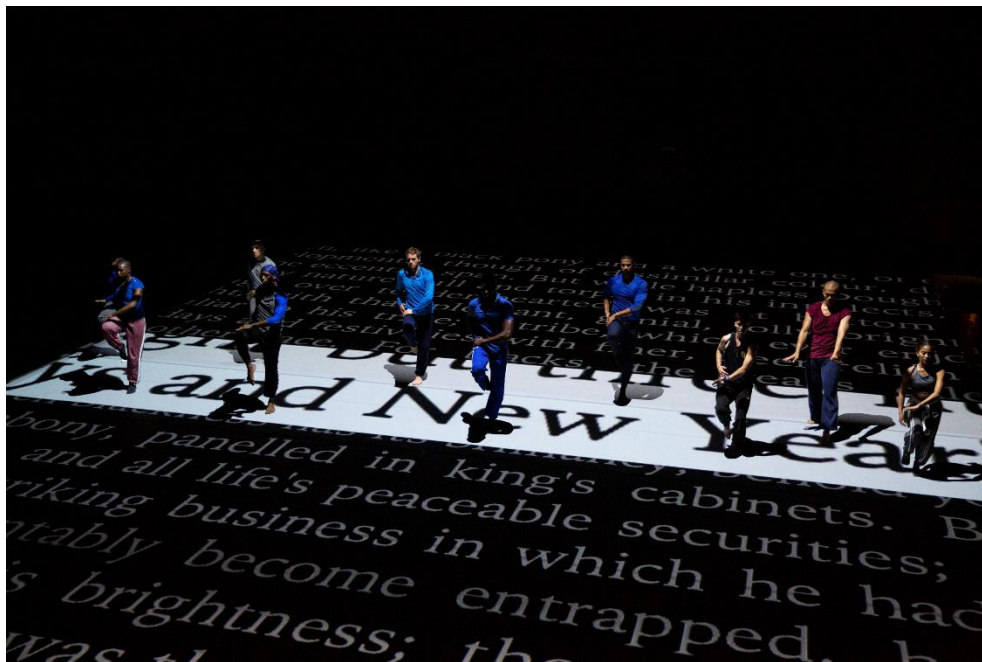




**World Premiere of *Deep Blue Sea* by Bill T. Jones,
Featuring the Renowned Choreographer in Performance with 100 Dancers and
Community Members, Opens at Park Avenue Armory this Fall**

**Armory Commission Features Visual Environment Designed by
Elizabeth Diller and Peter Nigrini**

September 28 – October 9, 2021



Bill T. Jones, technical residency of *Deep Blue Sea* at LUMBERYARD, 2019.
Photo: Maria Baranova

New York, NY – Updated August 2, 2021 – Following this spring’s sold-out run of *Afterwardsness*, renowned director, choreographer, and dancer **Bill T. Jones** returns to Park Avenue Armory to present and perform in the world premiere of his monumental new work, *Deep Blue Sea*. The production marks Jones’ first time performing in over fifteen years. Using deconstructed texts from Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” and Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick*, the highly personal work explores the interplay of single and group identities and the pursuit of the elusive “we” during fractious times. *Deep Blue Sea* is Jones’ second Armory commission this year, following *Afterwardsness*—part of the Armory’s Social Distance Hall commissioning initiative—which was performed by the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company in the Wade Thompson Drill Hall in May.

The work commences with a solo by Jones and builds into a collective performance featuring 100 community members and dancers led by Jones and the **Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company**. Conceived for the Drill Hall, *Deep Blue Sea* magnifies the vast space through a visual environment by **Elizabeth Diller** of the acclaimed architectural firm **Diller Scofidio + Renfro** and projections by Tony Award-nominated projection designer **Peter Nigrini** (*Beetlejuice*, *Fela!*). Diller’s design utilizes dynamic projections, supported by theatrical lighting. This non-traditional relationship between video and theatrical lighting transforms the entire stage into a large

scale, immersive screen. An original vocal score by composer **Nick Hallett** and electronic soundscape by **Hprizm aka High Priest, Rena Anakwe, and Holland Andrews** echoes the words of King and Melville. *Deep Blue Sea* is commissioned by the Armory and Manchester International Festival in collaboration with the Holland Festival, and produced and developed in collaboration with New York Live Arts. Performances will run from September 28 to October 9, 2021.

“Through commissions like *Deep Blue Sea*, the Armory provides artists the support and the space to expand their creative practices in ways that would be unimaginable elsewhere. With this new work, Bill has harnessed the power of the Drill Hall once again to create a lyrical piece that is epic in size, emotion, and ambition,” said **Rebecca Robertson, Founding President and Executive Producer of Park Avenue Armory**. “Inviting community members from across the city into his choreography adds a meaningful new dimension to *Deep Blue Sea*, an element of gathering that takes on special resonance after this year of separation and isolation.”

“Bill T. Jones has long possessed a particular skill for harnessing the power of dance as both a narrative medium and a means to address contemporary issues. With *Afterwardsness*, Jones created a work that expressed the trauma and isolation of the twin pandemics of COVID-19 and ongoing racial violence. With *Deep Blue Sea*, he offers a glimpse of the salvation that can come with unity and community,” said the Armory’s **Marina Kellen French Artistic Director Pierre Audi**. “Intertwining his dynamic choreographic style with elements of spoken word, music, and design, *Deep Blue Sea* is a crowning achievement for Jones and a perfect embodiment of the kind of interdisciplinary work we are committed to commissioning.”

“Performing alongside the young, robust ensemble of the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company and the dynamic group of 90 community members gives me hope in these fractious times,” said **Bill T. Jones**. “The constantly morphing, evocatively weaving designs of Liz Diller and Peter Nigrini, as well as the emotionally complex score by Nick Hallett performed by Hprizm with a select group of vocalists, underscore the poignancy and power of the elusive ‘we’ this piece is in the pursuit of.”

A MacArthur “Genius” Award recipient and two-time Tony Award–winning choreographer (*Spring Awakening, Fela!*) revered internationally for his skill at storytelling through movement, Jones conceived this work as a creative response both to his own life and the pursuit of unity and community in divisive times. A collage of personal and textual references, *Deep Blue Sea* examines our desire for community and the vision of collective redemption.

In conjunction with *Deep Blue Sea*, the Armory will host an artist talk on Thursday, September 30 featuring Bill T. Jones and Elizabeth Diller in discussion about the process of creating this expansive new work for the Drill Hall.

Deep Blue Sea

Performances: September 28 – October 9, 2021
Monday – Thursday at 7:30pm
Friday and Saturday at 8:00pm

Tickets start at \$40

A New Commission by Park Avenue Armory and Manchester International Festival in collaboration with Holland Festival
Featuring Bill T. Jones and Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company

Produced and developed by Park Avenue Armory in collaboration with New York Live Arts

Creator and Director **Bill T. Jones**
Associate Director **Janet Wong**
Choreography **Bill T. Jones, Janet Wong**, and the **Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company**
Visual Environment, Video Projection & Lighting Design **Elizabeth Diller, DS+R**, and **Peter Nigrini**
Composer and Music Director **Nick Hallett**
Electronic Score **Hprizm, Rena Anakwe** and **Holland Andrews**
Lighting Design **Robert Wierzel**
Sound Design **Mark Grey**
Costume Design **Liz Prince**
Dramaturg **Mark Hairston**

Artist Talk: *Deep Blue Sea*

Thursday, September 30 at 6:00pm

Tickets: \$15

Health & Safety Protocols

All ticket-holders must be **fully vaccinated**. “Fully vaccinated” means that you received your final dose at least 14 days before your performance date. At check-in, ticket-holders will be required to show **proof of full vaccination** (the [New York State Excelsior Pass](#) or a hard copy or photo of your vaccination card).

SPONSORSHIP

Bloomberg Philanthropies is the Armory’s 2021 Season Sponsor.

Deep Blue Sea is supported in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the city council. The production is also supported in part by public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Support for Park Avenue Armory’s artistic season has been generously provided by the Charina Endowment Fund, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, the Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, the Howard Gilman Foundation, the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, The Emma and Georgina Bloomberg Foundation, the Marc Haas Foundation, the Juliet Lea Hillman Simonds Foundation, the Leon Levy Foundation, the May and Samuel Rudin Family Foundation, the Richenthal Foundation, and the Isak and Rose Weinman Foundation. The artistic season is also made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. Additional support has been provided by the Armory’s Artistic Council.

ABOUT BILL T. JONES

Bill T. Jones (Artistic Director/Co-Founder/Choreographer: Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company; Artistic Director: New York Live Arts) is the Associate Artist of the 2020 Holland Festival and recipient of the 2014 Doris Duke Performing Artist Award; the 2013 National Medal of Arts; the 2010 Kennedy Center Honors; a 2010 Tony Award for Best Choreography of the critically acclaimed *FELIX!*; a 2007 Tony Award, 2007 Obie Award, and 2006 Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation CALLAWAY Award for his choreography for *Spring Awakening*; the 2010 Jacob’s Pillow Dance Award; the 2007 USA Eileen Harris Norton Fellowship; the 2006 Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Choreography for *The Seven*; the 2005 Wexner Prize; the 2005 Samuel H. Scripps American Dance Festival Award for Lifetime Achievement; the 2005 Harlem Renaissance Award; the 2003 Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize; and the 1994 MacArthur “Genius” Award. In 2010, Jones was recognized as Officier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government, and in 2000, The Dance Heritage Coalition named Jones “An Irreplaceable Dance Treasure.” Jones choreographed and performed worldwide with his late partner, Arnie Zane, before forming the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company in 1982. He has created more than 140 works for his company. Jones is the Artistic Director of New York Live Arts, an organization that strives to create a robust framework in support of the nation’s dance and movement-based artists through new approaches to producing, presenting, and educating.

ABOUT NEW YORK LIVE ARTS AND BILL T. JONES/ARNIE ZANE COMPANY

New York Live Arts is a center of diverse artists devoted to body-based investigation that transcends barriers between and within communities led by world-renowned choreographer, dancer, theater director, and writer, Bill T. Jones, and home to the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company. Located in the heart of Chelsea in New York City, Live Arts offers audiences access to art and artists notable for their conceptual rigor, formal experimentation, and active engagement with the social, political, and cultural currents of our times.

With all that is happening globally and within our borders, we believe even more in our vision to be a conduit for engagement through the arts. The repertoire we present and the conversations we host work to address themes spanning personal and communal responsibility, racism, gender equality, and civil liberties.

Over the past 39 years the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company has shaped the evolution of contemporary dance through the creation and performance of over 140 works. Founded as a multicultural dance company in 1982, the company was born of an 11-year artistic collaboration between Bill T. Jones and Arnie Zane. Today, the company is recognized as one of the most innovative and powerful forces in the modern dance world. The company has performed its ever-enlarging repertoire worldwide in over 200 cities in 30 countries on every major continent. The creation of new work by Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company is made possible in part by our Partners in Creation: Anonymous, Anne Delaney, Zoe Eskin, Eleanor Friedman, Ruth and Stephen Hendel, James C. Hormel and Michael P. Nguyen, Suzanne Karpas, Ellen Poss, Jane Bovingdon Semel, in memory of Linda G. Shapiro, and Slobodan Randjelović and Jon Stryker. Additionally, the creation of *Deep Blue Sea* was originally supported by the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, Philadelphia, with additional commissioning support from The Mann Center for the Performing Arts, and generous support from the Ed Bradley Family Foundation.

Additional support provided by the Arnhold Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Brant Foundation, Inc., Joseph and Joan Cullman Foundation for the Arts, Dance/NYC, Ford Foundation, Howard Gilman Foundation, Mertz Gilmore Foundation, Harkness Foundation for Dance, Marta Heflin Foundation, Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller Fund, Alex Katz Foundation, Lambent Foundation, Alice Lawrence Foundation, Samuel M. Levy Family Foundation, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, National Performance Network, New England Foundation for the Arts, NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund in the New York Community Trust, The Poss Family Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Jerome Robbins Foundation, The Fan Fox & Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, San Francisco Foundation, The Semel Charitable Foundation, Scherman Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, Stavros Niarchos Foundation, Tides Foundation.

Public support includes the National Endowment for the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

ABOUT ELIZABETH DILLER

Elizabeth Diller is a partner of Diller Scofidio + Renfro (DS+R). Alongside partner Ricardo Scofidio, Diller's cross-genre work has been distinguished with TIME's "100 Most Influential People" list and the first MacArthur Foundation fellowship awarded in the field of architecture. Most recently, she led two cultural works significant to New York: *The Shed* and the expansion of MoMA. Diller also co-created, -directed and -produced *The Mile-Long Opera*, an immersive choral work staged on the High Line. She is currently working on two exhibition designs opening this Fall: *The Hare with Amber Eyes* at the Jewish Museum in New York and *Cartier and Islamic Art*, which will be exhibited both at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris and the Dallas Museum of Art. Diller is a member of the UN Council on Urban Initiatives and a Professor of Architectural Design at Princeton University.

ABOUT DILLER SCOFIDIO + RENFRO

Founded in 1981, Diller Scofidio + Renfro is a design studio whose practice spans the fields of architecture, urban design, installation art, multi-media performance, digital media, and print. With a focus on cultural and civic projects, DS+R's work addresses the changing role of institutions and the future of cities. DS+R completed two of the largest architecture and planning initiatives in New York City's recent history: the adaptive reuse of an obsolete, industrial rail infrastructure into the High Line, a 1.5-mile-long public park; and the transformation of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts' half-century-old campus. The studio also completed the 35-acre Zaryadye Park, adjacent to the Kremlin, St. Basil's Cathedral and Red Square in Moscow. The studio has also worked with global cultural institutions to expand access to the arts. The Broad is a contemporary art museum in Los Angeles offering free admission, whose visitorship reflects a comparatively younger and more diverse contemporary arts audience, while the V&A Research and Collection Centre, under construction in London, will bring much of the collection out of storage and into public view for the first time. For more information, visit dsrny.com.

ABOUT PETER NIGRINI

Peter Nigrini has for the past fifteen years been a pioneer in the integration of digital media and live theater.

In the commercial theater his designs include: *Dear Evan Hansen*; *Ain't Too Proud*; David Byrne's *Here Lies Love*; *Fela!*, a musical based on the life of Fela Kuti, the Nigerian pop star and political activist; *Grounded* directed by Julie Taymor for the Public Theater; and a series of adaptations with Robert Woodruff including Dostoyevsky's *Notes From Underground*, Bergman's *Autumn Sonata*, and Fassbinder's *In A Year of Thirteen Moons*.

He works in a variety of disciplines and genres, including works such as: *Real Enemies*, a multi-media piece conceived with Darcy James Argue and Isaac Butler for the 18-piece jazz ensemble The Secrete Society and BAM; the Grace Jones Hurricane Tour; *Blind Date*; an evening long dance piece for Bill T. Jones; and a decade long collaboration with Nature Theater of Oklahoma, for which he designed every aspect of their productions, including *No Dice*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and the multi-part work *Life & Times*.

ABOUT PARK AVENUE ARMORY

Part palace, part industrial shed, Park Avenue Armory fills a critical void in the cultural ecology of New York, supporting unconventional works in the performing and visual arts that cannot be fully realized in a traditional proscenium theater, concert hall, or white wall gallery. With its soaring 55,000-square-foot Wade Thompson Drill Hall and an array of exuberant period rooms, the Armory enables a diverse range of artists to create, students to explore, and audiences to experience epic, adventurous, relevant work that cannot be done elsewhere in New York.

Programmatic highlights from the Wade Thompson Drill Hall include Ernesto Neto's *anthropodino*, a magical labyrinth extended across the Drill Hall; Bernd Alois Zimmermann's harrowing *Die Soldaten*, in which the audience moved "through the music"; *the event of a thread*, a site-specific installation by Ann Hamilton; the final performances of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company on three separate stages; an immersive *Macbeth* set in a Scottish heath with Kenneth Branagh; *WS* by Paul McCarthy, a monumental installation of fantasy, excess, and dystopia; a radically inclusive staging of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* staged by Peter Sellars and performed by Sir Simon Rattle and the Berliner Philharmoniker; eight-time Drama Desk-nominated play *The Hairy Ape*, directed by Richard Jones and starring Bobby Cannavale; *Hansel & Gretel*, a new commission by Ai Weiwei, Jacques Herzog, and Pierre de Meuron that explored publicly shared space in the era of surveillance; *FLEXN* and *FLEXN Evolution*, two Armory-commissioned presentations of the Brooklyn-born dance activists group the D.R.E.A.M. Ring, created by Reggie "Regg Roc" Gray and Director Peter Sellars; Simon Stone's heralded production of *Yerma* starring Billie Piper in her North American debut; *The Let Go*, a site-specific immersive dance celebration by Nick Cave; Satoshi Miyagi's stunning production of *Antigone* set in a lake; Sam Mendes' critically acclaimed production of *The Lehman Trilogy*; and the *Black Artists Retreat* hosted by Theaster Gates, which included public talks and performances, private sessions for the 300 attending artists, and a roller skating rink.

In its historic period rooms, the Armory presents more intimate performances and programs, including its acclaimed *Recital Series*, which showcases musical talent from across the globe within the intimate salon setting of the Board of Officers Room; the *Artists Studio* series curated by MacArthur “Genius” and jazz phenom Jason Moran in the newly restored Veterans Room, which features a diverse array of innovative artists and artistic pairings that reflect the imaginative improvisation of the young designers and artists who originally conceived the space; and *Interrogations of Form*, a public talks program that brings diverse artists and thought-leaders together for discussion and performance around the important issues of our time.

Among the performers who have appeared in the *Recitals Series* and the *Artists Studio* in the Armory’s restored Veterans Room or the Board of Officers Rooms are: Christian Gerhaher; Ian Bostridge; Jason Moran; Lawrence Brownlee; Barbara Hannigan; Lisette Oropesa; Roscoe Mitchell; Conrad Tao and Tyshawn Sorey; Rashaad Newsome; and Kreny Garcia (“El Prodigio”).

Highlights from the public programs include: symposiums such as Carrie Mae Weems’ day-long event called *The Shape of Things*, whose participants included Elizabeth Alexander, Theaster Gates, Elizabeth Diller, and Nona Hendryx; a day-long Lenape Pow Wow and Standing Ground Symposium held in the Wade Thompson Drill Hall, the first congregation of Lenape Leaders on Manhattan Island since the 1700s; salons such as the Literature Salon hosted by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, whose participants included Lynn Nottage, Suzan Lori-Parks, and Jeremy O. Harris, and a Spoken Word Salon co-hosted with the Nuyorican Poets Cafe; and most recently, *100 Years | 100 Women*, a multi-organization commissioning project that invited 100 women artists and cultural creators to respond to women’s suffrage.

Current Artists-in-Residence at the Armory include two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Lynn Nottage; Obie winner and Pulitzer short-listed playwright Branden Jacobs-Jenkins and Carmelita Tropicana; Reggie “Regg Roc” Gray and the D.R.E.A.M. Ring; singer and composer Sara Serpa; Tony Award-winning set designer and director Christine Jones and choreographer Steven Hoggett; and Mimi Lien, the first set designer to receive a MacArthur Fellowship. The Armory also supports artists through an active commissioning program including such artists as Bill T. Jones, Lynn Nottage, Carrie Mae Weems, Michael van der Aa, Tyshawn Sorey, Raashad Newsome, Julian Rosefeldt, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, and others.

The Armory also offers creativity-based arts education programs at no cost to thousands of underserved New York City public school students, engaging them with the institution’s artistic programming and outside-the-box creative processes.

The Armory has undertaken an ongoing \$215-million renovation and restoration of its historic building designed by architects Herzog & de Meuron, with Platt Byard Dovell White as Executive Architects.

www.armoryonpark.org

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