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ODE2FOOL Offers a Map of Dreams at New Dance Alliance's Performance Mix Festival

by CANDICE THOMPSON on Jun 7, 2017 • 2:57 pm

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Julian Barnett and Jocelyn Tobias will be among the 20 local and international dance artists chosen by New Dance Alliance founder and director Karen Bernard for the [2017 Performance Mix Festival](#) at University Settlement. Billed as "part opera, part confessional, [ODE2FOOL](#) acts as an ontological study of connection, commitment, and resilience," following Barnett and Tobias, along with Justin Cabrillos, "as they uncover the deeper currents of their artistic motivations." Dd caught up with Julian Barnett over email to find out more about the iterative and collaborative process—which does include singing—that this work is built from.

{ DIYdancer }, Candice Thompson: I was a freshman at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts in 1999. If memory serves, I have a vision of you two collaborating way back then...is that when your partnership began?

Julian Barnett: Amazing. Of course, I remember you as well. Incredible to see how this life unfolds and more. As for Jocelyn Tobias and I, in some ways yes. Jocelyn was in my first piece at Tisch. We went off in different directions after school and reconnected while working with Mark Dendy years later. I was organizing a show for Joyce SoHo during that time and we started working together again in this context. It really wasn't until our duets "Bridge" and "Blue Marble", which was produced by Kampnagel in Hamburg, Germany and Danspace Project in New York, that we began to more deeply collaborate. Our partnership has taken on many beautiful forms and manifestations and she's a great source of insight, is a poignant performer, and has a sharp dramaturgical eye. I am eternally grateful to work with her.

CT: What was the incubation process for this work like in terms of time?

JB: This work has been developing in various ways for an extended amount of time now. Many stops and starts, mostly because of scheduling, performing for other people, teaching, and of course working within a frame of limited (local) support. At the same time, we have been incredibly lucky so I should just shut up. Yet I can't deny that it has been challenging to work in New York. We had two residencies in Europe, through the support of the FUSED (France US exchange in Dance) grant in 2015 and worked at La Briqueterie CDC Val-du-Marne outside Paris, France and at Hellerau in Dresden, Germany. The seeds of the work were planted during these two residencies. I received the US/Japan Creative Artist Fellowship to study Butoh in Japan, and we worked there for a short bit. I taught at Tisch during the summer of 2016, and so we had access to space and worked there for a little bit. I was invited to work in Barcelona, Spain through La Visiva, as a solo artist, and so aspects of the research continued to develop and deepen within this frame. I performed a solo version of ODE at FLOCK in Portland, Oregon and later we did the group version at Movement Research at Judson Church in New York around February

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this year. So it's been an eclectic journey that I am happy is continuing with the Performance Mix Festival and hopefully beyond.



CT: ODE2FOOL excavates dances from dreams. Is this literal, in the sense that you pull material from your subconscious or recorded dreams, or are these fictitious dreams?

JB: The notion of dreams is multifaceted in the sense that it embraces the literal dreams we have (and nightmares too), while including our ideals, hopes, and aspirations. We have been working in Europe over the last 7 years and had been working within a context that seemed to prioritize more of a logical approach to making. With this new work, it was all about allowance, deviating from some of our patterns of making and saying yes to things that we might normally question or even reject. I often dream up choreography and perhaps this is a little 'ode' to that spark of potentiality. Conceptually, dreams somehow seemed to encapsulate both the potential of creative spark and the freedom of the surreal or unexplained. Additionally, we talked about the fact that as artists and makers, we find ourselves faced with the question of 'how long can we sustain this lifestyle?', so the idea of dreams also took the frame of 'dream dance' or if this was your last piece what do you 'dream' it to be?

CT: I often think of dreams as being quite personal—how do you collaborate on such particular source material? Or are these shared artistic dreams?

JB: I agree, dreams are personal. Mostly because they are hard to contextualize and perhaps because of that, sometimes difficult (or tedious) to articulate. There are so many layers built around personal history and experience that may be tricky to distill. I keep a dream journal and Jocelyn and I often share our dreams with each other to the extent in which I think they started to infect how we began discussing the piece. We also make 'maps' a lot in our process that reveal a more holistic picture of our visions, interests, projections, and dreams, etc. and where they might overlap in unexpected ways or be completely non-relational in interesting ways. This work is an embodiment of this 'map', which seems appropriate as a metaphor when dealing with themes of artistic sustainment, desire, and potential. The destination is understanding the map itself – if you know what I mean.

Thursday 6/8 at 7p and Sunday 6/11 at 2:30p
31st Annual Performance Mix Festival at University Settlement
\$20

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Written by [Candice Thompson](#)

After more than a decade in Brooklyn, Candice Thompson is now an Atlanta-based artist and writer. Prior to dancing with the Milwaukee Ballet Company and ad hoc Ballet, she trained with Kee Juan Han at the School of Ballet Arizona and NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. She founded LOLAstretch Dancewear in 2000 and has designed costumes for a variety of theater and dance companies across the country. She recently received a masters degree in Literary Nonfiction from Columbia University's Creative Writing Program and more of her dance writing can be found in the pages of Dance Magazine, Pointe, and Dance Teacher.



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