



RIRIE-
WOODBURY
DANCE
COMPANY
ri-rié wóod-búur-é



GROUNDWORKS

Joan Woodbury, Shirley Ririe, Alwin Nikolais, Daniel Charon

September 21-23, 2023



60th
ANNIVERSARY



Ririe-Woodbury (Ri-rē Woōd-būr-ē) Dance Company is Utah's most established institution for contemporary dance. The Company actively embraces and commissions the work of contemporary choreographers,

tours worldwide, and develops dynamic education and community outreach programming. Through performance and educational undertakings, the Company pursues its mission to make dance a viable part of everyone's life— whether it be as creators, performers, dance educators, critics, or as participating audience members. Over the span of its history, Ririe-Woodbury has toured nationally and internationally, always advocating the philosophy that "dance is for everybody."

Under the direction of Executive Director Thom Dancy, Artistic Director Daniel Charon, and Education Director Ai Fujii Nelson, Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company is committed to building upon the vision of its founders as it continues to evolve as an important voice for innovation in contemporary dance and dance education.

Our Mission

Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company is committed to furthering contemporary dance as an accessible and valued art form through performance and dance education that raise the standards, deepen the understanding and promote personal connections with dance.

The Company pursues this overall vision through:

- Performing innovative original works and commissioning choreographers of exceptional talent
- Providing dance education for all levels and outcomes
- Touring regionally, nationally, and internationally
- Training artists as performers, educators, and choreographers
- Developing dance audiences

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Thom Dancy

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Daniel Charon

THE COMPANY DANCERS

Peter Farrow, Megan McCarthy, Alexander Pham, Fausto Rivera, Sasha Rydlizky, Miche' Smith

EDUCATION DIRECTOR

Ai Fujii Nelson

EDUCATION ASSISTANT

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Shirley Ririe & Joan Woodbury

WE THANK OUR 60TH SEASON SPONSORS:



Dear Friends, Supporters, and Dance Enthusiasts,

I am thrilled to extend a warm and heartfelt welcome as we gather to celebrate a momentous occasion - the 60th anniversary of our beloved Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company. This special performance represents a legacy of passion, creativity, and innovation that has been the very heartbeat of our organization for six remarkable decades. As the Artistic Director of this incredible company, I am honored to be a part of a dedicated team that has poured their hearts and souls into each and every artistic and educational activity we pursue.

Our 60th anniversary is not just a milestone; it is a testament to the enduring power of dance to inspire, captivate, and unite. It is an acknowledgement that we stand on the shoulders of the Company's founders, Joan Woodbury and Shirley Ririe, and former Executive Director, Jena Woodbury. It is a celebration of the incredible dancers, directors, choreographers, staff members, designers, musicians, and countless others who have contributed their talents to our shared vision. It is a reflection of the unwavering support we have received from our loyal patrons and from the communities we have touched.

While we look back with pride on the footsteps we've left behind, we also turn our gaze towards the future with a fervent commitment to relevance, innovation, and creativity. We understand that the world of dance is in a constant state of transformation, and we embrace the challenge of evolving with it. We are committed to remaining a forward-looking, dynamic, and inclusive dance organization that engages with the world in meaningful ways.

In the coming years, you can expect to witness groundbreaking performances that push the boundaries of movement and storytelling. We will continue to collaborate with artists from diverse backgrounds, exploring new forms and styles while preserving the essence of the Company that has defined us for generations.

Our legacy is not just a collection of memories; it is a foundation upon which we will build an even brighter future for contemporary dance. We invite you to join us on this exciting journey, to be a part of our story, and to experience the beauty, power, and emotion that only dance can convey.

Thank you for your unwavering support over the years. Together, we will continue to create, inspire, and move hearts.

With gratitude and excitement for the years ahead,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Charon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each word being capitalized and larger than the others.

Daniel Charon, Artistic Director

DANCE IS FOR EVERYBODY

Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company is dedicated to pursuing ongoing inclusion across race, gender, culture, spirituality, identity, age, ability, and experience. Dance is a timeless form of human expression and inspiration, and through dance, we are committed to fostering equity, diversity, access, and inclusion for all. The Company stands against racism and continues to engage in meaningful internal dialogue to make measurable changes to our policies, procedures, and programming to meet all of these goals.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Ririe-Woodbury acknowledges that the land where we have our offices, studio, and theaters, is located on the traditional and ancestral homeland of the Shoshone, Paiute, Goshute, and Ute Tribes. We recognize the Native communities in our region today and extend our deepest gratitude to those who have stewarded this land. Our organization recognizes the void of representation experienced by these and other indigenous peoples, and through our diversity, equity, inclusion, and access efforts are committed to empowering change. We encourage you to investigate whose land you reside on by visiting native-land.ca and commit to finding ways you can support the Indigenous people in your community.

Tensile Involvement (1955)

Choreography, Sound Score, Scenic, and Lighting Design: Alwin Nikolais

Costume Design: Alwin Nikolais | **Recreated:** Dawn Maughan

Guest Dancers from BYU Department of Dance* -

Kyla Balser, Dominique Cordón, Jewel Hatch-Killpack, Megan Haymore, Kylee Jackman, Alexa Payne, Cassidy Schoyer, Bailey Smith, Baylee Van Patten, Brinnli Wosnjuk

Artistic Direction: Alberto del Saz

Assistance: Kate Monson and Keely Song

Premiered at the Henry Street Playhouse, New York City on February 13, 1955.

~ *Brief Pause* ~

Liturgies (1983): A customary public ritual of worship.

Choreography, Sound Score, Scenic, and Lighting Design: Alwin Nikolais

Costume Design: Alwin Nikolais and Frank Garcia

Dancers: The Company with Guest Dancers from BYU's Department of Dance

Artistic Direction: Alberto del Saz

Assistance: Daniel Charon

Ritual: A ceremony consisting of a series of actions performed according to a prescribed order.
The Company

Effigy: A model of a particular person, created to be damaged or destroyed in protest or anger.
Megan McCarthy and Peter Farrow

Reliquary: A shrine to protect and display sacred relics.
Alexander Pham, Sasha Rydlizky 9/21 & 9/23, Fausto Rivera, Miche' Smith 9/22

Carillon: Tower bells sounded by hammers.
Baylee Van Patten*, Jewel Hatch-Killpack*, Megan Haymore*, Brinnli Johnson*

Celebrants: An individual performing a ceremonial rite.
The Company

Sorcerer: A personage believed to have magic powers.
Peter Farrow

Shadow: Dark shapes created by the obstruction of light.
The Company

Premiered at the Teatro Municipal Caracas, Venezuela on March 29, 1983.

Commissioned by the Venezuelan National Cultural Council for the Simon Bolivar Bicentennial.

Special Thanks to Cliff Wallgren

The licensing and performance of this work has been granted through the exclusive rights of the Nikolais/Louis Foundation for Dance, Inc.

www.nikolaislouis.org

"BYU would like to give our deepest gratitude to Alberto "Tito" del Saz who made this joyful collaboration possible. We also would like to thank the Ririe-Woodbury Company and Daniel Charon for their generous hospitality in hosting the BYU dancers."

~15 Minute Intermission ~



On Being (2021)

Choreography: Daniel Charon in collaboration with the Dancers*

Costume Design: Melissa Younker

Costume Construction: Courtney Andrews

Lighting Design: William Peterson | **Reconstructed:** Susannah Pilkington

Music: Edyís Evensen

Dancers: The Company

* original cast: Peter Farrow, Corinne Lohner, Megan McCarthy, Alexander Pham, Fausto Rivera, and Miche' Smith

~Brief Pause~

Then and Now: A Choreographic Tribute to Joan Woodbury and Shirley Ririe

Concept, Curation, and Video: Daniel Charon

Dancers: The Company

Restaging: Daniel Charon and Company Dancers

Special thanks to alumni dancers Jill Edwards, Greg Simione

Includes:

Boot the System from ***Electronic Dance Transformer (1985)***

Choreography: Joan Woodbury, Shirley Ririe, and the Dancers

Costume Design: Marsha Barton

Lighting Design: Susannah Pilkington | **Based on Original Design:** Amy Turek and Michale Wellborn

Script: Emma Lou Thyne

Musical Score: Mark Jackman

Recording Musicians: Dave Cantrell, Mike Wightman, and Mark Jackman

Narration: Ai Fujii Nelson

Note: "Ours is an electronic age, but even though the human brain is like a computer, we are different from computers. We have senses that we can use to learn about the world. We love to be energized, but we also like our quiet and contemplative times. And those give us another very special kind of energy." - Shirley Ririe

Electronic Dance Transformer was commissioned by the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and premiered in Washington D.C. in the spring of 1985.

Excerpt From ***L’Invasion (1991)***

Choreography: Joan Woodbury

Costume Design: Ching-Yi Ma

Lighting Design: Susannah Pilkington | **Based on Original Design:** Nicholas Cavallaro

Score: Radames Gnattali Schottisch, Valse, & Corta Jaca

Guitarists: Todd Woodbury and Tully Cathey

Note: “What is this dance of life? Are we now invaded by our own misdeeds?”

Banners of Freedom (1989)


Choreography: Shirley Ririe

Costume Design: Cynthia Turner

Lighting Design: Susannah Pilkington | **Based on Original Design:** Stephen Terry

Score: “Overture for Percussion” by John Beck

Note: One month after Ririe-Woodbury performed in East Berlin, the Berlin Wall came down. During her time in Berlin, the choreographer was inspired by the potent visual images of the masses of people, their joy, and the banners and flags waving in every demonstration. Banners of Freedom is Ms. Ririe’s artistic tribute to the courage and the unbelievable strength of people all over the world who are speaking and acting for their beliefs. Certainly there is much work to do before actual freedom will be realized, but this dance speaks to the initial joy of us all that it is indeed beginning.



ON TOUR | 2023-2024

Ivins, UT with Center for the Arts at Kayenta- October 5-7, 2023

Cedar City, UT with Cedar City Music Arts- November 6-10, 2023

Ogden, UT with Weber State University- March 7-9, 2024



PETER FARROW (he/him) was born and raised in Richmond, Virginia. He began dancing in 2005 with Richmond Ballet's youth outreach program Minds In Motion. Two years later, he began his ballet training at the School of Richmond Ballet, where he would later become a trainee for the 2013- 14 season. He attended the Juilliard School (Class of 2018) where he performed works by choreographers such as Nacho Duato, Ohad Naharin, Merce Cunningham, Jerome Robbins, and Aszure Barton, as well as creating his own work. He also attended summer programs at Arts Umbrella in Vancouver, Nederlands Dans Theater, and Springboard Danse Montréal. After graduating, he performed in Punchdrunk's immersive production Sleep No More in NYC until early 2020. He has been a member of Ririe-Woodbury since 2021.



MEGAN MCCARTHY (she/her) (Portland, OR) received her formative training at the School of Oregon Ballet Theatre, and is a graduate of the California Institute of the Arts BFA Program in Dance. Since joining Ririe Woodbury in 2017 she has had the pleasure of performing the works of Daniel Charon, Raja Feather Kelly, Doug Varone, Kate Weare, Yin Yue, Andrea Miller, Alwin Nikolais, Stefanie Batten Bland, Shapiro & Smith and many more. As a freelancer in Los Angeles, she worked extensively with Rosanna Gamson//World Wide, Acts of Matter, and The Union Project Dance Company, with whom she performed at Jacob's Pillow. Additionally, she has been a guest artist with the Des Moines Metro Opera, Portland Opera, Portland Festival Ballet, Pasadena Dance Theatre, szalt, Nugent Dance, and in numerous independent projects. Megan has toured internationally and domestically as a teacher and performer, and has her choreography produced in Portland, OR. She is grateful for the opportunity to share her love of dance.



ALEXANDER PHAM (he/they) is a first generation Vietnamese American dance artist from Minneapolis, Minnesota. He studied at the University of Minnesota and holds a BFA in Dance and a BS in Human Resource Development with dual honors. Alexander's passion and commitment lie at the intersection of performance, representation, and equity in dance, with the intent of creating meaningful dialogue and change. He has toured nationally and internationally over the last decade, dancing with zoe | juniper, LED Boise, Spectrum Dance Theater, TU Dance, and Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company respectively. Through TU Dance, he had the opportunity to work in collaboration with music group Bon Iver for their collaborative performance "Come Through", and create visual elements for their album "i,i". Professionally he has performed works by artists such as Alvin Ailey, Stefanie Batten Bland, Donald Byrd, Lauren Edson, Raja Feather Kelly, Andrea Miller, Alwin Nikolais, Zoe Scofield, and Yin Yue among others. Alexander is forever grateful to share through movement and hopes to continue innovating the ways in which dance can be equally as empowering as it is visceral. He joined the company in 2021.



FAUSTO RIVERA (he/they) is a Chicano dance artist from the Pacific Northwest. He graduated with a BA in Dance and a minor in Anthropology from the University of Washington, where he was awarded the Evelyn H. Green Endowed Scholarship for artistic merit and promise. He grew up training in Mexican Folk Dance, and trained in ballet and modern dance in college. While at the UW, he danced with the Chamber Dance Company, under the direction of Hannah C. Wiley, performing work by Lar Lubovitch, Danny Shapiro/Joanie Smith, Bill T. Jones, and Doug Varone. He is a founding member of Seattle's Au Collective, a collective of dance artists highlighting the work of artists from marginalized communities. With Au, he has been able to present and perform original choreography throughout the PNW, as well as NYC. Fausto worked under the artistic direction of Donald Byrd at Spectrum Dance Theater, for six seasons, and was fortunate to tour throughout the country and abroad. This is his fourth season with Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company and he is excited to continue growing as an artist and an educator.



SASHA RYDLIZKY grew up in Ellsworth, Maine. She graduated summa cum laude from the Conservatory of Dance at SUNY Purchase with a BFA in Dance and minor in Arts Administration, with additional training abroad at the Taipei National University of the Arts. She has had the pleasure of performing work by Christina Robson, Lucinda Childs, Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham, Taryn Russel, and Kevin Wynn, among others while in school. After working in NYC with collaborators including Chloe London Dance, Michelle Thompson, Alison Cook Beatty Dance, and Peter Stathas Dance, she relocated to SLC. There, she has worked with Oquirrh West Project, Wasatch Contemporary Dance Company, Rachel Barker, and joined the Ririe-Woodbury in 2022. She is also a passionate teacher of dance, yoga, and meditation.



MICHE' SMITH is a dancer, actor and choreographer from Gautier, Mississippi. She grew up training where her mother and aunt trained, leading her to chase a life in the arts in pursuit of telling stories which would inspire and empower others. A graduate of Troy University, Miche' completed both a Bachelor's of Science in Theatre and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance and was awarded the David Dye Award for Excellence in Theatre Artistry. Upon graduation, Miche' accepted a position as acting apprentice at Aurora Theatre in Atlanta, where she continued to hone her skills as an actor, educator, and performer. Her most recent choreographic story was a commissioned dance film, Count It All, as a Dihvinely Konnecked fellow with Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre. Her creative work has recently appeared at Atlanta Film Festival, Bronze Lens Film festival, MAD film festival, LoveDanceMore, SLPublicLibrary, Noori Dance film festival, Dance Camera West, Great Salt Lake Fringe Festival and Plan-B theatre. Miche' has had the pleasure to perform works by Jose Limon, Andrea Miller, Stefanie Batten-Bland, Yin Yue, Raja Feather Kelly and more. Miche' aims to create an evocative, interdisciplinary body of work that encourages us to expose our humanity, examine our wounds, and deeply connect with one another empathetically. She joined the company in 2021 and is excited to continue growing as an artist and educator.



DANIEL CHARON (he/him)

Artistic Director of Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company since 2013, Daniel Charon has been active as a choreographer, teacher, and performer for over twenty-five years. While based in New York City, Daniel maintained a project-based company and primarily danced with Doug Varone and Dancers (1999-2010) and the Limón Dance Company (1997-1999). He is a BFA graduate of the North Carolina School of the Arts and an MFA graduate of the California Institute of the Arts in Choreography and Integrated Media.

As Ririe-Woodbury's Artistic Director, Daniel has created numerous original works for the stage, gallery installations, and has designed video for his and other choreographers' works. As an independent choreographer he has presented multiple full evening concerts in New York City, has been produced by various theaters, and has been commissioned to choreograph new works for many companies, universities, and festivals around the country. Daniel choreographed *The Pearl Fishers*, *Aida*, *Moby-Dick*, and *La Traviata* at the Utah Opera.

Daniel regularly teaches master classes and workshops nationally and internationally and has taught at the Metropolitan Opera, the Bates Dance Festival, Salt Dance Fest, North Carolina School of the Arts Summer Comprehensive, Varone Summer Dance Workshops, and Limón Summer Workshops. He has been a guest artist and adjunct professor at numerous universities Daniel has staged the works of José Limón, Jirí Kylián, and Doug Varone at schools and companies around the world.



ALWIN NIKOLAIS, choreographer, sound score, scenic and lighting designer, blended his many talents into a single aesthetic force. In a career that spanned five decades, he left his imprint on every theatrical medium, from Broadway to television.

Whenever there was something new, his hand was evident. His lighting designs, sound scores, choreography, and costumes influenced the contemporary stage and a generation of choreographers. Mr. Nikolais was the creator of the internationally acclaimed Nikolais Dance Theatre and the genius responsible for dozens of visual masterpieces. Mr. Nikolais was lauded for his accomplishments and contributions many times over. In 1987, he was awarded our nation's highest cultural honors, the National Medal of Arts, bestowed by President Reagan, and the Kennedy Center Honors. Often affectionately referred to as the American Patriarch of French modern dance, Mr. Nikolais is a knight of France's Legion of Honor and a Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters. Alwin Nikolais was born in 1910 in Southington, Connecticut. He studied piano at an early age and began his performing career as an organist accompanying silent films. It was after attending a performance by the illustrious German dancer Mary Wigman that he was inspired to study dance.

He received his early dance training at Bennington College from the great figures of the modern dance world: Hanya Holm, Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, Louis Horst, and others. In 1948 Mr. Nikolais redefined dance as the "the art of motion, which, left on its own merits, becomes the message as well as the medium."



ALBERTO DEL SAZ is the Artistic Director of the Nikolais/Louis foundation for Dance. Mr. del Saz is a vital and important link in keeping the Nikolais/Louis repertory active and alive.

Mr. del Saz was born in Bilbao, Spain. At an early age he studied ice-skating, which later led to his performing career. In 1980 Mr. del Saz became the Spanish National Champion in figure skating and soon made his debut with Holiday on Ice International. His early dance training was received at the Nikolais/Louis Dance Lab from the great teachers of the technique: Hanya Holm, Alwin Nikolais, Murray Louis, Claudia Gitelman, Tandy Beal, Beverly Blossom and others.

In 1985 Mr. del Saz made his debut as a lead soloist with the Nikolais Dance Theater, later renamed the Murray Louis and Nikolais dance Company. As a member of this internationally acclaimed company he has toured to virtually every continent of the globe.

Mr. del Saz has appeared for President Reagan at the Kennedy Center Honors in a CBS telecast featuring the Nikolais Dance Theatre as well as on a PBS American Masters series in "Nik and Murray", an award winning documentary film by Christian Blackwood. He has also represented the United States State Department on a tour of India, appeared at the Paris Opera Garnier in a Homage to Alwin Nikolais and at the Next Wave Festival with Bill T. Jones and Arnie Zane Dance Company.

In 1990 he went to Japan where he appeared as a guest artist in "V", a project by Mr. Ushio Amagatsu, artistic director of Sankai Juku. He has also performed at "Men Brazil". Mr. del Saz has appeared as a solo artist in works by Hanya Holm, Maureen Fleming, Sara Pearson, Cleo Parker Robinson and others.

Mr. del Saz is the reconstruction director of the Nikolais/Louis repertory and has staged the repertory on university and professional dance companies around the world. In 1997 he danced the role Rudolph Nureyev's role in "Moments" a work created by Mr. Louis.

Mr. del Saz work has been funded by NYSCA in collaboration with Ice Theater of New York. His skating work has appeared on Ice-Wars, Grand Slam and the Professional World Championships televised on CBS, FOX and ABC networks as well as the official openings of Rockefeller and Bryant Park.

Mr. del Saz has been with the Nikolais/Louis Foundation for 40 years, at the moment his focus is in preserving the Nikolais/Louis technique, repertory and legacy through his teaching and directing.



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SHIRLEY RIRIE

RIRIE-WOODBURY DANCE COMPANY CO-FOUNDER

Shirley Ririe is a groundbreaking leader in the field of dance for children. She was appointed to the committee which developed National Standards for Arts Education K-12 in 1994. She served as the United States delegate to Dance and the Child International and as a consultant for the Association of Instructional Television producing two programs for PBS. She has served on the National Advisory Committee for Young Audiences.

During her 35 year performing career, she performed leading roles in choreography by José Limon, Helen Tamiris, Alwin Nikolais, Murray Louis, and

Merce Cunningham. In addition to studying with this prestigious group, she also studied with Anna Halprin, Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey and Louis Horst.

As a guest teacher and performer, she has traveled the world and most of the States across the Nation. Among her favorite experiences were those she had in South Africa, at the Edinburgh Festival, in China and in Paris. She has choreographed over 100 works, both for Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company and for various other companies. She also choreographed musicals at Pioneer Memorial Theatre at the University of Utah for 10 years.

Shirley has received an Honorary Doctorate, the Merit of Honor, and the Distinguished Woman of the Year Award from the University of Utah. She also received the Governor's Award and Honors in the Arts from the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce, the Plaudit Award from the National Dance Association, the Pioneers of Progress Award for Days of '47, and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Utah Dance Education Association. Shirley was also a Fulbright professor in Hong Kong and in New Zealand.

Married to O. Rhees Ririe for 59 years, she is the mother of four daughters, fifteen grandchildren, and twelve great grandchildren. This, she feels, is the major accomplishment of her life.



JOAN WOODBURY

RIRIE-WOODBURY DANCE COMPANY CO-FOUNDER

Joan Woodbury is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin and studied as the first Fulbright Scholar in dance with Mary Wigman in Berlin. She was a professor of modern dance at the University of Utah where she taught for 47 years. When Joan was 21, she met Alwin Nikolais who had a profound influence on her philosophy and aesthetic sensibility for the rest of her career. She was privileged to teach with, and for him in New York, Florida, and Minnesota - and abroad in Avignon, Angers, Paris, and Sussex.

Joan has choreographed over 100 works in her career and has danced and/or taught workshops and master classes throughout the United States, as well as in Canada, Portugal, South Africa, Slovenia, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore, China, France, England, Ireland, and Italy.

In addition to many choreographic grants, her awards include a Chimera Award from the Nikolais Dance Theatre, a Salt Lake City Chamber of Commerce Honors in the Arts Award, Distinguished Alumni Awards from the University of Wisconsin and Southern Utah University, and an Honorary Alumni Award from the University of Utah. She has also received the Utah Governor's Award in the Arts, the Heritage Award from the National Dance Association, and the Cathedral of the Madeleine Award. Joan has been awarded two Honorary Doctorates of Humanities from Southern Utah University and an Honorary Doctorate of the Arts from the University of Utah.

GUEST PERFORMERS:

BYU DEPARTMENT OF DANCE

BYU Dance: With nearly 4,000 enrollments in dance classes each year, the College of Fine Arts and Communications is home to the most versatile department of dance in the United States. Students enjoy opportunities to learn and experience ballet, ballroom, contemporary, cultural dance, and music dance theatre. Degree-seeking students have opportunities to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Arts in Dance Education, or a Bachelor of Fine Arts. Our department mission statement affirms our belief that dance is divine as we strive to integrate body, mind, and spirit through performance, choreography, teaching, and scholarship. The BYU Contemporary Dance Theatre (CDT) company's mission is to enhance the student performers' lives while sharing goodwill with the world through collaboration and artistic exchanges.

stuartruckman.com
801.231.0649



stuart ruckman photography



image from Molly Heller's *Long View*

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THOM DANCY (he/him) | *Executive Director*

Thom Dancy has worked in the arts non-profit sector for 10 years in communications, outreach, and leadership roles for dance companies across the United States. He has worked as the Social Media Coordinator for The Big Muddy Dance Company, and as Malashock Dance's Outreach and Communications Coordinator. From 2019 – 2023, Thom worked for The Rosin Box Project in San Diego as the organization's inaugural Executive Director. Through his work, the company grew from a \$30,000 to \$500,000 budget and engaged students across Southern California in numerous dance education workshops. Thom is most proud of the success of TRBP's flagship outreach program, The Ballet Machine, which will reach 40 classrooms in 2023, as well as the integration of TRBP into its present home in Liberty Station, a historic naval training center and reclaimed arts district in the heart of San Diego.

Thom has presented on the topics of social media and dance education to the Board of Directors at Arts for Learning, The San Diego Arts Empower Mega-Conference, and San Diego Unified School District. He has previously served on the communications committee for AERO San Diego, as well as on the executive committee for Rising Arts Leaders of San Diego. Thom currently sits on the curatorial and development committees for ENVZN, an arts and culture festival spearheaded by Vanguard Culture. This international festival is a part of San Diego and Tijuana's regional designation as the 2024 World Design Capital. Thom has also served on the Board of Directors for Smashworks Dance, a dance and social advocacy organization based in New York City.

Thom is a former professional dancer and performed for Milwaukee Ballet II, Grand Rapids Ballet, The Big Muddy Dance Company, The Muny, and Malashock Dance. He carries a great passion for teaching and, when he's not working to elevate artists and organizations, you can find him in the studio dancing with the students he loves.



AI FUJII NELSON (she/her) | *Education Director*

Ai Fujii Nelson began dancing at the age of four in Tokyo, Japan, where she received several national dance awards. After coming to the U.S., she earned a BFA in Modern Dance at the University of Utah. Following graduation, Ai apprenticed for Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company in New York City, and danced professionally with Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company for eight seasons in Salt Lake City between 2000 and 2008. In 2009 she danced her way to New Zealand, where she acquired a Master of Creative and Performing Arts degree in choreography, and also worked with Touch Compass - a professional multi-ability dance company. Throughout her career, Ai has enjoyed teaching students of all ages and abilities, both nationally and internationally. In the state of Utah, she has served as Adjunct Faculty at Utah

Valley University, taught creative dance for the University of Utah's Tanner Dance, as well as contemporary dance technique for the Ballet West Academy. She is thrilled to have returned to Ririe-Woodbury in 2014 as Education Director, and looks forward to advancing the legacy of the Company's education programs.



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Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company

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