

ATLANTA BALLET

Turner Broadcasting Presents

big

It's Not Hip-Hop. It's Not Ballet. It's *big*.

(Atlanta, Georgia) In his signature tradition of reflecting the culture and history of Atlanta and the South as a whole, Atlanta Ballet Artistic Director John McFall has outdone himself by bringing together the most unlikely partnership of art forms to create *big*, a provocative evening of dance and live music that captures the essence of our unique Southern city.

“Hip-hop is a defining element of our city,” says McFall. “It only makes sense that the two art forms would come together at some point.” Bringing the hip-hop aspect to this project is Atlanta’s own Grammy Award-winning visionary, Big Boi of OutKast, along with some friends such as Sleepy Brown and Janelle Monáe. Best known to many as the silky voice on several of Big Boi’s popular hits, including “The Way You Move,” Sleepy Brown has garnered a following all his own. He boasts his own Top 40 single, “I Can’t Wait,” featuring OutKast, from his debut album *Mr. Brown*. He is also one third of the influential Atlanta hip-hop production group Organized Noize, which was intrinsically involved in cultivating the music of groups such as OutKast and Goodie Mob. Sleepy Brown is set to appear in several tracks for *big*, including “I Can’t Wait” and Big Boi’s “Church.”

Janelle Monáe is quickly becoming a force in modern music. Originally trained in classical and Broadway, she has trademarked her own brand of soul/R&B. She recently released her debut album *Metropolis*, from which two tracks – “Sincerely Jane” and “Metropolis” – will be featured in *big*.

Everyone has great expectations about the pairing of these hip-hop creative thinkers with Atlanta Ballet’s exquisite dancers. “I think fans are going to dig it,” Big Boi says. “They get to see something else besides the usual.”

Also contributing to this unexpected collaboration are Khujo Goodie, Scar, Big Rube, and Rock D, as well as members of the musical group Konkrete. They are slated to appear with Big Boi on tracks such as “Morris Brown” from *Idlewild*, “Liberation” from *Aquemini*, and “Kryptonite” from *Got Purp? Volume II*. The music director for the project is DJ Swiff.

Collaborators from all sides of this project have embraced the opportunity to shatter stereotypes of “the usual.” “There are a lot of stereotypes about hip-hop. At the same time, there are stereotypes about what ballet is. Many of these assumptions come from people who have never actually experienced these types of art forms,” says Lauri Stallings, Atlanta Ballet’s Choreographer in Residence, who has been working with the dancers and Big Boi since August to conceptualize the show. “**big** is about putting those assumptions aside and finding the commonality in people.”

Media sponsors include WVEE V-103.3 FM, Atlanta’s number one radio station, and *Atlanta Peach Magazine*, the city’s preeminent luxury publication. After hearing of John McFall’s desire to bring hip-hop to the stage, *Peach* editor-in-chief Elizabeth Schulte Roth introduced McFall and Atlanta Ballet to Big Boi and Purple Ribbon Entertainment.

Tickets start at \$25 and are on sale now. Call the Ticketmaster Arts Line at (404) 817-8700, or stop by a Ticketmaster outlet or the Fox Theatre Box Office. To order online, visit www.atlantaballet.com. Groups of ten or more may contact Atlanta Ballet Group Sales at (404) 873-5811 ext. 207 or groupsales@atlantaballet.com.

Founded in 1929, Atlanta Ballet is the longest continuously-operating ballet company in the United States. Atlanta Ballet’s eclectic repertoire spans ballet history, highlighted by beloved classics and inventive originals.

Among Atlanta Ballet’s proud and unique 78-year history are its three Artistic Directors: Miss Dorothy Alexander, whose vision brought dance to the South; Robert Barnett, who turned Atlanta Ballet into a professional company; and currently, John McFall. Under McFall’s leadership, Atlanta Ballet continues its commitment to share and educate audiences on the empowering joy of dance.

Atlanta Ballet opened the Centre for Dance Education in 1996 and is dedicated to nurturing young dancers while providing an outlet for adults to express their creativity. With diverse class offerings and student population, the Centre serves over 150,000 people in metro Atlanta each year. Atlanta Ballet’s roots remain firmly grounded in the Atlanta community and continue to play a vital role in the city's cultural growth and revitalization.

###

