What sort of ancestor will you be?

My ancestors laughed, cooked, suffered persecution, fell in love, escaped war, sought a better life, battled illness, upheld cultural traditions, cared for one another, and carried on despite difficult times. Can I tell you more about my ancestors during the afternoon networking break?

And, if there’s time, will you share the path your ancestors took? Did they arrive by boat? Did they work the land? What language did they speak? Is it the same as yours? Where does ancestral wisdom live in your body? I hope you’ll be able stay for the keynote – I hear there will be a big reveal.

Are you wondering what networking and keynotes have to do with ancestry? This July, Melecio Estrella and Andrew Ward – the choreographic duo behind Fog Beast – will be playing host to a conference-turned-dance-theater-experience telling stories of the tangled ancestral roots underneath the glossy facade of our high-tech Bay Area. Dancers’ Group has commissioned this work and is partnering with the Asian Art Museum to bring it free to audiences. Readers can learn more about Fog Beast and their creative process in developing The Big Reveal in two preceding articles in the May and June issues of In Dance, both available at dancersgroup.org.

Ancestry – or rather, the rage and grief collected over generations, carried deep in the flesh of Native peoples, people of color, LGBTQ+ communities, and myriad structurally marginalized groups – unfolds beautifully in Sima Belmar’s regular column In Practice, in conversation with interdisciplinary artist Chris Evans. It is writing about listening, about a performance that was a ritual for healing. My reading turned to listening and folded in to become a part of the ritual as it continues in a new shape.

What sort of ancestor will you be?

Another way of asking could be “what will you be remembered for?” A generational view can’t contain the specifics – the precise recipe, the exact pathway of the arms in a piece of choreography, the words to the lullaby, the tenor of a laugh. The memories will reside in the DNA, below and within the subconsciousness of those who carry on, and if we are lucky, some tendrils of our values will remain in the root system of an ever-expanding future.

In Dance is an integral part of Dancers’ Group’s own root system, holding strong to values which align with my own. Each month, we seek to uplift dance and the artists who make it, celebrate a diversity of perspectives and approaches, be curious, generous, dive deep into challenging issues, and stay playful and present in the abundant joy that dance can be. That is the ancestor I aim to be.

Before concluding, I want to share with you – amazing, creative, powerful reader – that this July I’m bidding farewell to my role at Dancers’ Group, after seven eventful and inspiring years. I am beginning a new adventure, as Executive Director of Joe Goode Performance Group. I make this transition feeling grateful for not only the legacy of Dancers’ Group and its vibrant future but for the dance ecosystem that fills my life with meaning each and every day. May we continue working together, dancing alongside each other, and deepening that root system of values for all who come along next.
AFRO URBAN SOCIETY: Uniting the African Diaspora through Dance

by ARIES JORDAN

THE QUESTION ‘Where are you from?’ can mean different things depending on where you are in the world. For Nkeiruka Oruche, the Artistic Director and Founder of Afro Urban Society, this was a simple question but became more complex when she moved to the United States. Nkeiruka was born and raised in Lagos, Nigeria, but moved to New York, Georgia and came of age and found her tribe in California. Each place she has lived has shaped her identity and commitment to preserving Afro Urban dance culture. Through original and curated arts and event production, popular arts education and community engagement Afro Urban Society create spaces for people of African descent all over the world to tell their own stories. In a candid interview Nkeiruka describes the essence of Afro Urban dance and community cultivated to celebrate the fullness of African identity; that spans many cultures and nations.

Nkeiruka Oruche: In Nigeria, when people ask ‘Where are you from?’ they don’t mean where you were born or raised but your ancestral homeland. I am from the Igbo ethnic group, which is one of about 230 different ethnic groups in Nigeria. Many Igbo in present-day Nigeria have a patrilineal society, which determines where you are from based on your father’s bloodline, language, and ethnic tribe. I grew up with a duality of culture that laid the foundation for how I approach dance. I understood that no matter where I was born or raised I had an ethnic identity that connected me to my Igbo ancestral homeland, language, and traditions. Amichi, Nigera is my ancestral hometown. Growing up, I lived in Lagos (Nigeria), the Bronx, Stone Mountain (Georgia), and the Los Angeles Valley. I finally ended up in the Bay Area in 2003 for college and have been here ever since. The question of ‘Where are you from?’ grew more complicated because my identity was shaped by all of the places that I lived in. I was no longer just Igbo but so much more. A Pan African approach to dance just felt natural because it acknowledged my multinational identity and experiences.

A2: What inspired the creation of Afro Urban Society?

NJO: In New York City I experienced many types of Afro Caribbean and other Non-Nigerian African cultures. There was a collective Pan African awareness and exposure to different aspects from people of African ancestry. I moved to the south there was little diversity and I was immersed in Southern Black culture. Being African and different was really hard. Growing up in the South I felt more disconnected from other Nigerians and Africans. I wasn’t ‘African enough’. And in the US I was “too African.” I attended college in Southern California and San Francisco and connected with other Africans, who were first-generation immigrants or had a Pan African mindset. Afro Urban Society simply began informally as a few Africans that wanted to connect and make stuff we didn’t see. At the time, Africans were creating visual aesthetics specific to their ethnic identity or tribal roots. It excluded the African diaspora that has also shaped modern day African culture. We wanted to create clothing, visual arts, performance, and events that were beyond African nationalism and included political consciousness of the places that we lived. Moving to the Bay Area was encouraging, but I’m not only met like-minded Africans but also African Americans that affirmed my multidimensional identity and experiences. In the Bay Area, I developed my Afro Urban Dance practice which became a meeting place for all the different styles I had learned from Dancehall, Congolese music, hip hop, and contemporary African pop. Afro Urban Society became the umbrella to unify and center the creativity of people of African descent.

A2: How do you define Afro Urban culture and dance?

NO: Afro Urban acknowledges the way people of African descent show up whether it is dance music, fashion, visual arts that are unique to each city or each urban locale. In America, the word “Urban” has become synonymous with African American culture. Globally urbanization describes living conditions and has to basically different meaning. Afro and Urban combined connects Black people from the African continent to the diaspora. No matter where Black people are in the world, they consciously and unconsciously have a vibe that is rooted in African culture. Urban culture naturally infuses traditional and contemporary dance. Afro Urban dances are created and fostered by people of African descent living in urban areas like Breakdance, Turbo, Punto, Bachata and Afrobeat.

A2: What are the dance elements that make up an Afro Urban Dance experience?

NO: Urban Dance is usually generated from the stories, social and political conditions of urban living. In places where dance culture is strong, it is often in disenfranchised communities, where people live in close quarters or sheltered. Public spaces are a place to socialize, conduct business, create music or dance. From these interactions, street dance emerges and no one owns it. Each city has its own Afro Urban style but I have noticed a global trend of line dancing, freestyle, bawad, and call and response. Freestyle and being yourself is important. When there is music playing, you simply dance. There are no strict guidelines, instruction or rules to follow which is rooted in African tradition. Secondly, there is also a crowd celebration of solo or partner dancers that put their unique spin on traditional or contemporary movements. Crowds gather around dancers that truly embody or elevate a dance style. Line dancing and community dancing have an important function in Afro Urban dance. Line dance is an expression of unity that brings the collective group together in movement. Lastly, the interaction between the dancer and music is essential. Traditionally, the exchange between the dancer and drummer is harmonious. Dancers moved in response to the music and vice versa. Contemporary Afro dance styles follow the same structure but traditional drummers have been replaced with DJs.

A2: What can your audience expect from Afro Urban Society’s upcoming performance at the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival?

NO: What is Afrop-African Urban Drumline?

NO: The audience will experience the African Diaspora through dance and music. The Pan-African drumline is an experimenter of urban drum culture throughout the world preserved by people of African descent. We incorporate drum styles like Junankao from the Bahamas, Southern Rap, Miami bass, second line, Bay Area Hyphy, Congolese, and contemporary Afro and Urban drumlines. Afro Urban Society’s upcoming performance at the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival will be a fusion of traditional and contemporary drumming. In the Bay Area, we are exploring our unique heritage and cultural identity through the art of dance. Together, we hope to inspire and empower our community to continue to celebrate our African identity and heritage.

Which is why Afro Urban Society believes it is essential to celebrate the fullness of African identity; that spans many cultures and nations. Dancers moved in response to the music and vice versa. Afro Urban dance is an expression of unity that brings the collective group together in movement. Lastly, the exchange between the dancer and drummer is harmonious. Dancers moved in response to the music and vice versa. Afro Urban dance is an expression of unity that brings the collective group together in movement. Lastly, the exchange between the dancer and drummer is harmonious. Dancers moved in response to the music and vice versa. Afro Urban dance is an expression of unity that brings the collective group together in movement. Lastly, the exchange between the dancer and drummer is harmonious.

The content of this page is a review of the Afro Urban Society’s upcoming performance at the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival. It highlights the essence of Afro Urban dance, which is a fusion of traditional and contemporary dance forms. The performance will showcase the cultural identity and heritage of people of African descent. The audience can expect a fusion of traditional and contemporary drumming, which is essential to the celebration of African identity and heritage.
by MINA RIOS

SWING DANCE LIVES IN THE BAY AREA

IMPOSSIBLE TO RESIST. You know that toe-tapping, pre-World War II tune, Sing, Sing, Sing that commands you to dance the moment you hear it? That was one of the catchy jazz arrangement by Louis Prima, famously performed by Benny Goodman and his orchestra – to get listeners up on their feet. Swing music was so infectious in its rhythmic back beat – as it does today, conjuring up an intoxicating social dance experience. Jazz music of this kind, treasured by countless people over multiple generations, will never be forgotten. Enthusiasts wouldn’t allow it. For this reason, swing music and dancing have stood the test of time – as it must – in the San Francisco Bay Area and around the globe.

Today, you could say swing has a somewhat underground existence. You’re less likely to see swing events publicized widely through paid advertising outlets. Underneath the surface, you’re less likely to see swing events publicized widely. It’s an underground existence. You’re less likely to see swing events publicized widely. For this reason, swing music and dancing have stood the test of time – as it must – in the San Francisco Bay Area and around the globe.

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**IN PRACTICE: Reconstructing Reconstruction** with Chris Evans
by SIMA BELMAR

**WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO GRIEVETM IN THE context of perpetual marginalization and terrorization?** That is the contours of grief in the afterlife of ancestral, epigenetic, and inter-generational trauma? And what if what is grieving is the earth itself? What if there’s no way to move on?

Chris Evans’ collaborative, multidisciplinary, multimedia event Reconstructions Performance Ritual is divided into four parts: a gallery installation performance in three cycles (Cycle 1: Find Me, Cycle 2: Grief, Cycle 3: Rage); a staged performance (This Must Break); a procession through Oakland’s Idora Park/Rancho San Antonio/Ohlone Land neighborhood; and a shared meal curated by Thuy Tran. The installation, staged performance, and meal took place over two weekends in March at the Idora Park Project Space at the corner of Shattuck and 56th Street, a former French laundry built in 1934.

In the gallery, grief, rather than a unidirectional and finite process, is a cycle that repeats. And rage, rather than operating as a necessary step on the path towards moving on from grief, is the core affect around which the project cycles. Reconstructions Performance Ritual is the final installment of the Reconstruction Study Project that Evans began in collaboration with Rhiannon Fel- nin saxophonist/keyboards/vocalist David Boyce in 2015. Each study is an investigation into the affective afterlife of the post-Civil War Reconstruction era in the US. Throughout the work, Evans, dancer/choreographer Byb Bihene, and Boyce embody historical, biblical, and complex characters to explore the question, “What is the liberatory potential of rage?” Evans writes, “The project begins with why do we Americans cry here, in the words of Lillian Smith, onto a Trembling Earth, a trembling that began with the first violence done to the First Peoples.”

Idora Park Project Space is the home of choreographer/dancer/director/cellist Evans, dancer/choreographer david Boyce, costumer/designer/vintage clothing store owner/one-woman-show-wonder Regina Evans, lighting designer/visual and performing artist/Sima Belmar, dancer/choreographer Latannya D. Tignor, and co-producer/curator/artist Rhannon Evans MacFadyen. The number of backlashes alone attests to the range of experiences, interests, and talents that went into the construction of Reconstructions.

I attended the penultimate performance ritual on March 30. What follows is a reconstruction of my trembling conversation with Evans at Idora Park Project Space, in her living room, which had only recently been the site of the staged performance and shared meal segments of the ritual. Evans and I have talked a lot about her process and her ideas over the past few years so there will be under-explicated assumptions throughout our discourse. I hope you will allow yourself to float in the lazy river of our talk and worry not about extracting anything solid from its silty bed.

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Sima Belmar: Why does rage follow grief in this work?

Chris Evans: David and Byb have a duet about grief, black men’s grief specifically, the loss of and assault on immancy and connection. After we finished the shows and in the process of coming back to life, it felt like the earth was grieving, and I didn’t know what to do with that. I think of rage as having this transformative power, particularly the Jim Cobe story, which was one of the first inspirations for the piece. Through his rage he transformed his life. How does rage get channeled into transformation? But I think the grief has to happen first because there’s so much trapped energy in people and then the rage can get expressed.

SB: What you’re saying makes me think that moving from anger to grief to acceptance is a privileged order of emotional life. Like maybe you’re angry at your mother or your boss and that anger is getting in the way of feeling the grief over what you didn’t get that you needed in life. This suggests that the playing field is even and it is an individual process of internalizing pain that can eventually give way to acceptance and forgiveness of self and others. But if you are a victim of systemic, structural violence that separates and hierarchizes humanities, then I can see that you’re always already living grieving, and then something has to give for you to feel the injustice, which is radically different.

CE: That direction of anger to grief is a bit of a masculine construct and potentially a western European white construct. For people who are not allowed to express anger, that anger gets buried under grief, and people who are not allowed to express anger are not allowed to be fully human members of a community. The only emotion available for them is to express is grief or sadness or depression, because if you express anger you’ll be killed. I’m interested in how to let the rage move through to find that righteous anger.

SB: How do you feel about what happened in the work that you made? What were you hoping to make visible, palpable?

CE: I feel like this kind of ritual work that I did with this piece, that people like Amara [Tabos-Smith] and Ellen [Sebastian Chang] do, like Doheer [Lee] does, is happening in different places, and it’s as if we’re creating these pools of water that are starting to join. I feel almost funny saying I created this work because it came to me, like I was told, ok, this is your part to do to join the work of these other artists, who have influenced me and been such an important part of my growth as an artist. And the people I collaborated with on every aspect were so much a part of making it realize itself. I think this ritual work is also so much about healing participants. The audiences for this work are diverse and often predominantly people of color. There’s something about this self-healing that is happening within communities that have been trauma-tized and marginalized.

I asked everyone who worked on the piece what kinds of things they did in order to process, what were their own personal rituals, and Latanya said something that made a lot of sense to me. She said, “I’m never out of it.” So it’s not really a question of processing it and then it being done. The couple nights after the show I couldn’t sleep because I felt like the earth was so sad and weighted upon. [Tears.] It’s such a huge question. There’s nothing I can do to solve that. But I can in my work about it, around it.

SB: You and I have talked a lot about what it means to listen. I consider myself a good listener but I’m often (always?) responding to what I’m hearing in my head, which doesn’t feel like good listening to me.

CE: We talk so much about listening and there’s so little listening that actually happens. For the staged performance, when you walk in you’re hearing a story told in a language that most people wouldn’t recognize. It was the Ohlone language Chochenyo, the first language spoken on these lands by human beings. There was a night when people were buzzing with questions about the language, all of this talking. I didn’t want you to necessarily understand it. I wanted its meaning to come into your body. I wanted you to be in a state of not knowing and still allow something to come in. So at the last performance, Rhannon read something I wrote about listening to the audience—that this is an opportunity to listen and let the unknown come into your body through your pores, through your ears, without you trying to capture it in words. I hope people had some experience of that because I think it’s key for anything to change.

SB: You asked me to do some writing about this work. What does a writing that’s a listening look like? Why write about a ritual performance? What does the writing serve?

CE: Part of it is practical, to have the documentation. Part of it is I have felt fairly invisible as an artist and being made visible. Most of my collaborators are not as visible as they should be. They are super talented, accomplished people who don’t get enough support for what they do. And you’re who I wanted to write about it because I’ve talked to you a lot about this, I know you’re going to be aware of racial dynamics, you’re thinking about history, you’re thinking about the embedded racism that is throughout so many of our artistic structures and institutions. And I was also curious to see what you would do. Your writing is a continuation of the work in a different form.

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**JEFF KERR**

Emotions, art, unity 44 Gough St, Suite 201 San Francisco, CA 94103 www.dancersgroup.org

**IN DANCE** May 2014 dancersgroup.org unify strengthen amplify
When you said that you felt like you out that. I have this image of you writing me. This came from somewhere else and I listened to people—listening to place, the non-material making this project. Not just listening to rage. I felt like I was being held by the water itself, a vessel for the flow of grief and things I was rolling around up by the time I got there.

I went on for a long time and the air became low point and then I missed the gallery section to while performing in the work?

CE: In the gallery we were excavating. Here, in this artificial, theatrical space, it was about reconstructing. I became a different person in here. I felt my ferociousness and my authority. I wasn’t just excavating and listening and having things channel through my body. I was full with that and I had something to say. It was very different. I felt my own rage in here.

SB: Fierce is how I felt your presence here.

CE: The archetype I was embodying was about in-between-ness and invisibility and the deep feminine. To stand up and be seen and heard unapologetically was a powerful experience in front of an audience. It was me and not me. I felt like I became an ancestor spirit that was saying, You need to hear me. I was Darcia, a biblical character, a seamstress, who had a group of widows who were her disciples, I think. In the story she dies and St. Peter raises her from the dead. I read that story as this transition from matriarchal to patriarchal religions and that being raised from the dead was not a good thing but rather an appropriating thing, where she becomes a symbol of the power of patriarchal, monothestic religion—a violence.

Though the interview drops off here, Chris and I continued talking over rice cakes and hummus in her living room that had been the theater space, that had been the ritual space, that continues to be a space that welcomes ghosts to help heal us all.

I’ve been trying to practice listening in making this project. Not just listening to people—listening to the place, the non-material world, the past, things we may not see or that do not fit into our rational understanding of a thing to be listened to. So in order to make this thing I had to keep practicing and keep listening. This didn’t come from inside me. This came from somewhere else and I listened to it. I allowed me to see and hear and create things that I couldn’t have done without that. I have this image of you writing and you doing that sort of meditation and that sort of listening and seeing what comes and trusting that.

SB: Ok. I want to be fiercely honest. I feel bereft because I wasn’t really present for your show. [Tears] It was really shitty timing for me. I wasn’t even supposed to be here. I was supposed to be in New York but I had to cancel the trip. It was such a low point and then I missed the gallery section and I am angry at myself for that. I feel like I let you down. Like I betrayed something. Like I was supposed to show up in a certain way and I didn’t. So I was already having trouble connecting to the performance because of my own shit, which, truth be told, happens at almost every performance. I need to have a chance to arrive, settle in, awaken the moment that pulls me into feeling, into an experience. While I wait, I watch the dancing, the technique, the patterns. I get into design thinking. I start to ask questions about the work and make connections. I begin to think about how I’d write about what I’m witnessing. When I entered this space, I thought, Why aren’t we in a circle? (I was making assumptions about rituals needing to transpire in circles.) Then you invited audience members onto the stage. I loved watching them watch us as we listened to the unbarable litany of numbers, dollar amounts and ages from the auction block. It went on for a long time and the air became thick with grief and rage, but also with more minor affects like discomfort and irritation.

The minute you began playing the cello, I felt physically moved by its sound and by where you go facially while you’re playing. I felt like I was being rolled around viscously. That was when I stopped resisting the work and ceased to feel like I’d fucked it up by the time I got there.

You mentioned water earlier. I felt the performance to be a container rather than the water itself, a vessel for the flow of grief and rage. I felt like I was being held by the performance for my own nonsense, which may have nothing to do with what was motivating this work. I think I’m telling you that I wanted to rise to what you made because of how I know you. [Full crying now] I felt a certain responsibility to the work.

CE: When you said that you felt like you were in a container and you were having all of these feelings—that’s ritual. It’s not performance. That was my goal. I want people to feel and I want it to be a place of healing. I think that’s what’s my work in this world, to help all of us heal in different ways. You had a whole journey and I think that’s amazing. You’re saying you weren’t present but you really were.
VISIT THE ONLINE COMMUNITY CALENDAR, to find additional events and to submit a performance. dancersgroup.org

**SF Ethnic Dance Festival: Weekend 1**
Zellerbach Hall, Berkeley
Featuring 15 Bay Area dance and music ensembles showcasing traditions from around the world. Afro Urban Society + Beatitude, Chitresh Das Institute, Gita Bhatts, Jubbilee American Dance Theatre, Kanyon Sayers-Roods, Kizizi Malanga, Kohaku + Shiko Tendou, L’Emir Hasaan Harttuce, George Lammam Ensemble, Los Lukeuyes de San José, Nicole Maria + Georges Lammam Ensemble, O D K, and SF Taiko Days. Sat-Sun, Jul 6 & 7, 7pm. $14-68. sfethnicedancefestival.org

**HEARTLAND: Woodland Creatures**
Shawl-Anderson Dance Center, Berkeley
A pop-up event from Salt Lake City choreographer Molly Hellier and composer Michael Wall. HEARTLAND is a dance party within a DAKKE PARTY in which multiple performances happen amidst moving and growing. Sat, Jul 13, 8pm. $12-30. shawlanderson.org

**Yerba Buena Gardens ChoreoFest**
Yerba Buena Gardens, SF
Curated by RAWdance’s Artistic Directors, the third annual ChoreoFest features nine local companies in a weekend of extraordinary performances throughout the Gardens’ lawns and architecture. Sat-Sun, Jul 13 & 14, 1pm. FREE. ybgfestival.org

**SF Ethnic Dance Festival: Weekend 2**
Zellerbach Hall, Berkeley
Performances by 15 Bay Area dance and music ensembles showcasing traditions from around the world, including: Awon Ohun Omnira (Voices of Freedom), Ballet Folklorico Nube de Oro, Conamacoal, Diamano Coura West African Dance Company, Feng Ye Dance Studio, Guru Shradha + Antara Asthaayi Dance + Navia Dance Academy, Jackeline Rago, Parangal Dance Company, Tari Catherine Pandeya, and Te Mana O Te Ra. Sat-Sun, Jul 13 & 14, 1pm FREE. sfethnicedancefestival.org

**Amy Seiwert’s Imagery**
ODC Theater, SF
SKETCH 9: Diverse features original works by Artistic Director Amy Seiwert, Artistic Fellows Baran Naeemah Wood, and Chicago based choreographer Stephanie Martinez (winner of the Joffrey Ballet’s “Winning Works: Choreographers of Color” commission). Wed-Sat, Jul 17-20, 8pm; 445 S. FREE. amyseiwert.org

**Fog Beast**
Asian Art Museum, SF
Melissa Estrella and Andrew Ward of Fog Beast use body-based theatrics in The Big Reveal, a subversive art experience with dancing, humor and live music. Presented in the format of a corporate conference turned dance theater experience, this interactive performance draws on family histories and immigration stories to consider access and belonging, revealing what lies beneath modern corporate America. As an audience member, you will move through the museum, orienting and reorienting yourself in “networking” sessions and in depth breakout groups, culminating in a full-throttle keynote address. Co-presented by Dancers’ Group and The Asian Art Museum. Thu, Jul 18, 6-8:30pm; Sat-Sun, Jul 20-21, 10:30am-4:30pm. FREE. fogbeast.com

**IncivilitySF**
EXIT Theatre, SF
Subversion invites artists working with themes of social justice, community-empowerment, and political awakening to come try out new work in-progress in front of a live audience. Each evening will have four featured performers, plus an optional facilitated feedback session afterwards for those seeking input on their creations. Fri-Jul 26, 8pm. FREE. theexit.org

**Genevieve Rochefor and Mel Mark**
SAFEHouse Arts, SF
Genevieve Rochefor’s new work explores partnership and use of the gaze. Mel Mark examines games and play in “No one can play this game alone.” Presented by SAFEhouse’s Resident Artists Workshop. Fri-Sat, Jul 26-27, 8pm; $15-20. safehousearts.org

**ODC/Dance**
ODC Theater, SF
This year Summer Sampler features two unique programs over two back-to-back weeks. ODC’s Artistic Directors and Choreographers (Brenda Way, KT Nelson, Kate Weare) examine games and play in “No one can play this game alone.” Presented by SAFEhouse’s Resident Artists Workshop. Fri-Sat, Jul 26-27, 8pm; $15-20. safehousearts.org

**Subversion**
SAFEHouse Arts, SF
Genevieve Rochefor’s new work explores partnership and use of the gaze. Mel Mark examines games and play in “No one can play this game alone.” Presented by SAFEhouse’s Resident Artists Workshop. Fri-Sat, Jul 26-27, 8pm; $15-20. safehousearts.org
**SpectorDance**

SpectorDance, Marina

The Choreographers Showcase offers local audiences a chance to see a wide variety of original, cutting-edge works from dance artists from around the country, celebrating the diversity and vitality of dance as a contemporary art form today. Sat, Aug 3, 7:30pm; Sun, Aug 4, 2pm; see website for ticket information.

**Guru Shradha**

Guru Shradha, part of the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival, Jul 6-14. Photo by RJ Muna

**NewGround Dance Company**

Canada College Theater, Redwood City

Storied, a poetic weave of dance, voice, and imagery focusing on 3 powerful seeds that live inside each of us. These 3 seeds are planted in the human heart, a new humanity is sure of activism in her new solo. Es “Delight” Co is directed by Esra Coskun and presents new work on this program. Presented by SAFEhouse’s Resident Artist Workshop. Fri-Sat, Aug 9-10, 8pm; Sun, Aug 11, 3pm. garrettmoulton.org

**Dalton Alexander**

Dalton Alexander Studio 210, SF

#White Noise strives to collide nostalgia for the past with current American affairs. Fri-Sat, Aug 9-10, 16-17, & 23-24; 8pm; Sun-Mon, Aug 11-12, 7pm, Sun, Aug 18 & 25, 7pm. dalexandermoves.space

**International Deaf Dance Festival**

Dance Mission Theater, SF

Produced by Urban Jazz Dance company, the annual event consists of performances and workshops that highlight the important contributions that Deaf and Hard of Hearing (HoH) artists make to our community. This year they have many local Deaf artists, some flying in from India, Colombia, Taiwan, Jamaica, Mexico, Washington DC, Arkansas and more. There will be a diversity of Sign Languages including but not limited to Colombian Sign Language, American Sign Language, International Sign Language and Russian Sign Language. Fri-Sat, Aug 9-10, 7:30pm; Sun, Aug 11, 3pm. safetydance.org

**Francesca Cipponeri and Gwendoline Hornig**

SAFEhouse Arts, SF

Francesca Cipponeri’s new work is the embodiment of redemption and ransom; an opportunity to witness the cycle of decay and creation through the movement language of dance. Gwendoline Hornig and collaborators explore women’s bodies, voices and agency throughout history in their new work. Presented by SAFEhouse’s Resident Artist Workshop. Fri, Aug 16-17, 16-18, $15-20. safehousearts.org

**Kathy Mata Ballet**

Merry High School, SF

The program will present classical and contemporary ballet pieces performed with live accompaniment, as well as numbers incorporating many different dance styles, including modern, lyrical fusion, contemporary, musical theater character, and much more. Sat, Aug 24, 7pm. FREE. kathymataballet.org

and Kimi Okada) collaborate and cross-pollinate on a new work exploring survival and escape during trying times over the first weekend. The second weekend features works by Brenda Way. Fri-Sat, Jul 26-27 & Aug 2-3; 8pm, $30.

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In Dance  |  May 2014  |  dancersgroup.org

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JUL/AUG 2019
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www.dancersgroup.org

COLLEEN MULVIHILL:
June 9, 1952 – March 2, 2019

training, Colleen was an exceptional dancer. Receiving a BFA in Modern Dance in 1974. terror Wollenski, Willis Ward and Pat Knowles, studied dance with Beverly Blossom, Ches-
tic coach in the United States in the 1960s. father, Dick Mulvihill, a well-known gymnas-
hours in the gym daily being coached by her

One of eight siblings, Colleen Mulvihill
found her calling at an early age, spending
in the gym daily being coached by her
father, Dick Mulvihill, a well-known gymnastic
couch and especially in her role as a cherished
friend to many in the dance world.

As might be assumed from her gymnastic
in every step, in the margins or ON the stage.

In the Bay Area, Colleen collaborated with
the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company from
1977–1979 and also from 1984-1986. On
learning of her death Jenkins provided this
reflection, “Colleen was the definition of
rhythm for me, living in the spaces in between
the beats. When she first came to my class I

Colleen also had the opportunity to work
in every step, in the margins or ON the stage.

Over the years Colleen created several
businesses that allowed her to share her
unique perspectives on training that, in addi-
tion to gymnastics and dance included, Qi
Kung, yoga, Pilates and Gyrotonic. For many
years she created gymastics routines for
competitive university and club teams, cul-
tivating award-winning gymnasts through-
out the country, including the University
of California, Berkeley Golden Bears. Over
the course of her 20-year study of Five Ele-
ment Theory, Reiki and other esoteric heal-
ing forms, she created a tremendously effec-
tive and wholly unique energetic healing
modality, which she used to restore health to
countless animals and people.

This work bridged diverse settings and body-
work modalities, each reflecting her history
as a gymnast, dancer, choreographer, teacher,
couch and especially in her role as a cherished
friend to many in the dance world.

Colleen Mulvihill J
Photo courtesy of J.A. Deane

Colleen Mulvihill
Photo by RJ Muna

At the age of 19, Colleen
went on to compete at the 1968
Mexico City Olympics by placing thrid at
the Olympic Trials. After the Olympics she
completed her education at Centennial High
School in Illinois, graduating in 1970 and
then attended the University of Illinois where she
studied dance with Beverly Blossom, Ches-
ter Wolenski, Willie Ward and Pat Knowles,
receiving a BFA in Modern Dance in 1974.

As might be assumed from her gymnastic
training, Colleen was an exceptional dancer.

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Colleen also had the opportunity to work
with the David Gordon Pick Up Company in
New York City from 1980 to 81. Starting
in 1979, Colleen started her lon-
gest and most enduring collaboration that
continued until her death. That collabora-
tive partner was composer and musician
J.A. Deane - Dino. Together they gener-
ated over 50 dance and music works which
they described as “a dynamic relationship
to the inextinguishable possibilities of move-
ment, sound, architecture, image and light.”
Colleen and Dino performed and presented
original productions throughout the United
States, Europe and China. In 1986 Dancers’
Group presented Colleen and Dino’s work
in the inaugural Edge Festival and again in
1994, both presentations in San Francisco.

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businesses that allowed her to share her
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tion to gymnastics and dance included, Qi
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Colleen Mulvihill

Photo by RJ Muna

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Colleen Mulvihill

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**Upcoming Performances**
Yerba Buena Gardens ChoreoFest
July 14, 2019, 1pm
FREE Performance
ybgfestival.org

Trace Figures
An ensemble with a new score by Paul Dresher
performed by the Dresher Davel Invented Instrument Duo
of ZONE (128 Utah Street, SF)
September 13-15, 2019

More information at mjdc.org

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SAN FRANCISCO ETHNIC DANCE FESTIVAL
CELEBRATING THE HEART + SOUL OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

JULY 6-14, 2019 | ZELLERBACH HALL BERKELEY | In association with Cal Performances

Tickets: $28-$70 at sfethnicdancefestival.org or 510.642.9988.
50% discount for children 16 & under. Group & subscriber discounts available.

All photos by RJ Muna. Pictured: Afro Urban Society, Feng Ye Dance Studio, Te Mana O Te Ra, Diamano Coura, West African Dance Company, Guru Shradha + Antara Asthaayi Dance + Navia Dance Academy

“The musicians and dancers of this Festival are consummately professional and dazzlingly virtuosic.”
- San Francisco Chronicle
Invaluable Lessons

by AMY SEIWERT

MY FIRST WEEK

As Artistic Director of Sacramento Ballet, I learned we had lost our warehouse space and would need to deeply consolidate our sets and costumes. As my Production Manager walks me through the warehouse, I point to things we can let go of, and things I see as using again. He points to a set, “Please tell me I can let go of this.”

I realize I am looking at San Francisco Ballet’s old Romeo and Juliet set, probably purchased in the mid-90s. I danced on this set back then in my former boss Ron Cunnigham’s production. This is also the set of my other former boss, Michael Smuin. Probably the same set seen when PBS aired Smuin’s Romeo and Juliet on “Dance in America.” Worlds collide. Being back in Sacramento was already surreal enough. This moment encapsulated the “it’s complicated” status I was so profoundly feeling. (And no, I did not let him get rid of the set.)

What a long strange trip it has been. This first season has challenged me in ways I could not have imagined and was rewarding in ways I did not know possible. I am writ-

ting this a few days after Sacramento Ballet finished our first season under my leadership. That milestone gave me the opportunity to look back on a vision statement I had writ-
ten to the Sacramento Ballet Board a year ago. When I read that statement, it’s easy to measure where I as an artist and we as an organization have succeeded, and where there is still work to be done.

Both these things went well, and both these things will continue. Val Camparoli served as our first Beer & Ballet mentor and has signed on to do so again in 2020. I am excited that we have evolved this opportu-
nity and one work created for our 2019 Beer & Ballet by Sacramento Ballet artist Isaac Bates-Vinuesa will be further developed for our main stage in our 19-20 Season.

I wrote that Sacramento Ballet would continue to be a community leader. That art changes lives, and we would be a catalyst for that change in Sacramento. We have done this by continuing strong programs such as the Leaps and Bounds program, which offers free classes onsite at two Title 1 schools as well as our Community Events, which subsidizes more than 1800 tickets to students and families. Our Nutcracker School Matinees, where ticket prices range between $15-20 per student, reached over 6000 children.

We also found new ways to uniquely engage. For example, we did our first virtual field trip. This was a closed livestream of rehearsal utilizing 180’ cameras, which was followed by an interactive Q&A with artists. We are exploring how to reach into other communities. We started a dance class that focuses on balance and fall prevention for Seniors, which is already at capacity. And through my connection with AXIS Dance Company, we are exploring how to develop a program for dance and disability in our School.

The most valuable lesson I learned this year was that I can do hard things. I thought I knew this, but early in the season I undertook the biggest creative challenge of my career, a full-length Nutcracker. It was the first moment I felt like I had been training my whole life for this job. I had to read and mark up the score to communicate with our conductor and the Philharmonic what changes musically would occur. The action of acting with this score for hours led me to hear the music in a new way and develop a new relationship with the music I’d known since I was eight years old. Fortunately, I have cats, and while I cannot herd them, years of trying helped with the task of creat-

ing on the cast of 300 children. As a woman with a fear of guns, I choreographed a battle scene. And I was able to show my love of the classical ballet language and form, creating a snow scene that makes my heart sing. Some in this community have worried my choreo-

graphic style is too contemporary to lead a ballet company, my hope is this Nutcracker calms their concerns.

Not all days were wins. It does not matter if you’ve created the most brilliant ballet in the world if your community does not know it. Remember that Sacramento was already surreal enough. This is a place where I will continue to advocate. We have fewer dancers than before I became Artistic Director, and I am not interested in adding more dancers to my staff until we can address both of those issues in a finan-

cially responsible way.

The opportunity to lead this company has allowed me to imagine new relationships. Remember that Romeo and Juliet set from the beginning of the article? What if I collaborate with a local artist to repurpose the set with a new visual design that allows for a re-interpre-
tation of this classic tale? I hope to premiere my own Romeo & Juliet set and then Sac-

dramento Ballet steps back into this city’s newly renovated Community Theater Center.

AMY SEIWERT

is the Founding Artistic Director of Amy Seiwert’s Imagery and the Artistic Director of Sacramento Ballet (as of July 2018). Amy Seiwert’s Imagery, a contemporary ballet company in San Fran-
cisco, believes that ballet is an expressive and vital voice relevant to our times. Imagery’s artists share the belief that through collaboration and experimenta-
tion, we can break away from habitual reactions and express more vibrant and courageous ideas. Imagery’s mission is to expand the definition of ballet by explor-
ing preconceptions of what ballet is and can be.

Amy Seiwert’s Imagery presents Sketch 9: Perspective, Jul 17-20, ODC Theater, SF.

Sketch 9: Perspective marks the 9th iteration of imagery’s celebrated Sketch Series, an annual creative laboratory which provides a safe place for risk-tak-
ing in ballet-based choreography. During an intensive 5-week rehearsal period three choreographers will each create a new ballet for the eight dancers of Amy Seiwert’s Imagery. Original works by Amy Seiwert, Artistic Fellow Ben Needham-
wood, and Chicago-based choreogra-
pher Stephanie Martone explore new potentials on utilizing projection as a theatrical lighting source, stepping out of the traditional mindset of how to light a ballet.

asmagogy.org

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EMERGENCY STRATEGY
By: Adrienne Maree Brown

Artists are creative problem solvers. This book validates our relationship to creativity and strategizes how to make more possibilities and build more resilience, instead of feeling resource scarce.
—Recommended by: Yoyo Kambara

HOW TO DO NOTHING:
RESISTING THE ATTENTION ECONOMY
By: Jenny Odell

Many dance artists are responding to the "attention economy" of social media and reality television. Some of us run in the opposite direction, trying to create projects that are nostalgic for a pre-technological world. Others dive into pop and news media landscapes, and some even try to create IRL experiences. This is a book that supports our questioning of the attention economy and gives us frameworks for creating better worlds.
—Recommended by: Keith Hennessy

DANCING IN BLACKNESS
By: Halifu Ossuar

Many dancers will remember Hassil as a mover and shaker in the Oakland dance community in the 1970s and 80s. It’s fun to read about those times, and the book is a memoir of an amazing life in dance as well as an important history of black dance in America. Most moving and rewarding for me is that it is a personal telling of the experience of being a black dancer during the past 50 years.
—Recommended by: Ruth Botchan, Director of Berkeley Moving Arts & The Ruth Botchan Dance Company

JEMELE HILL IS UNBO thered (PODCAST)
By: Jemima Hill

Jemima Hill, best known from her time at ESPN and her critiques of the current president, is a poet that aims to acknowledge the truth around politics, sports, and pop culture. Her podcast does exactly that: it’s an enlightening and insightful way through personal opinion and in-depth interviews with celebrity guests and influencers. Available for streaming on Spotify.
—Recommended by: Andikia Spearmons, Dance Maker/Arts Administrator/Opinion Haver

STEPS TO THE FOCUS PATH
By: Sandi Scheuber, Freelance Choreographer

Lots of good insight into confronting self-defeating messages, building stronger relationships, embracing one’s own strength, wisdom, power, and asking for what you really want.
—Recommended by: Sandi Scheuber, Freelance Choreographer

ASCII PORTER: THE COMPLETE LIBRARY OF ASCII ART
By: William F. Richman

This book is an exhaustive reference to ASCII art. It is a valuable resource for anyone interested in creating ASCII art, whether for personal enjoyment or for use in their professional work.

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF TREES:
WHAT THEY FEEL
By: Peter Wohlleben

This book tells a Secret Story of Life, Death and Regeneration. Recommended by: Lisa Townsend

FOOTPRINTS OF THE DANCE:
AN EARLY SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY DANCE MASTER'S NOTEBOOK
By: Jennifer Neville

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By: Jennifer Neville

This first analysis of the recently-found notebook is a fascinating read because it gives us the never-before-seen glimpse into the daily life of a dancing master in the 17th century. Jennifer Neville’s insights are insightful but she also gives the best description of the history of dance that I’ve ever read. By referencing information from her vast research into the area, Jennifer illuminates a connective thread that reaches all the way into the present day. It is inspiring, well-researched, thorough, and full of detail that transports the reader into another time. And the bibliography alone is worth the price of the book for any serious dance researcher.
—Recommended by: Jennifer A. Maler, Director of Creative Development, New York Baroque Dance Company

THE CYCLE: A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO MANAGING ARTS ORGANIZATIONS
By: Michael H. Kaiser and Brett E. Elgin

Good insight into long-range programming and potentially offers “refrigerators.”
Recommended by: Shannon Presto, Lenora Lee Dance Company Manager

WEIRD DANCE: CURIOUS AND BIZARRE DANCING TRIVIA
By: Tim Rayborn and Abigail Keyes

WEIRD DANCE is an entertaining and sometimes macabre look at the stranger tales of dance History, starting with early man and tracing strange stories through to the 20th century. I admit that my partner and I wrote this book together, but I intended this book for the casual reader (no footnotes or endnotes) but we do feel that specialists (in the field) will enjoy it as well. While it’s certainly not a comprehensive history (we focused on antiquity, Western Europe, the US, and a little bit in the Middle East—which is my area of expertise), it does illuminate some of the more obscure and possibly overlooked elements of our dancing past, like whatever happened to Mata Hari’s head? And why did ballet dancers used to keep their worn-out pointe shoes? And who danced at the infamous Suicide Club in Chicago? We also think that dance teachers of junior high and high school-aged students will appreciate this text for its humor and well-researched inaccuracy.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE BIG TOP
By: Abigail Kayes

It is part 3 of a series. Weird Music (formerly named Beethoven’s Skull), Weird Theater (formerly named Shakespeare’s Ear), and now, Weird Dance (originally titled Isadora Duncan’s Neck).
—Recommended by: Abigail Kayes

CLASS ACT
By: Chyli Atoms & Jacob Malone

There aren’t many detailed accounts of tap dancers and our history. This one is colorful and reads like the author speaks. It feels like he’s sharing anecdotes with you.
—Recommended by: Gregg Geoffroy

CAN WE ALL BE FEMINISTS?
By: June Eric-Udorie, Editor

This anthology has a focus on intersectionality and forward momentum for feminism. It made me think. It taught me something. It asked hard questions.
—Recommended by: Jr Kreiter, Choreographer/ Site Artist

MOVIMIENTO DE ARTE Y CULTURA LATINOAMERICANA (MACLA):
Castellano Playhouse
MACLA is an inclusive contemporary arts space grounded in the Chicano/ Latino experience that incubates new visual, literary and performance art in order to engage people in civic dialogue and community transformation. The Playhouse is a black box style theatre which is an unadorned performance space equipped with a digital projector and screen, WiFi, and sound system with MPA/auxiliary input. ADA compliant and accessible without stairs.

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Summer Reads
THEBIGREVEAL

A Fog Beast convening where dance performance, interactive learning sessions and migratory bloodlines intersect.

ARTISTIC DIRECTION:
Melecio Estrella and Andrew Ward

MUSICAL DIRECTION:
Ben Juodvalkis

PERFORMERS:
Katie Faulkner, Danny Nguyen, Melissa Lewis, Wailana Simcock, Janine Trinidad, Patricia West, and Special Guests

The Big Reveal is commissioned by Dancers’ Group and co-presented by The Asian Art Museum.

Entry to the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco and performances FREE with registration. More info at:
fogbeast.com

The commissioning and production of this world premiere is made possible by the Gerbode Foundation Special Award in the Arts program.