

The Dance Complex Presents *Routes & Roots*



Cambridge, MA- September 23, 2019: The Dance Complex presents *Routes & Roots*, three evenings gathering spectacularly talented dancers and choreographers from throughout New England and New York, on one stage, October 18, 19 & 20. *Routes & Roots* considers both the geographic and creative journey of the artist and how their own roots have contributed to the routes that their choreography has taken.

This year's program seeks particular interest in how one's upbringing and following journey affect spirituality, and will feature artists Amirah Sackett, Jean Appolon, Aysha Upchurch, J. Michael Winward, & Soumaya MaRose in rotating repertory.

Performances will begin at 8pm on October 18 & 19, and 7pm on October 20. Tickets \$10 to \$100 when purchased in advance. Tickets and more information available at dancecomplex.org.

Join us at 7pm on Saturday, October 19 for a BEE Dance pre-performance discussion, a great opportunity to learn more about each artist's unique journey to and exploration of spirituality. This conversation is free and open to the public, with reservations encouraged. All "BEE" attendees receive a complimentary refreshment with purchase of a ticket for that evening's performance.

Our ground-level lobby area and performance space as well as our second floor Julie Ince Thompson Theater are ADA compliant. Our motorized lift is currently out of service, please visit dancecomplex.org for up to date information. There is no elevator. Accessible seating is available in the first row of our four-row seating area. Steps lead to the other rows of seating. Gender-neutral accessible bathrooms are located on both the ground and second-floor levels of the building.

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About the Artists:

Amirah Sackett is an internationally recognized hip-hop dancer, choreographer, and teacher who explores and embodies her Muslim American identity through combining hip-hop movement and Islamic themes. She is widely known for her creation of the choreography and performance group known as, "We're Muslim, Don't Panic", which reached viral video fame after being featured on POPSUGAR Celebrity, The Huffington Post, AJ+, and Upworthy. Sackett was honored to be a TEDx speaker, guest lecturer at Harvard University, and a cultural diplomat with the U.S. State Department in Bangladesh and Malaysia.

Aysha Upchurch, the Dancing Diplomat, is a seed planter and soil agitator who creates, facilitates, and designs for radical change. This translates to her working as a sought-after performer, instructor and education consultant whose work sits at the nexus of youth advocacy, social justice, and transformative education. Aysha was also a CATALYSTS artist for the 2018 to 2019 season. She has spoken at national conferences about artfully designing classrooms centered around equity and cultural relevance, the importance of dance and movement in education, and embracing Hip Hop as a powerful literacy and cultural lens in schooling.

Jean Appolon Expressions (JAE) celebrates and advances Haitian folkloric dance by building a contemporary cultural community that produces professional performances, educational opportunities, and dance training for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. Based in Boston and directed by Jean Appolon, JAE's professional company conducts performances, community classes and educational workshops, with the goal of using dance and dialogue to promote healthy communities. The Haitian contemporary dance company combines Modern technique and Haitian folkloric dance, bringing a new artistic vernacular to its audiences. With its dynamic repertoire, JAE educates audiences about Haitian culture, traditions, history and current issues. The company has performed both at major venues such as Boston's Paramount Center, The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, the ICA, The Silver Spring Civic Building, and in city parks and community spaces in free performances accessible to the public. JAE has also performed at many schools and colleges, including American University, Harvard University, Lesley University, Salem State, Bridgewater State and Wheaton College. The company has been fortunate to share the stage with celebrities such as Danny Glover, Henry Louis Gates and Edwidge Danticat, and to collaborate with community partners around the greater Boston area.

J Michael Winward is an independent dance artist based in Boston. With influences in American-style ballroom, ballet, contemporary and somatic dance practices, his work places a strong focus on building connection: connection to one's body, one's self, one's audience, connection between dance partners, connection within and across communities. His solo performances blend movement and memoir, and deal with a variety of topics, including: coming of age, institutional injustice, and the politics of being oneself. For the 2019 to 2020 season, Michael is a CATALYSTS resident artist and will have the opportunity to present his work in January in the CATALYST shows. Through the Steps in Time program, Michael brings social ballroom dance classes and parties to senior, elder, and memory care communities throughout Greater Boston. Dancing with Peter DiMuro/Public Displays of Motion (PDM), Michael works to advance the PDM mission of cultivating dance/arts literacy, advocacy and engagement. Along with Maggie Cee, Michael produces Dancing Queerly, a festival of performances, workshops, discussions, and social dance gatherings by and for the LGBT+ community, friends, and allies. More information can be found at www.jmichaelwinward.com.

Soumaya MaRose is a native Moroccan woman born and raised in Belgium. When she was 13, Soumaya played table and drums and performed at shows, weddings, and events. She became a member of El Housna, a Moroccan girl-band, and for 15 years played with the band at Arabic events in Belgium, France, Germany, and The Netherlands. As an adult, Soumaya began to study Raks Sharqi and different folklores from the culture. In Boston, she collaborates with many local artists including Atlas Soul (North African music), Club Mediteranee (Arabic and Balkan music), Salma Dance with Joanie block, was invited to choreograph to the beautiful music of the amazing musician Walid Zairi and Talween. Creator of the Lionesses EL ATLAS Troupe, first Moroccan troupe in Boston, she produced and choreographed in collaboration with musicians for the first time in the area and Chicago a show dedicated to Moroccan dance and Culture and Raks Sharqi. She has studied, taught workshops, and performed across the USA and internationally (Egypt, Canada, and Belgium) on Moroccan dance styles, Raks Sharqi, and Arabic culture. Soumaya is a committed artist and believes that is very important to work as a bridge between cultures. She appears on local TV, article, and interview to do so. She says "for me, dancing means language. It is my way to share my culture and keep the Arabi woman in me alive." For more information visit www.soumayamarose.com

If you have any further questions or concerns about refunds or ticketing, or accessibility at The Dance Complex, please contact Jake Crawford, Front of House Manager, at jake@dancecomplex.org.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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