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Letter to a Man

BAM Harvey Theater

Oct 15, 19—22, 26—29 at 7:30pm

Oct 16, 23 & 30 at 3pm

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

Robert Wilson / Mikhail Baryshnikov

Direction, set design, and lighting concept by

Robert Wilson with **Mikhail Baryshnikov**

Based on the diary of **Vaslav Nijinsky**

Text by **Christian Dumais-Lvowski**

Dramaturgy by **Darryl Pinckney**

Music by **Hal Willner**

Costumes by **Jacques Reynaud**

Collaboration to movements and spoken text by

Lucinda Childs

Lighting design by **A.J. Weissbard**

Associate set design **Annick Lavallée-Benny**

Sound design by **Nick Sagar** and **Ella Wahlström**

Video design by **Tomek Jeziorski**

Season Sponsor:

**Bloomberg
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*Giorgio Armani is the Lead Sponsor of BAM's
presentation of Letter to a Man.*

*Leadership support provided by
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*Major support for theater at BAM provided by:
The Francena T. Harrison Foundation Trust
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The performance is in English and Russian
with English titles

ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION CREDITS

Associate director **Nicola Panzer**

Sound **Nick Sagar**

Assistant director **Fani Sarantari**

Stage manager **Thaiz Bozano**

Stage engineer **Mauro Farina**

Technical director **Reinhard Bichsel**

Lighting supervisor **Marcello Lumaca**

Stage master **Michele Iervolino**

Followspot **Fabio Bozzetta**

Assistant costume designer **Micol Notarianni**

Robert Wilson's personal assistant **Owen Laub**

Makeup **Claudia Bastia**

Production delegate **Simona Fremder**

A **Change Performing Arts** and **Baryshnikov Productions** project

Elisabetta di Mambro, Franco Laera executive producers

in association with **Huong Hoang**

commissioned by Spoleto Festival dei 2Mondi, BAM, Cal Performances University of California

Berkeley, Center for the Art of Performance at UCLA in collaboration with Teatros del Canal Madrid,

Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo/Monaco Dance Forum and CRT Teatro dell'Arte

A special thanks to:

The Vaslav and Romola Nijinsky Estate

Farrar Strauss & Giroux's *The Diary of Vaslav Nijinsky*, Unexpurgated Edition, edited by Joan Acocella

Giorgio Armani

Asylum, courtesy of James Casebere and Sean Kelly Gallery



Letter to a Man

As Robert Wilson's staging of *The Diaries of Vaslav Nijinsky* opens, we find Mikhail Baryshnikov as the troubled dancer in Budapest in 1945. He and his wife have found refuge with her family. These are the final weeks of World War II and battles between German and Russian soldiers rage in the destroyed streets. Nijinsky's mental health had broken down in Switzerland at the close of the First World War. His diaries are an extraordinary document of his struggle not to go mad and to understand what was happening to him. When he stopped writing his diary, he locked himself away, as in a tomb. There he remained for more than two decades, watched over by his wife. But as another catastrophe in Europe draws to its close, the great artist seems to be coming to life again. We visit him behind his silence. For Nijinsky, time has stood still. He is alone with his ghosts, especially that of Diaghilev, the impresario who first put him on stage before the ballet world.



Mikhail Baryshnikov, Photo: Lucie Jansch

MIKHAIL BARYSHNIKOV

Born 1948 in Riga, Latvia, Mikhail Baryshnikov is considered one of the greatest dancers of our time. After commencing his career with the Kirov Ballet in Leningrad, he came to the West in 1974, settling in New York City as principal dancer with American Ballet Theatre (ABT). In 1979 he joined New York City Ballet, where he worked with George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins. A year later he was appointed artistic director of ABT where, for the next decade, he introduced a new generation of dancers and choreographers. From 1990—2002, Baryshnikov was director and dancer of the White Oak Dance Project, which he and choreographer Mark Morris co-founded to expand the repertoire and visibility of American modern dance. As an actor he has performed widely on- and off-Broadway, as well as in television and film, receiving a Tony Award nomination and a Drama Desk Award for *Metamorphosis*, and an Academy Award nomination for *The Turning Point*. Other productions include *Forbidden Christmas* or *The Doctor and the Patient*, *Beckett Shorts*, *In Paris*, *Man in a Case*, and *The*

Old Woman. He is currently appearing in two solo theatrical productions, *Letter to a Man*, directed by Robert Wilson and *Brodsky/Baryshnikov*, directed by Alvis Hermanis. In 2005, he launched Baryshnikov Arts Center (BAC) in New York City, a creative space for presenting and nurturing multidisciplinary artists from around the globe. Under his leadership as artistic director, BAC's programs have grown to serve up to 700 artists and 22,000 audience members annually. Among Baryshnikov's many awards are the Kennedy Center Honors, the National Medal of Honor, the Commonwealth Award, the Chubb Fellowship, the Jerome Robbins Award, and the 2012 Vilcek Award. In 2010, he was given the rank of Officer of the French Legion of Honor.

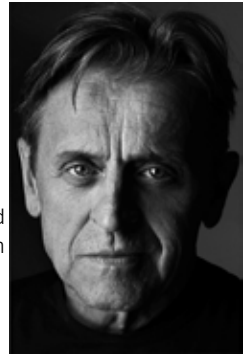


Photo: Marco Glaviano, 2016

ROBERT WILSON (direction, set design, lighting concept)

Born in Waco, TX, Robert Wilson is among the world's foremost theater and visual artists. His works for the stage unconventionally integrate a wide variety of artistic media, including dance, movement, lighting, sculpture, music, and text. His images are aesthetically striking and emotionally charged, and his productions have earned the acclaim of audiences and critics worldwide. After being educated at the University of Texas and Brooklyn's Pratt Institute, Wilson founded the New York-based performance collective "The Byrd Hoffman School of Byrds" in the mid-1960s, and developed his first signature works, including *Deafman Glance* (1970) and *A Letter for Queen Victoria* (1974–75). With Philip Glass he wrote the seminal opera *Einstein on the Beach* (1976; at BAM in 1984, 1992, and 2012). Wilson's artistic collaborators include many writers and musicians such as Heiner Müller, Tom Waits, Susan Sontag, Laurie Anderson, William Burroughs, Lou Reed, and Jessye Norman. He has also left his imprint on masterworks such as Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*, Brecht/Weill's *The Threepenny Opera*, Debussy's *Pelléas et Melisande*, Goethe's *Faust*, Homer's *Odyssey*, Jean de la Fontaine's *Fables*, Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, and Verdi's *La Traviata*. Wilson's drawings, paintings, and sculptures have been presented around the world in hundreds of solo and group showings, and his works are held in private collections and museums throughout the world. Wilson has been



Photo: Yorgos Kaplanidis

honored with numerous awards for excellence, including a Pulitzer Prize nomination, two Premio Ubu awards, the Golden Lion of the Venice Biennale, and an Olivier Award. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, as well as the German Academy of the Arts, and holds eight honorary doctorate degrees. France pronounced him Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters (2003) and Officer of the Legion of Honor (2014); Germany awarded him the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit (2014). Wilson is the founder and artistic director of the Watermill Center, a laboratory for the arts in Water Mill, NY.

DARRYL PINCKNEY (dramaturgy)

Darryl Pinckney, a long time contributor to *The New York Review of Books*, is the author of two works of non-fiction, *Out There: Mavericks of Black Literature* (2002) and *Blackballed: The Black Vote and US Democracy* (2012), and two works of fiction, *High Cotton* (1992) and, most recently, *Black Deutschland*. He has worked on Robert Wilson's productions of *The Forest*, *Orlando*, *Time Rocker*, *The Old Woman*, and *Garrincha: A Musical of the Streets*.

HAL WILLNER (music)

Hal Willner is a music producer for albums, films, television, theater, and live events, best known as "father of the modern tribute record" for producing a series of multi-artist concept albums starting with *Amarcord Nino Rota* in 1981 as well as providing "sketch music adaptations" for *Saturday Night Live* for over three decades. *Letter to a Man* is his ninth collaboration with Robert Wilson. Previous productions include *The Old Woman* with Willem Dafoe and Mikhail Baryshnikov, *The Odyssey*, *Lulu*, *The Tower of Babel*, and *Garrincha*. Willner has produced albums for Marianne Faithfull, Lou Reed, Macy Gray, Bill Frisell, Lucinda Williams, Laurie Anderson, William S. Burroughs, and many others. Film work includes Robert Altman's *Shortcuts* and *Kansas City*, Martin Scorsese's *Gangs of New York*, Wim Wenders' *Million Dollar Hotel*, Gus Van Sant's *Finding Forrester*, and Adam McKay's *Talladega Nights*. Willner co-hosted the radio show *New York Shuffle* with Lou Reed and worked with Reed on his last project, *The RCA and Arista Album Collection*, a 16-CD box set which was just released. Current projects include music for Oren Moverman's film *The Dinner*, Dianne Dreyer's *Change in the Air*, Joseph Ceder's *Norman*, *The Rise and Fall of a New York Fixer*, a multi-artist homage to Mark Bolan and T. Rex. Willner just began his 37th season at *Saturday Night Live*.

LUCINDA CHILDS

(collaborator, movement and spoken text)
Lucinda Childs began her career at the Judson Dance Theater in 1963 where she choreographed 13 works and performed in works of Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton, and Robert Morris. Since

forming her company in 1973, she has created over 50 works. In 1976, she collaborated as principal performer and later as choreographer on the opera *Einstein on the Beach* by Robert Wilson and Philip Glass, for which she received an Obie Award. Childs has appeared in a number of Wilson's productions: *Maladie de la Mort*, *I Was Sitting on My Patio This Guy Appeared I Thought I Was Hallucinating*, *Quartett*, and *White Raven*. She received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1979 for her collaboration, *DANCE*, with music by Philip Glass, and film décor by Sol LeWitt, a production which continues to tour internationally and includes a new production for Lyons Opera Ballet in the fall of 2016. Since 1981, she has choreographed over 30 works for ballet companies including the Paris Opera Ballet, Les Ballets de Monte Carlo, and Baryshnikov's White Oak Dance Company. She has worked as choreographer and director for 16 opera productions including *Orfeo and Euridice* for the LA Opera, *Zaide for La Monnaie*, *Le Rossignol et Oedipe*, *Farnace*, and *Alessandro*, voted "Opera of the Year" by Mezzo-TV 2013. In 2014 she directed John Adams' *Dr. Atomic* for the Opera du Rhin and Jean Baptiste Lully's *Atys* for Opera Kiel, where she will choreograph and direct a new production of *Orfeo and Euridice*. In 2016, the Centre Nationale de la Danse in Paris is exhibiting her choreographic scores in collaboration with the Thaddeus Ropac Gallery and sponsored by the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage. Childs' production of Jean-Marie Leclair's *Scylla and Glaucus* will premiere in Oper Kiel in 2017. Childs is the recipient of numerous prestigious awards. She holds the rank of Commander in France's Order of Arts and Letters.

A.J. WEISSBARD (lighting design)

A.J. Weissbard is an American lighting designer and artist who has worked worldwide designing for theater, video, exhibition, permanent architectural installation, special events, and fashion. His collaborations include projects with Robert Wilson, Peter Stein, Luca Ronconi, Daniele Abbado, Marina Abramovic, Bernard Sobel, Peter Greenaway, William Kentridge, David Cronenberg, Andriy Zholdak, Shirin Neshat, Gae Aulenti, Fabio Novembre, Pierluigi Cerri, Richard Gluckman, Matteo





Thun, Giorgio Armani, Hugo Boss, Ermenegildo Zegna, and Martha Graham Dance Company. His work has been seen in major opera houses, festivals, theaters, and other sites in more than 40 countries including at Lincoln Center, Los Angeles Opera, Teatro alla Scala (Milan), Opera Garnier (Paris), La Monnaie (Brussels), Teatro Real (Madrid), Epidaurus (Greece), Deutsche Oper (Berlin), Esplanade (Singapore), Bunka Kaikan (Tokyo), Teatro Municipal (São Paulo), Royal Opera House (Muscat), Guggenheim Museum (New York and Bilbao), Royal Academy (London), Petit Palais (Paris), Vitra Design Museum, Milan Triennale, Quirinale (Rome), Kunstindustrimuseum (Copenhagen), Shanghai Art Museum; Aichi World Expo 2005, Salone del Mobile (Milan), Venice Biennale, and the Louvre (Paris). He is pleased to return to BAM for the sixth time. His recent projects include Luca Ronconi's final work, the *Lehman Trilogy* at the Piccolo Theater, the new Armani/Silos exhibition space in Milan, and the stage and light design for *King Kandaules* at the Vlaanderen Opera in Antwerp. He was awarded Russia's 2014 Golden Mask for best lighting design for musical theater, and the first IFSArts award for lighting design. Weissbard is based in Italy and teaches at institutions around the world.

JACQUES REYNAUD (costume design)

Jacques Reynaud is a French-Italian costume designer. Since graduating from New York University he has worked in Europe and in the US, at Teatro alla Scala in Milano, the Salzburg Festival, Berliner Ensemble, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Lincoln Center, Thalia Theatre in Hamburg, La Monnaie Opera in Brussels, and many other venues. His debut as a costume designer was in 1993 in *Peer Gynt* directed by Luca Ronconi, with whom he also collaborated in 2001 at Nuovo Piccolo Teatro in Milan. Reynaud has collaborated with Robert Wilson on numerous productions including *Leonce and Lena*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, *Lulu*, *Peter Pan* at the Berliner Ensemble, *L'Orfeo* and *Il Ritorno di Ulisse in Patria* at Teatro alla Scala, *The Life and Death of Marina Abramovic*, and *The Old Woman*.

ANNICK LAVALLÉE-BENNY

(associate set design)

Annick Lavallée-Benny was born in Québec where she first studied set and costume design. After a few years of practice in Montréal working in film and theater, she began making contemporary performance at the Norwegian Theatre Academy where she completed a degree in scenography. She was awarded the Gold Medal for Most Promising Talent at the Prague Quadrennial 2011 in recognition of a site-specific large-scale installation project. Since then, alternating bases between Montreal and Berlin, she works as a freelancer at the meeting point of architecture, visual arts, and theater. In recent years, she has collaborated with Robert Wilson on several projects dealing with space in various contexts. Among the main productions are Monteverdi's opera cycle presented at La Scala in Milan and Opéra Garnier in Paris, Verdi's opera *Macbeth* in Bologna, *The Life and Death of Marina Abramovic* (which completed its tour at the Park Avenue Armory), *Pushkin Fairy Tales* at Moscow's Theatre of Nations, a series of collaborations with Lady Gaga including the 2013 MTV Music Awards and video portraits exhibited at Musée du Louvre, *Garrincha* (São Paulo), and *The Old Woman* (BAM).

NICK SAGAR (sound design)

Recent work includes *The James Plays* (National Theatre, London; International Tour), *Tree of Codes* (Manchester International Festival; Park Avenue Armory, New York), *Horrible Histories 'Barney Britain'* (London West End; UK Tour; Sydney Opera House), *Gangsta Granny* (UK tour), Robert Wilson's *The Life and Death of Marina Abramovic* (New York, Toronto, Amsterdam, Antwerp, Madrid, Manchester) and *The Old Woman* (Athens), *Krapp's Last Tape* (Beijing), *A Doll's House* (Edinburgh Lyceum), *Men Should Weep* (Glasgow Citizens) for which he was also composer, *Young@Heart Chorus' End of the Road* (Oslo, Singapore, New York, Manchester), *Horrible Histories' Ruthless Romans* (Hong Kong, Singapore, Dubai, Abu Dhabi), Tom's *Midnight Garden* (UK Tour), *Caledonia* (Edinburgh Festival), *Appointment with the Wicker Man* (Edinburgh Fringe Festival), as well as associate design roles for the

productions of *27* (Edinburgh Lyceum), *Peter Pan* (UK Tour), *Blackwatch* (Pitlochry), and *Wolves in the Walls* (New York).

ELLA WAHLSTRÖM (sound design)

Ella Wahlström is a Finnish, London-based sound designer who trained at Rose Bruford College. Her recent credits include: sound operator on *The Encounter* (Complicite, Broadway), sound design for *Peter Pan Goes Wrong* (Mischief Theatre, London West End), *The Life* (English Theatre Frankfurt), *The Bunker*, *The Frontier* and *The Capone Trilogies* (Jethro Compton, Edinburgh Fringe, and International tour), associate sound design for *Othello* (Frantic Assembly), *JOHN* (DV8), and *The Cripple of Inishmaan* (Michael Grandage Company). She designed sound for *Three Generations of Women* (Broken Leg Theatre, Greenwich Theatre), *The Ballad of Robin Hood* (Tacit Theatre, Southwark Playhouse), *Empty Vessels* (Rosemary Branch Theatre), *Klippies* (Southwark Playhouse), *Chicken Dust* (Finborough Theatre), *In Lambeth* (Spellbound Productions, Southwark Playhouse), *Carroll: Berserk* (Spindrift Theatre, Drayton Arms Theatre), *A Study in Scarlet* (Tacit Theatre, Southwark Playhouse), *Titus Andronicus* (Hiraeth, Arcola), *Romeo and Juliet* (Hiraeth, Upstairs at the Gatehouse), *Theatre Uncut* (Young Vic), and *The Revenger's Tragedy* and *Henry V* (Old Red Lion Theatre).

TOMEK JEZIORSKI (video design)

Tomek Jeziorski was born in 1986 in Warsaw. He graduated in film directing from the National Film School in Lodz and culture studies at University of Warsaw. His own films include the documentaries *Free Flight* (2010) and *Camp* (2011), as well as the short features *Cross-country* (2010), *Happy Days* (2013),

and *Giant* (2015), which have been screened at major film festivals around the world including Locarno, Vancouver, Madrid, St. Petersburg, Tampere, Vienna, and Sibiu. Since 2011 he has also worked in theater as a video designer with Robert Wilson on *The Life and Death of Marina Abramovic* (2011), *Grace for Grace* (2011), *Lecture on Nothing* (2012), *Das Mädchen mit den Schwefelhölzern* (2013), *1914* (2014), *Rhinoceros* (2015), *Faust 1 & 2* (2015), Laurent Chétouane's *Das Erdbeben in Chill* (2012), and *Sacre du Printemps* (2012).

CHANGE PERFORMING ARTS

Established in 1989, Change Performing Arts is an independent production company based in Milan, and active worldwide in the fields of live performance, including theater, dance, opera, traditional performing arts, classical and contemporary music, and in the visual arts, including installations, exhibitions, and cultural events. Constantly devoting its efforts to creating new relationships with established and young artists, the company explores and encourages the way the various arts forms can be combined to create new and original means of expression in realizing provocative events of the highest quality.

BARYSHNIKOV PRODUCTIONS is designed to bring the voices of distinctive directors, choreographers, and artists to the world's most respected stages. Under this umbrella, the company has produced and toured the White Oak Dance Project (1990—2002), *Forbidden Christmas or The Doctor and Patient* (2004—06), *Beckett Shorts* (2007), *In Paris* (2010—12), *Man in a Case* (2012—14), and *The Old Woman* (2013—15). Current productions include *Letter to a Man* and *Brodsky/Baryshnikov*.



Founded by avant-garde visionary Robert Wilson in 1992, The Watermill Center is an interdisciplinary laboratory for the arts supporting young and emerging artists through its year-round Artist Residency Program, International Summer Program, as well as Education Programs and open rehearsals. The Center also presents exhibitions, public programs, and offers tours of its 20,000+ square-foot building and eight-and-a-half acre grounds and gardens throughout the year. Watermill supports projects that integrate different genres and art forms, break with traditional forms of representation, and develop democratic and cross-cultural approaches. Watermill is about living and working together, creating your own environment and sharing this experience with others.

Visit The Watermill Center's web site at watermillcenter.org.