

USER

PASSWORD

GO

Not registered? Signup [HERE](#), or [REQUEST A NEW PASSWORD](#).

DANCEU101



Jersey Moves!
Dance Festival

February 23

- Carlos Cardova
- Claire Porter
- 10 Hairy Legs
- Carolyn Dorfman Dance Company
- New Jersey Ballet ... and more!

CLICK HERE FOR TICKETS

NJPAC
NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
One Center Street, Newark, NJ

node 779

A Bauschian Day at Williams College

Filed under:

A workshop with Pablo Aran Gimeno of Tanztheater

By [Elena Hecht](#) (/users/Ehecht)

Published January 3, 2013.



[\(/sites/default/files/Pablo](#)

[Aran Gimeno.jpg](#)

Pablo Aran Gimeno (standing) and Dominique Mercy in Bausch's *Como el mosquito...*

“Yes yes yes, what do I do?” was the response of Erica Dankmeyer, former Graham dancer and acting chair of the Williams College dance department, when her colleague Omar Sangare approached her about the possibility of collaborating on a workshop. Not just any workshop, but a workshop with Pablo Aran Gimeno of Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch. As Dankmeyer says, “I just thought, Wow, that’s an amazing opportunity. This is something new that we haven’t done, and an artistic legacy that is so important, that I just figured I would bend over backwards to make it happen.”

Surrounded by the rolling mountains of the Berkshires in northwestern Massachusetts, Williams College is a small liberal arts school known for its top-notch academics. Though there are dance technique classes offered for P.E. credit and a strong extracurricular dance scene, there is no dance major or minor, and the dance program became a department with regular academic classes only two years ago. Nonetheless, when Sangare, a professor in the theater

department, connected with Aran Gimeno after seeing Tanztheater Wuppertal, it was this small school that brought the dancer to teach a multi-session workshop in October while the company was in New York for its performances at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

During the workshop Aran Gimeno, who brought along fellow company member Jorge Puerta Armenta as an observer, was a guest artist for two theater classes and participated, with Puerta Armenta, in a moderated discussion during a dance seminar. The afternoon concluded with a class for 20 handpicked students—10 dancers and 10 actors. Some dancers were members of the department's extracurricular performing ensembles—CoDa (contemporary dance), INISH (Irish dance), Kusika (African dance), and Sankofa (step dance). "This was a way to try to bring students from various disciplines together," says Dankmeyer, "for a shared experience with some really wonderful artists."

For Aran Gimeno, who has been with Tanztheater Wuppertal for seven years—and who first connected to dance via ballroom dancing—the final class was not an official Bausch workshop but rather a moment to share what he describes as "my suitcases of technique and experiences, a mixture of many inputs." At the end, he and Puerta Armenta decided to simulate Bausch's creative process, with Puerta Armenta giving a prompt and Aran Gimeno responding with movement. Aran Gimeno also danced a short solo. From this, "the students that took the class could see why you are working, what you are working for," he says. "It was to show them the end of the process." It was, Dankmeyer says, "a really magical moment."

For the students, some of whom were unfamiliar with Bausch, the class offered something new, from the expressive movement style to the glimpse of the creative process. "The whole concept of responding to a prompt was really interesting to me," says Gabrielle DiBenedetto, a freshman and CoDa member originally from Pennsylvania. "The fact that it was purely based on emotional response—you just got a prompt and then you had to respond to it physically, but you could see how emotion was connected to that—was something that we do in everyday life. Our emotions feed our physical being, so it was really interesting to see that manifested in dance."

Dankmeyer was pleased to see her students connecting so deeply to their encounter with the Tanztheater Wuppertal dancers. "My interest is in trying to find those shared experiences that are artistic on one level but just human on another—things that people remember and care about. That's what I'm always looking for," she says.

Williams students are offered workshops with companies performing on campus through the CenterSeries, such as the New Zealand company Black Grace, which will come this spring, and members of New York City Ballet who regularly visit in the fall. Dankmeyer hopes that the connection with Aran Gimeno can continue. "It was a great thing. I hope we can do it again sometime," she says. "I don't know when, but it's exciting to me to think that we might actually be able to build a relationship and see what can happen in the future."

Originally published in [Dance Magazine \(//www.dancemagazine.com\)](http://www.dancemagazine.com), January 2013