

STEP AFRiKA!

JAN 14



2022-23 SEASON

AUDITORIUM THEATRE
CHICAGO'S LANDMARK STAGE EST. 1889



UPCOMING EVENTS

Step Afrika!

JAN 14

National Geographic Live — Greenwood

JAN 29

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo

FEB 11

Tank and The Bangas

FEB 18

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

MAR 8-12

Lettuce

MAR 25

National Geographic Live — How to Clone a Mammoth

MAR 26

Shen Yun

APR 6-9

American Ballet Theatre

APR 14-16

Dorrance Dance, Trinity Irish Dance Company, M.A.D.D. Rhythms

APR 22

AuditoriumTheatre.org | 312.341.2300

AUDITORIUM THEATRE
CHICAGO'S LANDMARK STAGE EST. 1889

50 East Ida B. Wells Drive | Chicago, IL

Welcome Letter

AUDITORIUM THEATRE
CHICAGO'S LANDMARK STAGE EST. 1889

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year!

As the calendar turns over to a new year, we reflect on another year in the significant history of our landmark Auditorium Theatre. While we honor this storied legacy, the new year also rightly focuses our vision of future service to Chicagoland.

For the second half of our season, we are proud to expand our programming further than ever before! We have three **Global Dance** companies gracing our stage, a full **National Geographic Live** program with the explorers themselves, as well as two more **Chicago Dance** performances including the much-anticipated triple threat engagement with Dorrance Dance, Trinity Irish Dance Company, and M.A.D.D. Rhythms!

We are excited to add to our offerings special upcoming performances featuring two Grammy-nominated artists and the **Chicago Philharmonic!** Break-through artists **Tank and The Bangas** will be at the Auditorium on February 18 and **Lettuce** joins us on March 25. These special one-night-only performances highlight our ever-growing relationships with the Chicago community and our dedicated mission to bring you the best in dance, music, comedy, and more!

Let's continue to lift ourselves from the mire of isolation that we all experienced and trade up for the perspective of community and an inspiring expression of shared hope that only the performing arts can provide. Go live!

ENJOY THE SHOW!



Rich Regan

Rich Regan
Chief Executive Officer



Thomas R. Baryl

Thomas R. Baryl
Chair, Auditorium Theatre Board of Directors

Auditorium Theatre

Venue Policies & Amenities

AUDITORIUM THEATRE
CHICAGO'S LANDMARK STAGE EST. 1889

BABY CHANGING TABLES are located in both the men's and women's restrooms, located in the Lower Level and on Level 3 of the Theatre.

CHILDREN: All guests must have a ticket for entry, and in all instances, babies in arms are not permitted. It is the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian to research and judge the content of a performance as appropriate for their child's age and level of maturity. There is no official rating system for live performance.

COAT CHECK is located between Aisle 2 and Aisle 3 in the Main Floor Lobby. Please note that our Coat Check only accepts credit card transactions. The Coat Check also features complimentary seat cushions/booster seats, disposable ear plugs, and assisted listening devices.

ELECTRONICS, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND VIDEO: Please turn off ALL electronic devices that may ring, beep, vibrate, or otherwise produce a sound that may disrupt performances. The use of video, photography, or any other recording devices is strictly prohibited during performances.

EMERGENCY EXIT: Please take a moment to locate the nearest emergency exit closet to your seating area. In the unlikely event of an emergency, please remain calm, and follow the instructions from the Auditorium Theatre team members.

FILMING NOTICE: Please be aware there may be video recording and/or photography of audience members taking place throughout the day. By entering the theatre, you consent to your voice, name, image, and/or likeness being used, without compensation, by the Auditorium Theatre, in any medium of publicity or advertising, and you release the Auditorium Theatre, its members, agents, employees, and board from any liability.

FIREARMS: In compliance with the Illinois Firearms Concealed Carry Act, the Auditorium Theatre prohibits the carrying of weapons of any kind in the theatre and on theatre property.

FIRST AID SERVICES: In the event you require medical assistance, please see an Auditorium Theatre team member.

FOOD & BEVERAGE: Concessions are open on the Main Floor Lobby for all performances. Additional concession locations will be open throughout the Theatre lobbies for certain performances. Outside food and beverages are

not allowed inside the building. Please note that our Coat Check, Merchandise, and Concession locations only accept credit card transactions.

HEALTH SAFETY: Our priority is the safety and comfort of all our guests in our theatre. To find out more information and for the most up to date protocols for our venue and your specific event, please check the Safety Page on the Auditorium Theatre website at auditoriumtheatre.org

LATE SEATING: The Auditorium Theatre has a strict policy of no late seating. Guests arriving after a performance has begun, or leaving the seating area for any reason, will be seated in a designated section and may take their ticketed seats at intermission, if applicable. For further information regarding late seating policies for your specific event, please see any Auditorium Theatre team member.

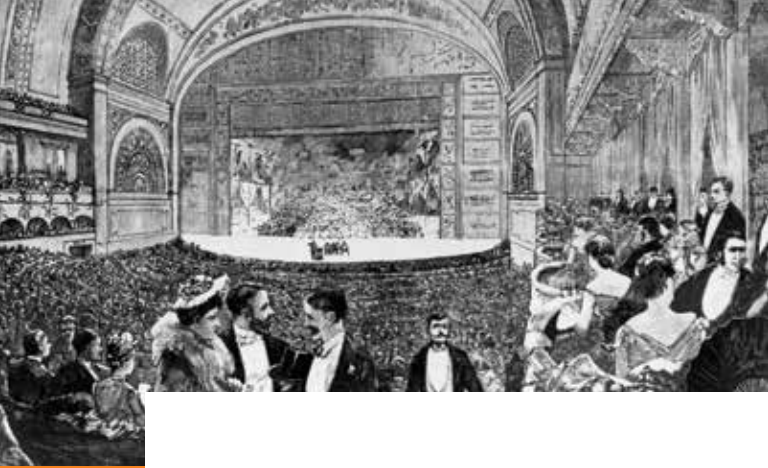
LOST AND FOUND: Found articles should be left with any Auditorium Theatre team member. To determine whether a personal article has been turned in to the Lost and Found, please call 312.341.2300. Any items lost or presumed stolen are not the responsibility of the Auditorium Theatre. Lost and Found items will be held on-site for 30 days only.

PROHIBITED ITEMS: Cameras (photo or video), professional camera equipment (tripods, monopods, etc.) and/or audio recording equipment of any kind are NOT permitted in the theatre during an event. In addition: firearms, weapons of any kind, large bags, backpacks, outside food and drinks, helium balloons, bullhorns or noisemakers, gifts, costumes, masks covering face, confetti or glitter, UAVs/drones, hover boards, luggage, signs of any type, and other items deemed unsafe by management are prohibited.

RESTROOMS/ACCESSIBLE RESTROOMS are located on the Main Floor, Lower Level, and Level 3 of the Theatre. There are 2 accessible gender-neutral restrooms located in the Southwest corner of the Main Lobby and 2 additional accessible gender-neutral restrooms located on Level 3 of the Theatre.

SECURITY: Upon arrival, all guests will be required to follow all security protocols and screenings, which may include walk through metal detectors and/or handheld wands in order to gain access into the venue.

SMOKING of any kind, including e-cigarettes and vaporizers, is strictly prohibited inside the theatre and within 25 feet of any entrances.



133 YEARS OF HISTORY AND COUNTING!

Designed by **Louis Sullivan** and **Dankmar Adler** at the behest of Chicago businessman Ferdinand Peck, the theatre was immediately hailed as one of the most beautiful venues in the world, with its gilded elegance, graceful design and perfect acoustics. Architectural giant Frank Lloyd Wright, who for one of his first jobs served as a draftsman on the project, would later note the Auditorium is: "The greatest room for music and opera in the world—bar none."

During its early decades, the Auditorium stage was the venue of choice for leading entertainers of the era, including **John Philip Sousa** and **Sarah Bernhardt**, as well as political figures including **Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt**, and **Booker T. Washington**. It also played host to not only operas and orchestras, but indoor baseball games, as well as a bowling alley while acting as a **Servicemen's Center** during WWII.

Since the late 1960s, the Auditorium earned a reputation as Chicago's home for music superstars, world premier dance companies, and even Broadway musicals!

We are a theatre that endures. To this day, the staff and Board of the Auditorium Theatre continue to preserve and restore this treasured building. Typically, more than 250 performances and events attract **over a quarter of a million people every year** to Chicago's landmark theatre, making it a true staple in Chicago and the rest of the world.

2021-22 SEASON IMPACT

ON OUR STAGE

- **24** Cultures + countries represented
- **179** In-person performances + events
- **1,446** Paid artists + theatre professionals
- **106,016** Audience members + counting!

IN OUR COMMUNITY

- **5** Signature education + outreach programs
- **41** Neighborhoods reached
- **954** People strengthened their communities through the performing arts

1889

Auditorium Theatre officially opened

1893

US Congress decision to host World's Fair in Chicago

1945

Post WW II closes our doors

1960s

Beatrice Spachner: renovate and restore!

1967

Re-opening night performance

1975

Declared a National Historic Landmark

2020

Covid-19 pandemic closes Auditorium's doors

2021

Reopened after 600 days with a record-breaking season!

And beyond!

Home for the best variety of entertainment and your memories!

Auditorium Theatre

Staff and Board Members

AUDITORIUM THEATRE
CHICAGO'S LANDMARK STAGE EST. 1889

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The Auditorium Theatre is proud to acknowledge the following institutional partners for their generous support. Corporate, foundation, and government relationships are integral to the success of the Auditorium's work on stage and in the community. This list is reflective of support from October 1, 2021 through November 6, 2022.



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Our In-Kind Partners



Tank and The Bangas
FEBRUARY 18



Lettuce
MARCH 25

2 SHOWS!
2 GRAMMY-
NOMINATED
ARTISTS!
2 TIMES THE
GROOVE!

CONCERT SERIES
WITH CHICAGO PHILHARMONIC

 **CHICAGO
PHILHARMONIC**
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A HILTON HOTEL
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AUDITORIUM THEATRE
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STEP AFRİKA!

Saturday, January 14, 2023 at 7:30PM



2022-23 SEASON SPONSORS

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Global and Chicago Dance

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Sobel

Student Matinee

THE
ROBERT THOMAS ROBINS
FOUNDATION

Photo by Sekou Luke.

STEP AFRİKA! | 9



Administrative Team

- C. Brian Williams**
Founder & Executive Producer
- Lamar Lovelace**
Executive Director
- Mfoniso Akpan**
Artistic Director
- Conrad R. Kelly II**
Assistant Artistic Director
- Artis Olds**
Director of Arts Education and Community Programs
- Margo Cunningham**
Marketing Manager
- Kristen L. Taylor**
Company and Communications Manager
- Misha Michel**
Arts Education and Production Assistant
- Niomi Collard**
Production Manager

Company

- Ariel Dykes
- Kamala Hargrove
- Akievia Hickman
- Jabari Jones
- Conrad Kelly II
- Isaiah O'Connor
- Valencia Odeyka Emonni Springer
- Ericka Still
- Pelham Warner
- Robert Warnsley
- Jerel L. Williams

Learn more about Step Afrika!

Share your experience! #StepAfrika
stepafrika.org



Step Afrika! Program

- TRIBUTE**
Choreographed by Jakari Sherman
Tribute pays homage to the African American step show. The work combines the distinct stepping styles from different fraternities and sororities and blends them together to showcase the incredible variety of stepping. *Tribute* includes all the exciting elements of the step show—the use of props, ripples and floor work, creative formations and audience participation.
- NDLAMU**
Choreographed by Jackie Semela
Ndlamu is a traditional dance of the Zulu people and for more than 25 years, Step Afrika! has studied the dance form through the Company’s long-standing partnership with the Soweto Dance Theater. Step Afrika! makes this *Ndlamu* uniquely its own featuring solos created by each dancer as well as the addition of contemporary movement.
- ISICATHULO**
Choreographed by Jackie Semela
Isicathulo or “the gumboot dance” is a tradition created by South African workers who labored in the oppressive mining industry of then-apartheid South Africa. Isolated from their families for long periods, the miners transformed their rubber boots into percussive instruments to not only entertain but to share secret messages with each other. Isicathulo has become one of the most popular dance forms in South Africa and has striking similarities to the African-American tradition of stepping.

- SOLO**
Traditionally, stepping is performed by groups, big and small. In this Solo, Step Afrika! investigates the form at its most intimate level.
- CHICAGO**
Choreographed by Jakari Sherman
Chicago finds the rhythm in everyday situations. It is a percussive symphony using body percussion and up to 5 complex polyrhythms performed simultaneously in order to narrate a percussive dance “story.” Inspired by a summer spent in the Windy City, this ground-breaking work transforms the 100-year old, folkloric tradition of stepping into contemporary performance art.
- Special Note:**
Audience participation has been a part of the step tradition since its inception in the 1900’s — members of the audience are invited to clap, stomp, cheer and participate in call and response with the Artists.



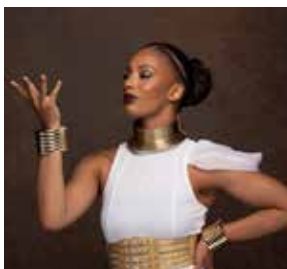
Ariel Dykes

Ariel Dykes is from Gainesville, Florida. She received an Associate of Arts Degree in Musical Theatre from Santa Fe College and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance from the University of Florida. She has trained in traditional and post-modern dance, jazz, voice, and acting and worked with such artists as Ailey Dancers Nathaniel Hunt and Samantha Barriento, Tony Award-winner Scott Coulter, and world-renowned choreographer and performer Galen Hooks. She was introduced to stepping and strolling as a member of the Iota Lambda Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., where she choreographed step routines for the chapter and UF's National Panhellenic Council.



Kamala Hargrove

Kamala Hargrove is a native of the Bronx, New York. She started dancing at the age of four. She has trained in ballet, Horton, Graham, West African, jazz, and hip hop at the Alvin Ailey School and Dance Theater of Harlem. She received her BA in Mathematics and Theater and Dance with a concentration in Dance and Choreography at Trinity College. Kamala has performed with artists including Estelle, Mr. Vegas, Wizkid, and French Montana and served as a guest artist on tour with Step Afrika! Kamala also worked as a Teaching Artist in New York City, teaching elementary, middle, and high school students.



Akievia Hickman

Akievia Hickman is a native of Tallahassee, Florida. She received an MBA from Florida A&M University. She is a member of the Beta Alpha chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Trained in hip-hop and jazz, Akievia also studied modern contemporary dance under the direction of Shepiro Hardemon as a member of Mahogany Dance Theatre. She created her own dance company, Killer Heels, which has helped build her into a great choreographer. Akievia was introduced to stepping in high school when she joined the Code Red Step team and furthered her experience in college as a member of the Rampage Step Team.



Jabari Jones

Jabari "Solo" Jones is a Detroit, MI native and self-taught dancer who began dancing at the age of 8. Prior to Step Afrika!, Jabari was a featured performer including credits with Aloe Blacc, Detroit 1-8-7, Elijah J, Jacob Latimore, K Jay Music, and The Music Factory, and has since performed with Missy Elliot, Lil Baby, City Girls, 2 Chainz, Rick Ross, and Lil Yachty. Other credits include College Boyfriends, Mooz-Lum, Will Packer's Bigger, Nick Cannon's WildNOout, BET's American Soul, and more. Jabari studied English at Morehouse College where he stepped with Du Beta Psi, and received additional instruction with both the Marygrove College in Detroit, MI and the Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit. He is a proud member of The Chi Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc where he served as Stroll Master, and first joined Step Afrika! upon graduating Morehouse College in 2017.



Conrad R. Kelly II

Conrad R. Kelly II, Assistant Artistic Director of Step Afrika!, is a native of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where he attended Dillard High School of the Visual and Performing Arts. While attending Florida A & M University, he became a member of the Marching 100 and the Strikers. After college, Conrad became a soloist for The Rolle Project in Las Vegas as well as a dance instructor with Studio 305, where he regularly taught classes in hip-hop, contemporary and jazz dance. Conrad plans to use his performing and teaching experiences to open a mentoring program for young male dancers.



Isaiah O'Connor

Isaiah O'Connor is from Miami, Florida. He received a BS in Biology from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. In college, Isaiah joined the Strikers Dance Troupe under the direction of Shepiro Hardemon and studied hip-hop, modern, and urban soul. He aspires to use his talents to learn about performing while also giving back to those who helped him.



Valencia Odeyka Emonni Springer

Valencia Odeyka Emonni Springer is a native of Brooklyn, New York. Valencia received a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and served as the first "Stand Queen" (captain) with the Ambassadors of Sound Marching band at Virginia Union University. She studied ballet, jazz, African, hip-hop, and contemporary dance at Restoration Youth Arts Academy and has performed with Forces of Nature and Dance Africa (Brooklyn). Valencia is a proud member of the Nu Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. and the Eta Psi Chapter of Tau Beta Sigma National Honorary band sorority.

Meet the Company



Ericka Still
Ericka Still is a native of St. Petersburg, Florida. She has been dancing since a young age at SADA under the direction of Paulette W. Johnson, where she trained in tap, ballet, jazz, African, and contemporary dance. Ericka discovered the art form of stepping in middle school as a part of the AKAdemy Exquisite Gems program. Ericka received a BA in Health Science: Pre-Occupational Therapy and she minored in Rehabilitation Management from Florida A&M University. Throughout college, she studied under the direction of Shepiro Hardemon as a member and Co-Assistant Artistic Director of Mahogany Dance Theatre.



Pelham Warner
Pelham Warner, is from The Bronx, New York and attended Dutchess Community College. As a teenager, Pelham was a member of The Players Club Steppers. He then found his home stepping with the Harlem, New York-based group, The Order of the Feather Fraternity, where he served as the team’s Step Master and captain for five years. He is blessed to have the opportunity to continue his passion for stepping, performing, and teaching with Step Afrika!



Robert Warnsley
Robert Warnsley is a native of Chicago, Illinois. He graduated from Illinois State University with a BS in Information Technology. Robert learned to step and stroll as a member of the Eta Tau chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. In addition to stepping, he practices hip-hop and Chicago-style footworking.



Jerel L. Williams
Jerel L. Williams, is a native of Jacksonville, Florida and he has been stepping for more than 20 years. Dance and theater became a part of his life when he joined the Florida A&M University Strikers in 2007, where he trained to be a professional performer. Jerel studied Education at Tallahassee Community College. He served many years traveling to different communities as a student advocate, mentor, stepping and dance instructor; leading young people through love, unity and opportunity and to reach their full potential. Jerel joined Step Afrika! in September 2016.

Meet the Creative Team



Mfoniso Akpan
Artistic Director
Mfoniso Akpan has trained extensively in tap, ballet, jazz, modern, African dance and step. While attending the State University of New York at Stony Brook, she majored in biochemistry and cultivated her stepping skills as a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Mfon began her training at the Bernice Johnson Cultural Arts Center and has performed at Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, the Apollo Theater, the Brooklyn Academy of Music and Lincoln Center. Mfon toured with the off-Broadway show “Hoofin’ 2 Hittin,” where she was a featured stepper and dancer.



C. Brian Williams
Founder and Executive Producer
C. Brian Williams is a native of Houston, Texas and graduate of Howard University. He is a National Heritage Fellow as designated by the National Endowment of the Arts, the nation’s highest honor in the folk and traditional arts. Brian first learned to step as a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. — Beta Chapter, in the Spring of 1989. While living in Southern Africa, he began to research the percussive dance tradition of stepping, exploring the many sides of this exciting, yet under-recognized American art form and founded Step Afrika! in 1994. Williams has performed, lectured and taught in Europe, Central and South America, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, the Caribbean and throughout the United States. He is the founder of the monumental Step Afrika! International Cultural Festival in Johannesburg, South Africa. Through Williams’ leadership, stepping has evolved into one of America’s newest cultural exports and inspired the designation of Step Afrika! as Washington, D.C.’s official “Cultural Ambassador.” Williams has been cited as a “civic/community visionary” by NV Magazine, a “nation builder” by the National Black Caucus of State Legislators and a “minority business leader” by the Washington Business Journal. He is the recipient of numerous Artist Fellowships; the Distinguished Arts Award from the Coalition for African-Americans in the Performing Arts; the Pola Nirenska Award for Contemporary Achievement in Dance. He is also featured in Soulstepping, the first book to document the history of stepping. He also earned the 2008 Mayor’s Art Award for Innovation in the Arts and has led the company to multiple Metro DC Dance Awards for “Outstanding New Work,” “Excellence in Stage Design/ Multimedia” and “Outstanding Group Performance.” In 2018, Williams received the Mayor’s Arts Award for Visionary Leadership from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities.



Niomi Collard
Lighting Designer/Production Manager

Niomi Collard is a Washington, D.C. and Tampa, FL based lighting and projections designer. Niomi has designed lights and video on stage with Synetic Theater Company, The Source Festival, GALA Hispanic Theater, and was nominated for a DC Regional Award for Outstanding Production in a Play for KLYTMNESTRA by Dane Figueroa Edidi at Theater Alliance (2020). Niomi has been behind the camera as lighting director for PBS NewsHour, and designed lighting throughout the Smithsonian’s many museums. She has assisted designs at The Studio Theatre and Rorschach Theatre Company. Niomi helps lead TechOps for DragonCon in Atlanta, GA every Labor Day weekend, and is a graduate of the American University in Washington, D.C. Niomi joined Step Afrika! in 2017 and her favorite color is R318 Mayan Sun.



The Story of Step Afrika!

Founded in 1994 by C. Brian Williams, Step Afrika! is the first professional company dedicated to the tradition of stepping—a polyrhythmic, percussive dance form that uses the body as an instrument. Under Mr. Williams’ leadership, stepping has evolved into one of America’s cultural exports, touring more than 50 countries across the globe. Step Afrika! is one of the top 10 African American dance companies in the world. Step Afrika! promotes stepping as a contemporary dance genre through critically acclaimed performances and arts education programs. Creatively engaging audiences in this nascent art form, the Company creates full-length productions that expand on stepping’s unique American history.

Step Afrika! blends percussive dance styles practiced by historically African American fraternities and sororities; traditional West and Southern African dances; and an array of contemporary dance and art forms into a cohesive, compelling artistic experience. Performances are much more than dance shows; they integrate songs, storytelling, humor and audience participation. The blend of technique, agility, and pure energy makes each performance unique and leaves the audience with their hearts pounding.

The Company reaches tens of thousands of Americans each year through a 50-city tour of colleges and theatres and performs globally as Washington, DC’s one and only Cultural Ambassador. Step Afrika! has earned Mayor’s Arts Awards for Outstanding Contribution to Arts Education (2005); Innovation in the Arts (2008); and Excellence in an Artistic Discipline (2012); and performed at the White House for President Barack Obama and the First Lady.

Critically Acclaimed works, such as *The Migration: Reflections on Jacob Lawrence and Drumfolk*, tour to major U.S. cities. Step Afrika! is prominently featured at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History & Culture with an interactive exhibit on the art form of stepping.

To learn more, visit stepafrika.org.

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Reflects gifts received October 1, 2021 through November 6, 2022. If you have questions or concerns, please call 312.341.2382.

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Owner-Operators Association
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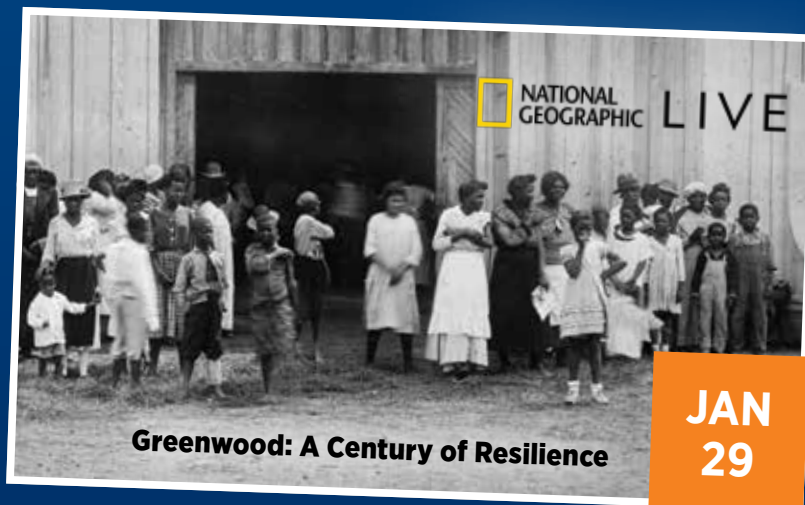
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Greenwood: A Century of Resilience, CR Library of Congress — Prints & Photographs Division — American National Red Cross Collection. Les Ballet Trockadero de Monte Carlo's Philip Martin Nielson in *Paquita*, photo by Marcello Orselli. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's Jacquelin Harris, photo by Dario Calmese.