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Photo: Valerie Kosnevich.

Philadelphia Youth Companies Shine at Peridance Spring Showcase

by Rachel DeForrest Repinz

The 2024 Spring Choreographers' Showcase at Peridance's KNJ Theater in NYC delivers an impressive bill of New York and East Coast youth dance companies. The young dancers performed an impressive bill of works overall, with Philadelphia company [Koresh Youth Ensemble](#), and the Pennsylvania-based Oxford Center for Dance and the Grier School, standing out for their sophisticated approaches to artistic inquiry and technical acumen.

[Peridance Youth Ensemble](#) kicked off the evening with an intense and technically skillful contemporary piece, *2 3 1*. Choreographed by Chris Ralph, the work set a curiously somber tone for the rest of the evening. The dancers take a fine-tuned approach to embodying Ralph's choreography, oscillating between moments of flawless synchronization and relaxed structure while maintaining consistent virtuosity throughout. Similarly solemn themes with percussive yet eerie instrumentals followed in the rest of the performances. In contrast, [Broadway Dance Center's BDC Youth Co.: Arts in Motion](#) and [Koin & Co.](#) offer short dances full of liveliness and levity that break the solemn nature of the evening. While the showcase features some of the inconsistencies typical of youth dance performances, with differing technical abilities among performers and companies, the artistic aptitude is impressive. Works by John Dewey High School and Oxford Center for Dance adhere to a distinctly lyrical style, while Peridance and Koresh Youth Ensembles veer towards experimentation and the avant-garde.

Among standouts from the evening include Philadelphia's Koresh Youth Ensemble. They perform an impressive contemporary work choreographed by Melissa Rector. The bipartite offering brings together two of the ensemble's works by Rector, *Unraveling - Quinten & Trio* and *Trigger*. Presented as one cohesive work, the dancers begin with more intimate small group work set to a serene instrumental composition by Michael Logozar. The dancers move like silk through the space and then suddenly explode into the rhythmically-strong *Trigger*. Set to music by composer Sage DeAgro-Ruopp, a recurring [collaborator](#) with the Koresh Dance Company. Other highlights

include a dynamic tap piece by BDC Youth Co.: Arts in Motion which showcases the dancer's aptitude for rhythmic complexity and nuance. Choreographed by Dre Torres, the piece features a small group of dancers who jump, chugg, and flap across the stage, igniting the showcase with a much-needed dose of energy. Other performers that stand out throughout the evening are Margot Anderson-Song (Peridance) and Marina Krumins-Beens (Koin & Co.), for their technical mastery, consistency, and sophisticated performance quality. Krumins-Beens is highlighted in a solo performance of *One Day* by Emily Greenwell, while Anderson-Song appears in multiple group works throughout the evening.

Pennsylvania schools stand out as hubs for their artistic and technical caliber, having made up 30% of the performing companies presented. Included are the Grier School, a Pennsylvania-based private school for girls renowned for its pre-professional dance program, the Koresh Youth Ensemble, and the Oxford Center for Dance. All demonstrate an explosive potential of Philadelphia's up-and-coming dancers. While youth recitals tend to get a bad rep for way-too-long bills lacking curation or a connecting theme, Peridance's approach as host and curator exemplifies how youth companies can offer well-produced performances for audiences of all ages. While the showcase could have benefited from more diversity in dance genre and musical score, the overall evening uplifted youth companies performing at a high artistic level while maintaining technical rigor.

[2024 Spring Choreographers' Showcase at Peridance KNJ Theater](#), April 13th and 14th.

Image Description 1: A group of dancers in red silk dresses support a dancer who is balancing on one leg with arms overhead and their working leg behind them in a high arabesque. The group of dancers hold on to this dancer at their ankles, hips, and arms, providing stability. Choreography by Chris Ralph

Image Description 2: A group of dancers in black shorts/skirts and torn white tops, extend their right legs out to their sides, with their same arm extending out above the leg. Choreography by Clarisse Roud.

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