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Dallas Black Dance Theatre, One of 5 U.S. Organizations

Selected for International Communities Connecting Heritage Program

Dallas, Texas – **Dallas Black Dance Theatre (DBDT)** is among five artistic organizations in the nation receiving funding through the **Communities Connecting Heritage (CCH) exchange program for its new cultural heritage project with Macedonian filmmakers.** CCH, sponsored by the **U.S. Department of State** with funding provided by the U.S. Government and administered by **World Learning**, empowers youth to protect the cultural heritage of underserved communities around the world. This is only the second funding cycle since the program's inception.

Dallas Black Dance Theatre and **Association MakeDox** in Macedonia will collaborate on the project, *Widening the Lens*. The program will engage 12 African-American dancers and 12 Macedonian filmmakers to create a 50-minute documentary exploring and celebrating African-American culture through dance and Romani heritage through music. The goal of the project is for African American dancers and Macedonian filmmakers to explore and preserve African American and Romani heritages by producing a creative documentary of dance on film that reveals cultural similarities, especially highlighting the experience of ethnic minorities in society.

Participants will engage in virtual exchanges from February to June where they will explore each other's cultures, both ethnically and artistically. In mid-March, Macedonian filmmakers will travel to Dallas to tour the city, learn about African American heritage and film African American dance live around the city. In April, DBDT Dancers will travel to Macedonia where they will tour Skopje and the countryside, learn about Romani and Macedonian heritage, and dance to live Romani music in site-specific performances for the film.

Dallas Black Dance Theatre will incorporate aspects of the project into its Spring Celebration

series May 17-19, 2019, at the Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre in the Dallas Arts District. MakeDox will showcase the final film during its rural Traveling Cinema in June and an urban screening in July. Dallas Black Dance Theatre will also hold three free screenings of the film in July. At least one screening will be synchronized with the Macedonian screening and feature live talkback between the two countries and artists.

“Exchanges that connect and engage people from different communities are more valuable than ever,” said Christina Thomas, World Learning’s divisional vice president for youth exchange. “The Communities Connecting Heritage program offers an opportunity to do this in unique and creative ways, both at home in the U.S. and abroad. World Learning is thrilled to implement the second iteration of these cultural heritage projects and to be a part of this exciting and diverse community.”

The projects will be carried out among five U.S. organizations and five international organizations during the next 12 months. The other four projects include:

- **Mandala Theater** (Nepal) and **Creative Connections** (Connecticut) *Kalasanskriti ra Sampada: An Artistic Approach to Preserving Cultural Heritage and Community Healing* will engage 30 youth from Nepal and the U.S. to capture and exchange art, audio, and video exploring their own cultural heritage, which they will use to facilitate workshops at local schools.
- **Bhasha Research and Publication Center** (India) and **University of Northern Colorado Anthropology Department** (Colorado) *Reclaiming Heritage: The Intercultural Heritage Exchange Project* will train up to 30 participants from the historically marginalized Chhara community in India and the Karenni refugee community in the U.S. to use virtual reality technologies to explore and document their respective cultural heritages, including family and spiritual traditions, festivals, performances, and natural heritage.
- **Youth of Osh** (Kyrgyzstan) and **New York Folklore Society** (New York) *Cultural Bridge* will challenge up to 30 youth to discover Kyrgyz and American cultural heritage by learning about oral history and cultural heritage documentation and contribute to preservation efforts by doing community service, producing media, and installing signage to support the cultural tourism industry.
- **Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels (BOZAR)** (Belgium) and **Soul of Nations** (Washington, D.C./Navajo Nation, Arizona) *Digital Natives* will engage 10 young Native-American women from New Mexico and 10 young Belgian women from migrant families to create group artworks and video installations, exploring equality and women’s empowerment through the lens of personal narratives and cultural backgrounds.

2018-2019 | DBDT Season Sponsors

Legacy Sponsor: Simmons Sisters Fund of The Dallas Foundation

Season Sponsors: Office of Cultural Affairs – City of Dallas, Texas Instruments, International Association of Blacks in Dance, NBC 5, *I Messenger*, *The Downtown Business News*, TACA, *PaperCity*, American Airlines, *The Dallas Weekly*, and DART.

2018 – 2019 | DBDT Season Supporters

Season Supporters: Texas Commission on the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, Lexus, OverseeMyIT, *The Dallas Examiner*, *The Dallas Post Tribune*, *Elite News*, AT&T Performing Arts Center, *Trendy Africa*, and *Arts+Culture*.



ABOUT DALLAS BLACK DANCE THEATRE: Dallas Black Dance Theatre is an internationally recognized professional dance company that engages the cross-cultural community through contemporary modern dance presented from the African-American experience. Founded by **Ann Williams** in 1976, the company has been designated as an American Masterpiece Touring Artist by the **National Endowment for the Arts** in 2008 and received the Texas Medal of Arts Award for Arts Education in 2017.

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. The company is the 10th largest minority arts organization in America and the fourth largest black dance company in the nation. The virtuosic dancers of Dallas Black Dance Theatre have mesmerized 4.2 million arts patrons across 15 countries, including two Olympic Cultural events. *For more details visit www.DBDT.com*

About World Learning

World Learning works globally to enhance the capacity and commitment of individuals, institutions, and communities to create a more peaceful and just world through education, sustainable development, and exchange. Our programs advance leadership in more than 150 countries. For more details www.worldlearning.org.

About ECA

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DBDT dancers Hana Delong and Sean J. Smith on the Ronald Kirk Bridge in Dallas, Texas as photographed by The Dallas Dance Project.



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