

2025 - 2026



CONTEMPORARY **DANCE**

AUDIENCE GUIDE

RAISING THE BARRE FOR DANCE



THE OVATIONS 2025 - 2026 DANCE SERIES

Rennie Harris Puremovement

November 8, 2025 at 7 PM
Westbrook Performing Arts Center

Les Ballets Africains

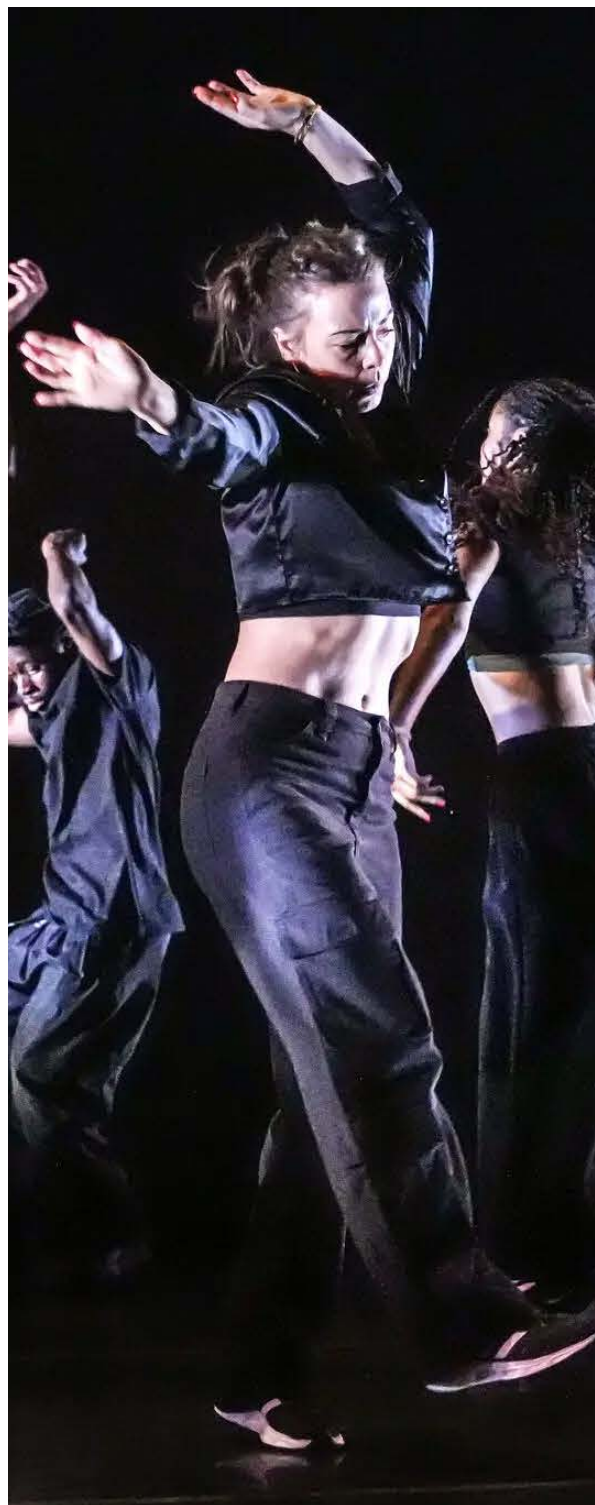
March 3, 2026 at 7 PM
Merrill Auditorium, Portland

Jay Carlon & Micaela Tobin: TALAGA

May 7, 2026 at 7 PM
Mechanics' Hall, Portland

"Dance is for everybody. I believe that the dance came from the people and it should be delivered back to the people"

- ALVIN AILEY



Rennie Harris Puremovement



Les Ballets Africains

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS AUDIENCE GUIDE

For some people, their interaction with dance is long hours in a dance studio warming up their bodies and perfecting their technique before performing. Others' interactions with dance are watching an annual performance of *The Nutcracker*, seeing children in their first onstage roles. Some have queasy memories of square dancing or line dancing in a stuffy gym class with sweaty, disinterested partners; some, joyful abandonment on a crowded dance floor at a wedding.

What is dance? Despite some first impressions and experiences, dance is not an art form veiled in mystery meant only for the trained and the graceful. Dance is about moving our bodies. Dance is open to all. It stems from our innate spirit, from our need to communicate our feelings and to be in our bodies. Whether it is ballet or tap, jazz or street funk, contra or country, ballroom or hip-hop, clogging or stepping, lockin' or poppin', or just moving to music – it's all dance.

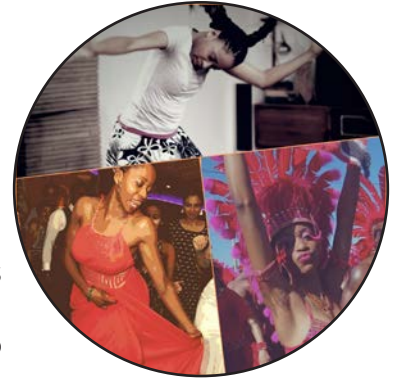
This guide is a way to engage more deeply, with your brain and body, with the dance performances Oventions is presenting this season. We hope you are inspired to talk about dance, from your own perspective. This audience guide includes examples of what to look for and questions to think about for each performance. We invite you to engage in conversation with your fellow audience members during intermission or after the performance. Nothing would make us happier than to see and hear lively conversation about dance!

WELCOME LETTER

From Adanna Jones
Portland Ovations 2025-26 Dance Scholar-in-Residence

Hello Portland Ovations Friends, Family, and Dance Enthusiasts, ,

Welcome to another exciting and awe-inspiring season of dance performances. As the temperatures begin to cool and the weather continues to change, we invite you into the comfort of our theater and performance spaces to experience the multi-sensorial productions of this year's featured dance artists and companies: Rennie Harris Puremovement, Les Ballets Africains, and Jay Carlton & Micaela Tobin. These innovative performers all hail from rich backgrounds and histories that deeply inform the dancing and creative magic they will present on the stage. Their distinct and unequalled works-of-art offer us insight into the unique and important narratives of peoples, places, and cultures from across the globe.



Rennie Harris Puremovement (RHPM) kicks off our Dance Season with an evening-length piece entitled *NUTTIN' BUT A WORD*. To quote RHPM's founder and lead choreographer, Lorenzo "Rennie" Harris himself, "*NUTTIN' BUT A WORD* challenges the Hip-Hop puritans at every turn and reminds us that we will not evolve as a form without individuality, creativity, and innovation". Using multiple Hip-Hop techniques—such as Campbell locking, house dancing, breaking—this piece asks us to think differently about Hip-Hop by challenging what we think we know about the practice itself. The title is a shortened version of the phrase "You ain't said nothing but a word!" This is African-American Vernacular English for "Your words mean nothing, back it up with some action!" (This is a very loose translation.) According to Harris, the purposeful use of this phrase (alongside his choreography) is a reminder that within the Hip-Hop community, action (namely the innovation and creation of movement) is deeply valued over words. In effect, by transforming the properties, textural qualities, and embodied languages of street dance, *NUTTIN' BUT A WORD* pushes the boundaries of Street Dance Theater itself.

Just as Rennie Harris is a leading ambassador for Hip-Hop, so too are our next troupe of performers, Les Ballets Africains. As official cultural ambassadors to the Republic of Guinea, Les Ballets Africains has shared their rich cultural traditions of music and dance across all four corners of the earth! Since their inception in 1952, the company continually fosters "a greater understanding of Africa" with the mission of building a healthy, fruitful, and cooperative relationship "between Africa and the rest of the world" (<https://www.lesballetsafricains.org/english-bio>). You will get to experience rhythms and dancing from some of the ethnicities of people that reside in what is now known as Guinea, such as Baga, Malinké/Mandeng, and Soussou. (Please note that Guinea and many of its neighboring countries, like Mali, were all part of the Malinké/Mandeng Empire, for example; so, many of these ethnicities are not specific only to the land/region that is now defined as Guinea.) The intense sounds and vibrant movement patterns that you will witness come from long standing traditions that continue to have deep meaning and value across time and space. From the vibrant colors and textures of



their traditional regalia to the invigorating sounds of their elaborate drumming (not to mention their fierce dancing), this production will excite, captivate, and move you to your feet.

Rounding off our season of dance are Jay Carlon—a Filipinx-American dancer, choreographer, and community organizer—alongside their long-time collaborator Micaela Tobin—a Filipino-American composer and sound artist. These trailblazing and inimitable artists will transport you into a different world with their immersive performance practice known as TALAGA. This perfect fusion of dance/performance, art installation, conversation, and food sharing invites us, as a community, to engage with filipinx culture in different and innovative ways. /TA•LA•GA/ is a filipinx expression that translates into “really or indeed,” and is often used when gossiping ([ref.](#)). Accordingly, Carlon and Tobin use “processing, discussion, and ritual” to reimagine gossiping. In so doing, this work both preserves and reawakens “filipinx culture, healing, and joy!” ([ref.](#)). Furthermore, it unearths and reimagines “the filipinx experience through performance,” specifically by strengthening, inspiring, and connecting the delicate and intimate web of filipinx experimental creatives with different audiences, across various places and spaces ([ref.](#)). “Exciting, talaga?!”

As you can tell, this season of dance promises to awaken your interests at every sensorial and intellectual level. With each performance, we get to experience the unique ways that dance fosters deep and profound connections to communities, histories, and cultural traditions that may have felt vastly different than your own. Not only do they offer us a beautifully unique and special understanding of our world, but they also remind us of the universal ways we remain connected to each other, especially through our humanity.

Please join us in welcoming Rennie Harris *Puremovement*, Les Ballets Africains, and Jay Carlon & Micaela Tobin to our Portland Ovations community! With tremendous gratitude and joy, we look forward to celebrating their artistry with you all season. It does not matter if you are brand new to the world of dance or if you are a veteran dance patron. This season promises to awaken your inner dance enthusiast, leaving an unforgettable mark on your heart, mind, and dare I say, soul.

Peace, Love, and Healing Joy,

Adanna Jones, Ph.D.
Portland Ovations 2025-26 Dance Scholar-in-Residence
Assistant Professor of Dance and Dance Studies | Bowdoin College

CONTEMPORARY DANCE: A BRIEF HISTORY

Now one of the most ubiquitous genres of dance, the history of contemporary dance is one of push and pull as dancers and choreographers rejected established styles and techniques, embraced individual expression and sought social change.

THE BEGINNING

Modern dance has its beginnings in the 20th century through the work of Loie Fuller, Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, and Ted Shawn in the United States, and Rudolf Laban and Mary Wigman in Germany. These dancers rebelled against the rigid formalism of classical academic ballet and the banality of burlesque and used movement as a metaphor and language to express social concerns and explore emotional landscapes. The early history of modern dance in the United States was dominated by white women who used the artform to find a new voice and means of expression, while their contemporaries fought for the right to vote in the suffrage movement. Through their efforts, the United States became one of the primary places of innovation for contemporary dance.

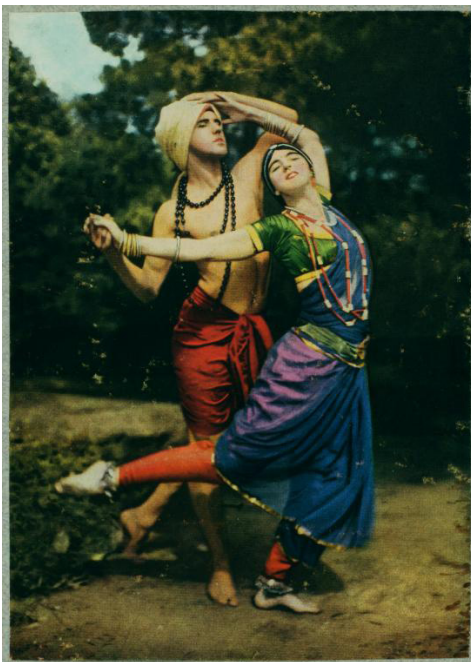
Loie Fuller and Isadora Duncan led the charge toward a new form of expression in the early 20th century. Loie Fuller, an American actress-turned-dancer, popularized “free dance” through her natural movement and use of theatrical lighting as well as the manipulation of transparent lengths of China-silk fabrics. She paved the way for modern dancers in rebelling against formal technique and pioneered new theatrical lighting techniques. While dance was only one tool Fuller used to achieve a larger theatrical effect, it was the focus of Isadora Duncan’s work. Duncan brought a vocabulary of basic movements to heroic and expressive standards. She performed in thin, flowing dresses with no corset that left her legs, arms, and feet bare—a revolutionary artistic choice in the early 20th century. Her choreography—characterized by powerful, simple movements influenced by Greek mythology—left an impact on dance that lasted far beyond her death, not just in the nascent field of modern dance, but also ballet.

ESTABLISHING THE FOUNDATION

Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn, partners both in life and dance, were the first to formally teach modern dance with the establishment of the Denishawn School in 1915 in Los Angeles, California. Shawn went on to purchase the property in Massachusetts that would become Jacob’s Pillow in the 1930s. The Denishawn School was the foundation for many modern dancers, including two women who shaped modern dance as a genre, Doris Humphrey, a student of Ruth St. Denis and Martha Graham, a student of Ted Shawn. Doris Humphrey emphasized craftsmanship and structure in choreography which focused on fluidity and “fall and recovery,” playing with and against gravity. Doris Humphrey wrote one of the foundational texts for modern dance, *The Art of Making Dances*. Martha Graham deeply explored human emotion, psychology, and the physical expression of emotion through muscle tension and her technique of “contraction and release,” set to music by contemporary composers. Like Isadora Duncan, Graham was heavily influenced by Greek myth. Her dance company fostered generations of innovators of



Arnold Genthe / Isadora Duncan in 1915



New York Public Library / Ted Shawn & Ruth St. Denis in 1916

HISTORY: CONT

modern dance, including Merce Cunningham and Paul Taylor. The work of pioneers like Martha Graham, Ruth St. Denis, Ted Shawn, Lester Horton, and Katherine Dunham firmly shifted modern dance away from its roots as an avant-garde reaction to classical ballet and into the mainstream. By the 1950s, modern dance had firmly become established as an art form which fully embraced the range of human emotion and addressed contemporary social concerns. The physical language of modern dance emphasized the torso and pelvis as centers of movement, and horizontal movement close to the floor was as integral to modern dance as the upright stance is to ballet.

As artists sought ways to respond to contemporary social, political, and economic concerns, dancers began shifting their focus away from the relatively linear expressionism of choreographers like Martha Graham towards more abstract, non-linear work. Merce Cunningham, a former ballet student who studied with Lester Horton and performed as a principal dancer with Martha Graham became one of the champions of the movement toward the abstract. He developed his own technique, which incorporated elements of ballet, and embraced chance in composition and organization, using rolls of dice to determine the structure of his pieces. He believed dance should be only about movement, not focus on emotional expression at all. Cunningham was a prime influence on the development of post-modern dance in the 1960s.

Along with abstraction, choreographers in the 1950s increasingly embraced theatricality as a tool for expression in dance. At the forefront of this aesthetic trajectory were Alwin Nikolais, whose productions incorporated highly sculptural lighting and props like thread and fabric as an integral part of the choreography, and Paul Taylor—a principal dancer with both Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham—who augmented a rigorously rhythmic style with theatrical projection.

Not all choreographers in the 1950s rejected narrative—most notably Alvin Ailey who choreographed stunning masterpieces that emphasized both narrative and theatricality in celebration of African American culture and history and sought to create a form of modern dance that would be accessible to a broad range of audiences. Ailey was a student of Lester Horton's and became director of the Lester Horton Dance Theater following Horton's death in 1953. He went on to found Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1958, where he choreographed and performed his signature piece, *Revelations* (1960), a sweeping, powerful examination of African American cultural heritage, which Ailey described as, "sometimes sorrowful, sometimes jubilant, but always hopeful."



Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater
Khalia Campbell
Photo by Dario Calmese

HISTORY: CONT

MOVING BEYOND MODERN DANCE

Following the influence of Merce Cunningham, dancers and choreographers in 1960's New York reinvented modern dance to perform in non-theatrical spaces, and created pieces that incorporated repetition, pedestrian movement, improvisation, minimalism, speech, singing, and mixed media, including film. This movement became known as post-modern dance. Avant-garde experimentalists from the Judson Dance Theater (sometimes colloquially known as Judson Church after their studio), Trisha Brown, David Gordon, and Deborah Hay all went on to create their own companies in this style. A former dancer with Paul Taylor's company, Twyla Tharp, created experimental pieces in street clothes on a bare stage with no music and incredibly technically precise movement. Tharp embraced jazz in the 1970s, and while her choreography retained its technical precision, she adopted a style marked by an air of nonchalance and flippant humor, carefully crafted to create an improvisatory feel, which established her as one of the most influential choreographers of the later 20th century.

Mark Morris brought a new energy in the early 1980s with comedic, satirical pieces, performed with vibrantly colorful costumes and lighting, and a deep sense of musicality. While the stricter genre of post-modern dance began to dissolve in the 1980s, the term "contemporary dance" rose to describe the vast landscape of modern and post-modern dance, continuing to respond to social and political concerns and explore both abstract and narrative expression.

CONTEMPORARY DANCE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

It's important to note that most of the taught history of contemporary dance was dominated by white dancers, as those were the individuals with access to performance spaces and funding. Their work is the most documented and archived – though dance transcription remains very limited. However, there were many dancers of color working within the genre and creating work in conversation with or in opposition to form, adding their own cultural and racial experiences to their technique and choreography. Today, contemporary dance includes a wide range of artists and art forms, and a wealth of companies and schools have taken root across the country so that New York and Los Angeles are no longer the only seats of innovation. Ballet, jazz, and modern dance have blended together to create less rigid lines between technique and form. Hip Hop dance, in all of its forms, is a powerful aspect of dance in contemporary times. Philadelphia-born choreographer Rennie Harris is credited by many for bringing hip hop from the street to the proscenium stage and promoting it as a concert dance form.

With the rise of international music stars who dance, the music video (which draws heavily on hip hop dance forms), and reality shows like "So You Think You Can Dance," the role that dance plays in popular culture has exploded. While myriad choreographers and dancers are creating innovative work shifting the landscape of contemporary dance, two artists currently leading the charge are Camille A. Brown and Hope Boykin. Camille A. Brown made her debut on Broadway directing "for colored girls who have considered *suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* making her the first Black woman to direct and choreograph a Broadway show since Katherine Dunham. She was also the first Black woman to direct a mainstage production at The Metropolitan Opera with *Fire Shut Up In My Bones*. Hope Boykin, a former member of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, combines artistic innovation with education and advocacy through her work with organizations like the Kennedy Center's Dance Lab, training new generations of dancers in intentionally open and accepting environments where "lifting and leading young and aspiring artists to a secure foundation and a concrete understanding evolves a confidence and an assurance which will be unmatched." (Those in attendance at Ovations' 2019 presentation of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater experienced the grace and power of Hope Boykin dancing.)

Contemporary dance today is a constantly developing artistic medium influenced by its written and unwritten history, as well as multiple forms of hip hop dance, social dance, and wide variety of cultural traditions that inform dancers and choreographers.

OVATIONS DANCE HISTORY

Portland Ovations was founded in 1931 as the Portland Concert Association (PCA) and focused on presenting classical music. With one notable exception, a presentation of the Kurt Jooss Ballet in 1939, Ovations did not regularly present dance until after we established ourselves as a multidisciplinary presenter in 1977. Ovations began consistently presenting dance in the 1980s and, throughout the 80s and 90s, presented one high-profile dance company per season (Pilobolus, Dance Theater of Harlem, Savion Glover, and various versions of ballets like *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, and *Cinderella* to name a few). In 2006, Aimée M. Petrin took on the role of Ovations' new Executive Director. During her first season, she witnessed the community's huge response to Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. With Petrin at the helm in 2007, Ovations began to invest in the presentation of no fewer than three dance companies per season that represent a range of aesthetics and traditions. Since then, Ovations has presented nearly 50 performances by over 40 companies from five continents and participated in the creation of five new contemporary dance works.



BANDALOOP, presented September 2021
Photo by Tim Greenway

February 2011

Ovations co-commissions Doug Varone's "Chapters from a Broken Novel," alongside Bates Dance Festival (BDF). BDF hosts a creative residency in summer 2010 with a preview of the new work. When the company returns in February 2011 for the premiere of "Chapters" Ovations hosts a Choreographer's Salon.

March 2013

As part of a yearlong celebration feting both the 100th Anniversary of Igor Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring" and the centennial of Merrill Auditorium, Portland Ovations presents the illustrious Joffrey Ballet in a faithful restaging of "Rite."

September 2017

Ovations presents vertical dance company BANDALOOP performing on the sides of two iconic Arts District buildings in downtown Portland. The free public performances impact an estimated 7,000 people.

December 2025

Ovations presents Ellis Bauregard Foundation Contemporary Dance Award Recipient Kayla Farrish.

October 2012

Portland Ovations premiere Bridgman/Packer Dance's "Voyeur," a multi-media dance installation, at the Institute of Contemporary Art at Maine College of Art.

February 2016

An incredible residency with the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company features the company alongside an octet of Maine Musicians, and 13 dancers drawn from local studios and colleges.

October 2019

Ovations launches Raise the Barre to support and nourish contemporary dance and those who love it.

HOW DO WE TALK ABOUT DANCE

Dance can be hard to talk about and describe. Often, dance heavily relies on audience members to make their own meaning out of what they experience. The human brain is built to make connections and find meaning, but we aren't always in the habit of noticing all the observations we make in the moment that lead us to those connections. Taking a moment to note our observations about a piece of art before analyzing it can help us to think more deeply and broadly about the themes and emotions it explores. Dance is an artform that explores the body in space, using energy, over time, so observing dance can be broken down into three categories: **Space, Energy, Time**

Space describes the way the body interacts with the air around it and the floor underneath it. It describes movement and stillness, and how much room the body takes up. As you observe the space the dancers use, consider:

- Stillness: What kinds of shapes do dancers create with their bodies when they are still?
- Movement: Is the movement traveling across the floor (locomotor), or does it stay in place (axial). Both locomotor and axial movement can be described in a variety of ways.
 - Levels: low (close to the floor), middle (standing, moving on one or two feet), or high (jumping, leaping)
 - Directions: movement forward, backward, diagonal, up or down.
 - Pathways: curved or straight (when you think about pathways imagine the lines dancers create when they travel through space or with their arms and legs as they remain in place).
 - Unison: dancers moving together
 - Contrast: dancers moving separately
 - Gesture: moving a part of the body. Gestures can be recognizable (like a wave) or abstract.



*Example of Space
Les Ballets Africains*

Energy describes the amount of tension a dancer uses in a given movement. Dancers describe energy through “movement qualities.”

- Sustained: an even flow of energy, no accents or abruptness
- Percussive: sharp, accented movement
- Suspended: hanging or resisting gravity (think balances)
- Collapsed: giving in to gravity (i.e. falls)
- Swinging: pendulum-like movements that use suspension and collapse together.
- Vibratory: quick bursts of energy, usually small and repetitive (like shaking.)



*Example of Energy
Rennie Harris Puremovement*

Time describes the quality of the movement. Most descriptions of time come from music and describe the musicality of the movement, not necessarily the duration of the movement.

- Tempo: how fast or slow the dancers move
- Meter: the number of musical beats that make up the movement. Just like in music, meter in dance can be double, triple, or mixed.
- Rhythm: the way beats combine to create patterns, just like in music, the rhythm of movement can be long or short.
- Canon: truly a combination of Time and Energy, describes when the same movements happen at different intervals.

Rennie Harris Puremovement

November 8, 2025 • 7 PM

Westbrook Performing Arts Center



Rennie Harris Puremovement

Celebrated choreographer and the pioneer of bringing hip-hop dance from the street to the stage, Rennie Harris lays down his three laws of hip-hop: individuality, creativity, innovation. With a mixtape of moves from b-boying to Campbell locking to house — set to an unexpected soundscore — the indefatigable company showcases the power of hip-hop in all its flips, headspins and lightning-fast footwork glory. Leave what you think you know about hip-hop at the door: This evening of pure movement challenges popular perceptions of street dance where every step tells a story in sync with the rhythm, honoring hip-hop's roots while taking it to new heights.

You can try to shout 'em down, but you ain't said Nuttin' but a Word.

Learn more about Rennie Harris Puremovement: www.rhpm.org/

What to look for.

Classic hip-hop styles like locking, house, and B-boying. Energetic, strong, athletic movements deeply tied to rhythm.

What to think and talk about after the performance.

1. What moments from the performance stuck out to you? Why?
2. How would you describe the types of movements you saw?
3. What emotions did this piece inspire for you? What artistic choices (choreography, lighting, costumes, sound, etc.) emotionally resonated with you? How did it feel to experience this piece from your seat? If you attended with someone else, how were your experiences similar and different?
4. What elements of the choreography or music were familiar to you or remind you of something you have experienced before?
5. Where do you see the influence of Rennie Harris's three laws of hip hop (individuality, creativity, and innovation) in this performance? Why do you think these elements are critical to understanding hip-hop as a genre?



Les Ballets Africains

Les Ballets Africains

March 3, 2026 • 7 PM

Merrill Auditorium, Portland

One of the first African national dance companies, Les Ballets Africains was formed in Paris in 1952 by distinguished Guinean choreographer Keita Fodeba. Following Guinea's independence in 1958, they were invited to become the country's national ensemble. Between 1958 and the present day, Les Ballet Africains has traveled the world representing the very best of Guinean music and dance, sometimes remaining on tour for up to two years at a stretch. In one extraordinary marathon, they appeared in 165 capital cities, presenting an astonishing 695 performances in 750 days, traveling 180,000 kilometers by plane, 33,000 km by train, and 21,000 km by road.

Les Ballet Africains have been recognized around the world for their role as ambassadors of West African arts. The company's ultimate mission is to foster a greater understanding of Guinea and West Africa and encourage cross-cultural understanding and celebration. Their journey is a testament to the enduring power of art to transcend boundaries and unite people across the globe. Their legacy is one of artistic excellence, cultural pride, and a steadfast commitment to bridging the gap between nations through the universal language of dance.

Learn more about Les Ballets Africains: <https://www.lesballetsafricains.org/>

What to look for.

Music and movement drawn from West-African tradition. Celebratory, joyful dancing. Musicians performing complex rhythms and melodies live onstage. Colorful textiles (the costumes are art pieces in their own right). Dances that serve social purposes.

What to think about after the performance.

1. What moments from the performance stuck out to you? Why?
2. How would you describe the types of movements you saw?
3. What emotions did this piece inspire for you? What artistic choices (choreography, lighting, costumes, sound, etc.) emotionally resonated with you?
4. How did it feel to experience this piece from your seat? If you attended with someone else, how were your experiences similar and different?
5. What characteristics of West African music and dance did you notice in the performance?
6. Where do you see and hear elements of West African dance in US media?



Jay Carlon
Photo by Angel Origgi

Jay Carlon & Micaela Tobin: TALAGA

May 7, 2026 • 7 PM

Mechanics' Hall, Portland

Ellis-Beauregard Foundation Choreographer Award recipient, Jay Carlon's work is grounded in a collective journey toward decolonization and sustainability. A self-identified queer, Filipinx dancer, choreographer, and community organizer, Carlon facilitates collective healing and the exploration of the post-colonial identity, ancestry, and the experience of queer in Filipinx communities. In TALAGA, Carlon partners with composer, sound artist, and soprano Micaela Tobin in a hybrid of performance, installation, and conversation. Talaga is an expression meaning "really" or "indeed," often used when gossiping, the grounding concept of the piece. TALAGA uses rituals of sharing food and conversation alongside performance to preserve and reawaken Filipinx culture, healing, and joy.

Learn more about Jay Carlon: <https://www.jaycarlon.com/>

Learn more about Micaela Tobin: <https://www.micaelatobin.com/>

What to look for.

Moments of deep connection between the performer and audience. Movements that play with tension and release. Rice cookers making food that will later be shared.

What to think and talk about after the performance.

1. What moments from the performance stuck out to you? Why?
2. How would you describe the types of movements you saw?
3. What emotions did this piece inspire for you? What artistic choices (choreography, lighting, costumes, sound, etc.) emotionally resonated with you?
4. What was your experience as an audience member in this performance? How does TALAGA interrogate the cultural conventions of live performance?
5. Where do you observe or experience elements of decolonialization in this performance?
6. How might you approach being an audience member differently in the future after experiencing TALAGA?

MORE WAYS TO ENGAGE

[Ovations Offstage \(O2\)](#) connects the art and artists on our stages with our Maine community. O2 offers pre- and post-performance conversations, masterclasses, special events, and online resources for lifelong learning in conjunction with all of our performances. New opportunities are added throughout the year. Keep an eye on the lineup as it develops by visiting portlandovations.org/community-events. If you'd like more information, reach out to us at offstage@portlandovations.org

Pre-performance Panel Conversation: Dancing Beyond the African Diaspora

November 8, 2025, 5:30 PM

Westbrook Performing Arts Center

Community Street Dance Workshop with Rennie Harris Puremovement

November 9, 2025, 11 AM

Casco Bay Movers, Portland



Masterclass with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, 2024

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive

<https://www.jacobspillow.org/dance-interactive/>

Long considered the birthplace of American modern dance, Jacob's Pillow Interactive is a rich resource. This site is home to hundreds of performance excerpts (some dating back to the 1930s!), a game to test your dance knowledge, and an extensive selection of multimedia essays featuring talks, photos, programs, and other exclusive content organized into themes including Tap, Dance of the African Diaspora, Women in Dance, and more.

Dance Magazine

<https://www.dancemagazine.com/>

Continuously published since 1927, *Dance Magazine* is your source for everything dance!

PBS Learning Media: Dance

<https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/subjects/the-arts/dance/>

With hundreds of videos available, this collection compiled by PBS is a great way to explore many styles of dance, as well as resources to encourage participation, analysis, appreciation, and history of dance.

The Kennedy Center's Dance Digital Resource Library

<https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/resources-for-educators/classroom-resources/collections/collections/dance/>

A rich resource for teachers and parents, the Kennedy Center's Digital Resource Library Dance Collection includes videos, lesson plans, activities for families, and articles on a wide variety of dance topics.

Dance on Social Media

- **André Avila and Community in Motion** @commotionusa Organization founded by a Latin social dance expert and educator with the goal of making dance and movement accessible to everyone.
- **Divya Ravi** @dancingdivyaravi, Bharatanatyam practitioner and choreographer.
- **Donté Colley** @donte.colley multimedia creator and influencer.
- **James Jones** @notoriuscree, Cree hoop dancer.
- **Kristián Mensa** @mr.kris, acclaimed Bboy, experimental dance artist, and illustrator.
- **Lil Buck** @lilbuckdalegend artist, choreographer, and champion of Memphis Jookin'.
- **The Millenium Dance Complex** @mdcdance Los Angeles-based studio that specializes primarily in hip hop.
- **Shelby Williams** @biscuitballerina Soloist with the Royal Ballet of Flanders and dance educator

And be sure to check out the 2025-26 season artists on social media:

- **Rennie Harris Puremovement:** Instagram: @rhpm.1992; X: @RHPM Facebook: Rennie Harris Puremovement Youtube: @RHPM215
- **Les Ballets Africains:** Facebook: Les Ballets Africains from the Republic of Guinea
- **Jay Carlon:** Instagram: @carlondance Facebook: @CARLON

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS / CREDITS

Written by Dr. Liz Schildkret, in consultation with Susan Griffin

Designed by Katie Day

Cover Photo Angel Origgi

We are happy for you to use this material as you wish; however, we ask that you do not re-use it in another context without Portland Ovations' permission.



Rennie Harris Puremovement

Portland Ovations' dance series and relation Ovations Offstage events are funded in part with support from



PHILL STEELE &
FRANCESCA GALLUCCIO-STEELE

