

RENNIE HARRIS PUREMOVEMENT
AN AMERICAN STREET DANCE THEATER COMPANY



FIRSTWORKS

PRESENTS

RENNIE HARRIS PUREMOVEMENT
NUTTIN' BUT A WORD

FEBRUARY 24, 2017 || THE VETS

RENNIE HARRIS PUREMOVEMENT



Photos by Brian Mengini

RENNIE HARRIS, CHOREOGRAPHER,
FOUNDER & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

BRANDYN SCOTT HARRIS, DANCER
HOODLOCKERS, DANCE GROUP

JOSHUA CULBREATH, DANCER

KATIA CRUZ, DANCER

PHILLIP CUTTINO, JR., DANCER

MAI LÊ HO JOHNSON, DANCER

SAMANTHA SHEPHERD, DANCER

BOB STEINECK, PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR
AND LIGHTING DESIGNER

RODNEY HILL, COMPANY MANAGER

FIRSTWORKS ARTISTIC ICONS SERIES

NUTTIN' BUT A WORD!!! SUITE

Continuum

Choreography by Rennie Harris

Music mixed by DJ Lee

The Word...

Choreography by Rennie Harris

Music by Osunlade: *Trinity Ov Me*

Unlocked

Choreography by Rennie Harris

Music by Raphael Xavier: *Ambient*

A Funny Thing Happened!?

Choreography by Rennie Harris

Music by Cinematic Orchestra:

Man With a Movie Camera

Intermission

Locking Exposed

Directed by Rennie Harris

Choreography by Hood Lockers

Music: by Unknown

Get Down or Lay Down

Choreographed by Rennie Harris

Music by Mandrill: *Can You Get It*

This is for the Ancestors:

Choreographed by Rennie Harris

Students of the Asphalt Jungle

Music by Goodmen: *Give It Up*

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

This suite of works challenges the structural integrity of Campbell locking, house, hip-hop and B-boying. Now that we are a global hip-hop nation, if you will, we seem to have become hip-hop/street dance zealots. This purist attitude has stagnated the natural progression of street dance. Simply put, we have become elitist about Hip-hop culture. This is due to this generation's obsession with "keeping it real." The truth of the matter is that this generation will never relive my generation's era of original dance, which was built on innovation, individuality, and creativity. At best they can appreciate it, pay homage to it, and acknowledge it as the foundational era of hip-hop/street dance it was. In doing that they will in fact tap into their own individuality, creativity, and innovation, which in turn ensures progress. The title of the work *Nuttin' But A Word* was taken from a cultural phrase used amongst Blacks in the United States. 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. There is nothing about the Three Laws of Hip-Hop that suggests stagnation. These laws are: (1) individuality, (2) creativity, and (3) innovation. There is nothing about these laws that suggests that we as practitioners of the form should only adhere to its foundation; it is quite the opposite. *Nuttin' But A Word* challenges the Hip-hop puritans at every turn and serves as a reminder that without individuality, creativity and innovation we will not evolve as a form.

— Rennie Harris

RENNIE HARRIS

Lorenzo "Rennie" Harris, is the founder, artistic director, choreographer, and stage director of Rennie Harris Puremovement, has been called "the most respected—and the most brilliant—hip-hop choreographer in America" by The New Yorker.

Rennie Harris was born and raised in an African American community in North Philadelphia. Since the age of fifteen, he has been teaching workshops and classes at universities around the country, advocating for the significance of "street" origins in any dance style. In 1992, Harris founded Rennie Harris Puremovement, a street dance theatre company dedicated to preserving and disseminating street dance culture through workshops, classes, lectures and lecture demonstrations, residencies, mentoring programs, and public

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Rennie Harris
Photo by Rose Eichenbaum

performances. Harris founded his company based on the belief that hip-hop culture is the most important original expression of a new generation. With its roots in inner-city African American and Latino communities, hip-hop can be characterized as a contemporary indigenous form, one that expresses universal themes that extend beyond racial, religious, and economic boundaries, and one that, because of its pan-racial and transnational popularity, can help bridge these divisions. Harris' work encompasses the diverse and rich African American traditions of the past, while simultaneously presenting the voice of a new generation through ever-evolving interpretations of dance. Harris is committed to providing audiences with a sincere view of the essence and spirit of hip-hop rather than the commercially exploited stereotypes portrayed by the media.

BOB STEINECK (Lighting Designer, Production Supervisor) has design credits that include concerts, ballet, modern dance, opera and theatre. He is currently resident lighting designer for ReedDance, Texture Contemporary Ballet, Carnegie Stage, and Mercyhurst University Dance Department. Mr. Steineck has toured throughout the US and abroad with such companies as Rennie Harris Puremovement, Rennie Harris RHAW, Reed Dance, Squonk Opera, the Lyon Opera Ballet, Sankai Juku, Phoenix Dance Company, Kirov Ballet Academy and the *America Tour for Stars on Ice*. Television/Video/DVD credits include the *DIZZY GILLESPIE Allstar Big Band* for A&E Cable, the *SPYRO GYRA concert* for PBS, *Lindy & Loon* for Maria Del Rey and *JOHNNY A TRIO* by Warner Bros. Publications. He has designed for several corporate events and fundraisers.

BRANDYN SCOTT HARRIS, the eldest of Rennie Harris' children, originally from North Philadelphia, has spent most of his time since high school graduation performing and competing in Philadelphia and across the country. Brandyn strives to be one of the greatest dancers of Philadelphia who hasn't been studio-trained. Brandyn tours the world as a dancer in both Rennie Harris Puremovement and Rennie Harris RHAW. He has been training with Rennie Harris RHAW since 2008, and hopes to one day follow in his father's footsteps as a premier choreographer. Brandyn serves as the assistant rehearsal director of Rennie Harris RHAW.

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SHAFEEK WESTBROOK, the native son of north Philadelphia knew he wanted to dance at the age of 6. Shafeek studied tap dance at the Philadelphia Dance Company. After winning various competitions he was dubbed "Mighty Mouse." Soon after, he would find himself studying under the tutelage of Brian "Hannibal" Newby, Founder/Director of 360/Flavor Crew in 2005. Since the summer of 2009 he has trained and performed with Rennie Harris R.H.A.W. and also serves as an apprentice in Rennie Harris Puremovement.

KATIA CRUZ was born in 1992 in Camden, New Jersey and raised in Pennsauken, N.J., where she currently resides. Katia started dancing salsa at the age of nine with Barbara Capaldi at the Atrium Dance Studio. Two years later, she started training in hip-hop dance with Marcus Tucker, the co-founder of Face Da Phlave Ent., and India Hyman, also of Face Da Phlave. Katia is a leading member and choreographer of In Da Clutch Ent., owned by Kenneth Thomas. She is co-director of In Da Clutch Jr. Division, a children's hip-hop program. Katia has been dancing with Rennie Harris Puremovement since 2012.

PHILLIP CUTTINO, JR. is a Philadelphia native hip-hopper, instilled since birth with breakin', graffiti, DJ-ing, and rapping. His first performance was at the age of four with his father, a prominent MC and B-Boy in the Philadelphia hip-hop scene. He started in a crew called the X-men doing local talent shows and learned from some of Philadelphia greats. He has toured through out the United States and internationally.

MAI LÊ HO Hailing from France, Mai Lê is an arts educator, dance choreographer, and deejay who relocated to New York City in 2009. Through her passion for dance, Mai Lê has had the opportunity to perform and teach in France, Democratic Republic of Congo, the UK, Vietnam, Italy, Spain, Croatia, Slovakia, Holland, Russia, Belgium and throughout the United States. In 2012 she joined Rennie Harris RHAW, and soon after, Rennie Harris Puremovement, the longest running hip-hop dance touring company, with which she traveled to Central Africa to serve as a U.S. Cultural Ambassador in 2013. She also toured Europe with Detroit-based music producer Theo Parrish in 2014 as a dancer in his live band, The Unit. Driven by her talents, Mai Lê has been relentlessly promoting underground Hip-Hop & House cultures locally and internationally, helping bring awareness to their positive impact on the community. She also strongly advocates for the harmonious marriage of dance and music, primarily through her event *LayeRhythm, A Jam Session of*

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Music & Dance, created in March 2015 in NYC, and now expanding to other cities. Follow her journey at @MaileGrooves.

RODNEY S. HILL Born and raised in North Philadelphia, Rodney entered the hip-hop scene in 1988. For more than a decade, Rodney has blazed the stages in venues nationally and abroad. He has been featured in many music videos for internationally recognized artists including Boys II Men, Will Smith, and Music Soul Child, just to name a few. He has performed on TV shows including *LA R&B Divas*, *NBC Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, *Soul Train*, *NBC'S NFL Under The Helmet*, and *BET's Teen Summit*. In addition, he has toured and performed with R&B singers Brave Williams and Julian King, "EVE", Teddy Pendergrass, Shanice Wilson, Mary J. Blige, 50 Cent, and Philly's own the Roots. An accomplished teacher and choreographer, Hill has had the opportunity to perform and teach in universities and dance studios locally, nationally and internationally, in France, Democratic Republic of Congo, East Asia, Egypt, Israel, and Palestine. Constantly expanding his horizons, Rodney is always working with new artists and exploring new opportunities. Currently, he is Company Manager/Director of Rennie Harris Puremovement and Rennie Harris RHAW. Rodney Hill seeks inspiration from his community and family while continuing to educate and inspire others, through his hard work, dedication and commitment to hip hop and its culture.

SAMANTHA SHEPHERD is a Philadelphia based dancer. She has performed with 213 Productions, Chosen Dance Company, Loose Screws Contemporary Tap, Monster Squad, and Group Motion. Samantha has choreographed for the Philadelphia 76'ers dancers as well as the Bearded Ladies Cabaret Company of Philadelphia. She has performed throughout the United States and internationally in Mumbai and New Delhi, India. She is currently working with Rennie Harris RHAW, and on staff at the University of the Arts. She also appeared as Hunyak in Media Theater's regional premiere of *Chicago* and was Assistant Choreographer on the feature film *Christmas Dreams* that was released in 2013.

THE HOODLOCKERS, Richard Evans, Joshua Polk, Andrew Ramsey and Marcus Tucker are a dynamic fusion of some of the best Hip Hop dancers from South Jersey who have joined forces to create and perform original and contemporary street dance. The company's work is an electric mix of foundational styles of Hip Hop Dance culture. Collectively, the band of brothers create and display a unique and traditional approach to the style of Locking, which they characterize this understanding as "Hood". TV and video

appearances include: Randy Jackson presents America's Best Dance Crew, Step Up 3D, and So You Think You Can Dance. They have choreographed for Malaysian recording pop artists Mizz Nina, and they appeared with Rennie Harris Puremovement in an off-Broadway production of New York City Legends of Hip Hop at the New Victory Theater in New York City.

RENNIE HARRIS PUREMOVEMENT STAFF

Artistic Director/Founder.....Lorenzo Rennie Harris
Company Manager..... Rodney Hill
Production Supervisor/Light Designer..... Bob Steineck
Sponsored in part by..... Philadelphia Dance Company

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