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Contact: Laura Faure 207-786-6381 | bdfpress@bates.edu

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COCo Dance Theatre brings Caribbean flavors to the Bates Dance Festival

LEWISTON, Maine -- Incorporating the textures of Caribbean performance with African and American sensibilities, Cynthia Oliver's COCo Dance Theatre performs their current evening-length work at this summer's Bates Dance Festival.

Performances take place at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, July 23 and 24, in Bates College's Schaeffer Theatre, 305 College St. For information about tickets, and for additional performance details, visit the festival website: www.batedancefestival.org/perform-listings.php

Oliver presents her newest work, "Rigidigidim De Bamba De: Ruptured Calypso," a multidisciplinary work that takes calypso in and out of the carnival context and layers it with mythology.

A meditation on transnationalism, "Rigidigidim" features six women from the Caribbean diaspora. In Oliver's signature repeating, overlapping style, "Rigidigidim" forces the performers to navigate their individual identities through their voices, stories, and bodies. They cut through calypso's melodious innuendo to reveal its politically subversive truth-telling, delivered in raucous, downright unrespectable intensity.

Cynthia Oliver is a Bessie Award-winning choreographer whose work is a melange of dance, theater and the spoken word. She has presented work in New York at The Joseph Papp Public Theatre's "Haphazard Cabaret," the Pauline Oliveros Foundation's Live Letters Festival, the 92nd Street Y, University Settlement, The Kitchen, Performance Space 122 and Dance Theater Workshop.

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She was named Outstanding Young Choreographer by reviewer Frank Werner of the German magazine Ballet Tanz and had her film "AfroSocialiteLifeDiva" aired on European television. Oliver has received numerous awards and commissions from the Franklin Furnace, The Puffin Foundation, the Jerome Foundation, the Edward and Sally Van Lier Fund for Minority Artists, the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Performance Network, the University of Illinois, the Illinois Arts Council and many others.

She holds a doctorate in performance studies from New York University and is an associate professor in the dance department at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

About the Bates Dance Festival

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

The festival serves as an annual destination for artists, students and audiences to engage in a full range of dance 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/movement disciplines.

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