

Hubbard Street Dance Chicago 43rd Season to Kick Off With New Piece by Rena Butler

New Full Company Piece to Debut Online Oct. 22

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

CHICAGO – **Hubbard Street Dance Chicago's** (HSDC) 2020/21 43rd season will begin Thursday, Oct. 22 at 6 p.m. with a virtual premiere presentation of new work from former Hubbard Street dancer and acclaimed choreographer **Rena Butler**. The piece will be streamed again Saturday, Oct. 24 at 6 and Sunday, October 25 at 2.

For a downloadable photo, [click here](#).

Butler's 25-minute work, entitled "A Tale of Two," was filmed by **Talia Koylass**. It features music by composer **Darryl Joseph**, as well as songs by vocalists **Shawnee Dez** and **Alencia Norris**. The work is performed by the full HSDC company, featuring cameos from former HSDC dancer Jessica Tong, recently named HSDC's Associate Artistic Director, Jonathan Emanuell Alsberry, HSDC Artistic Liaison, as well as Butler. 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 filming all taking place during the pandemic required the dancers to perform outdoors at a distance from one another, or in groups of dancers who reside together, while wearing masks.

"Oftentimes growing up during the summertime in Chicago, it was difficult to differentiate whether the loud bangs at social gatherings were fireworks or gunshots. Amidst the multiple pandemics of this year – with protests and the attention to racial disparity, I was compelled to make a work that examined my curiosity of why Chicago constantly feels like two cities in one –from the glamour of the Magnificent Mile to the rampant gun violence that heavily affects our youth and the generations to come within disparate communities. It has always seemed that there has seldom been attention to these communities in Chicago impacted with grief from gun violence," said Butler. "The work seeks to explore the aspects that fuel this cultural dichotomy, thus making Chicago feel like a segregated experience."

Butler's passion for choreography stems from her desire to use her voice to participate in the world rapidly changing around her. Butler's collaborators are some of the biggest influences on her work because of how unique and individual all of them are. "Representation in diversity of body type, complexion, gender and culture is incredibly important so that the viewer can recognize their self and connect to the conversation—whether through art or otherwise," said Butler. "Everyone has their own distinct way of seeing and receiving the world events around them; it makes it so much more fulfilling to investigate with a diverse group of collaborators, because it is essentially a dialogue dissecting the state of humanity—a wonderful, eclectic and invigorating exchange."

Hubbard Street will stream free of charge through Vimeo and on hubbardstreetdance.com, where viewers can RSVP for the event to receive a link via email.

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, Kyle Abraham/Abraham.In.Motion, Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company, Manuel Vignouille/M-Motions, The Kevin Wynn Collection, and David Dorfman Dance. In 2013, Rena was featured as an Artist 'On The Rise' by Dance Magazine. 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. Butler recently joined Gibney Company as an Artistic Associate in New York City, and is continually shaping her choreographic voice by creating for various dance companies across the United States.

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 for more information.

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