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For Immediate Release

Governors State University's Dance Company Returns to Live Performance with a Dynamic Tribute to Broadway

University Park, IL (January 27, 2022) – *Cabaret*, *Dreamgirls*, *Chicago*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *Cats* are just a few of the Broadway musicals that the GSU Dance Company will be paying tribute to on Governors State University's Center for Performing Arts stage on February 11 and 12.

The last time the dance company performed in front of a live audience was in March 2019. Their 2020 show was postponed due to Covid-19, and eventually streamed to hundreds of viewers at home from an empty house. Choreographer, dancer, and GSU alumna Autumn Price shares, "We were fortunate to perform virtually last year, but there's nothing like performing in front of a live audience. There is a powerful exchange of energy between the performers and the audience. I've missed that."

25 Years of Broadway and Beyond features 14 numbers, choreographed primarily by GSU students and alumni. Assistant Professor of Dance Megan Lindsay—Coordinator, Artistic Director, and Faculty Advisor to the GSU Dance Company—is choreographing two Bob Fosse inspired dances. In addition to offering dance students the chance to choreograph, current students enrolled in the Theatre Design course will have the opportunity to design lighting for a piece. Lindsay says, "Each design student is paired up with one of our student choreographers. They have the opportunity to get real-world experience and work with professional designers and technicians."

Although each dance number originated on Broadway, the dance styles could not be more diverse and varied. “There’s jazz, tap, modern, contemporary, vogue, hip-hop, and even Afrobeat,” says Jazmin Butler, GSU freshman and dance company member. “That’s one of the challenges. It’s not only different dance styles; each piece has its own mood and emotions.”

Kiaa Driver, GSU alumna and choreographer, says audience members can expect an energetic, dynamic, and surprising show. “Most of the pieces fuse theatricality and dance. I’ve been able to use my training as an actor to direct and help dancers fuse the lyrics, dance steps, and emotions. It’s challenged me as a choreographer because it goes beyond proper dance steps; each dancer embodies a specific character with their own motivation.”

Inspired by the Center for Performing Arts’ 25th Anniversary and as a look back on the many touring Broadway productions that graced the stage, the show quickly evolved into something beyond Broadway. In addition to celebrating the Center’s Silver Anniversary, Lindsay says it also speaks to the importance of the arts during the pandemic. “What we all need now is to feel uplifted, inspired, and joyful. No genre embodies that better than the Broadway musical. It is my wish that the audience members leave with a sense of hope and awe of the resiliency of the human spirit.”

The piece titled “Zombie” and choreographed by Tashona Butts is from a lesser-known Broadway musical. “When most people think of African musicals, *The Lion King* comes to mind,” says Driver, “But one of our pieces is from a musical entitled *Fela!*, based on the life of Nigerian musician and political activist Fela Kuti. Tashona’s piece goes beyond entertainment. It explores important social and political issues and presents Black artists in a different light.”

In addition to student and alumni involvement, the show will feature a number with Thornton Fractional North students performing a selection from their fall musical *Bring It On!* choreographed by Price. Lindsay saw the show in November and thought the choreography was so wonderful; she wanted to give the high school students an opportunity and create a community partnership.

Watseka’s Studio on Main will also present a dance from “Thoroughly Modern Millie,” choreographed by Lauren Pueschell.

Tickets are \$15 and \$10 for students with valid i.d.

To purchase tickets, call (708) 235-2222; visit CenterTickets.net; or visit the box office in person at 1 University Parkway, University Park, IL 60484.

Box Office Hours: Tuesdays and Fridays, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Thursdays, 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. Open two hours prior to show times.

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PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE AND TICKET INFORMATION

25 Years of Broadway and Beyond

Friday, February 11, 2022, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 12, 2022, 7:30 p.m.

Governors State University, Center for Performing Arts

1 University Parkway

University Park, IL 60484

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Your health and safety are our priorities.

Audience members five (5) and older are required to show proof of vaccination or proof of a negative PCR Covid-19 test (within a 72-hour period prior to the performance start time) until further notice. Proof can be electronic, photocopied, or official CDC vaccination record at time of entry into the venue with valid ticket. Adults aged 18 and older are required to provide photo identification with proof of vaccination or PCR COVID test results.

Facemasks are required on campus for ages 2 and up, even if vaccinated. Reduced capacity and socially distanced seating may be in place based on Governors State University and State mandates. Hand sanitizer will be made readily available throughout the venue, and patrons are strongly encouraged to make use of them. If you are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms, stay home and do not attend the event, and contact the box office as soon as possible.

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