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FirstWorks announces 2016/2017 Artistic Icons Series

The non-profit driving force behind PVDFest carries the festival spirit through a series to engage audiences with the legacy and innovation of luminary American artists

Providence, RI — Now in its 12th year of connecting art with audiences, **FirstWorks** continues its legacy of bringing bold and brilliant performances to Rhode Island with its **2016/2017 Artistic Icons Series** at **The Vets**. The non-profit driving force behind Providence's PVDFest will engage audiences through performances and artist residencies featuring three luminary American artistic innovators across the genres of circus arts, hip-hop, and dance.

Tickets for the **FirstWorks 2016/17 Artistic Icons Series** performances start as low as **\$18** and go on sale on **July 21**. Patrons may contact www.first-works.org or by calling the box office at **401-421-ARTS (2787)**. A full series ticket package is available through **October 29** offering up to 25% savings across all three shows.

This season's Icons include **Cirque Mechanics**, who pedal back into Providence with their newest spectacle; the renowned **Rennie Harris Puremovement**, igniting the stage with the art and legacy of hip-hop; and the inimitable **Paul Taylor Dance Company**, whose **FirstWorks** residency culminates in the world premiere of a new work.

The **2016/2017 Artistic Icons Series** launches at **The Vets on October 29, 2016** at **7:30 p.m.** with **Cirque Mechanics' "Pedal Punk"**, a steampunk spectacle of stunning circus arts featuring a dazzling whirl of acrobats, cyclists and mind-blowing, one-of-a-kind machines.

FirstWorks surpasses their reputation for "firsts" in dance by bringing **Paul Taylor**, arguably America's most important living choreographer, to Rhode Island for a multi-month residency and the world-premiere of a new work. The **Paul Taylor Dance Company** will rehearse and debut the new work in Providence on **February 3, 2017** at **8:00 p.m.**, prior to its three-week run at New York's Lincoln Center. **Paul Taylor Dance Company** offers an ambitious concert evening of dance,

live music, and art. The project celebrates legacy and innovation in what promises to be one of the most significant cultural events of the season.

The series concludes with **Rennie Harris**, hip-hop's leading ambassador to the world and his company **Rennie Harris Puremovement**. Blending explosive movement and sheer athleticism with fluid, lyrical dance, Harris breaks down barriers between the vocabulary of the street and the vocabulary of the concert hall for the Rhode Island premiere of their 25th Anniversary "**Living Legacy Tour**" at **The Vets** on **February 24, 2017** at **8:00 p.m.**

"A thrilling group of living legends and genre-defining artists are joining us this season, all pushing the boundaries of their respective disciplines, making them a perfect match for our adventurous Rhode Island audiences," says FirstWorks' Executive Artistic Director Kathleen Pletcher. "We are grateful for the many partnerships that enable us to connect these artists across our community and invite new audiences to experience the arts."

Each world-class artist in the **Artistic Icons Series** contributes to the groundbreaking **FirstWorks Arts Learning** program, by coming into classrooms and offering daytime educational performances for Rhode Island students. Last season, over 4,000 **FirstWorks Arts Learning** students were inspired by some of the world's best creative forces.

JumpStarts, FirstWorks' signature free, pre-show programming highlighting Rhode Island's own performing artists and youth ensembles, will also return for the 2016/17 **Artistic Icons Series**, with performers TBA.

FIRSTWORKS 2016-17 SEASON LISTINGS

October 29, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.

CIRQUE MECHANICS

"Pedal Punk"

R.I. Premiere!

Tickets: \$18-\$78* at www.first-works.org or 401-421-ARTS (2787)

Hailed as "the greatest contribution to the American circus since Cirque du Soleil," by *Spectacle* magazine, the incredible Cirque Mechanics wows with flying unicycles, floating trapeze artists and innovative mechanical staging. Enter a world inspired by steampunk culture where cycling is the way to escape a technology-obsessed society. You've never seen a circus like this: a dazzling whirl of acrobats, cyclists, and magnificent one-of-a-kind machines. *Presented by FirstWorks and The Vets.*

February 3, 2017 at 8:00 p.m.

PAUL TAYLOR DANCE COMPANY

R.I. Premiere and World Premiere

Tickets: \$28-\$150* at www.first-works.org or 401-421-ARTS (2787). *Premium ticket includes post-show Premiere Party with the Paul Taylor Dance Company*

Dance master Paul Taylor is arguably the greatest living choreographer. He returns with his namesake company to Providence for an ambitious **FirstWorks Artistic Icons** concert sure to be one of the most significant cultural events of the season. This extraordinary evening offers the thrilling world premiere of a brand new work, plus the company's first-ever Rhode Island performance of "Esplanade"—Taylor's definitive masterwork set to Bach's "Double Violin Concerto". Experience the energy, romance, humor and sheer beauty of America's most magnificent dancing machine.

February 24, 2017 at 8:00 p.m.

Rennie Harris Puremovement: 25th Anniversary "Living Legacy Tour"

R.I. Premiere

Tickets: \$18-\$58* at www.first-works.org or 401-421-ARTS (2787)

The sensational, world-renowned choreographer Rennie Harris—believed by many to be the best living hip-hop dancer/artist on earth—takes the **FirstWorks** stage with his namesake company for their 25th Anniversary Living Legacy Tour. Breaking down barriers between the street and the concert hall, the fluid, lyrical dancers of Rennie Harris Puremovement have dazzled audiences across the globe with movement forged in urban crucibles. Experience the pure essence and spirit of hip-hop culture.

**Ticket prices include a \$3 Vets restoration fee*

About FirstWorks

FirstWorks is a non-profit based in Providence, Rhode Island whose purpose is to build the cultural, educational and economic vitality of its community by engaging audiences with world-class performing arts and education programs. Since its launch in 2004, **FirstWorks** festivals, performances and programs have attracted more than 366,000 participants. The **FirstWorks Arts Learning Program** works with over 4,000 students from public and charter schools across Rhode Island to provide transformative learning experiences with world-class performing artists. In June 2016, **FirstWorks** served as Founding Creative Partner to the City of Providence, for the second annual PVDfest (formerly Providence International Arts Festival). The four-day event drew over 75,000 over the four-day festival to experience music, art and spectacle from around the globe and around the corner. Visit www.first-works.org to learn more. [For high resolution images click here](#)

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