

October, 28-30, 2015

Spectrum Dance Theater Presents The Minstrel Show Revisited

Company: Spectrum Dance Theater
Venue: NYU Skirball Center for Performing Arts
Location: New York, NY

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Nate Watters

NYU Skirball Center for the Performing Arts

Presents

NY Premiere of Spectrum Dance Theater's

The Minstrel Show Revisited

October 28-30, 2015

Featuring

Beyond the Stage, Pre-and Post-Show Conversations

"The black-faced mask of minstrel shows is a lingering image from America's past that still inflicts wounds today through its psychic hold...In the future if we are to be free from its terrible grip we must confront it boldly and courageously by staring back into its face and laughing at the absurdity of its representation until it no longer has the power to hurt us. Only then will it be vanquished and we are free to be."

– Donald Byrd

NYU Skirball Center for the Performing Arts will present the N.Y. premiere of *The Minstrel Show Revisited*, a reworking of the Tony-nominated Donald Byrd's 1991 Bessie Award-winning theatrical confrontation of America's cultural racism, running October 28 – 30, 2015. *The Minstrel Show Revisited* questions and critiques the 19th Century black-faced entertainment genre whose legacy is still felt today and continues to play a significant role in cultural stereotyping. *Beyond the Stage*, a series of pre-and post-show conversations, will be held each evening.

The Minstrel Show Revisited addresses current racial issues while shining the light on racist aspects of American history that are difficult to discuss. By using the conventions of the 19th Century Minstrel Show, including the once common tradition of "black face," Byrd and the Spectrum dancers confront audiences with the past and present manifestations of racism and perpetuation of stereotypes embedded in American culture and tradition.

Donald Byrd's work as a choreographer achieved international visibility with the creation of the *Harlem Nutcracker* and a Tony Award nomination for his 2006 choreography of Broadway's *The Color Purple*. He has created more than 80 modern dance pieces for his own groups as well as Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre and The Joffrey Ballet. He was a fellow at The Institute on the Arts and Civic Dialogue at Harvard University for three years. His unbounded appetite to explore the arts has fueled his artistic vision for Spectrum Dance Theater since 2002 and has evolved the company into one of regional and national significance.

The work engages audiences in conversation about race and ethos. While the racially motivated slaying of Yusef Hawkins was the original impetus for the creation of the piece, the Black Lives Matter movement, Eric Garner's choke-hold death and the Ferguson shooting of Michael Brown have been the impetus for revising it. With traditional music and popular music from the period by Scott Joplin and Stephen Foster, *The Minstrel Show Revisited* will also feature original music from Mio Morales.

Spectrum Dance Theater (SDT) was founded in Seattle in 1982 to bring dance of the highest merit to a diverse audience composed of people from different social, cultural, ethnic and economic backgrounds. Under the artistic leadership of Donald Byrd since 2002, Spectrum Dance Theater has become the preeminent modern dance company of the Pacific Northwest. SDT's principal objective is to make the art form of dance accessible through contemporary dance performances and high-quality dance training in a variety of dance styles. Under Donald Byrd's visionary artistic leadership, the organization has embarked on an exhilarating transformation that has attracted world-class dancers, produced some of the most avant-garde works in contemporary dance, and generated local and national praise. www.spectrumdance.org

The Minstrel Show Revisited will play for three performances: October 28 and 29 at 7:30 pm; October 30 at 8 pm. Tickets are \$30 – \$55 and may be purchased online at www.nyuskirball.org, by phone at 212.998.4941, or in person at the NYU Skirball Center Box Office: Tuesday-Saturday, 12:00–6:00 pm. The NYU Skirball Center for the Performing Arts is located at 566 LaGuardia Place at Washington Square, New York, New York 10012.

NYU Skirball Center for the Performing Arts is the premier venue for the presentation of cultural and performing arts events for New York University and lower Manhattan. Led by Executive Director Michael Harrington, the NYU Skirball mission is to showcase and support diverse and eclectic talent from around the world, while cultivating audiences for live performance through deeper engagement opportunities. For more information visit: www.nyuskirball.org.

BEYOND THE STAGE

A Series of Pre-and Post-Show Conversations

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28

Pre-Show Lobby Talk and Q & A at 6:30 pm

Matthew Morrison, Assistant Professor and Faculty Fellow at Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music, NYU Tisch School of the Arts

Post-Show Discussion and Q&A in conversation with Donald Byrd.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29

Pre-Show Lobby Talk and Q & A at 6:30 pm: From Minstrelsy to Miley Cyrus: A Round Trip

Daniel Charnas, Associate Arts Professor at Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music in Tisch School of the Arts at NYU.

Post-Show Discussion and Q & A

Deborah Jowitt, Master Teacher in Dance at Tisch School of the Arts at NYU, in conversation with Donald Byrd.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30

Pre-Show Lobby Talk and Q & A at 7:00 pm

Post-Show Discussion and Q & A

Kwami Coleman, Assistant Professor and Faculty Fellow in Gallatin School at NYU, in conversation with Donald Byrd.

Spectrum Dance Theater
566 LaGuardia Place
New York, NY, 10012
(212) 998-4941
<http://www.nyuskirball.org>

Schedule
October 28, 2015: 7:30pm
October 29, 2015: 7:30pm
October 30, 2015: 8:00pm

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