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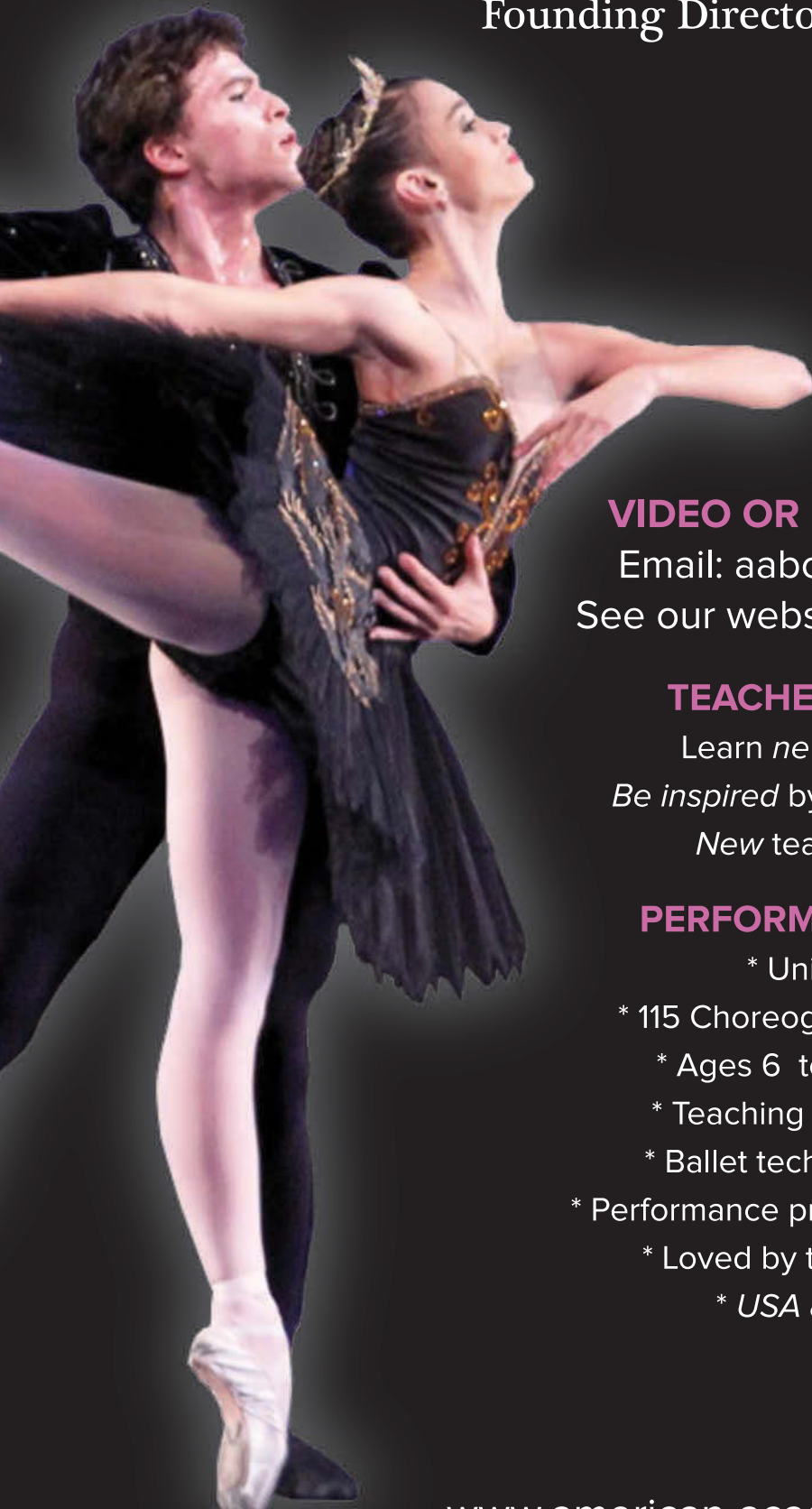
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### ON THE COVER:

Joya Powell's *Her Veiled Reflections*  
performed by Movement of the  
People Dance Company  
photo by Steven Schreiber

## UP FRONT | BY ANDREA MARKS



### There's nothing like a fun prop to get preschool-aged dancers

using their bodies in new ways. In her creative ballet classes at the Manhattan Jewish Community Center, Maria Hanley plans four weeks of spring classes all about umbrellas. The fun starts before dancers even see the prop.

**Use imagination first.** Before introducing a real umbrella, Hanley gets her students brainstorming about its many shapes and qualities. They use their bodies to demonstrate open, shut, spinning, dripping, sopping wet, etc. They also play rainy-day movement games where they jump in imaginary puddles, or do battement kicks that make a splash.

**Then incorporate props.** Later, they bring in their own umbrellas to dance with and to make the shapes they've discussed. Hanley has a safety talk about keeping umbrellas above their heads and she divides the class in half to take turns watching each other so there's more space to move safely. "I use the umbrellas for a visual of how to move their bodies, but I like them to come up with the ideas first," she says. "That's why I don't bring the umbrellas in until the second or third lesson."

**TIP:** Hanley plans all her props around the seasons instead of holidays, so no students feel left out.

## New Music for Class from "DWTS" Pro Mark Ballas

Between training celebs to compete for the mirror ball trophy and touring with *Dancing with the Stars Live*, ballroom pro Mark Ballas found time to launch his solo music career. On his debut EP, *Kicking Clouds*, the singles "Miss Incredible" and "Get My Name" share a funky, upbeat sound that's impossible not to move to. They're perfect for warm-up or across-the-floor in a teen class. (Some lyrics are inappropriate for younger students.) Check out his "Get My Name" music video (directed by Derek Hough) for choreographic inspiration.



Health Craze: Coconut Oil



Hailed as the latest elixir of life, coconut oil is *the* hot health commodity. Lifestyle bloggers are touting its effectiveness for everything from strengthening the immune system to teeth whitening. But it's important to recognize that this is a trend, just like contemporary dancers taking class in tall, dark socks. There's some utility to it, but it's mostly popular because everybody's doing it.

There have been some intriguing studies regarding the product's effect on cholesterol levels and more, but research is still new. "It takes years of use and study to determine whether a nutrient or food is really beneficial," says

Marie Scioscia, a registered dietitian at The Ailey School. One possible benefit is that coconut oil has antibacterial properties, so feel free to use it liberally as a moisturizer, especially on scaly or cracked feet. It can't hurt, and any healing qualities would be beneficial after dancing barefoot on dirty studio floors.

When it comes to maintaining a healthy diet for dance, however, be conservative about following the fads. Regardless of its possible health benefits, coconut oil (like other oils) is high in calories and contains a mix of healthy and not-so-healthy fats. Don't replace your olive oil just yet.

Know the Numbers:	Calories	Saturated Fat	Polyunsaturated Fats	Monounsaturated Fats
Coconut Oil (1 Tbsp)	117	12 g	0.2 g	0.8 g
Olive Oil (1 Tbsp)	119	1.9 g	1.4 g	10 g

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9 WAYS TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL DANCE WEEK

April 24–May 3, 2015

National Dance Week's annual 10-day celebration each April is a great time to raise your studio's profile in your community. Here are a few ideas to kick things off:

1. **Participate in the NDW Dance Mob.** Dancers can learn choreography from [nationaldanceweek.org](http://nationaldanceweek.org) and perform it en masse in a public space.
2. **Organize a dance festival** with other studios and companies in the area and invite the public. It gives dancers a chance to show what they've been working on and to see what their peers are doing.
3. **Offer one day of free or discounted classes at your studio**, with special somatics, dance fitness or ballroom classes to attract adults.
4. **Host bring-a-friend week** in your regular classes with added games and partnering activities.
5. **Organize a student choreography showcase**, where dancers create, rehearse and costume their own pieces.
6. **Enter the NDW Poster Contest** at [nationaldanceweek.org](http://nationaldanceweek.org). The prompt is "What does dance look like?" Display artistic interpretations by your students and faculty around the studio.
7. **Enlist advanced students to perform a lecture-demonstration** of different dance styles at a local elementary school. Include explanations of the different types of dance shoes and costumes.
8. **Partner with a local dancewear retailer** to put on a fashion show at their store with your students as models.
9. **Host a special workshop** to help local Girl Scout troops earn their dance badges.

# Building Your Dance Business

## Time-Savers & Money-Makers



Do you feel as though you spend too much time on administrative tasks and not enough time teaching and growing your business? By utilizing The Studio Director software, you can not only give parents more visibility and control of their information, but also lessen your workload, leaving you more time to teach and focus on growth – both yours, and your students’.

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### Manage Events & Competitions

Recital and competition seasons can be a very hectic time of year for many studios. By using The Studio Director’s Events & Recitals feature, you are able to schedule events and each performance that will occur during that event. You are able to charge overall event fees to each student participating, as well as individual performance fees if necessary. The system has the ability to automatically order performances for you to ensure that no students will perform or compete back-to-back. You can even generate a basic event program without having to create one on your own.

*“We LOVE the Studio Director and can’t imagine how we survived so long without it!”*

- CAGE & TNT, Topeka, KS

### Costume Management Feature

Ask any studio owner, and they will likely tell you that costumes can be an administrative nightmare. Between measuring, sizing, ordering, and charging costume deposits and balances, it’s easy to lose track of all the paperwork involved, as well as to figure out who still owes for costumes. The Studio Director’s Costume Management Feature will take the headache out of the process. You have the ability to globally charge costume deposits and remaining balances. You can enter measurements individually by student or for all students in a given class, and The Studio Director can automatically size all costumes for you based on those measurements. Various reports allow you to verify that all students will get what they need, and print purchase orders to order all items from a particular vendor at once.

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- Studio 48 Dance & Cheer, Hooper, UT



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Educators Marilyn Berrett, Bill Evans and Joya Powell each recently developed a dance work in collaboration with students and/or community populations. Here is an account of the three very unique projects that resulted.

# Her Veiled Reflections

JOYA POWELL

Movement of the People Dance Company, New York, NY

A lone dancer lies on a dimly lit stage, covered in index cards. On each card is written a secret—a confession that a woman somewhere in the world has, until now, hidden. Slowly, the dancer rolls to emerge from the secrets, several index cards still clinging to her body. This is a scene from *Her Veiled Reflections*, conceived by Joya Powell as 2012–2013 artist-in-residence at The Performance Project at University Settlement in New York City.

The work drew inspiration from an online survey that Powell conducted, in which she invited friends all over the world to share their secrets. They in turn told their friends, until Powell had collected almost 200 responses. “There were a lot of secrets about body image and women’s perceptions of themselves,” says Megan Minturn, a dancer with Powell’s Movement of the People Dance Company. “And a range from really powerful things like abuse or abortion, to others that seemed silly, like, ‘I secretly like Britney Spears.’ I saw in all of them that desire to divulge.”

“What I gravitated toward was how women all over the world are having similar experiences,” says Powell. “No matter how old we are, what race or religion, there are recurring themes. The experience of being a woman in this day and age is very universal.”

Powell and her company used the secrets as foundation material for the solos and group work that form *Her Veiled Reflections*. She was so taken with the movement responses to the secrets that she opened the process to the community through free workshops for dancers and nondancers alike. “It was really incredible to see how the community members who didn’t have a lot of formal dance training really embraced the idea of moving and exploring their experiences through their bodies,” says Minturn.

In the sessions, each woman wrote one of her own secrets on an index card and placed it anonymously in a box. After



a basic warm-up, Powell led a guided improvisation. At first, prompts were simple: Think about how the secret makes you feel, then explore that feeling with simple movements and gestures. Then, imagine a part of your body where the secret resides, and hold that part still, as if stuck. See how it affects the rest of your movement.

“I ended up creating movements I hadn’t before,” says Minturn. “Maybe one part of my body was stuck to the floor

Photo by Steven Schreiber, courtesy of Movement of the People Dance Company





**"No matter how old we are,  
what race or religion, there are  
recurring themes. The experience  
of being a woman in this day  
and age is very universal."  
—Joya Powell**

**Pictured, dancer Candace Tabbs**

and I moved around it. I was finding almost contortions, some twisting, floor work I hadn't done before."

*Her Veiled Reflections* premiered in 2013, performed by Movement of the People Dance Company. The final piece drew heavily from the community workshops—both the secrets and the movement phrases that came from them. The company even used the actual index cards. "We wore the secrets, and part of the choreography was shedding

those secrets, releasing them to the world," Powell says. "In one section of the piece we also started reading them aloud as a cacophony, peeling them off each other. It was an intense experience on so many different levels."

"It was a reminder of how personal choreography can be and of its power to address social issues," says Minturn. Powell adds, "It's an amazing thing to get outside voices within your own process." —*Ashley Rivers*

Members of BYU's  
danceEnsemble  
performing work  
inspired by  
cowboy poetry

# Buckaroo: Cowboy Poetry in Motion

MARILYN BERRETT

Brigham Young University, Provo, UT

Listening to Marilyn Berrett recite Paul Zarzyski's *Benny Reynolds' Bareback Riggin*, it's obvious that she knows her way around cowboy poetry culture. The chair of Brigham Young University's dance department is completely at home with the phrasing, dramatic expression and idiosyncratic language of the uniquely American oral tradition. It's a world that she has been involved with for 25 years since she created her first dance set to work by three of the leading cowboy poets of the west. In 2013, she revisited this material in *Buckaroo: Cowboy Poetry in Motion*, a show presented by BYU that involved 3 poets, 11 student choreographers, 18 dancers, 4 faculty choreographers, a music director, 6 student musicians and the band, Hot Club of Cowtown.

When Berrett first approached cowboy poet legend Dan Bradshaw about collaborating, he was more than a little skeptical. "This is not going to work," he said. But cowboys and modern dancers have more in common than you might guess. "We both work in obscurity, have extremely athletic lives full of sacrifice and take great risks," Berrett says. "They work every day and so do we." She convinced Bradshaw to watch a rehearsal and the two have been allies ever since.

Berrett's process for making a dance inspired by a poem is to begin by simply reading each poem aloud to unearth its unique character, story, images, language and musicality. "Each poem seems to present its own set of rules," she says. Take for example the opening couplets of Zarzyski's vivid poem:

*A bacon slab a-boiled black in oil every day  
Ain't as soggy as the surcingle he folds whatever way*

*He wants to, heck it always has sprung back  
Like a flapping magic bird pulled from his riggin' sack,*

"We looked at the images, played with the timing and the rhythm of the words, and asked, 'what is a surcingle?'" says Berrett. [It's a wide strap or belt that runs over the back and under the belly of a horse.] The dancers decided to contrast the rapid fire language of this piece with slow motion movement. While the poem depicts a rodeo bucking bronc ride, the dancers sink and roll, balancing and dangling from a fence.

In each poem, Berrett and her team of choreographers played with both abstract and more literal interpretation of the words, mood and narrative, letting the poem guide the way. They also responded to the energy of the poem, which goes beyond the words.

Under Berrett's approach, a dancer does not jump into this realm without some homework. Because cowboy poems are essentially autobiographical, each dancer wrote an "I am" poem in the cowboy poetry tradition, and two of these poems ended up in the show. She also took the students to the Heber Valley Western Music & Cowboy Poetry Gathering.

The resulting performance was much more than an evening of dances set to poems. The poets read poems, the popular western swing band Hot Club of Cowtown performed, and there were dances set to poems without music as well as dances set to music without poetry. The audience came out to see the band *and* the dances. "I was amazed they were also so gracious and willing to help with my project," Berrett said about the Austin, TX-based musicians. "We had these two worlds meeting." —Nancy Wozny

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Men in Dance performed at the NDEO conference opening, October 2014.

# Why I Can't Not Dance

**BILL EVANS**

National Dance Education Organization Conference, Chicago, IL

Like many successful dance works, *Why I Can't Not Dance* began with moving subject matter, an eager cast and a confident choreographer. The fact that it was a group of 21 geographically dispersed, male, mostly middle-aged dance teachers—with a very brief window for rehearsal—didn't give choreographer Bill Evans pause. Success in working with large groups, says the longtime college professor, artistic director and veteran teacher of teachers, requires fewer planets aligning than you'd think.

The dancers were all members of Men in Dance, a special interest group of the National Dance Education Organization. When the idea of a performance came up, Evans quickly offered his services. To begin, he asked colleague Doug Risner (Wayne State University), to share a few quotes from Risner's body of research about boys who decide to dance. Three weeks before the performance, Evans e-mailed the group, requesting each man to select one quote that resonated with him (or to contribute his own) and develop a short movement phrase. The movement could be full-bodied or gestural, depending, Evans says, "on what age they were and what they liked to do."

When the group assembled for the first time—the day before their performance—Evans began by appraising his cast and improvising an easy folk dance. "That got us all moving together, in a circle," he says. "A real community emerged." He then asked the group to form trios to share their solos and adapt them for each other. They could choose to include the text of the original quote, or not. "When there's a short time to really get them to invest in what they're doing," Evans says, "I ask them to make decisions."

A second, shorter rehearsal the next day gave everyone a chance to review choreography and finesse trouble spots. "If I look at what's out there after we've been working for three or four hours, it seems so far from being able to be performed," Evans admits. "I keep telling myself to stay calm, stay focused, keep encouraging." Learning to trust the process, he says, leads to meaningful art: "When you let people be themselves, they're truly beautiful."

Meanwhile, composer Suzanne Knosp, who Evans had invited to collaborate, worked to create a sound environment that would support the dance.

What eventually emerged was a simple, introspective work, necessarily thin in complexity but rich in heart. The cast members began gently, moving in a circle with chugs and carving port de bras. The folk dance then gave way to a single, undulating line across the width of the stage. As each man wove downstage, he spoke his chosen quote aloud: "I dance because it feeds my soul." "I dance because it was my only home." "I dance because I can't not dance." Trios formed and then dispersed. By the end, the dancers had returned to their single line—and to their quotes.

The experience successfully drew attention to the unique issues boys face and both audience and performers were moved. One of the dancers, Barry Blumenfeld, has been part of the Men in Dance group since its inception. "That piece changed me fundamentally as an educator," he said after returning to his teaching job at Friends Seminary in New York City. "I have one boy student, and I came back and said, 'I'm investing in him and mentoring him more.' I see him in the class differently now." —Rachel Rizzuto





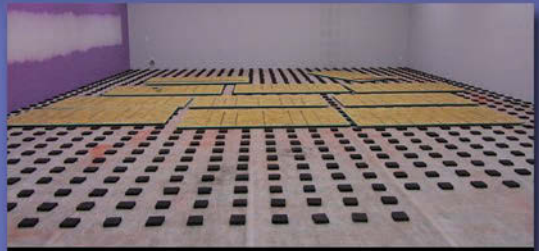
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# DANCE IN DENVER THIS SUMMER!

# The Other Martha

A new documentary tells the fascinating story of Martha Hill.

BY NANCY WOZNY

**M**artha Hill (1900-1995) may very well be the most important figure in American dance history that people know the least about. A new documentary by filmmaker Greg Vander Veer is about to change all that. *Miss Hill: Making Dance Matter* gives the great dance legend her rightful place in history.

Put simply, Hill is the reason that modern dance flourished in the United States. In 1934, she launched The Bennington School of the Dance, with a faculty that included Doris Humphrey, Martha Graham, Charles Weidman and Hanya Holm. As the founder of the dance department at Juilliard, she was the first to combine modern dance and ballet training in an academic setting, which is now the norm.

"She took away the names of the techniques in classes," says Daniel Lewis, who was present at the very first conversations about the film in the 1980s. "Your class schedule would say the name of the teacher." Lewis, the now retired dean of dance at New World School of the Arts in Miami, Florida, worked as Hill's assistant at Juilliard for 20 years.

Another of Hill's innovations has become a tradition that continues today at Juilliard: Dance students benefit from performing the works of professional choreographers. "We might not know Anna Sokolow's work if it weren't for Martha. About 70 percent of Sokolow's work was done on Juilliard students," says Lewis, who danced with the José Limón Dance Company from 1962 to 1976.

Lewis himself makes several appearances in the film, relaying history and lively stories about his time with Hill. For instance, the film chronicles the drama around the building of Lincoln Center, which would become home to The Juilliard School. "George Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein were powerful people," Lewis says. In their vision for the Lincoln Center there was no space for Juilliard's dance division. "Ballet was about to become the American dance form. Modern dance could have died off. She fought it."



Daniel Lewis was Hill's assistant for 20 years.



Martha Hill, who brought modern dance to Vermont to teach in the Bennington summer program

One of his favorite stories about Hill ended up on the cutting room floor. She had asked him to take her to the Village Gate to see the play, "Lemmings," a parody of Woodstock. Afterward, they stopped for coffee to discuss it. Lewis was amazed at how much Hill, in her 70s at the time, knew about rock music. Turns out, she watched "Don Kirshner's Rock Concert" on television every Saturday. "That's how I understand my students," she told him.

There's no doubt that the film paints Hill as a strong personality. "She was a difficult woman, but a great lady," he says. Lewis hopes every young dancer sees the film and fills in this missing piece of their history with the story of one woman who shaped an American art form from behind the scenes. "I hope that Martha finally gets the credit and recognition that she so deserves."

To find a screening date near you: [firstrunfeatures.com](http://firstrunfeatures.com)



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# Beyond Studio Walls

Miami studio owner Amanda Tae launches a nonprofit dance company with a mission to educate. **BY COLLEEN BOHEN**

When Amanda Tae sets her mind to something, the results tend to be quite impressive. The 34-year-old has a star-studded performance and choreography résumé—Pitbull, Will Smith and Enrique Iglesias, to name just a few. This year, she is celebrating the 10th anniversary of her Miami-based Focal Point Dance Studios, a training ground for bold-faced names such as “So You Think You Can Dance” Season 5 champion Jeanine Mason, Season 8 finalist Ricky Jaime and River North Dance Chicago veteran Ricky Ruiz. The talent management agency she started in 2007 currently has a roster of 350 artists (mostly dancers). And now, Tae is turning her attention to the launch of a new nonprofit dance company that will spread dance appreciation and education to underserved communities.

The company, Mosaic Dance Project, will offer full-time positions for up to eight dancers. Rehearsals will begin in late August or early September, with the first performances slated for December 2015. “I don’t want this to be just a contemporary company,” Tae says. “There will be elements of B-boying, hip hop, jazz, tap, flamenco—anything that showcases Miami’s melting pot of talent. I want dancers who will be open-minded and throw themselves at anything that’s given to them.”



Amanda Tae, Kiki Lucas and Andrew Winghart make plans for the new company.



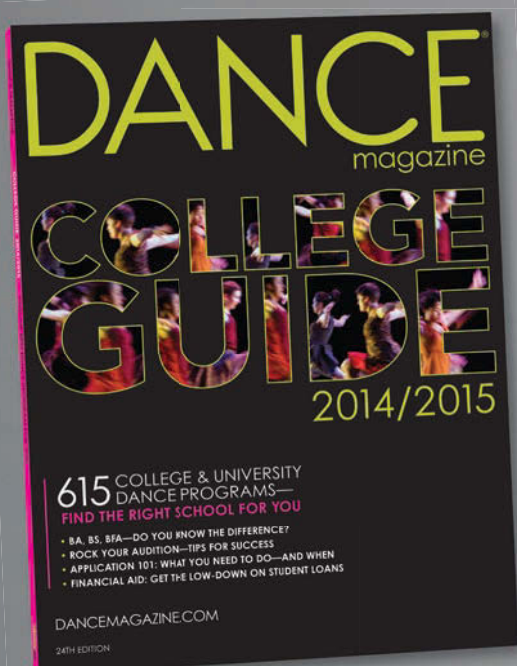
Nathalia Guzman is a student at Focal Point Dance Studios.

At the helm as resident choreographer is Kiki Lucas, fresh off an eight-year stint as the resident choreographer for the Houston Metropolitan Dance Company in Houston, TX. “Having the chance to build this new family and see where it can all go is really an amazing gift,” says Lucas.

Tae has big dreams for the educational outreach part of her vision and fundraising efforts are currently underway. Initially, she plans to provide scholarships for local dancers in need—the first, to be awarded before the end of 2015, will send young dancers to out-of-town conventions, intensives and other enrichment experiences. Longer term, Tae’s plan is to partner with local schools and community centers to bring dance classes to low-income areas. “There have been huge cutbacks in the past five years,” says Tae. “As a graduate of a public arts high school myself, it hit home, so I wanted to help fix it.”

“It’s important to educate dancers by teaching them great technique, but also how to be a good person and how to survive in the world,” she says. “It’s important to realize what’s beyond the four walls of the dance studio, and to find out what you can do, and what dance can do, to make things better for the community.”





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# Post-Gravity

A teacher and activist imagines an expanded role for dance education in a theoretical “Battle Star” future. **BY RIMA FABER**

I recently read George Friedman’s book, *The Next 100 Years* (Anchor, 2010), in which he presents a rather dim view of humanity as territorial and power-grubbing societies that squabble over earth’s acreage. “In the 2030s,” writes the political scientist, “the United States will have begun a fairly low-key program for the commercialization of space.” He predicts that by the 2040s there will be strategically placed “Battle Star” space platforms housing populations of hundreds, if not thousands, and forming communities within each platform. This idea sparks my imagination. These growing communities will need to engage in physical activities for health, leisure and pleasure. They will dance.

But how will dance change to adapt to populations in space?

Right now, much of a dancer’s training has to do with working with, or against gravity. What about movement in an environment with no gravity? Bartenieff Fundamentals can engage in no weight shifts without weight. The premise of human movement would have to shift.

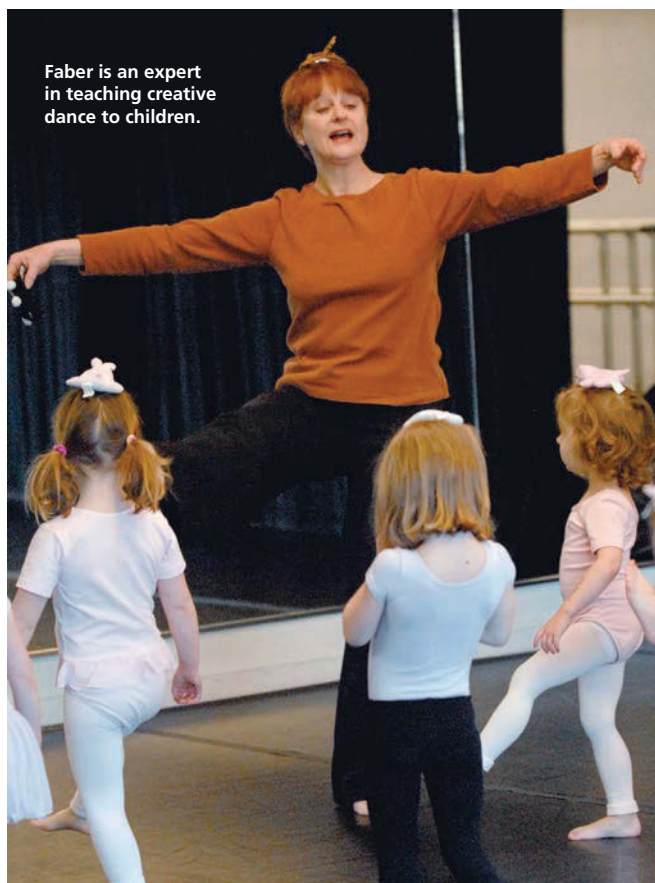
Ice-skaters understand how to change direction on a frictionless surface. It is accomplished by twisting body parts in opposition, and quickly shifting them in opposite directions like a screw unwinding. This is usually a motion of the pelvis (the body’s center of weight) against the shoulders, which is why skaters seem to flap their arms so relentlessly. Movement in space would be based upon that same principle of spiraled opposition, which means Graham technique lives! The axis of a position is a straight line, as in ballet, but the axis of motion in space is a spiral; motion as in orbits, planets, galaxies, possibly universes and the human body. Movement technique in space would depend upon spiraling and unspiraling oppositional body parts to both propel and direct controlled motion.

Everyone would need this training, and so dance classes would be mandatory and dancers would be in great demand. Dancers would need higher education because knowledge of anatomy and movement physics would be necessary for both teaching and choreographing in space.

There would be entirely new choreographic forms and possibly genres. Spatial relationships take on new meaning in space, with floating abstractions of positions; no up, down, east, west, forward, back, etc. “Death defying” acrobatic tricks would have no consequences once the dancer had skill to control spinning. A new aesthetic would develop based on an understanding of finite life in infinite space.

Music as well as costuming would have to be rethought. There would be no air to transmit sound or provide the flow of a twirling skirt or fluffy tutu.

Back on earth, dance education would become progressively disembodiment due to the convenience of online



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learning. The necessities of weight and gravity will be overcome digitally through internet and video. Dancers will choreograph, teach, and even perform without ever leaving their homes. This will create a globally interconnected dance community moving across cultures and country boundaries. While dance won’t solve the global wars and power struggles that Friedman predicts, dance education will develop unified communication. The art will move us toward global understanding.

The future seems to rush toward us at an ever-increasing speed. Didn’t the turn of the millennium just occur? Friedman’s 2030 and the existence of space communities is around the corner. Dance has a long history and we now have about a second to consider how to move forward into our new future.

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*Rima Faber, PhD, was instrumental in founding National Dance Education Organization and chairs the Dance Task Force of the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards.*

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