9-10-2010

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Recommended Citation

"Dancing on Campus" (2010). News Releases. 1118.
https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls/1118

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Dancing on Campus

09.10.2010 | Fine Arts, Campus and Community

There will be dancing in the streets, the classrooms and all over campus with an enhanced partnership between the University of Dayton and the internationally recognized Dayton Contemporary Dance Company.

The partnership will bring DCDC dancers and choreographers to campus for performances, classes and artistic collaborations that will add to the University's arts and intercultural education programming.

The University has named DCDC as Community Artist-in-Residence for the 2010-11 academic year. The dance company, which is rooted in the African-American experience, will work with students from all majors and at all levels of dance experience to introduce them to the art of dance and its relevance to learning.

"The University of Dayton is pleased with our relationship with the world-class Dayton Contemporary Dance Company," said University of Dayton President Daniel J. Curran. "This partnership will enable our students to learn from an organization that is a true American treasure, one that shares the University's commitment to building community and advancing Dayton's artistic vitality."

Paul Benson, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences who also serves on the DCDC board, said DCDC's educational mission will help the University with its mission to broaden students' learning.

"As part of our mission, the University of Dayton works to extend our students' intercultural capabilities and increase their engagement with the performing arts," Benson said. "The challenge and creativity sparked by DCDC's arts-integrated educational mission are touchstones for educating 21st century leaders and citizens."

DCDC discussed its partnerships with the University of Dayton and Central State University in a joint press conference Friday, Sept. 10, at DCDC's studios and office located at Central State's Dayton Campus on Germantown Street.

"Education is as central to DCDC as it is to the University of Dayton and Central State University," said Ro Nita Hawes-Saunders, executive director of DCDC. "Since its beginnings in 1968, DCDC has been concerned with using dance as a tool for arts education. In partnering with these two universities, DCDC has arrived at a critical place where it can meet the growing demands made on our youth of all ages, including the very young, those getting their college degrees and other learning members of the community."

The University and DCDC anticipate the company will work closely with students in these ways:

- Company members will work with students of all years and majors with little or no experience in dance to learn about movement, the history of the art of dance and DCDC's history.
- DCDC's professional dancers will mentor students with previous experience and involvement in dance. Artistic Director Debbie Blunden-Diggs will teach dance classes.
- The ArtStreet Learning Living Community students will build a sustained relationship with DCDC artists.
- University faculty and students from all disciplines at the University will work with DCDC to create new academic and experiential learning activities, such as course development and performances.
- The University will continue collaborations with the dance company through its humanities core program and other first-year learning living communities, as well as the theatre program and the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

DCDC dancer Crystal Michelle Fuller will coordinate activities of the residency through the University's ArtStreet learning-living program. Three University of Dayton faculty and staff members currently serve on DCDC's board of directors.

As part of the campus residency, several DCDC events this fall will be free and open to the public:

- 7th annual campus ArtBeat Festival of the Arts: 4 p.m. Friday, Sept. 24, ArtStreet, 330 Kiefaber St.
- Black Catholic Mass: 6 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 14, Immaculate Conception Chapel.
- Company rehearsal: 8 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 30, Kennedy Union's Boll Theatre.

The University of Dayton is a top-tier national Catholic research university and the largest private university in Ohio. Founded by the Society of Mary (Marianists) in 1850, the University of Dayton ranks among the 10 best Catholic universities in the nation.

The Dayton Contemporary Dance Company is an internationally celebrated modern dance company, rooted in the African-American tradition. It was founded in Dayton in 1968 by Jeraldyne Blunden, and holds the world's most comprehensive repertoire of classic works by African-American choreographers. DCDC performs nationally and internationally and is known for its significant contribution to the history of American dance.

For more information contact Cilla Shindell at Shindell@udayton.edu or 937-229-3257 or Donnel Jones at d.jones@dcdc.org or 937-228-3232, ext. 106.