

DALLAS BLACK DANCE THEATRE



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National Endowment for the Arts Awards Dallas Black Dance Theatre 2017 Challenge America Grant

Dallas, TX - **National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Chairman Jane Chu** approved more than \$30 million in grants as part of the NEA's first major funding announcement for fiscal year 2017. Included in this announcement is a Challenge America grant to **Dallas Black Dance Theatre (DBDT)** so it can feature guest artists from **Ballet Austin** during its Spring Celebration series during May 2017. The Challenge America category supports primarily small and mid-sized organizations for projects that extend the reach of the arts to underserved populations-those whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, ethnicity, economics or disability.

The Spring Celebration Series May 19-21, 2017 marks the close of Dallas Black Dance Theatre's 40th Anniversary season. The series features guest artists from Ballet Austin performing a work by their **Artistic Director Stephen Mills**. In addition, DBDT dancers will perform a contemporary work by Mr. Mills. Directly following the Friday evening performance DBDT will hold an artists' discussion, featuring dancers from both companies and the choreographer where audience members can ask the guest artists questions about the artistic process.

"The arts are for all of us, and by supporting organizations such as Dallas Black Dance Theatre, the National Endowment for the Arts is providing more opportunities for the public to engage with the arts," said NEA Chairman Jane Chu. "Whether in a theater, a town square, a museum, or a hospital, the arts are everywhere and make our lives richer."

"The NEA has two criteria for awarding grants, excellence and merit," explained Jane Chu when she visited DBDT on November 28, 2016 as part of a tour of the Dallas Arts District. "We decide the grant amount on the project, not the size of the organization." The NEA has given grants to Dallas Black Dance Theatre for more than 30 years. In FY 2016, Dallas Black Dance Theatre was the only modern dance company in Texas to receive an NEA grant.

"Dallas Black Dance Theatre is honored to receive this award to support guest artists' performances and engagement with community audiences," said **Zenetta Drew, executive director of Dallas Black Dance Theatre**.

During its 40-year history, Dallas Black Dance Theatre has performed on five continents, in 15 countries and 31 states, including two Olympic Cultural events. Over the years, more than 4 million arts patrons and 2.6 million students, grades K-12, have experienced the dance company's performances and educational outreach programs. DBDT serves more than 100,000 people annually, including more than 20,000 youth in grades K-12 in Dallas-Fort Worth area schools. DBDT offers community outreach services through workshops, lecture/demonstrations, master-classes, residences, mini-performances and student matinees that are designed level-specific for elementary, middle, high school and university

students. Another 40,000 youth and adults are reached through local, national and international festivals, tours, special performances at universities, social service agencies, professional and corporate organizations, civic events and community venues.

Dallas Black Dance Theatre is a resident company of the Dee & Charles Wylie Theatre in the Dallas Arts District where the Spring Celebration series will be performed May 17-21, 2017. For details visit www.DBDT.com.

For more information on projects included in the NEA grant announcement, visit arts.gov/news.

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About Dallas Black Dance Theatre

Founded in 1976 by Ann Williams, Dallas Black Dance Theatre (DBDT) is the oldest continuously operating professional dance company in Dallas. It has become the largest minority arts organization in Dallas and the 10th largest in the nation. The mission of Dallas Black Dance Theatre is to create and produce contemporary modern dance at its highest level of artistic excellence through performances and educational programs that bridge cultures and reach diverse communities. With an ever-expanding national and global audience, the company employs a diverse, multi-ethnic troupe of dancers performing for audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

Located in a historic facility at the eastern end of the thriving downtown Dallas Arts District, Dallas Black Dance Theatre is a nationally and internationally recognized professional modern dance company. DBDT engages the cross-cultural community through contemporary modern dance presented from the African American experience.

Dallas Black Dance Theatre is comprised of five performing companies and its training Academy. Dallas Black Dance Theatre's professional company, DBDT, consists of 12 full-time professional dancers performing a mixed repertory of modern, jazz, African and spiritual works by national and international choreographers. DBDT: Encore! (formerly DBDT II) features eight artists of rising excellence from across the nation that support DBDT's growing local and regional educational outreach.

Dallas Black Dance Academy, the official school of Dallas Black Dance Theatre, celebrates 43 years of delivering dance instruction to a community of diverse backgrounds. Over 500 students participate weekly in 50 dance classes of ballet, jazz, tap, modern, and African at DBDT studios for ages four to adult. The academy has three performing ensembles: Allegro, DBDT's premier academy ensemble, Senior Performing Ensemble, and Junior Performing Ensemble.

For more details visit www.DBDT.com and www.dbdt.com/academy.

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Jane Chu, NEA Chairman. Photograph by Steve Peterson.



Zenetta Drew, Dallas Black Dance Theatre Executive Director. Photograph by Brian Guillaux.



(l-r) Zenetta Drew, Dr. Jane Chu, Dr. Gary Gibbs, and Gilbert Gerst during November 28, panel discussion at Dallas Black Dance Theatre.

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