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## DALLAS BLACK DANCE THEATRE

### TO BE FEATURED IN

### 2021 INTERNATIONAL DANCE DAY

Dallas, TX – **International Dance Day** is an annual global celebration of dance held on April 29<sup>th</sup>. The **International Theatre Institute (ITI)** will present an online celebration of video excerpts by dance companies from 17 countries. Representing the U.S. is **Dallas Black Dance Theatre** and **Rennie Harris Pure Movement**. The virtual dance festival can be viewed on the International Dance Day website: <https://www.international-dance-day.org/mainevent.html>. The program starts Thursday, April 29, 2021, at 7:00 am CDT, and the U.S. section of the program begins approximately at 9:00 am CDT.

Dallas Black Dance Theatre will present the “Cool Water” segment of *ODETTA*, choreographed by **Matthew Rushing**, associate artistic director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. The Reimagined 2021 duet, set to the Odetta Holmes song “Cool Water,” was filmed outdoors on a pier at Dallas’ White Rock Lake. Set to the musical genius of **Odetta Holmes**, the work pays tribute to Odetta’s musical range of folk, gospel, and blues music. It had its world premiere in 2014 with the Ailey company and its DBDT premiere in 2019.

DBDT’s 44<sup>th</sup> season has been entirely virtual, with many of its stage performances reimaged on film across the Dallas landscape. During the summer of 2020, Dallas Black Dance Theatre became the first professional dance company nationally and internationally to consistently present paid virtual performances as a new business model after the closing of live performances due to the COVID-19 pandemic. DBDT is the oldest and largest professional dance company in Dallas, the fourth largest African American dance company, and the tenth largest arts organization of color in the United States. The company consists of 12 professional, multi-ethnic, full-time dancers performing a mixed repertory of modern, jazz, ethnic and spiritual works by nationally and internationally known choreographers.

ITI first launched International Dance Day in 1982. It is celebrated every year on April 29th, the birthday of Jean-Georges Noverre (1727-1810), creator of modern ballet. The International Dance Day message is to celebrate dance, revel in the universality of this art form, cross all political, cultural, and ethnic barriers, and bring people together with a common language - dance.

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**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. 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 at 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 5 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 12 full-time salaried dancers performing a mixed repertory of modern, jazz, African, and spiritual works by national and international choreographers. DBDT: Encore! features six 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 47 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 permanent 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 Wily Theatre**.

For more details, visit [www.DBDT.com](http://www.DBDT.com) and [www.dbdt.com/academy](http://www.dbdt.com/academy).



*Photograph by Melissa M. Young.*



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