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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 15, 2018

### **FirstWorks Artistic Icons Series Brings World Class Performances by Black Violin and Complexions Contemporary Ballet to Providence in April 2019**

*New tour from hip-hop classical fusion violin duo and America's first multicultural ballet company's tribute to the late David Bowie now on sale in time for the holidays*

Providence, RI – **FirstWorks**, a Rhode Island non-profit dedicated to building community through world-class arts unveils two powerhouse performances for their Artistic Icons Series as they celebrate their 15th season in 2019. The **FirstWorks Artistic Icons Series** invites audiences to experience the genre-shattering, signature sounds of “classical boom” from hip-hop innovators **Black Violin**, and the electrifying dance of **Complexions Contemporary Ballet** in a glitter and glam spectacular, “From Bach to Bowie.”

“We are thrilled to celebrate our 15th season, in partnership with Providence Performing Arts Center and the historic VETS auditorium, with sensational artists who bridge the gap between generations and introduce our diverse audiences to new spins on classical music and dance,” said Kathleen Pletcher, FirstWorks Executive Artistic Director. “The FirstWorks Artistic Icons Series introduces audiences to genre-defining artists of our time, spotlighting innovators in music, theater and dance. For 15 years we’ve been offering audiences extraordinary,

big city caliber performances the likes of Yo-Yo Ma, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Wynton Marsalis and Joffrey Ballet, opening access to a world of peak arts experiences within our community.”

FirstWorks brings the groundbreaking hip-hop duo **Black Violin** to Providence with their “Classical Boom Tour,” a follow up to their successful 2016-2017 “UNITY Tour” which sold-out 28 public performances. Classical music and hip-hop collide as classically trained musicians Wil B (violin) and Kev Marcus (viola) craft a concert of live dueling strings along with their band to energize audiences of all ages, helping to keep classical music alive for the next generation. Featuring turntable whiz DJ SPS and a drummer, **Black Violin’s** genre-shattering “Classical Boom Tour” arrives Wednesday, April 3 at 7:30 p.m. at The VETS with a rousing mix of classical, hip-hop, rock, R&B and bluegrass sounds. Tickets are available at the PPAC/VETS Box Office (220 Weybosset Street in downtown Providence), by phone at (401) 421-ARTS (2787), or online at [first-works.org](http://first-works.org) and [thevetsri.com](http://thevetsri.com). Tickets are \$29-\$59 (including a \$4 facility restoration fee.) Educator and student discounts are available by calling 401-421-4278.

Next, join FirstWorks for their 15th Anniversary performance celebration in a spectacular evening of glitter and glam. On Wednesday, April 17th at 7:30 p.m., FirstWorks in partnership with the Providence Performing Arts Center presents **Complexions Contemporary Ballet: “From Bach to Bowie”** at PPAC. Complexions, America’s first fully multicultural ballet company, was founded by master choreographer Dwight Rhoden, former Alvin Ailey principal dancer, and the legendary Desmond Richardson, the first African American principal dancer of the American Ballet Theater.

**Complexions’** evening performance features “**Star Dust**,” an electrifying tribute to rock icon David Bowie, which takes an array of Bowie’s hits and lays a visual

imprint inspired by his unique personas to create a rock-inspired ballet. Tickets are available at the PPAC Box Office (220 Weybosset Street in downtown Providence), by phone at (401) 421-ARTS (2787), or online at [first-works.org](http://first-works.org) and [ppacri.org](http://ppacri.org). Seats range from \$25 to \$74.50 (including a \$3 facility restoration fee.) Educator and student discounts are available by calling 401-421-4278. An exclusive **FirstWorks 15th Anniversary Celebration** featuring great food, music and entertainment takes place at 5:00 p.m. Premium tickets that include admission to the celebration and top-tier seats to Complexions' evening performance are available for \$200 through the PPAC Box office phone line only: 401-421-ARTS (2787).

### **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 500,000 participants. The FirstWorks Arts Learning Program reaches more than 4,000 students from public and charter schools across Rhode Island with transformative, arts-based learning experiences. FirstWorks is Founding Partner and co-producer of PVDfest, collaborating with the City of Providence to produce an international arts celebration held each June. In 2018 the festival drew 100,000 visitors to Providence to experience music, art and spectacular performances. Visit [first-works.org](http://first-works.org) to learn more.

### **About Black Violin**

Black Violin is composed of classically trained violist and violinist Wil B. and Kev Marcus who combine their classical training and hip-hop influences to create a distinctive multi-genre sound that is often described as "classical boom." The band released their major label debut "Stereotypes" (featuring Black Thought of The Roots and MC Pharoahe Monch) on Universal Music which debuted at #1 on the Billboard Classical Crossover Chart and #4 on the Billboard R&B Chart. Black Violin has shared stages with top names including Kanye West, Aerosmith and Tom Petty, and has creatively collaborated with the likes of Wu-Tang Clan, Wyclef Jean and Alicia Keys. The band is currently touring the US and they are working on new music for their upcoming album. They have also recently released their new track "Dreamer" and have a music video on the way.

Wil and Kev place heavy emphasis on educational outreach and have performed for more than 100,000 students in North America and Europe in the

past 12 months. The band is endorsed by Yamaha Music and Bose and has partnered with the National Association for Music Manufacturers (NAMM) to continue their advocacy for accessible music education. For more information visit [blackviolin.net](http://blackviolin.net).

### **About Complexions Contemporary Ballet**

Break the boundaries of dance with the innovative company that transcends tradition, Complexions Contemporary Ballet. Founded in 1994 by master choreographer Dwight Rhoden and the legendary Desmond Richardson, Complexions' foremost innovation is to remove any barriers to creative expression, not reinforce them. This singular approach mixes methods, styles and cultures to create groundbreaking movement that embodies the company's historical moment, while simultaneously building its future. Today, Complexions represents one of the most recognized and respected performing arts brands in the world. In the 23 years since its inception, the company has born witness to a world that is becoming more fluid, more changeable and more culturally interconnected than ever before—continuing its mission of bringing unity to the world, one dance at a time. For more information please visit [complexionsdance.org](http://complexionsdance.org).

### **About Providence Performing Arts Center**

The Providence Performing Arts Center is celebrating the 90th Anniversary of the Loew's Theatre Building throughout its EPIC 2018/2019 Season. It was a momentous day when the Loew's Theatre Building, now known as the Providence Performing Arts Center, opened on October 6, 1928. The Theatre, designed by Rapp & Rapp, has always been a visual marvel, and has astounded visitors with its beauty and grandeur. For nine decades, the Loew's Theatre Building has not only survived, but ultimately flourished, while undergoing various name changes, storm damage, and ongoing architectural restoration.

The Providence Performing Arts Center presents a full roster of touring Broadway theatricals and contemporary engagements. PPAC has been the theatre of choice in launching eighteen National Tours, including MISS SAIGON, CATS, and THE BAND'S VIST this Season. PPAC is a 3100-seat, world class venue located in the heart of Providence's arts and entertainment district; it is the second largest theatre of its kind in the country. PPAC is listed on the National Register of Historic Places; it has also been ranked by Pollstar as one of the Top Venues in the world.

### **Listings Information:**

WHO: FirstWorks Artistic Icons Series presents Black Violin "Classical Boom Tour"

WHAT: A genre-shattering concert from the celebrated hip-hop and classical strings fusion duo

WHEN: Wednesday, April 3, 2019 at 7:30 pm

WHERE: The VETS, 1 Avenue of the Arts, Providence, RI

TICKETS: \$29-59 (includes \$4 restoration fee)

WHO: FirstWorks Artistic Icons Series presents Complexions Contemporary Ballet  
"From Bach to Bowie"

WHAT: A spectacular evening of dance from America's first fully multicultural  
ballet company featuring a glitter and glam tribute to David Bowie

WHEN: Wednesday, April 17, 2019 at 7:30 pm

WHERE: Providence Performing Arts Center, 220 Weybosset Street, Providence, RI

TICKETS: \$25-74.50 (includes \$3 restoration fee). \$200 premium ticket including  
FirstWorks 15th Anniversary Celebration admission also available.

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