

Artword Artbar
 15 Colbourne St
 Hamilton

arts hub, live music venue,
 art gallery, neighbourhood bar
 in the heart of James North arts district

905-543-8512
 905-912-9083

Licensed cafe-bar.
 Homemade light meals

Open Wed-Sat from 6 pm
 plus special events

www.artword.net/artbar

For immediate release: June 15, 2015

Learie Mc Nicolls in Transformation at Artword Artbar, Fringe 2015

Learie Mc Nicolls confronts the demons of poverty, violence and fear in his powerful new work, *Transformation: a Journey of the Soul's Healing*, Artword Theatre's contribution to the Hamilton Fringe Theatre Festival, July 2015. Directed by Ronald Weihs, *Transformation* combines dance, spoken word, soundscape and visual images, to present one man's struggle to come to terms with his troubled Trinidad childhood and redeem the forgotten child inside him.

The live musical soundscape is by Dale Morningstar, founder of the experimental blues-rock band, The Dinner is Ruined. Live visuals are by Judith Sandiford. *Transformation* was first presented on March 25 and 26, 2015, at Artword Artbar, and is being remounted there as a Fringe Bring-Your-Own-Venue.

Learie Mc Nicolls has been a key figure in the contemporary dance scene in Toronto since the 1980s. He has danced with Toronto Dance Theatre, Desrosiers Dance Theatre, Dancemakers, the National Ballet of Cuba, and his own company, Mythmakers. As a solo dancer, he has been exploring the combination of dance with spoken word, to create a powerful new form of theatrical presentation. His Toronto production, *Armour*, took two Dora awards for Outstanding Choreography and Outstanding Performance.

A year ago, he moved to Hamilton, where he is devoting himself to help build the contemporary dance scene here. In May, 2014, he performed *Resurrection* at the Pearl Company, and choreographed the dances in Artword Theatre's second production of James Street. He has created an ongoing series of showcase dance productions, beginning in June 2014, at Artword Artbar, called *Big Dance Little Stage*, featuring dancers from Hamilton and Toronto. Learie is the recipient of the 2015 City of Hamilton Arts Award for Performance.

Transformation takes the dance/spoken word paradigm to a new level. Ronald Weihs as director, and Judith Sandiford as designer, pushed Learie to incorporate methods based on their approach to theatre. Together, the three of them analyzed Learie's poems from a theatrical point of view, finding characters and situations that needed to be brought to life. Learie was fine with this, because he is also an actor.

The three collaborators also drew on their experience with *Big Dance Little Stage*, where Judith Sandiford improvises with projected images and musicians create soundscapes to interact with dancers. It was through BDLs that they became acquainted with Dale Morningstar, who provides improvised music for his wife, dancer Megan English. In addition to his work as a musician, Dale is perhaps best-known as co-founder of The Gas Station Recording Studio, "the hub of the Canadian indie rock sound", now located at Gibraltar Point on Toronto Island. He and Megan now live in Hamilton.

The Artword team, Ronald Weihs and Judith Sandiford, created and ran Artword Theatre in downtown Toronto for twelve years before coming to Hamilton in 2007. Weihs and Sandiford have had long experience with one-person plays, including three by Charlie Chiarelli, *Cu'Fu*, *Mangiacake* and *Sunamabeach*, Allan Merovitz's *If Cows Could Fly*, and Donald Carr's *The Full Nelson*. Judith Sandiford has designed and lit dance productions with Meiko Ando, Michael Du Maresq, Leanne Dixon, Hedy Minten, Daryll Tracy, Bonnie Kim and Donald Carr. Artword Theatre's original multi-cast productions in Hamilton include *You Are What You Do*, *Langston Hughes vs Joe McCarthy*, *Rascals and Numskulls*, *Tobacco Troubadour*, *James Street* and *Scroogissimo*. They own and manage the popular Artword Artbar, featuring music of all varieties, theatre, poetry and spoken word four nights a week, Wednesday to Saturday.

Transformation: A Journey of the Soul's Healing

An Artword Theatre production

written by **Learie Mc Nicolls**

choreographed and performed by **Learie Mc Nicolls**

directed by **Ronald Weihs**

original music performed live by **Dale Morningstar**

live visuals by designer/producer **Judith Sandiford**

Performances at Artword Artbar, 15 Colbourne Street, a Bring-Your-Own-Venue

Showtimes (eight performances):

Thursday July 16 at 9:00 pm; Friday July 17 at 9:00 pm; Saturday July 18 at 9:00 pm;

Sunday July 19 at 8:00 pm; Wednesday July 22 at 9:00 pm; Thursday July 23 at 8:00 pm;

Friday July 24 at 9:00 pm; Saturday July 25 at 9:00 pm (Final Show)

Part of the Hamilton Fringe Theatre Festival, 2015

Tickets: \$10

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For more information, contact Judith Sandiford, artword@artword.net,
905-543-8512, cell: 905-912-9083