



The University of Texas at Austin
Theatre and Dance
College of Fine Arts

For immediate release:

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE
PRESENTS
TRANSCENDENCE
A CELEBRATION OF LIFE AND LEGACY
MARCH 28-APRIL 8, 2018
AT THE B. IDEN PAYNE THEATRE

Under the direction of Charles O. Anderson and Andrea Beckham, The University of Texas at Austin's award-winning dance company Dance Repertory Theatre returns to the stage in *Transcendence*, March 28-April 8 at the B. Iden Payne Theatre. A celebration of life and legacy, *Transcendence* features works by nationally renowned artists, including Rennie Harris, Yacov Sharir, Madison Hicks, Andee Scott and Andrea Beckham, as well as emerging choreographers Courtney Mazeika and Ginnifer Joe.

"This concert is based on the phenomenon of transcendence: the 'transcendent' is that which transcends our own consciousness, much like both the scholarly and artistic work of Dr. Yacov Sharir over the span of his illustrious career," Charles O. Anderson, co-artistic director, explains. "It also captures the profound impact of Haruka Weiser upon our dance community."

Dr. Yacov Sharir, University of Texas at Austin professor emeritus, joined the Department of Theatre and Dance faculty in 1978. He founded the American Deaf Dance Company in 1977 and later, formed the Sharir Dance Company (1982), the university's professional company-in-residence through its final season in 2007. The company, later renamed Sharir + Bustamante Danceworks, introduced Austin to exemplary national and international artists whose work had previously been exclusive to the larger markets such as New York City. As a choreographer and educator, Sharir is a pioneer in the use of new technologies, including virtual reality, intelligent fabrics and interactive systems in performance. His work has earned him prestigious fellowships from the Banff Centre for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. In addition to featuring Sharir's *More About Love*, *Transcendence* includes choreography from artists who have learned from and performed with him.

Transcendence marks the inaugural year of a celebration of the life and art of Haruka Weiser through a new work commissioned in her name. This commission is made possible through the Haruka Weiser Endowed Excellence Fund in Choreography, an endowment created by students, alumni and friends to honor Weiser in perpetuity. Weiser was a bachelor of fine arts in dance student at The University of Texas at Austin at the time of her death in 2016.

New faculty member, Rennie Harris' work, *Resurrection*, is the first Weiser commemorative dance work. "Hearing about the death of Haruka Weiser struck me. My mother had recently passed...they seem to be a part of a long list of spirits taken from us far too soon," Harris explains. "*Resurrection* is about experiencing the moment – to live and remember the lives before and after you."

Harris, an internationally-acclaimed choreographer, has "literally embodied the history of hip-hop dance" (*The Times of London*) and is considered the pioneer of the street dance theatre genre. He was voted one of the most influential people in the last 100 years of Philadelphia history, his hometown, and has been compared to 20th century dance legends Alvin Ailey and Bob Fosse.

"We have the distinct privilege of presenting excerpts of Harris' compelling new evening-length work that has been commissioned by the world-renowned Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre," Charles O. Anderson shares. "We feel fortunate to offer a dance of this stature as our first choreographic tribute to Haruka Weiser."

PROGRAM

Dance Repertory Theatre presents *Transcendence*
Artistic Directors: Charles O. Anderson and Andrea Beckham

Sextant by Andee Scott

Distillation Study by Courtney Mazeika

Heavenly by Ginnifer Joe

More About Love by Yacov Sharir

She Has No Shame by Andrea Beckham

Daring Greatly by Madison Hicks

Resurrection by Rennie Harris

For more information on *Transcendence* please visit JoinTheDrama.org

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENT

Dance Decoded

March 30, immediately following the 7:30 p.m. performances

B. Iden Payne Theatre

Guests are invited to join Artistic Directors Charles O. Anderson and Andrea Beckham and members of the cast for a brief post-performance discussion.

CALENDAR LISTING

March 28-April 8, 2018 – The University of Texas at Austin Department of Theatre and Dance presents *Transcendence* at B. Iden Payne Theatre (300 E. 23rd St.), located in the F. Loren Winship Drama Building. A map of the campus:

theatredance.utexas.edu/about/location-directions-parking

Performance times are March 28 at 7:30 p.m. (Preview); March 29-30, April 5-7 at 7:30 p.m. and April 7-8 at 2:00 p.m. Tickets for performances on March 29-April 8 (\$26 adult, \$21 UT faculty and staff, \$15 student) are now on sale at authorized ticket outlets, which include the Bass Concert Hall Box Office, most H-E-B stores and all Texas Box Office outlets, online at JoinTheDrama.org, or by calling (512) 477-6060 or (800) 982-BEVO. Tickets for the preview performance on March 28 (\$10 adult, \$5 student) are available at the Bass Concert Hall Box Office and F. Loren Winship Building Box Office. Box Office locations and hours: theatredance.utexas.edu/ticketing

ABOUT TEXAS THEATRE AND DANCE

The University of Texas at Austin Department of Theatre and Dance is a world-class educational environment that serves as the ultimate creative incubator for the next generation of artists, thinkers and leaders in theatre and performance.

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