

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation

Meet the Writers: Christina Gesualdi

Finish this sentence "Good writing..."

...is like the aftermath of a mummer's parade for big ideas. What if ideas paraded down 2nd St, one by one, each idea flashier than the next, each one decked out glitzy and showy, hard to turn away from, strutting and grinning, a big raucous idea-parade on your mind? You turn them over and over and over and over, again and again, keep parading them down the 2nd St. of your mind until only tiny remnants are left. A feather, a few sequins, a SOLO cup, a hot dog wrapper, shards of a broken beer bottle, a banjo string... Arrange and organize what remains, throw in some grammar rules, and that (I hope) is good writing.

What are you most excited to cover through TD?

I did an interview with Tip Flannery of [Club Lyfestile](http://clublyfestile.com), and that was a great opportunity to delve into an increased range of diversity within Philly's "dance scene" (to basically get beyond concert dance). I also really want to cover this blog soon: <http://howtomakemoderndance.tumblr.com/>. I think it is amazing.

Which part is challenging, scary, difficult?

Deadlines. To be honest, I have not successfully met many of my deadlines thus far. I appreciate TD's leniency and process-oriented approach BUT since it is scary, difficult, and challenging for me to think, brainstorm, write, re-write and send my work to the editor in just a matter of days, I think I need to just get over it and overcome this obstacle. If you know any hot lines or support groups for deadline-challenged humans, let me know!

How/when did you learn to type?

I can remember playing a Mario-typing game in grade school. Long story short, I am looking at the keyboard as I type this now. (perhaps learning to actually type could help me meet deadlines?)

What is the TD project really about, in your experience?

TD is about getting hopped up on tea and Trader Joes' cookies at our monthly meetings. Its about the adrenaline rush and armpit sweats I get when I write, talk, and read about dance. It is about joining together with other people that share these symptoms, both fellow TD writers and many others in the Philadelphia Dance community and way way beyond. Its about starting conversations, nurturing them and giving them a space to grow.

Finish this sentence "Good dance....."

is an adjective-noun pairing that "if I never see again, it will be too soon." Dance is relative to its context. Dance is highly specific. Dance can confuse the hell out of me and simultaneously get at things that words just can't. Dance can stay with me for days and sometimes years. Dance can creep its way into and out of my body when I least expect it. Sometimes I really hate dance, and sometimes I really love it. Overall though, I'd like to challenge myself to avoid calling dance "good".

What is your "desert-island" publication?

Everything by Italo Calvino.

How has TD affected your other dance-related work?

TD has fostered my faith in group problem solving. There are so many wise, ambitious, sensitive and thoughtful people on board who

trust in the model of sitting around a table and bouncing ideas off of one another. Their enthusiasm for exchange and collaboration inspires my yoga teaching and choreography.

What would your parents say about your work in the arts?

My parents are amazing, and I am grateful that they prioritize attending MANY of my shows. I can always distinguish my Mom's fire-cracker claps from that of the rest of an audience. After each show she often says to me, "that was so clever". It is both endearing and frustrating. My Dad loves when a choreographer uses jazz music, but he puts a mug on or leaves a show if there is nudity/people acting silly /spinning/yelling/doing things that don't look like dancing on stage. My parents subscribed to Dance Magazine for me and took me to see Alvin Ailey and Pilobolus productions during my formative years...I can't thank them enough. I also have trouble finding the right words to describe to them how my passion has evolved and shifted from Ailey to "dancing" that sometimes looks like nude, spinning/talking people doing a thing that I deeply believe in.

If you were to write a dance love-letter, it would be to:

Martha Graham. I used to be obsessed with her, still am. Her story/legacy/spoof-ability/technique/wealth of work/value system/unapologetic personality/transparency is a big deal, and I love her for it.

By Christina Gesualdi

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