

Walker Art Center - November 3, 2006

NEWS

WALKER ART CENTER MINNEAPOLIS SCULPTURE GARDEN

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Walker Art Center Presents 34th Annual Choreographers' Evening Celebrating Minnesota Dance Curated by Sandy Agustin

"A tradition as overstuffed as a Thanksgiving dinner . . . a great primer on the local dance scene."—City Pages



Choreographers' Evening Dancers

Photo: Cameron Wittig

(l to r, foreground): Margot Bassett, Edna Stevens Talton, Anasooya Abraham; (background): Cathy Wright

The Walker Art Center's annual Choreographers' Evening, now in its 34th year, invites audiences to celebrate the richness and variety of Minnesota dance. From established choreographers trying out new ideas to the freshest new talents, this evening of short works shows where dance is heading. This year's showcase, on Saturday, November 25, at 7 and 9:30 pm in the William and Nadine McGuire Theater, includes contemporary ballet, bharatanatyam, aerial work, flamenco, modern, African/hip-hop, tango/ballroom, and other styles.

Curated by choreographer/performer Sandy Agustin, former artistic director of Intermedia Arts, the program features Anasooya Abraham, Denise Armstead and William Gladen, Margot Bassett, Penelope Freeh, Gerry Girouard, Sarah Jacobs, Sachiko Nishiuchi, Eddie Oroyan, Edna Stevens Talton, and Cathy Wright. In addition to paying tribute to choreographers who currently shape space and time, the evening honors several individuals who have impacted the Minnesota dance scene with their insight, passion, and advocacy: Katherine Dunham, Drew Gordon, Skeeter Rabbit, Dale Schatzlein, and Dan Shapiro.

Sandy Agustin

Sandy Agustin, independent arts and civic dialogue consultant, was formerly the Artistic Director at Intermedia Arts and adjunct faculty at Augsburg College. Agustin holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Dance Therapy from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Trained in the Hanya Holm/Nikolais aesthetic of modern dance, Agustin has danced and toured professionally since 1984 throughout the Midwest and in Mexico City. Her work has been performed at the Hennepin Center for the Arts in Studio 6A, the Southern Theater, Walker Art Center, and the Ordway Theater. She is an Artistic Core member of Mu Performing Arts, an Asian-American theater company based in the Twin Cities. She continues to choreograph for SteppingStone Children's Theater, Augsburg Theater, and Mu Performing Arts. Agustin has curated several multidisciplinary series to engage people in civic issues. She is a member of several boards, and is a champion for HIV/AIDS causes.

Anasooya Abraham

Anasooya Abraham is a Bharata Natyam dancer and choreographer. She has worked as a dancer in the Twin Cities under Kats D & Paneer Project, Kala Vandanam Dance Company, and Katha Dance Theater. She premiered Chasm, her first full-length solo work under Naked Stages 2004 through Intermedia Arts, and Chasmagic, her first full-length group work, at the Fringe Festival in 2006.

Denise Armstead

Denise Armstead's illustrious career has spanned the globe for more than 25 years. A born-and-raised Minnesotan, Armstead is a wife, mother, and grandmother, as well as an animal enthusiast. She has paralleled her dance career with her lifelong passion for horses. Over the past 17 years, she has trained and instructed both horse and rider in the art of competitive jumping, and is now teaching at Blackshire Farms in Randolph, Minnesota. Currently, her career has blossomed to include an even wider array of styles and artists. She has plunged into the world of aerial dance. Along with choreographing commissioned works, Armstead is working on her own pioneering project to premiere in 2007.

Margot Bassett

Margot Bassett is a performer, dancer, singer, yoga instructor, cook, and, as you may have guessed, a Libra. She received her BFA in Dance from Wesleyan University in 2001, and was a 2002 co-recipient of the Jerome Fellowship for Performance Art (Naked Stages). Bassett currently dances with Rosy Simas Dance Projects, and makes her own work as well as contributions to the collaborative performance group Bright Eye Productions/Hope Collective. She has danced with Hijack, BodyCartography Project, and Hannah Kramer, to name a few, and also performs through her alter-ego, Karyn, of the legendary lesbian folk duo Karyn & Sharyn. Bassett teaches yoga at One Yoga Studio, and hopes to either find a rich patron of the arts or a songwriter who will write songs for her to sing in her dream-band, the Makeouts.

Penelope Freeh

Penelope Freeh is originally from Ohio. She relocated to Minneapolis from New York City in 1994 to join the James Sewell Ballet. In 1998, she received a Minnesota State Arts Board Fellowship and won a McKnight Fellowship for Dancers. Freeh's choreography has been presented by numerous Twin Cities institutions, including the Walker Art Center and Southern Theater's Momentum series, the Weisman Art Museum, James Sewell Ballet, Minnesota Orchestra, 3-Legged Race, and Ballet Builders in New York. In 2005, she produced an evening of choreography at the Southern Theater. Visit her blog, barefootpenny.blogspot.com, to read her thoughts on dance.

Gerry Girouard

Gerry Girouard is a long time local choreographer who has been dancing and choreographing for more than 20 years. He began his modern dance career under the tutelage of Nancy Hauser and is currently studying Argentine Tango from Florencia Taccetti who has inspired him with passionate teaching and dancing. Girouard is also grateful to have had his partner, Bob, in his life for 16 years. Girouard is the 2006 recipient of the Ivey Award for Outstanding Choreography and has received fellowships from the Jerome Foundation, the Minnesota State Arts Board, and the McKnight Foundation, among others, throughout his career.

William Gladen

William Gladen is a dancer, aerialist, and performer, currently living in the Minneapolis area. He has been performing for many years and has had the pleasure of working with and/or performing for many wonderful people, including Mel Wong, David Gordon, Ping Chong, and others. He has been studying and performing aerial work for about four years and is exploring the fusion of dance and aerials. More information can be found at his web site: www.redfacedtroll.com.

Sarah Jacobs

An active teacher throughout southeast Minnesota, Sarah Jacobs recently relocated back to Minneapolis. She has performed with various Twin Cities choreographers and has been a guest artist at Florida State University and the Florence Dance Center (Italy). She has presented her work at the Walker Art Center, Bryant Lake Bowl and at Florida State University. Jacobs holds a degree in dance from Carleton College where she received honors for Excellence in Performance. Recent study includes a month in Berlin, Germany, practicing action theater with performance artist Sten Rudstrom.

Sachiko Nishiushi

Sachiko Nishiushi has studied flamenco dance in Spain, the United States, and Japan since 1995. She arrived in Minneapolis in 2000, and currently teaches flamenco in the Twin Cities and is also a company member of Zorongo Flamenco Dance Theatre's ensemble Majas. Nishiushi has performed locally and nationally with various groups, such as Zorongo Flamenco, Theatre de la Jeune Lune, Michael Hauser's Cuadro Flamenco, and FUEGO Flamenco. Her performance information is updated at www.myspace.com/sachikoflamenco. Nishiushi was a recipient of the Jerome Foundation's Travel and Study Grant in 2006.

Eddie Oroyan

Eddie Oroyan graduated in 2001 from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point with a BA in Dance. Through the

fall of 2001, he performed with Creach/Company in New York City. Upon returning to the Midwest in 2002, he began teaching for Zenon Dance. Oroyan currently dances with companies Black Label Movement and Shapiro and Smith, while also working as a freelance artist. His choreography has been shown at venues such as the Phipps, Southern Theater, and the Varsity Theater.

Edna Stevens Talton

Edna Stevens Talton was born and raised in Liberia, Africa. She has loved dance since she was a child. In Minnesota, she studied and taught ballroom dance for one year before starting her own dance company, Universal Dance Destiny. Besides performances, workshops, and residencies, the company offers dance classes in a unique selection of dance styles, including hip-hop, breaking, African, Latin, and swing.

Cathy Wright

Cathy Wright earned a BFA in Modern Dance from the University of Utah and an MA in Education from Minnesota State University-Mankato. She has choreographed, performed, and taught for Salt Lake City dance companies Ririe-Woodbury Dance Co., Wasatch Dance Collective, and Paradigm Dance Project. Wright is in her fifth year as Director of Apple Valley High School's curricular dance program of 200 students, and has choreographed over a dozen productions there. John Munger's Crash-test Relationships and Megan Flood's Block E program have also featured her choreography. Wright produced her own concert with a cast of 16 dancers, Dweller on the Threshold, this past August at the Bloomington Center for the Arts. She is one of four choreographers who have been selected for the upcoming 2007 Momentum Series presented by the Walker Art Center and the Southern Theater.

Tickets to Choreographers' Evening are \$16 (\$13 Walker members) and are available at walkerart.org/tickets or by calling 612.375.7600.

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