St. Olaf Dance Department presents Senior Dance Concert 2014

Coalesce

December 11 & 12, 7:30 pm
Kelsey Theater

free and open to the public

with presentation

Arts and Public Policy
December 11, 11:30 am
Dittmann 305
Coalesce
Senior Dance Concert 2014

Welcome to Coalesce! Coalesce is full of diverse new pieces, showing how much personality is in this year’s senior class. Although each senior has her own personality, the ten of us together create an energetic and close-knit group. We have worked very hard this semester to construct our capstone projects and produce this concert. We hope you enjoy the show!

The St. Olaf Dance Department

Mission
The St. Olaf College Department of Dance is committed to teaching and presenting dance as a vital form of embodied awareness and understanding, communication and expression – all of which are central to education in the liberal and fine arts traditions.

Overview
The movement-intensive and language-intensive studies and experiences provided by the St. Olaf College B.A. in Dance guide students toward lives and careers with strong physical, creative, and analytical skills at their foundation. As a result, dance majors come away from St. Olaf College with the ability to manage, direct, and perform with professional companies or as free-lance artists; pursue graduate study in dance therapy, teaching, choreography, performance, or the somatic disciplines; enter other fields such as the healing professions, arts management, psychology, environmental studies, media, etc. In short, a B.A. in Dance from St. Olaf College, which engages students in the study of dance as a personal art, a cultural art, and a fine art, prepares dance majors for a wide range of life and career possibilities and options.

Accreditation
The Dance Department at St. Olaf College is a charter member and accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Dance, and is one of only two schools in the state of Minnesota to be an accredited institutional member.
About the Senior Dance Major Capstone Experience
This evening’s performance is the culmination of the senior dance majors’ transformational experiences of designing and implementing their individual senior dance projects. Within this process, each dance major reflected upon the whole of their liberal arts education to select an Area of Specialty, which is the synthesis of a content area (the ‘what’ of the research process) and a mode of presentation (the dissemination method). Each student assembles a committee of two dance faculty and one faculty member from outside the dance department to serve as mentors to support, challenge, and guide the students during the lives of their projects. Thanks to the many external faculty members who have served over the years! In addition to being the creative architects of their senior dance projects, the senior dance majors are also responsible for the planning, finances and promotion of this evening’s senior dance concert.

Now that you are here, the senior dance majors invite you to join in their explorations. Regardless of your background or familiarity with dance or movement, you have something unique and valuable to offer: your life experiences, your point of view, your frame of mind as you watch the concert. We encourage you to be an active observer, to let your own experiences color what you see, think, hear, and feel during this performance. It is not as important that you “get it” as it is that you participate in the unfolding journey and try to get and give “something.”

American Politics, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Subsequent Influence on Dance
Michaela Liesenberg

My research explores the political history of the National Endowment for the Arts and the lingering impacts politics have on modern dance today. By gaining the power of funding the arts through the establishment of the NEA, the government has had an undeniable influence on the progression and reach of the arts. From the very beginning, the US government was more interested in using the arts to control and promote very specific political and social agenda than in supporting and fostering a creative, arts-rich nation. The power of funding not only allowed certain companies and artists to thrive, but also changed the popular trends within art. The willingness of government to fund community outreach and tours has cultivated a modern dance community that has a strong emphasis on social work and education. I explore ways to create dance, and art in general, that is authentic and free from the politically forced trends within art, and how to best use government funded resources to support a true artist’s vision.
Echoes
Choreographer: Sarah Cassavant
Dancers: Ashley Belisle, Lisa Cole, Lucia Heppner, Tasha Viets-VanLear, Cecilia Wall
Music: *To Make a Portrait* by Message to Bears

Pleas(e)
Choreographer (Guest Artist): Gabriel Anderson
Dancer: Lindsey Mornson
Music: *Endalaus II* and *Erla's Waltz* by Ólafur Arnalds
Rehearsal Director: Katherine Griffis

pathways of decay
Choreographer: Alisha Jihn
Dancers: Shaina Andres, Harper Foote, Lucia Heppner, Natalie Lovdal, Kirsten Schowalter
Music: *Toms, Electric Mind, NoWayOut* by Ran Bagno
Special thanks to Haichi Jihn and Lih Shyu for helping to create the costumes!

I want, I must, I am
Choreographer: Elayna Wagnild in collaboration with dancers
Dancers: Becky Bowman Saunders, Julie Hagn, Connor Phelan
Music: *Five* by Lamb

*I see dance being used as communication between body and soul, to express what is too deep to find for words.* -Ruth St. Dennis

~BRIEF PAUSE~
The audience is asked to follow the ushers onto the stage.

they can see the universe
Choreographer: Seipati Jonga in collaboration with dancers
Dancers: Emily Anderson, Gabby Dominique, Joanna McLarnan, Kate Roy, Ben Swenson-Klatt, with special thanks to Ellie Curd
Music: *Battle for Kattegat* by Trevor Morris, *If I had a Heart* by Fever Ray
~INTERMISSION~

LetHer Inside
Choreographer (Guest Artist): Kari Mosel
Dancer: Katherine Griffis
Music: Ben Frost, Explosions in the Sky, Ethel
Rehearsal Director: Lindsey Mornson
Special Thanks: Andrew Streich

In Complete Stillness
Choreographer: Karina Culloton
Dancers: Madison Goering, Joanna McLarnan, Laura Schlotterback
Music: Water and Glasstop by Jon Hopkins

En Garde
Director & Choreographer (Guest Artist): Suzanne Costello
Dancer: Grace Wehrspann
Music: René Aubry, Nick Cave & Warren Ellis
Sound Arrangement: Brian Evans
Rehearsal Director: Cecilia Wall

The Rumble
Choreographer: Anna Grimes
Dancers: Shaina Andres, Anna Bertel, Bri Blakey, Sarah Bresnahan, Cal Knickerbocker, Kelly Mahaffy, Liz Nelson, Connor Phelan, Allie Solensten
Special thanks to St. Olaf rugby team members: Natalie Bentley, Jen Crawford, Emily Grimes, Alex Hernandez, Alyssa Mettler, Eleanor Worley
Music: Bom Bom by Sam and the Womp

Reception
Following the Thursday performance, there will be a reception in the Dittmann Center lobby with cake, snacks, and drinks. Join us!
Senior Dance Majors Biographies:

Sarah Cassavant
Sarah began dancing at the age of 3, and it has played a major role in her life ever since. Trained in various styles - including ballet, modern, jazz, and tap - Sarah has brought her passion for dance to St. Olaf. A double major in dance and English, Sarah is heavily involved in the St. Olaf dance department through the major as well as participation in Companydance. She also teaches at Division Street Dance in Northfield, where she enjoys helping students explore and articulate their own love of dance. After a semester long hiatus from dancing because she was studying abroad in Ireland at the National University of Ireland, Galway, she is so thankful to be back in the dance department. After St. Olaf, Sarah plans to pursue a career in publishing, though she is sure that dance will continue to be an integral part of her life.

Karina Culloton
Karina has loved dancing for as long as she can remember. She has brought that love to St. Olaf where she is as involved as possible in Companydance, serving on the promo team, working on the dance tech crew, performing and creating her own work. When she is not in Dittmann, Karina enjoys teaching dance to Northfield high school and middle school students at Division Street Dance, writing letters to friends and family and decorating dorm room doors. Karina would like to extend a special thanks to Finleigh and Elaine Culloton for their contributions to this piece.

Katherine Griffis
Katherine began dancing at the age of three after her mother became frustrated with her inability to sit still during violin lessons. She has danced competitively at regional and national levels in the styles of tap, jazz, lyrical and ballet, working with many gifted artists including Mandy Moore, Alex Little, and Matt Dorame. During her time at St. Olaf, Katherine has had countless enriching experiences that have deepened her passion for performance including performing as a member of Companydance, participating in guest residencies, and experiencing memorable classes filled with laughter and love. It is the love of movement that fuels Katherine to strive for growth in dance, which she intends to cultivate for the rest of her life. Katherine would like to thank everyone who has supported her journey in dance and in life, with a special thank you to her mother, Colleen, who has given her the world and more.
Anna Grimes
Anna has always been a mover. From dancing to hiking to skiing to playing rugby and everything in between, she loves it all. After her freshman year of trying to decide what to do with her life, Anna once again found herself drawn back to dance, unable to stay away. Here at St. Olaf she is pursuing degrees in exercise science and dance as a stepping stone towards working in physical therapy. Her goal is to help others continue to move for as long as possible. Anna wishes to thank those in her life who have encouraged her to never stop moving.

Alisha Jihn
Alisha is a former bunhead who now does not have enough hair to put up in a bun. At the age of 5, she started dancing at the Milwaukee Ballet School and Academy alongside fellow senior Michaela Liesenberg. A dual dance and Asian studies major with a concentration in China studies, Alisha hopes to pursue critical dance studies within the Asian context, dance somatic studies, while still performing, choreographing, eating, and traveling. She is eternally grateful for her atypical tiger parents for their continued love and support as she becomes a third generation artist in her family. Alisha would like to dedicate her piece in memory of her beloved Ah-Gong (1920-2014), the first of the many artists in her family.

Seipati Jonga
Seipati’s dancing career started at the age of four at one of only two dance studios in Swaziland, her country of birth. She fell in love with movement and since then has always searched for opportunities to continue growing in dance. This search led her to St. Olaf College where she has been blessed to be part of the amazing dance department, fulfilling both a major and her passion. During this four-year study abroad opportunity she feels that she has grown into a dancer and a person that she is proud of, and she is excited to continue onto the next chapter of her life. She hopes to pursue a career in international and humanitarian action, and is more than confident that dance will play a continuing and integral role in her life.

Michaela Liesenberg
Originating from her training with the Milwaukee Ballet School, Michaela’s love and desire for dance drew her to St. Olaf, but the rich academic lens through which dance is explored and understood has kept her here. Enjoying all that is theoretical, Michaela has pursued dual degrees in political science and dance, and a concentration in management studies. After St. Olaf, Michaela is looking to bring the innovation and creativity fostered by the dance major into the corporate
setting. Eventually, she intends to pursue a graduate degree in public policy and expand the impact that dance can have within a community.

**Lindsey Mornson**
Lindsey's curiosity for movement began at a very young age, and despite everyone's hope that she would play basketball like her dad, she decided to channel that curiosity and energy into dance. She did, however, follow her dad's footsteps to St. Olaf where she will graduate with a dual degree in dance and sociology/anthropology. Lindsey is beyond grateful for all of the opportunities that St. Olaf has provided to enrich her exploration of dance. Performing with her talented classmates, serving as Companydance president and a member of the Dance Department promo team, as well as interning with a dance company in India are just a few highlights of her St. Olaf career. Lindsey enjoys teaching at Dance Endeavors and Northfield Dance Academy and plans to continue exploring movement after graduation by performing, teaching, and perhaps even dancing for Beyoncé's next tour.

**Elayna Wagnild**
Elayna began dancing in the womb, kicking and turning until her mom was put on bedrest. She danced her way through life and grounded herself at St. Olaf. Once at Olaf, she found her niche in the Dance Department. Elayna has also danced her way across the world, to Morocco to study French and New Zealand to study at the University of Otago. She leaped her way into the dance major and spun round and round while creating her own major, Body/Mind: Wholeness Through Movement, that is leading her to a career in dance therapy. She also hopped herself into a Women and Gender Studies concentration. Elayna loves the dance she created during her time at St. Olaf and is excited to create the next dance in her life, whatever that may be.

**Grace Wehrspann**
Grace began her stage career at age 7 playing the recorder and skipping around with a pinwheel in her community theater’s production of *The Music Man*. A self-professed fine arts junkie, Grace loves to be as involved as she can in all things artistic, including performing, choreographing, teaching, and working backstage as a member of both the dance tech and scene shop crews on campus. Grace is thankful for all the opportunities St. Olaf has provided both inside and outside of the studio, including spending a semester abroad in Aberdeen, Scotland.
Guest Artist Biographies

**Gabriel Anderson** is a director, performer, and teaching artist. His creative work centers primarily around the body as principal medium for expression. He has choreographed for dance, theater, and opera, most recently serving as movement coach and choreographer for Bizet's *La Tragedie de Carmen* at Ted Mann Concert Hall. A dedicated teacher, Gabriel is on faculty at Ballare Teatro Performing Arts Center, Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists, Young Dance, Zenon Dance Company & School (upcoming 2015), and is an adjunct assistant professor at St. Olaf College (2014-2015). Mr. Anderson holds Master degrees from the University of Iowa (Choreography) and the University of Minnesota (Public Health). For more information, please visit: www.gabrielanderson.org

**Suzanne Costello** joined Stuart Pimsler Dance & Theater in New York City in 1979 and became its Artistic Co-Director in 1984. During her career with the company, she has been highlighted as a performer, choreographer, teacher, and rehearsal director. As Director of Arts & Education and Arts & Healthcare Programs for the company, she coordinates and facilitates the many community-inclusive projects SPDT has come to be known for nationally and internationally.

She has also been a guest artist at colleges and universities throughout the US and Abroad. In New York City, Costello performed with several companies, including David Gordon Pick Up Co. and Billy Siegenfeld & Dancers. She has continued her association with Mr. Gordon, who has set a number of works on SPDT. She has also worked with colleague Joe Goode in San Francisco who created a new solo for her, *Movie Star Life*. Ms. Costello first began her study of dance under Annelise Mertz at Washington University in St. Louis, where she graduated Magna Cum Laude with a B.A. in Dance.

**Kari Mosel** hails from Eau Claire, Wisconsin where she grew up riding horses, climbing trees, and tripping over her own feet. She received her BFA in Dance from the University of Minnesota in 2004. In 2002 Kari began her professional career with an apprenticeship for Shapiro & Smith Dance. She became a full company member in 2006, while serving as tour manager and understudy for ANYTOWN, a nationally toured work. Kari also serves as Shapiro & Smith’s administrative assistant and board treasurer. In 2005 she became a principal company member and teaching artist with Stuart Pimsler Dance & Theater (SPDT), performing
with them nationally and internationally for the past 8 years. Kari has assisted SPDT in workshops and residencies that range throughout the educational and healthcare fields. She was SPDT’s company manager from 2009-2011 and currently serves as their video editor and archivist. Throughout her career Kari has had the pleasure to dance with many phenomenal Twin Cities Artists. *Kari is a recipient of a 2013 McKnight Artist Fellowship for Dancers* and was nominated for a SAGE Dance Award for "Outstanding Performer" in 2012. In addition to performing she choreographs on a smaller scale, works as a freelance photographer and videographer throughout the twin cities and is in her third season as a performance coach for the Hudson High School Gymnastics Team. It has been an enormous blessing and pleasure to have had this opportunity to work with Katherine on this solo, she is truly a passionate and authentic artist and I look forward to our future collaborations!

*For all those that embrace the fear to fall.* -KJM

**Special Thanks:**
There are a lot of people who put effort into creating a show like this, and we, the seniors, would like to thank those people. They include: The Dance Department faculty, Aimee Jillson, Gwen Daniels, Kyle Carson, Dean Neuburger, Kelly Mahaffy, Beth Christiensen, Cub Foods, J.P. Douglas, St. Olaf dance majors and students, St. Olaf Theater Department, Custodial Staff, the Northfield community, and our families. We would also like to thank our external faculty members: Wendy Allen, Cindy Book, Dona Freeman, Dana Gross, Jennifer Manner, Sian Muir, Jason Ripley, Jeanne Willcoxon, Tom Williamson, and Ka Wong. Your time and support is greatly appreciated. We couldn’t have done this without you!

**Production Staff**
*Technical Director, Lighting Designer, Sound Engineer:* Kyle Carson  
*Stage Manager:* Sydney Mason  
*Assistant Stage Managers:* Jenna McKellips, Jon Tiburzi  
*Flyrail:* Jonathan Baunach  
*Light Board Operator:* Denzel Belin  
*Sound Board Operator/Projectionist:* David Gindra  
*House Manager:* Virginia Pierson  
*Ushers:* Alexandra Woods, Dat Le, Valery Wehrman, Michaela Liesenberg  
*Department Videographers:* Zach Greimann