

Hopkins Center for the Arts

at Dartmouth

presents

Urban Bush Women

35th Anniversary

Legacy + Lineage + Liberation

Friday & Saturday, January 21 & 22, 7:30 pm

The Moore Theater • Dartmouth College • 2022

Generously supported by the Howard Gilman 1944 Directorship at the Hopkins Center for the Arts Fund, the Wetzel Family Fund for the Arts, the Melville 1960 and Leila Straus Fund, and Barbara J. and Richard W. Couch Jr. '64 E'65. This project is also supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Haint Blu is a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation & Development Fund Project co-commissioned by Live Arts Miami, Hopkins Center for the Arts, Junebug Productions, Yard Inc and NPN. The Creation & Development Fund is supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency). For more information, visit www.npnweb.org.

Legacy + Lineage + Liberation

Original Choreography by Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Founder/Chief Visioning Partner

Directed by Chanon Judson and Samantha Speis, Co-Artistic Directors

Shirazette Tinnin, Music Coordinator/Performer

John D. Alexander, Technical Director/Lighting Supervisor

The Company: Courtney J. Cook, Roobi Gaskins, Chanon Judson, Samantha Speis, Mikaila Ware

Program

Approximate Duration: 90 minutes including intermission

I Don't Know, but I Been Told, If You Keep on Dancin' You Never Grow Old (1989)

The opening solo of *I Don't Know, but I Been Told, If You Keep on Dancin' You Never Grow Old* is an excerpt from *Visible* by Jawole Willa Jo Zollar and nora chipaumire with Marguerite Hemmings

Music: Percussion performed by Shirazette Tinnin

Lighting: John D. Alexander

Give Your Hands to Struggle (1998)

Music: Give Your Hands to Struggle, words and music by Bernice Johnson Reagon

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Lighting: Russell Sandifer

Give Your Hands to Struggle was originally choreographed and developed at the Florida State University Dance Department for Cathy Horta.

It is an excerpt from the evening-length work, *Hands Singing Song* (1998), commissioned by the American Dance Festival through the Doris Duke Awards for New Work, with additional support from the Philip Morris New Works Fund.

Girlfriends (1986)

Lighting: Susan Hamburger

Original Costumes: Jawole Willa Jo Zollar and Terri Cousar

Girlfriends is an excerpt of the evening-length work, *Anarchy, Wild Women & Dinah* (1986), commissioned by The Clark Center for the Performing Arts (New York, NY).

Women's Resistance (2008)

Choreography: Jawole Willa Jo Zollar and Germaine Acogny (Compagnie Jant-Bi)

Excerpted from the evening-length work, *les écailles de la mémoire* (Scales of Memory)

Music: Fabrice Bouillon-LaForest with Frederic Bobin

Lighting: Russell Sandifer

Costumes: Naoko Nagata

Women's Resistance is an excerpt of the evening-length work, *les écailles de la mémoire* (Scales of Memory, (2008), co-commissioned by DANCECleveland with funding from the 2006 Joyce Award and Christopher Newport University's Ferguson Center for the Arts. It was developed via creative residencies hosted by the Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography at Florida State University, the Brooklyn Academy of Music and L'Ecole des Sables. Additional funding: National Dance Project, The MAP Fund and Florida State University Cornerstone Arts and Humanities Program Enhancement Grant.

INTERMISSION

World Premiere

Haint Blu (proscenium version, 2021)

Choreography by Chanon Judson & Samantha Speis, Co-Artistic Directors, in collaboration with the company:
Courtney J. Cook, Roobi Gaskins and Mikaila Ware

Writer: Nina Angela Mercer

Dramaturg: Talvin Wilks

Video Designer: Nicholas Hussong

Music: Percussion performed by Shirazette Tinnin (Jasmine De Leon, understudy)

Guitar and vocals performed by Grace Galu Kalambay

Lighting: John D. Alexander

Costume Coordinator: Lori Gassie

Wellness Consultant: Adaku Utah

Initial *Haint Blu* creative community partners include Live Arts Miami and Miami Dade College in partnership with Hampton House; New Orleans Coalition including Junebug Productions, Ashe Center and the New Orleans Contemporary Arts Center; Berkshires Coalition including MASS MoCA, Jacob's Pillow, and Williams College Dance Department; The Yard and the Community of Martha's Vineyard.

Additional commissioning partners: Wesleyan University Center for the Arts; Hopkins Center for the Arts at Dartmouth.

Residency and development support: NPN Creation Fund, LMCC's Residency Program, Arts & Culture on Governors Island, Lumberyard's Technical Rehearsal Program.

About the Artists

Urban Bush Women (UBW) burst onto the dance scene in 1984, with bold, innovative, demanding and exciting works that brought under-told stories to life through the art and vision of its award-winning founding Artistic Director and Visioning Partner, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar. The company continues to weave contemporary dance, music and text with the history, culture and spiritual traditions of the African Diaspora under the organizational artistic direction of Zollar and Co-Artistic Directors of the UBW Company, Chanon Judson and Samantha Speis.

UBW performs regularly in New York City and tours nationally and internationally. The Company has been commissioned by presenters nationwide, and includes among its honors a New York Dance and Performance Award ("Bessie"), the Capezio Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dance, a Black Theater Alliance Award

and two Doris Duke Awards for New Work from the American Dance Festival. In recent years, Zollar has been awarded the 2014 Southern Methodist University Meadows Prize, the 2015 Dance Magazine Award and the 2016 Dance/USA Honors Award. In 2017, Zollar received a Bessie Award for Lifetime Achievement in Dance. Speis is the recipient of the 2017 Bessie Award for Outstanding Performer with the ensemble skeleton architecture. Judson received the APAP Leadership Fellowship and the Director's Lab Chicago Fellowship in 2018.

Off the concert stage, UBW has developed an extensive community engagement program called BOLD (Builders, Organizers and Leaders through Dance). UBW's largest community engagement project is its Summer Leadership Institute (SLI), established in 1997. This ten-day intensive training program serves

About the Artists *continued*

as the foundation for all of the company's community engagement activities. Ultimately the SLI program connects dance professionals and community-based artists/activists in a learning experience to leverage the arts as a vehicle for civic engagement.

UBW launched the Urban Bush Women Choreographic Center Initiative (CCI) in January 2016. The CCI supports the development of women choreographers of color and other underheard voices.

Jawole Willa Jo Zollar (Founder/Chief Visioning Partner)

After earning her BA in dance from the University of Missouri at Kansas City, Zollar received her MFA in dance from Florida State University. In 1984 Zollar founded Urban Bush Women (UBW) as a performance ensemble dedicated to exploring the use of cultural expression as a catalyst for social change. Zollar developed a unique approach to enable artists to strengthen effective involvement in cultural organizing and civic engagement, which evolved into UBW's acclaimed Summer Leadership Institute. She serves as director of the Institute, founding artistic director, and visioning partner of UBW, and currently holds the position of the Nancy Smith Fichter Professor of Dance and Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor at Florida State University.

Awards: 2008 United States Artists Wynn fellowship, 2009 fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial, 2013 Arthur L. Johnson Memorial award by Sphinx Organization, 2013 Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, 2014 Meadows Prize from Southern Methodist University, 2015 Dance Magazine Award, 2016 Dance/USA Honor Award, 2016 Black Theater Alliance Award, 2017 Bessie Award for Lifetime Achievement in Dance, 2018 American Conference on Diversity Performing Arts Humanitarian Award, 2021 fellowship from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 2021 Dance Teacher Award of Distinction and the 2021 Martha Hill Dance Fund Lifetime Achievement Award.

Chanon Judson (Co-Artistic Director/Performer)

joined UBW in 2001. Additional credits: Taylor Mac's A 24-Decade History of Popular Music, Prophecy Dance Company, Cotton Club Parade, Fela!. Commercial credits: L'Oreal Live, *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* and Michael Jackson's 30th Anniversary Concert. Chanon was part of the APAP Leadership Fellows Program, and DirectorsLabChicago. She was an arts educator with Alvin Ailey Arts in Education, BAM, and is founder of Cumbe Center's Dance Drum and Imagination Camp for Children and Family Arts Movement.

Samantha Speis (Co-Artistic Director)

is a movement improviser and the mother of Aminata and Aicha. She has worked with Gesel Mason, The Dance Exchange, Jumatatu Poe, Deborah Hay, Marjani Forte and Liz Lerman. Speis was the recipient of the Alvin Ailey New Directions Choreography Lab and was awarded a Bessie for Outstanding Performer. Her work has been featured at the Kennedy Center, Long Island University, Joyce SoHo, Hollins University, Danspace Project, Dixon Place, Dance Place and The Kelly Strayhorn Theater. She has been a guest artist and teacher throughout the US, South America, Senegal and Europe.

Courtney J. Cook (Associate Artistic-Director/Performer)

studied at Virginia Commonwealth University. She has performed with choreographers Maria Bauman and Marguerite Hemmings, and with ModArts Dance Collective and Betty's Daughter Arts Collaborative, among others. In 2018, she received a New York Dance and Performance "Bessie" Award: Outstanding Performer. She is currently collaborating with Tendayi Kuumba and Greg Purnell on FLUXX.

Mikaila Ware (Performer)

(B.F.A. Florida State University) began her dance training at Fort Stewart, Georgia at the age of five. Now a NY-based movement artist, Mikaila has worked in the mediums of dance and film with choreographers such as Davalois Fearon,

Kayla Farrish, André Zachery, and Johnnie Cruise Mercer. Mikaila's performances have been featured in articles such as the NY Times, Dance Magazine, and Dance Enthusiast. Additionally, Mikaila completed the Accessibility Partnerships and Programs Fellowship at Lincoln Center and is an alumna of the Diversity in Arts Leadership program with the Arts and Business Council of New York.

Roobi Gaskins (Performer) is an New York City-based artist, who specializes in dance, choreography and garment construction. Although she has always had a passion for dance, she owes her movement genesis and training to 14 years of competitive figure skating, where she competed internationally as a member of the Puerto Rican national team. She began her formal dance training at Bard College where she received a BA in Dance. She was an apprentice with Urban Bush Women in 2019-20, and has also performed works with various artists including Abby Z and the New Utility, Brownbody, 7NMS and Trisha Brown.

Shirazette Tinnin (Music Coordinator/Performer) is a Fulbright Scholar recipient, music educator, touring artist, clinician, health coach and writer. She has written several articles for *Modern Drummer* and *Tom Tom Magazine* that involve keeping the musician healthy. She has a rigorous schedule of touring with Allan Harris, Nicole Mitchell, her own project, Sonic WallPaper, along with many more artists.

Grace Galu Kalambay (Musician/Performer) is a vocalist, actor, guitarist and composer. She combines the sounds of her Irish and Congolese heritage and her LES upbringing in a soulful and gritty twist. Grace was featured in *Buskerball*, and recorded *Firelight* with Fearless Music. Her composition, *Ordinary Sentiment* was featured in the Ed Burns film *Purple Violets* which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival. Grace devised *The Mendelssohn Electric* with Trusty Sidekick, and was cast as the lead in their production, *The Gospel Electric*, commissioned by the Park Avenue Armory.

She is a core member of the band Soul Inscribed, and was twice selected as a cultural ambassador for the American Music Abroad program. She has been selected as a cultural ambassador for their next residency program (2022). Grace is also a recipient of the NEFA NTP grant. Soul Inscribed has recently been signed to the music label, Tokyo Dawn and just released their EP, *Tune UP*. Grace is an artist-in-residence at HERE Arts Center and the composer for *Cannabis! A Viper Vaudeville*. Grace voiced Wisdom in Nia Witherspoon's production *The Dark Girl Chronicles* (2021 at The Shed).

Jasmine DeLeon (Musician/Performer Understudy) is Shirazette Tinnin's Understudy for Urban Bush Women. She grew up being a self-taught drummer but learned how to play classical percussion at West New York Memorial High School and New Jersey City University's Symphony of Winds and Percussion. She has also taken guitar lessons for two years. Currently a drummer at the Evangelical Pentecostal Church in Union City, New Jersey, she is enrolled at New Jersey City University as a Jazz Studies Performance major. She enrolled as a drummer and studied with Shirazette Tinnin. Jasmine also gives one-on-one lessons and teaches the Memorial Drum Line.

Nicholas Hussong (Video Designer) is a creator of video, projections and film for live (and now digital) performance and events. Creative Producer at Dwight Street Book Club. Broadway: Skeleton Crew. Other regional credits include: *Until the Flood* (13 regional and international locations); *Haint Blu*, *Hair & Other Stories* (Urban Bush Women); *These Paper Bullets*, Drama Desk Nomination (Yale Rep, Atlantic Theater Company, Geffen Playhouse); *Woman's Party* (Clubbed Thumb); *Grounded* (Alley); Arden Theater, Playmakers Rep, Berkshires Theatre Group, Marc Jacobs, Nashville Symphony, Hartford Symphony, Tony Awards (CBS). He also designed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, China, Canada and Vienna. Co-Creator of FEAST, an immersive dining experience with Listen&Breathe

About the Artists *continued*

(Nantucket, Ireland and please, hopefully, someday, the US). Adjunct Lecturer New School of Drama & USC. Yale MFA. UAW & USA829 www.nickhussong.com

Nina Angela Mercer (Writer) is an interdisciplinary artist and cultural worker. Her plays include *Gutta Beautiful*; *Itagua Meji: A Road and a Prayer*; *Gypsy & the Bully Door*; and *A Compulsion for Breathing*. Her writing is published in *Black Renaissance Noire*; *Continuum: The Journal of African Diaspora Drama, Theatre, and Performance*; *Break Beat Poets Vol 2: Black Girl Magic* (Haymarket Press); *Are You Entertained? Black Popular Culture in the 21st Century* (Duke University Press); *Performance Research Journal*; *Represent! New Plays for Multicultural Young People* (Bloomsbury

Press); and *A Gathering of the Tribes Online Magazine*. Find more at www.ninaangelamercer.com.

Talvin Wilks (Dramaturg) is a director, playwright and dramaturg based in New York City and Minneapolis. He has served as dramaturg for five collaborations with the Bebe Miller Company: *Going to the Wall, Verge, Landing/Place* (2006 Bessie Award for dramaturgy), *Necessary Beauty* and *A History*. Other recent dance collaborations include work with Camille A. Brown (*Mr. Tol E. RAnCE, Black Girl: Linguistic Play, ink*) Carmen de Lavallade (*As I Remember It*), Urban Bush Women (*Hep Hep Sweet Sweet, Walking with 'Trane, Scat!*) and Darrell Jones (*Hoo-Ha*).

Credits

Urban Bush Women Staff:

Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Founder/Chief Visioning Partner
Chanon Judson & Samantha Speis, Co-Artistic Directors/BOLD Directors
Tahniah Belle, Managing Director
Jonathan D. Secor, Producing Director
Michelle Coe, Director of Booking & Touring
Cheri Stokes, Associate Producer of Special Projects
Makeda Smith, Marketing Manager
Brook Rucker, Development/Visioning Partner Assistant
Elsie Neilson, Co-Artistic Directors' Assistant
Zoe Walders, Operations Associate
Henry Liles, Finance Manager
Camille Lawrence, Archivist
Isaiah Blake, Producer Assistant
Lian Thorne, SLI Coordinator
Jolie Saltiel, Company Manager
John D. Alexander, Technical Director/Lighting Supervisor
Shirazette Tinnin, Music Coordinator
Bennalldra Williams, Movement Specialist

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For booking: Michelle Coe, Director of Booking & Touring: mcoe@urbanbushwomen.org

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Connecting Artists to the Community

During their time at the Hopkins Center this January, Urban Bush Women led a movement workshop for Dartmouth students and members of the community. They will take part in an open discussion following their performance on Saturday, January 22. The company also spent a week-long residency at the Hop in November 2021 during which they honed the proscenium version of Haint Blu on the stage of the Moore Theater, presented glimpses of their work in an informal showing, and engaged in conversations with faculty in the African and African American Studies and Theater departments.

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