

JOFFREY ★ BALLET

CHICAGO

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FOUR WORLD PREMIERES FEATURED IN THE JOFFREY BALLET'S "WINNING WORKS"

Presented in association with the Museum of Contemporary Art, March 5-6, 2016

CHICAGO – The [Joffrey Academy of Dance](#), Official School of The Joffrey Ballet, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago present four World Premieres in the sixth annual "[Winning Works](#)" program, the culmination of Joffrey's 2016 Winning Works Choreographic Competition. This year's Competition winners - **Jeffrey Cirio**, **Christian Denice** and **Mariana Oliveira** each choreographed a work, along with a fourth by Joffrey Academy Artistic Director **Alexei Kremnev**, titled *Coco + Igor*. All four works are performed by dancers from the [Joffrey Studio Company](#) and the [Joffrey Academy Trainee Program](#). The Joffrey Academy of Dance's "Winning Works" program is presented at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago's Edlis Neeson Theater, 220 E. Chicago Avenue, over three performances only: Saturday, March 5, at 3:00 PM and 7:30 PM and Sunday, March 6 at 3:00 PM.

[Jeffrey Cirio](#) is a current soloist with American Ballet Theatre and past principal dancer for the Boston Ballet who has won numerous ballet competitions worldwide, including the gold medal at the Helsinki International Ballet Competition and the coveted Princess Grace Award. In addition to dancing, Cirio has created two works for the Boston Ballet, *of Trial* and *fremd*, in addition to new works for Ballet Academy East and Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet. In 2015, Cirio, along with his sister Lia (principal at Boston Ballet), formed Cirio Collective, a summer project that brings together dancers and choreographers to work and perform in a residency environment. Cirio Collective performed "MiniM" at Vineyard Arts Project and Cape Dance Festival for their inaugural year. For this program, Cirio will present a piece inspired by "house dancers" called "steppers" (with strong roots in Chicago) as well as musical duo *the Kiasmos* and their unique ability to blend contemporary classical music with house music.

Formally with River North Dance Chicago, [Christian Denice](#) is an international dancer, choreographer and teacher who has already created works for Odyssey Dance Theatre, Odyssey II, Expansions Dance Company, River North Dance Chicago in collaboration with Frank Chaves, LEVELdance Chicago, DanceWorks Chicago, and Interlochen Center for the Art in addition to presenting work at the Jazz Dance World Congress. Most recently, Denice was the 2015-2016 winner of the University of South Florida's Echo Choreographic Competition and had a two-week residency at the university where he restaged his 2011 work, "raum." His new work, *Urgence*, was inspired by the drought in his hometown of Southern California as well as the recent terrorist attacks in Paris. Denice's piece explores themes that emerge in times of crisis: urgency, desperation, loss, devastation; also the sense of community and strength, hope and courage.

Originally from Brazil, [Mariana Oliveira](#) is Choreographer and Artistic Director of The Union Project Dance Company, where she's developed works in New York, Miami, Los Angeles, and Brazil, with performance venues including Lincoln Center, Tribeca Performing Arts, McCallum Theatre and most recently at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival Inside/Out Series. Oliveira has also been nominated as a finalist of the McCallum Theatre 18th Choreography Festival as well as the World Choreography Awards 2015 in the Concert Dance Category. Oliveira's new work, "Death and the Maiden," is based on the poem of that name written by German poet Matthias Claudius. It describes a conversation between both characters, the Maiden and Death, where Death takes form and allures the Maiden. In a tragic yet seductive confrontation between the main characters, this piece portrays the agony and the comfort of death, and the vulnerability and awareness of life.

The "Winning Works 2016" program also includes Joffrey Academy Artistic Director **Alexei Kremnev's** *Coco + Igor*, a new creation about artistic geniuses, and the passion of two 20th-century icons, Coco Chanel and Igor Stravinsky. The relationship between Stravinsky and Chanel parallels the innovative spirit of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* and the creation of Chanel's signature perfume, Chanel No. 5. Combining contrasting elements of avant-garde and conservatism, this work explores the journey of two creative powerhouses that leads to artistic triumph.

The Winning Works Choreographic Competition was created to recognize talented and emerging ALAANA (African, Latino(a), Asian, Arab and Native American) artists and to provide them with a platform to showcase their original and innovative work. Each of the three selected choreographers are awarded a \$5,000 stipend, given a minimum of 30 rehearsal hours and an opportunity to work closely with Joffrey Academy Co-Artistic Directors, [Alexei Kremnev](#) and [Anna Reznik](#).

"The Joffrey is honored to recognize the country's most promising diverse choreographers and provide this opportunity to set their works on dancers at the cusp of their professional careers," said **Ashley Wheeler, Artistic Director**. "It is fitting that as we celebrate our 60th anniversary, we continue to move forward with the vision of our founder Robert Joffrey by showcasing new work from emerging choreographers."

"Winning Works is an example of our commitment to nurturing and empowering the diverse voices and talent of young choreographers," said **Greg Cameron, Executive Director**. "Joffrey celebrates the diversity of our dancers, students and choreographers and it is an honor to provide these three immensely talented artists with a platform to engage new audiences in partnership with the MCA."

"This exemplary project raises these innovative choreographers and the exquisite Joffrey Academy dancers to a new level, and MCA Chicago is thrilled to once again join The Joffrey in staging the performances," said **Peter Taub, MCA Chicago Director of Performance Programs**. "It is certain to be a memorable audience experience in the intimate setting of the MCA theater."

"The Joffrey Ballet's Winning Works program encourages a creative exchange of ideas, fostering exploration of new ideas and providing opportunities to experience a wide continuum of dance and movement disciplines," said **Stephanie Martinez, 2015 Winning Works Choreographer**.

Ticket Information

Tickets for "Winning Works 2016" at the MCA Stage are \$24 and available for purchase at the MCA's official Box Office located at 220 East Chicago Ave., by telephone at 312-397-4010, or online at www.mcachicago.org.

About the Joffrey Academy Trainees and Joffrey Studio Company

The Trainee Program is a rigorous program with an internationally recognized reputation for excellence which gives students the skills needed to launch their careers into the professional world. Academy Alumni have danced with companies around the world, including The Joffrey Ballet, American Ballet Theater, New York City Ballet, Dresden Semperoper and many more. The Joffrey Studio Company is a scholarship program of the Joffrey Academy, comprised of 10 outstanding students at the cusp of their professional careers. The individualized training and performance opportunities provided by the Joffrey Studio Company offers dancers exceptional insight into the life of a professional dancer and pushes dancers to realize their full artistic and technical potential.

For more information on the Academy Trainees of The Joffrey Ballet, the Joffrey Studio Company, or other programs at the Academy of Dance, Official School of The Joffrey Ballet, please visit joffrey.org/academy

The Joffrey Ballet is grateful for the support of its Winning Works Sponsor, The Edward and Lucy R. Minor Family Foundation, and to its Joffrey Academy of Dance Sponsor, Athletico.

About MCA Stage

MCA Stage is a nationally recognized presenter of contemporary theater, dance, music, and multimedia performances. Featuring leading performers from around the globe, including Chicago's innovative artists, MCA Stage is one of the most active interdisciplinary performing arts presenters in the US, located within the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. Visit mcachicago.org to learn more.

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