



# Advance Program Notes

**Dorrance Dance**

*ETM: Double Down*

**Friday, February 23, 2018, 7:30 PM**

These Advance Program Notes are provided online for our patrons who like to read about performances ahead of time. Printed programs will be provided to patrons at the performances. Programs are subject to change.

## DORRANCE DANCE

**Artistic Director**

Michelle Dorrance

**Dancers**

Ephrat "Bounce" Asherie, Christopher Broughton, Elizabeth Burke, Warren Craft, Michelle Dorrance, Claudia Rahardjanoto, Byron Tittle, Matthew "Megawatt" West, Gabriel Winns Ortiz, and Nicholas Van Young

**Musicians**

Donovan Dorrance, Aaron Marcellus, and Gregory Richardson

### *ETM: Double Down*

Created by	Michelle Dorrance and Nicholas Van Young
Original Tap Instrument Design	Nicholas Van Young
Choreography	Michelle Dorrance and Nicholas Van Young with Ephrat "Bounce" Asherie and solo improvisation by the dancers
Original Music Composed and Improvised by	Gregory Richardson, Donovan Dorrance, Nicholas Van Young, Aaron Marcellus, and Warren Craft, with Michelle Dorrance
Additional Music by	Adele Adkins, Karin Dreijer Andersson, Olof Dreijer, Justin Vernon, and Patrick Watson
Lighting Design by	Kathy Kaufmann
Costume Design by	Amy Page and Shiori Ichikawa
Dancers	Ephrat "Bounce" Asherie, Elizabeth Burke, Warren Craft, Michelle Dorrance, Leonardo Sandoval, Byron Tittle, Nicholas Van Young, and Gabe Winns Ortiz
Musicians	Donovan Dorrance, piano and controllerist; Aaron Marcellus, vocals; Gregory Richardson, bass and guitar; Nicholas Van Young, drums and percussion; Warren Craft, drums and percussion; and Michelle Dorrance, drums and percussion

*ETM: Double Down was created in part during a Creative Development Residency at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, in part at The Yard during a 2015 Yard Offshore Creation Residency, and during a residency provided by the Joyce Theater Foundation with major funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.*

This performance is supported in part by a gift from Sherwood Quillen.

# *Artist Statements*

This work is the initial exploration of a new world and a new collaboration. Constantly inspired by the range of possibilities inherent in being both dancers and musicians in the visual and aural, we also embrace embodying the organic and inorganic, the acoustic and the electric. None of this work is remotely possible without tap dancer, percussionist, innovator, and my longtime friend, Nicholas Young. He is the man behind the curtain. He has been developing the instruments you see here and has been experimenting with the technologies you will see at work tonight for years in order to make this world possible. I also want to acknowledge our musical collaborators and friends, Gregory Richardson, Aaron Marcellus, Warren Craft, and Donovan Dorrance, who, with intuition, incredibly open minds, and a wonderful sensitivity to collaborating with the sounds of tap dance, have created some inspiring compositions. It has been a dream of mine for almost a decade to collaborate with my dear friend and multi-form dancer Ephrat "Bounce" Asherie, whose visual percussion, musical phrasing, and dynamic range of movement inspire me tremendously. Tap dance was America's first street form and is deeply rooted in the foundations of hip-hop and house dance. These communities have long been connected on the streets and in the club, but are less likely to be found on the concert stage. As we enter the world of electronic music, looping, and sampling, these worlds become even closer and that connection ever more important. Getting back to the beginning, I want to say thank you—thank you, Nicholas Young, for your artistry, your creativity, your tireless and endless work, your inventive mind, your friendship, and your trust. I feel incredibly blessed to have been so warmly invited into your world to play and create.

—Michelle Dorrance

It started with the simple need to find a way to amplify tap dance without feedback, so I could dance with a live band. Many people have used contact microphones (Gregory Hines, Tap Dogs, etc.) so I knew that was a possibility, and it led me to experimenting with guitar pedals and effects. I started out looping hand and body percussion with live and affected tap dance. Being a drummer as well and working with electronic music since the early days of EDM, I've stayed in touch with what's happening in the music production and DJ community. I knew contact mics could be doubled as drum triggers, and I was already playing around with a masterful piece of software called Ableton, a live performance software and digital audio workstation. I got the idea to create small trigger boards to dance on—essentially wooden drum pads. In conjunction with my main dance board and effects, this added a whole new sound set for me to experiment with. Over time I took online courses in Ableton and began to understand the limitless possibilities. Soon, I was able to play notes, arpeggios, chords, sound bites, and quotes, and began composing scores in real time with improvised tap dance. The synthesized possibilities are endless, and the combination of this, with the acoustic sound and attack of tap dance, was a very exciting frontier for me to explore. The only thing missing was Michelle Dorrance. Being a company member of Dorrance Dance, Michelle had given me my first opportunity to perform a solo using this electronic set up in an evening length performance in Boston, presented by Thelma Goldberg in 2012. We, as kids, had dreams about experimenting with altered soundscapes for tap dance. We jokingly called it "Tap to the Max."

I was creating solos with my "compositional tap instrument," but had visions of several dancers across a number of platforms and boards, dancing out elaborate choreographed phrases while simultaneously playing the musical composition. Once Michelle asked to me to collaborate on this show I knew it was on. Her expansive creativity in tap choreography and movement, along with her sophisticated musical phrasing, started to unlock possibilities in our set that were getting us both so excited. Simple ideas led to large discoveries, and every time we workshopped an idea, 20 more were born. Needless to say, here we are, pushing ourselves to explore the sonic potential in tap dance and tap instruments. In some ways we have created the ultimate tap dancer's playground: where you can let your imagination and your feet run wild.

Enjoy.

—Nicholas Van Young

# ***About Dorrance Dance***

Dorrance Dance is an award-winning tap dance company based out of New York City. The company's work aims to honor tap dance's uniquely beautiful history in a new, dynamic, and compelling context; not by stripping the form of its tradition, but by pushing it rhythmically, technically, and conceptually. The company's inaugural performance garnered a Bessie Award for "blasting open our notions of tap," and the company continues its passionate commitment to expanding the audience of tap dance, America's original art form.

Founded in 2011 by Artistic Director and 2015 MacArthur Fellow Michelle Dorrance, the company has received countless accolades and rave reviews and has performed for packed houses at venues including the Joyce Theater (New York), the Kennedy Center (Washington, D.C.), New York City Center (New York), Lincoln Center Out of Doors (New York), Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival (Beckett, Massachusetts), Vail International Dance Festival (Vail, Colorado), National Arts Centre of Canada (Ontario, Canada), Fira Tarrega (Tarrega, Spain), Staatstheater Darmstadt (Darmstadt, Germany), Danse Danse Montreal (Montreal, Canada), and Hong Kong Arts Festival (Hong Kong), among others, including many colleges and universities across the United States. For more information, please visit [dorrancedance.com](http://dorrancedance.com).

## **Dorrance Dance Staff**

Artistic Director: Michelle Dorrance

Executive Director: Donald Borrer

Production Manager/Sound Engineer: Christopher Marc

Company Manager: Tina Huang

Rehearsal Director: Elizabeth Burke

Musical Director: Donovan Dorrance

Lighting Design: Kathy Kaufmann

Lighting Supervisor: Serena Wong

Technical Director/Assistant Stage Manager: Diego Quintanar

Artist Representative: Margaret Selby, Selby/Artists Management

# Biographies

**MICHELLE DORRANCE**, *artistic director, co-creator, and dancer*

Michelle Dorrance is a New York City-based artist. Mentored by Gene Medler, Dorrance grew up performing with his North Carolina Youth Tap Ensemble and was lucky to study under many of the last master's hoofers. Her career highlights include STOMP, Derick Grant's *Imagine Tap!*, Jason Samuels Smith's *Charlie's Angels/Chasing the Bird*, Ayodele Casel's *Diary of a Tap Dancer*, Mable Lee's *Dancing Ladies*, and Darwin Deez. Company work includes Savion Glover's *ti dii*, Manhattan Tap, Barbara Duffy, JazzTap Ensemble, Rumba Tap, and solo work ranging from the Late Show with Stephen Colbert to Damian Woetzel's Vail Dance Festival Projects and a commission for the Martha Graham Dance Company. A 2017 Ford Foundation Art of Change Fellow and 2015 MacArthur Fellow, Dorrance is humbled to have been acknowledged and supported by United States Artists, the Joyce Theater, New York City Center, the Alpert Awards, Jacob's Pillow, Princess Grace Foundation, The Field, American Tap Dance Foundation, and the Bessie Awards. Dorrance holds a bachelor's degree from New York University and is a Capezio Athlete.

**NICHOLAS VAN YOUNG**, *co-creator, dancer, and musician*

Nicholas Van Young is a dancer, musician, choreographer, and a 2014 Bessie Award recipient. Van Young began his professional career at age 16 under Acia Gray and Deidre Strand with Tapestry Dance Company in Austin, Texas, eventually rising to principal dancer and resident choreographer. Since moving to New York, he has performed with Manhattan Tap, RumbaTap, Dorrance Dance, and Beat the Donkey; toured as a drummer for Darwin Deez; and spent almost a decade performing with STOMP, where he performed the lead role and acted as rehearsal director. Van Young tours both nationally and internationally, teaching and performing at various tap festivals, and founded Sound Movement dance company and Institute for the Rhythmic Arts (IFTRA). Van Young is thrilled to have found a home with Dorrance Dance, co-creating and developing *ETM: Double Down* and the Guggenheim Rotunda Project, both collaborative efforts with Michelle Dorrance.

**EPHRAT "BOUNCE" ASHERIE**, *dancer*

Ephrat "Bounce" Asherie is a 2016 Bessie Award winner for Innovative Achievement in Dance and a New York City-based bgirl, dancer, and choreographer. As artistic director of Ephrat Asherie Dance (EAD), she has presented work at Jacob's Pillow, FiraTarrega, and New York Live Arts, among others. Asherie has received numerous awards to support her work, including a National Dance Project Award from New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA), a Mondo Cane! Commission from Dixon Place, and an Extended Life Residency from the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. Asherie has taught at Wesleyan University and is on faculty at Broadway Dance Center. For more information, please visit [ephratasheriedance.com](http://ephratasheriedance.com).

**ELIZABETH BURKE**, *rehearsal director and dancer*

Elizabeth Burke is a Chapel Hill, North Carolina, native who spent 11 years under the direction of her mentor, Gene Medler, in the acclaimed North Carolina Youth Tap Ensemble. Burke has been with Dorrance Dance since its inception in 2010. She pursues her own choreographic work, teaches, and performs as a soloist on occasion. She is an alumna of the School at Jacob's Pillow and Marymount Manhattan College (with bachelor's degrees in political science and communication arts, magna cum laude).

**WARREN CRAFT**, *dancer*

Warren Craft is a New York City tap dancer who has trained in ballet with both the American Ballet Theatre and the School of American Ballet. Craft has been a member of Brenda Bufalino's New American Tap Dance Orchestra, Max Pollak's RumbaTap, and Dorrance Dance. He moves with "bizarre physicality," and "unconventional eloquence" (*New York Times*).

# *Biographies, continued*

**DONOVAN DORRANCE**, *musical director and musician*

Donovan Dorrance hails from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where he studied piano, guitar, drums, and voice, before attending the University of North Carolina (UNC) for a bachelor's degree in philosophy. After singing in an a cappella group, drumming in an indie-rock band, and receiving a degree fit for waiting tables for the rest of his life, Dorrance moved to Brooklyn to assist his sister's company and pursue his passion for music. In his spare time, he composes music with Greg Richardson for Dorrance Dance, takes online business courses, and is occasionally published in his UNC professors' books in the field of philosophy.

**AARON MARCELLUS**, *co-composer and musician*

Aaron Marcellus, a singer, vocal coach, writer, musician, dancer, and actor from Atlanta, started his career in gospel music and has performed around the world. Marcellus has recorded albums and was voted top 24 on *American Idol* in 2011. After a world tour, he was featured in a Chapstick commercial, NBC's *Next Caller*, and was a cast member of STOMP. Marcellus also hosts a Burlesque show at Duane Park. Most importantly, he founded both Surrender To Love, LLC, a foundation that supports arts programs and seeks to feed the hungry, and Adventure Voice, a training program offering vocal classes for groups and individuals.

**GREGORY RICHARDSON**, *composer and musician*

Gregory Richardson was born in Tucson, Arizona, and learned rhythm and blues at an early age from a family of musicians where everyone could play at least a little piano and everyone was expected to sing. As a member of the band Darwin Deez, Richardson has performed at many of the world's largest music festivals. In recent years, he's found a second home with the New York City tap dance community, composing for and/or performing in several Dorrance Dance works, including *Myelination*, which was commissioned by the Fall for Dance Festival and premiered at New York City Center.

**LEONARDO SANDOVAL**, *dancer*

Leonardo Sandoval has established a reputation in the tap world and beyond for his musicality and for adding his own Brazilian flavor to tap. Sandoval co-founded the Cia Carioca de Sapateado in Rio de Janeiro, bringing tap to a wider audience in Brazil. Since moving to New York in 2013, he has performed with Dorrance Dance and as a solo artist, and has presented work as a choreographer at venues across the U.S. and abroad.

**BYRON TITTLE**, *dancer*

Byron Tittle has been dancing since the age of seven in his hometown of New York. Starting with tap and ballet, Tittle soon grew to enjoy the different genres and aesthetics in the entire realm of dance. He began tap dancing with David Rider and then with the American Tap Dance Foundation's Tap City Youth Ensemble. There, he met Michelle Dorrance and continually took her master classes and workshops. He joined the company in 2014 and has been consistently involved since then. Commercially, he has danced for Janet Jackson and Nicki Minaj, but feels most fulfilled on stage with Dorrance Dance.

**GABE WINNS ORTIZ**, *dancer*

Gabe Winns Ortiz, 26, was born and raised in San Diego. Ortiz started dancing at the age of 11, and his love for the art form has continued to grow ever since. He has toured worldwide with the critically acclaimed stage show *Tap Kids*, and since moving to New York City, he has worked with various companies, including RumbaTap, Dorrance Dance, and Swing FX. He also directs his own group called the Students of Sound and teaches at the American Tap Dance Foundation. Television credits include *America's Most Talented Kids* (2002), *America's Got Talent* (2011), and *FakeOff* (2014).

# *Biographies, continued*

## PRODUCTION/STAFF

### **KATHY KAUFMANN**, *lighting designer*

Kathy Kaufmann, a New York City native, has been happily designing for Dorrance Dance since its inception (*SOUNDspace*, *The Blues Project*, *ETM: Double Down*, and *Myelination*). A resident designer at Danspace Project whose work has been seen throughout the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Asia, Kaufmann also teaches at Sarah Lawrence. A two-time Bessie Award recipient, she was nominated for work on Rebecca Davis's *Bloowst Windku* at Here in 2015. Her most recent projects include designs for Joanna Kotze, Ben Kimitch, Eva Yaa Asentawa's *Skeleton Architecture*, David Parker, Eiko, Koma, Larissa Velez Jackson, Rebecca Davis, and Ephrat Asherie.

### **CHRISTOPHER MARC**, *production manager and sound engineer*

Christopher Marc's credits include Elephant and Piggy's *We Are in a Play!* for the Kennedy Center Theatre for Young Audiences, the national tour of *Clifford the Big Red Dog Live!*, and the Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival, as well as *Forever Plaid*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Fantasticks*. Marc's design credits include *The Black Book* (off-Broadway), the Aquila Theatre National Tour, and *Wuthering Heights*, *The Tempest*, *Fahrenheit 451*, and *Twelfth Night*.

### **DIEGO QUINTANAR**, *technical director and assistant stage manager*

Diego Quintanar started working in theatre production as a student at the College of the Holy Cross. Quintanar was introduced to Dorrance Dance through his work with the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum's Works & Process series as a project coordinator. His other credits include Latino Cultural Center and Wyly Theater in Dallas, Texas, where he worked as a carpenter and electrician; off-Broadway's *I Like It Like That* as production manager; and Shen Wei Dance Arts and Dance Heginbotham (New York City) as an assistant stage manager and scenic charge.

### **SERENA WONG**, *lighting supervisor*

Serena Wong is a Brooklyn-based freelance lighting designer for theatre and dance. Wong's designs have been seen at New York Live Arts, Irondale Arts Center, the New Ohio, and Danspace. She enjoys biking, beekeeping, and bread baking.

# *Engagement Events*

Friday, February 23, 2018

## **SCHOOL-DAY PERFORMANCE: DORRANCE DANCE**

This school-day performance, linked to the Virginia Standards of Learning, had attendees in sixth through 12<sup>th</sup> grades in public and private schools and homeschool families in Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski, Roanoke, and Tazewell Counties, as well as the City of Radford.

## **LEARNING GUIDE QUESTIONS**

The Moss Arts Center Learning Guide is a resource for educators, students, and anyone who enjoys digging deeper into our programming. To engage even more fully with our season performances, view the full Learning Guide at [bit.ly/LearningGuideMAC](http://bit.ly/LearningGuideMAC). Please use the following questions to spark your own contemplation about today's performance:

- Speaking about the origins of tap in the context of American slavery, Michelle Dorrance explained that, "[tap] is born of some of the most oppressed people in our country and culture has known and ... finds its way to joy." How and where was this history and concept present in the performance?
- How did the incorporation of electronic drum pads impact your perception of tap dance as an art form?
- How would you describe the performers' interaction with one another? How did that contribute to the overall spirit of *ETM: Double Down*?
- Where in the performance of *ETM: Double Down* did you experience a clear distinction between performers as dancers vs. musicians? Where were the lines most blurred between dance and music? What was the effect of this exploration for you?

# *In the Galleries*

## **RAY KASS**

January 18-March 31, 2018

All galleries

Ray Kass, a prominent Virginia artist with a long record of national and international exhibitions, is well known not only for the quality and breadth of his art but as a pivotal, even catalytic figure in this region. Over the years Kass stood out as an exemplary artist, here and in the art world beyond, as well as a distinguished art professor at Virginia Tech. Among his many accomplishments was establishing and directing the Mountain Lake Symposium and Workshop programs, through which he brought art-world luminaries to this region—Clement Greenberg, Donald B. Kuspit, and John Cage, among others—and subsequently influenced generations of artists in Virginia and the southeast.

This exhibition highlights exemplary work from Kass' prolific career, ranging from his large scale, multi-panel *Polyptych* (1961-2003) paintings to his most recent *Still Lives* (2015-2018), created with stencils in an inventive layering of water media, oil emulsion, and dry pigment on rag paper. Among the key works in the exhibition is the monumental painting *Broad Channel: Vorticella Polyptych*, 1991, from the permanent collection of the Nevada Museum of Art, which will be seen in Virginia for the first time in 20 years.

## **RELATED EVENT**

Tuesday, February 27, 2018, 7:30 PM

### **NEW MUSIC ENSEMBLE: SETZ DIE SEGEL ZUR SONNE**

Join the Virginia Tech New Music Ensemble for an evening of Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Set Sail for the Sun*, a seminal text work of intuitive music from the collection *From the Seven Days*, in the Ruth C. Horton Gallery and Grand Lobby in conjunction with the exhibition by Ray Kass. The New Music Ensemble focuses on the discussion, performance, and artistry of experimental music since 1970, including works of indeterminacy, free and structured improvisation, graphic notation, and contemporary performance practices. Kyle Hutchins is the artistic director.

## **GALLERY HOURS**

Monday-Friday, 10 AM-5:30 PM

Saturday, 10 AM-4 PM

To arrange a group tour or class visit, please contact Meggin Hicklin, exhibitions program manager, at [megh79@vt.edu](mailto:megh79@vt.edu) or 540-231-0840.