



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 9, 2024

Lincoln Theatre Walk of Fame to Induct Black Dance Icons Alice Grant and Bettye Robinson

Presented by State Auto Insurance, the Lincoln Theatre Association will hold its annual Walk of Fame induction ceremony at the Lincoln Theatre (769 E. Long St.) on Saturday, July 27, at 7 pm, to memorialize two icons of Black dance in Columbus who also affirmed for youth the opportunity to pursue dance as a career, Alice Grant and Bettye Robinson.

These local trailblazers will be honored during a ceremony that will include a multi-genre tribute to their lives and work and a performance by dancers Ellington Hoffman, Lori Lindsey, Brianna Rhodes, and the Dance Elite Performance Academy. The second half of the ceremony will then move outdoors to reveal the new stars on the Walk of Fame.

The event is free and open to the public with pre-registration at www.LincolnTheatreColumbus.com.

“This particular Walk of Fame ceremony holds a significant place in my heart. These two women gave birth to an actualization that resisted deferment of dreams,” Lincoln Theatre Executive Director Suzan Bradford said. “In the words of Pearl Primus, ‘Dance is my medicine. It’s the scream which eases for a while the terrible frustration common to all human beings who because of race, creed, or color, are invisible. Dance is the fist with which I fight the sickening ignorance of prejudice.’ This recognition of Ms. Bettye and Ms. Alice is a reminder of historic resilience and the ongoing fortitude needed to generate dancers for generations to come. It is for the aforementioned reasons that these giants are worthy of our meager acknowledgement towards their enormous gift of sacrifice.”

Alice Grant

Alice Grant began dancing ballet at an early age. Her fast learning revealed the racism in her studio, which refused to allow her to take advanced level classes.

Relentlessly pursuing her dream, she began studying with Vicky Paige at the Vicky Paige Studio.

Grant was crowned Miss Bronze Ohio in 1959, opening doors for more opportunities. She auditioned for Pearl Bailey in Cincinnati and hired as a solo classical dancer. She performed with Bailey in Las Vegas and began touring from the West Coast through the Midwest. She also earned dance work overseas, performing solo work with the USO. When she returned to the U.S., she performed as a dancer in *Hello, Dolly!* on Broadway.

Grant holds degrees from the University of Southern California, California State University Los Angeles, and the Ohio State University. She owned the Alice Grant Dance Studio in Columbus for 18 years. She is a retired teacher from Columbus School for Girls and Columbus City Schools.

Bettye Robinson

Bettye Robinson was the founder of the first Black ballet company and school in Columbus, mentor and teacher of Black Dancers in Columbus from 1960-1990. She nurtured Black students who pursued professional dance careers, founded dance schools and companies; two of her students were chosen to study at the School of American Ballet in the 1970s.

“Aunt Bettye,” as she was called, inspired and influenced a generation of young Black women with her passion for art of the dance. She opened her first dance school in 1946 in Philadelphia, later opening studios in Youngstown and Columbus, where she created “Les Danseurs Noir,” the first Black ballet dance company in Columbus.

During her career she served as a choreographer for the Columbus Victory Matrons Cotillion, the Youngstown Junior League Cinderella Ball, Youngstown Playhouse Green Pastures, Warren Kenley Players, 1973 Miss Black Teenage Pageant, DST Jabberwock Fiesta Internationale, and served as a judge for the Miss Teenage Cupidette Pageant. She set choreography for musicals at her alma mater, Ohio Dominican College.

She received many awards, including those from the Urban League, Blue Chip, Central Ohio Pioneer of Dance, and Special Education Awards from the Hilliard City Schools and the Ohio State University Department of Education.

“State Auto shares the Lincoln Theatre’s commitment to this neighborhood and to downtown Columbus. For many years, we’ve been enthusiastic supporters of efforts to revitalize the Lincoln and the surrounding King-Lincoln District,” said Stephanie

Meredith, External Relations Director, State Auto Insurance. “We exist to help people embrace today and confidently pursue tomorrow. And we have an unwavering commitment to investing in our communities through financial support, issues-based thought leadership, and employee giving and service.”

This year’s Walk of Fame honorees also call attention to the ongoing **Lincoln Theatre Dance Initiative**, providing opportunities and access to dance training and other experiences for underserved communities. In addition to being graduates of the Lincoln’s Expanding Your Horizons Incubation Program, Lori Lindsey and Briana Rhodes also share a background with the LTDI through the agencies with whom they work -- Diane McIntyre, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, and Deeply Rooted Dance Theatre. Ellington Hoffman is a dancer from Columbus Dance Theatre, the ballet arm for the LTDI collaboration.

“Engaging these performers is a testament to the cause of dance preservation and experience, demonstrating that a single tie is all that we need to tether one agency to another as we work towards the common goal of exposure,” Gamal Brown, Associate Director of the Lincoln Theatre, said.

www.LincolnTheatreColumbus.com

CALENDAR LISTING

The Lincoln Theatre Association presents the 2024 WALK OF FAME INDUCTION CEREMONY

Saturday, July 27, 7 pm

Lincoln Theatre (769 E. Long St.)

The Lincoln Theatre Walk of Fame will induct two icons of Black dance in Columbus, Alice Grant and Bettye Robinson. The ceremony will include multi-genre tributes to the inductees and a live dance performance, then move outdoors to reveal the new stars on the Walk of Fame. The event is free and open to the public with preregistration at www.LincolnTheatreColumbus.com.

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Support for the Lincoln Theatre’s 2023-24 season is provided in part by the Greater Columbus Arts Council, The Columbus Foundation from the William C. and Naoma V. Denison Fund with the assistance of the Ingram-White Castle Foundation, the Ohio Arts Council, the Nationwide Foundation, Liberty Mutual Foundation and the State Auto Fund, Donna and Larry James, Huntington Bank, the AEP Foundation, and Encova Insurance.

About the Lincoln Theatre

First opened in 1928, the Lincoln Theatre is a landmark in African American and jazz history. After undergoing a \$13.5 million renovation funded by a partnership of public and private support, the Lincoln reopened in May 2009 as a multi-use, state-of-the-art performing arts and education center serving the diversity of the central Ohio community. The Lincoln is a bustling hub of activity 365 days a year hosting performances, rehearsals, and classes in the performing arts, as well as a wide variety of community events such as film festivals, meetings, and receptions.

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