Why I Dance: David Dorfman

David Dorfman performing in "Lightbulb Theory"

Why do I dance? I have to—I need to. To heal. To feel.
My mom was ill (MS). I danced, at times frantically, to encourage her to take a step. Once after seeing me dance, she walked a few relatively pain-free paces before her body remembered she couldn't. I love those moments of inspiring others to do what they didn't think they could. I've also danced so many times for my dad, who was secretly a performance artist at heart. I dance for love.

When I told my mom at age 8 that I wanted to open a dance studio, James Brown was my idol, Soul Train, my visual bible. But the courage to enroll in formal training eluded me until I was a college junior. Two years later, I was introduced to Martha Myers and the late Daniel Nagrin, my “dance parents,” through Connecticut College and the American Dance Festival. Thanks to Martha's wild directives and Daniel's bold knee drops in performance at age 63, I propelled myself through an MFA at CC and then on to New York City.

I have always been interested in grassroots movements and the rights of the disenfranchised. If I hadn't become a dancer, I think I would have been a social worker or therapist. I believe in the healing power of art—and dance in particular. I see the body as a political and emotional force. I love using mine as an expressive power. There is too much normalcy and puritanism in our culture; dance artists need to shake things up and enable people to see other possibilities for their bodies and lives.

Much of what I do artistically has the intent of being somewhat subversive or underground or alternative. It's a dissenting voice that I'm interested in. I believe that we need to see the world in different ways. We can't get stale—that is death. I want to pleasantly challenge an audience to leave the theater changed in some way. “Invite and indict,” I say. My company does this by being fluid, honest, muscular, funny, risky and frisky, using my motto of “sweet non-irony.” Courage has now found me; we can dance our lives out loud!

I love people. In the last year alone, my company has led workshops from Tennessee to Tajikistan, Alabama to Armenia, with folks in mental health facilities and senior homes, with young dance professionals and sublimely mundane dance doubters. To get the whole world dancing is my form of kinetic diplomacy. A Soul Train line is one incredible universal language!
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Wayne McGregor's Giving Away 5000 Hours of Free Rehearsal Space
Wayne McGregor is giving away 5000 hours of free rehearsal space in east London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park just opened on Friday. And he's pledged to give away 5000 hours of rehearsal time there for free every year.

Now, Wayne McGregor is helping out London's dance community with the second of those two resources.

His new multi-million dollar studio (http://waynemcgregor.com/studio/about) in east London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park just opened on Friday. And he's pledged to give away 5000 hours of rehearsal time there for free every year.

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Wendy Perron (http://www.dancemagazine.com/community/wendyperron/)

5h
We Need Liz Lerman Now More Than Ever (http://www.dancemagazine.com/we-need-liz-lerman-now-more-than-ever-2344181834.html)
(http://www.dancemagazine.com/we-need-liz-lerman-now-more-than-ever-2344181834.html)

In these times that are scary for artists and immigrants, it's good to be reminded that dance does not have to ignore politics. Maybe that's why more than one organization recently decided to honor Liz Lerman, an American choreographer known for working toward issues of social justice. This summer Lerman will receive both the Jacob's Pillow Award (a $25,000 prize) and American Dance Festival's Distinguished Teaching Award.

As Editor in Chief Jennifer Stahl pointed out (http://www.dancemagazine.com/artist-matters-today-2307046353.html) the day after last fall's presidential election, dance has a long history of responding to social issues, and Lerman is part of that history.

At a time when dance artists are seeking ways to engage in the questions of the day, Lerman provides a roadmap. Passionate about issues of social justice, she's found ways to incorporate social issues, from poverty to environmental protection, into her dances. These are not simple "message" dances but fully layered works that care about craft as much as statement.

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What Was It Really Like to Tour with Madonna in the '90s?

Imagine getting a call from the biggest pop star of the day telling you that she wants you to dance on her upcoming world tour. And then imagine becoming a symbol of a cultural revolution in the process. Crazy, right?

Over 25 years ago, that's exactly what happened for seven young male dancers chosen by Madonna to join her on
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Caitlin McCarty (http://www.dancemagazine.com/community/caitlinmccarty/)
Apr. 03, 2017 05:50PM EST
As Instagram has become one of the most popular apps in the world, dancers have—unsurprisingly—taken full advantage.


But how do you take your passion for posting your dance videos on social media and translate that into a career in dance for film?

**Experiment**

Using social media is a great way to get your career off the ground. And now, with editing tools like Boomerang (https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/boomerang-from-instagram/id1041596399?mt=8) built directly into the Instagram app, you can make even more creative choices. Holly Wilder of Wilder Project (https://www.instagram.com/wilderprojectdance/) says that social media offers a place to experiment: "You can release small segments of work or unfinished ideas."
Que drama #swanlake

MARCH 25

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Theresa Ruth Howard (http://www.dancemagazine.com/community/theresa...)
21h
Janet Collins, Raven Wilkinson, Debra Austin, Nora Kimball, Misty Copeland, Francesca Hayward. All of these successful black ballet dancers have something in common: they skew toward the fairer end of the sepia spectrum.

Onstage, the duskiness of their complexions can be all but washed out, bleached by the lights. From the audience, they could present as a white girl back from a beachside vacation, or be perceived as Latina.

This observation is in no way meant to challenge these women's "blackness," or their talent. It's to highlight a long-overlooked fact that, historically, artistic directors have shown a predilection towards black ballerinas with lighter.
Overlooked fact that historically artistic directors have shown a preference for darker-black ballerinas with lighter skin tones.

Misty Copeland in Swan Lake. Photo by Gene Schiavone, courtesy ABT
What Is it Like to Dance in Kyrgyzstan? (http://www.dancemagazine.com/what-is-it-
Built in 1955, the Kyrgyz National Opera Ballet has long been a symbol of Kyrgyzstan's cultural radiance abroad. Under the USSR regime, Moscow put particular effort into developing dance in the area, through the non-negotiable funding of a national dance school.

In time, Kyrgyzstan became the best dance training center in Central Asia, forming many dancers who went on to have international careers. At its peak, the Kyrgyz National Opera Ballet provided daily performances, and toured throughout the USSR.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, central funding stopped. Although the school still thrives, the company struggles with corruption, creative inertia and an organizational structure inherited from the Soviet era.

Today, young dancers and choreographers cling to the idea of bringing the Kyrgyz National Opera Ballet back to its past grandeur.

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The term "backup dancer" might bring to mind the army of women on Beyoncé's Formation tour, or the men who didn't miss a beat during Mariah Carey's recent New Year's Eve performance, maintaining flawless unison as she dealt with technical difficulties. Choreography for concerts tends to be almost aggressively slick and synchronized, a sea of dancers serving to multiply the image of the star.