



Thursday | January 19 | 8pm
Friday | January 20 | 8pm
Saturday | January 21 | 8pm

NEC's Plimpton Shattuck Black Box Theatre

LaTasha Barnes' *The Jazz Continuum*

Visionary / Artistic Director LaTasha Barnes

Production Manager Michele Byrd-McPhee

Musical Director Christopher McBride

Dramaturg / MC Melanie George

Lighting Designer serena wong

Rehearsal Director Reyna Núñez

Stage Manager Ndanu Mutisya

Dance Explorers

LaTasha Barnes • Michele Byrd-McPhee • Melanie George • Reyna Núñez
Ray F. Davis • Alain 'Hurrikane' Lauture • Tyedric Hill • Duane Lee Holland, Jr.
Le'Andre Douglas • Shana Maria Weaver • Imani Arrington

Musical Explorers

Christopher McBride, saxophone

Diyanna Monet, DJ / turntablist

Errick Lewis, bass

Marcus E'Shadd Parker, drums

Imani Rousselle, vocals

Idris Frederick, piano

Managing Producer Laura Colby - Elsie Management

Performance sponsors **Susan & Michael Thonis**

This presentation of *The Jazz Continuum* is made possible in part
by the **New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project**,
with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation
and the Mellon Foundation.

Additional support provided by the
Amy Lam Fund for Creative Performance

2022/23 Season Sponsors **Amy & Joshua Boger**

DANCE PROGRAM

Explorations of The Continuum

The Call

The Embodiment

The Response

The Exchange

The Vibe

Our Acknowledgement

Today's program will end at approximately 9:45pm; there will be no intermission.

ARTIST STATEMENT

by LaTasha Barnes

The Jazz Continuum is the manifestation of a long held dream—a space of creativity built upon the tenets of community, play, improvisation, and an unapologetic celebration of our full being! An unapologetic acknowledgment of all shades, compilations, and expressions within the Black experience. The establishment, or re-establishment as it were, of my personal relationship with Jazz music and dance in a time of great personal uncertainty brought me to a place of great clarity—understanding of myself, trust in my creative faculties, and a robust sense of hope. Hope for what this culture could be and what my communities could be encouraged to express and affirm through the prolific beauty that is our cultural continuum. Born of my research analysis during grad school at NYU Gallatin, this transformative project's full intentions are to provide space for a celebratory negotiation of Black dancers' and musicians' relationships to Jazz and its sires (Soul, Funk, Hip-Hop, House, et al) and all the technologies they have also birthed—to bridge the knowledge, expressive, and creative gaps that our disjointed and compartmentalized social and academic experiences have left many of us with.

You have the honor of witnessing, in real time, these artists' explorations through the continuum and our efforts to inhabit / embody them generatively towards our next phase of being. We aim to acknowledge the efforts and gifts of our ancestors and community elders by uplifting the vestiges of their genius within our current Black cultural forms (music and dance) and offering to the continuum something new. It is my deepest wish that, as new ways of composing our expressions, or seeing our collective are established, the "presentation" of *The Jazz Continuum* will pass forward to its next torchbearer. While that progresses, we thank you for bearing witness to our journey and making space to support this process with your energy and other gifts. We give thanks to our ancestors, to our elders, to the universes, and to each other for daring to share in this way and again we thank you for celebrating the limitless power and joy that is *The Jazz Continuum*.

To The Continuum!

WHO'S WHO IN THE JAZZ CONTINUUM

Bessie Award-winner **LaTasha Barnes** (*Visionary / Artistic Director / Dance Explorer*) is an internationally awarded and celebrated dance artist, educator (assistant professor of dance, Arizona State University), decorated US Army Veteran (SFC/ SATCOM Engineer), and Tradition-Bearer of Black American Social Dance. Her love of dance and music exceeds her known life, as Barnes' parents lovingly joke she was dancing even before she was breathing, recalling memories of LaTasha grooving in her mother's womb while she sat next to speakers at parties LaTasha's father DJ'd. From this early love / education her expansive artistic, competitive, and performative skills flourished and have made her a frequent collaborator with prominent artists and arts organizations around the world. She is deeply honored to be in service to her culture across social, academic, and performative spaces as shared in her March appearance on the *Today Show with Hoda & Jenna* and her July 2022 *Dance* magazine profile. And while contributing to the success of the ground-breaking stage production *Swing Out* with Caleb Teicher (BrainTrust), and championing this expansive intergenerational and intercommunal cultural arts experience *The Jazz Continuum* brings her great pride, LaTasha most cherishes the guidance, support, and empowerment bestowed by her family / family, elders, mentors, and ancestors. Their love gives her the strength to strive for authentic expression, excellence, and fulfillment in every endeavor—for them and this work LaTasha is eternally grateful.

A tireless advocate for girls and women, **Michele Byrd-McPhee** (*Production Manager / Dance Explorer*) is the founder and executive director of Ladies of Hip-Hop (LOHH). Michele has been working for over two decades to re-contextualize Hip-Hop spaces and conversations regarding sex, gender, and race. Under her direction, LOHH cultivates dance environments that honor and acknowledge the roots of Hip-Hop and the many creative pioneers who have shaped them. This is especially important given the ways in which Black dance has been co-opted, and appropriated without acknowledgement to its community cultural origins. Michele earned her BS from Temple University and an MS in nonprofit arts management from Drexel University. Michele also worked many years in TV and arts production, working as a production coordinator at Brooklyn Academy of Music and then as a senior music coordinator at *Late Night with Seth Meyers*. Michele currently is teaching marketing for the arts and arts advocacy at Texas Tech University. She also served as a Bessie Award Committee Member (2018, 2019, 2020). In addition to serving as executive director of LOHH, she is artistic director of LDC (LOHH dance collective).

Christopher McBride (*Saxophone / Musical Director / Musical Explorer*) is a saxophonist based in Harlem whose work includes education, arrangement, and composition, in addition to performance. Born in Chicago, and starting his professional career there in 2007, Christopher moved to New York City in 2013. His group, The Whole Proof, has played venues all over New York, and Christopher ran his *Singer Meets Saxophonist* series at the famed Minton's Playhouse in Harlem from 2017 to 2019. The musicians he has performed for span many genres, with artists such as Billy Preston, Jimmy Hetah, Bobby Broom, Percy Gray, Roy Hargrove, Pete Rock, Big Daddy Kane, Talib Kweli, Lupe Fiasco, Guy Sebastian,

Solange, Ne-Yo, Jennifer Hudson, Alice Smith, Brandon Flowers, Lea DeLaria, 88 Keys, Multon Mustafa, Winard Harper, and the Marquis Hill Blacktet. Christopher also serves as the director of education for the Second Line Arts Collective, a not-for-profit organization based in New Orleans. He has also worked as a journalist and consultant with Forbes*Ignite*, the innovation coalition of Forbes. He recently received a Grammy nomination for his work on Steven Feifke and Bijon Watson's 2022 album *Generation Gap Jazz Orchestra*. As a composer, McBride was recently selected as the 2022 Make Jazz fellowship artist at the 18th Street Arts Center in Santa Monica, CA.

Melanie George (*Dramaturg / MC / Dance Explorer*), named one of *Dance* magazine's '30 over 30' in 2021, is the founder and director of Jazz Is... Dance Project, and associate curator and director of artist initiatives at Jacob's Pillow. As a dramaturg, she has contributed to projects by Raja Feather Kelly, Susan Marshall, Alice Sheppard, Machine Dazzle, Urban Bush Women, and Caleb Teicher's *Swing Out*, among others. George is featured in the documentary *UpRooted: The Journey of Jazz Dance*, and she founded the global advocacy website jazzdancedirect.com. She is the 2021 recipient of the Outstanding Leadership Award from the National Dance Education Organization.

serena wong (*Lighting Designer*) is a Brooklyn-based freelance lighting designer for theater and dance. Her designs have been seen at Lincoln Center, Fall For Dance at City Center, Danspace, and Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, among others in the US and abroad. Most recently she has designed for choreographers LaTasha Barnes, Gemma Bond, Caleb Teicher, Leonardo Sandoval, and Jaamil Olawale Kosoko. She enjoys biking, baking, and pottery.

Reyna Núñez (*Rehearsal Director / Dance Explorer*), a born and bred New Yorker, is simply a versatile movement artist. Immersed in Street Dance Culture, she has trained under Danielle Polanco, Ejoye Wilson, Michele Byrd-McPhee, Cebo Carr, and LaTasha Barnes, studying House, Jazz, Vogue Femme, and more. Núñez appeared as a featured dancer in the film *In the Heights*, and has worked with artists such as Janet Jackson, Lizzo, and Louie Vega. Núñez is the rehearsal director for *The Jazz Continuum* and Ladies Dance Collective. She also serves as the shared administrative assistant for Michele Byrd-McPhee, LaTasha Barnes, and Melanie George.

Ray F. Davis (*Dance Explorer*) is a performer, choreographer, and teacher born in Kingston, Jamaica, who currently resides in the Bronx. He is in his 19th year of being a dance professional, is still adding movement from different genres, and is always a hungry student. Ray has trained under the BLADE technique with the Hip Hop Dance Conservatory. He was the associate artistic director of the Hip Hop Dance Conservatory and BLADE Dance Academy. Ray is proficient in various styles of Hip Hop and many genres of partner dances as well as solo dances such as lindy hop, salsa, foxtrot, ballet, modern, and jazz, to name a few. He has traveled to China, Cuba, Barbados, Sweden, England, Canada, Puerto Rico, Korea, and numerous states to train, perform, and teach. Ray F. Davis sends a huge thank you to his mentors, dancers, teachers, and people who have influenced and continue to influence and cultivate his passion for movement.

Alain ‘Hurrikane’ Lauture (*Dance Explorer*), born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, found interest in dance in early 2007. Known in the underground scene for his spontaneous freestyle as a “Locker,” and his versatility as a dancer granted him awards at many competitions and battles including “Juste Debout 2011” and “Locking Forever” during Amsterdam’s Summer Dance Forever Festival 2017 and 2018. He has performed on MTV, Samsung, with Madonna, and with Janet Jackson. Beginning to dive deeper into his artistic journey, Hurrikane recently performed as a dancer in the Tony-nominated *Skeleton Crew* on Broadway.

Tyedric Hill (*Dance Explorer*) is an internationally established dancer, educator, choreographer, and performer who specializes in Black American social and cultural dance traditions that include but are not limited to vernacular Jazz, Lindy hop, and hip-hop. Tyedric first started dancing in 2004. He and his siblings established a movement foundation in liturgical and modern dance, by regularly performing at local churches in their hometown of Dallas. Eventually he would connect with hip hop and other urban dance styles in 2010, leading his own dance crew in high school. Over the years, he has established a background enriched and informed by many movement traditions, including capoeira and stepping. He discovered vernacular jazz dancing four years ago, and hasn’t looked back since. He’s been distinguished as a Frankie Manning Ambassador, and has earned various competition titles at events such as Lindyfest and the Uptown Swingout.

Duane Lee Holland, Jr. (*Dance Explorer*) began his career as a gymnast and member of the Jr. National Team. He began his professional dance career at age 17, as an original core member of Rennie Harris Puremovement. He was also in the original Broadway case of *The Lion King*, as well as featured dancer and assistant choreographer of Maurice Hines’ Broadway production of *Hot Feet*. In May 2015, he received his Master of Fine Arts in dance (*magna cum laude*), with a focus in choreography, from the University of Iowa. He was the first hip-hop artist to graduate from the graduate program. In August 2016, Duane joined the Boston Conservatory at Berklee as their first full-time hip-hop faculty member. In May 2019, he joined the dance faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as assistant professor of dance, becoming the first hip-hop faculty member there. in 2016, and at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2019. The UMass-Amherst dance program welcomed new faculty member Duane Lee Holland, Jr. at the beginning of the 2022/23 academic year. In 2010, he released his first independent R&B/Hip-Hop music project, *Life Expansion*, and his second project, *Love-n-Life*, featuring songs from his one-man show, *The Adventures of Maxx Lancaster*, was released in March 2021, with a premiere planned for 2023.

Le’Andre Douglas (*Dance Explorer*) is a nationally accomplished dancer, choreographer, and teacher from Houston, with more than a decade of professional dance experience. Le’Andre has performed, choreographed, opened, and been a part of the creative process for acts such as Grammy-nominated artists Tamar Davis, Pitbull, Omarion, B.o.B, Pat Benatar, the BareNaked Ladies; and hip-hop legends LL Cool J, Kid’n Play, Big Daddy Kane, The Sugar Hill Gang, and many more. His mission is to preserve and innovate Black culture within the body through dance education classes, performances, and social events. Mr. Douglas believes that he can help fill the gap where there is lack of access to education

about the cultural lineage and African origins of Black cultural dances, while also teaching the necessary performance skills for dancer development.

Shana Maria Weaver (*Dance Explorer*) is a Swing dance performer and instructor based in New York City. She holds a BA in music with a concentration in jazz studies from California State University, Los Angeles (2011). She teaches music at York Early College Academy in Queens, New York, and is currently finishing her MA in music and music education at Columbia University's Teachers College. Her educational platform, the *Shana Weaver Workshop Series* (2017), strives to share with students the vast legacy of Black History, music and dance. Shana has worked with choreographers including Dormeshia Edwards, Mickey Davidson, Chester Whitmore, Sonny Allen, and Norma Miller. She is a member of the Black Lindy Hop Foundation (BLHF) and a board member for Collective Voices For Change (CVFC). Instagram: @shana_maria_weaver

A Brooklyn native, **Imani Arrington** (*Dance Explorer*) studied under Angel Chinn and has performed with NonaLee Dance Theatre since 2014. Arrington continued training at Queensborough College but decided to shift focus to explore passions and purpose within New York City's street dance culture. She currently teaches and performs with Ladies of Hip Hop Dance Collective and Educated Little Monsters.

Always keeping New Jack Swing sounds in her vicinity, **Diyanna Monet** (*DJ, Turntablist / Musical Explorer*) is a Washington, DC, multidisciplinary artist, whose enthusiasm and ambition for movement stems from her childhood exposure to music genres such as hip hop, R&B, and the native Go-Go sound, which catalyzed her path in DJ-ing. Inspired by several collectives and artists in the city, Diyanna's creative blends of art, DJ-ing, and dance convey reminiscent energies of a '90s House Party.

Erick Lewis (*Bass / Musical Explorer*) is a talented multi-instrumentalist and producer, owning his own label, X-vibe Records. He is well versed in funk, R&B, rock, jazz, and hip hop genres, and has worked with a number of well-known artists, including Stevie Wonder, D'Angelo, Lauryn Hill, Jay-Z, Common, Talib Kweli, Mos Def, Snoop Dogg, Wu Tang Clan, Jill Raheem DeV Vaughn, and Mike Phillips. A native of Compton, CA, Erick is a self-taught musician who was raised around music, playing drums in church when he was 8 years old. Erick has performed with artists at arenas across the United States: the Playboy Jazz Festival at the Hollywood Bowl, Montreal Jazz Festival, West Palm Beach's SunFest, the Blue Note in New York City, Blues Alley in Washington, DC, and the Hollywood Bowl. Erick has been the musical director for Erykah Badu, Karen Briggs, and Kim Burrell, and co-produced saxophonist Hailey Niswanger's 2015 album PDX Soul with Grammy Award Winner Thara Memory on trumpet. In June 2013, after spending years developing and exploring his musical ideas, Erick debuted his first album as a leader, *Where Musician Ends and Instrument Begins*. Currently, Erick works full-time as a musician in Portland, OR, and has begun composing for his second album.

Marcus E'Shadd Parker (*Drums / Musical Explorer*) has been strategically groomed for his inheritance of funk royalty since 1983. As the son of funk pioneer Melvin Parker, he was born in Washington, DC, and raised in Richmond, Virginia. Marcus was only an infant when he first picked up a pair of drumsticks and has been wowing crowds since the age of six. He also understands and demonstrates that funk isn't something that can be done part time; it's truly a gift that lives within. His gift of funk has gathered him international acclaim, performing with greats such as Aretha Franklin, Prince, Candy Dulfer, and Anne Nesby, as well as a five-year tenure with funk icon Marceo Parker. One experience is all that's needed to recognize that he is indeed what Prince called "The Son of Melvin."

Imani Rousselle (*Vocals / Musical Explorer*) is a Texas-born vocalist with a love for interpreting and delivering the message of lyric. Whether singing jazz standards or contemporary compositions, her voice invites you to follow along as she fills space with carefully crafted sound. She currently makes her home in New York City, having graduated from the Manhattan School of Music in 2021. Prior to moving to NYC, Imani studied at Columbia College Chicago during which time she performed on many stages around the city including the legendary Jazz Showcase and The Green Mill, and was named a Luminarts Cultural Fellow. Since moving to New York in 2019, Imani has sung on stages including the world famous Dizzy's Jazz Club, Clements Place, the Schomburg Center in Harlem, the Joyce Theater, and more. She has performed alongside great musicians including Stefon Harris, Casey Benjamin, Marc Carey, Jaleel Shaw, Domo Branch, Cory Henry, and Roger Boykin, and is excited to continue expanding creatively and performing in a world with renewed fervor for connection and creation.

Idris Frederick (*Piano / Musical Explorer*) is a 25-year-old pianist / composer who was born in Detroit. Before moving to New York City to study at the New School of Jazz, he spent the first six years of his career performing alongside some of the biggest talents in and around the Louisville area. He is now expanding his career to global lengths and changing lives with the power of his music. You can follow Idris on his social media platforms.

Laura Colby (*Managing Producer*), recipient of NAPAMA's 2016 Liz Silverstein Award, secures funds to create new work with Elsie Management (which she founded in 1995). Most notably, during the pandemic, Colby served as creative producer for Manual Cinema's *A Christmas Carol*. Prior to the pandemic, she oversaw the consortium of presenters who commissioned Ragamala Dance Company's *Fires of Varanasi*. She is honored to be working with LaTasha Barnes to bring *The Jazz Continuum* to indoor stages.

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performance?
Let us know your thoughts
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Celebrity Series of Boston

2022/23

Winter/Spring

JANUARY 2023

Company SBB // Stefanie Batten Bland, *Look Who's Coming to Dinner*

Sat | Jan 14 | 8pm
Sun | Jan 15 | 3pm
NEC's Plimpton Shattuck
Black Box Theatre

LaTasha Barnes' *The Jazz Continuum*

Thu – Sat | Jan 19 – 21 | 8pm
NEC's Plimpton Shattuck
Black Box Theatre

Emerson String Quartet

Sun | Jan 22 | 3pm
NEC's Jordan Hall

Danish String Quartet

Fri | Jan 27 | 8pm
NEC's Jordan Hall

An Evening with Branford Marsalis

Sat | Jan 28 | 8pm
Berklee Performance Center

FEBRUARY 2023

Chris Thile
Fri | Feb 3 | 8pm
Sanders Theatre

Artemis

Sat | Feb 4 | 8pm
Berklee Performance Center

***What Makes It Great?*
with Rob Kapilow
Copland's *Appalachian Spring with A Far Cry***

Sun | Feb 5 | 3pm
NEC's Jordan Hall

**Jessica Vosk,
*My Golden Age***

Sun | Feb 5 | 5pm
Symphony Hall

Circa, *Sacre*

Thu – Sat | Feb 9 – 11 | 8pm
Boch Center Shubert Theatre

**NEIGHBORHOOD ARTS
Sandeep Das & Mike Block
*Where the soul never dies***

Sat | Feb 11 | 4pm
Harvard-Epworth Church

Emi Ferguson and Ruckus

Sat | Feb 11 | 8pm
Calderwood Studio at GBH
Boston

**Jason Moran and the Harlem Hellfighters,
*James Reese Europe and the Absence of Ruin***

Fri | Feb 17 | 8pm
Berklee Performance Center

DEBUT SERIES

Alexi Kenney
Wed | Feb 22 | 8pm
Longy's Pickman Hall

Dreamers' Circus

Fri | Feb 24 | 8pm
NEC's Jordan Hall

NEIGHBORHOOD ARTS

Sandeep Das: *Soundscapes of India* - Suhail Yusuf Khan with Boston City Singers
Sat | Feb 25 | 3pm
Multicultural Arts Center,
Cambridge

and many more

Dreamers' Circus
February 24

