

KANOPY DANCE



Kanopy Dance Company

Kanopy Dance Company's expressionistic and emotionally charged works combine the dramatic physical integrity of modern dance and contemporary ballet with dance-theater. The Company features works by its artistic directors as well as local, regional, national and international choreographers, all linked by the desire to create dance that is thought-provoking, elegant, bold, humorous, romantic, and compelling.

Founded in 1976, Kanopy has been under the artistic direction of Robert E. Cleary and Lisa Thurrell since 1995. Kanopy Dance Company is a strong regional presence in the Midwest. Winning numerous awards and grants year after year, Cleary and Thurrell create and commission new works for Kanopy Dance. They have attracted national and international dancers and choreographers to create premiers and re-stage dances and physical-theater works for Kanopy Dance. Kanopy Dance is a resident company of Madison Wisconsin's Overture Center for the Arts.

In addition, Cleary and Thurrell are devoted to education of the art form. Kanopy Dance is also comprised of The Academy and The Studio where dancers train as a profession or simply a serious avocation. Cleary and Thurrell, both with higher degrees in the field, guest teach and choreograph at various academies and colleges throughout the country.

Kanopy Dance, a nonprofit organization, is the 'umbrella' for Kanopy Dance Company, Kanopy Dance Academy, and Kanopy Dance Studio.



Touring

Kanopy Dance Company has touring programs of Dance and Dance-Theater.

Kanopy Dance Company's Dance-Theater programs are suited for large venues, and its' Signature Dance is the perfect choice for smaller venues.

Presenters may choose from either to tailor their programming needs. Thurrell and Cleary work with the needs of each host organization to create programs that work in each individual setting.

Kanopy is well equipped to present Dance and Physical Theater residencies, master classes, and lecture demonstrations suited to the needs of a variety of age groups and curriculum (K-12 and University/College programming).

Tours with 6-10 dancers



Dance-Theater Touring

Physical theatre, dance theater, use of voice, expressionistic, funny, dark... narrative that take you on a journey.



Monkey see, monkey do

This evening length dance-physical theater work is entertaining, humorous, creepy and a bit film noir. Created by Amit Lahav, Artistic Director, Gecko Theater, United Kingdom.

"...the unsettling macabre story of a scientist who kidnaps a girl in order to transplant her good soul into a woman whose soul is rotten. Among the great moments: Robert Cleary 's darkly hilarious portrayal of a desk clerk in police precinct-like building, where a couple comes looking for their missing daughter; the emotional depths plumbed by all of the lead actor-dancers, as they struggled with deep feelings of loss, desire and guilt; and the quirky frenzy of news reporters as they skipped and salivated over a potentially juicy story..." -- *Karyn Saemann, Capital Times (2011)*

10 dancers



Antigone

In this telling of Antigone, Thurrell has chosen a non-linear path of images, metaphors and states of being. Antigone is a story of war, death, hubris, and rule of law. It is a story of protest, by a girl, and politics. Rather than tell the story start to finish, there are chosen moments, motivations, and emotions to explore in the unfolding of Antigone. Thurrell also reveals the women of war who throughout history lament sons, fathers, husbands, yet have little voice. Created by Lisa Thurrell, Co Artistic Director, Kanopy Dance Company.

"I was struck by how she told Sophocles' tragedy in a non-linear way. The dancing isn't bogged down with a predictable retelling, yet the tale makes a clear and profound mark. Thurrell creates snapshots of these dramatic moments. Kopolos is striking as Creon, mouthing unjust words while ignoring the situation he has created. Antigone, played by the always-excellent Sierra Kay Powell, hurls herself at her oppressors while a chorus of women react to the horrors of war. Again and again Antigone faces the audience, one arm reaching to the sky, the other to the earth. Her standing leg is firmly planted while her other leg is bent high and to the side. It is a statement of defiance and strength that really resonates when echoed by the chorus. The original score by Vicky Tzoumerka-Knoedler is haunting as well. Sections that include plaintive statements in Greek are unsettling, which suits and supports the piece." -- *Katie Riser, Isthmus/The Daily Page (2013)*

10 dancers

Signature Dance Touring

Collections of work from the past 18 years created for Kanopy by its Artistic Directors and guest artists.



This is Not America

A ballad for our time -

"This is Not America," was steeped in social commentary. It juxtaposed a man, bound on the floor after refusing to confess to a crime he did not commit, with an oblivious, beautifully dressed couple dancing to romantic music. It made you consider all the social ills we close our eyes to as we waltz through life."
Karyn Saemann | Special to 77 Square (2011)

Ensemble: 3 men and 1 woman



Partita & Chorales

A classical modern dance, lush and painterly; uplifting -

"...Thurrell and co-director Robert Cleary have a Midas touch with Romantic material." -*Susan Kepecs, The Daily Page (2009)*

Ensemble: 6-10 men and women



Cassandra's Cry

Steeped in Martha Graham-inspired energy; mythic Cassandra, has the gift of prophecy, but cursed so no one will believe -

"... rich fully realized... creepy and gorgeous...smartly reinterprets theme-and-variation as prophecy and echoed realities, often as triads built on descending height. Vital and vibrant..." - *Jay Rath, State Journal (2008)*

Ensemble: 3 women



End Times.... Ebullient Machine

Chaos and Redemption, original music, contemporary ballet mixed with charged physical energy.

"The sun stops. It is a minute past noon. Immediately, everything built by man collapses on the living and buries them. Only that which has a semblance of mechanical life lasts two seconds more. We see trains roll to the end of their course, machines turning empty, planes falling like dead leaves..." from a 1916 poem by Frédéric Sauser known as Blaise Cendrars. –

"Cleary makes Armageddon seem riotously pleasurable..." –Jay Rath, State Journal (2008)

Ensemble 6-10 men and women



Press

"a powerful, sophisticated program and commanding performances." -- Karynn Saemann, Capital Times (2013)

"moods frequently shifted on a dime, from contemplative one moment to funny " the next. Sharp modern lines were mixed with classically inspired swirls... Ultimately, it all made for an immensely interesting night that satisfied the soul and the mind."--- Karynn Saemann, Capital Times (2012)

"Kanopy Puts it all together in 'Baba Yaga' show. For any arts group, a night when everything comes together is an exceptional accomplishment. Kanopy Dance Company had an exceptional night Saturday. On all levels — choreography, costumes, music, story and performers themselves (some only young teenagers) — a packed audience at the Overture Center got their money's worth, and more..... The story of Baba Yaga is itself a folkloric treasure. Kanopy's interpretation, superbly performed Saturday night, is a Madison treasure." --Karynn Saemann, 77 Square (2012)

"Exceptional performances mark 'Cassandra' debut at Overture Bold, new choreography and a talented array of dancers impressively came together Friday night in Kanopy Dance Company's 'Cassandra.'The night of unveilings at the Overture Center's Promenade Hall — with three world premiers and two Madison premiers— attested to Kanopy's continued relevance as a showcase for significant new works... And Kanopy dancers deftly showed their skills, meeting substantial theatrical and choreographic demands." --Karynn Saemann, Capital Times (2011)

"... a rivetingly bold evening of contemplative dance theater.. the Martha Graham-inspired dancing was excellent as expected. What really shone was the ability of the dancers not just to move, but to also successfully pull off the choreography's exhausting, often wrenching emotional demands and intensely serious mood." -Karynn Saemann, Capital Times (2010)

"Kanopy Dance wizards Lisa Thurrell and Robert Cleary score a new hit with Dark Nights." – Susan Kepecs, Isthmus (2009)



Artistic Directors



Robert E Cleary is a dancer, choreographer, director and master teacher. Dancer in Minnesota Dance Theater, Bebe Miller, Bill T Jones, and principal for Ballet Minnesota, among others, he went on to take directorship of Kanopy Dance, with his partner Lisa Thurrell. He has toured, performed, choreographed, and taught throughout the US and in Denmark. Influenced by ballet, postmodernists as well as the modernists, he is in constant exploration of relevant dance and movement expression. An extraordinary movement artist, physical theater fits him like a second skin.

Winning audiences over and over again, critics call him "fiery and riveting," "Inspired, wicked dancing, an astonishing performance..." As a creator of dance and movement his work has been called by critics "quirky... oozes nonlinear narrative... classic gut-centered ... 20th century modern dance" and "riotously pleasurable...Intense, richly satisfying..."

Mr Cleary received his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance Performance and Choreography and a Bachelor of Arts in History, 19th Century Europe, from the University of Minnesota. He trained intensively at American Ballet Theatre and with Susan Klein in Klein Release Technique in New York. Some of his mentors include David Voss, Mary Hinkson, Frank Bourman, Loyce Houlton, Bonnie Mathis, Susan McGuire, Maria Cheng, and Tisha Von Burpee.



Lisa Thurrell is a dancer, choreographer, director, and master teacher. She danced with Martha Graham Company in the late 80's early 90's, among others, moving on to take directorship of Kanopy Dance, with her partner Robert E Cleary. She has worked extensively in the field, performing, choreographing, and teaching throughout the US and in Denmark. Embracing the modern founders aesthetics and philosophies, yet ever curious, she has also journeyed down the road of study and practice of asian theater forms, and physical theater.

Nominated for the Bonnie Bird International Choreography award, her choreography has been described by critics as "...like a Hieronymus Bosch painting spilling onto the floor of the theater.." to "The work stresses the fragility of the human body and self-reflection." As a performer, critics have called her dancing as... "pure power and pure vulnerability at once..."

Ms Thurrell received her Certificate from the Professional Trainee Program at the Martha Graham Center for Contemporary Dance in NYC and received her Master of Fine Arts: Dance Performance and Choreography with a minor in Asian Theatre from the University of Wisconsin Madison. Some of her mentors include: Yuriko, Carol Fried, Pearl Lang, MP Sankaran Namboodiri, Phillip Zarrilli, Nancy Hauser, Hanya Holm.

Collaborations, Guest Artists

Kanopy Dance commission's new works, invites performers, performances, reconstructions, and historical work by collaborating with dance companies, independent performances, choreographers, composers, master teachers, costumers, set and prop designers.

Martha Graham Company & Center, NYC
360 Degree Dance Company, Martin Lofsnes, NYC
Yuriko Kichuchi, NYC
Alessandra Prospero, NYC
Stanley Love Performance Group, Stanley Love, NYC
Bopi Black Sheep Dance, Kraig Patterson, NYC
Quinindustry, David Quinn, costumer, NYC

On Common Ground, Donlin Foreman, NH

Gecko Physical Theatre Co, Amit Lahav, London, UK
Deborah Hay, London, UK
Emelio Ochando Talero, Madrid, Spain
Ricardo Flores, Mexico

Eleanor King Foundation, FL
Gordondance, Lonny Joseph Gordon, Texas
Danica Sena, SF, CA
Amy Ernst, AZ
Heidi Cooper, puppeteer and puppetmaker, AZ
Don Redlich, Santa Fe, NM

Wendy Hambidge & Dancers, Portland, OR

Footholds Dance, Jim Lieberthal, MPLS, MN
Ballet Minnesota, Andrew Rist, MPS, MN
Kiril Bak, Ballet Minnesota, MPLS, MN
James Diers, composer, MPLS, MN
Allen Gregory, Ballet Minnesota, MPLS, MN

Sandra Kaufmann, Chicago, IL
Deb Goodman, Chicago, IL
Momenta, Stephanie Clemmens, Chicago, IL
Winifred Haun & Dancers, Chicago, IL

Maureen Janson, Smartdance, Madison, WI
KirOga Theater, Madison, WI
Kalaanjali Dance, Madison, WI
Wadoma West African Dance, Madison, WI
Marc Kotz, Whitewater, WI
Connolly Dance, Madison, WI
Gaelic Fusion Dance, Madison, WI
Sadira & Riad Dance, Madison, WI
Tania Tandias Flamenco Dance, Madison, WI
Harmony Men's Chorus, Madison, WI
Thomas Powell, composer, Madison, WI
Hanna Jon Taylor, composer, Madison, WI
Barbara Chusid, composer, Madison, WI
Vicky Tzoumerka Knoedler, composer, Madison, WI
Music Revolution, Madison, WI
Christopher Maslanka, story teller, Madison, WI
Amy Panganiban, costumer, Madison, WI



Performances, Workshops and Residencies

Kanopy Dance Performances may include outreach activities.

Kanopy is well equipped to present Dance and Physical Theater residencies, master classes, and lecture demonstrations suited to the needs of a variety of age groups and curriculum (K-12 through University/College programming). Kanopy's 'Dance Your Voice' is a program for youth in creative discovery and choreography.

Performances

APAP, Lincoln Center, NYC
APAP, Ailey Citicorp Theater, NYC
Deborah Hay Project, Guggenheim, NYC

Ballet Minnesota, MPLS, MN
Minnesota Dance Festival, MPLS, MN

Winifred Haun & Dancers, Chicago, IL
Ruth Page Center, Chicago IL
University of IL, Bloomington Normal, IL

Academy of Russian Ballet, Denver, CO
Wendy Hambidge & Dancers, Portland, OR

Overture Center for the Arts, Kanopy Dance Company Annual Season in its home theater, NOV/FEB/APR, Madison, WI

Boys and Girls Club of Dane County, Taft St, Madison, WI
Overture Arts Initiative and Community Voucher Program, Madison WI
Madison Opera, Madison, WI
Madison Museum of Contemporary Art winter festivals, Art Fair on the Square, Madison, WI
Madison Children's Museum, Madison, WI
Madison Youth Choir, Madison, WI
Madison Ballet, Madison, WI
Madison Dance Council Festival, Madison, WI
Children's Theater of Madison, Madison, WI
Edgewood High School, Madison, WI
Wingra School, Madison, WI
Mitby Dance Festival, Madison, WI
University of Wisconsin, Madison WI
University of Wisconsin Extension Program, Madison, WI
Youth INC, Celebrate Youth, Madison, WI
WEAC educators training program, Madison, WI
Arts Immersion Project, Madison, WI
Gallery Art Walk Night, Madison, WI
Discovery Arts Pre School, Madison, WI
UW Children's Hospital, Madison, WI
Madison Metropolitan School District, (Lincoln, Sandburg, Mendota, Hawthorne, Van Hise, Lowell, Thoreau), Madison, WI

Stoughton Theatre, Stoughton, WI
University of WI, Oshkosh, Oshkosh, WI
IndUS America, (Indo-US good will events), Appleton WI
University of Eau Claire, Eau Claire, WI
Oregon Public Schools, Oregon, WI
Verona Public Schools, Verona, WI
Horicon Library, Horicon, WI
Beaver Dam Library, Beaver Dam, WI
MacMillan Library, Wisconsin Rapids, WI
Fitchburg Community Center, Fitchburg, WI
Milwaukee High School of the Arts, Milwaukee, WI



“Thurrell and Cleary serve as visionaries, choreographers, and educators. Their combined artistic talent and experiences allow Kanopy to present outstanding programs as well as nurture professional and student talent”—Sandra Kaufmann, former Martha Graham Company Dancer, Director of Dance, Loyola University, Chicago



"Kanopy is a diverse and fascinating group of fine performers who have great talent both as performers and creators." —Amit Lahav, Artistic Director, Gecko Theater Company, UK



Contact Us

Kanopy Dance Company
341 State Street
Madison, WI 53703
608 255-2211
info@kanopydance.org
www.kanopydance.org

Tour Representation & Booking

Jodi Kaplan & Associates
161 Avenue of the Americas
Suite 904
New York, NY 10013
Tel: (212) 352-0400
Fax: (212) 255-2053
jka@bookingdance.com



"Thurrell and Cleary are a treasure—one of a kind—in what they contribute to the cultural landscape of our nation." — Lonny Joseph Gordon, international solo artist, former Dean of Fine Arts, University of Indiana, Bloomington

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