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17c

Big Dance Theater

Conceived and choreographed by Annie-B Parson

Directed by Annie-B Parson and Paul Lazar

BAM Harvey Theater

Nov 14—18 at 7:30pm

Running time: approx. one hour & 10 minutes, no intermission

Sound by **Tei Blow**

Set design by **Joanne Howard**

Lighting design by **Joe Levasseur**

Costume design by **Oana Botez**

Video design by **Jeff Larson**

Season Sponsor:

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ANNIE-B PARSON



ELIZABETH DEMENT



CYNTHIA HOPKINS



PAUL LAZAR



AARON MATTOCKS



KOURTNEY RUTHERFORD

PERFORMERS

Elizabeth DeMent**Cynthia Hopkins****Paul Lazar****Aaron Mattocks****Kourtney Rutherford**Produced by **Aaron Mattocks**Production manager **Carl Whipple**Production stage manager **Ilana Khanin**"Elizabeth" wig design and construction **David Bova**Associate sound designer **Eben Hoffer**Associate set designer **Andrea Mincic**Sound engineer **Tyler Kieffer**Video assistant/operator **Jorge Morales Picó**Set construction **Joseph Silovsky** and **Infinite Studios**Costume construction **Talla Dia/Talla Design, Karen Boyer**Production interns: **Amy Shoshana Blumberg, Pei Chi Huang, Emma Jaster, Cole Stuart Johnson, Jack Martin, Xiao Quan, Alana Reibstein, Samantha Simone, Sophia Schrank**Written and freely adapted by Annie-B Parson from source texts by Samuel Pepys, Margaret Cavendish, Euripides, Eugène Ionesco, *The Nerd Next Door*/Leesa Ricci, Jill Johnston, and annotator comments on pepysdiary.com

17c is produced by Big Dance Theater and co-commissioned by FringeArts (Philadelphia), Carolina Performing Arts/UNC Chapel Hill, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Old Vic/London, The Yard (Chilmark, MA), Anonymous, Virginia and Timothy Millhiser, the Starry Night Fund, Helen and Peter Haje, and the Heimbinder Family Foundation.

The New York premiere of *17c* is supported by the Howard Gilman Foundation.

17c is also supported in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and the National Endowment for the Arts. *17c* was created with residency support from the MacDowell Colony and the AIRspace program at Abrons Arts Center. *17c* is funded, in part, by the Big Dance Theater Creation Circle, individual contributors committed to the development and support of the company's newest works. Big Dance Theater is supported by the Doris Duke Performing Artist Awards program, the Emma A. Sheaffer Charitable Trust, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation New York Theater Program, the W Trust, Barbara A. Parson, and the Nancy and Anthony Bowe Charitable Fund.

Artistic directors **Paul Lazar** and **Annie-B Parson**

Co-founder **Molly Hickok**

Executive director **Aaron Mattocks**

Finance and development manager **Sara Procopio**

Associate producer **Jason Collins**

Administration management **Artspool**

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Special thanks to Joe Melillo and the amazing BAM staff and crew for their expert stewardship; Anne Delaney and the Big Dance Theater board for their leadership; Hamilton College; Brendan Regimbal, Genée Coreno, and Jason Collins for doing countless jobs and taking such great care of us; Chris Giarmo for making us sing; and David R. White, Ben Pryor, Jay Wegman, and Craig T. Peterson, for providing homes for each stage of this process. Thanks to Brian Teare, Amber Reed, and Ted Zeiter for inspiration. Thanks to Molly Hickok for everything.

BIG DANCE THEATER

Founded in 1991, Big Dance Theater is known for its inspired use of dance, music, text, and visual design. The company often works with wildly incongruent source material, weaving and braiding disparate strands into multi-dimensional performance. Led by co-artistic directors Annie-B Parson and Paul Lazar, Big Dance has delved into the literary work of such authors as Twain, Tanizaki, Wellman, Euripides, and Flaubert, and dance is used as both frame and metaphor to theatricalize these writings. For more than 25 years, Big Dance Theater has worked to create over 20 dance/theater works, generating each piece over months of collaboration with its associate artists, a long-standing, ever-evolving group of actors, dancers, composers, and designers. Big Dance Theater received Bessie Awards in 2002 and 2010; the company was awarded an OBIE in 2000 and BDT company members have received five additional Bessie Awards and an OBIE Award for their work with Big Dance. In 2007 the company received the first-ever Jacob's Pillow Dance Award. Big Dance Theater has been presented around the world including France, Italy, Belgium, The Netherlands, Brazil, and Germany and in the US in venues including BAM, Dance Theater Workshop, The Kitchen, City Center, The Performing Garage, New York Live Arts, The Chocolate Factory, Classic Stage Company, Japan Society, Under the Radar, American Realness, PS 122's COIL Festival, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago), Walker Art Center, Yerba Buena, On the Boards, UCLA Live, ICA Boston, American Dance Institute (ADI), Fusebox Festival/Austin, CounterCurrent Festival/Houston, and Spoleto Festival USA. Additionally, in 2013—14, the artistic directors and design team were invited to create a commission featuring Mikhail Baryshnikov, and under the Big Dance Theater creative umbrella in partnership with Baryshnikov Productions, *Man in a Case* toured nationally to Hartford Stage, Shakespeare Theater in DC, Berkeley Repertory Theater, the Broad Stage in LA, ArtsEmerson/Boston, and the MCA/Chicago. Other recent commissions have been from Les Substances in Lyon, Chaillot

Theatre National in Paris, BAM, Walker Art Center, Carolina Performing Arts, and the Old Vic/London.

ANNIE-B PARSON (director and choreographer) co-founded Big Dance Theater in 1991. She has choreographed and co-created more than 20 works for the company, ranging from pure dance pieces, to adaptations of found text, plays, and literature, to original works combining wildly disparate materials. Her work with Big Dance has been commissioned by Les Substances in Lyon, BAM, National Theater of Paris/Chaillot, Japan Society, Walker Art Center, and many others. Outside of Big Dance, Parson has created choreography for operas, pop stars, television, movies, theater, ballet, and symphonies. Most recently, Parson created a work for Sadler's Wells/Co. of Elders in London. Other works includes David Byrne's musical *Here Lies Love* at both the Public Theater and the National Theater in London; David Byrne's 2012 world tour with St. Vincent and a marching band; and for Byrne's 2008 Brian Eno world tour. She is currently working on David Byrne's upcoming tour. Parson also created the choreography for St. Vincent's 2014 world tour, as well as her performances with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra and on *The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon*. She worked on St. Vincent's current tour. Parson currently has new work in repertory at Martha Graham Dance Company, and has created a solo for Wendy Whelan commissioned by the Royal Ballet. Parson choreographed 1000 singers for a work by David Lang at the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center. She choreographed the world premiere of David Bowie/Ivo Van Hove's new work *Lazarus* at New York Theatre Workshop, which opened in London in fall 2016 at the King's Cross Theatre. Her dances are featured in the film *Ride, Roar, Rise* about David Byrne, among others. Her work for theater, opera, and film includes the recent Meryl Streep/Jonathan Demme movie *Ricki and the Flash*, Nico Muhly's opera *Dark Sisters*, and plays by Lucas Hnath, Sarah Ruhl, and Suzan Lori Parks. She has also choreographed for orchestras and bands, including a full evening work for the string quartet ETHEL. Her awards include the Doris

Duke Performing Artist Award (2014), an Olivier Award nomination in choreography (2015), Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grants to Artists Award (2014), USA Artists Grant in Theater (2012), Guggenheim Fellowship in Choreography (2007), two Bessie Awards (2010, 2002), and a Franky Award (2016). Parson was honored by PS 122 in 2016, has been nominated for the CalArts/Alpert Award seven times, and has received three Lucille Lortel nominations (2014, 2012, 2011). She was a YCC choreographer at American Dance Festival. BDT received an Obie (2000) and the first Jacob's Pillow Dance Award (2007). Since 1993 Parson has been an instructor of choreography at New York University's Experimental Theater Wing. She was featured in *BOMB* magazine, and has written articles for *Ballet Review*, *Movement Research Journal*, had a drawing published in the *Brooklyn Rail*, wrote a piece for Dance USA on the state of dance/theater in the US, and gave a talk on the use of poetic forms in adapting text at the Poetry Center. As an artist curator, she has curated shows including: Merce Cunningham's memorial *We Give Ourselves Away at Every Moment*, *Dancer Crush* at NYLA, and *Sourcing Stravinsky* at DTW. Parson tours a lecture on abstraction called *The Virtuosity of Structure* to universities and for audience development. Her book, *Dance by Letter*, is published by 53rd State Press.

PAUL LAZAR (co-director, performer) is a founding member and co-artistic director, along with Annie-B Parson, of Big Dance Theater. He has co-directed and acted in works for Big Dance since 1991, including commissions from BAM, Walker Art Center, Dance Theater Workshop, Classic Stage Company, and Japan Society. Outside of Big Dance, Lazar directed Howard Fishman's *A Star Has Burnt My Eye* (2016 Next Wave), Christina Masciotti's *Social Security* at the Bushwick Starr in 2015, *Elephant Room* at St. Ann's Warehouse for the company Rainpan 43 in 2012, and Young Jean Lee's Obie Award-winning *We're Gonna Die* in 2011. He directed a new version of *We're Gonna Die* in 2015 featuring David Byrne, at the Meltdown Festival in London. He also directed *Bodycast: An Artist*

Lecture by Suzanne Bocanegra starring Frances McDormand for the 2013 Next Wave Festival; and *Major Bang* for The Foundry Theatre at St. Ann's Warehouse. Lazar recently created a solo dance with text by John Cage, live music by Lea Bertucci, and choreography by Annie-B Parson called *Cage Shuffle*. It premiered at the American Realness festival in New York and has toured to The Walker Arts Center in Minneapolis and APE Arts in Northampton, MA. In the fall of 2017 it goes to Chicago and Notre Dame University. Lazar has performed with the Wooster Group in *Brace Up!*, *Emperor Jones*, *North Atlantic*, and *The Hairy Ape*. Other stage acting credits include Richard Maxwell's *Samara* at Soho Rep, *Tamburlaine* at Theatre for a New Audience, Young Jean Lee's *Lear*, *The Three Sisters* at Classic Stage Company, Richard Maxwell's *Cowboys and Indians* at Soho Rep, *Richard III* at Classic Stage Company, *Svejk* at Theatre for a New Audience, Irene Fornes' *Mud* at the Signature Theater, and Mac Wellman's *1965 UU* at the Chocolate Factory. He has acted in over 30 feature films, including *Snowpiercer*, *The Host*, *Mickey Blue Eyes*, *Silence of the Lambs*, *Beloved*, *Lorenzo's Oil*, and *Philadelphia*. His awards include two Bessies (2010, 2002), the Jacob's Pillow Dance Award in 2007, and the Prelude Festival's Franky Award in 2014, as well as an Obie Award for Big Dance in 2000. Lazar has taught at Yale, Rutgers, the William Esper Studio, and the Michael Howard Studio, and currently teaches at New York University. This spring, he will direct Mac Wellman's *Three Americanisms* at the Theater, Dance and Media Department of Harvard University.

TEI BLOW (sound designer) is a performer and media designer born in Japan, raised in the US, and based in Brooklyn. Blow's work incorporates photography, video, and sound from live instrumentation and found media artifacts. He has performed and designed for The Laboratory of Dmitry Krymov, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Big Dance Theater, and David Neumann/Advanced Beginner Group. He also performs as Frustrator on Enemies List Recordings and is one half of Royal Osiris Karaoke Ensemble. Blow's work has been featured at Hartford Stage, Dance

Theater Workshop, Lincoln Center Festival, The Kitchen, BAM, The Public Theater, Broad Stage, MCA Chicago, MFA Boston, Kate Werble Gallery, Baryshnikov Arts Center, Wadsworth Atheneum, and at theaters around the world. He is the recipient of a 2015 Bessie Award for Outstanding Sound Design for *I Understand Everything Better*, by dancer and choreographer David Neumann. Blow's most recent production with Royal Osiris Karaoke Ensemble, *The Art of Luv Part I: Elliot*, premiered in The Public Theater's Under the Radar Festival in January, 2016. Royal Osiris Karaoke Ensemble is the recipient of a 2016 Creative Capital award and 2013 Franklin Furnace Award. Blow is a recipient of a 2016 NYSCA Individual Artist Grant for the composition of *I used to love you*, a new sound score for Martha Graham Dance Company made in collaboration with Kid Millions and Zach Lehrhoff.

OANA BOTEZ (costume designer) is a Princess Grace, Barrymore, and Drammy Award recipient, and a NEA/TCG Career Development Program Recipient. In New York Botez's work has been seen at the BAM Next Wave Festival, Bard SummerScape, Baryshnikov Arts Center, David H. Koch Theater/Lincoln Center, Soho Rep, LCT3, Public Theater, Classic Stage Company, Joyce Theater, Big Apple Circus, BRIC Arts Media, 59East59, La MaMa, and HERE Arts Center. Regional venues include the Wilma Theater, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Hartford Stage Company, Long Wharf Theater, Berkeley Rep, ArtsEmerson, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Walker Arts Center, Peak Performances, ADI, and Curtis Institute of Music. International stages include Bucharest National Theater, Arad National Theater, Bulandra Theater, Théâtre National de Chaillot, Les Subsistances, Budapest National Theater, Cluj Hungarian National Theater, Bucharest Operetta Theater, International Festival of Contemporary Theater, Le Quartz, La Filature, Centro Cultural Universidad del Pacifico, Palazzo Simoncelli, Edinburgh International Festival, and Singapore Arts Festival. Botez is a graduate of Bucharest Art Academy and received an MFA in Design from NYU/Tisch School of the Arts. She teaches figure drawing costume design at MIT and resides in Manhattan. oanabotez.com

ELIZABETH DEMENT (performer) is from Ukiah, CA, where she began her training with Mary Knight at Mendocino Ballet. She studied at the Marin Ballet School, Oakland Ballet, and danced for the Riverside Ballet Company. She received her BFA from The Juilliard School. Dement has been a freelance performer in New York for many years and has enjoyed working/dancing with Peridance Ensemble, the Metropolitan Opera Ballet, Liz Gerring Dance Company, OtherShore, Stephen Petronio, Jodi Melnick, Patrick Corbin, Dance Heginbotham, and Susan Stroman. She has also acted in plays by Christina Masciotti (*Social Security*), Tina Satter (*House of Dance*), and Jess Barbagallo (*Good Year for Hunters*). She is proud to have worked as associate choreographer to Annie-B Parson on *Here Lies Love* as well as assisting on and performing in works that Parson choreographed for musicians David Byrne and St. Vincent. Dement thanks her mother Diane DeMent for believing in the power of art.

CYNTHIA HOPKINS (performer) is an internationally-acclaimed musical performance artist who writes songs, records albums, and creates groundbreaking musical performance works that intertwine truth and fiction, blurring the lines between edification and entertainment. She has produced eight performance works, eight albums of original music, and one museum installation. Her work has been honored with many awards, including a 2015 Doris Duke Artist Award, a 2010 Guggenheim Fellowship, and the 2007 Alpert Award in Theater. Hopkins also works as a performer, composer, voice-over artist, and musician for many other folks. She blissfully resides in West Philadelphia, PA. cynthiahopkins.com

JOANNE HOWARD (set design) has been designing sets for Big Dance Theater since 1992. In addition to set design, Howard works in a variety of media including sculpture, works on paper, ceramics, and video. She has received a Bessie Award for her collaboration with BDT for *Comme Toujours Here I Stand* and is a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship recipient for architecture/environmental structures. Howard has exhibited in New York, Chicago, and Los





Angeles. A recent installation will be included in *Call and Response*, an exhibition at Wave Hill, The Bronx, in fall of 2017.

ILANA KHANIN (stage manager) is a New York-based stage manager and director. Recent stage management credits include *Miles for Mary* (The Mad Ones/Bushwick Starr), *Football Head* (La MaMa), *Some of the Things Inside* (Waterwell), *The Wolves* (Clubbed Thumb workshop), and *Men on Boats* (Clubbed Thumb). She has also worked on productions at Samuel French, PTP/NYC, The Tank, New Victory, The Brick, Women's Project, Drama League, Governors Island, Baryshnikov Arts Center, Dixon Place, New York City Players, and BAM. She earned an MA in performance studies and a BFA in drama from NYU. ilanakhanin.com.

TYLER KIEFFER (sound) is a Brooklyn-based sound designer whose recent works include *Counting Sheep* (Kilkenny Arts Festival, Ireland); *Every Year It Grows Again* (Another Love Story, Ireland); *The Reception* (HERE Arts Center); *Made in China* (Wakka Wakka); *A Dog Story* (The Davenport Theatre); *Every Morning I Wake Up and Seem to Forget* (Body & Soul Music Festival, Ireland); *Little Shop of Horrors* (Berkshire Theatre Group); *The History Boys* (Palm Beach Drama Works); *I Wasn't Going to Tell Anybody and Then I Told Everybody*, *Buried Child*, *All's Well that Ends Well* (NYU: Tisch); *Deer and the Lovers*, *Peter Pan*, and *The Troublesome Reign of King John* (Yale School of Drama); *Arcadia* (Yale Repertory Theatre); and *Ain't Gonna Make It* (Ars Nova). Kieffer is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama, class of 2015. Tylerkieffer.com

JEFF LARSON (video designer) has collaborated with Big Dance Theater four times previously, designing video for *Alan Smithee Directed This Play*, *Man in a Case*, *Supernatural Wife*, and the Bessie Award-winning *Comme Toujours Here I Stand*. Larson is co-curator of the Obie award-winning performance series CATCH (catchseries.org). He has taught in the undergraduate drama department and the Department of Design for Stage and Film at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, and been a visiting professor

at Bennington College. Larson is currently resident designer and production manager at Hamilton College.

JOE LEVASSEUR (lighting designer) has collaborated with many dance and performance artists, including Big Dance Theater, Jennifer Monson, John Jasperse, Sarah Michelson, Neil Greenberg, David Dorfman, Donna Uchizono, RoseAnne Spradlin, Maria Hassabi, Ishmael Houston-Jones, and Amanda Loulaki. His lighting design work has been seen throughout the US, Europe, and South America, and has received two Bessie Awards. In 2009, his *Drop Clock* installation was featured in the lobby of Dance Theater Workshop (New York Live Arts). In 2010 he showed a collection of original paintings at PS 122, and in 2013 was commissioned to paint an original mural for AUNTS. Ongoing projects include lighting work for Brian Brooks/Wendy Whelan, Jodi Melnick, and Palissimo. joelevasseur.com

AARON MATTOCKS (executive director, performer) is a two-time Bessie Award nominee for Outstanding Performer (2013, 2016), whose work with choreographer Annie-B Parson in live performance, film, and music includes projects with Mikhail Baryshnikov, Jonathan Demme, Wendy Whelan, David Byrne, David Lang, and Martha Graham Dance Company, among others. He has toured internationally with Parson and Paul Lazar/Big Dance Theater since 2009, and with Phantom Limb Company (artistic directors Jessica Grindstaff and Erik Sanko) since 2011, where he is also an associate director. He is the executive director of Big Dance Theater, creative producer for Pam Tanowitz, former company and general manager for the Mark Morris Dance Group (2002—10), and has produced projects, premieres, and tours for Faye Driscoll, Beth Gill, and Steven Reker. He teaches at Sarah Lawrence College. aaronmattocks.com

ANDREEA MINCIC (associate set designer) is returning to work with Big Dance Theater after being the associate set designer for *The Man in the Case*. Recent work includes *3Fifths* with James Scruggs (costumes), *Primitive Tissue* with Catharine Dill (set and costumes), *Dead*

Time of Plenty (set and costumes) with Mallory Catlett, *Elements of Oz* (costumes) with The Builders Association, *I'm Bleeding All Over the Place* (set) with Brooke O'Hara, *Long Yarn* (set and costumes) with Banana Bag and Bodice, *Vine of the Dead* (costumes) with Jim Findlay, and *The Return* (puppetry) with Tom Lee. Other dear collaborators in NYC: Half Straddle, 31Down, Radiohole, Hoi Polloi, Kyle Decamp andreeamincic14.portfoliobox.io

JORGE MORALES (video engineer) is a Puerto Rican sound designer, actor, and composer currently based in New York. Drawing inspiration from both classical theater and experimental techniques, his work sits at the intersection of formal experimentation and artistic relevance. He has designed and composed for plays such as *The Burma Project* (dir. Kate Whoriskey) and *Artaud Artaud* (Theatre for a New City), and his work has been featured in places such as Signature Theatre and New York Theater Workshop. Apart from sound design, he has also acted in various projects, including *Bohemian Lights* (HERE Arts Center), *Macbeth* (Park Avenue Armory, dir. Kenneth Branagh), *Othello* (No Stone Productions), and *Reinar después de morir* (Repertorio Español). He is also the founding co-artistic director of What Will the Neighbors Say?, an international theater

company committed to provoking questions through untold stories. For more information about the company and its programming, please visit www.tns.org.

KOURTNEY RUTHERFORD (performer) has worked with Big Dance Theater since 1997, appearing in many of their productions including *Alan Smithee Directed This Play*, *Ich Kurbisgeist*, *Comme Toujours Here I Stand*, *Shunkin*, *Antigone*, and others. She has also worked with many of downtown theater's most cutting-edge ensembles and theater artists including Radiohole, Half Straddle, Witness Relocation, Sibyl Kempson, Eliza Bent, and Normandy Sherwood. She has created work with The Operating Theater, which she co-founded with Jason Schuler. Her interpretation of the rhetorical gesture "Scorn" was recently published in *A New Practical Guide to Rhetorical Gesture and Action* by National Theater of the United States of America, available on 53rd State Press. Rutherford received her BFA in acting from the Experimental Theater Wing at NYU, and has a Master of Education degree from City College/CUNY. An avid supporter of arts-in-education, Rutherford has taught acting and theater-making throughout the New York City public school system. Love and gratitude to her family and Mathieu.

17c is a dizzy intertextual romp through the diaries of Samuel Pepys, weaving music, dance, video and text into a spectacularly outré portrait of the famed 17th-century philanderer and his tragic wife Bess. Annie-B Parson, Co-Artistic Director of Big Dance Theater, spoke with Adriana Leshko about the piece, her technique, Pepys' diaries, and more.

How would you describe Big Dance Theater's body of work to someone who has never seen it?

Big Dance Theater, as its simple name suggests, has been in a protracted, aesthetic, alchemical conversation with dance and theater simultaneously. All elements from both camps are in play: costumes, props, language, structuralism, the use of space, time, line, causation, relationship, shape, literature, sound design, singing, dancing...

Big Dance's body of work is a sprawling compendium of material wherein abstraction and narrative work hand-in-hand to express the world, dance and language cohabitate, design matters, sound matters, the body in space matters, literature matters. In a Big Dance piece, Form and Content intersect and have equal sway in expressing the world—meaning: what we say and how we chose to say it, are equally important.

The sources for each piece are unique, yet I've noticed themes over time that consistently make their way into each work—these human contradictions: our desire to live against the immutability of our mortality; our desire to be autonomous in the face of our interconnectedness; and the playful nature of theater against the innate tragedy of reality.

My work has always been defined by its privileging of dance in a theatrical context and the collision of forms this juxtaposition creates. This often materializes as text juxtaposed against movement forms themselves, as two concurrent systems of subject matter. I believe strongly in both the supportive and poetic power of structures that stem from dance-making tools that are unique to choreography, forms that can hold both a narrative and an unrelated ongoing movement piece at once, allowing the two elements to collide and resonate with each other.

By way of training I am a choreographer, and my

early works were dances. By the time I created my company, I was in collaboration with Paul Lazar, an actor and director, and the theatrical elements organically entered the work.

What are some themes/ideas explored in 17c?

What does it mean to be hyper-generative? How have our technologies of writing the self evolved and how has that affected who we are? What does it mean NOT to have a diary endure through time, NOT to be read? Or, the legacy of erasing women's lives is a blow to the passing down of identit(ies) for women, while men have maintained a narrative through-line by way of publishing their "selves." How do we retrieve identities that have been erased? Has anything in 350 years changed in the way more powerful men perceive and treat less powerful women (citation: Uber, Trump, Murdoch, Weinstein...)? Why have dance and theater become so much less valuable than in the past?

What drew you to Pepys initially? And how is his obsessive chronicling of his own life relevant to our contemporary moment?

My first induction into Samuel Pepys' compendious diaries was through an abridged one, and I was charmed and vindicated by how much he valued learning to dance, going to the theater (he saw it as a vice he couldn't quite quit), and daily singing and music classes. In the argument between: the past is so different from contemporary life, and people never change, it seemed here was a chronicle of a time when art mattered greatly, enough to live for and fight for—very unlike our own. But, Pepys was eye-opening in how unusual he was for his time, not because he was a diarist, but because of his compulsive, plain spoken and uncensored writing—it reminded me of a Facebook page!

Much like our own constant social media updates, he needed to get everything down on paper or he felt lost; he possessed this same compulsion to assign a real-time meaning to his daily existence. Dispensing with the flowery language of the day, he recorded every toothache, desire, aspiration, thrill, and frill as he rode, strode, groped, bullied, and danced through his days. And his descriptions of his life are unbound by any moralizing or spiritual component; Pepys "keeps it real." But then I got a hold of the unabridged diaries and saw

a darker, uglier side of Pepys. While he has a contemporary self-awareness, he is also totally emboldened by and oblivious to his unacknowledged bias against women and aggression toward them. This contradiction makes him fascinating and valuable to observe, interrogate, and challenge.

Who was Margaret Cavendish and what is her role in the work?

Mad Madge, as she was called, was a 17c playwright, largely unpublished in her time, who lived in the same city and time as Pepys, and intersected a bit with him. She was a radical feminist thinker and an enfant terrible type. I had the idea to include a play in the piece that Pepys and Bess may have seen; I wanted to include the voice of a woman. Most of the women I read wrote in the flowery Restoration style of the day, while Margaret Cavendish did not. Her subject matter is women and their lives and freedom. I was instantly smitten. I include an edit of her play *The Convent of Pleasure* in 17c, as a play within a play.

Could you talk about the importance of movement/choreography in illuminating the character of Bess, Pepys' long-suffering wife?

In reading the diaries over many years there was a gnawing wonder about Bess' voice; I strongly suspected that she too had written a diary but if so—where was it? Finally, last year I stumbled on a passage that answered my question: in a rage at her, Pepys admits to finding her diaries: "I burnt them all" he admits. (He also describes with relish and detail that as he is raging and burning, his trousers are caught around his ankles!) So dance was my way of letting Bess speak without access to her diaries.

Describe a typical Big Dance Theater rehearsal process, if such a thing exists.

I came to the theater through dance, and this has influenced the way I work. Most people think of theater as something that is—first and foremost—written. However, I have always approached theater as something that is constructed, developed, grown, through movement and its forms. Many theater

rehearsals begin sitting around a table, reading a script. Big Dance works start with dances—on your feet—gathering sources, generating material, marinating, experimenting, honing, refining in tandem with the performers and designers. So our rehearsals often focus on generating movement through forms. Here's a metaphor: I construct a recipe and the dancers make a prototype of a piece of cake, then I taste it and change the seasoning; they refine that, and back and forth it goes.

What are some questions you wish you would be asked in Q & As such as these, whether about 17c specifically or about your career writ large?

How has the work you do outside your company affected what you make for the company and vice versa? What writers have influenced you? What composers? Who are your art heroes?

What has been your most memorable Next Wave experience as an audience member?

As a young choreographer in 1984 on my first visit to BAM I saw Pina Bausch's *Café Müller*. Having been immersed in the prosaic, structural, and virtuosic pedestrianism of the early Judson Church dance-makers and second gen-Judsons, I was intoxicated by Bausch's use of dance in relation to costume, sexuality, relationship, scenario, and character. This was a decidedly European perspective on dance from an entirely different family tree than the downtown dance scene of the time, and divorced as well from the Modernists who I rejected out of hand. I continued to see her work at BAM.

Last time, I saw the first Pina Bausch piece without Pina Bausch on Earth, and I learned something new about the mechanics of her work. I felt a strange absence in the theater and in the work itself and realized watching it that all these years her dancers had been dancing FOR her, and her alone. Choreography is a very personal sport. And it's more perishable than fruit.

—Adriana Leshko, Senior Publicity Manager at BAM.