For Immediate Release
March 29, 2018

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THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACKS IN DANCE RECEIVES
$2,636,000 MELLON FOUNDATION GRANT

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The International Association of Blacks in Dance (IABD) is pleased to announce a $2,636,000 grant award, made possible through continued support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation over the next four years. This generous grant will support Phase II of the Comprehensive Organizational Health Initiative (COHI) including capital deployment to member organizations and is part of a total package award of $4,508,000 in partnership with Nonprofit Finance Fund (NFF).

Phase II of the COHI responds directly to many of the learnings from Phase I activities and serves as recommended next steps to strengthen IABD, Inc., its member organizations, and by extension, the field of Black dance. Consisting of two cohorts, Phase II aims to ensure the vitality of the Black dance sector by addressing historic barriers, building parity among Black dance organizations that support and create work with differing aesthetics, and developing new models and practices for nonprofit arts organizations. This should be accomplished by creating peer-learning opportunities that cross-pollinate strategies for organizational health, providing organizations with access to information, tools, and consultants who can support their longevity, and strengthening the capacity of these organizations to become recognized thought leaders.

“On behalf of the Board of Directors, we thank the Mellon Foundation for its continued commitment and support of IABD,” said Yvonne Walker, Board Chair. “This strategic gift will not only have long term effects on the Black dance community but solidifies IABD’s role and position in the full dance ecosystem.”

In a statement, IABD President and CEO Denise Saunders Thompson said the grant award will fund the five founding companies of the association, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Philadanco!, The Philadelphia Dance Company, Cleo Parker Robinson Dance, Dallas Black Dance Theatre, Lula Washington Dance Theatre as well as a cohort of twenty-five (25) member organizations. “The awarding of this type and size of grant from The Mellon Foundation to IABD is historic and one-of-a-kind for the Black dance community. The foundations laid by these organizations have been built upon the support each has provided to one another for many years. With this funding opportunity, the critical role that these organizations have played and continue to play in the dance field will be strengthened and supports IABD’s history, identity, and legacy, as well as the organizational contributions to Black dance through dance artists, dance traditions, and those companies’ Founders.”

In April, IABD will invite organizations to participate in the application process for Phase II. Dance organizations that met and completed the full criteria of Phase I will be eligible to apply. Additional information specific to eligibility and requirements will become available soon. Funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, data and analysis from this project will be compiled in order to bring greater awareness to the performing arts and philanthropic fields. For more information visit http://www.iabdassociation.org/cohimoveoverview.

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ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACKS IN DANCE

The International Association of Blacks in Dance (IABD) preserves and promotes dance by people of African ancestry or origin, and assists and increases opportunities for artists in advocacy, audience development, education, funding, networking, performance, philosophical dialogue, and touring. IABD has become the Mecca for Blacks in Dance such as administrators, artists, choreographers, dance companies, directors, educators, scholars, and those interested in artistry, black dance issues, and performance presentations. The Association, founded in 1991, provides a network, formal newsletters, choreographer’s directory, published papers, and is the raison d’être for the annual conference and festival. The Association also responds to and initiates dialogue around issues that impact the Black Dance Community as well as the Dance community at large. IABD has developed national prominence and allowed the Black Dance Community to come together on important issues. For more information on IABD visit iabdassociation.org.

ABOUT THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION

Founded in 1969, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation endeavors to strengthen, promote, and, where necessary, defend the contributions of the humanities and the arts to human flourishing and to the well-being of diverse and democratic societies by supporting exemplary institutions of higher education and culture as they renew and provide access to an invaluable heritage of ambitious, path-breaking work. Additional information is available at mellon.org.

ABOUT NONPROFIT FINANCE FUND

Nonprofit Finance Fund (NFF) advances missions and social progress in underserved communities through financing, consulting, partnerships, and knowledge-sharing that empower leaders, organizations, and ideas. A leading Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), NFF currently manages over $310 million. Since 1980, we have provided almost $700 million in financing and access to additional capital in support of over $2.3 billion in projects for thousands of organizations nationwide. NFF is headquartered in New York City and serves clients from five offices across the country. For more information on NFF visit nff.org.