

Astra

DANCE THEATRE



Voted *Best New
Theatre Company*
in Los Angeles.

LA WEEKLY

*Experience thrilling and unique
dance theater.*

As seen in **FAKEOFF** Season 2

*“A breathtakingly talented troupe of...
neoclassical dancers, contortionists
and circus artists.”*

— Artsbeat LA

Kelsie Koziol



Astra

DANCE THEATRE

offers programs, small to large, for discerning venues around the globe. Our award-winning production team, paired with our select group of in-house talent, make up our current tribe. We work well with established dance programs, seeking to expand their viewership and university programs that combine education and performance opportunities. We are happy to supplement our core crew with local talent.

Thrill your audience by adding Astra Dance Theatre to your dance program!

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER/ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

David Wilkinson david@astradance.com

CREATIVE DIRECTOR/COMPOSER

Regan Remy regan@astradance.com

DIRECTOR AND WRITER

Sasha Travis sasha.travis@gmail.com

GENERAL CONTACT INFORMATION

310-734-8857

info@astradance.com

astradancetheatre.com



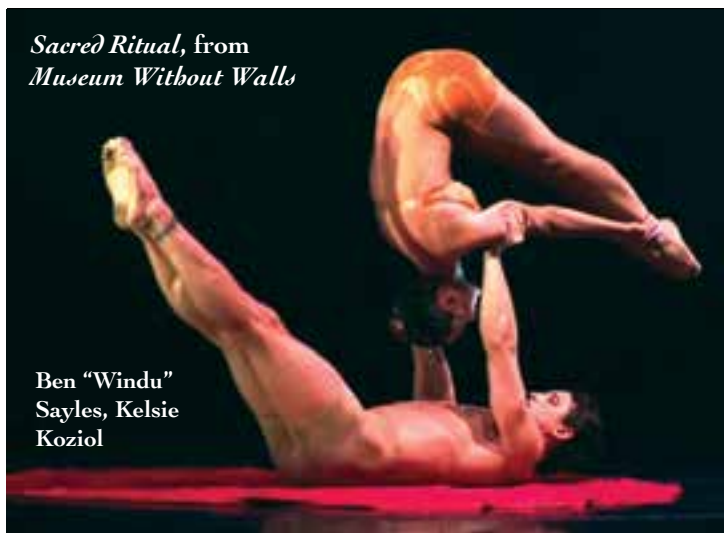


MUSEUM WITHOUT WALLS

ART *comes alive*

*Elegant dance explorations of
visual art through the ages.*

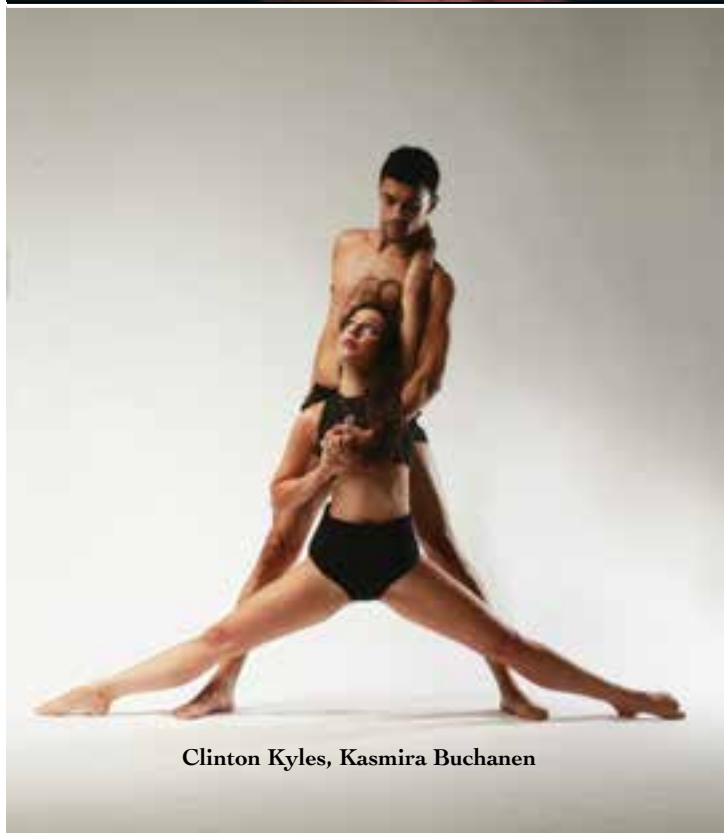
*Sacred Ritual, from
Museum Without Walls*



Ben "Windu"
Sayles, Kelsie
Koziol

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Clinton Kyles, Kasmira Buchanen

*The Cabinet of
Dr. Caligari*



Roger Fojas

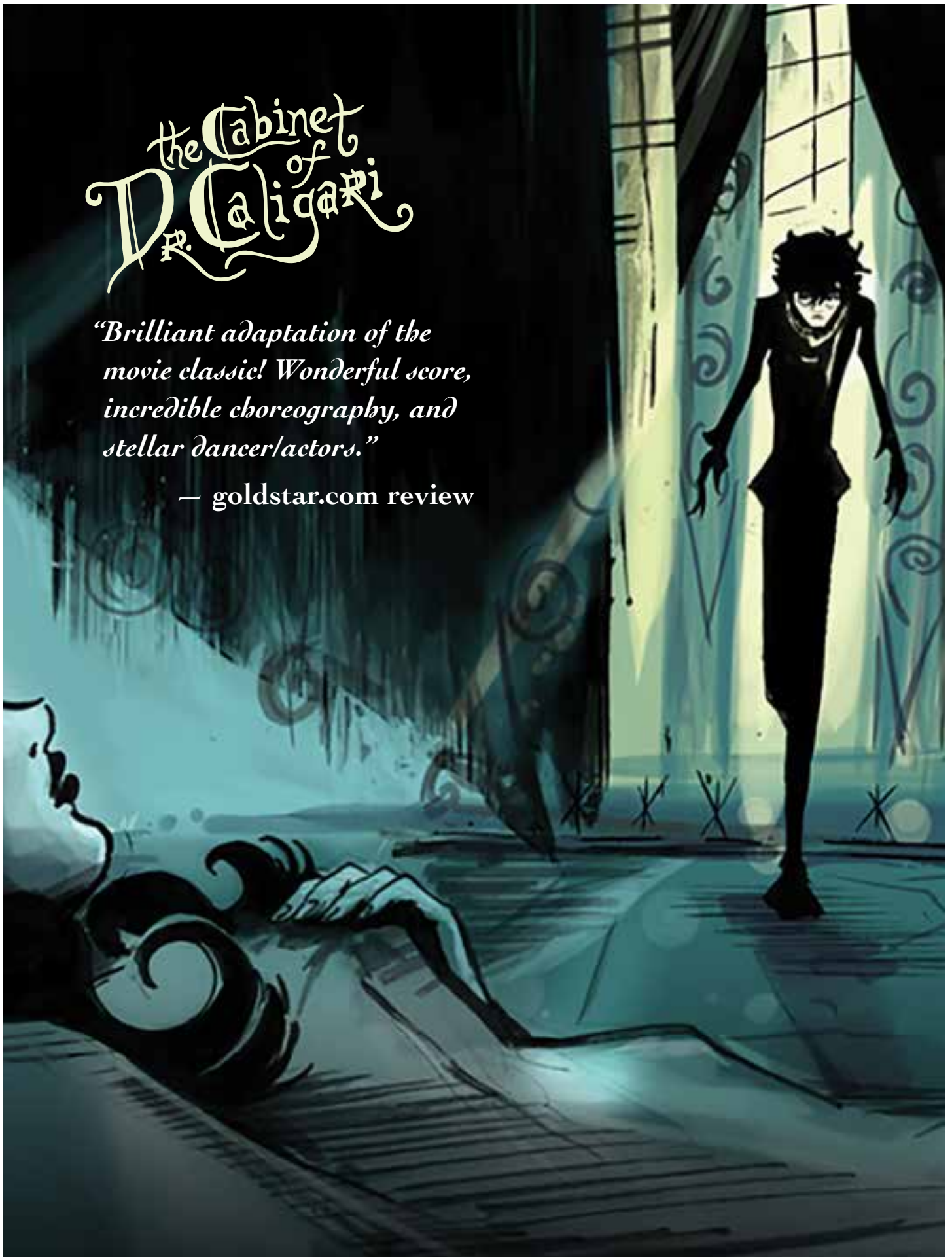


Georgia Reed

the Cabinet of Dr. Caligari

"Brilliant adaptation of the movie classic! Wonderful score, incredible choreography, and stellar dancer/actors."

— goldstar.com review



The Artistic Vision of *Astra* DANCE THEATRE

WITH A PASSION FOR THE PAST, we pull from historic art forms and classical literature to create cutting-edge dance theatre productions. We bridge the gap between the technological age and the great classics. We combine powerful dance, thrilling original scores, and richly vivid digital scenography.

Astra Dance Theatre tells stories that are timeless and enchanting, making theatre more exciting and accessible to myriad of audiences worldwide.



ART *comes alive*



MUSEUM WITHOUT WALLS

Visual art, music, and movement have always inspired each other. In this powerful series, we explore themes in visual art with intimate dance and original music.

Envision the dancer, alone in the Museum, exploring the collection of art through the lens of their own body and its movements. Inspiration flows thusly from artists lost through time, their work living on to inform a new generation of great masters.

Through cutting-edge projection and passionate dance, we can *educate* and *entertain* your community about Renaissance, Impressionist, and Modern Art.

We also love to workshop and perform *original works based on artists in your community*. We work with young dancers, musicians, visual artists, singers, and actors from your community, creating mentorships, educational and performance opportunities for the next generation of artists of all types.

Educational Offerings

Lectures by UCLA professor, author and Astra founder Dr. David Wilkinson

- *Making an Art Style into a Dance Style*
- *Great Masters of the Renaissance Era*
- *Great Masters of the Impressionist Era*
- *Great Masters of the Americas*

Master Classes in Acting with our award-winning director, Sasha Travis

- *From Static Art to Dynamic Motion — Story Telling through Dance*
- *Melodrama in Dance and Acting*
- *Don't Forget Your Face — Acting for Dancers*

Master Classes in Music with award-winning composer, and our founder Regan Remy

- *Improvisation — Set your Playing Free*
- *Not Quite Silent — The History of Silent Film Music*
- *Composing Made Easy — Silence Your Inner Critic*

Our aim: meet the needs of the community. *Lectures* are accompanied by slides, where appropriate. *Acting* and *Music Master Classes* are part lecture, part performance, part workshop.

Our Repertory

MUSEUM WITHOUT WALLS

A tight ensemble of dancers brings classical works of art into vivid embodiment. Adapted to be performed in the limited confines of the museum, itself, this work also lends itself to smaller, more intimate settings.

Programs Available



Renaissance

Idealized forms of humans cavort with the Gods in this love story set amidst the great art of the Renaissance era.



Impressionism

Witness the transformation of a young dancer into a prima ballerina, in this ode to the great impressionist paintings.



American

Cultural and Technological revolutions have upended art since the 60's. Witness the journey of an artist as she dances through these changing worlds.

Each show can be done with 3–10 dancers and no sets. All shows include educational offerings. Art can be present in projections, displayed prints, or in the program. Lectures, workshops, and master classes are available in Art History, Eras of Music, Historic Theatre, Improvisation (Dance, Music, Acting), Choreography, Musical Ensembles and more! Exploring great art through movement and music is our passion!

Community Engagement

We can adapt our presentation to include elements from your local line-up of talent!

- **Local Visual Artists** can serve as inspiration for our dancers
- **Local Dancers** can participate in workshops and performances
- **Local Musicians** can contribute to the musical score

SHOWCASE



7:36 minutes — *Sacred Ritual*, from *Museum Without Walls*

Brynn Fehir,
Kelsie Koziol



Our Repertory

THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI

A dance-theatre adaptation of the classic German-Expressionist silent film, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, features 17 dancers playing 37 roles, along with artistic recreations of the original bizarre, distorted backdrops. Said to have inspired Tim Burton, this creepy classic thrills lovers of dance, film, and horror.

Programs Available

1. *Full Show*. Featuring 17 dancers, 5 projectors and 87 minutes of thrilling action.
2. *Caligari Lite*. Featuring 11 dancers, 3 projectors and 60 minutes of thrilling action.

Educational Offerings

The Art of Melodrama. Six hours of intensive instruction, featuring a lecture on the history of classical Melodrama, a movement workshop on the distinctive expressions of melodrama, and a silent film makeup tutorial. For anyone, especially *actors, directors, and makeup artists*.

Scoring on the Fly. A 4-hour master class on musical improvisation. Bring your instrument if you have one! We will talk about the history of silent film live scoring, work with techniques to banish inhibitions, and help you create an arsenal of your own musical moods! For anyone, especially *musicians and composers*.

A Survey of Silent Film. A 4-hour lecture with film examples, covering the advent of cinema up to the era of the “talkies.” Taught by Harvard author and UCLA professor Dr. David Wilkinson. For anyone, especially *film fanatics!*

TRAILERS



[1:23-minute promotional trailer](#)

INTERVIEWS



[Interviews with *Caligari* director Sasha Travis, artistic director David Wilkinson, and performer Roger Fojas](#)

SELECTED SCENES



[10:41 minutes of selected scenes from *Caligari*](#)

Reviews and Accolades

THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI

"Astra Dance Theatre has interpreted the twisted, sinister plot and expressionistic style of the 1920s silent horror film classic to produce a gorgeous if disquieting acrobatic ballet. A breathtakingly talented troupe of 17 neoclassical dancers, contortionists and circus artists emote and perform the melodramatic tale of murder and mystery against a projected backdrop of animation and abstract, jagged settings. The graceful and athletic ballet is engrossing."

— Pauline Adamek; *Artsbeat LA* review



"To create the Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, Astra Dance Theatre has really made something new in the field of theatre for Los Angeles. It has flair and emotion wrapped together with projections and a completely original score."

— yelp.com review

"It's absolutely delightful ... both of us are Deaf, and the show was completely understood by us. I only wish ... I had known of this before attending it, because I would have told our many Deaf friends, and we are certain that many of them would ... [have attended] the show."

— goldstar.com review

"Brilliant production by a prodigiously talented cast. I live in NoHo and it's our Little Broadway."

— goldstar.com review



In Development



SILENT FILM, as focused as it is on communication through the physical medium only, is perfectly suited to dance. These well-known, historic works of art—moody, melodramatic, and timeless—have captivated a century of creatives.

After our stunning production of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, Astra Dance Theatre decided this medium was worth expanding upon. Digital recreations of the original art harness modern technology to create an immersive theatrical experience. Dancers combine stunningly athletic modern dance with the melodramatic stylings of the silent film era.

Scalable for any budget, these unique works are sure to attract both dance enthusiasts and lovers of classic film.

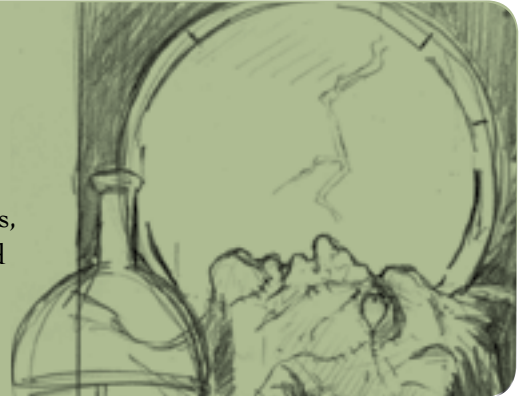


NOSFERATU

Bram Stoker's 1897 Gothic novel, *Dracula*, inspired the 1922 German Expressionist film *Nosferatu*. ADT's thrilling dance theatre piece *Nosferatu* combines acrobatic dance with cutting-edge technology and a dramatic original score. With a story rooted in the *Dracula* mythos, we follow the monstrous love of a fiendish and merciless vampire aristocrat for the innocent, yet fierce, Mina.

FRANKENSTEIN

Mary Shelley's 1818 Gothic novel, *Frankenstein*, inspired silents in 1910 and 1920. ADT's fascinating dance theatre piece tells the story of the tragic creature of Dr. Frankenstein in our own vernacular. Playing upon the horrors of modern life as the Age of Industry overtook simpler times, this multimedia masterpiece bridges the centuries and expresses age-old human concerns. This epic tale is told through stunning acrobatic dance; vivid, realistic projections; and electrifying original music.



METROPOLIS

Recreating the dystopian future world of this 1926 German Expressionist novel by Thea von Harbou, and epic 1927 silent film by Fritz Lang, this sci-fi dance-theatre piece unfolds against the imposing mechanistic backdrop, recreated in dramatic three-dimensional projections. Its impassioned characters dance their several ways through their archetypal journeys to Power, Knowledge, Vengeance, Creation, Perfection, and Love, illustrated by the classic dialogue title cards. *Metropolis* features massive puppetry, a thrilling score, and unforgettable dance.

FAIRY TALES have endured throughout the ages, with their bizarre and fantastic themes. Heavily laden with the potent language of the subconscious, these works' appeal spans across generations.

Calling upon tales of ages past, these stories bring a sense of nostalgia and wonder, while also offering sage advice to the amused viewer. These entrancing tales translate into grand, theatrical experiences guaranteed to spur enthusiasm for dance, literature, and the creative arts in younger audiences. Bright costumes, exotic scenarios, and playful dance transport the viewer to a delightful otherworld. Original music and unique staging create an unforgettable stage show.

With themes for any community, these playful theatrical pieces engage the young, and the young at heart.



WONDERFUL TUNE

Geared for children, this interactive dance performance invites everyone to the stage for a thrilling finale. When an Irish piper does a favor for the faeries and is granted a boon, he chooses to learn their most wonderful tune, which compels all who hear it to dance. A great deal of chaos breaks out when the piper pipes the fishes out of the sea to dance with the townsfolk whether they want to or not, and is crowned King of the Fishes by the Queen of the Sea herself! Experience legend brought to life in this fantastical dance performance for all ages.

TAM LIN

Suited for young adults, this fantastical dance tells the tale of a stubborn young girl determined to earn back her honor after a tryst with a dashing handsome faery knight.



HO, AND AWAY TO FRANCE

A curious Cornishman learns the dangers of fraternizing with faeries in this timeless tale about a life gone awry. From a secret visit to the Squire's cellars to barely escaping death on the scaffold, this hero is led astray and back again by his faery princess in this classic faerie tale.

Our Creative Team



DAVID WILKINSON (Founder, Artistic Director): Ex-private pilot, ex-skydiver, ex-paraglider. His body is now self-grounded, but his imagination still soars. In addition to founding Astra Dance Theatre, David is also a UCLA professor, author of five books and fifty-odd articles, and a traveler to strange destinations—Ulan Bator, Timbuktu, Titicaca. David (as writer) and Regan Remy (as composer) founded the dance troupe. David's Poe-esque tale, *Astra von Berlitzing*, was set to music by Regan and performed at Burning Man in 2008, at the Electric Lodge in 2009, and at the Million Dollar Theater in 2010. David next narrated Poe's unusually light love story *Eleonora* and contributed his voice to Clive Barker's *I Dreamed...* at the El Portal in 2012. He co-scripted *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* with the directorial genius Sasha Travis in May 2012, supplying the voices of the Director and the Police.



REGAN REMY (Co-Creator, Composer): Falling in love with *Fur Elise* at age 8 set Regan "High Priestess" on her course to be a composer. With work recently on display at New York's Bryant Park for Armory week, she has written music for art installations, dance exhibitions, prime-time TV, and big budget film. She has composed everything from film trailers to art installations, dance productions to circus acts. She has performed all over the world, including Australia, Europe, and Indonesia. State-side she's performed at Burning Man, Labyrinth of Jareth, Faerieworlds, and Comicon, and as an opera-singing mermaid in cirque show, *Oceania*. Regan and David founded the Astra Dance Theatre based on a mutual passion for music, dance, and classical literature.



SASHA TRAVIS (Director): Travis sees art as the connector of all things, unifying all aspects of production, on the stage and off, to tell a compelling and passionate story. Travis moved to Los Angeles in 2008, assuming a directing position for Sypher Art Studios, taking on role of Lead Director for the Labyrinth of Jareth Masquerade Ball. She joined the production team for Labyrinth of Jareth in 2009. Travis has also had the pleasure of directing shows for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and joined the Astra Dance Theatre as Director in 2010. From singing at Carnegie Hall to crooning jazzy classics in Downtown Los Angeles, Sasha Travis is equally comfortable on stage or directing. She has directed for Sypher Art Studios, LACMA, and Astra Dance Theatre.

A short history of *Astra* DANCE THEATRE



THE ASTRA DANCE THEATRE sprang from the germ of an idea shared in 2005 by its co-creators, David Wilkinson and Regan Remy, well known for their respective achievements in writing and in musical composition, David envisioned the story of *Astra von Berliftzing*, a sequel to Edgar Allan Poe's *Metzengerstein*, and Regan committed to set the new story to music. Dance was swiftly added, and soon the ambitious band of "Astratroupers" set out to prepare a performance of the fiery tale. After that beginning, there was no looking back!

ADT's original and signature show, the morally challenging story *Astra Von Berliftzing*, was performed in 2008 at Burning Man, Black Rock City, Nevada, upon the Shiva Vista stage, and set that stage ablaze (and we mean literally!) before an estimated audience of 1,500. In 2009, a new version of *Astra von Berliftzing* was born at the 99-seat black box Electric Lodge, in Venice, California. In 2010, we welcomed director and writer Sasha Travis to the team for a fully renovated *Astra*, to be performed at the historic,

2000-seat, Million Dollar Theater on Broadway in downtown Los Angeles. Bringing a cast of talented, independent dancers together in a way that truly enables them to share their emotional experience, as well as their physical mastery, is a true gift of Sasha's. In addition, her acumen in writing and adapting has brought our ambitious, historic pieces to life for the stage. *Astra* was greeted with great, unabated enthusiasm.

Turning its attention to more intimate works, ADT workshopped Edgar Allan Poe's love story, *Eleonora*, at the SB ADaPT festival at the Electric Lodge in 2011. Unique and stirring, this is Poe's only story where love is rewarded and the hero is redeemed and forgiven at the end of his tale.

In 2012, the El Portal Theatre in North Hollywood offered to host a season of the Astra Dance Theatre, and this lovely and historic 360-seat space has now generously nurtured Astra's grandest endeavors. ADT opened its 2012 season with the double bill of *Eleonora* and Clive Barker's *I Dreamed I Spoke in Another's Language*, a beautiful piece of love and longing, told by a living legend of modern fiction.

There followed ADT's reincarnation of the foundational silent film and psychological horror-thriller

classic *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. The May 2012 run of *Caligari*, so captured the enthusiasm of its audience that it returned to the El Portal with enhancements and a new script treatment by David Wilkinson and Sasha Travis in September–October 2012, for a run of twice the length of the original, building to a sold-out house on the closing weekend!

Since its first public production in 2008, ADT has painstakingly developed a diverse and beloved repertoire, each show boasting a unique combination of historical and imaginative dance stylings, entrancing story lines, fantastic costumes, and absorbing digital scenography.

Each of our chosen tales—whether selected from classic literature, modern poetry, historic silent film, or of our own original design—has been set to music composed especially for it by Regan Remy, and narrated by David Wilkinson.



A Blog Review Worthy of Sharing



Astra Dance Theatre's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*

by Zahir Blue

Yesterday afternoon I went with some friends to see something that promised to prove special—a dance version of the classic Expressionist film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*.

For those who don't know, almost any film student would tell how *Caligari* changed cinema forever. It became a film that brought you into a new world, then persuaded you on a visceral level this world was your own—a heightened reality making things somehow more true via the distortions. Then it emotionally makes you fundamentally uncertain of anything. We become totally absorbed in the Hero and all that he believes, loves and wants. Then we learn he's wrong about everything. Yet—and here lies the genius of it—we remain emotionally still on the hero's side! Our intellectual and emotional understandings of the world become totally in conflict, and we feel the conflict! Recognize it!

“Caligari changed cinema forever. It became a film that brought you into a new world, then persuaded you on a visceral level this world was your own.”

The Astra Dance Theatre transforms this story into a two-act play that, like the film, relies on written dialogue (shown on screens either side of the stage). Like all narrative dance, it uses movement rather than words to convey content. Two men sit on a bench. One tells of his belief in spirits.

[Francis (Gayton Askey) points to his fiancée, Jane (Amy Highfill), and says to the man “What happened to Jane and me was stranger still...”]

So, like the film, we spend the bulk of the performance in flashback. On one level, what follows makes for an exciting thriller and spooky horror story.

Indeed, many credit *Caligari* as the first horror film. Francis and Alan (Olivia Bollfrass), best-of friends, decide to attend the carnival that just arrived in town. Along the way they see Jane, the Mayor's daughter, whom they both love. Both agree the choice must be hers, but either way they remain friends! But then, they go to the side show, to see the somnambulist.

Dr. Caligari (Roger Fojas) insists ... [that his sleepwalking Cesare (Brandon Binkly)] ... can predict the future! Alan asks “How long do I have to live?” The reply, “You have until dawn!” horrifies all who hear it, not least because a grisly murder occurred the night before.

Next day, Francis visits Alan and discovers his friend murdered. He's right. Caligari sends Cesare out to commit murders each night. The next evening, his target is none other than Jane! But this time the somnambulist hesitates, entranced by her beauty. Instead, he kidnaps her—yet another horror as she is still reeling from the news of her friend Alan's brutal death. A brief encounter with Caligari and Cesare while looking for Francis made things worse for her fragile nerves. Now she becomes hysterical. [Jane is] rescued as Cesare flees from a mob. [Her pleading] inspires Francis to follow [the doctor] to the local Asylum

where he flees. But there Francis learns the Asylum Director pretends to be Caligari, and with the staff as well as police officers learns of the man's obsession with an 18th century mountebank named Caligari, "a man who left a scar upon the world" by using a somnambulist to commit murders, holding whole towns in a grip of terror. Upon learning Cesare was killed, the Director loses his self control and has to be restrained. "From that day until this," says Francis, "the madman has never left his cell." But Jane, poor Jane, has never really recovered from the shock.

All this sounds like a fun tale for Halloween, but in fact it becomes much, much more. The "look" of both film and dance play make it dreamlike yet weirdly appropriate. Houses look like a dark vision from Dr. Seuss, even the color palette not quite real, yet strangely familiar. The cast wears white face make-up and white gloves, all save Cesare whose gloves stand out as black. It all ties in with the plot, which actually builds upon questions of reality. The carnival with its otherworldly delights. A romantic triangle we expect to result in conflict, but never does. A sleeping man who talks, and gives self-fulfilling prophecies. Confusion over who is who, what we can consider real, when do we dream and when not? It is a world where the idea that the director of a madhouse would of course turn out to be insane. Both familiar yet disturbing.

So have we any right to be surprised or upset by the final twist? Francis and his companion we see return back to the asylum where they live. Patients.



Lunatics. Francis sees "Alan," ... [amazed] his friend is yet alive! He sees Cesare and others. Jane he piteously approaches, clearly in love or seeming so with a delusional girl lost in her own reality, with no notion who he might be. Finally, the director of this, the REAL asylum, walks in. Francis shrieks CALIGARI! And attacks him! Attendants force a straitjacket onto him.

But the [director's] notes [say] "At last I understand. He believes me to be Caligari! But now I know how to cure him!" But for all we've now seen, the director still oozes sinister intent. Or does he? As the dance ends, we see him pick up a book about the mountebank Caligari, the figure ... [with] whom Francis insisted this man had become obsessed. Was Francis the madman right? Is the director evil and insane? Or is he studying Caligari in hopes of curing the lad? Or both? Or neither?



We don't know. We can never know. Hence this story's power! Captured with great skill by a dance company that never stops giving us this intense dreamlike reality. The police with their rigid, almost military unity. Poor Jane as we see her sanity shred under one terror after another. Asylum doctor who with Francis discover the director's notes and react in ever-growing horror at the contents! Or the physical (but silent) laughter from Caligari at the end of Act One as we see someone else arrested for the first two murders. At that moment, we know him guilty, without any evidence at all. And yet, even at story's end, is he really guilty of anything? If so, what?

The original music in the show was composed by Regan Remy. I for one am seriously tempted to look for a CD of this score when it becomes available. While eerily lovely and compelling, it also captures the strange essence of the story. Kudos!

Renaissance



MICHAELANGELO

MUSEUM WITHOUT WALLS



CAILLEBOTTE

Impressionism

ART COMES ALIVE

American Modern



ANDY WARHOL



Cynthia Anderson, Kasmira Buchanen



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310.734.8857
astradancetheatre.com
regan@astradance.com

Georgia Reed