



NATIONAL MEDAL OF ARTS | NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND PHOTOS CONTACT:

Kendall Lockhart, Public Relations & Communications Coordinator

pr@jacobspillow.org

**Jacob's Pillow Welcomes Switzerland's
Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève
for Week 3 of Summer Dance Festival**

**Outdoor Henry J. Leir Stage will feature *Memoirs of Blacks in Ballet*,
The MasterZ At Work Dance Family, and duets by *Merce Cunningham*,
Liz Gerring, and *Kyle Abraham***

June 18, 2024 (BECKET, Mass.)—Week 3 of this year's Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival welcomes the acclaimed Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève, returning from Switzerland to Jacob's Pillow for the first time in over a decade. The company will present a full program of works by Artistic Director and groundbreaking Belgian and Moroccan choreographer, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, including *Faun* and the U.S. debut of *Noetic*, in the Ted Shawn Theatre from Wednesday, July 10 to Sunday July, 14.

During this week of the festival, the outdoor Henry J. Leir Stage will feature a two-night presentation by *Memoirs of Blacks in Ballet* (MoBBallet) titled *Creating Pathways to Performance* on Wednesday, July 10 and Thursday, July 11. Tickets to this performance start at \$40. The Leir Stage will also feature a presentation of *Merce Cunningham, Liz Gerring, and Kyle Abraham: Three Duets* on Friday, July 12, and a one-night-only performance by *The MasterZ At Work Dance Family* on Saturday, July 13. Tickets for one-night-only performances are available on a Choose What You Pay model. Tickets for all performances are on sale now.

As part of Jacob's Pillow Live—a new livestream series showcasing artists from this summer's festival— *The MasterZ At Work Dance Family* performance on Friday, July 13, will be live streamed for free. Livestream access will be available from 6-7pm Eastern on Saturday, July 13. Pre-registration for the livestream is encouraged at jacobspillow.org/live.

Week 3 of the Festival will also feature *The Art of Black Grace 3/5* in the Sommers Studio at Jacob's Pillow from Wednesday, July 10, to Saturday, July 13, in a family friendly dance and technology event led by one of New Zealand's leading contemporary companies, Black Grace, performed virtually. On Saturday, July 13, a tour of Jacob's Garden will take place; this will be the first of two public Jacob's Garden tours this summer, which are free with registration. Jacob's Pillow will also offer a free PillowTalk screening on Saturday, July 13, which will be presented in Blake's Barn featuring Keith Glassman's documentary film entitled *Lives Beyond Motion*.

The Pillow Pride Party, Jacob's Pillow's annual LGBTQIA+ celebration featuring multimedia performer MX Oops, will occur following the evening performance of Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève on Saturday, July 13. Rounding out the weekend will be a workshop with artists of Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève on Sunday, July 14, open to intermediate and advanced dancers, ages 16+. Week 3 will end with another free PillowTalk film screening in Blake's Barn on the afternoon of July 14, where maverick choreographer Jane Comfort will present and discuss her film retrospective, entitled *Breaking Form*.

"It is truly exciting to welcome Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève back at the Pillow for the first time since 2011," said Jacob's Pillow Executive and Artistic Director Pamela Tatge. "They are returning in a completely new era, now under the artistic direction of Jacob's Pillow Dance Award winner and truly remarkable choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, whose work across so many dance genres and vocabularies—in collaboration with companies and dancers with such a wide range of cultural backgrounds—really celebrates the spirit of international collaboration that's a hallmark of our Festival."

Tatge continued: "On the outdoor stage, we will continue our celebration of ballet with *Memoirs of Blacks in Ballet* showcasing 15 extraordinary black ballet dancers from across the country presenting works by both established and emerging black choreographers. Audiences will also see a special triptych of duets from Merce Cunningham, Liz Gerring, and Kyle Abraham that are being performed live together for the first time. And we couldn't be happier to welcome back Courtney Washington Balenciaga and The MasterZ At Work Dance Family, who wowed audiences at Festival 2023."

ABOUT BALLET DU GRAND THÉÂTRE DE GENÈVE

"One of the most original and inventive in Europe," (*La Presse de Tunisie*) Switzerland's acclaimed ballet company boasts a rich history but continues to create innovative, thought-provoking works. Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève is headed by critically acclaimed

choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, who is also the artistic director of his own company, Eastman, and the former artistic director of Belgium's Royal Ballet of Flanders from 2017-2022. Cherkaoui has received numerous awards, including the Jacob's Pillow Dance Award in 2022, the Olivier Award, the Kairos Prize, and a nomination for a Tony Award for his work on *Jagged Little Pill*. Cherkaoui's work has expanded off of the stage; in 2018, he choreographed the music video "Apushit" for The Carters (Beyoncé and Jay-Z), and joined the couple on their live tour.

Praised as "without a doubt one of the best European companies," (*Paris Capitale*) Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève will present their first performance in the U.S. under Cherkaoui's artistic direction at the Pillow. Known for inventive dance works, classically trained dancers, and breathtaking contemporary choreography, the Swiss ballet company will perform a program of all-Cherkaoui choreography.

The program will include *Faun*, which debuted at Sadler's Wells Theatre in London as a part of the centenary celebration of the Ballets Russes. Visceral and carefree, Cherkaoui's *Faun* drew upon *L'après midi d'un faune*, a work by iconic Ballets Russes choreographer Vaslav Nijinsky, and is danced to Claude Debussy's impressionistic music of the same name. The company will also present the U.S. premiere of *Noetic*, a work which mediates on the constructions of reality and features a set designed by widely acclaimed artist Sir Antony Gormley, costumes by fashion designer duo Les Hommes, and music by composer Szymon Brzóska.

Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève last performed at the Pillow in 2011, presenting *Romeo and Juliet*, choreographed by Joëlle Bouvier. In 2007, the company's Pillow debut engagement featured *Para-Dice* by Saburo Teshigawara and *Loin* by current artistic director Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui. Cherkaoui's company Eastman performed in the Ted Shawn Theatre in Festival 2018. In 2022, Cherkaoui was awarded the Jacob's Pillow Dance Award.

Watch clips on Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive:

Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève; 2011:

<https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/ballet-geneve/closer/>

<https://danceinteractive.jacobspillow.org/ballet-geneve/romeo-and-juliet/>

ABOUT MEMOIRS OF BLACKS IN BALLET AND THE PATHWAYS TO PERFORMANCE CHOREOGRAPHIC PROGRAM

Launched in 2015, Memoirs of Blacks in Ballet (MoBBallet) is a living archive that preserves, presents, and promotes the contributions of Black artists in the field of Ballet. With a mission to illuminate the histories and legacies of Black ballet artists that are often muted or erased from

the narrative of dance history, MoBBallet utilizes their digital archive as well as in-person forums, symposiums, artistic residencies, and performances to stimulate dynamic conversations. Alongside discussions within the dance community, MoBBallet provides a platform for emerging dancers, educators, teachers, and choreographers. A multi-talented and highly regarded voice in the field, founder Theresa Ruth Howard is a former ballet dancer, curator, scholar, and arts leader with a longstanding connection to Jacob's Pillow.

The Pathways to Performance (PTP) Choreographic Program is an initiative of MoBBallet and Howard to nurture and develop Black ballet choreographers and artists of color. Supported by Jacob's Pillow and The Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., PTP provides artists with opportunities to create and present their work on prominent stages.

On the outdoor Henry J. Leir Stage, MoBBallet will present the works of established black choreographers including Donald Byrd, Jennifer Archibald, and Kiyon Ross, and early-career makers Meredith Rainey and Portia Adams, who are creating in the idiom of ballet. This program will be performed by 15 international Black Ballet artists from preeminent ballet companies across the country.

Theresa Ruth Howard, founder of MoBBallet, has facilitated numerous Pre-Show Talks and PillowTalks at the Festival, including Tulsa Ballet in 2023, Miami City Ballet in 2022, PillowTalk: Ballet Coast to Coast in 2021, PillowTalk: Black Creatives: Revolution, Representation, and Responsibility in 2020, and Dance Theatre of Harlem in 2019. In Spring 2023, Theresa Ruth Howard and MoBBallet's Pillow Lab residency contributed to the development of the PTP Choreographic Program.

Watch a short documentary on Jacob's Pillow On Demand:

Inside the Pillow Lab: Theresa Ruth Howard, 2023

<https://watch.jacobspillow.org/detail/videos/inside-the-pillow-lab-film-series/video/6327545001112?autoStart=true>

ABOUT "MERCÉ CUNNINGHAM, LIZ GERRING, KYLE ABRAHAM: THREE DUETS"

Friday evening July 12 on the Leir Stage will feature three distinctive duets: an arrangement from Merce Cunningham's *Landrover*, Liz Gerring's *Dialogue*, and Kyle Abraham's *MotorRover*. Premiering in live performance for the first time, these three duets were first performed in a 2021 digital program called "In Conversation with Merce," co-produced by the Merce Cunningham Trust and Baryshnikov Arts. The duet from Cunningham's *Landrover*, arranged by former Cunningham company member Jamie Scott for Jacquelin Harris and Chalvar Montiero,

opened the dialogue for commissioned choreographers Gerring and Abraham to create their duets in response.

ABOUT MERCE CUNNINGHAM (1919-2009)

Credited with expanding the frontiers of contemporary art, visual arts, performing arts, and music, Merce Cunningham (1919-2009) is considered one of the most influential choreographers of the 20th century. In his seven-decade-long career, Cunningham created 190 repertory dances and more than 700 events defined by precision, complexity, intense physicality and intellectual rigor. His works challenged traditional notions of dance, pushing the boundaries of audience and performer, off-stage and on-stage. Cunningham is known for embracing the element of chance and incorporating technology in his work, especially in collaboration with his artistic and life partner, composer John Cage.

Cunningham's 1972 dance work, *Landrover*, which was arranged into a duet by Scott, was inspired by "people moving in different landscapes. American, perhaps in the sense that we move in our country—across varied spaces—with varied backgrounds." (Merce Cunningham Trust)

Merce Cunningham has a long history with Jacob's Pillow. He first performed at the Pillow in 1955, presenting *Septet* and *Banjo*. Since then, Merce Cunningham Company has presented work dozens of times at the Festival, and participated in PillowTalks, exhibits, and programs at the School. Developing over the past 70 years, the strong relationship between the Cunningham legacy and the Pillow has continued to the present day.

ABOUT LIZ GERRING

Liz Gerring, a San Francisco native who began dancing in Los Angeles, formed her company in 1998 and has been presenting her work in New York City and abroad ever since. Gerring's illustrious choreographic career has garnered several awards and acclaim. She was the recipient of the Jacob's Pillow Dance Award and a Joyce Theater Residency in 2015, the City Center Choreographic Fellowship in 2017/18, and one of five artists to receive the Cage-Cunningham Fellowship from the Baryshnikov Arts Center in 2019.

Liz Gerring's choreography was first presented at the Pillow by her company, then Liz Gerring Dance, on the Henry J. Leir Stage in Festival 2006. In Festival 2012, Liz Gerring Dance Company performed Gerring's work *she dreams in code* in the Doris Duke Theatre. The Company returned to the Duke again in 2015 with Gerring's work *glacier*.

ABOUT KYLE ABRAHAM

Gia Kourlas of *The New York Times* has written that “Kyle Abraham has a mission—and it’s bigger than himself. He likes to spread the love with his company, A.I.M, and, in doing so, broaden the viewer’s experience of what a dance concert by a choreographer-led company can be.”

Beginning his training in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Abraham received the Jacob’s Pillow Dance Award in 2012 and the Princess Grace Statue Award in 2018, among other acclaims for his work in dance making. In his work for his company, A.I.M, and commissioned works for a variety of dance companies, Abraham creates an aesthetic “that doesn’t distinguish between genres but freely draws on a vocabulary that is as much Merce and Martha as it is Eadweard Muybridge and Michael Jackson.” (*Vogue*)

Kyle Abraham made his Pillow debut as a dancer in Festival 2008, performing in *Fell of Night* with Cherylyn Lavagnino Dance on the Henry J. Leir Stage. In 2009, Abraham’s company, Abraham.In.Motion (now A.I.M), performed in the Inside/Out performance series, marking his first time presenting choreography at the Pillow. Since 2009, Abraham has presented work at several Festivals, both with his company and as an independent choreographer. In 2018, A.I.M had a Pillow Lab residency to develop *THE UNTITLED D’ANGELO PROJECT*, which ultimately led to his work *An Untitled Love*. Kyle Abraham is a member of the Board of Trustees at Jacob’s Pillow.

ABOUT THE MASTERZ AT WORK DANCE FAMILY

Founded in New York City in 2021 by ballroom legend Courtney “Balenciaga” Washington, The MasterZ At Work Dance Family is a collective of individuals from different dance backgrounds, sharing the same passion for dance. Drawing on jazz, hip-hop, street jazz, house, African, vogue, and contemporary dance, the MasterZ has been commissioned by Works & Process to perform at Lincoln Center. Always “irrepressible,” (*The Dance Enthusiast*), the company wowed audiences last year in their Pillow debut as a part of the week-long mini-festival, Hip Hop Across the Pillow, and 2024 marks their anticipated return.

PERFORMANCE & TICKET DETAILS

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

Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève

July 10-14; Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday at 8pm; Friday through Sunday at 2pm

Ted Shawn Theatre | Tickets from \$65

MoBBallet: Creating Pathways to Performance

July 10-11; Wednesday and Thursday at 6pm

Henry J. Leir Stage | Tickets from \$40

Merce Cunningham, Liz Gerring, Kyle Abraham: Three Duets

Friday, July 12 at 6pm

Henry J. Leir Stage | Choose What You Pay; Rain or Shine Tickets from \$35

The MasterZ At Work Dance Family

Saturday, July 13 at 6pm

Henry J. Leir Stage | Choose What You Pay; Rain or Shine Tickets from \$35

ADDITIONAL EVENTS**Morning Classes**

June 25-28; Tuesday through Friday, 9-10am

Open to all dance experience levels, ages 16+. Offered weekly through the summer in Sommers Studio. \$12 per class; \$50 for 5 class card. Pay via online pre-registration or cash/card at the door.

- **Ballet:** Tuesdays through August 20
- **Contemporary:** Wednesdays through August 21
- **West African Dance & Spiritual Well-Being:** Thursdays through August 22
- **Hip-Hop/Street Styles:** Fridays through August 23

The Art of Black Grace 3/5

July 10-13; Wednesday through Saturday from 12-4:30pm (staggered entry every 30 minutes)

Sommers Studio | \$15

A Dance & Technology Event

Jacob's Pillow explores the intersection of dance and technology this summer with immersive experiences for the whole family. The world premiere of *The Art of Black Grace 3/5* combines dance, music, art, and video recordings that bring small groups of visitors face-to-face with the dancers of Black Grace, one of New Zealand's leading contemporary dance companies. In the span of roughly 30 minutes, the audience will be introduced to the work of the company and

then interact virtually with dancers who will teach them the choreography of *Handgame*, a dance with Samoan cultural roots that Black Grace has performed around the world, including at Jacob's Pillow in 2005.

While *Handgame* is high-energy and percussive—marked by clapping, stomping, and jumping—the dance uses simple movement patterns and rhythms, making it accessible for all ages to participate in, with no dance experience necessary. Although the dancers will appear via video, there is no video captured during the event, and participants are not recorded. This is a ticketed performance with limited capacity; reservations must be made in advance. Black Grace has had three previous engagements at Jacob's Pillow: in 2004, 2005, and 2022.

Public Tour of Jacob's Garden

Saturday, July 13 at 12:30pm

Free with registration

Jacob's Pillow inaugurated the 1.5-acre Jacob's Garden in 2021 as a place to grow fruits and vegetables and connect to the land's multiple histories, drawing direct inspiration from Ted Shawn's original 1931 "friendship garden." On two summer Saturdays, visitors can tour the garden beds, apiary, rainwater harvesting system, and pollinator meadow of Jacob's Garden. Join in a brief stretch and moving meditation led by Adam Weinert, and contribute to the garden's health by turning the compost heap. Please wear clothes you can move in and bring gloves, if you have them. Meet at the Welcome Center before walking along George Carter Road. Pre-registration encouraged.

PillowTalk: Lives Beyond Motion

Saturday, July 13 at 4pm

Blake's Barn

FREE

Former dancer Keith Glassman interviewed dozens of American men to address why they dance, and his resulting film encompasses a wide range of Pillow artists. This screening will be followed by a brief discussion with the filmmaker.

Pillow Pride Party

Saturday, July 13 at 10pm

Pillow Grounds | \$35

The Pillow's annual LGBTQIA+ celebration returns with a dance party featuring MX Oops following the evening performances of the Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève in the Ted Shawn Theatre. Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève ticket buyers are granted free entrance to the Pillow Pride Party.

Workshop with Festival Artists: Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève

Sunday, July 14 from 10-11:30am

\$20/class or \$15/class for dance educators with I.D.

Intermediate and advanced dancers, ages 16+ 18

Focus on the ideals of movement and performance of Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui through phrasework from *Noetic*, a work presented as part of the Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève's performance in the Ted Shawn Theatre. Company members Zoe Hollinshead and Jared Brown will guide participants through a mapping of the body and creating internal and external patterns, alone and with others. Wear comfortable clothing to move in; socks or bare feet recommended.

Pre-registration strongly encouraged.

PillowTalk: Breaking Form

Sunday, July 14 at 4pm

Blake's Barn

FREE

For more than 40 years, choreographer Jane Comfort has been grappling with hot-button issues including gender, AIDS, and social injustice, and this feature-length film addresses it all.

In Studio Observation in The School

Tuesdays through Fridays: June 25 – August 16, 10:45am-12:15pm and 2:30-4pm

Quiet observation of classes and rehearsals inside the Perles Family Studio will be open on a first come, first served basis. In the case of inclement weather, School observation hours will not be held.

FESTIVAL EXHIBITS & ARCHIVES – ONGOING**JOHN LINDQUIST: AS OF TODAY**

It's impossible to overstate how the photographs of John Lindquist (1890-1980) have shaped public perception of the Pillow's first four decades and influenced all subsequent photographers here. Now the institutional home for Lindquist's body of work, Harvard University's Houghton Library has digitized many thousands of images, and we are able to learn more about our past through these carefully-selected new prints, many of which are being exhibited for the first time. *Blake's Barn; open Tue-Sun, noon through final curtain.*

ROYAL BALLET CONNECTIONS

Even as this season marks The Royal Ballet's Pillow debut, the links between these two iconic dance institutions run deep. Some of the evidence is on display here, in rare photos and footage spanning the decades. From Alicia Markova and Antony Tudor to contemporary artists including Pam Tanowitz and Wayne McGregor, the shared histories are surfaced and celebrated. *Ted Shawn Theatre Lobby; open Tue-Sun, noon through final curtain.*

FANTASY MEETS REALITY: THROUGH THE EYES OF A DENISHAWN DANCER

Curated by Phil Chan and Caroline Hamilton, this exhibit builds upon last year's initial examination of Denishawn's 1925-26 Asian tour. With newly-discovered treasures, this re-examination of the tour focuses on the experiences of three Denishawn dancers: Ernestine Day, Mary Howry, and Jane Sherman. Included are costumes they retained, objects they purchased, and words they wrote—challenging viewers to ponder what it means to share culture with integrity. *Blake's Barn; open Tue-Sun, noon through final curtain*

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

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. *Blake's Barn; open Tues.-Sun., noon through final curtain.*

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, which celebrates its 92nd season in Summer 2024. 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.

Founded by Ted Shawn in 1933, 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 its seasonal internship 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 highlighted 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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