

# RENNIE HARRIS PUREMOVEMENT

## AMERICAN STREET DANCER

**CHOREOGRAPHER, FOUNDER & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR** Rennie Harris

### **RENNIE HARRIS PUREMOVEMENT**

**CHOREOGRAPHY** Rennie Harris

**PERFORMERS** Marguerite Waller, Rachel Snider, Angel Anderson, Miyeko Urvashi, Rennie Harris, Joshua Archibald, Zakhele Grabowski, Tyreis Hunte

**TAP SOLOIST** Ayodele Casel

**MANAGING & CREATIVE DIRECTOR OF AYODELE CASEL** Torya Beard

### **HOUSE OF JIT**

**CHOREOGRAPHY** Michael Manson

**PERFORMERS** Michael Manson, Gabrielle McLeod, Michael Reed, Lilanie Karunanayake, James Broxton, Malaino Ross, Tristan Hutchinson

### **CREATION GLOBAL**

**CHOREOGRAPHY** Eddie Martin

**PERFORMERS** Charles L. Parks IV, Donnetta Jackson, Eddie Martin, Christopher Thomas

### **RENNIE HARRIS HIP-HOP ORCHESTRA**

**MASTER DRUMMER** Brytiece Wallace

**BEATBOXERS** Akim Funk Buddha, Kenny Muhammad, Alexander Sanchez

**BUCKET DRUMMERS** Tony Royster, Edward Smallwood, Solomon Saunders

**TURNTABLIST** DJ Razor Ramon

**MUSIC EDITED, COMPOSED & PRODUCED BY** Darrin M. Ross

**PLAYBACK MIXED BY** DJ D-9-3 & DJ 1LOVE

**PRODUCTION VIDEOGRAPHY & LIGHTING DESIGNER** Julie Ballard

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Zellerbach Theatre

Friday, March 14 @ 8 PM

Saturday, March 15 @ 2 PM

Saturday, March 15 @ 8 PM

There will be no intermission.



**NATIONAL**  
**ENDOWMENT** for the **ARTS**  
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Originally commissioned by Princeton University's Lewis Center for the Arts' Caroline Hearst Choreographer-In-Residence Program.

Penn Live Arts is the artistic home of Rennie Harris Puremovement. These performances are made possible in part with support provided by the Penn Live Arts Accelerator Program.

## PROGRAM

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### **AMERICAN STREET DANCER**

#### **Honoring Source**

##### **Culture Deferred**

Akim Funk Buddha

##### **Rhythm Revolt**

Ayodele Casel

##### **Make Music w/Mouth Biz**

Rennie Harris Hip-hop Orchestra beatbox vocalists

##### **Echoing Legacy**

Rennie Harris Hip-hop Orchestra bucket drummers

##### **Jit.Rhythm.Soul**

Creation Global

House of Jit

Rennie Harris Puremovement

##### **Wheels of Steel**

DJ Razor Ramon

#### **The Gathering**

## PROGRAM NOTES

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*American Street Dancer* explores and illuminates the rich lineage of African American rhythms in the United States and embarks on a historical journey that traces the roots of street dance, highlighting those rhythms that have had a profound impact across various artistic landscapes. These significantly vibrant dances have woven themselves into the fabric of dance, theatre, film and global culture, solidifying their vital role in the narrative of American history. *American Street Dancer* is an exhilarating rhythmic spectacle, enhanced by the dynamics of the Rennie Harris Hip-hop Orchestra, composed of three bucket players, three beatbox vocalists and one DJ. Together, they create an electrifying soundscape that complements the choreography, inviting audiences to immerse themselves in the rhythm of the community it comes from.

*American Street Dancer* celebrates diverse dance styles, such as jitting from Detroit, footwork from Chicago and GQ from Philadelphia. Each style brings its own unique flair and history, reflecting the vibrant and multifaceted nature of street dance across the U.S. Harris' vision for this work is not only to pay homage to the rich heritage of African American contributions to dance and music, but to also underscore the power of these art forms to transcend cultural boundaries and foster a deeper understanding of community and identity. As you witness the world premiere of *American Street Dancer*, you will not only experience the exhilarating artistry of various street dance styles but also delve into a movement and sound narrative that honors the past while looking toward the future. In Harris' words, "It is these rhythms, specifically GQ rhythms from Philadelphia, that inform every piece of choreography I've ever choreographed and will choreograph."

## Did you know?

Across America, there exists a rich tapestry of street dance styles that, while often associated with hip-hop dance and culture, should not be mistakenly classified as hip-hop dance itself. Using the term “hip-hop dance” to encapsulate these distinct styles can lead to confusion. For example, krumping originated in Los Angeles, juking hails from Memphis, turfing is rooted in the Bay Area, and lite feet emerged from New York City. Additionally, go-go and beat the feet come from Washington, D.C., while popping and Campbell locking have their origins in Los Angeles. Salsa and vogue are products of New York. The important distinction here is that none of these styles can be categorized as hip-hop dance because they each thrive on unique musical foundations specific to their genre of music.

Hip-hop dance typically refers to popular party dances that are performed with a partner and done to hip-hop music. In contrast, the street dance styles mentioned above are practiced to a diverse range of musical genres, from funk and disco to Latin and soul, reflecting the cultural influences of their respective regions. In essence, appreciating the diversity within street dance means recognizing that while these styles share a common ethos of expression and creativity, they each hold their own identity and musical context that set them apart from hip-hop dance. Lastly, the word “street” is a slang/euphemism used to describe one’s community. So, “street dance” is referring to the community dance(s) and its unique culture and practices.

**Jitting**, also known as jit or jit dancing, is a street dance style that originated in Detroit, Michigan during the 1980s. It is characterized by its energetic and highly expressive movements, frequently featuring quick footwork. Jitting is often performed to the fast-paced sounds of techno, house and electronic music, which are synonymous with Detroit’s vibrant music scene. The dance emphasizes agility and rhythm, allowing dancers to showcase their creativity and individuality. Jitting is known for its improvisational nature. As part of Detroit’s cultural landscape, jitting has evolved over the years while maintaining its roots in the city’s rich musical heritage. Its influence can be seen in various dance forms and has contributed to the broader conversation around street dance and its connection to music genres that emerged from Detroit.

**Chicago footwork** is a dynamic and highly rhythmic street dance style that originated in Chicago, Illinois during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Known for its rapid foot movements and intricate footwork patterns, this dance style is often performed to the fast-paced beats of footwork music, a genre that emerged from Chicago’s underground music scene and is characterized by its energetic tempo and heavy bass. Footwork features fast, shuffling steps that allow dancers to express themselves with speed and precision. Dancers often incorporate elements such as spins, slides and dips while executing complex patterns with their feet.

**GQ** has its roots in the Latin dance known as the cha-cha, which became popular in Philadelphia during the 1960s. Its origins can be traced back to the Black social clubs in the city, where dancers would partner with one another to perform the cha-cha. Beginning with the cha-cha rhythm, GQ incorporates intricate footwork as dancers engage with each other, often competing against other social clubs. Over time, the dance became known as GQ due to its attire such as suit, tie, hat and, occasionally, a cane. This dance style flourished in Philadelphia from the 1960s through the 1980s. Several influential GQ groups were The Floor Takers, Franchise, Chip and Pip, The Great Gatsby, The Flamingos, The Disco Kings and Queens, The Step Masters, Rafique & the Stepping Uniques and the Godfather of GQ Dwight.

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## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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### **Rennie Harris** (Choreographer, Founder & Artistic Director)

Harris has been called “the most respected — and the most brilliant — hip-hop choreographer in America” by *The New Yorker*. Recently, *The New York Times* wrote that Harris is “the hip-hop master who has become one of his generation’s most exacting and exciting choreographers.” There are two sides to Harris’ rhythmic wizardry; both are impeccable. Born and raised in an African American community in North Philadelphia, Harris has taught at universities around the country since the age of 15. Advocating for the significance of street origins in any dance style, Harris believes hip-hop expresses universal themes that extend beyond racial, religious and economic boundaries, and, because of its pan-racial and global popularity, can help bridge these divisions. In addition, Harris was in The Fresh Fest, the first rap tour to cross the country which starred Run DMC & Jam Master Jay, LL Cool J, Kurtis Blow, Fat Boys, Salt-N-Pepa and many other noted pioneers of rap.

Known for bringing social dances to the concert stage and coining the term “street dance theater,” Harris has broken new ground as one of the first hip-hop choreographers to set works on ballet-based companies such as Ballet Memphis, Colorado Ballet, Pennsylvania Ballet (now Philadelphia Ballet), PHILADANCO!, Giordano Dance Chicago, Lula Washington Dance Theatre, Cleo Parker Robinson, Dallas Black Dance Theater, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and more. Harris was the first street dancer commissioned to create an evening-length work on Alvin Ailey American Theater and to serve as a resident artist at the Alvin Ailey School. He’s received three Bessie Awards, five Black Theater Alvin Ailey Awards and the Herb Alpert Award, and has been nominated for a Lawrence Olivier Award (UK). He’s also received a Lifetime Achievement Award in choreography (McCullum Theater, 2019). Harris was voted one of the most influential people in the last one hundred years of Philadelphia’s history (*City Paper*). He’s been compared to Basquiat, Alvin Ailey and Bob Fosse.

In addition, Harris has received a Guggenheim Fellowship, PEW Fellowship, a USA Artist of the Year Fellowship, a Governors Artist of the Year Award and is noted as the first street dancer to receive two honorary doctorate degrees from Bates College (Lewiston, Maine) and Columbia College (Chicago, Illinois). He served as a cultural ambassador for former President Ronald Reagan’s U.S. Embassy Tour in 1986, was invited to the White House by the Clinton Administration in 2001 to share in the recognition of African American artists making a difference in the world and received a medal in choreography from the Kennedy Center. His company, Rennie Harris Puremovement, has performed for such dignitaries as the Queen of England and the Princess of Monaco, and was chosen as one of four U.S. companies to serve as hip-hop cultural ambassadors for President Obama’s Dance Motion USA, touring to Israel, Jordan, Ramulah, Egypt, Palestine, Japan, China, Gambia and Kazakhstan. In 2020, Harris became a recipient of the Doris Duke Artist Award. He was also awarded The Andrew W. Mellon Grant “Building A Legacy of Street Dance” (2022) as well as the Hermitage Greenfield Prize (2023) and the Samuel H. Scripps American Dance Festival Award (2023). Lorenzo “Rennie” Harris is atop the hip-hop heap, its leading ambassador.

### **Rodney Hill** (Executive Director, Rennie Harris Puremovement)

Hill was born and raised in the tough streets of North Philadelphia, entering the hip-hop scene in 1988. For more than a decade, Hill has blazed the stages in venues, nationally and abroad. He has been featured in many videos for such artists as Boys II Men, Will Smith and Musiq Soulchild. He has also performed on TV shows such as *R&B Divas: Los Angeles*, *Late Night with Conan O’Brien*, *Soul Train*, NBC’s *NFL Under the Helmet* and BET’s *Teen Summit*. In addition, he has toured and performed with Rennie Harris Puremovement, R&B singer Brave Williams, Julian King, R&B group AArries, Mad Skillz, rapper Eve, R&B legend Teddy Pendergrass, Janet Jackson’s DJ Aktive, R&B singer Shanice Wilson, Mary J. Blige, 50 Cent and Philly’s own The Roots. An accomplished dancer, choreographer and teacher, Hill has performed and taught at universities and dance studios locally, nationally and internationally

in London, Santiago, Toronto, Bermuda, Monaco, Bogotá, Democratic Republic of Congo, East Asia, Egypt, Israel and Palestine. In 2020, Hill graduated from Wilson College in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania with an MFA in choreography. Hill's inspiration for dance comes from his community and family. He continues to educate and inspire others through his hard work, dedication and commitment to hip-hop and its culture. In January 2022, Hill was sworn in as Councilman for Sharon Hill, Pennsylvania, a suburban community just outside North Philadelphia where he grew up.

**Marguerite Waller** (Principal dancer & Company Manager, Rennie Harris Puremovement) Waller is a dancer, choreographer and teaching artist born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona. Heavily involved in the local hip-hop community, she pulls from various dance forms, such as waacking, house, locking, breaking, hip-hop, postmodern contemporary and tap in her performance work, choreography and freestyle/battle practice. She is a graduate of Arizona State University, obtaining a BFA in dance, a minor in justice studies and certificates in arts entrepreneurship and socially engaged practice in design and the arts. In addition, Waller is a Fulbright Summer Institute participant, a recipient of the Joan Frazer Memorial Award for Judaism and the Arts and a published writer. She is an Arts and Humanities Fellow through the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities. Waller recently left Washington, D.C. and her role with local nonprofit Dance Exchange. She now lives in NYC, dancing and making. Waller is deeply honored to be a principal dancer with Rennie Harris Puremovement, as well as Company Manager.

**Angel Anderson** (Principal dancer, Rennie Harris Puremovement) Anderson is a performing artist, scholar and educator from the south suburbs of Chicago. Encompassing various dance forms rooted in Africanist traditions, her movement archive includes street and club dance forms, modern and contemporary sensibilities, neo-traditional African dances and traditional West African dances. Anderson is an alumna of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where she obtained her Bachelor of Fine Arts in dance and Bachelor of Science in psychology. Performing nationally as a principal dancer of RHMP, Anderson has also assisted Harris in works such as *Dear Frankie* (Hubbard Street Dance Chicago) and *Jacobs Ladder* (Dayton Contemporary Dance Company). Anderson has studied at Rennie Harris University and Ecole Des Sables via the Training Diaspora Africa program and is currently an MFA student at University of Colorado Boulder.

**Zakhele "Swazi" Grabowski** (Apprentice, Rennie Harris Puremovement) Grabowski is a competitive breaker, tap dancer and musician. Originally from Eswatini, he is now based in NYC. He is a member of the Dynamic Rockers Crew, Breaking For Gold USA (teen team) and will be representing the USA in Slovenia in May at the Kidz World Breaking Championships. He is delighted and honored to be performing with Rennie Harris Puremovement.

**Rachel Snider** (Principal dancer & Rehearsal Director, Rennie Harris Puremovement) Snider is a Chambersburg, PA native who relocated to Philadelphia in 2016. She started dancing at age three, training in ballet and modern, and competed in multiple dance competitions. Snider began learning hip-hop at the age of twelve with Jason Reed in REACH! Hip Hop. She discovered her true passion for dance through Moncell Durden and his company, Keystone Dance Project, learning styles such as hip-hop, locking, house, breaking, etc. Through Durden, Snider met her biggest dance inspiration and mentor, Marcus Tucker, training under his direction and The Hood Lockers for eight years. She has become a core member of The Hood Lockers and Hood Nation and is an alumna of Jacob's Pillow for Social Dances - Jazz to Hip Hop. Snider has performed in shows across college campuses, taught workshops at Ursinus College and York College, and assisted Tucker's teaching residency at Eastern University. She has been teaching in Philadelphia for six years at Vince Johnson's Movemakers Philly and Lisa Welsch's First Position Dance Arts. Snider became a core member of Rennie Harris Puremovement in 2022 and is eager to continue her journey with the company.

**Miyeko Harris** (Apprentice, Rennie Harris Puremovement)

Born in Philadelphia, Harris began training in Austin, Texas at the age of eight. She later returned to Philadelphia and began her pre-professional training at the Koresh School of Dance, where she trained under Melissa Rector, Roni Koresh and Eva Szabo. Harris performed with the Koresh Youth Ensemble for three years. Most recently, she performed with Maura Townsend Dance in the Los Angeles Dance Festival at the Luckman Theatre. Harris is in her third year of college at Fullerton College in California. She is excited to be performing with Rennie Harris Puremovement and looks forward to this next chapter in her life.

**Joshua "butterfly.god" Archibald** (Principal dancer, Rennie Harris Puremovement)

Jamaican-born and Miami-based, Archibald is a multidisciplinary artist with a focus on spiritual and esoteric material. He was brought up in a firm, Christian household and draws inspiration from both the teachings of his youth and the consequent spiritual journey of adulthood. Having a music producer for a father and raised as a percussionist, he comes from a musically inclined background. He was a regular drummer for his church as well as his high school jazz ensemble. During the later years of his education, he became an engineering student and simultaneously found an interest in theatre. Although dance is his medium of choice, his education and training in these different areas inform his creative process and ultimate expression as an individual and artist. As a dance major, he received most of his ballet and contemporary training at Miami-Dade College under Michelle Grant-Murray. In addition to his participation in the dance program, he independently trained in hip-hop and other street styles with different crews and leaders in the community. Lately, he has focused on developing his own movement to lay the foundation for future works.

**Tyreis Hunte** (Associate dancer, Rennie Harris Puremovement)

Hunte is a Creole Amazônido world creator born in Guyana and raised as a global artistic nomad. Hunte is keen on the historic and contemporary contributions of street culture in global societies and the integrity of consuming/producing the contemporary Black. They are a Davis World Scholar and alum of the United World College in Changshu, China. They received their BA with distinction in dance and Asian studies with a focus on movement therapy from St. Olaf College. This influenced their participation and work in joining the inaugural cohort of Rennie Harris University Hip Hop Certification Program and receiving certification in men's and women's design from Istituto di Moda Burgo in Milan, Italy. Some of Hunte's collaborators include Lloyd N D'Arts Production Company, Animation Dance Crew, Giada Negroni (DueDa), Arneshia Williams, Cudjoe Emmanuel, Heather Klopchin, CompanyDance, Melissa Teodoro (Palenque Dance Company), BRKFST Dance Crew, Afoutayi Dmaco Dance Company, Marciano Dos Santos (Contempo Dance Company), Mathew Janczewski (Arena Dance Company), Samba Colorado and Raw Groove Presents. Hunte is grateful to have exchanged with communities and audiences throughout the globe including the National Cultural Center and the National Theatre Guild Georgetown, The Royal Family of Norway, Suzhou Industrial District, San Vittore Milano, The Cowles Center of Performing Arts (Minneapolis), Macky Auditorium, Atlas B2 Space, American College Dance Association and The Carpenter Performing Arts Center in Long Beach, CA. They are currently a 2024 CAAAS research fellow whilst completing their MFA in dance at the University of Colorado Boulder. Hunte is also reigning Samba King Colorado.

**Ayodele Casel** (Tap Soloist)

A Doris Duke Artist in the dance category, Casel is an award-winning and critically acclaimed tap dancer and choreographer. Born in the Bronx and raised in Puerto Rico, her practice centers highly narrative works rooted in expressions of selfhood, culture and legacy. Her projects include her concert and Bessie Award-winning film, *Chasing Magic*, her one-woman show, *While I Have the Floor*, and her theatrical and film series, *Diary of a Tap Dancer*. She served as a tap choreographer for the Broadway revival of *Funny Girl*, which garnered her a 2022 Drama Desk nomination for Outstanding Choreography. Casel was a 2019-2020 fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, an artist-in-residence at Harvard University and is the recipient of a United States Artist Fellowship, Herb Alpert Award and Hooper and Flo-Bert award. In 2021, Casel was depicted on a U.S. Postal Service Forever Stamp celebrating tap dance.

**Torya Beard** (Managing & Creative Director of Ayodele Casel)

Beard's credits include *Ayodele Casel: Chasing Magic* at American Repertory Theatre and Broadway productions of *Funny Girl* (Assistant Director), *Waitress* (Assistant Director) and *The Lion King* (Swing, Dance Captain). Educational credits include *Sophisticated Ladies* (Co-Director/Choreographer) at University of Michigan and *Pippin* (Director) at Syracuse University. Other recent projects include *Jesus Christ Superstar: Highlights from the All-Female Studio Cast Recording* (Executive Producer) and the 2023 Bessie Awards (Creative Producer). Beard received APAP's inaugural CIPA Award for Outstanding Achievement in Creative Producing. Beard is Artistic Director at Excellence Community Schools, Co-Founder of the social enterprise tall poPpy (with Darren Biggart and Jeanine Tesori), and sits on the boards of Earl Mosley's Diversity of Dance, percussive dance company, SOLE Defined, and Raja Feather Kelly's dance-theatre-media company, the feath3r theory. Beard's creative partnership with Ayodele Casel has been a significant collaboration. The pair has developed numerous projects, among them: *While I Have the Floor, Rooted*, ALL ARTS' Past, Present, Future Film Festival; the Bessie Award-winning dance film, and subsequent stage production, *Ayodele Casel: Chasing Magic; Freedom... In Progress*; Max Roach 100; and *Ayodele Casel + Arturo O'Farrill*. Beard's New York City Center commissions include the digital series *Diary of a Tap Dancer V.6: Us, Where We Dwell*, the inaugural five-borough tour of *City Center on the Move*, and, most recently, *Ayodele Casel | Artists at the Center*. Beard and Casel are Resident Directors of Dance Lab New York's Tap Project and were co-curators of the Little Island Dance Festival.

**Michael Manson, Jr.** (Founder and Dancer, House of Jit)

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

**Gabrielle "Queen Gabby" McLeod** (Dancer, House of Jit)

McLeod is the queen of Detroit jit. Throughout her journey, she has dedicated over a decade to uplifting Detroit's dance culture, striving to enrich the development of jit's cultural scene nationally and internationally as a dancer, choreographer and educator. A core member of House of Jit, McLeod is the director of the Detroit Pistons Jit Team. She has won the Kresge Artist Fellowship for Live Arts; curates events with Snipes to promote Detroit's dance battle culture; has been a guest performer and judge for Red Bull's Dance Your Style series; and directs, choreographs and performs with rapper Tee Grizzley. McLeod has been featured in *Forbes Magazine* detailing the history of jit and its importance to the city of Detroit. She was a representative for Detroit jit at the World Culture Festival in Washington, D.C. She performed in the opera *BLUE* with the Detroit Opera House and worked the Slippage project with the Detroit Institute of Arts, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and the Toledo Museum of Art. McLeod has performed for the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture; showcased and taught jit internationally in Lilongwe, Malawi and Paris, France; and was a guest artist for the critically acclaimed show *The Jazz Continuum*. She taught the foundation and history of Detroit jit at the University of Michigan, Wayne State University, Oakland University, Eastern Michigan University, Northwestern University and Arizona State University. She has taught various workshops across the country in cities including New York, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Atlanta and Detroit. Through her work individually and collectively with House of Jit, McLeod has

been a pioneering force in Detroit's cultural landscape, propelling jit to new audiences and illuminating Detroit's hidden gem, while helping open doors for women in a predominantly male-dominated genre. Her relentless commitment to advancing jit is evident in her efforts to educate diverse demographics about its rich history and origins.

**Lilanie "Lily/The First Lady of House Of Jit" Karunanayake** (Dancer, House of Jit)

Karunanayake has been jitting for five years now. She was previously dancing professionally in the styles of jazz, ballet, tap, lyrical and hip-hop at Gotta Dance in Sterling Heights, MI. Afterwards, she continued dancing for the Henry Ford II High School dance team and was on the Intrigue Hip Hop Dance Team at Oakland University. After graduating from college with her bachelor's degree in criminal justice, Karunanayake joined local hip-hop crews, such as NOIZE and Melodic Nocturne. In 2018, Karunanayake started training in Detroit jit with Michael Manson.

**James Broxton** (Founder and Dancer, House of Jit)

Broxton is an Inkster, Michigan native, who was born and raised in Milwaukee, WI. He has been friends with Michael Manson since high school. Since then, both have danced for the Detroit Pistons, traveled the country and started a jit crew called The League. Throughout the years, Broxton also pursued his interests in modeling and acting. In 2019, he helped Manson launch the company House of Jit.

**Michael "King Flash" Reed** (Dancer, House of Jit)

Reed is an experienced, energetic and engaging dancer with over 15 years of performance experience in hip-hop foundation, Detroit jit and other street dance forms and techniques. He is passionate about captivating audiences with creative and dynamic choreography and continuously maintains optimal levels of physical fitness and personal health to perform at an exemplary level. Reed excels at expressive movement across a variety of mediums and is committed to continuous learning and growth within his craft.

**Malaino "Asap" Ross** (Dancer, House of Jit)

Ross was born and raised in Detroit, MI. He started jitting in 2018, and it has been a passion for him ever since. Ross has worked with the Detroit Pistons, Tee Grizzley and Red Bull, and is a principal member of House of Jit.

**Tristan "The Golden Child" Hutchinson** (Dancer, House of Jit)

Hutchinson is a 22-year-old dancer, born and raised in Detroit. He has been dancing for the past 18 years. In the beginning, Hutchinson specialized in the dance styles of waving and krumping. He started showing an interest in Detroit jit when he discovered a crew called Run Jit. Later, he took a class from the Queen of Jit, Gabby McLeod. Detroit jit became a passion for him, and he continued his training through Michael Manson, becoming a member of House of Jit this year. Hutchinson considers Detroit jit a lifestyle. It is by far his favorite dance style of art.

**Charles "King Charles" L. Parks IV** (Co-founder and Dancer, Creation Global)

Parks is a Chicago footwork pioneer from the southside of Chicago and a prominent international teaching artist. He has been a global ambassador for the art form for 18+ years. He is the founder and leader of Creation Global, an international Chicago footwork dance crew with over 90 members worldwide. Parks was the Artistic Director of renowned Chicago dance company The FootworkKINGZ, which was featured on major television shows including *America's Got Talent* and *America's Best Dance Crew*. He has worked professionally with many iconic artists, including touring with Madonna for years and performing with Elton John and will.i.am. Parks continues to blow audiences away with his energy and creativity. His commercial work and stage performances include Omarion, Twista, Bakermat, Willow Smith, Verizon and Nike. Parks is a mentor to many leaders and future leaders worldwide. He is also the creator of an open footwork style event called Footwork Frenzy and is a co-founder of Chicago Footworkology, a footwork camp created in response to the global pandemic that provides dance and music programming to educate students globally about Chicago footwork culture.



### **Eddie “Pause Eddie” Martin Jr.** (Co-founder and Dancer, Creation Global)

Hailing from Chicago, Martin began dancing at the age of 15 and has not looked back since. Out of options, with nowhere to turn and eager to avoid the violence that plagued his neighborhood, Martin picked up dance as a creative outlet. What began as a hobby, quickly turned into a full-fledged career, teaching all over the U.S. in studios such as Broadway Dance Center, Debbie Reynolds, Millennium Dance Complex, Kreativmndz and Hubbard Street. On top of his various teaching credentials, Martin has performed on some of the biggest stages including *Dancing with the Stars*, the Video Music Awards with Missy Elliot, MTV's *America's Best Dance Crew*, *America's Got Talent*, *World of Dance*, at Apollo, Mamby On The Beach, PitchFork, Lollapalooza, for the NBA and WNBA, and Chance The Rapper's Magnificent Coloring Day Tour. Always remembering his roots, he constantly gives back to the community by training dancers through his company, Creation. Martin has also donated his time to different local programs such as After School Matters, and teaches at low income/project areas to help encourage the youth to better their lives. His unwavering commitment to keep pushing his art is motivated by his peers, friends, family and the tragic death of his brother, Kendall. Through all the sacrifice and struggle, he hopes to display that motivation with drive and positive energy!

### **Christopher “Mad Dog” Thomas** (Dancer, Creation Global)

Thomas is an extremely motivated dancer, activist and youth mentor. Born and raised in Chicago's Altgeld Gardens project homes, he was inspired to dance at age five by artists like Michael Jackson and New Edition. Thomas danced with K-Phi 9, House Arrest II and Second II None. He later joined King Charles' footwork battle clique, Creation, in 2005. In 2007, Thomas became a member of the FootworkKINGz for their appearance on *Ellen's Really Big Show* in Las Vegas. He acted as the official spokesperson for FWK during their appearance on *America's Got Talent* and joined Kuumba Lynx 2005 in 2009. A sought-after arts and restorative justice facilitator, Thomas has received several awards for his arts and activism work with Chicago youth. He's received the 2020 Chicago Dancemaker Award, 2022 American for The Arts Johnson Award, Greenline Theatre 2022 Artist Award, the 2023 IMAN Roster Artist Award, the Links Hall 2023 residency and the Chicago Cultural Center Dance residency. Additionally, Thomas produced his first film project, a 45-minute production titled *Footwork Through The Trauma*. Currently, Thomas is a 2024 MAP Fund grantee and is working on a new project, *The Displacement Of Chicago Footwork (It's A Juke Story, You Wouldn't Understand)*. In the summer of 2022, under the creative direction of Kuumba Lynx, he developed Juke for Liberation, a reconciliation of Chicago's juke DJs and producers, footwork battle cliques and dance communities. Thomas and his young apprentices at Kuumba Lynx have performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Music and Movement Festival at the Auditorium Theater, Chicago Youth Dance Festival at the Harris Theater, Our Chance to Dance at NEIU and at two appearances at the Chicago Hip Hop Theater Fest. Creating opportunities for the footwork community and using this style as a tool of social liberation through artistic expression is very important to Thomas. His work allows him to educate and organize young people to use their art for social liberation and change.

### **Donetta “LiBit” Jackson** (Co-founder and Dancer, Creation Global)

Jackson is a versatile dance performer, instructor, choreographer and actress. Born and raised on the southeast side of Chicago, she began dancing at the Sammy Dyer School of the Theatre at the age of seven. At 11 years old, she became one of the original members of the prestigious M.A.D.D. Rhythms tap company and later, joined the Chicago footwork crew, Creation Battle Clique/Creation Global. She choreographs for and performs with the Grammy® Award-winning artist, Chance the Rapper. One highlight of her career is performing alongside Missy Elliot at the 2019 Video Music Awards for her Michael Jackson Video Vanguard Award performance. Jackson, recently acknowledged as a sister with a superpower by *Rolling Out Magazine*, has also footworked internationally for corporations like Nike and Jordan, and competed on season six of MTV's *America's Best Dance Crew* with the Chicago FootworkKINGz. Recently, Jackson appeared on the Fox/Hulu dance series, *The Big Leap*, as Tamra Smalls and was also one of the lead dancers in the Red Hot Chili Peppers new video, “The Drummer.”

**Brytiece Wallace** (Master Drummer, Rennie Harris Hip-Hop Orchestra)

Wallace is a Philadelphia native with a passion for West African music and dance. He honed his skills by studying with artists such as Ira Bond and Mbembe Bangoura, and with various organizations including Universal African Drum and Dance and Malidelphia. Wallace showcases his talent and dedication to African drumming and dancing as a musical director for the Kulu Mele Dance Ensemble. His contributions to the Philadelphia arts community are invaluable, inspiring others with his creativity and commitment to his craft. He hopes to continue making a significant impact with his performances, teaching and leadership within the ensemble.

**Akim Funk Buddha** (Beatboxer, Rennie Harris Hip-Hop Orchestra)

Hip-hop performer, dancer and teacher, Buddha is one of five American artists to win a U.S./Japan Creative Artists' Program grant for a three-month residency and cultural exchange in Japan. The grant is awarded by the U.S. Japan Friendship Commission in conjunction with the National Endowment for the Arts. Buddha was selected twice to be a hip-hop ambassador and awarded a competitive hip-hop fellowship by the Next Level program, an initiative of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. In 2018, he went to Azerbaijan and in 2022, he went to Ireland. Buddha is a multi-faceted performance artist with talents ranging from high-energy classic hip-hop rhymes, beat-boxing and Mongolian throat-singing to body-balancing, martial arts, tap dance and circus arts. Buddha is known for his holistic approach to hip-hop, drawing from a full spectrum of cultural traditions and artistic disciplines. Buddha's stage productions transcend borders and have been featured at The Kennedy Center and throughout New York City, including at Central Park SummerStage, The Blue Note, The Whitney Museum (VH1 Hip Hop Honors), Lincoln Center Outdoors, Joe's Pub, The Winter Garden Theatre, La MaMa Theater and The Rubin Museum. His shows are featured annually at BAMCafé Live at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. He won the award for best choreography in New York's Fringe Festival for the musical *Average Asian American*. Buddha has made appearances on *The Late Show with David Letterman* and *Sesame Street* and can be seen as an emcee in the award-winning documentary *FreeStyle - The Art of Rhyme*. Buddha has collaborated with Bobby McFerrin at Carnegie Hall and toured the world with the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, performing as throat singer/vocalist, beatboxer, percussionist and dancer. Buddha was also the specialized casting agent for dancers on the film *Once Again* by Boaz Yakin (winner of the Audience Award at the Tallinn Film Fest).

**Kenny "The Human Orchestra" Muhammad** (Beatboxer, Rennie Harris Hip-Hop Orchestra)

Muhammad has expanded the range of art that some call "the human beat box." He redefined the human body as the first instrument. Muhammad summons Afro-Cuban, jazz, rock, reggae, salsa, house, techno, jungle, trance, hip-hop, drum and bass rhythms from the depths of his soul and the ethers of the universe to create an amazing array of human orchestrations. Muhammad is a three-time, consecutive winner of Showtime at the Apollo in 1991. He has toured Japan, Korea, Africa, Russia, Croatia, Spain, France, Montenegro, Ghana and all across the United States. He has developed a worldwide fan base, having shared the stage with Public Enemy, Mindless Self Indulgence, Dougie Fresh, Matisyahu, Squarepusher, The X-ecutioners, Regina Bell, The Gap Band, Maxwell, Angie Stone, India Arie, Stevie Wonder, Vernon Reid, Take 6 and a cameo with Patti LaBelle. In addition to his work with hip-hop, R&B and jazz artists, Muhammad's musical background includes performances with the New York Symphony Orchestra at Manhattan Center, conducted by David Eaton, a major performance at King Sey Jung Hall in Seoul, Korea with violin virtuoso Eugene Park, and at Carnegie Hall. He appeared on *CBS This Morning* and *Good Day New York*. Muhammad has appeared on Canada's *Much Music Video* with Busta Rhymes, MTV, MTV2, *30 Seconds of Fame* and *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. Muhammad also made his debut appearance on the History Channel's *Stan Lee's SuperHumans* as the SuperHuman Beatbox Vocal Percussionist!

**Alexander “Bizkit” Sanchez** (Beatboxer, Rennie Harris Hip Hop Orchestra)

Born in White Plains, New York, Sanchez is a world-renowned beatbox artist and professional dancer based in Philadelphia. He is currently the second-best beatboxer in the United States and a Grand Beatbox Battle World Champion. Performing on stages in Japan, Poland and France for beatboxing competitions, Sanchez is a seasoned battler and performer who is dedicated to perfecting his craft. Having graduated from the University of the Arts with a BFA in dance, he has a deep understanding of musicality and dynamics within sound and body, as well as the importance of expressing one's individuality through mediums of hip-hop culture.

**Edward “Uptown Ed” Smallwood** (Bucket Drummer, Rennie Harris Hip-Hop Orchestra)

Smallwood is a dynamic drummer hailing from the vibrant music scene of Philadelphia. Born and raised in the city of brotherly love, Smallwood has been captivating audiences with his infectious rhythms and electrifying performances since he picked up his first pair of drumsticks at the age of three. With a foundation grounded in gospel and funk, Smallwood's drumming style is a unique fusion of traditional and contemporary influences. He honed his craft in churches, local clubs, community centers and the streets, from Philly to New Orleans, drawing inspiration from legendary musicians and the sounds of the city itself. Over the years, he has collaborated with a diverse array of artists, from indie rock bands to hip-hop collectives, showcasing his versatility and passion for music.

**Tony “Mr Y Not” Royster** (Bucket Drummer, Rennie Harris Hip-Hop Orchestra)

Founder of Positive Movement Entertainment (@PMEDRUMLINE), Royster strives to keep a positive mind to decrease negative reactions and instead bring smiles to the hearts of his neighbors through drums, love and positive vibes. In hopes to decrease the violence in his city, he promotes “PUT DOWN THE GUNZ & PICK UP SOME DRUMS” for a better community! Check out Royster's documentary on [whourockinwit.org](http://whourockinwit.org) and then watch him on WHYY's *Albie's Elevator* episode “Movie Night.”

**Solomon Saunders** (Bucket Drummer, Rennie Harris Hip-Hop Orchestra)

Saunders has had a deep passion for the arts since childhood, whether playing drums at home or performing at schools across the city. If the arts are involved, Saunders is there. For the past few years, he has been a dedicated member of PME Drumline, a well-known community drumline in Philadelphia, featuring the iconic Philly Elmo. Through his talent and commitment, Saunders continues to make an impact in the local arts scene.

**DJ Razor Ramon** (Turntablist, Rennie Harris Hip Hop Orchestra)

Razor Ramon is a DJ, turntablist and producer from Philadelphia. He has been in the Philly hip-hop scene for over 30 years and has been influenced by DJs such as Grandmaster Flash, Grandmixer D.X.T., the late Jam Master Jay, DJ Jazzy Jeff and DJ Cash Money. The award-winning turntablist is the 2001 *Philadelphia City Paper* Pitch Control DJ Battle Champion, 2002 NBA All-Star Weekend DJ Battle Champion and the seven-time Power 99 FM (Clear Channel) DJ Battle Champion. Ramon has also performed on stages throughout the United States and internationally including Toronto, Venice, Monaco, London, 26 cities in The Netherlands, Auckland, six cities in Mexico, Beijing, Melbourne, and Sydney. Ramon has performed with poets such as Ursula Rucker, Mo Beasley and Rich Medina. He has also performed with hip-hop artists Grand Agent, Kenny “The Human Orchestra” Muhammad, Poor Righteous Teachers, DJ Cash Money, Supernatural, Medusa, Hezekiah, Boogaloo Sam (the creator of popping and boogalooing) & The Electric Boogaloos, the late Don Campbell (the creator of locking), Crazy Legs, Pop Master Fabel and the Rock Steady Crew, Illstyle & Peace Productions Dance Theatre Company and Danse4Nia/Phoenix Danse. Ramon has also performed Off-Broadway in *Rennie Harris' Legends of Hip-Hop*. Ramon was part of one of the first hip-hop acts to perform at the Kimmel Center in *Rennie Harris' Legends of Hip-Hop*. He has commercially recorded music with Grand Agent, Mel Ink, Boyz II Men, Wort Und Totschlag (W.U.T.-German Hip Hop Artists), Theotis Joe and NFL Films. He released two solo albums entitled *Introducing The Turntablistic DJ Razor Ramon* and *For Beats Sake Volume I*. Ramon is the recipient of the 2003 Philly DJ Appreciation Award for his years of dedicated service, and in 2023, he made history by becoming the first turntablist to be nominated for

a Bessie Award. DJ Razor Ramon continues to create music, perform in theatres, clubs and lounges throughout Philadelphia and abroad, displaying his skills and passion for the art of turntablism.

**Darrin M. Ross** (Music Editor, Composer & Producer)

Ross has been producing and engineering songs since 1984 with Jam On Productions. He has recently completed the score for Suzan-Lori Parks' *Top Dog/Underdog*. He is also the recipient of a 2001 New York Dance & Performance Award (BESSIE) for his music composition for *Rome & Jewels*. Ross has worked with and established many artists in the industry such as PM Dawn, Newcleus, Aphillyation, Ram Squad, Tuff Crew, Doug E. Fresh, King Britt, ZHANE, Helen Bruner, Jungle Brothers, Kim Waters, Todd Terry, The Roots, Bahamadia, Dee Dee Sharp Gamble, No Question, AZ YET, Victor Duplaix, Bowser, Rampage, Brother Peace, Major Figgas, Grisha Coleman, Leon Evans, Mike Knox and more. In 1992, he formed I.Q. Records and is now directing his own production company, KIA-TIFF. Past collaborations with Rennie Harris include the 1990 co-production of television segments for *Dance Party USA* and *One House Street*, scoring and composition efforts for works with the Pennsylvania Ballet (now Philadelphia Ballet) and the Memphis Ballet, and various movies.

**Julie Ballard** (Production Videography & Lighting Designer)

A member of USA829, Ballard is a professional lighting designer, ETCP-certified electrician and theatrical technician. She is affiliated with IATSE Local 2 and the Actors' Equity Association. Additionally, Ballard is the owner and operator of OverlapLighting Productions, LLC, a freelance production company specializing in lighting design, production/stage management and photography. She has designed for the Charlotte Ballet, Giordano Dance Chicago, Ballet West and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago.

Ballard has freelanced for two decades in and around the Midwest, touring regionally, nationally and internationally with Hubbard Street, Pilobolus, Deeply Rooted Dance Theater, The Seldoms and David Dorfman Dance. Theatre audiences have seen her designs in the U.S. and across Europe, Siberia and South Africa. Ballard holds degrees in theatre (BA, 1999) and lighting design (MFA, 2004) from Kent State University and the University of Florida, respectively. [overlaplighting.com](http://overlaplighting.com)

**RENNIE HARRIS PUREMOVEMENT STAFF**

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