



Photo: Ian Douglas

kimberly bartosik/daela

I HUNGER FOR YOU

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I hunger for you

Suspended in a stark yet mesmerizing world defined by light and its absence, *I hunger for you* creates a space where internalized forces of faith pulse through dancers' bodies which restlessly, tenderly, and violently confront one another. Emanating from choreographer Kimberly Bartosik's (an alum of Merce Cunningham Dance Company) personal experience with Charismatic spirituality, the evening-length work delves deeply into the heart of losing one's self in ecstasy, ritual, and desire, riding an edge of barely controlled abandon and vibrating stillness.

Choreography and Direction by Kimberly Bartosik

Created in close collaboration with performers Christian Allen, Dylan Crossman, Burr Johnson, Lindsey Jones, Joanna Kotze, Dahlia Bartosik-Murray

Lighting and Set Design by Roderick Murray

Music by Sivan Jacobovitz, arranged with Kimberly Bartosik

Costume Design by Harriet Jung

Dramaturgy by Melanie George*

World Premiere, LUMBERYARD Center for Film and Performing Arts, October 12-13, 2018

NYC Premiere: BAM Next Wave Festival 2018, October 31-November 3, 2018

Watch the *I hunger for you* promo video here: <https://vimeo.com/301314008>

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*made possible by LUMBERYARD Center for Film and Performing Arts

kimberly bartosik

Bessie Award-winning performer Kimberly Bartosik's work has been commissioned and presented by BAM Next Wave Festival, LUMBERYARD Center for Film and Performing Arts, New York Live Arts, Wexner Arts Center, 92nd St. Y Fridays @ Noon (2019), American Realness festival, Dance Place, American Dance Festival, Dance Theater Workshop, Gibney Dance, Abrons Art Center, The Yard, MASS MoCA/Jacob's Pillow, Danspace Project, French Institute Alliance Francaise's Crossing the Line Festival, Festival Rencontres Chorégraphique Internationales de Seine-Saint Denis (France), Artdanthe Festival (France), BEAT Festival, The Kitchen, La Mama, Mount Tremper Arts, and Movement Research.

Bartosik is a 2017 National Dance Project (NDP) Production Grant and Community Engagement Fund recipient, a program of the New England Foundation for the Arts. She is a 2017 (and 2010) MAP Fund grantee and has also received support for her choreographic work from the Jerome Foundation; FUSED (French-US Exchange in Dance), a program of the New England Foundation for the Arts in partnership with The Cultural Services of the French Embassy and the French American Cultural Exchange; Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation, USArtists International; New York Foundation for the Arts, Building Up Infrastructure Levels for Dance (BUILD); American Dance Abroad; New Music USA, Live Music for Dance; and Foundation for Contemporary Arts, Grants to Artists and Emergency Grants. She is a 2018 Creative Arts Initiative (CAI) grantee.

Bartosik is a 2017-19 New York Live Arts Live Feed Residency Artist where she is developing *I hunger*, the sister piece to *I hunger for you*, for a December 2019 premiere. She was a 2017 Dancing Laboratory Residency Artist at the National Center for Choreography at the University of Akron (NCCAkron); a 2017 Bogliasco Foundation Fellow; a 2015 Merce Cunningham Fellow; and a 2016 Gibney Dance DiP Residence Artist. She is a recipient of an ART, a Capacity-Building grant through Pentacle (2016-19).

She has been in creative residence at New York Live Arts, Live Feed and Studio Series; NCCAkron; Centre Chorégraphique National-Ballet de Lorraine; LUMBERYARD Center for Film and Performing Arts; Marble House Project; Gibney Dance Center's DiP Residency; Centre Chorégraphique National de Franche-Comté à Belfort, France (FUSED); Governor's Island through Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Swing Space Program; Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts at Arizona State University; Joyce Soho Artist Residency Program; LaGuardia Performing Arts Center; Jacob's Pillow; Kaatsbaan International Dance Center; Mount Tremper Arts; White Oak Plantation; and Movement Research.

Bartosik was a member of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company for 9 years and received a Bessie Award for Artistic Excellence in his work. She was a member of the Wally Cardona Quartet and also performed in the 2011 restaging of Robert Ashley's 1967 opera, *That Morning Thing*.

Bartosik received her BFA from North Carolina School of the Arts, and MA in 20th Century Art and Art Criticism from The Graduate Faculty of Political and Social Research of the New School University. She was a 2016 Princeton Fellowship Finalist, and has been a guest artist/faculty at Princeton University, The Juilliard School, Rutgers University (2019), University of North Carolina School for the Arts, Arizona State University's Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, SUNY/Purchase, Colorado College, and University of Buffalo (2019).

company bio

The mission of Kimberly Bartosik/daela is to create viscerally provocative choreographic projects that are built upon the development of a virtuosic movement language, rigorous conceptual explorations, and the creation of highly theatricalized environments. Bartosik closely collaborates with her performers and designers to create work which is deeply informed by literature and cinema, involves complex plays on space, time, and audience perspective, dramatically illuminating the ephemeral nature of performance.

The creation and presentation of I hunger for you is made possible, in part, through commissions from BAM Next Wave Festival and LUMBERYARD Center for Film and Performing Arts through an inaugural year BAM/LUMBERYARD partnership. The work premiered at LUMBERYARD Center for Film and Performing Arts where it also received significant development support in LUMBERYARD's residency program.

I hunger for you has also received generous funding from: The MAP Fund, primarily supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation with additional funds from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project Production Grant, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; General Operating support was made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project with funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation; Production Residency & Community Engagement Fund funded by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance project, with funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; New York Live Arts' Live Feed Residency Program; and administrative support through Pentacle's ART Program.

I hunger for you was created, in part, during an National Dance Project Late Stage Production Residency @ National Choreographic Center-Akron (NCC-Akron); accueil studio residency @ Centre Chorégraphique National-Ballet de Lorraine; Bogliasco Fellowship; Marble House Project Residency; Upstream Residency @ Kaatsbaan International Dance Center; and DANCENOW Silo.



photo: Alon Koppel

Notes on *I hunger for you* by dramaturg Melanie George

Kimberly Bartosik is a visionary and a collaborator. Though those roles are not mutually exclusive, I highlight them separately because they are fundamental to her aesthetic. As a conceptualist, she has a keen understanding of intent, content, and execution, which is tempered with her knowledge – culled from years of dancing for Merce Cunningham and Wally Cardona – that the embodiment of her vision is best achieved through the agency of her collaborators. Each is an individual critical component of the work. Dylan's aggressive grace. Burr's powered elegance, Dahlia's stoic innocence. Christian's weighted vulnerability. Lindsey's ecstatic formalism, Joanna's sophisticated exertion. Harriet Jung's costume layer texture and color that suggest remnants of beauty. Sivan Jacobvitz's score is a pulsing current that will embed into your senses. Roderick Murray's lighting is transformative. I have seen this work with and without lighting. Believe me when I tell you, his use of fluorescents is more than a device; it illuminates the space in a way that reconfigures the hierarchies within an audience's viewing experience. Each artist brings something autonomous and essential to the piece. Change one component and you see a different work. In movement analysis, we call this dynamic alignment. Among the many things that encapsulate *I hunger for you*, chiefly, it is a dynamic work.

I hunger for you is a work of sensation and nuance. Its rhythms are instinctive and primal, but also precise. The process is exacting. I liken it cracking a safe, a click too far and you have bypassed the subtleties that encompass the work. Consider the title, and differences between hunger and thirst. Both are sensory responses dictated from desire and need. But metaphorically and colloquially, we see them differently. Where thirst is equated with desperation and lack, hunger is associated with want and desire, willfulness. Tonight's work is imbued with these semantic nuances. Bartosik alludes to this when speaking of her choreography noting, "My work is dark, but my work isn't heavy". In the dancers' performance, you will see frenzy not panic, rhythm not groove, events not episodes, aggression not chaos. As the work vacillates between choreography and improvisation, the spatial and rhythmic threads that allow dancers to intersect while maintaining a stark intensity are quite specific and refined.

I hunger for you is a cacophony of coexisting energies. We see this literally in the way the dancers' bodies execute repeated actions, sometimes syncing up, sometimes colliding, often creating a new sense of rhythm from the whole. In my rehearsal notes, I call this "The Rev", as in to rev up like an engine. It is fascinating to observe how a dancer maintains tensegrity as the body adjusts rhythmic phrasing and sequencing to accommodate duration. It is compulsive and carnal and willful. And riveting. An exposition on what bodies can and do and how they endure. Throughout the work, we witness the co-existence of states and drives. This is the intersection of space, flow, time, and weight. Though it is hyperphysical and violent at times, it also transcends personhood. The dancing operates on a cellular level. You may find you cease watching Joanna, Burr, Dylan, Christian, and Lindsey to become a witness to the properties and conversion of energy. Do not be surprised if your body has a sympathetic response. Heart rates might accelerate, limbs might involuntarily replicate the rhythms in the piece, or you may find your pulse aligning with the movement or the accompaniment. In this way, *I hunger for you* is simultaneously impulsive and impactful.

That said, returning to my theme of the importance of nuance, location, and precision, this piece is not about cause and effect. It does contain a narrative about trauma and survival. It is about sensation, not feeling. The movement is weighted, but not symbolic. I would even offer that is designed, but not choreographed. *I hunger for you* happens in real time to real people. It is not a simulation. This is a cast of doers, not actors. It is not a representation or meditation or a poem. Bartosik was inspired by themes of faith, violence, compassion, and life force, and has transposed these ideas into a work that speaks to an ecstatic, resilient experience.

press

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November 09, 2018

Pushing the Limits

“I hunger for you”

Kimberly Bartosik/daela

BAM Fisher (Fishman Space)

Brooklyn, NY

November 3, 2018

by Martha Sherman

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Like the zone inhabited by whirling dervishes, Kimberly Bartosik’s passionate “I hunger for you” reaches for moments of mystical power through relentless motion. In its New York premiere in the capacious black box of BAM Fisher, her work for five dancers (plus a brief observer) offers passion and intensity that often finds that ecstatic zone; even the act of reaching offers many of its own rewards.

Bartosik, like several of the dancers who perform in “I hunger for you,” learned her trade with Merce Cunningham, and all the athletic power, precision, and randomness the master offered. That training was evident from the start, as Burr Johnson and Dylan Crossman in an early parallel duet, entered from opposite corners and stretched their legs back into perfect arabesques, then crumpled with arms wide to scoop large chunks from the air. If the Cunningham discipline offered a platform, it was not the destination. Bartosik’s goal was to lean not toward pure movement, but toward almost boundless feeling.



Burr Johnson, Dylan Crossman and Christian Allen



The work started in silence, as Christian Allen and Lindsey Jones leaned against the back wall, their arms very slowly rising and opening wide in welcoming gesture. Johnson and Crossman joined in their parallel duet, and Joanna Kotze joined them as the central line of a symmetrical pattern on-stage, five dancers who moved forward and backward in lines of deep, parallel leg lifts, arm swoops, turns and tumbles, in staggered lines, a cascade of roiling bodies. This was no slow burn: they started with power, and never backed down.

The dancers were costumed (by Harriet Jung) in layers of diaphanous, earth-toned material, their bodies clearly visible through the translucent coverings. Some wore or put on jackets of the same fabric, some took them off. They shed the layers as if skin; the levels of vulnerability were an apt metaphor for layers of emotional nakedness, continually peeling away.

The dancers reeled from paired intimacy to solo obsessions, repeating movements to exhausting extremes. The duets were the most beautiful, sometimes cringingly intimate. Crossman and Kotze were the first to partner, approaching each other with intention – and with Kotze’s hands held up, as if to hold off, just as she approached. With their bodies close, Crossman leaned

his face in, but instead of a kiss, his head found the shape of Kotze's long, swan-like neck and curled his neck around hers, not touching. Their shared heat was palpable.

In a later duet, Johnson and Allen filled the stage in a frantic search, like approach/ avoidance personified. As they connected (again, not quite touching,) they looked like skaters, with wide arms and legs meeting in matched arabesques; their heads, too, came perilously, deliciously close – but didn't connect.

The duets intersected and competed with solos of obsessive movement – Crossman's shivering torso, Kotze endlessly curling and re-curling her arms, Jones' pattern of arm thrusts and bent knees. Jones' repetitive meme was the most dervish-like in its meditative power. Starting slowly, her long solo sequence built to a relentless pattern of arms thrust down as her knee bounced her torso downward to most closely evoke a trance of religious ecstasy. Because the stage is so large, the audience was often faced with multiple patterns to look at – and often had to choose. Depending on where one sat in the three-sided audience, one dancer or one duet was likely to be in the foreground, the others' frantic movement just background noise to whatever was holding immediate attention.

Kotze opened an extended solo by releasing her long hair, which flew along with her repetitive head and neck contractions like sharp punctuation. As she stood, doing her repetitive arms curls, Bartosik's young daughter, Dahlia Bartosik-Murray, walked casually onto the stage in sneakers and work-out clothes, to quietly observe, sitting in a soft spotlight. In a later scene, on a dark stage, Bartosik-Murray returned to run determinedly around the stage in several loops, another familiar repetitive movement meme – that of joggers on a track. The brief appearances of this appealing teenager made the piece a true family affair, since Bartosik's lighting designer is her husband, (and Dahlia's father,) Roderick Murray.

Murray's lighting choices matched the choreography in their stark contrasts, though the harshness wasn't always successful. At the start, and periodically through the work, the theater was entirely bright, including house lights, ensuring that the viewers were not separated from the stage. Being in the light can be an awkward experience for the audience, and when the houselights dimmed, it was a relief. The darker configuration also allowed us to see the most intriguing lighting element: several long shafts of light that fell from the ceiling like daggers of illumination.

Finally, the score was the underlying mediator of Bartosik's vision. Composer Sivan Jacobovitz mixed silence with waves melodic and electronic lines. The sounds included bubbling water, pounding rhythms, techno buzzing. In one especially exhausting sequence, Crossman moved to an electronic rumble; as the rapid rhythm became inhumanly quick Crossman's physical jerks moved to an inhuman level, too.

By the program's end, it almost hurt to hear the dancers' panting, as they moved in pools of sweat. Bartosik and her dancers were relentlessly hungry; she seemed to suggest that we not expect to be sated, that the hunger itself is what counts.

Photo Credits:

Top: L-R Burr Johnson, Christian Allen, Joanna Kotze, Lindsey Jones, Dylan Crossman in "I hunger for you." Photo © Ian Douglas.

Middle: Burr Johnson, Christian Allen in "I hunger for you." Photo © Ian Douglas.

Bottom: Christian Allen, Burr Johnson, Joanna Kotze in "I hunger for you." Photo © Jim Coleman.

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InfiniteBody

art and creative consciousness by Eva Yaa Asantewaa

Thursday, November 1, 2018

Forever hunger: Kimberly Bartosik at BAM Fisher



Joanna Kotze in Kimberly Bartosik's *I hunger for you*
(photo: Jim Coleman)

Lighting designer **Roderick Murray**'s fluorescent tubes hang from the ceiling inside **BAM Fisher**'s Fishman Space, colder and more severe than stalactites. Two dancers--**Christian Allen** and **Lindsey Jones**--step into the bare space of **Kimberly Bartosik**'s *I hunger for you*. You can almost hear raptor wings, so forceful is the way they will lunge and beat and spin against the air. Arms lifting and rotated. Heavy breath audible. Heads and chins tilted upward. Torsos arching as they drop to a knee.

Burr Johnson, **Dylan Crossman** and **Joanna Kotze**--raptors, too, or perhaps angels, if angels have feet to strike mountainous earth--come in and churn and lash against the empty space as well. Back and forth, they cross it, overlapping in time and close pathways, until their labors clearly take a toll. Watching them, too, provides an initial sensation of exhilaration followed by exertion. When they stop--just stop and stand and shift inside and gasp--you feel the same internal wooziness, everything inside one's own body saying, "Hold up. Can we just settle back into order?"

I hunger for you plays with the risk of release--the kind of dropping of form and letting go that we experience in extremes of sensual and spiritual ecstasy--without guarantee of connection. Or guarantee that connection achieved will stay or will satisfy. A partner backs off or quietly quits the space entirely. The one remaining might freeze in a pose of hopelessness--arms wrenched forward from a moment of intense submission.

Much of the inspiration for the piece comes from the choreographer's religious upbringing, and it's interesting that she has cast her own child, **Dahlia Bartosik-Murray**, as a silent witness to some moments of Kotze's dancing as well as, later, a figure of release, coursing around the space like a wild filly.

Choreography: Kimberly Bartosik in collaboration with the dancers

Music: **Sivan Jacobovitz**, with arrangement by Kimberly Bartosik

Costume design: **Harriet Jung**

Sound Engineering: **James Bigbee Garver**

Dramaturgy: **Melanie George**

The New York Times

A Dance About the Things We Carry (Sorrow and Rage)

By Siobhan Burke Oct. 30, 2018



Kimberly Bartosik on becoming a choreographer: "There's something in *this* body that these really fantastic male artists haven't gotten to. So what is that? Only I can access it." Lauren Lancaster for The New York Times

Like some of the best New York stories, it started with a chance encounter on a subway platform. The longtime dancer Kimberly Bartosik was waiting for a train when a colleague, the choreographer and curator Dean Moss, approached her with an unexpected question: Would she be interested in making a dance?

That was about 20 years ago, and Ms. Bartosik has since choreographed more than a dozen works. She related that anecdote over coffee recently near the Brooklyn Academy of Music, where her latest evening-length piece, "I hunger for you," will be presented, beginning on Wednesday, as part of the Next Wave Festival.

Though she had performed with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company for nine years, and with Wally Cardona for several more, she hadn't seriously considered creating her own work until Mr. Moss proposed it.

"Something in me was like, 'I think you should see what this is,'" she said, "and it opened up this whole Pandora's box."

Since that tentative start, Ms. Bartosik, 52, has thrown herself into the precarious life of a freelance dance maker. One of just a few female choreographers to come out of Cunningham's company, she spent years distancing herself from his influence. Still, in works of feverish beauty and mystery, she seems to share his proclivity for stretching dancers (herself included) to imaginative physical extremes.



From left, Joanna Kotze, Lindsey Jones and Dylan Crossman rehearsing Ms. Bartosik's "I hunger for you," at Lumberyard in Catskill, N.Y. Lauren Lancaster for The New York Times

Ms. Bartosik spent her formative years in upstate New York and North Carolina, one of five siblings raised by evangelical parents. The core of "I hunger for you," she said, is a reflection on faith — of all kinds, not just religious — and its power to transform the body. At a recent rehearsal, five courageous members of her company, daela, appeared to surrender themselves to ecstatic, sometimes erotic states, backed by Sivan Jacobovitz's roiling soundscape.

"There's a wildness that has grown in her work — a desire for wildness and violence in the body," said the dancer and choreographer Joanna Kotze, who has worked with Ms. Bartosik since 2009.

That artistic shift has paralleled new opportunities. The Next Wave Festival invitation, Ms. Bartosik said, brought levels of funding and creative support she had never before received, including a residency at Lumberyard in Catskill, N.Y., and the chance to work with a dramaturge (Melanie George) and a costume designer (Harriet Jung) for the first time. She has also invested more in lighting design, by her husband and frequent collaborator, Roderick Murray.

"I've been able to say, 'Rick, you're actually my hired lighting designer, not just my husband who's going to do this for free,'" she said, laughing.

Ms. Bartosik spoke about the "slow burn" of becoming a choreographer and the process behind "I hunger for you." These are edited excerpts from that conversation.

Tell me about not wanting to choreograph.

When I left Merce, I was never going to be a choreographer. That was the last thing I wanted to do. I was working for this amazing part of history, and I was like, "What could I ever add?"

I didn't want to commit, to be honest — to that life, to having to scramble. But the more I peeled back the layers of that interest, I was like, "Yeah, this is really who I am."



Ms. Bartosik rehearsing her dancers at Lumberyard. “I hunger for you” comes, she said, “from my response to what I feel is the rage and the sorrow that we are carrying in our bodies at this moment in time.”

Lauren Lancaster for The New York Times

How did making your own work compare to dancing for other people?

I remember thinking, There’s something in *this* body that these really fantastic male artists haven’t gotten to. So what is that? Only I can access it. I spent a long time in the studio by myself. The first few pieces I made, I worked only with women.

What was the starting point for “I hunger for you”?

If I were to put it into one line, it came from my response to what I feel is the rage and the sorrow that we are carrying in our bodies at this moment in time. It doesn’t matter what our ideologies are; I think that in our culture, there is so much we carry in our bodies, and how do we deal with those things?

I started with all these questions about religion and faith. Faith is still something very deep in this work, but not faith connected to religion. It’s bigger than that.

Did those questions have to do with your family?

My siblings and I had, at first, a pretty conservative Catholic upbringing, and then my parents joined an evangelical church. I remember going to these churches and seeing people go into states — speaking in tongues, slaying in the spirit. The power of believing in something changed their bodies.

I wasn’t sure what my own belief was. I was just like: “Oh! Wow.” Watching people have such deep faith, it imprinted itself on me as this crazy physical phenomenon. Like, how did you do that? How did that happen?

In rehearsal, there was almost a feeling of exorcism.

There is a deep essence of pulse, or what I've started to call life force. It's a very different place than I've ever been with my body or my practice, which is built a lot on restraint.

You've collaborated with your husband on many projects. Is that challenging?

It's tricky, and at the same time, I don't think I could be with somebody who wasn't deeply involved in my work, because it's become my whole being. My body wakes him up at night because I'm trying to figure out a problem, and he feels that energy radiating from me. He'll sit up and say, "Are you choreographing again?"

A version of this article appears in print on Oct. 31, 2018, on Page C5 of the New York edition with the headline: A Dance About the Things We Carry (Sorrow and Rage)

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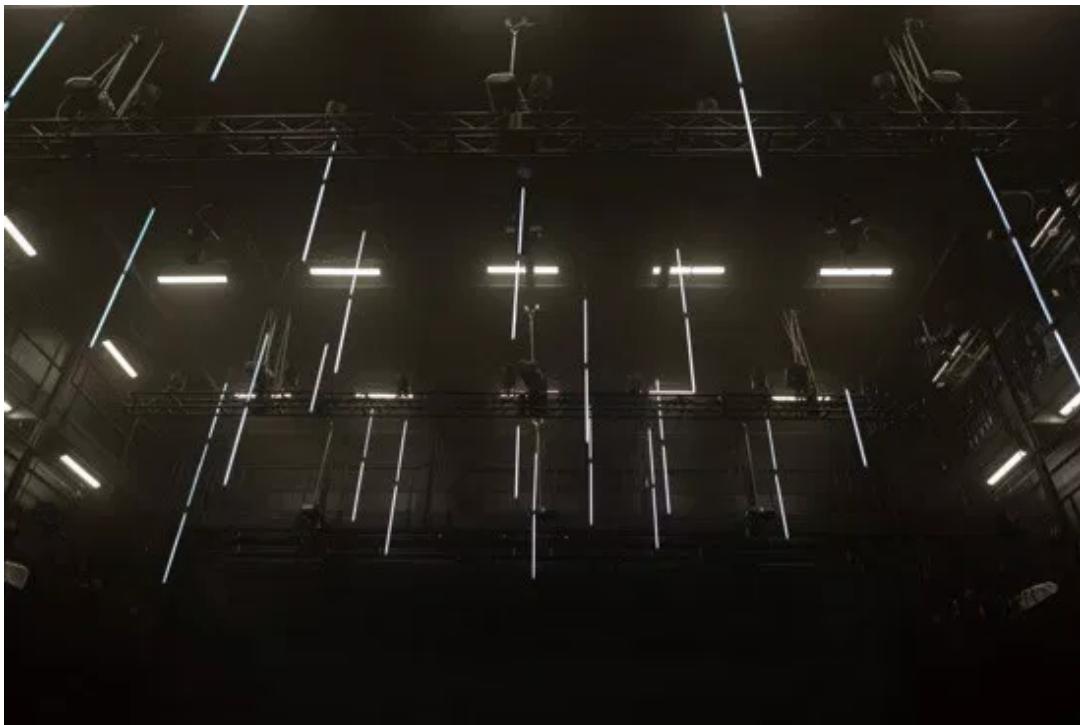
Deborah Jowitt on bodies in motion

an **arts**JOURNAL blog

Hunger Appeased? Maybe Not

October 17, 2018 by Deborah Jowitt

Kimberly Bartosik/daela premieres *I hunger for you* at Lumberyard.



A view of Roderick Murray's setting for *I hunger for you*. Photo: Alon Koppel

center for performances and film showings and opened its inaugural season at the end of September. On October 12 and 13, Kimberly Bartosik/daela premiered Bartosik's new *for you* in Lumberyard's state-of-the-art theater at its Water Street campus beside Caterskill Creek—a tentacle of the Hudson River—and just down the hill from the shops and restaurants of South Main Street.

The piece will have its New York City premiere on October 31 through November 3, as part of BAM Next Wave Festival, and I suspect that spectators will be seated the way we were for *I hunger for you*. In Lumberyard's flexible, lofty-ceilinged black-box space, we were positioned in rows along three of its sides and hence viewed the opening sequence differently.

Christian Allen and Lindsey Jones, the first of the five remarkable dancers to enter, stand and slowly raise their arms before an array of vertically suspended neon tubes by lighting and set designer Roderick Murray. The performers (costumed by Harriet Jung in grays, browns, and blacks) face my side of the space, as do Dylan Crossman and Burr Johnson, who enter to flank them. Joanna Kotze, the last to arrive, appropriates center. So I see these five approaching us or turning to repeat their solitary paths, while those seated along the sides of the space perceive streams flowing side-to-side in both directions as they pass one another.

The pattern is symmetrical and tightly organized. At some point, I realize that Crossman and Johnson are only travelling halfway toward us before turning back. Watching these journeys, I begin to imagine them as simulating the way city streets ought to work (or, at least, how city planners think they ought to work). No one bumps into anyone else; no one gives a damn about anyone else, even though the two members of both pairs move in meticulous synchrony to the electronic background sound by Sivan Jacobovitz (arranged with Bartosik).

The movements become larger: jumps, turns, thrusts of one leg into the air, twists of the body. And by the end of the sequence, each person is making choices that differ from anyone else's. The territory itself alters when some start taking diagonal paths; collisions almost occur, or are avoided. Silence. Everyone calms down.

The program notes mention "deeply internalized forces of faith, violence, life force, and compassion." Only after seeing the piece, did I read an interview in *The Brooklyn Rail*, during which Bartosik spoke of our current corroded political atmosphere—one in which (my words) truth is distorted, people cling to beliefs and rituals they're unable or unwilling to examine, and reasoned dialogue is buried by violence. Every day my e-mail box is full of passionate messages calling me by name and attempting to inflame me, make me feel culpable, urge me to action, and beg for my money.



Joanna Kotze and Dylan Crossman in Kimberly Bartosik's *I hunger for you*. At back: Lindsey Jones (L) and Burr Johnson. Photo: Alon Koppel

Often in *I hunger for you*, the dancers are locked in place, swaying or vibrating. Allen approaches each one of the others. They pay him no mind. Kotze reaches out to Crossman, who shrinks away from her possible touch; when he takes her hands and whispers something to her, she pulls away and goes toward Allen. Crossman continues convulsing. Allen and Johnson dance wildly, but that process moves them so close together that they almost kiss, almost (or do) touch cheeks. Allen slides a foot between Johnson's legs, but in doing so bends improbably far back. Then Johnson slowly retreats, gradually raising his arms. By the time he begins to fall, Allen has raced to catch him.

Everything these people do looks both like and unlike something familiar. Crossman often crouches slightly and, knees bent, shifts from foot to foot, his hands balled into fists and pressed against his pelvic bones. What is he defending? At times, he also holds his hands low, fingers together, palms tilted slightly up, as if readying himself to push something away. Why does Johnson lift his shirt briefly to expose his belly before leaving the performing area? And where did she come from, this golden-haired child (Dahlia Bartosik-Murray), who sits down, legs crossed, and watches Kotze gesturing quietly, lost in some kind of meditation? When the lights brighten, and the sounds cease, the girl goes. Then Kotze lets her hair down, the stage darkens again, and she begins twisting and flinging her body and limbs around, as if these were all at cross-purposes. Before long, a soft throbbing sound starts up. A bit later, rumbling gives way to a perky tune.



Dylan Crossman (L) confronted by Burr Johnson. Half-hidden: Joanna Kotze. Photo: Alon Koppel

As various of the dancers come and go in this unstable world, you can believe by the way they often gaze upward that they're searching for spiritual help. Jones, temporarily dancing alone, reaches out, as if to say, "come on, bring it on," and for a moment, I imagine an exorcism. But another event is more purifying: Glowing between one blackout and another, Bartosik-Murray runs in a big circle over and over, light and swift. A beautiful sight.

As the music roars and develops a percussive rhythm, the five become more and more unhelpful with one another. Or rather, they try to help, but seem to have forgotten how best to do that. Still, Kotze and Johnson can join Crossman and, fists at hips, jolt in rhythm with him. Increasingly, that stance begins to convey, "I will not be moved." You can't always guess their intent. Crossman strokes Kotze's face, pushes Johnson's chest. In various ways and for unknowable reasons, people drag or lift one another.



L to R: Joanna Kotze, Dylan Crossman, and Burr Johnson in a rehearsal of *I hunger for you* (spectator at back). Photo: Alon Koppel.

The stage is very dim for the last section, the sound a quiet crackling. There are shadows, assertions. Crossman scours his own face and rubs a hand softly down Johnson's face as the latter bends backward, but then strokes both his hands down Johnson's legs as if he'd like to take the skin off them. He leaves, and Johnson remains, reaching out into space as the lights slide into blackness.

As we were stumbling out of the theater, a pleasant man we'd been talking to in the lobby before the performance, came up to us asking, "What did you think of it?" I was, as usual, politely evasive. I couldn't say that I felt yanked about by it, astonished by its fierceness and its beauty, exhausted by it, and that "thought" was something that would come later. Perhaps ironically, after dining in Catskill and setting out for western Massachusetts, from whence we had come, flashing police lights and an accident near the eastern end of the Rip Van Winkle Bridge caused us to bear right instead of left. Driving miles south when we meant to go east, taking a vaguely familiar road and finding ourselves where we hadn't expected to be, passing the same crossroad twice, getting little help from convenience store people, and trying to stay calm may have been a suitable follow-up to the ideas generated by the performance. Which way *are* we heading? What should we resist? How can we avoid violence, counter falsehood? Whom should we believe? What rituals can enlighten us, and which need to be re-examined? I don't mean to say that these constitute Bartosik's message, only that they crept into the creative maelstrom of her choreography and empowered it in mysterious ways.

Dance
INCONVERSATION

October 3rd, 2018

Ecstasy and Exorcism in Kimberly Bartosik's *I hunger for you*

by Ivan Talijancic

Kimberly Bartosik

I hunger for you

BAM FISHER | OCTOBER 31 – NOVEMBER 3, 2018

Kimberly Bartosik kicked off her professional career with a nine-year-long adventure dancing for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company (1987 – 1996), the work for which she then received a Bessie Award in 1997. Since then, she has been steadily and methodically building a choreographic body of work, characterized by a rigorously detailed exploration of physicality and a keen interest in creating multidisciplinary performance environments. Her work as a choreographer garnered her many accolades—including a prestigious Grant to Artists award from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts—and yet, 2018 feels like the year of Bartosik, with a string of firsts. This year, the adventurous choreographer received her first award from New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, in order to create her new evening-length work, *I hunger for you*. The work will be one of the inaugural productions at Lumberyard's brand new venue in Catskill, NY later this month before its New York premiere at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival. By happenstance, Bartosik and I were peer artists during a three-week residency at the Marble House Project in Vermont earlier this summer, where I had the opportunity to witness her creative process. Back in Brooklyn in August, we took the time to catch up via Messenger and converse about her upcoming BAM performances.



Christian Allen and Lindsey Matheis in *I hunger for you*
Photo: Jim Coleman

Ivan Talijancic (Rail): When we were talking about your new piece in Vermont, there was a series of keywords that seemed really important to the work. Can you talk about these notions and how they prompted you to begin creating *I hunger for you*?

Kimberly Bartosik: The keywords or themes have emerged after quite a lot of research and practice. They are: faith, violence, compassion, and life force. What prompted me to make the work is a hugely

complex question. If I were to summarize, I would say that I felt desperate to find a way to understand how we got to a place in our country after the 2016 election where we couldn't speak to one another without breaking into violence.

I come from a family in North Carolina, where we were/are split right down the middle politically. I'm definitely someone—one of many—who experienced an inability to communicate with family members who voted for Trump. It's so deeply personal, while being a symptom of living through this particular cultural moment. I keep thinking of dance as a way to communicate beyond language. Language, talking, is where we get fucked up; our bodies are another reality. That's how my community practice emerged: personally, I feel a kind of rage that we are in a place where our familial relationships are deeply impacted by our political realities.

Now, with my piece, I feel like I keep trying to understand faith—the need to believe in something outside ourselves. Why so many people who voted for Trump have deep belief systems? At the same time, I am clear that I'm not interested in religion, but in ideas about faith—what draws someone to look outside this material world.

I feel a weird kind of privilege in coming from a family where several of us voted for Trump and hold his values. I can't be like many of my friends who are able to dismiss this population. Rather, I need to try to understand them. That's where compassion comes in: we are all human, but how did we get so far apart? We all get one life—how can we make sure that we don't let external forces determine how we spend this time connecting to one another on this earth, while holding on to our own values? I feel the violence of love. The violence of separation. The violence of desire to stay together.

Rail: Hearing you talk about all the streams of thought that feed into the piece, it almost feels like an exorcism. How are you working with your dancers to allow these threads to filter in?

Bartosik: Yes, it sort of is. It's a way for me to feel like I can accept the honor of making art in an age of extreme violence, dissonance, and disruption.

This is the first full-length work I've made in several years and the first ever that's received significant support, so we've been able to engage in rather complex processes. Each performer is distinctly individual and each brings their own ideas about faith into the process. We don't really talk about it; I offer physical practices that take the body into extreme states and, well, it's like we can find our "god" in those spaces. Everything begins with the body—there's no indulgence or extraneous theater. But then, there's so much drama in the body and once we tap into it, you never know what you can find. It's been just over a year of process, but it is all really beginning to come together.

I grew up going to evangelical churches, but only one performer in my group has ever experienced that. It's not something one can easily relay, so we discover spaces of ecstasy—I think it's really about identifying a



Joanna Kotze in *I hunger for you*. Photo: Jim Coleman

hunger for connection.

Rail: Speaking of connection—it seems to me that you are thinking about this notion very widely. This project has received major support from the National Dance Project, which will allow you to share your work with diverse locales across the United States. How do you envision the opportunities for community engagement in these regions?

Bartosik: Yes! With this project, I've been wildly dedicated to finding ways to create possibilities for connection, and focusing a lot on populations outside our “dance world,” and outside our political comfort. I don't want to only “speak” to those who share my values. How can dance, a non-verbal artform, create the possibility to speak across our own boundaries?

A huge plea for my National Dance Project grant was speaking from my heart. As I said, I feel a kind of privilege in coming from a place where I need to understand those who do not share my belief, or I risk ostracizing them and myself. Life is way too short to risk that, but I keep thinking about how we can speak without yelling. How language—rational language—leads to violence. Where is the place where we can just connect? I think that place is our bodies: we all have one, no matter what we believe. We are all mortal, we all have flesh, blood, desire, emotion . . .

Besides making my work, I wanted to develop a space where our bodies could be moving in the same, shared space. Could we find a place where our beliefs were less important than our humanity? And, in that space, can we just look at, and acknowledge one another, and not need to kill each other? My project isn't really that lofty, or political, but I do believe adamantly in what Merce Cunningham said was “that single fleeting moment when you feel alive.” Maybe that is enough for now.

What's so cool—and wild—about the journey of making this project, is all the ways in which it has been challenging my own fear, desires, assumptions. I never just dance for the sake of moving. I'm extremely shy, and yet I developed my community engagement practice around the power of moving together in a shared space, without hesitation or judgement. So the work is pushing me, out of necessity, way beyond myself. But, as you witnessed, I needed three weeks of being in a studio alone to figure out how to do that!

Rail: Better late than never: just remember how much effort it takes that butterfly to get out of the cocoon!

One more question: it sounds like a given that we'll be in for some really intense physicality. However, your work is also known for your use of design. Who are your key collaborators in bringing this vision to life—or, should I say, to the stage?

Bartosik: Indeed, design is very important to me, and I feel like to you as well! For *I hunger for you*, the set is the ephemeral element of light. Roderick Murray, my longtime collaborator (and husband) is creating this design. For the first time ever, he's going to have the opportunity to heavily experiment during our upcoming residency at The National Center for Choreography at the University of Akron, Ohio. This is also the first time I get to work with a composer and a costume designer! Sivan Jacobovitz is creating the score and Harriet Jung (of Reid & Harriet) is creating what people will wear (because I don't like “costumes”) and there's a very new exciting development in the cast—

Rail: Pray tell! Or, is this going to be a cliffhanger?

Bartosik: While we were rehearsing in France this summer, I realized there was one element missing: a young witness. Having been so deeply impacted by the work of the choreographer Thierry Thieû Niang, I've added a very special role. And, yes, let's leave it at that.



Christian Allen and Lindsey Matheis in *I hunger for you*
Photo: Jim Coleman

Kimberly Bartosik's production of *I hunger for you* runs October 31 – November 3 as part of the Next Wave Festival at BAM Fisher (321 Ashland Place, Brooklyn.) For further information and tickets: <https://www.bam.org/dance/2018/i-hunger-for-you>

CONTRIBUTOR

Ivan Talijancic

is a founder and artistic co-director of WaxFactory, a New York-based interdisciplinary art group. He is currently completing his first feature film, *416 MINUTES*, and regularly writes on the arts for *BOMB*, London-based *Bachtrack*, and the *Brooklyn Rail*.

The New York Times

9 Dance Performances to See in N.Y.C. This Weekend

By Brian Schaefer

Oct. 25, 2018

Our guide to dance performances happening this weekend and in the week ahead.

KIMBERLY BARTOSIK at BAM Fisher (Oct. 31-Nov. 3, 7:30 p.m.). This choreographer was rattled by the 2016 presidential election and found herself unable to communicate her feelings through words. So she turned to the body, and the result is an ongoing project called “I Hunger for You,” which had its premiere at Lumberyard in Catskill, N.Y., recently. The piece arrives in Brooklyn on Wednesday and will continue to evolve for a performance next fall. The themes at hand are faith, violence and compassion, and Bartosik illustrates them through a mixture of extreme trembling, ecstatic dancing and moments of contemplative stillness.

718-636-4100, bam.org



5 MUST-SEE PERFORMANCES AT BAM'S "NEXT WAVE FESTIVAL" THIS OCTOBER

OCTOBER 19, 2018 | BRITT STIGLER
POSTED IN **DANCE, THEATER**

SHARE



Since Brooklyn Academy of Music's pioneering director Harvey Lichtenstein hired Joseph V. Melillo in 1983 as the founding director of the "Next Wave Festival," Melillo has helped to present groundbreaking work from a diverse list of vanguards in the performing arts. Now, after three decades of stewardship, this year's "Next Wave Festival" (running now through Dec. 23) marks the last to be overseen by Melillo as BAM's executive producer.

Here are five not-to-miss performances to catch this October.

"I hunger for you"

Oct. 31-Nov. 3

This new work from choreographer Kimberly Bartosik chronicles the artist's experience with Charismatic spirituality. Bathed in light cast onto a stark set, the piece explores faith, desire and ritual in this deeply personal performance.

The New York Times

39 Dance Performances to See This Fall

By **Gia Kourlas**

Sept. 12, 2018

This fall's dance calendar will feature inventive takes on old favorites and intriguing new works. Dates are subject to change.

Read more listings for art, classical music, film, pop music, television and theater. Add events directly to your calendar.

2018 BAM NEXT WAVE FESTIVAL Brooklyn Academy's fall festival dance offerings open on a sound note with the Trisha Brown Dance Company in three early gems: "Ballet" (1968), a rope-walking solo; "Working Title" (1984), an exploration of suspended bodies for eight dancers; and "Pamplona Stones" (1974), a duet with dialogue for two women. (Oct. 10-13). The festival continues with the Seán Curran Company in performances featuring live music by the ensemble Third Coast Percussion (Oct. 24-27). Jerome Robbins's "Watermill" (1972) is reimaged by the Italian director and choreographer Luca Veggetti (Oct. 24-27); Kimberly Bartosik/daela looks at faith and transformation in the evening-length "I hunger for you" (Oct. 31-Nov. 3); the German choreographer Sasha Waltz presents "Kreatur," a collaboration with the inventive fashion designer Iris van Herpen and the experimental music trio Soundwalk Collective (Nov. 2-5). Also, the Danish artist Jesper Just choreographs and directs "Interpassivities," a performance work that incorporates ballet and explores changes in labor and in communication in light of new technology (Nov. 15-17); Dorrance Dance, led by the tap choreographer Michelle Dorrance, offers a new, site-specific work choreographed by herself and Nicholas Van Young (Dec. 5-8); and David

FALL PREVIEW 2018

37 Classical and Dance Performances to See This Fall Emma Portner, Nico Muhly, Julia Wolfe, Trisha Brown, and more.

By *Vulture* Editors Photograph by Alexander Black

10/31

***I Hunger for You*, through 11/3, BAM**

Choreographer Kimberly Bartosik, an alumnus of Merce Cunningham, draws on her experiences with religious ritual, employing light and movement to suggest the ecstatic throes of spirituality.

Brian Schaefer Nov. 23, 2017 11:00AM EST



Kimberly Bartosik's *Ecsteriority4* (Part 2). Photo by Ryutaro Mishima, Courtesy BAM.

Why Lumberyard and BAM Are Teaming Up to Create a New Rural-Urban Dance Pipeline

Showing choreography at a major venue in New York City is a goal and milestone for many dance artists. Yet when such an opportunity comes their way, choreographers frequently find themselves scrambling for time and technical resources to give their work that professional shine. What they end up performing may not have the polish they intended. "Far too often artists are arriving at their presenting house and the piece isn't ready," says Adrienne Willis, the executive and artistic director of Lumberyard Contemporary Performing Arts, an organization that helps dance artists develop new work.

Back when Lumberyard was known as the American Dance Institute and operated out of a strip mall in Rockville, Maryland, it pioneered its Incubator program to whip new pieces into shape, kind of like the "out-of-town" tryout model for theater. Several of the artists it supported ultimately brought their shows to the Brooklyn Academy of Music, one of New York City's most prestigious venues, which quickly recognized the positive influence of the Incubator on performances.

Now the partnership is official. This summer, Lumberyard and BAM announced a collaboration to address the need for tech time in dance. Ahead of BAM performances, select artists will receive a weeklong production residency. Lumberyard's new home in Catskill, New York—a small town on the shores of the Hudson River, two hours north of Manhattan—opens in 2019, so this first year's residencies will be held in Bennington, Vermont. The artists will then preview the work and receive feedback from local audiences. "There will be an effort to clarify what is often dense, delicate and nuanced work," says Amy Cassello, associate producer of BAM's Next Wave Festival. "It's good for everyone."

The three inaugural artists to receive a Lumberyard residency ahead of the 2018 Next Wave Festival are David Neumann (who was previously supported by ADI in Rockville), Kimberley Bartosik and Kaneza Schaal. Unlike many dance initiatives, Lumberyard production residencies are not aimed at so-called "emerging artists (<http://www.dancemagazine.com/emerging-choreographers-2497206789.html>)."

As Cassello explains, BAM is "interested in bringing an artist's most mature work, so it implies a certain amount of track record."

For the residency, choreographers and their dancers receive housing, meals and a \$10,000 stipend, plus a dramaturge, full crew and tech support, and unlimited access to the theater, which can be configured to resemble nearly any performance space in New York City. The experience is customized to the needs of each artist, including the amount of time they want to have between the residency and their performances at BAM.

"The most important thing we can do is be as flexible as possible," Willis says. She admits it can be difficult to quantify the impact of a residency but says her measure of success is "if an artists feels that when they show at BAM, they're showing the work they want to show." Cassello concurs: "When the artist is more confident and more prepared, then it translates to the audience," she says. "You know when people are really ready."