

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CUNY Dance Initiative and John Jay College
present the World Premiere of
Dzul Dance: *Rites of Passage*
September 24, 2016 at 8pm
at the Gerald W. Lynch Theater**

CUNY Dance Initiative and John Jay College present the World Premiere of *Rites of Passage* on September 24, 2016 at 8pm at the Gerald W. Lynch Theater, 524 W. 59th Street, NYC, in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month. Admission is \$30 (\$25 for CUNY students, faculty and staff and \$10 for John Jay College students, faculty and staff). Tickets are available at dzul.eventbrite.com.

Dzul Dance fuses multiple dance forms with aerial and circus arts as a means to communicate pre-Hispanic, Latin and Mexican culture. By transforming his company into earthbound and airborne forces of nature Dzul creates bridges between contemporary art and historical heritage while breaking physical and cultural boundaries.

Artistic Director and Choreographer Javier Dzul grew up immersed in Mayan culture and later trained and performed with the Martha Graham Dance Company. His new work will focus on several pre-Hispanic rites of passage and explore the idea of ritual as a transformative experience.

Joining Javier Dzul and his company of dancers, aerialists and contortionists for the premiere of *Rites of Passage* are **Katherine Crockett**, the Queen from Queen of the Night and principal dancer with the Martha Graham Dance Company, former Limon Dance Company principal **Kurt Douglas** and former Cirque du Soleil soloist **Anna Venizelos**. Masks and body paint created by visual artist **Darrell Thorne** and lighting design by **Kate Ashton**.

A free preview featuring excerpts of *Rites of Passage* will take place on September 23, 2016 at 11am at Gerald W. Lynch Theater followed by a question and answer session.

Artistic Director **Javier Dzul** was born and raised in a Maya tribal community in southern Mexico performing ritual dances, speaking Mayan and studying ancient teachings until the age of 16. Professional dance training began in Xalapa Veracruz at which time he also became a principal dancer with Ballet Folklorico de Mexico and Ballet Nacional de Mexico. Javier received full scholarships to study at Xalapa Veracruz, Ballet Nacional de Cuba and the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance. While in New York, Javier performed primarily with Martha Graham Dance Company, Pearl Lang Dance Theater, Alvin Ailey Repertory Company and Acroback Inc. His dancing has been described as "acrobatic wizardry" (*Attitude: The Dancer's Magazine*), "mythical" by City Arts and "spellbinding" by the Scotsman (Edinburgh).

About Dzul Dance

Created in 2003, Javier Dzul and his diverse company of performers have been presented throughout the world garnering reviews along the way that hail Dzul's ability to turn his dancers of "remarkable elasticity" into "creatures of the air as well as of the earth" (*The New York Times*). Dzul Dance's intense physicality and creative appeal have won them invitations nationally and internationally to present their unique work on a variety of prestigious stages.

www.dzuldance.com

The **CUNY Dance Initiative** (CDI) is a new residency program that opens the doors of CUNY campuses to New York City choreographers and dance companies. Developed in response to the shortage of affordable rehearsal space in New York City, CDI aims to support local artists, enhance college students' cultural life and education, and build new audiences for dance at CUNY performing arts centers.

In 2016, 12 CUNY colleges in all five boroughs are hosting 23 artists, from emerging choreographers to established dance companies. In addition to providing space for artists to create work, the residencies include master classes and open rehearsals specifically for students, plus showings and performances for the public.

www.cuny.edu/danceinitiative

The CUNY Dance Initiative receives major support from The Mertz Gilmore Foundation, New York Community Trust and the Howard Gilman Foundation. Additional support is provided by the Jerome Robbins Foundation and the Harkness Foundation for Dance. CDI is spearheaded and administered by The Kupferberg Center for the Arts at Queens College.

John Jay College of Criminal Justice of The City University of New York, an international leader in educating for justice, offers a rich liberal arts and professional studies curriculum to upwards of 15,000 undergraduate and graduate students from more than 135 nations. In teaching, scholarship and research, the College approaches justice as an applied art and science in service to society and as an ongoing conversation about fundamental human desires for fairness, equality and the rule of law. For more information, visit www.jjay.cuny.edu.

Since opening its doors in 1988, the **Gerald W. Lynch Theater** has been an invaluable cultural resource for John Jay College and the larger New York City community. The Theater is dedicated to the creation and presentation of performing arts programming of all disciplines with a special focus on how the artistic imagination can shed light on the many perceptions of justice in our society. The Theater is also a member of **CUNY Stages**, a consortium of 16 performing arts centers located on CUNY campuses across New York City.

The Theater has hosted events in the Lincoln Center Festival since its first season in 1996, as well as, New York City Opera, Great Performers at Lincoln Center, Gotham Chamber Opera, Metropolitan Opera Guild and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater/Ailey II. The Theater has also been the site of many television and film specials including A&E's Live by Request, Comedy Central Presents and Premium Blend, Robert Klein in Concert and VH1's Soundtrack Live. For more information, and to view a schedule of events, please visit www.jjay.cuny.edu/theater.

For more information, visit www.dzuldance.com or www.jjay.cuny.edu/upcoming-performances.

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