



# MEDIA ADVISORY

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## ***Lauren Anderson to Teach at COCA***

*One of America's most distinguished African-American ballerinas will hold two master classes, a Q&A on Saturday, October 27*

**WHAT:** COCA will welcome famed dancer Lauren Anderson for a series of master classes on Saturday, October 27, 2018. Anderson joined Houston Ballet in 1983 and in 1990 became the first African-American to be promoted to principal dancer at Houston Ballet – and one of the few African-American ballerinas at the head of a major ballet company anywhere in the world. Anderson is now an outreach associate in Houston Ballet's education department where she teaches ballet classes at Houston Ballet's Ben Stevenson Academy, conducts master classes at area schools, and lectures to students on dance and her historic career as one of America's most distinguished African-American ballerinas.

**WHERE:** COCA, 524 Trinity Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63130

**WHEN:** Saturday, October 27, 2018 – Master classes are open to all dancers at the appropriate level. Dancers do not have to be COCA students.

- 11:00-1:00pm: Ballet Master Class for Beg/Int Students, Ages 10+
- 1:30-2:30pm: Q & A - Free and open to the public.
- 3:00-5:00pm: Ballet Master Class for High Int/Adv Students, Ages 13+

**COST:** \$25 per master class; Q&A is free and open to the public

**INTERVIEWS:** Anderson is available for interviews in advance by phone, on Friday, October 26, after 7pm, or Saturday, October 27, before 10am. Media is also invited to attend any portion of the master classes and/or the Q&A. To schedule, please contact Beth McClure, [emcclure@cocastl.org](mailto:emcclure@cocastl.org), 314.561.4868.

**IMAGES:** High-resolution images available at: <https://www.laurenandersonofficial.com/gallery>

### **ABOUT LAUREN ANDERSON:**

Native Houstonian Lauren Anderson danced with Houston Ballet from 1983 to 2006, performing leading roles in all the great classical ballets, appearing across the world to critical acclaim, and in the process, becoming one of Houston Ballet's most beloved stars. In January 2007, Anderson assumed her new role of outreach associate in Houston Ballet's education department where she teaches ballet classes at Houston Ballet's Ben Stevenson Academy, conducts master classes at area schools, and lectures to students on dance and her historic career as one of America's most distinguished African-American ballerinas.

She trained exclusively at Houston Ballet's Ben Stevenson Academy from the age of seven. She joined Houston Ballet in 1983 and in 1990 became the first African-American to be promoted to principal dancer at Houston Ballet – and one of the few African-American ballerinas at the head of a major ballet company anywhere in the world. In addition, Anderson received the Special Jury Award at the 1990 International Ballet Competition as well as the International Critics Award in Chile.

(more)

Anderson danced leading roles in numerous classical ballets. Her repertoire included works by George Balanchine, Sir Kenneth MacMillan, Christopher Bruce, James Kudelka, and Trey McIntyre. Anderson created the title role in Ben Stevenson's *Cleopatra*, and her performance as Cleopatra received accolades from international critics. Anna Kisselgoff of *The New York Times* compared her to the great Italian actress Eleanora Duse, and Christine Temin of *The Boston Globe* pronounced her "a powerhouse in interpreting the role that Stevenson created on her." Anderson performed across the world as a guest artist, appearing in New York, Chile, Moscow, and Chicago.

In April 1999, Anderson was featured on the cover of *Dance Magazine*. She has also been featured in the magazines *People* and *Pointe*; as well as on the television programs "A&E Breakfast With the Arts," "CBS News Sunday Morning," and the game show, "To Tell the Truth."

The Martin Luther King Foundation, Coalition of 100 Black Women, YWCA, by the Urban League, Delta Gamma Foundation, Texas Woman's Chamber of Commerce, Houston City Council, and the Texas Legislature have honored her. Anderson is also an honorary member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Anderson was awarded the Jefferson Award for Community Service in 2011. Most recently, Anderson received the Barbara Jordan, Breaking Barriers award from the Harris County Democratic Party. Anderson is the proud parent of Lawrence Bell Fitzgerald Turner.

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#### **ABOUT COCA-CENTER OF CREATIVE ARTS**

Founded in 1986, COCA is the fourth largest multidisciplinary community arts center in the country, one of only 16 schools in the nation accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools (ACCPAS), and a national leader in innovative arts education. With a mission to enrich lives and build community through the arts, COCA serves 50,000 people of all ages and skill levels, from enthusiastic amateurs to emerging professionals—all taught by a faculty of distinguished arts educators. We provide meaningful arts experiences in our own studios, gallery and theatres as well as in schools, community centers and corporate settings in order to build a vibrant St. Louis that is creative, connected and inclusive. Visit [www.cocastl.org](http://www.cocastl.org) to learn more.