



FIRSTWORKS
connecting art with audiences

FirstWorks Arts Learning

Presents Urban Bush Women

Create Dance. Create Community

For a special student performance/demonstration celebrating the history of UBW, movement for everyone & "Walking w/"Trane".

February 26, 2016

11:00 am @ The Vets

1 Avenue of the Arts

Providence, RI 02903

Student Guide



About FirstWorks Arts Learning

FirstWorks has built deep, ongoing relationships with over 30 public and charter schools across Rhode Island to provide access to artists and help fill the gap left from severe public spending cuts.

The program features workshops taught by leading artists who provide rich experiential learning in a classroom setting, allows students and their families to attend world-class performances, and provides professional development and lesson plans for teachers.

“FirstWorks is clearly becoming a cultural beacon in its community and state. It’s very exciting to see how they’ve mobilized a community.” - National Endowment for the Arts

Please visit us online at www.first-works.org for further information about Arts Learning programming and season offerings.





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Snapshot

Questions to Think About During the Performance

- What kind of experiences do Urban Bush Women dancers hope to create?
- How can you understand the storyline through dance?
- How is modern dance different from classical dance? From ballet?
- How can dance strengthen community?

What You'll See

You will attend a FirstWorks Arts Learning performance by Urban Bush Women, a modern dance company from Brooklyn, New York. UBW will discuss their history as a modern dance company, will perform selections from "Walking With 'Trane", and will encourage audience participation.

About the Artists

UBW galvanizes artists, activists, audiences and communities through performances, artist development, education and community engagement. With the ground-breaking performance ensemble at its core, ongoing initiatives like the Summer Leadership Institute (SLI), BOLD (Builders, Organizers & Leaders through Dance) and the developing Choreographic Center, UBW continues to affect the overall ecology of the arts by promoting artistic legacies; projecting the voices of the under-heard and people of color; bringing attention to and addressing issues of equity in the dance field and throughout the United States; and by providing platforms and serving as a conduit for culturally and socially relevant experimental art makers.

Mission

Founded in 1984 by choreographer Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Urban Bush Women (UBW) seeks to bring the untold and under-told histories and stories of disenfranchised people to light through dance. They do this from a woman-centered perspective and as members of the African Diaspora community in order to create a more equitable balance of power in the dance world and beyond.

As UBW enters its 32nd year, they continue to use dance as both the message and the medium to bring together diverse audiences through innovative choreography, community collaboration and artistic leadership development.



Q: Where does the dance company name come from and what does it mean ?

A: UBW founder Jawole is inspired by many different things. Jazz is one of the biggest sparks for her creative mind. The name she chose was inspired by a jazz album by Art Ensemble of Chicago called "Urban Bushmen". Jawole liked how the name invoked the idea of the urban city and jungle - or bush - at the same time and identified a unique blend of modern and ancestral roots, just like Urban Bush Women calls upon.

Q: What are "bushmen"?

A: Bush-man: noun, plural noun: Bushmen a member of any of several aboriginal peoples of southern Africa, especially of the Kalahari Desert. They are traditionally nomadic hunter-gatherers. The term is no longer in favor and these people are now called "The San". The term, 'bushman', came from the Dutch term, 'bossiesman', which meant 'bandit' or 'outlaw'.



Q: What does "diaspora" mean?

A: di-as-po-ra: noun

1. the movement, migration, or scattering of a people away from an established or ancestral homeland
2. people settled far from their ancestral homelands

URBAN BUSH WOMAN CORE VALUES:

VALIDATING THE INDIVIDUAL --

Each individual has a unique and powerful contribution to make.

CATALYZING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE --

UBW's work intends to help people make sense out of the world and prepare to take action in it.

BUILDING TRUST THROUGH PROCESS --

A transparent process of artistic and managerial leadership builds and nurtures trust.

ENTERING COMMUNITY & CO-CREATING STORIES --

Each community is unique and has the answers it seeks to uncover.

CELEBRATING THE MOVEMENT & CULTURE OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA --

UBW is committed to highlighting the power, beauty and strength of the African Diaspora.

RECOGNIZING PLACE MATTERS --

We recognize that being part of, responding to and contributing to the overall well-being of our home community, Brooklyn, is of the utmost importance.

3 What is Modern Dance?

modern dance: NOUN, 1. a form of contemporary theatrical and concert dance employing a special technique for developing the use of the entire body in movements expressive of abstract ideas.

Modern dance is a broad genre of western concert or theatrical dance (as opposed to participation dance), primarily arising out of Germany and the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The oversimplification of modern dance's history often leads to the erroneous explanation that the art form emerged merely as a rejection of, or rebellion against, classical ballet. An in-depth analysis of the context of the emergence of modern dance reveals that as early as the 1880s, a range of socioeconomic changes in both the United States and Europe was initiating tremendous shifts in the dance world.

In America, increasing industrialization, the rise of a middle class (which had more disposable income and free time), and the decline of Victorian social strictures led to, among other changes, a new interest in health and physical fitness. "It was in this atmosphere that a 'new dance' was emerging as much from a rejection of social structures as from a dissatisfaction with ballet," wrote Joshua Legg in his 2011 book, *Introduction to Modern Dance Techniques*. During that same period, "the champions of physical education helped to prepare the way for modern dance, and gymnastic exercises served as technical starting points for young women who longed to dance" (Anderson, Jack (1997). *Art Without Boundaries: The World of Modern Dance*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press. p. 8.) —and women's colleges were already offering "aesthetic dance" courses by the end of the 1880s.

Simultaneously, dance artists such as Isadora Duncan, Maud Allen, and Loie Fuller were pioneering new forms and practices in what is now called aesthetic or free dance for performance. These dancers disregarded ballet's strict movement vocabulary, the particular, limited set of movements that were considered proper to ballet, and stopped wearing corsets and pointe shoes in the search for greater freedom of movement.

Emil Rath, who wrote at length about this emerging art form at the time stated, “Music and rhythmic bodily movement are twin sisters of art, as they have come into existence simultaneously...today we see in the artistic work of Isadora Duncan, Maud Allen, and others the use of a form of dancing which strives to portray in movements what the music master expresses in his compositions—interpretative dancing.”

American modern dance can be roughly divided into three periods or eras:

Dates	Era	Examples of Artists	Notes
1880-1923	Early Modern Period	Isadora Duncan, Loie Fuller, Ruth St. Denis, Ted Shawn, Eleanor Anderson	New Dance, Free Dance, and Modern Romanticism could be other names for this period. While artistic practice changed tremendously during this period, clearly distinct modern dance techniques had not yet emerged.
1923-1946	Central Modern Period	Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Katherine Dunham, Charles Weidman, Lester Horton	Many dance artists during this era searched for an American way of moving, and created an American artform. They also developed clearly defined and recognizable dance training systems.
1946-1957	Late Modern Period	José Limón, Pearl Primus, Merce Cunningham, Talley Beatty, Erick Hawkins, Anna Sokolow, Anna Halprin, Paul Taylor	This period brought clarity of abstractionism, the rise of the avant-garde, and paved the way for postmodernist dance.

From roughly 1914 forward, sociopolitical concerns added fuel to the continued development of modernist dance in the United States and Germany. The First and Second World Wars, the rise of fascism, the Great Depression, and the evolution of other art forms each informed modern dance along the way. Moving into the 1960s, new ideas about dance began to emerge, again in large part as a response to both earlier dance forms as much as to social changes. Eventually, postmodern dance artists would reject the formalism of modern dance, and include elements such as performance art, contact improvisation, release-technique, and improvisation.

4 African American Modern Dance

The development of modern dance embraced the contributions of African American dance artists regardless of whether they made pure modern dance works or blended modern dance with African and Caribbean influences.

- Katherine Dunham—An African American dancer, and anthropologist. Originally a ballet dancer, she founded her first company Ballet Negre in 1936 and later the Katherine Dunham Dance Company based in Chicago, Illinois. In 1945, Dunham opened a school in New York where she taught Katherine Dunham Technique, a blend of African and Caribbean movement (flexible torso and spine, articulated pelvis, isolation of the limbs, and polyrhythmic movement) integrated with techniques of ballet and modern dance.
- Pearl Primus—A dancer, choreographer, and anthropologist, Primus drew on African and Caribbean dances to create strong dramatic works characterized by large leaps in the air. Primus often based her dances on the work of black writers and on racial and African-American issues. Primus created works based on Langston Hughes *The Negro Speaks of Rivers* (1944), and Lewis Allan's *Strange Fruit* (1945). Her dance company developed into the Pearl Primus Dance Language Institute which teaches her method of blending African-American, Caribbean, and African influences with modern dance and ballet techniques.
- Alvin Ailey—A student of Lester Horton, Bella Lewitzky, and later Martha Graham, Ailey spent several years working in both concert and theater dance. In 1958, Ailey and a group of young African-American dancers performed as the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in New York. Ailey drew upon his blood memories of Texas, the blues, spirituals, and gospel as inspiration. His most popular and critically acclaimed work is *Revelations* (1960).



5 Meet Jawole!

Choreographer and dancer Jawole Willa Jo Zollar was born in 1950 and raised in Kansas City, Missouri. One of six children, Ms. Zollar grew up in a family that was steeped in African American culture. She grew up listening to jazz music and imagining movement in her head. Her first dance teacher was Joseph Stevenson, a student of American dance pioneer Katherine Dunham. Having earned her B.A. degree in dance from the University of Missouri in Kansas City and an M.F.A. degree from Florida State University, Ms. Zollar moved to New York City in 1980 to study dance with Dianne McIntyre at Sounds in Motion. In 1984, she left McIntyre's studio to establish the internationally acclaimed dance company, Urban Bush Women.



Ms. Zollar's choreographic style is influenced by the dance traditions of black Americans—modern dance, African dance, and social dance. Her movement synthesizes influences from modern dance (a combination of Dunham, Graham, Cunningham, and Limón techniques), Afro-Cuban, Haitian, and Congolese dance. She emphasizes the use of weight and fluidity as opposed to creating clean shapes. From her Afro-Cuban dance training she employs a strong sense of dynamic timing, rhythmic patterns, and continuous flow of movement. She derives many of her movement ideas from African-American culture—allowing the “church testifying, emotional energy to shape the form, and the rawness of that form, like you have in jazz.”

Her work with UBW has earned five grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and a fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts. Ms. Zollar has also garnered accolades as a teacher and speaker. These include receiving a New York Dance and Performance BESSIE Award in 1992. Ms. Zollar has created works for Alvin Ailey, the American Dance Theater, Ballet Arizona, Philadanco, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company and others. Ms. Zollar is Artist in Residence at Florida State University.

Her favorite color is orange and her favorite food is arugula. Her favorite season is Spring or Fall in New York.

On directing & choreography...

Ms. Zollar says being a good director and choreographer requires a combination of passion for the art, long hours, and a commitment and willingness to grow. However, she says, "It's all about the individual. There are certain socialization processes as women that either work for you or against you. I think it's all in terms of how the individual internalizes that that really comes to your own style."

Leadership, she adds, is also about values. "When I first began, for me the value was about just getting the work done by any means necessary. What I've learned is that positive reinforcement goes much further than negative reinforcement."

Ms. Zollar has choreographed more than 30 works for UBW and still performs, although less now. "When I auditioned dancers for the 30th anniversary, I incorporated the assets of the company members that I most wanted to work with – intelligence and creativity are a big part of that. I worked from their basic talents insofar as my dancers also help generate the material for my pieces. I give them ideas and images and they generate much of the movement. At my age, their bodies can do things that I can no longer do, and it opens me up to creative possibilities. Then, I work in an editing and refining process with a dramaturg. For example, in the opening section of Hep Hep, there is a lot of footwork because some of the dancers were good tap dancers."

"I have always worked this way, more or less. In the early days, my dancers would generate 50% of the movement and I would generate 50% – and now they generate 70-80%. I always make a conscious decision to work with the people in the room, and if I'm working with intelligent creative people why would I ignore that? As I have aged, I don't have the same physical imagination because my body does not move in those kinds of ways, and that can become potentially limiting, but I also see that as something interesting."

She says she believes in exposing her dancers to all the arts. That, coupled with the work, is how she develops them as artists. "It's through doing the work and trying to get to the highest level of the work. By exposing them to writers they may not be familiar with and by learning as much as they can about culture, it's all connected. You can't separate it from the movement." For her, seeing her students and company dancers evolve into artists is very fulfilling.



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Modern Dance Coloring Page!



7 “Walking with ‘Trane”



“Walking with ‘Trane” is a new live music/dance event created by Urban Bush Women dance troupe in tribute to the life of legendary jazz saxophonist John Coltrane and his seminal jazz suite, “A Love Supreme.” Set to a Coltrane-inspired score, composed by Philip White (Side A: “JUST A CLOSER WALK WITH ‘TRANE”) and George O. Caldwell (Side B: “FREED(OM)”), and featuring the Grammy Award-winning pianist Mr. Caldwell playing live during Side B (second act), “Walking with ‘Trane” premiered in September 2015 at Opening Nights at Florida State University, then later had its NYC premiere in December at the prestigious Brooklyn Academy of Music’s Next Wave Festival, where it was considered one of the most important works of the season.

“Walking with ‘Trane” is choreographed by Urban Bush Women Founder Jawole Willa Jo Zollar and Samantha Speis. The music is composed by Philip White and George O. Caldwell. The design team includes Wendall K. Harrington (projections), Helen Lucille Collen (costumes) and Russell Sandifer (lighting). The dramaturg is Talvin Wilks. The company of dancers features Du’Bois A’Keen, Amanda Castro, Courtney J. Cook, Chanon Judson, Tendayi Kuumba, Stephanie Mas, Love Muwakkil, and Samantha Speis.

Q: Why did UBW create this piece? A: John Coltrane released “A Love Supreme” in 1965 when Jawole was 16 years old and it was still fairly new. When she heard it for the first time, at the age of 17, it was a totally new sound, exciting her. She said that the music had so many powerful elements that really spoke to her that she could not have articulated at the time. It always stayed with her, though, and she knew that at some point she wanted to turn to it when she was ready to handle it. After researching and thinking about it for several years and reading about Coltrane’s making of “A Love Supreme”, she thought that it was time to really look at it as a masterwork. She wanted to create a new vision for Urban Bush Women inspired by it. The piece, “Walking with ‘Trane” is the result.

8

John Coltrane

John Coltrane was born September 23, 1926 in Hamlet, North Carolina. He was always surrounded by music. His father played several instruments sparking Coltrane's study of E-flat horn and clarinet. While in high school, Coltrane's musical influences shifted to the likes of Lester Young and Johnny Hodges prompting him to switch to alto saxophone. He continued his musical training in Philadelphia at Granoff Studios and the Ornstein School of Music. He was called to military service during WWII, where he performed in the U.S. Navy Band in Hawaii.



After the war, Coltrane began playing tenor saxophone with the Eddie "CleanHead" Vinson Band, and was later quoted as saying, "A wider area of listening opened up for me. There were many things that people like Hawk, and Ben and Tab Smith were doing in the '40's that I didn't understand, but that I felt emotionally." Prior to joining the Dizzy Gillespie band, Coltrane performed with Jimmy Heath where his passion for experimentation began to take shape. However, it was his work with the Miles Davis Quintet in 1958 that would lead to his own musical evolution. "Miles music gave me plenty of freedom," he once said.

By 1957, Coltrane had been addicted to heroin and alcohol for almost ten years. He nearly overdosed and was subsequently fired from Miles Davis's band. This mortifying experience and brush with death forced him to face his demons and soon he was able to overcome his addiction. He attributed his sobriety to a newfound faith in God, naming his next album, "The Believer", a popular success on which he developed his "sheets of sound"; a three-on-chord method of playing multiple notes at one time.

By 1960 Coltrane had formed his own quartet which included pianist McCoy Tyner, drummer Elvin Jones, and bassist Jimmy Garrison. Eventually adding players like Eric Dolphy, and Pharoah Sanders. The John Coltrane Quartet created some of the most innovative and expressive music in Jazz history including the hit albums: "My Favorite Things," "Africa Brass," "Impressions," "Giant Steps," and his monumental work "A Love Supreme" which attests to the power, glory, love, and greatness of God. Coltrane felt

we must all make a conscious effort to effect positive change in the world, and that his music was an instrument to create positive thought patterns in the minds of people.

In the liner notes to "A Love Supreme", he states that, in 1957, "I experienced, by the grace of God, a spiritual awakening which was to lead me to a richer, fuller, more productive life. At that time, in gratitude, I humbly asked to be given the means and privilege to make others happy through music." This album is generally considered to be Coltrane's greatest work, as it melded the hard bop sensibilities of his early career with the modal jazz and free jazz styles he adopted later. It has influenced many artists beyond Urban Bush Women, from U2 to Carlos Santana and many others. In 2003, "Rolling Stone" magazine called it a "legendary album-long hymn of praise" and stated: "the indelible four-note theme of the first movement, 'Acknowledgement,' is the humble foundation of the suite. But Coltrane's majestic, often violent blowing (famously described as 'sheets of sound') is never self-aggrandizing. Aloft with his classic quartet..., Coltrane soars with nothing but gratitude and joy. You can't help but go with him".

In 1967, liver disease took Coltrane's life leaving many to wonder what might have been. Yet decades after his departure his music still affects and influences the world.

"My goal is to live the truly religious life, and express it in my music. If you live it, when you play there's no problem because the music is part of the whole thing. To be a musician is really something. It goes very, very deep. My music is the spiritual expression of what I am - my faith, my knowledge, my being."



9

How People Feel About “A Love Supreme”

“Every so often this ceases to be a jazz record and is more avant-garde contemporary classical,” remarked Neil Hannon, frontman of The Divine Comedy. “I love the combination of abstract piano that’s all sort of ‘clang’, and weird chords with wailing saxophone over the top.”

“He had a different sound,” says dancer and associate artistic director Samantha Speis. “People often thought of it as anti-jazz, as opposed to being in his place of discovery as a musician.” In developing “Walking with ‘Trane’”, Urban Bush Women put in lots of study: hours of listening to the suite, parsing the sounds of individual instruments and transcribing the work’s compositional themes. “It’s an incredible piece of art . . . that allows you to really have an experience,” Speis says. “It’s remarkable to be able to listen to his music and feel that—the spiritual, transformative journey.”

The extraordinary saxophonist Gary Bartz shares some of his thoughts about Trane:

“John Coltrane gave me an insight of how hard one needs to work in order to create music that has never been heard before. His work effort continues to inspire me. What a wonderful musical scientist he was. In order to compose music on the spot, one cannot leave any stone unturned. One lifetime is not long enough, so we do what we can in the time we have allotted for us. John did enough for several lifetimes. His ‘Giant Step’ changes were the first innovation since musicians learned how to use the cycle of fifths, which was at least a hundred years or more.

What a debt we owe him. His ‘Chasin the Trane’ was very important to me for many reasons. Also, I love the ‘Ballads’ recording. ‘A Love Supreme’ made me realize that this music is really more gospel than any other category. It is hard to pick any one or two recordings, but these are still important to me.”

10 Glossary

All dance has three basic building blocks:

space - the whole design and use of the area in which a dance unfolds.

time - a measurable period during which movement or dance occurs. Time is indicated in dance in many ways, ranging from complex rhythm patterns to long, unbroken periods of stillness.

energy - the intensity, amount or force of the movement. Adjectives such as explosive, smooth, free, restrained, wild, etc. describe different types of energy that dancers can exhibit.

Other relevant terms that will enhance understanding and appreciation of a dance performance:

abstract dance - a dance or series of movements that do not tell a story but create design through pattern, shape and momentum.

canon - the same movement or series of movements performed in successive, overlapping sequence.

choreographer - the artist who creates the concept for a dance, composes the steps and teaches the movement to the dancers.

choreography - the arrangement of movement in space and time.

composer - a person who creates original music, sometimes collaborating with a choreographer to create a score.

dancer - a performer who executes and gives meaning to the movements of a dance on stage.

ensemble - a group of performers on stage.

gesture - the use of motions of the body or limbs as a means of expression or non-verbal communication.

lighting designer - the person who creates a visual concept by designing and arranging the stage illumination for a performance.

narrative dance - a dance (or series of movements) that tells a story.

pattern - a design made by dancers in a space to create a visual and sometimes dramatic configuration.

score - the musical or sound accompaniment for a dance.

shape - a formation or design created by the dancers with the lines of their bodies.

solo - a dance or a section of a dance performed by a single dancer.

unison - the same movement or series of movements performed in the same period of time by more than one dancer.



Additional Resources:

Urban Bush Women:

<https://www.urbanbushwomen.org/>

Urban Bush Women: Twenty Years of African American Dance Theater, Community Engagement, and Working It Out by Nadine George-Graves, ISBN 10-0299235548

Interview with Jawole: <http://uworldseriescommunityconnections.blogspot.com/2015/01/interview-with-jawole-willa-jo-zollar.html>

Video Intro to “Walking with ‘Trane”:

<http://first-works.org/events/2015-16-season/urban-bush-women-walking-with-trane/>

John Coltrane:

The John Coltrane Foundation: <http://www.johncoltrane.com/>

National Public Radio, “The Story of ‘A Love Supreme’”: <http://www.openculture.com/2013/09/john-coltranes-handwritten-outline-for-his-masterpiece-a-love-supreme.html>

Quotes from John Coltrane: <http://jazz-quotes.com/artist/john-coltrane/>

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FirstWorks Arts Learning programs help K-12 students build connections between art, their academic subjects, and their lives.

These school-based **Arts Learning** programs meet grade-level standards and model pathways to the future through exposure to cultural firsts.

FirstWorks Arts Learning enables K-12 youth to interact directly with some of the most inventive, creative minds of our time; bolstering student achievement and broadening career possibilities.

With gratitude to the VSA for their generosity in providing funds for student accessibility for this performance.

The Kennedy Center

vsa

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