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**As a part of the 2012 Philadelphia Live Arts Festival & Philly Fringe,  
the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts presents Marc Bamuthi Joseph's  
theatre/spoken word hybrid  
*red, black and GREEN: a blues***

(Philadelphia, July 17, 2012)—A unique blend of spoken word, theatre and dance over the soulful sounds of gospel is the centerpiece of the multi-disciplinary piece *red, black & GREEN: a blues (rbGb)*, premiering at the Annenberg Center as a part of the 2012 Philadelphia Live Arts Festival & Philly Fringe. Masterminded by Marc Bamuthi Joseph, named one of America's Top Young Innovators by *Smithsonian Magazine*, with the Living Word Project, the piece delves into the matter of going green—and what sustainability means in our own community. Featuring a set constructed entirely of repurposed materials, *rbGb* is as “smart and provocative as it is breathtakingly beautiful” (*San Francisco Chronicle*).

Performances will take place on **September 21, 2012 at 7:30 PM** and **September 22, 2012 at 8 PM**. Tickets are \$20-\$35 (prices are subject to change). For tickets or for more information, please visit [AnnenbergCenter.org/rbgb](http://AnnenbergCenter.org/rbgb) or call 215.898.3900. Tickets can also be purchased in person at the Annenberg Center Box Office.

Developed during a three-year, community-based civic and artistic process, *rbGb* takes place within a modular set of row houses made from repurposed materials designed by visual artist Theaster Gates. These houses represent four American cities—Oakland, New York, Houston and Chicago—where *rbGb*'s narrative grew out of the stories and energy cultivated at Joseph's signature Life is Living Festivals. Within and among the houses, distinctive characters share personal stories through poetry, monologue, song and movement that reflect on poverty, violence, racial consciousness—and how we, as a collective society, can invent and navigate sustainable survival practices in urban America. Immersing audiences in a new mode of kinetic performance, *rbGb* strives to unite communities around a broader definition of “sustainable living” and to be a catalyst for cultural and creative engagement.

“I explicitly seek to present art that reflects and inspires transformation on personal and collective levels and that constructs safe space for this transformation to take place” says Marc Bamuthi Joseph of the work.

Directed by Cornerstone Theatre's Michael John Garcés, Joseph is joined on stage by an ensemble cast, including actor/dancer Traci Tolmaire, musician Tommy Shepherd aka Emcee Soulati and vocalist Yaw. Additional collaborators include choreographer Stacey Printz, filmmaker Eli Jacobs-Fantauzzi, lighting designer James Clotfelter and media designer David Szlasa.

**Audience note:** The presentation begins promptly at show time. The first 30 minutes of the program is interactive and will take place with the audience *on stage* (as space permits).

***rbGb* ANCILLARY EVENTS at the Annenberg Center**

Several events are planned around the presentation of *rbGb*. All events are free for ticket holders.

**September 20**

**5:30 PM-7:30 PM—Public Forum: The Creative Eco-System: Re-viewing Sustainability**

An interactive forum led by artist/educator/activist Marc Bamuthi Joseph addressing major environmental justice issues in Philadelphia featuring **Katherine Gajewski**, Director of Sustainability for the City of Philadelphia, **Amy Hillier**, Assistant Professor at the University of Pennsylvania School of Design, **Aaron Levy**, Executive Director for the Slough Foundation, and **Kira Strong**, Vice President of Community and Economic Development, People's Emergency Center. Admission is free, but participants must reserve a ticket online.

### **September 21 (Opening Night)**

#### **6:30 PM—Artists & Audiences Changing Lives**

Join us for a pre-show Artists & Audiences Changing Lives **mini poetry slam** featuring **Philly Youth Poetry Movement**. Artists & Audiences Changing Lives is an Annenberg Center program that spotlights not only artists with exceptional talent but also those who are also tirelessly dedicated to a specific cause. In the case of *rbGb*, Marc Bamuthi Joseph champions the notion of developing youth in urban areas through spoken word programming. This Artists & Audiences Changing Lives event offers audience members the opportunity to donate 10% of their ticket purchase that evening to Philly Youth Poetry Movement.

#### **Post-Show INSIGHTS event**

The cast invites all audience members back on stage to join them in informal conversation.

### **September 22**

#### **Post-Show INSIGHTS event**

The cast invites all audience members back on stage to join them in informal conversation.

Marc Bamuthi Joseph is one of America's vital voices in performance, arts education and artistic curation. Joseph is an inaugural recipient of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation Artist Award (2012) and a recipient of the Alpert Award in the Arts for Theater (2011). In the fall of 2007, Bamuthi graced the cover of *Smithsonian Magazine* after being named one of America's Top Young Innovators in the Arts and Sciences. He is the artistic director of the seven-part HBO documentary *Russell Simmons presents Brave New Voices* and an inaugural recipient of the United States Artists Rockefeller Fellowship (2006), which annually recognizes 50 of the country's "greatest living artists." He currently serves as Director of Performing Arts at Yerba Buena Center in San Francisco.

After appearing on Broadway as a young actor, Joseph has developed several poetically based works for the stage that have toured across the U.S., Europe and Africa. These include *Word Becomes Flesh*, *Scourge*, and *the break/s*, which co-premiered at the Humana Festival of New American Plays and the Walker Arts Center in the spring of 2008. Joseph's *Word Becomes Flesh* was re-mounted in December 2010 as part of the National Endowment for the Arts' "American Masterpieces" series and will tour throughout North America and Hawaii through 2013.

A gifted and nationally acclaimed educator and essayist, Joseph has lectured at more than 200 colleges and universities, been a popular commentator on National Public Radio and has carried adjunct professorships at Stanford University, Lehigh University, Mills College and the University of Wisconsin. As the Artistic Director of Youth Speaks, he mentored 13-19 year-old writers and curated the Living Word Festival and Left Coast Leaning. He is the co-founder of Life is Living, a national series of one day festivals designed to activate under-resourced parks and affirm peaceful urban life through hip hop arts and focused environmental action.

*red black & GREEN: a blues has been supported by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage through the Philadelphia Theatre Initiative.*

*red black & GREEN: a blues is presented in partnership with the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival.*

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### **INSIGHTS—Performance Enhancement Events**

The Annenberg Center offers a range of exciting and informative pre- and post-performance events that are free for all ticket holders. Featuring discussions led by Penn faculty members, area experts and guest artists, these events are designed to illuminate the work on stage. For more information, visit [AnnenbergCenter.org/INSIGHTS](http://AnnenbergCenter.org/INSIGHTS).

### **The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

The University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts has been the region's leading multi-disciplinary performance venue for theatre, dance, jazz, world music, new music and children's programming since its inception in 1971. The Annenberg Center's curatorial vision emphasizes four primary values: artistic integrity, cultural diversity, curatorial balance and a willingness to take risks. By presenting world-renowned and cutting edge artists and companies that express adventuresome perspectives on contemporary issues, timeless ideas and diverse cultures, the Annenberg Center promotes critical thinking and dialogue among its audiences, creating a uniquely rewarding arts experience.

The Annenberg Center has achieved national recognition for its outstanding, 30-year Dance Celebration series (presented in partnership with Philadelphia's Dance Affiliates), touring theatre series, and for its superior offerings for children, including both its Student Discovery Series and the acclaimed 29-year Philadelphia International Children's Festival, the oldest festival of its kind in the United States.

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**For additional press information or to set up interviews, please contact:**

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