

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**New York City Center announces digital
2020 Fall for Dance Festival live from the stage,
October 21 & 26**

Available on demand through November 1, highlights include:

**Four World Premiere City Center Commissions from
Kyle Abraham, Dormeshia, Jamar Roberts,
and Christopher Wheeldon**

Hosted by Alicia Graf Mack and David Hallberg

Digital access \$15 per program; On sale September 29 at noon

(UPDATED: October 5, 2020) September 29, 2020 (New York, NY) – New York City Center President & CEO **Arlene Shuler** today announced programming for an unprecedented 2020 **Fall for Dance Festival** in two programs premiering October 21 and 26, and available on demand through November 1. Reflecting this singular moment in history, this season marks the first time the Festival will be filmed live on the City Center stage and presented digitally—making the annual sold-out “highlight of the city’s cultural calendar” (*The New York Times*) accessible to the entire world to experience.

For seventeen seasons, the Fall for Dance Festival has welcomed dance lovers, both existing and new, to experience an array of international dance artists and a variety of genres. Hosted by **Alicia Graf Mack** and **David Hallberg**, the 2020 Festival features exclusively artists from New York City performing on the City Center stage—highlighting the resilience of dance and dance artists, and the power of coming together in solidarity through the arts.



“The fall has always signaled the beginning of a new season of performing arts across the city. In that tradition, we are turning the lights back on and presenting the Festival live from our stage as the first steps toward City Center’s reopening to the public,” said **President & CEO Arlene Shuler**. “We are steadfast in our commitment to support artists at this crucial time, and, with rigorous health and safety protocols in place, we are thrilled to have them back in our building where they belong. We have deep, longstanding relationships with many of the artists and companies in this year’s Festival and we are all eager to get them back on the stage. While we may not be able to welcome audiences into the theater yet, I’m delighted that we are able to capture the energy of live performance on our stage and bring these artists directly to our audience—across the city, country, and around the world.”

Program 1 features two world premiere commissions, including a solo piece from **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater’s** first Resident Choreographer **Jamar Roberts**—choreographed for himself—and a duet from **Christopher Wheeldon** for New York City Ballet principal dancer **Sara Mearns** and **David Hallberg**, American Ballet Theatre principal dancer and the incoming artistic director of The Australian Ballet. This marks Mearns and Hallberg’s first-ever performance together. The program also includes **Ballet Hispánico** in a New York premiere of excerpts from *18+1*, an electric, mambo-driven piece celebrating **Gustavo Ramírez Sansano’s** 19 years as a choreographer. **Martha Graham Dance Company’s** **Natasha M. Diamond-Walker** performs *Lamentation*, one of the Company’s quintessential solos, presenting a timeless message about the essence of grief.

In Program 2, world renowned tap dancer **Dormeshia** performs a world premiere City Center Commission, accompanied by musicians **Noah Garabedian**, **Winard Harper**, and **Gabriel Roxbury**. **Calvin Royal III**, recently promoted to principal dancer with **American Ballet Theatre**, also dances a world premiere City Center Commission by choreographer **Kyle Abraham**. **Lar Lubovitch Dance Company**, featuring guest artists **Adrian Danchig-Waring** and **Joseph Gordon** (principal dancers with New York City Ballet), perform the iconic male duet from *Concerto Six Twenty-Two*. The program also features **Ashley Boudier**, **Tiler Peck**, and **Brittany Pollack** in excerpts from George Balanchine’s *Who Cares?*, an exuberant response to George Gershwin’s classic tunes.

In keeping with the Festival’s long history of accessible tickets, digital access is \$15 per program. Expanding City Center’s founding mission to make the arts available to everyone, digital access will be



free for City Center Education and Community Engagement partners including participating schools (students and teachers) and Fall for Dance Lab professional development participants; and \$5 per program for Take 5 Ticket buyers and City Center On the Move partners at NYC Parks recreational centers.

It was also announced today that New York City Center Board Co-Chair Richard Witten and his wife and fellow Board Member Lisa have established a Challenge Grant in connection with the 2020 Fall for Dance Festival. Any donations made in addition to the \$15 digital access fee, including membership gifts, will be matched dollar for dollar through November 1.

Program 1 of the 2020 Fall for Dance Festival premieres on October 21 at 7:30 PM ET and Program 2 on October 26 at 7:30 PM ET. Both programs will be available on demand through Sunday, November 1, on City Center's website at NYCityCenter.org/FallforDance. **Digital access is \$15 for each program and goes on sale September 29 at noon at NYCityCenter.org.**

2020 Fall for Dance Festival is produced by New York City Center and Nel Shelby Productions in association with Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library. Programming and casting subject to change. The safety of the artists, crew, and staff is City Center's first priority. All rehearsals and performances are executed in strict adherence to rigorous health and safety protocols under the guidance of medical consultants and in accordance with government and union guidelines. New York City Center is located at 131 West 55th Street between 6th and 7th Avenues. For information call 212.581.1212 or visit NYCityCenter.org.

New York City Center gratefully acknowledges Fall for Dance Festival Lead Sponsor Bloomberg Philanthropies. Major Support for Fall for Dance is provided by Jody and John Arnhold.

City Center is also grateful for the support of its Fall for Dance Presenting Partners including Denise R. Sobel, Barbara and David Zalaznick, Perry and Marty Granoff, and Caroline Howard Hyman.

Additional Support for Fall for Dance is provided by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, Joyce F. Menschel, the Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Inc., and The SHS Foundation.



Major Support for New York City Center's 2020-2021 season is provided by the Howard Gilman Foundation and the Ford Foundation.

Support for the Arts Access Fund is provided the JLGreene Arts Access Fund in The New York Community Trust, the Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller Fund and the William and Dewey Edelman Charitable Trust.

Leadership support for dance at New York City Center is provided by The Harkness Foundation for Dance.

FALL FOR DANCE FESTIVAL

OCT 21 & 26, 2020

Digital access \$15 per program (through Nov 1)

PROGRAM 1

October 21 | 7:30PM ET

Ballet Hispánico

Excerpts from **18+1** | New York Premiere

Choreography by Gustavo Ramírez Sansano

Performed by Ballet Hispánico Company Dancers: Shelby Colona, Dandara Veiga, & Lenai Wilkerson

Jamar Roberts of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Morani/Mungu (Black Warrior/Black God) World Premiere City Center Commission

Choreography by Jamar Roberts

Martha Graham Dance Company

Lamentation

Choreography by Martha Graham

Featuring Natasha M. Diamond-Walker

Sara Mearns & David Hallberg

The Two of Us World Premiere City Center Commission

Choreography by Christopher Wheeldon

PROGRAM 2

October 26 | 7:30PM ET

Ashley Boudier, Tiler Peck, & Brittany Pollack

Excerpts from ***Who Cares?***

Choreography by George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust



Calvin Royal III of American Ballet Theatre
World Premiere City Center Commission
Choreography by Kyle Abraham

Lar Lubovitch Dance Company
Duet from *Concerto Six Twenty-Two*
Choreography by Lar Lubovitch
With guest artists Adrian Danchig-Waring & Joseph Gordon

Dormeshia
Lady Swings the Blues World Premiere City Center Commission
Conceived and Choreographed by Dormeshia
Accompanied by Noah Garabedian, Winard Harper, & Gabriel Roxbury

2020 Fall for Dance Festival Artists

Kyle Abraham (Choreographer) is a 2013 MacArthur Fellow and a 2016 Doris Duke Awardee who began his dance training in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania before receiving his BFA from Purchase College and his MFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, an honorary Doctorate in Fine Arts from Washington Jefferson College, and is currently serving as a visiting professor in residence at UCLA. Abraham received a prestigious Bessie Award for Outstanding Performance in Dance for his work in *The Radio Show*, and a Princess Grace Award for Choreography in 2010. In 2011, *OUT* magazine labeled Abraham as the "best and brightest creative talent to emerge in New York City in the age of Obama." He is the founding Artistic Director of A.I.M., a contemporary dance company, created in honor of his history, experiences, and artistic interests. Abraham is a 2015 New York City Center Choreography Fellow and previously choreographed a solo piece for Misty Copeland in the 2019 Fall for Dance Festival.

Ballet Hispánico, America's leading Latino dance organization, has been bringing people together to celebrate the joy and diversity of Latino cultures for 50 years. Ballet Hispánico's mission-driven ethos has been a catalyst of change for communities throughout our nation. By bringing the richness of the Latinx culture to the forefront of performance, education, and social advocacy, Ballet Hispánico is a cultural ambassador. Today, Ballet Hispánico is led by Eduardo Vilaro, whose artistic vision responds to the need for social equity, cultural identity, and quality arts education for all. Ballet Hispánico has been, and will continue to be, a beacon for diversity.

Ashley Boudier was born in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and began her ballet training at the age of six at the Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet with Marcia Dale Weary. After attending the School of American Ballet (SAB), Boudier joined New York City Ballet (NYCB). She was promoted to principal dancer in 2005. She has danced in ballet galas around the world and guest starred in companies including the Paris Opera Ballet, Rome Opera Ballet, Bayerisches Staatsballett, and the Mariinsky Ballet. She was awarded the Mae L. Wien Award for Outstanding Promise at the School of American Ballet as a student. Other awards include the Janice Levin Honoree from NYCB, the Miss Expressivity for 2011 and the Miss Virtuosity for 2013 from the Dance Open Gala, the 2019 Benois de la Danse, and the Award for Artistic Excellence from the Borough of Manhattan Community College for her work in promoting gender equality in the ballet world.



Adrian Danchig-Waring is a principal dancer with NYCB, where he's collaborated with many of today's renowned choreographers and performed an active repertoire of masterworks by George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins. He has originated featured roles in works by Kim Brandstrup, Eliot Feld, Wayne McGregor, Benjamin Millepied, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Justin Peck, Angelin Preljocaj, Alexei Ratmansky, and Liam Scarlett, among others. He was a founding member of Christopher Wheeldon's company Morphoses, with which he toured from 2005–2008. Danchig-Waring is the director of the New York Choreographic Institute: an incubator for the development of new work in the field of classical and contemporary ballet and director of the board of The George Balanchine Foundation.

Natasha M. Diamond-Walker is from Los Angeles. She joined the Company in 2011 and has danced solo roles in Graham classics such as *Diversion of Angels*, *Cave of the Heart*, *Embattled Garden*, and *Appalachian Spring*, among others. She has also originated roles for top choreographers Kyle Abraham, Lil Buck, Nacho Duato, Liz Gerring, Bobbi Jene Smith, and Pam Tanowitz. Diamond-Walker appears as guest artist with Annie-B Parson's Big Dance Theater and can be seen in myriad TV/film projects. She holds a BFA from Fordham University.

Dormeshia is a two-time Bessie Award winner (performer and choreographer), and Princess Grace Award Statue Award and Astaire Award recipient. Her Broadway credits include *After Midnight*, *Black and Blue*, and *Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk!*, including the international tour (dance captain, principal, lead). Her film credits include *TAP* with Gregory Hines, Spike Lee's *Bamboozled* (assistant choreographer/actress), and *The Rise and Fall of Miss Thang*, for which she received a nomination for Best Lead Actress. Some of Dormeshia's choreography credits include Michael Jackson's *Rock My World*, and *The Blues Project* (co-choreographer). Dormeshia continues her artistic journey with the first full-length work *And Still You Must Swing*: a celebration of tap dance, jazz music, the connection between the two, and their African roots.

Noah Garabedian holds a BA in Ethnomusicology from the University of California Los Angeles, and a Master's in Music Performance from New York University. In 2006 he was awarded a John Coltrane National Scholarship, and in 2007 was selected as a finalist for the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz graduate program. In March of 2011, Garabedian was selected to participate in Brad Mehldau's master class at the Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall, and in June of that same year was selected as a finalist in the ISB Double Bass Competition. In November of 2016, he received a Fulbright Specialist Grant to teach jazz music for one month at Silpakorn University, in Bangkok, Thailand. Garabedian, a native of Berkeley, California, has performed and toured with Ravi Coltrane, Ralph Alessi, and Josh Roseman, as well as on behalf of the US State Department throughout Asia and the Middle East.

Joseph Gordon was born in Phoenix, Arizona, and began his dance training at the age of five at The Phoenix Dance Academy. Gordon began studying at SAB, the official school of NYCB, during the 2006 summer course and enrolled as a full-time student that fall. In August of 2011, Gordon became an apprentice with NYCB, and in July of 2012, he joined the company as a member of the corps de ballet. He was promoted to soloist in February 2017 and to principal in October 2018. He has performed featured roles in ballets choreographed by George Balanchine, August Bournonville, Justin Peck, Alexei Ratmansky, Jerome Robbins, and Christopher Wheeldon. Gordon has performed on stages around the world including the Théâtre du Châtelet of Paris, Bunkamura Festival Hall of Tokyo, Copenhagen Royal Opera House, Tivoli Gardens Theater, and has been a guest artist at the Vail International Dance Festival since 2014.



Alicia Graf Mack began her inaugural season as the dean and director of the Dance Division at The Juilliard School in fall 2018. She enjoyed a distinguished career as a leading dancer of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and was a principal dancer with Dance Theatre of Harlem and Complexions Contemporary Ballet. She has also danced as a guest performer with André 3000, Alonzo King LINES Ballet, Beyoncé, John Legend, and Alicia Keys. Graf Mack graduated magna cum laude with honors in history from Columbia University and holds an MA in nonprofit management from Washington University in St. Louis. In 2007, *Smithsonian Magazine* named her an American Innovator of the Arts and Sciences. She is a recipient of the Columbia University Medal of Excellence, an annual award given to an alumnus who has demonstrated excellence in their field of work. As a dance educator, Graf Mack most recently taught as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Houston and was a visiting assistant professor at Webster University. She is a co-founder of D(n)A Arts Collective, an initiative created to enrich the lives of young dancers through master classes and intensives.

David Hallberg was born in South Dakota. He trained at The School of Ballet Arizona and the Paris Opera Ballet School, before joining American Ballet Theatre (ABT) in 2001. He became a principal dancer in 2005 and his repertoire includes leading roles in all the major classical ballets. He has performed works by George Balanchine, Kurt Jooss, Lar Lubovitch, Mark Morris, Jerome Robbins, Twyla Tharp, Antony Tudor, and more, as well as roles he created in seven of Alexei Ratmansky's world premieres. He made history in 2011 as the first American to join the Bolshoi Ballet under the title premier dancer. Hallberg has been a guest artist with Mariinsky Ballet, Paris Opera Ballet, La Scala, The Royal Ballet, and more. His recognitions include the Benois de la Danse prize, the Princess Grace Fellowship, The Bell Family Foundation Emerging Artist Award, and the Chris Hellman Dance Award and its Statue Award. Hallberg is the incoming artistic director for The Australian Ballet, and he serves as a board member with City Center and Performa in New York City.

Winard Harper studied at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and at Howard University and was awarded a scholarship to study jazz under the guidance of Jackie McLean at the University of Hartford. He has played with Betty Carter, Dexter Gordon, and Johnny Griffin. Harper was part of the Young Lions with his brother Philip, and together they formed jazz sensation The Harper Brothers, with five much lauded albums and Billboard 100 positions to their name. He formed his own sextet in 1993, recording seven albums featuring a host of special guests, true to his collaborative approach and the strong desire to showcase jazz greats of all ages. His latest project "Winard Harper & Jeli Posse" continues to record and perform throughout the region.

Lar Lubovitch (Choreographer) is one of America's most versatile and widely seen choreographers. He founded the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company in 1968. Over 50 years, the company has gained an international reputation as one of America's top dance companies, produced more than 120 dances, and performed before millions across the U.S. and over 40 countries. Many major companies throughout the world have performed the company's dances, including American Ballet Theatre, New York City Ballet, Paris Opera Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, The Joffrey Ballet, Martha Graham Dance Company, and more. His theater and film work includes *Into the Woods* (Tony Award nomination), *The Red Shoes* (Astaire Award), the Tony Award-winning revival of *The King and I*, and more. In 1987, he conceived *Dancing for Life*, which took place at Lincoln Center. It was the first response by the dance community to the AIDS crisis, raising over one million dollars.



The **Martha Graham Dance Company** has been a world leader in the development of contemporary dance since its founding in 1926. Today, the Company is embracing a new programming vision that showcases masterpieces by Graham alongside newly commissioned works by contemporary artists. During its 90-year history, the Company has received acclaim from audiences and critics in more than 50 countries.

Sara Mearns of Columbia, South Carolina, has been a principal dancer with NYCB since 2008. She has been a guest artist with the Paul Taylor Dance Company, Jodi Melnick Dance, and Wang Ramirez. She has also starred in the US premiere of Matthew Bourne's *The Red Shoes* at City Center and performed the *Dances of Isadora Duncan* at both Lincoln Center and City Center's Fall for Dance Festival. Mearns was also featured in the Fall for Dance Festival in 2013, 2017, 2018, and 2019. She has worked with world-renowned choreographers including Justin Peck and Alexei Ratmansky. In 2019, she made her City Center Encores! debut in *I Married an Angel*. Mearns is the winner of the 2018 Bessie Award for Outstanding Performer and a nominee for both the Benois de la Danse and Princess Grace Awards. She has partnerships with Cole Haan, Tiger Balm, and SoDanca.

Tiler Peck has been a principal dancer with NYCB since 2009. She most recently starred as Marie in the Kennedy Center's production of *Little Dancer* and is slated to star in the show's upcoming Broadway production now called *Marie*. Peck made her Broadway debut at age 11 in *The Music Man* and was seen on Broadway as Ivy Smith in the Tony-nominated *On the Town*. She has appeared on television in *Ray Donovan*, *Dancing with the Stars*, the 2012 and 2014 Kennedy Center Honors for the Obamas, and Live from Lincoln Center's *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*, and *Carousel*. She is a recipient of the Princess Grace Statue Award, *Dance Magazine* Award, Mae L. Wien Award, and was named one of *Forbes* "30 under 30." Peck has appeared in previous City Center events including Studio 5, the 2015 and 2018 Fall for Dance Festival, and the 2016 Vail Dance Festival: ReMix NYC.

Brittany Pollack is a soloist with NYCB. She has performed principal roles in ballets choreographed by George Balanchine, Mauro Bigonzetti, August Bournonville, Justin Peck, Angelin Preljocaj, Alexei Ratmansky, Jerome Robbins, Lynne Taylor-Corbett, Christopher Wheeldon, and more. Her standout roles include Anita in *West Side Story*, *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*, *Symphony in C*, *Opus 19: The Dreamer*, *Western Symphony*, *Who Cares?*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake*, and more. Her Broadway credits include Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel*—2018 revival. Pollack's film and TV credits include Steven Spielberg's *West Side Story*, *Camp*, *NY Export: Opus Jazz*, *The David Letterman Show*, Live from Lincoln Center's *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*, and more. Pollack has also appeared in the Radio City Christmas Spectacular, the cover of *Dance Magazine's* "25 to Watch" issue, and more. She holds a BS from Fordham University and MBA from Colorado State University. Pollack performed Christopher Wheeldon's *Polyphonia* with NYCB at City Center's 2011 Fall for Dance Festival.

Jamar Roberts is the first resident choreographer of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. A dancer with the company since 2002, Roberts's first full-length work for the company, *Members Don't Get Weary*, premiered at City Center in 2016. In 2019, he premiered his next work, *Ode*, also at City Center. Roberts set his work *Gemeos* on Ailey II. A graduate of the New World School of the Arts and The Ailey School, he has danced for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ailey II, and Complexions Contemporary Ballet. Roberts won the 2016 Bessie Award for Outstanding Performer. He has been commissioned by The Juilliard School Dance Division, the March on Washington Film Festival to create a dance tribute to the honorable John Lewis, and as a Works & Process Virtual Commissioned Artist where he created the acclaimed short work on film, *Cooped*.



Gabriel Roxbury studied with Sekou O’Hura and Chiku Awali African Dance, Arts & Culture with Makane Koute and Jerry Dzokoto. His credits include *Hello from Hollywood* at Lincoln Center with the New York Philharmonic featuring Tony Award winner Bryan Stokes Mitchell, Jacobs Pillow Dance Festival, and the Hudson River Dance Festival. Roxbury has also toured and taught in Ghana, West Africa, and Tempe, Arizona.

Calvin Royal III began his formal dance training at the Pinellas County Center for the Arts in St. Petersburg, Florida. He was a finalist at the Youth America Grand Prix Competition and was awarded the Ethan Stiefel Scholarship to train at ABT’s Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School in 2006. Royal joined ABT II in 2008 and the main company in April 2011. He was promoted to soloist in September 2017 and to principal dancer in September 2020. Royal has been featured in the company's classical repertoire such as *Swan Lake*, *Romeo & Juliet*, and *Apollo*, and new works by Kyle Abraham, Wayne McGregor, Alexei Ratmansky, Twyla Tharp, and Christopher Wheeldon. Royal was the winner of the Leonore Annenberg Fellowship grant, and the July 2020 cover star of *Dance Magazine*. Royal was named the 2020/21 artist-in-residence at the Vail Dance Festival in Vail, Colorado.

Christopher Wheeldon (Choreographer) Christopher Wheeldon trained at The Royal Ballet School and joined The Royal Ballet in 1991. In 1993, he joined New York City Ballet (NYCB) and was promoted to Soloist in 1998. He was named NYCB’s first Resident Choreographer in July 2001. Since then, then Wheeldon has created and staged productions for many of the world’s major ballet companies. In 2007, he founded Morphoses/The Wheeldon Company and was appointed an Associate Artist for Sadler’s Wells Theatre in London. Wheeldon now serves as Artistic Associate of The Royal Ballet. Among Wheeldon’s awards are a Tony Award for Best Choreography, an Outer Critics Award for Best Choreography and Direction for *An American in Paris*, the Martin E. Segal Award from Lincoln Center, the American Choreography Award, the Dance Magazine Award, multiple London Critics’ Circle Awards, the Léonide Massine Prize for new choreography, and more.

NEW YORK CITY CENTER (Arlene Shuler, President & CEO) has played a defining role in the cultural life of the city since 1943. The distinctive neo-Moorish theater welcomes over 300,000 annual visitors to experience internationally acclaimed artists on the same stage where legends like George Balanchine, Leonard Bernstein, and Barbara Cook made their mark. Its landmark 75th Anniversary Season (2018 – 2019) paid tribute to this rich history and celebrated the institution’s singular role in the arts today. City Center’s Tony-honored Encores! series has celebrated the tradition of American musical theater for over 25 years. In 2013, City Center launched the Encores! Off-Center series, which brings today’s innovative artists into contact with groundbreaking musicals from the more recent past. Dance has also been integral to the theater’s mission from the start and programs like the annual Fall for Dance Festival, with all tickets \$15, remain central to City Center’s identity. Home to a roster of renowned national and international companies including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (City Center’s Principal Dance Company) and Manhattan Theatre Club, New York City Center is Manhattan’s first performing arts center, founded by Mayor Fiorello La Guardia with the mission of making the best in music, theater, and dance accessible to all audiences. That mission continues today through its dynamic programming, art exhibitions, studio events, and master classes, which are complemented by education and community engagement programs that bring the performing arts to over 11,000 New York City students, teachers, and families each year. NYCityCenter.org



PRESS CONTACT:

Joe Guttridge, Director of Communications

JGuttridge@NYCityCenter.org

212.763.1279

Sara García, Publicity Assistant

SGarcia@NYCityCenter.org

212.763.1288

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