

## Transcript of *In Conversation* with Vanessa Sanchez

*In Dance* Summer 2021

*In Conversation* theme music: Calming mid-tempo new wave meditation music that you may hear in a massage therapy clinic

[Theme music plays, then fades out slightly to play in the background of the introduction]

**Andréa Spearman:** Dancers' Group is experimenting with new ways to unify, strengthen, and amplify voices in the Bay Area. We're excited to share a variety of ideas and stories.

[Theme music fades back in, then gradually fades out entirely as Andréa begins to speak]

**Andréa:** Hey, we're back with *In Conversation* with me, Andréa Spearman, and today we have Vanessa Sanchez!

**Vanessa Sanchez:** Hello, thanks so much for having me.

**Andréa:** Yes! Welcome, welcome. She is a Chicana-Native dancer, choreographer and educator who focuses on community arts and traditional dance forms to emphasize voices and experiences of Latina, Chicana, and Indigenous women and youth. Based in San Francisco, she is the [2019 Dance/USA Artist Fellow](#), a recipient of the [2019 New England Foundation for the Arts National Dance Production Grant](#), and holds a BA from San Francisco State University. Sanchez is the Founding Artistic Director of [La Mezcla](#), a rhythmic ensemble of women of color, that explores historical narratives and challenges social injustice through tap dance, Mexican zapateado, and Afro-Caribbean rhythms. Her production [Pachuquismo](#), an all-female tap dance and Son Jarocho performance about the 1943 Zoot Suit Riots has received the Isadora Duncan Award for Outstanding Production and will tour through 2022.

Welcome, Vanessa!

**Vanessa:** Hello! Thank you so much for inviting me to be a part of this conversation.

**Andréa:** We are so excited to have you. Now that was just a peek into your artistic background. You recently appeared on the [World Arts West program Living Traditions](#) and in that conversation, I heard you say that you grew up around Son Jarocho and a living, breathing culture. Tell the audience more about that.

**Vanessa:** Well, I grew up in San Jose, California and just a little background on that, I started dancing when I was really young, around four. I grew up around Son Jarocho through my family. My family on my mom's side is from Veracruz, Mexico where Son Jarocho – music, dance, the traditions, the culture – comes from. So Son Jarocho is, like I said, the traditional music and dance from Veracruz, Mexico, specifically the southern region of

the state. And so growing up with my abuelos and tios abuelos coming and visiting from Veracruz, it was always around but it wasn't explicit. They would bring costumes... I know that my brother was a folklorico dancer when he was very young and did a lot of Son Jarocho, zapateado, so it was something that I was always around, but wasn't directly taught or introduced to any of the dance or music until much later in life. But in terms of the cultural significance, it was something that was just part of the family.

**Andréa:** Yeah, it's that kind of intrinsic nature of being surrounded by it and then getting that more formalized training later.

**Vanessa:** Yeah, after spending years of training in tap dance and other dance forms, especially in San Francisco around Afro-Cuban/Afro-Brazilian dance, it was actually when I was in Brazil with my teacher and mentor Tania Santiago that I realized that I was spending so much time learning about this amazing, beautiful culture of Brazil... What about the culture that my family comes from? I haven't dived nearly as deep into that, and so it was around that time where I realized, "All right, I think it's time for me to start exploring that side." And so I traveled through Mexico and Veracruz by myself one summer and then ended up moving there the following year to just really start learning about the traditions.

The form of Son Jarocho that I have studied and spent a lot of time researching is fandango style, so it's not the same as folklorico. Folklorico is an amazing, rich, beautiful tradition but the fandango style is rooted in the campos, in the countryside with the families and it's a familial tradition that is passed down generation to generation. A community fandango is essentially a gathering, a party where families, community members come together and play, sing, dance Son Jarocho until it's done. Sometimes it can go until 5am [*Andréa laughs*]. I remember being at one fandango in Veracruz and around 4am, I just had to tap out.

**Andréa:** Oh, goodness. [*laughs*]

**Vanessa:** They were still going, but I just had to tap out. There's a word in Spanish – convivencia – which means "living and thriving together." There's not really a translation for it in English and so that essentially is what this tradition brings. It's thriving together, and so sometimes when you're in that, you just keep going.

**Andréa:** I love that. You know, 4am may not be my jam, but I love the energy [*both laugh*] that radiates from celebrations and gatherings like that.

**Vanessa:** Yes, yes, definitely. It's its own experience and sometimes you just gotta tap out, you know [*Andréa laughs*], when it's past your time.

**Andréa:** And what would you say are some of the most important things that you've learned throughout your career studying and making dance?

**Vanessa:** Yeah, that's a great question. I've actually been reflecting on this a lot lately and thinking of it not just in terms of my current career – currently what I do with dance as a director/choreographer/educator, but also thinking back to being seven, and being ten, and kind of the span of what dance has taught me. And one of the first things that comes to mind from being younger is around discipline. You know, the discipline of training and I feel like this also spans in other art or athletic forms, there's a discipline in training. There's a discipline in learning a technique and learning a style that spans years! Sometimes decades. And I think that that often translates to a lot of other facets of life. I think that's one of the reasons that arts and dance education is so important for youth because it can translate to other parts of life.

The other thing that really comes to mind, and it's one of the more challenging things I've learned, is humility. [Andréa: Ooh.] When you are working towards something, even as you're advancing and growing in a style or a skill or developing as a choreographer or whatever it may be as a performer, there is this sense of humility that you have to have along the way because it's not always going to turn out how you had envisioned, but that can't be what stops you. For myself, I have to accept and get past and move forward when roadblocks come up in the way.

And I think lastly, and I've referenced this a lot in what we've been saying, I've learned just a lot about who I am and where I come from through dance. It's given me a very, very clear tool and lens to understand kind of rhythmically, kind of through movement – that's how I think anyway, I think more through movement and rhythm than through actual words – to really understand where I come from and begin to... *begin to* because I feel like this is never fully understood, begin to understand what my place in the world is and in the community. So that's definitely been a long – over three decades – process, but I'm really grateful to have dance to introduce these things.

**Andréa:** Yes. Ooh your place in the community. That's actually something we're going to circle back to a little bit later in the conversation.

**Vanessa:** Okay, sounds great.

**Andréa:** And right now, what you just said about humility and growth. What are some things that you struggle with? What does it mean to take risks?

**Vanessa:** Yeah, that's a great question. I'm going to think for a second because I have so many answers. I shouldn't try to verbalize them. A little tangent, that's one of my struggles as a dancer, sometimes I'm like, "Let me dance it for you," but I'm going to verbalize it...

You know I think if I'm looking at it in a purely logistical playing field, I think one of the things I struggle with is the management of the dance world. I guess, for lack of a better word, the business side. Because as dancers in school and in training, we're training in movement, we're training in rhythm, we're training in music; we're not necessarily

training in bookkeeping and all that kind of stuff. So as my company and my work grows, that's definitely been something I've had to adapt to. And I feel like that's kind of – in talking with other dancers locally and around the country – that's kind of a common theme of “Okay, now we're getting to this place. It's not just this place with our movement and our choreography, we also have to figure out how to match that on the business and logistical side of things.” That's definitely been a struggle. I don't know if I'd say a “struggle,” but it's been a challenge that I've had to learn to overcome over the past few years and I know that it's a similar thing kind of across the board with a lot of other dancers and artists.

I'll say one of the big things, if I'm looking at it from a personal level and who I am in my inner ego talking, one of the big things I have to overcome is – for lack of a better word, I don't really like this term – is imposter syndrome. [Andréa: Ooh.] This idea of: Do I belong here? Just looking at where we come from, we're in a culture/society rooted in white supremacy and patriarchy, so being a woman of color coming into these spaces, sometimes there's this voice inside of me because we're trained for our whole lives, indirectly or directly, to know where we belong and where we don't belong. As I've gone to attend panels, as I'm applying for grants, as I'm doing all these things, there's this voice in the back of my head like, “Do you belong here? Is this where you're supposed to be?” It actually takes a lot, and I'm getting a little emotional thinking about it, it takes a lot to push past. It's a little bit scary sometimes and I think that's where community support and ganas – “ganas” meaning, it's Spanish slang, this desire and drive to do it, to make it happen – is something I rely on heavily to push past those moments. It doesn't go away either; as I've continued to grow, I think the voice starts to get a little bit louder. It's just kind of there, especially leaving my comfort zone of my San Francisco Bay Area dance community and going into other spaces, the voice gets louder. It's finding a way to overcome it but to also cope with why it's there. Also find healthy outlets to be like, “Why is this happening and what can I do to begin to remedy those voices in the back of my mind?”

**Andréa:** Yes, absolutely. I was definitely going to ask you about that because you recently presented work for Joyce Theater and the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. These are traditionally white spaces and I wanted to ask you: What was that process like and how are you, as an artist of color, navigating and changing these environments?

**Vanessa:** I was contacted by the theaters for both of those and I have to say my first reaction was like, “Are you sure? Really?”

**Andréa:** Ah see, that's that imposter syndrome.

**Vanessa:** And it took me – I remember after getting those emails – it took me a couple days to even respond because I was just like, “Are you sure? Do you know what we do? Do you know who we are?” And so, it's been interesting. I have to say that I'm not sure on the other end, if we're reshaping and changing things through the work, but I have to say the

intention I bring is being honest and straightforward in what the mission and intention of the work I do is for. You know, not watering that down. Even in [the piece we did for the Lincoln Center](#), that was a concert for kids. That was part of their Concerts for Kids series and I still felt it really important to find a way to talk about farmworker and environmental injustice and the legacy that the pachucas had in the 1940s. I felt it was really important to find a way to include that in the narrative of the work because if we don't, then we're not being who we are. Then I'm not being who I am. I'm not bringing the work forward, and I'm not watering it down. I'm not watering it down for a specific audience.

That I feel, just going back to this idea of imposter syndrome, that's something I also struggle with, is changing the way we speak – the way I speak – in certain situations. In both approaching the conversations with the Joyce and the Lincoln Center, I had to really make a conscious decision of “Okay, I'm going to do this, but I'm going to do this *as me* and as what I do.” And I'm not going to try to fit it into another watered down box so that it doesn't feel – I don't want to say “threatening” – but in a way, it doesn't feel as threatening to people who maybe aren't used to these kinds of concepts or themes.

I remember in addition to the Joyce [virtually screening the show \*Pachuquismo\*](#) on their platform, it was the first time our work – in terms of a performance, a full show – has been screened to New York audiences. I was really nervous about how it would be received, but had to move forward and just say, “We're doing this. We're doing this and we're putting this out there and whatever happens, happens.”

In addition to that screening, they also asked me to curate their weekly dance picks. At the time – I'm not sure if the Joyce is still doing this – they had a featured artist choose their weekly dance picks. They would give you a week and say, “Highlight 4-6 dance picks for this week and we're going to put it on our website and on our social media.” And so in that, at first I was trying to think of things that were like, “What would the Joyce Theater audience want to see?” And then, in the process of that, I was like, “No! I'm not going to do that. I'm going to say first of all, what does the Bay Area dance scene have to offer?” Because I feel like the Bay Area dance scene doesn't get out as much as it needs to. It's not seen from other parts of the country as much as it should be because it's so rich and amazing and beautiful and powerful. And at the same time, sharing what *my* platforms towards using dance for social change are. I was really intentional around the pieces I picked, some of them were talks, some of them were performances, some of them were around the Indigenous jingle dance and what that means to Indigenous communities, and so I just think in working with these communities and theater spaces that I'm not totally familiar with, my approach after pushing past the voices in the head has been: Do you and do it good.

[Theme music fades in, then gradually fades out entirely as Andréa begins to speak]

**Andréa:** Bringing it back home to the Bay Area, I wanted to talk to you about our community and our ecosystem. You started this series called [Connecting Communities](#) and some of that work included talking to funders. Now what motivated you to move in that direction?

**Vanessa:** Yes, so Connecting Communities came out of the start of the pandemic and trying to find a way for artists, dancers, musicians to stay connected. A lot of that was inspired by tap jams and fandangos where communities gather, so trying to find a way to continue that connection virtually. And [Connecting Communities with Funders](#) came out of a lot of my experiences I've had over the past – at that time, I think this came out in September 2020 – so the prior year in beginning to receive national grants and beginning to attend these national conferences and being part of these conversations around *who's* getting funded? Who's getting funded and who has access to getting funded? And really looking at a lot of my mentors in the Bay Area and beyond who – I mean I wouldn't be here, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing without them – who have changed and shaped communities and done this work for decades and decades and decades, but because of resources and because of language barriers, they aren't necessarily able to apply and receive the funding they should be. With that, I just felt it really important in that I don't want to be one of the only ones from the Bay Area – in our kind of world of dancers of color who are coming from dance forms from traditionally Black and brown communities – I don't want to be one of the only ones getting this. There are so many more people who need and deserve this – this funding.

I looked at what I'd done and the relationships I've built with funders and just felt this kind of community responsibility to share that. Like I now have these connections and I need to do what I can do to share these connections with other people. That's where Connecting Communities started. It wasn't funded, this was just something I did because I felt like it needed to be done, especially in the time of the pandemic when artists and dancers and youth companies and these organizations are losing money. And when we look at predominantly white organizations or predominantly ballet- or modern-based organizations and dancers and companies, they have a larger pocket to draw from when there's a shift in funding, like during a pandemic. And then looking at these artists who rely 100% on gig money and performance money and class money, it's just done. They're just no longer getting it. It was like, "Okay, what can I do to try to make a connection between the people who have the money, and the people who need the money?" It was just an idea I had and I try not to be one of those people who has an idea and sits on it. I was like, "All right, I'm doing this, we're just *doing* it."

I just started emailing funders that I had built relationships with, setting up meetings with them, telling them this idea I had, talking not only about this need to shift the funding structure, but also the importance of realizing that they're people. Funders and granters, they're people and I think part of the nature of being a little bit afraid to dive into that world is when you see a website or you see a grant deadline, it can be very intimidating. But I think seeing the person behind it, seeing the face behind it makes that process a little bit easier, a little less intimidating. So that was part of the process – literally just did

some cold calls and emails to funders that I had gotten funding from in the past and then also some I hadn't gotten funding from. Just kind of "This is my idea, this is my vision" and everyone seemed really open to the idea. I was very straightforward in what the vision was: Session 1 is introducing community members to funders. This is 100% free to artists and dancers in the community and I wanted to make it intentionally welcoming to dancers rooted in Black and brown cultural traditions. Dancers, artists, musicians – it was kind of around the board. The people who registered – we had seamstresses, musicians, filmmakers who all kind of wanted this, needed this. Needed this kind of introduction to the whole process because it can be very foreign and very intimidating. Session 1 was just the introduction: these are the funders, these are their faces, this is what they offer.

Session 2 was tips – tips on how we can make this happen from different perspectives. It was done in a very casual way; it wasn't done with PowerPoints, it wasn't done with a panel of people sitting at a desk. No, these are real people, this is what we've gone through, and these are strategies we've figured out over the past decade or couple decades or what have you.

The final session was really just opening a space for artists to talk directly to funders and say, "This is what's working for us, and this is what isn't working for us. These are our thoughts on what would make this more accessible for a lot of us." It was really great to open up that space. A lot of artists who had never applied for grants attended, which was the point of it, that was the whole purpose to make people feel welcome into the process. My idea for this was if I can get one or two people to feel comfortable to begin this process – because it's a process, it's not like you apply for a grant and you get it – it's a process. You're gonna apply and not get them for many years, or for many months, and then one day you're going to get it and that turns into more. We talked about strategies around how to leverage getting one grant to get another and all these kinds of things. So I had this idea that if I can get one or two artists to apply for a grant after this, then that is the mission. One of the tools in doing that was making it feel a little different. In the middle of it, we had a dance break. We would just play music and get up and "All right, we're all gonna dance!" It felt more welcoming, it felt more like an artist space than like a very official, formal panel.

**Andréa:** Aw man, I must have missed that one with the dance break!

**Vanessa:** It was like, "All right, let's just dance! Let's get moving." And it was intentional. I tried to be like, "What would people in the community want in a gathering?" Not what is the most effective in teaching people about grants, but what would they want in a gathering? We're not totally about sitting in chairs, we're about music and dancing, so I really tried to make the process feel more accessible and more open and welcoming and I think that's kind of a conversation that can happen with other granters locally and throughout the country is if you want people from different communities and different spaces to

apply, how are you making this a space that doesn't say, "You are welcome here" but that says, "This is for you."

**Andréa:** Absolutely, what you're saying is so informative and to have these events that shift that narrative that granters and funders and foundations are these intimidating folks when it's just people behind desks.

**Vanessa:** And that's one of the things, too, around this process is that you can *call* these people. These are people – if you have questions, you can actually call them and they'll talk to you, which I know for me, was very scary and intimidating at first. I hope to do the series again, it's a whole process and I was grateful for Dancers' Group's contribution to allow me to get an assistant to help with the registration process. So really grateful for that. I think when I initially had the vision, I was like, "I can do all of this!" And then a few weeks in, I was like, "Oh my god, what did I do?" It made a lot of difference to be able to bring on someone to support just in the collecting emails of registrants and whatnot.

**Andréa:** Yes, absolutely. This series I hope very much that you continue it, and I hope to see more of these types of gatherings and informal discussions, and see a shift in the way that folks interact with each other and be able to do it in an easier way and not feel so intimidated.

As somebody who works in a nonprofit and has worked on a few other grant panels, please call, please email. We want to hear from the people! Especially if there's confusion because if we get your app, and we don't have a connection to you, we don't have any kind of prior history, it's much easier to say "Oh, we had a conversation with them earlier and they talked about this and that a little bit more. They asked questions about this," so now this seems clearer than their initial application. You've made that connection.

**Vanessa:** Yeah, it's really important. Even more in that process of personalizing it, so it's not so separate. It's not such a separate entity. Definitely.

**Andréa:** Absolutely. And I hope to see that shift in a major way, especially after this year.

**Vanessa:** Yes, yes. Same. Just this morning I was scrolling through my Instagram feed as a lot of us do when we wake up, and I know of just so many people in the community who are running these organizations out of pocket. They're meaningful, impactful organizations. They're people from the community creating things for the community. That's so important! And these are the ones that are the most underfunded, either underfunded or completely not funded, they're just straight-up running it out of their pocket. That shouldn't be the case, that should not be the case. I agree it would be great moving forward to have *that* shift – share some of the money that all of these major, major organizations are getting with people in the community who are doing the work daily. It's really important that that starts to happen.



**Andréa:** Absolutely, absolutely. And with that, what are some of the other shifts that you would like to see in the local, national, global dance communities?

**Vanessa:** Ooh... that's a good question. One thing that kind of brings together community and national spaces, I really want to see more – and this is specifically around dance, but it also spans everything else – I want to see more Bay Area dance companies on the national level. I just feel like there is so much in the Bay Area, but a lot of it is kind of kept in a bubble. Just attending these national conferences and seeing artists getting these national grants, there's so much here. There's so much here that doesn't get out. It doesn't leave and it should. That is definitely one of the shifts I want to see happen. I think that when we look at the landscape of the New York dance scene, or the East Coast dance scene, or even the LA dance scene, there are a ton of dance booking agents and there really aren't any dance booking agents here. So how can we shift that? How do we start to look at how dance companies here can be connected with theaters around the country and then begin to travel and show their work and show what the powerful Bay Area dance scene has.

Another thing I really want to see is – these conversations happen, but I think they need to happen a little more intentionally and they need to continue – is to really talk about white supremacy in the dance scene in the Bay Area. I think because the Bay Area is seen as such a liberal community and people are open and all of this, I feel like we can still do more. I feel like there is a lot more that can still be done and this is in the funder sense, this is also in the performance sense. Just looking at *who* is in what spaces, you know? I feel like there's a lot of compartmentalizing that is done around dance forms here. There's a lot of like, "Okay, these dance forms are performed in this kind of festival, and then these dance forms can be on these big, giant dance stages that have these giant audiences," which also reflects artist fees, opportunity, and I think we really have to shift that. That does not need to be the case. A cultural, traditional dance form that has existed and survived for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years does not need to be compartmentalized into two dance festivals a year. Why aren't they getting put on these big, giant stages that often feature, often present dancers from out of town or companies from out of town? And don't really focus on what's happening locally. I think that's a major shiftout that should happen and I think it should happen soon. I think it's been a really long time coming that these kinds of little boxes that forms and traditions are put into, they need to break them. It is definitely time for that to happen.

**Andréa:** Absolutely. That sense of gatekeeping is what it is. And I'm witnessing a change and a shift in that right now in some of the larger institutions, but I agree with you. It needs to happen faster, quicker, yesterday.

**Vanessa:** Yeah, yes definitely. I mean these artists and these forms... It's not even about deserving it, but they need to be there. They need to.

**Andréa:** And that's definitely an opportunity for change and growth in the dance community. I'm so glad you brought that up.

**Vanessa:** Yeah, I think it's important. Also just looking across the national landscape, there's almost this sense of like, "Okay, it's Latino Heritage Month. We had our one Mexican dance company. It's Black History Month. We had our one African dance company." No, that needs to be presented year-round. We don't need to fit into this little box. [Andréa: Absolutely.] Those platforms and those performances deserve more than a month. I feel like in some spaces, it's almost become like a check, a box that you check like, "Done! We got our one Asian dance company, our one Filipino dance company, our one Black dance company, our one Latino dance company, and now we can move on and do the 'real' dance companies." No, that's not how that works. That's wrong, that's not how it works at all. I think that definitely needs to be shifted and we need to look at how we can move forward collaboratively. How we can all move forward – not just one or two – but everyone in this space, everyone in these traditions, everyone in these communities.

**Andréa:** That is so accurate. Especially in this last year in the pandemic, I've definitely seen an overhaul of moving and shifting to that effect and also people calling it out for what it is and not just letting it slide anymore. [Vanessa: Yes, yes.] There have been so many articles of people calling out institutions, people calling out specific leadership saying, "Hey!" Exactly what you just said, "There needs to be Latinx performances all year long, there needs to be Indian performances all year long." There shouldn't be a special evening like, "Thank you for your time." How does that work?

[Theme music fades in, then gradually fades out entirely as Andréa begins to speak]

**Andréa:** I think during this pandemic people have really had the time to sit and think and reflect and take action in a way to make change going forward. How has this time impacted you? Any observations or surprises during this time?

**Vanessa:** Yeah, you know this time has definitely been difficult for me in that the dance forms that I train in – because I consider myself a student for the rest of my life [Andréa: Yes.], whether I'm teaching it or performing it, I'm a student forever – so the dance traditions I train in and do, they're all rooted in community. They're all rooted in gatherings. They're all rooted in being connected with other people with the music, having live music is a huge element in all this so it's been a real struggle to not be around that for a year. That's been really hard. It's shifted, it's been extremely difficult. I have to say I feel like there's been a little more push for innovation. Suddenly learned how to be a film editor, we had to develop all of these new skills to continue making the work that we make.

And I also feel like it's been a bit of an opportunity to connect with other people and communities that I wouldn't necessarily be able to connect with if it weren't for this new virtual landscape. Connecting Communities with Funders has been a real example of that, kind of opening up access for people who maybe wouldn't have it in other spaces.

One really surprising thing for me that has come out of this is being introduced to audiences across the country that I wouldn't necessarily have been able to connect with and that has led to a lot of other connections. That has been interesting and surprising at the same time, and I hope that other artists are experiencing a similar thing in that their work is now being shown on the East Coast, or even in different countries and that's getting your work out there. It's getting your work out there for other audiences, for other theaters, for other communities. And it impacts in a different way. Those voices and narratives wouldn't necessarily come from someone who's over there. I feel like it's really important that those voices, stories, experiences are being shared wider-range but also what that could mean is now people in New York know about your work, now people in Italy know about your work. What does that mean in the future? I think those are some surprising and interesting connections that have been made during the past – what is it now – year and two months?

**Andréa:** Yes [*both laugh*], yes. And speaking of new audiences, what's next? You said earlier that you're going on tour next year.

**Vanessa:** After receiving the New England Foundation for the Arts grants, we were supposed to begin touring in 2020. So we were supposed to start leaving our lovely, beautiful Bay Area bubble and start to go to other places with the work. All of that, obviously, was postponed or cancelled due to the pandemic. So now, as things begin to shift and things begin to reopen, theaters begin to reopen and whatnot, we are now planning some tour dates for 2022 around the country.

I'm also in the process of developing a new show. I was very, very fortunate and I'm super grateful to have received the [Hewlett 50 Arts Commission grant](#) in collaboration with Brava Theater to develop a new work. Currently, diving into a summer of research and development for the new work. The new work is called *Ghostly Labor* and it is a tap dance, Son Jarocho, and Afro-Caribbean rhythmic show that explores the history of female labor in the US-Mexico borderlands. So both looking at the exploitation, the legacies of exploitation and profiteering on female labor, but also really looking at the resilience and strength and real people who have been doing this work for hundreds and hundreds of years and continue to.

A lot of the work is rooted in fieldwork and live interviews, so that's part of why it was postponed – people feeling safe to meet and have these interviews and really connect, and so that's something I'll be diving into this summer. Simultaneously as *Pachuquismo* is touring, we'll be creating and developing the work and then it will premiere in 2023 at Brava Theater. So I'm really excited about this work, I'm also really excited to really intentionally bring together tap dance and Son Jarocho with Afro-Cuban rhythms. These are all forms I've trained in and studied in and now to really be intentional around how we can bring those together is something I'm really excited about. I'm also really excited to be connecting with communities around the Bay Area and in Arizona and New Mexico

and Texas to really meet with people and share their experiences, share whatever stories that they want to tell.

**Andréa:** I'm excited to witness *Ghostly Labor* as it develops and once we start seeing it on stages and whichever ways you present it. You're such a fabulous storyteller. Thank you so much for joining us, Vanessa!

**Vanessa:** Thank you so much for having me, Andréa.

[Theme music fades in, then fades out slightly to play in the background of Andréa's closing words]

**Andréa:** Thanks so much for joining us for this audio experience. For additional content that reflects our dynamic dance community, visit our *In Dance* article archive at [dancersgroup.org](http://dancersgroup.org).