



The New York Dance and Performance Awards
Produced in partnership with Dance/NYC
www.dancenyc.org/dance-nyc/bessies

July 18, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The New York Dance and Performance Awards, aka The Bessies, will take place on Monday October 24, 2011 at 8 pm at the legendary Apollo Theater in New York City.

This year, for the first time, the Bessies will announce the final works to be considered for Bessie Awards.

The Bessies are introducing an entirely new Juried Bessie Award to be chosen by a jury of acclaimed choreographers and to come with touring opportunities. The Bessies have secured the award's first regional touring partner.

“The Bessie Awards are taking a giant leap forward,” says Lane Harwell, Director of Dance/NYC and Chair of the Bessie Steering Committee. “The scale and reach of this year’s ceremony, and the range of artists represented, demonstrate the vitality and promise of dance in New York City.”

The Bessies at The Apollo

The Bessie Awards are very excited to announce that this year’s award ceremony will be held at one of the country’s most renowned and storied venues—Harlem’s Apollo Theater. To be presented in collaboration with the Apollo, the 2011 Bessie ceremony will be a true gathering of the city’s diverse and ever-expanding community of dancers.

The landmarked Apollo Theater has played a pivotal role in American culture since the 1930s. The Apollo's signature Amateur Night talent competition is known around the world, and its legacy of launching and nurturing talent and presenting seminal music, dance, and entertainment performances is unparalleled.

Lucy Sexton, Producer of The Bessie Awards, says, "The Bessies are honored to be presenting the awards at this historic and vital venue. By coming to the Apollo, we really feel the Bessies are stepping out as a citywide celebration of dance. One of the imperatives of the Bessies is to provide increased visibility for our honored dance artists, so to present them at a theater that is known the world over really helps us put dance forward on the national and international stage. And the fact that it is such a dynamic performance space, one with a real community feel, is the icing on the cake. I couldn't think of a more exciting place for the Bessies to happen."

"From the famous Apollo chorus dancers to Honi Coles to Sammy Davis Jr. to Savion Glover, dance has been a cornerstone of the Apollo's artistic offerings since the theater opened its doors in 1934," said Apollo Theater Executive Producer Mikki Shepard. "We are thrilled to expand our connections to the dance community through this new partnership with the Bessies, and look forward to sharing our own exciting new dance programming with the public in the coming seasons."

The Bessies

Final works to be considered in each award category

For the first time in the 27 year history of the awards, the Bessies will announce the works the Bessie Selection Committee is putting forward for consideration of an Outstanding Production Bessie. There will be four Bessie Awards for Outstanding Production. Here are the final works to be considered for these awards:

Outstanding Production (of a work performed in a larger capacity venue of more than 400 seats):

Thirteen Diversions by Christopher Wheeldon, performed by American Ballet Theatre at the Metropolitan Opera House

Quartet by Merce Cunningham, performed by the Merce Cunningham Dance Company at The Joyce Theater

The Bright Stream by Alexei Ratmansky, performed by American Ballet Theatre at the Metropolitan Opera House

Outstanding Production (of a work that stretches the boundaries of a traditional or culturally specific form):

Remembering Jimmy and *Three to One* by Michelle Dorrance, performed at Danspace Project

Los Muñequitos de Mantanzas with Max Pollak and Barbaro Ramos, performed at Symphony Space

Caribbean Soul Dancers by Ismael Otero, performed at the Salsa Congress, Hilton Hotel

Outstanding Production (of a work performed in a smaller capacity venue of less than 400 seats):

Them by Ishmael Houston-Jones, performed at Performance Space 122

Etudes for an Astronaut by Lance Gries, performed at La MaMa Moves! Dance Festival

Nameless Forest Choreographed and Directed by Dean Moss
In collaboration with Sungmyung Chun

Outstanding Production (of a work not technically considered dance but happening in and influencing the dance community):

Selective Memory by Brian Rogers and Madeline Best, performed at The Chocolate Factory

Lili Handel by Ivo Dimchev, performed at La MaMa

Montgomery Park, or Opulence by Karinne Keithley, performed at Incubator Arts Project

Outstanding Visual Design:

Walter Dundervill for *Aesthetic Destiny 1: Candy Mountain* (choreographed by Walter Dundervill, performed at Dance Theater Workshop)

Patricia Forelle for *La Folia (1700/2001)*, (choreographed by Raoul Auger/Lynn Parkerson as part of *From Baroque to Hip Hop* performed at the Performance Space at the Schermerhorn)

Bjorn Amelan, Robert Wierzel, and Janet Wong for *Fondly Do We Hope . . . Fervently Do We Pray* (choreographed by Bill T. Jones, performed at the Rose Theater)

Outstanding Sound Design or Composition

Stephen Vitiello (in collaboration with Patrick DeWit, drumming segment) for *Nameless Forest* (choreographed by Dean Moss in collaboration with Sungmyung Chun, performed at the Kitchen)

Jon Moniaci for *Electric Midwife* (choreographed by Beth Gill, performed at the Chocolate Factory)

Rodrigo Marçal for *ID: Entidades* (choreographed by Sonia Destri, performed at City Center)

Savion Glover for *SoLe Sanctuary* (choreographed by Savion Glover, performed at The Joyce)

Outstanding Emerging Choreographer

Souleymane Badolo

Beth Gill

Bouchra Ouizguen

Justin Peck

Outstanding Individual Performance

Camille A. Brown in *The Evolution of a Secured Feminine* (choreographed by Camille A. Brown)

Rebecca Serell Cyr in *beginning of something* (choreographed by RoseAnne Spradlin)

Caleb Teicher in *A Shared Evening* (choreographed by Michelle Dorrance and Dormeshia Sumbry-Edwards)

Marcelo Gomes in *Giselle* (performed by American Ballet Theatre)

Sustained Achievement in Performance

Rashaun Mitchell in the work of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company

David Thomson in the work of various choreographers including this season's performance in Muna Tseng's STELLA

Wendy Whelan in the work of the New York City Ballet

The Bessies

Juried Bessie Award

This is an entirely new award, chosen in an entirely new way. A jury of three acclaimed choreographers will choose an artist or company whose work they feel exhibits the most interesting and exciting ideas happening in dance in New York City today. The honored dance maker will then tour their work to one or more regional theaters. The inaugural jury is David Gordon, Ralph Lemon, and Elizabeth Streb.

The Nazareth College Arts Center Dance Festival is the inaugural touring partner for the Juried Bessie Award. The honored artist will be invited to perform at the 2012 festival at the Nazareth College Arts Center in Rochester, NY. Nazareth College President Daan Braveman says, “The Nazareth College Arts Center has a long history of presenting renowned—and diverse---dance companies on our stage. It is an honor to be the inaugural touring partner for the new Juried Bessie Award, and we look forward to introducing Rochester-area audiences to the artist or company selected for this prestigious recognition.”



About the Bessie Awards

The mission of the Bessie Awards is to gather the city's many dance communities, to honor outstanding work in the field of dance, and to advocate on the national and international stage for the extraordinary range of dance being performed in New York.

Established in 1983 by David White at Dance Theater Workshop, the New York Dance and Performance Awards or Bessie Awards---in honor of the treasured dancer and teacher Bessie Schonberg--- acknowledge outstanding creative work by independent artists in the fields of dance and related performance in New York City. They honor exceptional choreography, performance, music composition, visual design and others areas of dance and performance. The award recipients are chosen by The Bessie Selection Committee, which consists of artists, dance presenters, producers, journalists, critics and academics.

Producer

Lucy Sexton is the independent producer of the Bessie Awards. A choreographer, director, and producer, she has worked in the field of dance and performance for more than 25 years. Highlights include creating the dance performance duo DANCENOISE, directing the off-Broadway play *Spalding Gray; Stories Left to Tell*, and producing Charles Atlas's film *The Legend of Leigh Bowery*. Please contact her with any questions about The Bessie Awards: thebessies@gmail.com.

The Bessie Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is responsible for setting policy and providing oversight of the Bessie Awards throughout the year.

Chair:

Lane Harwell became director of Dance/NYC in September, 2010. Prior to joining Dance/NYC, he was the director of development at New York's arts-

(Chair Lane Harwell, continued)

wide advocacy group, the Alliance for the Arts. His lifelong history in the arts also includes training at the School of American Ballet, a performance career with American Ballet Theatre Studio Company, and management experience in diverse theater and service contexts. He holds a BA in Philosophy from Princeton University, an MA in Performance Studies from the University of California at Berkeley, and is currently pursuing an MBA at Columbia Business School, focusing on the applicability of for-profit management approaches to the nonprofit sector. Lane is also a member of the Steering Committee for the New York City Arts Coalition and of the Policy Leadership Circle for the Institute for Culture in the Service of Community Sustainability.

Steering Committee:

Cora Cahan (President, The New 42nd Street), Judy Hussie-Taylor (Artistic Director, Danspace Project), Carla Peterson (Artistic Director, Dance Theater Workshop), Elizabeth Streb (Artistic Director, Streb Extreme Action), Martin Wechsler (Director of Programming, Joyce Theater); and Reggie Wilson (Choreographer, Artistic Director, Fist and Heel Performance Group).

The Bessie Selection Committee:

Responsible for choosing work to be awarded from the 2010-11 season.

Arthur Aviles, Artistic Director Arthur Aviles Typical Theatre and the Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance

Nolini Barretto, Arts Administrator, Producer, Curator

Barbara Bryan, Executive Director, Movement Research; Managing Director, John Jasperse Company; Project Director, Sarah Michelson

Kim Chan, Paul Taylor Dance Foundation, Director of Development

H.T. Chen, Artistic Director/Founder of H.T. Chen & Dancers and Chen Dance Center – School and Theater

Lili Chopra, Artistic Director of the French Institute/Alliance Francaise (FIAF)

Arlene C. Cooper, Scholar & Consultant, History of Textiles & Costume Design

Rachel Cooper, Director for Cultural Programs and Performing Arts, Asia Society

Nancy Dalva, Dance Writer; Creator/Producer of *Mondays with Merce*

Andrew Dinwiddie, Performer, Creator and Co-curator of Catch

Maura Donohue, Artistic Director, Maura Nguyen Donohue /inmixedcompany; Writer, Culturebot.org; Assistant Professor of Dance, Hunter College in New York City

Joan Finkelstein, Director of Dance, New York City Department of Education

Stephen Greco, Director of Content, Classical TV

Marina Harss, regular contributor to “Goings On About Town” in the New Yorker magazine and “The Faster Times”; freelance writer for The Nation, Playbill, Ballet Review, and Pointe Magazine

Zhenesse Heinemann, Curator, Producer, Performance/Visual Artist

Andy Horwitz, Curator, Producer; Director of Public Programs Lower Manhattan Cultural Council; Founding Editor Culturbot.org

Ryutaro Ishekane, Performance / Lens-based artist

Virginia Johnson, Artistic Director Dance Theatre of Harlem, Founding Editor in Chief Pointe magazine, former Principal Dancer Dance Theatre of Harlem

Fatima Kafele, Publicist and Dance Enthusiast, LIU Brooklyn

Robert LaFosse, Dancer, Choreographer, Teacher, American Ballet Theatre, New York City Ballet, and Broadway

Stanford Makishi, Artistic Advisor, Fall for Dance Festival

Ken Maldonado, Producer, Curator; Founding Director of Zia Artists and Gotham Arts Exchange

Caridad Martinez, Choreographer; Former Principal Dancer of the Ballet Nacional de Cuba; Pre-Professional Division Coordinator for the Ballet Hispanico School of Dance

Salley May, Performance Artist, Curator Avant-Garde-Arama at Performance Space 122

Brian McCormick, Educator

Nicky Paraiso, Performer/Artist-Curator; Director of Programming, The Club at La MaMa; Curator, La MaMa Moves! Dance Festival

Morgan von prelle Pecelli, PhD., Curator, Producer, Anthropologist, and Performer; Director of Development, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council

Rokafella, Choreographer, Dancer, Co-Founder Full Circle Prod Inc

Tina Ramirez, Founding Artistic Director, Ballet Hispanico

Will Rawls, Choreographer, Dancer, Collaborator with Kennis Hawkins as the duo - Dance Gang, Movement Research Board of Directors

Walter Rutledge, Associate Artistic Director and Choreographer in Residence, Nanette Bearden Contemporary Dance Theatre; Senior Writer *Harlem World*

Philip Sandstrom, Producer, Designer, Critic

Yoko Shioya, Artistic Director, Japan Society

Elka Samuels Smith, Artist Management Divine Rhythm Productions, Freelance Dance Writer & Teacher

Gus Solomons jr, Dancer/Choreographer; Artistic Director, PARADIGM, Professor, NYU/Tisch; and Writer for Dance Magazine, Gay City News, www.solomons-says.com

Ivan Sygoda, Director, Pentacle Artist Services

Kay Turner, Folk Arts Director, Brooklyn Arts Council, Brooklyn-based traditional dance research and presentation

Marya Warshaw, Founder/Artistic & Executive Director BAX/Brooklyn Art Exchange

Heather Watts, former Prima Ballerina New York City Ballet, Teacher, Contributing Editor *Vanity Fair*

Adrienne Westwood, Choreographer and dancer, Co-founder of VIA Dance Collaborative, member of the Dance/NYC Junior Committee

Susan Yung, Freelance culture writer and BAM's Publications Manager