

Cape Breton University

2023

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM

WITH *Ellen Furey*



Ellen Furey’s artistic path began in Unama’ki/Cape Breton in her hometown of Sydney. At age 18, she left the island to study music, theatre and dance at Randolph Academy in Tkaronto/Toronto before turning towards experimental dance and theatre. She continued her training at The School of Toronto Dance Theatre. It was in experimental emergent forms, in embodied practice, and in interdisciplinary exploration that Ellen found a new sense of home.

In the past 11 years, she has had the opportunity to present her work in England, the USA, Belgium, France, Germany, Scotland, Switzerland and Austria. Cultural exchange and creating in different contexts have felt important to her understanding of a wider artistic conversation (locally, nationally and internationally). “The CBU Artist in Residence program will afford me a rare opportunity to share and exchange my work with the place I was raised.”

Furey has worked in co-authorship with UK artist Malik Nashad Sharpe on their last two major performance works and with a range of independent artists in different ways over the past decade. She has accompanied processes as a dance dramaturg and artistic advisor. Since 2019 she has been working formally as an advisor, co-curator and now consultant of Montreal dance organization, Danse-Cité. In the past 2.5 years, two new areas of focus for her have been intuitive/spiritual practice (moving towards studies in End of Life Care) and Conflict Management (University of Waterloo). As the 2023 Cape Breton University Artist in Residence, Furey is interested in making connections with new people, building on cohesiveness in community with others, and breaking away some of the leftover isolation from the first years of the pandemic.

PUBLIC EVENTS

WEEKLY WORKSHOPS JANUARY 19 - MARCH 30, 2023

Thursdays, 11:45am to 1:00pm (10 workshops total - no workshop February 23)
Centre for Sound Communities Studio (located near the Sullivan Fieldhouse)

EXPANDED NOTIONS OF CHOREOGRAPHY LIFTING THE CEILING

In many different ways, global populations are dealing with changed ideas of home and future be it through global displacement, natural disaster, the loss of loved ones during COVID, or simply leaving our parents’ home for the first time when going to post-secondary education. The workshop proposes performative scores* for sensing possibility. Scores for finding ways to recognize inspiration and inner desire in order to articulate latent dreamscapes for life, work and art making, as big and as good-feeling as we can imagine.

LIFTING THE CEILING is an ongoing workshop that will grow with the student population, local artists and members of the public around CBU over the course of the winter months. This workshop is geared towards those interested in art-making, experimentation and exploration. The instructor’s practice is mainly as a choreographer, so embodiment practices will be offered, though no dance training is required to participate.

**DROP IN WHEN YOU CAN,
OR JOIN IN ON ALL
10 WORKSHOPS.**

*A score is a set of instructions made to guide us through an experience.

Photography by Winnie Ho & Do Phan Hoi





CURATED COMMUNITY EVENTS

Join Ellen at various locations around the CBRM as she leads a series of curated workshops.

JANUARY **On Paper Books**
Listening Night

FEBRUARY **James McDonnell Memorial Library**
Film screening

MARCH **Membertou Heritage Park**
Performance series

Glace Bay Library
Small Space Performance Series

Check [CBU.ca/community/artist-in-residence](https://www.cbu.ca/community/artist-in-residence) for dates and times.

PERSONAL CREATION: LAY HOLD TO THE SOFTEST THROAT

During the month of April, 2023, Furey will be working on a new interdisciplinary performance work entitled *Lay Hold to the Softest Throat*, which is set to premiere in Montreal in late May 2023. This project is funded through the Montreal, Quebec and Canada arts councils and is being made with co-production support from La Chapelle, Scènes Contemporaines (Montreal), La Nouvelle Scène (Ottawa) and Festival TransAmériques (Montreal).

Lay Hold to the Softest Throat is a choreography for three vocalising performers. As its main content, this piece reconstructs an absurd rendering of Jerze Grotowski's concept of the "Holy Actor" (Towards a Poor Theatre). In this interdisciplinary collaboration, three performers use voice, movement and aesthetics of 1970s physical theatre to celebrate the messiness of personal identity in a quest for sanctity. The piece explores training techniques of vocalisation and movement as building blocks for imagining new practices of collective power, courage and empathy.

A female cast, the piece is being created and performed by Ellen Furey and musicians Alanna Stuart (Montreal/Jamaica) and Romy Lightman (Los Angeles). The trio will be joined by long-term collaborator, Toronto sound-artist and dance dramaturg, Christopher Willes as sound designer. Willes will help bridge the contexts of contemporary dance and music making. Renowned lighting designer Paul Chambers joins the team, as well as philosopher and dance-artist Hanako Hoshimi-Caines as dramaturg.

During a two-week period in April, members of the team will join Furey to work on the creation of this show. At the end of the two weeks, the group will present a public viewing of the work-in-progress. The project team will be working out of the Centre for Sound Communities Studio, CBU Campus. Open rehearsals of their work, along with workshops and artist talks, will be offered during their creative process.

Visit [CBU.ca/community/artist-in-residence](https://www.cbu.ca/community/artist-in-residence) for updated dates and times.