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A 651 ARTS Project
FLY: Five First Ladies of Dance – *The National Tour*

Featuring solo performances by five legendary dance stars:

Germaine Acogny
Carmen De Lavallade
Dianne McIntyre
Bebe Miller
Jawole Willa Jo Zollar

(September 27, 2010 – Brooklyn, New York) 651 ARTS, Brooklyn's premier arts organization dedicated to performance of the African Diaspora, announces the national tour of *FLY: Five First Ladies of Dance*. This program is an evening-length dance performance that includes the choreography and solo performances by five legendary contemporary dancer/choreographers: Carmen de Lavallade, Dianne McIntyre, Bebe Miller, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, and Germaine Acogny of Senegal.

2010 tour sites and dates include:

- **THE PAINTED BRIDE (Philadelphia, PA), October 29, 30, 2010**
Info: 215.925.9914. www.paintedbride.org
- **THE KENNEDY CENTER (Washington, DC), November 1 & 2, 2010**
Nov. 2 SOLD OUT.
Info: 800-444-1324 or 202-467-4600, www.kennedy-center.org
- **DANCE CLEVELAND in collaboration with Oberlin College (Oberlin, OH), December 3, 4, 2010.** Info: (216) 991-9000, www.oberlin.edu/artsguide
- **NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (Newark, NJ), Dec. 11, 12, 2010**
Info: 888-GO-NJPAC, www.njpac.org

Originally presented by 651 ARTS in May 2009 as part of a season dedicated to the many contributions of women of African descent in the performing arts, both performances quickly sold out. With greater audience demand than could be accommodated in the Brooklyn engagement, and a cast that was inspired to continue working together, the idea of reuniting these five dancers and taking the show on the road was born.

Read more...

651 ARTS Executive Director, Georgiana Pickett notes, *“FLY was designed to reflect the contributions of veteran Black female choreographers to the field of dance; to juxtapose the variety between their artistic voices; and to illustrate their collective impact. As dancers, choreographers and company-founders, these women, who span five decades, have helped shape the language and trajectory of contemporary dance both in the U.S. and abroad. They have broken barriers and inspired countless artists as they continue to raise the artistic bar and inspire the world with vital work and fresh ideas.”*

Eva Yaa Asantewaa of *Dance Magazine*: *“...each has questioned the status quo of her art and her time, forging a creative engagement to inspire generations to come.”*

In addition to presenting five solo works, the *FLY* tour will include master classes and historical lectures by these decorated artists.

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Dedicated to Performance of the African Diaspora.

Website: www.651ARTS.org
Twitter: <http://twitter.com/651ARTS>
Facebook: <http://bit.ly/dfSEZC>

THE ARTISTS:

BEBE MILLER, *Rain* (1989)

Choreographed and Performed by Bebe Miller

Original Music: Hearn Gadbois, with additional music by Heitor Villa Lobos

Noted for her cross-disciplinary explorations that have expanded the vocabulary of dance, Bebe Miller is a modern master who articulates a physical language for the human condition in her choreography. Ms. Miller opens *FLY* with her classic and highly regarded work *Rain* (1989), which premiered twenty years ago at the BAM *Next Wave Festival*. *Rain* is a work crafted in graphic contrast. The result is a powerful work in which Miller portrays “a woman weighted down by a host of cares, yet refusing to be totally crushed by them.” (Jack Anderson, NY Times, November 30, 1989).

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GERMAINE ACOGNY, excerpt from *Songook Yaakaar (Facing up to hope)*, (2010)

Choreographed by Germaine Acogny and Pierre Doussaint

Performed by Germaine Acogny

Frequently referred to as the doyenne of contemporary African dance, Germaine Acogny can best be described as a force. Through her vision and sheer determination, she has not only led the way for contemporary dance on the continent of Africa, but has also greatly influenced black American choreographers. ***Songook Yaakaar*** – an evening-length work that had its premiere in Lyon, France on September 17, 2010, furthers the framework for which she creates art – one in which Acogny proclaims the hope of Africa with insight and conviction. Using video, an original score and a riveting presence, this solo excerpt taken from *Songook Yaakaar* imagines an Africa with a powerful female President.

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DIANNE MCINTYRE, *If You Don't Know...* (2009)

Choreographed and performed by Dianne McIntyre

George Caldwell on Piano

Music composition: Olu Dara

The inimitable Dianne McIntyre follows Ms. Acogny with her work *If You Don't Know...* (2009), a piece that draws upon the lifetime revelations of three individuals who have greatly influenced Ms. McIntyre – Gwendolyn Nelson-Fleming, St. Clair Bourne and Lester Bowie. The work is also a powerful tribute to Ms. McIntyre's own choreographic legacy – one that features a dynamic movement style and an ingenious use of live music. Her contributions to the Black Arts Movement of the 70's inspired dance artists such as Jawole Zollar in their own explorations of black American lives. Her body of work is also noted for its contribution to American post-modern dance.

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Continued...

JAWOLE WILLA JO ZOLLAR, *Bring 'Em Home* (2009)

Choreographed and performed by Jawole Zollar

Music: "Just a little while to stay here" from the CD *Rollin'* by ReBirth Brass Band (1994).

Choreographer, civic engagement leader and catalyst for social justice are just a few ways of describing Jawole Zollar. As founder of celebrated dance troupe **Urban Bush Women**, twenty-five years ago, Ms. Zollar set out to create art that illuminated the stories of women and men often forgotten or ignored. In her work *Bring 'Em Home* (2009), Ms. Zollar explores the New Orleans tradition of Second Line dancing, while commenting on the failed efforts to assist those displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

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CARMEN DE LAVALLADE, *The Creation* (1972)

Choreographed by Geoffrey Holder

"Few people in the performing arts can match the accomplishments of the supremely elegant Carmen de Lavallade." - Valerie Gladstone, *Dance Teacher*

Performed by Carmen de Lavallade

Costumes and Music by Geoffrey Holder

Closing this extraordinary program is the legendary Carmen de Lavallade performing *The Creation* (1972), choreographed by her illustrious husband Geoffrey Holder. This thirty-seven year old classic work retells the Biblical story of creation as interpreted in a poem by James Weldon Johnson. In *The Creation*, we not only enjoy de Lavallade's movement, but also her riveting recitation of Johnson's moving poem. Over her nearly 60-year career, Ms. de Lavallade has starred in ballets, performed in films and choreographed for opera. By setting no limits and fearlessly choosing groundbreaking projects, Ms. de Lavallade's longevity and contributions to dance are incomparable.

FLY: Five First Ladies of Dance was produced by 651 ARTS as part of its signature series *Black Dance: Tradition and Transformation* and premiered on May 30, 2009 under the same program. The U.S tour of *FLY* is funded in part by the National Dance Project of the New England Foundation for the Arts, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and additional funding from the Ford Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Community Connections Fund of the MetLife Foundation. *Black Dance: Tradition and Transformation* has been generously funded by the Doris Duke Foundation and the Mertz Gilmore Foundation. Visit www.651ARTS.org for more information.

It is the mission of 651 ARTS to deepen awareness of and appreciation for contemporary performing arts and culture of the African Diaspora, and to provide professional and creative opportunities for performing artists of African descent.

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