



# unboxed

[tea]

WITH PETER CHU

## Discussion Guide



This guide contains videos, discussion questions, activity prompts and pre-recorded activities to accompany Peter Chu's Chinese Tea variation created for the *Unboxed* project as we invite you to CONNECT, EXPLORE, CREATE, AND RESPOND.

# LET'S GO!



- WHAT IS UNBOXED?
- MEET THE CHOREOGRAPHER
- ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS AND ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS
- VOCABULARY & INFLUENCES
- PETER CHU'S TEA
- DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
- YOUR TURN! MOVEMENT EXERCISES WITH PETER
- MEET OUR PARTNER - FINAL BOW FOR YELLOW FACE
- REFLECTION
- STANDARDS

# WHAT IS UNBOXED?

***Unboxed*** is a project created and developed by Hubbard Street Dance Chicago and made possible through collaboration with **Final Bow for Yellowface**. We asked choreographers **Yin Yue, Edwaard Liang, and Peter Chu** to use their voices and vocabularies to reimagine the Chinese Tea variation from *The Nutcracker* on their own terms. These Asian-American dancemakers engaged in three-day workshops with the Hubbard Street Dancers. Their creative processes were not only artistically fascinating, but they also prompted the deep exploration of fundamental questions: **What are the traditions we want to protect? What do we want to leave behind?**

We are humbled by the work of Yin Yue, Edwaard Liang, and Peter Chu, without whose artistry this project could not exist. We are grateful for the insight of Phil Chan and Georgina Pazcoguin of Final Bow For Yellowface, who have led the conversation on eradicating cultural stereotypes from the dance field over the last 5 years.

*Unboxed* was created by Jessica Tong, Hubbard Street's Associate Artistic Director, and developed in collaboration with Jonathan Alsberry, Hubbard Street's Artistic Liaison. The project is championed by Artistic Director Linda-Denise Fisher-Harrell.



Born in the Bronx, NY, and raised in Cocoa Beach, Florida, Peter began his training as a competitive gymnast, later nurturing his artistry at Dussich Dance Studio. Upon graduation from The Juilliard School, he performed with BJM Danse, EZdanza, Azure Barton & Artists, Kidd Pivot, and in Celine Dion's Vegas spectacular, A New Day.

Peter can be seen as the lead in Christina Perri's Jar of Hearts music video.

In 2008, Peter formed a Las Vegas project based dance company, chuthis., which showcases the work of Chu and his collaborators. chuthis. also provides movement education programs which foster technical and artistic development.

Chu has been an honoured recipient of choreographic awards and commissions, including the Hector Zaraspe Prize, A.C.E. Capezio Award, and Hubbard Street Dance International Commission Project. He was also named a Blodgett Distinguished Artist by Harvard University for 2018. Additionally, Chu has served as the Rehearsal Director for Nederlands Dans Theater 2, and as a Guest Rehearsal Director for NDT1. Chu has created works for Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Charlotte Ballet, Staatstheater Augsburg, Germany, Orlando Ballet Theatre, Hubbard Street 2, Giordano Dance Chicago, Charlotte Ballet II, SYTYCD, Houston MET Dance, New Dialect, SALT Contemporary Dance, HSPRO, Harvard University, Point Park University, and The Juilliard School, among others.

Last season, Chu premiered works for Giordano Dance Chicago and Gibney Dance Company, and choreographed for Cirque du Soleil's Vitori in Malta. He is currently commissioned to create for Paul Taylor Dance Company, and is developing a new work with his own company, chuthis.

**[You can learn more about Peter and his company here.](#)**

PETER  
CHU  
*pe*

# A NOTE FOR OUR TEACH ERS



## **Essential Questions**

What are stereotypes?

What is your relationship to your culture?

What do we think of as canon/who decides?

How is dance a part of your culture?

What is appropriation?

## **Enduring Understandings**

Dance is varied and diverse.

Ideas can have multiple interpretations.

Dance has lineage and history.

People have lineage and history.

Dance steps evolve.

Cultural dance is not a monolith.

Cultural dance can be theatrical.

Culture is a part of all dance.

## **Discussion Objectives**

Students will know ...

It is important to explore the lineage of the movement you are embodying.

I can create movement that is authentically me.

Appropriation is not inspiration.

Choreography is an act of self expression.

There are infinite ways to create dance.

Students will be able to ...

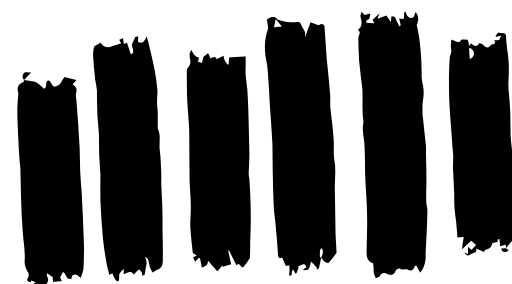
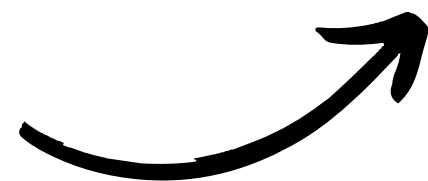
Define stereotype, appropriation, and cultural dance.

# VOCABULARY





# CULTURAL DANCE



Forms of dance [that] reflect the cultural traditions within which they developed.

An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance, Joann Kealiinohomoku

# VOCABULARY

## \* Stereotype

A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular group of people based on selected traits.

## \* Appropriation

The action of taking something for one's own use, often without the permission of the owner and/or using a cultural symbol in an incorrect context. - *Definition from Oxford Language*

## \* Cultural Appropriation

The unacknowledged or inappropriate adoption of the customs, practices, ideas, etc. of one people or society by members of another and typically more dominant people or society. - *Definition from Oxford Language*

## \* Canon

Often defined as a traditional collection of dance works, against which other dance works are evaluated. In other words, it means "a long list of works taken as authentic." Frequently critiqued for excluding non-western/European work. *Note: This does not refer to canon as a choreographic device.*



# PETER'S VOCABULARY

## \* Pedagogy

The method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept.

## \* Jazz Dance

A dance form or dance that is matched to the rhythms and techniques of jazz music, developed in the early part of the 20th century. While the jazz dance that Peter studied has its roots in West African culture, generations of other cultures in the US contributed to its development.

## \* Qigong

Qigong is a century-old practice that involves certain postures and gentle movements with mental focus, breathing, and relaxation. With roots in Chinese medicine, philosophy, and martial arts, Qigong is traditionally viewed by the Chinese and throughout Asia as a practice to cultivate and balance qi (pronounced approximately as "chi" or "chee"), translated as "life energy".

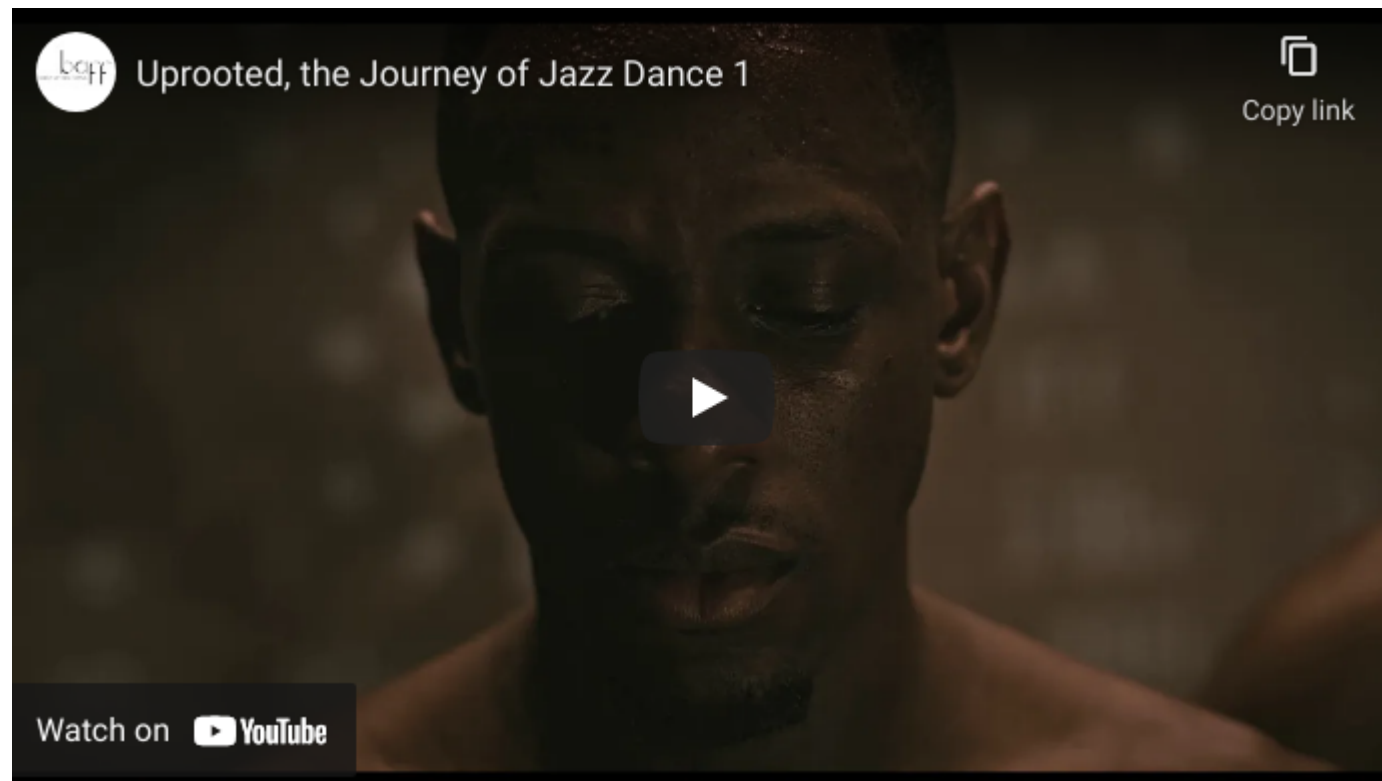
# PETER'S INFLUENCES



## Qigong

Master Gu guides us through the history, philosophy and transformative power of this ancient Chinese wellness practice....

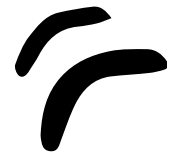
Brought to us by George Thompson.



## Uprooted- the Journey of Jazz Dance

A cinematic exploration of this art form, paying homage to its lineage, celebrating its many re-interpretations and, through a fast-moving kaleidoscope of movement and music, will inspire the dancer of tomorrow to keep this art form alive.

Learn more - <https://uprootedfilm.com/>



# PETER'S TEA



"Jazz dance and Qigong were both built off of oppression — to heal the body. When I came back from Europe, I guess I'd been searching for my lineage, and, being biracial, you're always battling "Who do I fit with?" But — enough with being apologetic! I don't want to be apologetic with who I am. I'm going to combine the yin and yang of these two worlds — this Jazz energy and the Qigong energy."



# LET'S DISCUSS!

QUESTION



Where did you notice the influences of jazz dance and qigong in Peter's work? Describe the movement. Refer back to the video as needed.

01

QUESTION



What are the dancers' individual rhythms in this piece? How does it relate to the music?

02

QUESTION

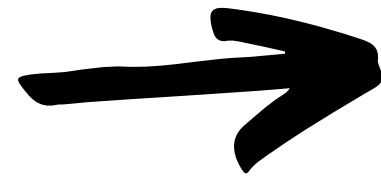


Look back at the definition of cultural appropriation. How can you appreciate and uplift the dances of other cultures?

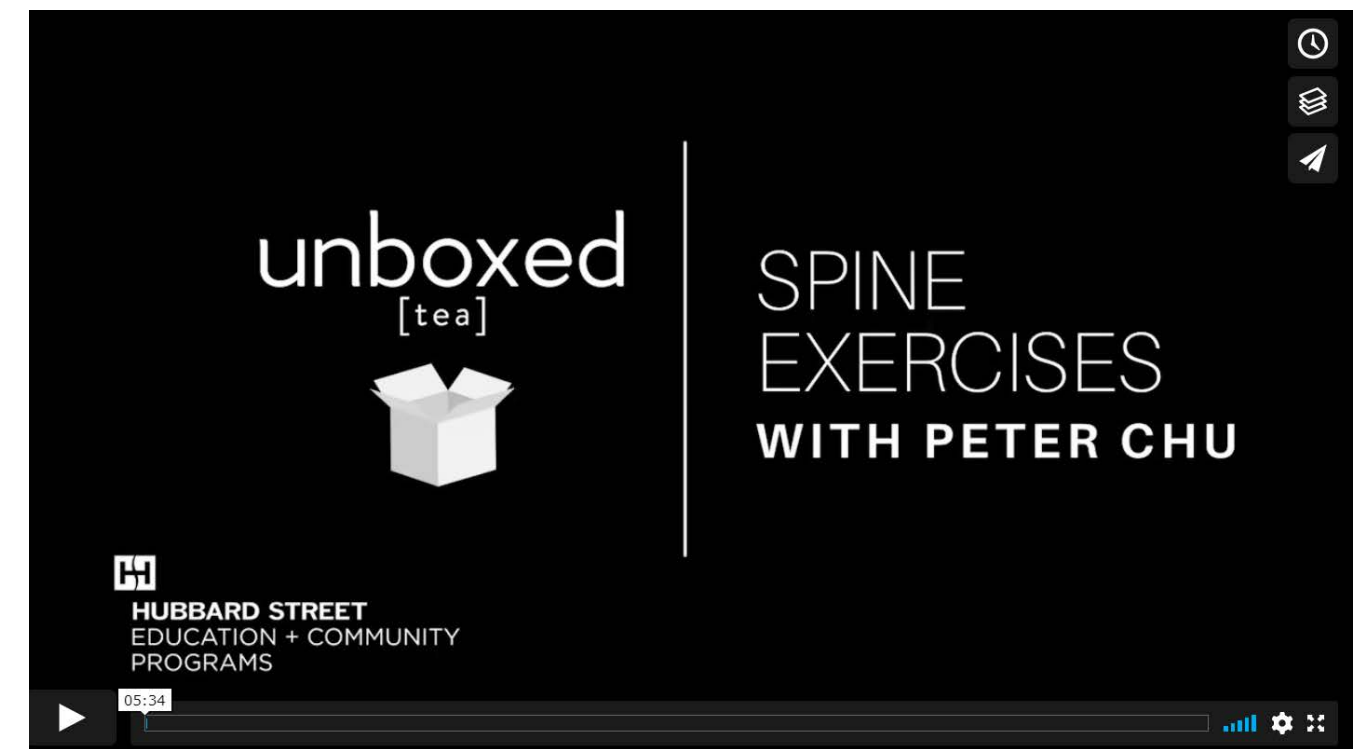
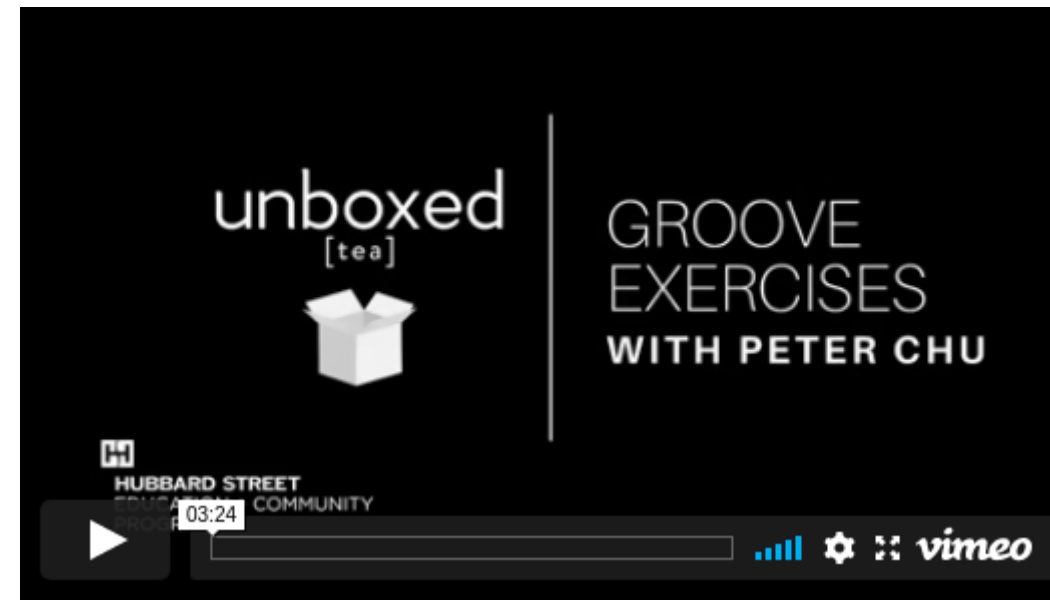
03



# LET'S DANCE TOGETHER!



It's your turn! Try some of the groove and spine movements with Peter.



# WORKSHEET



Where did you notice the influences of jazz dance and qigong in Peter's work?

## WHAT DOES YOUR EYE SEE?

As you watch the piece, note the dance elements you see below. Refer to the BEST dance vocabulary (Body, Energy, Space & Time) if needed to describe what you see.  
Ex: "I see rhythmic movement with bent knees at a medium level."

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## WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

What are elements of jazz dance and qigong? Watch the piece again. How do the dance elements you noted relate to the elements of jazz dance or qigong?

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## RECORDING INFLUENCES

Using information from both columns, write where you see influences of jazz dance and qigong in Peter's work. What did you feel as you watched these movements?

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# MEET OUR PARTNER

# FINAL BOW FOR YELLOWFACE

Inspired by positive changes at New York City Ballet in 2017, we began to ask ourselves why other companies in America still present outdated representations of Asians in the Nutcracker and other ballet performances. We recognize that this conversation has been happening across the country every December, in communities large and small, from dance studios to professional companies - and want to consolidate the conversation. We also recognize the work happening in other performing arts disciplines, especially the great and productive conversations happening in opera and theatre, and wanted our ballet community to engage in the same self-reflection.

In the same way that Blackface is limiting and degrading to African Americans, continuing to present an 19th century view of Asians does not allow for character nuance for Asian American dancers today. If all audiences see is the bobbing and shuffling coolie from a bygone era as the only representation of Asians on stage, what message does that send to our Asian students who dream of dancing the Swan Queen? What does that say to the Asian audience members who want to see themselves on stage, only to find themselves as the butt of the joke? What does that say to the Board member, who writes checks and involves their friends, only to see a one-dimensional representation of their heritage?

In the spirit of making the ballet more inclusive, we invite you to join us by signing our pledge and committing to speak up against Yellowface on our stages, and working to create more positive and nuanced representations of Asians in ballet.

It's time for us to replace caricature with character; it's time for Yellowface in ballet to take a Final Bow! Sign the pledge now!

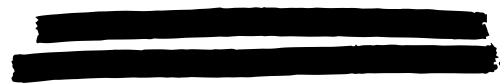
Phil Chan  
Georgina Pazcoguín



Georgina Pazcoguín and Phil Chan  
Photo by Kenneth Edwards

# REFLECTION

*How is dance a part of your culture?*





# Standards Addressed

## National Core Arts Standards

DA:Cr2.1.3b Develop a dance phrase that expresses and communicates an idea or feeling. Discuss the effect of the movement choices.

DA:Cr2.1.4b Develop a dance study that expresses and communicates a main idea. Discuss the reasons and effectiveness of the movement choices.

DA:Cr2.1.5b Develop a dance study by selecting a specific movement vocabulary to communicate a main idea. Discuss how the dance communicates nonverbally. TH:Cr1.1.3c Collaborate to determine how characters might move and speak to support the story and given circumstances in drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr1.1.4c Imagine how a character might move to support the story and given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr1.1.5c Imagine how a character's inner thoughts impact the story and given circumstances in a drama/ theatre work.

MU:Pr4.2.3 Demonstrate understanding of the structure in music selected for performance.

MU:Pr4.2.4 Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, and form ) in music selected for performance.

MU:Pr4.2.5 Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, form, and harmony ) in music selected for performance.

## Common Core Standards

ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events  
ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.5 Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.

ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.5 Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.

ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.



**HUBBARD STREET**  
EDUCATION + COMMUNITY  
PROGRAMS

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For more information about all of available our education programs, please visit our website.



# *Hubbard Street Dance Chicago Education & Community Programs*

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