

UNIONPDX

FESTIVAL OF CONTEMPORARY DANCE

PUSH/FOLD PRESENTS
UNION PDX - FESTIVAL:23
NOVEMBER 16-19
HAMPTON OPERA CENTER

23



FROM SAMUEL HOBBS

Welcome to the 5th annual Union PDX - Festival of Contemporary Dance, **Festival:23!**

We are thrilled to be here with you all and to share in this experience of **Art** and **Community** with these incredible artists from the United States, across the sea, and right here in our city. Art is an essential and necessary part of society; we would not be here today without it. **Art** waters hope, builds resilience, and saves lives. Art drives innovation and inspires scientists and mathematicians to dream up new ways to solve problems and explore the stars. **Art** truly nourishes the life and breath of who we are as individuals and as a community.

For the **push/FOLD** family, 2023 has been a remarkable year of exploration, growth, and creative evolution. It has been a year of travel, performances, forging new relationships, building new opportunities, strengthening coalitions, and much more! **Community** lies at the heart of this endeavor, and we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the volunteers, donors, board, and staff whose unwavering support has been instrumental in bringing this vision to life.

This weekend, the **Union PDX** festival, is more than a series of performances. Built with our community for our community, it is a collective creation shaped by panels, forums, discussions, and partnerships. It is a manifestation of the dedication and passion of countless individuals who have spent the past year devoted to the creation of **Art**, shaping the cultural landscape, and planting the seeds for our future star seekers. Thank you to our community and our colleagues—**Union PDX** would not exist without you.

Thank you for being with us. We are thrilled that the **Union PDX - Festival:23** weekend has finally come!

-Samuel Hobbs-

ABOUT UNION PDX

Since its inception in 2019, the **Union PDX - Festival of Contemporary Dance** has emerged as a dynamic force within Portland's vibrant dance scene, solidifying its place as a cornerstone of **push/FOLD's** programming. Committed to addressing the fundamental challenges faced by dance professionals globally—**Opportunity**, **Education**, and **Resources**—our festival stands as a catalyst for upward mobility in the dance world.

Through a weekend filled with compelling performances, enriching masterclasses and workshops, and engaging artist-audience interactions. This panel-curated festival transcends borders, bringing together artists from around the world to Portland. Our mission is to cultivate a thriving creative ecosystem, strengthening our city as a national hub for dance.

Now in its fifth annual iteration, the **Union PDX** festival remains a vital platform. It has evolved into a comprehensive resource and a one-stop shop for presenters, donors, and collaborators—breaking down barriers and fostering opportunities for cross-pollination. We stand humbled and grateful, united with artists globally.

Explore our website to delve deeper into the vision of **Union PDX** and learn how you can be a catalyst for change in the world of dance.

ABOUT PUSH/FOLD

At the intersection of artistic innovation and physical prowess lies **push/FOLD**, the vision of multidisciplinary artist and composer-choreographer Samuel Hobbs. Founded as a performance-focused arts organization, immersive moodscapes, abstract storytelling, and athletic dance performance set to original sound, set, and lighting design are the hallmarks of **push/FOLD's** body of work. Central to **push/FOLD's** athletic style is the **Visceral Movement Theory™** (VMT) technique, revolutionizing the expression of power and efficiency in movement. Informed by cutting-edge research, **VMT** seamlessly blends athletics and dance training with visceral biomechanics.

Dedicated to community empowerment, **push/FOLD** packages education with high-caliber professional dance performance. Their programs encompass masterclasses, professional development workshops, student outreach, films, artist talks, and the annual **UnionPDX - Festival of Contemporary Dance**. Collaborating with professional artists and companies, and offering residencies and workshops to a broad spectrum of entities, including athletes, training programs, corporations, dance schools, and universities regionally and internationally, **push/FOLD** continues to shape the future of dance, inspiring audiences and communities alike.

push/FOLD is a 501(c)(3) non-profit arts organization based in Portland, Oregon.

PART I | PROGRAM

'Confetti Head' | Open Space

A dark yet playful piece about power play, and the place deep inside our heads where we must escape to survive, when we find ourselves at the tipping point of abused power.

Choreographer:
Franco Nieto

Dancers:
Elise Gonsalves, Audrey Wells

Music:
'Im Sorry' — Travis Lake
'Lakmé: Sous le Dôme Épais' — Bulgarian National Radio Symphony
'Learn your Lesson' — Madison McFerrin (Photay Remix)
'Gang Gang Dance' — MindKilla

'A Clarion Call' | Sridharini Sridharan

'A Clarion Call' examines today's world through the creator's eyes. Parallels are drawn from the Hindhu mythology on how the divine power has incarnated on earth each time there has been a call for help. Is there hope? Will the creator rise again in response to the call for help? A clarion call does not answer these questions, but probes each of us to ask questions that are necessary.

Music:
'Nattuvangam' — Revathi Ramachandran
'Mridangam' — Kesavan, Akshay, Bharadwaj
Vocals: Nandini Anand, Preethi Mahesh, Ramakrishnan Murthi
Violin: K.P. Nandini, Charumathi Raghuraman, Ambi Subramaniam
Dialogues: Sridharini Sridharan & Nivethitha Kumar

'Once, & for All' | Outrun the Bear

What the hell is happily ever after?

Reflections on learning that love and happiness are two different entities, with nonlinear trajectories in common. Much is expected, nothing is guaranteed. Deconstructing the fairytale, all the while discovering the joys and challenges that make up the story of how another being can become a home.

Choreographers, Performers:
Megan Doherty & Ilya Nikurov

Music:
"Cristo Redentor"- Harvey Mandel
"Liebestraume No. 3" - Franz Liszt
"You'll Never Be Alone"- The Books

PROGRAM | PART II

'0.4mm' | Evelyn Tejeda

Visually, an exhaustion of a resource as daily and simple as a blouse, is the analogy of the epidermis and the infinite search of the question, "what am I for?" '04mm' is the discomfort and dissatisfaction of one's own being and what is hidden under the skin— the knotted entanglements originating in the existential vacuum of the mind and its games of power and manipulation over the Self.

Have you ever forgotten how to listen and follow your heart?

Music:

'Nwia' — Valentin Stip

'Memoria' — Murcof

'Ozymandias' | push/FOLD

A haunting recording bookends this work—the hopeful mating call of the last Kaua'i 'o'o Bird. For two years the lulls in his call search for a female response that never comes. Tragically, the recording of its own call was played back to the lonely bird, who mistakes it for a potential mate. He sang for a few more days after this recording before succumbing to extinction, marking the end of the Kaua'i 'o'o species. At its core, 'Ozymandias' grapples with the relentless erosion of self, particularly as it relates to heritage and community.

Choreographer:

Samuel Hobbs

Dancers:

Maile Crowder, Briley Jozwiak, Ashley Morton, Alana Stubbs, Willow Swanson

Music:

'Deja que Salga La Luna' — José Alfredo Jiménez, performed by Katie James

'Corazón Enamorado' — Super Grupo Colombia

The last song of the Kauai O'o Bird — Recorded by Ornithologist H. Douglas Pratt

'Simposio' | Compagnia Bellanda

From "hermaphrodites," narrated in Aristophanes' speech, the supernatural figures in strength and shape to the divided body that we have, our moving figures are born. The bodies combine—the attempt at reunion—a tension towards completeness, and a relationship never completely "satisfied." It is now impossible to go back to a single body. A perennial desire for reunion, a desire that animates and moves.

Choreographers, Performers:

Lia Claudia Latini & Giovanni Leonarduzzi

Music:

'Hvert stefnir' — Sigur Ros; Steindór Andersen, Hilmar Örn Hilmarsson and María Huld Markan Sigfúsdóttir



Photography: Emanuele Chirivino

COMPAGNIA BELLANDA

Gorizia, Italia

Compagnia Bellanda was founded in 2012 by Giovanni Leonarduzzi (aka Gava), driven by the desire to explore a personal evolution of breakdancing. Together with partner Claudia Latini, Compagnia Bellanda's movement is rooted in profound research of urban influences, and it aspires to evolve toward a choreutic expression of contemporary dance. As their company has grown to become one of the most active international entities in the realm of new dance, Giovanni and Claudia are regularly invited to serve as dance professors at Balletto di Roma, Dance Hause-Kataklò in Milan, and Opus Bellet in Florence, as well as in numerous academies across Europe.

www.bellanda.company
@COMPAGNIA_BELLANDA



SAMUEL HOBBS

push/FOLD | Portland, OR

Samuel Hobbs is a dance presenter, educator, and multidisciplinary artist (Dance, Art, Film, Music), and is the Artistic Director and composer-choreographer for push/FOLD. Named an Oregon Performing Arts Fellow of 2023, Samuel's works have performed both internationally and nationally since 2014, while teaching contemporary movement and partnering since 2008.

As a choreographer, Samuel's artistic process draws from themes influenced from Dreamtime and a profound fascination with athletic forms—encompassing training in Track, Swimming, Martial Arts, and various dance styles including West African, Street, Contemporary Dance, and Ballet. Building upon their movement foundation, Samuel integrated their expertise in visceral biomechanics as an Osteopathic Manual Therapist to develop the unique somatic movement method called Visceral Movement Theory™ (VMT). VMT plays a pivotal role as the core framework underpinning push/FOLD's distinctive movement-partnering style and training.

Samuel's recent notable commissions and projects include their Oregon Ballet Theatre 2023 premiere 'Part II', and their latest evening-length work 'Vespers'—a collaboration with the 100-member Portland Symphonic Choir to premiere in January 2024 at The Reser.

Before dance, Samuel was a university track athlete studying Math and Computer Science at the University of Oregon and Western Oregon University, graduating in 2007 with a B.S. in The Arts, studying Music, Illustration, Sculpture, Dance, and Computer Programming.

www.pushfold.org

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FRANCO NIETO

Open Space | Portland, OR

Choreographer

Princess Grace Award winner Franco Nieto was born and raised in the Pacific Northwest. He made the unconventional switch from football to ballet in his teenage years and has now taught and danced across the United States and internationally. Nieto was a principal dancer with NW Dance Project in Portland, Oregon, where he toured the world and worked with leading minds to create countless original works. His early training came from the Vancouver School of Arts & Academics, Columbia Dance, and his mentor, Tracey Durbin. He graduated from Point Park University, with his BFA in Jazz. Nieto is now Artistic Director and a co-founder of Open Space, located in North Portland.

OPEN SPACE

Open Space is a creative container for dance and movement where every *body* is welcome. Founded in 2020 by Maeve Dougal, Charlene Hannibal, and Franco Nieto, Open Space is an "Open Space" for dancers, artists and movement enthusiasts. Featuring both a professional company and a dance school, the Open Space company performs across the United States and regionally. This year, Open Space Too emerged, serving as a two-year training program for advanced-level dancers aged 18+.

The School at Open Space works in partnership with the performance company, and enrolls 190 students each year (ages of 2 to 21). The School serves students of all socio-economic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, and celebrates all gender identities and its neurodiverse populations. Turning no family away for lack of funds, Open Space awards over \$50,000 in scholarships annually.

www.openspace.dance

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Photography: Jason Hill

Photography: Holly Shaw



OUTRUN THE BEAR

Los Angeles, CA

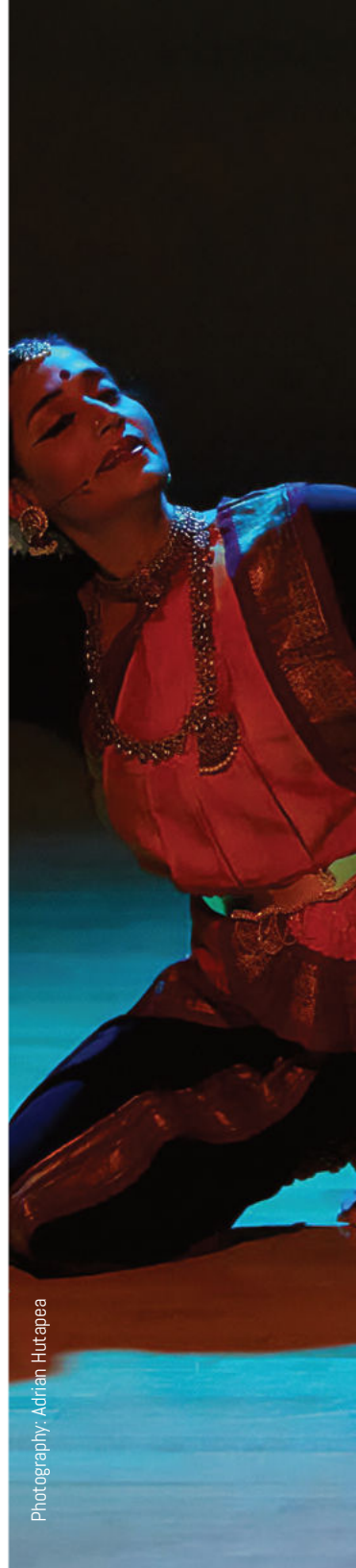
There is a saying — "when being chased by a bear, you don't need to outrun the bear, you just need to outrun your friend" — we choose to "Outrun the Bear," together.

Megan Doheny (USA) and Ilya Nikurov (Russia) met working as dancers for the Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company (KCDC) in Israel, and have been creating together since 2015. From 2016-2020, Megan and Ilya worked as resident choreographers for the International Dance Journey Program and created pieces for KCDC's main company as a part of the Alternative Stage Platform in Israel. In 2021, they established their collaborative dance project, "Outrun The Bear." Since then, Megan & Ilya have received invitations to perform and screen their works in Israel, the Netherlands, Portugal, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, The United States, Japan, Mexico, Singapore and South Korea. Megan recently completed her time as an Artist in Residence at LA Dance Project as a part of Launch:LA 2023, and a guest artist at Chapman University.

Together, Megan & Ilya find inspiration for creation in the space that exists between reality and the dream world. Warping the familiar and embodying the imagined, Outrun The Bear is interested in connecting and communicating with audiences by sharing personal stories in thought-provoking contexts.

www.outrunthebear.org

OUTRUN.THE.BEAR



SRIDHARINI SRIDHARAN

Portland, OR

Choreographer, Performer

A disciple Guru Smt. Revathi Ramachandran, Sridharini has been honed in the Melattur style of Bharatanatyam for over three decades, performing at numerous venues as a solo artist and as lead roles in the dance ballets conceptualized by her guru. As a classically trained vocalist, Sridharini is also well versed in traditional cymbals called Nattuvangam.

Sridharini has extensively traveled France and the USA, performing as a regular at many of India's renowned art festivals, including Incredible India festival in France, and representing her country as a cultural ambassador in Singapore. Sridharini was featured in the Polaris Galaxy dance festival in 2020 and 2021, and was featured in a short film 'A Day in Colour' at the Monta Villa Jazz Festival. In 2022, she presented her full-length solo work, 'A Clarion Call', as part of the Residency program at New Expressive works in Portland, OR.

Sridharini holds a diploma in Indian classical music and Bharatanatyam from the state of Tamil Nadu, India in addition to being a CPA outside of dance. Sridharini currently runs her school Kalashiksha to share her love for the art with the community.

SRIDHARINI



EVELYN TEJEDA

Dominican Republic

Choreographer, Performer

Originally from the Dominican Republic, and based in NYC, interpreter, improviser, choreographer, and instructor, Evelyn Tejeda is an independent artist creating across the world. Holding a Master's degree in Performing Arts from Rey Juan Carlos University in Madrid, Spain, Tejeda first gained recognition as a Semi-Finalist on Dominicana's Got Talent in 2019, later becoming an Elite Judge at Hip-Hop International. As a founding member of the National Contemporary Dance Company of the Dominican Republic, she toured globally.

Showcasing her artistic depth, Tejeda's career has taken her to international stages and music videos, winning awards for her choreography 'Imposible Explicar', and leaving an indelible mark on the world of dance. She has performed at Bates Dance Festival, XVII Encuentro de Danza Ecuador, among others; and with artists: Farruko, Anuel AA, Thomaz, Greeicy, Eddy Herrera, Daddy Yankee, La Materialista, Enrique Iglesias, and Sean Paul.

www.evelyntejeda.com

📸 EVELYNTEJEDA_



Photography: Jingzi Zhao | Festival'22 Artists

PERFORMANCES

Nov 16 @ 8:00pm
"Student Preview"

Nov 17 & 18 @ 7:30pm
Nov 19 @ 4:00pm

FESTIVAL SOIRÉE

Nov 19 | Post-Performance

"Free & Open to All"

MASTERCLASSES

Contemporary Jazz | Nov 17 @ 1:30pm
Franco Nieto

Jedatam Method | Nov 17 @ 3:15pm
Evelyn Tejeda
(Contemporary Street)

Sync-Up | Nov 18 @ 11:45am
Outrun the Bear
(Contemporary Partnering)

Natya Katha | Nov 18 @ 1:30pm
Sridharini Sridharan
(Bharatanatyam & Natya Katha)

Floor Flirting | Nov 18 @ 3:15pm
Compagnia Bellanda
(Contemporary Break)

WORKSHOPS

Deciphering Grants - Part I | Nov 19 @ 10:00am
Eleanor Sandys & Samuel Hobbs

Deciphering Grants - Part II | Nov 19 @ 11:45am
Eleanor Sandys & Samuel Hobbs



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SPECIAL THANK YOU

Holly Shaw • Hailey Bill • Erin O'Shaughnessy • Kathryn Frey
Briley Jozwiak • Ashley Morton • Maile Crowder • Bethany Foran
Ronni Lacroute • George Thorn • Graham Cole • Bill & Wendy Whitsell
Carolyn Hope & Steve Lyford • Christina Grooms • Jingzi Zhao • Sharon & Alan
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