As I write this, senior concerts and final performance projects are in full swing at Five College Dance, capping off a most unusual year. All our campuses have been in some degree of restriction since March 2020, when COVID-19 was declared a national emergency, and they remain separated from one another now, more than a year later. Indeed, many students, as well as members of the faculty and staff, are not even on their own campuses. Throughout the year, of course, the global backdrop has been bleak, and the adversity endured by citizens of the world has likewise touched our communities. It has been a hard year.

Restrictions on physical proximity could have meant a complete stop to our work at Five College Dance. Remote or socially distanced learning has been a challenge for all disciplines, but teaching and performing dance rely, crucially, on bodies being together in space—moving, touching, breathing, spectating. For Five College Dance, which additionally relies on bringing our campus communities into the same classes, rehearsals, workshops, lectures, and performances, the threat posed by COVID-19 was even more pronounced.

And yet, Five College Dance did not come to a stop. In fact, we reinvented our work and even expanded it. In this newsletter, we've gathered highlights of the work that we did together this year—all socially distanced, livestreamed, recorded, Zoomed, or remote in some form. Harder to capture in these pages is the persistence, originality, collaboration, and sheer effort behind it all. I'm incredibly proud of the breadth, depth, and rigor of what my faculty and staff colleagues and our students have achieved in such a trying time. I know how ready we all are to return to working and moving together in person, but I also believe that this year apart, and the ingenuity and dedication it demanded, has prepared us to come together in new and powerful ways, ones we may never have tapped before. I can't wait for next fall.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Ripp
Director
TAKING DANCE STUDIES Beyond the Proscenium

The annual Northeast conference of the American College Dance Association (ACDA) has long been a staple engagement of Five College Dance and its 27-plus fellow regional programs, where students present work for adjudication and take classes with dance faculty members. UMass Amherst Dance and FCD were looking forward to hosting the conference in March 2021, but when COVID-19 guidelines prohibited large gatherings, Associate Professor Paul Dennis and his colleagues decided to dream more expansively about what they could offer dance students and educators this year.

Dennis spearheaded a one-day virtual conference, “Beyond the Proscenium: Access” (BTP), which sought to challenge conventional ideas about how to teach, perform, and engage with dance in our society today. The conference programming illustrated the ways in which dance research and practice have branched into varied, often interdisciplinary, modes and highlighted the multiple academic, professional, and artistic avenues available to students and faculty members.

From 9:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., BTP featured 14 virtual sessions that provided a wide range of scholarly and artistic enrichment for dance students and faculty participants. In all, some 120 individuals from nine schools, plus members of the broader community, took part.

FCD professors Deborah Goffe, Lailye Weidman, Barbie Diewald, Jenna Riegel, Shakia Barron, Molly Christie González, and Chris Aiken led sessions on topics spanning Dunham technique, embodied archives, house dance, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Urban Bush Women co-artistic director Samantha Speis, UMass Amherst Dance alumna Meredith Wells, and dance artist-educator Gerald Casel also led workshops, and students and faculty members from across the region presented their scholarly research.

UMass Amherst Fine Arts Center hosted a thought-provoking public conversation with dance artist-educators d. Sabela grimes, Jackie Lopez, and Rennie Harris, moderated by dance artist-scholar Thomas DeFrantz. Capping off the day, UMass Amherst Lecturer in Jazz Dance Lauren Cox hosted a curated series of performances from across artistic genres.

“Beyond the Proscenium: Access” offered students and faculty members across the Northeast a variety of dance methodologies, practices, and inquiries. We look forward to cultivating these new resources with our colleagues at the next ACDA—in person!

RACE AND... Dance Delves into African Diasporic Movement and Culture

After the May 2020 killing of George Floyd, in Minneapolis, Five College Dance Joint Lecturer of African Diasporic Dance Shakia Barron quickly mobilized to support her students. Although the school year was wrapping up at that time, she created an online healing space for her dance students of color. This informal gathering turned into a weekly series, Black Beauty Dance, that she organized and hosted. With crowdsourced funding, Barron brought in prominent Black dance artists to teach their craft and share their knowledge. These classes emphasized the centrality of Black culture, history, and identity in the United States and established a safe space for discussion and processing in a traumatic time.

For fall 2020, Barron and FCD Director Alexandra Ripp worked with Mount Holyoke College Associate Dean of Students for Community and Inclusion Latrina Denson to produce a related series for the whole Five College community, which explored the intersection of race and dance. Barron’s work paired well with Denson’s RACE AND... programming, which connected to the College’s Common Read: the 1619 Project.

Digital poster for RACE AND... Dance. NOTE: Adanna Kai Jones taught the November 6 class.
Through her series RACE AND . . . Dance, Barron wanted to provide the Five College community, regardless of individual dance training, a creative mode for learning about and appreciating African diasporic cultures, whose contributions to contemporary dance are often underexplored. With race at the forefront of national conversations, she wanted to offer embodiment as a unique entry point for understanding and appreciating Black identity.

With the sponsorship of all five dance departments and Mount Holyoke’s cultural centers, Office of Student Life, and Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Barron curated a six-session Zoom series taught by guest artists. Focusing on distinct African diasporic forms, teachers presented a combination of lecture, discussion, and movement training.

Every session gathered past and present Five College students, together with faculty and staff members and friends of FCD. With funding from the South Hadley Cultural Council, RACE AND . . . Dance will be programmed again in fall 2021 with an open invitation to the general public. We welcome all Five College Dance communities past and present to join us via Zoom!

**TRACING DESIRE: Hampshire Dance Offers a New Learning Model**

What would it look like to build and sculpt courses, student performances and research, and public programming around a theme or concept? No better time than in this strange year of displacement and confusion to experiment, especially with the themes of home, desire, and land.

In fall 2020, Hampshire College Dance Assistant Professor Deborah Goffe and Visiting Assistant Professor Lailye Weidman joined forces with Visiting Assistant Professor of Theatre Will MacAdams and Hampshire’s Ethics and the Common Good Project to curate an integrated curricular and cocurricular platform called DESIRE LINES. This consisted, first, of Goffe’s course Desire Lines: Mapping Home in the Dancing Body, and Weidman and MacAdams’s course Desire Lines: Theatre/Text/Movements Through Space and Place. Referring to the well-worn yet unruled paths made by people finding their way, these courses, held both remotely and in person, explored the desired movements of bodies in home spaces and across land. Students in both courses performed their work with the wider community through Zoom, and on a collectively curated website at the end of the semester. One work that emerged from the process, *Spilling the Medium*, was also presented at Hampshire’s Winter Concert this past February.

Grounded in the courses, the professors and students curated and hosted a series of free lunchtime artist talks for the public, which focused on body, land, memory, and place. Six choreographers, theater makers, and interdisciplinary artists who activate the intersections of embodied performance and site-based practices shared their driving questions, creative research, and distinct perspectives on art making rooted in body, land, memory, and place. The talk series brought to the fore concepts of home, interior and exterior worlds, relationship to built and natural environments, and tensions between prescribed and desired movement. In a time of displacement and severed connections, DESIRE LINES created community.
As a faculty member for DEL (Dance Education Laboratory), Joint Lecturer of African Diasporic Dance Shakia Barron (Five College Dance) has facilitated multiple professional development sessions around integrating hip-hop dance and history into curricula. She also organized the online movement and lecture series RACE AND . . . Dance for Five College Dance and Mount Holyoke College Division of Student Life, cultural centers, and Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Since late spring 2020, she has also curated and produced Black Beauty Dance, an online series of classes and discussions for Five College Dance students of color.

Shakia Barron (Five College Dance) and Assistant Professor Barbie Diewald (Mount Holyoke College) received a New England Foundation for the Arts New Work New England grant, for New England artists to create and produce work with the potential to engage multiple New England communities. In their words, their project, Concours, “brings together our respective mentors, former students, and research. Bringing vision and legacy into conversation at the level of the body, this confluence creates an intergenerational community of inquiry and affirms that mentorship is multidirectional: we glean as much from our mentees as from our mentors. Concours celebrates the feedback loops that occur when we collapse the distinctions between self, student, teacher, and material.”

Professors Charles and Rose Flachs (Mount Holyoke College) created a new course titled Native American Ballerinas, which focuses on the lives and careers of five Native American female ballet dancers. The class worked with the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum and with guests from Tulsa Ballet, which holds extensive archives of these important dance figures.

Along with collaborators Bebe Miller and Darrell Jones, Associate Professor Angie Hauser (Smith College) launched Solo/Duo Dancing Project, a co-mentoring choreographic process series. Fellow FCD faculty member Jenna Riegel was in the project’s inaugural cohort of six invited choreographers. With Associate Professor Chris Aiken (Smith College), Hauser created a new course called Movement Ecology and Performance in the Smith Landscape. She also offered online classes and performances through Bates Dance Festival, freeskewl, Contact Quarterly, Patrick’s Cabaret, and A.P.E. Gallery.

Assistant Professor Jenna Riegel (Amherst College) spent the summer of 2020 discovering ways to adapt to teaching and performing dance online. This included teaching for the American Dance Festival’s Online Summer Dance Intensive and working with the Bill T. Jones / Arnie Zane Dance Company to conceive, rehearse, and film a new virtual performance project that premiered in November 2020, Continuous Replay: Come Together. In the fall of 2020, Riegel was a presenting artist for the School for Contemporary Dance and Thought’s Practicing Presence Festival, where she and partner Sha Harrell showed their work, smelting, and co-taught a movement and vocal workshop titled Wrestling with Absence. Riegel dived headfirst into recording and editing her first dance film, Come Sit by Me, a collaboration with students in her Contemporary Dance Technique course at Amherst College. She also appeared as a performer in the world premiere of Rosalynde Le Blanc and Tom Hurwitz’s dance film Can You Bring It: Bill T. Jones and D-Man in the Waters at the DOC NYC online film festival.

Associate Professor Thomas Vacanti (UMass Amherst) attended Gallim’s Dancing with the Camera seminar and is working on a dance film called Catch, due to be completed and shown this year.
PERFORMING in Pandemic

Last spring, before campuses abruptly evacuated, FCD students and members of the faculty and staff hurriedly—and gorgeously!—mounted live performances originally scheduled for weeks later. This term, we had more time to think about how to reimagine performance during COVID. Each department, and each student, has uniquely negotiated physical distance and virtual performance, often pushing far beyond artistic, technical, and intellectual comfort zones.

While such radical reinvention has required substantial time and labor, it has also gleaned remarkable new ways of making performance. With each concert, the FCD faculty, staff, and student body have demonstrated their resilience, collaboration, and creativity:

**Friday Night DANCEFLIX (Smith College):** When the first-year MFA students’ performances were canceled last spring, they spent the summer converting their work into dance films. Separated geographically this fall, they presented the films on Zoom, followed by a self-moderated panel discussion.

**Fall Senior Concert (UMass Amherst):** FCD’s first in-person livestreaming concert from Totman Performance Lab! Two graduating seniors presented, respectively, a solo performed by the choreographer and a group piece, performed in masks and socially distanced.

**Fall Grad Dance Event (Smith College):** MFA students scattered across the United States presented their dance-on-screen works via Zoom—some recorded, some live-mixed.

**Winter Dance Concert (Hampshire College):** Students presented a dance film, performance scores, and two live performances over Zoom. The live works featured a duet (with live remote musical accompaniment) and a full group, both with participants performing “together” from distinct locations.

**Performance Projects (Amherst College):** The Intermediate Contemporary Technique class made and Zoom-screened a dance film, and the Performance Projects class held a Zoom screening of their cocreated video work.

**Senior Capstone Showcase (Mount Holyoke College):** This Zoom concert consisted of an afternoon research presentation and an evening showing of six dance films. Some students made their films on campus and some elsewhere.

**Senior Projects (Amherst College):** These projects manifested as a dance film, with an original score and interview footage shot in Israel, and an in-person immersive installation with timed entry for the Amherst College community.

**Body Reverb: A Division III Dance Festival (Hampshire College):** This Zoom festival featured seven works in two programs: three multimedia pieces livestreamed from Hampshire’s Studio Theater, one group piece with dancers performing in different locations, and three dance films. A self-moderated panel discussion among Division III choreographers followed.

**Senior Concert (Smith College):** This Zoom concert showcased one dance film shot in Hawaii and four pieces livestreamed from Smith’s Hallie Flanagan Studio Theatre. The concert was redesigned to allow students to choreograph their pieces in relationship to a three-camera live-edited broadcast.
In spring 2021, thanks to support from the Five College Consortium’s Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant (Gathering at the Crossroads: Building Native American and Indigenous Studies at the Five College Consortium), Five College Dance and UMass Amherst Fine Arts Center (FAC) virtually hosted body-based artist Emily Johnson, of the Yup’ik nation. Johnson furthered her development of her current project, Being Future Being, bringing the Five College community into contact with her creative process and her work overall, and helped build connections between the Five College Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) and Dance programs.

The virtual residency consisted, in part, of FCD class visits. In March 2021, Johnson guest taught Deborah Goffe’s Curating Performance class at Hampshire College and Angie Hauser and Chris Aiken’s Movement Ecology class at Smith College, contacing her the Five College community into contact with her creative process and her work overall, and helped build connections between the Five College Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) and Dance programs.

Additionally, Johnson participated in several public conversations via Zoom. The first was with FCD Annual Lecture speaker Alice Sheppard (see page 7), as part of FAC’s Bodies at Risk event series. A week later, Johnson held a curated conversation with her Being Future Being collaborator, the scholar Karyn Recollet, in which they discussed their shared research and inquiries, driven by Indigenous knowledge and epistemologies. A month later, they continued this conversation in another public discussion hosted by Smith College Dance, with FCD support.

Johnson will return to FCD and UMass FAC for a spring 2022 in-person residency, with additional support from the Mellon grant. She will develop Being Future Being, bringing collaborators to work here, and will also teach a course through Amherst College’s Theater and Dance and American Studies Departments. In working with Emily Johnson, the Five College Dance and NAIS programs have initiated exciting cross-pollination. We look forward to building more connections beyond our campuses, through the thoughtful community-engaged work for which Johnson is known.

Screenshot of Sophie Clingan (MHC '22) and Sam Murray (MHC '23) in Aggie Johnson (MHC '21)'s _radio silence_ dance film. Mount Holyoke College Dance Senior Capstone Showcase, April 2021.

BUILDING SPECULATIVE FUTURES with Emily Johnson


Spring Senior Concert (UMass Amherst): This Zoom concert’s two programs presented eight dance films and four pieces livestreamed from Totman.

Junior Choreography Project (UMass Amherst): This Zoom concert’s two programs also offered a mix of recorded dance films and livestreamed performances from Totman.

Continuous Replay: Come Together (Amherst College): This Zoom remount of the Bill T. Jones / Arnie Zane Dance Company piece featured students from Mount Holyoke and Amherst Colleges in remote locations.

Spring Grad Showing (Smith College): This year’s first and only show with no virtual aspect. Smith MFA students performed their own socially distanced works to small audiences in Smith’s Mendenhall Center Courtyard.

Spring Grad Showing (Smith College): This year’s first and only show with no virtual aspect. Smith MFA students performed their own socially distanced works to small audiences in Smith’s Mendenhall Center Courtyard.
In February 2021, Five College Dance welcomed disabled dancer, choreographer, scholar, and activist Alice Sheppard to virtually deliver its annual lecture. A Bessie Award winner and Ford Foundation Disability Futures Fellow, Sheppard is the founder of the disability arts ensemble Kinetic Light, which creates, performs, and teaches at the nexus of access, disability, dance, and race.

Starting in fall semester 2020, FCD worked with Sheppard for several months to imagine how we might organize the talk and scaffold her visit for broader and more sustained engagement around intersectional disability and dance. We hosted a pre-lecture Zoom screening and discussion of Kinetic Light’s work, which was led by Sheppard and moderated by Jina Kim, Smith College assistant professor of the Study of Women and Gender. This event grounded our community in Sheppard’s ethos and artistic practice and introduced key concepts of intersectional disability and its relation to dance.

Thanks to Mount Holyoke College’s Arts and Technology Initiative, students and members of the dance faculty and staff had the opportunity to learn from Michael Maag, Kinetic Light’s lightning designer, about his practice. FCD additionally acquired an online “bookshelf” related to the work of Kinetic Light.

Sheppard’s virtual talk, “Under Wired: Intersectional Disability Aesthetics On and Off Stage,” centered on the research and creation of Kinetic Light’s new work in progress, titled Wired. In Wired, Kinetic Light explores the gendered, raced, and disability histories of barbed wire through sound, light, and movement. Sheppard also offered a broader vision of intersectional disability aesthetics and culture and laid out the principles of a newly reemerging disability arts movement. Two hundred sixty-five people attended!

A week later, Sheppard led an online embodied workshop, whose creation and facilitation were supported by FCD faculty members Deborah Goffe, Barbie Diewald, Molly Christie González, and Lailye Weidman. Sheppard led the students and faculty participants through her approach to movement as a wheelchair user and challenged them to experiment with embodying barbed wire.

Our time with Sheppard culminated in a public online conversation with our other artist in virtual residence, Emily Johnson, hosted by UMass Amherst Fine Arts Center’s Bodies at Risk series with FCD support. Sheppard and Johnson shared reflections on intersectionality and their own racial, cultural, and national identities; discussed the idea of “bodies at risk”; and interrogated the larger systems responsible for that risk. They invited viewers to physically move in response to their words and welcomed questions and reflections in the chat.

Alice Sheppard has given us considerable learning to carry forward about disability, access, and performance. Her insistence on disability as a culture and aesthetic, not a deficit, will remain in our thinking, teaching, and making.

**DISABILITY IS A CULTURE: Alice Sheppard at Five College Dance**

Alice Sheppard, a multiracial Black woman with short curly golden hair, wearing a sleeveless tank top, is crawling on her forearms with her knees in Laurel Lawson’s footplate. Laurel, a pale white woman also wearing a sleeveless top, is arching her back on the ground as she is dragged along the floor. Their wheelchair wheels are stacked and shine in the light. The sky in the background is full of deep red and orange sunset hues; blue and white projections of figures and constellations fall across the ramp and the floor.

Photo by Chris Cameron, courtesy MANCC.
Emma Rose Brown (Smith College ‘13) has taken a break from Queens, NY, where she has lived for six years, and is spending the pandemic with her family in Boston. For the last five years, she worked as the oral history assistant for the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. Pre-pandemic, she was showing performance work at Gibney Dance, Judson Memorial Church, and Sundays on Broadway. She is applying for MFA programs in interdisciplinary arts, for fall 2021.

Donna Davenport (UMass Amherst ‘84) received her BFA in Dance and BA in Psychology, yet her memories are solely about the Dance Program. Her training at UMass and experience in University Dancers were the foundation for a career as a professional dancer, choreographer, and professor. Donna teaches in the Dance Department of Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, NY, specializing in composition, performance, dance pedagogy, and the integration of dance and social justice studies.

Brendan Drake (UMass Amherst ‘09) is a Brooklyn-based dance artist. His newest work, Community Exercises for Sanctuary Spaces, premiered last year at the Brick Theater as part of the 2020 Exponential Festival and received a Bessie nomination for Outstanding Performer. Brendan is currently an artist in residence at Chez Bushwick, and he recently guest lectured at Columbia University, Muhlenberg College, and DeSales University. This fall, he will begin pursuing his MFA in Choreographic Inquiry at UCLA.

Sofia Engelman (Smith College ’19) and Em Papineau (Smith College ’21) live on Canarsie and Munsee Lenape land in Brooklyn. They continue to nourish and care for freeskewl, a platform for movement classes, performances, discussions, and community. Sofia also works for Contact Quarterly, and Em lug people’s stuff as a member of a queer moving company. After a year of grief and loss, they look forward to returning to their shared choreographic practice as spring and summer bloom.

Ally Garcia (Smith College ’18) currently lives in Westminster, CO, where she takes advantage of an incredible hip-hop community that both Denver and Boulder contribute to. For the past year, she has been training with a new hip-hop company formed by a handful of talented, dedicated local dancers and creating video projects regularly. Ally recently began working as a sales development representative at Gusto and is excited to support small businesses.

Annie Heath (UMass Amherst ’15) is a dance artist in Brooklyn, NY. She is interested in process-based dance making and builds fabricated memories and dreamlike, meditative atmospheres. Her current project, Departure Study of Mother/land Fabric, will premiere at the Brick Theater (2022) and is supported by a Fresh Tracks residency at New York Live Arts and Brooklyn Arts Council. Annie received a Jadin Wong Fellowship through Asian American Arts Alliance (2021).

Matthew Holliday (Amherst College ’19) currently works as program coordinator at Purelements: An Evolution in Dance, an arts nonprofit in Brooklyn, NY. He has enjoyed helping teachers to enhance their curricula and lesson plans and providing administrative support to the organization. In December 2020, Matthew choreographed a solo piece titled Stars I Shall Find, commissioned by the Brooklyn Youth Chorus Academy for its Home for the Holidays show, which was performed in Prospect Park with music by the choral academy.

Kimberleigh Holman (Mount Holyoke College ’09) is still residing in the Boston area, after graduating from Goddard College with her MFA in Interdisciplinary Arts, and is running Luminarium Dance Company. Most recently, she was awarded the Boston Foundation’s prestigious LAB Fund, to expand her work Contradictions + Casual Self Loathing for a November 2021 debut.

Lauren Horn (Amherst College ’17) lives in Connecticut and created a new work, Cleave, commissioned and digitally premiered by Thru Lines. She is Artist Instructor in Dance at the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts Middle School, and in 2021 premiered a digital dance work titled @Me, at the Chop Shop: Bodies of Work dance festival. Lauren gave a retrospective lecture at University of Connecticut’s Black Radical Art and Performance series and has a new work commissioned by the Dance Collective in Hartford.

Emma Jaster (Amherst College ’07) is a movement director and educator focused on cross-cultural communication and diplomacy. She works at the Lab for Global Performance and Politics at Georgetown University, where she is developing a course called Body in Global Politics. During the pandemic, Emma has developed and participated in several digital projects, including Heartbeat Opera’s Breathing Free. Nominated for a Drama League Award for Outstanding Digital Concert, this project was a collaboration with Smith College professor and filmmaker Anaiis Cisco.

Dayita Nereyeth (Mount Holyoke College ’15) recently cofounded the 206 Dance Collective in Bangalore, India, and has been making short dance films in places that inspire her. She is also immersed in cross-cultural processes with Ellen Oliver (Hampshire College ’16) and Margaret Wiss (Mount Holyoke College ’15) and is well on her way to becoming an Alexander Technique teacher. Dayita is excited to return to live performance. Until then, she will play her ukulele and (not so patiently) wait.

Lila Alice Reid (Mount Holyoke College ’15) has lived in Oregon’s Eugene–Corvallis area since 2015. After receiving her MFA in Dance from University of Oregon, she began working at Oregon State University as the coordinator of Social and Artistic Dance for the Physical Activity Courses Department. She teaches dance elective courses and advises the Social Dance Teacher Training and Leadership Certificate Program. Lila and her partner teach country-western social dance in the local community.

Sea Thomas (Mount Holyoke College ’19) is currently living in Minneapolis, continuing work as a freelance performer through the pandemic. In the summer of 2020, they were featured in the 20% Theatre Company’s virtual performance of The Naked I with their solo dance horseshirt/farmboy. Sea is looking forward to performing in Open Flame Theatre's production of The Garden and Felix Gonzalez-Torre’s Untitled (Go-Go Dancing Platform) at the Walker Art Center in the late summer of 2021.

Kristen Duffy Young (UMass Amherst ’00) was promoted to codirector of the Colleges of the Fenway (COF) Center for Performing Arts. Kristen founded the COF Dance Program in 2006, where she has developed inclusive programming and increased student participation. In this new role, she will oversee the Dance, Theater, and Music Programs and seek collaborative opportunities across member institutions. The COF is a consortium of Simmons University, Emmanuel College, Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, and Wentworth Institute of Technology, all in Boston.
DANCE SCIENCE RESEARCH Gets a Home at UMass Amherst

Aston K. McCullough, assistant professor of dance science in the UMass Amherst Department of Music and Dance, garnered one of the five National Endowment for the Arts Research Lab national awards to direct the Laboratory for the Scientific Study of Dance (LAB:SYNC), a state-of-the-art, purpose-built motion capture and physiological testing unit for research on dance and health. McCullough will work with a group of UMass Amherst researchers and with Five College Dance researchers Chris Aiken (Smith College), Barbie Diwald (Mount Holyoke College), Jenna Riegel (Amherst College), and Alexandra Ripp (Five College Consortium). Each Five College Dance research partner brings a unique perspective to somatics, anatomy, dance science, and program design.

LAB:SYNC will focus on researching dance’s impact on adult health. Over a two-year period, McCullough and colleagues will seek to design and evaluate sensor- and questionnaire-based methods for quantifying dance behavior in adults ages 18–85 with varying levels of dance training and experience. They will also test associations between dance experience and markers of physical and mental health.

Look forward to news and events for the Five College and broader community in the upcoming two years! By the time you read this, LAB:SYNC will have its own website, featuring news, ongoing research, a description of the lab facilities and equipment, along with bios of the research team. You can also subscribe to gravity, a quarterly online newsletter published by LAB:SYNC, by visiting blogs.umass.edu/labsync, or scanning the QR code (left). All things LAB:SYNC are accessible from the UMass Amherst Dance Program website. Sign up for updates and stay in the loop!

Beyond the concerts and programming detailed in this publication’s articles, Five College Dance also hosted a variety of additional virtual events, classes, and workshops for our community. This list does not include the exciting artists and thinkers who also visited classes opened up to FCD students, faculty participants, and staff members! Even in a year of pandemic, we stayed busy, moving and thinking together.

- **Contemporary Dance Master Class with Kyle Marshall**
  Hosted by Amherst College Theater and Dance
- **Dancing Democracy: Empathy and Community in Bill T. Jones’s Contemporary Work**
  A talk by Ariel Nereson
  Hosted by Amherst College Theater and Dance
- **Fun Dance Fridays Screening and Discussion**
  With Xan Burley and Alex Springer (Smith College Dance MFAs ’20)
  Hosted by Smith College Dance
- **Dancing Material History: Site-Specific Performance in Michigan**
  A talk by Petra Kuppers and Stephanie Heit
  Hosted by Smith College Dance with support from Five College Dance
- **Creative Process and Movement Workshop with Ananya Chatterjea**
  Hosted by Five College Dance, Smith College Dance, and UMass Amherst Fine Arts Center
- **Making Dances, Doing Research, and Problem-solving During the Zombie Apocalypse**
  Master Class with Christopher-Rasheem McMillan (Hampshire College ’07)
  Hosted by Amherst College Theater and Dance
- **Watch Party with Mariana Valencia: Solo B**
  Choreographed and performed by Mariana Valencia (Hampshire College ’06)
  Hosted by Hampshire College Dance
- **Dance on Film Workshop**
  With Clare Schweitzer (Mount Holyoke College ’12)
  Hosted by Mount Holyoke College Dance
- **Translations Hip-hop Workshop with Bill Shannon**
  Hosted by Five College Dance and UMass Amherst Dance with support from UMass Fine Arts Center
- **Hip-hop Master Class with Rennie Harris**
  Hosted by Five College Dance, Amherst College Theater and Dance, and UMass Fine Arts Center
- **Scotty Hardwig Artist Talk**
  Hosted by Amherst College Theater and Dance
- **Black Women Leadership Initiative Launch Event**
  Led by Shakia Barron and Jamila Jackson
  Hosted by Five College Dance
The Hampshire Dance Program has been most grateful for Larry Berger’s return as technical director for Music and Dance this fall, after a year away. Larry began in this position in January 2007, capping off a formidable career as a sound engineer for prominent musicians, production companies, and concert venues. His skill and creative energies have been especially vital this past year as we actively leaned into digital platforms to make and share our work during the pandemic. As in so many years past, Larry’s generous and enthusiastic collaboration with students and faculty members has been pivotal in realizing our visions of artful togetherness over these last months.

—Deborah Goffe, associate professor of Dance, Hampshire College

Jake Meginsky joined the faculty of Smith College Department of Dance as Musician in Dance in fall 2020. In addition to playing for a wide range of studio classes (hip-hop dance, West African dance, ballet, salsa, and contemporary), he teaches music and composition to both undergraduate and graduate students.

A Massachusetts Cultural Council Fellow in both music and film, Jake has collaborated and performed with an extraordinary range of musicians, including Milford Graves, Alvin Lucier, and Kim Gordon. His debut solo album, L’appel du Vide, was included in The Wire’s Top 10 Records of the Year for Outer Limits; his third release, Seven Psychotropic Sinewave Palindromes, was listed in Fact magazine’s Top 50 Albums of 2016. Jake also frequently collaborates with choreographers and has worked with Gwen Welliver, Susan Sgorbati, and Nora Chipaumire.

Jake is the recipient of a New Music USA Live Music for Dance award for his original composition for Welliver’s Beasts and Plots, which premiered at New York Live Arts in 2013 and was restaged at the Guggenheim Museum in April 2018. Later that year, he directed and produced an award-winning music documentary, Milford Graves Full Mantis. The New York Times called the film a “stunning documentary” and wrote, “This movie gives you the man’s heart, and it’s a beautiful one.” The film was screened theatrically worldwide, and in October 2018, it was featured at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture’s inaugural film festival in Washington, DC. It is now streaming internationally.

—Angie Hauser, associate professor of Dance, Smith College

M’Bewe’s teaching and her research are centered on how artistic practices and performance are embedded in social and political ideologies and movements and how they contribute to different senses of identity. Her extensive knowledge on these topics has assured our students a comprehensive view of complex issues and made her a valuable colleague at Amherst and then at other Five College campuses. Her courses filled a real gap in our curriculum, and her dedication to helping students think more critically was always apparent.

M’Bewe also contributed enormously to FCD beyond the classroom. She curated Amherst’s “African American Dance Symposium” in April 2018, an impressive program of talks and performance, which followed film screenings and movement workshops earlier in the semester. In 2018, M’Bewe was also our honored FCD Annual Lecture speaker, sharing her research on Pearl Primus.

M’Bewe is a true team player who works hard to create an atmosphere in which everyone thrives and cooperates. Her experience, her passionate dedication to dance, and her generosity make her a cherished colleague and teacher,
Achaetey Kabal, who has been our wonderful assistant production manager since January 2019, will be leaving Five College Dance in June, to pursue new opportunities outside the Valley. It’s almost impossible to quantify everything they’ve brought to us and everything we’ve gained in working with Achaetey.

In addition to the successful management of numerous productions, they were also instrumental in our transition to virtual work this past year. They helped to craft our models for both filmed and livestreamed concerts, as well as the creation of our virtual crew replacement curriculum. This included the mastering of new software, such as OBS and Vimeo Live, and methods of scheduling and organizing our technical and dress rehearsals.

Achaetey has been a superb colleague and collaborator, bringing an attentive, kind, and understanding demeanor to concerts, which have quickly become more complex, involving many moving parts that are new to us. Often in moments of stress, Achaetey helped to solve what seemed like insurmountable problems, merely by listening and calmly responding to tense situations.

They have been likewise instrumental in the creation of the diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility work that the FCD office has been involved with this past year, often leading the way through these important issues.

We will miss Achaetey a great deal, but wish them the best of luck with everything in the future. We believe great new opportunities await them this summer.

—Matthew Adelson, Five College Dance production manager

John Sprague has played for Five College Dance with devotion and loyalty since 1988. When I first met John, I was immediately moved by his gorgeous melodic playing on the recorder. I liken John’s spirit to a reed sounding in a field. In the studio, he always brings ancient instruments, humility, and a sincere approach to every class and performance situation. While John accompanied classes at all five campuses for many years, he was a prominent feature of the Hampshire program, where he had strong working relationships with Becky Nordstrom, Daphne Lowell, and Cathy Nicoli. In his early years, he had a close connection with Wendy Woodson at Amherst and was the musician for a memorable improvised group performance by Wendy, Peter Schmitz, and Penny Campbell. Throughout his time, John worked with countless Smith grad students, providing a steady, experienced presence as they ventured into teaching. He also worked for years with Peggy Schwartz at UMass and, more recently, with Paul Dennis, including a semester-long class of movement improvisation for performance, which culminated in a piece in the annual University Dancers concert.

John has a deep devotion to spiritual studies, most notably Zen and Buddhism, and has worked in this field alongside his music endeavors for many years. He is also a long-term core staff member at North Star Self-Directed Learning for Teens, where he directs the music program and teaches philosophy and yoga. John taught a popular workshop called The Moving Village, which evolved out of Moving from Within, a group movement practice he helped develop in collaboration with movement educator Susan Bauer. He has taught workshops in creativity, and improvisation in both music and movement. He has released four CDs of improvisational music, especially for movement and contemplation, one of which was nominated by Just Plain Folks for best instrumental album of the year. John can often be heard playing for improv dance jams in New England and around the Valley.

I know I speak for all of Five College Dance in thanking John for his tireless service to our dancing community and wishing him all good things for the future. Thank you, John!

—Peter Jones, senior lecturer and accompanist in Dance, Mount Holyoke College
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On our website, you can also find supplements to this newsletter: student research papers, additional alumni updates, and more! Visit fivecolleges.edu/dance/newsletter_2021 or scan the QR code to the right.

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS for These Public Events!

FCD Annual Lecture speaker: Jawole Willa Jo Zollar (choreographer, teacher, performer, and founding artistic director / chief visioning partner of Urban Bush Women)
November 5, 2021, at Mount Holyoke College

FCD Repertory Project: Batty Moves, choreographed by Jawole Willa Jo Zollar
November 11–13, 2021, at Amherst College
November 18–20, 2021, at Smith College

THE FIVE COLLEGE DANCE STAFF

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Production Manager: Matthew Adelson
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