



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

651 ARTS Unveils Additional Details for its 2022 Season

FOREWORD, FORWARD: A Bridge Season

**As the Institution Prepares Move into its First Permanent Home in
its Over 30 Year History**

Spring 2022 Season Highlights Include:

Virtual Griot “I Wish MF Wood” Featuring NSangou Njikam

**WILD: a new ballet by Jeremy McQueen’s Black Iris Project
Presented by Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and
651 ARTS**

Live @651ARTS Presents Black Dance Stories Live

651 ARTS’ Second Annual Juneteenth Celebration

**The Return of The Woodshed Network in Partnership
With Jazz Icon Dee Dee Bridgewater**

(**BROOKLYN, NY** – February 25, 2022) – 651 ARTS, Brooklyn’s premier institution for the African Diasporic performing arts, today unveiled additional details for its 2022 season - ***FOREWORD, FORWARD: A Bridge Season***. Consisting of a slate of exciting, new programs featuring a mix of original virtual works, in-person presentations and unique collaborations with world class artists, ***FOREWORD, FORWARD*** acts as an artistic conduit for the venerable institution in preparation for the opening of its first-ever permanent home located in the heart of downtown Brooklyn scheduled for Fall, 2022. 651’s upcoming season was also curated to represent and reflect “a time of great transformation,” centering around themes of progress, legacy and what it means to embrace change.

As part of ***FOREWORD, FORWARD: A Bridge Season***, 651 will launch its LIVE @651ARTS series with **WILD** - a new ballet from Emmy-nominated choreographer **Jeremy McQueen** and

his Black Iris Project presented by Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and 651 ARTS (March 17). Inspired by past 651 ARTS programs, LIVE @651ARTS will feature premieres of live virtual, digital or print presentations. The new series will allow the institution to expand its artistic footprint and to further develop partnerships and collaborations with artists and other arts organizations. As part of LIVE, 651 will also host the first in-person gathering for the popular **Black Dance Stories** in a two-day presentation featuring acclaimed choreographers **Rena Butler, Reggie Wilson, Tiffany Rea-Fisher, and Jamar Roberts** (April 1 - 2). *FOREWORD, FORWARD* will culminate with the return of 651's annual **Juneteenth Celebration** to be held over the course of the weekend commemorating Juneteenth (June 18-19) and to include a special performance featuring **DJ Reborn**.

For its Digital Suite programming, 651 will present the world premiere of **Virtual Griot: "I Wish MF Wood"** (March 7 - April 25) - an original eight-episode digital series featuring playwright/performer **NSangou Njikam** that uniquely explores the issue of gentrification. Additionally, Jazz icon **Dee Dee Bridgewater** will once again partner with 651 to present **The Woodshed Network** - now in its third year and conceived by Bridgewater as a mentorship and career accelerator program for emerging women artists in Jazz.

"Our FOREWORD, FORWARD Season represents an extension of our 30-plus year legacy and is a 'sneak-peak' view for 651 programming in our future home in Downtown Brooklyn. While crafting FOREWORD - a mix of intimately curated convenings that we see as an introduction to our way FORWARD - we make progress and we progress. We harvest from seeds planted and nurtured over thirty years ago when this institution was founded and we are gathering our 651 ARTS community to spark ideas, align intentions and to refine our movement," said **Monica L. Williams**, Chief Curator and Director of Programs for 651 ARTS. "As we cross-over from the pandemics into this new season, we lean on our community knowledge for inspiration. Inspired by historical Black Gatherings of salons during the Harlem Renaissance; The Great Migration depicted in Jacob Lawrence's paintings; all-Black artist groups from the Black Arts Movement; and the iconic 'Breakbeat' of Hip Hop, we intentionally curate Black space as a home filled with the nuances of Black life, emergent Black performance, and the 'each one, teach one' philosophy of Black culture. I am excited that our audiences will be able to go along with us on this journey and have the opportunity to experience our vision for the future of this institution."

651 ARTS' new home is located at 10 Lafayette Avenue in Downtown Brooklyn and will be comprised of 12,500 square feet of office, rehearsal and production space. The institution is scheduled to move into the building in Fall, 2022.

651 ARTS' FOREWORD, FORWARD: A BRIDGE SEASON - HIGHLIGHTS

LIVE @651ARTS

WILD: a new ballet by Jeremy McQueen's Black Iris Project Presented by Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and 651 ARTS

Date(s): March 17, 2022; 7:00 pm

Location: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture - 515 Malcolm X Blvd in Harlem, NY

WILD, a new ballet from Emmy-nominated choreographer **Jeremy McQueen's** Black Iris Project and presented by Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and 651 ARTS will serve as the launch for 651's new series – Live @651ARTS. Loosely inspired by Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* children's book, WILD follows a young boy's journey as he celebrates his 14th birthday while incarcerated. Frequently harnessing the power of his imagination, he transports himself to an alternate universe where he is not treated like a wild animal. This cutting-edge ballet utilizes physical movement to illustrate and honor the history of Black bodies moving through space while encountering oppression and transforms countless men's stories into an artistic dance work, intended to be a reclaiming of time, unity, space, and Black culture.

WILD is part of Carnegie Hall's *Afrofuturism* festival will be performed live at the Schomburg Center and streamed on the Schomburg Center's livestream page. Admission is free; reservations are encouraged via: [WILD FROM JEREMY MQUEEN'S BLACK IRIS PROJECT](#)

LIVE @651ARTS Presents Black Dance Stories

Curated by Charmaine Warren

Featuring Rena Butler, Reggie Wilson, Tiffany Rea-Fisher, and Jamar Roberts

Date(s): April 1 - 2, 2022

Location: Mark Morris Dance Group - 3 Lafayette Avenue in Brooklyn, NY

651 ARTS presents the first in-person gathering for Black Dance Stories in a two-day presentation for both in-person and online audiences and featuring acclaimed choreographers **Rena Butler, Reggie Wilson, Tiffany Rea-Fisher** and **Jamar Roberts**. The artists will present solo work, engage in movement together, and take part in a lively discussion speaking to their experimental and investigatory practices. Conceived and co-created by **Charmaine Warren** in June 2020, the Black Dance Stories showcases and initiates discussions with Black creatives, exploring social, historical, and personal issues and highlight the African Diaspora's humanity in the mysterious and celebrated world of dance.

651 ARTS' Second Annual Juneteenth Celebration Featuring DJ Reborn

Date(s): June 18-19, 2022

Location: The Plaza at 10 Lafayette Avenue in Brooklyn, NY

651 ARTS presents its Second Annual Juneteenth Celebration, an annual commemoration of African-American emancipation featuring a weekend of performances and activities. This year's

Celebration will span over the course of three days and will include a special presentation featuring **DJ Reborn**. This event is free and open to the public and will be held outdoors at the institution's future home at 10 Lafayette Avenue. Registration is required.

651 ARTS DIGITAL SUITE

Virtual Griot “I Wish MF Wood”

Date(s): Premieres March 7, 2022 – April 25, 2022; Weekly on Mondays; 7:00 pm

Location: Online

651 ARTS premieres *Virtual Griot*, an original digital series featuring performing artists in the role of Griots as they deliver powerful messages from their neighbors to the people in their neighborhoods. This 8-episode video series embodies African Diasporic storytelling traditions, old and new. The pilot is based in Brooklyn and follows Maurice Francis Wood aka MF Wood who upon seeing his neighborhood go through gentrification, decides to take action with rather unusual and sometimes extreme methods to save his beloved community in the hopes to inspire others to take bigger steps in making their lives and homes better. Featuring playwright and actor **NSangou Njikam** as MF Wood.

651 ARTS HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION CONVENINGS

The Woodshed Network

Date(s): February 21 – March 4, 2022

Now in its third year, The Woodshed Network led by Jazz icon **Dee Dee Bridgewater** and **Tulani Bridgewater-Kolwaski** was conceived by Bridgewater as a mentorship and career accelerator program for emerging women artists in Jazz to include professional career development sessions and networking.

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.

651 ARTS' programs are made possible by gifts from generous individuals and grants from Bay and Paul Foundations, The Baisley Powell Elebash Fund, The Black Seed, Con Edison, Doris

Duke Charitable Foundation, Ford Foundation, Harkness Foundation for Dance, Howard Gilman Foundation, Lambent Foundation, Mertz Gilmore Foundation, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, New York Community Trust, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Emma Sheaffer Charitable Trust, Wallace Foundation, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, including Majority Leader Keith Powers, the Office of the Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso, and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature.

###

For more information contact:

Nina Flowers

Nina@FlowersPRAgency.com