



The Dance Complex announces its 2017-2018 CATALYSTS Dance Artists

CAMBRIDGE, MA- November 17, 2017- The Dance Complex announces it's 2017-2018 CATALYSTS, all artists with a strong history and connection to Boston who've demonstrated the drive and talent through their careers, however emerging or established they might be, to get dance moving from idea to performance.

This year's CATALYSTS artists are: tap dancer Ian Berg, originally from Chicago IL; street dance pioneers and teachers The Wondertwins, Billy and Bobby McClain; Artistic Director of EgoArt Inc., Nicole Pierce; jazz-loving tap dancer, vocalist and improviser Jenny Herzog; modern and classical Indian dancer/choreographer Chavi Bansal, from India. This year's CATALYSTS are expansive in style and perspective. Through the program, they have united in mission to create art that features their collaborative nature. The works created promise to be interdisciplinary, relatable, and expressive of their unique histories and forward-thinking views.

Since 2015 and each year since, CATALYSTS artists are supported with an 8 month residency at The Dance Complex. Artists receive hundreds of hours of studio space, mentor and peer feedback opportunities, and additional choreographic skill and arts administration development to assist the creation and producing of their work. Each residency period ends in three weeks of concerts produced by The Dance Complex, with CATALYSTS and guest artists performing in rotating repertory.

This year's CATALYSTS program will culminate with performances over the weekends of January 20 & 21, January 26, 27, & 28, and February 2 & 3. More information, including a schedule of when each artists' works appear in repertory, and tickets are available at www.dancecomplex.org; tickets purchased at the door are subject to availability at full price.

Ian Berg

Bio: Ian Berg is Boston-based tap dancer from Chicago, Illinois. Ian has studied dance at the Joffrey Ballet, Chicago Human Rhythm Project, The School at Jacob's Pillow and holds a BFA in contemporary dance performance from The Boston Conservatory. He has worked as a principle dancer with Chicago's MADD Rhythms at the MGM Garden Arena, The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and The Ted Shawn Theatre at Jacob's Pillow. Ian has composed and performed music for a wide variety of ensembles and is currently the Director and Choreographer for Boston-based tap dance company Subject:Matter.

About The Work: "In 1967, Herbie Hancock wrote and recorded the music for Michelangelo Antonioni's film "Blowup" with an all star cast of jazz musicians and pieces range from funk to blues to bop. The music in the film is diegetic, it is part of the world. When a character turn on a radio, the music of Herbie Hancock fills the room and the relationship between the characters and the music is causal. We aim to demonstrate this relationship between tap dance and music as four tap dancers and a jazz sextet work together to give this music a fresh take.

This a project that has been several years in the making and taken several shapes, at one point even as a film, but we are finally with the right cast to bring this exhilarating project to life."

www.subjectmattertap.com

The Wondertwins, Billy and Bobby McClain

Bio: The award-winning duo street dance pioneers, Billy & Bobby McClain, from Boston have headlined at Jacob's Pillow "Unreal Hip Hop" & Inside/Out Dance Festival, Brooklyn Dance Fest, Rochester University, Southern Vermont, Dance Festival, Colby College, UraGano Italy, Concepto Vimen Mexico, TedX talks boston, David White's Tap The Yard, DanceNOW Boston, DanceNOW NYC Joes Pub, Dixon Place, The Dance Hall and The Music Hall Loft. They are Six-time winners of Showtime at The Apollo Theater and performed a record 16 appearances on the Apollo Stage. The Wondertwins have additionally worked for 21 years as teachers in Boston Public schools, and spend their summers as directors of Project RISE, an educational summer program for 150 inner-city students in Braintree, MA for 20 plus years.

About The Work: "The new work we are creating is called BLACK. BLACK is a piece designed to vocally and visually show the audience the injustices of police brutality toward black people. The work also shows a deep dialogue of compare and contrast between Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. Both men were fighters for the freedom of Black People but the way each went about it was different. Martin was about hope and Malcolm was about reality. "

Nicole Pierce

Bio: Nicole Pierce is Artistic Director of EgoArt, Inc., a dance-theater company she founded in 1999. She has created over 30 dance works for her company and maintains an active freelance career as a choreographer, teacher and dancer. Pierce's choreographic work is eclectic in nature and explores traditional concert dance, multimedia installation, and theater. Karen Campbell in the Boston Globe called her work "expansive, muscular movement etched with vivid detail."

Pierce has received fellowships from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, Boston Dance Alliance and The Yard among others, and has performed throughout New England and in New York City. Pierce served on the dance faculty of Tufts University, Emerson College, The College of the Holy Cross, The Dance Complex and Green Street Studios and has conducted master classes at many schools and colleges including most recently Harvard University, Gibney Dance and Harkness Dance Center. Pierce choreographed for the BSO's production of *The Soldier's Tale* under Maestro Charles Dutoit in 2016. She continued her work with classical musicians with the premiere of *Sweat*, an a cappella opera, that premiered at National Sawdust in Brooklyn, NY that same year. Some of her most noted works are *Requiem*, set to the complete score of Mozart's Requiem as well as a series of monologues comprising *The Ego Show* cycle of which there are 7 parts. A recent transplant to New York City, Pierce is working on a one-woman show. Please visit www.egoartinc.com.

About The Work: "This is the first time I've ever choreographed a dance via Skype! Fortunately it is with dancers that I have worked with for a long time. Because we know each other well, we are able to communicate effectively. Audio has been a problem. Sometimes I write things down on a piece of paper and hold it up to the camera because our microphones don't pick up very well when the dancers are at a distance from the computer. I also end up doing weird "demonstrations" with my fingers to show what

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kinds of things I'm looking for – this is especially challenging when it comes to partnering. At other times, I've been laying on my couch with a blanket making a dance - that's something to behold! I give them assignments to make their own movement phrases and then I use those to structure the dance. I've been using their movement language to tell me what this piece is about. It reveals itself in new ways every time. Sometimes the screen acts like a stage – I see the dance in a contained medium – the screen – and so I get a perspective like one might get by sitting in the audience. Sometimes in the studio I get too close to the dance and I need to step back in order to see it – the screen puts me in an objective perspective from the start. I've settled on 2 duets and a quartet. Originally I thought the 2 duets would be danced simultaneously, but I've since decided to give each their own time and attention.”

Chavi Bansal

Bio: From India, Chavi Bansal's early dance training was in Bharatnatyam, Bollywood, Martial Arts, and Indian Contemporary dance. Craving a broader dance vocabulary, Chavi moved to the Netherlands, where she earned her B.A. in Dance with a specialization in Choreography. In 2010, Chavi founded her company, Vimoksha, or “Liberation” in Sanskrit. Using a base of Indian classical movement and western modern technique, Chavi's work is developed largely through improvisation. Since moving to Boston in 2014, Vimoksha has found a company of Boston-based dancers. Chavi's work is supported by the Lab grant (Boston Foundation), New England Dance Fund (NEFA), and by the Cambridge Arts Council and Somerville Arts Council grants (Massachusetts Cultural Council) and Creative City grant by New England foundation for the Arts.

Jenny Herzog

Bio: Jenny Herzog is a classically trained, jazz-loving tap dancer, vocalist, and improviser. She received her Masters of Music from the Contemporary Improvisation Department at New England Conservatory. Jenny was Artist-in-Residence at Surel's Place in Boise, ID, where she presented an evening of original compositions, tap, and voice. Jenny was a guest Teaching Artist at the University of Michigan, and is currently a Teaching Artist with Classroom Cantatas, teaching songwriting in Dorchester. She sings and taps throughout the Northeast, at Jordan Hall, Music on Norway Pond, the Armory, Boston Center for the Arts, Dixon place, and more. Jenny is Co-Founder and Executive Director of Moving Stories, an organization that partners with local organizations to create live, full-length performances integrating storytelling, music, and dance: *fighting elitism in the arts*. (movingstoriesfoundation.com, jennyherzog.com)

About The Work: *Strange Tea* creates a world in which nothing makes sense, motives are unclear, and desires reign without reason. Through audience interaction and participation, we invite guests into our world. Chavi Bansal utilizes modern dance and dance theatre in her approach. I am composing an operatic score, with gibberish for lyrics; by juxtaposing a nonsensical language with a traditional musical structure, I hope to point out the absurdity inherent within the form. Tap dance will suggest rhythms that are echoed in the music; the feet become a character of their own. Drawing from theatre, modern dance, opera, jazz, tap dance, and swing dance, this cross-genre approach invites audience members to consider how absurd everything, in the end, really is.

Chavi Bansal and Jenny Herzog are collaborating on the work *Strange Tea*.

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