

NEWS

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**The Annenberg Center and NextMove Dance Present
PHILADANCO's *Xmas Philes*, December 12-14**

(Philadelphia – December 5, 2019) — **The Annenberg Center** and **NextMove Dance** present **PHILADANCO's** eagerly anticipated holiday tradition, ***Xmas Philes***. A highlight of PHILADANCO's 50th Anniversary season, these performances mark the first time the full production has returned to the Annenberg Center after its commissioning and premiere in 2000, under the inspirational leadership of PHILADANCO's executive and artistic director **Joan Myers Brown**. *Xmas Philes* pairs PHILADANCO's colorful contemporary dance with popular Christmas songs, with choreography by **Daniel Ezralow** (*How the Grinch Stole Christmas*). Festive, joyous and spiritual, *Xmas Philes* is uplifting holiday entertainment for all ages and faiths. With a tapestry of holiday music, *Xmas Philes* mixes traditional and contemporary versions of holiday classics in a modern dance setting with Hollywood flavor. Wacky, funny, and somewhat ironic, *Xmas Philes* lifts spirits with hilariously memorable moments.

Performances are **Thursday, December 12 (7:30 PM)**, **Friday, December 13 (8 PM)**, and **Saturday, December 14 (2 PM and 8 PM)**. Visit AnnenbergCenter.org for tickets. Following the performance on December 12, the audience is invited to a champagne toast to celebrate PHILADANCO's 50th anniversary, the 60th anniversary of the Philadelphia School of Dance Arts, and founder and national dance icon, **Joan Myers Brown**. In addition to four public performances of *Xmas Philes*, PHILADANCO will inspire and entertain hundreds of schoolchildren during Student Discovery performances on December 12 and 13 at 10:30 AM.

Dancers from **PHILADANCO Company** appearing in the *Xmas Philes* are members Rosita Adamo, Janine Beckles, William E. Burden, Mikaela Fenton, Leah Friedman, Clarricia Golden, Joe Gonzalez, Jameel M. Hendricks, Victor Lewis Jr., Kareem Marsh, Dana Nichols, Brandi Pinnix, Courtney Robinson, Jah'meek D. Williams, and Marcus Williams; and guest artist Tony Harris.

The production also includes Onederful Ancrum, Ankhtra Battle, Kaniah Browne, Simone Gadlin, Lindsey Lee, Briana Marshall, Angelica Merced, Dahlia Patterson, Nasir Pittman, Donyae Reaves, Francis Sloane, Taylor Sparks, Lourdes Taylor, Rhapsody Taylor, and Dominique Thompson from the **D/2 Apprentice Company**; and Nia Y. Bailey, Donovan Blake, Zion Boggs-Brown, Naiya Brown, Arianna Deshields, LaNiya Hamilton, Bethany Morris, and Jasmine Williams from the **D/3 Youth Ensemble**.

[Full program notes and bios are available here.](#)
[Photographs for PHILADANCO *Xmas Philes* are available here.](#)

PHILADANCO

"PHILADANCO's dancers are a miracle of skill and energy. They work in a range of idioms most companies don't even try to possess...A company that can...represent the possibilities of human spirit through dance." (*Dance Magazine*) The award-winning Philadelphia Dance Company, PHILADANCO, is preparing for its 50th anniversary in 2020 and celebrating over 49 years of providing exceptional dance performances and training to dancers throughout the U.S. and around the world. PHILADANCO continues its original mission to "present

the highest quality of professional dance performance and to provide exceptional training for the improvement of skills for emerging professional dancers and choreographers in a nurturing environment, while increasing the appreciation of dance among its many communities.”

Since its inception in 1970, PHILADANCO has had a significant impact on the dance world. As a cultural ambassador representing the U.S., the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia, its artistic direction and renowned national and international guest choreographers have developed a reputation for producing a dance repertory with passion, power, skill and diversity. A stellar faculty, handpicked by Founder Joan Myers Brown, has trained over 4,500 dancers in a comprehensive program achieving the highest level of technical skills in dance and performance. The unique blend of dance styles of PHILADANCO, and its roster of 50-60 concert performances and 45 residencies most years, has made it one of the most sought-after modern dance companies in the country.

PHILADANCO has received such recognition as an NEA Fellowship and the prestigious National Choreography Planning Grant. It organized the historic first two International Conferences for Black Dance Companies in Philadelphia (1988). For the past 30 years, more than 600 people have assembled annually for the International Conference on Black Dance, headed by the International Association of Blacks in Dance (1991). Most recently, PHILADANCO collaborated with The Apollo Theater Foundation, Inc. for *Get On The Good Foot* and *Straight Outta Philly* with Rennie Harris Puremovement. It frequently engages with the community through Drexel University, the University of Pennsylvania, Annenberg Center performances, Breaking Barriers, and others. PHILADANCO believes in and continues to provide quality arts instruction to young people with authentic learning experiences that engage their minds, hearts and bodies. Its record of performing opportunities, commissioned works and life-changing experiences is unequalled.

Daniel Ezralow (Choreographer)

Daniel Ezralow has made an award-winning career expanding the boundaries of dance. From his beginnings as a dancer with 5x2 Plus, the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, Pilobolus and the Paul Taylor Dance Company, Ezralow's professional life has grown to include work as a director and choreographer. As a choreographer, Ezralow has been commissioned for original works by Paris Opera Ballet, Batsheva, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, and PHILADANCO, amongst others. His choreography and aerial creations are in *The Beatles LOVE* by Cirque du Soleil, Broadway's *Spider-Man Turn off the Dark* and the seminal musical film *Across the Universe*.

Hailed by *The Chicago Tribune* as “one of the best American dancer choreographers now working on an international scale,” Ezralow is the artistic director and founder of Ezralow Dance, a movement-based company known for its explosive physicality, originality and humor. He is one of the original dancer/choreographers for MOMIX and a director and founding member of ISO Dance. In television, Ezralow conceived and created the award-winning dance specials *Windows* (Bravo), *Episodes* (PBS), and *Josh Groban in Concert* (PBS), and has choreographed music videos and staged shows for musicians including Josh Groban, Andrea Bocelli, Sara Bareilles, Sting, David Bowie and U2.

Ezralow's work has earned him two American Choreography Awards for innovative and outstanding choreography, a Choreographic Media Honors Award, an Emmy® Award and nomination, the Premio Positano (Italy), a Nijinsky Award, an Ischia Award, and an NEA Choreographic Fellowship. He recently received the McCallum Theater Choreographic lifetime achievement award.

Joan Myers Brown (Founder, Executive/Artistic Director, DFA, DHL, DA) is the honorary chairperson for the International Association of Blacks in Dance (LABD), an organization she established in 1991, founder of the International Conference of Black Dance Companies in 1988, and a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of the Arts and Howard University in Washington, DC. She was awarded an honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters by Ursinus College and an Honorary Doctorate of Arts from the University of Pennsylvania. Listed in *Who's Who in America* and described as an “innovator and communicator”, Brown's efforts for dance excellence are only part of her contribution to the field. She was co-chair of Dance/USA Philadelphia. She received the Philadelphia Award and was documented in a publication, *Joan Myers Brown and the Audacious Hope of the Black Ballerina*, by Brenda Dixon Gottschild. She has received awards from the City of Philadelphia, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Embassy of the United States of America. Brown was honored as a

Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania and Outstanding Alumni of West Philadelphia High School. She received the prestigious National Medal of Arts award from President Barack Obama and was also honored by the American Dance Guild Honoree Award, in addition to many other awards. Brown is a recipient of the *Philadelphia Inquirer's* 2017 Industry Icon Award, and most recently, received the Philadelphia Cultural Fund's David Cohen Award in April 2019. Honored and recognized by the national mainstream dance arena, Brown received the Bessie Award in 2019 for Lifetime Achievement.

About the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts serves as a major cultural destination and crossroads connecting Penn and the greater Philadelphia region through innovative human expression in theatre, music, dance, and film, serving an annual audience of over 60,000. The Annenberg Center also serves as a key resource for the arts at Penn, connecting master artists with Penn students in support of and as an enhancement to the arts curriculum. Student performing arts groups are also key users of the Annenberg Center's multiple performance and rehearsal spaces, while also staffing many operational roles throughout the academic year. In reflection of Penn's core values as a world-respected academic institution, the Annenberg Center emphasizes artistic and intellectual excellence, diversity, and rigor in its presentations; prioritizes broad inclusiveness in the artists, audiences, and groups it serves; manages outstanding performance, conference, and meeting facilities; and stresses comprehensive event planning, production support, and customer service. The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is a major provider of performing arts access for school children and actively engages a broad range of primary, secondary, and post-secondary student audiences and inclusive constituencies from the campus, community, and greater Philadelphia region. Visit AnnenbergCenter.org.

About NextMove Dance

NextMove Dance Artistic Director Randy Swartz created the first annual dance series in Philadelphia at the Walnut Street Theatre in 1970. In 1983, he launched the Dance Celebration series at the Annenberg Center for a 32-year run and initiated a new annual series at the Prince Theater in October 2015. Dance Affiliates, renamed NextMove Dance, is recognized as one of the nation's finest dance presenters. Known internationally for award-winning presentations for almost four decades, NextMove Dance provides a wealth of opportunities for the Delaware Valley community to interact with the artists through talk-backs, master classes, artistic collaborations, workshops, children's programs and much more. Visit nextmovedance.org.

CALENDAR LISTING

PHILADANCO

Xmas Philes

Thursday, December 12, 7:30 PM

Friday, December 13, 8 PM

Saturday, December 14, 2 PM

Saturday, December 14, 8 PM

An Annenberg Center original commission and local dance treasure return home! 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.

*** A champagne toast to celebrate PHILADANCO's 50th anniversary, the 60th anniversary of the Philadelphia School of Dance Arts, and founder and national dance icon, Joan Myers Brown will be held following the December 12 performance.*

The 19/20 dance series is presented by the Annenberg Center and NextMove Dance.

Visit AnnenbergCenter.org for ticket information.

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