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Dance Company Brings Unique Perspective to Story of Helen Keller

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Dance Company Brings Unique Perspective to Story of Helen Keller

Thodos Dance Chicago to perform Oct. 18 at Ford Center, also sets community outreach programs

OCTOBER 14, 2015 BY [NATHAN WEBER](#)



Thodos Dance Chicago will bring its spirited and contemporary modern dance style to the Ford Center for a Sunday (Oct. 18) afternoon performance.

OXFORD, Miss. – The Thodos Dance Chicago company will bring its acclaimed contemporary and modern dance style to the University of Mississippi for a performance Sunday (Oct. 18) at the Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts.

General admission tickets to the 3 p.m. show are \$20 and can be purchased at <http://fordcenter.org> or at the UM Box office inside the Student Union.

The members of the dance troupe also plan to involve the community in several special outreach programs.

"We are excited to welcome such a wonderful dance company to the Ford Center for the Performing Arts," said Kate Meacham, Ford Center marketing director. "They are a little different than other companies in what they bring to performances."

The company, founded in 1992 by Melissa Thodos, is described as having an athletic and beautiful style. It has been called "an inventive troupe in the modern dance scene," with all its members holding degrees in dance education, and they have the ability to teach at various education levels.

At its performance in Oxford, the troupe's first piece will feature the acted-out story-ballet, "A Light in the Dark: The Story of Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan." Thodos Dance Chicago's second act will focus on original performances.

The performance is expected to be sublime in its portrayal of the Keller story, Meacham said. While many people are aware of the story of Keller and Sullivan through the popular play and movie, "The Miracle Worker," audiences will be able to see the remarkable relationship between the teacher, Sullivan, and her special pupil, Helen Keller, in a refreshingly new perspective through dance.

"The audience has a chance to see the subject matter in a different way," Meacham said. "The performance is able to extend past theme and emotion that is sometimes lost in words."

The Dance Touring Initiative program, funded by a grant from South Arts in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, allows the Ford Center to bring companies such as Thodos to Oxford for extended residencies. For this weekend tour, Thodos will help educate students through modern dance and also work with vision- and hearing-disabled groups.

"Before the company's performance on Sunday, they will have a 'touch tour' at 1:30 p.m., in which individuals with vision and hearing disabilities, as well as any other disabilities, will be able to go onstage and take a tour of the set with the cast," Meacham said. "We urge any group in the area that deals with special needs individuals to contact us if they would be interested in this tour."

All members of the ensemble learned American Sign Language so they can engage with hearing-disabled patrons, Meacham said.

During this extended residence, company members will visit Lafayette Elementary School on Friday morning (Oct. 16), followed by an extended lecture and demonstration on the UM campus for communications science students.

That afternoon, members of the troupe will travel to Tupelo to conduct a workshop at the Lee County Juvenile Detention Center.

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OXFORD, Miss. – Peer recognition is a rewarding experience for anyone, but University of Mississippi researcher Amir Mehrara Molan was elated when an article he co-authored recently received the Most Cited Paper Award at the 102nd Transportation Research Board meeting in the nation's capital. The International Journal of Transportation Science and Technology presented the civil engineering

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OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy's new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying "thank you." "It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to

The next day, Thodos will offer a master class and beginner class at the Ford Center studio for dance students. These classes allow dancers, whether novices or experts, to go through a workshop where they can learn the choreography and concepts of modern dance from the company's professionals.

"Thodos Dance Chicago will provide a unique experience to the Ford Center audience and the university campus," Meacham said. "The Ford Center is trying to remove the boundaries general audiences have when it comes to accessing arts. We are trying to educate and engage the audience with a group and performance they might not regularly be exposed to."

Anyone interested in participating in the touch tour should call Meacham at 662-915-6502.

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