

Dance Repertory Executive Summary



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"We need more such programs to prove to educators, administrators, politicians and the public that dance and the arts make for strong people and great performers."
Joanna Gewertz Harris, Ph.D
Voice of Dance
Vision Series 2004

"DANCE MAGAZINE has been proud to lend our name to the *Vision Series*... The commitment of Ms. Heath and those who work with her is of the highest standard. I wish that each of our partnerships with the dance community could be as easy and fruitful as this one."
Sincerely,
Barbara Paige Kaplan

"Thank you for all the time and faith you have invested in my peers and me. You've contributed to our development as individuals and our position in life..."
Love Always,
Lauren Nelson, Sequoia H.S.
Vision Series 1999-2001

"I took a dance convention and wanted to say that it was one of the best experiences in dance I have had in a long time. Donnette is a wonderful choreographer and I hope to be as good as she..."
Amanda McSweeney
Lamar H.S., Texas

San Francisco Youth Arts Festival
Performing Arts Award 2001

Zellerbach Family Foundation
Grant 2001-2002, 2004-2008

Fort Mason Foundation
Grant Recipient
2000-2002, 2004-2008

- Founded in 1997 by Donnette Heath as an avenue to provide educational and professional performance opportunities to dancers of all ages with an array of experience levels and expertise. All-inclusive performances educate youth and choreographers, unify the arts, provide increased recognition for these artists and dancers worldwide, as well as offer audience members broader perspectives and a wider range of choices.
- **Exposure provided to:** 11 local and national choreographers in dRep Repertoire, 5 local and international guest artists, nearly 2,350 Bay Area dancers at the high school level and above, nearly 650 Bay Area high school and emerging choreographers, 46 local and national visual artists
- **Features:** Dance Spirit e-News - March 2011, SF Examiner - March 2009 and March 2011, SF Chronicle, 96 Hours - March 2009, SF Bay Times HOT TICKETS - March 2009, ABC 7's "What's Hot" with Don Sanchez - February 2006, Dance Teacher - Fresh in February 2006, KRON-TV's Weekend Wrap-Up for Vision Series 2004, Dance Magazine - May 2001 & June 2005, SF Chronicle & SF Examiner 2001, 33 Bay Area publications, 14 web sites, Texas publications, 2 cable vision talk shows, 27 Benefit/Showcase performances
- **Eleven Vision Series Dance Festival Productions** that expands knowledge, provides mentorship, offers support, cultivates artistic exchange and increases the exposure of modern dance as an art form to the general public. Here, artists are supported and given the framework in which to grow and flourish.
- **Three Dance Repertory Extravaganza Productions** with a mission to enable young artists to gain technical training through master classes and mentoring in choreography and performance through working side by side with professional artists.
- **One Dance Repertory Review Production** presents professional and collegiate dance programs and targets invitations to dance critics and writers from across the Bay Area to "review" the works prior to or after the performance.
- **Annual Featured Guest:** Alonzo King LINES Ballet Training Program
- **Dance Repertory Youth Ensemble** selected through an audition process, high school students perform a premiere work by a member of Alonzo King LINES Ballet Training Program.
- **Support comments:**
- "The whole experience was delightful. Congratulations on the wonderful contribution you are making. Bravo!" *Anna Halprin, Featured Guest 2009*
- "One of the most vital dance programs in the Bay Area. Considering the breadth and wealth of dance in our region, this is quite a statement, but completely factual." *Gary W. Masters, Artistic Director, sjDANCEco and former principal dancer, Jose Limon Dance Company*
- "We need more such programs to prove to educators, politicians and the public that dance and the arts make for strong people and great performers. *Joanna Harris, Voice of Dance, March 2004*
- "I really appreciate the work you are doing to expose young people in their artistic endeavors... You never know what clicks and makes an impression and fuels the dream! Keep up your Vision -- it's a gift to the Bay Area." *J.R. Glover, Education Programs Director, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival*
- "Wow, what an experience! Thank you for all the time and faith you have invested in my peers and me. You have contributed to our development as individuals and our position in life." *Lauren Nelson, Vision Series 1999-2001*

Organizational Background

Dance Repertory was founded in 1997 by dancer/choreographer Donnette Heath to provide professional opportunities and increased exposure to emerging local, national, and international choreographers, Bay Area dancers, and youth. The organization is a fiscally sponsored project of Dancers' Group. Since its founding, dRep has presented professional repertory by numerous local and national choreographers, including Dr. Cindy Gratz (Sam Houston State University); Michael Kelly Bruce (Ohio State University); and Emma Lou Huckabay (Huckabay McAllister Dance), among others. The company has performed at the Cowell Theater at Fort Mason, the McKenna Theater, Dance Mission, and ODC Theater, and was named Artist-in-Residence at Venue 9 in 2002. In 2002, dRep shared its Home Season with Huckabay McAllister Dance, performing at the Cowell Theater in August for a large and enthusiastic audience.

Executive/Artistic Director Donnette Heath has been producing dance performances and educational events since her college days at Sam Houston State University in 1992, where she presented six dance workshops for high school students. She was a member of the highly acclaimed Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company, and served as Master Teacher and Director of the company's TEEN BOARD Project, where she created a choreography performance festival.

In 1999, dRep inaugurated the *Vision Series*, an educational dance festival that brings together a diverse pool of emerging professional choreographers and their companies with high school dancers, and presents their work in a professional showcase format. Fundraiser Workshops provide professional technical training to high school students, professional dancers and college students. In 2009, dRep premiered their first "Dance Repertory Extravaganza," an adjudicated showcase that featured specially selected high school/youth/studio dance companies and special guests. In 2011, dRep premiered their first "Dance Repertory Review" that features specially selected college and professional dance companies and special guests. The primary focus of the Review is to invite dance critics and writers in hopes that the participants receive a public review to further their exposure, increase their audience sizes and enhance their portfolios.

Dance Repertory continues to grow and expand. We proudly announce annual partnerships that have been established to provide expansive training and feedback opportunities to all levels of dancers throughout the greater Bay Area. Alonzo King LINES Dance Center presents annual Dance Days and Mentoring/Training events. City College Dance Department, San Francisco State University Dance Theater, Mills College Dance Program, Lowell High School and Mercy High School San Francisco have all graciously donated their space in support of Dance Repertory programs. Most recently, LINES Ballet Training Program has become dRep's annual featured guest for all performances as well as master classes and choreographic feedback for showcase participants. One LBTP member will also be setting a new premiere work on our Dance Repertory Youth Ensemble, a group of high school students chosen by audition only.

The Vision of the Company: From the Founder, Donnette Heath

In 1997, the vision for Dance Repertory was born. The initial goal was to form a professional modern dance performance company dedicated to presenting outstanding works of both established and up-and-coming choreographers. Because many incredible choreographers find it difficult to be presented to wider audiences, Dance Repertory became a vehicle to sustain works on the professional stage and continue presenting them to various audiences through tours and home seasons of the company.

From 1992 until 1995, I was the producer of dance workshops and performances while obtaining a Master of Fine Arts Degree and subsequently working with Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company in Salt Lake City, Utah as master teacher of their TEEN BOARD Project. During that time, I began to notice a gap in the education and development of young artists' work, as well as a lack in performance opportunities for them in the professional arena. Based on programs I had previously implemented, I wanted to create a diversified program to feature works of the younger generation and emerging professionals, while providing them with guidance and support. Such an approach helps young artists gain self-confidence and inspires them to create from a deeper place inside of themselves. I also wanted these artists to enhance their work through mentorship from highly experienced and respected dance educators and choreographers.

The most important aspect of forming this program was a steady belief that no one should be turned away or put through a rigorous audition process in order to present their choreographic works. As a result, in the VISION SERIES DANCE FESTIVAL, participation is on a first-come, first-serve basis such that any choreographer is welcome. I believe expertise comes from experience, and that opportunities should be available to give everyone a place to shine--ultimately allowing them to develop and find their own artistic voice.

Further, I found my own early experiences in dance to be highly competitive and demanding on personal and professional levels. Most would agree that as a field, dance can be very unforgiving, such that we often develop a constant awareness of our faults as dancers and choreographers. For me, this began to cause me to lose interest in the very thing I had loved—dancing and performing! A primary component of the vision for this company, then, is to continue creating avenues not to only educate aspiring artists, but to do so within a uniquely supportive educational environment. In such an atmosphere, we can come together on equal ground and start transforming negative aspects of dance—such as the type of unhealthy competition that diminishes one's self-esteem—into beneficial learning opportunities. In the Vision Series, we learn to embrace our differences and accept ourselves where we are, rather than compare ourselves with where we think (or others think) we *should* be. At the same time, we see that the successes of others can inspire us to strive to improve in order to reach our own potential.

In the Vision Series, we can embrace every experience as a positive opportunity to learn. From this perspective, we push the boundaries of what we believe to be possible. As we see that time is actually on our side at every stage of our careers, we can be humble and comfortable with our progress, while inspiring one another to grow! Here, we everyone looks *to* each other, not *at* each other.

Starting in 2009, Dance Repertory presented their first adjudicated concert of selected Bay Area high school programs that was created as an opposition to its current non-competitive programs. dRep wants to introduce a new and healthy perspective for young dancers to be inspired through opposite perspectives: what it feels like to be selected and not selected. Each experience has its own feelings and connotations. dRep plans to expand future activities to help youth learn acceptance of themselves and others despite their selected/not selected status. Healthy competition can actually be a valuable and inspirational tool for their futures regarding confidence, overcoming negativity as a positive experience that shapes their belief system and being supportive when it seems to be the hardest thing to do.

In closing, dRep is implementing its final component for a complete festival of four showcases. The Dance Repertory Review will feature adjudicated works of emerging professionals and college dance programs. They will share the stage with esteemed companies such as LINES Ballet Training Program and others. Invitations are extended to writers and critics in the dance field to attend the preview showcase to see the concert prior to the artistic community and general public. This unique showcase will allow young professionals to expand their portfolios, enhance their audience base and create a strong reputation and presence in the Bay Area.

The Vision Series Dance Festival

Mission

The Vision Series provides educational and professional performance opportunities to an innovative cross-section of dance artists from the Greater Bay Area. It develops and presents the diverse visions of high school dancers, professionals, emerging choreographers, and academic instructors, regardless of individual experience or expertise. This education project expands knowledge, provides mentorship, offers support, cultivates artistic exchange and increases the exposure of modern dance as an art form to the general public. Here, artists are supported and given the framework in which to grow and flourish.

History

Since 1999, it has provided opportunities to over 650 choreographers and 2,350 performers from 40 California high schools, youth programs and dance studios and 70 professional emerging companies and collegiate dance programs. Over 60 professional educators, along with professionals from Dance Magazine and California Dance Education Association, have graciously given their time, energy and expertise to the advancement of the program. Alonzo King LINES Ballet Training Program has been secured as the festival's special guest on an annual basis. This project has also provided exposure for these artists to over 7,700 audience members. Over \$6,000 in scholarships have been developed and distributed to participating choreographers and/or participating programs as support for expansion of artistic careers and program enhancement. In addition, Vision Series Dance Day Conventions, sponsored by Alonzo King LINES Dance Center have given professional dance training to over 1,750 high school students.

The youth development goals of the Vision Series are: 1) to provide high school dancers and dance groups with high quality arts education and training; 2) to offer a unique and meaningful opportunity for these dancers to express their imaginations through dance and performance; and 3) to introduce high school dancers to professional dancers and companies.

Further goals include the following:

- Provide educational lectures, classes, discussions, workshops and in-school/on-site mentorship from dance experts and professionals to educate and expand knowledge of modern, jazz and ballet dance choreography, technique, and performance to high school youth and professional emerging companies.
- Strengthen and develop the minds, character and self-esteem of high school youth through the values of dance, performance and participation in a non-competitive, constructive and positively reinforced environment.
- Provide a unique and meaningful opportunity for these youth to express their imaginations through dance and performance while gaining the knowledge and experiences of the lifestyle of a professional dancer.
- Provide youth with the inspiration to create dance, thereby engaging their own unique talents and creativity and helping to keep them off the streets.
- Expand support and spirit within communities by integrating emerging artists and educators with high school students.
- Provide participants with a supportive artistic environment in which to network and learn in an open, collaborative way.
- Provide scholarships and peer awards of recognition to enhance participants' motivation and progress toward careers as developing professional artists.
- Offer professional performance opportunities and exposure in a respected and well-established venue external to the education systems and smaller performance theaters.
- Provide a dance community forum for networking by supplying information in the lobby of our performances, including information and promotional material about local dance companies, events, workshops, college dance departments, and upcoming performances.
- Educate the general public by building a new awareness and appreciation to the varieties and values of various dance forms.

Dance Repertory Extravaganza

Mission:

The "Dance Repertory Extravaganza" is an adjudicated showcase performance by committee selection featuring new and diverse works from Bay Area high schools and Alonzo King's LINES Ballet Training Program. The mission of the Extravaganza is to enable young artists to gain technical training through master classes and mentoring in choreography and performance through working side by side with professional artists. Young artists further gain performance experience in an esteemed and respected venue, initiating them into the life of a dancer in the professional realm.

History:

In 2009, the Extravaganza made its debut performance. Since then, it has featured special guests Anna Halprin Dancers, LINES Ballet Training Program and Modesto Jr. College. This special concert has provided an unforgettable performance opportunity for 20 Bay Area high school dance programs and studio dance companies and 247 youth dancers.

Future goals and programming:

dRep will expand the services of this showcase through a focus on collaboration and healthy competition as a unique and valuable learning tool. We will use these topics to explore the emotional impact of performance on a personal and collective level, toward the goal of addressing the following question: How can we support personal and community growth through our dance community?

This support process will enable participants to do the following:

- Discuss and embrace imperfection
- Establish healthy expectations
- View themselves and others as equals
- Deal with inner conflict
- Interpret negative and positive criticism as a learning tool
- Increase self-esteem by finding positive solutions throughout their career

How do the Extravaganza students benefit?

Students will benefit in several ways from their participation. First, through interactive discussions with the guest artists, youth gain an understanding about life as a dancer in the professional realm. Second, the guest artists will also act as master teachers to enhance the technical abilities of participants. These artists will also act as facilitators for educational forums through creative process discussions with each student group during the structure of the performance preparation process. Finally, Networking Meetings and a Buddy System support students in the following manner:

- "Networking Meetings"- These meetings provide performers with information on auditions and job opportunities. This community exchange encourages participants to discuss and create opportunities to dance for others, train and/or work with colleges and companies, and build long-lasting friendships in the dance community.
- "Buddy System" - The buddy system provides a place for high school participants to share the creative and performance experience with another participating high school group (called a "Buddy"). As students encourage and support each other through interaction and Peer Spirit Awards, they develop a long-lasting dance network with their peers.

Dance Repertory Review

The "Dance Repertory Review" is a unique showcase that features the dance works of professional emerging artists and college dance programs. In its inaugural presentation in 2011, the Review gave valuable performance time on the acclaimed Cowell Theater stage to 7 emerging and professional dance companies and 37 dancers. This showcase will also feature a high caliber and well respected Special Guest Artist - Kun-Stoff Dance Company and LINES Ballet Training Program. The creation of this performance is to target invitations to dance critics and writers from across the Bay Area to "review" the works prior to or after the performance. These writers and critics would represent highly respected magazines, web sites and various publications. The goal is to present an array of works that have depth, integrity and substance that are worthy of receiving a positive "Review."

This new presentation creates a unique and unfounded need in the Bay Area. These artists will present their works in a professional theater and share the stage with artists that have developed a highly respected and esteemed reputation in the artistic community and general public's eye. To share the stage with a company of this caliber is one that the artists may not otherwise be able to do so. The Special Guest list may not only significantly enhance the attendance for the "Review" itself, but moreover, provide more exposure to the talents of the emerging colleges and companies that could lead to larger audiences for their future performances as well.

For most dance companies, emerging or established, it is a goal to receive a "review" of their work in newspapers, magazines, publications and web. Exposure through these avenues allows the artists to gain visibility, insight and perspective on the impact and messages of their work. A "review" can significantly impact the audience size to share the work with and the artists may gain prestige and additional publicity that they can utilize in their future portfolios. A "review" can even influence the choices people make to attend an upcoming event. The commentary of any "review" is subject to the reviewer's impressions, but to get publicity of any sort is an important, necessary and vital component for the development and increase of a reputation for any dance company. Grant applications, publicity and marketing materials are strengthened with "reviews" or press clippings.