



5824 Forbes Ave, Suite 8
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www.bodiographycbc.com
info@bodiographycbc.com

To Whom It May Concern,

As Founder, Artistic Director, and Resident Choreographer of Bodiography Contemporary Ballet, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to present you with an informational packet showcasing the artistic capabilities of our modern ballet company that focuses on the aesthetic of the technique rather than the aesthetic of the body. In 2009 I was honored to be selected as a "Young Pittsburgher to Watch" by the Pittsburgh Post Gazette, voted *Best Dance Company* by Pittsburgh Magazine, and our Innovation concert was selected as one of the "Best Performances in 2009" by dance critic Jane Vranish. Since Bodiography's foundation in New York City in 2000 and the foundation of Bodiography's collaborative branch based in Pittsburgh, the company has truly taken flight. BCB has been seen throughout Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Florida, Maryland, and West Virginia, and receives warm receptions for every passing performance. BCB's mission to promote education, health, and positive body image combined with our use of contemporary themes and music choices appeal to a wide demographic. We are always interested in continuing our touring pursuits and are eager to see if we are a fit for your performing arts calendar. I hope that you find our program options to be a worthwhile investment.

Please visit our website at www.bodiographycbc.com to view a promotional video which offers a glimpse of the artistic range of our work. As you view these works, please keep in mind the tremendous success of a mixed repertoire performance which can include some of the works you see on the video, as well as excerpts from many of my other eclectic ballets. Additionally, you will find this informational packet about the company's mission, a description of company endeavors, a personal biography, and a compensation list that describes our standard rates. The video clip best illustrates the versatility of my choreography, as well as the company's seamless technique.

Again, I thank you for your time, and sincerely hope that you consider us for your upcoming season. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call at any time.

Warm Regards,

Maria Caruso
Artistic Director



Bodiography Contemporary Ballet Company (BCB) was established in New York City in 2000 as a giant step toward creating a unique oasis in the world of dance. Ms. Caruso, founder and artistic director, began her crusade to revolutionize the world of contemporary ballet by fashioning a new standard of dance performance and education. This new standard includes the employment of college educated, artistic, and proficient dancers who do not fit the stereotypical ballet aesthetic and are eager to adopt Bodiography's mission. This mission allows for artists to find pleasure in the execution of Caruso's emotionally intriguing ballets set to contemporary music, while educating the general public about healthy-living. BCB consistently impacts audiences with its holistic approach, intriguing mission, and profound performances that showcase exquisite ballet technique utilizing contemporary accents in both movement and music. Bodiography holds 501c3 non-profit status.

Mission

Bodiography Contemporary Ballet strives to be the premier non-profit contemporary ballet company in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Providing quality, innovative and artistic multi-genre movement material with a strong foundation in classical ballet technique, Bodiography showcases entertaining dance that is accessible to audiences of all ages. Bodiography offers opportunities for college educated professional dancers with athletic bodies to grow as artists, promoting healthy lifestyles and positive body image within our company and within our audiences.

Artistic Vision

Bodiography Contemporary Ballet (BCB) offers its audiences a union of many eclectic movement styles, solidly supported by classical ballet technique. BCB is not a traditional classical ballet repertory company. Contemporary ballet, as viewed by Artistic Director Maria Caruso, is a fusion of movement styles – modern, jazz, and pedestrian movement - with an underpinning of ballet technique. Instead of movement created for the pointe shoe, contemporary ballet is movement accentuated by the pointe shoe. Pointe work is a bright color in the contemporary ballet choreographer's palette, sometimes shining on its own, sometimes used to contrast barefoot movement, sometimes not used at all. However, even when it is not used, the balletic line of the body still distinguishes contemporary ballet from straight modern dance. Where modern dance techniques such as Cunningham or Limon incorporate an original movement vocabulary, contemporary ballet speaks with a true ballet vocabulary accented by the languages of modern and jazz.

Caruso's choreography is a fine balance of pristine classical ballet technique, powerful pointe work, modern and jazz vocabulary, intense spatial patterns, and pedestrian movement. Ms. Caruso concentrates on realistic themes, such as relationships and real life issues, aiming at art that is emotionally accessible and relevant to all audiences. Caruso's goal is to explore the universal human condition through movement, the universal language, in an attempt to touch viewers' hearts. Her music is also specifically chosen to appeal to audiences that may be attracted to dance through the music. This strategy has been successful at bringing newcomers to view ballet with BCB as evident in BCB's growing audience base at Pittsburgh's Byham Theater.

BCB recruits well-trained dancers who are both finely tuned ballet dancers and competent in and confident with all dance styles, who have received a four-year baccalaureate degree, have experience with nationally renowned dance organizations, are accomplished dance teachers and mentors, are committed to BCB's mission, and have a variety of healthy physiques. Rather than presenting a homogeneous corps,



BCB aims to present uplifting ballet enlightened by the physicality, style, and passion of each unique company member. Pairing a tall dancer with a small dancer, for instance, gives BCB choreography a humanity and an emotional impact that cannot be achieved with a uniform corps of stereotypical ballet bodies.

The concept behind BCB, that of providing entertaining and beautiful dance focused on the aesthetic of the movement rather than on the aesthetic of the dancer's body, is unique in the dance community. It offers dancers the possibility of accepting their physical gifts as they are. It encourages young dancers not to fall prey to eating disorders and other destructive behaviors in order to meet sociological standards. As our mission asserts, it promotes healthy living and positive body image. BCB believes that these ideas are central to reaching out to new audience populations who may be intrigued by the company's philosophy.

Beliefs

It is Bodiography's belief that by holding a standard for educational excellence within a professional dance setting, there will be a mature and inspirational quality within both the working atmosphere and the work produced. By only employing dancers who have received a minimum of a four-year baccalaureate degree, there is a great opportunity to provide not only mature and high quality work, but also offer a high standard of education. Bodiography believes strongly that our youth will pave the way of the future. With that in mind, Bodiography is dedicated to providing quality dance education through Bodiography Center for Movement, Bodiography's affiliated dance conservatory owned and operated by Artistic Director Maria Caruso. At this institution, BCB dancers are employed as faculty members where they can explore their talents as mentors, as well as choreographers. At Bodiography Center for Movement, the educators enrich young and aspiring artists about the importance of a sound mind, body, and spirit within the technique of ballet, modern, jazz and other affiliated subjects.



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Artistic Director / Founder / Choreographer

Maria Caruso, native of Pittsburgh, received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in performing arts and dance from the Florida State University at age nineteen and shortly after earned a Master of Science Degree in Professional Leadership with an emphasis on management for non-profit organizations from Carlow University. Throughout the years she has had the great opportunity to study and perform with numerous choreographers and renowned companies and has had an active performance career with Bodiography since inception.

Her teaching career began in Florida where she took part in the development of dance curriculum in the Florida public schools while directing a ballet/modern program at a leading academy in South Georgia. Upon moving back to New York City she became a teacher at Ballet Academy East and began laying the foundation of her company. The concept of a ballet company that encouraged numerous body types began when Ms. Caruso grew weary of the body conflicts of the ballet world. Her experiences inspired her to find success in a professional career that would allow dancers to eliminate this problem. She believed that the technique and artistry of the art form was the most important aspect rather than how well the body molds itself to the ensemble. With this in mind Bodiography was born and contemporary ballet was adopted as a style that would diverge from the classical ballet.

Her choreography has been well received throughout the United States and continues to receive immense acclaim with every passing performance. Ms. Caruso has choreographed numerous ballets for the company's repertoire and has been commissioned to produce works for *brooks and company dance*, Off Broad Street Center for Dance Arts, North Allegheny High School, Butler Community College, The Garrett Lakes Arts Festival, and the Elsie Awards honoring Director Rob Marshall. In addition to her choreography she is proud to have commissioned original works for Bodiography's extensive repertoire from such distinguished choreographers as Johann Renvall, Ze'eva Cohen, Anjali Austin, James Martin, Ilana Suprun Clyde and Lynne Taylor-Corbett. Ms. Caruso has had the great opportunity to showcase Bodiography Contemporary Ballet by touring through New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, and Florida where she has presented her work and engaged in many outreach programs and lecture demonstrations. She has conducted master classes at Point Park College, Slippery Rock University, McDaniel College, Pittsburgh University, West Virginia University, and Desayles University, as well as design movement programs for The Yeshiva Girls School of Pittsburgh, Shaler Area School District, and the Carnegie Mellon University's Cyert Center. Additionally, Caruso is excited to watch the growth of her multi-genre conservatory Bodiography Center For Movement where Caruso prepares young aspiring artists for collegiate and professional careers in dance. Her graduates continue to flourish in the top university dance programs in the country.

Most recently Ms. Caruso was featured in the Carlow University Journal and recognized by the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette as a "Young Pittsburgher to Watch in 2009." She also acts as the Group Fitness Coordinator at Club One Pittsburgh.



Company Members

Kelly Basil joined Bodiography in 2005 and has performed a variety of principal and soloist roles for Caruso and guest choreographers, including Ze'eva Cohen, Anjali Austin, James Martin, and most recently, Lynne Taylor-Corbett. In addition to dancing, she has presented several pieces of her own contemporary choreography on the company during annual *Multiplicity* concerts.

Ms. Basil attended North Carolina School of the Arts in the B.F.A. ballet program, and then studied contemporary movement at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where she graduated with a B.A. in Dance, magna cum laude. While attending UNCG, she danced with the Greensboro Ballet for two seasons, performing soloist roles in both contemporary and classical repertoire. Originally from Long Island, she feels fortunate to have studied under the renowned Maggie Black and owes much of her development to Black's coaching. She received her early training at Huntington Ballet Theatre and later at Variations Dance Studio where she moved through the ranks to teaching faculty, as well as intensive programs at Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, Kansas City Ballet, and Connecticut Ballet.

This season Ms. Basil has added a new piece to the puzzle. In addition to dancing with the company and teaching at Bodiography Center for Movement and T.H.E. Dance Place, she is pursuing her M.Ed. in Health and Physical Education at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and acts as a graduate assistant for the department. Upon graduation she will be certified to teach dance in the public schools, which is the next challenging role that she is looking forward to.

Meghan Dann, originally from New Hampshire, began her training at The New Hampshire School of Ballet and The Boston Conservatory. In 2002, she moved to Pittsburgh to attend Point Park University. While attending Point Park, Meghan studied and performed works by Mark Diamond and Alan Hineline. After three years she graduated magna cum laude with a B.A. in dance and a minor in child psychology. Since joining the company in 2006 she has performed works by Anjali Austin, Maria Caruso, Lynne Taylor-Corbett and fellow company members. Meghan also works closely with Act One Theatre School's Professional Training Program and yearly high school musical. In August of 2009 Megan and husband Stephan welcomed their daughter Aila Raine to the world.

Colleen Landwerlen, Born in Roswell, New Mexico, began her dance training at the Alcorn Academy of Dance. As a young child, Colleen moved from state to state, diversifying her technique through other dance studios including Tuzer Dance Center, Fort Wayne Ballet, and most importantly, Dallas Dance Academy. In conjunction with Dallas Dance Academy, Colleen appeared in the corps de ballet of *The Nutcracker* with Fort Worth Dallas Ballet, now known as Texas Ballet Theater. From ages 13 to 18 she attended several summer dance intensives including American Ballet Theatre, Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, and Pittsburgh Ballet Theater. After graduating high school, Colleen moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to attend Point Park University, where she earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in ballet in December, 2006. While there, she was privileged to work with such choreographers as Margot Sappington, Christian Holder, and Alan Hineline. She danced the lead role in Hineline's ballet, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, and appeared as the Sugar Plum Fairy with Orlando Metropolitan Ballet in their production of *The Nutcracker*. Colleen joined Bodiography in 2008 and continues to perform principal roles while producing her own choreography for the company's annual *Multiplicity* concerts.



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Company Members (cont.)

Kaitlin Dann, originally from New Hampshire, graduated cum laude from Point Park University with a degree in modern dance. Here in Pittsburgh, Kaitlin has performed at Pillow Project's *Second Saturday* and has set her own choreography at Point Park University's *Student Choreography Project*. In 2009 she also worked with Gretchen LaBorit to both present and perform in a work at the Grey Box Theater for Supporting Woman Artists Now (SWAN) Day. Kaitlin has been working with Bodiography since 2009.

Nicole Cerilli, a Pittsburgh native, received her early training at Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre where she participated in the Schenley High School Program and performed with the PBT company. During the summers, she diversified her training at Pacific Northwest Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Miami City Ballet, BalletMet, and Bodiography Center for Movement. In 2009 she graduated magna cum laude from Mercyhurst College in Erie, Pa with a B.A. in dance and a minor in Communication. At Mercyhurst, Nicole had the opportunity to perform soloist and principal roles with the Mercyhurst Dancers under Artistic Director Tauna Hunter. In addition, she was privileged to work with world-renowned classical and contemporary teachers and choreographers such as Bruce Marks, Vivi Flindt, Laura Alonso, and Bridget Moore. She also taught in the open ballet division at Mercyhurst, made her choreographic debut in the Raw Edges X concert, and was the Arts and Entertainment Editor for the student newspaper. Nicole joined Bodiography in 2009 and in addition to her dance life is enrolled in the Master of Teaching program for Elementary Education at Chatham University.

Kirstie Corso's training is diversified from her training at various locations around the world including South Korea, Thailand, Virginia, New Mexico, and the DC area. Unable to choose between the worlds of dance and academia, she attended Mercyhurst College where she pursued a dual degree in Dance and Political Science. Ms. Corso is happily continuing a profession in both realms, as a company member at Bodiography and as a student at the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs. Ms. Corso is indebted to the numerous teachers who helped shape her into the artist that she is today, but would like to extend a special thanks to the entire teaching staff at Mercyhurst's Dance Department for all the opportunities and support they provided her while pursuing her undergraduate studies. Ms. Corso has been working with Bodiography since 2009.

Mara Mandradjjeff began her ballet training with the Pittsburgh Youth Ballet where she performed principal roles in George Balanchine's *Stars and Stripes*, *Serenade*, and *Valse Fantasie*. Her summers were spent training at various programs such as the School of American Ballet, Chautauqua Institute, and Miami City Ballet. Turning towards academics, Mara went on to receive her bachelors at the University of Pittsburgh in English Literature with a minor in Dance. Attending the University of Pittsburgh presented Mara with numerous opportunities such as becoming a board member, teacher, and choreographer for the Pitt Dance Ensemble where she worked with Susan Gillis, choreographing and dancing for Opera Theater of Pittsburgh, and interning for Attack Theatre. Mara then began researching dance, body, and gender theories. She went on to present such research at the Pennsylvania State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance Convention with her lecture *Just Your Typical Starving Artist*. In the following year, Mara won The Marlee and James Myers Award for her critical essay *Queering Ballet*. Most recently, Mara finished her Masters in Education at the University of Pittsburgh where she continues to choreography and teach in addition to offering her talents to Janet Hays Dance Studio, Ballet Academy of Pittsburgh, and Point Park University. Mara joined Bodiography in 2009.



Company Members (cont.)

Maggie McNamara (Apprentice) attended Bodiography Center for Movement's College Preparatory Program prior to graduation from high school in the spring of 2009. Ms. McNamara is currently enrolled at Princeton University where she is studying dance performance. She continues to work with Bodiography.

Alex Salerno (Apprentice) attended Bodiography Center for Movement's College Preparatory Program prior to graduation from high school in the spring of 2009. Ms. Salerno is currently enrolled at Point Park University and is a full time apprentice with Bodiography. Aside from her academic studies she has an active teaching schedule and is a prominent group exercise instructor in the fitness industry.

Erin McKaveney and Chelsea Zimmer (Trainees) are both enrolled in Bodiography's College Preparatory Dance Program. This is Ms. McKaveney's second season as a trainee. She has attended such summer intensives as Boston Lab, Saratoga Springs, ABT, and Joffrey Ballet. Chelsea Zimmer is entering her first season as a trainee and has trained intensively with Bodiography in the summers. Both artists pride themselves on academic and artistic excellence.



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Bodiography Performance Projects

Year	Title	Key Choreographer(s)	Location	Dates/# of performances	Attendance
2009-2010	Multiplicity	Kaitlin Dann Colleen Landwerlen Ilana Suprun Clyde Maria Caruso Claudia M. Lawrey	Kelly-Strayhorn Theater, PA	November 14-15, 2009	250
2008-2009	S&T Bank and The Sue Hewitt Dance Studio Present Bodiography Contemporary Ballet	Maria Caruso	Indiana County Jr. High School	March 28, 2009	150
2008-2009	Innovation 2009	Maria Caruso Ilana Suprun Clyde Lynne Taylor-Corbett	Byham Theater, PA	February 21, 2009	576
2008-2009	Multiplicity	Kelly Basil Meghan Dann Colleen Landwerlen Lauren Sufлита	Kelly-Strayhorn Theater, PA	November 1-2, 2008	250
2007-2008	Innovation 2008	Maria Caruso James Martin	Byham Theater, PA	April 12, 2008	446
2007-2008	Multiplicity	Kelly Basil Meghan Dann Courtney Gleason Kalin Morrow Lauren Sufлита	Kelly-Strayhorn Theater, PA	November 3-4, 2007	250
2006-2007	The Pittsburgh Children's Museum – Shaken and Stirred	Maria Caruso Kelly Basil	The Pittsburgh Children's Museum	May 4, 2007	800
2006-2007	McDaniel College Presents Bodiography Contemporary Ballet	Maria Caruso Anjali Austin	Carroll Arts Center, MD	March 2-3, 2007	200
2006-2007	Innovation 2007	Maria Caruso Anjali Austin	Byham Theater, PA	February 3, 2007	596
2006-2007	Princeton University Dance Faculty Concert	Ze'eva Cohen Meghan Durham Dyane Harvey Rebecca Lazier Edisa Weeks	Berlind Theater, NJ	December 8-9, 2006	400
2006-2007	Multiplicity 2007	Kelly Basil Karen Dacko Shannon Hritz Courtney Gleason Lauren Sufлита	Kelly-Strayhorn Theater, PA	November 4-5, 2006	250
2005-2006	Innovation 2006	Maria Caruso Ze'eva Cohen	Byham Theater, PA	April 8, 2006	534
2005-2006	McDaniel College Presents Bodiography Contemporary Ballet	Maria Caruso Kelly Basil Lauren Sufлита	Carroll Arts Center, MD	February 25-26, 2006	260

2005-2006	Multiplicity 2006	Kelly Basil, Maria Caruso, Frances Chiaverini, Lauren Sufлита	Kelly-Strayhorn Theater, PA	January 28, 29, 2006	150
2004-2005	Washington and Jefferson College Presents Bodiography Contemporary Ballet	Maria Caruso	Olin Fine Arts Center, PA	April 29, 2005	450
2004-2005	Innovation 2005	Johan Renvall Maria Caruso	Byham Theater, PA	April 22, 23, 2005	200
2004-2005	Multiplicity	Karen Dacko Lauren Sufлита Shannon Hritz Kelsey Yates Danika Pramik-Holdaway	Kelly-Strayhorn Theater, PA	January 28, 29, 30 2005	150
2004-2005	Millennium Confusion	Maria Caruso	Byham Theater, PA	November 18, 2004	498
2003-2004	80's Rock Ballet	Maria Caruso	Carlow College, PA	September 26, 2004	200
2003-2004	Elsie Awards In honor of Director Rob Marshall	Maria Caruso	Carnegie Music Hall, PA	April 1, 2004	550
2003-2004	80's Rock Ballet	Maria Caruso	Byham Theater, PA	March 13, 2004	455
2003-2004	Mixed Rep Concert for National Eating Disorder Awareness Month	Maria Caruso	McDaniel College, MD	February 5, 2004	500
2003-2004	Multiplicity	Maria Caruso Lauren Sufлита Shannon Hritz Peter Boucher Jennifer Guy Christena Jones	Kelly-Strayhorn Theater, PA	January 30, 31 2004 and February 1, 2004	150
2003-2004	Living Successions	Maria Caruso	Byham Theater, PA	October 16, 17, 2003	498
2002-2003	Garrett Lakes Arts Festival / Period Work Created By Caruso to Depict the Life and Times of the County	Maria Caruso	Garrett County Community College, MD	July 26, 2003	175
2002-2003	West Virginia University Governor's School for the Arts Mixed Rep Performance	Maria Caruso	West Virginia University, WV	June 28, 2003	100
2002-2003	Bodiography Contemporary Ballet Spring Concert	Maria Caruso	Kelly Strayhorn-Theater, PA	May 16, 17, 18, 2003	150
2002-2003	An Evening of Movement Exclusively for the Women of Yeshiva Girl's School	Maria Caruso	Kelly Strayhorn-Theater, PA	April 1, 2003	175
2002-2003	Living Successions	Maria Caruso	Butler County Community College, PA	January 31, 2003	150
2002-2003	Envisage	Maria Caruso	Byham Theater, PA	January 12, 2003	472

2002-2003	Creation	Maria Caruso	Theater of the Riverside Church, NYC	March 15, 16, 2002	150
2002-2003	Creation	Maria Caruso	Martin Theater, FL	May 19, 2002	150
2002-2003	Creation	Maria Caruso	Byham Theater, PA	January 2002	450



Touring Engagements and Contact List

**Sue Hewitt Dance Studio and S&T Bank Presents
Bodiography Contemporary Ballet**
Indiana Junior High
March 28, 2009

Contact:
Sue Hewitt @ 724-465-8455
Director, Sue Hewitt Dance Studio
Indiana, PA

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**Clear Channel Radio Presents Bodiography Contemporary Ballet at
Ecolution, an Earth Day Celebration**
Mattress Factory Art Museum
April 19, 2008 @ 6-11pm

Contact:
Gina Mignogna @ 412-897-2988
Integrated Marketing Executive, Clear Channel Radio
Pittsburgh, PA

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brooks & company dance Commissions New Work by Maria Caruso
Residency: March 7-10, 2008
(Company performed Caruso's 8 minute piece titled "Intimate Liasons" during 3 mixed
rep shows on April 4,5, 2008 at the Defoor Centre, Atlanta, GA)

Contact:
Joanna Brooks @ 404-371-9652
Artistic Director, brooks & company dance
Atlanta, GA

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Off BroadStreet Centre for the Dance Arts
Commissions New Works by Maria Caruso
Residency: November 14-19, 2007
(Student dancers performed 4 works developed by Caruso during their June concert)

Contact:
Dana Willis @ 229-377-2800
Director, Off BroadStreet Centre for the Dance Arts

The Children's Museum of Pittsburgh Presents
Bodiography Contemporary Ballet (mixed rep)
In collaboration with fundraising event titled "Shaken and Stirred"
The Children's Museum
May 4, 2007 @ 7-11pm

Contact:
Heather McBrier @ 412-366-2006
Co-Chair of Shaken and Stirred
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

McDaniel College Presents
Bodiography Contemporary Ballet (mixed rep)
In collaboration with National Eating Disorder Awareness Week
Carroll Arts Center
February 2, 2007 @ 8pm
Master Workshops in Hip-Hop, Pilates, Modern Dance, and Improvisation
McDaniel College
February 3, 2007

Contacts:
Dr. Cathy Orsolek-Kronner @ 410-857-2535
Suzanne Gilbert @ 443-340-8619
McDaniel College
Westminster, Maryland 21157

Princeton University Presents
Dance Faculty Concert
With Bodiography Contemporary Ballet (Meditation on a Square)
Berlind Theater
December 8 and 9, 2006 @ 8pm

Contact:
Professor Ze'eva Cohen @ 609-258-2992
Princeton University
Princeton, NJ 08544

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McDaniel College Presents
Bodiography Contemporary Ballet (mixed rep)
In collaboration with National Eating Disorder Awareness Week
Carroll Arts Center
February 25, 2006 @ 8pm
Master Workshops in Hip-Hop, Pilates, Modern Dance, and Improvisation
McDaniel College
February 24, 2006

Contacts:
Dr. Cathy Orsolek-Kronner @ 410-857-2535
Suzanne Gilbert @ 443-340-8619
McDaniel College
Westminster, Maryland 21157

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Washington and Jefferson College Presents
Bodiography Contemporary Ballet (mixed rep)
Olin Fine Arts Center
April 29, 2005

Contacts:
Ronald Sherhofer @ 724-223-6511
Washington & Jefferson College
60 S. Lincoln St.
Washington, PA 15301

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Carlow College Presents

Bodiography's 80's Rock Ballet

Antonian Hall

September 26, 2004

Contact:

Student Activities Department @ 412-578-6690

Carlow University

3333 Fifth Ave.

Pittsburgh, PA 15213

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The Elsie Awards Presents

Bodiography and a new work to honor Director Rob Marshall

Carnegie Music Hall

April 1, 2004

Contact:

Lili Mosco @ 412-622-1300

WQED Multimedia

4802 Fifth Avenue

Pittsburgh PA 15213

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McDaniel College Presents

Bodiography Contemporary Ballet in a Mixed Rep Performance

In collaboration with National Eating Disorder Awareness Week

McDaniel College Campus

February 5, 2004

Contacts:

Dr. Cathy Orsolek-Kronner @ 410-857-2535

Suzanne Gilbert @ 443-340-8619

McDaniel College

Westminster, Maryland 21157

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Garrett Lakes Arts Festival Presents BCB Commissioned Work

Garrett County Community College

July 26, 2003

Contact:

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**West Virginia University and West Virginia Governor's School Presents
Performance of Repertory and Master Workshops**

West Virginia University Campus

June 28, 2003

Contact:

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The Yeshiva Girls School Presents

An Evening of Conservative Movement Exclusively for Women

Kelly Strayhorn Community Theatre Pittsburgh, PA

Contact:

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Butler Community College Presents

BCB in Living Successions set to the music of Pearl Jam

Succop Theater

January 31, 2003



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Touring Repertoire

Heart Strings (2009)

Choreography: Lynne Taylor-Corbett
Dancers: 5
Music: Tin Hat Trio
Time: 18 minutes
Genre: Modern Ballet
Description: Theater/dance work depicting women of the Dust Bowl era

For My Father (2009)

Choreography: Ilana Suprun Clyde
Dancers: 2
Music: Patrick Doyle
Time: 7 minutes
Genre: Modern Ballet
Description: Duet referencing two sisters grieving

Something About Nothing (2009)

Choreography: Maria Caruso
Dancers: 13
Music: Pink Floyd
Time: 50 minutes
Genre: Modern Ballet - Pointe
Description: Movement tapestry depicting the musical journey of a doctor and patient

Partitia (2008)

Choreography: James Martin
Dancers: 5
Music: Johann Sebastian Bach
Time: 18 minutes
Genre: Modern Ballet
Description: Movement tapestry depicting the musical composition

Bound (2008)

Choreography: Maria Caruso
Dancers: 9-13 dancers, 12 actors
Music: The Red Hot Chili Peppers
Time: 50 minutes
Genre: Modern Ballet – Pointe
Description: Ballet descriptive of psychological disorders and the recovery process

Solace (2008 Restaged – Original 2005)

Choreography: Maria Caruso
Dancers: 8
Music: Arvo Part
Time: 30 minutes
Genre: Modern Ballet – Barefoot
Description: Ballet showing a journey to another world



Touring Repertoire (cont.)

Attaining Wonder (2007)

Choreography: Anjali Austin
Dancers: 7
Music: Ojos De Frujo, James Asher, The Pleb
Time: 18 minutes
Genre: Modern Ballet – Pointe
Description: Ballet infused with pedestrian movement

Mentality Toiled Empathy (2007)

Choreography: Maria Caruso
Dancers: 2
Music: Pheloung Barrington
Time: 16 minutes
Genre: Modern Ballet – Barefoot
Description: Tightly choreographed study of contrast between logic and emotion

Kaleidoscope (2007)

Choreography: Maria Caruso
Dancers: 9
Music: Dave Matthews Band
Time: 38 minutes
Genre: Cont. Ballet – Pointe
Description: Series of colorful movement tapestries

Timeless (2006)

Choreography: Maria Caruso
Dancers: 6
Music: Stevie Nicks
Genre: Cont. Ballet – Pointe
Time: 32 minutes
Description: Series of pas de deux work along with pas de trois pieces showcasing relationships

Reflections (2006)

Choreography: Maria Caruso
Dancers: 5
Music: Bliss
Genre: Modern Ballet – Barefoot
Time: 20 minutes
Description: Three dance segments utilizing props to depict ideas of self reflection

Meditation on a Square (2006)

Choreography: Ze'eva Cohen
Dancers: 6
Music: Various
Genre: Modern – Barefoot
Time: 24 minutes
Description: Middle-eastern flavored study of cultural and architectural influences in Barcelona



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Touring Repertoire (cont.)

Love Lines (2005)

Choreography: Maria Caruso

Dancers: 2

Music: David Grey

Genre: Ballet - Pointe

Time: 10 minutes

80's Rock (2004)

Dancers: 8

Music: Various 80's artists

Genre: Modern Ballet – Pointe

Time: 90 minutes

Description: Upbeat full length ballet about youth growing up in the 80's

Living Successions (2003)

Choreography: Maria Caruso

Dancers: 8

Music: Pearl Jam

Genre: Modern Ballet – Barefoot and Pointe work

Time: 45 minutes

Description: Rock concert format of vignettes and movement tapestries



Compensation/Program Template

Technical Requirements

Available upon request

Travel Requirements

BCB requires that all travel expenses be paid by the presenting organization including transportation, room and board, and meals.

- (1) Mixed Repertory Performance
(\$5,000-\$12,000) contingent upon rep. selections**
- (2) Mixed Repertory Performance and Master Workshop
Additional \$500 for 2hour master class involving entire company**
- (3) Work Commissioned by Organization
(\$3,500-\$12,000) contingent upon length**

Package includes recognition of commissioner in all future programs and performances, which will remain in Bodiography's repertory. Work will premiere at the venue and will be available to be carried out in programs throughout the U.S. and abroad. Work may be commissioned for educational institutions and may be held in repertoire.

- (4) Three-Five Day Residency Program at Educational Institutions
without Performance, Choreography and master workshops only**

Commissioned work with choreography by Maria Caruso

3 day (\$3,500)

*residency includes six hours of class and 12 hours of rehearsal
Commissioned work will range from 10-20 minutes*

5 day (\$6,000-12,000)

*Residency includes ten hours of class and 20 hours of rehearsal
Commissioned work will range form 20-30 minutes*



Performance Contract Template
Agreement for Service

THIS AGREEMENT FOR SERVICE (this "Agreement") dated this 20th day of September, 2007

BETWEEN:

McDaniel College, 2 College Hill Westminster, Maryland 21157
(the "Customer")
OF THE FIRST PART

- AND -

Bodiography Contemporary Ballet, 5824 Forbes Ave Suite 8, Pittsburgh, PA 15217
(the "Service Provider")
OF THE SECOND PART

BACKGROUND:

- A. The Customer is of the opinion that the Service Provider has the necessary qualifications, experience and abilities to provide services to the Customer.
- B. The Service Provider is agreeable to providing such services to the Customer, on the terms and conditions as set out in this Agreement.

IN CONSIDERATION OF

The matters described above and of the mutual benefits and obligations set forth in this Agreement, the receipt and sufficiency of which consideration is hereby acknowledged, the parties to this Agreement agree as follows:

Services Provided

The Customer hereby agrees to engage the Service Provider to provide the Customer with services consisting of:

- Produce a **75-minute mixed repertory performance** including segments from Caruso's most current ballets at **7:30pm on Friday March 2, 2008** at the Carroll County Arts Center.
- Hold a Question and Answer session that will be no longer than 30 minutes during which time Ms. Caruso will discuss the founding of the company and its mission as it ties in with National Eating Disorder Awareness Week.
- Conduct **four workshops on March 3, 2008** beginning at 9am in the genres of *hip-hop, Pilates, jazz, and modern*.

The Service Provider hereby agrees to provide such Services to the Customer.

Term of Agreement

1. The term of this Agreement will begin on the date of this Agreement and will remain in full force and effect until March 3, 2008, subject to earlier termination as provided in this Agreement, with the said term being capable of extension by mutual written agreement of the parties. The Customer will withhold all legal responsibility from Service Provider if any person becomes injured at anytime, for any reason, during project including any and all with association of Service Provider, of liable for that, which has occurred. Participants will take part at their own risk

Performance

2. The parties agree to do everything necessary to ensure that the terms of this Agreement take effect. The Customer agrees to house the performance in an adequate performance space that fulfills safety regulations for all parties involved with all fees paid in full.

Compensation

3. A \$_____ deposit on or before **February 3, 2008** and a second and final payment of \$_____ on March 2, 2008, the day of first performance

Ownership of Materials

4. All materials developed, produced, or in the process of being so under this agreement, will be the property of the Service Provider. The use of the mentioned materials by the Service Provider will not be restricted in any manner including the Customers waiving of rights to any and all photography and video used during this performance/workshop period

Return of Property

5. Upon the expiry or termination of this Agreement, the Service Provider will return to the Customer any property, documentation, records, or confidential information which is the property of the Customer.

Assignment

6. The Service Provider will not voluntarily or by operation of law assign or otherwise transfer its obligations under this Agreement without the prior written consent of the Customer.

Capacity/Independent Contractor

7. It is expressly agreed that the Service Provider is acting as an independent contractor and not as an employee in providing the Services under this Agreement. The Service Provider and the Customer acknowledge that this Agreement does not create a partnership or joint venture between them, and is exclusively a contract for service.

Modification of Agreement

8. Any amendment or modification of this Agreement or additional obligation assumed by either party in connection with this Agreement will only be binding if evidenced in writing signed by each party or an authorized representative of each party.

Notice

9. All notices, requests, demands or other communications required or permitted by the terms of this Agreement will be given in writing and delivered to the parties of this Agreement as follows:

a. _____, Program Director, McDaniel College
2 College Hill, Westminster, MD 21157

b. Maria Caruso, Artistic Director, Bodiography Contemporary Ballet
5824 Forges Ave, Suite 8, Pittsburgh, PA 15217

or to such other address as to which any Party may from time to time notify the other.

Costs and Legal Expenses

10. In the event that legal action is brought to enforce or interpret any term of this Agreement, the prevailing party will be entitled to recover, in addition to any other damages or award, all reasonable legal costs and fees associated with the action.

Entire Agreement

11. It is agreed that there is no representation, warranty, collateral agreement or condition affecting this Agreement except as expressly provided in this Agreement.

Limitation of Liability

12. It is understood and agreed that the Service Provider will have no liability to the Customer or any other party for any loss or damage (whether direct, indirect, or consequential) which may arise from the provision of the Services.

Indemnification

13. The Service Provider will indemnify and hold the Customer harmless from any claims against the Customer by any other party, arising directly or indirectly out of the provision of the Services by the Service Provider.

Inurnment

14. This Agreement will inure to the benefit of and be binding on the parties and their respective heirs, executors, administrators, successors and permitted assigns.

Currency

15. Except as otherwise provided in this Agreement, all monetary amounts referred to in this Agreement are in United States dollars.

Titles/Headings

16. Headings are inserted for the convenience of the parties only and are not to be considered when interpreting this Agreement.

Gender

17. Words in the singular mean and include the plural and vice versa. Words in the masculine mean and include the feminine and vice versa.

Governing Law

18. It is the intention of the parties to this Agreement that this Agreement and the performance under this Agreement, and all suits and special proceedings under this Agreement, be construed in accordance with and governed, to the exclusion of the law of any other forum, by the laws of the State of Pennsylvania, without regard to the jurisdiction in which any action or special proceeding may be instituted.

Severability

19. In the event that any of the provisions of this Agreement are held to be invalid or unenforceable in whole or in part, all other provisions will nevertheless continue to be valid and enforceable with the invalid or unenforceable parts severed from the remainder of this Agreement.

Waiver

20. The waiver by either party of a breach, default, delay or omission of any of the provisions of this Agreement by the other party will not be construed as a waiver of any subsequent breach of the same or other provisions.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF

the parties have duly executed this Service Agreement this 20th day of September, 2007.

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED
in the presence of

Maria Caruso, Service Provider

_____, Customer



5824 Forbes Ave, Suite 8
Pittsburgh, PA 15217
412-425-3766 (p)
412-521-6096 (f)

www.bodiographycbc.com
info@bodiographycbc.com

Bodiography Contemporary Ballet

Technical Rider

Revision 10/17/05

Maria Caruso
Artistic Director
Bodiography Contemporary Ballet
5824 Forbes Ave., 3rd Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15217
412-521-6094 (office)
412-425-3766 (cell)
412-521-6096 (fax)
maria@bodiographycbc.com

Brant Thomas Murray
Resident Lighting Designer
Bodiography Contemporary Ballet
516-965-7458 (cell)
brant@brantmurray.com

Introduction

The information provided here is an overview of the company's technical requirements provided as a quick reference for prospective presenters. Should any of the technical requirements listed below pose a problem that cannot be resolved within your venue, please inform Maria Caruso and/or Brant Murray as soon as possible.

Documentation Required

The presenter shall provide, either in paper or electronic format, documentation regarding the venue for the performance, including but not limited to:

- Floor Plan
- Center Line Section
- Line set Schedule and/or information regarding the rigging system
- Soft Goods Inventory
- Lighting Inventory
- Electrical Specifications (including dimming system and control)
- Sound Specifications (including control, playback, and amplification)

Stage and Flooring

The presenter's stage for the performance should be a minimum of 40' wide at the proscenium, and 30' deep from the plaster line to the cyclorama. Floor must be wood, smooth and level. The floor should be resilient, laid over wood sleepers. Floor cannot rest directly on concrete. Bodiography Contemporary Ballet reserves the right to cancel any performance scheduled where the stage is concrete.

Stage, wing areas, and crossover should be free of all equipment and scenery, and cleaned of all dirt and debris. Stage must be properly heated to 70° - 75° Fahrenheit.

A black vinyl dance floor must be provided by the presenter – either permanently installed or applied in roll form (whether owned or rented by the presenter). The size of the vinyl dance floor coverage shall equal the width of the proscenium and the depth of the stage from plaster line to cyclorama. If the vinyl dance floor is in roll form, the presenter shall put down the floor prior to Bodiography's arrival at the venue. The presenter shall provide 2" black gaff tape for applying the floor – spacing between rolls shall be 1/8". Prior to Bodiography's arrival, the dance floor shall be thoroughly wet mopped with warm water and white vinegar (2 cups vinegar to 4 gallons of warm water) and in a dry condition upon company's arrival. Dancers must be allowed to wear character shoes and to use rosin on the dance floor.

Two ballet barres shall be provided by the presenter for the company's use.

Curtains and Masking

The presenter shall provide and hang the following prior to Bodiography's arrival:

- four sets of black velour legs and borders hung evenly spaced to divide the stage into four equal lanes and wings, appropriately masking the offstage areas.
- full stage black scrim, full stage cyclorama (either bleached muslin or grey RP screen), and full stage bounce (either bleached muslin or white filled leno).
- grand drape at the plaster line.

Exact locations of the masking and soft goods shall be coordinated with the venue's production staff and Bodiography Contemporary Ballet prior to load-in.

Lighting

It is the responsibility of the presenter to provide all lighting equipment, including but not limited to:

- Dimming System
- Control Board and Monitors
- Lighting Instruments
- Cable
- Hardware
- Accessories
- Gel and Templates

The light plot shall be developed specifically for the presenter's venue, and coordinated with the venue's production staff and Bodiography Contemporary Ballet prior to load-in. For the presenter's reference, the following is a description of the lighting systems:

- Two Color Front Light System (full stage coverage)
- Two Color Pipe Ends or Ladders (four lane coverage)
- Two Color Back Light System (full stage coverage)
- Template Wash (full stage coverage)
- Four Color Floor Booms (four lane coverage)
- Twelve Quarter Mark Specials (three per lane: SL, CS, and SR)
- Twelve Specials
- Three Color Cyc - Red, Blue, Green (top and bottom cyc coverage)

The presenter shall be responsible for hanging, circuiting, patching, and testing the light plot prior to Bodiography's arrival. Gel and templates shall also be installed prior to Bodiography's arrival.

The presenter shall provide a computer memory light board with storage of lighting cues on floppy disk and/or hard drive.

The presenter shall also provide a tech table in the house for the company's use. It shall include monitors connected to the lighting console; two "Littlites"; two headsets connected to backstage, sound, and lighting control; a "god" mic; and a power strip with five Edison outlets for the company's use. It shall have enough room for two people to sit and work comfortably with an unobstructed view of the stage.

Upon Bodiography's arrival, the light plot shall be ready to focus. The presenter is responsible for providing all crew and equipment necessary to focus the plot. In addition to crew needed for focus, the presenter shall provide a Light Board Operator to program the lighting cues and run the show.

Sound

It is the responsibility of the presenter to provide all sound equipment. Bodiography Contemporary Ballet requires a sound system to reproduce compact discs for primary playback and amplifiers and speakers geared to the size of the house. There must be at least two backstage monitor speakers (offstage left and right), with volume controls separate from the front of house speakers. An announcer's microphone may be needed backstage for use by the stage manager.

A closed-circuit intercom system is required with stations for all operators. If the intercom system is not house equipment, it must be rented by the presenter and installed prior to load-in.

The presenter is responsible for providing all crew and equipment necessary to install and operate the sound system. In addition to crew needed for sound load-in, the presenter shall provide a Sound Board Operator to set levels for the sound cues and run the show.

Dressing Rooms

Bodiography Contemporary Ballet requires three dressing rooms: one for men (1-3), one for women (6), and one star room, all with restroom facilities (hot and cold running water). These facilities must be separate and apart from public view. Each dressing room must be clean with sufficient lighting for make-up, mirrors, tables, chairs, wash basins, clothes rack and electrical outlets. Rooms must be properly heated to 70°-75° Fahrenheit. Sufficient area offstage will be needed for quick changes.

Wardrobe

If possible, the presenter should provide a wardrobe room with clothes racks, hangers, AC outlets, an ironing board, iron, sewing machine, sink for hand washing, washer, drier and industrial steamer.

Technical Schedule and Running Crew

The technical schedule for the performance(s) shall be coordinated with the venue's production staff and Bodiography Contemporary Ballet prior to load-in. This will include the presenter's load-in of dance floor, soft goods, lighting, and sound equipment. Upon the company's arrival lighting focus and cueing shall commence, followed by setting sound levels. A technical rehearsal with lighting and sound shall occur prior to the first performance. Load-out will commence immediately following the final performance of the engagement.

The following minimum running crew is required: one light board operator, one sound board operator, and one deck hand.

Box Office

The presenter shall provide all staff needed for the box office, including but not limited to ticketing, house management, and ushers.

Bodiography Contemporary Ballet requests that a minimum of ten complimentary tickets be reserved for company use.

Local Transportation

Presenter is responsible for providing all local transportation of company personnel and equipment from arrival to departure. Presenter must provide drivers for all vehicles.

Hospitality

On performance days and lecture/demonstration performance days when the Company is working in the theater, the presenter shall provide the company access to bottled water, a large pot of coffee, milk, sugar, tea bags, hot water, fresh fruit, yogurt, bagels and butter in an easily accessible area backstage close to the dressing rooms, to be available beginning with the earliest arrival of Company personnel. On regular performance days a hot meal and beverage service must be provided backstage for the Company. Presenter and the Company will agree on the menu and time of meal service two (2) weeks before the Company's arrival.

Company Members

Bodiography Contemporary Ballet's touring company consists of 6-10 dancers, Artistic Director, Rehearsal Director, and Stage Manager/Lighting Director.



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Press Release

Bodiography Contemporary Ballet Pittsburgh

Ms. Maria Caruso
Artistic Director
412-425-3766 / 412-521-6094
info@bodiographycbc.com

Bodiography Celebrates Another Innovation

Bodiography's main event this season will take place at the Byham Theater on Saturday, February 3rd at 8pm with the presentation of **Innovation 2007**. Performance highlights include Caruso's colorful and first non-thematic new ballet, *Kaleidoscope*, set to the music of The Dave Matthews Band. This full length work will offer a colorful display of shape, size, and pattern as the cast of 16 take the stage as a live moving color palate. Additionally she will present a more serious work, *Mentality Toiled Empathy*, set to the compositions of Barrington Pheloung conveying the ideas of the internal human struggle as individuals deal with the separation between logic and emotion. This duet also represents the first union between principal dancers Lauren Suflita and Shannon Hritz on the Byham stage. Bodiography is also pleased to present to Pittsburgh a new ballet by renowned choreographer and acclaimed veteran artist of the Dance Theatre of Harlem, Anjali Austin. Austin's new ballet has an exotic and punctuated rhythm that will really make the body move. Austin, now an associate professor in the Department of Dance at Florida State University, will expand current work *Pleb* into a masterful creation to challenge the pointe shoe. The movement offers a fine marriage between the honesty of pedestrian nuances and the beauty of the proscribed contemporary ballet vocabulary. She will also invest in the community with outreach master workshops in ballet, contemporary, and a public lecture. In addition to dance, sculptor and photographer, Eric Rose will present his four sculptors of Bodiography's principal dancers and a display of his photographs of the entire company. **Innovation 2007** is supported by the Heinz Small Arts Initiative and the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust. Tickets are \$25-40 with \$15 student rush tickets available 1/2 hour before curtain. 412-456-6666

Visit Bodiography at www.bodiographycbc.com for more information about artists, residencies, projects, and tour dates.

Dance Preview: Dance creator stresses spirituality's role

Tuesday, April 04, 2006

By Jane Vranish, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Choreographer Ze'eva Cohen grew up in Tel Aviv, which was then a small desert town in Israel. Like most towns, it was built around a square that was a gathering place, serving the residents physically, socially and emotionally.

After extensive travels and visits to many such town centers, Cohen found the inspiration for "Meditation on the Square," to be performed by Bodiography this weekend at the Byham Theater.

For a company that made its mark with rock ballets -- artistic director Maria Caruso's new Stevie Nicks-inspired work, "Timeless," will share the program -- Cohen's piece represents a departure.

Cohen has come to believe that dancers have to go back to their roots. At a recent rehearsal, exotic music fills the Bodiography studio in Squirrel Hill as company members try to shake their usual contemporary flair and delve into the past.

Cohen looks comfortable, not only because of her loose clothing and the red-rimmed glasses that hang on a cord around her neck, but with her heritage. In fact, she is urging the cast to "think casual, relaxed -- as if you're doing nothing. No more dancing anymore -- look spiritually within."

Cohen learned to do that early on in Tel Aviv. While studying the free, improvisational style of Gertrud Kraus, she subliminally tapped into the folklore around her. The technique came later in studies with American dancers Rena Gluck and Anna Sokolow, who pushed Cohen to move to the United States and even bought her a ticket.

While she voraciously sampled all that New York City had to offer -- Juilliard, Pearl Lang, American Dance Theater -- she would eventually make her mark as a dance soloist, with 28 works by the likes of Kei Takei, Rudy Perez, Sokolow and others.



Bodiography will present Ze'eva Cohen's "Meditation on the Square."
Click photo for larger image.

Bodiography: Innovation 2006

- **Where:** Byham Theater, Downtown.
- **When:** 8 p.m. Saturday.
- **Tickets:** \$25-\$40, with student tickets available at \$15 30 minutes before the show; 412-456-6666.



Ze'eva Cohen

[Click photo for larger image.](#)

In 1969, she accepted an offer to teach at Princeton University. "I didn't have to go commercial or wait tables," she says. Not configured as a department but instead as a "program," it drew teachers such as former Dance Alloy artistic director Mark Taylor and students such as choreographer David Rousseve. Bodiography board member Cathy Rohrer was a student there and suggested the upcoming project to Caruso.

You can immediately see Cohen's innate sense of giving, a product of that academic background. She brought to Pittsburgh the idea of using Antonio Gaudi's exotic organic architecture in Barcelona, Spain. But "Gaudi took a lifetime," she realized. "How can I do it in three weeks?"

She continued to think of Spain as "a meeting place" in medieval times, where a global influx of travelers brought a blend of Christian, Jewish and Muslim traditions in the extraordinary mix known as the Golden Age. Spain continues to be the benefactor of those influences.

"The square" is an emblem for Cohen. "It was a kind of crossroads of folklore, nature, religion and sculpture -- there was so much going on." And in such places, "things happen."

So she instructs the Bodiography dancers not just to move "pretty," but to find "ancient memories" that allow them to use dance as "a deep experience that connects with humanity."

Cohen gives them sculptural movement with a flowing, geometrical sensibility. Suddenly, the square begins to take shape -- the sculpture here, the church over there, the smells and sights and sounds -- a square not located along Forbes Avenue, but one that exists only in the dancers' imagery and imagination.

Bodiography puts on the right moves

Tuesday, February 01, 2005

By Jane Vranish, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Bodiography, the ballet company built on rock, confined its hard-edged approach to music between dances last weekend at the Kelly-Strayhorn Theater, East Liberty, where the up-and-coming band Pete Killed Pete satisfied the need for a heavy beat.

Artistic director Maria Caruso was presenting her "Multiplicity" program, with choreography primarily supplied by members of the company, although guest artist Karen Dacko provided a welcome experimental twist in "Dove on My Roof." Costumed simply in voluminous white shirts and neatly tied together with wing-like allusions, "Dove" boasted a spare but intriguing musical landscape by Pittsburgh composer Victor Grauer.

Although this company prides itself on its pointe work and balletic turn out, Danika Pramik-Holdaway's "La Desesperanca" opted for bare feet and parallel positions. Despite a certain naive simplicity about it all, this piece was choreographically charming. Pramik-Holdaway certainly had a sophisticated ear that latched on to the music and translated it into subtle patterns that gave the dancers a real sense of style.

In "Sarria," another barefoot work, Kelsey Yates installed pretty overlapping movements that felt like tidal waves of emotion. But the piece never developed from there and cut off rather abruptly at the end.

Although not all hobos are as perky as Yates, the dancers showed a real knack for loosely casual and light-hearted characterizations in Shannon Hritz's "A Day in the Park."

Lauren Suflita got the nod for a technique-filled finale, "Resolve to Rove," in which the dancers, back in pointe shoes, let loose with fleeting high spirits.

Dance Preview: Bodiography seeks a new balance in new works

A blending of styles

Wednesday, April 20, 2005

By Monika Kugemann, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Balance is the key concept of classical ballet. From the ballerina's struggle to maintain equilibrium while standing on the tip of her toes to the male dancer's controlled jumps, movement in ballet traditionally evolves around a vertical line.

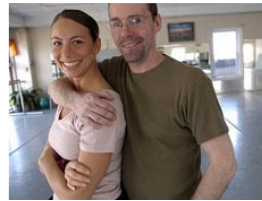
By contrast, former American Ballet Theatre principal dancer and renowned choreographer Johan Renvall will present "classical ballet vocabulary taken off balance" in the first-ever commissioned work for Bodiography Contemporary Ballet. The new program, "Innovation," will feature Renvall's piece along with two new works by director Maria Caruso, "Solace" and "Love Lines," on Friday and Saturday at the Byham Theater, Downtown.

Caruso's mix of classical, modern and jazz styles is characterized by the crossing over of stylistic conventions, e.g., using pointe shoes for modern music and modern styles for classical music pieces.

Because of the multifaceted nature of her company, Caruso looks for flexible dancers. "As a director, I am working on having dancers who have a clean technique," she says. "I look for artistry and versatility."

Since founding Bodiography in 2000, Caruso has been working on improving her ensemble to create a group of dancers that fuse together perfectly. After incorporating new members recently, she feels pretty close to her ideal. "I am quite pleased with the dancers and the execution of all the material that we have presented the past season," she says.

Considering herself still a student of choreography, Caruso has decided to enhance her company's profile and her own choreographic range through commissioning choreographers from different dance genres. While modern dance expert Ze'eva Cohen,



Steve Mellon, Post-Gazette

This year Maria Caruso commissioned choreographer Johan Renvall to create a work for her Bodiography company. The dancers will perform it this weekend at the Byham Theater.

Click photo for larger image.

BODIOGRAPHY

- **Where:** Byham Theater, Downtown.
- **When:** 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday.
- **Tickets:** \$22-48, \$15 student rush tickets half an hour before curtain; 412-456-6666.

chair of the Princeton University dance department, is the choice for next season, Renvall with his more classical style was chosen to enrich Bodiography's program this spring.

"I am a great admirer of his choreography, of his movement," Caruso says. "Johan is a great mentor in the choreographic realm."

After meeting Renvall in 2000 at the Ballet Theater, where both had been teaching, the two choreographers stayed in touch when Caruso's company moved to Pittsburgh in 2002, leaving a branch behind in New York. Fascinated with the "organic, fluid style" of his choreographies, Caruso invited Renvall to be the first to choreograph for Bodiography besides herself.

"I was very pleased and quite honored when he accepted," she says.

As a principal dancer, Renvall enchanted audiences with his poetic style. "He had a wonderful kind of vulnerability on stage and a strong technique; something like an 'inner soul' that drew the eyes of the audience to him," remembers Marianna Tcherkassky, who preformed with Renvall at the American Ballet Theatre.

Renvall includes Mercutio in "Romeo and Juliet," the Prince in "Nutcracker," Bronze Idol in "La Bayadere" and Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring" among his favorite roles.

Being at his best in the works of Anthony Tudor with their subtle and psychological touch, Renvall's talent for the nuances that guided him through his career as a dancer also shows in his choreography, according to Tcherkassky.

"Because of his dramatic ability, his ballets have a theatrical flair which his audience enjoys," she says, also praising his deep musicality and his fine sense of humor.

With Paul Taylor and William Forsythe as his choreographic models, Renvall composes his pieces the way he likes to move, "which is completely against my training," as he puts it. Through the use of counter-balance movements and modern elements, he challenges five female Bodiography dancers as well as two male dancers from New York, whom he has brought along for his work, "Again Fifth."

At the same time Renvall likes to challenge himself as a choreographer by making each piece he devises different from previous ones.

"I develop the choreography with the dancers," he says. "I see them try and watch what the dancer's



Steve Mellon, Post-Gazette

Choreographer Johan Renvall works with dancers at Bodiography in preparation for this weekend's performances.

[Click photo for larger image.](#)

body does. Later, I incorporate these movements."

In this sense, Renvall's choreographies are essentially not ideas, but processes. Even the overall theme of a piece surfaces only at its completion, when "it all falls into place." The title of his newest piece, for example, refers to the recurring structure of the "fifth position," the only classical element in the choreography.

"It makes us work to a depth as an ensemble," says Caruso, considering the challenge of the piece for her company. "We are building our dialogue."

(Monika Kugemann can be reached at mkugemann@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1581.)

Bodiography

Bodiography's "Multiplicity" is, well, multiplying. Originally conceived as a choreographic showcase for members of the company, it has expanded its horizon to include guest artists of all genres, making what was an elementary experiment into more of an entertaining event.

Sculptor Eric Rose and guitarists James Patia and Justin Morris offered an emotional "Out of the Black," but the rest was all about moving.

Sometimes it was in mysterious ways, as with Zafira Belly Dance Company grooving in its ancient tradition while adding a few new wrinkles. Languorous body ripples gave way to sultry contemporary waves, and some nifty mirroring and footwork made for an impressive showing.

Mostly the dance was upright and straightforward, as in Karen Dacko's work-in-progress, "Pas de Schumann," which neatly toyed with the folk elements of classical ballet but allowed some classroom combinations to seep into the phrases, and with Courtney Gleason's contribution, "Falling Up," well executed by the dancers.

So while there were no surprises in the choreography, there was with the company, which seems to be maturing without losing its enthusiasm. Movements were sharp and clean in Kelly Basil's "Steel Surf" and "Black and Light" and Lauren Suflita's "All Sorts," while Shannon Hritz delved into a Ailey-esque gospel number, "Blow, Wind, Blow."

*-- By Jane Vranish,
Post-Gazette dance critic*

Dance Preview: Bodiography attains Austin's 'Wonder' and Caruso's new work

Thursday, February 01, 2007



AcesHigh

Members of the dance group Bodiography -- Dan Savage, left, Shannon Hritz, Maria Caruso, Lauren Suflita and Kelly Basil -- will show some "Wonder" at the Byham Saturday night.

**By Jane Vranish
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette**

Just like a child, a young dance company must be nurtured, as Bodiography's artistic director and founder Maria Caruso well knows. Always on the lookout to grow, the energetic Caruso has encouraged her dancers to participate in the choreographic process so that they might interact with her on a higher artistic level.

Bodiography Contemporary Dance Company

■ **Featuring:** Anjali Austin's "Attaining Wonder" and a premiere by Maria Caruso, to music by the Dave Matthews Band.

Caruso also has carefully introduced other professionals to the mix along the way, beginning with former American Ballet Theatre principal dancer Johann Renvall and contemporary solo artist and Princeton faculty member Ze'eva Cohen.

■ **Where:** Byham Theater, Downtown.

■ **When:** 8 p.m. Saturday.

■ **Tickets:** \$26.50-\$40.50; 412-456-6666.

"I use rock music to attract new audiences," explains Caruso, who is premiering her own work to music by The Dave Matthews Band at the Byham Theater on Saturday. "Johann was leg specific in his technique and Ze'eva had a gestural approach. It was a great way to push forward."

This year she went back to her roots. A graduate of Florida State University, Caruso attended classes given by former Dance Theater of Harlem dancer Anjali Austin. "She had a great way of making the dancer feel comfortable," says Caruso. "She was nurturing, but precise -- and just what we needed."

Austin spent 13 years at Arthur Mitchell's Harlem company, performing in works like George Balanchine's "Four Temperaments" and "Concerto Barocco," Glen Tetley's "Voluntaries" and Agnes de Mille's "Fall River Legend."

"He was demanding," says Austin. "He shaped not only how I danced, but how I approached life."

Upon her retirement, Austin followed that model with her students, not only teaching discipline, but how to show appreciation. As Florida State underwent a \$14 million renovation, adding a National Center for Choreography with a full conditioning center, she brought 20 years of Gyrotonic training, a method of exercise and rehabilitation, to the hundred students in various dance programs.

Austin brought "Attaining Wonder," appropriately named for a young dance company, to Bodiography Contemporary Dance Company for its upcoming program.

She had designed an African-based dance for her Florida State students, but wanted to expand the work, which now includes an earthy sense of world music. Her time at Bodiography presented the perfect opportunity.

"I tend to look at pedestrian movements, how we walk in life, what our natural dance is," says Austin. "I like to look at when we're most honest in movement, then take those pedestrian movements and embellish them."

In "Attaining Wonder," she is taking the Bodiography dancers toward an "enlightenment, a spiritual side, toward those moments that are very private." She wants them to be "honest about sharing the vulnerability that we all have."

Austin started with a few simple movements -- rubbing of the hands, a shoulder roll -- and the rest came through observing the dancers and what they did and shaping it. "Once

they are at a certain technical level, I build the confidence so that they are able to make the movement their own," she says.

"So often we're put in a place in a rehearsal setting where it has to be one way or the other, right or wrong," Austin continues. "I want to see some variation. I want to see what gray looks like. Let's see it all and see what happens."

(Jane Vranish can be reached at jvranish@post-gazette.com.)

Bodiography Contemporary Ballet's new show heralds big changes.

BY STEVE SUCATO



Motion to continue: Maria Caruso of Bodiography

Maria Caruso founded Bodiography Contemporary Ballet on the premise that a "ballet body" can take many forms beyond the stereotypical toothpick physique. The company was about changing people's perspectives on ballet and those who dance it.

Some seven years later, the message remains the same. But Caruso feels that the way she and her company deliver it is itself in need of renovation.

Thus, the two new works of Caruso's featured in Bodiography's *Innovation 2007*, Feb. 3 at the Byham Theater, herald a marked departure in her choreographic approach. Moreover, *Innovations* will mark Caruso's last local performance as a full-time dancer with the company.

The 26-year-old Caruso wears many hats for Bodiography: artistic director, choreographer, costume designer and marketing director. But it is her role as principal dancer she now feels she must give up. Caruso won't disappear completely from performance, she says. But her dancing in future productions will be limited.

"I have always been a juggler," says Caruso, "able to balance dancing and many other jobs within the company. But I feel the only way for the company to move forward is for me to really invest in my abilities as a choreographer and focus more on my duties as artistic director."

Caruso feels that over the past few years, her dance works had become formulaic -- ballet movement coupled with an emotionally charged storyline. For her new, 40-minute ballet "Kaleidoscope," Caruso chose concept over story. Set to music from The Dave Matthews Band's hit 1994 album *Under the Table and Dreaming*, the piece showcases 16 dancers (including upper-level students from Bodiography's school) in a work based on pattern, shape and color. It's all to create what Caruso calls a "body landscape."

"I closed my eyes listening to Matthew's music and saw bursts of color," says Caruso. "I wanted to convey those images on stage."

Divided into eight sections, the ballet changes its look as it progresses, moving from a neutral color palette through a kaleidoscope of color reflected in the dancer's costumes that Caruso describes as "insanely bright."

Caruso's second work on the Feb. 3 program, "Mentality Toiled Empathy," is a 14-minute duet for company dancers Lauren Suflita and Shannon Hritz. Set to music from the 2005 film *Shopgirl*, by Australian composer Barrington Pheloung, it examines the volatile relationship between heart and mind. Caruso says that here, again, she broke away from her norm, by using modern-dance movement more than ballet technique to portray a sense of conflict and coexistence.

The final work on the program is Anjali Austin's "Attaining Wonder." Austin is a former dancer with Dance Theatre of Harlem and was a mentor of Caruso's at Florida State University whom Caruso asked to help celebrate her career transition and the company's fifth season at the Byham.

Speaking by phone from Atlanta, Austin described "Attaining Wonder" as fast footwork *en pointe* danced in a mixture of styles from ballet and jazz to West African. The 20-minute group work in three sections is set to a variety of music, by composers including Senegal's Pleb. The title comes from the writings of philosopher Alan Watts.

"What interests me is how the individual dancers capture the movement and moment of the work and make it their own so the audience has a shared experience with them as opposed to being simply spectators," says Austin.

The program will also include exhibit of visual art by local artist Eric Rose, featuring photography and sculpture of Bodiography's company dancers.

Bodiography Contemporary Ballet performs Innovation 2007 8 p.m. Sat., Feb. 3. Byham Theater, 101 Sixth St., Downtown. \$25-40 (\$15 rush tickets available 30 minutes before curtain). 412) 456-6666 or www.bodiographycbc.com

Bodiography showcases 'Innovation 2007'

By [Mark Kanny](#)

TRIBUNE-REVIEW CLASSICAL MUSIC CRITIC

Thursday, February 1, 2007

Maria Caruso has woven related and contrasting threads into "Innovation 2007," the Bodiography dance company's major program of the season that will be performed at the Byham Theater Saturday night.

The season is a turning point for the 26-year-old dancer, choreographer, company founder and artistic director. She's presenting her two new pieces, "Kaleidoscopes" and "Mentally Toiled Empathy," along with "Pleb" by her teacher from Florida State University, Anjali Austin, who was a member of Dance Theater of Harlem for more than a decade.

And it will be Caruso's last major production as a full-time dancer.

"My goal is to bring the youth back to the arts, who tend not to see themselves going to classics, through musical appeal and my lyrical nature," says Caruso.

Approaching her company's fifth anniversary in Pittsburgh, she knew she was wearing too many hats.

"The next step is for me to step out as a full-time dancer. Transition is bittersweet. It doesn't mean I'm not going to dance at all, but just cameos from now on. I think I'm a very emotionally driven person. I want to see the company continue to grow," says Caruso.

"Kaleidoscope" is her first non-thematic ballet.

"It is in general about shape, pattern, texture and color," she says. "I love the music of The Dave Matthews Band, the texture of his music, and thought it would be suitable for this ballet. This is something adult audiences can relate to and understand, as well as young audience especially for the sarcasm, but is also something a child is going to enjoy.

"Mentally Toiled Empathy" is an exploration of contrasting aspects of our minds -- thought and feeling. It is a duet featuring Lauren Suflita and Shannon Hritz -- my two most seasoned dancers," says Caruso.

The choreographer particularly relishes the ways Suflita and Hritz have grown while in the company.

"I've watched them both closely," she says. "Lauren is strong-minded, opinionated, with a not very soft exterior, but I've seen a softer side emerging to create a fine balance. Shannon is quiet and very soft, but this year I've seen her strongly stand up a lot."

Austin's "Pleb," which will conclude the evening of dance, is an expansion to three movements of a work she created in 2005. It grew from what is now the middle movement that provides the title -- which is the name, The Pleb, used by a Senegalese musician and artist. Austin says she loves his fusion of traditional African music, including layered rhythms, with electronics.

"I already wanted to expand the 'Pleb' when Maria approached me about coming up here," says Austin. She added a fast "East meets West, Latin flavored" first movement to the existing fast and now second movement, before going for a slower pace for the conclusion.

The conclusion is "about being exhausted, or off-track in life. For whatever reason, eventually you become comfortable in your own skin, or peel off the first layer, and allow yourself to become humbled, vulnerable and accepted," says Austin.

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Bodiography's Maria Caruso explores psychotherapy via dance -- with music by the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

BY [STEVE SUCATO](#)



Bound-ing: Bodiography's Kelly Basil. Photo courtesy of Ship King Media

Maria Caruso is still trying to find herself as a choreographer. Last season, for instance, in her work "Kaleidoscope," the 27-year-old artistic director of Bodiography Contemporary Ballet experimented with a different movement language, one that purposely steered clear of such habits as movement directly tied to emotion.

Caruso considered the experiment a success. So for the company's latest production, *Innovation 2008*, Caruso seeks to marry her newfound way of looking at dance movement with her passion for emotional themes. The result is "Bound," her 45-minute work set to the music of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, and set to premiere April 12, at the Byham Theater.

"Bound" centers on a group of individuals seeking psychotherapy. Caruso says she got the idea from talking with a psychologist friend. The work's backdrop includes a dozen actors portraying patients and a therapist; the patients' disorders and conversations with the therapist are played out in a series of vignettes danced to such Chili Peppers hits as "Under the Bridge," "Californication" and "Scar Tissue."

Caruso consulted with three psychologists during the creation of "Bound." They informed the piece as a dramaturge might, helping to direct the work's 12 actors and 14 dancers to present each disorder.

"From the therapist's feedback I found that some of the gestures and movements I used to communicate a particular feeling or disorder, such as having the dancers placing their hands over their mouths, had a different meaning to the therapists, who saw that gesture as being associated with an altogether different disorder," says Caruso.

While "Bound" deals with therapy of the mind, Caruso's other work on the program, a restaging of 2005's "Solace," set to music by composer Arvo Pärt, deals with therapy of the heart. Inspired

by a life-threatening auto accident her mother was involved in, "Solace" recognizes the unexpected support people can receive in times of trouble.

"People came out of the woodwork that we hadn't heard from in years, and what they did gave me and my mother such a wonderful sense of support and comfort," says Caruso. "I wanted to relate in my piece that sense of community and support during a traumatic time that often comes unexpectedly and goes unacknowledged."

Innovation 2008's final work, "Partita," comes from choreographer James Martin, associate chair of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

Set to Bach's "Partita no. 1," Martin's 17-minute contemporary ballet for five dancers celebrates both Bach's music and the company's dancers.

"What inspires me about Bach's music is I feel like he is able to balance elements of recognition and surprise in an elegant and beautiful way," says Martin. Caruso calls Martin's "Partita no. 1" a sensitive and beautifully constructed dance work.

Bodiography Contemporary Ballet presents *Innovation 2008* 8 p.m. Sat., April 12. Byham Theater, 101 Sixth St., Downtown. \$25-40 (\$15 rush, available 30 minutes before curtain). 412-456-6666 or www.bodiographycbc.com

April 15: Scenes from the Arts-burgh

Review: By The Tribune-Review Tuesday, April 15, 2008

Bodiography Contemporary Ballet

The eyes and mind had a full dose of stimulation Saturday night at the Byham Theater, Downtown, when Bodiography Contemporary Ballet presented "Innovation 2008." Starting with an abstract, non-narrative ballet, the piece focused perceptions to prepare the audience for the rest of the program.

Guest choreographer James Martin's setting of Johann Sebastian Bach's "Partita No. 1" -- to a recording played on piano -- grew stronger as the piece proceeded. The Courante and Sarabande featured the most compelling dance vocabulary and invention.

Bodiography's artistic director and founder Maria Caruso was represented by "Solace," created in 2005 and restaged by Lauren Suflita. Smartly expressive dancing was well blended with several pieces by composer Arvo Part.

Caruso's new work, "Bound," is a portrayal of a dozen mental-health issues danced to songs by the Red Hot Chili Peppers. At the front right of the stage, a psychologist greeted a new patient at the start of each piece. When attention shifted to the dancers, Caruso's hopeful perspective was clear.

Three dancers performed "Dissociative Disorder," with one off on her own before coming together with the other two to form an integrated personality. In "Physical Impediment," one of the women, fitted with a heavy-duty knee brace, danced on crutches. "Depression" was not a low-energy dance, despite low energy being characteristic of the condition, just as "Mania" was not hyper. These patients were near or at recovery.

-- *Mark Kanny*

Bodiography offers 3 premieres at Innovation 2009

By [Mark Kanny](#), TRIBUNE-REVIEW
Tuesday, February 17, 2009

Three wide-ranging premieres fill the program of Bodiography dance company's Innovation 2009 show this weekend.

Artistic director Maria Caruso chose music by Pink Floyd for her premiere called "Something About Nothing." It is an abstract work because she wants audience members to define their own emotional journeys.

Caruso and principal dancer Lauren Suflita will dance their first duet to illustrate the grieving process as seen by choreographer Ilana Suprun-Clyde, who is a member of the faculty at Princeton University in New Jersey.

Choreographer Lynne Taylor-Corbett returns to Bodiography for the evening's third premiere, which explores how women might have used humor and grit to help survive the Dust Bowl of the 1930s.

The performance starts at 8 p.m. Saturday at the Byham Theater, Downtown. Admission is \$25 to \$45. Student rush tickets will be available at 7:30 p.m.

Details: 412-456-6666.

Review: Bodiography impressively choreographed

By [Mark Kanny](#), TRIBUNE-REVIEW
Monday, February 23, 2009

Unlike dance theater groups, Bodiography Contemporary Ballet draws much of its appeal from the expressive classic steps and use of arms of ballet. The all-female group's Innovation 2009 show, seen Saturday night at the Byham Theater, Downtown, featured enjoyable examples of its style from three choreographers.

"Heart Songs" by Lynne Taylor-Corbett cleverly used sheets as props to define roles women live, including bed sheets, prayer shawls and rags to wash floors. These provided the context for the expressive solos and ensemble work.

The emotional impact of Ilana Suprun-Clyde's "For My Father" was achieved by the choreographer's balancing of lonely solos performed by company director Maria Caruso and Lauren Suflita with shared reassurance.

Caruso's "Something About Nothing" to music by Pink Floyd included the evening's most exuberant dance. "Shine On You Crazy Diamond" featured the dancers' strutting their stuff in a non-sophisticated way that brought to mind the world of "Li'l Abner," while the finale to the band's "High Hopes" provided the requisite excitement for the finale. By contrast, "Marooned" was a solo in which the nature of the introspection achieved by Lauren Suflita made her sensuality anything but tawdry.

Bodiography ranges from folkoric to rock

Dance Review

Monday, February 23, 2009

By Jane Vranish, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

There is no doubt that movement matters in dance, whether it's the memorable shapes, a dense rhythmic thrust or a skilled use of technique. Choreographers can make all the difference.

Now in its seventh year, Bodiography Contemporary Ballet Company has gradually expanded its learning curve by bringing on guest choreographers, the better to develop new textures and phrasing.

But it was Tony-nominated Broadway and ballet veteran choreographer Lynne Taylor-Corbett who finally gave the company a substantial gift at Bodiography's "Innovation 2009" at the Byham Theater Saturday night. Filled with a series of Appalachian folk-like vignettes, this was a charming slice of life. Called "Heart Songs," there was an easy camaraderie among a collective of women, who might have shared gossip, sorrows and sunshine over the clotheslines in their backyards.

The cast of six demonstrated a resilient strength and found a new comfort zone in Taylor-Corbett's patchwork quilt of movement, making this work easy on the eyes and easy on the performers.

Artistic director Maria Caruso and Lauren Suflita followed with a memorial, "For My Father." Choreographed by former Bat-Dor dancer Ilana Suprun-Clyde, this relatively short duet also took good advantage of the dancers, who form the backbone of the company. Their synchronization within the deceptively simple steps formed deeply etched images.

Caruso finished with the latest in her series of rock ballets, a genre that has defined Bodiography up until this point. It was called "Something About Nothing," and drew upon the pearls of wisdom, works of art and simple solutions that often seem to materialize out of thin air.

It was a breakthrough for Caruso to begin developing her own concept independent of the music, in this case British psychedelic band Pink Floyd. But somehow the movement was static, as if confined to a small space, although Caruso topped it with angular, sometimes frantic arms that resembled semaphore signals.

Given the sometimes ponderous sounds of Pink Floyd and the deep-seated nature of rock in general, it would be wise for Caruso to design more low-slung, sweeping movements that cover the stage and take advantage of the natural expanse to be found in her own personal balletic style.

Former Post-Gazette critic Jane Vranish can be reached at jvranish1@comcast.net

Multiplicity 2009 (Review by Jane Vranish)

Bodiography Contemporary Ballet. Bodiography took the stage at the Kelly Strayhorn Theater last weekend with a new outlook, not only in choreography, which is what its “Multiplicity” program is all about, but with a bundle of new dancers. As a small contemporary ballet company, artistic director Maria Caruso has dealt well with the rather frequent performer transitions that come with the territory.



She faced this first program of the season without experienced dancer Lauren Suflita, the rehearsal director and longtime friend who has been with her from the start. Thus the company skews young at this point, but with graduates from substantial programs at Mercyhurst College, North Carolina School of the Arts and Point Park University.

But this may be the Bodiography group that has the greatest potential. Every dancer had technical expertise as a foundation with which to build a company. As for “Multiplicity,” Caruso interspersed newly ordained choreographers with more experienced fare, amounting to a stronger program.

Caruso is building a partnership with Cello Fury (formerly Cellofourte), a good move when it comes to live music. I’d never heard the previous configuration, but Cello Fury has a parallel energy to Bodiography that should work well. However this particular concert had some intonation problems in the higher registers and the players’ aggressive playing style sometimes seemed overly raw.

Caruso provided two pieces, one a reworking of “Intimate Liasons.” It focused on loss and featured some of Kelly Basil’s best work with Colleen Landwerlen in the emotional landscape of the piece. “No Bad Hair Days” included three breast cancer survivors who related their stories during a solo by Meghan Dann. It signaled a significant change from Caruso, who showed a sculptural sense that was ultimately satisfying. That carried over into her solo, “The Red Dress,”

by Ilana Suprun Clyde. Except for an unexpected series of pique turns that seemed out of context, Caruso made it into a powerful showcase.

Although Landwerlen's "Swing Into the Night" was a lively opening selection, it relied too much on geometric patterns and chorus line elements, and Kaitlin Dann's "No Character for Every Actor" lacked dimension.

However, Nicole Cerilli's "Alone in Kyoto" had the linear aesthetic of the Far East and Alex Salerno, company apprentice and student at Point Park, provided a silky little solo in "Child." Claudie Morris Lawrey contributed an entertaining finale, "Nuances de Chocolat."

Best Dance Performances of 2009

'Romeo et Juliette'

Thursday, December 17, 2009

By Jane Vranish, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Rich Sofranko

Alexandra Kochis and Christopher Budzynski danced the roles of Shakespeare's star-crossed lovers in Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre's "Romeo et Juliette" in February.

Local dance organizations came up with a creative response to the economic downturn in 2009. Several were big ticket items such as Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre's comprehensive "Light/The Holocaust and Humanity Project," the Kelly Strayhorn's dance festival and Conservatory Dance Company's warm-hearted "The Bench." Others, such as Attack Theatre, found low-cost solutions by sharing space with Pittsburgh Opera (and art galleries in 2010). By stepping out on a limb, PBT came out on top with a pair of contemporary ballets that paid huge artistic dividends -- the aforementioned "Light" and the pick of the year, "Romeo et Juliette."

1. Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, "Romeo et Juliette" (Benedum Center, Feb. 14): Jean-Christophe Maillot's brilliant rethinking of Shakespeare's love story took the No. 1 spot due to virtually perfect casting choices, led by the radiantly feisty Alexandra Kochis and her attentive lover, Christopher Budzynski, with uncommonly strong support from the conflicted Friar Laurence (Christopher Rendall-Jackson) and the emotions erupted front and center from an inspired ensemble, with not a weak link to be seen. This production was the equal of the original cast at Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo.

2. Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, "Light/The Holocaust and Humanity Project" (Byham Theater, Nov. 12): The biggest event attempted by PBT in 40 years, involving 23 partner organizations over a span of four weeks, this collaboration reached a cumulative audience of 14,000. But by itself, Stephen Mills' "Light" was a powerful ballet that resonated with its audience. It was also a great fit for the company's actor/dancers -- led here by the beautifully resilient Julia Erickson -- who have really responded to Terrence Orr's dramatic directions with the company.

3. Attack Theatre, "Incident[s] in the Strip" (Pittsburgh Opera, Nov. 17): The most sophisticated blend of music and choreographic mayhem that we've seen from this trigger-happy group. Where else would you find a Marx Brothers mentality along with whimsically wonderful contemporary dance and a rock-solid musical score that borrows from "La Traviata" and the Muppets?

4. "New Moves" (Kelly Strayhorn Theater, May 7-10): It was an edgy dance collaboration between New York, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh choreographers that spanned four days, great for catching the latest movement trends from a group of young talents. But "New Moves" also was symbolic of Janerra Solomon's astute direction at the East Liberty theater, where she has embraced everything from community works and social interaction to classic movies and serious art like this.

5. Dance Alloy, "Exposed" (New Hazlett Theater, April 4): The final performance under artistic director Beth Corning. She played to her strengths in this strong trifecta of works from female choreographers. It was mesmerizing to watch the carefully calculated, intense images in Nora Chipaumire's "becoming angels," Victoria Marks' "Dancing to Music" and Corning's own "4-2 Men."

6. Batsheva, "Three" (Pittsburgh Dance Council, Benedum Center, Feb. 5): Israeli choreographer Ohad Naharin gave us an up-close-and-personal glimpse of his fluid style of movement in "Three," a blend of "beauty, nature and existence." It was a chance to see why Naharin is in demand worldwide.

7. The Pillow Project, "Sorta Saturday" (The Space Upstairs, Dec. 12): Under artistic director Pearla Porter, the Pillow has been bursting with creativity since June. This finale to the season, a "gala" in Pillow terms with homemade hors d'oeuvres, was an evening-length jam session in the best jazz sense. The energy virtually rebounded off the walls as the performers, selected for their individual impact on the company during its five years of exploring the arts, concocted a terrific improvisational conversation.

8. Ronald K. Brown/Evidence, "One Shot" (PDC and August Wilson Center, Byham, May 2): What drove this performance were Teenie Harris' remarkable photos of life in the Hill District. But the choreography, while flawed in its relationship to the various eras on the Hill, had a rhythmic life all its own, so distinctly Afro-Brown.

9. Conservatory Dance Company, "The Bench" (Pittsburgh Playhouse, Dec. 13): With an eye on high production values, Kiesha Lalama-White fashioned a family album of memories in this full-length dance event. Using a traditional jazz vocabulary with traditional jazz music, this was as tight a dance production as CDC has presented.

10. Bodiography, "Innovation 2009" (Byham, Feb. 21): The resourceful Maria Caruso lured Tony Award-winning choreographer Lynne Taylor-Corbett to choreograph the Appalachian-inspired "Heart Songs." Along with Ilana Suprun-Clyde's duet for Caruso and Lauren Suflita, it was surprising to see the sweep and passion that these dancers could conjure.

Former PG critic Jane Vranish can be reached at jvranish1@comcast.net. She also blogs on CrossCurrents at www.pittsburghcrosscurrents.com.