“YOU CAN TELL WHERE YOU ARE BY WHAT PEOPLE DO WITH THEIR BODIES”

- Darius Simpson

DARIUS SIMPSON

Darius is a writer, educator, performer, and skilled living room dancer from Akron, Ohio. Much like the means of production, he believes poetry belongs to and with the masses. He aims to inspire that feeling you get that makes you frown and slightly twist up ya face in approval. Darius believes in the dissolution of empire and the total liberation of Africans and all oppressed people by any means necessary. All Power to the People. Free The Land. Free All Political Prisoners.

FUN FACTS:

- Some of the most important elements of poetry are imagery, rhythm and sound.
- Imagery: Using imagery in a poem allows the poet to “show” what they are saying vs. “tell.”
- Rhythm: This is not to be confused with rhyme. It can include it but it doesn’t have to.
- Sound: Not just simply what we can hear, it is the purposeful use of certain letters to emphasize a point.
GUINEA

DANCE GENRE:
Djun Djun Drum and Dance

LAHYDI DANCE COLLECTIVE

Djun djun dance originates from the Susu people of the Boké region and the Baga people of the Boffa region of current-day Guinea. Djun djun dance is traditionally done only by females, and signifies the completion of rites of passage ceremonies for pre-adolescent Susu and Baga girls. Elder women of these communities escort young initiates into the bush, where they learn their ancestral ways of knowing and ways of being upstanding, contributing members of their societies. It is during this period the elders teach the initiates how to dance and drum djun djun in preparation for their reintegration back into their communities.

FUN FACTS:
- The colors red, black, green and white are traditionally worn by Susu and or Baga female initiates, who perform the djun djun dance as part of the rites of passage rituals.
- Director Alseny Soumah brought the drums directly from Guinea to use for this piece.
- You may also find some people spelling djun djun as dundun.
- Lahydi means “to promise,” which is the goal of the collective: to preserve, present, and teach the art forms of Guinea, West Africa.

HOW MANY DRUMS DO YOU SEE?
There is one djembe drum, one that is physically different from the rest. Do you see it? What symbols do you see on the drums?
IRAN, TURKEY

DANCE GENRE:
Sacred Dance/Whirling

MIRIAM PERETZ

The practice of whirling as a form of prayer has been around for thousands of years and was especially known as a practice in ancient Persia; however the practice became highly codified and formalized as a spiritual path during the time of the great poet Mevlana Jalalladin Rumi. Since then the path of the whirling dervishes as well as the intoxicated poetry of Rumi and other mystics of his time have spread throughout the world. Also known as "The Path of Love," the Sufi path has a strong focus on reaching the beloved (God) through embodiment.

FUN FACTS:

- The name of the piece is “Parvaneh,” which means “moth” in the Farsi language.
- For the Sufi people, the act of whirling or spinning is a form of meditation.
- Rumi has been described as the "most popular poet" and the "best selling poet" in the United States.
- The Persian Empire encompassed the areas of modern-day Iran, Egypt, Turkey, and parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan.
USA

DANCE GENRE:
Stepping, Body Percussion

MOLODI

Stepping is a cultural polyrhythmic dance form created by the African American fraternal system in the early 1900’s. It has evolved and reflected the culture of African American life in the United States over the last 100 years. This percussive and visual dance has rituals, a rich history, and deep rooted lineage. It derives from the Juba dance and West African dance, it shares a close relationship to the South African gumboot dance. It’s the cultural dance form of the African American Greek Fraternity organizations found on college campuses.

FUN FACTS:
- This video was filmed at Franklin Elementary School, in Oakland.
- The muralist who created all the images behind the dancers is called Agana.
- This group added a beatboxer for this piece as another representation of percussion that we can create with our bodies.

HOW MANY OF THE FACES IN THE MURALS DO YOU RECOGNIZE?
DANCE GENRE:
American Indian

EDDIE MADRIL OF SEWAM AMERICAN INDIAN DANCE

Hoop dancing has a deep history surrounded by similar stories believed to explain its origins. Some say that in its original form, the Hoop dance is believed to have been part of a healing ceremony designed to restore balance and harmony in the world. In that form, the dance is not exhibited to the public. Another story says the dance was created for children who would need to climb to safety in their cliff dwellings. Other stories say the dance tells a story of all creation, including the lifetime of an individual. In recent years, a public form of the dance has been developed. Contemporary Hoop dancers, using as many as 40 reeds or wooden hoops, can create many shapes, including butterflies, turtles, eagles, flowers, and snakes. They represent living things and show how everything is connected and how it grows and changes.

FUN FACTS:

- Eddie Madril is a member of the Pascua Yaqui tribe of the Sonora Desert region.
- In Native healing ceremonies, there's often a re-creation or recollection of origin stories telling participants about where they come from and that they are invincible.
- The regalia being worn is all handmade mostly by the dancer himself. The cape and apron represent the colors of fire in the center of the world, the leggings are made from mountain sheep, and the Moccasins are made from leather and adorned with beads.
DANCE GENRE: Afro-Cuban Rumba

DENMIS BAIN SAVIGNE AND ANGEL YOEL MULEN-ROBERT

Rumba, a form traced back to Africa, is a uniquely Cuban improvised conversation between dancer and drummer developed in colonial barrios and ports of Havana and Mantanzas, where percussionists played wooden boxes. This innovative piece shows a snapshot of the day to day life in Cuba where neighbors meet up outside to socialize and play dominoes. In Cuba, Rumba and playing dominoes are both ways that people interact and communicate with each other. In this piece, the two artists skillfully combine the tradition of Rumba with that of dominoes.

FUN FACTS:
• In Cuba, the dominos use a double nine, unlike the traditional game that goes up only to double size.
• The performance piece is called “Dale agua al dominó” which literally means “give water to the domino”, it’s an expression that means “shuffle the pieces”.
• Rumba is a broad name for the genre. Within it there are three sub genres: yambú, cumbria, and the most commonly seen guaguancó.
HAWAI‘I

DANCE GENRE: Hula Kahiko

HĀLAU O KEIKIALI‘I

Traditional Hula is a dance form accompanied by the Ipu Heke (drum) and chant. The chant/song is called a mele. The mele (songs) are prayers often made to specific deity, ali‘i (ruling class), and/or geographic location. The hula is the body movement made to express the mele. All hula is accompanied with lyrics and is commonly divided into two broad categories: Ancient hula, as performed before Western encounters with Hawai‘i, is called “Hula Kahiko” and is accompanied by chant and traditional instruments, and “Hula ‘Auana” as it evolved under Western influence, in the 19th and 20th centuries. These songs are accompanied by song and Western-influenced musical instruments such as the guitar, the ‘ukulele, and the double bass.

FUN FACTS:
- This song, or mele as it is said in Hawaiian, is about the fog that appears in the summer in San Francisco.
- You might hear the word “Uhiwai” several times, which is the word for fog.
- The ‘a‘ahu (clothing) are all hand sewn and woven by the students. The multiple layers of white mimic the flow of the fog.
- The men are draped in clothing to mimic the land and are sharing a particular style of hula called the ‘Ōhelo.
DANCE GENRE: Indian Classical Dance

MYTHILI KUMAR OF ABHINAYA DANCE COMPANY OF SAN JOSE

Bharatanatyam is an ancient classical dance form that was performed and nurtured in the temples of Tamil Nadu in Southern India as a part of the daily worship. Graceful movement, mime, and music contribute in equal measure to this traditional and beautiful dance. Speaking a universal language of gestures, replete with diverse moods and emotions, and portraying rhythmic precision, the dance essentially brings to life the glorious sculptures of the temples, as well as the mythology of the land. This dance is accompanied by classical South Indian or Carnatic music, while the rhythm is kept by the cymbals and the mridangam (horizontal drum). The dancer wears anklelets of small bells to emphasize the rhythm. This style is one of the most ancient and arguably the best-known classical dance forms of India.

FUN FACTS:

- This is a devotional song in the language Gujarati from Western India.
- It includes a favorite lyric of Mahatma Ganchi that describes the righteous person who shows the qualities of compassion and treats all equally.
- Traditionally, the Bharatanatyam dress is elaborate with multiple bright colors. For this piece, Mythili dresses more simply and is honoring the Bharatanatyam tradition with a single flower and blue Sari.
DANCE GENRE:
Mexican Folklore

ENSEMBLES BALLET FOLKLÓRICO
DE SAN FRANCISCO

The music and traditional dances of Veracruz date back to the colonial era, specifically 1683, and are heavily influenced by Spanish colonization and intertwined with African influence from the enslaved Africans brought through the busy port to the Americas. Incorporating the deep rooted “son jarocho” (a traditional musical style from Veracruz) and Afro-Veracruzano rhythms from the plains and Sotavento regions of Veracruz.

FUN FACTS:
- The women are wearing the traditional attire from the Mexican state of Veracruz, inspired by the beautiful white sea foam found along the shore. The men’s white outfits echo the elegance of the woman’s dress.
- This piece highlights the strength of the “zapateado jarocho,” or footwork, that is derived from the Spanish “seguidilla,” a Spanish dance in triple time, and African rhythms.
- The term jarocho is not only used to name this musical genre but also can be used to call a thing or a person from Veracruz.