

DANCE PREVIEW

On Saturdays in September, the Rose Kennedy Greenway makes space for dance

By **Karen Campbell** Globe Correspondent, Updated September 7, 2023, 4:33 p.m.



Lonnie Stanton (center), a performer with Public Displays of Motion, rehearses at the Carolyn Lynch Garden on the Greenway on Wednesday. ERIN CLARK/GLOBE STAFF

Saturday strolls along the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway this fall come with a bonus — if you take them at the right time. They'll be enlivened by dancers cavorting across the lawns, through the playground, around the maze, and around the fountain. The new [Momentum Greenway Dance Program](#), commissioned by the Greenway Conservancy and presented by Amazon, will showcase four different dance companies in site-specific dances over four Saturdays in September, culminating in a final festival day Oct. 7.

The goal of the project has been to provide a diverse group of choreographers with the time, rehearsal space, mentorship, workshops, and funding to create innovative new work. Participants in the pilot series are [Continuum Dance Project](#), [Jean Appolon Expressions](#), [Public Displays of Motion](#), and [Vimoksha](#), and each has selected a portion of the 1.5-mile-long Greenway on which to base a roughly 30-minute dance that responds to the historical, social, anthropological, or environmental context of the site.

Boston-based choreographer/director [Peter DiMuro](#) has been guiding the dance groups through a year-long development process. Through rehearsals and performances on the Greenway — all free and open to the public — the program draws audiences into the artistic process as well as the final product.

ADVERTISING



“The Greenway hosts about 400 events a year, but we don’t do much programming,” said the organization’s outgoing director of programs and community engagement, Keelin Caldwell, who has worked closely with DiMuro on the project. “We really wanted to dive deeper into site-responsive performance and see what stories came out when we asked artists to engage in a specific space.”

The four choreographers and their companies did their own research to come up with their own creative themes. “All four landed on themes of immigration and cultural background, which is very powerful and meaningful for this whole corridor, from Colonial times to more recent,” Caldwell said.



Vimoshka Dance Company rehearsed their piece for the Momentum Greenway Dance Program. OLIVIA MOON PHOTOGRAPHY

Each Saturday will feature two performances — at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Vimoshka Dance Company kicks off the series Sept. 9 at Rows Wharf Plaza. Led by choreographer/founder Chavi Bansal, the company plays off stories collected from the surrounding community as well as research into Rows Wharf's history as a place where goods as well as enslaved Africans were brought into the country.

DiMuro's Public Displays of Motion (Sept. 16) created a piece for the North End area of the Greenway. DiMuro's Italian father grew up in East Boston, and DiMuro remembers traveling the highway that once divided the corridor and surrounding communities to get to the North End for feast days and celebrations. His multigenerational company represents lineages from around the world, and their work

explores ancestral stories and incorporates myths of warding off evil spirits. “We took a look at what stories get told around the holiday table, what stories are forbidden to be told, translating to who are the saints and sinners in your line,” DiMuro says. “It’s a little tongue in cheek, with the idea of a parade that turns into a stroll.”



Jean Appolon Expressions rehearsed this summer in the Greenway's Armenian Heritage Park. OLIVIA MOON PHOTOGRAPHY

Jean Appolon Expressions, which is rooted in Haitian folkloric culture and dedicated to connecting disparate communities, sets its new work in Armenian Heritage Park (Sept. 23). Appolon says the park is uniquely related to some of his company’s recent work focusing on how the arts can create pathways towards the healing of collective trauma. Their work examines the questions all immigrants confront — what and where is home?

Continuum Dance Project, led by choreographers/co-directors Adriane Brayton and Fernadina Chan, will perform their dance in Auntie Kay & Uncle Frank Chin Park (Sept. 30). The work is a series of vignettes reflecting history, family, and community life in Chinatown. Movement will wind from the Chinatown Gate through the playground and along the serpentine path leading to the fountain.



Continuum Dance Project rehearsed in Chinatown's Auntie Kay & Uncle Frank Chin Park. OLIVIA MOON PHOTOGRAPHY

On Oct. 7, visitors will have a chance to see all of the companies back-to-back, starting with Continuum Dance Project at 11 a.m., followed by Vimoksha Dance Company (12:30 p.m.), Jean Appolon Expressions (1:30 p.m.), and Public Displays of Motion (2:30 p.m.).

“We want the the Greenway to be seen as a place to bring, learn, and share site-specific dance, where that practice is welcomed, encouraged, and deepened,” Caldwell said.

DiMuro sees the project as a way to learn and forge new history on the Greenway. “Here we have this great place for memory-making out of this land,” he said. “We wanted artists to come along for the ride this pilot year, so hopefully this learning could go on from year to year, artist to artist, building its own kind of ancestry.”

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