

Sunday, May 31, 2020

Battery Dance TV Dance Diplomacy with Jonathan Dancing in Iraq

Company: Battery Dance

Venue: Battery Dance

Location: New York, NY

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Battery Dance

Battery Dance launched Battery Dance TV on March 27, 2020 at <https://batterydance.org/dancetv/> to provide free live dance classes and programming for the general public by Battery Dance and affiliated local and international artists through a regularly scheduled program. Faced with the cancellation of its New York City public school dance classes and the postponement of its State Department Nigeria tour, and with its popular dance studios closed, its staff members went into high gear (from living rooms and kitchens), creating online content. In its first 8 weeks, Battery Dance TV has had 70,000 views from people in 112 countries.

Sundays feature a mixed schedule beginning with an interview program at 9am and noon hosted by Battery Dance's Founder Jonathan Hollander, Dance Diplomacy with Jonathan. He has brought together dancers, culture leaders and diplomats from the U.S. with their counterparts from North and South America, South Asia, Africa, Europe and the Far East, examining how the pandemic is impacting them and sharing inspiration along with challenges. International guest artist classes and solo performances are presented later in the day.

On Sunday, May 31 at 9am and 12 noon EDT, Hollander's Dance Diplomacy interview reassembles a trio of women who succeeded in bringing Battery Dance's "Dancing to Connect" program to Iraq in 2012 against a backdrop of bombs attacks and institutional skepticism. Sue Harville served as the Public Affairs Officer for the U.S. Department of State in Kirkuk, Erbil, where explosions served as her morning wake-up call. Local Cultural Advisor Helen Pattou facilitated the project, translating into two languages for youthful participants from different religious and linguistic groups and negotiating for space when everything went awry at the last moment. Robin Cantrell overcame her trepidation and dug into her skills as a dancer and teaching artist with Battery Dance, converting theater students into confident choreographers and dancers in the matter of 5 days.

"It took true believers to bring a dance program to Iraq in 2012. Through this look back by the three women who made it happen, we will see how grace, steely determination and adaptability came into play with results that play out even today through life-long relationships," according to Jonathan Hollander, Artistic Director and Founder of Battery Dance.

Later in the afternoon at 2pm, Battery Dance TV features a ballet class taught by Roman Baca, Artistic Director of Exit 12 dance company, former U.S. Marine who served in Iraq. Baca was a Mission Continues trainee with Battery Dance and eventually co-led "Dancing to Connect in Iraq" with Robin Cantrell.

"Echoes of Erbil" choreographed and performed by Hussein Smko will fill the solo performance slot at 4 p.m. A native of Erbil, Iraq, Hussein is the recipient of Battery Dance's Adel Euro Fellowship for Dancers Seeking Refuge, and was recently featured in Dancemagazine. His fellowship is named after the late dancer, Battery protégé Adel Euro who was featured in the documentary "Moving Stories". Euro was trained by Battery Dance on Skype, performed with the Company in two festivals in Amman, Jordan, and fell victim to the tragic car bombing in Baghdad on July 3, 2016. Battery Dance recently introduced several new programs to its normal line up of classes and performances. These include Mindful Movement sessions for frontline healthcare workers offered eight times per week; improvisation and musical theater dance classes; and special afternoon classes for kids.

Battery Dance TV's regularly scheduled offerings include: morning warmup/stretching/conditioning exercises to start your day off right mid-day classes in contemporary dance with afro, ballet and jazz fusion element evening classes in varied ballroom styles a daily 4pm short video by

dancers performing in their living roomsBattery Dance also plans to expand its distance learning and programming by including online classes in lighting and production design, and classes in arts administration and cultural diplomacy. In the future, the Company plans to add short performances by youth around the world who will create short dances based on a specific weekly theme suggested by the Company.

Morning Classes & Instructors

Flow - Vivake KhamsingsavathStretch & Strength - Mira CookConditioning - Sean Scantlebury

Afternoon Contemporary Classes & Instructors

Jazz Fusion - Jill LinkowskiBallet Fusion, Improv, and Musical Theatre - Bethany MitchellStorytelling & Repertoire - Hussein SmkoAfro Fusion - Sean Scantlebury

Evening Ballroom Classes & Instructor

Cha Cha, Salsa, Waltz, Fox Trot, Tango, Rumba, Swing - Razvan Stoian

ABOUT BATTERY DANCE

As one of America's leading cultural ambassadors, Battery Dance connects the world through dance. The Company pursues artistic excellence and social relevance by creating vibrant new works, performing on the world's stages, presenting dance in public spaces, serving the field of dance and teaching people of all ages with special attention to the disadvantaged and areas of conflict. Battery Dance is committed to enhancing the cultural vibrancy of its home community in New York City, extending programming throughout the U.S., and building bridges worldwide through international cultural exchange with programs in 70 countries to date. www.batterydance.org

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