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**Acclaimed Modern Dance Artist and Educator Gesel Mason to be in Residence at U.Va. Jan. 15-17**

• **Jan. 15: Master Class with Gesel Mason**

6:30 p.m., Culbreth Theatre

Admission is free.

The public is invited to observe Gesel Mason teach a master class to 30-35 dancers from U.Va. and the local community.

• **Jan. 16: Dialogues In Dance**

7 p.m., Culbreth Theatre

Free and open to the public.

Through a combination of lecture and demonstration, Gesel Mason will share her insight and creative process around recent and upcoming projects.

• **Jan. 17: "NO BOUNDARIES: Dancing the Visions of Contemporary Black Choreographers"**

8 p.m., Culbreth Theatre, followed by a post-show discussion with the artist

Admission: \$10 public, \$5 U.Va. students, faculty and staff.

Tickets go on sale Jan. 15 at the U.Va. Drama Box Office, 434-924-3376.

Gesel Mason's award-winning solo work, "NO BOUNDARIES" celebrates the diverse visions of African Americans in modern dance by sharing the creative process and cultural perspectives of leading and emerging African-American choreographers through video documentation, oral text and performance.

December 29, 2008 — Award-winning choreographer and educator Gesel Mason's work is all about the creative process and how culture influences dance. During a three-day guest residency in the University of Virginia Department of Drama, Mason will conduct master classes and group discussions, culminating in a performance of her solo work, "No BOUNDARIES: Dancing the Vision of Contemporary Black Choreographers."

"As an artist, I find Gesel's work unique in how she sees the world and translates it into movement and dance specifically," said Theresa M. Davis, associate professor of cross-cultural performance. "She is an amazing artist."

Mason will share her perspective on the creative process and her cultural influences in three events during her residency. All are open to the public.

On Jan. 15, Mason will teach a master class for 30 to 35 U.Va. and community dancers. This event, at 6:30 p.m. in Culbreth Theatre, is free and the public is invited to observe.

On Jan. 16, Mason will share her creative insights in "Dialogues in Dance," a combination of lectures and demonstrations in which she will reveal the process surrounding her recent and upcoming projects, including "NO BOUNDARIES" and "A Declaration of (In)Dependence: The Story of Sally Hemings." Cheles Rhynes, co-founder of Mason/Rhynes Productions and technical director of Gesel Mason Performance Projects, also joins the dialogue and discusses Mason/Rhynes Productions' ongoing mission to "entertain and enlighten the consciousness."

On Jan. 17, Mason will perform her award-winning solo piece, "NO BOUNDARIES: Dancing the Visions of Contemporary Black Choreographers." Leading contemporary black choreographers, including Bebe Miller, Donald McKayle, Reggie Wilson, Andrea Woods, David Roussève and Jawole Willa Jo Zollar contributed original and historical solo dance pieces that will be performed by Mason along with her own choreographed work. The evenings performance will also include projected video interviews with the choreographers.

Sarah Kaufman of the Washington Post raved, "Gesel Mason's one-woman show was the sort of performance that in any other realm would enshrine her among a select few standouts. [It is an] ambitious, riveting and impressively executed program."

The production "cuts across boundaries. It's a movement/theater concert that combines pieces of pure dance, dance/theater and movement/dance. Gesel also weaves past and present and brings together perspectives from different pasts and backgrounds."

In addition to the public events, Mason will also teach classes for U.Va. student-actors that will explore issues of identity through improvisation, text and movement. With student designers studying lighting, costume and production, she will share her expertise in the creative design process as a collaboration with dancers.

"NO BOUNDARIES" is the recipient of a MetLife/National Dance Project touring grant from the New England Foundation of the Arts. U.Va. is one of six performance sites during the 2008-2009 season, along with Austin, Texas; Washington, D.C.; Dallas; Cincinnati and Philadelphia.

Described as "young, black and brilliant" by Philadelphia's City Paper, Mason is the co-founder and artistic director of Washington, D.C.-based Mason/Rhynes Productions and artistic director for Gesel Mason Performance Projects. She has performed with Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company and toured Germany with the Repertory Dance Theatre of Utah. Also, she has taught and performed in Poland with Jacek Luminski and the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange and was selected "Emerging Choreographer" by the Bates Dance Festival in 2000 and received the 2007 Millennium Stage Local Dance Commissioning Project from the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Mason's three-day residency is presented by the National Dance Project of the New England Foundation for the Arts and several U.Va. entities, including the Department of Drama, Vice Provost for the Arts, College of Arts and Sciences, Carter G. Woodson

Institute for African-American and African Studies and the Office of African-American Affairs.

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