

PRESENTED BY



SOPAC
SOUTH ORANGE
PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



Friday, May 4 & Saturday, May 5, 2018

Artists Who Innovate: A Celebration of New Jersey Choreographers

Two exciting evenings featuring nine New Jersey award-winning choreographers.

Choreographers are a rare breed of innovators. Moving dancers through space with humor, passion, elegance and power is their specialty. Honored by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts with prestigious fellowships, SOPAC presents nine of New Jersey's finest choreographers in this two-day showcase of their work. Join us for one, or both days of this extraordinary celebration of the artists who create dance.

Friday, May 4 at 8PM

Claire Porter

Nancy Turano

~Intermission~

Stephanie Nerbak

Kyle Marshall

Saturday, May 5 at 8PM

Hillary-Marie

Loretta Fois

Lauren Connolly

~Intermission~

Samuel Pott

Keith Thompson



Lauren Connolly, Artistic Director of Connolly & Co., is a choreographer and dance educator from New Jersey. She is a recipient of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts Individual Artist Fellowship Award as well as the Dance on the Lawn 2017 Emerging Commissioned New Jersey Choreographer. Lauren has shown her work throughout the New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and New Jersey area including New Jersey Performing Arts Center as part of Jersey (New) Moves! Emerging Choreographer Fellowship, The Koresh Come Together Dance Festival, New York Live Arts, Reverbdance: Echo Tours, Dance Teacher Summit, Rutgers University, Your Move, Dixon Place, Salvatore Capezio Theatre,

Grounds for Sculpture and George Street Playhouse.

Connolly & Co. is invested in how dance can initiate physical, intellectual, emotional, and spatial transformations. Her work has been described as “sublime...full of surprises, admirably originaland engaging...” In 2017, Connolly & Co. joined forces with Robert Mark Dance to create the first of many evenings that will celebrate the art of collaboration. Lauren is the former curator of coLAB Arts' Motion: New Danceworks Choreography Residency in New Brunswick, NJ and currently serves a board member of Dance New Jersey.

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Loretta Di Bianca Fois received her MFA in Dance from Ohio State University, and her BA in Theatre and Chemistry from The College of the Holy Cross. She is an Associate Professor and Director of the Dance program at Raritan Valley Community College, Vice President of Education for Dance NJ, Founding Director of New Jersey Dance Studio, and Artistic Director of Puppe'n'Dance. For ten years she served as an Artist-in-Residence for New Jersey Department of Education, and has served as an Artist-in-Residence for the Paper Mill Playhouse Outreach program. Loretta received a 2017 and 2011 Choreography Fellowship from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and has been the recipient of a number of grants including NJSCA AIE, NYFA and The Puffin Foundation.

Loretta has worked and collaborated with many professional artists and companies throughout the country including Claire Porter, Verlezza Dance, Dancing in the Streets, Andrew Jannetti & Dancers, Ellen Cornfield, Pat Graney, Ralph Lemon, Creach/Koester, and Stephen Koplowitz. She served on faculty at Mason Gross School of the Arts, City University of New York, Ohio State University, Union County College, Middlesex County's School of Performing Arts, and NJ School of Ballet. She has taught at various American college dance conferences, and spent her sabbatical years (2011-2013) in Rome, Italy studying Dalcroze Eurhythmics. She served on the writing team for the revision of the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards in Dance, and is currently on the Advisory Board of Freespace Dance.

Facebook [Loretta Di Bianca Fois](#)



Hillary-Marie began her dance training at the age of five at her local dance studio in New Jersey. Her studies continued with Karen Callaway Williams, whose credits include the Tony Award nominated Duke Ellington musical *PlayOn*. In 2006 she became a member of the New Jersey Tap Ensemble's youth company and just three years later became principal dancer for the company under the direction of Deborah Mitchell. Hillary-Marie was mentored by and assistant to the vaudeville legend Dr. Harold 'Stumpy' Cromer, half of the world-famous duet 'Stump & Stumpy.'

Hillary-Marie is one of the most accomplished tap dance artists and producers in America. She is an award-winning, internationally acclaimed soloist and ensemble member and at age 17 founded the Jersey Tap Fest, New Jersey's sole dance festival featuring world-class tap faculty and extravaganza. In addition to Jersey Tap Fest, she is also the artistic director of FutureSTEP Tap Company, Sole Music Collective and Grooves Unlimited Dance Studio. Hillary-Marie's dancing has been described as 'like feathers with steel bones' due to her combination of strength and grace. She has also been called 'a brilliant artist' and received a 2017 Individual Artist Fellowship in Choreography from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, one of their most competitive awards. A native of New Jersey currently based in NYC, Hillary-Marie has been recognized by and featured in the *New York Times*, *Star Ledger*, *Dance Studio Life Magazine*, *Dance Spirit Magazine* and *Dance Teacher Magazine*. She has performed on *The Colbert Report* and has appeared at the Smithsonian, Apollo Theater, Jazz at Lincoln Center, Highline Ballroom, The Copacabana, NJ State Theater, NJPAC, SOPAC, and Symphony Space among many other prestigious theatrical and live music venues along the American east coast.

Artistic Vision - As a young artist in training, I was determined to become a Jazz dancer and a drummer. So it's only natural that I would combine vernacular movement and rhythm to become a tap dancer. By combining tap dance choreography and improvisation with live music collaboration, I strive to be a unique story teller. I truly feel that music and dance can connect with people in a way that our words can't and when people see my work, I strive for an energy transference to occur. It's my greatest hope for people to lose themselves, find resolve for their current frustrations, find the drive to follow their aspirations, find the joy they're searching for and overall just find the missing component that they're seeking in their day to day lives.

Every piece or full-length show I create is born from a personal experience turned into a wild dream that leads to a hardcore brainstorming session in my journal. Writing out my thoughts helps me sort them and it also gives me the opportunity to revisit a previously brainstormed project that wasn't ready for realization. From there, the work takes on a physical form. My conceptualized pieces hover around relatable topics of young love, heartbreak, unexplainable joy, loneliness, frustration and friendship. Other pieces focus on rhythmic concepts, grooves and introverted exploration.

My current work challenges the notion that tap dance is a dying, underground, indigestible art form. I've thrown aside the top hat, tuxedo and cane of vaudeville to bring to life my definition of the modern day tap dancer because I believe that rhythm is a universal language and tribal instinct that all of us understand. It's an ambitious desire to embark on a musical dance odyssey, but I choose to approach tap dance as both a musical instrument and visual performance art to culminate in the ultimate form of storytelling. The results so far have been beautiful.

www.Hillary-Marie.com | Facebook [Hillary Marie Tap](https://www.facebook.com/Hillary-Marie-Tap) | Instagram [@hillarymarietap](https://www.instagram.com/hillarymarietap)



A 2017 New Jersey Artist Fellow, dancer and dance-maker **Kyle Marshall** currently works with the Trisha Brown Dance Company and Doug Elkins Choreography, Etc. He has also had the pleasure of working with Tiffany Mills Company, Ryan McNamara, Heidi Latsky, and was a founding member of 10 Hairy Legs. Kyle organized his dance-making practice into *Kyle Marshall Choreography (KMC)* in 2014.

Since its inception, *KMC* has performed throughout the tri-state area including: Jacob's Pillow Inside/Out, DanceNow Joe's Pub, New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Harlem Stage: EMoves, Actors Fund Arts Center, Judson Church, NYC Summerstage, Montclair Dance Festival, Jersey City Theater Center, Wassaic Arts Project and Conduit Dance (PDX). *KMC* has received residencies from DanceNow at Silo, Jamaica Performing Arts Center

and CoLab Arts. Commissions have included: "Dance on the Lawn" Montclair Dance Festival, NJPAC and Harlem Stage. *Kyle Marshall Choreography* conducts annual education outreaches throughout New Jersey and has taught master classes at DeSales University, Muhlenberg College, Ailey/Fordham University and Montclair University.

Kyle's work, *WAGE*, premiered at the Center for Performance Research in Brooklyn, NY March, 2018. Kyle graduated Magna Cum Laude from Rutgers University with a BFA in Dance.

Artistic Vision - Art is an opportunity to empathize with other human beings. I see the dancing body as a celebration of an agile beauty, a container of history and an igniter of social disruption. My process frays layers representation into abstraction. Out of the material, there is a found logic. Meaning is made through the accomplishment of movement. The dance becomes a complex product of a human's desire for understanding and order. An outlier and reminder of the patterns we find ourselves cascading through.

www.KMChoreography.com | Facebook [Kyle Marshall Choreography](https://www.facebook.com/KyleMarshallChoreography) | Instagram [@kmchoreo](https://www.instagram.com/kmchoreo)



Choreographer, Dancer, Teacher, and Solo Artist, **Stephanie Nerbak** is drawn to creating dance works that challenge her own status quo, privileging the process of dance-making. She considers live dance to contain power for both the performer and the viewer, and believes performance is an opportunity for initiating conversations with ourselves and each other. Ms. Nerbak's *n-Root Danceart* was formed in 2016 as a result of those values. She is a recipient of a 2017 Individual Artist Fellowship from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, and the 2017/2018 Jersey (new) Moves Emerging Choreographers Fellowship. In NJ, Stephanie has shown her work through a choreographic residency with

coLAB Arts, *Your Move: NJ's Modern Dance Festival*, Freespace Dance Company's 40+, Centenary University, the Bailar al Sol Dance Festival, and NJPAC. Holding an MFA in Dance from Sarah Lawrence College and a BA in Dance Performance from Point Park University, she feels fortunate to have experienced a diverse formal education. She has worked with companies such as Heidi Duckler Dance Theatre (Los Angeles), Donna Sternberg & Dancers (Santa Monica), and toured with the West Virginia Dance Company. She's also had the pleasure of working with many choreographers such as Molissa Fenley, Naomi Goldberg Haas, and Jodi Melnick. Currently, she is on faculty at the County College of Morris, where she has also presented her choreography at the American College Dance Association Conference. A strong advocate for the arts, Stephanie hopes to continue making dances and building relationships as part of the dynamic community of dance in New Jersey.

Artistic Vision - I find purpose in the making and sharing of choreographic art as a physical and theatrical expression of lived humanness. My current dance-making processes stem from my own socially conscious responses to our world. Through a multi-disciplinary and imaginative approach, I craft dances that investigate the complex relationship between inner human landscapes and social, political, and economic environments. I draw on the beauty of that complexity to challenge myself as an artist and to inspire a connection with viewers.

Facebook [Stephanie Nerbak](https://www.facebook.com/StephanieNerbak) | Instagram [@stephanie_nerbak](https://www.instagram.com/stephanie_nerbak)



Claire Porter is a choreographer/writer/performer. In addition to this year's New Jersey State Council for The Arts Fellowship, Porter has also received Fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, The Rockefeller Foundation, New Music USA and The Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation. Porter has an MA Dance Ohio State, BA Math and is a Laban Movement Analyst.

www.CPortables.com | Facebook [Claire Porter](#)



Samuel Pott founded Nimbus Dance Works in 2005 drawing on a deeply held personal belief in the value that the arts can play in bringing people and communities together. Under his direction the company has grown each year adding new repertory, programs, community initiatives, and performances at venues including NJPAC, Jacob's Pillow and BAM. As a soloist with the Martha Graham Dance Company, his repertoire included iconic roles in many of Ms. Graham's classic works.

Samuel founded the School of Nimbus Dance Works in 2012, making high quality dance training available to Jersey City youth regardless of financial background. He founded and directs NimbusPRESENTS, a Jersey City performance series featuring local and national performers. Samuel received Choreography Fellowships from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts in 2008 and 2016 and was named a Distinguished Teaching Artist in 2012. He was one of 25 arts leaders nationally selected for the Association of Performing Arts Presenters' (APAP) inaugural Leadership Fellows Program. He co-founded the Jersey City Arts Council and serves on its Advisory Council.

Artistic Vision - As a choreographer it is my intention to access fresh, personal and explorative movement within the structures of contemporary technical dance. I strive to create a meaningful, personal exchange between performers and audiences/communities, leading all participants forward in self and collective awareness, unity, and health. By rigorously exploring and pushing forward my art form as a craft and by engaging with content related to core notions of identity, culture, and socio-politics, I build dances that are exciting, relevant and intriguing to a broad spectrum of theatergoers. For me, dance is a supreme outlet for expression of our inmost self. Through dance we draw out an extraordinary world of internal self-understanding and growth, and exchange with others through performance, collaboration and oral tradition-based learning.

www.NimbusDanceWorks.org | Facebook [Nimbus Dance Works](#) | Instagram [@nimbusdanceworks](#)



Keith Thompson danced internationally for the Trisha Brown Dance Company from 1992-2001, served as Trisha's Rehearsal Assistant from 1998-2001, currently Associate Professor and Acting Associate Chair in the Dance Department at Mason Gross School of the Arts, performs and rehearsal directs for Liz Lerman; teaches globally for Sasha Waltz & Dancers (Berlin), his company, 'danceTactics performance group', has been featured at Montpellier International Dance Festival, Dixon Place NYC, Jersey Moves Festival at NJPAC in Newark NJ, Triskelion Art Center's Split Bill Series in Brooklyn, the Edinburgh International Fringe Festival and the Hokusai International Dance and Theater Festival in Tokyo, Japan. Keith is also a recipient of a 2017 Fellowship from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

Artistic Vision - I have been interested in dance's capacity to communicate on its own, undressed. In my work, I explore form and the use of choreographic devices such as construction, deconstruction and innovation to manipulate and develop structures. I am on a trail of discovery that takes place within the moment, computationally and conceptually. Complexity and the articulation of multiple pathways through and between spaces are a main focus. I am currently interested in investigating the fusion of theater and modern dance. My focus of movement investigation in dance and physical theater looks to create a connection of abstraction and narrative for the viewer. In working with text linearly and abstractly, I'm searching for new ways to engage the action of the text into movement.

www.danceTactics.org | Facebook [DanceTactics Performance Group](https://www.facebook.com/DanceTacticsPerformanceGroup) | Instagram [@dancetactics](https://www.instagram.com/dancetactics)



Nancy Turano is a Director, Master Teacher and Choreographer for Dance, Film, Opera and TV. She received a BFA in Dance from SUNY Purchase and performed as a principal dancer with Ballet Hispanico of New York, Buglisi Dance Theatre, Martine Van Hamel's New Amsterdam Ballet and others. As Artistic Director of the New Jersey Dance Theatre Ensemble since 1994, Turano has been acknowledged for creating innovative training programs for dancers in the NJ, NYC metro area including; Movement Invention Project® (MIP®) at Baryshnikov Arts Center and New York Live Arts, and MIP2® in NYC. In 2017, MIP® was acknowledged as one of the TOP 10 international

Contemporary Summer Intensives. Turano recently secured a new 9,000 sq. ft. dance center for New Jersey Dance Theatre Ensemble in Summit, NJ to expand their pre-professional training program for dancers ages 5-18.

Ms. Turano has choreographed 26 new works and commissioned 53 new works for New Jersey Dance Theatre Ensemble. Her choreography has also been presented throughout the US, Mexico, Panama, Israel, Sweden and Germany. Her full-length *Carmen* was filmed for a feature on PBS Channel 13. Her short film *Tango Octogenario* has been featured on PBS Channel 13, at the New Films/New Directors series in Lincoln Center, the Tribeca Film Festival, and other film festivals around the world. She has also choreographed episodes of *Law and Order: Criminal Intent*.

Ms. Turano is the recipient of numerous awards, including the 2017 NJSCA Individual Artist Fellowship for Excellence in Choreography, NJSCA 2012 NJ Governor's Award, NJSCA 2011 Distinguished Teaching Artist Award, and Outstanding Alumni Award by the Chancellor of SUNY Schools. She has been a National panelist (2013-2015) and Chair (2016-2017) for YoungArts in search of U.S. Presidential Scholars for the Arts. Turano has been on the NJPAC Advisory Committee since 2015. A master teacher, Turano has taught at National Ballet of Sweden School, Ballet Hispanico, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Aspen Ballet, National Ballet of Panama, Teatro San Martin in Argentina, Bat-Dor in Israel, Vancouver Arts Umbrella, Celine Dion's "A New Day," Montclair State University, New York University, Purchase College, and over 30 Universities in the US. Ms. Turano was also the Founding Director of the Harkness Youth Ballet at the 92nd St. Y in NYC. Turano has been on the faculty of the Ailey/Fordham BFA Program since its inception and with the Pre-Professional Division of Ailey School for 21 years.

www.NJDTE.org | Facebook [New Jersey Dance Theatre Ensemble](https://www.facebook.com/NewJerseyDanceTheatreEnsemble) | Instagram [@njdtedance](https://www.instagram.com/njdtedance)