



Chanel Celebrates Five Years Of The BAAND Together Dance Festival At Lincoln Center



The New York City Ballet for BAAND Together Dance Festival
Courtesy of CHANEL

The Rite of Spring is one of Igor Stravinsky's greatest legacies, yet that nearly almost wasn't the case. Composed for Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes and choreographed by Vaslav Nijinsky, when the show debuted in 1913, it was instantly met with controversy. But when Coco Chanel met Diaghilev, she became his friend and costumer designer, and eventually his patron when he was unable to fund the revival of *The Rite of Spring*, allowing the show to be revived at the end of 1920.

Coco Chanel immersed herself in the world of dance beyond providing financial support, taking dance lessons with Isadora Duncan. Her passion for dance lives on through her maison. Today marks the opening night of the BAAND Together Dance Festival, in which five iconic dance companies come together for the fifth year, a famously auspicious number for Chanel. BAAND Together Dance Festival began in 2021 when the New York City arts scene was starting to return to the stage after being ravaged by the pandemic. The festival marked a new form of collaboration to help spark the return of live performances.

The American Ballet Theatre for BAAND Together Dance Festival
Courtesy of CHANEL

"Five is a very important number for Chanel, but also it represents five years of coming out of this extraordinary time for this city, out of a pandemic, and what was not just a silver lining, but this development of a real relationship that happened in a very dark time for the city," says Shanta Thake, Ehrenkranz Chief Artistic Officer of Lincoln Center. "These five incredible, illustrious companies coming together and making something bigger than the sum of its parts is one of the most inspirational events."

The festival is an ongoing reminder of how powerful it can be when people join forces for good. "These five dance companies in the middle of the pandemic were leaning on each other in new ways, as many of us were, and thinking about how as running companies of dancers when we're not allowed to be together and near each other, sharing ideas practices and how to move through this time, and they formed this camaraderie," Thake



says. "Jon Nakagawa, who was on the Lincoln Center team, found out about this and reached out and asked, 'could you imagine actually performing together beyond this conversation?' They took that and ran with it. This idea of coming together in this way was important for all of the leaders of these companies to show what was possible when they came together, and to be able to celebrate together."

Running through August 2, each dance company will perform a program curated collaboratively by the artistic directors as part of Lincoln Center's Summer for the City. The Dance Theatre of Harlem will perform "Nyman String Quartet No. 2" by Robert Garland, New York City Ballet will perform "After the Rain (Pas de Deux)" by Christopher Wheeldon, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater will perform "Many Angels" by Lar Lubovitch, American Ballet Theatre will perform "Midnight Pas de Deux" by Susan Jaffe and Ballet Hispánico will perform "House of Mad'moiselle" by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa.

BAAND Together Dance Festival has grown and evolved since its inaugural performance, which was held outdoors to accommodate restrictions during the pandemic. "We're very fortunate to be in the space of our friends at New York City Ballet, at the David H. Koch Theater," Thake says. "We moved it indoors because we want to make sure we never have any weather cancelations when we have these companies together. The other thing is the deepening of the relationship with Chanel, who's been supporting this from the very beginning, moving with us—no pun intended—towards all of these choices of how and where we meet the audience. It's become such a fan favorite, staff favorite and dancer favorite, to see all of these companies together because of the depth of these relationships over five years."

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for BAAND Together Dance Festival
Courtesy of CHANEL

For the first time, this season the audience can get the behind-the-scenes scoop on the on-stage collaboration between all five dance companies during a free panel discussion on July 29 at 5PM in the David Rubenstein Atrium featuring the artistic leaders of all five companies, moderated by Thake. "To actually hear artistic directors in conversation with one another, you see this camaraderie come out in a different kind of way," Thake says. "What I love about these artistic directors is that they're also New Yorkers. You also get to see them as people who are so invested in this city, and because dance happens at such a young age, and so many of them grew up here, learning here at these various schools and forums, this idea of what it means to be in New York and dance is going to come through in this panel."

To reach audiences and dance lovers in new ways, free dance workshops will be offered for all ages and abilities. "Every day of the festival, a different company brings their expertise in education and programming to the David Geffen Hall lobby, where anyone can participate in these dance workshops," Thake says. "Another through line of these companies that they all have beautiful, big education programs. It's a large part of what they do. It's not an aside. To be able to make sure that we have room to showcase both of them, and for audience members to be able to come and watch the performance at night, but also be able to dance yourself and join us on the dance floor after the performance, [illustrates] this idea that dance really does belong to all of us. Freedom of movement and the power of being able to use your body in space is one that that we feel is necessary to activate differently in this time."

The performers of the BAAND Together Dance Festival
Courtesy of CHANEL

A cornerstone of the BAAND Together Dance Festival is making dance more accessible to all, so to honor that effort tickets are available on a choose-what-you-pay basis (the suggested ticket price is \$35). "It's amazing to have audiences walk into that theater and have this experience in one of the best theaters in the world, and choose what you pay



ticketing and free tickets, and see these great companies together,” Thake says. “A lot of people don't think culture belongs to them. It's part of our role as a civic cultural institution to make sure that everyone in the city and beyond knows that art is a public good. We have this opportunity in the summers to open up all of these different culturally rich bridges to anyone that comes through, and to be able to see this height of human expression. We want to make sure everyone has that ability. We also do that through the addition of ASL to performances and performances where we have audio description, making sure that the Lincoln Center is a place for everyone.”

Ballet Hispánico for BAAND Together Dance Festival
Courtesy of CHANEL

As the official partner of the festival, Chanel makes all of this possible. “Chanel is such an incredibly generous partner for this festival over five years,” Thake says. “They continue to deepen their relationship to dance and the performing arts, and you see it also in the history of this house, and Gabrielle Chanel's commitment to dance and freedom of movement, and this storytelling around it. When you think of Chanel, you think of this femininity, but also strength. There's a strength associated with the house and you cannot look at the athleticism of the dancers and not think the same thing with these beautiful movements, but also the unbelievable strength of these athletes onstage. Lincoln Center is a long-standing idea and ballet and Chanel is as well, so when you come together around the shared idea of something that's as old as time itself, of people coming together, expressing themselves through movement, it's always a beautiful process.”

The Dance Theatre of Harlem for BAAND Together Dance Festival
Courtesy of CHANEL

Thanks to the BAAND Together Dance Festival, both Chanel and Lincoln Center achieve their shared goal of making dance accessible to all. “The most rewarding for me is watching this audience come in and maybe they have seen Alvin Ailey before, but they didn't even know that Ballet Hispanico existed, or they are part of the school of Ballet Hispanico, but have never seen ballet with the American Ballet Theater,” Thake says. “Watching people understand what's available to them in this city, in this world, that there are all of these different forms of expression that are here in this incredible city, I just love that. I love watching somebody come in with a tutu and then stopping by the Alvin Ailey desk on the way out to find out more. The hope is exactly that, that the more people learn about these different forums and companies, the more they continue to expand their own curiosity about humanity at large.”

