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FOR IMMEDIATE LISTING and RELEASE
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**THE 2019 YARD ARTS SUMMER SEASON
OPENS WITH
THE SCHONBERG FELLOWS/"CHICAGOLAND":
FORMALIST JOANNA FURNANS
AND
THE ERA FOOTWORK CREW
STEP OUT FROM THE CITY OF THE BIG SHOULDERS**

"Stormy, husky, brawling" is how poet Carl Sandburg memorably described Chicago. And while he lauded the "hog butcher to the world" and "players with railroads," had he lived today he might well have also included "master choreographers to the Midwest." Chicago has a mighty place in the history of American dance, sometimes overlooked - as with many midcountry social phenomena - in the decades of cultural noise emanating from the coasts. It has a highly diverse community of dance-makers, often sited across Chicago's idiosyncratic neighborhoods. **Joanna Furnans**, a formalist LGBTQA choreographer, and **The ERA**, a uniquely Chicagoan fast footwork crew whose creations draw on roots in house music and street dance, represent different tracks in that community, nevertheless conjoined by a strong political will and artistic activism.

The Performance will take place:

"Schonberg Fellows/Chicagoland: The Era Footwork Crew and Joanna Furnans"

Saturday, June 8, 7PM

Location: The Yard's Patricia N. Nanon Theater at 1 The Yard, Middle Road, Chilmark, MA

Tickets: \$25 adults / \$15 seniors, students, and military / \$5 children under 12.

New this year! Please consider upgrading to a \$45 "Neighbor and Need" ticket to support The Yard's efforts to continue offering free and discounted programming to those in our community for whom our ticket prices pose an impediment.

Member and Behind the Counter discounts apply

The Yard's **Bessie Schonberg Legacy Choreographic Mentorship Residency** is named after Bessie Schonberg (December 27, 1906 - May 14, 1997), a groundbreaking dance mentor who helped shape generations of dancers, from Alwin Nikolais and Paul Taylor to Meredith Monk and Lucinda Childs.

In line with Schonberg's mentorship of emerging performers, The Yard's 2019 **Schonberg Fellows** will work on expanding ongoing projects with the aide of mentors **Raphael Xavier**, a veteran breakdance artist and innovator, and **Alison Manning**, The Yard's own executive director and co-leader of the organization's internal dance company, DanceTheYard.

The Schonberg Fellows will be in residence at The Yard for two weeks, culminating in a split-bill performance on Saturday, June 8, 2019, to share their in-process explorations with the Martha's Vineyard community.

The Schonberg Fellows choreographic mentorship residency is made possible each year by the support of the Jerome A. and Estelle R. Newman Assistance Fund.

ABOUT THE WORKS:

Parental Advisory: Language

Join us for The Yard's launch of the 2019 YARD ARTS Season and annual Bessie Schonberg Legacy Choreographic Mentorship Residency. This year's **Schonberg Fellows** are **The Era Footwork Crew** and **Joanna Furnans**.

For the first time, The Era footwork collective and dance artist Joanna Furnans, two **Chicago**-based artists, will reveal new works - mid creation.

Through combining these groups of artists under one roof, the show will be a platform to encourage laughter, curiosity, vulnerability, social and sexual struggle, and to reveal the power of Chicago's emerging performing artists.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS:

THE ERA FOOTWORK CREW

“Footwork kept me alive’ is a refrain repeat we feel often, and by several generations of Chicago dancers who have turned to dance for community and survival.” —The Era

“The Era has taken footwork back for Chicago.” —The Chicago Tribune

The Era is a collective of footwork dance trail blazers founded in 2014. Hailing from the South Side of Chicago, they have been recognized as one of Chicago's "cultural organizers of the year" by FADER Magazine and "choreographers of the year" by New City.

The Era crew is composed of dancers Litebulb, P-top, Chief Manny, Stelo and includes documentarian and founding advisor, Wills, co-manager Dee-Dee and consultant / advisor Drew. In addition to their dance and choreography skills, members of the group self-identify as film-makers and fashion designers tasked with furthering the reach of their voices through multimedia.

The Era use footwork to address inequality and racism in Chicago through their lyrics, panel discussions, and film documentation. They have brought their work to Chicago's most challenged neighborhood public schools, as well as to international stages.

The Era are opening doors to opportunities for more than themselves. They are uplifting the next generation of black youth in Chicago.

JOANNA FURNANS

***“Furnans' stage presence carries the piece even at its most mysterious.”
—Chicago Tribune***

“...Furnans transforms an ordinary, methodical pass of dancing into a sexually, politically charged statement...” —Art Intercepts

Joanna Furnans is an independent dance artist and dance writer based in Chicago, whose work has been supported by the Chicago Dancemaker's Forum, the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), and Minneapolis' Walker Art Center, amongst others.

Furnans' piece, *Doing Fine*, is a solo performance manifested by a year of autobiographical writing and movement research developed through collaboration with five choreographers, a writer, a visual artist, and a sound designer.

Doing Fine specifically explores themes of memory, specificity, vulnerability, habit, confusion, recovery, and commonplace, and will be officially premiering in Chicago in August 2019.

Joana Furnan's work combines the notion of collaborative art with solo performance and delivers a space wrought with experimentation and emotion.

SEED. GROW. REAP. REPEAT: THE NATURE OF THE YARD.

Mission:

The Yard supports diverse, contemporary dance-makers and related artists in their creative processes through paid, creative residency, public performance, long-term education, and artist-driven civic engagement. We serve all ages and cultural populations on Martha's Vineyard, and work collaboratively with artists, producers, and other cultural organizers within regional, national, and international contexts.

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David R. White
Artistic Director & Executive Producer

Alison Manning
Executive Director & Co-Producer

Jesse Keller Jason
Director of Island Programs and Education & Co-Producer

Chloe Jones and Holly Jones
Associate Producers

What Makes The Yard Possible:

Our many individual members and donors, and:

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Barr Foundation

The Boston Foundation

Cape Air

Cape Cod Foundation, GALE Fund

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