

SEPTEMBER 2016

## Élan Study Guide and Program Information



Élan presents the work of exceptional contemporary choreographers whose movement languages exemplify the style and vigor of our time. While RDT is a “living” museum for the history of modern dance, sixty percent of our repertory comes from our commitment to commissioning new work. Danielle Agami, Noa Zuk, Andy Noble, Anna Meredith and David Ogle expand the range and diversity of our repertory in this concert.

At the turn of the 20th Century, many dancers worldwide were exploring ways to express the energy of an era influenced by technology, access to travel and the discovery of scientific principles that were to change our lives forever more. Daring choreographers boldly rejected the status quo and were determined to create new movement languages...the exploration continues.

RDT dancers have learned the vocabulary of over 150 different choreographers over the years. Now we have added the Gaga Movement Language developed by Israeli choreographer, Ohad Naharin. See more information inside about this wonderful movement language!

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## About the Choreographers and Pieces



**Danielle Agami** was born in Israel in 1984 and was a member of the Batsheva Dance Company from 2002-2010. She functioned as the company's rehearsal director and is now one of only 50 Gaga teachers worldwide. In 2011, Agami relocated to New York City where she functioned as Senior Manager of Gaga U.S.A. Since arriving in the U.S. Agami has met and taught thousands of dancers. During 2001, she created original work at Rutgers University, Boston Conservatory, Cornish College for the Arts, to name a few. In 2012, after relocating to Seattle, Agami founded Ate9 Dance Company and created *Sally meets Stu* and *Sheila*. In 2013, she chose Los Angeles as the company's home. During 2012, she presented *Tae Ticks* for Ate9, *Shula* in Israel for the Batsheva Ensemble, *This Time Tomorrow* for NorthWest Dance Project in Portland, *Loose Gravel* for Barak Ballet and a unique collaboration with L.A.Dance Project for *Invisible Cities* by The Industry Opera. Agami is a renowned Gaga Teacher. She has traveled across the world as an ambassador of Ohad Naharin.



### THEATRE (World Premiere)

Choreography by Danielle Agami

RDT had the pleasure of working with Danielle Agami and her company Ate9 the summer of 2016. Gaga is a tool she uses on a daily basis while choreographing her original repertory. The experience for RDT dancers was transforming. She says, "Gaga trains us to be fully effective and efficient in our body movements as we communicate." The Gaga experience connects our senses to a world of endless possibilities. Agami's work is stark, direct and she exposes our imperfections...it is intelligent and intense and she likes to leave room for improvisation and individual expression.

**Noa Zuk** is a performer, teacher and choreographer who has toured around the globe performing on the world's most prestigious stages with the renowned Batsheva Dance Company from Tel Aviv, Israel. Noa began her career in 1997 as a member of the Batsheva Ensemble and then became a company member from 2000-2009. She has performed in most of the choreography created by Batsheva's Artistic Director, Ohad Naharin. During her time with Batsheva, Noa began choreographing her own work.

Her collaboration with interdisciplinary artist, Ohad Fishof on the video dance *One More Song* was presented in Israel and abroad. In 2010, she was awarded The Schusterman Foundation Visiting Artist Scholarship and spent three months in residency at The Ohio State University. In 2012, her new creation for Bern Ballet premiered in Switzerland and she was also selected as one of 10 finalists to present her work in the 5th Copenhagen International Choreography Competition. In 2013, she was invited to return to the United States to be an artist in residence at OSU as well as Groundworks Dance Company in Cleveland, Ohio. Noa is a certified teacher of Gaga Movement Language developed by Ohad Naharin.



**Ohad Fishof** is an artist and musician working in a diverse range of fields including sound, dance, video, performance, and installation. Fishof began his artistic career as a musician with seminal pop combo Nosei Hamigbaat and later moved to compose music for dance, performance and art installations, while at the same time expanding his artistic endeavors to other media. In 1997, he received a master's degree in dance from the Laban Centre London. Since then, this work in dance and performance and his sound and video installations have been presented on stages and in galleries around the world including the Venice Biennale. Fishof is a long-term collaborator of Batsheva Dance Company and its artistic director Ohad Naharin. He designed the soundtracks for Naharin's *Three*, *MAX*, *Seder*, *Furo* and *Telophaza*, and served as a dramaturge for the later, as well as for Naharin's solo evening *Playback*, this he also produced musically. Fishof lives and works in Tel Aviv and teaches at Hamidrasha Art College and the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design. He was named a Chosen Artist of the Israel Cultural Excellence Foundation in 2008.

### **By The Snake (RDT Commission, 2014)**

Choreography by Noa Zuk

Music by Ohad Fishof (RDT Commission)

*By the Snake* was created by two Israeli artists who wanted to deconstruct roles and routines of couple dancing and create a dance that reflects a different social order. Zuk says, "I want to fabricate a folk dance. I took ideas and conventions from the different traditions of dancing in couples and developed a new world from it; I wanted to invent a new kind of social dance with a strong sense of ritual and tradition but with different forms and values.





**Andy Noble** danced with RDT from 1998-2004. He is now Co-Artistic Director of NobleMotion Dance and an Associate Chair/Professor at Sam Houston State University. He also serves as the Associate Artistic Director of the Dance Gallery Festival, an international festival that occurs every year in New York City. During the summer, Andy is a faculty member at Dance Italia in Lucca, Italy. Houston Press recognized Andy as one of Houston's 100 Most Creative. Andy has received numerous grants and commissions for his choreography. Most notably, he worked with Academy Award Winner, John Ridley to create original choreography featured on the Emmy Award Winning and Golden Globe Nominated ABC TV Show, *American Crime*. NobleMotion Dance was recently awarded Houston's Best Dance Company by the Houston Press and listed in Dance Magazine as one of Houston's "A-list" dance companies. Additionally, his work has been selected twice for the National Dance Festival at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D. C. Andy has served as faculty at the University of South Florida and Western Washington University. Andy holds a BA in Modern Dance from the University of South Florida and a MFA with an emphasis in Dance Technology from Florida State University.

**David Deveau** is a collaborator at heart. With a background in theater, musical theater, dance, music, design, directing and management, he is always searching for new artists and students to work with on upcoming projects. Some of his most recent collaborations include working with NobleMotion Dance, the Dominic Walsh Dance Theater, Hope Stone Dance Company, Urban Souls, METDance, Infinite Movement Ever Evolving, Revolve Dance Company, and The Dance Gallery Festival. Mr. Deveau is a recent graduate of the Sam Houston State University MFA Dance Program. While taking part in this three-year program, Mr. Deveau was also working full-time as the department's technical/lighting director as well as a free lance lighting designer & stage manager in the Houston Dance Community. Mr. Deveau has taught at SHSU the undergraduate production course for the last five years, the graduate level dance production course the last two years and has recently taught the undergraduate level dance and technology course. He is currently on graduate dance faculty and has served on five graduate student thesis committees.

### **Filament** (World Premiere, RDT Commission)

Choreography by Andy Noble

Music by Max Richter, Shifted, Jónsi & Alex, Nils Frahm

Lighting and Media Design by David James Deveau

RDT alumnus, Andy Noble was the winner of the Regalia 2016 choreographic competition. Andy is interested in creating fresh, new worlds that marry dance and technology in such a way that dance is seen anew.



**David Ogle** is from the Isle of Man and studied at Lond Studio Centre and Trinity Laban Conservatoire for Music and Dance. David specializes in contemporary dance and has worked with a range of companies and performed internationally. David tries to diversify his career and has assumed many different roles within his work ranging from a company dancer learning repertoire to a collaborator on a light/movement installation piece at Design Festival. His passion for collaboration led him to work with Anna Meredith. David began working with Anna as a choreographer on "HandsFree" during their time with the National Youth Orchestra in 2012. Since the success of that work, they have also worked on creating other pieces including "Connect It" for the BBC Ten Pieces initiative in 2014 which was also performed at the Royal Albert Hall for the BBC Proms.



**Anna Meredith**, Scottish composer and performer, has been called "One of the most innovative minds in Modern British Music." She is a composer, producer, and performer of both acoustic and electronic music. Her sound is frequently described as "maximalist" and "uncategorisable" and "genre-defying" and straddles the different world of contemporary classical, art pop, electronica and experimental rock. Meredith first came to prominence within the classical genre before branching out into electronica. Born in 1978 in Edinburgh, she came from an artistic family background. At school, Meredith took up the clarinet and percussion and later, composition. She studied at Napier University and earned a degree in Music from the University of York. She attended the prestigious Royal College of Music. In 2004, Meredith became a composer in residence with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the PRS/RPS Composer in the House with Sinfonia Viva, a post she held until 2007. It was during this period that she was at her most prolific., composing several pieces for the BBC and more.



## **HandsFree**

**Originally commissioned for Britain's National Youth Orchestra in 2012**

Sound Score by Anna Meredith

Choreography by David Ogle

Performed by RDT and 180 Students from the Utah Youth Symphony Orchestra.

Contemporary composer, Anna Meredith, likes to think outside of the box. She created a piece that asks the performers to create rhythms by clapping, stamping, singing, and beatboxing (a technique involving the art of producing drum beats and rhythm using the mouth, tongue, lips and other voice techniques.)



## GAGA MOVEMENT LANGUAGE

Developed by Ohad Naharin

Gaga is a new way of gaining knowledge and self-awareness through your body. Gaga provides a framework for discovering and strengthening your body and adding flexibility, stamina, and agility while lightening the senses and imagination. Gaga raises awareness of physical weaknesses, awakens numb areas, exposes physical fixations, and offers ways for their elimination. The work improves instinctive movement and connects conscious and unconscious movement, and it allows for an experience of freedom and pleasure in a simple way, in a pleasant space, in comfortable clothes, accompanied by music, each person with himself and others.

*We become more aware of our form. We connect to the sense of the endlessness of possibilities. We explore multi-dimensional movement; we enjoy the burning sensation in our muscles, we are ready to snap, we are aware of our explosive power and sometimes use it. We change our movement habits by finding new ones. We go beyond our familiar limits. We can be calm and alert at once.*—Ohad Naharin

From an article by AC Remler...(a good description!)

*Gaga movement is much like it sounds: playful, sumptuous and alternately precise and powerful, with the ability to evoke humor, vulnerability and strength. There are two teaching tracks of Gaga, one for professional dancers and one for untrained "movers." For the non-professional student, Gaga training is quite different than with other forms of dance and movement; there are no arabesque lines to hit or poses to hold. The movement is improvisational, guided by imagery, so it's not uncommon to hear the instructor say things like: "soften your flesh and move your body as if you have no bones" or "move only your bones as if you are made of wood." And there are few house rules? There is no looking in the mirror (which is covered); and no guests are allowed to sit and observe. This allows students to move with abandon and use their imaginations and senses, not their reflections, to explore the movement. In Tel Aviv and other parts of the world, Gaga is an absolute craze, similar perhaps to the yoga or Pilates movement in the U.S. though without the accompanying apparel lines.*

### **.Lesson Plan—Textures in Movement**

One of the main ingredients in a gaga movement language class is the infusion of texture and imagery into any and all movement throughout the experience. Adding texture to movements that the body is used to can challenge the mind and body to push to a new level of movement experience.

Try: Have the students use their senses (touch, sight, smell, auditory, and taste) to describe objects in the room, pick 3 or 4 objects. Write these descriptions (what does it feel like?, how is the texture? What is the aroma?) down on paper or the whiteboard. Then, using a movement combination the students know well, something from class or a piece they are working on, etc., apply one of the written phrases to the movement. For example: Maybe one of the students commented about how a curtain was “hanging droopily”, this would then be the image and texture ideas that would be applied toward with the movement phrase that they already know. This does not mean however that they are imitating the idea of acting droopily, the students will try to embody that idea into the movement they already know. Repeat using the same movement material but varying the sense description that accompanies it. This mental and physical exercise is designed to develop richer connections between the body and mind.

### **Lesson Plan—Timing Challenge**

In working with Danielle Agami, the dancers were challenged to work differently in regards to timing and flow of movement. She wanted an arrested stop after each movement/moment. In her movement, there is typically no flow from one thing to the next. There are definitely textures to the movement, but also a driven, hardness to the timing, clearly distinguishing one movement from one another, no running together of ideas, but clearly defined shape/feeling in the body.

Try: Using the same phrase you were working with about in the texture exercise. Give the students a direction to show each moment as a complete clear thought, with no flow between each motion, but show a completed idea. This will be challenging as we are all so used to finding the momentum or flow between movements. As the teacher, you may need to point out to the them when one movement starts and stops and another begins. After the students have experienced this idea, have them create a phrase from scratch using the this type of timing as a springboard.

**For additional information and to view a preview of the pieces, go to the following vimeo link!**

<https://vimeo.com/180329983>

**RDT is extremely excited that you and your students will be joining us for the Elan Matinee! If you are interested in seeing the entire concert, please know that student tickets are always \$5 (with ID) and teachers can get in for \$15. Call ARTIX or go online to serve your tickets.**



## Why Use Dance in the Classroom?

Dance is the oldest language. Dance is a total experience involving the physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and aesthetic dimensions of an individual which helps us perceive and communicate who we are and what we aspire to become. Dance is a great resource for teaching and opening minds and imaginations. Dance is a form of non-verbal communication, a powerful language that everyone can understand. Dance allows all children to explore their own physical and creative potential in a non-competitive environment.

**Standards for Arts Education:** Utah Core Curriculum

- **Moving:** Increasing strength, flexibility and endurance
- **Investigating:** Discovering the elements of dance: time, space energy and the body
- **Creating:** Exploring the creative process
- **Connecting:** Appreciating dance, its historical, cultural and personal origins

## The Elements of Dance

There are four elements of dance: **time, space, energy (force and flow) and the body.**

The **body** is the instrument of dance. It is the vehicle of communication, based upon the dancer's kinesthetic sense.

Dance exists in both time and space. **Time** can be rhythmic and based upon meter, or body rhythms and breath rhythms.

**Space** is concerned with the visual design of dance. It consists of body shape, levels, floor patterns, group relationships and volume.

**Energy** relates to the force with which the movement is released. Another term for energy is dynamics and may be described by specific qualities such as: percussive, staccato, sustained, swinging, suspended, vibratory and collapse. A variety of energy levels make a dance more interesting and create texture within the movement.



## How to Prepare for the Dance Performance

Turn off and put away all cell phones, mp3 players and any other device which may cause distraction, and remove any chewing gum. Clear your mind of other thoughts (general or personal). Open your mind and spirit to the moment; concentrate and raise your awareness to the immediate environment. As the lights lower and/or the music begins, take a deep breath and relax in your seat. You are beginning to watch motion, movement, shape, line, rhythm, tempo, color, space, time, energy...dance.

Allow yourself to release the notion that you already know what dance means, or has to mean, or that you have to figure something out. Release the notion that you have to look at dance as if you were reading a book. Dance doesn't necessarily have a storyline. If you watch the dance with openness, you may experience an emotion, an image, or a feeling that you may not be able to describe. You may not know why or where reactions come from, but don't worry. That is a part of the magic of theater.

Every piece of choreography has a reason for being. Dances may be celebrations, tell stories, define moods, interpret poems, express emotions, carve designs or visualize music. As you watch a dance, a story may occur to you because of your past experience. However, not all dances tell stories. The sequences do not have to make literal sense. Allow images and personal feelings to come to the surface of your consciousness.

After the performance, feel free to discuss your thoughts with others, but do not be disturbed if you find others have a different reaction than yours. Think about your own personal images and thoughts. Was it fun to watch? Did the dance remind you of any experiences in your own life? Did the choreography inspire you to express yourself, write a poem, draw a picture, or make up your own dance?



# Dance Criticism and Questions for Written Analysis and Discussion

Criticism (writing or talking about dance) or evaluation of a dance performance is affected by past experience, sensitivity, involvement, and personal judgment. Criticism involves three processes: **description**, **interpretation**, and **judgment** of a particular piece being analyzed.

When you write or talk about a dance performance you should consider or analyze four different aspects of the dance.

- The **choreographic elements**: the overall form, use of space, rhythmic and timing factors, use of dynamics, style, music, and movement invention
- The **performance elements**: the technical skill of the dancers, their projection, commitment, ability to communicate.
- The **production elements**: the costumes, lighting, props, sets, and music
- The **general impact**: the clarity of intent, concept, invention of the dance performance.

When answering the following questions, try to be multi-dimensional in your responses by describing visual and auditory perceptions and feelings. Make sure you state your reasons for anything you liked or disliked.

1. What emotional reactions did you have? What moved you?
2. What was the most interesting feature of the performance?
3. What in particular do you most remember about the experience?
4. Was there an apparent motive for the dance? Was it dramatic, abstract, a mood piece, etc.?
5. Were there any social, political, or historical elements?
6. What did you notice about the form of the dance?
7. Were the performers skilled technically?
8. How well did they portray their characters or communicate with movement?
9. What kind of music was used?
10. What were your reactions to the technical or production elements, the staging, décor, props, lighting, costumes?

These questions may stimulate great discussions in the classroom, or may allow the students to delve deeper into their performance experience.



## RDT's Goals for Arts-in-Education

Using dance as a way to help people become more:  
*Connected, Compassionate, Aware, Inspired, Original, Focused, Courageous, Passionate, Human*

- To provide alternative ways of learning in order to achieve basic educational objectives such as concentrating, creative problem solving, planning, visualizing and conceptualizing
- To develop skills and insights needed for emotional maturity and social effectiveness-sharing, cooperating, integrating, and interacting.
- To develop an individual's physical and mental discipline at all levels of ability.
- To open participants' minds and imaginations by developing tools of communication
- To develop feelings of self-worth, confidence, and achievement by giving students and teachers opportunities to explore movement, the art of improvisation and the creative process.
- To develop an understanding and appreciation of American Modern Dance.
- To deepen the understanding of the relationship between art and life.
- To develop Life Skills by encouraging good citizenship, by helping students be responsible and understand their relationship to the other members of their group, family, class or community.



## RDT and Arts Education

REPERTORY DANCE THEATRE founded in 1966, is a professional modern dance company dedicated to the creation, performance, perpetuation, and appreciation of modern dance. RDT's long standing commitment to arts in education focuses on enriching young students lives and providing on opportunity for students to experience the joy of living through dance. The company of outstanding performers, teachers, and choreographers has created new pathways for audiences to experience and value the art of dance. Residency activities that include demonstrations, movement classes, and teacher in-service workshops encourage students to integrate movement into their learning and teaching process. RDT's residency activities are specifically designed to assist teachers and students in achieving the standards for arts education.

The following organizations and donors generously support Repertory Dance Theatre's Arts-in-Education Activities:

- Jarvis and Constance Doctorow Family Foundation
- Salt Lake City Arts Council—Arts Learning Grant
- Salt Lake County Zoo, Arts & Parks Program
- George S and Dolores Dore Eccles Foundation
- Emma Eccles Jones Foundation
- Utah State Office of Education—POPS Program
- Ally Bank
- Lawrence T & Janet T Dee Foundation
- Utah Division of Arts & Museums and the National Endowment for the Arts
- HR Burton Foundation
- BW Bastian Foundation
- 4Life
- Deluxe Corporation Foundation



For more information about Repertory Dance Theatre, our upcoming workshops, performances, residencies, etc. Please visit our website at [www.rdtutah.org](http://www.rdtutah.org) or contact us at 801-534-1000.