



**MARTHA GRAHAM DANCE COMPANY PRESENTS SPRING 2023 SEASON  
AT THE JOYCE THEATER IN NEW YORK CITY, APRIL 18–30, 2023**

**Featuring Martha Graham classics, world premieres by Baye & Asa and Annie Rigney, the new *Canticle for Innocent Comedians*, and *CAVE* by internationally acclaimed choreographer Hofesh Shechter**

New York, NY (January 31, 2023) – The world-renowned **Martha Graham Dance Company** returns to The Joyce Theater with three exciting programs April 18–30, 2023. The season features world premieres by **Baye & Asa** and **Annie Rigney**, **Hofesh Shechter**'s high-energy ***CAVE***, and the mesmerizing ***Canticle for Innocent Comedians***, a multi-choreographer work directed by **Sonya Tayeh** featuring an original score by jazz great **Jason Moran**. With their stunning mid-century sets by Isamu Noguchi, Graham's masterworks ***Cave of the Heart*** and ***Embattled Garden*** return to the stage along with her earliest comedy, ***Every Soul is a Circus***, and the modernist ritual ***Dark Meadow Suite***.

The season features a new work for six Graham dancers by the artist duo Baye & Asa. Drawing inspiration from Martha Graham's *Cortege of Eagles*, Baye & Asa's work looks at Charon, the ferryman who shepherds souls to the underworld. In Graham's work, Charon is a harbinger of Troy's inevitable fall. In Baye & Asa's creation, they ask: Who is the ferryman for the fall of the American Empire?

The season also includes a premiere by evocative choreographer Annie Rigney. This work for five dancers explores feminine rage, grief, and sisterhood. It is at once a rallying cry, an apology, and a prayer, and is danced to haunting and powerful Bulgarian folk music, as well as original music by Italian classical composer **Marco Rosano** and his collaborator, **Andreas Scholl**.

The rapturous *CAVE* by award-winning UK-based choreographer Hofesh Shechter will also be presented. Created for the Company in 2022, *CAVE* is an exploration of collective movement, sound, and shared kinetic energy, and features an electronic score by German duo **Âme** and Shechter. Costumes are by **Caleb Kreig** and lighting design is by **Yi-Chung Chen**.

Bringing a new generation of choreographers to re-envision Graham's innovations, the new *Canticle for Innocent Comedians*, which had its premiere last spring, is inspired by the themes and format of Graham's 1952 work. The original work was built around eight virtuosic vignettes that each celebrated a different aspect of nature and our relationship to it. Emmy and Tony award-winner Sonya Tayeh is the lead choreographer and created the vignette titled *Sun*. **Alleyné Dance**, **Jenn Freeman**, **Juliano Nunes**, **Micaela Taylor**, and **Yin Yue** created *Earth, Water, Fire, Stars*, and *Death*, and **Robert Cohan**, who danced in the original cast in 1952, created a new *Wind*. *Moon* has the original choreography by Martha Graham. *Canticle* features a commissioned score by renowned jazz pianist and composer Jason Moran. Costumes are by **Karen Young** and lighting design is by Yi-Chung Chen.

The season also features *Cave of the Heart*, Graham's 1946 masterwork based on the story of Medea with a score by Samuel Barber and *Embattled Garden* (1958), Graham's take on the Garden of Eden and the timelessness of temptation with a score by Carlos Surinch. Rounding out the program are Graham's wry *Every Soul Is a Circus* from 1939, with music by Paul Nordoff, and

*Dark Meadow Suite*, an arrangement of highlights from Graham's 1946 work *Dark Meadow*, set to a score by Carlos Chavez.

There will be a special gala performance celebrating the Company's 97th season on Thursday, April 20. The Company's biennial University Partners Showcase will be presented on Saturday, April 22, and on Sunday, April 30, the Company will present a family matinee with programming for ages 8 and up.

The dancers of the Martha Graham Dance Company are **So Young An, James Anthony, Alessio Crognale, Laurel Dalley Smith, Natasha M. Diamond Walker, Lloyd Knight, Jacob Larsen, Devin Loh, Marzia Memoli, Anne O'Donnell, Lorenzo Pagano, Kate Reyes, Anne Souder, Richard Villaverde, Leslie Andrea Williams, and Xin Ying.**

Performances are at The Joyce Theater April 18–30, 2023 (Tuesday and Wednesday at 7:30pm, Thursday and Friday at 8pm, Saturday at 2pm and 8pm, and Sunday at 2pm and 7:30pm). The Joyce Theater is located at 175 Eighth Avenue (at 19th Street), in Manhattan. Tickets range from \$10 to \$75. Prices are subject to change. Tickets can be purchased online at [www.joyce.org](http://www.joyce.org) or by calling JOYCECHARGE at 212-242-0800. For information about the Company's gala on April 20, call 212-229-9200.

### **Spring 2023 Season Schedule**

#### **PROGRAM A**

**Tuesday, April 18, at 7:30pm, Friday, April 21, at 8pm, Sunday, April 23, at 2pm, Wednesday, April 26, at 7:30pm**

*Dark Meadow Suite* by Martha Graham

New Work by Annie Rigney

New Work by Baye & Asa

*Cave of the Heart* by Martha Graham

#### **PROGRAM B**

**Wednesday, April 19, at 7:30pm, Sunday, April 23, at 7:30pm, Thursday, April 27, at 8pm, Saturday, April 29, at 2pm and 8pm**

*Embattled Garden* by Martha Graham

New Work by Baye & Asa

*Canticle for Innocent Comedians* by Sonya Tayeh with Alleyne Dance, Robert Cohan, Jenn Freeman, Juliano Nunes, Micaela Taylor, Yin Yue, and Martha Graham (Saturday at 2pm)

*CAVE* by Hofesh Shechter (Saturday at 8pm)

#### **SPECIAL GALA PERFORMANCE**

**Thursday, April 20, at 7pm**

*All-City Panorama* by Martha Graham

Selections from *Canticle for Innocent Comedians*

*Embattled Garden* by Martha Graham

#### **PROGRAM C**

**Saturday, April 22, at 8pm, Tuesday, April 25, at 7:30pm, Friday, April 28, at 8pm, Sunday, April 30, at 7:30pm**

*Every Soul is a Circus* by Martha Graham

New Work by Annie Rigney

*CAVE* by Hofesh Shechter

#### **UNIVERSITY PARTNERS SHOWCASE**

**Saturday, April 22, at 2pm**

This special program, performed by university and high school dancers from around the country, will feature six works by Martha Graham including *Diversion of Angels* and *Adorations*, as well as *Pond* by Alwin Nikolais and *Cantilever* by Erick Hawkins.

## **FAMILY MATINEE**

**Sunday, April 30, at 2pm**

*All-City Panorama*

*Every Soul is a Circus*

*Canticle for Innocent Comedians* by Sonya Tayeh with Alleyne Dance, Robert Cohan, Jenn Freeman, Juliano Nunes, Micaela Taylor, Yin Yue, and Martha Graham

Images are available [here](#).

## **Guest Choreographer Biographies**

**Alleyne Dance** is a UK-based company founded in 2014 by award-winning dancers/sisters **Kristina** and **Sadé Alleyne**. Its choreographic aesthetic reflects the sisters' diverse background in athleticism and dance training. Within its abstract contemporary construct, Alleyne Dance blends West African, Caribbean, hip-hop, Kathak, and circus skills, delivered as fast-paced and dynamic movement. The choreographers infuse lyrical and fluid motion, layered with rhythm and textures, in physically powerful, yet graceful performances. Alleyne Dance has received over 20 choreographic commissions working with companies such as 2Faced Dance Company, institutions and groups such as Scatter Dance Company (UK), ImPulsTanz (Austria), Codarts (Belgium), Jeune Ballet Calabash (France), SEAD Salzburg (Austria), K Arts (Korea), among others. Their education and participation strand supports professional development of vocational training students, postgraduates, and early career performers through mentorships.

**Baye & Asa** is a company creating movement art projects directed and choreographed by **Amadi 'Baye' Washington** and **Sam 'Asa' Pratt**. The duo grew up together in New York City and that shared history is the mother of their work. Hip-Hop and African dance languages are the foundation of their technique. The rhythms of these techniques inform the way they energetically confront contemporary dance and theater. They have presented live work at The Joyce Theater, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the 92nd Street Y, Baryshnikov Arts Center, Jacob's Pillow, DanceHouse Vancouver, Blacklight Summit, and Battery Dance Festival. They were selected as one of *Dance Magazine's* "25 to Watch" for 2022. Their film work has won numerous awards and been presented internationally.

**Jenn Freeman**, artistic director of Freemove Dance, is a choreographer, dance performer, and educator based in New York City. In October 2018 she self-produced and debuted Freemove Dance's first evening-length work, *...it's time...*, at The Theater at the 14th Street Y. Her choreography has been commissioned by Marymount Manhattan College, Wayne State University, and the University of Texas at Austin, where her piece *When* was nominated for a 2018 Austin Critics Table Award and chosen as a finalist to be presented at the Kennedy Center for the ACDA National Festival. Freeman's work has been presented in NYC at the Reverb Dance Festival, The 14th Street Y Cabaret, and The Young Choreographer's Festival. She has also worked alongside internationally recognized choreographers in the development of pieces and large-scale productions for Florence and the Machine, Madonna, Cirque du Soleil, SYTYCD, Encores! and Off-Center at New York City Center (*The Wild Party*).

Choreographer **Hofesh Shechter** is artistic director of the UK-based Hofesh Shechter Company, formed in 2008. The company is a resident at Brighton Dome and Shechter is an associate artist of Sadler's Wells. In addition to works for his company, Shechter has staged and choreographed works on leading international dance companies including the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Batsheva Ensemble, Candoco Dance Company, Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet, Nederlands Dans Theater 1, Paris Opera Ballet, Royal Ballet, and Royal Ballet Flanders. He has choreographed for theater, television, and opera, notably at the Metropolitan Opera for Nico

Mulhy's *Two Boys*, the Royal Court on Motortown, and The Arsonists, the National Theatre on Saint Joan, and for the Channel 4 series *Skins*. As part of #HOFEST, a four week festival celebrating Shechter's work across four iconic London venues, he co-directed Gluck's *Orphée et Eurydice* with John Fulljames at the Royal Opera House. In 2016 he received a Tony Award nomination for his choreography for the Broadway revival of *Fiddler on the Roof*. In 2018 Shechter was awarded an honorary OBE for services to dance. In 2020, Hofesh Shechter Company was named the winner of the Fedora–Van Cleef & Arpels Prize for Ballet for *LIGHT: Bach Dances*, in collaboration with Royal Danish Opera and co-directed by Shechter and John Fulljames.

**Juliano Nunes** trained at the Brazilian Dance Conservatory in Rio de Janeiro, furthered his studies at the Mannheim University of Music and Performing Arts in Germany with a bachelor of arts and master of arts, joining companies such as Royal Ballet of Flanders, Leipzig Opera Ballet, Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe, and Stuttgart Gauthier Dance. He has worked with choreographers such as William Forsythe, Christopher Wheeldon, Hans van Manen, Jirí Kylián, Ohad Naharin, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Yuri Grigorovich, and Akram Kahn, among others. Nunes has received critical acclaim for his own choreography and has created pieces for the Royal Ballet in London, Nederlands Dans Theatre 2, Acosta Danza, Atlanta Ballet, Mariinsky Theatre, and for the Netflix series *Tiny Pretty Things*.

**Annie Rigney** is a New York-based dancer, choreographer, Gaga teacher, and Ilan Lev therapist. She is an alumnus of the Conservatory of Dance at SUNY Purchase. Rigney danced with the Batsheva Ensemble under the artistic direction of Ohad Naharin. She toured internationally with Inbal Pinto and Avshalom Pollak Dance Company and was a cast member of Punchdrunk's immersive theater production *Sleep No More* from 2015 to 2019. She has freelanced with LeeSaar the Company, Zoe Schofield, and Gallim Dance. Rigney teaches regularly at Gibney Dance Center, Mark Morris Dance Center, and is an adjunct professor at University of the Arts and SUNY Purchase. She is the director of the Ilan Lev Method Training program in New York and treats dancers for injuries and functional limitations. Rigney was a guest choreographer for the Fall Concert at SUNY Purchase 2021 and her work has been presented by Batsheva Studios in Tel Aviv, Joyce Soho, Arts on Site, Greenspace, Berkeley Repertory Theater, and the University of the Arts. Her choreographic work *Galithea* was recently featured as a part of the 92nd Street Y's Future Dance Festival and was presented at The Joyce Theater by the Martha Graham Dance Company. Her evening-length work entitled, *...she was becoming untethered*. will be presented by the 92nd Street Y in June of 2023. Rigney is a recipient of the Moving Women Residency from Gallim Dance, a CUNY Grant recipient, and a current choreographic fellow for Robert Battle's New Directions Choreographic Fellowship program at the Alvin Ailey School.

**Sonya Tayeh** is a New York City-based choreographer and director. Her work has been characterized as a blend of powerful versatility and theatrical range. Tayeh made her Broadway choreographic debut last summer when *Moulin Rouge!* opened at the Al Hirschfeld Theatre. Tayeh has also choreographed pieces for the Fall for Dance Festival at City Center, *The Lucky Ones* at Ars Nova, *Kung Fu* at the Signature Theatre, and many other projects for companies and venues like the Music Center in LA, New York Live Arts, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Martha Graham Dance Company, and The Joyce Theater. She has directed and choreographed for world-renowned music artists including Miley Cyrus, Florence and the Machine, and Kyle Minogue. Tayeh choreographed Fox's *Rent Live!* in 2019 and has gleaned many accolades for her versatile work, including two Emmy Award nominations for her work on Fox's *So You Think You Can Dance*, an Obie Award, an Outer Critics Circle Award, two Lucille Lortel Awards for Outstanding Choreography, a Drama Desk nomination, and a 2020 Drama Desk Award for *Moulin Rouge!*

**Micaela Taylor** is a professional dancer/choreographer and artistic director of The TL Collective. She is the recipient of the Inaugural Springboard EMERGE Choreographic Award, was named one of *Dance Magazine's* "25 to Watch" in 2019, and was on the cover of *Dance Magazine* in May 2020. She is trailblazing in the city of Los Angeles and beyond. Alongside the launch of The TL

Collective, Taylor has been commissioned to choreograph and teach by BODYTRAFFIC, Springboard Danse Montreal, Cleo Parker Robinson Dance, B12 Festival Berlin, Carlos Acosta's Acosta Danza, and others. Taylor's work has been presented at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, the Broad Stage, Ford Amphitheatre, the Barclay Center, Institute of Contemporary Art Boston, among others. *SNAP*, a commissioned work created for BODYTRAFFIC, set her mark as a choreographer who transcends one style of dance. She created a new movement style called Expand Practice, which allows individuals to expand their mind, body, and narrative.

**Yin Yue** is an internationally recognized performer and choreographer, and the founder/artistic director of YY Dance Company. Yue studied Chinese classical dance at the prestigious Shanghai Dance Academy and contemporary dance at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts where she received her MFA in 2008. The company's mission is to incorporate Yue's signature movement style into live performances and choreographic commissions as well as educational endeavors. As choreographer, Yue was the winner of the Hubbard Street Dance Chicago 2015 International Commissioning Project, winner of the 2015 BalletX Choreographic Fellowship, and winner of Northwest Dance Project's fifth annual Pretty Creatives International Choreographic Competition in 2013. She has been commissioned by all three of these companies as well as other companies and organizations: Philadelphia Ballet, Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, Limón Dance Company, Alberta Ballet, Balletto Teatro di Torino, Gibney Dance, Ririe Woodbury Dance Company, Boston Dance Theater, Tisch School of the Arts, George Mason University, Rutgers University, and Juilliard School for Dance, among others.

**Martha Graham** (1894–1991) is recognized as a primal artistic force of the 20th century, alongside Picasso, James Joyce, Stravinsky, and Frank Lloyd Wright. In 1998, *TIME* magazine named Martha Graham "Dancer of the Century," and *People* magazine named her among the female "Icons of the Century." As a choreographer, she was as prolific as she was complex. She created 181 ballets and a dance technique that has been compared to ballet in its scope and magnitude. Her approach to dance and theater revolutionized the art form and her innovative physical vocabulary has irrevocably influenced dance worldwide.

### **About the Martha Graham Dance Company**

The Martha Graham Dance Company has been a leader in the evolving art form of modern 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 House, 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 Odeon of Herodes Atticus theater 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](http://www.marthagraham.org).

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