



# Ephrat Asherie Dance

ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT

"a magnificent celebration of movement and art."

- CITY PAPER



# About the Company

## EPHRAT ASHERIE DANCE (EAD)

Ephrat Asherie Dance (EAD) is a dance company rooted in African American and Latinx street and club dances.

Dedicated to exploring the inherent complexities of these dances, EAD investigates the expansive narrative qualities of various vernacular forms including breaking, hip-hop, house and vogue, as a means to tell stories, develop innovative imagery, and find new modes of expression. EAD's first evening-length work, *A Single Ride*, earned two Bessie nominations in 2013 for Outstanding Emerging Choreographer and Outstanding Sound Design by Marty Beller. The company has presented work at Art Power! at UC San Diego, The Apollo Theater, Columbia College, Dixon Place, NY City Center, FiraTarrega, Works & Process at the Guggenheim, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, the Joyce Theater, La MaMa, New York Live Arts, River to River Festival, Spoleto Festival USA, Summerstage NYC, and The Yard, among others.





# Ephrat Asherie

## BIOGRAPHY

EPHRAT “BOUNCE” ASHERIE is a New York City based b-girl, dancer, and choreographer and a 2016 Bessie Award Winner for Innovative Achievement in Dance. Asherie has received numerous awards to support her work including *Dance Magazine's* Inaugural Harkness Promise Award, a Jacob's Pillow Fellowship at the Tilles Center for the Performing Arts, and a Jerome Foundation Travel and Study grant. In 2017, she received a National Dance Project award to support the development and touring of her most recent work, *ODEON*. Asherie is a 2019 NYFA Fellow and a 2018-2019 City Center Choreography Fellow. Her newest work, *UNDERSCORED*, premiered in November 2022 at Works & Process at the Guggenheim. It was awarded a 2019 Creation and Development Award from the National Performance Network and a 2022 National Dance Project award. She is honored to have been mentored by Richard Santiago (aka Break Easy) and to have worked and collaborated with Dorrance Dance, Doug Elkins, Rennie Harris, Bill Irwin, David Parsons, Gus Solomons Jr., and Buddha Stretch, among others. Asherie earned her BA from Barnard College, Columbia University in Italian and her MFA from the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee where she researched the vernacular jazz dance roots of contemporary street and club dances. She is a co-founding member of the all-female house dance collective MAWU and is forever grateful to NYC's underground dance community for inspiring her to pursue a life as an artist.

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"Asherie and her company are a sight anywhere they perform."

”

-THE BOSTON GLOBE





TOURING REPERTORY

# UNDERSCORED

*UNDERSCORED* acts as a living archive of five generations of NYC club dancers. The evening-length performance of *UNDERSCORED* is a multi-generational collaboration with performers ranging in age from 28-80. Celebrating and investigating their connections to the club scene from the 1970s at seminal parties like the Loft and the Paradise Garage until today, *UNDERSCORED* features EAD ensemble members and three NYC club legends, Archie Burnett, Brahm's "Bravo" LaFortune and Michele Saunders. Audiences join the company in an exhilarating journey through deeply personal histories, rarely seen archival footage, a vast musical landscape including funk, disco and house and of course decades of dancing through the culturally reflective styles of breaking, hip-hop, house, vogue, waacking and hustle. The pandemic kept ALL of us from gathering. Whether on or off the dance floor, *UNDERSCORED* is a reminder of how essential it is to connect to one another.

[CLICK HERE FOR TRAILER](#)





TOURING REPERTORY

# UNDERScoreD



## DIRECTION

Ephrat Asherie

## CHOREOGRAPHY

Ephrat Asherie in collaboration with EAD and legendary club elders

## LIGHTING DESIGN

Kathy Kaufmann

## COSTUME DESIGN

David Dalrymple

## PROJECTION DESIGN

Cornelius "Neil" Henke III

## TOURING PARTY

13 total

Dancers / Performers:

7 dancers, 3 featured guest performers

Tech/Administrative Staff:

1 PM, 1 LD, 1 Projectionist

## RUNNING TIME

60 minutes, no intermission



*UNDERScoreD* has received lead commissioning and development support by Works & Process, for world premiere at the Guggenheim. *UNDERScoreD* was made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable foundation and Mellon Foundation. This project is made possible in part by a grant from the Association of Performing Arts Professionals for a residency at The Jay and Linda Grunin Center, made possible through support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. *UNDERScoreD* is a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation & Development Fund Project co-commissioned by Works & Process in partnership with ArtPower at UC San Diego, The Momentary and The Yard. The Creation & Development Fund is supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency).

“

I have so much to say about this piece [UNDERSCORED], the inspiration behind it, the process, but no time to sit and formulate my thoughts this week as we have been deep in it and too busy dancing-ha. It is an honor to be sharing the dance floor with Archie, Loose and Michele, three legendary club heads who have inspired countless dancers, artists and free thinkers. I've had the great fortune to have danced at the club with Archie and Loose for more than fifteen years and although I just recently met Michele, we are kindred spirits and I know we'll have many more years of shared dance floors to come. In the '90s, I was lucky to have been exposed to a great deal of dance, music and culture of the African diaspora first through hip hop, jazz and then house. The house dance community in NYC represents the beauty and strength that emerges when the collective consciousness celebrates each individual as their own special creation. This community inspired me to live my life as an artist; for this I am forever grateful.

”

- EPHRAT ASHERIE



## TOURING REPERTORY

# ODEON

*ODEON, an evening-length work for six dancers and four musicians, takes a hybrid approach to movement. Remixing and reconnecting various street and club styles while exploring their roots in West African rhythms and movements, ODEON blurs time, tempo and genre. The score, composed by fin-de-siecle Brazilian composer Ernesto Nazareth, blends popular Afro-Brazilian rhythms with classical European melodies. Musicians and dancers cross paths seamlessly on stage through choreography that reflects Nazareth's fluid approach to music – layering breaking floorwork, house-dance footwork, New York style hustle and vogue – ODEON invites you into a world wholly its own.*

[CLICK HERE FOR TRAILER](#)

### ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Ephrat Asherie

### MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Ehud Asherie

### LIGHTING DESIGNER

Kathy Kaufmann

### COSTUME DESIGNER

Mark Eric



## TOURING PARTY

12 total

Performers:

6 dancers, 4 musicians\*

Tech/Administrative Staff:

1 PM, 1 LD

\*No musicians option possible.

## RUNNING TIME

55 min, no intermission



## STREAMING OPPORTUNITIES

# In the MOment: A Drawing Dance

LIVE ACTION ANIMATED DANCE FILM

Experience creativity in motion! Join Ephrat Asherie Dance as they literally jump off the pages and onto the stage. Inspired by the artwork and abstractions of best-selling author, illustrator, and Kennedy Center Artist-in-Residence, Mo Willems, Asherie and dancers collaborate in a live action animated film featuring illustrations by beloved children's book author Mo Willems in this family-friendly visual dance adventure full of doodles and sketches. Study Guide available. Option to add Post-Screening Discussion with Ephrat Asherie. [CLICK HERE FOR TRAILER](#)



### CHOREOGRAPHY

Ephrat Asherie  
in collaboration with EAD

### ILLUSTRATIONS

Mo Willems

### ORIGINAL MUSIC

Marty Beller

### RUNNING TIME

24 mins





## ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

# Master Classes

EAD offers master classes in breaking, hip-hop and/or house for dancers of all ages.

### HOUSE CLASS

This class will cover some of the fundamentals of house, including aspects of footwork, floorwork and the importance of a freestyle approach to the form. The cultural context in which this dance was created and where it continues to thrive will be discussed and underscored in the movement.

### BREAKING CLASS

This class will cover some of the foundational techniques of breaking (b-boying/b-girling) including top rock, drops to the floor, footwork and basic spins. The cultural and historical content from which breaking emerged will be highlighted and discussed. Through movement and discussion, students will gain a more in-depth understanding of the global importance of Hip Hop culture.

### FREESTYLE/IMPROVISATION CLASS

This class will focus on methods/exercises/concepts to open students up to ideas surrounding freestyle/improvisation. Moving from ideas and values rooted in street and social dance, this class will push students to reach outside their comfort zone to find new modes of exploring movement, rhythm, melody and space and emphasize the importance of connecting with others through movement.



## ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

# Workshops/Demonstrations

### OPEN PRACTICE SESSION

This session allows dancers of all levels to interact, exchange and share ideas with company members. A low stress environment where learning can happen at various paces and levels, this practice session reflects the ethos of club culture, which embodies openness, individuality, tolerance and moving in and out of your comfort zone in a safe space. Music playlists curated by EAD are sure to inspire all to “get busy”!

### LECTURE DEMONSTRATIONS

The company offers lecture demonstrations and seminars on the many street and social dances the company embodies, underscoring the cultural context from which these dance forms emerged and the spaces in which these styles continue to thrive and exist.

### MULTIGENERATIONAL MOVEMENT WORKSHOP

Presented in a lec-dem format, this workshop is created to inform, connect and bring individuals from all generations together through street and social dance. Performing dance sequences from EAD repertory, members from the company demonstrate and lead this movement workshop, emphasizing how meaningful creating relationships through movement can be. The workshop draws from various styles including breaking, hip-hop, house and vogue as a means to help participants move out of their comfort zone, find new modes of expression and connect with one another.

### SCHOOL TIME MATINEES: ODEON OR UNDERSCORED

The matinee begins with a brief introduction from Ephrat Asherie followed by a 40-minute version of *ODEON OR UNDERSCORED*, the full company participates in a Q&A session with students. Study Guide(s) available. Length: 50 minutes (includes Q&A session). Grade range: Grade 6-High School



## ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

# Virtual Experiences

### BEHIND THE SCENES: CREATING *UNDERSCORED*

A sneak peek into the creative process of *UNDERSCORED*. Excerpts of the work are performed in real-time and interspersed with conversation about process and the history of New York City's underground dance community. Featuring Ephrat, EAD company members and guest artists/ elders from the underground dance community . Option to include moderator alternatively a moderator may be provided by Presenter.

### BEHIND THE SCENES: CREATING *ODEON*

A behind-the-scenes look into the choreographic process and musical influences that led to the creation of *ODEON*. Brief excerpts of the work are screened and discussed along with live musical and movement explanations/demonstrations to highlight stylistic nuances, sonic shifts and the works' dynamic sources of inspiration. Featuring Ephrat, EAD company members and EAD musicians. Option to include moderator alternatively a moderator may be provided by Presenter.

### DOCUMENTARY SERIES: WATCH PARTY WITH EAD!

Curation and screening of documentaries about Black and LatinX vernacular dance, with a specific focus on New York City's history as the birthplace of Hip-Hop and it's role in defining Underground Dance culture. Includes screening plus post-screening discussion with Ephrat and a special guest (someone who is featured in the documentary or an expert in the field).

### EPHRAT ASHERIE MOVEMENT WORKSHOPS

Ephrat Asherie Dance offers movement classes for Dance Departments or Community Organizations in: Breaking, House, Freestyle/Improvisation, Dance Theater: an approach to working with movement and text; Classes may be tailored and adapted as needed.

# Press

Review: Another Asherie success with collaboration 'Odeon'

-CITY PAPER

Ephrat Asherie's 'Odeon' presents dance that's both poetic and playful

-TIMES UNION

Ephrat Asherie's 'Odeon' at The Pillow is extraordinary

-THE BERKSHIRE EDGE

Asherie's 'Odeon' a perfect opener for the Plimpton Shattuck

-THE BOSTON GLOBE

Catch the Vibe: Club Culture Comes to Life at Lincoln Center

-NEW YORK TIMES

“

"Ms. Asherie's movement phrases — compact bursts of choreography with rapid-fire changes in rhythm and gestural articulation — bubble up and dissipate, quickly paving the way for something new."

”

- THE NEW YORK TIMES





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