

## *Teaching Philosophy*

I am an artist whose aesthetic is rooted in the traditions and philosophy of jazz. This aesthetic is one that shapes my teaching, my performances, my choreography, my collaborations and my life.

This philosophy is one in which community supports the creative voice of the individual. There is a commitment to form and structure, which provides freedom to the individuals making up the whole. Within this structure, improvisation is encouraged and becomes both a tool for creating form as well as a vehicle for spontaneous expression. It is from this place that I approach any teaching that I do, whether it is in dance, music or a multi-disciplinary program.

Using this knowledge and a very individual approach, I encourage students to develop their own voice within the context of the class and with a collective spirit of support and discovery amongst the group as a whole.

I believe the job of any teacher is to encourage students along the same path that I believe we all are on, and that is to discover our truths, and to take responsibility for choices we make in relationship to those truths. As dancers we must discover and accept our physical truths, our strengths and weaknesses. We must choose for ourselves how we work with these truths to maximize our physical potential.

I believe it is the responsibility of any teacher to consider the larger context of the world we are preparing young people to be active parts of. Asking questions is imperative. What skills will any young person need as they move out into the world? What are young people lacking, in general, in our culture today? How can this teaching opportunity help better prepare students to meet these challenges as citizens and artists?

With these questions in mind I construct classes that encourage students to develop deep and full-body listening skills, to be sensitive, responsible and cooperative citizens within the classroom, to understand the power of focus, the spirit of play and the experience of intimacy. I give focus to developing dance techniques that are grounded and that allow for ease, strength and efficiency, giving the dancer access to a full range of expressive dynamics. I believe that dancers are served by developing technique that is rooted in sensation and a strong sense of presence and musicality. My classes are not formulaic. I work with a specific focus and move the class along a path in that direction. Rather than trying to cover all bases in one class, I work toward deepening the understanding of a concept, coming at it from a variety of directions. There is progression and accomplishment built into the structure of each class, along with an openness to shifting gears entirely if the situation presenting itself suggests doing so would better serve the class.

My range of movement experience is very broad, open and inclusive, yet it is rooted in solid and grounded technique. I have experience with a variety of functional anatomy and somatic techniques as well as Effort Shape Fundamentals, Yoga, Pilates, Movement for Actors, Movement Improvisation, Modern Dance, Composition and Choreography, Classic Jazz Dance, Ballroom and Social Dance and Rhythm Tap. All of these techniques inform the approach that I take and the information that I offer in any class.

Above all, I want to be a positive example, conducting myself in and out of the classroom in a way that speaks to my own truth and values.