

SoMar Dance Works
and the Mercyhurst Department of Dance
present



NOT OUR FIRST RODEO

Sat Feb 22nd @ 7:00 pm
Sun Feb 23rd @ 2:00 pm

Walker Recital Hall

SoMar Dance Works
Presents

Not Our First Rodeo

Solveig & Mark Santillano
Co-Directors, Choreographers

Company
Emma Berkheiser, Katie Bleu, Kenzie Krommes, Maya Richards,
Mark Santillano, Solveig Santillano, Mia Semieraro,
Madeleine Sipos, Moira Sullivan, Colton Swiger

Technical Director
Harold Hotchkiss

Howdy pardner,

We're much obliged you could join us for our little shindig. We're back in the saddle again for another SoMar concert and we couldn't be more excited to share what we've been working on. After twenty-six years, it may not be our first rodeo, but it's always a thrilling ride just the same.

We hope you enjoy tonight's offerings. We've brought back some of our old favorites and cooked up a few new pieces for y'all. As always, we've got a lot on our minds, and this is one of the ways we get to express ourselves. It is with enormous gratitude we acknowledge our privilege to be able to have our voices heard. Our world seems to be divided beyond repair, and it is our sincere wish that, through the arts, we can see we have much more in common with each other compared to what divides us. As Judith Jamison said "to share our humanity is what we're here for."

~Mark and Solveig Santillano, Co-Directors

Piercing Darkness

(2014)

Music: *Piercing Darkness* by Mark Santillano

Choreography: Solveig & Mark Santillano

The company

For the Honey and You

(2019)

Music: *A Taste of Honey* by Bobby Scott and Ric Marlow

Videography & editing: Mark Santillano

Choreographed and performed by Solveig & Mark Santillano

Tributary of Life

(2025)

Music: *Le Petite Cascade* by René Aubry

Choreography: Katie Bleu

The company

Dedicated to Doris Mastalski, my sweet grandma,
who is no longer with me on earth but still holds my hand from heaven.

Meditation Moment 1

Tippy Tops

(2012)

Music: *Sleeping Dogs Lie* by Bela Fleck

Choreography by Solveig & Mark Santillano

Maddie Sipos, Mia Semieraro, Colton Swiger

Kalyana Mitra

(2025)

Music: *Sur Measure* by Hugues Le Bars

Choreography by Solveig Santillano

Maia Richards, Katie Kleu

Gratuitous Interlude (2008)

Music: Bobby McFerrin
Choreography: Mark Santillano
Moira Sullivan, Mia Semieraro

Meditation moment 2

Not a Pipe

(2014)

Music: *The Longest Night* by Mark Orton
The Clandestine Adventures of Ms. Merz by Rob Burger
March of the Smallest Feet by Carla Kihlstedt
Happy Hour by Rob Burger
Choreographers: Mark Santillano, Solveig Santillano

The company

Old Friends

2013 (original stage version)

2025.02 (film)

Music: *Old Friends/Bookends* by Paul Simon, performed by the New York Voices
Choreographed & performed by Solveig & Mark Santillano
Cinematography: Ainsley Dunning and Mark Santillano
Video editing: Mark Santillano

Rodeo (on a stick)

(2020)

Music: *Rodeo* by Aaron Copland
Choreography by Solveig & Mark Santillano,
in collaboration with the original cast

The company



-- 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 the age of four at Enterline's Dance Center, where she trained until starting college. Now a junior at Mercyhurst University, she is studying both nursing and dance. Emma is passionate about dancing and is grateful for the opportunity to perform with the SoMar Company for a second year. Emma aspires to join a professional ballet company after graduating while also pursuing a nursing career as she is dedicated to helping others.

Katie Bleu is a principal company artist with Seiche Dance Collective guesting with SoMar Dance Works. She received her BFA in Dance from Mercyhurst University and now holds a day job at the University as their campus visit coordinator. Katie specializes in modern, contemporary, and ballet dance styles. She has apprenticed with Texture Contemporary Ballet and has expanded her horizons through summer intensives and workshops with Alonzo King Lines, Attack Theater, Diffusion Dance Company, and Nimbus Dance. This is Katie's fourth year with SoMar and she is glad to be back again!

Kenzie Krommes is a sophomore at Mercyhurst University and this is her first season performing with SoMar Dance Works. She is currently getting her BFA Dance and is minoring in Fashion Merchandising and Expressive Therapy. Kenzie is from Reading, Pennsylvania and danced with Allegro Dance. Kenzie is also a member of the National Honor Society of Dance Arts.

Maya Richards began dancing at the age of five and has over 20 years of experience as a dancer. She graduated from Mercyhurst University with her B.F.A. in Dance and her B.A. in Mathematics. While at Mercyhurst, she performed with SoMar for two years. In addition to performing, she is passionate about teaching. Maya recognizes the impact that one can have on others, particularly as a teacher. She loves seeing individuals learn, taking what she teaches and making it work for themselves. Maya also works as the Development Associate for the Erie Philharmonic. Maya is excited to be back with SoMar Dance Works for her third season.

Mia Semieraro, originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, first began dance classes about 20 years ago. She is in the process of completing her senior year at Mercyhurst University and will graduate with a B.F.A. in Dance and a minor in Exercise Science. This past summer, she had the opportunity to dance and intern with Ballet Concerto for their 42nd annual Summer Dance Concert. She has also attended summer intensives with Oregon Ballet School, Orlando Ballet School, Attack Theatre, and Texture Ballet School. For the past three years, Mia has been a company dancer with SoMar Dance Works.

Madeleine Sipos is a junior at Mercyhurst University, and this is her second season performing with SoMar Dance Works. She is double majoring in Dance and Communications with a minor in Arts Administration. Madeleine is from Los Angeles, California and trained at Lauridsen Ballet Centre with the company Ballet California. As a Mercyhurst Dancer, Madeleine is in the National Honors Society of Dance Arts and is Co-President of Dance Club. Outside of the studio, she is a member of the Mercyhurst Honors Program, Phi Eta Sigma, and is a work study with Conference and Events on campus.

Moira Sullivan is a Junior Dance Major at Mercyhurst University with minors in Arts Administration and Dance Education. She is from Columbus, Ohio and previously trained at Northpointe Dance Academy where she studied ballet, jazz, musical theater, hip hop, and contemporary dance. She has also done a choreography internship at Deos Contemporary Ballet. This is her second year performing with SoMar Dance Works and she is excited to dance with the company again!

Colton Swiger is a Freshman Dance Major at Mercyhurst, and the youngest member of SoMar. Originally from Cincinnati, Ohio, Colton loves to dance. His favorite style is ballet, and he loves cooking and working out at the gym. He joined SoMar because he wanted to do something outside his comfort zone. He also wanted to create a unique exuberance for the audience, and he believes we've done that with this concert. Enjoy the show.

-- Technical Director --

Harold Hotchkiss, MFA, has been working in technical theatre for 23 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 who help us
continue to do what we do.

Mercyhurst Department of Dance – Noelle Partusch, Chair

Mercyhurst School of the Arts – Jodi Staniunas Hopper, Dean

Our volunteer stage crew.

Our financial contributors.

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 19, 2025, Palmer Studio, Zurn Hall

Raw Edges XXVII: April 25-27, 2025, Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center

Keep in touch with SoMar. "Like" us on Facebook and
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<https://gofund.me/19710393>

