

# THE SHED Press Release

THE **BLOOMBERG** BUILDING  
545 West 30th Street  
New York, NY 10001

For more information, please contact:

**Sommer Hixson**

Director of Communications  
The Shed  
(646) 876-6933  
sommer.hixson@theshed.org

**Christina Riley**

Publicist  
The Shed  
(646) 876-6858  
christina.riley@theshed.org

**Amanda Domizio**

Polskin Arts  
(212) 583-2798  
amanda.domizio@finnpartners.com



*William Forsythe: A Quiet Evening of Dance*, Sadler's Wells Theater, 2018. Photo: Johan Persson. Courtesy of Sadler's Wells.

***William Forsythe: A Quiet Evening of Dance at The Shed October 11– 25***

**NEW YORK, AUGUST 1, 2019**—Renowned choreographer **William Forsythe** brings a new kind of dance work to The Shed, October 11 – 25, 2019, that, like an evening of chamber music, is designed to be listened to. Staged in the 500-seat Griffin Theater, ***A Quiet Evening of Dance*** is an intimate experience for audiences in which choreography is stripped down to its essence, with works ranging from sparse analytic distillation to baroque-inspired counterpoint. The program includes two new pieces, *Epilogue* and *Seventeen/Twenty One*; two reimagined repertory works, *Dialogue (DUO2015)* and *Catalogue (Second Edition)*; and *Prologue*, an excerpt in Act One of *Seventeen/Twenty One*.

For its North American premiere at The Shed, the commission will be performed by seven of Forsythe's most trusted collaborators—all former dancers with the Forsythe Company/Ballet Frankfurt: **Brigel Gjoka**, **Jill Johnson**, **Christopher Roman**, **Parvaneh Scharafali**, **Riley Watts**, and **Ander Zabala**. They are joined by **Rauf "Rubberlegz" Yasit**, who has developed a unique form of movement taken from b-boying, a style of breakdancing he has traveled the world to perform.

The intricate phrasing of the dancers' breath is the primary accompaniment for a distillation of the geometric origins of classical ballet. In Act One, the duets *Prologue* and *Dialogue* are performed to field recordings of birdsong, and the duet *Catalogue* is performed in silence. *Epilogue*, a series of solos and duets, is

performed to composer Morton Feldman's *Nature Pieces from Piano No. 1* from *First Recordings (1950s)*. *Seventeen/Twenty One* comprises Act Two, performed to composer Jean-Philippe Rameau's *Six Concerts en sextuor, Une symphonie imaginaire*, and *Abaris ou les Boreades (Suite and Dances)*.

*A Quiet Evening of Dance* premiered in London in 2018 as a Sadler's Wells London Production co-commissioned by The Shed; Théâtre de la Ville-Paris, Théâtre du Châtelet and Festival d'Automne à Paris; Festival Montpellier Danse 2019; Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg; Onassis Cultural Centre-Athens; and deSingel international arts campus (Antwerp). The new commission won the FEDORA - VAN CLEEF & ARPELS Prize for Ballet the same year.

Forsythe was an early collaborator of The Shed when, in 2018, he created *Pas de Deux Cent Douze* for *A Prelude to The Shed*. The radical reimagining of the central duet from his seminal 1987 ballet *In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated* was performed on an outdoor stage by dancers Josh Johnson and Roderick George to music by Azealia Banks and Abra.

Performances of *William Forsythe: A Quiet Evening of Dance* at The Shed are October 11 – 25, Thursday through Saturday at 7:30 pm and Sundays at 3 pm (there are no performances on October 14, 17 and 21). Tickets are available at [theshed.org](http://theshed.org).

M&T Bank is The Founding Bank of The Shed and is the exclusive financial services supporter for live performance commissions as part of a multiyear partnership.

## BIOGRAPHIES

### Creative Team:

**William Forsythe**, active in the field of choreography for over 45 years, is acknowledged for migrating the practice of ballet from classical repertoire to a diverse range of discursive platforms. Forsythe's deep interest in the fundamental principles of composition has led him to produce a wide range of projects including visual arts installations, films, and web-based knowledge creation. He was appointed resident choreographer of the Stuttgart Ballet in 1976. In 1984, he began a 20-year tenure as director of the Ballet Frankfurt after which he founded and directed the Forsythe Company until 2015. While his balletic works are featured in the repertoire of every major ballet company in the world, he consistently focuses on works of varying scale, such as *A Quiet Evening of Dance*, that model his continued interest in the economies of public presentation.

**Tanja Rühl** is a freelance lighting designer and lighting supervisor. She was born and resides in Germany. In 1999, she began her theatrical engineering apprenticeship at Frankfurt Opera House. She then joined Ballet Frankfurt in 2002 under the artistic direction of William Forsythe as assistant to the lighting supervisor. She became lighting supervisor with the newly founded Forsythe

Company in 2005. As a member of Forsythe Productions, Rühl acts as technical and design consultant, collaborating with ballet and dance companies in matters of Forsythe works. Since 2014 she has worked as a full-time freelance lighting designer, collaborating with choreographers, companies and artists around the globe.

**Dorothee Merg** was born in Frankfurt, Germany. She started her tailoring apprenticeship in 1985. After successfully completing the apprenticeship in 1988 she began to work for film and television. Dorothee joined the Ballet Frankfurt, led by William Forsythe, in 1989. In 2005, she joined the Forsythe Company as head of costume; during that time she completed several designs for Forsythe's works. She has also designed costumes for numerous independent ballet and theater projects.

In 1992, **Niels Lanz** joined the sound department of Ballet Frankfurt as a company member and had the opportunity to further develop his skills under William Forsythe on several productions, including *Eidos: Telos*, *Endless House*, *Kammer/Kammer*, and *Decreation*. In the late 90s, he began to create electronic music for dance, producing music for David Dawson's *The Grey Area* and *00:00* for Dutch National Ballet. Since 2004, he has worked as sound and video designer for the Forsythe Company and won a Bessie Award for the composition of *Three Atmospheric Studies* in 2007. Since 2012, he has worked as a freelance sound designer for various theater productions.

#### **Dancers:**

**Brigel Gjoka**, born and trained in Albania, pursued his studies in Cannes, France, working as a choreographer, dance teacher, and professional stage dancer. Since 2014, he is artistic director of Art Factory International Contemporary Dance Platform based in Bologna, Italy. He has worked with the Ballet du Rhin, Staats Theater Mainz, Netherlands Dance Theater, and the Forsythe Company. For the last decade, he has traveled around the globe performing in renowned dance festivals, creating new projects for dance companies and festivals, and teaching dance workshops. In 2016, he was part of the farewell world tour of Sylvie Guillem, performing *DUO2015* by William Forsythe, with whom he has collaborated closely for nine years. Gjoka is currently working on a new production co-choreographed with Rauf 'Rubberlegz' Yasit, in collaboration with Forsythe, which will premiere in November 2019.

A 34-year veteran of the dance field, **Jill Johnson** choreographs for film, television, and stage. Johnson has danced in over 50 tours on five continents, was a soloist with the National Ballet of Canada, and principal dancer in William Forsythe's Ballet Frankfurt. For two decades, Johnson has staged Forsythe's work with dance companies worldwide. She has served on the faculty and choreographed work for Princeton University, Columbia University, the New School, the Juilliard School, and NYU. Currently, she is director of dance, faculty, and founder/artistic director of the Harvard Dance Project at Harvard University where she has created 11

original works. Recent projects include giving the commencement address at Canada's National Ballet School, and collaborations with Eve Ensler/American Repertory Theater, *PBS: Poetry in America*, and the Louvre Musee des Arts Decoratif in Paris.

**Christopher Roman** began his formal training at the School of Cleveland Ballet, where he also danced as an apprentice, and later studied at the School of American Ballet in New York City. He joined the ranks of the Pacific Northwest Ballet in Seattle and has worked as a soloist and principal with Edward Villella's Miami City Ballet, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, the Pennsylvania Ballet, and Ballet Frankfurt, where he began his long-term artistic relationship with William Forsythe. He stages and is a choreographic assistant for the works of Forsythe, was associate artistic director of the Forsythe Company, and is a trustee for the Foundation Forsythe. From 2015 to 2018, he was a dancer and artistic director of the Dance on Ensemble, First Edition. He received the 2009 DER FAUST Theaterpreis for Best Dance Performer and is curator and organizer of the Hollins University MFA in Dance's European Study Program, based in Berlin. In 2019, Roman founded the SALTco. with the mission to illuminate the worth, contribution, and role of the dancer.

**Parvaneh Scharafali** received her formal training in classical ballet and contemporary dance at the school of the Hamburg Ballet. At the age of 17 she became a member of the Hamburg Ballet John Neumeier. In 2001, she joined Netherlands Dance Theater 2, and was invited to join Netherlands Dance Theater 1, where she collaborated and performed as a principal in important choreographic works, most notably in Jiri Kylian's *Tar and Feathers*, '27'52, and works by Crystal Pite, Ohad Naharin, Hans van Manen, amongst others. In 2006, Scharafali won the Golden Swan for best dancer. She was also nominated for a Golden Swan for her performance in William Forsythe's *DUO*. In 2008, she became a member of the Forsythe Company where she worked closely with Forsythe. Scharafali is now working as a freelance performer and teacher worldwide.

**Riley Watts** is a dance artist based in Portland, Maine. He began his training in competitive gymnastics in Bangor and later in classical ballet at Thomas School of Dance under Ivy Forrest. He studied dance at the Walnut Hill School for the Arts and received a BFA in dance from the Juilliard School where he won a Princess Grace Award. He has danced with NDT2, Bern Ballet, Cedar Lake, and with William Forsythe since 2010. In 2015, he performed Forsythe's *DUO2015* with Brigel Gjoka on Sylvie Guillem's *Life in Progress* tour, for which they were named contemporary dancers of the year by the Leonide Massine-Positano Prize, Italy. In addition to teaching, choreographing, and creating sculpture- and video-based performance art, Watts is an advocate for the arts in Maine where he is the creator of Portland Dance Month.

**Rauf ‘RubberLegz’ Yasit** is a Los Angeles-based dancer and visual artist with Kurdish roots who was born and raised in Celle, Germany. He has worked with William Forsythe, Arashi, Red Bull, National Opera of Paris, LACMA, Flying Steps, Moderat, Sonos, Seat, Tumi, Sony, WAD, HP, Pandora, and others. RubberLegz has a style that defies categorization. He has created his own unique movement language taken from b-boying that he has developed over a number of years. He received his diploma in 3-D visualization and animation in Switzerland and has years of experience working in professional design agencies as a visual artist.

**Ander Zabala** was born in Bilbao, Spain, and began his dance education with Ion Beitia. He won a full scholarship at Maurice Béjart’s School Mudra International in Brussels. He later trained in Germany at John Neumeier’s Hamburg Ballet School and finished his education in France at Rosella Hightower’s Centre de Danse International de Cannes where he became a founding member of the Jeune Ballet International. He was awarded the Prix Serge Lifar 1991. He has worked closely with William Forsythe for over two decades as a principal dancer, participating and collaborating in the creation of many works with the Ballet Frankfurt and the Forsythe Company. Zabala’s choreographic works include *A Part*, commissioned in 2009 by the Monaco Dance Forum for the celebration of the Centenary of Les Ballets Russes, and *Hue*, produced by the Forsythe Company and performed in Frankfurt and at the Montpellier Dance Festival 2008.

#### **About Sadler’s Wells:**

Sadler’s Wells is a world-leading theater dedicated to dance in all its forms. It reflects and responds to the world through dance: enabling artists of all backgrounds to create dance that moves us and opens our minds and sharing those experiences with the widest possible audiences. Over half a million people come to Sadler’s Wells’ London theaters each year, with many more enjoying its touring productions at venues across the UK and around the world. Sadler’s Wells commissions, produces and presents more dance than any other theater in the world, embracing the popular and the unknown. Since 2005, it has helped to bring over 175 new dance works to the stage, from the most exciting talents working in dance today. [www.sadlerswells.com](http://www.sadlerswells.com)

#### **About The Shed:**

Located on Manhattan’s west side, where the High Line meets Hudson Yards, The Shed commissions original works of art, across all disciplines, for all audiences. From hip hop to classical music, painting and sculpture to literature, film to theater and dance, The Shed brings together leading and emerging artists and thinkers from all disciplines under one roof. The building—a remarkable movable structure designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Lead Architect, and Rockwell Group, Collaborating Architect—physically transforms to support artists’ most ambitious ideas. Committed to nurturing artistic invention and bringing creative experiences to the broadest possible audiences, The Shed, led by Artistic Director and CEO Alex Poots, is a 21st-century space of and for New York City.