



DANCE CELEBRATION

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JPEG images available upon request

**MAURICE HINES HOOFS INTO PHILLY AS STAR OF  
*THANK YOU GREGORY, A TRIBUTE TO THE LEGENDS OF TAP,*  
TO OPEN DANCE CELEBRATION'S 2009-2010 SEASON  
SEVEN PERFORMANCES ONLY  
OCTOBER 6-10, 2009**

Philadelphia, PA — Maurice Hines, renowned star of stage and screen and brother/partner of the legendary Gregory Hines, will be hoofing into town this fall to star in the world premiere of *Thank You Gregory, A Tribute to the Legends of Tap*, October 6-10, at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Pennsylvania, 3680 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, launching Dance Celebration's 28<sup>th</sup> season, *The Magic of Movement*.

Featuring an all-star cast of eight led by Emmy® Award-winner and tap phenom Jason Samuels Smith, as well as a live band and multimedia projections, this new production of *Thank You Gregory*, produced by Dance Affiliates' Randy Swartz, directed by Ann Marie De Angelo (former principal dancer and associate artistic director of Joffrey Ballet), and written by Tony Waag (artistic director of the American Tap Foundation) pays homage to tap's leading ambassador Gregory Hines, and the great legends who preceded him.

Under the artistic direction of Randy Swartz, **Dance Celebration, presented by Dance Affiliates and the Annenberg Center's Penn Presents**, maintains its tradition of bringing Philadelphia audiences the world's best contemporary touring dance companies. This season pays tribute to American dance, showcasing the diversity of styles including tap, Broadway, jazz, contemporary, hip-hop, multimedia and dance theater. Notes Mr. Swartz about *Thank You Gregory*, "this production celebrates America's history, diversity and creativity, as well as our energy and optimism. It is truly a dance party and everyone is invited to bring their tap shoes."

Inspired by the success of Dance Affiliates' 2005 production, about which the *Philadelphia Inquirer* wrote, "*Thank You Gregory* is not only entertaining, it's a lesson in dance history... a great opportunity to see some of tap's finest," the new show salutes such tap titans as Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, John Bubbles, the Nicholas Brothers, Honi Coles, Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly, Ray Bolger, Donald O'Connor, Dr. Jimmy Slyde and the Copacetics, as well as tap's leading ladies, and especially Gregory Hines, who redefined the art form and influenced a new generation of tappers. The program reflects the scope and breadth of tap's genres and timelines including vaudeville,

(more)

## 2-2-2-2 Maurice Hines Opens Dance Celebration Season with Thank You Gregory

Harlem and the Club circuit, Hollywood and Broadway, as well as the art form's recent renaissance on concert stages and in electronic media.

Sections of live and filmed dances showcase the elegant, highly-choreographed and oh-so-smooth styles of Astaire, Coles and Slyde, the athleticism of the Nicholas Brothers, the eccentric creations of O'Connor and Bolger and the pervasive percussive rhythms of Bojangles, Bubbles, Brown, Hines and today's preeminent hoofers. Ensemble sections include the classic tap favorites Shim Sham Shimmy and the Stroll. The live band features Bernice Brooks (drummer), Joe Fonda (bass) and Theo Hill (piano).

The late Tony® and Emmy® Award-winner Gregory Hines referred to Jason Samuels Smith as "possibly the next greatest [tap dancer]." Called "smashingly inventive" by the *New York Times*, Smith (the featured performer for ***Thank You Gregory***) leads a stellar cast including Chloe Arnold (a protégé of Debbie Allen), Michelle Dorrance (cast member of off-Broadway's *STOMP*), Kendrick Jones (soloist for *Tap City*), Dormeisha Sumbry-Edwards (captain/principal dancer for Broadway's *Bring in Da 'Noise, Bring in Da 'Funk*), Brent McBeth (of *Fosse* fame), Heather Holohan (a protégé of Brenda Bufalino) and Melinda Sullivan (original cast member of Disney's national touring production of *High School Musical*). (See attached bio sheet) Gregory Hines once said, "I love tap dancing. I get so inspired, so filled up." In response, Tony Waag exclaims, "In Gregory's honor and in his spirit, this production pays tribute to America's leading tap legends."

In addition to performances, ***Thank You Gregory*** dancers will offer outreach activities including two master classes, as part of Dance Affiliates' *Artist to Artist Series* and two special school performances as part of the *Student Discovery Series* at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts. For more information about the *Artist to Artist Series*, call 215-636-9000 x110 or visit [www.danceaffiliates.org](http://www.danceaffiliates.org). For more information about the *Student Discovery Series* and to purchase tickets, call 215.898.6789 or visit [AnnenbergCenter.org/studentdiscovery](http://AnnenbergCenter.org/studentdiscovery).

Performances will take place on Tuesday, October 6 at 7:30 pm; Wednesday, October 7 at 2 pm and 7:30 pm; Thursday, October 8 at 7:30 pm; Friday, October 9 at 8 pm and Saturday, October 10 at 2 pm and 8 pm. Ticket prices are \$38 - \$58 (evening) and \$34 - \$54 (matinee), and **may be purchased by calling the Annenberg Center Box Office at 215-898-3900 or by visiting [www.AnnenbergCenter.org](http://www.AnnenbergCenter.org). Dance Celebration subscriptions are on sale now and include a savings of up to 34% off regular single ticket prices. Single tickets go on sale August 31, 2009, and will be available online, over the phone and in person at the Annenberg Center Box Office.**

This production of ***Thank You Gregory, A Tribute to the Legends of Tap*** and its world premiere are made possible with major support from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.

**Significant funding for the 2009-10 Dance Celebration season is provided by the William Penn Foundation and also in part by Business Friends of Dance (Affiliates), The Connelly Foundation, Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation, Samuel S. Fels Fund, Friends of Dance (Affiliates), Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, New England Foundation for the Arts, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Pennsylvania Presenters, The Philadelphia Cultural Fund, and the Virginia C. Mulconroy Fund of The Philadelphia Foundation.**

For more information on the upcoming production of ***Thank You Gregory*** and Dance Celebration's 28<sup>th</sup> season or for press tickets and/or interview requests, please call Nina Zucker Associates at 610.667.0706 or email [nzapr@aol.com](mailto:nzapr@aol.com). For more information on the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, please call 215-898-3900 or visit [www.AnnenbergCenter.org](http://www.AnnenbergCenter.org).

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