

Education Materials for Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company's Student Matinee Fall Season 2014

*Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company's **FALL SEASON** juxtaposes three male choreographic voices from around the world: The world premiere of a work by New York based award-winning choreographer Jonah Bokaer, whose conceptual approach to dance occupies a space between choreography, visual art, and moving images; the revival of one hundred thousand, a provocative work by German choreographer Johannes Wieland, which investigates the concepts of celebrity and stardom in our society; and finally, the Salt Lake City premiere of Storm, a work by Artistic Director Daniel Charon. This last work is an energetic and vibrantly kinetic piece which explores the breakneck speed of the world around us. Originally commissioned by the Zenon Dance Company in Minneapolis, MN, it was awarded "Best Dance Performance of 2012" by Minneapolis City Pages.*

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Artist biographies and contextual information

Fragments (World Premiere)

by Jonah Bokaer

Premiere & Commission: Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company, 2014

Jonah Bokaer has cultivated a new form of choreography, whose structural supports rely on visual arts and design, to transform public viewing and understanding of dance. Born to Tunisian and American parents, and active as a choreographer since 2002, he is the author of 55+ works spanning stage, gallery, museum, film, opera, app, and installation. He works internationally, exhibiting and touring worldwide. Occupying a space between choreography, visual art, and moving images, Bokaer has created work for museum spaces since 2002. This approach has been acknowledged by museums including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, PS1 MoMA, The New Museum, The Museum of Arts & Design, MASS MoCA, Miami MOCA, MAC Marseille, IVAM Valencia, Palazzo Delle Arti Napoli, Kunsthalle St. Gallen, SCAD Museum of Art, Ludwig Museum of Budapest, MUDAM Luxembourg, among others. Frequently collaborators include Daniel Arsham (2007-Present), Anne Carson, Richard Chai, Merce Cunningham, Anthony McCall, Abbott Miller, Tino Sehgal, Robert Wilson (2007-Present), and other leading innovators spanning performance, visual art, literature, and design.

Jonah Bokaer's words on **Fragments**

Between 2002-2014 I created a body of 55 original works, always aiming to intensify the relationship between visual art, design, and dance. The majority of my work happened overseas, where these aesthetics were embraced, and I spent a decade trying to work more in the United States.

It was hard to share my work here, the country where I live. When Daniel Charon and Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company invited me to stage work on their company, for me, it was an immediate yes. I was aware of the company, and their strong legacy: but also personally very touched with the human approach Daniel adds to the company, their work, and their new programs. Daniel leads them into the future, and I wanted to become involved.

"Fragments" is a project made specifically for the Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company, and for their dancers. When the commission started, I was re-reading my collaborator Anne Carson's translated fragments of Sappho, entitled "If Not, Winter." The text is an ingenious literary window into the lyric power of a Greek poet whose power transcends the millennia: Anne translated the text by leaving the blank spaces (the gaps) in the papyrus as an integral part of the poems, and their spatialization. In Anne's translation, the poems also include the blank spaces on the page - which have disintegrated through the years.

In the production with Ririe-Woodbury dancers, I've designed a stage space which is blasted open, gently, with two installation elements. The first is a set of hanging panels, whose depths and orientation break open the plane of the proscenium. A simple mirrored surface of the panels will allow the public to see gaps in the stage, or, reflections of themselves. The second is a set of fluorescent light, which produce a pattern on the floor. My idea is to highlight the dancers, and the space, with fragmentary reflections & refractions of light, and space.

A number of my collaborators are now moving into their 70s. It is strange to see this, to feel it happening. My deepest bonds have always been with artists who are 40-60 years older than me. There is not a cultural connection between me and these elders: but I think there is a work ethic that we share in common.

Maybe "Fragments" is also about the breaks, or the dilation, of time that happens between generations. There is a very small aesthetic gap, between me and the giants of past generations: they are my friends, and my artistic family.

The bigger gap, is often the new canyon between me and younger dancers, who come to dance aesthetics through acquired knowledge, and through their own learned ways of moving into our present day. I've always felt that this younger individuality is something to celebrate, and to engage, as a way to make new work.

I want "Fragments" to be for this new generation of dancers: an embrace, a hug, a way to give information from past generations to the present - and with a light touch. My hope is that these young dancers can perform the piece, and enjoy it, like a soft glove, for many years to come.

one hundred thousand (2013)

by Johannes Wieland

Johannes Wieland received his early dance training under Ellys Gregor in Berlin, the dance academy of the Deutsche Oper Berlin, with John Neumeier at the School of The Hamburg Ballet, and at the Amsterdam School of the Arts where he earned his BFA. His dance career took him back to Germany, the State Theater of Brunswick, and later the Berlin State Opera. Here he worked with numerous guest choreographers, among them Jorma Uotinen, Roland Petit, and Maurice Béjart. He then joined the Béjart Ballet Lausanne as a principle dancer and also toured extensively with that company.

Ready for a radical change, Wieland next moved to New York City where he was awarded a scholarship to the NYU Tisch School of the Arts, where he earned his MFA in Contemporary Dance and Choreography in 2002.

His company, johannes wieland, was founded that same year. The original work 'tomorrow' debuted at the Joyce SoHo Theater and was reviewed as “a spectacular exploration of relationships,” by Anna Kisselgoff of The New York Times. This was one in the body of the startlingly powerful, terse, strange pieces Wieland began creating for his company, prompting Dance Magazine to cite him as one of the 25 to Watch, 2003. Since 2006, in addition to heading his own company, Wieland holds a permanent position as the artistic director and choreographer of the resident dance company of the State Theater of Kassel in Germany. He was also associate artistic director of Paradigm in New York and is a guest choreographer and teacher in schools and companies in Europe and North America.

Storm

by Daniel Charon

Salt Lake City Premiere, 2014

Daniel Charon is a dance artist who has been active as a choreographer, teacher, and performer since 1995. He spent 18 years in New York where he maintained a project-based company and primarily danced with Doug Varone and Dancers (1999 – 2010) and the Limón Dance Company (1996 – 1999). Additionally, he performed with Doug Elkins and Friends, the Metropolitan Opera, the Aquila Theater Company, the Mary Anthony Dance Theater, Opera Colorado, Minnesota Opera, Music Theater of Wichita, Mordine and Company (Chicago), and Dance Kaleidoscope (Indianapolis). Daniel is a B.F.A. graduate of the North Carolina School of the Arts and a 2013 M.F.A graduate of the California Institute of the Arts in Choreography and Integrated Media. Daniel has served as the Artistic Director of the Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company since 2013.

Daniel's choreographic work is inspired by the notion of temporality. Utilizing movement as his primary medium, he employs a broad range of physicalities to explore the vulnerability and courage existence requires. He is interested in the interaction between movement and technology and how our human evolution is influenced by this relationship. Daniel's work has been produced by the 92nd Street Y Harkness Dance Festival, the Inside/Out Series at Jacob's Pillow, and the Dance Complex (Cambridge, MA) among others. He has presented multiple full evening concerts in New York City and has been commissioned to choreograph new work for many companies, universities, and festivals around the country. He received a choreographic

fellowship from the Summer Stages Dance Festival and has been the artist in residence at the Silo at Kirkland Farm three times. Daniel is a recipient of Dance Theater Workshop's Outer/Space Creative Residency and of Topaz Arts Solo Flight Creative Residency.

Daniel has taught regularly in New York at respected studios such as the Limón Institute, the 92nd Street Y, Dancespace, and the Peridance Center. He regularly teaches master classes and workshops around the country and has taught at the Metropolitan Opera, the Bates Dance Festival, the University of North Carolina School of the Arts Summer Comprehensive, the Varone Summer Dance Workshop, and the Limón Summer Workshop. He has been a guest artist at numerous universities and was an adjunct faculty member at Hunter College (NYC) and the California Institute of the Arts. Daniel held an annual dance intensive in Cambridge, MA and currently teaches a professional technique workshop in Boulder, CO every summer. He has staged the works of José Limón, Jirí Kylián and Doug Varone at various schools and companies all over the world.

Daniel Charon's notes on **Storm**

"There are some things you learn best in calm, and some in storm."
~ Willa Cather

Storm is inspired by the individual energy inherent in each of us that when put together, make a community's life force so unique. The component parts that make up this community are the constantly shifting energy fields between individuals. The vitality of this living organism that is community, depends on how these relationships coexist.

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