

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Kat J. Sullivan

Rocky's 2020 Recap

by Maddie Hopfield

It's official: the Rockies are back from the dead!

On Monday night, an audience of dancers, dance enthusiasts, and friends gathered at FringeArts to joyously celebrate the return of the peer-to-peer awards show for local dance, which has been missing in action for the last two years. (You can read more about its revival in an interview with Rockies' producer and thINKingDANCE writer [Mira Treatman here](#).) The host for the evening, [Lily Kind](#), cracked jokes about the local dance scene and got us up to date with the history of the Rockies, despite having lost most of her voice to a cold. In a sonorous whisper (or Tom Waits impression minus the piano, she joked), Kind motioned to a projected image above her onstage. There hung an image of previous years' Rockies' hosts. "I obviously cannot fill their amazing shoes. So instead, I just chose to bring most of my friends and coworkers from the [Urban Movement Arts](#)."



Mira Treatman and Lily Kind. Photo: Kat J. Sullivan

And, indeed, the UMA family was represented. Performances from the studio's vibrant and varied community included the sensual and powerful work of Majestique (Sophiann Mahalia & Julian Darden), Great on Skates—aka grooving on roller skates!—(India Bernardino, Shamar Cunningham, & Dennis Watley), a hip hop duet with Mark “Metal” Wong and Vince Johnson set to audio from the movie *Rocky*, Nicole Burgio and Mel Hsu with an excerpt from Almanac Dance Theater's *xoxo moongirl*, and an excerpt from Kind's own playful work *Wolfthicket* (featuring Lillian Ransijn, Eva Steinmetz, Chelsea Murphy, Elizabeth Weinstein, Dylan Smythe, Amalia Colon Nava, Evelyn Langley, and Lily Kind).

A segment of Almanac Dance Theater's *Fronteras* also graced the stage, along with a piece by Perphorm, in which quotes about the Philadelphia dance scene, collected during the event's happy hour, were read aloud onstage by performers. In answering the question, “What do you love about the Philadelphia arts community?,” responses included: “I hate it. And I hate the question.” “I hate the question, too.” “I wish things weren't always at the same time and expensive.” “I think it's communities, plural, and I think that's okay.” “I love that there are lots of really thoughtful comedic makers.” “Its connectivity.” Overall, the wide range of performances celebrated the integrity and diversity of dance practiced within Philadelphia. Philly dance communities, plural, not singular, was the refrain of the night.



Lily Kind and Ron Wood. Photo: Kat J. Sullivan

On to the awards themselves. [Kyle "JustSole" Clark](#) gave his to [Dinita "Queen Dinita" Clark](#) and [Jumatatu Poe](#) theirs to Nikolai McKenzie, both with such thoughtful, tender speeches that yes, I teared up both times. [Jaamil Kosoko](#) joined us via pre-recorded video to award his Rocky to [Donna Faye Burchfield](#). [Jessica Warchal-King](#) gave hers to [Jennifer Morley](#), and a spacesuit helmet-clad [Zornitsa Stoyanova](#) gave her Rocky to [Almanac](#) for [Fit Fest](#). Last but not least, Lily Kind presented her host award, the Greatest

Of All Time Award, to [Ron Wood](#), in honor of not only his long history as a mover in many capacities in Philadelphia, but also of his continuing work as a dancer, martial artist, and teacher. "I have to live up to this," Wood said in his acceptance speech, "because it means I still have a lot left to do." I left the venue filled with gratitude, not only for the past three years of dance in Philly, but for all of its futures, (plural) to come.

[The 2020 Rocky Awards](#), January 27, Rockies Happy Hour in La Peg, 5-7pm, Awards Show in FringeArts Theater, 7-9pm.

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