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New performance series will celebrate Black artists and the African American experience

(November 12, 2019) — This morning at the Aronoff Center, business leaders announced plans to showcase nationally and internationally acclaimed African American performing artists in Cincinnati, as a new way to bring people together across cultural divides.

Flow, an African American Arts Experience, will feature quarterly performances by renowned Black artists and ensembles working in various disciplines. The series is being presented by ArtsWave, the region's engine for the arts, with support from area businesses, foundations and individuals and with guidance from a steering committee comprised of representatives from the region's top corporations.

Flow has been purposefully designed to showcase professional, evocative African American artists whose work is unique and exciting. The goal for the series is to attract a highly diverse, culturally adventurous audience and create a shared and elevated appreciation for artists of color. Flow complements and expands the region's existing inventory of multicultural experiences offered by local arts organizations.

The 2020 series kicks off with a residency and performances by internationally-acclaimed Dayton Contemporary Dance Company (DCDC) on February 21-22 at the Aronoff's Jarson-Kaplan Theater. This marks DCDC's first full-length concert performances on a premier Cincinnati stage in more than a dozen years. Two evenings featuring hallmark works by the company will inaugurate the Flow series. As part of the residency, DCDC will engage with students at Frederick Douglass Elementary.

Additional artists announced for 2020 include award-winning jazz vocalist Jazzmeia Horn (May 1-2); the multimedia performance piece "Love Heals All Wounds" featuring Movement Art Is artists Lil Buck and Jon Boogz (Sept 26); and Broadway actor/singer Norm Lewis in his "Naughty & Nice" holiday cabaret show (Dec 4-5).

"Flow is about building greater demand for expressions of Black culture in this region," says Mel Gravely, TriVersity Construction Chief Executive Officer and Co-Chair of Flow's Board of Advisors. "It's an invitation to experience, more frequently, the inspiration and

provocation of Black artists working at the highest professional levels, which will add to our community conversation.”

Flow Co-Chair Mary Stagaman, Vice President of Inclusion at the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber, adds, “We have a great opportunity to leverage the arts to nurture a highly diverse, culturally competent, and globally competitive workforce and community. Flow adds to our region’s enviable arts offerings and accelerates our shared journey toward greater equity and inclusion of all cultural traditions.”

“Flow is a strategic undertaking for ArtsWave,” explains President and CEO Alecia Kintner. “Our ten-year Blueprint for Collective Action in the arts sector has the goals of deepening the roots of Cincinnati residents, particularly African Americans, and bridging cultural divides. Flow is one way that the arts are leading Cincinnati in becoming a more inclusive, future-oriented city.”

Flow’s founding partners include: Fifth Third Bank, Greater Cincinnati Foundation, P&G and the Cincinnati Arts Association, who also serves as the series’ production partner. Additional founders include Duke Energy, GE, TriVersity, Cincinnati Enquirer, d.e. Foxx, and Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center, who also is the series’ youth education sponsor. Media sponsors include: Cincinnati Enquirer, The Cincinnati Herald and Radio One.

More information at artswave.org/FLOW. Tickets for DCDC go on sale to the public tomorrow (November 13) at CincinnatiArts.org or by calling 513.621.2787.

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About ArtsWave

ArtsWave, a nonprofit serving the Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky Region, is the lead planner, promoter and fundraiser of the arts. Its roots stem back to the late 1920s when the Cincinnati Taft family provided initial investment matched by community support. In the late 1940s, it evolved to become the first united arts fund in the nation and in the mid-1970s, the first organization to initiate workplace giving for the arts. ArtsWave continues to innovate while leading, as illustrated by its No. 1 rank nationally in community arts fundraising; coordination of a sector-wide Blueprint for Collective Action; piloting of new technologies to maximize arts engagement; and development of resources for the arts.

Strong funding for the arts has allowed Cincinnati’s arts and culture scene to become a national draw and regional asset, creating a wave of economic and community benefits. Each year, ArtsWave supports the work of over 100 arts organizations, school outreach programs, festivals, community centers, neighborhoods and various collaborations through impact-based grants. In 2019, ArtsWave raised \$12,355,136 for the region’s arts, marking its sixth year in a row surpassing the milestone of \$12 million. ArtsWave remains the largest community campaign for the arts throughout the country, both in total contributions and number of donors.