

The Bessie

**The 39th Annual
New York Dance &
Performance Awards**

7:30pm

August 4, 2023

The Bessie Awards Ceremony
Lincoln Center Damrosch Park

Three dancers are standing in front of a backdrop with the 'dance/NYC' logo. The dancer on the left is wearing a white tank top and a black face mask, and is making a hand gesture. The dancer in the center is wearing a yellow t-shirt and a white face mask. The dancer on the right is wearing an orange jacket and a white face mask. They are all holding a large pink sign that has the text '#WeAreNYCDance' and 'Dance. Workforce. Resilience.' on it.

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Photo of BalletX dancer Annika Kuo. Vandy Photography.

BAAD! BAAD! BAAD! BAAD! BAAD! BAAD!

BAAD! BAAD! BAAD!

BAAD! BAAD! BAAD!

BAAD! BAAD! BAAD! BAAD! BAAD! BAAD!

The Bronx
Academy of
Arts and Dance
salutes the
2023 Bessie
nominees

"a funky and
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-The New York Times

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L to R: Rafael V. Cañals Perez
& riki viv in *Physuul*, 20th
Anniversary Celebration
(2023), by Richard Rivera.
Photo: Roy Balzan (c)

BAX BROOKLYN ARTS EXCHANGE

Congratulations to all 2023 Bessie Award Nominees!

BAX | Brooklyn Arts Exchange is a multigenerational arts organization nurturing creative expression and artistic process through education, residencies, and performance at the intersection of arts and social justice. Vist: bax.org

trisk [verb]:
the process of throwing
ideas around & turning
them into action.

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About The Bessies

The New York Dance and Performance Awards have saluted outstanding and groundbreaking creative work in the dance field in New York City for 39 years. Known as “The Bessies” in honor of revered dance teacher Bessie Schönberg, the awards were established in 1984 by David R. White at Dance Theater Workshop. They recognize choreography, performance, music composition, visual design, legacy, and service to the field of dance by independent dance artists and organizations. Nominees are chosen by a selection committee composed of artists, presenters, producers, and writers. All those working in the dance field are invited to join the Bessies Membership and participate in annual discussions on the direction of the awards and nominate members to serve on the selection committee. For more information about The Bessies, visit www.bessies.org.

Bessies Values Statement

Guided in collaboration with the artists, leaders, and advocates of the dance and performance field, The New York Dance and Performance Awards, The Bessies, recognizes and celebrates the craft and impact of artists and their supporters across the five boroughs of New York City. Valuing dance as a vehicle for change and a pivotal part of a vibrant society, The Bessies advocates for dance in NYC, nationally, and internationally. The Bessies uplifts the movement, experimentation, and risk-taking that empowers communities and creates pathways leading the field towards change.

From the Executive Director

Dear dance community member,

Thank you for joining us at the 39th Bessie Awards Ceremony, our first ever at Lincoln Center! We could not have come this far without you. Enormous thanks to the team at Lincoln Center for welcoming us into their house. Deep gratitude to Torya Beard for being this year's visionary Producer. Thank you Neysha Merced, Regine Pieters, and Gabrielle Burgess who are the year round part time staff of The Bessies alongside me. Shout out to the outstanding seasonal Bessies team, our interns, and volunteers- with whom tonight has been made possible. Huge thanks to every performer, teacher, artist; to every presenter, sponsor, partner, donor; to the Bessies Selection Committee who advocates for dance year round; to the Bessies Steering Committee who provides guidance and support; to the Bessies Membership for your collaboration and vision for the organization doing better; to the Presenters League for helping us imagine a more connected way forward; to the inaugural Bessies Board of Directors for bringing us into a sustainable future; and to all community members who tirelessly support the arts.

We are reimagining what it means to truly represent and support the community we serve. Many shifts have come to fruition but many more are still in the works. I am inviting you to be part of that change at The Bessies. Email me at Heather@bessies.org, and let's collaborate!

The only way forward is with everybody. I can't wait to connect.

Love,

Heather

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Photo by Maria Baranova. Performer Albert Ibokwe Khoza in work by Robyn Orlin.

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Buglisi Dance Theatre

Artistic Director Jacquelyn Buglisi

Buglisi Dance Theatre Congratulates the 2023 Bessie
Awardees and Nominees

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AND ALL THE 2023 BESSIE
AWARD NOMINEES FOR THEIR
OUTSTANDING WORK AND
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SUMMER 2024

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**YOUNG PROFESSIONALS
ENSEMBLE**

AUGUST 24–25, 2024

Program

Performance	Diversity of Dance
Welcome and Land Acknowledgement	The Illustrious Blacks, Host
Special Remarks	Vicki Capote, Dance/NYC Alton Murray, Deputy Commissioner, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs Lucy Sexton, New Yorkers for Culture and Arts
Performance	AbunDance Academy of the Arts
Essential Dance Workers and #ArtistSupportStories	Abdel Salaam & Dyane Harvey Salaam
Performance	The Fabulous Waack Dancers
Outstanding Sound Design or Musical Composition	Presented by Erin Fogarty
Lifetime Achievement in Dance	Presented by Dionne Figgins
Outstanding Breakout Choreographer	Presented by George Faison
Outstanding Visual Design	Presented by Gian Marco Riccardo Lo Forte
Performance	Ladies of Hip-Hop Collective
Service to the Field of Dance	Presented by Ms Vee
The 2023 Bessies Juried Award	Presented by luciana achugar, Ayodele Casel & Kyle Marshall
Outstanding Revival	Presented by Hosts

PROGRAM

Outstanding Performer	Presented by Tiffany Geigel & Paz Tanjuaquio
In Memoriam	Presented by Mireicy Aquino & Jhailyn Farcon
Special Remarks	Heather Robles, Executive Director of The Bessies
Outstanding Choreographer / Creator	Presented by Karisma Jay & Fredrick Earl Mosley
Closing	

Performance Notes

Diversity of Dance

Title: Unbroken
Choreographed by: Fredrick Earl Mosley
Performed by: Earl Mosley's Institute of the Arts
Music by: Lady Gaga

A Note from the Choreographer:
authenticity: the courage to be yourself.

The Company:
*For more information about Diversity of Dance please see Fredrick Earl Mosley's bio under the section entitled "Speakers"

AbunDance Academy of the Arts

Title: Afro - Acro
Choreographed by Karisma Jay
Performed by: AbunDancers Youth Ensemble
Music by: Arturo O'Farrill

The Company: AbunDance Academy of the Arts' (pronounced "Abundance") mission is to guide students through the exploration, preparation and practice of pre-professional dance, providing in-depth instruction in Ballet, African, Modern, Hip-Hop and Audition Prep. During the program year, our students are also provided enrichment in Vocal, Performing Arts History, Choreography, Gymnastics, and Health/ Fitness. Through their dance training, seminars, workshops and performance exposure, students explore and develop the ability to connect their dance and performance skills to that of their academic, artistic and overall life pursuits. Alumna have successfully completed Arts programs at the industry's top institutions, many receiving partial and/or full scholarships . Notable affiliations include The Juilliard School, Hunter College Dance Department, Brooklyn Nets Dance Team, LaGuardia HS, Broadway Dance Center, The Ailey School, Mark Twain School, Dance Theatre of Harlem, Martha Graham School, Ballet Tech among others. Conveniently located at 90 Sullivan Place in Brooklyn, AbunDance Academy of the Arts is truly a 501(c)3 tax exempt organization where "In AbunDance, there's Dance!"

An excerpt from The Fabulous Waack Dancers Big Show

Conceptualized and Directed by: Princess Lockerooo.
Choreography by: Princess Lockerooo, Nefertari, & Zenta
Choreographer's Assistant: Jojo Yvita (Giorgia Vitali)
Performed by: Zenta (Eujin Kang) Nefertari, Samantha Weese, Ash Johnson, Alur (Shar Adrias) Alexandra Eleganza, Onjay (Daeun Cho) Sebastian Jeremy.
Music by: Harold O'Neal

PERFORMANCE NOTES

A Note from the Choreographer:

“The Fabulous Waack Dancers: The Big Show” invites audiences to experience the captivating and dynamic world of Waacking, beautifully blends the glamour of Hollywood films, the electric energy of disco, and the vibrant underground gay club culture of the ‘70s. “The Big Show” showcases the origins and influences of the dance with dazzling costumes, theatrical choreography, elements of comedy and Drag, and integrates a seamless fusion with other dance styles like Locking, Ballet, and Jazz. The show goes beyond dance by weaving together a compelling narrative that follows the captivating journey of its characters.

Renowned composer Harold O’Neal contributes an energizing and nostalgic soundtrack that takes audiences on a musical journey through various eras of American black music culture. From Jazz and Disco to Soul, RnB, Pop, and Blues. This unforgettable spectacle celebrates the history, innovation, and cultural significance of Waacking.

The Company:

The Fabulous Waack Dancers (FWD) is a New York City based dance company that is dedicated to preserving the art form, history, and legacy of waacking; a dance style that originated in the gay club scene of 1970s LA. FWD was founded and is directed by global waacking ambassador, Princess Lockerooo. The company is dedicated to honoring the Inspirations of waacking in Hollywood films, disco, and 70s gay club culture.

The Fabulous Waack Dancers serve as educators in the waacking community and mentors to students of the Waack Dancer Training Program. The company aims to promote the art of Waacking and its significance within the LGBTQ+ community, utilizing waacking as a medium to empower and Inspire individuals. The Big Show was commissioned by Works & Process.

Nominations

Outstanding Choreographer/Creator

Vanessa Anspaugh
mourning after mornings
New York Live Arts

LaTasha Barnes
LaTasha Barnes presents The Jazz Continuum
The Joyce Theater

Sidra Bell
REP: Introspection
Gibney

Jessica Chen
NüWa (女媧)
Arts on Site

Dormeshia
Dormeshia Tap Collective: Rhythm Is Life
The Joyce Theater

Rennie Harris
Lifted
The Joyce Theater

Deborah Hay
Horse, the solos
The Joyce Theater

Benjamin Akio Kimitch
Tiger Hands
The Shed

Jordan Demetrius Lloyd
Blackbare in the Basement
Danspace Project

Shamel Pitts
BLACK HOLE – Trilogy And Triathlon
New York Live Arts

Lia Rodrigues
Encantado
Brooklyn Academy of Music

Omari Wiles
New York Is Burning
Works & Process at the Guggenheim

NOMINATIONS

Outstanding Revival

Pina Bausch & Tanztheater Wuppertal
Água (1995/2023)
Brooklyn Academy of Music

Camille A. Brown & Dancers
Mr. TOL E. RAnCE (2012/2022)
The Joyce Theater

Garth Fagan & Garth Fagan Dance
Prelude (1981/2022) "*Discipline Is Freedom*"
The Joyce Theater

Twyla Tharp
In the Upper Room (1986/2022)
New York City Center

Outstanding Visual Design

Isabela Dos Santos (Animation)
Mr. TOL E. RAnCE
By Camille A. Brown
The Joyce Theater

Sarai Frazier (Lighting)
all things under dog, where two things are always true
By Monica Mirabile
Performance Space New York

Zane Pihlström (Costume and Stage Design)
Company XIV: Seven Sins
By Company XIV
Théâtre XIV

Tina Tzoka and Loukas Bakas (Set Design), Stephanos
Droussiotis (Lighting Design), Nektarios Dionysatos (Props)
Dimitris Korres (Mechanical Inventions)
Transverse Orientation
By Dimitris Papaioannou
Brooklyn Academy of Music

Outstanding Performer

Billy Barry
Hora
By Ohad Naharin
The Joyce Theater

j. bouey
A Message from Mx. Black Copper
By j. bouey
Movement Research at the Judson Church

NOMINATIONS

Outstanding Performer, *continued*

Amanda Castro
Ayodele Casel: Chasing Magic
By Ayodele Casel
The Joyce Theater

Joyce Edwards
Grace, The Equality of Night and Day, and Open Door
By Ronald K. Brown
The Joyce Theater

Timothy Edwards
Mr. TOL E. RAnCE
By Camille A. Brown
The Joyce Theater

Rachel Harris
Mr. Withers
By David Parsons
The Joyce Theater

Niall Jones
COMPRESSION
By Niall Jones
Performance Space New York

Albert Silindokuhle Ibokwe Khoza
*And so you see... our honourable blue sky and ever
enduring sun... can only be consumed slice by slice...*
By Robyn Orlin
New York Live Arts and FIAF's Crossing the Line Festival

Maleek Washington
Mr. TOL E. RAnCE
By Camille A. Brown
The Joyce Theater

Ensemble: Anand Bolder, Louise Dahl, Freddy
Houndekindo, Elliott Marmouset, Adam Schütt, Johanna
Tengan, Vincent Van Der Plas
Horse, the solos
By Deborah Hay
Cullberg
The Joyce Theater

Ensemble: bree breedem, Wendell Gray II, José Lapaz
Rodriguez, Jordan Demetrius Lloyd, Mia Martelli, Mykel
Marai Nairne, Owen Prum, Kennedy Thomas
Blackbare in the Basement
By Jordan Demetrius Lloyd
Danspace Project

NOMINATIONS

Outstanding Performer, *continued*

Ensemble: Marielys Burgos-Meléndez, Rafael V. Cañals
Pérez, Christopher “Unpezverde” Núñez
The Circle or Prophetic Dream
By Christopher “Unpezverde” Núñez
Danspace Project

Outstanding Breakout Choreographer

Bryan and Shaina Baira of BAIRA

Symara Johnson

Soles of Duende: Amanda Castro, Brinda Guha, Arielle
Rosales

marion spencer

Outstanding Sound Design or Musical Composition

Roman Bestion, Fouad Boussouf, and Marion Castor
Näss

By Fouad Boussouf
The Joyce Theater

Graham Reynolds

Horse, the solos

By Deborah Hay

Cullberg

The Joyce Theater

Evil Tracy The International Showoff and DJ Razor Ramon

Rome & Jewels

By Rennie Harris

The Joyce Theater

Charles Turner and Sean Mason

LaTasha Barnes presents The Jazz Continuum

By LaTasha Barnes

The Joyce Theater

Recipients

2023 Lifetime Achievement in Dance Recipient

Virginia Johnson

2023 Service to the Field of Dance Recipient

Michele Byrd-McPhee

2023 Bessies Juried Award Recipient

Barkha Patel

Hosts

The Illustrious Blacks

Self-proclaimed Afro-Electro-Disco-Space-Punks, DJ/music/fashion duo The Illustrious Blacks are unlike anything you've ever seen. Part DJ set, part dance performance, part Studio 54, part Berlin underground, this NY couple know how to put on a SHOW! With inspiration from artists like Prince, David Bowie, Grace Jones, Depeche Mode and George Clinton, The Illustrious Blacks have arrived with a mission to fuse futuristic funk, hypnotic house, space disco and synth-pop into pulsating positivity for the planet. The real-life married couple are not only co-pilots on their artistic voyage, but are united in their fantastical journey through life. In 2017, the duo that The New York Times called Bed-Stuy's "favorite creative couple" released their highly anticipated debut EP, Neo Afro Futuristic Psychedelic Surrealistic Hippy, on Concierge Records. In the same year, the dynamic duo found time to work on a remake of the 90s dance floor classic "Funk That!," which spawned a popular music video. Currently, The Illustrious Blacks are working on the final touches of their debut album and on various musical collaborations with notable dance music producers Luke Solomon (Beyoncé), Russell Small (Freemasons), Seven Davis Jr., KDA, Nickodemus, and Toribio and Soul Clap. In 2023 the duo will take Ibiza by storm as part of Glitterbox's Hi Ibiza residency. Individually, Monstah and Manchild illuminate the galaxy with equal magnitude. As The Illustrious Blacks, they have combined their powers to save the world one beat at a time and encourage all to LIVE THE HYPE LIFE!

Speakers

Abdel Salaam

Abdel R. Salaam is the Executive Artistic Director/Co-Founder of Forces of Nature Dance Theatre (FONDT) founded in 1981. Born in Harlem, New York, Abdel is a critically acclaimed, award winning choreographer and in the past, served as a dancer, teacher and/or performing artist in five continents throughout his 52 year career in the Dance World. He has received numerous awards and fellowships for excellence in Dance including the 2013 Audelco Award for Dance Company of the Year, the 2017 Bessie for Outstanding Production and the 2019 Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Dance Guild. In addition to appearances on stage, television and film, he has served as a choreographer and/or director for the New York Shakespeare Festival, The Billie Holiday Theater, The Apollo Theater, NJPAC's Kwanzaa Celebrations, The Winter Solstice at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, The New York Musical Theater Festival, BAM, Black Dance USA and The Tennessee Performing Arts Center. Abdel has served

on the faculties of The American Dance Festival in North Carolina and Seoul, Korea, The Alvin Ailey American Dance Center and Herbert H. Lehman College. Mr. Salaam is one of the directors of the Harlem Children's Zone/ Forces of Nature Youth Academy of Dance and Wellness as well as the Artistic Director of Brooklyn Academy of Music's longest running program and festival, DanceAfrica. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Directors of the International Association of Blacks in Dance. A Husband, Father, Grandfather, Abdel remains a perpetual seeker of all ways to help heal and serve humanity through creativity and the performing arts.

Alton Murray (Deputy Commissioner, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs)

Alton Murray was appointed Deputy Commissioner of New York City of Cultural Affairs in Spring of 2022. Previously, Alton was the Strategic Partnership Manager in the Corporate Affairs Department of Con Edison. There he managed relationships with Arts, Culture, and Environmental nonprofits organizations for 15 years focusing on philanthropic efforts. Prior to this position, he worked at Con Edison in Community Relations, Emergency Management and Customer Outreach for 7 years. Alton is a patron and supporter of the arts. He mentors emerging performance and visual artists. He currently serves on the Board of Company Stefanie Batten Bland and on the advisory council of New York Live Arts. He holds a B.S in Liberal Studies from St John's University and a Corporate Community Involvement Certification from Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship.

Ayodele Casel

Ayodele Casel, a Doris Duke Artist in the dance category, is an award-winning and critically acclaimed tap dancer and choreographer. Born in The Bronx and raised in Puerto Rico, her practice centers highly narrative works rooted in expressions of selfhood, culture and legacy. Her projects include her concert and Bessie Award-winning film "Chasing Magic," her one-woman show "While I Have the Floor," and her theatrical and film series "Diary of a Tap Dancer." She serves as a tap choreographer for the Broadway revival of "Funny Girl," which garnered her a 2022 Drama Desk nomination for Outstanding Choreography.

Dionne Figgins

Dionne Figgins is a multi-hyphenate creative, primarily in the Performance Arts, with 20 years of professional experience in concert dance, theatre, and film/tv. She is a former member of the Dance Theatre of Harlem, under the direction of Arthur Mitchell, and a former guest artist with Complexions Contemporary Ballet. She has performed in the original cast of 3 Broadway shows (Motown, Memphis, and Hot Feet) and was the assistant choreographer on Leap of Faith on Broadway. She worked with several notable artists including Hinton Battle, Christopher

SPEAKERS

Dionne Figgins, *continued*

Ashley, Christopher Renshaw, Aurin Squire, Sophia Nahli Allison, Arthur Mitchell, Jon Batiste, John Legend, Jemel McWilliams, Berry Gordy, Maurice White, Maurice Hines, Des McAnuff, Camille Brown, and Diane Paulus. She is the co-founder of Broadway Serves, a non-profit organization whose mission is to connect theater professionals to community service opportunities. She is a proud member of AEA/SAG. Figgins currently teaches for the legendary Jones-Haywood Dance School in Washington, DC, where she is also an alumnae.

Dyane Harvey Salaam

Dyane Harvey Salaam is an accomplished performing artist, BESSIE award nominee (2019) and recipient (2017), dance educator, choreographer, certified Pilates instructor and board member of the American Dance Guild. She has performed as a principal soloist with many recognized dance companies and is a founding member and assistant to director Abdel R. Salaam, of The Forces of Nature Dance Theatre Company. She has appeared nationally and internationally with concert dance companies including: The Eleo Pomare Dance Company, Joan Miller's Dance Players, Chuck Davis Dance Company, Walter Nicks Dance Company, Otis Sallid's New Art Ensemble, George Faison's Universal Dance Experience, Dance Brazil, and The Repertory Dance Theatre of Trinidad and Tobago. Commercial appearances include The Wiz (Broadway and original film), Timbuktu!, Spell #7, Your Arms Too Short to Box With God (Paris, France Company), Ailey Celebrates Ellington (CBS Special), Free To Dance (PBS Special). Most recently she served as guest artist in Sydnie L. Mosely's Purple A Ritual In 9 Spells, produced at Lincoln Center. Her choreography for Black Theatre companies has earned her AUDELCO Awards for Oya the Dance Drama, and Great Men of Gospel, and The United Solo and Broadway Berkshire Awards for Becoming Othello a Black Girl's Journey. Other awards include: A.I.R. Living Legends Award from Miami Dade Community College, Distinguished Woman Award from the Harlem Arts Alliance and the Harlem Chamber of Commerce. Aspects of her life have been recorded for the Lincoln Center Performing Arts Library Jerome Robbins Dance Division, Oral History Project, and she participated in The Dance Historian Is In, a video presentation in which she highlighted major career achievements. Her published article, "Making Movement as an Act of Listening, Riding with the Muse" was part of the CLAJ Special Edition dedicated to the legacy of collaborator, Ntozake Shange. As an educator she continues to teach and design courses at both Princeton and Hofstra Universities, where she shares her philosophy about the dance of life itself.

SPEAKERS

Erin Fogarty

Erin Fogarty holds a BFA from Marymount Manhattan College. Upon graduation, she joined Carolina Ballet under the direction of Robert Weiss. After moving back to NY, she joined BalletNY under the direction of Judith Fugate and Medhi Bahiri. She served as Assistant Director of Administration for the New York State Summer School of the Arts Ballet from 2006-2012 and remained on the teaching faculty until 2015. Erin also served as executive assistant to Damian Woetzel on a variety of projects including the Vail International Dance Festival; Aspen Institute Arts Program; World Science Festival gala; Turnaround Arts performances and the first performance of the White House Dance Series hosted by Michelle Obama. Erin was the Director of Programming for Manhattan Youth Ballet from 2010-2021. During this time, she began Dance Against Cancer, an Evening to Benefit the American Cancer Society in 2010 with producing partner and longtime friend, Daniel Ulbricht. Since its inception, Dance Against Cancer has raised over \$3.2 million for the American Cancer Society. Erin is now Executive Director of GALLIM Dance working with visionary artist and GALLIM's Artistic Director, Andrea Miller.

Frederick Earl Mosley

Fredrick Earl Mosley is Founder/Director of Diversity of Dance Inc., including programs such as Earl Mosley's Institute of the Arts (EMIA), Hearts of Men, and Dancing Beyond. Part of EMDOD's mission is not only to educate and entertain but to also use dance to enhance and enrich lives, even in the most adverse circumstances. *EMIA* is a four-week annual residential summer intensive that began in 2006, and is held at Hofstra University in Hempstead, Long Island. *Hearts of Men* uses dance to empower and cultivate a positive environment where men of all ages can bond in a community of brotherly love. For his third program, Mr. Mosley has applied his philosophy of "giving back" in the creation of a winter intensive called *Dancing Beyond; A benefit for Dance Against Cancer*. Mr. Mosley's choreographic credits include the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, American Ballet Theater Studio Company, and Dallas Black Theatre to name a few. Mosley has also choreographed at K-12 schools, Higher Ed and Programs such as Marymount Manhattan College, Muhlenberg College, The Joffrey Ballet Trainee Program, Rosie's Theater Kids, National Dance Institute, The Ailey School, Hofstra University, Adelphi University and others throughout the nation. He has also worked with international institutions in Chile, Colombia, and Japan. Mr. Mosley's work has been performed at the National College Dance Festival in Washington DC, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, The Joyce Theater, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Lincoln Center Alice Tully Hall,

SPEAKERS

Frederick Earl Mosley, *continued*

Lincoln Center “Out of Doors Series”, and Jacob’s Pillow. Mr. Mosley believes in diversity, not only in art, but also the life experiences that each dancer brings to the process of creating dance that entertains, educates and heals the human spirit. For more information visit Diversityofdance.org.

George Faison

George Faison, a visionary creative, continues to leave an indelible mark on the world of dance and artistic expression. As a dancer, choreographer, educator, and director, he has crafted timeless works that resonate with audiences worldwide. Mr. Faison was a featured dancer with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater from 1967 through 1970. After making his Broadway debut in the original production of *Purlie*, George founded the George Faison Universal Dance Experience where he created two modern American dance classics, *Suite Otis* and *Slaves*. His choreographic works include *Don’t Bother Me, I Can’t Cope*, *Via Galactica*, *Tilt*, and *The Wiz* which earned him Drama Desk Award and Tony Award for Best Choreography in 1975. Throughout his legendary career, Faison collaborated with a plethora of renowned artists, including Michael Jackson, Diana Ross, and Earth, Wind & Fire, Ashford and Simpson, Dionne Warwick, Patti Labelle and Cameo to name a few. He is the co-founder and producing artistic director of the Faison Firehouse Theatre, located in a former Harlem firehouse. In addition to the theatre, Mr. Faison has developed a unique performing arts-based outreach and youth theatre project, the Faison Firehouse Respect Project. Most recently Mr.Faison directed and choreographed *Once on This Island* for Summer Theatre of New Canaan.

Gian Marco Riccardo Lo Forte

Gian Marco Riccardo Lo Forte (he/they) is a Gay immigrant and cultural organizer based in NYC. A creative director, writer, filmmaker, and curator of interdisciplinary LGBTQ works, he is the Artistic Director of Pioneers Go East Collective. Since 2012, he has created works developed in NYC at BAM, BRIC ARTS MEDIA, Judson Church, La MaMa, Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance, Center for Performance Research, Exponential Festival, JACK, Governors Island/ LMCC, Goethe Institut; and Upstate NY at Lumberyard, and Collar Works. A NYSCA, NEA, Bel Geddes Design Award, and Foundation for Contemporary Arts recipient, his creative and curatorial practice has been highlighted by The New York Times, New York Magazine’s Pick, The New Yorker’s Pick, CULTUREBOT, and interviews published in Forbes and The Brooklyn Rail

SPEAKERS

Jhailyn Farcon

Jhailyn Farcon is 18 years old and from New York City. She is a recent graduate of Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Arts and Performing Arts and will be attending the Fordham/Ailey BFA Dance Program in the Fall. She previously made her Encores! debut in New York City Center's *The Light In The Piazza*, was in Jon M. Chu's *In The Heights*, and in Netflix's *13: The Musical*. Jhailyn has also toured with Broadway's *Billy Elliot the Musical*, danced for Mariah Carey, Justin Bieber, and former President of the United States, Barack Obama.

Karisma Jay

True to her name, Brooklyn- native, Karisma Jay is the epitome of Multi-Hyphenate. Dancer, Actress, Singer, Director, Playwright, Choreographer, Wellness Coach, Teacher, Entrepreneur and Host, she has performed/ toured with prestigious dance companies. She has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Dance Teacher Magazine*, and programs aired on Netflix, Lifetime, BET, MTV, NBC, and VH1. In 2013, Karisma joined STOMP. In 2016, *Family Circle* magazine coined her a "Local Hero" and Lifetime TV featured her as a Female Entrepreneur to Watch. Most recently, she won the "Power Women in Business" for her work as the Artistic Director and Founder of AbunDance Academy of the Arts and CEO of AbunDance Studios and AbunDance Gear. Annually, she writes, directs, produces and co-stars in musicals that AbunDance Academy presents. She just recently graduated Summa Cum Laude with her MFA in Dance at Hunter College while also teaching Dance and Culture at Hunter as an Undergraduate Faculty Member. Currently, she is teaching West African Dance and African Fusion at The Juilliard School, Ballet Tech, Broadway Dance Center and LaGuardia High School as a Guest Teaching Artist. In 2022, she worked as a choreographic apprentice with the Broadway show, David Byrne's *American Utopia*. She is a Dance Teacher Magazine's 2021 Dance Teacher Award Recipient and a recipient of Assemblymember Brian Cunningham's Woman of Distinction Award. Her most recent accomplishment was co-writing and co-directing her new film *CROWN*, a celebration of black hair, black dance and black love. With a mission to lead by example, she helps everyone who crosses paths with her to flourish AbunDantly. Follow @iamkarismajay @crownthefilm

luciana achugar

luciana achugar is a Brooklyn-based choreographer from Uruguay who grew as an artist in close dialogue with the NY and Uruguayan contemporary dance communities. Her work is concerned with the post-colonial world, searching for an undoing of current power structures from the inside out. She is a two-time "Bessie" Award recipient,

SPEAKERS

luciana achugar, *continued*

and one time nominee, a Guggenheim Fellow, Herb Alpert Award recipient, Creative Capital Grantee and a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grantee, amongst other accolades; most recently she received a 2022 USA Doris Duke Fellowship. She is currently teaching and studying at Bennington College; writing a book on the “Pleasure Practice” and continuing her research for PURO TEATRO: Spell for Utopia; which premiered in its first iteration in November 2021 at The Chocolate Factory Theater as a co-presentation with NYU’s Skirball Center for the Performing Arts. In her work Theater is a space for Utopia; Utopia is a practice; practice is ritual; ritual is devotion; and devotion is Dance and Dance is a practice of being in pleasure.

Kyle Marshall

Kyle Marshall is a choreographer, performer, teacher and artistic director of Kyle Marshall Choreography (KMC), a dance company that sees the dancing body as a container of history, an igniter of social reform and a site of celebration. Since inception in 2014, KMC has performed at venues including: Chelsea Factory, BAM Next Wave Festival NJPAC, Entertainment Community Fund Arts Center, Little Island, and Roulette. Kyle has received choreographic and dance film commissions from the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Baryshnikov Arts Center, “Dance on the Lawn” Montclair’s Dance Festival, Harlem Stage and THE SHED. National touring has included: Jacob’s Pillow Inside/Out (Beckett, MA), FringeArts, (Philadelphia), Bickford Theater/Morris Museum (NJ) and New World Center (Miami). Recognitions have included a 2018 NY Dance and Performance Juried Bessie Award, a 2020 Dance Magazine Harkness Promise Award and a 2020 Bessie Honoree for his revival of *Colored*. Kyle has also received choreographic fellowships from Princeton University, Center for Ballet and the Arts at NYU, and residencies from the Monira Foundation, 92nd st Y, Center for Performance Research, American Dance Festival and Bethany Arts Community. As an educator, Kyle is currently an adjunct professor at NYU’s Open Arts Program and has been a guest artist at Rutgers University, Ailey/Fordham University, Eugene Lang/New School and Sarah Lawrence College. Kyle has engaged young artists through creative workshops at Operation Unite NY, Bloomfield College and New Jersey High Schools; Bayonne, County Prep, and Trenton Central. As a performer, Kyle was a member of the Trisha Brown Dance Company, doug elkins choreography etc., and Tiffany Mills Company. He is a graduate of Rutgers University with a BFA in Dance and currently resides in Brooklyn, NY.

SPEAKERS

Mireicy Aquino

Meet Mireicy Aquino, talented and passionate performer in the world of dance, acting, and spoken word. This gifted individual was awarded a prestigious scholarship to Montclair Kimberly Academy, where they have excelled both academically and artistically. Her dance journey has been nothing short of extraordinary, having received training at the renowned Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre. She also had the honor of working with legendary figures in the dance community, including the acclaimed Savion Glover, the graceful Nasha Thomas, the inspiring Hope Boykin and the influential Heather Robles. Throughout her artistic career, Mireicy has graced the iconic Lincoln Center Stage, Off-Broadway, the Prudential Center and NJPAC. Beyond dance, Mireicy has cultivated a genuine passion for acting and spoken word. The combination of these disciplines allows her to express her artistic vision in unique ways, captivating hearts and minds with every performance.

Ms Vee

Originally from Vancouver, Canada, Ms Vee started making her mark in the NYC dance scene in 2003. Vee has proudly been in Ephrat Asherie Dance since 2012. They have also had the pleasure of working with such distinguished choreographers as Buddha Stretch, Rennie Harris, Luam, Maria Torres, and Bradley Rapier. TV, film, and stage highlights include: 'Hideaway' Video by Kiesza, Step Up 3D, Rennie Harris' Legends of Hip Hop, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Sadler's Wells Breaking Convention. Ms Vee is also a celebrated dance educator, and is on faculty at Broadway Dance Center, Pace University's Commercial Dance BFA Program, and in 2017 became the first Hip Hop teacher at The Julliard School.

Paz Tanjuaquio

Paz Tanjuaquio (she/her) has been active in NYC since 1990 as a choreographer, performer, educator, and is Co-Founding Director of TOPAZ ARTS, Inc. founded in 2000 with Todd B. Richmond. She currently serves as Chair of the Steering Committee for The Bessies, and is a member of the NYS DanceForce. Paz will be performing in a production with Big Dance Theater at PAC NYC this Dec 2023, and will be presenting her new full-evening work, January 11 & 12, 2024 as part of Out-FRONT! Fest. curated by Pioneers Go East Collective at The LGBT Center in NYC. www.topazarts.org

SPEAKERS

Tiffany Geigel

Tiffany Geigel is a dancer, model & disability advocate. She has danced for Heidi Latsky Dance Company. She received her BA in dance in NYC. Tiffany's TV appearances include Disney+ Growing Up ep;2 Emily, TLC's ["Two In A Million; Tiniest Torso"](#), etc. Tiffany has modeled for fashion jeweler Alexis Bittar. The Puerto Rican native New Yorker has a modeling book project titled "The Beauty of Tiffany" by Asael Dror available on Amazon.

Lucy Sexton

Executive Director of New Yorkers for Culture & Arts, Lucy Sexton is a Brooklyn born producer, administrator, and performing artist who has worked in the fields of dance, performance, film, and public advocacy. She has served as Executive Director of the NY Dance and Performance Awards, The Bessies, building them for the first time into an independent organization. From 2013-16 she worked as a Consulting Associate Artistic Director of the planned performing arts center at the World Trade Center, conducting field-wide outreach and developing the center's artistic mission and plan. As a dance artist she works with Anne lobst creating and performing the dance performance duo DANCENOISE which was founded in 1983, received a Bessie Award for outstanding production in 1989, had a retrospective exhibit and performance at the Whitney Museum in 2015, and premiered a new piece at NY Live Arts in 2018. She has also directed and dramaturged plays by Spalding Gray, Tom Murrin, Nora Burns, and Heather Litteer; and produced documentaries by Charles Atlas for the BBC and Arte. | lucy@ny4ca.org

Vicki Capote

Vicki Capote is a multidisciplinary artist and fundraiser committed to building a more accessible, equitable, and inclusive arts ecosystem. With more than 15 years of experience as a singer, actor, and stage manager in the performing arts field, Vicki is passionate about utilizing art as a vehicle for social change, civic engagement, and self-actualization. She is currently the Director of Development at Dance/NYC and part of the organization's Co-Leadership team.

The Bessies Staff

Heather Robles, Executive Director

Heather Robles (she/her/ella) is a nondisabled queer Latinx cis woman of Indigenous Mexican descent who lives on the stolen land of the Lenape and Canarsie peoples in what is currently called Brooklyn. She has worked at The Bessies since 2010- the first year they were independently produced with Lucy Sexton. She is the Founder and Artistic Director of Alma Dance Company, a certified birth doula at Our Birth Doula, and an adjunct professor at her alma mater, Marymount Manhattan College. A Brooklyn-based choreographer and performer, she has worked with many artists including Yvonne Rainer, Sidra Bell, Pavel Zústiak, Nathan Trice, DANCENOISE, André M. Zachery, Buglisi Dance Theater, Soluq Dance Theater, Alison Cook Beatty Dance, Fredrick Earl Mosley, Suzanne Ponomarenko Dance, and The Equus Projects. She is on the board of directors for Renegade Performance Group and Sharron Miller's Academy for the Performing Arts. Heather is also a dance educator, teaching artist, producer, and advocate for mental health in the dance field. She is excited to train with Indigenous midwives in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala this fall.

Ava Stanton, Executive Assistant

Ava Stanton (she/her), from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, is a rising third-year in the Ailey/Fordham BFA program with a double major in Dance and Fashion Studies. Aside from being this year's Bessie's Executive Assistant, Ava works in the Ailey School Costume Shop and at Madewell Retail Stores. A dancer since age 2, she spent many years studying Ballet, but now specializes in multiple different dance techniques, as well as voice and visual arts. She is ecstatic to be part of the Bessie's team this year and is excited to work with the Bessie's for years to come!

Brittney Griffin, Associate Producer

Brittney Griffin (Associate Producer) graduated from the University at Buffalo with a BFA in Dance. Credits include: Hairspray, 42nd Street(International), Dreamgirls National Broadway Tour (Dance Captain/Swing), Dreamgirls Non-Equity and South African Tour (Associate Director/Choreographer), Apollo Club Harlem, After Midnight (NCL). Film: Bolden, A Jazzmans Blues (Netflix). Winner of 2022 Connecticut Critics Circle Award for Best Choreography from her work on Five Guys Named Moe (Playhouse on Park). She is currently a Creative Consultant for lululemon NYC and the Associate Choreographer of Broadway's Kimberly Akimbo.

DJ Sabine Blaizin, DJ, Silent Disco

DJ Sabine Blaizin's work focuses on the exposure and pleasures of African diasporic music. Brooklyn Mecca, Cumbancha, and Oyasound are a few of her creative

THE BESSIES STAFF

Dj Sabine Blaizin,
continued

projects. Dj Sabine spins Global Soul: House, Afrotech, Afrobeat, Haitian Roots and other diasporic tunes. As an activist, Sabine continuously gives back and serves her African diasporic community. In this capacity, she is the Director of Programs at the Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute and volunteers as the NY Deputy Ambassador for Haiti's She Builds Initiative. Sabine ultimately seeks to create new scholarship through the African and Haitian diasporic lens of music, culture and spirituality.

Dalia Engelberg,
Program Manager

Dalia Engelberg is a New York University graduate with a BFA in Dance and a Minor in History. During her time at NYU she had the privilege of working with choreographers Bill T. Jones, Sidra Bell, and Rafael V. Cañals Pérez. She's originally from Montclair, New Jersey where she studied at Sharron Miller's Academy for the Performing Arts as well as the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance. Now living in NYC, she is focused on being a part of the dance community! This is her third year working for The Bessies and her first year as the Program Manager.

Dani Cole,
Accessibility Consultant

Dani Cole (they/them), otherwise known as "dan," is the Accessibility Consultant for the 2023 Bessies programming. They served as the Associate Manager and Managing Director for the Bessies from 2020-2023, and also supported in the roles of VIP Ticketing Manager and Volunteer Manager in 2019. Currently, they are pursuing licensure as a Dance/Movement Therapist and are a somatic touch practitioner. They serve as a NYC Parks Super Steward Street Tree Care Captain and lead stewardship events throughout Brooklyn to invite communities to engage with urban ecologies. As an interdisciplinary artist, they frequently collaborate with jill sigman/thinkdance. Dan's debut poetry book exploring the intersections of trees, lineage, and healing will be published in 2024. They carry a vibrant history as an social justice activist, gardener, choreographer, artist doula, editorial and curatorial assistant, yoga teacher, dance educator, math tutor, barista, and lifelong student of deep ecology.

Gabrielle Burgess,
Social Media Manager

Gabrielle Burgess (she/her), originally from Dracut, MA, has worked with The Bessies since 2019. She holds a BA in Dance from Hofstra University, and has worked with a number of artists as a freelance performer, including the Moving Architects, the Chamberlin Collective, Joan Bradford and Collaborators, and kamrDANCE. Gabbie has worked for many years as a dance educator in Brooklyn and the greater New York area, and is currently studying

THE BESSIES STAFF

Gabrielle Burgess,
continued

at Columbia University to become a licensed occupational therapist.

Jaron Givens,
Assistant Producer

Jaron Givens (he/him) is a rising third-year in the Ailey/Fordham BFA Dance Program and a double major in Environmental Studies. Givens was born in Baltimore, Maryland, where he began dancing in 2017 at the Peabody Preparatory at Johns Hopkins University in the Estelle Dennis/Peabody Dance Training Program for Boys. Givens now studies at the Ailey School in the Professional Division and trains in various dance styles such as ballet, Horton, Graham, jazz, West African, and contemporary. Givens is ecstatic to intern with the Bessies this summer as the Assistant Producer and hopes you all enjoy the 2023 Bessie Award Ceremony!

Kristin Colvin Young,
Stage Manager

Kristin Colvin Young (she/her) has worked as a New York City based dance stage manager for over two decades. Her touring career has taken her to 47 states and 32 countries. Most recently she was the Production Stage Manager for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (2000-2023). She has also stage managed for DanceAfrica at BAM (2018-2023), Parsons Dance Company (1997-2000) and was a founding member of Battleworks Dance Company in 2002. In 1997 Kristin began her journey in dance stage management as a technical intern at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. A graduate of Mount Holyoke College with a BA in dance and sociology, Kristin enjoys lecturing at colleges and universities encouraging the next generation of stage managers.

Lucas
Tahiruzzaman Syed,
Video Editor

Lucas Tahiruzzaman Syed (he/him) is a gay South Asian-American video editor and composer. His current main project is *Pointing Fingers*, a first-of-its-kind feature film about—and starring—minimally-speaking autistic people, written by his longtime collaborators and friends Michael and Dan Bergmann. Other recent projects include the London premiere of his musical *The Brontës*, a world-premiere orchestral work with NYC's Queer Urban Orchestra, and the impending release of the psychoanalytic iPhone game *Of Two minds*. He is a long-time member of the BMI Lehman Engel Advanced Musical Theater Workshop.

Molly Grund,
Program Designer

Molly Grund is a New York-based art director and designer. Although she is not a dancer, she is the daughter of one, and grew up happily watching performances in and around the city, the Berkshires and between.

THE BESSIES STAFF

Morgan Gregory, Executive Assistant

Morgan Gregory is originally from Richmond, VA where she primarily studied at The Richmond Ballet. Now, she is an upcoming senior in the Ailey/ Fordham BFA program double majoring in both Dance and African and African American studies. Morgan is also a Denise Jefferson Memorial scholar with the Ailey School. She has previously interned with MOBBallet, Urban Bush Women, and The Ailey School.

Neysha Merced, Associate Manager

Neysha Merced (she/her) is a DeSales University graduate with a BA in Dance. Her background, being born in Puerto Rico and raised in Allentown, PA, fostered her love of nature and performance. Now living in NYC, she is focused on community building through movement and networking with dancers and artists of all genres to create a sustainable future for the arts. Neysha is a dancer and the Associate Artistic Director of J CHEN PROJECT. She specializes in social media strategy for small businesses and assisted in designing the relaunch for the JCP 2022 Mentee Program. This is her fourth year working with The Bessies, the first as Associate Manager! She is a GYROTONIC® & GYROKINESIS® Trainer, a model represented by Stetts Model Management, and a freelance florist.

Regine Pieters, Development & Grant Writing Consultant

Originally from the Caribbean island of Curaçao, Regine Pieters (she/her) is an arts administrator, producer, choreographer, and dancer. Upon moving to NYC in 2018, she found a deep joy in organizing the logistical aspects of performance, prioritizing providing artists with the support and resources to develop their work and thrive creatively. She has worked in administrative, producing, development, and management capacities at Gibney Dance Center, Center for Performance Research, Dishman + Co. Choreography, Brooklyn Arts Exchange, The Bessies, and New Yorkers for Culture and Arts. Currently, she's diving deep into her fundraising and development work at The Chocolate Factory Theater, longing to make non-profit funding more equitable within underrepresented communities. With her deep appreciation for the performing and visual arts, she aspires to create leverage within the structures of arts organizations to foster sustainability and opportunities for artists.

THE BESSIES STAFF

Sara Thoreson, Angel Party Assistant and Volunteer Coordinator

Sara Thoreson (she/her) is a dancer and student at the Ailey/Fordham BFA program, double majoring with dance and Sociology, as well as beginning an accelerated masters degree in Urban Studies. Originally from North Idaho, dance has taken her to San Antonio, Texas, and now here to the city! Her passion for dance has offered so much, including a passion for community and growth. She has previously interned with the Center for Traditional Music and Dance, works at her university as an Event Manager, and is excited to be joining the Bessies team this year!

Taegan Smith, Program Assistant

Taegan Smith (she/they) is originally from Newtown, CT, and is a rising junior in the Ailey/Fordham BFA program with a double major in Dance and History. She is currently an intern with Lincoln Center of the Performing Arts, The Juilliard School, and the Bessies, and works for select performances on The Ailey School stage management team and in the costume shop. She is also a gold award Girl Scout and a Barton Weller scholar. As a longtime lover of dance and the arts in New York City, Taegan is ecstatic to be working on the Bessies team this year!

Torya Beard, Producer

Torya Beard is a New York-based director, creative producer, curator, choreographer, and educator specializing in dance and theater. For over 25 years, Torya has supported performing artists through all manners of administrative and producorial support, including but not limited to: general operations, public relations, marketing, creative consulting, and producing. Torya's creative partnership with Ayodele Casel has been a significant collaboration; the pair has developed numerous projects, among them Bessie Award-winning dance film, and subsequent stage productions of *Ayodele Casel: Chasing Magic* (Director), *Ayodele Casel | Artists At The Center*, featuring 7 world premieres by 10 choreographers, and Casel's *Where We Dwell*. Ayodele and Torya are Resident Directors of Dance Lab New York's Tap Project and were co-curated of the Little Island Dance Festival 2021 & 2022. Other projects; Assistant Director, *Funny Girl* 2022 Broadway revival & *Waitress* 2021 Broadway remount; Director, American Repertory Theater 2022 Gala; Executive Producer, *Jesus Christ Superstar: Highlights from the All-Female Studio Cast Recording*, Idina Menzel 2017 World Tour (co-Creative Director). Torya is the 2022 recipient of the APAP's Inaugural CIPA Award for Outstanding Achievement in Creative Producing and was featured, along with Ayodele Casel and Idina Menzel, in Variety and Lifetime's *'Power of Women: The Changemakers' Special* for her work with the arts-based youth development

THE BESSIES STAFF

Torya Beard,
continued

organization, [A BroaderWay Foundation](#). In the interest of arts advocacy, sustainability, and the elevation of young voices, Torya serves as Executive Director, A BroaderWay Foundation; Artistic Director, [Excellence Community Schools](#), Co-Founder, [tall poPpy](#), and serves on the boards of Earl Mosley's [Diversity of Dance](#), [Sole Defined](#), and Raja Feather Kelly's dance-theatre-media company, the [feath3r theory \(TF3T\)](#). Learn more at [toryabeard.com](#), @thatgirltorya.

In Memoriam

Darius Barnes

Darius Barnes was a Broadway performer and choreographer. An alumni of the School of American Ballet, he danced with Dance Theatre of Harlem, Suzanne Farrell Ballet, and New York City Ballet before moving to Broadway. There, he performed in *Mean Girls*, *Memphis*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Spider-Man: Turn Off The Dark*, and Rodgers + Hammerstein's *Cinderella*. His final project was as associate choreographer of Kimberly Akimo.

David Gordon

David Gordon was a choreographer who largely created experimental dance pieces. Working during the postmodern era, Mr. Gordon created Judson Dance theater alongside Trisha Brown, Steve Paxton and Yvonne Rainer. He was also a founding member of the improvisatory group Grand Union and the director of the Pick Up Performance Company. His vision was singular and unmatched, and his pieces remain incredibly influential.

Dexter T. Jones

Dexter T. Jones was a spirited tap dancer with a bright performance quality and an innate sense of musicality. He was a lover of collaboration and worked with countless stars of Broadway and beyond, including national and international tours of *Black and Blue*, *A Chorus Line*, *42nd Street*, *My One and Only*, *Riverdance*, *Play On!*, *The Tempest*, and *Sophisticated Ladies*. He appeared in the west coast premiere of *Swinging on A Star*, for which he was nominated for an NAACP Theatre Award for his performance.

Edwin “Edy” Lopez

Edwin “Edy” Lopez, as a young adult, left the US Navy with an honorable discharge due to an accident that resulted in the amputation of his left leg. Mr. Lopez worked at Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association thereafter, where he played wheelchair basketball under the tutelage of a pioneer in Adaptive Sports. He had an unbridled enthusiasm with showing off his athletic skills and entralling a crowd, and used his skills for immense good. Edy had a deep connection to Heidi Latsky Dance, performing for the company at Lincoln Center.

Everett Quinton

Everett Quinton was an actor, director, and legend in the downtown theater scene. He was also a leading figure of the Ridiculous Theatrical Company, founded in 1967 by Charles Ludlam, Mr. Quinton's theatrical and life partner, and wrapping in 1997. This group was committed to upholding the inventive and experimental aspects of local theater, and Mr. Quinton flourished in many starring roles of their productions.

IN MEMORIAM

Jennifer Muller

Jennifer Muller was a choreographer and a visionary. As the owner of her own company, Jennifer Muller: The works, she made a profound impact on dancers, students, and audiences. Mrs. Muller was active and on the forefront of dance's innovation for over 50 years, performing for José Limón and Louis Falco while simultaneously building JMTW to success. She also created and taught the Muller Polarity Technique as well as Women/Create! for female choreographers, and was one of the first artists to blend dance and theater by incorporating spoken word into many choreographic pieces.

Jordan Neely

Jordan Neely was a talented dancer, performer, impersonator, and entertainer. While homeless for much of the latter half of his life, Mr. Neely traveled the NYC subways as a Michael Jackson impersonator, and was often recognized and celebrated for his talents. While his passing was incredibly tragic, he made a momentous mark on history. He will be remembered for his spirit and the countless souls he touched through performance.

Lynn Seymour

Lynn Seymour was a star of the Royal Opera House Ballet, a choreographer, an artistic director of two European ballet companies, and a screen actress. She worked closely with many of the greats of the 20th century screen acting legends as well as breakout choreographers and rising stars like Alvin Ailey, William Forsythe, Kenneth Macmillan, and Rudolph Nureyev. Ms. Seymour was a true star of her time and beyond.

Micki Wesson

Micki Wesson was a dancer, a teacher, and a longtime arts supporter who received a Special Citation Bessie Award for her many generous contributions to the dance field. Wesson also served on the boards of Dance Theater Workshop & Meredith Monk Company, and performed frequently with The Paper Bag Players.

Neil Chrisman

Neil Chrisman was a lover of the arts who had a BA of Economics from Princeton University, an MBA from New York University, and who served as a Lieutenant in the US Navy. Dedicated to sustainable farming and the arts, Mr. Chrisman worked for multiple not-for-profits. He was the founder of Berkshire Agriculture Ventures in 2010 and Board Emeritus. As a lover of painting, music, and dance, Mr. Chrisman served several arts organizations, notably Brooklyn Academy of Music and Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival.

IN MEMORIAM

Pierre Lacote

Pierre Lacote was a celebrated French ballet dancer who studied at the Paris Opera Ballet School and was part of their company. After excelling in this position, Mr. Lacote left and formed his own company in order to work on his own choreography, Les Ballets de La Tours Eiffel. He performed as a guest artist around the world during this time, and upon returning to France, he specialized in restagings of ballets for the Paris Opera, The Bolshoi Ballet, Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo, and many more.

Ralph Lee

Ralph Lee was a prolific puppeteer as well as an actor, writer, producer, and director. His masks and figures were incredibly involved and uniquely crafted, and were seen in productions by his own Mettawee River Theater Company and in shows around the greater NYC area— The Metropolitan Opera, the New York Shakespeare Festival, The New York City Opera, Theater for the New City, and many more.

Robert Gottlieb

Robert Gottlieb was a passionate dance lover and chief dance critic for The New York Observer. A New Yorker his whole life, Mr. Gottlieb was a talented editor and writer who edited some of the most classic novels of the later 20th century. He spent a large number of years as an editor at Simon and Schuster based out of New York City, and following this portion of his career, he transitioned to hold the third editor spot in New Yorker Magazine history.

Scott Johnson

Scott Johnson was a talented composer and guitarist who created numerous pieces for the dance community. He was said to embrace the complexity of a piece, and he was particularly inspired by Stravinsky's Rite of Spring and works by Steve Reich. His compositions were consistently ahead of their time, and his contributions to the music universe remain momentous.

Stephanie Bissonnette

Stephanie Bissonnette was a gifted performer who made her Broadway debut in the original cast of Mean Girls on Broadway. She was one of the featured stars of Ensemble, a documentary about modern Broadway dancers grappling with the Covid-19 shutdown. Ms. Bissonnette also participated in When The Lights Are Bright Again, a book of letters that memorialized the moment of the shutdown across Broadway. She was incredibly active in charity performance circles and taught at Broadway Dance Center.

IN MEMORIAM

Stuart Hodes

Stuart Hodes was an incredibly skilled modern dancer who danced on Broadway, in films, with his own troupe, and notably as Martha Graham's partner. He was also a choreographer, with his works featured in pieces for Boston Ballet, Dallas Ballet, Harkness Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, and other dance companies. He was also the Dance Associate for the NY State Council on the Arts, a dance panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts, and president of the National Association of Schools of Dance.

Tina Ramirez

Tina Ramirez, originally from Venezuela and raised in Spanish Harlem, founded Ballet Hispánico in 1970. Her company was one of the first and remains one of the largest Latinx/Latine/Hispanic cultural organizations in the United States. Under her direction, over 45 choreographers created works for the Company. Ms. Ramirez received the National Medal of Arts, an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts degree from The Juilliard School and a Citation of Honor at the New York Dance and Performance Awards.

Valda Setterfield

Valda Setterfield was a star of the postmodern dance movement and a muse for countless choreographers of the mid-20th century. Her career training spanned from the tutelage of Russian dancer Tamara Karsavina in the 1950s and transitioned to Woody Allen in the 1990s. Ms. Setterfield was often her husband David Gordon's onstage partner, a relationship that began before their marriage in 1961 and lasted until their final 2018 season at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. She had close ties with Merce Cunningham and was a lead dancer in his company, a teacher of his technique, and one of his trusted friends.

WORKS & PROCESS

CHAMPIONING CREATIVE PROCESS FROM STUDIO TO STAGE

**WORKS & PROCESS CELEBRATES
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**OUR GRATITUDE TO THE BESSIES AND
SELECTION AND STEERING COMMITTEES.**

Works & Process at the Guggenheim, LaTasha Barnes presents *The Jazz Continuum* culminating a Works & Process Bubble Residency at Catskill Mountain Foundation with support from the Mellon Foundation and Doris Duke Foundation. May 19, 2021.

Photo: Titus Ogilvie-Laing

Heartfelt and deeply felt congratulations to all Bessie nominees and recipients who created much-needed and welcome new work this season! May we all as artists ride this wave of newfound inspiration with integrity, commitment and hopefulness, with an unbridled passion, wonder and joy in the new creative year ahead.

From your friends, colleagues and family at
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The Bessies Membership 2023

Alexis Ortiz, Amy Cassello, Andrew Chiang, Anna Glass-Coquillot, Ara Fitzgerald, Art Bridgman, Arthur Aviles, Barkha Patel, Bebe Neuwirth, Bill Young, Candace Thompson-Zachery, Carla Peterson, Carol K Walker, Caroline Cronson, Carolyn Lucas, Carolyn Silverman, Catherine Peila, Charles Rice-Gonzalez, Charly Santagado, Charmaine Warren, Chris Robles, Christina Tedeschi, Craig Peterson, Crystal Wei, Danni Gee, David Archuletta, David Thomson, Dian Dong, Dianne McIntyre, Doron Perk, Emily Giovine, Emily Waters, Erin Carlisle Norton, Garnet Henderson, George Emilio Sanchez, Gian Marco Riccardo Lo Forte, Holly Jones, J. Bouey, Jada Jenai, Jamie Scott, Janet D Clancy, Janet Eilber, Janet Stapleton, Jazelynn Goudy, Jeanne Linnes, Jennifer Crane, Jessica Chen, John Scott, Juan Michael Porter II, Karen Calhoun, Karen Eubanks, Kathy Westwater, Kennedy Thomas, Kim Chan, Kwami Winfield, Kyle Marshall, Kyle Maude, Lane Wood, Lauriane Ogay, Laurie Uprichard, Leslie Cuyjet, Linda Waters, Lisa Gold, Lisa Wong, Lloyd Knight, Lucy Sexton, Madalyn Rupprecht, Maile Okamura, Maura Nguyen Donohue, Megan Minturn, Mette Loulou von Kohl, Michelle Preston, Morgen Littlejohn, Nancy Reynolds, Nolini Barretto, Obinnaya Williams, Paz Tanjuaquio, Peggy Cheng, PeiJu Chien-Pott, Rashida Bumbray, Rita Robles, Rosalynde LeBlanc, Rosemarie Gates, Sadi Mosko, Sally Sommer, Sangeeta and Peter Yesley, Sidra Bell, Sun Kim, Suzanne Konowitz, Suzanne Rubinstein, Tal Yarden, Thibaut Witzleb, Tiffany Rea-Fisher, Tyler Ashley, Uttara Asha Coorlawala, Vicki Capote, Xin Ying, Yanira Castro, Yoko Murakami, Yoko Shioya, Young Soon Kim, Závě Martohardjono

If you'd like to get involved in The Bessies by joining any of these groups,
email heather@bessies.org



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Bessies Steering Committee

Charmaine Warren	Mother/Wife/Performer/Curator/Dance Writer/Historian – Founder/Artistic Director – “Dance on the Lawn: Montclair’s Dance Festival” & “Black Dance Stories.” Producer DanceAfrica & Artistic Associate and Programming Director
Craig Peterson	President and CEO Lower Manhattan Cultural Council
george emilio sanchez	Performance Artist, Writer and Social & Indigenous Justice activist
maura nguyễn donohue	Director, MFA in Dance, Hunter College – Writer, Performer, Choreographer, Installation artist (she/they/bruh/mom)
Nicky Paraiso	Actor, musician, writer, performance artist and curator; Director of Programming for The Club at La MaMa; Curator, La MaMa Moves! Dance Festival
Paz Tanjuaquio (chair)	Choreographer, Performer, and Co-Founding Director of TOPAZ ARTS, Inc.
Stanford Makishi	Vice President & Artistic Director, Dance Programs, New York City Center
Tiffany Rea-Fisher	Artistic Director EMERGE125, Bryant Park Dance Curator, Teacher, Community Organizer
Yvonne H. Chow 周化炜	Director of Operations & Education Director, H+ The Hip-Hop Dance Conservatory // Curator of Works & Principal Dancer, H+ Theatre of the Mind® //Founder & Artistic Director, House of Chow® {Asian Division of H+}

Bessies 2022/2023 Selection Committee

This committee nominated the work being celebrated this evening.

Anabella Lenzu	Choreographer - Scholar - Educator - Author Unveiling Motion and Emotion/ Revelando Movimiento y Emoción, 2013
Donna Costello	Dance Artist; Performer, Creator and Educator, Bessie Selection Committee 2022-2023
Elizabeth Burke	Tap Dancer, Performer, Educator, Choreographer; Dance Captain + Rehearsal Director + Dancer, Dorrance Dance
Gian Marco Riccardo Lo Forte	Creative director, filmmaker, cultural organizer and curator, Pioneers Go East Collective; LGBTQ advocate; cat(s) dad
Ivan Talijančić	Time-based artist, Co-founder of WaxFactory (NYC.) Director of Contemporary Performance Practices (Croatia)
Kate Thomas	Artistic Director- Ballet Neo, Choreographer, Dance Educator, Designer, Arts Administrator.
Porshia A. Derival	Performer, Teacher; Executive Director of H+; Producer at TOTEM Productions
Timberly Canale	Performer, Choreographer and Dance Educator
Satsu Holmes	Selection Committee Member, Lead at in-corporus
Shalewa Mackall	Shalewa Mackall artist and educator, makes multidisciplinary performance and literary work in the Sankofic tradition
Tiffany Geigel	Dancer, Model, Stage Manager, Healthcare Coordinator
William Isaac	Antiguan, not a fan of cooking himself, loves to eat, Choreographer, Conduit.
Tyler Ashley	Dance, Drag and Performance Artist

THE BESSIES 2022/2023 SELECTION COMMITTEE

Valerie Green	Artistic Directory, Dance Entropy; Founder, Green Space; dancer, choreographer, and teacher
Yoko Murakami	Movement Artist, Experimental Film Creator, Jewelry Designer, Design Director
Yoshiko Chuma	Conceptual artist, choreographer/artistic director of The School of Hard Knocks (1980-2023)

Bessies 2023/2024 Selection Committee

This committee is currently viewing work for Bessies consideration. The current eligibility period spans April 1, 2023-March 31, 2024. To invite them to your performances, please visit Bessies.org/Committee and click "Email the Committee."

Alex Smith, Jr.	Executive Chairman, Thelma Hill Performing Arts Center
Anabella Lenzu	Choreographer - Scholar - Educator - Author Unveiling Motion and Emotion/ Revelando Movimiento y Emoción, 2013
Celia Ipiotis	Creator/producer of EYE ON DANCE educational TV series; Dance Historian; Lecturer; Educator, Editor/EYE ON THE ARTS Culture Website
David Persky	Arts enthusiast and transdisciplinary facilitator for emergent systems change
Duke Dang	Works & Process Executive Director. A refugee championing creative process from studio-to-stage
Farren Wood	Programs and Community Engagement Manager, 651 ARTS; Producer; Presenter; Performer; Fierce Advocate of Arts and Community
Gian Marco Riccardo Lo Forte	Creative director, filmmaker, cultural organizer and curator, Pioneers Go East Collective; LGBTQ advocate; cat(s) dad

THE BESSIES 2023/2024 SELECTION COMMITTEE

Gregory English	Dancer, Writer, Arts Administrator, Camper, Manager, Hiker
Hannah Garner	2nd Best Dance Company - Performer, Choreographer, Dance Educator, Director
Ivan Talijančić	Time-based artist, Co-founder of WaxFactory (NYC), Director of Contemporary Performance Practices (Croatia)
Kate Thomas	Artistic Director- Ballet Neo, Choreographer, Dance Educator, Designer, Arts Administrator.
Kyla Gordon	Curator; Writer; Researcher; Performer
Leslie Cuyjet	Performer and Choreographer
Lynn Schwab	Tap Dancer, teacher, choreographer
Nami Yamamoto	Choreographer, Dancer, Performer, Puppeteer, Teaching Artist and Core Council at Artists of Color Council at Movement Research
PeiJu Chien-Pott	Director of New and Contemporary Dance, Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company. Artistic Director, PEIJU C. Performing Arts (Taiwan). Graham faculty at Ailey School, Martha Graham School
Porshia A. Derival	Performer, Teacher; Executive Director of H+; Producer at TOTEM ProductionsGraham School
Rakia Seaborn	Dancer, Maker, Educator, Cultural Producer
Ronald K. Alexander	Ballet Instructor, Director, Choreographer, Educator, Pilates infused Dance advocate
Shalewa Mackall	Artist and educator, makes multidisciplinary performance and literary work in the Sankofic tradition
Tyler Ashley	Dance, Drag and Performance Artist

THE BESSIES 2023/2024 SELECTION COMMITTEE

William Isaac	Antiguan, not a fan of cooking himself, loves to eat, Choreographer, Conduit
Yoko Murakami	Movement Artist, Experimental Film Creator, Jewelry Designer, Design Director
Yoshiko Chuma	Conceptual artist, choreographer/artistic director of The School of Hard Knocks (1980-2023)
zavé martohardjono	Bessies Selection Committee Member, Interdisciplinary Artist



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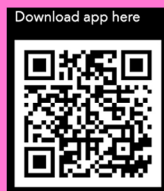


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TOPAZ ARTS

A decorative header featuring a complex, white geometric pattern of interconnected lines and triangles on a dark background. The numbers 80, 30, and 20 are prominently displayed in a large, white, sans-serif font, each centered within its own section of the pattern.

80 30 20

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Shout Outs

Congratulations Mykel Marai Nairne, Jordan Lloyd and fellow nominees for Outstanding Ensemble.

- Pamela & Michael

Congratulations to Vanessa Anspaugh and LaTasha Barnes on your nominations! The entire Bates Dance Festival community is so proud of and inspired by you. Thank you, your casts, and crews for being part of the 2023 Festival!

- Bates Dance Festival

Shoutout to a fellow Asian American choreographer, Jessica Chen, for her nomination of Outstanding Choreographer/Creator for NüWa (女媧)! As your friend/supporter, I know this is well deserved as you have matured both in your self-understanding and your creations. Congratulations!

- Yvonne H. Chow | 周化炜

Michele, I am immensely proud of all of your accomplishments. Thank you for creating space for us through LOHH. Thank you for being an example for Black Women everywhere on what leadership and advocacy looks for women in Hip-Hop.

Love, Porshia

Staff/Production

Heather Robles	Executive Director
Abigail Browde	Website Designer
Brittney Griffin	Associate Producer
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Dalia Engelberg	Program Manager
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Jaron Givens	Assistant Producer
Morgan Gregory	Executive Assistant
Sara Thoreson	Volunteer Coordinator
Taegan Smith	Program Assistant

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Jyn Orlowski	Sydney Jones
Maria Moxey	

Special Thanks

We would like to acknowledge the following individuals and organizations whose support has been invaluable to The Bessies this year:

AK47 Division

Brooklyn Academy of Music

Charles Vincent Burwell

Candace Thompson-Zachery

Dave Archuletta

Dance/NYC

Gregory English

New York Live Arts

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Porshia A. Derival

Rita and Chris Robles

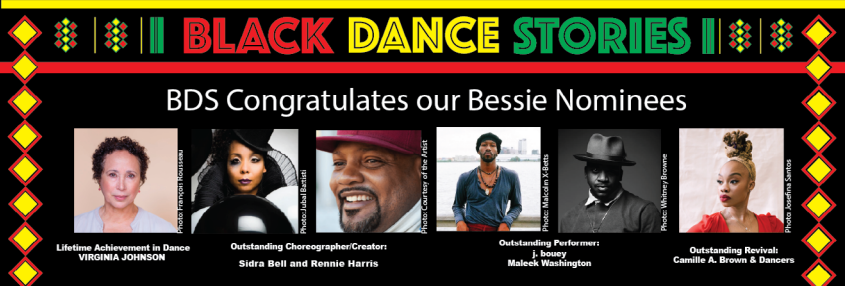
Yvonne H. Chow

And every Bessies staff person, the Bessies Board of Directors, Bessies Steering Committee, Bessies Selection Committees, Bessies Membership, Bessies Presenter League, our generous donors, funders, partners, interns, volunteers, and every individual in our community who has made tonight possible!

Danspace
Project






Congratulations to all the nominees & awardees!

Bravo to nominated Danspace Project artists, including Christopher "Unpezverde" Núñez and the ensemble of *The Circle or Prophetic Dream*: Marielys Burgos-Meléndez, Rafael V. Cañals Pérez, Christopher "Unpezverde" Núñez, and to Jordan Demetrius Lloyd and the ensemble of *Blackbare in the basement*: Bree Breeden, Wendell Gray II, José Lapaz Rodriguez, Jordan Demetrius Lloyd, Mia Martelli, Mykel Marai Nairne, Owen Prum, and Kennedy Thomas!



BLACK DANCE STORIES

BDS Congratulates our Bessie Nominees

 <small>Photo: Terrence Henderson</small>	 <small>Photo: David Bistell</small>	 <small>Photo: Courtney of the Artist</small>	 <small>Photo: Malcolm X Bello</small>	 <small>Photo: William Browne</small>	 <small>Photo: Andrew Santos</small>
Lifetime Achievement in Dance VIRGINIA JOHNSON	Outstanding Choreographer/Creator: Sidra Bell and Rennie Harris		Outstanding Performer: J. Honey Maleek Washington		Outstanding Revival: Camille A. Brown & Dancers



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