

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 19, 2016

[Press Room](#)

**CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY
#BERKELEYRADICAL**

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS WEST COAST PREMIERE OF
TRAJAL HARRELL'S LATEST DANCE THEATER WORK,
THE GHOST OF MONTPELLIER MEETS THE SAMURAI, MARCH 18--19**

**Performances are part of the 2015–16 Berkeley RADICAL ReVisions programming strand
exploring contemporary performance**

BERKELEY, February 19, 2016—Cal Performances presents the West Coast premiere of dance theater artist [Trajal Harrell](#)'s latest work, *The Ghost of Montpellier Meets the Samurai*, as part of the 2015–16 season's Berkeley RADICAL programming, which reimagines contemporary performance through the creative lens of artist innovators. In particular, the ReVisions programming strand features artists whose multi-disciplinary work challenges genre stereotypes and performance practices. Harrell rose to prominence through works that combine dance with song and text, explore the present by excavating the past, and interrogate high art and pop culture in equal doses. *The New Yorker* has called him “a thinking choreographer,” and *The Village Voice* has praised his works, which question the very nature of theatrical performance, as “subtly brilliant.” Trajal Harrell performs on Friday, March 18 at 8:00 p.m. and Saturday, March 19 at 2:00 p.m. in the Zellerbach Playhouse.

While on campus in March, Harrell will be guest lecturer in Vice Chancellor of Art and Design Shannon Jackson's “Architecture of Life” course, a Letters and Sciences Big Ideas class funded by Cal Performances through a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. There will also be a special open rehearsal for Theater, Dance and Performance Studies students.

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These performances mark Harrell's second visit to campus this season. As part of the presentation of this new work, the choreographer was in residence at Cal Performances from November 12–16, participating in programs hosted by UC Berkeley's Dance Studies Working Group and the Arts Research Center. He was featured in a symposium entitled "Revisions in Time" alongside Rude Mechs, also in residence with Cal Performances as part of the ReVisions strand of programming. While in the San Francisco Bay Area during his fall residency Harrell worked at ODC with artist/choreographers in butoh-based contemporary dance, female drag and choreography for social justice. A short skype conversation between Harrell and Cal Performances' Associate Director Rob Bailis can be viewed [here](#).

The Ghost of Montpellier Meets the Samurai explores the human passion for art through an imaginary meeting of three luminaries of the performance world: Tatsumi Hijikata, founder of *butoh* dance; Dominique Bagouet, leader of the Nouvelle Danse in France; and Ellen Stewart, founder of La Mama ETC. In this performance, Harrell asks, "Why are we passionate about Art? Why are artists, audiences, industry professionals, and innocent bystanders notoriously passionate about it? Why are bank accounts emptied, homes mortgaged, and years devoted to it?" This is Harrell's first major work since his hugely popular and critically-acclaimed "dance-fiction" series, *Twenty Looks or Paris is Burning at the Judson Church*, where conceptual experiments in postmodern dance clashed with lascivious poses of vogue-ing and elements of African-American and Latino underground pop culture. *The Ghost of Montpellier...* features seven dancers from New York and Europe, including Harrell himself, in a collage of dance, song, and dramatic text.

Trajal Harrell's work has been presented nationally and internationally at many venues including the Kitchen, New York Live Arts, TBA Conversation, Walker Arts Center, P.S. 122, REDCAT, the Festival d'Automne (Paris), Holland Festival (Amsterdam), ImPulsTanz (Vienna), Tanz im August (Berlin), and Panorama Festival (Rio de Janeiro). He has also shown performance work in visual art contexts at MoMA, Performa Biennial, Fondation Cartier (Paris), the New Museum, Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam), the Centre Pompidou-Paris, ICA Boston, and Art Basel-Miami Beach. Harrell is a recipient of fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, Art Matters Foundation, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, and in 2014 was among

the inaugural recipients of the Doris Duke Impact Award. His past works include the series *Twenty Looks or Paris is Burning at The Judson Church* and *Used Abused and Hung Out to Dry*.

BERKELEY RADICAL

In February 2015, Cal Performances unveiled Berkeley RADICAL (**R**esearch **A**nd **D**evelopment **I**nitiative in **C**reativity, **A**rts, and **L**earning), its new project to cultivate the artistic literacy of future audiences and to connect the world's most innovative artists with the intellectual capital of the UC Berkeley campus. Through carefully crafted public programs and creative artistic residencies, Berkeley RADICAL serves as a framework to expand the reach of Cal Performances by providing audiences with multiple access points to a single work of art or artist. With a program that challenges genre stereotypes and reimagines conventional performing arts practices, Trajal Harrell's residency is part of a series of performances and public programs titled [ReVisions](#), one of three thematic strands—[ZellerBACH](#), [The Natural World](#), and ReVisions—that merge traditional and contemporary genres, weaving intriguing ideas throughout the rich fabric of the season. Continuing the ReVisions and Natural World thematic strands, on May 1 Artists in Residence the **Kronos Quartet** will perform Terry Riley's *Sun Rings* (2002) with visuals by **Willie Williams** that explore the mysteries of the natural world far beyond Earth's boundaries. Its score and video inspired by NASA audio recordings of outer space.

For more information about Berkeley RADICAL visit <http://calperformances.org/learn/berkeley-radical/programs.php>.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Trajal Harrell's** *The Ghost of Montpellier Meets the Samurai* on Friday, March 18 at 8:00 p.m. and Saturday, March 19 at 2:00 p.m. in the Zellerbach Playhouse are \$48.00 and are subject to change. Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at (510) 642-9988, at www.calperformances.org, and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to <http://calperformances.org/buy/discounts.php>.

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Cal Performances' 2015–2016 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Friday, March 18, at 8:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Playhouse, UC Berkeley Campus

Saturday, March 19 at 2:00 p.m.

Bancroft Way at Dana Street, Berkeley

Dance

The Ghost of Montpellier Meets the Samurai

Trajal Harrell

Program:

In his latest work, the inventive and irreverent choreographer Trajal Harrell explores the human passion for art, through an imaginary meeting between a *butoh* dance pioneer, a leader of the French Nouvelle Danse movement, and an influential New York theater impresario. *The Ghost of Montpellier Meets the Samurai* features seven dancers in a collage of dance, song, and dramatic text.

Tickets: Priced at \$48.00 and subject to change. They are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at (510) 642-9988, at calperformances.org, and at the door.

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