



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DBDT Launches Legacy Performance Series Featuring a Timely Work Set to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "We Shall Overcome" Speech

Dallas, TX. - Dallas Black Dance Theatre launches its *Legacy Performance Series* featuring art that replicates life. The mesmerizing, powerful words from **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s** "We Shall Overcome" speech come to life in the work *Bodies as Site of Faith and Protest* choreographed by **Tommie-Waheed Evans**. The work, which made its Dallas premiere in 2018, will be the focal point for a virtual experience on Saturday, June 20, 2020, at 6:00 pm CDT. The live Zoom experience allows the audience to engage with the choreographer and dancers in real time.

Bodies as Site of Faith and Protest explores the idea of bodies uniting in protest through faith. The dance takes on added theatrics as the dancers sing, with DBDT principal **Claude Alexander III** leading a cappella songs during the performance. "It's an embodied map of a process that pushes towards action," explained choreographer Tommie-Waheed Evans. "Through that work, we take a visceral walk down memory lane and (re)learn the road to freedom."

The *Legacy Performance Series* virtual experience will run the full ballet from DBDT's 2018 premiere. Tommie-Waheed Evans will speak about his timely work, which reflects national historical times and is relevant today. In addition to behind-the-scenes rehearsal footage, DBDT dancers will candidly share their perspectives about the process and journey to performing this work.

Dallas Black Dance Theatre's live performances and events have been canceled since mid-March due to the current public health crisis. DBDT dancers have been collaborating with the marketing department, while practicing social distancing from home, to produce dance

video projects to motivate and inspire patrons in a campaign called #DBDTatHome on social media.

“Exploring new ways to reconnect with our extended DBDT family challenges us to grow as the times require,” said Dallas Black Dance Theatre Artistic Director **Melissa M. Young**. “Bringing the *Legacy Performance Series* into the fold reminds us that we stand on the mighty shoulders of our past, and each experience provides a source of inspiration as to why we should continue to simply do the work. The combination of enjoying live conversation from the choreographer and company dancers, viewing rehearsal moments and performance all-in-one is a priceless opportunity. In conjunction with our return to theater-life as we know it to be (in the coming months), we hope to continue these digital gatherings as we move into the future.”

Legacy Performance Series Details

Saturday, June 20th @ 6:00pm CDT

Virtual Ticket - \$20

RSVP via Zoom link <https://bit.ly/2MYwYj5>

More details at DBDT.com.

2019-2020 | DBDT Season Sponsors

Legacy Sponsor: Simmons Sisters Fund of The Dallas Foundation

Season Sponsors: Office of Arts and Culture – City of Dallas, Texas Instruments, International Association of Blacks in Dance, NBC 5, *The Downtown Business News*, *The Dallas Morning News*, *I Messenger*, NorthPark Center, TACA, American Airlines, The Shubert Foundation Inc., DART, and *The Dallas Weekly*.

2019 – 2020 | DBDT Season Supporters

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

ABOUT DALLAS BLACK DANCE THEATRE: *Dallas Black Dance Theatre (DBDT) is an internationally recognized professional dance company that engages the cross-cultural community through contemporary modern dance presented from the African-American experience. The National Endowment for the Arts designated the 44-year-old company as an American Masterpiece Touring Artist in 2008. The company also received the Texas Medal of Arts Award for Arts Education in 2017. As Dallas’ oldest and largest professional dance company, DBDT ranks as the 10th largest minority arts organization in America and the fourth largest black dance company in the nation.*

Ann Williams founded *Dallas Black Dance Theatre* in 1976. **Melissa M. Young** took over the helm as Artistic Director in 2018 after starting with the company as a dancer in 1994. **Zenetta S. Drew** has led the administrative side of the company since 1987 as Executive Director.

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 virtuosic dancers of Dallas Black Dance Theatre have mesmerized 4.3 million arts patrons across 16 countries, including two Olympic Cultural events.

*Five performing companies comprise Dallas Black Dance Theatre and its training Academy. **DBDT** consists of 13 full-time salaried dancers performing a mixed repertory of modern, jazz, African, and spiritual works by national and international choreographers. **DBDT: Encore!** features eight artists of rising excellence from across the nation who support DBDT's growing local and regional educational outreach. 2.7 million students, grades K-12, have experienced the dance company's performances and educational outreach programs.*

***Dallas Black Dance Academy**, the official school of Dallas Black Dance Theatre, celebrates 46 years of delivering dance instruction to a community of diverse backgrounds. The academy was the first in the nation to train a student who received the Presidential Scholar Award in Dance in 1980. More than 500 students participate weekly in 50 dance classes, which include ballet, jazz, tap, modern, and African. Classes are held at DBDT's studios and are open to students ages four to adult. The academy has three performing ensembles: **Allegro Performing Ensemble**, DBDT's premier academy ensemble, **Senior Performing Ensemble**, and **Junior Performing Ensemble**.*

*Dallas Black Dance Theatre's primary home in the historic Moorland YMCA building in the Dallas Arts District includes dance studios, training facilities, and administrative offices. Dallas Black Dance Theatre is a resident company of the **AT&T Performing Arts Center** and its performance home is the **Dee and Charles Wylie Theatre**.*

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



DBDT dancing Bodies as Site of Faith and Protest, choreographed by Tommie-Waheed Evans. Photograph by Amitava Sarkar.



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