



NEWS RELEASE

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RED CLAY DANCE COMPANY ANNOUNCES ITS 15TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

Celebrating a Legacy of Artivism through creating, performing and teaching dances of the African Diaspora

CHICAGO, IL. (JUNE 13, 2023) - Named in 2021 as one of “Chicago’s Cultural Treasures,” *Red Clay Dance Company* is launching its 15th Anniversary Season themed “15FORWARD.” To Celebrate this anniversary milestone, the company is presenting a diverse offering of performances and events to begin July 2023 and continue through June 2024.

Located in the Woodlawn community, Red Clay Dance Company is Chicago’s premier professional Afro-contemporary dance company which tours nationally and internationally sharing their stories and “Artivism” (art + activism). In its 15 year history, Red Clay Dance has created and produced award-winning original works that have appeared around the World and has become the home for professional and pre-professional dancers, dance-lovers and other artists to convene, create, and collaborate together.

The organization houses The Red Clay School of Dance and The Red Clay Dance Youth Ensemble which serves as a pipeline for youth in Chicago communities to become thriving professional artists by providing creative and safe spaces of liberation and inspiration. Red Clay Dance Company also provides resources by way of their Community Engagement, Education, and Partnerships (CEEP) program which offers culturally rich dance education, programming and training to schools and community spaces on Chicago’s South Side.

The 15th Anniversary season will highlight and pay tribute to Red Clay Dance Company’s work and legacy of thought-provoking, uplifting, challenging and innovative afro-contemporary socially-conscious dance, instruction and programming. This curated season was designed to build on the Company’s legacy of amplifying the voices of the African Diaspora.

“The number 15 is a marker for growth and expansion. As we kick off this 15FORWARD anniversary season, I am even more energized and dedicated to the work of growing and expanding the impact and creative work of this cultural institution.” says Vershawn Sanders-Ward, the brainchild of the organization, the institutions’ Founding Artistic Director & CEO. “This is my baby, but the baby is 15 now, and learning to lead from within, and it is now the home for so many talented artists and arts lovers, and that makes my heart sing!”

Sanders-Ward envisioned the concept for Red Clay Dance Company during her first trip to Africa in the summer of 2007, with a visit to L'Ecole De Sables, a dance school in Toubab Dialaw, Senegal, which brought economic development and entrepreneurial opportunities to its neighbors. Sanders-Ward desired to build an organization that would have this same impact in marginalized communities on the South Side of Chicago.

Red Clay Dance Company "15FORWARD" - Season 2023-2024

July 23, 2023 (12:00pm - 4:00pm)

Mardi Gras in July! Season Kick-off Celebration

Location: Red Clay Dance Studio (808 E. 63rd Street; Chicago,IL.)

Mardi Gras in July! is a FREE family friendly event in celebration of Red Clay Dance Company's 15-year investment and commitment to the Southside of Chicago in bringing high quality arts experience to the Woodlawn community with a day full of family fun! The event will feature a mobile style Mardi Gras parade down 63rd Street, drummers, stilt walkers, live DJ, food trucks, face painting, and free dance classes in the studios of Red Clay Dance Company.

August 23, 2023 (6:00pm)

Paint The Town Red Fundraiser

Location: Ivy Room located (12 East Ohio Street; Chicago, IL.)

Red Clay Dance Company and the Board of Directors hosts its annual Paint the Town RED: *Red Hot Summer Nights* Fundraiser! This end of summer soiree will celebrate the 15FORWARD Season and will present Social Justice Artist and Community Activist, Tonika Johnson Lewis with the 2023 Culture Creator Award. The event features an exclusive VIP pre-reception, live dance and music performances, signature cocktails, exquisite bites, guided by the hypnotic soundrotation of DJ Duane Powell.

March 14-16, 2024

La Femme Dance Festival

Location: Harris Theater for Music & Dance (205 E Randolph St, Chicago, IL)

La Femme Dance Festival is a 3-day event celebrating, supporting and advancing women of color in dance. This year's festival kicks off with the following events:

- **March 14th** - *Opening Reception- Black Women in the Arts fireside chat with prominent arts leaders locally and nationally. **Location:** Arts Club of Chicago, 201 E Ontario St, Chicago, IL*
- **March 15th**- *A series of masterclasses and workshops at our Center for Excellence in Woodlawn. **Location:** Red Clay Dance Company, 808 E. 63rd Street; Chicago,IL*
- **March 16th**- *Festival performance at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance featuring two works by Red Clay Dance Company and includes a new work by guest choreographer*

*Michelle Gibson and a special performance of **Portraits in Red** by Paris based choreographer Wanjiru Kamuyu. **Location:** Harris Theater, 205 E Randolph St, Chicago, IL*

June 8, 2024

Dance4Peace Youth Concert

Location: Logan Center for the Arts, 915 E. 60th Street, Chicago, IL

Red Clay School of Dance hosts its annual **DANCE4PEACE** Concert which is a celebratory, professional performance opportunity for its School of Dance students. This showcase features performances by the School of Dance Pre-Professional students and special guests to promote and spread the message of peace through music and dance.

For tickets and more information about the 15FORWARD Anniversary Season and all its events visit www.RedClayDance.com

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