



SPECTRUM DANCE THEATER

A Rap on Race

Executive Artistic Director Donald Byrd

Co-Creators Donald Byrd & Anna Deavere Smith

Choreography & Direction Donald Byrd

Lighting & Scenic Design Jack Mehler

Costume Design Doris Black

Stage Manager Sara Torres

Text *A Rap on Race* by James Baldwin and Margaret Mead

Music *The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady* by Charles Mingus

Cast

James Baldwin Donald Byrd

Margaret Mead Julie Briskman*

Spectrum Dance Theater Company Artists

Mikhail Calliste, Michele Dooley, Blair Jolly Elliot, Marco Farroni, Hutch Hagendorf, Marte Osiris Madera, Nia-Amina Minor, Yurie Nishi, Emily Pihlaja, Andrew Pontius, Fausto Rivera, Mary Sigward, Jaclyn Wheatley

*Appears through the courtesy of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

PROGRAM

There will not be an intermission.

Friday, October 12 @ 8 PM

Saturday, October 13 @ 8 PM

Zellerbach Theatre

A Rap on Race used by kind permission of The Estate of James Baldwin and Dr. Mary Catherine Bateson.

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NextMove
DANCE

The 18/19 dance series is presented by Annenberg Center Live and NextMove Dance.

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THE NEW ENGLAND FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS

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PROGRAM NOTES

In 1970, two towering personalities of the American intelligentsia, black author and social critic James Baldwin and white anthropologist Margaret Mead, sat together and recorded a conversation on what is arguably the defining subject of the American experience — race. Now over 40 years later, two contemporary artistic icons Anna Deavere Smith (best known for her documentary theatre style in plays such as *Fires in the Mirror and Twilight: Los Angeles*) and legendary choreographer Donald Byrd (Tony® nominated and Bessie Award winning Director/Choreographer) re-imagine this monumental moment in history into a genre obliterating evening of “theatre for the 21st Century”. In this ground-breaking production, featuring the world renowned dancers of Spectrum Dance Theater, Julie Briskman as Mead and Donald Byrd as Baldwin, Deavere Smith and Byrd excavate the truths buried in the facts of this cultural artifact.

Anna Deavere Smith and Donald Byrd Talk A Rap on Race

Donald Byrd [DB]: So the first question—and I don’t want to do the interview, I think, as somebody who is not vested in it in some way because that’s kind of impossible.

Anna Deavere Smith [ADS]: Yes, and not uh, not true.

DB: In your usual process you do the fieldwork of interviewing the subjects, you have met them and have a real sense of them beyond the interview. Because this was a pre-existing recording, how are the challenges different, in shaping the script and in this particular case, it not being devised as a solo performance?

ADS: I have been learning and studying this material since the early eighties when I found it in the bookstore of the American Museum of Natural History in New York, where Margaret Mead worked in the Department of Anthropology from the 20’s until her death. I have taught it for years in my acting classes having students play parts and switch sides to learn about persona and language. I then learned and performed the edit that you have as a one-person piece for the opening of Zankel Theater at Carnegie Hall. I then directed actors in it in 2014. The recording and book are compelling to me as a drama. Race is the topic of discussion, but the drama is actually more complex. It is a drama about two people who have met their match intellectually but who substantively see the world differently in part because of their histories and their experiences, but also because one of them, Baldwin, thinks and talks in metaphor and the other collects and absorbs what she calls facts. The fire in the conversation is about two inevitably different ways of seeing and connoting the world.

DB: Can you tell me what is it about this material, the recordings that attracted you to it in the first place?

ADS: The musicality of it, and also their willingness to talk with one another and their desire to pick up the pieces of the ‘60’s and to make sense of it. And so the vigor of the inquiry on both sides is very interesting to me.

DB: This thing you said about the musicality of it, I mean when you and I were working together you said, listen to the tapes and try to capture the musicality of it—

ADS: Yeah.

DB: I’ve found the same thing happens when doing it, performing it, is that they, Mead and

Baldwin, start to make sense, literally just in the abstraction of the musicality of how they speak to each other. Do you think that that's where the truth of it really is, in how they are playing *their* music together? That there is something about *that*, their music, as much as in what they are actually saying, their interplay, in the counterpart of the musicality of their conversation?

ADS: I think that's part of it. But I do think that there is also just the heft, the intellectual heft, that even if we had never heard them and we just saw this on the page, you can feel the intellectual energy there and the bulk of knowledge. You know, these are true public intellectuals. So I would say that both are true, that both count in this case.

DB: One of the things I find really interesting is that in the beginning of the conversation with her, he seems to let her speak. He acquiesces in some way or kind of—what's the word I'm looking for...he is "gracious" in his letting her tell him all about her northern background and her northern good and all of that stuff, that progressive liberal kind of way of thinking, and that he is doing it in a way that is not meant to set her up, but just to allow her to revel in some ways in who she is and what her background is.

ADS: Yeah, I mean I don't know if he had a motive. I know from watching audiences watch it, they assume – they laugh because they think that it's this white woman, you know, talking so much.

DB: Yeah.

ADS: But I actually think that any good writer, any good artist, any good thinker spends a good deal of time listening or reading or watching. And so I think that he's truly—my choice if I were performing him is that he's truly interested.

DB: Right.

ADS: He doesn't know her.

DB: Yeah.

ADS: As you know they met specifically for this and he doesn't know the terms of the conversation yet. So I think it would be wise for any of us in that same situation to listen before we speak.

DB: I agree. I find that he just, they don't know each other, he just listens. And then the other thing, I mean one other question is about the role of alcohol in loosening them up. As the conversation progresses, obviously drunker, would they have been able you think to have a conversation like this if they had not been so sloshed?

ADS: Well I don't know. We don't know if they were drinking because we didn't see it. You know what I'm saying? Maybe that slurred speech is that they're tired. I mean at one point he says "these last 48 hours" or whatever.

DB: Right.

ADS: So that's a long time. So we don't know for sure. I think we have to say that, Donald. We don't know, uh, if they were drinking. It seems that they were. And do I think that they could have the same conversation? Absolutely. Absolutely. I have no doubt about that. Because you and I are both old enough to know how those quote-unquote "conversations"

about race went quote-unquote “back in the day,” when we weren’t so careful about talking about white privilege or this or that or the other. I think that people were in a vigorous seeking of how can we find our way together after, you know, uh, more than 100 years—or 200 years depending on when you landed on American soil—all these years of a very, uh, um, peculiar relationship that was guarded and, um, where people didn’t have a chance to have, you know, their full humanist expressed. So I think many of us dove into that when we had a chance to do so, and uh, I think without alcohol it would be just as open and just as fiery.

DB: Right. Um, I wonder if uh, I mean I think... one of the things I’ve said to people and wonder if you agree with this or if there is something you want to add to it, I kind of look at this, their conversation as a model. That if we, ... that the value of bringing it up, the Mead/Baldwin conversation, and kind of putting it in front of people is in some ways... they are a model for how we might...the degree of honesty and openness ... that we might have... and the kind of messiness and sloppiness of having a conversation about race... my hope is that in some ways their conversation is a model and might give us permission to have deep uninhibited conversations around race.

ADS: Well I think yes, I think it’s a model, very hard to find now. Um, but I also think that we again can’t underestimate that this isn’t just like a truth-telling session. These are two people who are extremely accomplished researchers in their own way, thinkers and writers.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Creative Team

Donald Byrd (Executive Artistic Director, Co-Creator, Choreographer & Director, James Baldwin)

Donald Byrd, Tony® nominated and Bessie Award winning choreographer, is the Executive Artistic Director of Spectrum Dance Theater, and formerly Artistic Director of Donald Byrd/The Group. He is credited with over 100 dance works for his own groups plus Alvin Ailey, Dayton Contemporary, Philadanco, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Joffrey Ballet and Dance Theater of Harlem, among others. He’s worked with The New York Shakespeare Festival/Public Theater, La Jolla Playhouse, SF Opera, Seattle Opera and NYC Opera. Honors include Masters of Choreography Award (Kennedy Center), Fellow of The American Academy of Jerusalem, James Baldwin Fellow of U.S. Artists and Fellow at the Institute on the Arts and Civic Dialogue. He was an NEA and Princess Grace Awards panelist and served as Cultural Envoy for The U.S. Department of State. He currently serves on the SDC Diversity Task Force and SDC Journal Editorial Board, and recently completed his term on the Tony® nominating committee.

Anna Deavere Smith (Co-Creator)

Anna Deavere Smith has performed in film, television and on stage. She currently plays Attorney General Mary Campbell on *Madame Secretary* and appears as Alicia on *Blackish*. She played Mrs. Akalitis on *Nurse Jackie*, Nancy McNally, the National Security Advisor, on *The West Wing* and was featured in the series *Presidio Med*. Smith has been featured in several films, including *Rachel Getting Married*, *The American President*, *The Human Stain*, *Dave* and *Rent*. As a writer and a humanist, she has received numerous awards for her work including the prestigious 2013 Gish Prize for achievement in the arts, the 2012 National Humanities Medal presented to her by President Obama, and the 1996 MacArthur “Genius” Award. In 2015, she was named the Jefferson Lecturer, the federal government’s highest honor in the Humanities.

Doris Black (Costume Design)

Doris Black has been designing costumes for theatre, film and dance for 19 years. In six seasons with Spectrum, she has designed for *Love*, *Carmina Burana*, *The Minstrel Show Revisited*, *A Rap on Race* and *Autopsy of Love*, among others. She designs for many theatres in the Puget Sound area including Seattle Shakespeare Company, The Seagull Project, Book-It Repertory Theatre and Intiman, and has taught at and designed productions for the University of Puget Sound. Black has been the company costume designer for the Seattle Men's Chorus and Seattle Women's Chorus since 2004. Her film work includes *The Dark Horse*, *Cthulhu*, *Police Beat*, *Deadline*, *A Water Tale* and *Shut Eye*. Black received her MFA in Costume Design from the University of Washington and her BFA from Washington University in St. Louis.

Jack Mehler (Lighting & Scenic Design)

Based in New York for 25 years, Jack Mehler designs for a wide variety of musicals, dance, plays and corporate projects. He received the 2013 Korean Musical Theatre Award (Korean Tony) for his lighting of *Rebecca* and the 2012 award for *Elisabeth*. He received IRNE (Boston Critics' Award) nominations for *A Christmas Carol*, *Nine* and *Camelot*, all at North Shore Music Theatre. He has designed scores of projects with Donald Byrd, including *A Rap on Race* (scenery) and *Dance, Dance, Dance* (lighting) for Spectrum Dance Theater. Other highlights include *Theatre of Needless Talents* for Spectrum; *Motown Suite* and *To Know Her* for the Joffrey Ballet; *Burlesque* and *Fin de Siècle* for Alvin Ailey; and *Jazz Train* and *Harlem Nutcracker* for Donald Byrd/The Group. Other dance projects include Joffrey Ballet works by Nic Blanc, Donald Byrd, Edwaard Liang, Lar Lubovitch, Yuri Possokhov, Stanton Welch, and for nine years, Robert Joffrey's *Nutcracker*. Other dance designs include Ballet Memphis, BalletMet, Buglisi Dance Theatre, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, José Limón, Lar Lubovitch and San Francisco Ballet, among many others.

Sara Torres (Stage Manager)

Sara Torres is a Pacific Northwest native who began studying technical theatre and the performing arts in her early teens and went on to earn a BFA in Performance Production from Cornish College of the Arts in 2008. Her eclectic skill set has kept her active in many circles of the Seattle arts community. Torres is perhaps best known in the Seattle dance scene for her 10-year tenure as Technical Director for *Beyond The Threshold: Seattle International Dance Festival*. She has designed lighting and stage managed for local choreographers Cyrus Khambatta, Wade Madsen, Karin Stevens, Alex Crozier, Coleman Pester and many others. She also designs lighting for theatre and special events like the Fremont Oktoberfest. Torres served as stage manager for Spectrum Dance Theater's productions of *Rambunctious 2.0* and *A Rap On Race* in 2016 before joining the company full-time for the 2016-2017 season. This is her third full season with Spectrum Dance Theater.

Spectrum Dance Theater

Under Donald Byrd's artistic leadership since 2002, Spectrum Dance Theater has become the foremost contemporary modern dance organization in the Pacific Northwest, gaining recognition nationally and abroad. For over 30 years, Spectrum Dance Theater has brought dance of the highest merit to a diverse community working to make dance accessible to all through contemporary dance performances and high quality dance training in a variety of styles. Three components comprise the organization: the professional company, the school and outreach programs. With Donald Byrd's visionary artistic leadership, the organization has embarked on an exhilarating transformation that has attracted world-class dancers, produced some of the most avant-garde works in contemporary dance and generated local and national praise. spectrumdance.org

Text & Music

James Baldwin (August 2, 1924 - December 1, 1987)

James Arthur Baldwin, the grandson of a slave, was born in New York, New York and was the eldest of nine children. He was raised in Harlem, growing up in and surrounded by poverty. During his teen years, Baldwin was active as a preacher in a small revivalist church, an experience that later served to inspire his semi-autobiographical first novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953).

Baldwin spent the years following his graduation from high school in Greenwich Village, working low paying jobs while beginning his career as a writer, finally attracting the attention of established novelist Richard Wright. Wright would eventually assist Baldwin in securing a grant that allowed him to devote himself full-time to writing.

In 1948, at the age of 24, Baldwin left New York City for Paris, where he would spend the next eight years studying American society from a distance. "Once you find yourself in another civilization, you're forced to examine your own," Baldwin said.

After time spent in Paris and Istanbul, Baldwin returned to the U.S., motivated in part by a desire to participate in the civil rights movement. Baldwin's experiences traveling throughout the South brought forth his work *The Fire Next Time* (1963), focused on black identity and racial struggle, which became a bestseller and landed Baldwin on the cover of *TIME Magazine*.

Baldwin would eventually return to France, settling in St. Paul de Vence, following the assassinations of his friends Medgar Evers, Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. In the last ten years of his life, Baldwin began teaching as a means of connecting with a new generation, while continuing to produce socially relevant fiction, nonfiction and poetry.

James Baldwin died in St. Paul de Vence in 1987, at the age of 63.

Margaret Mead (December 16, 1901 - November 15, 1978)

Margaret Mead was born in Philadelphia, PA into a family of social scientists. Her mother, Emily Fogg Mead, was a sociologist and early supporter of women's rights, while her father, Edward Sherwood Mead, was a professor at the Wharton School. Mead's grandmother, Martha Ramsay Mead, was a child psychologist and encouraged Margaret to observe the behavior of younger children as a means of understanding their actions.

Mead's early education was highly unorthodox, as she attended school for only one year of fourth grade and six years of high school. This education was heavily supplemented by that offered by Mead's family. Mead would go on to study psychology at DePauw University before transferring to Barnard College, where she graduated in 1923. That same year, Mead began graduate school at Columbia University, studying anthropology with Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict and earning her M.A. in 1924 and a Ph.D. in 1929.

It was during her time at Columbia University that Mead embarked upon the first of many trips to the South Seas. She conducted field research in American Samoa and Papua New Guinea, collecting material that would form the foundation for the first of her 23 books, *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928). In this text, Mead's characteristic reliance on observation, rather than statistics was already apparent.

Mead would later serve for many years with the American Museum of Natural History in

New York City, first as Assistant and then Associate Curator, before being named Curator of Ethnology.

The wide-range of topics covered in Mead's work is notable: women's rights, child rearing, sexual morality, nuclear proliferation, race relations, world hunger and the cultural conditioning of sexual behavior and natural character.

Mead was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the United States' highest civilian honor, in recognition of her contributions to science.

Charles Mingus (April 22, 1922 - January 5, 1979)

Born on a military base in Nogales, Arizona in 1922 and raised in Watts, California, Charles Mingus' earliest musical influences came from the church choir and group singing, and from "hearing Duke Ellington over the radio when [he] was eight years old." He formally studied double bass and composition, while absorbing vernacular music from the great jazz masters first-hand. His early professional experience, in the 1940s, found him touring with bands like Louis Armstrong, Kid Ory and Lionel Hampton.

Eventually he settled in New York where he played and recorded with the leading musicians of the 1950s, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Bud Powell, Art Tatum and Duke Ellington. By the mid-1950s, he had formed his own publishing and recording companies to protect and document his growing repertoire of original music. He also founded the "Jazz Workshop," a group which enabled young composers to have their new works performed in concert and on recordings.

Mingus soon found himself at the forefront of the avant-garde. His recordings bear witness to the extraordinarily creative body of work that followed and include: *Pithecanthropus Erectus*, *The Clown*, *Tijuana Moods*, *Mingus Dynasty*, *Mingus Ah Um* and *The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady*. Work to his music was also performed frequently by ballet companies, and Alvin Ailey choreographed an hour program called *The Mingus Dances* during a 1972 collaboration with the Joffrey Ballet Company.

In 1977, he was diagnosed with a rare nerve disease, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). He was confined to a wheelchair, and although he was no longer able to write music on paper or compose at the piano, his last works were sung into a tape recorder. At a memorial following Mingus' death in 1979, Steve Schlesinger of the Guggenheim Foundation commented: "I look forward to the day when we can transcend labels like jazz and acknowledge Charles Mingus as the major American composer that he is."

The Company

Julie Briskman (Margaret Mead)

Julie Briskman is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of The Seagull Project, a Seattle-based ensemble-driven theatre company that uses the works of Anton Chekhov to inspire the modern theatre through intensive process and international collaboration. In 2014, The Seagull Project became the first American ensemble to receive a grant from the U.S. Embassy to bring their critically acclaimed production of *The Seagull* to the renowned Ilkhom Theater in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Briskman has portrayed Arkadina in *The Seagull*, Olga in *The Three Sisters* and Ranevskaya in *The Cherry Orchard*. In Seattle, she has appeared in leading roles on all of the major stages including Seattle Repertory Theatre, ACT Theatre, The Intiman, Seattle Children's Theater, The 5th Avenue Theater and Seattle Shakespeare Theater. National credits include Yale Repertory Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theater, Trinity Repertory Theatre, The Old Globe, The Playwright Center of Minneapolis

and seven seasons as a member of The Guthrie Theater acting ensemble. Briskman is a proud recipient of the Lunt-Fontanne Fellowship.

Mikhail Calliste (Dancer)

A native of Trinidad and Tobago, Mikhail Calliste migrated to New York City at a young age where he began his training at The Martha Graham School. Soon after, Calliste joined the professional training program at The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, where he was immersed in many dance forms. After graduating from Talent Unlimited High School, Calliste furthered his training in Philadelphia at The University of the Arts where he acquired a BFA in dance in 2018 under the direction of Donna Faye Burchfield as a director's full scholarship recipient. During this time, Calliste performed works by Alvin Ailey, Martha Graham, Ronald K. Brown, Mark Haim, Douglas Becker and Netta Yerushalmy, among others, and also received a field study course in The Pennsylvania Ballet second company program. Calliste has most recently participated in the Ballet Preljocaj Professional Training Program in Aix-en-Provence, France, presented choreographic research at The National College Dance Festival, and is still indulging in movement creation. Calliste is pleased to join Spectrum Dance Theater for the 2018-19 season.

Michele Dooley (Dancer)

Michele Dooley is a native of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where she also began her dance training at The Institute of the Arts under the direction of Cheryl Gaines Jenkins. She graduated from the High School for Creative and Performing Arts under the direction of LaDeva Davis, and went on to study dance at The University of the Arts, earning her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree under the direction of Donna Faye Burchfield. While earning her degree, she became a company member of Eleone Dance Theatre where she danced for three seasons. Dooley has also trained at Bates Summer Intensive, BalletX summer program and DCNS Summer Dance Intensive. She has had the privilege to work with choreographers such as Gary Jeter, Tommie Waheed-Evans, Dara Meredith, Milton Myers, Nora Gibson and Ronen Koresh, among others. This is her first season with Spectrum Dance Theater.

Blair Jolly Elliot (Dancer)

Born in Los Angeles, CA, Blair Jolly Elliot started dancing at the age of 11. She summited Mt. Kilimanjaro via the Western Breach (age 11), sailed in the Flanders Youth Regatta in Nieuwpoort, Belgium on the U.S. National Team (age 12) and competed in the Junior Olympics for swimming (100 m butterfly, age eight). She studied dance at the Pinellas County Center for the Arts at Gibbs High School (St. Petersburg, FL) with Suzanne Pomerantzeff and Patricia Paige-Parks. She received her BFA from The University of the Arts. During her college years, she was an intern with Koresh Dance Company and trained extensively with Ronen Koresh and Melissa Rector. In 2016, she earned her personal training certification from the National Academy of Sports Medicine. This is her fifth season with Spectrum Dance Theater.

Marco Farroni (Dancer)

Born in the Dominican Republic, Marco Farroni attended New Jersey Performing Art Center's young artist program where he was introduced to modern dance and ballet. He received a BFA in Dance from the University of the Arts under the direction of Donna Faye Burchfield, where he trained in ballet, modern, jazz and improvisation. He has performed works by Sidra Bell, Earl Mosley, Kevin Wynn, Keelan Whitmore, Katie Swords, Jesse Zaritt, Ronald K. Brown, Tommie Waheed-Evans, Douglas Becker, Mark Haim, Mark Caserta and Jillian Peña, among others. Farroni has participated in the American Dance Festival six-week school, Alonzo King LINES Ballet summer intensive, Alonzo King LINES Ballet professional workshop and Earl Mosley Institute of the Arts summer intensive. This is his second season dancing with Spectrum Dance Theater.

Hutch Hagendorf (Dancer)

Originally from Houston, TX, Hutch Hagendorf began dancing at the age of nine at West University Dance Center under Evelyn Ireton. During high school, he danced with his studio's competition group Soul Discretion (artistic director Kelly Ann Vitacca), and performed with Exclamation Dance Company (director Kenneth Epting). He went on to receive his BFA in dance at the University of Arizona School of Dance. Workshops include Perry-Mansfield, David Parsons, Alvin Ailey Extension, Paul Taylor, Doug Varone, NW Dance Project Launch and Axis Connect. His first job after graduating in 2015 was with Royal Caribbean International. After completing two cruise contracts, Hagendorf settled in New York City in 2017 and has since worked with iKADA Contemporary Dance Company under Mee Jung and most recently, with De Funes Dance under the direction of Diego De Funes. This is his first season with Spectrum Dance Theater.

Marte Osiris Madera (Dancer)

Born in Guadalajara, Mexico, Marte Osiris Madera has been a company member with Dance Kaleidoscope of Indianapolis, and worked in the San Francisco Bay Area with Oakland Ballet, Menlowe Ballet, Margaret Wingrove Dance, Man Dance Company, sjDANCEco and Central West Ballet. He has also worked on the East Coast with Lustig Dance Theater of New Jersey. He has guested for various dance companies in California, including for Robert Moses Kin, and has worked for choreographers including Donald McKayle, Stephanie Martinez and Molissa Fenley. He has a BFA in Dance from San Jose State University where he graduated cum laude. This is his second season with Spectrum Dance Theater.

Nia-Amina Minor (Dancer)

Nia-Amina Minor is a performer, teaching artist and screen dance filmmaker from South Los Angeles. She began dancing at the Debbie Allen Dance Academy and received her BA in Communication with a minor in Film and Media Studies from Stanford University. Minor received her MFA in Dance from the University of California. In addition to performing at RedCat and Jacob's Pillow, she was a faculty member at Saddleback Community College and Cypress College as well as a former arts administrator with San Francisco Ballet, Alonzo King LINES Ballet and Heidi Duckler Dance Theatre. Minor is also the co-founder of a movement-based collective called No)one Art House, based in South L.A. This is her third season with Spectrum Dance Theater.

Yurie Nishi (Dancer)

Originally from Japan, Yurie Nishi is a dancer, choreographer and certificate trainer of GYROKINESIS®. She started training in a variety of dance styles when she was five years old, and was awarded 3rd prize at Dancing Koshien as a member of Dragon Tribe. Nishi graduated with a major in Health and Sports Science at Mukogawa Women's University, moved to New York City in 2015 and completed the International Student Program at Peridance Capezio Center in 2017. Additionally, she participated in summer intensives with Toronto's Conteur Dance and the pro intensive with Houston's METdance, both on full scholarship. She has performed works by Joyce King, Michael Bishop, Dionna PridGeon, Julia Ehrstrand, Joe Celej, Kiki Lucas and Bonnie O'Rourke, and has presented her own choreography at The Ailey Citigroup Theater, The Salvatore Capezio Theater, Triskelion Arts and New York City Center. This is Nishi's first season with Spectrum Dance Theater.

Emily Pihlaja (Dancer)

Emily Pihlaja is from New Canaan, CT and received her early dance training from the New England Academy of Dance. She attended the Kirov Academy of Ballet in Washington, D.C. from which she graduated in 2009. She then moved to Portland where she performed for four seasons with Oregon Ballet Theatre. Pihlaja was featured in ballets such as George Balanchine's *Serenade*, *Divertimento No. 15*, *Emeralds*, *The Four Temperaments*, *Swan Lake*, *Coppelia*, *Giselle* and *The Nutcracker*. She also performed in New York with Thomas/Ortiz

Dance. Her performances with Spectrum Dance Theater include 5th Avenue Theatre's *Carousel* and Donald Byrd's *Carmina Burana*, *Rambunctious* (1, 2 and 3), *Drastic Cuts*, *Jazz 1* and *LOVE*. This marks Pihlaja's fifth season with Spectrum Dance Theater.

Andrew Pontius (Dancer)

Originally from Bremerton, Washington, Andrew Pontius started studying ballet at the age of 11 with Pacific Northwest Ballet. At 15, he left for Washington, D.C. and graduated from the Kirov Academy of Ballet in 2010. He began his professional career with the Dresden SemperOper Ballet in Germany, where he spent two seasons, before moving to Madrid to dance for the Victor Ullate Ballet. He is happy to be home dancing in the Pacific Northwest in his fifth season working with Donald Byrd at Spectrum Dance Theater.

Fausto Rivera (Dancer)

Fausto Rivera is a Chicano dance artist from the Pacific Northwest. He graduated with a BA in Dance and a minor in Anthropology from the University of Washington, where he was awarded the Evelyn H. Green Endowed Scholarship for artistic merit and promise. He grew up training in Mexican Folk Dance, and trained in ballet and modern dance in college. While at the UW, he danced with the Chamber Dance Company, performing work by Lar Lubovitch, Danny Shapiro/Joanie Smith, Bill T. Jones and Doug Varone. Rivera also trained at the San Francisco Conservatory of Dance, Northwest Dance Project's Launch: 10, and, for a semester, at the University of Guadalajara in Jalisco, Mexico. He is a founding member of Seattle's Au Collective, a collective of dance artists highlighting the work of artists from marginalized communities. Rivera has been a company member of Spectrum Dance Theater since January 2015.

Mary Sigward (Dancer)

Mary Sigward was born and raised in Cincinnati, OH. She began dancing at the age of five at the Connie Ferguson School of Dance, and continued her formal training with Meredith Benson and Mario de la Nuez at De La Arts. In 2015, she graduated magna cum laude from the University of South Carolina with a BA in Dance Performance, where she was awarded the Outstanding Senior Award for artistic achievement. Under the direction of Susan Anderson and Stacey Calvert, she had the honor of performing works by George Balanchine, Twyla Tharp, Tanya Wideman-Davis, Thaddeus Davis, Helen Pickett, Lynne Taylor-Corbett and Paul Taylor. Sigward has attended summer and winter workshops at Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Spectrum Dance Theater, Complexions Contemporary Ballet, Lemon Sponge Cake Contemporary Ballet, Visceral Dance Chicago and Company E. She became a certified Pilates instructor in April 2017. This is Sigward's fourth season with Spectrum Dance Theater and second season as the Academy Coordinator for the School of Spectrum Dance Theater.

Jaclyn Wheatley (Dancer)

Originally from Vancouver, B.C., Jaclyn Wheatley received her early dance training under the tutelage of Kathryn Long, Rachael Poirier and Li Yaming. Other training included American Ballet Theatre, Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, Dance New York International (Paris, France) and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. An alumna of the Alvin Ailey/Fordham University BFA program, Wheatley graduated summa cum laude with a major in Dance and a minor in Business Administration. A member of the JUNTOS Collective, she traveled to Costa Rica, Guatemala and Nicaragua to participate in dance outreach activities. She has performed the works of Alvin Ailey, Jennifer Archibald, Joshua Beamish, Ronald K. Brown and Arch Contemporary Ballet. Since her move to Seattle, Wheatley has performed in many of Donald Byrd's productions including *Drastic Cuts*, *LOVE*, *Carmina Burana*, *Shot* and *(Im)pulse*, as well as works presented by Alex Crozier, Vincent Michael Lopez and The Cabiri. This is her fifth season with Spectrum Dance Theater.