



## 2023-24 ANNUAL REPORT

### REFLECTING ON OUR 2023-24 SEASON

As we reflect on the past year, it's clear that our 2023-24 season was not just a continuation of White Bird's legacy but a bold step into a future filled with promise and excitement. This season was marked by a series of firsts and returns, each one a testament to the resilience and vibrancy of the dance community we've nurtured over the years.

This season we returned to presenting dance companies from overseas. White Bird has proudly presented companies from over 25 countries, and in February 2024 we continued this legacy with **Black Grace**, an exceptional dance company based in Aotearoa/New Zealand. We closed our season with **Sydney Dance Company**, Australia's leading contemporary dance company.

In October, after 25 years of visionary leadership, White Bird Co-Founders Walter Jaffe and Paul King gave their final remarks from the stage. Building on the strong foundation laid by our Co-Founders, we are committed to investing in White Bird as Portland's accessible, educational, and vibrant home for contemporary dance for the next 25 years.

The highlight of this season was our presentation of **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater** at the the Keller Auditorium, Portland's largest concert hall. Between two performances, over 4,000 people joined us for this storied American dance company's first performances in Portland since 2018, marking our triumphant return in the Keller Auditorium since the pandemic.

Our work would not be possible without the continued support of people like you—our patrons, donors, volunteers, and partners. While shifts in the funding landscape and audience habits continue to present challenges, we made great strides toward full houses and a balanced budget in 2023-24. Thank you for your invaluable hand in this progress.

Faithfully yours,

Graham Cole, Executive Director, and The White Bird Team



Gretchen Westlight, Operations Manager & Executive Assistance; Christopher Carvalho, Director of Patron Services & Communication; Graham Cole, Executive Director; Deanna Reeves, Communication Manager; Mia Chavez Lysaght, Administrative Assistant

# OUR VALUES IN ACTION - SEASON 26

## REPRESENTATION ON STAGE

Four of the nine companies this season were led by artists of color, and five of the nine prominently featured a traditional or vernacular style of dance. Our Uncaged Series solely featured companies led by women, each with a unique style. Four companies made their Portland debuts this season.



## STRONGER COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

This season we partnered with 10 local schools and studios and offered 17 free workshops and talks with visiting companies. This is a significant increase over the 2022-23 season, and in the coming years we plan to deepen this commitment to providing free connections to dance.



## OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

In 2023-24 we added a new staff position – IDEA Director – to supplement our small team. With lead funding from the Murdock Trust, our IDEA Director helped us expand our free community engagement offerings, and continues to bring White Bird's actions into closer alignment with our equity commitment.



## HONORING OUR CO-FOUNDERS' LEGACY

In honor of our Co-Founders we raised over \$50,000 to inaugurate the Walter & Paul Founders Fund. This Fund will help maintain White Bird's general operations, while we continue to work toward stability. Once we've achieved this stability, the Founders Fund will be used to continue Walter and Paul's legacy of commissioning new work.



## INVESTING IN NEW WORK

In October 2023 we awarded the Barney Commissioning Prize to Shay Kuebler, a highly promising choreographer based in Vancouver, British Columbia. Shay will use the \$15,000 commission to develop a new evening length work, to be featured in a future White Bird season. White Bird has proudly commissioned over 40 works in the past 26 years.

## SUPPORTING THOSE IN NEED

Our NEST (No Empty Seat Today) program welcomed three new Health and Human Service Partners: Downtown Portland Clean & Safe, HOLLA Mentors, and the Artist Mentorship Program (AMP). We were able to offer 525+ tickets to our 14 NEST Partners through donations by the Starseed Foundation, Standard Insurance, and White Bird patrons.

## 2023/24 SEASON IN REVIEW

Subscribers

1235

Volunteer Opportunities

292

Volunteer Hours

700+

NEST Tickets Distributed

533

Comp Tickets

3305