

CONTACT: **Louisa Spier**
Cal Performances
(510) 643-6714
lspier@calperformances.org

Jeanette Peach
Cal Performances
(510) 642-9121
jpeach@calperformances.org

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[Press Room](#)



Images of Big Dance Theater's *17c* are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#).

CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS
BIG DANCE THEATER IN THE WEST COAST
PREMIERE OF
17c

A FEMINIST RE-EXAMINATION OF THE LIFE OF SAMUEL PEPYS
CREATED BY ANNIE-B PARSON
THURSDAY–SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13–16

The performances are part of Cal Performances' 2018–19 Berkeley **RADICAL Women's Work** programming strand, which recognizes the artistry of women as creators across a range of artistic genres

A free **Artist Talk** with director **Annie-B Parson** is planned as part of the company's campus residency

Berkeley, November 8, 2018 — Cal Performances at UC Berkeley presents New York's pace-setting **Big Dance Theater** in the West Coast premiere of *17c*, a theatrical production combining music, dance, video, and text to explore the erasure of women's voices in historical texts. The work is conceived, choreographed, and co-directed by **Annie B-Parson**, and uses the diaries of Samuel Pepys, the remarkable 17th-century politician and obsessive self-documenter, to offer a feminist

twist on a male-dominated narrative. Parson puts Pepys' infamous romantic predations in a new context by giving his young wife a presence beyond Pepys' representations of her, and by placing Pepys' words in conversation with a radical feminist work by his contemporary, Margaret Cavendish. Pepys' writings are also juxtaposed with contemporary commentary by the cult of online annotators at pepysdiary.com. The performances are Thursday–Saturday, December 13–15 at 8pm; Saturday, December 15 at 2pm; and Sunday, December 16 at 3pm in Zellerbach Playhouse.

Samuel Pepys was a Restoration-era London politician, statesman, and diarist who wrote vividly and compulsively about the most intimate details of his life. His published writings, which document a 10-year period, reveal a complicated figure obsessed with self-improvement, and also prone to bouts of infidelity, violence, and sexual predation. In a series of tightly crafted episodes, Parson's production dismantles this unchallenged historical figure, and embodies the women's voices omitted from Pepys' intimate portrait of his life.

Founded in 1991, Big Dance Theater is known for its inspired use of dance, music, text, and visual design. The company often works with wildly incongruent source material, weaving and braiding disparate strands into multidimensional performances. Led by co-artistic directors Annie-B Parson and Paul Lazar, the “Bessie” and Obie Award-winning company has created more than 20 dance/theater works, generating each production over months of collaboration with its associate artists, a longstanding, ever-evolving group of actors, dancers, composers, and designers. In addition to her work with Big Dance Theater, Annie-B Parson has created dances for artists and organizations as diverse as the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Royal Ballet, Martha Graham Dance Company, David Byrne, St. Vincent, Jonathan Demme, and the ETHEL string quartet. Her awards include a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Doris Duke Artist Award, and the first Jacob's Pillow Dance Award.

The Big Dance Theater performances are part of Cal Performances' 2018–19 Berkeley *RADICAL Women's Work* thematic strand, which includes five programs across several genres, created or performed by trailblazing female theater artists, musicians, directors, and choreographers. Some of these works place traditional feminist thinking in conversation with a new wave of feminist thought, using imaginative narrative techniques and inventive blending of media. While Cal Performances has always presented women artists of the highest caliber, the *Women's Work* strand is a focused look at

the extraordinary artistry of five women who are not only principal creators of works, but are, more broadly, expanding the definition of what it is to be an artist in the 21st century.

An artist talk is planned with Annie-B Parson on Saturday, December 15 at 5pm in Zellerbach Playhouse, and is free and open to the public.

Ticket Information

Tickets for *Big Dance Theater: 17c* on Thursday–Saturday, December 13–15 at 8pm; Saturday, December 15 at 2pm; and Sunday, December 16 at 3pm in Zellerbach Playhouse are \$54 (prices 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 calperformances.org, and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to calperformances.org/discounts.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Thursday, December 13, 8pm
Friday, December 14, 8pm
Saturday, December 15, 2pm
Saturday, December 15, 8pm
Sunday, December 16, 3pm

Zellerbach Playhouse
Bancroft Way at Dana Street
UC Berkeley campus

Theater

Big Dance Theater

***17c* (West Coast Premiere)**

Conceived and directed by Annie-B Parson

Co-directed by Paul Lazar

Choreographed by Annie-B Parson and the company

Program: Cal Performances presents the West Coast premiere of *17c*, the “Bessie” and Obie Award-winning Big Dance Theater’s genre-defying portrait of Samuel Pepys, the remarkable 17th-century politician whose obsessive, tell-all diaries are a startling precursor to our own social media culture. The ensemble weaves music, dance, video, and text in an exploration—part celebration, part inquisition—of the moral murkiness of Pepys’ legacy as statesman and notorious philanderer, juxtaposing his own writings with the radical feminism of his contemporary, the playwright Margaret Cavendish, and the cult of online annotators at pepysdiary.com.

Berkeley RADICAL: This performance is part of the *Women's Work* thematic strand, which shines a spotlight on remarkable female artists—directors, musicians, and choreographers—and explores the role of women creators in the arts and beyond.

Tickets: \$54 (prices subject to change)

Residency Activities

Artist Talk

Saturday December 15 at 5pm

Zellerbach Playhouse

A conversation with director Annie-B Parson focusing on the artistic choices involved in creating *17c*. Free and open to the public.