



Education Material Packet for Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company's *BLOOM* Student Preview, Spring 2019

In the final performance of the 2018/2019 season Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company proudly presents *BLOOM* — an evening of contemporary dance filled with world-premiere choreography and dynamic repertory. *BLOOM* opens the window into the process of being part of a community, family, or relationship. Through the contrasting point-of-views of each choreographer, this program is sure to enliven the soul, entertain, and reveal. *BLOOM* celebrates positive new beginnings and the sometimes challenging road it can take to arrive at them. This performance includes two world premieres, one choreographed by long time Ririe-Woodbury collaborator, Stephen Koester, the other created by Artistic Director Daniel Charon. It also marks the return of Bulgarian born choreographer Tzveta Kassobova's *The Opposite of Killing*.

Please find inside this information packet; artist biography, contextual information, and movement lesson ideas inspired by *BLOOM*.

The Opposite of Killing (2010)

Choreography	Tzveta Kassabova
Music	Arvo Part, Somei Satoh, Ryuichi Sakamoto, Instrumental Acoustek, Aleksei Stevens
Lighting Design	Cliff Wallgren
Costume Design	Tzveta Kassabova
Performers	The Company

Since its Salt Lake City premiere in 2016, the company has toured Tzveta Kassabova's *The Opposite of Killing* (2010) extensively both nationally and internationally. This hauntingly beautiful piece will return to Salt Lake City as part of this performance and will be seen for the first time in the intimate setting of the Leona Wagner Black Box Theater. *The Opposite of Killing* explores change, anger, understanding, confusion, and sorrow, related to the absence of a close friend. The work was originally created at a seven day residency at New Bulgarian University (Sofia), was reworked and presented at Dance Place, DC and staged for student casts at University of Florida, UMBC, and Middlebury College. The piece won four Metro DC Dance Awards 2012.

Artist Biography

Tzveta Kassabova is a Bulgarian born independent choreographer, costume designer and installation artist, named one of the '25 to watch' in 2012 by Dance Magazine. At different times she has been a gymnast, physicist, and meteorologist. As a dancer, Tzveta has been part of Ed Tyler, Sara Pearson/Patrik Widrig and David Dorfman Dance companies, and has performed in works of Mark Haim, Nancy



Bannon, Maurice Fraga, Zoltan Nagy, Joshua Bisset, Netta Yerushalmy, and Colleen Thomas, among others. Her work as a choreographer has been presented at CSPAC(MD), Dance Place(DC), Kennedy Center(DC), (Croatia), NBU(Bulgaria), Judson Church(NYC), Dixon Place(NYC), Mulberry Street Theater(NYC), Artomatic. She received a Metro DC Dance Award (2008), the Prince George's Arts Council grant (2009 and 2012) and Maryland State Arts Council Award (2010 and 2011). She holds three Masters degrees. Tzveta believes that dance is a visual art form. She has always been fascinated by the concept of space, and is constantly trying to address it, both in her choreography and design.

Movement exploration inspired by The Opposite of Killing

Theme: A close friend

Guide your students through the following creative process;

Individual task

- 1) Prepare a pen and a paper.
- 2) Think of a friend who is very close to you. During this exploration process, you will not reveal who you have in mind to anybody. Write three things/sentences about this friend - think about what make this friend unique. Perhaps it is the quality you admire about this friend, or what s/he does. They don't necessarily have to be always positive - maybe it is something this person does that makes you uncomfortable. Try and think about three things that show different sides of the same person.
- 3) Create a short movement phrase based on the three sentences. Keep it short and simple - aim for 4 to 8 counts for each phrase.
- 4) Combine all three ideas with smooth transitions, flowing one idea to the next, so that you have a sense of one movement sequence from beginning to the end.
- 5) Share - you can do half of the class show the other half what they created and take turns, or put them in partners and they can share with each other.

Partnering task

- 1) Next, think of the dynamics of your relationship with this particular close friend. Are you sweet and tender to each other? Do you inspire and push each other to do better? Are you always joking with each other and having fun? Do you need each other for support? Select one of the many ways you relate to each other, and write it down on your paper.
- 2) Work in partners. Share with each other what you wrote down. With your partner, use different spatial relationship to create movement interaction and partnering choreography based on the idea. How can you convey the state of your relationship with your close friend to the audience? Find smooth transition from one dancer's idea to the next dancer's idea and create one continuous partnering sequence.
- 3) Can you find a way to interweave your individual solo material with this partnering sequence? Does this duet start with partner sequence, and go into solos, or other way around? Or one solo happens, then partnering, and the other solo? Where does each part happen in space? Find transitions that make sense.
- 4) Share the whole dance with the rest of the class.

Discussion and reflection

- 1) What did you see? What worked, what stood out, what made you curious? And why?
- 2) How did you feel from a choreographer's point of view, during the creative process? What was your experience as a performer? What kind of emotional response did you have as an audience member as you watched other dancers perform?
- 3) What was the part that you enjoyed the most? What was your biggest challenge(s)?
- 4) What choreographic tool can you use again?
- 5) How can you improve this process?

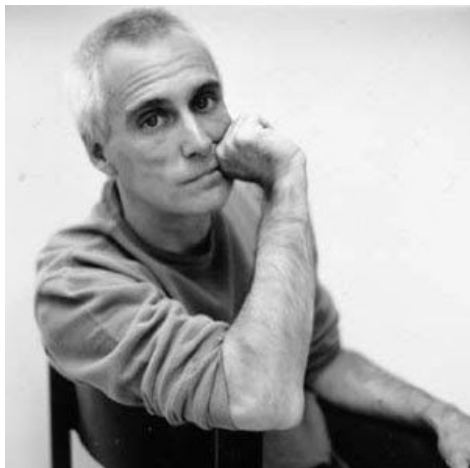
Departure – A Last Song, Perhaps a Final Dance Before a Rest (world premiere 2019)

Choreography	Stephen Koester
Music	David Lang
Lighting Design	William Peterson
Costume Design	Stephanie B Jones
Performers	The Company

“As I look towards retirement from teaching at the University of Utah and perhaps to dance, I find it incredibly meaningful to be able to make this work for the Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company. I took some of my first dance classes with Joan Woodbury and Shirley Ririe and from there, the company has threaded throughout my career as a student in their summer workshops, teacher in their workshops and choreographer. Joan in particular as always been a mentor and model for me. It feels like a very satisfying completion of a circle to perhaps end where I began. I thank everyone associated with the company, including this amazing set of dancers, for this opportunity to work with the company.”

As Stephen Koester embarks on the next stage of life and career with his pending retirement as a professor at the University of Utah, his latest work, *Departure – A Last Song, Perhaps a Final Dance Before a Rest*, offers an opportunity for reflection with a touch of nostalgia – a time of looking back. With age, landscapes in life become broader, time widens or ceases to exist. With this new work, Koester continues his interest in seeing the stage as a landscape or a canvas in which events unfold in their own time and logic, where the juxtaposition of events is as important as the movement/events themselves. Ideally, a sense of meditative contemplation in both the dancing and viewing of the work is realized, where stillness may at times speak louder than movement.

Artist Biography



Stephen Koester is a Professor in the Modern Dance Program at the University of Utah. He has served as Chair in the Department of Modern Dance and also Modern Dance Program Head. He was formerly co-Artistic Director of Creach/Koester, an all male dance company based in New York City, which toured throughout the US, Canada and Europe. With partner Terry Creach, Stephen received five consecutive choreographic fellowships from the National Endowment of the Arts, plus a choreographic fellowship from the New York State Foundation for the Arts. Creach and Koester also received the Bonnie Bird North American

Choreographic Award along with extensive additional choreographic/company support. In addition to his professional activities with Creach/Koester, Stephen has been a guest artist at numerous colleges and universities throughout the country and continues to choreograph and teach both nationally and internationally. Having made over 140 dances, his work has appeared in the repertoires of the Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company, Repertory Dance Theatre, Pittsburgh Dance Alloy, Dance Forum Taipei, among others, including his own company Dance Koester Dance, which has presented several Salt Lake City seasons. In 2004, Stephen won Repertory Dance Theatre's "Sense of Place" National Choreographic Competition, setting a new work on the company, and in 2006 received a Utah Arts Council Established Artist Grant to support his company choreography. At the University of Utah, Stephen regularly choreographs, and teaches improvisation, composition, technique, and graduate seminars. In 2002, Stephen received the College of Fine Arts Faculty Excellence Award for creative research, and in 2008 was named a University Professor.

Movement exploration inspired by Departure – A Last Song, Perhaps a Final Dance Before a Rest
Theme: Departure

Guide your students through this simple group improvisation exercise.

Group improvisation phase 1

- 1) All the dancers start standing in a tight group, facing the same direction. Designate one dancer as the leader, who stands in the front and leads the group in slow motion. Everybody else has to follow the leader's movement as exactly as possible. The leader is responsible for how much and where the group travels in space (start simple!)
- 2) At any moment, a dancer might leave the group and exit the performance space (leader is the only person who can not leave). Continue until there is just the leader left alone on stage.
- 3) When you leave, depending on what is happening, make a clear choice about how you depart. Are you slowly peeling away? Do you make a sudden and dramatic departure? Do you physically affect other dancers? Do you make an announcement that you are leaving? What is the pathway of your departure? Do you run, tip-toe, roll, fall, scream, cry, slither, skip with joy? Try all kinds of different ideas and have fun - there is no wrong answer. (If the students are shy or at beginning level, teachers might provide some of the action words that they can try).

Discussion and reflection

- 1) When you are inside, what was the impetus for you to leave the group? Why did you decide to leave when you did?
- 2) Why did you make the choice of how you left the group?
- 3) If you had a chance to watch others, which of the choices worked, or interesting? Which ones didn't work? Did you have any reactions and why?
- 4) What other insights did you gain from this improvisation? How could this be connected to your life outside of dance studio?

Group improvisation phase 2

- 1) Repeat the similar structure at the beginning, but mix it up so everybody's position within the group space is different. This time the leader can decide to leave as well. When that happens, the group collectively has to find a new leader, without talking to each other.
- 2) Also everybody is allowed to depart, and rejoin the group once, if they choose to. However, since it is only allowed once, the total of departures will be two times. After that the dancer has to remain outside of the performance. Continue until the whole group feels (or the teacher senses) the improvisation has run its course.

Discussion and reflection

- 1) How was it different from the phase 1 improvisation? What were your inside discoveries? What were the great moments and challenging moments?
- 2) What affected your choices about leaving, returning, or not returning?
- 3) What were the solutions to the problem of losing a leader?
- 4) What other interesting things happened? What were some of the challenges?
- 5) What would be the next layer to this improvisation?

***Dance for a Liminal Space* (world premiere 2019)**

Part 1: *Dark*

Part 2: *Light*

Choreography	Daniel Charon in collaboration with the dancers
Music	Part 1: Meredith Monk Part 2: Michael Gordon
Lighting Design	William Peterson
Costume Design	Melissa Younker
Costume Construction	Eugene Tachinni
Performers	Yebel Gallegos, Megan McCarthy, Breeanne Saxton, Bashaun Williams, Melissa Younker

Liminal:

1. relating to a transitional or initial stage of a process.
2. occupying a position at, or on both sides of, a boundary or threshold.

Artistic Director Daniel Charon premieres his newest work titled *Dance for a Liminal Space* which is imagined to exist in a realm of transition where one finds themselves at the threshold of a process, boundary, or beginning. This work will be presented in two parts, bookending the

evening, encouraging a sense of return, nostalgia, and recollection. Charon contemplates the idea of transition and how it seems as though this state of being is actually quite constant. It examines the life changing moments where we step out of the ordinary to process an event that has happened—something that suspends our everyday life.

Artist Biography



Artistic Director of Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company since 2013, **Daniel Charon** has been active as a choreographer, teacher, and performer for over twenty-five years. While based in New York City, Daniel maintained a project-based company and danced with Doug Varone and Dancers and the Limón Dance Company. Additionally, he performed with Doug Elkins and Friends, the Metropolitan Opera, the Aquila Theater Company, and the Mary Anthony Dance Theater among others. He is a BFA graduate of the North Carolina School of the Arts and an MFA graduate of the California Institute of the Arts in Choreography and Integrated Media.

As Ririe-Woodbury's Artistic Director, Daniel has created original works for the stage, gallery installations (Utah Museum of Contemporary Art), and had designed video for his and other choreographers' works. Daniel is the recipient of City Weekly's Best of Utah 2016 Award in Choreography for his Together Alone Trilogy. Independently in Salt Lake City, he has shown his work at Mudson and 12 Minutes Max and choreographed The Pearl Fishers and Aida at the Utah Opera. Daniel's choreography has also been produced by the 92nd Street Y Harkness Dance Festival, the Inside/Out Series at Jacob's Pillow, and the Dance Complex (Cambridge, MA) among others. He has presented multiple full evening concerts in New York City and has been commissioned to choreograph new works for many companies, universities, and festivals around the country.

A nationally known and respected educator, Charon regularly teaches master classes and workshops nationally and internationally and has taught at the Metropolitan Opera, the Bates Dance Festival, Salt Dance Fest, North Carolina School of the Arts Summer Comprehensive, Varone Summer Dance Workshops, and Limón Summer Workshops. He has been a guest artist at numerous universities and was an adjunct faculty member at Hunter College (NYC) and the California Institute of the Arts. Daniel has staged the works of José Limón, Jirí Kylián, and Doug Varone at schools and companies around the world.

*Movement exploration inspired by
Dance for a Liminal Space
Take a peek at Daniel Charon's creative process*

"We used a process to generate material by placing certain objects in the space and then having the dancers create material interpreting the object. We did this with stationary objects like an AV cart, chalkboard, and a lamp for instance. You can also use objects to map out the space so each dancer is following a particular spatial pattern.



If you look here:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/dgit5gebp8w86zw/AABhPPaSIhuWzWN_WCjHyt8aa?dl=0
You can see some of the rehearsal videos. If you go into one of the folders, like one of the Company member Melissa Younker for instance, look at the ones labeled balls, curtain, shirt, ladder, tripod, and then look at one of the _obstacle solos you can see how the solo was generated.



Melissa Younker

Here is a different section:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/q3a0vdiy23q9zfg/early-run-through.MP4?dl=0>
When the dancers are dancing together, they are doing their corresponding studies. So for instance they might both be doing the chalk board study or their AV cart study."

Have fun moving! And enjoy the performance of *BLOOM*.

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