

**Education Material Packet for
Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company's
Student Preview for *TRACES* 2019**



This concert includes two vastly different dances by two dynamic choreographers. The return of Elizabeth, the dance by Ann Carlson and a world premiere by Company Artistic Director Daniel Charon.

Originally premiered in 2017, Elizabeth, the dance by Ann Carlson reflects on “the visionaries and teachers” of modern dance in both homage and critique. With movement that is formal and physically awkward, deliciously surprising, and joyfully restrained, Carlson has created an astonishing tribute to modern dance and to the pleasures and challenges of being human. This surprising and delightful work derives inspiration, text, and play from a host of pioneering creatives. Elizabeth, the dance attains a perfect blend of spontaneity and structure with a timely questioning of purpose acquired through Carlson’s unique wit and humor.

Please find inside this information packet; artist biography, contextual information, and movement lesson ideas inspired by the three works presented in this performance.



Everybody Knows (World Premiere 2019) ***by Daniel Charon in collaboration with the dancers***

Music: Leonard Cohen

Lighting Design: William Peterson

Costume: Daniel Charon, Megan McCarthy, and Melissa Rochelle Younker

Dancers: Bashuan Williams and Melissa Rochelle Younker

Artist Biography: DANIEL CHARON



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 danced with Doug Varone and Dancers and the Limón Dance Company. Additionally, he performed with Doug Elkins and Friends, the Metropolitan Opera, the Aquila Theater Company, and the Mary Anthony Dance Theater among others. 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 original works for the stage, gallery installations (Utah Museum of Contemporary Art), and had designed video for his and other choreographers' works. Daniel is the recipient of City Weekly's Best of Utah 2016 Award in Choreography for his Together Alone Trilogy. Independently in Salt Lake City, he has shown his work at Mudson and 12 Minutes Max and choreographed The Pearl Fishers and Aida at the Utah Opera. Daniel's choreography has also 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 works for many companies, universities, and festivals around the country.

A nationally known and respected educator, Charon 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 at numerous universities and was an adjunct faculty member at Hunter College (NYC) and the California Institute of the Arts. Daniel has

staged the works of José Limón, Jirí Kylián, and Doug Varone at schools and companies around the world.

Daniel was a freelance web developer and works extensively in the digital realm, creating websites, working with video and interactive technology, and seeking ways to implement media in his work.

Elizabeth, the Dance (2017)

Concept, Direction, and Choreography: Ann Carlson

Set Design: Torry Bend

Musical Conception: Ann Carlson

Soundscape: Matthew McMurray

Costume Design: Ann Carlson, Daniel Charon, Mary Lyn Graves, Melissa Younker

Lighting Design: Cliff Wallgren, adapted by William Peterson

Dancers: the Company

Young boy's voice reading *The Art of Making Dances* by Doris Humphrey:
Joseph Carlson-Strom at age 5.

homage

1. respect or reverence paid or rendered

Elizabeth, the dance pays homage

- to visionaries and teachers whose shoulders we stand upon.
- to the history of dances that have inspired this one.
- to the walls outside ourselves and within.
- to copyright, access, ownership, oppression.
- to the activists and artists who have paved the way.
- to dancers as shamans.
- to those who shame us.
- to those who inspire our liberation.
- to the joy, disappointment, and mystery of desire.

Artist Biography: ANN CARLSON



"Ann Carlson is a conceptual artist who uses gesture, text and humor to break your heart."

– William Harris, New York Times

"Carlson's work mines the ephemeral and the commonplace toward extraordinary results."

– Robin Wander, Stanford News

ANN CARLSON is an award winning interdisciplinary artist whose work borrows from the disciplines of dance, performance and theater, as well as visual, conceptual and social art practices. Carlson's work takes the form of solo performance, large scale site specific projects, ensemble dances and performance/video. She often works within a series format, creating socially engaged performance structures over a period of years that adapt and travel to multiple sites. "It has been extraordinary experience to build "Elizabeth, the dance" with the Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company. I view this company as a national treasure; it is a dynamic cultural institution with an unparalleled weave of the contemporary existing alongside a living history." Carlson is the recipient of numerous awards and commissions for her artistic work. Awards include: Creative Capital Award, Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, Two American Masters awards, a USA Artist Fellowship; a Guggenheim Fellowship; a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship and a Fellowship from the Foundation for Contemporary Art, among others. She was an artist fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies Fellowship/Harvard University and at the Humanities Center at Stanford University. Carlson received the first Cal/Arts Alpert Award in Choreography; and a prestigious three-year choreographic fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Carlson is currently based in Los Angeles.





Elizabeth, the dance is a contemporary dance performance built for the concert stage. It is structured as ten episodic dances, woven together by multiple streams of inspiration; a mapping of the history of the contemporary

dance form colliding with a tracing of desire and aliveness within the body of the dancers. Elizabeth, the dance takes place atop a white floor lying on top of a black one, delineating the dancing space into a rectangle and amplifying the larger apparatus of the proscenium frame.

A movable white wall also sits atop the white floor; the wall, moved by the dancers, shifts and morphs into a barrier, a back drop, or a boundary and curious building blocks. Designed to come apart and be put back together, the wall is almost another dancer— moving alongside the human forms in surprising, funny, and unpredictable ways. During Elizabeth, the dance, the dancing body is constantly transforming and shifting, revealing the way the human body is itself both a canvas and a dynamic instrument of its time. Elizabeth, the dance is accompanied by music that is a blend reminiscent of popular songs, house music, electro pop, sound effects, and silence mixed live by a DJ. The movement material for Elizabeth, the dance borrows from dance history, embedding snippets of form and style from modern and postmodern dance of the 20th century, as well as post-postmodern and contemporary dance of the 21st century. This movementbased amalgam reflects the blurry lines of these categories, and plays inside and in spite of these taxonomies. Pointing to the past in the present-ness of this work pays homage to those upon whose shoulders we stand as living contemporary artists. It also draws attention to the form's evolution and limitations of its labels. Carlson will develop a specific dance practice with the Ririe-Woodbury dancers to utilize during the performing of Elizabeth, the dance. Emerging as a result of the mapping of the dancers' individual and collective experiences in areas of history, desire, and aliveness, this performance practice is intended to amplify the agency of each body in the room as a whole (i.e. both dancer and spectator). The end result is a contemporary dance that seeks to be delicate and raucous, obvious and enigmatic, sloppy and absolute, playful, sexy, calm, considered, and fun.



Lesson ideas inspired by *Elizabeth, the dance*

- Pre-performance
Ann believes that dance is passed on like oral tradition from one generation to the next, and each “section” of *Elizabeth, the dance* utilizes a particular style or era of american modern dance in a contemporary way. Dance artists such as Isadora Duncan, Mary Wigman, Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, José Limon, Alwin Nikolais, Pina Bausch, Trisha Brown, Elizabeth Streb are among those who are referenced in this work. In addition, Narrative Ballet, Polynesian influenced ideas, and Native American (Ute Indian Bear Dance) influenced ideas are also referenced in interesting ways.
- Discuss with your students - who are these historical dance figures mentioned above? What were they known for, or what particular characteristics made them become recognized as outstanding artists of their time?
- Contemporary/Modern Dance History
Do you know who choreographed the famous works below, and what year were they premiered (answers on the next page)? See if you can find a footage on the internet and take a look of these dances before you watch *Elizabeth, the dance*.
 - 1) Cafe Muller
 - 2) Crucible
 - 3) Spanish Dance
 - 4) Hexentanz (Witch Dance)
 - 5) Water Study
 - 6) There is a Time
 - 7) Trio A

- During the performance - look and see if you can recognize any of the artists, their characteristic movement, or famous work of choreography inside *Elizabeth the dance*? Some of them are more embedded than the others. What were some of Ann's choreographic devices she used to make references to the dance history and events? Did she use a movement motif? Or literal gestures? Or did you hear something in the spoken text?
- Post-performance
There is a very strong scenic element to *Elizabeth, the dance*. The white wall can move through space. It can break apart, be thrown around, it can be assembled and disassembled. It can serve as a podium or a chair, and make references to ancient ruins, toppling towers, or small stages. It acts like a seventh performer taking on a personality of it's own. It also gives the work a unique visual design.

Find something in your studio, school, or dance studio that could be used as your scenic element. Then try the following task.

Choreograph a short dance with your scenic element/object. Your object has to have ways to;

- a) change the space in a dramatic way, and/or
- b) change the feeling of the dance, and/or
- c)reference an historical event.

If possible, have a small performance and share with each other. Discuss what stood out for you and why? Could you identify the choreographer's intention, or was it open-ended for the audience's interpretation? What was the movement style? How was the dancer's performance? What were the movement choices that made the dance great?

Answers for the questions on page 6;

- 1) Cafe Muller (1978) by Pina Bausch
- 2) Crucible (1985) by Alwin Nikolais
- 3) Spanish Dance (1973) by Trisha Brown
- 4) Hexentanz (1926) by Mary Wigman
- 5) Water Study (1928) by Doris Humphrey
- 6) There is a time (1956) by Jose Limon
- 7) Trio A (1978) by Yvonne Rainer

Enjoy the performance!!

Sept.11, 2019
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