

Back to the Future

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Okwui Okpokwasili, *Bronx Gothic*, 2014. Okwui Okpokwasili. Photo: Ian Douglas.

HERE IT IS: the annual highly selective, totally subjective, goddammit-I-only-remembered-the-best/weirdest/awfullest-thing-after-it-was-published, New York fall performance preview. Trust me, this hurts me more than it hurts you.

I decided to take a different tack and focus as much as possible on smaller and out of the way things, because, you know, the city is going to be taken over by Performa 15, which is coming up November 1, and this year has the humble theme of the Renaissance. And yes, the Crossing the Line festival is great (Miguel Gutierrez's complete trilogy at New York Live Arts, and Adrian Heathfield and André Lepecki convene "Afterlives: The Persistence of Performance" in collaboration with the Museum of Modern Art.) And yeah, Marina Abramović returns to the Park Avenue Armory to do something about some guy named Bach.

1. But have you heard about the choreographer Anneke Hansen, or the Irondale Center in Fort Greene? She'll present her new work *2hymn vb* December 2–5, and I think her delicately and carefully layered phrasework would be perfect for the elegantly aging theater. Hansen comes from a strong New York tradition of nuanced movement. She's worth paying attention to.

2. Speaking of New York lineages: "Sundays on Broadway" is a treasure-trove series curated by Cathy Weis at WeisAcres, her loft in SoHo in one of those buildings still occupied by artists, like some sort of nature preserve. This season's lineup is beyond, including showings by Juliette Mapp, Jodi Melnick, Jon Kinzel, Vicky Shick, and Weis. Dance royalty Carolyn Brown (once of Merce Cunningham) and Sara Rudner (once of Twyla Tharp) host an evening on October 18. And there will be screenings of films by Charles Atlas, Robert Whitman, Léonide Massine (!), and Yasuko Yokoshi.

3. Yokoshi's film *Hangman Takuzo* plays a part in *Zero One*, which will be presented at Danspace Project September 24–26. Yokoshi is not to be missed (and tends to sell out, act fast), but the rest of Danspace's fall is largely populated with less established figures (uh, ok, there is this collaboration December 17–19 between Meredith Monk and Anne Waldman, which, my god—yesss), such as Mina Nishimura and Jean Butler, both singular performers. Their works will be in conversation with intense histories: butoh in Nishimura's case, and Irish dance for Butler.

4. Butler has been slowly easing her way into choreography, along the way collaborating with experienced makers like Tere O'Connor and Jon Kinzel. The woman has impeccable taste, and this fall you can accomplish a hat trick, seeing *The Goodbye Studies* by O'Connor at The Kitchen December 2–12, and *COWHAND CON MAN* by Kinzel October 21–24 and 28–31 at Gibney Dance. I hope you've heard of O'Connor; Kinzel's public profile is lower, but his art is sublime. He's one of many fine artists being supported by Gibney this year.



Anneke Hansen Dance, *hymn vb*, 2015. Promotional image. Austin Selden and Sam Hanson. Photo: Matt Harvey.

5. I'm not always so up on The Joyce Theater's programming, but October 13–25 will see the seventieth anniversary season of the Limón Dance Company, with performances by a range of guest artists. This is American modern-dance bedrock (hey museums, what gives, not sexy enough for you?), and while some of the work shows its years, it remains deeply powerful. The Joyce is also presenting Twyla Tharp's fiftieth anniversary (performances will be at the David H. Koch Theater). Limón and Tharp changed the course of things. Respect must be paid.

6. Ok, here's something at the other end of the spectrum from respectable modern dance: the performance art gallery Grace Exhibition Space. Curated by the artist Whitney V. Hunter and informed by ideas of the artist as mythmaker, "The Sphinx Returns" runs from September 19–December 19. I love the opening act, the Afro-Futurist duo The Illustrious Blacks, but many of the artists Hunter has chosen are unknown to me—and what's not to love about that?

7. I didn't know much about Joshua Lubin-Levy when I was invited to attend his Fred Herko symposium at New York University's performance studies department, where he is a PhD student. What a hot mess that event was, and I am now a Lubin-Levy fan. Here are two things he's up to this fall: Curating "Not Not," a free back-to-school evening September 12 at the Center for Performance Research, featuring performances, readings, and refreshments with *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory*. And on September 26 and 27 at Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's open studios on Governors Island, "Bilderatlas," a dramaturgical platform in collaboration with a series of strong dance artists.



Yasuko Yokoshi, *ZERO ONE*, 2015. Photo: Kentaro Hisatomi.

8. Another worthy curatorial endeavor is Prelude, the annual smorgasbord of theater and performance at The Graduate Center, CUNY. This edition, organized by Antje Oegel and Tom Sellar, takes place October 7–9. Details are still in flux, but one track that looks especially intriguing involves architecture. Artists including Annie Dorsen, David Levine, and Ryan McNamara will exhibit and discuss various speculative architectures of their imaginations, and there will be a panel with builders of new performing-arts buildings: Performance Space 122, St. Ann's Warehouse, and the now near-mythical (in a Sisyphus kinda way) Performing Arts Center at the World Trade Center.

Theater in Long Island City. The interdisciplinary space, in its tenth season, has a dance-heavy fall with works by the gorgeous movement investigators Jeanine Durning and Silas Riener, raunchy political comedy by Adrienne Truscott, and a dance installation by Michelle Ellsworth, who is doing some of the most engrossing explorations of how the body and technology coexist and collide. (Full disclosure: I have a commission there in December.)

10. The Chocolate Factory's programming tends to involve a lot of women makers. Let's swing to the opposite extreme, Ballet! I adore New York City Ballet, which has the most thrilling dancers and repertory, promotes homegrown talent (like the dancer-choreographers Justin Peck and Troy Schumacher) and commissions like mad—but how predictable yet disappointing that there's nary a female choreographer to be seen in the premieres. In this, as in other diversity woes, City Ballet does not stand alone (nor ballet—hello exclusionary avant-garde legacies), but I guess I pick on the company because I hold it to a higher standard. But still, there are some exciting stirrings this fall: City Ballet alumni Wendy Whelan and Jock Soto are reunited in the noh drama *Hagoromo* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music November 6–8, and Schumacher continues his indie explorations with his BalletCollective November 4–5 at NYU's Skirball Center. You can see teasers of both of these at the Guggenheim Museum's Works & Process series, which also features City Ballet alumnae Emily Coates and physicist-collaborator Sarah Demers, on November 30.

11. Continuing in a scientific vein, how about an ecosexuality immersion course courtesy of Annie Sprinkle (sure, you've read about her vagina, but have you seen her in the flesh?) and Beth Stephens, who will be at Abrons Arts Center as part of the Queer New York International Arts Festival September 16–26. This event has sometimes felt a little behind the times for New York, but you should be in good hands, or something, with artists like Ivo Dimchev and Max Steele.



Sophocles, *Antigone*, 2015. Directed by Ivo van Hove with a new translation by Anne Carson. Center: Antigone (Juliette Binoche). Photo: Jan Versweyveld.

12. Or maybe you'd like a little more fourth-wall safety in your performance-going. Probably you'll get this with poet-star (never thought I'd write that word combo) Anne Carson, who will be at BAM with her *Antigone* translation September 24–October 4. I adore Carson (duh), though I'm weary of another Juliette Binoche vehicle. If you have more appetite for insanely good ensemble work than celebrity, perhaps try *Fondly*, *Collette Richland*, a new production by the always worthwhile playwright Sibyl Kempson and company Elevator Repair Service, at New York Theatre Workshop September 11–October 18.

13. I'd like to see Okwui Okpokwasili play *Antigone*. In the meantime, we have her *Bronx Gothic* October 21–24 at New York Live Arts. This undersung New York powerhouse has been getting more of her due in recent years. She's in residence at NYLA for the next two years, for example, but you can also see her at The Kitchen, along with the equally astounding April Matthis, in Ralph Lemon's *Scaffold Room* (October 30–December 5); I saw this work last year at the Walker Art Center. It blew me away.

14. Avant-Garde music time: The Japanese-born pioneers Takehisa Kosugi (The Whitney Museum, September 12–13) and Yoshi Wada (Issue Project Room, November 5–6) are not to be missed. But nor is La Monte Young or the work of Pandit Pran Nath, both of which you can catch at Dia. Their names are all interwoven, with one another and music history. Take your pick.

15. Ok, ok, I've strayed from my lesser-known artists premise. Let's end with composer Brendan Connolly and performance artist Scotty Heron, both based in New Orleans, collaborating for the first time, December 10–12 at JACK in Brooklyn, with *Appalachian Spring Break*. Just... trust me. Go.

— Claudia La Rocco