

AT Banter Podcast Episode 325 - Adam Grant Warren

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SPEAKERS

Rob Mineault, Steve Barclay, Ryan Fleury, Adam Grant Warren

R Rob Mineault 00:19
Hey and welcome to another episode of AT Banter

S Steve Barclay 00:25
Banter banter.

R Rob Mineault 00:26
Are we back to the original intro? I thought you guys had rewritten the intro.

S Steve Barclay 00:32
Now we were just screwing with you.

R Rob Mineault 00:34
Okay, good. Hey this, as usual, hey this is of course the podcast where we talk with advocates and members of the disability community to educate and inspire better conversation about disability. Hey, my name is Rob Mineault and joining me today Mr. Ryan Fleury.

R Ryan Fleury 00:53
I'm back again.

R Rob Mineault 00:56
You're always here it's how can you be back you've never you never left.

R Ryan Fleury 01:00
I did well for a while.

R Rob Mineault 01:02
It was awhile ago. Hey, look who else is here? It's Mr. Steve Barclay

S Steve Barclay 01:07
You killed my father. Prepare to die

R Rob Mineault 01:12
Call back to a classic film. You should do that as a running gag. You just quote classic movie lines.

S Steve Barclay 01:20
I started something.

R Rob Mineault 01:27
Yeah. Boom. Boom. We already started thing.

R Ryan Fleury 01:31
We've refreshed the show.

R Rob Mineault 01:34
That's right. Now if we can only rebrand. Figure that out. How are you gents today?

S Steve Barclay 01:44
.....

Oh, just ducky. Excellent.

R Ryan Fleury 01:47
I'm good. Thanks for asking. How are you, Rob?

R Rob Mineault 01:50
I'm good. Listen, it was a beautiful day. It is a little bit chilly. But I'll take the chilly and sunny skies over rain.

S Steve Barclay 01:59
Indeed.

R Ryan Fleury 02:00
Indeed

R Rob Mineault 02:01
Whoa, that was freaky. Wow, you wouldn't be able to do that again if you tried. There was no editing involved in that, that was totally natural. That is what would happen if like Steve and Ryan merged into one.

R Ryan Fleury 02:21
That's what happens when you work together for over 20 years.

R Rob Mineault 02:23
Yeah, clearly, you're really sharing that brain.

S Steve Barclay 02:28
Ah, two brain cells between us and one of them's pushing the other one in a wheelbarrow.

R Rob Mineault 02:35
So true. Hey, oh, yeah, we should mention to you that we have no Lis Malone today. We're recording this on Valentine's Day, and apparently she has a life so

R Ryan Fleury 02:47
or a love.

R Rob Mineault 02:48
Whatever.

S Steve Barclay 02:51
We don't judge.

R Rob Mineault 02:53
That's why she's always getting the COVID. She's out there too much. Yeah, she needs to be basement dwellers like us.

S Steve Barclay 03:04
You can't be doing all that heavy breathing and not expect to get that

R Rob Mineault 03:07
That's right. So no sympathy on this on for her then.

S Steve Barclay 03:11
But no, mostly we're just jealous.

R Rob Mineault 03:15
Right? Ah, all right. Enough of this. Hey, Ryan.

R Ryan Fleury 03:20
Yes, Rob.

R Rob Mineault 03:22

R Rob Mineault 03:22

Tell the fine folks at home what the heck we're doing today.

R Ryan Fleury 03:25

Well, today we are speaking with a guest who is a writer, a performer and collaborator over at All Bodies Dance, which I believe is a local Vancouver organization. So I'd like to welcome to the show Adam Grant Warren. Welcome, Adam.

A Adam Grant Warren 03:42

Hi. Thanks for having me.

R Ryan Fleury 03:43

Thanks for being here.

S Steve Barclay 03:44

Once again. Ryan manages to find yet another underachiever.

R Rob Mineault 03:52

That's right. We were always joking with him that he's already bringing on people that are doing so much that makes us feel like a bunch of schlubs. So yeah, it's it messes with our self esteem, but that's okay.

A Adam Grant Warren 04:09

I'm sorry?

S Steve Barclay 04:13

Don't be sorry. Just keep doing what you're doing. Because if you weren't doing it, we might have to.

R Rob Mineault 04:20

That's true, too. Well, listen, hey, we want to thank you so much for for taking some time out of the day and talk with us. We are excited to talk to you. I've been doing a deep dive into All Bodies Dance, and I love it. So I'm really I'm really excited to talk to you and unpack a bit of it.

But before we get into that, maybe you could just give a give our audience like a brief overview of of yourself and a little bit of a brief overview of what it is that you guys do over at All Bodies Dance.

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Adam Grant Warren 04:55

Well, I'm actually I'm originally from Newfoundland. Um, So I moved out here

S

Steve Barclay 05:03

Stop the show!

A

Adam Grant Warren 05:06

I'm originally from Newfoundland, and I moved out here. I guess, God, it's gotta be moved out here in '08. So I've been out here for a minute now. But I came out here to study film at Vancouver Film School and made some films ended up teaching at Vancouver Film school for a while. I don't really honestly I don't really work in in film a ton anymore. Most of my work these days is in theater and performance. And dance. Yeah, I came out sort of wanting a career in film came out here moved at Western Newfoundland wanting a career in film after, I always kind of identified myself as a recovering high school English teacher. So that's kind of where things I guess started. And then I, I spent a year in, in a little town just outside of London, England, teaching high school English. And that's where my first play came from. It was not a great year. And then I sort of went home to Newfoundland to regroup. And things sort of tumbled out that I ended up going to Vancouver Film School. And, and I did some time, like I said, some time in film, and but my heart has always been in theater and performance. That's actually where my sort of my undergraduate degree is. I have a degree in English with a specialization in theater from Memorial University. And, and I guess, yeah, my heart's always been in theater and performance. So opportunity wise, when I came out here, sort of after film space and time the the opportunities were in theater and performance. And then that's kind of where I found myself drawn back to. I was working on the show, I guess it would have been eight or nine years ago now. And the artistic director, she's artistic director of All Bodies Dance, Naomi Brand, she and I were working on a show together, had nothing to do with dance. But it was a some sort of storytelling theater with a group called Theatre Terrific here in town. And, and we connected on that show. And she said, hey, I'm doing a thing, and you should come. And so I went to her first, you know, or one of their first classes. And it was, it was interesting for me. Because, up until that point in my career, both in Newfoundland and in Vancouver, I had always been the person, the one person in the room, who was a chair user, among a bunch of sort of standing performers. It was like a bunch of standing performers and me. And when I went to that first class, it was the first room that I was in, that I'd ever been in, in, where there was a sort of an active combination of community dancers, professional dancers, folks in wheelchairs, folks, not in wheelchairs, folks who use other mobility devices, community, folks, anyone. That's the whole thing, right? I mean, anyone who wants to dance with us can come and dance with us. We have a strong and vibrant sort of series of community programs where anyone can drop in and just see what's this about. Anyone who's curious about movement, who likes to dance, who likes to move. You know, anybody that is alive, is a body that dances. And I think that that's sort of one of the things that we champion, we do have a strong sort of

contingent of professional dancers as well, myself and sort of a company core that do that are engaged professionally. But anyone again, even some of our shows, or community shows anyone who wants to perform, can come and perform. All Bodies I think was for me, I guess the soundbite is, and this is something that I that I say to folks, you know, I speak on a lot of panels and stuff. And, you know, people ask, if I have advice for sort of emerging artists and my advice has become, to be prepared to be a different artist, I think than you were expecting to be. So I came out here looking for film, looking for a career in film and found a career in performance and dance, sort of just by happenstance and happy accident and, and I'm better for it.

R

Rob Mineault 09:51

Yeah, I want to I want to sort of talk a little bit about this, this idea, that of integrated day, or I guess it's also you also kind of call it mixed ability. Because I feel like - and I don't know a lot about different dance companies - but certainly I've never seen anything like this. I feel like this is a really unique perspective on building a dance program. Can you talk a little bit about the idea a little bit more about the idea of the integrated dance? And how do you kind of turn this idea of mixed abilities, how do you sort of tie that into the whole creative process?

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Adam Grant Warren 10:36

I think that's a really good question. integrated dance just refers to dance that, So I think for me, there's a there's a key difference between integrated dance and inclusive dance. Right? For me, and inclusive dance is dance that includes everyone, but doesn't necessarily treat everyone on equal footing. Right, you're there, but you're not an equal participant, you're not necessarily an equal participant, you're not necessarily an equal contributor, but you're there, you're included. Integrated, for me refers to more of a position of, of equality and equity, in terms of creative contribution. How we, how we bring that into the creative process is, again, the the the soundbite version, is that we believe and I believe, and I think this is, I've taken this into myself, just as a core of my own creative practice, is that every, the cool thing about All Bodies Dance, or one of the cool things, there are many cool things. But the coolest thing, is that we build choreography, based on what each individual body is bringing to the picture, and how each individual body moves even on the day. We all understand that a body, everybody moves differently, yes, and everybody moves differently every day. And we don't see that as something that needs to be worked around, we see that as something that offers choreographic potential. I have a particular style of movement. Every dancer that I work with, has a particular style of movement. And there are no as opposed to sort of like the, the commercial, what I see as the commercial perspective on synchronized dance and bodies moving the same way. So you know, similar bodies moving similarly, bodies moving in unison. I mean, it's not that we don't do unison work. But I find the unison work that we do much more interesting because we bring a different lens to the concept of unison. When, when we say, for example, if we're going to build a movement around, you know, circling the left arm, the people that we work with, are not going to make the same arm circle, or circling, even to make it simpler, circling a limb. The folks that we work with are going to circle limbs differently, because their bodies are each so individual and different. And that brings, I think, a much richer lens or an idea of unison, than, say, for example, A Chorus Line or a ballet troupe. So that's, that's how we, that's how we build choreography. It's from this idea of integrating whichever bodies we have present on the day,



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Rob Mineault 14:00

I mean, that was sort of my experience in exploring the site. This isn't about inclusion, this goes far beyond inclusion, this is about creating something that's, that's very different. This whole mixed ability concept is more about celebrating the differences as opposed to, like you mentioned, working around them or developing something that caters to a specific range of motion. You guys are doing something completely different than that. And I think it's really quite amazing.

A

Adam Grant Warren 14:32

There are a couple of different companies in Canada and, and some internationally that do similar things, but I, you know, we're, we're fairly unique and fairly original in the context of in the Canadian context on the Canadian landscape. I, you know, we don't identify as an organization as a company made for people with disabilities. That's not how we that's not how we brand. That's not how we identify. the name of the company is All Bodies Dance, we are for all bodies. And you know, and we recognize that all bodies, professional community, old young, that, you know, whichever body you're bringing whichever whatever experience and performance, whether it's none, like some people, you know, this is your first dance class or this is your first, you know, opportunity to move like this, or you have 15 years of professional performance experience. You know, we work with folks that, that, that run that gamut from from, you know, and just to be clear, to be to make it super clear that people who have that performance experience, those 15 years are not all standing, quote, unquote, able bodied folks. I'm one of those people. Rose is another one of those people. There are lots of other. You know, we don't, that's not the distinction we don't, we don't draw a distinction between professional standing dancers and amateur or community seated dancers. That's not the distinction we draw. For all intents and purposes, we don't draw distinctions at all. And I think that that is, you know, that's why that's why as much as I joined All Bodies, whatever it was eight or nine years ago, when it started, that's why I stay. I, at this particular point in my life, I am fortunate to be able to identify more as a wheelchair user than as a person with a disability. And I don't tend to, you know, I am in a place where I'm sort of trying to find myself and community as I age. And as I develop an experience, I'm still trying to locate myself in a community of folks with disabilities. I've never had trouble locating myself in the community of All Bodies Dance. And that's why I've kind of stuck around.

S

Steve Barclay 17:06

That's nice, I love I love the the way that you're expanding on dance and bringing it to more people, bringing more people into it. You know, it really you when you were talking there, you really reminded me of an old friend of mine who's who's passed now. But my friend Jeannie Robinson, she and her husband wrote a book called Star Dance years ago. And she in that book, they talk about zero gravity dance. And she was able in, like, around 2008, they actually got enough funding together, to go up in a plane and drop them so that they could experience zero gravity and experiment in zero gravity dance. So as you were talking, I was, I was thinking, all right, we gotta get these wheelchairs into a plane down and drop them.

A

Adam Grant Warren 18:02

Absolutely

absolutely.

R

Rob Mineault 18:05

But that's, you know, that's why I love the arts. I really feel like if, if anything is going to save the world, it's going to be the arts. The arts can and should be inclusive, you know, when you were when we were you were talking about about, you know, the idea of all abilities it's, it's almost like, you know, each different dancer, depending on their range of movements, it's almost like they make up a different color. If we were sort of to compare this just like a painting, it's a different color that creates a greater work altogether, you know, in a performance, and I don't know, I just think that's, that's just really amazing.

S

Steve Barclay 18:53

Yeah, it's adding depth.

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Adam Grant Warren 18:56

I mean, I still find myself absolutely, just even in rehearsal, or even in community classes, absolutely fascinated by, say, for example, you know, we have an older gentleman who's a, I mean, he's a senior citizen, he doesn't identify as disabled or anything like that. But he's, he's really just sort of getting into the idea that his body can move in particular ways. And in class, when I get a chance to observe, I always find myself gravitating toward him because he has super articulate feet. You know, and he never really considered his his feet. He's never really paid attention to what his feet are doing. He's really, he's really into his arms. He knows what his arms do, and he likes making his arms do things. It's interesting, but he doesn't pay attention to his feet. I actually as a as a wheelchair user, who sometimes I'll dance between my chair and the floor, oh, that's half in my chair and a half out of my chair and all kinds of strange things, but I tend not to pay attention or as much attention to my feet, my lower extremities as I should. It was interesting to see him to see him pay so much attention to what he's doing from the waist up. And but his feet are doing these wonderful things that he's not even aware of. And, and it was, it was interesting for me to like, pay attention to him in that way that he doesn't pay attention to himself and just see this beautiful, unintentional improvised choreography that he was building with a part of himself that he wasn't even paying attention to.

S

Steve Barclay 20:25

If you pointed that out to him, if you if you know you did, okay, and how did he receive that? Did it cause him to focus more on it? Did he tighten down immediately, as soon as he started paying attention to it?

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Adam Grant Warren 20:39

It's an interesting thing. He started to focus. And I was like, oh, no, I broke it. I ruined him. And then he let it go. And then he let it go. And I think you know, in terms of watching his growth,

and it'll be a pleasure for me to watch him grow. I would love for him to find a balance between the parts of himself that he pays attention to and the parts of himself that he doesn't. I've been working to find that balance for years for most of my for most of my career in performance. But it's it's interesting to watch it on somebody else.

R

Rob Mineault 21:16

So in general, how big is the program? How many dancers do you do you have? Or does it kind of fluctuate?

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Adam Grant Warren 21:22

It does fluctuate, but it is quite big. We have grown from like, I think one or two classes, one or two days a week, to a class of some sort virtually every day. And these are community drop in classes. Plus, we also have you know, we also have rehearsal periods, for particular shows that we're doing that are sometimes you know, like, everyone in a class or everyone who wishes to participate can come and be in a performance. And then sometimes they have smaller pieces that we build for professional shows and touring. But our, full open door contingent of folks. Oh, my gosh, more than 100 people, I'm sure. Our core folks. I mean, you could see a lot of us on the website. Or I would say our core is about 20 folks. But but the community around them is huge. And getting I think bigger.

R

Rob Mineault 22:29

So and what kind of things do you generally do work on during classes? Is it is it? Is it more like about improvisation? Or is there a choreography that is generally worked on? Or does it depend?

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Adam Grant Warren 22:43

We will do we will give like, we will offer suggestions. Say for example, something as simple as moving and stopping in space. It's a really simple score, everybody move everybody stop. But it it, it really works on things like spatial attention, like staying connected to the folks in the room. However you like to move, you can move however you like to move, but when everybody's moving, everybody's moving, when everybody stops, everybody stops, right? That's like the most fundamental score movement score that we'll offer. And then we'll we'll work on articulating parts of the body, or we'll work on shaping. We'll work on, like quality of movement. So we'll use will use adjectives to generate movement or will will will offer things like say for example, leading with the head, as opposed to leading with the feet or leading with an elbow, and there are much more technical ways to get to the same things. But we as a company under the under the fantastic leadership of an Naomi Brand and Carolina Bergonzoni who and they've both done training under a gentleman in, I think he's in Europe now named Alito Alessi. And Alito has developed a kind of way of way of articulating fundamental dance concepts without using dance jargon. So we we do invite sort of a fundamental foundational principles of dance, but we invite them in language that makes, you know, layperson sense,

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Rob Mineault 24:35

When you bring on some new dancers, do you kind of have to work with them a little bit? It seems to me that everybody that comes in is going to have a different range of motion or they're going to have a different way of moving. Do you kind of work with them to help them develop their own style?

A

Adam Grant Warren 24:53

Yes and no. Yes in that. We we offer we make those offers, and we often try to pay attention to, to remind folks to pay attention to the parts of themselves that they don't, often or to engage the parts of themselves that they don't often engage. But we don't, you know, we don't actively work with folks and make suggestions. You know, by virtue of our invitations, folks will do things like a big one. For me it's always really interesting, when you have people who sort of like think of dance as a thing, you do upright, a thing you do on your feet. And then there's a thing that happens, it's honestly, it's usually me, who will, who will do something like I'll be in my chair, and then suddenly, I'll be on the floor, and people will be like, oh, I'm allowed to be on the floor. You know, I can dance in, I can dance vertically, but I can also dance horizontally, I can dance any plane in between the vertical and the horizontal. So when you when you there's usually a dancer, one of the more experienced folks, typically who will, who will, by virtue of doing something, give permission or open a plane of movement, that some other folks in that room don't really, haven't really considered. And so they can, it's not that we make suggestions, it's that, by example, folks can see us, the more experienced movers are sometimes just the bolder movers who are like, it's not it's not, it's not always the more experienced folks, sometimes people just dive onto the floor, and it's great. But, but yeah, it's, you know, folks see, and folks learn by example, folks learn to shift attention. By example. It's not like we sit there in the front of the class and say, like, remember that you have a left side as well as the right side? So for me, that's the thing that I have to go, I'm left handed. And, I have cerebral palsy, which means I'm exceedingly left dominant. So for me, it's, it's a challenge sometimes to remember, oh, no, I can go to the right. You know, and that's the thing that I have to remember that I have two halves, that can dance together and independently of each other. And, and yeah, but it's, it's when when somebody takes it's kind of a by example thing, because somebody takes an invitation that we offer, and they do something really cool with it. Everybody else in the room goes, oh, crap. Wow, look at that. And that's like, when that light bulb goes on. I mean, that's, I'm an educator, too. And that's like, one of the things that I live for, as an educator is to see somebody else make that connection to be like, I can do it like this. And it's great.

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Rob Mineault 27:51

Yeah, and well, and that's such a very different approach than a lot of conventional dance, because, "conventional dance" it's, it's kind of it, it is very instruction based. It's very, very, you know, this move, then this move into this move. And it's, you know, it's very, you know, coordinated. And, and that's what generally people think about when they think about dance classes. So, you know, I love this, this idea, because it's also, I think that that probably lends itself very well into this idea of mixed ability, because it's not about, oh, you need to get to this level, in order to participate in this dance. It's more about finding your space and finding your own movement and working with the other dancers to sort of create a bigger picture,

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Adam Grant Warren 28:42

I was gonna say, 100% you're right, 98% 98%, that the 2% is that we do. Also, if you if you would like technique, if you would like to focus on building a particular sort of series of articulations, if you would like to engage that way, we can also help you engage that way. That's more of a sort of professional, the core company. However, we're in the process of defining what that means. But like, you know, that's, that's more of the sort of performance arm of the company that deals with things like technique, but we do have the means to teach that as well. But for our community arm and for folks who are just like, I'm gonna come down and give it a shot, it really is about finding your own movement style in your own movement, vocabulary and just sort of like, I want to use the word relishing, relishing those moments where you figure out or you see how whatever it is you're offering is working with whatever it is, everybody else is offering it. So it's, you know, eight, eight years down, and it's still so cool to me. It's still so cool to see somebody realize what it is we're after, and how it is which it is we work together. It's so neat.

R

Rob Mineault 30:03

Yeah, cuz I was gonna ask about that like, because I'm sure that on occasion, people who are first coming in, you must almost kind of have to deprogram them a little bit in terms of like, what they might think a conventional dance classes or even, like the pressure that they might put on themselves to think, oh, you know, like I have to, I have to be, you know, coordinate with what everybody else is doing, or I have to move in a way that's similar to them. Because that looks so cool. It must take a little bit for somebody to kind of just loosen up and just be able to embrace that part of themselves.

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Adam Grant Warren 30:39

It does have some people will just go straight for that in the first class. For some people, it doesn't, you know, it doesn't come at all. For some people. I think for the majority of people, we work with it. Yeah, it takes a few classes, right. It's like any, it's like, a sort of training and retraining any thought pattern. People do, you're right, people do come in, even people who come to see our shows, audiences come with a particular sort of preconceived notion, sometimes with dances, and then they watch us do what we do. And they're like, Oh, hmm. You know, you can kind of see that changing, but it works. It works with people in their classes, too. If, you know, give it give it a few classes. Yeah, as a joke. I said one time, one of the, one of the women that I work with, she's actually kind of in a managing director role now. But she came, she came along to one class, and she was recommended. And she it, you know, it really sort of stuck with her after that first class. And I said to her afterwards, we got you now! You can sort of like, think you will never leave. And you can sort of see the people that it really resonates with, and there's always that hope that folks will come back, you know, people who are like, almost there, almost willing to let go of whatever it is, or almost willing to dive in all the way. We meet people wherever they're at. We need people wherever they're at. But there is a hope from the other side where it's just like, come on back, give it another shot. Come on back, come on back. Come on back. And if folks come back for that third or fourth class, you can see things opening up. Right, even on a really kind of fundamental level. A lot of folks who come both, you know, community and professional dancers, however you want to sort of make that

distinction. For me, it's money. You know, like, are we paid to do it? Or we not? But you can see people opening up to what it is, to what it is we do. And again, that's that's, that's sort of the that's the pleasure point for me. Yeah.

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Ryan Fleury 33:10

So what does a class look like for a first timer coming in, you just have music playing and everybody just starts moving? Or like, what what happens?

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Adam Grant Warren 33:19

So that's a really good question we'll normally start with, with a warmup, which just means I like to think of it as sort of getting yourself in your body and arriving in the space with, you know, we invite people to, you know, circle joins to get in contact with themselves by you know, physical touch and massage, you know, just like, like you would warm up, say, for example, like you would warm up before workout, right? You stretch and you do, you know, so we invite a series of stretches, we invite a series of locations of the self, to get in touch with like breathing or physical musculature, get in touch with any parts of your body that might hurt on the day or need a little bit of extra attention, we can do that. Then what normally happens is we'll start with is an introduction of ourselves, because that's really important. I think, for us, the ritual of the circle, is just we introduce ourselves, individually, we say a little few words about where we are, how we're feeling. For me, when I introduce in the circle, if there are any new people in the room, I always mentioned that I do dance in and out of my chair. If I'm on the floor, I mean to be on the floor. I'm not hurt, you know, but I also say I'll also invite people to in the context of circle, I'll invite people to if I'm not in my chair, you can go ahead and sit in my chair. You can sit on me in my chair, if you like you can do whatever you like, you know in the context of me and my chair, but there are other dancers who are who won't check in and say for example, you know, I'm not cool with anyone sitting in my chair. Please don't you know, I have trouble with touch. And that's all 100% fine, like I said, we meet people where we are, where they're at. And, and we always give them a chance to sort of check in and say where we are on the day, and then we'll do the warm up. And then the warm up sort of proceeds organically into into a first offer, which is often sometimes about moving through the space, as opposed to standing in the circle, or sitting or being in the circle together, we'll start moving through the space. And then whoever's resulting in class will make an initial offer, say, for example, to move, however, it means for you to move in, to move in response to the architecture of the room. So people might start moving along the walls, or might start playing over and under and around chairs, or some people walking on the tables, you know, kinds of all kinds of wacky stuff, whatever, whatever, whenever sort of organizing, responding to the architecture means we might do something, we might then bring the focus back into the body and talk about like, shape making, right? So draw a draw square, like draw a square in the space with your torso, or draw a square in the space with your nose or draw square in this space with a room on the back of your head. We always try to like engage parts of the body that are you know, less than typically engage with and you know it the class just proceeds forward just based on a series of invitations that sometimes build on each other and sometimes don't.

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Ryan Fleury 36:43

So was this all I think you said, like Naomi, and I forget the other one that was a Carol ...

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Adam Grant Warren 36:50

Oh, Carolina Bergonzoni and I should mention as well, we did have another sort of founding member who has relocated to other parts of BC Sarah Lapp was the original co founder. But Sarah Lapp was the original co founder with Naomi. Carolina came on, I think, a couple of years in. And then we have kind of a, like a small fleet of instructors who facilitate the classes.

R

Ryan Fleury 37:16

Right. And so when Naomi went over to Europe, like this gentleman that she, I guess, learn from this, this is all this is something he created this structure of dance.

A

Adam Grant Warren 37:32

I think. I mean, I think other people. And again, I don't know, I think a number of people had had worked on developing that language and that vocabulary, I think Alito formalized it in a way. But I think that said, a lot of us who have we have learned, I mean, Naomi learned from Alito, and Naomi has come back to teach, you know, to bring his teachings, but she has also developed a lot of her own vocabulary. And we as a company have developed a lot of our own vocabulary. So we don't there's no like, there is no like guidebook. There's yeah, there's no Alito dictionary, right? You know, it he he was a jumping off point. He was a beginning. Just to get all smart about it. He was a beginning lexicon and introductory lexicon, I think for the vocabulary. And then we have all taken it to, to include or to and adjusted it as, as befits our practice.

R

Rob Mineault 38:38

So how often do you guys have performances?

A

Adam Grant Warren 38:45

I mean, pre-pandemic, we were, I mean, we would have a number of, we would have probably two or three sort of, like community shows a year associated with various community festivals. And then we would, there you know, probably another three or four, five times a year, we might get invited to, as you know, to do a few of our smaller pieces are sort of our touring repertoire. We, like every other Arts company in the city and in Canada, I would say I would argue in the world right now - are in a process of rebuilding. So our energies are focusing more on our kind of infrastructure and how we want to grow forward knowing that we are we're living in a different arts ecology now. Yeah, you know the answer to that question about how often we perform, that will change, has changed, will change. So I would like you know, in in sort of my ideal world, we would, we would have more performance, we would make them more pieces smaller and larger. But that's, you know, that's, that's to be honest, that's my professional training talking. That's, you know, gotta make gotta make stuff. I come from a very sort of gotta make stuff mentality. It's changing a little bit now as well, I'm finding different value, post

pandemic. And also as I age, I'm finding different value in the community aspects and the bringing together of folks in the, in the creating of something that is valuable for its own sake, you know, but, but I still have like, that whole, that whole show must go on gotta make, gotta make shows gotta make gotta make stuff. I don't think I'll ever I don't think I'll ever get rid of that. That's too far in there for me. So but, you know, to come back to your original question. We have, we have a performance coming up on family day, it's kind of just a free sort of a drop in performance. Anybody from within the company, anybody from the community who wants to come and dance can come and dance. I know like we've got a couple of festival offers coming up as as festivals are once again a thing in town. But yeah, I don't know if I want to answer like how many performances we normally have because I feel like that answer is that would change.

R

Rob Mineault 41:34

Totally, totally fair. So it because I'm really curious about the process of putting together a performance I watched on your YouTube channel, I watched a really fascinating clip about a project that you guys did years ago called See and Be Seen.

A

Adam Grant Warren 41:50

Yeah, that was our first, I think, our first show.

R

Rob Mineault 41:54

Yeah, and it was it was fascinating and showed a lot of sort of behind the scenes, and how it was all put together. And it was really fascinating. So I'm kind of curious about when you are putting together a performance, how collaborative is that whole process when it comes to the choreography? Do you kind of work with all the dancers who are in that particular performance and you everybody sort of brings their own together? Or do you have a main choreographer that just puts everything together?

A

Adam Grant Warren 42:24

Well, okay, so so the way it the way it has, has worked. And again, we don't know that you're talking about our first show, and that was many, many years ago. But when we were doing larger shows, and we may or may not do that again in the future. But when we were doing larger shows, it would be a case where, say, for example, I have, I had a couple of smaller pieces in that show. And I built those, I choreograph those with myself or with the, you know, the few dancers that I was working with. And then though that piece is sort of inserted into the larger progression of the show. And it's, it's Naomi's job, as artistic work has been historically Naomi's job as Artistic Director, to say, for example, assemble those pieces, and to act in them in the process of choreographing them individually to act as outside i has been a lot of cases and in many cases, we are inside our own work. And that's, you know, that's, that's a hard place to be in terms of seeing how the work actually reads on stage. And so Naomi would come in or Naomi or Carolina or anyone really from sort of the the more established company would come in and act as an outside eye and offer offer notes. For the larger like full company pieces

that you must have seen on the on the clip, that's that's mostly Naomi. Naomi has a particular eye for larger, spatially engaged company work that's part of her style. And so she's, she's kind of the best person in the space to articulate or to help folks articulate that. I have a very small and focused eye when it comes to the way that I like to choreograph. And the way that I like to dance. I like I like two dancers, I like three dancers. I like small, intimate duets. I tend to to move toward unexpected physicalities often make sort of dissenters of my thesis. But for the larger community stuff, that's Naomi, that's, that's a large number of bodies moving in space, she has that particular lens on things and I don't, so even choreographically the people that are sort of at the at the core of the company, we each bring different sort of choreographic sensibilities that we can then sort of put on, put on a piece.

R

Rob Mineault 45:09

And when you're putting together a piece that is so much about sort of interpretive and being in the moment, is it is it kind of true that no one performance is really ever the same?

A

Adam Grant Warren 45:20

100 percent. And that is, that is why it's interesting to me. Like I said, I came to Vancouver wanting a career in film, and film is, you know, you do a bunch of takes, and you assemble the thing. And the thing is, whatever thing you assemble is going to be that thing, or ever, right? Part of the reason and theater is a little different, in that, you know, each as much as a sort of a traditional theater show is is scripted and directed, and is fundamentally the same every night with the exception of, of, you know, something more experimental or going to pick a path style theater. You know, we have our pieces, our pieces are choreographed to a to a given score. But sometimes the, what is choreographed are the rules, or the sort of the outcome rules, the parameters that we dance by. And sometimes what is a you know, if it's if it's more sort of strongly choreographed, more sort of strongly set. Yeah, it, they are fundamentally the same every night, but dance for me, and especially not not dance, but the the dance that we do, because it's so based in improvisation, it can be drastically different. Every night, we have the, you know, we were very good as a, as a company, at least sort of the performing company, we, we are very good at, like adaptive structures. So, if, if someone if someone is supposed to be in a particular spot on stage, at a given time, in trying a piece, and that person is not there, for whatever reason, we're all very good at picking up that, you know, at accounting for that. I was gonna say, sort of picking up the slack, but that's not really what it is. It's, it's, it's working with whatever is present on stage at a given time is what it is, or working with whoever is present in class at a given time. So we have, we're all exceptionally flexible. And I think part of the thing that is just so compelling to me, is is the I don't use the word lightly but sort of the artistic magic or the choreographic magic that happens when something unexpected happens. You know, another short story I think we were doing redoing a piece on Granville Island and another dancer came up behind me in such a way as to knock me over. And I was like, and then I was on the ground. And but you know, sort of the, the my theater muscles go like, oh, God, I gotta you know, how do I fix? But then I was like, Okay, well, this is now this is now part of the piece. I'm on the ground. And yeah, this is the show. No, and it turned out to be so cool. Because that's kind of like and and part of what made it so cool is that the rest of those dancers in that space, it was a you know, I think there were like 12 or 13 of us and I fell over. And no one did anything. No one did anything. And people people in the audience go like, you know that you can feel it in the audience go like, what are they going to help them? What's happening? What's

going on? Is that, you know, is that part of it. And it makes such an interesting social commentary. Because of course, we're all trained to run toward even me as a person who is here, we're all trained to one run toward the person who goes down. And they, they didn't do anything. And part of that was because they knew that I knew how to go down. And they knew that I knew that now this is part of the piece. So like everybody in that space, there was just a and this is this is as much as folks come in and like and drop in and do classes. I think that's great. But, but those of us who've been dancing together for a long, long time. We trust each other. If we trust each other to take care of our own bodies, we trust each other to be there, we trust each other to announce or acknowledge when we're hurt. And if nothing comes, then oh, this is what we're working with. He's on his back, you know what I mean? Like, it's it. And, and that became a really, again, a really sort of magical part of the show. And that's, that's what we do it what we do as a company, it lives in the spaces that we need to adapt to. For each performer, and for each performance,

R

Rob Mineault 50:36

You must really sort of build up a real level of trust among, you know, the regular dancers that are dancing together a lot.

A

Adam Grant Warren 50:45

Yeah, yeah, they're, you know, to bring it outside of the art piece. I moved to Vancouver, and Vancouver is a real hard to city to break into sometimes, you know, especially when you move sort of for in an academic context, and you have these really great friends for the length of your academic program, and then you will go your separate ways. And then all of a sudden, you're, you know, quite lonely. I found All Bodies, and I've worked with a bunch of theatre companies, a bunch of, you know, a bunch of makers in town, and you get really close for the duration of a show. All Bodies was the first, the first time I like sort of kept wanting to come back to these folks and continue making work with these folks, sort of, without that invitation to come back, I wanted to return. And I got married some years ago, and my wedding party was mostly with the exception of one person, it was mostly made up of All Bodies folks, like they're my people. I can go and make other work with other companies and other artists. And because I feel like I have a home, artistically and creatively with our bodies. And I think a lot of that has come from over the years, the amount of the amount of time we've spent together, the amount of crap we've like had to deal with and just just that trust that comes. Yeah, that trust that comes knowing that your people know you as a performer, and that you know them as performers. And every time still, just to bring it back to the humanity every time someone new comes. It's not like, oh, someone new is coming, and sort of parachuting into an established thing. I mean, one of the things that I value most is, is how welcoming we are of new folks. And it's not a case case of like, you know, the center is closed. Do you know what I mean? And it's not that at all, it's, it's, it's, you know, folks come in, and the first thing I want to do is like, invite them to before, before classes, even over, the first thing that I want to do is invite a person to come back. Because because it's become artistically and personally, you know, it's become really important to me, and it's the thing that I can point to where I can say like, regardless of who sees the work, how many, regardless of how many butts we have in seats, and how many eyeballs we have on our screens, or on our stages. The work feels valuable at each stage, because of the people that returned to it.

R

Rob Mineault 53:47

Yeah, that must be so rewarding, right like to watch new people come in and for that light bulb to go off and for them to like realize that. Yeah, this is the you know, this is going to be a really incredible experience. Incredible community.

A

Adam Grant Warren 54:01

This is a place, right, this is a place. And I think what I you know, what we really sort of value is this is a place where you're welcome. This is a place where whatever you bring has space. You know, however you are, whatever you're bringing on the day, whatever movement you have in you, this is a place for it. And it's a really beautiful thing to watch people realize that that's more than something you say. Do you know what I mean? When you come back for that second or third class, people go like, oh, no, they're, they mean it. Yeah. It's cool.

S

Steve Barclay 54:40

So we're a local group, your local group. Are you aware of programs like this and other parts of the country?

A

Adam Grant Warren 54:47

Yeah. Um, there's, there's us here and there's Propeller in Ottawa, our, our co founder, Sarah Lapp, one of our original co founders. She runs Exploration Dance, there was there was Momo Dance but I don't think I'm I don't know that Momo is still active. Yeah, it's, it's not a huge pool, it's not a huge pool. Yeah, the it's not a huge, it's not a huge pool, there could there's definitely room for the pool to be bigger. And as we as we grow, and I can't say grow in terms of size, but as we develop as an organization, we've had, we've had chances to work with some folks across Canada and sort of plant some seeds. Which has also been really valuable for me as an educator and as a maker.

R

Rob Mineault 56:14

Yeah, I have to really, thank you so much for coming on. And I mean, it's an it's an incredible organization. I'm anxious for you guys to do performance, because I want to come out and see it. So where can people find out more information if they actually want to do a drop in or if they want to keep an eye like, like me, keep an eye on any upcoming performances? Where can they go to find out more?

A

Adam Grant Warren 56:39

We're, um, we're on the socials. And links to our socials can be found at the company website, which is www.allbodiesdance.ca.

R

Rob Mineault 56:49

Awesome. Well, thank you so much for coming on, and come back anytime, especially if you guys are putting together performance. We're happy to have you back on and to talk about it.

A

Adam Grant Warren 57:00

We'd love to thank you. Thanks for having me. Take care, guys.

R

Rob Mineault 57:03

There's hope for you yet Fleury. Load you up with that hula hoop and, and a tutu and send you in.

S

Steve Barclay 57:12

I know Rob, I was thinking more along the lines of us. Maybe there's somebody out there who could turn us into dancers?

R

Rob Mineault 57:18

Well, there you go. Right. Yeah.

R

Ryan Fleury 57:21

You can already dance. That's that's the key takeaway. Oh, you can already know. You can already move. Yes. Adam was saying I can move. I can move. But yes.

R

Rob Mineault 57:35

No, that's such it's such a cool concept. I wasn't kidding. When I first at first glance, I really just thought okay, well, this is I get I get what the gist of this is, and then you start to read, you start to uncover more, and you realize that there is something completely different that's, that's really quite beautiful. This could deep in the pool, as he was saying, you know, we need more of these all over the, you know, the continent all over the world, for that matter. Hopefully, one day.

S

Steve Barclay 58:03

I get the sense, though, you know, from talking to him from having, you know, the experience that he's had with this and the experience that others are having in this that this is this is something that's bound to expand and yeah, and I would think, probably fairly soon, I think

we'll see more groups like this. Yeah, building up and, you know, more and more of a base of performances?

R

Rob Mineault 58:30

Yeah, for sure. Well, I mean, especially, you know, as the idea of inclusion and diversity, you know, really, really starts to gain traction, more and more. Yeah, I think that, that this is definitely, you know, has the potential to pop up a lot more of these all around.

R

Ryan Fleury 58:45

So, I kind of liked his definition or his distinguishing between inclusivity and integration. Yeah, me too. You know, I'm kinda hammered and hard on this whole inclusivity term. Now, should we be actually saying integrated? Or is inclusivity still what we're aiming for?

R

Rob Mineault 59:11

Wow, it's it's a whole other podcast episode. Maybe a roundtable? Because it's a that's a valid question. It's, actually it's kind of true. You know, it's not about it's not, you know, with, with this, it's, you know, it's, again, it's not inclusion in the sense that it's not about workarounds. It's not about oh, we'll build something specifically for people in chairs. You know, not that there's not value in that I'm sure. You know, we we've been trying to get on that - What's that all girl chair dance group down in the states that we kind of tried to get on the show for a while? The Rollettes? I mean, certainly, they're still I mean, there's all of those value in that show for sure as well. But this is it's this is just something really different. That I think is really more about just celebrating celebrating diversity as a was to, you know, again, like tacking some sort of accessibility solution on to something like a dance group. Yeah, there you go. There's there's hope for us as a human species yet.

R

Ryan Fleury 1:00:15

The arts will save the world as you said. Yep. Yep.

S

Steve Barclay 1:00:18

They're gonna keep pushing boundaries. That's that's what the arts do they push bound boundaries, they challenge assumptions and that's what we love.

R

Rob Mineault 1:00:27

Yep. Well said all right. Anything else to add before we get the hell out of here?

R

Ryan Fleury 1:00:35

R Ryan Fleury 1:00:35
Nope.

S Steve Barclay 1:00:37
Not a thing.

R Rob Mineault 1:00:39
Right? Yeah, I agree. Hey, Ryan.

R Ryan Fleury 1:00:44
Yeah, Rob.

R Rob Mineault 1:00:46
Where can people find this?

R Ryan Fleury 1:00:48
They can find us at www.atbanter.com

R Rob Mineault 1:00:53
Hey, Steve how many of those Doritos are left?

R Ryan Fleury 1:00:56
Incidentally, how many of those Oreos are left?

S Steve Barclay 1:01:01
They are sitting directly beside my desk here. And I have piled up so much neglected paperwork on top of them. I don't even think of them so much as snacks anymore. They are merely an object in place.

R Ryan Fleury 1:01:15
Next time you're leaving your house bring them over.

S Steve Barclay 1:01:17
Okay

R Ryan Fleury 1:01:18
Rob is taking them

R Rob Mineault 1:01:23
Well, I'm not getting all of them. You'll kill me. Just find me on the floor two days later with Dorito dust all over my shirt and white Oreo cookie filling all over my face. Hey, they can also drop us an email if they so desire at cowbell@atbanter.com

R Ryan Fleury 1:01:51
All thanks to Steve for renewing the email.

R Rob Mineault 1:01:54
I saw that. I saw your emails.

S Steve Barclay 1:01:57
The email has been saved. And if you're not one of those people who uses email, but instead uses social media, you can find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

R Rob Mineault 1:02:08
Yeah, there you go. In. All right, I think that is going to be about do it for this week. Big thanks, of course to Adam for joining us and we will see everybody next week.