



NEW DANCES

A NEW GENERATION



PRESS RELEASE

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Press contacts:

Melissa Thodos, Thodos Dance Chicago
melissa.thodos@thodosdancechicago.org

Julie Nakagawa, DanceWorks Chicago
jnakagawa@danceworkschicago.org

CONFIRMED! *NEW Dances 2019's* Panelists - Buy your Tickets today

NEW Dances 2019 creative connections are expanding with confirmation of this year's panelists: **Kristina Fluty, Jeff Hancock, and Zachary Whittenburg**. "We are so honored to have these seasoned, knowledgeable and passionate artists and leaders from our community as part of our *NEW Dances 2019* team to support our talented choreographers and help them reach their creative goals and grow," shared Melissa Thodos. These panelists will be joining the mentorship team of Thodos Dance Chicago and DanceWorks Chicago's artistic directors, Melissa Thodos (TDC) and Julie Nakagawa (DWC).



Kristina Fluty



Jeff Hancock



Zachary Whittenburg

Along with Thodos Dance Chicago and DanceWorks Chicago, this year's panelists will help support the creation of six new works from: **Francesca Baron, Jana Bennett, Lauren Blane, LOUD BODIES, Katie Carey, and Rigoberto Saura**. Panelists participate in a dedicated showing during the *NEW Dances* creative period where each choreographer presents their work-in-progress to the panel for review. Choreographers receive enriching feedback from these well-established artists that will help to guide and shape the development of



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their work in process. Following the final performance of *NEW Dances 2019*, panelists also provide final feedback.

This project invests in the growth of the dancemaker by providing a valuable resource of feedback during the creative process. The panel plays a pivotal role both mid-process and post-performance by reviewing each work as it develops and also when complete and provides supportive, neutral, and honed individual feedback. Melissa Thodos shares, "It is unusual, so rare, yet so very important for artists to have the opportunity to share work mid-process, have the opportunity to ask questions, engage in dialogue and receive enriching feedback mid-process and post-performance from established mentors to further their creative goals and growth for their work." Curating a panel of Chicago's dancer leaders enhances the artist's process by providing a depth of added knowledge, new ways of looking at things, which each choreographer can tap into for inspiration, guidance, and growth.

Not only do the *NEW Dances 2019* choreographers receive valuable mentorship from established leaders of the Chicago's dance community, but they themselves are valued and active voices, and as Choreographers participate in post-show discussions with the audience moderated by Thodos Dance Chicago and DanceWorks Chicago's artistic directors, Melissa Thodos (TDC) and Julie Nakagawa (DWC).

Chicagoland can catch these six premieres at the **Athenaeum Theatre, Black Box Studio 2 with performances the week of June 17**. Performing these new, original works are: **Quincie Bean, Tara Charvat, Kristen Donovan, Abby Ellison, Sarah Fluegel, Jade Hooper, Sarah Jones, Cameron Lasater, Racquel Mar, Erin Quigley, Elijah Richardson, Tori Rumzis, Simone Stevens, Jack Taylor, Kallie Tierney, and Imani Williams.**

Industry members of the dance community are invited to a preview performance on Wednesday, June 19th at 7:30 PM for \$25.00 or \$15.00 with evidence of industry affiliation. General audiences can enjoy performances on Friday, June 21st at 7:30 PM; Saturday, June 22nd at 7:30 PM; Sunday, June 23rd at 3:00 PM for \$30.00 pre-sale or \$35.00 day of. A special ticketing opportunity is available on opening night which includes a "Meet the Artist" Opening Night Cocktail Reception + intermission toast. Tickets can be purchased through Athenaeum Theatre's box office by phone (773- 935- 6875) or online (www.athenaeumtheatre.org).

NEW Dances 2019 Panelists Bios

Kristina Fluty (Chicago, IL) is thrilled to be back with New Dances to serve on the feedback panel. She is a dancer/choreographer/educator/consultant based in Chicago. Kristina's main creative home since 2003 is Molly Shanahan/Mad Shak, where she dances in the ensemble, provides administrative support and serves as a board member. She is an Assistant Professor of Movement for Actors at The Theatre School at DePaul University and teaches modern at the Lou Conte Dance Studio of Hubbard Street Dance Chicago and Dovetail Studios. She has also worked in Nashville and New York, as well as with many other choreographers and companies in Chicago such as Lucky Plush Productions, Rob Welcher, and Asimina Chremos. Kristina holds a Masters in Dance/Movement Therapy and Counseling, a graduate certificate in Laban Movement



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Analysis, and is a registered Movement Pattern Analyst. She is also honored to be at the forefront of an emerging theatrical field: she has worked as an intimacy choreographer/consultant at Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Victory Gardens Theater, TimeLine Theatre Company, Remy Bumppo Theatre (and Chicago), and Center Theatre Group (LA).

Jeff Hancock (Chicago, IL) MFA performs, teaches, choreographs and designs movement and clothing that moves all over the US and abroad. Since 1990, dancing for River North, Hubbard Street, Same Planet Different World, and others, his dance and design life collided, supported and informed each other, and shaped his path as a teaching artist. Curiosity about the semiotics of movement and clothing and their mutual influence has fueled his long history of research and exploration. Recent performance collaborations: "Of Whales, Time and Your Last Attempt to Reach Me..." with Molly Shanahan/MadShak, "Sword-fighting and Other Things to Do With Your Manhood", "Volledig" with Rob Welcher, "And We Shall Be Rid of Them", with Molly Shanahan/MadShak. Recent solo work: "Verge: at the gilded edge of loss..." Hollins University, "Verge: the edge of chaos and becoming" Northwestern University. Recent design: Qudus Onikeku – *Iyami*, Peter Carpenter – *When Bodies Ring*, Margi Cole – *Surfacing*, Wini Haun – *This Is (Not) My Body*.

Zachary Whittenburg (Chicago, IL), Colorado native, spent ten years as a professional dancer with companies including Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, BJM Danse Montréal, Pacific Northwest Ballet, and North Carolina Dance Theatre, now Charlotte Ballet. His subsequent freelance career in Chicago included performance, teaching, and choreographic work with, among others, Lucky Plush Productions, Molly Shanahan / Mad Shak, DanceWorks Chicago, Luna Negra Dance Theater, Mordine & Co. Dance Theater, River North Dance Chicago, and Thodos Dance Chicago. As Associate Director of Marketing and Communication at Hubbard Street, he represented the company on the Chicago Dancemakers Forum consortium, and he was most recently Communications and Engagement Director at Arts Alliance Illinois. Whittenburg contributes regularly to *Dance Magazine*, is a panelist and guest speaker, and tweets @trailerpilot about contemporary culture, politics, and the performing arts. He is a founding board member for the Chicago Dance History Project and a member of the artistic advisory council for High Concept Labs.

About Thodos Dance Chicago

Melissa Thodos, a choreographer, educator, and performer for over 30 years, founded Thodos Dance Chicago in 1992. For 25 years, the company offered dancers a place to perform, a place to create new work and a place to educate the next generation of dancers. Thodos Dance Chicago successfully performed and taught for over one million dance fans in Chicago, across the country in 27 states, and around the world on five continents.

In its 27th year, Thodos Dance Chicago has evolved to undertake projects that provide the greatest impact in the Chicago community beyond as a project based dance organization. Our mission is to engage and enrich the community through dance creation, advocacy, education, and mentorship. TDC is also working with Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Chris Olsen on creating documentaries and film about the development of and the performance of some of the Company's high profile signature story ballets and dance theater works.



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In addition, Thodos Dance Chicago continues to host seasonal workshops for the advanced, pre-professional and professional dance artist. For more information, visit <https://thodosdancechicago.org>.

About DanceWorks Chicago

Founded in May 2007, DanceWorks Chicago is committed to building a foundation for early career artists by providing a laboratory from which dancers and choreographers propel themselves and the art form to a new level of artistry through training, collaboration, mentorship, and performance. DWC's effort to nurture and convene the next generation of artists, audience, and dance citizens, inspires, empowers, and contributes to a sustainable future for dance. For more information, visit <https://www.danceworkschicago.org>.

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