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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Marcus Performing Arts Center Announces 2024/25 “Culture Collective,” Showcasing Prominent Artists of Color

As part of the 2024/25 MPAC Presents Series, the second year of the Culture Collective features 10 shows and events from September to April

MILWAUKEE (August 6, 2024) – After a successful inaugural season, the [Marcus Performing Arts Center](#) (MPAC) is proud to announce the second year of the [Culture Collective](#), an exciting addition to its performance lineup designed to celebrate and elevate the contributions of artists of color across a spectrum of artistic disciplines.

The Culture Collective aligns with MPAC’s commitment to [Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(REDI\)](#) in the performing arts. This year’s Collective features eight performances featuring prominent artists of color ranging from award-winning musicians and dance companies to dazzling cirque and concert experiences as well as two free community events.

“The Culture Collective not only enriches our artistic offerings but also fosters meaningful connections and learning opportunities through our educational and community engagement activities,” stated **Kevin Giglinto, MPAC President & CEO**. “With the second year of the Collective, we are proud to continue this journey as part of our commitment to Racial, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, ensuring that the transformative power of the arts reaches everyone in our community.”

Tickets are now on sale for all performances. These shows may also be combined with other MPAC Presents performances to create a [Build Your Own \(BYO\) Series](#) (three or more shows) for instant savings of 15%.

To purchase tickets, visit www.MarcusCenter.org, call 414-273-7206 for personal service, or visit the MPAC Box Office at 929 North Water Street, Downtown Milwaukee. Groups of 10 or more receive special discount pricing and can secure their seats by calling 414-273-7207.

Numerous educational and community engagement activities will be part of the 2024/25 Culture Collective. MPAC will offer a range of activities alongside our performances, including masterclasses, Q&A sessions, post-show talkbacks, and more in partnership with local schools and community organizations, ensuring that the transformative power of the arts reaches individuals of all ages and backgrounds. Our 2024/25 Student Matinee Series will also be announced at a later date, which will include several of the artists featured in the Collective.

The Culture Collective is generously supported by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation and the Wisconsin Arts Board. Additional support is provided by Bader Philanthropies, Inc., the National Endowment for the Arts,

Northwestern Mutual Foundation, and Saint Kate – The Arts Hotel. For Culture Collective sponsorship opportunities, please contact give@marcuscenter.org.

Following is a chronological listing of the shows as part of this season's Culture Collective.

[esperanza spalding](#)

Tuesday, September 17, 2024 | 7:30 p.m.

esperanza spalding (a.k.a. irma nejando) is an eaabibacliitoti* artist, trained and initiated in the North American (masculine) jazz lineage and tradition. Emphasizing the simplicity and intimacy of her voice, bass, and songs, in this special configuration of 2 musicians and 2 dancers, esperanza performs songs from all 8 of her previous albums, songs from current releases, plus a special preview of her forthcoming project.

**European-African ancestored being influenced by American cultures living in Indigenous Territories of Turtle Island*

[The Hip Hop Nutcracker](#)

Friday, November 22, 2024 | 7:30 p.m.

A holiday mash-up for the whole family, The Hip Hop Nutcracker returns to Milwaukee by popular demand. Directed and choreographed by Tony and Olivier Award-nominated Jennifer Weber, this contemporary dance spectacle is a re-mixed and re-imagined version of the classic, smashing hip hop dance and Tchaikovsky's timeless music together into a heart-stirring and inspirational holiday event. The Hip Hop Nutcracker is brought to life by a powerhouse cast of a dozen all-star dancers, a DJ, a violinist, and MC Kurtis Blow, one of hip hop's founding fathers, who opens the show with a short set.

[41st Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration](#)

Monday, January 20, 2024 | 4:00 p.m.

Free Community Event

This cherished community event is dedicated to preserving the impactful legacy of Dr. King. For four decades, young people have been the heart of this celebration, expressing Dr. King's timeless messages through art, speech, and writing contests. This program has impacted the lives of countless Milwaukee youth, providing a platform for creativity and fostering a deeper understanding of Dr. King's teachings. Since 1984, Milwaukee has proudly stood alongside Atlanta as one of the only cities in the country to host an annual celebration in honor of Dr. King's birthday.

[Cirque Kalabanté: Afrique en Cirque](#)

Wednesday, January 29, 2025 | 7:30 p.m.

Cirque Kalabanté combines breathtaking acrobatics with live music played on traditional Guinean instruments in Afrique en Cirque, a vibrant show by Yamoussa Bangoura. Dazzling circus arts intertwine with the sounds of live Afro-Jazz music, percussion beats, and the soulful melodies of the kora, a West African string instrument. Get ready for an unforgettable journey with Cirque Kalabanté as you are swept away into the heart of Guinea through mesmerizing blend of acrobatics, music, and dance.

[Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis](#)

Thursday, January 30, 2025 | 7:30 p.m.

Led by artistic director, trumpeter extraordinaire, and nine-time Grammy Award®-winner Wynton Marsalis, the sensational Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra (JLCO) has brought the art form of jazz with its swinging rhythms and soulful melodies from the heart of New York City to cities around the world for more than three decades. A leading advocate for jazz, culture, and arts education, every performance of the JLCO features musicians of unparalleled artistry and musical mastery and is a celebration of the spirit of jazz and its enduring influence.

[Complexions Contemporary Ballet](#)

Wednesday, February 5, 2025 | 7:30 p.m.

Under the artistic direction of dance icons Dwight Rhoden and Desmond Richardson, Complexions Contemporary Ballet is bringing their groundbreaking style to Milwaukee for the first time ever. With a rich Alvin Ailey lineage and

16 stunning dancers, Complexions has been hailed as a “matchless American dance company” by the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and “game changing” by *The Guardian*. The company will perform their blockbuster hit program, STAR DUST: From Bach to David Bowie, an utterly transfixing tribute to the life and music of David Bowie, full of glitter and glam.

[YAMATO: The Drummers of Japan](#)

Wednesday, March 5, 2025 | 7:30 p.m.

Passion meets tradition with the explosive energy of YAMATO: The Drummers of Japan. The internationally acclaimed group performs a powerhouse program featuring over 40 traditional Taiko drums, each with its own unique character and sound. Founded over 30 years ago in Nara Prefecture, said to be the birthplace of Japanese culture and civilization, YAMATO travels the world to share this longstanding cultural tradition. The highly skilled, athletic drummers channel the heartbeat and spirit of their homeland in this spectacular show.

[6th Annual César E. Chávez Celebration](#)

Sunday, April 6, 2025 | 4:00 p.m.

Free Community Event

This annual event focuses on educating our communities about the legacy of César E. Chávez, an unselfish advocate of social justice and respect for human dignity. Programming highlights the youth in our community. Building on the success of the Dr. King Birthday Celebration, we engage young people from schools throughout the region through art, writing, and speech contests.

[Ladies of Hip Hop | The Black Dancing Bodies Project: Speak My Mind](#)

Friday, April 4, 2025 | 7:30 p.m.

Ladies of Hip Hop (LOHH) is an all-female intergenerational dance collective that creates dance works illuminating the strength, power, and diversity of women in Hip Hop. Under the direction of founder Michele Byrd-McPhee, LOHH interweaves the embodied experiences of women, creating a communal fabric that paints a picture of a more global women experience. **The Black Dancing Bodies Project: Speak My Mind** is an initiative to uplift and celebrate Black women in street and club dance culture, addressing the erasure and miscoding of Black women’s contributions to American dance culture.

[Lakecia Benjamin](#)

Friday, April 11, 2025 | 7:30 p.m.

With her deep jazz roots, electric presence, and fiery sax work, Lakecia Benjamin fuses traditional concepts of jazz, hip hop, and soul to create a fresh new sound. A dynamic young performer, Benjamin has shared stages with many legendary artists, including Stevie Wonder, Alicia Keys, Christian McBride, Gregory Porter, and The Roots and was voted “Rising Star Alto Saxophonist” in the 2020 *Downbeat* Critics Poll and “Up and Coming Artist of the Year” by the Jazz Journalists Association.

[MPAC REDI Action Plan](#)

The Marcus Performing Arts Center commits to creating a more racially representative and equitable community at MPAC so that we may continue to build bridges between diverse members of our community through high-quality arts and entertainment. We strengthen our commitment through our Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) Action Plan, with the following pillars: Representation, Inclusion, and Investment

Embodying “Representation,” the Culture Collective highlights shows featuring artists of color, exceeding for the 4th year in a row MPAC’s original pledge for 30% of annual programming dedicated to voices of artists of color.

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About Marcus Performing Arts Center

A mission-based non-profit organization located in downtown Milwaukee, the Marcus Performing Arts Center (MPAC) brings high-quality arts and cultural programming to Southeastern Wisconsin. MPAC strives to act as an energizing force that connects the community to the world through collaboration, innovation, social engagement, and the transformative power of the performing arts. Through multiple performance series, community events, and educational experiences, MPAC brings a diverse range of celebrated artists to the region. A fixture in Milwaukee for over 50 years, MPAC is proud to be part of the Milwaukee Theater District as well as a dedicated War Memorial facility. Learn more at www.MarcusCenter.org.