

# 'Facing Mekka'

Harris hopes to turn hip-hop on its head – literally

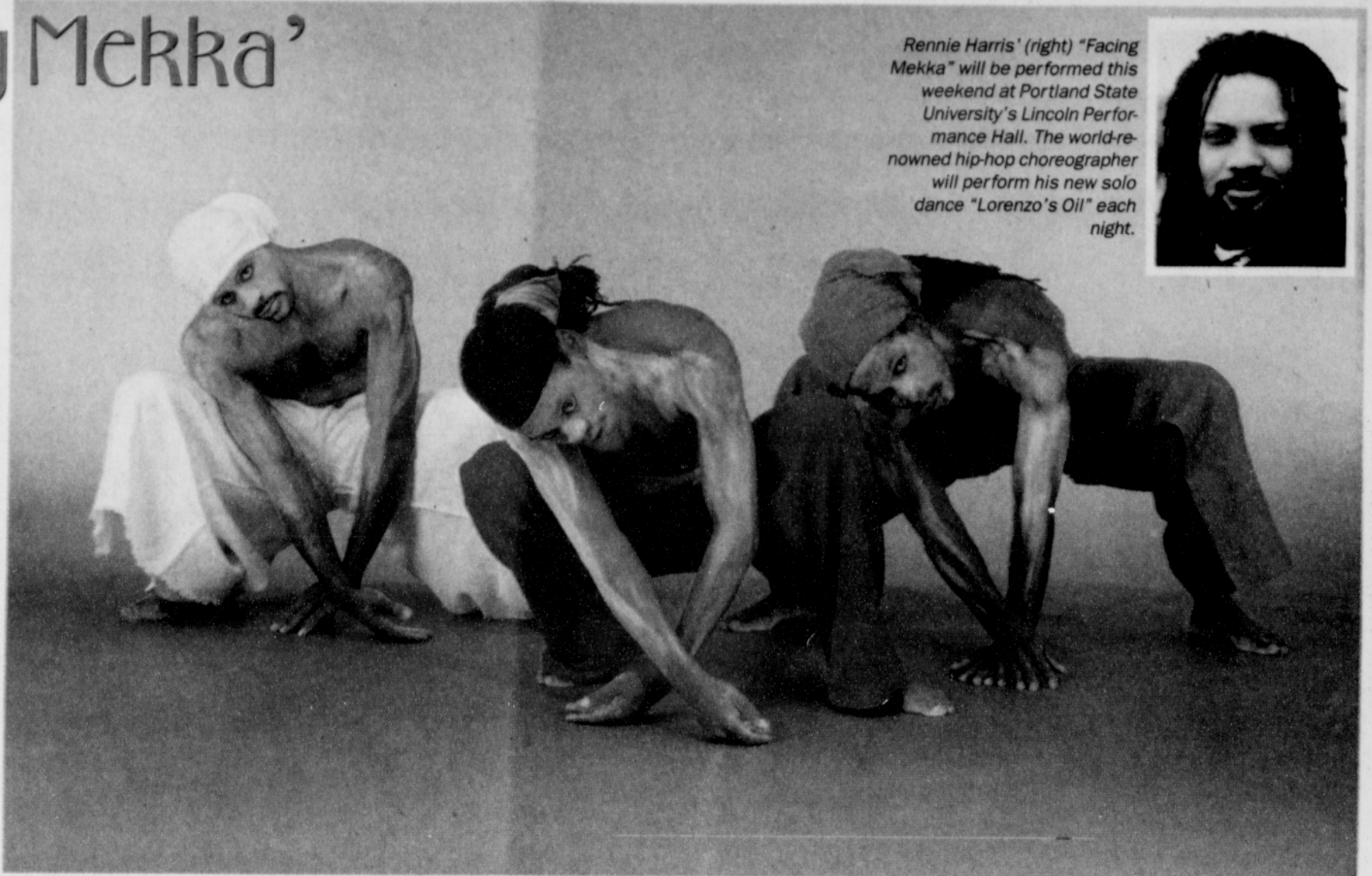
Internationally renowned hip-hop choreographer Rennie Harris comes to Portland to showcase the work of his dance troupe, Rennie Harris Puremovement, for three performances of "Facing Mekka" this Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Hot off the trail from the worldwide success of "Rome and Jewels," his startling version of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliette," Harris has created a major work that returns to the pure dance roots of hip-hop.

Partly inspired by Harris' first trip to West Africa in 1997, "Facing Mekka" aims to show the human commonalities found in the marriage of movement and music from different cultures. Turning away from the violence of "Rome and Jewels," Harris intends to demonstrate the positive energy of dance as a creative and spiritual force.

"Facing Mekka" will be a landscape of movement, rhythm, sound and image that offers dance as a vehicle for uniting people and cultures.

The show features a cast of 13 dancers who are accompanied by live percussionists and a re-



Rennie Harris' (right) "Facing Mekka" will be performed this weekend at Portland State University's Lincoln Performance Hall. The world-renowned hip-hop choreographer will perform his new solo dance "Lorenzo's Oil" each night.



corded sound score. Original vocal and musical compositions will be performed by Grisha Coleman, Phillip Hamilton, Kenny Mohammed, Lenny Seidman and Gabby Lang. Two collage artists have created images that will be

projected on the floor and backdrop of the stage to create a multi-layered landscape.

The highlight of the show will be a new solo, entitled "Lorenzo's Oil," performed by Harris himself. The solo depicts a journey in

which Harris, traveling slowly on a long diagonal, calmly and serenely executes hip-hop move-

ments. With his dance, Harris hopes to literally turn hip-hop on its head in order to draw the attention away from the spec-

tacle of hip-hop culture to look at what it really is – or what it could and should be.

"Facing Mekka" will be performed at the Portland State University Lincoln Performance Hall at 8 p.m. Thursday, April 10

through Saturday, April 12. Tickets are \$24 for general admission and \$12 for college students and seniors. Tickets can be purchased at the PSU Box Office, 1825 SW Broadway, or by calling 503-224-4400.



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