

# AXIS

## Dance Company

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Spring 2000



## Home Season coming in June!



We've said it before and we'll say it again: This is a company that is going places. The past months have brought many developments and accomplishments, of which we are inordinately proud. Here are just a sampling that

we'd like to crow about.

Undoubtedly the most thrilling thing in the past year was the opportunity to work with the renowned choreographer Bill T Jones. Over three intensive, inspiring weeks in September, all seven AXIS dancers met daily with Bill and his astoundingly astute rehearsal director Janet Wong to create a new AXIS piece to Franz Schubert's "Fantasy in C Major,"--a devilishly complex, intricate, and hauntingly beautiful piece of music. In our quest to hone and polish the piece since then, we've recruited an astoundingly astute rehearsal director of our own, Sonya Delwaide, whom you may remember as the very talented choreographer who created "Chuchotements" for us in 1998. "Fantasy in C Major" was commissioned by AXIS and Dance Umbrella in Boston and will premiere there June 9-11.

For those wishing to see the piece a little closer to home, read on! After working double-time over the past two years to create an all-new repertory, AXIS is terrifically excited to present our first official AXIS Home Season at the Cowell on June 22-24. Much of our new repertory has not yet been seen in the Bay Area, so for all of you who have been asking us "when do I get to see that piece?", this is your moment. This will be the Bay Area premiere of Bill T Jones's much-anticipated lyrical tour de force "Fantasy in C Major;" Joe Goode's provocative dance theater rumination on love and duty, "Jane Eyre;" and Joanna Hai-good's lush aerial quartet "Descending Cords." Also included on the program are recent favorites "Chuchotements," Sonya Delwaide's quirky take on baroque social codes; and "Ta Kala," nominated for a 1998 Izzy for Choreography, directed by AXIS' own Stephanie McGlynn and Nicole Richter. In other words,

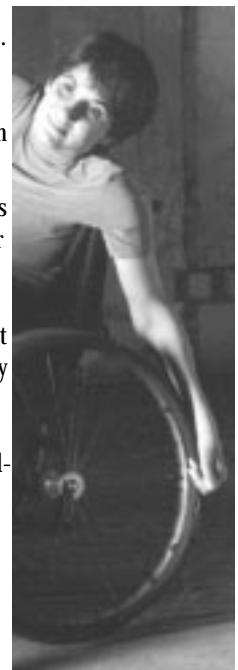
this is as richly varied and fascinating a repertory show as you're likely to see this year. Don't miss out!

As if the stellar roll-call of talented choreographers listed above is not dizzying enough, AXIS has recently corralled a prestigious Rockefeller MAP Fund to commission the equally prestigious Stephen Petronio to create our next work. Known world-wide for his stunningly kinetic, ground-breaking works, Stephen has been called the "most fearlessly inventive, most audaciously virtuosic dancer-choreographer of his generation" by the San Francisco Examiner. Members of AXIS were privileged to enjoy an intensive workshop with him in February of 1999, by the end of which our fascination with each other had clearly become mutual. Stephen proposed, we breathlessly accepted, and the rest (we predict!) will become dance history. With almost unbearable anticipation, we look forward to starting work on the piece in the fall.

AXIS has been invited down under! We're one of a very few companies to be invited to perform in the Harbour of Life Festival in Sydney, Australia, the arts festival centered around the 2000 Olympics and Paralympics. AXIS will be presented in the Sydney Opera House. Pending funding, we'll be there for nine days in October to teach and to perform four full repertory programs.

For the second time in three years, AXIS has been honored with a coveted nomination for the super-prestigious Cal Arts/Alpert Award in Dance. The award honors mid-career artists or companies creating work of high merit with a social importance. Nominations are by anonymous professionals in the field, and cannot be repeated from year to year. The award takes into consideration both the quality of past work and the promise of future output. In truth we are thrilled just to be nominated again.

Thank you, whoever you are!



# Who's on board ...



Tom Metz joined the AXIS Board of Directors in the fall of 1996. Several years earlier, he had attended an AXIS performance at the Berkeley Art Museum, an experience he describes as revelatory, pivotal, and terrifying. "It totally blew me away. I had never seen disabled people move in such an energetic and powerful way." As a person with a disability, he says, "I was not prepared for what I saw." The performance "challenged my ideas about limitations for people with disabilities." On a dare, Tom joined AXIS's weekly contact improvisation classes. A year later he was invited to join the company's Hidden Histories Project (Cowell Theater, June 1996).

By profession a technical writer for Quicken personal finance software, Tom regularly lends his talents as writer and editor to AXIS's public relations and fundraising efforts. A community activist who has done public relations for the Columbus AIDS Task Force and served on the advisory board of ABLE-TOGETHER, Tom was a driving force behind last year's Garrick Ohlsson benefit recital.

Tom joined the AXIS Board of Directors, because "the Dance Access Program changed my life. I wanted to give something back." As a Board member, his principal aims are to build the company's infrastructure as it moves to the next level of professionalism. "The AXIS Board is strong. We have a very committed core, with energy and a diversity of talent," Tom says, "but the dancers are ahead of us. I'm inspired and in awe of what the dancers are doing, and it makes me want to do more myself. We have to catch up to them!"

## Thank you, thank you, thank you.

AXIS gratefully acknowledges the support of our unstoppable dancers and our incredible Board of Directors; Alysah Ahlstone for marketing consultation; Lela Davia for development; Ramona Arellano and Dolly Gattozzi for administrative assistance; Sonya Delwaide, Alexander Nichols, Joanna Haigood, Wayne Campbell, Joe Goode, Marit Brook-Kothlow, Leon Setti, Bill T. Jones and Janet Wong for our wonderful new repertory pieces; Ted Helminsky, Elly Pardo, Brian Lazarus and KDOL for video work; Jim Iacona and his numerous associates for photo work; Andrew Tavoni and Tom Metz for graphics; Mary Smith for financial management; and Jan Garrett and Jonathan Frieman for their exceptional leadership! Jeremy Alliger, Bjorn Amelan, Jim Beatty, Marisa Brugarolas, Donna Burke, Marina Drummer, Wayne Cook and Rob Lautz, Sally Dean, Christine Elbel, Susan Goldberg, Linda Howe, Safi Jiroh, Terry Joseph, Carmella Johnson, Barbara Kaplan, John Killacky, Bruce Lawrence, Joan Lazarus, Tim McClymon, Nancy Martino, Joan Nelson-Dills, Susan O'Hara, Stephen Petronio, Frances Phillips, Suzanne Sato, Joe Tuohy, Andrew Wood and ODC Theater for their enthusiasm and support. The dancers would like to send a special thanks to the following very supportive and understanding individuals: Paul Church, Cathy Green, Wally Holder, Jim Iacona, Matt McGlynn, Leon Setti, Iva Walton.

AXIS Dance Company was supported in 1999 by Arts Management Institute, Business Volunteers for the Arts, California Arts Council Organizational Support Program, Oakland Cultural Arts Division, Maxwell Blake Fund at East Bay Community Foundation, Emmett R. Quady Foundation, Charles Schwab, Judith Stronach Fund of Vanguard Public Foundation and True North Foundation, and by the following generous individuals: Sydel and Eva, Keith Alward, Sue Anderson, Jody Andrews, Judith Baker, Jeri Bemis, Susan Blanchard, Diana Bohn, Jackie Brand, Joan Breves, Michael Brown, Tish Brown, Maryann Buchholz, Anne Butigan, Carrie & John R. Butler, Geneva Clay, Carolyn Cornia, Allen Daley, Lela Davia, Tisha Dunne, JA Ellis, Laine Feingold, Jackie & Richard Fineberg, Elly & Izzie Friedman, Jeff Friedman, Jonathan Frieman, Dolly Gattozzi, Dan Geiger, Cindi & Howard Goldberg, Anne Greene, Tyler Haaren, Elliot Halpern, L. Hamilton, Neala Haze, Nancy Henderson, Linda Hunt, Susanna Jacobson, Sondra Jensen, Victoria Jones, Hannah Joyce, Marty & Barbara Kaplan, Lucille Karuzas, Elias Katz, Yuko Kitaura, Susan Kuhn, David Landes, Virginia Laurence, Phyllis Lewkowicz, Simi Linton, Jeffrey Mandel, Pamela Markmann, Jennifer McKay, Pam Mendelsohn, Tom Metz, Albert Meyer, Michael Miller, Mary Mocine, Susan Musicant, Debra Nicholson, Susan Oehser, Sheila O'Rourke, Michael Perreault, Karen Peterson, Peter Pfaelzer, Nancy Pierce-Owens, Bob Powers, Jodi Pullan, Anders Richter, Richard Richter, Barry Roeder, Carol Rothman, Megan Schirle, Peg & George Schirle, Jane Schnorrenberg, Alan & Laurie Senauke, Kathryn Setian, Beth Slepian, Lois Smith, Mary Smith, Joel Snyder, Patty Thayer, Judith Treesberg, Steven & Christina Upstill, Gretchen Williams, Edwin Wood, Rachel Young, Sophie Yung, Luoping Zhang.

The New Works Fund was supported in 1999 by Alameda County Arts Commission, Fleishhacker Foundation, Walter and Elise Haas Fund, LEF Foundation, Rockefeller MAP Fund and the Zellerbach Family Fund. 'Fantasy in C Major' by Bill T. Jones is supported by Jeremy Alliger and Dance Umbrella, the National Endowment for the Arts, AT&T Foundation, LEF Foundation, City of Oakland Cultural Arts Division, Charles Jackson and the Alice Arts Center, Elena Serrano and Sonja Travick and CitiCentre Dance Theatre, the Durant Hotel, Terry Joseph, Bruce Lawrence MD, Carol Swann and Moving on Center, Jerry Brown and We the People, and by the following individual donors: Alisa Ahlstone, Farrell Barnett, Mary Barrington, Linda Bernhard, Kathryn Black, Carolyn Cornia, Michael Darby MD, Rosalind Diamond, Laird Eickmeyer, Coyness Ennix, MD, Susan Foster, Jonathan Frieman, Jan and Dan Garrett, Russell Giuntini, MD, Nancy Henderson, David Landes, Keith and Lynette Lewis, Phyllis Lewkowicz, Andrew McGuire, Henry Ramos & Claudia Lynchen Ramos, Steven Raskin, MD, Pauline Richter, Peg & George Schirle, Mary Smith, Alan Spanier, Nancy Gardner.

Dance Access and Dance Access/KIDS was supported in 1999 by {from} the California Arts Council Artist-in-Residency Program, Clorx Foundation, Disability Rights Advocates Fund of the San Francisco Foundation, Pacific Bell Foundation, Puffin Foundation, Sydney Stern Memorial Trust, Van Loben Sels Foundation, Morris Stulsaft Foundation, Zellerbach Family Fund.

And thanks to everyone who participated in our Studio Cleanup Party!

# Spring 2000 Calendar

Some events subject to change - call 510-287-5792 for information and confirmation!

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## Performances

- April 22, 8pm - Alice Arts Center, Oakland, CA. Info: 510-238-6952

AXIS performs beside dance luminaries Capacitor, Fellow Travellers, and Kendra Kimbrough, as part of the Oakland Arts Festival.

- May 7, 7:30 pm. Works in the Works, Eighth Street Studio, Berkeley, CA.

AXIS shows off its new duet-in-progress by Megan Schirle and Alisa Rasera. Come offer your feedback and see other new pieces by local dance artists! Info: (510) 654 5492

- June 1-11 Dance Umbrella Presents AXIS, Boston, MA

AXIS returns to Boston to premiere "Fantasy in C Major" by Bill T Jones, show off the rest of its rep, and teach throughout the Boston area in a full week's residency. Info: (617) 482 7570

- June 22-24 AXIS Home Season Cowell Theater, Bay San Francisco, CA.

AXIS presents its millennial repertory, including area premieres of pieces by Bill T Jones, Joe Goode, Joanna Haigood, plus favorites by Sonya Delwaide and AXIS choreographers Stephanie McGlynn and Nicole Richter. What a show! Info: (510) 287 5792

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## Classes

- March 28-May 16, Tuesdays, 7:30-9pm, Dance Access Open Adult Classes\*, Eighth Street Studio, Berkeley. Classes for adults & teens with/without disabilities--any level of experience! Info: (510) 287 5792
- March 29-May 17, Wednesdays, 4:15-5pm, Dance Access/KIDS\*, Eighth Street Studio, Berkeley. Creative dance for children ages 7-12, with and without disabilities. Info: (510) 287 5792
- March 30-May 18, Thursdays, 12:30-2pm, Dance Access Improv Lab\*, Eighth Street Studio, Berkeley. Improvisational explorations, for dancers with some experience. Info: (510) 287 5792

\* All Dance Access 8-week sessions end with an informal performance/showing during the final class! Come see what our Dance Access participants are up to!

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## Master Classes

- April 16, 1:00-4:00 pm. Eighth Street Studio, Berkeley, CA. "Motion Techniques." Guest teacher Kathleen Hermsdorf teams with accompanist Albert Mathias for a very special class. Info: (510) 287 5792. Fee: \$30, limited spaces!

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## Lectures and Presentations

- April 1, 1:30-2:30 pm. DeYoung Museum Access Day. DeYoung Museum, San Francisco, CA. Includes a presentation/workshop by AXIS. Info: (415) 750 7645

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## National Dance Week April 21-30

Info: (510) 287 5792

### Performance

Sat. April 22, 8pm - Alice Arts Center, Oakland, CA. Info: (510) 238 695

AXIS performs beside dance luminaries Capacitor, Fellow Travellers, and Kendra Kimbrough, as part of the Oakland Arts Festival.

### Open Classes

- Tues. April 25, 7:30-9pm - Dance Access - open level class for adults & teens
- Weds. April 26, 4:15-5pm - Dance Access/KIDS (ages 6-12)
- Thurs. April 27, 12:30-2pm - Dance Access Improv - for experienced dancers

Come watch or participate in our Dance Access classes for dancers of all levels and ages, with and without disabilities! All classes are free and take place at Eighth St. Studio, Berkeley.

### Lecture/Demonstration

Wed. April 26, 5:15-6:15pm - Eighth St. Studio, Berkeley.

AXIS Co-Directors Judith Smith & Nicole Richter talk about the company, "integrated dance," show videos and answer your questions. Come watch the kids class, attend the lecture/demo, and stay for a bit of the open rehearsal!

### Open Rehearsal

- Wed. April 26, 6:30-9:30pm - Eighth St. Studio, Berkeley.
- Sun. April 30, 1:00-4:00pm - Eighth St. Studio, Berkeley.

Come watch as AXIS rehearses its diverse repertory in preparation for its Home Season at the Cowell. Work rehearsed may include pieces by Bill T Jones, Joe Goode, Joanna Haigood, Sonya Delwaide, and AXIS choreographers!

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## Dance Access Update

AXIS Dance Company's educational and outreach program continues to expand its ongoing quest to provide high quality, accessible dance education to everyone. We are particularly proud of the success of our Dance Access/KIDS program, now just a little over a year old. We have expanded our scope to provide a larger array of services to potential young dancers with and without disabilities. Adding to our ongoing program of after-school and in-school classes for kids of all ages, our latest project is a partnership with Independent Living Resources of Contra Costa to bring assemblies into area schools. With a team of AXIS dancers, we combine performances of AXIS repertory with interactive improvisational games and a liberal dose of gabbing about our work, the choreographic process, and disability issues. Through this assembly format, we are able to reach a much larger number of kids (already it's in the thousands!) with a "double whammy" brand of dance AND disability education. If you are interested in having us teach or perform at your school, please contact Bonnie at 510-287-5792.

We are also working to enhance our Dance Access/KIDS school programming by developing our own school curriculum guide, with the much-appreciated help of creative consultant Marth Beckett of the Beckett Group. Marth has an extensive background in curriculum development and we are thrilled to have her in our corner. For the adults out there, our Big New Exciting Thing is the launch of our Master Class Series. One Sunday afternoon of almost every month, AXIS hosts a special 3-hour workshop by a Bay Area dance luminary: It's their opportunity to teach their specialty to dancers with and without disabilities, and it's your opportunity to train in something new, alongside dancers from the AXIS company. We kicked off our Master Class Series on February 20 with John Doyle teaching an intriguing, exhilarating workshop on "Butoh for Beginners." March 19th brings legendary Bay Area dance iconoclast Keith Hennessy, and on April 16th we will be graced with the presence of everyone's favorite dancer/teacher, Kathleen Her s-dorf, accompanied by the extraordinary Albert Mathias. We also continue to offer our weekly adult evening and afternoon classes, where we are continually amazed at the number of new dancers out there who wander cheerfully into our studio. (See calendar.)

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Due to rising costs and an ever expanding mailing list, we need your support in order to continue producing our bi-annual newsletter. If you enjoy this newsletter and would like to see future issues, please support us with a suggested donation of \$10 or more.

### Board

Jonathan Frieman (President), Jan Garrett (Vice President), Elliot Helpern (Secretary/Treasurer), Geneva Clay, Lela DaVia, Tom Metz, Laurie Posne

### Dancers

Bonnie Lewkowicz, Stephanie McGlynn, Alisa Rasera, Nicole Richter, Megan Schirle, Uli Schmitz, Judit Smith.

### Staff

Codirectors: Judith Smith and Nicole Richter

Program Director: Alisa Rasera

Rehearsal Director: Sonya Delwaide

Production Manager: Iva Walton

Financial Manager: Mary Smith

Administrative Assistant: Kelly Snitki

Administrative Volunteers:

Ramona Arellano & Dolly Gattozzi

## Supporting AXIS

AXIS needs your support! In today's world of shrinking arts funding, we cannot survive without the generous support of individual donors. AXIS is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit, and your gift is tax-deductible.

The New Works Fund supports creation of our cutting-edge choreography, commissioning collaborating artists, and presenting performances to local, national, an international audiences.

Dance Access Educational and Outreach Fund supports classes, workshops, residencies, assemblies and lecture/demonstrations in schools and the community.

By specifying "Greatest Need," you grant us the discretion to apply your donation towards the area of our work which most needs support at that time.

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$5-\$49 Fan
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$50-\$99 Supporter
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$100-\$249 Sponsor
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$250-\$499 Sustainer
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$500-\$999 Patron
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$1,000 & up Benefactor

Thank you so much of dancing with us!

### BOOKING AXIS

Would you like to bring AXIS to your community or school? You may be able to receive financial support from the California Arts Council Touring Roster and The San Jose Artist Fee Support Program for performances, workshops, residencies and work in schools. Please contact Judith Smith at 510-287-5792 for more information.

## Dancer Profile: Nicole Richter

When we caught up with AXIS dancer and co-director Nicole Richter, we asked her for a glimpse into the dancer's daily routine. What's on her plate? In a word: work. This week, the Company is polishing the Bill T. Jones piece, then revisiting the Sonya Delwaide piece. Next week, they're revisiting all five of the repertory pieces slated for performance in the June premiere of AXIS's home season at the Cowell Theater.

"Judy [her AXIS co-director, Judith Smith] and I share a very ambitious vision," Nicole says. "and it's a rough time for small companies with big ambitions."

Nicole discovered modern dance at Oberlin College, finding it to be "the perfect synthesis of all I need in life: it accesses the creative, the intellectual, the physical, the social, and it's impossible to be in a bad mood afterward." Starting late as she did, Nicole worried that dance would never be anything but a hobby, but found she was still dancing after college. In fact, she had started to dance professionally. "At a certain point, I had to see if I could do this," she says. And in a phrase that may resonate with other AXIS dancers today, she summarizes: "I thought, better to try and fail, than never to try."

In 1994, while studying at the Laban Centre for Dance in London, Nicole discovered the emerging field of "integrated dance," when she saw a performance of the CandoCo Dance Company, one of the most successful professional integrated dance companies in the world. "I was blown away by the quality of what I saw," she recalls, "and I immediately angled for an internship with them." The 1-week assignment became a 2-1/2-year mission and led to a master's degree in a field that until recently few people had heard of.

While researching her master's thesis, Nicole literally traveled across continents to interview members of integrated dance companies, including AXIS. "I had some lucky breaks. I met a Japanese company, Taihen, at the Edinburgh Festival. They had a huge group of dancers, all rather severely disabled. They did this beautiful Butoh-based piece, with gorgeous, simple sets, and no one was ever in a chair." She also went to Cleveland, Ohio, Eugene, Oregon, and Seattle, Washington. In California, two of the dancers Nicole interviewed were Bonnie Lewkowicz and Judith Smith of AXIS.

Even in the midst of her thesis research, Nicole knew that she wanted to come back to live in the U.S., but says "I was terrified! After living so many years in a culture where the arts are strongly subsidized and thriving, the prospects for getting work in the U.S. seemed daunting." Nevertheless, in November 1996, Nicole made the leap and found herself living in the Bay Area, "just because this is the place I wanted to live. I actually had gotten some job offers by then in cities around the U.S., but my gut drew me to the Bay Area with no job. My first month here, it was on my list to 'get in touch with AXIS,' when out of the blue I got a call to come audition." Later, Judy revealed to me that after I first met her and Bonnie for my research, they had turned to each other and said, "We have to get her."

So how has it been? "Amazing. It's an amazing group of people, for one thing. When I walked into this group, I felt immediately at home. It's a company with a lot of humor and a lot of love for each other—I think that's a key component of what drives a successful company. And that's what I felt here right off." And the work? "I love the work. It's been three years now. The company has grown and changed in ways I'm really happy with. At the start there was a lot I loved, but I saw some unexplored potential. I think becoming co-directors allowed me and Judy to catalyze the company to take some new risks. AXIS has beautiful performers, a great history, and such potential to take it even farther. We're a company that's always looking, always pushing, always improving. Wherever we are now, we want to go to the next level. It's like the way we approach potential new dancers: in a sense, we're looking for people who can outdance us. The people you want to watch onstage, the people who love the work. People who want to dance for their life."



Nicole masterminding a Performance Zap in downtown Oakland.

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## Dancer Audition

AXIS is currently looking for one male dancer, preferably with a physical disability, to join our exciting dance company. Requirements: dance or athletic skill and training, a willingness to dance for a life if not for a living, boundless enthusiasm for this company and its work. Recommended: teaching experience. Paid performances, teaching opportunities, choreographic opportunities. Company works 40 weeks/year, including 2-4 weeks out of state (or country)/year, 6-12 rehearsal hours/wk. Repertory to include works by Stephen Petronio, Bill T. Jones, Joe Goode, Joanna Haigood, Sonya Delwaide, as well as AXIS choreographers. For information about this position and other auditions please contact Nicole at 510-287-5792.

AXIS Dance Company  
Annual Home Season Repertory Performance  
Featuring the Bay Area Premieres of 'Fantasy in C  
Major' by Bill T. Jones, 'Descending Cords' by Joanna  
Haigood, and 'Jane Eyre' by Joe Goode, with works by  
Sonya Delwaide and AXIS Choreographers.

June 22, 23, and 24  
Cowell Theater, Fort Mason Center  
San Francisco.

Information: 510-287-5792



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## AXIS Dance Company

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Free Matter for the  
Blind and Disabled

Visit our web site to find news, class schedules, performance reviews, and video clips from the AXIS repertory:  
<http://www.axisdance.or>