

For Immediate Release
September 9, 2020



PEAK PERFORMANCES AND WNET'S ALL ARTS ANNOUNCE FIRST SEASON OF *PEAK HD* BROADCASTS, FEATURING PERFORMANCES BY SOME OF THE WORLD'S MOST GROUNDBREAKING ARTISTS, FILMED AT THE TECHNICALLY OPTIMIZED ALEXANDER KASSER THEATER AT MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

Beginning with Anne Bogart & Elizabeth Streb's *FALLING & LOVING* on October 11, 2020 the ALL ARTS Broadcast Channel and Digital Platform Will Offer Dynamic, Up-Close Experiences of PEAK Programming from the 2019-20 Season, Including the Martha Graham Dance Company & International Contemporary Ensemble, Richard Alston Dance Company, Gandini Juggling, and Grand Band

As Broadcasts of These Previously Filmed Performances Begin This Fall, PEAK Will Continue Staging New Works at The Kasser, Capturing Them for Broadcast and, When Safe, Phasing in In-Person Audiences

PEAK Performances and WNET's ALL ARTS today announce the initial lineup for **PEAK HD**, a partnership formed last year to broadcast performances produced at PEAK Performances' state-of-the-art home, **The Alexander Kasser Theater at Montclair State University**, to audiences across the country. These monthly releases—beginning with works performed last season and soon featuring works programmed for Fall 2020 at PEAK—launch October 11, 2020 with **Anne Bogart & Elizabeth Streb's *FALLING & LOVING***, based on the works of **Charles Mee**, and breathtakingly captured with 12 cameras of varying sizes and purposes. The broadcasts, which will be available to stream on the same day on the ALL ARTS

website and free streaming app, will continue with **Martha Graham Dance Company** and **International Contemporary Ensemble**, performing *Appalachian Spring* and PEAK Commission *The Auditions*; **Richard Alston Dance Company** in their final American engagement; *Spring*, by **Gandini Juggling**; and **Grand Band** in a concert that included **Julius Eastman's** *Gay Guerrilla*. See descriptions of these works below; broadcast dates will be announced soon.

PEAK Performances and ALL ARTS first conceived PEAK HD in 2019, when Montclair State University made **the Alexander Kasser Theater** a state-of-the-art live performance broadcast venue by installing multiple 4K robotic video cameras linked to control studios in MSU's School of Communication and Media. The potential for what PEAK HD could mean for the theater world has been elevated amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, as the organization took hold of this moment of deep uncertainty and expanded their 15-year streak of breaking the rules of performance as we've known it. PEAK HD reaches back to the golden age of television when broadcasts of live symphonies, operas, and plays were fundamental to the newly invented craft of TV. Leaning into the future, well beyond the end of social distancing, PEAK HD and PEAK STAGE will continue to be central partners, working in tandem to—at levels both local and global—widen and deepen tastes for highly inexplicable works in dance, music, theater, opera, and circus.

While it pre-dates the pandemic, PEAK HD exemplifies how performance institutions can and will begin to move forward amidst the obstacles of the current moment. Having transformed The Kasser into a hybrid live performance venue and TV studio, PEAK Performances can program works for the future for capture/broadcast, while phasing audiences back in and assiduously assessing the safety needs of the moment. The organization plans to record its future productions using cutting-edge technology and 9-12 camera shoots, giving experimental and iconoclastic artists vast cinematographic scope and flexibility to capture their work. Regardless of the size of their live audiences (whether they can be viewed by 8 or 80 or hundreds of people in person at a time), these performances will live forever, and be open to anyone who wishes to discover them as exhilarating filmed works.

PEAK Performances Executive Director Jedediah Wheeler, who has worked in performance through the devastation of the AIDS epidemic, economic crashes, and numerous other crises, says, "The obstacles we're facing today are catastrophic and coated in painful loss, but this is not new for the performing arts. The performing arts in America are filled with the most tough-minded, forward-thinking, get-it-done people I have ever experienced in the world. So PEAK HD comes as a celebration of the deep, purposeful, important creativity that exists not just in the U.S. but worldwide, and it's an intense creative process with multiple experienced minds focused on it. With The Kasser now equipped as a first-class broadcast venue for the performing arts, we're sending that message far and wide. The day we can open The Kasser's doors to 465 people (and simultaneously capture these performances for broadcast)—that will be another celebration. But the doors that are open are the doors of our ideas. Everybody is welcome. All seats are available. There is no social distancing to the imagination."

ALL ARTS Artistic Director Jörn Weisbrodt says, "I have always admired the bold programming of PEAK Performances and its Artistic Director, Jed Wheeler. They have brought some of the greatest

international artists to PEAK's home, the Alexander Kasser Theater at Montclair State University—often groundbreaking artists whose work has never been seen in the United States. PEAK Performances is also one of the very few arts presenters on the East Coast commissioning new productions. I am proud that in our first year of collaboration we can bring an entire season of programming to our audiences during times when the live experience is sadly not available to us.”

Lineup of Upcoming PEAK HD Broadcasts

FALLING & LOVING

Co-directed by Anne Bogart and Elizabeth Streb

Adapted from the plays of Charles Mee

Created and Performed by SITi Company & STREB Extreme Action

October 11, 2020, at 8pm

World Premiere Performances Took Place at The Alexander Kasser Theater September 24-30, 2019

“On one side is Ms. Bogart’s ability to explore the emotion behind words and movement; on the other is Ms. Streb’s courage and single-minded conviction to create human daredevils.” — *The New York Times*

“Love has never been messier than in...[this] brilliant new dance-theater piece.” — NJArts.net

Two titans of avant-garde performance—director Anne Bogart and choreographer Elizabeth Streb—join forces to take on works of Obie Award–winning rebel playwright Charles Mee in an original production co-produced by PEAK Performances. In *FALLING & LOVING*, six actors from Bogart’s company and six of Streb’s action heroes storm the stage and launch into the air with the aid of a Guck Machine, an enormous contraption conceived by Streb that features rotating rings and buckets armed to continually release materials into the stratosphere. Artists, ideas, and objects collide in this radical new production.

Martha Graham Dance Company

Janet Eilber, Artistic Director

Sunday, November 8, 2020, at 8pm

Appalachian Spring

Music by Aaron Copland

Set by Isamu Noguchi

Choreography by Martha Graham

The Auditions

Music by Augusta Read Thomas

Choreography by Troy Schumacher

Music performed by **International Contemporary Ensemble** Conducted by **Vimbayi Kaziboni**

Performances (surrounding the 75th Anniversary of *Appalachian Spring* and marking the World Premiere of *The Auditions*, commissioned by PEAK Performances) took place November 14-17, 2019 at The Alexander Kasser Theater

“Schumacher effectively communicates with the Graham legacy in a respectful yet forward-looking manner.” — *Montclair Local*

Comprising the “most skilled and powerful dancers you can ever hope to see” (*The Washington Post*), Martha Graham Dance Company performs the iconic dance maker’s most celebrated work, *Appalachian Spring*, in concert with a PEAK Performances commission, *The Auditions* by choreographer Troy Schumacher and composer Augusta Read Thomas. This new work has been designed to resonate with Graham’s classic, which turned 75 in 2019. “America’s foremost new-music group” (Alex Ross), the International Contemporary Ensemble joins the Graham Company for these world-class renditions of new music by Augusta Read Thomas and the original Pulitzer Prize–winning score for *Appalachian Spring* by Aaron Copland.

Spring

Gandini Juggling and Alexander Whitley

Director: Sean Gandini

Choreographer: Alexander Whitley

Sunday, December 13, 2020, at 8pm

U.S. Premiere performances took place at The Alexander Kasser Theater December 12-15, 2019

The avant-garde virtuosos of Gandini Juggling create breathtaking productions that mesmerize audiences of all ages. Back by popular demand following the success of the 2018-2019 season’s *Smashed*, the company collaborates with British choreographer Alexander Whitley in *Spring*. “Joyous, exhilarating, and transporting” (*Culture Whisper*), this production interweaves five virtuoso jugglers with four contemporary dancers in a kaleidoscopic dreamscape propelled by an immersive score by Gabriel Prokofiev. Visually arresting, colorful, and bursting with rhythm and pattern, *Spring* is a refreshing and entertaining production at the vanguard of contemporary circus.

Grand Band

Performed by: Erika Dohl, David Friend, Paul Kerekes, Blair McMillen, Lisa Moore and Isabelle O’Connell

Sunday, January 10, 2021, at 8pm

Performances, marking Grand Band’s PEAK debut, took place at The Alexander Kasser Theater February 14 & 15, 2020

Kate Moore

Sensitive Spot

Julia Wolfe

my lips from speaking

Missy Mazzoli

Three Fragile Systems

with Joshua Frankel's *Emergent System*, an animated film in collaboration with Faye Driscoll

Julius Eastman

Gay Guerrilla

"The six [pianists] tended to generate a pulsating, rhythmically intoxicating ball of sound, rolling over the audience like a series of waves." — NJArts.net

Grand Band is a unique musical ensemble that includes six pianos arranged in a circle and played by "the finest, busiest pianists active in New York's contemporary-classical scene" (*The New York Times*). The sextet engulfs the audience in the sonic intensity of four landmark contemporary works: the iconic and massive *Gay Guerilla* by cult underground figure Julius Eastman; the pulsating *Sensitive Spot* by Australian sound artist Kate Moore; and *my lips from speaking*, a riff on Aretha Franklin's *Think* by Pulitzer-winning composer Julia Wolfe. In a thrilling combination of sight and sound, Missy Mazzoli's *Three Fragile Systems* is enhanced by the debut of an animated film by Joshua Frankel. In this film, commissioned by PEAK Performances, Frankel builds a world of geometry, color and looping patterns of human bodies created collaboratively with choreographer Faye Driscoll, heightening the experience of the music.

Three Fragile Systems by Missy Mazzoli was commissioned by Grand Band with funds from Chamber Music America. *Emergent System* by Joshua Frankel was commissioned by **PEAK Performances @ Montclair State University**.

Richard Alston Dance Company

Sunday, February 14, 2021, at 8pm

Voices and Light Footsteps

Choreography Richard Alston

Music Claudio Monteverdi

Detour (U.S. Premiere)

Choreography Martin Lawrance

Music Michael Gordon from the album *Timer Remixed*

Shine On (U.S. Premiere)

Choreography Richard Alston
Music Benjamin Britten
Performed live by pianist Jason Ridgway
Featuring soprano Gelsey Bell

***Brahms Hungarian* (U.S. Premiere)**

Choreography Richard Alston
Music Johannes Brahms, Hungarian Dances for solo piano
Performed live by pianist Jason Ridgway

Performances, which included the U.S. Premieres of *Detour*, *Shine On*, and *Brahms Hungarian*, took place February 20-24, 2020 at The Alexander Kasser Theater

“In its final U.S. appearance, the company displayed its virtues: luxuriant dancing allied to courtly music.” — *The New York Times*

Boasting a “rich, pliant, full-bodied” style that transports audiences “to the heart of dance itself” (*The New York Times*), Richard Alston Dance Company returned to PEAK Performances in early 2020 for its final American engagement before the company closed its doors after a quarter of a century. A selection of recent works highlights the unflagging invention of this beloved group, led by Richard Alston, one of the world’s finest choreographers currently celebrating his 50th year of making dances. Performed to live music, Alston’s witty *Brahms Hungarian* is presented alongside *Shine On*, the last piece the choreographer will create for the company. The fast-paced *Detour*, created by associate choreographer Martin Lawrance, rounds out a thrilling program including three U.S. premieres and celebrating a troupe still in top form, even as the curtain closes.

FUNDING CREDITS

Programs in this season [SH1] are made possible in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a Partner Agency of 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, and the Aaron Copland Fund for Music.

ABOUT ALL ARTS

ALL ARTS is breaking new ground as the premier destination for inspiration, creativity and art of all forms. This New York Emmy-winning arts and culture hub is created by WNET, the parent company of New York’s PBS stations. With the aim of being accessible to viewers everywhere, ALL ARTS’s Webby-nominated programming – from digital shorts to feature films – is available online nationwide through allarts.org, the free ALL ARTS app on all major streaming platforms, and @AllArtsTV on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com), and [Twitter](https://twitter.com). New York area TV viewers can also watch the 24/7 broadcast channel. For all the ways to watch, visit allarts.org/everywhere.

Leadership support for ALL ARTS is generously provided by Jody and John Arnhold, Sue and Edgar Wachenheim III, the Kate W. Cassidy Foundation, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Rosalind P. Walter, and The Agnes Varis Trust.

ABOUT PEAK PERFORMANCES

PEAK Performances is a program of the Office of Arts + Cultural Programming at Montclair State University and has been honored by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts with an Arts Citation of Excellence and Designation of Major Impact. Programs in this season [SH2] are made possible in part by the Alexander Kasser Theater Endowment Fund, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, and 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.

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For WNET's ALL ARTS

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