

Jodie Gates

Artistic Director and Founder

Jodie Gates has established a significant career in the field of dance. For over thirty years she has contributed to the profession as a visionary leader, artistic director, educator, choreographer, producer, stager and principal dancer. She is an experienced founder of programs and organizations and serves as a facilitator for artistic collaborations and educational initiatives nationally. Ms. Gates leads with integrity, bold ideas and risk-taking as guiding principles, and continues to usher momentous ideas forward to create groundbreaking and lasting change within the dance field, while creating a positive impact more broadly in society.

Her professional leadership education includes The Psychology of Leadership Certificate from Cornell University SC Johnson College of Business, and her studies with the Higher Education Leadership Program for Women (HERS Institute) at Bryn Mawr College.

Her most recent service activity in the field has been as facilitator for the *Artistic Directors Coalition for Ballet in America - Pilot Program for African American Inclusion*. Since June 2020, this group of artistic leaders in the classical ballet and contemporary dance fields, have been actively working with the organization, *The International Association of Blacks in Dance*, to build broader diversity and greater equity in the dance field, specifically in classical ballet.

Ms. Gates is formerly a principal dancer with the Joffrey Ballet, Frankfurt Ballet, Pennsylvania Ballet, and Complexions Contemporary Ballet, as well as a principal guest artist with several companies around the world. Her guest appearances include a gala at The Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia, the Benois de la Danse in Moscow, dancing Odette/Odile in *Swan Lake* at the Ballet de Monterrey, Mexico, to appearing in well-known festivals such as Spoleto in Italy, The Edinburgh Festival, the Nijinsky Festival in Hamburg, Germany, and The Melbourne Festival in Australia.

Ms. Gates' prolific performing career began under the mentorship of the visionary director Robert Joffrey. Upon joining The Joffrey Ballet at the age of sixteen, she originated many roles and worked with a host of renowned choreographers, including Alonzo King, Agnes de Mille, Paul Taylor, William Forsythe, Martha Clarke and Mark Morris. She has been featured in several publications since 1984, including articles in dance magazines, dance reviews and has appeared in numerous television programs and festivals. She was chosen to represent dance on the national stage and was featured at the 1993 presidential inauguration, and previously had the honor to perform at The Kennedy Center for presidents Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton. Additionally, her performing career ranged from dancing title roles in classical full-length productions such as Juliet in *Romeo & Juliet*, Giselle, Aurora in *Sleeping Beauty*, Swanhilda in *Coppelia* and *Cinderella*, principal roles in the neo-classical repertoire by George Balanchine, and contemporary pieces by Alvin Ailey, Sir Frederick Ashton and Merce Cunningham. She collaborated in an improvised production with jazz musician Ornette Coleman

and tap dancer Savion Glover at the Cologne Music Festival and with the musical artist Prince in the Joffrey Ballet's production, *Billboards*. She has danced at the Bolshoi in Moscow, the Bockenheimer Depot in Frankfurt, Germany, the Châtelet Theatre and Theatre des Champs-Élysées in Paris and Sadler's Wells in London, among other well-known venues.

As an internationally recognized choreographer, Ms. Gates has published more than 70 original dance works. She has been commissioned by dozens of dance companies, television ad campaigns and academic institutions, and her work has been performed at the Kennedy Center, American Ballet Theater, New York's City Center Theater, Staatsballett Berlin, The Juilliard School, Princeton University, the Helsinki International Ballet Competition, the Vail International Dance Festival and many other venues and festivals. Her ballets have been called "visually compelling, powerful, beautiful" by the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and "richly textured and profound" by the *Orange County Register*.

She regularly stages dance works for Forsythe Productions, all ballets originally created by the prominent choreographer William Forsythe. She continues to coach professionals and stage productions for companies such as Paris Opera Ballet, Scottish Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Prague National Theatre Ballet, Zurich Opera Ballet, Teatro alla Scala, Ballet West, Houston Ballet and Pennsylvania Ballet.

Her teaching, coaching and lecture credentials include invitations by professional companies, dance organizations, performing arts schools and in higher education. While teaching for professional companies and contributing to higher education, she has had the opportunity to create international partnerships, build a robust professional network, design and implement an artistic vision, develop innovative programming and produce forward-thinking curricula. Formerly a tenured Professor of Dance at the University of California, Irvine, where she worked closely with Donald McKayle, she honed her skills as an educator and mentor, and worked collaboratively with faculty and students to enrich the graduate and undergraduate student experience through her teaching philosophy. In addition, she is an active pre-professional teacher and mentor, a college recruiter, and an educator and judge for Youth America Grand Prix and Universal Ballet. Prior to Cincinnati Ballet, Ms. Gates was the Founding Director of the University of Southern California's Gloria Kaufman School of Dance, where she was also a Professor of Dance. She was the school's first Vice Dean and Director and was given the unprecedented responsibility for implementing the artistic vision, creating a dance curriculum, and hiring faculty and staff from the ground up. The resulting curriculum, named *The New Movement*, is a new hybrid model for dance – expressed in studio practice, music, choreography, performance, new media and scholarship – this new model exploring performance, choreography and research, immerses students in a dance conservatory environment while also engaging with rigorous academic studies at USC.

Ms. Gates' honors include recognition by the American Association of University Women; an Altria/ABT fellowship from the American Ballet Theatre; Laguna Beach's Artist of the Year Award; honored by Arts Orange County; and awarded as a recipient of the esteemed Jerome Robbins New Essential Works program.

