

BAM

2016 NEXT WAVE FESTIVAL

BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC PETER JAY SHARP BUILDING 30 LAFAYETTE AVENUE BROOKLYN, NY 11217—1486

**BAM presents the US Premiere of Mikhail Baryshnikov in Robert Wilson's
*Letter to a Man***

Bloomberg Philanthropies is the Season Sponsor.

Letter to a Man

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 by Annick Lavallée-Benny

Sound design by Nick Sagar / Ella Wahlström

Video design by Tomek Jeziorski

In Russian with English titles

BAM Harvey Theater (651 Fulton St)

Oct 15, 19—22, 26—29 at 7:30pm; Oct 16, 23 & 30 at 3pm

First press preview: Oct 19

Tickets start at \$35

Talk: Inside Nijinsky's Diaries

Co-presented by BAM and the Center for Ballet and the Arts, New York University

Oct 24 at 7pm

Center for Ballet and the Arts at NYU (16 Cooper Sq)

Free with RSVP

“If Nijinsky was perfect for Wilson, so was Wilson for Nijinsky” *The New Yorker*

Sept 22, 2016/Brooklyn, NY—Iconic director Robert Wilson and legendary performer Mikhail Baryshnikov join forces to create *Letter to a Man*—a theatrical work based on the famous diary of Russian dancer and choreographer Vaslav Nijinsky. Nijinsky, who performed with Sergei Diaghilev's renowned Ballets Russes was—in his prime—the most celebrated male dancer in the Western world before descending into schizophrenia. Hal Willner's century-spanning score contextualizes the intriguing narrative by weaving audio fragments of the diary with music by

Tom Waits, Arvo Pärt, Henry Mancini, and Soviet futurist composer Alexander Mosolov. The outfits worn by Baryshnikov include a black crêpe tuxedo, a classic dark suit, and a selection of white and black shirts, all from the Giorgio Armani collection.

Aware that his mental health had been deteriorating since the end of World War I, Nijinsky spent six and a half weeks from January to March, 1919 deftly crafting an extraordinary written document conveying his struggle against madness. His thoughts on paper are consumed with his profound love of dance, whilst also wrestling with spiritual doubts and preoccupations with Diaghilev, his erstwhile lover. Once the diary was finished, Nijinsky locked himself away, remaining isolated for more than two decades while watched over by his wife. As World War II wound down, the great artist showed signs of life again; this is where *Letter to a Man* begins, providing a glimpse into the dancer's past, and ahead toward his few remaining years.

The project marks the second collaboration for Wilson and Baryshnikov, whose production of Daniil Kharms' *The Old Woman* (2014 Spring Season), featuring Baryshnikov and Willem Dafoe, toured nationally and internationally to critical acclaim.

Robert Wilson's longstanding relationship with BAM goes back to the 1970 premiere production of *The Life and Times of Sigmund Freud* and includes the Philip Glass/Wilson epic *Einstein on the Beach* (1984, 1992, and 2012 Next Wave Festivals) and *The CIVIL warS: a tree is best measured when it is down, Act V—the Rome Section* (1986 Next Wave Festival), a work created with an international group of artists, including David Byrne. In addition to his collaborations with Tom Waits/Kathleen Brennan (*Woyzeck*, 2002 Next Wave Festival) and Tom Waits/William Burroughs (*Black Rider*, 1993 Next Wave Festival), Wilson also created works in partnership with Lou Reed, including *Time Rocker* (1997 Next Wave Festival) and *POEtry* (2001 Next Wave Festival). *The Temptation of St. Anthony* (2004 Next Wave Festival) featured a collaboration with Sweet Honey in the Rock founder Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon. Wilson was at BAM with his retelling of Henrik Ibsen's dramatic classic *Peer Gynt* (2006 Spring Season); *Quartett* (2009 Next Wave), Heiner Müller's adaptation of Choderlos de Laclos' *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, featuring Isabelle Huppert; *Threepenny Opera* (2011 Next Wave); and *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (2014 Next Wave).

Born 1948 in Riga, Latvia, **Mikhail Baryshnikov** is an acclaimed theater, television, and film actor who is also considered one of the greatest dancers of our time. After commencing a spectacular 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 touring two solo theater projects, *Letter to a Man* and *Brodsky/Baryshnikov*. 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 serve more than 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.

For press information, contact Sarah Garvey at sgarvey@bam.org or 718.724.8025

Credits

Bloomberg Philanthropies is the Season Sponsor.

Armani is the Lead Sponsor of Letter to a Man.

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Executive production CRT Teatro dell'Arte

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"Asylum" courtesy of James Casebere and Sean Kelly Gallery

General Information

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, BAM Rose Cinemas, and BAMcafé are located in the Peter Jay Sharp building at 30 Lafayette Avenue (between St Felix Street and Ashland Place) in the Fort Greene

neighborhood of Brooklyn. BAM Harvey Theater is located two blocks from the main building at 651 Fulton Street (between Ashland and Rockwell Places). Both locations house Greenlight Bookstore at BAM kiosks. BAM Fisher, located at 321 Ashland Place, is the newest addition to the BAM campus and houses the Judith and Alan Fishman Space and Rita K. Hillman Studio. BAM Rose Cinemas is Brooklyn's only movie house dedicated to first-run independent and foreign film and repertory programming. BAMcafé, operated by Great Performances, offers a dinner menu prior to BAM Howard Gilman Opera House evening performances. BAMcafé also features an eclectic mix of live music for BAMcafé Live on Friday and Saturday nights with a bar menu available starting at 6pm.

Subway: 2, 3, 4, 5, Q, B to Atlantic Avenue – Barclays Center (2, 3, 4, 5 to Nevins St for Harvey Theater); D, N, R to Pacific Street; G to Fulton Street; C to Lafayette Avenue
Train: Long Island Railroad to Atlantic Terminal – Barclays Center
Bus: B25, B26, B41, B45, B52, B63, B67 all stop within three blocks of BAM
Car: Limited commercial parking lots are located near BAM. Visit BAM.org for information.

For ticket information, call BAM Ticket Services at 718.636.4100, or visit BAM.org.

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