



eMartin
DANCE

BLOOD OF THE EARTH

SEPTEMBER 26 - 27, 2025
THE SOUTHERN THEATER
MINNEAPOLIS, MN



BLOOD OF THE EARTH

Choreographer

Erika Martin

Performers

Nieya Amezquita, Lu Chen, Lily Conforti,
Kaitlin Craven, Shannon Hartle Dolan, Olivia
Geffre, Zoë Koenig, Kae McMahon, Monica
Merino, AyM, Brenna Mosser, Lauren Reed,
Mary Mailand Schlichting

Technical Director & Lighting Designer

KD Deutsch Frost

Artistic Collaborators

Sophia Diehl, Nancy Julia Hicks

Archival Documentation

Ben McGinley, Stan Waldhauser

APPROXIMATE LENGTH: 1HR15

*Please turn off phones and electronic devices.
Photography, audio and/or videotaping is strictly prohibited.*

DIRECTOR NOTE

I am proud to welcome you to the world premiere of eMartin Dance's newest work 'Blood of the Earth.' The seeds of this piece were planted almost nine years ago when I first experienced the museum exhibit 'White Gold' by North Carolina based sculptor and painter Thomas Sayer. The stage opens on a likeness of Sayer's work - one dancer emerges from a field of reclined bodies with movement developed in dialog with his creative process.

This dance unfolds in three distinct sections rooted in the earth, shaped by water, and tinged with blood. I invite you to witness the histories beneath our feet - to resonate with the images of land and body.

As I developed this work, I drew inspiration from the textures of the South. The red clay and hurricanes of my youth are now informed by the rich soil and land of 10,000 lakes which I now call home. We premiere this work on the traditional and unceded homeland of the Dakota Oyate and Anishinaabe. From this land, and many others, I have drawn inspiration from those who have been the stewards of the earth for generations before. The earth holds our histories, our futures, our blood - we are the blood of the earth.

I want to give a special thank you to the contributions of the artists who have been a part of this work over the years: The students of Connecticut College and Zenon Dance Zone for the opportunity to research movement. Multidisciplinary artist Nancy Julia Hicks for collaboration on the screen dance build/capture 1823-2019, from which an excerpt appears in this work. And the movers of this cast for their collaboration and artistic generosity in the final stages of this process.

Thank you, and enjoy the show,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erika J. Martin'.

Erika Martin
Artistic Director

BLOOD OF THE EARTH

I

eulogy in clay

Performed by: Nieya Amezquita, Lu Chen, Lily Conforti, Kaitlin Craven, Shannon Hartle Dolan, Olivia Geffre, Zoë Koenig, Kae McMahon, Monica Merino, AyM, Brenna Mosser, Lauren Reed, Mary Mailand Schlichting

Sound credits: Knoxville: Summer of 15, Op.24 by Samuel Barber, Prayer by Gohst Quartet, Redford by Sufjan Stevens

II

build/capture

Video/textile: Nancy Julia Hicks

Performed by: Kaitlin Craven, Sophia Diehl, Shannon Hartle Dolan, Zoë Koenig, Erika Martin

Sound score: Erika Martin

III

eye wall

Performed by: Nieya Amezquita, Lily Conforti, Shannon Hartle Dolan, Olivia Geffre, Zoë Koenig, AyM, Lauren Reed

Sound credits: River in the Sea by Prudence Johnson, Luna by Purple Orange, After the Storm by Tony Anderson, Oh Katrina by Anders Osborne

IV

plowshares and watermelon seeds

Performed by: Nieya Amezquita, Shannon Hartle Dolan, Olivia Geffre, Zoë Koenig, Lauren Reed

Sound credits: Says by Nils Frahm, On the Nature of Daylight by Max Richter

Nieya Amezquita is a MN-based artist working with eMartin Dance, Arena Dances, Rhythmically Speaking, and Corpus Dance Works. She has performed with Threads Dance Project, Elayna Waxse Movement Projects, Concerto Dance, Off-Leash Area, and Doma Dance Theater. Nieya holds a BA in Dance and Psychology from the University of Georgia. Nieya's work has been presented in the Blackness Is Arts Festival by the Guthrie Theater, the CandyBox Festival by Arena Dances. She has been commissioned by Threads Dance Project, Alternative Motion Project and Ballet Co/Laboratory. In 2023, Nieya furthered her professional development by founding and leading Amez Dance.

陳璐 / Lu Chen is an artist with a focus in movement residing in Mini Sota Makece. Lu holds a Bachelor of Arts from Macalester College, where they majored in Psychology and Theater and Dance. Lu has performed with Macalester Mainstage Theater, Lightning Rod, 20% Theatre Company, Red Eye Theater, Twin Cities public parks, Tek Box Theater, and the MODArts' Move To Change Festival. Lu danced in works by choreographers such as Wynn Fricke, Ashwini Ramaswamy, and Vanessa Cruz. Lu is currently making independent work and performing with eMartin Dance.

Lily Conforti is a performer, choreographer, stage manager, and dance teacher from the Twin Cities. She graduated from the University of Minnesota with a BA in dance and physiology. Lily is the artistic director of Corpus Dance Works. Corpus aims to fuse daring movement with bold storytelling through multi-media art, satire and absurdity. Corpus has performed original evening-length works for MN Fringe Festival since 2019. Along with her own choreography, Lily has performed works by Kjara Wurst, Gallim Dance, Berit Ahlgren, Black Label Movement, Alternative Motion Project, and Threads Dance Project.

Kaitlin Craven is a Twin Cities based dancer, arts administrator, and yoga instructor. Kaitlin has performed locally with Willmeng Dances, eMartin Dance, Concerto Dance Company, and Borealis Dance Theatre, at Soiled Dance Series, MN Fringe Festival, CollabArts, Art-a-Whirl Festival, CANDY BOX Dance Festival, Generating Room, and DanceBARN Festival. She teaches at YogaSix and has recently worked administratively for MSAB and Zenon Dance School. Whether behind the scenes or onstage, Kaitlin is driven by a belief in the arts as a tool for connection, access, and transformation.

Kai "KD" Deutsch Frost is a non-binary, first generation artist specializing in lighting, video and audio for theatres around the Twin Cities. Their recent Light Design includes CASTLES by Kat Purcell at the Avalon, and Close to Home by Sharifa Yazmeen at Pillsbury House + Theatre. KD is the Event Production Coordinator/Video Supervisor at the Walker Art Center. They can be seen around the cities as a lighting designer, all-around stagehand, and are known to crochet in dark corners around town to pass the time.

Shannon Hartle Dolan is from Des Moines, IA. She received a BFA in dance from University of Iowa where she worked with Monica Bill Barnes, Jennifer Kayle, Christopher Rasheem-McMillan, Eloy Barragan, and Armando Duarte. She is a company member with Ruby Josephine Dance Theatre, Crash Dance Productions, Black Label Movement, and eMartin Dance. Shannon has performed with Threads Dance Project, Stark Dance, Ayumi Schaefer, and Analog Dance Works. Her choreography has been presented in Collab Arts Vol. III, Zenon Zone, Movers Make 2.0, and Candy Box. She teaches at Hothouse, Circus Juventas, Emerge Performing Arts, Young Dance, and Zenon.

Olivia Geffre is a Twin Cities based dancer, choreographer, and creative. She attended the Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists. In 2022, she became a certified yoga teacher, furthering her kinesthetic knowledge and fascination with movement. In 2024, she completed a year of TU dance's CUL•TI•VATE, trainee program. She is currently teaching dance at Emerge Performing Arts, hoping to inspire the next generation to see the beauty and importance of art. She is currently exploring trusting her creativity and her individual artistic voice - aiming to inspire positive change through her movement expression.

Zoë Koenig is committed to producing surreal works that balance emotional and physical extremes with humor and pop sensibilities. Her work has been shown at the Walker Art Center, Cowles Center, Southern Theater, Luminary Arts Center, Praxis Gallery, and Off-Leash Art Box. She's been commissioned by Alternative Motion Project, Analog Dance Works, and artist in residence at the Cowles Center and Zenon Dance Zone. She has danced in works by numerous choreographers nationally and internationally, including Martha Graham, Kate Wallich, and Katy Pyle. Her newest project, Physical Prizes, a collaboration with composer Nora Nygard, will premiere October 2025.

Erika Martin is a Minneapolis based dance artist, choreographer, educator and engaged citizen. Their works have been performed nationally in museums, theaters, and public spaces: notably at the Lyman Art Museum (CT), Schaefer Theatre Box, Bates Dance Festival (ME), Melrose Ballroom (NY), Praxis Gallery, TekBOX at the Cowles Center, Barbara Barker Center for Dance, DanceBARN, Dances by the Lake Festival, The Southern Theater, and Soiled Dance Series (MN). Erika has had the privilege to perform works by Kyle Abraham, Ronald K. Brown, David Dorfman, Elm City Dance Collective, Ori Floman, Paula Mann, Doug Varone and Shen Wei. Erika is a 2017 graduate of Connecticut College with degrees in Dance, America Studies, and Sociology. Their research investigates identity performance and how experience is manifested in movement. Erika is the Artistic Director of eMartin Dance, co-founder of Dance Projects by ME and serves as School Coordinator for Zenon Dance School.

Kae McMahon is a clumsy dancer, disorganized organizer, and recreational farmer. Since relocating to the Twin Cities in 2023, they have had the opportunity to perform in works by Gabrielle "Gabby the Baddie" Abram, Taja Will, Mathew Janczewski, Alys Ayumi Ogura and Griffy LaPlante. They independently produced and collaboratively choreographed and performed in "Good News: A Dance Concert", directed by Haze Harrison, which premiered at MOVO Space in January 2025. They are grateful to join eMartin Dance as an apprentice and performer for their 2025 season.

Mona Merino was born and raised in Ciudad, MX, where she discovered a love for dance at an early age. Her journey led her to perform alongside celebrated Mexican pop artists. After stepping away from the stage to embrace the role of full-time mother, she returned 23 years later to rediscover the art form that has always been her deepest passion. She has since performed with Dance Projects by ME, Contempo Physical Dance, and eMartin Dance. With each performance, she treats the stage as both a homecoming and an exploration—seizing every opportunity to keep moving, creating, and telling stories through the language of dance.

AyM is a Twin Cities based movement artist. Born and raised in Japan, she came to the US to study at Carleton College, where she earned a BA in Dance and Physics in 2022. She learned

contemporary dance from Janne Shockley and Judith Howard as well as worked with MN-based artists such as D. Jinza Thayer, HIJACK, Mathew Janczewski, BRKFAST Dance Compay, Rosy Sima, Mary Willmeng, and Dance Projects by ME. She had the honor of presenting her work at the America College Dance Association. One of her goals is to share the joy of movement with as many people as possible, as a mover and volunteer with eMartin Dance.

Brenna Mosser is a Minneapolis based dancer and choreographer. She seeks to illuminate the awe in her surroundings by sculpting falls, stumbles, and asymmetries gracefully. She spent two years in the Conservation Corps where she faced the reality of climate change, and has since dedicated her work to this crisis. She earned a BFA in dance performance at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire, UK. She earned an L3 license in performance and arts management at le Centre national de la Danse Contemporaine, FR. She founded Analog Dance Works in 2019. She currently dances for Analog, eMartin Dance, Ruby Josephine Dance Theater, Threads Dance Project, and Zoë Koenig.

Lauren Reed is a St. Paul based Black-American dancer, creative, and scholar, born and raised in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Dance is where she spiritually feels most connected to God, her ancestors, and herself. She is a 2023 graduate of Bates College with a BA in Dance and Africana Studies. Her thesis entitled "Rest & Resistance: Dance as Protest, Pearl Primus, and Black Women Claiming Our Deserved Rest" investigates Black women using rest as a form of resistance against racist, capitalist, patriarchal structures. Lauren is currently researching different Afro-Diasporic movement styles and how dance heals the human heart.

Mary Mailand Schlichting is a Minnesota-born dance artist whose work is rooted in athleticism and nuanced artistic inquiry. She holds a BFA in Theater and Dance from Macalester College, where she represented the program at the renowned Jacob's Pillow Festival. Deeply engaged in the Twin Cities artistic community, Mary has performed and collaborated with a diverse range of companies and artists, including Crash Dance Productions, Contempo Physical Dance, Amez Dance, Analog Dance Works, Ruby Josephine Dance Theater, Rountree Gallery, and continued partnership with visual artist Jessalyn Finch.

THANK YOU

eMartin Dance is a small, but active local arts organization. This work would not have been possible without the support of our community. In this difficult economic climate we are thankful for your generosity.

Leanne Aranza
Martha Acebal
Ginger Bate
Rebecca Brill-Weitz
Sarah Brenneke
Kelly Campos
Miles & Letha Costin
Stella Catherine
Steve Cofrancesco
Suzanne Cottrell
Deborah Danzeiser
Jerome Davis
Joseph & Kristel Desanto
Julia Davidson
Sophia Diehl
Nina Ebbighausen
Deanna Fields

Jessi Fett
Anne Gorman
Courtney Greer
Dana Gentry
Emily Green
Karla Grotting
Pamela Gordinier
Sharon Garner
Susan & Ned Gardner
Ayumi Hori-Shafer
Mona Hall
Sénait Judge-Yoakam
Shawn Judge
Shell Jiang
Susan & John Donahue
Janet Lenuis
Joanna Lees
Lorraine Ljunggren

Rachel Lieblein-Jurbala
Joshua Martin
Linda & Jim Martin
Marco Marcotte
Bobette Reed
Chelsey Rowan
Kelley Robbert
Meg Robbins
Joy Schare
Melanie Spanko
Storm & Sarah Sovia-Borris
Thomas Sayer
Cynthia Thomas
Erin Thompson
Maurice Tiner
Jillian Wiseman
Sarah Weiss

Thank you for supporting dance in action!

[DONATE](#)

