

The New RIOULT Dance Center Opens October 15

October 11, 2018



Cutting the ribbon at the grand opening ceremony of RIOULT Dance NY with Queens Borough President Katz, and Council Members Costa Constantinides and Van Bramer, Kaufman Studios President and CEO Hal Rosenbluth, who welcomed RIOULT Dance Center and RIOULT Dance NY Artistic Director and Choreographer Pascal Rioult, Executive Director Amy Harrison, and Board of Directors Chair Hope Greenfield. Photos (c) Eric Bandiero.

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“RIOULT Dance NY is one of our country’s premier dance companies, and we are proud that its new Dance Center will soon call Queens ‘home,’” said Borough President Melinda Katz. “The RIOULT Dance Center will be in great company alongside many world-class institutions in Queens, and we welcome its educational and performing arts contributions to our borough’s vibrant cultural scene.”

A dance to celebrate the RIOULT Dance Center ribbon-cutting. “The opening of the RIOULT Dance Center marks a significant milestone in the history of RIOULT Dance NY,” said Hope Greenfield, chair of the RIOULT Dance NY Board of Directors. “We have long sought a permanent home for our professional company of dancers and we can now proudly offer the Queens and greater New York City arts communities a world-class dance facility and school for performance, teaching and rehearsal.” “I am delighted to welcome RIOULT Dance Center as the first established dance company within the Kaufman Arts District of Astoria,” said Council Member Van Bramer. “Working together with local arts organizations, we established the Kaufman Arts District in 2014 as Queens’ first official arts district. The addition of RIOULT Dance Center will increase the accessibility and affordability of dance classes in Astoria and further contribute to the cultural vibrancy and economic growth that the Kaufman Arts District has brought to our community.”



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“Western Queens’ arts are as diverse as its neighborhoods, and will be even richer with the RIOULT Dance Center,” said Council Member Constantinides. “Our residents will be empowered by the accessible, affordable, and various dances taught at the RIOULT Dance School. I’m pleased this cultural institution and premier dance company has joined the Queens family.”

The RIOULT Dance Center will serve a broad audience from professional dancers to those in the community who wish to explore different dance and dance-based forms. Classes geared toward professional and advanced dancers will include modern and ballet taught by an exemplary faculty with roots in the modern techniques of Martha Graham, José Limón, and May O'Donnell. Classes for the community will reflect the cultural diversity of Queens. Modern dance and ballet will coexist with culturally specific dance forms such as African and Afro Caribbean dance and Flamenco, offered through Djoniba Dance and Drum Centre, as well as fitness classes such as Pilates, Gyrokinesis, Body Conditioning, Masala Bhangra, among others.

Through the RIOULT Dance School, the Company will expand its existing educational programs to serve young people from toddlers to teens. Children's classes will include Modern, Ballet, Creative Movement, Hip Hop, African and Afro Caribbean Dance, Jazz, and Spanish Dance/Flamenco, among others. Inspired by the vision of Pascal Rioult, the RIOULT Dance School will carry forward a dance tradition that values individualism, welcomes diverse voices, and is committed to encouraging new voices to emerge.

RIOULT Dance NY is the first established dance company to take residence in the Kaufman Arts District, home to a community of cultural institutions, including Kaufman Astoria Studios, Museum of the Moving Image, Frank Sinatra School of the Arts high school, and Queens Council on the Arts.

The 11,000 square foot facility will house five state-of-the-art studios, including one that converts into a 100 plus-seat black box theater and a second that doubles as public space, along with offices and storage. The studios will feature Harlequin flooring, individual temperature control, floor-to-ceiling windows with treetop views, pianos, and audio/video systems. The RIOULT Dance Center, a \$4.5 million facility designed by the New York City-based architecture firm Architecture Outfit, is conveniently located directly across the street from the Steinway Street stop on the M and R lines.

RIOULT Dance NY fast became an established name in modern dance with a reputation for bringing the sensual, articulate and exquisitely musical dance works of Pascal Rioult to audiences worldwide. The dance company, founded in 1994 and based in New York City, is led by the husband-and-wife team Artistic Director/Choreographer Pascal Rioult and Associate Artistic Director Joyce Herring – both former Martha Graham Dance Company principal dancers. With an established repertoire of over 45 dances that expands each year with Pascal Rioult's new work, RIOULT Dance NY has presented its New York Season at the Joyce Theater and tours nationally and abroad. In addition, DanceREACH, RIOULT's in-school arts education and community outreach program, has been integral to the Company since its inception, introducing students and families to the art of modern dance.

A former track and field athlete in France, Pascal Rioult came to the United States on a fellowship from the French Ministry of Culture to study modern dance in 1981. After performing with the companies of May O'Donnell and Paul Sanasardo he was invited to join the Martha Graham Dance Company. Since starting his own company RIOULT Dance NY in 1994, Rioult has dedicated his energies to developing his own choreographic style and nurturing a robust ensemble of dancers. A two-time recipient of the Choo-San Goh Award for Choreography, Rioult's works have been commissioned by the American Dance Festival; Cal Performances, Berkeley, CA; the Geneva Ballet, Switzerland; The Orchestra of St. Luke's; the Grand Marnier Foundation; the Théâtre de Saint Quentin en Yvelines France; Lehigh University in Bethlehem, PA; and Marymount Manhattan College; among others.