



B O S T O N
DANCE
T H E A T E R

The Boston
Foundation **tBf**



SEPTEMBER 25, 2022

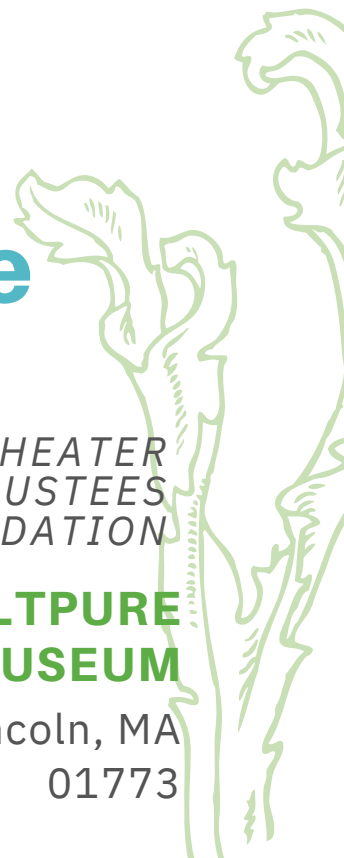
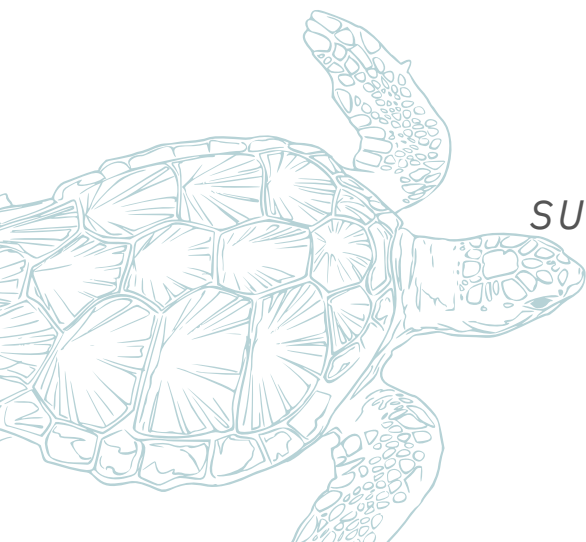
4:00 PM

SURGE Coastal Community Fellowship deCordova Performance

*BOSTON DANCE THEATER
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE TRUSTEES
SUPPORTED BY THE BOSTON FOUNDATION*

**DECORDOVA SCULPTURE
PARK AND MUSEUM**

51 Sandy Pond Rd, Lincoln, MA
01773



The background of the page is a photograph of a beach. In the foreground, there is a large, smooth area of light brown sand. To the right, white, frothy waves are crashing onto the shore, creating a stark contrast with the sand. The sky is not visible, as the top of the image is cut off by the top edge of the page.

About the Fellowship

The [SURGE Coastal Community Fellowship](#) is a two-month residency program that accompanies Boston Dance Theater's SURGE performance. The program has been designed for a group of BIPOC movement artists residing in coastal communities that are vulnerable to the impacts of sea-level rise. The SURGE Fellowship provides the opportunity for Fellows to reflect on the impacts of local climate events, build on existing narratives of resilience to climate change, and to envision a thriving future for the community through artistic presentation. During six meetings Fellows are guided through a creative art+science+climate activism process designed by Jessie Jeanne Stinnett, Dr. Larry J. Pratt, and the BIPOC Core Members of BDT. Fellows will learn about recent trends in Boston-area sea level rise research, Stinnett/Pratt's strategies for art+science collaboration, gain access to resources for climate activism, and continued learning through the [Climate Reality Project](#), and will have the opportunity to share their artistic contributions alongside Boston Dance Theater's performance of SURGE.

The Boston Foundation has provided support to BDT to launch the pilot SURGE Fellowship in East Boston in partnership with [The Trustees of Reservations](#).

The SURGE performance is a participatory dance work by BDT of approximately 45 minutes in length. Audience members mingle with performers and a scientist to witness dance and engage in dialogue about the climate crisis, current sea-level rise science, and coastal impacts to come. The work was initially funded by the [Boston Dancemakers Residency](#) award in 2020, but the creation was cut short by COVID-19 cancellations. In partnership with The Trustees of Reservations, SURGE will premiere in East Boston at Pier's Park in July 2022.

Run of Show



Opening Remarks		5 mins
Piece #1	Veronica Robles SURGE East Boston Fellow	5 mins
Piece #2	Maria Servellón SURGE East Boston Fellow	5 mins
Piece #3	Boston Dance Theater's SURGE	30-45 mins

Poetry in Piece #2 by NEHA RAYAMAJHI

Main Collaborator to Maria Servellón

Sincerely yours,
East Boston

Do you remember what I was called
when I was five points of a star scattered across your deep blue arms?
Not Noddle's, Apple, Governor's, Bird, and Hog Islands
but before that,
before the ships from the east sailed to you,
knighted me with names in a language my tongue thought too salty
until it eventually learned to regurgitate it as if it was my mother
tongue.

I imagine them still safe in the bottom of your belly;
My forgotten names,
buried among scraps of metal and poison pouring from the factories
emerging
one after one after one after one.
My forgotten names,
floating among apology letters, I never sent to you,
for pollution, for violence, for forgetting.

And you raged,
ate the edges of the shoreline
like a lover burning old photographs over a quarrel.
I should have apologized.

Oceano, Muhit, Ocean
What stories will you keep?
Am I a foe or a friend in your memory?
How will you think of me?

Do you remember the faces of immigrants?
Bodies crossing borders for refuge,
Bags filled with rubbles of wars and a dream.
Oh, how they held hope in their palms,
And we welcomed them,
not knowing,
Not knowing their sanctuary was also a battleground in the making.

I imagine them sitting in Belle Isle or sprawling on Constitution beach;
People becoming this city,
abuelas, artists, architects,
young lovers sharing their first kiss,
mothers chasing their toddlers chasing the sea.
Sharing communion in this not knowing,
Not knowing while we were writing a litany of gratitude,
Others were writing us down as collateral for their greed.

And you warned us,
sent surges of storms
like goddess Yemoja wanting to protect her children.
We should have listened.

Oceano, Muhit, Ocean
What stories will you keep?
Am I a foe or a friend in your memory?
How will you think of me?

Do you remember when they started replacing homes with
houses?
Bodegas burned down to make room for expensive cafes.
Tall buildings causing people to be short on rent.
Bodies now leaving for refuge,
Bags filled with rubbles of gentrification and deferred dreams.
Oh, how they hold vigor in their palms,
And we bid them goodbye, not knowing
Not knowing that farewells could make living off a city so well

I imagine them putting barcodes on your currents;
Men drenched in conceit
telling the tides, they have no right
to unionize with the moon.
Copyright your waves.
Evict the jellyfishes,
call them lazy while profiting off our wounds.
Their gluttony could swallow a sea.

And you ache,
flood the city mid-summer
like a volcano tired of her own tolerance.
We should have stopped.

Oceano, Muhit, Ocean
What stories will you keep?
Am I a foe or a friend in your memory?
How will you think of me?

Do you remember what it was to be gods, not goods?
The thundering footsteps of the Naumkeag people
worshipping you.
The prophecies that sailed across coasts to you,
Dusas hidden in coat pockets unraveled just for you.
You vowed to honor those prayers.

And I imagine them floating in the air;
The prayers,
left on rocks and roots and ruins all over this city
waiting to be inhaled by the youth
The young ones will save us
They will march,
They will pray with their fists up,
Fill the world with thundering footsteps.

And you bless us with another chance,
not down
but baptize us so we resurrect as a stronger city.

Oceano, Muhit, Ocean
What stories will you keep?
Am I a foe or a friend in your memory?
How will you think of me?

Performance Text

Performance Text

Piece #3 by BOSTON DANCE THEATER

STORY OF SEA LEVEL RISE

- Sea levels near our homes, like mine in Florida, are rising and accelerating.
- In the arctic, the ocean is warming and ice is melting
- The overturning of the ocean is slowing down like a wheel losing its spin
- Most sea level rise over the past century has been linked to us
- Recent climate change cannot be explained by natural causes alone.
- The science is certain that sea levels, including areas of the southeast United States, where my grandparents live, will rise as much as 1 inch every 3 years.
- Climate impacts are inevitable. Storms are intensifying, permafrost is melting, marine life in the Boston harbor is dwindling already!
- Tropical storms and extreme winds that used to occur once a century will strike every year on parts of the east coast by the year 2050.
- The ocean isn't ruining itself.
- We are ruining the ocean.
- Low lying cities and small islands such as the Kiribati islands in the central pacific ocean, will become completely submerged, changing the face of the earth and harming millions of people.
- Those people with less resources will suffer the most.
- It is too late to stop this.
- If we continue as we are, the global sea level may rise by 38 feet. Just over the size of that lamppost between now and 2300
- The ocean isn't ruining itself.
- But there is hope, If we can pull together to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, like global leaders agreed in Paris 2015, the sea level may only rise 3 feet
- Low emission scenarios lead to slower rates of sea level rise and gives hope to my community, to us.
- But we are still ruining the ocean.
- With supportive federal leadership, we have the chance to think big and act godly to confront the global climate crisis threatening the future of billions of people. This is our climate moment and we can't afford to waste it.

OCEAN MONOLOGUES

- ... holds a special memory for me
- I stepped onto the canoe and learned it is possible to live with the earth rather than purely residing on its surface
- Water makes me feel ...
- His bones were soft and cartilaginous until the body made contact with salted water. A calcification cycle was closed, abandoned forever the sweet placental fluid of his creator
- Sea level rise is...
- Increased storm surges have tainted my drinking water and forced evacuation. And my parents used to laugh in disbelief when they heard that Boston is the fifth most vulnerable coastal city to flooding from sea level rise in the US
- Isn't it interesting that the same water that floats you can be the same water that drowns you
- Strolling along the roads, my field of vision of the sea was restricted as a result of my meager height at 5 years old. However, the picture of the seascape magnified with each and every step. When we were 2 blocks away from the waterfront, the color of the vast sea began to differentiate from the deep blue that could be perceived from afar, into different shades and hues of azure and viridian.
- The transition happened between two distance oceans, the first one fit in the space between hips, then it dissipated without memories of water. His feet became fins, a blue depth seduced, like corals bones grew from within breaking the skin.
- The city of Boston is no longer the same even the simple things like drinking and cooking with clean water is no longer simple. The neighborhoods that raised me Dorchester and Roxbury filled with people who look like me rely on that water for so many reasons
- My first memory of the ocean is
- The urban areas along the coast, where 80% of the population resided, was replaced by rising briny waters. My family and friends were then forced out of our homes and country. The degradation of flora, fauna, soil, wild-life, society and culture turned this place we used to call home into a lifeless wasteland.
 - The surface of the viscous waters fluxed and flowed, as if it were, an intricately composed symphonic lullaby
 - Instead of pressing the home button on our iPhone, some people read the sea, and their relationship to the stars
 - Most sea level rise over the past century has been linked to us
 - Tropical storms and extreme winds will strike every year
 - Low lying cities will become completely submerged, changing the face of the earth and harming millions of people
 - Sea levels near our homes are rising
 - The city of Boston is no longer the same. Even the simple things like drinking and cooking are no longer simple
 - Where my grandparents live will rise as much as one inch every three years
 - Perhaps that sea was nothing more than the idea of leaving his body on the turbulent surface, and letting his mind rest on the bottom of the ocean
- Life without water would be...
- A healthy ocean looks like...

2022 SURGE Fellows

MARIA SERVELLÓN

is an award-winning filmmaker, multimedia artist, educator, and arts advocate from Boston, MA. Her focus is film and digital media, including projection, installation, photography, and design. Maria's work often explores synesthetic relationships between art, music, and dance within identity formation.



VERONICA ROBLES

is a Mariachi singer, musician and Latin American folkloric dancer and choreographer by trade but has become a cultural icon for Latinos in Boston. She has effectively utilized the power of the arts and culture to bring the community together by raising awareness on the importance of diversity and she has empowered the youth by employing them and teaching them about their roots and cultures.

JENNY OLIVER

is a Boston-based trauma-informed, culturally responsive, kinetic storyteller. She is inspired by the transformative power of movement to educate, heal, and connect. An enrolled member of the Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag, her experiences as an African American person of Cape Verdean/Native American heritage inform her creative process.



(Jenny's work will not be performed at the deCordova showing of SURGE)

2022 SURGE Collaborators

As lead artists, our Fellows were encouraged to invite 1 main collaborator to participate in all residency meetings (which will involve science discussion, led movement practices, spoken word and movement generation exercises) and performances.

Additionally, they were invited to include 1 supplemental collaborator to participate in the Piers Park performance in July.



Neha Rayamajhi

Maria's Collaborator



Torie Wojick

Maria's Collaborator



Flor Delgadillo

Veronica's Collaborator



Jociney Barbosa

Veronica's Collaborator



Ruka White

Jenny's Collaborator



Jessie Jeanne Stinnett

Project Lead, Choreographer

Stinnett is a Climate Reality Leader trained by former US Vice President Al Gore as well as a dancer, choreographer, and the founder and co-artistic director of Boston Dance Theater (BDT). Her current project, SURGE, is created in collaboration with ocean scientist Dr Larry J. Pratt of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and the BIPOC dance artists of Boston Dance Theater. SURGE addresses the crisis of sea level rise, and the role that arts + science collaboration can play in creating a sustainable future.

She received a BFA in Dance Performance from The Boston Conservatory and an MFA in Creative Practice: Dance Professional Pathway from Trinity Laban Conservatoire, in conjunction with Independent Dance/Siobhan Davies Dance. Most notably Jessie has performed for the Metropolitan Opera, Tate Britain (UK), Prometheus Dance, Institute of Applied Systems Analysis (Vienna), The Boston Baroque Opera, and Bard College's SummerScape Festival.

Her choreographic work has been described by Hannah Chanatry of WBUR as "conceptually driven performance that unpacks the complexities of being female, and pushes the academic boundaries of choreography" and has been sustained in part by grants from The Boston Foundation with support from The Barr Foundation, New England Foundation for the Arts, Assets4Artists at MASS MoCA, and Fidelity Charitable.

Some of Jessie's recent choreography commission credits include: Boston Ballet School, Dean College, Keene State University, Providence College, Endicott College, Goethe-Institut Boston, Emerald Necklace Conservancy, The Trustees of Reservations, Combined Jewish Philanthropies, and Emmanuel Music. She is the recipient of the 2020 Boston Dancemakers Residency grant award and was the 2020 Choreographer in Residence at Boston Center for the Arts and Boston Dance Alliance.

FACILITATORS

Dr. Larry J. Pratt

Lead Science Collaborator

Dr. Pratt is a senior scientist at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He holds a B. S. and M. S. from the University of Wisconsin and a Ph.D. from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Dr. Pratt's research interests include theory and modeling of ocean and marginal sea circulation and mixing, mesoscale and submesoscale instability and turbulence, sea strait hydraulics, abyssal circulation in deep canyons, and the use of dynamical systems and chaos theory to understand mixing and stirring at various scales.

He has collaborated on a number of dance, photography, and ocean science projects and public workshops in Boston and New York with choreographers Riley Watts, Courtney Peix, Jody Sperling, Mariah Steele, Alissa Cardone and Jessie Jeanne Stinnett. His extended arts and science projects have been presented at the Boston Science Museum, New Bedford Art Museum, Keck Futures Foundation (Washington, DC), Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, and Boston Arts Academy, often with support from the National Science Foundation.



Sarah Anne Stinnett

Dramaturg & Writing Consultant

Sarah Anne Stinnett is a multi-disciplinary artist and educator. Since 2017 she has served as a Teaching Assistant for Harvard Extension and Harvard Summer Schools in the subjects of speech, communication, and social media. At Lesley University she is a Teaching Assistant for Musical Theater Writing and instructs curriculum in collaboration, voice, and performance. Her core tenets in teaching are as in life: employ unparalleled curiosity, to do is to discover, and a life of learning and imagination is impelled by the study of the masters before.

At Boston Dance Theater, Sarah Anne teaches acting, voice work, and creative writing. Coaching and writing credits include *Body speaking* supported by the New England Foundation for the Arts, *SURGE* presented by Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution & Boston Center for the Arts, and *Man of the Hour* presented by Global Arts Live at the Institute of Contemporary Arts. Through her MFA in Creative Writing at Lesley University, expected in 2023, Sarah Anne's writing explores the cross-pollination of poetry and music with research specializing in Stephen Sondheim's lyrics. She expects her ALM in Dramatic Arts in 2022 from Harvard Extension. Her scholarship coalesces voice and embodiment with a focus on Shakespeare's plays. She received her ALB with honors from Harvard Extension where she now serves as Academic Advisor.

Previously, she attended Berklee College of Music for bass performance, often extending her studies through the ProArts Consortium at Emerson College, Boston Conservatory, and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts.



FACILITATORS



Dana Caspersen

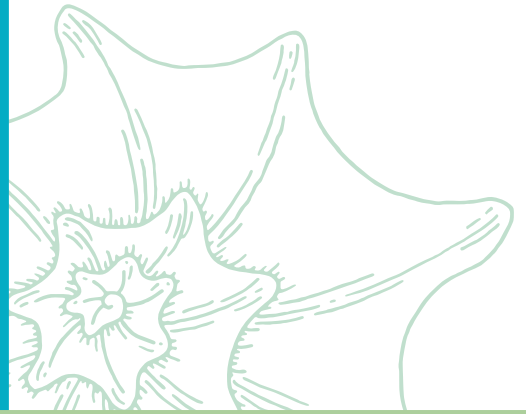
Consultant

Dana Caspersen is a conflict engagement specialist, award-winning performing artist, and author. Her book, *Changing the Conversation: The 17 Principles of Conflict Resolution* (A Joost Elffers Book), has been translated into 8 languages and is widely used as a training tool by organizations, schools, and individuals worldwide. In her work integrating conflict engagement strategies with choreographic methodologies, she has designed and realized teaching and communication methods and large-scale public dialogue models addressing topics such as immigration, racism, and violence. These projects have brought together thousands of people from diverse communities across the world.

During over 30 years as a performing artist, she has authored, performed, and toured works worldwide— principally as a primary collaborator of choreographer William Forsythe and a member of the ensembles Ballet Frankfurt and The Forsythe Company. This practice of developing agile physical and mental response strategies in complex environments as a dance thinker has also shaped her understanding of conflict as a vehicle for transformation and positive change. Caspersen has received the Bessie Award for Outstanding Creative Achievement in the United States and was nominated for the Lawrence Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in England.

Dancers

Boston Dance Theater



Core Members



Isvel Bello
he/they/theirs



Olivia Coombs
she/her/hers



Khris Henry
he/him/his



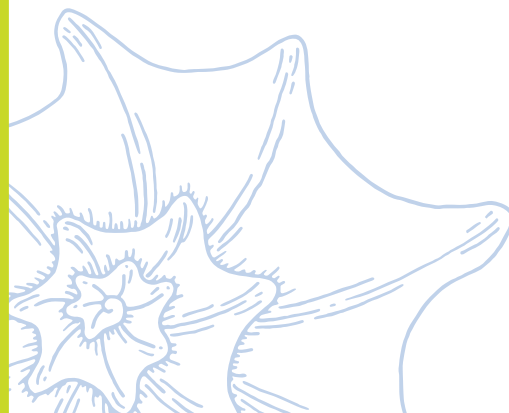
Henocho Spinola
he/him/his

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Dancers

Boston Dance Theater



Apprentices



Carley Lund
she/her/hers



Sarah Takash
she/her/hers



Wesley Urbanczyk
they/them/theirs

Trainees



Anelise Tatum
she/her/hers



Sean Pfeiffer
he/him/his

[DANCER BIOS AT BOSTONDANCETHEATER.COM](http://BOSTONDANCETHEATER.COM)

Collaborators



Zane Kealey
Costuming



Grant Stinnett
Music



Ernie Galan
Videography

COLLABORATOR BIOS AT
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Thank you!

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