

# THODOS DANCE

CHICAGO



# THE COMPANY

“Breathtakingly athletic,” “powerfully beautiful,” performing “vibrant choreography” are among the ways audiences and press describe Thodos Dance Chicago (TDC). For the past 23 years, this ensemble of twelve versatile dance artists has performed with a captivating style using a variety of dance forms. The Company’s unique mission of inspiring expression through dance education, dance creation, and dance performance has established Thodos Dance Chicago as an innovative presence in American contemporary dance.

Highlights of the Company’s annual performance season include its home concerts, national and international touring engagements and the critically acclaimed *New Dances* choreography performance series. The Company has performed in 79 venues in 26 states, as well as many foreign countries.

Thodos Dance Chicago features the American voice in contemporary dance. In addition to award winning repertory works, it has created two critically acclaimed story ballets, both named as one of the top performances by the *Chicago Sun-Times*. These are great American stories brought to life through movement and music:

*A Light in the Dark*, based on the life of Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan  
(as told in the classic book and play *The Miracle Worker*).

*The White City*, based on the extraordinary events of the Columbian  
Exposition of 1893 (as told in the best-selling book *Devil in the White City*).

TDC performs a diverse array of works created by renowned American choreographers: Bob Fosse, Ann Reinking, Lar Lubovitch, Shapiro & Smith, Lucas Crandall, Jon Lehrer, Garfield Lemonius, Zachary Whittenburg, Amy Ernst, Ron De Jesús, Gustavo Ramírez Sansano, and Sybil Shearer. In addition, TDC ensemble members themselves create highly-charged, illuminating world premieres every year in the Company’s acclaimed *New Dances* choreography series. Selected works from the series are chosen to become part of the Company’s repertoire each year. Other works from *New Dances* have been performed by The Joffrey Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago and other companies across the U.S.

Reaching young minds through dance education is vital to the mission of Thodos Dance Chicago. As a teaching company, members of our ensemble hold B.A. and M.F.A. degrees in dance, and teach at the elementary, high school and university levels. TDC is well suited for residency programs where performances, lecture demonstrations, workshops and master classes go hand in hand. In residence at the Menomonee Club, TDC’s professional dancers share their professional talent, knowledge, and creativity with tomorrow’s dancers through the company’s Youth Dance Program, the TDC Youth Ensemble, and week-long intensive programs geared to pre-professional and professional dancers. TDC engages young audiences with after school programs, master classes, residencies and assemblies. In 2014, over 10,000 children were impacted by TDC’s unique educational programming.

For more information about programs and upcoming performances of Thodos Dance Chicago, please visit our website at [www.thodosdancechicago.org](http://www.thodosdancechicago.org).

THODOS DANCE  
CHICAGO

Phone: 312-266-6255  
Email: [info@thodosdancechicago.org](mailto:info@thodosdancechicago.org)  
Web Site: [www.thodosdancechicago.org](http://www.thodosdancechicago.org)

# ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



**Melissa Thodos** has been described by critics as “a choreographer with a bright and lively imagination.” The *Chicago Sun-Times* wrote: “Thodos displays a fine musicality and elegant lyricism; there is a sort of New Age mysticism about much of her work. She is a skillful and eclectic choreographer with a talent for creating a well-defined mood and interesting group patterns.”

In 1992, Thodos founded Thodos Dance Chicago and has developed it into an established national and international touring company. The environment Melissa has created also serves as an incubator for its artists as choreographers and as teachers. The *Chicago Sun-Times* wrote: “In her third decade leading her own company, Melissa Thodos continues to look in every direction. Past styles and even past eras, a great diversity of contemporary dance forms of choreography and even its dancers all fall within her active gaze.”

Melissa Thodos has a long history of collaborating with a variety of artists. Teaming up with Tony-award winning choreographer Ann Reinking, she created two critically acclaimed story ballets “The White City: Chicago’s Columbian Exposition of 1893”, voted the best dance of 2011 by the *Chicago Sun-Times*, and “A Light in the Dark: the story of Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan,” named one of the top 10 dances of 2013 by the *Chicago Sun-Times*. Melissa choreographed a work with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and in 2007 created “Cascade” set to music by Maurice Ravel for the Ravinia Festival. She was recently commissioned by the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago to choreograph an original work to a violin concerto by Pugnani. In spring 2014, Melissa teamed up with world renowned architect Jeanne Gang to create “Changes of Phase,” an innovative, cross-medium work that transcends the realms of dance, architecture and physics.

Born in Evanston (IL), Melissa received early dance training at the Evanston School of Ballet. She continued her study of both classical and contemporary technique at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York. Following graduation, she performed for eight years with the Chicago Repertory Dance Ensemble, in venues all over the world.

Thodos and her company have been the recipient of numerous awards and grants including the National Endowment for the Arts; Illinois Arts Council Fellowships; a Chicago Dance Achievement Award and an award from the State of Illinois for nurturing and training dancers and choreographers in Chicago. One of her signature works, “Reaching There”, was a semi-finalist at the Internationale Dance de Paris. Thodos was featured in *Today’s Chicago Woman* as one of Chicago’s “100 Women in Chicago Making a Difference,” and was voted one of Chicago’s “top ten hidden talents” by the *Chicago Tribune*. She was one of nine finalists selected nationally for the “Women of Worth” award in New York City. Melissa has also served as a panelist for numerous grant adjudications including the City of Chicago Cultural Grants Program, the IL Arts Council Grants Panel, and the Rasmuson Foundation Individual Artist Awards in Alaska.

THODOS DANCE  
C H I C A G O

Phone: 312-266-6255  
Email: [info@thodosdancechicago.org](mailto:info@thodosdancechicago.org)  
Web site: [www.thodosdancechicago.org](http://www.thodosdancechicago.org)

# TOURING PROGRAM 2015-2016

*Available for 2016-2017 Season*

## A Light in the Dark

The Story of Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan

**A Light in the Dark** is a 50 minute story ballet, choreographed by Melissa Thodos and Tony Award winner Ann Reinking. It is based on the book "The Miracle Worker" by William Gibson and Anne Sullivan's autobiography. Original music for the dance was created and orchestrated by composer Bruce Wolosoff. The show is followed by 50 minutes of company repertory following intermission.



Anne Sullivan Leading Her Students at the Perkins School for the



Helen Keller Meets Ann Sullivan



Ann Sullivan Directing Helen's Parents to Enforce Discipline



Helen Discovers the Joy of Communication

**Dance Magazine:** "The larger-than-life gestural language of the choreography weaves a tale with an almost mythic tone that gives us new insight into Helen Keller's world."

**Chicago Sun Times:** "A powerful portrait of the meaning of communication, movement, independence, freedom and love." Named one of the top 10 dance events of 2013.

**Chicago Tribune:** "The dancing is lilting and infectious, glossed with a warm evocation of the past, an old-fashioned storytelling art not often seen in choreography today."

**Chicago Stage Standard:** "Light in the Dark has the hallmarks of an instant classic".

**A Light in the Dark** features 12 dancers. It requires the presenter to furnish a bed and a table. Fly space is recommended to reveal the simple sets. A full length film version on DVD is available upon request.

For blind patrons of the presenter, the company offers a "touch tour" of the stage, sets and costumes, as well as an audio description of the performance.

*Shine*, a documentary on the making of a **Light in the Dark** is available to air on local PBS stations. The company also offers *Connections*, a 45 minute educational program about the senses, relating to those with disabilities, and differences that make us all unique.

THODOS DANCE  
CHICAGO

Phone: 312-266-6255  
Email: [info@thodosdancechicago.org](mailto:info@thodosdancechicago.org)  
Web Site: [www.thodosdancechicago.org](http://www.thodosdancechicago.org)

# TOURING PROGRAM 2015-2016

*Available for 2016-2017 Season*

## Repertory Show Featuring Fosse Trilogy

**Fosse Trilogy** is a compilation of three notable works by Bob Fosse created for television in the late 1960's. They all featured Fosse's wife Gwen Verdon as the lead dancer, shortly after the birth of their only child Nicole. One of the works was performed on the Ed Sullivan Show, while the other two were performed on the Bob Hope Comedy Hour. While "Cool Hand Luke" was performed around the world in the Broadway show "Fosse," the other two works never saw the live stage.

**Fosse Trilogy** features nine dancers and has a video introduction. Master classes in Fosse technique are available.

Current company repertory would accompany **Fosse Trilogy** which would likely be programmed to be the first piece after intermission.

Fosse muse Ann Reinking restaged the choreography from Nicole Fosse. Ann also created the transitional choreography between the pieces and narrates the video introduction.

**Fosse Trilogy** was awarded funding as a "Dance Masterpiece" by the National Endowment for the Arts.



*Fosse Trilogy: Cool Hand Luke*



*Fosse Trilogy: Mexican Breakfast*

THODDOS DANCE  
CHICAGO

Phone: 312-266-6255  
Email: [info@thodosdancechicago.org](mailto:info@thodosdancechicago.org)  
Web Site: [www.thodosdancechicago.org](http://www.thodosdancechicago.org)

# COMPANY REPERTORY 2015-2016



## **Fosse Trilogy**

***Cool Hand Luke, Tijuana Shuffle and Mexican Breakfast***

Choreography by Bob Fosse, staged by Ann Reinking

Awarded a "Dance Masterpieces" Award by the National Endowment for the Arts. (Three trios for 9 dancers)



## **A Light in the Dark**

**The Story of Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan  
One Act Story Ballet**

Choreography: Melissa Thodos and Ann Reinking

Music: An original score by Bruce Wolosoff commissioned especially for this dance.

Named one of the top 10 dance events of 2013 by the *Chicago Sun-Times*. (12 dancers)



## **Memoirs**

Choreography: Garfield Lemonius

Recently granted tenure by the prestigious Conservatory of Performing Arts, Point Park University in Pittsburgh, PA, Mr. Lemonius was commissioned to create *Memoirs* for Thodos Dance Chicago. The piece, danced by the full Company of 12 dancers, is inspired by the energy and movement of everyday people in a city, with their various thoughts and emotions as they go through their day. The dancers perform in stunning red costumes to a mix of music played by a string quartet.

THODOS DANCE  
C H I C A G O

Phone: 312-266-6255  
Email: [info@thodosdancechicago.org](mailto:info@thodosdancechicago.org)  
Web Site: [www.thodosdancechicago.org](http://www.thodosdancechicago.org)

# COMPANY REPERTORY 2015-2016



## All You Need Is

Choreography: Taylor Mitchell

Selected from the nine works performed in TDC's *New Dances* project to enter the company repertory, this piece is a delightful, humorous work about love. The *Chicago Tribune* wrote that the work "proved to be the audience hands-down favorite."

Performed to charming music from Woody Allen's movie *Midnight in Paris*. Love is lost, found, accepted and rejected in a variety of dramatic and funny ways in this work, and is all over the stage by the end of the piece. (8 dancers)

## Near Light

Choreography: Melissa Thodos

This piece is about the pain and anguish of losing a loved one suddenly, and the remarkable healing that is possible overtime through growth and understanding. Healing itself is a painful, difficult process that take a great deal of introspection. The piece is dedicated to the friends and families of those who have died by suicide, gun violence, and other tragic events. (10 dancers)



## Cascade

Choreography: Melissa Thodos

*Cascade* was commissioned by the Ravinia Festival and received second prize in the Dance Under the Stars International Choreography Competition. (4 dancers)



## Hopelandic

Choreography: Kellie Hodges

*Hopelandic* has delighted audiences from Alaska to Busan, Korea. (3 dancers)

Photos by Cheryl Mann

# WHAT THE MEDIA SAYS

**“dance that grabs you with the first images and never lets go”**

*-Chicago Tribune*

**“rich, theatrical work, limited only by gravity”**

*-Chicago Sun-Times*

**“their 90-minute show Thursday night at the Discovery Theatre was a delicious surprise...(and) an open invitation to come back”**

*-Anchorage Daily News*

**“The best dance event of the year (White City).”**

*-Hedy Weiss, Chicago Sun-Times*

**“exquisitely well trained, technically proficient in all manner of movement”**

*-Sanibel Islander*

**“serene athleticism, every aspect of the choreography is truly satisfying”**

*-The British Herald*

**“the company’s repertoire is so rich...the dancers are superb”**

*-Chicago Reader*



THODDOS DANCE  
C H I C A G O

Phone: 312-266-6255  
Email: [info@thodosdancechicago.org](mailto:info@thodosdancechicago.org)  
Web Site: [www.thodosdancechicago.org](http://www.thodosdancechicago.org)

# WHAT THE PRESENTERS SAY



**Michael Burgraff, Executive Director**  
**Fergus Falls Center for the Arts, Fergus Falls, MN**

*"I grabbed at my chest during the technical rehearsal and was asked by the Thodos' technical director if I was having a heart attack; I replied no, it had just been such a long time since dance had moved me in such a raw emotional way."*

**Stuart Sector, Executive Director**

**Clark State Community College Performing Arts Center, Springfield, OH**

*"Everyone with Thodos Dance Chicago went above and beyond, and did it with such grace, style and genuine appreciation. It created an impact on our community/region that will long be remembered."*

**Dottie Demark, Executive Director**

**Skagway, AK Arts Council**

*"Skagway just loved Thodos. As you heard, we had a record turnout for the performance and I'm still hearing positive comments and thank yous from folks around town. Everyone in the company was so enjoyable, my eyes teared up when I said goodbye to them at the ferry terminal."*



**Emily Brickler, Managing Director**  
**Leach Theater**

*"It was fantastic from beginning to end!"*

THODOS DANCE  
C H I C A G O

Phone: 312-266-6255  
Email: [info@thodosdancechicago.org](mailto:info@thodosdancechicago.org)  
Web Site: [www.thodosdancechicago.org](http://www.thodosdancechicago.org)

# WHAT THE PRESENTERS SAY (CONT.)

**Tommy Hensel, Managing Director**  
**Fine and Performing Arts Center**  
**Moraine Valley Community College, Palos Hills, IL**

*"During the past six years, I have had the pleasure of presenting Thodos Dance Chicago on three occasions. I continue to be amazed at both their supreme talent and at the growth of the company, both as dancers and choreographers. Their collaborations with Ann Reinking have been some of the most evocative and amazing dance works I have seen in my career as an arts presenter."*



**Kenley Jackson**  
**Sitka, AK Arts Council**

*"Sitka had a wonderful time with Thodos! The elementary assembly was well done, engaging, and very informative for students and adults. The performance was very well attended (508 patrons) --a huge show for us! The company was delightful and the dancing was inspiring and gorgeous."*



**Dwight Vaught, Director**  
**Doudna Fine Arts Center**

*"What an amazing and powerful performance Thodos presented for our audience! Excited was the audience on Saturday night. A pretty full house (officially 97% capacity) was awed by the performance. At intermission I had three people whose opinions I highly value proclaim, 'This is the best dance performance I've ever seen', or 'This is the best performance we've had at the Doudna'. We've had some good ones (I would say great ones), but Thodos made a connection on much deeper levels than simple performance."*

THODOS DANCE  
C H I C A G O

Phone: 312-266-6255  
Email: [info@thodosdancechicago.org](mailto:info@thodosdancechicago.org)  
Web Site: [www.thodosdancechicago.org](http://www.thodosdancechicago.org)

# EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Whether it is a pairing with schools, community organizations, libraries, or colleges/universities, Thodos Dance Chicago is adept at creating educational programming tailored to the specific needs of the presenter. With education being the foundation upon which Thodos Dance Chicago was created, ensemble members hold degrees in dance from leading colleges and universities. Company artists teach dozens of weekly classes in the Thodos Dance Chicago program at the Menonomee Club of Chicago in addition to engaging with the community through numerous outreach programs.



## **Connections** *STUDY GUIDE AVAILABLE!*

### **Assembly Performance: Grades K-8**

Thodos Dance Chicago takes the inspirational story of Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan, through the medium of contemporary dance, to bring awareness about those living with disabilities. Through this 40 minute assembly program, students can gain a better understanding of people with disabilities and the rise of Helen Keller to become one of the 20th century's leading humanitarians. The **Connections** assembly program includes professional repertory performance selections, demonstrations, and student participation.



## **Imagine Dance** *STUDY GUIDE AVAILABLE!*

### **Assembly Performance: Grades K-8**

**Imagine Dance** is an exciting 40 minute interactive dance assembly that educates students about the concepts and tools employed in creating dance. TDC ensemble members perform dances of various styles and demonstrate the concepts, stages and tools needed to create a dance. The program contains participatory exercises requiring student generated ideas and the execution of those ideas by students themselves onstage. "For a full hour 300 third-sixth graders were completely spellbound, learning about dance modalities, engaging with the dancers and having the opportunity to watch polished performance pieces. The kids (and teachers as well) really connected with the dancers." -Janet Bowen, Homer, AK



## **Dance Smash**

### **Assembly Performance: Junior and Senior High School**

A full company one-hour repertory concert with a lecture demonstration --best performed in a theater setting. Acclaimed dances in the repertory of Thodos Dance Chicago are performed by the entire Company for the student body with full production elements inclusive of lighting and costumes. A question and answer session with the Company is conducted with the students following each performance.

THODOS DANCE  
CHICAGO

Phone: 312-266-6255  
Email: [info@thodosdancechicago.org](mailto:info@thodosdancechicago.org)  
Web Site: [www.thodosdancechicago.org](http://www.thodosdancechicago.org)

# EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING (CONT.)



## Unique Residencies

### Teaching Program: All ages and skill levels

Thodos Dance Chicago creates residencies tailored specifically for YOU! With input from our artistic staff, we offer a variety of programming offerings that can be customized to fit the specific needs of your school or organization. Options include, but are not limited to, teaching master classes, setting choreography, presenting a performance, and participating in live music collaborations.



## Master Classes

### Teaching Program: All ages and skill levels

Thodos Dance Chicago can teach classes in any dance style and at all levels. Classes are offered in:

- Modern/contemporary technique
- Ballet technique
- Jazz
- Composition and improvisation
- TDC repertory
- Body, Health and Wellness
- Yoga and Pilates mat classes



## Setting Choreography on Community Performers

### Teaching Program: All ages and skill levels

A Company Member of Thodos Dance Chicago can set new choreography on a group of dancers. All TDC Company Members are both professional performers and educators ensuring the highest level of instruction, education, and creativity. The new choreography can be performed at the TDC concert and/or a student recital.



## Community Immersion

Thodos Dance Chicago thrives on developing unique relationships with community partners. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Partnership with Chicago Union League Boys and Girls Clubs
- Touch tours for audience members with disabilities
- Post-show “Meet the Artists” events
- Performances in art museums and art galleries
- Lectures to book clubs and libraries about the novels behind TDC’s story ballets
- Site-specific works (creating a piece in a location of local significance)

# PERFORMANCE HISTORY

(includes contracted 2015-2016 performances)

## United States

### Alabama

East Alabama Arts Association, Opelika

### Alaska

Anchorage Center for the Performing Arts, Anchorage

Chilkat Center for the Arts, Haines

Gerald E. Wilson Auditorium, Kodiak

Juneau-Douglas High School, Juneau

Kayhi Auditorium, Ketchikan

Mariner Theater, Homer

Skagway City School, Skagway

Sitka Performing Arts Center, Sitka

Valdez Civic Center, Valdez

### Connecticut

Carol Autorino Center, St. Joseph College, East Hartford

### California

McCallum Theater for the Performing Arts, Palm Desert (2)

### Florida

Hollywood Arts and Cultural Center, Hollywood

Schein Performance Hall, Sanibel

Tarpon Springs Performing Arts Center, Tarpon Springs

Thrasher Horne Center for the Arts, Orange Park

### Illinois

Auditorium Theater, Chicago (3)

Athenaeum Theater, Chicago (33)

North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, Skokie (8)

Claudia Cassidy Theater, Chicago (4)

Dance Center of Columbia College, Chicago (7)

Dorothy Menker Theater, Moraine Valley Community College, Palos Hills (6)

Doudna Center, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston (2)

Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Chicago (11)

Hettenhausen Center, McKendree University, Lebanon

James Lumber Center, College of Lake County, Grayslake

Kirkland Fine Arts Center, Millikin University, Decatur (2)

Logan Center for the Arts, University of Chicago

Marjorie Ward Marshall Dance Center, Northwestern University, Evanston (2)

Marion Cultural and Civic Center, Marion

McAninch Arts Center, College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn (3)

Metropolis Centre for the Arts, Arlington Heights (2)

Prairie Center for the Arts, Schaumburg

Pritzker Theater, Harold Washington Library, Chicago (23)

Richard C. Johnson Auditorium, Barrington (2)

Ruth Page Theater, Chicago (36)

Skyline Stage, Navy Pier (5)

### Iowa

Galvin Fine Arts Center, St. Ambrose University, Davenport

Kruidenier Center, Central College, Pella

THODOS DANCE  
C H I C A G O

Phone: 312-266-6255  
Email: [info@thodosdancechicago.org](mailto:info@thodosdancechicago.org)  
Web Site: [www.thodosdancechicago.org](http://www.thodosdancechicago.org)

# PERFORMANCE HISTORY (CONT.)

# THODOS DANCE CHICAGO

Phone: 312-266-6255  
Email: [info@thodosdancechicago.org](mailto:info@thodosdancechicago.org)  
Web Site: [www.thodosdancechicago.org](http://www.thodosdancechicago.org)

## Indiana

Anderson University, Anderson  
Arts Place, Richmond  
Clowes Memorial Hall, Butler University, Indianapolis  
Emens Auditorium, Ball State University, Muncie  
Indiana State Theater, Indianapolis  
Tilson Auditorium, Indiana State University, Terre Haute

## Kansas

Johnson County Community College, Overland Park  
Fort Hays State University, Hays  
Lied Center (University of Kansas), Lawrence

## Kentucky

Glema Mahr Center for the Arts, Madisonville

## Louisiana

Manship Theatre, Baton Rouge

## Massachusetts

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Beckett (2)

## Michigan

Dogwood Center for the Arts, Fremont  
Grand Rapids Ballet Theater, Grand Rapids  
Hope College, Holland  
Louis Armstrong Theatre, Grand Valley State University, Allendale (2)

## Minnesota

Fergus Falls Center for the Arts (2)

## Mississippi

Ford Center for the Performing Arts, Oxnard  
Riley Center for the Performing Arts at MSU, Meridian

## Missouri

Leach Theater, Missouri University of Science and Technology, Rolla (2)  
Hammons Hall, Missouri State University, Springfield  
Touhill Performing Arts Center, University of Missouri at St. Louis (5)

## Nebraska

The Tassel, Holdrege  
Merryman Performing Arts Center, Kearney

## New Hampshire

Stockbridge Theater, Pinkerton Academy, Derry

## New York

Alvin Ailey Theater, New York (2)  
City Center Studios, New York  
Nazareth College, Rochester  
Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs

## North Carolina

Altamont Theater, Ashville  
Davidson College, Davidson

# PERFORMANCE HISTORY (CONT.)

## Ohio

Clark State University, Springfield (2)

## Tennessee

Dixie Carter Performing Arts Center, Huntingdon

## Texas

Paramount Theatre, Austin

## Vermont

Fine Arts Center, Castleton State College

Flynn Center for the Arts, Burlington

## Virginia

TCC Roper Performing Arts Center, Norfolk

## Wisconsin

Janesville Performing Arts Center, Janesville

John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan

Young Auditorium, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

## International

Busan International Dance Festival, KOREA

Istanbul International Dance Festival, TURKEY

Edinburgh Fringe Festival, SCOTLAND (2)

Ankara International Dance Festival TURKEY

World Expo, Brisbane AUSTRALIA

Concurs International Danse de Paris, FRANCE

THODOS DANCE  
CHICAGO

Phone: 312-266-6255

Email: [info@thodosdancechicago.org](mailto:info@thodosdancechicago.org)

Web Site: [www.thodosdancechicago.org](http://www.thodosdancechicago.org)