

The Miami Times

DanceAfrica Miami returns after nearly 20-year hiatus

Reception Friday marked kick-off for August festival activities, workshops

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Delou Africa Dance Ensemble performs at a reception Friday to kick off the return of DanceAfrica Miami.

The return of DanceAfrica Miami kicked off with a cocktail reception on Friday, June 17 at the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center. The return follows a nearly 20-year hiatus since the last DanceAfrica Miami festival in 1997, when it was presented by Miami Dade College Wolfson Campus.

The reception hosted attendees for an evening of culture and traditional African dance and music as well as a mini performance by the Delou Africa Dance Ensemble. Attendees participated in drumming and traditional African dance demonstrations and learned a traditional Senegalese song, and the Black Affairs Advisory Board presented Delou Africa with a certificate of recognition for the vision to relaunch DanceAfrica Miami.

DanceAfrica Miami makes its South Florida debut in conjunction with Delou Africa's seventh annual African Diaspora Dance and Drum Festival of Florida on August 5-7, with festival activities and workshops at the Little Haiti Cultural Complex and the concert extravaganza at the Miramar Cultural Center. The return of DanceAfrica Miami was made possible in part by a grant awarded by the Knight Foundation.

The return of DanceAfrica Miami is an opportunity to expand the community's cultural awareness of African dance, music, and culture. Driven by Delou Africa's vision

to bridge cultural gaps through a diversity of multicultural programming, DanceAfrica Miami is being presented to the community through a series of cultural, artistic and educational events and programming. Similar to the success that DanceAfrica New York has enjoyed over the past 39 years at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, DanceAfrica Miami has the potential to boost South Florida's profile as a cultural arts destination.

The two-day African Diaspora Dance and Drum Festival of Florida will feature African, modern, and Caribbean dance, drum and music workshops, international dance choreographers, a global bazaar and artisan marketplace, a health fair, and a Children's Village zone. The concert extravaganza features New York's Forces of Nature Dance Theater, which celebrates 35 years of producing ballets and educational programming in the U.S. and abroad. The festival will also feature world renowned performers and talented local artists representing Africa, the Caribbean, the U.S. and the Delou Africa Dance Ensemble. Immediately following the concert is a gala reception fundraiser to benefit ongoing programs and events with entertainment provided by Pantastick Steel Orchestra, Fun Generation costume showcase for the 2016 Miami Broward One Carnival, and DJ Isis. South African Airways will also sponsor a raffle drawing for two round trip tickets to South Africa.

The nationally recognized DanceAfrica festival network was created during the 1960s under the artistic direction of Dr. Chuck Davis. Over the course of nearly four decades, DanceAfrica has grown as a movement to showcase the rich social, religious, and ceremonial traditions of African heritage through performance, art, film, and community events.

For more information about DanceAfrica Miami and the upcoming festival, visit www.adddff.delouafrica.org.