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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**Welcome**

by WAYNE HAZZARD, ARTIST ADMINISTRATOR

RAW Artist Showcase, Jan 11-12
photo by Alexandra Spiraarman

RAW Artist Showcase, Jan 11-12
photo by Robbie Sweeny

Deborah Slater Dance Theater, Feb 27-Mar 1
photo by Robbie Sweeny

Sharp & Fine, Feb 7-9
photo by RJ Muna

JAN/FEB 2020

Welcome by Wayne Hazzard, Artist Administrator
by CHRISTINE JOY FERRER

WOMXN SPEAK: WORD!

ON THIS PAGE/WOMXN SPEAK: WORD!
bym Christine Joy Ferrer

35 Years Later SFB Brings Back Balanchine’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream
by Heather Dorgan

SPEAK: How to Ask for Help
by Megan A Shannon Kurashige

January/February Performance Calendar

Dance Play is Serious Business by Nancy Ng

SPEAK: A Seat at the Table by Deborah Slater

Encounters Over Go by Simo Belmar

IZZIE Nominees & Honorees Announced

wore. 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 both speak both life and death into being, shed light on the truth and hide the truth. We use words to reflect, inspire, story-tell, 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 - Women Outsider 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 Nekuruwa Orchre and Tossie Long of Afro Urban Society in collaboration with DMT presenting Bakamal De Afrique: What Had Happened Was .., an Afro-Urban musical, and collaboration on a new program with La Colectiva de Mujeres (Balle Collectivo) spearheaded by Andrea Maldoñado and Vanessa Sanchez. And this year, it expanded to include Rulan Tangen/Dancing Earth (Between Underground and Skyworld), Kanyon Sayers-Rodri and Bernadette Smith (REINDIGENIZE), Kenora Lee (In the Skin of Her Hands), Susanarenas Arena Dance Company (Ex 6), and finally finishing up the season with Krisy Keefer/Dance Brigade (Buttery 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 crucial for social change, without their voices, we don’t have social change, social justice and equality,” says Kristy Kefee, 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 multimedia storytelling. Tackling issues such as: climate change, perspectives of blackness internationally and nationally, the rise of indigenous peoples —acknowledging that we are on occupied lands—immigration, spirituality, health and living with breast cancer. I spoke with three choreographers -Rulan Tangen, Susanarenas Arena and Krisy Kefee - 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. Kefee, 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 choreographers 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 re-examine 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 interdisciplin ary 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 human toxicity 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 re-purpose? 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 viability.”

Christine Joy Ferrer (C-JF): What was your intention and process behind Between Underground and Skyworld? One of my 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 place 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 advisors and the power that they have.
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 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 Contemp-orary Dance Creations dynamically activates their mission to support Indigenous dance and related arts, to encourage and revitalize awareness of bi-cultural diversity through artistic expression, for the education and wellness of all peoples.

Eso sí, Arenas Dance Company’s latest work, celebrated the 20th anniversary of choreographer and director Susana Arenas Pedrosa. 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 Afro-Cuban folkloric and popular dance traditions.

Eso sí, Susana Arenas says, “someone is going to find you while you’re dancing in the Malecón 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 Pedrosa, Arenas Dance Company’s mission is to preserve and promote the rich and diverse Cuban folkloric and popular dance traditions.

Krisy 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.

Krisy 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 uphold the beginning of the WORLD SPEAK WORD! And the oracu- lar knowledge and spirit that follows it. Visit dancemissiontheater.org for more info and let’s be interested in donating to sup-port this work.

I have never done an entire, even-length work on the complete degradation of our cli- mate 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 fash- ion. Getting sucked into the beauty of a fashion show display that turns distant at the end. The audience will witness through visual imagery how entire towns get wiped out because of flood and fire. Remember- ing PARADISE and people trying to fight for their lives in SONOMA and SANTA ROSA.

It’s time for us 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 Krisy Keefer explores the intersection between art and social issues with fierce inventiveness and a deft comic touch.

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.
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 what I mean. Mop it up and make ap-propriate speeches fueled by over-imbibing. Decades-old quarrels rearing their heads, passive aggressive looks running rampant and complex romantic entanglements pulling focus from the newfound.

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 actu-ally devoted to that specific event. Instead, Dream focuses on the extraneous attendants who are gathering for the wedding celebra- tion: 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 mack-up 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. Trick- ery. Dream runs the whole gamut. As the author so aptly penned in Act I, Scene 3, “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 troopes like Silicon Valley Shakespeare and Concourse’s 8th The- atre Company. This coming spring, San Fran-cisco Ballet (SFB) continues the trend, dig- ing into their vast repertory archive to offer another A Midsummer Night’s Dream expe- rience. One that communicates Shakespeare’s magically layered narrative through classical ballet, innovative choreography and stun- ning visual storytelling. A Dream filled with arms and hands that dance inches from a spell. With solos that command the space with large shapes, long extensions and light- ning-fast batterie. Sharp, directional changes in the choreography mirror shifts in the story; turns and spins indicate a change in character intention and trajectory. At the beginning of the show, 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 repeti- teur with the George Balanchine Trust.

An incredibly important member of the creative team, the ballet repetiteur is tasked with matching, creating and staging an existing ballet work or any of its com- ponents. To do so successfully requires a soul intensely immersed in the creation and evolu- tion of the production. An encyclopedic knowledge of the chro-notherapy, to be sure, but also of the music, of a 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 took her own personal 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 Edward Villella perform the principal roles,” she remembers, “it was one of my favorite ballets to dance, very romantic and every sec- tion felt so joyful.” With all that first hand experience and artistic lineage in tow, Jen-nings 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 summerfall). 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 particu-lar version... at the same time, I was 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 anx- iousness. “We don’t tend to do many full-length Balanchine narratives, and I think the company really came together for this new challenge,” relaxes 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% pres- ent, so supportive of the process and the completion 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 complexities. “Oberon’s variation is by far one of the hardest things I’ve ever had to do; it’s technically demand-ing, 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.”

At the same time, with Dream being a com-edy, 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 perfor-mance - 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 numer- ous balls, 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. Jennings is quick to point out how this production can provide yet another platform for folks to exper-ience Shakespeare, an artist, literary force that can sometimes feel overwhelming and inaccessible, “Dream is able to remove pre-conceived 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 to do it to such an extreme, miss- ing 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 sixth, 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. Jennings 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 Oakland Ballet, the dance curator for SF Arts Monthly, a contributor to DanceAll and as well as other dance-focused publications. Program 4 of San Francisco Ballet’s 2020 season, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, runs March 6th at the War Memorial Opera House. sfballet.com

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

Wanda Park and Benjamin Freemantle rehearsing Balanchine’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Photo by Erik Tomasson

© SFMOMA; Photo by Erik Tomasson
How to Ask for Help, Raise Your Ghosts, and Make a Family

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

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

The first thing:
In 2015, 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 the Conservatory closed, we felt unmoored. We had never made a piece without a home to create 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 RAWdance 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.

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, 9, 11
Z Space, San Francisco
sharphandfine.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 Pelletier 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

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.

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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, 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 Lisa Fair Dance, Mark Forster’s Dance Project, Alax Katiy, Christian Barnes, Amy Siewert, Ballet Pacifica, and Grandes Ballets Canadien 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 graphic designer.
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 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 adaptation 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 Homayra 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.
nonstopbhangra.com

SAFEhouse RAW presents Artist Showcase
SAFEhouse Arts, SF
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 RAWdance with guest artists: Julie Crothers, Kelly Del Rosario, Melissa Finley, Molly Matsutani, and Suzy Myre. Fri, Jan 17, 8pm, Sat, Jan 18, 7pm & 9pm, $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 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, 7pm & 9pm, Sun, Jan 26, 7pm, Sat, Feb 1, 2pm and 8pm, Sun, Feb 2, 2pm, $35-$999.
sfballet.org

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, and a 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

VISIT THE ONLINE COMMUNITY CALENDAR, to find additional events and to submit a performance. dancersgroup.org
San Francisco Movement Arts Festival
Grace Cathedral, SF
With the 6th Annual San Francisco Movement Arts Festival (SFMAF), 55+ local performance groups, comprising of 200+ 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, 4pm. $10-$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. $10-$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 personal break, hospital and mental facility recovery. Fri-Sat, Jan 31-Feb 1, 7:30pm; Fri-Sat, Feb 7-8, 7:30pm, $20-$30. kwendo.com

KWENTO
PianoFight, SF
Inter-artist Catherine Liu’s, KWENTO’s Artistic Director, most traumatic experience with her own mental health, showing her racing thoughts as they turn into “tick 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. kwendo@dance.com

Theatre Flamenco of San Francisco
Herbst Theater, SF
Herbst Theater’s 55th Home Season presents Soul Almo, 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 Juan de la Isla. Sat, Feb 1, 7:30pm. $15-$25. theatreflamenco.org

Sharp & Fine
Z Space, SF
A devised work for six performers and four musicians. Just Ahead is Dohme draws on the Japanese and Japanese-American tradition of remembering the dead to tell a poignant story. 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. $10-$35. sharpandfine.com

Wax Poets(s)
Shawl-Anderson Dance Center, Berkeley
McClintock 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, 9pm. wax-poets.com

Cirque Mechanics
Bankhead Theater, Livermore
This latest from the creative minds of Cirque Mechanics dares us to leap into the circus ring and experience the timelessness of this evolving art form. gore7 is full of theatricality but with a modern sensibility, a showcase of wonders from a galloping mechanical horse to a rotating tire frame for strongmen, acrobats and aerialists. Sun, Feb 9, 7pm, $20-$45. 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’ Sandpiper Ballad, 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, 7:30pm; Thu, Feb 20, 7:30pm; Sat, Feb 22, 2pm and 8pm, $29-$99. sf ballet.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 ▶
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

DC Contemporary Dance Theatre/El Teatro de Danza Contemporanea
YBCA Theater, SF
UBLINDU: 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), Chandiri Derby 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

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-$95. sfperformances.org

Deborah Slater Dance Theater
ODC Theater, SF
In its 30th Anniversary season, ODDT 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, 5pm, $25-$45. nancykarp.org
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 capital is for African-American preschool boys. Preschoolers! I have spent my entire career teaching and learning how to foster children’s happiness and well-being—from my first job as a preschool teacher to my current role as Director of Early Childhood Education (ECE) at Luna, the right 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 into a workforce 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 danc- ing. Their organic in-the-moment quality of movement is something my preschool danc- ers yearn for and try to create in our choreogra- phy and performance. With bodies not yet colonized, young children’s dances are truly original just by being true to their inborn nature.

Increasingly, more dance teaching art- ists are becoming interested in working with young children 0-5. How can I, as a teacher educator, help them to create learning expe- riences that nurture and activate children’s innate creativity? How can dance support healthy attachment and autonomy? What dance curricula supports the whole child—cognitively, socially, emotionally, 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 education sector so they understand how dance meets early education goals? At Luna, early education threads through all of our work. A recent program exploring All 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 secu- rity, safety, and nurturant experiences in the cocooned intra-uterine 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 birth they mimic the facial expressions of the adult holding them. A loving parent gazes into their child’s face stick- ing out their tongue and out and 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 connection. Families move toward and away from each other, shadow each other’s moves, 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 cho- reographers who investigate the intricacies of relationships using space, props, and general 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 impro- visation is at the core of play. Dance improv- isation 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 destina- tion seem less tedious. Walking it blocks does not seem like much as an adult, but it is as great a distance to a young child with legs only 18 inches long. I taught her to jump by holding my hand. A few years later 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 shrub- bery. Our sidewalk dances were spontane- ous—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 juggled, rounded, 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 away, other times it moves 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. Anthropo- logists have made the case for dance as the first art form, and movement as the first form of communication. Dance/movement is funda- mental to literacy, health, and wellness as a core component of a holistic approach to sup- port young children’s self-efficacy, self-aware- ness, and autonomy. There is plenty of neuro- science 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 develop- mental 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 talbotore; 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 bet- ter 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 chil- dren’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 rela- tionship 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 Crea- tivity and Policy and Dir. of Early Education at Luna Dance Institute. She continues to learn from young children and 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 (Nagakawa, A. Dec. 2004), and The First Steps: Luna Dance Institute (Ready, P. May 2010).

I AM A STORYTELLER, a translator, an orator—
my job is to try and understand and perform these life experiences to help break the code of isolation, gives hope and sometimes clarity. We need to be taken out of ourselves and art to do this, 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, set and all the things that make a creative process. We engage together instead of playing apart. 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 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 when the table breaks apart and everybody gets to tell 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 we cannot 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. He assumed he might have found it easier to dance circles around him, got one. During roundtables at my studio (not at roundtable!), 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?”

These interviews brought up for the company are more questions: “What is the point of the 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 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 began 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 several 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 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 ignorance and division we currently find ourselves in. Donate, participate, advocate. This is what we all can do.

DEBORAH SLATER, directress/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, DP3 Dance & Social Justice, Iowa State University and the Exploratorium. Special thanks to my performers Rachel Garcia, Anna Greenberg, Deni Mininni, Megan Nettenstellen, Erin Atkinson and Kyle Linion for their commitment, honesty and guts. To Stearn Wray for doing the impossible and making a monster transformer into a circle. To Antonio Neglia for making us visible. And to Jessica Audd, John B. Roll and Wayne Hazeldorn for editing brilliance.


photo by Deborah Slater

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photo by Deborah Slater

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

by DEBORAH SLATER
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 Merían 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 inter-generational, multi-ethnic, cross-disciplinary, and international dance dialogue, there will also be ample space provided for reflection 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.

Marian Soto / photo by Brij Hubert

SB: How do you see your role in Encounters Over 60?
MJ: As you know 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 chrysalis. There were 2 or 3 of us making work. [Laughter] 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 Sheila Xorges, 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 Dickens, 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 844, 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 YRCA. 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 those 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 weight 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 in be an emphasis on the new in the 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
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 post-what you can do 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, Wow! Dancers over 40? I’m 48 now, but even then, I found myself drawn to these dancers, less interested in glossy, 20something 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 continue deeply 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 their work and their practice and challenge their assumptions.

We also wanted to choose two artists who have 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 the things I love the breadth of what goes on in the Bay Area and I thought what a great opportunity for her. When 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 work, 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 us are bringing people to the Bay Area who are going to define the Bay Area in a way that it hasn’t been defined 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 Kerman. 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 practices, 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 in 7 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.

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

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

MJ: There was a kind of energy you can’t put into your work if it’s spent on the litany of complaints about the things you don’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 writings please subscribe to tinyletter.com/simabelmar.
The Joffrey Ballet

LIAM SCARLETT
Vespertine (music: Bjarte Eike, Dowland, Corelli, Geminiani) (California Premiere)

STEPHANIE MARTINEZ
Bliss! (music: Stravinsky) (California Premiere)

NICOLAS BLANC
Beyond the Shore (music: Mason Bates) (Bay Area Premiere, Cal Performances Co-commission)

JUSTIN PECK
The Times Are Racing (music: Dan Deacon)

Mar 6–8
ZELLERBACH HALL

Dorrance Dance

SOUNDspace

Thirteen tap dancers and one acoustic bass player—it’s all you really need! SOUNDspace strips tap dance down to its most raw and thrilling basics—movement as pure music.

“One of the most imaginative tap choreographers working today.”
—The New Yorker

Mar 13–15
ZELLERBACH PLAYHOUSE

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo

Having debuted in Berkeley in 1976, the iconic prima ballerinas of the Trocks have helped bring gay culture and drag arts to the American mainstream through savagely funny satire married with seriously stunning ballet.

“The Trocks prove how parody and virtuosic technique work in glittering tandem.”
—The New York Times

Mar 14 & 15
ZELLERBACH HALL

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Robert Battle, artistic director
Matthew Rushing, associate artistic director

Programs will include classics from the Ailey repertoire plus Bay Area premieres by Aszure Barton, Camille A. Brown, Donald Byrd, and Jamar Roberts.

Mar 31–Apr 5
ZELLERBACH HALL

calperformances.org/tickets

Start Planning for the 22nd Annual Bay Area Dance Week

• HOST A FREE EVENT — a class, performance, open house, workshop, lec-dem, film screening, or design your own special event that promotes your activities
• Last year over 21,000 participants took part in over 350 free events.

APRIL 24 – MAY 3, 2020

ODC Theater Presents
KINETECH ARTS

AI SENSORIUM
February 21 - 23, 8PM
odc.dance/AISensorium

bayarea dance week
All dance All free All week

April 24 – May 3, 2020

— HOST A FREE EVENT — a class, performance, open house, workshop, lec-dem, film screening, or design your own special event that promotes your activities
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Did you know?
Classes are FREE at City College of San Francisco for all SF residents. Check out ccsf.edu/freecity

CCSF DANCE DEPARTMENT
Register for Spring 2020
Classes start January 13th
Online Schedule: ccsf.edu/Schedule/

Earn your Dance AA Degree or dance with us just for fun!
Contemporary | Modern | Musical Theater | Jazz | Hip Hop | Salsa
African Haitian | Swing & Lindy Hop | Tap | Ballroom | Folk Dance
Performance Production | Yoga | Zumba | Dance Conditioning

THERE’S MORE SPACE THAN YOU THINK
FIND IT. BOOK IT. CREATE.
BayAreaSpaces.org

NEW BALLET
2019-2020 Season
The San Jose Nutcracker
December 13-24
Fast Forward
March 28
Swan Lake
May 16-17
newballet.com

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Isadora Duncan Dance Awards Committee Announces Nominees and Honorees for 2018-2019 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, Divinig, little seismic dance company, ODC Theater, San Francisco

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

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

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

Outstanding Achievement in Performance – Individual
Zackary Forcum, James’s referrals, choreography by Zackary Forcum, ODDPie Dance Theater, San Francisco

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

Alice Papazian, Another Time, choreography by Mark Forfunker, Mark Forfunker Dance Project, Cowell Theater, San Francisco

Frankie Peterson, Champions and lovers, choreography by Gregory Dawson, Black Choreographers Festival 2018, iPAC, New and Now, 2019, Dance Mission Theater, San Francisco

Kavita Thirumalai, Anandam, choreography by Kavita Thirumalai, CubbyBher Theater, Palo Alto

Outstanding Achievement in Performance – Ensemble
Tessa Barbou, Ian Buchanan, Maggie Carey, Mengjun Chen, Jonah Corrall, Valerie Harmon, Nicola Hawkins, Peter Kurtz, Tessa Loson, Ben Needham-Wood, Tereq Dean Orr, Lauren Pischirr, Max van der Sterre, and Erin Yarbrough-Phillips, Renaissance Dance, (as of May 24, 2019), choreography by Amy Seiwert, Smaun Contemporary Ballet, Mountain View Center for the Arts, Mountain View

Dores Andre, Ulfrir Birkjartor, Jaime Garcia Castilla, Susa De Sola, Benjamin Freemantle, and Elizabeth Powell, Appassionato (as of February 13, 2019), choreography by Benjamin Millepied, Samudra Dance Creations, San Francisco Ballet, War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco

Julia Daniel and Collette Kelleo, dust from small variations, choreography by Cid Pearmain, Cid Pearmain Performance, Joe Goode Annex, San Francisco

Garrett + Moulton Productions’ Movement Choir Dancers: Ashleigh Adamec, Almira Bautista, Suzanne Beal, Jessica Bosz, Charlotte Carvajal, Ricardo Defrancisco, Caitlin Hicks, Anna Krupmos, Nicole Maimon, Alyssa Mitchell, Chelsua Mosley, Christina Nguyen, Thea Patterson, Hannah Fazio, Jocelyn Sattarberg, Clare Schwartz, Neilson Stettenbenz, and Onna Wong-Danders, Itisast Mord and Must Brass, choreography by Janice Garrett and Charles Jenkins, Garrett + Moulton Productions, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Theater, San Francisco

Megan Lowe with Sonshineh Giles and Shira Yad, Action Pointers, choreography by Megan Lowe, in collaboration with the performers, Megan Dances, Athletic Playground, Emeryville

Lydia Clinton, Marlone Garcia, Emily Hansel, Kyle Limin, Alexis Manalacan, Maric Paymo, Neill Sulttines, Brianna Torres, Onna Wong-Danders, and Liselie Yap, Impro, direction and choreography by Kristin Darnow, Kristin Darnow & Company, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Theater, San Francisco

Outstanding Achievement in Performance – Company
Afro Urban Society + Bearettes, Connecting the Concrete to the Dust, choreography by Kanukai Chigamba Ensemble, San Francisco Ethic Dance Festival, Zellerbach Hall, Berkeley

Arletta Anderson, Eric Garcia, Cookie Harrist, Hien Huynh, Phoecinia Pettyjohn, Kaira Quintero, and Galicia Stacklozano, Ooof and diamonds by: Ariana Together, choreography by Catherine Gallasso, in collaboration with the dancers, ODC Theater, San Francisco

Anne Bluh Rentbuhl, Richelle Donigan, Laura Elaine Ellis, Joanna Hygoine, Dominique Hargrove, Courtney Hope, Rebecca Johnson, Courtney King, Joan Lazaru, Sue Li Joe, Elva Marta, Priscilla Regalado, Jane Schonnerben, Frances Seday, and Nina Wu, Spirit and Bones, choreography by Sarah Bush, Sarah Bush Dance Project, Taubir Adam Theater, War Memorial Veterans Building, San Francisco


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

Samudra Dance Creations, The Earth Speaks, choreography by Jyotnya Vaidei, 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 Ethic Dance Festival, Zellerbach Hall, Berkeley

Marlon Aidan (percussion), Joseph Churchill (percussion), Jorge Licuega (flamenco guitar), Angel Vel Molen-Rubin (vocal), Clara Rodriguez (vocal), and Robert Woods-Labue (percussion), Del Flamenco a la Rumba, choreography by Carmen Febre and Domnis Bain Sjengives, Arak Iwaii and Theatre Flamenco of San Francisco, CulcaCaribe Festival, Dance Mission Theater, San Francisco

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

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

Aviva Rose-Williams and Molly Rose-Williams for 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 Wears, ODC/Dance, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Theater, San Francisco

Outstanding Achievement in Visual Design
Jack Beatlifter (lighting design) and Sean Riley (set design), The West Room Part One of the Decadence 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 Rubec and Jacoby (installation), San Francisco House. The Beginning, choreography by Krissy Kefser, Dance Brigade, D.I.R.T (Dance in Revolt) (ing) Times Festival, Dance Mission Theater, San Francisco

Aurea Fischbeck (concept and direction) and Dieth and Anne-Rose-Williams for text, Our World in Revolt(ing) Times Festival, Dance Mission Theater, San Francisco

Kinetic Arts and Weidong Yang (sound), Rasonant Frequencies, choreography by Dianna Lopes da Silva, in collaboration with the dancers, Kinetic Arts, Walking Tall Festival, ODC Theater, San Francisco

Hudson Mortalez and Saba Taj (costume and visuals) and Arum Awan and MACKRAWIES (video and set design), Tomorrow We Inherit the Earth. The Quare Irrefrida, choreography by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Joe e abad, CounterPulse, San Francisco

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

Outstanding Achievement in Restaging / Revival / Reconstruction
Jessie Elger, Brian Fisher, Brandon Freeman, and Katherine Wells, restaging of Concerto Grosso (2000), choreography by Mark Forfunker, Mark Forfunker 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 Bal Pozziing (1970), choreography by Charles Moulton, Garrett + Moulton Productions, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Theater, San Francisco

Nancy Raff, restaging of Shoeshotaku Trilogy (1980) choreography by Alexie Ratmansky, San Francisco Ballet, War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco

Special Achievement Award for Outstanding Production Honoree
PachoApu, choreography by Vanessa Sanchez, La MaMa, Dance Theater, San Francisco, for its unique telling of the story of PachoApu in the 1960s using tap dancing and san jaracho music

Special Achievement Award Honoree
Sandra Chin, 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 across the country and also supported the contributions of the African American artists.

Ensembles Ballet Folklorico de San Francisco, for 25 years of sharing, promoting, educating, and continuing one of the highest masterpieces of tradition and culture in Mexico Flamenco dance.

Joe Landini, for twelve years of devoted work developing and implementing the S'Atmosphere Arts’ Resident Artist Workshop (RAW) program for emerging and established artists by providing rehearsal and performance space and mentorship, and presenting over 200 shows with 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 youth, 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 through August 31, the volunteer Izzies Committee collaboratively views over 400 excellence performances. The final nominees and honorees are selected at an annual voting meeting held in September after the close of the meeting. The voting 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: izzienes@izziesthearts@gmail.com
America’s Dance Greats Take to the Stage!

**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.

“...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

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Maya Beiser + Wendy Whelan + Lucinda Childs + David Lang

The Day

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

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DANCERS’ GROUP

Artist Administrator: Wayne Hazzard
Community Resource Manager: Katie Taylor
Artist Resource Manager: Zoe Donnelly
Program Assistant: Andréa Spearman
Bookkeeper: Michele Simon
Design: Sharon Anderson