FLEXN  thu  SEP 15  10 am
Followed by optional post-show discussion
WELCOME TO THE HOP
A performance needs an audience, so be prepared to play your part!

THEATER ETIQUETTE
When entering the Hopkins Center, show consideration for all those sharing the building by remaining quiet and respectful in common areas.
For this performance of FLEXN, if you see something you like, say something! Applause is the best way to show your enthusiasm and appreciation!
Important things to remember: Backpacks, food, drink, and gum are not allowed in the theater. You are encouraged to photograph and film any part of the performance that you like. Hats off! It is respectful to remove hats during your time in the theater.

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS
Be prepared and arrive early. You should arrive at the theater 30 to 45 minutes before the show. Allow for travel time, parking, and trips to the restroom. You should be in your seat at least 15 minutes before the performance begins.
Have a head count. On the day of the performance be sure to have an accurate head count of students, chaperones, and teachers.
Staying for lunch? Please call 603.646.2010 no later than one week in advance of the show to make a reservation for lunch. The day of the show, bring lunches in marked boxes and give them to a Hop staff member. Lunches will be ready for you after the show in Alumni Hall.

Photo Policy. The Hopkins Center may take photographs during the performance for use on our website or on promotional materials. If you or your students do not wish to be photographed, please see a Hop staff member.
The Show Must Go On! We do not cancel events due to inclement weather. Performances will only be canceled if the artist is unable to reach the theater. Schools will be notified by phone if the performance has been cancelled. We do not issue refunds for weather-related cancellations; please feel free to fill empty seats with other school or community members.

DID YOU KNOW?
- The Hopkins Center opened in 1962.
- The Hopkins Center was designed by Wallace Harrison, architect of Lincoln Center and the United Nations Building in New York City.
- The first three rows of The Moore Theater are on an elevator that goes eleven feet below ground to create an orchestra pit and can also be raised to the height of the stage to make it larger.
- In The Moore Theater, the area over the stage, called the “fly loft,” is 63 feet tall.
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

FLEXN is a collaboration between Flex dance pioneer, co-director and choreographer Reggie (Regg Roc) Gray, world renowned director Peter Sellars and members of the flex dance community in Brooklyn, New York.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Characterized by a variety of techniques including pausing, snapping, gliding, bone breaking, hat tricks, animation and contortion, Flex is a form of street dance that evolved from the Jamaican bruk-up found in dance halls and reggae clubs in Brooklyn.

This electrifying phenomenon was first showcased as FLEXN at the Park Avenue Armory (2015) in a new project that features dancers who explore personal narratives through their own unique movement vocabulary in post-modern dance. FLEXN is set to a range of popular American music as well as Jamaican dancehall and reggae music. The dancers say this music is the soundtrack of their lives. It’s played loud, and some of its language is explicit. There will be earplugs on hand for those with sensitive ears, but the audience is encouraged to immerse themselves in the sound, which is key to the experience.

Unlike some other Hop performances, the audience is encouraged to freely respond to the dancers and vocalize their support—“make some noise!” They are also welcome to photograph and video the performance freely.

FLEXN Company:
Android (Martina Heimann),
Banks (James Davis), Brixx (Sean Douglas), Cal (Calvin Hunt), Dayntee (Deidra Braz),
Doc (Aaron Frazier), Dre Don (Andre Redman), Droid (Rafael Burgos), Erthquake (Jason Cust),
Karnage (Quamaine Daniels), Sam I Am (Sam Estavien), Scorp (Dwight Waugh),
Shellz (Shelby Felton), Slicc (Derick Murreld), Tyme (Glendon Charles)

Web Video Link
Regg Roc talks about FLEXN and demonstrates:
www.dreamringxperience.com/#!FLEXN-culture/cegh
FLEXN asks the audience to share the experience of some strong personal stories, content, and feelings of grief, sorrow, anger, joy. This show demonstrates profoundly how art is a powerful voice for change, and movement can open up new dialogues. As co-director Peter Sellars says, “We’ve heard about Eric Garner in New York City. We’ve heard about Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. We’ve talked and talked. And sometimes there is nothing left to say. Art can speak to America about things America can’t articulate.”

The performance will be followed by a discussion in which students are invited to respond to the work, and to share their thoughts and feelings about this community. We welcome you to art that connects the head to the heart.

WHAT IS FLEX?

Flex dance is an improvisational movement. It incorporates a combination of street dance styles including bruk up, pausing, gliding, bone breaking and hat tricks. FLEXN performers undulate and twist their bodies in visually stunning ways, conveying their personal stories through a range of extraordinary dance techniques.

Dancers in FLEXN portray their own stories and struggles on stage.

ABOUT THE CREATORS

Reggie “Regg Roc” Gray was born in East New York, Brooklyn and began dancing when he was three years old. He grew to love reggae music and learned the foundational Jamaican street dance styles of flexn, bruk up and dancehall. Regg Roc and his friends went on to form an elite dance group called “Hyperactive” and developed a new genre of dance – flexn. As a pioneer of the flexn dance style, pausing, Gray has dedicated over 15 years to dancing, choreographing and making flexn a globally respected and infinite genre of dance. Reggie founded a community-oriented dance performance and competition company, the D.R.E.A.M Ring (Dance Rules Everything Around Me) that showcases and supports artists that embody the Brooklyn born street dance style. It also provides youth with a safe environment to express their artistry and a wealth of opportunities for sharing their creativity with the community. Reggie looks forward to the growth and popularity that flexn culture and dance continues to gain.

Peter Sellars is a world renowned director of opera, theater and film. He is known for his innovative treatments of classical material from western and non-western traditions and for exploring the role of the performing arts in contemporary society. He has served as artistic director of the Los Angeles Festival, the American National Theatre at the Kennedy Center, the Boston Shakespeare Company and the Elitch Theatre for Children in Denver. He is a recipient of the MacArthur “Genius” Prize Fellowship and was awarded the Erasmus Prize at the Dutch Royal Palace for contributions to European culture. Sellars has been on the cutting edge of cultural activism for the past 20 years, using performance art to explore challenging moral issues such as war, poverty, social justice and the international refugee crisis.
CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND: FLEXAPEDIA

FLEXN: Created by Rocky and Sandra Cummings and derived from Flex N Brooklyn, a cable-access show that was established in the early 1990s that showcased flex movement.

B.A.: A celebration of a great move.

BOGLE: A dance created by Gerald “Bogle” Levy, who later on became the creator of many dances in dancehall reggae. His style consisted of a lot of fluidity in his movement (which we call body grooving today).

BONE-BREAKING: (Pioneer: Nugget) A style that looks like its name: the illusion that a person’s bones are breaking. Usually the dancer makes it look harder and more difficult to do bone-breaks and uses a larger amount of flexibility to create illusions and tell stories in all directions using arms and body.

BRUK UP: A dance started by George Adams, aka Bruck Up, originally from Jamaica. His style consisted of character and popping of the shoulders, and is the foundation of flexn along with the dancehall style.

CONNECTING: (Pioneer: Gutta) A style that links together different concepts, body movements, foot placements and flex genres in a consecutive flow with dance moves seamlessly creating different ways of physical storytelling. Hand-based connecting is when a person uses angles, puzzles and shapes as their way of linking and flowing things together.

DANCEHALL: A genre of Jamaican popular music that originated in the late 1970s; a sparser version of reggae than the roots style which had dominated most of the 1970s.

DIRTY: Not to be messed with; extremely skilled

FINESSE/JETTE ADORE: Good vibes; a calm mood (see below for definition of “modd”)

FOUNDATION: The beginning; the secret scrolls to becoming a full flexer

GET-LOW: (Pioneer: Reem) A style based on using crouching, knee pivots, knee glides, hand/body to floor moves and movements, animations and illusions in relation to the floor.

GLIDING: (Pioneer: Brian) A style that is based on the concept and illusion of air-walking, sliding and floating using different patterns, foot placements, body movements and hand gestures; creating stories using different alternating upper and lower body movements and patterns.

HARD: The power of a move

HAT TRICKS: (Pioneer: Gutta/Popcorn) A style that uses the hat to do flips, spins, finger illusions, animations, flows, rhythms, concepts and also uses any part of the body to maneuver and make moves with the hat. The style is usually done with fitted caps and moves are usually blended with other flex styles.

ILLUSION: Expansion of your imagination through movement

INNOVATORS: The ones who adopt the genre and its originality then further the style with their own creativity and skills, thus enhancing the way the style is done, adding to its history.

BROOKLYN AND BRUK UP

The bruk up style of dance was developed by a man named George Adams in his native country of Jamaica. Adams had a debilitating bone disease that caused him to jerk as he moved, and he was inspired to turn it into a dance style. When he emigrated to the United States in the early 1990s, he landed in Brooklyn, NY, a hotbed of street dance. The dance was popularized, and sparked the creation of flex. Bruk up means “broken” in the jargon of Jamaica.
IT’S OVA/ZODDED/CHewed/CHOMPed/ MASHED/FIXed/SENt TO MARS: You can’t come back; you got beat; a very bad loss

LABBIN’: Experimenting; working on your craft; can be both physically and mentally; chemistry

LET’S GET IT!: Let’s get to work

MODD (THAT’S MODD): Something spectacular; it’s mazal tov; exciting; eye candy; oh he’s goin’ modd

O.D.: Overdose move

O.G.: A pioneer in the flex community

PAUZIN: (Pioneer: Regg Roc) A style that looks like the original inspiration for the concept: pressing play and pause on dance moves and movement. A person exaggerates different effects and animates stories with an added pauzin effect. The pauzin look is usually honed to become extremely hard with every pauze, but can also be done lighter with a softer beat becoming mini-pauzes.

RAW: Something natural; raw talent; something organic

RIDIN’: Going with the beat of the song

SHOTTA: A dancehall dancer

SMOOTH: Calm movements

SWAG: The way you carry yourself; your definition; your style

WACK: Corny

WAVING: When your body is waving, or you’re waving certain points of your body or the wave is going from one point of your body to another point of your body

WORD: In agreement; I agree

THE D.R.E.A.M RING

D.R.E.A.M stands for Dance Rules Everything Around Me. D.R.E.A.M. Ring artists create bodies of work that showcase creativity and team work through tag-team and two-man performances. TAG-TEAM performances consist of groups of quartets whose goal is to choreograph duets within the group that highlight each other’s styles and narratives individually and collectively. TWO-MAN performances are duets that showcase artists with the same or complimenting styles and their goal is to choreograph a body of work that exemplifies those styles through a singular narrative. These artists use the creative and improvisational expressions of flexn such as pauzin, connecting, get low/floor, bone-breaking, hat tricks, gliding and other dance styles that influence them such as krumping, ballet, modern and housing to share their personal stories.

BLACK LIVES MATTER

When FLEXN was in development, Eric Garner was killed in New York City. In the third week of rehearsal, Michael Brown was killed in Ferguson, Missouri. FLEXN was created in response to these events, and others that followed. Some of the group’s dance techniques help express the wide range of the dancer’s personal experiences around these and other topics.

“WE KNOW OUR DANCE CAN TELL A STORY. IT IS LIKE WE WERE DESTINED TO COMMUNICATE THESE ISSUES BECAUSE OUR BODIES CAN MOVE THIS WAY.”

–REGG ROC GRAY
LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

START A MOVEMENT (GRADES 9–12)

To quote Peter Sellars, “The arts insist upon everyone’s humanity.” One art form often used to express humanity and explore societal change is poetry.

Read the following poems out loud:

“If We Must Die” www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/44694
Claude McKay, 1919

“Bullet was a Girl” www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/bullet-was-girl
Danez Smith, 2015

Compare and contrast how both poems address themes of violence and racism. What ideas come to mind after reading it? Who do you think the poem is about? Who is the audience for the poem? Separate into groups and select (or teacher can assign) a stanza from one of the poems for each group. Group members collaborate together to create a short movement piece that expresses the meaning of their stanza. Use a combination of literal and expressive/interpretive gestures to convey the ideas and themes you have identified. Work on a variety of levels (standing/sitting/laying down/etc.) and use each member of the group. Share each movement piece with the rest of the class, linking the stanzas of the poem together. How did movement add or detract to the meaning of the poem? Was there new meaning evoked by the movement that was not in the words alone? Repeat each movement piece, this time add in a narrator that speaks the words of the poem as each group moves. Were there movements that coordinated with specific words? Did the meter of the poem affect the performers?

Extension: In same groups, add music to underscore your movement and observe how that alters meaning. Repeat with the second poem and compare and contrast movement choices between the two poems.

DOCU-DRAAMA (GRADES 9–12)

Documentary theater performance can be a way to actively explore issues and brainstorm solutions. To prepare, do some simple vocal warm ups (see below) and stretches (yoga, other simple moves from gym class) together in a circle. Next, divide the larger group into two smaller groups for a quick exercise in thinking outside the box and warming up muscles. Line one group up on one side of the room for a slow-motion race. Instruct everyone to race across the room to the established finish line, with the goal of moving as slowly as you can the entire way across, taking the largest strides possible and always keeping one foot on the ground at all times. The other group will cheer in slow motion for those who are racing. Switch and repeat. After the races are complete, have each group sit in a circle and share experiences—their own or family/friends—involving unresolved injustice, bias or other situations in which a person’s power was unfairly taken and not returned.

As FLEXN works to demonstrate the diversity of experiences of the group and showcase their incredible dance talent, social justice organizations and movements are also working to combat systemic racism. One movement working to address these issues is Black Lives Matter. This organization sprung from a Twitter campaign using #BlackLivesMatter, a hashtag created in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the murder of 17-year old Trayvon Martin in Florida in 2012. Black Lives Matter is a chapter-based national organization with “a call to action and a response to the virulent anti-Black racism that permeates our society.” Black Lives Matter works to keep the conversation about racism in America in the forefront of the media and people’s minds.
LEARNING ACTIVITIES: (CONT.)

Select one experience and turn it into a simple scene with dialogue performed by the students. Assign roles to everyone in the group (feel free to add to the original story to accommodate all participants). Review what each character says and does, checking back with the original story for authenticity. Have each group perform their scene. After the presentation, audience should respond to the performance, sharing what they saw and how they perceived the conflict in the scene. As a large group again, discuss the possible ways the issue presented in the scenes could be resolved. What could happen that would restore power or reverse the detrimental effects of the experience? Explore these hypothetical resolutions by creating a second part to the scene that reveals this possible solution. Perform again allowing the audience to respond. Does the solution seem viable?

How does it change the repercussions of the situation when it is unresolved?

Variation: After performing first iteration of the scene, switch stories so that groups are brainstorming solutions for the scene they watched. Perform again for each other and respond. How did the other group’s perspective affect the story?


VOCABULARY

**Improvisational**: done in the moment, unrehearsed

**Post-modern**: new form or style in the arts or literature that turns away from traditional styles or genres or takes them in an entirely new direction

**Reggae**: a style of popular music with a strongly accented beat, originating in Jamaica

**Undulate**: move with smooth wavelike motion

PRE PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why is it difficult for some people to have a productive dialogue with each other about race and culture? What do you do when you encounter someone who does not share your values or belief system? Does race or culture affect or alter your perceptions? How do we reconcile and accept our differences?

- How do the police, politicians or other authority figures help or hinder the conversation? Since none of us are perfect, in what ways do you think we can hold people accountable for their transgressions but also allow them an opportunity to reform and improve their circumstances?

POST PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What moments in the performance were visually striking? Why?

- List the themes and stories to which you could relate. In what ways were these stories meaningful to you? Was there a moment that made you uncomfortable? Why or why not?

- Which street dance techniques featured in the performance did you find interesting? How would you compare and contrast these dance techniques with ballet or other forms of dance?

- What issue would you interpret through movement or incorporate into a dance? What song would you choose to accompany? What style(s) of dance or movement would you use?
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Read more about FLEXN and its debut at the Park Avenue Armory in NYC at www.armoryonpark.org/programs_events/detail/FLEXN

Read more about the D.R.E.A.M Ring at www.dreamringexperience.com/

Read more about #BLM at www.blacklivesmatter.com

See a slideshow about bruk up at www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2011/03/08/fashion/0309brukup.html

View the pre-show talks from the Park Avenue performances at www.armoryonpark.org/programs_events/detail/FLEXN_conversations_race_and_the_city


www.pbs.org/wgbh/questionofgod/voices/sellars.html
www.wacd.ucla.edu/people/28-people/faculty/133-peter-sellars

nationalsawdust.org/artists/reggie-regg-roc-gray
www.jacobspillow.org/festival/2016/08/FLEXN
www.brooklynrail.org/2015/05/dance/the-gilded-stage-FLEXN
ps79q.wikispaces.com/file/view/NYC%20Boroughs.png/520230024/306x291/NYC%20Boroughs.png
www.nytimes.com/2012/10/03/arts/dance/Flex-is-kings-live-at-the-dumbo-arts-festival.html
www.thump.vice.com/en_us/article/meet-ghost-bed-stuys-bruk-up-veteran-interview
www.allmusic.com/artist/bruk-up-mn0001009847
www.brambilabong.com/how-to-street-dance-ultimate-learning-guide-beginners
www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/five-borough-freestyle-bruk-up
www.aub.edu.lb
www.parkavenuearmory.tumblr.com