



dawsondancesf

MISSION: **dawsondancesf** breaks down the barriers placed on classical ballet and brings to light the strength and beauty that artists possess within themselves, allowing them to explore their voices through choreography and vision. Through this process, artists transform themselves, audiences, and the world of dance.

VALUES: True artistry rests in each artist's ability to delve deep within, and to be supportive of each other in that process of exploration and risk taking. The beauty and tradition of classical ballet can provide a solid foundation from which to move forward and explore the science of motion.

GOALS: With **dawsondancesf**, we are building a world-class company that celebrates the diversity of American culture in dance and embraces and draws inspiration from the movement of the universe. Our primary goals are to enlighten artists and audiences and to create a company that broadens the awareness of dance here in the Bay Area and beyond. While we continue to be successful in being awarded tours and grants, we rely on supporters like you to continue our exploration and growth as we strengthen our foundation.

- Bring a broad array of works to the existing San Francisco dance audience and bring new audiences to the world of dance.
- Provide a professional environment in which local talent can develop and take artistic risks.
- Develop into a thriving contemporary ballet company with a reputation for excellence and risk-taking and a regular season of productions.

HISTORY: **dawsondancesf** was formed by Gregory Dawson in 2007, when it premiered at The Lund Dance Theatre, Valencia for the California State Summer School of the Arts (CSSSA).

The organization gained the respect of the LINES Ballet Professional Training Program, the Surdna Foundation (which has brought Dawson Dance SF to the Lund

Theatre each summer since 2007), St. Mary's College, and Dominican University.

In 2011, **dawsondancesf** began a concerted effort to bring more of its artistry to audiences in nonacademic settings with performances at ODC Theatre and at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. The organization is fiscally sponsored by Dancers Group, and has the respect of such notable San Francisco companies as the Alonzo King LINES Ballet.

Gregory P Dawson, Choreographer and Artistic Director of **dawsondancesf**, began his studies in Chicago at the Ruth Page School of Dance and then continued at the University of Southern Illinois at Edwardsville, where he also studied Afro Haitian dance with Katherine Dunham. In 1981, he moved to San Francisco and studied with Evelyn Schuert at Shawl-Anderson Dance Studios and with Alonzo King at Dance Central. Mr. Dawson left for New York in 1982 to study with DTH.

From 1983-1986, he danced with Theatre Ballet Canadian, returning to the Bay Area to perform with Oakland Ballet, Berkeley Ballet Theater, Sacramento Ballet, and the San Francisco Opera Ballet. Dawson joined the Alonzo King LINES Ballet in 1987.

Upon retiring from the company in 2005, he began to teach and choreograph for the LINES Ballet Training Program and in 2006 to teach and choreograph for Dominican University's LINES Ballet BFA Program. In 2007, the BFA program was selected to represent the Southwest Region with a performance of Dawson's Solid Soil Beneath Our Feet at the ACDF's National College Dance in NYC.

In 2009, Dawson became Assistant Director of the CSSSA Dance Department. He has also been on the faculty at the Ruth Asawa San Francisco High School for the Arts since 2005. In 2008, he completed for Company C, Which Light in the Sky Is Us, nominated for an Isadora Duncan award for choreography. Dawson reset Eclipsing Venus for the 2010 spring season of the David Taylor Dance Theater (DTDT) and in the spring of 2011, created a new ballet for DTDT, Big Sky, Endless Mountains. Moss on the North Side of the Trees is Dawson's senior project for St Mary's Leap program where he will receive his BFA in fall 2011. Also in 2011,

Dawson became the artistic director for Dawson-Wallace Dance Project (formally the David Taylor Dance Theatre).

dawsondancesf works with talented composers and lighting designers, including: Zakir Hussain. Appreciated both in the field of percussion and in the music world at large as an international phenomenon, Hussain is widely considered a chief architect of the contemporary world music movement. His contributions to world music, include many historic collaborations, such as Shakti, which he founded with John McLaughlin and L. Shankar, Remember Shakti, the Diga Rhythm Band, Making Music, Planet Drum with Mickey Hart, Tabla Beat Science, Sangam with Charles Lloyd and Eric Harland, as well as recordings and performances with artists as diverse as George Harrison, YoYo Ma, Joe Henderson, Van Morrison, Airtó Moreira, Pharoah Sanders, Billy Cobham, Mark Morris, Rennie Harris, and the Kodo drummers. He was honored in April 2009 with four sold-out concerts at Carnegie Hall's Artist Perspective series.

Zachary Lovitch, A highly-gifted flautist well versed in a range of instruments and with a keen sense of rhythm and versatility, Lovitch is also influenced by his Jewish heritage, yet has a deep understanding of how American music has been influenced by African roots. He is a member of the Composers' Guild at California State University, Long Beach.

Alton San Giovanni, with his music best described as an elaborate mixture of traditional instrumentation and digital sheen, San Giovanni is part of the next generation of musicians and composers of the digital age. He is a founding member of the well-known electronic group, Niteppl, and is signed to Our House Records in San Francisco.

Moses Sedler. A composer of music for concert stage, modern dance, and

film, Sedler is also a concert cellist and recording artist. He has a background rooted in classical music, as well as improvisatory music, with influences of Indian classical music and eastern European folk music. Moses studied composition at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle, Washington before moving to the San Francisco Bay Area to study north Indian classical music with Ali Akbar Khan. As a

cellist and composer Moses has been working with concert ensembles, theater companies, choreographers, and filmmakers for over 15 years. Some of the collaborations include LINES Ballet, The Picasso String Quartet, Kunst-Stoff, Davka, Janice Garrett and dancers, Kitka, and Open Eye Pictures.

Patrick Toebe, Toebe has an extensive background in lighting and scenic design. His work has been seen across the United States and in Japan and includes lighting design for Theatre Flamenco (8 years), the World Institute on Disabilities (8 years), California Revels (7 years), Sacramento Ballet, Tulsa Ballet, Alabama Ballet, Knoxville City Ballet, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival, Sierra Shakespeare Festival, Centre Repertory, and Solo Opera. He has created lighting and scenic designs for Theatre of Yugen, Foothill Theatre Company, Pacific Alliance Theatre Company, Summer Repertory Theatre, A.C.T.'s Junior Rep, Centre Repertory, and many more. Toebe received an Izzy nomination for Dawson's "Which Light in the Sky is Us" in 2009.

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Artists

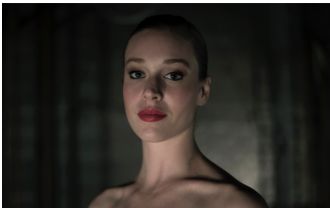


Gregory P Dawson upon retiring from the LINES Ballet in 2005 began to teach and choreograph for Alonzo King LINES Ballet BFA at Dominican University of California and for the LINES Ballet Training Program. Students from the LINES BFA Program were selected to represent the Southwest Region and perform his *Solid Soil Beneath Our Feet* at the National College Dance Festival in New York. Mr. Dawson has also been on faculty for the San Francisco High School for the Arts for the last eight years. In 2007 he formed dawsondancesf. In 2008 for Company C completed “Which light in the sky is us,” which was nominated for an Isadora Duncan Award for choreography. In 2009, he became Assistant Director of the CCCSA Dance Dept. In the spring of 2010, Mr. Dawson reset *Venus* for the 2010 season of David Taylor Dance (DTD), and in Spring 2011 created a new ballet for DTD *Big Sky Endless Mountains*. In the fall of 2011, Mr. Dawson became Artistic Director of Dawson Wallace Dance Project in Denver, Colorado (formerly David Taylor Dance). In 2011, Dawson was selected to receive a CHIME grant to be mentored by Elizabeth Streb for a year, which ended in December 2012. In 2013 The Denver post named Dawson the best choreographer in Denver. In September 2013, dawsondancesf re-established its presence in SF with a world premiere of *fabricca matterasso d’argento* at Zaccho Studio, the company’s new home.

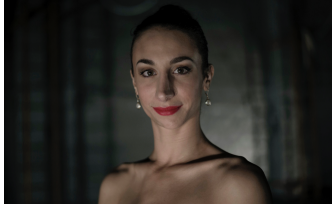
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Isaiah Bindel was born and raised on the coast of California. He began dancing at the age of 4. After his training at University North Carolina School of the Arts as well as the San Francisco Ballet School, Isaiah began his first season with dawsondancesf in September of 2013. He continues to work and support the vision that Gregory Dawson has created for dawsondancesf.



Jordan Drew began her dance training under the tutelage of the late Timothy M. Draper at the Draper Center for Dance Education in Rochester, New York. While training, she was awarded many prestigious honors, including the 2002 Hope Award and 2004 Top 12 Finalist at the Youth America Grand Prix Finals in New York City, as well as scholarships to both the American Ballet Theater Summer Intensive and the Paris Opera Ballet School. In 2008, she continued her training at Alonzo King's LINES Ballet Training Program in San Francisco from 2008-2010. While there, she danced repertory by Alonzo King, Kara Davis, Gregory Dawson, Yannis Adoniou, Carmen Rozestraten, Keelan Whitmore, Robert Moses, and Maurya Kerr.



Ilaria Guerra was born in Torino, Italy and moved to Palos Verdes Estates, California at the age of five. She trained at Lauridsen Ballet Center, performing with their pre-professional company, South Bay Ballet, for seven years. Ilaria graduated from the Alonzo King LINES Ballet BFA Program at Dominican University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance and a minor in Arts Management in 2013. She was nominated for a Dizzy Feet Foundation Award in 2012. She joined dawsondancesf in 2013.



Frankie Lee III received his BFA in Contemporary dance from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts in May 2014, where he performed works by Larry Keigwin, Alwin Nikolai, Maurya Kerr, Shen Wei, Juel Lane, Doug Elkins and Merce Cunningham. He has been a consistent scholarship student and faculty assistant at the American Dance Festival, where he performed works by Ohad Naharin, Mark Dendy, Titiana Bagonava & Donald McKayle. He has performed works by Jeremy McQueen at “The Young Choreographers Festival”, “The Capezio ACE Awards”, “Jacobs Pillow Inside/Out Series”, and by Mark Dendy in the World Premier of his site specific work, “Ritual Cyclical”, part of NYC Lincoln Center out of Doors.



Alexander Vargas began his ballet training at the Harrison School for the Arts in Lakeland Florida in 2009. He trained there until his senior year and then attended Blake High School for the Arts in Tampa Florida and also trained at the Next Generation Ballet as a trainee in 2012 during his senior year. After graduating high school, he attended the Lines Ballet Training program under full scholarship and completed it this past May 2014. This is Alexander’s first season with dawsondancesf.

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Press

dawsondancesf
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For Immediate Release
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fabbrica materasso d'argento

September 4-6, 2014 at 8pm

Rose Nagelberg Theater

Baruch College

55 Lexington Ave, New York, NY 10010

dawsondancesf.org



"MAJOR MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT, MESMERIZING, PUZZLING YET ULTIMATELY CONVINCING... DAWSON BRILLIANTLY BALANCED THE VIGOROUS, INDIVIDUALIZED CENTERSPACE, DANCING WITH A HAUNTING PICTORIAL QUALITY, IN WHICH THE PERFORMERS, DEVOLVED INTO BLACK SILHOUETTES AGAINST THE SILVER COATED BACK WALL."

- Rita Feliciano SF gate

Photo: Austin Forbord

In collaboration with soprano Christy Rohayem, and Alton San Giovanni, “fabbrica materasso d’argento,” created in residence, investigates the marriage of music, voice, and dance; the physical possibilities created by this matrimony; and the influence each of the components has on the union. The movement compositions are abstract and independent of each other, but hold within them narratives that could intermingle. The score by Alton San Giovanni, is Dawson's fifteenth collaboration together with the San Francisco-based composer who works under the name of NITEPPL.



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dawsondancesf presents
Intrinsic Motion Reconstructed

October 18,19, 25, 26

ZACCHO Studio #330

1770 Yosemite St San Francisco, CA 94124

Dawson's *intrinsic motion project* first premiered in 2014. Referring to the inherent impulses that generate and guide movement, *intrinsic motion project* investigates the connection between initial acts of locomotion and the physical result of those preliminary gestures. Letting the dancers' natural drives be a significant determiner of the choreography, Dawson creates a work that is guided by the body's intrinsic understanding of motion. *MONOCHROME* (premiered this summer at the BAN 7 Festival August 2014), also appears on the program.

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World premiere from risk-taking dawsondancesf choreographer

By: Rachel Howard

Published 1:34 pm, Wednesday, December 3, 2014

Two years ago, Gregory Dawson was teaching for the Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts and the Alonzo King Lines Ballet bachelor's of fine arts program, mentoring dancers in the Lines Training Program, finishing a college degree, apprenticing with the iconoclastic dance experimentalist Elizabeth Streb, and flying back and forth to co-direct what had just been renamed the Dawson Wallace Dance Project in Denver.

"What woke me up," Dawson said over coffee near his home in the Mission, "was a really bad car accident. I actually ran into someone, and it was my fault. I realized I was thinking about work and not paying attention. And I said, OK, that's a sign."

Stately and reflective, with gray hair offset by tortoiseshell glasses, Dawson doesn't strike one as the type to drive recklessly, and he soon quit as leader of the Denver troupe. But he seems to have done more than survive the stress of his simultaneous endeavors, because the seven-member company he now runs, Dawson Dance SF, moves with the kind of maturity only a veteran director-choreographer can deliver. Based at Bayview's Zaccho Dance Studio, Dawson Dance SF has steadily delivered risk-taking, muscularly elegant performances since its establishment just one year ago. And now, following an appearance in the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts' Bay Area Now series and a tour to New York, the company is dancing the world premiere of an ambitious new ballet with live music by jazz innovator Richard Howell this weekend. Dance fans have Lines Ballet founder Alonzo King to thank. When Dawson decided to retire from an 18-year stage career with Lines, "I wanted to step back from dancing. But Alonzo said, 'Actually you won't be resting. You'll be teaching in the BFA program, and you'll be doing choreography.' I thought, I've never done choreography. But Alonzo saw that I had that capability. I couldn't see it."

Perhaps Dawson was blinded by the sparkle of his other talents. Raised in Chicago with 14 siblings by parents who insisted the children receive college educations, Dawson studied Italian at Southern Illinois University, and came to San Francisco to pursue advanced Italian at San Francisco State. He owns a second home in Italy, and

is a serious artisan of mosaics. He would have been happy to devote himself to languages or the visual arts.

But immediately, his dances struck people. “Which Light in the Sky Is Us,” created in 2008 for Company C Ballet, scored an Isadora Duncan Award nomination for best choreography. Soon, Denver’s David Taylor Dance acquired one of Dawson’s ballets and commissioned another, and Dawson found himself at the helm, importing gutsy dancers he had developed through the Lines Training Program.

And then came Elizabeth Streb. Dawson’s Choreographers in Mentorship Exchange apprenticeship with her “was a paradigm-shift experience,” he said. “I had always worked from the inside out, tapping my inner voice and making sure it’s heard. And I’m sure Alonzo spoke about something just being what it is. But I probably didn’t hear it and that must be why he thought that I needed to experience working with Streb. Because her work is just what it is. It’s physics, timing, the study of motion and locomotive. Just blunt. I was gobsmacked.”

The Streb influence can be seen in the sometimes slamming force of Dawson’s movement, all the more startling danced en pointe. But Dawson also takes his own kinds of risks. When he first worked with Howell on the ballet that makes up the first half of this weekend’s shows, he took Howell’s compositions and rearranged them, without letting Howell hear the results until nearly opening night. Now, for the new ballet that concludes these shows, Dawson created pure movement, and Howell wrote new music in response. With a catch: As of our interview over coffee, two weeks before opening night, Dawson hadn’t heard a note of it.

Spreading himself too thin might have frazzled him in the past, but a high-stakes world premiere? Not a chance. “Trust, that’s the thing,” he said with a shrug. “I’m curious as to what’s going to happen.”

ONCE UPON A MATTRESS

You can't blame choreographer **Gregory Dawson** for calling his newly minted hour-long septet *fabbrica materasso d'argento*. It is a lot more euphonious, and mysterious, than "silver mattress factory," which refers to the metallically painted walls of Zaccho Dance Theater's home, a former Serta manufacturing facility.

Though badly in need of better seating facilities, the space is becoming popular as a performance venue. But it has never looked better than in Dawson's intelligent and spacious choreography, bathed in Patrick Toebe's bluish lighting design that highlighted the performers one minute before swallowing them up the next.

Dawson, a former member of Alonzo King Lines Ballet, decamps for Italy — he is also a mosaic artist— for extended periods of time. For a choreographer, *fabbrica* is a major achievement, mesmerizing, puzzling yet ultimately convincing. Of course, he carries within him much of what he learned during his 18-year tenure with King. But he made the fractured lines, the fierce attacks, and the collage approach his own.

There are moments when you began to wonder where what looked like independent units were going, besides showcasing excellent dancers at their best. But in the end the pieces came together.

It felt like a veil had been yanked away and, all of a sudden, you clearly saw what had been a journey for these six dancers after all. The exception was Jeffrey Van Sciver, who after an astoundingly virtuosic yet silken solo, performed in a diaphanous white skirt that beautifully set off his dark skin, simply disappeared. Why? Was his presence a guiding force no longer needed? ? Dramaturgically, this seemed weak.



Dancer: Christopher DeVita,
Photo: Tommi Cahill

Dawson brilliantly balanced the vigorous, individualized center-space dancing with a haunting pictorial quality, in which the performers devolved into black silhouettes against the silver coated black wall.

Moving friezes, they melted away.

Alton San Giovanni's tempestuous score excellently supported the choreography.

The dancers: Jordan Drew, Oliver Shock, Ilaria Guerra, Christopher DeVita, Jessica Wagner, Isaiah Bindel, and, of course, Van Sciver — who next month is starting his first season with Lines Ballet — performed at the top of their impressive abilities. I want to see them again. *

dawsondancesf/Richard Howell Presents
"in this moment" "birds eye view"

November 29-30, December 6-7 7:30pm

ZACCHO Studio #330

1777 Yosemite St

Dawson's "**birds eye view**" is collaboration with jazz musician Richard Howell. First performed at the Black Choreographers Festival in March 2014, this work explores Dawson's affinity for jazz, as well as the broader relationship between music and movement. Presented first with an original score by Howell, Dawson then worked to choreographically interpret Howell's creation. Hearing the essence of a journey in Howell's composition, Dawson sought to incorporate a sense of travel into "birds eye view," giving the work a temporal trajectory, with the hope of arriving at a clear destination.

In a second collaboration "**in this moment**" with Richard Howell, Dawson flips the creative order in which he and Howell have previously worked. In this instance, Dawson composed highly structured and specific movement first, to which Howell then created a new score. Working from the deep trust they established in their first collaboration, Dawson and Howell imbue "in this moment" with a playful synergy and the goal of articulating each other's artistic vision. With both "birds eye view" and "in this moment," Howell's live jazz music adds an improvisational nature to each performance; played slightly differently each time, the music requires the dancers to respond to the shifting musical nuances each night.

"Dawson works in the contemporary ballet idiom, characterized by balletic grammar mixed with lissome spines, thrusting rib cages and swerving limbs. Dawson has a snappy vibe, and his confident choreography is at its best when showing off the speedy athleticism and muscularity of his six dancers"

-Mary Ellen Hun

dawsondancesf

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San Francisco, CA 94110 415.994.3430



Critical Dialogues: Rachel Howard and Gregory Dawson

By: Rachel Howard

What if, rather than writing a review, a critic sat down with a choreographer to have a two-way conversation about the work? That's the experiment behind Critical Dialogues. For this fourth installment, choreographer Gregory Dawson, director of DawsonDanceSF, met for coffee with critic Rachel Howard to talk about the October 19, 2014 performance of Dawson's IntrinsicMotion Reconstructed at Zaccho studio in Bayview, San Francisco.

Rachel Howard: I was excited to catch up with your work. I remember seeing your first work, Which Light in the Skys Us, danced by Company C.

Gregory Dawson: That was a long time ago. A different world.

RH: Well, we'll talk about that. For this piece, Intrinsic Motion Reconstructed, I loved the way that you used ZacchoStudio's gritty space. I've been to a lot of ballet performances where the choreographer isn't using a proscenium stage, and they always seem to be fighting the effect of the dancers being en pointe and close to the audience—Youknow, "Pretend you can't hear their point shoes clamoring against the ground!"

GD: I love that sound!

RH: Yeah. The clamor was so of a piece with the atmosphere. Being in that industrial space, and even the industrialneighborhood, it was like a complete experience the moment. I pulled onto that street, like I was in a dream world. Now, at thestart of the show, when you gave the audience our initial directions—that we were going to move into a circle in the middle of theperformance, and then at the signal we would return to a line across the front—I was dubious. I thought, this is going to feel forced and be a lot of complication for nothing. But it worked.

GD: [Laughs.] Well, when you say a "dream world," I dream an awful lot. Most of my ideas come in my dreams. My whole ideawas to bring you into my headspace. My dreams are usually smooth and connected and I wanted that to happen with the audience. We'd done [moving the chairs around] before, in the spring. The last time people became uncomfortable being askedto do something on the spot. Last time people were less shocked than they were this time. But this time, they understood theaction and produced the action really quickly.

RH: Even though it was smooth, I was still uncomfortable and I liked that. Because you're still in a circle staring at other people during the performance and very aware of other people being able to see you. And something I thought gave the piece a satisfying sense of form was how you started in a more conventional way with the audience in a line up front. And then the audience moving into a circle, which for me really paid off when the dancers started running around and around right behind

us . . .

GD: [Mischievous laughing.]

RH: And we could feel the floor shaking. And the floors were really rumbling, and the pointe shoes are loud. And then after you had the audience move the chairs back up front, there was a sense of return to the work's beginning—but with a difference, because Jordan [Drew] was running right into my face. She was running back and forth in a line and I think she was kicking her pointe shoe within inches of my nose. So there was a return, but an escalation to a greater sense of danger at the same time. **GD:** That was my intention. Often people go to shows but they aren't immersed in them. With a proscenium, I would have approached it differently.

RH: I loved how you were working against the ballerina image of being light and airy—you are going to the extreme opposite, and later too, with the section of men slamming to the floor.

GD: That's Elizabeth Streb. I spent a whole year of CHIME [Choreographers in Mentorship Exchange] with her and she blew my mind. I spent 22 years with Alonzo [King, artistic director of LINES Ballet]. And he gave me a sense of knowing myself. And I'm very grateful and eternally indebted. And then I met Elizabeth. Alonzo made that possible—he said, you need to go experience this with her. And she schooled me. I walked out of that place 50 feet off the ground. The science of motion, the mathematics of motion—so many aspects I had known but not examined.

RH: Can you give me a quick example?

GD: Examining each inch of space in a motion and where each inch of the path of motion takes you. And really acknowledging it. Examining the path, and how you construct that. Or how is the body stopped when it's dropped onto a floor. How can I examine that motion so that it is natural and not forced or contrived or cliché?? You know how people fall to the floor in this kind of lovely motion—I'm not interested in that. I'm interested in how do we go from here to there—wham.

RH: What was intriguing was to see that combination of brute physics with being on pointe. That is still not seen much. Also, the costumes were good. I had a bit of resistance at first to the theatricality of the black straps wound around the men's arm and legs. I liked the high briefs on the men—and the interesting gender choice in that the men were much more exposed than the women, who were fully clothed in leotards. **GD:** I was trying to create different worlds, different scenarios, giving people different metaphors. I'm interested in how lines are continued and extended and how we can give the illusion that they continue on forever. And my intention with the webbing was to give that impression. It had nothing to do with the dance. I just thought it was really cool. [Laughter.] It did also seem regal, royal.

RH: It's very mythological. It kind of reminded me of Martha Graham.

GD: But also, I was giving homage to Harriet Tubman, and how she was a poignant figure and oversaw passages and pathways in leading people . . .

RH: Uh, interesting.

GD: I guess you wouldn't have gotten that. [Laughter.]

RH: No, but another point of engagement for me was that Jordan was the picture of strength and musculature. Not the skinny, filmy ballerina. And I thought she delivered what I think is your emerging style with the most confidence.

GD: I've had her my longest and I call her my rock. Jordan understands the pointe aspect of my work.

RH: Interesting. Because when she came out for her solo in the third part, when she is holding on to the ropes from the ceiling—and I was standing right in front of her in the front row—and I wasn't even sure why, but I became so fixated on her pointe shoe.

GD: The "intrinsic" part of that section is the shoe, and how she used the shoe to control the turns and come down from pointe.

RH: The other thing I thought interesting is that you start out with the big steel apparatus [shaped like an A with a platform on top and ladders on both sides] that Isaiah [Bindel] is on for his opening solo, and then more apparatuses are introduced one by one, and by the time Jordan did that solo hanging from the ceiling rig I was perceiving the pointe shoe as another kind of apparatus. Another physical edifice that the body uses to push off of.

GD: Totally.

RH: Another thing about the arc of the evening—the reason I was prepared to focus on the pointe shoe was because of the solo that came before, with Ilaria [Guerra] balancing against the wall. At first you're interested in her balancing with her hips against the wall. But then once you become used to those physics a bit of your attention is freed to look at other mechanics, and that was when my focus first moved to the feet.

GD: Yes, we worked a lot on the articulation of the counterbalance of the pointe shoe and the wall. There was a lot of resistance, though. The dancers fought me tooth and nail. They're such refined, developed artists, but they really

want to know what my approach is so they can help me. And I could do that. But I think the exploration they have to do will show in the work.

RH: I think it's conditioned within ballet dancers to hide the effort and the mechanics, so that's what you're working against—but I could see you working against it in a way that was engaging. And that connected to how you were working with the space rather than against it, letting the industrial qualities of the space come through. And so another thing I loved about Ilaria's solo—this will sound strange—but there was the wall, and the lighting was great, but then just behind her was an electrical socket—right down by her feet, where your attention was going. I loved that that electrical socket was there.

GD: And that was on purpose.

RH: Oh really?

GD: I wanted people to see how raw the experience was. We are in a former factory—so yes, there's a socket here, with a plug in it, with an orange tag that says how much wattage it's delivering.

RH: I think that was a great choice. The last thing: I liked that most of the sections had a clear core movement investigation. In the first section, there was a lot of coming down onto a flat foot, extensions landing in parallel, the men and the women facing off. Then the section of windmilling arms. Then in the circle began the investigation of grabbing one's own thigh, pushing and pulling the thigh, "what if I use my arm to locomote my leg?" And when they first fell into a bridge pose that initiated the slamming section. And then the rigs started coming in. And when Jordan came out for her solo from the hanging rig and she used it to make that awful violent sound which was horrifying—I just loved that.

GD: To me when I'm creating soundscapes, silences are golden, and the awkward noises that come in. If the music stops and we're breathing loudly, to me that is the most beautiful sound. So when I was working with Joanna [Haigood, Zaccho Studio's artistic director] on being safe with the rigging, I decided to make the apparatus the music, because the scraping sound was so wonderfully awkward. It's piercing, aggressive—and yet this beautiful woman manipulating it.

RH: Yes, that was unforgettable.

I can see how you were influenced by Alonzo [King] and have moved away from that—because you were working with Streb, that makes sense. I also found myself thinking of Karole Armitage.

GD: I have never seen her work. I like looking at other's work, but I am such a sponge. I am still influenced by Alonzo, because he is my mentor.

RH: I still see that in how a dramatic extension will fall swiftly into a lunge.

GD: Yeah. I could turn it off, but it's like my blood being red. And he means the world to me.

RH: So what would your ideal review of this performance have said?

GD: "It's really wonderful to see that Gregory Dawson has found his voice."

RH: Great.

GD: I know who I am now. And the direction I need to go. It took going in Denver [to direct the Dawson Wallace Dance Project, formerly David Taylor Dance, for two years]. It took working with Streb, being a professor [at the LINES Ballet BFA program at Dominican University]. Being a choreographer and directing are two different things, because you have to cultivate artists. I'm comfortable as a creator—directing is something still in progress.

RH: So now I have to do the uncomfortable part. There were some places where I was less aware of what the central movement investigation was, and my attention wandered. The first solo against the wall, the smaller man holding on from above—that section struck me as more "pose"-y. I thought it would make a beautiful photograph, but I wasn't sure what was happening.

GD: It was actually choreographed on another person, a much larger man.

RH: That's so interesting. Because the audience's assumption is that it's being danced just as the choreographer intends.

GD: I had to interpret it differently with a dancer who was younger, lighter and very sylph-like.

RH: Alexander Vargas is definitely sylph-like.

GD: So for me it was an exercise in muscle-building, and trying to get him to move from brute strength. I think in four more performances he'll get there. But I agree with you.

RH: And the hoop solo had kind of the same effect.

GD: Yes. Isaiah did that solo. For me it was a little showy, which

is not its fullest intent. Sometimes when dancers are out of their sense of being they go into putting on. The intent of the solo was to have the body be the apparatus and the hoop be the focal point. You're right.

RH: It's not about being right or wrong, just about how you experience it.

GD: Well, you have these young artists you are trying to cultivate, trying to give them the power to explore—as Alonzo did with me. So, my note to Isaiah was that he was controlling the pose. It becomes narcissistic, indulged—I can give him that direction. My job is to give

them the knowledge to do the exercise I want to see on the stage.

RH: You have another weekend with them to keep growing

. . . So two other points. This one is a delicate issue. The music [recorded selections by Alton San Giovanni, Hamza El Din, and Guem] in someways was effective, especially when something from the exterior world would blend in, and I felt the work in the studio merging with the world at large. But I noticed at some point, even moving between the deep bass sounds and the rhythmic, percussive sections, the music was becoming monotonous. I'm not sure as an artist how you deal with that because I know you're going for an extended dream state, and there's a delicate balance to be found.

GD: I really like awkward. And sometimes awkward hits people the wrong way. I like weird.

RH: Hmm. For me, the "weird" sounds—like the grating of the rig against the ceiling when Jordan was swinging the ropes—that worked. But the recorded selections . . . I respect it's your choice, but I wondered if there was a way to bring in more diversity of sound without puncturing that dream world.

GD: There is. I usually do most of my music myself. But for me

I thought that when we dream, what we're dreaming is different from what is happening. A smooth thing happening and a harsh sound in the background—and when you wake up you feel in the pit of your stomach that it's still there.

RH: One last issue: It may have to do how titles effect our perception of a work—what a strong framing device they are. If a viewer feels the title is imprecise, that can set you up to have objections you might not otherwise. Because this was titled Intrinsic Movement, the title set me on the path of wanting something that would be more . . . I mean, I know the movements were organic within the bodies, but as the work went on, it seemed to be about being leveraged by something outside of the body. And—so—"intrinsic movement," um—I thought the impulses that were in the body, initiating things—I guess I didn't see how the movement investigation was different from what might be called in a more blanket way, "movement investigation." I didn't understand what made it "intrinsic."

GD: I had a lot of examples in my head. You know how when the heart pumps blood to the veins—that's intrinsic motion. When we move that apparatus, something inside of us impels us to move the apparatus. That in my mind was the intrinsic action. Or, yeah . . . I can see why you're saying that, but . . .

RH: Well, it also might be that the word chosen was imprecise. It's a language thing.

GD: Yeah.

RH: Because "intrinsic" is a word in high circulation, so it stops having that specificity of meaning that apparently it had for you.

GD: Titles to me are something that I create in my mind and mean something to me. And if the audience has their own ideas about that, they can ask me.

RH: Well, I think that titles are a difficult issue, and I respect that for some artists they don't matter at all, but it's interesting that for a lot of audience members they wield a great deal of influence.

GD: Yeah. I struggled with whether the title would create preconceived ideas. But I'm the creator, I'm creating something for the audience to observe and have questions about. They can ask and I'll gladly answer. I won't be literal, because I think people should have their own ideas about what they see, and if it coordinates with my ideas . . .

RH: I think that the artist should never be put in the position of defending a certain interpretation. That's not what art is about. I agree with you about that.

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