



# Dorrance Dance

**Michelle Dorrance**

*Artistic Director*

Thursday Evening, October 20, 2016 at 7:30

Friday Evening, October 21, 2016 at 8:00

Power Center

Ann Arbor

Tonight's performance is funded in part by the Arts Midwest Touring Fund.

Special thanks to Grace Lehman and the Ann Arbor Y and Susan Filipiak for their participation in events surrounding this evening's performance.

Dorrance Dance appears by arrangement with Lotus Arts Management.

In consideration of the artists and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.

## PROGRAM

### Act I

**SOUNDspace** (excerpts)

### Intermission

### Act II

**ETM: Double Down** (excerpts)



Following Thursday evening's performance, please feel free to remain in your seats and join us for a post-performance discussion with members of the company.

## **ACT I: EXCERPTS FROM *SOUNDspace***

*Direction and Choreography* / Michelle Dorrance, with solo improvisation by the dancers

*Dancers* / Megan Bartula, Elizabeth Burke, Warren Craft, Michelle Dorrance, Leonardo Sandoval, Byron Tittle, Gabe Winns

*Managing Director* / Courtney Runft

*Rehearsal Director* / Elizabeth Burke

*Assistant to the Artistic Director* / Michelle Rose

*Technical Direction and Production Manager* / Christopher Marc

*Original Lighting Design* / Kathy Kaufmann

*Lighting Supervisor* / Serena Wong

Originally a site-specific work that explored the unique acoustics of New York City's St. Mark's Church through the myriad sounds and textures of the feet, *SOUNDspace* has been adapted and continues to explore what is most beautiful and exceptional about tap dancing — movement as music.

Excerpts adapted for University Musical Society / University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

The creation of *SOUNDspace* was made possible, in part, by the Danspace Project 2012–13 Commissioning Initiative, with support from the New York State Council on the Arts. As part of Danspace Project's Choreographic Center Without Walls, Ms. Dorrance received a production residency supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

## Michelle Dorrance on *SOUNDspace*

During the winter of 2012–13, when this piece was created, I was asked to consider my influences, lineage, legacy — “the web of connections that new generations of artists trace with the past through their work” — and I would argue that no dancers call upon specific individual influences of so many of their masters and their form’s innovators (our ancestors, if you will) more directly and more often than tap dancers. Their personalities and unique styles live deeply within most of us.

I have had the honor of studying with and spending time with a great number of our tap masters before they passed away: Maceo Anderson, Dr. Cholly Atkins, Clayton “Peg-Leg” Bates, Dr. James “Buster” Brown, Ernest “Brownie” Brown, Harriet “Quicksand” Browne, Dr. Harold Cromer, Gregory Hines, Dr. Jeni Legon, Dr. Henry LeTang, LeRoy Myers, Dr. Fayard and Harold Nicholas, Donald O’Connor, Dr. Leonard Reed, Jimmy Slyde, and Dr. Prince Spencer. I would also like to honor our living masters whom I am constantly influenced by: Arthur Duncan, Dr. Bunny Briggs, Brenda Bufalino, Skip Cunningham, Miss Mable Lee, and Dianne Walker.

While we are exploring new ideas in this show, we are also constantly mindful of our rich history. Dr. Jimmy Slyde was the inspiration for my initial exploration of slide work in socks (in the original work) and his influence continues to guide that work. In order to tap dance on the original wood floor of St. Mark’s Church, we had to turn away from aluminum taps towards using different surfaces on the soles

of our feet. Leather soles and wood taps pre-date aluminum taps as they were used in the late 1800s when the form was still called “Buck Dancing” or “Buck and Wing.” There is a bit of a historical reference in some of the leather-soled work we explored, in that we explore the sounds of early tap dancing (imagine Bill “Bojangles” Robinson on the balls of his feet) before introducing the power of the rich bass in the heels. Tap master John Bubbles, the game changer, is known for revolutionizing the tap dance in this way. We invite you to experience tap dancing with fresh pairs of eyes and ears, with both an acknowledgement towards the past and a look into the future.

## **ACT II: EXCERPTS FROM *ETM: DOUBLE DOWN***

*Creators* / Michelle Dorrance and Nicholas Van Young

*Artistic Director* / Michelle Dorrance

*Original Tap Instrument Design* / Nicholas Van Young

*Choreography* / Michelle Dorrance and Nicholas Van Young, with Ephrat Asherie, and solo improvisation by the dancers

*Original Music Composed and Improvised by* / Gregory Richardson, Donovan Dorrance, Nicholas Van Young, Aaron Marcellus, Warren Craft, with Michelle Dorrance

*Additional Music* / Adele Adkins, Karin Dreijer Andersson, Olof Dreijer, Justin Vernon, Patrick Watson

*Dancers* / Elizabeth Burke, Warren Craft, Michelle Dorrance, Leonardo Sandoval, Byron Tittle, Matthew “Mega Watts” West, Gabe Winns

*Musicians* / Donovan Dorrance, Aaron Marcellus, Gregory Richardson

*Bass and Guitar* / Gregory Richardson

*Vocals* / Aaron Marcellus

*Piano* / Donovan Dorrance

*Drums and Percussion* / Nicholas Van Young with Warren Craft, Michelle Dorrance

*Controllerist* / Donovan Dorrance

*Managing Director* / Courtney Runft

*Rehearsal Director* / Elizabeth Burke

*Assistant to the Artistic Director* / Michelle Rose

*Lighting Design* / Kathy Kaufmann

*Lighting Supervisor* / Serena Wong

*Technical Direction and Production Manager* / Christopher Marc

*Costume Design* / Shiori Ichikawa with Amy Page and Len Burton

*ETM: Double Down* and *ETM: The Initial Approach* were co-commissioned and created, in part, during a Creative Development Residency at Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival, with support from the Jacob’s Pillow Dance Award Initiative.

## **Michelle Dorrance on *ETM: Double Down***

This work is the initial exploration of a new world and a new collaboration. Constantly inspired by the range of possibilities inherent in being both dancers and musicians, in the visual and aural, we also embrace embodying the organic and inorganic, the acoustic and the electric. None of this work is remotely possible without tap dancer, percussionist, and innovator, my longtime friend, Nicholas Young. He is the man behind the curtain. He has been developing the instruments you see here and has been experimenting with the technologies you will see at work tonight for years in order to make this world possible. I also want to acknowledge our musical collaborators and friends, Gregory Richardson, Aaron Marcellus, Warren Craft, and Donovan Dorrance who, with intuition, incredibly open minds, and a wonderful sensitivity to collaborating with the sounds of tap dance, have created some inspiring compositions. It has been a dream of mine for almost a decade

to collaborate with my dear friend and multi-form dancer, Ephrat “Bounce” Asherie, whose visual percussion, musical phrasing, and dynamic range of movement inspire me tremendously. Tap dance was America’s first street form and is deeply rooted in the foundations of hip-hop and house dance. These communities have long been connected on the streets and in the club but are less likely to be found on the concert stage. As we enter the world of electronic music, looping, and sampling, these worlds become even closer and that connection ever more important. Getting back to the beginning, I want to say thank you — thank you Nicholas Young, for your artistry, your creativity, your tireless and endless work, your inventive mind, your friendship, and your trust. I feel incredibly blessed to have been so warmly invited into your world to play and create.



## UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN CREDIT UNION: VICTOR FOR THE ARTS

UMS and UMMA thank the University of Michigan Credit Union for investing \$1.5 million to endow the University of Michigan Credit Union Arts Adventures Program.



This generous gift ensures that UMS and UMMA will provide thousands of Southeast Michigan community members and U-M students and faculty with extraordinary access to a diverse array of arts offerings including performances by world-renowned artists, hands-on art making workshops, and engaging events each year.





## The Making of *ETM: Double Down*

It started with the simple need to find a way to amplify tap dance without feedback so I could dance with a live band. Many people have used contact microphones (Gregory Hines, Tap Dogs, etc.) so I knew that was a possibility, and it led me to experimenting with guitar pedals and effects. I started out looping hand and body percussion with live and affected tap dance. Being a drummer as well, and working with electronic music since the early days of EDM (electronic dance music), I've stayed in touch with what's happening in the music production and DJ community. I knew contact mics could be doubled as drum triggers, and I was already playing around with a masterful piece of software called Ableton: a live performance software and digital audio workstation. I got the idea to create small trigger boards to dance on — essentially wooden drum pads. In conjunction with my main dance board and effects, this added a whole new sound set for me to experiment with. Over time, I took online courses in Ableton and began to understand the limitless possibilities. Soon I was able to play notes, arpeggios, chords, sound bites, and quotes, and began composing scores in real time with improvised tap dance. The synthesized possibilities are endless and the combination of this, with the acoustic sound and attack of tap dance was a very exciting frontier for me to explore. The only thing missing was Michelle Dorrance.

Being a company member of Dorrance Dance, Michelle had given me my first opportunity to perform a solo using this electronic set-up in an evening-length performance in Boston presented by Thelma Goldberg in 2012. As kids, we had dreams about experimenting with altered soundscapes for tap dance. We jokingly called it "Tap to the Max."

I was creating solos with my "Compositional Tap Instrument" but had visions of several dancers across a number of platforms and boards, dancing out elaborate choreographed phrases while simultaneously playing the musical composition. Once Michelle asked to me to collaborate on this show, I knew it "was on." Her expansive creativity in tap choreography and movement along with her sophisticated musical phrasing started to unlock possibilities in our set that were getting us both so excited. Simple ideas led to large discoveries and every time we workshopped an idea, 20 more were born. Needless to say, here we are. Pushing ourselves to explore the sonic potential in tap dance and tap instruments. In some ways we have created the ultimate tap dancer's playground. Where you can let your imagination and your feet run wild. Enjoy.

—*Nicholas Van Young, co-creator*





## ARTISTS

**Michelle Dorrance**, founder and artistic director of Dorrance Dance, is one of the most sought-after tap dancers of her generation and “one of the most imaginative tap choreographers working today” (*The New Yorker*). A 2015 MacArthur Fellow, a 2014 Alpert Award Winner, 2013 Jacob’s Pillow Dance Award winner, 2012 Princess Grace Award Winner, 2012 Field Dance Fund Recipient, and 2011 Bessie Award Winner. Ms. Dorrance performs, teaches, and choreographs throughout the world. Mentored by Gene Medler, Ms. Dorrance grew up performing with the North Carolina Youth Tap Ensemble and has since performed with STOMP, Manhattan Tap, Savion Glover’s “Ti Dii,” JazzTap Ensemble, Barbara Duffy & Co, Rumba Tap, Derick Grant’s Imagine Tap, and Jason Samuels Smith’s Chasing the Bird to rave reviews. She holds a BA from New York University and teaches on faculty at Broadway Dance Center.

For more information, please visit [www.michelledorrance.com](http://www.michelledorrance.com).

**Ephrat “Bounce” Asherie** (*choreographer*) is a New York City-based bgirl, dancer, and choreographer. As artistic director of Ephrat Asherie Dance (EAD), she has presented work at the Apollo Theater, Jacob’s Pillow, New York Live Arts, Summerstage, the Yard, and elsewhere. Ms. Ephrat has received numerous awards to support her work, including a Mondo Cane! commission from Dixon Place, a Workspace residency from the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council; a travel and study grant from the Jerome Foundation, and two residencies through the CUNY Dance Initiative. Ms. Asherie is on faculty at Broadway Dance Center and the Joffrey Jazz and Contemporary Program.

For more information, please visit [www.ephratasherie.com](http://www.ephratasherie.com).

**Megan Bartula** (*dancer*) began dancing at the age of four in Michigan. A tap enthusiast from the start, her interests soon spread to include intensive training in ballet and jazz at Deborah’s Stage Door, where she spent 10 years on their national award-winning competition team. At the University of Michigan, Ms. Bartula was an executive member, dancer, and choreographer for Rhythm Tap Ensemble. Since moving to New York in 2008, she has worked with Derick K. Grant, Lynn Schwab, Lisa La Touche, and is currently a member of Dorrance Dance. She continues to train, perform, and teach in New York City and in the Midwest.

**Elizabeth Burke** (*rehearsal director/dance captain*) has been working with Dorrance Dance since the company’s inception in 2010–11 and prior to that spent 11 years under the tutelage of her mentor, Gene Medler, in the acclaimed North Carolina Youth Tap Ensemble (NCYTE). She also works with Nicholas Young’s SoundMovement Dance Company and Caleb Teicher & Company, among other choreographers. Ms. Burke is an alumna of the School at Jacob’s Pillow and Marymount Manhattan College (BA political science, BA communication arts, magna cum laude, 2014). When not working with Dorrance Dance, she teaches and pursues her own choreographic work.

**Warren Craft** (*dancer*) is a New York City tap dancer who has trained in ballet with both the American Ballet Theatre and the School of American Ballet. He has been a member of Brenda Bufalino’s New American Tap Dance Orchestra, Max Pollak’s RumbaTap, and Dorrance Dance. He moves with “bizarre physicality,” and “unconventional eloquence” (*New York Times*).

**Donovan Dorrance** (*composer and piano*) hails from Chapel Hill, North Carolina where he studied piano, guitar, drums, and voice before attending the University of North Carolina for a BA in philosophy. After singing in an a cappella group, drumming in an indie-rock band, and receiving a degree fit for waiting tables for the rest of his life, Mr. Dorrance moved to Brooklyn to assist his sister's company and pursue his passion for music. In his spare time, he composes music with Greg Richardson for Dorrance Dance, takes online business courses, and is occasionally published in his UNC professors' books in the field of philosophy.

**Aaron Marcellus** (*composer and vocals*), singer, vocal coach, writer, musician, dancer, and actor from Atlanta, started in gospel music and has performed around the world. He has recorded albums and was voted in the Top 24 on *American Idol* in 2011. After a world tour, he was featured in a Chapstick commercial, NBC's *Next Caller*, and is a cast member of STOMP. Mr. Marcellus also hosts a burlesque show at Duane Park. Most importantly, he founded both Surrender To Love, LLC, a foundation that supports arts programs and seeks to feed the hungry, and Adventure Voice, a training program offering vocal classes for groups and individuals.

**Gregory Richardson** (*composer and multi-instrumentalist*) was born in Tucson, Arizona and learned rhythm and blues at an early age from a family of musicians where everyone could play at least a little piano and everyone was expected to sing. As a member of the band Darwin Deez, he has performed at many of the world's largest music festivals. In recent years, he has found a second home with the New York

City tap dance community, composing for and/or performing in several shows with Dorrance Dance, including *Myelination*, which was commissioned by the Fall For Dance Festival and premiered at New York City Center.

Brazilian tap dancer **Leonardo Sandoval** (*dancer*) is gaining a reputation in the tap world for his musicality. He co-founded the Cia Carioca de Sapateado in Rio de Janeiro, bringing tap dance to a wider audience in Brazil. In 2013, he moved to New York and has performed at the Chicago Human Rhythm Project's Rhythm World, the DC Tap Fest, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Tap City, and ATDF's Rhythm in Motion as an artist-in-residence. He recently premiered his own show, *Music from the Sole*, a creation with bassist and composer Greg Richardson.

**Byron Tittle** (*dancer*) is from New York and began dancing at age five, studying tap, ballet, and other genres. Tap became of chief interest upon studying with David Rider and joining the American Tap Dance Foundation's Tap City Youth Ensemble; through the Ensemble, he met Michelle Dorrance. Before committing to Dorrance Dance, he worked in film, television, and live performance in Los Angeles. He recently performed at the 2015 BET Awards in a tribute to Janet Jackson. He continues to be challenged and enthralled with all that Dorrance Dance has to offer and cannot wait for the future with this cast.

**Matthew "Mega Watts" West** (*dancer*) started dancing at his church in Queens, New York and with the company On Point Choreography, where he learned different styles of hip-hop dance. He has competed in several b-hop competitions, and is a

passionate educator. He is a student of house music and dance, training with the New York City crew MAWU, Conrad Rochester, and James “Cricket” Colter.

**Gabe Winns** (*dancer*), 26, was born and raised in San Diego. He started dancing at the age of 11, and his love for the art form has continued to grow ever since. He has toured worldwide with the critically-acclaimed stage show *Tap Kids*, and since moving to New York City he has worked with various companies, including RumbaTap, Dorrance Dance, and Swing FX. He also directs his own group called the Students of Sound, and teaches at the American Tap Dance Foundation. Television credits include *America’s Most Talented Kids* (2002), *America’s Got Talent* (2011), and *FakeOff* (2014).

**Nicholas Van Young** (*co-creator/ choreographer*) is a dancer, musician, and choreographer and a 2015 Bessie Award recipient. He previously was a member of the off-Broadway sensation STOMP, where he performed the lead role, acted as rehearsal director, and spent 10 years with the show. He began his professional career at the age of 16 with Tapestry Dance Company of Austin, Texas. Since moving to New York, he has performed with multiple tap companies and shows and is thrilled to have found a home with Michelle Dorrance’s Dorrance Dance. He is currently working on *ETM: Double Down*, a collaborative effort with Michelle Dorrance.

**Kathy Kaufmann** (*lighting designer*) is a resident designer at Danspace Project whose work has been seen throughout the US, Canada, and Europe. She is a two-time Bessie Award recipient and was nominated for her work on Rebecca Davis’s *Bloomst Windku* at Here in 2015. She was

also honored to be included in *Curtain Call: Celebrating 100 Years of Women in Design* at the NY Performing Arts Library and currently teaches lighting at Sarah Lawrence. Most recent projects include designs for Joanna Kotze, David Parker, Eiko & Koma, Jillian Peña, Larissa Velez Jackson, and Dorrance Dance (*The Blues Project*, *SOUNDspace*, and *ETM*).

**Christopher Marc**’s (*production manager/ sound operator*) credits include: The Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences: *Elephant and Piggie’s We are in a Play!*; national tour of *Clifford the Big Red Dog Live!*, Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival; and *Forever Plaid*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Fantasticks*. Design credits for off-Broadway include *The Black Book* (Aquila Theatre National Tour), *Wuthering Heights*, *The Tempest*, *Fahrenheit 451*, and *Twelfth Night*.

**Michelle Rose** (*assistant to artistic director*) originally moved to New York to pursue her master’s degree, and ended up working across arts disciplines. She has worked with ABT II, Monica Bill Barnes & Company, and Batsheva Dance Company, and with brief stints in Broadway theater production (*Wicked*) and reality television. One of her favorite experiences was working on *This American Life Episode 528: The Radio Drama Episode, Live at BAM*. She holds a BA from Mount Holyoke College and an MA from NYU Gallatin. In her “free” time, she teaches yoga around New York City. When she was eight years old, she was in a K-Mart commercial with Martha Stewart.

**Courtney Runft** (*managing director*) hails from Wichita, Kansas and presently resides in New York City. She is a graduate of Friends University and holds a BA in business management (*magna cum laude*). She is the former education associate/ registrar for the American Tap Dance

Foundation as well as the former director of the ATDF's Tap City Junior Ensemble and Tap City's summer youth program. A passionate educator, she is the lower school dance teacher at St. Luke's School in New York City and is on faculty at the ATDF.

**Serena Wong** (*lighting supervisor*) is a Brooklyn-based freelance lighting designer for theater and dance. Her designs have been seen at New York Live Arts, Irondale Arts Center, the New Ohio, and Danspace. She enjoys biking, beekeeping, and bread baking.

*UMS welcomes Dorrance Dance as the company makes its UMS debut this week.*

TONIGHT'S VICTOR FOR UMS:



## Arts Midwest Touring Fund

*Supporter of this evening's performance by Dorrance Dance.*

### MAY WE ALSO RECOMMEND...

- 11/17–20 Nora Chipaumire: *portrait of myself as my father*  
1/7–8 Batsheva Dance Company  
3/17–18 Kidd Pivot and Electric Company Theatre: *Betroffenheit*

*Tickets available at [www.ums.org](http://www.ums.org).*

### ON THE EDUCATION HORIZON...

- 10/22 You Can Dance: Dorrance Dance  
(Ann Arbor Y, 400 W. Washington Street, 2–3:30 pm)
- 11/19 You Can Dance: Nora Chipaumire  
(Ann Arbor Y, 400 W. Washington Street, 2–3:30 pm  
Boll Family Y, 1401 Broadway Street, Detroit, 2–3:30 pm  
*Sessions will meet at Ann Arbor and Detroit locations concurrently.*)

*Educational events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.*