

ACE Weekly

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LEXINGTON'S FREE NEWSPAPER

A New Dance



lex welcomes a new collective

A Resonant Collective

Contemporary Dance Collective Debuts

By Bianca Spriggs



photo by Steve Moline

Less than a week before opening night, the practice room three stories up in Art-sPlace pulses with movement and sound. A tribe of dancers communicates in a

There are flurries of color everywhere from tanned limbs and scrunched-down socks to jewel-colored garments, glints of silver jewelry and winks of turquoise nail polish on toes, all rebounding from a wall of mirrors to slam into the hardwood floor or perforate the air.

Threading through the cacophony

kind of pidgin or scat, improvising hums, woops, grunts, plosions of air, and percussive clicks to replace words as they rehearse and demonstrate moves for one another.

dressed in demure gray and black, Stephanie Pevac calls out direction and encouragement. She stands no taller than any of her dancers, but there is no doubt exactly who is at the helm of this energetic new company, the Contemporary Dance Collective (CDC). Her voice sharpens and warms as she steps in to illustrate just how deeply a movement should well up from or to what angle a leg must extend. All of this while

taking notes for lighting design, monitoring the soundtrack, and keeping an eye on the clock. She's modified costumes, designed the show's program, and wrangled schedules to include collaborative artists like Kurt Gohde, who is well-known for his photography and documentary work with local and regional drag queens.

With opening night just days away, it is clear that while there is much to do, much has been accomplished. It is an overarching vision that seems to drive Stephanie, who works by day as Development Director for the Lexington Art League, "As an artist and choreographer, I believe strongly in the power art can have in each of its disciplines to influence our experiences, inspire our thoughts, engage our actions, and produce our visions."

When she speaks of her inspiration, Stephanie might mention Sylvia Plath or David Gray in the same breath as Alvin Ailey and Bill T. Jones. She finds herself moved by visionaries in her field and also the potential for personal growth, "Modern dance is intuitive...Learning a modern dance piece is an exercise of the body, mind, and soul where connection to the work you are performing is as necessary as having proper placement."

Her formal training at Kent State University culminating in degree in concert dance performance, served as a platform for her career as a specialist not only as a performer, but also teaching modern dance technique, improvisation, and master classes along with choreography workshops, "I believe that dance is a vehicle to provide the ability to speak without words and transcend the space between trying to explain what your work is about and actually gifting the audience with the ability to feel it."

Building a company from the ground up has proven both challenging and rewarding. Stephanie hopes the debut of the CDC in their first feature-length performance, *The Resonance Project*, will move the audiences on both visceral and cerebral levels, "The audience can expect something engaging, inspiring, and unique. This concert is based upon the concept of a living breathing performance space."

She also looks forward to growing the company in an organic sense by gauging the interest of Lexington audiences and potential members of the CDC, "I am interested in working with dancers who not only

have skill but also the ability to be creative on their own. Improv and peer teaching are important as well, so I want to work with dancers who have these qualities. A spirit for collaboration is a must as well."

Putting on this scale of performance for a choreographer is no different than a composer's

debut of an opus or the opening of a visual artist's solo exhibit. There is meticulous attention placed on every detail in over an hour-length show. But for Stephanie Pevac, who has infused *The Resonance Project* with a decade of her life's experiences, choreographing serves as a natural and dynamic vehicle for expression, "I felt compelled to create this body of work as a way to celebrate the things that life has brought my way both good and bad that have shaped and defined me."

It is a less than a week before opening night and Stephanie and the CDC dancers, Lee Erik Eachus, Kate Hadfield, Cara Terry, Brooke Thomas, and Erica Maryman, with guests Lucy Arthur-Parately and Natalie Drucker, are feeling it. They coach one another, murmuring or shouting direction between moves honing their bodies through bruises, soreness, and sweat. They dig in, trusting one another to reach higher, hold longer, and whittle down excess pauses. It is clear that beyond their shared artistry, the CDC is not just nurturing to life a new company of dancers, this collective resonates with community. ■

What: The Contemporary Dance Collective presents *The Resonance Project*

Where: Downtown Arts Center, 141 East Main Street

When: June 17 at 6:30 PM, Dress rehearsal/pay what you can June 18 at 7:30 PM, Opening Night, Reception Following June 19 at 7:30 PM, Closing Night, Final Performance

Tix: \$18, students \$12 with ID