



NATIONAL MEDAL OF ARTS | NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

MEDIA ALERT

FOR REQUESTS AND MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kendall Lockhart, Public Relations & Communications Coordinator

klockhart@jacobspillow.org

**Jacob's Pillow to present Sekou McMiller & Friends'
"Afro Latin Jazz and Soul Experience"
Community Dance Residency in Pittsfield
June 12-15**

**Free community workshops, Salsa dance party, and events are open to all ages
No dance experience necessary; advance registration is recommended**

May 23, 2025 (BECKET, Mass) – Jacob's Pillow is thrilled to present Sekou McMiller & Friends' ***Afro Latin Jazz and Soul Experience***—a multi-day community residency in Pittsfield from **Thursday, June 12 through Sunday, June 15**. The workshop series, led by New York/Chicago-based Afro Latin Jazz artist **Sekou McMiller** with artistic collaborators Adriel Flete, Miriam Gallardo, and percussionist Khary Kamau, will feature a range of free, all-ages events including dance workshops, music listening and movement sessions, and dance parties. Centered on the vibrant traditions of the African Diaspora and the joy of celebration, parades, and rituals across cultures, these intergenerational workshop events will highlight traditions from Mardi Gras in New Orleans to Candombe in Uruguay, Salsa dance parties, and other global festivities. Registration is available at jacobspillow.org/pittsfieldcommunityresidency for one or all events, and to view event details.

Deemed "innovative, cutting, and soulful" (La Voz Magazine), Sekou McMiller is a dancer and choreographer at the forefront of Afro Latin dance performance and education, known for his explosive energy and unique fusion style rooted in Afro-Caribbean traditions and the broader African diaspora. McMiller's choreography has been featured at Jazz at Lincoln Center, The Apollo Theater, and the United Nations General Assembly. He has performed in films like *In the Heights* and for top music artists including Pitbull, Madonna, and Gilberto Santa Rosa. Currently, McMiller is a faculty member at Marymount Manhattan College, NYU Tisch School of the Arts, The Ailey School, Ballet Hispánico, Steps on Broadway, and Broadway Dance Center. In addition, he is a Curator and Producer at the National Jazz Museum in Harlem.

Over the years, McMiller has appeared at Jacob's Pillow as a performer, choreographer, and educator, including serving as Co-Director of The School at Jacob's Pillow Musical Theatre program in 2024 and as a performer on the outdoor Henry J. Leir Stage during Festival 2024. This summer, Jacob's Pillow will welcome Sekou McMiller & Friends back for the world premiere performance of *Urban Love Suite* in the Ted Shawn Theatre, from July 30 through August 3, 2025. Tickets are available at: jacobspillow.org/events/sekou-mcmiller-and-friends.

Walk-ups are welcome for the Sekou McMiller & Friends' *Afro Latin Jazz and Soul Experience*; however, advance registration is recommended, as space is limited. This residency is presented by Jacob's Pillow in partnership with NAACP Berkshire County Branch, WANDER Berkshires, the Common Room at Zion Lutheran Church, and Berkshire Community College, with special thanks to Noel Staples-Freeman and Luana Dias David.

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Parading through Culture: A Community Gathering About Celebration, Ritual, and Movement Thursday, June 12 at 7-8:30pm

The Common Room at Zion Lutheran Church, 74 First Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

This dynamic session invites participants to explore the many ways family, community, and culture express themselves through celebration, ritual, and parade. Using the vibrant traditions of the African Diaspora—including Uruguay's candombe parades, Mardi Gras, Carnival, and Salsa dance parties—participants will explore the power of parading as both a cultural expression and a form of joy, resistance, and unity. The session will culminate in a collaborative social dance space, where the stories and rhythms explored throughout come to life through music and movement.

From Clave to Celebration: A Listening & Movement Experience

Friday, June 13 at 7-8:30pm

WANDER Berkshires, 34 Depot St Suite 101, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Centering the sounds and rhythms that inspire dance traditions, this listening and movement session takes a rhythmic journey through African American, Afro Latino and other African Diasporic cultures. Rooted in community, movement and sound, this session explores how dance and music from the African Diaspora were cultivated throughout the Americas, celebrating and exploring new exciting fusions. Participants will explore rhythms like the "Clave" that have inspired dance and music like Salsa, Samba, Rumba, Rock and Roll, and more.

Community Movement Workshop: Joyful Celebration of Rhythm, Culture, and Movement
Saturday, June 14 at 1-2:30pm

Paterson Field House, Berkshire Community College, 1350 West St, Pittsfield, MA 01201

This energizing, full-body experience blends movement, music, and culture through Sekou McMiller's Afro Latin Jazz and Soul Experience. Participants will be guided on a rhythmic journey through African American, Afro Latino, and other African Diasporic cultures, highlighting the deep connections, shared histories, and vibrant fusions that continue to evolve today. Rooted in the rich traditions of Caribbean dance and music—like Salsa, Mambo, Cha-cha-cha, and Rumba—this class also incorporates African American Jazz, West African social dances, and African modern dance. Open to all ages and experience levels, this joyful, community-centered movement session explores the fundamentals of social dance and Embodied Africanist Aesthetics in a welcoming space that celebrates connection, culture, and expression.

Salsa for Everyone! Dance Class & Party

Saturday, June 14 at 7-8pm (Dance Class) and 8-11pm (Dance Party)

WANDER Berkshires, 34 Depot St Suite 101, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Participants are invited to a fun, high-energy Salsa dance class that introduces the basics of this vibrant social dance style. The class will cover simple steps, footwork, and partner work, with a focus on rhythm, music, and community. After the class, a DJ'd Salsa Dance Party will invite participants to practice their new moves, connect with others, and experience the joy of dance and music as a celebration of culture and community.

NAACP Juneteenth Celebration: Celebrate Juneteenth with Us!

Sunday, June 15 at 12-6pm

Durant Park, 30 John St, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Sekou McMiller & Friends will join the NAACP Berkshire County Branch as a part of their Annual Juneteenth Celebration—a joyful day of community, culture, and connection for all ages. The event will feature a pop-up performance, movement and line dance workshop, and energizing dance party that celebrates freedom, resilience, and community.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Doors will open a half hour prior to each event. Guests will be checked in at the door. Walk-ups are welcome, pending capacity. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged.
- Please wear comfortable clothing and shoes.
- Jacob's Pillow is committed to creating accessible spaces and experiences. Please contact community@jacobsillow.org with accessibility questions or accommodation requests.

- Participants agree to Jacob's Pillow's liability and media release. These documents will also be available in print upon entry.

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 93rd season in Summer 2025. 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 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 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.

MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR JACOB'S PILLOW IS GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY: Arison Arts Foundation, Barr Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Doris Duke Foundation, Ford Foundation, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency, Shelby Cullom Davis Charitable Fund, and The Shubert Foundation. *As of March 31, 2025.*

#####