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*Merce Cunningham*  
CENTENNIAL

**COMPAGNIE CNDC-ANGERS/ROBERT SWINSTON  
MAKES JACOB'S PILLOW DEBUT IN CELEBRATION OF  
GLOBAL MERCE CUNNINGHAM CENTENNIAL**

June 14, 2019—Jacob's Pillow presents the Pillow debut of Compagnie CNDC-Angers/Robert Swinston as part of the global Merce Cunningham Centennial, July 3-7 in the Ted Shawn Theatre. Under the direction of Robert Swinston, a longtime Merce Cunningham Dance Company member, later assistant to the choreographer, and finally director of choreography, France's National Center for Contemporary Dance/Angers brings three masterworks by Cunningham: *Suite for Five*, *Inlets 2*, and *How to Pass, Kick, Fall, and Run*. This celebratory program also features archival footage of Cunningham performing at Jacob's Pillow. The performance is the anchor event of a week-long exploration of this American master.

"We're thrilled that our contribution to the Merce Cunningham Centennial will be to give Compagnie CNDC-Angers its Pillow debut with an all Cunningham program. Cunningham protégé Robert Swinston is known for his vision and artistic rigor, and his dancers consistently perform some of the best Cunningham work done today," says Jacob's Pillow Director Pamela Tatge.

Merce Cunningham is widely considered one of the greatest artistic innovators of the 20th century, with a robust Pillow history that dates back to a company debut in 1955. An alumnus of The School at Jacob's Pillow, Swinston became CNDC-Angers' Artistic Director in 2013 with a goal of building on the legacy of Cunningham's iconic body of work through revitalized creativity. *Time/Out NYC* lauds, "If we can trust anyone to uphold Merce Cunningham's choreographic legacy, it's Robert Swinston." CNDC-Angers' New York premiere was "met with near euphoria" (*Dance Magazine*) and their work possesses "all qualities that make Cunningham's work feel alive and thoroughly timeless, perhaps more so with each passing year" (Marina Harss, *DanceTabs*).

*Suite for Five* (1953-1958) was created by adding a trio, a duet, and a quintet to Cunningham's earlier "Solo Suite in Space and Time." The classic purity and tranquility of *Suite for Five* is acknowledged in the program note which reads, "The events and sounds of this work revolve around a quiet center, which though silent and unmoving, is the source from which they happen." The musical composition and choreography relied on the imperfections in paper and on change operations; the music is avant-garde composer John Cage's "Music for Piano". Robert Rauschenberg designed the earth-toned leotards, with lighting by Beverly Emmons.

*Inlets 2* is one of Cunningham's best known nature studies and was created through chance operations to determine the order of the 64 movements. The choreography is commonly linked to the climate and topography of the Pacific Northwest where Cunningham was raised (in Centralia, Washington). The music is Cage's original score for *Inlets*, Mark Lancaster designed new costumes for *Inlets 2* with leotards and tights in gray, blue, or brown, over which some of the women wear tulle skirts.

*How to Pass, Kick, Fall and Run* (1965) is a frolic with an athletic theme, without any specific reference to games. The choreography keeps the dancers constantly in motion, with two or three movements simultaneously occurring on stage at all times. The dancers originally wore tights and sweaters that they chose themselves, with music by Cage which includes anecdotes from Cage's writings in *A Year from Monday*, read out loud on stage. Swinston won a Bessie Award for his role as a dancer and for his participation with Cunningham and Carolyn Brown in the reconstruction of the 2003 revival.

#### **ABOUT THE MERCE CUNNINGHAM CENTENNIAL**

Merce Cunningham (1919-2009) is considered one of the greatest artistic innovators of the 20th century. His seven-decade career was distinguished by constant innovation which expanded the frontiers of contemporary art, visual art, performing arts, and music. The Merce Cunningham Centennial unites artists, companies, and cultural and educational institutions in a multifaceted display and celebration of Cunningham's visual impact.

Jacob's Pillow features several events throughout the summer in honor of the Centennial. This includes a Festival-long lobby exhibit in the Doris Duke Theatre that displays an abstract virtual reality portrait of Cunningham created by digital artists Paul Kaiser and Marc Downie from a motion-captured performance of one of Cunningham's solo dances for hands; a related virtual reality experience offered in Blake's Barn, the home of the Jacob's Pillow Archives; a PillowTalk with Kaiser and Downie on July 5; a PillowTalk with long-time Cunningham dancer Marianne Preger-Simon about her new book on July 6; and a showing of the film *Merce Cunningham: A Lifetime in Dance* by Charles Atlas on July 7.

#### **ABOUT COMPAGNIE CNDC-ANGERS/ROBERT SWINSTON**

The National Center for Contemporary Dance, CNDC, was created in 1978 at the initiative of the Ministry of Culture and the City of Angers. The CNDC, which became a national choreographic center (CCN) in the 1990s, reinforces its mission as a choreographic center through the production of shows and as a training center. The directors of CNDC since its creation include Alwin Nikolais, Viola Farber, Michel Reilhac, Nadia Croquet, Joëlle Bouvier and Régis Obadia, and Emmanuelle Huynh.

Robert Swinston became CNDC's Artistic Director in 2013. For Compagnie CNDC-Angers he created the *Cunningham Event; Four Walls Doubletoss Interludes; Deli Commedia Variation* (adaptation of Cunningham/Caplan Video Dance); and Debussy's *La Boîte à Joujoux*, for young audiences. He has staged Cunningham works for companies such as the White Oak Dance Project, Rambert Dance Company, New York City Ballet, and the Paris Opera. In 2003, Robert Swinston was awarded a Bessie for the reconstruction and performance in *How to Pass, Kick, Fall and Run* (1965).

Prior to his time at CNDC, Swinston was director of choreography at the Merce Cunningham Trust in 2012 and the Merce Cunningham Dance Foundation for the repertoire, pedagogy, and educational programs from 2010 to 2011. Throughout his career, Robert Swinston has taught around the world. The artist has extensive pedagogical experience at the Merce Cunningham Studio & Dance Company, the Juilliard School, Montclair State College, Purchase College, UC Berkeley, Rambert Dance Company, London Contemporary Dance School, CNSMD Paris and Lyon, and the National School of Dance in Cannes.

Robert Swinston was a performer for the José Limón Dance Company (1978-1980) and the Kazuko Hirabayashi Dance Theater (1972-1982) before joining the Merce Cunningham Dance Company in 1980. In 1992, he became the choreographer's assistant and continued to interpret the works. Swinston was born in Pittsburgh, PA. He attended Middlebury College and the Juilliard School, where he earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts.

#### **JACOB'S PILLOW CONNECTIONS:**

Merce Cunningham (1919-2009) formed his company in 1953, which made its Pillow debut just two years later. After returning the very next season, Cunningham's work was absent from the Pillow for nearly 30 years, though the connections multiplied between 1984 and 2009 when he received the Jacob's Pillow Dance Award. The last time Cunningham saw his company dance was the 2009 performance of *Sounddance* (performed by Swinston), streamed to his laptop just a few days before his death on the same day the company closed its final Pillow engagement. A memorable 2007 interview with Cunningham was included in the Pillow documentary, *Never Stand Still*, released in 2011.

Robert Swinston studied on scholarship in The School at Jacob's Pillow in 1971, the final season directed by Pillow founder Ted Shawn. In addition to his many Pillow appearances with Cunningham, Swinston also performed in the 2012 cast of *The Men Dancers: From the Horse's Mouth*.

- Explore past Pillow performances on Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive: Robert Swinston with Merce Cunningham Dance Company in *Sounddance* in 2009: [danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/merce-cunningham-dance-company/sounddance/](http://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/merce-cunningham-dance-company/sounddance/)
- Experience Sydney Skybetter's multimedia essay on Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive: [danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/themes-essays/men-in-dance/day-merce-died/](http://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/themes-essays/men-in-dance/day-merce-died/)

#### **ALSO THIS WEEK:**

##### **David Roussève/REALITY**

**July 3-7, Wednesday-Saturday at 8:15pm; Saturday and Sunday at 2:15pm**

##### **Doris Duke Theatre**

Dance, music, text, and video come together in David Roussève/REALITY's new work *Halfway to Dawn*, a "heartfelt and heart-breaking homage" (*Times Quotidian*) to Billy Strayhorn, Duke Ellington's prolific but long-obscured collaborator, known for singles like "Take the 'A' Train", "Satin Doll", and "Lush Life". Interpreting Strayhorn's signature music sensibility through a dynamic movement vocabulary which melds jazz, modern, postmodern, and social dance, *Halfway to Dawn* creates an abstract portrait of Strayhorn's life as a gay, African American jazz composer in the 1950s-60s. Led by "one of this country's most inspired and inspiring dancemakers" (*San Francisco Chronicle*), David Roussève/REALITY returns to the Pillow after a developmental stint in the Pillow Lab. *Tickets start at \$35.*

Explore past Pillow performances on Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive:

- David Roussève/REALITY in *Stardust* in 2014: [danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/david-rousseve-reality/stardust/](http://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/david-rousseve-reality/stardust/)

##### **Inside/Out Performance Series: The LayaRhythm Experiment**

**Wednesday, July 3 at 6:15pm**

##### **FREE, LIVE MUSIC**

LayaRhythm began as a jam session of music and dance, created in 2015 in New York City as a monthly event. Now, The LayaRhythm Experiment, comprised of street dancers, musicians, an emcee, and a singer, takes its club roots and brings it to the stage. They perform *It Takes Two*, a new interactive production where audience ideas are transformed into the performers' movements, sounds, and lyrics, described as "an improv comedy show where dancing, not laughs, is the currency" (*The New York Times*).

##### **Class with Inside/Out Artist: Kyle Marshall Choreography**

**Thursday, July 4 at 4pm**

Feel joy and uplift the spirit with Kyle Marshall as he teaches from an embodied history of black, American, and postmodern dancing. Participants will play with rhythm and footwork, while the voice will deepen the sense of musicality. Building phrase work to challenge the body's coordination, use of weight, and retention of details,

acts of unison and improvisation will heighten participants' connection to the group and allow them to harness the personal power of choice-making.

Weather permitting, class takes place at the Inside/Out stage. In the case of inclement weather, classes take place in the Ruth St. Denis Studio. Participants will be barefoot. *Open to all experience levels, ages 12+; \$15 per person. Participants younger than 18 will require a parent/guardian's signature on a liability waiver. Pre-registration is required at [jacobspillow.org](http://jacobspillow.org).*

**Inside/Out Performance Series: Kyle Marshall Choreography**

**Thursday, July 4 at 6:15pm**

**FREE**

Recipient of the 2018 Juried Bessie Award, and one of *Dance Europe Magazine's* "New to Watch," Kyle Marshall uses dance as an opportunity to empathize with other human beings. Developed in 2014, Kyle Marshall Choreography sees the dancing body as a container of history, an igniter of social reform, and a site of celebration. In their return to the Inside/Out stage, Kyle Marshall Choreography performs an evening of thought-provoking contemporary work including *King*, a solo performance to a soundscore inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s final speech *I've been to the Mountaintop*; excerpts of *Colored*, a celebration of cultural variation; and a work-in-progress of Marshall's newest work *Reign (work-in-progress)*, an investigation into how religious texts and belief systems influence bodies, communities, and nations.

**Special Event: Free Fun Friday**

**Friday, July 5 at 2pm**

**FREE**

Dance games, a special Kids' Tour, classes, a free outdoor performance, and more! *Funded by the Highland Street Foundation.*

**PillowTalk: Merce Cunningham: Loops**

**Friday, July 5 at 5pm**

**Blake's Barn**

**FREE**

Digital artists Paul Kaiser and Marc Downie demonstrate and discuss a virtual reality work they created using Cunningham's own words and movement, celebrating Merce Cunningham's Centennial.

**Inside/Out Performance Series: Daniel Doña Compañía de Danza**

**Friday, July 5 at 6:15pm**

**FREE, LIVE MUSIC**

Madrid-based Daniel Doña is at the forefront of a generation of dancers finding their own choreographic and interpretative voice through flamenco and Spanish dance. Since 2004, Daniel Doña Compañía de Danza has invigorated audiences with dance that combines the traditions and new trends of Spanish dance. As a choreographer and Artistic Director, Doña's work has been performed at renowned festivals worldwide. They perform *Nada Personal*, a dramatic and musical trio that innovatively combines flamenco and contemporary dance. *Produced with support from the Cultural Office of the Embassy of Spain.*

**PillowTalk: Dancing with Merce Cunningham**

**Saturday, July 6 at 4pm**

**Blake's Barn**

**FREE**

Marianne Preger-Simon danced with Cunningham for eight years, including the company's first two Pillow appearances in the 1950s, which she details in her new book. *Followed by a booksigning.*

**Site-Specific Performance: "They Stood Shaking, While Others Began to Shout"**

**Saturday, July 6 at 2pm**

**Presented in collaboration with Hancock Shaker Village**

**1843 W Housatonic St, Pittsfield, MA**

Award-winning choreographer Reggie Wilson imagines what Black Shaker worship might have looked like in the world premiere of *POWER* at Jacob's Pillow. Witness an introduction to the work in a special site-based experience at Hancock Shaker Village with Reggie Wilson/Fist and Heel Performance Group. The site-specific event will feature the dancers in a roving performance that weaves the historic buildings and landscape into Wilson's narrative and emphasizes the intense physical expression of Shaker spirituality. *Visit [hancockshakervillage.org](http://hancockshakervillage.org) for tickets.*

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

**Saturday, July 6 at 6:15pm**

**FREE**

Dancers of The School at Jacob's Pillow Flamenco & Spanish Dance program train with celebrated Cuban artist Irene Rodríguez during their final program week. Current directions in flamenco and Spanish dance include working with the manton/shawl and the rhythms and palos of seguiriyas. The performance for Festival audiences features a glimpse into dancers' studio work where communication with musicians evokes each dancer's passionate duende.

The Flamenco & Spanish Dance Program is directed by Cuba-based Irene Rodríguez and includes 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: David Roussève/REALITY**

**Sunday, July 7 at 10am**

**Doris Duke Theatre**

Learn movement from David Roussève's *Halfway to Dawn* with members of the dance/theater company, REALITY. After a brief warm-up, the class will focus on the work's unique fusion of modern, postmodern, and jazz dance vocabularies and include the teaching of dynamic, full-bodied phrase material. *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](http://jacobspillow.org).*

**Sunday Film Series: Merce Cunningham: A Lifetime in Dance**

**Sunday, July 7 at 4:30pm**

**Blake's Barn**

This in-depth profile by filmmaker Charles Atlas explores Cunningham's prolific career, from his earliest successes to the ground-breaking works of his last years such as *Biped*. *General admission \$10.*

**Community Workshop: Community Ring Shout with Reggie Wilson/Fist and Heel Performance Group**

**Monday, July 8 in Pittsfield**

**FREE**

A stimulating, transformative sing-a-long for participants to restore and connect to their rhythmic voices and bodies. The Shout unearths some of the origins, functions, and interconnections through tales and songs from Africa and the African Diaspora (the Caribbean and American South). *Additional details to be announced, visit [jacobspillow.org](http://jacobspillow.org) for updates.*

## **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](http://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](http://www.jacobspillow.org).

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