

NEOCORTEX DANCE THEATRE COMPANY

NEOCORTEXDANCE.ORG

SATURDAY
JUNE 20, 2026
7PM

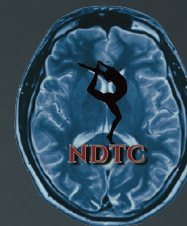
**CHICAGO
BALLET ARTS**

915 FOSTER ST
EVANSTON, IL 60201

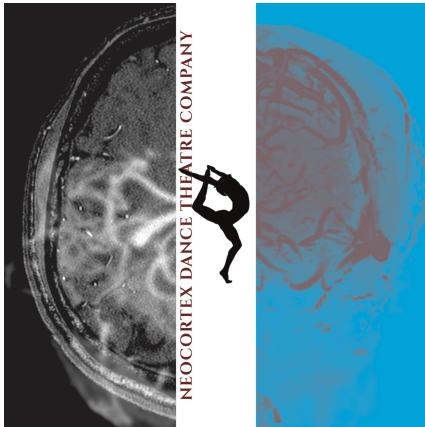
*A PREVIEW OF OUR WORLD
PREMIERE SHOW IN GERMANY*

WITH LIVE PIANO
ACCOMPANIST & COMPOSER
FRANK J. GLAB

ALSO FEATURING
THE MAGICIAN:
THE GREAT FRANKINI



FROM CHICAGO TO HANNOVER



ABOUT NEOCORTEX DANCE THEATRE COMPANY (NDTC)

Neocortex Dance Theatre Company (NDTC) is an emerging Chicago and Evanston, IL, USA-based pre-professional, professional, contemporary, and modern project-based dance theatre company. We

explore themes of identity, trauma, mental health, and self-worth. No two stories and experiences are the same, and we provide stories of different experiences (your truth may not be the truth for others). We recognize that people can change and evolve for the better (despite past actions), and we are committed to providing opportunities for individuals to learn and grow. Our organization is dedicated to fostering a culture of empathy, understanding, and inclusivity. Mental health and mental illnesses will always exist on a spectrum, and we believe stories should be told without generalizations, stereotypes, or stigmas.

NDTC'S MISSION

Our primary mission is to promote awareness of mental health, reduce stigma, and foster a sense of relatability. We are dedicated to creating a safe, diverse, and inclusive environment.

Additionally, we provide a resource page featuring 34 categories on mental disorders and other mental health subjects, which lists various informational resources on our website, as well as offering printed and/or electronic informational resource brochures, artist talks, and answering questions for our performances.

Neocortex Dance Theatre Company (NDTC) is committed to

contributing to the ongoing conversation on mental health, promoting community, advocacy, and empathy, and sharing a shared experience with audiences by exploring complex themes through dance.

Our goal is to establish a full-time dance company and a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization or LLC that offers pay-what-you-can classes to the community, regardless of socioeconomic status. Our programs will provide opportunities for dancers and movers to receive technical training, enhance their mental health and well-being, and foster a sense of community and connection in a safe and nonjudgmental environment.

ACTIVATOR/CONTENT WARNING:

Mental Health, Mental Illness, Bipolar Disorder, Trauma, Emotional Numbing, and Adult Themes, Content, and Discussion

Neocortex Dance Theatre Company (NDTC) explores complex themes about mental health and identity (including themes of suicide, non-suicidal self-injury, abuse, mental illness symptoms, and more). The material, choreographic works, and the artist's talk may be traumatizing for adult or children audiences. If you are unsure about the content, please reach out to us for further details.

DISCLAIMERS

Neocortex Dance Theatre Company (NDTC) is not a licensed medical organization or personnel and will not be held responsible or liable for your engagement, treatments, activators, or actions. The information and resources Neocortex Dance Theatre Company provides on our website, social media platforms, performances, rehearsals, artist's talks, presentations, lectures, workshops, residencies, or classes are not medical, personal, or legal advice, diagnosis, or treatments and should only be used for educational purposes. Always seek medical advice from licensed medical professionals.

INTRODUCTION

SWITCHING (THE OSCILLATION OF POLARITY)

NEOCORTEX DANCE THEATRE COMPANY (NDTC)

CHOREOGRAPHER: Juan Enrique Roque Irizarry Jr., in collaboration with dancers

DANCERS: *Self:* Francisco Melendez, *Depression:* Timothy Tsang, and *(Hypo)Mania:* Derek Quesada

MUSIC: *12 Rounds 6 Feet Under* — Music collaboration with Allen Russell and MusicforMovers.com

Bipolar disorder is a mood disorder with symptoms of fluctuating (hypo)manic highs, depressive lows, and sometimes mixed episodes, affecting everyone uniquely. As someone who has bipolar disorder, Juan Enrique Roque Irizarry Jr. often does not recognize himself when he looks in the mirror and is typically flooded with thoughts and memories that reflect the harm and wounds inflicted on me over time. This piece explores his transformation of inner struggles from the switching states to outer expressions and the psychomotor agitation and retardation that his bipolar disorder causes.

SCENE 1 | INTRODUCTION: SELF

SCENE 2 | THE EMERGENCE

SCENE 3 | SELF VS. DEPRESSION

SCENE 4 | SELF VS. (HYPO)MANIA

SCENE 5 | SELF VS. DEPRESSION & (HYPO)MANIA (MIXED EPISODES)

SCENE 6 | FINALE: THE CONTINUATION

PAST DANCERS AND COLLABORATORS:

2024 | *Self:* Meg Gourley, *Depression:* Elisabeth Roskopf 이지영, and *(Hypo)Mania:* Mark Gonzalez

2025 | *Self:* Meg Gourley, *Depression:* Katie Speltz, and *(Hypo)Mania:* Kaleigh Dent

LOPHIIFORMES

NEOCORTEX DANCE THEATRE COMPANY (NDTC)

CHOREOGRAPHER: Juan Enrique Roque Irizarry Jr.

DANCER: Timothy Tsang

MUSIC: *Breaking the Surface* — Between Music: AquaSonic

Lophiiformes, the biological name for an anglerfish, is a haunting exploration of toxic allure, as the soloist succumbs to the irresistible pull from the treacherous light. Like an angler's fatal lure, the light beckons, promising escape from the darkness, but ultimately devours all who dares to touch it. This piece is a metaphor of being trapped in a cycle of destructive desires.

PAST DANCER

2018 | Jessica Morales

THE GREAT FRANKINI'S DELIGHTFUL DECEPTIONS *IMAGINATION, INC.*

UP AGAIN, DOWN AGAIN, UP AGAIN — *EXCERPTS*

NEOCORTEX DANCE THEATRE COMPANY (NDTC)

CHOREOGRAPHER: Juan Enrique Roque Irizarry Jr., in collaboration with dancers

DANCERS: Francisco Melendez, Derek Quesada, and Timothy Tsang

MUSIC: Music collaboration with Live Piano Accompanist and Composer Frank J. Glab

VIDEO ARTIST: Alex Yasinovsky

The excerpts shown are snippets of the Euthymia ("Normal" Cognition:), Depression, Hypo(Mania), and the Mixed Episodes section of a larger work with a total of 6 dancers (20:33 minutes).

"Up Again, Down Again, Up Again" is a deeply personal and visceral dance piece inspired by Juan Enrique Roque Irizarry Jr.'s experiences with bipolar disorder. This abstract interpretation explores, although this theory was debunked by Dr. Joanna Moncrieff and her colleagues in July 2022, the intricate chemical imbalances in his brain, revealing the dynamic interplay between synapses, neurotransmitters, the amygdala, hippocampus, gray matter, locus coeruleus, dopamine, and serotonin. Through movement, the piece embodies the fluctuating states of normal cognition/euthymia, depression, (hypo)mania, and mixed episodes, illuminating the cyclical patterns of ups, downs, and back up again.

SCENE 1 | INTRODUCTION: EUTHYMIA

SCENE 2 | DEPRESSION

SCENE 3 | INTRODUCTION OF (HYPO)MANIA

SCENE 4 | (HYPO)MANIA

SCENE 5 | MIXED EPISODES (SWITCHING)

SCENE 6 | FINALE: THE CYCLE CONTINUES

PAST DANCERS AND COLLABORATORS:

2025 | Mark Gonzalez, Nik Graves, Audrey Hartnett, Hannah Huang, Francisco Melendez, and Brady Neher

INTERMISSION

THE GREAT FRANKINI'S DELIGHTFUL DECEPTIONS *IMAGINATION, INC.*

SCHATTEN IM NEBEL: ESCALATING DETACHMENT — 600-900 MILLIGRAMS *(PREMIERE)*

NEOCORTEX DANCE THEATRE COMPANY (NDTC)

CHOREOGRAPHERS: Juan Enrique Roque Irizarry

DANCER: Juan Enrique Roque Irizarry Jr.

MUSIC: Music collaboration with Live Piano Accompanist and Composer Frank J. Glab

Emotional numbness is a state where an individual has reduced ability to feel or show positive and negative emotions. Also described

as “emotionally dead,” emotional numbness can cause or exacerbate symptoms of depression, anxiety, aggression, and risky behavior. This piece is inspired by Juan Enrique Roque Irizarry Jr.’s experience with lithium, causing emotional numbness, leading to his recklessness, anxiousness, aggressiveness, and self-destructive patterns, as well as his most recent emotional numbing and depression within the past two years, from 2024 to the beginning of 2026.

VERBLASSEND FÄDEN—LONGING FOR TOUCH (PREMIERE)

NEOCORTEX DANCE THEATRE COMPANY (NDTC)

CHOREOGRAPHER: Juan Enrique Roque Irizarry Jr., in collaboration with dancers

DANCERS: Francisco Melendez and Derek Quesada

MUSIC: Music collaboration with Live Piano Accompanist and Composer Frank J. Glab

This piece explores the ripple effects of emotional numbness: a continuation of the “Schatten im Nebel: Escalating Detachment — 600-900 Milligrams” piece. Emotional numbness is an individual experience, but its ripple effects dismantle our closest relationships. It causes a withdrawal from both oneself and others, leaving partners craving more from each other, yet unsure how to bridge the gap. There is an ache of loneliness and a disconnect that seeps into cold beds and silent rooms—a grieving for the relationship that has slipped away, and a longing for the intimacy, touch, the spark, and wanting to be taken back to the night they met.

DAS WAR NICHT WAS ICH ERWARTET HATTE/ THAT WASN’T WHAT I EXPECTED IMPROVISATIONAL DANCE PIECE

NEOCORTEX DANCE THEATRE COMPANY (NDTC)

CHOREOGRAPHERS AND DANCERS: Juan Enrique Roque Irizarry Jr., Francisco Melendez, Derek Quesada, and Timothy Tsang

MUSIC: *Intermezzo Number 2 Opus 118* — Brahms: Performed by Frank J. Glab

ARTIST TALK: QUESTION AND ANSWERS



JUAN ENRIQUE ROQUE IRIZARRY JR.

**NEOCORTEX DANCE THEATRE
COMPANY (NDTC)**

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | FOUNDER, |
CHOREOGRAPHER, | COMPANY DANCER

*Photo Credits: Headshot: Michelle Reid; Action Shot:
Indie Media Studios and Identity Performing Arts*



Juan Enrique Roque Irizarry Jr. (He/Him) is a professional dancer and choreographer from Chicago and is the Artistic Director, Founder, Choreographer, and a Company Dancer for Neocortex Dance Theatre Company (NDTC). He began his performing arts journey with theatre and musical theatre, however, he started training with Joffrey Ballet (Gallery 37 and After School Matters) and Culture Shock Chicago at 17 and obtained a BA in Anthropology and Sociology with

a minor in Dance Studies from Knox College in 2015. At Knox College, he was awarded the John Hofsas Prize in Dance, the TRIO Persistence Award, TRIO Scholarship, Dance Scholarship, and Theatre Scholarship.

Through ongoing education, he is developing expertise in trauma counseling and through Envision Unlimited, he is currently pursuing his CRSS and CPRS certification to become a peer support specialist. He recently achieved an MFA in Dance at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee as an Advanced Opportunity Program Fellow in 2025. He is also a dancer and collaborator with Sildance Acrodanza, a dance instructor, and a magician's assistant for The Great Frankini. As a versatile dancer trained in multiple techniques and styles, such as modern, contemporary, jazz, street jazz, ballet, hip-hop, heels, Asian folk dance, West African, improvisation, somatics, (acro) yoga, and some aerial, Juan Enrique has performed nationally in cities such as Chicago (IL), Evanston (IL), Milwaukee (WI), Davenport (IA), Galesburg (IL), Springfield (MO), St. Louis (MO), and Kalamazoo (MI), and toured internationally in countries such as Cuba, Germany, Mexico, and Ghana. He has worked with various companies, residencies, and projects, like Identity Performing Arts, Rainbow Children Dance Collective, Innervation Dance Cooperative, and Movement Revolution Dance Crew, and also trained with Aerial Dance Chicago, Visceral Dance Center, and Joel Hall Dancers and Center. Juan Enrique is passionate about exploring dance, pedagogy, psychopathology, and mental health awareness, using his platform to help destigmatize mental illnesses.



**FRANK J. GLAB |
THE GREAT FRANKINI
NEOCORTEX DANCE THEATRE COMPANY
(NDTC) |
IMAGINATION INC.**

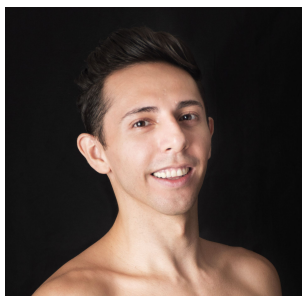
ARTISTIC ADVISOR | PIANIST | MAGICIAN



Frank J. Glab (The Great Frankini) attempts to raise the vibration of the world through his artistic accomplishments. He holds an MFA in music and is an accomplished pianist, organist, and vocalist. He works regularly as a choirmaster in church music with a penchant for early music. Frank is also an award-winning magician and collector of vintage magic equipment and stone lithography. Frank is also a cranio-sacral therapist and is the Artistic Advisor and Pianist for Neocortex Dance Theatre Company (NDTC). Frank attempts to bring healing as well as entertainment through all his artistic disciplines.

THE GREAT FRANKINI

The Great Frankini (Frank J. Glab) has been delighting audiences with his magic conjuring skills for over 50 years. He holds first place and People's Choice Awards from The Society of American Magicians and the International Brotherhood of Magicians. His magical performances include everything from table-side, sleight of hand magic to full-scale illusions, such as Sawing A Lady in Half. He strives to preserve magic history by presenting the true classics of magic. Frankini is also a masterful fire performer, including fire eating, fire breathing, and Samoan Fire Knife Spinning. He enjoys delighting audiences with spectacle and delightful deceptions, emphasizing with magical wonder—all good things can happen.



FRANCISCO MELENDEZ
NEOCORTEX DANCE THEATRE COMPANY
(NDTC)

DANCER | REHEARSAL DIRECTOR |
 POSTER DESIGNER

Francisco (Franky) Melendez is a dance artist originating from El Paso, Texas. While living in El Paso he trained with Champion Dance Studio and El Paso Conservatory of Dance. He went on to perform with the El Paso Ballet Theatre and

Human Nature Contemporary Ballet. He moved to Chicago in 2019, where he continued his professional development training from the Ruth Page Center For The Arts, Joel Hall Dancers & Center, and from the Chicago Movement Collective as a Claire Bataille Legacy Program student. He then went on to be an apprentice with Cerqua Rivera Dance.



DEREK QUESADA
NEOCORTEX DANCE THEATRE
COMPANY (NDTC)

DANCER

Derek Quesada is a Chicago-based dance artist, performer, and storyteller whose work bridges contemporary movement, musical theatre, and expressive narrative. Originally rooted in a multidisciplinary performance background, Derek developed his artistry through extensive training in dance and theatre, cultivating a movement style grounded in emotional authenticity and musicality.

Since relocating to Chicago, he has continued his professional development through classes, workshops, and collaborative projects across the city's vibrant dance community. Derek has performed in both concert and theatrical settings. He is currently working with Matter Dance Company and Silvit Acrodanza and now Neocortex Dance Theatre Company.

In addition to his performance career, Derek is passionate about interdisciplinary collaboration and the intersection of movement, identity, and storytelling. His artistic interests center on creating work that reflects both character and meaningful

expression while fostering connections with audiences. He holds over ten years of case management where he supported individuals in the world of Developmental Disability; and he continues to advocate for this population as a registered nurse in Chicago.



TIMOTHY TSANG
NEOCORTEX DANCE THEATRE
COMPANY (NDTC)

DANCER

Timothy Tsang is a queer Chinese American dance artist whose work bridges movement, cultural memory, and embodied research. Raised in Shanghai and Chicago, he approaches contemporary dance as a structure that holds multiple timelines, intersecting identities, and global

circulations. His choreography has been commissioned and presented at the Auditorium Theatre, Links Hall, and the Edge Theater, and he has performed with South Chicago Dance Theatre, Mordine & Company Dance Theatre, and The Seldoms. Currently pursuing his MFA in Dance at the University of Michigan, Tsang is a recipient of the Lieberthal-Rogel Center for Chinese Studies Fellowship and Rackham International Research Award. His current research investigates the legacy of Leslie Cheung and the aesthetics of queer Chinese cinema.



ALLEN RUSSELL

MUSICIAN

Allen Russell is a violinist, composer and instructor based in Milwaukee, WI. He began his musical studies on the violin at age 5, and studied at the String Academy of Wisconsin with Mimi Zweig and David Becker before later going on to study with Jerome Franke and Dr. Bernard Zinck. Allen has

performed with his Hot Swing quartet Swing Chevron at festivals such as the Midwest Gypsy Swingfest, as well as historic venues such as the Green Mill. With the string quartet Tontine Ensemble, Allen has participated in premiering the new works of modern composers and has had his own compositions performed in collaboration with Milwaukee Ballet, UWM Dance, Danceworks Inc., and Water St. Dance. Allen is a registered Suzuki Violin instructor and holds a Master of Fine Arts in String Performance and Pedagogy from UW Milwaukee.



ALEX YASINOVSKY

VIDEO ARTIST

<https://www.alexandrayasinovsky.com/>

Alexandra Yasinovsky is a visual storyteller living in Chicago who has a multicultural background that influences her work. She creates videos for live performances trying to add another dimension to the show and works with artists in different artistic

projects.



SPENCE WARREN

VIDEOGRAPHER

My name is Spence Warren and this is my bio! I am an artist. I make motion pictures, I make puppets, and I make music. I serve as President of the Board of Directors for a radical, non-profit multimedia production company called Soft Cage Films. I'm a freelance, commercial Art Director/Prop Master and on occasion, I write about local theater for an online, entertainment magazine called Picture this Post. My aim is to create entertaining, imaginative works that provide an intellectually satisfying experience.

My hope is to inspire.



ABOUT OCEAN

BETWEEN

Led by Marianne Buchwa and other amazing German artists, such as Cem Koc, Krikrass Heike, Franz Betz,

and Harro Schmidt, Ocean Between is an ongoing international art symposium founded in 2017, fostering US-Germany cross-cultural collaborations among various artists. It intertwines visual artists, dancers, musicians, filmmakers, multimedia artists, and more to share skills, creativity, and interdisciplinary work. The symposium features exhibitions, performances, workshops, and outreach events in cities such as Chicago, Hannover, and Berlin. Ocean Between celebrates its 9th annual addition in Hannover

in June 2026.

Main Highlights:

- Interdisciplinary exhibitions and performances (film, dance, music, spoken word, mask theater)
- Community workshops open to families, seniors, and local residents
- Collaborative artmaking across cultures and disciplines
- Inclusive projects such as mail art, installations, and live performance events

SPECIAL THANKS & RECOGNITIONS

You: The Audience

All The Very Talented and Very Supportive Dancers (*Francisco Melendez, Derek Quesada, Timothy Tsang*, and past dance collaborators)

Everyone Involved In This Production

Chicago Ballet Arts

Frank J. Glab (The Great Frankini)

Video Artist: Alex Yasinovsky

Allen Russell

Francisco Melendez (Poster Design and Marketing for NDTC)

Videographer: Spence Warren

Photographer: Michelle Reid

Wolf Ruediger Leister

NDTC Logo Design Collaborations: Angel Cunningham

Ocean Between

All the participants of Ocean Between's *Migrating the Color Fields* Festival

Marianna Buchwald

Kristin Heike

Cem Koc

Franz Betz

Harro Schmidt

All the donors who donated to NDTC for our international Germany travel (as of 19. June 2026): *Andrea Cook, Catherine Aranas, Frank J. Glab, Herminia Chase, Kristin Heike, Maria Elena Roque Irizarry, Nicole Sands,*

, Rainbow Children Dance Collective, Silvit Diaz Brown, and Todd Kiech

All donors and audience members who will be coming and donated from Germany

All the friends, families, and supporters

Chicago Danztheatre Ensemble

Bürgerschule Nordstadt

Sofa Loft

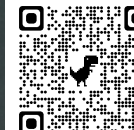
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR
SUPPORT!



NEOCORTEX
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NDTC MENTAL
HEALTH
RESOURCES



Mental illness and mental health are individual experiences and sometimes a struggle, but you are not alone. Please take care of yourself and seek additional help and support when needed. I am glad you are here and sending so much care, love, and support!

Immediate Emergency Assistance or Injury: Dial 911
Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (24/7, Free, & Confidential): Call or Text 988

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