

SoMar Dance Works  
presents



**BODY  
LANGUAGE**

A 25th anniversary concert that speaks volumes.



Walker Recital Hall  
Feb 17 @ 7:00  
Feb 18 @ 2:00

# SoMar Dance Works

Presents

## Body Language

Solveig & Mark Santillano  
Co-Directors, Choreographers

### Company

Emma Berkheiser, Katie Bleu, Natalie Cecil, Ainsley Dunning, Katherine Kilbourn,  
Madeleine Plourde, Mark Santillano, Solveig Santillano, Sophie Satoh, Mia Semieraro,  
Madeleine Sipos, Moira Sullivan, Nicole Walters

With Kelly Armor and Angela McDonough DiFiore

Technical Director  
Harold Hotchkiss

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Greetings from the directors! We warmly welcome you to SoMar Dance Work's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary concert entitled "Body Language". According to google body language means "the use of physical behavior, expressions, mannerisms to communicate nonverbally, often done instinctually rather than consciously" and we learn about, interpret, make meaning through our bodies. As this evening's theme professes, we're invested in the way movement speaks and are similarly fascinated with the way language reveals embodiment. One can feel the weight of circumstance, embrace the situation, shoulder a burden, climb to the top, take a leap of faith, work around an issue, develop a knot in our stomach, come to an under-standing, follow a gut feeling, become sick to our stomach, die of a broken heart, sense deception, feel uplifted, seen, or heard. Not only does a picture speak a thousand words, but also the body never lies. In short, movement conveys cultural and individual beliefs, biases, and ideas. Our values and experiences live inside our tissues.

We're excited to share with you this evening's mélange of works that we think speak volumes about the way humans move through the world – be it in celebration or competition, curiosity or conflict, voicing creativity, or simply experiencing pleasure in a Crunky Dunky day. We hope you'll enjoy our play on pluses and minuses of human experience down to the nearest decimal, and we thank you in advance for coming into community to reflect on the power of body language and for supporting the arts.

~Mark and Solveig Santillano, Co-Directors

## ***Alchemy***

2024

Music: *Senza* by Camille; *Au Port (Stuck in a Harbour)* by Camille

Choreography: Mark Santillano, Solveig Santillano

Commissioned by the San Diego Civic Dance Arts

Emma Berkheiser, Natalie Cecil, Ainsley Dunning, Katherine Kilbourn, Madeleine Plourde,  
Sophie Satoh, Mia Semieraro, Maddie Sipos, Moira Sullivan, Nicole Walters

## ***Old Friends***

2013

Music: *Old Friends/Bookends* by Paul Simon, performed by the New York Voices

Choreographed & performed by Solveig & Mark Santillano

## ***Dance by Numbers: π***

2007

Music: *Third From the Sun* by Psilonaut; *2πr* by Clint Mansell

Choreographed by Mark Santillano

Ainsley Dunning, Katherine Kilbourn, Mia Simeraro, Moira Sullivan/Nicki Walters

## ***Ode to "Walking and Falling"***

2024

Music: Mark Santillano

Directed by Solveig Santillano, Mark Santillano

Edited by Mark Santillano

Choreography: Solveig Santillano and the cast

## ***The Sneetches***

2024

Text: Theodore Geisel/Dr. Seuss

Music: Mark Santillano

Narrator: Solveig Santillano

Sylvester McMonkey McBean: Mark Santillano

Sneetches: Emma Berkheiser, Katie Bleu, Natalie Cecil, Ainsley Dunning, Katherine Kilbourn, Madeleine  
Plourde, Sophie Satoh, Mia Semieraro, Madeleine Sipos, Moira Sullivan, Nicole Walters

## ***Seasons***

2023

Music, cinematography, and editing: Mark Santillano

With Mark Santillano & Solveig Santillano

## ***Another Slice of Pi***

2007

Music: *Marshmallow Pie* by Spookie Daly Pride

Choreographed by Solveig & Mark Santillano

Madeleine Plourde, Sophie Satoh

## ***Like Silent Raindrops Fell***

2024

Music: *The Sound of Silence* by Paul Simon, performed by Disturbed;

instrumental introduction by Mark Santillano

Choreography: Mark Santillano, Solveig Santillano, in collaboration with Katie Bleu

Katie Bleu with Emma Berkheiser, Natalie Cecil, Mia Semieraro, Madeleine Sipos

## ***A World Beneath***

Music and text by Kelly Armor

Choreographed and performed by Angela McDonough DiFiore, Solveig Santillano

## ***Crunky Dunky Day***

2012

Music: *Hunting Wabbits (Bad Hare Day)* by Gordon Goodwin

Choreography: Mark Santillano, Solveig Santillano

Emma Berkheiser, Natalie Cecil, Ainsley Dunning, Katherine Kilbourn, Madeleine Plourde,  
Sophie Satoh, Mia Semieraro, Maddie Sipos, Moira Sullivan, Nicole Walters



-- The co-directors--

**Mark Santillano** has enjoyed a rich and varied career in the arts. With a background of gymnastics, martial arts, music, and theatre, Mark earned a BFA in Dance and BS in Communications from Southwest Missouri State University, and his Masters from Wesleyan University. As a dancer he has performed around the world. With Pilobolus Dance Theatre, Mark was dance captain, soloist, choreographic collaborator, danced at the Olympics, appeared in commercials, on television, and won an Emmy. He was also a member of Indianapolis' Dance Kaleidoscope. As a member of Actor Equity Association his credits include the (inter)national tours of *The King and I*, *West Side Story*, and *A Chorus Line*. As an educator, Mark has served as an Artist-in-Residence at SMSU and is currently an Assistant Professor at Mercyhurst University. Along with his wife, Solveig Santillano, Mark is co-director/founder of SoMar Dance Works. Established in 1999, SoMar has received numerous grants from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and Erie Arts and Culture. The company is in-residence at Mercyhurst. He has choreographed for a number of companies and university performing ensembles across the country and served on the board of directors of the American College Dance Association, and as president of the Erie Dance Consortium. In 2016, Mark became the recipient of the inaugural Erie Arts & Culture Artistic Fellowship.

**Solveig Santillano**, Associate Professor of Dance at Mercyhurst; Co-Director/Choreographer of SoMar Dance Works; holds an MFA (Hollins); MALS (Wesleyan/Rulewater Prize winner); a BFA from Juilliard; multiple certifications in yoga, is RYT @ 500 hours certified through Yoga Alliance; CET/Certified Evans Teacher; trained in Stott Pilates; is a CLMA/Certified Laban/Bartenieff Movement Analyst (Integrated Movement Studies) and RSMT (Registered Somatic Movement Therapist) through ISMETA. Originally from SD, early studies revolved around theatre (*Circle in the Square*, NHSI), followed by a decade of performing (Anna Sokolow's *Player's Project*, *Ruby Shang and Dancers*, *Prometheus Dance*, *Spencer/Colton*), culminating in six years of touring internationally with MOMIX. Now based in Erie, Santillano lives, teaches, dances, collaborates with her partner on and off the dance floor, Mark, her students, friends, colleagues, and company, SoMar. Her work has been presented by/at/in *Dance Across Borders* (Gothenburg Sweden), *Austria's Young! Tanzsommer* dance festival, Grand Valley State University (Allendale, MI), *Dancing Wheels* (Cleveland, OH), Lake Erie Ballet and Erie Contemporary Ballet Theatre; *Instinct DanceCorps* (Scottsdale, AZ); the San Diego Civic Dance Company (CA), conferences including American College Dance Association, East West Somatic and William Evans Somatic Conferences. She has a passion for collaborations that build community, raise awareness over issues of social concern including cancer (*Laura's Grace*), mental health (*Dis-Ease: A Coming Out*), human trafficking (*Project Abolition*), gender (*In Her Shoes*), and environmental science (*The National Water Dance Erie: The Ripple Effect*) and was the recipient of the (2016) inaugural Erie Arts & Culture Artistic Fellowship.

-- The company --

**Emma Berkheiser** began dancing at Enterline's Dance Center in Mifflinburg, PA at the age of four. She trained there until she graduated high school and has also participated in summer dance intensives at the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre. Emma is a sophomore at Mercyhurst University and as her majors, she is working towards a BSN in Nursing and a BA in Dance. In the future, Emma aspires to be a nurse in a psychiatric environment and continue her dance career with a ballet company. Dancing has always been a passion for Emma and she is grateful for the opportunity to dance and perform with the SoMar company.

**Katie Bleu** is a principal company member with Seiche Dance Collective guesting with SoMar Dance Works this year. She received her BFA in Dance (May 2023) from Mercyhurst University and now holds a day job with the University as their campus visit coordinator. Katie's feet are always moving to the beat of the music and so is her soul. She loves all dance styles, however, specializes in modern, contemporary, and ballet. She has apprenticed with Texture Contemporary Ballet and attended summer intensives with Attack Theater, Diffusion Dance Company, and Alonzo King Lines Ballet. This is Katie's third year with SoMar and she is thankful to have the opportunity to continue working with the company!

**Natalie Cecil** grew up in the Philadelphia area where she started dancing at the age of eight. While she enjoyed all genres of dance, she specialized in ballet and contemporary. She started her college education at Mercyhurst University and is currently a sophomore dance major. She is a part of the Dance Club and Liturgical Dance Ensemble on campus. This is her first year with SoMar Dance Works and she is grateful for the opportunity to expand and grow her talent in the dance world! This summer she will be attending Philadelphia Ballet's Choreographic Workshop and Company Experience summer intensives. She continues to work hard at the art form and hopes to continue her dance career for many years.

**Ainsley Dunning** is a student at Mercyhurst University, where she is studying dance, arts administration, and graphic design. She has attended summer intensives with the American Ballet Theatre, the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, and Orlando Ballet. Ainsley's dance film "quarks" was published in the literary-creative magazine *LUMEN*; she also performed in the dance film *NEXT* under the creative direction of Ashley Lindsey and Grady Bowman, which was selected for the Greensboro Dance Film Festival. She is excited to be performing in her first concert with SoMar Dance Works.

**Katherine Kilbourn** grew up in Easton, Maryland where her love for various dance styles began at the Mid Shore Dance Academy. She attended the Washington School of Ballet before furthering her education at Mercyhurst University where she will graduate with her BFA in Dance and a minor in Psychology this spring. She has enjoyed being a company member of SoMar Dance Works for the past three seasons.

**Madeleine Plourde** is in her senior year as a Dance and Integrated Media and Strategic Communications double major at Mercyhurst. She is passionate about using dance and the arts to connect with others. Originally from Vermont, she has trained primarily in ballet, pointe and modern though she has taken classes and workshops in a wide variety of styles. This is Madeleine's second season dancing with SoMar Dance Works, and she hopes you enjoy watching the show just as much as she has enjoyed rehearsing and performing it.

**Sophie Satoh** was born in Tsukuba, Japan then moved to Massachusetts where her passion for dance continued to grow. She is a senior at Mercyhurst University and a double major in Dance and Public Health. During her time at Mercyhurst University she joined SoMar Dance Works, where she has been a company member for the past two years. Sophie is excited to continue her dance journey after university, gaining more experience and exploring her growth as a dancer as well as an individual.

**Mia Semieraro** is a native of Pittsburgh, PA and has danced for over 19 years. She began serious ballet training around 5 years old at Pittsburgh Youth Ballet. At age 15, she then attended Pennsylvania Ballet Conservatory and branched out to other dance styles. Currently she is a 3rd year Dance major and Exercise Science minor at Mercyhurst University. She has attended summer intensives with Attack Theatre, Texture Ballet School, and Orlando Ballet. This is her second year performing with SoMar Dance Works and she is very excited to share her love of dance with the audience.

**Madeleine Sipos** is a sophomore at Mercyhurst University and is majoring in Dance and Communications with a minor in Arts Administration. She is from Los Angeles, California and trained at Lauridsen Ballet Centre with the company Ballet California. Madeleine is a member of the Mercyhurst Honors Program, Phi Eta Sigma, and National Honors Society of Dance Arts. Besides dancing, Madeleine's favorite thing to do is reading on the beach with a cup of coffee. This is her first year performing with SoMar Dance Works.

**Moira Sullivan** is a sophomore dance major with a minor in arts administration at Mercyhurst University. She is from Columbus, Ohio and previously trained at Northpointe Dance Academy where she studied ballet, jazz, musical theater, and contemporary. At Mercyhurst, she is the Vice President of the Liturgical Dance Ensemble and the Co-President of the Tall Ship Sailing Club. This is her first year in SoMar and she is excited to perform as part of the company!

**Nicole Walters** grew up in Sellersville, Pennsylvania. She is studying at Mercyhurst for a BFA in Dance and a BA in English. Nicole has trained primarily in ballet, character, and Irish techniques with Budzynski Ballet Theater, Princeton Ballet School, and the Fitzpatrick School of Irish Dance. She has attended summer programs at the American Repertory Ballet, the Atlanta Ballet, and Riverdance. She is excited for her first performance with SoMar Dance Works.



- - Guest Artists - -

**Kelly Armor** is singer, multi-instrumentalist, storyteller, folklorist, and educator. In 2020 – 2022 she has recently performed her original compositions for three productions by Erie’s Dafmark Dance Theater. Ms. Armor has been a teaching artist since 1995, and lead over 50 residencies in schools and social service organizations. Her residencies focus on storytelling, folk music, songwriting, and folk arts. For the past 25 years she has worked intensively with Erie’s New American community, identifying artists and supporting their work to preserve their culture and traditions in their new home and creating systems for the greater community to honor, celebrate, and benefit from the New American’s indigenous knowledge. She was the Education and Folk Art Director at the Erie Art Museum from 2003-2018. Since 2018 she has been the Folklorist in Residence at Erie Arts & Culture, a regional arts council.

From 1993 – 2003 she was a full-time performer, interpreting the folk music from East Africa, Appalachia, and the British Isles. She toured the country presenting at coffee houses, festivals, schools and concert venues. She studied flute performance and composition at Yale University. She has a B.A. in Ethnomusicology from Friends World Program of Long Island University, where she did field work from 1986 – 1989 in Kenya and Tanzania in traditional music, Swahili language, and English language instruction.

**Angela McDonough DiFiore** has over twenty-five years’ professional experience in the field of dance as a choreographer, performer, and educator. She holds a BFA in Dance from New World School of the Arts and an MFA in Dance (Performance and Choreography) from Florida State University. Angela has presented her choreographic work in performances throughout the state of Florida, Erie Pennsylvania, Fredonia, New York, Mt San Jacinto, California, Steamboat Springs, Colorado, and Pro Danza Italia in Montescudaio, Italy. She has performed throughout the South Florida region with such groups as Dancesynergy, Corps Chameleon, Millennium Dance Syndicate, Ballet Flamenco La Rosa, Kokoflux, Fuzion Dance Artists (Sarasota Contemporary Dance), and The Ugly Company in NYC. Angela has been a part of performances of Florida Waterways Dance Project and National Water Dance since 2010 through the present, as a choreographer, director, collaborator and performer. She has recently become involved in choreographing and performing in dance for film projects for Erie Dance Film Festival as well as creating a new screendance work made for Fredonia Dance Ensemble titled *Turbulence* and an independent dance film titled *Waves* for the Erie Dance Consortium Festival of Dance. Angela has taught at Broward College, Santa Fe College, University of Florida, Mercyhurst University, the College of Central Florida, FSU in NYC, Perry Mansfield Performing Arts School and Camp and the Mercyhurst Summer Dance Experience. She has served on the board of directors of the Erie Dance Consortium and has hosted dance movement workshops in the Erie community at Soma Movement Arts, the PACA Movement Center and the Erie Art Museum. Angela is a rostered teaching artist with Erie Arts and Culture and a Lecturer in Dance at SUNY Fredonia.

-- Technical Director --

**Harold Hotchkiss**, MFA, has been working in technical theatre for 22 years. Harold is a native of Buffalo, NY, and a graduate of the University of Buffalo. He completed his Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Design from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. During Harold's time in theatre, he has worked with many educational institutions such as Mercyhurst University, Penn State Behrend, Moreau Catholic High-School in Hayward California, University of Buffalo, and more. Currently he divides his time working as an assistant technical director in Erie, PA and production manager/ technical director in Hayward, CA. Outside of the theatre Harold enjoys working in the garden with his wife, Gillian.

### Appreciations

It is with endless gratitude that we acknowledge the many people that help us continue to do what we do.

We are grateful for our parent's lifelong support and dance in their memory and presence.

Mercyhurst Department of Dance – Noelle Partusch, Chair  
Mercyhurst School of the Arts – Jodi Staniunas Hopper, Dean  
And the Production Practicum class students.

And our incredible dancers. It's always a pleasure.

Thank you, our audience, for supporting the arts.

Come see the Mercyhurst Dance Department's next performances:

**Choreography II showcase:** March 15, 2024, Palmer Studio, Zurn Hall

**National Water Dance:** April 20, 204, Erie Maritime Museum/H.O. Hirt Auditorium

**Raw Edges XXVI:** April 26-28, 2024, Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center

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