



Arts

## Baltimore-based dance troupe explores transitions

By Jennifer Choi | Sun reporter  
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No one would blame you if you couldn't see the overarching theme that binds the pieces of the Collective dance company's annual concert together.

The Baltimore-based troupe explores the topic of transitions from wildly varying angles, including traffic and terminal illness.

"I think that it's really a journey of a show," said director/choreographer Jessica Fultz. "Every piece is so different from the one before or after."

The Collective: Moving Through Transitions, which takes place Saturday at the [Baltimore Museum of Art](#), features eight pieces, including five world premieres.

Some dancers act as traffic lights, wearing red, green and yellow, while others scurry around like cars in The Community Project 2008: Traffic Patterns. The premiere piece, which involves 21 community members ranging in age (16 to 60) and dance experience, focuses on the day-to-day congestion, traffic and loss of control experienced by city dwellers.

"We all live in an urban environment," said director Sonia Synkowski. "I wanted to start with that idea of being in traffic because that's an experience that we can all relate to."

In Mom Genes, another new work, the story revolves around a woman who faces the possibility of terminal illness and tries to convey grace and strength through fluid, balletic movements. Fultz, the choreographer, based the piece on her mother's experience being tested for the BRAC gene, which indicates a high likelihood of getting cancer. The dance explores topics related to testing positive for the gene, such as relationship changes and preventive health decisions.

"My piece is not sad. I chose to look at the more feminine and humanistic side of just being a woman," said Fultz.

The other debuts include When Tomorrow Comes, about different approaches to the future; Caecos Inter Nos, an abstract piece inspired by an attempted suicide; and Circulate, a collaborative group piece that centers on circular motions.

One of the Collective's staples, On the (ready, set) Go!, based on one member's hectic life as a mother of two small boys, features a lot of frantic motion. Tennis shoe-clad dancers slam and jump off of chairs to high-energy electronica beats.

In a restaged version of Zemoxy Baloop Ze, reworked by New York choreographer Adele Myers, dancers blend salsa, hip-hop, capoeira and contemporary dance. Legs kick over people's heads and dancers hold hands and push off of each other to perform jumps. The kicks express anger, and the partnering reflects the need for help.

"This piece examines the dynamic of female relationships," explained Synkowski. "Sometimes we're happy with each other, and sometimes we're angry with each other."

The program also includes a performance by a visiting troupe from Montgomery County, CrossCurrents Dance Company. The group performs At Last Light, in which the central character falls ill, gets examined by health professionals and is represented as having died, through a funeral scene.

"It's not too abstract or too literal either. I try to get the idea of getting manipulated and examined as pieces of a body across," said choreographer Darcy Mandell.

Though the concert has a unifying theme and significant back stories, the Collective doesn't mind at all if audiences don't pick up on either of them.

"It's not what the meaning is," said Fultz. "It's how it makes you feel."

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*Doors open at 1:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Performances begin at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. The museum is at 10 Art Museum Drive. Tickets \$10-\$15. Call 443-257-3844 or go to [collective-dance.com](#).*