



BAM's Trailblazers Gala 2025 honors Serge Laurent and Charles J. & Irene F. Hamm on April 23

Event highlights Van Cleef & Arpels' contributions to the performing arts and celebrates the legacy of the BAM Hamm Archives

April 10, 2025/Brooklyn, NY—On April 23 BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music) honors the transformative support of **Serge Laurent**, Director of Dance and Culture Programs for Van Cleef & Arpels, and **Charles J. and Irene F. Hamm**, namesakes of the BAM Hamm Archives.

The evening kicks off with pre-show cocktails and an exclusive performance of Tony-nominated **Whitney White's *Macbeth in Stride***. The performance will be followed by dinner on BAM's Howard Gilman Opera House stage, and an after party in the Adam Space. **Mikhail Baryshnikov** and **Helga Davis** will introduce Laurent and the Hamm's respectively.

Each honoree is celebrated for their vision, generosity, and dedication to supporting artists and preserving and amplifying their legacies. In his role as Director of Dance and Culture Programs at Van Cleef & Arpels, Laurent has significantly expanded the forum and landscape for dance through his passionate devotion to uplifting choreographic arts around the world, and has been critical to the recovery of the dance community after the pandemic.

BAM is also thrilled to recognize Charles and Irene Hamm, whose staunch support of BAM's archival work over the years has led to the opening of the permanent home of the BAM Hamm Archives inside the BAM KBH at the L10 Arts and Cultural Center. The Hamm's philanthropy has ensured that BAM can safeguard the history of the performing arts and the borough of Brooklyn, granting future generations access to such a rich cultural heritage.

BAM continues its enduring mission to find creative ways to bring artists and audiences together for inclusive and accessible artistic experimentation. Funds generated by this event help secure a future for BAM that is even more imaginative, expansive, and adventurous.

Gala co-chairs are **Alexa Davidson Suskin** and **Robert Tichio**.

Gala benefit committee members include **Kabir & Sofia Ahuja, Valerie Berlin, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Janel Anderberg Callon, Bill Campbell & Christine Wächter-Campbell, Natalia Chefer & Joel Tompkins, Cheryl & Joseph Della Rosa, Richard Feldman - The SHS Foundation, Steven & Susan Felsher, Jeanne Donovan Fisher, Judith & Alan Fishman, MaryAnne Gilmartin, Jennifer & Dmitry Kopylov, Edgar & Robin Lampert, Diane Max, Robin Maxwell & James Wilentz, Scott C. McDonald, Depelsha McGruder, Juliet Moser & Ben Darnell, Eri Nishikawa, Praxis Foundation, David & Rona Pickett, Lindsay & Gabe Pizzi, Marcel Przymusinski, Debbie & Jonathan Rosen, Alberto Sanchez, Tim & Julie Sebunya, Emilia Sherifova, Lenny Singletary, Social Justice Fund Founded By Clara Wu Tsai, Nora Ann Wallace, Adam Wolfensohn, and Claire & Curtis Wood.**

The Gala Artist Committee is **Hanif Abdurraqib, Alberta Arthurs, Peter Born, Helga Davis, Patsy Ferran, Tony Kushner, and Meshell Ndegeocello.**

About the honorees:

Serge Laurent graduated from the École du Louvre in Museology, with a specialization in Art History and Archeology. He joined Van Cleef & Arpels in April 2019. As Director of Dance & Cultural Programs, he is in charge of the implementation of Dance Reflections by Van Cleef & Arpels, an international program supporting the art of choreography.

From 2000 to 2019, he was Head of Live Performance Programming at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, along with its sites in Malaga and Brussels. From 1990 to 1999, Laurent was Associate Curator at the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain. After several years of involvement in numerous contemporary art exhibitions, he was given the responsibility of programming performing arts. For five years, he initiated the Nomadic Nights (Soirées Nomades).

Alongside the Fondation Cartier, the Dijon Consortium entrusted him with the artistic direction of the New Scenes (Nouvelles Scènes) Festival (1996 to 2000). In 1997, he also introduced living arts to the Cahors Spring (Printemps de Cahors) festival for photography and video arts. Since 2019, as Director of Dance & Cultural Programs, Laurent has been in charge of strengthening the Maison's commitments in the field of dance: via institutional partnerships, initiatives to support creation, choreographic events and a policy of promoting and raising awareness of dance among diverse audiences.

Charles J. Hamm, son of Lisbeth Higgins Hamm and Frank Hamm, grew up on Pierrepont Street in Brooklyn Heights and attended Brooklyn Friends School, Packer Collegiate Institute, Berkeley Carroll School, and Polytechnic Preparatory School—fully immersed in the borough he serves with such distinction. **Irene F. Hamm**, a native Floridian, earned a master's degree in special education at Columbia University, and spent over three decades teaching students ranging from preschool to high school.

In 1975 Mr. Hamm became a trustee of Independence Community Bank Corporation and was named president in 1985. He and Irene have remained deeply engaged in the city's civic life. Charles has served on the boards of Pratt Institute, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, and BAM, among others. By lending their name and long-standing support to the BAM Hamm Archives, Charles and Irene helped ensure that BAM's rich history would not only be preserved but also would inspire its future—an enduring legacy now housed in the Karen Brooks Hopkins space at the L10 Arts and Cultural Center.

In 1890, Charles's great-great uncle, Father Joseph Fransioli, was honored at BAM at a Golden Jubilee, making the Hamm family the **oldest philanthropic family ever honored** by the institution. Their multigenerational legacy reflects a profound and enduring belief in public service.

About BAM:

A world-class home for adventurous artists, audiences, and ideas, BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music) is North America's oldest performing arts center, showcasing the work of emerging artists and modern icons.

For more than 160 years, BAM has been a thriving, urban multi-arts complex renowned for presenting an unparalleled roster of visionary and cutting-edge dance, theater, music, opera,

visual arts, literature, and film engagements. Attracting more than 750,000 people annually to its home in Brooklyn, BAM provides a welcoming cultural stage and meeting place for global and local communities of all backgrounds. BAM's distinctive multi-theater campus is alive year-round with inspired new engagements and signature programs alike including the renowned Next Wave (one of the world's most influential festivals of contemporary performing arts, founded in 1983), the iconic DanceAfrica, an acclaimed repertory film program, and literary, archival, educational and humanities programs. For more information visit BAM.org.

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For Gala information please contact BAM Patron Services at patronservices@BAM.org or 718.636.4182

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