

# Gathering Bones

Sound score by Pauri Walsh

Choreography by Maya Soto

Gathering Bones is an evening length performance experience exploring themes of internal personal power, feminism and femininity through dance, music and art. This movement collage dives into princess, warrior and queen archetypes through a variety of cultural histories and resources.

Gathering Bones goes back in time, exploring stories and myths of powerful and wild women. The performance runs 52 minutes in length with an original recorded sound score. The original cast includes nine female dancers. An art installation accompanies the performance and the audience is invited to view the installation pre and post show.

Gathering Bones premiered in Seattle on May 18 and 19, 2013 at Velocity Dance Center. After performing for sold out houses and receiving rave reviews, Gathering Bones toured to Portland for Pacific Dance Makers in June and Conduit's Dance+ Festival in July 2013.



We all begin as a bundle of bones lost somewhere in the desert, a dismantled skeleton that lies under the sand. It is our work to recover the parts. It is a painstaking process best done when the shadows are just right, for it takes much looking. La Loba indicates what we are to look for - the indestructible life force, the bones.



Fairy tales, myths, and stories provide understandings which sharpen our sight so that we can pick out and pick up the path left by the wildish nature. The instruction found in story reassures us that the path has not run out, but still leads women deeper, and more deeply still, into their own knowing. The tracks which we all are following are those of the Wild Woman archetype, the innate instinctual self.

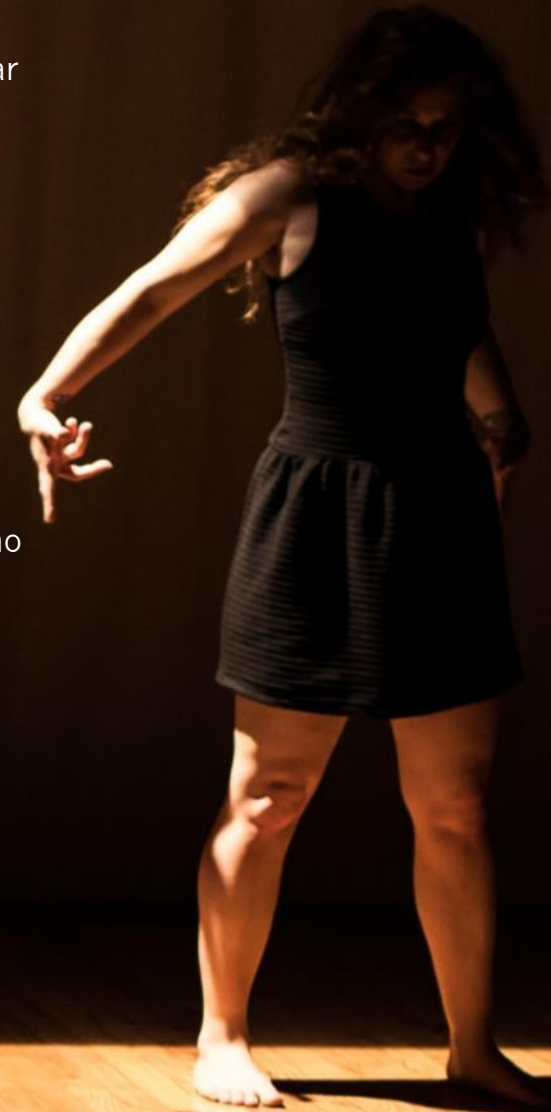


Wild woman teaches women when not to act “nice” about protecting their soulful lives. The wildish nature knows that being “sweet” in these instances only makes the predator smile. When the soulful life is being threatened, it is not only acceptable to draw the line and mean it, it is required. When a woman does this, her life cannot be interfered with for long, for she knows immediately what is wrong and can push the predator back where it belongs. She is no longer a mark or a target.



I call her Wild Woman, for those very words, wild and woman, create llamar o tocar a la puerta, the fairy-tale knock at the door of the deep female psyche. Llamar o tocar a la puerta means literally to play upon the instrument of the name in order to open a door. It means using words to summon up the opening of a passageway. No matter by which culture a woman is influenced, she understands the words wild and woman, intuitively.

...the word wild here is not used in its modern pejorative sense, meaning out of control, but in its original sense, which means to live a natural life, one in which the criatura, creature, has innate integrity and healthy boundaries. These words, wild and woman, cause women to remember who they are and what they are about. They create a metaphor to describe the force which funds all females. They personify a force that women cannot live without.



# Reviews and Impressions

“...movement warfare” – Dean Speer / Critical Dance Forum

“Gripping and honest, the work was obviously personal, yet it spread the universal message that the sacred feminine is ancient, alive, and well. Gathering Bones was one of the most genuine, authentic expressions Seattle contemporary dance has seen in a long while.”

– Kathryn Hightower / Seattle Dances

“Gathering Bones is a brutally exciting show. It is vigorously physical, with generally simple movement, and it is possible simply to enjoy it as a visceral spectacle of women “kicking butt.” I am certain many enjoyed it exactly that way, like an episode of Buffy the Vampire Slayer. There is, however, a deeper intellect at play here. Ms. Soto’s use of myth to reflect the dilemmas of the contemporary female is truthful and timely. Her dancers are brilliant and her ideas are fresh.”

– Omar Willey / Seattle Star



# About the Creator/Choreographer

Maya Soto's work has been called...

"...crisp, primal, and athletic" - Kaitlin McCarthy / Seattle Dances (2013)

"I have always admired Ms. Soto's work and this is no exception." – Omar Wiley / Seattle Star (2013)

"lurid theatricality" – Michael Upchurch / The Seattle Times (2012)

"a wild, powerful display" – Nalisha Rangel / Seattle Dances (2011)

"so palpable the audience whooped and hollered throughout" – Nalisha Rangel / Seattle Dances (2011)



**Maya Soto** is truly a Pacific Northwest artist. She has been creating, performing and teaching dance in Seattle for over 10 years. She draws inspiration from integrating a wide variety of movement forms. Her choreography has been performed in venues including On the Boards, Velocity Dance Center, the Firehouse Performing Arts Center and Tacoma Museum of Glass. Festival commissions include: NWNW Festival, BOOST Dance Festival, SIDF, Conduit's Dance+ Festival, JFFA and the Arts in Nature Festival. Her work focuses on finding common ground in dance, drawing on elements of rhythm and a variety of styles and cultural influences. Soto brings together classical dance training and a sense of play and entertainment. After premiering Collage Pink in 2011, she went on to create Gathering Bones, an evening length work exploring feminism through the mythology of powerful and wild women. From 2003-2012, Soto co-directed NorthWest Dance Syndrome (NWDS). Through her long standing collaboration with NWDS, she co-choreographed, produced and performed in 3 evening length works Americanism (2005), Red Tent (2006) and Junknation (2009) along with numerous shorter dances and dance films Nocturne (2007) and The Snapping Point: The Movie (2012). Her work with NWDS has received support from Allied Arts Foundation and Walrus Performance Productions. She has performed with LeGendre Performance Group, Big Red Dance Company, Amy O'Neal and Sandstrommovement.

As an educator, Soto has extensive experience. Whether teaching in a high school, college, a workshop or a studio class, she works to cultivate meaningful relationships and brings an upbeat, energetic teaching style that embraces all people. She teaches modern dance technique at Velocity Dance Center and directs the Bellevue College Dance Company. At the Northwest School, where she is on faculty, she works with middle and high school students. From 2006-2013 she created and directed the dance program at the Arts and Academics Academy in Highline School District and served on the Superintendent's Council for the Arts and OSPI's GLE Arts Team. She has been a teaching artist for PNB's REACH program, Seattle Youth Dance Collective, Tacoma School of the Arts, Foster High School and Vancouver School of Arts and Academics. She is a graduate of Cornish College of the Arts and has completed teacher training programs through City University and Seattle University.

## About the Composer

Paul O. Walsh graduated from Cornish College with a degree in Classical Composition and Electro-acoustic music. He is an active composer of electronic music (including large-scale surround sound performance installations), modern classical chamber music, music for dance and theatre, and experimental rock. Writing and performing throughout the US and Europe, he has been a core member of the hyper-experimental performance art/music group Degenerate Art Ensemble, designed audio installations, engineered, produced, and composed music for the theater group Implied Violence, and can be seen performing in math rock outfit X-Ray Press, electronic pop group Rainbows, and as solo electronic artist Trying. He also runs ExEx Audio, a creative recording studio centered around working collaboratively with artists to help them better express themselves through sound. [www.exexaudio.com](http://www.exexaudio.com)



# Gathering Bones is available for touring, festivals and performance events

## Contact

Maya Soto

722 11<sup>th</sup> Ave E

Seattle, WA 98012

360-566-3945 (cell)

[mayasoto22@gmail.com](mailto:mayasoto22@gmail.com)

[www.sotostyledance.com](http://www.sotostyledance.com)



## ~Credits

Text taken from *Women Who Run With the Wolves* by Clarissa Pinkola Estés

Photography: Joseph Lambert

Sound Score Composition: Paul Walsh

Concept, Direction and Choreography: Maya Soto

Performers/Creative Collaborators: Danica Bito, Teresa Hanawalt, Amy Johnson, Jana Kincl, Cristen Klaja, Erin McIntire, Uraina Nagy, Carla Negrete Martinez and Maya Soto

