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A Portrait of the Company

Founded in 1964, the *Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company* celebrates its **56th Season** of creating original, innovative modern dance. The *Company* strives to be at the forefront of the art form and provides audiences with a variety of choreographic styles in a single evening. The *Company's* repertory ranges from minimalism to extraordinary multi-media performances.



Founders Shirley Ririe and Joan Woodbury began dancing together in 1952. These early performances and collaborations became the foundation for what is now an internationally renowned contemporary dance company. *Ririe-Woodbury* has performed in every state in the U.S. as well as the

British Isles, Canada, China, Eastern Europe, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Singapore, South Africa, the Virgin Islands, France, Spain and Italy. In the 2017-18 season, Ririe-Woodbury served as one of three American dance companies selected to participate in the DanceMotion USASM — a people-to-people international exchange initiative of the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. As part of this program, the *Company* travelled, performed, and engaged in community outreach dance classes and events in South Korea and Mongolia in the spring of 2018.

The *Company* not only has works by its founders, but also commissions new works each year from both up-and-coming choreographers and seasoned professionals. Past choreographers include Murray Louis, Tandy Beal, Anne Carlson, Pilobolus, Steven Koester, Laura Dean, Doug Varone, Joe Goode, Douglas Nielsen, Pascal Rioult, Seán Curran, Daniel Ezralow, John Utans, Alicia Sanchez, Wayne McGregor, Charlotte Boye-Christensen, Netta Yerushalmy, Jonah Bokaer, Johannes Wieland, Joanna Kotze, Zveta Kassabova, Kate Weare, Ying Yue, and Artistic Director, Daniel Charon.

Located in downtown Salt Lake City, the **Company** performs three to four different shows annually in the Capitol Theatre, Rose Wagner Center for the Performing Arts, and George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Theater. In addition, a season consists of eight to ten weeks of national and international touring, five to six weeks as resident dance specialists in Utah schools, five weeks conducting extensive summer workshops for aspiring students, pre-professional as well as professional dancers, and eleven weeks of rehearsal which includes working with nationally and internationally recognized choreographers.

The Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company is recognized as a powerful force in the development of new dancers and has a long-standing relationship with schools—from elementary and secondary schools to the universities—throughout the United States. They have succeeded in integrating movement and dance into elementary and secondary school curricula including performance, dancer training, and experimental improvisation. The **Company** has developed a program specifically designed for **pre-professional** high school students to provide information and exposure to the art form as a possible career. These types of programs have produced a long succession of dancers that now perform and teach with other professional dance companies and academic programs.

Ririe-Woodbury is the only dance company other than the Nikolais Dance Theatre to perform a full evening of dances by the genius of multi-media, Alwin Nikolais. In collaboration with the Nikolais/Louis Foundation for Dance Inc., Ririe-Woodbury began a series of performances of Nikolais work in 2003—touring three weeks in the U.S at the prestigious Joyce Theater in N.Y plus four weeks internationally. The company performed in Torino (site of the 2006 Olympics), and in Paris, Lyon, Bordeaux, and Toulouse among many other cities in France. In 2017-18 season the **Company** returned once again to France to present more Nikolais works. The **Company** will continue to honor the commitment of keeping the Nikolais legacy alive for new audiences as well as keeping a focus on expanding a contemporary repertory.



With an eye towards the future, the whole staff of the **Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company**—including Jena Woodbury, Executive Director; Daniel Charon, Artistic Director; Ai Fujii Nelson, Education Director —will continue to expand Shirley’s and Joan’s vision to create new generations of art enthusiasts who agree with the **Company’s** philosophy that...

“Dance is for Everybody”!!

Elements of Dance

The elements of dance are elements found in all art forms. These elements are SPACE, SHAPE, TIME and MOTION. Dancers also use their bodies as instruments of their art.

SPACE is all around us and affects everything we do. A dancer can use the space in different ways to evoke different feelings.

SHAPES or designs are how we see things in space. All of our bodies have a shape. We can mold our bodies into many different shapes, as if we were clay being sculpted.

TIME—all movement happens in time. Tempo, duration, and rhythm are the elements of time.

MOTION, the quality of movement—soft, hard, smooth, jerky, etc.—is the basis for the art of dance. Motion is energy experienced in a particular movement.



Before the Show

What to look for

Dancers talk with their bodies. When you are watching the performance, try to figure out what their bodies are saying.

Watch how the dancers move together. What shapes can they make together that they cannot make alone?

Discuss the kinds of skills it takes to be a dancer. Focus on balance, strength, flexibility, fitness, concentration, timing, trust and coordination needed by the dancers.

Notice the lighting and costumes. How do they affect your impression of the dance?

Dance often tells a story. The movement of the dancers is a kind of pantomime that allows them to act out the story without words. Have your students listen to a piece of classical or instrumental music. Does the music make them think of a story? Play the music a second time and have the students in small groups write out the story that they think the music is telling. Finally, ask the students to tell their story with some gestures or whole body movement, while the music plays.

