



# Journey of Dance

By Nicole S. Colson

"Time to Dance"  
2018 performance  
photo by  
Steve Holmes  
Photography

The rest of the year, MoCo Arts students showcase the work of other choreographers. Spring is the time they interpret the work of their own teachers.

MoCo Arts' 15th annual "Time to Dance" happens this Saturday, March 16, and Sunday, March 17, at The Founder's Theatre at MoCo Arts in downtown Keene. MoCo Arts' dance program offers instruction in several disciplines to children in grades 2 through 12.

Time to Dance features 14 original pieces choreographed by MoCo Arts teaching artists and performed by advanced dance students in the top two class levels in each discipline, including ballet, tap, hip-hop, modern and jazz. The youngest students (11-12 years old) are in the Kids Bop class.

This year, there are about 90 students performing in "Time to Dance," making it MoCo's smallest dance performance. By comparison, MoCo's bi-annual performance of "The Nutcracker" features about 170 dancers.

When the event premiered in 2004, teaching staff at MoCo was looking for a way to offer their repertory and upper-level students an additional opportunity to perform. In the early years, instructors also performed in the show. With some of the MoCo teachers having achieved notoriety as professional dancers, it was an effective way to ensure a good audience turnout.

By 2009, the number of advanced students had grown

so the focus of the event was shifted to them alone with faculty supporting and coaching them behind the scenes.

"Every piece stands on its own and doesn't tie into any other show," said Reagan Messer, MoCo's executive director and artistic director of dance. "Students don't have to worry about a storyline, so it allows them freedom and the chance to challenge themselves. We push them outside their comfort level."

Messer said his students enjoy the freedom to interpret they are afforded with this show.

"When I work with advanced ballet students, there are times I see them do something and I say, 'I like that — do it again,' and they do it and we create off of that," he said. "(Students) have always loved this show because it gets away from the story, although there are sometimes stories within a piece."

He does give his students a thought to keep in mind as they rehearse.

"The audience doesn't have to take anything away from it, but I tell students the audience may take away some feeling from how they interpreted the piece."

Whenever "Time to Dance" is performed in MoCo's "black box" theater (The Founder's Theatre), the show sells out, which is why every other year it is performed on a larger stage at Keene State College's Redfern Arts Center. Only during years when MoCo produces "The Nutcracker" does "Time to Dance" return to the smaller, more intimate space as it will this year.

"It's up-close and personal in the black box," said Messer. "The audience can see how physical everything is."

Pieces in "Time to Dance" range in length — last year, they were from 3 to 22 minutes long. This year, Messer contributed four pieces: one is a boys' ballet piece set to the tune, "Mr. Bojangles."



Samuel Induni, 17, rehearses for "Time to Dance" 2019. Photo by Colleen Manzi.



Marcelo Brodsky, *Bogotá, 1968, 2015*, pastel on archival inkjet print, courtesy the artist and Henrique Faria Fine Art, New York.

**Marcelo Brodsky: 1968: The Fire Of Ideas and Selected Works**

March 20 – June 23 2019

Fifty years of work by Argentinian-born photographer, conceptual artist, and activist Marcelo Brodsky, including early, pre-exile works, a large, mid-career work embodying the artist's engagement with human rights, *I Pray With My Feet*, and examples of his current project, 1968: *The Fire Of Ideas*, a visual rumination on history, memory, politics, and art.

Wednesday, March 20

**4-6 p.m.:** Community-wide reception for Marcelo Brodsky: 1968: *The Fire Of Ideas* and Selected Works

Thorne-Sagendorph Art Gallery

**6:30 p.m.:** James D. Ewing World Affairs Lecture with Marcelo Brodsky: "Memory Works"

An illustrated lecture by Marcelo Brodsky addressing photography, memory, language, and activism.

Mabel Brown Room,  
L.P Young Student Center

Also on view through March 31

**Body Politic: Melanie Baker, Daniel Bejar, Daniel Heyman, Jane Irish, Jayson Musson, John Willis**

**Mark Hogancamp: Women of Marwencol and Other Possible Histories**

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"These two guys are both (high school) seniors and good friends — it will be the last repertory show together for them," said Messer. "In the piece they are exchanging dance steps back and forth, playing off each other. They're having fun."

Another of Messer's works in the show is a classical piece backed by a Bach soundtrack Messer described as a straightforward, dance-for-dance's-sake performance.

His third is another playful piece set to Michael Bublé's "Save the Last Dance for Me" featuring five point dancers. "The music dictates where the dance goes," said Messer.

His final contribution is called "Devotion," a piece he said is about prayer.

"(Time to Dance) takes the audience on such an emotional journey," said Messer.

MoCo Arts School of Dance students will perform the 15th annual "Time to Dance" Saturday, March 16, at 3 and 7 p.m., and Sunday, March 17, at 2 p.m. at The Founder's Theatre at MoCo Arts, 40 Roxbury St., Keene. Tickets are \$14 and may be purchased at MoCo Arts, or by calling 357-2100. For more information, visit [moco.org](http://moco.org).



Lily Bond and, top photo, more dancers perform in "Time to Dance" 2018. Photos by Katie Day.