

Stories of Our People
Music from the original performance work,
created by Bandelion, 2015



Bandelion is:

Chris Evans, Christof Gallegos, Dawn Holtan, Corissa “Reese” Johnson, Eric Kupers, Keith Penney, Anne-Lise Reusswig, Belgica Rodriguez, and Frances Sedayao
with Associate Members: Rodney Bell, Cristina Carrasquillo, Dorine Hoeksema, Stacz Sadowski

On these recordings:

Chris: *Cello, Looper, Spoken Text*
Christof: *Clarinet, Backing Vocals, Spoken Text*
Corissa: *Lead and Backing Vocals, Cajon*
Eric: *Lead and Backing Vocals, Ukulele, Looper, Bass and Tenor Banjos, Djembe, Cajón, Percussion, Moyo Drum, Spoken Text*
Keith: *Keyboards, Accordion, Djembe, Lead Vocals on The Wind, Spoken Text*
Anne-Lise: *Backing Vocals, Spoken Text, Lead Vocals on The Wind*
Frances: *Flute, Spoken Text*
Abe, Bubbles & Doodle: *Shaking, Moral Support*

Music and Lyrics by Eric Kupers in collaboration with Bandelion except where noted*
Note: All of these songs were created as Bandelion worked on the performance piece, Stories of Our People. Some ended up in the shows, some stayed behind the scenes and fueled us in other ways.

Disc I

1. Stories of Our People – There are Many **Words by Andrew Ramer, adapted by Eric*
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3. Rosh Hashanah 5775 **
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Disc I

1. *Stories of Our People – There are Many*

*Words by Andrew Ramer, adapted by Eric

Eric: Moyo Drum

Text Spoken by: Eric, Chris, Keith, Frances, Anne-Lise

There are many stories of our people.

Sometimes we are called the *Man-Woman People*,
and sometimes we are called the *Not Man-Not Woman People*.

Because of our connection to the air, we are sometimes called the *People with Wings*, or the *Fairy People*.
And because of our connection to the Earth, we are called the *Fruit People*, and the *Faggot People*,
which means the Bundle of Sticks Tied Together People.

We have been called the *Fixes the Hair People* and the *Makes Beautiful Lodges People*.
Sometimes we are called the *Like-That People*, the *Happy People*, or the *Strange People*.

Some have called us the *Creative People*, the *Misfit People*. or the *Wild People*.

Because we travel on our own, beyond the known lands, without maps,
we are sometimes called the *Alone People*, or the *Outsider People*,

But of all the names we have called ourselves and been called, my favorite is the *Walks Between People*.

After Father Earth had made all the different people, he saw that every people was staying in its own place, keeping its own kind of beauty. So he asked Grandmother Sun. She thought about it, and she thought about it and she thought. She got so tired thinking that she fell asleep. And while she was sleeping, she dreamed. And in her dream, a new kind of people appeared, the *Walks Between People*—the People who walk between women and men, who walk between night and day, who walk between the sky and the earth, who walk between the living and the dead, connecting them, carrying their beauty back and forth and forth and back. And she was happy. And Father Earth was happy.

As we have grown, we have planted *Walks Between* seeds. And now in this time, those seeds have begun to sprout in all places, so that there are those who are part of other peoples, but they are growing eyes that see as *Walks Between* eyes see, and ears that hear as *Walks Between* ears hear, and hearts that feel as *Walks Between* Hearts feel. They are growing *Walks Between* songs inside of them, so that even when we are walking between, they can remember all kinds of beauty.



2. *Two Men Walking*

*Music by Chris Evans

Chris: Cello, Looper

Eric: Percussion



3. *Rosh Hashanah 5775*

Eric: Vocals, Ukulele, Bass Banjo, Looper, Tar Drum, Percussion

Corissa: Vocals

Chris: Cello

Note: I've always felt disconnected from traditional Jewish religious services, especially around the High Holy Days. In year 5775 (2014-15) I began celebrating the Jewish New Year with a ceremony that is spiritually customized for my particular collection of habits, inclinations and yearnings—writing a new song on both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. I might use the songs in performance, or they might remain private. This feels like a form of prayer I can do wholeheartedly. this song was written on Rosh Hashanah 5775, and became an important part of my practice this year. --Eric

Walk between with me.
There are no guarantees; and nothing is easy...
but life is queer everywhere; and here we are;
I can only be me...

Home is a story I dreamed of so long ago.
When I was young and I didn't know.

Dodi li va-ani lo
Haro eh basho shanim...

Hebrew Lyrics: Traditional;
Translation: *My beloved is mine, I am his, The shepherd among the lilies...*

4. Dawn's Story

Eric: Ukulele, Bass Banjo, Looper, Tenor Banjo, Cajón
Frances: Flute



5. Week of Sunsets

Eric: Lead Vocals, Ukulele, Bass Banjo, Tenor Banjo

Keith: Accordion, Djembe

Corissa: Backing Vocals

Sinking...Sinking backwards
down through...water black
Thoughts stay...Where I think them
While I drift and I descend



'til I see...That week of sunsets
That autumn when all was right
There was our eyes our hands our touching
And our talking through the night

We travelled so fast so strong
Heart roads, Soul paths, Body songs
All was alive...and filled with us
I no longer wanted more

Then I...then I told you
late night sitting side by side
Why did that stop our searching?
I wasn't ... wasn't Done

6. Song for Della – Dance Club Version

Eric: Lead and Backing Vocals, Ukulele, Bass, Looper, Djembe, Percussion, Jaw Harp

Corissa: Lead and Backing Vocals, Cajón

Keith: Keyboards

Chris: Cello

Christof: Backing Vocals



Note: Della Davidson remains my primary artistic mentor. I studied with her, danced in her companies, and went to her over and over to see my work with deeper perspectives. Her death in 2012 affected me profoundly. I didn't feel done with our mentor/mentee relationship. So I'm doing my best to continue seeking her guidance with the intuitive form our relationship now takes. I wrote this song originally just after her death. This Dance Club Version arose out of a desire to continue to actively remember Della in my work, while honoring the side of her that loved ecstatic dance ritual onstage. It is my hope that many people will dance to this song, in many different ways, touching into the wild mystery that Della led so many of us into. --Eric

Ahava
 v'Rachamim
 Chesed
 v'Shalom

Chorus:

The breath inside the breath;
 The fire that fuels the fire;
 A light shining, no one will ever see.
 The wind under the ground;
 The un-hearable sound;
 The tiny bridge you pause upon, crossing into sleep.

I.

Do you ever get lost without a name in the fog?

Do you ever seek something obscene?
Will you pay the cost for the beauty beyond,
all reason and all that you think?

Chorus

II.

There's a treasure below, it's all covered in stone.
There's a truth that you cannot be told.
Try watching and waiting. Try slipping through shadows.
Try drinking the unending sky.

Chorus

Bridge

This breath no longer yours.
This body just a passing song.

Ahava
v'Rachamim
Chesed
v'Shalom

Hebrew lyrics and melody adapted from Kehilla Community Synagogue
Translation: *Love; Mercy, Compassion; Charity, Good Deeds; Peace*





Disc II

1. The Wind

Keith and Anne-Lise: Vocals

Eric: Ukulele, Percussion

Chris: Cello

Shimmering, kissing trees. Older, than all beliefs.
Empty...yet bursting seams. Moving, only moving.

No birth, and no demise. Sees all, ground-body-sky.
Carries, my longing home. Maybe, I'm not alone.

Wondering, how you began. Savoring, your tender hands.
Waiting for your embrace. Knowing you'll leave no trace.

Hear me, Hear me now. Take my, pain somehow.

2. To Be Complete

Eric: Vocals, Looper, Tar Drum, Percussion

Grass grows green, then brown,
Sun and sky, turn round,
Clouds come up, then down,
Grass grows green, then brown.

I don't want to get to the end of my time,
never knowing what it is to be complete.

I forgot our stories.
I don't know our land.

Growing up, growing up, growing up, and down.

3. A Better World

**Music and Lyrics by Corissa "Reese" Johnson*

Corissa: Vocals

Keith: Keyboard

Eric: Djembe, Cajón

We need to refrain, detract, subtract the hate.

We need to eliminate, the pain, the shame.

Bring the world back to a better place, where we can face, each other again.

There's been too much dying, too much crying.

We are a nation at war, with ourselves, with each other, what are we even fighting for? I can't remember.

It's been so long, that time begins to devour, a sense of peace, an inevitable point of relief to achieve,
who we can really be, who we are meant to see, A better people, freedom for Humanity.

Think of the children who live in poverty.

Do you care? Do you even stop to think?

They need freedom of choice, a place to use their voice;
reunite in this mayhem, the chaos, to save them.

Instead of standing by one another, lending a hand
we choose to look past the other, blaming the other man.
Look at yourself, grab a mirror, responsibility is skin deep.

Look and you will realize, it starts with you and I.

Understand that and you will gain knowledge, a fact too abstract, that there should be no turning back.

We need to walk with our heads high, see the other guy, look him in the eye.

No more fear, don't shed a tear.

Unless it's for your brothers and sisters.

Don't take too long you don't want to miss this, opportunity to right the wrong.

Let's make this world a better place, let's make it strong.

We need to get back to where we came from.
Our roots, like a computer reboots, restart, find the heart.
Lose our heads, believe instead, that we're still breathing.
Coming back from the dead, like Jesus of Nazareth

Tell me
What are we fighting for?
Children dying in this war
Losing faith and losing our humanity

Tell me
Why do we choose to ignore
Blaming those we love and adore
We gotta get back to what's right to heal the wrong.





4. The Seam

**Lyrics by Dawn Holtan*

Eric: Lead and Backing Vocals, Ukulele, Looper, Percussion

Chris: Cello

Corissa and Anne-Lise: Backing Vocals

I want to touch the seam where sky meets sea.
At dusk, the clouds will sing to me,

And cresting ocean heave a shadowed sigh,
I know I'll hear you speak, if I just try.

Your voice will come to me, this place is ours.
I train myself to trace you in the stars,

Me an anchor plunged deep into the sand.
I taste the salt as if it were a man.

I came to touch the seam where sky meets sea.

At dusk, the clouds were thick--I could not breathe.

And cresting ocean heaved a shadowed sigh.
I want to hear your voice, to taste your cry.

Speak to me. Please speak to me.

Bright moon sunken deep beneath the black,
I cannot stop the tide. I want you back.

Alone--dark seam—I came to touch that line,
Where a silent fish bends the light.

If I could touch the seam where sky meets sea.
At dawn, the clouds will break. And I will see.

And cresting ocean heaves a shadowed sigh.
This empty silver night, I let you die.

5. Stories of Our People – When I Was Born

**Words by Andrew Ramer*

Christof: Spoken Text

Eric: Moyo Drum, Percussion

When I was born, the nurses wrapped me in a yellow blanket. My parents told this story over and over again. And every time I heard that story, I got mad.

Blue is for boys. Everyone knows that. And pink is for girls. But what is yellow for? I know that there are planets with more than two choices. But here on Earth, you only get to choose from blue or pink. And frankly, I didn't care which. Boy or girl, girl or boy. In a yellow blanket, not blue, or pink, I was sent home from the hospital.

That story haunted me all through my childhood. Haunted me in the schoolyard, where I sat alone under a tree. Watching the boys play baseball in one corner, while the girls jumped rope in another. It haunted me in the bathtub. It haunted me in my dreams. And it haunted me later, when the hair started growing on my upper lip, in my armpits, beneath my fruit of the loom white jockey underpants.

When I was born, the nurses wrapped me in a yellow blanket. Not a blue one or a pink one.

When I was born, six pounds and seven brown ounces, with a head of curly thick black hair, the nurses wrapped me in a yellow blanket. And I'm wrapped in it still. And I ask myself over and over, how did those nurses know, when they wrapped me, newly slipped into this world and still jet-lagged, how did they know on that new spring night...

6. The Seam – Response

Eric: Vocals, Ukulele, Bass Banjo, Looper, Percussion

Corissa: Vocals

Keith: Keyboard

Christof: Clarinet

I can hear the words that you're saying.
But I don't know, what do they mean?



7. What Soft Hand

Eric: Vocals, Ukulele, Bass Banjo

It's like leaning over a bridge that crosses the canyon.
It's like watching the train come in only inches from where you're standing.
It's like sitting behind the wheel, when just one slip will bring your ending.

It's like asking each other if something could have been different.
It's like looking at someone's kids, knowing all the pain they're in for.
It's like seeking another chance, when your heart is raw and winded.

You've been thinking, when you should act. You've been hoping, when you should move on.
You've been searching, through your past, wonderin' where has all your truth gone.
You've been knowing there's no return and can't find nothing to get a boost from

What knocks you down? What dusts you off?
What helps you forget just enough?
What whispers deep, just out of reach?
What brings a song when you've given up?

When the going has been too hard, and there's no sign of it easing.
When your love has lost its charge and you don't know who you're pleasing.
When the stories that led you on now just leave you dry and empty.

It's like walking way too far without water, or a companion.
It's like waking in the dark, filled with fear of all you can't know.
It's like nothing seems to help but, somehow, you're still standing.

What moves your breath? What tells you when?
What gives the glimpse, beyond wrong and right?

What keeps you here? What holds you back?
What soft hand guides you through the night?

8. Stories of Our People – Epilogue

Eric: Moyo Drum, Percussion



STORIES OF OUR PEOPLE

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and the fertile, spiraling circles of Dandelion Dancetheater.

Bandelion is:

Eric Kupers' ensemble within Dandelion Dancetheater. Bandelion collaborates. We are committed to pushing and being pushed by each other, past familiar edges. All ensemble members develop movement, sound, theatrical & design elements. We are inspired by Physically Integrated Dance, in which people with and without disabilities figure out how to create together, and set up accessible structures for performance.

Our work includes different ability levels due to disabilities & devotion to different artistic disciplines. We each come with unique skills & unique difficulties, & we communicate rigorously so that we can effectively train, support each other, & create art we're all invested in.

We are a performance research lab, a found family, a band, a team of explorers. Eric usually writes initial versions of our songs, which he brings to the ensemble to be expanded and transformed by Keith our musical director and the whole ensemble. Everything we create arises from, and is refined by the crucible of rigorous training and rehearsing. We need regular rehearsal in order to be honest, to be fully real—so we rehearse all year long, whether or not we're preparing for a particular project. We need to perform, to be so present that every second feels spacious. We need to not be controlled. We need to give, and feel lucky enough to be given something in return. We need a community of people that we can trust, love and depend upon.

We are that community.

We want to explore how individuals can become greater than their individual parts—like starlings flocking. We want to have an impact on how other people see themselves and the world. We want to be free of fear, free of frustration, free of capitalism, free of racism, free of binary thinking. We want to contribute wisdom through the stories we share. We want to bring forth our deepest truths. We want all the insights of post-modern identity politics to be infused with ancestral needs for live art, in concentric circles of relations.

We want the unexpected.

We'd love to hear from you at: info@dandeliondancetheater.org

More info at: www.dandeliondancetheater.org/bandelion/

and

www.facebook.com/dandeliondancetheater

Bandelion Bios

Eric Kupers is the Director of Bandelion and the Co-Artistic Director of Dandelion Dancetheater. He is an Associate Professor of Dance at CSU East Bay where he directs the Inclusive Interdisciplinary Ensemble, a training, research and performance program open to all who want to create meaning-filled art collaboratively, embracing all art forms, abilities, disabilities, sizes, shapes, cultural/sexual/gender identities and levels of experience. Eric danced in the companies of Margaret Jenkins and Della Davidson, and after shifting to focus more on directing/choreography than dancing, he discovered a passion for making music. He founded Bandelion in 2006 to propel his evolving, rigorous, cross-disciplinary experimentation. He aspires to one day make part of his living through accompanying modern dance classes.

Chris Evans' music training began in Oakland public schools. She eventually dropped out of a Comparative Literature PhD program and moved to France to study cello, chamber music and dance. In the Bay Area she has studied with Roscoe Mitchell, Alex Kelly, Shelly Senter, Abigail Hosein, and Randee Paufve and collaborated with Byb Chanel Bibene, Sheena Johnson, Lizz Roman, musicians from WaterSaw and Ark of Bones, and visual artists Ernest Jolly and Nick Dong. She is deeply excited to continue the exploration of all of these interests in the Bandelion/Dandelion community.

Chris Gallegos bounces back and forth between dance/theater, visual art and computer programming and is seeking a fusion of all three. He has performed with Bandelion/Dandelion since 2010 and just graduated from CSU East Bay with a BA in Art and Computer Science in 2014.

Dawn Frank Holtan was raised in Oakland, where she improvised in the redwoods, choreographed on her siblings at home, and studied RAD ballet in the studio. Dawn discovered modern dance at UC Berkeley and went on to graduate from Bard College with a degree in Dance Choreography/Creative Writing. She began working with Kimiko and Eric in 1994 and has enjoyed being a Dandelion ever since. Former co-director of Frank and Bryan Dance, Dawn's choreography was selected as one of ten major local performances by the SF Bay Guardian. She teaches at Shawl Anderson Dance Center and CSUEB, and spends many hours dancing with family and friends in living rooms, parks, and on the beach.

Corissa "Reese" Johnson is a 2008 graduate from CSUEB where she obtained a B.A in Theatre Arts-Dance. She has been teaching and studying dance for over 14 years and currently teaches all over the Bay Area. Reese is a member of MEnD Dance-Theater company and performs with the company, promoting healing and mending through dance. Reese is also a singer, songwriter and a percussionist and believes that through the art of music, dance and the spoken word, that we can invoke change and inspiration within the lives of others.

Keith Penney plays piano for instrumental indie-rockers, Karate Mountain, and accordion for hot-jazz bar-hoppers, The Worlds Finest Apples. He's been putting on his dance face for Bandelion since 2008.

Anne-Lise Reuswig graduated from UC Santa Cruz with a degree in Theater Arts. She was a scholarship student at the Cunningham Studio in NYC and performed with many different choreographers. In the Bay Area, Anne has appeared in works by Element Dance Theater, Lisa Townsend Company, Company Mecanique, Nancy Karp + Dancers, and Shift >>>Physical Theater. She has been teaching at CSUEB since 2007 and working with Bandelion/Dandelion since 2001.

Belgica Rodriguez is an evolving actress/dancer, costume artist, native Mexican, youngest Bandelion—she’s interested in sharing stories that matter. Bandelion since 2013.

Frances Sedayao is a dancer, choreographer, actress, improviser, black belt in Tae Kwon Do, singer, flutist, Pilipino native—she’s tiny but tough & captivating. DDT since 2001. Bandelion since 2014.

Bandelion Associate Members are not able to rehearse with us on a weekly basis, but are deeply connected to the work, and join us for intensive rehearsals and performances whenever possible: **Rodney Bell, Cristina Carrasquillo, Dorine Hoeksema, David Ryther, and Stacz Sadowski.**

Bandelion thrives on collaborations with a diverse array of contemporary artists, including: Kimiko Guthrie, Kristin Heavey, Navarette x Kajiyama Dance Theater, AXIS Dance Company, Nicole Fuentes, Bob Webb, Paufve Dance, Patrick Cress, Karate Mountain, Mickey Kay, T-Bird Luv, Trina Nahm-Mijo, Suki O’Kane, Nancy Ostrovsky, Paufve Dance, Theater Grottesco, Matt Payne, Jacques Poulin-Denis, Sue Roginski, Lucia August, and the Inclusive Interdisciplinary Ensemble. All of our work is informed and deepened by the invaluable contributions of previous ensemble members: Eric Andler, Julie Brown, UE Chua, Patrick Cress, Dana DeGuzman, Julia Hollas, Debby Kajiyama, Julie Kane, Edmer Lazaro, Heather Lukens, Flo Nakamura, Mantra Plonsey, David Ryther, and Benjamin Wright.

