



Wolfe Island's Dance Festival

OFF SEASON: 21-Year-Old Juilliard Student Brings World-Class Dance to Wolfe Island, ON

Inaugural festival features Citadel + Compagnie, Esie Mensah Creations, Emma Ouellet of The National Ballet of Canada, Quinte Ballet School of Canada, and Métis choreographer Jera Wolfe

WOLFE ISLAND, ONTARIO — At just 21 years old, James Street is bringing some of Canada's leading dance artists to a place that has shaped his life for generations. A graduate of Canada's National Ballet School and a current student in the Dance Division at The Juilliard School in New York City, Street has founded OFF SEASON, a new dance festival that will debut July 24–25, 2026, on Wolfe Island.

The inaugural festival brings together an exceptional roster of artists and companies whose work has helped define Canadian dance today, creating a rare opportunity for audiences to experience world-class performance in one of Ontario's most distinctive rural settings.

For James, the festival is also deeply personal. Having spent summers and weekends on Wolfe Island throughout his childhood, he has longstanding family ties to the island that span multiple generations. Through OFF SEASON, he hopes to contribute to the island's cultural life while creating new opportunities for artistic exchange and community gathering.

Presented at the Hotel Wolfe Island, OFF SEASON's inaugural season features a programme performed over two evenings, showcasing a range of classical, contemporary, and Afro-fusion works that reflect the breadth, diversity, and excellence of Canadian dance.

"Wolfe Island has been part of my life for as long as I can remember," says Street. "I spent summers and weekends here growing up, and my family's connection to the island goes back generations. Through my training at Canada's National Ballet School and now at Juilliard, I've had the privilege of learning from extraordinary artists and seeing what is possible when communities invest in culture. OFF SEASON is about bringing that same sense of possibility to Wolfe Island and creating opportunities for people to experience dance at the highest level, regardless of where they live."

Both festival evenings will feature performances by:

- **Citadel + Compagnie**, performing *The Man in Black*, James Kudelka's acclaimed work set to the music of Johnny Cash.
- **Esie Mensah Creations**, presenting excerpts from *Zayo*, a powerful and visually arresting work exploring identity, ancestry, and collective memory through movement.
- **Emma Ouellet** of The National Ballet of Canada, performing excerpts from *Swan Lake* from the celebrated production staged by Karen Kain and collaborators.

The festival's featured guest artists will vary by evening.

Friday, July 24, 2026

The program will include a special appearance by the **Quinte Ballet School of Canada**, presenting new work *Joining* by choreographer **Robert Stephen**.

Saturday, July 25, 2026

Born in Toronto, **Jera Wolfe** is a choreographer and performer and a member of the Manitoba Métis Federation. He and Miyeko Ferguson will be presenting *If Then*, a duet where two people meet and drift into a shared moment. Movement draws them together, then apart—uncertain what was real and what was imagined.

In addition to performances, OFF SEASON will offer workshops, artist conversations, and opportunities for audiences to engage directly with dancers and choreographers throughout the weekend.

At a time when most major dance presentations remain concentrated in urban centres, OFF SEASON seeks to demonstrate that artistic excellence can thrive in rural communities. By bringing nationally recognized artists to Wolfe Island, the festival aims to create new pathways for cultural exchange while contributing to the region's growing reputation as a destination for arts and tourism.

"Some of the most exciting conversations in the arts today are about accessibility, community, and who gets to experience great work," says Street. "We believe audiences shouldn't have to live in Toronto, Montreal, or Ottawa to encounter extraordinary artists. OFF SEASON is an invitation to experience Canadian dance in a completely different way—close to the artists, close to the landscape, and close to one another."

Located at the gateway to the Thousand Islands, Wolfe Island provides a uniquely intimate setting for artistic exchange and discovery. OFF SEASON aspires to become an annual destination for dance, creativity, and community, welcoming audiences from across Ontario and beyond.

About OFF SEASON

OFF SEASON is Wolfe Island's dance festival. Founded in 2026 by James Street, the festival champions artistic excellence, accessibility, and community engagement through performances, workshops, and public programming. OFF SEASON connects audiences with leading Canadian dance artists in a distinctive rural setting and seeks to establish Wolfe Island as a destination for cultural exchange and artistic discovery.

About James Street

James Street is a graduate of Canada's National Ballet School and is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance at The Juilliard School in New York City. At age 21, he founded OFF SEASON with a vision of bringing world-class dance experiences to rural communities and creating new opportunities for artistic connection on Wolfe

Island. Street spent summers and weekends on Wolfe Island throughout his childhood and has longstanding family ties to the island.

Media Contact

James Street
Founder & Artistic Director
OFF SEASON
james@offseason.live

+1 416-419-8400
www.offseason.live