

Leah O'Donnell

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Dance / Theater Artist

EDUCATION

University of Michigan – Master of Fine Arts (Dance) candidate – anticipated completion 2023

Wayne State University – Bachelor of Science in Dance, graduated summa cum laude - 2019

Wayne State University – Bachelor of Arts in English, 2016 – 2017

New School University & Joffrey Ballet School – Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance, 2001-2002

CHOREOGRAPHY

BODIES IN MOTION AND AT REST - 2023

Site-Specific performance and dance film in response to *Unseen Worlds* exhibit. Dir./Chor.

- Michigan Museum of Natural History, Ann Arbor, MI

BLUE BURROW - 2023

Site-Specific short dance film set on Lake Huron

- American Dance Festival's Movies by Movers - official selection
- Inspired Dance Film Festival (Australia) -official selection
- Dance Camera Istanbul - official selection
- Experimental, Dance & Music Film Festival - winner: best experimental dance film
- Dublin Movie Awards - winner: best experimental
- Tokyo International Short Film Festival - honorable mention
- Seoul International Short Film Festival - official selection
- Paris International Short Festival -finalist

ONCE THERE WAS NOT - 2022

Evening-length (1 hr.) dance theater thesis concert. Group work. Dir./Choreographer

- Performance Studio Theatre, Ann Arbor, MI

THE THIRD - 2022

Trio. Approx. 10 minutes. Choreographer.

- Detroit Dance City Festival (Best Choreography Award recipient), Detroit, MI

EL AMOR BRUJO - 2021

Commission. Solo and duet performed with live orchestra. Approx. 15 minutes. Choreographer

- Great Lakes Chamber Orchestra, Bay Harbor, MI

SARA - LARA - 2021

Short solo dance Film. Choreographer and Performer

- Global Women Performing Arts Festival, Busan, Korea
- Detroit Dance City Festival (adapted live duet performance), Detroit, MI

WATCH HER DISAPPEAR - 2020

Duet. Approx 10 min. Choreographer

- Maggie Allesee Choreography Competition (Finalist); Virtual
- Detroit Dance City Festival; Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI

- Think Tank 1: Among Women; Detroit, MI

UNTITLED OFFICE DANCE - 2020

Site-specific duet. Choreographer and Performer

- Kalamazoo Art Hop; Kalamazoo, MI

UNTITLED - 2020

Commission. Group work. Approx. 10 min. Choreographer

- Eisenhower Dance Detroit: Dance Mosaics Concert; Rochester, MI

REVERIE - 2019 - 2020

Trio. Approx. 8 min. Choreographer

- NewDanceFest; (Guest Choreographer) Eisenhower Dance Detroit; Rochester, MI
- Women's Work Festival; Boll Theater, Detroit, MI

DANCE OF THE ANCESTORS - 2019 -2020

Group dance theater work. Approx 12 min. Choreographer

- American College Dance Association, NE Conference 2019 (Gala selection); SUNY Brockport, NY
- RadFest 2020 Epic Center, Kalamazoo, MI

EUTIERRIA - 2019

Short dance film. Dir./ Chor.

- Jump/Cut: A Dance on Film Festival; Brooklyn, NY

THE SORCERER - 2016

Choreographer

- UM Gilbert and Sullivan Society, Lydia Mendelsohn Theatre; Ann Arbor, MI

RESIDENCIES

GREYWOOD ARTS; Killeagh Village, Ireland - 2022

DANCE & LIVE PERFORMANCE

"CAVERNOUS BODIES" SCREENDANCE, DUDERSTADT CENTER, ANN ARBOR, MI

Dancer. Dir. Georgia b Smith

"MOTION PICTURES" RESIDENCY, RIVERSIDE ARTS CENTER, YPSILANTI, MI – 2021

Dancer. Dir. Peter Sparling

"PLASTIC ABODES" PERFORMANCE INSTALLATION AND FILM – 2021

Dancer. Dir. Georgia b. Smith

BIZARRE BAZAAR, COLLEGE FOR CREATIVE STUDIES FUNDRAISER; BIRMINGHAM, MI – 2019

Dancer. Chor. Biba Bell

IMPRESSIONIST AND MODERN ART RECEPTION, SOTHEBY'S AUCTION HOUSE; NEW YORK, NY – 2015

Dancer. Chor. Jermaine Browne

WASHINGTON NATIONAL OPERA, KENNEDY CENTER; WASHINGTON, D.C. – 2013

Dancer: *La Forza Del Destino*. Dir. Francesca Zambello / Chor. Eric Sean Fogel

Principle Dancer, cover: *Show Boat*. Dir. Francesca Zambello / Chor. Michele Lynch

NEW YORK CITY OPERA, EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO – 2012 – 2013

"Death" Principle U/S: *Orpheus*. Dir. Rebecca Taichman / Chor. Mark Dendy

METROPOLITAN OPERA, LINCOLN CENTER; NEW YORK, NY – 2011-2013

Dancer: *Turandot*. Dir. Franco Zeffereilli / Chor. Chiang Ching

Dancer: *Don Giovanni*. Dir. Michael Grandage / Chor. Ben Wright
THE FABULOUS SHOW, ATHINON ARENA; ATHENS, GREECE – 2009-2010

Dancer & Soloist. Chor. Jermaine Browne
"PEEPSHOW", PLANET HOLLYWOOD; LAS VEGAS, NV – 2009

Original Cast Member & Ms. Pete U/S. Dir. Jerry Mitchell / Chor. Nick Kenkel
THE BOX NYC – 2007-2009

"Hammerstein Beauty" Dir. Simon Hammerstein & Richard Kimmel.
NYC and select tours to Washington D.C., Turkey, United Emirates, & England.
TARGET KALEIDOSCOPE FASHION SPECTACULAR, THE STANDARD HOTEL; NEW YORK, NY – 2009

Dancer. Chor. Ryan Heffington
LITTLE STEVEN'S GARAGE FESTIVAL; RANDALL'S ISLAND, NY – 2004

Dancer. Nancy Sinatra performance: *These Boots are Made for Walking*. Dir. Steven Van Zandt
BALLET DEVIARE; NEW YORK, NY – 2003 – 2004

Soloist. Dir. Laura Kowalewski

FILM (principal dancer credits)

TRAINWRECK – 2015

Dir. Judd Apatow / Chor. Danielle Flora

RICKI AND THE FLASH – 2015

Dir. Jonathon Demme / Chor. Annie B. Parsons

THE INTERN – 2015

Dir. Nancy Meyers / Chor. Danielle Flora

THE SMURFS – 2011

Dir. Raja Gosnell / Chor. Keith Young

DARK HORSE – 2011

Dir. Todd Solondz / Chor. Dan Knechtges

MULTIPLE SARCASMS – 2010

Dir. Brooks Branch

AWAY WE GO – 2009

Dir. Sam Mendes

ACROSS THE UNIVERSE – 2005

Dir. Julie Taymor / Chor. Daniel Ezralow

TELEVISION (principal dancer credits)

SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE, NBC – 2010 – 2015

Several episodes. List available upon request. Chor. Danielle Flora

LIP SYNCH BATTLE, SPIKE TV – 2015

Salt-N-Pepa performance. Chor. Danielle Flora

THE TONIGHT SHOW, NBC – 2014

Footloose (performance with Kevin Bacon). Chor. Danielle Flora

Wastepaper Basketball (skit with Jimmy Fallon and LeBron James). Chor. Danielle Flora

VICTORIA'S SECRET FASHION SHOW, CBS – 2003 & 2011

Ballet segment. (2011) Chor. Jermaine Browne.

Jay-Z performance: *Dirt Off Your Shoulder* (2003) Chor. Fatima Robinson

THE COMEDY AWARDS, HAMMERSTEIN BALLROOM; NEW YORK, NY – 2011

Lonely Island, Akon & The Roots performance: *I Just Had Sex*. Chor. Danielle Flora

MARK TWAIN PRIZE FOR AMERICAN HUMOR, PBS. KENNEDY CENTER, WASHINGTON D.C – 2010

Jenna Maroney performance: *Muffin Top*. Chor. Danielle Flora

VIDEO MUSIC AWARDS , RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL; NEW YORK, NY – 2009

Beyoncé performance: *Single Ladies*. Chor. Frank Gatson

GOSSIP GIRL, CW. – 2007

Hi, Society. Dir. Patrick Norris

30 ROCK, NBC. – 2007

The Source Awards. Chor. Danielle Flora

FASHION ROCKS, VH1. RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL – 2006 & 2007

Martina Mc Bride performance (2007): *This One's For The Girls*

Nelly Furtado & Timbaland performance (2006): *Maneater* Chor. Fatima Robinson

LATIN GRAMMY'S, UNIVISION. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN – 2006

Thalia performance: *Sedución*

ASSUME THE POSITION WITH MR. WUHL, HBO. – 2006

Prod. Robert Wuhl

NIGHT OF TOO MANY STARS, COMEDY CENTRAL. 2006 & 2010

Steven Colbert & Steve Carell performance: *Everybody's Talking 'Bout Sully* (2010). Chor. Danielle Flora

Jack Black opening performance (2006). Chor. Danielle Flora

EUROPE MUSIC AWARDS, MTV. PAVILHÃO ATLÂNTICO; LISBON, PORTUGAL – 2005

Black Eyed Peas performance: *My Humps* Chor. Fatima Robinson

Akon performance: *Banza* Chor. Jamaica

PEPSI: "SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION" NATIONAL COMMERCIAL – 2005

Dance & Stunt Double for Parker Posey. Chor. Margherite Derricks

SELECT WRITING

ESSAY'D DETROIT: Contributing Writer, Detroit, MI 2020

- [Artist Profile: Rachael Harbert](#)

ANN ARBOR OBSERVER: Contributing Writer, Ann Arbor, MI 2015-current

- [Betroffenheit: The Art of Trauma](#)
- [Batsheva Dance Company: Mesmerizing](#)
- [Mark Morris Dance Group: Layla and Majnun](#)
- [Growing Up with Ballet: Counting the Years in Nutcrackers](#)
- [Right & Left: An earthy vocabulary](#)
- [Comic Opera guild: Barber of Seville](#)

UM CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE: Contributing Writer, Ann Arbor, MI 2016-2018

- [Hou Ying Dance Theater's TUTU: A Powerful New Voice in Chinese Contemporary Dance](#)
- [Hanggai Brings Musical Diversity to the U-M Campus!](#)

DETROIT METRO TIMES: Contributing online Writer, Detroit, MI, 2015

- [Welcome to Flower house, a Living Art Installation in Hamtramck](#)

DANCE PULP: Contributing Writer, New York, NY 2012-2015

- [Review: Ballet Next at the Joyce Theater](#)
- [Flashback: Emma Livry, 1862](#)
- [Looking back: A Dance Icon Video Tour](#)

DANCE SPIRIT MAGAZINE: Editorial Intern, New York, NY 2010

- [Terpsichore and Memories of Greece](#)
- [Focus on Freelance: Meet Leah](#)
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FURTHER TRAINING

"Body/Landscape" Body Weather workshop with Frank van de Ven. Inishbofin, Ireland - 2022
VIM VIGOR winter sessions workshop. Ann Arbor, MI - 2021
Dance Spirit Magazine Editorial Internship – 2011
Broadway Dance Center Internship – 2002 –2003

TEACHING

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN; ANN ARBOR, MI 2020 - 2022

Dance 131: First- Year Composition. (GSI) Fall 2022
Dance 100: Composition. (GSI) Fall 2022
Dance 100-400: Contemporary. (GSI) Winter 2022
Dance 100: Improvisation. (GSI) Winter 2022
Dance 200: Modern 2 (Substitute Instructor) Winter 2022
Dance 100: Contemporary. (GSI) Fall 2021
Dance 100: Musical Theater. (GSI) Fall 2021
Dance 100: Musical Theater. (GSI) Winter 2021
Dance 100: Site Dance. (GSI) Winter 2021
Dance 100: Ballet. (GSI) Fall 2020

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY; DETROIT, MI - 2022

Choreography 3. (Guest Teacher) Fall 2022

MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE; DETROIT OPERA HOUSE, DETROIT, MI – 2018-2021

Operetta Summer workshops for teens. Movement Instructor and choreographer
Operetta Remix - 2019 and 2021
Virtual Edition - 2020
Iolanthe - 2018

JCC MACCABI GAMES; BEVERLY HILLS, MI – 2019

Dance Competition Judge

BALLET AND BODY; NEW YORK, NY – 2015

Instructor: Ballet, street jazz, and "Ballet Body TM Barre" method for teens and adults

NIEVES LATIN DANCE STUDIO; BROOKLYN, NY – 2014

Instructor: Ballet and Creative Movement for children ages 3-10

WILLIAMSBURG MOVEMENT AND ARTS CENTER; BROOKLYN, NY – 2014

Guest Teacher, open level ballet

EAST VILLAGE DANCE PROJECT; NEW YORK, NY – 2012

Substitute Teacher: Contemporary Jazz

AWARDS

Detroit Dance City Festival - Best Choreography Award recipient - 2022
Center for the Education of Women + (University of Michigan) Joan P. Irish Scholar - 2021
Maggie Allesee Choreography Award (finalist) - 2020
ACDA Northeast Conference (Gala section) SUNY Brockport - 2019
Maggie Allesee Copperfoot Award for Choreographic Excellence - 2019
The Harriet Berg Endowed Choreography Award - 2018
Georgia Reid Scholarship - 2018
Wsf Hans A Matthias Scholarship - 2018
Department of English Pearl A. Warn Endowed Scholarship - 2017
The Actors Fund: Career Transition for Dancers, education grant - 2016

PRINT AND PRESS

Festival Reviews: Blue Burrow directed by Leah O'Donnell - 2023
Wildsound Blog Interview: Filmmaker Leah O'Donnell - 2023
Tokyo International Short Film Festival Review: The Infinite Blue - 2023
Tokyo International Short Film Festival: Blue Burrow - An Interview with Leah O'Donnell - 2023
Interlochen Public Radio Interview: "From the Met to MTV, Leah O'Donnell..." - 2021
Dancers Among Us (New York Times Best Seller) featured dancer - 2012
Prestige Magazine (Paris): Shooting a N.Y., Party a la (haute) Mode. Ballet Dancer/model - Dec. 2011
Philadelphia Weekly "Delicate Balance", cover photo - April 2011
Celebrity Magazine (Greece) 2010 "Absolutely Fabulous" Cover story - 2010
Allure Magazine "The Sexiest Show Ever" Interviewee, dancer - 2008

VOLUNTEER WORK

MATTHAEI BOTANICAL GARDENS; ANN ARBOR, MI – 2016

Horticulture care and maintenance volunteer

BIRD CENTER OF WASHTENAW COUNTY; ANN ARBOR, MI – 2015

Care for, and rehabilitation of injured birds.

PAWS NYC; NEW YORK, NY – 2013 – 2014

Assist the elderly and disabled in caring for their pets, enabling them to keep their companions.

OCCUPY SANDY; BROOKLYN, NY – 2012

Volunteer relief, post-hurricane. Organization of donated materials: towels, clothes, food etc.

MEALS ON WHEELS; ANN ARBOR, MI– 2011

Holiday Volunteer

BROADWAY BARES, EQUITY FIGHTS AIDS, ROSE LAND BALLROOM; NEW YORK, NY – 2005 & 2007

Volunteer performer for charity fundraiser shows. Dir. Jerry Mitchell