



## NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 16, 2018

### **The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Pennsylvania Announces 2018-19 Season**

***NextMove Dance returns to the Annenberg Center in new co-presenting partnership, consolidating Philadelphia's two major dance presenters under one roof***

***New series "The Philadelphians" explores Philadelphia's long history of diverse cultures and traditions which have influenced the city***

***Dance Theatre of Harlem, under the direction of Philadelphia native Robert Garland, will be the Annenberg Center's Artist-in-Residence***

***The 2018-19 season offers a robust calendar of jazz, world music, theatre, classical, early music, family, and holiday programming***

(Philadelphia – April 16, 2018 – [The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts](#) at the University of Pennsylvania, under the direction of Executive and Artistic Director **Christopher A. Gruits**, has announced its 2018-19 season. Subscriptions to the Annenberg Center's 2018-19 season are on sale now at [AnnenbergCenter.org](#) or 215.898.3900. Single tickets will go on sale at a later date.

#### **ANNENBERG CENTER LIVE 2018-2019 SEASON**

The Annenberg Center's 2018-19 season continues a commitment to innovative, critically acclaimed productions—top contemporary dance ensembles, cutting edge theatre productions, a diverse array of celebrated jazz, classical, and world music artists, enriching family programs, and festive holiday celebrations. Recently announced partner, NextMove Dance, returns to the Annenberg Center for a co-presented series of 11 exceptional dance companies, including four performing in Philadelphia for the first time. A new series, The Philadelphians, explores the populations that came to and forever changed Philadelphia, through period performance juxtaposed with new interpretations that look back on the city's history. Early music graces the Annenberg Center stage for the first time, while two site-specific performances, in Rittenhouse Square and a local pub, bring the Annenberg Center's programming beyond conventional theatre walls. The Artist-in-Residence program continues with the renowned Dance Theatre of Harlem, featuring a world premiere by Philadelphia native and resident choreographer Robert Garland. Jazz pianists will be in the spotlight, with intimate shows by three vibrant, young artists, and The Crossing, Philadelphia's Grammy® Award-winning chamber choir, makes its Annenberg Center debut in a unique holiday concert. It is a season replete with exciting Philadelphia debuts, exciting world, U.S., and local premieres.

“The Annenberg Center plays an important role on the University of Pennsylvania campus and in the cultural landscape of Philadelphia, nurturing and presenting innovative programming in dance, music, theatre, and more,” says **Executive and Artistic Director Christopher A. Gruits**. “We are thrilled that our co-presenting partnership with NextMove Dance will combine Philadelphia’s two major dance presenters under one roof, ensuring a healthy future for contemporary dance in Philadelphia. Our 2018-19 season celebrates this integration and uses the performing arts to reflect on current events and explore our common connections through a wide array of musical styles, cutting-edge theatre and exciting dance. It’s truly a season that showcases the power of the arts to transform lives.”

### SEASON OPENER

The Annenberg Center opens its 2018-19 season **September 28 and 29** with Australia’s bold, contemporary circus troupe, Circa, performing the U.S. premiere of *Humans*, a tour de force about the power in physical and emotional strength. The “stunning athleticism and heart-stopping acrobatics in this innovative circus work” (ArtsHub) explore the expressive possibilities of the human body at its extremes. Circa is a co-presentation with FringeArts.

### THE PHILADELPHIANS: MIGRATIONS THAT MADE OUR CITY

Philadelphia has been shaped by a long history of diverse cultures and traditions. In *The Philadelphians*, the Annenberg Center will explore the populations that migrated to and influenced the city, uncovering a unique, shared identity. Audiences will experience two periods in time, a contrast of colonial-era early music with new works that look back on our history. Along with junto-style discussion groups, period performance and modern interpretations will connect audiences with those who created our cultural landscape.

### ANNENBERG CENTER ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE: DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM

The preeminent Dance Theatre of Harlem will serve as the Annenberg Center’s artist-in-residence for the 2018-19 season. Known around the world as a classical ballet ensemble with impeccable dancers and masterful repertoire, Dance Theatre of Harlem will perform a world premiere work by Philadelphia native and resident choreographer, Robert Garland, for two public performances as well as a special Arts4Youth show for local school students. Members of the company will also conduct masterclasses, ballerina meet-and-greets and additional community outreach activities.

### DANCE

The Annenberg Center’s co-presenting partnership with NextMove Dance will bring 11 dance ensembles to Philadelphia in the 2018-19 season.

- **Circa, *Humans* (September 28-29)** Australia’s bold, contemporary circus troupe, Circa, returns to the Annenberg Center with the U.S. premiere of *Humans*, a tour de force about the power in physical and emotional strength. Circa is co-presented with FringeArts.
- **Spectrum Dance Theater, *A Rap on Race* (October 12-13)** Nearly 50 years ago, two towering public figures, African-American author James Baldwin and white anthropologist Margaret Mead, sat together and recorded an epic and intimate seven-and-a-half-hour conversation about race in America. Now, choreographer Donald Byrd and playwright Anna Deavere Smith re-imagine that conversation in the present in *A Rap on Race*.
- **Jessica Lang Dance (November 30-December 1)** Lang’s ballet-based yet contemporary-driven works are rich with stunning movement, compelling musicality and beautiful cinematic composition. In a program of critically acclaimed Philadelphia premieres, this company transforms how audiences experience dance.
- **Caleb Teicher & Company (December 14-15)** Tap, jazz and swing combine in the radiant choreography of Caleb Teicher, a founding member of Dorrance Dance and the 2016 *Dance Magazine* “Best

Emerging Choreographer.” Teicher’s signature style of musicality, humor and warmth will shine in the Philadelphia debut of Caleb Teicher & Company.

- **Martha Graham Dance Company, The EVE Project (January 25-26)** In the EVE Project, this iconic troupe stays true to Graham’s tradition of social activism with a program by all female choreographers commemorating the upcoming centennial of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Featuring the powerful Philadelphia premiere of *Chronicle* by Graham, as well as the first preview performance of a new work by contemporary superstars Maxine Doyle and Bobbi Jene Smith, this amazing company continues to inspire and impress the generations worldwide.
- **Dance Theatre of Harlem (March 1-2)** This company of exceptionally-trained dancers breathes new life into classical ballet with masterful repertoire performed across the globe. This unparalleled force in dance performs a program including a world premiere by Philadelphia native and resident choreographer, Robert Garland as well as other works not previously performed in Philadelphia.
- **Dance Heginbotham (March 15-16)** New York-based contemporary troupe Dance Heginbotham makes its Philadelphia debut. Founded in 2012 by former Mark Morris Dance Group dancer and 2018 Guggenheim Fellow John Heginbotham, this company quickly established itself with works of vibrant athleticism, humor and adventurous theatricality.
- **Union Tanguera + Kate Weare Company, Sin Salida (April 5-6)** Contemporary dance meets Argentine tango in *Sin Salida*, a full-length work by award-winning choreographer Kate Weare and Esteban Moreno of the French/Argentinean tango troupe, Union Tanguera.
- **Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers (April 12-13)** Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers’ artistry is a hybrid of Asian philosophies and Western culture infused with a fearless physicality that resonates with the soul.
- **BODYTRAFFIC (April 26-27)** Blending contemporary, hip hop, jazz and ballet, this troupe will perform a program of Philadelphia premieres including *A Million Voices*, a work set to Peggy Lee classics by Pennsylvania Ballet resident choreographer and BalletX co-founder, Matthew Neenan.
- **Parsons Dance (May 10-11)** Known for remarkable athleticism and impressive ensemble work, this celebrated troupe delivers bold, exuberant and joyous contemporary dance. This audience favorite returns to Philadelphia for new works alongside the beloved stroboscopic masterpiece, *Caught*.

## THEATRE

- **Private Peaceful (October 11, 12, 13)** Written by Michael Morpurgo; adapted and directed by Simon Reade. Private Tommo Peaceful is going to die tomorrow. A young WWI soldier, Tommo faces the firing squad at dawn and marks the hours by recalling memories from his short but wonderful life, long before the dreadful horrors of war. By the celebrated author of the Broadway hit *War Horse*, this moving, funny and heart-breaking one-man play tours the US for the first time, serving as a timely reminder, now 100 years later, of the heroic sacrifices of WWI veterans. A Philadelphia premiere.
- **Two Pints: Abbey Theatre (February 27, 28, March 1, 2, 3)** Blarney Stone Pub, 3929 Sansom Street. “Most of what we say is drivel.” “And it’s still brilliant.” Two men meet for a pint. They talk about their dads, death, football, North Korea, the afterlife and everything under the sun. Roddy Doyle’s hilarious and provocative *Two Pints* started as a conversation on Facebook. Now, following a sold-out tour across Ireland, the Abbey Theatre brings the play to life at local pub, the Blarney Stone. This Philadelphia premiere is “achingly, breathtakingly funny” (*Sunday Independent*).
- **Vessels (March 7, 8, 9, 10)** In *Vessels*, seven women explore the transcendental possibilities of music during the Middle Passage. Set in an interactive, sculptural environment that invokes infamous slave ships, this interdisciplinary work explores singing as a survival tool. *Vessels* will premiere in fall 2018 in New Orleans before heading to Philadelphia for its indoor world premiere. *Vessels* will be performed with a single movement each evening, culminating in the full production on March 10.

## CLASSICAL MUSIC

- **The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia**—The Philadelphians Series  
A unique, interactive chamber music experience with members of the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia. Performed in the round, a host will provide background and insight on each work and lead conversations with the musicians between pieces. Each performance concludes with a casual audience Q&A.
  - Origins & Diaspora: West African musical traditions and influences in classical music (**October 17**)
  - *intersect10*: African influences on rock, pop, jazz, classical, and folk music (**February 20**)
  - Call & Response: African-American composers from Burleigh to Braxton (**March 13**)
- **Jordi Savall: The Routes of Slavery (November 1)**—The Philadelphians Series  
In this Philadelphia premiere, Grammy® Award-winning early music interpreter Jordi Savall, distinguished West African singer Kassé Mady Diabaté, and artists representing Europe, Africa and the Americas explore the music through which enslaved peoples forged a sense of community, preserved their own humanity and found a way to endure. Accompanied by historical texts on slavery, this musical memoir honors their journeys through the musical legacy they left, aiming to illuminate both the cruelest depths and extraordinary resilience of the human spirit.
- **The English Concert: Handel's *Semele* (April 16)** “One of the period-instrument world’s most successful ensembles” (*The New York Times*), The English Concert performs in Philadelphia for the first time following sold-out appearances at Carnegie Hall. Conducted by Harry Bicket, the sparkling Handel oratorio, *Semele*, tells a tale of a princess’ love affair with a god, in a stream of easy-flowing melodies and dazzling coloratura. With show-stopping arias including “Endless pleasure, endless love” and “Where’er you walk,” The English Concert’s stunning and critically lauded operas-in-concert promise a very special evening.

## JAZZ

- **Vijay Iyer (September 29)** Grammy® Award-nominated composer/pianist Vijay Iyer makes his Annenberg Center debut in a rare solo performance. A Harvard University professor, MacArthur Fellow and “one of the most interesting and vital young pianists in jazz today” (*Pitchfork*), Iyer’s musical output is adventuresome, masterful and emotionally resonant.
- **T.S. Monk (November 3)** Making his Annenberg Center debut, acclaimed drummer, bandleader and composer T.S. Monk pays loving tribute to his famous father in honor of what have been his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. This performance celebrates Thelonious Monk’s timeless, swinging jazz in an evening of newly discovered compositions and beloved hits by this “Father of Modern Jazz.”
- **René Marie: Experiment in Truth (February 16)** In her Annenberg Center debut, René Marie’s empowered musical risk-taking, flawless artistry, and searing honesty have captivated audiences and critics alike, making her “one of the most sensuous songbirds ever captured on disc” (*JazzTimes*). Rooted in jazz traditions and mixing in a little folk and R&B, her Grammy®-nominated music mines her survivor’s journey while navigating the bright and dark corners of the human experience.
- **The New Lionel Hampton Big Band featuring Jason Marsalis (March 23)** After a 15-year hiatus, the Lionel Hampton Big Band is back on stage, promising an energetic evening of jazz, swing and bebop. The youngest brother in the venerable first family of jazz, vibraphonist Jason Marsalis leads this 16-strong group, comprised of musicians who played with renowned bandleader/musician Lionel Hampton himself, in a night of swinging jazz, including favorites by Dizzy Gillespie, Frank Foster, Quincy Jones and more.
- **Hiromi (April 11)** Electrifying. There’s simply no better word to describe Hiromi’s live performances. A pianist/composer known for a creative output that expands on jazz, classical and pop, Hiromi’s “dazzling, explosive keyboard abilities” (NPR) captivate audiences and critics alike. This “forceful

presence on any stage” (*The New York Times*) returns to the Annenberg Center for a rare, solo performance.

- **Emmet Cohen Trio: A Handful of Keys (May 11)** Harlem-based piano phenom and rising jazz star Emmet Cohen makes his Annenberg Center debut backed by his all-star trio, including *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* bassist, Russell Hall, and drummer Evan Sherman. With a “kaleidoscopic sense of musical narrative” (*Downbeat Magazine*), Cohen dazzles with his astonishing technique, innovative sound and exuberant charm.

## WORLD MUSIC

- **Béla Fleck, Zakir Hussain & Edgar Meyer, with Rakesh Chaurasia (November 11)** Banjoist Béla Fleck, tabla player Zakir Hussain and bassist Edgar Meyer share the stage to unite the worlds of classical, bluegrass and world music, obliterating musical borders and traversing new frontiers. Each individually known as an innovator and virtuoso, their original trio music explores the connections between American roots and classical Indian tradition. The addition of Rakesh Chaurasia on banusuri completes this evening of world music fusion.
- **Nobuntu (November 17)** With their bright a cappella harmonies, the five women of Nobuntu have earned international praise for the passion and joy they bring to Zimbabwean songs, Afro-jazz and gospel. The quintet’s pure voices are augmented by traditional percussion and dance to celebrate the vibrant identity of their culture and what it means to be an African woman. Nobuntu is making its Annenberg Center debut.
- **Michael Londra and the Celtic Fire (March 16)** Irish singing sensation Michael Londra and his dazzling cast of *Riverdance* and *Lord of the Dance* alumni make their Annenberg Center debut, performing a lively evening of traditional Irish music and step dancing. Backed by an ensemble of Ireland’s finest musicians, Michael Londra and the Celtic Fire promise an electric St. Patrick’s Day celebration straight from the heart of the Emerald Isle.

## FAMILY PROGRAMS

- **Enchantment Theatre Company: *The Snow Queen* (December 8, 9)** How far would you go to save a friend? When Kai vanishes, his best friend Gerda sets out on an enchanted adventure to rescue him from the evil Snow Queen. Based on the beloved fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen and brimming with “holiday magic” (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*), Enchantment Theatre Company uses life-size puppets, expressive masks, original music and imaginative effects to tell the story of a brave young girl and the power of friendship.
- **Cirque Mechanics: 42FT – A Menagerie of Mechanical Marvels (February 17)** 42 feet full of thrills, laughs and excitement. At the heart of every circus, a 42 foot ring promises entertainment like none other. “Intelligently conceived and expertly executed” (*The New York Times*), this brand new Cirque Mechanics show takes an industrial spin on traditional circus with acrobats on mechanical wonders, ageless stories spun in mid-air and astonishing theatrics for the whole family.
- **Philadelphia Children’s Festival (May 2-4)**

## RINGING IN THE HOLIDAYS

- **The King’s Singers (December 9)** A cappella harmonies fit for a king! In their Annenberg Center debut, one of the world’s finest vocal ensembles, the Grammy® award-winning King’s Singers, celebrate Christmas and their 50th anniversary with an afternoon of timeless carols, Christmas classics, and new arrangements.
- **The Crossing @ Christmas (December 14)** Church of the Holy Trinity, Rittenhouse Square. For the first time, the Annenberg Center presents The Crossing, the Grammy® Award-nominated and Philadelphia-based chamber choir conducted by Donald Nally, in *The Crossing @ Christmas*. The performance will

feature a world premiere by composer Gavin Bryars and other new music, all meant to reflect on our world in the winter holiday season.

- **Rodney Marsalis Philadelphia Big Brass (December 15)** Classical, big band and New Orleans swing combine for a jazzy holiday celebration with the Rodney Marsalis Philadelphia Big Brass, returning to the Annenberg Center after a sold-out performance in 2016. Originally taught by his cousin, Wynton, and now Principal Trumpet with the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, Marsalis brings together top brass players from across the country, all dedicated to creating joyful experiences in music.

---

### **CHRISTOPHER A. GRUITS**

Christopher A. Gruits is Executive and Artistic Director of the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Pennsylvania. The 2017-18 season was the Annenberg Center's first fully-programmed season under his leadership. Gruits' vision returns the Annenberg Center to its roots as Philadelphia's premier curator of innovative and groundbreaking programs, presenter of sought-after debut artists, and champion of multifaceted collaborations. A signature of his leadership is the cultivation of partnerships across the community, reflecting the Annenberg Center's commitment to serving the University of Pennsylvania, the West Philadelphia neighborhood in which the Annenberg Center resides, and the Greater Philadelphia region. Gruits is the former Vice President and Executive Producer of Presentations, the programming and arts broadcasting division of Interlochen Center for the Arts. Previously, he was Director of e-Strategy at Carnegie Hall and Commercial Director for DilettanteMusic.com, the web's first and largest social music network for classical musicians and listeners. He began his career at the Seattle Symphony. Gruits holds a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary humanities with a concentration in arts management from Michigan State University, and a master's in business administration with a focus on strategy from the University of Edinburgh.

### **ABOUT NEXTMOVE DANCE**

NextMove Dance Artistic Director Randy Swartz created the first annual dance series in Philadelphia at the Walnut Street Theatre in 1970. In 1983, he launched the Dance Celebration series at the Annenberg Center for a 32-year run and initiated a new annual series at the Prince Theater in October 2015. Dance Affiliates, renamed NextMove Dance, is recognized as one of the nation's finest dance presenters. Known internationally for award-winning presentations for almost four decades, NextMove Dance provides a wealth of opportunities for the Delaware Valley community to interact with the artists through talk-backs, master classes, artistic collaborations, workshops, children's programs and much more. Visit [www.nextmovedance.org](http://www.nextmovedance.org).

### **ABOUT THE ANNENBERG CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS**

The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts serves as a major cultural destination and crossroads connecting Penn and the greater Philadelphia region through innovative human expression in theatre, music, dance, and film, serving an annual audience of almost 50,000. The Annenberg Center also serves as a key resource for the arts at Penn, connecting master artists with Penn students in support of and as an enhancement to the arts curriculum. Student performing arts groups are also key users of the Annenberg Center's multiple performance and rehearsal spaces, while also staffing many operational roles throughout the academic year. In reflection of Penn's core values as a world-respected academic institution, the Annenberg Center emphasizes artistic and intellectual excellence, diversity, and rigor in its presentations; prioritizes broad inclusiveness in the artists, audiences, and groups it serves; manages outstanding performance, conference, and meeting facilities; and stresses comprehensive event planning, production support, and customer service. The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is a major provider of performing arts access for school children and actively engages a broad range of primary, secondary, and post-secondary student audiences and inclusive constituencies from the campus, community, and greater Philadelphia region. Visit [www.AnnenbergCenter.org](http://www.AnnenbergCenter.org).

# # #

CONTACTS:

Katherine Blodgett, for the Annenberg Center

Email: [katherineblodgett@gmail.com](mailto:katherineblodgett@gmail.com)

Phone: 215.431.1230

Alexander Freeman, Director of Marketing and Ticketing

Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

Email: [freemana@ac.upenn.edu](mailto:freemana@ac.upenn.edu)

Phone: 215.898.9081