

Dancing to Permeate

The National Water Dance on April 16

Consciousness



Melanie Martel, Miami Water Dance 2015 [Photos courtesy of Dale Andree]



SOUTH FLORIDA HEARTBEAT

A group of dancers at National Water Dance 2014 [Photos courtesy of Dale Andree]

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National, Water, and Dance may be three words you did not really expect to hear jointly, but National Water Dance—an event coming to the Deering Estate on April 16—lives up to its interesting and whimsical name. Dancers will be part of a literal movement of 1,500 dancers across the country who are dancing in an effort to raise awareness of water issues across the globe. Dancers include those at colleges and universities, private dance schools, elementary, middle and high schools, and professional dance companies.

Founder and artistic director Dale Andree is a Miami resident who started National Water Dance after seeing the success of a statewide project called Florida Waterways Dance Project in 2011. She saw an opportunity for creating a project with more emphasis on water and used the same structure of simultaneous performances at water sites. Eventually, the Knight Foundation saw the potential of National Water Dance and came onboard as a supporter.

“Einstein believed imagination is more important than fact, and dance brings imagination to the questions and the problems we face as a society,” said

Andree. “It opens other ways of seeing change, something that happens when people care about something and sometimes people seeing a dance in a beautiful place opens them up to a new way of thinking about the issues at hand. And hopefully they arrive at a way of thinking about the problem that may arise next time that person hears about the issue or sees that place.”

Water crises are often a lot more com-



Momentum [Photos courtesy of Dale Andree]

plex than a simple, lack of accessible potable water, which can make those problems easy to ignore and overlook. In the Greater Miami area, the main problem Andree and the National Water Dance dancers want to bring attention to is sea level rise and saltwater intrusion upon the aquifer, which could be reaching the area’s drinking water and affecting drainage of the Everglades.

“We live in the midst of a water cri-

sis,” said Andree. “Even though there is a lot in the news about water-related issues, people don’t really pay attention to how critical it really is. I think what the arts do is bring those issues into our life cycle in a different way so we can feel it more naturally and more viscerally. It’s a slow seeping into the consciousness, a presence saying, ‘This is something you need to pay attention to.’ Dance is something of joy and beauty, and sometimes it is about highlighting the beauty of an area and building the idea in the local consciousness, like a constant drip that permeates stone.”

National Water Dance is also permeating the broader consciousness of internet users with a growing presence on Facebook, YouTube, and other popular media sources. Dancers from all over the country are beginning to post what they are doing online, raising awareness of local issues and to the movement as a whole. Andree says it is really beginning to feel like a larger community and a positive force for participants and viewers alike, creating a

change that cannot be quantified.

“I know the importance of this for the dancers,” noted Andree. “It has taken me some time to come to an understanding of the real meaning of what we are doing here. I really believe that art is about living life out loud and living life in public. When you do that, someone, something is going to be different.”

National Water Dance is about tack-

ling critical questions related to water issues and then distilling a response to it into a beautiful, artistic answer. For the dancers, the project presents an inviting, but thorny challenge in that the dances are performed outside, and the work is competing with all of the openness and largeness of the outdoors while simultaneously highlighting its grace. It demands a lot of focus and concentrated energy, Andree explained. Dancers not only have to strive to hold the attention of the audience, but to keep their own attention engaged as well. Energy naturally gets pulled out and away from the dancers, dispersing in the environment around them. Facing this challenge together is one way the National Water Dance builds community among the dancers.

There will be 80 dancers, along with 80 singers and percussionists at the Deering Estate battling with the distractions of the world around them, while trying to tell a cohesive story and simultaneously draw attention to the environment they are in. The percussion score is signed Brandon Cruz, director of the South Florida Center for Percussive Arts, and the dance will include the Jubilation Dance Ensemble of Miami Dade College. However, while there are only 80 dancers in Miami, they are part of something larger, and that is something that can be felt by the dancers; the responsibility of creating a memorable and motivating National Water Dance is part of that.

For those who cannot attend the National Water Dance, the entire local and national event will be live streamed online at nationalwaterdance.org. For more information, visit the website or Facebook page for the event.



National Water Dance 2014 [Photos courtesy of Dale Andree]



Come to National Water Dance 2016 at Deering Estate on April 16 [Photos courtesy of Dale Andree]

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Protect Our Water Supply Join the National *Waterdance*



Coming together are 1500 dancers from across the country to perform a site-specific dance at a river, a bay, a lake, the ocean, or any water site nearby. Miami-Dade County dancers and students will join others from colleges and universities, private dance schools, elementary, middle and high schools, and professional dance companies, around the country, uniting to celebrate Water.

“My desire in creating National Water

Dance was to inspire artists of all ages to go beyond the studio and the stage with their art; to connect with the environment and realize the power of art to bring awareness to environmental issues, particularly water,” said National Water Dance founder and artistic director Dale Andree. “Through the internet National Water Dance has become the community of artists/activists that I hoped it would.”

The Miami performance of National Water Dance will feature 90 dancers and 100 singers and musicians at the Deering Estate at Cutler, as part of their Festival of the Arts, at 4pm on Saturday, April 16. The dance artists will perform to an original percussion score based on Beethoven’s *Ode to Joy* and will be sung by the Bridgeprep Academy of Arts & Minds choir. Students from participating schools will also share original poetry inspired by water. a sign language interpreter will also be at the event. All National Water Dance events at the Deering Estate are handicapped accessible. Admission from 3:30pm on is FREE.

Deering Estate at Cutler, 16701 S.W. 72nd Avenue. For information visit: nationalwaterdance.org.



NATIONAL WATER DANCE HAPPENING APRIL 16

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Dance students across the U.S., from Alaska to Florida, will participate in National Water Dance's 2016 event this Saturday, April 16. As in the past, dancers from universities, private studios, elementary schools and even professional dance companies will unite in a simultaneous, site-specific dance at a river, a bay, a lake, the ocean or any water site near to them.



This celebration is designed to initiate a conversation on national "water ethic" in the U.S. – one that can inform and inspire both participants and audience members to take responsibility for conserving and protecting the water that they use and enjoy.

National Water Dance began in 2011 as a local event, initiated by the New World School of the Arts in Miami, Florida, to bring attention to the power and fragility of Florida's waterways. Under the guidance of Artistic Director Dale Andree, National Water Dance, in less than three years, grew to a nationwide event involving more than 70 institutions in 30 states around the country. Participants experience dance as a form of social activism, an opportunity to be part of a "movement choir" that creates social change through art.

An idea first conceived by Rudolf Laban, a "movement choir" is a community of people dancing together for a common purpose. Performances often take place outdoors, in celebration of the environment, and audience members are frequently invited to join the dance.

The event's leaders, based in Florida, connect to participants online, suggesting movement phrases for them to perform.

For more information about participating in the 2016 National Water Dance event, contact Dale Andree at dandree@nationalwaterdance.org. See what schools and universities are contributing at <http://se.nationalwaterdance.org> and be sure to support them!

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