



MARGARET
JENKINS
DANCE
COMPANY
EST. 1973

Margaret Jenkins Dance Company History

Margaret Jenkins, Founder and Artistic Director of the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company is a choreographer, teacher, and mentor to many artists as well as a designer of unique community-based dance projects. Jenkins began her early training in San Francisco. In the sixties, she moved to New York to study at Juilliard, continued her training at UCLA and returned to New York to dance in the companies of Jack Moore, Viola Farber, Judy Dunn, James Cunningham, Gus Solomons, Jr., and Twyla Tharp's original company with Sara Rudner. In addition, Jenkins was a member of the faculty of the Merce Cunningham Studio and restaged his works for companies in Europe and the United States through 1976.

In 1970 Jenkins returned to San Francisco, and in 1974, formed the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company (MJDC). She opened one of the West Coast's first studio-performing spaces and a school for the training of professional modern dancers. This venue quickly became the center for local and traveling companies to show their work. Viola Farber and Merce Cunningham were frequent guests, and dozens of young choreographers had the chance to experiment and take risks. Jenkins takes great pride in being part of the revitalization of the West Coast as a major center for dance activity. In 2013 – 2014, Jenkins celebrated the 40th Anniversary of her Company for which she created *Times Bones*, based on gathering the scattered bones from her older work, as well as *The Gate of Winds* in collaboration with her Company and the Kolben Dance Company of Jerusalem. After its West Coast premiere the Company traveled to Jerusalem for its premiere there.

Over the last decade, Ms. Jenkins' choreographic attention has been primarily focused on cross-cultural collaborations between her Company and international artists, including the Tanusree Shankar Dance Company of India, and the Guangzhou Modern Dance Company of China. She has also developed ambitious multi-disciplinary works such as *Light Moves*, an evening-length dance created in collaboration with media artist Naomie Kremer. A proponent of a fully realized collaborative art, Jenkins has collaborated for over 43 years with poet Michael Palmer and worked with dance, music and visual arts luminaries, including Terry Allen, Alvin Curran, Paul Drescher, Rinde Eckert, David Lang, Bruce Nauman, Alexander V. Nichols and Yoko Ono, among others.

Jenkins has received commissions from renowned national and international arts presenters and cultural institutions, including BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music), the Clarice Smith Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Maryland, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA), The Dance Center of Columbia College in Chicago, National Dance Project (NDP), among others. In 2008, Jenkins was commissioned to create a new work for the 75th anniversary of the San Francisco Ballet.

In 2004, she and her Company launched CHIME (Choreographers in Mentorship Exchange). CHIME is a unique mentorship program that fosters creative exchange and long-term relationships between emerging and established choreographers, creating an arena for the critical analysis of choreography outside of the academic environment. In 2014 the Company reinvented CHIME, with Ms. Jenkins being the mentor to three Bay Area choreographers.

She has received numerous awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, an Irvine Fellowship in Dance, the San Francisco Arts Commission Award of Honor, three Isadora Duncan Awards (Izzies), including the Sustained Achievement Award in 2015, and the Bernard Osher Cultural Award. In 2013, she was awarded a residency at The Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center in Italy.

In 2015, the MJDC premiered *Site Series (Inside Outside)*. The work was generated in the Margaret Jenkins Dance Lab using a Beckett-like imaginary living room, a contained space, to inspire the choreography. With an easily adaptable minimal set, the flexibility of *Site Series* has allowed the Company to launch a new way of working, more intimate in every aspect, performing more frequently in the San Francisco Bay Area, in New York City and during a two-week tour to Sweden in 2016. To date, *Site Series (Inside Outside)* has been performed in over 35 locations.

2017 was the 43rd Season of the Company, where the MJDC became the first to perform in the new Wilsey Center in the San Francisco Veterans' Building. A reimagined version of *Site Series* was performed in the Education Room and the world premiere *Skies Calling Skies Calling* was performed in the Atrium Theater. The collaborators were video artists Hi-Jin Kang Hodge and David Hodge, composer Thomas Carnacki, lighting designer David Robertson, costume design Mary Domenico and poet Michael Palmer.

As the Company nears the 45th anniversary in 2019, Artistic Director Margaret Jenkins, long-time collaborators Paul Dresner, Rinde Eckert, Alexander V. Nichols, Michael Palmer, along with the dancers have been deep at work incubating new ideas. This is the first time since 1993's *The Gates (Far Away Near)* that these artistic collaborators and Ms. Jenkins have all worked together, and they do so to premiere *Toward 45*. This new work, a series of physical, musical, narrative and visual episodes traverses through the Margaret Jenkins Dance Lab and two studios of the San Francisco Conservatory of Dance. The evenings' investigations are the foundation of what will eventually become the 45th Home Season of the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company.