



# UNIVERSITY OF SAINT JOSEPH

CONNECTICUT

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF SAINT JOSEPH PRESENTS:  
APRIL 2016 MONTH OF DANCE  
“STORIES TOLD FROM THE FRONT LINES”  
FOUR ORIGINAL DANCE EVENTS**



WEST HARTFORD, Conn. (March 30, 2016) – The University of Saint Joseph is excited to announce four innovative, dynamic, and inspiring dance events that invite the audience to share the personal experiences of a veteran, a refugee, sanitation workers, and students. Each heartfelt and emotional story, told from the “front lines,” is showcased in a performance that will resonate with audiences and provide an evening of unique and thoughtful entertainment.

**The Odyssey**

Exit 12 Dance Company

Saturday, April 16, 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 17, 2:00 p.m.

Tickets: \$20 adults | \$17 seniors | FREE for veterans and students

Performed by Exit 12, a nationally celebrated military veteran dance company, the *Odyssey* draws upon the works of Romare Bearden, Gil Scott-Heron, and Homer’s

*Odyssey* to depict a veteran's journey home. Artist, Exit 12 dancer, and choreographer Andrew Harper parallels the tale of the warrior Odysseus and the themes of journeying and homecoming to veterans returning home from war and readjusting to their former lives. The search for home in Harper's *Odyssey* is circular and ongoing. Events occur, obstacles interfere, and just when the end is in sight, the journey begins all over again. The endings feel the same as the beginnings, and yet, everything has changed.

Through this exploration, Harper discovered that his own experiences — the challenges, expectations, disappointment, loneliness, and uncertainty at the very core of the piece, are particularly relevant to the veteran community's experiences. Harper continues to tap into these points of inspiration for the remounting and expansion of his *Odyssey*, creating a piece that can resonate strongly with both veteran and civilian audiences. The *Odyssey* will be shown as a work-in-progress performance, with talkbacks following each one. Full production will open Veterans Day 2016 at USJ. Program support received from the Greater Hartford Arts Council's Arts and Wellness Grant.

**PANEL DISCUSSION: Return of Veterans & Healing Through the Arts**

Monday, April 11, 7:00 p.m.

Free

Thomas Broffman, Ph.D., MSW, assistant professor, Department of Social Work & Latino Community Practice, coordinator of MSW Veterans sequence, will host and moderate a panel discussion with veterans and leading veteran support workers in Connecticut. Discussion will cover the challenges of pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment, and how arts can play a role in the healing process of veterans, their families, and the larger community.

**FROM REFUGEE CAMP TO PROJECT**

Sokeo Ros

Everett Dance Company

Friday, April 22, 7:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$20 adults | \$17 seniors | \$12 students

Cambodian refugee Sokeo Ros takes us on his journey from Asia to America, from housing projects to artistic projects, and an epic return to the Cambodian village his family was driven from in the 1970s. The piece uses the rich artistic vocabulary that Sokeo developed as a means of self-expression, beginning with a documentary video that sets the historical background and introduces us to his parents. Sokeo's live performance goes on to combine hip-hop choreography, traditional Khmer dancing, breakdancing, popping, and krumping, intertwining these dance and movement

forms with personal narrative and spoken word poetry.

It is a story of struggle, pain and progress, a story of how self-expression and art helped Sokeo Ros surmount his past and discover the beauty in life, becoming an artist that is passionate about giving back to the community, locally and globally.

### **'TRASH DANCE'**

Allison Orr, Artistic Director

Forklift Dance Works

Tuesday, April 26, 7:00 p.m.

Free

“Trash Dance” is a documentary about a unique partnership between Forklift Danceworks, an Austin, Texas arts organization, and the City of Austin Solid Waste Services Department, featuring 24 employees and 16 large sanitation vehicles. Directed by Andrew Garrison, the film follows choreographer Allison Orr as she spends several months working alongside sanitation workers in her hometown. After listening to and learning about these hardworking city employees, Orr convinces them to collaborate on a unique modern dance production designed around the rhythmic, elegant movements they perform each day on the job. As the performance takes shape, the workers open up and their candid interviews depict not only the personal hardship in their lives but also deep pride in their work, resulting in a beautiful and poignant film.

Released in 2013, “Trash Dance” garnered immediate critical acclaim, nabbing a special jury prize at its world premiere, Austin’s South by Southwest festival. Other accolades followed, with the “Washington Post” calling the film “a powerful ode to resilience, humor, professionalism, and human dignity.” Austin City Council Member Laura Morrison said, “Trash Dance is one of the most unique and inspirational productions I have seen.”

Post-film discussion will include a conversation with Alison Orr and area sanitation and public works officials including John Phillips, Director of West Hartford Department of Public Works.

### **SPRING SHOW**

USJ Dance Ensemble

Saturday, April 23, 7:30

Tickets: \$12 adults | \$10 seniors | \$5 students

This annual event promises to be an enjoyable evening showcasing work choreographed and performed by students and guest artists. Directed by Susan Murphy, USJ Dance faculty.

## **SPECIAL OFFER - \$40 FOR ALL 4 PERFORMANCES**

All performances will be held in the Bruyette Athenaeum located at 1678 Asylum Avenue, West Hartford. For tickets, call 860.231.5555 or visit [tickets.usj.edu](https://tickets.usj.edu).

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*The University of Saint Joseph (USJ) offers a wide range of graduate, undergraduate, and certificate programs that combine a professional and liberal arts education with a focus on service. Coeducational graduate master's and doctoral degree programs are taught on the University's two campuses in West Hartford and Hartford, Connecticut; at off-campus locations throughout the state; and online. Undergraduate programs for women and for coeducational adult students take place on our beautiful suburban campus and include more than 25 majors and seven pre-professional programs, each of which provides personal attention in a caring environment. Founded in 1932 by the Sisters of Mercy, the University of Saint Joseph welcomes students from diverse backgrounds and religious traditions. To learn more, view our website at [www.usj.edu](https://www.usj.edu).*

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