DEEPLY ROOTED DANCE THEATER PRESENTS
“REAFFIRMED/REIMAGINED”
DEC. 13–15 AT LOGAN CENTER
Revivals, Repertoire, Special Project Preview on Programs

Deeply Rooted Dance Theater (DRDT) offers classic revivals, company repertoire and a preview of a collaboration with gospel artist Donald Lawrence and the Tri-City Singers for its fall season, “Reaffirmed/Reimagined.” Performances take place December 13–15 at the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts on the University of Chicago campus, 915 E. 60th Street, Chicago.

DRDT’s Nicole Clarke-Springer begins serving as the company’s artistic director during the 2019–20 season, beginning with these fall performances. Co-Founder Kevin Iega Jeff, transitioning to the role of creative director, is shifting his focus to cultivate the community relationships and funding resources for
developing the South Side Dance Center, an initiative announced in 2018, and the development of the new Special Projects Division, beginning with the preview of Gesem: East of the Nile on the December programs. Jeff will also support Clarke-Springer’s transition by serving on DRDT’s artistic team.

As an overall frame for the season, Clarke-Springer has chosen a quote from writer Jeremy Eichler: “The great masterworks of the past not only shaped what came afterward but continue to find their meaning changed retroactively as new works of art reimagine them through the prism of the present.”

“As someone who is a product of the Deeply Rooted process—artist, choreographer, Dance Education director—it is an honor to now serve the company in this capacity,” Clarke-Springer commented. “It is important to me to maintain both the spiritual and artistic integrity for which the company is known as well as create spaces for new voices that not only are inspired by our mission but look to reaffirm it in new and imaginative ways.”

“Reaffirmed/Reimagined” features revivals of two classic DRDT works. Essence – A Portrait of Four Women (1972) by Haitian-American choreographer Martial Roumain, shows the lives of four women of color—a domestic worker, a high-value prostitute, a biracial African-Latina woman navigating two worlds and an urban woman surviving through race-based rage—intersecting on an emotional journey of self-actualization and sisterhood, set to music by legendary songstresses Nina Simone, Zulema, Roberta Flack and Nikki Giovanni with the James Cleveland Choir. Kevin Iega Jeff’s Dedication (1982) depicts an ancestral elder passing the legacy of life onto children of the new world, set to music by Quincy Jones, Clause Ogerman and Patti Austin.
Also on the program are three works from the company repertoire. DRDT Co-Founder and Associate Artistic Director Gary Abbott’s *Parallel Lives* (2017) is 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.” Nicole Clarke-Springer’s *Forces* (2018) explores spiritual influences on daily consciousness, with music by Marcelo Zarvos. *When Men* (2016), by company and Artistic Team member Joshua L. Ishmon, considers the idea of abandoning stigmas to strengthen from within, with music by Ananda Giri and Paolo Nutini and text by Charlie Chaplin.

On December 14 and 15, a preview of *Gesem, East of the Nile* brings together DRDT and acclaimed gospel artist Donald Lawrence and his Tri-City Singers. This theatrical experience melds elements of choral, hip-hop, trap-jazz and inspirational music with inspirational dance theater. Said Jeff, “Collaborating with Donald Lawrence is exciting! His generous spirit is infectious, and his musical genius is legendary. We look forward to working with Donald to create Gesem, an inspired evening of dance, music and song.”

Special performances for youth and senior audiences Wednesday, December 11 at 10 a.m. and noon feature excerpts from this season’s repertoire.

Deeply Rooted Dance Theater’s “Reaffirmed/Reimagined” takes place Friday, December 13 at 7 p.m.; Saturday, December 14 at 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday, December 15 at 6 p.m. at the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts on the University of Chicago campus, 915 E. 60th Street, Chicago. Tickets are $45 general admission; a $150 ticket for any performance provides additional support to Deeply Rooted and, on Friday, December 13 only, includes a post-performance VIP reception. Tickets for the youth/senior performances on Wednesday, December 11 at 10 a.m. and noon are $10.
Premiering in 1996, Deeply Rooted Dance Theater (DRDT) is rooted in traditions of modern, contemporary and African dance, as well as storytelling, in universal themes that spark a visceral experience and ignite an emotional response in diverse audiences worldwide. Collaborating with nationally renowned choreographers across the spectrum of modern, ballet and African dance, DRDT presents work that reflects eclectic voices in contemporary life.

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 Donnelley Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Illinois Arts Council Agency, International Association of Blacks in Dance, Martha Struthers 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.

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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) Briana Arthur, Paige Fraser, Joshua Henry, and William Roberson in Forces. Photo by Michelle Reid.

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