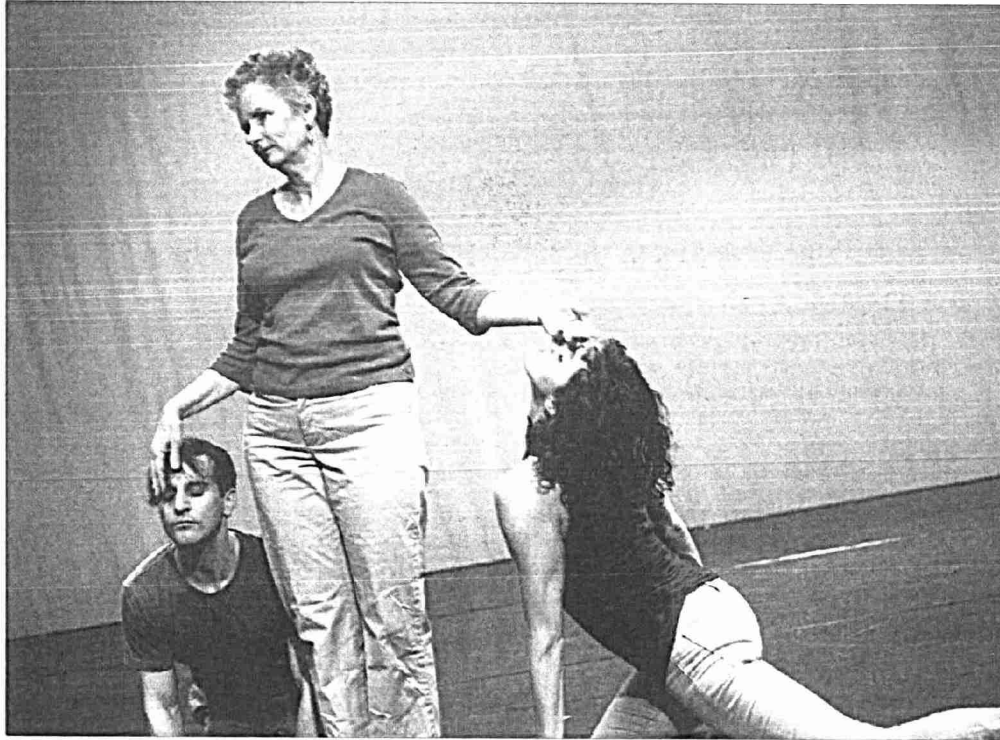


a&e arts music movies mayhem



I THINK YOU'VE GOT A FEVER: Beverly Agard (center), the mother of dancer and choreographer Gabrielle Revlock (right), has never taken a dance class. But she still keeps getting recruited as a performer, as in this workshop last year and in Revlock's upcoming *Confetti* at the Annenberg Center.

KATHRYN RAINES

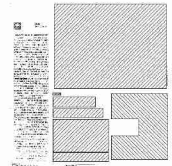
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DAUGHTER'S LITTLE HELPER

A Philly choreographer works her amateur-dancer mom into a premiere of duets.

By Julie Zeglen

Philadelphia choreographer and dancer Gabrielle Revlock has several "dance crushes" — performers who piqued her creative interest enough that she enlisted them as dance partners for *Confetti*, her upcoming all-duet show premiering next weekend at the Annenberg Center for Performing Arts. *Confetti* is an abstract interpretation of how two people can influence and change each other through movement. Most of Revlock's 12 dance partners (14, if you count two hand trucks that "dance" in the opening section) come from a dance background, like Greg Helt, a fellow contemporary choreographer and dancer. Some are less expected, like 8-year-old Lily Savage, a student at the Rock School and daughter of another dancer in the show. But the least traditional is Revlock's own mother, Beverly Agard — who's never taken a dance class in her life.



"No." Revlock laughs when asked to confirm that her mom is not a professional dancer. "At the very beginning of this process, I did little interviews with people [in the show] and asked them what type of dancer they were, and she said that she was a salsa dancer. **My mother has never taken any salsa, so I don't know where that's coming from.**"

Agard, a horticultural therapist by day, fostered her daughter's lifelong enthusiasm for the art form. "I always loved dance and took her to a ton of dance performances when she was younger," she says. "I took her to *The Nutcracker*, and she came out knowing all the steps." But she entered the world of contemporary dance herself only two years ago, when Revlock encouraged her to participate in Sylvain Emarad's massive group dance *Le Grand Continental* as part of the 2012 Fringe/Live Arts festival. She's sporadically appeared in

her daughter's work ever since, both on stage and in video.

"I knew that she'd be really game, and that she had this uninhibitedness that I think is lovely; I wanted to work with that," says Revlock, who is

known in the Philadelphia dance scene for her quirky dance style and incorporation of humor into her pieces. "I get sick of my own gracefulness sometimes; I want to just be irregular. She can do that. I have a hard time doing that. Also, because she's my mom, she lets me drag her around the stage and sit on her." She laughs. "Maybe with other people there's some of that awkwardness of, 'Do you mind if I stand on you?' But I can just do that to my mom!"

The mother-daughter duet is the second in the show. As the previous section's music fades and Revlock lies on the ground with Holt gyrating over her, Agard emerges from stage left, a bundle of broom handles in hand. She drops them, and Holt steps aside. For the next six minutes, Agard and Revlock engage in a partly synchronized series of steps ranging from jazzy jumps to morose floor rolls. At one point, another dancer emerges and attempts to drag Agard off of the stage, and Revlock drags her back, then takes a seat on her mother's knees. In a rehearsal about two weeks before the show's opening, Agard seems to have the moves down pretty well, only hesitating to watch her daughter for direction a few times.

It's clear that Agard is no pro. But being an amateur has its value.

"I'm sure some people will be horrified by the section, but I hope that some people will actually enjoy watching her make choices," says Revlock. "The beauty of her doing things a little bit differently each time, I think, is really interesting."

Acting as protégée to someone who was once your own protégée can make for a strange power shift, though.

"I've been reprimanded a few times," says Agard. "When I got on the cell phone when she was giv-

ing direction, she didn't like that." Also, "she likes things very well-rehearsed. Somebody like me, it takes a lot of going over and going over. I'm 62."

"Patience is the number one word," says Revlock. I probably had the most rehearsals with her, and we're still trying to remember the choreography. And then I realized, that's what this section is. And if she doesn't remember it, fine. In fact, great. All the better. I love seeing her thinking about what's coming next and trying to remember."

Agard, in her own defense, credits herself with at least some of her daughter's talent. "She says I'm a good improviser. And she was always a good improviser. Maybe she got that from me."

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♦ Confetti, Jan. 24-25, \$20-\$30.
 Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, 3680 Walnut St., 215-898-3900,
 annenbergcenter.org.