



PERFORMING ARTS

National Water Dance embraces hurricane-ravaged Puerto Rico

BY MICHELLE F. SOLOMON
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One of the signatures of the National Water Dance project since its inception seven years ago was that dance troupes, large or small, professional or school groups, were free to perform whatever choreography moved them with only a few stipulations: They would begin precisely at the same time in or next to a body of water; and, while they could do whatever choreography they imagined in the middle of the simultaneous performance, as a sign of solidarity they should begin with the exact same movement.

Miami's Dale Andree, National Water Dance originator and founder, began the site-specific initiative to raise awareness of ecological issues about the crisis surrounding water – its scarcity, contaminated quality, the impact of climate change on our very grounding – in Florida in 2011. In 2014, NWD went national in the

continental U.S., and now the showcase, held every two years, has grown to include Puerto Rico and Canada.

This year's event takes place on Saturday when, exactly at 4:00 p.m. EST, more than 1,500 dancers from 40 states will dance in the name of water preservation, from the Brookline Reservoir in Brookline, Mass., to Crandon Park in Key Biscayne. And this year, in Cabo Rojo in Puerto Rico.

Andree puts out a call to action about six months before the event asking that all participants submit a short movement gesture for her to consider as the opening phase. She selects one, and posts it on the National Water Dance website, and then requests that everyone begins with the first gestural movement. By chance, Puerto Rican choreographer and performance artist Camille Imilse Arroyo's submission was selected.

"It was the most dynamic of them all – the way she was interpreting water was quite different from everyone else because it had this sharp, hard edge," Andree says.



National Water Dance at Deering Estate in 2016.

MIANA JUN

Arroyo, a choreographer who moved from Miami back to her native Puerto Rico in June 2016, said that the effects of Hurricane Irma and more devastatingly Hurricane Maria on Sept. 20 had a profound impact on how she approached creating her movement, and where and how she will dance on April 14.

Her company, Tercera Ola, is collaborating with Puerto Rico's MayaWest Dance Project for its water awareness performance at Faro de Los Morrillos lighthouse in Cabo Rajo, on the southwest coast of Puerto Rico.

"I chose this landmark as a symbolic representation of our journey, shedding light on various issues concerning water in Puerto Rico," says Arroyo. "From here, you can see the coastline from the cliffs, and the erosion is so apparent."

The opening gesture she submitted did have its inspiration from the traumatic turbulence that the citizens of Puerto Rico have been through since the September storms. But it is also inspired by another natural upheaval that many Puerto Rican natives are familiar with — earthquake *temblores* or tremors.

Water Dance at University of Hawaii.

CHRISTINE MAXWELL



"Usually a movement for water is flowing, but mine is a little bit more of a hurricane," she said her creation. "I visualized a bowl of water that I saw during one of the *temblores* here, water rippling and spilling out, and it's that motion that my hands are mimicking." (Puerto Rico experiences small earthquakes daily that sometimes people cannot even feel. And because of what scientists have identified as the Puerto Rico Trench, the deepest part of the Atlantic Ocean, the island is vulnerable to tsunamis.)

Andree visited Puerto Rico as part of a new partnership this year with Pedestrian Wanderlust, a New York City dance program that began two years ago to document, via videos, dance in public places. The Wanderlust videos were to be posted and used as promotion to get people interested in the April Water Dance event. While plans were already in the works for Wanderlust founder Rami Shafi to create videos of dancers around the United States to help get the word out about NWD, Puerto Rico moved to the top of the list after hurricane Maria made it of primary importance. A private donation to NWD helped aid the support for the Wanderlust partnership, and for Andree and Shafi to head to Puerto Rico to create the videos.

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Water Dance Goes Worldwide Saturday

Movement Dance Idea To Bring Awareness Was Born Here

Wednesday, April 11, 2018

By Cameron Basden



Dale Andree, director, founder, and organizer extraordinaire of the National Water Dance (NWD), met me in the parking lot of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Biscayne Nature Center in Crandon Park on Key Biscayne. We were off to see the Miami setting for Saturday's (April 14) massive "water" event that is being embraced by over 100 dance organizations across the North American continent, and over 45 in Florida alone.

The organizations are uniting their physical voices to create a movement choir, a community of people dancing together for a common purpose. First conceived by Rudolf Laban, the dances are often performed outside in celebration of the environment and frequently,

participants invite the audience to join the dance. The NWD organizations believe that our environment is the most pressing issue of this generation and as dancers, using our bodies and movement is a way to create a community that reaches out for action.

For the National Water Dance performance, which happens at exactly 4 p.m. EST Saturday wherever you are, each dance organization will commence with a unified movement phrase that has been created and shared by Andree, and then break into their own choreography to create a unified voice of movement in site-specific dance creations nationwide. The dances will be streamed, shared and videoed so that everyone can see what every other group is doing and people everywhere can watch.

NWD is partnering with Pedestrian Wanderlust, an organization that creates video portraits and free public dance jams to inspire others through the joy of dance. For NWD, Wanderlust is making spontaneous dance videos at water sites all over the country leading up to the date of the event.

Andree is not a slow walker, in fact, it is difficult to keep up with her, but it is a metaphor for how she does things; nothing she does is slow. Off we went on a concrete path that soon turned to sand. As we walked, Andree filled me in on all the activities that are in the works before the final culminating performance.



“We did a beach clean-up, and then had art workshops afterwards, the discovery of sea life, walking on the sandbar. Having an event like that with Miami Waterkeeper deepened the collaborative relationship with an environmental group, which is great. Many students who are not dancers get to be part of this process, as well. For this year, we have an exchange between the Conchita Espinoza Academy, Morningside K-8 Academy and schools in Hawaii and they’re exchanging poems. Those poems will all be on display.”

We trudged through beach grass and trees until we arrived to the beach and a beautiful sandbar stage that extended far into the ocean. It was easy to imagine how glorious it must feel to dance in that natural vastness surrounded by sun and sea. With the tide rolling in, the performance space was slowly becoming engulfed in water. I was prepared for dancers rehearsing on a dry beach-like setting. This was a “roll up your pants and get wet” interview.

Andree laughingly noted, as much as she tries to follow the schedule of the tides, rehearsals can only be scheduled when people can come and that isn’t always when the tide is out.

“This is really interesting because when the tide is in, it is totally covered in water and actually is fairly deep. But the low tide on the 14th is an hour and ten minutes before the performance which means that the sandbar will be very visible way out there for the beginning of the dance, but water will start coming in slowly to divide the bar during the performance. So by the end, we should all be in some degree of water.”

As we were talking, dancers and directors began to arrive for rehearsal. The rehearsal time today was to be spent in transitions. These few, more mature dancers would be the leaders that the younger students would follow. With the numerous organizations involved, schedules don't permit group on site rehearsals, so it has to be done totally separately until everyone arrives to the site on the 14th. It is a logistical challenge and the leaders of the huge event play a very important role.

"Coming here many, many times, imagining it, coming up with ideas with the dancers, and how to move the dancers within this space. This is definitely more to adjust to than we've had in the past. Our big 4 hour rehearsal will be very intense. We'll find out on the 14th!"

"Where people are taking dance performance is just very exciting. While the NWD is very organized, this whole environment opens it up for exploration and improvisation. I bring the choreographers out here and they are so inspired when they see the setting."

Live music, composed and played by Brandon Cruz and his musicians, an immense beachfront space, a myriad of dancers and musicians, the glorious sun, the infinite sea, and dance for a cause that affects everyone. Performed every two years, the National Water Dance is an awe-inspiring movement.

MORE INFORMATION

National Water Dance at Marjory Stoneman Douglas Biscayne Nature Center in Crandon Park on Key Biscayne

Saturday, April 14, 4pm FREE

For more information visit: nationalwaterdance.org

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[Home](#) > On Earth Day, Dancers and Poets Will Join Forces to Plant Seeds of Action (Video)

On Earth Day, Dancers and Poets Will Join Forces to Plant Seeds of Action (Video)

By [Blanca Mesa](#) [1] / [Biscayne Times](#) [2]
April 8, 2018, 10:00 AM GMT

On April 22, 1970, a Dead Orange march wound its way through downtown Miami. On people's minds that day was air pollution, saving the Everglades and sewage in the waterways.

It was Miami's first Earth Day.

Since then, some positive changes have come: The Clean Air Act passed. Everglades restoration became a thing. The Miami Beach sewage outfall pipe was closed.

Today there's an even greater sense of urgency about the environment. Wild animal species on land and in the seas are declining precipitously, leading to extinctions. Carbon emissions have increased 2.4 times, causing a rise in temperatures and

rising sea levels as sea ice melts. The Everglades is threatened by saltwater intrusion, pollution and encroaching development. And sewage spills continue from leaky pipes and stormwater pumps.

Given all this, can Earth Day be a day of celebration in 2018? And where can we turn to for hope?

Artists say, look to them. In Miami, dancers and poets are coming together in the sublime light of the beach this month in celebration—and also in hope.



More than 70 dancers, musicians and singers gathered to dance for water at the 2nd National Water Dance, at the Deering Estate on Biscayne Bay, Miami, April 2016.

"Dance can be so many things," says Dale Andree, founder and artistic director of the National Water Dance that will be performed April 14 at the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas Biscayne Nature Center on Key Biscayne. Andree grew up around water and says she has always felt close to nature. But it was dance that brought her to a deeper connection and a quest to express that connection through movement.

Andree believes art-in-the-environment is a powerful draw. Her transformative moment came in 1983 with Christo's *Surrounded Islands*, an art installation that wrapped Biscayne Bay spoil islands in pink fabric. The artist created a scene that drew the eye and moved the spirit to appreciate the natural beauty in our midst where the "luminous pink color of the shiny fabric was in harmony with the tropical vegetation of the uninhabited verdant islands, the light of the Miami sky and the colors of the shallow waters of Biscayne Bay."



Andrew Holmes performs a celebratory dance of water performed on stand up paddle boards as part of Liquid Flux, an

hour-long site-specific event for the 2016 National Water Dance on the San Diego Bay inlet of NTC Park in Point Loma, California; choreographed by San Diego Director of National Water Dance Lara Segura. (image: Sue Brenner)

Andree created her first site-specific performances with the Florida Waterways Dance Project while she was still a dance instructor at the New World School of the Arts. She later founded NWD Projects, a Miami-based dance production company that created the National Water Dance, an international celebration that now features 1,500 dancers performing site-specific dances at rivers, bays, lakes and ocean shores throughout the U.S. and Canada, Mexico and Puerto Rico.

The National Water Dance also has a poetic element, with students from Miami and Hawaii schools contributing poems about water.