CA$H Dance 2026 Press Release
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Contact: Wayne Hazzard

Dancers' Group Announces 2026 CA$H Dance Grant Recipients





Photos *(L to R): Preethi Ramaprasad photo by Joanna Ruckman; MoToR/dance photo by Lisa Berman; Casey Terrier photo by Paige Alexander*

SAN FRANCISCO—Dancers' Group, a service and presenting organization in the San Francisco Bay Area, is pleased to announce it has awarded $100,000 in grants to 20 Bay Area dance artists and organizations. Each grantee will receive $5,000 as part of the 2026 round of CA$H Dance.

The CA$H Dance program has supported dancemakers since 1999 and was designed by artists for artists. The program seeks to support artists and organizations that represent the many diversities of Bay Area dance.

Dancers' Group received 105 applications for this round of funding—56 applications from individual artists/partnerships/collectives, and 49 applications from organizations. After 25 years of grantmaking, this was the second-highest number of applications received.

They were able to provide grants to 10 artists and 10 organizations supporting a range of dance forms and practices including Aerial, Afro-Cuban and Afro-Peruvian dance, Bharatanayam, Contemporary dance, Tap, Hip Hop Freestyle, and Kuchipudi. The grantees will explore themes of grief, intimacy, identity, migration, cultural histories, ancestral connections, and the sharing of knowledge across generations through their work.

> *The artists and organizations receiving CA$H Dance grants reflects the incredible creative activity taking place in the SF Bay Area. Dancers' Group is more than proud to play a role that supports and uplifts their creative activity.* — **Wayne Hazzard, Executive Director**

The CA$H Dance program is funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation with additional support from Fleishhacker Foundation, Grants for the Arts, Kenneth Rainin Foundation and the Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation.

The 2026 CA$H Dance grantees are:
(Links to artists and organizations as well as project descriptions follow the list of awardees)

Artists	**Organizations**
Archana Raja	Arenas Dance Company
Alaja Badalich	BODYSTORM
Casey Tessier	Bounce Back Hip-Hop
Chinchin Hsu	Cunamacué
Héctor Jaime	Dancing Cy(i)phers
Kimberley Acebo Arteche	Latin Dance Grooves
KT Nelson	Molly Levy & Stephanie Sherman
Preethi Ramaprasad	MoToR/dance
Vivek Ramanan	Pulp Dance Co
Wendy Rogers	REYES Dance

Artist Project Descriptions:

Archana Raja is an Indian classical Kuchipudi dancer, and their practice sits between tradition and inquiry. Raja values the rigor and discipline of her training and is interested in how the richness of this tradition can continue to resonate with students and audiences who encounter Indian classical dance in a different cultural landscape.
CA$H Dance will support: Through Kuchipudi, they will explore questions that will stretch their inherited movement grammar and draw from poetic imagery toward a new dance-theatre work. The grant will give them dedicated time and resources for an exploratory process that is difficult to sustain alongside regular teaching and performance.
Instagram: @archanarajadance
Website: archanaraja.com

Alaja Badalich (they/she) is a Black, queer, neurodivergent dance artist, choreographer, and co-founder of Fermata Ballet Collective.
CA$H Dance will support: Badalich's revision of ***don't call me soldier; don't call me lady,*** a collaboration with **Jordon Ellis Dabney** — a live conversation between movement and sound that explores identity through the intersections of Blackness, gender fluidity, and neurodivergence. The work investigates how the body navigates the tension between being misunderstood by others and the layers of masking and code-switching of the two's lived experience. Badalich will expand the work beyond its current six-minute form, the full length duet will be premiered & presented by the 2027 Black Choreographers Festival: Here & Now,

with plans to pursue additional opportunities for the work to continue reaching audiences throughout 2027.
Instagram: @lajy.lou @laj.moves

Casey Tessier is a professional tap dance artist and award-winning percussionist of Panamanian/Sicilian descent from Albuquerque, New Mexico.
CA$H Dance will support: The development of ***Pocket 77*** as a modern reconnection to the historic jazz scene of West Oakland's 7th Street. Once deemed the “Harlem of the West,” a competitive title more widely attributed in the 50s to San Francisco's Fillmore District, West Oakland's 7th Street was the epicenter of African American life and "evolutionary blues" in the 40s before urban renewal initiatives of the 60s snuffed the cultural flame entirely. Original compositions will be created in collaboration with today's culture keepers in lindy hop, tap dance, and instrumental jazz artistry to honor the importance of this quintessential era that is often left unacknowledged.
Instagram Handles: @pi.taps @_accentap
Website: caseytessier.com

Chinchin Hsu, born and raised in Taiwan. Her practice draws from contemporary dance, improvisation, Chinese martial arts, Tai Chi, and embodied storytelling. She uses the body as both archive and landscape, exploring how memory, grief, resilience, and cultural lineage live in gesture, rhythm, and relationship.
CA$H Dance will support: ***Every Grain of Us***, a dance work exploring how cultural knowledge travels across generations and borders. Began with research into Koda Farms, a Japanese immigrant-owned California rice farm, to consider migration, agriculture, labor, and preservation. In combination with her own living experience to examine how rice can be a talisman from home, for those who are away from home. Through ***improvRICE***, a community-based practice where they meet people where they gather, they will invite conversations about rice, and respond through movement. This process will support the gathering of stories to connect with the public and to inform the choreography. Rice will activate sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste, making the performance space a place for gathering and exchange.
Instagram: @doublechinnychin @doublechindance

Héctor Jaime (They/She/He) is a Two-Spirit dance artist, choreographer, and “shaman of movement” from Mexicali, Baja California, México, based in San Francisco.
CA$H Dance will support: Jaime will develop ***Mundane Containment***, a 25 minute solo built around a large semi translucent scrim pyramid. The work examines containment and divinity by placing the body inside a structure that can alternately restrict, reveal, distort, and enlarge its presence.
Instagram: @hector.jaime09
Website: Héctor Jaime

Kimberley Acebo Arteche is a multidisciplinary artist, educator, and cultural worker committed to reindigenizing cultural practices and fostering community-based art.
CA$H Dance will support: They will work on ***pact: proto-calls of belonging***--a multidisciplinary ritual performance project co-created with collaborators Joshua Icban and Transcriptions01. It transforms oral histories from Queer Filipinx elders into song, movement, and site-based ceremonial performances. They will conduct oral history interviews with Queer Filipinx elders, including Jaime Geaga (founder, Filipino Task Force on AIDS), whose work moved the needle for Filipino communities during the AIDS crisis. Their project culminates in 3-4 site-specific performances across San Francisco.
Instagram: @kimbr

KT Nelson is a dance maker and mentor-facilitator-host. From 1976-2020, she danced, choreographed and partnered with Brenda Way to run ODC Dance Company.
CA$H Dance will support: Nelson will develop a new dance film, ***HoldYouMe*** which explores intimacy between bodies. This project was triggered by her husband's death. "After 47 years of togetherness and our innately interdependent life/shared body, I had to learn to understand what happened to this part of my world and my life in his absence." ***HoldYouMe*** is a collaboration with co-director Natalie Roberts and features a duet performed by Hadassah Perry and Kira Fargas. The film will be scored by Joan Jeanrenaud.
Website: ktnelson.com

Preethi Ramaprasad (she/her) is a dancer, curator, musician, and researcher. Her journey teaching and performing Bharatanatyam (South Indian dance) has led to artistic community-building endeavors across India, Europe, and the United States.
CA$H Dance will support: Ramaprasad will develop their solo dance entitled ***Love Language*** with filmic elements to tell the story of falling in love when you are far away from home. She will use the traditional Bharatanatyam format of a varnam, which is known as a very rigorous composition in the repertoire. However, placing a woman falling in love on a commute in an urban city in the United States, the piece both pays homage to Bharatanatyam practice while also pushing the boundaries of the repertoire. It leads with a cover of Freddie Mercury's "Somebody to Love," and connects with audiences using quite literally, different ***Love Languages***.
Instagram: @preethstergram
Website: preethiramaprasad.com

Vivek Ramanan is a dynamic artist who brings together the Indian dance form of Bharatanatyam with the percussive arts of konnakol and mridangam. His grounding in Carnatic music and percussion creates a distinctive artistic voice: one where musical composition integrates with the movement, footwork, and narrative power of Bharatanatyam.
CA$H Dance will support: Ramanan will create and produce three new works alongside musical collaborators, with the goal of public performance in 2027 with live musicians.
Instagram: @vivek.ramanan
Website: vivekramanan.com

Wendy Rogers has choreographed and performed contemporary dances for over fifty years, residing in the East Bay Area, New York City and Riverside (University of California dance faculty, 1996-2016).
CA$H Dance will support: Rogers proposes a fresh reset of ***See What Happens*** (2011-21-?), a ten-year project that became ongoing. Together with multi-generational collaborators, she has been sourcing moving artifacts and audiovisual recordings, costumes, sets, photos, etc. from her Body of Work. Rogers and dancer Jennifer Jerum will remix with dancing from the present: questioning, salvaging, tossing out, changing-up possibilities. Their emergent approach aligns with Anna Halprin's RSVP cycles: Resources, Score, Valuaction, Performance.
Learn more: Listen to a recent interview

Organization Project Descriptions:

Arenas Dance Company preserves and promotes the rich and diverse AfroCuban folkloric and popular (i.e. social) dance traditions – from the percussive Arará to the sensual Rumba to the energetic Palo – making it accessible to wide audiences via performances, classes, workshops, and cultural immersion trips to Cuba.
CA$H Dance will support: the presentation of a new dance theater work, ***Àṣẹ, Axé, Ashe*** that examines the shared African roots and distinct evolution of Yoruban West African religious cultural traditions as expressed through dance and music across the Diaspora, including Cuba and Brazil. ADC will also plan for an upcoming folkloric dance conference and prepare to offer a free lecture series on the economic and humanitarian Crisis in Cuba.
Instagram: @arenas_dance_company
Website: arenasdancecompany.com

BODYSTORM is an earthbound, airborne dance company. Via site-specific dance performance and education, we highlight the intelligent technology of nature and body, inviting expansive possibilities and cultivating resilient communities and imaginative futures.
CA$H Dance will support: ***Flight School***, a paid site-specific vertical dance training and performance lab for low-income artists, centering QTBIPOC. We approach the work through the lens of transness as a methodology, in which our survival mechanisms of adaptation and imagination sharpen our tools for placemaking and worldbuilding. The program takes place across the Bay at Oakland Museum of California, Bandaloop Studios, and Community Arts Stabilization Trust, supported by the Bridge Live Arts Community Engagement Residency. As we engage each site's social and ecological history, the afterlives of place emerge as their own architecture, and the body becomes a site of possibility.
Instagram: @bodystorm___
Website: bodystorm.org

Bounce Back Hip-Hop is an Oakland-based collective uplifting the Bay Area Hip-hop freestyle dance community through sessions, workshops, and events. It was born from a gap they identified in the Bay Area dance scene. While choreography classes are widely available, no dedicated space existed for dancers to learn hip hop freestyle foundations or history. In 2024, they self-funded a trip to New York to learn directly from the pioneers of this art form, bringing that knowledge home to share with their community. What began with five dancers has grown into a large, thriving community, drawing 40-70 attendees per session from across the Bay, the U.S., and abroad.
CA$H Dance will support: Advancing education by inviting experienced educators and historians to lead workshops. In addition to workshops and open sessions, they will organize other hip hop events including battles, performances, panel talks, and history lessons that highlight and uplift local Bay Area hip hop artists and continue to build local knowledge and appreciation for hip hop culture.
Instagram: @bouncebackhiphop_

Cunamacué is an Oakland-based Afro-Peruvian performing arts organization founded in 2010 to produce, present, and preserve Afro-Peruvian cultural traditions as living, evolving art forms. Through original choreography, musical composition, performance, festivals, film, and community-based education, Cunamacué amplifies the history, cultural knowledge, and contemporary voices of African descendants from Peru.
CA$H Dance will support: Artistic Director Carmen Roman will explore how Afro-Peruvian dances can be a source of spiritual expression, and a direct connection to the divine. She will develop a dance theater piece, ***Altares***, reimagining Afro-Peruvian dances and their connection to ancestral forms of spiritual expression. The choreography will be rooted in Afro-Peruvian rhythms such as Landó, Afro, and Festejo, while also incorporating original songs and décimas (improvised poetic form). In this way exploring Afro-Peruvian dance as a pathway to memory, ancestral connection, and collective care.
Instagram: @cunamacue
Facebook: @cunamacue
website: cunamacue.org

Dancing Cy(i)phers – Founded in 2019 as result of ancestral curiosities and "ah has" – is a deeply embodied cultural experience that evolved out of 30 years of research on African dance presence in African American dance forms and serves as a space for practitioners and scholars to examine, decode and recode, engage and embody what it means to attain "African Diasporic dance literacy." (Thank you, Dr. Halifu Osumare for the term "African Diasporic dance literacy.")
CA$H Dance will support: Research and development residencies tracing the cyphers, the coded footwork, spinal articulations, and gestural vocabularies of the dances of the Congo/Angola and West African regions through their African American retentions. Dancing Cy(i)phers will present the ***Stepping For Our Ancestors*** symposium at the Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts, which feature culture bearers and practitioners teaching Detroit Jit, Chicago Footwork, DC Beat Ya Feet, Memphis Jookin', and other regional footwork-centered forms, in addition to the dances of cultural groups from Liberia, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Guinea,

and Ghana. The symposium features live accompaniment and sessions on history, technique, research and preservation.
Instagram: @dancing_cyiphers
Facebook: @latanya.d.tigner
Website: https://dancing-cyiphers-101702.weebly.com/

Latin Dance Grooves is an intergenerational and diverse dance community that explores the art of Latin dance, focusing primarily on dances from Cuba, Brazil and the Caribbean. In addition to weekly dance classes, and community stage performances, their biggest multi-disciplinary project is producing an award-winning SF Carnaval Contingent.
CA$H Dance will support: Elizabeth Soberanes in developing guidelines and a mentoring process to help their BIPOC dance students learn the tasks involved in producing ***SF Carnaval Contingents***. This work will give the Latin Dance Grooves Carnaval community the information it needs to continue beyond Soberanes' 20-year tenure as director. The goal is to help sustain the legacy by preparing the next generation of dance teachers, artistic collaborators, and production teams, who are essential to creating the community's vibrant Carnaval presentations
Instagram: @elizabethsoberanesldg
Website: latindancegrooves.com

Molly Levy & Stephanie Sherman create dance-theater performances and participatory grief rituals that reclaim Jewish tradition in solidarity with Palestinian liberation, opening dialogue among Jews and between Jews and Palestinians where Zionism has severed connection. We weave Jewish ritual, live music, poetry, fabric, movement, and participation.
CA$H Dance will support: redevelopment of ***The Weight of Thread: A Jewish Ritual for Palestine***, an interactive dance ritual that transforms Jewish mourning rituals into collective grief rituals in solidarity with Palestinian liberation. Levy and Sherman will rework several dance sections, deepen others, add a new singer and revise poetry. They'll strengthen transitions between choreographed dance and audience participation so the ritual feels more intentional, and collectively held. They'll engage structured listening with Palestinian and anti-Zionist Jewish audiences in a feedback session where they respond to the developing work, particularly its representations of Palestinian suffering, Jewish grief, solidarity, & responsibility.
Instagram: @dra.coreografa
Website: stephanie-sherman.com
Website: mollylevy.com/the-weight-of-thread

MoToR/dance creates powerful interlocking percussive dance with layered vocal harmonies and large group choreography, in a moving choir. Creating emotionally in-depth works that are physically and intellectually challenging, MoToR/dance pushes the envelope in Body Music and Dance Performance.
CA$H Dance will support: the new evening-length ***Body Music show People Are You Ready***, presented in the round, with no sound support. In a very loud world, the work invites the audience to lean in; illuminating societal trends that try to tear us apart, and building solidarity in communal experience. Organically engaging the audience to be a part of the rhythm and song, the project demonstrates the medicinal effects of collective pulse.

Instagram: @EvieLadin
Website: evieladin.com/projects/motor-dance

Pulp Dance Co is a San Francisco-based contemporary dance company led by Artistic Director and choreographer Jenna Valez. The company began as a group of artists who met in dance class in 2017. Nearly a decade later, we continue to create work together. This shared history has built deep trust that allows us to take risks, challenge one another, and pursue work with clarity and intention.
CA$H Dance will support: Pulp will research, create, rehearse, and perform a new evening-length dance-theater work, ***Forever***, to be presented at the SF International Arts Festival in April/May 2027. ***Forever*** explores our human desire for permanence despite the reality of change and loss.
Instagram: @pulp_dance
Website: pulpdance.com

REYES Dance creates and produces evening-length dance performances, dance films, and Dance Thrill Fest, an annual dance film festival. Their choreography blends theatricality, humor, absurdity, everyday gestures, athleticism, and storytelling onto a rigorous contemporary movement base. We're interested in the tension between virtuosity and the ordinary, and between difficult subject matter and moments of silliness and joy.
CA$H Dance will support: REYES Dance will create a three-month self-directed residency, rehearsing 1–2 times per week with four dancers. The objective is to reinvent Reyes' choreographic practice through '***7 Ideas and No Structure***'. The project will consist of seven distinct movement ideas, each 2–5 minutes long, connected through chance procedures—such as rolling dice—to create an unpredictable stream of consciousness in movement. "I do not want to decide in advance what this work is "about." I want to remain open to whatever artistic and personal preoccupations emerge."
Instagram: @jocelynmreyes_
Website: reyesdance.com

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