EPHRAT ASHERIE DANCE
NOV 5 - 7, 2019
Q&A with Ephrat Asherie

Interview by Nadia Halim, edited by Laura Diffenderfer

New York City-based b-girl and choreographer, Ephrat “Bounce” Asherie brings the underground club ethos to Joyce audiences in Odeon, a music and dance-filled collaboration with her brother, jazz pianist Ehud Asherie. Inspired by the sounds of Brazilian composer Ernesto Nazareth, the work features a unique hybrid style of breaking, house, vogue, and West African dance. We sat down with Ephrat to discuss the creative inspirations behind the work you are about to see.

Going to school and working as an artist here, how were you first introduced to the NYC underground dance scene?

I grew up listening to hip-hop in the 90s, the golden era, and was fortunate that a friend of mine took me to a breaking practice in Bushwick in the early 2000s. There, I met the person who became my breaking mentor, Richard Santiago, aka “Break Easy,” a legendary Bboy from Brooklyn who's been breaking since the 70s. He organized free community practices at the Bushwick/Hylan Community Center. It was free for anybody and you just showed up and got down. But you had to show your dedication over a period of time—show and prove, especially as a woman—to be taken seriously. But it was through that community, the breaking community, and specifically “Break Easy,” that I got introduced to this world.

You have studied the vernacular jazz dance roots of contemporary street and club dance. How has your research informed your understanding of the work you do?

I was really lucky that I was surrounded by dancers who were so deeply rooted in the scene that, from an early point, I understood that these dances were not just about the dances, that they were about community, culture, lineage. When studying different vernacular jazz dances, the connections to the club styles that we do were clear. The roots in West African rhythms and movements are so present. I grew up listening to jazz—my brother's a jazz pianist—so I always loved the music, but when I started to understand the depth of the continuum of dances from the African Diaspora and that breaking, hip-hop, and house all come from jazz and are part of this lineage...it changed everything. And I was around people who were passing on this information, how important our dance lineage is in the community, and how important it is to honor your teachers and your elders. That's integral to being a part of the underground scene in New York. Looking backwards as a means to move forward with purpose, you know?

What captivated you and Ehud about Ernesto Nazareth's music?

I was lucky because I grew up going to my brother's gigs. He played a lot of standard jazz from the 30s and 40s, but then he would start to play samba—or what to me sounded like samba—so I asked, "Why are you playing samba in the middle of a jazz set?" And he said, "Oh, that's the composer Ernesto Nazareth from Brazil." I already had a deep interest in Brazilian music and dance, because in the house clubs that I was going to in the early 2000s, there was a community of dancers from Newark, and they were Brazilian. I was hearing house music with Portuguese lyrics and Afro-Brazilian rhythms, seeing people doing really smooth and fast footwork rooted in that feel. I definitely learned my first samba in the club!

Can you wrap up in three words how you would describe Odeon?

Music, connection, and dance. I think. But maybe in its simplest form it’s—

The relationship.

Yes. Between music and dance. Between dancers. Between movement and space. Between us and our elders, ancestors, and lineage. What do all these relationships bring out that we can’t speak about as easily as we can move about? That’s what we're exploring here.
Leadership support for The Joyce Theater Foundation has been received from the LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust.

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The Joyce Theater thanks the Theatre Development Fund for their support of this season.
ODEON

Choreographer: Ephrat Asherie, in collaboration with EAD
Composer: Ernesto Nazareth
Musical Director: Ehud Asherie
Percussion Arrangements: Sergio Krakowski
Lighting Designer: Kathy Kaufmann
Costume Designer: Mark Eric

Dancers
Ephrat “Bounce” Asherie, Manon Bal, Teena Marie Custer,
Val “Ms. Vee” Ho, Linda “LaNaija” Madueme,
Matthew “Megawatt” West, Omari Wiles

Musicians
Ehud Asherie, Eduardo Belo,
Sergio Krakowski, Ranjan Ramchandani

Tonight’s performance is dedicated to two legendary dancers, leaders, mentors and shining lights
of the NYC underground dance community: Marjory Smarth and Raymond "Voodoo Ray" Ultarte.
We miss you every day.

Musical Selections
in order of appearance
Brejeiro
Odeon
Fon-fon
Tenebroso
Apanhei-te cavaquinho
Ouro sobre azul
Confidências
Ven cá, Branquinha
Batuque

About the Composer

ERNESTO JÚLIO DE NAZARETH (Composer) was a Brazilian composer and pianist (1863-1934). He published his first composition Você Bem Sabe (1877), at age fourteen.
At this time, he began his professional career playing in cafes, balls, society parties
and in the waiting rooms of movie theaters in Rio de Janeiro. Known for creatively combining musical influences from Brazil, Africa, and Europe, Nazareth straddled the genres of popular and classical music, often blurring the boundary between the two worlds. Although greatly influenced by Chopin, Nazareth was also noted for his singular maxixe and choro compositions and composed over 210 waltzes, sambas, polkas and quadrilles during his lifetime. His work is now included as part of teaching programs for both classical and popular styles all over the world.
Ephrat Asherie Dance (EAD) is a dance company rooted in street and social dance. Dedicated to revealing the inherent complexities of these forms, EAD explores the expansive narrative qualities of various street and club styles including breaking, hip hop, house and vogue, as a means to tell stories, develop innovative imagery, and find new modes of expression. EAD’s first evening-length work, A Single Ride, earned two Bessie nominations in 2013 for Outstanding Emerging Choreographer and Outstanding Sound Design by Marty Beller. The company has presented work at The Apollo Theater, Columbia College, Dixon Place, FiraTarrega, Guggenheim Works & Process, Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival, La MaMa, River to River Festival, New York Live Arts, Summerstage, and The Yard, among others.

ABOUT THE COMPANY

EPHRAT “BOUNCE” ASHERIE (Artistic Director/Choreographer/Dancer) is a New York City-based b-girl, dancer, and choreographer and a 2016 Bessie Award Winner for Innovative Achievement in Dance. Asherie has received numerous awards to support her work including Dance Magazine’s Inaugural Harkness Promise Award, a Jacob’s Pillow Fellowship at the Tilles Center for the Performing Arts, and a Jerome Foundation Travel and Study grant. In 2017, she received a National Dance Project award to support the development and touring of her most recent work, Odeon. Asherie is a 2019 NYFA Fellow and a 2018-2019 City Center Choreography Fellow. Her new work UnderScored was awarded a 2019 Creation and Development Award from the National Performance Network and will premiere at Works & Process at the Guggenheim in the fall of 2020 with residency support from the Lumberyard and the Pocantico Center. She is honored to have been mentored by Richard Santiago (aka Break Easy) and to have worked and collaborated with Dorrance Dance, Doug Elkins, Rennie Harris, Bill Irwin, David Parsons, Gus Solomons Jr., and Buddha Stretch, among others. Asherie has created work for various University dance programs, including Lehman College, Smith College, SUNY Brockport and the University of California Santa Barbara. She earned her BA from Barnard College, Columbia University in Italian and her MFA from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where she researched the vernacular jazz dance roots of contemporary street and club dances. Asherie is a co-founding member of the all-female house dance collective MAWU and is forever grateful to NYC’s underground dance community for inspiring her to pursue a life as an artist. For more information, please visit ephratasheriedance.com or follow EAD on Instagram @ephratasheriedance.

EHUD ASHERIE (Musical Director/Musician) “a master of swing and stride” (The New Yorker), is a jazz pianist who integrates the venerable New York piano tradition into his inventive style. Largely self-taught, or rather, “old-schooled,” Asherie learned the ropes at Smalls, spending the wee small hours of his early teens becoming a fixture of the late-night jam sessions. Mentored by the late Frank Hewitt, Asherie began to develop “his virtuosity and his ear for clean, crisp lines” (The Star-Ledger). From Smalls to the Rainbow Room, from Lincoln Center to The Village Vanguard, Asherie has since worked with a broad range of musicians including: John Pizzarelli, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Wyndcliffe Gordon, and Catherine Russell. Ehud has toured clubs and festivals around the world, including South America, Europe and Asia. His playing can be heard on countless recordings, including the 2010 Grammy Award winning soundtrack of HBO’s Boardwalk Empire. Acclaimed album releases under Ehud Asherie’s leadership have included Shuffle Along, which reinterpreted the music of Eubie Blake, Organic, which finds Asherie on organ, and Upper West Side and Lower East Side, duet projects featuring the saxophonist Harry Allen and his trio recording Music Makes Me. Asherie’s most recent trio recording is Wild Man Blues on Capri Records.
**MANON BAL** *(Dancer)* was born in Marseille, France. She trained at the IFPRO Rick Odums in Paris. She performed as a soloist in Les Jeunes Ballet Jazz de Rick Odums before moving to New York to train at the Aliley School. Manon has worked with choreographers including Ronald K Brown, Tweet Boogie, and Miki Tuesday, in addition to co-founding Mozaik Dance with Sun Kim and Janine "J9" Micheletti.

**EDUARDO BELO** *(Musician)* is a Brazilian bass player and composer who has worked with many great musicians including Ari Hoenig, Chico Pinheiro, Duduka Da Fonseca, Helio Alves, Claudio Roditi, Kevin Hays, Gabriel Grossi, Koran Agan, Mario Adnet, and many others. Eduardo earned his BA in Music at the Universidade de Brasilia, and his Master’s degree in Jazz from the Queen’s College of New York.

**TEENA MARIE CUSTER** *(Dancer)* is an artist/educator based in Pittsburgh. Her choreographic work has been presented at Sadler’s Wells, and 30 universities across the U.S. She taught at Slippery Rock University for 14 years, and has an MFA from Ohio State. Teena has been touring her critically acclaimed solo work, My Good Side, since 2015 and regularly reps her crews Venus Fly and Get Down Gang.

**VAL "MS. VEE" HO** *(Dancer)* was born in Vancouver, Canada and moved to New York in 2003. She has had the pleasure of working with Buddha Stretch, Rennie Harris, Luam, Maria Torres, Bradley Rapier, and Ephrat Asherie. She has appeared on various award shows, TV and film and co-choreographed and was featured in Kiesza’s viral video sensation “Hideaway.” Ms. Vee is the first-ever hip hop faculty member at The Juilliard School and also teaches at Pace University’s Commercial Dance BFA Program and Broadway Dance Center.

**SERGIO KRAKOWSKI** *(Musician)* has dedicated his whole life to the Pandeiro, also known as the Brazilian Tambourine and considered a symbol of Brazilian Music and Culture. In his twenty year career, he has worked with artists including Maria Bethânia, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Lionel Loueke, and Cyro Baptista, among many others. Sergio holds a PhD in Computer Music where his research evolved into the electronic music project **Talking Drums**, commissioned by the NY State Council of the Arts and presented by The Guggenheim Museum of Bilbao, Le Poisson Rouge, Oi Futuro and at the Museum of Moving Image. Sergio’s latest album *Passaros - The Foundation of the Island* was released in June 2016.
LINDA "LANAIJA" MADUEME (Dancer) was raised in Nigeria, and has developed a unique movement style that blends house dance, as well as African and contemporary dance styles. Her current explorations include tango, salsa, and Afro-Cuban dance. She has also received training from Ronald K. Brown, Funmilayo Chesney, Courtney Ffrench, and Camille A. Brown, among others, and has both taught and judged at numerous national and international events. Linda received her BA in Anthropology from Princeton University, and is a co-founder of MAWU.

RANJAN RAMCHANDANI (Musician) first encountered Brazilian music through Rio's Carnaval samba. He then began a serious study of traditional samba and choro and the gamut of Brazilian percussion. He has shared the stage with the leading lights of contemporary Brazilian music, including Moyses Marques, Rogério Souza, and Nailor Proveta, and leads his own choro group in NY.

MATTTHEW "MEGAWATT" WEST (Dancer) started dancing at the age of sixteen in Queens. Megawatt is an active part of NYC's underground dance community and teaches youth classes throughout the five boroughs. Megawatt is a regular guest artist with Dorrance Dance and can be seen in Baz Lurhman's Netflix series The Get Down and battling with his crew, the Mellow Animals.

OMARI WILES (Dancer) was born in Senegal West Africa, and trained and performed with his family's dance company The Maimouna Keita School of African Dance from a young age. Raised in Brooklyn, New York, Omari is also a legendary member of the ballroom scene and founder and artistic director of Les Ballet Afrik. Omari has worked with many artists including Janet Jackson, Jidenna, Raashad Newsome and Wummi and is on faculty at Broadway Dance Center, Peridance Capezio Dance Center and EXPG.

KATHY KAUFMANN (Lighting Designer) is a two time Bessie recipient and New York City native. She was nominated for a 2015 Bessie for Rebecca Davis's Bloowst Windku. She has been a resident designer at the Danspace Project at St. Marks Church for over 15 years and has toured extensively throughout the world. She was honored to be included in Curtain Call: Celebrating 100 Years of Women in Design at the New York Performing Arts Library and currently teaches lighting design at Sarah Lawrence College. She works regularly with many companies including Michelle Dorrance (Dorrance Dance), Joanna Kotze, David Parker (The Bang Group) Eiko & Koma, Rebecca Stenn, Moriah Evans and Mina Nishamura. Recent projects include designs for Jonathan Gonzalez, Morgan Bassichis, Mariana Valencia, Jasmine Heard, and Tatyana Tenenbaum.
MARK ERIC (Costume Designer) is a native of the San Francisco Bay Area and now resides in New York City, where he designs and constructs costumes. He trained as a fashion designer at the Fashion Institute of Technology, where he was recognized as the Critics’ Choice among his graduating class. After interning with Marchesa, he started designing eveningwear for several brands including Monique Lhuillier and Adrianna Papell before discovering his passion for costume design. Mark Eric has designed costumes for a diverse roster of choreographers including: Robert Battle, Darrell Grand Moultrie, Rennie Harris, Stefanie Batten Bland, Andrew McNicol, and Marguerite Donlon among others. He has costumed works for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Alvin Ailey II, BalletX, TU Dance, and Nimbus Dance Works to name a few and is currently working on new works with Gregory Dawson for BalletX and Ephrat Asherie Dance. Instagram: @MEMarkEric #CostumesbyMarkEric

ALEXA ZANIKOS (Production Manager) is a freelance theater technician and dance artist based in Brooklyn NY. Dedicated to dance production, she has worked with Jacob’s Pillow, National Dance Institute, Baryshnikov Arts Center, and Danspace Project, and She has a BA in Dance and Lighting Design from The George Washington University and was a 2017 Allen Lee Hughes Lighting Design Fellow at Arena Stage in Washington DC.

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Photo by Christopher Duggan
The Joyce Theater Foundation ("The Joyce," Executive Director, Linda Shelton), a nonprofit organization, has proudly served the dance community for over three decades. Under the direction of founders Cora Cahan and Eliot Feld, Ballet Tech Foundation acquired and The Joyce renovated the Elgin Theater in Chelsea. Opening as The Joyce Theater in 1982, it was named in honor of Joyce Mertz, beloved daughter of LuEsther T. Mertz. It was LuEsther's clear, undaunted vision and abundant generosity that made it imaginable and ultimately possible to build the theater. Ownership was secured by The Joyce in 2015. The theater is one of the only theaters built by dancers for dance and has provided an intimate and elegant home for over 400 U.S.-based and international companies. The Joyce has also expanded its reach beyond its Chelsea home through off-site presentations at venues ranging in scope from Lincoln Center's David H. Koch Theater, to Brooklyn’s Invisible Dog Art Center, and to outdoor programming in spaces such as Hudson River Park. To further support the creation of new work, The Joyce maintains longstanding commissioning and residency programs. Local students and teachers (K-12th grade) benefit from its school program, and family and adult audiences get closer to dance with access to artists. The Joyce’s annual season of about 48 weeks of dance now includes over 340 performances for audiences in excess of 150,000 patrons. Visit Joyce.org for more information.

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*Phillip J. Pena
In loving Memory of Bill Perlmut, Patricia Dugan Perlmut
*Alicia Pinkston
*Larry Pitsch
Hugh B. Price
Jonathan Raskin
Dr. & Mrs. Robert Refowitz
Lan Rice
Judith & Gary Richter
*Barbara S. Rosenthal
*Laine & John Ross
*Anya Peterson Royce
*Alan Russell
*William H. Sadie
*Prince & Petar Sanders
*Laura E. Schneider
*Deborah Selch
Mary & John Seward
*Rita Shawnor
*Anthony & Rosa Smith
*Robin Smith & Bill Plante
*Dr. Irene Rosner & Dr. Raphael David
*Dixie M. Sheridan
Martha Sherman
Milton Sondagyan
*Robin Stout
*Jos Stumpe
Dr. Pavur R. Sundaresan
*Jennifer Tipton
William M. Tomai & John Eric Sebesta
Lee L. Traub
Charles & Susan Tribbitt
In Memory of Rachel Tucker-Gaynor
Bob Tucker
Ann Vosti & Llyod Leanez
*Ronald Walcott
Richard E. Wallach
*Pam Weisberg

*Denotes Joyce Rising Stars, the Joyce’s new and increased donors.

The Rudolf Nureyev Prize for New Dance and Ballet Festival Commissions

The Joyce Theater Foundation thanks the Rudolf Nureyev Dance Foundation for its invaluable partnership in commissioning new works from both established and emerging ballet companies, and enabling these companies to perform on the Joyce stage. The Joyce gratefully recognizes the donors listed below for their generous matching support that has made this effort possible.

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**FACILITIES & SERVICES**

Box Office (212-242-0800): Open Monday thru Sunday, 12pm - 6pm. On days when there is a performance, the box office is open through curtain time; advance sales stop ½ hour prior to curtain time (including matinees). Closed on major holidays. For Hearing Impaired call (TDD) 212-245-2904.

To report Lost & Found items, please see an usher or call 212-691-9740.

For Special Event Rental information, contact Katy Myers at kmyers@joyce.org.

**EMERGENCY RESUSCITATION EQUIPMENT**

Resuscitation masks and latex gloves are located in the closet next to the drinking fountain in the Upper Lobby. AED is located downstairs in the reception area. LEARN CPR. For more information, contact the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association.

**FIRE NOTICE:** The exit indicated by a red light and sign nearest to the seat you occupy is the shortest route to the street. In the event of fire or other emergency, please walk —do not run— to that exit.

**WARNING:** The use of any recording device, either audio or video, and the taking of photographs, either with or without flash, is strictly prohibited within the auditorium. Violators will be punished with confiscation of recording device or ejection from the theater, and may be held liable for money damages.
As a nonprofit organization, The Joyce Theater relies on the generosity of our patrons to do the work we do best: providing world class dance experiences to audiences and artists alike. Contributions to The Joyce make up 50% of our annual operating budget and support breathtaking performances and innovative initiatives that ensure everyone has a seat in the theater.

Today we ask you to become a Friend of The Joyce, and keep the movement going both onstage and off. As a thank you for gifts of $75 or more, you will receive amazing benefits including invitations to open rehearsal, exclusive interactions with artists, access to the best seats in the house, and more.

For more information, please contact Ivan Huang at ihuang@joyce.org or 646-278-0444, and become a part of the movement!
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