



## Moving here, there and everywhere: Dance on the Lawn returns to Montclair



*Sharron Miller's Academy for the Performing Arts performs at the 2016 Dance on the Lawn. COURTESY TONY TURNER.*

*'Dance on the Lawn'  
Saturday, Sept. 9, 3-5 p.m.*

*St. Luke's Episcopal Church lawn  
73 South Fullerton Ave.*

**New Jersey schools:** Future STEP Tap Company;  
Sharron Miller's Academy for the Performing Arts;  
DanceWorks & Co.; New Jersey Dance Theatre Ensemble

**New Jersey companies:** FreeSpace Dance;  
"DanceTherapy;" 10 Hairy Legs; Robert Mark Dance

**New York companies:** Special choreography by Troy Powell (artistic director, Ailey II);  
PROJECT 44 DANCE; Stephen Petronio Company

[Danceonthelawn.org](http://Danceonthelawn.org)

**By Gwen Orel**

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Charmaine Warren, founding artistic director of Dance on the Lawn, is very busy. When she spoke to the Local this weekend, Warren was on her lunch break from judging dancers auditioning for a New York company.

She was also preparing to teach a class at Hunter College titled "Dance, Dancers and the Audience," a class which is part discussion, part dance. She has been an adjunct there for several years.

And, of course, she was gearing up for Dance on the Lawn, the free dance festival featuring dance companies and schools from New York and New Jersey, which returns to Montclair for the fourth time on Sept. 9.

Montclairites bring chairs and blankets to the lawn of St. Luke's Episcopal Church to see dance in a variety of styles, including some world premieres. The format is the same every year but the content is always different.

Young aspiring dancers can watch professionals just a few feet away. Professional young choreographers bring innovative work to the stage.

Warren said she has to remind herself to anticipate the fun of the day.



CHARMAINE WARREN

"It's all about planning, there's no time to get emotional," she said with a laugh. "Last year during the festival when I saw all the people coming on to the lawn, I had to walk away and take a little breath, pinch myself: 'This is truly happening.'  
"On the day of, I will probably go wacky again."

She said she expects to feel excited, happy, sad, loving, warm, on that day of, and "of course, the business brain is just going crazy."

Though admission is free, Dance on the Lawn performers are paid. Last year, DoTL collaborated with Summer Stage, which presents events in New York parks.

At a Summer Stage program, Dance on the Lawn presented its New Jersey Emerging Choreographers from 2015 and 2016, Robert Mark Burke and Kyle Marshall, along with a New York artist.

At Dance on the Lawn, Marshall presented a work he had not yet premiered. He's an example of how DoTL helps encourage young dancers to soar professionally, Warren said.

"In June of this year, he did his own evening in Brooklyn. He premiered it last year at Dance on the Lawn 2016. He has showed different iterations in different places, at Summer Stage, Dance Newark, and from all of these opportunities he was able to do his own evening."

This year, DoTL has received a grant from the Montclair Foundation to help with expenses. Some organizations also donate in kind.



*New Jersey Emerging Choreographer Lauren Connolly, in black, rehearses with Sharie Talub, in blue, and Madelyn Eltringham, for "We Know Not What Comes Next," which will premiere at Dance on the Lawn. COURTESY TONY TURNER*

The business part of the planning begins “the day after,” Warren said, adding that nothing would go forward without Managing Director Laura Marchese, who has been with the project since it began in 2014.

This year’s New Jersey Emerging Choreographer, Lauren Connolly, is the first woman to be chosen by DoTL. Warren said she’s eager to see what Connolly, who works with text and poetry, will share.

“She is making work — what I see so far — that has a lot of movement, and story,” Warren said.

While all dance is movement to some extent, “When I teach my history class, I always talk about Paul Taylor. He walks on stage and doesn’t move for upwards of two minutes.

“When you look at Lauren’s work there isn’t that much stillness. There’s moving here, there and everywhere.”