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Compagnie Käfig Integrates Dance and Technology into the Final Week of the 2023 Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival

Tulsa Ballet to make its Pillow Debut on the Henry J. Leir Stage

July 26, 2023 (BECKET, Mass.)— In the exciting final week of Festival 2023, Lyon-based Compagnie Käfig will return to Jacob's Pillow for the first time in ten years with a unique performance bridging dance and technology from Aug. 23-27 in the Ted Shawn Theatre. On the outdoor Henry J. Leir Stage, Tulsa Ballet will make their Pillow debut as the first company from Oklahoma to perform at the Festival, in a week-long engagement from Aug. 23-27. Tickets for performances are on sale now.

Also in Week 9 is a free screening of the documentary *August Pace* as a part of the PillowTalk lecture series. This fly-on-the-wall documentary follows the 2019 revival of the 1989 work *August Pace*, by the illustrious postmodern choreographer Merce Cunningham. And on Sunday afternoon, Compagnie Käfig artists Kader Belmoktar and Rémi Autechaud will guide a hip hop and freestyle dance workshop, open to beginner/intermediate dancers ages 16+.

"Compagnie Käfig's *Pixel* is one of the most breathtaking integrations of dance and technology I've seen; the dancers move in and out of pixelated light and video projections and at times seem to have super powers as they move," said Pamela Tatge, Executive and Artistic Director of Jacob's Pillow. "I can't wait for audiences to see it. I'm also thrilled that we are presenting the Pillow debut of Tulsa Ballet – the first company from Oklahoma to ever perform at the Pillow. Artistic Director Marcello Angelini has put together a stunning program of contemporary ballet works that will showcase the company's beautiful dancers. Ballet against the backdrop of the Berkshire hills. What could be better?"

Founded by acclaimed French hip hop artist Mourad Merzouki, Compagnie Käfig will perform their signature work *Pixel*, a wondrous merging of virtuosic dance and technology created by Merzouki in collaboration with French digital producers Adrien Mondot and Claire Bardainne. Seen by audiences in more than 30 countries around the world, the show explodes into a 3D world of captivating digital light and video projections, which accompany dancers' movements. The piece aims to strike a subtle balance between the real and the virtual world, and between energy and poetry, resulting in a performance infused with a multitude of art forms.

In its Pillow debut on the outdoor Leir Stage, internationally acclaimed Tulsa Ballet will present three popular works from their repertoire. Nicolo Fonte's *Divenire*, a piece full of "energy, passion and joy," (*Tulsa World*) and Andrew McNicol's *Celestial Bodies* both had world premieres at Tulsa Ballet in 2022. The company will also perform the pas de deux from *Ode*, which premiered at Tulsa Ballet in 2021, by

Polish choreographer Katarzyna Kozielska, who is known for works “that span from the pure physical to the pure emotional.” (*Ballet Herald*)

ABOUT COMPAGNIE KÄFIG

Founded by French choreographer Mourad Merzouki, Compagnie Käfig creates work at the crossroads of multiple disciplines and mediums, drawing on circus, martial arts, fine arts, video production, and live music to explore hip hop dance. Starting at age 7 at the circus school of Saint-Priest in Lyon, Merzouki gravitated to hip hop as a teenager, but the influence of circus arts persisted as he branched into choreography. In 1989, he co-founded his first company Accrorap, with Kader Attou, Eric Mezino, and Chaouki Saïd, which was acclaimed for bringing hip hop onto the concert stage. In 1996, Merzouki sought to establish his own company. Paradoxically titled after the Arabic and German word meaning ‘cage,’ Compagnie Käfig took its name from Merzouki’s first fully independent work, *Käfig*. This 1996 work charged the company with its message to refuse stylistic boundaries and extend hip hop’s territory while honoring its social and geographical origins.

Compagnie Käfig’s signature work *Pixel*, to be performed as a full-evening presentation, utilizes light projections as partners for the dancers, dissolving boundaries between the digital world and the dancer’s reality. *The Jerusalem Post* applauds Merzouki’s choreography in *Pixel*: “None have so perfectly managed to marry the screen and the moving body.” Since its inception in 1996, Compagnie Käfig has produced 31 works that have reached 700 cities, 65 countries, and two million audience members. Acclaimed by *The New York Times* as “One of the most innovative troupes on the experimental dance scene,” Compagnie Käfig’s work is a genre-bending and boundary-pushing exploration.

The performances of "Pixel" by Compagnie Käfig-Mourad Merzouki are part of the Albertine Dance Season and received support from Villa Albertine.

ABOUT TULSA BALLET

Named The Official Cultural Ambassador for the state of Oklahoma, Tulsa Ballet is an internationally recognized company bringing classical and contemporary repertory to the Oklahoma stage. Founded in 1956 by husband and wife Roman Jasinski and Moscelyne Larkin, dancers who performed with the historic Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, the couple wished to create a site of artistic excellence in the heart of the United States after a globe-trotting dance career.

Jasinski and Larkin’s contributions to dance were recognized in 1988, when they received the coveted *Dance Magazine* award. Marcello Angelini, the current Artistic Director of Tulsa Ballet, has continued the mission of the Jasinski family since 1995 with his commitment to presenting new works and building an ambitious repertory. Tulsa Ballet has presented over 70 new works in the past decade, all of which were either Oklahoma premieres, United States premieres, or World premieres.

Today, Tulsa Ballet presents works created by the world’s leading choreographers featuring its international roster of dancers. Angelini aims to preserve the classical repertoire of the 19th and 20th centuries, while also commissioning contemporary works to invest in the future of the art form. These works have toured nationally and internationally: the company has performed in five different countries, as well as The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. and The Joyce Theater in New York.

Jacob's Pillow Connections

In 2001, Compagnie Käfig presented the U.S. premiere of *Dix Versions* in its debut engagement at the Pillow. The company also performed in the Festival in 2012 and 2013.

Moscelyne Larkin made her Pillow debut in 1955 with Michael Maule. Maria Tallchief, one of the Five Moons dancers – a renowned group of indigenous dancers in Oklahoma – alongside Tulsa Ballet founder Moscelyne Larkin, first performed at the Pillow in 1951. After her debut, she performed at the Pillow six additional times. The other Five Moons dancers have also performed at the Pillow: Rosella Hightower in 1946, Yvonne Chouteau in 1946 and 1953, and Marjorie Tallchief in 1963 and 1964.

Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive:

Compagnie Käfig performing *Dix Versions*, 2001:

<https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/compagnie-kafig/dix-versions/>

Compagnie Käfig performing *AGWA*, 2013:

<https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/compagnie-kafig/agwa/>

Maria Tallchief performing *Sylvia Pas de Deux*, 1951:

<https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/maria-tallchief/sylvia-pas-de-deux/>

PERFORMANCE & TICKET DETAILS

Compagnie Käfig

Aug. 23-27, Wed., Thurs. and Sat. at 8pm; Fri.-Sun. at 2pm

Ted Shawn Theatre

Tickets from \$65

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

Tulsa Ballet

Aug. 23-27, Wed.-Sat. at 6pm; Sunday at 12pm

Henry J. Leir Stage

Tickets \$45

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

ALSO THIS WEEK

PillowTalk: Merce Cunningham's *August Pace*

Sat., Aug. 26, 4pm

Blake's Barn

FREE

A 1989 Cunningham dance was recreated thirty years later, with a reconstruction process involving the original cast caught on camera in this revealing documentary.

Workshop with Festival Artists: Compagnie Käfig

Sun., Aug. 27, 10-11:30am

\$25

Beginner/intermediate dancers, ages 16+

Explore hip hop styles and postures through this freestyle dance workshop guided by Kader Belmoktar and Rémi Autechaud of Compagnie Käfig. Participants will explore different ways of feeling and expressing music. The experience will culminate in a soul train that celebrates hip hop and the creativity of the participants. Please wear comfortable clothing to move in and soft sneakers. A water bottle is recommended!

In Studio Observation in The School

Perles Family Studio

Quiet observation of classes and rehearsals inside the Perles Family Studio will be open from 10:45am-12:15 p.m. and 2:30-4pm, Tuesday through Friday, June 20–Aug. 18, on a first come, first served basis. In the case of inclement weather, School observation hours will not be held.

Morning Classes

Sommers Studio

Tues. and Wed. 8-9 am, Thurs. and Fri. 9-10 am, Jun. 27-Aug.25

\$12 per class

A variety of in-person dance and movement classes open to participants of all experience levels, including beginners, ages 16+ (sorry, no exceptions). Tuesday classes are body conditioning/Pilates, Wednesday classes are modern/contemporary, Thursday classes are ballet, and Friday classes are hip hop. Pay via online pre-registration at jacobspillow.org/morningclasses or cash/card at the door.

FESTIVAL 2023 EXHIBITS & ARCHIVES—ONGOING

Welcoming the World

Blake's Barn

Tuesday-Sunday, noon through final curtain

FREE

From the first international artists who performed here in the 1940s to today, Jacob's Pillow has long worked to connect audiences with all kinds of dance. As people now emerge from extended isolation, the need for cultural exchange is keener than ever. Using historic photos and moving images that span the globe and transcend time, this exhibition demonstrates the wide-ranging definition of dance that has always epitomized the Pillow's worldview. *Co-curated by Tanisha Jones, Hari Krishnan, and Norton Owen.*

Envisioning a New Theater

Ted Shawn Theatre Lobby

Open daily, noon through final curtain

FREE

An international team of architects and designers/consultants led by Netherlands-based Mecanoo are now busily planning a new Doris Duke Theatre, reimagining the beloved structure consumed by fire in 2020. On display here are color renderings, a scale model, video simulations, and other resources to help audiences visualize this exciting new building project and its design process. With a projected opening in 2025, the Doris Duke Theatre is envisioned as a versatile home for dance-making and performance in the 21st century. *Co-curated by Katy Dammers and Norton Owen.*

Fantasy Meets Reality: The Far East Tour

Blake's Barn Special Collections Room

Tuesday-Sunday, noon through final curtain

FREE

Denishawn's Asian tour in 1925-26 proved pivotal in the artistic evolution of Ted Shawn and Ruth St. Denis, as their famous oriental dance fantasies encountered authentic Asian dances and audiences. Shawn and St. Denis spent months studying with local artists, buying up hordes of set and costume pieces. Their return set off a renaissance of Western interest in authentic Asian dance, opening doors for Asian and Asian American artists. Today, costumes from the Far East Tour challenge us to grapple with how to share culture with integrity. *Co-curated by Phil Chan and Caroline Hamilton.*

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*

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 Reading Room and new Special Collections Room also feature recent donations and more archival treasures from the Stephan Driscoll Collection.

ABOUT JACOB'S PILLOW:

Jacob's Pillow acknowledges that it rests on the ancestral homelands of the Muh-he-con-ne-ok or Mohican people. We pay honor and respect to their ancestors and elders past and present as we commit to building a more inclusive and equitable space for all. In addition, we acknowledge the Nipmuc, the Wampanoag and other tribal nations who also made their

homes in what is now known as Massachusetts. 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 its 91st season. 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, a prestigious professional dance training center, advances the careers of the upcoming generation of performers and choreographers; during the Festival, 100 international dancers evolve as artists in ballet, choreography, contemporary, musical theatre, tap, and other genres, and year round, artist faculty and accomplished alumni nurture younger dancers in a series of Jacob's Pillow 360 workshops and intensives offered in partnership with leading dance institutions worldwide. 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. Through its 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.

Jacob's Pillow is grateful to its global community of supporters and Members for their ongoing support for our mission. Major institutional support for Jacob's Pillow is provided by the Alphadyne Foundation, Arbella Insurance Foundation, Arison Arts Foundation, Arnhold Foundation, Barr Foundation, Doris Duke Foundation, Ford Foundation, William Randolph Hearst Foundation, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency, Mellon Foundation, Mertz Gilmore Foundation, Mill Town Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, Craig H. Neilsen Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, and Jacob's Pillow Business Partners (as of May 23, 2023).

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