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Urbanity Dance Presents Dance Around Boston with *Refractive Choreographies*

Produced and presented with the generous support of MASARY Studios.

BOSTON, MA—Throughout the month of May, Urbanity Dance will present a new work, [Refractive Choreographies](#), around Boston, furthering its mission to bring dance to the masses and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Created in collaboration with [MASARY Studios](#), *Refractive Choreographies* features work by Urbanity Artistic Associate Meg Anderson (choreography), media artist [Jeremy Stewart](#) (Video & A.I. programming), composer [Ryan Edwards](#) (music), artist and projectionist [Samo](#) (projection mapping; onsite production), Rob Eckel (videography), and dancers in Urbanity's Professional Company. Originally set to premiere at Urbanity Dance's season finale *VERGE*, Urbanity has adapted the piece, bringing it to the entire city of Boston through outdoor, on-location projections and a series of dance films.

In accordance with social distancing guidelines and with public safety in mind, *Refractive Choreographies* will be projected outdoors in neighborhoods and on buildings deeply impacted by the pandemic, including hospitals, schools, and community centers in Chinatown, Dorchester, Chelsea, and more. Each projection will be presented "pop-up" style, with locations not being announced in advance and lasting no more than three and a half minutes. Filmed recordings of each performance will be further curated as mini-dance films to be shared more widely online to a broader audience. Through *Refractive Choreographies*, Urbanity Dance seeks to continue its mission of inspiring, engaging, and empowering individuals and communities through dance.

Under the direction of Anderson, Company dancers filmed themselves dancing from their own homes, creating raw material for Stewart's artificial intelligence to learn from. The AI is programmed to watch, mimic, and move with the performers, ultimately producing a digital representation of their dancing. With each projection, the AI learns from the dancers' movement, gradually becoming a larger participant in and part of the choreography.

From the creators:

Refractive Choreographies is a piece that was being developed before COVID-19 caused closures, cancellations, and postponements. Being able to find a new stage for it was immediately a necessity for me. I needed to get this out to the world in a way that it could inspire and create community and awareness for the arts, especially dance, in a time where human contact and community has become so difficult and so important.

–Meg Anderson, Urbanity Artistic Associate and Choreographer

Refractive Choreographies is a response to our present condition and our needs as humans in this moment: to continue to build with each other, to continue to share--work, ideas, connections--with the public, to continue striving for the future that we want to build together.

–Jeremy Stewart, Videographer & A.I. Programmer

Urbanity Dance is one of Boston's crucial arts institutions... As artists, and as a city, we can't stop creating, sharing, and staying on our grind. Boston has what it takes to be smart and be tough, to bring innovation and roll up our sleeves. Here's to everyone doubling down on that vibe, today and everyday."

–Ryan Edwards, Composer

About Urbanity Dance

Urbanity Dance was founded as a non-profit arts organization in 2011 by Director Betsi Graves with the mission to engage, inspire, and empower individuals and communities through the art of dance and movement. This mission is manifested through Urbanity's organizational pillars of Company, School, and Community, which strive to achieve three objectives: to propel contemporary dance to the forefront of Boston's cultural landscape; fill an unmet demand for access to training in diverse dance forms; and use dance as a tool for fostering bodily autonomy and creativity in local schools and community spaces. Through its three South End studios and work in the community, Urbanity is proud to provide high-quality dance experiences to over 10,000 dance-lovers of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities every year.

The Professional Company

Founded in 2008 by Director Betsi Graves, Urbanity Dance offers audiences a challenging, entertaining, and visionary experience. The Company's hyper-athletic aesthetic is a true fusion, aiming to bridge the gap between concert and commercial dance. Known for its effortless curves and use of breath, Urbanity places a strong emphasis on the foundations of modern, jazz, and ballet, while also utilizing the highly detailed gesture work and hard-hitting articulation usually associated with hip-hop. Originally an all-female company, Urbanity added men to its ranks for the first time in 2014. Appreciating the attendance of live dance as a generous act in the mediated 21st century, the Company values high artistic integrity. Since its founding, Urbanity Dance has grown tremendously. The Company was voted Boston's Best by *Improper Bostonian* in 2013, announced Best of Boston by *Boston Magazine* in 2015, recently shortlisted for Bostinno's 50 on Fire, and named a Top Ten Critics' Pick by *The Boston Globe*. Urbanity has presented at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, The Alvin Ailey Citigroup Theater, The Institute of Contemporary Art, and venues across New England, New York, Virginia, Texas, and Florida.

About MASARY Studios

MASARY Studios is a transdisciplinary collective reconsidering environments through site-specific installations using sound, light, interactivity, and performance. Based in Boston, the studio's practice includes live percussion performance, electronic music and production, facade projection-mapped video, artistic research, technology and materials fabrication, and the expansive use of animation. The studio is artist-owned and managed and was founded in 2015.

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