



indance

JAN/FEB 2020

DISCOURSE & DIALOGUE TO UNIFY, STRENGTHEN, & AMPLIFY

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Welcome

by **WAYNE HAZZARD, ARTIST ADMINISTRATOR**

Imagine a society—a world—that enables and ensures each person can live and create without money. I hope and dream about this. It will be an equalizing time when every individual is fully supported so that they can be housed, nourished, clothed, with all needs met. In this time, there's an abundance of wellness centers that are as plentiful as creative spaces where we're invited to dance, listen to music, watch performances and read.

We have full and easy access to services in every space, and we continue to connect with now free services online, where each request is met with an enthusiastic "yes, we can get that for you". All education is free, and this creates opportunities to share breakthroughs in every area of human study. A collective exhale takes place around the globe. The world knows deep comfort and ecstatic joy. Othering is no longer needed. We freely share and learn from those we encounter because money and the accumulation of wealth is no longer valued, needed.

I hope and I dream about this. It's like when as a kid I read comic books that made supercomputers, self driving cars, and watches we could communicate on come to life. And now these long-ago imagined devices, and many more, are part of our everyday experience. It's an essential part of our journey to believe in the potential of the unknown, believe that there's a future that's truly equitable for everyone, and continue to believe in, and, when needed, fight for what is true and needed.

Each day these hopes, dreams and desires impact how I think about my ongoing work to bring visibility and resources to those that make and want to see dance.

In this first issue of 2020—a date that seems born out of my science fiction loving childhood—there are uber-themes in each article that I am sure will resonate, and they are:

Ask for help

Ask for help often and then ask for help again, and then ask for help another time because now you know you deserve it

Be open to encounters

Imagine seeing and participating in dance that is not the dance you imagined

Take a seat at the table

Take time, find time, to participate and be in conversations that reflect the future you want

Bring back dances (recycle)

Let's make this the decade to re-invest in what's been created

Word

Create combinations of words—and movement—that are true to you

Nurture creativity, especially in children

Through this act, boundless rewards are reaped for future generations

Celebrate

And acknowledge the breadth of artistry created in the Bay Area

*Imagine it red, Imagine it blue, Imagine it freely, while
Imagining in every which way you want to.*

Enjoy the creative moments and the work ahead—
our moment is now.

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- All Community benefits plus:
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WOMXN SPEAK: WORD!

by CHRISTINE JOY FERRER



Dance Brigade / photos by Robbie Sweeny

WORD. In the vernacular, you say “Word,” to express agreement, validating you’re listening to what someone is saying. You might also hear it when something said is truthful or insightful. Words hold so much power. With words you can speak both life and death into being, shed light on the truth and hide the truth. We use words to reflect, inspire, storytell, and the list goes on. When words aren’t enough, use dance, music, or art to further express. Give depth and meaning beyond the words. Make movement your vocabulary. Embody everything. Speak through it all.

Dance Mission Theater (DMT) presents the *WOMXN SPEAK: WORD! series - Womxn Oracular Radical Dance* featuring different groups of women identified artists with intersecting identities, who share their oracular truth, while representing their communities through dance.

This series started in the Fall of 2018, with Nkeiruka Oruche and Tossie Long of Afro Urban Society in collaboration with DMT presenting *Bakanal De Afrique: What Had Happened Was...*, an Afro-Urban musical; and collaboration on a new program with La Colectiva de Mujeres (*Baile Colectivo*) spearheaded by Andreina Maldonado and Vanessa Sanchez. And this year, it expanded to include Rulan Tangen/Dancing Earth (*Between Underground and Skyworld*), Kanyon Sayers-Roods and Bernadette Smith (*REINDEGENIZE*), Lenora Lee (*In the Skin of Her Hands*), Susana Arenas/Arenas Dance Company (*Eso sí*), and finally finishing up the season with Krissy Keefer/Dance Brigade (*Butterfly Effect*), that will run for three weeks in January 2020.

The vision of the program is to elevate the female-identified artistic voices that aren’t always heard. “Women have oracular power to see into what’s happening in the world. These voices are critical for social change, without their voices, we don’t have social change, social justice and equality,” says Krissy Keefer, Dance Brigade’s Artistic Director. “These artists are really visionary and are creating something so deep and profound with their work; supporting cultural preservation through the dances they create, the spoken word and text they are writing and incorporating into their productions, the groups of people they bring together. These efforts transform humanity.”

WORD! weaves various themes through performance ritual and multi-media storytelling. Tackling issues such as: climate change, perspectives of blackness internationally and nationally, the rise of indigenous voices—acknowledging that we are on occupied lands—immigration, spirituality, health equity and living with breast cancer.

I spoke with three choreographers - Rulan TI spoke with three choreographers - Rulan Tangen, Susana Arenas and Krissy Keefer - about their intention behind their

participation in the WORD! series. With this program, Dance Mission Theater also worked closely with Tangen and Arenas through production, specifically inviting them to present full-length works and highlighting their voices as woman of color. For years, DMT has supported both their projects. Keefer, as both the executive director of DMT and artistic director of Dance Brigade—the resident dance company of DMT—finds herself in the same trajectory since 1975, creating content-driven choreographies at the intersection of arts and politics. These stories deepen witnesses understanding of spiritual and cultural perspectives as they move in-between spiritual and material work, encouraging viewers to reimagine their own power because our actions collectively matter.

The following are excerpts from their interviews that have been condensed and edited.

Rulan Tangen’s *Between Underground and Skyworld (BTW US)* is a multimedia dance theater work that illuminates the practical, spiritual and cultural aspects of renewable energy, combining intertribal perspectives with Indigenous futurities. Fusing tradition with technology, Indigenous interdisciplinary artists engage creation and constellation stories in tandem with geo-sensitive new media to conjure visions for a more sustainable future.

The creative process behind *BTW US* started a few summers ago, when Rulan started collecting different elements of nature and putting them in her backpack. Later in the studio, she asked each dancer to reach into her bag and pull something out. The dancers wrote about these objects. Spread out over the studio floor, were beautiful rocks, leaves, branches, and roots, but scattered amongst them were also things like safety pins, hair ties, a plastic bag, a rubber ball, other inorganic materials. Tangen imagined some of the writings would be about toxicity in our environment or humanity’s disregard for nature but instead, dancers’ reflections strived to find the connection between ALL elements, even man-made. (*Plastic bag*) *I am transparent, Even if you disregard me, I will never go away, and will shape to your every dream.* And now that it’s made, how do we repurpose? Find the beauty and life force in everything. How does it translate into our actions?

BTW US ran from Oct 26-27, 2019. And on Sunday, October 27 BTW US opened



with *REINDIGENIZE* that included pre-show activities and performance rituals curated by California Native people who are currently living here in the Bay Area. “They brought their vision and genius to the streets at 24th and Mission BART,” says Rulan Tangen. “It’s important to remember that we are respectful guests on Ohlone land. We use our power and privilege as artists to bring them visibility.”

Christine Joy Ferrer (CJF): What was your intention and process behind *Between Underground and Skyworld*? One of your main themes focused on recovering ancestral knowledge and making that accessible to the audience’s level of understanding. But, was there an overarching theme that you wanted to convey?

Rulan Tangen: *Between Underground and Skyworld* speaks to energy, between two places and two sacred realms, retelling what is in-between and the impact each space has on the other. Space, being marginal can become bridges, which is the space of infinite potential. The overarching question is, what is the future we want to bring forward? I generally invite my performers to collaborate, but this time was different, I decided to let them lead. The future is young people, indigenous centered and it’s in their hands. What they choose to create is going to be the future. My previous works have been environmentally themed, and indigenous cultural barrier and elder driven, but this is about acknowledging that young people too are the cultural advisers and the power that they have.



Rulan Tangen's *Between Underground and Skyworld*
photo by Paulo T Photography

The first act is about storytelling setting up the journey. The second act is more of an energetic ritual. You move through this portal through a staircase, running away from the apocalypse, learning about the creation story, traversing waters, climbing mountains. They open up their backpacks to find medicine bundles and pieces of trash. They process their connection to the objects. Recognizing that the energy and life force that is spirit, matter, history and future, connects us all, which is directly invoked in imagery on stage. It's not about spirit vs. matter or inorganic vs. organic. Or even the past vs. present. It's about the in-between. Everything is sacred.

Dancing Earth Indigenous Contemporary Dance Creations dynamically activates their mission to support Indigenous dance and related arts, to encourage and revitalize awareness of bio-cultural diversity through artistic expression, for the education and wellness of all peoples.

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Eso sí, Arenas Dance Company's latest work, celebrated the 20th anniversary of choreographer and director Susana Arenas Pedroso. The evening-length work featured Afro-Cuban folkloric and popular dance, live drumming, incorporated movement and text, and integrated the sacred and the profane in Cuban culture. With sold out performances, *Eso sí* ran at Eastside Arts Alliance and Dance Mission Theater October 6-13, 2019 at Dance Mission Theater.

CJF: In *Eso sí*, you integrate your own spiritual practice and honor your ancestors through Afro-Cuban folklore and vibrant visual storytelling. What does *Eso sí* mean to you? How does it reflect who you are as a cultural barrier within the Afro-Cuban diaspora?

Susana Arenas: Soy hija de Elegua y mi mama es Yemaya. As a Cuban, raised in Havana, for me, dance is about life, spirit and soul. Cuba is all about music and dance. We are born with its rhythm. *Eso sí* is my

story, as a dance instructor, as a professional dancer and as an Afro-Latina. *Eso sí* is about who I am through Afro-Cuban folklore and dance. I came to the U.S. from Cuba 20 years ago. It's about my spirituality, with the orishas and Santería, Yoruba traditions that come from Nigeria, and Bantu culture. It's about ceremony. *Eso sí* is about music, and that no matter what age you are, everyone's welcome. I mix rhythms of *Rhumba* and *Comparsa* with both passion and heart. I honor the two cultures of Bantu and Vodou through dance.

In *Eso sí*, the Godmother (*La Madrina*) has a dream of one of the dancers (me), traveling to different places, teaching and performing Afro-Cuban Folkloric dance, making money, learning about other cultures. So, bless Yemaya. Connect with the ocean. Yemaya provides safe passage across the ocean, and represents the seven seas. In Cuba, *El Malecón* is very important. It's the place where Cubans come to sing, cry, dance, maybe find a love. La Madrina



Arenas Dance Company /
photo by Brooke Anderson

says, "someone is going to find you while you're dancing in the Malecon and take you abroad." And this is how my journey to United States begins. At the time, the situation between U.S. and Cuba was hard. But, it's my job as a cultural bearer to teach and educate others about my culture. We dance more for heart than for money. *Más que bailar en Cuba bailaremos por Cuba.*

Founded and directed by Susana Arenas Pedroso, Arenas Dance Company's mission is to preserve and promote the rich and diverse Cuban folkloric and popular dance traditions.

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Krissy Keefer's upcoming show, *Butterfly Effect*, runs from January 26 – February 9, 2020 at Dance Mission Theater. Her latest work is site-specific centered on climate crisis. Since 1975, Keefer's work explores contemporary social issues by creating, producing, presenting, and teaching feminist and multicultural dance and theater. Finding herself in the same trajectory over the years, at the intersection of arts and politics.

CJF: With the heightened awareness of the unprecedented global climate crisis we're facing, why is *Butterfly Effect* so relevant?

Krissy Keefer: I came out of the 1970s, deeply aware and conscious of the environmental crisis. Back then, we were all about not shopping at Safeway, or at least, not taking plastic bags from Safeway. Save the Whales! Save the Planet! But, it all changed with this massive march towards consumerism. However, in our current environmental and political state of things, a lot of people are taking a hard stance around the world right now about the climate breakdown that is happening in their cities, towns, and countries. There's a huge global environmental movement coming out of the U.K., Extinction Rebellion. In Honduras, hundreds of activists have been killed each year, trying to defend their lands and rivers, against multinational interests.

I have never done an entire, even-length work on the complete degradation of our climate until now. *Butterfly Effect* is all about climate change and catastrophe. With a cast of 16 performers, people are singing, drumming, acting and dancing. Images depict the apparent climate crisis, people in a state of despair, who feel trapped and caught up in day-to-day activities. They are so focused on Trump, they don't even notice the bigger problem.

The dances take place in different rooms. One room is about consumerism and fashion. Getting sucked into the beauty of a fashion show display that turns dystopian at the end. The audience will witness through visual imagery how entire towns get wiped out because of flood and fire. Remembering PARADISE and people trying to fight for their lives in SONOMA and SANTA ROSA.

It's time for me as an artist to participate in the best way I can to make a difference, and piggy back on grassroots movements that are trying to enact social response and social change.

Dance Brigade's Artistic Director Krissy Keefer explores the intersection between art and social issues with fierce inventiveness and a deft comic touch.

.....

We breathe life into our WORD, and it becomes reality.

Like the Holy text reads, "In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the WORD was God." So let's continue to uplift the beginning of the WOMXN SPEAK: WORD! And the oracular knowledge and spirit that follows it. Visit dancemissiontheater.org for more info and if you're interested in donating to support this work.

CHRISTINE JOY FERRER is a multi-disciplinary creative from San Francisco, California. A youth movement arts instructor by day and a freelance media producer and designer by night. Founder of EO MVMNT, Media & Design (eomvmnt.org). She dances with Parangal Dance Company.

35 Years Later San Francisco Ballet Brings Back Balanchine's A Midsummer Night's Dream

by HEATHER DESAULNIERS

HAVE YOU EVER been to a wedding where the invited guests just couldn't keep it together? I have. And I'm betting you know exactly the kind of wedding I mean. Sloppy, inappropriate speeches fueled by over-imbibing. Decades-old quarrels rearing their heads, passive aggressive looks running rampant and complex romantic entanglements pulling focus from the newlyweds.

William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* paints a similar picture. Written toward the end of the sixteenth century (though scholars disagree on the exact year), the five-act comedic play declares that the Duke of Athens, Theseus, and the Queen of the Amazons, Hippolyta, are about to be married. Though very little time is actually devoted to that specific event. Instead, *Dream* focuses on the eccentric attendees who are gathering for the wedding celebration: the impish Puck; Oberon and Titania, King and Queen of the Fairies; the bewitched Bottom; and the lovers Demetrius, Lysander, Helena and Hermia, all of whom are embroiled in interconnected drama. As we follow this madcap collection of humans, fairies and sprites, shenanigans ensue. Unrequited love and familial expectations abound. Magic potions are deployed in order to ensure certain outcomes. Relationship pairings pivot and change. Scheming. Trickery. *Dream* runs the whole gamut. As the author so aptly penned in Act I, Scene I, "the course of true love never did run smooth..."

In 2019, Bay Area audiences had some wonderful opportunities to engage with this enchanting tale. Cal Shakes included it in their most recent season, as did a number of other regional theater troupes like Silicon Valley Shakespeare and Concord's B8 Theatre Company. This coming spring, San Francisco Ballet (SFB) continues the trend, digging into their vast repertory archive to offer another *A Midsummer Night's Dream* experience. One that communicates Shakespeare's magically layered narrative through classical ballet, innovative choreography and stunning visual storytelling. *A Dream* filled with arms and hands that flutter as though casting a spell. With solos that command the space with large shapes, long extensions and lightning-fast batterie. Sharp, directional changes in the stage architecture mirror shifts in the story; turns and spins indicate a change in character intention and trajectory. At the beginning of March, the company brings George Balanchine's 1962 adaptation back to the War Memorial Opera House stage. It's been thirty-five years since SFB first debuted this two-act story ballet, and they are beyond thrilled to resurrect it under the impeccable direction of Sandra Jennings, full-time répétiteur with The George Balanchine Trust.

An incredibly important member of the creative team, the ballet répétiteur is tasked with teaching, coaching, rehearsing and staging an existing ballet work or any of its components. To do so successfully requires a soul intimately connected to the ballet in question. An encyclopedic knowledge of the choreography, to be sure, but also of the music, of each character's developmental arc and of every design element's contribution to the overall message or story. When it comes to Balanchine's *Dream*, Jennings, who has a significant personal history with the ballet, certainly fits the bill. "As a young 11-year-old dance student, I fell in love with this ballet - Diana Adams was one of my teachers and she was the very first Titania," she shares.

As Jennings continued her dance studies and eventually launched her own professional career, that adoration only deepened. "When I was part of New York City Ballet from 1974 to 1983, I got to dance *Dream* many times, learning various parts from legends like Gloria Govrin and watching dancers like



(Top left) San Francisco Ballet rehearsing Balanchine's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* / Photo by Erik Tomasson, (Top right) Julian Montaner as Puck and Ricardo Bustamante as Lysander in Balanchine's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1985 / © SF Museum of Performance + Design



Edward Villella perform the principal roles," she remembers, "it was one of my favorite ballets to dance, very romantic and every section felt so joyful." With all that first hand experience and artistic lineage in tow, Jennings began staging Balanchine's *Dream* (and other compositions) for the Trust in the mid-1980s. Internationally, she has set the work for Paris Opera Ballet, Ballet de Santiago and the Mariinsky as well as many US-based companies including Washington Ballet, Miami City Ballet and Boston Ballet.

This past summer, Jennings arrived in San Francisco ready to add SFB to that already impressive list (even though *Dream* would not hit the stage for six more months, SFB rehearses all the upcoming season's repertory in the preceding summer/fall). A mix of excitement and anxiousness was indeed palpable for Jennings, "I was nervous because I was going to try and stage the ballet in three weeks, and only a few dancers in the company had ever seen this particular version...at the same time, I was so eager to share the work and was hoping that they might love it as much as I do." The dancers, many of whom hadn't yet been born the last time SFB performed *Dream* in 1985, shared those same feelings of excitement and anxiousness. "We don't tend to do many full-length Balanchine narratives, and I think the company really came together for this new challenge," relays Principal Dancer Esteban Hernandez. Jennings couldn't agree more and was so impressed by how each dancer in every cast (there are three) was 100% present, so supportive of the process and the compressed timeline.

Tight schedule notwithstanding, Jennings' strategic approach with *Dream* is always to begin with the harder choreography. "There's Hippolyta's solo, Hermia's solo, several pas de deux as well as a dance for six couples that occurs in the ballet's second act, but one of the very first pieces I teach is Oberon's solo, which is supremely difficult" she explains. Though he will debut as Puck on opening night, Hernandez is also one of the dancers learning Oberon. He will dance that role on the second night of *Dream*'s run, and he can more than attest to its complexity, "Oberon's variation is by far one of the hardest things I've ever had to do; it's technically demanding, long and super fast - you have to remain totally in character the entire time, completely calm and collected even though you can't feel your arms and legs once it's over."



Wona Park and Benjamin Freemantle rehearsing Balanchine's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* / Photo by Erik Tomasson

At the same time, with *Dream* being a comedy, the ballet also incorporates plenty of fun and ample lightness. Hernandez sees Puck as one of those points of levity, "Puck is such a fun part: it's very high energy; the movement style is more demi-character so things don't have to be so pretty; and I like his mischievous quality, he is the one orchestrating everything and leading everyone, including the children's cast, through the entire story." And such a significant children's cast it is! *Dream* calls for twenty-five young dancers for every performance - one as Titania's page and the others play various bugs in the forest - and students from San Francisco Ballet's School are handily and exuberantly filling these important roles. "As a child, Mr. B. [Balanchine] was in numerous ballets, and he felt the experience nurtured him so much; there is so much joy in the children's sections, his choreography is such a wonderful gift to them that will forever touch their lives in a special way," recalls Jennings.

There are so many special aspects of this *Dream*, of course for the participants, but also for the audience. Hernandez is quick to point out how this production can provide yet another platform for folks to experience Shakespeare, an artistic, literary force that can sometimes feel overwhelming and inaccessible, "*Dream* is able to remove preconceived notions people may have about Shakespeare and the theater by simplifying the story without compromising its essence." Jennings agrees, "Mr. B. had to compress the play [the original source material has five acts, while the ballet unfolds over two], and even though there are some elements missing, this *Dream* tells the story in a way that you absolutely get what's happening."

Jennings will be back at SFB in the New Year to continue overseeing the return of Balanchine's *Dream* - revisiting scenes, polishing choreography and delving deeper into the characters - ahead of opening night. Then, on March 6th, the company will invite its patrons to journey into dreamland with them! "The play and the ballet are really about human behavior - there are so many relatable human elements and emotions in the tale, which continues to make it viable, relevant and timeless," Jennings describes. In addition to those universal themes and threads, *Dream*, in just two short hours, offers folks the space to escape to another realm. Hernandez hopes viewers can savor that opportunity, and for that brief time, leave everything else outside the theater, "I hope that audiences will be completely enthralled and transported to this magical world where the biggest worry is whether Titania will figure out that Bottom is not a donkey, but a human blanketed by a mystical spell."

HEATHER DESAULNIERS is a freelance dance writer based in Oakland. She is the Editorial Associate and SF/Bay Area columnist for CriticalDance, the dance curator for SF Arts Monthly, a contributor to DanceTabs as well as several other dance-focused publications.

Program 4 of San Francisco Ballet's 2020 season, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, runs March 6-15 at the War Memorial Opera House. sfballet.org



How to Ask for Help, Raise Your Ghosts, and Make a Family

by MEGAN AND SHANNON KURASHIGE, CO-DIRECTORS OF SHARP & FINE

WHEN WE WERE growing up, we went to Hawaii nearly every summer. Our parents grew up on the island of Kauai, as did their parents. Our family has been in Hawaii for a while and it's not until you get to our great- and great-great-grandparents' generations that people start arriving from Japan.

People always tell us that it must be a nice place to have family. And it is. It's a beautiful, culturally varied, genuinely paradisiacal place. To us, it also feels very much like the family home and when we were kids, we didn't appreciate it as anything other than ordinary. Even the parts of it that are genuinely magical were just what we did in between visiting grandmas and grandpas, cleaning relatives' houses, and getting fed by an endless sequence of aunts and uncles.

One of these magical and underappreciated things was bon dances. Bon dances are part of the Japanese and Japanese-American tradition of Obon, a summertime ritual of honoring the spirits of your ancestors. In Hawaii, a big part of Obon is a three-month-long season of bon dances, glorious nighttime gatherings that bring together people—locals and tourists of all kinds of beliefs and backgrounds—with music, food, and communal dancing. Many of our childhood summers were spent going to bon dances where we would hear our great-uncle sing, dance alongside our great-aunt, and absolutely take for granted the way that bon dances get people who don't dance to move together like it's the most normal thing in the world.

A few years ago, our aunt took us to a bon dance at an assisted living facility for seniors with memory loss. They set the dance up in the parking lot, around a big tree hung with paper lanterns. Musicians played flutes and drums and sang, caretakers pushed the seniors in their wheelchairs in a circle around the tree, and the seniors (some of whom can't remember their names or who their family members are) lifted their hands and moved them through the gestures of the dances.

We burst into tears, struck hard by the beauty and wisdom of this act of remembrance through dance, something so familiar that we hadn't fully understood its power before. By the time we were walking to the car, we were talking about making a piece for Sharp & Fine that would attempt to explore this strange resurrection of feeling and memory.



photos by RJ Muna

Several years later, when we were ready to start making that piece, three things happened.

The first thing:

In 2018, the San Francisco Conservatory of Dance closed. We are both alumni of the Conservatory and it had become our artistic home and family, in both philosophical and practical ways. Philosophically, the training and mentorship we received there are what made us want to choreograph in the first place. Practically, it gave us many of the resources that we needed to do so: like-minded collaborators and the gift of enormous amounts of time and space to experiment, fail, and discover in. When the Conservatory closed, we felt unmoored. We had never made a piece without a home to create it in. We realize that this was a very privileged position to be coming from, but (as every choreographer in the Bay Area knows) making work without a space is a daunting and expensive challenge.

The second thing:

We received some very good advice. Wendy Rein and Ryan Smith (co-founders of RAW-dance and two incredibly savvy and generous builders of community) told us that we should never be afraid to ask for more help. They pointed out that there are always people who will want to help, if you can ask clearly and it is within their power to do so. Asking for help can be an exciting necessity, a way of bringing more people into the work so you are creating it together instead of facing it alone.

The third thing:

We started asking. We asked our collaborators to join a long and potentially nomadic process. We asked for help with finding space. We asked for advice, resources, and time. We asked friends, acquaintances, and strangers. We asked and asked and asked. Sometimes people did say no, but overwhelmingly and incredibly, so many people said yes.

We are astonished and humbled by how many people are helping us make this piece.



The dance community has welcomed and supported us in ways that we never expected. It is making us expand the way we think of "home." Our artistic home is so much bigger than we used to think it was. It's a sprawling place with many rooms and many people, and everyone is busy juggling at unimaginable speeds. But if you lose something or are struggling to carry a thing that's too heavy to lift, there is always someone ready to reach over and help.

The creative process of making this piece and the practical process of making it happen have shared many parallel themes. We are telling a story about family and ghosts while wrestling with the practicalities of nurturing our family of collaborators and carrying our history as choreographers into the future. We are asking our community for help while making a piece that explores why coming together, remembering, and the communal power of bon dances matter.

MEGAN & SHANNON KURASHIGE are sisters, dancers, and choreographers. We co-founded Sharp & Fine in 2011 to create narrative performance work that brings together physically exuberant choreography, emotionally nuanced text, live music, and multi-disciplinary collaboration. Our work is informed by the technical rigor of classical ballet, the human intensity of contemporary forms, and the conviction that telling a story built on personal truths is a powerful and communal act of communication and empathy. Collectively, we have worked with Liss Fain Dance, Mark Foehringer Dance Project, Alex Ketley, Christian Burns, Amy Seiwert, Ballet Pacifica, and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montreal. We studied at the San Francisco Conservatory of Dance, North Carolina School of the Arts, Academy of Ballet, and UC Irvine. Megan is also a writer. Shannon is also a graphic designer.

SHARING

Sharp & Fine's *Just Ahead is Darkness* will premiere at Z Space in San Francisco, February 7-9, 2020. It is a devised work for six performers and four musicians that draws inspiration from bon dances to tell a story about family, love, loss, and the eternal return of ghosts. We're calling it a "play for dance" and while we are co-directing it, we are honored to share the credit for its creation with our collaborators (our dancers, Sarah Woods-LaDue, Sonja Dale, Christian Burns, and Tristan Ching Hartmann; and our composer, Cory Wright) and all the people and places who make up our new artistic home. We hope we can share it with all of you.

Just Ahead is Darkness

February 7, 8, 9

Z Space, San Francisco

sharppandfine.com/darkness

Opportunities that we want to share:

Berkeley Ballet Theater's Artist-in-Residence Program

Thank you to Courtney King, Ali Taylor Lange, and Robert Dekkers for responding to our need for help with the creation of this invaluable program.

berkeleyballet.org/artist-in-residence

Dresher Ensemble Artist Residency Program

Thank you to Paul Dresher and Dominique Pelletay for supporting the creation of new works by a broad range of Bay Area artists.

dresherensemble.org/community-programs/the-dresher-ensemble-artist-residency-program/

Other spaces that have welcomed us:

We thank all of these spaces for welcoming us. We highly recommend them as places to consider for rehearsals.

Academy of Ballet, San Francisco

Stapleton School of the Performing Arts, San Anselmo

Finnish Hall, Berkeley

JAN/FEB 2020

calendar

VISIT THE ONLINE COMMUNITY CALENDAR, to find additional events and to submit a performance. dancersgroup.org



Paul Taylor Dance Company, Feb 19-22 / Photo by Paul B. Goode

Carolina Lugo's & Carolé Acuña's Ballet Flamenco

Pena Pachamama, SF

Brace yourself for a night when the well worn hardwood floors of Pachamama resonate with the pulsating sounds of footwork, song, castanets, syncopated hand clapping and guitar. Carolina and her daughter Carolé Acuña and their company of musicians and dancers offer a special evening of Flamenco and Spanish dance traditions. Saturdays, Jan 4-Feb 29, 7pm, \$21.98.

carolinalugo.com



Wendy Whelan and Maya Beiser, Feb 27-28
Photo by Nils Schlebusch



BBT Studio Company, Feb 29 / Photo by Natalia Perez

FRESH Festival 2020

Various locations, SF

11th annual, FRESH Festival 2020 is a diverse feast of embodied art, action and interaction showcasing three weeks of risk-taking mainstage Performances, immersive studio Practices, and social, inclusive and interactive community Exchanges, featuring 75+ cutting-edge artists from the Bay Area and beyond. Mon, Jan 6-Sun, Jan 26, various times, various prices.

freshfestival.org

Simorgh Dance Collective

Menlo-Atherton Performing Arts Center, Atherton

A dance concert adaption of the Persian epic *The Conference of the Birds* featuring folkloric, classical, and sacred dances of the Silk Road performed by Farima Berenji and the Simorgh Dance Collective. Includes Persian music performed by Homeyra Banejad and Ensemble. Sat, Jan 11, 7-9pm, \$35-\$40.

farimadance.com

Non Stop Bhangra

Public Works, SF

For 15 years, Non Stop Bhangra has been an ever evolving collective of dancers, DJs, drummers, and special guests. Imagine a scene from a Bollywood movie, smack in the middle of a thumping nightclub, swirling colors, rhythm of pounding feet, wall to wall smiles, relentless energy, and brilliant beats-That's Non Stop Bhangra. Sat, Jan 11, 9pm, \$15-\$25.

nonstopbhanga.com



Simorgh Dance Collective, Jan 11 / Photo by Varol Ozkaner

SAFEhouse RAW presents Artist Showcase

SAFEhouse Arts, SF

RAW Presents Sawako Gannon, John Paul Alejandro, A. Spearman & Co., Es"Delight"Co, and Kitty Conlon. Sat, Jan 11, 8pm; Sun, Jan 12, 7pm, \$15-\$20

safehousearts.org

RAWdance

Green Room at SF War Memorial and Performing Arts Center

RAWdance's beloved salon serves up a fresh dose of unique, high quality dance art in a lavish setting, but with a living room vibe. Five Bay Area choreographers join RAWdance to share works-in-progress and revamped repertory tailored for intimate viewing. Featuring RAW-

dance with guest artists: Julie Crothers, Kelly Del Rosario, Molissa Fenley, Molly Matutat, and Suzy Myre. Fri, Jan 17, 8pm, Sat, Jan 18, 3pm & 7pm, \$10-\$25

rawdance.org

San Francisco Ballet

War Memorial Opera House, SF

Christopher Wheeldon updates the timeless tale of *Cinderella*. With colorful sets and costumes by Julian Crouch, magical projections by Daniel Brodie, and breathtaking puppetry designed by Basil Twist, Wheeldon's *Cinderella* is a fairy tale for our time. Tu-Thu, Jan 21-23, 7:30pm; Fri, Jan 24, 8pm; Sat, Jan 25 2pm and 8pm; Sun, Jan 26, 2pm; Sat, Feb 1, 2pm and 8pm; Sun, Feb 2, 2pm, \$35-\$399

sfballet.org



James Graham Dance Theatre, Feb 13-15 / Photo by Robbie Sweeney

San Francisco Movement Arts Festival

Grace Cathedral, SF

With the 6th Annual San Francisco Movement Arts Festival (SFMAF), 55+ local performance groups, comprising of 300+ performers, will celebrate their movement art at the grand Grace Cathedral. As you enter the inspiring space, multiple STATIONS of the Movement (performances) will be going on simultaneously. Fri, Jan 24, 6pm, \$28-\$45

sfmaf.org

Dance Brigade

Dance Mission Theater, SF

Butterfly Effect is a new site-specific dance work by Dance Brigade that focuses on the devastating effects of global warming, as well as the profound ripple of influence that one person's actions can have on social change and climate change combat. With eight dancers and six drummers this work winds through the three studios inside Dance Mission Theater. Fri-Sat, Jan 24-25, 8pm; Sun, Jan 26, 6pm; Fri-Sat, Jan 31-Feb 1, 8pm; Sun, Feb 2, 6pm; Fri-Sat, Feb 7-8, 8pm; Sun, Feb 9, 6pm, \$20-\$30

Dancemission.com

The MFA in Dance Program at Saint Mary's College of California

Shawl-Anderson Dance Center, Berkeley

The Collective - Phase II is an evening of eight distinctive choreographers coming together to explore various facets of embodied human experience ranging from deep emotional and moral connections to the impact of rituals in our daily lives. These eight works-in-progress are parts of ongoing original research, which will culminate in evening-length thesis performances in June 2020. Sat, Jan 25, 5:30pm &

8pm, \$10-\$15, Q&A following the 8pm show. stmmarys-ca.edu/mfa-in-dance

KWENTO

PianoFight, SF

BREAK retells Catherine Liu's, KWENTO's Artistic Director, most traumatic experience with her own mental health, showing her racing thoughts as they turn into "sick truths," her suicide plan, mental break, hospital and mental facility experience, and the tumultuous waves of her recovery. Fri-Sat, Jan 31-Feb 1, 7:30pm; Fri-Sat, Feb 7-8, 7:30pm; \$20-\$30

kwentodance.com

Theatre Flamenco of San Francisco

Herbst Theater, SF

Theatre Flamenco 53th Home Season presents *Soul y Alma*, a tribute of Gospel and Flamenco Music. Singer Amparo Heredia, percussionist Diego Alvarez, dancers Carola Zertuche & Cristina Hall and from Spain, guest artists, flamenco dancer Eduardo Guerrero and guitarist Juani de la Isla. Sat, Feb 1, 8pm, \$25-\$55.

theatreflamenco.org

Sharp & Fine

Z Space, SF

A devised work for six performers and four musicians, *Just Ahead is Darkness* draws on the Japanese and Japanese-American tradition of remembering the dead to tell a poignant and magical tale about family, love, loss and the eternal return of ghosts. Performances by company co-directors Megan and Shannon Kurashige, Christian Burns, Tristan Ching Hartmann, Sonja Dale and Sarah Dionne Woods-LaDue. Musicians include Steve Adams, Karl Evangelista, Jordan Glenn and Cory Wright. Fri-Sat, Feb 7-8, 8pm; Sun, Feb 9, 2pm, \$20-\$35.

sharpandfine.com



Cirque Mechanics, Feb 9 / Photo courtesy of artist

Wax Poet(s)

Shawl-Anderson Dance Center, Berkeley

MidCentury Blue(s) seeks to integrate movement and lights to explore two moments in history that saw radical approaches to agency in performance while still existing within traditional power structures. Examining the uses of these two blues from a contemporary understanding of intersectionality opens up questions around how a radical act can still support status quo. Sat-Sun, Feb 8-9, 7pm, \$12. wax-poets.com

Cirque Mechanics

Bankhead Theater, Livermore

This latest invention from the creative minds of Cirque Mechanics dares us to leap into the

circus ring and experience the timelessness of this evolving art form. *42FT* is full of theatricality but with a modern sensibility, a showcase of wonders from a galloping mechanical metal horse to a rotating tent frame for strongmen, acrobats and aerialists. Sun, Feb 9, 7pm, \$20-95

lvpac.org

San Francisco Ballet

War Memorial Opera House, SF

Classical (Re)Vision features ballets specifically created for SF Ballet dancers. *Hummingbird*, Liam Scarlett's first commission for SF Ballet, showcases this choreographer's style of blending classical ballet with contemporary drama. Mark Morris' *Sandpaper Ballet*, 1999, is a cleverly tongue-in-cheek ballet exemplary of this choreographer's signature musical sensibility. Tu-Wed, Feb 11-12, 7:30pm; Fri, Feb 14, 8pm; Sun, Feb 16, 2pm; Thu, Feb 20, 7:30pm; Sat, Feb 22, 2pm and 8pm, \$29-\$399.

sfballet.org

San Francisco Ballet

War Memorial Opera House, SF

Dance Innovations offers a chance to see three different ideas of what ballet can express: the beautiful poignancy of Edwaard Liang's *The Infinite Ocean*, the world premiere of Trey McIntyre's *The Big Hunger*, and the thrilling display of classical movement that is *Etudes*. Thu, Feb 13, 7:30pm; Sat, Feb 15, 2pm and 8pm; Tu-Wed, Feb 18-19, 7:30pm; Fri, Feb 21, 8pm; Sun, Feb 23, 2pm, \$29-\$399.

sfballet.org

James Graham Dance Theatre

Joe Goode Annex, SF

DANCE LOVERS 9...duets by real-life couples, crushes, and comrades...presented by James Graham Dance Theatre. Different couples (sisters, friends, lovers) performing in their own styles. Thu-Sat, Feb 13-15, 8pm, \$20-\$40. jamesgrahamdancetheatre.com

Continued on pg 8 >>



©2019 Andy Mogg

SF Movement Arts Festival, Jan 24 / Photo by Andy Mogg

calendar

ODC/Dance

ODC Theater, SF

ODC/Dance Unplugged is a recurring platform offering a rare and candid look into the creative process of ODC's choreographers. Delve into the specifics, question the process, and learn something new during these exclusive evenings with ODC's creative force. Fri, Feb 14, 7pm, \$25
odc.dance

Paul Taylor Dance Company

YBCA Theater, SF

The dance world lost Paul Taylor in 2018 after more than a six-decade career in contemporary dance. The Company's two programs include Taylor's final work, *Concertiana* and signature dances that defined his artistry. Wed-Sat, Feb 19-22, 7:30-9:30pm: Sat-Sun, Feb 22-23, 2pm. \$45-\$90
sfperformances.org

Kinetech Arts

ODC Theater, SF

In *AI Sensorium*, ODC Resident Artist Kinetech Arts investigates how bodies and minds are transformed, exploited, and manipulated by machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI) both virtually and physically. Fri-Sun, Feb 21-23, \$15-\$30.
odc.dance

DC Contemporary Dance Theatre/El Teatro de Danza Contemporanea

YBCA Theater, SF

UBUNTU: For the Whole of All Humanity, a diverse program in the Ailey genre yet reflects the power, passion and poetry of the Central American history, layered with an international elegance and flair of multi-cultural dancers. Choreographers: Lloyd Whitmore (Philadanco), Francisco Castillo (El Salvador), Chandini Darby and Maurice Johnson (Washington, DC). Sat, Feb 22, 7pm, \$25.
teatrodedanza.org

Black Choreographers Festival: Here & Now - 2020

Various locations, SF and Oakland

The Black Choreographers Festival: Here & Now - 2020 brings performances to San Francisco and Oakland highlighting a host of premieres featuring unique and dynamic performances. Visit the BCF website for programming details, updates, to donate and/or to volunteer. Sat-Sun, Feb 22-23, Feb 29-Mar 1, Mar 7-8, 7:30pm, \$10-\$30.
bcfhereandnow.com



Nancy Karp + Dancers, Feb 27-29 and Mar 1 / Photo by John Hefti



DC Contemporary Dance Theatre/El Teatro de Danza Contemporanea, Feb 22 / Photo by Dave Cunningham

Wendy Whelan and Maya Beiser

YBCA Theater, SF

Ground-breaking dancer Wendy Whelan, legendary choreographer Lucinda Childs, renowned cellist/creative producer Maya Beiser and Pulitzer Prize-winning composer David Lang partner for the Bay Area premiere of *The Day*. Thu-Fri, Feb 27-28, 7:30-9:30pm, \$45-\$65.
sfperformances.org

Deborah Slater Dance Theater

ODC Theater, SF

In its 30th Anniversary season, DSDT co-presents with ODC Theater, Part Two and Three of the inCIVILITY series— the acclaimed *Outrage Machine* (2018), a combination of motion capture, live interactive visual effects, and the expressive power of dance; and the world premiere of the third and final section, *A Seat at the Table*. Thu-Sat, Feb 27-Feb 29, 8pm; Sun, Mar 1, 5pm, \$20-\$50.
deborahslater.org

Nancy Karp + Dancers

Paul Dresher Ensemble Studio, Oakland

"*Piano piano*" is an Italian expression that means "slowly slowly, gradually, gently" and the work invites the audience through the buildings hallways, balconies, and central floor space. The dancers relationship to the architecture and the many spaces that appear to be fixed will inform how the piece emerges. Seating Limited. Thu-Sat, Feb 27-29, 8pm; Sun, Mar 1, 3pm, \$25-\$45.
nancykarp.org



Theatre Flamenco of San Francisco, Feb 1 / Photo by Lorena Zertuche

Rotunda Dance Series

San Francisco City Hall

The Rotunda Dance Series brings many of the Bay Area's most celebrated dance companies to SF City Hall for free monthly noon-time performances and is presented by Dancers' Group and World Arts West. Fri, Feb 28, 12pm, **FREE**.
dancersgroup.org

Berkeley Ballet Theater and San Francisco Girls Chorus

YBCA Theater, SF

An original production, *Rightfully Ours*, that uses the Centennial of the 19th Amendment to ask the question of what it means to have a voice in society. The 60-minute work includes 8 new pieces of choreography created for BBT's Studio Company and the San Francisco Girls Chorus. Sat, Feb 29, 7:30pm, \$28-\$50.
berkeleyballet.org



RAWdance, Jan 17-18 / Photo by Hillary Goidell

DANCE PLAY IS SERIOUS BUSINESS: Young Minds Require Freedom

by **NANCY NG**

“There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way it treats its children” —NELSON MANDELA

RECENTLY, A COLLEAGUE shared his frustration about the entire hour of homework his first-grade child was expected to complete after an eight-hour school day. He called it, “an assault on kids.” His passionate comment reminded me of how I felt the first time I witnessed elementary school children passing through the hallways with their hands crossed behind their backs replicating the “perp” walk of prisoners. The school-to-prison pipeline was visual and visceral. Last year, I learned that the highest suspension rate per capita is for African-American preschool boys. Preschoolers! I have spent my entire career teaching and learning how to foster children’s happiness and wellbeing—from my first job as a preschool teacher to my current role as Director of Early Childhood Education (ECE) at Luna, the rights of children to be free has been a core tenet of my work.

It saddens me to witness an educational system that treats children as chattel destined to be molded and formed to serve the industrial complex; instead of respecting and nurturing them as vibrant human beings who are naturally eager to love and learn. I am humbled by the power of young children dancing. Their organic in-the-moment quality of movement is something we professional dancers yearn for and try to create in our choreography and performance. With bodies not yet colonized, young children’s dances are truly original just by being true to their nature.

Increasingly, more dance teaching artists are becoming interested in working with young children 0-5. How can I, as a teacher educator, help them to create learning experiences that nurture and activate children’s innate creativity. How can dance support healthy attachment and autonomy? What dance curricula supports the whole child—cognitively, psycho-socially, and physically? What are kids’ natural interests? How can dance teachers reframe success to be about exploring children’s wonder rather than expecting them to follow? How can dance educators articulate what we know to early educators, parents, and policy-makers outside of the arts education sector so they understand how dance meets early education goals? At Luna, early education threads through all of our programs through a framework we call Love, Play, Move (an ECE teaching guide with the same title will be published in 2020).

LOVE

Relationships are at the core of all learning. As human beings we are hard-wired to bond with a primary caregiver. All babies are cute and adorable for a reason. Adults want to take care of them—even when they cry. The security, safety and nurturing experienced in the cocooned in-utero environment is manifested out-of-utero as infants are swaddled, held, rocked, fed, and talked to. An infant recognizes voices outside of the womb because they have heard the voices of their family members for nine months prior. Within the first few hours of an infant’s breath they mimic the facial expressions of the adult holding them. A loving parent gazes into their child’s face sticking their tongue out and their baby mimics this movement. Already, parent and child are playing with each other. Babies learn to smile because loving adults smile at them often.

Relationship-based dance curriculum expands on early natural movement learning in a multitude of creative ways. In the ECE classroom or studio space, classes focus on the elements of dance that are central to family



Luna Dance Institute Early Childhood Education Program / photo courtesy of the artist

connection. Families move toward and away from each other, shadow each other’s movements, make body shapes that attach and detach, travel in connected shapes, create secret movement handshakes, discover dances that relate over, under, around and through. These explorations in ECE dance are familiar to choreographers who investigate the intricacies of relationships using space, props, and gestural movement. As children become preschool aged (3-5), they are able to apply this relationship-play in the dancing with their peers.

PLAY

Young children learn through play, and improvisation is at the core of play. Dance improvisation shares so many attributes of play—spontaneity, imagination, connections in the moment, communication with another person. As dance educators we need to mindfully craft dance activities that are play-based; and we need to be able to articulate what we see in dance play to parents and classroom teachers so they can also see its value to the cognitive and socio-emotional growth of the whole child.

When my daughter was four, we made up a movement game during long walks to pass the time and make the journey to our destination seem less tedious. Walking 8 blocks does not seem like much as an adult, but it is as great distance to a young child with legs only 18 inches long. Determined by what felt right in the moment we alternated leading different locomotor movements, finding ways to go over or around objects on the sidewalk, making shapes with fire hydrants or shrubbery. Our sidewalk dances were spontaneous—sometimes I shadowed my daughter, sometimes she shadowed me. She learned so much in these dances: physics – how to run and decrease her momentum at the sidewalk’s edge and use weight to push off a hydrant; empathy – how to embody my movements in the moment and feel what it’s like to be me; patterning used in math and language – as we created movement sequences that repeated (ie. gallop, stop, gallop, stop).

A favorite dance game at Luna is rivers and stones adapted from Anne Green Gilbert’s “Rocks and Bridges” activity in *Creative Dance For All Ages*. The stones make rock-like shapes that can be jagged, round, or even have holes in them. The river flows/dances over, around, and through the rocks. Sometimes the river is still and may settle next to a rock and sway, other times it might move fast and furious. In this one dance children learn to speed up and slow down, curve and mold their body to another person’s shape, stop and go, and explore weight while resting on a rock.

MOVE

The moving body is how we experience our world, and how we know our world. Anthropologists have made the case for dance as the first art form, and movement as the first form of communication. Dance/movement is fundamental to literacy, health, and wellness as a core component of a holistic approach to support young children’s self-efficacy, self-awareness, and autonomy. There is plenty of neuroscience research to validate what we already know as dancers. For example, we know that children develop body-brain connectivity in their natural movement explorations during the first two years of life.

Many dance educators use the developmental patterns, present in all dance styles and forms – breath, core-distal, head-tail, upper-lower, body-side, cross-lateral during a class. Breath: internal pulse needed to bring oxygen to our body; Core-Distal: extension from our core through our limbs, head and tailbone; Head-Tail: spinal movement; Upper-Lower: grounding to the floor with our lower body and reaching to the sky with our upper body; Body-Side: division of body movements along the vertical axis; Cross Lateral: movements which cross the body’s midline. Our bodies are designed to move in these patterns; and moving through these patterns are a necessary part of brain development in young children. What better case can be made for dance than that?

As dance educators it is imperative that we convey what we know about dance and early learning to parents, teachers, early education leaders and policy-makers. Children come into the world ready to learn through love,

play, and movement. The benefits of early dance and movement begin in utero, continue in relation to a primary care giver, expand in social play with peers, and actualize children’s individuation and expression in small group movement activities. This parallels the goals of California’s early education initiatives which are focused on the whole child in relationship to family and then community.

When young children are dancing, they are completely embodied in the moment expressing who they are – they are free. This is what is needed in our schools, in our society. We know children should be moving for the entire day in pre-school, and first graders should be dancing after-school instead of sitting and doing homework. We know dance is fundamental for embodied learning; and we are in a unique position to support children’s creativity, freedom and authentic expression. With a new state governor committed to early education, we are at a pivotal moment to truly create change as dancers and activists who care about young people and their well-being.

NANCY NG is Executive Director of Creativity and Policy and Dir. of Early Education at Luna Dance Institute. She continues to learn from young children. Luna faculty members have written other articles for this journal which delve into early education and dance. You can read *Exploring Power and Agency in Early Childhood* (Nakagawa, A. Dec. 2018), and *The First Steps: Luna Dance Institute* (Reedy, P. May 2012)

1. Green Gilbert, Anne. *Creative Dance For All Ages*, 95. Reston, VA: The American Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 1992.

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A SEAT AT THE TABLE: If you don't have a seat at the table, you are probably on the menu.

by **DEBORAH SLATER**

I AM A STORYTELLER, a translator, an every-person, trying to 'get' life's inexplicable moments. I make work to try and understand difficult life experiences, like the death of a parent, a near-fatal accident, passing as something one is not, the unspoken language of relationships, and impending environmental crises. It is my hope that the particular kaleidoscope of questions and modalities my company engages casts fresh light on the topics we address. I am drawn to things that challenge the dancers. And by grappling with the challenge, we have courage to go forward. We believe that art is a tool that can explore, re-contextualize, and reframe difficult life experiences.

I have come to appreciate that live performance, especially about shared life experiences, helps break a sense of isolation, gives hope and sometimes clarity. We need to be taken out of ourselves and art does that for us, for a second, a minute or a lifetime.

I don't 'think' my way through a difficult experience, I understand it as we wrestle with the ideas in rehearsal. It's in the conversations, the physical struggle. We get to have a dialogue. We see facial expressions, hear tones of voice, note body language in the flesh, not on a screen. Collaborators come in and bring music, sets and all the things that make a creative process. We engage together instead of playing separately. That is as critical a context as I can imagine in this time of incivility.

Which brings me to this piece. I first heard Elizabeth Warren say, "If you don't have a seat at the table, you are probably on the menu!" I kept hearing the phrase over and over in every current event context. Ideas for a new piece started to percolate. What if we started with a table that was rectangular, where there's a 'head', a power seat? And what if the table breaks apart and everybody gets to tell/move their stories about how they got there? Or didn't get there. Then they come back together and the table is re-assembled as round, and everyone is co-equal. Does being at the round table mean equity?

It has become evident as we are working that what we can attempt to address in our small-ish group, without tokenizing, is 'power'—who has it and who doesn't. As I frequently do when developing a new work, I began interviewing others for their points of view. It was important to interview a range of people to get perspectives other than our own because I understand how limited one's own point of view can be. I started with people I knew and through them was introduced to more people to interview who identify as gay, transgender, people of color, people who have different religious beliefs, people with disabilities and people who are combinations of all those things.

The interview process has been compelling and turned up unexpected answers. Respondents have talked about all the amazing events in their lives and how they are more focused on what they have as opposed to what they don't have. For example, one gay dancer talked about the luck he felt as a man in the dance field. I assumed he might have struggled both with being a gay man and/or a dancer. He cited getting into a dance program on a scholarship. None of the women, who he felt could dance circles around him, got one. During roundtables at my studio (not at roundtables!), some people said, "I don't want to be at the table," or "I'll bring my own table," or "Who needs a table at all?"

What these interviews brought up for the company are more questions: "What sort of table am I creating? What are people willing to tell me, versus someone in their identified

community? What is left unsaid? Is what they are willing to share influenced by the possibility that their story may be used to help create a piece that they are not creating? How candid are they willing to be? How much pressure did they feel internally to tell a good/positive story about themselves and represent others like them in a favorable way?" I can't answer for anyone, but it makes me think when interpreting their responses.

In this way, the interviews serve to keep us grounded. None of us see the world the same way. Because of where we're born, what we look like, how much money we have, we don't have the same opportunities or life experiences. Institutional sexism, racism, homophobia, etc. play a part. And yet...there are so many things that cross over and push us towards each other... as well as push us away.

As movers, as members of the ensemble, the company understands the vastness of these different experiences and the challenge of how to approach them as movers. Our focus in working with the table is on making ideas physically visible. What has developed are characters, scenes, emotional connections and disconnections because of relationships begun or ended at the table.

This piece is the perfect finale to the 30th anniversary of my company, Deborah Slater Dance Theater (DSDT). The fact that we have endured is remarkable because there just aren't a lot of dance entities that sustain themselves this long. Stubbornness helps. Creating something from nothing is how everyone in my generation began, and when the money goes away, we know we can create something from nothing again. It's just a lot harder. In the old days there was cheap space, everyone could work together without complex contracts and my shows often garnered 6 reviews (reporters even came up from San Jose). Not now.

A small pitch here—it is harder and harder to live in the Bay Area due to high rental rates and low wages. Our rent has increased five-fold since we first opened the studio and the renters on either side of us (who are much newer to the building) pay twice as much as we do. So moving to a larger space is out of the question. I have done my best to compensate company members at least equivalent to minimum wage, but this does not cover health insurance or unemployment and is not enough to live on. I worked in restaurants in the old days to pay the rent and could keep my schedule very flexible. Now performers need full-time jobs, or a complicated patchwork of teaching, to cover their bills. Rehearsal time has decreased and the stress to keep a greater number of balls in the air has exponentially increased. I feel strongly that the work that DSDT is doing is important (a statement that can be made for most small companies), in that we deal with serious issues and that our work can offer perspective and techniques for coping and solace. Any sense of community we can create, just the act of sitting in a theater together, is a rebuttal to the cruel, ignorant environment we currently find ourselves in. Donate, participate, advocate. This is what we all can do.



photo by
Robbie Sweeny



photo by Deborah Slater

DEBORAH SLATER, director/choreographer/performer, has worked in dance and theater for over 30 years. She is the Artistic Director of Deborah Slater Dance Theater, a multi-media dance company, creating visually gorgeous, acrobatic, talking dance and dedicated to the creation of full-length works exploring social issues, science and art through original dance, text and music. Slater co-founded Studio 210, a performance/rehearsal space celebrating its 40th Anniversary in 2020. Selected commissions and residencies include SF MOMA, USF Dance & Social Justice, Iowa State University and the Exploratorium. *Special thanks to my performers Rachel Garcia, Anna Greenberg, Derek*

Harris, Meegan Hertensteiner, Evan Johnson and Kyle Limin for their commitment, honesty and guts. To Sean Riley for doing the impossible and making a rectangle transform into a circle. To Octavia Hingle for making us visible. And to Jessica Judd, John B. Hill and Wayne Hazzard for editing brilliance.

inCIVILITY, P2 Outrage Machine & P3 A Seat at the Table, ODC Theater, Th-Sun, Feb 27-Mar 1, 2020. Tickets: <http://odc.dance/incivility,deborahslater.org>

IN PRACTICE: Margaret Jenkins' Discusses Encounters Over 60

by SIMA BELMAR

IN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER 2019, I saw the work of three remarkable New York-based artists: Adia Whitaker, Miguel Gutierrez, and Tere O'Connor. Although O'Connor is arguably the most well-known of the group, or at least the most well-established, at least in contemporary western concert dance circles nationally and internationally, the houses on the nights I attended did not reflect this. Whitaker's ODC Theater shows were sold out, and Gutierrez fans covered every inch of space at the Latinx Research Center in Berkeley, but O'Connor's show was, though well-attended, not the jam-packed event I'd expected. (I don't usually make people feel bad for missing performances—I miss them all the time—but if you missed *Long Run*, well, you missed something special. Heck, if you missed any of these events, well, I'm sad for you.)

I think the main reason for the disparity in audience turnout is that both Whitaker and Gutierrez spent several formative dancing years in the Bay Area—they have people here. When Gutierrez saw the turnout for his talk “Does Abstraction Belong to White People?” he said, “This is like, *This is Your Life, Miguel!*” Friends and family of both the blood and dance kind showed up to support the talk and engage with its ideas. Whitaker, who said she was encouraged to “get her people” to the theater, appeared to have no trouble doing so. But O'Connor, who hadn't shown work in San Francisco for at least a decade, didn't have the same pull. Whose responsibility is it to pack the house? The artist? The PR team? The press? The artist's mom? It's probably some combination of sources and forces but one thing seems clear: the Bay Area favors its local and prodigal artists.

Margaret Jenkins, San Francisco native and prodigal daughter herself, has invited two dance artists who are largely unfamiliar to and with the Bay Area dance scene for two week-long residencies at the Margaret Jenkins Dance Lab in February and March. Vicky Shick (Budapest/New York) and Merián Soto (Puerto Rico/Philadelphia) will offer performances, classes, and workshops as part of *Encounters Over 60*, a project that aims to “amplify the visibility of elder dance artists.” Given Jenkins' commitment to intergenerational, multiethnic, cross-disciplinary, and international dance dialogue, there will also be ample space provided for reflection and discussion.

Jenkins and I met in her Polk Street office to talk about the challenges of bringing “outsiders” to the Bay, the rewards of CHIME (Choreographers in Mentorship Exchange), now in its 15th year, the future of older dancers, and the extraordinary (Jenkins likes that word, you'll see) vitality of the Bay Area dance community.

Sima Belmar: Let's get right to it. Tell me about the project.

Margaret Jenkins: The seed for *Encounters Over 60* really begins with CHIME. CHIME has kept me in conversation with artists and their work in ways I might not have had the opportunity, if not for this program. One of the things about CHIME that has continually surprised me is the degree of camaraderie that the people involved in it have discovered, the degree to which it diminished their sense of isolation. In each iteration of CHIME, the artists involved would get together four times a year to talk about what they were discovering in their mentorship relationships. I thought that the artists would find these burdensome, but their reports said otherwise. They were deeply appreciative.

SB: How do you see your role in *Encounters Over 60*?

MJ: Being *way* over 60, I can see that we are now in a very different art environment from when I started CHIME, and we are certainly in a very different arts culture from when I first returned to the Bay Area in 1970. There were a few of us making work then. Literally a few. So it wasn't just a euphemism. There were 2 or 3 of us making work. [Laughs] There are now 100s of us making work. And that's the great news.

SB: You're talking about concert dance, right? Because I'm sure other dance must have been happening in the Bay Area in the 1970s but perhaps not in that historical legacy.

MJ: Yes and no, but to name just a few: there was Shela Xoregos, Pacific Ballet, Carlos Carvajal (Dance Spectrum), San Francisco Ballet, and Anna Halprin in Marin who had what one might call more formal structures or groups. There were individual artists at work like Theresa Dickerson, Ann Woodhead, Helen Dannenberg. People reading this will rightfully know of others. And there was nowhere to show the work being made. There wasn't a Cowell Theater, there wasn't an 848, which turned into lots of other things. There wasn't yet a Theater Artaud or now Z Space. There certainly wasn't an ODC; they weren't here until 1976. There wasn't even my Bryant Street studio (1974) that turned into a performance space. There wasn't a YBCA. There wasn't, there wasn't, there wasn't.

There were some wonderful people here who were underground, trying to be seen, to find ways to share their work, but from 1970 to now there are literally 100s of people making and showing work in different ways, in different places, venues, alternative and traditional. There are of course not enough places but there are quadruple the number of places to share what you're doing than there were. You don't leave San Francisco anymore because you can't get good training, you can't see enough, there aren't enough variety of activities or points of view about dance-making. You leave for other reasons, more often now because you can't afford to live here. Before you came today, I was making a list of artists I know well who have left, and

there are at least ten who've left in the last few months.

SB: In the last few months?!

MJ: Yes. My roundabout point is that the wonderful news over these decades is the wealth and breadth and quality of dance-making that's going on—it's stupendous. But the thing that's complicated is that although there are many foundations trying to figure out or “refresh” how to support the wealth of activity—including diversity in styles and ethnicity—the question of how to support this volume remains a huge question. The people of my generation are now in a position of having to ask whether or not it's time for us to step out of the way to make room for a new generation of thinking, new ideas that are at work trying to find a voice. Personally, I don't think that's the solution.

SB: I don't know exactly what that would look like—

MJ: But I do think it's an important question. If you are an artist, age is not a defining characteristic. Making work is “of necessity.” I still have a burning desire to continue to grow and be present and to share what I know. There is no alternative but to continue.

SB: Is that what you're foregrounding with *Encounters Over 60*? That drive?

MJ: Yes. I wanted to find a way to create a program that highlights the necessity of continuing regardless of age. How can you make room for artists who are 60 and who are still performing, who are still at work, who have a lot to share and an eagerness to gather as well? There tends to be an emphasis on the new in our field and I think it's important to honor and celebrate our elders.

SB: How did you choose the artists for the project?

MJ: Some of the prerequisites were that the artists are still performing, that they are women, that they were performers, and that when they are here, each for a week, they be interested in doing something with members of this community. We've worked with the artists to help identify local communities they are attracted to working closely with—one will be focusing on making work with dancers over 60, and the other with the rich

SB: Because the four meetings were required?

MJ: Yes. But consistently, every year, each artist said it was the highlight of the year because they had the opportunity to really be in dialogue with one another in a way they never get a chance to in their daily working lives. It's always hard to find the time to stop and really talk to one another. Just surviving takes time. These conversations during CHIME led me to think about how I could get more of those happening, particularly between generations, where so much can be gained from one another's experiences. This curiosity evolved into *Encounters*.



Merián Soto / photo by Bill Hebert

continued on pg 12 »

» continued from pg 11

community of skilled improvisers in the Bay Area. This aspect was very important, so it wasn't just that they land, do something and leave, but they interact and get immersed here. We want to find ways that the artist can both encounter our community and encounter themselves, perhaps in new ways within our community. And we're excited for all the activities that will happen – there will be daily classes, workshops, and the performances by the artists and of the work they develop with the local dance community while here. All of which are pay-what-you-can with no one turned away, so these opportunities can be available to as many people as possible.

We want to fill the room with conversations and provocations!

SB: I remember seeing *Nederlands Dans Theater III* when I was in my twenties and was like, *Whoa! Dancers over 40! I'm 48 now, but even then, I found myself drawn to these dancers, less interested in glossy, 20-something virtuosity. There's nothing like witnessing someone who has been deep down into their work for a long time. I'm interested in what artists over 60 have to say about what it's like to move now, what's changed. I know some dancers in their 70s who are pissed that they can't do what they used to be able to do, and others who continually deepen their practice.*

MJ: The number of people in the Bay Area who are actively still working who are over 60 is really quite voluminous and many have been at the forefront of how the Bay Area has become such a rich landscape of diverse activity. Before making the choice of these particular women, I did a lot of talking to people around the country because there are so many wonderful women over 60 who are still at work and performing as well, about whom I knew so little. I was interested in bringing people who I felt embraced where they are with their bodies at 60 or older. I too want to talk with these artists and those we gather about how they continue to deepen their practice and challenge their assumptions.

We also wanted to choose two artists who've never been seen in the Bay Area. Merián had been recommended by a number of people that I knew, and I will admit that I didn't know very much about her and what a treat to broaden my landscape with getting to know her. Then in talking with her I discovered she knew very little about the breadth of what goes on in the Bay Area and I thought what a great opportunity for her as well. When I said there are 100s of people working here and the issue of finding people to come to her workshops would not be difficult, she was delighted and surprised. Vicky was connected to enough people in the Bay to know that it was a vital center of activity and was overjoyed at the invitation, having never been here. So, their residencies will be generative in multiple ways: we will meet two artists who have not been here with their work before and in turn they will learn about the wealth of artists at work



here and share what they learn in their home cities as well.

SB: What are some of the qualities that drew you to Vicky and Merián in particular?

MJ: They are two very different women dynamically, who have been involved in the field for decades and committed to very rigorous practices in very different ways, who have an absolute dedication to their practice. They care about the world, they care about human interaction, they care about how people are treated, they care about the state of the environment, they care about the state of the human body, and they care about the impact that their work and the body can have on the health of the human spirit. There are lots of people in the Bay Area who are teaching and making work that also care about these things. It's not that all of sudden we're bringing people to the Bay Area who are going to enliven the Bay Area in a way that it hasn't been enlivened before. I don't have that presumption. I just think it's another lens and another spice to add to an already rich meal that's here.

Vicky has been involved with the New York dance community since the late 70s, performing, teaching, and making dances.

She worked for a number of years with the Trisha Brown Company, and has made many dances in collaboration with visual artist Barbara Kilpatrick and sound designer Elise Kermani. She's an electric performer and commands the stage or room now even more than she did as a young performer.

Merián is known for creating her aesthetic-somatic dance practices, her *Modal Practice*, and her experiments with Salsa. Her meditative movement practice, *Branch Dance Series*, has garnered wonderful attention and includes dozens of performances on stage, in galleries, in nature, as well as video installations and year-long seasonal projects. She was a central figure in the 80s and 90s Latina Arts, Equity, and Community Arts movements, and she developed numerous projects featuring works by emerging Latinx dance and performance artists, including producing the Rompeforma festival in Puerto Rico for seven years. She uses film and live performance to embrace who she is now and takes her audience and her performers on a journey that brings everyone together.

SB: Do you think any 60 plus artists are going to be grumpy about not being the lead artists in this project?

MJ: Kegan [Marling] and I were talking about that. I hope not. I think many of us who run programs in San Francisco bring people here with excitement to share new ways of thinking but to also share the vitality of the area and to broaden what we know. To stay insular doesn't make any sense. That's why I travel to other places in the world as often as possible. That's why I try to get people from as many different places as possible to come here and be in dialogue with my company or in CHIME. When I did CHIME Across Borders for five years that was the reason I brought David Gordon, Ralph Lemon, Dana Reitz, Tere O'Connor, Elizabeth Streb—not because they are better than anybody here, but they had other experiences to share and offered different ways of seeing, about art-making. Elizabeth made everyone think outside the box. There isn't anybody who thinks like she thinks.

SB: Well that's for sure.

MJ: My hope is that Vicky and Merián will do the same. The people that I know in the Bay Area that are over sixty, dozens, some of them really good friends and fascinating artists, will welcome the challenge or the otherness of these artists, I think. And, also an ongoing question is what can I do to keep myself as an artist at attention and interested? How great to be able to curate a program and to continue to make work. I'm sure I'll learn a lot.

SB: It goes back to the question of whether older established artists need to step aside. If you have the power to provide platforms for other artists, that's much more important than stepping aside or out of the realm. If you're still in the funding cycle but it's in order to foster other artists, then that seems like a better idea. There will always be grumpy artists in a culture that doesn't support the arts enough.

MJ: Well, I don't think it should be either/or. I am interested in curating. I am interested in being a working artist. I think it's extraordinary what we get to do with our lives. More often than not, getting to go into the studio and work with the people I get to work with is a breathtaking and great privilege, and that every so often you get to step outside of yourself and think about what you can do to spark the learning curve for yourself and others in some way. One of the things that's very complicated about being an older body is that you can't do it the way you used to, but you can do it differently. How glorious. One of the things I love about still performing with Rinde Eckert is that I get to do it differently. I have no desire to do it the way I used to do it. I don't bemoan that loss.

There's a kind of energy you can't put into your work if it's spent on the litany of complaints around the things you didn't get, don't get, or can no longer do. Maybe spend 10 minutes there, then move on. It really is a decision about what to focus on and how to spend one's limited resources and energy.

At some point, when I was 13 and it seemed like everybody really hated me when I was in school, my father said to me: "You know, if you're any kind of a person, half the world's going to hate you and half the world's going to love you. Figure out what you believe in and move forward. The rest will follow."

SIMA BELMAR, PH.D., is a Lecturer in the Department of Theater, Dance, & Performance Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, and the ODC Writer in Residence. To keep up with Sima's writing please subscribe to tinyletter.com/simabelmar.

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Isadora Duncan Dance Awards Committee Announces Nominees and Honorees for 2018-19 Performance Season

THE ISADORA DUNCAN DANCE AWARDS, known locally as the Izzies, are awarded annually to acknowledge creative achievements in the performance and presentation of dance. This year the Isadora Duncan Dance Awards Committee will celebrate 34 years of honoring local dance artists.

Awards are given in nine categories to honor the dancers, choreographers, designers, composers, dance companies, dance scholars and individuals who have made important contributions to the San Francisco Bay Area's thriving dance community.

The winners will be honored at an awards ceremony to be held in the spring of 2020. This event will be free and open to the public. The following is a list of Nominees and Honorees by awards category.

Outstanding Achievement in Choreography

Katie Faulkner, in collaboration with the dancers, *Divining*, little seismic dance company, ODC Theater, San Francisco

Janice Garrett, *Gojubi*, Garrett + Moulton Productions, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater, San Francisco

Hope Mohr, in collaboration with the performers, *Leaving the Atocha Station*, Southern Exposure, San Francisco

Amy Seiwert, *Renaissance*, Smuin Contemporary Ballet, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater, San Francisco

Outstanding Achievement in Performance – Individual

Zackary Forcum, *femme's refusal*, choreography by **Zackary Forcum**, OOMPH Dance Theater, San Francisco International Arts Festival, Fort Mason Chapel, San Francisco

Chinchin Hsu, *Divining*, choreography by **Katie Faulkner**, in collaboration with the dancers, little seismic dance company, ODC Theater, San Francisco

Kimberly Marie Olivier, *The Fifth Season*, choreography by **Helgi Tomasson**, San Francisco Ballet, War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco

Allie Papazian, *Another Time*, choreography by **Mark Foehringer**, Mark Foehringer Dance Project, Cowell Theater, San Francisco

Frankie Peterson, *Champions and Lovers*, choreography by **Gregory Dawson**, Black Choreographers Festival: Here and Now 2019, Dance Mission Theater, San Francisco

Kavita Thirumalai, *Anandam*, choreography by **Kavita Thirumalai**, Cubberly Theater, Palo Alto

Outstanding Achievement in Performance – Ensemble

Tessa Barbour, **Ian Buchanan**, **Maggie Carey**, **Mengjun Chen**, **Jonah Corral**, **Valerie Harmon**, **Nicole Haskins**, **Peter Kurta**, **Tess Lane**, **Ben Needham-Wood**, **Terez Dean Orr**, **Lauren Pschirrer**, **Max van der Sterre**, and **Erin Yarbrough-Powell**, *Renaissance* (cast of May 24, 2019), choreography by **Amy Seiwert**, Smuin Contemporary Ballet, Mountain View Center for the Arts, Mountain View

Dores André, **Ulrik Birkkjaer**, **Jaime Garcia Castilla**, **Sasha De Sola**, **Benjamin Freemantle**, and **Elizabeth Powell**, *Appassionata* (cast of February 12, 2019), choreography by **Benjamin Millepied**, San Francisco Ballet, War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco

Julia Daniel and **Collette Kollwee**, duet from *small variations*, choreography by **Cid Pearlman**, Cid Pearlman Performance, Joe Goode Annex, San Francisco

Garrett + Moulton Productions' Movement Choir Dancers: **Ashleigh Adamec**, **Allegra Bautista**, **Suzanne Beahrs**, **Jessica Bozzo**, **Charlotte Carmichael**, **Jessica DeFranco**, **Caitlin Hicks**, **Anna Krumpo**, **Nicole Maimon**, **Alyssa Mitchel**, **Chelsea Mosley**, **Christia Nguyen**, **Thea Patterson**, **Hannah Pierce**, **Jocelyn Satterberg**, **Clare Schweitzer**, **Nicholas Stettenbenz**, and **Oona Wong-Danders**, *Stabat Mater* and *Mad Brass*, choreography by **Janice Garrett** and **Charles Moulton**, Garrett + Moulton Productions, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater, San Francisco

Megan Lowe with Sonsheree Giles and Shira Yaziv, *Action Potential*, choreography by **Megan Lowe**, in collaboration with the performers, Megan Lowe Dances, Athletic Playground, Emeryville

Lydia Clinton, **Marlene Garcia**, **Emily Hansel**, **Kyle Limin**, **Alexa Manalansan**, **Macio Payomo**, **Nell Suttles**, **Brianna Torres**, **Oona**

Wong-Danders, and **Liselle Yap**, *Impact*, direction and choreography by **Kristin Damrow**, Kristin Damrow & Company, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Forum, San Francisco

Outstanding Achievement in Performance – Company

Afro Urban Society + Bearettes, *Connecting the Concrete to the Dust*, choreography by **Kanukai Chigamba Ensemble**, San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival, Zellerbach Hall, Berkeley

Arletta Anderson, **Eric Garcia**, **Cookie Harrist**, **Hien Huynh**, **Phoenicia Pettyjohn**, **Karla Quintero**, and **Galia Stack Lozano**, *Of Iron and Diamonds V3: Alone Together*, choreography by **Catherine Galasso**, in collaboration with the dancers, ODC Theater, San Francisco

Anne Bluethenthal, **Richelle Donigan**, **Laura Elaine Ellis**, **Joanna Haigood**, **Dominique Hargrove**, **Courtney Hope**, **Rebecca Johnson**, **Courtney King**, **Joan Lazarus**, **Sue Li Jue**, **Elvia Marta**, **Priscilla Regalado**, **Jane Schnorrenberg**, **Frances Sedayao**, and **Nina Wu**, *Spirit and Bones*, choreography by **Sarah Bush**, Sarah Bush Dance Project, Taube Atrium Theater, War Memorial Veterans Building, San Francisco

Sarah Chenoweth, **Kara Davis**, **Chinchin Hsu**, **Rogelio Lopez**, **Manny Mendoza**, **Andrew Merrell**, **Julianna Monin**, **Danny Nguyen**, **Annamaria Santos**, **Nol Simonse**, **Tashanay Spain**, **Shaunna Vella**, **Jared Wiltse**, and **Leesha Zieber**, *Lipstick Lumberjacks*, *Losers and Leapfrogs*: "an evening of theatrical pas de deux," choreography by **Shauna Vella** and **Andrew Merrell**, The Humanist Hall, Oakland

Garrett + Moulton Productions, *Gojubi*, choreography by **Janice Garrett**, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco

Samudra Dance Creations, *The Earth Speaks*, choreography by **Jyotsna Vaidee**, Cowell Theater, San Francisco

Outstanding Achievement in Music/Sound/Text

Afro Urban Society (music), *Connecting the Concrete to the Dust*, choreography by **Kanukai Chigamba Ensemble**, San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival, Zellerbach Hall, Berkeley

Marlon Aldana (percussion), **Joseph Churchill** (percussion), **Jorge Liceaga** (flamenco guitar), **Angel Yoel Mullen-Robert** (vocals), **Clara Rodriguez** (vocals), and **Robert Woods-LaDue** (percussion) (music), *Del Flamenco a la Rumba*, choreography by **Carola Zertuche** and **Denmis Bain Savigne**, **Ará Irawó** and **Theatre Flamenco of San Francisco**, CubaCaribe Festival, Dance Mission Theater, San Francisco

Robert Moses and **Renee Gregory** (text), *The Exceptionally Elderly Overweight Black Man Phoenix*, choreography by **Robert Moses**, Robert Moses' Kin, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Forum, San Francisco

Vicki Randle (composer/music director), **Denise Woodward** (sound design), and **Skip the Needle** (music), *Spirit & Bones*, choreography by **Sarah Bush**, Sarah Bush Dance Project, Taube Atrium Theater, War Memorial Veterans Building, San Francisco

Aviva Rose-Williams and **Molly Rose-Williams** for text, *Mind the Gap*, choreography by **Aviva Rose-Williams** and **Molly Rose-Williams**, Kinetic Arts Center, Oakland and The Uptown, Oakland

The Crooked Jades (music), *World's on Fire*, choreography by **Kate Weare**, ODC/Dance, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater, San Francisco

Outstanding Achievement in Visual Design

Jack Beuttler (lighting design) and **Sean Riley** (set design), *The Wait Room: Part One of the Decarceration Trilogy*, choreography by **Jo Kreiter**, in collaboration with the dancers, Flyaway Productions, East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, Richmond

Alexa Burrell and **Lena Gatchalian** (video) and **Harry Rubeck** and **Jaco Strydom** (installation), *Sin Palabras II: The Butterfly Effect*, choreography by **Krissy Keefer**, Dance Brigade, D.I.R.T. (Dance in Revolt(ing) Times) Festival, Dance Mission Theater, San Francisco

Aura Fischbeck (concept/direction) and **Beth Hersh** (lighting design), *Dusk, a dance for the time when the light is fading*, choreography by **Aura Fischbeck**, Aura Fischbeck Dance, Joe Goode Annex, San Francisco

Kinotech Arts and **Weidong Yang** (heart monitors), *Resonant Frequencies*, choreography by **Daiane Lopes da Silva**, in collaboration with the dancers, Kinotech Arts, Kinotech Arts, Walking Tall Festival, ODC Theater, San Francisco

Hushidar Mortezaie and **Saba Taj** (costume and visuals) and **Anum Awan** and **MACROWAVES** (video and set design), *Tomorrow We Inherit the Earth: The Queer Intifada*, choreography by **Zulfikar Ali Bhutto** and **jose e abad**, CounterPulse, San Francisco

Olivia Ting and **Lenora Lee** (media design), *Beneath the Surface*, choreography by **Lenora Lee**, in collaboration with performers, Lenora Lee Dance, YMCA of San Francisco, San Francisco

Outstanding Achievement in Restaging / Revival / Reconstruction

Jessie Egber, **Brian Fisher**, **Brandon Freeman**, and **Katherine Wells**, restaging of *Concerto Grosso* (2000), choreography by **Mark Foehringer**, Mark Foehringer Dance Project, Cowell Theater, San Francisco

Virginia Matthews, restaging and revival of excerpts from 50 years of dance and

choreography for *Approaching 70 -- 50 Years of a Life in Dance*, choreography by **Virginia Matthews**, Dance Mission Theater, San Francisco

Charles Moulton, revival of *Ball Passing* (1979), choreography **Charles Moulton**, Garrett + Moulton Productions, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater, San Francisco

Nancy Raff, restaging of *Shostakovich Trilogy* (2013), choreography by **Alexei Ratmansky**, San Francisco Ballet, War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco

Special Achievement Award for Outstanding Production Honoree

Pachuquismo, choreography by **Vanessa Sanchez**, La Mezcla, Dance Mission Theater, San Francisco, for its unique telling of the story of Las Pachucas in the 1940s using tap dancing and son jarocho music.

Special Achievement Award Honorees

Sandra Chinn, for her commitment to and excellence in the training, teaching, inspiring, and motivating dancers throughout the dance community.

Kary Schulman, for her dedication to the arts community through the San Francisco's Grants for the Arts, and her extraordinary leadership of San Francisco's venerable funding structure and unflinching commitment to excellence and generosity at the helm of this important institution.

Sustained Achievement Award Honorees

Black Choreographers Festival, for producing performances, forums, and educational opportunities which have inspired similar dance festivals recognizing and promoting the contributions of African American artists.

Ensembles Ballet Folklórico de San Francisco, for 25 years of sharing, promoting, educating, and continuing one of the richest manifestations of tradition and culture in Mexican folkloric dance.

Joe Landini, for twelve years of dedicated work developing and implementing the SAFEhouse Arts' Resident Artist Workshop (RAW) program for emerging and established artists by providing rehearsal and performance space and mentorship. RAW has provided over 800 arts groups with resources and opportunities for experimentation and growth.

Carla Service, for her 35 years of service to the dance community through Dance-A-Vision Entertainment. Under her leadership, the organization provides dance instruction for Bay Area youths, and produces performances, lecture demonstrations, and choreography training for the community-at-large. Her dedicated work has been the inspiration for many students to pursue careers in the entertainment field and beyond.

During each 12-month performance cycle, running September 1-August 31, the volunteer Izzies Committee collectively views over 400 eligible performances. The final nominees and honorees are selected at an annual voting meeting held in September after the close of the viewing cycle. Member profiles and lists of previous nominees and award winners are available online at www.izzies-sf.org. The Izzies Committee is supported in part through grants, in-kind donations, and annual giving by individuals.

For additional information, contact: izzienotifications@gmail.com



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PAUL TAYLOR DANCE COMPANY

The Celebration Tour

Wednesday–Sunday
February 19–23, 2020

The Blue Shield of California
Theater at YBCA

PAUL TAYLOR DANCE COMPANY returns with “The Celebration Tour” performing two programs of Taylor’s monumental choreography, including the West Coast premiere of Taylor’s final work, *Concertiana*. In 2018 Taylor named longtime company dancer **Michael Novak** as artistic director. Don’t miss the opportunity to meet Novak in person as he talks about the exciting future of this iconic company.



Photo: Paul B. Goode

Maya Beiser + Wendy Whelan + Lucinda Childs + David Lang

The Day

Thursday–Friday, February 27–28
7:30pm | Herbst Theatre



Photo: Haydn Heron, Courtesy of Jacob's Pillow

“You know from the start that Beiser, who is a magnificent cellist, is going to fill not just your ears but also take over your senses...this searching, haunting and very, very beautiful work is surprisingly lacking in melancholy. It is souls journeying, seen neither from the nostalgic past nor unknowable future.” —*Los Angeles Times*

Creative Producer Maya Beiser
Maya Beiser | Cello
Wendy Whelan | Dancer
Lucinda Childs | Choreographer
David Lang | Words and Music

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DANCERS' GROUP Artist Administrator: Wayne Hazzard, Community Resource Manager: Katie Taylor, Artist Resource Manager: Zoe Donnellycolt, Program Assistant: Andréa Spearman, Bookkeeper: Michele Simon, Design: Sharon Anderson

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