

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Building Black Ballerinas: Ngoma Invests \$108,000 to Train Black Swans of Tomorrow**

Website: [www.ngcfddt.org](http://www.ngcfddt.org)

Video Links

DDT Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/282567288>

Ngoma Center for Dance assists with the national initiative to provide more spaces to train ballerinas of color. This summer is a milestone in its efforts. Ngoma Center for Dance's Founding Director Shawn Short, had a dream in 2012 and it is beginning to blossom.

"I grew up in the DC area, in a time where Black arts were prevalent and vast in diversity", says Short.

" DC Black dance companies have always been cultural treasures to communities since 1934. The companies even helped to develop neighboring Black-majority Prince George's county's (Maryland) dance arts scene. We should be able to build equity in ourselves and for our communities" - Shawn Short

Short mentions that there are less than five out of 36 Black dance entities left, and that Ngoma has "rolled up its sleeves" to answer the call.

Ngoma designed its strategic plan with its board members, in 2012, and with great assistance from the University of Maryland's School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies rental staff an initial Saturday program was developed. With great programmatic success, The Ngoma School was created in 2014 to expand pre-pre-professional training year round.

The Ngoma School is the only Black-managed dance school attached to a professional company in the Washington, DC area. Dissonance Dance Theatre, founded by Shawn Short in 2007, was titled "One of the 11 small-but-mighty dance companies outside of LA and NYC" by Dance Spirit Magazine.

This summer completes phase one with Ngoma investing \$108,000. The investment covered facility and staff costs, pointe (demipointe) shoes purchases, tutu-tacking classes, and production fees.

Eight budding ballerinas begin pointe training this upcoming school year.

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The official school of [Dissonance Dance Theatre](#), DC's Only African-American managed, and nationally-recognized contemporary ballet. Serving over 200 students annually since 2014, The Ngoma School is emerging as a Washington, DC area dance-school destination for students interested in a professional concert dance career. The Ngoma School offers programs for students in a range of ages and with different levels of ability. School year programs include the highest quality of instruction in ballet, modern, jazz and hip-hop technique.