



Martha Graham Dance Company Announces New Commissions for 2022–2023 Season

New York, NY (July 2022) – The **Martha Graham Dance Company** is pleased to announce that it has commissioned choreographers **Baye & Asa** and **Annie Rigney** to create new works for the Company. Both works will premiere as part of the Company's Joyce Theater season in spring 2023.

"We are thrilled to commission these next generation choreographers who have such distinctive voices," said Graham Company Artistic Director Janet Eilber. "Our season theme, HUMAN/NATURE, references Graham's reverence for the body and the inherent intelligence of the natural world, and these artists have been chosen for their ongoing inquiries into the nature of being human. Though they will be making entirely contemporary statements born out of their own sensibilities and movement vocabularies, we anticipate an exciting synergy with the Graham classics."

Baye & Asa interrogate systemic inequities, and contemporize ancient allegories, shaping characters that are righteous, often helpless, and fated to their cultural position. Their work for the Company will explore these themes through rhythmic, energetic movement that illuminates contemporary issues around inequity.

Rigney's work will explore the concept of the Edge Effect. Rigney has said she is interested in looking at the body as an ecosystem, and exploring what happens when it collides, merges with, and melts into another body. "Is there a third unique quality that can only exist as a result of our physical overlap, and entanglement? What does this look like explored through dance?"

About the Artists

Baye & Asa is a company creating movement art projects directed by **Amadi 'Baye' Washington** and **Sam 'Asa' Pratt**. Individually they have performed with Akram Khan Company, Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More*, A.I.M. by Kyle Abraham, David Dorfman Dance, Gallim, Kate Weare Company, and the Francesca Harper Project. For the past year they have been presenting their short film, *Second Seed*, which has won numerous awards including the Jury/Audience Awards at Portland Dance Film Festival, the Best Director Award at Phoenix Dance Film Festival, and the Social Justice Award from Chicago's In/Motion Dance Film Festival. Their duet *Suck it Up* was commissioned by The BlackLight Summit and premiered at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center in early February 2022, followed by an New York premiere at the 92nd Street Y Mainstage Series. In March 2022, they premiered *The One to Stay With*, a piece commissioned and performed by BODYTRAFFIC at the Joyce Theater. Later this year, they will debut *HotHouse*, a duet co-produced by Pioneer Works. Baye & Asa were selected as one of Dance Magazine's "25 to Watch" for 2022.

Annie Rigney certified Gaga teacher and Ilan Lev Method therapist. She has danced with the Batsheva Ensemble, Inbal Pinto, and Avshalom Pollak Dance Company, and spent many years performing in Punchdrunk's New York City production of *Sleep No More*. Her work has been shown at Batsheva Studios in Tel Aviv, in the Dance Theater Lab at SUNY Purchase, at Manhattan Movement and Arts Center, and the Reverb Dance Festival. Rigney operates a private practice in the Ilan Lev Method, treating dancers and other artists for injury and functional limitations. She is an adjunct professor at University of Arts in Philadelphia, and teaches regularly in and around the New York area.

About Martha Graham Dance Company

The Martha Graham Dance Company has been a leader in the development of contemporary dance since its founding in 1926. Today, the Company is embracing a new programming vision that showcases masterpieces by Graham alongside newly commissioned works by contemporary artists. With programs that unite the work of choreographers across time within a rich historical and thematic narrative, the Company is actively working to create new platforms for contemporary dance and multiple points of access for audiences.

Since its inception, the Martha Graham Dance Company has received international acclaim from audiences in more than 50 countries throughout North and South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. The Company has performed at the Metropolitan Opera, Carnegie Hall, the Paris Opera House, Covent Garden, and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, as well as at the base of the Great Pyramids in Egypt and in the ancient Herod Atticus Theatre on the Acropolis in Athens. In addition, the Company has also produced several award-winning films broadcast on PBS and around the world. For more information about the Company, visit: www.marthagraham.org.

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