

## “The History of Black Dance in America – Black History Month 2016 Celebration!”



TORRANCE, CA – On [February 20th](#) at 8:00 p.m., members of the Central Avenue Dance Ensemble, the only dance company in the United States solely dedicated to the preservation of African-American vernacular dance, will present “The History of Black Dance in America” in the Marsee Auditorium on the campus of El Camino College in Torrance, California.

HBDA is a spectacular multi-media dance concert showcasing the African-American contribution to American social dance. Starting from the late 1800s and progressing to the modern era, audiences are mesmerized by authentic renditions of vernacular dances such as Zulu, Work Songs, Cakewalk, Spiritual Dances, Shim Sham, Lindy Hop, Foxtrot, the African inspired Latin-American dances, plus live singing and tribute to Nat King Cole.

The 2016 performance celebrates Black History Month with an educational and entertaining history lesson on the cultural impact that the descendants of African slaves have had on the evolution of dance in the United States. It also honors and pays special tribute to Hip Hop Dancer/Choreographer Madonna Grimes for her lifetime contribution to the art form. In addition, this performance will mark the show’s five year anniversary.

For more information, please visit: [www.HistoryOfBlackDance.org](http://www.HistoryOfBlackDance.org)

**Who/What:** “The History of Black Dance in America – Black History Month 2016 Celebration.”

**Why:** For Black History Month, to entertain and educate about the history and cultural relevance of African-American inspired social dances popularly danced in the United States. The program also honors Dancer/Choreographer Madonna Grimes.

**Visuals:** The Central Avenue Dance Ensemble recreates African-American vernacular dances dating from the slavery era through [today](#), such as Zulu, Work Songs, Cakewalk, Spiritual Dances, Shim Sham, Lindy Hop, Foxtrot, the African inspired Latin-American dances. Video promo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCgbPceEVSsw>

**When:** [Saturday, February 20th](#) at 8:00 p.m.

**Where:** Marsee Auditorium, El Camino College, 16007 Crenshaw Blvd, Torrance, CA 90506

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## **ABOUT THE CENTRAL AVENUE DANCE ENSEMBLE:**

The History of Black Dance in America (HBDA) is the creation of Chester Whitmore and Ron Parker, borne out of their mutual love and respect for Black dance history.

The Central Avenue Dance Ensemble (CADE) is a vernacular jazz dance company named after the famous "Central Avenue" district of Los Angeles which was the center of Black LA culture and entertainment in the early part of the 20th Century. With its active Rhythm and Blues and Jazz music scenes, Central Avenue was commonly considered the west coast equivalent of Harlem. CADE was founded by Chester and Ron and has performed HBDA for Black History Month in 2011, 2012 and 2014 to sold out audiences. The 2015 performances were funded by a successful Kickstarter campaign and honored the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Juneteenth, the oldest know celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States.

Chester Whitmore is a world-renown choreographer, tap dancer, lindy hop instructor and dance historian who toured the world with the original HBDA for over 15 years beginning in the late 1980s. Chester is one of the last surviving members of the famed "Hoofers Club" and has studied under and worked with some of the greatest vernacular jazz dancers of the 20th century. He has endeavored his entire career to preserve and promote American vernacular jazz dances and their history.

Ron Parker is a Ballroom dancer and dance historian who came to dance from the world of business and was also swept up by the importance of educating the community on its dance history. He has produced HBDA for the past 5 years.

Chester and Ron worked as the directorial team on the Frankie Manning 100 Year celebration show at the Apollo Theater in New York in 2014. It was acclaimed as "the best show at the Apollo in 25 years." Ron and Chester were recently nominated as 2015 Black History Month local heroes on KCET TV.

For more information visit [www.HistoryOfBlackDance.org](http://www.HistoryOfBlackDance.org)

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## **HISTORY OF BLACK DANCE IN AMERICA MEDIA CONTACT:**

*For additional information, interviews, special show arrangements, at-event liaison.*

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