

## Lifestyle | Features

## Dance star boycotts planes and hits out at 'artistic jet set'

The French choreographer Jerome Bel caused a stir yesterday by saying that he had stopped taking flights and was turning his back on the "artistic jet set". The enfant terrible of French dance told AFP that he would also be boycotting work by artists who flew or did not make an effort to combat climate change. He is one of a number of art and theatre stars who are now refusing to travel by plane for performances and rehearsals, including the acclaimed British director Katie Mitchell.

Just like Hollywood stars, major performance artists and directors are globetrotters, who can clock up millions of air miles. Bel said that neither he nor his dance company would be taking a plane again. "We cannot keep destroying the planet as we are doing," he said. For his new show, "Isadora Duncan", which is opening both in Paris—where he lives—and in the US, he had to work with his dancer in New York by Skype.

"There will therefore be two versions of the piece: one which will tour in Europe and one in the US, and both will travel by train," Bel added. He said the experience had pushed him to be even more radical. "Like Greta Thunberg (the teenage Swedish environmental campaigner), I am going to boycott dance companies who continue to pollute," he told AFP. "How can you trust a choreographer or a company which contributes to global warm-

ing?" he added.

**'I was watching hell'**

The "flight shaming" movement—which is trying to make frequent flying less socially acceptable—began in Sweden, where a concert hall in Helsingborg has become one of the first in the world to only book musicians and orchestras who agree to travel by train. Bel said while watching a "not very interesting" show in Vienna recently, he "began to calculate the carbon footprint of what was going on in front of me: all the international trips the dancers had to take, the decor, the technicians etc..."

"And I realised I was watching hell—I was watching the ice melting, the homes ravaged by storms, the millions of climate refugees who were going to have miserable lives," he added. A British government study published Wednesday found that just one percent of people in England were responsible for nearly a fifth of the country's international air travel. It also discovered that the top 10 percent of frequent flyers took more than half of all overseas flights last year. Movie stars have come under increasing scrutiny about the gap between their lifestyles and their stance on climate change.

**DiCaprio carbon neutral**

British actress Emma Thompson was pilloried by some commentators in April for flying



French choreographer Jerome Bel poses during a photo session in Paris. —AFP

8,700 kilometers from Los Angeles to take part in an Extinction Rebellion march in London. Leonardo DiCaprio, who has produced the documentary "The 11th Hour" warning of climate change and the new film "Ice on Fire" championing possible solutions, admitted he was responsible for more than 100 tons of greenhouse gases over a decade.

The Oscar winner said he is having trees planted in Mexico to offset that carbon footprint and has been investing in green energy projects. DiCaprio said he is now lives a carbon-neutral life and tries to fly on commercial

airlines if he has no option but to fly. Bel said he had a eureka moment last winter when was adjusting the heating in his Paris apartment to trying to "save as much energy as possible".

Then he realized that at the same time his four assistants were flying to Hong Kong and Lima to help with the staging of his shows. "That's when I realized I was being a hypocrite, that I was lying to myself, that my life was like a bad play," he said.—AFP

## Marvel's Kevin Feige to produce new 'Star Wars' film

Marvel Studios boss Kevin Feige will develop a new "Star Wars" as part of the franchise's next wave of projects, The Hollywood Reporter said Wednesday. Feige joins the Lucasfilm team as studio president Kathleen Kennedy prepares for the new chapter of films set in the "Star Wars" universe, the Reporter said. "We are excited about the projects Kathy and the Lucasfilm team are working on," Alan Horn, the co-chairman and chief creative officer of Walt Disney Studios, which owns both Marvel and Lucasfilm, told the publication.

"Kathy is pursuing a new era in 'Star Wars' storytelling, and knowing what a die-hard fan Kevin is, it made sense for these two extraordinary producers to work... together." Feige, who is widely credited with the phenomenal boom in comic book movies of the past decade, produced all 22 movies in the "Avengers" franchise. In July, superhero blockbuster "Avengers: Endgame"—the final installment—became the biggest movie of all time, ending the 10-year reign of James Cameron's "Avatar."

"Endgame" took in \$2.7902 billion globally since its April release, versus \$2.7897 billion for "Avatar," including its original theatrical run in 2009 and various re-releases. In addition to the new "Star Wars" film, Feige will oversee Marvel's upcoming host of movies and television shows featuring popular "Avengers" characters, as well as new Marvel franchises acquired by Disney in its purchase of 21st Century Fox, including the popular "X-Men."—AFP

## US drummer pleads guilty to embezzling from charity

Robin DiMaggio, a professional drummer who once served as the musical director for the United Nations and has worked with some of music's biggest stars, pleaded guilty on Wednesday to embezzling \$750,000 from a charity for homeless children. According to a criminal complaint, DiMaggio, 48, lied to a Bulgarian-based nonprofit called Peace for You Peace for Me Foundation, telling them he would help organize a charity concert in the Bulgarian capital Sofia to help raise funds for homeless and displaced children from war zones.

The foundation's financial sponsor wired

## Tom Hanks to get lifetime award at Golden Globes

Tom Hanks, one of Hollywood's most beloved actors, is to add another honor to his name with a lifetime achievement award from the organizers of

\$750,000 to a DiMaggio-controlled account in 2016, but instead of using the money to book celebrities for the gig, DiMaggio placed the money into his personal account, the complaint says. He then used the funds to buy his ex-wife a house in California, to make payments on cars for his mother and son, to settle his credit card debt and for his living expenses, prosecutors said.

When the foundation's financial sponsor became suspicious and demanded he return the \$750,000, DiMaggio claimed that he had sent the money to artists who were to perform at the concert and would give back the funds when the deposits were returned, the complaint said. In 2016, the foundation's financial sponsor sued DiMaggio, who subsequently filed for bankruptcy.

DiMaggio, who has performed with the likes of Paul Simon, David Bowie, Diana Ross and others over the last three decades, faces up to 20 years in prison at his sentencing in March of next year. He was the drummer and music director for comedian Arsenio Hall's late-night TV show in 2013 and served as the music director for a number of events at the United Nations.—AFP



In this file photo Robin diMaggio arrives for the Children's Defense Fund-California 22nd Annual 'Beat the Odds' Awards at Beverly Hills Hotel in Beverly Hills, California.—AFP

the Golden Globe awards. The Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) said on Tuesday it would present the prolific actor and producer with its Cecil B. DeMille award at the Golden Globes ceremony in Beverly Hills on Jan. 5. The boyish-looking Hanks, now 63, made his movie breakthrough in "Big" in 1988, playing a teenager who wakes up to find himself in the body of an adult.

He went on to win back-to-back Oscars

and Golden Globes in 1994 and 1995 for his roles in AIDS drama "Philadelphia" and comedy "Forrest Gump." "For more than three decades, he's captivated audiences with rich and playful characters that we've grown to love and admire," HFPA president Lorenzo Soria said in a statement. "As compelling as he is on the silver screen, he's equally so behind the camera as a writer, producer and director."—Reuters

Hanks' next movie appearance will be