Give Ear, by Berit Ahlgren and Nathan Keepers, was set to premiere live in March of 2020. A year later after shutdowns, lockdowns, protests for justice, election, insurrection, inauguration, transition, and profound loss, the piece is being reinvented. A new dance/theater FILM that looks back on what was never seen, only to question, pursue, refine, throw away, and start over. Give Ear continues on a new path to investigate what it means to listen and what happens if we listen a lot more.

In its previous iteration, Give Ear was a dance/theater production based in the act of listening: exploring our relationship to sound, silence, and tuning in.
THE CREATORS

BERIT AHLGREN
was a founding member of TU Dance and performed with the company from 2006–2016. Receiving Metropolitan Regional Arts Council’s Next Step Grant in 2011, Ahlgren had the opportunity to study the Gaga Movement Language in Tel Aviv, and moved to Israel to pursue teacher certification between 2011–2012. Ahlgren earned her MFA in Dance from NYU/Tisch School of the Arts in 2016, and has since been teaching, performing, and choreographing between Minneapolis and New York City. She houses her work as freelance choreographer and performing artist under her solo run organization, HoneyWorks, established in 2019.

NATHAN KEEPERS

THE PRODUCTION TEAM

Directed by: Berit Ahlgren & Nathan Keepers

Performers: Berit Ahlgren
JuCoby Johnson
Nathan Keepers
Isaiah Langowski
Jordan Lovestrand
Mirabai Miller
Leslie O’Neill
Randy Reyes
Joe Tennis
Christian Warner

Lighting Designer: Jesse Cogswell

PROGRAM

Give Ear
is a one-act dance/theater FILM, expected to run approximately 1 hour 10 minutes.

PLEASE NOTE:
Photography, video, and audio recording are strictly prohibited. Thank you & enjoy the show!

This performance is part of MERGES IN MARCH, which expands on The Cowles Center’s MERGE program to facilitate inter-disciplinary and ground-breaking performances.
PERFORMER BIOS

JuCoby Johnson
is a Twin Cities-based theater artist. He has been on stage The Guthrie Theater, Cincinnati Playhouse, The Jungle Theater, Ten Thousand Things, and several other theaters.

Isaiah Langowski
started dancing during his sophomore year at the Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists. He received a scholarship to train at TU Dance Center in 2016. In 2017, Isaiah trained at The Alvin Ailey School. Since graduation he’s been yielding to nature.

Jordan Lovestrand
received Honors in Dance from Gustavus Adolphus College in 2017, and was a member of the DanceJerusalem study abroad program from 2015-2016. He has danced for Kolben Contemporary Dance Company and is currently a member of Ate9 Dance Company in Los Angeles.

Mirabai Miller
is a Minneapolis-based dancer originally from Silverton, Oregon. Mirabai has worked with Twin Cities dance makers including Jennifer Glaws (Jagged Moves) and John Mark Hostetler (John Mark Creative). She is currently a dancer and teacher with Black Label Movement and Shapiro & Smith Dance.

Leslie O’Neill
has danced professionally since 2004. She was a founding member of Black Label Movement from 2005 – 2009, and joined nationally acclaimed repertory company Zenon Dance in 2006. Leslie performs as a guest artist with Shapiro & Smith Dance and Arena Dances.

Randy Reyes
is an award-winning theater artist that has worked as a professional actor, director, and theater educator with institutions across the country including Theater Mu, The Guthrie, Mixed Blood, The Jungle Theatre, NYU Graduate Acting Program, and The University of Utah.

Joe Tennis
is from Eagan, Minnesota and holds a BFA in dance from the University of Minnesota. He currently works with Black Label Movement and has performed with numerous dance companies in the Twin Cities. Joe has an innate joy and passion for movement.

Christian Warner
is a performing artist, choreographer, and teacher who continues to enjoy a career that spans concert and commercial dance, musical theatre, and film. He is a company member with TU Dance, and his musical theatre credits include The Lion King, Oliver!, and Hairspray.

Jesse Cogswell
is a Twin Cities-based lighting designer of theatre, dance, opera, and museum exhibits. Past works include In the Heights for Ordway Theatre, La Rondine for Minnesota Opera, St. John Passion for Minnesota Dance Company, and What the Moon Sees for Zorongo Flamenco.
SPECIAL THANKS

Berit and Nathan’s special thanks extend to:
Everyone who contributed to our fundraiser dinner and silent auction in February 2020, including: Steven Ahlgren, Attorney at law; Blink for Beauty; Chez Bill; Corepower Yoga; Daniel Del Prado and Martina Restaurant; Flourish Pilates; From Grasse with Love; Fusion Yoga; 1dun; James Sewell Ballet; KB Creative; Sarah Leeth (Wild Hockey); Lululemon; Moe Bodyworks; Pryes Brewing; and Rocksteady Life

“ON LISTENING” BY JUCOBY JOHNSON (EXCERPT FROM GIVE EAR)

WHEN YOU’RE YOUNG, no one listens to you. Because you’re young. What could you possibly know or have to say about the world around you, that holds any real value? What have you seen? What have you done? Who even are you at this point? Go out into the world & gain some experience. Travel & dream & love & learn & struggle & break someone’s heart & have your heart broken in return & discover what it is to be defeated & wake up & get out of bed anyway, GO! LIVE! Once you’ve done that, come back to me and at that time maybe possibly we can start thinking about what it might be like to take your thoughts under consideration. So you do. You live. You give this world your best shot. You master a craft. You climb the ladder. Any ladder. You learn when to compromise and when to stick up for yourself. You extend your hand and help other people on their journey. You do the things you were told to do. You think “Now’s my moment. The moment when people will finally hear me.” You open your mouth to speak and as you begin to invent sound you hear a mighty “SHHHHHHH” coming from all directions. Because you’re old. And, when you’re old, no one listens to you. What could you possibly have to say about the world around you? This world that has changed so much. This world that has moved on and will continue to move on with or without your participation. What do you know? Have you kept up? Do you even know what’s going on anymore? Do you know who this person is?

How about this person? Take a step back and let the young people handle this. So, you do. You take a step back. Several steps actually. So many steps you wind up in a cave somewhere. Are there even caves where you live? There are now. Because here you are. In one. You take in your surroundings. Darkness. Silence. Solitude. Lonliness? Peace? Both perhaps? You walk deeper and deeper into the abyss and think “Maybe I live here now. This place isn’t so bad.” Until a sounds stops you in your tracks. A voice. Both familiar and completely foreign. Singing beautifully. You follow it as it grows louder and louder. You reach the source. A figure: chin lifted, mouth wide open and pouring from it is the sound that led you here. As well as something a bit more staggering. A great wave of color (magenta, turquoise, chartreuse, blood orange) spills from between their lips. It lands on the cave floor and a garden grows. Lush vegetation appears and snakes up the walls and fills every corner. Light pours in. The figure stops. The mouth closes. But the space remains alive and forever changed. You call forth, “Hey.” The figure turns around, a bit startled. They look sort of like you, actually. A bit worn down. A bit grey. A bit world weary. Your eyes meet and they look at you for a long moment before finally saying, “Oh sorry... I didn’t know anyone was listening.”
The Cowles Council, staff, students, artists, and volunteers of The Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts gratefully acknowledge the extraordinary generosity of our donors.

With donors’ support, The Cowles Center is able to provide education, rehearsal, administrative, and performance resources to local dance companies and independent choreographers, in addition to funding free and deeply discounted dance workshops and performance tickets for local school groups.

For further information on how you can support The Cowles Center, please contact Mary Meyers, Individual Gift Manager, at mary.meyers@artspace.org or (312)-485-4063.

A special thank you to Hearst Foundations for supporting arts education at The Cowles Center in response to the Covid pandemic!
CORPORATION & FOUNDATION

$100,000 AND ABOVE
The McKnight Foundation

$50,000 - $99,999
Hearst Foundations
Target

$10,000 - $49,999
3M
Best Buy Foundation
James B. Linskmyer Foundation
The Minneapolis Foundation
Minnesota State Arts Board
National Endowment for the Arts
U.S. Bank

$5,000 - $9,999
Best Buy Foundation
KPMG
Mayo Clinic
Miller Dunwiddie Architecture
Newhall Schleuss Family Foundation

$1,000 - $4,999
Ameriprise Financial
Dayton King Foundation
Eide Bailly LLP
The Head Family Foundation
Indeed Brewing Company
Malson LLP
Taft Law
UrbanWorks Architecture
Watson Forsberg
Wellington Management

$500 - $999
David and Leni Moore Family Foundation
The Douglas & Mary Staughton Jones Foundation
HRK Foundation
LHB, Inc.
Rhythm Street Movement

ARTIST

$500 – $999
Peter Christian
Charles Cowles and Constance Mayeron Cowles
John Cowles and Page Knudsen Cowles
Allison and Michael Gelfman
Reilly Knorr
Will Law
Kelley Lindquist
Peggy Lucas
Robert and Mary Mersky
John and Julie Pierson
Lee Pielowkski
Susan and Robert White

AMBASSADOR

$250 – $499
Todd Clasen
Jonathan Despotes-Tourdot
Eleanor Dvorak
Patricia Frasher
Leland and Beverly Gehrke
Rikaela Greane
Becky Heist
Masami Kawazato and Aaron Merill
Erinn Liebhard and Kristoffer Olson
Robin F. Moede
Thomas Ruter
Carolyn M. Shrewsbury
John Sullivan

THE COWLES CENTER DONORS

PARTNER

$1,000 – $2,499
Chas Anderson
Karen and Kenneth Charles
Matthew Damon
Wendy Dayton
Terrance and Susan Dolan
Emmy Lou Jacobson
Peter and Jane Lefferts
Archana Ramaswamy and Rumi Faizer
Patty and Randy Tucker

EN AVANT! SPONSORS

3M
Ameriprise Financial
Best Buy
Eide Bailly LLP
Ernst & Young
KPMG
LHB, Inc.
Maslon LLP
Miller Dunwiddie Architecture
Taft Law
UrbanWorks Architecture
Watson-Forsberg
Wellington Management
U.S. Bank

FAMILY DAY SPONSOR

Family Day Sponsored by Target

MAKE YOUR TAX-DEDUCTIBLE GIFT ONLINE TODAY
thecowlescenter.org/donate

THANK YOU