FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
March 15, 2017

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
Presents

DEMO: Song & Dance
by Damian Woetzel

featuring
Tyler Angle
Andrew Axelrad
Kurt Crowley
Kate Davis
Michelle Dorrance
Johnny Gandelsman
Samantha Harris
Bill Irwin
Chris Jackson
Tiler Peck
Matthew Rushing
Gabe Schneider
Dancers from Paul Taylor Dance Company

Multi-genre series explores the interplay of music and movement
April 3, 2017 in the Eisenhower Theater

(WASHINGTON)—After paying tribute to artistic inspirations during Fall 2016’s DEMO, Damian Woetzel continues to unite artists from across fields around a common theme in performance on April 3, 2017 at 8:00 p.m. in the Eisenhower Theater. This installment of the multi-genre series brings together acclaimed artists for a special one-night performance to celebrate the combination of song and dance.
The cast of *Song & Dance* features tap dance powerhouse and 2015 MacArthur “Genius Grant” winner, Michelle Dorrance (last seen at the Kennedy Center with her company in October 2016 for *The Blue’s Project*); singer/songwriter Kate Davis; Tony Award®-winning actor Bill Irwin; music director and conductor for the hit musical *Hamilton* on Broadway, Kurt Crowley; Tony Award®-winning *Hamilton* actor (George Washington), Chris Jackson; New York City Ballet ballerina and star of the Kennedy Center’s *Little Dancer*, Tiler Peck; New York City Ballet principal dancer Tyler Angle; dancer/ choreographer/rehearsal director for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Matthew Rushing; multi-woodwind instrumentalist Andrew Axelrad; Grammy Award®-winning violinist Johnny Gandelsman; guitarist Gabe Schneider; percussionist Samantha Harris; and dancers from the esteemed Paul Taylor Dance Company, Michael Trusnovec, Michelle Fleet, and James Sansom.

Program pairings of these two art forms include such combinations as Ailey star Matthew Rushing joining with *Hamilton’s* Chris Jackson for “A Song for You,” the magnificent solo from Alvin Ailey’s *Love Songs*; “Lessons in Tradition,” a three person song and tap work recently premiered in 2016 at Vail Dance Festival is performed by Michelle Dorrance, Kate Davis, and Bill Irwin; and Christopher Wheeldon’s haunting pas de deux “This Bitter Earth” danced by Tiler Peck and Tyler Angle who are joined by vocalist Davis, violinist Johnny Gandelsman, and pianist Kurt Crowley. Also included in the program are dances from Paul Taylor’s *Black Tuesday* set to depression era songs including “Brother, Can you Spare a Dime?” and “Slumming on Park Avenue,” and excerpts from George Balanchine’s *Who Cares? “The Man I Love” and “Fascinatin’ Rhythm*” to the music of George Gershwin and danced by Peck and Angle.

“The idea for this exploration of song and dance came easily—the words go together as rightly as the forms they describe—but limiting ourselves in such a vast array of possibilities has been wonderfully challenging.” said director Damian Woetzel. “In the end it has come down to the artists and work that I feel resonates through them in particular—these are their songs and dances.”
Previous DEMO performances have centered on the themes of time and place, and paid tribute to heroes. Featured artists have included iconic dancer and actress Carmen de Lavallade, Broadway and New York City Ballet star Robert Fairchild, Grammy®-nominated tabla player Sandeep Das, and Memphis jookin’ pioneer Lil Buck, among others.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

New York City Ballet principal dancer turned director, choreographer, and producer **Damian Woetzel** curates and directs DEMO. Woetzel is currently the artistic director of the Vail Dance Festival and the director of arts programs for the Aspen Institute. Dubbed “the matchmaker” by *The New York Times*, Mr. Woetzel has earned acclaim over the past years for creating unusual combinations of music, dance, and theater, often engaging with the world of ideas, in venues varying from China’s National Performing Arts Center to New York’s Delacorte Theater in Central Park. In 2009 President Barack Obama appointed Woetzel to his President’s Committee on Arts and Humanities, where he worked on issues including arts education until January 2017. Woetzel holds an MPA from Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, and is the recipient of numerous awards including the Harvard Arts Medal.

**Tyler Angle** (NYCB) was born in Altoona, Pennsylvania, and began his dance training at the age of nine with Deborah Anthony at the Allegheny Ballet Company. He entered the School of American Ballet (SAB), the official school of New York City Ballet, full-time in the fall of 2001. In the fall of 2003 Angle became an apprentice with New York City Ballet. As an apprentice he danced a featured role in Michel Fokine’s *Chopiniana*, performed by SAB as part of New York City Ballet’s winter 2004 season. He joined New York City Ballet as a member of the corps de ballet in June 2004. He was promoted to the rank of soloist in December 2007 and in October 2009 was promoted to principal dancer.

**Andrew Axelrad** is a multi-woodwind instrumentalist specializing in saxophones, flutes, and clarinets. Originally from Chicago he received his formal musical training at North Texas State University. He has toured extensively throughout the U.S., Canada, Scandinavia, Europe, the Mediterranean, Middle East, and Japan. Performance highlights include appearances with Tommy Tune, Mel Torme, Doc Severinsen, Bob Hope, Clark Terry, Quincy Jones, Louis Bellson, Eddie Daniels, Paquito D’Rivera, Ben Vereen, Kirk Whalum, Sammy Nestico, Bob Mintzer, the Brecker brothers, Herbie Hancock, Arturo Sandoval, Kevin Spacey, Jeff Goldblum, Irish Tenor Ronan Tynan, Ukulele virtuoso Jake Shimabukuro, The Temptations, Bebe Winans, Bobby Caldwell, New York Voices, Stanley Turrentine, and many more jazz and pop icons. He has recorded on numerous albums including the 2008 Latin Grammy Award®-winning CD Afro Bop Alliance’s *The Caribbean Jazz Project*.

**Kurt Crowley** is currently the music director/conductor of *Hamilton* on Broadway. Previous work in theater includes *Hamilton* (Public Theater), *Bring It On* (Broadway), *Natasha, Pierre, and the Great Comet of 1812* (Off-Broadway), *In The Heights* (National Tour), *Carmen La Cubana* (Théâtre du Châtelet), *FLY* (Dallas Theater Center), and *Somewhere* (Hartford Stage). He took part in Vail Dance Festival’s recent *ReMix NYC*, conducting Stravinsky’s
Apollo. He has written arrangements and played for numerous Cabaret venues in New York City and also has written music for a song on Sesame Street. After studying Music and Comparative Religion at Harvard University, he received a fellowship to study classical and devotional music in North India. He was also part of the creative team of Carmen: El Amor Cubano, one of the first professional productions of musical theater in Cuba in decades.

The music of multi-instrumentalist and vocalist Kate Davis has been turning heads in New York’s music scene since 2012. Whether she’s crooning rootsy ballads or plucking bright riffs from her bass, the gutsy songstress from Portland, Oregon, puts a fresh spin on the standards and brings a canonical sensibility to her own lush tracks. Lauded by MTV as one of 2014’s “15 Fresh Females Who Will Rule Pop,” Davis has performed at illustrious venues including the Bowery Ballroom, Lincoln Center, and Carnegie Hall, among others. Recently she has shared the stage with such diverse artists as Alison Krauss, Josh Groban, Ben Folds, Sara Bareilles, and Renée Fleming. Her accolades include a Robert Allen Award from the ASCAP Foundation and her arts advocacy work includes a presentation at TEDx Portland and participation in the 2010 National Arts Policy Roundtable. She is a graduate of the Manhattan School of Music.

The founder and artistic director of Dorrance Dance, Michelle Dorrance is one of the most sought after tap dancers of her generation and “one of the most imaginative tap choreographers working today” (The New Yorker). A 2015 MacArthur Fellow, 2014 Alpert Award Winner, and 2013 Jacob’s Pillow Dance Award Winner, Dorrance performs, teaches, and choreographs throughout the world.

Johnny Gandelsman’s musical voice reflects the artistic collaborations he has been a part of since moving to the United States from Moscow in 1995. Through his work with such artists as Yo-Yo Ma, Bono, David Byrne of the Talking Heads, James Levine, and others, Gandelsman has been able to integrate a wide range of creative sensibilities into his own point of view. Combining his classical training with a desire to reach beyond the boundaries of the concert hall and a voracious interest in the music of our times, he has developed a unique style amongst today’s violinists. A passionate advocate for new music, he has premiered dozens of works written for Brooklyn Rider and Silk Road Ensemble. In 2012–13 he premiered works by Lev “Ljova” Zhurbin, Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky, Vijay Iyer, Béla Fleck, and a violin concerto by Gonzalo Grau, commissioned for him by Community Music Works, among others.

Michelle Fleet (PTDC) grew up in the Bronx and began her dance training at age four. She attended Ballet Hispanico of New York during her training at Talent Unlimited High School. There she was a member of The Ballet Hispanico Jr. Company. Fleet earned her B.F.A. in dance from Purchase College in 1999 and received her M.B.A. in business management in 2006. She has performed in works by Bill T. Jones, Merce Cunningham, Kevin Wynn, and Carlo Menotti. She joined the Paul Taylor 2 Dance Company in summer 1999 and made her debut with the Paul Taylor Dance Company in September 2002.

Savannah Harris is a drummer and writer who recently graduated from Howard University with a degree in journalism. Growing up in Oakland, California, she learned drums at an early age, studying and performing with her father Fred Harris and her step-father Khalil Shaheed, as well as Bay Area luminary Faye Carol. As a member of the Howard University Jazz Ensemble, she has shared the stage with Bobby Watson, Hubert Laws, Sonny Fortune, and Hugh Masekela, and has performed independently with names such as Geri Allen and Cyrus Chestnut. This year she joined Jason Moran and the Bohemian Caverns All Stars for an installment of
Moran’s Jason+ series at the Kennedy Center. She currently acts as teaching artist for NJPAC’s Jazz For Teens and Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Jazz For Young People programs.


**Christopher Jackson** is a Tony Award®-nominated actor, Emmy Award-winning songwriter/composer, and Grammy Award® winner. Jackson currently stars in the hit CBS drama *Bull.* He most recently was seen on the stage in his Tony®-nominated performance as George Washington in Broadway’s *Hamilton.* Additional Broadway credits include *Holla If Ya Hear Me, Bronx Bombers, After Midnight, In the Heights,* *Memphis,* and *The Lion King.* He has appeared in film and television in *Tracers, Afterlife, Freestyle Love Supreme* on Pivot, *The Good Wife, Nurse Jackie, White Collar,* *Oz,* *Person of Interest,* and *Gossip Girl.*

**Tiler Peck** (NYCB) was born in Bakersfield, California, where she began her dance training at the age of two at her mother’s studio. In 2004 at the age of 14, Ms. Peck entered the School of American Ballet (SAB), the official school of New York City Ballet, full time. In September 2004 Peck became an apprentice with the New York City Ballet and in February 2005 she joined the company as a member of the corps de ballet. She was promoted to soloist in December 2006 and principal dancer in October 2009. Ms. Peck made her Broadway debut as Gracie Shinn in Meredith Wilson’s *The Music Man* at the age of 11. She has been seen as a guest star on *Dancing With the Stars* for two seasons and had the pleasure of being a guest on Bravo’s television show *Rocco’s Dinner Party.* She had the honor of performing for President Obama at both the 2012 and 2014 Kennedy Center Honors, and portrayed the role of Louise in the Emmy-nominated 2013 production of the New York Philharmonic’s *Live From Lincoln Center* production of *Carousel.* Peck recently played the title role in Susan Stroman’s newest musical, *Little Dancer,* at the Kennedy Center and was seen on Broadway as Ivy Smith in *On The Town.* She is the 2004 Mae L. Wien Award winner, the Janice Levin Honoree for 2006–07, winner of the Leonide Massine’s Positano Premia La Danza for International Emerging Artists, a 2004 recipient of the Princess Grace Foundation–USA Dance Fellowship, and a 2013 Princess Grace Statue Award Winner. Ms. Peck is an artist-in-residence at the Vail International Dance
Festival, where under the direction of Damian Woetzel she has performed every summer since 2008. In 2013 she was named Forbes’ 30 under 30 in Hollywood Entertainment. She is also the designer of Tiler Peck Designs.

**Matthew Rushing** (Ailey) was born in Los Angeles, California. He began his dance training with Kashmir Blake in Inglewood, California and later continued his training at the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts. He is the recipient of a Spotlight Award and Dance Magazine Award and was named a Presidential Scholar in the Arts. He was a scholarship student at The Ailey School and later became a member of Ailey II, where he danced for a year. During his career Rushing has performed as a guest artist for galas in Vail, Colorado, as well as in Austria, Canada, France, Italy, and Russia. He has performed for Presidents George H. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama, as well as at the 2010 White House tribute to Judith Jamison. Rushing joined the company in 1992 and became Rehearsal Director in June 2010. During his time with the company, he has choreographed three ballets: *Acceptance In Surrender* (2005), a collaboration with Hope Boykin and Abdur-Rahim Jackson; *Uptown* (2009), a tribute to the Harlem Renaissance; and *ODETTA* (2014), a celebration of “The queen of American folk.” In 2012 he created *Moan*, which was set on Philadanco and premiered at The Joyce Theater.

**James Samson** (PTDC) is a native of Jefferson City, Missouri where he began his dance training at age eight and later became a competitive gymnast. He studied dance at Missouri State University where he earned a B.F.A. in dance with a minor in business. He went on to study as a scholarship student with the David Parsons New Arts Festival, Pilobolus Intensive Workshop, and the Alvin Ailey Summer Intensive, where he was selected to perform in Paul Taylor’s *Airs* set by Linda Kent. Samson’s professional career has included Charleston Ballet Theatre, New England Ballet, Connecticut Ballet, and the Amy Marshall Dance Company. He joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company in February 2001.

After falling in love with the guitar at age 10, **Gabe Schnider** has performed/recorded with artists such as Wynton Marsalis, Joshua Bell, Bill T. Jones, Arturo O’Farrill, Jon Batiste and Stay Human, Ben Folds, Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, and Dee Dee Bridgewater, among others. He is a regular performer/bandleader at Jazz at Lincoln Center and has worked in New York City and beyond at venues including Carnegie Hall, Jazz Standard, Staples Center, Blue Note, the Kennedy Center, and the Newport, Monterey, Montreux, Marciac, Montreal, and Toronto International Jazz Festivals, as well as the 2016 American Folk Festival. A former member of the Next Generation Jazz Orchestra and Brubeck Institute Summer Jazz Colony, two-time selectee for the Grammy Jazz Ensembles, Montreux International Electric Jazz Guitar Competition Semifinalist, and a NFAA YoungArts winner in Jazz, he now resides in New York City where he is currently completing his studies at the Juilliard School as a recipient of the Greene Fellowship. Recently, Schnider was featured at the 2016 Marciac Jazz Festival as a member of Wynton Marsalis’s group entitled Wynton Marsalis and the Young Stars of Jazz.

**Michael Trusnovec** (PTDC) from Yaphank, New York, began dancing at age six, graduated from the Long Island High School for the Arts, and received a B.F.A. in dance performance from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. Professionally he has danced with Taylor 2, Cortez & Co. Contemporary/Ballet, CorbinDances, and in works by Christopher Gillis and Margie Gillis. Trusnovec was a 1992 YoungArts Awardee and Presidential Scholar in the Arts. In 2006 he was a recipient of a Bessie Award for his Body of Work during the 2005-06 Taylor season, and in 2016, honored with the distinction of “Positano Premia La Danza” Dancer of the Year. Fall 1998 marked his debut with the Paul Taylor Dance Company.
FUNDING CREDITS

New Artistic Initiatives are funded in honor of Linda and Kenneth Pollin.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets start at $25 and can be purchased online, at the Kennedy Center box office or by calling Instant Charge at (202) 467-4600 or (800) 444-1324. For all other ticket-related customer service inquiries, call the Advance Sales Box Office at (202) 416-8540.

For more information about the Kennedy Center visit www.kennedy-center.org.

Discover the Kennedy Center on social media:

#KennedyCenter

###

PRESS CONTACT:
Brittany Laeger
(202) 416-8445
balaeger@kennedy-center.org

GENERAL INFORMATION:
(202) 467-4600; (800) 444-1324