



**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 April**

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

**April 14 – 25, 2020**



Bill T. Jones, work-in-progress performance of *Deep Blue Sea* at LUMBERYARD, 2019.  
Photo: Maria Baranova

**New York, NY** – February 4, 2020 – This April, renowned director, choreographer, and dancer **Bill T. Jones** presents and performs in the world premiere of his monumental new work, *Deep Blue Sea*, at Park Avenue Armory, marking Jones' first time performing in 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.

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 Armory's Wade Thompson Drill Hall, *Deep Blue Sea* magnifies the vast space through a design by **Elizabeth Diller** of the renowned architectural firm **Diller Scofidio + Renfro** and projections by Tony Award-nominated projection designer **Peter Nigrini** (*Beetlejuice, Fela!*), with a sonic backdrop created by composer **Nick Hallett** and music producer **Hprizm aka High Priest** with **Holland Andrews**. *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 April 14 to April 25, 2020.

“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 and majesty of our Drill Hall to create a lyrical piece that is immense in size, emotion, and ambition,” said **Rebecca Robertson, Founding President and Executive Producer of Park Avenue Armory**. “Weaving diverse members of our local communities into his choreography adds a meaningful new dimension to *Deep Blue Sea* and continues the Armory’s precedent of creating programming of global stature that speaks to the many different communities we serve.”

“Bill T. Jones has long possessed a particular adroitness for harnessing the power of dance as both a narrative medium and a means to address contemporary issues. 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,” said the Armory’s **Marina Kellen French Artistic Director Pierre Audi**.

“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 and Holland Andrews 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 Wednesday, April 15 at 6:00pm 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: April 14 – 25, 2020

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 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 **Elizabeth Diller (DS+R)** and **Peter Nigrini**

Lighting Design **Robert Wierzel**

Original Score **Nick Hallett**

Music Producer **Hprizm aka High Priest**  
Sound Design **Mark Grey**  
Costume Design **Liz Prince**  
Dramaturg **Mark Hairston**

**Artist Talk: *Deep Blue Sea***

Wednesday, April 15, 2020 at 6:00pm  
Tickets: \$15

**SPONSORSHIP**

Citi and Bloomberg Philanthropies are the Armory's 2020 season sponsors.

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.

*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.

**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 *FELA!*; 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, Mr. 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 Mr. Jones "An Irreplaceable Dance Treasure."

Mr. 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. Mr. 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. We are a place that brings people together to explore common values through live gathering and performance reminding us of our humanity and elevating the human spirit.

We provide much-needed resources to artists at every stage of their career. We enable the creation of work by

Artists at every level: from emerging talent being seen for the first time, to the mid-career artists who will be our next great masters. We foster artists who participate courageously in the world of ideas and ask difficult questions.

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.

Located in the heart of Chelsea in New York City, New York Live Arts is an internationally recognized destination for innovative movement-based artistry offering 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. At the center of this identity is our Artistic Director, Bill T. Jones.

Over the past 38 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 & Stephen Hendel, James C. Hormel & Michael P. Nguyen, Suzanne Karpas, Ellen Poss, Jane Bovingdon Semel, in memory of Linda G. Shapiro, and Slobodan Randjelović & Jon Stryker. Additionally, the creation of *Deep Blue Sea* was made possible with generous support from the Ed Bradley Family Foundation and was originally supported by the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, Philadelphia with additional commissioning support from The Mann Center for the Performing Arts. Public support includes 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. Additional support provided by Joseph and Joan Cullman Foundation for the Arts, the Ford Foundation, Harkness Foundation for Dance, Marta Heflin Foundation, Mertz Gilmore Foundation, Alice Lawrence Foundation, New England Foundation for the Arts, Jerome Robbins Foundation, The Fan Fox & Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Scherman Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, and Stavros Niarchos Foundation

#### **ABOUT ELIZABETH DILLER**

Elizabeth Diller is a co-founding partner of Diller Scofidio + Renfro (DS+R). Liz'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. She led two cultural works significant to New York: The Shed and the expansion of MoMA. Liz also created, directed and produced *The Mile-Long Opera*, an immersive choral work staged on the High Line. Currently, Liz is leading the design of the Centre for Music - a permanent home for the London Symphony Orchestra - and a new Collection and Research Centre for the V&A in London's Olympic Park. Liz is a Professor of Architecture at Princeton University.

#### **ABOUT DILLER SCOFIDIO + RENFRO**

Founded in 1981, Diller Scofidio + Renfro (DS+R) 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. The studio is based in New York and is comprised of over 100 architects, designers, artists and researchers, led by four partners—Elizabeth Diller, Ricardo Scofidio, Charles Renfro and Benjamin Gilmartin.

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. In 2019, the studio completed two more projects significant to New York: The Shed, the first multi-arts center designed to

commission, produce, and present all types of performing arts, visual arts, and popular culture, and the renovation and expansion of The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Most recently, the studio was also selected to design: the Centre for Music, which will be a permanent home for the London Symphony Orchestra; and a new collection and research centre for the V&A in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

Recent projects include the 35-acre Zaryadye Park adjacent to the Kremlin in Moscow; the Museum of Image & Sound on Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro; The Broad, a contemporary art museum in Los Angeles; the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive at the University of California, Berkeley; the Roy and Diana Vagelos Education Center at Columbia University in New York; and The Juilliard School in Tianjin, China.

### **ABOUT PETER NIGRINI**

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

In the commercial theater his designs include *Dear Evan Hansen*, *Ain't Too Proud*, David Byrne's *Here Lies 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 by enabling artists to create, students to explore, and audiences to experience, unconventional work that cannot be mounted in traditional performance halls and museums. With its soaring 55,000-square-foot Wade Thompson Drill Hall and an array of exuberant period rooms, the Armory offers a platform for creativity across all art forms. Together, these and other spaces within the historic building utilized for arts programming comprise the Thompson Arts Center, named in recognition of the Thompson family's ongoing support of the institution.

Since its first production in September 2007, the Armory has organized and commissioned immersive performances, installations, and cross-disciplinary collaborations in its vast Drill Hall that defy traditional categorization and challenge artists to push the boundaries of their practice. In its historic period rooms, the Armory presents small-scale 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; and the new Artists Studio series in the newly restored Veterans Room, which features innovative artists and artistic pairings that harken back to the imaginative collaboration and improvisation of the original group of designers who conceived the space. The Armory also offers robust arts education programs at no cost to underserved New York City public school students, engaging them with the institution's artistic programming and the building's history and architecture.

Programmatic highlights from the Armory include *The Let Go*, a site-specific immersive dance celebration by Nick Cave; a Lenape Pow Wow and Standing Ground Symposium, the first congregation of Lenape Leaders on Manhattan Island since the 1700s; an immersive *Macbeth* set in a Scottish heath and henge by Rob Ashford and Kenneth Branagh; Ernesto Neto's *anthropodino*, a large-scale, interactive sculpture and labyrinth comprising a 120 by 180-foot canopy extended across the Drill Hall and 60-foot aromatic fabric stalactites; 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 across three separate stages; *WS* by Paul McCarthy, a monumental installation of fantasy, excess, and dystopia;

a profound and radically inclusive staging of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* staged by Peter Sellars and performed by Sir Simon Rattle and the Berliner Philharmoniker; *FLEXN*, an Armory-commissioned presentation of the Brooklyn-born street dance Flex, created by Reggie "Regg Roc" Gray and Director Peter Sellars; Louis Andriessen's *De Materie* in a highly imaginative staging by director Heiner Goebbels that included floating zeppelins and a flock of 100 sheep; *Circle Map*, two evenings of immersive spatial works by internationally acclaimed composer Kaija Saariaho performed by the New York Philharmonic with mise-en-espace by Armory Artistic Director Pierre Audi; Taryn Simon's *An Occupation of Loss*, a monumental work with 30 professional mourners from around the world that blended sculpture, sound, architecture, and performance in an exploration of the boundaries of grief between living and dead, past and present, performer and viewer; Julian Rosefeldt's *Manifesto*, a multi-channel cinematic installation featuring Cate Blanchett; eight-time Drama Desk-nominated play *The Hairy Ape*, directed by Richard Jones and starring Bobby Cannavale; *Hansel & Gretel*, a new commission by Jacques Herzog, Pierre de Meuron, and Ai Weiwei that transformed and activated the Drill Hall to explore the meaning of publicly shared space in the era of surveillance; Simon Stone's heralded production of *Yerma* starring Billie Piper in her North American debut; and Sam Mendes' critically acclaimed production of *The Lehman Trilogy*, starring Adam Godley, Ben Miles, and Simon Russell Beale.

Concurrent with its artistic program, the Armory has undertaken an ongoing \$215-million revitalization of its historic building, designed by architects Herzog & de Meuron.

[www.armoryonpark.org](http://www.armoryonpark.org)

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