



PRESS RELEASE

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THODOS DANCE CHICAGO COMES FULL CIRCLE, FOUNDER MELISSA THODOS ANNOUNCES A NEW ARC FOR HER COMPANY IN 2017 AND BEYOND

CHICAGO, February 8, 2017 – In 1992, Thodos Dance Chicago Founder and Artistic Director Melissa Thodos formed a company that offered dancers a place to perform, a place to create new work and a place to educate a next generation of dancers.

Fast forward 25 years, and Thodos Dance Chicago has successfully performed for over one million dance fans, created and taught dance in Chicago, across the country in 27 states, and around the world on five continents ever since.

Today, Thodos announced her company would continue its evolution as an integral part of Chicago's dance community, but will move forward with a new structure in 2017 and beyond.

"Our 'ride to 25' has been incredibly fulfilling, personally and professionally, and I feel such a deep sense of accomplishment as we celebrate our Silver anniversary season," said Thodos. "Likewise, I feel that now, while we are on a true high note, is the right time for a change. Today, having fulfilled the goals and vision on which Thodos Dance Chicago was founded, I'm announcing the start of a new chapter that allows for more personal creative freedom."

"While many organizations restructure due to financial issues, we have been fortunate with our supporters and donors that for us this is not a decision based on finances but one born out of a need for change," Thodos added. "We are in a strong, stable fiscal position and we pride ourselves that we have successfully navigated the choppy waters of running a non-profit dance company. As Thodos Dance Chicago has grown, I found myself spending more time focused on artistic management and day to day operations and less time in the studio. Now I seek more time and creative freedom as a choreographer and educator."

After the current season concludes in mid-March, Thodos Dance Chicago will no longer maintain its own ensemble of 12 company dancers. While current members will have an opportunity to create new works for a final *New Dances* concert this summer, Thodos will move forward focusing her company's efforts on more project-based work. Examples include when she was commissioned last fall to choreograph a dramatic, ceremonial outdoor dance celebrating the unveiling of Yoko Ono's new *Skylanding* sculpture in Chicago's Jackson Park, and when the City of Chicago commissioned Thodos to create *Endymion* in celebration of the opening of Chicago's Millennium Park.

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Thodos also looks forward to creating new work, participating in residencies in Chicago and elsewhere, pursuing independent teaching opportunities with emerging artists, drawing from Chicago's dance community to perform on a project basis including festivals and series locally and nationally, and setting new works and signature dances from the TDC repertoire on other companies locally and nationally.

Additionally, two of Thodos Dance Chicago's most acclaimed story ballets, *The White City: Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893* and *A Light in the Dark: The Story of Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan*, both co-choreographed with Ann Reinking, were each the subject of documentary films. Thodos enjoyed participating in that process, and looks forward to pursuing new initiatives designed to bring dance to larger audiences via film with these works and exploring the possibilities of setting the works on other companies.

Similarly, Thodos would like to continue to seek new possibilities for the company's American Dance Legacy Project, which is dedicated to keeping the creative voice on stage of renowned American dance artists no longer visible to the public. Through this initiative, TDC has already recreated and presented *Fosse Trilogy*, a trio of rarely performed works by Bob Fosse, a suite of choreography originally created by iconic modern dance legend Sybil Shearer, and last season's highly successful tribute to legendary Japanese-American dance artist Sono Osato. Currently there is a project focus to bring *Sono's Journey* to a television audience.

In fact, today's announcement gives a whole new meaning to Thodos Dance Chicago's 25th Anniversary *FULL CIRCLE* celebration concert, Saturday, March 11 at 7:30 p.m. at Chicago's majestic Auditorium Theatre, as it will be the last chance to see the company perform in its current form. Single tickets are \$29-\$68. To purchase, visit AuditoriumTheatre.org, call (312) 341-2300 or buy in-person at the Auditorium Theatre's Box Office, 50 E. Congress Parkway, Chicago.

An emotional highlight of the program surely will be *The Wheel Trilogy*, a triumphant, combined and retrospective work by Melissa Thodos. This whimsical, three-part dance concludes with the world premiere of *There*, which is paired with *Reaching There* and *Getting There*, two of Thodos's signature works from the company's near and distant past. *There* employs the same wheel prop that was used in the previous works and is the third and final installment in *The Wheel Trilogy*. The combined work will only be performed once – ever – at TDC's *FULL CIRCLE* concert at the Auditorium.

The program also boasts the Chicago premiere of *Nos Duraturi*, a dramatic commentary on mankind's ability to endure by legendary choreographer Bella Lewitzky, "the Grand Dame of West Coast modern dance" (1916-2004). TDC's revival of *Nos Duraturi*, the fourth work to emerge from the company's American Dance Legacy Project, is supported by a NEA Arts Work grant. Completing the program are the Chicago premieres of *Changing Strangers* by Melissa Thodos, a new work touching on partnership and distance that boasts her singular fluid, kinetic style; *Acid Reign*, in which TDC guest choreographer Brian Enos answers the question "what might a celebration look like on another planet in the future?"; and *Uncovering* by Thodos ensemble member Briana Robinson, a piece born from the company's 2016 *New Dances* in-house choreography series.

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Also proceeding as planned is Thodos Dance Chicago's *Timeless Motion* concert for Thodos's ever-loyal North Shore audience, Saturday, February 25, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, Center Theatre, 9501 Skokie Boulevard, Skokie, Illinois, 60077. Tickets range from \$28 to \$58 and are available online at NorthShoreCenter.org or by calling (847) 673-6300.

Likewise, Thodos Dance Chicago's *New Dances* in-house choreography series will be presented Saturday, July 15 at 7:30 pm, and Sunday, July 15 at 3 p.m. at the Athenaeum Theatre, 2936 N. Southport, Chicago. *New Dances 2017* will be the 17th annual showcase of works created by company dancers.

Soon after the Auditorium concert in March, eight dancers will have their creative proposals selected and they will be provided a three-month development and rehearsal period to create new works for what is always a highlight of Chicago's summer dance calendar. Tickets will go on sale later this spring.

Following this year's *New Dances* concerts, Thodos will seek a new partner to inherit and continue managing one of the city's most respected new choreography creation initiatives.

"What an amazing journey it has been thus far, though I trust I've made it clear that I'm not going anywhere. Thodos Dance Chicago will live on, just with a different structure," Thodos concluded.

"So while this is far from a farewell, I would be remiss if I didn't seize this opportunity to thank the hundreds of dance artists, our many guest choreographers, the countless designers, our staff and board, our students, and in particular, our fans and funders, for supporting our unique dance performance, creation and education mission for 25 years."

The company is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, The Sono and Victor Elmaleh Foundation, The Garden of the Phoenix Foundation, the Illinois Arts Council—a state agency, Target, The Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, the MacArthur Fund for Arts & Culture at the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, The Arts Work Fund, The Morrison-Shearer Foundation, The Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation, Service Club of Chicago, Project 120, The Garden of the Phoenix Foundation, the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events and many individual and corporate sponsors.

For further information, visit ThodosDanceChicago.org.

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Note to editors: click [here](#) for a company backgrounder with more details about Thodos Dance Chicago, and [here](#) to access a timeline highlighting the company's top achievements over the past 25 years with archival photos.