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Dec. 19, 2011

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### **'red, black & GREEN: a blues' breaks boundaries at Bates College**

LEWISTON, Maine -- "The movements for social change and environmental accountability are one and the same," says Marc Bamuthi Joseph. "And focusing on steps to sustain the planet will ultimately force us to envision a pathway to sustaining humanity."

Finding that focus is the goal of the stage show "red, black & GREEN: a blues," which Joseph and a host of collaborators present in performances at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, April 27-28, at the Lewiston Memorial Armory, 65 Central Ave.

Bates College and the Bates Dance Festival present this widely acclaimed multimedia production that brings to life personal stories about the impacts of a deteriorating environment. Doors will open at 7:30 p.m. for a viewing of the show's innovative stage sets. Tickets, priced at \$20 for the general public and \$10 for seniors and students, go on sale March 1, 2012, at [batestickets.com](http://batestickets.com).

For more information, please call 207-786-6163.

As part of Martin Luther King Day observances at Bates, Joseph presents a staged reading of the piece at 7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 13, in the Olin Arts Center Concert Hall, 75 Russell St. For more information contact 207-786-6135 or [olinarts@bates.edu](mailto:olinarts@bates.edu).

Called "as smart and provocative as it is breathtakingly beautiful" by the San Francisco Chronicle, "rbGb" combines spoken word, music, dance and a stunningly dynamic stage design. Such eclecticism reflects Joseph himself -- a true Renaissance man equally talented as a poet, a dancer, educator and activist.

This full-length performance piece is designed to jumpstart a conversation about environmental justice, social ecology and collective responsibility in the climate-change era. Joseph, one of America's vital voices in performance and arts education, brings the piece to Lewiston as part of an ongoing relationship with Bates.

"'rbGb' breaks new artistic ground and delivers a powerful message," says Laura Faure, director of the Bates Dance Festival. "We're honored to have had a sustained relationship with the

brilliant Marc Bamuthi Joseph over the past nine years, and are thrilled to bring this remarkable work to Maine."

"rbGb" reunites seven artists from the acclaimed 2008 work "the break/s: a mixtape for stage": writer-performer Joseph; director Michael John Garcés; choreographer Stacey Printz; drummer/beatboxer Tommy Shepherd; documentary filmmaker Eli Jacobs-Fantauzzi; lighting designer James Clotfelter; and media designer David Szlasa.

Joseph is joined onstage in the performance by Shepherd, dancer-actor Traci Tolmaire and vocalist-visual artist Theaster Gates, who is also designing the set.

Stories for "rbGb" were developed from material gathered at a series of festivals, held in four cities across the U.S., that use participatory arts and action to advance social and environmental justice in diverse and underserved communities. Under Joseph's artistic direction, these "Life is Living" events in Oakland, Calif., Harlem, Chicago and Houston have yielded residents' testimony as dramatic source material -- specifically, the voices of people often left out of discussions about "living green."

Interviews, poems, films and murals from "Life is Living" have become words, dance and images that express the challenge of living green where violent crime and poor education are more of a threat than ecological crisis, and that reveal emerging definitions of environmentalism in these communities.

Set into Gates' malleable stage installation of repurposed building materials and clay objects, and heightened by Jacobs-Fantauzzi's vivid films and vibrant graffiti murals from "Life is Living," "rbGb" is driven by the idea that valuing your own life, and the life of your community, is the first step to valuing planet Earth.

The production is composed of two sections. Titled "the colored museum" (inspired in part by the George C. Wolfe play of the same name), the first invites spectators on stage to look into the windows of installations that represent four urban regions, and stories and movements from these areas.

In "colors and muses," audience members return to their seats and watch as the piece extends beyond conversation and focuses on central figures in Houston, New York, Chicago and Oakland.

### **Marc Bamuthi Joseph**

Joseph is one of America's vital voices in performance, arts education and artistic curation. He appeared on the cover of Smithsonian Magazine in 2007 as one of America's Top Young Innovators in the Arts and Sciences. He was the artistic director of the HBO documentary "Russell Simmons Presents Brave New Voices," and an inaugural recipient of the United States Artists Rockefeller Fellowship, which annually recognizes 50 of the country's "greatest living artists." He received this year's Alpert Award in theater.

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