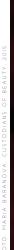
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Zuštiak creates no movement that looks like dancing for its own sake. It becomes a statement of identity, a task to be completed, an urge to be satisfied.

Deborah Jowitt, ARTSJOURNAL

There is scant middle ground in Pavel Zuštiak's work. Violence and desire, fear and rapture, pain and giddiness – he traffics in extremes, often slammed against one another in uncomfortably close quarters.

Claudia La Rocco, THE NEW YORK TIMES

A vivid, often anguished imagination shines through in Zuštiak's work.
Brian Seibert, THE NEW YORKER

In an age where many creators make cookie-cutting an art, this company deserves kudos for boldly (and refreshingly) reinventing its approach with each new piece.
Ivan Talijančić, BACHTRACK

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND THE COMPANY

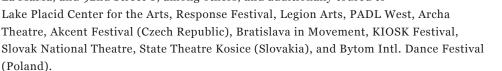
Pavel Zuštiak is a Slovak-American creative director, choreographer, and performer. Born in the communist Czechoslovakia and introduced at an early age to acting (he was a child star of the popular TV show *Golden Gate*), film, music and dance, Zuštiak left for Amsterdam shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall to study at the School for New Dance Development and eventually, he moved to New York City where he currently resides.

Presenting spectators with multi-sensory theatrical experiences, Zuštiak's works for stage and public spaces center around the exploration of the corporeal body and draw towards the darker side of the human condition. Described as both human and humane, his work merges the abstract aspects of dance with nonlinear qualities of "theatre of images" into multidisciplinary works that are rich in evocative imagery and piercing emotional resonance.

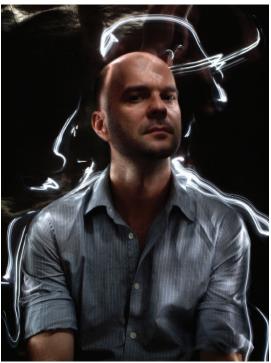
Zuštiak established Palissimo Company in 2004 as an interdisciplinary platform for the research, development and production of live art works, with a mission to attain artistic liberty and to inspire and impact audiences and the art field. Palissimo facilitates diverse artistic collaborations notably with lighting designer Joe Levasseur, musicians Christian Frederickson, visual artist Robert Flynt, and video designers Tal Yarden and Keith Skretch.

Zuštiak is the 2015 Bessie Juried Award winner for his "poetic layering of movement and visual imagery, conceiving the stage space as a decentralized world in which the corporeal body is the focus and canvas for a wide range of human expression," a 2019 Bogliasco Fellow, 2015-17 Princeton Arts Fellow, the recipient of 2013 LMCC President's Award for Excellence in Artistic Practice, 2012 NEFA/NDP Production and Residency Grants and 2010 Guggenheim Fellowship, 2010 MANCC Fellowship, and multiple Princess Grace Awards. His 5-hour trilogy The Painted Bird received a 2013 Bessie Award nomination for Outstanding Production.

Zuštiak's work is presented by Cal Performances at UC Berkeley and has additionally been commissioned and presented by Walker Art Center, Wexner Center for the Arts, American Dance Institute, New York Live Arts, PS122, COIL Festival, Abrons Arts Center, Baryshnikov Arts Center, La MaMa, and 92nd Street Y, among others, and additionally toured to



Zuštiak was an artist in residence at American Dance Institute, Gibney Dance Center, Walker Art Center, Wexner Center for the Arts, Cowles Center, Vermont Performance Lab, LMCC, Movement Research, Baryshnikov Arts Center, MANCC, Abrons Arts Center, Czech Center NY and Grotowski Institute. His work was funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, New England Foundation for the Arts, The Jerome Foundation, Trust for Mutual Understanding, National Performance Network (NPN), Princess Grace Foundation, Department of Cultural Affairs, City of New York, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, New Music USA: Live Music for Dance Program, The Edith Lutyens and Norman Bel Geddes Design Enhancement Fund,



a program of the A.R.T./New York, CEC Artslink and The Greenwall Foundation.

ARTIST STATEMENT

I believe in the power and primacy of the theatre, not as an escape from rational thinking, but as a vehicle of activating the whole person on a pre-conscious, subliminal level. I am fascinated by the unexpected and unpredictable, and love the tension when the lights go down before the show and anything can happen. I strive to suspend that tension through a totalizing theatrical experience that charts the collisions between dance, theatre and visual arts, each an equal element in creating worlds that have the potential to consume viewers and alter their perception and senses without offering straightforward conclusions.

I am drawn towards the darker side of the human condition, mirroring my personal story as someone who falls between the cracks of the social, cultural, sexual and artistic categories. I find the human body the ideal vehicle to convey such otherness. I play with the roles of the audience and performers and desire to create affinity between them while committing to taking risks, exposing my doubts and half-formed beliefs in the service of an authentic interchange. – Pavel Zuštiak



COLLABORATORS

Among the artists involved in past creative dialogues that constitute the crucial component of Palissimo's work are: in lighting design, **Joe Levasseur**; in music, **Christian Frederickson, Ryan Rumery, Jason Noble and Bobby McElver**; in video design, **Tal Yarden, Keith Skretch**; in photography, **Robert Flynt, Jose Aragon**; in set design, **Peter Ksander, Nick Vaughan**; and many others.

PRESENTERS

Palissimo presentations have been co-produced and presented by Cal Performances at UC Berkeley, Walker Art Center, Wexner Center for the Arts, Performance Space 122, La MaMa ETC., Baryshnikov Arts Center, Abrons Arts Center, New York Live Arts, Archa Prague, State Theatre Košice, KioSK Festival, and Bratislava in Motion Festival.

RESIDENCIES AND COMMISSIONS

Pavel Zuštiak has been an artist-in-residence at GIBNEY, Walker Art Center, Bogliasco Foundation, Movement Research, Baryshnikov Arts Center and Abrons Arts Center in NYC, Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography in Florida, Vermont Performance Lab, Stanica in Slovakia and Grotowski Institute in Poland. Zuštiak's choreographic works outside Palissimo include commissions by the University of California in Irvine (*Blackbird* at the Claire Trevor Theatre, 2010); Yale University, New Haven (choreography for

Matt Moses's *The Bedtrick*, 2009; for Brecht's *Baal*, 2007 and *Edward II*, 2006); **LABCO Dance**, Pittsburgh (*(S)even*, 2007).





Zuštiak has also taught master classes and workshops in composition and improvisation at the Princeton University, SaltDance Festival, at Marymount Manhattan College; California State University San Marcos; Archa Theatre in Prague, Czech Republic; Florida State University; SITI Company (Guest Artist Program); University of California San Diego; UC Irvine; Bytom International Dance Festival, Poland; Columbia University (lecture on collaborative artistic process).

AWARDS

- 2019 Bogliasco Foundation Fellow
- 2019 Princess Grace Foundation-USA Residency Award
- 2019 GIBNEY Dance in Process Residency
- 2015 Juried Bessie Award / The New York Dance and Performance Awards
- 2015 2015-17 Princeton Arts Fellow
- 2014 Princess Grace Foundation-USA Award
- 2013 Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's President's Award for Excellence in Artistic Practice
- 2013 Painted Bird trilogy nominated for Bessie Award for Outstanding Production
- 2013 Alpert Award Nomination in Dance
- 2013 Vermont Performance Lab, Artist in Residence
- 2012 Named Ambassador of KOŠICE 2013, European Capital of Culture
- 2010 John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship
- 2010-11 Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography Fellowship | Tallahassee, FL
- 2010 Time Out New York Honorable Mention for The Painted Bird: Bastard
- 2009 Alpert Award Nomination in Dance
- 2009 Princess Grace Foundation-USA Work in Progress Residency Award
- 2009 NYC Department of Transportation under Urban Art Program presents site-specific work Halt!
- 2008-09 Movement Research Artist-in-Residence | New York City
- 2007 Princess Grace Foundation-USA Choreography Award

WORKS

CUSTODIANS OF BEAUTY

World Premiere: American Dance Institute (November 2015); NYC Premiere: New York Live Arts (December 2015); Walker Art Center *Running time: 90 minutes*

The time-based work *Custodians of Beauty* continues Zuštiak's previous exploration, forging towards abstraction, minimalism, and restrained expressive modes while amplifying potency of an image; human body as sculpture, emotional trigger, or a political symbol.

For decades various arguments have been put forward against beauty. Where do we find beauty today and does it need our defense? In an age when humanity, disenchanted with itself, seems to have rejected the necessity of beauty, *Custodians of Beauty* asks us to look again, beyond the surface, to see differently.

Pavel Zustiak's gorgeous Custodians of Beauty was a profound consideration of the elements of movement. Performers Nicholas Bruder, Justin Morrison and Emma Judkins are paragons ... the piece's sense of reverence comes from the way they manifest deep calm while spending immense physical resources on our behalf.

Helen Shaw, TIME OUT NY

Custodians of Beauty tells no stories. It is a dance of images. You watch them recur, but they're not the same as they were before. They hint at meanings that vanish when the lights go out. You sense something that is not there hovering beneath what is there. Yet what is before you holds—compels— your attention. If this rich, yet pared-down dance were a meal, you'd receive a few sips of fine wine, a slice of warm bread, and a handful of freshly picked berries, and you'd go home feeling full.

Deborah Jowitt, ArtsJournal

CREDITS

Concept/Direction/Choreography/Scent Design: **Pavel Zuštiak**; Performers: **Victor de la Fuente, Emma Judkins, Justin Morrison**; Originating Performer: **Nicholas Bruder**, Original Music: **Christian Frederickson**; Lighting Design: **Joe Levasseur**; Set and Video Design: **Simon Harding**; Costume Design: **Ásta Bennie Hostetter**; Dramaturgy: **Megan Carter**; Text: **Alexandra Collier**

Custodians of Beauty is commissioned by New York Live Arts for its 50 & Change Commission series with support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. Its world premiere was at American Dance Institute (ADI) as part of ADI's Incubator program.

Custodians of Beauty is supported by Jerome Foundation. It is also supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

Custodians of Beauty is a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation Fund Project co-commissioned by New York Live Arts in partnership with Walker Art Center, Legion Arts, and NPN. The Creation Fund is supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Ford Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency). The Forth Fund is supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. For more information: www.npnweb.org.

Custodians of Beauty was developed as part of Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Process Space artist residency program and in creative residencies at Walker Art Center and Cowles Center for Dance and the Performing Arts in Minneapolis. Pavel Zuštiak researched, developed and honed Custodians of Beauty with financial, administrative and residency support from the Dance in Process Program at Gibney Dance.

Additional resources for Custodians of Beauty were received through Materials for the Arts.











ENDANGERED PIECES

World Premiere: Abrons Arts Center, NYC (October 2013) *Running time: 60 minutes*

Endangered Pieces exposes the most vulnerable, endangered, aspects of two seemingly disconnected realities—human existence and theatrical performance. The work reflects upon people's propensity to become their own worst enemies, and upon the cataclysm in contemporary economic, ecological and cultural landscapes, foreboding its arrival the way a dog senses an earthquake. With its set and costumes reduced to bare minimum, *Endangered Pieces* determinedly returns to the human body as the main medium of expression, exploring its multifaceted potential as an abstract sculpture, emotional trigger, and political symbol.

PRESS

The integration between the action, the imaginatively harsh lighting and the ominous soundscape is exceptionally tight.

Brian Siebert, The New York Times

How does one go on in the aftermath of destruction, ranging anywhere from profound emotional loss to a cataclysmic event? And what is the barrier that divides resignation from the impetus to rebuild from the rubble?

Ivan Talijančić, BACHTRACK

Zuštiak is training us to treat our current precarious dance with fate as a game that we must learn to play, ideally, with a philosophical distance.

Deirdre Towers, Dance Enthusiast

This is a work that defies easy interpretations and puts the audience somewhat on the spot.

Deborah Jowitt, ARTSJOURNAL

CREDITS

Concept/Direction/Choreography: **Pavel Zuštiak**; Performers: **Christian Frederickson, Bobby McElver, Matthew Rogers, Jaro Viňarský, Pavel Zuštiak**; Original Music: **Christian Frederickson, Bobby McElver**; Male Voice: **Paul Cooper**; Female Voice: **Tara Frederickson**; Lighting Design: **Joe Levasseur**; Assistant Lighting Design: **Dan Stearns**; Text, Costumes and Set: **The Company**; Dramaturgical Advice: **Igor Dobričić**

A Palissimo production, commissioned by the Abrons Arts Center, created in research and development residencies and with support of Abrons Arts Center, Czech Center New York, Vermont Performance Lab, and Stanica Žilina-Záriečie, Slovakia. Elements of the sound score recorded and engineered by Dave Snyder at Guilford Sound. This piece was made possible with funding from The Jerome Foundation, The Mertz Gilmore Foundation, Trust for Mutual Understanding, and New Music USA.











THE PAINTED BIRD Trilogy

Three years in development, **the four-hour trilogy cycle** is an **ambitious interdisciplinary spectacle loosely inspired** by the harsh, memorable and controversial 1965 wartime novel **by an expatriate Polish writer Jerzy Kosiński** under the same title. Sifted through Zuštiak's own sensibility, marked by sense of detachment of typical social, political and artistic roles, *The Painted Bird* became a point of departure for exploration of themes of trauma and coping, longing and memory, otherness and search for a new identity, reworking Kosiński's ideas in an abstract and indirect way. On a formal level, it is an important piece in Zuštiak's ongoing examination and questioning of roles and power dynamic between performers and audiences – as Claudia La Rocco put it in her 2011 review of the second part, the piece is "as much about the watchers



as the watched". Part I, BASTARD, starts in the "safety" of a traditional auditorium; however, appearance of a large group of performers in the final scene changes the traditional power dynamics, raising the question of who is looking at whom. In Part II, AMIDST, the audience, freely moving

in a seatless black box, becomes the crowd of the BASTARD, again posing a question of whose story is being told, and who is watching it. Finally, in STRANGE CARGO, the symmetrically divided audience area separates the viewers from the performers onstage, but at the same time forces them to look at a "mirror image" of themselves across the stage.

The three installments premiered individually as they were completed and eventually as a four-hour spectacle are designed to be presented both independently and as a cycle. Accompanied by rich photographic and video imagery and evocative live music, they create work that is *"as intimate as a personal narrative and as authentic as historical nonfiction… a genius production."* (*BroadwayWorld*)

Part I, BASTARD, developed and supported during residencies at Stanica Žilina-Záriečie (Slovakia) and Grotowski Institute (Poland). Created with financial support from Trust for Mutual Understanding, Greenwall Foundation, CEC Artslink, Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, US Embassy in Slovakia, Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, and NF Slovak Telekom. An early research of the work was made possible with assistance of Movement Research in New York City and dance department at University of California, Irvine.

Part II, AMIDST, developed and supported during residency at Baryshnikov Arts Center (NYC) with financial support of Princess Grace Foundation-USA. Further funding provided by John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, Greenwall Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts and Jerome Foundation. Production design support by The Edith Lutyens and Norman Bel Geddes Design Enhancement Fund, a program of the Alliance of Resident Theatres / New York (A.R.T. / New York.) Funds for the composer's commission and musicians fees supplied by the American Music Center Live Music for Dance Program. Amidst was also made possible through subsidized studio space available with support from the A.R.T. / New York Creative Space Grant, founded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation by and by Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Swing Space program, provided by a real estate donation from Capstone Equities.

Part III, STRANGE CARGO, created with commissioning support from Performance Space 122 and Wexner Center for the Arts at The Ohio State University and made possible, in part, by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and additional backing from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the MetLife Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional support and commissioning funds for this program have been provided by The Jerome Foundation and New Music USA's Live Music for Dance program, with additional project support from Greenwall Foundation and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council. Developed and supported during residency at the Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography (Tallahassee, FL), Baryshnikov Arts Center, Abrons Arts Center and also made possible by Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Swing Space program through a real estate donation from Capstone Equities.

BASTARD (The Painted Bird: Part I)

World Premiere: KioSK Festival, Stanica, Slovakia (July 2010) US Premiere: La MaMa ETC (November 2010) *Running time: 75 minutes*

The opening section of the trilogy shows the most direct narrative connection to its literary source. Conceived as a visceral, physically demanding and courageous solo for the Slovak dancer Jaro Viňarský (awarded the 2013 Bessie for Outstanding Performer for his portrayal of Kosiński's persecuted outsider/wanderer in this piece), it draws upon crucial scene of The Painted Bird novel—a bird captured by a human is brilliantly painted and then freed to return to its flock, only to be violently killed by its own kind as a perceived interloper. A forceful performance by the soloist concludes by a group scene with an ensemble of dancers and nonprofessionals drawn from the community where the work is presented, transforming the internal landscape of agony and misrecognition into a collective remembrance.

PRESS

Bastard is searing. Gia Kourlas, THE NEW YORK TIMES

Bastard earns it emotional extremity - with tenderness and quiet.

Apollinaire Scherr, FINANCIAL TIMES

Bastard has both magic and mystery. Leigh Witchel, DANCEVIEWTIMES

Almost every artistic choice in this hour-long work feels essential. Siobhan Burke, DANCE MAGAZINE

Pavel Zuštiak's choreography is fascinating and compelling. He uses simple phrases and the natural disposition of the dancer's bodies to create drama and emotional effect.

Andy Horwitz, CULTUREBOT

CREDITS

Concept/Direction/Choreography: **Pavel Zuštiak**; Performer: **Jaro Viňarský**; Original Music and Live Performance: **Christian Frederickson**; Lighting Design: **Joe Levasseur**; Scenic and Costume Design: **Nick Vaughan, Pavel Zuštiak**; Video Design: **Manny Palad**



AMIDST (The Painted Bird: Part II)

World Premiere: Baryshnikov Arts Center (June 2011) *Running time: 60 minutes*

Conceived as an immersive live performance installation, in which performers and audiences coalesce in a dark, foggy, and enigmatic space, AMIDST is a meditation on nostalgia, entrapment in the state of "in-between" – an often disorienting experience of changing times, cultural and social identities, memories, longings, losses, reinventions and aspirations. The work employs three performers (original cast included Lindsey Dietz-Marchant, Nicholas Bruder, and Pavel Zuštiak), appearing and disappearing among the crowd of freely moving spectators, who themselves become coopted and transformed into performers. Accompanied by haunting images by Robert Flynt and video projections by Keith Skretch, AMIDST provides a distinctive, participatory theatrical experience.

PRESS

It's worth losing your bearings for a while in the enigmatic atmosphere of this high-art haunted house.

Leigh Witchel, NEW YORK POST

The most disorienting reminders of the terrors of that war... came from the emotional impact of the dance, and the audience's own foggy path.

Martha Sherman, DANCEVIEWTIMES

Amidst is not a play. It is not solely a dance. It is that newer beast-live art or contemporary performance... a non-word-based performance full of as much beauty and narrative and character as anything taking place within the strict confines of 'theater.'

Sherri Kronfeld, NEW YORK THEATER REVIEW

The entire production is very much a whirlwind, and the bravura of the dancers, their quicksilver movement quality, along with the impressively accomplished design elements adds up to a richly satisfying experience.

Ivan Talijančić, BACHTRACK

CREDITS

Concept/Direction/Choreography: **Pavel Zuštiak**; Performed by **Lindsey Dietz-Marchant, Nick Bruder, Pavel Zuštiak**; Original Music by **Christian Frederickson, Jason Noble and Ryan Rumery**, performed live by **Christian Frederickson, Ryan Rumery, Tim Isler**; Photography: **Robert Flynt**; Video Design: **Keith Skretch**; Lighting Design: **Joe Levasseur**; Costume Design: **Nick Vaughan**; Dramaturgy: **A. P. Andrews**













STRANGE CARGO (The Painted Bird: Part III)

World Premiere: Performance Space 122 at Synod Hall of Cathedral of St. John the Divine (May 2012) *Running time: 60 minutes*

"There is no essential difference between war and any other traumatic experience," said Jerzy Kosiński in an often-cited interview given to *Paris Review* in 1972 – and it seems an appropriate introduction to THE STRANGE CARGO, the capstone of *The Painted Bird* cycle. In this most physically intense part of the trilogy, featuring five performers of strikingly different physiques, the dancers shift between confrontational scenes in which they threaten one another to moments of alienation and disconnect. None of the meeting of outsiders concludes in community-forming unity. The audience, arranged on either side of the theater, seems almost encouraged to take sides as brutal and intense episodes unfurl on stage – leading to an unexpectedly solemn finale, evoking tragic ending met by *The Painted Bird* writer, who took his own life in 1991. As Kayt MacMaster put it in his *BroadwayWorld* review of the whole La MaMa cycle, "Strange Cargo *is the straw that breaks the camel's back. It is hellish and difficult. It is the moment when all the banished are together in one place, and the outcome is simultaneously accusatory and reflective. It forces responsibility and recognition on all participants."*

PRESS

History-laden 'Cargo' worth the freight. Leigh Witchel, NEW YORK POST

Terrible images can be so beautiful. Martha Sherman, DANCEVIEWTIMES

Sensation of being on the outside looking in, along with Christian Frederickson and Ryan Rumery's live score, gives "Strange Cargo" jolts of spooky energy. **Gia Kourlas, THE NEW YORK TIMES**

CREDITS

Concept/Direction/Choreography: **Pavel Zuštiak**; Original Music composed and performed live by **Christian Frederickson** and **Ryan Rumery**; Performers: **Giulia Carotenuto, Lindsey Dietz-Marchant, Luke Murphy, Denisa Musilová, Jeremy Xido**; Lighting Design: **Joe Levasseur**; Set Design: **Peter Ksander**; Costume Design: **Asta Hostetter**; Video Design: **Keith Skretch, Manny Palad**; Dramaturgy: **A. P. Andrews**



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PALISSIMO COMPANY

Producing Artistic Director: **Pavel Zuštiak**, pavel@palissimo.org Associate Producer: **Jason Collins**, jason@palissimo.org

Board of Directors

Mary Ellen Obias, *President* Julio J. Tumbaco, *Treasurer* Roger Kingsepp, *Secretary* Jess Edkins Min Pefanis Cathy Liu Dicksé Fitzerald Pavel Zuštiak, *Palissimo Inc., Producing Artistic Director* Jeffrey Fracé [Chairman Emeritus]

Dancers (past and present)

Benjamin Asriel, Gina Bashour, Nick Bruder, Giulia Carotenuto, Yoel Cassell, Ellen Cremer, Elena Demyanenko, Viktor De La Fuente, Alberto Denis, Lindsey Dietz-Marchant, Saar Harari, Sho Ikushima, Jeff Kent Jacobs, Emma Judkins, Ashleigh Leite, Justin Morrison, Luke Murphy, Denisa Musilová, Matthew Rogers, Jaro Viňarský, Marýa Wethers, Anthony Whitehurst, Jeremy Xido, Pavel Zuštiak.

Collaborators (past and present)

A.P. Andrews, Jose Aragon, Megan Carter, Alexandra Collier, Igor Dobričić, Robert Flynt, Christian Frederickson, Simon Harding, Ásta Bennie Hostetter, Peter Ksander, Joe Levasseur, Bobby McElver, Jason Noble, Ryan Rumery, Daniel Stearns, Keith Skretch, Nick Vaughan, Tal Yarden.

Funders

- Alliance of Resident Theatres/New York (A.R.T./New York) Bossak/Heilbron Charitable Foundation CEC Artslink Department of Cultural Affairs, City of New York Foundation for Contemporary Arts John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship Lower Manhattan Cultural Council National Endowment for the Arts New England Foundation for the Arts New Music USA: Live Music for Dance Program
- Mary Duke Biddle Foundation Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation Princess Grace Foundation-USA The Greenwall Foundation The Jerome Foundation Trust for Mutual Understanding