

FOR IMAGES AND MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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ON THE HENRY J. LEIR STAGE****CIRQUE BARCODE & ACTING FOR CLIMATE MONTRÉAL PERFORM *BRANCHÉ* ON
THE JACOB'S PILLOW CAMPUS IN THE SEVENTH WEEK OF FESTIVAL**

July 29, 2021 – (BECKET, Mass.) – Internationally recognized Black American Social Dance Tradition-Bearer, LaTasha Barnes, presents the world premiere of *The Jazz Continuum*. This new work centers Jazz music and dance as the foundation of globally-celebrated dance forms like House, Hip-Hop, Waacking, Jazz, and Lindy Hop that are not commonly recognized as threads of the same fabric. From August 11-15 on the Henry J. Leir Stage, Barnes and her cast of masterful dancers and musicians will perform this revolutionary work that aims to reconnect Black American dance forms through the music and inherent motivations that sired them. Also this week, Cirque Barcode & Acting for Climate Montréal, the only international artists to visit the Pillow in Festival 2021, present their collaborative work *Branché*, an outdoor acrobatic circus performance in and around the trees.

The Tap Program at The School of Jacob's Pillow will perform on the Henry J. Leir Stage on Sat., Aug. 14 at 2 p.m. This event will be simultaneously live streamed online. LaTasha Barnes will lead a Sunday Workshop exploring vernacular Jazz dance traditions on Sun., Aug. 15 at 10 a.m. She will also participate in a PillowTalk on the History of Jazz Dance that same day at 3:30 p.m. moderated by Pillow Scholar Melanie George, Jazz dance artist, scholar, dramaturg and founder of *Jazz Is... Dance Project*, a project that is dedicated to the dissemination of Jazz dance education, choreography, performance, and scholarship.

Online offerings include the digital premiere of *Life Encounters: Archie Burnett* on Thurs., Aug. 12 at 7:30 p.m., which will be available until Thurs., Aug. 26, and the digital premiere of *PillowTalk: Celebrating Warren Davis* on Fri., Aug. 13 at 4 p.m.

“LaTasha is an artist well known to Pillow audiences from her dancing with Michelle Dorrance, Caleb Teicher and Gaby Cook. In a project shepherded by our Associate Curator, Melanie George, we now have the opportunity to welcome her back with the culmination of her research into Jazz dance, specifically Black Jazz dance and have it take over the Henry J. Leir Stage,” said Jacob’s

Pillow Executive & Artistic Director, Pamela Tatge. “Her stellar company of dancers and musicians will show how forms we’re familiar with, like House and Lindy Hop, however generationally separated they may seem, are all rooted in Jazz music and dance.”

In Barnes’ *The Jazz Continuum*, dance forms like House and Lindy Hop, separated by generational distance and cultural chasms, find each other in their roots: Jazz music and dance. Barnes’ movement in *The Jazz Continuum* is a through-line for multiple eras of Black American social dance, and “to watch her dance, especially to Jazz music, is to watch historical distance collapse” (*The New York Times*). This phenomena is not limited to Barnes alone, as the collective of masterful artists and musicians in *The Jazz Continuum* share with audiences their own personal histories and explorations. *The Jazz Continuum* provides revolutionary contextualization to multiple genres of Black American dance by putting several generations of dancers— including Reyna Núñez, who made her professional debut in Lin Manuel Miranda’s *In The Heights* film, Frankie Manning Ambassador Tyedric Hill, and former Associate Artistic Director of the Hip Hop Dance Conservatory Ray F. Davis, among others— each deeply well-versed in a different style, in conversation with live Jazz music to reveal their similar roots and interconnected truths.

Cirque Barcode & Acting for Climate Montréal bring performance into the trees, paths, open fields, and other areas on the Jacob’s Pillow campus with their work *Branché*. These two groups reimagine the way their art is practiced, purposefully performing in and around nature and allowing the environment to influence and change their performance in real time. This radical engagement with nature encourages audiences to redefine their relationship with the environment, showing how humans can quite literally learn to coexist peacefully and creatively with the earth’s natural architecture. As the only international company performing on the Pillow’s campus this year, the artists are dedicated to crafting a unique experience using the natural landscape as their apparatus. Cirque Barcode is committed to sustainability in their touring practices. They travel purely by land, and separate branches of their company exist in Canada, Europe, and the United States to avoid air travel.

ABOUT LATASHA BARNES

LaTasha “Tasha” Barnes is an internationally recognized and awarded dancer, choreographer, educator, performer, cultural ambassador, and tradition-bearer of Black American social dance from Richmond, Va. Currently based between New York and Arizona, Barnes is celebrated globally for her musicality, athleticism, and joyful presence throughout the cultural traditions she bears: House, Hip-Hop, Waacking, Vernacular Jazz, and Lindy Hop. Her expansive artistic, competitive, and performative skills have made her a frequent collaborator with Dorrance Dance, Singapore-based Timbre Arts Group, and Ephrat Asherie Dance. Her leadership and business skills have placed her in positions of service as Chair of the Board of Trustees for *Ladies of Hip-Hop Festival*®, who will be performing throughout the Berkshires in the Jacob’s Pillow On the Road series, Vice President of Marketing & Outreach for the *International Lindy Hop Championship*, Board Member of the *Black Lindy Hoppers Fund*, the Frankie Manning Foundation, and a contributing member to the NEFER Global Movement Collective.

Expanding the scope of impact for the communities she serves, Barnes completed her self-designed Master's in Ethnochoreology, Black Studies, and Performance Studies through New York University Gallatin School in 2019. Her thesis and continuing research are working to bridge the gap between communities of practice and academic cultural dance research, performance, preservation, and pedagogy. In concert with these efforts, she is honored to be a part of the *Brain Trust*, developing the ground-breaking stage production *Swing Out*, which brings the passion and power of *Lindy Hop* and its community to the concert stage. She is also honored to be a developing force of several intergenerational and intercommunal cultural arts exchanges and performances like *The Jazz Continuum* that will be presented by Guggenheim Works & Process and Jacob's Pillow in 2021. Additionally in support of this dialogue, Barnes is a contributing author to the forthcoming text *Rooted Jazz Dance: Africanist Aesthetics and Equity in the Twenty-First Century* - Univ. FL Press (2021). Ensuring future artists and dance scholars maintain authentic cultural context as they move through the world bearing forth Black dance traditions, Barnes is excited to join the faculty of Arizona State University School of Music, Dance and Theater as an Assistant Professor of Dance beginning in Fall 2021.

ABOUT CIRQUE BARCODE & ACTING FOR CLIMATE MONTRÉAL

Cirque Barcode began in 2011 when Tristan Nielsen, Alexandra Royer, and Eric Bates met at the National Circus School of Montréal. They toured together for three years with The 7 Fingers as original cast members on the show *Sequence 8*, thrilling audiences around the world. Soon after, they were joined by Eve Bigel, a talented hand-to-hand flyer from France. Together, their careers have produced a string of highlights including a gold medal at SOLyCIRCO Festival for Royer's hoop act, a bronze medal at the Cirque de Demain Festival for both Bates' cigar box juggling and Nielson and Bigel's hand-to-hand acts, a silver medal for the trio's Russian Bar act, and the Audience Choice award. They have performed on *France's Got Talent*, *It's Showtime*, and multiple times on *Le Plus Grande Cabaret du Monde*. In 2019, the team's passion and creative spirit pushed them to co-found Cirque Barcode. The four artists are at once co-founders, co artistic-directors, and artists onstage, with additional co-founder Sophie Picard as General Manager of the company. Barcode's first original theatrical show, *Sweat & Ink*, premiered in 2019. Their second show, *Branché*, a collaboration with the group Acting for Climate Montréal, works to realize their goal of more sustainable touring and use their circus to draw attention to the climate crisis.

The seeds of Acting for Climate were planted in Norway in 2015 by Abigael Winsvold and Victoria Gulliksen. Acting for Climate Montréal was initiated by Agathe Bissierier, Nathan Biggs-Penton, and Adrien Malette-Chénier in 2019. Their mission is to create a network of artists and activists to nurture collaboration, equity, and admiration of nature for a sustainable future. They are inspired by Piet Hein's definition of art as "the solution to the problems that cannot be formulated clearly before being resolved." Artists have the opportunity and responsibility to inspire action, joy, and change. The Acting For Climate tree is growing, both as a professional stage-performance company with a European branch and a Montréal branch, and as a community platform for arts and sustainability. They intend to strengthen and expand global networks of action through interaction with local artists and activists. Acting for Climate is not just a group of performers— it

is a mindset and a movement. Acting for Climate will always strive to develop the field of performing arts, through cross-disciplinary collaboration and challenging its methods and expressions.

JACOB'S PILLOW CONNECTIONS

LaTasha Barnes co-hosted Pillow Party: Swing Dance in March 2019, a special event including a swing dance lesson with herself and Caleb Teicher followed by a social dance party. She will serve as Master Class Faculty for the Tap Program at The School at Jacob's Pillow in August 2021. Barnes is also Chair of the Board of Trustees for Ladies of Hip-Hop Dance Festival®, who are performing in the Jacob's Pillow On the Road series July 31- Aug. 1.

PERFORMANCE AND TICKET INFORMATION

LaTasha Barnes presents *The Jazz Continuum*

Henry J. Leir Stage, Aug. 11-15

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Sunday at 2 p.m.

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, at 6 p.m.

\$45

Available to watch online Aug. 26-Sept. 9; Online premiere Aug. 26 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are on sale now; online at jacobspillow.org, via phone 413.243.0745, and at the Jacob's Pillow Box Office at 358 George Carter Road, Becket, MA 01223.

Cirque Barcode & Acting For Climate Montréal

Pillow Grounds, Aug. 13-15

Friday, Saturday, Sunday at 12 p.m.

Saturday at 3:30 p.m.

\$25

Tickets are on sale now; online at jacobspillow.org, via phone 413.243.0745, and at the Jacob's Pillow Box Office at 358 George Carter Road, Becket, MA 01223.

ALSO THIS WEEK:

ON-SITE EVENTS

The School at Jacob's Pillow Performance Ensemble

Sat., Aug. 14 at 2 p.m.

Henry J. Leir Stage

FREE

Free performances by The School at Jacob's Pillow Performance Ensemble provide an inside look at The School experience and feature repertoire created on the dancers by leading choreographers who serve as program faculty. At the culmination of the 2-week Tap Dance Program, the Performance Ensemble of eleven dancers will perform on the Henry J. Leir Stage. Program Directors of the Tap Dance Program are Michelle Dorrance, Derick K. Grant, and Dormeshia.

Dancers of The School at Jacob's Pillow are apprentices, trainees, pre-professionals, and early-career professionals from around the world. Two-week long Professional Advancement Programs during Festival 2021 are on-site and online, and are designed to nurture the artistic growth of the next generation of dance artists.

Sunday Workshop: LaTasha Barnes

Sun., Aug. 15 at 10 a.m.

The Great Lawn Tent

FREE

Open to all levels, ages 16+.

Join LaTasha Barnes and members of the cast of *The Jazz Continuum* for an exploration of vernacular Jazz dance traditions and social line/group dances that are at the center of the creative and historical space that provided for the expansion and continued celebration of the powerful Black social dance forms presented within the work. Attendees can expect to dance energetically throughout the class and learn about dances like Fall of the Log, Tack Annie's, Blues Stops, The Shim Sham, Two Step, Philly Bop and more.

PillowTalk: The History of Jazz Dance

Sun., Aug. 15 at 3:30 p.m.

Blake's Barn

FREE

As a foremost tradition-bearer of Black American social dance, LaTasha Barnes places Jazz dance in the context of House, Hip-Hop, Waacking, and Lindy Hop.

PillowTalks are a curated series of entertaining and informative discussions with choreographers, writers, filmmakers, and cultural experts. Moderated by Pillow Scholars, PillowTalks provide an opportunity to gain behind-the-scenes insight into the field of dance. Hour-long PillowTalks take place on-site on Sundays at 3:30pm at Blake's Barn (next to the Box Office) and are free and open to the public with advance registration. Recordings of online PillowTalks will be shared throughout the summer, premiering Fridays at 4pm.

ONLINE EVENTS

***Life Encounters*: Archie Burnett**

Online premiere with live chat Aug. 12 at 7:30 p.m. Eastern

Digital screening Aug. 12-26

FREE

Directed by the legendary Archie Burnett, first Father of the New York-based House of Ninja, *Life Encounters* invites audiences to witness the evolution of New York City underground dance histories by way of Burnett's most cherished personal memories. From long nights spent at NYC's iconic underground dance party The Loft to developing kinships with the Hustle, Waacking, Vogue, and post-modern dance communities, Burnett and a dynamic cast of guest artists—Abdiel

Jacobsen, Princess Lockeroo, Ephrat Asherie, and more—embody the adage that there is nothing quite like a life well-danced. A leading figure in the social and street dance scene for over 45 years, Burnett co-directed the Street & Club Dances program at The School at Jacob's Pillow last summer, and has performed at Danspace, 92nd Street Y, and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts.

Virtual Class: Families Dance Together

Fri., Aug. 13 at 3 p.m. Eastern

All Fridays July 9-Aug. 27- ONGOING

FREE

Experience the joy of creating simple dances from the comfort of your home in this intergenerational 45-minute movement class designed for movers of all ages to enjoy together. From kids to adults, we invite you to get your whole household moving! Led by artists of Dance Exchange. No special preparation needed; simply register, gather your movers, click the Zoom class link, and start dancing. We encourage you to find a safe, open space to move in and make sure to modify any movement as needed.

Taking place at Jacob's Pillow since 2001, Families Dance Together is an annual, treasured movement program led by Artist Jeff Bliss, in collaboration with the Becket Arts Center.

PillowTalk: Celebrating Warren Davis

Digital Screening of live, on-site event debuts Fri., Aug. 13 at 4 p.m. Eastern

FREE

This craftsman who provided the Ted Shawn Theatre's immense beams was a local hero and a pioneering Black businessman connected with W.E.B. DuBois.

The School at Jacob's Pillow Performance Ensemble

Sat., Aug. 14 at 2 p.m. Eastern

LIVESTREAM

FREE

Free performances by The School at Jacob's Pillow Performance Ensemble provide an inside look at The School experience and feature repertoire created on the dancers by leading choreographers who serve as program faculty. At the culmination of the 2-week Tap Dance Program, the Performance Ensemble of eleven dancers will perform on the Henry J. Leir Stage. Program Directors of the Tap Dance Program are Michelle Dorrance, Derick K. Grant, and Dormeshia.

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FESTIVAL 2021 EXHIBITS & ARCHIVES—ONGOING

Blake's Barn, June 30-Aug. 29, open Wed.-Sat. 12-8 p.m., Tuesday and Sunday 12-5 p.m.

FREE

***Build Me a Theater*; exhibition**

Ted Shawn's instructions to architect Joseph Franz provide the title for this examination of all the Pillow's performance spaces, past and present. Artifacts and images from the Ted Shawn Theatre, Doris Duke Theatre, Henry J. Leir Stage, and the Bakalar Studio create a kaleidoscopic celebration of live performance at the Pillow.

Jacob's Pillow Archives/Norton Owen Reading Room

This spacious, informal library and reading room allows ticketed 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 newly expanded 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 in the Reading Room, 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. Jacob's Pillow rests on the traditional lands of the Agawam, the Nipmuc, the Pocumtuc, and the Mohican and we honor their elders past, present, and future. 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. 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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