

1. What is the Symphonic Body Orchestra?

The Symphonic Body is a performance made entirely from gestures. It is a movement based orchestral work performed by people from across the Stanford University campus. Instead of instruments, individuals in this “orchestra” perform gestural portraits based on the motions of their workday. These portraits are like individual dances, custom made for each person, choreographed from the movements they already do. By engaging with this choreographic performance practice members of the Stanford community come together in concert to expand, renew and re-experience the artistry embedded in the everyday. The Symphonic Body/Stanford will be performed on May 29<sup>th</sup> at the new Bing Concert Hall.

2. What types of jobs are included in the performance?

Gardener, Ground Keeper, Horticulturist, Pediatrician, Professor, PhD candidate, Continuing Studies student, Environmental Scientist, Scholar, Dean, Dancer, Social Worker, Counselor, Student Advisor, Actor, Anthropologist, Physician, Arborist, Attorney, Microbiologist, Researcher, Undergraduate, Electrical Engineer . . . to name a few.

3. Were there any special challenges in working with regular people instead of professional dancers?

The Symphonic Body/Stanford builds on a practice I have been engaged with for more than 20 years. I make performance works with people gathered together by a common profession or activity or shared passion. Lawyers, security officers, nuns, fly fisherman, custodians, a farmer and her dairy cows, physicians, poker players, cowboys, development directors, among others, have performed in this series of works. I think of these works as a dialogue between embrace and surrender. For example, in the case of the Symphonic Body/Stanford, whether it’s the performance studies professor or the grounds keeper here at Stanford, each takes up, or embraces, her identity as a professor or as a gardener *as* the context of this performance. This (self) embracing draws metaphor and meaning from the surroundings of the everyday. But, and, then during the making of the work and the performance process the embrace gives way to a surrender, a letting go of the individual identity into a larger experience of being. So, these works, performed by the actual individuals who live with these gestures (as opposed to trained performers taking on the gestures of other people) exist in this tension between embrace and surrender, giving rise to questions about what constitutes humanity and aliveness in given moment.

4. We all have repetitive motions that fill our days. Will this unique performance make us feel better or worse about that?

Ha. Better!

5. What has surprised you most about this project?

Almost everyone I've worked with here at Stanford has surprised me in one way or another. There is a ubiquitous willingness, drive and imagination in people at this vast university. The thing that has surprised me most, though? Love. There is a lot of love here.

6. Any final thoughts?

Yes, I wanted to say something about how all the people have come to participate in the Symphonic Body. I asked the first person to agree to be in it . . . Who inspires you here at Stanford? Who uplifts you? Who has caused you to grow, expand, become more of yourself? From there I got three names and I went to them to invite them to participate. Whether or not they could, I then asked those people . . . Who inspires you here at Stanford . . . on and on. So, The Symphonic Body performance will exist as a kind of living "web" of inspiration.