

FOR IMAGES AND MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Nicole Tomasofsky, Public Relations & Communications Manager
413.243.9919 x132
ntomasofsky@jacobspillow.org

DAVID ROUSSÈVE/REALITY BRINGS *HALFWAY TO DAWN* TO JACOB'S PILLOW, JULY 3-7

June 14, 2019—Jacob's Pillow presents *Halfway to Dawn* by David Roussève/REALITY in the Doris Duke Theatre, July 3-7. This new work brings together dance, music, text, and video in a "heartfelt and heart-breaking homage" (*Times Quotidian*) to African-American jazz composer Billy Strayhorn, Duke Ellington's prolific but long-observed collaborator. Led by "one of this country's most inspired and inspiring dancemakers" (*San Francisco Chronicle*), David Roussève/REALITY returns to Jacob's Pillow after a developmental residency in the Pillow Lab.

"We were fortunate to witness an early version of *Halfway to Dawn* when Roussève and his talented company REALITY developed this work at the Pillow Lab. The audience that saw the work-in-progress were at the edge of their seats. I'm excited for Pillow audiences to see this wildly thought-provoking and highly poetic tribute to Billy Strayhorn," says Jacob's Pillow Director Pamela Tatge.

Written, choreographed, and directed by Roussève and performed by the diverse nine-member company REALITY, *Halfway to Dawn* redefines 'biography' as the intersection of fact, conjecture, comment, abstraction, and fantasy as it seeks to uncover the complicated emotional truths of gay, African American jazz composer Billy Strayhorn's life while creating a dialogue on today's urgent social 'truths'. 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.

Largely unknown, Strayhorn (1915-1957) was instrumental to the creation of one of the most important bodies of work in American music history. As Duke Ellington's main arranger/writing partner, he wrote and co-wrote signature tunes like "Take the A Train", "Satin Doll", and "Lush Life". Openly gay and living in Harlem in the 1940s-60s, Strayhorn chose to lead a remarkably private life, allowing Ellington to take the spotlight and much of the credit for their joint collaboration.

In *Halfway to Dawn*, layered video-projected text conveys the biographical facts of Strayhorn's life, projected abstract video art explores the emotional undercurrents of his journey, and expressionistic physical theater expands the political urgency of his narrative into our own lives. Historical footage projected on moveable screens helps move the narrative fluidly between past, present, and future. This is Roussève's third collaboration with Cari Ann Shim Sham* (video), Chris Kuhl (lighting), and Leah Piehl (costumes); and his second with Lucy Burns (dramaturgy) and d. Sabela Grimes (sound design).

ABOUT DAVID ROUSSÈVE

Choreographer/writer/director/filmmaker David Roussève is a magna cum laude graduate of Princeton University and a Guggenheim Fellow. He has written, directed, and choreographed 14 full evening works for David Roussève/REALITY including three commissions for the *Next Wave Festival* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Roussève's commissions for other companies include Ballet Hispánico (in collaboration with salsa great Eddie Palmieri), *Dancing Wheels* (a reimagining of *Dumbo* set amongst high school bullying), Cleo Parker

Robinson Dance Theater, Atlanta Ballet (with a live performance by the 100-member Morehouse College Glee Club), Houston Ballet (danced to a live playing of “Appalachian Spring” and set in a Houston High School during 1970s desegregation), Dance Alloy (in collaboration with Ysaye Barnwell of Sweet Honey in the Rock), and Ilkhom Theater Company of Tashkent, Uzbekistan where Roussève spent six weeks creating an evening-length work surrounding the homoerotic art of Russian painter Usto Mumin.

In 2017, Roussève choreographed Kurt Weill’s *Lost in the Stars*, a musical based on Alan Paton’s “Cry the Beloved Country” for director Anne Bogart/SITI company and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. In 2016 Roussève created *Enough?*, a commission for San Francisco’s RAWDance, that asks whether dance can even begin to address social issues like Black Lives Matter. In 2018, *Enough?* was set on Lula Washington Dance Theater and performed at LA’s Ford Theater.

As a filmmaker, Roussève has created three short films including his most recent, *Two Seconds After Laughter*, for which he served as director, writer, and choreographer. Shot in Java, *Two Seconds* is an original intersection of documentary, narrative short, dance-for-camera, and surreal fantasy. The film has screened at over 40 film festivals in 12 countries and won or was a finalist for 13 festival awards including four for best short. Roussève was twice a fellow in the Sundance Feature Film Development program’s Screenwriter’s Lab and is the recipient of First Place Screen Choreography at the prestigious IMZ International Dance Film Festival. Roussève recently completed *Twit*, a feature screenplay based on his dance/theater work *Stardust*. In 2017, *Twit* was a finalist in two “Best Screenplay” categories at the Nashville Film Festival and a semi-finalist for the Los Angeles Outfest Screenwriter’s Lab.

His awards include a Bessie Award, three LA Horton Awards, the CalArts/Alpert Award in Dance, seven consecutive NEA Fellowships, the *Distinguished Alumni Award* from the Association of Black Princeton Alumni, two Irvine Fellowships in Dance, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and a Creative Capital Fellowship. Among others, Roussève has served on the faculty of Princeton University, Columbia College summer program, and Randolph Macon College. In 1996 he joined UCLA’s Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance where he is Distinguished Professor of Choreography and former Department Chair. For the UCLA School of the Arts and Architecture he has served as Associate Dean (2014-15), Acting Dean (2015), and Interim Dean (2015-17).

JACOB’S PILLOW CONNECTIONS:

David Roussève/REALITY made their Pillow debut in 2010 with *Saudade* and returned in 2014 with *Stardust*. *Halfway to Dawn* was developed in part at the Pillow Lab.

- Explore past Pillow performances on Jacob’s Pillow Dance Interactive:

David Roussève/REALITY in *Stardust* in 2014:

danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/david-rousseve-reality/stardust/

Halfway to Dawn was made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts’ National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. *Halfway to Dawn* is a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation Fund Project co-commissioned by REDCAT in partnership with ArtPower at UC San Diego, Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans, the Kelly Strayhorn Theater and NPN. The Creation Fund is supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency). For more information: www.npnweb.org.

ALSO THIS WEEK:

Compagnie CNDC-Angers/Robert Swinston

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

Ted Shawn Theatre

Compagnie CNDC-Angers/Robert Swinston makes its Pillow debut with work by one of the greatest artistic innovators of the 20th century as part of the worldwide Merce Cunningham Centennial celebration. The company is led by current director of the National Center for Contemporary Dance in Angers, France, Robert Swinston, a longtime dancer with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, later assistant to the choreographer, and finally director of choreography. A revered holder of Cunningham's body of work and revelatory technique, *Time Out* lauds, "If we can trust anyone to uphold Merce Cunningham's choreographic legacy, it's Robert Swinston." Commemorating a special Pillow history—the last time Cunningham saw his company perform was through a live stream of its closing performance on the Ted Shawn Theatre stage—the program opens with archival film of Merce Cunningham at Jacob's Pillow followed by *Suite for Five* (1953-1958), *Inlets 2* (1983), and the frolic *How to Pass, Kick, Fall, and Run* (1965), for which Swinston was awarded a Bessie Award in his role as a dancer and for his participation with Cunningham and Carolyn Brown in the reconstruction of the 2003 revival. Swinston is a Pillow alumnus and an original trustee on the Merce Cunningham Trust, whose mission is to carry Merce Cunningham's legacy into the future. *Tickets start at \$45.*

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

Robert Swinston with Merce Cunningham Dance Company in *Sounddance* in 2009:

<https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/merce-cunningham-dance-company/sounddance/>

Inside/Out Performance Series: The LayeRhythm Experiment

Wednesday, July 3 at 6:15pm

FREE, LIVE MUSIC

LayeRhythm began as a jam session of music and dance, created in 2015 in New York City as a monthly event. Now, The LayeRhythm 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.*

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.

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

Saturday, July 6 at 2pm

Presented in collaboration in 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 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 finale 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.*

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 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, 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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