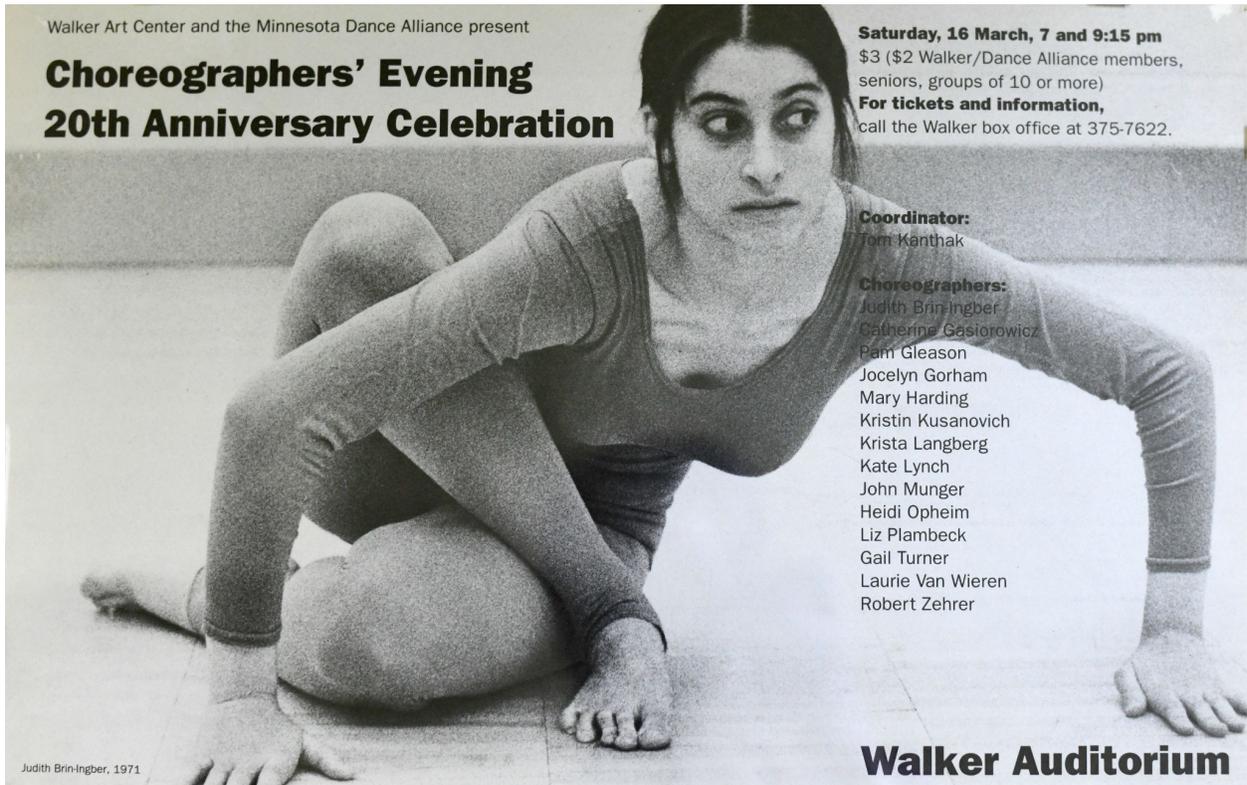


Is it 49 or 50?

If you read the recent announcement on the the Walker Art Center Website, you will see Walker recently invited "Minnesota makers to propose dances as part of Choreographers' Evening with guest curator Valerie Oliveira to be held on November 27, 2021, at 4 and 7 pm.

.."Choreographers' Evening is an annual eventcelebrating Minnesota's dynamic dance and performance communities. Begun in 1972 as a showcase...It returns to the McGuire Stage...Nov. 27, 2021"

But is it 49 years old as Walker claims, or 50 years since I created "The Young Choreographers' Evening"?



Walker Art Center and the Minnesota Dance Alliance present

**Choreographers' Evening**  
**20th Anniversary Celebration**

**Saturday, 16 March, 7 and 9:15 pm**  
\$3 (\$2 Walker/Dance Alliance members, seniors, groups of 10 or more)  
**For tickets and information,**  
call the Walker box office at 375-7622.

**Coordinator:**  
Tom Karthak

**Choreographers:**  
Judith Brin-Ingber  
Catherine Gasiorowicz  
Pam Gleason  
Jocelyn Gorham  
Mary Harding  
Kristin Kusanovich  
Krista Langberg  
Kate Lynch  
John Munger  
Heidi Opheim  
Liz Plambeck  
Gail Turner  
Laurie Van Wieren  
Robert Zehr

Judith Brin-Ingber, 1971

**Walker Auditorium**

Fifty years ago, I created the Young Choreographers' Evening at the Walker Art Center. Happily, ever since, Walker has held what's now known as the Choreographers' Evening, a yearly concert featuring MN dancers. This year's Choreographers' Evening was seen on June 4, 2021. Walker considers this their 49th Choreographers' Evening. I, on the other hand, know I created the program 50 years ago.

At the time, I assisted the Walkers' first performing arts curator, Suzanne Weil, with dance programming. In 1970, there was little chance for emerging dance makers to be seen. I proposed to Suzanne that Walker announce we were seeking young choreographers to show their work for a new show and that I would scout out dancers and their dances from different studios. I watched many, and chose three from Nancy Hauser's Guild of Performing Arts: Jerry and Sara Pearson, Joann Saltzman and Gail Turner; from the Children's Theatre came Terrence

L.V. Karn. There were two independents: Katherine Hearth plus me with my own solo, "I Never Saw Another Butterfly," and my group work with 17 dancers from MN Dance Theatre. Loyce Houlton loaned me her dancers as a wedding gift. Weil produced the evening on Dec. 8, 1971. The usual showtime for any show at the time was 8:30 PM but she chose the unconventional time of 7:00 PM so if few audience members showed up for the unknown dancers, no one would be the wiser. Surprisingly, however, The Young Choreographer's Evening completely sold out. Weil came backstage to ask the performers if we'd agree to perform a second show that same evening at 9:00 PM? We did and that is how the tradition of two shows at 7PM and 9PM was born. Each year though, there are different guest curators chosen by Walker's Performing Arts curator and staff. For the 20th anniversary concert, curated by Tom Kanthak, for the advertisement, he used the poster from the first evening. The photo caught me in a moment from my solo called "I Never Saw Another Butterfly", inspired by a poem included in a collection of imprisoned children's poetry and drawings, from Theresienstadt, the Nazi WWII ghetto camp. The poem was written by the child poet and Holocaust victim Pavel Friedman who wrote it in Theresienstadt before his tragic deportation to Auschwitz.

In 2005, when the Walker addition was being built, no official show was held, but a renegade performance co-curated by choreographers April Sellers and Laurie Van Wieren was seen outside in the snowy sculpture garden, dubbed "Out in the Cold" by Patrick Scully.

By Walker's count, for the 30th Choreographers' Evening, in 2001, Kristin Van Loon and I co-curated the Choreographers' Evening. The program included "Mergers and Acquisitions," a trio I created with Brian Sostek and Patrick Scully.

For Thanksgiving weekend, Nov. 24, 2012 (the Choreographers' Evening migrated to that holiday weekend for many years), [I remounted "I Never Saw Another Butterfly" on dancer Megan McClellan, with new music by Jim Miller.](#) This year's recent Choreographers' Evening was called "Body Prayers: Choreographers' Evening Special Edition" curated by the African-Centered healing artist and choreographer, DeJaJoelle on June 4, 2021. The choreographers she chose can be seen on the Walker website:

<https://walkerart.org/calendar/2021/body-prayers-choreographers-evening-special-edition>

I join DeJaJoelle's call to include body-prayers in performance, to refuse "to wither in the face of oppression and injustice". Through our prayers and dancing, and my dance writing, I continue to examine the plight of children. Since Pavel's fate in World War II until today, the situation for children has only worsened; child refugees world-wide, some who have been imprisoned, number between 30 – 34 million children of the 79.5 million forcibly displaced persons. "Almost Snuffed Out", my article, centers on choreographer Kamila Rosenbaumova, who co-created musicals including "Fireflies" (*Broučci*) with child performers in the Theresienstadt ghetto camp. The article will appear in the forthcoming free on-line textbook called "The Holocaust, Remembrance, Respect and Resilience." We thank Walker Art Center for continuing the annual platform for MN choreographers as we dance on to express our hopes and prayers.

[Correspondence between Suzanne Weil, arts curator at the Walker and Judith Choreographer's Evening Program](#)



