



Bates Dance Festival

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<http://www.batesdancefestival.org/about/press-room/> (password: press)

DanceNOW showcase kicks off 35th season of Bates Dance Festival

LEWISTON, Maine -- A showcase of dynamic new works by New England dance artists opens the Bates Dance Festival's 2017 performance series and 35th season.

Titled DanceNOW, the performances takes place at 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, July 7 and 8, at Bates College's air-conditioned Schaeffer Theatre, 329 College St.

Admission is \$20 for adults, \$15 for seniors and \$12 for students. Tickets are available at batestickets.com. For more information, please visit the festival website at batesdancefestival.org or call the box office at 207-786-6161.

Friday's program features Vermont-based performance artist Lida Winfield and the pairing of Betsy Miller and Matthew Cumbie. In her poignant and hilarious solo "In Search of Air," Winfield chronicles growing up dyslexic. Through a seamless blend of text and music, Winfield shares the gifts and heartache that accompanied her struggle to learn to read -- in her early 20s.

" 'In Search of Air' is one of those rare works of art ... that resonates toward other lives, predicaments, challenges and accomplishments," says Rick Benjamin, the state poet of Rhode Island. "Lida Winfield is a brilliant performer."

Miller, choreographer and assistant professor of dance at Salem State University, and Cumbie, associate artistic director of Dance Exchange in Tahoma Park, Md., offer a whimsical new duet, "The (still perfectly fine) Adventures of Unicorn Hair + Dragon Heartstring." The pair challenges assumptions of postmodern dance with heart, humor and just the right amount of quirkiness, exploring fresh possibilities for virtuosity in performance and presence.

On Saturday, Christal Brown, assistant professor of dance and chair of the dance program at

Middlebury College, presents her company, INSPIRIT. The troupe performs Brown's acclaimed "The Opulence of Integrity." This forceful multimedia work adapts the story of Muhammad Ali to explore the struggle for identity of men of color in the U.S. and examine social, economic and spiritual conditions that inhibit freedom.

"To say that there is a purpose that we all have and to live that out is an opulence. It's an opulent privilege," says Brown. "And to do that, in a way that doesn't divide you as a person, that's the integrity."

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About the Bates Dance Festival

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The 2017 season is also the 30th and last for director Laura Faure, under whose guidance the Bates Dance Festival has become a leading American dance center, celebrated as a laboratory for important contributors to contemporary dance.

In November, Shoshona Currier takes over for Faure. A Maine native, Currier comes to the festival from Chicago, where she has served for five years as the city's director of performing arts.

Founded in 1982 at Bates College, the Bates Dance Festival brings together an international community of contemporary choreographers, performers, educators and students in a cooperative community to study, perform and create new work.

The festival serves as an annual destination for artists, students and audiences to engage in activities and performances that foster a creative exchange of ideas, encourage exploration of new ground and provide access to a wide spectrum of dance and movement disciplines.

At press time, support for the 2017 season has been provided by Bates College, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New England Foundation for the Arts, National Performance Network, the Sequoia Foundation, the Onion Foundation, New Music USA, Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust, the Shapiro Family Foundation, Norway Savings Bank, Eagle Point Donor Fund, Platz Associates, L.L. Bean, Maple Way Dental Care, Bob Crewe Foundation, I.Dres and generous individual donors.

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