
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

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DALLAS BLACK DANCE ACADEMY
PRODUCES DISCIPLINED PROFESSIONALS
IN A SPECTRUM OF INDUSTRIES OVER 50 YEARS
The BIG Dance Proceeds Benefit the Academy

In-person + Live Stream

Dallas, TX – As **Dallas Black Dance Academy** prepares to launch its 50th season in June, it continues a legacy of producing disciplined professionals in a spectrum of industries including dance. Since 2012, every senior in the academy has graduated from high school and gone on to attend college. **Dallas Black Dance Theatre's (DBDT)** annual fundraising event, **The BIG Dance**, on Saturday June 3, 2023, from 7:00 PM – Midnight at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center benefits the Academy.

Dallas Black Dance Academy is the only modern dance company of color in the nation certified to teach the **American Ballet Theatre (ABT)** National Training Curriculum to students. Many of the accomplished students from the Academy have been scholarship students who could not otherwise afford formal dance training. Without the early attention and rigor provided at the Academy, these promising students may never have been accepted to **Booker T. Washington HSPVA** and then can go on to prestigious universities and conservatories across the nation.

Dallas Black Dance Academy alumni have not only made their mark in the dance industry, but in various careers. **Avalyn Pace** is a retired IBM Executive in Dallas, TX., **Dr. Avia Wilkerson** is a physician in St. Louis, MO., **Liz Mikel** is an actress on Broadway, **Dr. Nicole Hubbard-Muestercher** is a pharmaceutical researcher in Boston, MA., **Angelia Williams** is a Vice President at City Financial in Tampa, FL., **Dr. Karlen Lewis** is a physical therapist in Dallas, TX., **Wendy Calhoun** is a Producer/Director/Writer in Los Angeles, CA., **Sharon Holland- Carnell** is a Magnet Coordinator at Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Dallas, TX.

Academy alumni who are in the dance industry include India Bradley with the New York City Ballet, My'Kal Sromile with the Boston Ballet, **Layla Brent** and **Jordan Willis** who are both in The Lion King, **Alysia Johnson** with the Hubbard Street Dance in Chicago, IL., **Jared Brown** with the Hofesh Shechter Dance Company in Germany, and **McKinley Willis** who is an eight-year member of Dallas Black Dance Theatre.

THE BIG DANCE PROCEEDS BENEFIT DALLAS BLACK DANCE ACADEMY

All proceeds from The BIG Dance will benefit Dallas Black Dance Theatre's Academy, providing a 40% reduction in tuition fees for more than 300 students enrolled in our on-site academy training classes at our arts district facility. It also helps to support in-school dance residency programs for 2000+ students in 24 area DFW schools with student populations whose families are economically challenged and primarily Latino and Black.

The 49-year-old Academy produced the first **Presidential Scholar** in dance in America. Eight other Presidential Scholars who graduated from **Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts** trained at **Dallas Black Dance Academy**. Four Academy students have received full scholarships to the prestigious dance program at **The Juilliard School**. Many more Academy students have received the **Texas Young Masters Award**, the state equivalent to the national award.

"Dallas Black Dance Academy has been inclusive from the beginning with Black, White, and Hispanic students. Within a few years, the academy also had Indian and Asian students," said Academy Founder **Ann Williams**.

Every year Dallas Black Dance Theatre celebrates a different culture and music genre during its annual fundraiser The BIG Dance. This year the theme is *La vida es un carnaval!* "Life is a carnival!" featuring a fusion of Latin & Afro-Latin music. Including different cultures is part of the legacy of DBDT, which has been inclusive in the way it operates since it opened in 1976. In 2019 The BIG Dance genre was The Roaring 20's with the theme of *Harlem Renaissance*. In 2021 the genre was Big Easy with the theme Let the Good Times Roll! In 2022, the genre was Country with a theme of Boot Scootin' Boogie.

The 2023 event will be an unforgettable night with the theme *La vida es un carnaval!* which translates to "Life is a carnival!" Live music from traditional and contemporary local Dallas artists, including the premier Cuban-style orchestra **Havana NRG!**, the full-experience salsa band **Fusión Latina**, and the captivating atmosphere of **Mariachi Zacatecas**, sets the pace for the evening. The event includes dance lessons by **Amanda Alvarez** of **Amanda Cristina Salsa**, social dancing, food, spirits, festive décor, and professional dance vignettes by Dallas Black Dance Theatre dancers celebrating the flair of Latin and Afro-Latin culture! You can also experience the festivities via a live stream.

Honorary Co-Chairs **Mr. Sam Santiago** and **Mr. Enrique G. Cobian** and Co-Chairs **Ms. Sharon K. King** (Castle Business Solutions, LLC) and **Mrs. Veronica Torres-Hazley** (Torres Hazley Enterprise, LLC) planned the event. The attire for the evening is Latin festive.

For more details visit www.dallasbigdance.com

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ABOUT DALLAS BLACK DANCE ACADEMY

Dallas Black Dance Academy, the official school of Dallas Black Dance Theatre, celebrates 49 years of delivering dance instruction to a community of diverse backgrounds. The academy trained the first student in the nation to receive 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 on-site at DBDT's studios. 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***.

For details on Dallas Black Dance Academy visit www.dbdt.com/academy.

ABOUT DALLAS BLACK DANCE THEATRE

Ann Williams founded Dallas Black Dance Theatre in 1976 and retired in 2014. The dance company is now under the direction of Artistic Director **Melissa M. Young**. Dallas Black Dance Theatre's mission is to create and produce contemporary modern dance at the highest level of artistic excellence through performances and educational programs that bridge cultures and reach diverse communities. As the largest and oldest professional dance company in Dallas, DBDT is the fourth-largest Black dance company in the nation, the ninth-largest contemporary modern dance company, and ranked 40th among the nation's leading ballet companies. Located in the thriving downtown Dallas Arts District, DBDT has performed worldwide for over 4.5 million arts patrons and 2.7 million students in

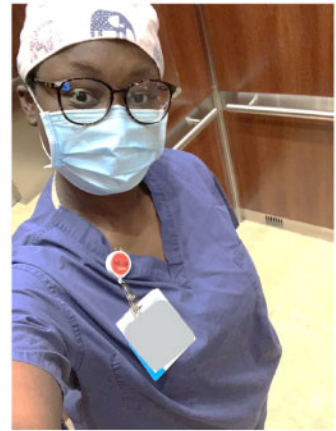
32 states and 16 countries on five continents. The performances include two Olympics (1996 & 2012), the nation's most prestigious venues (**Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Broadway, Jacob's Pillow**), and for such luminaries as **Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II** and **South African President Nelson Mandela**. Since the pandemic began in 2020, DBDT performances have also been viewed virtually in 34 countries and 38 states. The Company has been recognized by the **National Endowment for the Arts as an American Masterpiece Touring Artist** (2008) and received the **Texas Medal of the Arts Award for Arts Education** (2017) and a co-recipient of the **National Medal of Arts** (2023). For details on Dallas Black Dance Theatre visit www.DBDT.com.



Layla Brent



Alysia Johnson



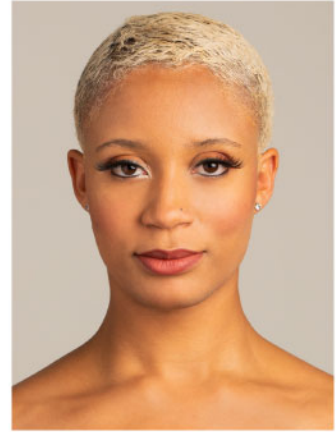
**Dr. Karleen Lewis,
PT, DPT, CLT**



My'Kal Stromile



Dr. Avia Wilkerson, MD



McKinley Willis



Academy photograph by Chris Jones.



Academy photograph by Chris Jones.



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