

DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM



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Dance Theatre of Harlem Artistic Director

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We are thrilled to welcome guests back to the Detroit Opera House. The safety of our guests, artists, and staff, is our greatest priority. In response to the current COVID-19 infection numbers, we have updated our safety protocols as outlined below. As always, we will follow guidelines and recommendations as set forth by the CDC and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. We will continue to monitor and adjust these policies as appropriate.

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Welcome to the Detroit Opera House! COVID-19 SAFETY MEASURES

Please have the following out prior to entering the queue:



Face coverings must be worn at all times, unless actively eating or drinking.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US KEEP EACH OTHER SAFE!

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE'S COVID-19 SAFETY PLAN](#)

Masks must be worn inside the Detroit Opera House, properly over the nose and mouth. All patrons MUST wear a mask at all times - unless actively eating or drinking, regardless of vaccination status.

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For more details about the Michigan Opera Theatre Reopening Plan created in partnership with NSF International feel free to visit: www.michiganopera.org/plan-your-visit/covid-19-plan.

A MESSAGE FROM WAYNE S. BROWN

MOT PRESIDENT AND CEO

As Michigan Opera Theatre (MOT) embarks on a new decade of artistic excellence, we are thrilled to begin our 2022 dance season with a series of performances from Dance Theatre of Harlem that represent the essence of the human spirit.

Dance Theatre of Harlem's (DTH) return to the Opera House is a special occasion as the groundbreaking company was among the last performances in our venue before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their return symbolizes hope in these uncertain times and an unwavering commitment to the arts. The performances include the world premiere of *Higher Ground*, a new work by Resident Choreographer Robert Garland. Having the world premiere of this ballet in Detroit, which features music from Stevie Wonder, is especially meaningful to our community as it is the birthplace of Motown Records and the city where Wonder started his storied career.

Both DTH and MOT are celebrating golden anniversaries while looking forward to what the next 50 years will bring for each company. The upcoming performances mark the seventh residency of DTH at the Detroit Opera House and we look forward to continuing our long-standing relationship with the company, which began nearly 20 years ago.

Finally, we express our appreciation to our sponsors, without whom this performance would not have been possible: Ford Motor Company Fund, New England Foundation for the Arts, MGM Grand Detroit, Richard & Joanne Brodie, Marvin, Betty, and Joanne Danto Family Foundation, Maxine & Stuart Frankel Foundation and Kevin Dennis & Jeremy Zeltzer. Additionally, I'd like to express my deepest gratitude to Robin Terry, chairperson and CEO of the Motown Museum, for their collaboration and support of DTH's Detroit residency.

We are eager to safely welcome audiences back into our performance venue. It has been a long intermission and we appreciate your return to the Detroit Opera House!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wayne S. Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a dark ink on a light background.

WAYNE S. BROWN
MOT President and CEO

A MESSAGE FROM JON TEEUWISSEN

MOT ARTISTIC ADVISOR FOR DANCE

Arthur Mitchell was a force of nature. Born and raised in Harlem, Arthur Mitchell was committed to equality and creating opportunity for people of color. He often said “either you hit the high C, or you don’t hit the high C,” and it has nothing to do with the color of your skin. Mr. Mitchell made history as the first African-American principal dancer with New York City Ballet, and enjoyed a successful career under the tutelage of George Balanchine. In 1969, Mr. Mitchell and ballet master Karel Shook co-founded the Dance Theatre of Harlem. Beginning with training and rehearsals in the basement of a church in Harlem, DTH evolved into a professional school and company that would tour the world to great acclaim.

Because of Mr. Mitchell’s heritage as a disciple of George Balanchine, DTH is rooted in the neoclassical style. Known for its passionate and dramatic interpretations, touring internationally to celebrate African-American culture through dance, DTH will perform a mixed-repertoire program which includes the world premiere of Robert Garland’s *Higher Ground* performed to music from Detroit icon, Stevie Wonder; *Passage*, a ballet which speaks to the resilience and determination of the human spirit; and a stunning piece *Balamouk* choreographed by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, a ballet that is rich with multicultural movements, textures, and sounds. All three ballets celebrate Mr. Mitchell’s vision of ballet as an art form that pushes boundaries while showcasing the athleticism and discipline of classical ballet technique.

Thank you for celebrating this return of dance to the stage of the Detroit Opera House with us. We look forward to seeing you again in March when we present the Detroit premiere of *Doña Perón: The Rise and Fall of a Diva*. Featuring the choreography of Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, this new full-length ballet celebrates one of the most spellbinding women of South American history.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Teeuwissen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

JON TEEUWISSEN
MOT Artistic Advisor for Dance

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HIGHER GROUND: AN OVERVIEW

ROBERT GARLAND,
DTH RESIDENT CHOREOGRAPHER

As a child, growing up in the 1970's, it was becoming increasingly clear that Dr. King's world, his "Beloved Community," was much farther off than we realized. His prescient statement that he "may not get there with you" created for me a haunting awareness, coupled with a cultural anxiety, that lingers even to this day. I wondered in 2018 if these thoughts were on the mind of Arthur Mitchell, Dance Theatre of Harlem's Founder, as he drifted off into an eternal sleep.

It has been said that African American people are the conscience of America. If that be so, then Stevie Wonder was, and still is, the conscience of Black America. His music loved us, taught us, admonished us, held us up, broke us down and turned us around. It was not surprising to me that the music of Wonder served as a fitting background musical theme in the culminating events leading up to, and throughout the election of the first African American President of the United States. Former President Barack Obama has called Wonder his "musical hero"; Mr. Wonder's "Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours," served as the closing soundtrack the final night of the Democratic National Convention that election year.

The ballet *Higher Ground* represents for me a Sankofa-esque reflection on our current times. From his song "You Haven't Done Nothing," composed to address an impending impeachment of former President Richard Nixon, to the complicated reflections on faith and social justice in "(Heaven Is) 10 Zillion Light Years Away," the questions raised by Wonder within this music are wholly applicable today.

His *Village Ghetto Land*, reveals Mr. Wonder as an early master of the technique loosely referred to as "bricolage" juxtaposes lyrics outlining the horrors of urban blight and poverty, brilliantly contrasted by a sweet, classical cadence (or "recitative") worthy of Verdi or Mozart.

His “Saturn,” moves towards heavenly solutions, and yearning for an entirely different world; while *Higher Ground* aggressively moves towards that goal in an entirely different way.

The music’s cultural relevance and timeless messages are crucial to understating art that directly addresses current social issues and politics. I’m thrilled to premiere *Higher Ground* in Detroit, which is not only the birthplace of Motown and Mr. Wonder’s sound, but a city I gratefully performed in many times as a principal dancer with Dance Theatre of Harlem (DTH) under our then Founder/Artistic Director Arthur Mitchell.

I’m proud to contribute a work that continues the philosophy and vision of Arthur Mitchell, and ultimately share his philosophy and vision with current and future generations to come.

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PROGRAM

HIGHER GROUND

(Premiere January 22, 2022, Detroit Opera House)

Choreography: Robert Garland

Costume Design: Pamela Allen-Cummings

Lighting Design: Roma Flowers

Music: “Look Around” by Stevie Wonder and Syreeta Wright ©1970

“Heaven Is Ten Zillion Light Years Away” &

“You Haven’t Done Nothin’” ©1974, by Stevie Wonder

“Higher Ground” ©1973, by Stevie Wonder

“Saturn” by Michael Sembello and Stevie Wonder ©1975

“Village Ghetto Land” by Gary Byrd and Stevie Wonder ©1976

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Amanda Smith Daphne Lee Alexandra Hutchinson

Anthony Santos Micah Bullard Kouadio Davis

Higher Ground by Robert Garland was commissioned by Northrop at the University of Minnesota.

Intermission

PASSAGE

(World Premiere May 3, 2019)

Choreography: Claudia Schreier

Music: Jessie Montgomery

Costume Design: Martha Chamberlain

Lighting Design: Nicole Pearce

Anthony Santos Derek Brockington

Ingrid Silva, Crystal Serrano, Yinet Fernandez, Daphne Lee, Lindsey Donnell

Dylan Santos, Keenan English, Derek Brockington,
Christopher Charles McDaniel, David Wright

Passage was commissioned by the Virginia Arts Festival in partnership with American Evolution for the 50th Anniversary of Dance Theatre of Harlem and the 2019 Commemoration, recognizing the 400th anniversary of a series of pivotal events in America's history – including the first documented arrival of enslaved Africans. The ballet reflects, in abstract, the fortitude of the human spirit and an enduring will to prevail.

Support for *Passage* was made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Additional commissioning funds provided by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation through Dance Theatre of Harlem's *Women Who Move Us* initiative, O'Donnell-Green Music and Dance Foundation and the Princess Grace Foundation-USA, the City of Norfolk, Virginia, the Friedrich Ludwig Diehn Fund of the Hampton Roads Community Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Virginia Arts Festival production residency for *Passage* was funded by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Intermission

BALAMOUK

(World Premiere October 5th, 2018)

Choreography: Annabelle Lopez Ochoa
Music: Les Yeux Noirs, Lisa Gerrard, René Aubry
Costume Design: Mark Zappone
Lighting Design: Les Dickert

Ingrid Silva Alexandra Hutchinson Amanda Smith Stephanie Rae Williams

Lindsey Donnell

Micah Bullard Dylan Santos Derek Brockington Christopher Charles McDaniel

Kouadio Davis

Commissioned by New York City Center for the Fall For Dance Festival, the development of Balamouk was supported through 50th anniversary commissioning support provided by the Seattle Theater Group and by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation through Dance Theatre of Harlem's Women Who Move Us Initiative. Support for new dance works at City Center is provided by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation and Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

A CONVERSATION WITH PASSAGE CREATORS CLAUDIA SCHREIER & JESSIE MONTGOMERY

In March of 2020, Dance Theatre of Harlem was set to perform at the Detroit Opera House and premiere *Passage* – a new ballet choreographed by Claudia Schreier with a commissioned score by Jessie Montgomery. The work offers a moving reflection on the fortitude of the human spirit, created in recognition of the 400th anniversary of the arrival of enslaved Africans to Virginia in 1619.

In preparation for that performance, MOT spoke with the creative team at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in February of 2020. Though performances were canceled due to COVID-19, we look forward to the return of Dance Theatre of Harlem to Detroit and reassembled the creative team in December of 2020 to come back and talk with us again about the work on *Passage*. We were joined by choreographer Claudia Schreier and composer Jessie Montgomery. The panel was moderated by Wayne State University Assistant Professor Dr. Jennifer Gómez. That conversation has been edited for length. For the full conversation, visit MichiganOpera.org.

Dr. Jennifer Gómez

Thanks for joining us at MOT at Home today and it's nice to have a little bit of a reunion. We ran this panel back in February 2020, which already seems like a lifetime ago at the Charles Wright Museum of African American History. At that time, we were preparing for Dance Theatre of Harlem to come to Michigan Opera Theatre and perform *Passage* for us. And just maybe two weeks after we did this panel, the world shut down and for everybody's safety, Dance Theatre of Harlem didn't perform. So we're excited to kind of reintegrate, redo this panel here tonight for MOT at Home and this new space, new way, this new life – looking forward to Dance Theatre of Harlem performing *Passage* here in Detroit at Michigan Opera Theatre when we can. So while we welcome Claudia Schreier

and Jessie Montgomery, I am Dr. Jennifer Gómez, you're fearless moderator and we'll just go ahead and dive in. The first question I have for both of you and maybe a question more for Claudia, can you give a brief summary of our synopsis of *Passage* and what people can expect when they see the show back when the world is open again?

Claudia Schreier

Absolutely and thank you so much for doing this for us today. *Passage* is a ballet that I created last year, which feels like a lifetime ago, in collaboration with Jessie. It's about 18 to 20 minutes long. It's for 12 dancers, six men and six women, and it is ultimately about the perseverance and fortitude of the human spirit. It was commissioned by the Virginia Arts Festival on American Evolution to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the first arrival of enslaved Africans to North America. And so in abstract it speaks to this period in our nation's history and creates a through line to the ideals and to what we are continuing to experience and contend with today.

Dr. Jennifer Gómez

And Jessie, can you speak to, as a composer, the type of music and the kind of experience that people would get when they come and see *Passage*?

Jessie Montgomery

Sure. And again, thank you, Jennifer, for being here. And thanks Claudia. Glad that we can be here and look at this piece and talk about it again. This piece was very much in collaboration with Claudia. We had like, you know, the steps but it wasn't like music first than dance. Well, there was some music first, and then there was dance that went along with it. And then there was music and dance that started to get worked on together simultaneously, that we sort of reworked the form as the piece was in development. And so musically, I was really trying to underpin this story that sort of emerged naturally out of Claudia's choreography. We approached it from the perspective of highlighting the idea of the human spirit overcoming trials, in essence, but I was thinking pretty cinematically – in a lot of ways in terms of how you carry the listener, the viewer along. Actually, there's some sort of

traditional ballet form that's underpinning the whole structure of the piece. So we're really sort of working in both these traditional forms and also sort of looking at orchestration in a different way, and also musical storytelling in a different way.

Dr. Jennifer Gómez

We know that the Co-founder and Artistic Director Emeritus Mr. Arthur Mitchell passed away September 2018 and *Passage* was being set, correct me, just before and then just after he passed. Can you speak to what that was like in being in the Dance Theatre of Harlem world, during this transition time for Dance Theatre of Harlem with his passing?

Claudia Schreier

Obviously, the responsibility, and the honor of creating a work for Dance Theatre of Harlem is something that I felt immediately before anything else transpired. And, of course, we didn't know how imminent his death was to be. It came, I think, as a surprise to a lot of us and so, you know, we're already in communication and this ballet was in development, before his passing. But the weight of this immense loss, it goes so far beyond the loss of one individual. He is an extraordinary, larger than life figure who transformed the face of ballet in America, ballet for Black people, ballet for everyone. And so to know that this work, that speaks to the history and the legacy of the Black experience, would be in conversation with this larger company history and narrative just made it all the more meaningful and I carried that with me throughout for sure.

Dr. Jennifer Gómez

So could each of you speak to the experiences of being Black women, artists, creators, composer, in what is traditionally a white man dominated field? Even though ballet in the arts is largely women dominated, those in positions of power and really dictating the creation of the arts is men. What was that like for each of you being Black women and working on your own and with each other for *Passage*?

Jessie Montgomery

I've probably faced the most complicated moments about being a Black female artist during the time we're in now more than I had as a kid, or growing up and coming through. I've been very fortunate in my career in terms of having opportunities to develop my art but in terms of dealing with the big structural aspects of classical music, it's the institution's questions about me that have been the problem for me. The institution wonders why I'm there and they keep asking me why I'm there. That's the issue. Why me? Why is classical music interesting to you? And the reason classical music is interesting to me or that I've had access to it, well in my case, is because I grew up in New York City. I had access to so much stuff by being in a major, urban metropolis and feel like that's a unique question for me.

Claudia Schreier

It is difficult to put into words only because as the larger conversation evolves around Blackness, and everything that it entails, it's such a personal journey that one has been called upon to speak to, universally. And I am in such a different headspace, in terms of my relationship to my identity, than I was when we had this conversation back in February compared to where I was when we started the piece. We were talking about this in like 2016, 2017. The personal, private evolution of myself and my character and my relationship with Jessie, my relationship with my family, my relationship to teach, my relationship to the world, I mean, it goes on and on and on. I can see my perspective on the ballet itself change and shift simply because of that. And much like Jessie, we both come from classical backgrounds, classical training, and we both have, I believe, this passion and this impetus to push the outcome forward but still lay claim to our background and to express appreciation for our background.

Dr. Jennifer Gómez

It's kind of helpful to think that the things that we do and the things that we're fighting for, you know, can live beyond us and the people who come up behind us can kind of carry the torch. So in thinking about *Passage* and everything we've talked about so far, what do you hope that audience members, when the world is back open again and they're all lined up in the theater, what do you hope audience members take away from *Passage*?

Claudia Schreier

I hope they take away hope. The mere fact to be sitting in a theater again, together, sharing live dance and live music and live performance, ideally, on the other end of this devastating pandemic, the fact that we can all do that means that there is hope and things can move forward and move upward. To be able to share in that experience together would be immensely gratifying and so humbling. And I would just give anything to be able to share that again with people

Jessie Montgomery

Same! I can't wait to see a live dance performance in a theater, all huddled together with the lights low and not knowing what's coming. That'll be a great moment for everyone. I hope that people see what we know and to be confirmed in that. And to know that the work is not done and that we're growing immensely, but that there's just a lot to do. We have to support each other coming into the space and being with the performers. Being an audience member means so much to the future of the art form and thereby so much to these artists. If you want to support Black art, come see *Passage*.

For the full conversation, visit MichiganOpera.org.

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OVER FIFTY YEARS OF DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM

The fifty-three-year history of Dance Theatre of Harlem is a landscape of peaks and valleys inhabited by a race of dreamers, achievers, and yes, history makers. DTH co-founder Arthur Mitchell was all the above as well as premier danseur, choreographer, and teacher. We used to call him “our fearless leader” because he marched forward never thinking that what he sought to do would have been impossible for anyone else. His passing in 2018 left us bereft but determined that the institution he and Karel Shook incorporated on February 11, 1969, will endure and thrive.

Arthur Mitchell believed in the power of art to change lives and open minds. The DTH Company, School, and our arts education program, “Dancing Through Barriers,” became the manifestation of that idea. While the School and DTB served the Harlem community, with the Company, Arthur Mitchell was able to take his vision across the globe. The DTH Company, a mix of African Americans, Hispanics, Asians and Caucasians, was a vivid demonstration of the premise that the art form of classical ballet belongs to us all.

The social impact of Dance Theatre of Harlem’s national and international touring for more than 50 years is often noted, but as significant is the depth and breadth of the company’s artistic prowess. With a repertoire that ranges from Mitchell’s own neoclassical works (he learned his craft at George Balanchine’s knee, after all), historic Ballet Russes, classics such as *Scheherazade* and *Les Noces*, to great American narrative works such as *Billy The Kid*, *Fall River Legend*, and the groundbreaking productions of *Creole Giselle* and *Firebird* that linger in the collective consciousness, throughout its history Dance Theatre of Harlem has expanded the notion of what ballet can be.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Virginia".

VIRGINIA JOHNSON
Artistic Director

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*Christopher Chance, McDaniel, and
Crystal Serrano in Harlem on My Mind.
Photo by Rachel Weir*

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DEREK BROCKINGTON

Born: Chicago, IL and raised in Holland, MI.
Training: Grand Rapids Ballet School, Interlochen Arts Academy, Ballet West and Pennsylvania Ballet Summer Intensives. Professional Experience: Dance Theatre of Harlem (fourth season), Cincinnati Ballet, Grand Rapids Ballet. Repertoire includes works by Claudia Schreier, Robert Garland, Stanton Welch, George Balanchine, Anabelle Lopez Ochoa, and Darrell Grand Moultrie. Along with DTH's Alexandra Hutchinson, he coordinates DTH Social Media.

MICAH BULLARD

Born: Houston, TX. Training: The Dance Center of Baytown, University of Oklahoma School of Dance (BFA 2019), Jacob's Pillow Contemporary Ballet Program, Dance Theatre of Harlem Summer Intensive, Texas Ballet Theater Summer Intensive. Professional Experience: Oklahoma City Ballet, Hartel Dance Group, and Dance Theatre of Harlem (first season). Repertoire includes original works by Amy Hall Garner, Trey McIntyre, Colin Connor, as well as Alejandro Cerrudo's "Lickety Split," Merce Cunningham's "How to Pass, Kick, Fall and Run" and Prince Siegfried in "Swan Lake."

KOUADIO DAVIS

Born: Oneonta, NY. Training: Holbrook-Wade School of Dance, Fokine Ballet, New York State Summer School of the Arts with Daniel Ulbricht, NYCB. Carolyn Adams. Alvin Ailey, Nutmeg Ballet, Charlotte Ballet, Alonzo King Lines, French Academie of Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, and Springboard Danse Montreal. 2019 Graduate of Ellison Ballet. Awards: Youth America Grand Prix in 2017 and 2018, where he and his partner won second and then first place in the contemporary Pas de Deux category. Professional Experience: Dance Theatre of Harlem (third season).

LINDSEY DONNELL

Born: Midland, TX. Training: A Petite Dance Studio, Midland Festival Ballet under Susan Clark. Education: cum laude graduate of Butler University, degree in Dance Arts Administration and Journalism. Professional Experience: Dance Theatre of Harlem (tenth season), Nashville Ballet (trainee). Repertoire includes works by Robert Garland, Nacho Duato, Ulysses Dove, George Balanchine, Donald Byrd, Elena Kunikova and Dianne McIntyre.

KEENAN ENGLISH

Born: Randallstown, MD. Training: Baltimore School for the Arts, Boston Ballet, and School of American Ballet. Professional Experience: Boston Ballet, Cincinnati Ballet, Oregon Ballet Theatre, Carolina Ballet, and Dance Theatre of Harlem (second season). Repertoire includes ballets by Nacho Duato, George Balanchine, William Forsythe, Ulysses Dove, Helen Pickett, Robert Garland, Darrell Grand Moultrie, Val Caniparoli, Alvin Ailey, Septime Webre, Nicolo Fonte, Francesca Harper, Lynn Taylor Corbett.

YINET FERNANDEZ

Born: Mariano' La Habana, Cuba. Training: Provincial School of the Arts, National School of Ballet, Ballet Nacional de Cuba. Professional experience: Dance Theatre of Harlem (fifth season), Connecticut Ballet, Ballet Nacional de Cuba. Repertoire includes *Sleeping Beauty*, *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *Coppélia*, *La Fille mal gardée*, *Don Quixote* and works by George Balanchine, Robert Garland, Christopher Wheeldon, Darrell Grand Moultrie and Dianne McIntyre.

ALEXANDRA HUTCHINSON

Born: Wilmington, DE. Training: The Washington School of Ballet, Wilmington Academy of Dance, and summer intensives with Alvin Ailey, Alonzo King, Carolina Ballet, Ballet Chicago, and Nashville Ballet 2. Education: Bachelor of Science in Ballet, Indiana University, Jacobs School of Music. Professional Experience: Dance Theatre of Harlem (fourth season), Nashville Ballet. Repertoire includes *Orange* by Stanton Welch; *Return* and *New Bach* by Robert Garland; *Balamouk* by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa; *Harlem on My Mind* and *Vessels* by Darrell Grand Moultrie; George Balanchine's *Valse Fantasia*, *Western Symphony*, *Swan Lake*, *Concerto*

Barocco, Divertimento No. 15, Emeralds, Rubies, and Giselle; Paul Vasterling's Sleeping Beauty; Septime Webre's and Michael Vernon's The Nutcracker. Alexandra is the recipient of The Pierians Foundation Incorporated 2018 Emerging Young Artist Award, Virginia Johnson Scholar, Washington School of Ballet Professional Training Program tuition stipend, 2010, 2011, and 2012. Along with DTH's Derek Brockington, she shares the position of DTH Social Media coordinator.

DAPHNE MARCELLE LEE

Rahway, NJ. Training: Rahway Dance Theatre by her late mother Jay Skeete-Lee, and the Dance Theatre of Harlem School. Education: BFA in Dance, Ailey/Fordham University, and MFA from Hollins University. . Professional Experience: Dance Theatre of Harlem (third season), Collage Dance Collective, Oakland Ballet, Alvin Ailey II, Black Iris Project. Repertoire includes works by Jessica Lang, Benoit Swan-Pouffer, Nicolo Fonte, Dwight Rhoden, Jennifer Archibald, George Balanchine, Amy Seiwart, Joyce Trisler, and Darrell Moultrie.

CHRISTOPHER CHARLES MCDANIEL

Born: East Harlem, NY. Training: Dance Theatre of Harlem School, LaGuardia School of Performing Arts, Ballet Academy East, Boston Ballet, Jacob's Pillow. Professional Experience: Dance Theatre of Harlem (fifth season), Ballet San Antonio, Los Angeles Ballet. Repertoire includes works by Robert Garland, Ulysses Dove, Darryl Grand Moultrie, Colleen Neary, Thordal Christensen, George Balanchine, Jiri Kylian, Gerald Arpino, Christopher Stowell and Kitty McNamee. Christopher is an accomplished ballet teacher and DTH Social Media Manager.

SANFORD PLACIDE

Born: Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Training: Ballet Etudes of South Florida, Manhattan Youth Ballet, The French Académie of Ballet, Nadege Hottier, American Ballet Theatre, Dance Theatre of Harlem, Ballet Austin, Ballet Hispanico, Lines Ballet, and Miami City Ballet. Professional Experience: Dance Theatre of Harlem (third season), Alberta Ballet in Canada, Ballet West, Charlotte Ballet (formerly NCDT), Ballet Etudes of South Florida, Vorhees Ballet Theatre, Ballet Des Amériques, Fjkdance, Collage Dance Collective, Black Iris Dance Project, Boca Ballet Theatre, Ballet Northwest, Traverse City Dance Project, and Accent Dance. Special Honors: In commemoration of Haitian Flag Day 2018, Sanford partnered with the Consulate General of Haiti in New York to organize and produce UNI, an art collective where he premiered the riveting ballet MAGA. In 2019, Sanford produced *Sans-Souci*, the second staging in the UNI series and was honored by the Consulate General of Haiti in New York for his work in preserving Haitian culture. Repertoire includes works by George Balanchine, Nacho Duato, Glenn Tetley, Desmond Richardson, Robert Garland, Mark Diamond, Yukicchi Hattori, Wen Wei Wang, Aszure.

KAMALA SAARA

Born: Los Angeles, CA. Training: Yuir Grigoriev School of Ballet, School of American Ballet. Professional Experience: Dance Theatre of Harlem (first season). Kamala is a recipient of the Grow Annenberg Fellowship and was a full scholarship student at the School of American Ballet.

ANTHONY SANTOS

Born: New York, NY. Training: Rosie's Theatre Kids, North Carolina School of the Arts, Jacobs Pillow, Alonzo King LINES, Joffrey Ballet.

Professional experience: Dance Theatre of Harlem (fifth season), Kaatsbaan, Zest Collective, La Spezia Jazz Festival and Caitlin Trainor Dance. Repertoire includes Susan Jaffe's *Polivestian*, Doug Varone's *Democracy*, Christopher Wheldon's *This Bitter Earth*, Lucinda Child's *Concerto*, Ulyesses Dove's *Dancing on the Front Porch of Heaven*, Robert Garland's *Return, New Bach and Braham's Variation*, Darrell Grand Moultrie's *Vessels, Harlem on my Mind*, Geoffrey Holder's *Dougla*, Paul Taylor's *Esplanade*, Merce Cunningham's *Sounddance* Annabelle Lopez Ochoa's *Balamouk*, Stanton Welch's *Orange*, and Sasha Jane's *Lascia la Spina*.

DYLAN SANTOS

Born: São Paulo, Brazil. Training: Centro de Artes Pavilhao D under Ricardo Scheir and Harid Conservatory. Professional experience: Dance Theatre of Harlem (eighth season), Houston Ballet trainee, Orlando Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, Ballet Chicago, and Paris Opera Ballet. Repertoire includes works by George Balanchine, Nacho Duato, Robert Garland, and Ulyesses Dove, and Marius Petipa.

CRYSTAL SERRANO

Born: Denver, CO. Training: Pacific Northwest Ballet, School of American Ballet, and Olympic Ballet Theatre. Professional experience: Dance Theatre of Harlem (fifth season), Ballet San Antonio, Oregon Ballet Theatre, Sacramento Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet. Repertoire includes *Don Quixote*, *The Nutcracker*, *Peter Pan*, *Firebird*, *Donizetti Variations*, *Cinderella*, *The Four Temperaments*, *Allegro Brillante*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Cinderella*, *Serenade*, and *Swan Lake* and works by Robert Garland, Christopher Wheeldon and Darrell Grand Moultrie.

INGRID SILVA

Born: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Training: Projeto Dan-cando Para Nao Dançar, Escola de Danca Maria Olenewa, and Centro de Movimento Debora Colker. Education: Universidade da Cidade. Professional experience: Dance Theatre of Harlem (tenth season), Grupo Corpo (apprentice), Dance Theatre of Harlem Ensemble, Dançando Para Não Dançar, Armitage Gone! Dance, and the Francesca Harper Project. Repertoire includes works by Arthur Mitchell, Donald Byrd, George Balanchine, Dianne McIntyre, John Alleyne, Darrel Grand Moultrie, Francesca Harper, Robert Garland, David Fernandez, Carol Armitage, Deborah Colker, Rodrigo Pederneiras and Annabelle Lopez-Ocha. In 2017 Silva was the first African Brazilian to be on the cover of Pointe Magazine and appeared on the cover of Vogue Brasil November 2020. She is the Founder of EmpowHerNY & Co Founder of Blacks in Ballet.

AMANDA SMITH

Born: Orange County, CA. Training: Charlotte Ballet, SUNY Purchase, Joffrey Ballet School, Anaheim Ballet, Pointe of Grace, Ballet Pacifica. Professional Experience: Dance Theatre of Harlem (fifth season), Charlotte Ballet, New York Theatre Ballet, Black Iris Project. Repertoire includes works by George Balanchine, Mark Diamond, Sasha James, Dwight Rhoden, Alonzo King, Jiri Killian, Dianne McIntyre and Helen Pickett.

DELANEY WASHINGTON

Born: San Francisco Bay area. Training: Lise la Cour's LaCademy, The Ailey School/Fordham University, and Jacob's Pillow Summer Program 2021 under the direction of Helen Pickett and Milton Myers. Professional Experience: Palm Beach Dance Festival,

Dance Theatre of Harlem (first season). Repertoire includes works by Dwight Rhoden, Helen Simoneau, Yusha Marie-Sorzano, Maurya Kerr, Pedro Ruiz, and Andre Zachery. Delaney is the recipient of the Alvin Ailey Artistic Scholarship.

STEPHANIE RAE WILLIAMS

Born: Salt Lake City, Utah. Training: Dallas Dance Academy with Lyndette Galen and Fiona Fairrie, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Springboard Danse Montreal, The Juilliard School, Alonzo King's LINES Ballet, and Houston Ballet Academy. Professional experience: Dance Theatre of Harlem (12th season), The Francesca Harper Project, ARC Dance Seattle, Complexions Contemporary Dance Company, Ballet Black, and Texas Ballet Theatre. Repertoire includes works by Pam Tanowitz, Nacho Duato, Jose Limon, Helen Pickett, Arthur Mitchell, Donald Byrd, George Balanchine, John Alleyne, Dianne McIntyre, Darrel Grand Moultrie, Francesca Harper, Liam Scarlett, Robert Garland, and David Fernandez. Stephanie is the recipient of The Dallas Dance Council's 2017 Natalie Skelton Award, 2013 *Dance Magazine* "On the Rise", 2006 National Foundation for the Arts Award, 2006 Youth America Grand Prix finalist, Oprah Winfrey Fellowship recipient at the Ailey School, 2004 Texas Commission on the Arts Young Master.

DAVID WRIGHT

Born: Ft. Polk, Louisiana. Training: Infiti Performing Arts Center, Indiana Ballet Conservatory, Orlando Ballet School. Professional Experience: Orlando Ballet, Dance Theatre of Harlem (first season). Repertoire: Jorden Morris' *Moulin Rouge*, Val Caniparolis' *Lamberna*, Orlando Ballet's *Nutcracker*, and *Carmina Burana*. David was Finalist at Beijing International Ballet and Choreography Competition 2019.

ARTISTIC AND EXECUTIVE STAFF



KAREL SHOOK CO-FOUNDER

Karel Shook played a key role as teacher and mentor to African American dance artists in New York in the 1950s. In addition to cofounding Dance Theatre of Harlem with Arthur Mitchell in 1969, he also was a ballet master, choreographer, and author. Born in 1920, Mr. Shook was a native of Renton, Washington. Encouraged to study ballet, at age 13 he was a protégé of Nellie Cornish and received a scholarship to the Cornish School of Allied Arts in Seattle. While his performance career was brief, he appeared on Broadway and danced with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and New York City Ballet. Mr. Shook's brief performance career led to teaching and choreographing, mainly in Europe but also in New York. In the early 50s he opened Studio Arts, one of the few dance studios in the city where African Americans could study ballet. Among his students were Carmen de Lavallade, Pearl Primus, Geoffrey Holder, Louis Johnson, Alvin Ailey, and Arthur Mitchell, who first came to him at age 17. Mr. Shook left New York in 1959 to become the ballet master of the Dutch National Ballet, where he was when his former student, Arthur Mitchell, asked him to return to New York to help create the Dance Theatre of Harlem. Mr. Shook was an advocate of the universality of classical ballet. His book, *Elements of Classical Ballet* explores the development of classical ballet in such countries across the globe as China, Turkey, Iran, Japan, Cuba, and Mexico. In 1980 he was awarded the United States Presidential Award for "Excellence and Dedication in Education."



ARTHUR MITCHELL CO-FOUNDER

Arthur Mitchell was known around the world for creating and sustaining the Dance Theatre of Harlem, the internationally acclaimed ballet company he co-founded with Karel Shook in 1969. Following a brilliant career as a principal artist with the New York City Ballet, Mr. Mitchell dedicated his life to changing perceptions and advancing the art form of ballet through the first permanently established African American and racially diverse ballet company.

Born in New York City in 1934, Mr. Mitchell began his dance training at New York City's High School of the Performing Arts, where he won the coveted annual dance award and subsequently a full scholarship to the School of American Ballet. In 1955, he became the first male African American to become a permanent member of a major ballet company when he joined New York City Ballet. Mr. Mitchell rose quickly to the rank of Principal Dancer during his fifteen-year career with New York City Ballet and electrified audiences with his performances in a broad spectrum of roles. Upon learning of the death of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and with financial assistance from Mrs. Alva B. Gimbel, the Ford Foundation and his own savings, Mr. Mitchell founded Dance Theatre of Harlem with his mentor and ballet instructor Karel Shook.

With an illustrious career that has spanned over fifty years, Mr. Mitchell is the recipient of the

Kennedy Center Honors, a National Medal of the Arts, a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, the New York Living Landmark Award, the Handel Medallion, the NAACP Image Award, and more than a dozen honorary degrees.



VIRGINIA JOHNSON **ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

A founding member of Dance Theatre of Harlem, Virginia Johnson was one of its principal ballerinas over a career that spanned nearly 30 years. After retiring in 1997, Ms. Johnson went on to found *Pointe Magazine* and was editor-in chief for 10 years.

A native of Washington, D.C., Ms. Johnson began her training with Therrell Smith. She studied with Mary Day at the Washington School of Ballet and graduated from the Academy of the Washington School of Ballet and went on to be a University Scholar in the School of the Arts at New York University before joining Dance Theatre of Harlem.

Virginia Johnson is universally recognized as one of the great ballerinas of her generation and is perhaps best known for her performances in the ballets *Giselle*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and *Fall River Legend*. She has received such honors as a Young Achiever Award from the National Council of Women, Outstanding Young Woman of America and the Dance Magazine Award, a Pen and Brush Achievement Award, the Washington Performing Arts Society's 2008-2009 Pola Nirenska Lifetime Achievement Award and the 2009 Martha Hill Fund Mid-Career Award.



MARIE CHONG
REHEARSAL DIRECTOR

Marie Chong is founding director of ARC Dance Company in Seattle, WA where she commissioned new work and re-staged pieces by choreographers such as Edwaard Liang, Wen Wei Wang, and Alex Ketley. Her choreography has been presented at Seattle International Dance Festival, Men in Dance, Arts Umbrella, and ARC Dance Company. She was the Artistic Assistant/Director for Cirque du Soleil's touring show *KOOZA* and integrated new artists into other shows at the company's headquarters in Montreal. Chong has also worked with Disney Theatrical Group as a teaching artist. She is honored to join the Dance Theatre of Harlem's artistic team.



ROBERT GARLAND
RESIDENT CHOREOGRAPHER

Robert Garland was a member of the Dance Theatre of Harlem Company achieving the rank of principal dancer. After creating a work for the DTH School Ensemble, Arthur Mitchell invited Robert Garland to create a work for The Dance Theatre of Harlem Company and appointed him the organization's first Resident Choreographer. He is Director of the DTH school.

In addition to choreographing several ballets for DTH, Mr. Garland has also created works for New York City Ballet, Britain's Royal Ballet, Oakland Ballet and many others. His commercial work has included music videos, commercials and short films, including the children's television show *Sesame Street*, a Nike commercial featuring New York Yankee Derek Jeter, the NAACP Image Awards, a short film for designer Donna Karan, and the "Charmin Cha-Cha" for Proctor and Gamble. Mr. Garland holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from the Juilliard School in New York City.



ANNA GLASS **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Anna has been involved in the performing arts as both an artist and arts administrator for over twenty years. She produced Carmen de Lavallade's solo show, *As I Remember It*, an intimate portrait of this legendary artist. Anna previously served as the Managing Director of 651 ARTS, a presenting/producing arts organization dedicated to celebrating contemporary performing arts of the African Diaspora. While at 651 ARTS, she co-produced numerous projects, including the highly regarded national tour of *FLY: Five First Ladies of Dance*.

Anna has served as a consultant providing strategic planning and fundraising guidance to various non-profit arts organizations, including Urban Bush Women and the Weeksville Heritage Center. She currently serves on the board of the Association of Performing Arts Presenters. She has served as a Hub Site for the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project grant program. After receiving her Juris Doctor from the University of Dayton School of Law, Anna became the Artist Representative for the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, a company she performed with for three years (DCDC2). She is a licensed attorney in the State of New York and lives in Harlem with her husband and daughter.

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We extend a heartfelt thank you to the families, friends, colleagues, businesses, and groups who generously made gifts to Michigan Opera Theatre In Honor or In Memory of the special people in their lives, who names are listed in bold below.

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In remembrance of our founder and long-term general director, The David DiChiera Artistic Fund has been established to support and honor his artistic vision.

This fund enables Michigan Opera Theatre to produce compelling opera, present innovative dance, and engage with thousands of students and members of our community through our educational and outreach programs. Most importantly, it allows MOT to preserve David's legacy and his dedication to the young people of Southeast Michigan and young emerging artists from all over the country.

Michigan Opera Theatre gratefully acknowledges the generous corporate, foundation, and individual donors whose gifts to The David DiChiera Artistic Fund were made before December 31, 2021.

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CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE DETROIT OPERA HOUSE

The Michigan Opera Theatre Board of Directors began the first phase of fundraising for Detroit Opera House capital improvements in January 2020. This multi-phase capital campaign grew from recommendations identified in the facilities master plan completed by Albert Kahn Associates, Inc. Scheduled facility improvements and upgrades will shape the patron experience at the Opera House for years to come.

We look forward to sharing full details about the capital campaign in the coming months. Until then, we extend heartfelt thanks to the following donors who made contributions that enabled capital improvements to begin.



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Imagine a gift that outlives you, allowing future generations to experience and enjoy the world of opera and dance. That's the goal of the Avanti Society, Michigan Opera Theatre's planned gift recognition program.

The Italian word *avanti* means "ahead," or "forward." Michigan Opera Theatre's Avanti Society represents a designated group of friends who have made plans to include MOT in their estates — whether by will, trust, insurance, or life income arrangement. We are grateful for the generosity and foresight of those listed below, who have chosen to declare their intentions and join the Avanti Society.

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