

# BCF

THE AFRICAN & AFRICAN AMERICAN PERFORMING ARTS COALITION & K\*STAR\*PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

# BLACK CHOREOGRAPHERS FESTIVAL: HERE & NOW 20 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

**FEB. 7 - JUN. 21, 2025**

BCF @ MOAD | FEB. 7 & 8

BCF @ DANCE MISSION THEATER | FEB. 22 & 23, MAR. 1 & 2

BCF @ SF PUBLIC LIBRARY | MAR. 22

BCF @ MINNESOTA STREET PROJECT | MAY 3 - JUN. 21

**WWW.BCFHEREANDNOW.COM**

## CELEBRATING 20 YEARS of BLACK CHOREOGRAPHERS FESTIVAL: HERE & NOW!

As co-founders and co-artistic directors of the Black Choreographers Festival (BCF), it is with deep appreciation, joy, and awe that we reflect on our 20-year journey.

As we mark this significant milestone, we are overwhelmed by the resilience, passion, and creativity that have not only shaped the festival but have also shaped an entire community of dancers, choreographers, and audiences.

As we celebrate 20 years, we are reminded of the many hands that have shaped this journey—our incredible artists, collaborators, volunteers, donors, and audiences who have supported us every step of the way. We are here because of their belief in the power of Black dance and the importance of elevating our stories.

Thank you for being a part of this incredible journey.  
Here's to the next 20 years of creating, inspiring,  
and transforming the world through the power of Black dance.

Lovingly  
Kendra Kimbrough Barnes & laura e. ellis



A special thank you to our beautiful families: Kendra Kimbrough Barnes: Nate, Imman, & Zarah  
&

my LM crew for always being with me every step of the way!  
In Peace - With gratitude and excitement for what's ahead.

laura e. ellis: Michael Dabney, Jordon E. Dabney, my Ellis & Freeman fam - so deep, such gifts!  
My LA girlz – MARVEL-ous! And all my Bay Area Fam & Friends; the radiating circles of love of Support.

And with love to our Guardian Angels:  
Kendra: Mom – Jean Kimbrough & Dad – Ken Kimbrough  
laura: Mom – Anita Freeman Gentry & Dad – Charles M. Ellis

**BCF Celebrates 20 Years!**  
**New Voices / New Works**

*in association w/ Dance Mission Theater*  
Saturday & Sunday • Mar 1 & 2

**TYRONE** (*work-in-progress*)

Choreographer/Performer: Clarissa Rivera Dyas

Music: jose e. abad

Costume Design: Clarissa Rivera Dyas

*This new work was created through BCF's Artist Mentoring Program (AMP), mentor: Joanna Haigood.*

~ BCF Welcome ~

**Diary of A Black Woman** (*premiere*)

Choreographer/Performer: dominique lesleyann

Music: Besame Mucho by João Gilberto: hum II by the vernon spring

**StartOver** (2025)

Choreographers/Performers: Aja Randall + Patricia West

Music: Sampled "Mr. Fingers" and "Mystery of Love," composed and edited by Ben Juodvalkis.

Vocals by Aja Randall and Patricia West

Costume Design: Aja Randall + Patricia West

*StartOver is a new piece that explores the constant reset that is present in our day-to-day life.*

*Aja and Patricia would like to thank their outside collaborators and thought partners, Damara Vita Ganley and Oscar Trujillo*

**ORIGIN: from sand to sea**

Choreographer/Performer: natalya janay shoaf

Sound Score: natalya janay shoaf using the work of the amazing Lia de Itamaraca

Costume Design: natalya janay shoaf

*Thank you M.C.B, L.E.E, D.S, D.V.S, J.E.N, for your continuous support, your love brings me through.*

**may we heal?** (*work-in-progress*)

Choreographer: dazaun soley

Performers: Giordon Cruz, Jordon Ellis Dabney, Claire Fisher-Mendez, dazaun soley

Composer | Musician: Jordon Ellis Dabney

*"may we heal?" is an interdisciplinary performance piece set to premiere in San Francisco at the Geneva Powerhouse on May 30th, 2025.*

~ INTERMISSION ~

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***I always saw you* (work-in-progress – Sat)**

Choreographer/Performer: William Brewton Fowler Jr

Music: Jordan T. Chiolis

Costume Design: Dana Kawano

*This solo is centered around grief and the yearning for hope. This work-in-progress is an excerpt from my Black Futures residency which is premiering on June 28th at Zaccho studio from 6-8pm.*

***Love: Reclamation* (Sun)**

Choreographer | Performer: Sriba Kwadjovie

Music: Baby, This Love I Have – Minnie Riperton

Costume Design: dawsondancesf

***Marronage//Undrowned* (Sat)**

Choreographer *tara george*

Performers: tara george, Giulia Sales, Giovana Sales, Faith E Johnson, ameia camielle smith,

Mahyla Lewis, Eden Magana, Alexandra Massoumi

Music: My Queen Is Nanny Of The Maroons - Sons Of Kemet; Djembe Kan - Universal African Drum and Dance Ensemble

***Sacred Women* (2024 - Sun)**

Choreographer: *Tamara Williams-Xavier*

Performers: Suzi Alila, Monique LeFlore, Tamara Williams

Music: Iba Obinrin - Luciano Xavier

Costume Design: Tamara Williams

***Byen Fèt***

Choreographer/Performer: *Justin Sharlman*

Spoken Word: -Fèt Bèl (Made Beautifully) by Justin R. Sharlman,

Music: Masterpiece (Mona Lisa) by Jazmine Sullivan covered by Cynthia Erivo

Sound Editing: Terrance Holliday

*This new work was created through BCF's Artist Mentoring Program (AMP), mentor: Dazaun Soleyn.*

~ Thank You ~

***BLUR* (work-in-progress)**

Choreographer: Gabriele Christian, *with contributions from the cast*

Performers: Hodari Blue, Gabriele Christian, Audrey Johnson, Laila Shabazz, Zekarias Musele Thompson, Zubriiri Wilburn

Spoken Word: -Fèt Bèl (Made Beautifully) by Justin R. Sharlman,

Original composition and music accompaniment by Zekarias Musele Thompson

Other music: The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face - Roberta Flack, Blurred - Darkstar

Costume Design: Pangaea Colter and An Authentic Skidmark / House of Perception

Post-Performance Artists & Audience Q & A  
Cake and Chat Event in the lobby directly following the Q & A

## Choreographers' Bios (in order of performance)

**Clarissa Rivera Dyas** is a Bay Area, Ohlone land based dancer, choreographer, curator, and arts producer. She centers her artistic practice through the truthfulness of improvisation, investigating the intersection of their black+asian lineage and queerness, with the belief that movement is a spiritual practice as a conduit of change. Clarissa graduated from SFSU in 2017 with a B.A in Dance and a B.S. in Health Education. They have been a company member of Zaccho Dance Theatre, Robert Moses' Kin, and Flyaway Productions and have performed with Lenora Lee Dance, Megan Lowe Dances, OYSTERKNIFE, GRAVITY and many others. Clarissa is a co-conspirator of RUPTURE and collaborates with Sara Shelton Mann and Embodiment Project. They have presented in the Drescher Ensemble Artist Residency, Queering Dance Festival's FROLIC! and ROT/KH FRESH Festival. She was awarded Dance Magazine's, "25 to Watch" January 2024 for her choreographic work. Clarissa is on the Queering Dance Festival Steering Committee and is Co-Director of ROT/KH FRESH Festival.

**dominique lesleyann** is a powerhouse. A divine vibrant being. She is a storyteller; revisiting and reimagining all aspects of herself, and allowing her experiences to shape her reality. Diving into realms of love and collaboration, she is exploring empathetic and compassionate ways of listening and learning from her ancestors, family, and friends on how to cultivate and sustain a thriving community. As a teacher, she invites her students in the process of self reflection. Co-creating a space where her students feel called to swim in the pools of their inner truth and create/perform movement from the space of authenticity. dominique has had the pleasure of training with Deeply rooted dance theater, Hubbard street, Homer hans Bryant, LINES Ballet BFA program, Guy Shoromi and Sidra Bell. She has had the opportunity of choreographing and performing internationally in Portugal and Vancouver and domestically throughout the Bay Area. dominique is currently an arts education teaching artist in the SF and Oakland area and dancing with Dance Brigade. She is excited to be returning to her origins as a dancer and choreographer; diving into the ritual form that is movement medicine. asé. amen. and so it is.

**Aja Randall + Patricia West of DAP:** DAP was created in 2017 out of necessity as the collaborators found themselves grappling with what it means to be a dancer/dancemaker while also taking on roles as provider and caretaker. The group uses movement as a language of solidarity, resistance and self-expression while also considering the dynamics of listening, being heard and yielding. Spoken word, organic movement and song are tools they lean on in their dancemaking.

**Patricia West** (she/her) was born and raised in the Bay Area. As an educator and choreographer, she aims to create and support spaces that foster self-expression, collaboration and connection to oneself. She has had the honor of performing nationally and internationally with various dance companies. Patricia has been a Collaborating Artist of Joe Goode Performance Group (JGPG) since 2006. She has served as JGPG's Assistant Director and Creative Engagement Lead. Currently, Patricia works for Cal Performances' Education and Community Programs and is the director of their transformational program, Berkeley/Oakland AileyCamp. Patricia is grateful for every rising opportunity to teach, create and perform.

**Aja Randall** (she/her) is from St. Louis, Mo and graduated from Stephen College in Columbia, Mo with a BFA in Dance and Minor in Education. Aja moved to the Bay Area in 2004, and has danced for several local artists with the longest stretch for Afro-Cuban based Alayo Dance Company. Yoga Alliance Certified since 2017, she strongly believes in its philosophy and practice to help in maintaining longevity in art making and the care taking of the aging body. Being the Venue & Ops Manager with Joe Goode Performance Group is a manifestation come true. Witnessing, supporting, and uplifting our artistic community is just lovely, just right.

**natalya janay shoaf**, based in the Bay Area, is a renowned dance educator, choreographer, and performer with a dynamic career spanning both education and performance. She is currently dance educator at Oakland School for the Arts, a company member with the foundry — directed by Alex Ketley, and in residency at The Athenian School, Cal Sate University East Bay, and ODC. She is currently working towards and evening length solo entitled "from seed to bloom" set to premiere August 3rd, 5PM, at ODC. For more information : [www.natalyashoaf.com](http://www.natalyashoaf.com) | @natalyashoaf — Instagram

**dazaun soley**n (he/she/they), with an intention to create art that aims to illuminate the human soul, has presented work in the Bay Area since 2013. He received a BFA in Modern Dance Performance and Choreography from the University of South Florida and continued his dance education at the Alonzo King LINES Ballet Training Program. Recently, Dazaun graduated from California College of the Arts with a Masters in Architecture (MArch). Dazaun is an adjunct professor at the University of San Francisco, a Gyrotonic Instructor, Reiki Master and Apprentice Herbalists. His mediums include dance, architecture, sculpture and interactive installations.

dazaun.dance collaborators:

**Giordan Cruz** began his dance training in 2008 at in Miami, FL. After graduating, he continued his studies at the Alonzo King LINES Ballet Training Program under the direction of Karah Abiog. Where he had the opportunity to work with renowned artists such as David Harvey, Shannon Gillen, and Gregory Dawson. Following his time at lines Giordan joined visceral dance Chicago from 2016-2018. Now based in Berlin, he continues to expand his artistic voice. His movement has also been featured in campaigns for global brands like Nike, ASICS, and Axel Arigato.

## Choreographers' Bios (in order of performance)

**Jordon Ellis Dabney** is a musician, writer, and mover born and raised in Oakland, CA. They grew up in arts families like ODC, Shawl Anderson, Dimensions Dance Theater and Oaktown Jazz making collaborative art in learning spaces and on the stage. Co-creating music and movement has become their favorite way to share their thoughts and feelings with others, something that shines through their work in the Black Choreographer's Festival with dazaun.dance, Axis Dance Company, and the Black Excellence Band.

**Claire Fisher-Mendez** was born and raised in Tracy, California. She moved to San Francisco to train in the LINES Ballet Training Program and San Francisco Conservatory of Dance. From then on she has freelanced around the Bay Area working with choreographers, companies and colleagues including Bellwether Dance Project, dazaun.dance, Fullstop Dance, Garrett + Moulton Productions, Liv Schaffer, RAWdance, and Margaret Jenkins Dance Company.

**William Brewton Fowler Jr.** (Sat) is a Christian freelance dancer and emerging choreographer from Augusta, Georgia. In New York, he worked with Gallim Dance and Stephanie Batten Bland's Company, SBB. In the Bay Area, he was a member of the OBC and worked with Tinypistol, dawsondancesf, and SFBATCO. He also began aerial work with Joanna Haigood and worked with Mia Chong for the first season of Eight/Moves.

**Sriba Kwadjovie Quintana** (Sun) was born and raised in the SF Bay Area and at the age of five began her African Diasporic dance training at her mother's dance school, Beatriz Ross Cultural Dance Ensemble, along with classical ballet training at the Oakland Ballet and then with Ballet Petit. As an undergraduate at UC Irvine, Sriba had the opportunity to study modern dance under the legendary dancer/choreographer, Donald McKayle. She has performed with Bay Area dance companies such as, Company Chaddick, ODC, Robert Moses' Kin, Epiphany Dance Theater and is currently a member of Susana Pedrosa's, Arenas Dance Company. In 2015 she was selected to perform a solo project for the Havana Biennial opening of the "Mirage" exhibition in Cuba and most recently was commissioned by the Southern Exposure art gallery to create a piece for the "Once Removed" exhibition in 2021. Sriba's dance film, "The Sower" was a selected short for screening at the San Francisco Dance Film Festival in 2023.

**tara george** (Sat) is a Bay Area-based choreographer, writer, and dancer originally from Jupiter Florida. After graduating with her BFA in Dance from UF in 2020 she completed the two-year Alonzo King Lines Ballet Training Program and then went on to be named as one of ODC's Pilot Artists in its 73rd iteration of the program. Recently she performed in Grace Cathedral with Oysterknife and Brava Theater with SFBATCO. She is currently part of Dancing Earth's Bay Area Company Cohort and was seen on their Mexican tour.

**Tamara Williams** (Sun) is a native of Augusta, GA. She earned her BFA in Dance from Florida State University and her MFA in Dance from Hollins University in collaboration with ADF, The Forsythe Company, and Frankfurt University (Germany). She founded Moving Spirits, Inc in 2011, to uplift Black narratives and educate the general public in African diaspora dance forms.

**Justin Sharlman** began his dance journey at California State University East Bay, immersing himself in theatre and dance productions that explored contemporary, modern, and hip hop styles. He earned his B.A. in Dance in August 2024, deepening his expertise in both performance and choreography. Since 2011, Justin has been a committed company member of Dimensions Dance Theater, showcasing his dynamic artistry in every production. Currently, he serves as the lead choreographer for Covenant Church's Worship in Arts Ministry, where his creative vision brings compelling movement to life. Passionate about evolving his artistic voice, Justin is committed to exploring new creative horizons and sharing his unique vision with the world.

**Gabriele Christian** (b. 1991) is a San Francisco-based conceptual artist and descendent of stolen folk. Experimenting within somatic practices, language, performance composition, video production and community arts facilitation, they locate and center BlaQ (Black and Queer) experience, vernacular, and aesthetics as wellsprings for radical futurity. They perform original work and collaborate trans- and inter-nationally, most recently Berlin, New York City, Vienna, and Amsterdam. They are a founding member of multiple Bay Area born performance collectives and land projects including: RUPTURE; OYSTERKNIFE; and BlaQyard. They currently serve as Executive Director and Co-Artistic Director of Jess Curtis/Gravity, a body-based arts and accessibility non-profit living on in the wake of Jess Curtis' transition in March 2024. At the heart of all their work: exhaustive research into belonging, spirit, and desirability while living in the fangs of dehumanizing times.

## **BCF Celebrates 20 Years!**

### **BCF Concerts**

March 1 & 2, 2025

#### BCF @ DMT Tech Team

Lighting Designer/Board Operator: Harry Rubeck  
Audio Sound Engineer: Jabari Tawiah  
Stage Manager: Chi Chi Okanomah  
Asst. Stage Manager/PM: \*Jazara Metcalf  
Tech Crew: Imman Barnes, Sharai Mitchell  
Load-in/out Jordon Dabney, Chris Williams, Rock Williams  
DMT Theater Director: Stella Adelman  
DMT House Manager: James P. Earle  
DMT Box Office: Lauren Dunford  
*\*BCF Tech Training Program*

#### Public Relations & Social Media

Kendra Kimbrough Barnes

#### Webmaster

Michael Dabney

#### Graphic Designer

Kaylin Reid

#### Festival Archival Documentation

Photographer: Kimara Dixon  
Videographer: RAPT Productions

#### Festival Co-Directors

Laura Elaine Ellis  
Kendra Kimbrough Barnes

#### **About Dance Mission Theater**

Dance Mission Theater is a non-profit, multicultural dance center located in the heart of San Francisco's Mission District. We offer a full range of adult and youth dance classes, from hip hop to salsa to Afro-Brazilian to modern dance. For a complete schedule please visit [www.dancemission.com](http://www.dancemission.com). In addition to a full season featuring the work of the Bay Area's best and most diverse dance artists, Dance Mission Theater is available to rent for performances, workshops and other events. It is also the home of Krissy Keefer's Dance Brigade, San Francisco's groundbreaking, social-change oriented modern dance company. Dance Brigade's Dance Mission Theater is supported in part by San Francisco Grants for the Arts, the San Francisco Arts Commission and the San Francisco Foundation

#### **BCF acknowledges the following for their tremendous support and generosity:**

Krissy Keefer, Stella Adelman and the staff at Dance Mission Theater. Fiscal Sponsors: Dance Brigade for AAPAC, Dimensions Dance Theater for K\* Star\* Productions; Dr. Halifu Osumare, Portsha Jefferson, Randall Heath – DFSF; MoAD, SF Public Library, MSP-SF Arts Ed, SADC; Michael Dabney, Nate Barnes; Trader Joe's, SF; BCF Artists, Festival Committee and Advisory Committee.

Black Choreographers Festival: Here & Now (BCF)  
Celebrating 20 years!

#### **SPIRIT OF SANKOFA :**

#### **Bridging the Legacy of BCM & BCF**

Feb. 22 & Feb 23 | Mar. 1 & 2 @ DMT

An exquisite archival display that depicts the narrative of two iconic SF Bay Area Festivals: Black Choreographers Moving Toward the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (BCM), founded by Dr. Halifu Osumare and presented from 1989 – 1995, and Black Choreographers Festival: Here & Now (BCF) co-founded by Laura Elaine Ellis and Kendra Kimbrough Barnes, which premiered in 2005.

*Designed by Visual Artists: Pete Belkin and Tiersa Nureyev*

Upcoming

#### **BCF @ SF Public Library, Koret Auditorium**

100 Larkin Street, San Francisco

Saturday, March 22 @ 2p

#### **Spirit of Sankofa: Bridging the Legacies of BCM to BCF Featuring: Archival Exhibit, Panel, & Performances**

Panel facilitated by Dr. Halifu Osumare w/  
Joanna Haigood, Dean Beck-Stewart, L. Martina Young,  
and Kendra Kimbrough Barnes  
Performances featuring: Natalya Shoaf, Byb Chanel Bibene,  
Justin Sharlman, and dominique lesleyann

#### **BCF @ Minnesota Street Project**

1275 Minnesota St, San Francisco

May 3 - June 21

Special Events

BCF Community Dance Day – May 3

Panel & Performances – May 10

*\*Programming subject to change*

#### **BCF: Here & Now**

The Black Choreographers Festival: Here & Now presents programming and events annually, celebrating African American Dance and Culture. We are in our 19<sup>th</sup> year of service to artists and community – co-directors Laura Elaine Ellis (AAPAC) and Kendra Kimbrough Barnes (K\*Star\*Productions) have been recognized by the State of California, Alameda County, the Bay Area's Spirit Awards and Isadora Duncan Dance Awards for sustained achievement and dedication to the preservation of African American arts & culture.

#### **The Black Choreographers Festival is made possible, in part, by the constant support of:**

SF Arts Commission, Dream Keeper Initiative  
Zellerbach Family Foundation, small businesses and individual contributions.

\* For updates on BCF Performances and Special Events:  
[bcfhereandnow.com](http://bcfhereandnow.com)