

**Wire Monkey Dance** creates highly physical dance installations utilizing steel scaffolding and other industrial materials. Their gravity defying, multimedia dance events feature bold, animalistic choreography, live music and video projections, and address timeless human themes. Under the artistic direction of Saliq Francis Savage and Jennifer Polins, Wire Monkey Dance has a 10-year roster of performances, including site-specific installations on the UMASS/Amherst campus, in gallery spaces, proscenium theaters, international festivals and even in a sugar cane factory in Taiwan. Recent tours have included The Saratoga Arts Fest, Lincoln Center and Dance Theater Workshop in New York City, Cyclorama at the Boston Center for the Arts, the Ponderosa Dance Land Festival in Germany, the Macau Fringe Festival and WACFEST, in Macau China. From their headquarters at Tree Studio in Holyoke, they create new work and performances for the local community.

**List of recent touring venues/ performances**

June 11, 2007	<b>OPEN SECRET</b> , Saratoga Arts Fest, Saratoga, NY
Oct 12-28, 2007	<b>OPEN SECRET</b> , Tree Studio, Holyoke, MA
Aug 11, 2006	<b>PRECARIOUS</b> , Lincoln Center out of Doors series, New York, NY
Aug 9, 2006	<b>PRECARIOUS</b> , Pulaski Park, Northampton
Nov 10, 16, 19, 2005	<b>ARCTIC TRIANGLE</b> , Berkshire Community College, Sunderland Elementary School, BayPath College, Massachusetts touring
Sept 30-Oct 23, 2005	<b>PRECARIOUS</b> , Tree Studio, Holyoke MA
July 29-30, 2005	<b>UNE MINUTE</b> , Ponderosa Land Dance Festival, Berlin, Germany
November 1-7 2004	<b>ARCTIC TRIANGLE</b> , Macau Fringe Festival, Macau, China
October 14-21 2004	<b>ARCTIC TRIANGLE</b> , WACFEST, Macau, China
Sep 17 - Oct 3, 2004	<b>AS IF LIFE</b> , Tree Studio, Holyoke, Ma
July 17-18, 2004	<b>HOHENSAMMLER</b> , Ponderosa Dance Land Festival, Berlin Germany
October 23-24, 2003	<b>AS IF LIFE</b> , Tree Studio, Holyoke MA (studio showing)
May 15-17, 2003	<b>ARCTIC TRIANGLE</b> The Pioneer Valley Performing Arts High School Hadley, MA
May 8-9, 2003	<b>SHORT CIRCUITS</b> Bowker Auditorium, UMASS, Amherst
May 2, 2003	<b>SHORT CIRCUITS</b> Holyoke War Memorial, Holyoke, MA
February 1, 2003	<b>ARCTIC TRIANGLE</b> Dance Theater Workshop, NYC
Oct 25-26/Nov 1-3, 2002	<b>SHORT CIRCUITS</b> Northampton Center for the Arts, Northampton, MA
October 4, 2002	<b>SHORT CIRCUITS</b> Tree Studio. Holyoke, MA (studio showing)
August, 18 2002	<b>TECHNIAL DIFFICULTIES</b> Celebrate Holyoke Festival, Holyoke, MA
May 17-19, 2002	<b>TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES</b> The Pioneer Valley Performing Arts High School Hadley, MA
April 13-22, 2002	<b>A TWO HEADED WEAVER</b> Sun Ya Tsien University, Kao Hsuing Taiwan
October 18-19, 2001	<b>ENDANGERED SPECIES</b> The Boston Center for the Arts, Cyclorama, Boston MA
Sept 28-29, Oct 5-6 2001	<b>ENDANGERED SPECIES</b> The Northampton Center for the Arts, Northampton, MA
September 13, 2001	<b>ENDANGERED SPECIES</b> The University of Massachusetts, Amherst Residential Arts site specific, Amherst, MA
May 19, 2001	Arts Walk, Holyoke Ma, site specific improvisation.
January 17, 2001	<b>LOOKING FOR MADONNA</b> , Studio 303, Vernissage Danse, Montreal QC
October 22, 2000	<b>SCAFFOLDING STUDIES</b> SUNY Albany, NY
October 17-18, 2000	<b>SCAFFOLDING STUDIES</b> A.P.E. Thornes Market, Northampton MA
July 21-22, 2000	<b>WIRE MONKEY</b> The Dance Complex, Cambridge MA
July 15-16, 2000	<b>WIRE MONKEY</b> Northampton Center for the Arts, Northampton, MA
September 1999	<b>LOOKING FOR MADONNA</b> A.P.E. Thornes Market, Northampton, MA

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

(CV's available upon request)

### **Saliq Francis Savage**, Artistic and Technical Director and Producer

Fundamentally, Saliq Francis Savage is a mover. His kinesthetic skills were first tuned through tree climbing and athletics. After a Marquette University education in mathematics and pre-med, he studied Ortho-Bionomy, dance and Laban Movement Analysis at the University of Washington. The Laban material provided him with a language of movement that he used to begin teaching Contact Improvisation. Today he is a certified teacher at the School for Body-Mind Centering®, a certified Laban Movement Analyst®, an ISMETA Registered Movement Therapist, a certified GYROTONIC trainer, and teacher of Contact Improvisation. Saliq is the founder, producer and artistic director of Wire Monkey Dance where he works as a choreographer, set designer and dancer.

### **Jennifer Polins**, Artistic Director

Jennifer has been involved with dance for 28 years. At 17, she joined the Joffrey II Dancers, and later danced with the Milwaukee Ballet and the Zurich Opernhaus Ballet. While in Zurich she was a founding member of the modern dance company POOL, and began choreographing and teaching New Dance, Ballet, Creative Movement and Improvisation to children and adults throughout Europe. Her work has been shown in Switzerland, France, Germany, Poland, Taiwan, Boston, New York, and Western Mass. She has co created over ten pieces with Saliq Francis Savage, who she has been working with since 1997. Jennifer is a certified Essalen Massage Therapist, and a certified Pilates, GYROTONIC®, GYROKINESIS®, and Yoga Instructor. As well as directing, choreographing, and administrating for Wire Monkey Dance, she teaches dance and co directs the Catalyst Dance Company at the Pioneer Valley Performing Arts High School, teaches yoga, dance and Pilates locally and abroad and is the director of Movement Resource, a movement therapy studio in Northampton. Jen and Saliq are also the proud parents of two children, Edalena 3yrs and Ascher 1.5 yrs old.

### **Stephen Katz**, Composer, Musician

Stephen is a cellist, guitarist, composer, and teacher. He has premiered his cello compositions at Carnegie Hall, and occasionally performs with the Paul Winter Consort. He is music director and composer for Wire Monkey Dance and has been a Visiting Artist at Amherst College. He was part of the duo company Seen & Heard with dancer/monologist BJ Goodwin, was a founding member of the improvisational theater ensemble Out of Hand, and has collaborated and performed with Peter Jones, Beverly Blossom, and members of Pilobolus Dance Company. Stephen's solo recording First Person Singular features his songwriting, singing and guitar playing in addition to the cello, and was hailed by Connecticut Songsmith as "an incredible debut album by a new and important artist". His most recent releases (Looking Up and Earthdance) feature his looped compositions and improvisations. Selections from these recordings will be heard as part of Three Of Hearts, a 2004 documentary to be broadcast on BRAVO and screened at the Toronto Film Festival. A native of San Francisco, Stephen received a Master of Music degree in cello performance from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and lives in Haydenville, Massachusetts.

### **Yoann Trelu**, videographer, Berlin GR

Yoann, age 29, studied science at university in Nantes, France. He went on to study x-ray technology and then began creating video for electronic and improvised music. Between 1999 and 2003 he took part in several multimedia projects in Nantes : Village Bunker, Tarmania, Robonom, DDM, merh editions, 911=1611855, Histoires Mixtes. Since 2 years he works mostly on dance productions and lives between germany, france and usa. For each production he develops a custom made software (using Max/Msp/Jitter) allowing live interaction / synchronization with the dancers. All video material are produced specifically for each show. Main dance collaborations : Wire Monkey Dance, Schwebezustand (USA, Germany), Howard Katz Fireheart (Germany) Music project : Le Code, audio-video duet with Mangrove Kipling (Berlin, Germany) Future projects : DVD compilation of recent works, production of a feature movie based on a script from HKF : "The Sandman", video production for Post Holocaust Pop (Berlin, Germany).

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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WIRE MONKEY DANCE and MIFA FALL FESTIVAL '07 present

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in

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**MIFA/the Massachusetts International Festival of the Arts and Wire Monkey Dance present the WORLD PREMIERE of *OPEN SECRET* – a multimedia collaboration by choreographers Jennifer Polins and Saliq Savage, composer/musician Stephen Katz and French videographer Yoann Trellu, over three weekends, October 12 - 28, 2007, at Tree Studio in Holyoke, MA.**

*OPEN SECRET* is 90 minutes of riveting dance, original music, and videography that investigates interdependency, vulnerability, and intimacy. *OPEN SECRET* will be performed for a eight-day run as part of MIFA FALL FESTIVAL 07. The work focuses on finding the extraordinary in the ordinary. Using normal steel scaffolding and platforms, the company's powerful acrobatic dancers create a distinctive and compelling world – swinging, leaping and flying through sets that transform from traveling minstrel stages to monster trucks to habitats and more.

These performances celebrate Wire Monkey Dance's 9th season in Holyoke and at **Tree Studio**, a unique performance venue in Holyoke's historic canal district. Built in 1904 as a theatre and athletic club for the Farr Alpaca textile mill workers, the space now serves as Wire Monkey's rehearsal/performance space.

Since 1998, the company has created over 14 dazzling pieces fashioned on ever-moving configurations of construction scaffolding. Wire Monkey dance brings together regional and international dancers and interactive media artists who jointly create a unique performance idiom. Their productions have excited audiences in Boston, Western Massachusetts, New York, Berlin, Taiwan, and Macau. Wire Monkey has performed at Lincoln Center Out of Doors Series, Dance Theater Workshop, The Macau Fringe Festival, The Ponderosa Tanz Land Festival in Berlin, as well as site-specific venues in Pulaski Park, UMASS Amherst and on the streets of Northampton.

Wire Monkey Dance is conceived and produced by **Saliq Francis Savage**, a teacher and performer of Contact Improvisation and a certified teacher of Body-Mind Centering. He co-directs and co-choreographs with **Jennifer Polins**, who has danced with the Joffrey, the Milwaukee, and the Zurich Opernhaus Ballets, as well as many prominent European and American modern dance companies. The dancers include Ione Beauchamp, Lizzy Tyler, Nicole Dagesse, Ariel Cohen, Whitney Tucker, Joe Seitz, Will Savitri, Saliq Savage, Katie Aylward and Milena Dabova.

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# *PRESS...*

“ They make dance and moving pictures that crackle with freshness... Animated with reckless grace... Joyous, rhythmic, sensual, dramatic and playful...something memorable”

*-The Daily Hampshire Gazette*

“This work is beautifully conceived, vividly imaginative, and superbly performed. It is both visually riveting and viscerally thrilling”

*-The Boston Globe*

“The sheer athleticism of the work places Wire Monkey in the tradition of companies like Pilobolus.”  
“It's a testament to the vision of Savage and Polins that Wire Monkey has achieved success so early on.”

*-The Valley Advocate*

“When I saw Wire Monkey's debut performance at the Northampton Center for the Arts, I kept forgetting to breathe. After all, I was watching dancers who could fly. With a lightning speed, the seven dancers climbed, swung and soared across the bars of a sophisticated jungle gym: 20 feet of scaffolding that suggested an urban rain forest.”

*-The Artful Mind*

“Like other ground-breaking choreographers such as Trisha Brown, who turned modern dance on its side in the 1970s when she created works for dancers dangling from rooftops and performing on the sides of buildings, Wire Monkey's experiment has produced a thrilling work of art which breaks down the conventional boundaries of modern dance.”

*-The Springfield Union News*

“The agile and daring company engaged in strenuous gymnastics and sculptural posturing on the intricate scaffolding to obvious audience enthusiasm.”

*The Springfield Journal*

“The company of seven dancers worked in a high metal scaffolding, and like circus performers, they'd mastered the apparatus....”

*-The Boston Phoenix*

# 'Species' is riveting as it evolves

By Karen Campbell, Globe Correspondent, 10/22/2001

In the glare of a spotlight, a lone dancer hovers, twisting, turning, and bending, a 6-foot-tall section of scaffolding balanced precariously on his back. As he leans down to the floor, seemingly pinned by the metal frame, it is hard not to reference the past month's tragedy of death and destruction. But just as surely, he carefully rises, the bars of scaffolding seeming to outline the wings of some resilient bird, a phoenix rising from the ashes.

"Endangered Species," by the Western Massachusetts-based Wire Monkey Dance, is laden with powerful, striking imagery that puzzles and provokes. The most obvious image is that of monkeys cavorting in the jungle. High atop 20-foot mobile scaffolds, the seven dancers engage in flights of acrobatic fancy, flipping, swinging, balancing with a gymnastic skill and grace enlivened by freeform simian glee.

However, confronted with the encroachment of black-clothed, grim-faced stagehands who move the scaffolds and carry ramps on and off, they cower in fear, huddling for comfort. Are they animals whose habitats are being invaded or humans whose shelters are being methodically, unceremoniously destroyed?

In one section, the scaffolding is pulled apart into two wide-angled frames, each pulled by a dancer circling slowly like a yoked ox. Kathy Couch's vibrant lighting casts shadows of ever-changing geometric configurations against the back wall as the scaffolds revolve and dancers duck and run to avoid being caught in some monster machine.

Humor comes in the form of three yokels pretending to watch TV, reacting hilariously in slow motion. But darkness falls again as the scaffolding pulls farther apart to reveal jagged edges upon which a dancer seems to be impaled. Though it gets a bit literal when the dancers tether themselves as a video shows a spider eating its prey, "Endangered Species" is thought-provoking stuff.

The video adds another visual element, though it is mostly an abstract play of color and light. The most important complement is Stephen Katz's terrific score of driving electronics and percussion with natural sounds.

Wire Monkey Dance, led by Saliq Francis Savage and Jennifer Polins, made its debut as a company just last year. With the towering scaffolds and daring physicality of the multimedia "Endangered Species," the company has established a distinctive profile. This new work is beautifully conceived, vividly imaginative, and superbly performed. It is both visually riveting and viscerally thrilling.

This story ran on page C6 of the Boston Globe on 10/22/2001.  
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## Troupe gets increasingly wired

BY LARRY PARNASS STAFF WRITER

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[ Originally published on: Thursday, September 23, 2004 ]

**HOLYOKE** - WITH "As If Life," the title of its engaging and electric multimedia performance, Wire Monkey Dance could mean several things.

Let's try a few.

First, sardonic: As if life ran this smoothly, animated with such reckless grace.

How about hopeful: As if life were really be this joyous, rhythmic, sensual, dramatic and playful.

Maybe prescriptive: As if life, like the actions set in motion by this inventive troupe in a studio hard by a Holyoke canal, should so fully embrace invention and experiment. That is should trust in the power of an ensemble of artists - working in dance, music, video and lighting - to make something memorable.

Or historical: As if life hadn't bypassed this historic mill building, where in this space, many decades ago, employees of the Farr Alpaca Co. gathered for theater events organized by their well-meaning, if paternalistic, employer.

Over two hours, dancers and other artists engaged in "As If Life" don't fret about meanings. They make dance and moving pictures that crackle with freshness. Their work continues this weekend and next at the start of the Massachusetts International Festival of the Arts.

For the first time, dancers with Wire Monkey are coming down to Earth. Four years ago, the Valley troupe adopted a whole lot of hardware - an inventory of scaffolding large enough to run a painting business - as a silent partner.

They started to play, with a childlike fervor, amid their larger-than-life Erector set. Soon, they were booking their acrobatic dance into venues in Boston, New York, Taiwan and, this summer, East Germany. A few dancers head for China in October.

Jennifer Polins, the company's co-artistic director with Saliq Francis Savage, says she has wanted to get dancers on the ground more. They do in "As If Life," though at least half of the performance still takes place inside, alongside and on top of wire structures.

By disconnecting dancers from the scaffolding, Wire Monkey emphasizes the soft tissues in a refreshing way, and nudges "As If Life" toward the mainstream of modern dance.

That enables dancers to shape characters in settings more like our own world. The shift powers a stronger empathy with human themes that have been playing out aloft in Wire Monkey works.

Dancing in the new work, along with the co-directors, are lone Beauchamp, Nicole Dagesse, Gamaliel Lodge, Justin Norris, Joe Seitz and Lizzy Tyler.

Over two hours, games keep unfolding, lingering on moments of joy, rivalry, friendship, travel, arguments, isolation, humor and love.



Wire Monkey Dance continues performs of 'As If Life' at its Holyoke studio this weekend and next, in connection with the Massachusetts International Festival of the Arts.

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European videographer Yoann Trelu is providing large-scale projections that verge on spectacle and help the dance brim with energy.

Composer Stephen Katz oversees - and provides live accompaniment to - a muscular soundtrack with borrowed and original works.

An uncredited partner in this project is the space itself, the Tree Studio on the first floor of 108 Cabot St. Upstairs, the building houses the Paper City Brewery. Because the brewery holds a liquor license, the dance company is able to stock a bar that runs alongside one wall.

Its presence helps turn the intermission and post-show into a festive, sociable celebration of this industrial space. Above, a high ceiling is held in place by massive beams. Heroic efforts have been made - and only that - to scrap away old paint.

At no time does the company disappoint, during "As If Life." Polins, Savage and their dancers, after years of work on the scaffolding, move with impressive ease through the metal.

In a segment danced to the song "I'll Fly Away," they used the scaffolding's assistance to fly, fall and glide.

Yes, skilled dancers can do it without an apparatus. But skilled dancers can do it in appealing new ways with such structures. Wire Monkey's embrace of a novelty is allowing it to attract non-dance audiences that appreciate gymnastic acumen. They get that and more.

At many turns, the company executed moves from the shared vocabulary of modern dance - including lifts and catches. Women are as likely to do the heavy work in this egalitarian squad.

With more time spent with their feet on the floor, performers embrace the complex business of using only the human body to illustrate emotion.

To be sure, this is emotion mostly in motion. Wire Monkey is fundamentally kinetic. Its new collaboration with Trelu ups the ante on its visual intensity.

In the first half, the company gets "As If Life" airborne. Dancers establish that the long, tube-like structure used in one segment is an airplane fuselage. They explore it inside and out - and one point jumping through its "windows" to feel a crush of air, before somersaulting back.

Videographer Trelu, using pictures Savage shot from plane windows, has created a marvelous landscape of the Earth below, which plays against two stories worth of interior walls. Later, night falls and we see an array of landscape lights. Trelu warps and manipulates them, creating brilliant effects.

In three dimensions, that scaffolding keeps changing too. It is built up and dismantled. It is swung around on its black rubber wheels. It is tipped onto its side, sometimes with a dancer riding the way up or down.

At one moment, dancers approaching yet another construction one by one turn to the person behind and smile deviously. "Oh, look," they say with their grins. "A new toy."

It might be a gimmick that gets them going, but its pleasure is real and infectious.

"As If Life" continues Friday and Saturday and Oct. 1 and 2 at 8 p.m. and Sunday and Oct. 3 at 6 p.m. at the Tree Studio, 108 Cabot St., Holyoke. Tickets are \$15, \$12 for students, and are available at the door or by calling (800) 224-MIFA. Directions can be found at [www.mifafestival.org](http://www.mifafestival.org).

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## 📺 Entertainment, danger clasp hands in park - A crowd of about 400 people turn out to see show in Pulaski Park

BY ERIN FUCHS

✉ EMAIL THIS WRITER

[ Originally published on: Friday, August 11, 2006 ]

**NORTHAMPTON** - They swung from steel, grownup-size monkey bars, as ominous-sounding beats of electronic music pulsed through Pulaski Park.

You're approaching the end, you're approaching the end, the lyrics rang out.

Wire Monkey Dance, a Holyoke-based dance company, gave an acrobatic performance for an audience of around 400 Thursday in Pulaski Park, swinging and sliding on a set of steel scaffolding and platforms.

The seven dancers seemed to defy gravity, balancing high above the park's concrete, in a performance appropriately named 'Precarious.'

Children filled the park to watch the performance. Some sat up front, legs crossed, eyes fixed on the dancers. Others clasped hands and danced to the music on a grassy hill.

'I was pretty amazed by it,' said Agostino Petrillo of Northampton, who held his infant on a blanket after the show. 'I love it when this park is used.'

About a dozen children watched the show from a tree. As the performers gripped steel beams, some of these children clutched tree branches and swung around themselves.

'My favorite part,' said Rory Lambert-Wright, 9, of Amherst, 'was that I got top-row seats in a tree I liked.'

Other children, who might have been too young to appreciate straight-up modern dance, said they enjoyed watching performers climb high above the audience.

Isidore Donnelly, 3, of Easthampton, said she loved watching the dancers. 'They didn't fall,' she said. 'They're good climbers.'

Thursday's dancing was, in fact, more precarious than it usually is. It was the troupe's first outdoor performance, a 'test run' for one Saturday at Lincoln Center's 'Out of Doors' in New York City, according to



JERREY ROBERTS

A crowd of about 400 people gathered to watch the Wire Monkey Dance company, which performed in Pulaski Park Thursday.

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Jennifer Polins, co-director of Wire Monkey.

After the show, Joe Seitz, one of the dancers who had performed somersaults, approached Polins with a bandaged hand. 'The concrete was a little rough,' he told her. 'Too much rolling, I guess.'

The dancers rolled and slid to a score filled with familiar sounds. Stephen Katz, who composed the music for Wire Monkey, weaved traditional instruments - cello, guitar, and percussion - into his computer-made, electronic music.

He also recorded everyday noises for the score, he said: Car alarms, airplanes on a runway.

Even the sound of artistic director Saliq Savage's telephone ring.

'Don't answer that!' Katz said he remembered telling Savage, as he quickly recorded the sound of his colleague's telephone ring.

Many of the noises were jarring. Sounds like the car alarm made the scaffolding seem like an urban landscape, dangerous and uncertain.

The seven dancers held hands and balanced on a beam at the end of the performance. 'Precarious' appeared to be over.

But they all seemed to lose their balance one by one: a dangerous domino effect that could have sent them sailing onto the unforgiving concrete. They breathed faster, one dancer put her hand to her heart, and they all clasped hands again.

It was all part of the show.

'I wish,' said 3-year-old, Isidore, 'I could do those things.'

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