



Dance Emerges in the Hudson Valley...Brilliant and Mindful of Community

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Dance in the Hudson Valley, on both sides of the river, has gained traction and experienced a recent upsurge with the founding of new arts organizations which either feature or include dance. Chelsea Ainsworth's Arts on Site to Stephen Petronio's Crow's Nest to Chase Brock's Modern Accord Depot to the development of Jonah Bokaer's The Hudson Eye were founded in the past three years by working choreographers. PS21, Elena V. Siyanko, Executive Director and curator, has shifted programming to pan-arts since 2019. Bard's SummerScape Artistic Director, Gideon Lester, has programmed dance out-of-doors for the first time. Adrienne Willis at the Lumberyard Center, founded in 2018, has shifted to technical rehearsals only. Venues have responded differently to the limitations of the pandemic but all plan to be on track by 2022, including the Hudson Valley Dance Festival which is on hiatus.

The beauty of the Hudson Valley and the proximity to NYC attracts artists, those who serve and fund the arts and those who attend arts events. Most venues involve the local community and offer arts to underserved recipients. Organizations that sit on many acres are keenly aware of land stewardship and the link of the arts to the environment. To keep afloat, organizations developed for-profit enterprises on their premises that support their non-profit contributions. Despite COVID these organizations have kept afloat and are poised to offer even more robust programming in the future, if not already.

This article is an overview of what is happening in dance and performing arts in the Middle and Upper Hudson Valley. And, importantly, it includes the perspectives of the directors and founders who have been tirelessly giving of their time and resources. The article includes [Arts on Site Residency & Retreat Center](#), [The Hudson Eye](#), [Hudson Valley Dance Festival](#), [Lumberyard Center for Film and Performing Arts](#), [Modern Accord Depot](#), [Petronio Residency Center](#), [PS21: Performance Spaces for the 21st Century](#) and [SummerScape, Fisher Center, at Bard College](#).



West of the Hudson

Stephen Petronio, Artistic Director/Choreographer, Stephen Petronio Company, Petronio Residency Center, Crow's Nest, Round Top, NY www.petron.io/prc

Supporting its first artists in 2018, the Petronio Residency Center (PRC), known as Crow's Nest, was founded by preeminent choreographer Stephen Petronio, and sits on 175 wooded, peaceful acres in Round Top, NY, 20 minutes from Catskill and Hudson. The aim of PRC is to bolster support for dance artists and work together to create fluid, well-resourced pathways toward production and presentation.

PRC accommodates artists and their companies by providing accommodations, studio space, a stipend, travel expenses, and a private chef. Says Petronio, "My intention (when developing the retreat) was to treat dancers like the absolute stars they are and give them the most relaxed, private and well-fed experience outside their normal real-world working experience."

These residencies are without requirements, such as presenting work developed onsite, and therefore, allow artists to create in unencumbered freedom. "The research and development ethic at PRC is not glamorous and is hard to understand for many not in the profession. You can't see a tangible THING like sets or costumes, or other things people like to help fund. So, my life mission is to elevate the creative process and the most glamorous thing is the most valuable element in the equation. I've been guided by this concept of "The Power of Zero," going into a free space without plan or expectation, quieting down and remaining open. All of that requires a lack of pressure to produce and deliver. And I believe strongly that being immersed in the amazing sea of green forest and mountain air at PRC will change them (the artists) in ways that are perhaps not so immediately obvious," states Petronio.

"Our Environmental mission is in tandem with our cultural one and we are at the beginning of developing this more fully. (PRC acreage will soon go into Conservancy.) Our goal is to match our Dance/Culture programming with an Environmental one," he added. Also, for \$15 for an entire week in July, PRC offers subsidized hip-hop, Indian classical, West African and choreography youth dance classes.

