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**August 7, 2008**

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**The Wilma Theater to be First Participating Theater in  
New Dance/USA Philadelphia Program**

PHILADELPHIA – The Wilma Theater is pleased to announce that it will be the inaugural venue to participate in the new Theater Rental Subsidy Program created by Dance/USA Philadelphia, the service organization for Dance Professionals in the Greater Philadelphia Region.

The program, to be launched in January 2009, will help choreographers, companies, and presenters access venues that they would otherwise not be able to afford. Dance/USA Philadelphia will subsidize 75% to 90% of theater rental costs for producing dance companies and organizations from the five-county Philadelphia region which have non-profit status. Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis beginning December 1, 2008, and funds will be distributed on a first come, first served basis.

Participating venues will provide the dance programming with marketing support through such avenues as inclusion in season brochures and playbills, promotion through websites and emails, and promotional materials distributed to theater patrons.

“The Theater Rental Subsidy Program will create new opportunities for dance artists, organizations, and audiences,” says Lois Welk, Director of Dance USA/Philadelphia. “Many venues that are well-suited for concert dance are underused by the dance community because rental rates are often prohibitive for producing dance companies and presenting organizations. Without a dance-specific venue in Philadelphia, it is important that dance programmers have more affordable access to the many wonderful theaters throughout the region in order to accommodate the explosion of dance activity in our community.”

Following a year-long assessment process with Welk, The Wilma Theater determined that it will continue to support dance artists through this subsidy program and by continuing to host its resident dance company BalletX. The Wilma has made a three-year commitment to the BalletX residency,

which is made possible through the support of the William Penn Foundation. However, the theater will discontinue its presentation of the *DanceBOOM!* festival for the foreseeable future.

"We are pleased *DanceBOOM!* has given so many opportunities to the dance community and hope the audiences generated here at the Wilma will continue to seek out their favorite companies in venues throughout the city," says Wilma Managing Director James Haskins. "We're thrilled to work with Lois and Dance USA/Philadelphia on this initiative to continue serving our vibrant dance community."

During the six years of the *DanceBOOM!* festival, which began in 2002, the Wilma has hosted a total of 67 dance companies and individual choreographers performing for over 21,600 audience members. *DanceBOOM!* has celebrated contemporary dance from hip-hop and Afro-Puerto Rican street performance to multi-media work and ballet, presented by some of Philadelphia's best contemporary dance companies as well as artists from New York and around the country.

The Wilma Theater celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with the 2008-2009 season, which opens with Tom Stoppard's *Rock 'n' Roll* in September. For more information and tickets, visit [www.wilmatheater.org](http://www.wilmatheater.org) or call (215) 546-7824.

Dance/USA Philadelphia was founded in 2007 as a branch office of Dance/USA, the national service organization for professional dance. Dance/USA Philadelphia provides advocacy, resources, services, and collaborative opportunities for the dance community in the greater Philadelphia area. For information, visit [www.danceusaphiladelphia.org](http://www.danceusaphiladelphia.org) or call (215) 922-5970.

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