JAMEL GAINES CREATIVE OUTLET AND DEEPLY ROOTED DANCE THEATER SHARE STAGE AT BAM FISHER SEPTEMBER 13–14

To celebrate their New York roots and historical connections, Jamel Gaines Creative Outlet (JGCO), celebrating its 25th anniversary, and Deeply Rooted Dance Theater (DRDT) share the stage at BAM Fisher September 13 and 14 for “Legacy,” the first in a series of annual programs that celebrate, reaffirm, and reimagine the artistic continuum that was established by JUBILATION! Dance Company during the 1980s and early ’90s in Brooklyn, New York.

“Legacy” is a shared evening featuring dancers cultivated and nurtured through processes developed by DRDT and JGCO. JGCO Founder/Director Jamel Gaines was mentored by DRDT Co-Founder and Artistic Director Kevin Iega Jeff as a member of Jeff’s JUBILATION! Dance Company, which he directed.
prior to moving to Chicago and co-founding DRDT.

“Legacy’ reflects a longtime desire to begin seeding an annual collaboration of dance companies, artists, and cultural organizations that were inspired through JUBILATION!’s mission,” said Jeff. “Specifically I mean artists, companies, and organizations dedicated to sharing creative consciousness in diverse communities without social limitations.”

“I am humbled to collaborate with one of my great mentors, Kevin Iega Jeff, and DRDT,” Gaines said. “‘Legacy’ is about having a voice that speaks to all people in a thought-provoking way to share spirituality, art, healing, and cultural empowerment. The African-American experience gives us a voice to continue our work, our 'legacy,' through art. Learning our history through art builds greater relationships and self-discipline that serves as a welcome reminder of personal growth.”

DRDT performs one of Jeff’s earliest works, Flack (1984), a portrait of strife, despair, and ultimately triumph, set to the music of legendary songstress Roberta Flack; DRDT Co-Founder and Associate Artistic Director Gary Abbott’s Parallel Lives (2017), a contemporary narrative inspired by poor, working
women who have shared life-changing events, both beautiful and tragic, with original music by Evangelos Spanos based on Vivaldi’s “La Folia”; and Jeff’s intimate and lush duet *Wild is the Wind* (2009), with music by Nina Simone.

JCGO performs three works by Founder/Director Gaines: the world premiere of *Tribal Truth*, which celebrates the festivities, tradition, and poetry of keeping traditional African dance alive, fused with hip-hop, ballet, and modern dance styles to the music of Fela Kuti; *Shhh…Ahh…* (2004), about daydreaming in the mist of cool, sexy, sultry, summer breeze, with music by India Arie; and *Hanging Tree* (2019), a solo dedicated to the MAAFA, a Swahili word referring to “the great suffering” during the transatlantic slave trade, that demonstrates breaking psychological chains and living in a country where history is distorted and changed.
DRDT Co-founder and Artistic Director Kevin Iega Jeff founded his first company, JUBILATION! Dance Company, in New York City in 1982 out of a need to provide a forum for African-American artists to be engaged holistically in the arts—spiritually, intellectually, physically, socially and economically. For 10 years the company toured nationally and internationally, helping to bring the stories, histories and art of African-American people, as well as Jeff’s unique approach to contemporary dance, to a global audience. In 1995, Jeff joined forces with Gary Abbott in Chicago and together founded Deeply Rooted Dance Theater, which has performed from coast to coast in the U.S. as well as in South Africa, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, France, Brazil and Canada.

Deeply Rooted’s programs are partially supported by the Alphawood Foundation Chicago, Arts Work Fund and Smart Growth program of the Chicago Community Trust, Chicago Park District’s Night Out in the Parks Program, Ginger Farley Charitable Fund at the Chicago Community Foundation, Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelly Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Illinois Arts Council Agency, International Association of Blacks in Dance, Martha Struther’s Farley and Donald C. Farley Jr. Family Foundation, Reva and David Logan Foundation, the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation and the Deeply Rooted Family of Friends. Special thanks to Ballet Chicago, Chicago Dancemakers Forum, Chicago Community Trust, Chicago Park District, Reva and David Logan Center and St. Benedict the African Church for their partnership and support.

**Jamel Gaines Creative Outlet Dance Theatre**

JGCO is considered one of Brooklyn’s premier contemporary dance companies, best known for its riveting, thought-provoking and relatable repertory. The dance aesthetic encompasses classical, contemporary, modern, African, and hip-hop dance styles. For nearly 25 years, JGCO has assembled an extensive performance repertoire, with works presented across the United States and select international cities. The company merges rigorous classical and modern technique with African-American soul and spirit. Under the artistic direction of Jamel Gaines, the company has been hailed by reviewers in the United States and Europe for its “richness of dance tone” and “contagious vitality.”

The company has performed internationally and nationally in Italy, England, St. Maarten, California, Seattle, Atlanta, and throughout its home base, New York City. Gaines has created works for Jacob’s Pillow, Lincoln Center, the Rialto, the Paramount Theatre, and the American Black Film Festival in Acapulco and worked with artists such as Malik Yoba, Savion Glover, Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston, Madonna, and more. JGCO artists also have worked on prestigious projects such as *FELA!* and *The Lion King* on Broadway, Rihanna’s LIVE tour, and Beyoncé’s “Single Ladies” video.

JGCO was founded in 1994 and has since grown into a multi-tiered arts organization. The company comprises unique performing artists whose talents include theatre, spoken word, live music, and visuals in the form of video and photographic art.

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Photos top to bottom:
Deeply Rooted Dance Theater in *Parallel Lives*. Photo by Michelle Reid.
Jamel Gaines Creative Outlet dancer Kevin Tate. Photo by Jerry Metellus.
Deeply Rooted Dance Theater dancers (L–R) Rebekah Kuczma, Ricky Davis, Dominique Atwood, and Ahmad Hill in *Heaven*. Photo by Michelle Reid.

[IMAGES AVAILABLE HERE](#).