



Celebrity Series of Boston

IN “THE MOVEMENT SERIES,” CELEBRITY SERIES OF BOSTON CONNECTS DANCE, JUSTICE AND THE BLACK EXPERIENCE IN THREE PERFORMANCES THIS SPRING

*Sankofa Danzafo explores politics of the Black body in “Accommodating Lie.”
Marc Bamuthi Joseph’s “The Just and the Blind” centers Black fatherhood.
Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater returns with new works that celebrate Black culture.*

JANUARY XX, 2022 – BOSTON – Celebrity Series of Boston announced today it will bring together three of its upcoming spring programs focused on the American and diasporic Black experience into a unified whole. **The Movement Series** includes performances by Colombia’s **Sankofa Danzafo**, **Marc Bamuthi Joseph’s** multimedia project “**The Just and the Blind**,” and the **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater** in a powerful three-part experience enhanced by community programming and a fresh audience development program guided by marketing consultant **Nicola Williams** from The Williams Agency.

“‘The Movement Series’ is one important step in Celebrity Series of Boston’s journey toward a more diverse and inclusive audience experience,” says **Celebrity Series President and Executive Director Gary Dunning**. “We’ve always known the power of performers like the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater to move forward the conversations about race, social justice, and America’s troubled history of equality. They, and so many of our artists, also remind us of the benefit that comes from being open to new perspectives through dance, music and the spoken word. This season represents some of our most ethnically and racially diverse performances. I am hopeful that our programs can be a catalyst for Boston audiences to connect, and experience new things in shared company.”

Reflecting its bent towards programs that center social justice, **The Movement Series** is anchored in dance and multimedia performances that take audiences on provocative, spiritual and exhilarating journeys through three very different lenses. In a lead-up to

each performance, free community centered events will work to familiarize audiences with the performers and the themes to be explored in their shows.

- **“Accommodating Lie”** (Feb 26-27, 2022) is Sankofa Danzafró’s searing and stirring performance that alternately spotlights and breaks down the historic stereotypes of Black bodies through the performances of seven dancers and three musicians from the richly diverse country of Colombia. [More Sankofa Danzafró info below.]



- **“The Just and the Blind”** (April 1-2, 2022) is a multimedia performance anchored by the writing of poet/dancer/playwright Marc Bamuthi Joseph, the music of Massachusetts composer Daniel Bernard Roumain and films by award-winning director Yoram Savion. Through song, dance and spoken word, the evening-length show plumbs the dual crises of aggressive policing and prison over-sentencing, exposing the literal and metaphorical separations they force between Black fathers and sons.



- An eagerly-awaited sign of a return to traditions, **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater** (April 28-May 1, 2022) has for decades been one of the Celebrity Series’s most popular annual events, and a tradition dating back to 1968. The Ailey company brings back to Boston the power of dance to amaze and connect. New and classic works will appear alongside the company’s most enduring signature work, *Revelations*.



Among the community events that will accompany the visits by these performers are school-based and general public movement workshops that bring a physical understanding of the onstage dance, as well as in-person and virtual events with BIPOC organizations and community leaders.

Photos this page: (top) Members of Sankofa Danzafró in Accommodating Lie, photo courtesy Elsie Management; (center, l.-r.) Marc Bamuthi Joseph and Daniel Bernard Roumain, photo by Bethanie Hines; (bottom) Ailey members Jacqueline Green and Solomon Dumas, photo by Andrew Eccles.

“THE MOVEMENT SERIES” TICKETS / SPECIAL PRICING

Individual tickets for these and all Celebrity Series productions are available now at celebrityseries.org. Special pricing for productions in “The Movement Series” (20% off when buying all three performances) is available at celebrityseries.org/movement.

MORE ON SANKOFA DANZAFRO

“Accommodating Lie” Reckons With Global Stereotypes About The Black Body



One year after debuting “Black Voices Boston” – a digital compendium of story-based dance performances by seven Boston-area residents, choreographer and Artistic Director Rafael Palacios brings stories from the African Diaspora – and his South American roots – as leader of the Afro-Colombian dance group Sankofa Danza Afro (l.).

Sankofa comes from the Akan people of West Africa, and reflects an African philosophy of knowing the past as a condition for understanding the present and being able to measure the future. Through their performances, Sankofa Danza Afro reaffirms the need for self-representation of Afro-descendant communities, and rewrites history from the perspective of colonized Colombians.

With the Boston premiere of “Accommodating Lie,” Palacios’s cast of seven dancers and live musicians take the stage in a forceful dismantling of stereotypes, clichés, and falsehoods about Black bodies and the meaning of being “of African descent.”

The show is a provocative series of solos, duets, trios, and full-company numbers set to rhythmically diverse music that reflects Colombia’s deep cultural intersections. The seven Sankofa dancers embody decades of slavery, racism and the “exotic” label that western colonizing culture assigned to Black bodies.

Through a curtain of raffia-like material emerges a variety of characters, often in costumes that suggest a mix of traditional and contemporary, exoticism and sexuality. In watching the dancers, audiences are drawn in by beauty and athleticism, only to be reminded that not long ago, similar bodies were seen as commodities around the world.

The stage images that compose “Accommodating Lie” are striking: a man in a suit jacket and grass skirt wrestles with fitting into two worlds (or perhaps living in between them); a woman bound at the hands fights her two captors before breaking free into a dance of defiance and confidence; a group dance set to Spanish-language text feels first like a runway show but reveals itself as an auction of some kind; a couple dances ecstatically, then aggressively.

SANKOFA DANZAFRO TICKETS

Tickets to the Celebrity Series of Boston performances of Sankofa Danzafró’s “Accommodating Lie” range from \$29-\$60. A 20-percent discount is available when purchased as part of “The Movement Series” package (see above). Tickets can be purchased online at celebrityseries.org, in person at the Boch Center Wang Theatre Box Office, or by phone through Shubert Ticketing at (866) 348-9738.

SUPPORT RECOGNITION

Sankofa Danzafró is supported by 2021/22 Dance Series sponsors Leslie & Howard Appleby, the Stephanie L. Brown Foundation, Foley & Lardner LLP, Cynthia & John S. Reed Foundation, and Royal Little Family Foundation. **Sankofa Danzafró** is made possible in part by support from Celebrity Series’ LIVE PERFORMANCE! *Arts for All* Endowment and Innovation Funds, with leadership support from the Stephanie L. Brown Foundation. “**The Just and the Blind**” is sponsored by the Stephanie L. Brown Foundation with support from the Barr Foundation and its ArtsAmplified initiative. “The Just and the Blind” is made possible in part by support from Celebrity Series’ LIVE PERFORMANCE! *Arts for All* Innovation Funds, with leadership support from Belinda Termeer. **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater** is supported by **2021/22 Dance Series** sponsors Leslie & Howard Appleby, the Stephanie L. Brown Foundation, Foley & Lardner LLP, Cynthia & John S. Reed Foundation, and Royal Little Family Foundation. **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater** is made possible in part by support from Celebrity Series’ LIVE PERFORMANCE! *Arts for All* Endowment and Innovation Funds, with leadership support from Royal Little Family Foundation.

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MEDIA CONTACT

For additional information on Celebrity Series of Boston’s “The Movement Series,” or any of the performances and events that are part of it including Sankofa Danzafró, reach **John Michael Kennedy** at jmk@jmkpr.com / 781-620-1761 or **Jennifer Astin** at ja@jmkpr.com / 424-333-1718.