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Philly

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The Philadelphia Orchestra
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Experience an awe-inspiring blend of dance prowess, artistic innovation, and cultural richness when @PHILADANCO (Facebook/Instagram)/@PhiladancoC (Twitter/X) returns this spring with “Roots and Reflections” presented by @EnsembleArtsPhilly (Facebook/Instagram)/@EnsembleArtsPHL (Twitter/X) from 4/12-14. For more info, visit www.ensembleartsphilly.org.

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**ENSEMBLE ARTS PHILLY PRESENTS
ICONIC DANCE COMPANY,
PHILADANCO!,
WITH THEIR SPRING SHOWSTOPPER,
ROOTS AND REFLECTIONS,
APRIL 12 – 14, 2024**

“The company is in peak form—dancer for dancer, probably the best-trained, certainly the most versatile, dance company in Philadelphia.”

– *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

“PHILADANCO! is such a fierce company, one of a kind, and one to keep on your radar.” – *Broadway World*

“PHILADANCO! is definitely an imaginative, gorgeous and thrilling dance company who showcase some of the best African American traditions in dance that really enhance their heritage.” – *Carpe Diem Emmie*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (March 4, 2024) – Ensemble Arts, the new presenting brand of the Kimmel Cultural Campus and The Philadelphia Orchestra, presents the return of **PHILADANCO!**, the renowned Philadelphia Dance Company, to the Perelman Theater with their new show, ***Roots and Reflections***, from Friday, April 12 through Sunday, April 14, 2024. With ***Roots and Reflections***, PHILADANCO! takes a trip down memory lane, revisiting masterpieces and iconic pieces that are ingrained in the foundation of PHILADANCO!’s extraordinary legacy.

Audiences will witness one of America's top dance companies share fresh and fervent stories through movement. The season will feature their most requested ballets, including **George Faison's** "Suite Otis" performed in Faison's typical playful modern jazz style and inspired by the genius of the late Otis Redding. From **Ronald K. Brown**, "Gate Keepers" is a story of homage, celebration, and an acknowledgment of conscious continuity, interconnectedness, history, tradition, and perseverance. "Pretty Is Skin Deep, Ugly to the Bone" by **Talley Beatty** is a modern jazz ballet in his usual style of inner-city interaction and challenge; and **Harold Pierson's** "Roots & Reflections" celebrates 100 years of African American dance history.

PHILADANCO!, founded in 1970 by the legendary Joan Myers Brown, is famous for its artistic integrity, highly trained dancers, and electrifying performances. PHILADANCO!'s legacy is a blazing trail of bridging cultures and tearing down barriers. With its original mission of providing Black dancers with performance opportunities, the company's eye for inclusion has always infused every performance with invigorating energy for diverse audiences. Using both its platform and hope for a better future, PHILADANCO! also commits itself to empowering youth with developmental and leadership skills that facilitate achievement and success in the world of dance and beyond.

"For decades, PHILADANCO! has shattered boundaries and fostered community across cultural divides," said President and CEO Matías Tarnopolsky. "*Roots and Reflections* will revisit some of the most iconic masterpieces from the past 50 years, offering a poignant retrospective of the company's groundbreaking work and lasting legacy."

"PHILADANCO! has a long history and commitment to the brilliant legacy of Black Artistic Excellence; it's the fabric of the company. We present this spring season entitled *Roots and Reflection*, which is truly an experience you don't want to miss!" said Joan Myers Brown, Founder of PHILADANCO!.

About the Choreographers:

George Faison (Washington, DC): His extraordinary talent has taken many forms: dancer, choreographer, actor, director, composer, producer, essayist, playwright, writer. Faison's multifaceted career has rightly earned him admiration as a renaissance man. The numerous honors, prizes, acclaims, and accolades on his shelf are for the many works he's created, staged, and choreographed, including *Suite Otis* and *Slaves*, and the Broadway shows he worked on, including *Don't Bother Me*, *I Can't Cope* and *The Wiz*. In 1975, that last credit made him the first Black person to win a choreography Tony. He also worked as a choreographer for such legendary Black musical artists as Aretha Franklin, Roberta Flack, Gladys Knight & the Pips, Stevie Wonder, Dionne Warwick, Ashford & Simpson, and Earth, Wind & Fire.

Ronald K. Brown (Brooklyn, NY): Founded EVIDENCE, A Dance Company in 1985. He has performed with Mary Anthony Dance Theater, Jennifer Muller/The Works, as well as other choreographers and artists. Brown has set works on Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ailey II, Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Jennifer Muller/The Works, Jeune Ballet d'Afrique Noire, Ko-Thi Dance Company, Muntu Dance Theater of Chicago, Ballet Hispánico, TU Dance, and Malpaso Dance Company. Brown was named Def Dance Jam Workshop 2000 Mentor of the Year and has received the Doris Duke Artist Award, NYC City Center Fellowship, Scripps/ADF Award, John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship, National Endowment for the Arts Choreographers Fellowship, New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, United States Artists Fellowship, a New York Dance and Performance

“Bessie” Award, Dance Magazine Award, and The Ailey Apex Award and recently the Martha Hill, Mid-Career Award.

Talley Beatty: The late Mr. Beatty studied with Martha Graham and Katherine Dunham and became a principal dancer with the Katherine Dunham Company at age sixteen. After touring with the Dunham Company for five years and appearing in films such as *A Study in Choreography for Camera* and Broadway shows such as *Cabin in the Sky*, *Pins and Needles*, and *Blue Holiday*, Mr. Beatty formed his own company and toured throughout Europe, the U.S. and Canada. For his work on Broadway, Beatty was nominated for a 1977 Tony Award as Best Choreographer for *Your Arm's Too Short to Box with God*. He is considered one of the greatest African American choreographers and his work focuses on the social issues, experiences, and everyday life of African Americans. *Mourner's Bench* is an excerpt from Mr. Beatty's first ballet, *Southern Landscapes*, which takes a dramatic look at the end of the reconstruction period marked by the end, through destruction, of the thousands of cooperative farms that had been created after the Civil War.

Harold Pierson: The late Mr. Pierson trained in dance with Robert Joffrey and Valentina Pereyaslavets and in acting with Louis Gossett Jr. and Sanford Meisner. He played a quiet but important role in the development of many black modern-dance choreographers' careers from the 1950's on, performing with the companies of Alvin Ailey, Syvilla Fort, Geoffrey Holder, Louis Johnson, Bob Fosse, Matt Mattox, Donald McKayle and Olatunji. He danced in the premiere of Mr. McKayle's classic *Rainbow 'Round My Shoulder* in 1959. Mr. Pierson also performed in the Broadway and touring casts of musicals, including *Golden Boy*, *Sweet Charity*, *Cry, the Beloved Country* and *Purlie*. He was the artistic director for the Black Dance America Festival presented by the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1983. He also held a visiting professorship at Howard University in the College of Fine Arts and Sciences.

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With its home base since 1970 on Philadanco Way (1981) in West Philadelphia, PHILADANCO! provides one of the nation's most state-of-the-art and successful dance training programs. A myriad of company support systems and intensive training enable dancers to hone their talent and refine their technical skills, preparing them for skills for life after performing. Often described as “a brilliant mix of miracle of skill, energy and artistry, fascinating and thrilling,” and performers with “virtuoso physicality,” PHILADANCO! dancers are among the best in the world.

The Philadelphia Dance Company (PHILADANCO!) is a nonprofit organization presenting the highest quality of professional dance performance. The intensely welcoming company is home for emerging and professional dancers and choreographers, providing creative space for these visionaries while increasing the appreciation of dance among its many communities. Across the nation and around the world, PHILADANCO! is celebrated for its innovation and preservation of African American traditions in dance, breaking barriers, and advocating for access and inclusion.

Other featured upcoming performances include **Emmet Cohen Trio** (March 14, 2024, Perelman Theater); **KevOnStage & That Chick Angel: Here's The Thing** (March 30, 2024, Miller Theater); **Terence Blanchard: Fire Shut Up in My Bones** (April 7, 2024, Verizon Hall); **Franco Escamilla** (April 7, 2024, Miller Theater); **Chloé Arnold's Syncopated Ladies: LIVE!** (April 13, 2024, Miller Theater); **Anthony Jeselnik: Bones and All** (April 27, 2024, Miller Theater); **Brad Williams: Tour '24** (April 28, 2024, Miller Theater); **An Evening with Leslie Odom, Jr.** (May 1, 2024, Miller Theater); and **Herb Alpert & Lani Hall** (May 18, 2024, Perelman Theater).

Tickets

Tickets can be purchased by calling 215-893-1999 or online at www.ensembleartsphilly.org. In-person ticket sales can be conducted daily from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. at the Academy of Music Box Office, located at 240 S. Broad Street. Visit www.ensembleartsphilly.org for more information.

PHILADANCO! *Roots and Reflections*

Perelman Theater

Friday, April 12, 2024, at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 13, 2024, at 2:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 13, 2024, at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 14, 2024, at 2:00 p.m.

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ABOUT ENSEMBLE ARTS PHILLY

For more information about ENSEMBLE ARTS PHILLY, visit www.ensembleartsphilly.org.

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