

URBAN ARTS MAGAZINE

Issue #3 • Winter 2019



CALLED BY GRACE

MELISSA M. YOUNG,
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF DALLAS
BLACK DANCE THEATRE

BEGIN WITH A BUDGET

TIPS FOR GETTING
STARTED

THE MAKING OF A MOGUL

THE SHAMAR WILLIS STORY

THE ART OF IT ALL

URBAN ARTS
PIONEERS

Paved the Way

DEPRESSION DOESN'T DISCRIMINATE

Breakthrough treatment for depression & anxiety



Elev8 MD
WELLNESS CENTER

CHARLOTTE'S LEADING
KETAMINE INFUSION CENTER

855-863-5388 | WWW.ELEV8MD.COM

FIND HOPE HERE



EDITORS NOTE

Issue #3 and we won't stop! Thank you to our arts partners across the country that have either allowed us to distribute through their building or supported us online. Also, thank you to our advertisers that saw the value in urban arts. And to every subscriber that has joined our mailing list we say thank you most of all.

As we move into the year 2020, we move with reflection and anticipation. We reflect on all of the artists that have come before and paved the way. Immediate names that come to mind are Maya Angelou, Langston Hughes, Elizabeth Catlett, Etta James, Alvin Ailey, Ira Aldridge and many more. There are many unsung heroes that made, and still make, an impact on the world we live in today. We celebrate a few of the "talented tenth" in this issue.

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." Eleanor Roosevelt. We chronicle the story of two artists, from completely different walks of life, who continue to chase their dreams. From the streets of Dallas to the suburbs of California, both of these trend making artists push the envelope in their respective fields and continue to find great success.

As a publication, we are making changes, upgrading our website and adding staff and programming. We have opened our Dallas arts venue **The Urban Arts Center** and an online TV show, that will be an extension of the magazine, is launching in the summer of 2020. We are excited to be growing and shifting. We hope you enjoy what you are reading and will join us as an arts partner, subscriber (it's free) and/or advertiser (our rates are affordable). I also welcome any feedback, good or bad. I would love to hear from you. Email me at jiles@urbanartsonline.com.

Here's to a productive, prosperous and production filled 2020!

Email: jiles@urbanartsonline.com



@UrbanArtsMag

IN THIS ISSUE

- Publisher:** Jiles R. King, II
Layout Editor: Jayden Designs
Contributors: Candice "Ordered Steps" Johnson, Branon Gilbert, Lacy Lemell, Jordyn Nicole, Jasmine Walters
Printing: Print Place
Visit Us Online at: UrbanArtsOnline.com

Urban Arts Magazine is a program under the not for profit entity The Urban Arts Collective Group. Urban Arts Magazine is a free quarterly magazine that is dedicated to exploring the cultural voices that make up the American Arts landscape. Covering everything from music to dance to visual arts to culinary arts, UAM offers the value of a trusted insider perspective with a fresh, bold, nonconforming lens. Breathing life into the intersection of what truly is URBAN and what truly is ART, this publication appeals to both the arts professional and the arts lover.

CALLED BY GRACE

MELISSA YOUNG, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF DALLAS BLACK DANCE THEATER

Written by Candice "ORDERED STEPS" Johnson



By the age of fifteen, Dallas Black Dance Theater Artistic Director Melissa Young had trained so extensively in dance, it became her sanctuary. So much so...one day, she found herself refusing to go to church, longing to rehearse instead.

By the age of fifteen, Dallas Black Dance Theatre Artistic Director Melissa M. Young had trained so extensively in dance, it became her sanctuary. So much so...one day, she found herself refusing to go to church, longing to rehearse instead.

...she ended up dreamily gracing the pews that day, anyway.

But, she'd discovered the gift that would later birth her exodus.

"My mother put me in dance at the age of five," the lithe overseer of the historical 43-year-old company recalls from her Downtown Dallas office, amusement coating her voice. "Truth be told, I was clumsy. Mom said every young lady needs to be poised, learn how to be disciplined, and be graceful throughout life." Little did the elder Young know, those nuggets of wisdom would serve as the mustard seeds that would propel her daughter to purpose as she enrolled Young in ballet and tap dance classes at their local recreation center. Tall, exquisite, regal. Young embodied the stature of a dancer, although those close to her initially failed to recognize it.

"My parents were quite awesome, because I got to do everything: play piano, tennis, take swimming lessons, you name it," Young recalls, "but I always kept coming back to ballet. I wanted more."

As an Afro-Latina teen from Orange County, California, Young had settled comfortably into her role as the only "one" on the block, or in certain classes. "Being the *one of only* built confidence in me," she says. "I had to keep my guard up and prove my place." Uniqueness helped Young wield her talents with bold humility. Exposed to a multitude of world-class dance companies prior to high school

graduation, it wasn't until Young sat in awe of the renowned Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, performing in Los Angeles, that dance transcended from art to Young's testimony. She was captivated by the beauty of skin resembling her own.

"I saw dancers who looked like me. And I was shocked they were paid to dance," she says.

Young quickly realized there was nothing else she wanted to do. She wanted, no – needed, to dance. There were stories burning in her spirit that she wanted to release. She understood the language the Ailey dancers spoke on stage; she was drawn by the art...though not everyone identifies movement as such.

"Dance is not typically the first thing that comes to mind when discussing art," Young says with a hint of disappointment. "Dance is the unicorn. People can't identify with dancers because they can't see themselves doing it."

Not only did Young identify with dance, it resonated with her.

After graduation, Young went off to college, armed with an escape plan. She refused to give up what she loved – dance, for a seat at the corporate American table. She craved the stage, and she planned to feast.

"By graduation, I'd only taken three modern dance classes," Young confesses. "I auditioned for – and was accepted, to the Ailey summer dance program in New York, which I lovingly 'conned' my parents into letting me accept. I had the mindset that if I went for the summer, there was no turning back." After successfully completing the summer program, without telling anyone, Young again auditioned – this time for Ailey's certificate program. Her parents were stunned when Young informed them she wouldn't be returning home to California, but moving to New York at age eighteen instead.



Execution of a Sentiment choreographed by Darrell Grand Moultrie. Photograph by Sharen Bradford – The Dancing Image. (full company photo)



Execution of a Sentiment choreographed by Darrell Grand Moultrie. Photo by Sharen Bradford – The Dancing Image. (photo of Xavier leaping to Charles)



Melissa Young's mission is to change the course of the way patrons consume dance, starting with audiences knowing the names of Dallas Black Dance Theater's company members.

Because dance was her calling.

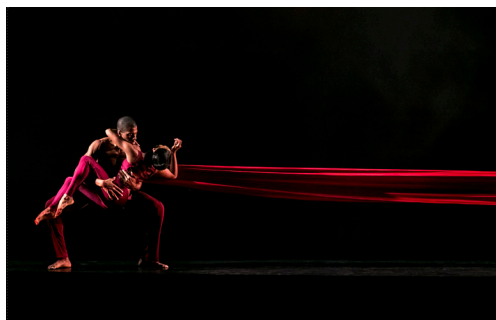
"I knew I had arrived when I was listening to George Benson singing *On Broadway* on my Walkman radio as I was walking down Broadway," Young says. "I started crying."

Three years later, disgruntled and disappointed, Young was tapped out on rejection. She was sick of not getting accepted and falling victim to bad nerves overtaking her auditions. Standing almost six feet tall, her physical appearance didn't always fit the "look" choreographers desired; she felt defeated when she didn't fit the bill. After returning to New York from an exchange program overseas, Young was prepared to quit, until destiny showed up in the form of a crumpled piece of paper: an audition notice for Dallas Black Dance Theatre.

"My mentor told me to go. Dallas Black Dallas Black Dance Theatre only had twelve dancers, so I would perform consistently, and they toured both nationally and internationally. The only difference between DBDT and Ailey was the location," Young said. "I told myself I would go on this one last audition."

So her mentor made the call that would shift the trajectory of Young's life - to Ann Williams, the prolific founder of Dallas Black. Young was interviewing via telephone, when the dreaded question barreled through the line like a fist: "How tall are you?" She verbally shaved a few inches from her athletic frame, but to Young's delight, Williams enjoyed tall dancers. It was time to audition.

Making it to the final round of auditions in the genre she felt least prepared for - African, Young endured a grueling wait before finally receiving the call that she'd been accepted into the company. Choking



Unsettled Thoughts choreographed by Richard A. Freeman. Photo by Sharen Bradford - The Dancing Image. (duet with long red fabric)

up at the memory, Young says, "You train for something and think that opportunity's never going to show up."

For her, it did.

Young was given two weeks to relocate from New York to Dallas. She went from rooming with other dancers who were strangers, to dominating the stage for eleven successful years as a DBDT performer.

"After ten seasons, I was tired," Young says. I never stopped loving it or had serious injuries...I just knew I wanted to stop. My body wanted to take a pause." Allowing intuition to lead the way, Young brought her concerns to Ms. Williams, noting that although she no longer had the hunger to dance, she still had the hunger for dance. Ms. Williams rewarded her loyalty to the company with a newly created title of Rehearsal Director - which Young knew nothing about, but eagerly accepted.

Like the better part of her artistic journey, Young seamlessly transitioned from RD to Associate Artistic Director, then into her current position as Artistic Director after

Ms. Williams' retirement. As she sees it, she's been in a constant state of transition before knowing she was in transition.

"My goal is to celebrate people," Young says. "I'm not here to change Dallas Black Dance Theatre into something else. I'm here to build and expand what we have. After 40 years, the foundation Ms. Williams built is to the ceiling. Now, my floor is my ceiling. I'm only trying to ascend."

According to Young, dance exists to educate and provoke feelings. Feelings that cause her voice to tremble as she reflects on her relationship with DBDT. "For Ms. Williams to trust me with her vision...it takes a unique individual to take on someone else's vision," she says. "You have to admire the steps she took to get us (DBDT) here. It's breathtaking."

Consistency. Passion. Boldness. Creativity. Inspiration.

Melissa M. Young's mission is to change the course of the way patrons consume dance, starting with audiences knowing the names of Dallas Black Dance Theatre's company members.

And with a name built on integrity, hers isn't a bad name to start with.



The Nina Simone Project choreographed by Dianne McIntyre. Photograph by Amitava Sarkar. (duet photo with female bent back)

BEGIN WITH A BUDGET

TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

By: Branon D. Gilbert

Have you ever wanted to buy something, but you weren't sure if you could really afford it? Or have you wondered why you never seem to have enough money to last from paycheck to paycheck? Whether it is buying something small like a cup of coffee or something large like purchasing a new car, it is important to determine if it is something you can really afford. When you find yourself facing this situation, having a budget will help you determine whether your purchase fits into your long-term personal and financial goals. Most people never realize that a small transaction today could influence whether you can buy a nice car, live in your dream home, or retire at an early age. The first step toward long-term financial success is getting a grip on your everyday spending decisions, and that starts with a budget. Building a budget involves taking an honest look at the money you earn. Your total income establishes the upper limit of what you can reasonably expect to spend. Next, you'll need to decide on your short-term and long-term priorities. You'll use that information to set spending limits that will help put you on track toward your financial goals. Healthy spending habits boil down to one simple concept: spend less than you earn. Expensive surprises like home and auto repairs can arise suddenly.

First, look at your monthly income. Be sure to look at the actual amount of money that goes into your account after taxes. In addition to paychecks, include any other sources of income, such as bonuses, child support, occasional part-time employment, and investment income. Once you have a monthly income total, it's time to look at your monthly expenses. To monitor

your expenses, decide on a time frame that will allow you to gather detailed information. The important thing is to be as thorough and accurate as you can. As you go through your expenses, categorize them as fixed or variable. A fixed expense is something that you pay each month that remains the same, such as a rent or mortgage payment. A variable expense changes from month-to-month, such as entertainment expenses or eating out. Finally, treat any form of saving or investing that you may do as an expense in your budget. Even though you don't pay that money to somebody else, it still comes out of your monthly income.

“

Exercising discipline can help minimize the anxiety that comes with those decisions.

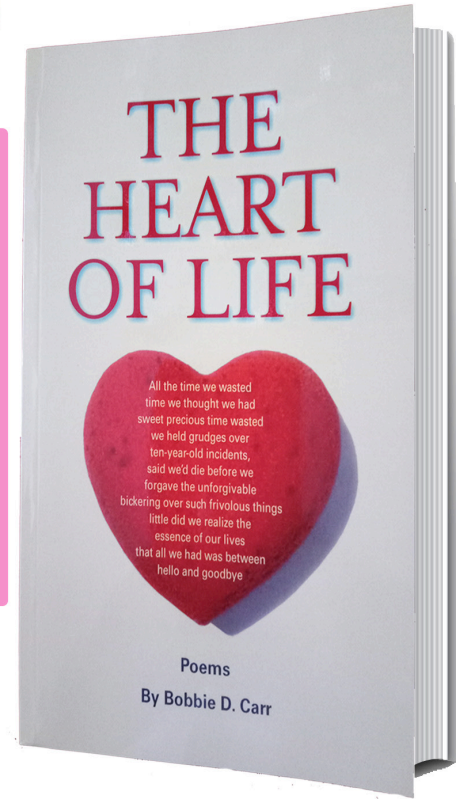
”

Once you've figured out how much you earn and how much you spend, it's time to compare those two numbers. If you discover that you're spending more money than you earn, you'll need to look for places to trim your expenses right away. Your goal will be to keep the total amount of your expenses (including debt payments and money you add to your savings account) lower than or to your income. Ultimately, the best budget—like the best diet and exercise plan—is the one that's easiest for you to follow and stick to. As much as having a budget can help you chart a path toward your financial goals, you'll still need the discipline to monitor your budget and make appropriate decisions about spending. Exercising discipline can help minimize the anxiety that comes with those decisions. The next time you feel unsure about whether you can afford that fancy coffee—or a nice new car—your budget will help you give a firm, confident answer. Lastly, check your budget often and adjust accordingly as situations in your life change. Your wallet and bank account will thank you.

Buy It NOW!



The Heart of Life poems speak to the essence of our souls. It was a turning point in our lives, a time of uncertainty, a time of ambiguity but what a magical time it was. A time that seemed never-ending. We were young and thought ourselves to be invincible. No one could have told us otherwise; even if they had, we wouldn't have believed them. We laughed through the tears, believing we would be the exception to the rule. Where had the time gone? Would things ever be the same again? Time had passed much too quickly. We came to understand that all things age to old, nothing can stay gold.



✦ Book available on Amazon, Barnes and Noble and iBooks ✦



Subscribe to Urban Arts Magazine

Urban Arts Magazine is a FREE publication for all Arts lovers.

Your subscription will include 4 issues a year.

www.urbanartsonline.com



THE MAKING OF A MOGUL

THE SHAMAR WILLIS STORY

By Jasmine Walters

For the past 5 years, Shamar Willis has been engrossed in this game called entrepreneurship. Growing up in the southern sector Dallas, affectionately known as Oak Cliff, Willis was the smart kid in the hood. "I was raised around drug dealers and killers but was first person in the family to graduate high school," Willis recalled. Soon his mom got a job in North Dallas and he was whisked away to a part of town where people didn't look like him. It was there that he learned how to walk between two worlds but he never quite fit in either. He jokingly says "I was too Oak Cliff to be Oak lawn but too Oak Lawn to be Oak Cliff."

Growing up in the hood, he was surrounded by negative influences. "I admired the drug lifestyle but saw it as an entrepreneurial life style." Willis shares. "I didn't want the fast life because that never lasts. I took the same hustle mentality methods and applied it to something that I'm passionate about. That was music."



Willis' brother started rapping and naturally he started hanging around the studio with them. While there he began to befriend producers and other rap artist. It wasn't long before he was connecting rappers with producers and vice versa. He didn't realize that he was unknowingly connecting dots and getting a glimpse into his future profession. It was all about passion. Watching the development of the process.

Learning never stopped for Willis. He received a certificate in entrepreneurship from Dallas' Southern Methodist University. It was a 4-month crash course on how to establish his business. There, he met a lot of business and personal connections. His personal investment increased the strength of his professional network.

To have a small wedding but a large funeral is Willis' mantra. "I see a lot of people in the industry wanting to be seen and

not remembered.” he shared. That is his inspiration. “Clarence Avant didn’t have a title, he just did what he did. You would not have known how great he was just from moves he made but he’s so revered. The documentary of his life is like a bible for me. He connected the dots for free and the results of it was people offering him a lot of money to do certain things. Now he’s the head of a label making a very generous salary.”

Life wasn’t always flashing lights and glamour. There was a moment when Willis had to pause and reset on his journey. During this reset, he got a traditional 9 to 5 job to make ends meet and slept on his mom’s couch. “I enjoyed that couch process.” Willis describes. “I never got comfortable on that couch. I would come home from looking like I was established and was sleeping on my mom’s couch.” That moment made him adjust and grow so he would never be in that situation again.

While in that bridge job moment, Willis believed there were two things he needed to survive; communication and transportation. As long as he had a phone and a way around town he was unstoppable. While working his corporate job he was still pushing his passion of music. Making phone calls and taking meetings in between clients. He created a financial plan and saved up enough money to cover his necessities for 6 months. It was then he knew it was time to exit the safety of the 9 to 5 and leap full time back into his purpose.

And leap he did. He got his first gold plaque from his work with Young Dolph. He has done 9 shows with Da Baby. His idols became his peers. He grew up knowing who Jay Prince was, now he is doing business with Jay Prince. “One year I’m running behind Derough and his manager just happy to be there and the next year I was able to book the artist and get the respect because you’re spending bigger money. Now you are handling bigger artist’s tours like Da Baby



I didn’t want the fast life because that never lasts. I took the same hustle mentality methods and applied it to something that I’m passionate about. That was music.



and Young Dolph, Lil Baby and NBA Young Boy.” Willis specializes in is taking those “hood” artists and putting them in hard ticket, diverse venues.

For artist to make it big there is no one size fits all model. Willis suggests that artists be consistent and work hard. He also puts emphasis on quality of your network. “Imagine you making a movie with Michael Bae and Steven Spielberg. You have a team that will open doors for you.” That is a recipe for success using your network. But there is still no one way.

One of his first concert was with Scarface. He was a Scarface fan. He booked a venue and needed 700 people to be Scarface fans too. Unfortunately, only 200 fans showed up. This taught him a valuable lesson. Don’t book shows based on personal passions but pay attention to what the trends are in the marketplace.

Willis was recently baptized for the 3rd time in his life. “I ran away from His calling which is to be a good person.

I was utilizing my power to be a boss and not a leader. There was no kindness or care. I was financially irresponsible also.” He had to learn to do right by the talents God gave him. God used his surroundings to get his attention. Things weren’t working out, concerts were getting canceled. He had to run back to God who is his source. He felt it was a shift and recommitment. Now he’s interning for the church he attends, attends a men’s group and spend his time volunteering. He decided to sit in the back and let God be the driver.

Dallas is a place that he has a strong infinity for. Her could’ve been in LA or ATL but he has such a love for my city. It’s a top 5 media market with no identity. Willis wants to establish his own territory in his hometown of Dallas. His long-term goal is to buy FC Dallas, a soccer team. He wants to be involved with the biggest sport in the world. With full confidence he exclaimed, “I don’t want to go against the machine. I want the machine to respect me.”

THE ART OF IT ALL

By Jordyn Nicole



Louis Armstrong House

34-56 107th St, Corona, New York 11368
louisarmstronghouse.org

The Louis Armstrong House Museum, open to the public since fall 2003, is a window into the simple yet intentional life of the musical legend. It stands in the Queens, New York neighborhood of Corona Park as a look into the neighborhood's past and a view of its future.

Armstrong lived in the home with his wife Lucille Wilson Armstrong from 1942 until his death in 1971. Following Mrs. Armstrong death, the house stood empty for decades. Bessie "Baby Ruth" Williams, Lucille's housekeeper since 1973, continued to clean and preserve the house, eventually serving as the museum's first caretaker and manager.

In 1977, the home was designated a National Historic Landmark and a New York City landmark. In 2017, the Louis Armstrong Education Center broke ground across the street from the house museum on a 14,000-square-foot, \$23 million building. It includes an exhibition gallery, a 68-seat jazz club and an archive of Louis Armstrong artifacts.

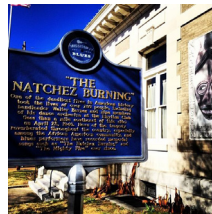
Anacostia Community Museum

1901 Fort Place SE, Washington, D.C. 20020
anacostia.si.edu

The Anacostia Community Museum recently underwent a \$4.5 million improvement project that amplified the 52-year-old museum's welcoming outreach to the nearby neighborhoods. The free museum is the city's only Smithsonian institution east of the Anacostia river. Its exhibitions and programming document urban communities and the lives of local residents, with a particular focus on social justice and community building.

Founded as the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum and opened in 1967, the Anacostia Community Museum was as an outreach effort by the Smithsonian to the local African American community.

Throughout its storied history, the museum has remained relevant, developing documentation projects, exhibitions, and programs which speak to the concerns, issues, and triumphs of communities and which tells the extraordinary stories of everyday people. The museum truly focuses on the unsung voices.



ZuCot Gallery

100 Centennial Olympic Park Dr NW, Atlanta, GA 30313
zucotgallery.com

ZuCot Gallery is the largest African-American owned fine art gallery in the Southeast. Located in the historic Castleberry Hill district of downtown Atlanta, the 3,500 sq. foot space offers an eclectic decor and features some of the most prolific contemporary artists of our time.

Zucot is named after the founding partner, Troy Taylor's, Grandmother who was the first woman to open a fresh produce market in the highly male dominated business on the Caribbean Island of St. Kitts. Rumor had it that in order for her to survive, she had to be as tough as a "Zoo Cat" hence the Nickname Zucot.

Zucot founders believe that all of us can be "Custodians of Culture" by collecting art. When you look back through history, you can always point to art as a defining piece of any civilization. Within the community, we have a responsibility to preserve this part of our culture and pass it down through generations.

Their business model is really based on breaking down the intimidation factors that a lot of people have about collecting art. They ease this angst by demystify the experience and ensuring everyone feels comfortable with asking questions and learning, which leads to collecting.

Natchez Museum of African American History and Culture

301 Main St, Natchez, Mississippi 39120

The Natchez Museum of African American History and Culture was first opened in 1991 by the Natchez Association for the Preservation of African American Culture. Housed in the city's historic former 1904 United States Post Office, the museums' displays occupy 10,000 square feet of space that showcase events beginning with the incorporation of the City of Natchez in 1716 and leading to present day.

During the 19th century, Natchez had the second largest slave market in the South. One of the museum's exhibits depicts a place of sale known as The Forks of the Road. The site earned its name because of its location at an intersection of vital streets that led into Natchez from all directions. The Forks of the Road was a popular destination point of caravans filled with slaves, mules and supplies sought by plantation owners.

Another exhibit tells the story of a fire in 1940 at the Rhythm Nightclub that killed more than 200 people of African origin. The fire was later written about in a 1958 novel called "The Long Dream." By Natchez native Richard Wright. In addition to Wright's talents, the museum features stories about African American artists native to the Natchez area including the famed singer "Black Swan."

PREMIER WEALTH MANAGEMENT



Where your wealth
is worth more.

Amegy | Premier Wealth
Management

URBAN ARTS PIONEERS

Paved the Way

• By Lacy Lemell •

Dr. Barbara Ann Teer, Theater

Dr. Barbara Ann Teer founded the National Black Theatre in the heart of Harlem in 1968.

Beginning her career as a dancer, Dr. Teer's arts trajectory was thrown on course when she met the renowned dancer and choreographer Pearl Primus in Illinois. It was that interaction that led her on a journey to New York City to further explore the black arts experience as a dancer and then later as an actress, writer, director and choreographer.

In 1964, she began working as an acting coach with Robert Hooks and the Group Theatre Workshop, which evolved into the Negro Ensemble Company. At that point, Dr. Teer's decision was to go uptown to Harlem. She then established The National Black Theatre Workshop Inc., an organization whose mission was to maintain the beauty and richness inherent in the black lifestyle; to produce transformational theatrical experiences that enhance African American cultural identity and tell authentic stories of the

Black experience. Dr. Teer envisioned National Black Theatre as a means to educate, enrich, entertain, empower and inform the national conscience around current social justice issues that impact our communities.

Since its formation, National Black Theatre has produced over 300 original theatre works that have toured the USA, the Caribbean, Central America, Africa, and Asia. They have also garnered over 45 AUDELCO Black Theatre Excellence Awards, and have been at the forefront of several commercially successful theatrical productions.

She once said in the New York Times "I believe the need for a (Black cultural art form) is far more critical even than the issue of white racism...All Black artists must begin either to build, or to support, Black theatres in all the Black communities in America," theatres that "should be concerned with the truth of our lives." Dr. Barbara Ann Teer passed away on July 21, 2008 at the age of seventy-one.



Maurice Hines, Dance

Maurice Hines has been seen on stage, screen and television. At the young age of five he began studying tap at the Henry LeTang Dance Studio in the city of New York. Mr. LeTang recognized his talents and was soon choreographing numbers specifically for Maurice and his brother, the late Gregory Hines. The brothers were soon performing on Broadway, touring the country and having an unprecedented 35 performances on "The Tonight Show."

Casted in the National Touring Company of *Guys and Dolls*, Mr. Hines launched into his solo career. He went on to star in hit Broadway shows like *Eubie!*, *Bring Back Birdie* and *Sophisticated Ladies*. Next, Mr. Hines made his big screen debut in Francis Ford Coppola's "The Cotton Club."

In 1986, Mr. Hines was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Actor in a Musical

for his work in *Uptown... It's Hot!*, a production he conceived, directed and choreographed. Mr. Hines continued chasing his passion including directing, choreographing and starring in the National Tour of the musical *Harlem Suite* with successive leading ladies Jennifer Holiday, Stephanie Mills and Melba Moore.

Mr. Hines later turned his attention to directing and choreographing music videos, including the song "I'll be Good To You," the first release off of Quincy Jones's "Back on the Block" album. He would also be the first African American to direct the Rockettes in the *Radio City Spectacular*.

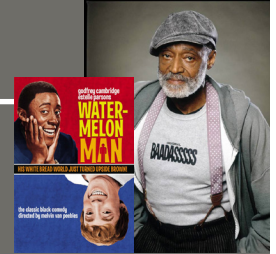
Not only a dancer, director and choreographer, Hines has released two celebrated jazz albums *Maurice: I've Never Been In Love Before* and *To Nat 'King' Cole With Love* on the Arbors label.





Melvin Van Peebles, Film

A filmmaker, producer, author and actor, Melvin Van Peebles grew up during World War II in Chicago, IL. Peebles served as a flight navigator in the United States Air Force. After leaving the Air Force he saw the world, living in Mexico, San Francisco and the Netherlands.



Peebles answered Hollywood's call in 1970 and directed *Watermelon Man*, the first mainstream studio-financed film directed by an African-American. After *Watermelon Man*, Peebles wrote, produced and directed the 1971 film *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*. This iconic film tells the story of a man who becomes a cop-killing anti-hero after watching police beat a community activist. Peebles was adamant that for this film he would hire minorities with little film experience so they could learn the business.

He also refused to submit his film for rating after the Motion Picture Association of America threatened to rate it "X" because of the movie's sex scenes. The MPAA nevertheless rated the movie "X." Peebles then came up with the slogan, "Rated X By An All-White Jury," which inspired African-American audiences to go out in droves to see his film. *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* grossed \$14 million dollars, making it one of the most successful independent movies of all time.

In 1971, Peebles created the Broadway musical *Ain't Supposed to Die a Natural Death* (*Tunes from Blackness*) and played for 581 performances. This made it one of the longest running show on Broadway during its time.

Peebles' documentary, *Melvin Van Peebles' Classified X*, about the negative images of African-Americans in film, appeared at the 1998 Sundance Film Festival. After a 20 year hiatus, the documentary, *How to Eat Your Watermelon in White Company (and Enjoy It)*, which recounted his career, was released in 2006. His last film released was the 2008 *Confessionsofa Ex-Doofus-ItchyFooted Mutha*, based on his 1982 Broadway musical *Waltz of the Stork*.

Peebles continues to perform, write, direct and discuss the role of African-Americans in film.

V Michael McKay, Music

If you've been to a black church in the last 20 years, it is a guarantee that you've heard a song penned by Houston resident, V. Michael McKay. He has been the lyrical genius behind some of gospel most influential hits like "The Battle is Not Yours It's the Lords" by Yolanda Adams, "The Potter's House" by Tramaine Hawkins, "All In His Hands" by Dr. Charles G Hayes' Cosmopolitan Church of Prayer Choir, "Broken But I'm Healed" by Byron Cage, "The Corinthian Song" by Kathy Taylor, "I'm Still Here" by Albertina Walker and "Oh Jesus" by Dorothy Norwood. The two-time Dove Award winner and 2000 inductee into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame has been inspiring people through song for over forty years.

McKay prides himself on being a well-respected conductor, clinician, speaker, songwriter, and author. He has dedicated his life to a greater level of ministry, with a passion to meet the needs of people in the contemporary Christian community. Growing up in a musical house influenced the person he is today. McKay shared with DefenderNetwork.com, "My grandfather was a Baptist preacher in Alexandria, Louisiana. My grandmother would sing the whole hymn as my grandfather narrated, telling the whole story, whether at home or while riding on the car. I didn't even know I was being taught. But from an early age, it was embedded in me."

With an expansive repertoire, McKay is undeniably a musical legend who continues to birth new timeless music in a sea of mimicked sound. Artists from all over the country continue to re-record many of his timeless hits. His works are also included in a Southern Baptist hymnal supplement, *For the Living of These Days*, GIA's groundbreaking African American Heritage Hymnal and many others.

Dr. Samella Lewis, Art

Dr. Samella Lewis was born in New Orleans, LA and used art as a mechanism to escape the harsh realities of the 1920s and 30s. As a young child, she was enamored with subjects as diverse as police brutality against African Americans, comic books, and characters from her elder sister's romance novels.



As a student at New Orleans' Dillard University, Lewis had the distinct honor of being mentored by internationally acclaimed artist Elizabeth Catlett. Following her new mentor, Lewis transferred to Hampton Institute, where she earned her B.A. degree in art history in 1945. Lewis completed her graduate studies at the Ohio State University, earning her M.A. degree in 1948, and in 1951 she became the first African American woman to receive her doctorate in fine arts and art history.

Lewis is best known for her figurative works on paper, including many series of lithographs and screen prints that are pictorial manifestations of the age of civil rights and black liberation. But her love for art spurned her work in education, writing and curating.

Among her numerous accomplishments, Lewis has documented the careers of other artists in films and voluminous writings. She co-edited, with Ruth Waddy, a two-volume



guide to contemporary African American artists, founded a scholarly periodical, the *International Review of African-American Art*, and published *Art: African American*, the first textbook of its kind.

In addition, her work as a teacher, curator, collector and social mover has been a powerful force in bringing African American artists to the public eye. Lewis founded the Museum of African American Art in 1976 with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts while she was teaching at Scripps College in Claremont, CA.

In recognition of her contribution to the arts and specifically to the field of African American art history, Samella Lewis received the UNICEF Award for the Visual Arts in 1995. She was also a distinguished scholar at the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities in Los Angeles from 1996 to 1997. Her work can be found at national art museums such as the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Hampton University Museum.

Springfield and Central Illinois African-American History Museum
1440 Monument Ave
Springfield, Illinois 62702
spiaahm.org

Studio Museum in Harlem
429 W 127th St
New York City (Manhattan), New York 10027
studiomuseum.org

Tangipahoa African American Heritage Museum
1600 Phoenix Square
Hammond, Louisiana 70403
taahm.org

The African American Museum
55 12th Ave SE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401
blackiowa.org

The African American Museum in Cleveland
1765 Crawford Rd.
Cleveland, Ohio 44120
aamcleland.wixsite.comaamc

The George Washington Carver Museum
1212 West Montgomery Road
Tuskegee, Alabama 36088
nps.govtuinindex.htm

The Griot Museum of Black History
2505 St Louis Ave
St. Louis, Missouri 63106
thegriotmuseum.com

The Legacy Museum
115 Coosa Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36104
museumandmemorial.eji.org

The National Great Blacks In Wax Museum
1601 E North Ave
Baltimore, Maryland 21213
greatblacksinwax.org

Tubman Museum
310 Cherry St
Macon, GA 31201
tubmanmuseum.com

Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site
1616 Chappie James Ave
Tuskegee, Alabama 36083
nps.govtuaiindex.htm

Tuskegee Airmen National Museum
Museum 6325 West Jefferson
Detroit, Michigan 48209
tuskegeemuseum.org

Weeksville Heritage Center
158 Buffalo Ave
New York City (Brooklyn), New York 11213
weeksvillesociety.org

Wells' Built Museum
511 W. South Street
Orlando, Florida 32805
wellsbuiltmuseum.comcontact.html

Whitney Plantation
5099 LA-18
St. John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana 70049
whitneyplantation.com

William V. Banks Broadcast Museum
3146 East Jefferson
Detroit, Michigan 48226
wgprtvhistory.org

ZuCot Gallery
100 Centennial Olympic Park Dr NW,
Atlanta, GA 30313
zucotgallery.com

THEATRE
African American Repertory Theatre
4849 W. Illinois Ave
Dallas, TX 75211
aareptheater.com

African American Repertory Theatre of VA
P.O. box 12413
Richmond, VA 23241
aartofva.org

African-American Shakespeare Company
762 Fulton Street, Suite 306
San Francisco, CA 94102
african-americanshakes.org

Agape Theatre Project
agapetheatreproject.com

Arena Players
801 McCulloh street
Baltimore, MD 21201
arenaplayersinc.com

Art Forms and Theatre Concepts
1923 Reynolds Ave
North Charleston, SC 29405

Billie Holiday theatre
1368 Fulton St
Brooklyn, NY 11216
thebillieholiday.org

Black Ensemble Theater
4450 N Clark St
Chicago, IL 60640
blackensembletheater.org

Black Power Theatre
blackpowertheater.com

Black Repertory Group
3201 Adeline Street
Berkeley, CA 94703
blackrepertorygroup.com

Black Repertory Theater of Kansas City
4949 Cherry Street
Kansas City, MO 64110
Kcrep.org

Black Revolutionary Theatre Workshop
theblackrevolutionarytheatreworkshop.org

Black Spectrum Theatre
177-06 Bailley Blvd
Jamaica, NY 11434
blackspectrum.com

Bushfire Theatre
224 S 52nd Street
Philadelphia, PA 1939
bushfiretheatre.org

Cincinnati Black Theatre
2237 Losantiville ave
Cincinnati, OH 45237
cincinnatiblacktheatre.org

Common Ground Theatre
4343 Ocean View Blvd
San Diego, CA 92113
cgtsd.org

Congo Square Theater
Chicago, IL 60563
congosomeatretheatre.org

Crossroads Theatre Company
7 Livingston Ave
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
crossroadstheatrecompany.org

Dominion Entertainment Group
5686 Fulton Industrial Blvd, SW, Suite 44870
Atlanta, GA 30336
dominionent.org

Ebony Repertory Theatre
4718 West Washington Boulevard,
Los Angeles, CA 90016
ebonyrep.org

ETA Creative Arts
7558 S South Chicago Avenue
Chicago, IL 60619
etacreativearts.org

Fleetwood-Jourdain Theater Company
2100 Ridge Ave
Evanston, IL 60201
cityofevantson.org

Harlem 9
harlem9.org

Harlem Repertory Theatre
240 E 123rd Street
New York, NY 10035
harlemrepertorytheatre.com

Hatillo Theatre
37 South Cooper
Memphis, TN 38104
hatillo.org

IKAM Productions
PO Box 3354
Decatur, GA 30031
ikamproductions.com

Images Theatre Company
5960 South Land Park Drive #138
Sacramento, CA 95822
imagestheatre.org

Jag Productions
5 south Main street
White River Junction, VT 5001
jagproductionsVt.com

Jubilee Theatre
506 Main Street
Fort Worth, TX 76102
jubileetheatre.org

Karamu House Theatre
2355 E. 89th Street
Cleveland, OH 44106
karamumhouse.org

Kennie Playhouse Theatre
kennieplayhousetheatre.com

Kenny Leon's True Color Theatre Company
887 West Marietta Street, Suite J-102
Atlanta, GA 30318
truecolorstheatre.org

Kuumba Ensemble
1021 Hartmont rd Suite755
Baltimore, MD 21228
Kuumbaensemble.org

Liberation Theatre Company
1855 Adam Clayton Powell Jr.
New York, NY 10026
liberationtheatrecompany.org

Lower Depth Theatre Ensemble
lower-depth.com
Mixed Magic Theatre
560 Mineral Spring Ave
Pawtucket, RI 02860
mmtri.org

MMPACT
P.O. Box 10039
Chicago, IL 60610
mpaact.org

National Black Theatre
2031 Fifth Ave
New York, NY 10035
nationalblacktheatre.org

Negro Ensemble Company
135 west 41st Street 5th Floor
New York, NY 10036
necinc.org

New Freedom Theatre
1346 N Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19121
freedomtheatre.org

New African Grove Theatre Company
4355 Cobb Parkway, Ste J #157
Atlanta, GA 30339
newafrican Grove.com

New Federal Theatre
543 w. 42nd Street
New York, NY 10036
newfederaltheatre.com

New Heritage group Theatre
229 west 135th
New York, NY 10030
newworldstation.com

New Mcree Theatre
2040 W carpenter RD
Flint, MI 48505
thenewmcreetheatre.com

New Professional Theatre
229 West 42nd Street #501
New York, NY 10036
newprofessionaltheatre.org

New Venture Theatre
P.O. BOX 45792
Baton Rouge, LA 70895
newventuretheatre.org

North Carolina Black Repertory
P.O. Box 95
Winston Salem, NC 27102
ncblackrep.org

NuAfrican Theatre
nuafrikantheatre.org

Passinart Theatre Company
Po Box 6407
Portland, OR 97228
passinart.org

Paul Roberson Theatre
350 Mastern Ave
Buffalo, NY 14209
aacbuffalo.org

Penumbra Theatre
270 N kent st
St.Paul, MN 55102
penumbraetheatre.org

Pins Point Theatre
pinpoints.org

Plowshares Theatre Company
440 Burroughs st #185
Detroit, MI 48202
plowsharestheatre.org

Rites and Reason Theatre
Brown University
Providence, RI 2912
brown.edu

Soul Rep Theatre Company
soulrep.org

St Louis Black Repertory Theater
6662 Olive Blvd
University City, MO 63130
theblackrep.org

Stage Aurora Theatrical Company
P. O. Box 28283
Jacksonville, FL 32218
stageaurora.org

The Black Theatre Troupe
1333 East Washington Street
Phoenix, AZ 85034
blacktheatretroupe.org

The Classical Theatre of Harlem
8 W 126th Street
New York, NY 10027
cthnyc.org

The Ensemble Theatre
3535 Main Street
Houston, TX 77002
ensemblehouston.com

The Hansberry Project
5951 44th ave South
Seattle, WA 98118
hansberryproject.org

The Lorraine Hansberry Theatre
762 Fulton Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
lhtsf.org

The M Ensemble
6103 NW 7th Ave,
Miami, FL 33127
themensemble.com

The Mahogany Project
Seattle, WA
mahoganyproject.org

The Movement Theatre
279 West 117th Street #2Q
New York, NY 10026
themovementtheatrecompany.com

The Robey Theatre Company
514 S. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90013
robeytheatrecompany.org

The Source Theater Company
721 Santa Fe Drive
Denver, CO
thesourcedenver.org

Towne Street Theatre
4101 Budlong Ave., Suite 4
Los Angeles, CA 90037
townestreetla.org

Tuskegee Repertory Theatre
201 South Main Street
Tuskegee, AL 36083
tuskegeerep.com

Ujima Company, Inc
429 Plymouth Ave Suite 2
Buffalo, NY 14213
ujimacoinc.org

Unity Theatre Ensemble
P.O. Box 1035
St.Louis, MO 63031
utensemble.org

Upstage Theatre Company Inc
Baton Rouge, LA 70815
upstagetheatre.biz

Watts Village
PO Box 72715
Los Angeles, CA 90002
wattsvillage.org

Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe
1012 N. Orange Ave
Sarasota, FL 34236
westcoastblacktheatre.org

Youth Ensemble of Atlanta
9 Gannon Ave
Atlanta, GA 30315
youthensemble.org

MULTI-DISCIPLINE
African American Museum and Library at
Oakland
659 14th St
Oakland, CA 94612
oaklandlibrary.org

Amazing Grace Conservatory
2401 W Washington Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90018
amazinggraceconservatory.org

Apollo Theater
253 W 125th St
New York, NY 10027
apollotheater.org

August Wilson Center for African American
Culture
980 Liberty Ave,
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
culturaldistrict.org

Bishop Arts Theatre Center
215 S Tyler St
Dallas, TX 75208
bishopartstheatre.org

Black Arts & Cultural Center - Kalamazoo
359 S Kalamazoo Mall Ste. 202
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
blackartskalamazoo.org

Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora
Institute
120 E 125th St
New York, NY 10035
ccardi.orghome-page

Carver Community Cultural Center
226 N Hackberry
San Antonio, TX 78202
thecarver.org

Cumbe: Center for African and Diaspora
Dance
1368 Fulton St.
Brooklyn, NY 11216
cumbedance.org

Harlem School of the Arts
645 St Nicholas Ave
New York, NY 10030
hsanyc.org

Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-
American Arts+Culture
551 S Tryon St
Charlotte, NC 28202
ganttcenr.org

I, Too Arts Collective - Langston Hughes
House
20 East 127th Street
New York, NY 10035
itooarts.com

Mosaic Templars Cultural Center
501 W 9th St
Little Rock, AR 72201
mosaictemplarscenter.com

National Afro-American Museum and
Cultural Center
1350 Brush Row Rd
Wilberforce, OH 45384
ohiohistory.org

The Black Academy of Arts and Letters
650 S Griffin St
Dallas, TX 75202
tbaal.org

The Center For Afrofuturist Center
120 N. Dubuque St
Iowa City, IA
publicspacecon.com/cas

The Watering Hole
1644 Main St., Studio 9
Columbia, SC 29201
twphpoetry.org

Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site
1616 Chappie James Ave
Tuskegee, AL 36083
nps.gov

FESTIVAL
Atlanta Black Jazz Festival
400 Park Dr NE
Atlanta, GA 30306
atlantafestivals.com

DC Black Theater Festival
dcbblacktheatrefestival.com

Essence Music Festival
1500 Sugar Bowl Dr- Mercedes Benz
Superdome
New Orleans, La 70112
essence.com/festival

International Association of Blacks in Dance
P.O. Box 1544
Washington, DC 20013
iabdassociation.org

National Black Arts Festival
Peachtree Center, North Tower, 235
Peachtree Street, Ste. 1725
Atlanta, GA 30303
nbaf.org

National Black Theater Festival
PO Box 95
Winston Salem, NC 27102
ncblackrep.orgcontact-ncbr-2

New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival
1751 Gently Blvd
New Orleans, LA 70119
www.nojazzfest.com

Riverfront Jazz Festival
650 S. Griffin St
Dallas, TX 75202
tbaalriverfrontjazzfestival.org

The Fire This Time Festival
85 E. 4th St.
New York, NY, 10003
firethistimefestival.com

Unity Fest Dallas
3536 Grand Ave.
Dallas, TX 75210
unityfestdallas.com

**TICKET YOUR NEXT THEATER EVENT WITH
THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN OWNED GLOBAL TICKETING PLATFORM!**



Ticketlocity
www.Ticketlocity.com

FREE FOR EVENT ORGANIZERS TO USE!

Ticket Service Fees Paid by Ticket Buyer. Organizers Receive 100% of Ticket Price!

SECURE | SELF SERVICE | EASY | CLOUD BASED | QUICK PAYMENTS

Setup Your Event within 5 Minutes!