



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Colin Mandlin, Managing Director
cmandlin@oaklandtheaterproject.org | 510.910.2494

Oakland Theater Project Presents
Talking Circle
by Risa Jaroslow & Dancers



Oakland, CA (Nov 2, 2022) - Oakland Theater Project Presents Risa Jaroslow & Dancers' production of *Talking Circle*, an evening-length dance with a multigenerational cast of six movement collaborators with music by Bay Area icon Amy X Neuburg. *Talking Circle* explores the relationship between individual and collective and asks what will we risk for freedom? The production will run **January 6th –15th** at OTP's theater at **FLAX art & design** (1501 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland CA 94612).

Talking Circle is Jaroslow's fourth evening-length work since moving to the Bay Area from New York in 2013. In keeping with her longstanding practice of bringing together all kinds of movers in performance, *Talking Circle* will include two members of **The Elders Project**, a program created by Jaroslow in partnership with Sarah Crowell, artistic director emeritus of Destiny Arts Center in Oakland. The Elders Project provides opportunities for youth and elders to support and learn from one another and co-create work that expands movement possibilities for all ages.

Talking Circle imagines a turning point in the life of a small community. "There are many circles inside *Talking Circle*," said Jaroslow. "In a circle people can see each other. In this work, seeing and acknowledging one another's differences while holding each other and remaining in community, is its heart and soul."



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Talking Circle premiered at CounterPulse in May 2022. Dance reviewer Sima Belmar said, “The piece looked like a community being together through the rise and fall of everyday affects—pleasure and pain, sorrow and joy, solemnity and jocularity. I thought, “Is this a covenant? A deconstructed *Little Women?* *Herland?*”

Dance writer Diane Frank said, “So many moments to savor, and most especially the way the dancers simply nailed their roles. So varied and personal, yet clearly part of the same clan, people who understand each other, who listen patiently, choose their words, know when to speak and when to stay silent so someone else can have their say. Know when to witness and when to testify. And most of all, people who hold each other in an emotional/motional circle of deep regard. Just masterful choreography, fully embodied.”

Following its successful run in San Francisco, Oakland Theater Project is thrilled to continue its success and expand its reach to more audiences in Oakland and the East Bay.

“We are thrilled to partner with Risa Jaroslow and the extraordinary dancers in *Talking Circle*,” said OTP Co-Artistic Director Michael Moran. “*Talking Circle* is a prime example of how our mission to use exquisite theatrical experiences to inspire compassion and forge emotional bonds across difference transcends traditional notions of theater. The dance piece is strikingly beautiful and includes various levels of dancing ‘expertise’ and yet all participants are an equal part of the whole. We can’t wait to share this aesthetically arresting and moving piece with our larger community.”

Talking Circle will be the first of four OTP Presents productions in 2023. The OTP Presents series provides the opportunity to collaborate and uplift powerful dynamic works of art by individual artists and performing arts organizations.

Dancers **Anna Greenberg**, **Phoenicia Pettyjohn**, **Cauveri Suresh** and **Erin Yen** are joined by **Pamela Wu Kochiyama** and **Sharon Dalke** of The Elders Project. Additional members of the creative team include lighting designers **Allen Willner** and **Stephanie Johnson** and costume designer **Callie Floor**.

“These are precarious times for democracy. *Talking Circle* has given us the chance to think about the ways societies both support and limit personal freedom and how individuals push against those constraints.”

Talking Circle has been created with support from the Kenneth Rainin Foundation, the Phyllis C Wattis Foundation, the Sam Mazza Foundation and generous individuals.



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Tickets & Performance Information:

Talking Circle

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Jan 6–15, 2023

Performances: Jan 6-7 (Fri-Sat) and Jan 12-14 (Thu-Sat) @ 7:30pm

Sunday matinees: Jan 8 and Jan 15 @ 3:00pm

Running Time: 60 minutes (no intermission)

Tickets: \$10–50 online; tickets at oaklandtheaterproject.org/circle or by calling **510.646.1126**.

About Safety Protocols:

Oakland Theater Project is following local and national health guidelines to ensure we promote a safe and healthy environment for all guests and staff to enjoy. To promote safety all audience members must **provide proof of vaccination** to enter the theater. Additionally, as a best practice, **all guests will be required to wear face masks** at all times while indoors.

Proof of up-to-date vaccination can be provided by bringing either a physical COVID vaccination card, a legible picture of the physical vaccination card, or an electronic copy with a matching valid government ID. More details can be found at oaklandtheaterproject.org/your-visit.

About Risa Jaroslow & Dancers:

Since 2013 Risa Jaroslow has resided in the Bay Area where she works as a choreographer, dancer, teacher and mentor. Formerly based in New York City, her company regularly performed at the major venues for new dance including DanceTheater Workshop, Danspace Project, Joyce Theater, Central Park Summerstage and the Duke Theater, among others. The company has performed nationally and at international festivals including The Dublin Dance Festival and The OPEN LOOK Festival in St. Petersburg, Russia.



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Jaroslow has taught at many colleges and universities, among them are Adelphi University, Trinity College (CT) and the Pratt Institute. She has conducted extended residencies with Kannon Dance in St. Petersburg, Russia, and at the University of Maryland and American University. From 1993 to 2002 she conducted a yearly residency in Bytom, Poland. Jaroslow has been a guest choreographer at Sonoma State University and Mills College. In 2005, she was the first Jerome Robbins fellow at the Bogliasco Foundation in Italy.

Jaroslow is dedicated to including diverse communities as participants and audience. She has led movement workshops with The Initiative for Women with Disabilities; Project FIND serving senior adults; Youth Enrichment Services, serving gay and lesbian youth; and Voices of Women, serving survivors of domestic violence. In 2018, she founded and continues to direct The Elders Project at Destiny Arts Center in Oakland.

Among the supporters of Jaroslow's work are the Kenneth Rainin Foundation, the Phyllis C Wattis Foundation, the Sam Mazza Foundation, the California Arts Council, the City of Oakland, the Ford Foundation, the Trust for Mutual Understanding, the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, the Jerome Robbins Foundation.

To learn more, visit www.risajaroslowdance.org.

About Oakland Theater Project:

Oakland Theater Project, formerly Ubuntu Theater Project, seeks to serve and heal the polarization and de-facto segregation in our community. The Oakland Theater Project was founded in 2012 by Michael Socrates Moran, William Hodgson, and Colin Mandlin in Oakland, CA. The Oakland Theater Project produces year-round professional theater for Oakland and the Bay Area and is committed to creating compelling works of art that unearth the human condition and unite diverse audiences through revelatory and exquisite theater.

Building on its ongoing tradition of offering pay-what-you-can tickets to every performance, Oakland Theater Project continues its commitment to radical inclusivity with **pay-what-you-can subscriptions for the season, with sliding scale tickets for every performance**. To subscribe, donate, or learn more, the public can call **510.646.1126** or visit **oaklandtheaterproject.org**.