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New 42nd Street Presents at New Victory Theater

**Step Afrika!
Drumfolk**



**Award-winning dance company travels back in time to explore the origins
of African American dance forms**

February 28, 2020 - March 15, 2020

New York, NY (January 14, 2020) -- Step Afrika! returns with its newest production, *Drumfolk*, based on historical events that took place during the 1700s in the Deep South. Building upon the success of *The Migration: Reflections on Jacob Lawrence* (New Victory 2017), Step Afrika! takes audiences on a journey from the 18th century to present-day America, where body percussion has shaped such modern art forms as hip hop and African American social dance, among others. *Drumfolk* runs at New Victory from February 28 - March 15, 2020, as part of the production's 10-city tour across the U.S.

Drumfolk explores this transformative movement in American history and honors the survival and evolution of a cultural ethos through rhythm, music and dance. Highlights include: Step Afrika!'s first presentation of dance and drumming traditions from Angola; an exploration of the

ring shout, which is an African American dance over 200 years old, rarely seen on our country's stages; and a contemporary routine of stepping and vocal percussion.

A seminal addition to Step Afrika!'s dance canon, **Drumfolk** is inspired by the Stono Rebellion of 1739, an uprising of 20 enslaved Africans from Angola who used their drums to start a revolt in South Carolina. Though quickly suppressed, this little-known event sparked the Negro Act of 1740, which prohibited, among many other rights, the Africans' use of drums. In response, African Americans began to use their bodies as percussive instruments and this act of resistance, resilience and reclamation gave rise to some of the country's most distinctive movement-based art forms, including stepping, tap, hambone and the ring shout. f

"**Drumfolk** chronicles and celebrates the African American experience in America," shares C. Brian Williams, Founder and Executive Director. "This new production is grounded in an extensive investigation into the tradition of stepping and over 25 years of Step Afrika!'s percussive practice. We're thrilled to be sharing this history and artistry with our audiences."

"We're so pleased to have Step Afrika! back at New Victory. *The Migration: Reflections on Jacob Lawrence* was deeply moving, and this work, *Drumfolk*, is the second of what will ultimately be a trilogy of works by this remarkable, relevant company," says Mary Rose Lloyd, New 42 Artistic Director.

Drumfolk is directed by Jakari Sherman. The cast includes dancers Kofi Agyei, Jeeda Barrington, Dionne Eleby, Matthew Evans, Conrad Kelly, Misha Michel, Vincent Montgomery, Joe Murchison, Ronniqùè Murray, Dustin Praylow, Anesia Sandifer, Brittny Smith, Jordan Spry, Nicolas Stewart, DJ Jeeda Barrington and beatboxer Jamaal Collier. C. Brian Williams is the founder and executive director of Step Afhhkk rika! and Mfoniso Akpan is the company's artistic director. Simone Baskerville is the production manager and touring stage manager, Kenann M. Quander is the costume designer and Mary Rathell is the wardrobe assistant. Lighting design by Marianne Meadows; lighting supervisor Yannick Godts. Steven M. Allen is the composer, Kevin Alexander is the sound designer and Jeremiah L. Davison is the sound engineer. Mask design by Erik Teague.

Learn more about **DRUMFOLK** at NewVictory.org.

Public Performance Schedule:

Friday, February 28 at 7pm

Saturday, February 29 at 2pm / 7pm

Sunday, March 1 at 12pm / 5pm

Saturday, March 7 at 2pm / 7pm

Sunday, March 8 at 12pm / 5pm*

Friday, March 13 at 7pm

Saturday, March 14 at 2pm / 7pm

Sunday, March 15 at 12pm / 5pm

*Signed-interpreted performance

DRUMFOLK has a running time of 1 hour and 35 minutes including one intermission, and is recommended for ages 7 and up.

Lobby Activities

Before and after every show, check out the theater lobbies to participate in free arts activities! You'll find creative content for families inspired by the show's themes and art forms.

Ticket Information

Full-price tickets for **DRUMFOLK** start at \$17. Tickets are available online (NewVictory.org) and by phone (646.223.3010).

To purchase tickets in person, the New Victory box office is located at 209 West 42nd Street (between 7th / 8th Avenues). Box office hours are Sunday & Monday from 11am-5pm and Tuesday through Saturday from 12pm-7pm.

About The New Victory Theater

The New Victory opens new worlds to young people and families through extraordinary performances, education and engagement programs. Bringing kids to the arts and the arts to kids since 1995, this nonprofit theater has become a standard-bearer of quality performing arts for young audiences in the United States. Reflecting and serving the multicultural city it calls home, The New Victory is committed to arts access for all communities of New York to experience and engage with the exemplary international shows on its stages. A global leader in arts education, youth development and audience engagement, The New Victory Theater has been honored by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities with the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award, by Americans for the Arts with a national Arts Education Award, and by the Drama Desk for "providing enchanting, sophisticated children's theater that appeals to the child in all of us, and for nurturing a love of theater in young people."

About The New 42nd Street

Under the leadership of President Russell Granet, New 42nd Street is a cultural nonprofit whose mission is to make extraordinary performing arts a vital part of everyone's life from the earliest years onward. Driven by a deep commitment to performing arts access, we connect people to world-class performances, essential education and employment programs, and creative communities that push culture forward. Through New Victory and New 42 Studios, we serve artists, educators and New Yorkers of all ages with invaluable arts engagement and resources in and beyond the performing arts. Together with our supporters, we open new perspectives, incubate new works and create new opportunities to move us all.

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