



US Department of State and Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) announce seventh season of cultural diplomacy program *DanceMotion USASM*

Participants Bebe Miller Company, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, and Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company to launch international residencies in 2018 to Colombia, Peru, Kazakhstan, Russia, Mongolia, and South Korea.

April 3, 2017/Brooklyn, NY—The US Department of State and Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) today announced the three American dance companies selected to participate in the seventh season of *DanceMotion USASM*—the dynamic cultural diplomacy program that supports United States foreign policy goals by connecting Americans with overseas entrepreneurs and social leaders through professional development opportunities, outreach and educational events, and performances. *DanceMotion USASM* is a people-to-people international exchange initiative of the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, administered by BAM.

Season seven features the following companies and world regions:

- Bebe Miller Company (Columbus, OH) will travel to Colombia and Peru.
- Dayton Contemporary Dance Company (Dayton, OH) will travel to Kazakhstan and Russia.
- Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company (Salt Lake City, UT) will travel to South Korea and Mongolia.

Companies participating in the program will embark on consecutive, four-week-long international professional development and performance residencies. *DanceMotion USASM* presents professional American dance to global audiences who may not otherwise be exposed to the work. Companies engage in outreach events, workshops, master classes, and media interviews. They organize discussions about arts management and technical production with local artists and audiences in a variety of venues and settings.



A particular area of focus is working with diverse communities and promoting the empowerment of women, people with disabilities, and at-risk youth. In addition, a week-long capacity-building and professional advancement program will take place at BAM in the summer of 2018. This Brooklyn-based program pairs six foreign artists who participated in workshops and collaborated with the *DanceMotion USASM* companies abroad with six local artists.



To date, *DanceMotion USASM* has engaged with more than 114,000 participants in 55 countries and has reached more than 40 million people online. It is an integral part of the US State Department's effort to connect people—particularly youth and marginalized communities—through cultural exchanges worldwide. The program also has provided rich experiences for the US-based dance companies and



choreographers, who advance their own careers and professional development opportunities through their work with internationally-based artistic colleagues.

BAM President Katy Clark said, “We are honored to work with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs on this dynamic program that promotes cross-cultural exchange and awareness of both our differences and our commonalities. *DanceMotion USASM* is a prime example of the power of the arts to enhance people’s lives, provide educational opportunities, and reveal new ways of looking at the world.”

BAM Executive Producer Joseph V. Melillo added, “*DanceMotion USASM* has a deep and tangible impact on the global communities it reaches. While engaging international audiences through dance, it fosters personal connections and makes the world a smaller place. I know that our season seven participants will find their experiences expansive and rewarding, and I’m proud to join once again with our partners at ECA to make this program possible.”

Companies who have participated in previous seasons of *DanceMotion USASM* include Urban Bush Women; ODC/Dance; Evidence, A Dance Company; Jazz Tap Ensemble; Rennie Harris Puremovement; Seán Curran Company; Trey McIntyre Project; Doug Varone and Dancers; Hubbard Street Dance Chicago; Illstyle and Peace Productions; Spectrum Dance Theater; Mark Morris Dance Group; CONTRA-TIEMPO; David Dorfman Dance; BODYTRAFFIC; Dance Heginbotham; Limón Dance Company; KEIGWIN + COMPANY; Stephen Petronio Company; and Reggie Wilson/Fist and Heel Performance Group.

Season Seven *DanceMotion USASM* companies:

The mission of **Bebe Miller Company** (BMC) is to support the artistic vision of choreographer Bebe Miller in creative, cross-disciplinary explorations, and to create and perform new works. Seeking to expand the language of dance, Miller’s work encompasses choreography, writing, film, video, and digital media. Miller has created more than 50 dance works for BMC, and has performed in nearly 400 engagements worldwide. BMC has been commissioned and presented by leading venues including BAM, 651 ARTS, Dance Theater Workshop, Jacob's Pillow, Joyce Theater, Portland Institute of Contemporary Art, REDCAT, Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, Wexner Center for the Arts, and Phoenix Dance Company (UK), among others. The company has received support from the National Endowment for the Arts, National Performance Network, New England Foundation for the Arts, and other generous funders. BMC creates new works during intensive residencies that bring national collaborating artists together over several years for exploration, rehearsals, and community activities. Pioneering the use of digital media for artists to communicate within the virtual community, the company facilitates a sharing of its process with a wide audience.

Bebe Miller, a native New Yorker, first performed her choreography at NYC’s Dance Theater Workshop in 1978, after receiving her MA in Dance from The Ohio State University (OSU) in 1975. She formed Bebe Miller Company in 1985. Known for its mix of virtuosic dancing and fundamental humanity, her choreography has been produced at major dance centers across the country and internationally in Europe and on the African continent. She has been honored with four Bessie Awards, fellowships from the New York Foundation for the Arts, Ohio Arts Council, and the Guggenheim Foundation, and was named a United States Artists Ford Fellow in 2010. A professor in dance at OSU from 2000 to 2016, Miller was a Distinguished Professor in OSU’s College of Arts and Humanities and received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Ursinus College in 2009. She was honored at the Kennedy Center as a Master of African-

American Choreography in 2005. In 2012 Miller was designated as one of the inaugural class of Doris Duke Artists, a program of the Doris Duke Foundation's Performing Artist Awards. Most recently, she was a Movement Research 2015 Gala honoree along with Tere O'Connor and Moira Brennan. Miller currently lives in Columbus, OH.

Rooted in the African-American experience, **Dayton Contemporary Dance Company's** main goals are to create, perform, and tour locally, nationally, and internationally; dance art of exceptional quality; and deliver premier arts-integrated education services to the local community while on tour. During its 2015-2016 season, the company reached over 60,000 people through its performances and education programming. Founded in Dayton, Ohio in 1968 by the late dancer, teacher, choreographer, MacArthur "Genius" fellow, and visionary leader Jeraldine Blunden, the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company (DCDC) is one of very few American dance companies of international reputation located outside a large US metropolitan area. The company has been supported by the American Dance Festival, Paul Taylor American Modern Dance, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, National Endowment for the Arts, and New England Foundation for the Arts, among others, and has been featured three times on PBS. DCDC has toured internationally to Bermuda, Canada, Chile, China, France, Germany, Poland, Russia, and South Korea. Noteworthy choreographers who have worked with the company over four decades include Alvin Ailey, Talley Beatty, Bill T. Jones, José Limón, Dianne McIntyre, Donald McKayle, Bebe Miller, and Doug Varone. The company has curated a collection of outstanding works that are now part of its touring program, including works created by Donald Byrd, Ronen Koresch, and Ray Mercer. DCDC's 2016 performance of Donald McKayle's *Rainbow 'Round My Shoulder*, produced by Paul Taylor American Modern Dance, received the 2016 Bessie Award for Outstanding Revival. In addition, DCDC has launched a new project, *The Bench—A Journey Into Love*, a dance theater experience choreographed by Kiesha Lalama and produced by Titus Theatricals, premiering in 2018 and featured by Association of Performing Arts Professionals 2017 Up Next! artist pitch session.

Artistic Director **Debbie Blunden-Diggs**, daughter of company founder Jeraldine Blunden, joined Dayton Contemporary Dance Company at age twelve and won national recognition for her choreography by seventeen. During her 40-plus years with the company, Blunden-Diggs appeared in most of the company's repertoire. Her choreography for the company, spanning two decades, includes *No Room, No Place, No Where* (for which she received a Monticello Award in 1982), *Variations in Blue*, *Night Phases*, *Silent Echos*, *Configurations*, *Kaleidoscope*, *Fragments*, *In My Father's House*, and *Traffic*. Blunden-Diggs is the executive director of Jeraldine's School of the Dance, the cornerstone of DCDC. She also works closely with the pre-professional company, DCDC2. Previously its associate artistic director and deputy director for arts and operations, Blunden-Diggs became the company's artistic director in 2007. She is also an adjunct professor at the University of Dayton Theatre department and is a member of the board for the International Association of Blacks in Dance (IABD).

Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company is Utah's most established institution for contemporary dance. The company was founded in 1964 by Joan Woodbury and Shirley Ririe, who were both professors of dance at the University of Utah. Since its inception, Ririe-Woodbury has pursued a mission to make dance a part of everybody's lives—whether as creators, performers, educators, critics, or audience members. The company founders were active in the earliest dance programs of the National Endowment of the Arts, leading it to greater stature and recognition. Its education program, a national model used in schools to date, grew from Ririe-Woodbury's participation in two prestigious national initiatives: the Dance Touring Program and the Artists in

the Schools Program. Currently the company has an education and an outreach director, whose jobs are singularly focused on creating dance opportunities for a wide audience, including toddlers, schoolchildren, adults, and nursing home residents. Ririe-Woodbury performs throughout the US and worldwide—including past international tours in South Africa, Southeast Asia, the Caribbean, the UK, and throughout Europe. Located in downtown Salt Lake City, Utah, the company produces three unique productions annually, including new works created by its Artistic Director Daniel Charon, alongside new commissions from both emerging and established choreographers. Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company is currently under the direction of Executive Director Jena Woodbury, Artistic Director Daniel Charon, and Education Director Ai Fujii Nelson.

Artistic Director of Ririe-Woodbury since 2013, **Daniel Charon** has been active as a choreographer, teacher, and performer for over 25 years. While based in New York City, Charon maintained a project-based dance company, and danced with Doug Varone and Dancers and Limón Dance Company. He performed with Doug Elkins and Friends, and at the Metropolitan Opera and the Aquila Theater Company, among others. Charon earned a BFA from North Carolina School of the Arts and a MFA from California Institute of the Arts in Choreography and Integrated Media. As Ririe-Woodbury's artistic director, Charon has created original works for the stage, designed video for his and other choreographers' work, and created gallery installations. Charon's choreography has been produced at the 92nd Street Y, Harkness Dance Festival, and Jacob's Pillow, among others. A nationally respected educator, Charon has taught at the Metropolitan Opera, Bates Dance Festival, Salt Dance Fest, and North Carolina School of the Arts Summer Comprehensive, and was an adjunct faculty member at Hunter College. He has staged works by José Limón, Jiří Kylián, and Doug Varone.

Visit: DanceMotionUSA.org

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DanceMotion USASM is a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the US Department of State, produced by Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) to showcase contemporary American dance abroad.

Credits:

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