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BARYSHNIKOV ARTS CENTER ANNOUNCES 2019—20 CAGE CUNNINGHAM FELLOW

JENNIFER TIPTON

Award to Support Development of a New Work by the Pioneering Stage Lighting Designer

New York, NY — Baryshnikov Arts Center (BAC) is pleased to announce the recipient of the 2019—20 Cage Cunningham Fellow, lighting designer Jennifer Tipton. This is the fourth award of BAC’s distinguished fellowship established in 2015 to support artists who embody John Cage and Merce Cunningham’s commitment to artistic innovation.

Jennifer Tipton, considered one of the most versatile stage lighting designers for dance, theater, and opera, is known for her painterly and emotionally evocative lighting. Throughout her exceptional career, Ms. Tipton has pushed the boundaries of her art form through visual innovations that have reimagined the relationship between lighting and performance, and inspired a generation of designers.

BAC Founder and Artistic Director Mikhail Baryshnikov said: “Throughout my life as an artist in the U.S. I have crossed paths with Jennifer Tipton, experiencing her defining innovations in theater and dance from both the stage and audience. I deeply admire Jennifer’s love of art, her boundless curiosity, and her extraordinary knowledge. All of us at BAC are thrilled that she accepts our award named for two other luminaries of their time.”

The Cage Cunningham Fellowship, awarded annually, includes $50,000 distributed over two years in support of the Fellow’s work. In addition, BAC provides use of the John Cage & Merce Cunningham Studio for up to eight weeks, as well as significant administrative support for project development.

During her fellowship, Ms. Tipton will collaborate with a set designer and a sound designer to develop an immersive installation centered on the disintegration of the planet’s natural resources, through a series of images created with light.

“I am overwhelmed and truly honored to be given this award,” said Ms. Tipton. “I feel that it will inspire me to go beyond myself and to imagine something that hopefully can communicate to an audience exactly how I feel about our planet today.”

The inaugural 2016—17 Cage Cunningham Fellow was celebrated Russian pianist and creative visionary Alexei Lubimov, who applied his award to commission five composers at the forefront of music innovation: Anton Batagov, Bryce Dessner, Pavel Karmanov, Julia Wolfe, and Sergei Zagny. BAC presented premieres of all five commissions between Fall 2017 and Spring 2019. The 2017—18 Cage Cunningham Fellow, choreographer Pam Tanowitz, dedicated part of her fellowship to developing an interdisciplinary evening-length work, Four Quartets, which was hailed by The New York Times as “the greatest creation of dance theater so far this century.” In conjunction with the Merce Cunningham Centennial celebration in 2019, the 2018—19 Cage Cunningham Fellowship was expanded to extend support to five artists: filmmaker Charles Atlas, multimedia artist Tei Blow, composer / musician Phyllis Chen, and choreographers / dancers Liz Gerring and Silas Riener.
About the 2019-20 Cage Cunningham Fellow

Born in 1937 in the United States, Jennifer Tipton graduated from Cornell University and studied dance in NYC before becoming a lighting designer. She is known for her outstanding work in theater, opera and dance, carving out the performers and evoking the atmosphere of the most diverse forms of theater. Since 1981 she has taught lighting in the Design Department of the Yale School of Drama. She has received numerous awards including the Dorothy & Lillian Gish Prize in 2001, Jerome Robbins Prize in 2003 and the Prize of the Mayor of New York for the Arts and Culture in 2004. In 2008, both United States Artists and the MacArthur Foundation made her a fellow. In the field of opera, she has lit for the Dallas Opera a production of Janacek's Jenufa, for the Santa Fe Opera a production of Handel’s Agrippina and Berlioz's Beatrice et Benedict, for the Theatre Royale de la Monnaie in Brussels a production of Mozart's Don Giovanni directed by David McVicar, Tchaikovsky’s The Queen of Spades directed by Richard Jones and Mozart's The Magic Flute directed by William Kentridge. She designed the lighting for Salvatore Sciarrino’s Da gelo a gelo in Schwetzigen and the Paris Opera directed by Trisha Brown, a production of Mozart's The Magic Flute at the Santa Fe Opera directed by Tim Albery, a production of Humperdinck’s Hansel and Gretel at the Metropolitan Opera directed by Richard Jones and La Traviata directed by David McVicar at the Scottish National Opera. In the field of dance, she has lit Balanchine’s Jewels for the Royal Ballet in London, Trisha Brown’s O Composite for the Paris Opera Ballet and Paul Taylor’s Beloved Renegade at City Center Theater in NYC among many others. In theater her work includes Beckett Shorts at the New York Theater Workshop directed by JoAnne Akalaitis and Richard Nelson's Conversations in Tusculum at the Public Theater. More recently, she lit American Ballet Theater’s production of The Nutcracker choreographed by Alexei Ratmansky and Paul Taylors’ Three Dubious Memories. In theater, she recently lit Tennessee Williams’ The Glass Menagerie at the Mark Taper Forum and the Wooster Group’s version of his Vieux Carre at Baryshnikov Arts Center in NYC. She also has lit Daniel Catan’s Il Postino at the Los Angeles Opera directed by Ron Daniels and a production of Aida at London’s Royal Opera House directed by David McVicar. Most recently she lit a new "pocket" opera of Philip Glass using Maria Irene Fornes' play Drowning as the libretto. Her recent work in theater is Richard Nelson's The Michaels at the Public Theater. She is the lighting designer of the Broadway production of Aaron Sorkin's To Kill a Mockingbird based on the original novel by Harper Lee. Her recent work in dance is Pam Tanowitz's all at once for Paul Taylor's American Dance Company and Twyla Tharp’s A Gathering of Ghosts for American Ballet Theatre.

About Baryshnikov Arts Center (BAC)

BAC is the realization of a long-held vision by artistic director Mikhail Baryshnikov who sought to build an arts center in Manhattan that would serve as a gathering place for artists from all disciplines. BAC’s opening in 2005 heralded the launch of this mission, establishing a thriving creative laboratory and performance space for artists from around the world. BAC’s activities encompass a robust residency program augmented by a range of professional services, including commissions of new work, as well as the presentation of performances by artists at varying stages of their careers. In tandem with its commitment to supporting artists, BAC is dedicated to building audiences for the arts by presenting contemporary, innovative work at affordable ticket prices. For more information visit bacnyc.org.

About the Cage Cunningham Campaign

In December 2015, BAC completed the two-year, $1M Cage Cunningham Campaign to establish the Cage Cunningham Fund for artist fellowships. At that time BAC also named its John Cage and Merce Cunningham Studio, the first physical space honoring the duo's unparalleled contribution to 20th century art and culture. The Cage Cunningham Fellowship, awarded annually, includes $50,000 distributed over two years in support of the Fellow's work. In addition, BAC provides use of the John Cage & Merce Cunningham Studio for eight weeks, as well as significant administrative support for project development.
BAC reached the Cage Cunningham Campaign goal thanks to the inspirational support of over 80 donors. BAC Board Member Suzanne Weil and Mikhail Baryshnikov made initial leadership gifts to the Campaign. New and additional funds were raised thanks to a $100,000 matching gift in 2014 from BAC Board Chairman Diana DiMenna and her husband, Joe DiMenna. In 2015, the Merce Cunningham Trust contributed a tremendous leadership gift of $250,000 in support of the Campaign.

The Cage Cunningham Campaign was launched with the encouragement of the John Cage and Merce Cunningham Trusts. The Campaign Advisory Committee included: Charles Atlas, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Frank Cordasco, Tony Cremer, Molly Davies, Deborah Eisenberg, John Guare, Colleen Keegan, Garrison Keillor, Laura Kuhn, Liz LeCompte, Harvey Lichtenstein, Benedicte Pesle, Georgiana Pickett, Judith Pisar, Kirk Radke, Liz Gerrit Radke, Peter Sellars, Wallace Shawn, Allan Sperling, David Vaughan, Suzanne Weil, Lynn Wichern, and Robert Wilson.

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All gifts as of November 25, 2019.

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Yamaha is the official piano of the Baryshnikov Arts Center.

As of November 25, 2019.

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