

METDance finds creative pulse in 'Where the Heart Is'

By **Molly Glentzer** Updated 3:37 pm, Wednesday, November 15, 2017



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METDance performs its "Deep in the Heart" program at MATCH.

Creative people tend to have their pulse on culture far ahead of everyone else, and serendipitous things happen because of it.

How else to explain the timeliness of METDance's "Where the Heart Is" show, a home-themed concert that was conceived well before Hurricane Harvey delivered such catastrophe to our doorsteps? (Ditto for the big "HOME - So Different, So Appealing" exhibition opening Friday at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.)

METDance artistic director Marlana Doyle has been looking really smart that way. She also planned last season's "United in Dance" theme before America's political divides became so nasty - planned partly to play up the 11-member company's diverse personalities, bodies and cultures.

When it comes to the actual dances, though, Doyle doesn't go for head-bonking an idea to death. The "home" concept for this weekend's show refers mainly to the return of the Houston-born choreographers who will be featured.

Margot Gelber, a High School for the Performing and Visual Arts graduate who won METDance's annual emerging choreographer competition a few years ago, came home from New York to create "Necessity Is a Mother" a few weeks ago.

Yes, that's since Harvey, but the dance riffs humorously on topics from "The Worst Case Scenario Little Book for Survival," such as surviving gunshot wounds and snakebites.

"It plays well with what happened here and how we all had to figure it out to survive," Doyle said. "But it's not all about Harvey."

More Information

Choreographer Mario Zambrano, a slightly older Houston native who built his reputation in Europe, will present "Volver," a dance sprung from Frida Kahlo's

*'Where the Heart Is'*When: 7:30 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, with pre-show talk 7 p.m. Thursday. The company also performs its "Moving Myths" family show at 2 p.m. Saturday. *Where:* MATCH, 3400 Main *Info:* \$18-\$28 for "Heart," \$5-\$10 for "Myths"; 713-521-4533, matchhouston.org

1933 painting "My Dress Hangs There."

"What inspires me so much about Kahlo's work ... is how unabashedly she declares herself in her paintings," Zambrano said. He wants the audience to feel that same sense of liberation in his movement language.

Houston choreographer Courtney Jones' "Paralyzed by Fear," a trio loosely based on her caretaking experience with a disabled parent, takes viewers on an abstract, emotional journey.

Doyle rounds out the program with the Houston premiere of New York choreographer Emily Schoen's "the grounding place." Inspired by a tour in Africa, it uses a drum score to explore themes of comfort, discomfort and common humanity.

"To me, dancers are not abstract movement artists. They are people, and their performance reflects real human beauty, struggle and quirk," Schoen said. "To see a dance piece is to watch real life and to, perhaps, see one's own humanity in a new light."

On a totally different track, METDance also will perform its big new educational production, "Moving Myths," Saturday afternoon.

The performance features captivating legends from all over the world in a magical interlude of storytelling.

"As traveling dancers spend a night beside a campfire, they entertain each other with breathtaking examples of mythology from their homelands from all around the world," Doyle said. " 'Moving Myths' is as much about honoring the importance of our unique cultures as it is about celebrating and sharing them together - a sentiment that mirrors METDance's core values of inclusion and diversity."

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