Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, a nonprofit organization.

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FLYNN MARQUEE

DECEMBER  JANUARY  FEBRUARY

Dianne Reeves
A Dance Whisperer Returns: Lida Winfield’s IMAGINARY

by MADELINE BELL
Programming Manager

Friday-Saturday, February 23-24, 8 pm, FlynnSpace

Lida Winfield is a familiar face at the Flynn. Aside from her 10year tenure as a teaching artist offering classes in the Flynn studios and in partner schools throughout the state, she’s performed on the MainStage and in FlynnSpace on numerous occasions. Her one-woman dance-theater piece, In Search of Air: Growing Up Dyslexic, was particularly outstanding.

Lida currently teaches as a visiting assistant professor in the dance program at Middlebury College. She’s been touring her work nationally and internationally since 2010 and considers her artistic practice inextricably linked to her role as an educator. In her classes, she encourages students to tell their own stories through a collaboration of body, brain, and spirit. Gary Shore of Roger Williams University calls Lida “the dance-whisperer.”

An active member of the Vermont dance community, Lida soon returns to the Flynn stage to share her new work, IMAGINARY. The dance-theater piece uses storytelling, video elements, and an original score to explore how the imagination assists in shaping our potential, our reality, and our world. What do we see in the dark? Who are our imagined and real friends? What is real and what is pretend?

Backed by four commissioning partners (Flynn Center, Jacob’s Pillow, Middlebury Performance Arts Series, and The Yard), the National Performance Network awarded Lida with a Creation Fund in the spring of 2017. All four presenters, impressed with Lida’s body of work and confident in her ability as an artist, committed to supporting the creation of this new work.

IMAGINARY premiers at the Flynn in February and travels to the other three presenting partners within the next few seasons.

Meet the Company:

Joseph Hall is Deputy Director at BAAD! Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance as well as a producer, curator, and performer working in NYC and Pittsburgh. He is Company Manager for NYC-based choreographer Marjani Forte, a Bessie Selection Committee member, and co-curator of Pearl Diving Movement Residency at PearlArts Studios in Pittsburgh. Before relocating to New York in 2014, he was Producing Director at Pittsburgh’s Kelly Strayhorn Theater. As a performer, Joseph has worked with choreographers Stayce Perry, Maree ReMalia, Jasmine Hearne, and video artist Suzie Miller. He hosts the Andy Warhol Museum’s annual Trans-Q Live!

Laurel Jenkins’ choreography has been presented by the Getty Center, Automata, REDCAT, Danspace, and in Berlin, Coventry, and Tokyo. Jenkins has been commissioned to choreograph for L.A. Contemporary Dance Company and the Wooden Floor. She was a member of the Trisha Brown Dance Company (2007-2012) and performs in Vicky Shick’s dances and in the opera Oedipus Rex/Symphony of Psalms by Peter Sellars. Jenkins holds a BA from Sarah Lawrence College, an MFA from UCLA, and is the recipient of an Asian Cultural Council Grant.

Maree ReMalia was born in South Korea and raised in the United States. She travels frequently, working as an independent dance artist facilitating movement experiences with individuals from a broad range of identities, abilities, and backgrounds and is a certified Gaga teacher. From 2015-2017, she worked as the Andrew W. Mellon Interdisciplinary Choreographer through the Movement Matters Residency at Middlebury College.

Ellen Smith Ahern grew up dancing in Illinois and came east to study at Middlebury College. Since then, she’s worked with many artists, including Jane Comfort & Company, Kate Elgin, Tiffany Rhyneard, Polly Motley, David Appel, and El Circo Contemporaneo. She has toured throughout Mexico, Cuba, Qatar, Europe, and the US. Based now in Connecticut, she studieis community organizing through social work, and continues to create, teach, and perform as an independent artist.

For more information on IMAGINARY, visit www.lidawinfield.com.
Disrupting Expectations

Jess Curtis and Claire Cunningham: The Way You Look (at me) Tonight
Friday and Saturday, February 2-3, 8 pm, MainStage

I have long been a fan of Jess Curtis. His aesthetic roots include ritualistic post-modernist dance theater, contact improvisation, body-based durational performance art, and media explorations. One of my favorite memories was him in a parking lot improvisation, body-based durational performance art, and media. For the past two decades, he had led a hybrid life, sharing his creative time between Europe and the Bay Area. In 2007, I saw a collaborative work he did with Claire Cunningham, an artist from Glasgow, Scotland who ambulates assisted by two forearm crutches. The piece, involving other dancers as well, was provocative and disruptive, as a trio of women interchangeably used the metallic walking aids to propel themselves through space. Thrusts, lunges, and falls took on new meaning and were kinetically thrilling, showcasing enhanced abilities and dismantling misperceptions of disability.

Curtis and Cunningham have continued their collaboration with their latest work, The Way You Look (at me) Tonight. Through their dancing, singing, and storytelling, the two artists draw the audience into their journey as a man and woman of different ages, bodies, and backgrounds, while addressing queerness, sexism, and ableism. The audience is seated on stage with the performance happening in, around, and amongst them. The duo’s residency is supported in part by a major grant from the Ford Foundation in support of the Flynn’s disability-related programming. Other upcoming programs under this initiative include Fluxus/fit!, an exhibition of Vermont artists with disabilities, opening in our Amy E. Tanant Gallery April 7, and violinist and vocalist Gaelynn Lea, performing in FlynnSpace May 11.

Anticipations: The Flynn’s Production Directors Take Their Picks

Pilobolus, Shadowland
Saturday, February 10, 8 pm, MainStage

Dance troupe Pilobolus has the following at the core of its mission: “to expand and diversify audiences through projects of all types and scales in live performance, film, and digital media, characterized by the qualities of our namesake fungus—adventurous, adaptive, athletic, surprising, and revealing of beauty in unexpected places.” Taking inspiration from nature, that is something that has occurred to me more and more as my life has progressed.

Pilobolus was started in 1971 by Dartmouth professors who were in a dance class together; non-dancers pioneering a new vision of the art. Amazing! As a theater student at the University of Wisconsin, I had a connection with them when they came to perform there in 1975. UW is the home of the first university dance program in the country, so of course they held workshops not only in dance but also in lighting and tech. Always evolving and pushing the edge, Pilobolus inspired us with their methods and innovations. And it was apparent they were having lots of fun, too. One of our dance students, an outstanding dancer and athletic in ability, fitted right into Pilobolus’ mold and joined the tour right then; ran away with the circus, so to speak.

Over the years, Pilobolus has played at the Flynn many, many times. The performances are deft, visually and mechanically teasing with clever tricks of body, scenery, and light. I’m looking forward to what they come up with next.

Manual Cinema, ADA/AVA
Wednesday, February 21, 7:30 pm, MainStage

Throughout the world in large exhibit halls and convention centers, the leading manufacturers of theatrical technology and production equipment hold giant trade shows to show off their latest overwhelming gadgetry. LED stage lighting, laser systems, 3-D projection, and digital system control technologies are all on display for dealers, theater owners and staff, and individual production companies; all of them searching for something new and dazzling to acquire. I predict that the members of Manual Cinema will not be attending any of these events. And I think that is terrific. To say that I am looking forward to the analog-produced ADA/AVA is to say that I am looking forward to seeing art that has been made by a group who respect and love genuine craftsmanship.

The sound of paper and cardboard being cut with a razor knife, the smell of oil paint and glue, and the warm hum of an overhead projector; yes, this is what my 21st century mind is really craving. Seeing live production composed of very primary elements draws the viewer in close. We pay attention, we become fully engaged, and listen very carefully. We are also led into a lovely corner where we have permission to let go of disbelief. Yes, we know that it is a puppet, yes, it is just a shadow and there are imperfections in the projection surface, but we get to blithely ignore this because the storytelling is real.

And, it may help us feel more real as ourselves by the time the show is over and it’s time to go home, forgetting to turn our cell phones back on as we leave the theater.
Immigration has never been far from the headlines in America. We’re a nation of immigrants, after all. On a local level, Chittenden County’s demographics have changed profoundly since Burlington began welcoming immigrants as an official Refugee Resettlement City in 1989. Taking an opposite approach, the current presidential administration is violently anti-immigrant, seeking to cap immigration at long-time lows while building a wall on our southern border.

Sandglass’ “Babylon” Explores Refugee Crisis

by STEVE MACQUEEN, Artistic Director

Sandglass Theater, the nationally acclaimed puppet-theater company out of Putney, Vermont, uses personal stories to create a panoramic view of immigration today in its latest work, Babylon. Using interviews and relationships with the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program (VRRP), the company has crafted a tale of seven refugees at a VRRP not only helped us to access speaking with refugees, they taught us what was at stake for everyone when we did talk, that the trauma that’s at the root of these conversations has to be recognized—telling someone the story of your journey as a refugee is not the same as telling someone what you bought at the supermarket. We could see after a while that we had earned their trust and that thrilled us because they didn’t give it lightly. One of the workshop/outreach items that Sandglass and VRRP collaborated on (during a Flynn-sponsored residency) is a “board-game” of sorts called Refugee Journey. It’s not really a game; it’s a simulation,” Bass explained. “It’s little Chutes & Ladders, a little Dungeons & Dragons, and a lot of learning what it’s like to be a refugee. Your playing piece might be a single piece or an entire family of up to 17 people—you may have to move that many people through a jungle or a desert or a city to get to a refugee camp, where you have to pass your medical test and get your refugee status granted before you can leave the camp. Along the way you draw cards that help you go forward or backward, and these cards tell actual stories. Other players are medical officers, border guards, and US immigration officials. There’s personal contact that happens that might be surprisingly generous or surprisingly onerous, depending on who’s playing that role.”

We feel that the people at the Flynn are much more than presenters,” Bass said. “You embrace the work and really help us as a vehicle to the work out in the community, and that’s what gives the work value for us.”

The Flynn co-commissioned the piece and hosted a residency during its latest work, Babylon. Using interviews and relationships with the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program (VRRP), the company has crafted a tale of seven refugees at a City in 1989. Taking an opposite approach, the current presidential administration is violently anti-immigrant, seeking to cap immigration at long-time lows while building a wall on our southern border.

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“We feel that the people at the Flynn are much more than presenters,” Bass said. “You embrace the work and really help us as a vehicle to the work out in the community, and that’s what gives the work value for us.”
A year and a half ago, I was charged by the Flynn’s education department to venture into new teaching territory. Over the years, we had done extensive work with students in kindergarten and older, but had only worked intermittently with preschoolers. So in the spring of 2016, thanks to the generous support of The Bay and Paul Foundations, the Vermont Arts Council, the Windham Foundation, and Champlain Investment Partners, I embarked on a storytelling (journey) to discover ways to harness the power of theater, creative movement, and music to support language development and improve the cognitive skills of children aged three-five. It was a thrilling exploratory mission.

Partners on the adventure were seven Head Start preschoolers in St. Albans, Swanton, Winooski, and Burlington. Each of these teaching and learning communities welcomed me into their space with a generous spirit, not only inviting bold classroom adventures, but also offering ongoing reflective feedback. This diversity in student populations among these different sites was a gift, providing me with critical opportunities to serve students in kindergarten and older, but had only worked intermittently with preschoolers.

The diversity in student populations among these different sites was a gift, providing me with critical opportunities to serve English language learners as well as students with a wide range of social-emotional and developmental delays and disabilities. At the heart of the work was a highly interactive approach to storytelling. With each visit, I brought a new variation of a story to tell, facilitating an array of exercises so that the students and I could perform the story together using our bodies, voices, and imaginations. For example, in a session about plot, the students added sound effects to my improvised telling of The Gingerbread Man. In a session about setting, the students changed the shapes of their bodies to become the forest trees, rocks, and river in my telling of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. In a session about character, the students imagined that my magic wand could transform them into different animals from Julie Donaldson’s The Gruffalo. With a few magic words, they were hopping, crawling, and flying through their classroom. Through extensive reflection together with the teachers, we experienced an ever-growing confidence in the potential of this new work to serve this very special population.

Having completed the initial design study phase of our Language & Learning through Oral Storytelling program, we are thrilled to enter a second phase of development. The Flynn, in partnership with Champlain Valley Head Start, the Burlington School District, and the University of Vermont, is launching a year-long participatory assessment of our interactive storytelling program. Through this partnership, we will measure our objectives against outcomes and identify improvements to our current model.

We are grateful to all our partners and fellow travelers on this new expedition!

—Susanna Olson, Education Coordinator, Champlain Valley Head Start

“Susanna’s energy, passion and knowledge have positively impacted the teaching practices and children’s learning. Bringing a piece of the Flynn Center to these children is the only opportunity many of them have to experience and appreciate the performing arts and we are very grateful.”

—Sandra Graven, Education Coordinator Champlain Valley Head Start

“Storytelling in preschool is beautiful to watch because young children naturally want to use their imagination, and Susanna is demonstrating that you can never go too far into becoming a character. I am seeing my students free themselves and enjoy performing familiar stories. It blends perfectly with my philosophy that children learn best through play.”

—Head Start Preschool Teacher, JFK School, Winooski

Mining the Gap: FlynnArts’ New Offerings

FlynnArts is the community arts aspect of education at the Flynn. Although we just recently adopted Everybody Belongs as our Flynn staff vision statement, FlynnArts has exemplified that core value since its inception. Through a diverse offering of classes and workshops, we’ve welcomed eager beginners and seasoned artists, infants, seniors, teens, and adults to experience the joy of participating in the arts.

This spring, in addition to perennial favorites, such as tap dance and Capoeira, and variations on existing themes, such as Creative Movement for Wellness and AcroYoga for Families, we are excited to offer two new classes. We’ve been listening to feedback from our participants, connecting with artists and educators to brainstorm fresh ideas, and researching what else is and isn’t happening in our community to find the gaps and fill them at the Flynn.

This spring, teens and adults learn to make beats and song selections with performer and DJ Craig Mitchell. Credited with starting and fostering the dance music scene in Burlington and Winooski, the Flynn is thrilled to engage with Mitchell’s energy and vision.

Focusing on the history of the DJ/selector, this class features discussions around sampling music, genres, mashups, and production techniques, exploring the evolution of the DJ from basements/bedrooms to festival stages. I am very honored to be a part of the robust schedule of arts education at what is such an important institution to Vermont and beyond,” Mitchell says. “With nearly 28 years of playing music, I am excited to be able to share my experiences and expertise around DJ-ing with young people of all ages!”

In partnership with the Young Writers Project, our other brand new offering brings accomplished local music director and composer Randal Pierce together with local spoken word artist and youth advocate, Rajnii Eddins. At age 11, Eddins became the youngest member of the African American Writer’s Alliance and at 24 he represented Seattle at the National Poetry Slam. A seven-year Burlington resident, he has created many opportunities for area youth, often in collaboration with the Young Writers Project, where he is artistic director, and the organization he founded, The Poetry Experience.

This class invites teenagers to put their spoken word to music and/or add poetry and spoken word to their musical compositions. “Poetry and music are wonderful expressions for whatever we can imagine,” Eddins says. “The merging of poetry with music is a magical experience. Pair that with the creative potential of young people and the possibilities are boundless. I’m so excited to witness the brilliance of the youth as we embark on this creative journey together!”

We are looking forward to welcoming students to the Winter/Spring FlynnArts season, including the new classes, Mix-Mastering with DJ mITCHELL, starting in January and Teen Voices: Music & Voice Mashup beginning in March. Please visit www.flynncenter.org for all class details.
Flynn Legacy Society Members: Securing the Flynn’s Future

by GINA HADDOCK, Development Director

The Flynn Legacy Society recognizes and honors individuals who have designated the Flynn Center as a beneficiary of their will, trust, life insurance, or life income. Mark Langan, a Flynn Board member and Chair of the Legacy Society, reflected on this important program: “It’s been rewarding to see the Legacy Society grow over the years and include people of all ages and gifts in all ranges. I think we all want our values to live on in a concrete way. Planned giving gives people the chance to do that.”

Flynn Spirit Lucie Holcomb is one such member. Lucie is an accounting professional working in the captive insurance management industry. She is celebrating her 28th season as a volunteer usher at the Flynn, so she has seen the joy that the performing arts brings to our patrons on a regular basis. “The Flynn and its education programming is an important part of why Burlington and the surrounding towns are an attractive place to live, raise a family, and retire,” she says. “Every year I’m amazed at the quality and quantity of performances we are privileged to enjoy. A legacy gift was easy to do at the same time as my other estate planning and puts in writing my wishes.”

William “Billy” and Lisa Northup recently joined the Legacy Society by including the Flynn in their estate plans. “The Flynn is the strong cultural heartbeat of downtown Burlington, contributing greatly to our state’s vibrancy, uniqueness, and commerce,” they say. “The Flynn brings world-renowned performers to its stage, showcases much emerging new talent on the cusp of greater popularity, and provides larger audiences for our great pool of local talent. We are at the Mainstage or FlynnSpace at least 20 times a year for events, and we pretty much live there during the Discover Jazz Festival.”

These thoughtful gifts will help keep the Flynn a vital community resource for future generations. Legacy Society members are receiving an invitation to join us for the performance of A Christmas Carol on December 8 and a reception in their honor. If the Flynn is in your estate plans, please let us know so that we may include you on our guest list.

If you have questions or would like more information, please contact Gina Haddock at 802-652-4533 or rhaddock@flynncenter.org. You may also visit our website at https://www.flynncenter.org/plannedgiving.html to learn about making a planned gift to the Flynn Center.

Flynn Member Tour

On Thursday, October 12, Facilities Manager Jack Galt gave over 50 Flynn members an in-depth look at the Flynn and discussed the history of our architectural landmark. Production Operations Director Eric Durett gave an inside perspective on what goes into staging a production at the Flynn.

Over the Edge

Over the Edge 2017 was a resounding success, raising over $153,725 for cultural and educational programs, including scholarships for FlynnArts students, support for student matinees, and tickets for our social and human services partners. Save the date for next year! 100 more brave Edgers will rappel nine stories down the Burlington Courtyard Marriott Harbor Hotel on Saturday, September 1.

Chinese New Year

Save the Date!—Sunday, February 18

Celebrate Chinese New Year at A Single Pebble in Burlington. Back by popular demand, this five course feast sells out fast! Invitations will be sent to members in mid-January.

Flynn Executive Director John Killacky appears as Mother Ginger in Vermont Ballet Theater’s performance of The Nutcracker at the Flynn, Saturday and Sunday, December 16th and 17th. He is pictured here at the VBT studios with dancers Eleanor Kinney, left, and Lissome Hall, right (the two Claras).

The Nutcracker
Flynn Calendar

**December**

1. Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy: *A Celtic Family Christmas*
2. Brian McCarthy Quartet: *Codex Release*
3. Warren Miller
4. Melissa Etheridge
5-6. Kinky Boots
6-10. Vermont Stage: *Winter Tales*
8. A *Christmas Carol*
9. VSO Holiday Pops
10. OrchestraChorusPalooza
16. Robinson Morse’s *Sound of Mind* featuring Peter Apfelbaum
16-17. Vermont Ballet Theater’s *The Nutcracker*
31. First Night Burlington

**January**

FS 11-13. Sandglass Theater: *Babylon*
SMS 19. DBR and Marc Bamuthi Joseph: *Blackbird, Fly*
FS 24-25. Vermont Stage: *Doublewide*
27. VSO Masterworks
28. VYO Winter Concert

**February**

2-3. Claire Cunningham and Jess Curtis: *The Way You Look (at me) Tonight*
7. *Cinderella*
10. Pilobolus: *Shadowland*
15. Dianne Reeves
16. The Sweet Remains
17. TURNmusic
23-24. Lida Winfield: *IMAGINARY*
24. Second City
28. Bedlam Theater: *Hamlet*

The Perfect Gift

Give the gift of the performing arts this holiday season! Gift cards to the Flynn can be used on performances, classes, camps, gift memberships, and more. Create lasting memories for family members, students, coworkers, or anyone who appreciates the magic of live performance.