



The University of Texas at Austin
Theatre and Dance
College of Fine Arts

For immediate release:

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Video available: vimeo.com/texastheatredance

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE
PRESENTS
MOMENTUM
AN EXPLORATION OF THE IMPACT OF
AFRICAN DIASPORIC CULTURE ON CONTEMPORARY DANCE
FEBRUARY 15-26, 2017
AT THE OSCAR G. BROCKETT THEATRE

The University of Texas at Austin's award-winning dance company Dance Repertory Theatre returns to the stage in *Momentum*, February 15-26 at the Oscar G. Brockett Theatre. An exploration of the influence of African American culture upon contemporary dance in the twenty-first century, *Momentum* features works by nationally renowned artists, including Gesel Mason, Dr. Lorenzo "Rennie" Harris, Abby Zbikowski, Adrienne Hurd, Netta Yerushalmy, Ananya Chatterjea and Dance Repertory Theatre Artistic Directors Charles O. Anderson, Jeremy Arnold and Lyn C. Wiltshire.

"*Momentum* pays tribute to two significant African American events in dance that transformed the field to come: 1932's *The First Negro Dance Recital in America* produced by Hemsley Winfield and Edna Guy and *Parallels* produced by Ishmael Houston Jones in 1982 and 2012," shares Co-Artistic Director Charles Anderson. "These events, in their time, asked and answered the question: What is Black Dance?"

"While not all the works in *Momentum* are explicitly about Black culture, they collectively are an embodied conversation with African Diasporic aesthetics, histories, politics and/or movement forms."

Highlights of *Momentum* include the keynote performance *Lec/Dem or How Do You Spell Femaphobic (excerpt from antithesis)* by Gesel Mason. Featured February 15-17, Mason's work builds upon poet Audre Lorde's essay *Uses of the Erotic*, which collides the genres, bodies and cultures of postmodern dance and erotic dance. "As an African American woman, I am particularly interested in how an embodied exploration of the erotic could allow us to access what Lorde calls 'our most profoundly creative source [in a way that is] female and self-affirming in the face of a racist, patriarchal and anti-erotic society'," Mason explains.

An assistant professor at the University of Colorado Boulder and artistic director of Gesel Mason Performance Projects, Mason is known for her use of dance, theatre, humor and storytelling to bring visibility to voices unheard, situations neglected, or perspectives considered taboo. Her work has been presented at venues spanning the globe, including at Joyce SoHo, 651 Arts, Bates Dance Festival, Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, Painted Bride, Dance Place, the International Contemporary Dance Conference and Performance Festival in Bytom (Poland), DanceAfrica and the International Association of Blacks in Dance.

Hip-hop choreographer Dr. Lorenzo "Rennie" Harris' *Second to Khan* offers a meditation on the rise in mass shootings on school campuses and a reflection of police brutality. Since the age of 15, Harris has been teaching workshops and classes at universities around the country and is a spokesperson for the significance of "street" origins in any dance style. He was voted one of the most influential people in the last 100 years of Philadelphia, his hometown, and has been compared to twentieth century dance legends Alvin Ailey and Bob Fosse.

"Harris has built a wedge that will open the doors of America's art centers, displaying hip hop as clear cultural expression, compelling to all races and generations..."
- *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

Vanguard emerging choreographer Abby Zbikowski's *Under the Asphalt* seeks out the symbiotic relationships between formalized dance and punk musical form. Zbikowski's work with her company, Abby Z and the New Utility, has been presented by the Bates Dance Festival, Dance New Amsterdam, the Gibney Dance Center and the Kelly Strayhorn Theater in Pittsburgh, among other venues. She is an assistant professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and on faculty at the American Dance Festival.

Momentum also features the second installment of Charles O. Anderson's *(Re)current Unrest* project. Inspired by the BlackLivesMatters movement and exploring notions of citizenship and personhood, *(Re)current Unrest pt. 2: In D'Nile* immerses the audience in a sonic landscape, revealing the sociocultural realities and imaginings that inform the utterances of the African American voices featured in composer Steve Reich's works. Anderson's *(Re)current Unrest*, the first work in his series, was premiered by Dance Repertory Theatre in the 2016 concert *Bodies & Souls*. Anderson is head of the dance program at The University of Texas at Austin and co-artistic director of Dance Repertory

Theatre. He serves as artistic director of the critically acclaimed dance theatre X which he founded in 2003.

Other work presented in *Momentum* includes *Hand in Heart* by Adrienne Hurd, *Bach in Time* by Jeremy Arnold, *Paramodernities #3* by Netta Yerushalmy, *Slow Fade to Black* by Lyn C. Wiltshire, *Walking with Natasha* by Ananya Chatterjea, *black is the new black* by Oluwaseun Samuel Olayiwola and *A-peeling* by Gianina Casale.

Programming for specific performance dates and times follows:

Dance Repertory Theatre presents *Momentum*

Artistic Directors: Charles O. Anderson, Jeremy Arnold and Lyn C. Wiltshire

February 15-17 at 7:30 p.m.:

Lec/Dem by Gesel Mason
(Re)current Unrest pt. 2: In D’Nile by Charles O. Anderson
black is the new black by Oluwaseun Samuel Olayiwola
Hand in Heart by Adrienne Hurd
Under the Asphalt by Abby Zbikowski
Bach in Time by Jeremy Arnold
A-peeling by Gianina Casale
Walking with Natasha by Ananya Chatterjea
Second to Khan by Lorenzo “Rennie” Harris

February 22, 24 at 7:30 p.m., February 19 at 3:00 p.m. and February 25 at 2:00 p.m.:

Bach in Time by Jeremy Arnold
Paramodernities #3 by Netta Yerushalmy
black is the new black by Oluwaseun Samuel Olayiwola
(Re)current Unrest pt. 2: In D’Nile by Charles O. Anderson
Under the Asphalt by Abby Zbikowski
Hand in Heart by Adrienne Hurd
Slow Fade to Black by Lyn C. Wiltshire
A-peeling by Gianina Casale
Second to Khan by Lorenzo “Rennie” Harris

February 18, 23, 25 at 7:30 p.m. and February 26 at 2:00 p.m.:

Bach in Time by Jeremy Arnold
Paramodernities #3 by Netta Yerushalmy
black is the new black by Oluwaseun Samuel Olayiwola
(Re)current Unrest pt. 2: In D’Nile by Charles O. Anderson
Under the Asphalt by Abby Zbikowski
Walking with Natasha by Ananya Chatterjea
Slow Fade to Black by Lyn C. Wiltshire
A-peeling by Gianina Casale
Second to Khan by Lorenzo “Rennie” Harris

Performances on February 15-17 include choreography that addresses sexuality and/or erotic dance and contains nudity. It is recommended for mature audiences. For more information on *Momentum* please visit JoinTheDrama.org

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

Dance Decoded

**February 16-18 and 22, immediately following the 7:30 p.m. performances
Oscar G. Brockett Theatre**

Guests are invited to join choreographers and members of the cast for a brief post-performance discussion.

CALENDAR LISTING

February 15-26, 2017 – The University of Texas at Austin Department of Theatre and Dance presents *Momentum* at Oscar G. Brockett Theatre (300 E. 23rd St.), located in the F. Loren Winship Drama Building. A map of the campus: <http://theatredance.utexas.edu/about/location-directions-parking>

Performance times are February 15 at 7:30 p.m. (Preview); February 16-18, 22-25 at 7:30 p.m., February 19 at 3:00 p.m. and February 25-26 at 2:00 p.m. Tickets for performances on February 16-26 (\$26 adult, \$21 UT faculty and staff, \$15 student) are now on sale at authorized ticket outlets, which include the Bass Concert Hall Box Office, most H-E-B stores and all Texas Box Office outlets, online JoinTheDrama.org, or by calling (512) 477-6060 or (800) 982-BEVO. Tickets for the preview performance on February 15 (\$10 adult, \$5 student) are available at the Bass Concert Hall Box Office and F. Loren Winship Building Box Office.

ABOUT TEXAS THEATRE AND DANCE

The University of Texas at Austin Department of Theatre and Dance is a world-class educational environment that serves as the ultimate creative incubator for the next generation of artists, thinkers and leaders in theatre and performance.

ALSO THIS SEASON

UTNT (UT New Theatre)

Curated by Liz Engelman and Steven Dietz
B. Iden Payne Theatre
March 2-12, 2017

The Cohen New Works Festival

Presented by Broadway Bank
April 10-14, 2017

Luna
By Ramon Esquivel
Oscar G. Brockett Theatre
April 20-23, 2017

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