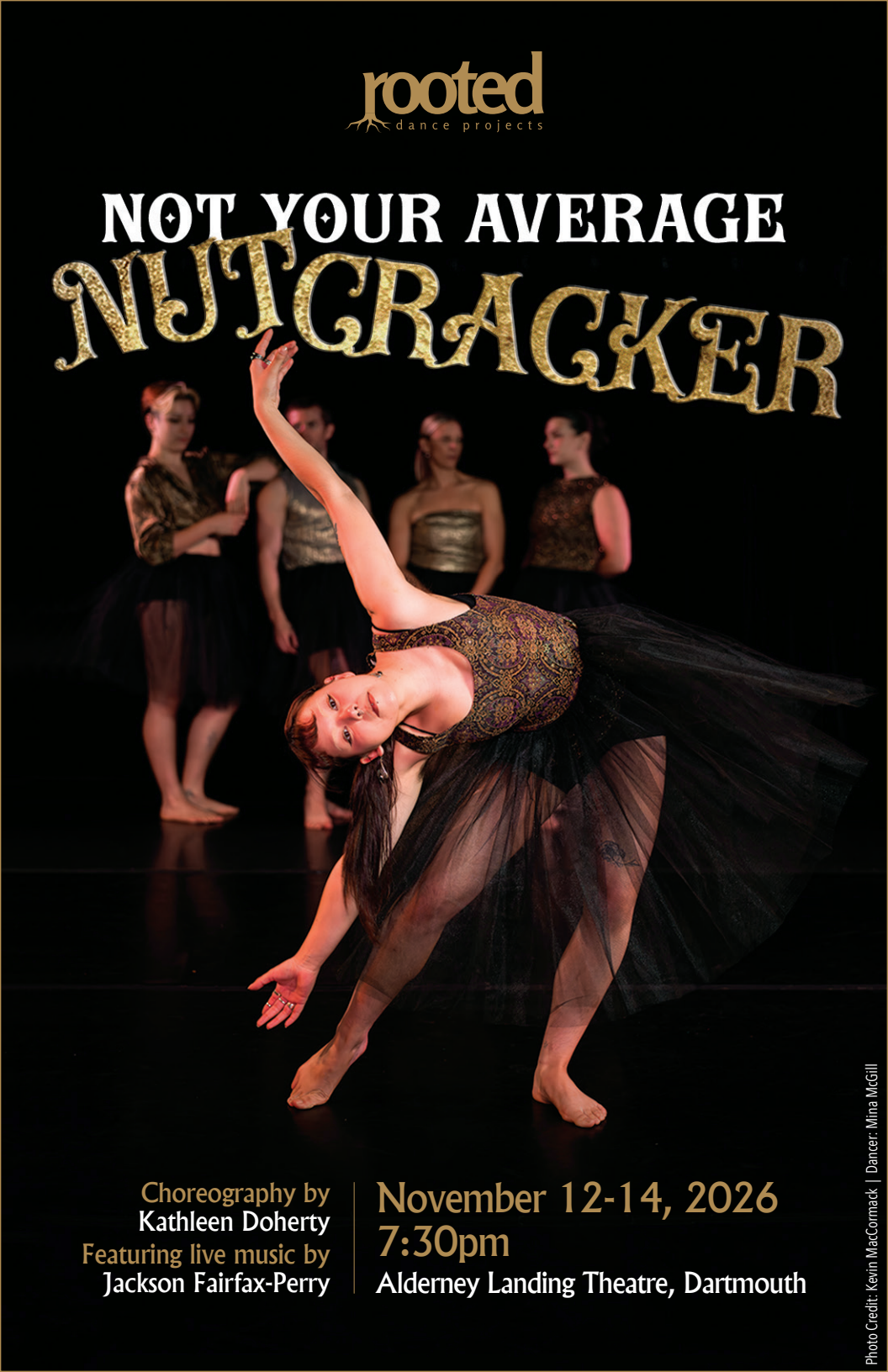
rooted
dance projects

NOT YOUR AVERAGE NUTCRACKER



Choreography by
Kathleen Doherty
Featuring live music by
Jackson Fairfax-Perry

November 12-14, 2026
7:30pm
Alderney Landing Theatre, Dartmouth

Photo Credit: Kevin MacCormack | Dancer: Mina McGill

ABOUT ROOTED DANCE PROJECTS

Rooted Dance Projects was founded in 2012 by Kathleen Doherty & Stephanie Mitro. Under the Artistic Direction of Kathleen Doherty since inception, the company is based in Kjipuktuk/Halifax, and is an integral part of the Nova Scotia dance community.

Rooted Dance Projects is committed to honouring the roots of Jazz dance and other related styles in their work. The company regularly creates, produces & presents work, tours regionally, hosts workshops and classes, and engages with youth through the Rooted Youth Project.

Finding identity in a rooted jazz dance style, the company has become well known for their highly physical, rhythmic, and engaging performances. Recent creations include WHODUNIT?, BASSline, Count Me In, and Elemental Rhythms by Kathleen Doherty, and Don't Wake The Lions and the light that devours her, by Catherine Hayward. The company works with live music whenever possible, and has created works with original music by Gabriella Ciurcovich (the light that devours her), Andrew Jackson (WHODUNIT?), Caito MacDonald (Count Me In), Tom Richards (Don't Wake The Lions), Sam Wilson (Elemental Rhythms), and Andrew MacKelvie (Verge).

www.rooteddanceprojects.com
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In our study and practice of Jazz, we honour this art form's African roots and history. We graciously acknowledge that Jazz is born of Black American culture and that many of us are our guests within this form.

Rooted Dance Projects acknowledges that our work takes place in Mi'kma'ki, on the ancestral and unceded traditional land of the Mi'kmaw people. We are grateful to the past, present, and future caretakers of these lands and waters.

LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Hello jazz lovers,

I am delighted to be sharing the world premiere of Rooted's largest project to date with you tonight, Not Your Average Nutcracker!

I began work on this show more than 3 years ago, and asked Jackson to come on as the composer and band leader around that same time. I came to Jackson with a plan of weaving different ballet stories together, and wondered how the music could play along with this idea. I was greatly inspired by Duke Ellington's album The Nutcracker Suite, and used this as a stepping off point for finding a jazzy play and landscape in these traditionally ballet and classical music worlds.

The dancers and I began working on choreography in January 2026, with regular check in's between myself and Jackson all along the way. Gil joined our team in the fall to round out the incredible team of NYAN artists. All of the artists and collaborators have been such an important part of making sure this wild show found its footing, and I am forever grateful to everyone's commitment and energy. A special shout-out to our amazing group of Youth Project dancers, who have been such a joy to work with over the past few weeks!

It's truly been a labour of love to get all the resources in place to make this show happen. A huge thank-you to our Season and Show Sponsors and Sparkle Squad donors, to everyone who is in the audience tonight, and who cheers us on from near and far. We feel your love!

Thank you for being here, and enjoy the show!

xx Kathleen



Photo Credit: Kevin MacCormack

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Artistic Director: Kathleen Doherty

Choreography: Kathleen Doherty, in collaboration with the dancers

Composer & Band Leader: Jackson Fairfax-Perry

Company Dancers: Isaac Abriel, Dorian Fournier, Michéle King, Mina McGill, Stephanie Mitro, Chris Van Green

Musicians: Gabriella Ciurcovich, Jackson Fairfax-Perry, Caito MacDonald, Sam Wilson

Narrator: Gil Anderson

Youth Project Dancers: Akira Brown, Lily Crooks, Kaylee Evans, Hailey Fisher, Natasha Haraga, Deanna Jablonszky, Maddy Jones-Kenyon, Sukhmani Kaur, Celia Konowe, Berkley Manser, Bethany McMorine, Breanna Miller, Sage Rizcallah, Reemas Sakr, Lauren Spinney, Rayelle Woolridge

Lighting Design: Thomas Rice, Jess Lewis

Technical Crew: Thomas Rice, Dan Morash

Script Development: Gil Anderson, Kathleen Doherty, Chantelle Rideout

Costumes: Kathleen Doherty, Gabriella Ciurcovich, Maritime Conservatory, Halifax Dance

Set Design & Construction: Kathleen Doherty, Colm Doherty

Graphic Design: Sue Healy

Stage Right: Fátima López



Photo Credit: Kevin MacCormack

NOT YOUR AVERAGE NUTCRACKER

ACT 1

Welcome to the Party

Romeo & Bros

Swan Crimes

Ode to Duke

Dance of the Knights

Romeo & Juliet

Groove of the Flowers

INTERMISSION

ACT 2

Tchaikovsky March

Sugar Plum

Swan Lake

Reed Pipes

Louisiana Russian Dance

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Siobhan Doherty

Sue Healy

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Bree Torgrimson

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Alderney Landing staff & tech crew

Halifax Dance

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Erinn Liebhard

Grace McRae

Stephen Mitro/Majestic Casters

Jenny Scott

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Suzanne Bartlett

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Liliona Quarmyne

Stuart Ross

Christopher Vernon

We are still in need of support ★ join the Sparkle Squad today!
Visit www.roooteddanceprojects.com for details

ARTIST BIOS



Kathleen Doherty • Artistic Director & Choreographer

Kathleen Doherty (she/her) is a producer, choreographer, dance artist, and educator based in Kjipuktuk/Halifax. Kathleen co-founded Rooted Dance Projects in 2012 and has worked as Artistic Director since the company's inception. Her creations with Rooted include WHODUNIT?, BASSline, Count Me In, and most recently: Elemental Rhythms. Kathleen is also the current Artistic Director of the Young Company of Halifax Dance (YoCo). Through this position, she is working to expand the community YoCo serves for young dancers, and the professional artists they engage with.

Kathleen holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree from Saint Mary's University in Halifax. She studied for two years in Decidedly Jazz Danceworks' Professional Training Program (Calgary). Kathleen loves to share her passion and knowledge for jazz dance throughout the city, and is a regular instructor with: The Maritime Conservatory, Halifax Dance, Rooted Dance Projects, and a part-time faculty member with The Fountain School of Performing Arts (Dalhousie University). Kathleen is proud to be a working artist mom to her eight-year-old son, Cillian.

Jackson Fairfax-Perry • Composer, Band Leader & Musician



Jackson Fairfax-Perry is an award-winning African Nova Scotian composer, sound designer, musician, and musical director based in Halifax, Nova Scotia. A graduate of Dalhousie University, Jackson has built a multidisciplinary career that bridges contemporary composition, popular music, improvisation, and theatrical sound design. For the decade following his graduation, he recorded and toured nationally and internationally with Hillsburn, an award-winning indie-pop band. Since 2023, Jackson has collaborated closely with Lance Sampson, AKA Aquakultre. As musical director for Sampson's live performances, he has co-written, arranged, and performed on several of Aquakultre's recordings, most notably on the critically acclaimed album 1783. As a saxophonist and keyboardist, Jackson is an active member of Halifax's jazz and creative music scene performing regularly with several ensembles including Many Worlds, as well as his own group TYNES plus III. Jackson also collaborates frequently with theatre and dance artists, having contributed music and sound design to numerous local and national productions.

ARTIST BIOS



Isaac Abriel • Dancer

Isaac grew up in Kingston, Nova Scotia, where he began his dance training at Precision Dance Company. In 2018, he moved to Anaheim, California, to join Mather Dance Company's Bridge Into the Industry program and subsequently relocated to Los Angeles, where he immersed himself in the local dance scene. In 2020, he returned to Halifax, Nova Scotia, to establish himself as a professional artist, going on to perform with Rooted Dance Projects in Don't Wake the Lions, WHODUNIT?, and BASSline; Zimmerdans in The Devil's Intervals; and Mocean Dance in Km+tkinu. As a freelance artist, he has performed at FODAR, Saint John Contemporary Dance Festival, Kinetic Open Studio Series, and more, presenting Blur, co-created with Marrin Jessome. In 2023, he was commissioned by Nostos Collectives for a week-long creative residency. He has also worked as a teacher and choreographer at various dance studios in Halifax. In 2024, Isaac relocated to Calgary, Alberta, to join Decidedly Jazz Danceworks, and is currently in his third season with the company.



Gil Anderson • Narrator

Gil Anderson is a Halifax-based actor and improviser whose work spans animation, film, television, and theatre. Her performance in the Crave comedy series The Trades earned her an ACTRA Maritimes Award. A lifelong storyteller, Gil is delighted to join Rooted Dance Projects as Narrator in Not Your Average Nutcracker.



Gabriella Ciurcovich • Musician

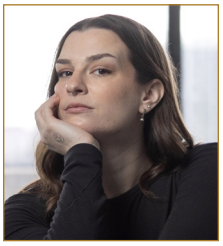
Gabriella Ciurcovich is a bassist and composer based in Kjipuktuk/Halifax. She is active in Halifax's improvised music scene, in projects such as rumé kover, Aquakultre, Many Worlds, the Dusty Halos, and often as a collaborator in interdisciplinary works. She writes for jazz and improvised music ensembles, as well as her own songwriting project, popuri. She was delighted to be a 2025/26 CFAT Media Arts Scholar, where she developed her first work in interactive/immersive media. She has a BMusic in Jazz Performance from the University of Toronto.

ARTIST BIOS



Dorian Fournier • Dancer

Dorian Fournier is a New Brunswick native who grew up in Ottawa, Ontario. They pursued a multitude of dance styles from a young age, through competitive dance at DanceR Studio and RAD ballet training, and their love for choreography and performance flourished during this time. After receiving their Bachelor's in Musical Theatre from Queen's University, they have continued their artistic development through drop in classes and musical theatre performance. Recently, they have hit the stage with Neptune Theatre's Mamma Mia! and Rent, HVCP's Footloose, and Horrorshow Productions' Cabaret. They are thrilled to join the Rooted Dance team, and further the company's exploration of movement. Free Palestine!



Michèle King • Dancer

Michèle King is a Nova Scotia based dance artist and graduate of Concordia University's Contemporary Dance Program. Her recent work centres on performance, rhythm-based practices, and community engagement. A longtime interpreter with Rooted Dance Projects, she has performed in works including Don't Wake the Lions by Catherine Hayward and Whodunit by Kathleen Doherty, to name a few, with upcoming appearances in Rooted's Not Your Average Nutcracker in November 2026.

In recent years her artistic focus has shifted toward Jazz and Tap, leading to the co-founding of RhythMM, a venture dedicated to percussive dance and musician/dancer collaboration. Recent choreographic work includes Triptych(2023), created collaboratively with Meghan Gilhespy and MacKenzie Greenwell.

Alongside her performance practice, Michèle is an active educator working with both youth and adults across Halifax and a producer of Heather Cornell's Tap Labs, bringing the internationally recognized program to Nova Scotia in 2025 and 2026.



Caito MacDonald • Composer & Musician

Caito Macdonald is a percussionist and composer from Halifax, NS. His approach to percussion is centered in melodicism, using traditional rudiments and forward motion to mimic harmonic lines. In addition to being a session/touring musician, Caito's trio plays a weekly residency at the Barrington Steakhouse.

ARTIST BIOS



Mina McGill • Dancer

Mina (She/They) is an accomplished dancer who was born in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, and has been dancing since they were only 2 years old. Throughout their competitive years, Mina has had the opportunity to train, teach, and choreograph at several studios around the South Shore, eventually finding their home at Elle Dance Academy and winning many awards in the process. After nearly two decades of training with prominent teachers and choreographers in the dance community, Mina has developed a unique style that blends aspects of contemporary, fusion, and hip-hop with classical technique and detailed musicality. Mina loves sharing their passion for dance through their choreography and encourages others to explore their own movement and individuality.



Stephanie Mitro • Dancer

Stephanie is an established industry professional, choreographer and dance teacher based out of Halifax, Nova Scotia, and is devoted to educating and mentoring young artists across Canada and abroad.

Stephanie is a proud graduate of TMU (previously Ryerson University) touting a BFA Degree (Theatre Performance Dance). Additionally, she is a graduate of the Professional Program, Decidedly Jazz Danceworks (Calgary).

Stephanie is the co-founder of the professional Halifax contemporary jazz company – Rooted Dance Projects (previously Votive Dance). During her professional dance career, she performed in numerous original full length choreographic works, some including: Proven Lands (Nextfest, Atlantic Dance Festival, Soulocentric, Tour); Perspective (Connection Dance Works); Homeplace (collaboration with Pier 21), Synced Systems (Alderney Landing), This Mess Of Ours (David Norsworthy) and Don't Wake The Lions (Catherine Hayward), WHODUNIT? and BASSline (Kathleen Doherty), to name a few.



Sam Wilson • Musician

Featured on CBC's Saturday Night Jazz with Laila Biali and reviewed by The Whole Note, Rhythm Changes, Jazzmania and CultureJazz among others, Sam Wilson has been described as "an original voice" (Yves Dorison), "highly unusual... but never seems to get old in the listening" (Rick Anderson), and "able to highlight the beauty of nature" (Mario Borroni). Since studying jazz during her formative years, Wilson's sound has evolved to incorporate elements of folk, contemporary chamber work, and other influences. On October 14th, she released her fourth album 'Sowing Spring'.

ARTIST BIOS



Chris Van Green • Dancer

Chris Van Green (he/they) is a multidisciplinary dance artist, educator, choreographer, and wellness coach based in Mi'kma'ki/ Nova Scotia. A graduate of Toronto Metropolitan University's Dance program, Chris has over a decade of experience working across multiple styles, including contemporary, ballet, jazz, heels, and acrobatics.

His recent performance credits include work with Rooted Dance Projects, Liam Caines, Melissa Page Webster, Marie-Josée Chartier, Connection Dance Works, and Symphony Nova Scotia, alongside earlier collaborations with artists including David Earle, James Kudelka, Fernando Melo, Hanna Kiel, and Robert Glumbek. His choreographic work includes Gravity's Pull and Douleur. Chris is currently continuing to develop his own artistic practice, exploring new ideas, movement possibilities, and ways of creating and experiencing dance.

Alongside his artistic work, Chris is a wellness coach, drawing on his experience as a dancer and educator to support strength, recovery, longevity, and a sustainable relationship with movement. At the centre of his practice is a curiosity to keep learning, keep creating, and keep finding new ways for movement to connect with people.



Jessica Lewis • Technical Direction & Lighting Design

Jessica lives and works in Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia) as a Lighting Designer and Production Manager. She has taken productions across Canada, throughout the Southern States, Asia and the UK.

Selected works include: Eastern Front Theatre (The Ghost of Violet Shaw, Fat Juliet, Stages Theatre Festival, Early Stages Theatre Festival) Neptune Theatre (Come From Away, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, Little Shop of Horrors, The Play That Goes Wrong, Billy Elliot, Dickens' A Christmas Carol, A Midsummer Night's Dream), Zuppa Works (The Final Recordings of an Almost Extinct Bird, The Movements, Tiny, Slowly I Turn, How Far, How Far Away), Rooted Dance Projects (Take 5, Strike Tone, WHODUNIT?, Don't Wake The Lions), Live Art Dance (Coastal Currents).

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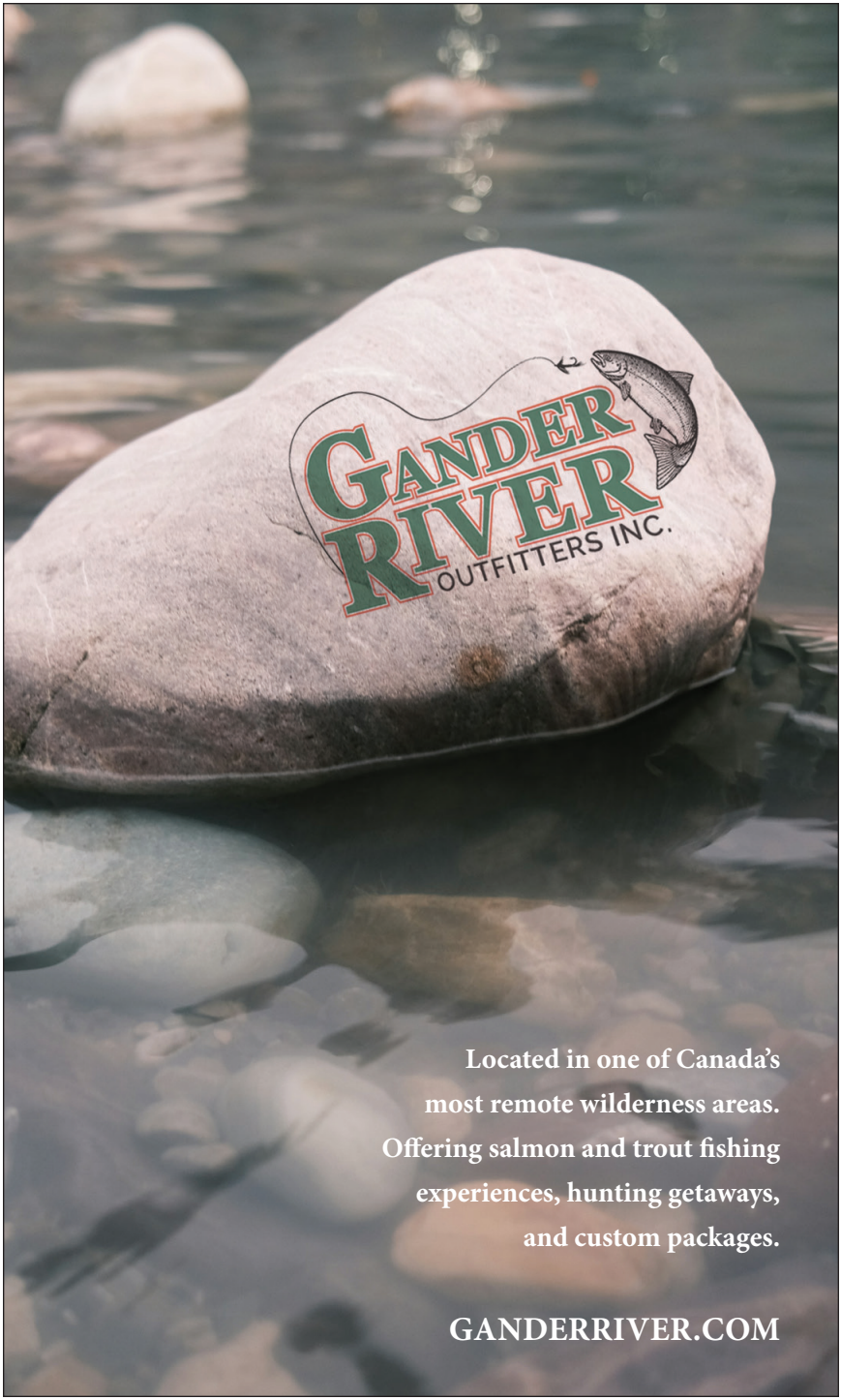
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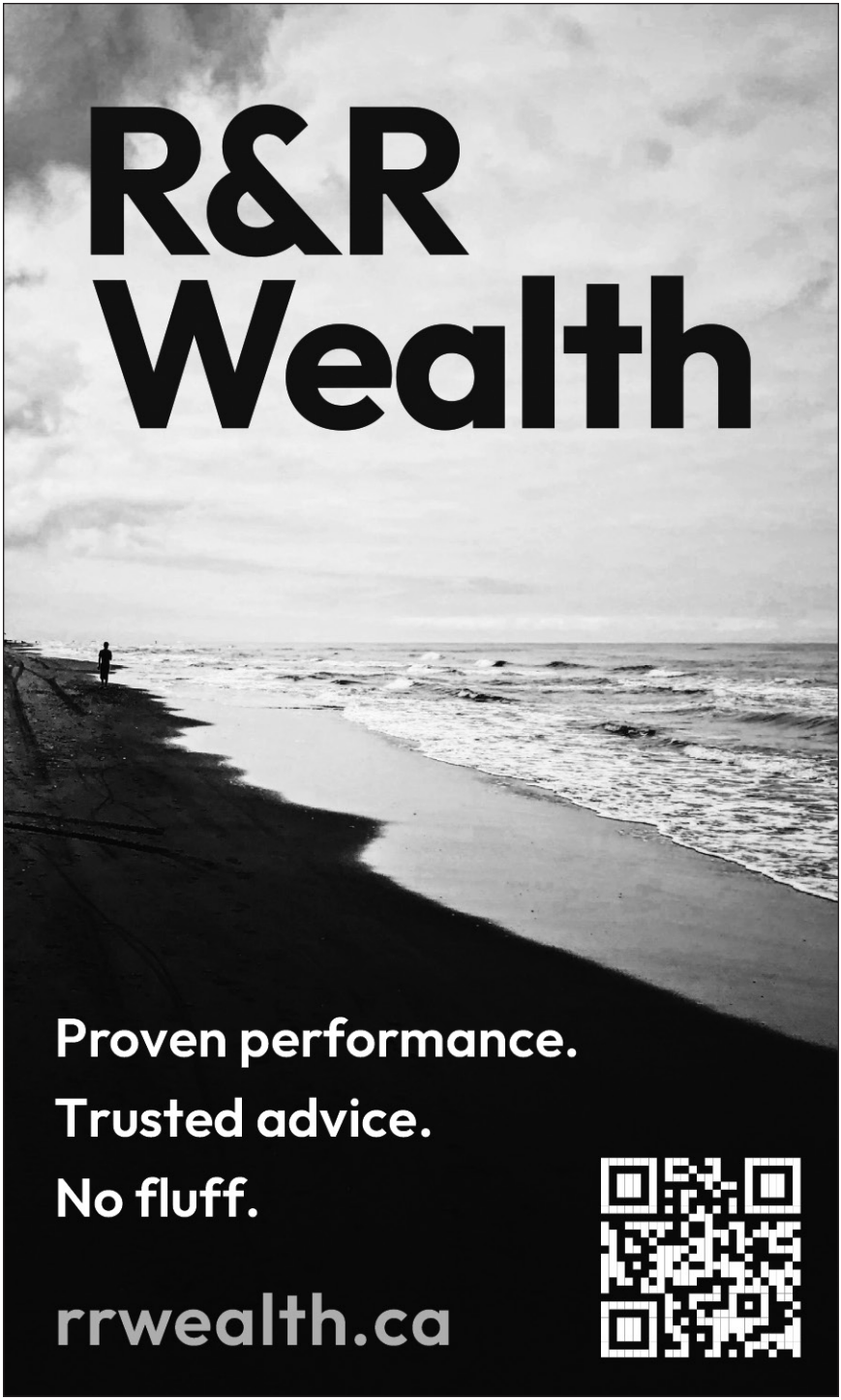
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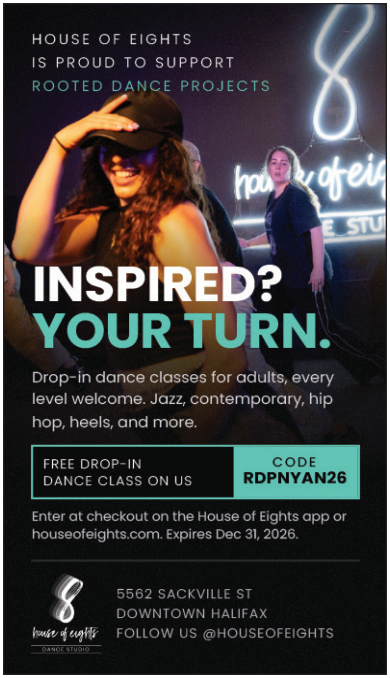
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