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Michelle Dorrance, Liz Gerring, and Pam Tanowitz awarded 2016-2017 New York City Center Choreography Fellowships

October 13, 2016/New York, NY—Arlene Shuler, New York City Center President & CEO, today announced **Michelle Dorrance**, **Liz Gerring**, and **Pam Tanowitz** as recipients of City Center’s 2016-2017 Choreography Fellowships.

Initiated in 2011, the Choreography Fellowship provides choreographers with 200 hours of free studio space, a generous stipend, and administrative support from the City Center staff in areas such as fundraising, marketing, and touring—essential components to their continued success. Fellows are also considered for a spot in the annual *Fall for Dance* Festival.

“Liz, Pam, and Michelle are important choreographers representing a diversity of styles, and I believe each is at a place in her career where having access to some of the resources of City Center will be especially beneficial,” said President & CEO Arlene Shuler. “We know how valuable space, time, and administrative support are for these busy artists, and we’re thrilled that City Center can serve as a consistent home base for them throughout the year. They will join a long list of influential artists who have animated this building with their creative gifts.”

In a city where affordable rehearsal space is increasingly rare, the Choreography Fellowship is an immeasurable boon for dance artists. “Choreographers develop things in our heads,” said Gerring. “But until you go into the studio and start making it happen, it doesn’t really exist. You need somewhere to go; you need other people. So this Fellowship is huge; having the space problem solved frees your mind to focus on actually *making* things.”

Inaugural Fellow and Artistic Director of Gallim Dance Andrea Miller recalls the constant burden of whether a rental space would be suitable for her dancers. “Being able to let go of the energy that goes into that, and fully invest it in the work we were doing—it definitely was a turning point for our company,” she said.

“New York City Center is dedicated to supporting artists in their creation and audiences in their exploration,” added Shuler. “We place as much emphasis on what we put into our studios as we do on what goes on stage. This, we hope, will ensure that the art of dance continues to evolve and thrive.”

Past City Center Choreography Fellows have included Kyle Abraham, Brian Brooks, Camille A. Brown, Beth Gill, Jessica Lang, Gabrielle Lamb, Emery LeCrone, Pontus Lidberg, Rashaun Mitchell, Silas Riener, Shen Wei, and Reggie Wilson.

Support for the Choreography Fellowship is provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

2016 New York City Center Choreography Fellows

Michelle Dorrance is a New York City-based tap dancer, performer, choreographer, teacher, and director. Her numerous honors include a MacArthur Fellowship, a Princess Grace Award, and 2011 and 2015 Bessie Awards. She is the Founder and Artistic Director of Dorrance Dance. Mentored by Gene Medler, Dorrance grew up performing with the North Carolina Youth Tap Ensemble while studying dance at The Ballet School of Chapel Hill. She performed with the New York cast and North American tour of *STOMP*, Savion Glover's *ti dii*, Ayodele Casel's *Diary of a Tap Dancer*, Mable Lee's *Dancing Ladies*, and Jason Samuels Smith's *Charlie's Angels / Chasing the Bird*, among others. Most recently, Dorrance appeared on CBS's "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert." Her choreography has been performed at venues and festivals throughout the world, including City Center's *Fall for Dance* Festival, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, The Joyce Theater, The Kennedy Center, Fira Tàrrega (Spain), and Sweet Basil's (Tokyo). The Martha Graham Dance Company recently commissioned Dorrance to create a new work as a part of their Lamentation Variations series. Her choreography was featured in a high-fashion short film for Tabitha Simmons' fall collection and a commercial for Toyota Taiwan. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from New York University, played bass for the indie-pop band Darwin Deez, teaches at Broadway Dance Center and Nicholas Young's Institute For The Rhythmic Arts, and is a Capezio Athlete.

Liz Gerring was born in San Francisco in 1965. She grew up in the Los Angeles area and began studying dance at age 13. In high school she studied dance at the Cornish Institute in Seattle. In 1987, Gerring received a BFA from the Juilliard School, where she studied with Kazuko Hirabayashi and Doris Rudko. She has been working as a choreographer in New York since 1993. In March 1998, Gerring presented her first piece, a four-hour movement installation. The Liz Gerring Dance Company has since presented work at the Baryshnikov Arts Center, Jacob's Pillow, Danspace Project, The Connelly Theater, The Kitchen, Engine 27, City Center's *Fall for Dance* Festival, and other venues. Gerring's work explores non-narrative, abstract movement, often derived from natural gesture. Her works are characterized by their intense physicality and intricate choreography. Movement is evolved from cause and effect rather than storytelling, and framed by independent media elements—often a multi-channel sound score or video set design. The company is noted for its close collaboration with contemporary visual artists and a long association with electronic music composer Michael J. Schumacher. In 2001 Gerring and Schumacher, with the support of Kirk Radke, founded the non-profit TonalMotion Inc., dedicated to the creation and presentation of movement and sound art. Its activities include Diapason Gallery and The Liz Gerring Dance Company.

Pam Tanowitz is known for her unflinchingly post-modern treatment of classical dance vocabulary. In 2000, she founded Pam Tanowitz Dance as an outlet to explore her vision with a consistent group of dancers. Since then, the company has received commissions and residencies at prestigious performance venues including The Joyce Theater, Lincoln Center Out of Doors, Chicago Dancing Festival, Baryshnikov Arts Center, and Jacob's Pillow. The company was selected by *The New York Times*' Best of Dance series in 2013, 2014, and 2015. In addition, Tanowitz has created work for the Vail International Dance Festival and City Center's *Fall for Dance* Festival; has set work on The Juilliard School, Ballet Austin, New York Theater Ballet, and Saint Louis Ballet; and has been a guest choreographer at Barnard College, Princeton University, Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University, Marymount Manhattan College, and

Purchase College. She received a 2009 Bessie Award for *Be in the Gray With Me*, and is the 2016 Juried Bessie Award Winner for *the story progresses as if in a dream of glittering surfaces*. Tanowitz was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2011 and the Hodder Fellowship from Princeton University in 2013-14, among other awards. She holds dance degrees from The Ohio State University and Sarah Lawrence College. Tanowitz is Resident Fellow at New York University's Center for Ballet and the Arts and currently teaches at Rutgers University.

New York City Center (Arlene Shuler, President & CEO) has played a defining role in the cultural life of the city since 1943. It was Manhattan's first performing arts center, dedicated by Mayor Fiorello La Guardia with a mission to make the best in music, theater, and dance accessible to all audiences. Today, City Center is home to many distinguished companies, including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, City Center's Principal Dance Company, as well as Manhattan Theatre Club; a roster of renowned national and international visiting artists; and its own critically acclaimed and popular programs. The Tony-honored *Encores!* musical theater series has been hailed as "one of the very best reasons to be alive in New York." In summer 2013, City Center launched *Encores! Off-Center*, a series that features landmark Off-Broadway musicals filtered through the lens of today's most innovative artists. Dance has been integral to the theater's mission from the start—and dance programs, including the annual *Fall for Dance* Festival, remain central to City Center's identity. Vital partnerships with arts organizations including Jazz at Lincoln Center and London's Sadler's Wells Theatre enhance City Center's programmatic offerings. City Center brings dance and musical theater to over 9,000 New York City students each year through its robust education program, and other learning opportunities are offered to seniors, families, and the general public. City Center is expanding its programming beyond the proscenium and activating its alternative spaces with pre-show talks, master classes, exhibitions of visual art, and intimate performances that give an up-close look at the work of the great theater and dance artists of our time. In October 2011, City Center completed an extensive renovation project to revitalize and modernize its historic theater.

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