

Hedwig Dances

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HEDWIG DANCES ANNOUNCES

“Creating *ASCENDance*”

November 15 - 22 | On-Demand Viewing

November 22 | Sunday Salon | 3:00 pm

Chicago, IL - Hedwig Dances, the Chicago-based contemporary dance theater ensemble, known for its theatricality and originality, continues its season with a week-long video streaming of its 2013 critically acclaimed production of *ASCENDance* from November 15-22, 2020. The on-demand streaming opportunity will be capped on Sunday with a live on-line conversation by and between Hedwig Dances artistic director and choreographer Jan Bartoszek with sculptor Barbara Cooper, along with **video projection designer Petra Bachmaier of *Luftwerk*, composer Matthew Ferraro, lighting designer Ken Bowen, costume designer Vin Reed, and dancer Maray Gutierrez.**

“Though our first preference is live performance in a theater with all the production values of costumes, light, sound, and the close proximity of dancers with the one another and the audience, the limitations of Covid 19 has empowered Hedwig’s creative team to innovate ways to remain engaged in the art of making live dance, while also revisiting some of our most memorable dance works that continue to resonate in today’s world. My 2013 work *ASCENDance* seems especially timely because it explores the exponential increase in the sheer amount of information overload coming at us from our devices as we continue to socially distance in our homes and work worlds” says Founder and Artistic Director Jan Bartoszek.

***ASCENDance* is an interdisciplinary dance theater work exploring the themes of renewal and transformation in a chaotic world.** The project began by developing the depth, complexity, and movement capability of flat planes of paper using folding processes based on origami, an ancient Japanese ceremonial folding practice, to create large-scale structures. The structural objects created by Barbara Cooper are manipulated by the dancers. Immersive light projections by Petra Bachmaier change and expand the spatial orientation of the structural objects and give mood and character to the performance. The music created by Matthew Ferraro, lighting by Ken Bowen and numinous costuming by Vin Reed complete the composition in drawing the disciplines together to create a harmonious dance theater performance. The structures are a metaphor for the information inundation experienced in the 24/7 news cycle world. Just as information is folded into smaller and smaller bits, compressed into increasingly smaller technological devices, the folds of origami contain information about the original unfolded piece of paper that, in its folded state, remain concealed. The dancers use the structures to embody movements of ritual and its antithesis, expressing the dichotomy between

personal sanctuary and the kaleidoscopic nature of the contemporary world. The dance movement expression is wrapped in an exquisite interplay of light and music.

All are invited to register for this week-long event composed of two parts: first, an opportunity to view the dance, on-demand, as viewers' schedules permit, and secondly, to hear the collaborators discuss the creative process live on Sunday. On demand viewing of **ASCENDance** takes place the week of November 15 to 22, 2020, culminating in the Sunday Salon with Bartoszek and her **ASCENDance** collaborators on Sunday, November 22 at 3 pm Central. Registration is free for both portions of this event, however, donations are encouraged to help the company cover its artistic and operating costs. **Online registrations only at bit.ly/HD_ASCENDance.**

This small and resourceful dance company is using the public social media forum in the hopes of extending its reach and thereby gaining new friends and supporters. "By taking our company's work to the internet with its almost unlimited reach, we're hoping to leverage this accessible forum, with a backstage pass of sorts, to look at Hedwig's collaborative creativity. In so doing, we hope to gain an international presence for the company," says Bartoszek.

About the ASCENDance Collaborators

Jan Bartoszek is an American choreographer and the Founding Artistic Director of Hedwig Dances. Through her interdisciplinary dance work, she fosters a spirit of collaboration with other artists; merging choreography, objects, media, text, and music to create dances that resonate with complexity and depth. Ms. Bartoszek has choreographed over 65 dances, presenting them in Chicago's vibrant theaters, national performance venues, and internationally in Cuba, Germany, Honduras, Mexico, Brazil and Canada. Her dance work has garnered numerous accolades including an Emmy-nomination for her film "Arch of Repose" and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Performance Network, NEFA/RDDI, the MacArthur International Connections Fund, and the Illinois Arts Council, among others. The Chicago Dance Coalition granted her a Ruth Page Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Dance Community for "her work at the Chicago Cultural Center, serving as an educator, mentor, presenter, administrator, and promoter of dance in the city with inspirational excellence."

Petra Bachmaier (Video Designer) is a multi-media artist and principal of **Luftwerk**, which uses space as a canvas, transforming environments through the exploration of light, color and perception into immersive, experience-based installations. Focused on the context of a site Luftwerk applies an interpretive layer, integrating the physical structure, historical context, and embedded information into each piece. Since founding in 2007, Luftwerk has amassed a significant body of work ranging from site-specific installations to experimental projects that interpret data. In each project, they are interested in the abilities of how light and color can be utilized to shift perception and enhance experience. Luftwerk is the artistic collaboration of Petra Bachmaier and Sean Gallero.

Ken Bowen (Lighting Designer) has served as Teacher, Designer, and Technical Director at the Latin School of Chicago for more than 20 years. He designed and built nearly 100 major productions in that time, managed all other lectures and events in the school theatre, and taught Stagecraft and Computer Drafting. For the previous 15 years, he was a free-lance designer, stage manager, and touring road manager, primarily for Dance. He worked with Hedwig Dances, Mordine & Company, Joel Hall, and a

host of other dance organizations, designing over 500 new works. He was honored three times by the Chicago Dance Coalition with Ruth Page Awards, and later served on their board of directors. He currently serves as a member of the Hedwig Dances Advisory Council.

Barbara Cooper (Sculptor) works fluidly between sculpture and drawing. That interest in flow and movement within the context of space and structure is what lies at the heart of collaborating with Hedwig Dances. Numerous one person exhibitions include the Bellevue Arts Museum, Washington, Gerald Peters Gallery (Santa Fe), the Chicago Cultural Center, and the John Michael Kohler Arts Center (Sheboygan). While working primarily with wood veneer, residencies at Pilchuck, the Kohler Arts / Industry Program, and the Johnson Atelier gave her opportunities to explore glass, cast iron and bronze, extending her vocabulary into diverse media. Further scale and media explorations can be seen in public art commissions for the Avalon Branch Library in Chicago and the Chicago CTA, and the Rhode Island Airport in Providence. Cooper has received three Illinois Arts Council Fellowships. Her work can be seen at www.barbaracooperartist.com, and Perimeter Gallery, Chicago.

Matthew Ferraro (Composer) is a unique artist who has the ability to live between worlds. As a composer for media, his musical skills have been used in everything from BBC Radio 4 productions to video games such as "Medal of Honor", the acclaimed television series, "Futurama" and Academy Award-winning films "The Insider", "The Incredibles," and many more. As a commissioned composer, Ferraro's work focuses on two things, multi-culturalism and the human experience. His commissioned choral hymn A.M.D.G. is published by Boosey & Hawkes and is performed by choirs worldwide. His multi-media work "The Tension of Opposites" was deemed a new art form, "Orchestral Journalism", by the California Arts Council. It opened to standing ovations at the Barbican in London in 2009. He is currently setting the prayers of Pope John Paul II to music using contemporary artists from around the world. Ferraro continues to live and work between London, Los Angeles, and Rome.

Maray Gutierrez Ramis (Dancer) is a native of Havana, Cuba where she trained at Escuela Nacional de Arte – the prestigious National School of Dance. For 10 years, she was a principal dancer for the internationally acclaimed Danza Contemporánea de Cuba and worked with esteemed choreographers Giovanni di Cicco, Donald McKayle, Joaquin Sabaté, Jan Linkens, and Marianela Boán (Founder of DanzAbierta), among others. She has performed throughout Europe, the U.S., and the Caribbean, as well as, for British television and the Venice Opera. Since relocating to Chicago, she has danced with Hedwig Dances, Luna Negra Dance Theater, CDI/Concert Dance Inc; the Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Houston Grand Opera. She received an Emmy-nomination in 2008 for her performance in the PBS Documentary of "Ruth Page's 1947 groundbreaking ballet cartoon", *Billy Sunday*, presented by CDI/Concert Dance Inc. She was also a featured performer in the dance film, *Arch of Repose*, produced by Hedwig Dances in 2009. Maray was named Artistic Associate of Hedwig Dances in 2007.

Vin Reed (Costume Design and Construction) is graduate of the University of Cincinnati's College of Design, Art, Architecture & Planning, Vin Reed is grateful to combine his skills in graphic design, photography, illustration, and fashion in dance partnerships with companies including; Chicago Dancing Festival, DanceWorks Chicago, Hedwig Dances, Piel Morena, Same Planet Different World, and The Visitors. Vin's work has been featured on the NBC morning show, and in Time Out Chicago. facebook.com/studioVin.

About Hedwig Dances

Hedwig Dances is a contemporary dance theater ensemble celebrating 35 years under the artistic direction of its Founder, Jan Bartoszek. The Company is named in honor of Ms. Bartoszek's grandmother. In-Residence at The Ruth Page Center for the Arts, Hedwig Dances' bold, interdisciplinary collaborations combine poetic choreography, projected images and haunting original music. The critically acclaimed and award-winning dance ensemble has presented over 1,500 performances at prestigious national and international venues. The Company has twice performed in exclusive performances at Joyce SoHo (New York City). Additional engagements include Bauhaus Dessau (Dessau, Germany), Teatro Nacional De Cuba Sala Avellaneda (Havana, Cuba), Teatro Diana (Guadalajara, Mexico), Grace Street Theater (Richmond, Virginia), Margaret H'Doubler Performance Space (Madison, Wisconsin), Lee Theater (Spring to Dance Festival, St. Louis, Missouri), among myriad other performances, residencies, and outreach programs over the past three decades. Hedwig Dances and its associated artists have been honored with two Ruth Page Awards and a Chicago Dance Award. For 20 years (1992 – 2011), Hedwig Dances served as the Dance Company-In-Residence at the Chicago Cultural Center under the visionary leadership and invitation of the late Lois Weisberg (Commissioner, Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, 1989-2011).

HEDWIG DANCES FUNDERS

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