

RONALD K. BROWN / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

EVIDENCE

A DANCE COMPANY



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about

EVIDENCE A DANCE COMPANY



Founded by Ronald K. Brown in 1985 and based in Brooklyn, New York, EVIDENCE, A Dance Company focuses on the seamless integration of traditional African dance with contemporary choreography and spoken word. Through work, EVIDENCE provides a unique view of human struggles, tragedies, and triumphs. Brown uses movement as a way to reinforce the importance of community in African American culture and to acquaint audiences with the beauty of traditional African forms and rhythms. He is an advocate for the growth of the African American dance community and is instrumental in encouraging young dancers to choreograph and develop careers in dance.

Brown has set dance works on Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ailey II, Cleo Parker Robinson Ensemble, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Jennifer Muller/The Works, Jeune Ballet d'Afrique Noire, Ko-Thi Dance Company, Philadanco and many others. He was recently commissioned to set a new dance work to - jazz legend - Max Roach's *Percussion Bittersweet*, which premiered at The Joyce in 2024 in honor of Roach's centennial celebration.

EVIDENCE now tours to some 25 communities in the United States and abroad. The company has traveled to Cuba, Brazil, England, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Mexico, Senegal, Nigeria, South Africa and Canada to perform, teach master classes and conduct lectures/demonstrations for individuals of all ages. EVIDENCE brings arts education and cultural connections to local communities that have historically lacked these experiences. Annually the company reaches an audience of more than 30,000.

artistic director



RONALD K. BROWN

RONALD K. BROWN, raised in Brooklyn, NY, founded EVIDENCE, A Dance Company in 1985. He has worked with Mary Anthony Dance Theater, Jennifer Muller/The Works, as well as other choreographers and artists. Brown has set works on Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ailey II, Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Jennifer Muller/The Works, Jeune Ballet d’Afrique Noire, Ko-Thi Dance Company, Philadanco, Muntu Dance Theater of Chicago, Ballet Hispánico, TU Dance, and Malpaso Dance Company.

Brown is the recipient of the **Jacob’s Pillow Dance Award** (2020), the **Dance Magazine Award** (2018), and the **Samuel H. Scripps/ADF Award** (2018). Other awards and recognitions include the **AUDELCO Award** for his choreography in Regina Taylor’s award-winning play *Crowns*, two **Black Theater Alliance Awards**, and a **Fred & Adele Astaire Award** for Outstanding Choreography in the Tony Award-winning Broadway and national touring production of The Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess*, adapted by Suzan Lori Parks, arrangement by Diedre Murray and directed by Diane Paulus.

Brown was named Def Dance Jam Workshop 2000 Mentor of the Year and has received; the Doris Duke Artist Award, NYC City Center Fellowship, John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship, National Endowment for the Arts Choreographers Fellowship, New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, United States Artists Fellowship, a New York Dance and Performance “Bessie” Award, and The Ailey Apex Award.

Brown is Co-Artistic Director of RestorationART Youth Arts Academy Pre-Professional Training Program / Restoration Dance Youth Ensemble and a member of Stage Directors & Choreographers Society.

“Ronald K. Brown is something of an archaeologist. In his dances—poetic structures of great subtlety and force—there is a sense of a singular artist digging for a forgotten treasure.”



FEATURED

repertory

THE EQUALITY OF NIGHT & DAY (2022)

Length: 23 minutes
8-10 dancers

The Equality of Night and Day (TEND) examines the concepts of balance, equity, and fairness in light of the conflicting present-day issues that young people, women, and people of color now face in a world where exploitation, gentrification, racism, and xenophobia are on the rise.



GRACE (1994/2004)

Length: 33 minutes
8-10 dancers

Originally choreographed in 1999 for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre and now considered a masterpiece in the Ailey repertory, EVIDENCE brings its own unique style *Grace*, added to the company's repertory in 2004. *Grace* weaves the story of a Goddess' journey to Earth to spread grace among humans, ultimately welcoming them to heaven.



OPEN DOOR (2015/2023)

Length: 20 minutes
8-10 dancers

Originally created on Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre in 2015, Open Door now joins the EVIDENCE touring repertory! Inspired by "La Puerta," a section from GRAMMY-Award winning musician and composer, Arturo O'Farrill's album, Cuba: The Conversation Continues. This work opens with a duet followed by a procession that invites the audience into a world of Afro-Cuban dance and joyous abandonment, ending in a state of bliss.



TORCH (2012)

Length: 18 minutes
8-10 dancers

This piece was created in residence at the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation Youth Arts Academy. With generous support from Reggie Van Lee, Alvin Adell, New York Community Trust/ The King Family Fund and Friends of CELEBRATE BETH.



OTHER

repertory

PERCUSSION BITTER SWEET: TENDER WARRIORS (2024)

American Jazz composer and drummer Max Roach would have turned 100 years old in 2024. To celebrate his lasting impact on dance and music in this country, Ronald K. Brown developed a new work in collaboration with Associate Artistic Director, Arcell Cabuag, and a combined ensemble of dancers from Havana's Malpaso Dance Company (Cuba) and EVIDENCE (USA), set to one of Roach's iconic scores, *Percussion Bitter Sweet*.

Like Roach, Ron was raised in the Bed-Stuy section of Brooklyn and draws from his African-American cultural roots. Ron also traveled to Cuba in 2001 where the dance, music, and culture inspired him to incorporate more Afro-Cuban music and vocabulary in his work.



MARCH (1995)

Length: 10 minutes
2 dancers

A part of his larger work *Lessons*, *March* is an extraordinary duet set to a speech by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech on the value of a man. The movement embodies the sentiment of the text to illustrate a physical story of perseverance, dignity, and collective strength and caretaking.

COME YE (2003)

Length: 27 minutes
8-10 dancers

Inspired by the music and sociopolitical legacies of artists/activists Nina Simone and Fela Kuti, *Come Ye* is a multimedia work that utilizes Mr. Brown's signature style of kinetic storytelling. Through African, Caribbean, modern, ballet, and social dance styles, the work summons warriors, angels and activists dedicated to the pursuit of liberation and peace amidst the struggles of human conflict.



HIGH LIFE (2000)

Length: 33 minutes
8-10 dancers



FOUR CORNERS (2014/2017)

Length: 22 minutes
8-10 dancers

Brown's *Four Corners* was originally commissioned for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 2014. Dancers depict spiritual seekers amid four angels standing on the corners of the earth, holding the four winds. In creating his fifth commission for the Ailey company since 1999, the celebrated choreographer turned to the song "Lamentations" by his friend, recording artist Carl Hancock Rux. Drawing from West African and modern dance influences, Brown uses grounded, earthy movements to portray figures who are burdened by grief but ultimately find peace, solace, and freedom with the aid of "the angels in their corners" mentioned in Rux's text.

...Beloved, you say your God, woman you're earth, lamentations born, you son ... Four Corners with blades and sheaths.....Stand Up.....

High Life is built as images of migration and the discovery of decadence. This dance looks at the movement, stories, and music that describe the journey of the American Negro from the rural south to the north. The work examines music, fashion, and culture that developed in West African cities as young people and families left in their villages, making their way to the dreams and aspirations pregnant in developing metropolises. The implications of newfound freedom and self-determination are addressed in this dance, where celebration and new beginnings are studied alongside the traditional and cultural values that are lost during the discovery of so-called liberation.



UPSIDE DOWN (1998)

Length: 21 minutes
8-10 dancers

Upside Down opens with the premonition of community mourning. The dance depicts a race with an underlying impetus that drives the individual towards their destiny. The score begins with Malian vocalist Oumou Sangare's "Kun Fe Ko" (The Uncertainty of Things), a song which states that the destiny of a child is in God's hands. The remainder of *Upside Down* is set to Fela Anikulapo Kuti's song of the same title, which tells the story of chaos and corruption amidst an abuse of power and the ever-strong desire for wealth. The dance calls upon the loss of a community member as a rite and cultivates solidarity. The imagery of the ascension and passing on of one soul reflects the idea that one's destiny is to the self.





IFE: MY HEART (2005)

Length: 22 minutes
8-10 dancers

Ife: My Heart was built as the journey of three families traveling to one destination, the temple of God. A place where the heart was open. Originally choreographed for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 2005, the work looks at the parallel journey of three traditions towards love, or “ife” (loving one another the way God loves us). With costumes that reference the U.S., Cuba, and West Africa, the piece implores each of us to “release your heart” in response to the conflicts and conditions in the world and in our personal relationships.

GATEKEEPERS (1999/2012)

Length: 30 minutes
8-10 dancers

Originally commissioned by Philadanco, *Gatekeepers* portrays dancers as “soldiers walking toward heaven, searching for the wounded and looking out to make a safe haven for others to follow.” The name “Gatekeeper” is given to a newborn child in some African cultures and preparations are made to welcome the child into the community. In these cultures, they often observe two worlds: the world of form (life) and the unseen world (afterlife). “Gatekeepers” guard a portal into the unseen world, where we connect with our ancestors in the afterlife if we are properly prepared. The theme of preparing the way—a safe and peaceful way of life across generations, and our responsibility to help each other in this quest—is present in many of Brown’s works.



ON EARTH TOGETHER (2011/12)

Length: 48 minutes
8-10 dancers

On Earth Together is inspired by and set to the music of Stevie Wonder. The piece is a study in compassion and relationships, not only between individuals but also with the world around them as well. Brown asserts, “The more I discover and imagine, I see the work as a commitment to making the world a better place: a loving & compassionate place to celebrate a world-view. The music of Stevie Wonder often speaks to the state of the world, asking questions of oneself and to society at large.”



MORE REPERTORY

available upon request

OUTREACH

activities

A core part of the EVIDENCE mission is to bring community engagement and cultural connections to every region it visits. Through these programs, EVIDENCE's goal is to increase access to arts education, to teach children and adults about cultural heritage and tradition, and to support practitioners of dance through training and mentorship.

Contemporary Dance Class

Classes have an emphasis on alignment, rhythm and using the body to express ideas and themes; strength, prayer, and celebration

Repertory Workshop

This workshop gives pre-professional students and young dancers the opportunity to learn Ronald K. Brown / EVIDENCE repertory.

Community Master Class

Master Classes are designed for inter-generational participants with a wide range to no dance experience; featuring simplified steps from Brown's blended style of contemporary, African, and Caribbean dance styles.

Choreography Lab

Participants will learn tools to employ in the development of choreography, including improvisation, partnering, creating companion phrases, how to use space, music, and text.

Text & Movement Class

This workshop combines the use of movement, writing, and story telling allowing participants to talk about body language and intention in creating and performing work.



Afro-Cuban Connection

This residency explores Ron's use of the vocabulary and cultural influences learned during his numerous trips to Cuba and Africa through master classes, talks and curated performances of Ron's Afro-Cuban choreography.

Legacy & Expression Workshop

Utilizing the basic tenets of his wildly popular text and movement workshop, Ronald K. Brown / EVIDENCE work with participants using photographs and the content suggested in them, such as legacy, community, family, identity, and the emotions expressed by those ideas. Taking a "static" captured moments in time and creating a movement sequence that strives to reveal the history, legacy, dignity, and vitality of that photograph is the challenge participants will come to appreciate in this workshop.

Gatekeepers Community Class

This inter-generational workshop was designed out of the ideas supported by the dance piece *Gatekeepers*. In some Native American and West African Cultures, a child is given the name of an elder or ancestor so they understand their connection to the heaven and earth. Sharing the same name also encourages a sense of lineage, responsibility and caretaking. This workshop provides a space to reinforce these ideas.

Two-Year Old Gentlemen Workshop

This workshop is designed for fathers & sons, or mentors and mentees designed to support the ideas that are at the core of the dance piece *Two-Year Old Gentlemen*. The bond between boys and men in their development is very important as we look to create a space where role models can guide and support the endeavors of the youth who are the leaders of tomorrow.



MORE OUTREACH ACTIVITES

available upon request

PRESS

quotes

"The choreographer Ronald K. Brown always seems to know what his audience needs, and he supplies it with a generous hand. . . Brown's company Evidence offered multiple perspectives on warmth and humanity."

— Sarah L. Kaufman, The Washington Post
November 9, 2019

"...I was struck by the seemingly ceaseless rise of energy...even in the moments of pause or stillness, the dancers continued to emit radiant strength; their commitment to the dance, to the art, to Brown, to each other, to us, is formidable, precious. Breathtaking and life-sustaining and hopeful."

— Janine Parker, Boston Globe
June 30, 2022

his movement signature invites an emotional response, a sense of ideation, as if audience members are somehow so intertwined with the dance that they themselves are up onstage."

"In his own unique way, Brown charges the performing arts in this century with a new mandate: Make the world a more loving and compassionate place."

— Rachael Carnes, Eugene Weekly
April 10, 2017

"Ronald K. Brown/EVIDENCE is a gift to the dance community."

— Marina Kennedy, Broadway World
January 19, 2023

"The dances, billed as "Grace and Mercy" . . . are pure Brown: otherworldly, charged, urgent in their undulating sweep and unaffectedly fervent. His blend of modern dance and movement from African traditions weaves a rich, poetic language that has the ability to lift the spirit — even if it's just for a night."

— Gia Kourlas, The New York Times
June 28, 2019

"...choreographer Ronald K. Brown reminds audiences how faith can unite us, heal us and help us get through the worst that life and human nature can inflict. For more than 30 years his New York-based Evidence company has used a sophisticated amalgam of Afrocentric movement and modern dance to make spirituality not merely a passive state but something vibrant and transformative."

— Lewis Segal, Los Angeles Times
March 26, 2016

"Choreographer Ronald K. Brown takes his audiences to church — but it isn't stuffy or preachy or hobbled by any particular kind of dogma. It's more a sense of grounded spirituality and abiding humanism that runs through his dances like a deep vein"

— Karen Campbell, The Boston Globe
November 25, 2014



“There is the joy of the ensemble moving in concert – as a tribe, a people – and the more ephemeral pleasure of abundant evocative details setting off fireworks of association.”

— Apollinaire Scherr, *Financial Times*
February 11, 2011

“If there is any company working today whose dancers pack a more sophisticated and vibrant kinetic punch than those of Ronald K. Brown/*Evidence*, I can’t think of it.”

— Claudia La Rocco, *The New York Times*
December 19, 2010

“The dancing is undeniably powerful; it sweeps you up in its physical tumult and strong emotions. There is nothing cool and restrained about Brown’s works...”

— Sarah Kaufman, *Washington Post*
May 3, 2010

“The appeal of his own troupe, *Evidence*, A Dance Company, lies in the dancers’ own ownership of their skills and their bodies; they fearlessly assert powerful personalities.”

— Gus Solomons Jr, *Dance Magazine*
May 2009

“...I can’t watch his work, with its rich blend of African and American modern dance, sitting still. What happens on stage is so supple and alive, so irresistibly kinetic”

— Brian Seibert, *The New York Times*
March 23, 2022

“Choreographer Ronald K. Brown creates dances so kinetically irresistible that it’s hard not to squirm in your seat, to nod the chin and cock the shoulders up and down, tapping along to the beat.”

— Karen Campbell, *The Boston Globe*
October 19, 2009

“...the passions and pulsations that animate his choreography ring with power and expressivity.”

“The drumming, the folk songs and the poetry-reciting tracks that provide the work with its colorful rhythms and atmosphere make the “one destination” described in the notes for *Ife/My Heart* a place where the dancing bodies are both grounded and in the clouds. Mr. Brown’s impressive career has taken him to a similar place.”

— Robert Greskovic, *The Wall Street Journal*
February 10, 2011



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