

Making Make Believe



**John Michael
Kohler Arts Center**

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center
is pleased to present

Making Make Believe

with Rosie Herrera

THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 2021

Via Zoom

The presentation of Rosie Herrera Dance Theatre is made possible by the **New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project**, with lead funding from the **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation** and **The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**. Additional support for this performance is provided by the **Kohler Trust for Arts and Education**, **Kohler Foundation, Inc.**, the **Frederic Cornell Kohler Charitable Trust**, and the **Wisconsin Arts Board** with funds from the **State of Wisconsin** and the **National Endowment for the Arts**.



Cover image: Rosie Herrera Dance Theatre, Katie Stirman. Photo: Ben McKeown.

Make Believe (excerpt), “Say My Name”

Choreography

Rosie Herrera in collaboration with the dancers

Performers

Ivonne Batanero, Abel Berenguer, Loren Davidson,
Katie Stirman, Rayne Raney, Elaine Wright

Dramaturg

David Brick

Costumes

Haydee Morales and Rosie Herrera

Additional Creative Consultation and Support

Maiko Matsushima

Lighting Design

David Ferri

Make Believe was made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; additional support from the National Dance Project's Production Residency in Dance program, with funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the National Dance Project's Community Engagement Fund, with funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Major support for this new work also comes from the MAP Fund, primarily supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation with additional funds from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This work was co-commissioned by The Yard, an artist residency and performance center dedicated to contemporary dance and related arts, as part of the 2018 Offshore Creation Residency; the Wilson Center at Cape Fear Community College; Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans; and the American Dance Festival with support from the Doris Duke/SHS Foundations Award for New Works. It was developed, in part, during a creative residency at the Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography, The Yard, Miami Light Project, Miami Theater Center; and a technical production residency at The Wilson Center at Cape Fear Community College. Additional community engagement development for *Make Believe* was supported by the Alabama Dance Council as a grantee of Engaging Dance Audiences administered by Dance/USA and made possible with generous funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

Thank you to Gerardo Pilatti, Elayne Bryan, Matthew Ferrara, George Echevarria, Melissa Sandor, Katherine Dubois, and Laurent Dubois and Moving Ethos Dance.

Special thanks to Chu-Hua Wang, Herman Ramos, Tyler James Mausser, Anthony Shevlin, Kingsan Lo, Victoria Mora, Hannah Darrach, Andy Hasenpflug and John Brinkman whose vulnerability and generosity inspired this entire work.

rosieherrera.dance

MANCC Residency, January 25–February 8, 2018

Collaborators in Residence

Ivonne Batanero, Loren Davidson, James Raney, Katie Stirman,
Simon Thomas-Train, Elaine Wright

Designer

Maiko Matsushima

Dramaturg

David Brick

Writer

Melissa Sandor

Rosie Herrera returned to MANCC to develop *Make Believe*, which explores magic, celebrity worship, and romantic love through the lens of ritual and religious spectacle.

Convening her entire cast and design team as well as dramaturg David Brick, co-director of Headlong Dance Institute, at MANCC represents a shift in her practice toward a longer term collaboration, where set, costume, and music designers help shape the work in the studio from the very outset.

During the residency Herrera met with a variety of scholars and experts to deepen her research at the intersections of love and religion. Dr. François Dupuigrenet-Desroussilles, professor of religion specializing in sixteenth-century Christianity, joined Herrera and her cast in the rehearsal studio. After viewing several vignettes the cast had been working on, Dupuigrenet-Desroussilles discussed the history and evolution of visual representation within the Christian tradition, the differences between reality and its representations, and notions of faith represented through extreme pain and ecstasy.

Trained as a classical opera singer, Herrera is also deeply interested in the physical and emotional healing potential of sound, particularly the voice. To this end, Herrera and her cast attended a local “group sing” of Sacred Harp Singers. The group provided a brief overview of their practice of shape note singing in four-part harmony, its history beginning in New England, and later its revival in the primitive rural churches of the American Southeast. Further, they shared personal stories of mourning, healing, and communities found in the practice of singing.

Herrera’s experience with the Sacred Harp singers led her to another singing group, the local chapter of the California-based Threshold Choir, which gathers to sing songs of comfort and joy to those “at the thresholds of life.” Founded in the 1990s by musician Kate Munger, the Threshold Choir was inspired while caring for a loved one dying of HIV/AIDs. Now, with chapters across the United States, volunteer singers come to the bedsides of hospice patients with the goal of bringing comfort and solace through shared energy and song. In preparation for an event honoring survivors of suicide, the Tallahassee Threshold Choir invited Herrera’s cast to experience their rehearsal process, taking turns as the “receivers” of song.

ABOUT MANCC

MANCC (pronounced man-see) is the only national center for choreography in the world located in a major research institution, and operates from one of the premiere dance facilities in the United States. The Center is embedded within The Florida State University School of Dance and offers unparalleled opportunities for contemporary choreographers to hone their artistic practice and develop new work inside a creative community.

MANCC provides development residencies for choreographers and their collaborators to develop new work. Its encourage artists to bring with them dancers, designers, dramaturges, composers, and other appropriate collaborators that would enhance their creative inquiry through physical, conceptual, experiential or scientific means. To assist with their research, artists have 24/7 access to a black box studio and/or open light studio, as well as a variety of additional shared facilities (media lab, cameras, audio lab, recording studio, costume shop). While in residence, choreographers are encouraged to experiment, reflect, and edit, honing their research and choreographic process.

mancc.org

Piel Fiel

Director

Randy Valdes

Writer, Choreographer

Rosie Herrera

Performers

Roxana Barba, Loren Davidson, Liony Garcia, Claudia-Lynn Rightmire, Katie Stirman, Britney Tokumoto, Simon Thomas-Train

Costumes

Rosie Herrera

Producers

Carmen Pelaez, Randy Valdes, Hector David Rosales

Piel Fiel was commissioned by the Miami Light Project and premiered at the MLP's Screendance Miami Festival in January 2021.

ABOUT MIAMI LIGHT PROJECT

Founded in 1989, Miami Light Project is a not-for-profit cultural organization that presents live performances by innovative dance, music, and theater artists from around the world; supports the development of new work by South Florida-based artists; and offers educational programs for students of every age.

Since our inception, we have reached a diverse cross-section of communities throughout Miami-Dade County with an extensive outreach effort that includes partnerships with other arts organizations, universities, and social service agencies. Miami Light Project is a cultural forum to explore some of the issues that define contemporary society.

miamilightproject.com

IVONNE BATANERO was born in Lima, Perú, and received her B.F.A. from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. She was commissioned by Miami Light Project in 2012 and 2013 to create work for the *Here and Now* program. In 2015, she toured Lima, Perú to create her first dance film and presented her solo work, *I Think It's In My Belly*. She was a 2016–2017 recipient of the Miami Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs Dance Miami Choreographic Fellowship. Batanero has been dancing with Rosie Herrera Dance Theater since 2011 and joined Adele Meyers and Dancers in 2016.

ISVEL BELLO (understudy) was born in Matanzas, Cuba, in 1987, and is a graduate of the National School of Dance and the Higher Institute of Art in Havana. He performed with Compañía Danza Espiral de Matanzas and Malpaso Dance Company based in Havana. He has participated in several festivals such as The III Dance Biennial Caribbean in Martinique, World Festival of Solos and Duets in Venezuela, International Ballet Festival of Havana, Luminato Arts Festival in Toronto, and Jacobs Pillow Dance Festival in Massachusetts, among others. He has worked with American choreographers Ron K. Brown and Trey McIntyre.

ABEL BERENGUER is originally from Holguín, Cuba. He received a bachelor's degree in dance and performing arts from the Instituto Superior de Arte of Havana Cuba 2006. He began his dance studies at the Vocational School of Art of Holguin and later at the National School of Art. His experience as a performer includes theater and dance productions as a member of companies such as DanzAbierta, Colectivo Persona, Danza Contemporánea de Cuba, and Teatro El Público. He toured extensively throughout Cuba and abroad to festivals such as Seoul International Dance Festival SIDANCE (South Korea), MONTPELLIER DANSE 11, (France), Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, (United States), Holland Dance Festival, (Netherlands) and the Schrittmacher Festival (Germany) to name a few. His choreography has been exhibited at the I and II Biennial of Caribbean Dance at Havana, Cuba, Sziget Festival, Budapest, Hungary, Les Hivernales Festival de la Danse, Avignon, France, and the Scène National de L'artchipel, Guadeloupe, Martinique. Abel moved to the U.S. in 2015 to make his work as a performer visible, for the opportunity to exchange with other artists, and to explore the world of movement and choreography.

LOREN DAVIDSON recently assisted Jawole Willa Jo Zollar on Taylor Mac's *A 24-Decade History of Popular Music*, a pivotal work performed in October 2016 at St. Ann's Warehouse in Brooklyn, New York. Davidson recently finished a three-year Visiting Guest Faculty position at Florida State University, where she taught contemporary technique, cross training for dancers, Pilates, and introduction to the dance profession; choreographed new work for the School of Dance; and collaborated with local galleries to curate a monthly performance series involving students and local performers. She holds an M.F.A. in performance and choreography from Florida State University, a B.F.A. in performance from New World School of the Arts, and a childhood full of incessant curiosity for movement, connectivity, and the human experience. Davidson joined Rosie Herrera Dance Theatre in 2017.

DAVID FERRI has worked with prominent choreographers such as Pina Bausch, Shen Wei, Doug Varone, Yin Mei, Eiko + Koma, Jane Comfort, David Rousseve, Jody Sperling, and Ballet Preljocaj. He has been the production manager for the prestigious American Dance Festival since 1996, training upcoming designers in America. He is the resident lighting designer–technical director for the Vassar College Dance Department. Ferri was also resident lighting designer and technical director at PS 122 from 1985 to 1991.

ROSIE HERRERA is a Cuban-American dancer, choreographer, and the artistic director of Rosie Herrera Dance Theater in Miami. She holds a B.F.A. in dance performance from the New World School. She has been commissioned by The Miami Light Project, The Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, Ballet Hispanico, Jose Limon Dance Company, Moving Ground Dance Theater, Houston Met Dance, New World Symphony, and the American Dance Festival in 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016, and 2018. Her company, Rosie Herrera Dance Theatre, has been presented by the Northrop Dance Series, New World Symphony, Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, Miami Light Project, Baryshnikov Arts Center, Texas A&M University, Duncan Theater, The Annenberg Center, Maui Arts and Cultural Center, Dance Place, Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans, The Yard at Martha's Vineyard, Alys Stephens Center, Wilson Center at Cape Fear University, The Rialto Center, Gotham Dance at Skirball, and Focus Dance at The Joyce as well as by the American Dance Festival at the Joyce NYC in 2016 and 2018. The company most recently appeared as part of The American Dance Platform in January 2020.

Herrera is also a classically trained lyric coloratura soprano and performs with the Performers Music Institute Opera Ensemble; she also works as an independent director and creative consultant throughout Miami. She was awarded a Princess Grace Choreographic Fellowship for her work with Ballet Hispanico in 2013.

TIFFANY SCHREPFERMAN is the stage manager for Rosie Herrera Dance Theatre and freelances as a lighting designer/stage manager for many other companies. She is also the production manager and resident lighting designer for Ad Deum Dance Company and Ad Deum II based in Houston, Texas. Schrepferman graduated *magna cum laude* from Belhaven University with a B.F.A. in dance, and has worked for the American Dance Festival as production stage manager of the Reynolds Theater for the past eight summers. She is excited to partner with the artists and creative minds of today to bring fresh and inspiring works into the arts community.

KATIE STIRMAN is a Miami native whose dance career spans two decades. She has performed at the Baryshnikov Arts Center, The Joyce Theater, NYU Skirball, the American Dance Festival, and the Adrienne Arsht Center. She works collaboratively with artists, creating tailored experiences for each project. After grand successes working alongside other creators, she now focuses mainly on her own repertory. Stirman is creating a series of immersive-meditative performances out in nature using textiles. Gladly diving into the intimate recesses of beauty this planet holds on the horizon, she seeks to deliver simplistic wonder back to those whom may have forgotten its marvels.

SIMON THOMAS-TRAIN began dancing at Middlebury College, transitioning from an extensive background in competitive cross-country skiing to graduate with a B.A. in dance and architectural studies in 2009. Since then, he has worked with Tiffany Rhynard/Big Action Performance Ensemble, Satya Roosens, Attack Theatre, Megan Bascom and Dancers, Alexandra Beller/Dances, Tiffany Mills and Company, Red Dirt Dance, Vanessa Anspaugh, Pavel Zustiak|palissimo, Rosie Herrera Dance Theatre, Boomerang, David Dorfman Dance, and most recently with the Bessie-winning *Then She Fell* and *The Grand Paradise*, both by Third Rail Projects. He is the co-founder and co-artistic director of The Space We Make.

ELAINE WRIGHT-ROARKE graduated from The LaGuardia High School for the Performing and holds a B.F.A. degree in Dance from NYU Tisch School of the Arts. Her performance experience includes: national and international touring with The Elisa Monte Dance Company, Bill T. Jones /Arnie Zane Dance Company, an original cast member of the 1989 TONY Award winning Broadway Show *Jerome Robbins' Broadway*, and numerous commercial and performance art projects. AEA, SAG/AFTRA since 1987. A Miami resident since 1991, Wright has had the pleasure of serving on faculty at New World School of the Arts, Dance Division, since 1992. At NWSA, she has taught both the high school and college divisions, focusing on a somatic and energy efficient approach to movement, teaching ballet and Pilates for contemporary dancers. As a Miami resident, Elaine has also performed in works by choreographers, Gerrri Houlihan (USA), Giovanni Luiquinni (Bahia, Brazil), and Marianela Boan (Havana, Cuba). She has also had her own choreographic work commissioned by the FIU Wolfsonian Museum and enjoys the collaborative process of site specific performance and improvisation.

For more information about Rosie Herrera Dance Theatre, including music credits, please visit: rosieherrera.dance