



651 ARTS Fall 2020 Virtual Season

Presents

Martha Redbone Roots Project at BRIC In a Special Live Recorded Performance Honoring Native American Heritage Month

Premiering on Tuesday, November 24th at 7pm

(**BROOKLYN, NY** – November 23, 2020) – 651 ARTS, Brooklyn’s premier institution for the African Diasporic performing arts, presents the **Martha Redbone Roots Project**, a special live recording by Award-winning musician **Martha Redbone** performing from BRIC in Brooklyn, NY and premiering on Tuesday, November 24th at 7pm. The show is part of Redbone’s artist residency at the institution and will be presented in November in honor of Native American Heritage month.

A major highlight of 651’s Fall 2020 Season, Martha Redbone Roots Project is a soulful, musical roots, Indigenous Blaxploration celebrating NYC’s urban Native community on Lenapehoking, and honoring the resilience of our Eastern Woodlands Indigenous nations and their descendants, for whom Thanksgiving is a national day of mourning. The performance will include excerpts of readings as well as a conversation with 651’s Director of Programs and Chief Curator (DPCC) **Monica L. Williams** and Redbone interwoven with song and music.

Martha Redbone is an Afro-Indigenous vocalist/songwriter/composer/educator. She is known for her music gumbo of folk, blues and gospel from her Cherokee/Shawnee/Choctaw roots in Appalachia. Her songs and storytelling share her life experience as an Afro-Indigenous woman and mother navigating in the new millennium, giving voice to issues of social justice, connecting cultures, and celebrating the human spirit. Redbone is the 2020 Drama Desk Award winner for Outstanding Music in a Play for the revival “For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf”, by the late Ntozake Shange at the Public Theater’s 2019.

The Martha Redbone Roots Project includes: **Martha Redbone** - Lead Vocal, Percussion; **Aaron Whitby**- Keys, MD; **Charlie Burnham**- Violin, Vocals; **Marvin Sewell**- Guitars; **Fred Cash, Jr.** – Bass.

“It’s a good day to be Afro-Indigenous, celebrating our resilience in a world that is in need of healing. This November for Native American Heritage Month I’m very honored to share our music,” said Redbone. “Yakoke (Thanks) to 651Arts for this important residency during these crucial days of growth and healing of our nation.”

651 ART’s Fall 2020 season will include a virtual mix of feature presentations, performances and the launch of new initiatives. 651 leadership made the decision to move forward with a season that will allow the institution to safely serve audiences and to be able to continue to support and provide a platform for local artists as arts organizations across the country continue to navigate through the effects of the global pandemic. The season will center around the theme of “*My Black Art Matters, I Matter*” and will celebrate the resilience and diversity of Black performance. It will also denote the institution’s first season under the programmatic leadership of Williams as the institution’s first-ever DPCC and the Martha Redbone Roots Project will mark Williams’ first major presentation in her new role.

“Martha is prolific artist and she truly personifies a ‘**651 ARTS** artist’ with her consistently innovative and singularly unique work,” said Williams. “With all that is happening in the world with COVID-19 and the national conversation around race in this country and, as the country prepares to recognize Thanksgiving under the strains of a global pandemic, she is the perfect person to communicate and illustrate our uncertainty, our fears, our triumphs and our hopes through her music and her art. We are very excited to present her as our feature performance in this Season.”

Since its inception in 1988, 651 ARTS has become a trusted convener of contemporary African Diasporic artistic expression, a champion and nurturer for emerging artists and their work and a vital cultural resource for its surrounding community. As it moves forward, part of 651 ART’s mission is to preserve the legacy of Black culture in Brooklyn, celebrate the eclecticism of Black performance and to pioneer new visions of African Diaspora artists. Helmed by Executive Director, David J. Roberts, the institution continues to look ahead and lay the framework for the next five years that will further help to reinforce 651 ARTS’ role as a leader of African Diasporic culture while also establishing it an incubator for artistic innovation in the 21st century.

651 ARTS' programs are made possible by gifts from generous individuals and grants from the Bay and Paul Foundations, Con Edison, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Ford Foundation, Howard Gilman Foundation, Lambent Foundation, the LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust, Mertz Gilmore Foundation, the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, New York Community Trust, the Emma Sheaffer Charitable Trust, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, including Majority Leader Laurie A. Cumbo, and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

About 651 ARTS

Founded in Brooklyn, NY in 1988, the mission of 651 ARTS is to deepen awareness of and appreciation of contemporary performing arts and culture of the African Diaspora, and to provide professional and creative opportunities for artists of African descent. 651's signature programs have featured pioneering black choreographers from around the world including Germaine Acogny, Nora Chipaumire, Carmen de Lavallade, Diane McIntyre, Bebe Miller, Abdel R. Salaam and Jawole Willo Jo Zollar. As part of its commitment to the furtherance of conversations and celebration of Diaspora music, the institution has presented dialogues and performances by Somi, Hugh Masekela, and Grammy-winning artist Betty Carter, to name a few. Theatrical and text-based works by Anna Deavere Smith, Sekou Sundiata, Marc Bamuthi Joseph, Ntozake Shange, Okwui Okpokwasili and Maria Bauman are representative of the hundreds of artists and productions featuring solo creations, collaborations, emerging artists, and works-in-development all produced by 651's visionary leadership in the field of Black performance.

###

For more information contact:

Nina Flowers ninaflowerspr@gmail.com

(917) 388-7444