

Clarice Presents

THE CENTER WILL NOT HOLD •

A DORRANCE DANCE PRODUCTION

Created by Ephrat Asherie and Michelle Dorrance



Thursday, May 1, 2025 • 7:30PM

KAY THEATRE

AT THE CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND

Clarice Presents

THE CENTER WILL NOT HOLD • A DORRANCE DANCE PRODUCTION

Created and Directed by Ephrat Asherie and Michelle Dorrance

Choreography: Ephrat Asherie, Manon Bal, Tomoe “Beasty” Carr,
Michelle Dorrance, Fritzlyn Hector, Donnetta “Lil Bit” Jackson, Richie Maguire,
Michael Manson Jr., Charles “Lil Buck” Riley, Matthew “Megawatt” West,
with solo improvisation by the dancers

Artistic Advisors: Brenda Bufalino, Buddha Stretch

Original Music: Donovan Dorrance

Live Percussion By: John Angeles

Lighting Design: Kathy Kaufmann

Sound Design: Christopher Marc

Costumes Facilitated By: Amy Page

Performed By: John Angeles, Ephrat “Bounce” Asherie, Manon Bal,
Tomoe “Beasty” Carr, Michelle Dorrance, Fritzlyn Hector,
Donnetta “Lil Bit” Jackson, Richie Maguire, Michael Manson Jr.,
Ron Myles, Matthew “Megawatt” West

Dance Captain: Manon Bal

Swings: Zakhele “Bboy Swazi” Grabowski, Eriko Jimbo

Lead commissioning support for The Center Will Not Hold is provided by the Jay and Susie Gogue Performing Arts Center at Auburn University. Co-commissioning support for The Center Will Not Hold is provided by Sadler’s Wells, London; The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland; McCarter Theater Center; The Princeton Museum of Art; and Jacob’s Pillow. Additional project support is provided by New Music USA’s Organization Fund in 2024-25 and the O’Donnell Green Music and Dance Foundation. The Center Will Not Hold was developed in part through residencies at the Jay and Susie Gogue Performing Arts Center at Auburn University; Jacob’s Pillow; and MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA. Excerpts of The Center Will Not Hold first premiered in 2023 as a commission by New York City Center for the Fall for Dance Festival. Support for the commission was provided by Stuart H. Coleman and Meryl Rosofsky and support for the composition was provided by The Charles and Joan Gross Family Foundation. The Center Will Not Hold is a Dorrance Dance Production. The creation and development of new work is funded, in part, through the Laslo-Srere Fund for New Work; founding supporters: Hilary Srere and Michael Lemle. Additional project support is provided by New Music USA’s Organization Fund in 2024-25, the O’Donnell Green Music and Dance Foundation, and One World Fund. This performance is also supported in part by the Maryland State Arts Council, The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation and FACTOR Canada.



THE MORRIS AND GWENDOLYN
CAFRITZ FOUNDATION



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DORRANCE DANCE PRODUCTIONS (PRODUCER)

DORRANCE DANCE was founded in 2011 as a tap dance company, passionately committed to sharing the complex history, powerful legacy and infinite possibilities of tap dance on a musical, conceptual and emotional level.

After 15 years of being the world's most lauded tap dance company, Dorrance Dance's mission has expanded. As a producing entity, the organization seeks after work that continues to contextualize tap dance's history and its diaspora in a culturally significant way. The company aspires to support the development and touring of new works that continue to deepen the relationship between tap dance and the forms that have a direct relationship to its lineage.

Dorrance Dance is generously supported by The Evelyn Sharp Foundation, The Harkness Foundation for Dance, Howard Gilman Foundation, The Hyde and Watson Foundation, MacMillan Family Foundation, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, New Music USA, The O'Donnell-Green Music and Dance Foundation, One World Fund, and The Shubert Foundation.

Rehearsal and development for this performance was supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts. These performances are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature. Dorrance Dance is a recipient of a U.S. Small Business Administration Shuttered Venue Operators Grant, made possible by the leadership of Senate Majority Leader Charles D. Schumer.

As seen in tonight's performance, Dorrance Dance Productions is deeply committed to creating and producing new works and employment opportunities for artists that intersect, innovate, and honor the cultural legacy of tap dance. Please join our mailing list for updates and consider donating to support the art and artists!

dorrancedance.com | Instagram: [@dorrancedance](https://www.instagram.com/dorrancedance) | Facebook: [facebook.com/dorrancedance](https://www.facebook.com/dorrancedance)



**Council on
the Arts**

ENGAGEMENT ON CAMPUS AND IN THE COMMUNITY

The Cast of *The Center Will Not Hold* have been very generous with their time this week. On Wednesday, they visited technique classes in the UMD School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies (TDPS) and spoke in a seminar class, also in TDPS. On Friday, they will visit technique classes again, and Michelle Dorrance will be teaching a special tap class for TDPS students. After tonight's performance, the artists will host a special Q&A for students.

EPHRAT “BOUNCE” ASHERIE

EPHRAT “BOUNCE” ASHERIE (*co-creator/performer*) is a New York-based director, choreographer, performer and b-girl, and a 2016 Bessie Award Winner for Innovative Achievement in Dance. Asherie has received numerous awards to support her work including Dance Magazine’s Inaugural Harkness Promise Award and two National Dance Project Awards. In 2019, she was the recipient of a NYFA Fellowship and was a Jerome Hill Artist Fellow from 2021 to 2023. As Artistic Director of Ephrat Asherie Dance (EAD), Asherie’s work has been presented on stages nationally and internationally with commissions from companies including Malpasso, Philadanco! and Parsons Contemporary Dance and additional commissions from Vail Dance Festival, Fall for Dance, River to River Festival, Firatàtrrega, Works & Process at the Guggenheim and The Kennedy Center. Additional directorial work includes *UNDERScoreD: On Screen* at Lincoln Center, *FLOORISH, Solo Chini: Un Dia en Nueva York* and *In the MOMent: A Drawing Dance* (New York Premiere at Dance on Camera Lincoln Center). Asherie is honored to have been mentored by Richard Santiago (aka “Break Easy”) and to have worked and collaborated with Michelle Dorrance, Doug Elkins, Rennie Harris, Bill Irwin, Gus Solomons Jr. and Buddha Stretch, among others. Asherie earned her B.A. from Barnard College, Columbia University in Italian and her MFA from the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee where she researched the vernacular jazz dance roots of contemporary street and club dances. She is a co-founding member of the all-female house dance collective MAWU and is forever grateful to New York City’s underground dance community for inspiring her to pursue a life as an artist.

MICHELLE DORRANCE

MICHELLE DORRANCE (*co-creator/performer*) is a New York City-based artist. Mentored by Gene Medler (North Carolina Youth Tap Ensemble), she was fortunate to study under many of the last master hoofers. Career highlights include: *STOMP*, Derick Grant’s *Imagine Tap!*, Jason Samuels Smith’s *Charlie’s Angels/Chasing the Bird*, Ayodele Casel’s *Diary of a Tap Dancer*, Mable Lee’s *Dancing Ladies*, and playing the bass for Darwin Deez. Company work includes: Savion Glover’s *Ti Dii*, *Manhattan Tap*, *Barbara Duffy and Co.*, *JazzTap Ensemble*, and *Rumba Tap*. Solo work ranges from The Late Show with Stephen Colbert to commissions for the Martha Graham Dance Company, Vail Dance Festival, American Ballet Theatre, and New York City Center. Michelle made her Broadway choreographic debut with James Lapine’s *Flying Over Sunset* at Lincoln Center Theater in 2021. A 2018 Doris Duke Artist, 2017 Ford Foundation Art of Change Fellow, and 2015 MacArthur Fellow, Dorrance is humbled to have been acknowledged and supported by United States Artists, The Joyce Theater, the Alpert Awards, Jacob’s Pillow, Princess Grace Foundation-USA, The Field, American Tap Dance Foundation, and the Bessie Awards. Dorrance holds a Bachelor of Arts from New York University and an honorary Doctorate of Arts from the University of North Carolina. She is a Capezio athlete and was recently named an Associate Artist at Sadler’s Wells.

JOHN ANGELES

JOHN ANGELES (*performer*) is from Fort Worth, TX. John obtained a music degree from TCU, where he focused on drumset, marimba and marching percussion. He was a member of the 2001 DCI World Champions, The Cavaliers. From 2007 to 2017, John performed with the New York and the touring productions of *STOMP*. After *STOMP*, John moved back to Texas and now focuses on being a father to his son and identical twin girls. Since moving back, John has returned to the stage with Dorrance Dance and is honored to be performing again with Michelle, Ephrat and company in *The Center Will Not Hold*. He is looking forward to performing for the first time in front of his kids.

MANON BAL

MANON BAL (*performer*) is a versatile professional dancer from Marseille, France. She has trained at the IFPRO Rick Odums in Paris and at the prestigious Ailey School in New York City. She has been a member of Ephrat Asherie Dance since 2016. She has worked for respected choreographers such as Ronald K Brown, Rick Odums, Tweet Boogie, Michele Byrd McPhee, Jon Rua and Miki Tuesday. Manon is the co-founder of Maley Company in collaboration with Dhele Agbetou Mozaik Dance in collaboration with Janine “J9” Micheletti and Sun Kim. She is also a New York City Center Teaching Artist.

TOMOE “BEASTY” CARR

Born in New York, **TOMOE** (*performer*) spent a decade of her upbringing in Japan. She commenced her dance training at Next Generation Dance Studios in Japan and is the first graduate of KINEXTion™ from NXGN Studios Japan. In 2019, she was recognized as an honorable mention recipient of the YoungArts competition. Tomoe has performed behind renowned artists such as Alicia Keys, Swaelee, Jidenna and Freddie Gibbs. Over the past decade, she has made significant contributions to the street style battle scene, emerging victorious at Red Bull Dance Ya Style Boston 2021, Jacob’s Pillow, Ladies Of Hip Hop Festival and Step Ya Game Up in 2022. Since 2021, Tomoe has embarked on a nationwide journey, engaging in battles, commercial endeavors and cultural exchanges with diverse dancers. In 2023, she transitioned into the realm of yoga, obtaining her teacher training certificate in Bali. Tomoe is dedicated to becoming a valuable advocate for both the dance and non-dance communities, aiming to raise awareness within the industry.

FRITZLYN HECTOR

FRITZLYN (*performer*) is a Bessie Award-winning director, choreographer, dancer, educator, actress and performing artist with a dynamic 25-year career. A veteran performer and cast trainer for *STOMP*, she was the rehearsal director for its international tour in France. In 2023, Fritz was Associate Director/Choreographer for *Ain’t Misbehavin’* at the Geva Theatre and Westport Country Playhouse (2023). Recently, she performed at the 2024 US Open and was featured in its national commercial. Her film credits include *The Bride!* (Warner Bros.), an Amazon Prime Music film, and Netflix’s *Julie’s Greenroom* starring Julie Andrews. She dances with Forces of Nature Dance Theatre, collaborates with top artists and leads her own company, The Fritization Experience. An esteemed educator, she has taught at Hofstra, Princeton, NYU, Lehman College, New Jersey Performing Arts Center and Earl Mosely’s Diversity Dance. She is currently a professor and Director of Dance at Long Island University Post.

DONNETTA “LIL BIT” JACKSON

DONNETTA “LIL BIT” JACKSON (*performer*) is a versatile dance performer, instructor, choreographer and actress. Born and raised on the Southeast Side of Chicago, IL, she began dancing at The Sammy Dyer School of the Theatre at the age of seven. At 11 years old, she became one of the original members of the prestigious M.A.D.D. Rhythms tap company, and later joined the Chicago Footwork crew, Creation Battle Clique / Creation Global. She choreographs for and performs with Grammy award-winning artist, Chance the Rapper. One highlight of her career is performing alongside Missy Elliot at the 2019 VMAs for her Michael Jackson Video Vanguard Award performance. Jackson, recently acknowledged as a sister with superpower for rolling out magazines, has also footworked internationally, for corporations like Nike and Jordan and has competed on Season 6 of MTV’s America’s Best Dance Crew with the Chicago FootworkKINGz. Recently, Jackson appeared on the Fox/Hulu dance series, The Big Leap, as Tamra Smalls and was also one of the lead dancers in the red hot chilli peppers new video *The Drummer*.

RICHIE MAGUIRE

RICHIE MAGUIRE (*performer*) is a hyperactive kid, turned gymnast, turned break dancer, turned performer. A native of New Rochelle NY, Richie calls Brooklyn home base. As a jack of most trades and master of none, Richie Flirts with film and television as well as live performances as a circus artist. Notable credits include: *Le Reve*, *Cirque Eloize*, *Battle of the Year 3D*, *Pippin* on Broadway, *Only Murders in The Building*, *jabbawockeez*, and Member of Celebrated breaking Crews FullForce/ SuperCrew.

MICHAEL MANSON JR.

MICHAEL MANSON JR. (*performer*) is a dancer, choreographer and educator, specializing in the form of Detroit Jit, the city’s most iconic dance style. He has been a featured dancer on the television program *So You Think You Can Dance*, and serves as a dancer and choreographer for the Detroit Pistons. He is the founder of the dance company House of Jit. He tours with the acclaimed street dance company Rennie Harris Puremovement and has been an invited teaching artist for the Rennie Harris Illadelph Legends Festival, teaching Detroit Jit. In 2020, he was awarded the Kresge Artist Fellowship grant, and he was one of five winners from across the Midwest of the 2022 Joyce Awards. In 2022, he was also honored with the Spirit of Detroit award for his dance accomplishments. In 2024, he won the Seed and Bloom: Detroit grant from the Gilbert Family Foundation. He is deeply committed to educating the next generation of Detroit dancers and frequently teaches workshops and classes in Jit and hip-hop. His teaching credits also include master classes at Arizona State University, the Columbia College Chicago Dance Center and Broadway Dance Center. He has taught workshops and performed internationally in France, Bolivia and Canada.

RON MYLES

RON MYLES (*performer*) admits that he has always been one looking to “shine in front of a camera.” Born and raised in the city of Memphis, TN. As a kid Myles developed a passion for music. Influencers such as his dad, older brother and childhood friend, would have sessions of free-style rapping or sitting in on sessions to watch and learn. Growing up around the best of Memphis artists such as 3–6 mafia, 8ball and MJG, Issac Hayes, The Bar-Kay’s, Kingpin Skinny Pimp and Tommy Wright the 3rd just to name a few. Taking his southern ways of rap to California in 2009 where he initially branched himself out learning new cultural music becoming a self writer. Much time was spent for Myles working with various producers perfecting his craft along the way. This young and talented artist sets himself for higher grounds working alongside super producer Timothy (Bos) Bullock. Working together these two has created heat during score sessions for featured films as well for the KPop industry. As of today Myles has released a few singles Babbage, Boss Moves and Michael Jackson from his upcoming EP (Orange Mound Baby) where you will find what it’s like to be a part of what he calls “Yachts World” giving a taste of new trap sounds from the dirty south and taking it globally.

MATTHEW “MEGAWATT” WEST

MATTHEW “MEGAWATT” WEST (*performer*) started dancing at the age of 16 in Queens, New York. Growing up, his fascination with animals was undeniable and directly influenced his smooth, fluid and animal-like 4 movement style. Although the majority of Mega Watts’ training is in bboying, he is also an avid listener of house music and a dedicated student of the dance style itself. He has attended numerous practice sessions held by renowned NYC house dancers, Conrad Rochester, James “Cricket” Colter and the Ladies of Mawu. Mega Watts is an active part of NYC’s house dance community and teaches youth classes throughout the five boroughs. He can be seen in Baz Lurhman’s recent Netflix series *The Get Down* and performing and battling with his crew, the Mellow Animals.

ZAKHELE “BBOY SWAZI” GRABOWSKI

ZAKHELE “BBOY SWAZI” GRABOWSKI (*swing*) is a performing and competitive tap dancer and breaker. He has toured with Dorrance Dance, Rennie Harris Puremovement Street Theatre and with the musical review, We Move In Color. In 2024, he won first Silver and then Gold in back-to back international competitions at the Théâtre du Rond Point and Spot 24 in Paris, took Gold at World Kidz Breaking Championships USA (U18), won Bronze at World Kidz Breaking Championship in Slovenia, took Gold in the Detroit cypher sponsored by Red Bull BC One, and then went on to be in the top 8 at the National Championships in Los Angeles. He was the 2023 National Champion of USA Breaking and a member of Teen Team USA Breaking For Gold. Additionally, he was one of the cohort for the Tap Ensemble at Jacob’s Pillow that year. He is a member of Dynamic Rockers (NYC) Boxcrew (Paris) and Funky Rockerz (Worldwide). Zakhele was born in Eswatini, and is currently based in the NYC area.

ERIKO JIMBO

ERIKO JIMBO (*swing*) is a Tokyo-born NYC based performing artist, educator, creative and collaborator. Ranging from contemporary, hip hop, partnering, house, martial arts, aerial arts, sway pole, to acting, physical theater and Taiko. Her credits include performing for Life & Trust, Pilobolus Dance Theater, the Met Gala, Sidi Larbi Cherkouï, Michael Arden, Ephrat Asherie, MAWU, Fuerza Bruta (NYC & global) and was also an original cast & show captain of Fuerza Bruta “WA!!” in Tokyo, as well as the lead in *Ships in the Night* by Gypsy Snider (Les 7 Doigts de la Main). She is also an associate director for *Untitled Dance Show Party Thing*, by Ani Taj & Sam Pinkleton. You can follow her adventures at erikojimbo.com or @jb0b0.

DONOVAN DORRANCE

DONOVAN DORRANCE hails from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where he trained as a multi-instrumentalist. After earning a Bachelor’s Degree at UNC, he moved to Brooklyn to work with Dorrance Dance, his sister’s dance company, later becoming music director and composing original music for the company. Outside of dance, Dorrance scores films, teaches music technology and produces and mixes music for other artists. His composition for *The Center Will Not Hold* was made possible, in part, by a New Music USA grant. If you’d like to hear music from this show or additional works, please visit donovandorrance.com.

KATHY KAUFMANN

KATHY KAUFMANN (*lighting designer*) is a New York City native, and two time Bessie recipient. She is resident designer at Danspace Project at St. Mark’s Church, has taught at Sarah Lawrence and NYU, and has toured extensively throughout the world. She designs regularly for Dorrance Dance, Joanna Kotze, The Bang Group, Mariana Valencia, Ephrat Asherie Dance, Vicky Shick and Music From The Sole.

CHRISTOPHER MARC

CHRISTOPHER MARC (*sound engineer*) is a NYC-based sound designer and production manager from Minneapolis, MN. He has designed and engineered sound for Michelle Dorrance, Music From the Sole, Variety Life Productions, Lincoln Center Restart Stages, Luke Hickey and Michael Jellick, as well as regional and Off-Broadway productions with The Kennedy Center, Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival, IJB Productions, Aquila Theatre and Mills Entertainment. Marc also designs and builds custom floors for percussive dance and is owner/operator of @CMarcAudio.

DEVIN KOENIG

DEVIN KOENIG (*lighting supervisor*) is a lighting supervisor, production manager and programmer based in Astoria, New York. Currently, she is the lighting supervisor for Dorrance Dance, and has previously worked with Music from the Sole, Paul Taylor Dance Company, Joyce Theater Productions and the Radio City Rockettes.