



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:
Ramona Logan
(214) 871-2376 Ext. 411
(214) 882-2451 cell
r.logan@dbdt.com

Dallas Black Dance Theatre Treats BIG Dance Guests

To a Fun-Filled Big Easy Themed Night

To Raise Money for Academy Scholarships

Dallas, TX – **Dallas Black Dance Theatre** transformed the Meyerson Symphony Center into a kaleidoscope of New Orleans-inspired festivities for The BIG Dance on Saturday, June 5, 2021. The event was a fundraiser benefiting **Dallas Black Dance Academy** scholarships and educational outreach programs.

Guests were greeted to the event by **Brazilian Samba Dancers** and stilt walkers gliding to the music of **DJ Kevy Kev** in the main lobby. New Orleans native and Hurricane Katrina survivor **Michelle N. Gibson** orchestrated the evening, making sure it had all the authentic trappings of a festive night in The Big Easy. **Norma** and **Don Stone**, and **Linda** and **Dr. Frederick Todd II** were the Honorary Chairpersons. **Carisma Ramsey Fields** and **Kim Whitaker** were Event Chairpersons.

New Orleans native **Thaddeus Ford Preservation Band** provided guests in the east lobby with jazz melodies. Guests in the west lobby were treated to the energetic sounds of the **Big Easy Brass Band**. People were able to join the party online and experience live music from both bands during the evening virtually.

Sprinkled throughout the evening of dancing and luscious New Orleans cuisine were mini parades featuring dancers in authentic attire, including the **Mardi Gras Black Indian/ Big Queen from the Wild Apache Tribe** and **Southern Belle Baby Dolls**.

The BIG Dance Host Committee included **Regina** and **Matamba Austin**, **Dorris L. Bogus**, **Angela Chapman**, **Greer Christian**, **Grace Cook**, **Marena L. Gault**, **Gwen** and **Art George**, **Misty J. Hoyt**, **Terrence Maiden**, **Amenemope' McKinney**, **Kim Noltemy**, **Kimberlie D. Page**, **Christopher Plumlee**, **Kymberley Scalia**, **Boski Sharma**, **Michelle Thomas**, **Paulette Turner**, and **Ann Williams**.

The finale featured Grand Marshal Michelle N. Gibson, leading the Big Easy Brass Band, DBDT dancers, and guests in a Second Line dance through the Meyerson lobby and out the front door for dancing under the stars. The BIG Dance turned out the perfect way to kick off the summer party season!

Event sponsors were JPMorgan Chase & Co., The Eugene McDermott Foundation, HALL Group, with additional sponsorship from HALL Wines. The official beer sponsor was Stella Artois.

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 Wyly Theatre**.*

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



*The BIG Dance Honorary Chairpersons Dr. Frederick Todd II, Don Stone, Norma Stone, and Linda Todd in a photograph by
Reflections HD Photography.*



The BIG Dance photograph by Reflections HD Photography.



Photograph of The Big Easy Brass Band by Reflections HD Photography.

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Dallas Black Dance Theatre 2700 Ann Williams Way, Dallas, TX 75201