



THE PHILADELPHIA DANCE COMPANY

PHILADANCO!

XMAS PHILES

Founder, Executive/Artistic Director, DFA, DHL, DA Joan Myers Brown

Company

Rosita Adamo, Janine Beckles, William E. Burden, Mikaela Fenton, Clarricia Golden, Joe Gonzalez, Jameel M. Hendricks, Victor Lewis Jr., Kareem Marsh, Dana Nichols, Brandi Pinnix, Courtney Robinson, Jah'meek D. Williams, Marcus Williams, Tony Harris (Guest Artist)

D/2 Apprentice Company

Onederful Ancrum, Ankhtra Battle, Kaniyah Browne, Lindsey Lee, Briana Marshall, Angelica Merced, Dahlia Patterson, Nasir Pittman, Donyae Reaves, Francis Sloane, Taylor Sparks, Lourdes Taylor, Rhapsody Taylor, Dominique Thompson

D/3 Youth Ensemble

Donovan Blake, Jaheara Brown, Kaniah Browne, Naiya Brown, Arianna Deshields, Nyilah Johnson, Kelsey Jones, Bethany Morris, Mahogani Richardson-Webb, Tiana Smith, Khidir Webster

PROGRAM

There will be an intermission.

Thursday, December 12 @ 7:30 PM

Friday, December 13 @ 8 PM

Saturday, December 14 @ 2 PM

Saturday, December 14 @ 8 PM

Zellerbach Theatre

NextMove
DANCE

The 19/20 dance series is presented by the Annenberg Center and NextMove Dance.

Xmas Philes was commissioned in 2000 by the Annenberg Center and NextMove Dance.

PROGRAM NOTES

Xmas Philes

Choreographer Daniel Ezralow

Assistant to the Choreographer Debora Chase-Hicks

Music Various Artists

Lighting Design Clifton Taylor

Costume Design Jackson Lowell

Costume Execution Natasha Guruleva

PRELUDE

The Entire Cast

WHITE XMAS

Tony Harris, Jr.

RUDOLPH

Rosita Adamo, Janine Beckles, Mikaela Fenton, Clarricia Golden, Dana Nichols, Brandi Pinnix, Courtney Robinson

TWAS

William E. Burden & Jameel M. Hendricks

DRUIDS

Janine Beckles, William E. Burden, Mikaela Fenton, Clarricia Golden, Joe Gonzalez, Jameel Hendricks, Victor Lewis Jr, Courtney Robinson

PRESENTS

Onderful Ancrum, Ankhtra Battle, Kaniyah Browne, Lindsey Lee, Briana Marshall, Angelica Merced, Dahlia Patterson, Nasir Pittman, Donyae Reaves, Francis Sloane, Taylor Sparks, Lourdes Taylor, Rhapsody Taylor, Dominique Thompson

12 DAZ

The Cast

BLUE

Rosita Adamo, Janine Beckles, Mikaela Fention, Clarricia Golden, Dana Nichols, Brandi Pinnix, Courtney Robinson

FA LA LA LA LA

The Cast

NEW YEARS EVE

Rosita Adamo with William E. Burden, Joe Gonzalez, Jameel Hendricks, Victori Lewis Jr, Marcus Williams

JINGLE BELLS

The Cast

INTERMISSION

XMAS AVENUE

The Cast

XMAS *EATS*

The Company

SILENT NIGHT

The Cast

PICKETS

Rosita Adamo, Janine Beckles, Mikaela Fenton, Leah Friedman, Clarricia Golden, Dana Nichols, Brandi Pinnix, Courtney Robinson

STORE WARS

Onederful Ancrum, Ankhtra Battle, Kaniyah Browne, Lindsey Lee, Briana Marshall, Angelica Merced, Dahlia Patterson, Nasir Pittman, Donyae Reaves, Francis Sloane, Taylor Sparks, Lourdes Taylor, Rhapsody Taylor, Dominique Thompson

X-MAS THIEVES

The Cast

BURRR...LESS CLAWS

The Company

SANTAS IN BLACK

William E. Burden, Joe Gonzalez, Jameel Hendricks, Victor Lewis Jr, Kareem Marsh, Marcus Williams

LIGHT UP

The Company

ZAT YOU SANTA CLAUS

The Entire Cast

S.C. IS COMING TO TOWN

The Entire Cast

Xmas Philes is festive, joyous and spiritual; an uplifting holiday entertainment for all ages and faiths. *Xmas Philes* is a tapestry of holiday music, mixing traditional and contemporary versions of holiday classics in a modern dance setting with Hollywood flavor. A wacky, funny, somewhat ironic Xmas that saves us all from the dreadful onslaught of endless nutcracking, it takes on the holiday season to lift your spirits and leave you humming holiday songs. Watch as PHILADANCO gets a rare chance to be silly, lighthearted and just plain gleeful; from the least likely Christmas angel to the most heartbreaking "Silent Night" you'll ever hear or see. Other segments, such as "Blue", "Druids" and "New Year's Eve", impart the thoughtful, spiritual and sometimes melancholic aspects of the holidays. Just add "Santas in Black" danced to themes from the movie *Men in Black* and chorus-lining Rockettes who can't stay in step in "Rudolph", and you get the kind of holiday mayhem that makes us all kids at heart.

The extended reconstruction of *Xmas Philes* was made possible by generous support from Always Best Care, PECO, Lincoln Financial and PNC Arts Alive.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

PHILADANCO

Celebrating 49 Years of Artistic Excellence

"PHILADANCO's dancers are a miracle of skill and energy. They work in a range of idioms most companies don't even try to possess...A company that can do more than just anything. It can represent the possibilities of human spirit through dance." (*Dance Magazine*)

The award-winning Philadelphia Dance Company, PHILADANCO, the resident company of the Kimmel Center, is preparing for its 50th anniversary in 2020 and is now celebrating over 49 years of providing exceptional dance performances and training to dancers throughout the U.S. and around the world. Continuing its original mission to “present the highest quality of professional dance performance and to provide exceptional training for the improvement of skills for emerging professional dancers and choreographers in a nurturing environment, while increasing the appreciation of dance among its many communities,” PHILADANCO survives and thrives despite the current economic climate.

Since its inception in 1970, PHILADANCO has had a significant impact on the dance world. As a cultural ambassador representing the U.S., the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia, its artistic direction and renowned national and international guest choreographers have developed a reputation for producing a dance repertory with passion, power, skill and diversity. A stellar faculty, handpicked by Founder Joan Myers Brown, has trained over 4,500 dancers in a comprehensive program achieving the highest level of technical skills in dance and performance. The unique blend of dance styles of PHILADANCO, and its roster of 50-60 concert performances and 45 residencies most years has made it one of the most sought-after modern dance companies in the country.

PHILADANCO has received recognition such as an NEA Fellowship and the prestigious National Choreography Planning Grant. It organized the historic first two International Conferences for Black Dance Companies in Philadelphia (1988). For the past 30 years, more than 600 people have assembled annually for the International Conference on Black Dance, headed by the International Association of Blacks in Dance (1991). Most recently, PHILADANCO collaborated with The Apollo Theater Foundation, Inc. for *Get On The Good Foot* and *Straight Outta Philly* with Rennie Harris Puremovement. It constantly engages with the community through Drexel University, University of Pennsylvania, Annenberg Center performances, Breaking Barriers, and others.

More importantly, PHILADANCO believes in and continues to provide quality arts instruction to young people with authentic learning experiences that engage their minds, hearts and bodies. Its record of performing opportunities, commissioned works and life-changing experiences is unequalled.

Daniel Ezralow (Choreographer)

Ezralow has made an award-winning career expanding the boundaries of dance. From his beginnings as a dancer with 5x2 Plus, the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, Pilobolus and the Paul Taylor Dance Company, Ezralow’s professional life has grown to include work as a director and choreographer. Over decades, he has masterfully traversed the mediums of live performance, film and television, from modest venues to the world’s greatest stages. With a directorial approach that’s both visceral and imaginative, his unique style of physical expression has earned him a distinguished international reputation as a groundbreaking artist.

Ezralow has conceived, directed and choreographed the new and original dance theatre play *PEARL*, inspired by the life of writer and humanitarian, Pearl S. Buck, which opened at Lincoln Center in 2015. *The Huffington Post* called it “a stunning collaborative spectacle of dance, theater, film, music, multimedia and history.” To bring to life the legend of Pearl, Ezralow traveled to Zhenjiang, China to research Pearl’s extraordinary journey. He conducted intensive dance workshops, discovering new international talent to compliment Ezralow Dance Company’s signature performers in this unique multi-cultural collaboration.

In Tokyo, Daniel Ezralow conceived, directed and choreographed the critically acclaimed show, *Flying Bodies, Soaring Souls* in collaboration with legendary designer Issey Miyake. Ezralow also transformed the Mariinsky Theater (Saint Petersburg) into a rolling wheat field, creating and directing a striking visual spectacle, provocatively reinterpreting Igor Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring*. As a director/choreographer, Ezralow has created fifteen original dance theatre plays that have toured internationally to glowing reviews. His most recent show *OPEN*, with Ezralow Dance, had its U.S. premiere at the Wallis Annenberg Center in Los Angeles in 2016. In addition, Ezralow has created live and filmed events at the Louvre Museum and the Pompidou Centre (Paris), Yankee Stadium and the Guggenheim Museum (NYC), the Getty Museum and The Ford Theater (L.A.) and the Opening Ceremonies of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia. As a choreographer, Ezralow has been commissioned for original works by Paris Opera Ballet, Batsheva, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, and PHILADANCO, amongst others. His choreography

and aerial creations are in *The Beatles LOVE* by Cirque du Soleil, Broadway's *Spider-Man Turn off the Dark* and the seminal musical film *Across the Universe*.

Hailed by *The Chicago Tribune* as "one of the best American dancer choreographers now working on an international scale", Ezralow is the artistic director and founder of Ezralow Dance, a movement-based company known for its explosive physicality, originality and humor. He is one of the original dancer/choreographers for MOMIX and a director and founding member of ISO Dance. In television, Ezralow conceived and created the award-winning dance specials *Windows* (Bravo), *Episodes* (PBS), and *Josh Groban in Concert* (PBS), and has choreographed music videos and staged shows for musicians including Josh Groban, Andrea Bocelli, Sara Bareilles, Sting, David Bowie and U2.

Ezralow's work has earned him two American Choreography Awards for innovative and outstanding choreography, a Choreographic Media Honors Award, an Emmy® Award and nomination, the Premio Positano (Italy), a Nijinsky Award, an Ischia Award, and an NEA Choreographic Fellowship. This past fall, he received the McCallum Theater Choreographic lifetime achievement award.

Joan Myers Brown (Founder, Executive/Artistic Director, DFA, DHL, DA); Philadelphia, PA
Brown is the honorary chairperson for the International Association of Blacks in Dance (LABD), an organization she established in 1991, founder of the International Conference of Black Dance Companies in 1988, and a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of the Arts and Howard University in Washington, DC. She was awarded an honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters by Ursinus College and an Honorary Doctorate of Arts from the University of Pennsylvania. Listed in Who's Who in America and described as an "innovator and communicator", Brown's efforts for dance excellence are only part of her contribution to the field. She was co-chair of Dance/USA Philadelphia. She received the Philadelphia Award and was documented in a publication, *Joan Meyers Brown and the Audacious Hope of the Black Ballerina*, by Brenda Dixon Gottschild. She has received awards from the City of Philadelphia, the State of Pennsylvania and the Embassy of the United States of America. Brown was honored as a Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania and Outstanding Alumni of West Philadelphia High School. She received the prestigious National Medal of Arts award and was also honored by the American Dance Guild Honoree Award, in addition to many other awards. Brown is a recipient of the *Philadelphia Inquirer's* 2017 Industry Icon Award, and most recently received the Philadelphia Cultural Fund's David Cohen Award in April 2019. Honored and recognized by the national mainstream dance arena, Brown received the Bessie Award in 2019 for Lifetime Achievement.

DANCERS

Rosita Adamo Managua, Nicaragua/Chapel Hills, North Carolina

Adamo began her dance training at Bounds Dance Studio at the early age of five. A graduate from the Carolina Friends High School, Adamo also studied at The American Ballet Theater, The Julliard School and the Dance Theatre of Harlem. She was also a scholarship recipient at The Ailey School as a certificate student. For eight years, Adamo danced with the Triangle Youth Ballet and performed with the Joffrey Ballet, Carolina Ballet and Long Leaf Opera. Adamo has performed works by Mia Michaels, Elie Lezar, Francesca Harper, Dwight Rhoden, Milton Myers, Christopher Huggins and many others. Additionally, she performed with Ailey II for two years and is a featured soloist and assistant to the Rehearsal Director with PHILADANCO. Adamo celebrated her 10th season with PHILADANCO in spring 2019.

Janine N. Beckles New York, New York

At the age of six, Beckles started dancing at Dance Theatre of Harlem for eight years, under fellowship scholarship. She then continued her training at LaGuardia H.S. of Performing Arts and the Ailey School (performing *Memoria*, *Hymn* and *Revelations*), both on full scholarship. Beckles received a BFA in dance performance and a BA in sociology from Southern Methodist University. Beckles was a National Foundation of the Arts award recipient in modern dance in 2000. A member of Dallas Black Dance Theatre for five years, Beckles is also a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. As a member of the staff of the Philadelphia School of Dance Arts, Beckles taught ballet and served as an assistant to choreographer Thang Dao. She just completed the National Visiting Teaching Fellows Program at

School of American Ballet 2018-19. Beckles was one of four national teaching fellows selected from across the U.S. representing The Philadelphia School of Dance Arts & PHILADANCO. In her spare time, she is an assistant at a law firm in Philadelphia.

William E. Burden Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Formal dance training for Burden began at the Creative and Performing Arts H.S. under the direction of LaDiva Davis. He attended the Rock School of Dance Education and was a scholarship student at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center. Burden has also attended many years of training with Tap Team Two & Company, co-directed by his father, Robert Burden. Burden has been a company member with Eleone Dance Connection, Eleone Dance Theatre (Artistic Director Shawn Lamere Williams) and Spectrum Dance Theater (Artistic Director Donald Byrd). Burden has been the recipient of the Marion Anderson Award in Philadelphia multiple times and most recently, received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of the Arts.

Mikaela Fenton Sicklerville, New Jersey

Fenton began dancing at the age of four. Her training with Chez Dance Studio, under the direction of Roseann Mastrogiacamo Gatto, sculpted her early stages of dance. She later was a part of the performing arts program with Paul VI High School under the direction of Courtney Daniels, receiving a scholarship in dance to further her education. While attending the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Summer Program, she had the opportunity to perform several works by Jonathan Lee. Under scholarship, Fenton earned a BFA in dance at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. During this time, she performed in works by Katie Swords-Thurman, Jesse Zaritt, Sidra Bell, Tommie Waheed-Evans, Kyle and Danita Clark, Milton Myers and Meredith Rainey. Parallel to her schooling, Fenton joined PHILADANCO's D/2 under the direction of Donald T. Lunsford, prior to being accepted into PHILADANCO.

Clarricia Golden Sumter, South Carolina

Golden began dancing at Miss Libby's School of Dance under the direction of Libby Singelton and Jennifer Alford-Reimer in Sumter, South Carolina. She continued her training under Dr. Gaynell Sherrod at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. Golden was a scholarship recipient at the Alvin Ailey summer program and has spent summers training at PHILADANCO. After receiving a BS in health, physical education and fitness with a concentration in dance, she decided to move to Philadelphia where she initially joined D/2 under the artistic direction of Donald Lunsford before becoming a member of PHILADANCO.

Joe Gonzalez Boston, Massachusetts

Gonzalez started dancing at age thirteen at the Roxbury Center for the Performing Arts, and attended the Boston Arts Academy for high school, graduating as a dance major. Gonzalez earned his BFA from the Boston Conservatory (2011) and performed master-works by Alvin Ailey, Anna Sokolow, Paul Taylor, Alwin Nikolais, and others. He has participated in several festivals, including American Dance Festival, Bates Dance Festival and Springboard Dance Montreal. As a choreographer, he is influenced by a diverse array of styles and co-directs the company Jo-Mé Dance. Gonzalez has performed with numerous projects and companies, both nationally and internationally, including "A" Major Dance Company and Prometheus Dance, traveling the U.S., Canada, Scotland, the UK, Denmark and India. He is currently on the faculty of Temple University and Director of PHILADANCO's D/3 Youth Ensemble.

Victor Lewis Jr. Los Angeles, California

Lewis first became involved with dance in Los Angeles, California at the age of 13. He joined the dance ministry at Faithful Central Bible Church, under the direction of Ariyan Johnson. His other form of training derives from The Debbie Allen Dance Academy. Lewis graduated from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in modern dance. He has performed with Eleone Dance Theatre, Rebecca Davis Dance Company, Dance Del Bello, Dissonance Dance Theatre, Classical Contemporary Ballet Theatre, and touring company Illstyles & Peace Productions in Philadelphia. He has also travelled internationally to teach dance and has had the pleasure of working with artists such as Keke Palmer, Jazmine Sullivan, Jill Scott and Laura Mvula; and choreographers Anthony Burrell, Chuck Maldonado and more.

Kareem Marsh Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Marsh is an instructor and choreographer who began his formal dance training at age 14 at Pointe Flex dance studio. He spent two consecutive summers at Youth Performers Theatre Camp. During the summer of 2008, Marsh began the intensive training program at PHILADANCO, and soon joined their second company D/2 and studied intensively under Donald Lunsford. Marsh has danced with local companies such as Grace Dance Theater, Eleone Dance Theater, Waheed Works, Reveal Movement and on many other independent projects. He also performed on the Noordam, one of Holland America's largest cruise ship, on which he traveled the South Pacific. In 2017, Marsh was featured in a *Dance Magazine* article by Meagan McFerrin speaking about his experience abroad.

Dana Nichols Los Angeles, California

Nichols began training in classical Russian Vaganova technique at the Yuri Grigoriev School of Ballet in Los Angeles at the age of seven. Soon after, she started training in modern dance, flamenco and lyrical jazz. She has participated in training programs at Dance Theatre of Harlem and Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre. In 2014, she graduated from Haverford College, with a degree in English and Africana studies. During that time, she was also a student in the Bryn Mawr College dance department, where she performed regularly in the ballet, modern and West African ensembles. She also co-founded Haverford College Dance Company. After graduating, she joined PHILADANCO's D/2 apprentice company.

Brandi Pinnix South Brunswick, New Jersey

Pinnix began her ballet training in the American Repertory Princeton Ballet School under the direction of Douglas Martin. After graduating high school in 2013, she was accepted into the LINES Ballet Training program in San Francisco. She finished the program in the winter of 2015 and moved back to the tristate area to train at The Ailey School, in their Independent Study Program and Scholarship Program. Pinnix has also studied at some of the most prestigious intensive dance programs, including The Julliard School, Dance Theatre of Harlem, BalletX and Point Park University. She has had the opportunity to work with amazing choreographers such as Eric Wagner, Sidra Bell, Uri Sands, Kara Davis, Dexandro Montalvo, Carmen Rozenstraten, Danielle Polanco and Darshan Bhuller.

Courtney Robinson Richmond, Virginia

At the age of four, Robinson began her training at Pine Camp Arts and Recreation Center under the direction of Annette Holt and Rodney Williams. She attended Appomattox Regional Governor's School for the Arts and Technology where she received formal training with Rebecca Hodal and other mentors such as Starrene Foster and Willie Hinton. She has been a part of programs such as Richmond Ballet, The Ailey School's Fellowship Program and Bates Dance Festival. She later went to the Conservatory of Dance at SUNY Purchase College. Robinson also studied abroad at Codarts Rotterdam Dance Academy in the Netherlands. She performed works by Bella Lewitsky, Pam Tanowitz, Wallie Wolfgruber, Stephen Petronio and others.

Marcus Williams Dallas, Texas

Williams began his dance training at 17 at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy (AMDA) in California. He also studied at Debbie Allen Dance Academy where he worked with choreographers Debbie Allen, Terry Beeman, Madame Dellas and Otis Sallid. Williams continued his dance training at the Ailey School as a scholarship student. He performed in Alvin Ailey's *Memoria* during Ailey's 2015 and 2016 New York City Center seasons. Williams has also performed as a guest artist with ZEST Collective, The Francesca Harper Project and Cross Performance, Inc. Williams was a company member with Ailey II from 2017-2019. He has taught classes at Next Generation Studios (TX), Debbie Allen Dance Academy (LA), Gibney Studios (NY) and Ailey Extension (NY). This is Williams' first season with PHILADANCO.

PHILADANCO Staff**Kim Y. Bears-Bailey** (Assistant Artistic Director)

A dance trainee of the Lynne B. Welters School of Dance & Duke Ellington High School of Performing Arts, Bears-Bailey is a Bachelor of Fine Arts graduate of The University of Arts who joined PHILADANCO

in 1981. A 1992 Bessie Award recipient, Bears-Bailey represented PHILADANCO at the 1988 American Dance Festival, performing works by Pearl Primus, and appeared in the movie *Beloved*. Bears-Bailey is an Associate Professor of dance at the University of the Arts. She is one of few artists granted permission to remount the works of many world-renowned choreographers, including Talley Beatty, Pearl Primus and Gene Hill Sagan. She received the Mary Louis Beitzel Award for Distinguished Teaching and the Silver Star Alumni Award from UArts. Bears-Bailey is a member of the International Association of Blacks in Dance's Next Generation of Leaders. She choreographs and directs an annual Dancing with the Stars of Philadelphia event. Bears-Bailey received the 2017 Bring it to the Marley Icon Award and the 2018 Legacy Award from DCNS Dance.

Debora Chase-Hicks (Rehearsal Director/Coach & Master Instructor)

After early dance training in Denver, Chase-Hicks studied at the Philadelphia School of Dance Arts and joined PHILADANCO in 1974, working for seven years as a soloist. In 1981, she joined the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for 11 years. She also reset *Witness* for the Royal Danish Ballet. In 1992, she retired from the Ailey Company and returned to Philadelphia and PHILADANCO. She was a 1997 recipient of the International Congress of Black Women Shirley Chisolm Award and a 1998 recipient of the Outstanding Young Americans Award. Chase-Hicks is currently Rehearsal Director and Coach at PHILADANCO. She has taught as a master teacher for PHILADANCO and has been on the staff of Freedom Theater, The Philadelphia School of Dance Arts and other schools.

Marlisa Brown-Swint (Artistic Administrative Assistant)

A native Philadelphian, Brown-Swint was introduced very early to a world of dance. She grew up in and around The Philadelphia School of Dance Arts. Little did she realize this was the beginning of a very special relationship. Then and now, dance classes and recitals are a part of her daily routine. Brown-Swint, now assistant to the director (her mom) for the Philadelphia School of Dance Arts, runs it like the prodigy she is. As Artistic Administrator, she handles many duties, especially the touring for PHILADANCO. Brown-Swint also oversees PHILADANCO's youth ensemble D/3, organizing classes, rehearsals and performance schedules. A number one "Dive Mom", Brown-Swint has two talented daughters following in her footsteps: Amari Noelle (gold medal nationally rated diver) and Mariah Dannielle (a rhythmic gymnast).

Melody Beal (Lighting/Technical Manager)

Award-winning Designer/Director Beal has devoted over twenty years to PHILADANCO as Technical Coordinator starting under the tutelage of William H. Grant III. She is currently designing lighting for Negro Ensemble Company, Mindbuilders, Trilogy Opera Company, Asase Yea African American Dance Theater and LaGuardia Performing Arts Center in New York City.

Clifton Taylor (Lighting Designer)

Taylor has created designs for Broadway as well as opera, theatre and dance companies around the world. In addition to his long-term collaboration with PHILADANCO, he is also the resident designer for the Armitage Gone! Company in New York and also has many works in the repertoires for the companies of Dance Theatre of Harlem, Lar Lubovitch, Elisa Monte and Ronald K. Brown. His designs have also been commissioned for the repertoires of the ABT, San Francisco, Boston, Austin and Washington Ballets, among many others. Taylor frequently works abroad and has designed recently in Italy, France, China, Indonesia, the UK, Chile, Russia and Singapore. He is often assisted by Nick Kolin.