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***Agbedidi* Invites Audiences to Celebrate African Dance and Culture Nov. 20-23**

Gainesville, Fla., November 6, 2014 — The University of Florida (UF) College of the Arts and the 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. The special 20th anniversary show, taking place in Constans Theatre located in the Nadine McGuire Theatre and Dance Pavilion on UF's campus Nov. 20-23, 2014, is directed by Mohamed DaCosta and will feature new works by visiting assistant professor of dance Trent D. Williams, Jr. and guest artist Raja Kelly. Performance times are 7:30 p.m. Nov. 20-21 and at 2 p.m. Nov. 23.

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 interactive experience invites both the performers and the audience to revel in African traditions and storytelling. DaCosta is dedicated to crafting a new story to share in each year's performance, encouraging his students and onlookers alike to engross themselves in not only the spectacle and music of the event, but in the overarching tale as well.



This year's theme centers on the migration of peoples throughout Africa and it is the first performance that is solely crafted within the School of Theatre + Dance. In previous years, the New World School of the Arts in Miami has also participated in the show. The addition of Williams' and Kelly's pieces add to the homegrown feel of the show.

Williams describes his new work, *his story...*, as a captivating, engaging, honest and vulnerable work inspired by his life experiences, which include the revelation of what it means to be a black male within society and its lexicons.

Guest artist Kelly will be incorporating two works into the performance, including *The Firebombers* and *Super We*. According to Kelly, the latter piece, inspired by Anne Sexton's poem of the same name, was created for UF students as a study on performance, community,

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interpretation and preservation. “I worked with the students in the same way that I would my professional company in New York City and helped them to the standard I hold of myself as a professional and for other artists,” said Kelly. “The students have been given the task to understand a conceptual approach to performing, and maintain this for over a year leading up to the *Agbedidi* performance.”

This year’s production of *Agbedidi* is supported by the College of the Arts, Center for African Studies, Center for World Arts, School of Music, School of Theatre + Dance and a Tourist Development Tax Grant from the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners in conjunction with the Alachua County Tourism Development Council.

Tickets are \$17 for the general public, and are \$13 for students, UF faculty/staff and senior citizens. Group rates are available for parties of eight or more. Tickets are available through 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: 10 a.m.-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. Parking is available across the street from the UF Bookstore & Welcome Center on the University of Florida located on Museum Road.

About the School of Theatre + Dance

The School of Theatre + Dance is one of the University of Florida College of the Arts’ three fully 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, previously known as the College of Fine 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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