



For Immediate Release

BalletX World Premiere Virtual Event

Short Films by Francesca Harper, Tsai Hsi Hung, and Manuel Vignoulle

Philadelphia, PA, December, 2020 – BalletX dives deeper into its 15th Anniversary Season celebration with the world premiere of three short films by choreographers Francesca Harper, Tsai Hsi Hung, and Manuel Vignoulle. BalletX will screen the short films for the first time in a Virtual Premiere event on **January 20, 2021 at 7:00pm EST**. BalletX dancers will perform live and choreographers will be interviewed about their work, moderated by Artistic & Executive Director Christine Cox. Following the event, subscribers will have exclusive 24/7 access to the short films on BalletX Beyond, the company’s subscription-based streaming platform, which *The Philadelphia Inquirer* called “home to some of the pandemic’s most satisfying works ... a joy to watch.”

“I am truly blown away that our BalletX Beyond subscriptions have reached a global audience, with viewers watching premiere films from 20 states across the U.S. and 6 countries. Even though it’s been a tough year for everyone, I am proud of the way we have harnessed the power of technology and innovation to keep creating, connecting, and growing together,” says Christine Cox, BalletX Artistic and Executive Director.

Francesca Harper, a New York-based choreographer, brought her previous experience as Ballet Consultant for the Oscar winning film *Black Swan* to the set of her short film at the BalletX Dance Center. In collaboration with Director of Photography Daniel Madoff, Francesca created *THAW*, an excerpt from *Unapologetic Body*, a work for seven dancers set to the music of Arcoiris Sandoval and slowdanger. The film is inspired by the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Loving v. Virginia*, as well as the work of Alice Dunbar-Nelson, a Philadelphia poet and social justice advocate, and

subject of “I Am an American!” – a digital exhibition by BalletX 15th Anniversary partners The Rosenbach and Free Library of Philadelphia.

Tsai Hsi Hung, born in Taiwan and based in New York, explores in her new short film, *Two X Two*, the harmony and dissonance between two dancers--one representing a tiger, the other a dragon. Set to the music of Luca D’Alberto, and featuring the dancers in ceremonial garb by costume designer Mark Eric, the work was filmed by Daniel Madoff at Franklin Institute’s Pepper Hall, the original reading room for the first Patent Library in the United States.

Manuel Vignouille, native of France and residing in New York, created his short film *Heal* as a response to the pandemic, and ongoing struggle for solidarity with ourselves and the planet. Blending three stories into one, *Heal* examines the idea of restoring personal wounds in order to find more peace within and without. Filmed by Daniel Madoff at Awbury Arboretum, West Mill Creek Park, and Washington Square West, the dance is set to the music of vocal group Li Ósc.

About BalletX Beyond:

BalletX launched BalletX Beyond, the company’s first-ever subscription-based streaming platform, in September 2020 to help keep the arts alive during the ongoing global pandemic, and to ensure BalletX can continue to support its exceptional company of dancers and collaborating choreographers, filmmakers, and designers.

BalletX Beyond is available now in two plans at www.BalletX.org/Beyond:

Basic (\$15/month), featuring access to three Virtual World Premiere events, 15 digital features and short dance films, behind-the-scenes documentaries, artist Q&As and interviews, bonus launch videos, and surprise programming and events throughout the season.

Plus (\$30/month), featuring all of the access available in the Basic plan, plus a rotating schedule of over 40 classic ballets from the BalletX archive and ticket discounts to any mainstage performances scheduled in spring or summer 2021.

BalletX Beyond **gift subscriptions** are available now in 1-month, 3-month, and 6-month Basic and Plus plans at <https://www.balletx.org/membership-gift/>.

For questions regarding BalletX Beyond and subscriptions, call 215-225-5389 or email boxoffice@balletx.org.

About BalletX

BalletX, Philadelphia's Premier Contemporary Ballet Company, celebrating its 15th Anniversary Season in 2020-21, commissions choreographers from around the world to create new ballets that are "fresh, inclusive, and connect to what people want" (*Philadelphia Citizen*). Led by Artistic & Executive Director Christine Cox, BalletX has been recognized by *The New Yorker* as a "place of choreographic innovation" for producing nearly 100 world premiere ballets by more than 50 choreographers in its 15-year history. In response to the Covid-19 global pandemic, BalletX launched BalletX Beyond, a subscription-based streaming platform and service, in September 2020. *The New York Times* promptly hailed BalletX Beyond "ahead of the game" in creating dance films, and *The Philadelphia Inquirer* called it "home to some of the pandemic's most satisfying works ... a joy to watch." In addition to virtual works, main-stage performances and international touring, the company offers free community pop ups, dance classes, artist Q&As, open rehearsals, and in-school dance education, designed to bring its home city of Philadelphia and the nation closer to dance. Among its many accolades and honors, BalletX was featured on the cover of *Dance Magazine's* October 2019 issue. To learn more about BalletX's programming and dancers, named "among America's best" by *The New York Times*, please visit BalletX.org and follow the company on social media.

About the choreographers:

Francesca Harper has choreographed works for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Dance Theatre of Harlem, Richmond Ballet, Ailey II, Tanz Graz, Hubbard Street II, and her own company The Francesca Harper Project. She served as Movement Director for Nick Cave's *The Let Go*, an exhibit recently awarded a Bessie Award for Outstanding Performance. Awarded a two-year choreographic fellowship with Urban Bush Women, Harper's other recent engagements include a collaboration with Wendy Whelan, choreography for Zendaya and Tommy Hilfiger for Fashion Week, choreography for a Planned Parenthood video campaign, a performance at The Metropolitan Museum of Art with Nona Hendryx, and *Refrigerated Dreams* at The Public Theater with collaborators Nona Hendryx, Carrie Mae Weems, Carl Hancock Rux and Niegel Smith. Harper served as a Ballet Consultant for the Oscar winning film *Black Swan*, and is currently engaged with Sony Pictures on a series in development. She is pursuing her MFA in performance creation at Goddard College, and is a Professor at Juilliard, NYU, and Ailey/Fordham.

Tsai Hsi Hung has worked with the Australian Dance Theater, Tasedance, and Chunky Move Dance Company Dancers. While an exchange student in the dance department at the Dance Queensland Technology University in Australia, Hung appeared on the TV show *So You Think You Can Dance*. Hung created the choreography for the Beijing TV show *Passion for Dance* in 2012. She was commissioned by Meimage Dance to choreograph and perform a solo piece entitled *Bluebeard* throughout Taiwan in the summer of 2016. Her choreography was featured at Baruch Performing Arts Center's REVERBdance series in 2017. In June of 2018, the MET Dance company performed Hung's work *ID* for 12 dancers at the Miller Outdoor Theatre in Houston, Texas. Hung's piece *DOUBLEND* was performed at the NU VU Festival at LaGuardia Performing Arts Centre and Martha Graham Studio Theater and NYU Skirball in January of 2019, and in 2020, she was selected for the Winning Works Choreographic Competition from Joffrey Ballet. Her most recent work *Brushstroke-X2* was performed at the 2020 APAP Peridance Showcase in New York.

Manuel Vignouille, a native of France, is the artistic director of Manuel Vignouille - M/motions, a project-based company in New York. Manuel has been commissioned by Ailey II, Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, Whim W'him, Jeune Ballet Européen, Makers Dance Company, Columbia Classical Ballet,

Satellite Collective, 10 Hairy Legs, Ballet Arkansas, Chicago Repertory Ballet, DanceWorks Chicago, A. Corona Performing Works, Periapsis Music & Dance, iKADA Contemporary Dance Company, Peridance Contemporary Dance Company, Steps Repertoire Ensemble and others. He has performed his own work with Manuel Vignouille - M/motions at Jacob's Pillow, Fire Island Festival, Bryant Park, APAP (New York), Monterrey International Ballet Gala (Mexico), (Mexico), Summer Heat International Dance Festival (Tulsa, OK), LifeChance International Ballet Gala (SC), Palm Spring Dance Festival (CA), Hudson Valley Dance Festival, The Dance Gallery, Pushing Progress Showcase Series, WestFest and The Latin Choreographer Festival (NY), and in France, Switzerland, Mexico, Brazil, and the USA. Manuel is the recipient of 2 Grand Prize Awards at Palm Desert Choreography Festival in 2017 and 2018. He also won the KoDaFe in NYC 2019 Dance Competition.

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