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## Working with a Guest Choreographer: Sonya Tayeh's Tips

Katie Rolnick | December 4, 2009

Recently, we got to watch SYTYCD choreographer Sonya Tayeh setting a piece on Brooklyn's DeMa Dance Company (Billy Bell is a new member!). We asked her if she had any advice for students working with guest teachers or choreographers and here's what she had to say:

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"When I can tell that [the dancers] are listening and trying to embody the choreography, I die" – in a good way! – "but when someone's not listening, it's my nightmare."

If you have the opportunity to work with a guest choreographer, you want to make the most out of the experience, which means both learning and absorbing as much as you can while presenting your best self. This can be a chance for you to push yourself, and often it's also like an informal audition.

But how do you impress a guest?

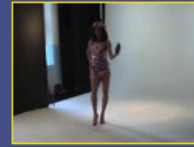
As Sonya said, if you're talking or simply not engaged, that can make it seem like you're not committed to the work – and that's certainly not the impression you want to leave! Instead, focus on the guest and the work at hand. Even if you're struggling with the movement, show that you care by giving 100 percent and being respectful during class or rehearsal.

"It's always difficult for them not to be afraid," Sonya also said of working with dancers she doesn't know. "I forget that they just met me." If you're tense, it will show in your dancing. Try to relax and be your fabulous-self!

Keep this in mind next time you're working with someone new. It will ensure that you get the most out of your time with a guest!

For more on how working with guest choreographers can boost your career check out "[Get in the Modern Dance Door](#)," in the September issue of *DS*.

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