



# Dance Program

Office for the Arts at Harvard

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**For More Information**

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## **DANCE PROGRAM AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESENTS: *GYM DANCES***

**PERFORMANCES: NOVEMBER 11-14 AT 8PM, AND NOVEMBER 15 AT 3PM, 2015. HARVARD DANCE CENTER,  
60 GARDEN STREET, CAMBRIDGE, MA.**

(Cambridge, MA) – The Office for the Arts at Harvard (OFA) Dance Program presents *GYM DANCES* – a triple bill of dance works which span the last six decades, were made in and for gymnasiums, and features Harvard Dance Project (HDP) student dancers. These performances also mark the 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversary (October 6, 2005) of the Harvard Dance Center, a primary venue for dance at Harvard. The *GYM DANCES* program will include talks that share insights into the unique creative processes of each piece.

*GYM DANCES* considers the role of the gymnasium in dance history — nationally, internationally and at Harvard. The Dance Center itself is a transformed basketball gymnasium, and the Radcliffe Gym (now the Knafel Center at the Radcliffe Institute) was the home to dance studies and the OFA Dance Program for over 50 years. Since 2005, over 16,000 people have participated and attended classes, courses and events at the Harvard Dance Center. In the past four years alone, 55 master classes have been conducted by leading artists from around the world; 50 dance luminaries have visited campus to lead master classes, talks and residencies; and 22 original works have been made for Harvard students that had world premieres on campus.

The *GYM DANCES* program includes three dance works. *gym event for Harvard*, a new work created by HDP students. Guided by Cunningham expert and former Company dancer Silas Riener, the students used the principles of chance procedures and indeterminacy they found present in the work and methods of Merce Cunningham, which he began practicing at Black Mountain College in 1938. The order of the sections will be determined using chance on

the night of each performance — no two shows are the same. The HDP students performed *gym event for Harvard* at the Institute of Contemporary Art galleries as part of the *Leap Before You Look: Black Mountain College 1933-1957* exhibition, Oct 13 & 15, 2015.

Belgian choreographer Anna Teresa de Keersmaeker's enduring work *Rosas Danst Rosas*, 2nd movement, re-interpreted by HDP student dancers and directed by Jill Johnson. Choreographers Francesca Harper and Jill Johnson will lead HDP in rehearsals of their work-in-progress *work for spring* (working title) to be presented April 13-17, 2016, at Farkas Hall.

Performances of *GYM DANCES* will take place on Wednesday through Saturday, November 11-14, at 8pm; and Sunday, November 15, at 3pm, at the Harvard Dance Center, 60 Garden St., Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

Tickets available online at [www.boxoffice.harvard.edu](http://www.boxoffice.harvard.edu). \$5 for students and seniors, \$10 general admission. For more information, visit [ofa.fas.harvard.edu/dance](http://ofa.fas.harvard.edu/dance) or call the Dance Program main office: (9:30am-5:30pm) 617-495-8683.

"We are thrilled to present these three works which span six decades and wide-ranging approaches to dancemaking and presenting dance. From the aleatoric poetry of Cunningham and the trailblazing style of De Keersmaeker, to the interdisciplinary inspirations of Harper's process – the caliber of these artists and their work engages our students in the history of dance and diverse ideas in the field. Through these three processes, students are contributing their very own propositions for considering, creating and communicating ideas in dance – and this is tremendously exciting research to witness." – Dance Director, Jill Johnson

"We are so grateful to those who paved the way and made the Dance Center possible — including Dance Director Emerita Claire Mallardi, former Dance Director Elizabeth Bergman, and Jack Megan and Cathy McCormick of the OFA; students, faculty and staff who helped to champion the demand and need of a dedicated space for dance on campus, and gave voice to the meaningfulness that dance held, and still holds, in so many students' lives." – Dance Director, Jill Johnson

"Dance is continually growing and continues to be a meaningful and dynamic part of our students' lives – from student-led dance groups and dance courses to master classes and the new Theater, Dance & Media Concentration. Dean of Harvard College, Rakesh Khurana, thoughtfully advocates an educational environment which supports 'intellectual, social and personal transformation' for all of our students. The Dance Center aligns with this mission and aims to foster transformative experiences in the arts for our students, faculty, interdisciplinary collaborators, audience members and our community." – Dance Director, Jill Johnson

"Our aim is to be a site for dignity and inclusion for all who enter the Dance Center doors — to create the conditions that foster agency through dance for our students and to promote the arts as agents of social change. We mark this anniversary with great pride, and strive to continue the Dance Center goal of advancing dance literacy on campus and for the world." – Dance Director, Jill Johnson

Artist Bios:

Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker: [www.rosas.be/nl/anne-teresa-de-keersmaeker](http://www.rosas.be/nl/anne-teresa-de-keersmaeker)

Silas Riener: [www.rashaunsilasdance.com](http://www.rashaunsilasdance.com)

Francesca Harper: [www.francescaharper.com](http://www.francescaharper.com)

Jill Johnson: [www.ofa.fas.harvard.edu/people/jill-johnson](http://www.ofa.fas.harvard.edu/people/jill-johnson)

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DANCE PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

Rooted in tradition, committed to innovating, the OFA Dance Program supports studies in dance composition, improvisation, performance, choreographic design and history of dance with an emphasis on collaboration and trans-disciplinary inquiry. The Program is a part of the concentration in Theater, Dance & Media; offers a secondary field of concentration in drama with a focus on dance; for-credit courses; co-curricular dance courses at all levels, plus opportunities to perform repertory, commissioned work, and installations. The Dance Program provides mentorship and support for student-led dance companies, a vibrant community of Harvard dancers who represent over twenty dance traditions from across the globe. The Program regularly hosts guest artists and choreographers who teach master classes and hold residencies throughout the academic year, fostering exceptional opportunities for students to work with luminaries and innovators in the field and in disciplines linked to dance.

THEATER, DANCE & MEDIA CONCENTRATION MISSION STATEMENT

Harvard's newest concentration, Theater, Dance, & Media, invites students to become art makers and researchers ranging across theater, dance, and performance-based media. Using Harvard's immense resources, from the Theatre Collection to the Dance Center and the American Repertory Theater, students will learn to hone their creative instincts, work collaboratively in small groups, and participate in professional departmental productions. Our courses range from physical movement, directing and design to creative writing, aesthetics and digital humanities and emphasize the combination of theory, history and practice. Equally invested in technical skills and a broad liberal arts education, the concentration aims to launch a generation of graduates who will use their experience in storytelling, performance, and media for careers inside and outside the arts.