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## **CHICAGO HUMAN RHYTHM PROJECT 2019 STRATEGIC PLAN LAUNCHES NEW LEADERSHIP, 30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY SUMMER FEST**

### **CHRP Appoints Jumaane Taylor Artistic Director of 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Rhythm World Festival**

#### **America's Oldest Festival of American Tap Embarks on New Path**

Chicago Human Rhythm Project is paving a post-pandemic path forward following its 2019 strategic plan with Jumaane Taylor leading a re-imagined 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary tap festival - *Rhythm World*.

[Chicago Human Rhythm Project](#) (CHRP) welcomes visionary performer, choreographer and teacher **Jumaane Taylor** as Artistic Director of its thirtieth annual summer festival of American tap, *Rhythm World*. A native Chicagoan, Taylor and CHRP's relationship spans two decades, first as a Tap Scholar and subsequently as a teacher, performer and director. Taylor, who began his training at the Sammy Dyer School of the Theatre, won multiple, consecutive scholarships to Rhythm World as a young dancer and has since earned acclaim as the choreographer and director of "Supreme Love" as well as awards from 3Arts and Chicago Dancemakers Forum and as an adjunct faculty member at Roosevelt University.

When asked to describe his plans for the festival, Taylor responded:

"I'm honored to direct the Chicago Human Rhythm Project's anniversary festival. I learned that tap dance or hoofing was my way of life because of the tap dancers I met at CHRP's Rhythm World, and in Chicago at the Sammy Dyer School of the Theatre. I am continuously learning about our art form while directing this festival from my experience as a Chicago tap dancer. I am only interested in truth, and the truth is I love tap, so I am determined to expose that. I am also thankful to the masters, scholars and all that represent what is true! I believe now is a time for the tap community to move forward in true positivity. We at CHRP are advocating re-education, so that we the community can continue to advocate the true definition of tap. I look forward to us expressing ourselves in the name of our art form, honoring it to its proper degree for generations to come."

According to CHRP's Co-founder, Lane Alexander:

"Jumaane will be CHRP's 6<sup>th</sup> festival director following in the footsteps of other world-renowned artists Jason Samuels Smith, Dianne "Lady Di" Walker, Derick K. Grant and Dani Borak. But, while previous directors have worked primarily within the existing Rhythm World framework, Jumaane has already moved in new directions by changing the formats of both the education and performance programs. He is also bringing in a fresh ensemble of artists that I think will surprise our audiences with post-modern and traditional takes on the art form."

CHRP Board Chair, Kwaku Osebreh remarked:

“Jumaane’s appointment marks a coming of age for CHRP - a young dancer who studied and excelled at the festival as a youth returns as an accomplished artist and as its leader. This is a wonderful tribute to the past teachers and our co-founders as we chart a new path forward building on their lessons.”

## **America’s Oldest Festival of American Tap Embarks on New Path**

Taylor has reimagined this year’s festival to span three weeks, July 26 – August 15, with each week featuring four emerging, established and legendary artists from around the world in intimate education programs and performances. New programs include the American Tap Conservatory and the Choreographic Residency. Artists making their Rhythm World debut as teachers and performers include Ivery Wheeler (Los Angeles), Karissa Royster (San Antonio/New York), Ian Berg (Chicago/Boston), Maurice Chestnut (New York), Christina Carminucci (New York), Kaleena Miller (Minneapolis), Naomi Funaki (Tokyo/New York) and Robyn Watson (Philadelphia). Rhythm World will also feature returning artists Jason Janas (Detroit), Caleb Teicher (New York), Sarah Savelli (Cleveland, New York) and RW30AD, Jumaane Taylor (Chicago). Special guest, Brian Seibert, a noted tap historian and New York Times dance critic, features writer and author of “What the Eye Hears, A History of Tap Dancing”, will give an in-person, public lecture the third week.

The 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary festival will include performances at the Black Legislator’s Theater at the DuSable Museum of African American history (Aug 7), the Edlis Neeson Theater at the MCA/Chicago (Aug 14), Jazz Showcase (July 27, August 3 and 10) and Navy Pier’s Lake Stage (July 28). Tickets on sale June 19. Rhythm World’s education programs will take place in Chicago’s historic Fine Arts Building and include Courses and Masterclasses (July 26 – 30), Youth Tap Ensemble Conference (August 2 – 6), Choreographic Residency and Teacher Certification (August 9 – 13) and the groundbreaking American Tap Conservatory, July 26 – August 14). Registration opens May 28.

Launched in 1990, CHRP’s Rhythm World is the oldest tap festival in the United States and has become a seasonal favorite on Chicago’s cultural calendar. American tap festivals feature robust education, performance and community building programs and have served as the campfires around which the tap community has gathered for the last three decades. Almost completely shut out of the American institutional dance framework until recently, tap communities have built new institutions that represent its traditions and future. Over the last 30 years, Rhythm World has presented a host of visiting legends and masters including Fayard Nicholas, Jimmy Slyde, Danny Daniels, Gregory and Maurice Hines, Sam Weber, Dianne Walker Savion Glover as well as a Who’s Who of Chicago based artists and companies including Reggio “The Hooper” McLaughlin, *Epecially Tap Chicago*, *Rhythm Women*, *Rhythm I.S.S.*, *Steppin’ Out*, *Chicago Tap Theatre*, *M.A.D.D. Rhythms*, *Jus’ LisTeN*, *Jump Rhythm Jazz Project*, and countless others.

Rhythm World’s immersion programs have helped to train many of the world’s leading artists including MacArthur Genius, Michelle Dorrance, Jazz at Lincoln Center soloist, Jared Grimes, *Subject Matter* founder and director, Ian Berg, newly appointed RW30 Artistic Director, Jumaane Taylor and literally thousands of other students. Rhythm World performances have featured the ever-present tap soloist and jazz trio, but unique to the field, long-form works by tap repertory companies from Chicago and around the globe including Brazil’s *Vata Tap*, Tokyo’s *ArtNtap* and Spain’s *Tap Ole*. Rhythm World has convened the global tap community in Chicago for 30 years to provide a platform where Chicago-based and national-international tap artists and students can create, teach, perform, network and build a new institutional framework dedicated to authentic diversity, equity and inclusion in the dance community.

## Jumaane Taylor's Full Artistic Statement:

The Chicago Human Rhythm has strived to deliver a proper presence of artistic progressions within tap dance. For three decades we have witnessed the richness of the tap culture with CHRP, displaying a proud global community and an educated approach towards its preservation. As we share the art form, Rhythm World allows tap dancers the space and the freedom to grow and discover our own character, while learning and refining an element of percussive dance or hoofing. Those masterful players or practitioners are here to proclaim this form. From Bojangles to Gregory Hines, we carry on the traditions of tap. Rearranging a legacy of 30 years for another 30 years of legendary work.

In celebratory fashion, our festival will cover 3 different extraordinary weeks of tapping from the best. Workshops that focus on the process with product, and performances that fulfill the rhythmic expressions. These masters of tap can improvise, choreograph and direct their work onto the concert stage. Therefore, this 2021 faculty represents those types of groundbreaking art works. From the handful of tap dancers that shed like jazz musicians and create ensemble work with intention to further the craft. A powerful combination creating for our culture. Carrying on the tap traditions, these veterans are embracing mastery to share with you at Rhythm World 30.

As the new artistic director of Rhythm World, I am honored to uplift the beauty I experienced with the Chicago Human Rhythm Project. I was only 10 years old when I first auditioned for their festival scholarship, and since then I never saw tap the same. It annually included advanced technical training, all-star tap concerts and new relationships within all generations. After 3 decades I am urging to keep the growth of the tap dance art form at our forefront, accepting while being receptive of its true history. A determination to always offer a healthy experience to living righteously for this dance.

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### **Chicago Human Rhythm Project**

Chicago Human Rhythm Project (CHRP) creates community through American tap and contemporary percussive arts in world-class, innovative performance, education and outreach programs. Believing tap is to dance what jazz is to music—an American contribution to global culture—CHRP has been presenting American tap and global percussive dance for more than 30 years, evolving from a summer tap festival into the world's first, year-round presenter dedicated to foot-drumming and contemporary rhythmic expression. Central to CHRP's performance, education and community activating programs is its mission to build bridges between individuals and communities through the practice and appreciation of rhythm. Whether as part of the oldest and largest tap festival on the globe, Rhythm World; the collaborative citywide percussive dance festival, STOMPING GROUNDS; year-round education programs in Chicago Public Schools, We ALL Got Rhythm; or its shared dance/arts incubator, the American Rhythm Center (ARC), CHRP focuses on artistic excellence, innovation, authentic diversity and cultural pluralism. CHRP received an Emmy nomination for its PBS-ITVS documentary *JUBA! Master of Tap and Percussive Dance*; curated the first-ever full-length tap concert in a major theater at the Kennedy Center; has officially represented the U.S. in dance festivals in South America, Asia and Europe; and has been lauded as a pioneer in the field by the *New York Times*. Past students receiving great acclaim include, among many others, MacArthur "Genius" Michelle Dorrance, Broadway dancer and choreographer Karissa Royster, Jazz at Lincoln Center soloist Jared Grimes among many others. For information, visit [chicagotap.org](http://chicagotap.org).

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