

FLYAWAY ✂

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Media Contact: John Hill
johnhillpr@gmail.com
510.435.7128

FLYAWAY PRODUCTIONS ANNOUNCES THE WORLD PREMIERE OF
The Wait Room

A site-specific dance honoring women with incarcerated loved ones

April 19 – 27, 2019



Clarissa Dyas photographed by RJ Muna.

flyawayproductions.com

“This is art at the heart of the democratic ideal.”

– Rita Felciano, *San Francisco Bay Guardian*

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, December 17, 2018 – Flyaway Productions is proud to announce the world premiere of **THE WAIT ROOM**, a site-specific dance honoring women with incarcerated loved ones. *The Wait Room* runs April 19 – 27, 2019, at 1125 Market Street, a vacant lot opposite United Nations Plaza at the Civic Center, with six performances at 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday, April 19 – 20, 26 – 27, and Wednesday and Thursday, April 24 – 25. Two additional matinees will take place at 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 20 and 27. All performances are free with no advance reservation required.

Engaging the ideas of waiting and weighting, *The Wait Room* blends oral history, dance, music and public art in an exploration of the physical, psychic and emotional burdens of prison for women with

incarcerated loved ones. Flyway Productions has commissioned longtime company collaborators **Sean Riley** and **Pamela Z** to participate in the creation of the work. Riley will design and construct a mobile set which will travel with the company from the Bay Area to Ossining, New York, outside of Sing Sing Prison, in September 2019.

Composer Pamela Z will translate the oral histories of several women with families fractured by incarceration into a score informing the choreography of Flyway Artistic Director **Jo Kreiter**, who has assembled a cast of six women performers: **Bianca Cabrera, Clarissa Dyas, Laura Elaine Ellis, Sonsheree Giles, MaryStarr Hope** and **Megan Lowe**.

Additional collaborators include lighting designer **Jack Beuttler** and costume designer **Jamielyn Duggan**. Joining the project as community partner is Oakland-based **Essie Justice Group**, an organization of women taking on the injustices of mass incarceration.

“One in four women and nearly one in two black women in the U.S. has at one point had a family member in prison,” said Kreiter. “I am one of these women.” Continued Kreiter:

“The Wait Room is the most personal work I’ve undertaken since founding Flyway Productions in 1996. The piece is designed to invoke the balancing act women must pull off as wives and mothers and daughters. The set engages instability as a metaphor for women’s lives under secondary incarceration. With the aid of Essie Justice Group, The Wait Room will frame the conversation around women not just as passive victims of incarceration by proximity, but as women whose collusion is called upon by the very system that is destabilizing their lives.”

“I have a partner who was incarcerated, and I have lived the last eight years wedged between the fracture of incarceration and the hopefulness of dance making. It is not an exaggeration to say that as I have endured the financial and emotional weight of bail, pre-trial, electronic monitoring, sentencing, penitentiary placement across the country, tangles with child protective services and now the peculiar limitations of re-entry and probation, dance has saved my life. It has kept my body aloft when the prison industrial complex has done everything it knows to drag me down.”

“I have gained vastly new dimensions of lived knowledge and empathy for the other America – the one that goes unspoken in polite middle class, white culture, the one that tilts its whole being toward waiting in parking lots outside cold buildings and razor wire frames built up in the middle of nowhere. I want to use my artistic prowess to intervene against this American incarceration system. Its usefulness is null. Its continuity is racist, counterproductive to national health and blatantly cruel.”

The first choreographer to be named a **Rauschenberg Foundation Artist-as-Activist Fellow**, Kreiter has received significant funding to develop *The Wait Room* and take it on the road. Before its presentation outside of Sing Sing Prison this fall, *The Wait Room* will travel to Richmond, California, for two performances, May 17 and 18, in partnership with the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts. The event will take place inside the “Iron Triangle,” on an empty lot across from the Center. The Rauschenberg Foundation will also support the creation of a dance film by award-winning filmmaker **Austin Forbord** to be distributed via Essie Justice Group and its national partners.

Kreiter is planning to develop two additional large-scale public art performances addressing the devastating effects of mass incarceration. ***Meet Us Quickly with Your Mercy***, a residency project with MoAD, Bend the Arc and Prison Renaissance, is slated to premiere in 2020. The following year, Flyaway Productions will mount a new dance inspired by restorative justice. These three works, beginning with *The Wait Room*, are titled ***The Decarceration Trilogy: Dismantling the Prison Industrial Complex One Dance at a Time***.

The world premiere of The Wait Room is supported by the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation; New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project; the Zellerbach Foundation; Grants for the Arts; the NEA; the California Arts Council; and Pacific Eagle and Eaton Workshop, owner of the lot at 1125 Market St. that is the future site of Eaton SF, a purpose-driven global company and creative lab founded by Katherine Lo.

ABOUT JO KREITER

Jo Kreiter is a San Francisco-based choreographer with a background in political science. Through dance she engages physical innovation and the political conflicts we live within. Kreiter creates a sense of spectacle to make a lasting impression with an audience, striving for the right balance of awe, provocation and daring. Her tools include community collaboration, a masterful use of place, an intersectional feminist lens and a body-based push against the constraints of gravity. Recent awards include a Rauschenberg Foundation Artist-as-Activist Fellowship, the Rainin Foundation Open Spaces Award and a National Dance Project Creation Grant. In her book, *Moving Sites: Investigating Site-Specific Dance Performances*, author Victoria Hunter cites Kreiter as a leader in the field of site-specific dance.

ABOUT FLYAWAY PRODUCTIONS

Flyaway Productions specializes in the art of placemaking. Founded in 1996 by Jo Kreiter, Flyaway Productions is an apparatus-based dance company that explores the range and power of female physicality and advances social issues in the public realm. The company uses the artistry of spinning, flying and suspension to engage political issues. Flyaway creates dances on both architectural and fabricated steel objects, with dancers suspended anywhere from two to 100 feet off the ground. Flyaway has a long history of transforming oral history into public art, articulating the experiences of unseen women. Flyaway has developed nationally recognized expertise in creating site-specific performance including: *Mission Wall Dances*, *The Live Billboard Project*, *The Ballad of Polly Ann*, *Niagara Falling*, *Multiple Mary and Invisible Jane*, *Needles to Thread*, *Grace and Delia are Gone*, and *Tender (n.): A Person Who Takes Charge*.

Flyaway's site-specific works are free to the public, engaging a wide audience that otherwise might never attend a professional dance performance. Through its GIRLFLY program, Flyaway provides artist-as-activist training for low-income girls that stimulates awareness of the physical body and of the social framework that undervalues women and girls.

ABOUT ESSIE JUSTICE GROUP

Essie Justice Group is an Oakland, California-based organization of women with incarcerated loved ones taking on the rampant injustices created by mass incarceration. Their award-winning "Healing to Advocacy Model" brings women together to heal, build collective power and drive social change. The

organization is building a membership of fierce advocates for race and gender justice — including Black and Latinx women, formerly and currently incarcerated women, transwomen and gender non-conforming people. Through Essie, they are empowered, and they lead, taking on campaigns, supporting their peers, participating in actions and partnering with a national community of activists and advocates to build a more compassionate and just society.

FACT SHEET

WHAT:

Flyaway Productions presents the world premiere of **THE WAIT ROOM**, a site-specific dance honoring women with incarcerated loved ones. *The Wait Room* is the first of three planned works under the banner of **The Decarceration Trilogy: Dismantling the Prison Industrial Complex One Dance at a Time.**

Choreographer & Director: **Jo Kreiter**

Dancers: **Bianca Cabrera, Clarissa Dyas, Laura Elaine Ellis, Sonsherée Giles, MaryStarr Hope, Megan Lowe**

Composer: **Pamela Z**

Set Designer: **Sean Riley**

Lighting Designer: **Jack Beuttler**

Costume Designer: **Jamielyn Duggan**

WHEN:

April 19 – 27, 2019

Friday, April 19 at **8 p.m.**

Saturday, April 20 at **2 p.m.** and **8 p.m.**

Wednesday, April 24 at **8 p.m.**

Thursday, April 25 at **8 p.m.**

Friday, April 26 at **8 p.m.**

Saturday, April 27 at **2 p.m.** and **8 p.m.**

WHERE:

1125 Market Street

San Francisco, CA 94102

(This is an empty lot opposite the Civic Center/United Nations Plaza.)

TICKETS:

Free

No advance reservation required.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

flyawayproductions.com

For all press inquiries contact John Hill at johnhillpr@gmail.com.