

CITY WEEKLY SALT BLOG: ARCHIVES JANUARY 2007-  
FEBRUARY 2009



MONDAY, JANUARY 14, 2008

Someone Who'll Watch Over Me



**[Theater Review]** I'm a "less-is-more" kind of guy. Whereas much contemporary live theater seems to be taking Hollywood's lead with big special effects, gauche gimmicks and stunt casting, [Pinnacle Acting Company](#) has chosen to go the other way with their production of Frank McGuinness's *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*. The show is a testament to the simple power of talented actors working with a good script in an intimate space. It's everything that live theater can and should be.

An Irishman, and Englishman and an American are being held hostage in Beirut. No, it's not a bad joke; it's three men chained by the ankle to cinder blocks in the middle of a room. We see them traverse the full spectrum of human emotional terrain from boredom to visceral grief to dark and absurd humor as they all go a little bit mad. I swear, you will never laugh so hard at a play about fundamentalist terrorism.

The fewer-than-50 seats in the theater are arranged on either side of the not-quite stage in facing rows. In this unusual configuration, no patron is ever more than a few feet from an actor; high drama plays out quite literally at your feet. More than once, I had to lean back because I was afraid I had invaded an actor's personal space. I almost kicked somebody.

All of this came together to create one of the best theater-going experiences I've had in a long time. With not quite a whole year behind them, Pinnacle Acting Company has a bright future—assuming they continue to stick to the basics.

*Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* concludes its run Jan. 17-19 at Sugar Space, located at 616 E. Winchester (2190 South). (Rob Tennant)

POSTED BY [SALT LAKE CITY WEEKLY](#) AT [1:06 PM](#)

<http://cityweekly.blogspot.com/2008/01/theater-review-someone-wholl-watch-over.html>

# The Salt Lake Tribune

## Review: 'Three Days of Rain' needs more thunder

Pinnacle Acting Company's provocative back-and-forth drama needs more chemistry bubbling between its troubled, complicated characters.

BY ELLEN FAGG WEIST

THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

PUBLISHED AUGUST 25, 2009 6:00 PM

This is an archived article that was published on sltrib.com in 2009, and information in the article may be outdated. It is provided only for personal research purposes and may not be reprinted.

Three characters who come to misunderstand more about their parents lives' through a whole lot of hyper-intelligent speeches: that's Richard Greenberg's "Three Days of Rain" in a nutshell.

On the page, Greenberg's drama zings with psychological self-analysis and quotes from dead philosophers, all of which doesn't go anywhere in fascinating ways, as it piles up speeches about disconnectedness and the burden of larger-than-life parents. In a *New York Times* profile, writer Alex Witchell described Greenberg's verbose reclusiveness as "Talk and parry, write and parry, parry and retreat," and that's an apt description of his characters' behavior in this play.

On stage, that dialogue needs to land with the elegance of improvisational jazz and the gritty awareness of dirty blues, and it doesn't in Pinnacle Acting Company's production, which plays through Sept. 5 at Sugar Space. What Pinnacle offers instead is a showcase for three actors, who excel in such different ways it's as if they are characters in three different plays.

The playwright hasn't made it easy, of course, with his talky characters and a drama structured as a two-act algebra equation that can start to collapse if you try to do the math. The story's set in a Manhattan apartment in 1995, as Walker Janeway and his older sister, Nan, are scheduled to meet with their lifelong friend, Pip Wexler, to settle their dead father's will. Walker and Nina, as well as Pip, are burdened by their inheritance from their parents, particularly their respective fathers, architects famous for a glass house they designed where the rooms have a different kind of miracle of light in each room.

And in the miracle of theater, after a scene erupts over the house at the lawyer's office, the characters are transformed into their parents in 1960 -- before they were parents, of course -- living in the the same rooms and carving out the emotional ruts that would come to define their children's lives.

Everything about this barely-there budget production, from the "I call this the stage" venue at Sugar Space to the streamlined chairs-and-bed set, emphasizes the show's acting. And that should be an attraction to any theatergoer who still thinks it's possible to feel something -- without spectacle, without theatrical fireworks -- while sitting alone in a darkened room with strangers.

In her line delivery, April Fossen shines at expressing the clipped, unspoken emotions anchoring a carefully sane, brittle woman like Nan -- and let's face it, what thinking woman isn't made brittle by the hard-edges of contemporary life? The actor lights up the stage in the second act, even if she doesn't seem quite at home in the body of Lina, Nan's mother as a single woman in 1960, an extravagantly verbal Southern woman "who admits to thirty." Lina is a mercurial woman who compliments a simple meal as a "fall-of-Rome-variation on a salad." She desperately wants to *be* somebody but hasn't quite settled on whom. Or whom to be with, as during a three-day rain storm she falls into an affair with Ned, her boyfriend's shy partner.

JayC Stoddard treads water as Walker, Nan's brother, a smart ne'er do well who can mine the pain in any situation. The character's opening monologues never feel authentic, and that's a particular flaw in this Alexandra Harbold-helmed show, as it means the story simply takes too long to get started. Yet in the second act, Stoddard successfully embodies the shy awareness of Ned, Walker's stuttering father, who can't take his eyes off his roommate's girlfriend.

That's in contrast to Jeremy Kidd, who plays Pip, a soap opera star, in the first act, and his narcissistic, self-doubting father, Theo, in the second. Kidd makes Pip come alive, thrillingly, as that most unusual breed in contemporary theater, a charming man who is both happy and knowing in his handsome shallowness. Unfortunately, the character of Theo, in all his intellectual prowess and self-doubting paradox, remains a cipher.

Overall, the production unspools its provocative back-and-forth in interesting ways, and for its \$10 ticket, offers much more to chew on than most of Hollywood's superhero blockbusters. But the director hasn't helped the actors fully develop their on-stage chemistry, so that even when we know more about their past, we can't fully comprehend the damage of their inheritance.

Review

Pinnacle Acting Company's "Three Days of Rain"

Bottom line » Production offers three smart actors a chance to shine, but lack of chemistry stalls their characters' stories.

When » reviewed Aug. 21; plays at 7:30 p.m. Aug. 27-29 and Sept. 3-5; 2 p.m. matinee Sept. 5.

Where » Sugar Space, 616 East Wilmington Ave., Salt Lake City

Run time » 2 hours, with 15-minute intermission

Tickets » \$10 at [www.pinnacleactingcompany.org/](http://www.pinnacleactingcompany.org/); \$12 at the door; two-for-one tickets on Thursdays.

[http://www.sltrib.com/arts/ci\\_13200805](http://www.sltrib.com/arts/ci_13200805)



# LONG ARM OF THE LAW IN SALT LAKE CITY



October 9, 2009

[Sugar Space, The](#)

616 E Wilmington Avenue (2190 S)  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84106

[Map](#)

Neighborhood: Sugarhouse

**PERFORMERS:**

*No Performers Listed*

[http://eventful.com/saltlakecity\\_ut/events/long-arm-law-/E0-001-025659605-7](http://eventful.com/saltlakecity_ut/events/long-arm-law-/E0-001-025659605-7)

# The Salt Lake Tribune

## So you think you're a dance critic?

BY KATHY ADAMS

SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 21, 2009 5:55 PM

This is an archived article that was published on sltrib.com in 2009, and information in the article may be outdated. It is provided only for personal research purposes and may not be reprinted.

Some 125 energized dance enthusiasts waited outside Sugar Space Studio on Nov. 14, but no one was there to audition or plop down in plush seats to be entertained. Instead, they turned out to offer opinions to choreographers of five newly created dances performed as part of the "Audience Award Show," a local event that might be considered a thinking person's "So You Think You Can Dance."

As patrons jockeyed for position in line, choreographer Graham Brown joked, "I feel like I'm at the latest secret warehouse party," the spontaneity between performers and audience members inviting the comparison.

But I wasn't there to party. As one of four judges, it was my job to help choose one starving-artist choreographer to send home \$1,000 richer, and I kept thinking about my memories of the thrill and letdown of auditions in my past life as a dancer.

**Dance this way** » As a critic for *The Tribune*, I make my opinions about dance known all the time. Part of a critic's job is coming to terms with the real or imagined blow back from my criticism. But on this night, I wouldn't be battling windmills in print, but defending my judgments against three other strongly opinionated dance professionals with histories very different from mine.

I started taking ballet classes in third grade at the local YWCA from our Methodist minister's wife, and later transferred to a local studio where the teacher was more technical but not nearly as nice. In college I studied modern and jazz, and later in New York City found teachers who blended the forms in a way that made sense to me.

**Dance criticism** » I fell into writing about dance while taking a journalism class at the University of Cincinnati. Coincidentally, the free-lance dance critic at the *Cincinnati Enquirer* had just left to become a movie critic for the competition.

For the dance critic slot, I was competing against a ballerina-turned-intellectual who had written a 100-page manuscript that she plopped on the editor's desk. Being an old-school newspaper guy, the editor never opened the cover. Instead, he asked me to attend the ballet performance that night and have a review on his desk the next morning.

The other three judges for the "Audience Award Show" had clear-cut classical ballet or modern-dance backgrounds. Mike Borchelt had an impressive bio, complete with an MFA in ballet and performance experience with Ballet West, Louisville Ballet and Dallas Ballet. Hilary Carrier and Amanda Sowerby hold MFAs in modern dance from the University of Utah and have performance credits in the U.S. and internationally.

I incorrectly assumed Mike would award points for arched feet and high arabesques, Amanda and Hilary would use phrases like "exploring the concept" and I would be left to defend the hip-hop moves. But when sharing our responses in the cloistered jury room, away from artists and audience, we discovered the four of us had given the pieces very similar scores, for exactly the same reasons.

It's a little-known fact that there is good and bad dance -- it's just that no dancers have the guts to tell "their friend, the choreographer" what they really think. And I must admit, the face-to-face critical experience has given me a new appreciation for "SYTYCD" judges Nigel Lythgoe's redundant, generic comments and Mary Murphy's obnoxious, evasive laugh. It's not easy to confront and disappoint at a distance of three feet.

**Critical assessment** » Months ago, when Sugar Space director Brittany Reese put the word out about this contest, I assume she wanted to be fair by including everything from conceptual work to commercial jazz. I give her credit for trying, but the jazz piece started as a political comment on the objectification of women, then confused the audience by doing sexy movements, unaware that it was mocking itself by objectifying women.

A couple of quality pieces that didn't win were Monica Campbell's "Breathing Room" and Rachael Shaw's "Pilgrimage." Judge Hilary complimented Campbell on creating a playful piece while remaining true to choreographic form. Amanda agreed and encouraged Campbell to keep it campy, instead of defaulting to recognizable modern-dance movement.

Mike, Hilary and Amanda shared the opinion that Shaw's opening image of three women drawn up around each other in a protective stance was intriguing, but felt the movement didn't reveal enough about the characters to keep it interesting. I felt the opposite: My anxiety meter tacks every time I see three barefoot women in bland dresses poised onstage. I'm always sure I've seen this dance before and I don't want to see it again. But I was pleasantly surprised by how the quality of the movement defined the characters.

The two pieces we judges dissected most thoroughly were Graham Brown's "A Twinkle in the All-Seeing Eye" and the winning duet, "Prison of Form" by Juan M. Aldape and Molly Beardmore-Heller. Brown's piece incorporated theater, hip-hop and modern. The audience was crazy for the piece, but most of the judges thought the dialogue and the dance were not successfully integrated. Brown argued back that dance and theater shouldn't have to be exclusive from one another. "Prison of Form" filled me with curiosity the moment it began. It felt authentic, had a clear focus, and the performer/choreographers costumed in simple, hip outfits were strikingly committed.

**Audience reaction** » The reason for producing the show, according to Reese, was for the artists to receive immediate audience feedback -- before the critics presented the awards. Most viewers were incredibly polite, which is one reason artists rarely get usable feedback.

Some offered their interpretation of what they thought the dance meant or how it made them feel. Others gave more sophisticated evaluative comments, assessing the success of the choreographers' intentions, on dynamics or the use of space, or the quality of the performance.

In the end, we all learned something about dance or ourselves. I look forward to the "Audience Award Show" becoming a Sugar Space annual event.

*Kathy Adams has been The Tribune's dance critic since 2003. Send comments to [features@sltrib.com](mailto:features@sltrib.com).*

[http://www.sltrib.com/ci\\_13827054](http://www.sltrib.com/ci_13827054)



## a review of Now the Show

Published on Monday, 28 June 2010 09:26

I went to Sugar Space this Friday night to see *Now: The Show*. The performance was the culmination of *Now Practices*, an improvisation and performance workshop for dancers directed by Graham Brown and Brandin Steffensen. Brown, who will move to Maryland later this year for graduate study, directed and co-founded the local improvisation troupe Movement Forum, which will perform at Sugar Space in July. Steffensen is a freelancer in New York, who grew up in Salt Lake and danced for Ririe-Woodbury. Sitting in the round, the audience watched nine dancers enter the space to stretch, bounce and generally warm up. If the tactic here was to disarm us with their lack of performative guile, they did not succeed, though one did get the sense that they were enjoying each other's presence. Soon the dancers (who looked like they had been asked to dress "casual professional") were breaking out of their stretching, pilates and plies into concentrated clusters around suddenly elevated lifts and long suspended falls. This presumably demonstrated trust, physical listening and attenuated awareness. I followed the action on a printed program that looked like an homage to one of John Cage's musical scores. Time could be traversed down the page against a lateral axis of four columns: *THIS, WHAT, ACCOMPANIMENT, and BY*. The first few sections (*Come As You Are, Audience Arrives...Pentamodal Duet, Ill Spoil*) were full of energy, a lot of very earnest dancing and not a lot of focus.

In short, the show was slow to start. It was bogged down by an indirectness of process and mind that has a place in the contact improv jam but that makes a live show drag. Maybe it's just that I've already seen all the walls of formality come down a hundred times and seeing them taken apart brick by brick just gets tiresome. I am willing to admit that the parts that bored me might have served as a good introduction for people less familiar with improvisation.

Things picked up when Repo (a local performer and poet, I later learned) came up next to me and stole my program notes to use as a reference for Steffensen's solo which was about to ensue. *THIS: Solo, WHAT: Brandin happens*. But clearly this was something that he had been working on long before the workshop. Steffensen tried, and mostly failed, to balance a water bottle on his head while commenting that he had no trouble with this task earlier that day in rehearsal. The workshop students standing supportively out of his way confirmed this verbally. *It's in my neck...* he whispered at least once or twice to himself. As his balancing act devolved into an absurd series of bodily tasks involving the water bottle, I felt like I was intruding on a very private struggle. He suckled the water, lent it to audience members and took it away, and held it with difficulty as he put himself through a painful series of arm balances. There was something very surprising, sad and funny about Repo's textual and sung interjections, which became a cryptic conversation with what Steffensen had mumbled during the doomed balancing act. She sang a brief and haunting quote from the famous Police song, "I'll be watching you..." He thrashed, like the virtuoso

version of some angry kid's hotel bed dance, and then we learned cathartically that Steffensen had suffered an injury to his neck from a chiropractor at age 16 (but so what?, the dance seemed to say). The sparse facts of the case hung in the air as he walked off. There was a surprising eloquence to it that I can't quite tell why I felt.

Another great moment came at the end of an athletic trio by Steffensen, Brown and Sean Keil. Steffensen's cool-headed body perched with a previously unseen docility on various ledges offered by the assertive, committed Keil. Brown interrupted with his characteristic bombastic tackling and acrobatics, trying to chase Steffensen in a way that seemed to echo moments of vulnerability in the solo. Then, with superb comic timing, one of the women (I wish I knew her by name) walked out and declared, "Boys aren't even supposed to dance anyway." Maybe it sounds trite in recapitulation, but there was something funny and very real about the lagging sheepish exit with which the three boys seemed to agree with their colleague's statement. Sometime after that, a tender duet evolved between Brad T Garner, a boyish charmer from Oregon, and Jordan Wonnacott, a contact dancer, performer and actor from Salt Lake. Wonnacott, a talented U of U dance refugee, cut through Garner's exuberance with steeliness and a sense of when to be still that was lacking during the rest of the evening.

The evening ended on a hokey note, concluding with a modern dance hoe-down, replete with flocking to the four corners of the stage to Sean Hayes's folk number "Alabama Chicken." After the show, Steffensen confided in me that he plans to do the whole project (workshop, show, and Underscore practice, which happened here on Saturday) again in NYC. The evening here in Salt Lake was a reminder of our dance community's demographic homogeneity (which is much greater than that of the city at large), and I wondered if doing the project with a more diverse group of performers (and/or the act of seeking such a group out) might challenge or add depth to the structures Brown and Steffensen imposed.

That said, all of the performers were engaged in the pursuit of improvisation as a performance practice, which is always a pleasure to see, even when it doesn't yield the best choreography. And it is encouraging to see risk happening, especially in a city where that value is often so anemic.

*Sam Hanson*

<http://www.lovedancemore.org/category/reviews/page/21/>



### INTERVIEW WITH SAM GOODMAN OF OOSIMAGINARY

July 1, 2010, 5:41 am

Filed under: [Uncategorized](#)



-The show is still very much improvisational, but we've shaped it into a two-act structure, with an intermission in between. All together, it runs about 90-100 minutes. We have been ambivalent about titling it, but we may decide to shortly, in which case I'll let you know. Without going into the details, it involves a lot of improvised dancing, original music (cello, guitar, percussion, singing, trumpet, & electronic), original text (both prerecorded & spoken), an old hunched curmudgeon, a garden of junk, cardboard boxes, motor oil cocktails, & Oscar Wilde.

I met Teddy in 2006 at Oberlin College & Conservatory, when we were both students there (I studied composition & he studied Cello Performance) We worked together quite a lot while we were students, in musical, dance, & improvisational settings. After graduating in 2009, we moved into a beautiful 4000 sq. ft. loft called the Archer Ballroom in Chicago, with intentions of creating a live-work-performance space.

In September 2009 I met Lisa at the Chicago Contact Jam and we have been collaborating closely ever since.

In January 2010, the three of us coalesced into OosImaginary and since then we have been actively performing and teaching.

The idea for the summer tour came relatively recently (In April) at a point when all three of our summer plans were somewhat up in the air. We had just seen the John Jasperse Company perform in Chicago at the MCA (Teddy actually performed in the show) and we all came away really inspired to keep working, but also definitely needing a break from Chicago, so we made a somewhat spontaneous decision to make a tour happen this summer, and ever since that point we've been working really hard to make it happen. We actually just had our first performance in Louisville tonight, so its already rolling. We have venues booked in Louisville, Nashville, Conway (AR), Denver, Salt Lake, Missoula, Seattle,

Portland, & Ventura, but the idea behind the tour is to perform every day in some capacity, so we are also planning on doing a lot of guerilla/street/outdoor performance in addition to the venue shows.

<http://utahdanceandarts.wordpress.com/2010/07/01/interview-with-sam-goodman-of-oosimaginary/>

# The Salt Lake Tribune

## Dance notes: Chicago troupe performs

The Salt Lake Tribune

Published July 3, 2010 6:00 pm

This is an archived article that was published on sltrib.com in 2010, and information in the article may be outdated. It is provided only for personal research purposes and may not be reprinted.

Three dancers, two nights

Sugar Space announces a performance by OosImaginary, an interdisciplinary ensemble based in Chicago. The group -- Lisa Frank, Teddy Rankin-Parker and Sam Goodman -- performs two evenings of improvised dance, music and theater.

When » Saturday and Sunday, July 10 and 11, 8 p.m.

Where » SugarSpace, 616 E. Wilmington Ave (2190 S.), Salt Lake City

Info » Tickets are \$10, \$12 at the door. Call 888-300-7898 or visit <http://www.thesugarspace.com> Target="\_BLANK"><http://www.thesugarspace.com>. OosImaginary will also offer a workshop on improvisational performance Saturday, July 10, from 3-6 p.m.; admission is \$20.

*Get your event listed here by contacting **Alicia Greenleigh** at [agreenleigh@sltrib.com](mailto:agreenleigh@sltrib.com) Target="\_BLANK">[agreenleigh@sltrib.com](mailto:agreenleigh@sltrib.com) or 801-257-8791.*

<http://archive.sltrib.com/article.php?id=9957211&itype=storyID&keyword=&qtype=>

# CITYWEEKLY

## THEATER

### OosImaginary

OosImaginary is an interdisciplinary performance ensemble based in Chicago. As part of their 2010 summer tour, they will bring their unique blend of music, theater and dance improvisation for two nights of boundary-pushing excitement and unpredictability to the Sugar Space.

Date: Jul 10, 2010

Time: 8 p.m.

Phone: 888-300-7898

Address: 616 E Wilmington Ave (2190 South), Salt Lake City, 84106

Where: Sugar Space

<http://www.cityweekly.net/utah/event-57637-oosimaginary.html>



# b-sides and rarities review

Published on Wednesday, 21 July 2010 14:09

Movement Forum surprised me last weekend at *B-Sides and Rarities*, a one-night engagement at Sugar Space. I wish I'd come at seven (they did two shows in one night) and everyone in the cast lamented that I'd missed the earlier show. But I certainly didn't feel cheated by what I saw, in fact I left feeling encouraged in a way that I haven't in a long time.

The program notes were printed on an 8 ½ by 11 sheet that the audience was encouraged to write on and throw onstage during the performance. The dancers and three musicians began warming up on stage, the lights and conversation dimmed and everyone adjourned from the middle of the space except for Michael Watkiss, who stood with an unusual presence for several seconds before beginning a gestural solo which seemed to develop the character his costume began: holey dress pants and a too-nice button up.

Watkiss's dance took a long slow turn for the introspective as he looked at his body up and down, cataloging the possibilities and searching patiently for some unexpected resonance in the folding and unfolding of his joints. The other dancers stood around him like a gang in the shadows out of some dance musical film from the fifties. They began to take turns narrating his solo in a sort of dialectic exquisite corpse. *Now he's a father. But he's a dead beat dad. Now he's twenty-six. There's some kind of mental illness. Now he's having an affair. Now he's thirty.* I've seen this kind of text-based work before, but rarely have I seen it with such tenderness between the performers. The framing and reframing that the other performers provided was excellently timed. It really made me think about truth and fiction and how the artifice of performance was functioning. I can't tell you how his abstract dancing moved me in a different way that it might have out of context, but I know that it has stayed with me and I'm still digesting it. I'd also like to take the opportunity to comment on how much Watkiss's dancing has developed since I last saw him perform in May. Something is happening; during his training at the U he managed to preserve a rare sense of interior monologue in his dancing, but now he's taking it into space with a clarity and humor I didn't know he was capable of.

The progression of the evening was rambling in a charming way, they didn't have any real concrete plan, which is not an easy thing to pull off, especially with a cast of almost twenty. There were some impressive interludes of explosive dancing to the amiable music of the live band (Alex Aponte, Trevor Price and Randal Topper), including a bombastic little number that looked a little bit like a Tere O'Connor dance falling out of an airplane (danced by Sherisa Bly, Corrine Penka and Eileen Rojas). The cast also undertook a sort of movement roast of departing and founding director Graham Brown who dived, leapt and tired himself with his usual inimitable athleticism. His dancers barraged him with loving jibes and crumpled airplane's whose comments from the audience had already been turned into a series of experiments

ranging from a hilarious deep lunging routine led by sassy Corrine Penka and an awkwardly funny send up of the late king of pop whose initials are M.J. (danced by Sofia Gorder and Jersey Reo Remio).

Before it was all over there was a brightly surreal trio with blind-folds and another stunning performance by Watkiss, this time joined by the equally witty Danell Hathaway, who will direct the company when Brown moves to Maryland to pursue graduate school this fall. Watkiss told us of a fantastic encounter with a giant talking spider (a dream? an acid trip?). As Watkiss was disarmed by this invisible figment of his subconscious, Hathaway playfully tried to undress him, he batted her off, much as one might an annoying insect. Here were performers dancing with a real sense of metaphor, and making it up as they went along. Some deep, but very playful investigation was happening that night and I was grateful to be invited inside of it.

*Sam Hanson*

<http://www.lovedancemore.org/b-sides-and-rarities-review/>

# CITYWEEKLY

THE ESSENTIALS

## Andrea Dispenziere: Hunting The Hemo Goblin

Thursday July 29 At Sugar Space

By Jacob Stringer



POSTED // JULY 29,2010 -

The adage is that real artists must suffer for art. Some artists set out to suffer, while others have no need to go looking for pain. Dancer Andrea Dispenziere is in the latter school—and her new work, *Hunting the Hemo Goblin*, is proof positive.

After stress-fracturing a rib this past year, Dispenziere not only was forced to take a break from dancing with Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company but also was forced to take a long look at her health—specifically, why she has gone to such extremes to achieve a kind of perfect physicality.

“Doctors told me I needed to change my dietary habits,” explains Dispenziere. “And quickly, because my current routine was not only preventing calcium absorption but also preventing me from having a menstrual cycle, which, hormonally, is key for calcium uptake in women. I had blood drawn almost every appointment. I was told to try eating meat again, to increase protein and bring up my iron levels, which were also abnormally low. Suddenly, I found myself on this hunt, or quest, for blood.”

Developed as a series of vignettes connected by subject matter, some sections are primarily performance art, others pure dance. Her performance incorporates spoken word, song, text, comedy and even Greek mythology.

“In this newfound quest for blood, I began to identify with the Greek goddess Artemis, who governs the hunt, the moon, and also, the female cycles that synch up with the lunar,” says Dispenziere. “This feminine, but strong, archetype led me to create the dance piece.”

Andrea Dispenziere: *Hunting the Hemo Goblin* @ Sugar Space Studio for the Arts, 616 Wilmington Ave. (2190 South), 888-300-7898, July 29-30, 8 p.m., \$12. [TheSugarSpace.com](http://TheSugarSpace.com)

<http://www.cityweekly.net/utah/article-30-11806-andrea-dispenziere-hunting-the-hemo-goblin.html>

# CITYWEEKLY

THEATER

## Yoga Confidential: A Rat Bastard's Inside Guide To Yoga And Surrounding Regions



SB Dance and Salt Lake Acting Company are co-producing "Yoga Confidential: A Rat Bastard's Inside Guide to Yoga and Surrounding Regions."

Date: Sep 10, 2010

Time: 8 p.m.

Phone: 888-300-7898

Address: 616 E Wilmington Ave (2190 South), Salt Lake City, 84106

Where: [Sugar Space](#)

<http://www.cityweekly.net/utah/event-57157-yoga-confidential-a-rat-bastards-inside-guide-to-yoga-and-surrounding-regions.html>

# saltlake

## Some Eye Relief From The Big Screen Starting Tonight!

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Jan 22nd 2012

Sundance is in town but if you want to feast your eyes on live human beings and take a break from the big screen there are two dance shows you shouldn't miss. The first one is tonight called The Sugar Show.



The Sugar Show started in November with a speed-pitch audition. 5 artists were chosen and provided mentorship. On Saturday, they present their work in a concert that showcases styles and perspectives from every corner of our community. Co-produced with [the Sugar Space](#), [the Sugar Show](#) is in its 4th fascinating year. Tickets are \$15 general admission, show starts at 8 pm at the Rose Wagner Performing Arts Center, Black Box Theatre (138 S Broadway).

The Sugar Show

Jan 21 at 8pm

Rose Wagner Black Box Theatre

The BEaST of SB Dance: Remix

Jan 27 and 28 at 8pm, Jan 29 at 4pm

Rose Wagner Black Box Theatre

All tickets: 801-355-ARTS or [arttix.org](http://arttix.org)

<http://slmag.com/blog/2012/01/22/some-eye-relief-from-the-big-screen-starting-tonight/>



# co.da artist reviewed in Seattle

Published on Tuesday, 17 July 2012 19:08

Sugar Space's co.da project is presenting *starter.kit* this August 2-4. The evening will feature work by company members Molly Heller, Nancy Simpson Carter, and Jane Jackson. They're also bringing out Shannon Mockli, a Utah native currently working in Oregon as a professor. Shannon produced a lot of choreography you might remember while she was in graduate school at the U from 2007-09. She also recently participated in Seattle's AWARD show- a format we've discussed a lot on this blog, both in its original NYC form and in its local incarnation as the Sugar Show. Here's one reviewer's thoughts on the evening...

<http://www.seattlegayscene.com/2011/01/reviewthe-a-w-a-r-d-show-at-otb-is-a-fascinating-weekend-of-competitive-dance-and-art.html>

I personally miss seeing Mockli's work and am excited to see it again. Hopefully more opportunities for accomplished ex-Utah artists like her to come back to town to show work will emerge in the next few years. Perhaps this could serve as a model:

<http://www.cuartcenter.org/utah-ties-accepted-artists>

*Samuel Hanson coordinates and curates new media projects for loveDANCEmore in addition to freelance choreography and performance about town.*

<http://www.lovedancemore.org/co-da-artist-reviewed-in-seattle/>



# coda's starter kit at Sugar Space

Published on Friday, 03 August 2012 02:10

If you become a member of *coda*, Sugar Space's new professional dance company, you'll find yourself in a situation much like Repertory Dance Theatre is said to have been in its early days. You and your comrades make dances on each other and you pool your knowledge to provide each other classes and choose a guest artist. Every few months, there's a new audition and the process repeats.

I just came home from watching the first iteration of this cycle. My initial takeaway is that it read like a real ensemble evening. Diverse interests were explored, but it didn't feel like a grab bag where a half a dozen people had been chosen from a pool of random, opportunity starved dance artists applying by mail. Care had been taken in putting a show *together*, in a more than idiomatic sense.

Molly Heller's work, which was split into three, provided a narrative scaffold for the rest of the evening. In these "acts", placed between other dances, Heller explicated her relationship with husband Brad Heller. Each vignette was also a performance of (and to) Rod Stewart's monster(ous) hit "Da Ya Think I'm Sexy" [Rod's spelling, not mine]. In part one, Heller (in golden stretch pants and a flouncy green top) gave her husband (purple tights, peasant ruffles up top) what might have been post modern prelude to a lap dance, while matter-of-factly telling him to periodically adjust the volume. Act II saw Brad and Molly coyly singing the song to each other while Molly slid herself across Brad's passive form. She crept slowly, giving choice attention to certain curves, arriving in unison next to Brad just in time for the second or third chorus of "If you want my body and you think I'm sexy/ Come on honey tell me so/ If you really need me just reach out and touch me/Come on *Molly* let me know". "No. It should be sugar." Singing this line lying face down next to each other earned a healthy laugh from a crowd that had been gently giggling the whole time. The final number was a giddy romp through the space for Ms. Heller and non-dancer Brad. The song was finally playing at full blast, which was quite satisfying, when all of a sudden the dancing devolved into a slide show of Googled images of Rod himself on the back wall. The piece ended as choreographer, husband and technical director struggled in turns to deactivate of the projector and diminish the specter of Rod.

As light, fun and self-effacingly hip as this all sounds it did leave me with a few lingering questions. How was I supposed to feel about the relationship between "trained" wife and "untrained" husband? Was this just a big joke or is this really "their song" in some serious, if sentimental, way? If I am being invited into an inner joke space of their relationship, why and how? And if not, what was the aim of making it seem so?

Nancy Carter's *Hold me tight if I love you* left me with many similar questions about form and content. The work was a modern dance trio, mostly, thought it began with each dancer choosing one audience member with whom to slow dance. They did this a few times at the very beginning, with a tender awkwardness that left me wishing they would make everyone in the audience dance at least once and then that would be that. What ensued instead was an exploration of formal themes such as how a trio functions, how Shira Fagan could stay in unison with Jane Jackson with Anne Marie Robson Smock attached to her body etc. The varied musics, notably a spoken word piece about hearts "bruising but not breaking" provided an unexpected modicum of contrast.

I am pretty sure that the *it* in *Everything is Nothing Without It* was dance itself. Jane Jackson's ensemble piece was a melange of fast paced dialogue and introspective group dancing. The six women fought over a cupcake ("That's not really dancer food!"), went to a "showing" within the dance, and argued about the primacy of the left vs. the right brain in dance making. There was some serious unison dancing, and then we returned to the image the dance started with, the heart of the dance really, choreographer Jane Jackson trying to decide how to start dancing. Standing there twitching with indecision, is something everyone who makes dances (and probably everyone else as well) can identify with.

Particularly in *Everything is Nothing*, but in everything else I've discussed as well, I noticed one recurring issue. Though each was an excellent first draft, all of these pieces seemed to be looking for a kind of high drama, something surreal, possibly even operatic. And yet none couldn't quite get there because they were held back by a commitment to a certain idea of dance-theater "realism". There's nothing "actorly" or "real" about the way most dancers talk and emote on stage- and that's fine- we're not actors, at least not in the same sense. What would it look like if we embraced that and became the strange, unique creatures that we are? In doing so maybe we could learn a little bit more about ourselves than the fact that we're afraid of food and that we don't know our left from our right.

Guest artist Shannon Mockli demonstrated commitment to a ballsy idea in her solo *A Space Between*. A slow, contemplative solo, almost too dramatic, happens in front of a video where slipping focus is an obvious metaphor for the areas between states of consciousness, life and death. There's a recorded text of Mockli discussing an ambiguous experience of "being between" that caused her to reflect on mortality and the life of the body, as it is and as it is imagined. In other hands, it could have been a tragic failure of a piece, yet Mockli is so committed to doing things because she feels them, that we feel them too. She transcends trend and conceit, working in a format that is reminiscent of a great essayist. She lays out several co-existent threads that can only be tied together by holding them inside ourselves all of them at the same time. Her dancing is so strong it can't be overpowered by other the other media- and that's rare. Mockli's group piece *Vital Rein* did similar things for each of its performers. Annie Robson Smock in particular danced in a way that I've never seen before, her length bridled and released with a sense of timing I didn't know she was capable of. Mockli and dancers never lost interest in the realness of the task, nor in the responsibility of holding each moment's metaphoric capacity.

*Samuel Hanson writes in this blog often, makes dances, makes coffees and makes videos.*

<http://www.lovedancemore.org/codas-starter-kit-at-sugar-space/>

# saltlake

## Sugar Space Fall Harvest Festival

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Oct 17th 2012

Enjoy the best of Autumn at the Fall Harvest Festival at Sugar Space Studio for the Arts. The celebration will feature free dance and music performances, a chili cook-off, beer garden, and food and art vendors. There will also be kids' activities. The festival includes performances by Aerial Arts of Utah, Compass Dance, Toy Soup, and many more. Proceeds benefit the Sugar Space Cooperative Dance Company.



**Thursday, October 25**

2:30-4pm TBA

4-5pm Stefanie Wagstaff and Friends (dance)

5-5:30 pm TBA

5:30-7pm TBA

7-7:30pm Compass Dance

7:30-8pm Bellydancers Curated by Yasamina

8pm- 8:30 Aerial Arts of Utah

8:30-9:30pm And Go... Comedy Improv Group

9:30-10pm Transfusion Hype Dance Company

**Friday, October 26**

2-4pm Hula Hoopology

4-5pm Stefanie Wagstaff and Friends (dance)

5-5:30pm ToySoup Comedy Improv

5:30-6:00pm Wasatch Contemporary Dance Company

6-6:30pm Steve Auerbach/musicgarage Music

6:30-7pm Matt Whitehour Music

7-7:30pm Compass Dance Company

7:30-8pm The Adding Machine

8-8:30pm Aerial Arts of Utah

8:30-9:00pm And Go... Comedy Improv

9:00-9:30pm Samantha Calmes Indie Music

9:30-10pm Taken Root Reggae/HipHop/Blues



Get ready to laugh with Toy Soup Comedy Improv.



Enjoy free performances by Aerial Arts of Utah.



Susan Spransy will be exhibiting her artwork.

# SUGAR SPACE

Sugar Space seeks to produce innovative live performance works while creating programs that support the development of the next generation of artists.

Check out the festival October 25-26 from 2 PM to 10 PM. For more information, visit [www.thesugarspace.com](http://www.thesugarspace.com) or call 888-300-7898.

<http://www.saltlakemagazine.com/blog/2012/10/17/sugar-space-fall-harvest-festival/>



## The Sugar Show

Published on Sunday, 20 January 2013 11:32

Now in its 5th incarnation, the **2013 Sugar Show** featured choreography that was short and sweet and in my opinion the strongest collection of work in my three years of attending this event. The panel discussion that followed, however, was unfortunately long and arduous. I feel like much of my frustration over the event is because I see so much potential in it for nurturing emerging choreographers and cultivating audiences of dance enthusiasts. Therefore, I applaud Brittany Reese and co-producer Stephen Brown for continuing to experiment with the format of the **show**. While I don't think they've landed on the exact right formula yet, I am glad to see that they are continuing to let the **show** evolve and adapt to best suit the needs of the local dance community. I also want to acknowledge Reese in particular for her selfless contributions, of which the **Sugar Show** is just one, to dance in Salt Lake City. The opening piece of the evening was a sumptuous duet entitled "Nightsong" by choreographer Monica Campbell. Largely inspired by performer Ismael Arriata's original score, it explored the "haunting magnificence of the night" and the "ritualistic existence of two lonely vampires." In the velvety shadows of the stage, the adept pair enacted a rich language of fully embodied gesture. I particularly enjoyed watching Mindy Houston's performance as she flowed easily between attending to her partner and addressing the audience. I have seen several pieces by Campbell over the years and this work stands out as a fresh choreographic exploration. "Dance of the Greedy", choreographed by TaCara De Tevis in collaboration with performers of local hula-hoop troupe Hula Hoopology, brought a unique genre of performance to the concert dance stage. The piece began with the striking, albeit brief, image of nude bodies huddled in a pool of light. I could have watched this shape morph and evolve for far longer, but the dancers soon broke apart to manipulate their individual hula-hoops. As the program notes and title suggest, the theme of the piece addressed the human experience of greed. The bulk of the dance vacillated between literal representations of greed and interesting collaborative shapes created by the connection of human bodies through multiple hula-hoops. I think it is unfortunate that the panel discussion seemed to glance over this piece as I feel it stood to benefit the most from the constructive feedback process. While clearly less choreographically sophisticated than some of the other works in the program, this dance opens up a new avenue of investigation for the fusion of hula hooping and concert dance and the earnest performers seemed eager to engage with feedback. Tara McArthur's work "Skewered", in collaboration with Efren Corado Garcia, created a landscape of illumination and darkness through the use of several freestanding electric lights. In the opening solo, McArthur highlights Corado's mercurial flow via hand held work light. The two proceed into a circular and egalitarian duet, each lifting the other in turn. Simply put, I love to watch these two bodies move. Watching them move together and mimic each other's distinct movement styles? Even better. I also particularly enjoyed the bold colors and disjointed prints of the dancers' costumes. So often in modern dance costuming seems to be a game of avoiding the

issue rather than a task of artistic choice. It was refreshing not to see dance pants and tank tops in muted tones blending in with the backdrop. As far as what the piece was about--I'm not sure and that doesn't really bother me. For me it was enough to relish in the images of golden light and waves of movement comprising McArthur and Corado's intimate world. The program concluded with the powerful all male ensemble "Sojourn" choreographed by Michelle Player and Tami Whatcott. Men in khaki pants and black T-shirts flooded the stage alternating between moments of randomized, individual movement and unison. Repeatedly, interesting ideas erupted and dissolved back into the group with an unsatisfying easiness. I would have enjoyed seeing the choreography hold onto these potential moments of tension and select specific ideas to flesh out more fully. Thus, the piece lacked a clear sense of progression and seemed like a soup chocked full of delicious ingredients that had not yet had the time to meld into a full-bodied flavor. The connection between so many dancers sharing the stage, however, elicited a wonderful emotional response for many in the audience that reminds one of the role dance can play in bringing people together in community. While I thoroughly enjoyed the creative presentations of the evening, the ensuing panel discussion was disappointing. From the onset of the feedback process, facilitator Stephen Brown deferred to the "expert opinions" of the selected panel members. It was nice to have several visiting guest artists included in the panel; however, three of the five were connected to Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company. When asked a question regarding bias, Brown commented that Salt Lake is a small community, but I think that more of an effort could have been made to include artists of different backgrounds and aesthetic viewpoints. Even more frustrating was Brown's facilitation style. After listening to multiple panelists speak in jargon ripe for a graduate-level composition class, he offhandedly invited the audience to contribute to the conversation as well. All in all, the "discussion" seemed more didactic than engaging and it discouraged me from sharing my thoughts and opinions, of which I had many, on the works. If I were an audience member with less dance experience, I can only imagine how much more uncomfortable I would have been to think for myself and connect with the work on a personal level. In the end, the audience voted in favor of "Sojourn" and the panelists for "Skewered". Given the tie situation, producers Brown and Reese made the final call and awarded the \$1,000 cash prize to Michelle Player and Tami Whatcott for "Sojourn". In last year's **Sugar Show**, although a single choreographer was chosen as the winner, the award money was shared between several choreographers. It seemed curious that given the tie situation, this year's format could not accommodate the idea of financially supporting multiple artists in their future artistic endeavors. My final thoughts on the evening are that the **Sugar Show** has a great amount of potential, but that the producers haven't quite figured out what the goal of the **show** is yet and in turn, the format to best support this goal. In spite of all of this, I look forward to seeing next year's installment. And hey, maybe they'll read this review and invite me to be on the expert panel! Elizabeth Stich is based in Salt Lake City. You might find her teaching at various universities, Aerial Arts of Utah or performing at venues all over town.

<http://www.lovedancemore.org/?s=sugar+show+2013&limit=10&ordering=date&task=searchpage%2F2%2Fpage/2/>



# upcoming events!

Published on Saturday, 02 February 2013 03:25

A lot is on the horizon in SLC dance. This weekend saw two shows: RW's Nikolais performance at Capitol Theater and BodyLogic at Sugar Space. Reviews are coming up for both soon.

But if this weekend wasn't enough, more is on the way. Next weekend co.da, the cooperative dance company housed in Sugar Space, [shares their second annual show](#). The company has a unique format designed to share resources and allow multiple voices to be heard. The theme of the show this year is "Romance Novel" and also features guest choreography from Camille Litalien from Utah State University. Later in the month loveDANCEmore will host its second Arrivals/Departures Gallery Stroll at the Rio Gallery. Featuring live performance by Ashley Anderson, Efren Corado, Katie Meehan, Sam Hanson & more. As always it's free and you can see dance film projects as well. The show stays up through March 8th but this will be the last live performance.

Arrivals/Departures features a film by Ellen Bromberg but she's also up to something new, a collaborative project with Jim Agutter from the University of Utah School of Architecture + Planning. The project culminates in a performance event at the Museum of Natural History on Wednesday February 13th and February 20th. The show starts at 7pm and cycles through twice until 8:45. No need to stay the whole time, just like Gallery Stroll, audience members can come and go as they please. It's free with a museum admission.

<http://www.lovedancemore.org/upcoming-events/>



## co.da's Romance Novel

Published on Friday, 08 February 2013 12:54



Last night [co.da](#) confirmed what I noticed at their first concert last year; they are a collective of strong women who know that if you want to be a dancer in this cultural climate you may just have to make the dances yourself. The cooperative company is made up of adept movers who are genuinely invested in the choreographic processes of their peers. But you do get the impression that on the whole, they just want to be dancing, a lot. This comes across most in the guest work of Camille Litalien, assistant professor from Utah State. The dancers come alive, divergent approaches to performance presence notwithstanding, and show us that their primary focus is navigating the work of others. But that's not to say that Camille's work has the most choreographic legitimacy. In fact, it's the work of Ariane Audd and Shira Fagan that stand out for me as an audience member. Ariane fostered excellent performances by Jane Jackson & Emily Weaver who truly took risks within the expected structure of women dancing to Billie Holiday. Shira Fagan's "The Breakup" also transformed the somewhat predictable dance where women act sad and find empowerment through a gestural phrase on a bench. But the choreography sticks to its idea really well and the dancers do too, so it doesn't seem cheesy or one-off, "The Break-up" is both honest and interesting. These two works suffered the least from an attempt to fit into the overall theme of the concert, [Romance Novel](#). While a theme helped centralize audience expectations, and certainly elicited laughs as each [co.da](#) member narrated a passage from a particularly odd pirate [romance](#) between pieces, it also caused some dances to deviate from their choreographic objectives. Anne Marie Robson Smock shared her work in progress not too long ago and it began a really poetic system which challenged idioms found in backup-dancing and music videos. As the dance evolved the additions, including a cardboard fake boyfriend and lots of popular guilty pleasure music, began to take away from the bold spirit of the first iteration. She concluded on a high note with a sweet and sad dance to the Magnetic Fields where Temria Airmet is seen as simultaneously confident and vulnerable. Annie's work spoke to a larger concern I had about the program. There is an alternating pleasure I take in watching people joyously and humorously dance alongside a nagging feeling that maybe [co.da](#) could take themselves more seriously. That isn't to say address deeper

concepts or include more ambient music (please don't! never!) but instead to follow their own instincts rather than try to create themes or jokes that they imagine the audience will respond to. Some of those instincts might be funny or include allusions to The Bachelor but I think others would not. I think that having a guest choreographer also downplays the exceptionally earnest efforts made by all **co.da** members to grow as choreographers and dancers. Based on the enthusiasm of the audience for each work I would say my criticism may be an outlier, but it is something I look forward to investigating in the next iteration as the group comes even more into their own ways of making and doing.

<http://www.lovedancemore.org/?s=co.da+romance+novel&limit=10&ordering=date&task=search>

# CITYWEEKLY

A&E BLOG

## More Weekend Essentials April 19-21

by Scott Renshaw



POSTED // 2013-04-12

Sometimes, the pages of *City Weekly* can't contain all the Essential entertainment options. Here are more for your consideration.

Municipal Ballet Co.: The newly-formed classical ballet troupe (pictured) concludes the two-night run of its debut production *Sunset District* April 12 at Sugar Space for the Arts. The production features new work by seven local choreographers and one filmmaker, with a "contemporary aesthetic." Performances are 7:30 p.m. each night, \$12 general admission.

AwkwardFest: *City Weekly* arts contributor and *The Awkward Hour* podcast host Brian Staker celebrates the podcast's 5th anniversary with music, local comedians and art, plus food and cash bar. *Awkward Hour* cohost and comedian Melissa Merlot emcees the event at The Complex, April 13, 1 - 9 p.m.

Spring Awakening: The University of Utah Theatre Department presents the controversial musical by Steven Sater and Duncan Sheikh, based on the Frank Wedekind play. Set in 19th-century Germany, it follows a group of teenagers struggling against the sexual morality of the era. Performances run April 12 - 28 at the Babcock Theatre (lower level of the Pioneer Memorial Theatre building), 7:30 p.m. with select 2 p.m. weekend matinees; tickets \$15 general admission. Note: Contains mature themes, parental discretion advised.

<http://www.cityweekly.net/utah/blog-19-9349-more-weekend-essentials-april-19-21.html>