



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dallas Black Dance Theatre Dancers To Perform Live With

North Macedonian Musicians in a World Premiere

Blending Two Cultures

In-person + Streaming + On-demand

Dallas, TX – **Dallas Black Dance Theatre (DBDT)** dancers and North Macedonian musicians join forces in a live music and dance world premiere woven from the tapestry of this cultural collage. Jazz guitarist **Toni Kitanovski & Cherkezi Orchestra** will let their music flow into a musical score as DBDT veteran dancer/choreographer **Claude Alexander III** transforms the music into passionate movements for DBDT dancers. This international project is part of Dallas Black Dance Theatre's Catalyst for Change as it celebrates its 45th anniversary. **Wells Fargo** is the Presenting Sponsor for the Cultural Awareness series on February 18-19, 2022, at 7:30 pm CST in the Wyly Theatre in Dallas, TX. The Guest Artist Sponsor is **Trust for Mutual Understanding**.

The North Macedonian musicians will travel to Dallas where the two groups will collaborate on the performance. The dancers will perform as the band plays live on stage. This is not the first time the two groups have worked together. Two years ago, both organizations traveled to each other's country as a part of a six-month cultural, artistic exchange. The result was the simultaneous world premiere of a creative documentary, *The Way of Clave*, about African American history and dance in Dallas and Romani heritage and music in North Macedonia.

Toni Kitanovski & Cherkezi Orchestra have received international rave reviews. The *Rolling Stone Magazine* described them as, "Rarely has Southeast Europe sounded so cosmopolitan." The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, says "*The individual class of its musicians reminds of the bands of Duke Ellington, Charles Mingus or Sun Ra...*"

"It is my great privilege and joy to be working again with Dallas Black Dance Theatre. The high level of excellence, professionalism and dedication of dancers, choreographer Claude Alexander III, and the whole production team is immensely inspiring," said Toni Kitanovski.

“We will explore in our individual artistic way and what connects our distant cultures as we are first and foremost all people of planet Earth. In my view, that is the essence of artistic, cultural exchange, and if maybe we can make someone in the audience feel less lonely in this world, we'll know we have succeeded.”

“I am thrilled about collaborating with Toni Kitanovski!” said DBDT dancer/choreographer Claude Alexander III. “My trip to Macedonia was the most beautifully, overwhelming experience as I met so many wonderful people, embraced new cultures, tried incredible foods, and encountered so much LOVE! The people are full of life, and I hope to display that love of life in this new work with Toni and the excellent musicians of Macedonia!”

Three audience favorites round out the Cultural Awareness series. Mesmerized eyes are transfixed as they observe *Awassa Astrige/Ostrich* regally glide across the stage, no matter how many times they have experienced this classic 89-year-old work. A male soloist becomes The Ostrich with a powerful presence along with fluid and awe-inspiring controlled movements. Sierra Leone native **Asadata Dafora** created the majestic work in 1932 with musical accompaniment of hypnotic, percussive African rhythms.

“Edgy, thrilling, and evocative.” That is how *The Berkshire Edge* described *Night Run* by international choreographer **Christopher L. Huggins** when it unfolded at the **Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival 2021**. Night falls and time seems to become an illusion as Huggins combined modern dance and classical ballet over Flamenco-influenced guitar and a slow waltz in the work.

The Dallas Morning News described *in-ter-pret* choreographed by **Hope Boykin** as “one of the best pieces in the Dallas Black Dance Theatre repertory.” Boykin created the work for DBDT in 2006 and describes it as lighthearted, quick, fun, and whimsical with expansive full movement. Boykin is a former dancer with the **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre**, having danced with the company for two decades. **The Kaleta A. Doolin Foundation** is the Female Choreographer Sponsor.

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Cultural Awareness

February 18-19, 2022, 7:30 pm

Dee & Charles Wyly Theatre

In-person + Live streaming + On-demand

In-person tickets range from \$45 to \$65.

Live streaming tickets are \$25 per household. Watch the live stream broadcast in real-time at 7:30 pm CST on Saturday, February 19, 2022. Or watch it on-demand starting at 11 pm CST Saturday through Monday, February 21, 11:59 pm CST.

For more performance details visit www.DBDT.com.

STUDENT MATINEES

Friday, February 18, 2022, at 10:30 am

Dee & Charles Wyly Theatre

W.P. & Bulah Luse Foundation is the Student Matinee Sponsor.

NO SUBSCRIPTIONS OR GROUP DISCOUNTS FOR THE 45TH SEASON

Dallas Black Dance Theatre is limiting seating capacity to allow for social distancing in accordance with CDC guidelines. Because of limited ticket availability, DBDT will not be able to give discounts on groups or subscriptions this year.

2021 - 2022 | DBDT Season Media and Travel Sponsors

NBC 5, *Texas Metro News*, *The Dallas Morning News*, American Airlines, DART, *The Dallas Weekly*.

2021 - 2022 | DBDT Season Media Supporters

Elite News, *FYI-50+*, *The Dallas Examiner*, *The Dallas Post Tribune*, *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. The National Endowment for the Arts designated the 45-year-old company as 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, Dallas Black Dance Theatre ranks as the 9th leading modern dance company and ranks 42nd as a ballet company according to Dance Data Project. This status in both modern and ballet recognizes the dancers' versatility across multiple genres. DBDT is also the 10th largest minority arts organization in America and the 4th largest black dance company in the nation.

As a result of COVID closures, Dallas Black Dance Theater's 44th season was 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 in the world to present its entire season as paid-only virtual performances, a new business model developed after the closing of live performances during the pandemic.

In 2021, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival commissioned Darrell Grand Moultrie to choreograph the new work LIKE WATER for Dallas Black Dance Theatre as the inaugural

recipient of the **Joan B. Hunter New Work Commission** in a world premiere at the prestigious dance festival.

Ann Williams founded Dallas Black Dance Theatre in 1976. **Melissa M. Young** took 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 following a volunteer assignment for the dance company.

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. Dallas Black Dance Theatre consists of 14 full-time salaried dancers performing a mixed repertory of modern, jazz, African, and spiritual works by national and international choreographers. **DBDT: Encore!** features 10 artists of rising excellence from across the nation who support Dallas Black Dance Theatre'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 48 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, including ballet, jazz, tap, modern, and African. Classes are held at Dallas Black Dance Theatre's studios and are open to students ages four to adult. The academy has three performing ensembles: **Allegro Performing Ensemble**, Dallas Black Dance Theatre'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.dbdt.com/academy.





2019 photograph of DBDT dancer/choreographer Claude Alexander III in North Macedonia by Xavier Mack.



Toni Kitanovski & Cherkezi Orchestra photograph by Stefan Saskov.



Awassa Astrige/Ostrich photograph by Richard Rodriguez.



Night Run photograph by Sharen Bradford - The Dancing Image.



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