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Market Hall Performing Arts' Bright Lights Series presents

AN EVENING WITH BILL JAMES

FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 8PM AT THE MARKET HALL

Bill James In Conversation with Paula Citron, Senior Dance Writer, Globe & Mail

With a live performance of a duet created for Old Men Dancing, as well as screenings of rare film footage taken from James' 30 years creating at the fore of contemporary dance in Canada.

Admission is by donation. All proceeds go to the Bright Lights Bursary, given to a promising young artist.

Market Hall Performing Arts presents **An Evening with Bill James**, the latest event in its **Bright Lights** series of on-stage conversations with great artists who come from, or now live in, the Peterborough area. Previous honorees have been composer **R. Murray Schafer**, dancer **Evelyn Hart**, playwright **Drew Hayden Taylor**, and Peterborough community theatre icon **Gwen Brown**. Bill James' remarkable and varied career in contemporary dance easily places him in the same company as these important and influential artists.

Discussing his life and work on the Market Hall stage will be one of Canada's foremost dance writers, **Paula Citron**, the Senior Dance Writer for the Globe & Mail and Arts Reviewer for Classical 96.3 FM. The conversation is sure to be informative and lively, as Citron's own lengthy career has allowed her to view the bulk of James's creative output. Audiences will also have a chance to see excerpts of James's work both live and on film. Footage of work spanning James's career, some dating back to the early 80's, will be screened and a duet Bill created for the Peterborough group Old Men Dancing will be performed on stage.

Bill James is widely known for his vision of dance in unconventional spaces; his multi-disciplinary collaborations with artists and scientists; and his work in community arts. Based in Toronto for much of his 30-year career, James moved to a farm just outside Peterborough, Ontario (pop 75,000) in 2002. From this base he continues pursue all facets of his artistic vision with collaborators in both Toronto and Peterborough, while pursuing a second career raising a variety of farm animals.

A native of North Dakota, James moved to Winnipeg to train with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, then spent 10 years as a dancer in Ottawa and almost 20 years in Toronto before settling in Peterborough. While in Toronto, James acquired a national reputation for his engagement of unusual sites and civic spaces, as both a creator of his own work and an animator of other artists' work. His 1986 work, *Atlas Moves Watching*, put the audience in a storefront watching dancers getting out of limos and dancing on streetcars, while his *Seven Mountains* was performed on seven large-scale ramps in an abandoned warehouse. From 1995 to 1999 he co-produced the series Art in Open Spaces, which commissioned dance and music creations in and around public sculptures and fountains, and in 2000 and 2003 he co-directed the Shared Habitat Festival of Art and the Environment, a symposium and festival focused on biology and dance.

Since moving to Peterborough James may be out of the limelight but he is no less busy. He has created 8 new works and is currently engaged in two significant ongoing projects. One is the *Weather Project*, a collaboration with media artists Steve Daniels and Caroline Langill, and composer Rick Sacks. The second is James' work since 2005 with the Peterborough community group Old Men Dancing. With an average age of over 50, these dozen late-blooming dancers have been receiving professional dance training - from James and others - as they work toward performing a full evening produced by James' company Atlas Moves Watching. The program will see them performing 4 works by 4 great Canadian choreographers - Marie-Josée Chartier, Allen Kaeja, D. A. Hoskins and James himself - at Peterborough's Market Hall May 7-10.

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All Bright Lights events are filmed for broadcast by Cogeco-TV.

MORE ABOUT BILL JAMES

Initially trained in classical ballet in Chicago, Winnipeg and New York, Bill joined the experimental dance company Le Groupe de la Place Royale in Montreal in 1975. He danced with that company for 10 years, while also dancing with several independent choreographers and performance artists while touring Canada, the U.S. and Europe.

Bill has collaborated with many composers, visual artists and filmmakers in performance, installation, film and media art projects throughout his career, in North America, Europe and Asia.

Bill began choreographing work in 1976 and has created over 30 works, including large-scale works, *Geography*, *Seven Mountains* and *Wind*, as well as dozens of other works and repertoire for Dancemakers, Danse Partout, Le Groupe de la Place Royale and commissions from Harbourfront, the Musee du Quebec, the Musee de la Civilisation and the Singapore Festival of the Arts. He was Artistic Director of Dancemakers in Toronto from 1988-90 and since 1996 he has been Artistic Director of Atlas Moves Watching

Bill James' work was first seen in Peterborough in 1989 with a full-length piece co-commissioned by Peterborough's Artspace and Toronto's Harbourfront Centre. In 2001 he came to the city to collaborate with Peterborough visual artist Shelagh Young on the creation of *Panopticon*, presented by Peterborough New Dance at the Market Hall and subsequently at the Winchester Street Theatre in Toronto. In 2002 he and his partner moved from downtown Toronto to a farm on the Indian River just outside Peterborough. Since then he has continued to make dance, including: two more collaborations with Young; a commission for the Peterborough Dance Collective; a number of community youth art projects; *Dancing In The Streets*, a community project involving 400+ performers aged 2 to 80; *Domestic Science*, a solo for himself that he presented at the Older and Reckless series in Toronto; and two new short works for Old Men Dancing, as well as commissioning a full evening of works for Old Men Dancing from 4 choreographers.

ABOUT BRIGHT LIGHTS

Bright Lights is a series of live on-stage conversations with great artists who live in, or hail from, the Peterborough area. Previous artists have included playwright **Drew Hayden Taylor**, ballerina **Evelyn Hart** and composer **R. Murray Schafer**. The series is based on Market Hall's **Greatest 100 in the Performing Arts**, a centennial project for the city of Peterborough that named the 100 most outstanding performing artists in its history. It can be viewed at www.markethall.org

Proceeds from Bright Lights events contribute to Market Hall's artistic programming as well as to the **Bright Lights Award**, an educational bursary given out at each event to a young artist working in the same field as the featured guest.