

Monday, February 2, 2026

Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre Announces Standing Down Straight® & Swing Dance Workshops with Guest Artist Billy Siegenfeld

Company: Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre
Venue: Amanda Selwyn Dance Studio
Location: New York, NY

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Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre announces Standing Down Straight® and Swing Dance workshops with guest artist Billy Siegenfeld, scheduled for Monday, February 2, 2026 at 10:30AM and 12PM, respectively, at Amanda Selwyn Dance Studio, 412 Broadway, 2nd Floor, New York, NY, 10013. Tickets start at \$25 and can be purchased at <https://amandaselwyndance.networkforgood.com/events/95453-standing-down-straight-swing-dance-workshops-with-guest-artist-billy-siegenfeld>.

Standing Down Straight® with Billy Siegenfeld | 10-11:30 a.m.

Standing Down Straight® (SDS) is a voice-and-movement training method developed by Billy Siegenfeld, founder of the theatre company Jump Rhythm®. This approach emphasizes gravity-directed relaxation, allowing individuals to do performative or everyday tasks with reduced strain and heightened efficiency—to find power in relaxation to prevent strain and injury.

Swing Dance Workshop with Billy Siegenfeld | 12-1:30 p.m.

This workshop explores swing dance through the lens of Standing Down Straight®—finding power in relaxation and letting gravity do the work. Instead of applying muscular force, you'll practice releasing unnecessary tension, organizing around the skeleton, and allowing movement to happen with less effort and more ease.

Dancers and non-dancers alike are welcome in this workshop to learn simple swing rhythms and partner movement while applying gravity-directed alignment, shared momentum, and efficient use of energy. Through partner and group exercises, we'll discover how Standing Down Straight® makes swing dancing feel more sustainable, connected, and joyful.

Billy Siegenfeld is a former jazz and rock drummer and present-day vocal-rhythmic actor-dancer-singer. He's also the founder, artistic director, choreographer, and musical arranger of the theatre company Jump Rhythm® (www.jumprhythm.org); an Emmy®-Award-winning recipient for both his performances in and vocal-rhythmic choreography for the documentary *Jump Rhythm Jazz Project: Getting There*; an author of essays, plays, and an upcoming book titled *How To Make Gravity Our New Best Friend*; and a Charles Deering McCormick Professor of Teaching Excellence in the Department of Theatre at Northwestern University.

The courses he teaches at Northwestern and in national and international residencies are guided by two holistic-educational-creative concepts:

STANDING DOWN STRAIGHT®, or SDS, is an anatomically fact-based, injury-preventive, "less is more" approach to both stage performance and daily living. By basing all movements and vocalizations on gravity-directed relaxation, SDS guides people to do any task with less physical strain, more emotional gain, and a body-mind connectedness to the earth, oneself, and the people we live, work, and/or play with.

JUMP RHYTHM® is a vocally accompanied jazz, funk, and hip-hop-rhythm-driven approach to singing and dancing. Inspired by the African-originated approach to body-voice rhythm-making called ngoma ("drumming and rhythmic song-dancing"), Jump Rhythm uses gravity-directed relaxation to turn body and voice into a single emotion-driven percussion instrument.

Among the courses he teaches, using these two concepts, are:

STANDING DOWN STRAIGHT® FOR ACTORS: Moving and Vocalizing from the Natural Body Using Gravity-Directed Relaxation as Source of "Less Is More" Stage Performance.

PARTNERED SWING DANCING: Using Gravity-Directed Relaxation as Source of Hands-Joined, Rhythmically Swinging Party Dancing.

JUMP RHYTHM® TECHNIQUE: Fusing Body and Voice into a Jazz-Syncopating Instrument of Emotion-Driven Body-Percussion.

His creative work focuses on building theatre out of primal human behaviors: giving expression to the energies we feel inside the body rather than the shapes we make on the outside it. This process turns fusions of rhythm-driven motion, song, and speech into stories that laugh, cry, and rant about our species' most dominant condition: wanting to get more than enough instead of accepting that enough is enough –

especially when we replace human-made ideas like standing up straight and no pain no gain with nature-friendly ideas like gravity-directed relaxation, less is more, and the Golden Rule.

Billy received a bachelor's degree in literature from Brown University and a master's degree (subject: writing about jazz music and the singing and dancing performed to it) from New York University's Gallatin Division. When living in New York City, he danced in Don Redlich's company; taught theatre-movement at Hunter College; performed as an actor-dancer-singer in both off-off-Broadway shows and the Broadway production of *Singin' in the Rain*; and studied Meisner-based acting with Tim Philips and natural-voice singing with Joan Kobin.

After becoming injured from years of dance training that pushes the body beyond its natural limits, he studied a rehabilitative approach to human movement called "ideokinesis." It emphasizes working within the body's natural range of motion by using gravity-directed relaxation to help the body operate in an energy-efficient, injury-preventive way. It is based on the ideas of posture and motion innovated by Mabel Ellsworth Todd. In her iconic anatomy text *The Thinking Body*, she addresses the difference between what the nature-made, evolution-designed human body wants to do versus what the over-grasping, hypertension-driven human mind thinks it should do. Todd's point of view directly spurred the development of the holistic-educational-creative concept that he named "Standing Down Straight®."

The Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre creates dynamic dance theatre that activates emotional expression. Through an interplay of athletic and articulate motion, they present theatrical and immediate works that engage audiences from start to finish and beckon a response of thought, feeling, and soul.

Notes in Motion, a vendor of NYC Department of Education, offers inclusive in-school, after-school, and community programs that teach dance styles including ballet, modern, jazz, African dance, Latin dance, hip hop, tap, musical theater, and more. Dance programs combine technical skill-based instruction with creative expression and foster self-discovery, risk-taking, and individual leadership, and are united by Amanda Selwyn Dance Company's singular approach to dance education, The Movement Exchange Method, which combines technical instruction with creative skill-building and collaborative learning. Notes in Motion aims to provide access to the art form of dance to inspire the next generation of dance appreciators. In the last three years, the dance education programs have grown from 87 programs and 45 school partners per year to 163 programs and 75 school partners. This year, Notes in Motion brought dance to 21,000 students and delivered 4,400 program sessions throughout NYC. Programs directly benefit underserved communities who have historically faced a lack of arts education.

Amanda Selwyn (Artistic Director/Choreographer) founded Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre/Notes in Motion in 2000 and in 26 seasons, has directed over 130 productions, developed a network of artists, and created Notes in Motion's dance education program. Amanda recently taught workshops and residencies at Peridance Hofstra University, NYU, SUNY New Paltz, BMCC, Baruch, New Women, NY, the NY Gender Conference, and Temple University. Her work has been presented twice on Jacob's Pillow Inside/Out, at Tribeca PAC, American Dance Guild Festival, DUMBO Dance Festival, APAP, COOL NY, Wassaic Dance, WestFest, Movement Research, Dixon Place, NYU's Women and Theater conference, Dance Teacher Summit, and Pushing Progress. Amanda led workshops at 3 Face to Face conferences. Grants: NYSCA, Harkness Foundation, Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation, Hyde and Watson Foundation, Friars Foundation, Dizzy Feet Foundation, Bronx Arts Council, DCLA, NYC Council, Manhattan Borough President, Met Life, City National Bank, Credit Suisse, and Bossak/Heilbron Foundation. Amanda participated in the Choreographer's Lab program at Jacob's Pillow. She has a 500-hour yoga teacher's certification and teaches yoga privately and at Crunch Gym. She holds a Master's degree from NYU Tisch and a B.S. from Northwestern University, with a focus on theatre, women's studies, and dance.

Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre/Notes in Motion programs are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature. The company is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

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Schedule
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