



Kimmel Cultural Campus

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The extraordinary @Philadanco returns to @KimmelCC (Twitter)/@KimmelCulturalCampus (Facebook and Instagram) for a thrilling show with NEW high energy dances in “Moving... Beyond Forward”, 4/21-4/23. For more info, visit kimmelculturalcampus.org.

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**KIMMEL CULTURAL CAMPUS PRESENTS
BELOVED RESIDENT COMPANY,
PHILADANCO!,
AND THEIR SPRING PERFORMANCES OF
MOVING... BEYOND FORWARD,
APRIL 21 – 23, 2023**

**Program features two world premieres
from renowned choreographers
Ray Mercer and Tommie-Waheed Evans**

**Back-by-popular-demand: the return of revived and
reconstructed company favorites
by
Milton Myers and Rennie Harris**

**"... talent, chutzpah, and energy to burn."
– *The Boston Globe***

**"The company is in peak form—dancer for dancer, probably the best-trained, certainly the
most versatile, dance company in Philadelphia."
– *The Philadelphia Inquirer***

**"an artistic haven for African-American dancers and choreographers..."
– *Barack Obama***

**"... superb dancers
who have traveled far and wide to impress the world with their skill, creativity, and
unapologetic swagger."
– *The Philadelphia Tribune***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (March XX, 2023) –The Kimmel Cultural Campus presents The Philadelphia Dance Company, affectionately known as **PHILADANCO!**, in their newest concert ***Moving... Beyond Forward***, in the Perelman Theater, Friday, April 21, 2023, through Sunday, April 23, 2023.

Moving – Beyond Forward will feature electrifying performances from a selection of PHILADANCO's longtime choreographers, including **Milton Myers**, who will revisit his classic work "Rite of Passage" and "The Element in Which it Takes Place," looking through a new lens of his creative process, embracing and acknowledging this community of dancers.

Ray Mercer, who has shared a 13-year relationship with **PHILADANCO!**, will introduce a newly constructed ballet, a premiere celebrating dance that features the amazing **PHILADANCO!** women... a dance for the sake of dance. **Tommie-Waheed Evans**, founder of Waheed-Works, will also debut a world premiere exploring race and sexuality featuring the full dance company.

Rennie Harris will revisit his work 'Fear' (cast of company women) through his creative process of rhythm manipulation and storytelling of each dancer's individual pulse.

This not-to-be-missed weekend highlights the company's long legacy of producing high-energy, technically proficient dancers with speed, stamina, and grace like no others.

"PHILADANCO! always delivers dynamic performances, reminding us why they are known throughout Philadelphia and across the globe for their inspiring performances," said Matías Tarnopolsky, president and CEO of The Philadelphia Orchestra and Kimmel Center, Inc. "*Moving... Beyond Forward* brings the creativity and innovation of three legendary choreographers to the stage, illustrating how PHILADANCO! is using the power of its past to shape the future."

PHILADANCO!, founded by the legendary Joan Myers Brown, is famous for its artistic integrity, highly trained dancers, and electrifying performances. Founded in 1970, **PHILADANCO!**'s legacy is a blazing trail of bridging cultures and tearing down barriers through mesmerizing movement. With its original mission of providing Black dancers with performance opportunities, the company's eye for inclusion has infused every performance with invigorating energy for diverse audiences. Using both its platform and hope for a better future, **PHILADANCO!** also commits itself to empowering youth with developmental and leadership skills that facilitate achievement and success in the world of dance and beyond.

"Over our 53-year history, I have had the honor of training and teaching hundreds of dancers, teaching them not just technique but tenacity to succeed in the dance world. I am ecstatic to bring 4 of our preeminent resident choreographers back home to Philadelphia to share their current artistic talent and vision," said Joan Myers Brown, Founder/ Artistic Advisor of **PHILADANCO!**.

"Working in conjunction with these legendary innovative choreographers and the company to create new dances and revisit classics has been reminiscent and amazing. Varied in style, technique and bravado, each choreographer brings a heightened level of energy, exuberance and artistry out of the dancers," said Kim Bears Bailey, Artistic Director of **PHILADANCO!**.

About the Choreographers:

Milton Myers is a resident choreographer and instructor for PHILADANCO! and has served on the faculties of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the Ailey/Fordham B.F.A. Program, Peridance, currently at STEPS on Broadway, and The Juilliard School, where he is the first Horton instructor. He performed with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, directed the Joyce

Trisler Danscompany, and has been honored by the International Association of Blacks in Dance for his extraordinary teaching and mentorship to dancers. He teaches and choreographs for prominent companies and dance centers worldwide including Italy, Japan, and Paris. This marks Mr. Myers' 37th year coaching and mentoring dancers at The School at Jacob's Pillow.

Ray Mercer is a native of Omaha, Nebraska, and has set works on various companies across the country, including **PHILADANCO!**, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, New Jersey Ballet, Dallas Black Dance Theatre, Ballet Pensacola, Cleo Parker Robinson Dance, and DRA (Dancers Responding to Aids). He has performed with Deeply Rooted Dance Theater, as a guest artist with Boston Ballet, and is currently the longest running cast member in the Broadway production of *The Lion King*. He is also a resident choreographer for the Ailey/Fordham BFA Program. Mercer is the recipient of many awards including a 2012 Joffrey Ballet Choreographers of Color Award, a Pensacola Ballet Choreographers Award, and he is a five-time winner of Broadway's Gypsy of the Year Award for best onstage performance. Recently acknowledged for his choreography in *The New York Times*, *Chicago Sun Times*, and *Movement Magazine*, Mercer has also been commissioned to choreograph a work for the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, DC.

Tommie-Waheed Evans is a 2021 Guggenheim Fellow. In 2006, Evans founded his company, Waheed-Works. He has set choreography on The Garden State Dance Festival, Philadelphia Dance Boom Festival, Verb Ballet, Eleone Dance Theatre, Boston Conservatory, and The University of the Arts. Evans is currently an Artist-in-Residence at **PHILADANCO!** and on faculty at The University of the Arts. His awards include a Dance/USA Philadelphia Rocky Award, Billy Penn: Who's Next Arts, Howard Gilman Foundation Fellowship Winner, The Tribune's 2017 Most Influential African Americans, and a BalletX 2017 Ballet Choreographic Fellowship. Evans recently received his Master of Fine Arts in Choreography from Jacksonville University.

Rennie Harris Lorenzo "Rennie" Harris was born and raised in North Philadelphia. In 1992, he founded Rennie Harris Puremovement, a hip-hop dance theater company dedicated to preserving and disseminating hip-hop culture. Voted one of the most influential people in the last one hundred years of Philadelphia history, Mr. Harris has received many accolades, including the Herb Alpert Award in the Arts, the Governor's Arts Award, a United States Artist Fellowship, and an honorary doctorate from Bates College. *The London Times* wrote of Mr. Harris that he is "the Basquiat of the U.S. contemporary dance scene. Dr. Harris' other works in **PHILADANCO!**'s repertoire include Hip-Hop at its finest, '*Philadelphia Experiment*' (a retrospect of the city of Brotherly Love) and the ballet *Wake Up*.

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With its homebase on Philadanco Way in West Philadelphia, **PHILADANCO!** provides one of the nation's most state-of-the-art and successful dance training programs. A myriad of company support systems and training intensives enable dancers to hone their talent and refine their technical skills, preparing them for skills for life after performing. Often described as "a brilliant mix of miracle of skill, energy and artistry, fascinating and thrilling," and performers with "virtuoso physicality," **PHILADANCO!** dancers are among the best in the world.

The Philadelphia Dance Company (**PHILADANCO!**) is a nonprofit organization presenting the highest quality of professional dance performance. The intensely welcoming company is home for emerging and professional dancers and choreographers, providing creative space for these visionaries while increasing the appreciation of dance among its many communities. Across the nation and around the world, **PHILADANCO!** is celebrated for its innovation and preservation of

African American traditions in dance, breaking barriers, and advocating for access and inclusion.

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Other featured upcoming performances on the Kimmel Cultural Campus include **KODO** (March 7, 2023, Miller Theater), **The Black Violin Experience** (March 9, 2023, Miller Theater), **Ranky Tanky with Ms. Lisa Fischer** (March 11, 2023, Miller Theater), **Immanuel Wilkins** (April 6, 2023, Perelman Theater), **Monterey Jazz Festival on Tour** (April 8, 2023, Verizon Hall), **WXPN Welcomes An Evening with Natalie Merchant: *Keep Your Courage*** (April 21, 2023, Miller Theater), **Sing Hallelujah** (April 26, 2023) and **Step Afrika!** (April 28, 2023, Miller Theater).

Tickets

Tickets can be purchased by calling 215-893-1999 or online at www.kimmelculturalcampus.org. In-person ticket sales can be conducted daily from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. at the Academy of Music Box Office, located at 240 S. Broad Street. See www.kimmelculturalcampus.org for more information.

PHILADANCO! *Moving... Beyond Forward*

Perelman Theater on the Kimmel Cultural Campus

Friday, April 21, 2023, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 22, 2023, 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 23, 2023, 2:00 p.m.

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KIMMEL 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 Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts (Verizon Hall, Perelman Theater, and SEI Innovation Studio), the Academy of Music, and the Miller Theater (formerly 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 The Philadelphia Orchestra and six esteemed Resident Companies: Opera Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Ballet, **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. Read Kimmel Cultural Campus' vision statement, world view, and mission statement [here](#). Learn more about our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and how it encompasses our mission, co-workers, and programs [here](#).

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