

Arts & Culture

In Philadelphia dance, a Rennie Harris masterpiece, Pennsylvania Ballet's 'Giselle,' much more

by [Ellen Dunkel](#), Updated: February 4, 2019- 5:00 AM



Paul Kolnik / AP

The acclaimed hip-hop choreographer Rennie Harris lives and works in Philadelphia, but his work is not always seen here. This season, local audiences get three high-profile chances.

The first, in March, is the most anticipated performance on Philadelphia's dance calendar this spring: *Lazarus*, which he made in December for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. In its [review of the *Lazarus* premiere at New York City](#)

[Center](#), the New York Times said, "Mr. Harris gives us something like heaven."

Philadanco is also performing a Harris work on its April program, and in June, Harris' own company, Rennie Harris Puremovement, will bring *Funkedified*, an autobiographical work that premiered Off-Broadway last year.

Other intriguing-sounding offerings this spring include a new Angel Corella-created *Giselle* from the Pennsylvania Ballet, a collaboration from choreographer Reggie Wilson and the city's new Philadelphia Contemporary museum without walls, and more world premieres from BalletX.

The often-aerial Brian Sanders' JUNK presents a *Romeo and Juliet* with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (March 1-2, Academy of Music). The big draw here is the Philadelphia premiere of [Rennie Harris' *Lazarus*](#). The program also includes such Ailey favorites as *Revelations*, one of the company's must-see works. (215-893-1999, [kimmelcenter.org](#))

Dance Theater of Harlem (March 1-2, Annenberg Center). This year's visit is part of DTH's 50th anniversary season and will include *Nyman String Quartet #2*, a world premiere by company resident choreographer Robert Garland, who is from Philadelphia. Note the overlap with Ailey's visit, and plan accordingly if you're trying to see both. (215-898-3900, [AnnenbergCenter.org](#))

BalletX (March 6-17, Wilma Theater). The spring season includes three world premieres. Choreographers include Lil Buck, who [danced in an Apple commercial](#) — and with cellist Yo-Yo Ma in a [viral video that Spike Jonze shot on his phone](#). Nicolo Fonte, who made several popular pieces for both BalletX and the Pennsylvania Ballet, is back with a new piece, and he also mentored the company's 2019 choreographic fellow, Katarzyna Skarpetowska, the third choreographer on the program. (215-546-7824, [balletx.org](#))



Alexander Iziliaev
Pennsylvania Ballet in "Giselle."

Giselle (March 7-17, Academy of Music). Artistic director Angel Corella has been restaging many of the classic evening-length ballets, and this time he's taking on *Giselle*, one he danced many times. *Giselle* is one of the most beloved ballets, as well as one of the oldest. (215-893-1999, [paballet.org](#))

Dance Heginbotham (March 15-16, Annenberg Center). This New York contemporary company was founded by former Mark Morris dancer and 2018 Guggenheim Fellow John Heginbotham. It is making its Philadelphia debut, and tickets are already sold out online, but call the box office for possible additional tickets. (215-898-3900, [AnnenbergCenter.org](#))

All Stravinsky program (April 4-7, Merriam Theater). The Pennsylvania Ballet is dancing Balanchine's *Apollo* and his *Stravinsky Violin Concerto*, along with Jerome Robbins' *The Cage* (a company premiere), and a world premiere by Matthew Neenan. (215-893-1999, [paballet.org](#))

Brian Sanders' JUNK (April 4-6, Verizon Hall, Kimmel Center). Sanders is known for his otherworldly scenes, sets made of found objects, and aerial dance. Here, he presents a new *Romeo and Juliet*, which will be performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Edgy meets classical? It sounds intriguing. (215-893-1999, [philorch.org](#))

Union Tanguera + Kate Weare Company (April 5-6, Annenberg Center). Two companies meet for a mix of tango and contemporary in an evening-length work set to live music. (215-898-3900, [AnnenbergCenter.org](#))

Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers (April 12-13, Annenberg Center). A hybrid of Asian and western culture and movement, this esteemed Philadelphia company makes its Annenberg debut. The program includes five Lin dances from 1993 to a world premiere, *Spring 101*, Lin's 101st choreographed dance. (215-898-3900, [AnnenbergCenter.org](#))

Philadanco (April 12-14, Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center). Philadanco's spring season will feature all ballets by choreographers born in, based in, and influenced by Philadelphia. On the program are new ballets by Rennie Harris and Dawn Marie Bazemore, as well as a revival from Gene Hill Sagan. (215-893-1999, [kimmelcenter.org](#))

Koresh Dance Company (April 25-28, Suzanne Roberts Theater). Artistic director Roni Koresh presents a world premiere based on Matisse's painting *La Danse*, set to an original score by John Levis with poetry by Karl Mullen. (215-985-0420, [koreshdance.org](#))

BODYTRAFFIC (April 26-27, Annenberg Center). This Los Angeles company blends contemporary, hip-hop, jazz, and ballet. It brings a series of Philadelphia premieres to the Annenberg, including *A Million Voices* by Philadelphia choreographer Neenan and set to Peggy Lee classics. (215-898-3900, AnnenbergCenter.org)

Advertisement

Prince Charming (May 2-4, Iron Gate Theatre at 3700 Chestnut St.). The young dancers of the Pennsylvania Ballet II stage a retelling of *Cinderella* from the prince's point of view that sounds — well, charming. Part of the Philadelphia Children's Festival, *Prince Charming* features an original score by Kermit Poling. (215-898-3900, AnnenbergCenter.org)

Reggie Wilson: Grounds That Shout! (And Others Merely Shaking) (May 3-4 at Church of the Advocate in North Philadelphia, May 11 at three Society Hill religious sites). The boundary-pushing Philadelphia Contemporary joins Partners for Sacred Places and Danspace Project (NYC) for a series of site-specific performances exploring the African American religious experience. (philadelphiacontemporary.org)

“DGV,” a world premiere, and “Glass Pieces” (May 9-12, Academy of Music). The Pennsylvania Ballet closes its season with Christopher Wheeldon's *DGV: Danse à Grand Vitesse* (which the company [first danced in 2015](#)), a Jorma Elo world premiere, and the company premiere of Jerome Robbins' *Glass Pieces*. (215-893-1999, paballet.org)

Parsons Dance (May 10-11, Annenberg Center). An audience favorite, Parsons is dancing a program of new work as well as its signature *Caught*, [a solo performed in a strobe light and looking like a series of photographs](#). The piece has been danced by both men and women over the years, including Pennsylvania Ballet artistic director Angel Corella. (215-898-3900, AnnenbergCenter.org)

Funkedified (June 7-8, Merriam Theater). Everyone seems to be performing Harris' work this season, including, in June, his own company, Puremovement. *Funkedified*, which [premiered Off-Broadway last year](#), is an autobiographical piece centered on all things 1970s funk. (215-893-1999, kimmelcenter.org)



Posted: February 4, 2019 - 5:00 AM
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THE DANCE Journal®

a publication of PhiladelphiaDANCE.org

Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers at Annenberg Center Live, April 12-13



*Press Release for The Dance Journal
February 14, 2019*

The critically-acclaimed Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers (KYL/D), one of the country's only Asian- American, contemporary dance companies, is pleased to announce its Spring home season performances at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts.

Drawing upon Eastern philosophies while expanding the perimeter of contemporary dance, Artistic Director Lin's Zen-inspired practice of dance manifests in lush works of poetic sensibility that The New York Times says "create and inhabit worlds of their own."

Lin has developed a personal movement language that is an unexpected hybrid of Western and Eastern cultures, suffused with strong spiritual underpinnings. Lin draws upon varied influences from his native Taiwan, such as calligraphy, martial arts, tai chi, and traditional Chinese dance movements, yet expresses these impulses in a thoroughly contemporary way, borne of his extensive performance experience worldwide.

KYL/D's performances at the Annenberg Center will feature an exciting new work, "Spring 101" — Lin's 101st choreographic work, evoking the joy of Spring and the excitement of new beginnings along life's journey. The ensemble also will present a selection of the company's signature works, including a reimagined version of "Chi" to a cast of 9. "Moon", a striking solo. "The Land," inspired by the enduring strength of the Tibetan people, and "Dreamscape," a dreamworld-like abstract dance with original music by Daniel Rhode. KYL/D's 2019 Spring Season has been made possible, in part, by the generosity of Season Producers Jeremy Siegel and Ellen Schwartz. Lin dedicates these performances in honor of their support.

The KYL/D company consists of 10 dance artists: Mo Liu, Evalina Carbonell, Weiwei Ma, Grace Stern, Annielille Gavino, Nikolai McKenzie, Keila Pérez-Vega, Frankie Markocki, Kyan Namazi, Barbara Craig.

Lighting design and stage management by Matthew Lewandowski II

KYL/D's 2019 Spring Season has been made possible, in part, by the generosity of Season Producers Jeremy Siegel and Ellen Schwartz. Lin dedicates these performances in honor of their support.

Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers (KYL/D)

Friday, April 12, 2019 at 8:00pm

Saturday, April 13, 2019 at 2:00pm

Zellerbach Theater at Annenberg Center, 3680 Walnut St, Philadelphia

Tickets: <https://www.annenbergcenter.org/event/kun-yang-lindancers>

PROGRAM

CHI (2002) (2018 reimagined version)

Choreography: Kun-Yang Lin Costumes: Heather McGinnis Music: Glen Velez

A group piece inspired by the ancient art forms of tai chi and calligraphy, Chi, which means breath, energy or life's source, which is a central element in KYL/D's outreach initiatives. The New York Times described it as "a buoyant, radiant dance." Premiere: April 12, 2002, KYL/D at The Taipei Theater, NYC

Moon (1993)

Choreography: Kun-Yang Lin Costumes: Kun-Yang Lin Music: Dead Can Dance

Moon is a signature solo work of Kun-Yang Lin considered "a powerful piece of choreography." – Knight Foundation. The highly technical solo contrasts moments of lush dynamism with captivating stillness. Premiere: September 18, 1994, at Dancespace Project, NYC

The Land (2000)

Choreography: Kun-Yang Lin Costumes: Tamaki Kawano, Kun-Yang Lin, and Sarah McCorrison Music: Philip Glass, Lama Gyurmes, Jean-Philippe Rykiel, Kirby Schelstad Photography: Harry Beach

A multi-media, multi-sectioned group work inspired by the struggles and enduring strength of the Tibetan people, The Land has been described as: "*Powerful simplicity*" (*New York Times*); "*Brilliantly constructed...combines a fresh approach to conventional craft with a commitment to contemporary*

social-consciousness” (Back Stage); “A post-postmodernist dance...effective and affective” (Ballet Review). Premiere: June 29, 2000, at The Yard, Chilmark, MA

Pilgrimage: The Company

Compassion: Kyan Namazi and Weiwei Ma

Our Land: Mo Liu, Keila Pérez-Vega, Frankie Markocki, Grace Stern and Weiwei Ma (Annielille Gavino)

Hope: Evalina Carbonell

Faith: The Company

Dreamscape (2016)

Choreography: Kun-Yang Lin Costumes: Cat O’Callaghan Music: Daniel Rhode

Dreamscape creates *“an other-world experience with a continual shifting of bodies and shapes,”* designing a *“brilliant interplay [of] powerful and striking syncopation of movement”* – Dance Journal.

Premiere: April 14, 2016, KYL/D at The Prince Theater, Philadelphia

Spring 101 (World Premiere)

Choreography: Kun-Yang Lin Music: Telemann (Suite in F Major for Horn, 2 Oboes & Strings- III. Der Alster Echo), Stölzel (Concerto in D for 6 Trumpets & Strings), Purcell (The Staircase Overture in B Flat for 2 violins & Basso continuo), Handel (Water Music), Vivaldi (The Four Seasons- Spring II. Largo), Sammartini (Concerto in C for Viola Pomposa & String I. Andante), Bach (Harpsichord in G Minor-First Mov.) Sound Design: Cory Neale Lighting Design: Matthew Lewandowski II Costume Design: Jill Peterson.

This world premiere breathes new life into Baroque music through a pairing of contemporary movement and sound design. Evoking the joy of Spring and the excitement of new beginnings, Spring 101, marks Lin’s 101st choreographic work in his creative journey.

Link to online article: <https://philadelphiadance.org/dancejournal/2019/02/14/kun-yang-lin-dancers-at-annenberg-center-live-april-12-13/>

THE PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE

Arts Calendar

21 February 2019



Annenberg Center

Michael Londra and the Celtic Fire *Mar. 16*

The New Lionel Hampton Big Band

Featuring Jason Marsalis *Mar. 23*

Union Tanguera + Kate Weare Company *Apr. 5-6*

Hiromi *Apr. 11*

Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers *Apr. 12-13*

The English Concert Handel's *Semele*

Apr. 16

BODYTRAFFIC *Apr. 26-27*

Arthur Ross Gallery

Soy Cuba: The Contemporary Landscapes of Roger Toledo

Apr. 6-June 2

THE DANCE Journal®

a publication of PhiladelphiaDANCE.org

An Eclectic Array of Works at KYLD's InHale Performance Series



By Winfield Mabin for The Dance Journal

Photo Credit: Mike Hurwitz

March 3, 2019

On Friday night Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers presented their 39th InHale Performance Series, a quarterly showcase of selected works by various local movement artists. Eleven works were displayed throughout the evening; highlighting a diverse array of talent which reached beyond the bounds of traditional concert dance and explored just what becomes possible when one is encouraged to experiment with performative movement.

The general vibe upon entering KYL/D's CHI Movement Arts Center was immediately warm and welcoming. Audience members were asked to remove their shoes before entering the space and, once inside, were greeted by a stage full of performers warming up and chatting amongst each other while the audience settled in. This presents a comforting atmosphere which draws the audience into this informal showing of work in an intimate and friendly way, whether any particular audience member is friends with a performer or not. The tone set by these first several moments in the space settled the audience into their seats for an evening of varied performance and communal support.

Evalina "Wally" Carbonell's *Hive* kickstarted the evening with movement that set high energy twitch grounded focused movement against grounded floorwork to great effect. Jim Bunting's *Secrets*

showcased an intense conflict of internal versus external via Katherine Corbette's performance which fused movement evocative of a marionette with a flow which pushed and pulled towards the audience; simultaneously rejecting their presence and beckoning them inward.

Carinosa by Annielille Gavino and Malaya Cassandra explored the idea of lineage and ancestry and the generational effects of imperialism by placing a maternal, mentorship relationship between an adult and child on the stage. Katherine Kiefer Stark's *Free to Be* was an eclectic and wildly entertaining piece which was at times an 80's style aerobic workout, at times a stand-up comedy routine, and at times an exploration of identity and the concept of self, all of which was completely sold by Stark's endearing and genuine performance. The first act concluded with *ARIA* by Rebecca Malcolm-Naib and performed by Amy Novinsky and Asya Zlatina which combined the stylings of classical ballet with the flow and upper body circulations of a modern or contemporary piece in a way that was remained evocative of the court dances from which ballet was derived.

The second act was initiated by *Se hace camino al andar* which was performed by choreographer Mariadela Belle Alvarez and dancers Sanchel Brown, Leilani Chirino, and Ani Gavino. The piece began with grounded, naturalistic crawling but quickly transitioned to a more up-tempo performance with each dancer which granted each performer a unique personality and identity through the solos they performed. The next piece, *Holding Belly*, shook things up a bit as American Grl Boi (Lu Donovan) invited the audience onto the stage for the duration of the piece. This lent voyeuristic, personal atmosphere to the work, compounded upon by the diegetic lighting provided by several lamps strewn about the space. The piece explored gender identity, highlighting longing, sacrifice, and the emotional aspects of struggling with the gender you were assigned at birth through subtle yet effective pedestrian movement and masterful use of props (including the performer's shirt, shredded to pieces to form a beard).

Frayed Ends by Thomas/Ortiz Dance was a duet that showcased a romance in its entirety instead of focusing on solely positive or negative aspects. It utilized the sensibilities of a classical pas de deux as well as a pushing and pulling motif between the two performers in order to provide a refreshing take on the complexities of romance. Taking a darker turn, Leah Moriarty's *Take the Sound of the Room Breathing* was an introspective exploration of the self which built to an explosion of movement and sound near the end. Set to an ominous, repetitive track by Yoko Ono, I can only describe the performance as a cerebral discordia which managed to unsettle and delight in equal measures.

Closing out the evening was Jesse Factor's *Marthanany: The Spectre-Acle* which left me speechless in the way it not only subverted my expectations but then subverted the expectations set by the initial subversion. It rode the line between tribute for and a parody of the late Martha Graham, beginning as a nearly identical recreation of her Lamentations before morphing into a bombastic lip sync performance, and again into a striptease. However, through all the insanity, Factor's physique and technique shone through making it not only an effective piece of theatrical comedy but also a kinesthetically enrapturing work of dance. It left the audience in an uproar and was the perfect finale to the evening.

While writing this review what stands out to me is the incredible diversity put on display at InHale. While often "modern dance" or concert dance, in general, can feel homogenized, being able to see artists working from so many different backgrounds and achieving such an eclectic array of works provides insight into the incredible variance in styles and vision that can fly under the radar if you aren't keeping your eyes open. KYL/D's InHale not only welcomed me into the fold but treated me to a wonderfully diverse evening of dance; one which invited me to consider the community at large and what I can do to diversify my support for the art I love.

Link to online article: <https://philadelphiadance.org/dancejournal/2019/03/03/an-eclectic-array-of-works-at-kylds-inhale-performance-series/>



Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers Bring South Philly Inspired “Immigrant Journeys” to Esperanza Arts Center

🕒 March 12, 2019 👤 Joy Huertas 📁 #EsperanzaNews, Featured, Press Releases

Creating Dialogue among Latinx communities on immigration, displacement, and identity

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE. Philadelphia, PA – March 12, 2019. Esperanza Arts Center (EAC) is proud to announce Kun-Yang Lin Dancers will perform excerpts of its acclaimed production “[Home Project – Immigrant Journeys](#)” on the Teatro Esperanza stage. The performance investigates the meaning of “home” and the immigrant experience. The North Philadelphia performance culminates an in-school residency at [Esperanza Academy Charter School](#), which will engage high school students in Modern Dance Technique master classes, and a guided discussion with students and faculty on immigration, displacement, and identity.

There will be an audience Q&A immediately following the performance. The cast and crew will share selected immigration stories and describe the background, inspiration drawn from immigrant stories in South Philadelphia, and the creative process behind Home Project – Immigrant Journeys.

WHO: KUN-YAN LIN/ DANCERS

WHAT: NORTH PHILADELPHIA THEATER, TEATRO ESPERANZA, PRESENTS “HOME PROJECT-IMMIGRANT JOURNEYS” BY KUN-YAN LIN/DANCERS

WHERE: 4261 NORTH 5TH STREET, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19140. TEATRO ESPERANZA, ESPERANZA ARTS CENTER. **WHEN:** 7:30 PM. FRIDAY, MARCH. 15.

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES:

- BILL RHOADS, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF ESPERANZA ARTS CENTER
- PERFORMERS UPON REQUEST

To purchase tickets visit <http://www.esperanza.us/event/home-project-immigrant-journeys/> . For media inquiries, contact Joy Huertas at (215) 324-0746 ext. 480 or jhuertas@esperanza.us.

About Esperanza. Esperanza is a national non-profit organization founded in 1986 by Rev. Luis Cortés Jr., and the Hispanic Clergy of Philadelphia & Vicinity with the biblical mandate to serve and advocate for “the least of these” (Matthew 25:40). Beginning with a local initiative, with programs targeted to address the unmet needs of North Philadelphia’s Hispanic community, Rev. Cortés is now sought by national and international leaders alike on issues of economic and workforce development, housing, immigration, and education. Under his leadership, Esperanza has grown from a small operation to a \$40 million organization with more than 450 employees. Visit www.esperanza.us or follow us on social media @esperanza_us on Twitter and Instagram, EsperanzaUSA on Facebook and Esperanza US on YouTube.

About Esperanza Arts Center (EAC). Guided by Esperanza’s core values of faith, integrity, and excellence, EAC is the hub for Latino performing arts in the Philadelphia region, spotlighting the rich spectrum of traditions from Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as other cultures from around the world, creating positive transformational experiences for students, families, and attendees of all ages through the arts. For more information visit www.esperanzaartscenter.us

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Download official press release [here](#).

Link to online article: <http://www.esperanza.us/kun-yang-lin-dancers-bring-south-philly-inspired-immigrant-journeys-to-esperanza-arts-center/>

HOME PROJECT-IMMIGRANT JOURNEYS (KYL/D): Promoting diversity through identity at Teatro Esperanza

March 18, 2019 - Winfield Maben



Photo by Rob Li

On Friday night Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers performed excerpts of their piece HOME PROJECT-IMMIGRANT JOURNEYS at Teatro Esperanza to cap off their week-long residency at Esperanza Academy. The work, which debuted in 2015, laid heavy focus on the concept of identity, individuality, and the personal stories that follow individuals as they immigrate from home to another. Throughout the 45 minute run time this theme was explored from a variety of angles which ranging from upbeat and comedic to slow, somber, and emotional, all of which was elevated through the impeccable technique and expressive performance of the dancers.

The sense of individuality and identity was portrayed in the work via a series of solos and duets set against a larger collective of dancers in the background. In this way, each dancer was granted a distinct identity through the choreography which emphasized their own unique personality within

the work. The variety in movement styles on display further emphasized the individuality and personality on the stage. At one moment a slow, sustained duet could be taking place while later there would be a solo focusing on more pointed, direct, and mechanical movements. These contrasting movement identities served to escalate and develop the themes present and reminded the audience that the people on stage were not a homogenous collective but instead a gathering of individuals who are at the same time dependent and independent of each other.

There were moments throughout where it became apparent that in individuality there is isolation and that through that mutual isolation, common ground and acceptance can be found. This idea is what guides the conclusion of the work where the entire ensemble comes together in a moment of perfect unison showcasing the way in which a collective of individual experiences and stories can grow together, culminating in a larger sense of community.

Aside from the movement itself, the presence of the work at Teatro Esperanza holds a high degree of significance. Placing this work at the end of a week of classes, workshops, and guided discussions with the company provided the students of Esperanza with the opportunity to see practice become performance and to observe how the fundamentals they've been taught can evolve into something greater. It's this degree of exposure that spurs young artists onward, providing the inspiration to stick with their craft and forge their own creative enterprises.

Keeping this in mind it's easy to see how the forging of diverse artistic communities in high school aged students relates to the work on stage as it's important to approach the development of these communities with identity and individuality in mind, as it's through individuality that artistic communities flourish and grow. By the end of the evening's performance it was clear KYL/D had left an impact during their residency as the students led a standing ovation for the company as soon as the lights had dimmed.



The event capped off with a question and answer session with company founder Kun-Yang Lin and his dancers. This gave an opportunity for greater understanding between the performers and students as they were free to openly discuss the themes, choreography, and process behind the work. While much of the discussion was impactful, the quote that stood out to me as an impactful summary of the night's events was when Kun-Yang simply said; "Dance is our common ground... so that is why we dance". In promoting arts education through collaboration and expressive technique KYL/D is actively contributing towards building a healthier, more diverse dance community here in Philadelphia through the common ground found within the love for this craft. Looking back on HOME PROJECT with this in mind it's easy to see how it was the perfect thematic fit for the evening, and how it places a hopeful lens on the future of diversity in the performing arts.

[Teatro Esperanza, 4261 N 5th Street] *March 15, 2019*; esperanza.us

Link to online article: <http://phindie.com/19222-home-project-immigrant-journeys-kyld-teatro-esperanza/>



KYL/D Honors Immigrants at Teatro Esperanza

© March 22, 2019  myadmin  #EsperanzaNews, Featured

Creating dialogues among Latinx communities on immigration, displacement, and identity

On Friday, March 15, the [Kun-Yang Lin Dancers](#) performed excerpts of their acclaimed production “[Home Project – Immigrant Journeys](#)” on the Teatro Esperanza stage. The performance was followed by a Q&A where the cast described the inspiration drawn from immigrant stories in South Philadelphia, as well as the creative process behind “Home Project – Immigrant Journeys.”

“Home Project” explores themes like home, identity, and diversity in relation to the immigrant experience. The excerpts on Friday focused on various immigrant journeys including Kun-Yang Lin’s. The performance did more than just display beautiful skill and technique, it also transcended the barriers of language and space that typically exist within the arts, bringing a high caliber of art to a community that is typically denied access to it.

During their time at Esperanza, the Kun-Yang Lin Dancers also led master classes for dance majors at Esperanza Academy. Along with teaching technique, Kun-Yang Lin and his dancers also spent time dialoguing with the students about their concept of home, and had the students engage in the Chinese practice of writing letters to ancestors, which were then included in the performance. Their inclusion in the performance was powerful, helping the students recognize that their stories are important and worth sharing. The students were also able to watch Puerto Rican dancer Keila Pérez-Vega on stage. Watching her in the spotlight showed the students that they too deserve a spot on center stage.



“I just spoke to an audience member, I felt at home,” said Pérez-Vega. “Me being *Puertorriqueña*, I mean you guys were well represented in the house.”

She also took the time to speak with us about the importance of art in communities, and why accessibility is important.

“Art is one those things open to interpretation, it’s accessible to all people,” she explained. “And especially if there’s a theater in your area, there’s no better reason for you to experience art. Art across all mediums speaks about life, it speaks about experience. The world would be a better place with art. If everyone would experience art a little more, there would be more productive discussions and peace.”

Teatro Esperanza seeks to continue providing space for dialogue. If you want to join the conversation, check out our upcoming events at teatroesperanza.us



Link to online article: <http://www.esperanza.us/kyl-d-honor-immigrants-at-teatro-esperanza/>



THE TEMPLE NEWS

A watchdog for the Temple University community since 1921.

Temple professor meets life-long goal at Annenberg Center

Five pieces from Kun-Yang Lin's career will be performed at the venue in April, including the premiere of "Spring 101."

🕒 26 March 2019 Emma Padner 📁 Dance, Features



Performers at Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers rehearse for the April premiere of "Spring 101" on Thursday at the South Philly studio on 9th Street near Sears. | EMMA PADNER / THE TEMPLE NEWS

When he immigrated to the United States in 1993 from Taiwan, Kun-Yang Lin came alone. He knew no one.

Around this time, he wrote "Moon," a dance piece expressing longing for familiarity and missing home.

“Creating dance is like eating,” said Lin, a Temple University dance professor. “You have to eat, you have to produce. When I moved to Philadelphia, I would say, ‘Dance is life, life is dance. Dance is my religion.’ So dance is everything. It’s your being.”

On April 12 and 13, “Moon,” along with four other pieces — “CHI,” “The Land,” “Dreamscape” and “Spring 101,” — will be performed at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts in University City. The theater is affiliated with the University of Pennsylvania.

All but “Spring 101” are repertoire pieces for Lin’s South Philly dance studio, Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers, on 9th Street near Sears. The event will mark the premiere of “Spring 101.”

Annenberg Center Live and NextMove Dance, a dance outreach, education and performance company, are presenting the performance. Seeing dancers perform his work on Annenberg’s stage is a life-long dream, Lin said.

“In order to get to the Annenberg Center stage, you have to be world-class,” Lin said. “We are on that stage...and a lot of [dancers] are Temple alumni and so I’m very proud of them.”

The program at the Annenberg Center will showcase Lin’s work from 1993-2019. The audience will witness how his work has changed and evolved, including how it has become westernized over the years, Lin said.

Francis Markocki, a 2016 dance alumnus, will perform at the Annenberg Center with Lin’s dance studio. He became a company member at Lin’s studio in 2017 and works as a dance artist and the studio’s technical director.

The dance group has been working on pieces for the Annenberg Center since May 2018, Markocki said, and he hopes to successfully perform the challenging pieces Lin chose.

“Annenberg Center is one of the biggest stages that Philadelphia has to offer and being represented under NextMove Dance is a huge honor,” he added. “It’s always one of those stages where...I’ve always aspired to perform on...and it’s nice to be able to do that.”

Gracianna Coscia-Collins, the education manager at Lin’s dance studio, hopes to have as many young people as possible attend the performance, which she said teaches viewers about the self and movement. Lin’s work taps into self-reflection, mindfulness and spirituality, Coscia-Collins said, which can be a learning opportunity.

Before moving to the U.S., Lin toured internationally with London-based Transitions Dance Company. He has since performed with esteemed U.S. dance organizations like

the Martha Graham Company, and has collaborated with famed post-modernist choreographers like Trisha Brown and Lynn Shapiro.

The premiere of “Spring 101” commemorates Lin reaching his dream of having his dances performed at Annenberg, he said. It’s the 101st piece he has choreographed.

While writing it, he put himself in a “beginner’s mind,” going back to the basics to keep fresh ideas while still sharing his past knowledge, Lin said. The end of the dance features dancers running toward the back of the stage to shift the view of the audience and give the effect of a new beginning, like spring, he said.

“You have that expectation when the first time spring finally comes, the warmth of the sunlight feels different,” Lin said. “Everything feels different. So you see a shifted view, one is almost longing to the dancers to that infinity, so everyone has that new beginning.”

The KYL/D team has been rehearsing for the Annenberg performance four times a week for almost a year.

“Maybe [with] the work, the world premiere of ‘Spring 101,’ everybody will embrace the beginner’s mind,” he added. “The future is wide open.”

Link to online article: <https://temple-news.com/temple-professor-meets-life-long-goal-at-annenberg-center/>

KUN-YANG LIN/DANCERS Spring Home Season: Studio Rehearsal

March 28, 2019 – Eri Yoneda



Photos by Mike Hurwitz

The studio of Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers is located in the heart of South Philly, right past Gino's and Pat's. When I arrived, the dancers were in the middle of a costume fitting for a world premiere, *Spring 101*, that will be performed at the Annenberg Center in less than 20 days. The simple but bright leotards caught my eyes, like the first flower that you see after long frigid winter.

The upcoming show is presented by Annenberg Center Live and NextMove Dance. The program showcases company's repertoires, *CHI* (2002), *Moon* (1993), *The Land* (2000), and *Dreamscape* (2016) along with *Spring 101*.



Lin said in a tender tone, "Each of us may think of different ideas from a word, but how we feel is the same."

Throughout the rehearsal, I was flabbergasted. Each piece began with an unexpected sound and a movement that I did not imagine from the title. However, the sound synchronized with the dancers, and the dancers guided me to feel. The dancers inhaled and I realized that I was breathing with them. I began to feel the pulse of muscles and nerves. Then the waves of movements. The air around us swayed. Lin gave the dancers some insights and directions, and the dancers were also open to sharing their thoughts and ideas after the rehearsal of *Spring 101*. Compared to other pieces, the face expressions of the dancers were distinctively unique. It was like an art museum filled with lots of paintings and sculptures from all kind of eras around the world, each so unique and different but equally vibrant and beautiful.

The dancers are very diverse, not only in their races and physicalities but also in their expressions and their languages of dance. Their solo dances were colorful and unforgettable, and when they came together they created a powerful force. Their dance will be a blight spring sunlight after the long winter hibernation.

[Annenberg Center, 3680 Walnut Street] **April 12-13, 2019; kyld.org**

Link to online article: <http://phindie.com/kun-yang-lindancers-spring-home-season-studio-rehearsal/>

South Philly review

South Philly art organizations among more than 300 across the city to receive thousands of dollars in grants

Marking its 28th year, the Philadelphia Cultural Fund distributes \$2.68 million to artists across Philly.

By Grace Maiorano – March 29, 2019



Shawn Lamere (center), artistic director of the 23-year-old Eleone Dance Theatre in Point Breeze, receives his Philadelphia Cultural Fund check from Jennifer Slavic of Councilman Mark Squilla's office and Frantz Pierre of Councilman Kenyatta Johnson's office. (GRACE MAIORANO/SPR)

Hundreds gathered at City Hall this week as the Philadelphia Cultural Fund distributed more than \$2.68 million in grants to 339 artistic organizations from across the city.

More than 40 of those recipients call South Philadelphia home – a testimony to the scope of established and emerging creativity nestled in communities around our area.

Marking its 28th anniversary, the Philadelphia Cultural Fund, which is resourced using city budget funds through the combined efforts of the mayor and City Council, bestowed record-breaking amounts to the largest grantee list since its inception.

Rewarding 315 institutional organizations, along with 24 new ones, the program's number of recipients represents a 19 percent increase since 2016. In fact, so many organizations were recognized that the program was split over the course of two days.

"Whether your organization is new or established, whether it's very small or very large, the Philadelphia Cultural Fund and the city of Philadelphia are acknowledging the breadth and the depth of the arts and culture community here and value the impact that you all are having in neighborhoods across the city," Philadelphia Cultural Fund executive director Barbara Silzle told the bustling room of winners. "We believe in the power of art to transform lives – to amplify voices and to connect us to each other."

A linchpin concept of the Philadelphia Cultural Fund lies in its acknowledgment of the arts outside the boundaries of Center City, fostering cultural opportunities in often impoverished or underserved communities.

In South Philadelphia alone, seven recipients reside in the 19145 ZIP code, 11 in 19148, 15 in 19147 and 10 in 19146. Spanning from Pennsport to Point Breeze, art hubs along nearly every South Philly block received their fair share of the prizes.

Tracking the locations of awardees, the Philadelphia Cultural Fund pinpointed winners on a map of Philadelphia, revealing the impact of the arts on some of the city's most disadvantaged areas.

"One of the things that we really do appreciate about the Cultural Fund is how their goals align with the city of Philadelphia's priorities to ensure equitable resources across all of Philadelphia's neighborhoods," said Kelly Lee, the city's chief cultural officer. "This administration is committed to providing access to quality arts experiences in every neighborhood, and this commitment is reflected in the Cultural Fund's equitable support of our cultural organizations."

During the ceremony, the West Philly-based *PHILADANCO!* dance company was awarded the esteemed Councilman David Cohen Award, which highlights an organization that has “demonstrated an outstanding commitment to social and economic justice through its mission, programming, art-related work product or services offered.”

The prolific and nationally renowned dancer Joan Myers Brown, founder and artistic director of the dance company, accepted the honor, as the organization was founded in 1970 in response to the lack of opportunities for minority dancers in the greater Philadelphia area.

Following the ceremony, awardees shuffled from the Mayor’s Reception Room to Conversation Hall, where they claimed their checks.

Several members of organizations say the most heartening element of the fund is that it’s considered “unrestrictive money.” Artists are encouraged to use the donations for fundamental operations, such as salaries, insurance and rent.

According to the Philadelphia Cultural Fund, 47 percent of grantees have budgets of less than \$150,000, and of those recipients, most have few, if any, paid staff.

“The great thing about the Philadelphia Cultural Fund is it allows the grantee organizations to apply the funds in whatever way is most needed without restrictions,” said Bella Vista residents and board president of Philadelphia Cultural Fund Ken Metzner. “...”I think it’s important for readers to know that their tax money is being reinvested directly in their neighborhood and benefiting their children and their seniors and their adults in programming that is really citywide. Supporting the Cultural Fund is a way to support community.”

Metzner, who is also the board president of Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers based in Passyunk Square, says his dance company has received donations from the citywide fund since 2011 and attributes it to the organization’s ability to stay afloat for more than a decade in South Philadelphia.

Similar thoughts were echoed by performing artists based on the other side of Broad Street.

“(The Philadelphia Cultural Fund) does so much justice for us,” said Shawn Lamere, artistic director of the 23-year-old Eleone Dance Theatre in Point Breeze. “If we don’t get anything else, we know we can always depend on it...and I’m sure a lot of these companies can say the same thing. I think they really do understand the mission of arts organizations.”

Lamere stresses the importance of the Philadelphia Cultural Fund helping to sustain the arts across the city, as this year, grant recipients are located in every City Council district.

Like Metzner, he says it's no surprise that such a significant chunk of recipients are based in South Philadelphia, as they feel the diversity and authenticity of the region have been breeding – and continues to cultivate – all forms of artistry.

"I think South Philly, especially, is a really rich area of the city for artists," said East Passyunk resident Erin Reed, general manager of PlayPenn theater workshop. "So many of my neighbors are practicing artists themselves, so it feels great to know that we have a little pocket of the city where we can all support each other as we go make our art in different neighborhoods...South Philly is such a great place to live, and you're obviously fed and inspired by the places that you're calling home."

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Link to online article: <https://southphillyreview.com/2019/03/29/south-philly-art-organizations-among-more-than-300-across-the-city-to-receive-thousands-of-dollars-in-grants/>

phindie.

Independent coverage of
Philadelphia theater and arts

Dance in Sketch: Kun-Yang Lin and Dancers Open Studio

March 29, 2019 – Chuck Schultz



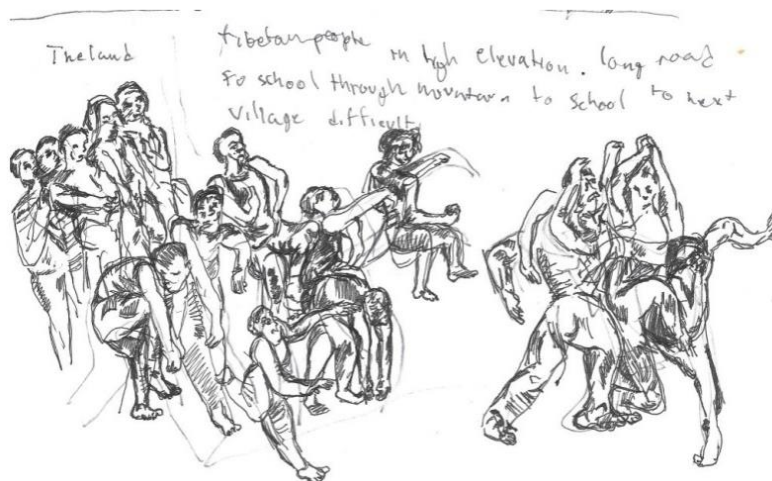
Last weekend Kun-Yang Lin and Dancers brought us into their studio at Chi Movement Art Center in preparation for their event at the Annenberg Center, April 12-13, 2019. This year has been heavily compared to previous seasons for KYL/D, with added performances at the Performance Garage and at the Esperanza Art Center just two weeks ago. Usually there is one event every year that builds immensely into a multi-textural performance.



They jumped right into the rehearsal of SPRING 101, and a lesson in Chi technique that . The program for next month's performance is made into a retrospective of Kun-Yangs early work in the first half and in the second half exhibits his most recent work as well as Lin's 101st piece- SPRING 101, a world premiere. The capability of these dancers is diverse in their personal dance styles. Through movement and emotion, drama and improv articulates the story about dance and the commonality between religions, backgrounds, ethnicities, and sexual/ gender roles. This company thrives in the nonrepresentational and makes it less abstract for dancers and non dancers.



Through the exploration of our breathe in the study of Chi movement Kyl/D instructed excerpts from the upcoming event at the Annenberg. The LAND(2000), MOON(1992), and CHI(2002) were moments in Lin's growth after moving to the United States from London and exploring themes about his identity. The dancers picked up on visceral images of the body with certain forms which assembled together or in solo performances among the company utilize contact inwardly and outwardly. For example, one of the dancers is lifted into the air, and a loftiness as she floats across the stage will be a scene to look out for. The arms and legs of the dancers redirect our perspective on the stage to interest us in the transformation of traveling to a new place.



Another irreplaceable moment during the open rehearsal was the meditative state that flooded in a green transient light over the company. The bodies of the dancers in a way to find 'one' with God, joy, or a divine being in the universe relate to a difficulty that we find in THE LAND. CHI is the essence of life, finding joy in life, and meaning for ourselves. The interesting part to the rehearsal was the connection of our life and nature, memory of place, and certitude in ourselves.



The last part of the rehearsal discussed the artistic process of dancing without music. Flower duets, the interaction with baroque music, and the emphasis of starting and finishing carried over a unique identity to the work of Kun-Yang Lin and Dancers. The meaning of movement in the core of the dancers and the intrinsic feeling of acquiring a new understanding to our daily life accumulate into a prolific rendering of light, music, and drama.



Link to online article: <http://phindie.com/dance-in-sketch-kun-yang-lin-and-dancers-open-studio-series/?fbclid=IwAR0R4qBXaOEV0UOBKwovYvdjDZe9Er7P6bSJVL1B5YejsIH7OU9GHQr1kk>

metro



Philadelphia

Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers are debuting a world premiere routine this weekend during their spring showcase

KYL/D will be hitting the stage at The Annenberg Center this weekend.

By [Molly Given](#) Published: April 08, 2019



The city of [Philadelphia](#) is a mecca for diverse culture and artistic talent: from acting and singing to art shows and dancing, Philly has it all. But the City of Brotherly Love offers so much more than just an entertaining arts scene — it offers a gateway to spiritual journeys, personal epiphanies and incredible showcases of the human spirit. One gateway that embodies all of that and more leads to the internationally active Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers (KYL/D). KYL/D is one of the country's only Asian-American contemporary dance companies, and through inspiration from Eastern philosophies along with contemporary dance, this critically acclaimed group has mixed the past with the present in a simply beautiful way. KYL/D will be showcasing some of their past works and unveiling a world premiere work this weekend at the Annenberg Center.

The Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers are known for their spiritual and unique talents. Artistic Director Lin's zen-inspired routines are unlike anything you have ever seen before. Every year, the Taiwan native creates new routines. Every single one is different, intricate and pleasing to the spirit. Lin draws from strong spiritual underpinning in both Eastern and Western cultures; the results are dance routines that are direct, fluid, colorful, tranquil, thought-provoking and massively entertaining.

This weekend the talented Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers will be performing six different works: the 2019 version of 2002's "CHI," 1993's "Moon," 2000's "The Land," 2016's "Dreamscape," 2016's "Interlude-Seed" and the world premiere of "Spring 101,"

"CHI" is an incredible group piece that embodies the ancient art forms of tai chi and calligraphy. "Moon" is extremely powerful, with exciting solo and group choreography. "The Land" goes deep by using dance to showcase the struggles and enduring strength of the Tibetan people. "Dreamscape" offers an ethereal experience and "Interlude-Seed" highlights the extreme talent this young group of dancers truly possesses.



The world premiere of "Spring 101" is the finale to this wildly exciting show. According to the release, "Spring 101" breathes new life into Baroque music through a pairing of contemporary movement and sound design. Evoking the joy of spring and the excitement of new beginnings, "Spring 101" marks Lin's 101st choreographic work in his creative journey.

The routines performed by KYL/D are not just for entertainment, they truly do take audience members on a ride to another world altogether. Lin's study in tai chi, martial arts, chi gong, calligraphy, meditation and Chinese opera movement tie the show up like an impressive present. The outcome proves to be a true gift to anyone who has the pleasure of watching.

The show features spirituality in a highly physical way. Each movement speaks a beautiful language that you already understand, and every dancer embodies another beautiful layer of the human spirit. If you are looking to be moved, awed and altogether stunned, head to the Annenberg Center this weekend to experience the Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers.

Tags:

[Things To Do](#)

Local dance company celebrates founder's 101st creative work with performance at Annenberg Center Live

This week's performance features highlights from choreographer Kun-Yang Lin's career along with a new piece.

By **Grace Maiorano** - April 10, 2019



Members of Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers, a world-renowned contemporary dance company that has been based in the Passyunk Square neighborhood since 2008, is presenting a collage of Kun-Yang Lin's highlighted works, ranging from the early 1990s to the debut of a brand new piece, "Spring 101." (Grace Maiorano/SPR)

At the core of his choreography anthology, Kun-Yang Lin says audiences may notice a sense of "Qi" – a Chinese philosophical concept surrounding the flow of energy inherent through all of life.

Whether described as "coming full circle," a "cyclic journey" or "infinity," the ensemble of 10 dancers performing under this prolific South Philly-based choreographer articulate his visions quite similarly.

No matter how they're worded, though, it's agreed that some form of this idea resonates through all 101 of Lin's creative works – a testimony to an inspiration that also seems rather infinite.

Commemorating his 101st milestone, Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers, a world-renowned contemporary dance company that has been based in the Passyunk Square neighborhood since 2008, is presenting a collage of the Taiwan-born artist's highlighted works, ranging from the early 1990s to the debut of a brand new piece, "Spring 101," at the Annenberg Center Live, 3680 Walnut St., on April 12 and 13.

Recently reflecting on his decades of work in the performing arts, Lin, whose training ranges from London's Transitions Dance Company to the Martha Graham Company, says while fostering his technique around the world, he was always creating choreography on the side.

"At the same time, I never stopped choreographing...because you have to use that as a way to practice to cultivate yourself," he said. "So, sometimes, I say each work is providing almost my sense of discovery of what's the meaning of life. So, when each work is finished, we're never really trying to say it's a 'period.' Each piece always reveals the further question, the deeper question."

At the conclusion of nearly all of his works, nothing ever feels fully answered, tracing back to questions first probed since the infancy of Lin's pieces, including "Moon," from 1993, which is one of the five excerpts featured in the Anneberg performance.

Crafted while studying in New York City, the solo piece "Moon," is later followed by the program's other featured pieces – "From The Land of Lost Content" (2000), "CHI" (2002) and "Dreamscape" (2016) in this weekend's show.

Lin explains that each of his works attempts to reconcile some kind of spiritual cliffhanger established in a previous one. Centering on mysteries, most themes explore not only finding one's self within oneself but finding one's self through others, as the company views dance as the "ultimate integration of body, spirit, and mind."

"That's the theme – not resolving because it's always a constant search, but searching for the connections between himself and his voice and his surroundings," said company member Evalina Carbonell. "His dancers are his environment. It's about finding the connection points. How do I relate to you, and how does my work reflect my surroundings and how are my surroundings reflected in my work? There's a back and forth."

The first half of the show, which is comprised of "Moon," "CHI" and "From The Land of Lost Content," is primarily Eastern influenced, featuring images of Tibet and handheld Asian bell instruments.

As the overarching performance progresses into "Dreamscape" and "Spring 101," eventually, the sound of gongs bleed into more contemporary beats and later even baroque composition.

Although aside from the music, the movement becomes more modernized, as Lin works to weave Eastern dance with Western, dancers say the headspace never wholly alters.

"It's nice to have one continual, linear thing that your body can hold onto or that your mind can hold onto, even though your body is doing this totally different kind of extremes of vocabulary movement-wise," said company member Kyan Namazi.

Both Lin and his dancers attribute the evolution of his choreography to his gradual inclusion of performers' perspective.

The changes in his creative outcomes are the product of more frequently using his dancers as a blank canvas and watching how the motions naturally unfold on them.

This idea aligns with Lin's comprehensive perspective of viewing his company as a garden – a collection of distinctive flowers that, together, make a scenic landscape.

"You can see his profession as a choreographer, as well," said company member Barbara Craig Liu. "Whereas, the first set are all his movements. They were helped created on his body. As he's gotten older, he's relied more on his – his instincts as a choreographer, I think, go more into, instead of individual, very precise movements, he focuses on the arc. As far as dancers and creative process, us fitting in that arc, we're given a lot more exploration, so a lot of the movement is collaborative."

Like all of his work, "Spring 101" attempts to resolve an unanswered inquiry.

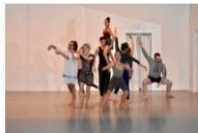
The new creation, which concludes the Anneberg performance, picks up where the company's last undertaking, "Faith Project/The Doors," left off. The 2018 show lies at the "intersection of dance and religion," examining the role of theology in people's everyday, as research for the work stemmed from interviews with local immigrant communities in South Philly.

"You can see, each work is really coming from me," Lin said. "My intention, and then I discover it."

In Lin's eyes, the piece, which ran at the Prince Theatre last March, reveals an empty universe and ultimately an empty divine, leaving only man's relationship with nature – the premise of "Spring 101."

Set to the sounds of baroque music, the work is intended to evoke joy attached to the blossom of springtime, which also coincides with this recurring theme of Qi.

"The seasons are on a cycle," said company member Nikolai Mckenzie. "Tides are on cycles. Everything is on a cycle. Your body is on a cycle...it's almost like infinity. It never starts. It never ends. You're seeing this piece in a snapshot."



(Grace Maiorano/SPR)

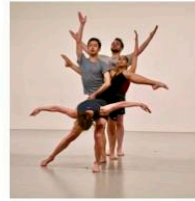
While Lin and the company recollect on the history of the Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers company, they simultaneously look ahead toward the next chapter – a continuous cycle of asking questions and dancing their way toward answers.

"I think that also suggests something about new beginnings, new journeys," said the company's business manager, Katie Moore. "Because now, Kun-Yang is choreographing his next 101 works."

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Info: To learn more about the show and to purchase tickets, visit www.annenbergcenter.org/event/kun-yang-lindancers



(Grace Maiorano/SPR)

Grace Maiorano

Kun-Yang Lin's baroque rites of Spring 101

April 15, 2019 by Lewis J Whittington for The Dance Journal | photo credit: Rob Li

In recent years, Choreographer Kun-Yang Lin has created a number of long-form dance pieces for his company KYL/Dancers addressing the many social issues of our perilous times with such works as HOME/S. 9th St, Santuario, and The Faith Project/The Door. By contrast, on the occasion of Lin's tenth anniversary season as a Philadelphia-based company, and to also celebrate his 101st dance piece, he has offered up Spring 101 along with the revival of four repertory works. The premiere of Spring 101 was also the company's first performances in the Zellerbach Theater at the Annenberg Center.



The company's avid fans showed up in full force for opening night, to the near capacity of the theater on what was a very rainy Friday. The stage is larger than KYL/Dancers are used to and they filled it with energy, precision and his range of styles.

The opening piece, CHI was created in 2000 for five dancers and now expanded by Lin to nine dancers. Lin's choreography is an exemplar of his consummate East-West choreographic fusion. Dancer, Weiwei Ma affirms the theme in an opening solo as the other dancers suddenly appear in a tight geometric cluster. CHI showcases Lin's clarity of a panorama of Asian dance artistry laced with western balletic vocabulary.

Next was Lin's stunning signature solo, Moon from 1993, set to music by Dead Can Dance, that until this night was only danced by others in the company. A virtuosic work, Liu Mo brings just as much power and precision. The dancer appears in bare to the waist, white samurai-esque skirt, the dramatic spotlight illuminating the sinewy movement in his back. Lin's recurring motif of avian moves from minimalist precision movements of the hand or the majestic 'wingspan' of his shoulders and arms. Lin's inventive adagio arts move in the explosive aerial work. Lin's shimmering choreographic lyricism is fully realized by Liu Mo and brought bravos from the audience.

The 'Land of Lost Content' from 2000 was accompanied with a mixed world music soundtrack, from chants and mystical gongs of Lama Gyurmes to the propulsive rhythmic drive of Philip Glass. The full company appeared dressed in sacred Tibetan red-orange robes designed by Tami Kawano, Sarah McCorriston and Lin. The company swarms in ceremonial kneeling prayers, their arms arced in a series of traditionally sacred postures as they advance in communal formations over four dance

sequences- Pilgrimage, Compassion, Our Land, Hope, Faith. All unfold in a meditative, but tight theatrical arc.

Kyan Namazi and Weiwei Ma bringing intimate dramatic chemistry in their central duet that features hypnotic lift sequences. Evalina Carbonell, in the last segment against the projected landscape backdrop of temples and mountains, writhes and spasms in seeming fear as the other dancers enter with blessed candles and place them at the edge of the stage and the sacred bells ring out. The tableau suggests political turmoil intruding. But entrancing mystical devotion prevails through the sacred temple dances from antiquity.

In 'Dreamscape' (2016) set to the music of David Rhode, Lin creates a dance world of distorted conscious and jagged movement fragments. Annielillie Gavino hypnotizes us with morphing body lines in reverse slow motion that keeps evolving. Other phrases alternate with convulsive clusters. The music shifts from darkly atmospheric to a pointillist rhythm and the dancers speed up with a fury of cryptic, surreal formulations, this side of Salvador Dali.

The four repertory works represent a panorama of Lin's expansive choreographic template and always evolving aesthetics. The premiere of 'Spring 101' burst forth like a gushing choreographic stream. Nikolai McKenzie slowly wrests himself from under the Annenberg curtain, in a fetal position and performs an arresting solo. Then, a Baroque Suite from George Telemann floods the theater as the curtain is up and a phalanx of dancer creatures in profile advances far upstage in a tight quirky processional. Costume designer Jill Peterson has the dancers in vibrant colors, velvety singlets with satin corsets – sharp greens, cool blues, gay fuchsia and livid reds – the colors of a vibrant tropical Spring.

Evocations of flora and fauna accompany pure movement mayhem – from flash twerking feral style, some millennial vogueing, or characterizations of avian, reptilian and mammalian physicality. Then, there are some human feats that also surprise, such as Liu Mo's saber-leg layouts, the spontaneous vocalizing by the ensemble, and of course the mach-speed attack in the ensemble sections. All are equally fertile choreographic ground for Lin.

There are interludes of earthy ambiance, created by frequent KYL/D composer & sound designer Cory Neale. in between the baroque music of Vivaldi, Purcell, and Samaratini. For the finale section, what else, but the cathartic universe of J.S. Bach. The lusty applause for each of these works and the extended reception for 'Spring 101' capped off a substantive KYL/Dancers anniversary season!

Copyright - The Dance Journal: Kun-Yang Lin's baroque rites of Spring 101

<https://philadelphiadance.org/dancejournal/2019/04/15/kun-yang-lins-baroque-rites-of-spring-101/>

Annenberg Center Live and NextMove Dance present KYL/D's 'Spring 101'

A premiere and a milestone

Melissa Strong

April 16, 2019 in [Dance](#)

The Annenberg debut of Philadelphia's Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers (KYL/D) celebrated spring and an artistic milestone, all in the company's signature style. Executive artistic director and choreographer Kun-Yang Lin draws upon philosophies like Buddhism and practices such as martial arts and Chinese opera. These influences were clear in each of the program's five distinct dances, all of which bore Lin's artistic fingerprint. This made for a **compelling debut, one that captured the dancers' prowess, the company's range, and the coherence of its artistic vision.**

Springtime and an artistic milestone with KYL/D. (Photo by Rob Li Photography.)



A life source in dance

The program opened with *CHI* (2002), a dance inspired by its namesake life source. We can feel and see the results of the movement of chi, but we can't see chi itself. The dance suggested the power and mystery of breath and energy with flowing formations of

dancers and projections of cloud-like shapes on a blue-lit background. Dancers formed pairs and trios, pulling one another by the hand and spinning energetically. They came together as a group to slowly lift one body above the others like a wave rising and cresting. A repeated thigh-

slapping gesture reflected exuberance, while hands held near the torso and swept vertically in front of the body resembled movements in the meditative practice of tai chi. Matthew F. Lewandowski II's lighting design here and throughout the program transformed dancers into beautiful moving sculptures.

Chi, faith, and humankind

Next, Liu Mo performed the stunning solo *Moon* (1993), set to nature sounds and music by Dead Can Dance. This piece combined natural images with echoes of Martha Graham's modern-dance technique, which Lin has studied. I saw birds in Mo's fluttering hands and salmon fighting their way upstream in his leaps. Meanwhile, his body rolls and slow balances embodied Graham's fluid rootedness. Effective solo dances need interesting choreography and powerful performances, and *Moon* brought strengths in both areas.

It was followed by a full-company dance, *From the Land of Lost Content* (2000). Like *Moon*, this built upon the themes *CHI* introduced, now adding humankind and faith to the program's exploration of life and nature. After a single dancer rang a bell, others entered, looking like disciples in a religious ceremony as they clasped their palms in a gesture of prayer. Praying hands were lifted overhead and drawn to the chest, and dancers prostrated themselves as if in supplication.

From the Land of Lost Content had five sections: "Pilgrimage," "Compassion," "Our Land," "Hope," and "Faith." These concepts fit its attention to belief and holiness, but the sections did not seem distinct. Several features appeared again and again, such as the dingling bell and a procession of dancers taking slow, exaggerated steps as if practicing walking meditation. As a result, the piece felt a little too long and a bit repetitive.

Dreamscape

Following intermission, *Dreamscape* (2016) took things in a different direction. However, it began and ended in a way that now felt familiar: each of Lin's dances had begun in silence, with slow movement often performed by a single dancer. Sound and music would enter the piece later, but silence returned at the end. The industrial sounds of Daniel Rhode's music enhanced the otherworldly quality of *Dreamscape*, which fused the natural with the unnatural. Dancers' synchronized breath, for instance, made the unconscious act of respiration into a percussive performance. When dancers formed lines and bent their elbows, with hands like claws, I thought of the iconic zombie dance in the "Thriller" video. Creative lighting projected larger-than-life shadows onto a screen as dancers performed a duet, raising questions about reality and illusion.



A welcome tribute to the warming season: KYL/D at the Annenberg. (Photo by Rob Li Photography.)

The joy of springtime

Spring 101, the world premiere, signaled a return to the **rhythm of the natural world**. Jill Peterson's costumes in the warm and cool shades of sun, flowers, leaves, and water combined with musical selections such as "Spring" from Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* to convey **the joy of springtime**. This dance also celebrates a milestone for Lin: it is his 101st choreographic work.

Fittingly, it began with an image of germination as Nikolai McKenzie emerged from beneath a curtain, looking like a creature being born or a sprout pushing through soil. McKenzie sunk into a split and bent his knees at an impossible-looking angle before scurrying back under the curtain, as if sucked back to his origin. The curtain rose to the sound of thunder, showing a tableau of dancers in several groups. They began to move in acrobatic postures with partners and on their own. One dancer balanced on forearms; another rested on one shoulder in a semicollapsed headstand. Anielille "Ani" Gavino and McKenzie shone during a duet of leaping advances. Sounds of insects and rain alternated with classical music, suggesting the **vibrant symphony of the cycle of life**. At the same time, **the varying tempos of Lin's choreography resembled the waxing and waning of energy during rapid development as well as fallow periods**.

KYL/D's Annenberg debut offered a welcome tribute to spring in a program that affirmed life. It also celebrated a significant artistic milestone for its choreographer, Kun-Yang Lin, along with the company's signature use of elements from Eastern and Western cultures to engage with natural and spiritual themes.

KUN-YANG LIN/DANCERS (NextMove Dance): A dance company with a philosophy

April 18, 2019 - [Eri Yoneda](#)



Yin and Yang is a commonly known Chinese philosophical concept. Many of us have seen the round, black and white icon somewhere before. But if someone asks you what it actually means, what would you say? It is a symbol of ... two opposite ideas...? **Experiencing KUN-YANG LIN/DANCERS, you may come to feel and understand what it means.**

The company showcased four repertoires and one world premiere at the Annenberg Performance Center on April 12 and 13, 2019, as the only Philadelphia-based dance company that took part in 2018-2019 NextMove Dance programs. The selections for the show, *CHI* (2002), *Moon* (1993), *From the Land of Lost Content* (2000), *Dreamscape* (2016), and *Spring 101* (World Premiere) presented **never-ending curiosity of and rich artistry of artistic director/founder, Kun-Yang Lin.**



Each piece had intriguing inspirations and concepts behind it. *CHI* was “inspired by the interplay of the visible and invisible as manifested in the ancient art form of tai chi and calligraphy”. The solo dance *Moon* was powerful yet tranquil at the same time. To the mystical music of bird chirps, chantings and percussions, Liu Mo was captivating and divine.

From the Land of Lost Content guided the audiences on a pilgrimage to the sacred land of Tibet. In the exotic costumes in the color of fire, the dancers vigorously prayed, embraced each other and the land.

Dreamscape was mysterious and sharp piece danced in black.

The show closed with the world premiere *Spring 101*, **an imaginative and comical dance** about a birth, awakening and joy.

Throughout the **diverse and unique** pieces, what was consistent was the dancers’ incredible ability to control and balance their bodies and movements. And the source of the strength seemed to come from the complete balance of two opposite elements, Yin and Yang, nurturing each other infinitely. Inhale and exhale. Hold and release. Serenity and explosion. When they posed in slow movements, the intense energy could be felt. When they reached at the highest point of grand jeté, they release the energy completely like a bird riding a wind, and that moment, **it felt as if they even stopped the time. Dancing can be in many and any forms, but those with a philosophical approach can be more eloquent and impactful. KYD/DANCERS proved just that.**

[Annenberg Center Live, 3680 Walnut Street] *April 12-13, 2019*; kyld.org

Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers Merge Philosophy with Choreography



A nonprofit, contemporary dance organization, *Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers (KYL/D)* was asked to participate in the 2018/2019 Annenberg dance subscription series based on a past performance ten years prior.

Their impressive performances of both physicality and intellect left a mark on the current executive and artistic director of the **Annenberg**, Chris Gruits, who invited them to be the only local performance company in the series for their paralleling missions and community outreach efforts to that of the Annenberg. Katie Moore, business director of Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers explains, “KYL/D’s conception of dance is not just for entertainment, it is a whole philosophy, a means of being that relates both inside and outside of the studio.”



For the spring home season, KYL/D presented four selections from previous signature works and a world premiere called *Spring 101* created by Kun-Yang Lin, choreographer, artistic director and founder of [Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers](#) and the [CHI Movement Arts Center \(CHI MAC\)](#) at 1316 S. 9th Street near Passyunk Square. Kun-Yang Lin explains the works in detail, “*CHI* is a connection with the Chi awareness; how our essential breath can lead into the group collective. *Moon* relates to nature and our relationship with nature.” He explains it as a shift into artwork and abstraction.

He had created this work in 1993 after just moved to the United States and was longing for home; however, the portrayal has no concrete visuals to depict or recount actual events of his past. This is a prime example of the philosophical inspiration captured in Lin’s movement.

For him, it starts with the process of discovering our gifts and sharing our gifts to help. This concept was taught to him at a young age from his mother. He knew he loved to dance and loved making things.

At age 12, he started a men’s dance group in the small village of Hsinchu, Taiwan, where he was raised at a time when boys were not allowed to be dancing or were not given the opportunity to dance. He helped them identify their gifts and live their passion of movement and dance. He realized his gift for making dance for his community in Hsinchu and carries that sense of making dance for the community here in Philadelphia.

The performance is a collaboration of movement developed by the company dancers guided by Lin through concepts of *Chi* and *Buddhism*. “Chi gives you a sense of environment. Chi is your relationship with others. Cultivate the Chi through gifts. Each of us has our own individual gifts. That has become my long journey in dance — discover your gifts and discover who you are, but that who you are is in constant change,” says Lin.





Artists have a certain ownership of the movement. He will take a concept and allow them to create by working together to build it, tying together the gifts of the individual artist. He will then add multiple layers and intellectual thinking to organize the movement into what will be presented in spaces, such as the Annenberg.

Jessica Warchal-King, the curator for KYL/D's InHale Performance Series, says "I've been learning from Kun-Yang since 2007, first as a grad student at Temple, then as a performing member of the company from 2010-2017. He challenges us to see and be seen, to be vulnerable at the same time we are strong, and to hold onto our past while embracing the unknown, changing future."

His artists have certain kinds of strengths along with athleticism, sharp and detailed technique, virtuosity, commitment, discipline and passion but, most importantly, is their creativity — that is the balance for KYL/D's creative process. "[The work is an] expression or reflection of my life through abstraction, but with the dancers, you have to plant the seed and allow them to grow. They have to engage with their imagination. They have to be creative."

There is a sense of individual within the collective, but the dancers work together to move those in the room through dance and breath allowing the audience to feel the energy as a whole and building a deeper connection and impact for the viewer. The audience is then embodied on the journey with the dancers taking the movement beyond just a reflection of Lin's history.

"People often call our work spiritual or that the sense of collective energy is empowering. What does that mean? It means you feel transformation happening," says Lin. With interesting elements of self-discovery for the performers, the energy of Lin's dance works has been known for taking the audience into their own self-discovery offering an escape into the movement,

which raises awareness with what they are going through personally in their lives while experiencing each performance.

For a deeper experience of the steps that go into Lin's creative process, KYL/D offers classes, open rehearsals and open studio series at CHI MAC for the audience to experience the whole environment, details of the dance works, and a more in-depth understanding of dance itself.



In an open studio event, he will deconstruct his creative process starting with one dance phrase for the dancers to learn and then layer on tasks of how to manipulate it until it slowly becomes their own while also assembling itself into final choreography for performances. “The working atmosphere at KYL/D is very empowering to me. Specifically, Kun-Yang’s open-minded perspective at the studio has created a safe place for us to work together, which has allowed us to learn how to respectfully listen and react to each other’s voices/thoughts,” says Maggie Zhao, rehearsal director and assistant artistic director. At the end of open studio events, there is a question and answer session along with an open dialogue with Lin, the dancers, lighting and music director about the collaboration.

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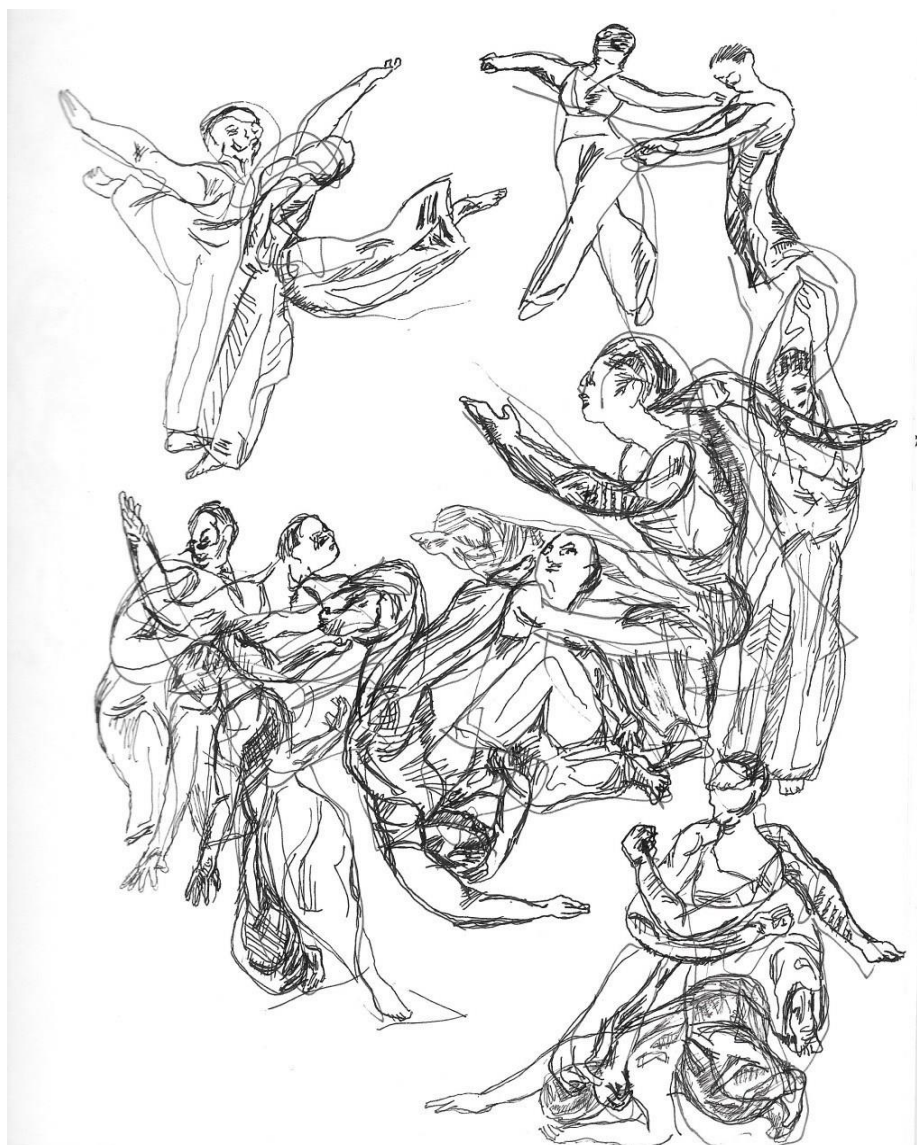
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Dance in Sketch: KUN-YANG LIN/DANCERS (NextMove Dance)

April 26, 2019 - [Chuck Schultz](#)

Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers performed April 12-13, 2019 as part of the Annenberg center Live series coproduced by Next Move Dance. ([Read the Phindie review.](#))



The Philadelphia dance scene was glorified by Philadanco's Joan Meyers Brown for having some terrific dancers. **Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers is one of those terrific gems.** The repertoire of Kun-Yang Lin showcased at the Annenberg showed **how the art reflects a relationship with the world around us.** Beginning with CHI, performed by the whole company, we perceive the blue sky and clouds as the nature we all share. It is the way we move through this nature that sets us apart from each other.



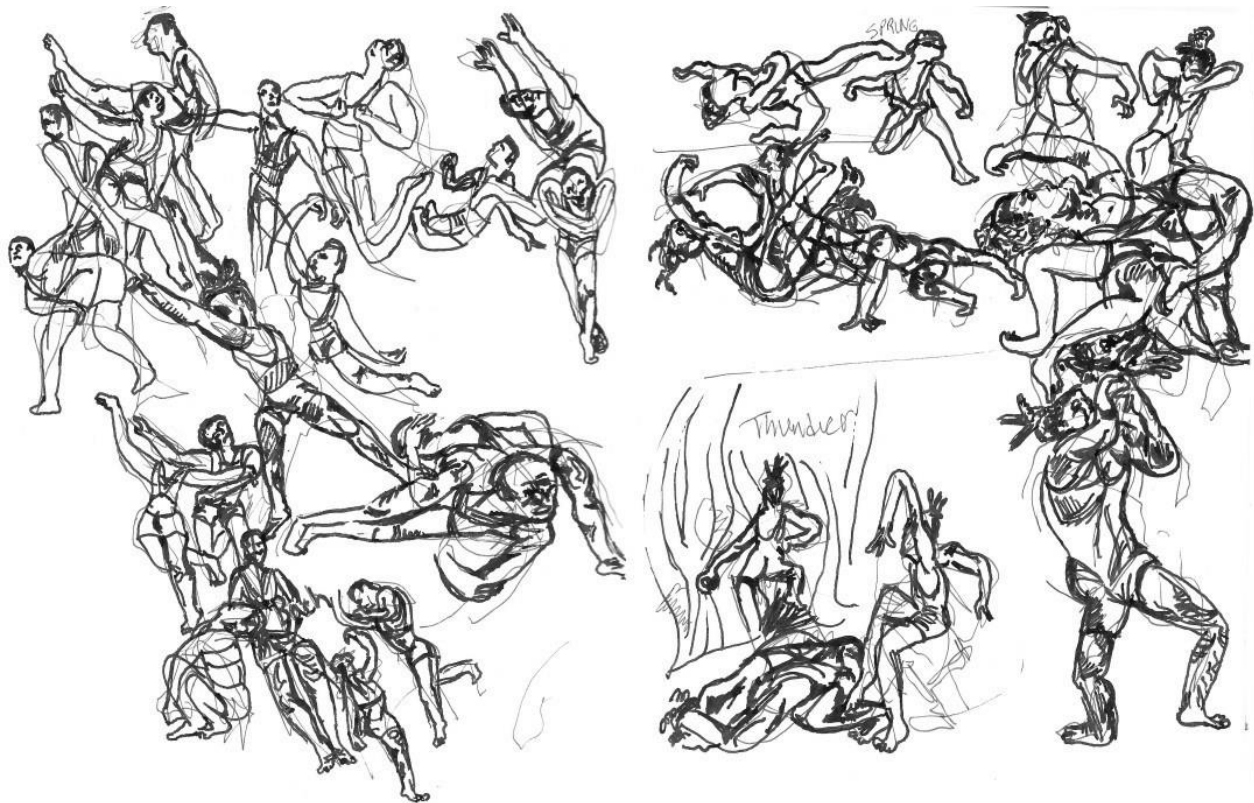
The next piece MOON, performed by Liu Mo, for instance sets the stage for a dark outer space. The hard edged figures moved into the light, creating a weight that moved slowly into a sound by stomping, but they appeared more like a massive meteorite that was sound with a colossal outer space. Physical dance and splashes of color and light address the full turn of events through Lin's path as a dancer. Zooming in on Lin's early work, there is a serious exploration of the forces around us. Whereas, in the second half we find that the powers of color and censorship are in our hands, and in that thought, Lin's later pieces moved toward an open relationship with nature.



The third dance of the evening, was FROM THE LAND OF LOST CONTENT, and it portrayed duets that brought the bodies closer and into orbit with one another. Lin's foundation of core movements provide us with an idea about a larger world. In LAND OF LOST CONTENT the color fields emit an emotion in a backdrop on stage: 1. Pilgrimage, 2. Compassion, 3. Our Land, 4. Hope, 5. Faith. What is lost, and where are we coming from in Lin's exploration of his identity in his dances? The purple screen behind the dancers during "our land", the green screen behind "hope", and red screen behind "faith", featured key parts to how we should perceive the lift that occurs in "pilgrimage" at the beginning. Compared to the red lights that end the piece during "faith," the dancers leave us in a trans; they leave their bodies, the land, and reach outwards. This piece transformed a noise, a breathe, or an energy that raised my attention to the polychromatic stage.



After Intermission, in DREAMSCAPE we reach a sense of modern dance which we can conceive from the dancers black costumes made up of slight changes designed to the individual dancer's style. The dynamic relation of figures blend together and adapt to parts of a larger organism. The meaning of DREAMSCAPE was a distance unfathomable, intrinsic, and detached from formidable structures. The presentation of visible and invisible constructs, such as, sexuality, performs in this black hole of identities dancing around an indecipherable mass.



Ending the KYLD event with a world premiere called SPRING 101 reminded me of an iridescent light shining on a crater with life crawling out of it. More like running and learning to walk again, the classical music of Bach was like turning the light on after a very long time of being in the darkness. It is interesting how these pieces have changed since the open studio series last month. The dance kept its humor while indulging in the color and individuality of KYL/Dancers. The indecipherable form in the last piece seemed to be uncovered in this dance, an insatiable field of flowers. Dancers performed duets, and solos that grew more distinct; a dancer mounted on the shoulders of another dancer in a golden light at stage left slowed down time. SPRING 101 moved in and out of the music, signaling a serious-comedy about the flowers in spring.

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