

November, 1-4, 2023

Dances We Dance presents 2023 Fall Season

Company: Dances We Dance
Venue: Martha Graham Studio Theater
Location: New York, NY

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Dances We Dance presents its 2023 Fall Season from November 1-4, 2023 at the Martha Graham Studio Theater, 55 Bethune Street, 11th floor, NYC. Performances: Wed-Fri at 7:30pm, Sat at 5:30pm. Tickets are \$35 general admission, \$25 student/senior, \$100 for 11/4 performance and reception and are available at <https://www.danceswedance.org/tickets>.

Choreography: Francesca Todesco, Rae Ballard, Jim May, Benjamin Cortés and Mark Bankin

Repertory Work by Anna Sokolow (1910-2000)

Guest Choreographer: Mark Bankin

Guest Dance Company: Rae Ballard Thoughts in Motion

Dancers: Kathleen Caragine, Colleen Edwards, Rosy Gentle, Margherita Tisato, Francesca Todesco (DWD); Rae Ballard, Lauren Naslund, Lana Hankinson (RBTM)

Guest Dancer: Benjamin Cortés

Dances We Dance presents its second season at the Martha Graham Studio Theater, previously home of the prestigious Merce Cunningham Dance Company. Francesca Todesco, Artistic Director of DWD, returns to the stage that hosted many of her performances of the past 20 years with the Sokolow Theatre/Dance Ensemble, Dances by Isadora, and Catherine Gallant/Dance.

The second season of Dances We Dance showcases choreography that has deep roots in the lineage of American Modern Dance and reflects Ms. Todesco's own ongoing evolution as a dancer and choreographer. In addition to her own work, this year's lineup includes choreography by Anna Sokolow, Jim May, Benjamin Cortés, and Rae Ballard, who is presenting dances with her company, Rae Ballard's Thoughts in Motion. Additionally, choreographer Mark Bankin will present a world premiere commission.

This company continues the original mission of Dances We Dance as when it was founded fifty years ago by the legendary Betty Jones and Fritz Ludin. Betty and Fritz's vision of forming a new generation of dancers resulted in over 50 years of dedicated teaching and choreographing all over the world. After their retirement in 2019, the organization passed to Ms. Todesco, who had spent the last 20+ years working with and learning from dancers and choreographers in New York City and worldwide.

This season includes a reunion with her former dance partner Benjamin Cortés, a former member of the Sokolow Theatre/Dance Ensemble who now lives in France. Their performance and the others on the program demonstrate how the genealogy of modern dance is being molded into the works of today's choreographers.

September Sonnet (1995) was the last duet choreographed by Anna Sokolow for Jim and Lorry May, who were devoted disciples of Anna Sokolow and co-artistic directors of her dance company, Players' Project. Mr. May is the Founding Director of the Sokolow Theatre/Dance Ensemble, whose aim is to expand the art of dance to incorporate other disciplines (music, theater, painting, literature), and work toward a

progressive new style of theater/dance. September Sonnet begins with a male solo, followed by a female solo and a duet. The piece is danced by Francesca Todesco and guest artist Benjamin Cortés, both former members of the Sokolow Theatre/Dance Ensemble and reunited on stage after 17 years.

Jack Anderson of The New York Times wrote: "It was a love duet - though not an ordinary one. Ms. Sokolow avoided choreographically rhyming moon with June or idealizing dewy-eyed youth."

Lisa Jo Sagolla, Backstage: "...pedestrian gestures of reaching and touching evoke powerful feelings of emotional bonding."

Mark Bankin's Elizabeth is a trio commissioned in 2023 by Dances We Dance. The piece explores the ways in which memories disintegrate. Originally conceived by looking at the salvaged excerpts from a fire of movement notation partitions, diagram records, and pictograms, Elizabeth examines how details slip through the cracks.

Benjamin Cortés will dance two solos (Peek and Passage) that are excerpts of his 4-solo work. The idea for Peek(choreographed by Cortés, music by Aphex Twin) came from observations and reflections of our interactions with computer and cell phone technology and how artificial intelligence is affecting the human condition. In the complete work, images of unhoused people by NY based photographer Michael Hayes are integrated.

Passage was choreographed by Jim May in 2009 with music by Rachmaninov; entirely choreographed on a diagonal, the solo speaks of loss and anguish after the loss of loved ones.

The second solo by Jim May, Remember (2021), is danced by Ms. Todesco. This piece was inspired by the statues "The Three Shades" in the garden of the Philadelphia Rodin Museum. Jim May has been one of Ms. Todesco's teachers and mentors for the past 20 years, as well as one of her most ardent supporters. She dedicates this piece to him.

Rae Ballard's choreography has been described by Jennifer Dunning in The New York Times as having "the quality of a short story." This choreography and related scripts written by Ms. Ballard for dance/theater works have provided the artistic direction for Thoughts in Motion, a non-profit company founded in the 1980s. Built on the bedrock of the Humphrey-Limón tradition, this former member of Anna Sokolow's Players Project creates dances laced with social commentary.

Three women in There is No End of Things in the Heart are propelled forward by a shared heartbeat, repeatedly separating and spiraling towards each other in a common allegiance.

Popular dances of the '20s and 40's included in Just Dance capture the joy of movement and continue the tradition of integrating other dance styles with modern dance.

Spring invokes a romp through dew laden grass of early morning, where one imagines and feels the natural renewal of spirit.

(Great) Expectation is the new quartet presented by Artistic Director Francesca Todesco. Set in 3 sections with music by Schumann and the dynamic third movement of Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata, the original idea generated from frantic, complex, and enigmatic relationships between mothers and daughters: dreams, desires, failures and rebounds, the unpredictability of change and the dilemma of unconditional love.

Ms. Todesco will also present Fuga y Misterio, a piece that premiered in 2022. A tribute to the inner beauty and strength of wild women, this piece will close the performance with the exhilarating music of Astor Piazzolla (1921-2022).

Dances We Dance is a not-for-profit organization which mission includes teaching, researching, reconstructing, preserving and performing new and past works of choreography. As Artistic Director, Francesca Todesco is bringing to the company her knowledge of early American Modern Dance, particularly Isadora Duncan but also Anna Sokolow, Humphrey-Limón as well as other techniques & styles. Notably Dances We Dance explores the legacy of dance pioneer Isadora Duncan by sharing the technique and repertoire through teaching and performances and by forming the next generation of Duncan Dancers. As a large focus of this group is dedicated to performing, the audience can envision the connection between works of current and past choreographers. The company actively explores new movements, both for original creations but also in re-imagining lost works of choreography, recreating them with a new vision while respecting their historic value. We welcome guest choreographers to create new or repertory works on this versatile company of dancers. Education is at the core of our mission, providing weekly classes in the Duncan style in New York City as well as occasional intensive workshops. Furthermore, DWD hosts seasonal workshops with master teachers. Check out our education page for current scheduling. Ms. Todesco has traveled widely offering workshops and performances abroad. www.danceswedance.org

Dances We Dance
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<https://www.danceswedance.org/tickets>

Schedule
November 1, 2023: 7:30pm
November 2, 2023: 7:30pm
November 3, 2023: 7:30pm
November 4, 2023: 5:30pm

