



VSA FLORIDA and USF Present

A New Definition of DANCE

An International
Mixed Ability Showcase
and Educational Initiative

October 21, 2016



Did you know....

VSA Florida has been providing arts education and cultural experiences for and by people with disabilities for 35 years! Join us after the show to celebrate this special milestone.



Schedule of Performances

Title: **Game On**

Dancers: REVolutions Dance students- Brianna Biaggi, Hailey Buxton, Jessica Hendricks, Danica Lane, Peggy McLaughlin, Kaitlin O'Dell, Ally Salvas, Jessica Salvas, and Evelyn Sharrow, with Dwayne Scheuneman, Calandre Kielech, Luca "LazyLegz" Patuelli, and Roya Hosini "Roya the DestRoya"

Choreographers: Sean McDonald, Merry Lynn Morris, Cara Hazel, Calandre Keilech

Music: "A Great Big World, Won't Stop Running," by Chad King and Ian Axel

Costumes: Cara Hazel

Title: **Manana**

Dancer: Liu Yan

Choreographer: Liu Yan

Music: France

Title: **Intimate Duet** (Premiered in Israel 2005)

Dancers: Hai Cohen and Tali Wertheim of Vertigo Power of Balance

Choreographers: Hai Cohen and Tali Wertheim

Music: His Name is Alive, The Cranes

Title: **Propel**

Dancers: Rolando Cabrera, Benjamin Howe, and Jahrel Thompson of Sarasota Contemporary Dance with guest artist Dwayne Scheuneman

Choreographer: Leymis Bolaños Wilmott

Composers: Scott Blum and Mark Dancigers

Title/Music: **Waltz**

Dancers: Hanna Harchakova and Ihar Kisialou

Choreographers: Hanna Harchakova and Ihar Kisialou

Costumes: Ihar Kisialou

Title: **Kasa**

Dancer/Singer: Sidiki Conde

Choreographer: Sidiki Conde

Title: **Buoyant Dreams** (excerpt)*

Dancers: Marjorie Burnett and Rebecca Pelham of Karen Peterson and Dancers Inc.

Artistic Direction and Choreography: Karen Peterson

Video Conception and Editing: Maria Lino

Music: Erich Kory

*First performed at the Byron Carlyle Theatre, Miami Beach, December 11, 2010

Title: **Towards and Away**

Dancers: Robert Kelley, Merry Lynn Morris and Dwayne Scheuneman

Choreographer: Merry Lynn Morris

Music: "Every Story Ends" and "Howard Sees the Sky" by Kerry Muzzey

Costumes: Terri Funaro

Title/Music: ***Paso Doble***

Dancers: Hanna Harchakova and Ihar Kisialou

Choreographers: Nikita Schebet and Aliaksandra Matusevich

Costumes: Ihar Kisialou

Title: ***Moves and Shape Shifts***

Dancers: Frank Hull and Marcie Ryan

Choreographer: Frank Hull

Music: "Story of my Life" by The Piano Guys

Title: ***New***

Dancers: Merry Lynn Morris and Dwayne Scheuneman

Choreographer: Merry Lynn Morris

Music: "Nuovo" by Gianmaria Testa

Costumes: Merry Lynn Morris

Title: ***Remember When***

Dancer: Marc Brew

Choreographer: Marc Brew

Music: "Angkor Wat Theme Finale" by Michael Galasso from the movie soundtrack "In the Mood For Love"

Composer of Film Soundtrack: Tiago d'Oliveira

Filming: Rachel Ferriman

Film Edit: Deveril

Title: ***It's all about youth...***

Dancers: Hanna Harchakova and Alesia Aliakhnovich

Choreographer: Hanna Horchakova

Music: "I'm In Love With A Monster" by Fifth Harmony

Costumes: Hanna Horchakova and Alesia Aliakhnovich

Title: ***Creatures***

Dancers: Luca "LazyLegz" Patuelli and Roya Hosini "Roya the DestRoya"

Choreographers: Luca "LazyLegz" Patuelli and Roya Hosini "Roya the DestRoya"

Music: Re-mixed excerpts by Freezer from "Hand Covers Bruise" by Trent Reznor, "Dona Nobis Pacem"(ft. Dj Shadow) by Supersister, "Haze" by Luvian, and "Wildcat" by Ratatat

Finale

Structured improvisation with all artists

Dancers: Alesia Aliakhnovich, Alito Alessi, Marc Brew, Hai Cohen, Sidiki Conde, Hanna Harchakova, Roya Hosini "Roya the DestRoya", Frank Hull, Robert Kelley, Ihar Kisialou, Merry Lynn Morris, Luca "LazyLegz" Patuelli, Marcie Ryan, Dwayne Scheuneman, Tali Wertheim, and Liu Yan

Music: "Torn (redux)" by Nathan Lanier

Artistic Director's Statement



The vision for this event began several years ago, and it is a great pleasure to have brought "A New Definition of Dance" to fruition not only one, but now two years in succession! After a successful and invigorating first year of presenting 9 diverse and highly accomplished guest artists, I worked with VSA Florida colleagues to pursue funding for a second year. Through the support of the Lightning Foundation's Community Hero Award, which I received, and multiple other sources of funding and partnerships including USF's Students with Disabilities Services, USF World, and the USF Confucius Institute, we were able to launch this large-scale event again. This year, VSA Florida Board members in Jacksonville and Miami also collaborated to bring the event to their cities. The event has grown in its reach and we have increased the number of guest artists to 16. After a full week of workshops and performances at the University of South Florida, the University of Tampa, five public schools, the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System, and local dance studios, we conclude the week with tonight's culminating performance. The performance draws together artists from across the globe including China, Belarus, Israel, and Australia and highlights the ways bodies of difference are galvanizing the dance field by introducing compelling and innovative approaches to movement expression. I am thrilled to have been able to bring this creative, collaborative arts experience to realization again. Special thanks to all of the sponsors for this event and my amazing VSA Florida colleagues!

Merry Lynn Morris

Assistant Director and faculty, Dance Program, School of Theatre and Dance
VSA Florida Board member

Performers Bios

Alito Alessi is the Artistic Director of DanceAbility® International and co-founder of DanceAbility®. Alito has been involved with the evolution of contemporary dance for the past 30 years, and is internationally known as a pioneering teacher and choreographer in the fields of contact improvisation, and dance and disability. Alito was selected as a Fulbright Senior Specialist (2007), received the Hong Kong Choreographer of the Year Award (2006), a Guggenheim Fellowship (2005), Choreographer's Fellowships from the American National Endowment for the Arts (1992-1993 & 1995-1996) and from the Oregon Arts Commission (1991), as well as numerous other grants and awards. Alito began training teachers in DanceAbility in 1997, focusing on how educators in various disciplines can make their classes more accessible to people with disabilities.

Marc Brew trained as a professional dancer at the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School and The Australian Ballet School. He has been working internationally for the past 20 years as a dancer, choreographer, director, teacher and speaker with the Australian Ballet Company, State Theatre Ballet Company of South Africa, Infinity Dance Theatre, and CandoCo Dance Company. He was a guest performer, collaborator and media spokesperson for the London Hand Over Ceremony for the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games Closing Ceremony. In 2014, Marc was nominated for Outstanding Achievement in Performance (Individual) at the prestigious Isadora Duncan Awards for his solo piece "Remember When." Now based in Glasgow, Marc's work has been toured to critical acclaim across the world. Since 2001, Marc has been dedicating time to his own choreography with Marc Brew Company.

In 1986, **Hai Cohen** became paralyzed from the chest down following a sharp jump into the shallow water of a swimming pool, which damaged his spine. In 2000, Hai got involved in mixed ability dance workshops in Israel with the Vertigo Dance Company. In 2001, Hai was invited by Vertigo Dance Company to take part in a new mixed ability work, titled "The Power Of Balance", choreographed by Adam Benjamin. The piece had more than 50 shows in Israel and abroad. Since 2002, Hai, along with Tali Wertheim, has taught mixed ability workshops, classes and other projects for adults, youth and children in Israel and abroad, including New York, Pittsburgh, North Ireland, Latvia, Ethiopia, Ukraine, Germany, France and Turkey.

At the age of 14, **Sidiki Conde** lost the use of his legs as the result of polio. In his village in Guinea, West Africa, disabled people commonly were banished from their homes in order not to bring shame or bad luck upon their family, so he was sent to his grandfather's village deep in the forest. Knowing that he would not be able to participate in the coming-of-age ceremony if he could not dance, Sidiki reconstructed the traditional steps using his hands instead of his feet. He became so adept that he was able to travel to the capital city, Conakry, and form *Message de Espair*, an orchestra of artists with disabilities he recruited from the city's streets. In 1987, he was asked to join the prestigious troupe, *Les Merveilles de Guinea*, for whom he composed and directed musical arrangements as well as served as Director of Choreography. In 1988 Sidiki came to America and formed the *Tokounou All-Abilities Dance and Music Ensemble*. Sidiki received a National Heritage Fellow Lifetime Honors from the National Endowment for the Arts in 2007.

Hanna Harchakova and **Ihar Kisialiou** are World and European champions in Wheelchair Ballroom Dancing. They have performed in many dance arenas in the world including China, Netherlands, Spain, Germany and Poland. Hanna was recently elected Chairwoman of the Minsk Regional Society for People with Disabilities, a group that unites more than 20 local grassroots organizations. She is a well-known wheelchair athlete and public figure in Belarus who uses dance as a method of social adaptation and rehabilitation for people with mobility limitation. In 2012, Hanna founded the successful "Dar" Dance School that offers a unique opportunity for young people to practice wheelchair dancing in an inclusive environment. **Alesia Aliakhnovich** is an accomplished dance student of Hanna's studio and is pleased to be part of "A New Definition of Dance" this year.

Roya Hosini, a.k.a. "Roya the destRoya", is a talented Australian performing artist who specializes in hand balancing, crutch dancing and break dancing. She does not let having one leg stop her from achieving her goals and has participated in cheerleading, break dancing, and circus, rhythmic and artistic gymnastics. Roya has been featured in various types of media including television and radio programs in Australia and Canada such as 'CTV News', 'CBC News', 'CBC Radio', 'The Project', 'Totally Wild!', the 2011 AFL Grand Final Footy Show Skit, and the 2nd Episode of 'Gymnastics Victoria' Doco.

Frank G. Hull is a power chair dancer, choreographer, singer, and theatre artist. His work interrogates the relationship between body and mobility devices in ways that challenge traditional (mis)representations of disabled people. Frank's career as a dancer was launched in 1999 at the Betty Oliphant Theatre in Toronto with his debut performance in THE CARETAKER. He then was awarded a scholarship to train with *Dancing Wheels* in Ohio. Frank has since choreographed and performed numerous original dance performances across Ontario, as well as in New York State. He has developed both solo performances and ensemble shows, with Toronto-based artists Spirit Synott and Kazumi Tsuruoka and Ottawa-based artist Alan Shain. Frank has developed dance instruction for people with mobility impairments, including those who use manual or power wheelchairs and has served as a research participant for the *Rolling Dance Chair Project*TM.

Robert Kelley possesses an Associates of Arts in Dance Performance from Valencia College and a Bachelors of Fine Arts degree in Dance Performance from the University of South Florida. He has had the opportunity to perform the works of many renowned national and international artist including: Robert Moses, Alonzo King, Doug Gillespie, Ohad Naharin, Xiao Xiangrong, and many others. His international performances include dancing by invitation in the International COCO Festival in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad as well as participating in the International Creative Dance Seminar in Beijing, China. He has presented his own choreography in various venues including Valencia College and the University of South Florida. Robert has also performed with Florida-based companies, *Moving Current Dance Collective* and *Collective Soles Arts Group*.

Merry Lynn Morris is the Assistant Director for the USF Dance Program and a full-time faculty member invested in teaching and research. She holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in dance performance and choreography from Florida State University and is a PhD candidate at Texas Woman's University. Merry Lynn has served on the faculty of the USF dance program since 1998, focusing in both teaching and research. Merry Lynn has performed and presented work nationally and internationally. Her early professional performance background includes performance and study with the Tampa Ballet and Dance Theatre of Florida. In 2002, Merry Lynn began exploring the area of integrated/inclusive dance, and as caregiver to a disabled father over a 21 year period, her interest in disability issues has been ever-present. Merry Lynn serves on the board for VSA Florida, the statewide arts and disability organization. She also serves as the Education Director and as choreographer for REVolutions Dance, an inclusive dance program and company based in Tampa, Florida. Merry Lynn's *Rolling Dance Chair Project™* approaches wheelchair design from a dance performance perspective to increase mobility options and expand perceptions regarding disability. The project has received national and international recognition and several patented chair prototypes have been built. Her invention has been featured at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, where she has also been a guest speaker. Merry Lynn has also been featured/interviewed by MSNBC, the Katie Couric show, PBS, CNN, the *Reader's Digest* and the *Inventor's Digest* (cover story).

Luca "Lazylegz" Patuelli was born with Arthrogryposis, a rare disorder that causes limited joint movement and poor muscle growth, as well as scoliosis. While growing up in Maryland, Luca never let his disability slow him down; actively participating in swimming, diving, skiing, horseback riding, sailing, and skateboarding. In 1999, at the age of 15, Luca discovered "B-boying" also known as Breakdancing. Although quite challenging at first, he began to learn moves and modified them to create his own unique style that incorporates both extreme upper body strength and the use of crutches. "Lazylegz" was born. In 2002, Lazylegz moved back to Montreal, where he had a massive impact in the Montreal dance community. In 2004, Lazylegz joined forces with Canadian breakdance crew, *Illmatic Styles*. They performed and competed throughout North America and were featured as one of the top acts on NBC's *America's Got Talent*. In 2007, Lazylegz created *ILL-Abilities*, an international crew consisting of the world's best "ill-abled" dancers from Canada, USA, Chile, and Holland. Together, they continue to perform all over the world and spread the message "No Excuses, No Limits."

Karen Peterson and Dancers

Dance is a shared human experience based on the physical body's impulse to move. Karen Peterson and Dancers, founded in 1990, believes that through dance, we can better understand our common humanity by exploring and appreciating this impulse to move and how it elevates the human spirit to do so freely, regardless of perceived or real barriers. KPD is dedicated to the development, education and presentation of dance through inclusive workshops, professional contemporary dance performances and fostering courage and resilience in the hearts and minds of the company and patrons alike. Founded by Artistic Director, Karen Peterson Corash, KPD creates and presents "mixed-ability" dance, promotes International Cultural Exchange and facilitates "The Talent Showcase," a twenty-week residency program for Miami Dade Public School teenagers with special needs.

Marcie Ryan worked with the nationally esteemed, *Dancing Wheels* dance company in Cleveland, Ohio from 1996 – 2001, under the artistic direction of Sabatino and Barbara Verlezza. Marcie also studied wheelchair ballroom under the direction of Rubin Zacharanov for approximately two years and competed in the Ukraine, coming in 5th place out of 8 couples. Marcie has participated in the Moving Wheels and Heels summer dance workshops out of the Steffi Nossen School of Dance in White Plains, NY since leaving *Dancing Wheels*. Marcie has also been instrumental in the *Rolling Dance Chair Project™* serving as a research participant and providing input for the new wheelchair technologies for dance being developed at the University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida.

Sarasota Contemporary Dance

Leymis Bolaños Wilmott and Rachael Inman began working together in Florida State University's graduate program in 2000. Not only did the two share an Arabic heritage, most importantly, they shared a vision to collaborate, create and celebrate through life experiences. They both spent time developing programming for the FSUdanceSARASOTA initiative, and in 2002 Leymis and Rachael founded Fuzión Dance, the first professional contemporary dance company in Sarasota. After a decade of establishing its presence under the continued Artistic Direction of Leymis Bolaños Wilmott, Fuzión Dance Artists became Sarasota Contemporary Dance. Sarasota Contemporary Dance (SCD) is recognized for its extraordinary level of high-energy, contemporary dance and collaborative performances with artists of various genres. Additionally, the company offers a variety of physically integrated dance and movement modalities to people in different stages of their lives and abilities, including an established ongoing bi-weekly Dance for Parkinson's class at the Parkinson Place.

Dwayne Scheuneman was an accomplished wheelchair Track and Field athlete when in 2002 he sought out dance as a means of cross training. The physicality and the creativity of dance quickly leaped to the forefront of Dwayne's interest and he began taking dance classes and performing with Asher Dance Eclectic in Tampa, Florida. It was also at this time when he began taking workshops and attending dance festivals with internationally recognized "Physically Integrated" dance companies such as AXIS Dance Company, CANDOCO and others. In August of 2005, Dwayne founded REVolutions dance in Tampa, Florida, an inclusive dance company that creates professional performance and training opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Dwayne has collaborated with choreographers and dancers around the US to create and perform in numerous dance performances. Dwayne has also worked in several international collaborations as a guest teacher and performer in Russia, Palestine and Israel. In 2014, Dwayne moved to Oakland to join AXIS Dance Company.

Tali Wertheim began studying Classical Ballet, Flamenco and Jazz at the age of nine and has taught dance for over 20 years. Since 2002, Tali, along with Hai Cohen, has taught mixed ability workshops, classes and other projects for adults, youth and children in Israel and abroad, including New York, Pittsburgh, North Ireland, Latvia, Ethiopia, Ukraine, Germany, France and Turkey. Tali is well known for her choreography and dancing, co-choreographing and performing in "Intimate Duet With Video" and "11,711 Stone Steps At Nikko" (which was performed at the Latvia dance festival "Time To Dance", the Ukraine dance festival "Free Dance", and in Dusseldorf, Germany). She also performed with the DIN A 13 Dance Company (Germany) on a full-length piece named "HOMEZONE" that was shown in Israel and Germany in 2013.

Liu Yan is a classical Chinese dancer who has performed in many dance dramas and won many dance competitions in and outside China. At 10, Yan gained admission to the Beijing Dance Academy middle school. She later enrolled at the Beijing Dance Academy at the age of 18 and majored in classical Chinese dance. Yan has performed alongside some of the nation's most famous people and won numerous awards for dance and drama. Yan was chosen to be the lead dancer in the "Silk Road" segment at the Beijing 2008 Olympics opening ceremony. Twelve days before the actual performance, Yan fell from a malfunctioning moving platform during rehearsal resulting in spinal damage and paralyzing her lower body. In March 2010, Yan established the Liu Yan Arts Special Fund to help children in poverty-stricken areas, orphans, and migrant workers' children through art education. She has a doctorate degree in Dance Theory from the Beijing Dance Academy, where she is a current faculty member.

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