

BOOY TRAFFIC

EDUCATOR'S STUDY GUIDE



ABOUT THE COMPANY

BODYTRAFFIC uses the creative spirit of its Los Angeles home as a backdrop for delivering performances that inspire audiences around the globe to simply love dance. Since its founding in 2007 by Artistic Director Tina Finkelman Berkett, the company has held fast to its mission of championing contemporary dance, educating audiences, and inciting positive change. Its goal is simple: get the world moving.

BODYTRAFFIC is not one driven by a single choreographic voice. It aims to be a home for an eclectic range of styles and perspectives that tell vital stories. Connecting individuals of vastly different life experiences through dance, BODYTRAFFIC has toured the world and continues to deepen its investment in its home city of Los Angeles. BODYTRAFFIC has performed across 30 states and 20 countries. These experiences have deepened the company's commitment to cross-cultural exchange, while refining its mission to foster creativity and cultural understanding across the globe.

BODYTRAFFIC inspires and uplifts its community and beyond through its education and outreach programs. Focusing on supporting the whole dancer, it provides programs ranging from youth-focused intensive training and master classes to professional development for established artists that encourage their growth by nurturing their unique identities. Every year, it mentors more than 700 students from diverse backgrounds.

Challenge, passion, empathy, inclusion, and growth are at the heart of everything BODYTRAFFIC does. It seeks to elevate dance beyond an art form to a mode of exploration and celebration of ideas and spirit through movement. Because, after all, without movement, nothing changes.



DURING THE PERFORMANCE

As you watch the performance, notice what you see, hear, and feel. A performance might make you laugh, think, feel joyful—or even bring up strong emotions. It's all part of the experience!

Live performances are also a great chance to unplug. Take a break from your phone and enjoy being fully in the moment.

If you want to chat with a friend about what you witnessed, wait for the pause between dances so everyone around you can stay focused and enjoy the show, too.

The dancers might not be able to see you, but they can hear you. If you see something you like, clap loudly so they know you're enjoying it—they love that! At the end of each piece, the dancers will take a bow—that's called a "curtain call." That's your moment to cheer and show your appreciation!



Don't forget to check out the vocabulary words defined in the Dance Glossary on pages 12-13.

TODAY'S PERFORMANCE

COALESCENCE

From the verb coalesce, which means to grow together, combine, join, blend or merge, *Coalescence*, shows us the power of reuniting with our truest selves.

Choreographer Jordyn Santiago takes audiences on a personal and relatable journey —from feelings of self-doubt and isolation to the joy of self-acceptance and belonging. Through a unique blend of **genre** – contemporary **ballet, social dance**, and movement inspired by **house** dance culture – the piece becomes a powerful celebration of identity, and community.

Throughout the work, Santiago uses moments of solo dancing contrasted with group movement and **unison** to show the emotional shift from being alone to finding support and connection. These changes in movement help tell the story of discovering one's place within a community and learning to embrace oneself fully.

The dance is set to an original score that features high-energy house music, along with a new composition by New York City musician and composer Rafa Aslan.



CHOREOGRAPHY: Jordyn Santiago

MUSIC: Rafa Aslan

LIGHTING DESIGN: Michael Jarrett

COSTUMES: UNNAMED

PERFORMERS: Jahnell Boozer, Grecia Cruz, Becky Garcia, Katie Garcia, Jordyn Santiago



I FORGOT THE START

Choreographer Matthew Neenan's *I Forgot The Start* explores how people care for and stay connected to one another through life's changing seasons. Throughout the piece, you will see projections that move from one season to the next, helping to show how time passes when we are supporting someone we love.

As the dancers move together and apart, Neenan's choreography reveals moments of joy, struggle, tenderness, and resilience. Notice how the performers use **quality**, **partnering**, and **repetition** to show the effort it takes to keep hope alive, even during difficult moments. The work reminds us that light and darkness often exist side by side—and that hope can continue to grow in the spaces between.



CHOREOGRAPHY: Matthew Neenan

MUSIC: Sinéad O'Connor, Heather Christian & The Arbonauts, Ozzie Kotani & Daniel Ho, Broken Social Scene, and Sufjan Stevens

LIGHTING, SET, and VIDEO

DESIGN: Christopher Ash

COSTUME DESIGN: Mária Talán de la Rosa

PERFORMERS: Chandler Davidson, Becky Garcia, Katie Garcia, Pedro Garcia, Brenan Gonzalez, Joan Rodriguez, Jordyn Santiago

SNAP

Choreographer Micaela Taylor's *SNAP* is an energetic exploration of individuality and the courage it takes to be yourself.

Set to the electrifying music of James Brown, the piece blends elements of contemporary dance, street styles, and theatrical storytelling. Notice how Taylor uses **isolations**, pantomime, and playful **gestures** to create characters and moments of humor and attitude. Dancers shift between moving as a unified group and breaking away to show their own unique style.

Inspired by the diverse yet sometimes lonely crowds of Los Angeles, *SNAP* encourages us to "snap out of" the pressure to fit in and instead celebrate the confidence that comes from finding a home within yourself.



CHOREOGRAPHY: Micaela Taylor
MUSIC PRODUCTION: David Schocke
WITH MUSIC BY: James Brown
LIGHTING DESIGN: Burke Wilmore
COSTUME DESIGN: Kristina Marie Garnett - KAART KAART GALLERY
PERFORMERS: Chandler Davidson, Becky García, Katie García, Pedro Garcia, Brenan Gonzalez, Joan Rodriguez, Jordyn Santiago

MEET THE CHOREOGRAPHERS

JORDYN SANTIAGO is originally from North Carolina and is a dancer, teacher and choreographer currently based in Los Angeles, CA. Jordyn grew up training at The Dance Theatre of Jacksonville, under the direction of Debra Baile. She has traveled and trained across the United States as well as abroad in Israel and Europe. Jordyn has studied with artists such as Danielle Agami, Jiri Pokorny, Medhi Walerski, Adi Salant, Bryan Arias, Diana Matos and Melissa Jackson. Jordyn has toured as a backup dancer with Los Angeles based band Half Alive. She had the opportunity of dancing for the motion picture production of *In The Heights* with Warner Brothers Entertainment. Jordyn has performed at the Lincoln Center in Washington D.C in an Opera titled *Prism* under the direction of Beth Morrison Projects. Jordyn has danced in music videos for Griffin Matthews, Zolita and Buzz's newest single "Soul". She has also taught at several well-regarded institutions and collectives, including Peridance Capezio Center, Broadway Dance Center, Brick House NYC, Marymount Manhattan, The University of the Arts and University of North Carolina Greensboro.



Jordyn had the opportunity of presenting her first solo work *All There Is* in Los Angeles for an all Queer Artist showcase. Last year, she had the opportunity to set a work on her fellow company members of BODYTRAFFIC, and is thrilled to present it this season at The Wallis.

This is Jordyn's fifth season with BODYTRAFFIC. She is incredibly grateful to get to travel the world alongside such a dynamic group of artists and is looking forward to sharing more of her personal work with audiences of all kinds.

MEET THE CHOREOGRAPHERS



Matthew Neenan, began his dance training at the Boston Ballet School. He later attended the LaGuardia High School of Performing Arts and the School of American Ballet in New York. From 1994-2007, Matthew danced with the Pennsylvania Ballet, where he was also named Choreographer in Residence.

Matthew's choreography has been featured and performed by the Pennsylvania Ballet, BalletX, The Washington Ballet, Colorado Ballet, Ballet West, Ballet Memphis, Milwaukee Ballet, Oregon Ballet Theatre, Tulsa Ballet, Ballet Met, Oklahoma City Ballet, Juilliard Dance, New York City Ballet's Choreographic Institute, Sacramento Ballet, Nevada Ballet Theatre, Indiana University, Opera Philadelphia, and LaGuardia High School of Performing Arts (NYC), among others. He has received numerous awards and grants for his choreography from the National Endowment of the Arts, Dance Advance funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Choo San Goh Foundation, and the Independence Foundation.

Matthew has been honored to receive the New York City Ballet's Choreographic Institute's Fellowship Initiative Award and fellowships from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. In 2005, Matthew co-founded BalletX with fellow dancer Christine Cox and is now the resident dance company at the prestigious Wilma Theatre.



MEET THE CHOREOGRAPHERS



Micaela Taylor, is a dancer, choreographer, and the Artistic Director, Founder, and Choreographer of the TL Collective. Trained in hip-hop and ballet, she has created her own dance genre called Expand Practice, exuding emotion from the core and creating varied physical shapes and textures as expressions of one's authentic self. Her quirky style of exaggerated facial expressions, gesture, and athletic theatricality sets her work apart. Taylor created her own technique and is building The TL Collective all from the ground up. She received the Inaugural Springboard EMERGE Choreographic Award, was named in Dance Magazine's 25 to Watch in 2019, and graced the cover of Dance Magazine in April 2020.

Taylor is a role model and influencer to aspiring BIPOC artists and is creating groundbreaking work that introduces commercial styles to concert dance. Taylor's work has been presented at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, The Broad Stage, Ford Amphitheatre, Institute of Contemporary Art Boston, and more. Alongside the launch of her company, Taylor has been commissioned to choreograph and teach by Rambert Dance Company, The Getty Museum, BODYTRAFFIC, Springboard Danse Montreal/Gibney Dance Company, Cleo Parker Robinson Dance, B12 Festival Berlin, Carlos Acosta's Acosta Danza, and more. Upcoming commissions include Martha Graham Dance Company and a co-commission by Jacob's Pillow and American Dance Festival.

Reflect and Analyze

Use the questions below to identify dance elements in the performance and reflect on what you saw.

Hint: Use the glossary on pages 15-16 to help you.

Time & Music

- Describe the **tempo**. Are the movements fast or slow? Is the music fast or slow? Does it change during the dance? In what ways?
- **Musicality**: Do the dancers' movements connect with the music? How?
- What mood does the music create? How might you describe the music? What instrument(s) do you hear? Do you hear singing? In what language?

Space & Shape

- What **parts of the body** are the dancers moving? When does that body part stop moving or change in quality?
- What **groupings** do you see? (Solos, duets, larger groups?) How do the groupings change?
- What is the **distance** between the dancers? Are they in close proximity or are they far away from each other? Does the space between them change?
- Do the dancers **locomote** forward and backward, in a straight line or in a curve? Are some of these patterns repeated?

Quality & Energy

- What feelings or moods do the dancers' movements remind you of?
- Did you notice any **repetition** of a **dance sequence**? Can you describe the energy of the dance sequence? Is it light and sustained? Swinging and suspended? Heavy and percussive?

Theatrical Elements

- Describe the stage set, costumes, and the **props** used. Do they help you understand more about the piece? If so, how?
- Does the lighting change during the piece? In what ways? What affect does the lighting have on the dancers' movements?

Post-Performance Activity #2 | COALESCENCE - Unity + Community

Explore the concepts of individuality and unity through creative movement using your own name as a choreographic phrase.

Part 1: Create Your Phrase – "Embody Your Name"

1. Spell your name using your body.
 - You may use your entire body to shape each letter, or
 - You may choose a specific body part (elbow, hip, hand, foot, etc.) to "draw" each letter in the air or space.
 - Example: If your name is Jess, you could:
 - Draw "J" with your elbow
 - "e" with your hip
 - "s" with your knee
 - "s" with your shoulder
2. This is your personal phrase.
 - Practice it until it feels natural, paying attention to the transition from one letter to the next.
 - Think about how your movement expresses you – your identity, energy, and rhythm.

Part 2: Translate and Teach

1. Form groups of 3–5.
2. Take turns teaching each other your personal phrase.
 - Notice how different people interpret the same letters.

Part 3: Direct and Develop – Choreographing Unity vs. Individuality

1. Choose one person in your group to be the choreographer/director.
 - Their role is to guide the group's creative process.
2. Experiment with performance structure:
 - Have one person perform a solo version of a phrase (individuality).
 - Have the group perform a phrase in unison (unity).
 - Explore canon (starting at different times), and changing your formation.
3. Decide as a group:
 - What story or feeling are you showing?
 - How does your choreography express individuality, unison, or both?

Share + Reflect

Each group will perform a short piece (30–60 seconds) showcasing their exploration and including:

- One solo phrase performance.
- One group performance in unison.
- At least one moment of clear contrast between individuality and unity.

Discuss

1. How did your movement feel different when done alone vs. with the group?
2. What did you notice when others performed your phrase?
3. What does it mean to keep your individuality while working in unison?

DANCE GLOSSARY

Dance Genres

Ballet: A classical Western dance that originated in the Renaissance courts of Europe. By the mid-1600s, steps and body positions became codified by King Louis XIV of France.

Folk/Traditional Dance: Originates from and is characteristic of a particular culture, often passed down through generations. These dances are typically performed within a community, reflecting their traditions, customs, and social practices

House: House dance is closely tied to house music – an electronically produced genre with a strong down beat. Emerging in the underground clubs of Chicago and New York during the 1970s, House evolved as a response to the commercialization. It focuses on improvisation, with distinctive elements such as jacking, footwork, and lofting.

Jazz Dance: Dance marked by movement isolations and complex, propulsive polyrhythms. It is an outgrowth of African-American ragtime, jazz, spirituals, blues, work songs, and so forth and is considered an American dance style.

Modern Dance: A 20th-century dance form that emerged as a rebellion against the rigid structures of classical ballet. It emphasizes freedom of movement, emotional expression, and personal narrative.

Tap Dance: Tap dance is characterized by the use of metal taps attached to the toes and heels of shoes, producing rhythmic sounds as the dancer strikes the floor. It blends rhythm, movement, and musicality. Tap dance has evolved from a fusion of African, Irish, and English dance traditions.

Choreographic Terms

Axial Movement: Movement anchored to one spot by a body part. Only the available space in any direction is used while the initial body contact is being maintained. Movement is organized around the axis of the body and is not designed for travel from one location to another. Also known as non-locomotor movement. Examples include stretching, bending, turning in place, and gesturing. Opposite: locomotor movement.

Choreography (“dance writing”): The creation and composition of dances by arranging or inventing steps, movements, and patterns of movements.

Choreographer: A person who creates dances.

Cyclorama: curtain or wall used as a background of a stage set to suggest unlimited space.

Dance Phrase: A partial dance idea composed of a series of connecting movements and similar to a sentence in the written form.

Dance Sequence: The order in which a series of movements and shapes occurs.

Dynamics: The energy of movement expressed in varying intensity, accent, and quality.

Gesture: The movement of a body part or combination of parts, with emphasis on the expressive aspects of the move. It includes all movements of the body not supporting weight.

Grouping: Describes how many dancers are on stage together. Two dancers form a duet, three dancers form a trio, four dancers form a quartet, and five form a quintet. A large group moving together is called an ensemble.

DANCE GLOSSARY

Isolation: Movement done with one body part or a small part of the body. Examples are rolling the head, shrugging the shoulders, and rotating the pelvis.

Locomotor Movement: Movement progressing through space from one spot to another. Basic locomotor movements include walking, running, galloping, jumping, hopping, skipping, sliding, and leaping. Opposite: axial movement

Motif: A distinctive and recurring gesture used to provide a theme or unifying idea.

Movement vocabularies: steps, movements, sequences, and ways of moving, which may be particular to a choreographer or particular to a dance genre (for example, a *tendu* in ballet, or a *flare* in breakdancing).

Pathways: A line along which a person or a part of the person, such as an arm or head, moves (e.g., her arm took a circular path, or he traveled along a zigzag pathway).

Phrasing: The way in which the parts of a dance are organized.

Quality/energy: An element of dance characterized by the release of potential energy into kinetic energy. It utilizes body weight, reveals the effects of gravity on the body, is projected into space, and affects emotional and spatial relationships and intentions. The most recognized qualities of movement are sustained, percussive, suspended, swinging, and collapsing.

Repetition: The duplication of movements or movement phrases within choreography.

Shape: The positioning of the body in space: curved, straight, angular, twisted, symmetrical, or asymmetrical.

Space: An element of dance that refers to the immediate area surrounding the body in all directions. Use of space includes shape, direction, path, range, and level of movement. Space is also the location of a performed dance.

Technique: The physical skills that enable a dancer to execute the steps and movements required in different dances. Different styles or genres of dance often have specific techniques.

Unison: Dance movement that takes place at the same time in a group.

Musical Terms

Beat: Unit of measure of rhythmic time

Musicality: Attention and sensitivity to the musical elements of dance while creating or performing.

Rhythm: A structure of movement patterns in time; a movement with a regular succession of strong and weak elements; the pattern produced by emphasis and duration of notes in music.

Tempo: The speed of music or a dance.

Time: An element of dance involving rhythm, phrasing, tempo, accent, and duration. Time can be metered, as in music, or based on body rhythms, such as breath, emotions, and heartbeat.

Keep up with BODYTRAFFIC throughout the year at www.bodytraffic.com & on our social media platforms.

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BODYTRAFFIC  

COMPANY PERFORMANCES EDUCATION+OUTREACH SHOP SUPPORT

2025
2026
SEASON

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