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Claudia La Rocco on ballet in and around Performa 15

Jennifer Krasinski on Basil Twist and Jack Ferver and Marc Swanson

Kate Sutton on Ieva Misevičiūtė's *Lord of Beef*

Time and Again

08.27.14



Christopher Wheeldon, *After the Rain*, 2005. Performance view, June 10, 2010. Wendy Whelan and Craig Hall. Photo: Paul Kolnik.

YOU ALL KNOW THE DRILL: It's fall. There are things happening.

Here are just a few of them, as filtered through a sensibility that may in no way be compatible with your own:

1. The inimitable ballerina Wendy Whelan is giving her farewell New York City Ballet performance on October 18, ending an astonishingly fertile thirty-year run that has included collaborations with just about every ballet choreographer of note, and performances of breathtaking command and finesse. Say you were inclined to commit some sort of semi-serious crime to get a ticket to a show this fall—this is the one. Otherwise, good luck.

1a. Once you fail to gain entry to Whelan, you can console your missing an electrifying moment in history by turning to a ballet star who's just about as far away from Whelan as possible: Natalia Osipova. Her *Giselle* (and pretty much everything else she does) is astounding, even when the production itself disappoints, as it might well do when the Mikhailovsky Theater rolls into Lincoln Center in all its East-meets-West, former Soviet glory (November 11–23, and the prone-to-pyrotechnics Ivan Vasiliev will also be onstage). There should be plenty of fabulous looking Russians in furs, and, given Osipova's penchant for company-jumping and the Mikhailovsky's penchant for star-nabbing, lots of fun rumors swirling about.

2. There's something numbing about anniversaries. But. Here's a pair of pretty grand fiftieth ones: Steve Paxton's *Flat* was made in 1964, the same year that Meredith Monk began her New York career. Fittingly, both are being feted this fall. "Steve Paxton: Selected Works" (October 17–19 and 24–26) will be the latest dance retrospective to take over the Dia:Beacon galleries, featuring seminal Judson Dance Theater-era works and a recent solo performed by the man himself (he remains understatedly electric onstage). And Monk has gigs all around, including a premiere at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (December 3–7).

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Meredith Monk, *On Behalf of Nature*, 2013. Performance view, May 3, 2013. Bohdan Hilash, Ellen Fisher, Meredith Monk, John Hollenbeck, Katie Geissinger, Bruce Rameker, Sidney Chen, and Allison Sniffin. Photo: Julieta Cervantes.

3. Speaking of retrospectives, the omnipresent French choreographer Xavier Le Roy is bringing his to America, courtesy of MoMA PS1 and the French Institute Alliance Française's Crossing the Line festival. *Retrospective* will hold court from October 2–December 1; while the concept of a gallery show activated by its spectators is by now rather passé, the man's pervasive influence is inarguable—as is the talent of the performers who will be interpreting his work. MoMA also has several fall performance offerings: presentations of James Lee Byars (September 7) and, with the Studio Museum in Harlem, Charles Gaines (September 27), as well as Trajal Harrell kicking off his two-year residency (September 4–5).

3a. And now for the big splashy museum shows dedicated to all of the women working in dance these days—oh, wait. Right. Nevermind. It's an off-year for Sarah Michelson, the current exception who proves the never-ending rule.

4. I can't out-summarize this Chocolate Factory Theater blurb: "*Screening Room, or, The Return of Andrea Kleine* (as revealed through a re-enactment of a 1977 television program about a 'long and baffling' film by Yvonne Rainer.) Andrea Kleine, an 'enigmatic and eccentric' (the *New York Times*), 'brainy, allusive Downtown artist' (*Village Voice*), whose work is 'something like genius' (*ArtVoice*), has been absent from the stage for a decade. She resurfaces as the choreographer/filmmaker Yvonne Rainer and Rainer's lion-tamer-turned-dancer character 'Kristina,' transforming a verbatim talk show interview into an imaginary film recounting Kleine's journey of disappearance."

5. This is probably maybe my favorite new series in New York: "Sundays on Broadway," curated by Cathy Weis and hosted in WeisAcres, her SoHo loft. The series, which starts September 21, mixes in-progress and improvisational showings with Weis and collaborators (Jon Kinzel! Jennifer Miller! Vicky Shick!), with screenings of films from *9 Evenings: Theater and Engineering*, the Armory events held in 1966 (Yvonne Rainer! Alex Hay! Lucinda Childs!). I mean. You guys. It doesn't get better.

5a. Another newbie but goodie comes via Gibney Dance, which has just taken over 280 Broadway, former home of the bankrupt Dance New Amsterdam. It would be a nice happy ending for that space if artistic director Gina Gibney could do something worthwhile with the real estate, and this is a promising beginning: She's hired the fantastic producer Craig Peterson as director of programs and presentation, and you can see his sensibilities all over "DoublePlus," a series featuring the guest artist-curators Annie-B Parson, RoseAnne Spradlin, Miguel Gutierrez, Donna Uchizono, Jon Kinzel, and Bebe Miller.

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Xavier Le Roy, *Retrospective by Xavier Le Roy*, 2012–. Performance view, Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, March 22, 2012. Photo: Lluís Bover.

6. Spradlin has a premiere of her own, at New York Live Arts. *g-h-o-s-t-c-r-o-w-n* (October 8–11) is part of Carla Peterson's final curatorial season, one of lots of tempting offerings, including a new work by Neil Greenberg (December 3–6) and Lang Dance (December 12–13), a partnership with the New School's Eugene Lang College that features work by Jeanine Durning and Reggie Wilson and the student-choreographed results of a research course with Sarah Michelson (whoa). And then there's this intriguing tidbit tucked into the season press release: "An announcement regarding the search for a new director of programs will be made in the coming months."

7. What do you guys know about Fred Herko? If you're anything like me, shamefully little, considering all he was involved with: Judson Dance Theater, Warhol's Factory, Happenings, the New York Poets Theatre, and on and on in the New York avant-garde. He died young, fifty years ago (YES, this is also an anniversary event. Sorry.) And this fall there will be a week of events dedicated to him, including "Fred Herko: A Crash Course," a symposium at NYU's Performance Studies on October 25.

7a. But nevermind about Herko, what do you know about BATAN, this "nomadic arts collective" created by Sasha Frere-Jones, the New Yorker pop-music critic all pop-music people seem to love to hate. (I'm not sure if that includes the pop-music people SFJ himself loves to hate or not?) I don't know anything, and, gasp, a desultory Google search didn't turn up much. But listen, F-J will reveal all, or something, during an evening with the public conducted on November 12 as part of his residency at the Park Avenue Armory. I'll be out of town—someone please go and report back.

8. Abrons Arts Center's beautiful little Henry Street Settlement Playhouse is celebrating one hundred years (take that, you half-centurians!). Much more importantly (real-estate nostalgia is for suckers, 5a. notwithstanding), Abrons director Jay Wegman is one of the best (and most under-recognized) champions of contemporary performance in New York, mixing international presentations with standout locals. This fall includes September's *Queer New York International Arts Festival* (Ivo Dimchev) and the *Forest Fringe Microfestival* (Tim Etchells), and several promising standalone productions from Aaron Landsman and Findlay/Sandsmark. Progressive hubs are an endangered species in New York—support this one.

9. And also check out JACK, an artist-run, interdisciplinary space in Clinton Hill. Programming runs the gamut: music, poetry, performance art, theater, dance, and so on and so forth. Things kick off September 5–7 with a baby grand and three strong pairings of pianists and writers: Angelica Sanchez and Christian Hawkey, Cooper-Moore and Carl Hancock Rux, Connie Crothers and Eileen Myles. Also, apparently, JACK is putting Ann Liv Young in jail for a few nights in December, for her sins, with visiting hours. So, obviously, that isn't going to go well.

10. Stockhausen maybe isn't someone you think about as being influenced by other people. But apparently he did this thing called *Originale*, which was him responding to Happenings, which just seems, I dunno, impossible. But there it is. And now (yes, ANOTHER fiftieth anniversary), fifty years after its New York premiere, here comes *Originale 2.0* at the Kitchen (November 7–8). Curated by Nick Hallett, this one features originals like Justin Vivian Bond and A. L. Steiner, making stuff in conversation with the composer's electroacoustic works. *Ich bin* intrigued.



Left: Big Dance Theater, *Alan Smithee Directed this Play*, Lyon. Photo: Brad Harris. Right: RoseAnne Spradlin, *g-h-o-s-t c-r-o-w-n* (working title), 2014. Rehearsal view. Natalie Green and Rebecca Warner. Photo: Ryutaro Mishima.

11. One thing about getting older is you're more and more satisfied with what's being presented on major stages. Or, you go off the rails entirely. Anyway: The things that make me happiest at BAM's Next Wave festival are new works by Jodi Melnick and Big Dance Theater. You can look on BAM's web site to find all the relevant details about what and who and how, but I don't need to know anything beyond these two names to know that I will be there.

12. FIAF's Crossing the Line has its usual lineup of progressive blue-chip possibilities: Xavier retrospective! Trajal Harrell's Judson-Voguing series at the Kitchen in its entirety! And so on. Here's another: Patti Smith teams up with her daughter Jesse Smith and Soundwalk Collective on October 2nd to channel the poetry of Nico. *Killer Road*. I can't tell if this will be dynamite or a train wreck. Well—historically, the two do go hand in hand.

12a. This is the moment you've all been waiting for, the shameless plug*. Did you know that Patti Smith read at the Poetry Project's inaugural New Year's Day marathon reading in 1974? And do you know that the reading always has lots of great performance folks sprinkled around the actual poets (who are not, I must admit about my people, always the best performers themselves, though sometimes they really are), and that Smith is a regular feature? These things are the perfect way to ease through your New Year's Eve hangover and into a whole new year of performance events. They never stop, these events. I'll be back.

*As in, the writer of this column is on the board of the institution she is about to recommend to you.

— Claudia La Rocco

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