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[ntomasofsky@jacobspillow.org](mailto:ntomasofsky@jacobspillow.org)**URBAN BUSH WOMEN CLOSE JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE FESTIVAL  
WITH *WALKING WITH 'TRANE*, AUGUST 21-25 IN THE DORIS DUKE THEATRE**

August 7, 2019 – (Becket, MA) Jacob's Pillow presents Urban Bush Women in *Walking with 'Trane*, August 21-25 in the Doris Duke Theatre. In this evening-length work, Urban Bush Women draw inspiration from the musical life and spiritual journey of legendary composer and saxophonist John Coltrane. *Walking with 'Trane* highlights the company's ability to weave together genuine movement and ephemeral storytelling into empowering performance.

"Urban Bush Women galvanizes artists, activists, audiences and communities through its groundbreaking performances. Their founder, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, has influenced countless choreographers, educators and arts activists and we are honored to welcome back the company in celebration of their 35 years dedicated to the transformational power of dance," says Jacob's Pillow Director Pamela Tatge.

Founded by visionary, and award-winning choreographer Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, recipient of the 2017 Bessie Award for Lifetime Achievement, Urban Bush Women tell the stories of disenfranchised people through dance. This year, the company announced its two new Co-Artistic Directors, Chanon Judson-Johnson and Samantha Speis. Uniting movement, music, and text from the woman-centered and African Diaspora community perspective, "Urban Bush Women have interpreted the black experience with passion and focus for [over] thirty years" (Elizabeth Zimmer, *Village Voice*).

Choreographed to scores inspired by Coltrane's iconic album *A Love Supreme*, *Walking with 'Trane* is "...More than a tribute to a jazz icon. It immerses the audience in what it is to be an artist" (*The Washington Post*). *Walking with 'Trane* premiered in 2015 after having been developed over the course of four years. Urban Bush Women researched Coltrane's music and how it manifests in physicality, as well as the journey of Coltrane's life. While composing choreographic transcriptions of the music, the company considered how people experienced Coltrane's music—in clubs and in society at large. With Coltrane-influenced scores by Philip White and live pianist George Caldwell, the artists improvise and practice the act of listening and communicating to foster a feeling of immediacy and response.

The evening-length work is composed into two “sides,” like a vinyl record. “Side A: Just a Closer Walk with ‘Trane” conjures Coltrane’s spiritual essence, based in the research of his music and cultural traditions. The performers find spiritual rootedness and heightened performance states through a journey driven by a multi-genre score by White. “Side B: Freed(om)” explores the artistic imprint of *Love Supreme* and Coltrane’s legacy. In diagonal pulls, elastic silences, and chaotic spirals, the performers find communal resilience inside a transcendental composition by Caldwell. Each performer seeks “the emotional state, physical state, and the musical state of being,” said UBW choreographer and dancer Samantha Speis (*On Tap Magazine*).

### **ABOUT URBAN BUSH WOMEN**

Founded in 1984 by choreographer Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Urban Bush Women (UBW) seeks to bring the untold and under-told histories and stories of disenfranchised people to light through dance. UBW does this from a woman-centered perspective and as members of the African Diaspora community in order to create a more equitable balance of power in the dance world and beyond.

UBW galvanizes artists, activists, audiences, and communities through performances, artist development, education, and community engagement. With the ground-breaking performance ensemble at its core, ongoing initiatives like the Summer Leadership Institute (SLI), BOLD (Builders, Organizers & Leaders through Dance), and the Choreographic Center, UBW continues to affect the overall ecology of the arts by promoting artistic legacies; projecting the voices of the under-heard and people of color; bringing attention to and addressing issues of equity in the dance field and throughout the United States; and by providing platforms and serving as a conduit for culturally and socially relevant experimental art makers.

As of July 2019, Chanon Judson-Johnson and Samantha Speis, longtime Co-Associate Artistic Directors and company members, were appointed as Co-Artistic Directors of the UBW Company.

### **ABOUT JAWOLE WILLA JO ZOLLAR**

Jawole Willa Jo Zollar (UBW Founder/Visioning Partner) is from Kansas City, Missouri. Zollar trained with Joseph Stevenson and was a student of the legendary Katherine Dunham. After earning her B.A. in Dance from the University of Missouri at Kansas City, she received her M.F.A. in Dance from Florida State University. In 1980, Zollar moved to New York City to study with Dianne McIntyre at Sounds in Motion.

In 1984 Zollar founded Urban Bush Women (UBW) as a performance ensemble dedicated to exploring the use of cultural expression as a catalyst for social change. In addition to 34 works for UBW, she has created works for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, PHILADANCO!, University of Maryland, Virginia Commonwealth University, and others; and with collaborators including Compagnie Jant-Bi from Senegal and Nora Chipaumire. In 2006, Zollar received a New York Dance and Performance Award (Bessie) for her work as choreographer/creator of *Walking With Pearl...Southern Diaries*. Featured in the PBS documentary *Free to Dance*, which chronicles the African-American influence on modern

dance, Zollar was designated a Master of Choreography by the John F. Kennedy Performing Arts Center in 2005.

Her company has toured five continents and has performed at venues including Brooklyn Academy of Music, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and the Kennedy Center. UBW was selected as one of three U.S. dance companies to inaugurate a cultural diplomacy program for the U.S. Department of State in 2010. In 2011 Zollar choreographed *visible* with Chipaumire, a theatrical dance piece that explores immigration and migration. In 2012, Zollar was a featured artist in the film *Restaging Shelter*, produced and directed by Bruce Berryhill and Martha Curtis, and currently available to PBS stations.

Zollar developed a unique approach to enable artists to strengthen effective involvement in cultural organizing and civic engagement, which evolved into UBW's acclaimed Summer Leadership Institute. She serves as director of the Institute, founder/visioning partner of UBW, and currently holds the position of the Nancy Smith Fichter Professor of Dance and Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor at Florida State University.

A former board member of Dance/USA, Zollar received a 2008 United States Artists Wynn fellowship and a 2009 fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial. Still dancing, she recently toured in a sold-out national tour presented by 651 ARTS as a leading influential dancer/choreographer on a program that included her early mentor Dianne McIntyre, her collaborator Germaine Acogny, Carmen de Lavallade, and Bebe Miller. As an artist whose work is geared towards building equity and diversity in the arts, Zollar was awarded the 2013 Arthur L. Johnson Memorial award by Sphinx Music at their inaugural conference on diversity in the arts. In 2013, Zollar received the Doris Duke Performing Artist Award and honorary degrees from Tufts University and Rutgers University. More recently, Zollar received the 2015 *Dance Magazine* Award, 2016 Dance/USA Honor Award, and the 2017 Bessies Lifetime Achievement Award.

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

Urban Bush Women's Pillow debut was in 1988, followed by many engagements in all three performance venues and multiple creative residencies. Their most recent Pillow appearance was on the Inside/Out stage in 2016.

Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, alongside several members of the company, directed The School at Jacob's Pillow's Improv Traditions and Innovations: From Ring Shout to Blues to Jazz Program in 2016.

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

- Urban Bush Women in *Praise House* in 1990:  
[danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/urban-bush-women/praise-house/](http://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/urban-bush-women/praise-house/)
- Urban Bush Women in *Self-Portrait* in 1998:  
[danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/urban-bush-women/self-portrait/](http://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/urban-bush-women/self-portrait/)

## Explore Themes & Essays on Jawole Willa Jo Zollar on Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive:

- *Dance of the African Diaspora*:  
[danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/themes-essays/african-diaspora/jawole-willa-jo-zollar/](http://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/themes-essays/african-diaspora/jawole-willa-jo-zollar/)
- *Women in Dance*:  
[danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/themes-essays/women-in-dance/jawole-willa-jo-zollar-2/](http://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/themes-essays/women-in-dance/jawole-willa-jo-zollar-2/)

## PERFORMANCE & TICKET INFORMATION:

**Doris Duke Theatre, August 21-25**

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

**Saturday and Sunday at 2:15pm**

**Tickets start at \$35**

*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.*

*Performances to the Saturday evening performance include admission to Summer Send-Off celebration.*

## ALSO THIS WEEK:

### **Boston Ballet**

**August 21-25, Wednesday-Saturday at 8pm; Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday at 2pm**

### **Ted Shawn Theatre**

"Nothing less than brilliant" (*The Boston Globe*), Boston Ballet returns to Jacob's Pillow for the first time in over a decade. Under the artistic directorship of Mikko Nissinen since 2001, Boston Ballet is recognized worldwide for repertoire that is "one of the most eclectic in the country" (*The New York Times*). As New England's first professional ballet company with a Pillow history dating to the company's infancy in 1962, Boston Ballet has mesmerized audiences for over five decades, presenting classical evening-length ballets as well as innovative contemporary works.

Boston Ballet's program includes excerpts of William Forsythe's critically acclaimed *Playlist (EP)* which pairs Forsythe's daring choreography to a soundtrack pulled straight from today's top charts; *Pas de Quatre* and *Rodin* by classic Russian choreographer Leonid Yakobson; and resident choreographer Jorma Elo's *Bach Cello Suites*.

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

Boston Ballet in *Plan to B* in 2004:

[danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/boston-ballet/plan-to-b/](http://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/boston-ballet/plan-to-b/)

## **Inside/Out Performance Series: NEW DIALECT**

**Wednesday, August 21 at 6:15pm**

**FREE**

After a decade performing internationally with artists such as Azure Barton and the Cullberg Ballet, acclaimed dancer Banning Bouldin returned to her hometown, Nashville, TN, to form NEW DIALECT. Since 2013, Bouldin and her collective have gained national recognition for their efforts to contribute

to the evolution of contemporary dance through imaginative, socially relevant outreach, and performances. As resident choreographer, Bouldin has created 11 original works for her company, including her most personal work to date, *The Triangle*, which takes its inspiration from her own experience battling and making peace with multiple sclerosis. The work poignantly combines conceptual fashion and dance theater in a series of moving portraits that reimagine the agency of disability and otherness. NEW DIALECT recently premiered *The Triangle* alongside Roy Assaf's *GIRLS* (US premiere) to sold out audiences at OZ Arts Nashville. They will make their Pillow debut with an excerpt of *The Triangle*.

**Inside/Out Performance Series: American College Dance Association Highlights**

**Thursday, August 22 at 6:15pm**

**FREE**

For the fourth consecutive year, American College Dance Association (ACDA) presents highlights from its regional festivals, supporting and promoting the wealth of talent and creativity from college and university dance departments. Each spring, regional conferences are hosted around the country with performances, workshops, panels, and master classes. At each conference, a panel of expert adjudicators select works in an anonymous process to be performed at a gala performance which concludes the conference. The dances are choreographed by undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and guest artists. Selected works from each region go on to be presented at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts before highlights are selected for the Inside/Out stage.

**PillowTalk: *Laura Young: Boston Ballerina***

**Friday, August 23 at 5pm**

**Blake's Barn**

**FREE**

Janine Parker's book about Laura Young explores her triumphs as a leading light of Boston Ballet during its formative years, and they both tell the story here.

**Inside/Out Performance Series: Jean Appolon Expressions**

**Friday, August 23 at 6:15pm**

**FREE; LIVE MUSIC**

Boston-based, Jean Appolon Expressions (JAE) celebrates and advances Haitian folkloric dance by building a contemporary cultural community that produces professional performances, educational opportunities, and dance training for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. JAE will be performing an excerpt of *Vwayaj (The Travel)*, its latest portrayal of the immigrant experience. After years of political tremor, Appolon has woven his personal story together with those of other immigrants into this evening-length production. Dancers will tell these stories through bold Haitian contemporary dance set to evocative music composed by Haitian electronic music artist Val Jeanty. At the heart of *Vwayaj* is an inquiry into some of the most basic questions of the human experience: Where is home? What do we sacrifice when we leave home? What are we seeking on the other side? How do we create support within community?

**PillowTalk: *Mikko Nissinen in Boston***

**Saturday, August 24 at 4pm**

## **Blake's Barn**

### **FREE**

As Artistic Director of Boston Ballet since 2001, Nissinen has literally brought the company into the 21st century, with a vitality now on full display.

## **Inside/Out Performance Series: Mozaik Dance**

**Saturday, August 24 at 6:15pm**

### **FREE**

Closing this year's Inside/Out Performance Series, Mozaik Dance brings together three women through a mix of popping, contemporary dance, and an influence of street styles. Dancers and choreographers Sun Kim, Manon Bal, and J9 collaborate to explore differences and commonalities.

Sun Kim hails from Korea and has won Step Ya Game Up and Book of Styles in the style of Popping. She has also danced for Madonna, Sir Elton John, Cirque du Soleil, and more. Manon Bal comes from France, studied at the Ailey school, and dances with Ephrat Asherie Dance as a principal dancer. J9 has immersed herself in both the underground and commercial scenery of New York City. She fuses Street Styles together and has danced for Madonna, 070 Shake, and Spotify.

## **Summer Send-Off**

**Saturday, August 24 at 10pm**

The ultimate end-of-summer celebration! After evening performances of Boston Ballet and Urban Bush Women, dance the night away with desserts, drinks, and a dance party. *Sponsored by Berkshire Photo Booth. Tickets start at \$45 including performance; \$25 party-only tickets available.*

## **Sunday Master Class: Urban Bush Women**

**Sunday, August 25 at 10am**

### **Doris Duke Theatre**

Artists of Urban Bush Women will teach a 90-minute master class 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: *Transmissions: Roots to Branches***

**Sunday, August 25 at 4:30pm**

### **Blake's Barn, FREE**

A sneak preview of a documentary film exploring the art form of jazz dance, paying homage to its lineage, celebrating its many re-interpretations, and using a fast-moving kaleidoscope of movement and music to inspire dancers of tomorrow. Featuring an all-star cast of jazz dance legends, this screening will be introduced by one of the film's collaborators, Melanie George.

## **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.

***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.

***Jacob's Pillow: Taking Dance Off the Mountain***

**Methuselah Bar & Lounge**

**391 North St, Pittsfield, MA**

**Mon-Sat 5pm-1am**

In this off-site exhibit, we ask the question: "where can dance happen?" View a selection of original images by Festival photographer Christopher Duggan, taken for a new artistic series that intersects dance, photography, and our beloved Berkshire landscape. We invite you to become part of the movement and share how *you* take dance off the mountain. Visitors are encouraged to take photos

dancing in the exhibit and post on social media using the hashtags #jacobspillow and #pillowcommunity for a chance to win Festival 2019 tickets.

### **Online Exhibit: Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive**

This evolving online resource features breathtaking video highlights of Pillow performances from the early 1930s through today, with an expanded section of multimedia essays featuring talks, photos, and other exclusive content organized into various themes. Visit [danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org](http://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org)

### **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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