

KYLE ABRAHAM / ABRAHAM.IN.MOTION

DEAREST HOME

TUE-SAT
MAY 16-20, 2017
YBCA FORUM

YBCA.ORG
#KYLEABRAHAM

YERBA BUENA
CENTER FOR
THE ARTS



A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Our organization was founded in 1993 as a citizen institution that would be home to the diverse local arts community while serving to connect the Bay Area to the world. YBCA's mission is to generate culture that moves people. We believe that culture—a collection of art, traditions, values, human experiences, and stories—is what enables us to act with imagination and creativity, to act socially, politically, and with conviction. Culture instigates change in the world.

We believe that more and different kinds of people need to be defining culture today and that more people need to have access to cultural experiences that are relevant to their lives and their communities. We need new definitions and new experiences that bring people together regardless of their differences in order to make the inclusive and equitable culture we need today. We believe that the arts should be on the front line of change and that cultural institutions exist to spur and support big societal movements. Through powerful art experiences, thoughtful and provocative content, and deep opportunities for participation, we are committed to kindling inclusive culture that cultivates empathy, awakens personal and societal transformation, and reaches for a world fueled by inspiration. The need has never been stronger than now, and there is no better place than YBCA to answer the call. We are so glad that you are here. We are grateful for your cultural participation, and we hope you will come back and enjoy all that YBCA has to offer.

Warmly,

DEBORAH CULLINAN
CEO of YERBA BUENA
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

KYLE ABRAHAM/ ABRAHAM.IN.MOTION DEAREST HOME

CHOREOGRAPHY: KYLE ABRAHAM
IN COLLABORATION WITH **ABRAHAM.IN.MOTION**
MUSIC COMPOSITION: JEROME BEGIN

LIGHTING AND SET DESIGN: DAN SCULLY
TEXT DESIGN: GLENN LIGON
COSTUMES: KYLE ABRAHAM

PERFORMERS: MATTHEW BAKER,
TAMISHA GUY, CATHERINE ELLIS KIRK, MARCELLA LEWIS, JEREMY "JAE" NEAL, CONNIE SHIAU

ABRAHAM.IN.MOTION

The mission of Kyle Abraham/
Abraham.In.Motion is to create an evocative, interdisciplinary body of work. Born into hip-hop culture in the late 1970s and grounded in Abraham's artistic upbringing in classical cello, piano, and the visual arts, the goal of the movement is to delve into identity in relation to a personal history. The work entwines a sensual and provocative vocabulary with a strong emphasis on sound, human behavior, and all things visual in an effort to create an avenue for personal investigation and exposing that on stage. A.I.M. is a representation of dancers from various disciplines and diverse personal backgrounds. Combined, these individualities create movement that is manipulated and molded into something fresh and unique.

For more information, to get involved, or to purchase AIM merchandise, please visit www.abrahaminmotion.org.

COMPANY INFORMATION

Artistic Director: **Kyle Abraham**

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Rehearsal Director: **Tamisha Guy**
Rehearsal Assistant: **Jeremy "Jae" Neal**
Education Assistant: **Connie Shiau**
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Cover Photo by Carrie Schneider

Dearest Home was commissioned by Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, The Hopkins Center for the Arts, and with a grant from The O'Donnell-Green Music & Dance Foundation. *Dearest Home* is a project of Creative Capital. Additional generous support for the creation and presentation of *Dearest Home* was provided by The MAP Fund, supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; the National Endowment for the Arts; the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; New York State Council on the Arts; and a Princess Grace Foundation-USA Special Project Grant. *Dearest Home* was developed during residencies at The Hopkins Center for the Arts, University of Arizona, University Musical Society, and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.



Creative Capital



A NOTE FROM THE CURATOR

MARC BAMUTHI JOSEPH
CHIEF OF PROGRAM AND PEDAGOGY



Recently, in a room filled with 150 future leaning folks, I was charged with facilitating a ‘get-to-know-you’ session. I asked *“When you think of home, is it a place, a memory, a person, or a journey?”*

I instructed, *“Choose one of those four, and group yourselves around the room with other people who’ve made the same choice that you did.”*

More than a few people couldn’t decide at first, but eventually a majority emerged. In this room, when I asked people to conjure home, most folks thought of it as...

A memory: *Dancing with my mom in our living room, my face pressed against her pregnant belly. Through the front window, it is dusk, and the sun is setting on summer. I’m going to be a big brother soon...*

A memory: *My grandmother is baking a cake for the interminable post-Church old people festivities come Sunday. The kitchen smells of vanilla and warm, and the adults are at the table playing an Old World card game. I watch closely, but I will never, ever, understand the rules.*

Home is a familiar body stretching toward me, and still just out of reach. As a matter of investigation, it is layered with the kind of intimate complexity that has become a hallmark of Kyle Abraham’s stunning choreography. To journey through Mr. Abraham’s wide-ranging output is to take a rigorous walk through a labyrinth of macro histories. Along his choreographic path, he’s left us artifacts of subculture to decode, and dances of temperance and vulnerability that wind around one’s memory, clearly and elusively, like a moonbeam. After presenting *Abraham.In.Motion* in 2015, YBCA enthusiastically commissioned his latest piece, a sojourn of several on-site residencies that have brought us here this evening, to *Dearest Home*. Through the lens of the choreographer, home takes on the armature of *Loving and Longing, Love and Loss*. It is a series of memories activated as present, moving conversations. We are honored to be the place that first holds this work for public witness. We anticipate Mr. Abraham will imbue us with new memories to share, and we encourage you to join us in reaching out to hold them close.



Photo: Steven Schreiber

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

In 2015, I felt full—not in a sense of fulfillment, but rather fullness of rage, sadness, and frustration based on the issues we were tackling in our work and the unintentional relevance associated with the ways in which these works addressed this country’s wrought history.

American history is so deeply laced with pain and struggle that drawing on it as source material began to personally take a toll on me. As a result, I decided to focus my next work, *Dearest Home*, on themes of love, loss, and longing under the assumption that these themes have the potential to heal and bring people together, forgetting for a moment the eerie, serendipitous coincidences that have existed within the two-year creative processes of all of my previous works.

Works like 2012’s *Pavement*, which drew inspiration from W. E. B. Du Bois’s *Souls of Black Folk* and John Singleton’s *Boyz n The Hood*, were aimed at addressing police brutality and the active genocide of black families across the country specifically during my adolescence in the early 1990s. Sadly, this work became all the more relevant after the shocking death of Trayvon Martin the same year that *Pavement* was set to premiere. With *Dearest Home*, I had no idea that I would lose my mother exactly one year from the previously announced world premiere of this work, or end a relationship with the man I thought I’d marry—all in the same calendar year.

That said, this work is still a healer in many ways. We’ve had the great pleasure of taking part in a variety of workshops and conversations with community groups across the country on the topics of love, longing, and loss. These interactions have led to multigenerational epiphanies, newly formed friendships, and, in one case, a marriage proposal.

Thank you for sharing your evening with us tonight!

I am so thankful to YBCA for believing in this work and for allowing me the opportunity to stretch my creativity and artistry.

—KYLE ABRAHAM, Artistic Director



ARTIST PROFILES

KYLE ABRAHAM

2016 Doris Duke Award recipient and 2015 City Center choreographer in residence Kyle Abraham is a 2013 MacArthur Fellow who began his dance training at the Civic Light Opera Academy and the High School for the Creative and Performing Arts in Pittsburgh. He continued his dance studies in New York, receiving a BFA from SUNY Purchase College and an MFA from NYU Tisch School of the Arts and, most recently, an honorary doctorate in fine arts from Washington Jefferson College in 2014. In 2012, Abraham was named the New York Live Arts resident commissioned artist for 2012–14. Also in 2012, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater premiered Abraham's *Another Night* at New York's City Center to rave reviews.

Rebecca Bengal of *Vogue* writes, "What Abraham brings to Ailey is an avant-garde aesthetic, a original and politically minded downtown sensibility that doesn't distinguish between genres but freely draws on a vocabulary that is as much Merce and Martha as it is Eadweard Muybridge and Michael Jackson." That same year, Abraham was named the 2012 Jacob's Pillow Dance Award recipient and a 2012 USA Ford Fellow.

In 2010 Abraham received a prestigious Bessie Award for outstanding performance in dance for his work in *The Radio Show*, and a Princess Grace award for choreography. The previous year, he was selected as one of *Dance Magazine's* 25 to Watch, and in 2008 he received a Jerome Foundation travel and study grant.

His choreography has been presented throughout the United States and abroad, most recently at On the Boards, Seattle; South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center; REDCAT, Los Angeles; Philly Live Arts, Philadelphia; Portland's Time Based Arts Festival; Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Massachusetts; Danspace Project, New York; Dance Theater Workshop, New York; Bates Dance Festival, Lewiston, Maine; Harlem Stage, New York; Fall

for Dance Festival at New York's City Center; Dublin's Project Arts Center, the Okinawa Prefectural Museum and Art Museum, Japan; the Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; the Kelly-Strayhorn Theater, Pittsburgh; and venues in Montreal, Germany, Jordan, and Ecuador.

In addition to performing and developing new works for his company, Abraham.in.Motion, Abraham recently premiered *Untitled America*, a three-part commissioned work for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and finished touring *The Serpent and the Smoke*, a new pas de deux for himself and the acclaimed Bessie Award-winning and former New York City Ballet principal dancer Wendy Whelan as part of Restless Creature. He choreographed for the upcoming feature-length film *The Book of Henry* with the acclaimed director Colin Trevorrow.

In 2011, *OUT Magazine* labeled Abraham as the "best and brightest creative talent to emerge in New York City in the age of Obama."

COMPANY

MATTHEW BAKER (*dancer*) hails from Ann Arbor, Michigan. He received his BFA (2008) in dance from Western Michigan University. In New York, he worked with such choreographers as Mark Dendy and Keith Thompson before joining Keigwin + Company, under the artistic direction of Larry Keigwin and cofounder Nicole Wolcott, from 2009 to 2014. He joined Kyle Abraham/Abraham.in.Motion in 2012. As choreographic associate for A.I.M., Baker works with the artistic director and his colleagues to maintain and develop the company's repertory. Baker was the recipient of a Distinguished Alumni Award from his alma mater in 2014.

TAMISHA GUY (*dancer*), a native of Trinidad and Tobago, began her formal dance training at Ballet Tech, the New York City Public School for Dance under the direction of Eliot Feld. Later she attended Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School, and

then SUNY Purchase College as a double major in dance and arts management. She has completed summer programs with Complexions Contemporary Ballet, Springboard Danse Montreal, and Nathan Trice, and performed works by William Forsythe, Pam Tanowitz, Loni Landon, Mark Morris, and Martha Graham. In 2013 Guy graduated with honors from SUNY Purchase College and joined the Martha Graham Dance Company shortly after, and in 2014 joined Kyle Abraham's Abraham.In.Motion. In 2016 Guy was selected as one of *Dance Magazine's* Top 25 to Watch and received the Princess Grace Award.

CATHERINE ELLIS KIRK (*dancer*) is originally from Dallas. After attending Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, Kirk graduated with a BFA from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and earned a yoga certification through Mind Body Dancer. Kirk has completed programs with the San Francisco Conservatory of Dance, Gaga Intensive in Tel Aviv, and Springboard Danse Montréal, and had the opportunity to perform works by Fernando Melo, Ohad Naharin, Sharon Eyal, Peter Chu, Andrea Miller, Robert Battle, and Alex Ketley. Since graduating, Kirk has had the pleasure of working with Danaka Dance and Chihiro Shimizu and Artists, and apprenticing for Sidra Bell Dance New York. Kirk is currently dancing for UNA-Projects and Helen Simoneau Danse, and is thrilled to continue with Kyle Abraham/Abraham.In.Motion.

MARCELLA LEWIS (*dancer*) hails from Los Angeles, where she began her dance training at the Lula Washington Dance Theatre at the age of three. She continued her studies at Los Angeles County High School for the Arts and received a BFA from SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Dance, where she was awarded the Adopt-a-Dancer Scholarship. While at Purchase, Lewis performed works by Doug Varone, Gregory Dolbashian, madboots, Kevin Wynn, and Ori Floman. Lewis has completed summer programs at the San Francisco Conservatory of Dance, Hubbard Street Dance, and Alonzo King LINES Ballet, where she was awarded the Homer Avila

Scholarship. She joined Abraham.In.Motion in fall 2016.

JEREMY "JAE" NEAL (*dancer*) was born and raised in Michigan and received his training from Western Michigan University. There, he performed in *Strict Love* by Doug Varone, *Temporal Trance* by Frank Chavez, and Harrison McEldowney's *Dance Sport*. Since relocating to New York, Neal has had the privilege of working with SYREN Modern Dance, Christina Noel Reaves, Catapult Entertainment, Katherine Helen Fisher Dance, Nathan Trice, and now Abraham.In.Motion. Neal would like to thank his family and friends for their consistent encouragement and support.

CONNIE SHIAU (*dancer*) grew up in Tainan, Taiwan. She was accepted into the dance conservatory at SUNY Purchase College in 2008, after training in the high school program at Taipei National University of the Arts. She has had the privilege of working with Gallim Dance, Kevin Wynn Collective, and Adam Barruch Dance. Shiau is a recipient of the 2014 Reverb Dance Festival best dancer award. She also received an honorable mention for the 2014 Jadin Wong Award for emerging Asian American dancers. Shiau joined Abraham.In.Motion in 2013 and has assisted Kyle Abraham in setting new repertory work at Princeton University and Point Park University.

CREATIVE TEAM

JEROME BEGIN (*composer*) has been called a "fabulous composer-pianist" and an "unimpeachable" collaborator by the *New York Times*. His works have been performed throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia, including a nationally televised performance of his score for Bill T. Jones / Arnie Zane Dance Company for President Barack Obama at the 2010 Kennedy Center Honors. Other dance commissions include works for Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, the Juilliard School, Brian Brooks Moving Company, Keigwin + Company, Gallim Dance, Seán Curran Company, Sacramento Ballet, Richmond Ballet, Alabama Ballet, and many others.

THE MEANINGS ARE AMPLIFIED BY THE QUALITY OF THE DANCING. IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I'VE SEEN A GROUP OF VIRTUOSO DANCERS LOOK AS NATURAL, AS HUMAN, AS ABRAHAM'S COMPANY.

THE NEW YORKER



Photo: Carrie Schneider



Photo: Carrie Schneider

His music was featured in the PBS *American Masters* show on Bill T. Jones's work. Recent projects include *Kwaidan*, a large-scale multimedia opera installation based on traditional Japanese ghost stories; *NEVEREND*, an evening-length dance work for Jin Ju Song-Begin / Da-On Dance; the score for the documentary *Flex Is Kings*; and an album recording with Chris Lancaster for their synth/cello duo band Tranimal. Current projects include new works for Brian Brooks Moving Company and Loni Landon Dance Project. Begin serves on the faculty of the Juilliard School.

GLENN LIGON (*text design*) lives and works in New York. He received a BFA from Wesleyan University in 1982 and attended the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program in 1985. His text-based conceptual works have been featured in solo shows at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; and the Power Plant, Toronto. A major retrospective of his work, *Glenn Ligon: AMERICA*, opened at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York in 2011 and traveled nationally.

DAN SCULLY (*lighting and set design*) is a New York-based lighting and projection designer, and has been designing for Kyle Abraham/Abraham.In.Motion for more than ten years, including the full-length evening works *Pavement*, *Live! The Realist M.C.*, and the Bessie Award-winning *The Radio Show*. Recent work includes *Rocky*, Broadway, New York; *Jedermann*, Salzburger Festspiele, Austria; *The Orchestra Rocks!*, Carnegie Hall, New York; and *Another Night*, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. He has also worked with Trinity Repertory Company, Providence, Rhode Island; Asolo Repertory Theatre, Sarasota, Florida; Cleveland Playhouse; Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival; and Two River Theater, Red Bank, New Jersey.

He holds an MFA from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

DAN STEARNS (*production manager*) is a lighting designer, scenic designer, and production manager interested in the intersections of dance, theater, music, and video. In addition to Abraham.In.Motion, his recent collaborations include Jane Comfort and Company, Pavel Zuštiak / Palissimo, LeeSaar The Company, Scott Ebersold, Paul H. Bedard / Theater in Asylum, Tara Ahmadinejad / Piehole, and Tami Stronach. He has worked at BAM, the Joyce Theater, New York Live Arts, La MaMa, Abrons Arts Center, HERE, Dixon Place, and 3LD in New York, and internationally from France to Korea.

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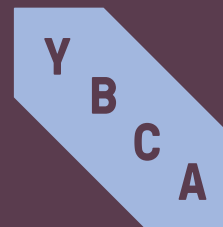
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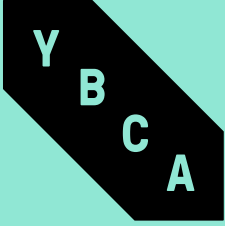
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