

A photograph of a dancer in a maroon leotard performing a high leap against a blue background. The dancer is captured mid-air, with one leg extended upwards and arms outstretched. Large pieces of light blue and purple fabric are draped around the dancer, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall aesthetic is clean and artistic.

# SpectorDance

## 2017 Press Kit

# OCEAN TRILOGY

**a multidisciplinary performance  
and educational outreach program  
highlighting both the challenges  
confronting the ocean and exciting  
innovations from cutting-edge  
ocean science research**

[www.spectordance.org](http://www.spectordance.org) | 831.384.1050



# OCEAN TRILOGY

*“Ocean Trilogy is a moving force for positive change. It touches people in a visceral way. It awakens us from the cultural hypnosis of the times.”*

*Elayne Azevedo  
Environmentalist*

**Ocean Trilogy** is a multidisciplinary performance piece and educational outreach program inspired by filmed interviews with a wide variety of ocean science experts.

Based on a partnership between choreographer Fran Spector Atkins and the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute, **Ocean Trilogy** looks at the challenges confronting our ocean and hopeful possibilities from cutting-edge ocean science research.

**Ocean Trilogy** is a 45-minute piece composed of three standalone sections:

**Part One** (Living Ocean) looks at the challenges confronting our ocean such as the impact of human activity on the ocean, increasing pollution and fossil fuels, acidification, extinction of species, the food web, and over-consumption.

**Part Two** (Hidden Ocean) looks at the innovative contributions from engineering to create new tools for collecting data, expanding our ability to understand the ocean and informing our policy decisions and our personal actions.

**Part Three** (Brilliant Ocean) looks at bioluminescent sea creatures and their mysterious capacity to transform and create light.

Each section weaves together audio sound bites from interviews with scientists, underwater film footage, contemporary classical and rap music, staging elements, and a variety of dance styles including contemporary, ballet, and urban.

Science informs us that human activity is resulting in changes to our ocean, a key factor in global climate change. Information from our most respected scientists has become politically controversial and makes **Ocean Trilogy** particularly timely. As ocean health is compromised, **Ocean Trilogy** is founded on the belief that artists have an opportunity and a responsibility to weigh in, to take part of the broad conversation to raise awareness. **Ocean Trilogy** will communicate the urgency of the problem on a level that reaches people's hearts.



## **OCEAN TRILOGY RESIDENCY PROGRAMS**

Along with performances, **Ocean Trilogy** can offer a variety of related dance/science activities tailored to the age groups and needs of each venue:

- Pre or post performance ocean science discussions
- Movement classes exploring scientific themes
- Week-long choreography workshops with the goal of creating new works about the ocean, which could be presented along with **Ocean Trilogy** performances

SpectorDance can tour **Ocean Trilogy** with MBARI's Education Specialist, George Matsumoto, who offers lectures and workshops for teachers and/or students.

We can provide **Ocean Trilogy** curriculum based on STEAM (Science, Technology, Education, Art, Math) and California Educational Standards.

*"I REALLY think the arts can help teach the public about science/ environmental issues in our world. The ocean performance is perfect to present at all the aquariums around the world as well as other public and private informal education venues such as museums and science centers. I actually saw the **Ocean** and SpectorDance performance at the Smithsonian a couple of weeks ago. Spectacular! This is a true example of integrating the sciences with the arts and it was also funded by National Science Foundation. What a great way to get important scientific information to the public (including teachers and students) by using this type of medium. I love it!"*

**Carmelina Livingston**  
Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellow



**OCEAN TRILOGY WORK-IN PROGRESS VIDEO LINKS**

**Part I** *The Challenges*

**Part II** *The Possibilities*

*“Ocean Trilogy is a masterpiece in the making”*

**Mary Ann Leffel**

*President of the Monterey County Business Council*

## OCEAN TRILOGY CREDITS

**Creative Director & Lead Artist:** *Fran Spector Atkins*  
**Media Artist & Collaborator:** *William Roden, New Dawn Studios*  
**Science Liaison:** *Kyra Schlining*  
**Rap Artist:** *Baba Brinkman*  
**Music:** *Bryce Dessner and Phillip Glass*  
**Dancers:** *Jamar Goodman, Jackie McConnell,  
Colton Sterling, Anne-Marie Talmadge,  
Raymond Tilton*  
**Technical Director:** *Roger Thompson*  
**Business Manager:** *Amy Byington*

**Interviewees:** National Geographic Explorer Sylvia Earle; MBARI Senior Scientists Peter Brewer (Ocean Chemist), James Barry (Benthic Ecologist), Francisco Chavez (Biological Oceanographer), and Steven Haddock (Marine Biologist); MBARI Education Specialist George Matsumoto; MBARI Director of Information and Technology Judith Connor, Ocean Photographers Kip Evans and Chuck Davis; Conservation leaders from the Monterey Bay Aquarium: Letise LaFeir (California Ocean Policy Manager), Sarah-Mae Nelson (Conservation Interpreter & Online Community Manager), and Kera Abraham Panni (Conservation & Science External Affairs Coordinator).



## **OCEAN TRILOGY MAJOR FUNDERS AND PARTNERS**

Community Foundation for Monterey County  
Monterey Peninsula Foundation  
National Endowment for the Arts  
Nancy Buck Ransom Foundation  
Rita and Luis Echenique Charitable Foundation  
Monterey County Gives!  
Harden Foundation  
Dunspaugh-Dalton Foundation  
Barnet J. Segal Charitable Trust  
Arts Council for Monterey County  
Monterey Bay Aquarium  
Monterey County Free Public Libraries  
Monterey Museum of Art  
Rancho Cielo  
Veterans Transition Center  
MEarth  
Solar City  
Cima Collina Winery  
Harriet Mittedorf  
Karen & Jay Cook  
Catherine & Nick Fanoe  
Roger & Linda Thompson  
Fran & Jim Atkins  
Hal Eastman  
Diana Huang and Ron Chen  
Susie Franklin Legacy Fund  
Jane Parker  
Union Bank



*“Ocean Trilogy helps people connect profoundly with ocean issues more than we might just through our mind’s ability to process information and connect dots. The impact goes deeper when our body or emotions become engaged, too.”*

**Jane Parker**  
Monterey County Supervisor



## OCEAN TRILOGY BIOGRAPHIES



**Lead Artist/Creative Director Fran Spector Atkins** is the Artistic Director and Founder of SpectorDance School, Company, community outreach, creative projects, and the Choreographers Showcase. Her credits include a B.S. in Occupational Therapy from Boston University, an M.F.A. from Mills College in Dance and Choreography and Certification in Laban Movement Analysis from the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies (New York City). She has directed schools in NYC, Cleveland, and Monterey and has choreographed throughout the United States and abroad. Some of her outstanding experiences include guest teaching and presenting her choreography at Oberlin College, Brown University and in Denmark, Egypt, England, Israel, the Island of Guam and Taiwan. Spector Atkins has received numerous awards and was featured in Carmel Magazine as one of 10 individuals making "altruistic contributions to the community." She was featured in the film *Luminaries of Monterey County* and has twice been invited to present at TEDxMonterey. SpectorDance was selected by The Arts Council for Monterey County as the **Outstanding Arts Organization in Monterey County** and as a national finalist for the Ovations TV award for **Excellence in the Performing Arts**.



**Media Artist/Primary Collaborator William Roden**, William Roden is an award-winning editor, creative director, and director of photography for numerous projects, including documentaries, health and wellness, educational programming and corporate media. Roden is the owner/operator of New Dawn Studios, a production house in Carmel, California, providing services for broadcast television and corporate communications. His current clients include National Geographic, Pebble Beach Company, and BMW. His work is varied with production of music videos, documentaries, commercials, and creative projects. Several projects made for public television including **Henry Miller Is Not Dead**, for which he received a Silver award at the Houston International Film Festival in 1994 and **The World of Healthy Healing** which aired on 20 PBS affiliates nationwide. Since 1996, Roden has collaborated with Fran Spector Atkins on a variety of dance-media works. Roden received a prestigious award from the Pacific Grove Arts Council for their collaborative dance video of **Figures in the Dust**, inspired by Steinbeck's **The Grapes of Wrath**.



**Rap Artist/Baba Brinkman** Baba Brinkman is a Canadian rap artist, award-winning playwright, and former treeplanter who has personally planted more than one million trees. To date Baba has written or co-written five hip-hop plays, several of which have toured the world and enjoyed successful runs at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and off-Broadway in New York. He is a winner of the Fringe First Award in Edinburgh and a two-time Drama Desk nominee for his one-man theatre productions. In 2013, Baba began collaborating with Fran Spector Atkins, artistic director of Monterey Bay's SpectorDance, developing a hip-hop soundtrack to her company's latest work, **East West**, a multi-media dance production that engages with Southern California gang culture and the challenges facing at-risk youth. In addition to his compelling performance style, Brinkman also brings a passion for and understanding of the environment to his work. Baba's most recent project, **Rap Guide to Climate Chaos**, enjoyed a critically-acclaimed five month off-Broadway run in 2016. When he is not on tour, Baba Brinkman resides in New York with his wife and two young children.



**Science Liaison Kyra Schlining** is a Senior Research Technician at the nonprofit research center Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute (MBARI). MBARI archives and manages a collection of over 24,000 hours of deep-sea video footage from remotely operated vehicle research dives. Schlining is an expert in describing all observed biological organisms and geologic features in the video database and she facilitates access to this valuable resource for scientific publications. She also participates on several research cruises each year and edits video for scientific presentations and for educational outreach on MBARI's YouTube channel (which has over 30 million views). Schlining received a B.S. in Biology from the University of Victoria in B.C., Canada, and an M.S. from CSU Stanislaus, CA. From 2007-2011 she served on the Board of Directors for SpectorDance and since 2010 she has collaborated with Fran Spector Atkins on works highlighting ocean issues.





**Jamar Goodman** (Dancer) began his dance training when he was eight years old at The School of the Hartford Ballet under a Dance City Youth Scholarship. He performed with The Hartford Ballet, American Ballet Theatre Studio Company, and American Ballet Theatre. Currently, Jamar dances with Diablo Ballet.



**Jackie McConnell** (Dancer) is from Salem, Oregon, trained with Pacific Northwest Ballet School and received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. She danced with Nevada Ballet Theatre, Cherylyn Lavagnino Dance, based in New York City and toured with the Portland-based company, Bodyvox. In the Bay Area, she has danced with Company C Contemporary Ballet, Oakland Ballet Company, Garrett and Moulton Productions, Menlowe Ballet and the San Francisco Opera. Currently, Jackie dances with Diablo Ballet and Post: Ballet.



**Colton Sterling** (Dancer) was born and raised in Los Angeles. He was adopted twice (once at birth and again at age four). At age five, he asked his dads to take dance classes. Since that time he has done gymnastics, acting, competitive ice skating and dance. He graduated from the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts in 2014. Currently Colton is dancing with several companies in Los Angeles.



**Anne-Marie Talmadge** (Dancer) is a dancer, speaker, health coach, and business mentor. Committed to a life of self mastery and contribution, Anne-Marie, has traveled the world performing and training with such companies as Alvin Ailey, Barak Marshall's Bridge Choreography Exchange In Israel, Spector Dance, and Multiplex. Along with DIAVOLO's VOLO company, Anne-Marie, currently performs with Nickerson Rossi Dance Company, Sean Greene's Shield Wall, and Not Man Apart Physical Theater Ensemble. Anne-Marie is a California Institute of the Arts graduate and Founder of Art and Action. "Live authentically, courageously, and inspired."



**Raymond Tilton** (Dancer) was born in San Marcos and trained at San Elijo Dance Academy and San Francisco Ballet School prior to being named an apprentice in 2010 with the San Francisco Ballet and joining the Company in 2011. Since joining Diablo Ballet in 2015, Raymond has performed in works by: Sean Kelly, Robert Dekkers, Norbert Vesak, Gary Masters, Sonya Delwaide, and George Balanchine. Currently, Raymond dances with Diablo Ballet.



## ABOUT SPECTORDANCE

**SpectorDance** was founded in 1997 by artistic director Fran Spector Atkins. The mission of **SpectorDance** is to establish a vibrant center for the performing arts offering a wide variety of dance-based activities that connects diverse artists and audiences, bridges disciplines through collaboration, and celebrates the power of dance to inform and inspire. The vision of **SpectorDance** is to utilize dance and the arts as a vehicle to open doors, ignite creativity, and fuel the human spirit.

With generous community support, **SpectorDance** has established a School, a Company, Educational Outreach Programs, **SpectorDance** On-Site, and the *Choreographer's Showcase*. All our programs are housed in or administered from our state-of-the-art studio and performance venue in Marina. **The SpectorDance Company** presents original multidisciplinary performances using a signature style that blends music, spoken word, and visual media with dance to explore social issues and themes that are relevant to our community. Examples of projects include *Figures in the Dust* (2006), a collaboration with the National Steinbeck Center, inspired by *The Grapes of Wrath*; *Common Ground* (2008), a piece about issues in California agriculture based on interviews with farm workers and agricultural experts; *Ocean* (2010-2013), a collaboration with MBARI about ocean issues; and *East West* (2014-2015), a collaboration with Rancho Cielo about gang culture.

**SpectorDance** has received many awards, including being selected as a finalist for the Ovation TV for *Excellence in the Performing Arts* and the Arts Council for Monterey County award for *Outstanding Arts Organization in Monterey County*. Fran was featured in the film *Luminaries of Monterey County* and in *Carmel Magazine* as "one of ten individuals in Monterey County making significant altruistic contributions to our community." Fran has twice been a presenter at TEDx Monterey.

## ABOUT MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM RESEARCH INSTITUTE (MBARI)

**MBARI** is a nonprofit research institution that was founded in 1987 by David Packard with a mission to achieve and maintain a position as a world center for advanced research and education in ocean science and technology, and to do so through the development of better instruments, systems, and methods for scientific research in the deep waters of the ocean. **MBARI** owns and operates three research ships out of Moss Landing, giving them immediate access to the deep waters of Monterey Canyon. **MBARI** also runs multiple remotely operated and autonomous underwater vehicles and maintains ocean-monitoring instruments and moorings.

*Interviews with Marine Biologist Steven Haddock, Biological Oceanographer Francisco Chavez, and MBARI Education Specialist George Matsumoto*



*"Climate Change is a massive scientific, societal, economic and political issue. It is the largest threat to national security and the future of society and environment as we know it. It is steeped in political controversy. Scientists have been frustrated for four decades, trying to get this message out to the public. But scientists always push the same buttons. This is the magic of Fran's production. She has fearlessly tackled a complex issue and expressed this artistically that will reach everyone. In my opinion, this is a brilliant expression of science and art and accessible to many for whom "climate change" is merely a point of political controversy. Climate change is not a political process. Yet, the manner in which we deal with it will be. Few of our political leaders are environmentally literate, yet they will need to have an experiential understanding of climate change in order to be responsible decision makers. It is my hope that this production will help advance the importance of this issue, for all of us, through the beauty of the human experience. This production is truly beautiful and moving."*

**Dr. Kenneth Coale**  
Moss Landing Marine Laboratories



“With **Ocean Trilogy**, I am exploring ways that dance can be at the center of a collaborative process that brings issues to the forefront. **Ocean Trilogy** boldly demonstrates the power of converging disciplines as a metaphor for an ideal world where we embrace partnership and welcome creative solutions to our most pressing challenges.”

**Fran Spector Atkins**  
Artistic Director of SpectorDance





SpectorDance Company dancers performing at the Aquarium of the Pacific

## ***What happens when dance and science merge?***

**September 27, 2016**

SpectorDance and the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute have joined forces to create another exciting multimedia project, ***Ocean Trilogy***. For this multidisciplinary performance piece, Artistic Director Fran Spector Atkins and media artist Bill Roden blended music, spoken word, and visual media with dance to highlight exciting innovative technology in cutting-edge ocean science research. The goal of this collaboration is to raise awareness and foster conversation about ocean health in an unexpected way.

SpectorDance and MBARI's first experiment bringing dance and science together was ***Oceans*** (performed in 2011-2013), which explored ocean issues such as ocean chemistry, storm patterns, extinction of species, and the food web. Interviews with marine scientists (including Jim Barry, Peter

Brewer, and Alana Sherman from MBARI) were interspersed with video footage, music, and choreography by Spector Atkins. What resulted was a beautiful and unique way to inform audiences about ocean issues, and a call for the audience to consider ways to be part of the solution.

With ***Ocean Trilogy***, audiences will be treated to an equally impressive performance focusing on using the power of imagination to develop novel ocean research projects and innovative engineering technology to explore ocean health. Audio from interviews with MBARI and Monterey Bay Aquarium researchers on topics such as bioluminescence and conservation is layered over choreography to music by composer Philip Glass and then interspersed with poetry by rap artist Baba Brinkman.

September 23, 2016

The Carmel Pine Cone

37A

## WOMEN IN BUSINESS

## Dancer choreographs her causes and what matters most

**F**RAN SPECTOR Atkins was running along Scenic Road, paying more attention to the rush of waves on the sand than the road before her, when it hit her. The idea, that is.

Passing Tor House to the east and a view of Point Lobos to the south, she focused on the beauty of the setting and began to choreograph, "Ocean ... Rock ... Bird ... Sky," a

performance inspired by the natural beauty of the Monterey Peninsula and the poetry of Robinson Jeffers. She imagined her dancers moving to the rhythm of waves as they express Jeffers' eternal view of man as a creature with "tides in our veins."

Ten years later, the dancer-choreographer has returned to the sea with "Ocean Trilogy," a multidisciplinary performance she designed to highlight cutting-edge research and innovations in ocean science.

Working with the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute, Atkins is exploring how dance and science can collaborate to create awareness, encourage conversation and inspire stewardship of our oceans.

"Science, like dance, has to come up with a concept and then experiment and explore it, going to places you didn't imagine going, which gets you to those 'aha' moments," said Atkins. "That humans can explore and express is uplifting and exciting. Through art and science, we can solve problems."

Atkins said she didn't dance professionally until she was 20. As a child, she danced in the forest by herself, enjoying the freedom of movement and expression children often leave behind as they exit the woods and enter the jungle of adulthood.

She took a few classes as a child, but said her parents didn't support her desire to become a dancer. But, she said it was "with good reason. It is an impossible profession. I had to come into it on my own, which is one of the reasons for my



PHOTO: PHILIP W. GELBER

Fran Spector Atkins, founder of SpectorDance, on a research cruise with MBARI earlier this year. Her latest piece, "Ocean Trilogy," highlights ocean science.

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## SPECTOR

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passion as a teacher."

Atkins went to Boston University, where she earned a bachelor of science degree in occupational therapy. But more

importantly, she also happened into a dance studio where choreographer Teyla Sharp was holding auditions. She took a two-week workshop with Sharp, and has followed her heart across the dance floor ever since.

She first moved to New York, where she spent "an exciting eight years" dancing and teaching at the Zena Rommett School, before moving to California to work with Richard Gibson at the Pacific Dance Center in Palo Alto. Three years

later, the two traveled to Paris to continue their work, but soon parted company. Atkins remained abroad, where she guest-taught dance for two years before returning to the United States.

By the late 1970s, Atkins had begun to choreograph her own pieces, working through various dance companies. Among them was her own SpectorDance, which she established in her native Cleveland, Ohio, and where, for three years, she choreographed, taught and produced a dynamic style of dance.

"I am trained as a teacher and dancer of classical ballet," she said, "but I am very interested in the influences and trends of the contemporary dancer. I work from a classical base with a contemporary design. The name SpectorDance suggests this is my own style of dance, but it's always with a great respect for tradition, for the history of dance."

## Great Lives

By LISA CRAWFORD WATSON

In 1988, Atkins moved to the Monterey Peninsula. For six years, she directed the dance program at Carmel Valley's Hidden Valley Music Seminars Institute of the Arts. By 1995, she had begun to direct her career toward university-level dance and choreography, for which she earned a master of fine arts degree from Mills College in Berkeley.

"Every major move in my life has been associated with a relationship beginning or ending," she said. "I'm not sure

Continues next page

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that's a good thing, but my life and my dance have taken me a lot of places. When I came here, I had traveled the world with my work, had made my life around dance and creative growth. I was 38, and what I really wanted was to have a studio, to build a business, and get married and have a family.

"I wanted the whole package. I really felt if I put my roots down somewhere, I could have it. This Peninsula is small, but it has grown. And we have a lot of excellent young dancers here."

Atkins met her husband, Jim Atkins, and his four young children, soon after she arrived on the Monterey Peninsula. Together, they raised the family and, in 2002, they founded SpectorDance in Marina.

"It's not easy to create a place for dance," she said. "But I am passionate about my work. This is my dream. My husband and I built this together; there would have been no

other way for me." She called creating the studio a "leap of faith," and that it was challenging emotionally, physically and creatively to maintain it.

There was a time when Atkins could never have imagined her life without dancing. But, after she was sidelined by an injury, she focused her passion on choreography.

"Surprisingly, the shift was seamless," she said. "I was very complete with dance. Yet, in life it seems to me, you try to work at your growing edge; what it is that really challenges you and allows you to grow. I don't think you can always do the same thing. There are times in life when the door closes and another opens. I'd gotten from dancing what I needed. The highest calling is creative work in whatever form that takes."

## Blended imagery

For more than a dozen years, Atkins has had her sights set on social and environmental consciousness. She started by focusing on literary matters — Henry Miller, Jeffers, John Steinbeck. Her choreography blended

the written or spoken word and visual imagery with music and dance.

"My last piece was 'The Grapes of Wrath,' such an amazing book," she said. "I didn't focus on the story but on universal themes, like man's capacity to surmount obstacles, and the need for man to have meaningful work. That was the bridge that led me to current issues with migrant farmworkers today, as compared and contrasted with those of the 1930s."

In addition to her choreography, Atkins also devotes her attention to the dance classes she offers at SpectorDance, and to getting classes to students who don't have the chance to get to her studio, among them Rancho Cielo, Charrwell School and the Veteran's Transition Center.

Today, the master teacher, award-winning choreographer, and international guest artist is most grateful for her march into the world and the impact she creates through dance.

"I am so lucky to have a beautiful studio and performing venue where I can bring something to Monterey that no one else is doing," she said. "In addition to my choreography, this phase in my life is moving me to mentorship. At 66, I really want to nurture other artists."

A work-in-progress performance of her Ocean Trilogy was presented at the Oceans 16 Conference at the Monterey Bay Aquarium on September 21. It will be presented to the public at the Monterey Museum of Art La Mirada on October 1. Tickets are available at [spectordance.org](http://spectordance.org).



### **BOOKING INFORMATION**

**Ocean Trilogy** is available for tour.

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