

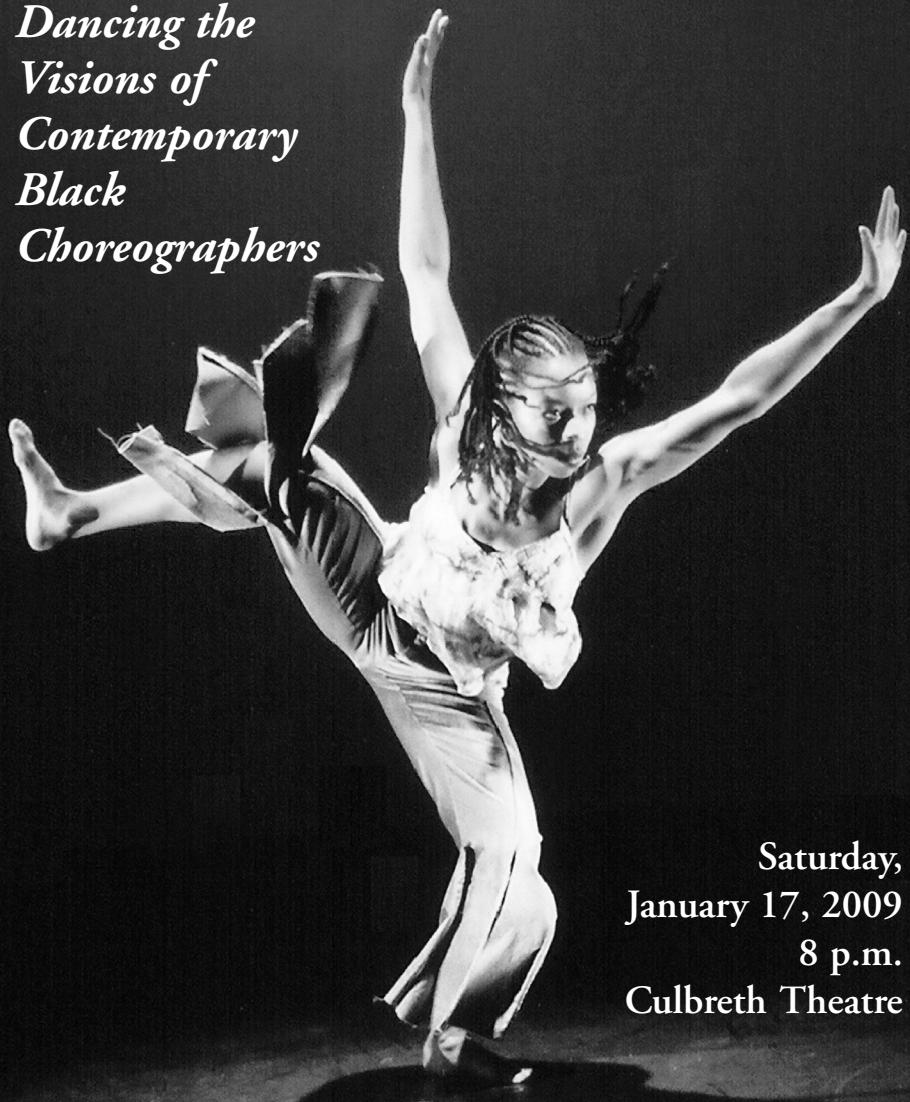
U.Va. Department of Drama
and
Mason/Rhynes Productions
present

Gesel Mason Performance Projects

in

NO BOUNDARIES:

*Dancing the
Visions of
Contemporary
Black
Choreographers*



Saturday,
January 17, 2009
8 p.m.
Culbreth Theatre

NO BOUNDARIES tour is funded by New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project (NDP), with generous support by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the MetLife Community Connections Fund of the MetLife Foundation. *NO BOUNDARIES* is a National Performance Network Creation Fund co-commissioning project with 651 Arts and Dance Place, with generous support by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. *NO BOUNDARIES* is also supported in part by Bates Dance Festival, Center Stage (VA), American Dance Festival, Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County, Maryland State Arts Council, National Foundation of Advancement in the Arts, and National Endowment for the Arts. Additional support was provided by University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, Ohio State University, Columbia College Dance Center, World Arts and Culture Department - University of California Los Angeles, New York University, Ohio State University, University of Maryland - College Park, Urban Bush Women, Bebe Miller Company, Reggie Wilson/Fist & Heel Performance Group, Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, and American Dance Institute. *NO BOUNDARIES* is a Mason/Rhynes Production.

This project would not exist without the support and contributions, big and small, of numerous individuals and organizations. Gesel Mason offers a sincere thank you to choreographers Donald McKayle, Bebe Miller, David Roussève, Reggie Wilson, Andrea Woods, and Jawole Willa Jo Zollar whose visions and generosity made this possible. Thank you to Theresa M. Davis, the University of Virginia, and Mason/Rhynes Productions' staff.



New England
Foundation
for the Arts



Drama Department Production Staff:

Producer	Theresa M. Davis
Chair, Department of Drama	Tom Bloom
Department Production Manager	Caitlin McLeod
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Technical Director	Jessica Cloutier
Run Crew	Jessica Cloutier, Elizabeth Majette
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Video Specialist	Bjorn Falk
Sound Board Operator	Mike Benonis
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NO BOUNDARIES:

Dancing the Visions of Contemporary Black Choreographers

Artistic Direction and Concept by Gesel Mason

Technical Direction by Cheles Rhynes

Videography by Cheles Rhynes with Rachel Boggia, Alli Aleni, and HJ

Video Editing by Ludovic Jolivet, Krissie Marty, Gesel Mason, and Carmella
Vassor Johnson

Production Assistance by Stephanie Williams

***How to Watch a Modern Dance Concert or
What in the Hell Are They Doing on Stage (1999)***

Choreography and Text: Gesel Mason

Music: J. S. Bach performed by Paul Galbraith

Narrator: Cheles Rhynes

Performer: Gesel Mason

Bent (2004)

Choreography: Jawole Willa Jo Zollar

Music: *Maggot Brain* by George Clinton

Lighting Design: Cheles Rhynes

Performer: Gesel Mason

Jumping the Broom (2005)

Choreography: David Roussève

Text: David Roussève

Music: *If Yesterday Could Only Be Tomorrow*

performed by Nat King Cole Trio

Recorded Voices: David Roussève, Gesel Mason

Lighting Design: Cheles Rhynes

Performer: Gesel Mason

- 15 minute intermission -

A Declaration of (In) Dependence:

The Story of Sally Hemings (2002) – excerpt

Choreography: Gesel Mason

Lighting Design: Cheles Rhynes

Text: excerpts from original statements by Thomas Jefferson

Music: *Appalachian Waltz* and *Appalachian Journey*

by Edgar Meyer, Yo-Yo Ma, and Mark O' Connor

Recorded Voice: Jeff Strum as Thomas Jefferson

Costume Design and Construction: Nicole McClam

Performers: Gesel Mason and Julia Smith

Ella (2007)

Choreography: Robert Battle

Staging Assistant: Marlena Wolfe

Music: *Air Mail Special* by Ella Fitzgerald

Original Lighting Design: Burke Wilmore

Performer: Sarah Levitt

Generous support for the creation of Ella

was provided by Times Square Alliance

benefiting Dancers Responding to AIDS.

No Less Black (2000)

Choreography: Gesel Mason

Poetry: Gesel Mason

Music: Songhai

Narrator: Theresa M. Davis

Performer: Gesel Mason

BIOGRAPHIES

Robert Battle (Choreographer), originally from Miami, FL, is a graduate of the New World School of Arts and the Julliard School, where he received the Princess Grace Dance Scholarship and the Martha Hill Prize. Upon graduation, Mr. Battle joined the Parsons Dance Company (1994-2001), and began setting his own work on the company in 1998. Parsons has performed his choreography across the United States and internationally, and featured it in several New York City seasons. In 2001 Mr. Battle founded Battleworks Dance Company, and the company premiered in August 2002 at the World Dance Alliance's Global Assembly in Düsseldorf, Germany. Selected as the American representatives to the festival, the company was chosen for its unique outlook on the future of modern dance. Battleworks has performed extensively in New York City and across the country at such venues as The Joyce Theater, Dance Theater Workshop, American Dance Festival, and Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. As an independent choreographer, Mr. Battle is in high demand. The Hubbard Street Repertory Ensemble, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ailey II, River North Dance Company, Koresh Dance Company, Introdans, and PARADIGM have all commissioned Mr. Battle for both new works and re-stagings of Battleworks repertory. Mr. Battle regularly conducts residencies at Universities throughout the country and teaches master classes in NYC and abroad. In 2005, Battle was honored at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts with a medal proclaiming him one of the "Masters of African-American Choreography" and he has recently been honored with the coveted Princess Grace Statue Award for achievements in choreography.

Sarah Levitt (Performer) is a dancer and choreographer based out of Washington, DC. She received her BA in Dance from the University of Maryland, College Park in 2007. During her time at Maryland, she held a Creative and Performing Arts Scholarship in Dance, and received the Dorothy Madden Emerging Artist Award upon graduation. Currently, Sarah works with Gesel Mason Performance Projects, the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, and PearsonWidrig Dance Theater. Sarah has performed at the Kennedy Center, Joyce SoHo, Ireland's Bealtaine Festival, the International Festival of Arts and Ideas in New Haven, CT, and was assistant to Gesel Mason at the International Contemporary Dance Conference and Performance Festival in Bytom, Poland. Sarah's work has been presented at Dance Place's New Releases Choreographers Showcase.

Gesel Mason (Artistic Director, Choreographer, Performer) is Co-founder and Artistic Director of Mason/Rhynes Productions (www.mason-rhynes.org) and Artistic Director for Gesel Mason Performance Projects. Ms. Mason has performed with Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company and toured Germany with the Repertory Dance Theatre of Utah. She taught and performed in Poland, in 1996 under the direction of Jacek Luminski and again in 1999 with Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, where she worked for four seasons as Performer, Project Director, and Artistic Director/Founder of Teen Exchange, and continues to perform as a guest artist. She has also worked with Alison Chase, Sardono Kusumo, Victoria Marks, Susan Marshall, Peter Pucci, Doug Varone, and Ralph Lemon in the final installment of his Geography Trilogy: "Come home Charley Patton". Ms. Mason's solo project, *NO BOUNDARIES: Dancing the Visions of Contemporary Black Choreographers*, includes the work of Donald McKayle, Bebe Miller, David Roussev e, Reggie Wilson, Andrea Woods, and Jawole Willa Jo Zollar. The proj-

ect received a National Dance Project Tour Only Grant for 2008/09 season from New England Foundation for the Arts, two Metro DC Dance Awards in 2007 for Outstanding Individual Performance and Outstanding Overall Production – Small Venue, and was supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and National Performance Network Creation Fund.

As an educator she has taught all ages and abilities and has been invited as artist in residence at schools and universities across the country including University of Utah, Columbia College, Texas Women's University, University of Maryland - College Park, University of Maryland at Baltimore County, and Virginia Commonwealth University. Ms. Mason received a Maryland State Arts Council Award in 2001, 2004, 2005, and 2008, an Arts Council of Montgomery County Artist Fellowship in 1999 and 2005, was selected Emerging Choreographer by the Bates Dance Festival in 2000, and received a 2007 Millennium Stage Local Dance Commissioning Project from the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Dallas Black Dance Theater, Eisenhower Dance Ensemble and Sandra Organ Dance Company have commissioned Ms. Mason's award winning choreography, among others, and her work has been presented at Joyce SoHo, the Fort Wayne Performing Arts Center, Diverse Works in Houston, 651 Arts in Brooklyn, Walker Arts Center in Minneapolis, Clarice Smith Center for the Performing Arts in College Park, MD, and as part of the International Contemporary Dance Conference and Performance Festival in Bytom, Poland, DanceAfrica, and the International Association of Blacks in Dance.

Cheles Rhynes (Technical Director, Lighting Designer, Narrator) is Co-founder and Managing Director for Mason/Rhynes Productions (www.mason-rhynes.org), a prolific African-American arts service organization located in Washington, DC. Mr. Rhynes' multifaceted experience in technical theater has brought him across the nation and around the globe, including Brazil, Lithuania, Croatia, Poland, Bosnia, and Serbia. He has worked with the Dallas Children's Theatre, and Pocket Sandwich Theatre (Dallas, TX), Mixed Blood Theater (Minneapolis, MN), and toured with the Flying Karamozov Brothers (Seattle, WA). He has worked in many theaters in the DC area including Howard University Cramton Auditorium, George Washington University Lisner Auditorium, Living Stage Theatre, the Shakespeare Theatre, Dance Place, and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts where he was the Production Stage Manager for the annual Mayor's Arts Awards and the Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, where his duties included announcing the President of the United States. Mr. Rhynes' award winning technical direction, stage management and lighting designs have been sought by numerous artists, companies, universities and organizations including Andrea E. Woods and Dancers/ Soulworks, Reggie Wilson/Fist & Heel Performance Group, International Association of Blacks in Dance, hjw/EDGEWORKS Dance Theater, Morgan State University, Coppin State University, Nejla Yarkin, Toni Blackman, Gesel Mason Performance Projects, CityDance Ensemble and hip hop/spoken word artist Psalmayene 24. He was Technical Director for Joy of Motion Dance Center's Jack Guidone Theater, Production Coordinator, Company Manager and Stage Manager for Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, and Production Stage Manager for Alvin Ailey II.

Mr. Rhynes is the Producer of the Expressions Series, a national showcase for the next generation of artists of color. He is also Founder of the Metro DC Dance Awards, an annual event that takes place at the John F Kennedy Center for the

Performing Arts, and Metro DC Dances; two galvanizing events celebrating the metropolitan DC/MD/VA dance community.

David Roussève (Choreographer) a choreographer, writer, director and performer, is a magna cum laude Graduate of Princeton University (Politics, Theater and Dance, and African Studies). From 1989-2002 Roussève was Artistic Director/choreographer for REALITY, a New York based multi-racial dance/theater company of seven performers that grew to become one of the most important voices in contemporary American dance. Commissioned three times by the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival, the company also toured throughout the US, Europe, Great Britain, and South America. Among others, Roussève has also created new works for the Houston Ballet, Ballet Hispanico (in collaboration with Salsa great Eddie Palmieri), the Atlanta Ballet, and Denver's Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Theater. Recent projects include a 2006 collaboration with Ilkhom Theater Company of Tashkent, Uzbekistan, the 2005 dance film *Bittersweet* (directed, written, and choreographed by Roussève) and a 2005 joint premiere for two Cleveland companies: *Dancing Wheels* and Cleveland Contemporary Dance Theater. His awards include the 2004 Guggenheim Fellowship, a 2006 Creative Capital Fellowship, a 2000 New York Dance and Performance Award ("Bessie"), a 2000 L.A. Horton (dance) Award, 1999 and 2001 Irvine Fellowships in Dance, a 2000 California Arts Council Choreography Fellowship, the 1996 CalArts/Alpert Award in Dance, "First Place Screen Choreography" at the IMZ Int'l Dance Film Festival, and seven consecutive fellowships from the NEA. As a writer Roussève was published in Bantam Press' *Rants and Raves from Today's Top Performance Artists*, Rutledge Press' *Envisioning Dance on Film*, and in 1997 and 2002 he was selected as a screenwriting Fellow in the highly competitive Sundance Screenwriter Lab. He is Professor of Choreography and former Chair of UCLA's World Arts and Cultures Department.

Julia Smith (Performer) has been performing in the Washington D.C. area for the past 16 years. She was born and raised in Beirut, Lebanon where she fell in love with ballet. After moving to the Washington D.C. area she was invited to attend the Pennsylvania Ballet School (Rock School) where she studied with Lupe Serrano and Ricky Weiss. She later received a performing arts scholarship from the University of Maryland's Modern Dance program where she earned her BA. She has danced for Alvin Mayes, Alcine Wiltz, Marcy Schlissel, Boris Willis, Bowen McCauley Dance, Rincones and Company, Tony Powell Music and Movement, CityDance Ensemble, DanceSmith, Ground Zero Dance, and is currently working with Tommy Parlon Dance Projects. Julia is delighted to be dancing for Gesel Mason. She currently teaches ballet and modern dance at Wheaton Studio of Dance, Joy of Motion, and the University of Maryland. She has a wonderful husband and two incredible kids, Ian and Emily.

Jawole Willa Jo Zollar (Choreographer) is the Founding Artistic Director of Urban Bush Women. She was born and raised in Kansas City, Missouri, and trained with Joseph Stevenson, a student of the legendary Katherine Dunham. Zollar holds a BA in dance from the University of Missouri at Kansas City and an MFA in dance from Florida State University. In 1980, she moved to New York City to study with Dianne McIntyre at Sounds in Motion. She founded Urban Bush Women in 1984. In addition to repertory for UBW, Zollar has created works for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ballet Arizona, Philadanco,

University of Maryland, University of Florida, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company and others. Her many positions as a teacher and speaker include Worlds of Thought Resident Scholar at Mankato State University (1993-94), Regents Lecturer in the Departments of Dance and World Arts and Culture at UCLA (1995-96), Visiting Artist at Ohio State University (1996), and the Abramowitz Memorial Lecturer at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1998). She was named Alumna of the Year by University of Missouri (1993) and Florida State University (1997). She also received the Martin Luther King Distinguished Service Award from Florida State University where she is a tenured professor with the Dance Department. Zollar was prominently featured in the PBS Documentary *Free to Dance*, which chronicles the African American influence on modern dance. In June 2002, Zollar was awarded an honorary doctorate from Columbia College in Chicago.

The U.Va. Department of Drama would like to thank our sponsors:

National Dance Project of the New England Foundation for the Arts
Carter G. Woodson Institute for African-American and African Studies
U.Va. College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office
U.Va. Provost's Arts Enhancement Fund
U.Va. Office of African-American Affairs
U.Va. Office of Diversity and Equity

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William B. Harvey
Winx and Fran Lawrence
Dr. Deborah McDowell
Carla Perlo, Dance Place
Richard Pilkington

And everyone who made this creative endeavor possible.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION...

PHOTOGRAPHIC AND RECORDING devices are strictly prohibited in the theatre.

CELL PHONES AND WRISTWATCH ALARMS can be very distracting to the audience and actors alike. Please turn yours off!

CONCESSIONS are on sale in the lobby before the show and at intermission. Please, no food or drinks in the theatre.

SEATING. As a courtesy to the other patrons and the performers, latecomers will be admitted at the discretion of the house manager.

EMERGENCY EXIT. In case of an emergency, patrons are requested to evacuate the theatre in a calm and orderly fashion. Please take a moment before the show begins to note your nearest exit. In the Culbreth Theatre, exits are located on both sides of the auditorium as well as at the rear. In the Helms Theatre, a second exit is located opposite the main entrance.