

# Jessica Miller Tomlinson

Dancer- Choreographer- Teacher- Ballet Mistress

“Choreographer Jessica Miller Tomlinson, a 15-year veteran of the Chicago dance scene, opened the program with *Berseluk-Beluk*, a duet infused with detailed gesture and intertwining partnership. Aside from a solo at the start, dancers Lauren Reed and Victoria Rumzis rarely lose contact with one another, exacting a precise stream of demonstrated causality in this gratifying offering. The work’s title is an Indonesian phrase which means intricate. The last and most famous of Paganini’s caprices for solo violin, while not at all Indonesian, echoes the complexities of the movement.” - **Nichelle Suzanne Strzepak: thedancedish Texas October 2019**

“Of the eight dances, Jessica Miller Tomlinson’s “Bells” stands out: a duet for the long and lanky Hoisington and equally leggy Cihlar. It’s a rather dreamy partnership, beginning in silence and only occasionally deviating from unison dancing as they swirl in and out of Tomlinson’s intricate patterns and lifts, oscillating between reckless abandon and gorgeous lines.” - **Lauren Warneke : The Chicago Tribune June 2019**

“The main stage performances kick off at 8 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 27, with Shift Dance co-directors Jacqueline M. García, Nevada, and Kelsey Paschich presenting three new works, including “Atuona,” a newly commissioned work by Chicago-based artist Jessica Miller Tomlinson. “Atuona” is an abstract trio for three distinct female dancers, loosely inspired by the work of French post-Impressionist artist Paul Gauguin.” - **Adrian Gomez: Albuquerque Journal September 2018**

“Opening the evening is a new work from Jessica Miller Tomlinson called “Speak to Me Only with Your Eyes.” Tomlinson’s aesthetic waxes and wanes between super-serious and quirky wit; “Speak to Me” is a healthy blend of the two, a grungy-hippy group dance performed in jeans and T-shirts to music by Led Zeppelin, “Black Country Woman” and “The Rain Song.” What’s a grungy-hippy, you ask? Remember the ‘90s, when bell-bottoms came back, ripped shirts and flannel were still in, nonchalance ruled the roost and life was all about the music? It’s that. Tomlinson’s cast of three women and two men dance with an aloof, be-cool nature, switching partners willy-nilly, unemotionally mouthing the music and intermingling aqueous dancing with sharp, spastic gestures.” - **Lauren Warneke: The Chicago Tribune September 2018**

“One of the strongest pieces came from Jessica Miller Tomlinson, who has been building a name for herself as an independent choreographer over the last several years, having made works for Visceral Dance, Dance in the Parks, and most recently the “Dance For Life” fundraiser coming up in August. The maturity of her voice stood out in “Berseluk-Beluk,” an ensemble piece featuring lyrical, complex partnering and a stunning moment where the nine dancers form a living sculpture, inspired by Tomlinson’s visit to Bali.” - **Sharon Hoyer: Newcity Stage July 2017**

“**Rebellious Reflection**” by **Jessica Miller Tomlinson** starring **Paige Fraser**: Miller Tomlinson says her hope “Is to innovate without self-consciousness and to be new and new again”. Fraser was a veritable avante goddess of electricity, very hot, very rhythmic, in this percussive-driven and humorous joyful dance.” - **Debra Davy: Splash Magazine May 2017 ( Visceral Solus)**

"Berseluk-Beluk", by Jessica Miller Tomlinson was a 10-dancer piece performed under smoke-filled light on a dark stage. Dancers in gold and white toga gear were wrapped around each other in ambitious modern duets, in a line as an elongated troupe, forming visionary tableaux. The music was clever and romantic, the performance lustrous and elegant. "

**Debra Davy: Splash Magazine July 2017**

"Thodos veterans Jessica Miller Tomlinson and John Cartwright have offered up multiple works during their tenures, each developing a unique voice through the years. Tomlinson in particular has honed her keen and quirky aesthetic thanks in large part to "New Dances," and this season's work, "Berseluk-Beluk," is no exception — at least for its first half. Niccolo Paganini's recognizable theme and variations, "Caprice No. 24," is the perfect accompaniment for the detailed, pizzicato gestures in the opening solo and duet of "Berseluk-Beluk," an Indonesian phrase meaning "intricate." But then it dissolves into just another dance: a mass of tangled-up arms and legs as each of the large cast takes turns being partnered by the rest, set to music that sounds like Philip Glass (in this case it's actually the Italian composer Ezio Bosso)." - **Lauren Warneke: The Chicago Tribune July 2017**

"Characters of sort also emerged in Tomlinson's mysterious, evocative R.O.C.B. Set to a particularly piercing recording of Heinrich Biber's Passaglia, this was not an easy or pleasant dance- press materials suggested it originated in part from the concept of hunger or hunger + anger. But it was a pleasure to watch thanks to its musicality, muscular use of torque and odd choreographic fillips." - **Laura Molzahn : The Chicago Tribune July 2016.**

" Also appearing in her own work is veteran dancer and choreographer Jessica Miller Tomlinson in R.O.C.B. Tomlinson usually knocks it out of the park, and R.O.C.B. is no exception. Lots of serious dancing set to Heinrich Biber's minor key Passaglia might come across as meh if not for Tomlinson's droll references to hunger. Dancer Anna Long starts by biting her finger, and the whole group degrades into a 'hangry' abyss. The final moment, the music's only major chord invoking the dancers to lick their arms, is especially satisfying." -**Lauren Warneke: See Chicago Dance 2016**

" Something To Do With Five", Choreographed by Jessica Miller Tomlinson, this last work was this reviewer's favorite piece in this series, starring five male dancers who performed a depression era modern spiritual lament and ballet, absolutely beautiful in footwork and overall execution. "- **Debra Davy: Splash Magazine 2015**

"Jessica Miller Tomlinson's quintet, "Something To Do With Five", was the only all-male work. Going beyond that, she chose old-time recordings, by the likes of Lead Belly and Casey Bill Weldon, of songs on the borderline between familiar and foreign: Black Betty, the chilling In the pines. Best Though was the homespun, utterly unpretentious choreography, whose cascades of surprising, mysterious details suggested a meaning just out of reach."- **Laura Molzahn: The Chicago Tribune July 2015**

"Tomlinson's sensual piece, Entwined Winds, set to an exotic, vaguely Arabic sounding original score by Kevin Keller, brought to mind the ever-shifting topography of both sand dunes and the emotional landscapes of human interaction, with one of its five dancers perching herself on a small sandbox-like installation with three sculptural forms."--**Hedy Weiss:**

**Chicago Sun Times July 2013**

"McDonald and Tomlinson's 93 83, declares plainly that it's a 'movement investigation'. 93 83 is unwieldy. But it's also firmly out there on its own. The dancers create a parade of strange images, from two main motifs. It doesn't quite all cohere but it's a fun ride while it lasts."-- **Zac Whittenburg, Trailor pilot July 2012**

"The most curious and chameleonic Thodos dancer continues to be Jessica Miller Tomlinson, who creates an entire movement universe from scratch for almost every dance she makes. Where most choreographers tinker with and refine their formulas, Tomlinson wears eras and schools like separates. Her latest, *In Tongues*, is an homage to David Byrne...that's frequently funny and, praise be, subtle. "--**TimeOut Chicago, July 2011**

"Her Piece, "In Tongues", proved to be one of the quirkiest escapades on the lineup. Using music of the Talking Heads, she not only delved into the wacky, pulse-altering rhythms and mindset of that group and maestro, David Byrne, but suggested its surreality from the start,"--**Hedy Weiss: Chicago Sun Times, July 2011.**

"One danger in assembling so many samples is that they tend to blur after a point, though Tomlinson's gifts indeed include a stylistic variety and a sharp sense of entertainment. Her rough-house duet "Crimes D'Amour," her oddball and extraterrestrial vision in last year's winner "Forget What You Came For?" and her slightly surreal dance theater to Otis Redding look nothing like each other, though all three are beguiling. "D'Amour," seen here in excerpt, is a robust-plus duet, ingeniously set to Led Zeppelin and more combative than romantic. Here we see Stewart the dancer, compelling and tough, ably matched by her partner, Charlie Cutler, burly and barrel-shaped, more biker-like than Romeo, which plays right into Tomlinson's energized, earthy zeitgeist. "Let Me In," to Redding, features seven dancers and an elaborate theatrical set-up, involving door frames as sets and idiosyncratic evocations of pop dance. Tomlinson keeps redeploying subsets of the group for unpredictable combinations, some of the women serving as a floozy-like chorus for a time and Justin David Sears occasionally a Redding stand-in. " ---**Chicago Tribune: Sid Smith, JMT/JLS Choreography June 2010.**

"Tomlinson's work is formally rigorous and full of detail" – **TimeOut Chicago: Zac Whittenburg, JMT/JLS Choreography June 2010**

"Jessica Miller Tomlinson's Architecture: Splintered and Cracked, an intellectual Rubik's cube in movement, with unexpected shifts of weight and composition" –**Chicago Dance Examiner: Lucia Mauro, 2009**

"Jessica Miller Tomlinson is kind of choreographer du jour after winning last month's feisty competition, " The A.W.A.R.D. Show", at the Dance Center of Columbia College. Her new work, Architecture: Splintered and Cracked unveiled over the weekend as part of Thodos Dance Chicago's New Dances 2009, suggests that success is no fluke. Mysterious and unnerving, set to the music of Dmitri Shostakovich and Alfred Schnittke, "Architecture" is otherworldly and discordant, peppered with inventive, even kinky, gestures, some of which explode and quickly disappear. It never relents in commanding attention or tickling the curiosity. Darkly lit and sere, "Architecture" makes imaginative use of classic yet perplexing choral arrangements of its eight dancers." ---**Chicago Tribune: Sid Smith, 2009**

"...her choreographic work demonstrated why she was singled out. Her piece, with its complex, decidedly original patterning, and its stark abstract geometric movements, melded ideally with her chosen music., and revealed an artist of daring and maturity.

---**Chicago Sun Times: Hedy Weiss, 2009**

"Miller Tomlinson's Forget What You Came For? a visual body- percussive exercise in tormented voyeurism. A watcher seated on a trunk moved closer to the other dancers against a blur of muscularly cut bodies." –**Chicago Tribune: Lucia Mauro, October 2007**