

# AXIS



## *Dance* Company

Fall 1999

### *Dance legend Bill T. Jones to create new work for AXIS*

Last year, AXIS embarked on an exciting new project of commissioning outside choreography from international and Bay Area choreographers. The company is now honored to have the opportunity to work with Bill T. Jones, one of the world's preeminent dance artists.

Mr. Jones will create a new repertory dance piece for AXIS, which will premiere in Boston next spring and then in San Francisco. Rehearsals begin in September at the Alice Arts Center.

Jones said in a recent interview, "I am fascinated to be working with AXIS. I found them to be very interesting people. It will be a challenge to avoid the clichés and pitfalls that are easy to fall into when working with dancers who are disabled."

***"I am fascinated to be working with  
AXIS ... It will be a challenge."***

The piece is being commissioned by AXIS Dance Company and Jeremy Alliger of Dance Umbrella in Boston and funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts and individual supporters of the arts and disability communities.

A recipient of a MacArthur "genius" Award, Jones has been outspoken about his experience with HIV and AIDS and the impact of AIDS on the art world.



Prior to founding the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance

Company in 1982, Jones choreographed and performed internationally as a soloist and with his late partner Arnie Zane. In addition to choreographing more than 40 works for his own company, he has been commissioned to create pieces for other modern and ballet companies, including the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the Boston Ballet and the Lyon Opera where he was appointed resident choreographer in 1993.

Jones has directed a number of theatrical works for the Guthrie Theater, the Houston Grand Opera, the Glynbourne Festival

Opera, the Munich Biennale and the BBC. He has been the subject of several documentaries, including "The Making of the 'Last Supper At Uncle Tom's Cabin'" and PBS production on the making of "Still/Here" produced by Bill Moyers.

Jones's work often explores the issues of race, sexual orientation and interracial relationships. Poet Maya Angelou has said: "It is a rare thing for a person to have the courage to live a strenuous and challenging life and be able to find beauty in it. It is more rare, and in this case more valuable, that Bill T. Jones has been able to do the above and dance about it."

**A reception will be held for Mr. Jones on  
Oct. 6. For details call 510-287-5792.**

## Who's on board ...

Jonathan Frieman, Board President  
Jan Garrett, Board Vice President  
Geneva Clay, Board Secretary  
Elliot Halpern, Board Treasurer  
Dolly Gattozzi, Board member  
Tom Metz, Board member  
Laurie Posner, Board member  
Juliana Recio, Board member

Judith Smith, Codirector, Dancer  
Nicole Richter, Codirector, Dancer

Bonnie Lewkowicz, Dancer  
Stephanie McGlynn, Dancer  
Alisa Rasera, Dancer  
Megan Schirle, Dancer  
Uli Schmitz, Dancer

Mary Smith, Business Advisor

Lela DaVia, Consultant



Jonathan Frieman became President of the Board of Directors of AXIS Dance Company in June 1999. A director since late 1996, he was inspired to join when he caught an AXIS performance in San Francisco where past President Jan Garrett, whom he had first met at a conference the previous fall, was selling AXIS T-shirts.

Jonathan acquired a severe hearing loss as a child; nevertheless, he taught himself guitar as a young teenager and went on to develop the drive and flair that took him to a Master's

degree in Public Administration. After a short career as an advanced hands-on body-worker he went for an education in the law, from which "I was paroled in 1997." He is currently active at several levels of nonprofit service: volunteer intake for Legal Aid of Marin; service on the board of an organization that raises funds to supplement the pay of attendants for severely disabled persons; and a founder of the newly launched JoMiJo Foundation, for which he is Program Director.

Jonathan's special interest is activism for social change and he sees AXIS in this light. The Company embodies the spirit of social change in its vibrant display of the innovative artistry of dancers with and without physical disabilities. Moreover, AXIS's outreach and education activities share the Company's unique genius with diverse communities worldwide, shattering stereotypic notions of the limitations of physical disability.

Jonathan's chief goals as President are to support the Board's wishes to strengthen the Company's infrastructure and establish financial stability. Consonant with his personal goal of encouraging philanthropy for social change, he will work to assure the prime place of AXIS Dance Company as a worthy beneficiary.

## Thanks

AXIS gratefully acknowledges the financial support of Sydell and Eva, Keith Alward, Sue Anderson, Jody Andrews, Judith Baker, Jeri Bemis, Susan Blanchard, Joan Breves, Michael Brown, Tish Brown, Maryann Buchholz, Anne Butigan, Carrie & John R. Butler, Geneva Clay, Carolyn Cornia, Allen Daley, Lela DaVia, JA Ellis, Lainey Feingold, Jackie & Richard Fineberg, Elly & Izzie Friedman, Jeff Friedman, Dolly Gattozzi, Dan Geiger, Cindi & Howard Goldberg, Grandmar, Inc., Anne Greene, Tyler Haaren, Elliot Halpern, L. Hamilton, Neala Haze, Nancy Henderson, Linda Hunt, Susanna Jacobson, Sondra Jensen, Victoria Jones, Hannah Joyce, Marty & Barbara Kaplan, Lucille Karuzas, Elias Katz, Susan Kuhn, David Landes, Virginia Laurence, Phyllis Lewkowicz, Simi Linton, Pamela Markman, Tom Metz, Michael Miller, Mary Mocine, Susan Musicant, Debra Nicholson, Michael Perreault, Karen Peterson, Peter Pfaelzer, Nancy Pierce-Owens, Bob Powers, Jodi Pullan, Henry A.J. Ramos & Claudia Lenschen-Ramos, Anders Richter, Richard Richter, Barry Roeder, Carol Rothman, Megan Schirle, Peg & George Schirle, Alan & Laurie Senauke, Beth Slepian, Lois Smith, Mary Smith, Joel Snyder, Judith Stronach, Patty Thayer, Judith Treesberg, Steven & Christina Upstill, Gretchen Williams, Edwin Wood, Rachel Young, Sophie Yung, Luoping Zhang, Walter and Elise Haas Fund, Zellerbach Family Fund, LEF Foundation, The Fleishhacker Foundation, Alameda County Arts Commission, Dance Umbrella of Boston, Oakland Cultural Arts Division, California Arts Council Organizational Support Program and Artists in Residency Program, National Endowment for the Arts, Judith Stronach Family Fund, True North Foundation, Clorox Foundation, VISA Corporation, Business Volunteers for the Arts, Arts Management Institute, Disability Rights Advocates Fund of the San Francisco Foundation, Sydney Stern Memorial Trust, Van Loben Sels Foundation, and Wheelchairs of Berkeley.

AXIS also thanks our as-always ridiculously dedicated dancers; our incredible board of directors; our Eighth Street Studio partner Jim Beatty of Ha Ha This-a-Way; Alysa Ahlstone of Deloitte and Touche for marketing consultation; Lela Da Via for development; Althea Boxley, Kelly Snitkin, Ann Hubrig, Ramona Arellano, Amanda Dewald, Elliot Halpern and Dolly Gattozzi for assistance with administration and special events; Sonya Delwaide, Alexander Nichols, Joanna Haigood, Wayne Campbell, Joe Goode and Marit Brook-Kothlow for our wonderful new repertory pieces; Aimee Tsao, John Killacky, Jeremy Alliger, Andrew Woods, Barbara Kaplan, Bruce Lawrence, M.D., Henry Ramos and Mel Soloman for their enthusiasm, moral support and networking; Dan Garrett, Tina Mann, Iva Walton, Matt McGlynn, Pauline Richter, Rebecca Lemov, Frank Garvey and Leon Setti for a variety of things; Scott Phelans for his much-appreciated massage externship; Andrew Tavoni, Geneva Clay and Tom Metz for graphics; Mary Smith for financial management; and Jan Garrett and Jonathan Frieman for their exceptional leadership!

# Fall/Winter Calendar

Some events subject to change -- call 510-287-5792 for information and confirmation

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## PERFORMANCES & EVENTS

### ODC Theatre Benefit

Sept 11, 8 p.m.

ODC Theatre, San Francisco.

Join AXIS and others for an exciting evening of Bay Area dance. Call 415-626-6745 for reservations.

### Teacher Training Intensive, Sacramento.

Oct 23, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Learn to teach dance to people with and without disabilities. For information call 510-287-5792. To register call Annie Desalarnos 916-277-2340

### World Institute on Disability Benefit

Oct 25, 6:30 p.m.

Yerba Buena Theater, San Francisco, CA

Featuring AXIS Dance Company, David Roche and Cheryl Marie Wade. For information: 510-865-3360

### AXIS Benefit Performance

Nov 7, 7 p.m.

ODC Theater, San Francisco, CA

Featuring a preview of AXIS's newest work, "Jane Eyre," choreographed by Joe Goode. For reservations call 415-626-6745.



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## CLASSES

### Dance Access Open Adult Classes

Oct. 19 - Dec 7, Tues. 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Eighth Street Studio, Berkeley, CA

Dance classes for adults with and without disabilities -- any level of experience!

### Dance Access Lab

Oct 21-Dec 9, Thurs. 12:30 - 2 p.m.

Eighth Street Studio, Berkeley, CA

For experienced dancers. The Performance Lab includes one weekly out-of-the-studio-and-into-the-streets site-specific guerrilla performance! Site determined on a weekly basis. For details call Nicole at 510-287-5792.

**Dance Access/KIDS! classes will also begin in the fall. Call Bonnie at 510-419-0527 for more information!**

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## Dance Access Adults and Youth Programs Expand

AXIS's ever-expanding educational and outreach program Dance Access has hit new highs. Thanks to support from local foundations and ardent AXIS supporters, we were able to both expand our ongoing adult programming and launch our long-awaited youth program, Dance Access/Kids! In response, our "core" teaching team has expanded to five dancers teaching throughout the week in area schools and in our own Eighth Street Studio. As always AXIS, continues to offer workshops for all ages while on tour and closer to home: recent residencies have included teaching stints in Los Angeles, Boston, Sacramento, and (closer to home) Berkeley High School and the Recreation Center for the Handicapped in San Francisco.

One of the most exciting developments in our adult programming has been the recent introduction of our **Dance Access Lab**, an informal/improvisational forum for more experienced dancers to explore, play, "body-storm" new ideas, and develop performance pieces. The Lab meets weekly both in our studio and--taking advantage of the terrific Bay Area weather!--outdoors in various public spaces in and around the East Bay. It is the perfect complement to our **Dance Access Open Adult Classes**, which continue to meet weekly and always welcome new folks and beginners to the form! For details on adult class schedules call Nicole at 510-287-5792 or see our Web site: <http://www.axisdance.org>.

(continued)

In youth news, our long awaited **Dance Access/KIDS!** program was launched in early spring and has thus far served over 500 students. The program, which emphasizes integration of children and teens with and without disabilities, consists of three different components: assemblies in schools throughout the Bay Area, on-going classes in the schools as part of the students' curriculum, and after-school classes at our studio in Berkeley. All of the classes are free. The response from everyone involved has been extremely positive and rewarding:

- "It's my favorite part of the week."
- "The class is a treasure for my child and a wonderful model of inclusion."
- "This class is the best thing I ever learned in."
- "Amazingly fun!"



AXIS is thrilled to be contributing to the arts education of these children and expanding their concepts of disability. Beginning in October we will once again teach in the Oakland and Albany school district as well as conducting school assemblies. For class information or to bring an assembly to your school call Bonnie at 510-287-5792.

### ***Wish List***

PC computer, printer, and color scanner

Video camera, tripod, monitor

General office supplies, stamps

Printing and graphic design

*Volunteers! ... for office help, mailings, studio maintenance*

*AXIS needs your support!* In today's world of ever-shrinking arts funding, we cannot survive without the generous support of individual donors from amongst our pool of AXIS fans.

The **New Works Fund** supports creation of our cutting-edge choreography, commissioning collaborating artists, and presenting performances to local, national, and international audiences.

**Dance Access Educational and Outreach Fund** supports classes, workshops, residencies, assemblies and lecture/demonstrations in schools and the community.

**General Operations Fund** supports the expenses of running a successful dance company. By specifying "Greatest Need," you grant us the discretion to apply your donation towards the area of our work which most needs support at that time.

\_\_\_\_\_ \$5-\$50 Fan

\_\_\_\_\_ \$50-\$100 Supporter

\_\_\_\_\_ \$100-\$250 Sponsor

\_\_\_\_\_ \$250-\$500 Sustainer

\_\_\_\_\_ \$500-\$1,000 Patron

\_\_\_\_\_ \$1,000 & up Benefactor

### ***BOOKING AXIS***

Would you like to bring AXIS to your community or school? You may be able to receive financial support from the California Arts Council Touring Roster and The San Jose Artist Fee Support Program for performances, workshops, residencies and work in schools. Please contact Judith Smith at 510-287-5792 for more information.

#### *Photos*

*Prayer, with dancers Megan Schirle and Stephanie McGlynn., copyright 1996 Amy Snyder*

*Dancer and instructor Bonnie Lewkowicz with Dance Access Kids., copyright 1999 Nicole Richter*

*Dancer and instructor Nicole Richter with Dance Access Lab participants, copyright 1999 Pauline Richter.*

*photo: dancer and instructor Judith Smith with Dance Access/KIDS! participants, copyright 1999 Nicole Richter.*

## ***Dancer Profile: Judith Smith***

AXIS dancer, founding member, and codirector Judith Smith, recalls: "I began dancing on a total fluke when I was asked to join in the creation of a dance piece with a group of dancers with and without physical disabilities. I use a wheelchair and had never been interested in dance and I knew nothing about it. But I was interested in moving in a way that was more than just getting from here to there, that would be moving creatively with other people."



Judith, surrounded by Dance Access kids.

Judith accepted the offer to dance in a wheelchair and the rest is dance history. Now, 11 years later, the group is the internationally renowned AXIS Dance Company and Judith has collaborated in the choreography and performed in 15 repertory works and three full-length works featuring a "integrated" new dance form, developed by dancers with and without physical disabilities.

Judith continues to study movement in a wheelchair through modern dance, improvisation, and martial arts. She also teaches dance in AXIS extensive community outreach and education program and participates in AXIS lecture demonstrations, workshops, teacher training, and residency activities. As AXIS co-director Judith is keen to commission outside choreographers to shape, design, and expand the Company's movement vocabulary.

She elaborates, "Before my wheelchair, when I was showing horses, I always looked to compete with riders who were better than I was. It's the same with dance. I'm looking for new works that will challenge our dancers. The potential of this dance form for creating movement art that can only happen because of the way disabled dancers move -- in wheelchairs, on crutches, with spasticity, on the floor or in the air -- is unlimited. Pioneering companies like AXIS have a tremendous responsibility to create dance that is applauded not because it's 'special art,' but because it's good and exciting to see."

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## ***Projects, Performances & New Works***

It's been a busy few months. We were honored when members of **Full Radius Dance Company** of Atlanta, GA were so impressed with AXIS's signature duet "Prayer" (created by Stephanie McGlynn and Megan Schirle in 1995) that they asked to include it in their own repertory. To our knowledge, the commissioning of a set piece of choreography from one integrated dance company by another is a first--and the project came with its challenges. Given the specificities of bodies and wheelchairs, dancers from both companies had to work long hours to adapt the movement while maintaining the essence of the piece. In the end, we were thrilled with how beautifully the Full Radius dancers have embodied "Prayer" confident in sending our "baby" out into the world! This experience reaffirmed that part of AXIS's legacy lies in documenting and perpetuating our dances so that others can learn and perform them for future audiences.

Many curious observers dropped in to watch our open studio rehearsals during National Dance Week in April. Those who did got their own special sneak preview of our new aerial piece, "Descending Cords," by **Joanna Haigood**. We previewed the piece to gasps and acclaim at our annual AXIS benefit at **Yerba Buena Forum** in May, and premiered it at Dance Umbrella's **International Aerial Dance Festival** in Boston in June (where our intrepid AXIS team also taught a full week's worth of classes in and around the greater Boston area). Another recent highlight was a residency at the **ATA/VSA Conference** in Los Angeles in May, in which in addition to teaching and performing we were able to connect with many other integrated dance companies from around the world -- some old friends, some astonishing new discoveries. (Look for updates on our Web site's dance company resource list.)

We've been working on a new piece by **Joe Goode**, which we will preview at ODC in November (see Calendar for details). Those of you who know Joe's work have an idea of what to expect: a quirky, humorous, thought-provoking piece which draws as much upon theater as dance, and a real departure for AXIS. Don't miss this preview.

Other future projects in the pipeline for unveiling in the millenium include a new company piece by AXIS dancers Megan Schirle and Alisa Rasera (our newest addition to the AXIS fold!). To all of you who have been asking us: "But when do I get to see all of this?" the answer is: in June, when we present our first annual **AXIS Home Season** at the Cowell Theater. Beyond that, plans are in the works for a collaboration with the highly acclaimed, oft controversial New York choreographer **Stephen Petronio**. Stay tuned for more details



***Garrick Ohlsson invites you to an intimate evening of great music to benefit art and humanity.***

Sunday, October 3, 1999

5:00 pm Recital

Followed by a private reception with Garrick

At the First Unitarian Universalist Church

1187 Franklin Street (at Geary)

San Francisco, CA

**For tickets, call 415-621-7797.**

\$45 general admission

\$75 admission plus reception

\$35 student and fixed income

A benefit for AXIS Dance Company and ABLE-TOGETHER.

Garrick Ohlsson ranks among the world's foremost pianists. A musician of enormous resources, Mr. Ohlsson commands an unusually wide and eclectic repertoire, which ranges from the works of Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, and Brahms, to twentieth century masters. The program will include Beethoven, Chopin, and Liszt.

Mr. Ohlsson performs regularly with the world's major orchestras. The San Francisco Chronicle described his recent sold-out performance with the San Francisco Symphony as "magnificent ... thrilling ... It was breathtaking -- not just a bravura display of keyboard magic but a fascinating exploration of musical sensibility."

**AXIS Foundation**  
for AXIS Dance Company  
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Oakland, CA 94618  
510-287-5792

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