



NEW YORK
CITY CENTER

MICHAEL S. ROSENBERG PRESIDENT & CEO
STANFORD MAKISHI VP & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, DANCE



Nov 9–11, 2023

NEW YORK CITY CENTER presents

PAM TANOWITZ

ARTISTS AT THE CENTER

Song of Songs

Choreography by
PAM TANOWITZ

Music by
DAVID LANG

A Fisher Center at Bard Production

Featuring

KARA CHAN CHRISTINE FLORES ZACHARY GONDER BRIAN LAWSON
VICTOR LOZANO MAILE OKAMURA MELISSA TOOGOOD MAGGIE CLOUD

EMILY BRAUSA CALEB BURHANS MARTHA CLUVER
KATIE GEISSINGER MOLLY NETTER YURI YAMASHITA

Leadership Support for Pam Tanowitz | Artists at the Center
Lynne and Richard Pasculano Fund for Programming and Education

We acknowledge that the land on which New York City Center and its theaters stand was forcefully taken from the Munsee Lenape tribe. We respectfully honor and acknowledge all Indigenous communities—past, present, and future—for their essential and ongoing connections to this land.



THE PROGRAM

Song of Songs

Choreography by PAM TANOWITZ

Music by DAVID LANG

Production design by PAM TANOWITZ, CLIFTON TAYLOR,

REID BARTELME, and HARRIET JUNG

Sound design by GARTH MACALEAVEY

Dramaturgy by MARY GOSSY

Rehearsal direction by MELISSA TOOGOOD

Music supervision by CALEB BURHANS

Production management/Technical direction by MARK QUILES

Stage management by BETSY AYER

Tour management by MADELEINE REILLY

Produced by JASON COLLINS

Premiere

July 1, 2022

Fisher Center at Bard's Sosnoff Theater

Annandale-on-Hudson, NY



THE CAST

Dancers

KARA CHAN CHRISTINE FLORES ZACHARY GONDER BRIAN LAWSON
VICTOR LOZANO MAILE OKAMURA MELISSA TOOGOOD

Understudy

MAGGIE CLOUD

Musicians

EMILY BRAUSA, Cello
CALEB BURHANS, Viola
MARTHA CLUVER, Soprano
KATIE GEISSINGER, Alto
MOLLY NETTER, Soprano
YURI YAMASHITA, Percussion

The Fisher Center is Pam Tanowitz's artistic home. Pam Tanowitz Dance is supported by the Friends of Pam through the Fisher Center's Pam Tanowitz Fellowship Fund.

Song of Songs is a co-commission of the Fisher Center, Barbican London, UCLA's Center for the Art of Performance, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music, with the support of Dance Reflections by Van Cleef & Arpels.

Commissioning funds for Song of Songs were provided by Jay Franke and David Herro, with additional support received from the O'Donnell Green Music and Dance Foundation, Judith R. and Alan H. Fishman, Amy and Ronald Guttman, Lizbeth and George Krupp, Virginia and Timothy Millhiser, and King's Fountain. The Fisher Center on behalf of Pam Tanowitz Dance received a 2020 NDP Finalist Grant Award for Song of Songs, made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts with funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, to address sustainability needs during COVID-19. Additional funding was received from the Fisher Center's Artistic Innovation Fund, with lead support from Rebecca Gold and S. Asher Gelman '06 through the March Forth Foundation. Co-commissioning support for the music of Song of Songs was provided by Flagey (Brussels), The Los Angeles Opera, Company of Music (Vienna), and The Crossing (Philadelphia).

Music provided by arrangement with Boosey & Hawkes, Inc., o/b/o G. Ricordi & Co. New York.



PROGRAM NOTE

Love Song: *Song of Songs*by MARY GOSSY, *Dramaturg*

You and your loving are all over the *Song of Songs*,¹ whose title, if read as a superlative (as in “King of Kings,” for example) could mean “the best song there is.” It is a song like many of the pop songs that reverberate through the decades, the love songs of first loves that make for thrills when they roll out of oldies radio (the youngest the *Song* is likely to be is about 2,200 years old; some say it’s centuries older).² *Your lovemaking; your love; the way you love me; you do something to me, you really got me; love is love not fade away; love, look at the two of us; love me do; nobody does it better.* This is a catalogue of modern language to rival any infinite playlist. *Oh, oh, those summer nights. Or in the bright light of day, I think we’re alone now, so happy together: Hello! It’s the same old song. I want you, do you want me? You want me? I want you! Let’s stay together, loving you wherever, whether times are good or bad, baby, happy or sad; I’ve lost you, my love. Help me find you! Find me!* Yearning and desiring, finding, losing, searching, finding again, falling together at last, body and soul into loving, then wanting *more and more and then some*; yes, that’s how the *Song of Songs* goes.

It might seem unusual that a love song laden with bodily eros could be a book of sacred scripture, approved by Jewish and later by Christian authorities and entered into the shortlist of texts that make up bibles.^{3,4} But it is a fact that religions read metaphors in the *Song*’s flesh, full flagons, and flowers. “Kiss me with the kisses of your mouth, for your love is sweeter than wine.” These first words of the *Song*, taken literally, leave little to the imagination, but over the centuries they have given rise to thousands and thousands of pages of scriptural commentary and argument. Secular literary scholars have gotten into the mix, as have historians of ideas, searching for love in the societies and cultures touched by the *Song*. How has the *Song* influenced Jewish mysticism? Is it one of the roots of Sufism? Is it behind medieval Provençal love poetry, and thus a source of courtly love, which is still manifesting in romantic comedies and the endless scores of popular love songs unfurling from all of our devices like player-piano scrolls, into our ears, through the ether?

Help me, I think I’m falling in love again. The *Song* creates vertiginous reactions indeed. Interpretation with wishes for dogmatic certainty may be almost unavoidable, and belief may settle on a single meaning of this text. A historical point of view can see that the *Song* started as oral literature, but what we have of it today is written down. We have the *Song of Songs* because it is text. Text is something woven, like paper or cloth—text’s etymological sibling is “textile.” Human hands were involved in it becoming legible. What is woven here are words. An implication of the *Song* could be that written words are holy, that there are ways that they can be woven that make them holier because they become more meaningful in many ways, together, simultaneously.



Let's dance. The holiness comes out of putting one word into motion with another, setting their touch and release in flexible order in the hope that, reaching out, reception might lead to an uncomprehending but felt understanding, with the thud that marks, internally, the knowledge that I have fallen in love with... you, wonderful you. Hearing a song (in one's head or outside it), writing it down, singing it, and then dancing are bodily acts addressing another body: "My beloved is mine and I am my beloved's" (*Song of Songs*, 2:16). A crowd of friends is watching. They witness the pairing. The pairing takes place in a community it helps to create, and which holds the two together, giving them the space both public and private that all new lovers need.

The *Song of Songs* calls forth "my love" (a person) again and again; it names "lover," "beloved," "friends," and tells of "lovemaking" and "loving," but if it mentions the deity, it does so with the utmost indirection.⁵ Only infrequently does it say "love," the abstract noun we mean when we say, for example, "I wanna know what love is" or ask "What's love got to do with it?" A heart-stopping definition comes, finally, almost at the end of the *Song*:

"love is strong as death"; "love is as fierce as death" (*Song of Songs*, 8:6).⁶

When the inevitable end comes, that word "love," what it means and does, is still there, holding open its embrace: relentless, ferocious, singing.

1. The *Song of Songs*, translated and with an introduction and commentary by Chana Bloch and Ariel Bloch; foreword by Stephen Mitchell, afterword by Robert Alter (Modern Library/Random House, 1995; U. of California Press, 1998) is a good introduction to the work. It offers a facing Hebrew-English translation. Its ample notes on its own and other translations and commentary provide help to readers and nonreaders of Hebrew and steer a calm and middle course through scholarly and other interpretive literature on the *Song*.

2. Bloch and Bloch, 22-25.

3. Bloch and Bloch, 27-29.

4. For a clear and concise statement of the *Song of Songs*'s history and liturgical usage in Judaism, see Samuel Barth, <https://www.jtsa.edu/torah/the-song-of-songs-lovers-absent-and-present> (April 18, 2014), Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, New York.

5. See Chana and Ariel Blochs' note on 8:6, 213. See also Barth, note 4.

6. 'Strong' and 'fierce' present at once in the Hebrew word, such that the Blochs translate it "strong/fierce." 8:6, 213.



MEET THE ARTISTS

PAM TANOWITZ (*Choreographer*) is thrilled to be making her NYCC debut! The critically acclaimed choreographer and founder of Pam Tanowitz Dance has steadily delineated her own dance language through decades of research and creation—many of which took place at NYCC, where she worked in administration and simultaneously developed her choreographic voice with her company in NYCC's studios. She is the first-ever choreographer in residence at the Fisher Center at Bard in Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, and is an assistant professor of professional practice at Mason Gross School of the Arts/Rutgers University. Other honors include the 2022 LMCC Liberty Award for Artistic Leadership, 2020 Doris Duke Artist Award, 2019 Herb Alpert Award, 2017 BAC Cage Cunningham Fellowship, 2016 and 2009 Bessie Awards and a NYCC Choreography Fellowship, among others. She has created for The Australian Ballet, New York City Ballet, Martha Graham Dance Company, Paul Taylor American Modern Dance, The Royal Ballet, Singapore Dance Theatre, Kennedy Center's Ballet Across America, Vail Dance Festival, Juilliard Dance, Ballet Austin and New York Theatre Ballet. Originally from New Rochelle, NY, Tanowitz holds degrees from Ohio State University and Sarah Lawrence College.

DAVID LANG (*Composer*) is one of America's most highly esteemed and performed composers. Lang's score for Paolo Sorrentino's film *Youth* received Academy Award and Golden Globe nominations, among others. *the little match girl passion*, commissioned by Carnegie Hall for Paul Hillier and Theatre of Voices, was lauded by *The Guardian* as "one of the top 25 works of classical music written in the 21st Century." It won the Pulitzer Prize in 2008 and the recording received a Grammy in 2010. His opera *prisoner of the state* (with libretto by Lang) was co-commissioned by the New York Philharmonic, Rotterdam's De Doelen, London's Barbican Centre, Barcelona's l'Auditori, Bochum Symphony Orchestra, Bruges's Concertgebouw and Malmö Opera, and premiered June 2019 in New York,

conducted by Jaap van Zweden. Lang is a professor of music composition at the Yale School of Music. He is co-founder and co-artistic director of New York's legendary music collective Bang on a Can.

CLIFTON TAYLOR (*Production Design*). Previously at City Center: designs for Ailey, Dance Theater of Harlem, Martha Graham, the Little Orchestra Society, Lar Lubovitch, American Ballet Theater. Longtime lighting director for the Fall for Dance Festival and designer for several Encores! productions. Additional designs on Broadway, West End, Paris, St. Petersburg, Hong Kong, Rio de Janeiro and Florence. In 2020, Taylor helped found the Studio School of Design. Visit studioschoolofdesign.org, to increase knowledge and diversity in the design professions.

REID BARTELME and HARRIET JUNG (*Production Design*). Harriet Jung and Reid Bartelme met in 2009 while pursuing fashion design degrees at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. They started designing collaboratively in 2011 and have focused their practice primarily on costuming dance. They frequently design costumes for works by Pam Tanowitz, Kyle Abraham and Justin Peck. They have devised costume-centric performances for commissions from the Museum of Art and Design and the Guggenheim Museum in New York City. In 2023, they made their Broadway design debut with *Bob Fosse's Dancin'*. Bartelme and Jung have completed research fellowships at NYU Center for Ballet and the Arts and the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. They continue designing costumes and sets for dance productions around the world while expanding the scope of their practice outside the theatre.

GARTH MACALEAVEY (*Sound Design*) is a leader in live music, theatrical and new-music opera sound design. He specializes in spatial sound, live surround sound mixing and high-fidelity classical and orchestral reinforcement and recording. An avid musician since his youth, he studied contemporary percussion, jazz drums and classical music at UCSC under the tutelage of Willie Winant,



MEET THE ARTISTS

gaining his degree in three years. MacAleavey is the director of sound and technical design at Brooklyn's National Sawdust. In partnership with Meyer Sound, he is an expert in constellation, space map systems and in immersive theatrical speaker systems design.

MARY GOSSY (*Dramaturg*) (professor emerita, Rutgers University; Ph.D., Harvard), works with close reading and contemplative practice as a scholarly, pedagogical and spiritual approach to the development of human consciousness. Since encountering the essays of Audre Lorde some years ago, she has been relieved to know that "Poetry Is Not a Luxury" and has discovered psychoanalytic and film theory (and gelato) are not luxuries either or shouldn't be. The *Song of Songs* integrates fleshly and divine love, rooted, literally, in the natural world. Its enactment of losing, finding, yearning and fulfillment makes a good example of a syllabus of Gossy's writing and teaching. She is the author of three scholarly works (*The Untold Story: Women and Theory in Golden Age [Spanish] Texts*; *Freudian Slips: Woman, Writing, the Foreign Tongue*; and *Empire on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*); numerous academic articles; essays on monasticism, mysticism and comparative contemplative practices; and *Enclosure*, which if not as exalted as the *Song of Songs*, is, like it, a story about how "love is strong as death."

MARK QUILES (*Production Manager/Technical Director*) is from Queens, New York. Quiles is the production manager and technical director for the department of theatre at Adelphi University in New York. He earned his MFA in scenic technology from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign in 2020. Previously, Quiles served as the technical director for Pam Tanowitz's *Four Quartets* and was the associate technical director for multiple summer seasons at the Bard Summerscape Festival. He has also spent time as the tour manager for multiple internationally touring music groups from the United States.

BETSY AYER (*Stage Manager*). Prior Pam Tanowitz Dance: *I was waiting for the echo of a better day*, *Song of Songs*, *Four Quartets*

and *New Work for Goldberg Variations*. Other dance: Trisha Brown Dance Company, *FLEXN* at the Park Avenue Armory/international tour. Former stage manager at New York City Ballet. Recent opera/oratorio: *Adriana Mater* at San Francisco Symphony, *Perle Noire* at the Dutch National Opera, *Monochromatic Light (Afterlife)* at the Park Avenue Armory, *to feel a thing* and *Requiem* at the Shed, *Idomeneo* at the Salzburg Festival, *Glass Handel* at Opera Philadelphia. Concerts: interim production manager, Carnegie Hall. She is a graduate of Smith College.

KARA CHAN (*Dancer*) is an NYC-based freelance dancer and dance educator, originally from Vancouver, Canada. She has danced lead roles with Twyla Tharp Dance and has assisted Ms. Tharp in the staging of *Deuce Coupe* and *Ghostcatcher* on American Ballet Theatre. Most recently, Chan appeared in Justin Peck's world premiere of *Illinois*, a dance-music-theatre piece based on Sufjan Steven's *Illinois*. Other performance credits include Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, Mark Morris Dance Group, Janis Brenner & Dancers, Dance Heginbotham, Gleich Dances, Barkin/Selissen Project, among many others. A BFA graduate from The Juilliard School, Chan was named one of *Dance Magazine's* "25 to Watch" for 2020.

CHRISTINE FLORES (*Dancer*) is originally from Toronto, Ontario, and has been working with Pam Tanowitz since 2016. She graduated from New World School of the Arts (Miami) in 2015 with a BFA in dance and received additional training at Springboard Danse Montreal, the Contemporary Program at Jacob's Pillow and Cunningham Fellowship workshops. Named one of *Dance Magazine's* 2021 "25 to Watch," Flores is currently based out of New York City and has performed with Company XIV, Dance Heginbotham, Keigwin + Company, Danielle Russo Performance Project, NVA & Guests and Shinsa Collective.

ZACHARY GONDER (*Dancer*) was born north of Chicago and trained at the Chicago Academy for the Arts, under the tutelage of Randy Duncan. He graduated from the Juilliard School in 2018 where he performed



MEET THE ARTISTS

works by Austin McCormick, Azsure Barton, Pam Tanowitz, Richard Alston, Gustavo Ramirez Sansano and Crystal Pite. He lives in Brooklyn, NY, where he is a performer with Pam Tanowitz Dance. He was also a swing in Justin Peck's new show *Illinois*. Other performance credits include PARA.MAR Dance, Brian Brooks Moving Company, the Mark Morris Dance Group, Zvi Gotheiner Dance, Studio 189 and the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

BRIAN LAWSON (*Dancer*) is a dance performer and educator who began dancing in Toronto, Canada. He earned his BFA in dance at SUNY Purchase and graduated summa cum laude in 2010. After working with Pam Tanowitz Dance and Dance Heginbotham he joined the Mark Morris Dance Group from 2011 to 2018. He earned his MFA from the University of Washington in 2020 and has taught master classes at Purchase College, NYU Tisch and the American Dance Festival. He is currently a visiting assistant professor at Skidmore College.

VICTOR LOZANO (*Dancer*) has been a member of Pam Tanowitz Dance since 2016. He holds an MA in performance studies from New York University and a BFA in dance from Juilliard. He is originally from Houston, Texas.

MAILE OKAMURA (*Dancer*) studied ballet with Lynda Yourth in San Diego, California, and at San Francisco Ballet School. She danced with Boston Ballet II, Ballet Arizona and for 25 years with Mark Morris Dance Group. Okamura has been dancing with Pam Tanowitz Dance since 2016. She also designs/constructs costumes for dance, music and opera, and is an ongoing creative collaborator with choreographer John Heginbotham.

MELISSA TOOGOOD (*Dancer/Rehearsal Director*) is a Bessie Award-winning performer based between NYC and Sydney. She's danced with PTD since 2007 and became rehearsal director in 2012. Toogood has assisted Tanowitz on numerous creations including works for The Australian Ballet, Ballet Austin, Martha Graham Dance Company, Paul Taylor American Modern Dance and many others.

Toogood was a member of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company and is an official stager for the Merce Cunningham Trust. She has performed with Kyle Abraham, Kimberly Bartosik, Rashaun Mitchell, Stephen Petronio Company, Sally Silvers and many more. Her own work has been commissioned for the Boston Ballet, New York Theater Ballet and Vail Dance Festival.

MAGGIE CLOUD (*Dancer/Understudy*) is a New York City-based performer and acupuncturist. She has been seen in the choreographic works of Moriah Evans, Beth Gill, John Jasperse, Neal Medlyn, Sarah Michelson, Pam Tanowitz, Gillian Walsh, the Merce Cunningham Trust and The Metropolitan Opera. Cloud has taught at Chen Dance Center, Brooklyn Arts Exchange and at the University of the Arts.

EMILY BRAUSA (*Cello*). New York City cellist Emily Brausa has performed throughout the world in a wide array of ensembles and situations. This past summer, Brausa founded and performed in Rockaway Chamber Music, a new music collective that is bringing classical music to the surf community of Rockaway Beach, NY. A graduate of The Juilliard School, she is a member of American Symphony Orchestra, performs regularly with American Ballet Theatre and is on faculty at Third Street Music Settlement. Currently, Brausa can be seen performing nightly in *Sweeney Todd* on Broadway.

CALEB BURHANS (*Music Supervisor/Viola*). Known for his animated performances and mesmerizing compositions, Caleb Burhans is a violinist, violist and composer who's been commissioned by Lincoln Center and the Library of Congress, to name a few. He is a member of the duo *itsnotyouitsme*, the American Contemporary Music Ensemble, and also plays fiddle at New York City's Central Synagogue.

MARTHA CLUVER (*Soprano*). Vocalist Martha Cluver has most recently been focusing her career on chamber music. She is an original member of Roomful of Teeth and ModernMedieval Voices. Cluver has recorded



MEET THE ARTISTS

and performed works by John Zorn, Steve Reich, Morton Feldman, David Lang, Julia Wolfe, Michael Gordon, Caroline Shaw and Caleb Burhans. She has performed as soloist with New York Philharmonic and Boston Symphony Orchestra, to which she just had her Tanglewood Festival debut with. Cluver is married to fellow musician Caleb Burhans, and they reside in Brooklyn with their daughter, Fiona.

KATIE GEISSINGER (*Alto*) is a Bessie-winning member of Meredith Monk's Vocal Ensemble, recently premiering *Indra's Net* in Amsterdam. Geissinger has sung in *Einstein on the Beach* by Philip Glass and Robert Wilson (Nonesuch), *The Carbon Copy Building* by Bang on a Can (Cantaloupe), *Steel Hammer* by Julie Wolfe and Anne Bogart, and in works by Michael Gordon, Anne Hamilton, Ben Katchor, David Lang, Baz Luhrmann, Marisa Michelson, Jonathan Miller, Mark Mulcahy and Aaron Siegel. Geissinger has appeared on and off Broadway, in concerts and theatres around the world and on film soundtracks such as *Joker* and *The Big Lebowski*.

MOLLY NETTER (*Soprano*). Entrenched in a multitude of styles from an early age, soprano Molly Netter enlivens complex and beautiful music, old and new. Noted for her "natural warmth" (*Los Angeles Times*) and "clear, beautiful tone" (*The New York Times*), Netter's recent engagements include solo debuts with the NY Philharmonic, the LA Philharmonic, Fort Worth Symphony and California Symphony. Renowned for her uncanny ability to bring a score to life, Netter was tapped as the soprano soloist for the U.S. and Japanese premieres of Lang's *prayers for night and sleep* conducted by Joe Hisaishi. Notable solo appearances include Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Boston Early Music Festival.

YURI YAMASHITA (*Percussion*). Percussionist Yuri Yamashita has been called "brilliant" (*Financial Times*) and "a standout" (*Los Angeles Times*). Yamashita has worked alongside a diverse mix of artists and groups including Tyondai Braxton, Bang on a Can's Asphalt Orchestra, Alarm Will Sound, American

Composers Orchestra and Tan Dun. As a soloist, she has performed Water Percussion Concerto with Milwaukee Symphony and Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra. Yamashita is currently the percussionist of David Byrne's *Here Lies Love* and the former percussionist of *Tina—The Tina Turner Musical*. She is a graduate of Juilliard School and the percussion faculty of Special Music School with Kaufman Music Center.

PAM TANOWITZ DANCE (PTD) unites critically acclaimed choreographer Pam Tanowitz with a company of world-class dance artists and renowned collaborators in all disciplines. As a choreographer, Tanowitz is known for her abstract treatment of classical and contemporary movement ideas. The work is deeply rooted in formal structures, manipulated and abstracted by Tanowitz until the viewer sees through to the heart of the dance. Since its founding in 2000, PTD has received commissions and residencies at Fisher Center at Bard, Baryshnikov Arts Center, Center for Ballet and the Arts at NYU, Chicago Dancing Festival, Danspace Project, Dance Theater Workshop, Guggenheim Museum's Works & Process, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, The Joyce Theater, ICA Boston, Lincoln Center Out of Doors, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, MANCC, New York Live Arts, Penn Live Arts and Center for the Art of Performance at UCLA, among others. Pam Tanowitz Dance was selected by *The New York Times* as Best of Dance 2013–22. pamtanowitzdance.org

FISHER CENTER AT BARD develops, produces, and presents performing arts across disciplines through new productions and context-rich programs that challenge and inspire. The Center's relationship with Tanowitz began with the presentation of three works for Bard SummerScape Festival 2015 and continued in 2018 with *Four Quartets*, lauded as "the greatest creation of dance theatre so far this century" (*The New York Times*). Following this success, Tanowitz became the Center's first choreographer-in-residence. This three-year fellowship supported by Jay Franke and David Herro included four film



MEET THE ARTISTS

commissions, comprehensive administrative and touring support, creation residencies and rehearsal space, professional development and three large-scale proscenium commissions. With the success of Tanowitz's fellowship and connected to a 20-year record of developing ambitious productions, the Fisher Center is making its unique brand of long-term, personalized and holistic support of artists the guiding force of its organizational development into the future. This commitment to American artists like Tanowitz is central to the Center's mission as a premier professional performing arts center. It is a priority to nurture artists at all stages of their careers. The Fisher Center serves as Tanowitz's ongoing artistic home. fishercenter.bard.edu

STANFORD MAKISHI (*Vice President & Artistic Director, Dance*) was appointed to his current position of artistic director, dance, at New York City Center in 2021 after serving as vice president for programming since 2015. He began at the organization in 2011 as associate producer of its Fall for Dance Festival. Makishi danced with Trisha Brown from 1992 to 2006, was assistant director of her production of *Winterreise*, and has taught and restaged her work internationally. He also served as artistic advisor for the Ringling International Arts Festival in Sarasota, executive director of the Baryshnikov Arts Center, director of programs at the Asian Cultural Council and director of creative services at Carnegie Hall.

MICHAEL S. ROSENBERG (*President & CEO*) has had a long and distinguished career leading performing arts institutions to successfully expand audiences and engage communities by supporting artists to create their best work. He has spent his career championing artists, beginning with Drama Dept.—the Greenwich Village artists collective he co-founded with Douglas Carter Beane and Cynthia Nixon. As managing director of La Jolla Playhouse in San Diego, Rosenberg worked with Artistic Director Christopher Ashley to oversee the development and production of the smash hit *Come From Away*,

along with a host of other acclaimed productions, many of which transferred to Broadway, Off-Broadway and the West End. During his tenure, the Playhouse was awarded multi-million-dollar grants to support the development of multiethnic projects, expand opportunities for family engagement and build community arts programs. More recently, as managing director of McCarter Theatre Center, Rosenberg was part of the evolution of the historic theatre—building diversity, equity and inclusion among artists, audiences and administrators alike. At each of the companies he has run, Rosenberg created unique business models, partnerships and funding initiatives to sustainably support the work that artists want to create.

NEW YORK CITY CENTER has played a defining role in the cultural life of the city since 1943. The distinctive Neo-Moorish building was founded by Mayor Fiorello La Guardia as Manhattan's first performing arts center with the mission of making the best in theatre, dance and music accessible to all audiences. This commitment continues today through celebrated dance and musical theatre series such as the Fall for Dance Festival and the Tony-honored Encores! series; the annual season by principal dance company Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater; and new series Artists at the Center and the City Center Dance Festival. City Center welcomes audiences to experience internationally acclaimed artists including Kyle Abraham, Matthew Bourne, Ayodele Casel, Manhattan Theatre Club, Nederlands Dans Theater and Twyla Tharp, on the same stage where legends made their mark. Dedicated to a culture built on the values of curiosity, collaboration, accessibility and inclusivity, City Center's dynamic programming, art exhibitions and studio events are complemented by education and community engagement programs that bring the performing arts to thousands of New York City students, teachers and families every year, in all five boroughs.

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80 YEARS AT THE CENTER OF THE ARTS



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A black and white photograph of Pam Tanowitz in a dance studio. She is wearing a dark, sleeveless, pleated dress and is captured in a dynamic, expressive pose, leaning forward with her head tilted back and a joyful expression. The studio features a large arched window in the background, a ballet barre, and a light-colored floor.

PAM TANOWITZ ON SONG OF SONGS



Pam Tanowitz | Artists at the Center features her full-length *Song of Songs*, with music by David Lang, from November 9 to 11. The dance is one of three major works choreographed by her in recent years, all of which have received accolades from critics and audiences. She discussed some of the concepts and influences that went into its creation.

ANDA RETURN TO by Susan Yung CITY CENTER



Susan Yung: What does it mean for you to be the third featured creator in New York City Center's Artists at the Center series?

Pam Tanowitz: I'm thrilled to be the Artist at the Center, particularly because of my history at City Center. I worked in the administration office there for many years. So coming back as an artist is very satisfying.

is a piece of abstract work that is inspired by the *Song of Songs*. It's not verbatim. It's a meditation on community, and it's spiritual. And there are moments of a love story, sort of, but it's about the ideas around that. I set them up more like a constellation that lives and deals with these themes. That's what I'm after. I love an abstraction, like an abstract painting. David used different rules; he filtered out the words. The first



SY: Can you discuss taking a text such as *Song of Songs* and distilling it into an essentially formal work?

PT: It is the third piece in a trilogy that started with *New Work for Goldberg Variations*, *Four Quartets*, and then *Song of Songs*—though I don't love the word trilogy. But there is a stream of thought there. It started with thinking big, about big proscenium works with text and music, and iconic works too. So we have *Goldberg Variations*, something to tackle that I've never done before. Then *Four Quartets*, with text that I wasn't allowed to change at all.

The freeing part of *Song of Songs* was I didn't have to stick to anything, because the original love poem is so old that David Lang and I could do whatever we wanted. It really

piece of music was already composed when we started working together, and then he created the other three.

SY: Can you discuss visual and movement elements in *Song of Songs*?

PT: Clifton [Taylor] showed us a picture of a synagogue with the blue of the set. And I've created my own folk dances. I've researched Jewish choreographers, Israeli dance, anywhere from David Gordon to Anna Sokolov. I did all this during the pandemic. I had to simultaneously remember, research it, and forget it.

Nothing that I researched is literal. Making dances is very complicated. There are so many things you have to do—and not do. You have to honor your heroes and



“DANCING IS ABOUT THE PRESENT”

influences, and also forget them. You have to coordinate material for your research, and then also forget about it—put in all your concepts and intentions. And then you have all the collaborators and the dancers; there’s so much going on. It’s crazy.

I do feel like I’m an intuitive artist, which doesn’t mean that I don’t do research, or read, or do what I need to do. But I can’t really clock or track literal references in a piece. If I could do that, it’s not really that interesting of a dance in some ways.

SY: Talk about the use of the platforms and benches.

PT: I wanted to make the dancers be the audience at times. That was one of my first ideas, because folk dance is strongly based in community. The dancers watch each other as audience members a lot through the piece.

SY: Not to give anything away, but there’s a costume change partway through...

PT: It’s like seeing the same movement and different costumes and lighting, which is endlessly interesting to me. It’s a feeling of getting to a different place.

SY: Will *Song of Songs* differ at City Center

than its premiere at Bard?

PT: It’s essentially the same idea, concept, music, sets, costumes, and most of the dancers, but I’m changing things within the material. As I’ve said before, dancing is about the present, about what’s going on right now in the room with these people. So it’s really important to me to keep it breathing. *Song of Songs* really started during the pandemic, so a lot of the rehearsals were on Zoom.

SY: I didn’t realize you did most of it on Zoom. That’s kind of amazing.

PT: That’s why a lot of the vocabulary and core material is highly individual and personal.

SY: So there are not specific narrative or emotional moments in the piece that might jump out at people, but if you’re looking for that you can find it.

PT: People thought it was going to be a love story, but I wouldn’t do that. The audience has to work a little to see it, but I want them to see it. I’m not like trying to be alienating or standoffish about it either. The music’s so beautiful. It is accessible, you know?

Susan Yung, based in the Hudson Valley, writes about dance, art, and culture.





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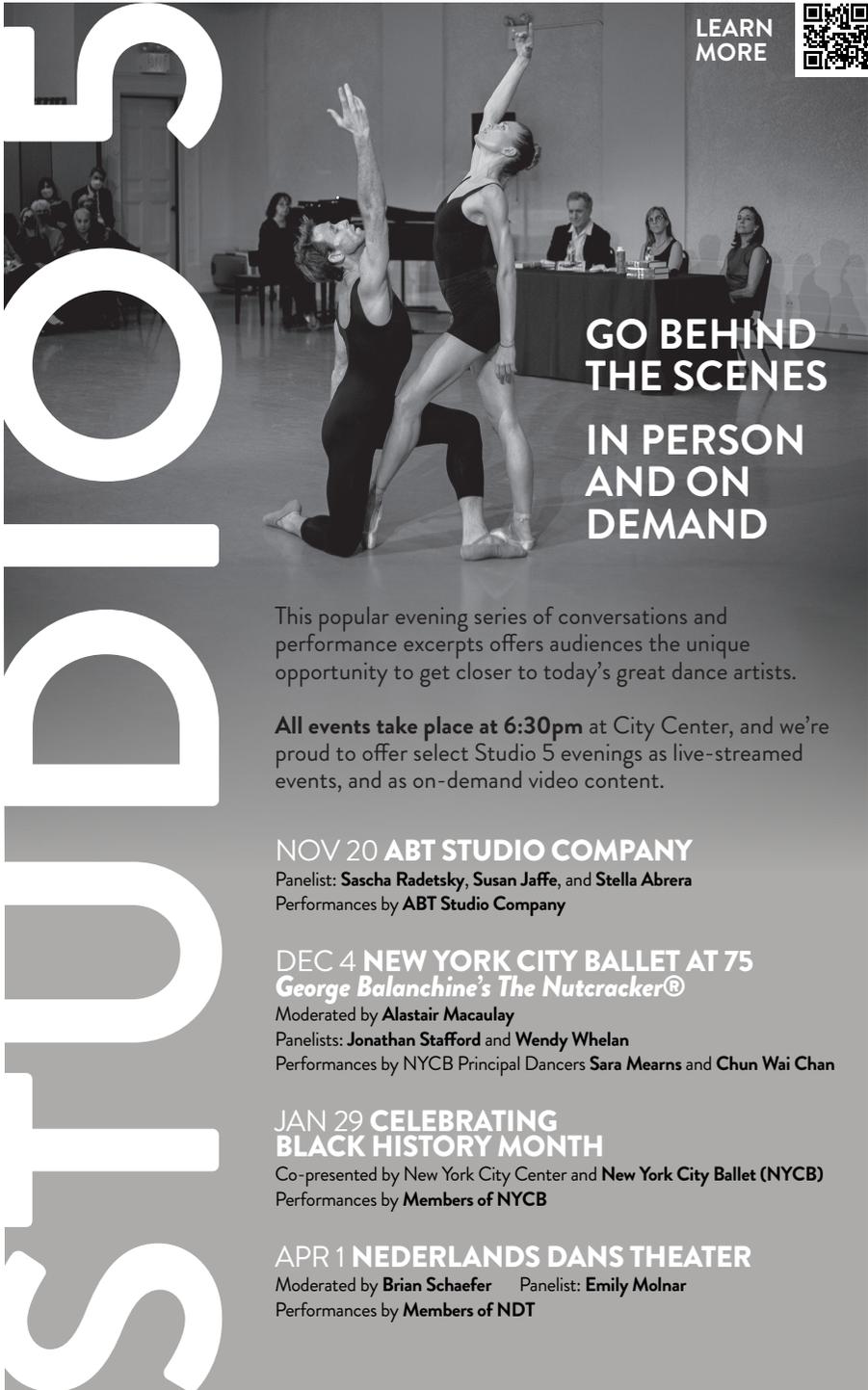
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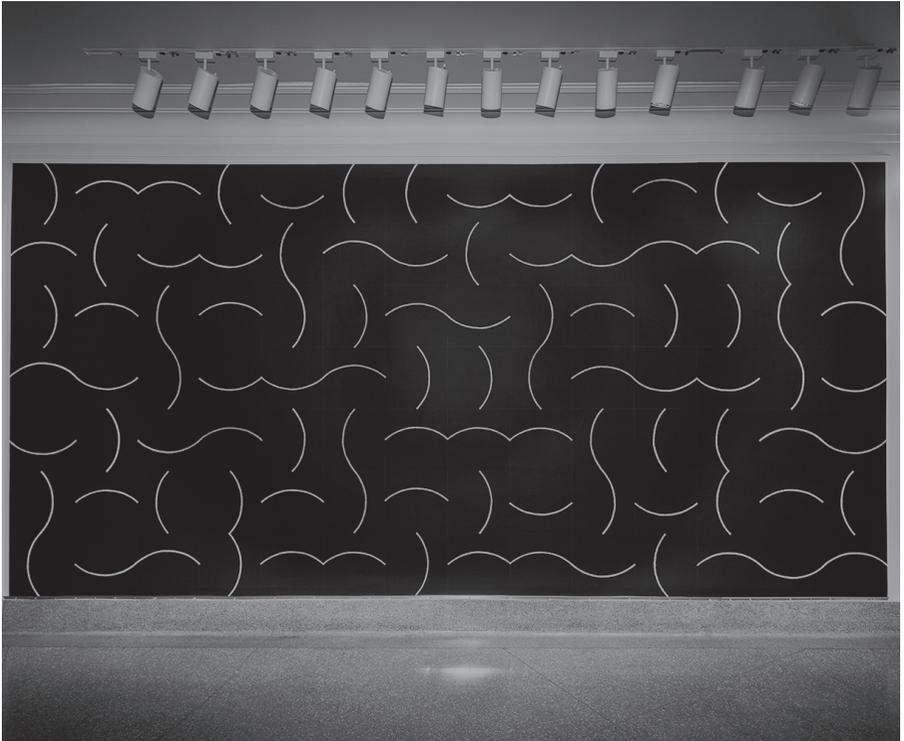
Moderated by **Brian Schaefer** Panelist: **Emily Molnar**
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SOL LEWITT

WALL DRAWING #357

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Renowned minimalist and conceptualist artist **Sol LeWitt** (1928 - 2007) is best known for his series *Wall Drawings*, which explore the relationship between a work of art and the place in which it is installed. In 1979, LeWitt teamed up with choreographer **Lucinda Childs** and composer **Philip Glass** to create *Dance*. Known for her minimalist choreography, Childs created a dialogue of shared methodology with LeWitt, exchanging correspondence through diagrams and imagery, which eventually led to LeWitt creating his only work of film: the visual backdrop of and for the dancers in Childs's iconic work. The film was recreated with the dancers of Lyon Opera Ballet for their 2016 production and presented this season at City Center as part of the citywide *Dance Reflections* by Van Cleef & Arpels Festival.

Currently installed at City Center this season, *Wall Drawing #357* is an ode to Lucinda Childs. The arc motif, along with straight and diagonal lines, embodies her choreographic style. The piece is a part of LeWitt's series, which employs a unique technique for installation. LeWitt created simple instructions for each piece to be drawn in the space, similar to architect's blueprints, based on his belief that the artist's concept was art in itself, and the construction could be open to interpretation. This means that no two pieces created from the same directions will ever be identical. *Wall Drawing #357* has not been seen in New York in any format since 1981, and the piece currently on display in the Grand Tier Lobby is entirely unique to City Center.





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Encores! *The Tap Dance Kid*; photo by Joan Marcus



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Photo by
Benjamin Miller

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