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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**FirstWorks' Artistic Icons Series Continues with  
American Hip-Hop Dance Theater Company  
Rennie Harris Puremovement**

*Street dance pioneer returns to Providence for first time in 10 years with 25th  
anniversary tour*

**PROVIDENCE, RI** – **FirstWorks**, a Rhode Island non-profit dedicated to connecting art with audiences, continues its 2016/2017 **Artistic Icons Series** with a hip-hop dance master and his company: **Rennie Harris Puremovement** on **Friday, February 24, 2017 at 8:00 p.m.** at **FirstWorks at The VETS** (1 Avenue of the Arts, Providence). Tickets for the performance, presented by **FirstWorks**, range from **\$18-\$58** and are available at [first-works.org](http://first-works.org) and 401-421-ARTS (2787).

World-renowned hip-hop dance icon **Rennie Harris**, called “the most respected—and the most brilliant—hip-hop choreographer in America” by the *New Yorker*, took the urban stylings of hip-hop dance from the streets to the concert stage, integrating and breaking down barriers between the two. Now marking its 25th anniversary, Harris' company **Rennie Harris Puremovement** has dazzled audiences across the globe by transforming the vernacular of hip-hop—which includes popping, locking, voguing, B-boying, and dueling—into groundbreaking dance-theater.

The evening's program, titled "**Nuttin' But A Word**," is a vibrant suite of urban street dance and hip-hop music spanning the classics to the utterly new. Set to diverse tracks from Mandrill, DJ Lee, Goodmen, Cinematic Orchestra, the Yoruba priest/music producer Osunlade and even unattributed underground cuts, the suite is a vital celebration of the pure essence and spirit of hip-hop culture.

"The title, '**Nuttin' But A Word**' was taken from a cultural phrase used amongst Blacks in the United States," explains Harris. "The full phrase is, 'You ain't said nothing but a word.' Loosely translated it means, 'Your words mean nothing—pay close attention, because what I do next will trump anything you have to say.' Hip-hop/street dance is progressive by design. '**Nuttin' But A Word**' serves as a reminder that without individuality, creativity and innovation, we [hip-hop artists] will not evolve as a form."

"We're thrilled to bring **Rennie Harris** to Providence at a moment in history when hip-hop is having a cultural moment as a leading expressive force. Given the runaway success of Broadway's hit show 'Hamilton,' hip-hop is clearly a part of our cultural lexicon and an energizing force of sweeping social change," said **FirstWorks** Founder and Executive Artistic Director Kathleen Pletcher.

While in Providence, Harris will be a featured guest at a hip-hop summit that **FirstWorks** is partnering on with the annual Rhythm of Change Festival at Brown University. His company will also conduct workshops in area schools and a daytime matinee for K-12 students as part of **FirstWorks** Arts Learning program. Educators may learn more by contacting Kathleen McAreavey at 401-421-4278.

### **About Rennie Harris Puremovement**

Founded in 1992, Rennie Harris Puremovement's (RHPM) is the first professional hip-hop dance company in the world, and is known specifically for its

internationally acclaimed hip-hop dance theater works. Lead by Guggenheim Fellow and award winning hip-hop choreographer Rennie Harris, RHPM challenges the perception of hip-hop and its stereotypes. Named by the U.S. State Department as an international ambassador for urban arts, RHPM performances and programs are based on the belief that hip-hop is the most important original expression of a new generation and can be utilized to meet the needs of our young people and communities today. In a society where hip-hop is often portrayed as a violent, undisciplined counterculture, RHPM deconstructs popular perception of this medium, expanding and challenging the boundaries and definitions of hip-hop in general. Because hip-hop continues to be the chosen medium for youth to express their creativity and ideas, RHPM works to support emerging young artist, honor its history, explore its ideas, and further its contributions to the surrounding community.

### **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 2004, **FirstWorks** festivals, performances and programs have attracted more than 366,000 participants. The **FirstWorks Arts Learning Program** reaches over 4,000 students from public and charter schools across Rhode Island with transformative arts-based learning experiences. **FirstWorks** is Founding Creative Partner for PVDfest, partnering with the City of Providence to produce an international arts celebration held each June in downtown Providence. The 2016 PVDfest drew over 75,000 to experience music, art and spectacle. Visit <http://first-works.org> to learn more.

### **Listings Information:**

WHO: **FirstWorks Artistic Icons Series presents Rennie Harris Puremovement**

WHAT: A suite of new and classic hip-hop dance works from the pioneer of American street dance theater

WHEN: **Friday, February 24, 2017 at 8:00 p.m.**

WHERE: **FirstWorks at The Vets** (1 Avenue of the Arts, Providence)

TICKETS: **\$18-\$58** (includes a \$3 restoration fee)

PURCHASE: Tickets are available at <http://first-works.org> and at the Vets Box Office: **401-421-ARTS (2787)**, 220 Weybosset Street, Providence

SPECIAL OFFERS: 20% off ticket 4-pack with code HIPHOP4

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