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ODC ANNOUNCES NEW LEADERSHIP AT ITS TEEN CONTEMPORARY DANCE COMPANY, **ODC DANCE JAM**

*Long-serving Associate Director Dexandro Montalvo steps down;
Douglas Gillespie to assume his role starting in February 2025*

*Guest choreographer Babatunji Johnson in residence with the company in
January 2025*

*ODC Dance Jam's annual home season, April 19 – 20, 2025, to feature
world premieres by Montalvo and Johnson alongside repertory works by
Kimi Okada, KT Nelson and Bliss Kohlmyer*



Photo by Nico Henderson.

odc.dance/jam

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, December 20, 2024 – ODC has announced new leadership at its teen contemporary dance company, ODC Dance Jam. Founded in 1996, the Dance Jam is currently led by **Kimi Okada**, a founding member of ODC, an associate choreographer and the ODC School director. The Dance Jam's

long-serving Co-Artistic Director **Dexandro Montalvo** will depart at the end of this year as the company welcomes new Associate Director **Douglas Gillespie**.

Montalvo's departure follows his momentous decision to form his own bicoastal company, a long-held dream of his. For his part, Gillespie joins ODC on the heels of a fulfilling performance career in New York. Currently he is a performer in Punchdrunk/Emursive's *Life and Trust*, and before that he was a member of the cast of *Sleep No More*. Within the world of concert dance, Gillespie has performed as a member of David Dorfman Dance and Kate Weare Company. He has also served as a guest performer with ODC/Dance and has taught as guest faculty in ODC School. Gillespie's term as ODC Dance Jam associate director begins in February.

"As a technique teacher, rehearsal master and choreographer, Dexandro has instilled a deep understanding of what it means to be a committed dancer," said Okada. "While we bid farewell to him, acknowledging all that he has generously given to the Dance Jam, we look forward with excitement to the fresh perspectives Doug will bring to the company."

ODC Dance Jam is a rigorous, pre-professional company for individuals ages 13 - 18. There are currently eight members, ages 16 - 18. Selected by audition, Dance Jam members cross-train in contemporary, ballet, world dance and street forms. They also take classes in composition/choreography and Pilates.

Rehearsing three times per week, the company often works directly with ODC's flagship dance company, ODC/Dance, as they learn to perform works from their repertory. The Dance Jam also has a rich history of commissions by distinguished guest choreographers including Gregory Dawson, Kim Epifano, Katie Faulkner, Amy Foley, Catherine Galasso, Erika Chong Shuch, Amara Tabor-Smith, Scott Wells and many others.

Next year's guest choreographer will be **Babatunji Johnson**, whose residency in January will culminate in a new work to be performed at the Dance Jam's annual home season, April 19 – 20, at ODC Theater. Johnson, who currently performs as a member of Alonzo King LINES Ballet, has an impressive resume that includes projects with Post:ballet, SFDanceworks, Terri Lyne Carrington and Misty Copeland. He is a recipient of the prestigious Princess Grace Award and the Chris Hellman Dance Award.

Next year's Dance Jam season will also include a parting gift – a new work, and hopefully not the last – by Montalvo, in addition to repertory works by Okada, ODC Fellow **KT Nelson** and guest choreographer **Bliss Kohlmyer**.

In addition to performing, the Dance Jam is mentored to self-produce their annual home season concerts – from marketing and fundraising to box office setup and tracking – learning skills that extend well beyond the studio and stage. Among the Dance Jam alums who have gone on to make careers in dance are **Chuck Wilt** and **Mia J. Chong**, each of whom launched their own companies, UNA Productions and 8 Moves, respectively, and many others who have been hired by professional dance companies or work as freelance agents.

"The Jam was an essential part of my journey towards becoming a professional dancer and then a self-producing choreographer and director," said Chong, who graduated from the Dance Jam in 2014. "Being in the Jam under Kimi, KT and Dexandro empowered my sense of self and gave me the courage to tackle creativity in my own way – two qualities I know the phenomenal Doug Gillespie has a special talent for extracting from students and professional dancers alike!"

ABOUT ODC

Founded in 1971 by Artistic Director Brenda Way, ODC is a groundbreaking contemporary arts institution: a world-class dance company (ODC/Dance), a theater with year-round presenting and mentorship programs (ODC Theater), a training school for dancers and movers of all levels (ODC School), and a fee-free, educational Healthy Dancers' Clinic. Known nationally for its entrepreneurial savvy and artistic innovation, ODC is unique for its holistic vision, now including a robust digital platform. With its home in San Francisco's Mission District, ODC makes a dynamic contribution to the Bay Area's vibrant dance and arts ecosystem, cultivating artists, inspiring audiences, engaging the community, and fostering diversity and inclusion through dance performance, training and mentorship.

FACT SHEET

WHAT:

ODC DANCE JAM, ODC's pre-professional teen dance company, presents their annual home season featuring world premieres by Babatunji Johnson and Dexandro Montalvo.

Program:

Untitled (world premiere) by **Babatunji Johnson**

Untitled (world premiere) by **Dexandro Montalvo**

Head in the Sand (2016) by **Kimi Okada**

There's So Much to Do to Save the World (2010) by **KT Nelson**

Mixing Ground (2003) by **Bliss Kohlmyer**

WHEN:

April 19 - 20, 2025

Saturday at **8 p.m.**

Sunday at **4 p.m.** and **7 p.m.**

WHERE:

ODC Theater

3153 17th Street

San Francisco, CA 94110

TICKETS:

\$15 - \$30

For reservations visit odc.dance/tickets or call the ODC Theater box office at **415-863-9834**.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

odc.dance/jam

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