

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Chicago Dancemakers Forum Gathers Chicagoans for an Improvisers' Dance Jam at Big Marsh Park**

On Saturday, September 24, Chicago Dancemakers Forum and multiple partners will present a series of dance improvisation experiences open to the public.

**CHICAGO, IL 8/18/2022** - [Chicago Dancemakers Forum](#) partners with M.A.D.D. Rhythms, [Un]common Grounds, and We Are Collective for a day of improvisational dance practices in Tap, Contemporary dance, and Freestyle/Hip Hop. The [Improvisers' Dance Jam](#) will take place outdoors at Big Marsh Park on the city's southeast side on Saturday, September 24, 2022, 1:00-4:00pm as part of their [5th Annual Celebration of Birds, Bikes, and Beats!](#) Free and open for the public to participate.

Bril Barrett (he/him) of **M.A.D.D. Rhythms** explains the importance of improvisational gatherings to their company and their work, "TAP JAMS are our way of paying homage to the 'Hoofers' of old and the traditions they set. Tapdancers form a cypher/circle and take turns 'shedding' to the music and/or the beat established by the other tapdancers. This is how tapdance was created! The 'Hoofers' or original tapdancers would dance all day and all nights in the streets of Harlem. From Master Juba to Chuck Green, Hoofers would create, practice, and perfect this artform....outside! Many dance schools didn't allow African Americans, so the streets became our studios and the dance became our resistance and perseverance. TAP JAMS make us better. TAP JAMS give us new ideas. TAP JAMS help us communicate. TAP JAMS allow us to express ourselves. Improvisation is the key to everything."

Reign Drop Winker (they/them), Co-Founder of **We Are Collective** shares, "We Are Collective is so excited to be a part of this electrifying line-up of dance improvisers. Movers of all ages and experiences, join us for an ever flowing current of movement meditation. Our goal in this hour and always, the

collective goal is to find steadfast freedom of expression in The River and with The Stone. *Intrigued? Come explore!* We will also be supported by the [Somi-1 sound system](#), which composes music LIVE as movement occurs on bodies. We are so excited and grateful to make dance and music at Big Marsh, one of Chicago's invigorating parks and community centers."

**[Un]Common Grounds** will be sharing their practice which Kierah King (she/they) details as "a mixture of introductions, uncommon questions/conversation specific to Big Marsh and the event, a group and influence warm-up, and then a freestyle/improvisation section with prompts or guidelines to help folks feel comfortable with movement or one another."

[Big Marsh](#) is a 297-acre natural area and bike park on Chicago's Southeast Side operated by the Chicago Park District. Once seen as a forgotten post-industrial brownfield, the site was acquired and reimagined by the Park District in 2011 and opened to the public in 2016. Roughly 45 acres are developed for eco-recreation opportunities including bike trails, an asphalt pump track, and BMX jump lines. Other acreage is reserved for more passive recreation such as birding, nature observation and picnicking. All acreage is being restored to further enhance the native habitat of the park property including sensitivity to flora, fauna, and the extensive wetlands. Through much planning, investment, and local stakeholder input, Big Marsh is now a safe, open, and inviting park space for Chicago and the neighboring communities. Big Marsh Park also features the Ford Calumet Environmental Center (FCEC).

The Improvisers' Dance Jam is presented as part of the [Chicago Park District's Night Out in the Parks series](#), supported by the Mayor's Office and Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. Celebrating 10 years, the 2022 Night Out in the Parks program presents cultural events year-round in neighborhood parks throughout the city. The Chicago Park District in partnership with over 100 local artists and organizations, present engaging events and performances that enhance quality of life across Chicago and amplify the artistic and cultural vibrancy in every neighborhood. Through multiple disciplines, which include theater, music, movies, dance, site-specific work, nature programs, and community festivals, the series aims to support Chicago-based artists, facilitate community-based partnerships and programs, cultivate civic engagement, and ensure equity in access to the arts for all Chicagoans.

#### **EVENT DETAILS:**

Improvisers' Dance Jam

Saturday, September 24, 2022, 1:00-4:00pm CT

Big Marsh Park, 11559 S Stony Island, Chicago 60633

Big Marsh is in Chicago, at 11559 S Stony Island, just off the eastern banks of Lake Calumet. The park is accessible from 103rd Street and Doty Road or 122nd Street and Torrence Ave. It is a natural environment with limited accessibility; paved trails and onsite environmental center with bathrooms are wheelchair accessible. Free and abundant parking lot.

URL: <https://chicagodancemakers.org/show-item/dance-jam/>

Free and open for the public to participate.

## EVENT SCHEDULE:

1:00 We Are Collective (Contemporary, Open)

2:00 [UN]Common Grounds (Freestyle, Hip Hop)

3:00 M.A.D.D. Rhythms (Tap Jam)

Save-the-Date for **Elevate Chicago Dance 2022!** October 13-16 at multiple venues across Chicago, including Big Marsh Park. More information at [ChicagoDancemakers.org](http://ChicagoDancemakers.org).

For more information on these events please contact Shawn Lent, Programs and Communications Director at [shawn@chicagodancemakers.org](mailto:shawn@chicagodancemakers.org).

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### **Chicago Dancemakers Forum**

Chicago Dancemakers Forum catalyzes the growth and artistic fulfillment of Chicago's dancemakers by providing time and resources for in-depth exploration and creation. It builds broad support for the field of dance in Chicago by facilitating robust interaction among dancemakers and with the public.

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

### **M.A.D.D. Rhythms**

M.A.D.D. Rhythms (Making a Difference Dancing Rhythms) is a phenomenal TAP dance collective whose "SOLE" purpose is to spread the Love and Joy of TAP worldwide. What started as Bril Barrett & Martin Dumas III's formula for giving back, is now a full-fledged performing arts company, quickly gaining a reputation for representing the true essence of tap: RHYTHM! The company is composed of young, versatile tap dancers from all over Chicago. Their ages range from 15 to 44, and their backgrounds are equally diverse. The one thing they all have in common is a love for "the dance". M.A.D.D. Rhythms is the only organization in Chicago keeping this time-honored Tap Jam tradition alive. They have been producing tap jams for almost 20 years and they don't plan on stopping. Dr. Buster Brown had Swing 46, Dr. Jimmy Slyde had La Cave and Dave Mann had Showman's; they jam to honor those tapdancers, those tap jams and the spirit of unity and community. <https://maddrhythms.com/>

### **[Un]Common Grounds**

Creative, Accessible & Communal space for artistic forms to intersect and find new practices on [UN]Common Grounds. [https://www.instagram.com/un\\_commongrounds/](https://www.instagram.com/un_commongrounds/)

### **We Are Collective**

We Are Dance Collective is a modern-based dance company investigating an amalgamation of differing dance niches and innovative technical elements. <https://www.instagram.com/wearedancecollective/>

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IMAGES AVAILABLE [HERE](#)  
CAPTION/CREDIT SHEET

**1 We Are Collective, Photo by Phylinese Brooks**

Featured: Nik LaMacck (he/him) and Reign Drop Winker (they/them), Co-Founders of We Are Dance Collective

Image Description: One white male dancer and one white non-binary dancer connect hand to head in an open field of green grass in the warm sunlight. He is wearing a brown, green, and yellow printed long sleeve button down, brown dance pants, and boots. They are wearing a white, blue and green vertically striped short sleeve button down shirt and printed blue dance pants, and black boots.

**2 We Are Collective, Photo by Phylinese Brooks**

Featured: Toree Benson, 2021 September Resident Artist

Image Description: One white female dancer stands in Lake Michigan just before sunset, the clouds are just turning purple. She thrashes her wet hair behind her creating an arch of water and hair in the air. She is wearing a black crop top, red long sleeved button down, and jean shorts with a black leather belt.

**3 [Un]Common Grounds, Photo by Omar Cardenas**

Caption: Moments from two different events we entitled “prompted” and “storytelling”

Image Description: A genuine moment of Artists being in space with one another and finding ways to make it work with the respective differences. Some are sitting, some are dancing, some are standing and engaging in different ways. They are outside on a concrete area of a park. There is a raised section with three stairs.

**4 [Un]Common Grounds, Photo by Omar Cardenas**

Caption: Moments from two different events we entitled “prompted” and “storytelling”

Image Description: A genuine moment of Artists being in space with one another and finding ways to make it work with the respective differences. Four are dancing in a seated position, some are standing and engaging in different, joyful ways. They are outside on a concrete area of a park.

**5 M.A.D.D. Rhythms, Photo by Nate Crossley**

Image Description: Ten tapdancers in face masks and black t-shirts with white text listing names such as “Juba, BoJangles, Quicksand, LeGon,” sitting and standing facing the camera in a studio with historical Tap photographs on the wall.

**6 M.A.D.D. Rhythms, Courtesy of the Company**

Featured: (l-r front) Donnetta “LilBit” Jackson, Andrew Carr, (l-r back) William J. Wims, Izaiah Harris

Image Description: A group of six tapdancers in action outdoors in the evening.

**7 Natural Encounters 2019, Photo by Enki Andrews**

Featured: Ayako Kato

Caption: Chicago Dancemakers Forum’s Natural Encounters 2019, “Dances for This Land” by **Ayako Kato**, Nejla Yatkin, and collaborators responding in movement to the natural spaces of Indian Ridge Marsh and its inspiring story of land remediation.

Image Description: A group of dances in action outdoors in a marsh parkland, surrounded by trees and tall grasses.

**8 cdf\_Marsh Dances Poster**

Event poster

**9 cdf\_Marsh Dances Postcards**

Event postcards