

Noelani Pantastico & James Yoichi Moore
ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

While the dance world continues to navigate the shifting sands of pandemic limitations, SDC is immersed in planning the 2021 season. Our mission from day one has been to create opportunities for artists to collaborate and find new inspiration and growth. This season will be no different and one project is already underway, joining together NYCB principal ballerina Sara Mearns with Gaga instructor and choreographer Bobbi Jene Smith to create the next SDC film. We are eager to unveil more in the coming months about our 2021 season and hope to provide you with a continuing source of art and imagination to carry us all forward. Thanks, as always, for your unwavering support.

-Noelani Pantastico & James Yoichi Moore

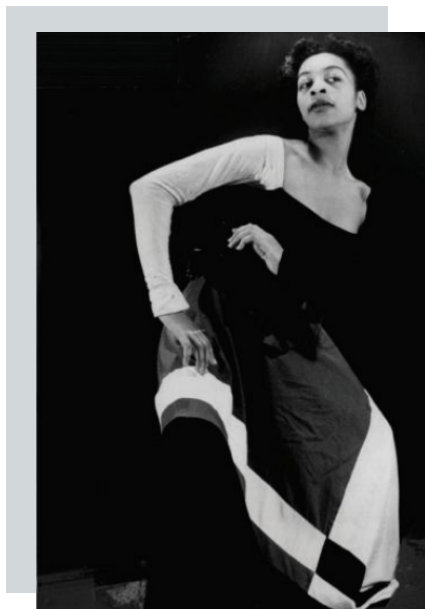
A New Year of Possibility

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Sara Mearns © Sarah Silver



Syvilla Fort ©Ernst Kassowitz

Celebrate Black History Month

In honor of Black History Month, SDC has selected to highlight the contributions of three individuals with ties to Seattle who have broken barriers and left an unmistakable mark on the dance world:

Syvilla Fort, Kabby Mitchell and Donald Byrd.

Read more on [SDC's website!](#)

Artists in the News

HERE'S WHAT SDC ARTISTS HAVE BEEN UP TO:

A Collaboration with local band FRETLAND:

- [Bruno Roque](#), [Lucien Postlewaite](#), [Stephan Bourgond](#), & [Henry Wurtz](#) participated in a music video collaboration for local band [FRETLAND](#)



A Premiere with PNB

- [Amanda Morgan](#) premiered *"This Space Left Intentionally Blank"* for PNB's Rep II - her first work for the company



Principal Dancer Promotions

- [Angelica Generosa](#) & [Dylan Wald](#) have been promoted to Principal Dancer at [Pacific Northwest Ballet](#). Congratulations to them!



Romeo et Juliette Stream

- *"Romeo et Juliette"* featuring [Noelani Pantastico](#) & [James Yoichi Moore](#) will be available for streaming at PNB on Feb 11-15. Get your tickets [here](#).



Dance Magazine's 25 to Watch

- [Amanda Morgan](#) & [Nia-Amina Minor](#), have been included in this year's issue of [Dance Magazine's "25 to Watch"](#). BRAVO!



DIVING DEEPER: SARA MEARNS

SDC New Artist

SEATTLE DANCE COLLECTIVE'S NEXT CREATION FOR THE SCREEN WILL BE A SOLO WORK FOR SARA MEARNS, CHOREOGRAPHED BY BOBBI JENE SMITH. DUE TO PREMIERE THIS SPRING, SARA AND BOBBI HAD JUST BEGUN THE CREATIVE PROCESS IN NEW YORK AT THE TIME OF THIS WRITING.

We can all agree that the COVID-19 pandemic has been one of the hardest things to navigate in our lifetime. For [Sara Mearns](#), *Principal dancer with New York City Ballet*, the beginning of the shutdown happened just at the height of her physical career. “I was exactly where I wanted to be physically and mentally. I was at such a high place that I wasn’t able to understand what was going on. I couldn’t believe that all of a sudden everything was just stopping.”



Sara Mearns © Sarah Silver

Although this is her first time working with SDC, Sara has been creating work for herself since last July. She built a studio in her second bedroom where she has spent all her free time. Around the globe there may have been a lull, but Sara never stopped. She was hustling - as New Yorkers do - to make things happen, even when it seemed impossible.

“With the connections I’ve made outside of NYCB, I was able to connect with people, institutions and collaborators, to make a lot of things happen last fall. I couldn’t believe how busy I was doing different projects, new creations and films. I couldn’t fit it all in at some points.”

For SDC’s current project, Sara is collaborating with *former Batsheva dancer, Gaga teacher, and choreographer*, [Bobbi Jene Smith](#). “Bobbi has been on my radar for many years. We’ve always been in each other’s world but never connecting. It’s never been the right moment to ask her to do something.” Schedules finally aligned when the SDC opportunity came along and they jumped at the chance to connect and create something together.

[cont.]



Sara Mearns © Sarah Silver

The style of this new work fits in the contemporary vein, which Sara often turns to during her NYCB lay-off periods. “I’ve joked that when I’m on lay-off I never put my pointe shoes on! It’s really hard to create anything ballet right now because you have to have a certain type of floor for pointe shoes, adequate space, and a sprung floor for jumps. I’ve been able to do a couple of pointe shoe pieces, but whether it’s sneakers, barefoot, flat shoes, or high heels, it is easier to do that right now.”

It seems that making dance films is one of the few ways to create and share art right now. Sara was drawn to work with Bobbi for many artistic reasons, but she also knew that Bobbi is well connected with skilled craftsmen in the film industry. Sara says, “I have people that I can go to that know about

live performing and making a production [for the stage], but not necessarily a film. I am really lucky that Bobbi has that circle around her already.”

It is difficult to look into the future right now with so many unknowns, but Sara is doing everything in her power to make things happen while we wait. “We don’t know until we are there. We have to change our mentality about how we go about presenting dance and how many ways it can be done. We have to make people feel comfortable because we rely on all of those ticket sales to be able to run. It’s a huge uphill battle.”

Many artists may relate to Sara’s hard work ethic and it is these people that will carry this art form into the future. “I can’t deal with just stopping, because I’m healthy and able to dance, so I’m going to find ways to do it.”

Dance on Film is Here to Stay

The great film director and actor Orson Welles (of “Citizen Kane” fame) once said that “the enemy of art is the absence of limitations”. Can boundless freedom possibly curtail creativity? Perhaps a better question to ask is how do limitations open the door to new ideas?

The constraints of the pandemic have certainly imposed great challenges to the dance community and to the performing arts sector at large. The inability to perform live in front of an expectant audience hits us at the core and has forced companies worldwide to cancel seasons, and for a few, shutter doors completely. However, one underutilized platform has flourished, delivering a new wave of artistic expression in dance: the medium of film.

Dance on film has existed for quite some time, but most people are only familiar with the depiction of dance in pop culture movies (think ballet-based *The Turning Point*, *Center Stage* and *The Black Swan*). In this unprecedented climate, we have an opportunity to expand the use of this creative instrument to go beyond scripted (and sometimes cliché-ridden) features, and focus more on developing new choreographic works specifically for the screen.

At the beginning of the pandemic shutdown, SDC turned to producing dance films as a temporary means to continue sharing our art.

What grew out of that process was the discovery of a fresh approach to storytelling by harnessing the power of the camera. Film offers a newfound intimacy between dancer and audience that is not often possible inside the confines of a theater. Close-ups can reveal more palpable emotion, or focus on the beauty and strength of a single outstretched hand. Utilizing camera angles from above, below and behind invites a playful approach to perspective that the fixed view of a stage does not allow.

[cont.]



Director Bruno Roque films Noelani Pantastico in ALICE

Closed theaters have indeed limited our ability to perform as we normally do, yet a new path has opened up, allowing us to express ourselves in innovative ways and deliver the artistry of dance to a much broader audience.

As we plan our 2021 season amid the fluid landscape of social-distancing requirements, film will be an essential element of what we do this year. Yet even into the pandemic- free future, we are committed to embracing this medium as an integral part of the artistic journey. For dancers, performing live on stage is an essential part of their beings and they long for the return to that thrilling, intoxicating life. But it is clear that creativity and inspiration can also thrive behind and in front of the camera, and that the dance film is here to stay.

ELIZABETH DOUGHERTY
SDC's Marketing & Communications Director

Film Festival Winnings!

ALICE Selected for Espoo Digi-Dance International & Utah Dance Film Festival

“ALICE”, choreographed by [Penny Saunders](#), has been officially selected for screening at [Espoo Digi-Dance International](#), and the [Utah Dance Film Festival](#)!

“The Only Thing You See Now” selected for CineDance ‘21

“The Only Thing You See Now”, choreographed by [SeaPerts](#), has been officially selected for screening at [CineDance ‘21](#)!



Noelani Pantastico © Bruno Roque



Don't Forget!

You can still watch
ALICE [here](#)
& CONTINUUM [here](#)

