

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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<http://www.batesdancefestival.org>

**Press releases, photos and artist information:**

[abacus.bates.edu/dancefest/pressinfo.php](http://abacus.bates.edu/dancefest/pressinfo.php)

**Bates Dance Festival's 'Different Voices' hail from Africa, Asia, U.S.**

LEWISTON, Maine -- Showcasing the internationalism of contemporary dance, choreographers from the United States, Africa and Asia bring compelling styles and perspectives to the Bates Dance Festival stage with the annual "Different Voices" concert at 8 p.m. Thursday and Friday, August 6 and 7, in Bates College's Schaeffer Theatre, 305 College St.

Tickets are \$20 for the general public and \$12 for students and seniors, and may be purchased by calling 207-786-6161 after July 6.

From Kenya comes choreographer Opiyo Okach, known for his subtle improvisational style and contemporary reinterpretations of East African traditions. Artistic director of the first contemporary dance company in Kenya, La Compagnie Gàara, Okach remains the principal figure in Kenya's choreographic landscape.

Okach's "Cleansing," the company's first work, won a prize at the second Rencontres Choréographiques Africaines 1998 and placed him amongst the pioneers of a new generation of choreographers from Africa.

Okach has toured internationally to more than 17 countries and received numerous awards. He is the artistic director of Gàara Dance Foundation, created in 2002 with the support of the Ford Foundation to consolidate choreographic activity initiated in Kenya. Its activities include choreographic research, artist residencies, artistic exchanges and support for the creation and diffusion of work.

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## **Bates Dance Festival 2009/Different Voices/Add 1**

Nigerian performer, writer and filmmaker Qudus Onikeku tours with the acclaimed Algerian company Heddy Maalem. He graduated from the National Higher School of Circus Arts in France as a dancer and acrobat. For more than a decade, he has been active in the choreographic scene of Lagos. Part of a new generation of creators springing up across Africa, Qudus is recognized in Europe, the U.S. and the Caribbean for his solo pieces and his artistic research.

New York choreographer-performer Jennifer Archibald, whose work is a dynamic fusion of hip hop, modern, jazz and Latin styles, is the founder and artistic director of the Arch Dance Company. A graduate of the Alvin Ailey School, she has performed at the Kennedy Center, Aaron Davis Hall in Harlem, the Lincoln Theatre, New World Theatre, The Duke on 42nd Street and the Abrons Arts Centre, as well as in Europe, Russia and Canada.

Emerging artists in residence at the Bates Dance Festival showcase recent works to round out the "Different Voices" program. Kyle Abraham, one of Dance Magazine's 2008 "25 To Watch," has worked with such acclaimed companies as nathan trice/RITUALS, Mimi Garrard Dance Theatre, Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, Dance Alloy Theater and the Kevin Wynn Collection.

Adele Myers, artistic director of Adele Myers and Dancers, has served as a choreographic assistant to Urban Bush Women artistic director Jawole Zollar, and has performed with Momix and Joy Kellman and Company.

Shanneka Harrell, a former member of the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, dances with Tania Isaac Dance.

In addition to mainstage performances, the Bates Dance Festival offers a selection of free and low-cost events. Additional information, including ticket prices and event locations, is available on the festival Web site: [www.batesdancefestival.org](http://www.batesdancefestival.org).

### **About the Bates Dance Festival**

Founded in 1982 at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, the Bates Dance Festival brings together a cooperative international community of contemporary choreographers, performers, educators and students to study, perform and create new work.

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## **Bates Dance Festival 2009/Different Voices/Add 2**

The festival serves as an annual destination for artists, students and audiences to engage in a full range of activities and performances that foster a creative exchange of ideas, encourage exploration of new ground and provide the opportunity to experience a wide spectrum of dance and movement disciplines.

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