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@PHILADANCO (Facebook/Instagram)/@PhiladancoC (Twitter/X) returns to the Perelman Theater with "Our Voices, Our Choices... This Is US!", a captivating fusion of rhythmic dance, artistic creativity, and vibrant culture, presented by @EnsembleArtsPhilly (Facebook/Instagram)/@EnsembleArtsPHL (Twitter/X) from 12/6-12/8! For more info, visit www.ensembleartsphilly.org

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**ENSEMBLE ARTS PHILLY PRESENTS
RENOWNED PHILADELPHIA DANCE COMPANY,
PHILADANCO!,
WITH THEIR FALL SPECTACULAR,
OUR VOICES, OUR CHOICES... THIS IS US!,
DECEMBER 6 – 8, 2024**

"A vibrant and creative force." – Alvin Ailey

**"... Not only dazzles the eye but enriches the soul and challenges the mind."
– *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette***

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (October 31, 2024) – Ensemble Arts Philly presents **PHILADANCO!**, the renowned Philadelphia Dance Company, and their newest show, ***Our Voices, Our Choices... This Is US!***, in the Perelman Theater from Friday, December 6 through Sunday, December 8, 2024. *Our Voices, Our Choices... This Is US!* will highlight women's perspectives and expressions, featuring voices of four African American women, some who have been invited to revisit their previous works – exploring original movement, music, and stories through exciting and thought-provoking choreography that will speak to audiences of all ages.

PHILADANCO! is pleased to introduce audiences to young American choreographer **Martha Nichols** in her first work with a world-renowned modern dance company, and subsequent Philadelphia and world premiere. Nichols has had a smooth transition collaborating in the creative process with PHILADANCO's incredible artists.

Jawole Willa Jo Zollar will look back at her ballet **"By Way of the Funk,"** acknowledging without question that this music of the 50s is here to stay.

Dawn Marie Bazemore will revisit her first ballet with PHILADANCO!, **"A Movement For Five,"** inspired by the events surrounding Central Park 5, the work aimed to uncover the structure of a community and socio-political system that failed to protect the lives of five innocent young boys living in Harlem in 1989.

"I am honored to be sharing 'A Movement for Five' with the Philadelphia community again," said Dawn Marie Bazemore. "It is so important to continue bringing awareness to these stories of institutional bias. These particular events that forever changed the lives of five young black men, are still as relevant today as they were in 1989."

Bebe Miller is excited to bring back her work **"My Science"** to PHILADANCO, re-energized with a cast of new and original dancers celebrating the music of American rock band Led Zeppelin.

"Since its founding, PHILADANCO! has been breaking barriers across race and gender," said Matías Tarnopolsky, president and CEO of The Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts. "This season, Joan Myers Brown's thought-provoking choreography continues to champion African American women, turning the spotlight on their unique perspectives and expression."

"PHILADANCO! Refined technique, dynamic style, and high energy artists mastering it all!" said Kim Bears-Bailey, PHILADANCO! Artistic Director.

PHILADANCO!, founded by the legendary Joan Myers Brown, is recognized for its artistic integrity, superbly-trained dancers, and captivating performances, while aiming to bridge cultural divides through established principles of providing opportunity, inclusion, and hope. 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! aims to empower youth with developmental and leadership skills that facilitate achievement and success in dance and beyond.

About the Choreographers:

Martha Nichols, a young American choreographer, took first place in the 2016 Capezio A.C.E. Awards for her work *Tilted*. After she appeared on *So You Think You Can Dance*, Nichols spent two years in Cirque du Soleil's production *Criss Angel Believe*. In addition to her work in the commercial industry, Nichols received the 2024 annual Winning Works Choreographic commission to present her first work for Joffrey Ballet. She has also created works for Point Park University, Boston Conservatory, and Pace University, as well as directing and choreographing her first full-length evening work, *The Wider Sun*, with her project-based company, Martha Nichols Dance. Nichols was one of *Dance Magazine's* Top 25 to Watch and can be found in numerous dance publications. Recently, Nichols wrapped as Associate Choreographer on Disney's newest live-action film, *Snow White*, to be released in 2025.

Jawole Willa Jo Zollar is a dancer, teacher, and choreographer of modern dance and the founder of Urban Bush Women Dance Company, which became the first major dance company consisting of all-female, African American dancers. Zollar was the recipient of the Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, the *Dance Magazine* Award, the Dance/USA Honor Award, the “Bessie” Lifetime Achievement in Dance Award for her work in the field, the Dance Teacher Award of Distinction, and the Martha Hill Dance Fund Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2020, the Ford Foundation declared Urban Bush Women one of America’s Cultural Treasures. Her most recent award was being named the recipient to the American Dance Festival 2024 Samuel H. Scripps/American Dance Festival Award.

Bebe Miller is a native New Yorker who formed Bebe Miller Company in 1985 to pursue her interest in finding a physical language for the human condition. Miller has created more than 50 dance works for the company that have been performed in nearly 400 engagements worldwide. Named a Master of African American Choreography by the Kennedy Center in 2005, Miller has been a Movement Research honoree, has received four New York Dance and Performance “Bessie” awards, the David R. White Award from New York Live Arts, United States Artists and Guggenheim Fellowships, honorary doctorates from Ursinus College and Franklin & Marshall College, and is one of the inaugural classes of Doris Duke Artist Award recipients. Miller is a Distinguished Professor Emerita in The Ohio State University’s Department of Dance.

Dawn Marie Bazemore is a performer, choreographer, and teaching artist based out of Philadelphia. From 1998 to 2009, Bazemore served as a principal dancer with PHILADANCO! where she worked with esteemed choreographers such as Bebe Miller, Alonzo King, and Jawole Willa Jo Zollar. In 2009, Bazemore transitioned into musical theater; performing ensemble and featured roles in various Broadway and regional theatre productions including *All Shook Up*, *Dreamgirls*, *Purlie*, and the first national tour of *The Color Purple*. Bazemore now teaches modern dance technique, Dance for Musical Theater, and theory courses in World Dance Forms and African Influences in American Dance at Rowan University.

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With its home base since 1970 on Philadanco Way (1981) 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 intensive training 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 include **Boney James: *Slow Burn*** (November 9, 2024, Miller Theater); **Ali Siddiq: *I Got A Story To Tell*** (November 15, 2024, Miller Theater); ***How Did This Get Made? Live*** (November 16, 2024, Miller Theater); **Django Festival Allstars** (November 16, 2024, Perelman Theater); **Orrin Evans and the Captain Black Big Band** (November 29, 2024, Perelman Theater); and **Samara Joy: *A Joyful Holiday* Featuring the McLendon Family** (December 23, 2024, Marian Anderson Hall).

Tickets

Tickets can be purchased by calling 215-893-1999 or online at www.ensembleartsphilly.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.ensembleartsphilly.org for more information.

PHILADANCO! *Our Voices, Our Choices... This Is US!*

Perelman Theater

Friday, December 6, 2024, at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, December 7, 2024, at 2:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 7, 2024, at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 8, 2024, at 2:00 p.m.

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For more information about ENSEMBLE ARTS PHILLY, visit www.ensembleartsphilly.org.

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