



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 27, 2023

PRESS CONTACT

Steve Sucato

Marketing & Communications Manager

steve@groundworksdance.org

Office: 216-751-0088

25th Anniversary Season Opens with Summer Performance Series 2023

Cleveland, OH – Celebrating 25 years of Moving Possibility, GroundWorks DanceTheater opens its Anniversary season with its **Summer Performance Series 2023**. The program, at both Cleveland Heights' **Cain Park** in July, and at Akron's Firestone Park in August as part of the **Heinz Poll Summer Dance Festival**, will feature two world premiere works plus back by popular demand, choreographer Antonio Brown's "Floating Walls" (2023).

The first of the world premieres comes from Los Angeles-based choreographer, and former Nederlands Dans Theater dancer **Spenser Theberge**. For his first commission for GroundWorks, he explores the many facets of memory and our relationship with it. Set to music by Beethoven and Bach, the yet-to-be-titled, 20-minute contemporary dance work for GroundWorks' five dancers will also have them embodying the idea of process, says Theberge. "I want them to try to be in process mode while they are performing the work and try to resist the urge of going into product mode and any feelings of completion...to relate to the piece as if it is still alive and changeable." [Click Here](#) to watch an interview with Theberge discussing his career, his new dance piece, and working with GroundWorks DanceTheater's dancers.

The second world premiere is GroundWorks DanceTheater **Founding Artistic Director David Shimotakahara's** 52nd work for the company, entitled "**Abide**." Set to music by Acid Pauli, Alva Noto, and Ryuichi Sakamoto, Shimotakahara says of his inspiration for the work, "In a world where information and ideas are constantly being imposed on us and appropriated for very specific purposes, what are the ways we can affirm a distinct and maybe different kind of personal autonomy? What does it mean to leave space for ambiguity, for being less certain, for not knowing the answer?"

Rounding out the program will be a reprise of GroundWorks' Artist in Residence and Cleveland-native **Antonio Brown's "Floating Walls."** The former Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company member's contemporary dance work explores the physical and psychological space that one encounters when feeling surrounded by walls both in the literal sense and within the imagination.

The *Summer Performance Series* will also be the last for GroundWorks company dancer **Madison Pineda** who has left an indelible impression on the company, Northeast Ohio audiences, and the many students she has taught via GroundWorks education and outreach programs during her tenure here. We wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

For photos, press tickets, or to request an interview with any of the choreographers and/or company dancers, email Marketing & Communications Manager Steve Sucato at steve@groundworksdance.org or call 216-751-0088.

SUMMER PERFORMANCE SERIES 2023 DETAILS



July 14 & 15, 2023 | 8:00 p.m.

July 16, 2023 | 2:00 p.m.

Cain Park – Evans Amphitheater
14591 Superior Rd, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118
Tickets: Advance \$25 | Day of Show \$30

August 4 & 5, 2023 | 8:45 p.m.

Heinz Poll Summer Dance Festival
Firestone Park
1480 Girard St., Akron, OH 44301
FREE

INFO/TICKETS: groundworksdance.org/summer2023

ABOUT SPENSER THEBERGE

Spenser Theberge is a multi-hyphenate performer and creator, working across the fields of choreography, dance, movement direction, text, costume design, pedagogy, and installation work. He is a graduate of The Juilliard School and a former company member with the Nederlands Dans Theater I & II and The Forsythe Company, as well as a guest artist with Kidd Pivot, the Goteborgs Operans Danskompani, the ARIAS Company, and RGWW. Spenser's creations are multi-disciplinary and genre-defying, continuously exploring identity, authenticity, and spectatorship. His work has been commissioned and presented by LA Dance Project, The Broad Museum, MOCA Geffen, REDCAT, The Korzo Theater, Gothenburg Opera Dance Company, Place des Arts, The Juilliard School, and the Queer Biennial III in LA. Spenser's collaborations with partner Jermaine Spivey have been additionally supported by Hollins University, PACT Zollverein, Nuova Officina della Danza, and presented by The Korzo Theater, The Frankfurt LAB, Place des Arts, Oregon Contemporary, Reed College, and NAVEL. As a movement director and performer, Spenser has worked with artists, brands, and organizations such as Taylor Swift, Gwen Stefani, LANY, UGG, Rami Malek, Ryan Pfluger, the Tune-yards, Seaworthy Jewelry, and the New York Times Magazine. He has also designed costumes for Andrea Miller, the ARIAS Company, and performing artist Frances Chiaverini, and is the text writer behind Alexander Ekman's award winning "Cacti" and "Hubbub". Spenser has been dance faculty at California Institute of the Arts, a guest faculty at The Juilliard School and USC Kaufman School of Dance, as well as at conservatories, schools, and programs across America, Europe, and Asia. Spenser is a YoungArts award winner, a Presidential Scholar in the Arts, and a Princess Grace Award winner.

ABOUT ANTONIO BROWN

Antonio Brown is the artistic force behind AntonioBrownDance, a native Cleveland, Ohio, where he began his dance training at the Cleveland School of the Arts and received his BFA from The Juilliard School. While there, he had the opportunity to perform works by Jose Limon, Ohad Naharin, Jiri Kylian, Eliot Feld, Aszure Barton, Jessica Lang, Susan Marshall, Larry Keigwin, among others. Mr. Brown has also worked with Camille A. Brown & Dancers, The Dash Ensemble, Sidra Bell Dance New York and Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company for 11 years. Antonio has choreographed works for Verb Ballets, The Juilliard Dance Ensemble, MOVE(NYC), August Wilson Center Dance Ensemble, Jacksonville University, Cleveland State University, Hunter College, Perry Mansfield Performing Arts School and Camp, The Arden Theater Company's production of "The Bluest Eye", Drama League DirectorFest, Earl Mosley's Dancing Beyond and is currently the movement director for The Public Theater's Shakespeare Initiative and Associate Choreographer for upcoming Broadway musical "Black No More".



ABOUT DAVID SHIMOTAKAHARA

David Shimotakahara has been a member of the Atlanta Ballet, Boston Repertory Ballet, Kathryn Posin Dance Company, and the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre. He performed with Ohio Ballet under the direction of Heinz Poll from 1983-1999. He also served as Rehearsal Assistant for Ohio Ballet from 1989-1999. Mr. Shimotakahara has choreographed for opera and theater with the Cleveland Opera, Great Lakes Theater Festival, and the Dallas Theater Center. He served on the Carlisle Project advisory panel in 1996, and dance panels for the Ohio Arts Council, Illinois Arts Council, the Mid Atlantic Arts Alliance, and the National Endowment for the Arts. He has been awarded 8 Individual Artist Fellowships for Choreography from the Ohio Arts Council from 1996 to 2016. Mr. Shimotakahara received the 2000 Cleveland Arts Prize for Dance. In 2002, his work with GroundWorks DanceTheater was voted “One of 25 to Watch” by Dance Magazine. In 2007, he received the OhioDance award for Outstanding Contributions to the Advancement of the Dance Artform. Mr. Shimotakahara was a 2008 recipient of the first COSE Arts and Business Innovation award as the founder of GroundWorks DanceTheater. In 2010 and 2013, Shimotakahara received a Creative Workforce Fellowship; a program of the Community Partnership for Arts and Culture funded by Cuyahoga Arts and Culture.

ABOUT GROUNDWORKS DANCETHEATER

GroundWorks DanceTheater is a contemporary dance company founded in 1998 by Founding Artistic Director, David Shimotakahara. Entering its 25th Anniversary Year, GroundWorks is nationally recognized for its contribution to the art form and the enrichment of human experiences in collaboration with some of the most innovative voices in dance today. Work that is created, produced, and supported in Northeast Ohio. GroundWorks' collaborative philosophy informs its work, in the studio, on stage, and in community. It expands the ways dance is shared and engages with and enlivens the communities we serve. Fundamental to GroundWorks is the fostering of new choreography and challenging preconceptions about dance. This group of outstanding artists has introduced dance lovers and neophytes alike to an experience that is unconventional, yet deeply human and resonating. The desire to push boundaries is evident in Shimotakahara's bold initiative: To constantly seek collaboration and input from ground-breaking choreographers of the highest caliber and to make certain that the repertoire of the company is constantly evolving. The company performs new works by Shimotakahara, as well as commissioned work by nationally and internationally acclaimed choreographers including GroundWorks Artist in Residence Antonio Brown, Rena Butler, Sidra Bell, Peter Chu, Dianne McIntyre, Robyn Mineko Williams, Adam Barruch, Gina Gibney, David Parker, Brian Brooks, James Gregg, and many others. Now in its third decade, GroundWorks looks toward its future, having earned solid support and a growing audience base as more and more people discover what the Cleveland Plain Dealer has described as the “smoldering brilliance” of one of “Cleveland's cultural gems.”

For dancer bios and more information about GroundWorks DanceTheater, visit groundworksdance.org

GroundWorks DanceTheater is [Cleveland State University's Professional Dance Company in Residence](#)

Spenser Theberge and Antonio Brown's creative residencies were made possible with support from Arts Midwest, Kulas Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.