

FOR IMAGES AND MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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ntomasofsky@jacobspillow.org**COMPAÑÍA IRENE RODRÍGUEZ OF HAVANA, CUBA MAKES HIGHLY-ANTICIPATED
JACOB'S PILLOW DEBUT, AUGUST 16–20**

August 1, 2017 – (Becket, MA) In an exhilarating program featuring four U.S. premieres and one world premiere, Compañía Irene Rodríguez of Havana, Cuba, presents *MÁS QUE FLAMENCO* at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in the Doris Duke Theatre, August 16–20. Prima ballerina of Spanish dances, teacher and choreographer in Cuba, and choreographic advisor and rehearsal instructor of Alicia Alonso's world-renowned National Ballet of Cuba, Rodríguez, with her ensemble of six dancers and four flamenco musicians, make their Jacob's Pillow debut. Rodríguez, praised as "intense" and "exacting" by *The New York Times*, created her company in 2012, and since then, this vivacious ensemble "has succeeded in positioning itself among the best of the Spanish genre in Cuba" (*Granma*, Cuba).

"I had the great fortune of seeing Irene's work on my trip to Havana last September. Her company performed in a small studio with a makeshift stage, and the power of Rodríguez, her dancers and her musicians, even in that modest setting, was unmistakable. We are delighted to welcome her back to the States for her Pillow debut, with four U.S. premieres and a world premiere," says Jacob's Pillow Director Pamela Tatge.

Rodríguez, a prominent name in the emerging contemporary Cuban dance scene, unites traditional Spanish dances and vibrant Afro-Cuban rhythms with ballet and contemporary technique, creating work that leaves a "trail of triumph and applause" (*Granma*). Under the lighting of Pedro Benítez, live musicians accompany the dancers with spirited arrangements for saxophone, percussion, bass, and guitar. With all performers onstage, the program blurs the line between a visual and aural experience, allowing the dancers and musicians to become one cohesive ensemble. *The New Yorker* comments, "Flamenco rhythms played on Afro-Cuban instruments suggest a crossover that's both historical and novel: evidence that a specifically Cuban form of flamenco might exist."

Compañía Irene Rodríguez presents four U.S. premieres (*El Mito*, *Tífoeo*, *Fever*, and *Encontra2*), and other company favorites, including *Aldabal*, *Zambra*, *Zapateao*, *Sobre Un Tema De Falla*, and *Solera*. Jacob's Pillow will also present the company's world premiere of *Pena Negra*, a work inspired by the poem *Romance de la Pena Negra* by Federico García Lorca. *Pena Negra* offers special costume design collaboration between Rodríguez and Jesús Villalonga.

Rodríguez's *Aldabal* draws on themes of human uncertainty and change from the poem *No Puedo* by Uruguayan writer Sara de Ibáñez. Rodríguez's choreography, performed in the flamenco style of Sigüiriya, pairs with Noel Gutiérrez's musical composition to highlight the dancers' swift direction changes. In the U.S. premiere of *Fever*, the company demonstrates a flamenco take on Eddie Cooley and Otis Blackwell's popular jazz standard, made famous by Peggy Lee. Rodríguez's *Zapateao* evolves from a solo performed by Rodríguez into a full company dance with music by Rynier Llorente. The tempo soars when the ensemble joins Rodríguez on stage, and they showcase intricate body percussion, footwork, and turns.

Set to a musical composition by Ariannys Mariño and Reyneir Llorente, Rodríguez closes the night with a solo work, *Solera*, in which she demonstrates the full breadth of her movement. Siobhan Burke of *The New York Times* praises Rodríguez, saying, “The word ‘fiery’, so overused with respect to flamenco, actually suits her well... in the last piece, a solo, Ms. Rodríguez tapped into a spontaneity we hadn’t yet seen.”

Maintaining piercing eye contact with the audience and each other, the ensemble pulls together a captivating production from start to finish. With a base in Spanish folk dances, Compañía Irene Rodríguez expands on these techniques to create a colorful, contemporary style that has gained them a strong following both in Cuba and internationally.

Since she founded the National Ballet of Cuba in 1955, the distinguished Alicia Alonso has brought Cuba international recognition for its dance. Compañía Irene Rodríguez now launches Cuban dance into the next age of electrifying, contemporary choreography.

About Irene Rodríguez

Director, Prima Ballerina, and Choreographer, Irene Rodríguez is the leading figure of Spanish dance in Cuba. She earned a Bachelor of Theater Arts Degree (Acting) from the National University of Arts (Instituto Superior de Arte, Havana, Cuba), receiving the “Diploma de Oro” in theater arts, an honor bestowed for her numerous roles as an actor. She also received a Master’s Degree in Theoretical Studies of Dance from the same university.

Born in Havana, she graduated in 1999 as a professional performer of Spanish Dances. After graduating, she immediately joined the Ballet Español de Cuba, where she became Prima ballerina in 2007, as well as the Choreographer and Specialized Professor and Regisseur of First Level. For several years, she has worked as a Professor of the Cuban National Ballet School and a choreography consultant of the Cuban National Ballet, specifically for Prima Ballerina Assoluta Alicia Alonso’s Spanish works. On several occasions, she has performed as a guest dancer with the Cuban National Ballet.

She has performed as Prima Ballerina in the most prestigious theaters of Barcelona, Granada, Andorra, Colombia, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, and Mexico, where she has shared the stage with world-renowned artists. In July 2009, she toured Mexico as a guest artist of the Spanish bailaora (flamenco dancer) María Juncal with the show *Tercera Llamada*, and in 2010, she danced in the Festival Cuna del Flamenco of Granada, one of the most important festivals in Spain.

In January 2012, she founded her own company, Compañía Irene Rodríguez, receiving rave reviews since the Company’s debut. As a dance professor, she plays a role in training many of the professional Spanish dancers in Cuba. She has given master classes and conferences both nationally and internationally, and has created several works for distinguished companies. In 2014, she created her own dance school, the Irene Rodríguez Spanish Dance Academy. She is a member of the International Dance Council (UNESCO). She has received numerous awards, including the First Prize in the eighth Alicia Alonso Ibero-American Choreography Competition (CIC’ 2012); an award from the Author’s Foundation of the Spanish General Society of Authors and Editors (SGAE) for her work *El crimen fue en Granada*; the Choreography Award in 2006 from the Unión Nacional de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba for best artistic interpretation; the Ramiro Guerra award in 2011 from Asociación Hermanos Saiz for the best interpretation of Folkloric dance by a woman; the Excellence Choreography Award in 2016 for the best choreography work at the International Ballet Schools Competition; and the Ibero-American Medal given for the Honoris Causa Foundation from the Guadalajara’s University in

Mexico. She has also been included in the “Libro de Honor del Gran Teatro de La Habana” (The Honor Book) for her numerous successful performances in that theater.

In the U.S., she has performed at the Montalvo Art Center in Saratoga, California, the MOLAA in Los Angeles, the Moore Theater in Seattle, The Joyce Theater in New York City, and the WTTW Studios in Chicago, among others.

Since 2012, by special request of the Prima Ballerina Assoluta Alicia Alonso, she holds the post of Artistic Director of the International Festival “La Huella de España”, an important annual event in Cuba.

The dancers in Compañía Irene Rodríguez have extensive backgrounds in traditional Spanish dances as university students, performers, and educators. Rolando Benitez (saxophonist), Jose Daniel Bermúdez (electric bassist), Noel Guitérrez (guitarist), and Daniel Sánchez (percussion), are all seasoned musicians, composers, and teachers that hail from music conservatories and universities in Cuba.

Performance & Ticket Details

Compañía Irene Rodríguez at Jacob’s Pillow

Doris Duke Theatre, August 16–20

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday at 8:15pm

Saturday & Sunday at 2:15pm

\$45, \$35, \$25

A limited number of \$20 Under 35 tickets are available; adults ages 18-35 are eligible. One ticket per person; each guest must show valid I.D. when picking up tickets at Will Call. Other discounts are available.

Tickets are on sale now; online at jacobspillow.org, via phone at 413.243.0745, and at the Jacob’s Pillow Box Office at 358 George Carter Road, Becket, MA, 01223.

ALSO THIS WEEK

Trisha Brown Dance Company

Ted Shawn Theatre, August 16–19

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday at 8pm

Thursday & Saturday at 2pm

\$69, \$59, \$39

Witty, inventive, and free from convention, the prolific choreographer Trisha Brown holds an uncontested legacy as modern dance’s “boundary-pusher” (*The Wall Street Journal*). The program will include a specially curated work for the Pillow’s 85th Anniversary Season featuring alumni of Trisha Brown Dance Company, among other works to be announced.

With close Pillow connections dating back more than 35 years, Trisha Brown’s accolades include the prestigious National Medal of Arts, a United States Artist Fellow in Dance award, a MacArthur ‘Genius’ Award, and a New York Dance and Performance (“Bessie”) Award for Lifetime Achievement, among countless others.

Related video on Jacob’s Pillow Dance Interactive

Trisha Brown Dance Company, *Les Yeux et l’âme*, 2011:

https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/trisha-brown-dance-company/les-yeux-et-lame/?_ga=2.241864069.684142114.1499787503-1763640048.1495821370

Inside/Out Performance Series: Xan Burley + Alex Springer

Wednesday, August 16 at 6:15pm

Free Event

Xan Burley and Alex Springer are dancers, choreographers, teachers, collaborators, and members of Doug Varone and Dancers. Following the company's engagement in the Ted Shawn Theatre, August 2-6, Burley and Springer will stay on as Jacob's Pillow Research Fellows and will create a site-specific work, which will premiere on August 16. As creative and life partners, collaboration is inherent and key for this duo. Since 2008, their cohesive efforts have taken shape as dance theater for the stage and camera, interdisciplinary work, site-specific performance, durational exhibition, and community engagement. Their choreography has been commissioned by colleges and universities across the U.S. As members of Doug Varone & Dancers, both have taught and performed extensively in the U.S. and abroad, including Korea, the Dominican Republic, Russia, Argentina, Peru, and Hungary.

Inside/Out Performance Series: Periapsis Music and Dance

Thursday, August 17 at 6:15pm

Free Event

Periapsis Music and Dance was founded with a mission to cultivate and support new repertoire at the intersection of dance and music, creating and facilitating opportunities for artists to perform with live music and for choreographers to work with living composers. The company's program, *The Portrait Project*, is comprised of four different short works, each featuring a solo dancer and solo musician, and each created by a different guest choreographer in collaboration with a composer. Each work will be performed with live music, including *Escape Velocity* by Seán Curran (with percussion), *Twine* by Manuel Vignoulle (with viola), *Separate Rooms* by Joshua Beamish (with bass clarinet), and *Reflection* by Katarzyna Skarpetowska (with piano). Periapsis Artistic Director and co-founder Jonathan Howard Katz composed original music for *Escape Velocity*, *Twine*, and *Reflection*, and the *Separate Rooms* score is by composer Shawn Jaeger.

PillowTalk: Trisha Brown's Legacy

Friday, August 18 at 5pm

Blake's Barn

Free Event

Trisha Brown's legacy endures through performances by her company and others, while Susan Rosenberg's new book celebrates Brown's choreography as visual art, with all efforts discussed here.

Inside/Out Performance Series: Stilo Dance

Friday, August 18 at 6:15pm

Free Event

Founded in Arizona in 2007 by David Olarte, Stilo Dance Company is a multi-faceted group that exists as both a performance team and as a community-centered, research-based educational entity. Stilo's roots lie in Latin social dance, but they pride themselves on breaking the rules and blurring the lines between Afro-Cuban Folklorico, contemporary/modern, and traditional Latin styles. The company performs *Paseo*, a fluid expression of these values and interdisciplinary viewpoints (connection, listening, finding authentic movement in social dance). Audiences will be led on a pedagogical journey through the broad historical landscape of Latin dance, then catapulted into Stilo's vision for what lies ahead in the future.

PillowTalk: Cuba's Changing Dance Scene

Saturday, August 19 at 4pm

Blake's Barn

Free Event

Spanish dancer Irene Rodríguez is integrally involved in Cuba's artscape, and a new film highlights her role in Havan's culture.

Inside/Out Performance Series: The School at Jacob's Pillow Musical Theatre Dance Program

Saturday, August 19 at 6:15pm

Free Event

Performers of the Musical Theatre Dance Program share excerpts of song and dance numbers they are preparing for *A Jazz Happening*, a benefit for The School at Jacob's Pillow to be held in the Ted Shawn Theatre on August 20. Under the direction of Broadway choreographer/director Chet Walker, award-winning Broadway choreographers, directors, composers, and musicians collaborate to create original numbers on the performers, with the same fast pace and rigor required to audition for and mount Broadway productions. Dancers attend all Festival events, including weekly career-building interactions with Festival Ted Shawn Theatre and Doris Duke Theatre performers.

Sunday Master Class with Festival Artist: Compañía Irene Rodríguez

Sunday, August 20, 10–11:30am

Doris Duke Theatre

Irene Rodríguez leads a class designed to broaden knowledge of Flamenco dance with a comprehensive focus on Spanish dance culture. Participants will learn the theory and practice of four distinctly different styles of Spanish dance with an opportunity to view demonstrations throughout the class. Dancers will leave with a greater understanding of Spanish culture. Please wear comfortable clothes to move in and be prepared with footwear: flamenco shoes are ideal, but character shoes or any other hard sole shoe with a wide heel will do. No bare feet please.

FESTIVAL 2017 EXHIBITS & ARCHIVES – ONGOING

The following exhibits and offerings are free and open to the public June 19 through August 27, 2017.

JACOB'S PILLOW JUMPS

Blake's Barn

Open Wednesday–Saturday, noon to final curtain (approx. 10pm), and Sunday–Tuesday noon to 5pm

Free Offering

Celebrating 85 Jacob's Pillow seasons, this exclusive new collection of original images connects today's artists with the pioneering dancers of yesteryear. From John Lindquist's iconic photos of the Men Dancers to Christopher Duggan's current season image of Camille A. Brown—with scores of others in between—these dancers truly soar.

INSIDE THE DANCER'S ART

Ted Shawn Theatre Lobby

Open Wednesday–Sunday, noon to final curtain (approx. 10pm), and Sunday–Tuesday noon to 5pm

Free Offering

In her thirty-year career of photographing and interviewing veteran and emerging dancers, Rose Eichenbaum has elicited eloquent, poetic, and insightful descriptions of the inner world of the dancer's life and art. This exhibit encompasses highlights from her new book for Wesleyan University Press, *Inside the Dancer's Art*, including many Jacob's Pillow images.

MAIRA KALMAN'S PRINCIPLES OF UNCERTAINTY

Doris Duke Theatre Lobby

**Open Wednesday–Sunday, noon to final curtain (approx. 10pm), and Sunday–Tuesday noon to 5pm
Free Offering**

In tandem with her Dance Heginbotham collaboration, *The Principles of Uncertainty*, premiering at the Pillow August 23–27, one-of-a-kind artist and author Maira Kalman shares some favorite images in this exhibition, created especially for Jacob's Pillow. Both whimsical and brilliant, Kalman's work explores the intersections of dance, life, and art in unexpected ways.

JACOB'S PILLOW ARCHIVES/NORTON OWEN READING ROOM

Blake's Barn

**Open Wednesday–Saturday noon to final curtain (approx. 10pm), and Sunday–Tuesday noon to 5pm
Free Offering**

This newly-expanded informal library and reading room allows impromptu visitors to view videos, browse through books, access the Pillow's computer catalog, or peruse permanent collections of Pillow programs and photographs from the Pillow's Archives. The Norton Owen Reading Room also features recent donations and more archival treasures from the Stephan Driscoll Collection. Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive, available on a popular touch-screen kiosk in the Reading Room, provides instant access to rare film clips ranging from the present day back to the 1930s.

ONLINE EXHIBIT: JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE INTERACTIVE

danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org

This ever-expanding website allows new dance lovers and aficionados to enjoy highlights from the past 84 seasons of Pillow performances, anytime and anywhere. Discover video excerpts from artists including Savion Glover, Martha Graham Dance Company, Carmen de Lavallade, Trisha Brown, Merce Cunningham Dance Company, Michelle Dorrance, and Pillow founder Ted Shawn and his Men Dancers, among countless others. A recent expansion features a series of multimedia essays from renowned dance scholars on three distinct themes: Tap, Women in Dance, and Dance of the African Diaspora. This newly-launched editorial platform features more than 30 essays on topics richly archived and relevant to conversations surrounding today's dance field. Each essay includes archival materials of various media, including video interviews with artists, scans of original printed programs, photographs, and rare performance excerpts, resulting in an expert-led tour through the extensive Archives.

FESTIVAL 2017 COMMUNITY CLASSES – ONGOING

Morning Classes

Ruth St. Denis Studio

June 5–August 25, Monday–Friday at 8am

Open to all experience levels, Jacob's Pillow Morning Classes take place each weekday morning in the historic Ruth St. Denis Studio on the Jacob's Pillow grounds. The class schedule includes Pilates with Pilates Certified instructor Sean P. Gallagher on Mondays; African Dance with Marilyn Sylla and live drumming by Jamemurrell Stanley on Tuesdays; Ballet with Ian Spencer Bell and Sharon MacDonald on Wednesdays; Zumba with Ilana Siegal on Thursdays; and Modern with varied Guest Artists including Paul Dennis, Ryoko Kudo, and Adam H. Weinert on Fridays. Other guest artists to be announced. All participants must be age 16 and over; \$10 per class or \$55 for a 6-class card. Participants younger than 18 will require a parent/guardian signature on a liability waiver.

Families Dance Together

Bakalar Studio

July 7–August 18, Fridays at 5pm

Led by Pillow Artist-Educator Jeff Bliss, this intergenerational class is a unique opportunity for children and adults to experience the joy of creating simple dances together. Families Dance Together is for children ages 5-18, accompanied by an adult. Participants under 18 years require a parent/guardian signature on liability waiver. Classes are \$5 per adult and \$1 per child. Families Dance Together is a Jacob's Pillow/Becket Arts Center collaboration. Call 413.623.6635 to pre-register.

TALKS, TOURS, OBSERVATION – ONGOING

Pre-Show Talks

30 minutes prior to every performance

Free Offering

Pillow Scholars offer helpful insight prior to every performance; located in Blake's Barn for Ted Shawn Theatre shows and on the Doris Duke Theatre porch for Duke shows.

Post-Show Talks

Thursday and Friday, immediately following the performance

Free Offering

Pillow Scholars moderate entertaining and informative discussions with dancers, directors, and choreographers; offered Fridays for Ted Shawn Theatre performances and Thursdays for Doris Duke Theatre performances.

Observe Dancers of The School

Monday–Saturday, check jacobspillow.org or onsite signage for specific times

Sommers Studio

Free Offering

Festival visitors are welcome to observe dancers of The School at Jacob's Pillow in classes and rehearsals.

Guided Tours

Thursday and Saturday at 5:30pm

Free Offering

Visitors can learn about the history and legends of Jacob's Pillow, a National Historic Landmark, on guided tours of the grounds. Self-guided tour maps are also available in the Welcome Center.

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 are taking 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, Dendy/Donovan projects, Camille A. Brown, Joanna Kotze, and John Heginbotham & Maira Kalman are all participating 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 (<http://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/>) is the Pillow's online platform for videos and digital dance resources

and remains active every day of the year, encompassing 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 Barack 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 www.jacobspillow.org.

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