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DanceAfrica DC Returns to Dance Place During Milestone 45th Season

WASHINGTON, DC (April 7, 2026): Dance Place is excited to announce the return of DanceAfrica DC! The annual festival is back to celebrate the rich history and traditions of the African Diaspora through dance, music and cultural exchange. Taking place June 1-7, 2026, the return of this outdoor festival delivers a week full of festivities, dance classes, storytelling, an outdoor market, and unforgettable outdoor performances. With a theme of “Past, Present, Future” this is an extraordinary chance to be immersed in the diverse ethnic groups within Africa and experience the vibrant spirit throughout the week’s festivities.

The 38th festival kicks off with a series of master classes held Monday, June 1 through Sunday, June 7th. All classes will be held in Dance Place’s Cafritz Foundation Theater; with the exception of Friday and Sunday, which will be in the Edgewood Arts Center. All classes Monday through Friday will take place from 6:30-8 PM; Saturday’s class will take place from 10 - 11:30 AM, and Sunday will have two master classes at 12-1:30 PM and 2-3:30 PM, respectively.

Then, on Saturday, June 6th, the Coyaba Village Celebration will take over the Arts Park and Edgewood Arts Center for an all-encompassing indoor and outdoor festival experience. Starting at 12 PM, attendees will experience a range of dance and motion from across the African diaspora, live drumming, lecture demonstrations and more.

“It’s so important to keep the spirit of DanceAfrica alive, well and *here*,” said Mama Sylvia Soumah, curator of the 38th DanceAfrica DC; Soumah is also head of Dance Place’s West African Dance Program, Artistic Director and Griot of DanceAfrica DC since 2017, and founder of Coyaba Dance Theater. “DanceAfrica is here because of the work and dedication from Carla Perlo. She’s the one who initially reached out to Baba Chuck Davis. This festival has meant so much to this community and it’s important to recognize that it is a staple here.”

Founded in 1997, Coyaba Dance Theater is a resident company at Dance Place, with the purpose of presenting traditional and contemporary West African dance and music, highlighting the diversity of West African culture. Coyaba Dance Theater has celebrated over 25 years of portraying outstanding performances in Traditional West African dance and drumming and theater. A 2001 and 2004 recipient of the DC Dance Award for outstanding group performance, Coyaba Dance Theater brings to Dance Place their annual Kwanzaa Celebration, a beloved experience filled with love, excitement, and the beauty of Black culture and tradition.

In this triumphant return, DanceAfrica DC is an embodiment of Dance Place’s 45th season theme, *Home is Coming: Inspiration, Connection, Action*. By striving to embrace the diversity and joy of West African dance, this festival upholds the themes of Inspiration and Connection.



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About Dance Place

Rooted in Washington, D.C., Dance Place supports movement artists by creating opportunities for creative development, performance, and education. The organization strengthens the dance field by investing deeply in artists and centering those who have been systemically excluded from it.