



For Immediate Release

Contact: Anna Glass
Shay Wafer
T: 718-230-2528
F: 718-636-4166
press@651arts.org

651 ARTS ANNOUNCES SEASON 2012

FEATURING **10 STELLAR ARTISTS** IN
8 STUNNING EVENINGS OF DANCE, THEATER, MUSIC AND
ARTIST-TO-ARTIST CONVERSATIONS

WORD BECOMES FLESH

by Marc Bamuthi Joseph

Presented by Under the Radar Festival
in association with 651 ARTS—January 5-15

LIVE & OUTSPOKEN

An original live series of conversation and performance

Nicholas Leichter & Eisa Davis—January 26

Regina Taylor & Special Guest—Early February

Garth Fagan & Judith Jamison—March 13

Toshi Reagon & June Millington—April 26

A CELEBRATION OF 81 YEARS

Carmen de Lavallade: My Life in Dance and Theater
and The Legends I Met Along The Way (working title)—May 18 & 19

(Brooklyn, New York, December 2011) The Brooklyn-based, **651 ARTS**—a performing arts organization dedicated to the multi-faceted work of contemporary performing artists of the African Diaspora—announces the season’s roster featuring 10 stellar artists in 8 stunning evenings of dance, theater, music and artist-to-artist conversations.

MORE...

THEATER

DANCE

MUSIC

COMMUNITY

The 2012 season begins with the evening-length dance and spoken word piece *Word Becomes Flesh* originally created as a solo work by **Marc Bamuthi Joseph** presented by the **Under the Radar Festival** in association with 651 ARTS at The Public Theater **January 5–15**. 651 ARTS' acclaimed series, **LIVE & OUTSPOKEN**, returns in four evenings of intimate dialogue and art between fellow artists. This year's stellar line-up includes: **Playwright/actress Eisa Davis interviewing choreographer Nicholas Leichter (January 26)**; **A Special Guest interviewing playwright Regina Taylor (Early February)**; **renowned dancer/choreographer Judith Jamison interviewing legendary choreographer Garth Fagan (March 13)**; and, **music pioneer June Millington interviewing singer/songwriter Toshi Reagon (April 26)**. An audience Q&A will follow each interview. All events will take place at the Mark Morris Dance Center in the James and Martha Duffy Performance Space. The interviews are recorded by media sponsor **BOMB Magazine** and will be made available to the public via podcasts. Lastly, 651 ARTS honors **Carmen de Lavallade**, a "First Lady of Dance," choreographer, actress and teacher in her 81st year, with the commissioning of her newest work, *Carmen de Lavallade: My Life in Dance and Theater and The Legends I Met Along The Way*. New York audiences will get a first look at this new work on **May 18 & 19** at The Kumble Theater for the Performing Arts, Long Island University (Brooklyn Campus). Audiences may also join a celebratory reception on May 19.

To round out a continued mission of outreach in the Brooklyn community, humanities events and educational programming (workshops and public lectures) will take place at community-based organizations and public schools throughout the year.

Tickets for *Word Becomes Flesh* go on sale December 6, 2011. Tickets for the rest of the 2012 Season go on sale January 4, 2012. Prices range from \$20-\$100. For more information about tickets, go to www.651ARTS.org or call 718-636-4181 x2229.

WORD BECOMES FLESH
Marc Bamuthi Joseph

Presented by the Under the Radar Festival in association with 651 ARTS
January 5 – 15, 2012

Thursday, January 5 @ 2pm

Friday – Saturday, January 6-7 @ 7pm

Sunday, January 8 @ 4pm

Monday, January 9 & Thursday, January 12 @ 9:30pm

Friday, January 13 @ 7pm

Saturday, January 14 @ 9:30pm

Sunday, January 15 @ 4pm

The Public Theater – 425 Lafayette Street, New York

Tickets: \$20

www.publictheater.org or call 212.967.7555

"Joseph's words can take an audience's breath away, then coax out sighs, exclamations of approval, and finally draw them to their feet."
(The San Francisco Bay Guardian)

Word Becomes Flesh is an evening-length dance and spoken word piece originally created as a solo work by **Marc Bamuthi Joseph**. Bamuthi re-imagines and expands the piece as a group work set on five male performers. Bamuthi's work takes form as a series of letters to his unborn son, using poetry, dance, live music and visual art to document nine months of pregnancy from a young single father's perspective. Bamuthi has reimagined the work for an ensemble cast in order to detach the piece from the autobiographical idiom so that it will speak to a new generation and serve as a broader comment on Black male relationships to fatherhood in general. *Word Becomes Flesh* represents the completion of his third play, having already staged *De/Cipher* (Theater Artaud and Yerba Buena Center, 2001) and *No Man's Land* (ODC, 2002). Presented in association with the Under the Radar Festival.

Marc Bamuthi Joseph is one of America's vital voices in performance, arts education and artistic curation. Bamuthi was featured on the cover of *Smithsonian Magazine* and was named one of *America's Top Young Innovators in the Arts and Sciences*. He is the artistic director of HBO's *Russell Simmons presents Brave New Voices*, a recipient of the Rockefeller Fellowship and has received an Alpert Award. Bamuthi has developed several poetically based works including *Word Becomes Flesh*, *Scourge* and *the break/s*. He wrote the libretto, *Home in 7*, for the Atlanta Ballet and directed Dennis Kim's *Tree City Legends* at Intersection for the Arts. Bamuthi was a commentator on National Public Radio, has lectured and carried out adjunct professorships, and currently teaches at Mills College. Bamuthi works with Youth Speaks as a mentor, curates the *Living Word Festival* and *Left Coast Leaning*, and is the co-founder of Life is Living.

**LIVE & OUTSPOKEN
2012**

For four evenings at the Mark Morris Dance Center in the James and Martha Duffy Performance Space, 651 ARTS' acclaimed series, **LIVE & OUTSPOKEN** returns with one-of-a-kind interviews between artists who have made indelible marks in the performing arts world today. Each evening provides an intimate glimpse of the influences, artistry and social concerns of some of the worlds' most engaging and fascinating artists. This season features **playwright/actress Eisa Davis interviewing choreographer Nicholas Leichter; A Special Guest interviewing playwright Regina Taylor; renowned dancer/choreographer Judith Jamison interviewing legendary choreographer Garth Fagan; and, music pioneer June Millington interviewing singer/songwriter Toshi Reagon.** In addition to conversation—and in keeping with 651 ARTS' dedication to live performance—the subject of the interview will demonstrate his/her artistic form throughout the evening and, when possible, the participants will collaborate artistically during the 90-minute event.

**Choreographer Nicholas Leichter interviewed by
Playwright/Actor Eisa Davis**

Thursday, January 26, 2012 – 7PM
The James and Martha Duffy Performance Space at the Mark Morris Dance Center

Tickets: \$20 | Students & Seniors \$15
www.651ARTS.org or call 718-636-4181 x2229

Old friends, **choreographer/artistic director Nicholas Leichter** and **playwright/actress Eisa Davis** come together and invite the audience to join in on their conversation. Leichter and Davis will discuss the use of movement and music to interpret ever changing cultural narratives. Leichter will perform excerpts from his recent works.

Nicholas Leichter has taught nationally and internationally, and served on faculty at the Tisch School of the Arts and the American Dance Festival. He has choreographed over 25 works for his company, including *Carmina Burana* and *Rite of Spring* commissioned by the Brooklyn Philharmonic, and *Sweetwash* with Eisa Davis. Recent commissions include Connecticut College, Wayne State University, The Barnard Project, University of North Carolina School of the Arts and *je danse donc je suis* in Burkina Faso. Leichter has been artist-in-residence and guest artist at many institutions including CSU Summer Arts, Sarah Lawrence College, Hollins University, George Washington University, University of Houston, Muhlenberg College and Idaho State University. He received the Mariam McGlone Emerging Choreographer Award, Choreographer Fellowship from NYFA, National Performance Network/Network of Cultural Centers of Color Artist-of-Color Residency Award at Sacramento State and Copperfoot Award for Choreography.

Eisa Davis was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama for her play *Bulrusher*. She wrote and starred in *Angela's Mixtape* and was named a Best of 2009 by *The New Yorker*. Other plays include *Ramp*, *The History of Light*, *Paper Armor*, *Umkovu*, *Six Minutes*, *Warriors Don't Cry* and *Hip Hop Anansi*. She was a resident at New Dramatists, winning the Helen Merrill Award and the Whitfield Cook Award. She received fellowships from the MacDowell Colony, Cave Canem, and the Van Lier and Mellon Foundations. Davis received an Obie Award for her performance in *Passing Strange* and is featured in the films *Welcome to the Rileys*, *Robot Stories*, *The Architect*, *Confess*, *Happenstance*, *Pretty Bird*, *Apparition of the Eternal Church*, *Brass Tacks*, *The Stare* and *This*. She appeared in *The Wire*, *Law and Order*, *Damages* and *Mercy*. She will also appear in the new NBC series, *Smash*. Her recent album is titled *Something Else*.

**Playwright/Actor Regina Taylor interviewed by
a Special Guest**

Early February 2012 – 7PM
The James and Martha Duffy Performance Space at the Mark Morris Dance Center

Tickets: \$20 | Students & Seniors \$15
www.651ARTS.org or call 718-636-4181 x2229

Playwright/director/actress Regina Taylor is interviewed by an exciting special guest about the artistic process and traversing the terrain between the big screen, small screen and the stage. Taylor will read excerpts from her latest works.

Regina Taylor received a Golden Globe, an NAACP Image Award and two Emmy Award nominations for her role as “Lilly Harper” in *I’ll Fly Away*. Taylor also starred in *The Unit* for which she received an NAACP Image Award. Her television roles include *Crisis at Central High*, *The Education of Max Bickford*, *Feds* and *Strange Justice*. Film credits include *The Negotiator*, *Courage Under Fire*, *A Family Thing*, *The Keeper*, *Clockers*, *Losing Isaiah* and *Lean on Me*. Taylor is the first Black woman to play William Shakespeare’s “Juliet” in Broadway’s *Romeo and Juliet*. Taylor has written *Oo-Bla-Dee*, *Drowning Crow*, *The Dreams of Sarah Breedlove*, *A Night in Tunisia*, *Escape from Paradise* and other works. Her play, *Crowns*, received four Helen Hayes Awards. Taylor received the Hope Abelson Artist-in-Residence Award and honorary doctorates from Columbia College, DePaul University and Lake Forest College.

**Legendary Choreographer Garth Fagan
Interviewed by Renowned Dancer/Choreographer Judith Jamison**

Tuesday, March 13, 2012 – 7PM
The James and Martha Duffy Performance Space at the Mark Morris Dance Center

Tickets: \$20 | Students & Seniors \$15
www.651ARTS.org or call 718-636-4181 x2229

Two of modern dance's incomparable legends, **choreographer Garth Fagan** and **dancer/choreographer Judith Jamison**, sit down for an intimate conversation about their ideas, inspirations and careers in dance. Members of Garth Fagan Dance will perform excerpts of his work.

Garth Fagan is the founder/artistic director of Garth Fagan Dance. He received a Tony Award for his path-breaking choreography in the *The Lion King*, as well as an Olivier Award, Drama Desk Award, Outer Critics Circle Award, Astaire Award, Ovation Award and Helpmann Award. He also choreographed *Queenie Pie* and *Shakespeare Marathon: A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Fagan created works for Dance Theatre of Harlem, Judith Jamison, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, José Limón Company and New York City Ballet. He holds the Order of Distinction from Jamaica. He is a Chancellor's Award Distinguished University Professor Emeritus of the State University of New York. He received the George Eastman Medal from the University of Rochester and holds honorary doctorates from the Juilliard School, University of Rochester, Nazareth College of Rochester, and Hobart and William Smith Colleges. Fagan was inducted into the American Academy of Achievement and titled a Fulbright Distinguished Fellow. He also received the Samuel H. Scripps American Dance Festival Award, the Guggenheim Fellowship, the *Dance Magazine* Award and the "Bessie" Award.

Judith Jamison joined Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (AAADT) in 1965 where Ailey created roles for her, notably the solo, *Cry*. During the 1970s and '80s, she appeared as a guest artist with companies worldwide, starred in Broadway's *Sophisticated Ladies* and formed The Jamison Project. She returned to AAADT in 1989 when Ailey asked her to succeed as Artistic Director. In the 21 years that followed, she brought the Company to unprecedented heights. Jamison received a prime time Emmy Award, American Choreography Award, Kennedy Center Honor, National Medal of Arts, "Bessie" Award, Phoenix Award and Handel Medallion. She is listed in *The TIME 100: The World's Most Influential People* and was honored by First Lady Michelle Obama at the first White House Dance Series event. Some Jamison works include *Divining*, *Forgotten Time* and *Hymn*. Her autobiography, *Dancing Spirit*, was edited by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and published in 1993. She remains committed to promoting the significance of the Ailey legacy. Jamison is the artistic director emerita of The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

**Singer/Songwriter Toshi Reagon interviewed by
Music Pioneer June Millington**

Thursday, April 26, 2012 – 7PM

The James and Martha Duffy Performance Space at the Mark Morris Dance Center

Tickets: \$20 | Students & Seniors \$15
www.651ARTS.org or call 718-636-4181 x2229

Two magnificent artists of the music world, **singer/songwriter Toshi Reagon**, and her mentor, **music pioneer June Millington**, come together to talk about artist activism and why they make music. Throughout the evening, Reagon and Millington will perform selections of their critically-acclaimed work.

Toshi Reagon, since 17, has moved audiences of all kinds with her big-hearted, hold-nothing-back approach to rock, blues, R&B, country, folk, spirituals and funk, leading her band—BIGLovely, launched in 1996. She has collaborated with Lenny Kravitz, Nona Hendryx, Elvis Costello, Ani DiFranco, Pete Seeger, Dar Williams, Lizz Wright, Meshell Ndegeocello and her mother, Bernice Johnson Reagon. She composed and served as musical director for Urban Bush Women, LAVA, and the Jane Comfort Dance Company. Her work was featured in *The Secret Life of Bees*, PBS/WGBH's *Africans in America*, and *The L Word*. Reagon collaborated with director Robert Wilson and Bernice Johnson Reagon on *The Temptation of St. Anthony*, and served as producer for Carl Hancock Rux and on CDs for Sweet Honey in the Rock. Some of Reagon's proudest moments have included playing for her godfather Pete Seeger's 90th birthday celebration. She performed with the Freedom Singers at the White House in President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama's tribute to the music of the Civil Rights Movement. Reagon received an Out Music Award, the Black Lily Award for Outstanding Performance and a New York Foundation for the Arts award. She was one of several women honored by the National Women's History Project.

June Millington and her sister Jean have been playing music since they were children strumming ukuleles in the Philippines. In the US, during the '60s, they turned in their acoustic guitars for electric and formed a succession of all-girl bands that eventually became *Fanny*, one of the first all-female rock bands to be signed to a major label. *Fanny* toured worldwide with bands like Chicago and Dr. John, and while recording in major studios Millington began to study sound recording and producing. After *Fanny*, Millington became involved in the women's music movement and was asked to play on tour with Cris Williamson's *The Changer and the Changed*. "Women's music" quickly evolved into an independent feminist music network, and Millington began to produce albums for, among others, Williamson, singer-songwriter Holly Near, and jazz pianist and composer Mary Watkins. June and Jean continued to record and perform throughout the 80's and 90's. June, together with her partner Ann Hackler, founded the Institute for the Musical Arts (IMA). June and Jean's latest CD is *Play Like a Girl*.

"A Celebration of 81 Years"
***Carmen de Lavallade: My Life in Dance and Theater and
Legends I Met Along The Way***

Friday – Saturday, May 18 & 19, 2012

"A Celebration of 81 Years"

*Carmen de Lavallade: My Life in Dance and Theatre and
Legends I Met Along The Way* (working title) – 7:30PM

The Kumble Theater for the Performing Arts – Brooklyn, New York

Tickets: \$35 | Students & Seniors \$30

\$100 (includes May 19 reception)

www.651ARTS.org or call 718-636-4181 x2229

In *The Creation* "de Lavallade's storytelling in words and motions
offers a saucy illustration of the Biblical take on how our world came to be..."
(*Dance Magazine*)

To honor a "First Lady of Dance," choreographer, actress and teacher, **Carmen de Lavallade**, and her legacy in her 81st year, 651 ARTS commissions a new work honoring her life and work, which will culminate with performances on **May 18 & 19**. After a year of development support from 651, de Lavallade will provide audiences a first look at *Carmen de Lavallade: My Life in Dance and Theater and Legends I Met Along The Way*, a retrospective work replete with excerpts of signature solos, film clips, photos and many stories. "A lot of people didn't know about my other life..." de Lavallade offers, "I touched every part of the arts in some way; I never settled for one thing... (she laughs), maybe because I didn't know any better." Stories of her years in California dancing with Lester Horton, in New York with Alvin Ailey and in Paris with Josephine Baker; working with jazz musicians Duke Ellington and later Wynton Marsalis; her work in film; and the "...magical..." time spent as part of Yale University's Repertory Theatre, will frame the work. *My Life...* is directed by de Lavallade's past student, actor/director Joe Grifasi, with dramaturgy by award-winning playwright/director Talvin Wilks. A reception follows the May 19 performance.

Carmen de Lavallade first appeared in New York City with the Lester Horton Dance Theater and subsequently on Broadway with Alvin Ailey in *House of Flowers*. She appeared in the films *Carmen Jones*, *Odds Against Tomorrow*, *Big Daddy* and *Lone Star*. Horton, Geoffrey Holder, Ailey, Glen Tetley and Agnes de Mille created ballets especially for her. She was a principle dancer with the Metropolitan Opera, a guest artist with the American Ballet Theatre and the New York City Center Opera. At Yale, she taught movement for actors and became a member of the Yale Repertory Company and the American Repertory Theatre at Harvard. She has choreographed for Dance Theatre of Harlem, Philadanco, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and the Metropolitan Opera. De Lavallade received a *Dance Magazine* Award, an honorary doctorate from the Juilliard School, a Duke Ellington Fellowship Award and a Dance/ USA Award. She is a founding member of Paradigm, a repertory concert company.

DIRECTIONS TO 651 ARTS' VENUES

Kumble Theater for the Performing Arts, at Long Island University,

Brooklyn Campus, Flatbush Avenue (between DeKalb and Willoughby)

www.brooklyn.liu.edu/kumbletheater

Subway

- 2,3,4,5 to Nevins Street. Walk north along Flatbush Avenue to main gate (Brooklyn campus begins on the corner of Flatbush and DeKalb Avenues), and proceed to LIU plaza, the Kumble Theater will be on your right.
- B,M,Q,R to DeKalb Avenue. Exit at Flatbush and DeKalb (front of Brooklyn-bound train), walk north along Flatbush Avenue to main gate (Brooklyn campus begins on the corner of Flatbush and DeKalb Avenues), and proceed to LIU plaza, the Kumble

The Mark Morris Dance Center

3 Lafayette Avenue

Brooklyn, NY 11217-1415

www.markmorrisdancegroup.org

Subway

- *B, D, C, G, M, N, Q, R, 2, 3, 4, 5*

Bus

- B41, B45, or B67 to Atlantic Ave

The Baryshnikov Arts Center

450 West 37th Street between 9th and 10th Avenues.

www.bacnyc.org

Subway

- A, C, E trains to 34th Street and 8th Avenue
1, 2, 3 trains to 34th Street and 7th Avenue

Bus

- M11 bus to 38th Street and 9th Avenue
M42 bus to 42nd Street and 10th Avenue

The Public Theater

425 Lafayette Street

New York, NY 10003

Subway

- West Side: Take the R or N train to the 8th Street Station
- East Side: Take the #6 train to Astor Place Station

Bus

- M2, M3, or M8 to 8 th Street and 4th Avenue
- M5 or M6 to 8 th Street and Broadway
- M15 to 2 nd Avenue and 9 th Street
- M101 or M102 to 8 th Street and Cooper Union

651 ARTS SEASON 2012 AT A GLANCE

WORD BECOMES FLESH by Marc Bamuthi Joseph	(Thur/Sun) January 5-15, 2012	The Public Theater Various Times
Live & Outspoken: Nicholas Leichter & Eisa Davis	(Thur) January 26, 2012	The Mark Morris Dance Center 7pm
Live & Outspoken: Regina Taylor & Special Guest	Early February 2012	The Mark Morris Dance Center 7pm
Live & Outspoken: Garth Fagan & Judith Jamison	(Tue) March 13, 2012	The Mark Morris Dance Center 7pm
Live & Outspoken: Toshi Reagon & June Millington	(Thur) April 26, 2012	The Mark Morris Dance Center 7pm
"A Celebration of 81 Years" – Carmen de Lavallade	(Fri/Sat) May 18 & 19, 2012	Kumble Theater for the Performing Arts 7:30pm



For over 20 years, 651 ARTS has been committed to developing, producing and presenting performance and cultural programming from the African Diaspora, with a primary focus on contemporary performing arts. 651 ARTS serves the cultural life of New York City, with a particular focus on Brooklyn, one of America’s most culturally diverse communities.

651 ARTS’ 2012 Season is sponsored in part by the following: Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Brooklyn Community Foundation, Con Edison, Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Councilwoman Letitia James, Deutsche Bank, The Lambert Foundation, Mertz Gilmore Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, National Performance Network (NPN) Creation Fund and Community Fund, New York Community Trust, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, The New York State Council on the Arts, Open Society Foundations and the Fund for the City of New York.

BOMB Magazine, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, delivers the artist’s voice through in-depth interviews between artists working across genre and media—collaborations that reveal their ideas, concerns, and creative processes through carefully developed dialogue—now and for posterity. www.bombsite.com

Under the Radar (UTR) is an annual theater festival that spotlights international artists ranging from emerging talents to masters in the field. The festival is a wild mix of works by ensembles, solo artists, writers, and creators. www.undertheradarfestival.com

For additional press information about 651 ARTS, please contact:

Anna Glass

Shay Wafer

718-230-2528 | press@651arts.org

#