

May, 18-19, 2023

Joshua Beamish/MOVETHECOMPANY Presents the Technology-Infused @giselle

Company: JOSHUA BEAMISH/MOVETHECOMPANY

Venue: Gerald W. Lynch Theater

Location: New York, NY

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David Cooper

New York, NY — Joshua Beamish/MOVETHECOMPANY presents @giselle, a technology-driven, contemporary reinvention of the beloved romantic ballet classic, May 18-19, 2023 at 7:30pm at The Gerald W. Lynch Theater, co-presented by The CUNY Dance Initiative and The Gerald W. Lynch Theater at John Jay College (524 West 59th Street, NYC).

Born out of Reimagining Giselle, a shorter work commissioned by The Royal Ballet in London and further developed through a residency at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund's Pocantico Center, this full-length narrative production will be brought to life by ballet stars; Betsy McBride, soloist with American Ballet Theatre, performing the title role of Giselle; Harrison James, principal dancer with The National Ballet of Canada, dancing the role of Albrecht; and Sterling Baca, principal dancer with Philadelphia Ballet, as Hilarion. Fangqi Li, from ABT, will perform the role of Bathilde, and former Ballet Frankfurt and PACT Ballet Johannesburg dancer Beverley Bagg will perform the role of Berthe. The all-star ensemble will be supported by additional ensemble talent from Canada and the US.

Directed and choreographed by Joshua Beamish, this innovative production explores connections between the original classical ballet and our understandings of love, sex, and relationships in a world mediated by dating apps, digital illusions, and fleeting encounters.

@giselle updates the narrative to the present, telling the story of a young woman named Giselle who is betrayed, isolated, and ghosted by her romantic partner on social media. In a state of extreme anxiety, Giselle livestreams her premature death and later returns to haunt her male tormentors in the form of motion-captured holograms projected onto the bodies of live dancers, creating a haunting tension between live and digital realities.

Highlighting the ways that Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, and Facebook have profoundly denatured the ways we fall in and out of love, @giselle is a bracing new vision of a classic tale that also raises the spectre of persistent male power in light of the #MeToo and Time's Up movements.

Beamish shares, "@giselle is a careful examination of the evaporation of romance in our culture, and the isolation, narcissism, and lack of accountability that social networks have fueled. By reimagining this story with motion capture technologies and a social media framework, I want to challenge audiences to consider the ways technology is changing the very nature of modern love and relationships."

Beamish is hailed as possessing "an enviable reputation for a choreographic style that emphasizes speed, clarity, and a dazzling array of body isolations" (Toronto Star) — with his work touted as "absolutely singular" (The Globe and Mail).

The original version of Giselle, which premiered in 1841 by what is now known as the Paris Opera Ballet, is based on a German legend and follows a young peasant girl's journey through the many dimensions of love and betrayal. Giselle dies of a broken heart after discovering her

lover, Albrecht, is betrothed to another. The Wilis, a group of mystic and supernatural women who dance men to death, summon Giselle from her grave.

In addition to creator Beamish, @giselle features stunning animation and projection design by trans artist and activist Brianna Amore, and costume design by Janie Taylor, Rehearsal Director with Benjamin Millepied's LA Dance Project and formerly a NYC Ballet principal dancer. Lighting is designed by Abigail Hoke-Brady. @giselle utilizes a recording of the original score composed by Adolphe Adam.

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