

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: DANCE/NYC HELD ITS FIRST ALL DIGITAL SYMPOSIUM

Monday, April 19, 2021

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By Dance/NYC

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Dance/NYC Held its First All Digital Symposium: Four Days of Content, 800+ Attendees, and Featured Speakers Dr. Aimee Meredith Cox, Gregory King, Ni'Ja Whitson, JaQuel Knight, and More

New York, NY (For Immediate Release) - The service organization Dance/NYC is pleased to announce that the fully digital 2021 Symposium successfully occurred on Wednesday, March 17 - Saturday, March, 20, 2021. As the only gathering of its kind for the dance community in the metropolitan New York City area, this year marked Dance/NYC's first four-day, all-digital Symposium. Over four days 800+ people attended the event built around the theme Justice. Transformation. Education., including dance artists, choreographers, artistic directors, administrators, funders, educators, policymakers, dance writers, scholars, somatic practitioners and students. Dance/NYC's Executive Director, Alejandra Duque Cifuentes remarks, "This broad cross section of the dance community created a swelling chorus of inspiration, dialogue, education and practical information sharing that reflected the need for moments of togetherness, hard to come by due to the pandemic, and the desire to be catalysts for change."

The event began on Wednesday, March 17, 2021 with consultations via a Legal Clinic facilitated by New York State Bar Association's Entertainment, Arts & Sports Law and Intellectual Property Sections and a SmART Bar, facilitated by Pentacle. These sessions partnered Symposium attendees with expert advice in areas including board development, fundraising, copyright issues, artist visas, and marketing and communications. This served approximately 50 dance workers and attendees. The opening event also took place on this day featuring Welcome Remarks, an Embodied Land Acknowledgement offered by River Whittle, and the release of the [Coronavirus Dance Impact Study Informational Brief](#) and Research Presentation. This presentation delivered by Alejandra Duque Cifuentes, Executive Director, Dance/NYC, provided an overview of the most recent findings from Dance/NYC's ongoing data collection around the impact of COVID-19 on the dance workforce and gave recommendations for how to restore the dance sector post-pandemic. A third round of data collection is underway now at Dance.NYC via the [Coronavirus Dance Impact Survey](#). The Coronavirus Dance Impact Survey and Informational Brief were created by Dance/NYC research consultant Carrie Blake at Webb Mgmt, in collaboration with members of Dance/NYC's Staff, Board, Advisory Committee, Task Forces, and funding partners. Dr. Aimee Meredith Cox, Cultural Anthropologist, Director of Undergrad Studies; Associate Professor of Anthropology and Africa, Yale University was the solo Keynote speaker for the opening event poignantly offering an address entitled Bodies on the Line, Spirits at the Center: Dance, Justice, and Transformation.

The opening event is available on [Dance/NYC's YouTube page](#).

Thursday, March 18 through Saturday, March 20 offered three days of content and programming; each day opened with a Welcome from a member of Dance/NYC's committees, two 90-minute long breakout session slots with attendees choosing from two (2) or three (3) sessions in each slot around the theme for that day. Thursday's sessions were JUSTICE related, Friday's TRANSFORMATION and Saturday related to EDUCATION. The latter half of the days ended with a collective debrief session to allow participants to engage directly with each other and unpack the day's sessions, a dance break giving attendees an opportunity to move together, a virtual expo showcase allowing sponsoring organizations to host information sessions. The Symposium itinerary ended each day with robust keynote panels led by Ni'Ja Whitson, Gregory King, and Lauren Wingenroth respectively. Other highlights included performance presentations by students of the Hunter College Dance Department, a short video from Dance Rising NYC's five borough Video Tour (Still Dancing) and a moment of solidarity to acknowledge and take action in support of the Asian and Asian American and Pacific Islander community against the violence that occurred in Atlanta.

The closing event included Closing Remarks and a short presentation by

Mario Ismael Espinoza, LMSW, Dancers' Resource Social Worker, The Actors Fund on the artist health insurance resource center and mental health resources for dancers. The session was presented in partnership with The Actors Fund and Okay Let's Unpack This. Symposium Closing Event & Keynote: A Reckoning of Power, Accountability, and Gender Equity. Moderated by Lauren Wingenroth, Editor in Chief, Dance Teacher and Dance Business Weekly, Senior Consulting Editor, Dance Magazine with featured speakers Germaul Barnes, Choreographer, Director, Master Educator, Scholar, Designer and Curator of Contemporary Improvisation for Black Men; Lady Krow, Dancer and Visual Artist; Leslie Scott, Founder, Youth Protection Advocates in Dance (YPAD); and Linda La, Multidisciplinary Performer.

The closing event is available on [Dance/NYC's YouTube page](#).

In response to the experience, attendees shared that the symposium offered *'Brave subject matters that inspire Dance. These zeitgeist issues Dance/NYC decided to focus on are all important and all inspiring.'* That the content was *'Valuable and informative'* and that the sessions were structured with *'Beautiful flow., powerful points made, grounded and praxical.'*

The Symposium was made possible through the collective efforts of the dedicated staff at Dance/NYC, production partners at Nel Shelby Productions, Full Out Creative, Renegade Performance Group, and the Dance/NYC [Board of Directors, Symposium Programming Committee, Advisory Committee](#), the [Justice, Equity and Inclusion Partners](#), and the many [Dance/NYC Task Forces](#). Dance/NYC's Senior Manager of Programming and Justice Initiatives, Candace Thompson-Zachery who was responsible for leading this event says that, "Hosting the 2021 Symposium, it was an absolute honor to create space for inquiry, advocacy, and action with dance workers in New York City. To our incredible community, thank you for trusting Dance/NYC with your dreaming and futuring, critical analysis, feel-good personal stories, and reflections on the beauty of dance. We are eager to continue this work with you and expand how our community approaches justice, transformation, and education. The work behind any undertaking of this scale is a reflection of the labor of many people and there is never enough time to make visible all of the contributions. I encourage everyone to read up on all the speakers, presenters and Dance/NYC's partners, sponsors, staff and committee members so you have a sense of whose labor created this important moment for the dance field."

The public is invited to revisit the Symposium by reviewing the [Program Book](#), which included Thematic Guides/Workbooks curated by Yanira Castro, Jonathan Gonzalez, and Maura Nguyen Donohue and promotes the work of many of Dance/NYC's partners and supporters. Publicly available are the [Opening & Keynote: Bodies on the Line, Spirits at the Center](#) and the [Closing & Keynote: A Reckoning of Power, Accountability & Gender Equity](#) on Dance/NYC's YouTube page. Images of the Symposium are available on Dance/NYC's [Facebook Page](#). Background information on speakers and sessions available at [Dance.NYC](#). All event content remains on the platform for registered attendees for two (2) months from the end date of the Symposium and additionally, select symposium content will be released publicly in the coming months.

Thank you to the 2021 Symposium Sponsors and Funders

Leadership support is provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Howard Gilman Foundation. The Symposium is also supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council, from the New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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For a full overview of the program, speakers, and more, visit Dance.NYC.

About Dance/NYC

Dance/NYC's mission is to promote and encourage the knowledge, appreciation, practice, and performance of dance in the metropolitan New York City area. It embeds core values of justice, equity, and inclusion into all aspects of its programs and operations.

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