

## Virginia Arts Festival announces **OVATION AWARD** Honoring the achievements of Hampton Roads artists

Virginia Arts Festival will present its first Ovation Award to the great, Norfolk-born ballerina Lorraine Graves at a luncheon and ceremony on Saturday, May 4.

The Virginia Arts Festival Ovation Award honors the lifetime achievement of artists with a special connection to the Hampton Roads region, and will be presented annually.

“Our region has given the world many great performers,” said Robert W. Cross, Virginia Arts Festival Executive Director and Perry Artistic Director. “Lorraine Graves is a superb example—an extraordinary ballerina, and longtime principal with the legendary Dance Theatre of Harlem, Ms. Graves had a distinguished career, performing around the world, and now shares her artistry and wisdom with young dancers in our region as well as nationally. We look forward to celebrating her achievements, and the accomplishments of more great artists in the coming years.”

### About Lorraine Graves

LORRAINE ELIZABETH GRAVES was born in Norfolk, Va., and began her classical training at the Academy of the Norfolk Ballet under the direction of the late Gene Hammett. She was later awarded full scholarships to the School of American Ballet and the American Ballet Center. She attended Indiana University at Bloomington, where she completed a four-year program in three years, earning a bachelor's degree in ballet with distinction.

Graves began her professional career with the Dance Theatre of Harlem (DTH) and rose to the rank of principal dancer within one year. Three years later, she became ballet mistress, in addition to her duties as a dancer.

Her performance credits with DTH include *Giselle*, *Firebird*, *Footprints Dressed in Red*, *The River*, *Toccata E Due Canzoni*, *Etosha*, *Serenade*, *The Four Temperaments*, *Agon*, *Allegro Brillante*, and the role of the siren in George Balanchine's *The Prodigal Son*. She also had leading roles in Frederic Franklin's production of *Pas de Dix*, *Prince Igor*, and *Scheherazade*, and Arthur Mitchell's *Rhythmtron*, *Holberg Suite* and *Fete Noire*.

Ms. Graves' television credits include the role of Myrta in NBC's airing of Dance Theatre of Harlem's *Creole Giselle*; the Princess of Unreal Beauty in the PBS production of John Taras' *The Firebird*; and the closing ceremonies of the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles.

Ms. Graves' guest appearances include performances with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic's Young People's Concert Series, The Norfolk Civic Ballet, The River City Ballet, The Northwest Florida Ballet, and the Virginia Ballet Theatre during the 1996 International Azalea Festival and Dance Theatre of Harlem's 30th Anniversary Celebration at New York's City Center.

Ms. Graves has taught at the North Carolina School of the Arts, The Governor's School for the Arts in Virginia, The Virginia School of the Arts in Lynchburg, The Cornish Institute in Seattle, the Oklahoma Summer Arts Institute, the South Carolina Governor's School of the Arts, DTH's Kennedy Residency

Program (now the Pre-Professional Program), the Virginia Ballet Theatre, the Flint Institute of Music, and the Southeastern Regional Ballet Association.

She is a permanent guest faculty member at the Virginia School of the Arts, is on the master teacher faculty at DTH, and is a faculty member at the Governor's School of the Arts in Norfolk. She is an invited guest teacher for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre and also is lead adjudicator for the West Virginia Dance Festival.

The chairwoman of the Norfolk Commission on the Arts and Humanities also is a member of the Mayor's Downtown Task Force; Links, Inc.; and the Todd Rosenlieb Dance Company Board, and is listed in Who's Who in America, Who's Who in Entertainment, Who's Who Among Women, and Marquis' Who's Who.

### **About the Virginia Arts Festival**

Since 1997, the **Virginia Arts Festival** has transformed the cultural scene in southeastern Virginia, presenting great performers from around the world to local audiences and making this historic, recreation-rich region a cultural destination for visitors from across the United States and around the world. The Festival has presented numerous U.S. and regional premieres, and regularly commissions new works of music, dance, and theater from some of today's most influential composers, choreographers, and playwrights. The Festival's arts education programs reach tens of thousands of area schoolchildren each year through student matinees, in-school performances, artists' residencies, master classes and demonstrations. # # #

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