



THE KIMMEL CENTER  
ACADEMY OF MUSIC  
MERRIAM THEATER

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@KimmelCenter honors beloved resident company @PHILADANCO and founder Joan Myers Brown for 50th Anniversary, with season-long celebration & reception feat. exclusive appearance & performance by former dancer & @HamiltonMusical star #LeslieOdomJr!

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## **KIMMEL CENTER HONORS BELOVED RESIDENT COMPANY'S FOUNDER & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR JOAN MYERS BROWN & PHILADANCO'S 50 YEAR LEGACY**

**Year-long commemoration kicks off on the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus  
with star-studded reception celebrating Joan Myers Brown,  
with proceeds benefitting PHILADANCO**

**"[Joan Myers Brown has made] an artistic haven for African-American dancers and choreographers to innovate, create and share their unique visions with the national and global dance communities." – President Barack Obama**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** (Philadelphia, PA, May 28, 2019) – The Kimmel Center Cultural Campus is thrilled to kick off the 50th anniversary season celebration for its beloved Resident Company, PHILADANCO, The Philadelphia Dance Company, with a presentation entitled *GENESIS*, followed by a star-studded, VIP reception honoring the legacy of PHILADANCO Founder & Artistic Director Joan Myers Brown, with proceeds from the event benefitting PHILADANCO. The reception will take place in the Academy of Music ballroom, home of PHILADANCO's first Gala in 1972. Reception attendees include former PHILADANCO dancer and former Tony Award-winning star of *Hamilton* Leslie Odom, Jr., who will perform at both the *GENESIS* performance on October 5 and at the reception. Both Odom, Jr. and

Broadway & television star Sheryl Lee Ralph will serve as honorary co-chairs for the 50th anniversary year.

PHILADANCO'S year-long commemoration, marking the company's 50th year in 2020, continues throughout the 2019-2020 season across the city of Philadelphia and the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus with the International Conference and Festival of Blacks in Dance (IABD), as well as seasonal student matinees; PHILADANCO's holiday show, *XMAS PHILES*, returns to the Annenberg Center in December, and the Kimmel Center hosts two world premiere presentations: PHILADANCO presents *GENESIS* in October, a retrospective piece looking back at the company's formative years; the season evolves with *FAST FORWARD* in April, a program that will be looking ahead to the next generation of emerging choreographers.

The *GENESIS* programs on October 5 & 6 will feature a performance of "Enemy Behind the Gate" by choreographer Christopher Huggins; a tribute to Aretha Franklin entitled "Love and Pain", choreographed by Milton Myers and featuring PHILADANCO alumni; and "Exotica" by Ron K. Brown. For the first time all four PHILADANCO companies will perform on the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus stage as part of the concerts.

"Joan Myers Brown is a Philadelphia institution, the embodiment of perseverance, grace, and vision," said Anne Ewers, President and CEO of the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. "Her mark on the world of black dance is indelible. Her mark on our city and innumerable artists over the past 50 years immeasurable. Under Joan's leadership, PHILADANCO has represented Philadelphia and its residents around the world, enriching our lives and broadening our perspective of dance and its evolution. Joan is a treasure among our Kimmel Center Cultural Campus family and we feel incredibly lucky to host her company, not only seasonally as part of our regular programming, but during this milestone 50th anniversary year!"

The Philadelphia Dance Company (PHILADANCO) presents the highest quality of professional dance performance and improves the skills of emerging and professional dancers and choreographers. PHILADANCO is celebrated across the nation and around the world for its innovation, creativity, and preservation of predominantly African-American traditions in dance. It is lauded for its ability to use the power of dance to address important topical issues in an accessible way.

"As PHILADANCO moves into its 50th anniversary year and marks the 60th anniversary year of my school, we look ahead to the future of Black dance, but also reflect on the past – to a time when there were little-to-no opportunities for Black dancers to work in professional companies in Philadelphia. I founded PHILADANCO to create that opportunity, a space where dancers could train and move on to larger opportunities in New York and elsewhere," said Joan Myers Brown, Founder & Artistic Director of PHILADANCO. "Most of the original changing styles in American dance have come from the Black community, from The Cake Walk, Tap, Merengue, Jitterbug, Jazz, the Twist, Bump, and so many more – up to today's hip-hop! Our programs on the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus this year reflect our history and look to the future, challenging the public who think that they know DANCO..."

As a Cultural Campus Resident Company, the Kimmel Center & PHILADANCO have presented internationally-renowned choreographers and world premieres to Philadelphia audiences since the Center's opening in 2001. Notable choreographers from the past few years include: Hope Boykin, now a member of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater; Anthony Burrell, an established creative director, choreographer, and actor known for his work on Beyoncé's music videos "Formation," "Sorry," and her

Super Bowl 50 performance; several ballets by choreographer Geoffrey Holder, one recently performed by his wife, Kennedy Center Honors Award winner & Danco choreographer, Carmen de Lavallade; revivals and new works from Talley Beatty, Gene Hill Sagan, Dawn Marie Bazemore, Christopher L. Huggins, Rennie Harris Puremovement, and more. PHILADANCO has premiered over 50 ballets during their Resident Company history on the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus.

**A complete list of the PHILADANCO 50th Anniversary season programming can be found below:**

**PHILADANCO: GENESIS STUDENT MATINEE PERFORMANCES**

**Merriam Theater**

*October 4, 2019 at 10:30 AM*

\*Not open to the public

Students from across Philadelphia will experience a sneak peek of new PHILADANCO works in advance of *GENESIS* and participate in a Q&A following the performance, moderated by Founder & Artistic Director Joan Myers Brown.

**PHILADANCO: GENESIS**

**Merriam Theater**

*October 5, 2019 at 8:00 PM*

*October 6, 2019 at 2:30 PM* (Leslie Odom, Jr. will not perform)

Acclaimed Philadelphia dance company PHILADANCO presents *GENESIS* – igniting the Merriam Theater stage with some of the most requested and exciting ballets from the company’s early years. Former DANCO dancers and guest artists will join the current company in a special evening of the ballets that established the preeminent company audiences know and love. The *GENESIS* programs on October 5 & 6 will feature a performance of “Enemy Behind the Gate” by choreographer Christopher Huggins; a tribute to Aretha Franklin entitled “Love and Pain”, choreographed by Milton Myers and featuring PHILADANCO alumni; and “Exotica” by Ron K. Brown. For the first time all four PHILADANCO companies will perform on the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus stage as part of the concerts.

Former PHILADANCO dancer and former Tony Award-winning star of *Hamilton* Leslie Odom, Jr. will perform at the *GENESIS* performance on October 5.

**POST-GENESIS RECEPTION**

**Academy of Music Ballroom**

*October 5, 2019*

The Kimmel Center Cultural Campus honors the legacy of PHILADANCO Founder and Artistic Director Joan Myers Brown during a reception in the historic Academy of Music Ballroom. Special guests include Leslie Odom, Jr.

**PHILADANCO: XMAS PHILES**

**Annenberg Center**

*December 12 – 14, 2019*

An Annenberg Center original commission returns to its roots! Choreographed by Daniel Ezralow, *Xmas Philes* pairs PHILADANCO’s colorful tapestry of movement with popular Christmas music in what has become an eagerly anticipated December tradition. Called “infectious fun” by *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, an expanded *Xmas Philes* celebrates the holidays with humor, Christmas classics and beautiful, contemporary dance. Welcome this local dance treasure back home to the Annenberg Center!

**THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACKS IN DANCE (IABD) IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PHILADANCO  
32ND ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AND FESTIVAL OF BLACKS IN DANCE  
Philadelphia, PA**

**\*Conference locations include the Kimmel Center Cultural Campus' Merriam Theater & SEI Innovation Studio, as well as Center City Double Tree & Cambria Hotels, and The University of the Arts**

*January 14 – 19, 2020*

Founded in 1988 by Joan Myers Brown, the Annual International Conference and Festival of Blacks in Dance is dedicated to providing leadership and networking for dance companies of color, with the support of The University of the Arts. At the 32nd Annual conference, over 30 companies will perform, representing 8+ countries. With 90+ classes, many workshops & panels, the week will feature auditions & scholarships for summer programs, colleges, classes, and jobs. The conference will hold its 4th audition for advanced ballet dancers of color, designed to make opportunities available for Black dancers in ballet companies all across America.

**PHILADANCO: FAST-FORWARD STUDENT MATINEE**

**Kimmel Center's Perelman Theater**

*April 17, 2020 at 10:30 AM*

Students from across Philadelphia will experience a sneak peek of new PHILADANCO works in advance of *FAST FORWARD* and participate in a Q&A following the performance, moderated by Founder & Artistic Director Joan Myers Brown.

**PHILADANCO: FAST-FORWARD**

**Kimmel Center's Perelman Theater**

*April 17 – 19, 2020*

*\*Times vary: 4/17 at 7:30 PM; 4/18 at 2:30 PM and 7:30 PM; and 4/19 at 2:30 PM*

As PHILADANCO moves into its next decade, *FAST FORWARD* presents a co-commission with Toronto's Dance Immersion, Vietnam's Thang Dao, Broadway's Ray Mercer, and emerging choreographer Kathy Smith. Additional program details to be announced at a later date.

**Tickets**

Tickets for *GENESIS* are on sale to Kimmel Center members for presale beginning Tuesday, May 28. Both *GENESIS* and *FAST FORWARD* are on sale to the general public beginning Friday, May 31. Tickets can be purchased by calling 215-893-1999, online at [www.kimmelcenter.org](http://www.kimmelcenter.org), or at the Kimmel Center Box Office. Group sales are available for groups of 10 or more and can be purchased by calling 215-790-5883. See [www.kimmelcenter.org](http://www.kimmelcenter.org) for more information. For tickets and information regarding the post-*GENESIS* reception, please contact PHILADANCO at 215-387-8200.

**The Kimmel Center Cultural Campus**

Located in the heart of Center City, Philadelphia, our mission is to engage the region's diverse communities with art through performance and education. Our Cultural Campus serves more than 1 million guests per year and includes the **Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts**, the **Academy of Music**, and the **Merriam Theater**- representing more than 160 years of rich history for the performing arts along Philadelphia's Avenue of the Arts. We are home to eight esteemed Resident Companies: **The Philadelphia Orchestra**, **Opera Philadelphia**, **Pennsylvania Ballet**, **The Philly POPS**, **PHILADANCO**, **The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia**, **The Philadelphia Chamber Music Society**, and **Curtis Institute of Music**. With nearly 9,000 seats per night, we are the region's most impactful performing arts center, and the second largest in the country. Our Cultural Campus serves as a preeminent and inclusive place to enjoy exceptional experiences that reflect the spirit of our region by cultivating a creative and socially-

responsible environment where our community shares experiences that are delivered with pride, integrity, and respect. As a 501 c 3 nonprofit organization, we collaborate on, present, and produce a broad range of relevant and meaningful events, we serve as an active gathering space for social and community events, we educate the region's young people through access to quality arts experiences, and we provide support to artists in the creation of new work. TD Bank, America's Most Convenient Bank, is our proud sponsor of the Kimmel Center's 2018-2019 Season. American Airlines is the official airline of Broadway Philadelphia. For additional information, visit [www.kimmelcenter.org](http://www.kimmelcenter.org).

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For photography, please visit <https://kcpres.smugmug.com/>