

## FOR AUDIENCES

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Friday, September 17, 2021

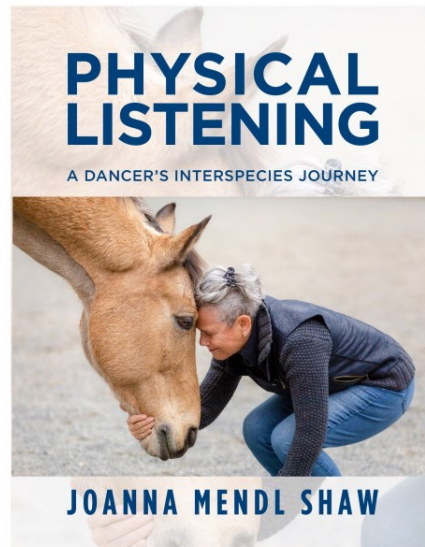
### Virtual book launch of Physical Listening: A Dancer's Interspecies Journey

Company: The Equus Projects

Venue: Online

Location: New York, NY

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JoAnna Mendl Shaw

Join author JoAnna Mendl Shaw and other special guests for the virtual book launch of Physical Listening: A Dancer's Interspecies Journey on September 17, 2021 at 8pm ET via Zoom. The evening will feature an introduction from Patricia Norcia, a longtime collaborator who helped found The Equus Projects in 1998; notes on bringing dancing into academia from Robin Collen, Faculty & Associate Dean, SUNY Potsdam; and a testimonial from Linda Parelli, co-founder of Parelli Natural Horsemanship. Guests will hear the story of how the Equus Projects began, watch excerpts from Interspecies Encounter, and hear essays from the book read by the author. For more information and to RSVP, visit <https://www.equus-onsite.org/book-launch-september-17th>.

In Physical Listening: A Dancer's Interspecies Journey, JoAnna Mendl Shaw invites audiences to explore her unusual dance career, a path that took her on a deep dive into the world of horses and equine training. Physical Listening is the deeply personal journey of an artist who at age 74 is still pursuing her passions, bringing an interspecies perspective into the dance world and the sensibility of an artist into the horse world.

"I am pleased and excited to have just published Physical Listening, A Dancer's Interspecies Journey. This book is a description of my fascination with the power of nonverbal communication, the lessons I learned working with equines and the realizations I gained about our underutilized capacity for fully embodied listening," said Shaw. "The pandemic brought the world to a halt - an enforced state of quiet that offered me time to ponder, process and write. The earth has vividly reminded us that we are just a small part of a huge ecosystem. Now, post pandemic, we must remember the importance of touch, compassion and truly listening. We need to be better listeners with each other but also to the natural world."

In Physical Listening: A Dancer's Interspecies Journey, author JoAnna Mendl Shaw takes readers into an inter-species creative process that has revealed far more about life, love and leadership than she ever expected. Follow The Equus Projects as the company devises interspecies performances with local equestrians and their horses throughout the States and in Sweden. Learn how dancers train to work with equine partners and translate that training into a studio practice. Explore guided embodied exercises that will deepen your Physical Listening. Discover over 450 full-color photographs, choreographic maps, and illustrations in an 8 1/2" x 11" format.

What Shaw learned on this journey was that as a dancer she had a toolbox of skills that reached beyond just athleticism and artistry. Shaw became convinced that the dancer's skill sets just might have relevance beyond plies, pirouettes, performing and making dances. In this book Shaw follows her conviction that the dancer's movement intelligence can powerfully inform our mode of communication, our ability to listen with curiosity and compassion. As she describes the choreographic journey of her company, the Equus Projects, she is simultaneously exploring the intersection between sensing and thinking. Each chapter of the book follows the devising of a performance project, offers essays on lessons learned during that creation process and detailed somatic exercises that emerged during that phase of research.

Physical Listening is available for purchase online on the Equus Projects website (\$60) or Amazon (\$75). Students can purchase a black and white version of the book for \$20 by emailing [jmsnyc@aol.com](mailto:jmsnyc@aol.com).

A visual expression of Shaw's story can be found in the film *Imprinted, Dancing with Foals* (2021). The film captures an extraordinary occurrence: the co-creation of a choreographic language between three dancers, two mares, and their newborn foals. Learn more at [imprintedthefilm.com](http://imprintedthefilm.com).

Choreographer, dance educator and arts advocate, JoAnna Mendl Shaw creates performance works for stage, rural and urban landscapes. With her company the Equus Projects, Shaw tours throughout the States and Europe creating site-specific performance works devised as an immersive community engagement process in collaboration with the local community. Shaw's choreography often includes equines. Her Physical Listening practice, developed from years of inter-species research, has brought Equus Projects into teaching residencies at the Naval War College, Training Magazine, NYU Medical School and into corporate think tanks, dance conservatories, colleges, elementary schools and into extensive work in the equestrian world. Shaw has taught on the faculty at NYU/Tisch, The Juilliard School, Ailey BFA Program, Marymount, Princeton, Mount Holyoke and Montclair State. Shaw and the Equus Projects have been funded by grants from the NEA, Harkness, Jerome Robbins, RSF, Rockefeller, O'Donnell Green and Oppenheimer Foundations, DCA, LMCC, NYSCA and commissioned by numerous festivals including Bates Dance Festival, Saratoga Arts Festival and NYC River to River Festival.

The Equus Projects create site-specific performance works that viscerally engage with the geographic and cultural environments. Their work often brings dancers and horses into shared landscapes. Equine works are created in collaboration with local equestrians and their horses. While not all Equus Projects performances include equines, their horsemanship training deeply informs choreographic content, and has shaped the company's studio practice, their teaching methods, approach to performing and choreographic methodologies. They bring a unique interspecies lens into their dance practice that focuses on Physical Listening, heightened merging of sensing and thinking and strategic decision-making. All Equus Projects performances are constructed as complex scored events, merging rigorous choreographic material with improvised structures and challenging the performers to function with real-time decision-making. For more information, visit [www.equus-onsite.org](http://www.equus-onsite.org).

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The Equus Projects  
121 W. 17th, 4B New York, NY 10011  
New York, NY, 10011  
<https://www.equus-onsite.org/book-launch-september-17th>

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Schedule  
September 17, 2021: 8:00pm

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