

## **TU DANCE**

**April 17-19, 2015**

Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts

528 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55403

Tickets: \$30-35 (fees included)

Box Office: [www.thecowlescenter.org](http://www.thecowlescenter.org) or 612-206-3600

Press photos, including public domain photos of Marian Anderson's 1939 concert, are available for download at <http://press.tudance.org>  
user id (leave blank); password: minnesota

### **TU Dance Spring Concert Features New Work by Uri Sands** *New work inspired by Marian Anderson's 1939 performance on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial*



(MINNEAPOLIS; March 17, 2015) – TU Dance, the acclaimed Minnesota-based dance company led by Toni Pierce-Sands and Uri Sands, returns to the Cowles Center for Dance as part of its 11<sup>th</sup> annual performance season. On stage at 8pm on Friday-Saturday, April 17-18, and 2pm on Sunday, April 19th at the Cowles Center in downtown Minneapolis, the concerts feature world premiere work as well as selections from the rich TU Dance repertory by choreographers Uri Sands and Gregory Dolbashian (The Dash Ensemble, New York).

In his world premiere work, ***The More Things Change***, Sands explores the incremental,

underlying flux of civil rights progress, reflecting on contemporary themes and inspired by contralto Marian Anderson's 1939 open-air concert on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. After having been refused permission to perform at Constitution Hall, Anderson's iconic Easter concert, performed for 75,000 and broadcast to millions via radio, broke barriers for African-American artists decades before the civil rights movement.

The program also features favorites from the company's repertory, including the reprise of an audience favorite, ***For You*** (2007), centered on the experience of an intense rapport between the performers, a gracious host and a surprise guest who enters a space of trust and generosity. In ***"Keep the Edges Wild"*** (2013), New York choreographer Gregory Dolbashian conveys a fluid vision of urban life-- a signature hybrid of hip-hop and contemporary movement which is "distinct and highly relevant for the 21st century" (Caroline Palmer, *StarTribune*). Uri Sands' full-company work, ***Hikari*** (2014), rounds out the program. Originally commissioned by the Ordway Center for its TU Dance 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary concert, *Hikari* is an immersive exploration of light, created in collaboration with print artist Hiroki Morinoue.

Over its first 10 years, Saint Paul-based TU Dance has conveyed a contemporary vision of dance as a connective power, drawing artists and audiences into a shared theater experience that celebrates, challenges and inspires. Founded in 2004 by Toni-Pierce Sands and Uri Sands, the professional 12-member company is acclaimed for its diverse, versatile artists, performing work that draws together modern dance, classical ballet, African-based and urban vernacular movements. In 2011, the organization opened TU Dance Center in Saint Paul, which provides year-round educational programming for dance students of all ages and levels of experience and also serves as a home studio for the professional company. Recently, TU Dance was named as one of 5 anchor arts organizations by The John S. And James L. Knight Foundation and granted major support from Knight to expand its dance education programming at TU Dance Center.

TU Dance company members: Darwin Black, Tara Cacciatore, Taylor Collier, Kendra Dennard, Hassan Ingraham, Demetrius McClendon, Alanna Morris-Van Tassel, David Rue, Duncan Schultz, Kaitlin Setzke, Katelyn Skelley and Elayna Waxse.

Tickets: \$35, student/senior: \$30 (fees included). For more information and tickets, contact the Cowles Center Box Office at 612-206-3600; Tickets can also be purchased online at [thecowlescenter.org](http://thecowlescenter.org)

## **RELATED EVENTS**

**TU Dance Open Rehearsal** with Toni Pierce-Sands and Uri Sands and company members  
Thursday, April 2, 5:00-6:30pm  
TU Dance Center, 2121 University Ave. W., Saint Paul 55114

**Post-Performance Discussion**, immediately following the 8pm Cowles Center performance on Friday, April 17.

**Media contact:** Abdo Sayegh Rodríguez, [abdo.sayegh@tudance.org](mailto:abdo.sayegh@tudance.org) 612-384-1202

###

## **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

**Toni Pierce-Sands** (Artistic Director). Prior to co-founding TU Dance, Minnesota native Toni Pierce-Sands performed with Minnesota Dance Theatre, Tanz Forum in Germany, Rick Odums in Paris, and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, where she was a featured soloist in such signature pieces as *Revelations*. Pierce-Sands has also appeared in the Twin Cities as a guest performer with Ragamala Music and Dance Theater, Shapiro & Smith Dance, VocalEssence, Stuart Pimsler Dance and Theater, and Robin Steihm's Dancing People Company. Her command of the Horton Technique has led to teaching posts throughout the United States and Europe. Pierce-Sands directs programming and teaches classes at TU Dance Center in Saint Paul and at the University of Minnesota, where she is also the Director of University Dance Theater. Pierce-Sands was awarded a 2004 McKnight Artist Fellowship in Dance, the Sage Awards' "2011 Outstanding Dance Educator" and a 2013 Links Emerald Service Award for service in the arts.

**Uri Sands** (Artistic Director and Choreographer) has received national recognition for choreography that is notable for the fusion of classical elegance with edgy contemporary action, for pulsating intensity with poetic lyricism. A native of Miami, Sands performed as a principal dancer with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for five years, Philadanco, Minnesota Dance Theatre, James Sewell Ballet, as a guest artist with Complexions under the direction of Dwight Rhoden and Desmond Richardson, and as a principal dancer with North Carolina Dance Theatre. His recent choreographic commissions include, among others, Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, Alonzo King LINES Ballet BFA at Dominican University of California, Dance St. Louis, VocalEssence, Zenon Dance, Penumbra Theatre, North Carolina Dance Theatre and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Sands was awarded a Princess Grace Award in choreography, a Joyce Foundation Award, and most recently, a McKnight Artist Fellowship in Choreography. In 2011, he was named City Pages' Choreographer of the Year."

**Gregory Dolbashian** (Guest Choreographer). Born and raised in New York City, Gregory made his professional stage debut at the age of eight with the Glimmerglass Opera Company. Soon after, he was cast in the Philip Glass/Robert Wilson world tour of *Einstein on the Beach*. Gregory received his dance training at the Alvin Ailey School on a fellowship scholarship and then graduated cum laude from SUNY Purchase dance conservatory where he studied composition with Kazuko Hirabayashi. Since then he has gone on to dance and choreograph

with a variety of artists, performing with Patrick Corbin, Nelly van Bommel, Sylvain Emard, and The Chicago Ballet. He was resident choreographer for both Chicago Ballet's spring season in 2008 and CorbinDances in 2007. He was selected as one of four emerging choreographers in the Springboard Montreal intensive run by Juilliard's Alexandra Wells, where he created and premiered his first international work. Dolbashian is a recipient of The Bessie Schoenberg Residency at The Yard, winner of The Pretty Creatives Competition for Northwest Dance Project, and of The Hubbard Street 2 international choreographic competition. He also placed second in Ballet Austin's New American Talent competition, and has received commissions from Atlanta Ballet, TU Dance in Minnesota, and CityDance Ensemble in D.C. He debuted his own company, The DASH Ensemble, in December 2009 at JOYCE SoHo. The company has gone on to present works at the Skirball Center, DTW, The Gershwin Hotel, Riverside Theater, Summer Stage, and The JOYCE Theater. Dolbashian received the audience award at NYC's DanceNOW challenge at Joe's Pub for his work with The DASH. The company also recently premiered a film at New York's Tribeca Cinemas in collaboration with fashion film director Charlie Wan. In addition to his choreography, Gregory, alongside Loni Landon, is the co-founder of The Playground, a choreographic initiative that was voted "25 to Watch in 2013" by Dance Magazine.