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The International Association of Blacks in Dance announces the release of
THE BLACK REPORT

The International Association of Blacks in Dance (IABD) announces the release of THE BLACK REPORT, an organizational and financial health assessment of a representative sample of 30 Black-led dance companies from across the United States. IABD traveled to the cities and communities of these companies collecting financial and organizational data in order to assess the needs of the Black dance sector. As a result of the report findings, IABD is poised to bring to light the innovative methodologies in spite of pervasive and sometimes destabilizing racism as well as systemic financial inequities utilizing dance as a means of protest, survival and social change. THE BLACK REPORT is available at iabdassociation.org/page/theblackreport, and is a free research tool provided to increase awareness of the report’s findings.

This timely and first-ever research analysis into the value, impact and relevancy of these companies, provides insight into the factors, conditions and similar characteristics of the Black dance sector in comparison to the larger infrastructure of the mainstream dance ecosystem. It compares compensation, dance genres, founder presence, geography, staffing, touring and so much more. This in-depth report also includes important factual data about the many, many contributions of Blacks in dance that are rarely spoken about or included in recognized dance history books.

“Black Dance companies are not simply cultural and educational anchors in their communities. They are also Black businesses that provide internships, job training, employment, facilities for rental, schools and/or summer intensives, even social services. PHILADANCO hosted a community library where there was none. Some produce or co-produce marketing and tourism events, such as city or neighborhood festivals. Some of these businesses have survived for 30/40/50 years without the significant support they so richly deserve -- and, is long overdue,” said Baraka Sele, Independent Consultant.

This report is a CALL TO ACTION, to move beyond the comfortable conversations, the empathy and understanding, the “woe is me and wringing of the hands.” It is now time for the hard work of CHANGE to begin for all who enter this space of trusting the process and implementing real equitable practices in the arts field. Let’s dive into The Uncomfortable Zone...

THE BLACK REPORT was not a commissioned body of work; it was birthed by the stories that were heard, and the people encountered who, on a day-to-day basis, strive to keep their arts organizations alive. The disparities that we know exist between Arts Organizations of Color and those White-led mainstream large budget companies in dance is confirmed by the data that was collected for this report. IABD desires to set the record straight about the state of Black dance companies in this field and how the deeply rooted racial and economic divide in the field of dance exists and must be addressed.

“We can no longer remain on the sidelines and be silenced by a system that wasn’t made for us to prosper. Structural racism in the dance field perpetuates unequal and harmful lifelong outcomes for Black, Brown and People of the Global Majority in this art form. Their artistry, companies and institutions have been historically exploited, neglected, and not valued in the creation of this nation’s culture, economy, and democracy. And right
now, the disproportionate effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the ongoing uprising to end police brutality, illuminates this fact even brighter. This report will provide clarity on what the dance community thought they knew about Black Dance. #BLACKLIVESMATTER” said Denise Saunders Thompson, President and CEO of IABD.

In response to the impact of COVID-19 in the Black dance community, to date, The International Association of Blacks in Dance (IABD), has raised $177,172 in support of their Emergency Fund. Emergency grants have been awarded to 59 individuals and 31 companies. Grants are $1,000 for individuals and $2,500 for companies. IABD is actively soliciting funding for their fund to continue to support artists, companies and dance-related personnel in the field. The fund was made possible with generous support from the Ford Foundation, Howard Gilman Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, and individual supporters.

As an organization, IABD values research in the arts and its ability to catalyst change. THE BLACK REPORT is a historical publication not only for the Black dance sector but a much-needed critical and important research tool that should be analyzed, recorded and updated on a consistent regular basis and provided to the entire field (i.e., academics, funders/philanthropists, researchers, scholars, etc.). The collective work for systemic change within the dance field demands the use of a lens that includes everyone.

Recently calling for change in the dance field, IABD launched the Can You Hear Me Now? Campaign, that began with an open letter to the White American dance community. Inviting artists and organizations to share the letter amongst their networks and sign on, the campaign is dedicated to acknowledging and dismantling long-standing racial disparities. To date, the letter has garnered the support of over 200 signatures, that includes artists, administrators, educators, organizations and individuals – seeking change that is visible and solid. Be part of the change. Lasting change is not possible without system change! Read the letter at www.iabdassociation.org/mpage/canyouhearmenow

For more information on IABD’s continued service to the field or to donate to their efforts, visit www.iabdassociation.org/

About The International Association of Blacks in Dance
For over 29 years, The International Association of Blacks in Dance (IABD) has preserved and promoted dance by people of African ancestry or origin and has assisted and increased opportunities for artists in advocacy, audience development, education, funding, networking, performance, philosophical dialogue, and touring. IABD serves a diverse, national and international membership of agents and managers, dance companies and studios, educators and educational institutions, individual artists, researchers, and supporters of the Dance field.

For more information, visit https://www.iabdassociation.org/.