

# SDCD *Arts* Notes

An Educational Study Guide from  
San Diego Civic Dance / San Diego Park & Recreation  
School Shows – February 9, 2024 10:00am & 11:45am



Casa del Prado Theatre  
Balboa Park



*“It had long since come to my attention that people of accomplishment rarely sat back and let things happen to them. They went out and happened to things.”*

**--Leonardo da Vinci**

## *Connected*

### **Welcome!**

The San Diego Civic Dance Program welcomes you to the school-day performance of ***Collage 2024: Connected***, featuring the acclaimed dancers from the San Diego Civic Dance Company in selected numbers from their currently running theatrical performance.

The City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department’s Dance Program has been lauded as *the* standard for which other city-wide dance programs nationwide measure themselves, and give our nearly 3,000 students the ability to work with excellent teachers in a wide variety of dance disciplines.

The dancers that comprise the San Diego Civic Dance Company serve as “Dance Ambassadors” for the City of San Diego throughout the year at events as diverse as The Student Shakespeare Festival (for which they received the prize for outstanding Collage entry), Disneyland Resort and at Balboa Park’s December Nights event, to name but a few. In addition to the talented City Dance Staff, these gifted dancers also are given the opportunity to work with noted choreographers from Broadway, Television, Los Angeles, New York, and Major Motion Pictures throughout the year.



***Collage 2024: Connected*** represents the culmination of choreographic efforts begun in the summer of 2023. Andrea Feier, Dance Specialist for the City of San Diego gave the choreographers a simple guideline: create a dance offering your unique view of what connects us through dance - whether in the audience, as a dancer or as a choreographer. From that came a wide variety: in music, in dance, in expression – and more. “It’s a truly eclectic show that appeals to all tastes” says Ms. Feier, “which is what our audiences have come to expect from us, and what we deliver”.

This Study Guide will give you an idea of what you can expect at this performance, how to prepare your students for the performance, and, importantly, the behavior and decorum that is expected of them in the fulfillment of their role as the audience for today’s show. If this is your first time seeing these wonderful performers, we welcome you to our dance world. If you’re returning to see them again, welcome back, and we hope to see you at future performances.

*-The Civic Dance Arts Program*

*“If I could tell you what it meant, there would be no point in dancing it.”*

**Isadora Duncan**

*Connected*

## The Art Form of Dance

### ***DANCE; Behind Every Step, Life's Twists and Turns***

By MIKHAIL BARYSHNIKOV

WHEN I first started going to the ballet, the thing that drew me back to it was not just the beauty of the performances but the fact that that beauty seemed personal to me. It is like people who collect stamps. In those little pictures they see details -- how many lines are laid down to make an ear or a mustache, and the inking, and the feel of the paper -- that they think only they can cherish. Only to them are these things so precise and so moving.

So it was for me with ballet. I was sure that I was the only one who saw how the fairy, when she raised her wand, lowered it again in a special kind of arc, first fast, then slower. That was mine, and full of mystery.

When I entered the ballet school in Riga, I began to see all this from the inside, to see the mechanics, how that arc of the wand was taught. But ballet didn't become less mysterious to me. It became more so. Here was a community of people, very secluded, who dedicated themselves to this art form. They were servants of something -- messengers. They had a duty, and not to everyday life.

I thought, what a beautiful way this was to live. They all had their own places in the company, each place very important and needed, whether it was a corps de ballet dancer or a coryphee or a character dancer or a ballerina. They spent pretty much all day in the theater, and then at night



they gave the performance. Hundreds of people, if you include the orchestra and the stagehands, and they all worked and worked, and then for three hours at night they came together and did this thing that was not about them but about an idea. And the audience came to see it, and then it was gone. It was a memory. The whole thing seemed to me like a ritual, haunting.

That wasn't the only mystery. The ballets, too, in their stories, were about serious and personal matters. "Giselle" and "The Sleeping Beauty" -- these had to do with the great blessings and disasters that are the center of our lives, the things one is usually too embarrassed or too frightened to talk about. There they were, in crystallized form.

And again, it seemed very personal, because it was contained in the bodies of the dancers, and the body is so revealing. When a dancer comes onstage, he is not just a blank slate that the choreographer has written on. Behind him he has all the decisions he has made in life. He has already met a million forks in the road. Each time, he has chosen, and in what he is onstage you see the result of those choices. You are looking at the person he is, the person who, at this point, he cannot help but be. All the experiences he has had as a child and as a teen-ager, all the images that his body has accumulated, these come up as colors in the dancing, giving it sparkle and complexity. They come out through the eyes, through the pores.



Exceptional dancers, in my experience, are also exceptional people, people with an attitude toward life, a kind of quest, and an internal quality. They know who they are, and they show this to you, willingly. But all dancers are self-revealing, and this is true no matter what the style of dancing. Whether it is ballet or Cunningham technique or Indian or Balinese dancing, the character of the dancer pours through. Within a minute, you are receiving a personal message.

© Robert Greskovic, excerpted from *Ballet 101: A Complete Guide to Learning and Loving the Ballet*

*“What would life be if we had no courage to attempt anything?”*

**--Vincent Van Gogh**

## **Creating the Dances and the Performance**

The foundation for the creation of a dance is the dance discipline of the dancers. “What do I have to work with?” is the fundamental question all choreographers ask themselves before they create a dance piece. Fortunately, for our choreographers, the dancers of the Civic Dance Company must excel in numerous disciplines, and all are required to take additional dance classes outside of their Dance Company commitment in order to continually enhance and grow their dance education. Within the context of creating an entire show like *Collage 2024: Connected*, however, there are certain “restraints” put on the creative process. Most notably, we need to offer a variety of dance styles and music choices to appeal to a large cross-section of audience members demographically, and ensure that the numbers chosen fit into the theme of the Collage concert.

### **Guest Choreographers**

For the benefit of our Dance students, noted Guest Choreographers are brought in to work with the students over the summer during our two “Dance Camp” intensives. Similar to a traditional intensive, the dancers arrive early in the morning and stay into the late afternoon and evening concentrating on nothing but dance. During this time, they are taught the numbers created by the Guest

Choreographers, who are given great leeway into the choice of music and dance they would like to create – we essentially let them do anything that inspires.

Because we want to give the Company dancers the most diverse dance education as is possible, the Dance Specialist for the City of San Diego finds noted choreographers whom the dancers would

otherwise not have a chance to work with, then coordinates their schedule (they’re usually flown in from other parts of the United States), choice of music, and oversees how the piece will ultimately fit in with the final



product (it certainly helps our program that our Dance Specialist has great “dance world” connections, having graduated from The Juilliard School (Dance) and danced in numerous major dance companies in New York City and elsewhere.) Finally, once the piece has been selected, the dancers staged and the costumes picked out (costumes are either purchased for a specific dance or built from scratch to fit a particular choreographer’s vision), the rest of the show begins to take shape.

## ***Integrating the Dance Staff Pieces***

Working as a creative team, the Producer, Director and Designers of *Collage 2024: Connected* create a stage environment that will reflect the artistic intentions of the Collage theme. The City Dance Staff requests the numbers they would like to stage in much the same way that the Guest Choreographers do (although they have less freedom to choose, as the director may say “We have enough tap dances and need you to stage a jazz dance instead”, or “Sorry, we’ve already got a similar song in the show, you’ll have to choose different music.” Once those dances are cast (yes, even though the Dance Company members all auditioned for and were accepted into Company, they still must audition for each individual number), the running order is created in order to have a show that flows theatrically, with a minimum of time between numbers and a wide variety of styles and feelings to give the maximum enjoyment to the audience.

## ***Moving into the Casa del Prado Theatre***

Less than two weeks before opening night, the San Diego Civic Dance Company moves into the theatre (which is shared by several Performing Arts groups). At that point, there is no sound system up, no decorations in the lobby, and not a single theatre light hung for the show! In the first two days, the Lighting Designer oversees the light plot (where all the lights are hung up) and the Technical Director oversees the scenery and prop load-in and construction. For the next week, light cues are written (there are over 750 individual cues in a full Collage concert!), the sound levels are set, and the dancers get used to performing the dances in the stage area (remember, for the past 6 – 8 months they’ve been performing the dances in different rehearsal halls and at different performance venues). Finally, 3 days before opening night, all of the elements are in place and the last 3 Technical Rehearsals are performed, two with no audience members and the last one with an invited audience. These are the three rehearsals where all of the elements are in place: Costumes (including quick changes), Lights, Sets, Props and Music are exactly as they will be on opening night. Barring injuries or other unforeseen issues, the show is then “frozen”, meaning no changes can occur without the express consent of the director and stage manager.

*“I'm not one who divides music, dance or art into various categories. Either something works, or it doesn't.”*

**–Twyla Tharp**

# *Connected*

## **Featured Music & Styles and Inspirational Artwork**

*Collage 2024: Connected* is a full-length theatrical piece. For the School Show Performance, the numbers are selected for their appropriateness.

### ***Modern / Lyrical***

#### **Yellow**

*Yellow* by Coldplay from the Album *Parachutes*

#### **Land of Confusion**

*Land of Confusion* by Genesis from the Album *Invisible Touch*

#### **Use My Voice**

*Use My Voice* by Evanescence from the Album *The Bitter Truth*

#### **In This Shirt**

*In This Shirt* by The Irrepressibles from the Album *From the Circus to the Sea, Pt. 2*

#### **Both Sides Now**

*Both Sides, Now* by Joni Mitchell, performed by Emilia Jones from the Original Motion Picture Soundtrack Album of *CODA*

### ***Tap***

#### **Come Together**

*Come Together* by Lennon & McCartney performed by Michael Jackson from the Album *HIStory: Past, Present and Future, Book 1*

#### **Puttin' On The Ritz**

*Puttin' on the Ritz* by Irving Berlin, performed by Bing Crosby from the Album *Bing Sings The Irving Berlin Songbook*

#### **Bad**

*Bad* by Michael Jackson from the Album *Bad*

#### **Counterpoint**

*The Beast* by Delta Rae from the Album *The Dark*

#### **Good To Go**

*Good to Go* by LÒNIS feat. Daphne Willis from the Album *Good to Go*



**“I use dancing to embellish, extend, or enlarge upon an existing emotion.”**  
*Gower Champion*

*Connected*

## **Dance Proficiency: California Standards**

Dancers of the San Diego Civic Dance Company receive varied and artistically rich instruction, greatly enhancing their Performing Arts Education. However, even students attending *Collage 2024: Connected*, then combining that attendance with pre- and post-performance discussions, will enhance their appreciation of the art form of dance and increase their dance education. The California State Standards for Proficient and Advanced levels can be addressed in these discussions and are beneficial for High School Graduates wishing to specialize in Dance. Note, the standards excerpted here are for Grades 9 – 12. Your grade level can be found at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/vapacontentstds.asp> The following Content Standards as adopted by the California State Board of Education for the Visual and Performing Arts (Dance) are included here based upon their relevancy:

### **3.0 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT**

- Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of Dance
- Students analyze the function and development of dance in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting human diversity as it relates to dance and dancers.

#### **Development of Dance**

**3.1** Identify, analyze, and perform folk/traditional, social, and theatrical dances with technically and appropriate stylistic nuances.

**3.2** Describe ways in which folk/traditional, social, and theatrical dances reflect their specific cultural context. Analyze the role dancers and choreographers play in the interpretation of dances in various historical and cultural settings

#### **Diversity of Dance**

**3.4** Explain how dancers from various cultures and historical periods reflect diversity and values (e.g., ethnicity, gender, body types, and religious intent). Explain how dancers and choreographers reflect roles, work, and values in selected cultures, countries, and historical periods.

### **4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING**

- Responding to, Analyzing, and Making Judgments About Works of Dance
- Students critically assess and derive meaning from works of dance, performance of dancers, and original works according to the elements of dance and aesthetic qualities.



## **Description, Analysis, and Criticism of Dance**

**4.1** Describe how the qualities of a theatrical production contribute to the success of a dance performance (e.g., music, lighting, costuming, text, set design). Critique dance works to improve choreographic structure and artistic presence.

**4.2** Apply criteria-based assessments appropriate to various dance forms (e.g., concert jazz, street, liturgical).

**4.3** Defend personal preferences about dance styles and choreographic forms, using criteria-based assessment.

## **Meaning and Impact of Dance**

**4.4** Research and identify dances from different historic periods or cultures and make connections between social change and artistic expression in dance.

**4.5** Identify and evaluate the advantages and limitations of viewing live and recorded dance performances.

## **5.0 CONNECTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, APPLICATIONS**

- Connecting and Applying What Is Learned in Dance to Learning in Other Art Forms and Subject Areas and to Careers

- Students apply what they learn in dance to learning across subject areas. They develop competencies and creative skills in problem solving, communication, and management of time and resources that contribute to lifelong learning and career skills. They also learn about careers in and related to dance.



## **Connections and Applications Across Disciplines**

**5.2** Compare the study and practice of dance techniques to motion, time, and physical principles from scientific disciplines (e.g., muscle and bone identification and usage; awareness of matter, space, time, and energy/force).

**5.4** Explain how participation in dance develops creative skills for lifelong learning and well-being that are interpersonal and intrapersonal.

**5.5** Examine the training, education, and experience needed to pursue dance career options (e.g., performer, choreographer, dance therapist, teacher, historian, critic, filmmaker).

*“Dance is the hidden language of the soul and body.”*

**Martha Graham**

*Connected*

## **Further Studies & Post-Performance Discussion**

### **Questions to discuss after the performance:**

1. Why do you think certain music was chosen for a particular dance?
2. Why do you think certain costumes were chosen for a particular dance?
3. How were the lighting used to convey different feelings, emotions and locations?
4. How were certain cultural influences (flamenco, tap, African, etc.) incorporated into various dances? What is their cultural significance?
5. Each individual dancer has to excel in many different dance disciplines in order to be considered for the San Diego Civic Dance Company. Discuss how many different dance disciplines you saw and if you noticed individual dancers performing more than one type (tap, jazz, ballet, etc.)
6. Discuss how dances elicited emotions. Were you surprised at how certain dances made you feel? Did you laugh?
7. Dancers are athletes! Compare the physical skills necessary to be a dancer with those of other athletic endeavors.

### **Additional Dance Viewing:**

- Martha Graham Dance Company– *Performance and Discussion* (YouTube)
- Cunningham: *Merce Cunningham A Life* (Max)
- *Alvin Ailey’s Revelations – 1995 Lincoln Center Performance* (YouTube)
- *American Ballet Theatre’s Swan Lake* (YouTube)
- The San Diego Civic Dance Company – *SDCDA Virtual Performances* (YouTube)

### **Are Students Interested in Taking Dance Classes?**

Visit [www.cividdancearts.org/classes.html](http://www.cividdancearts.org/classes.html)

### **More Information about the San Diego Civic Dance Association:**

[www.cividdancearts.org](http://www.cividdancearts.org)

*“The hardest job kids face today is learning good manners without seeing any.”*

**Fred Astaire**

*Connected*

## **Being a Good Audience Member**

### **Getting prepared**

Before the performance, which may be your first live dance concert, we encourage you to learn a little about the elements of the art and how they fit together. It will also help if you check out a dance video or two from the library, especially if you’ve never experienced a live dance concert before. Unlike a traditional “musical”, our dancers do not sing while they dance, nor do they pretend to be singing like in the movies. And unlike dance concerts like “The Nutcracker”, our individual dance pieces don’t join together to tell one long story.

### **Live Dance is NOT TV or the Movies**

It may seem obvious, but it is important to emphasize that you’ll be seeing a live event. The dancers are in the same room with the audience, hearing, seeing, and responding to everything that is going on. Inexperienced theatre-goers may assume that the event is similar to television or a movie – and that they won’t hear talking or noise made by the audience. But, in fact, the dancers rely on the audience to help make the dance come alive. And if there’s talking or other noise in the theatre, there’s no “rewind” button, so audience concentration and attention is important. But does that mean you have to be absolutely quiet? Absolutely not! If something is funny, go ahead and laugh, and if something makes you want to clap – go ahead and applaud!

### **What to Bring to the Theatre**

There’s almost no *Don’ts* (don’t talk, don’t fidget, etc.) in the theatre, but rather a list of *Do’s* to keep in mind:

- *Enjoy the performance* and give support to the dancers (applause is really nice).
- *Use Full concentration.* If you talk during the performance you will disrupt the concentration of everyone around you and also that of the dancers on the stage, and you’ll miss whatever is going on at that moment.
- *Plan on Having Fun,* ready to applaud and be ready to watch for the tiniest of details.
- *Have an Open Mind,* eager for new experiences and a new form of art.

### **What to Leave at School (and NOT TO BRING to the Theatre)**

- *There is no food or drink allowed in the theatre.*
- **All mobile or other electronic devices MUST be turned off.**
- No photography, electronic games, iPods or anything else that will interrupt the concentration of others.

### **What Will You Experience?**

The Pieces in *Collage 2024: Connected* tell a story, and many numbers have the power to move us emotionally. Pieces will convey ideas through dance movement, combined with costumes, lighting and music – and will mean different things to different people. It is okay to leave the theatre with questions about meaning and with different perceptions of what you saw from that of your friends. Dance is truly the unique performance art form that is designed to have the meaning – the “experience” – be individual and the impact personal. Your own anticipation before coupled with your undivided attention during are the keys to a rich theatrical experience.

### **We’re in this Together**

Think about how you feel when you get up in front of the class to give a report, or sing a solo, or do anything where there’s other people watching you. That’s how our dancers feel! Yes, even these very experienced dancers who perform all year long get nervous. The dancers care about how the audience responds to them!

## **SDCDA Collage Staff Choreographers**

Andrea Feier, Dance Specialist  
Rachel Mitchell, Collage Director  
Angelica Duarte  
Arika Keagy  
Caitlin Thomas  
Debbie Hardesty  
Tiffany Goff

Kathy Landry  
Alexis Ledgerwood  
Elizabeth Myrick  
Vincent Padilla

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## **The San Diego Civic Dance Company:**

Aiana Tolentino  
Aleina Trevino  
Alex Schueler  
Anabelle Betancourt  
Arielle Valenzuela  
Aurora Querido  
Bennett Findlay  
Citlali Gomez  
Daelin Ross  
Daphne Jones  
Destiny Deras  
Gabriella Betancourt  
Galia Balcazar  
George Greeves  
Hazel Butler  
Jade Miller  
Jacqueline Dombrow  
Kaelynn Garbutt  
Katie Cone  
Keira Kilgallon  
Kirra Felten  
Leona Amante  
Madelyn Paat  
Skyler Fogel  
Taylor Corlett

## **The T-Troupe:**

Abigail Karpewicz  
Ayla Lockhart  
Azeret Talamantes  
Caitlyn Nguyen  
Calvin Nguyen  
Cindy Nguyen  
Emily Hoang  
Evelyn Gray  
Rebekah Nguyen  
Ruby Jansen  
Shelby Felten  
Sterling Gonzales  
Tori Nielsen

## **Collage Production Staff:**

Andrea Feier, Producer  
Rachel Mitchell, Director  
Alan Schueler, Stage Manager  
Bonnie Breckenridge, Light Design  
Viviana Betancourt, Costume Design  
Kim Verstraten & Dustin Greeves, Scenery

All photos courtesy Kevin Walsh Photography

