

FOR IMAGES AND MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Elise Linscott, Public Relations & Communications Coordinator
elinscott@jacobspillow.org

**World Premiere of
America(na) to Me
Opens Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival 2022**

**Eastern Woodland Dances, Dance of the Ages, and Collage Dance Collective to
Appear in One-Night-Only Performances on the Henry J. Leir Stage**

May 25, 2022 (BECKET, Mass.)—The world premiere Pillow-exclusive engagement, *America(na) to Me*, will kick off Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival 2022 in the opening week of the Festival – as the first week-long performance in the newly renovated Ted Shawn Theatre – from June 22-26. Week 1 of the Festival will also feature several one-night-only performances on the outdoor Henry J. Leir Stage, including Eastern Woodland Dances, Ted Shawn's *Dance of the Ages* (1938) performed by Adam Weinert and Dancers, and Collage Dance Collective.

Eastern Woodland Dances opens the Festival as the first of 20 one-nighters on the Leir Stage on June 22; *Dance of the Ages* will be performed on June 23; and Collage Dance Collective on June 24. On Saturday, June 25, The School at Jacob's Pillow Contemporary Ballet Program will also perform on the Leir Stage, available in person and as a free livestream.

In addition to these onsite and online performances, PillowTalks will be offered free of charge in Blake's Barn: for a Saturday reading and book signing with Paul Scolieri, who has written a book about Jacob's Pillow founder Ted Shawn; and on Sunday, with a discussion about two short films that highlight the triumphs and challenges faced by dancers today, as exemplified by company directors Earl Mosley of Diversity of Dance, and Kevin Thomas of Collage Dance Collective.

"The opening week of Festival 2022 honors our past, present and future. Just as Ted Shawn showcased American folk dances in the opening week of his inaugural Festival in 1942, Melanie George and Ali Rosa-Salas look at all that American dance is in 2022 with a showcase of works by innovative artists performing in a wide range of genres," said Jacob's Pillow Executive and Artistic Director, Pamela Tatge. "We will also celebrate the Indigenous peoples on whose land we now dance, in a program on our outdoor stage that features dances that were once performed in our region."

America(na) to Me encapsulates the heart of the 90th Anniversary Season at Jacob's Pillow, looking at the dance landscape and the world at large today. In 1942, Jacob's Pillow inaugurated the Ted Shawn Theatre—the first theater in the United States designed exclusively for dance—with a showcase of American Folk Dances curated by Shawn. In this modern-day interpretation, Associate Curators Melanie George and Ali Rosa-Salas revisit the theme of that first program by inviting dance artists to reflect on what American identity means to them. This world premiere event features an expansive array of

artists including Warwick Gombey Troupe, Jasmine Hearn, Nélide Tirado, Sara Mearns & Joshua Bergasse, Alexandra Tatarsky, and Pillow commissions performed by Dormeshia & Guests and Mythili Prakash. Many of the works will also include live music.

Eastern Woodland Dances highlights the breadth of Indigenous performance traditions within the Eastern Woodland region and its diaspora. The program will feature *America(na) to Me* artists Warwick Gombey Troupe of Bermuda — who are of Wampanoag, Pequot, Mohican, and Narragansett ancestry, tribes forcibly removed from this region — along with the Iroquois Traditional Dancers, and Acosia Red Elk (2022 winner of the Gathering of Nations Women’s Jingle Dress competition). Nipmuc elder Larry Spotted Crow Mann returns as a curator of this year’s celebration.

Ted Shawn’s historic *Dance of the Ages* (1938) comes alive once again in this special engagement with Adam Weinert and Dancers. Ted Shawn, founder of Jacob’s Pillow, considered *Dance of the Ages* to be his masterpiece. The conditions it responded to — a land war in Europe, the loss of hard-won liberties, and the rise of fascism around the world — are once again familiar and all around us making this reconstruction feel more urgent than ever before. This iconic choreography was inspired by the radical queer text “Towards Democracy” (1883) by Edward Carpenter and comprised Shawn’s response to what he saw as the rise of fascism around the world. This new production brings a fresh perspective to the piece, offering subtle updates to themes of gender performance and national identity.

Collage Dance Collective returns to Jacob’s Pillow by popular demand following their performance in the Inside/Out series in 2017. Led by renowned dancer/educator and Pillow Alum Kevin Thomas, Collage Dance was established in 2006 in response to the ballet industry’s lack of racial diversity on stage. The ballet company relocated from New York City to Memphis in 2009, and since then has become instrumental in changing the landscape of dance. Collage Dance is one of the largest Black-led performing arts organizations in the South.

ABOUT AMERICA(NA) TO ME

Several groups performing in this exclusive engagement will be making Pillow debuts, including Warwick Gombey Troupe, a company hailing from Bermuda. Gombey is a folkloric performance from Bermuda that incorporates elements from West African and the Eastern Woodland cultures. The word “Gombey” is a transliteration of an African word “Gomba” meaning rhythm/drum. Also making her Pillow debut, Mythili Prakash belongs to a new generation of classical Indian dancers, and is one of the most celebrated and respected young Bharatanatyam dancer/choreographers today. A second generation Indian and American artist, Mythili’s repertoire is an embodiment of the narratives of the many worlds that shape her. Her piece will be accompanied by live music from Sushma Somasekharan, Rajna Krishnan Swaminathan, Kasi Aysola, and Ganavya Doraiswamy. Jasmine Hearn is an interdisciplinary artist, director, choreographer, organizer, teaching artist, and a three time Bessie award winning performer. The responsorial psalm to their 2021 solo series, N I L E, audience members will see Jasmine’s arrival and movement on-stage in *America(na) to Me* as the conclusion of their durational work of listening, roaming, and moving. This sensing choreography puts Hearn in touch with the land on which the Pillow is located as they connect with its collective memory and multiple histories. Alexandra Tatarsky is from New York City and creates work with comedy, poetry, dance theater, and deluded rant, sometimes with songs. Their performance pieces often incorporate improvisation and absurdist characters.

This engagement also features several artists returning to Jacob's Pillow. Nélide Tirado, a former Pillow Lab residency recipient, has been recognized around the globe for her grace and powerful style. She shares a deep passion and talent for Flamenco and Latin social dances. Sara Mearns is a principal with New York City Ballet, a Benois de la Danse and Princess Grace Award nominee, and winner of the 2018 Bessie Award for Outstanding Performer. She made her musical theater debut as the Angel in New York City Center Encores! *I Married an Angel* in March 2019, directed and choreographed by her husband, Joshua Bergasse. Bergasse is a New York-based choreographer as well as a master teacher. He won the Emmy Award for his choreography on NBC's musical drama *SMASH* and also choreographed multiple segments on *So You Think You Can Dance*. On Broadway, he choreographed the 2014 revival of *On The Town*. Dormeshia is a dynamic tap dancer, choreographer, and instructor who has been lauded as the best of her generation, both by her peers and esteemed dance critics. She was the recipient of the 2021 Jacob's Pillow Dance Award and has been a Co-Director of The School at Jacob's Pillow's Tap Dance Program since 2017. Her performances have appeared on the Broadway stage, in films, and in choreography for artists including Savion Glover and Gregory Hines. Collaborators with Dormeshia performing in *America(na) to Me* include Star Dixon, Quynn Johnson, and Brinae Ali .

ABOUT EASTERN WOODLAND DANCES

Larry Spotted Crow Mann belongs to the Nipmuc tribe and is an award-winning writer, playwright, poet, Native American cultural educator, traditional storyteller, tribal drummer and dancer, motivational speaker, and consultant on Indigenous pedagogy. Warwick Gombey Troupe of Bermuda are of Wampanoag, Pequot, Mohican, and Narragansett ancestry. Acosia Red Elk is of the Umatilla tribe and her main specialty is the jingle dance, which is an Ojibwe dance. The ancestral homelands of the Ojibwe are the Eastern Woodlands . She has been dancing since childhood and has competed at several dance competitions, including the Gathering of Nations Powwow in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where she's won in several categories. A group of Iroquois Traditional Dancers will also perform.

ABOUT DANCE OF THE AGES (1938) AND ADAM WEINERT

Dance of the Ages premiered on September 9, 1938 at Jacob's Pillow. Shawn considered *Dance of the Ages* to be the "summit of his achievement as a choreographer, dancer, and educator." Each section mirrors one of the four elements: fire, water, earth, and air. This iconic choreography was based on the radical queer text "Towards Democracy" (1883) by Edward Carpenter and comprised Shawn's response to what he saw as the rise of fascism around the world.

Hudson-based dance artist Adam Weinert is critically acclaimed for reconstructing the work of Ted Shawn with a distinguishable contemporary resonance. Weinert was a 2013 Jacob's Pillow Research Fellow and performed early solos by Shawn as part of a series hosted at the Museum of Modern Art and Tate Modern. In 2016, Weinert premiered the evening-length work *MONUMENT* at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, praised as "impressive, strange, a puzzle you want to solve" (*The New York Times*), where he revived works by Doris Humphrey, José Limón, and Ted Shawn. He is a Bessie Honoree, was named a "Dance Renegade" by *Dance Magazine*, awarded the Léo Bronstein Award from New York University, and the Hector Zaraspe Prize for Outstanding Choreography from The Juilliard School. In 2020, Weinert launched Jacob's Garden, a working farm, living archive and participatory piece of choreography on the campus of the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. His ongoing research includes teasing out the sensual connectivity between performance, agriculture, nourishment and community. For more information, visit www.jacobsgarden.org.

ABOUT COLLAGE DANCE COLLECTIVE

Collage Dance Collective is one of the largest Black-led performing arts organizations in the South and one of a few professional ballet companies in the world with a roster of BIPOC dancers. Its expanding programming and new, state-of-the-art facility has made Collage an anchor cultural institution in Memphis and a wellspring for future generations of Southern performing artists and 21st century creative leaders. Founded in New York in 2006, Collage Dance Collective relocated to Memphis the following year to take part in the city's exciting artistic renaissance and to fulfill its mission of extending the reach of outstanding classical ballet training. The company boasts a diverse repertory of classical and contemporary ballets by Sir Frederick Ashton, Camille A. Brown, Nicolo Fonte, and others.

Jacob's Pillow Connections

Nélida Tirado completed a Pillow Lab residency in the spring of 2021, where she focused on developing seven new works.

Sara Mearns made her Pillow debut at the 2015 Season Opening Gala. She returned the same year for a residency with Jodi Melnick. She has also performed at the Gala in 2017, and in 2019 had a one-week engagement at the Festival in a specially-produced program entitled *Sara Mearns: Beyond Ballet*.

Dormeshia was just 17 during her first appearance at Jacob's Pillow, in 1993, as an apprentice-turned-member of the Los Angeles-based Jazz Tap Ensemble. Dormeshia has performed at the Pillow with Dorrance Dance several times, most notably in *The Blues Project* in 2013 and 2015. In 2016, she created and performed *And Still You Must Swing* at the Festival with fellow tap soloists Jason Samuels Smith and Derick K. Grant, and featured 2016 Jacob's Pillow Dance Award winner Camille A. Brown. Since 2017, Dormeshia has been a Co-Director of The School at Jacob's Pillow's Tap Dance Program, where she plays a key role in the mentoring of the next generation of tap dance artists. Dormeshia was the recipient of the 2021 Jacob's Pillow Dance Award.

Nipmuc elder Larry Spotted Crow Mann performed at the Pillow in 2021 in *Eastern Woodland Dances*, and in a week-long landmark celebration in 2019 entitled *The Land on Which We Dance*. In 2021, Iroquois Traditional Dancer Jake George performed to music by Al George in a traditional smoke dance at Jacob's Pillow. Jacob's Pillow has engaged with Indigenous peoples and culture since its founding in 1933, and continues to seek ways to provide sustained support of Indigenous performance and further explore the history of the land.

Adam Weinert has enjoyed a multi-faceted Pillow relationship since 2003 when he first participated in the Contemporary Traditions program of The School at Jacob's Pillow. He has worked extensively with Jonah Bokaer, appearing with him at the Pillow in 2011 and 2012. Weinert's interest in Ted Shawn intensified during a Research Fellowship in the Jacob's Pillow Archives, and later encompassed the presentation of Shawn solos at The Museum of Modern Art and both The Tate Britain Museum and The Tate Modern, eventually developing into *MONUMENT*, which Weinert performed at the Pillow in 2016. In 2018, Weinert's reconstruction of *Dance of the Ages* (1938) was performed as a special post-Festival event in the original studio where it was created. In 2021, Weinert and collaborators performed in an inaugural event for Jacob's Garden.

Collage Dance Collective's founding artistic director is Kevin Thomas, a veteran of Dance Theatre of Harlem, Cleveland/San Jose Ballet, and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens who participated in the Jacob's Pillow Ballet Project in 1985. Collage Dance Collective performed in the Inside/Out series as part of the 2017 Festival.

Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive:

Sara Mearns and Honji Wang in *No. 1* in 2019:

<https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/sara-mearns-honji-wang/no-1/>

Dormeshia, Jason Samuels Smith, and Derick K. Grant in *And Still You Must Swing* from 2016:

<https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/dormeshia-sumbry-edwards-jason-samuels-smith-derick-k-grant/still-must-swing/>

Adam H. Weinert in *Dance of the Ages* in 2018:

<https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/adam-h-weinert/adam-weinert-dance-ages/>

Collage Dance Collective in *Lineage* in 2017:

<https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/collage-dance-collective/lineage/>

Iroquois Traditional Dancers in *Smoke Dance* in 2021:

<https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/iroquois-traditional-dancers/smoke-dance/>

PERFORMANCE & TICKET DETAILS

America(na) to Me

June 22-26, Wed.-Sat. at 8pm; Saturday and Sunday at 2pm

Ted Shawn Theatre

\$55-\$85

Tickets are on sale now; online at jacobspillow.org and via phone at 413.243.0745

Eastern Woodland Dances

Wed., June 22, 6pm

Henry J. Leir Stage

\$15-\$35

Tickets are on sale now; online at jacobspillow.org and via phone at 413.243.0745

Dance of the Ages

Thurs., June 23, 6pm

Henry J. Leir Stage

\$15-\$35

Tickets are on sale now; online at jacobspillow.org and via phone at 413.243.0745

Collage Dance Collective

Fri., June 24, 6pm

Henry J. Leir Stage

\$15-\$35

Tickets are on sale now; online at jacobspillow.org and via phone at 413.243.0745

ALSO THIS WEEK

PillowTalk: Ted Shawn: His Life, Writings, and Dances

Sat., June 25, 4pm

Blake's Barn

FREE

Paul Scolieri has written the first comprehensive biography of the Pillow's legendary founder, and he discusses his groundbreaking research, followed by a book signing.

The School at Jacob's Pillow Contemporary Ballet Program

Sat., June 25, 6pm

Henry J. Leir Stage

FREE

The School at Jacob's Pillow Performance Ensemble provides an inside look at The School experience and features world premiere works created on the dancers by guest choreographer Jennifer Archibald and Jacob's Pillow Dance Awardee and Program Director Annabelle Lopez Ochoa.

Workshop with Festival Artists: Névida Tirado

Sun., June 26, 10-11:30am

Open to all experience levels, ages 12+

Explore the music and dance form of flamenco from Andalusia, Spain with artist Névida Tirado. This workshop will focus on traditional basic flamenco movement such as marcajes, floreo, percussive footwork, and rhythm, incorporating and coordinating them all into a fun dance sequence. Please wear comfortable clothing to move in and bring a pair of hard soled/closed toe shoes with a sturdy low heel for sound, as well as your own water bottle.

PillowTalk: Perseverance on Film

Sun., June 26, 4pm

Blake's Barn

FREE

Two short films highlight the triumphs and challenges faced by dancers today, as exemplified by company directors Earl Mosley (Diversity of Dance) and Kevin Thomas (Collage Dance Collective).

FESTIVAL 2022 EXHIBITS & ARCHIVES—ONGOING

Now & Then: Evocative Dance Portraits by Christopher Duggan

Blake's Barn

Tuesday-Sunday, noon through final curtain

FREE

Photography has been an integral part of Jacob's Pillow throughout its 90 seasons, and Festival Photographer Christopher Duggan has often mined this tradition for inspiration, culminating in these pairings of vintage and contemporary images.

The Ted Shawn Theatre: An Evolving Landmark

Ted Shawn Theatre Lobby

Open daily, noon through final curtain

FREE

While the unveiling of an entirely new stage house takes the focus in 2022, this landmark structure has been a "work in progress" ever since its opening in 1942. Through vintage imagery and artifacts on display, the rich history of America's first dance theater comes into view.

Jacob's Pillow Archives/Norton Owen Reading Room

Blake's Barn

Tuesday-Sunday, noon through final curtain

FREE

This spacious, informal library and reading room allows visitors to view videos, browse through books, access the Pillow's computer catalog, or peruse permanent collections of Pillow programs and photographs from the Archives. The Norton Owen Reading Room and new Special Collections Room also feature recent donations and more archival treasures from the Stephan Driscoll Collection.

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. 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 celebrating its 90th Anniversary Season. 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 national and international dance companies and 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 Executive and Artistic Director since 2016 is Pamela Tatge. For more information, visit www.jacobspillow.org.

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