

The Astra Dance Company presents—

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari!







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# **THE ARTISTIC VISION OF THE ASTRA DANCE COMPANY**

An innovative, original narrative-dance-theater company, ADC combines historical and imaginative dance stylings, entrancing stories, and absorbing digital scenography. This growing company is constantly pursuing new avenues in both their concepts and their involvement and participation in arts and entertainment. ADC seeks to fascinate audiences of all ages with the incomparable experience of live dance-theater performance.

The Astra Dance Company is an ensemble of serious artists working in the dance-theater idiom with vision and energy to bring to life the stories we select. We construct innovative theatrical dance productions with deep narratives and with integrated multimedia enhancement that complements traditional stagecraft.

The Astra Dance Company team will continue to grow by focusing upon stories that are timeless and enchanting, and upon making theater exciting and accessible through the unparalleled experience of powerful live dance-theater performance.

# The Artistic Vision of “The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari”: From Silent Film to Dance-Theatre!

One of my project lines for the Astra Dance Company is the re-creation of some of the most absorbing films of the Silent Era as dance-dramas. While **Nosferatu**, **Metropolis**, **The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari** and come at once to mind in this connection, seemed to me clearly to deserve to be first in line and when I proposed it to the Astra creative team, **Caligari** proved a favorite!

David Wilkinson  
Artistic Director  
Astra Dance Company

## Caligari the film

The film **Caligari**, made in 1919-1920 Germany, is reckoned to be the foundation of the genre of the horror film. When a traveling hypnotist, Dr. Caligari and his encoffined future-telling somnambulist Cesare join a fair in a small German town, frightful events begin to occur ... The townsfolk search for answers. Investigations into these horrors discover a strange and dangerous trail which leads deeper into this twisted world of shadows and dreams, ending at last in an insane asylum—but who is it that is mad? Perhaps the investigator himself....

**Caligari** is a festival of the menacing and the macabre. The figures of authority are weird or sinister. The external world broods threateningly. Apparent exits from danger lead only to new entrapments.

The style of **Caligari** is remarkable. The actors move in dance-like ways, not always smoothly, sometimes in an abrupt fashion that anticipates dance modalities of decades later. The sets are painted backdrops, walls, floors and flats. Where we expect right angles, squares, rectangles, we find weirdly misshapen figures. The dress, makeup and expressions of the key figures Caligari and Cesare strongly express their eerie, uncanny characters.

The film **Caligari** resonates pervasively in the work of Tim Burton: The Penguin of *Batman Returns* has been compared to Dr. Caligari himself, the gentle lover Edward Scissorhands of the eponymous film to Cesare, and the “look” of *Beetlejuice* and *The Nightmare Before Christmas* to the unorthodox geometry of **Caligari**.

**Caligari** remains an active presence in the arts, remade as film, stage drama , radio drama and even Bunraku! Scores for **Caligari** have been written nearly a dozen times.

## **Caligari the dance-drama**

Dr. Caligari is the first of its kind for the Astra Dance Company. With its origin in silent film, Dr. Caligari broadens the reach of Astra Dance Company whose primary focus has been on the short story and poetry. No stranger to large casts, high production value and complicated digital components, Astra Dance Company thrives on the challenge of combining multiple art forms into the telling of a single story.

The multimedia production seamlessly weaves powerful, energetic and evocative dance, diverse and original music, vivid projections, stunning acrobatics and diverting circus arts to tell the classic, surrealistic and suspenseful tale of love, science, murder and madness at the turn of the last century.

A "who done-it?" silent film turned into the incomparable experience of live stage, Dr. Caligari is a theatrical dance show at every turn. To start the entire cast is clothed and painted head to toe in Black and White, which is further complimented by black and white multi-media projections and silent film clips, an original score by composer Regan Remy and emotive dance as the medium of communication all morphing this psychological thriller from fantasy to reality and back again.

The story is told on a bed of edgy orchestral music played by some of the top players in Los Angeles. The action is framed by 5 screens which fly in and out to play the part of the title cards from the film. The backdrop is a re-creation of the original painted backdrops, with the added dimension of animation.

Caligari is a dance through wicked carnivals and intrigues. Immersing the audience at every level, Astra Dance Company strives to entice you from the moment of arrival. It is a feast for the senses, and your experience with the strange characters begins when you enter the lobby!

## **Caligari the dance-drama vis-à-vis Caligari the film**

This latest incarnation of “Caligari” is ADC’s most ambitious project yet, with a sophisticated array of projectors building a surreal universe, and a fierce cast of performers recreating the passion and the dramatic impact that the 1919 silent-cinema classic had upon the world of its day.

The film is “expressionist” in visual style, in that objects are far from naturalistic and serve to embody the unstated emotions of the persons and the moment, and this principle has also guided our dance-drama.

The acting style of the film is also expressionistic rather than naturalistic, in that the actors show themselves as embodiments of emotions or ideas (Authority, Conformity, Order—and their opposites): this style too we have maintained.

One change worth noting: the film examines the borderlands of madness, ending with a twist that reverses its apparent verdict on sanity/insanity. Our show ends with a reversal of the reversal that puts the ultimate escape from enveloping horror once more into question.

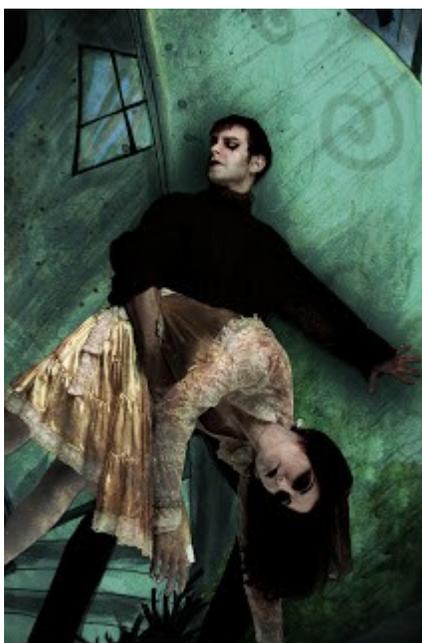
To our knowledge, Astra Dance Company is the first to pay homage to this enthralling and consuming film by way of dance-theater. We hope that we shall be judged to have done it justice.

## A Review and Synopsis of Caligari



**Sunday, September 30, 2012**

**Caligari by Astra Dance (Review)**

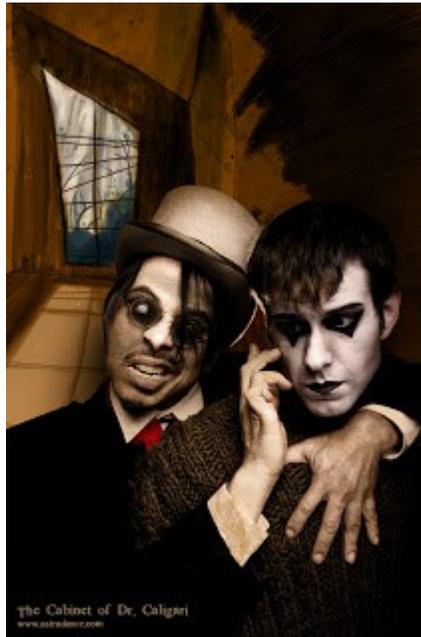


**Spoilers ahoy!**

Yesterday afternoon I went with some friends to see something that promised to prove special--a dance version of the classic Expressionist film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*.

For those who don't know, almost any film student would tell how [Caligari](#)

changed cinema forever. It became a film that brought you into a new world, then persuaded you on a visceral level this world was your own--a heightened reality making things somehow more true via the distortions. Then it emotionally makes you fundamentally uncertain of anything. We become totally absorbed in the Hero and all that he believes, loves and wants. Then we learn he's wrong about everything. Yet--and here lies the genius of it--we remain emotionally still on the hero's side! Our intellectual and emotional understanding of the world become totally in conflict, and we feel the conflict! Recognize it!



The [Astra Dance Company](#) transforms this story into a two-act play that, like the film, relies on written dialogue (shown on screens either side of the stage). Like all narrative dance, it uses movement rather than words to convey content. Two men sit on a bench. One tells of his belief in spirits. Francis ([Gaton Askey](#)), the second man, points to a very pretty girl passing by. His fiancée, Jane ([Amy Highfill](#)). What happened to us, he insists, was stranger still...

So, like the film, we spend the bulk of the performance in flashback. On one level, what follows makes for an exciting thriller and spooky horror story. Indeed, many credit *Caligari* as the first horror film. Francis and Alan ([Olivia Bollfrass](#)), best-of friends, decide to attend the carnival that just arrived in town. Along the way they see Jane, the Mayor's daughter, whom they both love. Both agree the choice must be hers, but either way they remain friends! But then, they go to the side show, to see the somnambulist

Cesare ([Brandon Binkly](#)) whom his keeper Dr. Caligari ([Roger Fojas](#)) insists can predict the future! Alan asks "How long do I have to live?" The reply, "You have until dawn!" horrifies all who hear it, not least because a grisly murder occurred the night before.



Next day, Francis visits Alan and discovers his friend murdered. He's right. Caligari sends Cesare out to commit murders each night. The next evening, his target is none other than Jane! But this time the somnambulist hesitates, entranced by her beauty. Instead, he kidnaps her--yet another horror as she is still reeling from the news of her friend Alan's brutal death. A brief encounter with Caligari and Cesare while looking for Francis made things worse for her fragile nerves. Now she becomes hysterical. Rescued as Cesare flees from a mob, her suffering inspires Francis to follow the doctor to the local Asylum where he flees. But there Francis learns the Asylum Director pretends to be Caligari, and with the staff as well as police officers learns of the man's obsession with an 18th century mountebank named Caligari, a man who "left a scar upon the world" by using a somnambulist to commit murders, holding whole towns in a grip of terror. Upon learning Cesare was killed, the Director loses his self control and has to be restrained. "From that day until this," says Francis, "the madman has never left his cell." But Jane, poor Jane, has never really recovered from the shock.



All this sounds like a fun tale for Halloween, but in fact it becomes much much more. The "look" of both film and dance play make it dreamlike yet weirdly appropriate. Houses look like a dark vision from Dr. Seus, even the color palette not quite real, yet strangely familiar. The cast wears white face make-up and white gloves, all save Cesare whose gloves stand out as black. It all ties in with the plot, which actually builds upon questions of reality. The carnival with its otherworldly delights. A romantic triangle we expect to result in conflict, but never does. A sleeping man who talks, and gives self-fulfilling prophecies. Confusion over who is who, what we can consider real, when do we dream and when not? It is a world where the idea that the director of a madhouse would of course turn out to be insane. Both familiar yet disturbing.



So have we any right to be surprised or upset by the final twist? Francis and his companion we see return back to the asylum where they live. Patients. Lunatics. Francis sees "Alan," amazing his friend is yet alive! He sees Cesare and others. Jane he piteously approaches, clearly in love or seeming so with a delusional girl lost in her own reality, with no notion whom he might be. Finally, the director of this, the REAL asylum, walks in. Francis shrieks CALIGARI! And attacks him! Attendants force a straightjacket onto

him. But the director's notes "At last I understand. He believes me to be Caligari! But now I know how to cure him!" But for all we've now seen, the director still oozes sinister intent. Or does he? As the dance ends, we see him pick up a book about the mountebank Caligari, the figure in whom Francis insisted this man had become obsessed. Was Francis the madman right? Is the director evil and insane? Or is he studying Caligari in hopes of curing the lad. Or both? Or neither?

We don't know. **We can never know.** Hence this story's power! Captured



with great skill by a dance company that never stops giving us this intense dreamlike reality. The police with their rigid, almost military unity. Poor Jane as we see her sanity shred under one terror after another. Asylum doctor who with Francis discover the director's notes and react in ever-growing horror at the contents! Or the physical (but silent) laughter from Caligari at the end of Act One as we see someone else arrested for the first two murders. At that moment, we know him guilty, without any evidence at all. And yet, even at story's end, is he really guilty of anything? If so, what?

The original music in the show was composed, arranged and mastered by [Regan Remy](#). I for one am seriously tempted to look for a CD of this score when it becomes available. While eerily lovely and compelling, it also captures the strange essence of the story. Kudos!

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari plays until October 6, 2012 at the [El Portal Theatre](#) in North Hollywood. I strongly recommend it!

Posted by Zahir Blue

# Poster Art for "Caligari"

*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND  
**SEPTEMBER 7th - OCTOBER 7th**

A LEGENDARY PERFORMANCE  
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LEGENDARY GERMAN EXPRESSIONISTIC FILM BY ROBERT WIENE

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North Hollywood

*Astra*  
DANCE COMPANY

*Los Angeles*  
BALLET ACADEMY



## Video Clip Hyperlinks for “Caligari”

### Promotionals

[1:13 Minute Promotional Trailer](#)

[1:23 Minute Promotional Trailer](#)

### Interviews

[Interviews with director Sasha Travis, artistic director David Wilkinson, and Roger Fojas \(Caligari\)](#)

[DancePlug host Simone Denise talks to director Sasha Travis, choreographer Nichelle Bane, and performers Rodger Fojas, Gaton Askey, Amy Highfill, Brandon Binkly, Boone and Cheetah Platt.](#)

### Selections

[10:41 minutes of selected scenes from Caligari:](#)

Scene 1: The Strongmen

Scene 2: The Wrong Murderer is Captured

Scene 3: Jane in Mourning

Scene 4: Jane Visits Caligari

Scene 5: The Abduction

Scene 6: The Death of Cesare

# More Reviews of “Caligari”

## The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari – Astra Dance – Los Angeles theater dance review

By [Pauline Adamek](#)

Thursday, October 4th, 2012



Hello readers!

My theater review this week for the LA Weekly is of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, an innovative dance work presented by **Astra Dance Company**, playing for TWO MORE NIGHTS ONLY, this weekend at the **El Portal Theatre**, in NoHo.

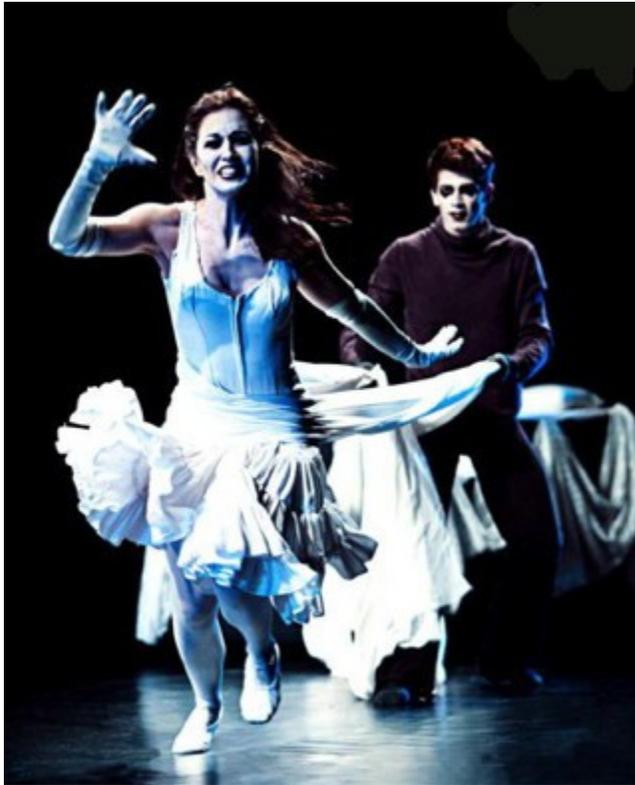
### *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*

**Astra Dance Company** has interpreted the twisted, sinister plot and expressionistic style of the 1920s silent horror film classic to produce a gorgeous if disquieting acrobatic ballet. A breathtakingly talented troupe of 17 neoclassical dancers, contortionists and circus artists emote and perform the melodramatic tale of murder and mystery against a projected backdrop of animation and abstract, jagged settings.

Best friends Francis (a superb **Gaston Askey**) and Alan (**Olivia Bollfrass**) vie for the affections of pretty Jane (**Amy Highfill**). When the menacing Dr. Caligari (**Roger Fojas**) comes to their small German town with his traveling carnival, a series of inexplicable murders send the townspeople into a frenzy of panic and mistrust.

**Nichelle Bane** and **Chandrae Roettig**'s sometimes jerky and manic choreography is dynamic, dazzling and expressive. It's well complemented by Regan Remy's marvelous original score, which merges classical instruments such as violin, clarinet and bassoon with the exotic flavor of the saw and *udu*.

Director **Sasha Travis** has staged her ambitious ballet well, creating vivid sequences and alluring drama. **Concetta Marie Verna**'s beautiful costumes permit fluid movement with period style. Although silent movie-type title cards projected on side screens frequently divert our focus from the stage, the graceful and athletic ballet is engrossing.



## Images of “Caligari”

[Dr. Caligari is displeased](#)  
["Let's go to the Faire!"](#)



The Strongmen at the Holstenwall faire

["Cesare knows the future!"](#)

[Small comfort](#)

[Assassin in the shadows](#)

[Gloating](#)

[Jane has offended Caligari](#)

[Cesare and Jane](#)



The Struggle

[The Abduction](#)



## Jane's Story

["It was CESARE!!!"](#)

[Francis among the Doctors](#)

[The Diary of the Director](#)

[Madness of the Director](#)

["Cesare is dead and we know everything!"](#)



Francis straitjacketed--1

[Francis straitjacketed--2](#)

["It is the Director who is insane!!"](#)

["Now I know how to cure him!"](#)

## Booking Options

### **Ready to Tour "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari"!**

This stunning and unique event has drawn rave reviews in Los Angeles, and is now ready to tour venues of 300 to 3000 seats. We would consider four-week runs, with a week dark in the middle, to be optimal for the promotional building of a full audience. We need Friday and Saturday night performances, and options in our hands for Thursday nights and for Saturday and Sunday matinees; and of course, however financed, we need to break even!

A cast of fifteen to twenty, with a crew of comparable size, plus a creative core of half a dozen, make up our current Caligari complement; but we will happily work with established theaters and university programs who wish to use their own people to supplement our indispensable core crew of five and our handful each of creatives and principal dancers!

If you think your venue has good potential for a successful run of "Caligari," please be in touch with Executive Producer/Artistic Director David Wilkinson at [david@astradance.com](mailto:david@astradance.com).

## Our Team

**Roger Fojas (Dr. Caligari, The Director)** - A multi-faceted creative character, Roger is a performer, choreographer, photographer, actor, dancer, writer, and clown. He has performed in several Los Angeles dance and theater troupes including CAG Theater, Hybrid Physical Theater, and the Silayan Dance Company. Roger is also highly acknowledged for his achievements in the vaudeville and circus performance worlds, where he is an active Ringmaster, character, and clown. He's performed and choreographed with troupes including Dream Circus Theater, Your Town Follies, the Wandering Marionettes, and the Lucent Dossier Experience. Roger has performed at music/art festivals such as Coachella, Lollapalooza & the Electric Daisy Carnival (USA), Electric Picnic (Ireland), Boom (Portugal), and within events through the UK, Canada and Guatemala, as well touring across the country as Ringmaster/clown with the band Panic! at the Disco (2006). Roger is featured in the 2011 documentary Don't Change the Subject, The Light of Love (2010), and the Panic! at the Disco concert DVD (2006). The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari is Roger's debut production with the Astra Dance Company and he's honored to be working with such a diverse and creative community of talented artists.

**Gaton Askey (Francis)** – Raised in the Midwest, Gaton dabbled in every activity imaginable until his mother placed him in dance class. Something about performing stuck and has taken him all around the world. Gaton began his professional dancing career with the Tremaine Dance Company assisting and training with the brilliant minds of Joe Tremaine himself, Jeff Amsden, Nick Drago, Keri Legrand, Marti Dew, Laurie Johnson and many more. Traveling to the major cities of the U.S. with Tremaine, he made time to live on the stage at venues such as The St. Louis Muny in performances like Grease O(Knicky), Les Miserables (Ensemble), Seussical the Musical (Wickersham Brother), Fiddler on the Roof (Russian/Core Dancer) and Thoroughly Modern Millie (Core Dancer). Gaton trained at Oklahoma City University under the inspiring Joe Rowan as well as the newly formed St. Louis Jazz Company before taking a contract with Jean Ann Ryan Productions. Jean Ann Ryan took Gaton from Dubai to Barcelona, from St. Petersburg to Dublin, all across Europe performing on Regent Seven Seas, 6 star Cruise line. Now settled down in Los Angeles, he is overwhelmingly excited to be back on the El Portal stage as Francis! Working with the Astra Dance Company has been an extremely fulfilling experience and he would like to express his extreme gratitude for the love and passion putr into this piece from everyone involved.

**Andrew Claus (Cesare)** - Originally from Seattle, WA, grew up very active in sports and the outdoors. After graduating from Whitman College and completing a year-long post-graduate acting program at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, he moved to New Your City to work as a dancer. Andrew trained at the Paul Taylor Dance School, and danced with a number of ballet and modern dance companies. His resume is filled with dance, theater, film and TV. Andrew is excited to be part of this

production, with Astra Dance Company after appearing in their last production of “Eleonora” as the leading male, Pyrros, here at the El Portal.

**Amy Highfill (Jane Olsen)** - Amy is originally from Missouri, and is a small town girl at heart! She’s been dancing since the age of 4, and hasn’t stopped since. After earning a BFA in dance, Amy moved to New York City working with many notable choreographers and companies. She studied at the Alvin Ailey and Martha Graham schools, acted Off- Broadway, and performed works by Sean Curran, Nathan Trice, and David Parsons. As a dancer, actress, and choreographer in Los Angeles, Amy has worked on national commercials, films, television, and many live shows. Hart Pulse Dance Co., Dream World Cirque, Bollywood Step, and John Gabriel Magic are a few of her recent performances. She is excited to reunite with this wonderful Astra family, and is so grateful for the opportunity to discover the emotional rollercoaster of Jane Olsen! SAG, AFTRA, AEA

**David Wilkinson (Founder, Artistic Director)** - David received the 1026-page , “The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe,” and tried to read it at a single sitting, many long years ago. Ex-private pilot, ex-skydiver, ex-paraglider, his body is now self-grounded, but his imagination still soars. In addition to founding Astra Dance Company, David is also a UCLA professor, author of five books and fifty-odd articles and a traveler to strange destinations--Ulan Bator, Timbuktu, Titicaca... He was once diving in search of a lost and sunken city off the coast of Africa, only to be driven off by its guardian jellyfish. David (as writer) and Regan Remy (as composer) founded the dance troupe which grew into the Astratroupers and then the Astra Dance Company. David’s Poe-esque tale “Astra von Berlifitzing” was set to music by regan and performed at Burning Man in 2008, at the Electric Lodge ion 2009, and at the Million Dollar Theater in 2010. Since the Electric Lodge is in Venice (California) and the Million Dollar is on Broadway (Los Angeles) David is proud to claim that “Astra” has been performed in Venice and on Broadway without ever having to leave the LA city limits! David next narrated Poe’s unusually light love story “Eleonora” and contributed his voice to Clive Barker’s “I Dreamed...” at the El Portal in 2012. He co-scripted “The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari” with the directorial genius Sasha Travis in May 2012, supplying the voices of the Director and the Police. He is happy to greet the return of Caligari to the North Hollywood borderline between reality and madness, and deeply grateful to the immensely talented cast, crew and creatives of Caligari, not to mention the wildly enthusiastic audiences whose energies drove Caligari’s revival!

**Regan Remy (Co-Creator, Composer)** - Falling in love with “Fur Elise” at age 8 set Regan “High Priestess” on her course to be a composer. She achieved prominence scoring everything from film trailers (Munich, The New World, Team America, Resident Evil, Lost, The Grid, Alias, 24) to big budget erotica (“The Fashionistas”, “Paradise Lost” and “Beautiful”). She has performed all over the world including: Australia with “Love in the Circus”, Europe and Bali. State-side she’s performed at Burning Man, Labyrinth of Jareth, Faerieworlds, Comicon and as an opera-singing mermaid in cirque show, Oceania. Regan and David Wilkinson founded the Astra Dance Company based on a

mutual passion for music, dance and classical literature.

**Sasha Travis (Director)** - Travis sees art as the connector of all things, unifying all aspects of production, on the stage and off, to tell a compelling and passionate story. Travis moved to Los Angeles in 2008, assuming a directing position for Sypher Art Studios, taking on role of Lead Director for the Labyrinth of Jareth Masquerade Ball. She joined the producing team for Labyrinth of Jareth in 2009. Travis has also had the pleasure of directing shows for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and joined the Astra Dance Company as Director in 2010.

**Nichelle Bane (Choreographer)** - As a dancer Nichelle was a member and soloist with the Civic Ballet of San Luis Obispo. Since moving to LA some of her credits include Friends, Clueless, Austin Powers 2 and more. She has been a guest artist with Rei Aoo's Dance planet. Nichelle is currently on faculty at Edge Performing Arts Center in Hollywood, and The Los Angeles Ballet Academy. She has taught all over the United States, and is an award-winning choreographer. Nichelle is the founder and artistic director of the Los Angeles based Reflections Dance Company. Recently Nichelle co-directed the 8th annual Momentum, An Evening Of Dance, at the El Portal Theater where she brought in guest artist from the Joffrey Ballet, and the Groovaloos.

## People in action at Fall 2012 Caligari



### Cast/Crew/Creative

#### CAST “The Cabinet of Dr Caligari”

(in order of appearance)

Francis

Gaton Askey

Dr Caligari/The Director

[Roger Fojas](#)

Jane

[Amy Highfill](#)

Alan

[Olivia Bollfrass](#)

Cesare

Brandon Binkly

Dr Olsen

[Kent Lowell](#)

#### Corps Dancers:

The Man/Police/Passerby/Doctor/Inmate

[Jarrod Paulson](#)

Town Clerk/Police/Doctor/Passerby/

[Janelle Cruz](#)

Board of Directors/Inmate

Passerby/Police/Doctor/House Worker

[Taylor Hensley](#)

Passerby/Police/Doctor/Inmate

Chelsea Michener

Passerby/Police/Doctor/Inmate

Joey Thao

Passerby/Town Clerk Secretary/House Worker/

[Monique Ziering](#)

Victim/Doctor/Board of Directors/Inmate

Passerby/Police/Doctor/Inmate

[Olivia Bollfrass](#)

Passerby/Doctor  
Nurse  
Criminal  
Police Chief

Cynthia Marie Mendez  
[Natalie Linthorst](#)  
[Cheetah Platt](#)  
[Boone Platt](#)

**Circus Performers:**

Antonio G-R, Boone Platt, Cheetah Platt, Cynthia Marie Mendez, Monique Ziering

**PRODUCTION CREW**

Artistic Director/Executive Producer  
ADC Co-Creator/Producer/Composer  
Director  
Stage Manager  
Assistant Stage Manage  
Line Producer  
Choreographer  
Asst Choreographer

[David Wilkinson](#)  
[Regan Remy](#)  
[Sasha Travis](#)  
Jon Ross  
Bryan Forest  
Ryan Omega  
[Nichelle Bane](#)  
[Chandrae Roettig](#)

**Show Production:**

Technical Director  
Lighting Design  
Lighting Assistants  
Board Operator  
Follow Spot  
Sound Technician  
Costume Design  
Costume Assistants  
Hair & Make Up Design  
Assistant Make up  
Practical set Design/Construction  
Props  
Digital Scenography Tim-geneer

Edwin Pleitez  
[Allen Clark](#)  
Kari Swanson, Tadao Tomomatsu  
Heather Romanowski  
David Patrick  
Bau Bancrfoft  
[Concetta Marie Verna](#)  
Hanna Hall, Corinne Marks Stevens  
[Dani Lagomarsino](#)  
Daniela Bernotas  
[Louie Lambie](#)  
[RJ Parsons](#) and [Sypher Art Studios](#)  
Timothy Lamb

## Tech Spec

Duration: 86 minutes + 20 minutes intermission=1:46.

# A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ASTRA DANCE COMPANY

The Astra Dance Company sprang from the germ of an idea shared in 2005 by its co-creators, David Wilkinson and Regan Remy, well known for their respective achievements in writing and in musical composition, when David envisioned the story of "Astra von Berlifitzing," a sequel to Edgar Allan Poe's "Metzengerstein," and Regan committed to set the new story to music. Dance was swiftly added, and soon the ambitious band of "Astratroupers" set to work to prepare a performance of the fiery tale. After that beginning, no looking back!

ADC's original and signature show, the morally challenging story "Astra Von Berlifitzing," was performed in 2008 at Burning Man, Blackrock City, Nevada, upon the Shiva Vista stage, and set that stage ablaze (and we mean literally!) before an estimated audience of 1500. In 2009, a new version of "Astra von Berlifitzing" was born at the 99-seat black box Electric Lodge, in Venice, California. In 2010, a revised "Astra" was performed at the historic, 2000-seat Million Dollar Theater on Broadway in downtown Los Angeles. "Astra" was greeted with great enthusiasm in each of these very different spaces.

ADC workshopped Edgar Allan Poe's love story, "Eleonora," at the SB ADaPT festival at the Electric Lodge in 2011. Unique and stirring, this is Poe's only story where love is rewarded and the hero is redeemed and forgiven at the end of his tale.

In 2012 the El Portal Theatre in North Hollywood offered to host a season of the Astra Dance Company, and this lovely and historic 360-seat space has now generously nurtured Astra's best productions yet. ADC opened its 2012 season with the double bill of "Eleonora" and Clive Barker's "I Dreamed I Spoke in Another's Language," a beautiful piece of love and longing, told by a living legend of modern fiction.

There followed ADC's reincarnation of the foundational silent film psychological horror-thriller classic "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari." The May 2012 run of "Caligari", so captured the enthusiasm of its audience that it returned to the El Portal with enhancements and a new script treatment by David Wilkinson and Sasha Travis September-October 2012, for a run of twice the length of the original, building to a sold-out house on the closing weekend!

Since its first public production in 2008, ADC has painstakingly developed a repertoire of four shows (two large, two small) through eight productions, each show boasting a unique combination of historical and imaginative dance stylings, entrancing story lines, fantastic costumes, and absorbing digital scenography.

Each of our chosen tales, whether selected from classic literature, modern poetry, and historic silent film, or of our own original design, has been presented to music especially composed for it by Regan Remy, and narrated by David Wilkinson.