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**JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE FESTIVAL OPENS 87TH SEASON
WITH BALLET BC IN THE TED SHAWN THEATRE, JUNE 19-23**

May 22, 2019 (Becket, MA)—Jacob's Pillow opens its 87th season with premier Canadian contemporary ballet company Ballet BC in the Ted Shawn Theatre, June 19-23. Celebrating ten years under the leadership of Artistic Director Emily Molnar, Ballet BC is considered one of the most significant Canadian companies, acclaimed as "physically rigorous, dramatically solid, and truly contemporary" (*Dance Magazine*). Ballet BC's program features the U.S. premiere of *Bedroom Folk* from Israeli collaborators Sharon Eyal and Gai Behar, Molnar's most recent work *To this day*, and Medhi Walerski's signature *Petite Cérémonie*.

"I can't wait for Ballet BC to open Festival 2019. The program they are bringing showcases the dancers' stunning versatility and prowess, and exemplifies why they are considered one of the best contemporary ballet companies today in Canada and beyond," says Jacob's Pillow Director Pamela Tatge.

Ballet BC brings the U.S. premiere of *Bedroom Folk* from Israeli choreographers and collaborators Sharon Eyal and Gai Behar. Intensely cool, a house beat pulses through an intoxicating space as dancers move in hypnotic synchronicity. Originally created for the Nederlands Dans Theater in 2015, *Bedroom Folk* is an electric mix of music, dance, and light. Former Associate Artistic Director and House Choreographer for Batsheva Dance Company, Eyal and techno-music producer Behar have collaborated together since 2012. Their company L-E-V made its U.S. debut at Jacob's Pillow in 2013.

To this day is inspired by and set to Jimi Hendrix's posthumous *Blues* album, revealing the intimate and daring space where the blues meets Molnar's expressive choreographic style. The work was choreographed to mark the 10th anniversary of Molnar's tenure at Ballet BC and salutes the way in which her unique vision has steered the company into a celebrated era of innovation and collaboration.

Petite Cérémonie, choreographed by French choreographer Medhi Walerski, is a humorously thought-provoking work created in a sensitive, episodic dialogue that has become a famed signature of Ballet BC's diverse repertoire since its premiere in 2011. Performed in formal black suits and cocktail dresses, dancers climb on and move in between rows of white boxes; Walerski describes the work as a "quirky essay on the way we box ourselves in." Set to music selections by Mozart, Bellini, Rodgers & Hart, and Vivaldi, *The Georgia Straight* lauds, "Medhi Walerski's unpredictable, dreamlike *Petite Cérémonie* is the talk of the night. It's odd, sensual, aggressive—a delirious mix of everything."

Related Pillow-exclusive programming includes an intimate PillowTalk with Emily Molnar and Jacob's Pillow Scholar-in-Residence Maura Keefe on Friday, June 21 at 5pm, where Molnar will discuss her various roles as a dancer, choreographer, and director of Ballet BC, as well as plans for the future.

ABOUT BALLET BC

Combining classical integrity with a contemporary sensibility, Ballet BC is a creation-based company of 18 talented dancers from Canada and around the world that is committed to exploration and collaboration in contemporary dance. Solidly grounded in the rigor and artistry of classical ballet, with an emphasis on innovation and the immediacy of the 21st century, the company presents a distinct and diverse repertoire of the most sought-after Canadian and international contemporary ballet choreography. Founded in 1986, Ballet BC continues its commitment to perform highly acclaimed productions on regional, national, and international tours in addition to its regular performance season at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre in Vancouver. In 2019, Ballet BC was nominated for an Olivier Award for Best New Dance Production for their tour to Sadler's Wells in London which featured *Solo Echo* by Crystal Pite, *16+ a room* by Emily Molnar, and *Bill* by Sharon Eyal and Gai Behar.

Passionate and distinctly talented, Ballet BC's company of dancers captivate audiences on home, national, and global stages. Like never before, each collaboration and each performance punctuates a story of diversity, evolving practice, and a versatile scope of artistic vision.

JACOB'S PILLOW CONNECTIONS:

Ballet BC made their Pillow debut in 1993 under the original company name Ballet British Columbia. Their most recent performance at Jacob's Pillow was in 2015.

Sharon Eyal's work has been presented at the Pillow since 2004 by Batsheva Dance Company, Norway's Carte Blanche, and Nederlands Dans Theater 2, in addition to the company led by Eyal and Gai Behar, L-E-V.

Explore past Pillow performances and related content on Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive:

- Ballet BC in *Consagracion* in 2015: danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/ballet-bc/consagracion/
- Ballet BC in *Return to the Strange Land* in 1993: danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/ballet-british-columbia/return-strange-land/
- *Emily Molnar, Women in Dance* by Maura Keefe: danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/themes-essays/women-in-dance/emily-molnar/
L-E-V in *House* by Sharon Eyal and Gai Behar: <https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/l-e-v/house/>
Sharon Eyal, Women in Dance by Maura Keefe: <https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/themes-essays/women-in-dance/sharon-eyal/>

PERFORMANCE & TICKET INFORMATION

- **Ballet BC at Jacob's Pillow**
Ted Shawn Theatre, June 19-23
Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday at 8pm
Saturday & Sunday at 2pm

\$78, \$65, \$45

A limited number of \$35 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.

ALSO THIS WEEK:

Circa

June 19-23, Wednesday-Saturday at 8:15pm; Sunday at 2:15pm

Doris Duke Theatre

"Circus at its purest and most thrilling" (*Daily Review*), Brisbane-based Circa is at the forefront of contemporary Australian circus, creating awe-inspiring performance from extreme physicality. Three fearless acrobats challenge perceptions of what the human body is capable of through a sublime display of interlocking bodies, aerial rope, and trapeze work in *What Will Have Been*, accompanied on stage by a live violinist and fusing together the music of Bach and Philip Glass with spine-tingling electronica. Founded by visionary Yaron Lifschitz, the ensemble blurs the lines between movement, dance, theater, and circus and has toured to over 39 countries across six continents since 2004, returning to the Pillow for the third time. *Tickets start at \$35.*

Inside/Out Performance Series: Kotchegna Dance Company

Wednesday, June 19 at 6:15pm

FREE; LIVE MUSIC

Performing in elaborate masks to the explosive percussion of a group of brilliant drummers, Kotchegna Dance Company brings to life the ancient stories and legends of Africa's Ivory Coast, praised by *The New York Times* for "feverishly intricate rhythms from drummers who knew countless ways to subdivide a beat and make it jump."

Artistic Director Vado Diomande is a master dancer and percussionist, who was born into the sacred stilt-dancing tradition of the Mahou people in northwest Ivory Coast. As a young member of the *Ballet National de Cote D'Ivoire*, Diomande absorbed diverse dances of over 60 ethnic groups of the Ivory Coast. Diomande has toured the world, impressing audiences with the acrobatics of the Tall Mask, "God of the Sacred Forest", and *Gue-Pelou*. Diomande re-established his dance company in New York City in 1994, as Kotchegna Dance Company, developing a corps of multicultural dancers and a repertoire that is widely loved and admired.

Inside/Out Performance Series: Luke Hickey

Thursday, June 20 at 6:15pm

FREE, LIVE MUSIC

Tap dancer and choreographer Luke Hickey, an alumnus of The School at Jacob's Pillow, performs the high-energy trio *A Little Old, A Little New*. Representing the arc of American culture from the jazz era to modernity, the work is a collaboration between musicians and tap dancers, celebrating the cultural importance of both art forms. Choreographed, performed, and directed by Hickey, the performance also features two dancers alongside Davis Whitfield and his jazz trio Maniacs of 4th Dimension.

PillowTalk: Emily Molnar's Decade

Friday, June 21 at 5pm

Blake's Barn

FREE

In celebration of her 10 years leading Ballet BC, Emily Molnar discusses her various roles as dancer, choreographer, and director, and her plans for the future.

Inside/Out Performance Series: Micaela Taylor's TL Collective

Friday, June 21 at 6:15pm

Thursday, June 20 at 6pm at Pittsfield's Third Thursday in the Dance Zone

FREE

The TL Collective fuses contemporary dance and theatrical hip-hop with elements of groove and acrobatics, bringing high levels of athleticism to the stage. Artistic Director Micaela Taylor is highly acclaimed, including as one of *Dance Magazine's* "25 to Watch" and recent recipient of the Inaugural EMERGE Choreographic Award from Springboard Danse Montréal. The TL Collective performs Taylor's newest evening-length work *Drift*, which seeks to demonstrate an individual's ever-changing relationship to self while exposing a personal season of self-growth. *Drift* premiered at the Ford Theatre in Los Angeles as part of the Ford Theatre's Artist-in-Residence program.

PillowTalk: Charles Reinhart Returns

Saturday, June 22 at 4pm

Blake's Barn

FREE

The longtime director of American Dance Festival directed Jacob's Pillow in 1974 and managed publicity here in the 1960s, returning now with stories to tell.

Inside/Out Performance Series: The School at Jacob's Pillow Contemporary Ballet Program

Saturday, June 22 at 6:15pm

FREE

Dancers of The School at Jacob's Pillow Contemporary Ballet Program are apprentices, trainees, pre-professionals, and early-career professionals with leading ballet companies from around the world. Their performance for Festival audiences includes choreography by Aszure Barton as well as the new ballet created on them for the 2019 Season Opening Gala by esteemed choreographer Matthew Neenan.

The Contemporary Ballet Program is directed by Alexandra Damiani, former artistic director of Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet, and Matthew Neenan, co-founder of Philadelphia's premier contemporary ballet company BalletX.

Sunday Master Class: Circa

Sunday, June 23 at 10am

Doris Duke Theatre

Circa's work has been seen in 40 countries by over one million people. At the core of Circa's practice is four space theory – a performance and analytical framework created by Yaron Lifschitz. Todd Kilby, Tour Director and member of the Circa ensemble, will lead participants through a practical introduction of this framework that will explore how the theory and some key features function, and how they are used in movement creation and improvisation.

Open to all intermediate and advanced performers ages 16 and over. Quiet observation is welcome; \$20 per class or \$100 for a 6-class card. Participants younger than 18 will require a parent/guardian's signature on a liability waiver. Pre-registration is required at jacobspillow.org.

Special Workshop: Flamenco with Briseyda Zárate

Tuesday, June 25 at 6:30-8pm

Get ready to dance and become inspired! Led by California-based flamenco dancer and choreographer Briseyda Zárate, this introductory class introduces participants to the main techniques of flamenco dance including braceo and floreos (movement of the hands and arms), zapateo (footwork), and palmas (rhythmic clapping). Participants will learn a brief and fun combination using all of these elements. Please wear comfortable clothing to move in and sturdy, hard-soled shoes. *For intermediate/advanced dancers ages 16+; \$20; pre-registration required at jacobspillow.org.*

FESTIVAL 2019 EXHIBITS & ARCHIVES—OPENING THIS WEEK***Dance We Must: Another Look*****Blake's Barn, June 19-August 25****Open Wed-Sat noon to final curtain (approx. 10pm) and Sun-Tues noon to 5pm; FREE**

Drawing upon the acclaimed 2018 exhibit at the Williams College Museum of Art, the Pillow's historic costumes, set pieces, and other artifacts are viewed through a different lens, illuminating the early years of American modern dance with alternative voices brought forward. The adjacent Norton Owen Reading Room features recent donations and more from the Stephan Driscoll Collection.

Assemblages by Paul Taylor**Ted Shawn Theatre Lobby, June 19-August 25****Open daily, noon to final curtain****FREE**

Beyond dancemaking, Paul Taylor was an infinitely creative artist in multiple media, and Jacob's Pillow salutes his memory with his own idiosyncratic visual works, some on public display for the first time. Assembled mostly from found objects, Taylor's artworks are joyful, haunting, humorous, bawdy, ingenious, and just as memorable as the dances for which he is best known.

Merce Cunningham: Loops**Doris Duke Theatre Lobby, June 19-August 25****Open daily, noon to final curtain****FREE**

This abstract virtual reality portrait of Merce Cunningham was created by digital artists Paul Kaiser and Marc Downie. With imagery derived from a motion-captured performance by Cunningham of his solo dance for hands, and soundtrack of Cunningham reading from early diary entries, *Loops* recognizes the Cunningham Centennial by distilling the great choreographer's essence into a unique work of art.

Jacob's Pillow Archives/Norton Owen Reading Room**Blake's Barn, June 19-August 25****Open daily, Wed-Sat noon to final curtain (approx. 10pm) and Sun-Tue noon to 5pm****FREE**

This spacious, 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, provides instant access to rare film clips ranging from the present day back to the 1930s.

ABOUT JACOB'S PILLOW:

Jacob's Pillow is a National Historic Landmark, recipient of the National Medal of Arts, and home to America's longest-running international dance festival, currently in the midst of its transition to becoming a year-round center for dance through a five-year strategic plan titled Vision '22. Each Festival includes more than 50 national and international dance companies and over 500 free and ticketed performances, talks, tours, classes, exhibits, events, and community programs. The School at Jacob's Pillow, one of the field's most prestigious professional dance training centers, encompasses the diverse disciplines of Contemporary Ballet, Contemporary, Tap, Photography, Choreography, and an annual rotating program (Flamenco and Spanish Dance in 2019). The Pillow also provides professional advancement opportunities across disciplines of arts administration, design, video, and production through seasonal internships and a year-round Administrative Fellows program. With growing community engagement programs, the Pillow serves as a partner and active citizen in its local community. The Pillow's extensive Archives, open year-round to the public and online at danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org, 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. The Pillow's Director since 2016 is Pamela Tatge. For more information, visit www.jacobspillow.org.

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