

**BILL T. JONES TO ACCEPT THE 2005 WEXNER PRIZE  
AS PART OF THE CENTER'S REOPENING FESTIVITIES  
Renowned Choreographer-Dancer to Stage Performance,  
Meet and Work with Ohio State University Dance Students**

One of the most acclaimed and innovative performing artists of our time, choreographer-dancer Bill T. Jones, will receive this year's **Wexner Prize** in conjunction with the reopening festivities for the Wexner Center for the Arts in October 2005. He is the 12th recipient of the prestigious international award.

Jones will accept the \$50,000 Prize, along with the award sculpture created by Jim Dine, at a ceremony held in the Center's Mershon Auditorium, on the campus of The Ohio State University, at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, October 28. The Prize presentation ceremony will take place before 1,500 invited guests who will gather from near and far to celebrate the Center's reopening. That same day, in keeping with the tradition of the Prize, Jones will meet and work with OSU students. On Saturday evening, October 29, Jones will give a special performance at 7:00 p.m. in the 2,500-seat Mershon Auditorium: a new evening-length production titled *As I Was Saying...* For this occasion, the Center will invite students along with members and patrons of the Center.

Known for his wit, elegance, and magnetic presence both on- and off-stage, Bill T. Jones often speaks in his work to issues and experiences of gender, race, and sexuality. Jones masterfully infuses socio-political topics of universal import with an acutely personal and poetic dance vocabulary. Over the course of 14 years, he and his dance troupe, the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, have been honored at the Wexner Center with a Residency Award and five performances, many of them multimedia pieces incorporating spoken word, video, and text.

“Astonishing in his choreographic range, Bill T. Jones can be both lyrical and lacerating, pugnacious and poignant,” Wexner Center Director Sherri Geldin says. “Ever the iconoclast, Bill has devoted his practice to the creation of a provocative body of work that is unflinchingly honest about the complexities of contemporary life.”

Leslie H. Wexner, chair of the Wexner Center Foundation Board of Trustees and founder of Limited Brands, comments, “We are pleased to award the 12th Wexner Prize to Bill T. Jones, a commanding force in his field. We applaud the creative innovation and risk that has characterized his entire career, and look forward to welcoming him back to the Wexner Center for this significant tribute.”

Upon hearing that he had been chosen to receive the Prize, Jones commented, “When a great honor, such as the Wexner Prize, is bestowed on an artist, it can elicit several responses....I am overwhelmed and excited to be included in such a varied and interesting roster of artists, and I am encouraged at a time when it not always easy to be encouraged.”

### **The Performance**

For his Wexner Prize appearance, Jones will perform *As I Was Saying...*, a new, evening-long production comprised of three works. The first, *Chaconne*, is choreographed to spoken text and the music of J.S. Bach's D-minor Partita for solo violin, incorporating the interplay of Jones's solo dance with ghostlike video images created by his frequent collaborators, digital artists Paul Kaiser and Shelley Eshkar. The second work, *22*, is a reshaping of an earlier, whimsical talking solo, making use of revolutionary technology in motion capture and gesture- and sound-recognition. This work has been created with Kaiser, Eshkar, engineer Marc Downie, lighting designer Robert Wierzel, and composer Roger Reynolds. The third work, *The Naz*, has Jones's solo dance movements responding to the jazzy verbal rhythms and Beat-era jargon of

the legendary nightclub comedian Lord Buckley, as captured on a recording from the 1950s.

Among his other honors, Jones has won a MacArthur Fellowship, three New York Dance and Performance Awards ("Bessies"), and the 2003 Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize, given to "a man or woman who has made an outstanding contribution to the beauty of the world."

### **Bill T. Jones and the Wexner Center**

The awarding of the Wexner Prize to Jones continues a longterm relationship between Jones and the Wexner Center, which includes five prior performances in Mershon Auditorium by Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, a Wexner Center Residency Award, and a past term on the Center's International Arts Advisory Council. The Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company was at the Wexner Center first in 1991 to perform *Last Supper at Uncle Tom's Cabin (The Promised Land)*. The company received the Wexner Center Residency Award in the 1994–95 season to complete the landmark work *Still/Here* during an intensive monthlong creative residency, which was included in a documentary on PBS and featured on CBS. Since then, the company has been back with *We Set Out Early...Visibility Was Poor* in 1998; the evening-length work *You Walk?* in 2001; and *The Phantom Project—20th Anniversary Season* in 2004.

### **About the Wexner Prize**

The Wexner Prize is awarded annually to a major contemporary artist in any field who has been consistently original, influential, and challenging to convention. The \$50,000 prize is funded by the Wexner Center Foundation through a gift from Abigail and Leslie H. Wexner, chairman of the Wexner Center Foundation and chairman and founder of Limited Brands. Prize recipients are nominated by the Wexner Center's

cross-disciplinary International Arts Advisory Council and selected to receive the prize by the trustees of the Wexner Center Foundation.

Past Prize recipients have been Peter Brook, theater director (1992); John Cage, composer/musician, with Merce Cunningham, choreographer (1993); Bruce Nauman, visual artist (1994); Yvonne Rainer, choreographer and filmmaker (1995); Martin Scorsese, filmmaker (1996–1997); Gerhard Richter, painter (1998); Louise Bourgeois, visual artist (1999); Robert Rauschenberg, visual artist (2000); Renzo Piano, architect (2001); William Forsythe, choreographer (2002); and Issey Miyake, designer (2004).