



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

For immediate release:

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Images available: <https://tinyurl.com/y7swleyq>

Password: media

Video available: vimeo.com/texastheatredance

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE
PRESENTS
FORTITUDE
MARCH 5-15, 2019
AT THE B. IDEN PAYNE THEATRE

Under the artistic direction of Andrea Beckham and Erica Gionfriddo, Dance Repertory Theatre returns to the stage in *Fortitude*, a concert celebrating the enduring spirit of dance and the strength of those called to it as a field. *Fortitude* features work by renowned guest artists, faculty and students as well as the annual presentation of the Haruka Weiser Memorial Commission.

“One way to define the word *fortitude* is ‘courage in the face of adversity,’” write co-artistic directors Andrea Beckham and Erica Gionfriddo. “Dance as a practice is uniquely situated toward problem-solving, addressing the uncomfortable and maintaining courage in the liminal spaces between absolutes. The choreographers in this program have challenged the performers to move with courage before the outcome is clear; to honor individuality alongside community, and to honor both history and the future as means to understand the present moment. Through our outstanding faculty choreographers and renowned guest artists, *Fortitude* offers communities and forms of dance a shared space that have not always been in conversation on the concert stage, championing the enduring power of bodies in motion to cross perceived divides.”

Highlights of *Fortitude* include Charles O. Anderson's *Idòbálẹ̀*, a celebration of the life and art of Haruka Weiser performed as the Haruka Weiser Memorial Commission. The work brings together the entire ensemble of Dance Repertory Theatre in a tradition of communion. "Every time we bring back an old memory, we run the risk of changing it...memories aren't just created once, but every time we remember them," explains head of dance Charles O. Anderson. "This spring, Haruka Weiser would have graduated from our dance program...this piece is my humble attempt to offer her a ceremony to mark that occasion. *Idòbálẹ̀* is the Yoruba concept of showing respect upon greeting and leaving. It reflects a reverence for life and death. I chose this title in dedication to Haruka and her classmates."

Anderson is head of the dance program at The University of Texas at Austin and serves as artistic director of the critically acclaimed Charles O. Anderson Dance Projects (formerly dance theatre X), which he founded in 2003. He has performed in the companies of Ronald K. Brown, Sean Curran, Mark Dendy and Miguel Gutierrez, among others. His work has been presented nationally and internationally and has earned recognition from numerous organizations such as the Pew Fellowship for the Arts, one of "25 to Watch" by *Dance Magazine* and one of "12 Rising Stars in the Academy" by *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* magazine.

Also included in *Fortitude* is guest artist, Raphael Xavier's *Sometimes: Life-Gates & Keys* explores themes of permanence and resilience through elements of Hip-Hop and Breaking. "As I pass on my technique of Breaking, I think about the longevity, sustainability and accessibility of dance. It's about taking apart, deciphering, decoding, putting back together and finding solutions for the individual goal. That's what Breaking is for me. As long as I can Break things I can make things." Xavier is a self-taught Hip-Hop dancer and Breaking practitioner who has forged an exceptional approach to improvisation over the past 20 years. He is an award-winning artist and alumnus of the world-renowned company, Rennie Harris Puremovement, as well as a 2013 Pew Fellowship grantee, 2016 Guggenheim Fellow and 2016 United States Artist Fellow.

Fortitude also features *Scar* by Andrea Beckham, developed through collaboration with the dancers and featuring sculpture work and set design by John Christensen; as well as work by Kirven Douthit-Boyd, co-artistic director of Dance at the Center of Creative Arts (COCA) in St. Louis Missouri; Sandra Organ Solis, founder of Earth Vessels: The Sandra Organ Dance Company and the first African-American ballerina at the Houston Ballet; Erica Gionfriddo, lecturer at the Department of Theatre and Dance and founder of ARCOS Dance (Austin, Texas); and Bridget L. Moore, founder of B. Moore Dance who has choreographed work for Ailey II, Dallas Black Dance Theatre and Urban Bush Women, among others.

For more information on *Fall For Dance* please visit JoinTheDrama.org

CALENDAR LISTING

March 5-15, 2019 – The University of Texas at Austin Department of Theatre and Dance presents *Fortitude* at B. Iden Payne Theatre (300 E. 23rd St.), located in the F. Loren Winship Drama Building. A map of the campus: theatredance.utexas.edu/about/location-directions-parking

Performance times are March 5 at 7:30 p.m. (Preview); March 6 at 7:30 p.m. (Opening); March 7-9, 13-15 at 7:30 p.m. and March 9-10 at 2:00 p.m. Tickets for performances on March 6-15 (\$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 at JoinTheDrama.org, or by calling (512) 477-6060 or (800) 982-BEVO. Tickets for the preview performance on March 5 (\$10 adult, \$5 student) are available at the Bass Concert Hall Box Office and F. Loren Winship Building Box Office. Box Office locations and hours: theatredance.utexas.edu/ticketing

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)
March 12-31, 2019

The Cohen New Works Festival
April 15-19, 2019

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