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**Contact:**  
**Dance Affiliates: Anne-Marie Mulgrew**  
**Director of Education & Special Projects**  
**215-636-9000 ext. 110    [annemarie@danceaffiliates.org](mailto:annemarie@danceaffiliates.org)**

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**A DANCE AFFILIATES PRODUCTION**  
***THANK YOU GREGORY, A TRIBUTE TO THE LEGENDS OF TAP***  
***EMBARKS ON A TEN-WEEK NATIONAL TOUR***  
***IN FOURTEEN VENUES AND 23 PERFORMANCES***

Philadelphia, PA – *Thank You Gregory, A Tribute to the Legends of Tap* embarked on a ten-week national tour commencing with its world premiere October 6-10, Philadelphia, PA. It launched Dance Celebration’s 28<sup>th</sup> season with seven upcoming performances starring Maurice Hines, Gregory’s brother and partner. The 14-venue national tour includes performances in Arkansas, Florida, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, New York, and Pennsylvania.

*Thank You Gregory’s* all-star cast of eight hoofers features Chloe Arnold, Dormeshia Sumbry-Edwards and Joseph Webb, live and recorded music, and stunning jaw-dropping film projections showing a plethora of legendary tappers at their best. Produced by Dance Affiliates’ artistic director Randy Swartz, directed by Ann Marie De Angelo (former principal dancer and associate artistic director of Joffrey Ballet), and created and staged by Tony Waag (artistic director of the American Tap Foundation), *TYG* pays homage to tap’s leading ambassador Gregory Hines, and the great legends who preceded him.

The Philadelphia Inquirer notes *Thank You Gregory (TYG)* is “a joyful celebration of the amazingly varied, soul-stirring thing called rhythm.” “It is not only entertaining, it’s a lesson in dance history... a great opportunity to see some of tap’s finest.” The show salutes tap titans Bill “Bojangles” Robinson, John Bubbles, the Nicholas Brothers, “Honi” Coles, Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly, Roy Bolger, Donald O’Connor, Dr. Jimmy Slyde and the Copasetics, as well as tap’s leading ladies, and especially Gregory Hines, who redefined the art form and influenced a new generation of tappers. The program reflects the scope and breadth of tap’s genres and timelines including vaudeville, Harlem and the Club circuit, Hollywood and Broadway, as well as tap’s recent renaissance on concert stages and in electronic media. Clips of live performance and film excerpts showcase the elegant highly-choreographed smooth style of Astaire, Coles and Slyde, the athleticism of the Nicholas Brothers, the eccentric creations of O’Connor

and Bolger and the pervasive percussive rhythms of Bojangles, Bubbles, Brown, Hines and today's preeminent tappers. Ensemble sections include the classic tap favorites -- Shim Sham Shimmy, Chairdance, the Coles Stroll, a rollerskating spoof with vocals and ukuleles, and a riveting tapping interpretation to the Beatles' "Eleanor Rigby." Broad Street Review states "These young dancers did all the crazy wonderful steps of their forebears, but adding in a little rap and a bit of attitude that was strictly 21<sup>st</sup> Century... working with edgy, aggressive, bold material."

*TYG* consists of 27 fast-paced sections choreographed by Chloe Arnold, Cholly Atkins, Brenda Bufalino, Charles "Honi" Coles, the Copasetics, Michelle Dorrance, Dormeshia Sumbry-Edwards, Donovan Helma, Heather Holohan, Brent McBeth, Susan Nase, Leonard Reed, Tony Waag, and Joseph Webb. Music runs the gamut from Big Band sounds to jazz, swing to pop, and Broadway to A Cappella. The production team includes Peter Jakubowski (ARTIE award winner and *TYG*'s lighting designer/technical director), Charles Schoonmaker (resident costumer for Jacob's Pillow and *TYG* costume coordinator), and Forward Motion Theater, founded by Eric Dunlap (former dancer with Nikolais/Louis Dance Company) and Holly Dagers, media artist who created *TYG*'s video-digital media clips.

The cast features **Joseph Webb**, an award-winning actor/dancer of Broadway's *Bring in Da'Noise*, *Bring in Da'Funk*, who performs solo tributes to Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, Peg Leg Bates and Gregory Hines. **Chloe Arnold** (a protégé of Debbie Allen), is dance captain/choreographer. **Dormeshia Sumbry-Edwards** (captain/principal dancer for Broadway's *Bring in Da'Noise*, *Bring in Da'Funk*) is a soloist for the "Hoofers Line." The sensational ensemble also includes **Brent McBeth** of *Fosse* fame and comic tapper, tapper and singer **Heather Holohan** (a protégé of Brenda Bufalino), **Donovan Helma**, lead dancer from *Tap Dogs*, and **Susan Nase**, an internationally acclaimed highland dancer and vocalist.

The tour previewed **October 2, 2009** at Eisenhower Auditorium, University Park, PA, followed by its world premiere **October 6-10, 2009** Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, Philadelphia, PA with subsequent engagements **November 4, 2009** Frostburg State University, Frostburg, MD; **November 5, 2009** Pasquerilla Performing Arts Center, Johnstown, PA; **November 8-9, 2009** Harrisburg Community College, Harrisburg, PA; **November 19-21, 2009** New Orleans Ballet Association, New Orleans, LA; **January 15, 2010** Fox Theater, Hutchinson, KS; **January 16, 2010** Carlsen Center, Overland Park, KS; **January 20-21, 2010** Walton Arts Center, Fayetteville, AK; **January 23, 2010** Hancher Auditorium, Iowa City, Iowa; January 29, 2010 The Ritz Theater, Jacksonville, FL; **January 31, 2010** The Kravis Center, West Palm Beach, FL; **April 6, 2010** Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, PA; **April 7, 2010** Kutztown University Kutztown, PA; **April 9, 2010** Capitol Theater, Concord, NH; and closes **April 16, 2010** Delaware Valley Arts Center Frazer, PA.

**DANCE AFFILIATES (PRODUCER)** Founded in 1983 by artistic director Randy Swartz, Dance Affiliates is one of the nation's few remaining dance-only presenters. Its Dance Celebration program, Philadelphia's most acclaimed and longest-running series of world-class contemporary dance, has presented more than 175 companies in 1,500 performances. In addition to its original production of *Thank You Gregory, A Tribute to the Legends of Tap*, in 2005, Dance Affiliates also conceived and produced *The Music That Made Us Dance: From Lindy to Hip Hop* in 2006, its first-ever commission for the series featuring Philadelphia's most inventive choreographers and dancers. To present a wide range of dance styles and programs, Dance Affiliates routinely partners with other nonprofit, educational and community organizations such as its symposium at The Philadelphia Museum of Art with the Merce Cunningham and Trisha Brown dance companies; The Mann Center for the Performing Arts to develop extensive outreach activities for its Royal Ballet, Dance Theatre of Harlem and Bolshoi Ballet engagements; the Baryshnikov Dance Foundation to present the play *Forbidden Christmas or The Doctor and The Patient* at Prince Music Theatre; the University of the Arts and The Rock School to sponsor on-site visits with students by Patrick Swayze, Lisa Niemi and George de la Pena; the Merriam Theater to bring Mikhail Baryshnikov's *PASTForward* with White Oak Project; and *Kids Dancing for Kids* showcasing some of America's most talented young dancers in joint production

In addition to performances, *TYG* hoofers will offer outreach activities including master classes, workshops, pre-post performance discussions, and school performances for local youth. For more information call 215-636-9000 ext.110 or visit [www.danceaffiliates.org](http://www.danceaffiliates.org) or [www.thankyougregory.com](http://www.thankyougregory.com)

Major funding from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Community and Economic Development has made possible the production of *Thank You Gregory, A Tribute to the Legends of Tap*. Tour support of *Thank You Gregory* has also been funded, in part, by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Community and Economic Development.

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