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BAY-AREA'S NATIONALLY ACCLAIMED PERFORMANCE ARTIST MARC BAMUTHI JOSEPH MOUNTS RE-CREATED HIP-HOP THEATER PIECE FOLLOWED BY RESIDENCY TO INSPIRE LOCAL TEENS

FOR RESIDENCY JOSEPH IS JOINED BY PHILLY'S OWN NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED PERFORMANCE POET AND YOUTH EDUCATOR GREG CORBIN

Philadelphia, PA – Painted Bride Art Center's **Performance in the Present Tense** series presents the **Philadelphia premiere of Marc Bamuthi Joseph's newly adapted and expanded theater work *Word Becomes Flesh***. The highly decorated spoken word artist, dancer-choreographer, theater arts innovator and educator returns to Philadelphia and the Bride's intimate setting to direct a cast of fresh theater talent in performances **Friday-Saturday, June 3 – 4 at 8pm**. Joseph, who does perform on stage for this two-night run, also takes on the role of **artist-in-residence to Philadelphia area youth**. His week-long engagement with teens culminates with the presentation of a special performance piece at the **2011 Ondunde Festival on Sunday, June 12**.

National Poetry Slam champion, Broadway vet, Goldie award winner, US Artists Rockefeller Fellow, "Top Young Innovator" in the Arts and Sciences (*Smithsonian Magazine*), artistic director to the 7-part HBO documentary *Russell Simmons Presents Brave New Voices* – Bay-area based **Marc Bamuthi Joseph** has earned decorated honors spanning the cultural arts and entertainment industry.

Stemming from his landmark solo work which premiered in Philadelphia at the Bride during the Live Arts Festival in 2006, as artistic director, Joseph remixes ***Word Becomes Flesh*** into a multi-player work of theater including new writing and new direction. A co-commissioner to this newly recreated work with support from National Performance Network re-creation fund, Painted Bride Art Center proudly presents **the Philadelphia premiere** in which **Youth Speaks Living Word Project** (Joseph's youth theater art project) gathers **Daveed Diggs, Dahlak Brathwaite, Dion Decibels, Ben Turner, Mic Turner and B. Yung** to present a series of performed letters to an unborn son.

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PAINTED BRIDE / MARC BAMUTHI JOSEPH'S *WORD BECOMES FLESH*/ ADD-2

Through spoken word poetry, dance and djing the talented collective delivers to audiences the documents which reflect nine months of pregnancy from a young, single father's perspective. The performances are driven by elements of ritual, archetypes, and symbolic sites within the constructs of hip-hop culture. As women continue to live out the pro life vs. choice debate, men continue to live out their social right to choose between committing to fatherhood vs. being absent from responsibility. *Word Becomes Flesh* critically, lyrically, and choreographically examines this domestic phenomenon.

Living Word Project is the resident theater company of Youth Speaks Inc., committed to producing literary performances and verse-based work – work which is spoken through the body, illustrated by visual and sonic scores, and in tune with important social issues and movements of the immediate moment. Stemming from social issues and cultural circumstances surfaced in *Word Becomes Flesh*, as well as Marc Bamuthi Joseph's successful Youth Speaks The Living Word Project model, **the Bride** teams-up with regionally-celebrated spoken word artist **Greg Corbin, Philadelphia Youth and Poetry Movement** and **Philadelphia Urban Creators to present *Speak Green*** a community engagement initiative aimed to inspire, uplift and educate youth within the immediate communities of Philadelphia. Taking place **Tuesday, June 7 through Friday, June 10, Marc Bamuthi Joseph and Greg Corbin** will implement ***Speak Green* which will feature a series of workshops** to include exploratory discussions, and guided instruction in writing and performing. Echoing the name of the initiative, ***Speak Green* will also teach life learning horticultural skills.** Youth members of **The Mighty Writers, Art Sanctuary, Overbrook High School, Mastery Charter School and KIPP** will participate in the week-long intensive itinerary. **On Sunday, June 12 the participants will be given a special opportunity to perform on the Odunde Festival stage located at 22nd and South sts.**

Single tickets to see *Word Becomes Flesh* are \$25. To make a purchase, for more concert or venue info, visit paintedbride.org, call the Box Office at 215-925-9914 or visit the Painted Bride Art Center, located at 230 Vine Street in Philadelphia. The box office is open Tuesday through Saturday, 12pm until 6pm. Students and seniors always receive a 25% discount on tickets.

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Press note:

Scroll below for additional background information.

**To schedule an artist interview contact:
Phil Sumpter, at (215) 925-9914 ext. 15.**

About *Word Becomes Flesh*

Originally produced and performed by Marc Bamuthi Joseph, *Word Becomes Flesh* premiered in November 2003 at the Alice Arts Center (Oakland, CA) and subsequently toured nationwide in 2007 seeing a variety of theatre venues including the Painted Bride as part of the Live Arts Festival. Considered the seminal work of Marc Bamuthi Joseph and The Living Word Project, the piece was chosen by the National Performance Network for its 25th Anniversary Re-Creation Initiative supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Word Becomes Flesh is a National Performance Network (NPN) Re-Creation Fund Project sponsored by La Pena in partnership with the Painted Bride Art Center, Dance Place], Youth Speaks and NPN. This project has been made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts as part of American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Artistic Genius with additional support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Ford Foundation. For more information: www.npnweb.org and <http://npnweb.org/about/25th/recreation/bamuthi/>

About Marc Bamuthi Joseph

Marc Bamuthi Joseph is one of America's leading voices in performance, arts education, and artistic curation. *Smithsonian Magazine* named him one of America's Top Young Innovators in the Arts and Sciences. Russell Simmons named him artistic director of the 7-part HBO documentary "Russell Simmons presents Brave New Voices." He is an inaugural recipient of the United States Artists Rockefeller Fellowship. His story was featured recently in *The Root*. Years after crossing the sands of Broadway performing in traditional theater most notably in Tony Award winning productions *The Tap Dance Kid* and *Stand-Up Tragedy*, Joseph's innovative vision and challenging works have been enabled by several prestigious foundation awards.

Marc Bamuthi Joseph is one of America's leading voices in performance, arts education, and artistic curation. In the Fall of 2007, Bamuthi graced the cover of *Smithsonian Magazine* after being named one of America's Top Young Innovators in the Arts and Sciences. He is the artistic director of the 7-part HBO documentary "Russell Simmons presents Brave New Voices" and an inaugural recipient of the United States Artists Rockefeller Fellowship, which annually recognizes 50 of the country's "greatest living artists". He has entered the world of literary performance after crossing the sands of "traditional" theater, most notably on Broadway in the Tony Award winning *The Tap Dance Kid* and *Stand-Up Tragedy*. His evening-length works have been presented throughout the United States and Europe and include *Word Becomes Flesh*, *Scourge*, *De/Cipher* and *No Man's Land*. His most recent work, the *break/s: a mixtape for stage*, was supported by a Joyce Foundation Award and completed during a prestigious Arts Institute Fellowship at University of Wisconsin, Madison. *the break/s* was seen in 88 performances in 16 U.S. cities from 2008-2010, winning wide acclaim. His work has been enabled by several prestigious foundation awards including grants from the Ford Foundation, the Center for Cultural Innovation, Creative Capital, the National Performance Network Creation Fund, the Wallace A. Gerbode Foundation, the Creative Work Fund, the Rockefeller MAP Fund, the NEA, the Hewlett Foundation, and a Dance Advance award from the PEW Foundation. A gifted and nationally acclaimed educator and essayist, he has lectured at more than 200 colleges & universities, been a popular commentator on National Public Radio, and has carried adjunct professorships at Stanford University, Mills College, and the University of Wisconsin. A resident at ODC Theater, YBCA, and Intersection for the Arts in San Francisco, Bamuthi's proudest work has been with Youth Speaks where he mentors 13-19 year old writers and curates the Living Word Festival for Literary Arts. Joseph's current project, *red black and green: a blues* performatively documents the ecoequity movement towards green collar jobs in Black neighborhoods. He proudly served as a featured artist for the NAACP's Centennial Anniversary Celebration during President Barack Obama's Inaugural Exercises.

About Greg "Just Greg" Corbin

Greg "**Just Greg**" Corbin is an international poet, writer, motivational speaker, hip hop artist, activist, workshop facilitator, community developer, and founder of the Philadelphia Youth Poetry Movement, which was established in 2006.

Greg is one fifth of the spoken word poetry collective, [Spoken Soul 215](#), with whom he hosts The Harvest Open Mic & Showcase Experience. He is an accomplished artist sharing the stage with the likes of India Aire, Mos Def, Talib Kweli, Musiq, Saul Williams, Kindred the Family Soul, and many other powerful artists of today's movement. Just Greg has been writing and performing spoken word for the last four years of his eternal life lighting up stages on an international level from South Carolina to South Africa, London to Canada. This Philadelphia native and Lincoln University Alum began writing in his sophomore year after deciding to follow the footsteps of fellow Lincoln grads Langston Hughes, Oscar Brown, and the unclaimed Gil Scott Heron.

In 2009, the Philly Youth Poetry Movement was featured on the **HBO docu-series "Brave New Voices"** where he was highlighted as a mentor/coach featuring his astounding ability to work with and inspire the youth to courageously express their truth. Greg Corbin was also featured on **BET's Lyric Cafe** this Fall of 2009 airing on BETJ.

About the Painted Bride Art Center

Founded in 1969 on South Street, the Bride is the region's alternative artport for world travel. Now located between Old City and Northern Liberties, the Bride continues to champion the living arts by presenting jam packed seasons featuring ground-breaking creative talents working in music, dance, theater, and the visual arts. The Bride offers adventurous art-goers an intimate space to discover contemporary artists with distinctive voices that reflect the rich cultural mosaic of our region. Our mission is to nurture and support both emerging and established artists to create, produce and present innovative work that affirms the intrinsic value of all cultures and celebrates the transformative power of the arts. Through performances and exhibitions, education and outreach, we create a forum for community engagement. We welcome you to become a part of the Bride Community, circa 1969.