

# Get to Know Guides

## Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre: Last Ward



Created across three continents, [Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre: The Last Ward](#) follows a man's journey towards death in a hospital room. Surrounded by the sterile mechanisms of modern medicine, the patient reflects on his life, relationships and connection to place, as the ritual of doctor visits and family calls transform into an increasingly bizarre landscape of tragedy and humor. The performance features an international cast including guest artist Khalifa Natour performing a script in Arabic with English subtitles.

### Get to Know... [Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre](#)

Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre (YSdT) creates invigorating performance and education programs that expand access to and promote understanding through the arts. A female/minority led organization, YSDT believes art should be liberating, transformative, and accessible to all. The company operates out of the United States and Palestine and is committed to uniting diverse artists and audiences in the creative process. Since 2005, the non-profit has produced more than 30 original works that have been seen in 10 countries across four continents.

### WHAT ARE CONTEMPORARY & DABKE DANCE?

Yaa Samar! blends [contemporary dance](#) with traditional [Dabke dance](#). Contemporary dance is a style of choreography that combines elements of several dance genres including modern, jazz, lyrical and classical ballet. Contemporary dancers strive to connect the mind and the body through fluid dance movements. Dabke is a traditional Middle Eastern dance form where dancers stand in a line holding hands and align their shoulders together and move to a specific rhythm. The word "Dabke" comes from a Levantine Arabic word that means "the stomping of the feet" or "to make a noise."





# Artist Inspiration

Yaa Samar! Dance Theater, according to Zoe Rabinowitz, the associate artistic director and a performer of the troupe, explains “that there’s a world that begs to be shared and wants to be seen and wants to show maybe the other side of a story that wants to be told about a certain type of person or people.” They are inspired by the world and desire to communicate its stories, taking inspiration from traditional Dabke dance. Through their Dabke practice, which is connected to ancient Asian and African traditions, they focus on the connection between their minds and bodies.

## ACTIVITY

Make a dance!

Research a traditional dance form from your culture or from another culture that interests you, including its traits. Consider how you can blend that dance form with contemporary dance.

For example, if the traditional dance style that you have chosen involves a lot of spinning, see if you can make the spinning in the fluid motion that is characteristic of contemporary dance.

Play around with the contrast of these dance forms until you have an amazing cross-temporal form of choreography!



## Learn More



### FURTHER VIEWINGS

[Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre Instagram Page](#) →

[Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre: Last Ward Trailer](#) →

[Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre - Artist Talkback](#) →

[Amir Nizar Zuabi: A theatrical journey celebrating the refugee experience | TED](#) →

[Co-Creators of Last Ward Amir Nizar Zuabi and Samar Haddad King \[afikra conversations\]](#) →



### FURTHER READINGS

[Dance and Political Credibility: The Appropriation of Dabkeh by Zionism, Pan-Arabism, and Palestinian Nationalism](#) →

[Global/Mobile: Reorienting Dance and Migration Studies](#) →

[Dance Ethnology and Anthropology of Dance](#) →

[Dabke Music and Dance and the Palestinian refugee experience: On the outside looking](#) →

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