AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND MEMORIAL

‘Emotional expression’

Residents get a preview of interpretive dance performance

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PORTSMOUTH — The second event in the “Blank Page Poetry – Words & Shadows: Truths That Arise Remembered” series took place with a seven minute preview interpretive dance and a poem by Portsmouth Poet Laureate Kate Leigh at the African Burial Ground Memorial Park Thursday evening.

Thursday’s event was a segment of a three-part series. Jerome Meadows of Savannah, Georgia, the designer of the African Burial Ground Memorial said he was delighted to be back in Portsmouth.

“When I designed the memorial over four years ago, there was such a tremendous amount of history and information that came out,” said Meadows. “I think coming back here now offers a

See Dance, A8

Nathan Moyer and Janelle Abbott Staley of Neoteric Dance Collaborative perform a site specific dance at the African Burying Ground Memorial Thursday night.

Nathan Moyer and Janelle Abbott Staley of Neoteric Dance Collaborative perform a site specific dance at the African Burying Ground Memorial Thursday night as a preview to Friday’s program, “Blank Page Poetry-Words & Shadows,” that will be presented at 3S Artspace. PHOTOS BY IOANNA RAPTS/SEACOASTONLINE
good pause for emotional expression. I was so taken by
the fact that when city work-
ers uncovered the graves,
they did not ignore them.
They stopped work and the
result is this memorial.”

Meadows said that Leigh
contacted him recently and
asked if she could use the
poem at the memorial for some
classes she was doing with the
schools.

“I said of course you can
use it,” said Meadows. “It is
your poem now. It belongs to
the city. We came together to
bring this series to Portsmouth.
We are very proud of what have
done here. I hope a lot of people
come out to see this, and to
honor the memories.”

The choreographer for the
event came from Savannah
with Meadows. Brea Cali was
on hand with her two danc-
ers, Janelle Abbott Staley and
Nathan Moyer.

Nancy Pearson of Artspeak
helped produce the three-day
series. She said she worked
with Meadows and Leigh
over the summer to plan the
program.

The dance happened along
the three main segments of
the memorial. At each, Leigh
read part of her poem titled

“The culminating program,
“Blank Page Poetry – Words &
Shadows,” is a unique, multi-
disciplinary performance at 3S
Artspace on Friday, Oct. 23 at
7:30 p.m. The performance will
combine poetry, digital projec-
tions and dance movement.

As many as 11 local poets,
including Leigh, will pres-
ent their original works
interspersed with dance
segments incorporating per-
fomers from the Neoteric
Dance Collaborative. All of the
performers will be seen only in
shadow, their images cast upon
a sheet of white paper that
encloses the stage. Admission
is free but patrons are asked to
reserve tickets in advance at
www.3sarts.org.