



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Introducing the 37th annual DanceAfrica DC festival, *Both Sides of the Water*, A Celebration of African-Native Culture

WHAT: [Dance Place presents DanceAfrica DC](#) Festival; Live Performances, Vendor Marketplace, and Oral History Presentation

WHEN: Tuesday, May 28 – Saturday, June 1st

WHERE: Dance Place 3225 8th Street NE Washington, DC 20017

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Join Dance Place for a week of dance, music, and tradition during our 37th annual DanceAfrica DC festival. Celebrate the spirit of the African Diaspora and Native American culture with master classes and an outdoor festival including live performances, an African-Native vendor marketplace, and oral histories. Hosted by Griot Mama Sylvia Soumah, DanceAfrica DC 2024 is guaranteed to inspire, invigorate, educate, and entertain.

This year’s Opening Fête on Friday, May 31st in the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Theater at Dance Place will showcase KanKouran West African Dance Company, Osagyefo Dance Company, Coyaba Dance Theater, Native America’s Protectors, and more! DanceAfrica DC 2024 will also include a ticketed closing performance in the theater on the evening of Saturday, June 1st, featuring performances by Ni Dembaya, Keur Khaleyji, and more.

This year’s festival is generously supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, the DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities, Bozzuto, and Menkiti Group/Keller Williams Capital Properties.

Saturday, June 1st FREE Festival Performances & Events

11:30am	Native American and African Oral History	Cafritz Theater
12:00pm	Soka Tribe	Arts Park
12:45pm	Taratibu Youth Association	Arts Park
1:30pm	Soul in Motion	Arts Park
2:15pm	Bellydancers of Color Collective	Arts Park
3:00pm	DC Casineros	Arts Park
4:00pm	Akoma de Gado	Arts Park

4:45pm	Coyaba Dance Theater	Arts Park
6:00pm	Native America's Protectors	Arts Park
7:00pm	Balafon West African Dance Ensemble	Arts Park

For more information, please head to danceplace.org/dadc2024.

Accessibility Services Offered:

- ASL Interpretation
- Large print programs
- Accessible seating
- Accessible restrooms

About Griot Mama Sylvia Soumah

Sylvia Soumah is the founder and Artistic Director of Coyaba Dance Theater. She has studied, performed, and taught throughout the D.C. Metro area and abroad. She has studied in Conakry, Guinea with Les Ballets Africains, and Senegal under the direction of Bouly Sonko, Artistic Director of the National Ballet of Senegal. She also performs with Erika Thimey Dance Theater and Carla and Company. Born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio, she moved to Washington, D.C. in 1985. Sylvia began her extensive study of West African Dance under the tutelage of Aidoo Holmes, Founder/Artistic Director of Wose Dance Theater, where she learned the importance of African Dance technique and solo performance, and how to drum and sing. Sylvia has collaborated with Daniel Burkholder (*My Ocean is Never Blue*), StepAfrika, Kingsman Island Festival (DC), Usuthu Arts Productions (South Africa), Salamata from Ghana, West Africa, Jessica Phillips Silver: *Finding Rhythm! The Journey Through The Musical Brain* (2020), Inspired Child Educational Music Video: *A to Z, This is MY DC*. She was also a Co-Choreographer/Performer with *What's Going On* touring company under the direction of Vincent Thomas.

Additionally, Sylvia Soumah is the Director of Dance Place's African Dance Program. She also serves as Artistic Director and Griot of the *DanceAfrica DC* festival and has been since 2017 after the passing of the previous Griot Baba Chuck Davis in 2017. DC is one of the longest-running arms of this nationwide phenomenon, celebrating over 30 years of education, artistry, and advocacy for African culture in our nation's capital.

[About Dance Place](#)

Rooted in the United States capital, Washington D.C., Dance Place supports movement artists by creating opportunities for creative development, performance, and education. By investing deeply in artists and centering those who have been systemically excluded from such opportunities, we strengthen the dance field.

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