

# The Oregonian

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## Goodman celebrates pure movement

By Catherine Thomas  
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Intensely rhythmic and deeply ritualistic, local choreographer Keith Goodman's latest concert of dance works is a heady blend of Goodman's signature Afro-Caribbean-meets-modern-dance

movement style: undulating samba-styled body riffs, space-grabbing lifts, flashy peacock struts, and the rapid-fire combat kinetics of capoeira, a centuries-old Brazilian martial art/dance hybrid developed by African slaves, all set to the pounding percussion of onstage drummers and the ambient drones of musicians on didgeridoo, conch shells and Brazilian agogo bells.

Danced by the nine versatile movers of Goodman's company Dance Gatherer -- in addition to Goodman, the company includes Jesse Berdine, Jen Hong, Nicolo Kerwald, Scott Johnson, David Oury, Nicole Sanson, Shelly Stephenson and Nichole Stewart -- the program's four dance works mark a clear departure from Goodman's theatrically based work. While the new focus on pure movement

highlights Goodman's extreme shifts of tempo and dense layering of movement styles, not to mention his dancers' muscularity, Goodman's trademark sense of ceremony is evident throughout.

"Three Fathers," a meditative work Goodman choreographed in 1997, draws on the Orisha dances of the African Candomble religion in a demanding series of combinations that move from dancers clustered in frozen shoulder stands to tango-esque duets to whipped-out backsprings. Capoeirista Nicolo Kerwald is the wild card windmilling through the group, his legs lashing in rapier roundhouse kicks that graze over the heads of the posed dancers.

Where "Three Fathers" suggests a community ritual, "Impermanence," choreographed in 2000, deals with the theme of oppression in a violent throw-down between Goodman and dancer-drummer Jesse Berdine. Kept tense by insistent, accelerating drum trills and sharp stabs of percussion and movement,

the piece casts Berdine as a ruthless physical aggressor, stalking Goodman through the crowd and hurling him in exhaustive assaults. Stylized tangles between Berdine and other dancers push the tension of the work, and Goodman's spare use of gesture speaks volumes about fraternity in the face of persecution.

Two new works round out the program. "Marooned in Innocence," set to Goodman's field recordings of Conjunto Pirajai, a percussion ensemble from Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, presents a baptism-inflected vision of a utopian village, filled with robust rhythms, angular modern dance leaps, gymnastic duets and distinctive solos.

Guest dancer Kimberly Mullen joins the program's finale, "Tempo," a free-flowing merge of funk, hip-hop and body percussion that busts loose a flurry of intricate rhythms.