



NATIONAL MEDAL OF ARTS | NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

**FOR IMAGES AND MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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**ARTISTS FROM BOSTON BALLET, HOUSTON BALLET,  
AND PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET COME TOGETHER  
ON THE HENRY J. LEIR STAGE IN “BALLET COAST TO COAST”  
TO CLOSE FESTIVAL 2021**

**JUMATATU M. POE AND JERMONE DONTE BEACHAM PRESENT J-SETTE  
PERFORMANCE ON THE PILLOW GROUNDS**

Aug. 13, 2021 – (BECKET, Mass.) – After more than a year of isolation with various forms of virtual and socially distant performances, dancers from three major ballet companies from across the United States will take the stage together in Ballet Coast to Coast at Jacob’s Pillow. Leading artists from Boston Ballet, Houston Ballet, and Pacific Northwest Ballet will perform on the Henry J. Leir Stage from Aug. 25-29 in this Pillow-exclusive event. This engagement is made possible by a gift from Jeffrey Davis and Michael Miller with additional support from Sylvia T. Pope.

Also this week, jumatatu m. poe and collaborator Jermone Donte Beacham distill a decade of research on J-Sette performance, a high step march popularized by the women’s majorette teams at historically Black colleges in the southern United States and Black queer femme men at southern Black gay clubs. In an amalgam of the performance and complexities of Black joy, poe and Beacham investigate rhythm, pattern, and attention in this iteration of the ongoing series *Let ‘im Move You*.

On Sunday, Aug. 29 at 10 a.m., dancers from each ballet company performing in Ballet Coast to Coast will lead a Sunday Workshop for intermediate/advanced dancers. That same day, *PillowTalk: Ballet Coast to Coast* will offer a discussion mirroring the current performance program, recounting the 20th-century evolution of regional ballet and recent developments in the field. Online this week are the digital premieres of LaTasha Barnes presents *The Jazz Continuum* on Thurs., Aug. 26 at 7:30 p.m. and *PillowTalk: The History of Jazz Dance* on Friday, Aug. 27 at 4 p.m.

“Ballet Coast to Coast is an exceptional opportunity to see some of the finest dancers from premier American companies present a rich program of works by Pickett, Peck, Welch, and Dove, culminating in a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see them perform together in a glorious work by Alejandro Cerrudo with music by Arvo Pärt,” said Jacob’s Pillow Executive & Artistic Director, Pamela Tatge. “Also this week, we are delighted to have an alum of The School, jumatatu m. poe, along with Jermone Donte Beacham, who will be making their Pillow debut.”

## **ABOUT BALLET COAST TO COAST**

Ballet Coast to Coast brings the best of ballet to the Berkshires in a unique program. Dancers from Pacific Northwest Ballet including Christopher D’Ariano, Elle Macy, Amanda Morgan, and Dylan Wald will perform choreographer Ulysses Dove’s *Red Angels*—the first work the late choreographer made for New York City Ballet. It is intense, athletic, and performed to a score for electric violin entitled “Maxwell’s Demon” by Richard Einhorn. Dove said of this work, “I wanted to deal with aspects of the Balanchine aesthetic I find appealing: the speed, legginess, the formality. As for the title, I think the dancers are angelic. And for me, the angels of the senses are red.”

Houston Ballet will bring dancers Chandler Dalton, Karina González, and Harper Watters to perform in two renowned ballets. *Reflections* by renowned choreographer Justin Peck, which Houston Ballet dancer Oliver Halkowich describes as having a “laissez-faire quality to it, like five friends socializing on a Sunday” (*Dance Spirit*). Dancers from Houston Ballet will also perform *Sons de L’âme* by choreographer and Houston Ballet Artistic Director Stanton Welch AM, a “serene pas de deux” (*Nantucket Atheneum Dance Festival*) that the *Houston Chronicle* has described as “crystalline classicism in an architecturally complex package of movements that cascade and echo continuously, so joyfully youthful.”

Dancers of Boston Ballet Lia Cirio, Paul Craig, and My’Kal Stromile will perform in *Home Studies: Parlor Floor Life* by Helen Pickett. There have been three *Home Studies* projects, including five dance films thus far, all created virtually and in the homes of dancers from Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Boston Ballet, Charlotte Ballet, Dance Theatre of Harlem, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, and Royal Swedish Ballet. The first three films, known collectively as *Home Studies 1*, were created on Boston Ballet dancers Lia Cirio, Paul Craig, and My’Kal Stromile, who will be performing the newly edited onstage version in Ballet Coast to Coast. A new *Home Studies* trio will premiere at the Pillow. *The Boston Globe* named *Home Studies 1* “one of the six bright spots in dance this year” in 2020.

In the program’s finale, dancers from all three companies will perform together in *Second to Last*, a work by Pacific Northwest Ballet’s resident choreographer Alejandro Cerrudo, inspired by and set to the music of Arvo Pärt.

## **ABOUT LET 'IM MOVE YOU**

jumatatu m. poe and Jermone Donte Beacham began their artistic relationship in 2009, brought together by their shared passion for J-Sette, a call-and-response dance form that originated in the early 1980s by Black southern U.S. majorette lines at historically Black colleges and universities. Black queer men, traditionally prohibited from joining majorette teams, brought J-Sette into queer spaces like gay clubs and pride parades by creating their own competitive teams. Iterations of poe and Beacham's project *Let 'im Move You* have been performed in black box and white box theaters, and the selections they will present at the Pillow exist primarily in duet structures that echo the choreographed call-and-response formula of traditional J-Sette competitions. A reimagining of these iterations for the Pillow's campus allows audiences to travel through and within the body of work that is *Let 'im Move You*.

## **ABOUT PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET**

Pacific Northwest Ballet, one of the largest and most highly regarded ballet companies in the United States, was founded in 1972. In 2005, Peter Boal became artistic director, succeeding Kent Stowell and Francia Russell, artistic directors since 1977. The Company of nearly fifty dancers annually presents performances of full-length and mixed repertory ballets at Marion Oliver McCaw Hall in Seattle and on tour. The Company has toured to Europe, Australia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Canada, and throughout the United States, with celebrated appearances at Jacob's Pillow and in New York City and Washington DC.

## **ABOUT HOUSTON BALLET**

With more than 50 years of rich history, Houston Ballet returns to its home stage at the Wortham Theater Center for its 2021-22 season with a company of 59 dancers. With a budget of \$33.9 million and an endowment of \$79.2 million (as of June 2019), it is America's fifth largest ballet company. Its \$46.6 million state-of-the-art performance space, Houston Ballet Center for Dance, opened in April 2011. Houston Ballet's reach is global, touring in renowned theaters in Dubai, London, Paris, Moscow, Spain, Montréal, Ottawa, Melbourne, New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and more.

Houston Ballet attracts prestigious leaders in dance. Australian choreographer Stanton Welch AM has served as Artistic Director of Houston Ballet since 2003, raising the level of the company's classical technique and either commissioning or acquiring works from choreographers such as Julia Adam, George Balanchine, Aszure Barton, Christopher Bruce, Alexander Ekman, William Forsythe, Jiří Kylián, Edwaard Liang, Trey McIntyre, and Justin Peck. Executive Director James Nelson serves as the administrative leader of the organization, a position he assumed in February 2012 after serving as the Company's General Manager for more than a decade. Beyond its stage presence, Houston Ballet maintains a strong foothold in continuing to foster a love for dance in future generations. Its Education and Community Engagement program reaches more than 70,000 individuals in the Houston area annually. Houston Ballet Academy trains more than 1,000 students every year, producing more than 64 percent of the elite athletes that comprise Houston Ballet's current Company.

## **ABOUT BOSTON BALLET**

Since 1963, Boston Ballet's internationally acclaimed performances of classical, neo-classical, and contemporary ballets, combined with a dedication to world-class dance education and community initiatives have made the institution a leader in its field, with a 58-year history of promoting excellence and access to dance.

Under the leadership of Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen and Executive Director Meredith (Max) Hodges, the Company maintains a diverse repertoire, ranging from full-length ballets to new works by some of today's finest choreographers. The company performs classical ballets such as Marius Petipa's *The Sleeping Beauty*, Rudolf Nureyev's *Don Quixote*, Sir Frederick Ashton's *Cinderella*, Mikko Nissinen's *Swan Lake*, Florence Clerc's *La Bayadère*, and John Cranko's *Romeo & Juliet*; neo-classical ballets by George Balanchine, Christopher Wheeldon, and Justin Peck; and contemporary ballets from choreographers including Jiří Kylián, Wayne McGregor, Helen Pickett, Nanine Linning, Karole Armitage, and Boston Ballet Resident Choreographer Jorma Elo. Boston Ballet has established a long-term partnership with William Forsythe, presenting Forsythe's *Artifact* (2018) and his first world premiere for a U.S. company in 27 years, *Playlist (EP)*. The Company has toured nationally and internationally, including critically acclaimed engagements in New York City, Washington D.C., Spain, Korea, Finland, London, and Paris. Boston Ballet's second company, Boston Ballet II, is composed of dancers who gain experience by performing with the Company and independently, presenting special programs to audiences throughout the Northeast.

Boston Ballet School provides exceptional dance education and ballet training across three locations in Boston, Newton, and Walnut Hill School for the Arts. Boston Ballet's nationally acclaimed Education and Community initiatives provide programming, events, and activities that connect the community to dance.

## **ABOUT JUMATATU M. POE**

I am a choreographer, performer, and educator based between Philadelphia and New York City who grew up dancing around the living room and at parties with my siblings and cousins. My early exposure to concert dance was through African dance and capoeira performances on California college campuses where my parents studied and worked, but I did not start formal dance training until college with Umfundalai, Kariamu Welsh's contemporary African dance technique. My work continues to be influenced by various sources, including my foundations in those living rooms and parties, my early technical training in contemporary African dance, my continued study of contemporary dance and performance, and my recent sociological research of and technical training in J-setting with Jermone Donte Beacham. I produce dance and performance work with idiosynCrazy productions, a company I founded in 2008 and now co-direct with Shannon Murphy. Previously, I have danced with Marianela Boán, Silvana Cardell, Emmanuelle Hunyh, Tania Isaac, Kun-Yang Lin, C. Kemal Nance, Marissa Perel, Leah Stein, Keith Thompson, Kate Watson-Wallace, Reggie Wilson, and Kariamu Welsh (as a member of Kariamu & Company). As a performer, I also collaborate with Merián Soto. —jumatatu m. poe (flexible pronouns, as long as it's coming from a respectful place)

## ABOUT JERMONE DONTE BEACHAM

Dancing has been in my blood since I can remember. It started off with hip hop dancing for my high school, and I began to recognize my skill and talent. After four years, I was introduced to the world of J-Sette by women. J-Sette historically refers to Jackson State University's female drill team that began in the 1970s. They "created" the dance style, and thus far have made it a distinctive form of dance. I was interested in this type of dance, but not entirely until I saw a group of males performing it. At that point, I claimed the style and perfected it on my body. Currently, I have my own J-Sette line, Mystic Force, and plan to increase our already considerable renown in this style of dance in our community, and eventually internationally. Previously, I served as co-captain of Dallas' Texas Teasers. I have participated and competed in several events and competitions, including two SettleItOff video challenges, Atlanta Pride 2010, Tennessee Classics 2009, and Memphis Pride 2008. In 2015, I was named New Legendary by the Meet Me on the Dance Floor J-Sette council, and have gained many titles since then, such as Best Dancer and Most Entertaining. Since then my biggest artist work has been a collaborative co-choreographed performance with jumata tu m. poe. Our work, the *Let 'im Move You* series, has been awarded the 2019 Queer Art Prize, and nominated for the Bessies in 2020. Currently, I lead the renovated Texas Teasers queer male J-Sette team. Our mission is to provide opportunities and guidance in pursuing dance careers for our younger generation of queer male dancers, and to provide scholarships to two of those young folks per dance (majorette) season. —Jermone Donte Beachman

## JACOB'S PILLOW CONNECTIONS

Dancers from Pacific Northwest Ballet made their Pillow debut in 2006 and returned in 2009 with an all-Ulysses Dove program, including *Red Angels*, which they are bringing back for Ballet Coast to Coast this season. They returned in 2014 and in 2016 with two completely different repertory programs.

Dancers from Houston Ballet made their Pillow debut in 1979 with a program including a world premiere by Ben Stevenson, who served as the company's director for nearly three decades. The company returned to the Pillow in 2018 under Stevenson's successor, Stanton Welch, who premiered *Just* on a program with other repertory works including excerpts from *Sons de L'âme*.

Dancers from Boston Ballet closed Festival 2019 in the Ted Shawn Theatre with excerpts from *Playlist (EP)* by William Forsythe. They also performed at Jacob's Pillow in 2004 in *Plan to B* by Jorma Elo.

jumata tu m. poe and Jermone Donte Beacham are making their Pillow debut with *Let 'im Move You*. jumata tu m. poe attended the Cultural Traditions Program at The School at Jacob's Pillow in 2005.

### Explore past Pillow engagements on Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive:

- Pacific Northwest Ballet in *Red Angels* (1997) in 2009:

- <https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/pacific-northwest-ballet/red-angels/>
- Pacific Northwest Ballet in *TAKE FIVE... More or Less* (2008) in 2014:  
<https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/pacific-northwest-ballet/take-five-more-or-less/>
- Pacific Northwest Ballet in *Her Door to the Sky* (2016) in 2016:  
<https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/pacific-northwest-ballet/door-sky/>
- Houston Ballet in *Just* (2018) in 2018:  
<https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/houston-ballet/just/>
- Boston Ballet in *Plan to B* (2004) in 2014:  
<https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/boston-ballet/plan-to-b/>
- Boston Ballet in *Playlist (EP)* (excerpts) (2019) in 2019:  
<https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/boston-ballet/playlist-ep-excerpts/>

## PERFORMANCE & TICKET INFORMATION

### BALLET COAST TO COAST

#### Henry J. Leir Stage, Aug. 25-29

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

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

\$45

Available to watch online Sept. 2-16; Online premiere Sept. 2 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are on sale now; online at [jacobspillow.org](http://jacobspillow.org), via phone 413.243.0745, and at the Jacob's Pillow Box Office at 358 George Carter Road, Becket, MA 01223.

### JUMATATU M. POE

#### Pillow Grounds, Aug. 26-28

Thursday, Friday, Saturday at 8 p.m.

Tickets are on sale now; online at [jacobspillow.org](http://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

#### Sunday Workshop: Ballet Coast to Coast

Sun., Aug. 29 at 10 a.m.

#### The Great Lawn Tent

\$20

Open to intermediate/advanced dancers, ages 12+.

One principal dancer from each of the three companies performing for Ballet Coast to Coast (Boston Ballet, Houston Ballet, and Pacific Northwest Ballet) will lead a class for intermediate/advanced dancers and invite you to enter into their acclaimed techniques.

*Please wear comfortable clothing to move in and ballet slippers.*

**PillowTalk: Ballet Coast to Coast**

**Sun., Aug. 29 at 3:30 p.m.**

**Blake's Barn**

**FREE**

Mirroring the current performance program, this discussion recounts the 20th-century evolution of regional ballet and recent developments in the field.

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**

**LaTasha Barnes Presents *The Jazz Continuum***

**Online premiere with live chat Aug. 26 at 7:30pm Eastern**

**Digital Screening Aug. 26-Sept. 9**

**FREE**

*The Jazz Continuum* exploration centers the prolific artistry of Jazz music and dance as a cornerstone of Black American dance forms. Through this acclaimed series, LaTasha Barnes and her cast of masterful dancers and musicians embody, amplify, and showcase the power of Jazz dance and Lindy Hop to their personal dance journeys and the artform as a global phenomenon.

In this world premiere of the second exploration of *The Jazz Continuum* series, this powerful cast will investigate the energetic and generative relationships within Jazz and Lindy Hop and share their imaginings of its reapplication. Barnes is an internationally recognized and award-winning dancer, choreographer, educator, performer, and ambassador of culture. She has been honored to be a frequent collaborator with Dorrance Dance, Ephrat Asherie Dance, Ladies of Hip-Hop, and Caleb Teicher & Co.

**Virtual Class: Families Dance Together**

**Friday, Aug 27 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: The History of Jazz Dance**

**Digital Screening of live, on-site event debuts Fri., Aug. 27 at 4 p.m. Eastern**

**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.

## **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](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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