

Dance



BWW Reviews: DANCE IN PRISONS: CONFINEMENT VS FREEDOM, WHAT IS IT? Demonstrates How Dance Can Save Lives

□ by **Vanessa Oswald** December 20 <http://www.broadwayworld.com/bwwdance/article/BWW-Reviews-DANCE-IN-PRISONS-CONFINEMENT-VS-FREEDOM-WHAT-IS-IT-Demonstrates-How-Dance-Can-Save-Lives-20131220#>

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Photo by Joyce Culver

[Edward Henkel](#) presented his event Dance in Prisons; Confinement vs. Freedom, [What is It??](#), as part of his MovementTalks: Dance as a Catalyst for Change series, which is in its fourth season, at the [92nd](#)

[Street Y](#) on Friday, December 13. The former dancer welcomed [Katherine Vockins](#), founder of [Rehabilitation Through The Arts](#) (RTA), to the stage to talk about her program, which she started in Sing Sing Correctional Facility in 1996. Since then the creative arts program has branched out to four other men and women's prisons in New York State. RTA offers activities for inmates to get involved in, such as theatre, singing, painting, creative writing and dancing.

Another guest invited to speak onstage for the majority of the presentation was former prisoner [Andre Noel](#). He joined Figures in Flight 5 [Dance Company](#), a facet of RTA's dance department, after witnessing one of their dance pieces titled "Each Other." While watching the routine, it reminded him of his life on the streets and gave him goose bumps. After feeling such a strong connection with the dance he decided to join the company. Noel now holds the position of dance captain of the group. During some practices in the prison he occasionally filled in for head choreographer [Susan Slotnick](#) and assistant [Bethany Wootan-Noel](#) when they were absent.

Noel, who was first incarcerated at age 17, performed the first piece of the night, which was a solo to [Sam Cooke](#)'s "A Change Is Gonna Come," wearing an all-black outfit topped with a fedora hat. He started off the dance sitting in a chair and from the moment he rose up his passion-filled movement called attention to the audience. His motions were predominantly fluid with sharp accents intermittently thrown into the mix. While he glided along the floor with ease and radiated a steady stream of confidence, this added to the piece's overall themes of hope and resilience. The lyrics and tempos in the music seemed to greatly inspire the movements.

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