

CONTACT: **Louisa Spier**
Cal Performances
(510) 643-6714
lspier@calperformances.org

Jeanette Peach
Cal Performances
(510) 642-9121
jpeach@calperformances.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 9, 2017
[Press Room](#)



Images of Camille A. Brown & Dancers are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#).

**CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS
CAMILLE A. BROWN & DANCERS IN THE BAY AREA PREMIERE OF
BLACK GIRL: LINGUISTIC PLAY
FRIDAY–SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8–10**

Performances are part of the 2017-18 season Berkeley **RADICAL *Joining Generations*** programming strand, which follows the work of four generations of pioneering African-American choreographers

An Artist Talk and Social Dance Workshop are planned with members of the company in conjunction with the performances

Berkeley, November 9, 2017 — Cal Performances at UC Berkeley continues its 2017/18 Berkeley RADICAL programming with a presentation of Camille A. Brown & Dancers in the Bay Area premiere of *BLACK GIRL: Linguistic Play*, Friday through Sunday, December 8–10 in Zellerbach Playhouse. Brown, a Guggenheim fellow and 2016 Jacob’s Pillow Dance Award recipient, has created dances for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and Urban Bush Women, and is known for her deep immersion in African American social dance practices. *BLACK GIRL: Linguistic Play* explores the self-discovery and playfulness of childhood through African-American vernacular forms such as social dancing, Double Dutch, hand-clapping games, and ring shout, to address contemporary issues of identity and social justice.

The performances are part of the Berkeley RADICAL *Joining Generations* programming strand, which spotlights the work of four generations of trailblazing African-American choreographers whose creative output explicitly and intentionally addresses issues of history, race, and personal identity. Considered together, the four engagements presented in *Joining Generations*—the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater’s annual residency, featuring Ailey’s iconic *Revelations*; Donald Byrd’s Spectrum Dance Theater in *A Rap on Race*; Reggie Wilson’s *Moses(es)*; and Camille A. Brown’s *BLACK GIRL: Linguistic Play*—together help define an important cultural movement in the last half-century. Through the works presented here, each of these choreographers, born between 1931 and 1979, offers a unique perspective on the African-American experience, on race in America, and on issues of social justice. Ailey, Byrd, Wilson, and Brown have intentionally positioned their work in relationship to black vernacular dance and music, and they draw on this collective cultural knowledge as a shared point of reference and ideological compass.

“What is most compelling about *Joining Generations* is the strikingly different and specific way each artist has chosen to engage with the topics of the African-American experience, race relations in America, and issues of social justice, in such entirely different aesthetic standpoints,” says Cal Performances associate director Rob Bailis. “These choreographers have pursued their own paths of inquiry, and distilled that process of discovery into distinctive vocabularies of movement and gesture. Camille A. Brown’s *BLACK GIRL: Linguistic Play* possesses the unique quality of being both intensely culturally specific and yet completely inviting to audiences representing a multitude of experiences. For *Joining Generations*, we wanted to bring new voices into our context with whom we

hope to have a sustained and robust relationship over time. Camille is exciting to us in that regard—she has the mark of a choreographer who can speak to all of us for years to come.”

Camille A. Brown’s New York Dance and Performance (“Bessie”) Award-nominated *BLACK GIRL* is concerned with representation—unpacking the images we see every day of African-American women in entertainment and the media, and offering alternatives to ingrained narratives of black femininity. Brown’s investigation, inspired by the research of ethnomusicologist Kyra Gaunt in her book *The Games Black Girls Play*, is grounded in the games, trials, and tribulations of girlhood. *BLACK GIRL* draws on an urban black vernacular—the snap of a Double Dutch rope on a city sidewalk, the sing-song rhymes of hand-clapping games in a schoolyard—to explore contemporary issues of black girlhood and womanhood. The work is danced to live music, with original compositions by Tracy Wormworth and Scott Patterson, performed by the duo of Patterson (piano) and Robin Bramlett (electric bass).

Two public programs are planned in conjunction with the performances. A Public Forum with Camille A. Brown and Brandi Wilkins Catanese, UC Berkeley associate professor in the departments of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies and African American Studies, is planned on Friday, December 8, at 3pm in the Durham Studio Theatre. The talk is free and open to the public. Dancers from the company will lead a Community Dance Class on Saturday, December 9, at 11am in the Bancroft Studio. The interactive class, open to all ages and abilities, will explore the cultural and political context of African-American social dance of the past and present, and include introductions to dance styles such as the cakewalk, Lindy hop, bump, hustle, jerk, wobble, and DLow Shuffle. Tickets are \$5, and capacity is limited. Pre-registration is requested at calperformances.org/learn/calendar/2017-18/.

Ticket Information

Tickets for *Camille A. Brown & Dancers* on Friday–Saturday, December 8–9 at 8pm, and Sunday, December 10 at 3pm in Zellerbach Playhouse are \$54 (prices subject to change). Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at (510) 642-9988, at calperformances.org, and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to calperformances.org/discounts.

#

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Friday, December 8, 8pm
Saturday, December 9, 8pm
Sunday, December 10, 3pm

Zellerbach Playhouse
Bancroft Way at Dana Street
UC Berkeley campus

Dance

BLACK GIRL: Linguistic Play

Camille A. Brown & Dancers

Camille A. Brown, choreographer

Scott Patterson, composer and piano

Robin Bramlett, electric bass

Tracy Wormworth, composer

Program: Choreographer Camille A. Brown's *BLACK GIRL: Linguistic Play* draws on the games girls play to tell a story of black female empowerment. Brown uses vernacular forms—social dancing, Double Dutch, hand-clapping games, and ring shout, set to live, original music—to explore the self-discovery and playfulness of childhood.

Berkeley RADICAL: These performances are part of Cal Performances' Berkeley RADICAL *Joining Generations* strand, which explores the work of four generations of African-American choreographers who have expanded the boundaries of contemporary dance. Each speaks profoundly, deliberately, and uniquely to issues of personal identity. More information at calperformances.org/berkeley-radical-joining-generations.

Tickets: \$54 (prices subject to change)

Residency Activities

Public Forum

Durham Studio Theatre

Friday, December 8, 3pm

Joining Generations discussion with choreographer Camille A. Brown and Brandi Wilkins Catanese, associate professor, departments of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies and African American Studies. Free and open to the public.

Community Dance Class

Bancroft Studio

Saturday, December 9, 11am

Social Dance Workshop: Taught by company members from Camille A. Brown & Dancers, this interactive class explores the cultural and political context of African-American social dance of the past and present. Dance styles used to illustrate the impact of social dance in modern culture and in contemporary dance include the cakewalk, Lindy hop, bump, hustle, jerk, wobble, and DLow Shuffle. Open to all ages and abilities.

Tickets: \$5, capacity is limited. Pre-registration is requested at calperformances.org/learn/calendar/2017-18/

– Cal Performances –