

PIONEER WINTER COLLECTIVE

BIRDS OF PARADISE

study guide



BoP III. Shamar Watt, Niurca Márquez, Clarence Brooks / Image Credit: Mitchell Zachs

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introduction

This document was created to support students and teachers who are incorporating *Birds of Paradise* into their coursework; yet its background information on the making of the show, as well as the activity and discussion prompts included here, may also be of interest to general audiences. It includes information about the multiple iterations of *Birds of Paradise*, and the artists who have contributed to each.

However you have found your way here -- we hope that this document enhances your enjoyment of *Birds of Paradise*.

Jeremy Stoller
Dramaturg, *Birds of Paradise*

enjoying the performance

There's no one right way to experience *Birds of Paradise*. The work of Pioneer Winter Collective is meant to be enjoyed and appreciated by all audiences, whether you attend many performances or this is your first. No expertise or prior knowledge is expected or required -- just your openness and attention.

The movements might suggest experiences you recognize, or not. We invite you to watch the performers not just as observers of their bodies and actions, but to find in their movements a reflection/refraction of your own.



Current Collaborators

Artistic Director + Choreographer

Pioneer Winter

Performers - Movement/Sound/Vocal Collaborators

Clarence Brooks, Junior Domingos, Jessica Gilmore,
Hector Machado, Niurca Márquez, Shamar Watt,
Pioneer Winter

Original Music & Sound Design

Juraj Kojš

Poet in Residence

Arsimmer McCoy

Costume Design

Karelle Levy

Rehearsal Eye & Studio Documentation

Marissa Alma Nick

Production Design

David Hans Lau

Cinematographer, Editor, Colorist & Scenic Asst.

McKenzie Mortensen

Lighting Design

Apon Nichols

Projectionist

Rodrigo Arcaya

Production & Stage Manager

Shannon Veguilla

Company Manager

Gladys Ramirez

Dramaturgy

Jeremy Stoller





BoP I. L, R: Shamar Watt, Gabriela Cruz / Image Credit: World Red Eye

About the Company

Pioneer Winter Collective (est. 2016) is a Miami-based, intergenerational and physically integrated dance-theater company, rooted in social practice and community, queer visibility and beauty beyond the mainstream; available for engagement activities and residencies, workshops, performances - both virtual and live. Described as avant-garde, experimental, fearless, and as diverse as Miami itself, the Collective democratizes performance through unexpected bodies in unexpected places, producing unexpected social change - powerful stories and voices that transform the cultural landscape.

A major objective continues to be expanding the definition of all that dance is and can be so that all bodies survive, thrive, and are witnessed in spite of constant erasure based upon race, body type, age, and ability - this goes for both the artists as well as the audience. The Collective does not separate its art making from its community engagement practice, so all activities are interwoven to support our mission of democratizing dance; and actively addresses social justice and equity by bringing real bodies and lived experience to the forefront. The heart of this work resides in dissolving barriers, and we are believers in the beauty of vulnerability and humanness.

Pioneer Winter, Choreographer + Artistic Director

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Follow us on social media, or check out our work online!

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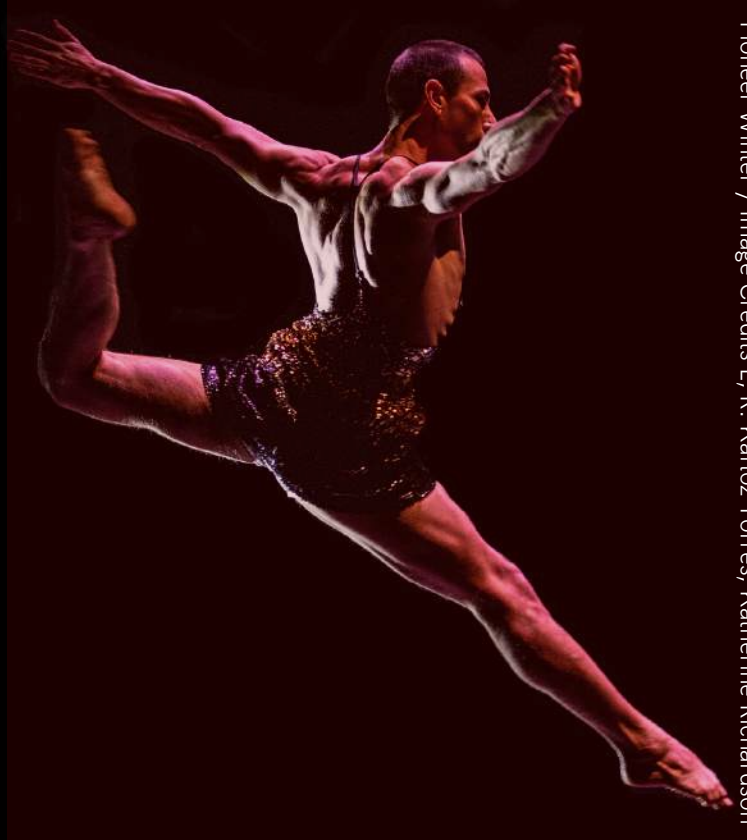


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Pioneer Winter / Image Credits L, R: Karloz Torres, Katherine Richardson

About Pioneer Winter

Pioneer (b. 1987; he/they) is a Miami-based choreographer and artistic director of the Pioneer Winter Collective, a dance-theater company that aims to democratize performance and transform the cultural landscape through movement that exposes beauty beyond the mainstream.

Recognized in Dance Magazine's 25 to Watch, Pioneer continues to expand the definition of all that dance is and can be, conjuring a world where all bodies - onstage and in the audience - survive, thrive, and are witnessed, no matter their race, body type, age, and ability.

Working across media from stage to film, and in a variety of movement and performance forms, Pioneer facilitates a collaborative process that centers social practice, community engagement, and queer methodologies. Pioneer has been commissioned by the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, Miami Theater Center, Karen Peterson and Dancers, Tigertail Productions, Live Arts Miami, Jacksonville Dance Theatre, and FundArte. Pioneer Winter's work is supported by local, state, and foundation grants, fellowships, and residencies.

Currently, Pioneer is the Arsht Center's first Artist-in-Residence in over a decade. An extension of their creative practice, Pioneer has curated and directed ScreenDance Miami Festival since 2017, presented by the Miami Light Project; Pioneer's own films screen internationally. Pioneer earned an MPH Public Health and Epidemiology from Florida International University's Stempel College of Public Health in 2009, and MFA Choreography from Jacksonville University/White Oak in 2016.

Pioneer serves as Assistant Teaching Professor in the Honors College and College of Communication, Architecture + The Arts at Florida International University. Pioneer is also affiliated faculty at the Center for Humanities in an Urban Environment (CHUE) and an inaugural Fellow in the Miami Studies Program.



BoP II. Image Credit: Passion Ward

Engagement

Pioneer Winter Collective is the only professional dance organization in Florida that focuses on LGBTQ2+ people. PWC does not separate its art making from its community engagement practices. The engagement model used since 2016 explores 3 life-long key intersections: Agency, Identity, Resilience.

For queer folk underrepresented even in their own community - elders, people of color, those of transgender experience, people living with disability - effects of erasure are prominent. Aesthetic and narrative cues subvert traditional dance forms and conflict avoidance by deep community interaction with material drawn from workshops, interviews, discussion, and reveals a platform for typically unheard voices and experiences to be witnessed.

Agency: explored using solo and group-based compositions that allow for participants to reframe memory, construct new narratives that reflect changes in the systems through which they operate.

Identity: gives embodiment to cultural values, brings attention to dissonant realities, and challenges fixed meanings in order to draw attention to the aesthetic and political within ourselves/between ourselves and others.

Resilience: focuses on the feeling body, that the body absorbs and holds onto knowledge of our oppression or pain, but also empowered by resistance against suffering.

exploring the production



the what and the when



BoP II. Gregory King (center) and company) / Image Credit: Karli Evans

About *Birds of Paradise*

Birds of Paradise honors and celebrates the enduring nature of people to shape themselves into something that is desirable, vulnerable, fierce, and reborn at the same time. Through this new work, Miami-based choreographer Pioneer Winter continues their exploration of beauty and virtuosity outside the mainstream by creating a series of dance-based queer solo portraits on the themes of agency, survival, and transformation.

Birds of Paradise is iridescent and effortful. Featuring interwoven filmed and live dance performance, this project was developed in collaboration with the performers, White Elephant Group media company, and sound artist Juraj Kojš.

This new project builds on our work in previous projects *Host* (2016), *Gimp Gait* (2016), *Forced Entry and Other Love Stories* (2017), and *Reprise* (2018/2019), which each examine relationships, queerness, memory, and power; and they were all built through close ties with our community.

Birds of Paradise confronts our notions of dance by exploring movement with people of varied physical ability, body type, gender identity, race, ethnicity, and experiences. This radical assemblage of birds living in our paradise will challenge us to explore our own humanity.

timeline

NOVEMBER 2019

Rehearsals begin for a live ensemble piece called *Birds of Paradise*.

MARCH 13, 2020

Rehearsals shut down because of COVID-19.

APRIL-JULY 2020

Company tries online rehearsals; chooses to go on hiatus.

NOVEMBER 2020

In-person rehearsals resume - more challenges, another pause.

JANUARY 2021

Rehearsals resume.

SEPTEMBER 16-19, 2021

World premiere at the Adrienne Arsht Center.

DECEMBER 2021

Development residency at Nat'l Center for Choreography in Akron.

MARCH 2022

Rehearsals begin for a new iteration of *Birds of Paradise*.

MAY 13-14, 2022

Birds of Paradise II premieres at Miami-Dade County Auditorium.

NOVEMBER 2022

Rehearsals begin for *Birds of Paradise III*.

MARCH 31-APRIL 2, 2023

Birds of Paradise III premieres at Sandrell Rivers Theater.

exploring the production

perspectives from the cast and creative team



Image Credit: Peter Nieblas

Pioneer Winter

CHOREOGRAPHER + ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

CHOREOGRAPHER'S NOTE

Birds of Paradise is a series of works that explore rebirth – both in the ideas threaded through its choreography and stagecraft; and in its process, as each iteration (of which this is the third...or fourth) involves welcoming new ideas, collaborators, design elements, and performance configurations into an existing choreographic vocabulary and artistic team. *Birds* was our return to performing in 2021 after a pandemic shutdown, and that piece was built around solos both for health reasons, and because when you are just trying to survive, it is hard to look outside yourself. As many of us continue on our journeys toward wellness, wholeness, we are better able to see not just ourselves, but others – to see ourselves in them, and them in us; to appreciate them and take care of them. So, the rebirth we are exploring has evolved from that of the individual, to that of both individual and collective.

There are always an infinite number of decisions to be made in any artwork, and for each *Birds* production, one of the most vital has been: where do we end up? Who is onstage and what is happening as the lights go down? What offering do we make to the audience as they head out of the theater and back into their realities? The shows' endings have felt uniquely weighted with a responsibility to honestly represent where we're at, be it tired and breathless; joyful; or proud and defiant. We build our movement from our own bodies and experiences, and together, that tells an evolving story of how we got to this moment. I appreciate that you have come to experience this work, and hope it may play some part in your own story of rebirth.

-- Pi

Ronald Baez + Kevin Berriz

CO-DIRECTOR

CINEMATOGRAPHER

(BoP I)

DANCING WITH THE CAMERA

RON

I'm new to the world of dance. I remember watching Lize-Lotte Pitlo rehearse her piece, and being floored by how incredibly connected I felt to her. I realized then that our goal wasn't to capture the movement, it was to give a singular perspective that communicated what it felt like to have the dancer directly in front of you. That gave the camera a unique spirit.

A camera has its own perspective. We were choreographing the camera to complement Pioneer's choreography.

KEVIN

My aim is to help tell the story of what the camera is looking at. Our process, whether we're making a traditional movie or not, is to figure out the conceptual goals, and how to apply those goals to the ways we film it.

Our goal here was to go beyond documentation or dance film. As a collective, White Elephant Group is already experimenting within film form and cinematic language, and Pioneer brings that experimentation to his dance works too. We had very similar goals, so right away when we began collaborating with Pioneer, it felt like meeting an old friend.



Juraj Kojš

ORIGINAL MUSIC + SOUND ARCHITECT

(BoP I, II, III)

[interview conducted for *BoP I*]

MORE THAN A SOUNDTRACK

For me, sound in a dance production is incredibly important and yet it is often overlooked and put on the level of a soundtrack. We are striving for the depth and richness of sound to be parallel, or complementary to, the visual aspects of the project. Whether it's recorded, live, or electronically derived, sound is there to be a partner in crime. Our decisions are driven by the storytelling, by really listening to the performers themselves, and from there deciding the best sonic tool. The tempo, the curvature, the temporalities of the music, need to be some reflection of the choreography. We find the interaction moments, looking for the peaks and valleys in the piece, where we want to create alignment or tension with the sound.

ARSHIT → JULY 9, 2021

David Hans Lau

PRODUCTION DESIGN (BoP I, II, III)

[Interview conducted for BoP II]

PROCESS

I worked in two worlds -- inside of the film conceptually, and on the exhibition of those films for a live audience.

Each solo expresses a specific narrative, theme, and emotion. We went to rehearsals to watch the solos, and to speak with Pioneer and the performers about what was important to them in each piece, what they were feeling during it, and what aspects we wanted to highlight for the audience. We also talked about logistics: the dimensions of the space, the budget, the limitations we were working with. All of that information fed into how we thought about the film conceptually, and how we designed the exhibition of the films.

CHALLENGES AND REWARDS

The challenge is working on such an in-depth production, with so many performers, each with their own style, their own story that they are telling, trying to hit those emotional beats.

The thing that I've loved the most is the context that all of this exists inside of. Being able to work alongside queer artists in this creative process is amazing. That's been the most enjoyable part, to be surrounded by all these queer creatives, and all these different queer narratives, and we're lifting each other up. It's been really beautiful in that regard.

12' 0"

★ Use light to direct where the audience goes.

of Benches?

HALLWAY

Telephone

LOAD DOOR

Electric Panels

KATRINA

Elephant doors

Elephant doors will open in hallway

Elephant doors

KATRINA

Karelle Levy

COSTUME DESIGN (*BoP II, III*)

[interview conducted for *BoP II*]



WHAT AND HOW I MAKE

I'm a textile designer by trade; I studied textile design at RISD. I began as a weaver and ended up as a knitter, doing custom fashion and costume design. I found that knitting was really forgiving because of the natural structure of the fabric, it's very stretchy and so something could fit a size 0 and a size 24. So I started knitting a tubular design that fits any body type. If it's a curvy person, it's a little shorter, and if it's a very slim, very petite person, it's longer. I've had people come to me who are too small for regular fashion and too big for regular fashion, and everywhere in between.

ANY BODY, ALL BODIES

I find that right now we're in an incredible time where we have body positivity becoming more of a conversation. In fashion, it's becoming more acceptable to have a body, and to have a different body than what you would normally see on the runway. And I love that now anybody, if they're feeling sexy, can be sexy. I want everyone to feel comfortable in their skin, and what I call the "second skin," which is my clothing. I'm just happy I can be part of that conversation, of the celebration of all bodies.

Clarence Brooks

PERFORMER (*BoP II, III*)

STARTING OUT

Moving/dancing has been a long-time expression for me. I have been a trained dancer for 42 years and a self-taught mover/improvisor for at least twelve years before that. My mother loved to dance, and my father was not a dancer, so she would grab one of the four children as her partner. We watched TV shows like *The Soul Train*, *American Bandstand*, *Solid Gold*, and variety shows. After imitating what I saw, I created and performed my own versions at parties my parents hosted.

CONTINUING

Time is not a friend to dancers; time off is only good for short periods. The quarantine was hideously detrimental to my career, particularly because I am older. Two years off is like starting anew. Because dance studios closed, some aspects of the craft could not be practiced properly, such as moving expansively through space, executing big jumping phrases, and partnering and being partnered by one or more dancers. I seriously considered becoming "COVID retired." But I have a personal philosophy that when you get knocked down, try to get back up to where you were. Decide about changes once you are on your feet again. I am so very thrilled to be back on my feet, in a studio with other artists, and presenting onstage in front of a live audience.

STILL DISCOVERING

Birds of Paradise is one of the most unique experiences of my career, because of the level of collaboration in all aspects of production. At every step of building of this piece, each collaborator has deep embodied involvement. The space and mood that Pioneer has invited us all into is secure, fun, creative, exhausting, challenging, and inspiring!

Aeon De La Cruz

PERFORMER (*BoP II*)

Before the pandemic, I had begun to reduce my self-induced pressure to perform, in order to focus more internally on my voice, approach, and what I wanted my work to be. The pandemic helped incubate that focus for me, but was also a time for big shifts. My reaction was to try to anchor myself to my own uncertainty and to the unpredictability.

I hadn't realized how much personal metamorphosis I had gone through, and *Birds of Paradise* is really calling me to address that for myself! I think about transformation, output, and the practice of re-establishing identity internally and externally. How I project my own voice, as well. There is a sense of freedom that comes with approaching things on your own terms and not feeling as much necessity to fit a mold or match a label. To me that signifies multiplicity. Cultivating the fabric of what makes a diverse and supportive group.

We are at a sensitive juncture in society today. My connection to my peers in the ensemble feels intimate, ever-changing, and very raw in some cases. Sometimes we move as one and sometimes we move individually, but there is always a fluidity to it, and an implicit sense of "nowness". There is a trust in the way we hold space for each other that I think carries over into the rest of my connections, and is open and supportive to our personal change and growth. I find myself trying to trust myself and others more than I have in the past!

Kayla Castellon

PERFORMER (*BoP II*)

EXCITEMENT AND COMFORT

I have been dancing since the age of 3. I sometimes think it's cliché when people say stuff like that but it is literally true. Dancing has always been my most authentic, deep, and vulnerable way of speaking.

When I first met Pioneer, I was so hungry for dance. I think that urgent and excited energy was somehow felt in my work on [the Collective's performance piece] *Reprise*. I really wanted to push myself and my limits. Now, after coming out of the pandemic, I feel a sense of settling into my body more. Not because there is more comfort but because there is this sense of collective exhaustion and prioritization of self care. I feel less striving and more being, less pushing and more allowing. And the permission to hold what I can hold.

POTENTIAL AND POSSIBILITY

Birds of Paradise is about potential and possibility. It is a moment in time that is dilated to represent what could be, not only in the individual but in the collective. There is something so sacred about showing up exactly where you are and feeling held and supported there. I think that is something the Collective does really well. Our stories, our days, our bodies, our injuries, our gifts, our wins, they are all in the room. We aren't dwelling on them but we aren't ignoring them either. And that is what actually allows for the transformation of the work.

Junior Domingos

PERFORMER (*BoP III*)

FINDING MY WAY TO DANCE

I've always had a relationship with dance, but didn't start taking classes until the age of 16. Before that, I'd done acrobatic and rhythmic gymnastics. And then in my adolescence I fell in love with circus performance, which was my first serious movement training, before I found my way to dance.

Since then, I have had the privilege of studying with great jazz, modern, contemporary, ballroom dance, and capoeira teachers who always respected my time and my body.

COLLABORATIVE MOVEMENT AND STORYTELLING

Pioneer always comes to us with a proposal for a movement or series of movements, but within that proposal there is a lot of openness for collaboration. Especially in the duets in this piece, communication is open about the choreographic ideas and the way that we as dancers execute them – not only the movements themselves, but the relationships created through them. We have the space to ask questions, and to take time exploring the answers.

THE 'HUGE HAPPINESS' OF DANCING AGAIN

In January 2022 I had surgery on my right thigh, and two months afterwards I still wasn't able to walk properly. Now a year later, being able to dance and having the privilege of being on stage with amazing people/dancers is a huge happiness. Even more so because this is a show that explores losses and gains, and building strong and constructive relationships. This past year has been a great learning experience about finding my way through the surprises life brings, and emerging from them with deeper and more solid relationships.



Josue Garcia

PERFORMER (*BoP I, II*)

PROCESS AND RESULT

I think *Birds of Paradise* is about being transient and moving into a new space with the knowledge you've gained, and that's been my experience working on it.

My solo [in the September 2021 *Birds of Paradise* premiere] is so personal and intimate -- about finding truth in myself that I never believed before, remembering things that happened once before that caused me to be the person I am today -- that it has been a cathartic release.

I've relived a lot of my past traumas through this piece -- metaphorically, literally, physically, mentally, emotionally. I've become exhausted with this piece, I've wanted to do this piece everyday, I've wanted to never see this piece again. Throughout this entire process I have also been going to intense therapy. I feel like a whole new person after this experience.

Hector Machado

PERFORMER (*BoP III*)

FROM DANCE TO STAGE MANAGEMENT, AND BACK

I have been in love with dance since I was cast in the “Hand Jive” number in *Grease* at Norland Middle School [in Miami Gardens]. I continued doing musical theater at school, and took classes in tap, African, stepping, jazz, and ballet.

I received my MFA from California Institute of the Arts in stage management. After my attempted suicide and consequential amputation, I moved back to Miami to begin living again. I asked Pioneer (who I knew through my earlier dance training) if I could be his stage manager. He asked if I still danced, and I said “um, not since this.” He invited me to a rehearsal, and I haven’t stopped dancing since.

A MAJOR SHIFT

I am in a completely different space physically, mentally, and spiritually than I was when I last danced with the Collective [in *Reprise*, 2019] and that matters because I’m asked to bring all those parts of me to the rehearsal room, along with a vulnerability and a “yes, and” attitude. The amount of trust between us in the ensemble allows me to soar to heights that I didn’t think would be possible.

Physically, I am further along in my dance vocabulary for my differently abled body. I performed 80% of *Reprise* in my wheelchair, only getting out for one floor section. This time I’m dancing without my chair and I have to figure out ways to navigate the space beautifully, seamlessly, and logically. A lot of my choreography is generated in the moments when I’m just moving, not overthinking.

And my relationship to performing has evolved. I have shifted from “doing it for me,” to doing it for those who need to see themselves represented on stage. Where they be black, disabled, queer, non-binary transfemme, fat, or any other marginalized group that they see being represented when they see me performing. I am a living testimony that anything is possible through faith, hard work, determination, consistency, vulnerability, and forgiveness.

Niurca E. Márquez

PERFORMER (*BoP I, II, III*)

PROCESS AND RESULT

With some dance forms, the level of physical demand is evident in the movement. Because of the collaborative way the Pioneer Winter Collective works, the movement and story come from you, and I don't think people see the individual demand of that.

Sometimes the movement is very minimal and seems simple, and it's actually very demanding of the body. In our last work, *Reprise*, there's a section where all we do is stand with our hands up in the air. And it was torturous, because you had to figure out how to adjust with micro movements to be able to sustain that.

We try out a lot of material in rehearsal, and these extreme places of physicality, that don't make it into the finished piece. But it never gets fully eliminated. What it yielded, the information it gave us, is still very present. The residue is still there.

DEVELOPING WORK IN A PANDEMIC

I think this piece would not have been possible without the pandemic. As dancers, we work with these conceptual frameworks, where we try to reimagine or recreate for ourselves, what a thing was at some other point in the process or our life. In *Birds of Paradise*, we are exploring queer resilience, and we didn't need to imagine: we were in it. People think that the pandemic shifted everything when it comes to performance work. But the pandemic wasn't one thing.

Barbara Meulener

PERFORMER (*BoP I, II*)

BEING WELCOMED, BUILDING TRUST

I grew up in the world of competitive dance, where it's very much, you have to look a certain way, the technique is very specific, the expectation is perfection.

With Pioneer Winter Collective, there is a stripping away of the expectations of how my body has to look, to be desirable or pretty. My body can come into the space as it is. It is very much about connecting to the movement, connecting to what feels good in my body and making it work for me. It's rewarding being in a space where all bodies are welcome, and are welcome to move in the way that they move.

With that, there is a lot of experimentation, the work is very cyclical. That can inspire some anxiety, thinking about: when the day of the show comes, what are we going to be doing? With this work, you really have to trust the process, and you learn to trust Pioneer to see it all through.

A photograph of June Raven Romero performing. She is wearing a red, sequined, sleeveless dress and has her arms extended horizontally. The background is a vibrant red, textured wall. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting her form against the red background.

June Raven Romero

PERFORMER (*BoP II*)

WHY I PERFORM

June Raven Romero, *BoP II* / Image Credit: Mitchell Zachs

I don't see myself as a dancer. I am really an actor first. I'm a big words person. It's simultaneously kind of suffocating and therapeutic to be expected to only move, when I've employed my words so much as a defense throughout my life. So I'm always looking at these dancers in rehearsal, and wondering how they communicate so seamlessly with so few words, how they seem to understand each other when it comes to movement and purpose for movement. I struggle a little more with that. I'm not fighting it, I just move as I'm being asked to move, and in the process I'll find some truth in each movement.

My relationship has grown beautifully strained to performance and to being seen performing and to managing an audience's gaze. I have pretty serious gender dysphoria. But I learned during the pandemic that I need to perform, more than I need the consolation or alleviation of my dysphoric episodes. So what I've done is take steps to not agitate my dysphoria during and post rehearsal and performance. Because I understand fundamentally now that I'm a performer at heart, and that I have an identity disorder, which is just a physiological condition I have to deal with.

When I started with the Collective four years ago, I was at the beginning stages of my transition. I was desperate to perform with a group of people who were going to celebrate and make room for my newfound identity and the ways in which I was expressing it, and Pioneer Winter Collective did just that.



ACTIVITIES

discussion

We tend to process art through emotional response before we can articulate that response intellectually. Attending a performance will often prompt a strong immediate reaction, which you may not have words for. Here are some strategies for more deeply exploring your own and others' responses through conversation.

- Start by simply describing the performance. In the most direct way possible, state what happened. How did the piece start? How did it end? What took place along the way? Take into account the location, design elements, music, style(s) of movement, the ways the performers interacted with each other and with the audience.
- Consider your responses to the performance, as a whole and to specific moments you remember. Don't feel the need to sum up your response into a single cohesive expression; different aspects of the piece may have elicited very different feelings.

discussion (cont'd)

- What might the creators of *Birds of Paradise* been trying to achieve? Consider everything you've articulated from the questions above. Maybe take another look at the choreographer's note. What sort of intended effect, impact, or message might be indicated by this? If there were moments you found emotional, challenging, or exciting, how might those responses have been in line with or at odds to the creators' intent?
- How well do you feel the performance achieved the goals it set out for itself? And in what ways are these goals meaningful to you personally, or to our culture today?
- What questions would you ask the creators if you had the opportunity?



BoP III. Left: Junior Domingos and Niurca Márquez; Right: Jessica Gilmore and Clarence Brooks / Image Credit: Passion Ward.

writing

1. Performance Criticism

Write a performance review of *Birds of Paradise*. Use the conversation prompts on the previous pages to craft a short review (under 800 words). Consider reading other dance/physical theater reviews in advance of your own writing to get a sense of different approaches to performance criticism. Think about who your audience is, what they are looking for in a review, and how to most effectively communicate with them.

2. Research + Composition

Choose a topic of interest related to the performance and your own interest or area of study (i.e., birds of paradise and ornithology; collaborative process; physical theater across the world today; queer representation in Miami culture). Write a short essay that incorporates your research and the performance to argue a thesis of your own devising.

movement

These prompts are adapted from exercises used by the Pioneer Winter Collective to generate choreography.

Personal → Shared

materials: sticky notes, writing utensils

1. based on a prompt of your choice ('the most surprising thing to happen to you this week,' 'a formative moment in your childhood', 'the moment you first discovered your love of dance'), write a memory on a sticky note
2. everyone should adhere their sticky note to the floor, and read the rest of the group's memories.
3. select a sticky note memory that intrigues you, and add on to it -- the next moment in the story; another detail. Repeat this several times.
4. Turn these narratives into movement. You can select one of them, or divide the group to each take on a different one.

movement (cont'd)

Experimenting with Composition and Objects

materials: a large quantity of stackable objects (blocks, cardboard boxes, styrofoam, etc.)

1. have participants create 3 different scenes using the objects: a wedding, a funeral, and a 3rd scene of their choice
2. invite the students to create short films using their phone cameras, to reveal the scenic environment in an intentional way
3. have the students view each other's films and respond (verbally and/or in writing) about what they see. What story are they intuiting? what is the relationship to the objects?
4. invite each creator to write about the feedback they received -- what pleased or surprised them? How might they change or build on their scene/film given the feedback?

movement (cont'd)

Flow, Order, Relationship, Motif

materials: white board, markers, music-playing device

1. ask the group: what is a symbol? what are some examples of symbols you encounter regularly? what do symbols mean to us? why do we use symbols in our communication?
2. divide into 2 groups, separated by a white board; put on some music; take 10 minutes to have each person write or draw something on the board, inspired by the music and/or by the preceding writings/drawings
3. rotate the board 180 degrees, have each group devise ensemble choreography inspired by the words and drawings of the other group

(take a pause)

4. have each group build on the existing movement vocabulary, considering: Flow, Order, Relationships, Motif (FORM).



**For more about Pioneer Winter Collective,
visit pioneerwinter.com.**