

# **PROGRAM NOTES**

**TEATRO CRDANCE: MAY 10-11, 2025, 7:30PM**  
**MARTHA GRAHAM STUDIO THEATER, 55 BETHUNE STREET, NY 10014**  
**2025 SEASON PREMIERE**

**ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/CHOREOGRAPHER/PRODUCER: CATERINA RAGO**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: CHERYL KAPLAN**

**LIGHTING: DESIGNER: JOSHUA MONROE**  
**STAGE + PRODUCTION MANAGER: CAYLIN MCGLYNN**

Running time: 90 minutes with Intermission

><

## **I. CRDANCE: ALTA MAREA, ACT I, 2024**

**DURATION: 37:00**

**CHOREOGRAPHER: CATERINA RAGO**

**DANCERS: ROSE BARBANTAN, MICAH MCKEE, AMINA KONATÉ, ANTONIO LEONE,**  
**CARA MCMANUS, CATERINA RAGO, JACOB GLENDENNING**

**MUSIC:** *Silentium (Tabula Rasa)*, 2000; *Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten*, 1977 by Arvo Pärt; *Dance for Me Wallis*, 2011; *Mothers*, 2016; *Exhibition*, 2016; *Charms*, 2012; *Six Hours*, 2012 by Abel Korzeniowski.

**PRODUCTION DESIGN: PIERPAOLO BISLERI, FABIEN CAPÉLAN**

**COSTUME DESIGN: MICHELLE DI PIERNO**

**ALTA MAREA** is a contemporary ballet created by Choreographer Caterina Rago that re-imagines the legend of Cilla, a fisherman's daughter, who fell hopelessly in love with a sailor lost at sea off the coast of San Lucido, Italy. The ballet is not a re-enactment, but uses the myth, as referenced by Homer and Virgil, to deliver a volatile and apocalyptic new work that speaks to the uncertainties of our time. Act I delivers highly energetic and peripatetic cycles of movement, endlessly dividing and escalating. In its fury and beauty, **ALTA MAREA** provokes a search, not so much for a lost love, but for answers to the turbulence in the world. **TEATRO CRDANCE** audiences will be transfixed by this confrontational and seductive work rooted in Italy. **ALTA MAREA** debuted at the KNJ Theater in New York in 2024. To learn more, go to [www.crdance.org](http://www.crdance.org).

**Caterina Rago** is the Founding Artistic Director, Choreographer and Principal Dancer of **CRDANCE**. Born in San Lucido, Italy and now based in New York, Rago has received commissions from Steffi Nossen Dance Foundation, Accademia Nazionale di Danza, Ailey/Fordham University, Marymount Manhattan College and Peridance Center. She joined the Martha Graham Dance Company in 2009 after completing its Professional Training Program and remained with the company until 2012. Rago serves as a regisseur of Graham's works, restaging repertory at universities throughout the United States and Europe. Her reconstructions include *Panorama*, 1935 for Accademia Nazionale di Danza at Rome's *Soirées Dans*, *Acts of Light: Ritual to the Sun*, 1981 and *Dancing Movie Stars Festival* in collaboration with Fondazione Roma Tre Teatro Palladium, as well as Karole Armitage's *American Dream* for the *Ravello Festival*. Rago was named an Emerging Choreographer by MET Dance, Houston. As Choreographer and Principal Dancer for **CRDANCE**, Rago's work has been performed at New York Live Arts, the Martha Graham Theater, KNJ Theater and Teatro de la Ciudad Francisco de Paula Toro in Mexico. Rago teaches Choreography and Dance in the USA and Europe in educational programs from **TDM/Tecniche Di Danza Moderna** and **TEATRO CRDANCE** to the Joffrey Ballet School and Peridance Center where she is on the faculty.

**CRDANCE** is a bold force in modern dance, reshaping the boundaries and experience of dance today. Founded in 2007 by Artistic Director Caterina Rago, this Italian and American company, known for its visceral movement language, honors modern dance tradition while forging a new platform for performance, dance education and its research. Under the leadership of Caterina Rago and Executive Director Cheryl Kaplan, **CRDANCE** has expanded its presence across the United States and internationally through its extensive performance repertoire, educational initiatives and global collaborations with artists. The newly launched program, **TEATRO CRDANCE**, cultivates emerging and established dancers and choreographers, transforming **CRDANCE**'s mission to create a hub for artistic exchange. **TEATRO CRDANCE** is not only a monthly performance series, but a vehicle for collaboration that takes dance to new directions through interdisciplinary dialogue, mentorship and cross-cultural projects. Committed to artistic and technical excellence, **CRDANCE** also nurtures emerging talent through **TECNICHE DI DANZA MODERNA (TDM)**, its educational division, offering immersive master classes in modern dance technique and repertoire. Honoring the legacy of modern dance as it dares to re-imagine its future, **CRDANCE** is proudly at the intersection of tradition and change, mapping new ideas onto the history of dance. To learn more, go to [www.crdance.org](http://www.crdance.org)

><

## **II. NAI-NI CHEN: WAY OF FIVE FIRE, 2006**

**DURATION:** 9:00

**CHOREOGRAPHER:** NAI-NI CHEN

**DANCERS:** SARAH BOTERO, YUCHIN (KIKI) TSENG, MADELEINE LEE,  
ESTEBAN SANTAMARIA, CALEB BAKER

**MUSIC:** *Desert Capriccio* by Tan Dun, from the film and original soundtrack *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, performed by YoYo Ma and Glen Velez. Velez and Tan Dun collaborated with Nai-Ni Chen.

**COSTUME DESIGN:** Nai-Ni Chen

**WAY OF FIVE FIRE, 2006**, commissioned by Towson State University in Maryland in 2006, is an exploration of the ancient Chinese theory that the cycles of creation and destruction correspond to the ever-changing phenomena of nature. The "Five" refers to the five elements: wood, water, fire, metal, and earth. The cycles are also used to mark the passage of time. 2025 is the year of the Water Tiger. Each element, as part of the forces of nature, creates another in harmony and destroys another in conflict. This exploration focuses on the element of fire that, for example, can be used to extract metal or be destroyed by water.

**CHOREOGRAPHER: NAI-NI CHEN.** Nai-Ni Chen, (1959-2021), was a recipient of multiple choreographic fellowships and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts and New Jersey State Council on the Arts to the Bessie. A legendary master Director and Choreographer, Nai-Ni Chen built a diverse repertoire of over 90 original dances that toured to major venues across the USA and appeared in international contemporary dance festivals in 12 countries. Born and raised in Taiwan, Nai-Ni Chen was a cultural bearer whose work crosses cultural boundaries. Each of her dances reflect her personal vision as an immigrant American female artist with deep roots in Chinese culture, creating new works that reflect the current issues with global influences. Many of her works were developed in collaboration with renowned contemporary artists from Jason Kao Hwang, Rokafella, Kwikstep and the Ahn Trio to Huang Ruo, Kenji Bunch, Glen Velez and Joan La Barbara.

**ABOUT NAI-NI CHEN DANCE COMPANY:** Established in 1988, Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company is based in Fort Lee, NJ, now under the Artistic Direction of Greta Campo and Executive Director Andy Chiang. The Company is a leading force in creating innovative cultural experiences that capture the hope, resilience, and energy of the immigrant journey. Each performance sheds light on the struggles, triumphs, challenges and joys of this experience. Through its productions, the Company fosters cross-cultural understanding while addressing important themes of identity, authenticity, and equality. This is the Company's first collaboration with **TEATRO CRDANCE**. To learn more, go to [www.nainichen.org](http://www.nainichen.org)

~ INTERMISSION ~

### III. ABARUKAS: THE BURNING OF LADY MACBETH, 2024

**DURATION:** 17:00

**CHOREOGRAPHER:** YOSHITO SAKURABA

**DANCERS FROM THE JOFFREY BALLET SCHOOL:** EMMA WILTON, ISABELLA KRATZ, JADYN BUTTERFIELD, VICTORIA GREGG, MADELINE CORDRAY, PEARL MADNICK, PIPER JO WHITT, TESSA SIEBER. REHEARSAL ASSISTANT: DANI AVILA

**MUSIC:** *In Hidden Mountains, 2020* by Lustmord; *Coffee Frother, Staples Center, 2021* by Chris Bernstead; *Blood Moon, 2022* by Two Fingers; *Defeated Clown, 2019* by Hildur Guonadotti; *Fair is Foul, 2022* by Carter Barwell.

**COSTUME DESIGN:** YOSHITO SAKURABA

**THE BURNING OF LADY MACBETH, 2024:** Choreographed by Yoshito Sakuraba as a commission he received from the Joffrey Ballet School, *THE BURNING OF MACBETH* is a visceral dance work that reveals the fragmented psyche of Lady Macbeth. The work unravels her descent into guilt, ambition and madness. Through stark physicality and haunting imagery, the piece explores the psychological toll of power and complicity, capturing the inferno that will consume her from within. Stark lighting, sharp gestures and moments of eerie stillness evoke a world suspended between reality and hallucination, where whispers of the past bleed into the present. This work strips away narrative conventions to focus on emotional truth to portray Lady Macbeth, not as a villain, but as a deeply tormented soul spiraling into oblivion.

**CHOREOGRAPHER: YOSHITO SAKURABA.** An award-winning Choreographer from Japan now based in New York, Yoshito Sakuraba's work has been presented throughout the USA at venues from the Joyce Theater and BAM Fisher to Jacob's Pillow, as well as and internationally in Germany, Italy, Spain, and Israel. Sakuraba has received the Audience Award at Masdanza in Spain and was selected for NW Dance Project's International Choreographic Competition and Whim W'Him's Shindig. He has created works for companies such as Bayerisches Staatsballett, NW Dance Project, Whim W'Him Seattle Contemporary Dance, Louisville Ballet, Ballet Arkansas, Eisenhower Dance Detroit, Houston Contemporary Dance Company, Nimbus Dance and more. A dedicated educator, Yoshito Sakuraba has taught and set works for the Martha Graham School and the Joffrey Ballet School, Steps on Broadway, Alvin Ailey/Fordham University, Marymount Manhattan College, UNCSCA and Barnard College.

**ABOUT ABARUKAS:** ABARUKAS is a New York based contemporary dance company under the Artistic Direction of Choreographer Yoshito Sakuraba, founded in 2012. Rooted in Japanese aesthetics and the philosophy of transformation through simplicity, ABARUKAS crafts emotionally charged, visually arresting works that combine physical rigor with poetic abstraction. The Company's performances traverse the space between chaos and stillness, weaving theatricality and layered narratives with striking imagery to create deep psychological and emotional landscapes. With a commitment to collaboration and storytelling beyond language, ABARUKAS invites audiences into haunting, introspective worlds where movement becomes a metaphor for memory, vulnerability and the unspoken. This is the Company's first collaboration with **TEATRO CRDANCE**. To learn more, go to [www.abarukas.org](http://www.abarukas.org)

><

**TEATRO CRDANCE GIVES SPECIAL THANKS.** Caterina Rago and TEATRO CRDANCE is grateful to the extraordinary individuals who provide vital and generous support to our mission of expanding the art of dance, including audiences like you. Special Thanks to Rose Barbantan, Jacob Glendenning, Cheryl Kaplan, Amina Konaté, Antonio Leone, Micah Mckee, Cara McManus, Doreen Chiang, Holland Putney and to Greta Campo, Andy Chiang and Yoshito Sakuraba. Activities of the Martha Graham Studio Theater are made possible in part by generous support from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

><

**SUPPORT TEATRO CRDANCE AT ANY LEVEL.** Support **TEATRO CRDANCE**, New York's monthly dance series, by going to [www.crdance.org](http://www.crdance.org) and click **SUPPORT**. Or send a check today to: *CRDANCE Company, LLC, CATERINA RAGO, 25-76 41st Street, Astoria, NY 11103 #1D*  
We are committed to creating works and teaching programs with historic and contemporary value. We respectfully ask that you make a donation, big or small, to **TEATRO CRDANCE**. Our work provides educational and artistic value to dancers at all stages of their careers in the USA and internationally, making a significant impact on audiences, like you, worldwide. Thank you.

**PROGRAM NOTES** *Written/Edited by © Cheryl Kaplan, 2025. All rights reserved.*

**PHOTOGRAPHY** *Courtesy © Caterina Rago Dance, 2025. All rights reserved.*