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651 ARTS PRESENTS

Ronald K. Brown/EVIDENCE: 25 Years

An evening of rarely seen works

With special guests: Mamadouba Mohamed Camara,
Dayton Contemporary Dance Company & Dirty Dozen Brass Band

Friday, December 17, 2010 at 7:30pm

BAM Harvey Theater

Tickets: \$100*/\$55/\$45/\$35.

*\$100 tickets include a post-show champagne reception with the artists.

Student, Senior, and group discounts available.

Purchase tickets: www.651ARTS.org or call 718-636-4100

(Nov 9, 2010 – Brooklyn, New York) As Brooklyn's premier presenter of contemporary performance of the African Diaspora, 651 ARTS is honored to celebrate 25 years of outstanding contributions to choreography and dance by Ronald K. Brown. Brown has been acknowledged throughout the year in honor of his 25th anniversary and 651 concludes this remarkable milestone by presenting a program with two recently remounted works, performed by EVIDENCE and Dayton Contemporary Dance Company. Live music accompanies all three works on the program.

For the first time in twelve years, Brown's company EVIDENCE performs his seminal work *Destiny* in-full, as the piece was originally conceived – including live musical accompaniment by West African percussionist Mamadouba Mohamed Camara. Brown was awarded a major American Masterpieces grant from the National Endowment for the Arts earlier this year to re-stage this vital work, which has mostly been seen in excerpt under the title *Upside Down*. *Destiny*, which explores and synthesizes contemporary American and traditional West African dance, reflects what has come to be known as the EVIDENCE aesthetic - showcasing Brown's distinctive juxtapositions of contemporary and traditional movement, music and storytelling from West Africa to America.

Sharing the lore and comparing the histories that connect the cultures of urban New York and Abidjan, *Destiny* is an episodic work that focuses on unity and social and spiritual healing in an era of HIV; it is about communities coming together and supporting each other in times of need.

As Brown says, “sometimes it takes a tragedy to bring us into focus, and to realize the responsibility we have to each other.”

As special guests on the program the acclaimed Dayton Contemporary Dance Company (DCDC) - the oldest modern dance company in Ohio and one of the first dance companies in American history to be dedicated to Black dance and choreography will perform *Children of the Passage*. Brown worked with revered American choreographer Donald McKayle in 1999 to create this distinctive work for DCDC. Originally conceived to be performed with live music by the New Orleans icons the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, who wrote the score, *Children of the Passage* has rarely been performed this way. In an anticipated reunion Dirty Dozen will travel to Brooklyn to perform live with DCDC for this exceptional event.

Percussive, high energy works that joyously splice complex rhythms with a deep but down to earth spirituality.” — *The New York Times*

Ronald K. Brown founded his New York-based contemporary dance company EVIDENCE, A DANCE COMPANY in 1985 — at the age of 19. Since then, Brown has emerged as a major choreographic voice, presenting extroverted, high-spirited work that critics have called “undeniably powerful” (Washington Post) with “magnificently textured style” (New York Times).

In addition to his work with EVIDENCE, Brown has created work for dozens of companies, including the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (*Grace* in 1999 and *Servicing Nia* in 2001, *IFE/My Heart* 2005), Ailey II, African American Dance Ensemble, Philadanco, Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble, Cinque Folkloric Dance Theater, Jennifer Muller/The Works, Jeune Ballet d’Afrique Noire, as well as DCDC. Brown has received numerous awards and fellowships including a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in Choreography, a National Endowment for the Arts Choreographer’s Fellowship, a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship in choreography, New York Dance and Performance Award (Bessie), a Black Theater Alliance Award, the American Dance Festival Humphrey/Weidman/Limón Award, and fellowships from the Edward and Sally van Lier Fund. In addition, Brown was named Def Dance Jam Workshop Mentor of the Year (2000). In 2003, Ron received an AUDELCO (Black Theatre Award) for his choreography for *Crowns: Portraits of Black Women in Church Hats*, originally produced by the McCarter Theater and presented off-Broadway in 2003. In fall 2006 Brown received The United States Artists Rose Fellowship.

651 ARTS has worked with Brown throughout its organizational history on multiple educational residencies, international exchanges with Africa and commissions.

THE PROGRAM (in order):

EVIDENCE performs *Two Year Old Gentlemen*, a 2008 work created for the male dancers in the company, which emphasizes the importance of community and strong male relationships across generations. Both pieces are set to music composed and performed by West African percussionist, Mamadouba Mohamed Camara.

Children of the Passage (1999), a piece Brown created for DCDC in collaboration with American Master Donald McKayle, honors the unique culture of New Orleans. DCDC will reunite with New Orleans’s iconic Dirty Dozen Brass Band—who also composed the original music — to perform the piece as it was meant to be seen: with the full band on stage.

EVIDENCE performs *Destiny* (1998), a work Brown created in collaboration with **Jeune Ballet d'Afrique Noire**. This work explores and synthesizes contemporary American and traditional West African dance. Excerpts of *Destiny* have been a favorite in the company's repertoire for the past twelve years; however, a full performance of *Destiny* has not been seen since 1998.

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THE ARTISTS:

•Dayton Contemporary Dance Company (DCDC)

Located in Dayton, Ohio since the company's inception in 1968, the world-renowned Dayton Contemporary Dance Company (DCDC), currently helmed by Artistic Director Debbie Blunden-Diggs, was founded by the late dancer, teacher, and visionary leader and MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship recipient, Jeraldyn Blunden. DCDC is among very few dance companies of national caliber to be located outside a large US metropolitan city. That caliber has several benchmarks. Among them, DCDC has the world's largest archive of African-American dance work and one of the largest of any kind among contemporary dance companies. DCDC was the first African-American dance company to join the Northeast Regional Ballet Association in 1973. DCDC participated in the Emmy-award winning PBS Great Performances documentary *Free to Dance* and has toured internationally to Russia, France, South Korea, Poland, and next year, Chile, S.A.

•Mamadouba Mohamed Camara

Mamadouba Mohamed Camara is a percussionist and arranger of traditional music from Guinea, West Africa. Camara has performed all over the world, including with the band Fatala under the direction of Fode Konte; the Ensemble Mandingnara directed by Djeli Mamadou Kande; dance and percussion ensemble Ballets Merveilles de Guinea directed by Kemoko Sano; Bembeya Jazz International; Wassa with Mercery Camara; and Percussionnes de Guinea — the prestigious national drum troupe composed of the seven best percussionists in Guinea.

•Dirty Dozen Brass Band

In 1977, the Dirty Dozen Social and Pleasure Club in New Orleans began showcasing a traditional Crescent City brass band. It was a joining of two proud, but antiquated, traditions at the time: social and pleasure clubs dated back over a century to a time when black southerners could rarely afford life insurance, and the clubs would provide proper funeral arrangements. Brass bands, early predecessors of jazz as we know it, would often follow the funeral procession playing somber dirges, then once the family of the deceased was out of earshot, burst into jubilant dance tunes as casual onlookers danced in the streets. By the late '70s, few of either existed. The Dirty Dozen Social and Pleasure Club decided to assemble this group as a house band, and over the course of these early gigs, the seven-member ensemble adopted the venue's

name: the Dirty Dozen Brass Band. Thirty years later, the Dirty Dozen Brass Band is a world famous music machine, whose name is synonymous with genre-bending romps and high-octane performances. They have revitalized the brass band in New Orleans and around the world, progressing from local parties, clubs, baseball games and festivals in their early years to touring nearly constantly in the U.S. and in over 30 other countries on five continents. The Dirty Dozen have been featured guests on albums by artists including David Bowie, Elvis Costello, Dr. John and the Black Crowes. The city of New Orleans even has an official *Dirty Dozen Brass Band Day*.

2011 Funding Info: Ronald K. Brown/EVIDENCE: 25 Years is a project of 651 ARTS' *Black Dance: Tradition and Transformation* series. Lead funding for this program has been provided by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The National Endowment for the Arts. Additional support comes from The New York State Council on the Arts, The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, State Senator Velmanette Montgomery, NYC Councilmember Letitia James, the Brooklyn Community Foundation, The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, The Lambent Foundation, The Mertz Gilmore Foundation, The New York Community Trust, The Rockefeller Brothers Fund, The Fund for the City of New York, ConEdison, JP Morgan Chase, Goldman Sachs and Individual Donors.

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. Visit www.651ARTS.org for more information.

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651 ARTS IS THEATER, DANCE, MUSIC, COMMUNITY.