

**CATA at Jacob's Pillow: 'One Potato, Two Potato'**

# Human condition endures, thrives

By Allison Tracy  
 Special to the Eagle

Jacob's Pillow hosted choreographer Dawn Lane and her Moving Company on the Doris Duke stage over the weekend in three post-season concerts that were packed. Lane's reputation precedes her.

She is one of three nationally-chosen dance educators to teach the Jacob's Pillow "Curriculum in Motion" residencies since 1993. Her "One Potato, Two Potato" is about the devastating Irish famine that drove hundreds of immigrants from their homes, and the resilience of those left behind. It speaks to that time, this time, and the universal human condition.

An "outstanding choreography" fellowship award from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, backed by the Pillow's Creative Development Residency, "One Potato, Two Potato" was cherry-picked last year by the prestigious VSA International Arts Festival at the Kennedy Performing Arts Center in Washington, D.C. Wow.

"Witness" is Lane's life-giving message in this work. The Irish plot is enough for a moving performance work. But Lane speaks to much more. Her artistic mission is a commitment to the democracy of art — what might be termed "artistic activism" for socio-political messaging.

Other significant choreographers who share her idealistic agenda have appeared on the Pillow's stages and at Mass MoCA. Liz Lerman, among them, has made her choreographic career drawing inspiration from common human interaction. She creates narrative works that pose knotty

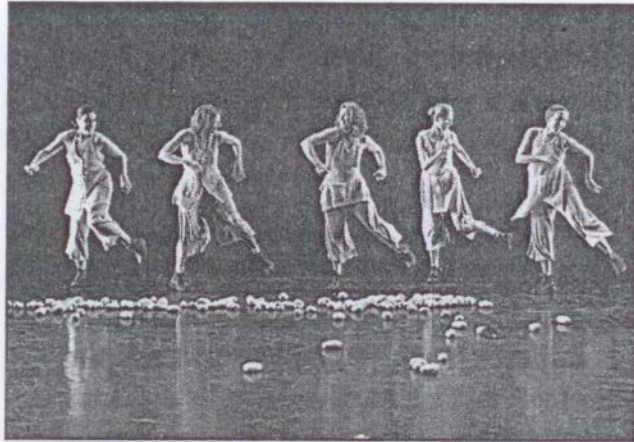


Photo by Cristina Lane/Courtesy CATA

From left, Bettina Montano, Jane Goodrich, Lorimer Burns, Leslie Nelson and Dawn Lane in a scene from 'One Potato, Two Potato,' performed over the weekend at Jacob's Pillow.

questions, like, how do we warn future unknown peoples about nuclear waste disposal? Who has the right to dance? Today, when Lerman accepts a commission, she prepares her ideals and then has the chutzpah to recruit her "company" onsite. Within six days, she presents the work. This is professional dance?

Other examples of this genre:

Inspired by the Pillow's history as a station on the Underground Railroad in the 19th century, choreographer Joanna Haigood and her Zaccho Dance Theatre presented "Invisible Wings," a site-specific work about harrowing slave escapes. Hardly your mother's concert dance subscription.

Others we've seen here

recently have trumped technique with gender-defying athletics, circus acrobatics and inventive costuming. These are all performance artists who quietly rail against socio-political violence and stereotypes, particularly, those of "technique" and "beauty."

Lane's message is democracy as community. An artistic program director and dance educator, she's also a choreographer pursuing her passion from idea to idea, grant to grant, award to award relying on dancers who share her passion.

## Dance Review

That passion is deeply shared by Sandra Newman, founder of Community Access to the Arts (CATA), a program based in Great Barrington dedicated to "celebrating the creativity of people with disabilities through shared experiences in the visual and performing arts."

For over 18 years, CATA has brought people with disabilities together with artists and into various showcase venues, from public schools to Shakespeare & Company to the Kennedy Center to revolutionize stereotypical thinking about art.

Under Lane's direction, CATA's Moving Company of dedicated movers and shakers has grown into a troupe of steadily more proficient, if physically compromised, performance artists. In addition, she has fostered other area dance colleagues — local dancers who have pursued professionalism and refuse to stop dancing against all odds. Her productions also heart-warmingly involve local children and families. Within the

local Berkshire community, Lane has worked quietly and steadily, cultivating her artistic mission well, like potatoes, on her own terms.

"One Potato, Two Potato" combines rocking-chair poetry with videos she took in 2009 of the now-dubbed "Famine Road" in Ireland's Burren, County Clare. From there, her imagination grew to issues that affect us all.

Her dance incorporates recognizable folk movement, the emotions and motivations of human beings everywhere — good and bad, the poetry and music that redeems and remakes the human experience however terrible, and ultimately, yes, the resilience of those who have the courage go through it, until they get their "wings." It is all portrayed through folks who are doing it as best they can.

At the end of the evening, many in the audience said they found it the best thing they'd seen all season.

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 APOLLO 18 (PG-13) (1:25 3:30 5:30) 7:35  
 THE DEBT (R) - ID REQ'D (1:30 PM 4:05 PM 6:35 PM)  
 DON'T BE AFRAID OF THE DARK (R) - ID REQ'D (1:50 PM 4:25 PM) 7:15 PM  
 OUR IDIOT BROTHER (R) - ID REQ'D (2:00 PM 4:40 PM) 7:25 PM  
 SPY KIDS 4: ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD (PG) (2:05 PM 4:45 PM)  
 ONE DAY (PG-13) 7:05 PM  
 RISE OF THE PLANET OF THE APES (PG-13) (1:45 PM 4:25 PM) 6:50 PM

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