

FOR IMAGES AND MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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WITH SEASON OPENING GALA**

May 17, 2017 – (Becket, MA) The Jacob's Pillow 85th Anniversary Season kicks off with the Season Opening Gala, the Pillow's signature fundraising event, Saturday, June 17. The event embodies the start of the summer season in the Berkshires, and features exclusive programming, unique and delicious food and drink, and plenty of dancing and live music.

Cocktail hour features pop-up performances and the U.S. debut of Toronto-based Throwdown Collective, the opening of the *Jacob's Pillow Jumps* photography exhibit in Blake's Barn, a specialty cocktail station by Methuselah Bar & Lounge, and a "Browse and Bid" marketplace silent auction.

The Gala program includes an exclusive work-in-progress performance by New York City Ballet principal dancer Sara Mearns and Festival 2015 duo Company Wang Ramirez; Miami City Ballet in *Carousel Pas de Deux* by Sir Kenneth MacMillan; and a world premiere performed by the Ballet Program students of The School at Jacob's Pillow, choreographed and set in just four days by Bruce Wells, former New York City Ballet dancer and former resident choreographer for Connecticut Ballet, Boston Ballet, and Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre.

Jacob's Pillow Director Pamela Tatge will present the 2017 Jacob's Pillow Dance Award to choreographer, performer, writer, educator, and speaker Liz Lerman in acknowledgement of her vision and outstanding contributions to the dance field. Lerman's extraordinary career over the past four decades includes a wide range of groundbreaking contemporary work. Established in 2007, the Jacob's Pillow Dance Award carries an unrestricted cash prize of \$25,000; previous recipients include the legendary choreographer Merce Cunningham; choreographer Crystal Pite; MacArthur Fellows Michelle Dorrance and Kyle Abraham; and choreographer, performer, and artistic director Camille A. Brown, among others.

Following the program in the historic Ted Shawn Theatre, guests will enjoy dinner by MAX Ultimate Catering of Boston and dancing and live music by Paul Loren & His One Night Only Band, a "soul crooner" who has performed in Nashville and Memphis, TN, and headlined at various New York City venues including Joe's Pub and Highline Ballroom. The "Browse and Bid" auction will be open throughout the event and will be available online; items are available for preview and online bidding opens June 1 at biddingforgood.com/jacobspillow2017. Auction items include a limited edition drawing by Maira Kalman, a James Taylor guitar personally

signed to the winning bidder, vacation packages across the U.S., as well as other one-of-a-kind experiences.

Honorary Gala Co-Chairs are U.S. Senators for Massachusetts, The Honorable Edward J. Markey and The Honorable Elizabeth Warren. Gala Co-Chairs are Caitlin and Mitch Nash and Jacob's Pillow Board Member Hunter K. Runnette and Mark P. VandenBosch. Proceeds from the Jacob's Pillow Gala benefit the Pillow's nonprofit programs including Festival presentations, free community programs, The School at Jacob's Pillow, and more.

The event begins at 5pm. Gala tables of ten are \$15,000 - \$3,500 and individual tickets are \$1,000-\$375; after party tickets are available for \$75. To purchase tickets contact Gretchen Weber, Jacob's Pillow Gala & Special Events Manager, at 413.243.9919 x126, gweber@jacobspillow.org, or purchase online at jacobspillow.org/events/gala.

Jacob's Pillow Year Round

Beyond its summer festival, Jacob's Pillow is an active year-round organization. Through **Jacob's Pillow Curriculum in Motion®**, a nationally-recognized program, Artist Educators work with Berkshire County teachers and students grades K-12 to transform curricula such as biology, literature, and history into kinesthetic and creative learning experiences. 2016-2017 Curriculum in Motion® residencies will take place at Conte Community School, Becket Washington Elementary, and Monument Mountain Regional High School. **Creative Development Residencies** take place at the Pillow throughout the year. Dance artists are invited to live and work at Jacob's Pillow for one to three-week residencies and during that time they are given a stipend, housing, and unlimited access to rehearsal space, the Archives, and staff support. During the 2016-2017 season, Netta Yerushalmy, Ephrat Asherie & Ehud Asherie, Marsha Parrilla, Ronald K. Brown & Arturo O'Farrill, David Dorfman, denny/donovan projects, Camille A. Brown, Joanna Kotze, and John Heginbotham & Maira Kalman will all participate in Pillow Creative Development Residencies. The annual \$25,000 Jacob's Pillow Dance Award supports visionary dance artists and choreographers with a residency, performance at the Season Opening Gala, among other engagements. **Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive (JPDI)** is the Pillow's online platform for videos and digital dance resources and remains active every day of the year. JPDI (<http://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/>) includes a wide range of Festival artists and video content from the 1930s to 2016 with new content added each month. The Jacob's Pillow **Intern Program** is also active year-round, offering hands-on work experience to college students and recent graduates seeking a deeper education within arts administration and production. At the same time, **The School at Jacob's Pillow** is hosting international auditions and workshops and planning its national audition tour, which will kick off in January in Miami. The School at Jacob's Pillow is a leading center for professional advancement; each year thousands of dancers audition and apply and only 100 are selected to participate in one of four programs in Ballet, Contemporary, Tap, and Musical Theatre Dance. The international students of The School are immersed in Festival life as they take class, attend seminars, and learn classic and new dance work from today's greatest choreographers, mentors, directors, musicians, and Broadway performers.

ABOUT JACOB'S PILLOW: Jacob's Pillow, celebrating its 85th Festival in 2017, is a National Historic Landmark, recipient of the National Medal of Arts, and home to America's longest-running international dance festival. Each Festival includes more than 50 national and international dance companies and 350 free and ticketed performances, talks, tours, classes, exhibits, and events. The School at Jacob's Pillow, one of the most prestigious professional dance training centers in the U.S., encompasses the diverse disciplines of Ballet, Cultural Traditions, Contemporary, and Musical Theatre Dance, as well as an Intern Program in various disciplines of arts administration, design, video, and production. The Pillow's extensive Archives, open year-round to the public, chronicle more than a century of dance in photographs, programs, books, costumes, audiotapes, and videos. Notable artists who have created or premiered dances at the Pillow include choreographers Antony Tudor, Agnes de Mille, Alvin Ailey, Donald McKayle, Kevin McKenzie, Twyla Tharp, Ralph Lemon, Susan Marshall, Trisha Brown, Ronald K. Brown, Wally Cardona, Andrea Miller, and Trey McIntyre; performed by artists such as Mikhail Baryshnikov, Carmen de Lavallade, Mark Morris, Dame Margot Fonteyn, Edward Villella, Rasta Thomas, and hundreds of others. On March 2, 2011, President Obama honored Jacob's Pillow with a National Medal of Arts, the highest arts award given by the United States Government, making the Pillow the first dance presenting organization to receive this prestigious award. For more information, visit jacobspillow.org.

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