



For Immediate Release



PHOTOS OF "A PLACE OF SUN," BY BENJAMIN HELLER

**NEW DANCES BY STEFANIE BATTEN BLAND PRESENTED BY  
AILEY II AT THE AILEY CITIGROUP THEATER, APRIL 19, 21, 22, 25, 27 & 28  
AND THE BARYSHNIKOV ARTS CENTER AT  
THE JEROME ROBBINS THEATER, MAY 10, 17 & 18**

Choreographer/dancer Stefanie Batten Bland has had a busy year and is poised to have an even busier future beginning with the April 19 premiere of "The Legacy of Inheritance" for Ailey II, her first work for the company, followed by the world premiere of "A Place of Sun" on May 10 and the New York premiere of "Terra Firma" at the Baryshnikov Arts Center (BAC), May 17 and 18, where she has been a two-time recipient of a Jerome Robbins New Essential Works fellowship (NEW). The performances mark the first time Bland's choreography has been seen in New York since 2009.

"The Legacy of Inheritance," which fuses European and American modern dance techniques, embodies Bland's own trans-Atlantic career (Europe and the United

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States). Connected by an enormous swath of white fabric, the Ailey dancers cross, circle the stage with an ever-changing, undulating motion suggesting a nocturnal, dreamlike landscape. The music is by Zoë Keating and Stars of the Lid.

“A Place of Sun,” presented by BAC, where it was created this year, looks at the power of adaptation. It was inspired by the BP oil spill in the Louisiana Bayou and the power of human, animal, bird and plant life to adapt to or recover in new environments. The dance was created in collaboration with visual artist Benjamin Heller who designed an installation of a sculpted cage suggesting an egg. The music is by Karol Szymanowski.

“A Place of Sun” will be first performed on May 10 as part of a shared program with fellow 2012 NEW choreographer John Heginbotham, and then again on May 17 and 18, along with the New York premiere of Bland’s “Terra Firma,” which was created during a 2010 residency at BAC, also with support from the NEW program. “Terra Firma” is about migration, immigration and the search for solid ground. Using a rigging sail system by award-winning artist Andrew Lyght, the dance is about the need to find respite in transit, the disabling effects of uncertainty, the need for identity, the cost of freedom, and finally, the powerful joy of collaboration and friendship. The work is performed to music by John Adams.

### **About Stefanie Batten Bland**

Daughter of jazz musician and composer Edward Bland and writer Mary Batten, Stefanie Batten Bland grew up in Soho before moving to California with her parents, where she graduated from the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts. In New York City, she studied dance at the Joffrey Ballet School and the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center. She attended SUNY Purchase on a dance scholarship, and the New School for Social Research on a scholarship for postcolonial literature studies. In 1998, she joined the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, where she spent

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several seasons as a soloist. Additionally, SBB has danced for choreographers, directors, and companies including Sean Curran, Kraig Patterson, Gus Solomons Jr., Douglas Dunn, Lar Lubovitch Dance, Pina Bausch Tanz Theater Wuppertal, Jerome Savary, Julie Taymor, Angelin Preljocaj, and Pal Frenak. In 2005 and 2006, SBB and a group of dancers performed as part of Joyce Soho Presents, a series created to encourage young choreographic talent. In 2008, SBB established her contemporary dance company, CSBB, comprised of a group of French and American artists each contributing creatively to the goals of the troupe that have performed live and via SBB's dance cinema films throughout Europe, Asia, Africa and the States, most recently in the Ringling International Arts Festival in Sarasota FL. CSBB was invited to perform at UNESCO in Paris for International Dance Day 2010. SBB frequently works for SYTYCD- Poland and choreographs for galas and commercial enterprises such as Louis Vuitton, Hermes, Guerlain and Van Cleef & Arpels. She is currently guest choreographer for Frontier Danceland of Singapore.

The evening curtains for the April 19, 25, 27 and 28 performances by Ailey II are at 8pm and the April 22 performance at 7pm. There will be a 3pm matinee on April 21.

Tickets are \$49 and can be purchased online at <http://www.alvinailey.org/aileyii> or by calling 866-811-4111.

The Joan Weill Center for Dance at The Ailey Citigroup Theater is located at 405 West 55<sup>th</sup> Street at 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The evening curtains for the May 10, 17 and 18 performances of Stefanie Batten Bland at Baryshnikov Arts Center are 8pm.

Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased online at [www.bacnyc.org](http://www.bacnyc.org) or by calling 866-811-4111.

The Jerome Robbins Theater at the Baryshnikov Arts Center is located at 430 West 37<sup>th</sup> Street.

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## **Background on the NEW Program at BAC**

Both “Terra Firma” and “A Place of Sun” were created at BAC with support from the Jerome Robbins Foundation. In 2009, the Foundation established the New Essential Works (NEW) program to support choreographers and dance companies through residencies and commissions. As a result of its ongoing relationship with the Foundation, BAC was identified as a NEW program partner, and Mikhail Baryshnikov was asked to select artists who would each receive a five-week residency at BAC and a \$10,000 stipend to create new work. In fall 2010, Heginbotham and Bland were each granted a NEW fellowship, during which time they created Closing Bell and Terra Firma, respectively. In 2011, both choreographers were granted a second NEW fellowship to create additional new works, which will be developed during a residency throughout the month of April 2012, and premiered in May as part of BAC Presents.

The NEW residency at BAC, combined with the opportunity for these artists to perform their works as part of BAC’s distinguished presenting series, is a prime example of BAC’s dedication to investing in the careers of emerging artists and supporting the development of new works—from exploration, to creation, to presentation. Additionally, Heginbotham and Bland are both artists who have had long performance careers with illustrious companies. The NEW fellowship at BAC has provided meaningful support to these artists as they each continue to make the transition from performer to choreographer. The May performances in the Jerome Robbins Theater further serve as a platform for these talented artists to share their work and their recently established companies with New York City dance audiences.

## **“A Place of Sun”**

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