

presents...

PIVOT FESTIVAL

ANDY MEYERSON | Percussion
MYLES THATCHER | Choreographer/Dancer

Sunday, February 1, 2026 | 7:00pm

Taube Atrium Theater

Parallel Play

Sound: JOHN CAGE

Movement: MERCE CUNNINGHAM

Child of Tree (1975)

Solo (1975)

Sound: GLENN KOTCHE

Movement: ROBIN DEKKERS

The Path Only Appears With The First Step (2025)

The Path Only Appears With The First Step (2025)

Sound: NICOLE LIZÉE:

Movement: REX WHEELER

Selections from The Filthy Fifteen (2016)

The Filthy Fifteen (2025)

INTERMISSION

Still Cycles (2016/2025)

A Noticeable Pause (2025)

Portrait (2025)

Portrait (2025)

Sound: DANNY CLAY

Movement: DANI ROWE

Sound: RAVEN CHACON

Movement: BABATUNJI

Sound: JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Movement: MYLES THATCHER

Chaconne from the Partita in D Minor for Violin Solo (1717–20), arr. for marimba by Andy Meyerson with Jack Van Geem (2025)

Valediction (2025–26)

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ARTISTS PROFILES

San Francisco Performances presents Andy Meyerson for the third time. His first appearance was in 2017, as part of The Living Earth Show. This is Myles Thatcher's SFP debut.

American composer **John Cage**, whose work has radically extended the boundaries of music, is one of the most inventive and influential figures of twentieth-century music and art. Cage's innovative use of chance in the composition and performance of his works, are among his most important contributions. His work with Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and Merce Cunningham, which began during his years at Black Mountain College (1948-52), represents one of the most enduring and fruitful artistic collaborations of the century. Cage moved on to a sixty-year career in which he performed throughout the world, all the while actively experimenting with new forms and ideas. Born in Los Angeles in 1912, John Cage studied with Richard Buhlig, Henry Cowell, Adolph Weiss, and Arnold Schoenberg. He has been associated with Merce Cunningham since 1943 and was musical advisor to the Merce Cunningham Dance Company.

Merce Cunningham (1919-2009) was a celebrated dancer and choreographer renowned for his groundbreaking work, his lifelong passion for innovation, and his profound influence on generations of dance-makers and artists. Born in Centralia, Washington, he attended the Cornish School in Seattle where he met the composer John Cage, who would become his closest collaborator and life partner. In 1939, Cunningham began a six-year tenure as a soloist in the Martha Graham company and soon began presenting his own choreography, most notably on joint music and dance concerts with Cage. In the summer of 1953, during a teaching residency at Black Mountain College, Cunningham formed a dance company to explore his innovative ideas. The Merce Cunningham Dance Company remained in continuous operation until its closure in 2011, giving nearly 3,000 performances in over forty countries. In collaboration with John Cage, Cunningham proposed a series of radical ideas including the separation of music and dance, the use of chance operations, and novel ways to utilize film and technology.

Since 2001, **Glenn Kotche** has been the drummer of Wilco, with whom he's recorded ten studio albums, garnering a Grammy® and 7 nominations. Kotche has done cross-disciplinary collaborations with

the likes of novelist Karl Ove Knausgård, choreographer Danielle Agami, actor Jon Hamm, chef Rick Bayless, WNYC's Radiolab, Notre Dame's Engineering Department, and Delta Faucets. He has played on over 180 recordings by artists such as Taylor Swift, Ed Sheeran, KD Lang, Neko Case, Laura Viers, First Aid Kit, Radiohead's Phil Selway & Ed O'Brien, Jim O'Rourke, Andrew Bird, Iron and Wine, Neil Finn, Low, and Beck. He resides in Chicago with his wife and their 2 children.

Robin Dekkers (they/them) is the Artistic Director of Berkeley Ballet, where they infuse their passion for collaboration into training and performance opportunities for dancers of all ages and levels of experience. Robin was also the founding Artistic Director of Post:ballet, a professional contemporary dance company based in the Bay Area from 2010-2025. With Berkeley Ballet and Post:ballet, Robin facilitated co-productions with organizations including Kronos Quartet, San Francisco Girls Chorus, Berkeley Symphony, Berkeley Art Museum (BAMPFA), and Berkeley Public Library. Robin has also created original works for Atlanta Ballet, Grand Rapids Ballet, Kansas City Ballet, Smuin Ballet, and Diablo Ballet, as well as the dance departments at Stanford University, Southern Methodist University, University of Richmond, and San Jose State University. Robin danced professionally with Ballet Arizona, ODC/Dance, Company C Contemporary Ballet, and Diablo Ballet.

Nicole Lizée is a Montreal-based, award winning composer and video artist. Her music and video reflect influences from an eclectic mix of influences including the earliest MTV videos, turntablism, rave culture, Hitchcock, Kubrick, Cage, Alexander McQueen, and 1960s psychedelia and modernism. She is fascinated by the glitches made by outmoded and well-worn technology and captures, notates, and melds them into live performance.

Originally from London, **Rex Wheeler** is a multi-faceted drag performer, actor, producer, and choreographer. Having trained in the UK at the Royal Ballet School and Elmhurst, Rex danced with the Slovak National Ballet, Sacramento Ballet and Smuin Contemporary Ballet before becoming a working choreographer in the US. Rex simultaneously embarked on a career in drag, creating his alter-ego Lady Camden, and became the runner up of Season 14 of *RuPaul's Drag Race*. He has since performed all over the world, starring in solo shows, performing in world tours, and

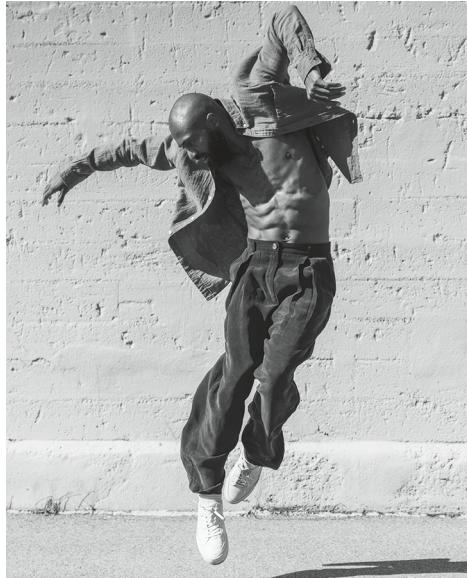
producing music as well as continuing to choreograph and produce shows in San Francisco. Rex recently starred in a new documentary, *Lady Like*, directed by Luke Willis which has been featured in many film festivals around the world.

Danny Clay (b.1989) is a composer and educator whose work is deeply rooted in curiosity, collaboration, and the sheer joy of making things with people of all ages and levels of artistic experience. He sees "composing" as the act of putting things together, and strives to find ways to utilize this act to foster creativity and connection—whether it be playing musical games with visitors to Chicago's Millennium Park, or building experimental sound installations with classes of elementary schoolers. Working closely with artists, students, and community members alike, he builds worlds of inquiry, play, and perpetual discovery that often combine sound with other forms of media.

Dani Rowe is a choreographer and the Artistic Director of Oregon Ballet Theater. After a decade as a principal dancer with the Australian Ballet, Rowe danced with Chris Wheeldon's Morphoses, Houston Ballet, and Nederlands Dans Theater. There, she worked with luminaries Jiří Kylián, Crystal Pite, Mats Ek, Paul Lightfoot, Sol León, and others. Her rich career of performing, choreographing, and directing at the highest levels of dance has cultivated in her a curatorial aesthetic that blends cutting-edge programming alongside the best of classical and neoclassical genres. She has choreographed acclaimed works for Ballett Zürich, San Francisco Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, Royal New Zealand Ballet, and others. Dani lives in Portland, Oregon with her husband and two daughters.

Raven Chacon is a Pulitzer Prize-winning composer, performer, and installation artist from Fort Defiance, Navajo Nation. As a solo artist, collaborator, and a member of Postcommodity (from 2009 to 2018), Chacon has exhibited, performed, or had works performed at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Renaissance Society, Chicago; San Francisco Electronic Music Festival; REDCAT, Los Angeles; Vancouver Art Gallery; Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; Borealis Festival, Seattle; SITE Santa Fe; Chaco Canyon, New Mexico; Ende Tymes Festival, New York; The Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C.; Whitney Biennial, New York; documenta 14, Athens and Kassel; Carnegie International, and Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh. Since 2004, he has men-

tored more than 300 Native high school composers in writing new string quartets for the Native American Composer Apprentice Project (NACAP). Chacon is the recipient of a 2023 MacArthur “Genius” Fellowship, a United States Artists fellowship in Music, a Creative Capital award, The Native Arts and Cultures Foundation artist fellowship, the American Academy’s Berlin Prize for Music Composition, the Bemis Center’s Ree Kaneko Award, and the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage’s Fellowship-in-Residence.



Babatunji is a dance artist, choreographer, and creative innovator based out of the SF Bay Area. Though never formally trained as a child, Babatunji grew up through his teens breaking and popping on street corners in Hilo, Hawai'i. After being “discovered” by a local dance instructor, he began his formal training in various styles of dance, including ballet. This would inevitably lead him to Lines Ballet’s Training Program, and from there, into the company. Babatunji has developed a unique movement language, blending his background in ballet, contemporary, breaking, and hip hop. For over a decade he has worked with one of the greatest American choreographers, Alonzo King. As a freelance dancer, Babatunji has worked with Post:ballet, Ishida Dance Company, SFDanceworks, tinypistol, and Ballare Carmel. In 2025, he co-created the multi-disciplinary dance band KoolooX with The Living Earth Show and Dennis Aman. In 2015, he was awarded a Princess Grace Award, as well as a Chris Hellman Award for his outstanding achievements and promise in the world of dance. Babatunji is immensely grateful to his mom for provid-

ing him with every opportunity and the guidance of her wisdom along the way.



Born in Atlanta, Georgia, **Myles Thatcher** trained in classical ballet with Margo Clifford Ging, The Harid Conservatory, the Edward Ellison Professional Training Program, and San Francisco Ballet School. He joined the San Francisco Ballet in 2009, where he continues to work as a soloist dancer. In 2025 he was appointed SF Ballet’s Creation House Associate Choreographer. Thatcher has choreographed stage and film work on an array of companies such as San Francisco Ballet, New York City Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, Scottish Ballet, and others.

PROGRAM NOTES

THE SOUND

Parallel Play was conceived as a challenge and an exploration. This recital represents an opportunity to confront the lineage of Bay Area percussion and the classical training through which I—and so many dancers and musicians—learn to develop, perform, and experience music. In the process, *Parallel Play* gave me the chance to gather music created by composers who have shaped my artistic life.

The Living Earth Show’s collaboration with Danny Clay, *Echoes*, marked our San Francisco Performances debut in 2017. Raven Chacon and Babatunji have become creative partners through our new bands, Lazyhorse and KoolooX. My work with Post:ballet led to the creation of Nicole Lézée’s *Family Sing-A-Long & Game Night*—one of the focal points of Do Be, our first collaborative production. And I wouldn’t have become a percussionist without the influ-

ence of Glenn Kotche, John Cage, and J.S. Bach.

Further, the solo recital—a formative experience shared by students of both music and dance—is a context through which one can better observe the relationship between music and dance.

Parallel Play is also an opportunity to collaborate with dancer and choreographer Myles Thatcher, one of the most gifted (and kindest) artists I know.

Parallel Play is dedicated to two guiding forces in my artistic life:

To Travis Andrews: Thank you for your virtuosity, patience, and for challenging me to be the best performer I can be.

To Jack Van Geem: Thank you for your kindness, guidance, and inspiration.

—Andy Meyerson

THE MOVEMENT

In the dance world, a recital is utilized by a performer, often a student, to highlight their skill, pedagogy, and progress. I think of it as a graduation of sorts, punctuating the end of a long period of training while ushering an artist into the next phase of their career. Andy came to me with the idea that we, two artists well into our artistic paths, put on a recital in tandem, one in music and one in dance. We set out to build a performance that would look closely at the traditional art forms that brought us here, turn them over in our hands, and reshape them via our own personal journeys as fully formed professionals.

As we continued to build the work together, I started to realize that Andy’s practice looked a lot like dance, and mine felt a lot like music. The responsibilities we set as “musician” and “dancer” curiously started to blur as we dove into the kinetic and rhythmic practices together. The show is designed to start us on a parallel tracks—musician and dancer. Slowly the labels we set for ourselves dissolve (as they often do) and we are left with two artists supporting each other in the other’s effort of making their art.

There are five new dance creations and one existing work on the bill. I wanted to curate an array of voices that represent my connection with the Bay Area while also stretching my experience as a dancer. I respect each choreographer immensely and have tasked them to follow their own curiosity to take bold risks in their creations. And as a choreographer myself, I am hoping, perhaps selfishly, that some parts of them will absorb into my own process and

enrich my own dance-making.

Thank you to Andy for inviting me in with guidance and trust as a true collaborator, and to San Francisco Performances for giving us a space to question, explore, and create. I hope this performance delights you, challenges you, and asks you to redefine the relationship between musician and dancer.

—Myles Thatcher

ABOUT THE WORKS

"I want to express myself in such a way that the idea behind my work remains unclear to my partner. He on the other hand receives an idea that I never had. We must speak to each other without speculating on an answer. Instead of the illusion that we understand each other we should have the will to misunderstand. Then we suddenly discover agreement and call this lucky chance. Then we smile and are happy."

—John Cage

John Cage *Child of Tree* (1975)

This work was originally used as music for the choreographed piece by Merce Cunningham entitled *Solo* (aka *Animal Solo/Dance*), with stage design by Sonja Sekula. While on tour in Arizona with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company in 1975, one of the dancers, Charles Moulton, brought a dried cactus to Cage, placed it near his ear, and plucked its spines. This inspired Cage to use cacti as musical instruments in pieces like *Child of Tree* and *Branches*. The score consists solely of performance instructions as to how to select 10 instruments via *I Ching* chance operations. All instruments should be made of plant matter or be themselves plant materials (e.g. leaves from trees, branches etc.). One of the instruments should be a pod (rattle) from a Poinciana tree, which grow in Mexico. Cage instructs: "Using a stopwatch, the soloist improvises clarifying the time structure by means of the instruments. This improvisation is the performance."

Merce Cunningham *Solo* (1975)

Solo was based on Cunningham's observation of animals in the San Diego Zoo. "The dance images go from one kind of

animal to another," he explained, "bird, snake, lion, in eight minutes." First performed as part of an Event at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1973, *Solo* was given its premiere on a repertory program two years later on March 8, 1975, at the Detroit Music Hall in Detroit, Michigan. The music was John Cage's *Child of Tree*, a percussion piece for amplified cacti and other plant materials. The costume was a woolen unitard hand painted by Sonja Sekula, originally worn by Cunningham for his 1947 dance *Dromenon*. *Solo* was last performed by Cunningham in 1982 as part of "Wall-to-Wall John Cage and Friends," an all-day celebration of Cage's seventieth birthday.

Glenn Kotche *The Path Only Appears With The First Step* (2025)

Glenn writes: *The Path Only Appears With The First Step* came about from asking a question: what next? I was making recordings of the skipping rhythms that LP records make at the end of a side--after the music is over—and wondered, what if those were transitions, what could come next? So, I made them into loops that I could play along to. I improvised a simple melody, then came up with an accompaniment drum part. Once those were established with the loop, I continued to write companion material, all simple and related ideas that I then fused together like characters in a story. This was all happening when Andy Meyerson and Robin Dekkers were in discussions with me about composing a piece for percussion and dance duo. I thought this idea with its groove and consistent rhythmic loop (now played on looped prepared snare drum) would be the perfect fit. The title is a reference to three things: the gradually unfolding melody, the original motivation of not knowing what comes next until you move forward to create it and lastly, considering that the piece would be workshopped by a group of dancers with Parkinson's and thinking about their paths forward.

Robin Dekkers *The Path Only Appears With The First Step* (2025)

Robin writes: I've been reflecting on how we are each creating the world around us as much as it is shaping us, so when I received the new score from Glenn Kotche

and read the title he'd chosen for the piece, *The Path Only Appears With the First Step*, I was inspired to use this offering as a creative constraint for our new work. Instead of mapping all of the choreography out on my own before beginning the rehearsal process, I allowed each step we created to inform the next step, each section we choreographed to reveal the next section. I decided that Myles would begin downstage right and end upstage left (where Andy is playing) and I entered the studios with a few phrases of choreography to pull from, but beyond that, I invited each day to flow naturally and followed the wave as we developed this new work. Andy's movement also inspired a deep synchronicity with the music, suggesting a dependent co-arising of the music and the dance.

Nicole Lizée *Selections from The Filthy Fifteen* (2016)

Nicole writes: Taking its title from the notorious list of "offensive songs" compiled by the Parents' Music Resource Center in the mid-1980s, *The Filthy Fifteen* is my interpretive, stylized documentary on censorship, referencing specifically the PMRC and its impact on music in the 1980s. Aspects of news footage (i.e. the pitch and inflection in PMRC members' voices, the rhythmic gestures that emerge during Zappa's animated display of disdain for the PMRC, etc.) are extracted, manipulated and shaped into musical material, becoming a type of instrument, which is colored and transformed live by the percussionist, in set-ups that integrate a typewriter, chains, a saw blade, books (preferably banned), and a vinyl record (selected by the performer) from the PMRC's official Filthy Fifteen list.

Censorship is a subject I've always felt strongly about—it was the PMRC's emergence in 1985 that led to my awareness of the concept of censorship--and this project was an important one for me.

Rex Wheeler *The Filthy Fifteen* (2025)

Over the past few years, I've had the pleasure of working with Myles on several projects where I've danced his choreography. He always works with me to authentically tell a story in a fusion of ballet, mime, and theatrical elements within a Drag performance setting. Together we'd push bound-

aries and explore something we'd never tried before all while coming from a deep love of ballet. I'm now having the pleasure of returning the favor and choreographing on Myles and working with Andy, both of which are a first for me. When approached with this opportunity I thought it would be fitting to bring our love of storytelling, humor and cheekiness into this. Once Andy and I got to know each other he brilliantly suggested *The Filthy Fifteen*, a piece that explores 80s hits that were once considered taboo and a bad influence on our younger generations. Over time, I've come to embrace bad influences and turn them into art that is fierce, fun, and joyful. How could our temptations, our curiosity, or our gender play ever really be that bad for us? A little bondage, a little heel, a little "filth" never hurt anyone.

Danny Clay **Still Cycles (2016/2025)**

Danny writes: *Still Cycles* is a collection of loops (originally written for Sarah Cahill on piano) that are built entirely from fragments of a baroque chaconne by G.F. Handel. The original material is deeply distorted almost beyond recognition, like a cassette tape of classical piano music stored in an old attic, rediscovered after decades of water damage, playing at half-speed. It emerged from my interest and love of tape loops, and the peculiar effects of persistent repetition--that is, in experiencing something that is unchanging, we begin to notice ourselves change.

Note from Andy: This piece was introduced to me by my dear friend and collaborator Dennis Aman. The performance of this piece on tonight's program is dedicated to him, with immense gratitude.

Dani Rowe **A Noticeable Pause (2025)**

Dani writes: Born from the spacious musical landscape of *Still Cycles*, this solo grew as Myles, Andy and I traded memories of practice, performance, and the strange alchemy that turns effort into artistry. It's my thank-you collage—of sound, sweat, kindness, and connection—for Myles, for Andy, and for the quiet, generous reciprocity between music and dance.

Raven Chacon **Portrait (2025)**

Continuing Chacon's work with scraped glass, *Portrait* is a negotiation of two players holding and moving a sheet of reflective glass. The two performers work in tandem and contradiction to replicate each other's gestures while sounding the precarious object between them. The specific piece of glass for which this work was created and upon which it is performed was found in 2017 at Building Resources in San Francisco when Raven and Andy were looking for instruments for their first collaboration: *Tremble Staves*, a site-specific work Raven composed for The Living Earth Show, performed in 2019 in Sutro Baths.

Babatunji **Portrait (2025):**

Babatunji writes: This work is rooted in and derived from play. My process began as I observed Andy and Myles' behaviors as they improvised together, generating their own sounds and movements with the sheet of glass. From those improvisations, I selected and expanded upon gestures that I found spoke to an idea of two individuals finding common ground through a shared experience of uncertainty and curiosity. I strive in this work to dismantle whatever imagined boundaries between dancer, musician, and performer.

Johann Sebastian Bach **Chaconne from the Partita in D Minor for Violin Solo (1717-1720), arr. for marimba by Andy Meyerson with Jack Van Geem (2025)**

Bach's influence in contemporary percussion is as profound as it is complicated: though marimba transcriptions of his solo works for violin, cello, and lute are staples of conservatory percussion repertoire—and the first major pieces I, like most percussion students, studied and performed—Bach never actually wrote any percussion solos.

The fact that our discipline chose to codify transcriptions of Bach as the foundational pedagogical tool, rather than build a new tradition from the ground up, represents (to some) a missed opportunity.

And, in the scale of Bach's solo work, the Chaconne is arguably the most famous. Any attempt to tackle it can feel simultaneously presumptuous, cliched, and solipsistic.

The Chaconne is, however, a masterpiece. And it has taught me, and generations of percussionists, how to perform and experience music.

Confronting this brilliant, complicated masterpiece felt like an engaging challenge, and an opportunity to explore, with Myles, where we are in our practices and where we hope to go from here.

Myles Thatcher **Valediction (2025–26)**

As I watched Andy prepare his stamina and technical prowess for this monolithic Bach piece, it reminded me of all the reasons I was drawn to ballet as a young person. The constant pursuit of perfection is intoxicating, and to see the slow and methodical progress in myself over my years as a student and professional has always been a humble point of pride. But now I'm in my mid-30s. My relationship with my technique has inevitably changed. How can it be that just as the knowledge I've accumulated over the years strengthens, my body gives way to its age, becoming less obedient and more temperamental. This work is somewhat of a valediction to my classical technique, or at least how I've embodied it in the past, and a reflection on how I celebrate it, grieve it, resent it, and continue to develop it as I get older.



ANTHONY MCGILL

Clarinet

GLORIA CHIEN

Piano

**April 3 | 7:30pm
Herbst Theatre**

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