



**BRIAN  
MARTINEZ**

# ***NEW DANCES 2020***

PRESENTED BY:  
THODOS DANCE CHICAGO  
& DANCEWORKS CHICAGO

EPISODE #6

SATURDAY, JUNE 27TH, 2020 12:00 PM

***Next to the Portrait of  
a Red-Haired Lady***

**Saturday, June 27 at 12pm**

*New Dances 2020 is generously supported by*

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**Good luck to all those involved in the *New Dances 2020* project!**

# ***NEW DANCES 2020 SUPPORTERS***

*New Dances 2020* aspires to serve, celebrate, and lift up a vibrant and inclusive group of Chicago-based movers and makers. Thodos Dance Chicago and DanceWorks Chicago gratefully acknowledge the generous support of donors, who are part of NEW steps.

If you are moved by your experience, please consider a tax-deductible donation to continue the *New Dances* legacy of support for local artists and create a more sustainable and empowering future for dance and dancers in Chicago.

[thodosdancechicago.org/support/](http://thodosdancechicago.org/support/) or [danceworkschicago.org/support/](http://danceworkschicago.org/support/)

## **Wish List Angels**

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### **Special Thanks**

Vin Reed: Graphic Design

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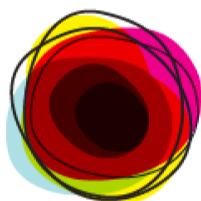
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[www.academyofmovementandmusic.com](http://www.academyofmovementandmusic.com)

# ***NEW DANCES 2020***

## **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 28th year, Thodos Dance Chicago has evolved to undertake projects that provide the greatest impact in the Chicago community and beyond as a project-based dance organization. Our mission is to engage and enrich the community through dance creation, advocacy, education, mentorship and production. 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. For more information, visit <https://thodosdancechicago.org/>.

## **TDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Kim Vatis, President

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## **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 efforts to nurture and convene a diverse 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/>.

## **DWC BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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# ABOUT NEW DANCES

For over 30 years, New Dances has fostered dance creation as one of Chicago's first and most extensive choreography incubation programs. Founded by The Chicago Repertory Dance Ensemble in the 1980's, continued since 2000 by Thodos Dance Chicago (TDC), and in partnership with DanceWorks Chicago (DWC) since 2018, *New Dances* offers opportunities for emerging choreographers to realize and share their creative vision with the community. Thank you for joining us to celebrate the 20th anniversary of New Dances under the TDC umbrella. Every year is a special year. This year has been a year of firsts. A record number of dancers from the Chicagoland area participated in the first-ever virtual audition. The six *New Dances* choreographers created a short audition prompt, and dancers recorded and uploaded their responses. Over seventy applications were received, and each choreographer reviewed the dancers' work in order to complete their casting wish list. Choreographer Joanna Meccia recalled, "Wow! What an incredibly moving/stirring 48 hours. There was something so inspiring about watching these audition videos, as the dancers were not only vulnerable in auditioning, but also in their willingness to open up their own spaces to record. You really get to see a piece of who they are." From dancer Ali Webb, "I am looking forward to pushing the bounds of our field through a virtual platform and creating something entirely new with everyone involved. What an exciting and innovative time!!!!"

Guided by the 3 R's of *New Dances* 2020, respectful, responsible, and resourceful, a collaborative decision to prioritize safety and proceed with virtual open company classes and rehearsals was made by the choreographers and artistic directors. Thanks to the generosity of a consortium of funders, open company classes were free and welcomed dancers from Chicago and beyond. Choreographers and dancers collaborated on virtual rehearsals, stretching their creative muscles to achieve shared artistic goals and being resourceful about using challenges as opportunities for exploration. A mid-point sharing with our Mentorship Panel provided valuable feedback from "outside eyes". Mentors will attend a performance and offer post-process thoughts to each of the choreographers.

This performance is a moment. A moment in the journey that has been *New Dances* 2020. A moment that is part of each individual artist journey. A moment that may fuel a broader journey, if we have the courage and stamina to act. Team *New Dances* is committed to supporting the Chicago community in the spirit of coming together around necessary change. A portion of revenues from ticket sales for each performance will be donated to Chicago-based beneficiaries selected by the artists of *New Dances* 2020. Brian's beneficiary is *Brave Space Alliance*.

There has been a lot of NEW in *New Dances* this season, including work behind-the-scenes. Gratitude to administrative and production staff for bringing their openness and talents to the table. Grateful to you, our audience, for your support of the individual and collective journey.

*Thank you for being part of history by attending a first-ever New Dances artist episode!*

Let's continue the work to make history and combine moments into movements. In dance, transitions are unseen heroes. Tap into your inner hero/shero, and let's do the work. Together .

# ABOUT THE DIRECTORS



## **Melissa Thodos, TDC Founder & Artistic Director**

At the age of six, Melissa Thodos wanted to really MOVE...so she did, by training at the Evanston School of Ballet, choreographing in High School, and doing both at Skidmore College. Following academia, she became a featured performer educator and choreographer with The Chicago Repertory Dance Ensemble performing works by Paul Taylor, Lar Lubovitch and Ze'eva Cohen among others until founding Thodos Dance Chicago in 1992. Thodos Dance Chicago served as a platform for her own choreography and for other American choreographers from the national dance landscape. Melissa also collaborated with such noted artists as Ann Reinking, Yoko Ono, and architect Jeanne Gang to bring blended vision and voices to the stage. For a quarter of a century, the Company performed in over 25 states and 6 continents, and beyond the stage Melissa created a professional environment that not only trained dancers, but also nurtured them as choreographers, and activated them to grow as educators. *New Dances* was part of the Thodos Dance Chicago's fabric and structure since 2000 and it is thrilling that this special project continues today in collaboration with DanceWorks Chicago.



## **Julie Nakagawa, DWC Co-Founder & Artistic Director**

From Evanston, IL, Julie was a featured dancer with Christopher D'Amboise's Off Center Ballet, Cleveland Ballet, and Twyla Tharp Dance. At the invitation of Lou Conte, Julie joined Lou Conte Dance Studio in January 1994 and rose to the position of Associate Director. In addition, she led Hubbard Street 2 from its inception in 1997 through February 2007, nurturing young dancers and establishing the National Choreographic Competition to provide opportunities for emerging dancemakers. Julie is a Co-founder and Artistic Director of DanceWorks Chicago, an artistic incubator focused on the holistic development of young creatives.



*Always moving.*



# ARTIST FEATURE: BRIAN MARTINEZ

*Next to the Portrait of a Red-Haired Lady*

**Choreography:** Brian Martinez

**Music:** "Mad Rush" by Phillip Glass

**Assistant:** David Scheuerman

**Dancers:** Jacob Buerger, Kara Hunsinger, Moscelyne ParkeHarrison, Kara Roseborough, Imani Williams

*"When life gives you lemons, film where you can."*

*Brian would like his episode's ticket proceeds to be donated to Brave Space Alliance.*

*Read more about Brave Space Alliance at <https://www.bravespacealliance.org/>*



**Brian Martinez** (Chicago) After receiving his BFA in Contemporary Dance, Brian moved to Chicago to further his training with Hubbard Street's Professional Program (HSPro) under the direction of Alexandra Wells. In the program, he has performed and workshopped works by Ryan Mason, William Forsythe, Rena Butler, Robyn Minekos Williams, and Peter Chu; all of whom provided transformative information for Brian's developing choreographic preferences. Providing a space for dancers to discover movement and take ownership of it has been a staple of his process. Allowing for this positively impacts the resulting product, whatever it may be.

## EPISODE SCHEDULE

**Episode 1: Monday, June 22 at 6pm CST (Sydney Jones)**

*Sydney would like her ticket proceeds to be donated to towards Assata's Daughters*

**Episode 2: Tuesday, June 23 at 7pm CST (Drew Lewis)**

*Drew would like his ticket proceeds to be donated to towards Chicago West Community Music Center*

**Episode 3: Wednesday, June 24 at 1pm CST (Peyton Winker)**

*Peyton would like her ticket proceeds to be donated to My Block My Hood My City*

**Episode 4: Thursday, June 25 at 7pm CST (Joanna Meccia)**

*Joanna would like her ticket proceeds to be donated to Southsiders Organized for Unity & Liberation*

**Episode 5: Friday, June 26 at 5pm CST (Joe Musiel)**

*Joe would like his ticket proceeds to be donated to Affinity Community Services*

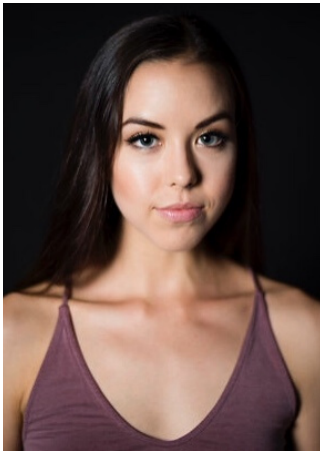
**Episode 6: Saturday, June 27 at noon CST (Brian Martinez)**

*Brian would like his ticket proceeds to be donated to Brave Space Alliance*

## **BRIAN'S DANCERS**



**Jacob Buerger** (Chicago), originally from Bolingbrook, IL, is a Chicago-based performer and teacher. He earned his BFA in Dance from Columbia College Chicago and has performed works by Emma Draves, Carrie Hanson, Vershawn Sanders-Ward, and Thomas DeFranz. In addition, Jacob has performed with The Puzzle League, Same Planet Performance Project, and Fred Darsow Dance. He is working toward certification in Thai Body Work and exploring the world of photography. Jacob joined Hedwig Dances and Concert Dance Inc in Summer 2018.



**Kara Hunsinger** (Chicago) is from Modesto, CA, where she started her dance training at Steps Dance Arts Center and then at a professional level with Juline's School of Dance. Kara's additional training includes Ballet West, Alonzo King LINES Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, San Francisco Conservatory of Dance, and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. In 2019, Kara graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Arizona, where she had the honor of performing works by Christopher Wheeldon, George Balanchine, Autumn Eckman, Nacho Duato, Sam Watson, Tamara Dyke-Compton, and Alexei Ratmansky. During her senior year she danced with Hawkin's Dance Company under the direction of Shelly Hawkins. Post-graduation, Kara joined the DanceWorks Chicago family.



**Moscelyne ParkeHarrison** (Chicago) graduated from The Juilliard School in 2019, with the Joseph W. Polisi Award for Artist as Citizen. She attended Walnut Hill School for the Arts where she received her high school degree. She has had the pleasure of performing works by Helen Simoneau, Katarzyna Skarpetowska, Roy Assaf, Hannes Langolf, Ryan Mason, Iztok Kovac, Stefanie Batten Bland, José Limón, Nacho Duato, Martha Graham, Johannes Wieland, and Crystal Pite. Her group and solo works have been performed at Juilliard, Triskelion Arts, and the Studebaker Theater. Moscelyne is a member of Post:Ballet in San Francisco, and the director of BodySonnet.



**Kara Roseborough** (Evanston) is a multidisciplinary artist, and she is thrilled to join New Dances for the 2020 season. Kara is a guest artist with South Chicago Dance Theatre, the assistant director of Evanston Dance Ensemble 2, and a Cecchetti certified ballet teacher at Dance Center Evanston. Kara is an alumna of the Chicago Academy for the Arts and the University of Utah, from which she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English Cum Laude while dancing in the resident company, Utah Ballet. She is grateful to her parents for their love and support.



**Imani Williams** (Chicago), from Atlanta, started dancing as a junior in high school. After graduation, Imani accepted a full scholarship at Joffrey Ballet School's (NYC) Jazz and Contemporary Program directed by Michael Blake, where he had the honor of dancing in works by former prima ballerina Margo Sappington, Tony Award-winner Chet Walker, and choreographer of *Rent* Marlies Yearby, and performing in pieces by Emily Bufferd, Lane Gifford, Tyler Gilstrap, and Sekou McMiller. Imani was featured in Joffrey Ballet School photos by Lois Greenfield. Imani has danced with Florida Dance Theater and *Giordano II*. Imani joined DanceWorks Chicago in September 2018.

## **MENTORSHIP PANEL**



**Jeff Hancock**, MFA, performs, teaches, choreographs and designs movement and clothing that moves all over the place. Since 1990, dancing for River North, Hubbard Street, Same Planet and others, his dance and design life collided, supported and informed each other, and shaped his path as a teaching artist. Curiosity about movement and clothing and their mutual influence has fueled his long history of research and exploration. Recent performance: "EX/BODY", "Of Whales..." with Molly Shanahan/Mad Shak, "Volledig" with Rob Welcher. Recent choreography: "Sword-fighting and Other Things ..." with Rob Welcher, "Verge: the edge of chaos and becoming" Northwestern University.



**Joshua Manculich** – born in Windber, PA – is a recipient of a 2015 Princess Grace Choreography Fellowship. His choreographic adventures include: Ballet Austin II, Collage Dance Collective, DanceWorks Chicago, Dancing in the Parks, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company II, Eisenhower Dance Detroit, Grand Valley State University, Houston Contemporary Dance Company, Interlochen, Metdance, Piel Morena Contemporary Dance, Point Park University, Santa Barbara Dance Theater, The Big Muddy Dance Company, Western Michigan University, Visceral Dance Chicago, and Whim W'Him. Josh is a proud alumnus of Thodos Dance Chicago where he danced five seasons and performed works by an eclectic range of dancemakers.



**Amy Wilkinson** is the Executive Director of the IN/Motion Dance Film Festival. She has performed extensively as a dance artist with numerous companies including Luna Negra Dance Theatre, Same Planet Different World, CDI/Concert Dance Inc., and Thodos Dance Chicago and has presented choreography at national and international venues. Recent projects include collaborations with Mandala Dance Company in Rome, Italy and the International Choir & Orchestra of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Ms. Wilkinson is on faculty at Loyola University Chicago where she makes dance films and is pursuing a PhD in Highe

## STAFF



**Ginger Jensen, DWC Operations Manager** Ginger brings a lifelong commitment to dance and a passion for developing sustainable arts organizations. Originally from Nebraska, Ginger followed her ambition to Chicago to pursue the more abundant opportunities in dance. She was the founding artistic and executive director of Renegade Dance Architects (of Chicago), where she cultivated donor relationships, tripled audience capacity in one season and created a dynamic social media presence. After completing her Master's of Science in Nonprofit Management with honors from Spertus Institute in Chicago she interned at the Adler Planetarium in individual and major giving and worked as development manager for Lucky Plush Productions.



**Jacob Snodgrass, Production Manager**, has been designing lights and working within the performing arts community since 2000. His works have been seen with Giordano Dance Chicago, Aerial Dance Chicago, Chicago Human Rhythm Project, BONEdanse, The Dance COLEctive, Khecari Dance Theater, Breakbone Dance Company, Peter Carpenter Performance Project, Same Planet Different World, instruments of movement, Chamber Opera Chicago, Cuba's Escuela Nacional de Ballet, REIDance, Havana Cuba's DanzAbierta, Soham Dance, Concert Dance Inc. (China 2009), Joel Hall Dancers, Hedwig Dances, the Other Dance Festival, the Ruth Page Foundation, the Space Movement Project, Canada's lbs/sq", NEIU Repertory Dance, and *New Dances*. Jacob is the Lighting Director at the Dance Center of Columbia College and has been technical director at the Ruth Page Theater, Links Hall, and Hamlin Park Dance Theater.



**Kristen Vasilakos, TDC General Manager** A Minnesota native Kristen attended the University of Iowa where she received a B.F.A. in Dance and a B.A. in Health and Human Physiology. After graduation, Kristen joined Thodos Dance Chicago as an Intern/Trainee for the 25th Season. As an Intern/Trainee at TDC, she gained valuable skills on the administrative side of running a dance company and became the Artistic Associate for TDC in March 2018. Kristen is honored to continue with Thodos Dance Chicago as General Manager and thrilled about the continued partnership with DanceWorks Chicago in producing a third season of *New Dances*!



**Emma Lambert, DWC Intern**, from Dearborn Heights, MI, is recently graduated from the University of Michigan. She completed a dual degree, receiving a BS in Movement Science and a BFA in Dance. Next year Emma will be attending the Master of Management program at the Ross School of Business. She would like to work in the arts administration field post-graduation and is particularly eager to do arts management work in the dance field. Emma is very excited to work with DanceWorks Chicago this summer and to work with the *New Dances* choreographers this year!



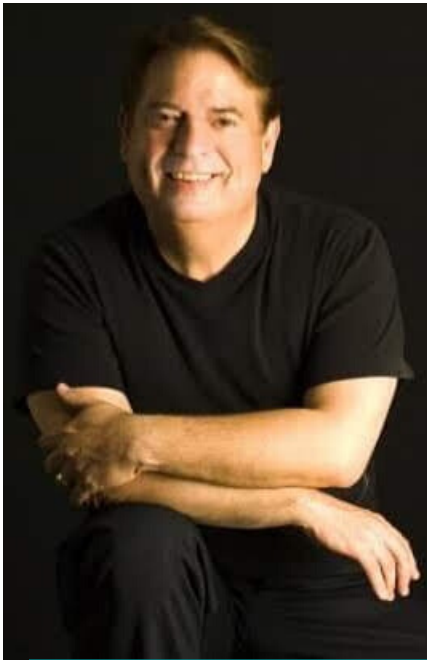
**Elijah Richardson, DWC dancer** (San Jose, CA) trained in figure skating, musical theatre, and classical choir from age five. Finding dance at age 12, his drive for excellence led to a BFA in Dance Performance and a minor in History from Chapman University (2018). Elijah spent summers training at Hubbard Street Dance Chicago and San Francisco Conservatory of Dance. A member of DanceWorks Chicago since September 2018, he has toured nationally and throughout Germany and worked with choreographers Shannon Alvis, Charissa-Lee Barton, Hanna Bricton, and Joshua Manculich, among others. Elijah has performed with The Cambrians, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, and New Dances 2019. Choreography and dance films have been showcased at DanceChance, Trifecta Dance Festival, and Mobile Dance Film Festival. Elijah is grateful to exercise his skills as an adjudicator, community builder, content creator, and teacher. IG: @elijahrisharson

### **Organizations to Explore**

*Affinity Community Services	Colorlines
*Assata's Daughters	The Conscious Kid
Antiracism Center	Crossroads Fund
Audre Lorde Project	Equal Justice Initiative (EJI)
Black Chicago Eats	George Floyd Memorial GoFundMe
Black Lives Matter	GoodKids MadCity
*Black Lives Matter Chicago	The Leadership Conference on Civil & Human Rights
The Black Star Project	Minnesota Freedom Fund
Black Visions Collective	MPowerChange
Black Women's Blueprint	*My Block, My Hood, My City
*Brave Space Alliance	NAACP
*Chicago Community Bond Fund	RAICES
Chicago Food Policy Action Council	Seasoned and Blessed
Chicago Freedom School	Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ)
Chicago Scholars	*Southsiders Organized for Unity and Liberation
*Chicago West Community Music Center	
Color of Change	

*\*Beneficiaries selected by the New Dances 2020 Company to receive proceeds from ticket sales.*

# TRIBUTES



***New Dances 2020* honors the memory of dear friend and lover of dance and the arts, Donald Hunter. We are grateful for your time with us as our managing director, with much love, your Thodos Dance Chicago Family**

**Sydney, the past few months showed us what arts, culture and dance provide in our lives and the void they leave when they are gone. I am inspired by you constantly, awed at your creativity and determination. Thank you for finding a way to do the impossible. Proud of everything you are doing!**

**Katie and Nick**

**Joanna Meccia, we are so proud of you and so excited to see what you're going to create!! Your hard work, talent, creativity, and beautiful heart have taken you so far, and the fact that you are where you are today is evidence! May God bless the work of your hands, and the meditations of your heart, and use them to touch the lives of others always. You are our precious girl.**

**We love you so much!!!**

**Lisa & Bill Paul**



**Sydney, I am so proud of what you have accomplished and truly admire your imagination. You fearlessly turn ideas and concepts into the beauty called dance; extracting raw emotions from the audience.**

**Love you, Dad!**

**“To Dance is to hear your Heart Speak”. Thank you to Sydney Jones and the choreographers and cast of New Dances 2020 for sharing your heart with us!**

**In love and gratitude, Corinne Jones**

**Sydney Jones, Dancing is dreaming with your feet. Keep dreaming and exploring outside the box. The entire world is opening up for you- this is only the beginning. We couldn't be prouder. I can't wait to see your vision come to life!  
I Love You, Mom**



**Meredith,  
We need the arts,  
and we need  
artists like  
Meredith! Keep  
exploring, keep  
expressing --  
Shine on, Love!**

**Congratulations  
Alexandra Webb and all  
the artists of 2020 New  
Dances! Your Tulsa,  
Oklahoma and Little  
Rock, Arkansas fans**



**You're my Hero  
Halina! I love you!**



**Brian,  
From high school to college to our  
first year post grad—I am amazed  
(but not surprised) at everything  
you have accomplished. Can't wait  
to witness your amazing work!  
Love,  
Gabby**



**Crush It Halina!  
You Are Dog-  
Gone Good!**

**Ingrid - it was a joy to watch you grow up at the Academy of Movement and Music, and a thrill now to see you take the stage with Thodos' New Dances!!**

**Drew - your passion has driven you to dance and create! You have come a long way from ballet at the Academy of Movement and Music!**



**We Are Proud of You Halina!**



**Cornito and I Think You're Amazing Hali! We Love You!**

**Sydney and the New Dances 2020 team,**

**Without a song or a dance..what are we?**

**So I say thank you for the music, for giving it to me**

**-ABBA**

**Love,  
The Kuranty's**



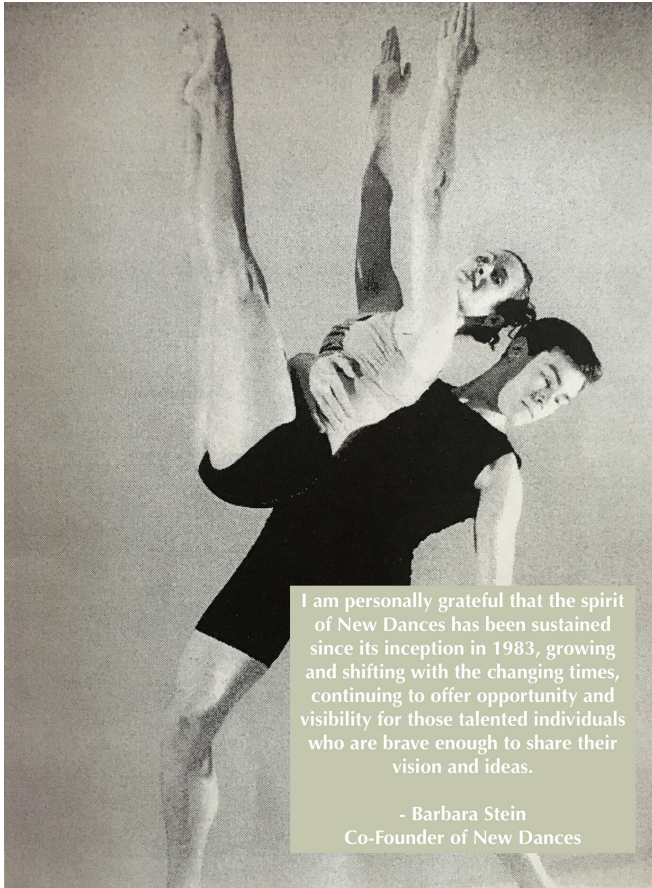
**Mere, your grace and beauty always leave us speechless and in awe! We are so proud of you and love you so much! Love Mom & Erik**

**All the best to the performers of New Dances 2020!  
Can't wait to see the talent displayed on Saturday!**

**So proud of you, Mariterese! Always love watching you perform! Love, Mom and Dad**

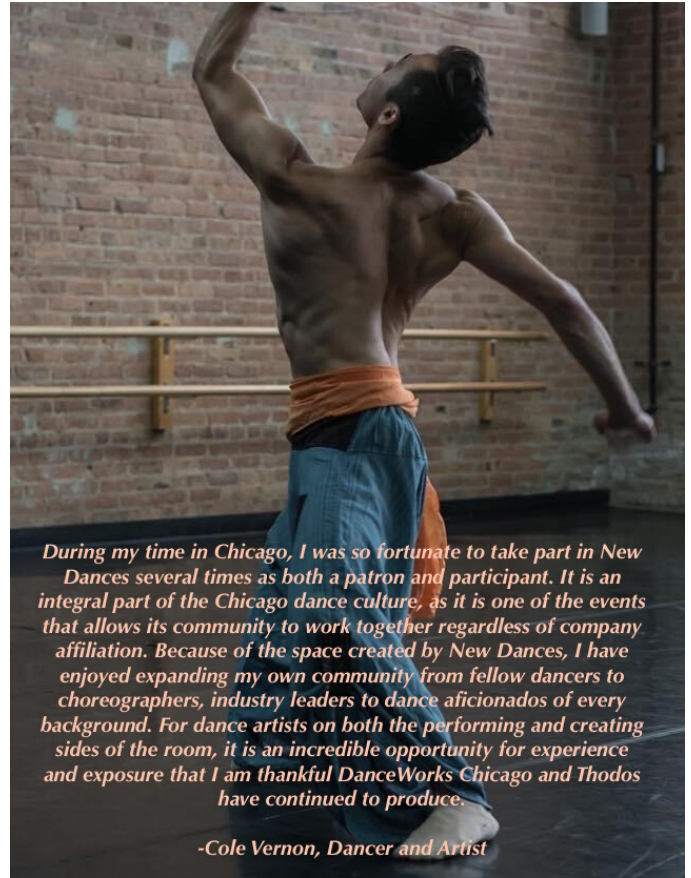


# THANK YOU, MELISSA, for carrying this project under TDC for 20 years!



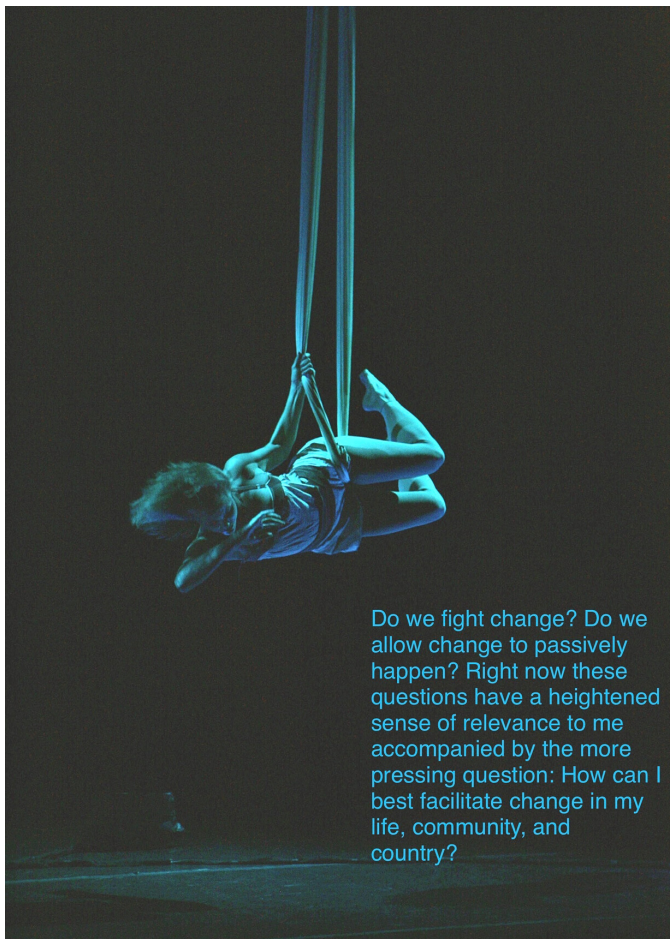
I am personally grateful that the spirit of New Dances has been sustained since its inception in 1983, growing and shifting with the changing times, continuing to offer opportunity and visibility for those talented individuals who are brave enough to share their vision and ideas.

- Barbara Stein  
Co-Founder of New Dances

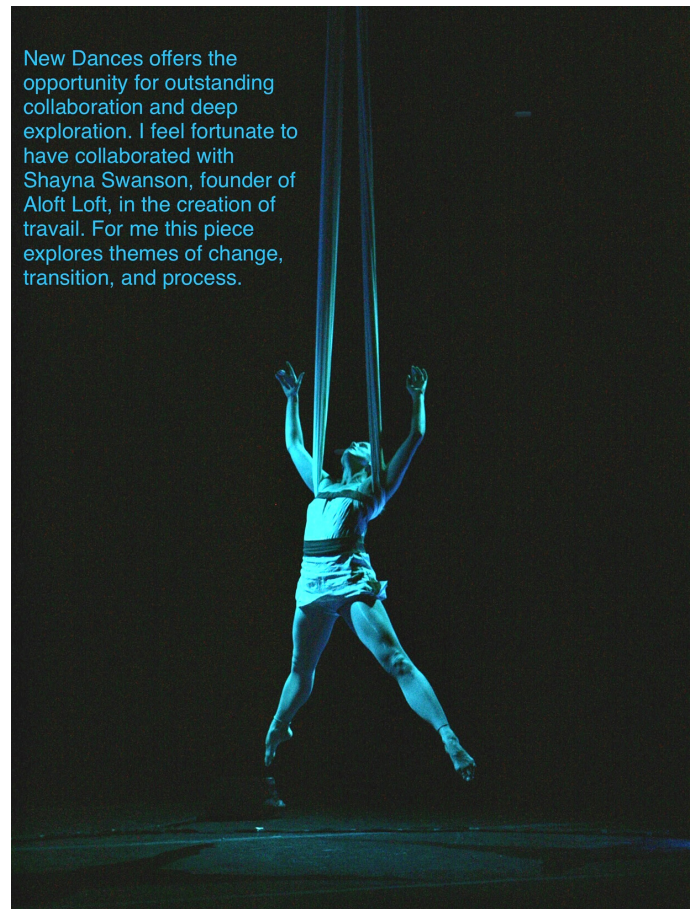


*During my time in Chicago, I was so fortunate to take part in New Dances several times as both a patron and participant. It is an integral part of the Chicago dance culture, as it is one of the events that allows its community to work together regardless of company affiliation. Because of the space created by New Dances, I have enjoyed expanding my own community from fellow dancers to choreographers, industry leaders to dance aficionados of every background. For dance artists on both the performing and creating sides of the room, it is an incredible opportunity for experience and exposure that I am thankful DanceWorks Chicago and Thodos have continued to produce.*

-Cole Vernon, Dancer and Artist



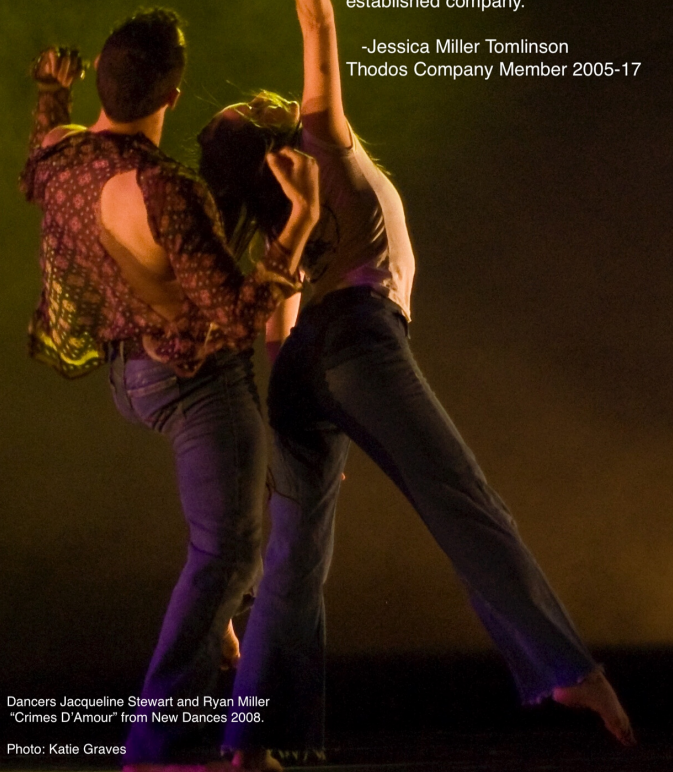
Do we fight change? Do we allow change to passively happen? Right now these questions have a heightened sense of relevance to me accompanied by the more pressing question: How can I best facilitate change in my life, community, and country?



New Dances offers the opportunity for outstanding collaboration and deep exploration. I feel fortunate to have collaborated with Shayna Swanson, founder of Aloft Loft, in the creation of travail. For me this piece explores themes of change, transition, and process.

New Dances has been an integral part of my development as a professional choreographer. Over the past 20 years Melissa Thodos and Thodos Dance Chicago has offered a platform to countless artists to create and have their work produced through an established company.

-Jessica Miller Tomlinson  
Thodos Company Member 2005-17



Dancers Jacqueline Stewart and Ryan Miller  
"Crimes D'Amour" from New Dances 2008.  
Photo: Katie Graves

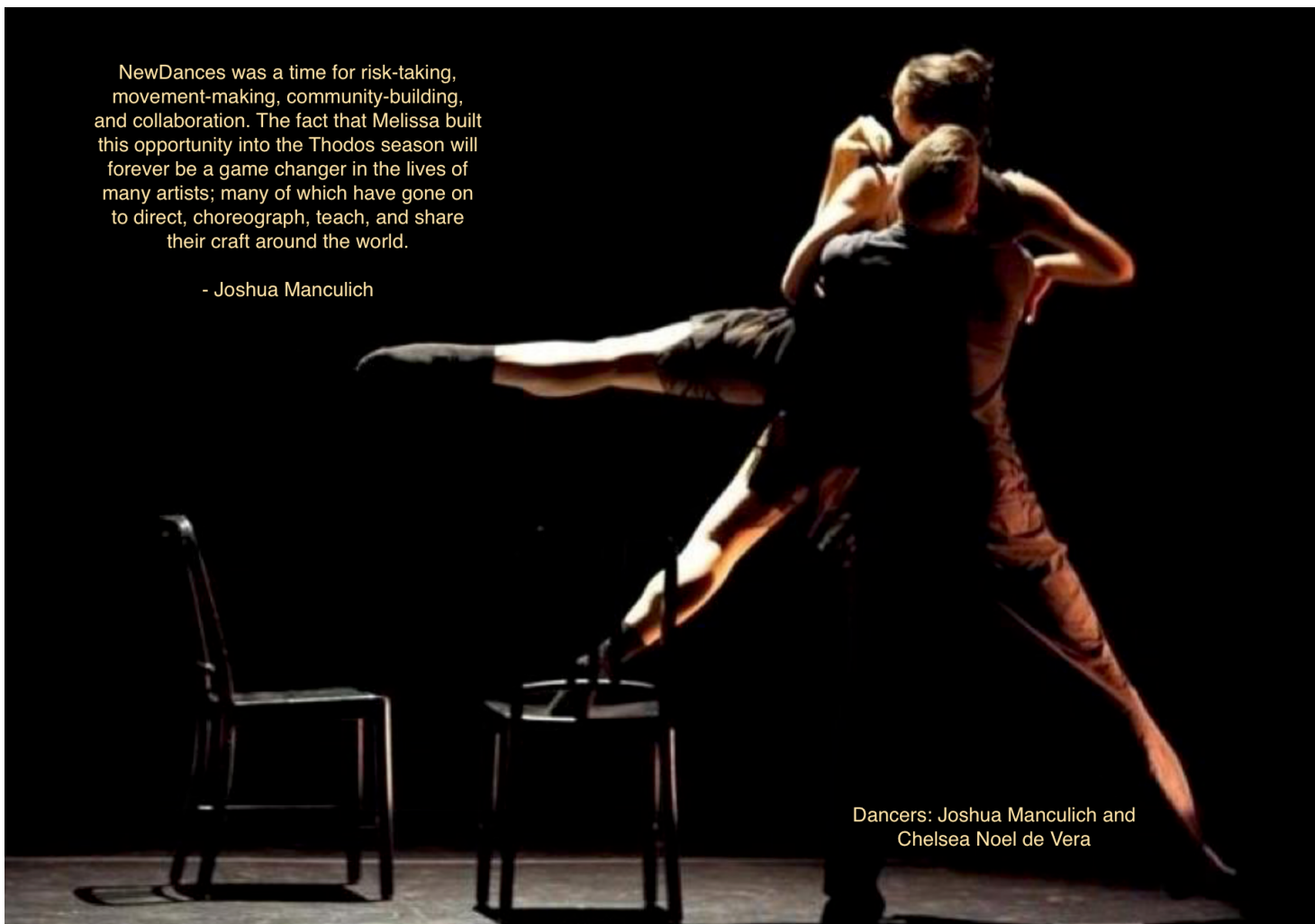


"My most memorable New Dances was New Dances 2016. New Dances 2016 was one of the most challenging, yet fulfilling experiences in my life. Not only as a performer, but as a choreographer as well. That year I performed "Sunrise," by Shannon Alvis and "Everywhere but Here," by Abby Hare. Both of those pieces are very dear to my heart, because they challenged me to grow in different ways, and allowed me to reveal a new found maturity in my artistry. I also choreographed "Uncovering," that year and that creative process served as a way for me to express and process the many life changes I was experiencing. Shortly before New Dances rehearsals began, I found out I was expecting, and I will always be grateful for the never ending support I received from Melissa Thodos and Laura Gates. Their encouragement was exactly what I needed during that time, and that's what New Dances is all about. Providing a safe space to create, heal and explore. I feel very proud and thankful to have been a part of such an important resource to the Chicago dance community. I say to all of the dancers and creators who have participated over the past 20 years, "Congratulations and keep on dancing!"

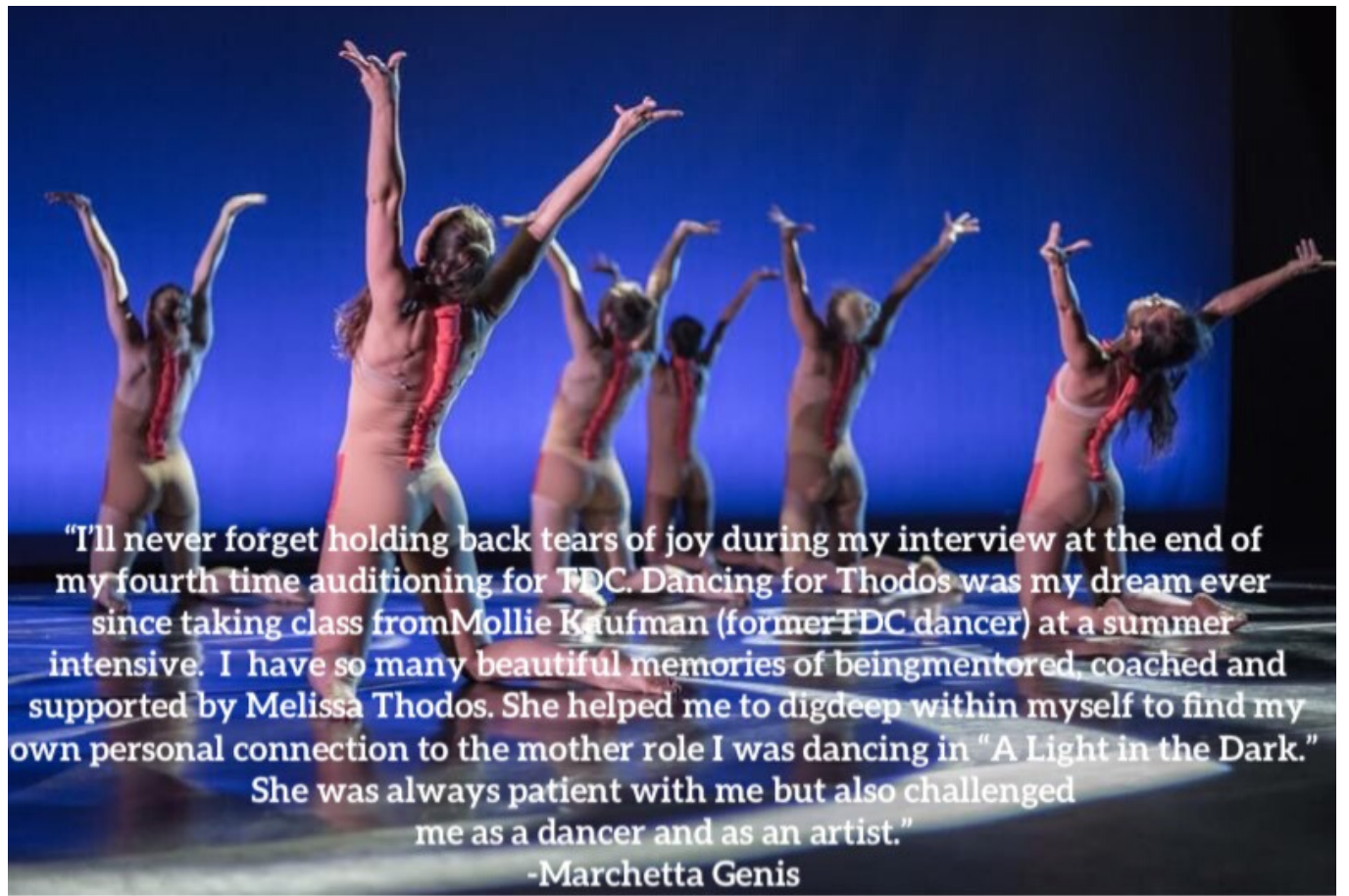
-Briana Arthur

NewDances was a time for risk-taking, movement-making, community-building, and collaboration. The fact that Melissa built this opportunity into the Thodos season will forever be a game changer in the lives of many artists; many of which have gone on to direct, choreograph, teach, and share their craft around the world.

- Joshua Manculich



Dancers: Joshua Manculich and  
Chelsea Noel de Vera



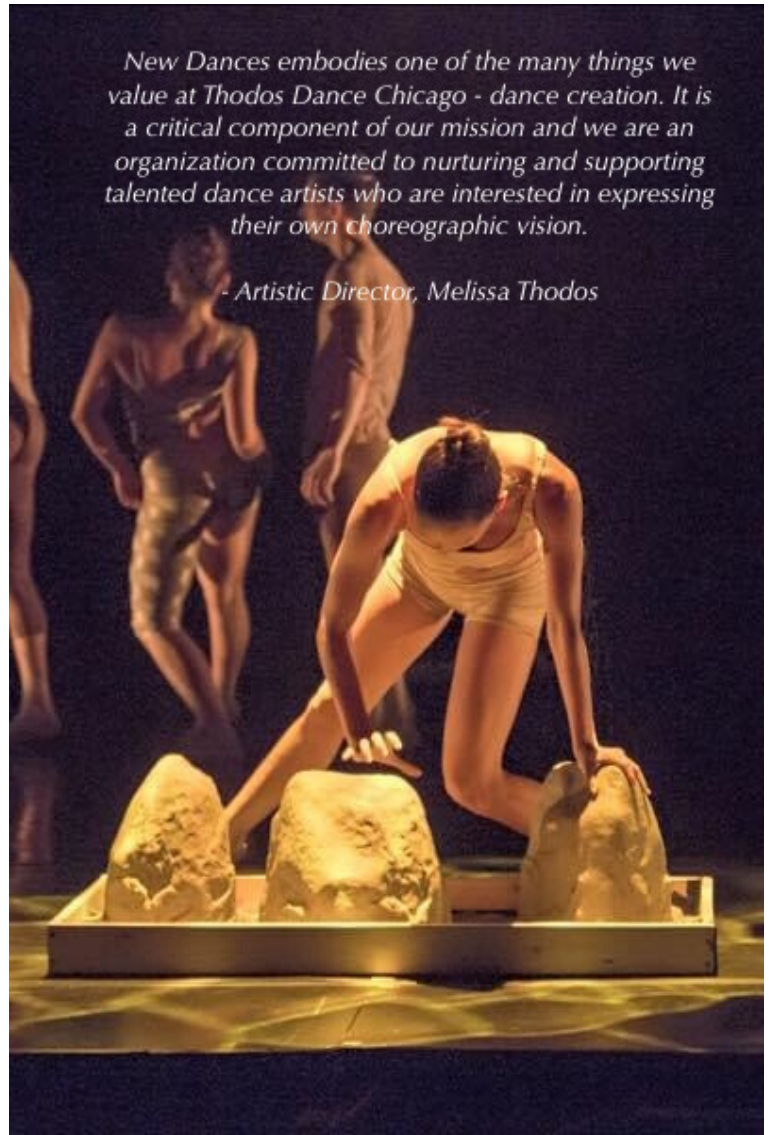
"I'll never forget holding back tears of joy during my interview at the end of my fourth time auditioning for TDC. Dancing for Thodos was my dream ever since taking class from Mollie Kaufman (former TDC dancer) at a summer intensive. I have so many beautiful memories of being mentored, coached and supported by Melissa Thodos. She helped me to dig deep within myself to find my own personal connection to the mother role I was dancing in "A Light in the Dark." She was always patient with me but also challenged me as a dancer and as an artist."  
-Marchetta Genis

"I couldn't be more thankful to have been a part of New Dances as a choreographer and as a dancer over the years. The sense of community built within this initiative is unparalleled. My growth as an artist would not have been the same without it. I'm truly grateful for New Dances to continue to grow and evolve and I'm fortunate enough to be a part of it."  
-Abby Hare



*New Dances embodies one of the many things we value at Thodos Dance Chicago - dance creation. It is a critical component of our mission and we are an organization committed to nurturing and supporting talented dance artists who are interested in expressing their own choreographic vision.*

*- Artistic Director, Melissa Thodos*





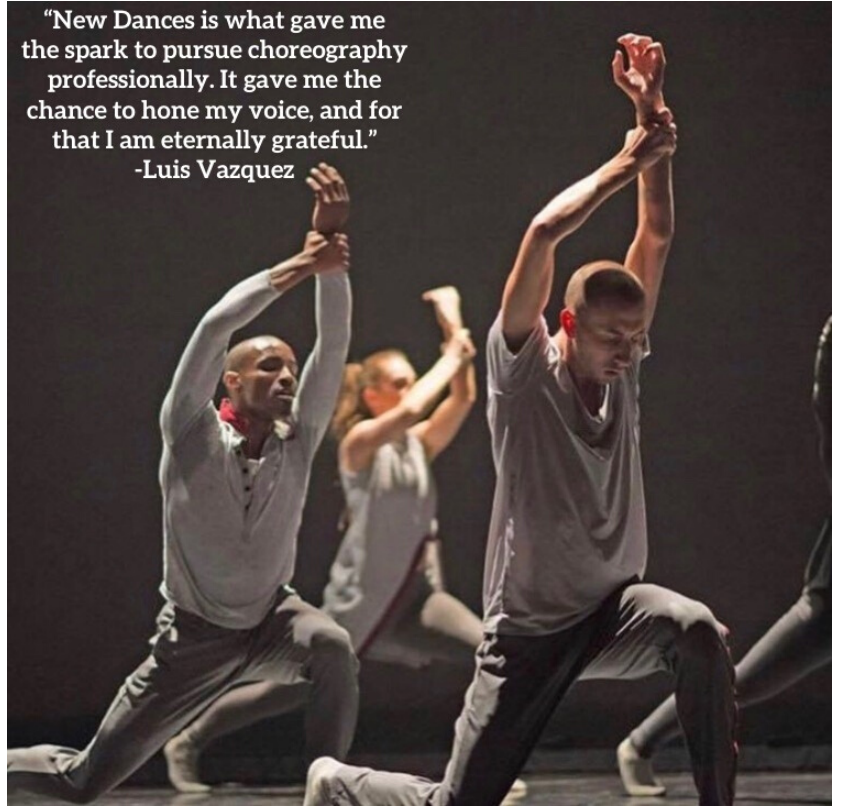
"I couldn't be more thankful for New Dances. Graduating college, I was worried that I would not have any other opportunities to choreograph. When I found out that there was a dance company that supported their dancers to pursue their own choreography- I was sold. Being a part of Thodos Dance Chicago and choreographing for New Dances for three years was a gift. New Dances gave me an opportunity to explore my voice as an artist and work with some of the most talented dancers in Chicago. Performing in New Dances was so much fun too- I got to collaborate and move with my best friends. Melissa, thank you for creating a one of a kind opportunity for dancers and choreographers like me. Congratulations for 20 amazing years of New Dances!"  
-Tenley Dickey

*New Dances gave me the support and experience I needed to develop my voice as a choreographer. When I made the artistic transition to focus on choreography I had legs to stand on and felt ready to pursue this next step in my career. I'm so grateful for what Melissa created in this program.*  
- Wade Schaaf

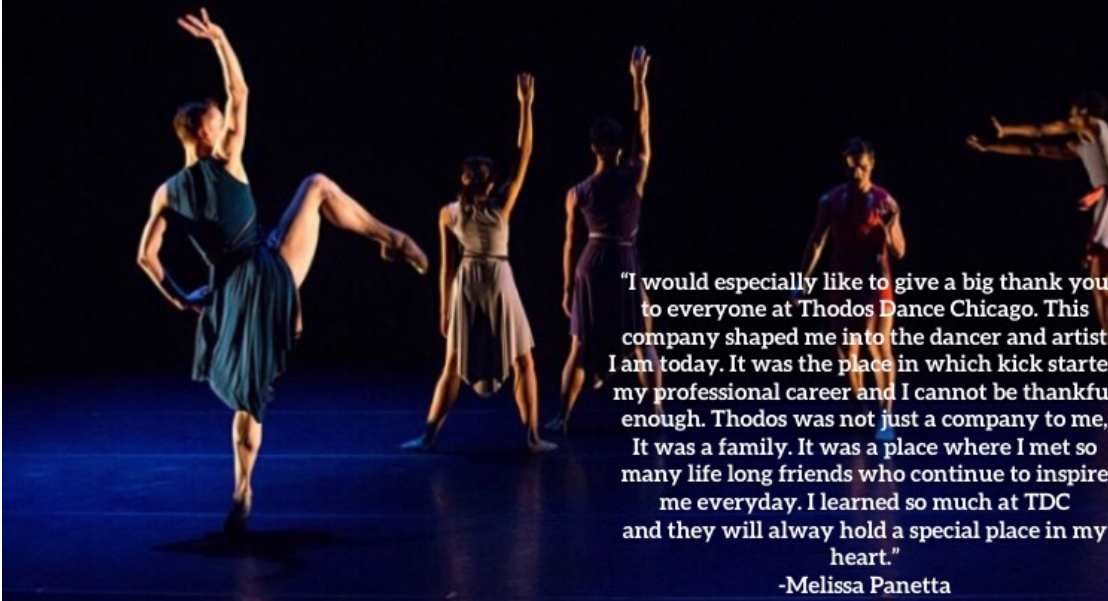


***Special thank you to  
Joshua Manculich,  
Jessica Miller  
Tomlinson, Abby Hare,  
and TDC Alumni for  
reflecting on 20 years  
of New Dances under  
Thodos Dance  
Chicago's umbrella.***

***"New Dances is what gave me  
the spark to pursue choreography  
professionally. It gave me the  
chance to hone my voice, and for  
that I am eternally grateful."  
-Luis Vazquez***



***"For me, New Dances was such an inspiring  
and memorable experience! It is a place  
where dancers of the community can come  
together and share their art with one another.  
It creates such a positive and creative atmosphere  
where artistic expression is freely encouraged.  
This platform enriches the dance  
community in so many ways and I will forever  
be grateful I got to be a part of it."***



***"I would especially like to give a big thank you  
to everyone at Thodos Dance Chicago. This  
company shaped me into the dancer and artist  
I am today. It was the place in which kick started  
my professional career and I cannot be thankful  
enough. Thodos was not just a company to me,  
It was a family. It was a place where I met so  
many life long friends who continue to inspire  
me everyday. I learned so much at TDC  
and they will always hold a special place in my  
heart."  
-Melissa Panetta***

***Shout out to  
photographers  
Ben Licera,  
Cheryl Mann,  
Johnny Nevin,  
& Michelle Reid  
for their  
beautiful  
images!***