

CLARE SIOBHAN BYRNE

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EDUCATION

2023 Master of Arts in Religion, Yale Divinity School and the Institute of Sacred Music, New Haven, CT

Thesis

"'Throw Your Weight Around': Human and Divine Choreographies in African Methodist Episcopal Dance Ministry" (2023)

Awards and Distinctions

Full tuition scholarship at the Institute of Sacred Music, 2020-2023
Selected by faculty: Best Colloquium Project, 2022

Studied with: Braxton Shelley (*The Gospel Imagination, Women in Gospel, Music and the Black Church*), Sally Promey and Kathleen Turner (*Dance Ministry in African Methodist Episcopal Churches*), Markus Rathey, Melanie Ross, and Teresa Berger (*Music & Theology, Gender and Identity Studies*)

2005 Master of Fine Arts in Dance, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI

Awards and Distinctions

Graduate Fellow in Dance, Full Tuition and Stipend Award, 2004-2005
Chancellor's Awards, 2003-2005

Studied with: Janet Lilly (*Yoga, Improvisation, Dance History*), Ed Burgess (*Improvisation, Independent Study*), Simon Ferro (*Composition*), Sara Hook (*Laban Analysis*), Jan Erkert (*Pedagogy through Kinesiology*), Barbara Grubel (*Modern Technique, Composition*), among others

1993 Bachelor of Arts in Dance Performance, Connecticut College, New London, CT

Studied with: Martha Myers (*Kinesiology, Composition, Improvisation*), Diana Schnitt (*Anatomy*), Jaclynn Villamil (*Ballet Technique*), Karen Dearborn (*Composition*), Laura Glenn, Hilary Easton, Ron Brown, David Dorfman, Anne Alex Packard, Mark Dendy, Michael Jahoda (*Modern Technique*), Eugene Gallagher (*Religious Studies*), Blanche Boyd (*Creative Writing*)

Awards and Distinctions

Summa cum laude, 1993

Connecticut College Scholarship, 1989-1993

Winthrop Scholar (upon admission), 1989

Phi Beta Kappa (junior year induction), 1992

SELECTED TEACHING

- 2021-present Teaching Artist, Neighborhood Music School, New Haven, CT
2021-present Teacher, Dance for Parkinson's Disease Classes at Mystic Hartford Health Care
2010-2018 Fulltime/Senior Lecturer, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT
2008-2010 Part-time Lecturer, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT
2001-2008 Adjunct Professor, Long Island University, Brooklyn, NY
2001 Adjunct Faculty, Manhattanville College
1995-2001 Adjunct Faculty, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA

Lecture/Discussion Courses: Introduction to World Dance Cultures/Global Perspectives in Dance, Ballet/Modern Dance History, Trends in Contemporary Dance, Gender and Social Dance

Studio Courses: Contemporary/Modern Technique, Ballet Technique, Movement Improvisation, Dance Composition, Contact Improvisation/Partnering, Site Dance Performance Practicum, Repertory, Artistic Direction of Student Concerts, Dance for Parkinson's Disease

SELECTED AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS, AND RESIDENCIES

- Nov. 2023 Invited Guest Lecture on dance ministry for interdepartmental course: "Drugs, Demons, and Dancing," University of Vermont, VT
Nov. 2023 Invited Music and Dance Guest Performance, Space Fest at Greywood Arts Residency Center in Killeagh, Ireland
July 2023 Residency for The Celestials at Arts Connection on Governor's Island, NYC
May 2023 Research selected for presentation At Yale University's 2nd Annual Black Arts Conference: *Ritual Transformations of Consciousness*, New Haven, CT
2020-2023 Full Tuition Graduate Scholarship at Yale's Institute of Sacred Music, New Haven, CT
2018-2022 Residencies, The Dragon's Egg, Ledyard, CT
2017 Residency, Bogliasco Foundation at The Liguria Center, Bogliasco, Italy

- 2017 Greywood Arts Residency, Killeagh, Ireland
- 2015-2018 Performance Residencies, Radio Bean, Burlington, VT
- 2007 White Oak Residency, White Oak, Yulee, FL
- 2006 Jerome Robbins Fellowship through the Bogliasco Foundation at The Liguria Center, Bogliasco, Italy
- 2004 Joyce SoHo Space Grant Residency, New York, NY
- 2004 Clare Byrne Dance Company Residency, The Yard on Martha's Vineyard, Chilmark, MA
- 2004 Meet the Composer Grant with The Yard and composer Eric Reed, Chilmark, MA
- 2003 Mondo Cane Commission from Dixon Place for *Rend and Sew*, New York, NY
- 2002 New York International Fringe Festival Best Dance Performance Award for *Wet Blue & Friends*, New York, NY
- 2002 - 2006 CCDE's Silo Residency at Kirkland Farm, Hellertown, PA
- 2000 Joyce SoHo Subsidized Performance Grant for *The St. Patrick Pageant*, New York, NY
- 2000 Bessie Schönberg Residency, Yard on Martha's Vineyard, Chilmark, MA
- 2000 Brooklyn Arts Exchange Space Grant, Brooklyn, NY

SELECTED WORK IN DANCE, SCHOLARSHIP, MUSIC

- 2023 *Throw Your Weight Around: Human/Divine Choreographies in Two African Methodist Episcopal Churches*, Graduate Thesis at Yale University
- 2023 *Oh Mother*, song and dance collaboration with Paul Besaw
- 2023 *Pilgrimage*, film in dance and music, collaboration with choreographer Ara Fitzgerald, film artist Peter Cunningham, and musician Wall Matthews
- 2023 *Tangle*, Choreographic collaboration with dance-comedy improvisation artist Amy Larimer and Andrey Ramirez
- 2019 *Celestials*, double album of original songs, recorded in Burlington, VT, released and performed in NYC, CT, VT
- 2018 *Appalachian Spring*, new choreography to Aaron Copland's score, commissioned by The Burlington Chamber Orchestra and conducted by Yutaka Kono
- 2017 *Song & Dance Man*, song and dance project created during sabbatical residencies at Greywood Arts in Cork, Ireland and Bogliasco Foundation, Italy, performed at Phantom Theater in Warren, VT, and toured in Ireland
- 2016 *Seed*, original EP album recorded with Vermont and Brooklyn musicians
- 2011-2013 *Poor Sister Clares Traveling Dancing Monk Show*, Flynn Theater, UVM, Fleming Museum, Phantom Theater
- 2007-2012 *Weekly Rites*, weekly online ritual of improvised performance in movement and other media, accompanied by weekly writing
- 2007-2010 *Kneelings*: happenings of genuflections in patterns through NYC and VT

- 2008 *Clare Mayfair*, series of events around NYC; premiere of *Witch Night*, evening of solo performance, Panetta Studios, New York, NY
- 2007 *Letter to the Church*, Union Seminary, New York, NY
- 2007 *To the Tree*, commissioned by Union Theological Seminary, New York, NY
- 2007 *Rounds: The First Last Dance, or The Last First Dance, or An Ordination* commissioned/produced by Dance New Amsterdam, New York, NY
- 2004 *Tetrapod*, co-produced with the Flea Theater, New York, NY
- 2003 *Rend and Sew, Mondo Cane* commission, Dixon Place, New York, NY
- 2002 *Wet Blue & Friends*, co-production with Dixon Place, New York International Fringe Festival, New York, NY
- 2001 *The St. Patrick Pageant*, Joyce SoHo, New York, NY
- 1999 *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, New York International Fringe Festival

SELECTED CHOREOGRAPHY FOR STUDENT PERFORMANCE

- 2016 *Premeaningmakers*, collaboration with UVM Taiko Drumming, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT
- 2014 *Tetrapod (2004)*, re-set on UVM students for travel/performance in Inner Mongolia, China
- 2014 *Flowers Need the Night* (Reprise, Site Work), American College Dance Festival, Boston University, Boston, MA
- 2013 *Flowers Need the Night* (Site Work), University of Vermont, Burlington, VT
- 2013 *RECKA RECKA fella*, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT
- 2011 *Kneelings III* (Site Work), University of Vermont, Burlington, VT
- 2011 *White Witch: Legion*, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT
- 2010 *Wind May Blow*, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT
- 2009 *Bye & Bye*, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT
- 2007 *Your Everything*, Pomona College, Claremont, CA
- 2007 *Unrooting*, University of Idaho at Pocatello, ID
- 2005 *Song of a Lark*, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI
- 2003 *Precipitate*, Brooklyn Arts Exchange, Brooklyn, NY
- 2002 *Trouble in Mind, Nobody Knows*, Long Island University, Brooklyn, NY
- 2001 *Bye & Bye*, Manhattanville College, Purchase, NY
- 2001 *Bloomsbury*, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA
- 1999 *Looking Down the Fire Lane*, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA
- 1998 *Between Stations*, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA
- 1998 *Monsterpak*, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA
- 1997 *Jest*, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA

SELECTED PERFORMANCE VENUES FOR WORK

New York City Performance Venues
Dance Theater Workshop (New York Live Arts)

Dance New Amsterdam
Joyce SoHo
Dixon Place
Performance Space 122
Dancenow Festival
Joe's Pub
The Flea Theater
Symphony Space Thalia Theater
Brooklyn Arts Exchange
New York International Fringe Festival
Cunningham Studio
Movement Research at Context Studio
University Settlement
The SoHo Arts Festival

Local Produce Festival
The Spider Arts Alliance
Evolving Arts Theater
Danspace Project at St. Mark's Church
Williamsburg Arts Nexus
Soundance Studio
Chashama
Marquee Theater at Marion's Restaurant
John Jay College Theater
Gershwin Hotel
The Bridge for Dance
Connelly Theater
Panetta Dance

National and International Performance Venues

Greywood Arts, Killeagh, Ireland
Flynnspace, Burlington, VT
UVM Recital Hall, Burlington, VT
Phantom Theater, Warren, VT
Hoxie Gallery, New London, CT
Goose Route Dance Festival, Shepherdstown, WV
The Wagon Train Project, Lincoln, NE
Merriewold Park, Forestburgh, NY
The Yard on Martha's Vineyard, Chilmark, MA
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI
Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA
Connecticut College, New London, CT
The Dragon's Egg, Ledyard, CT
Manhattanville College, Purchase, NY
Roger Williams University, RI
The New Dance Space, Charlottesville, VA

OTHER RECENT WORK

2023-present Researcher, Oral History of American Music Archive, Yale University
2019-2023 Writer, Reviews of Music, Dance, Food for *CT Examiner*
https://ctexaminer.com/author/clare_byrne/
2022-2023 Graduate Student Coordinator, Oral History of American Music Archive,
Yale University
2021-2022 Arts Minister, Chapel Services, Yale Divinity School

ARTS COMMUNITY SERVICE

- 2015-2018 Organization of Vermont improvisation series in music and dance, *The Mixer*
- 2007-2018 Selection Committee, Bogliasco Foundation/Liguria Study Center, Dance Panel, Bogliasco, Italy
- 2009-2017 Organization of community artists series, *Eat My Art Out*, presenting informal works-in-progress three times a year at different venues in and around northern Vermont

LINKS TO DANCE VIDEOS

A) Three Choreographic Examples (*across various time periods and stylizations*)

1) *Rend and Sew: A Dance Seen from Above and Below* at New York City's University Settlement's Gymnasium, with music by Aretha Franklin, James Cleveland and the Southern California Community Choir

<https://vimeo.com/42931927?share=copy#t=26>

2) *Cocoon*, with clarinetist Steve Klimowski playing Yvonne Desportes' *La Naissance d'un Papillon*, at University of Vermont's Recital Hall

<https://vimeo.com/862492965?share=copy#t=72>

3) *Weekly Rites: Planes*, on Upper West Side, NYC (from 5-year weekly online series)

<https://vimeo.com/34686378>

B) Teaching Example: Artistic Direction of Student Choreography in Site Work

Ravelling: a site-work student concert, directed by Clare Byrne, choreography from students of the University of Vermont's Department of Music and Dance

<https://vimeo.com/197552745>

BIOGRAPHY

Clare Byrne is a teacher, choreographer, researcher, writer, and musician. Her work in dance, music, and scholarship explores intersections of ritual, religion, transformation, and improvisation.

Byrne is a versatile and comprehensive teacher; she has taught in the dance programs at Muhlenberg College, Long Island University in Brooklyn, Manhattanville College, and was Senior Lecturer in dance in the Department of Music & Dance at the University of Vermont before leaving to gain a second graduate degree at Yale University.

In her professional career, Byrne was the artistic director of Clare Byrne Dance in New York City, and a member of Dance Tramp, a choreographic collective based in Burlington, VT. She toured the world as a founding member of Nicholas Leichter Dance, and has worked with Amy Larimer, David Neumann, Adriane Fang, Paul Besaw, Nayo Takasaki, and many other choreographers.

Byrne is a recording musician, songwriter, and bandleader. Her albums *Seed* and *Celestials* collected Vermont and New York City musicians in recording her original songs; she performs music and dance events in NYC at The Bitter End, Rockwood Music Hall, Governor's Island, and other venues in the United States and abroad with her band *The Celestials*. Her new single release "*Artemis*" debuted in 2023.

Byrne's research in African American gospel music and Black Church culture at Yale's Institute of Sacred Music produced a thesis which explored the intersection of choreographed dance ministry and ecstatic improvisation in two African Methodist Episcopal churches. This research was selected to be presented at Yale's 2nd Annual Black Sacred Arts Conference: *Ritual Transformations of Consciousness*; Byrne continues to present this scholarship at conferences and in guest lectures.

Byrne's full-evening dance projects include the *Poor Sister Clares Traveling Dancing Show*, which explores spirituality and sacrament; *Rounds: The First Last Dance, The Last First Dance*, the online improvisation blog *Weekly Rites. Pilgrimage*, a duet with Ara Fitzgerald, and *White Witch*, explores sacred and cultural constructions of feminine images. *To the Tree*, and *Letter to the Church* are site-specific works created and performed in Union Theological Seminary's chapels. *Kneelings I, II, and III* are pose-poems in the simple gesture of kneeling on streets and parks of New York City and Vermont. Byrne created new choreography to the score of Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring* for the Burlington Chamber Orchestra.

Byrne has received awards and residences through Yale University, White Oak Residency, Jerome Robbins Fellowship and the Bogliasco Foundation, Joyce SoHo, The Dragon's Egg in Ledyard, CT, Bessie Schönberg Residency at The Yard, Meet the Composer, Mondo Cane commission through Dixon Place, NYC, selection and awards at The New York International Fringe Festival, and a Brooklyn Arts Exchange Space Grant. Her work has been presented at Danspace at St. Mark's Church, Dance New Amsterdam, Joe's Pub, The Flea Theater, Symphony Space, The Flynn Theater in Burlington, VT, and many other venues in New York City, around the country, and internationally. Her work has been reviewed/previewed multiple times in *The New York Times*, *Village Voice*, *New Yorker*, *Dance Insider*, *Backstage*, *TimeOut NY*, *Eva Yaa Asantewaa/InfiniteBody*, and *Seven Days* in Burlington, VT.

SELECTED PRESS QUOTES

“Relentlessly creative, Clare Byrne is a modern renaissance woman. As a senior lecturer in dance at the University of Vermont and an accomplished dancer and

choreographer, her primary passion is movement. But Byrne's artistic impulses have led her to other mediums, including art, writing and music. Her debut EP, *Seed*, is something like her varied artistic oeuvre in microcosm...it suggests a curious and expressive mind as well as an artist unafraid of taking risks. "

■ Dan Bolles, *Seven Days*, Burlington, VT

"*Rounds* is an intriguing blend of the forthright and the mysterious, discipline and freedom, reverence and skepticism."

■ Deborah Jowitt, *Village Voice*, New York, NY

"Clare Byrne, a choreographer with an idiosyncratic and visceral sense of spirituality, hits the sidewalks of New York for a series of devotional genuflections."

■ Brian Seibert, *New Yorker*, New York, NY

"Her dance reminded me of something a metaphysical teacher said recently: that places that have seen great violence are like bodies in need of healing...*To the Tree* made me feel anything but anxious. I felt the healing."

■ Eva Yaa Asantewaa, *Infinite Body*, New York, NY

"The music seems to flood through Ms. Byrne and set her dancing the joyous physical equivalent of church-service speaking in tongues."

■ Jennifer Dunning, *New York Times*, New York, NY

"Clare Byrne is a gifted choreographer and a messenger...*Rend and Sew* is a masterwork of spiritually-inspired movement that dances beautiful, familiar, even husbandly bodies through magically lighted space to the music with all the passion, reflection, and conviction of a true healer commanding the crippled to walk, the blind to see, and the faithless to believe again."

■ Brian McCormick, *GCN*, New York, NY

"[The St. Patrick Pageant] at Joyce SoHo, written and choreographed by Byrne, has a harum-scarum charm, its unruliness monitored by intelligence. You're never sure what'll happen next, and when it comes you may not instantly be able to fit it into the faintly surreal puzzle, but you can easily fall in love with it."

■ Deborah Jowitt, *Village Voice*, New York, NY

"Ms. Byrne is quietly becoming a major presence in downtown dance, a deceptive wren who only gradually reveals her witty physicality."

■ Jennifer Dunning, *New York Times*, New York, NY