

PHOTOGRAPH BY KATHRYN POOLE

South Philly Lifestyles

The gift of Gabrielle

A Passyunk Square dweller will enlist dance duets to share her passion for populist pieces.

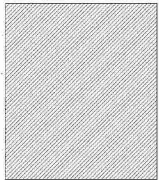
By Joseph Myers
REVIEW MANAGING EDITOR

A constant crusader for, and frequent recipient of, creative scrutiny, Gabrielle Revlock deems dance her best guide to giving fellow fanatics of observation many moments to understand exchanges of emotions. The 33-year-old performer and choreographer will again act as an advocate tomorrow and Saturday by premiering "Confetti," a 13-section work relying on duets to develop her appreciation for interpretation.

"People will definitely have occasions to read relationships into the piece," the resident of the 1300 block of Ellsworth Street said last week at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, her brainchild's host venue. "When they do, I hope they see themselves and make note of how our collective energy fuses."

An element of the location's By Local Series, "Confetti" will find the Passyunk Square inhabitant fulfilling her desire to devise material that focuses more on respecting shared space than achieving a sense of uniformity and perfection. To encourage that yearning, Revlock

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KATHRYN POOLE



counts trained and amateur dancers, including her mother, among her contributors and is infusing the presentation with her customarily quirky sense of humor.

"I love the world that I'm in," the owner of a lithe body and brain said of being a practitioner and disciple of contemporary, postmodern and avant-garde creations. "I get paid to roll around and make silly faces. What's not to find appealing in that for me?"

Well aware that many admirers of her field demand linear narratives and decry esoteric opuses, Revlock calls for seeing present innovations as keys to addressing the often puzzling yet ultimately rewarding task of analyzing the nature of present-day life.

"The mysteries are the joy of it," she said of having the ability to decipher meaning rather than dealing with the chore of accepting established notions of artistic pieces' aims. "I get that following some stuff can be difficult, but at the heart of most of it, and certainly with 'Confetti,' that complexity often reveals simplicity and the belief that somehow, we're all linked. That's kind of why I see my work as populist."

Stemming from an infatuation with "two-ness," Revlock elected to elevate the aforementioned sentiment by having duets do the deed of stressing interconnectedness. As she had wanted to observe how multiple stage partners can enhance her affinity to the nobody-is-an-island philosophy, she will share her atoms with, among others, a child and a classical Indian dance expert. Eager to oversee her first evening-length work, she sees her overall mission as being a touter of traditional views wrapped in a novel style.

"I think that's going to come through because I'm working with such an eclectic group," Revlock said. "No matter our backgrounds, we're striving to make connections. We all weave our own stories as audience members, and that's where we find strength."

THE WEST PHILLY native has always championed the benefits of applying oneself, using her diligence to become class valedictorian at Julia R. Masterman High School. While earning an art history degree at Vassar College, she added dancing to her pursuits, which helped her to answer the dreaded "What am I going to do now?" inquiry that many postsecondary learners

pose as graduation nears.

"I think it was essential to putting me on this path," Revlock said of an instructor's backing. "Dance can be a tough discipline to survive in, but I knew I had to see what kind of progress I could make."

Returning to her birth city, she founded Mano/Damno Projects in 2002, with the subsequent stretch yielding numerous alliances with entities such as the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage and stagings through FringeArts, for whom she earned a LAB Fellow residency two years ago, Philadelphia Dance Projects and the Opera Company of Philadelphia, among many others. Her alma mater, Bryn Mawr College and Drexel University have commissioned company creations, and she has garnered kudos as a '10 Philadelphia Dance Award honoree and an '11 A.W.A.R.D. Show finalist prize victor.

"I've been very fortunate that all of this hard work has put me in a situation where I'm able to follow my ambition and create," Revlock, who last month traveled to the Empire State to offer "Halo" through the New York Live Arts Fresh Tracks residency, said. "Plus, I've connected with great people."

Many of those figures, including childhood friend Bonnie Friel, a resident of the 1500 block of Mifflin Street and a "Confetti" performer, will interact with her this year as she contemplates how to inspire and rid possible connoisseurs of all apprehension. Immediately following the debut, she will turn her attention to teaming with Nicole Bindler, of the 700 block of Federal Street, for CardioCreativity, a series of Fairmount-situated classes she contends will help attendees to connect with their bodies.

"Dancing is about sharing experiences, meeting new people and feeling healthy," she said of the sessions, which will mark her return to teaching, a practice that years ago took her to numerous South Philly schools. "I'm enthusiastic about helping everyone along."

She and her Passyunk Square peer Bindler also will bond in April, as they will present "The Dance Apocalypse," a Pew Center funding winner, at the Fishtown-based FringeArts Theater. With so much on her calendar and interest in taking sec-

tions of “Confetti” on tour, Revlock seems determined to dance her way into the hearts and minds of everyone eager to side with solidarity over disparity.

“We all need that push to learn,” she said. “Dance is mine and I hope it can be so for others.” **SPR**

For tickets, visit annenbergcenter.org.

Contact Managing Editor Joseph Myers at jmyers@southphillyreview.com or ext. 124. Comment at southphillyreview.com/news/lifestyles.