



For Immediate Release

GARTH FAGAN DANCE AT 35
GARTH FAGAN DANCE CELEBRATES 35th ANNIVERSARY WITH
THREE PROGRAMS AT JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER'S
FREDERICK P. ROSE HALL, NOVEMBER 9-13

ONE-NIGHT-ONLY PERFORMANCE OF THE FULL-LENGTH
“GRIOT NEW YORK” (WITH LIVE MUSIC BY THE WYNTON MARSALIS
SEPTET) PLUS WORLD PREMIERE (WITH LIVE MUSIC FROM JAZZ
VIOLINIST BILLY BANG) AND 2 PROGRAMS
OF FAGAN'S HIT DANCES

He's a dance collagist, possesses the soul of a true humanist and is gifted with a musical imagination that embraces all cultures and centuries. Garth Fagan's dance company's 35th anniversary, which opens at the Rose Theater in Frederick P. Rose Hall, home of Jazz at Lincoln Center, is a perfect time to take a look at the choreographer's accomplishments. Garth Fagan Dance performs November 9-13.

Fagan's landmark—and now classic—dance, “Griot New York,” created in 1991 in collaboration with Wynton Marsalis and sculptor Martin Puryear, will be given a one-night-only performance on November 9. The music will be played live by the Wynton Marsalis Septet. November 10 through 13 will feature two programs, each highlighted by the world premiere of Fagan's “LIFE: DARK/LIGHT” with live music by virtuoso jazz violinist Billy Bang. The engagement will also include the return of four of the choreographer's most beloved dances: “Prelude—Discipline is Freedom,” “Two Pieces of One: Green,” “Translation Transition” and “DANCECOLLAGEFORROMIE.”

The subject of a PBS “Great Performances: Dance in America,” which aired worldwide in 1995, “Griot New York” became an instant hit when it received its theatrical premiere as part of BAM's Next Wave Festival in 1991. A glorious tapestry that synthesizes African traditions with contemporary American culture, the full-evening work is told from the point of view of a griot, or a storyteller who passes on the wisdom, traditions and history of a society. The exhilarating spirit and integrity of the piece endures, even with new cast members joining

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those who originally performed the work, affirming the classic power of the choreography. Excerpts from the dance will also be featured in one of the company's other programs.

"LIFE: DARK/LIGHT" embodies Fagan's profound humanist concerns, embracing the bonds that communalize society as reflected in the complex rhythms of Billy Bang's Asian-influenced jazz violin music. In the three-part work, set to Bang's "Vietnam: The Aftermath," Fagan explores the interconnections between man's intellect, compassion and instinct to survive.

Fagan's rich musical imagination radiates through "Two Pieces of One: Green," set to music by contemporary jazz musician Tony Williams and 16th century composer Cristobal de Morales. The 1998 work comments on the diverse and contradictory perspectives and lifestyles that define a real community.

The choreographer's loving friendship with the late visual artist Romare Bearden is celebrated in "DANCECOLLAGEFORROMIE," a three-part work showcasing different aspects of Bearden's work and personality. The music is a compilation of Shostakovich, Villa-Lobos and Ferd "Jelly Roll" Morton.

Set to music by the Jazz Jamaica All Stars, "Translation Transition" explores the similarities, differences and meeting points between American jazz and the traditional music of Jamaica (ska, reggae and mento).

A classic introduction to Fagan's unique style, "Prelude—Discipline is Freedom," created in 1983 to music by Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand) and Max Roach, displays Fagan's signature vocabulary: a fusion of ballet, modern and Afro-Caribbean dance.

Nineteen ninety-eight Tony Award-winner for his choreography for the record-breaking hit "The Lion King," Garth Fagan began his career in dance by touring Latin America with Ivy Baxter and her Jamaican national dance company. In addition to Baxter, Caribbean dance teachers Lavinia Williams and Pearl Primus strongly influenced Fagan's work, as did his later studies with Martha Graham, Mary Hinkson, Alvin Ailey and José Limón. Born in Jamaica and a graduate of Wayne State University, Fagan became director of Detroit's All-City Dance Company and principal soloist and choreographer for the Dance Theatre of Detroit and the Detroit Contemporary Dance Company. In 1970, he moved to Rochester and founded Garth Fagan Dance. The company has appeared in many major venues and arts festivals throughout the United States, as well as internationally in Europe, Africa, Asia, the Middle

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East, South America, New Zealand, Australia and the West Indies.

In addition to works for his own company, Fagan has choreographed dances for Judith Jamison, Dance Theatre of Harlem, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and Limón Dance Company. In May 1999, he created “Ellington Elation,” one section of a trio of pieces commissioned by New York City Ballet in honor of Duke Ellington’s centenary and NYCB’s 50th anniversary.

Fagan’s choreography for “The Lion King” also won him the 1998 Drama Desk Award, the 1998 Outer Critics Circle Award, the 1998 Astaire Award, the 2000 Laurence Olivier Award and the 2001 Ovation Award. In 2001, he received the Samuel H. Scripps/American Dance Festival Award; that same year, he was also the recipient of the Golden Plate Award, was inducted into the American Academy of Achievement and was presented with the Order of Distinction in the rank of Commander by the Jamaican government. Among other honors, including the 2004 Helpmann Award, Fagan has also received a New York Dance and Performance Award (“Bessie”), as have four other members of his company: Norwood Pennewell, Steve Humphrey, Natalie Rogers and Sharon Skepple.

Following its Jazz at Lincoln Center season, Garth Fagan Dance will perform in Rochester, NY (November 29–December 4); Richardson, TX (January 13); Tucson, AZ (January 25); Davenport, IA (January 28); Hamilton, Bermuda (February 1–2); Geneva, NY (February 13–17); and Cleveland, OH (February 25). The company will then go on a Hawaiian tour, with stops in Honolulu, Maui, Kamuela and Hilo (March 11–19), before performing in East Lansing, MI (May 2) and in Jackson, MS (June 22).

The opening night performance of “Griot New York” begins at 7:30pm at the Rose Theater in Frederick P. Rose Hall, home of Jazz at Lincoln Center. Thursday through Saturday evenings, the curtain is at 8pm. There will also be 2pm matinees on Saturday and Sunday. Opening night tickets are \$150/\$65/\$55/\$45; all other nights are \$65/\$55/\$45. Tickets are available at the box office on the ground floor of Jazz at Lincoln Center, at www.jalc.org or at 212-721-6500. Jazz at Lincoln Center is located at 33 West 60th Street at Broadway.

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