

School of THEATRE + DANCE

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA / COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

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Media Contact:

Leah Spellman, APR, Public Relations and Marketing Manager
University of Florida College of the Arts
Office: 352.273.1489 | Cell: 904.419.3346
lsPELLMAN@arts.ufl.edu

***Agbedidi* Blends Traditional and Contemporary African Dance Styles Nov 19-22**

Gainesville, Fla., November 5, 2015 – The University of Florida (UF) School of Theatre + Dance invites patrons young and old to *Agbedidi*, an invigorating dance experience that merges African and modern dance styles into one high-energy performance. Performances will take place in Constans Theatre located in the Nadine McGuire Theatre and Dance Pavilion on UF's campus Nov. 19-20 and Nov. 22, 2015. This year's production is directed by Mohamed DaCosta and will feature traditional West African dances staged by DaCosta as well as original compositions merging African dance with African-American contemporary and ballet choreography by Assistant Professor Trent D. Williams, Jr. and visiting artists Iyun Ashani Harrison and Mouminatou Camara. Performance times are 7:30 p.m. November 19-20 and at 2 p.m. November 22.

The word "agbedidi" stems from the Ewe language, its translation meaning "long life." Since the show's premiere in 1995, each year's ensemble gathers and performs in honor of Godwin Agbeli (whose last name means "there is life") to encourage the continued life of African-influenced performance around the world. This 21st anniversary production will offer performances of traditional African dance, along with different styles of dance by African and African-American artists.

"*Agbedidi* is no longer just about showing people African dance," said DaCosta. "I want people to see African choreography and African-American work coming together. "This year is a fusion of the contemporary and the African [movement]."



The show will feature original choreography by DaCosta and Williams, along with the revival of a piece the two choreographed for the School of Theatre + Dance's *Swamp Dance Fest 2015*. The show will also feature choreography by Camara, visiting artist and former principal dancer of Les Ballets Africains, one of the largest and most prominent dance companies in Africa. Other components of the performance include a piece by Harrison, founder and artistic director of Ashani Dances in Seattle, as well as a script by Mandisa Haarhoff.

The School of Theatre and Dance's production of *Agbedidi* is supported by UF's College of the Arts, Center for African Studies, Center for World Arts and School of Music.

Tickets for the UF production are \$18 for the general public, \$15 for UF faculty/staff and seniors, and \$13 for students. Season and group prices are also available. Tickets are available through

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the University Box Office located at Gate 1 of the Stephen C. O'Connell Center, by calling 352-392-1653 or at ticketmaster.com. The University Box Office is open Tuesdays through Fridays 12-5:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 10:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. Tickets can also be purchased at the Constans Theatre Box Office starting 45 minutes prior to the performance. The Nadine McGuire Theatre and Dance Pavilion is located at 687 McCarty Drive, Gainesville, FL 32611. On-campus parking is available at the Reitz Union garage and the Museum Road parking lot.

About the School of Theatre + Dance

The School of Theatre + Dance is one of the University of Florida College of the Arts' institutionally-accredited schools. Undergraduate students can pursue a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in acting, dance, musical theatre, theatre production—including costume design, lighting design and scenic design—or a Bachelor of Arts degree in dance studies or general theatre. Minors are also offered in dance and theatre as well as certificates in arts in medicine and dance in healthcare. Student organizations, showcase programs and other intensives provide students with invaluable professional experiences. UF is home to three School of Theatre + Dance performance venues, including the Constans Theatre, Black Box Theatre and G-6 Studio. To learn more about the School of Theatre + Dance, including upcoming performance dates and ticket information, visit www.arts.ufl.edu/theatreanddance.

About the College of the Arts

The College of the Arts is one of the 16 colleges and more than 150 research centers and institutes at the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida. The College of the Arts offers baccalaureate, master's and Ph.D. degree programs in its three institutionally-accredited schools — the School of Art + Art History, School of Music and School of Theatre + Dance. The college is home to the Center for Arts in Medicine, Center for Arts and Public Policy, Center for World Arts, Digital Worlds Institute, University Galleries and the New World School of the Arts in Miami. More than 100 faculty members and approximately than 1,200 students work together daily to engage, inspire and create. The college hosts more than 300 performances, exhibitions and events each year. Faculty and students also exhibit and perform at other local, national and international venues. To learn more, visit www.arts.ufl.edu.

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