

# Hubbard Street Dance Chicago 43<sup>rd</sup> Season to Feature New Pieces by Rena Butler, Jonathan Fredrickson, Penny Saunders, Robyn Mineko Williams and Connie Shiau

## Butler's New Full Company Piece to Debut Online Oct. 22

**For immediate release** • September 14, 2020

**Media contact** • Nick Harkin, Carol Fox and Associates, 773.969.5032  
nickh@carolfoxassociates.com

CHICAGO –**Hubbard Street Dance Chicago** (HSDC) today announced its 2020/21 43<sup>rd</sup> season, to include virtual presentations of new work by five acclaimed choreographers, all with ties to the company: **Rena Butler, Jonathan Fredrickson, Penny Saunders, Robyn Mineko Williams** and **Connie Shiau**.

Launching the season will be a world premiere created by Butler, former Hubbard Street dancer and choreographic fellow, on Thursday, Oct. 22. The full-company piece is an examination of Butler's perception of her home city of Chicago. Filmed in parks throughout the city, the work was inspired by GoodKids MadCity, an organization led by Black and Brown young people in Chicago advocating for the tools and resources needed to put an end to violence in their communities.

Butler's 25-minute work, currently untitled, was filmed by Talia Koylass. It features music by composer Darryl Hoffman, as well as songs by vocalists Shawnee Dez and Alencia Norris. The work is performed by the full HDSC company. Performing with the company are the choreographer, Jessica Tong, recently named HSDC's Associate Artistic Director, and Jonathan Emanuell Alsberry, Artistic Liaison. In addition to the presentation of the filmed piece, there will be a live, interactive conversation with Butler and other members of the creative team. The choreography, casting, rehearsals, and shooting amidst the coronavirus required the dancers to perform at a distance from one another, or in groups of dancers who reside together, while wearing personal protective equipment such as masks.

The process for admission and the platform for viewing will be announced at a future date.

HSDC's 43<sup>rd</sup> Season also includes new pieces created for online streaming by former Hubbard Street Dancers Jonathan Fredrickson, Penny Saunders, Robyn Mineko Williams and Connie Shiau.

The season's choreographers are also working with filmmakers with close ties either to HSDC or Chicago. Jonathan Fredrickson is working with New York-based filmmaker Tobin Del Cuore, a former Hubbard Street Dancer. Penny Saunders is collaborating with filmmaker Quinn B Wharton, a former Hubbard Street Dancer. Robyn Mineko Williams is working with Cam Be and CJ Arellano, both of whom are Chicago-based filmmakers.

Specific details about each piece, as well as their debut dates, will be announced at a future date.

"Despite the pandemic, our commitment is to maintain Hubbard Street's presence as a major force, to continue pushing the art of contemporary dance forward," said Associate Artistic Director Jessica

Tong. “The collaborators we work with always reflect the dynamic of today’s culture, and the dialogues they’ve initiated speak powerfully to today’s world. These new pieces also represent huge advances in our creative use of virtual technology and the use of online platforms to present live and recorded contemporary dance.”

“Seeing how our choreographers and dancers have risen to the occasion of advancing contemporary choreography during these times has been inspiring,” added Executive Director David McDermott. “Even during the shutdown, we have never stopped working, training and developing new choreography for the virtual platform. I believe that our audiences will be thrilled with the creativity and relevance of the new work that Hubbard Street is creating.”

### **About Rena Butler**

Rena Butler is a dance/choreographic artist from Chicago. She trained at The Chicago Academy for the Arts, studied overseas at Taipei National University of the Arts, and received her BFA from SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Dance. Companies she has danced for include Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Abraham.In.Motion, Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company and David Dorfman Dance. Her choreographic work includes BalletX, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Boston Dance Theater, The New Orleans Museum of Modern Art, CHTV Stories in Switzerland, a dance film for Third Coast Percussion in collaboration with Dev Hynes/Blood Orange, The Ailey/Fordham School, SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Dance, and more. Butler served on the consortium for Chicago Dancemakers Forum, and co-directed DanceLab—a free, choreographic course for local Chicago teens, where the students of varying socioeconomic backgrounds were able to find commonality in creation. In 2019, Butler was the recipient of the prestigious Princess Grace Award for Choreography.

### **About Jonathan Fredrickson**

Jonathan Fredrickson was born in Corpus Christi, TX. He attended California Institute of the Arts where he received his BFA in Dance Performance and Choreography. Jonathan danced with the Limon Dance Company from 2006-2011, and created two works on the company during his time there, *The Edge of Some World* and *Chrysalis*. In 2010, he was a winner of Hubbard Street’s National Choreographic Competition and was also honored as one of Dance Magazine’s “25 To Watch.” He then danced with Hubbard Street Dance Chicago from 2011 - 2015, where he was commissioned to create two new works on the company, *Untitled Landscape* and *For the Wandered*. His work has been shown in festivals such as Hong Kong Dance Festival, Reverb Dance Festival, and White Wave, and he has created for school programs like California Institute of the Arts, CalState Fullerton, Limon Institute, and Sundance/Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre. He joined the Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch in 2015, where he has been performing her work internationally, and creating for the company’s choreographic platform UNDERGROUND with the works *Epilogue* and *Afternoon Forest Birds*.

### **About Penny Saunders**

Penny Saunders, originally from West Palm Beach, Florida, graduated from the Harid Conservatory in 1995, and began her professional career with The American Repertory Ballet under the direction of Septime Webre. She went on to dance with Ballet Arizona, MOMIX Dance Theater, Cedar Lake Ensemble and in 2004 she joined Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. In 2011, Saunders won the International Commissioning Project which launched her choreographic career, creating pieces for Hubbard Streets Dance Chicago’s main and second company, Cincinnati Ballet, Whim W’Him, Oklahoma City Ballet, BalletX, Sacramento Ballet, The Royal New Zealand Ballet, Tulsa Ballet, Diablo Ballet, Dayton Ballet, among others. Saunders is honored to be the Resident Choreographer at The Grand Rapids Ballet where she has created many new works including her first full-length work, “The

Happy Prince and Other Wilde Tales.” Saunders has received support from The New York City Ballet Choreographic Commissions Initiative, participated in The National Choreographers Initiative and was the recipient of the 2016 Princess Grace Choreographic Fellowship. This year she is excited to be creating a range of new dance films with Whim W’Him, BalletX, Ballet Idaho, Seattle Dance Collective, Grand Rapids Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, and Pacific Northwest Ballet.

### **About Connie Shiau**

Connie Jie-Hung Shiau grew up in Tainan, Taiwan. She received her BFA in dance from SUNY Purchase College. Shiau was a Hubbard Street Dance Chicago dancer from 2018 – 2020. Shiau has worked as a collaborator with an array of companies including Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Kyle Abraham/Abraham.In.Motion, Gallim Dance, Helen Simoneau Danse, MeenMoves, Adam Barruch Dance and Kevin Wynn Works. She has performed works by Crystal Pite, Ohad Naharin, Lou Conte, Kyle Abraham, Brian Brooks, Peter Chu, Robyn Mineko Williams, Alejandro Cerrudo, Helen Simoneau, Sameena Mitta, Rena Butler, Alice Klock, Hanna Kiel, Osnel Delgado, Adam Barruch and Kevin Wynn. As a choreographer Shiau has created works on Loyola University, and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago Choreographic Summer Intensive. Her solo work “<108>” was presented in New Choreographer Project in Taipei, and in Piece By Piece in Chicago. In addition, Shiau was a recipient of Chicago Dancemakers Forum Greenhouse Artist in 2019, Dance Magazine’s “25 To Watch” in 2018, Honorable Mention for Jadin Wong Award for Emerging Asian American Dancer in 2014 and Reverb Dance Festival Dancer Award in 2014.

### **About Robyn Mineko Williams**

Robyn Mineko Williams is a Chicago-based director, dance maker and collaborator. She was a Hubbard Street dancer for twelve seasons, where she began making her own work in 2001 through the company’s Inside/Out Choreographic Workshop. She has since created multiple premieres for Hubbard Street and has also choreographed for Pacific Northwest Ballet, Royal New Zealand Ballet, Malpas Dance Company, Charlotte Ballet, Grand Rapids Ballet and Ballet Idaho. Her works have been presented at the Kennedy Center, Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Jacob’s Pillow, American Dance Festival, the Joyce Theater, MCA Chicago and others. She was named by Dance Magazine in 2014 as one of “25 to Watch,” and “Best Choreographer” in Chicago Magazine’s “Best of Chicago, 2016.” Robyn is a four-time grant recipient from the Princess Grace Foundation–USA, and she has been thrice recognized as one of NewCity’s “Players: 50 People Who Really Perform for Chicago.”

### **About Hubbard Street Dance Chicago**

Hubbard Street Dance Chicago’s mission is to bring artists, art, and audiences together to enrich, engage, educate, and change lives through the experience of dance. Celebrating Season 43 in 2020-2021, HSDC is committed to keeping its dancers creating and finding innovative ways to continue to share exceptional contemporary dance with the community. Hubbard Street also offers extensive Education and Adaptive Dance Programs to ensure that residents in every neighborhood of Chicago have access to the benefits of dance. Visit [hubbardstreetdance.com](http://hubbardstreetdance.com) for more information.

• • •