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Brazilian Choreographer Introduces Contemporary Ballet Dancers To Candomblé

Dissonance Dance Theatre introduces Brazilian Choreographer Rafael Gomes to the Washington D.C. audience with its new dance work, *Gira*, which debuts in the company's INTERSECTIONS Festival premiere, [Mahogany Strings](#), February 25-26, 2017 at Atlas Performing Arts Center.

Gomes has been eyeing Dissonance Dance Theatre (DDT) since 2015. Gomes initially sought to join the company; but due to unforeseen circumstances, Rafael's dream was not realized. That didn't stop him. Gomes stayed in contact with DDT founder Shawn Short through social media.

DDT's 2017-2018 theatrical season marks its tenth year as D.C.'s leading contemporary ballet company. The company's repertoire ranges from contemporary ballet to folkloric. Gomes wanted to celebrate the company's great milestone by presenting a dance work mixing African and Brazilian movements entitled *Gira*.

"Discovering new energy points in the bodies, *Gira* comes to remember the importance of collective work and kinesthetic inspired by the good fluid, strength and vitality of the human being. The strong music presence, brands where you'll find the license and honor of the Candomblé and the great miscegenation of the Brazilian people. The clean and sophisticated finishing of the classical dancer, gets the mix of African and Brazilian movements more interesting. *Gira* makes a cultural appeal to the future of such as "Good human being" infecting the world with love," says Choreographer Rafael Gomes.

Originated in Salvador, Bahia at the beginning of the 19th century, Candomblé (Portuguese pronunciation: [kɐ̃dõmˈblɛ], dance in honor of the gods) is a religion, practiced mainly in Brazil by the "povo do santo" (people of the saint).

"We are excited to present our first Brazilian choreographer in our New Voice of Dance program for emerging choreographers", says Founding Producing Artistic Director Shawn Short. "Rafael brings a rich and spiritual dance work to our stage. Not only does *Gira* enriches the diversity of our repertoire, it brings attention the vast culture of a beautiful people and culture."

Mahogany Strings features DMV's award-winning contemporary ballet Dissonance Dance Theatre with music by classical, jazz, and urban-infused classical composers. A mixed-repertoire dance concert where classical ballet changes stylistic perception through music: classical, jazz, and hip-hop.

"We cannot stereotype one another, nor should we want to. *Mahogany Strings* blindly looks at classical ballet as cultural dance of a group of people. Like America we all grow strongly when we grow from our differences. It's

time for classical ballet to meet 21st century musical swag.

- Shawn Short, Founding Producing Artistic Director

Tickets start at \$30. \$20 tickets with code:balletswag. For more information, visit DDT's website www.ddtdc.org.

Address: Lang Theater, The Atlas Performing Arts Center, 1333 H Street NE, Washington, DC 20002

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Named "One of the 11 small-but-mighty dance companies outside of LA and NYC" by Dance Spirit Magazine, Dissonance Dance Theatre is a Washington, DC-based professional dance company founded in 2007 by Shawn Short. Evoking emotional experiences in the audiences we touch, Dissonance's cutting-edge repertoire features works that are socially and visually appealing to audiences while remaining true to its mission; challenging audience's assumptions about the human experience through dance. DDT is the resident ballet company of parent organization Ngoma Center for Dance. Ngoma (N-GO-Mah) Center for Dance is a 501(c)3 arts organization whose mission is to provide a conduit between multicultural dance artists and their enthusiasts, across generations and social classes, with a deeper understanding of the art of dance through intense community integration, inspirational performance, competitive training, and artist development. For more information on visit www.ngcddt.org.