

DC ARTS EVENT: EXPLORING THE LIVES OF WOMEN THROUGH DANCE

American Gods, an upcoming contemporary dance concert at Dance Place, explores the complexity of women's lives. Two choreographers, Malcolm Shute of Washington, DC, and Autumn Mist Belk of Raleigh, NC, share an evening to examine cultural icons whose status has grown nearly to the point of religion: fashion and princesses.

Autumn Mist Belk of North Carolina brings her company Code f.a.d. to Washington DC to premiere "Fashion Briefs," a series of vignettes, including two video dances, examining style and fashion designers. Her work affectionately reveals both the richness and the limitations of the ideal image.

In Calvin Klein: Casual Friday, dancers pose for the camera in lingerie and blazers, flinging hair, rolling hips, and glaring, while a wall-sized clock ticks down in the background, measuring the fleeting duration of youth.



In Lee Alexander McQueen (for the designer who committed suicide in 2010), dancers in purple and black dresses haunt the runway like macabre models: elbows cocked on hips, heads slung to one side, sunglasses daring anyone to come closer. Three women stiffly trail across the footlights while the designer crumples.

Washington DC choreographer Malcolm Shute, director of Human Landscape Dance, stages myths from other lands that have become indelible in the USA. Employing his characteristic nuanced physicality to evoke undercurrents between the dancers, Shute retells the old stories with new twists, to confront issues of agency and gender.

"Aurora's Dream" depicts what Sleeping Beauty dreams during her long sleep. Aurora confronts Prince Desire, who is also the evil fairy Carabosse: a Jeekyll/Hyde fusion of the men who dominate her life. Aurora navigates her chamber blind. Prince Desire catches her when she falls, but he also stands in her way, impeding her movements.

In "Medusa," he casts a man in the role of Athena, Medusa's chief rival. In this version, the violence inherent in the original myth, which begins with rape, jumps out in a fierce duel between Athena and Perseus.

See American Gods on Saturday December 8 at 8pm and Sunday December 9 at 4pm at Dance Place, 3225 8th St NE, Washington DC. Tickets are \$22, \$17 for seniors and artists, \$10 for college students, and \$8 for children under 17. This show is family-Friendly. Call 202-269-1600 to order tickets, or visit Dance Place.

ABOUT CODE F.A.D.

Code f.a.d. Company (where f.a.d. in an acronym for film—art—dance) is a group of artists committed to combining film, visual art, and dance into precisely designed performance experiences. Artistic Director Autumn Mist Belk is a choreographer, dancer, filmmaker, and graphic designer and has previously shown her choreography and visual artwork in venues across the southeastern United States.

ABOUT HUMAN LANDSCAPE DANCE

Human Landscape Dance is an internationally known contemporary dance company based in Washington DC. Our work has been described as "...pitch-perfect and an element of humor and suspense is subtly added..." (Philadelphia Inquirer). Our dances explore relationships: ways in which people connect, disconnect, make nice, be cruel, make love, or make space for themselves. Touch is our medium. Founded in 2006, Human Landscape Dance has performed in Philadelphia PA, London UK, Halifax NS, and Prague CR.

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