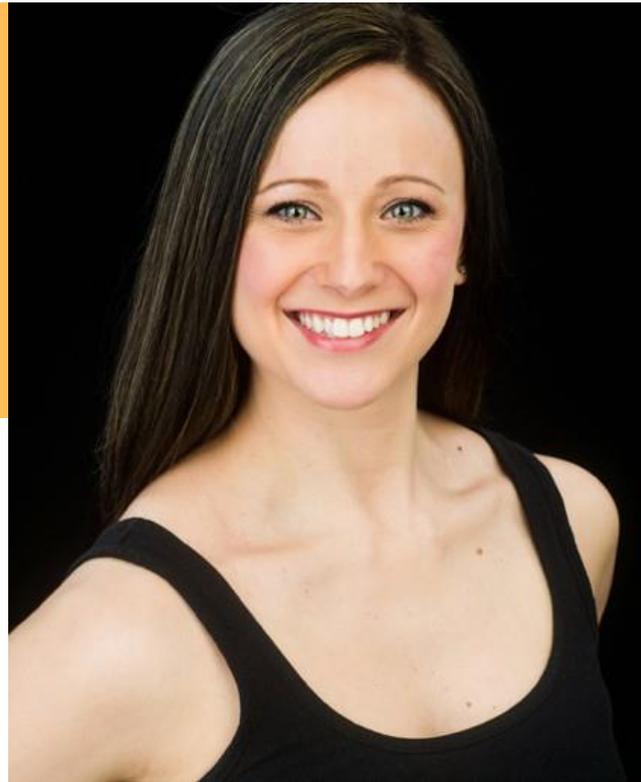


ABBY HARE

By: Emma Lambert



Abby Hare is no stranger to *New Dances*, filling roles as a choreographer and dancer. After graduating from Webster University in 2014, Abby joined Thodos Dance Chicago and danced with the company until its final season in 2017. She has auditioned successfully each year with *New Dances* and is now in her third season with the project as a partnership between Thodos Dance Chicago and DanceWorks Chicago.

When asked about working with Abby, Melissa Thodos, Founder and Artistic Director of Thodos Dance Chicago expressed that “Abby Hare is a rounded, inquisitive, committed dance artist who takes on every creative challenge with a 110% all in. It has been an honor to have her as a member of Thodos Dance Chicago for many years and witness her growth and evolution to becoming a featured dance artist with the Company. Her 3rd year commitment to *New Dances* in partnership with DanceWorks Chicago continues her valued legacy in our Chicago community. We are thrilled to have her on the *New Dances* 2020 team as we, together as community, bring dance to a whole new stage.”

Abby’s commitment to the *New Dances* legacy is clear. She has always loved the project because it is an opportunity to collaborate with different artists in Chicago. “It is a great way to meet other people, to learn from other people, and to grow from other people.” Abby also expressed how excited she was to learn that *New Dances* would continue as a partnership with DanceWorks Chicago after Thodos Dance Chicago had its last season in 2017. By continuing to be a part of the *New Dances* partnership, she gets her “quick fix” of dancing for the year. It is an important way for her to get to meet new up and coming choreographers as well as to see old acquaintances and meet new friends in the Chicago dance community.

Abby also reflected on how *New Dances* has grown over the years and how it has evolved since Thodos Dance Chicago partnered with DanceWorks Chicago. “It has gotten more exposure” since the partnership between these two companies began. Furthermore, she explained that the sense of community within *New Dances* has likely also fueled the interest in dancers to audition and join *New Dances*.

Abby attributes her growth as an artist to her time with *New Dances* over the years. She explained that when she first joined as a selected choreographer of *New Dances* with Thodos Dance Chicago before the partnership, she felt a little over her head and was insecure during her first time choreographing on professionals. However, each year she “feels more of a sense of appreciation for the whole project and appreciation for the choreographers who are up and coming.”



Sono's Journey by Melissa Thodos
Photo Credit: Chloe Hamilton
Photo courtesy of Thodos Dance Chicago

Abby's last season as a choreographer for *New Dances* in 2017 with Thodos Dance Chicago was a specifically memorable milestone for her journey. "The piece I created was very personal, where it felt like I had a very close attachment to it and it was just amazing to see it flourish on stage." As a dancer in *New Dances*, it was hard for her to pick out just one memorable moment because there were so many to choose from. Although last season seemed to stick out as a particularly great season for her. "Last year I had a blast. I felt that the energy in the room everyday was super positive. The choreographers I got to work with were super positive and hungry to do well."

When Abby reflected on how COVID-19 might affect *New Dances 2020*, she said she was curious to see how everything will pan out. "One of my favorite parts of *New Dances* was being able to be in the room with people, being able to meet new people, and work with people. It will be interesting to see if we can still make that connection online."

Now that we are past the mid-point of this year's *New Dances* journey, Abby has had a chance to reflect on the virtual process thus far. "It actually has surprised me as to how connected I do feel to the other dancers and choreographers. There is a real sensitivity to the process that I appreciate, and I do feel connected as we all are working towards a goal, yielding to one another's needs, and creating an atmosphere of respect that may not always be found within a studio atmosphere. It's nice to work in this way and take a step back in appreciating everyone's various situations."



Sunrise by Shannon Alvis
Photo Credit: Ben Licera
Photo courtesy of Thodos Dance Chicago



Acid Reign by Brian Enos
Photo Credit: Chloe Hamilton
Photo courtesy of Thodos Dance Chicago