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**ABBY Z AND THE NEW UTILITY
MAKE THEIR PILLOW DEBUT WITH *ABANDONED PLAYGROUND***

June 6, 2019 – (Becket, MA) Abby Z and the New Utility makes their Jacob's Pillow debut with *abandoned playground* at the Doris Duke Theatre, June 26-30. The evening-length, adrenaline-inducing sequence of hyper physicality and extreme virtuosity is described by *The New York Times* as "where dance meets sport." 2017 Juried Bessie Award-winner Abby Zbikowski's unique movement vocabulary brings together hip-hop, West African, and postmodern dance styles.

"Abby Zbikowski is a new highly acclaimed voice in the dance world. Her work *abandoned playground* immerses the audience in the sometimes beautiful and sometimes brutal dances that manifest themselves amongst players in team sports. The piece starts and it just doesn't stop—you can't believe the ferocity of these dancers!" says Jacob's Pillow Director Pamela Tatge.

In *abandoned playground*, nine dancers are pushed to the brink of their capabilities and their endurance is tested as they rip and run throughout the theater, performing complex sequences of full-bodied dance. Zbikowski highlights each dancer's unique strengths, forging an intense ensemble connection through vocalizations and channeling of communal energy. Performing such extreme and virtuosic movement at a relentless pace, the dancers invigorate and push each other to overcome their physical and mental exhaustion.

Following the work's critical acclaim, Zbikowski received the 2017 Juried Bessie Award for her "unique and utterly authentic movement vocabulary in complex and demanding structures to create works of great energy, intensity, surprise, and danger." Zbikowski generates her bold, high-intensity and precisely rhythmic choreography from her background in hip-hop, tap, West African, and postmodern dance styles, deeply-rooted punk aesthetic, and close collaboration with her dancers who bring their own distinct bodies, psychologies, and training histories to the work.

ABOUT ABBY Z AND THE NEW UTILITY

Abby Zbikowski formed the New Utility in 2012 with core company members Fiona Lundie and Jennifer Meckley to explore the human body's potential in choreography that pushes beyond its perceived limits. Utilizing an authentic movement lexicon that crosses multiple cultural value systems, the company seeks transformation through reclaiming embodied rigor and welcoming failure. "Our work is driven by the obsessive practice that accompanies the mastery of complex physical tasks, and structurally builds upon the psyche-emotional growth that evolves as a byproduct of practice," says Zbikowski.

PERFORMANCE & TICKET INFORMATION

- **Abby Z and the New Utility at Jacob's Pillow
Doris Duke Theatre, June 26-30**

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

Saturday & Sunday at 2:15pm

\$40

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.

ALSO THIS WEEK:

Compañía Irene Rodríguez

June 26-30, Wednesday-Saturday at 8pm; Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday at 2pm

Ted Shawn Theatre

Compañía Irene Rodríguez is a revered voice in the emerging contemporary Cuban dance scene, known for a particular vision of flamenco that is both Spanish and Cuban. Rodríguez, praised as “intense” and “exacting” by *The New York Times*, created her company in 2012 and has since “succeeded in positioning itself among the best of the Spanish genre in Cuba” (*Granma*, Cuba). After a sold-out Pillow debut in 2017, this fiery ensemble of dancers and live musicians return with audiences favorites and a world premiere, including the Pillow-commissioned *Pena Negra* based on poetry by Federico García Lorca, among others. Among many accolades, Rodríguez was recently awarded the Order Isabel la Católica from the King of Spain and the Spanish government. The Festival presentation coincides with a two-week Professional Advancement program in the current and historic traditions of flamenco and Spanish dance, directed by Rodríguez in *The School at Jacob’s Pillow*. *Tickets start at \$45.*

Inside/Out Performance Series: Briseyda Zárate Flamenco

Wednesday, June 26 at 6:15pm

FREE, LIVE MUSIC

Accompanied by the rhythmically melodic guitar and bitter-sweet flamenco song, powerhouse dancer California-based Briseyda Zárate delivers an intimate rendition of flamenco. Pushing the limits of self-expression and moving away from choreographies and towards exciting improvisation, she and her inspired ensemble of musicians will take audiences on an exhilarating journey deep into the heart and soul of flamenco.

Inside/Out Performance Series: Vanaver Caravan

Thursday, June 27 at 6:15pm

FREE, LIVE MUSIC

Hudson-Valley based Vanaver Caravan performs excerpts of *Turn, Turn, Turn*, a celebration with dance and live music featuring Pete Seeger’s most beloved songs in honor of the esteemed folk singer’s 100th birthday. With a broad repertoire that covers percussive Appalachian clog dancing and incorporates reconstructed works by Ted Shawn and Ruth St. Denis, as well as original choreography, the Caravan weaves tapestries of dance and music together with effortless skill and precision. Established in 1972 by musician/composer Bill Vanaver and dancer/choreographer Livia Drapkin Vanaver, the Caravan is dedicated to performing original, world-infused choreography and music, and draws from an ever-expanding repertoire of dance and music traditions.

PillowTalk: ¡Viva Spanish Dance!

Friday, June 28 at 5pm

Blake’s Barn

FREE

Two illustrious artists on The School’s faculty for the Pillow’s Flamenco & Spanish Dance Program, Carmela Greco and Carmen Ledesma, celebrate the glories of their extraordinary art form.

Inside/Out Performance Series: Sayat Nova Dance Company

Friday, June 28 at 6:15pm

FREE

Boston-based Sayat Nova Dance Company was formed in January 1986 under the direction of Apo Ashjian. Named after a famous 18th century Armenian troubadour, they are dedicated to preserving and promoting Armenian culture and multicultural awareness. Their performance celebrates the livelihood, aspirations, legends, and beauty of Armenian folk dance.

PillowTalk: *PS Dance: The Next Generation*

Saturday, June 29 at 4pm

Blake's Barn

FREE

Following Nel Shelby's award-winning documentary on dance in public schools, her new film spotlights Northampton's Dance Education Laboratory, a partner to the Pillow's engagement efforts.

Inside/Out Performance Series: The School at Jacob's Pillow Flamenco & Spanish Dance Program

Saturday, June 29 at 6:15pm

FREE

Dancers of The School at Jacob's Pillow Flamenco & Spanish Dance Program train with revered artists from Spain during their first week of study. Artist faculty coach dancers in the traditional rhythms and palos of flamenco and Spanish dance, such as alegrías, bulerías, and seguiriyas. Their performance for Festival audiences features a glimpse into their studio work where communication with musicians evokes each dancer's passionate duende.

The Flamenco & Spanish Dance Program is directed by Cuba-based Irene Rodríguez with highly-acclaimed artist faculty Carmela Greco and Carmen Ledesma from Spain. Guitarist and singer Cristian Puig and percussionist Peter Basil Bogdanos will accompany the performance.

Sunday Master Class: Abby Z and the New Utility

Sunday, June 30 at 10am

Doris Duke Theatre

Led by founder Abby Zbikowski, this workshop takes participants inside of the Abby Z and the New Utility training process. Participants will dive into physicality that sits at a nexus of movement disciplines, including modern dance, hip-hop, West African, basketball, tap, and postmodern dance. Participants will experience firsthand the correlation between the physical, philosophical, and cultural properties of movement. *Open to all intermediate and advanced dancers 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.*

All Styles Dance Battle

Sunday, June 30 at 8pm

Doris Duke Theatre

For the third year in a row, the Pillow hosts an all styles dance battle featuring DJ DP One, Festival artists, participants of The School at Jacob's Pillow, regional street artists, surprise judges—and of course, one winner. Audience members can choose to observe from theater seats, or become part of the action. *Tickets start at \$25.*

FESTIVAL 2019 EXHIBITS & ARCHIVES—ONGOING

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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