



For Immediate Release

BalletX to Premiere Four Short Dance Films by Choreographers Hope Boykin, Rena Butler, Caili Quan, and Penny Saunders for Works & Process at the Guggenheim
Moderated by Damian Woetzel
June 14, 2020 at 7:30pm

Philadelphia, PA – June 2020 – BalletX announces the premiere of four short dance films by choreographers **Hope Boykin, Rena Butler, Caili Quan, and Penny Saunders** for **Works & Process at the Guggenheim's *Virtual Works & Process*** series this **Sunday, June 14 at 7:30pm** – the series was recently in the news for premiering Jamar Roberts' viral dance video *Cooped*, named "one of the most powerful artistic responses yet to the Covid-19 crisis" by *The New York Times*. Audiences are invited to register (at the RSVP link below) to join a live Zoom presentation of BalletX's premieres blended with a discussion featuring **Artistic & Executive Director Christine Cox** and the choreographers, moderated by **Damian Woetzel**, President of The Juilliard School and Artistic Director of Vail Dance Festival. Registration is free with a suggested donation, and space is limited. The four short dance films will also premiere, without the live Zoom discussion, on Works & Process at the Guggenheim's Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube (@worksandprocess), where they will remain for repeat viewing.

"BalletX is incredibly thrilled and honored to collaborate with Works & Process at the Guggenheim. This is an opportunity to share with the world another side of BalletX that we look forward to exploring much more in the coming year. I would like to express my gratitude for the choreographers, co-presenters and co-sponsors that came together to help make this short dance film project a reality," said Cox.

Discussing her creative process, choreographer Rena Butler says, "We've been fueling this parallel investigation of The Underground Railroad and where we are today through virtual group discussions, connecting both personal experiences and viewing materials (social media, films,

the news) that prompt our spirits to take action. It's been incredible working with the dancers on this project – their openness and vulnerability has only fed the work the vitamins needed to produce a fully-grown model of what our dream of a progressive society could potentially be.”

Link to Zoom RSVP: <https://guggenheim.tix.com/Event.aspx?EventCode=1180734>

Link for more info: <https://www.guggenheim.org/event/virtual-works-process-balletx>

Co-Presented by Guggenheim Works & Process Artists (WPA), The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Vail Dance Festival, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, and Grand Rapids Ballet.

BalletX dance videos for Works & Process at the Guggenheim are made possible through lead support from the Wyncote Foundation, at the recommendation of Leonard C. Haas, in addition to the National Endowment for the Arts, Anne M. & Philip H. Glatfelter, III Family Foundation, Joslyn Ewart, Arthur M. Kaplan & R. Duane Perry, Eugene Lefevre & Deborah Boardman, Mary Kirson & Bob Bierman, Joan DeJean, and The Charles & Joan Gross Family Foundation.

About BalletX

BalletX, Philadelphia's premier contemporary ballet, commissions choreographers from around the world to create new ballets that are “fresh, inclusive, and connect to what people want” (*Philadelphia Citizen*). Led by Artistic & Executive Director Christine Cox, BalletX has been recognized by *The New Yorker* as a “place of choreographic innovation” for producing 87 world premiere ballets by over 45 choreographers in its 14-year history. In addition to main-stage performances and international touring, the company offers free community pop ups, dance classes, artist Q&As, open rehearsals, and in-school dance education, designed to bring its home city of Philadelphia and the nation closer to dance. Among its many accolades and honors, BalletX was recently featured on the cover of *Dance Magazine's* October 2019 issue. To learn more about BalletX's programming and dancers, named “among America's best” by *The New York Times*, please visit BalletX.org and follow the company on social media.

Works & Process at the Guggenheim

Described by *The New York Times* as “an exceptional opportunity to understand something of the creative process,” for 35 years, New Yorkers have been able to see, hear, and meet the most acclaimed artists in the world, in an intimate setting unlike any other. Works & Process, the performing arts series at the Guggenheim, has championed new works and offered audiences unprecedented access to generations of leading creators and performers. Most performances take place in the Guggenheim’s intimate Frank Lloyd Wright–designed 273-seat Peter B. Lewis Theater. In 2017, Works & Process established a new residency and commissioning program, inviting artists to create new works, made in and for the iconic Guggenheim rotunda. In 2020, Works & Process Artists (WPA) Virtual Commissions was created to financially support artists and nurture their creative process during the pandemic. Worksandprocess.org.

Hope Boykin, educator, creator, mover, and motivator, was born and raised in Durham, North Carolina. She was a three-time recipient of the American Dance Festival’s Young Tuition Scholarship and while attending Howard University in Washington, DC, she continued to pursue her desires to dance working with choreographer Lloyd Whitmore and his New World Dance Company. In New York City, Hope studied at The Ailey School and worked as assistant to choreographers Milton Myers and the late Talley Beatty. Hope was an original member of Complexions, and joined PHILADANCO, where she received the acclaimed “Bessie,” a New York dance and performance award. In her 20th and final season with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, she continues to build and create work as a 2019-20 Urban Bush Women Choreographic Center Fellow. She has choreographed for numerous dance company’s including Philadanco, Minnesota Dance Theatre, and Dallas Black Dance Theatre. In 2016, Hope presented her third work of choreography for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater called *r-Evolution, Dream.*, and most recently, in 2018 for *DEMO*, commissioned by Damian Woetzel and the Kennedy Center, Hope had the honor to choreograph, write, and perform with New York City Ballet Principal dancer Lauren Lovette in MomentsUponMoments which was redesigned for Vail Dance Festival in 2019. Serving as Artistic Lead for the Kennedy Center Dance Lab (KCDL), a two-week summer dance program for high school students, and Artist-In-Residence at USC Gloria

Kaufman School of Dance is confirmation of the mission of HopeBoykinDance, which includes leading young and aspiring artists to a secure foundation and a concrete understanding, which develops a confidence and an assurance that will be unmatched.

Rena Butler comes from Chicago, IL, and has danced in companies such as Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Kyle Abraham/Abraham.In.Motion, Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company, David Dorfman Dance, Manuel Vignouille/M-Motions, and The Kevin Wynn Collection. She has also collaborated with artists including Yara Travieso, Carrie Mae Weems, Nick Cave, and Carrie Schneider. Butler trained at The Chicago Academy for the Arts. She studied overseas at Taipei National University of the Arts in Taiwan, and received her BFA from SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Dance. Also a choreographer, Rena has presented her work at Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, The New Orleans Museum of Modern Art in collaboration with Academy Award-winning jazz composer, Terrence Blanchard, CHTV Stories in Switzerland, and more. Butler also served on the consortium for Chicago Dancemakers Forum, and in 2019, was the recipient of the Prince Grace Award for Choreography.

Caili Quan started dancing in her native Guam under the direction of John Grensback and Bettina Sanzotta, and moved to New York City to continue her classical training at Ballet Academy East. She was a trainee with Richmond Ballet and an apprentice with Charlotte Ballet (formerly North Carolina Dance Theatre), before joining First State Ballet Theatre under Pasha Kambalov for three seasons. During her training, she performed works by George Balanchine, Marius Petipa, and Malcolm Burn, among others. Caili has had the pleasure to choreograph for konverjdans, Columbia Ballet Collaborative, DanceWorks Chicago's ChoreoLab, CelloPointe, and St. Paul's School. Her piece *Fancy Me* was performed at the Vail Dance Festival in 2018. Caili was nominated by BalletX to serve as an Artistic Partnership Fellow at The Center for Ballet and the Arts at NYU during Summer 2019. In May 2020, Caili announced her retirement from dancing with BalletX at the conclusion of the 2019-20 Season to pursue her choreographic career. She is currently creating a new work on BalletX.

Penny Saunders, originally from West Palm Beach, Florida, graduated from the Harid Conservatory in 1995, and began her professional career with The American Repertory Ballet under the direction of Septime Webre. She went on to dance with Ballet Arizona, MOMIX Dance Theater, Cedar Lake Ensemble and in 2004 she joined Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. In 2011, Saunders won the International Commissioning Project which launched her choreographic career, creating pieces for Hubbard Streets' main and second company, Cincinnati Ballet, The Royal New Zealand Ballet, Sacramento Ballet, Whim W'Him, BalletX, Tulsa Ballet 2, Ballet Idaho, SFDanceworks, SALT Contemporary Dance, Neos Dance Theater, Missouri Contemporary Ballet, Owen Cox Dance Group, among others. Saunders is honored to be the Resident Choreographer at The Grand Rapids Ballet where she recently completed her first full length work, *The Happy Prince and Other Wilde Tales*, that focused on the life and fairy tales of Oscar Wilde. Saunders has received support from The New York City Ballet Choreographic Commissions Initiative, participated in The National Choreographers Initiative and was the recipient of the 2016 Princess Grace Choreographic Fellowship. In the 2019-20 season, she is excited to be collaborating with the Tulsa Ballet, Oklahoma City Ballet, The Grand Rapids Ballet, Whim W'Him, BalletX, Dayton Ballet, Diablo Ballet, Ballet Idaho, Indiana University, Seattle Dance Collective, and Point Park University.