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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Lewis Center for the Arts presents Princeton Dance Festival**  
*Annual festival features a diverse program of repertory and new works*



**Photo caption:** Students premiere “Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee,” by Olivier Tarpaga, at the 2016 Princeton Dance Festival.

**Photo credit:** Photo by Bentley Drezner

**What:** Princeton Dance Festival presented by the Lewis Center for the Arts’ Program in Dance

**Who:** Student dancers perform repertory works by Bill T. Jones and Ohad Naharin and premiere new dances by Alexandra Beller, Rebecca Lazier, Brian Reeder, Olivier Tarpaga, and Raphael Xavier

**When:** December 1 at 8 p.m., December 2 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and December 3 at 1 p.m.

**Where:** Berlind Theatre at McCarter Theatre Center, 91 University Place in Princeton

**Tickets:** \$12 in advance of show dates, \$8 for students/\$12 seniors, and \$17 purchased the day of performances at the box office, available at [arts.princeton.edu/dancefestival](http://arts.princeton.edu/dancefestival)

**Event info:**

(Princeton, NJ) The Lewis Center for the Arts’ Program in Dance at Princeton University presents the annual Princeton Dance Festival, in which 51 Princeton dance students will perform repertory works by Bill T. Jones and Ohad Naharin and premiere new works by Alexandra Beller, Rebecca Lazier, Brian Reeder, Olivier Tarpaga, and Raphael Xavier. Four performances will take place: December 1 at 8 p.m., December 2 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and December 3 at 1 p.m. at the Berlind Theatre at McCarter Theatre Center.

Excerpts from *Love Redefined* by **Bill T. Jones** have been staged by former company member **Stuart Singer**. A reworking of *Love Defined*, a work commissioned by the Lyon Opera Ballet in 1992, featuring the innocent and whimsical music of Daniel Johnston and original decor by Donald Baechler, *Love Re-Defined* embodies Bill T. Jones' distinct and poetic style, drawing freely from both classical and modern movement vocabularies. Jones received a Kennedy Center Honors award in 2010, a Tony Award for Best Choreography in 2010 for *Fela!*, and a 2007 Tony Award and 2007 Obie Award for his choreography for *Spring Awakening*. He created over 140 works for the company he founded with his late partner, the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company. He has collaborated with such artists as Toni Morrison, Max Roach, Jessye Norman, and Keith Haring. Jones received a MacArthur "Genius" Award in 1994 and in 2000 The Dance Heritage Coalition named him, "An Irreplaceable Dance Treasure." Singer, a "Bessie" Award winning performer, performed with Jones' company, as well as the companies of Wally Cardona, John Jasperse, Beth Gill and Lucinda Childs, and choreographs and teaches extensively throughout the U.S.

**Omri Drumlevich** is staging with Princeton students a segment from *Seder* (2007) by **Ohad Naharin**, Artistic Director of the Batsheva Dance Company from Tel-Aviv, Israel. Through the process, the students are training using Gaga, the movement language Naharin developed and is still developing with dancers and non-dancers in Batsheva Dance Company and in many other major companies and dance schools around the world. Drumlevich, a former Batsheva dancer (2010-2017), is currently creating, teaching Gaga, and staging Naharin's work throughout the U.S. Drumlevich is a visiting artist in residence at Princeton this semester through support from The Schusterman Foundation's Visiting Israeli Artists Program. *Seder*, which presents Naharin's research regarding movement, the power of imagination, musicality, speed, passion and groove, is composed from fragments of the Pieces *MAX* (2007) and *Three* (2005), both created for and premiered by the Batsheva Dance company.

*your art is as art as any art can be.* is the culmination of an intensive creative process in which **Alexandra Beller** and the student dancers collaboratively generated all of the movement and the text for a raucous, vigorous, and playful interrogation of how words fail dance. Using

text drawn from chance improvisation, dance criticism, academia, fundraising appeals, and pedagogy, Beller and the students have attempted to push movement through the sieve of language, and vice versa, to visualize what one understands from the body that language cannot convey. Live music, 15 dancer/actors, one helium balloon, and a lot of words assist movement in telling an absurd story of failure and the deep human desire to be known.

Faculty member **Rebecca Lazier** has created a new piece in collaboration with dance students. *Doom: A Sigh* combines a string quartet with recordings of ancient Romanian laments, five women chart a course through time. At moments peaceful and languorous, in others frenzied and propulsive, these women etch a landscape of loneliness and loss yet continually return to each other to forge a united path.

*Declare Independence* is a new dance work created by **Brian Reeder** in collaboration with Princeton students, with music by the avant-garde pop artist Bjork. The primary exploration for this choreography came from a shared mixing and editing of physical vocabulary between the dancers and Reeder. The underlined theme of the dance comes from the obvious tone and text within the music, which pulls on the complexities of what it may be like to be a part of a conformist society, with potential nonconformist ideals. Reeder has danced with several companies such as New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theater, and William Forsythe's Ballet Frankfurt. He has made numerous works for national, regional dance companies, as well as for universities, colleges and conservatories. This piece represents Reeder's third creative process with Princeton students.

Guest artist **Olivier Tarpaga** will present *Red Walls*, a new and abstract contemporary dance piece with live music created around rhythmic and grounded movement inspired by West African dance vocabulary. Tarpaga is a Lester Horton Award-winning dancer/ choreographer and the director of the African music ensemble in Princeton's Department of Music. He is the founder and artistic director of the internationally acclaimed Dafra Drum and Dafra Kura Band and co-founder of Baker & Tarpaga Dance Project. He danced with David Rousseve/REALITY from 2006 through 2010.

*Into the outer*, is an original work choreographed by **Raphael Xavier** inspired by the randomness of everyday interactions with the environment. "People, places and things re-direct us around every corner as we have to adapt to get to a destination," explains Xavier. A 2017 United States Artist fellow and a 2016 Guggenheim award recipient, Xavier is an alumnus of Rennie Harris Puremovement. He works specifically with the Breaking vocabulary to fully explore the possibilities of the form.

The works in this year's Dance Festival were learned, created and rehearsed in the state-of-the-art, purpose-built dance studios in the new Lewis Arts complex. The Dance Program moved in September from limited facilities at 185 Nassau Street into the new complex, which greatly expanded the number and variety of dance venues.

"We celebrate our move into the new Lewis Arts complex this fall with an overflowing program of dance featuring the work of two iconic master choreographers and five new works by celebrated choreographers working in collaboration with our students. With a deconstructed Hip Hop dance by Raphael Xavier, a rowdy, avant-garde pop ballet by Brian Reeder and a diverse range of smart, powerful contemporary dance, the program will be an exciting ride," notes Susan Marshall, Director of the Program in Dance. "Our students have been training this semester to meet the unique technical demands of these works and their specific movement vocabularies – it will be a pleasure to see these young artists stretch out and revel in their hard-won command of these challenging dances."

The Berlind Theatre is an accessible venue with access details available at [www.mccarter.org](http://www.mccarter.org) [embed link:[http://www.mccarter.org/VisitorInfo/VisitorDefault.aspx?page\\_id=32](http://www.mccarter.org/VisitorInfo/VisitorDefault.aspx?page_id=32)]. Assistive listening devices are available upon request when attending a performance. Patrons in need of other access accommodations are invited to contact the Lewis Center at 609.258.5262 or [LewisCtr-Comm@princeton.edu](mailto:LewisCtr-Comm@princeton.edu) for assistance at least two weeks prior to the selected performance.

Reserved seating tickets for Princeton Dance Festival are \$12 in advance of show dates, \$8 for students/\$12 seniors, and \$17 purchased the day of performances at the box office. Tickets are available online through [arts.princeton.edu/dancefestival](https://arts.princeton.edu/dancefestival), by calling the McCarter box office at 609-258-2787, at the Frist Campus Center or Lewis Arts complex ticket offices, and at the door on the night of performances.

In addition to the Festival, the Program in Dance will present a concert on March 29 through 31, 2018 in the new Hearst Dance Theater at the Lewis Arts complex showcasing seniors in the program with the premiere of senior thesis choreography and performance of repertory works, along with three individual senior thesis events during the spring. On March 8 and 9 the Performance Lab will offer an informal interdisciplinary showing of new student work. The program will also present two end-of-semester showings of work created and learned during the fall and spring semesters from a range of classes including ballet, modern, African dance, urban dance, and courses that present interdisciplinary explorations of dance with other areas.

To learn more about the Princeton Dance Festival, the Program in Dance, and the more than 100 performances, exhibitions, readings, screenings, concerts and lectures presented each year by the Lewis Center for the Arts visit: [arts.princeton.edu](https://arts.princeton.edu).

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