



NEWS RELEASE

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ACCLAIMED ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER DANCERS, ANTONIO AND KIRVEN DOUTHIT-BOYD JOIN COCA FOLLOWING AN INTERNATIONAL FAREWELL TOUR

Antonio and Kirven Assume their Roles as Artistic Directors of Dance Beginning August 17

ST. LOUIS, MO (August 10, 2015) – As announced in January, international dance stars Antonio Douthit-Boyd and Kirven Douthit-Boyd will officially begin as COCA as Co-Artistic Directors of Dance on August 17. The two join the organization on the heels of their final world tour as principal dancers with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

Antonio is a St. Louis native and COCA alumnus who began his training with the organization as a teen before beginning a career path that included the Dance Theatre of Harlem and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal prior to Ailey. Kirven trained at the Boston Arts Academy and danced with Battleworks Dance Company and Parsons Dance Company before joining Ailey.

“It is truly amazing that Antonio and Kirven are choosing to retire at the peak of their careers in order to devote themselves to educating the next generation of dancers here at COCA,” said Kelly Pollock, Executive Director of COCA. “Plus, to have Antonio back home as a member of our staff, after watching him accomplish so much since his time at COCA as a student, makes it all the more meaningful.”

In their newly established roles, Antonio and Kirven will manage all aspects of COCA’s Dance Department, including the renowned Pre-Professional Dance Division, and two of COCA’s student companies, COCA Dance and Ballet Eclectica. The two will also teach classes as part of COCA’s dance curriculum.

“St. Louis has a thriving arts community that is wonderfully accessible for young people,” said Antonio. “I am thrilled to be coming to a place that elevates new talent and inspires a love for dance in people of all ages.”

“I grew up dancing at a very similar organization, so I know the tremendous value of a place like COCA to a community,” said Kirven. “We’ve been watching COCA become a national model for community arts centers, especially in dance, and we’re ready to build upon that momentum to take St. Louis dance training to the next level.”

COCA’s multidisciplinary arts education program is socioeconomically and racially diverse, with students representing over 200 zip codes throughout St. Louis. Through the Pre-Professional Dance Division, students who are seriously committed, are provided sequential, advanced curriculum and support services to negate any barrier for participation, including scholarships, financial aid, free dancewear and shoes, transportation and access to academic and SAT/ACT tutoring. This Division exists within the broader COCA dance department, which offers classes for dance students of all ages and abilities.

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About COCA

Founded in 1986, COCA is the largest multidisciplinary community arts center in the Midwest and is a national leader in innovative community arts education. COCA annually serves more than 50,000 area residents of all ages through classes, camps and workshops, both on-site and in community venues; directly to schools through COCAedu and to business clients through COCAbiz.