



Saturday | January 14 | 8pm
Sunday | January 15 | 3pm
NEC's Plimpton Shattuck Black Box Theatre

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

Choreography, Installation and Direction: Stefanie Batten Bland

Music: Paul Damian Hogan

Costumes: Shane Ballard

Lighting design: Yuki Link, adapted from Clifton Taylor

Technical Director: Emma Rivera

Performers:

Latra A. Wilson

Rachel Watson-Jih

Doug Gillespie

Mio Ishikawa

Livanna Maislen

AJ Guevara

David Parker

Today's program will run approximately 75 minutes,
with no intermission.

Celebrity Series invites the audience to a special post-performance reception and conversation in keeping with the *Look Who's Coming to Dinner* theme of welcoming and inclusion.

Performance Sponsors **Susan & Michael Thonis**

Additional support provided by the
Amy Lam Fund for Creative Performance

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

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Inspired by the 1967 Stanley Kramer film starring Sidney Poitier, Katharine Hepburn, and Spencer Tracy, ***Look Who's Coming to Dinner*** pays tribute to those who paved the way toward acceptance in love and life. Set around a transformative dinner setting, seven dance-theatre artists excavate interlaced universal traumas through imagery and ritual as they seek a seat at the table.

Look Who's Coming to Dinner was originally created for the 2019 Crossing The Line Festival. Coproducers La MaMa Experimental Theatre and Alliance Française Fl:AF. Additional funding from Jerome Robbins Foundation, Crojiks Croft, Juilliard School, and University Settlement.

ABOUT COMPANY SBB // STEFANIE BATTEN BLAND

Child of a jazz composer/producer father and writer mother, and raised in Soho when it was still led by artists, **Stefanie Batten Bland** was clearly destined for a future in the arts. A global artist, Batten Bland exhibits a unique blend of African American flamboyance and European sensibility. Her work is situated at the intersection of dance-theatre, film, and installation, with a focus on the interrogation of symbols in contemporary and historical culture. Undeterred by convention, the emotional content of Batten Bland's choreography is directly accessible; its social and philosophical message is visceral.

As artistic director of Company SBB, Batten Bland established the company in France in 2008 while positioned as head choreographer at the Paris Opéra Comique. Upon returning to New York City, she received the support of Mikhail Baryshnikov and his residency program at Baryshnikov Arts Center, where she continues as a resident artist. Before establishing her own company, Batten Bland danced for Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch, Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More*, Hungarian Pal Frenák and Ivorian Coast creator Georges Momboye.

Known for her unique visual and movement aesthetic, Batten Bland served as movement director for *Eve's Song* at the Public Theater (Forbes 2018 Best Theater) and is currently casting and movement director for Emursive Productions, as well as their performance and identity consultant for *Sleep No More*. Her article in the August 2022 issue of *Dance* magazine details her advocacy in immersive theater for performers, through costuming, character direction, and lighting approaches.

She has created for fashion and lifestyle partners Fleur du Mal, Louis Vuitton, VanCleave & Arpels, Hermès, and Guerlain. Her choreography is currently in active repertory at American Ballet Theatre, Alvin Ailey II, Transitions Dance

Company in the UK, and Frontier Danceland in Singapore. Batten Bland has created 14 dance cinema films that have been shown in international festivals from South Africa to Buenos Aires and Greece to Germany. Her latest dance film, *Kolonial*, has received thirteen US and international film awards, and was nominated for three Bessie Awards. Her work has been presented at BAM, Lincoln Center Restart Stages, The Yard at Martha's Vineyard, and La MaMa Experimental Theatre, and internationally at the Spoleto Festival (Italy), Danse à Lille (France), and Tanz Tendenzen (Germany).

In 2021, Batten Bland was awarded a New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project Production Grant for her work *Embarqued: Stories of Soil*, which premiered at Duke Performances in April 2022. Other awards include a Jerome Robbins Award, Bessie Schonberg Fellowship at The Yard, and Toulmin Creator at NYU Center for Ballet Arts. She has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Dance* magazine, *Marie Claire*, and *Dance Europe*. Batten Bland received her MFA in Interdisciplinary Arts from Goddard College and is currently an assistant professor at Montclair State University's Department of Theatre and Dance. She lives in SoHo with her family.

Paul Damian Hogan (*composer*) writes and records music for film, dance, installations, and albums. He earned his doctorate in music composition from Columbia University with a focus on chamber and electronic music. He has collaborated with choreographer Stefanie Batten Bland on works premiered at La MaMa Moves Dance Festival, Lincoln Center's New Dances, and Crossing the Line Festival, as well as multiple dance videos. He scores narrative and documentary films, earning an Emmy nomination for his soundtrack for *Birders: The Central Park Effect*. His music is featured in artworks in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum and MOMA. In his spare time, he also makes albums about dreams, traveling, and dreaming about traveling.

Shane Ballard (*costumes*) has been a collaborator with Company SBB since 2018. He designed Company SBB's costumes for the films *Kolonial* and *Current*, as well as their dance-theatre productions *Embarqued* and *Look Who's Coming To Dinner*. Costume design credits also include: Charlotte Ballet's Innovative Works, Beyond The Mint dance series, Gibney Dance Company's Both/And dance series, *Cardboard Piano* at the Juilliard School, *Hair* at Berkshire Theater Group, *An Octoroon* at Rutgers Theater Company, *Madame Infamy* at the NY Musical Theater Festival, *One Day* at 3LD Art and Technology Center and *Oliver! The Musical* at El Museo del Barrio. Ballard currently teaches costume design and illustration at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University. Instagram: @shaneballard.design

Yuki Nakase Link (*lighting designer*) first designed *Look Who's Coming to Dinner* for Company SBB // Stefanie Batten Bland in a production at La MaMa, based on the original lighting design by Clifton Taylor. Recent design credits include *Orpheus and Eurydice* (San Francisco Opera); *Four Saints in Three Acts* (Target Margin Theater); *In a Grove* (Pittsburgh Opera); *Red Velvet* (Shakespeare Theatre Company); *Our Town* (Dallas Theater Center); *When Monica Met Hillary* (Miami New Drama); *Seven Deadly Sins* (New York City, Miami Beach); *Blood Moon* (Prototype Festival, Baruch Performing Arts Center); *Triptych: Eyes of One on Another* (Disney Hall, Kennedy Center, BAM Howard Gilman Opera House). She was born in Tokyo, grew up in Kyoto, Japan, and currently lives north of NYC in the woods of the Hudson Valley. She holds an MFA from New York University. For more information, see yukinlink.com.

Emma Rivera (*technical director; she/her*) is the Space and Production Manager at The Performance Project @ University Settlement (NYC). Select freelance work includes Company SBB // Stefanie Batten Bland (*Look Who's Coming To Dinner*, La MaMa, NYC; *Bienvenue 欢迎 Welcome Bienvenido كـب الـهـأ*, Spoleto Festival dei Due Mondi 2018; Spoleto, Italy; *The Winter Yard*, Martha's Vineyard), Karen Bernard (*Showgirls*, NYC; *Poolside*, NYC; *Lakeside*, NYC), and André Zachery/Renegade Performance Group (*Dapline!* NYC; August Wilson Cultural Center, Pittsburgh, PA; *Untamed Space*, Wexner Center for the Arts, Ohio).

Jennifer Payán (*associate artistic director*) is a Dominican-American movement artist originally from the Bronx, NY. She began performing with Company SBB in 2016 and has served as the associate artistic director since 2021. Outside of Company SBB, Jennifer is a company member with the Trisha Brown Dance Company and appears often as a guest artist in Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More*. She has previously worked for Pam Tanowitz Dance, Netta Yerushalmy, UNA Productions, Yara Travieso, Jasmine Hearn Collaborates, Maleek Washington, Bobbi Jene Smith, and others. Jennifer received her BFA in dance at Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University, with high honors.

PERFORMERS

Mio Ishikawa (*performer, she/her*) is a movement artist based in New York City with a deep interest in collaborations across the multiple artistic mediums. A native of Tokyo, she began training in classical dance forging a strong interest in the performing arts. She received her BFA in dance at the Juilliard School in New York City in 2019. Mio is currently a performer with Sidra Bell Dance New York, and Company SBB // Stefanie Batten Bland. She also serves a dance collective BODYSONNET as an artistic associate. In New York and Tokyo, she has worked with choreographers Maleek Washington, Kyle Abraham, Mariko Kakizaki, Celia Rowson-Hall, and others. Mio continues to nurture her own multidisciplinary art by collaborating across mediums with artists like American artist Dan Colen, visual artists Shana and Robert ParkeHarrison, cello player Ken Kubota, jazz pianist Isaiah J. Thompson, High Line Nine Gallery in Chelsea/Manhattan among many others. Mio is a certified Ilan Lev Practitioner.

Livanna Maislen (*performer*) received her BFA in dance from NYU Tisch School of the Arts. Maislen has performed aerial-installations for Microsoft, Clinique, Verizon, and Nestle, and has toured abroad in Italy, Czech Republic, and Bahrain. While dancer/rehearsal assistant with Time Lapse Dance (a Loie Fuller-inspired company), Maislen led residencies at Hofstra and DeSales universities. In 2013, Maislen became a performer with the Off-Broadway show *Sleep No More*, where she played eight different roles during her seven-year tenure with Punchdrunk. In 2015, Maislen became dancer and rehearsal assistant for the Francesca Harper Project (FHP), where she assisted in projects such as Nick Cave's Bessie Award-winning show *The Let Go*, Nona Hendryx and Carrie Mae Weems' *Refrigerated Dreams*, and Austria's Bregenzer Fruehling's Tanzfestival. Maislen has performed for Nicole von Arx, Yin Yue, Karole Armitage, and the San Francisco Opera. She is currently pursuing her master's degree in somatic psychotherapy at California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS).

Douglas Gillespie (*performer, he/him*) is a Brooklyn-based dance artist passionate in the making, teaching, and embodying of dance as an art form. He teaches at colleges and dance centers around the world, including the Juilliard School, NYU Tisch Summer Program, Mark Morris Dance Group, National Taiwan University of the Arts, and Gibney Dance Center in New York. Gillespie is an avid dance maker choreographing for Teoria De Gravidad, Limon Professional Training Program, Moving Current Dance Collective, Sarasota Contemporary Dance, and Doug Varone DEVICES workshop. Gillespie has also created his own student commissions for SUNY Brockport, Florida Southern College, Cleveland State University, University of Florida, and Santa Fe College; two of his works have premiered at American College Dance Association. Gillespie

has premiered two international self-choreographed solo projects, most recently for Festival Danza Urbana in Monterrey, Mexico, in August 2018, and Taipei, Taiwan in November 2015. Douglas was a performer for David Dorfman Dance from 2018-2021 and has been an originating member and creative contributor throughout Kate Weare Company's first decade. Gillespie has performed in Punchdrunk Emursive's *Sleep No More* and Third Rail Projects' *Then She Fell*. Gillespie was born in San Diego, raised in Jacksonville, FL and received his BFA in dance from Florida State University in 2005.

AJ Guevara (*performer*) is a freelance performer, educator, and dance maker based in New York City. He earned his BFA in dance and choreography from Virginia Commonwealth University, with additional training from the Accademia dell'Arte in Arezzo, Italy, and the American Dance Festival as a scholarship recipient. He has performed the works of Jennifer Archibald, Marc Brew, Robin Dekkers, Bill T. Jones, Jodi Melnick, Rachel Erdos, Walter Matteini, Joshua L. Peugh, Arthur Pita, Thomas Noone, Annie Rigney, Yoshito Sakuraba, Shen Wei, and Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, among others. Company credits include AXIS Dance Company, chrisbelldances, Emursive, FELD Entertainment, Susie McHugh & Dancers, Heidi Latsky Dance, VON HOWARD PROJECT, and Company I E, among others. His work with Company I E, in partnership with the US State Department, has allowed him to serve as an Artistic Diplomat for Cultural Exchange to Israel, Cuba, the UK, Palestine, Uruguay, Thailand and the UAE. His experiences in physically-integrated dance have led to advocacy work emphasizing inclusive practices / equitable spaces within the performing arts. He has led workshops and trainings for communities, organizations, and universities both across the US and abroad.

David Lee Parker (*performer*) is a native of Long Island, New York. He started his dance training at Long Island High School for the Arts and continued his studies at Mason Gross School of the Arts/Rutgers University, graduating with honors in 2018 and receiving his BFA in dance performance. David has trained at the Alvin Ailey Summer Intensive, American Ballet Theatre Summer Collegiate Program, Gibney Summer Contemporary Dance Program, and studied abroad for a year in Israel at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance. He has performed works by Stefanie Batten Bland, Antonio Brown, Camille A. Brown, Netta Yerushalmy, Ohad Naharin, Noa Zuk, Reggie Wilson, Darrell Grand Moultrie, Noa Wertheim, and Maxine Doyle, among others. Venues he has performed at include the Suzanne Dellal Theatre in Tel Aviv, the Joyce Theatre, and NYU Skirball. David was an apprentice for Ronald K. Brown and has danced for Brian Brooks Moving Company, visual artist Carrie Mae Weems, QBC Company, Kyle Marshall, and Kinesis Project Dance Theater. David is currently a full-time swing in Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More*.

Rachel Watson-Jih (*performer*) began her dance training at age four in Raleigh, NC. After attending the University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA) summer dance program in 2008, she was recruited to attend school there where she received her BFA in contemporary dance in May 2012. As a student at UNCSA, Rachel worked with Eric Oberdorff, Zane Booker, Elizabeth Parkinson, Helen Simoneau, Juel D. Lane, and Nicole Wolcott. Since relocating to New York, she has performed at Lincoln Center Outdoors and Joe's Pub with Mark Dendy, Karen Harvey Dances, Mari Meade Dance Collective, Jamel Gaines; she has also apprenticed with Camille A. Brown and Dancers. She made her Public Theater debut in *Eve's Song* in 2018 and joined Company SBB in 2019. Her TV and commercial work has included ABC's *Manhattan Love Story*, PC Richard and Sons commercial, SKYPE, Aetna, Tic Tac and dancing with Ryan Heffington in New York Fashion Week, Desigual Couture line. She has been a part of SheThinX, White House Black Market, and Coach campaigns and been featured in music videos for *Vanity Fair* and VICE/Black Coffee. Other commercial print work includes Lyft, Knoll, Canon, and Target. Rachel is currently a teaching artist with Alvin Ailey Arts in the education and community program and is the founder and artistic director of Blue Morph Collective.

Latra A. Wilson (*performer*) is a Texas native and graduate from University of Missouri at Kansas City with a BFA. Ms. Wilson has since danced with artists and institutions across the creative spectrum from Paul Taylor 2 (NY), Opera Theater St. Louis, to the Public Theatre's annual Shakespeare In the Park (NY). Ms. Wilson also is also a teaching artist with both the Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey and Ailey Arts in Education. Ms. Wilson, in addition to singing, dancing, and teaching continues to hone her craft by assisting some brilliant and upcoming artists including Stefanie Batten Bland (*Eve's Song*), Josh Prince (Dance Lab New York) and Karen Sieber, to name a few. Ms. Wilson is a certified Level 1 Gyrotonic teacher and serves as co-artistic director of TheDynamitExperience, a dance project she co-founded with her husband in 2018. Ms. Wilson just recently accepted the position as Master Teaching Artist with Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey. Ms. Wilson is excited for another season with Company SBB and grateful for the space to bridge her two worlds as an educator and performing artist.

Did you enjoy the
performance?
Let us know your thoughts
Scan for our survey



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

