



## 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.

### Headquarters:

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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, 2004-2007

Fort Mason Foundation  
Grant Recipient  
2000-2002, 2004-2009