



Photos by Morgan Schleif / Special to the Forum

Shot in the elements and wading waist-deep into water, Chamber Six Media led the production of the local film called "Wake" slated to open at the Rethink Dance Film Festival in October.

## 'WAKE' OF MOVEMENT

Nature is at the heart of new experimental film

By **Ethan Mickelson**  
The Arts Partnership

### FARGO

**S**tep by step, choreography offers a road map out of a deep digital forest. Dance transcends a single performer, pulling the audience in and lifting them in a wake of movement.

Challenging the traditional structures of choreographic storytelling and artistic expression, Rethink Dance's 2020 Film Festival is set for Oct. 8 at the Fargo Theatre with a premiere of a locally produced film called "Wake."

The experimental film brings together dance, cinematography and music to capture an extension of the subconscious using flowing movements of dancers with the beauty of nature as a backdrop.

Started three years ago, the Rethink Dance Festival features films that reflect the beauty and synchronicity between the choreography of dance and the choreography of cinematography. Narrative films of any length are eligible, and past submissions have included stories from around the world of dance.

"I'm really proud of our team for going for it and doing this film in the middle of a pandemic on a shoestring budget," says Haylee Thompson, founder and CEO of Rethink Dance.

Continuing on with another film this year, the festival originally premiered the experimental film "Rise" in 2018 alongside films from several countries.

"We were getting submissions from all over the place, all of these different countries," Thompson says. "I guess I shouldn't be too surprised, because I know people want a platform to share their art, but maybe it was my own attitude

of thinking this incredible thing couldn't come true."

It did come true. And now, even among unthinkable hurdles, the team behind "Wake" is bringing nature into the conversation for a fresh perspective in a strange world.

"Nature was a key element to the film, says the director of the film, Oscar De Leon, of Chamber Six Media. "The whole conceit of the project is about reengaging with nature."

Although they battled with the elements, from extreme heat to swarming bugs, shooting a dance film out in nature lent itself to their story of awakening.

"I think this pandemic and everything that's gone along with it has allowed us to really reengage and shut everything else off for the most part, to sort of forcibly come to terms with nature and try to capture it," De Leon says.

Shot in picturesque farmlands and wading into serene summer waters, the film creates a back-and-forth conversation between dance and the natural world.

As the choreographer for "Wake," David Triptow was tasked with starting that conversation first as free-form ideas, and then eventually cutting down ideas into one compelling piece.

"The choreography at first was kind of almost free-form and we slowly created a rhythm to it. I had to listen to it and things just kind of fit in pockets and I kept on re-tweaking, tightening up little by little until it just kind of fit like a glove," Triptow explains about the process.

A native of Fargo, Triptow's experience with choreography started with Trollwood Performing

'WAKE' FILM: Page B2



The locally produced film "Wake" creates a conversation around responses to the COVID-19 pandemic with organic movements that focus on reconnecting with nature and self-discovery.



Three years into the Rethink Dance Film Festival, CEO Haylee Thompson and a team of creatives came together to shoot "Wake," set to premiere this fall. A GoFundMe fundraiser is currently seeking support to finish the final editing of the project.

## Hired men on area farms sure were memorable

**S**tories in this column about hired men on area farms caught the attention of **John Pierce**, the longtime member of Concordia College's office of advancement.

"Hired men in the homes of farm families became fixtures in those homes," he writes "Neighbors"; "eating their meals there, in some cases residing in the same houses as their employers, becoming an integral part of not only the family's work environment but also of its social environment, attending church, going to



**BOB LIND**  
*Neighbors*

town with them on Saturday nights, and becoming a kind of role model (sometimes not a desirable one) for the children."

John then passes on this story:

"One of our hired men, in the years following my father's passing in

1961," he writes, "became frustrated when the Hercules engine on our old pull-type '65' John Deere combine kept overheating, causing its water supply to run out of its overflow. But he thought he had solved the problem by soldering the overflow shut — except it blew up.

"Mechanics at the implement store at Page, N.D., nearly died laughing when that hired man carried the radiator from the combine in, complaining that it

had malfunctioned... exploded!"

### Man of few words

John also passes along a story told by a well-known local person.

"Boyd Christensen, the beloved media personality on WDAY TV and radio and KFME public TV, told a story about a hired man on his family's farm that I'll always remember, because it could have happened in any farm family's home," John writes.

"Boyd said it was a typically long evening

after dinner, everyone had run out of conversation topics and listening to radio programs and it was getting late.

"Well, the hired man was the first to give up and go to bed. He slowly stood up and said, 'Ya, well, I s'pose,' and left the room.

"Boyd said those words were the only ones the man said the entire evening.

"That was typical."

If you have an item of interest for this column, mail it to Neighbors, The Forum, Box 2020, Fargo, ND 58107, fax it to 701-241-5487 or email [blind@forumcomm.com](mailto:blind@forumcomm.com).