



Amanda Selwyn
Dance Theatre

Digital Press Kit
amandaselwyndance.org



ARTIST STATEMENT ➤

Amanda Selwyn

Artistic Director/Choreographer

In my work, I aim to connect with what makes us human, our universal search for grounding, safety, and security. From there, we seek fulfillment—meaning and purpose, expression, and truth. In this time of political and environmental strife, so much is uncertain. I see dance as a way to empower the storytellers of our time not simply by the allegory of the dance itself, but in its dialogue with the audience. Dance, using the language of the body and movement, speaks a truth that is universal, immediate and tangible. As our society advances with technology, there are, increasingly, more and more opportunities to disconnect. Dance revels in connection. It pulses with touch, physicality and emotion. Dance activates a canvas of ideas, truths, and passions. In my work, I aim to celebrate community, humanity, and citizenship. I do not attempt to tell a linear story or unveil new truths, but rather to illuminate signposts that raise questions so that audiences can make meaning for themselves.

Now in the 24th season of my company, I have growing excitement and confidence in my creative process. With each new work, I up the ante for myself. This audaciousness plays out in my desire to integrate innovative scenic, video, costume, and musical elements, my insistence on harvesting a surfeit of raw material, and my relentlessness for trial and error that coaxes the movement to find its own voice in the creative process. I strive principally to engage my audience from start to finish and then secondarily, but perhaps most importantly, to raise questions and magnify humanity through dance.

Since founding Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre, I have tested my own choreographic voice and created a cohesive vision for the company that offers our audience access, inclusion, and emotional engagement to our performances. Through thoughtful collaboration with designers, the original movement lexicon in my choreography is artfully staged within a landscape of color, texture, and sound. My creative process is distinctive from many other choreographers and makes each new project full of surprises. In rehearsal, I pose physical and dramatic paradigms for my dancers, and ask them to work out these challenges through movement. My dancers then, through improvisation and spontaneous choreographic studies, unearth raw material. Movements are passed through the company to discover new variations, individual interpretation, and nuance. The choreographic vocabulary erupts from the discourse of exchange between dancers. The movement speaks a language of community. To achieve a fully developed work, I unravel the movement lexicon and weave it back into a larger structure that integrates motif, character, and spatial relationships. I linger in repetition, variation, deconstruction, isolation, and stillness to unpack each image and illuminate different ways of experiencing an idea. I like to work with themes rich in depth and nuance, yet possessing the grace to transmit simplicity and clarity. I search for moments of lightness. As my work develops, it traverses my original imaginings and takes on its own life, telling me who it is, what it wishes to say, and where to go next.

I want to turn that which we accept every day on its head. I play. I am dancing with social constructs and paradigms and finding new meanings, new context. The creative process is to me the very best of living. I love watching all the body is capable of. I seek out organic discoveries, raw and uninterrupted, to let movement flow from momentum and physical sensation. I enjoy mixing the recognizable and the unusual. I seek to find joy in the process and experience visceral truths in the movement. I thrive on bold choices and taking risks, and desire to beckon an audience response of thought, feeling, and soul. I aspire to uplift, inspire, exhilarate, and create a community of support. I believe I get back the energy that I put forward. I call the pauses in the process bookmarks – there is this interruption with more waiting to unfold.



MISSION »

Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre/Notes in Motion engages communities in dynamic dance theatre and inclusive arts education programs. Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre presents dance theatre productions that activate emotional expression. Through an interplay of athletic and articulate motion, we present theatrical and immediate works that engage audiences from start to finish and beckon a response of thought, feeling, and soul. Notes in Motion brings dance education programs to the NYC Public Schools in styles including modern, ballet, tap, jazz, hip hop, Latin, African, and more. Programs are united by our singular approach to dance education, The Movement Exchange Method, which combines technical instruction with creative skill-building and collaborative learning. Programs foster self-discovery, risk-taking, and making connections. We aim to provide access to the art form of dance to inspire the next generation of dance appreciators.

HISTORY »

Founded in 2000, Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre has presented 18 original evening length works and dozens of shorter works at NY Performance Seasons and festival engagements, and offers residencies to colleges and universities. We include audiences in the creative process by offering open rehearsals, informal performances of developing work, and access to videos, photos, and interactive tools on our website. We have presented over 130 productions at venues including Baruch Performing Arts Center, New York Live Arts, Mark Morris Dance Center, Tribeca Performing Arts Center, The Kumble Theater, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Danspace Project, The Ailey Citigroup Theater, John Jay College, and Dance New Amsterdam.

- *Inside New York*: “Amanda Selwyn is a master at illustrating the symbiosis of sound and movement, the romance of motion and emotion – she had me laughing, crying, cringing and gasping all in the short 55-minute production.”
- *Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival's Pillow Pages*: “Choreographically, Amanda's point of departure is not an image or a gesture, but a theatrical imperative felt in her insistence on expression.”



PRESS

[VIEW ALL PRESS HIGHLIGHTS »](#)

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The New Yorker »

"*Five Minutes* is structured in ten segments, each as long as the title indicates. Video elements, metronomic ticks and beats, and one bit of talking advance a theme of time being measured, but the choreography is more formal than conceptual, compact and intricate routines delivered by a vivid cast of six. A distinctive, off-kilter elegance threads through more standard-issue material, the score running to club remixes of tangoish melodies. Perhaps inevitably, some segments feel longer than others."

“

NY Social Agenda »

"There aren't sufficient words to describe this entire experience. Our senses were continuously activated through every session, as the dancers moved, extended, and coiled through air - while using the power of their bodies as a form of communication, to express vibrant and fun hidden messages and stories of laughter, happiness, solitude, love, and possibly seduction. Every movement and series were an extension highlighting balance, refreshing high energy, strength - and-Renewal."

“

Broadway World »

"...Last, but certainly not least, Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre executed a beautiful excerpt from their piece, *Refuge*. Set to sparkling crystalline music, with sound design by Joel Wilhelmi, the five dancers explored the realms of space and the limits placed upon them with the addition of silkscreen apparatuses. Each dancer explored every corner, high and low, to create a mosaic of awareness through movement that was, quite truly, breathtaking. Dynamic partner work followed, complete with spellbinding lifts and assisted spirals that took the piece into a different realm. It was a joy watching this company perform together. I only wish they had taken the stage more frequently."





Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre/Notes in Motion was featured in the March 2023 Dance Magazine article “The Do’s and Dont’s of Holding a Fundraising Event.”



Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre/Notes in Motion was featured in the January 2023 Dance Magazine article “Against All Odds, Six Dance Organizations Find Ways to Thrive in Hard Times.”



The Do's and Dont's of Holding a Fundraising Event

By Amanda Selwyn

November 16, 2022

An underside part of any artistic project is ensuring funding—a relentless task that many choreographers dread. But a fundraising event doesn't have to be a long-for-everyone experience in a night of awkward networking. Your goals can match the benefits of your company, whether that means a relaxed evening with old friends and new supporters, a sit-down, intimate dinner show or even a chance your own audience experience for attendees looking to mingle at their own pace. Choreographer Amanda Selwyn, whose eponymous company performs in 20th-century the great has successfully tried all three of these approaches. “The common denominator?” “I plan every moment,” she says. “That’s where the choreographer and producer roles come in.” With the right equipment, preparation and careful choreography of moving parts, a fundraising gala can be the productive, enjoyable event you want it to be.



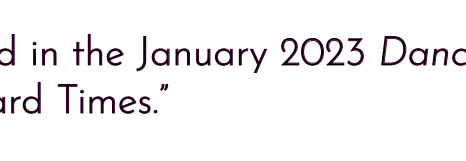
DO Explain the Benefits

Danielle Russo, artistic director of her own project-based cooperative, Danielle Russo Performance Project, is as transparent as possible about where monetary donations go. “I say, ‘This is what our budget is, this is what we have received, and this is the balance,’” she says. “But I’ll also break it down in terms of a gift of a certain amount of dollars will support one of our dancers for one week of rehearsal.” It gives donors the sense of what they’re contributing to. “Selwyn’s goal with each fundraising event she holds is always the same: ‘The formula that begins is to that 20 percent of the revenue goes to cover the event, and 70 percent is our net,’” she says.



DO Carefully Consider Timing

Plan well in advance. Selwyn recommends beginning to plan your event six months beforehand. Consider whether or not to tie the event to a premiere. Because of the volume of work involved in touring to gala and a premiere, some artists may choose to schedule an annual fundraising event between performance seasons. “That said, it can be nice when you’re engaging performance audiences to have a benefit right at the same time,” Selwyn says. “It feels natural.” Last-minute deadlines can work in your favor. “Dancers will respond more generously if they know it’s the final countdown to a production—that their gift is not only critical but will make something happen,” she says.



DO Create a Host Committee

Selwyn asks current and former board members and friends of the company’s dancers and supporters to serve as a gala committee and sell a certain number of tickets to their year’s fundraising event. “That’s how we meet our goals,” she says. “It’s very hard to get people to attend a fundraising event unless they’re affiliated in some way with our organization.”

DO Make Sure Your Event is Accessible

“Accessibility is really important in a multitude of ways,” says Russo, citing the venue location and whether it’s central and can be reached by several modes of transportation, and also means the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act in terms of physical accessibility. Selwyn tries to keep the evening’s programming flowing. “I don’t want people to have to stand up and wait a 45-minute presentation,” she says.



DO First Sponsor or in Kind Donations

Creating business partnerships or getting food and drink donated for your event can make a huge difference in how much you’re able to put directly toward your artistic project’s budget (as opposed to your fundraising event’s operating costs). “When I first started my company, in 2005, I had a collaborator who was great at just pounding the pavement,” remembers Selwyn. “This made relationships with people who ended up providing food and wine for our events for years. When you find a way to build relationships and keep connected to them, it becomes an easy call after a while.”



It’s Not Just About the Money

“The intention to come learn about the work and engage with all of the collaborators and share food and drink with new people with like-minded interests, without the commitment of a certain donation—that’s welcoming,” says Danielle Russo, noting that while more established companies might have a ticket fee for a fundraising event, smaller and younger companies like hers often don’t have audiences who can afford that fee. “The goal is to not only raise money that evening but, more importantly, to have committed audience members for our performance.”

Even for choreographer Amanda Selwyn—who has a stated focus this can afford a ticketed event—the focus is on fundraising support. “Our biggest goal is building partnerships and relationships with people who could become supporters,” she says. “That’s why we have fundraising events offer different experiences for attendees. I like to offer diversity of engagement—somebody might want to sit down and talk to their friend. Someone else might want to get to know the artist. Someone else might want to experience the work of a short artist.”



Setting It Up

Like many dance organizations in densely populated urban centers, New York City’s Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre comes on-line through contracts with local schools to provide dance education in the classroom. In turn, these contracts support the company’s performances, typically produced at a not-for-profit, when COVID protocols posed community engagement programs. Unfortunately, many companies were forced to reforge any teaching artists who hadn’t already left the field. AIGF executive and artistic director Amanda Selwyn, who founded the company in 2005, remembers well the hit to her partner school’s budgets during the financial crisis that began in 2008. Over the course of the next decade, Selwyn had nearly rebuilt those relationships. “Going into the pandemic, we’d not had our most difficult year of arts education yet, with about 20 programs,” she says.

In 2020, in part to address the financial hardship for low-income parents who need childcare during summer holidays, the New York City Department of Education and Department of Youth and Community Development launched six-weeks of educational activities plus breakfast six days a week, called Summer Rising. AIGF, as an organization with two decades of experience with local contracts at neighborhood schools through its focus in Motion curriculum, was well-positioned to be involved: with 12 grants totaling \$300,000, AIGF was able to provide 20 to 30 hours a week of instruction four days a week for six weeks, in as many as 10 different sites per site. “We could provide almost full-time employment for artists, and we hired about 45 of them,” Selwyn says. More than a third of those in Motion’s total sessions since 2005 occurred during the 2020-21 school year, when it reached more than 14,000 students—40 times the program’s size before COVID.



It’s in Queens

Amanda Selwyn was interviewed by Jeff Simmons of *It’s in Queens* about Notes in Motion’s extensive dance education programs serving NYC public schools and diverse communities.



Stage Whisper

Whisper in the Wings Episode 355
Stage Whisper by Andrew Cortes and Hope Bird
Amanda Selwyn spoke about her latest upcoming production, *Habit Formed*.



Queens Public Television

Notes in Motion’s inclusive dance education programs were highlighted in the January 2024 interview by *Queens Public Television*.



Against All Odds, Six Dance Organizations Find Ways to Thrive in Hard Times

By Jeremy Whittingburg

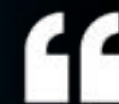
December 16, 2022

Over the past three years, most dance organizations have faced major challenges—or, worse, existential ones—due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and more recently, economic and political volatility. Emergency relief funds, and lower operating costs in-person events were suspended, helped during the financial impact of these forces on some established arts and cultural organizations, many of which reported operating expenses and historically high contributions, revenue (i.e., donations and grants) in 2021. In general, however, these conditions didn’t last long and new expenses are high, earned income from ticket sales is limited, touring remains complicated and budget deficits have been large. Against these odds, a few organizations are doing better than ever. Thanks to innovative partnerships, new business models, increased commitments by funders to artists and communities of color or some combination thereof.

Setting It Up

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Hi! Drama »

"Altogether, the work was invigorating and unexpected. The creative space brought out by Amanda Selwyn and her collaborators is truly a fun and funny place, celebratory, fiercely feminine, and vehemently aware of the interplay of time."



The New Yorker »

"Selwyn has managed to produce sincere, personal works year after year for two decades—no small feat."



Oberon's Grove »

"Sooooo...Amanda Selwyn's *CROSSROADS* is exhilarating...non-stop dancing (from lyrical to kick-ass) with a vibrant score...and her dancers are fantastic, both as individuals and as a group. Watch the trailer, then go and see the show!"



FlavorPill »

"Artfully athletic, expressive choreography... Choreographer Amanda Selwyn uses gesture, narrative, and character to move her dances beyond pure bodies in motion and into social commentary and critique."



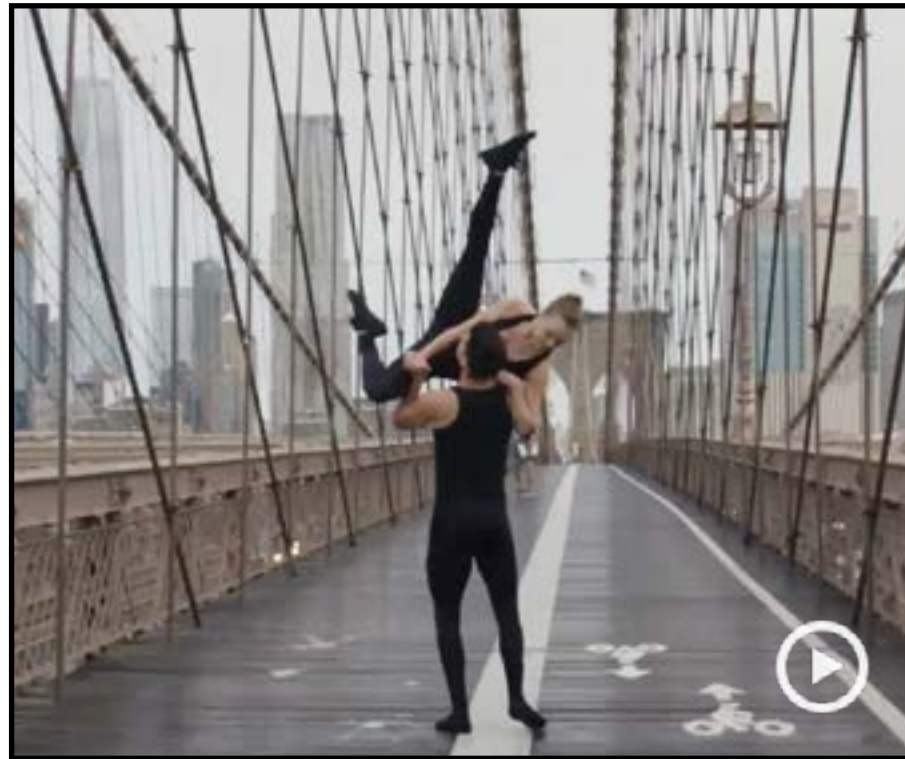
Inside New York »

"Amanda Selwyn is a master at illustrating the symbiosis of sound and movement, the romance of motion and emotion - she had me laughing, crying, cringing and gasping all in the short 55-minute production."

VIDEOS »



Why We Dance
21 Years of Dance »



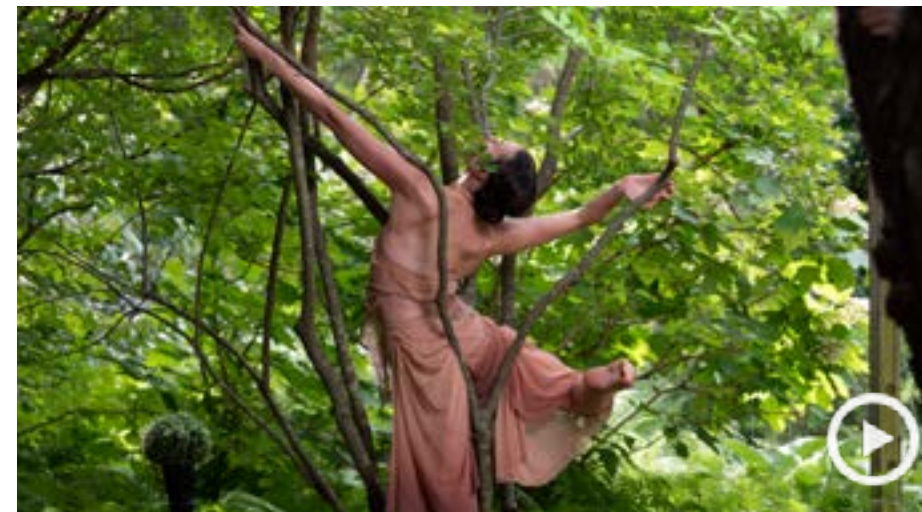
Crossing the Bridge »



***Hindsight* World Premiere**
Highlights »



***Threads* World Premiere**
Highlights »



***Green Afternoon* Garden**
Installations »



***Habit Formed* Highlights »**

UNIVERSITY RESIDENCY OFFERINGS

We build our University residency program to best match the needs of a dance program. Our programs can include combinations of the following components: (1) *Composition/Repertory*, (2) *Choreography*, (3) *Technique*, and (4) *Arts-in-Education Workshops*.

1. Composition/Repertory Workshops

We are interested in creating opportunities for your students to perform both an original work and a repertory Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre work. Through Selwyn's unique and collaborative dance-making process, Selwyn will create an original work with the students during our residency period in addition to setting a piece from our rich repertory. Depending on the length of the residency period, Selwyn can set shorter or longer works on students and likewise, develop original material that is resonant of the strengths of the dancers in the program.

2. Choreography Workshops

In Choreography Workshops, Selwyn will work with students on developing their own short choreographic studies with clear motifs, well-constructed phrasing, musicality, originality, and a strong theatrical point of view. She will also work with students on how to build out movement material into a larger work exploring pattern, repetition/theme and variation, use of solos, duets, group work, abstraction and narrative, design elements, character/environment, and dramatic arc.

3. Technique Workshops | Company Class

Selwyn and her company of dancers will teach students Company Class with a rigorous center warm-up, across the floor exercises, and center phrase work that develops technical clarity, strength, flexibility, agility, precision, performance quality and personal expression, and skills to master the coordination, movement memory, and athleticism required for her choreography.

4. Arts-in-Education Workshops

In addition to presenting innovative dance works, Amanda Selwyn has been bringing arts-in-education programming to 3K-12th graders in the NYC Public Schools for 24 years. In our Notes in Motion Arts-in-Education Workshops, we will emphasize ways in which your students can develop as teachers to build out their career and make a living in the field of dance. Workshops will explore engaging approaches to classroom management, culminating events, connecting dance to other aspects of the school curriculum, collaborating with classroom teachers, assessing students learning, practice teaching, and studying and analyzing the dance standards as outlined in the NYC Department of Education's *Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts*. The students will be able to connect with their passion for dance and develop leadership skills that can be applied throughout their dance careers.

LEARN MORE

We would be thrilled for the opportunity to work with your student body and are eager to provide and deliver the most enriching, artistic experience possible. To learn more, please feel free to contact us so we can better acquaint you with the company.

CONTACT US



NOTES IN MOTION »»

Overview

Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre's educational outreach program, Notes in Motion, has brought arts programs to over 140 schools and over 165,000 students in New York City since 2000. We have programs in all 5 boroughs and reach diverse student populations from 3K-12. As a vendor of the NYC Department of Education, our programs align with the *Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in Dance*.

Program Description

We create long-lasting arts partnerships with schools and inspire the greater community of each school with the beauty, magic, and vitality of dance. We do not offer any cookie-cutter programs. Each program is custom-tailored to the specific needs and population of each school partner. We work collaboratively with classroom teachers at every stage from program planning, implementation, performance/community sharing, assessment, and evaluation. Our Teaching Artists guide students through a unique creative process, creating connections with other academic subjects and fostering active learning – students are creators, improvisors, and collaborators. We have an Education Ensemble of 60 experienced Teaching Artists with advanced degrees and extensive performance and choreography backgrounds in several dance styles and techniques.

Dance Styles Offered

Afro-Caribbean, Afro-beats/Afro-fusion, Ballet, Ballroom, Bollywood, Classical Indian Dance, Contemporary Dance, Creative Movement, Dance & Drumming, Hip-Hop, K-Pop, Improvisation, Latin/Social Dance, Modern, Musical Theater, Step/Line Dance, Street Jazz, Tap, West African, Yoga and Meditation

YEARS
24

NYC BOROUGHS

5

SCHOOLS

140

STUDENTS SERVED

165,000+



Notes in Motion

2022-2023
YEAR IN REVIEW



DISTINCTIVE PROGRAMS IN 2022-2023

77

DANCE CLASSES

COMMUNITY EVENTS

3,496

18

STUDENTS SERVED

18,000+





COMPANY DANCERS »



Torrey Harada
rehearsal director



Ashley McQueen
assistant to the artistic director



Kevin Avila



Emanuele Fiore



Manon Hallay



Minseon Kim



Misaki Hayama



Isaac Kerr



Michael Miles



Oscar Antonio Rodriguez



Laruen Russo

PRODUCTION STAFF »



Anna-Alisa Belous
Costume/Scenic Designer



Robert Dutiel
Scenic Designer



Dan Ozminkowski
Lighting Designer



Gina Solebello
Stage Manager



Joel Wilhelmi
Sound Designer

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Amanda Selwyn
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COLLABORATING ARTISTS »

Nir Arieli
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Whitney Brown
Christopher Duggan
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Zachary Ludescher

Photographer
Photographer
Photographer
Photographer
Photographer
Videographer

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Amanda Selwyn
Milan Agnew
Janet Cessaroti
Ashley McQueen
Bailey Randolph
Erke Roosen-Castelluzzo
Emily Schwartz
Alana Marie Urda

Executive/Artistic Director
Marketing Director
Development/Program Associate
Assistant to the Artistic Director
Lead Teaching Artist
After-School Site Director
Lead Teaching Artist
Director of Education





AMANDA SELWYN »

Artistic Director/Choreographer

Amanda Selwyn (Artistic Director/Choreographer) founded Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre/Notes in Motion in 2000 and in 24 seasons, has directed over 110 productions, developed a network of artists, and created Notes in Motion's dance education program. Amanda's choreographic works include: *Habit Formed, Threads, Hindsight, Crossroads, Refuge, Renewal, It's a Game, Detour, Five Minutes, Passage, Undercurrent, Hearsay, Interiors, Disturbance, Salut, Tilt, Tidal, Shift, Siren, Contradicting Unity, Save My Spot, Hold On, Momentum, and Behind Us.*

Amanda recently taught workshops at New Women, New York, the New York Gender Conference, and a Choreography Master Class at Temple University. Her 24th Season is being presented at BMCC Tribeca Performing Arts Center and her 20th Anniversary Season was presented at Baruch Performing Arts Center both as Residency Artists of the CUNY Dance Initiative. She has choreographed dance for Chicago's Motivity; for theatre productions including *House on Mango Street, Free to be You an Me, Once Upon a Mattress, The Wiz, Little Shop of Horrors, and Charlie & The Chocolate Factory*; and for her original theatre productions which include *Herland, Yellow Feather, and Slitting the Clouds*. In addition to her choreographic work, Amanda has directed off-broadway theatre in NYC at John Houseman Studio, 30th Street Theatre, Grove Street Theatre, Kraine Theatre, Center Stage, and the Producer's Club. Amanda teaches dance and theatre to New York City children and has been on faculty at The Brearley School, Brooklyn Friends School, Beit Rabban School, Solomon Schechter School, and the New Acting Company. She has taught dance composition and technique at the Berkshire Institute for Music and Art and taught dance and theatre in Israel at the Israel Museum, English Village, and the Arad Community Center. Amanda led the workshops "Accessing Inspiration for Dance-Making" and "Teaching a Choreographic Process" at the 3 NYC Arts-in-Education Roundtable's Face to Face conferences.

She has also presented her choreography at NYU's Women and Theater conference and at Dance Teacher Summit. She is the recipient of grants from the NY State Council on the Arts, The Harkness Foundation for Dance, the Friars Foundation, Dizzy Feet Foundation, Bronx Council on the Arts, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs Cultural Development Fund, NY City Council Members Bill DeBlasio, Andy King, Carlina Rivera, Margaret Chin, and Rosie Mendez, Manhattan Borough President, Met Life, City National Bank, Credit Suisse, and the Bossak/Heilbron Charitable Foundation. Amanda participated in the Choreographer's Lab program at Jacob's Pillow. Her work has been presented twice on Jacob's Pillow Inside/Out Stage, at Tribeca Performing Arts Center, in the DUMBO Dance Festival, APAP Conference, COOL NY Dance Festival, Wassaic Dance Festival, WestFest Dance Festival, Movement Research's Performance Series, Earth Celebrations, Dixon Place, and Pushing Progress at Peridance.

Amanda has a 500-hour yoga teacher's certification from Laughing Lotus Yoga Center in NYC and teaches yoga privately and at Crunch Gym in NYC. She has a Masters from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts in performance studies and a B.S. from Northwestern University in theatre, women's studies, and dance.





**PERFORMANCE
HISTORY »**

**REPERTORY
WORKS »**



[CONTACT US](#)

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77 Bleecker Street, #318, New York, NY 10012 | (212) 995-9446

Press Representation: Michelle Tabnick, michelle@michelletabnickpr.com

*Engaging audiences from start to finish and beckoning a response of thought,
feeling, and soul... since 2000.*

A 501(c)3 organization.