



ELEVATE

CHICAGO DANCE 2022

OCTOBER 13-16

RETURN TO ELEVATE  
HOMEPAGE

ELEVATE

Photo: El at Pivotal Arts Festival 2022, Edge Theater. Photo by William Frederick

# Big Marsh Park

11559 S Stony Is Ave, Chicago, IL 60633

Sunday, October 16 2022 • 2:00 PM

FREE EVENT. Outdoor venue with limited accessibility.



Aaliyah Christina

Ysaÿe Alma

Jasmine Lupe Mendoza, Lia Kohl, and Corey Smith



FORCEI at Pivotal Arts Festival 2022, Edge Theater, Photo by William Frederick

The Elevate Chicago Dance festival was only supposed to happen once. Born out of a partnership with the New England Foundation for the Arts' Regional Dance Development Initiative, the festival was a way to showcase the work of Chicago dance artists and bring local, regional, and national audiences and presenters together. That "one time" festival was supposed to have its third iteration in 2020 and we all know what happened then.

Here we are in 2022, altered, making our way back to rehearsal studios and live performance. This festival is showcasing some of what Chicago's dance artists have been thinking about, dancing about, and working toward over the last couple of years. We are intentionally positioning works-in-progress showings, excerpts, panel discussions, site-responsive performances, durational works, and completed pieces for the stage all side by side with one another to underscore the reality that this is what artists are doing now and it is worth support and recognition.

As we've listened, watched, and learned from our fellow artists in preparation for this festival we've asked ourselves, what do we need to gather again in performance? How has our work changed? And, what kind of practices help us sustain shifts in the field? We hope you ask these questions with us and remain open to all that comes next.

Joanna Furnans  
Executive Director, Chicago Dancemakers Forum

# Aaliyah Christina

## **“We praise mother while We be FAST”**

Outdoors, 2:00pm

We praise mother while We be FAST navigates the relationship dynamics between Black maternal figures and their children from childhood to adulthood. It challenges the demands of patriarchy, white supremacy, and religious indoctrination. An intergenerational group of dancers perform choreographies and improvisations in an abstracted J-sette/majorette style with spoken word and big band sounds directed and choreographed by Aaliyah Christina.

Gratitude: This work is dedicated to our mommas and our mommas' mommas. To our aunties, siblings, friends, and, most importantly, ourselves. We take care of ourselves to take care of each other.

Born in Ruston, Louisiana and raised across Louisiana, Maryland, and Texas, Aaliyah Christina creates and supports performance work as an administrator, curator, movement artist, and writer. She improvises dances and writes poetry/prose about relationships, mental health, and Blackness as a resident on the South side of Chicago. As Associate Curator & Artist Programs Manager at Links Hall, she ensures the voices of artists are centered through programming & creating new works. Aaliyah consistently collaborates & supports Chicago's community artists/organizations including, but not limited to Keyierra Collins, Darling Shear, Assata's Daughters, The Fly Honeys, and Chicago Dancemakers Forum. Alongside working at Links Hall, she's a Co-Organizer for Performance Response Journal. In 2021, Aaliyah received the 3Arts Make-A-Wave grant.



# Aaliyah Christina

## **“We praise mother while We be FAST”**

Outdoors, 2:00pm

Performers: Naomi Baty, Keyierra Collins, Felicia Holman, Deja Hood, Mekeba Malik (on behalf of Deeply Rooted Dance Theater), Darling Shear

Brianna Alexis Heath - Dramaturg  
Professor-Wrecks - Music & Sound Mix

Aaliyah Christina- Director

Sound/Music Credits (in order of appearance) Barbara Ann Teer // Grambling State University's WorldFamed Tiger Marching Band // Kevin Jz Prodigy // Awood Magic Johnson Jr., Calvin Cordazor Broadus (x2), Corey Miller, Craig Stephen Lawson // Bernard James Freeman, Chad Hugo, Jeremy Varnard Allen, Pharrell L Williams, Webster Gradney // Alexyss K. Tylor // George Kranz, Hasben Jones, Michael Anthony Barney // Jackson State University's Sonic Boom of the South

Choreography created by Aaliyah Christina with contributions from the Performers & samples from GSU Orchesis Dance Company & JSU Prancing J-ettes

Spoken Word improvised by the performers with scores created by Aaliyah Christina // monologue written by Felicia Holman

We give thanks to all of our donors who contributed to our Go Fund Me campaign. It was made up of friends, family, peers, mentors, and strangers who all believed in the vision! We also give thanks to our off-site rehearsal locations: Dorchester Arts + Housing Collaborative, Mayfair Arts Center, & Soham Dance Space!

I (Aaliyah) would also like to give a HUGE shout out and express ALL my gratitude to my collaborators: Bri & Wrecks, thank y'all for helping me conceptualize and affirm my ideas. I truly have so much love, respect, and admiration for my cast who put in work in rehearsals week after week! Lastly, I want to thank Keyierra for being an exceptional squad captain who also affirmed me and held me accountable to coordinate all the outrageous 8-counts!



# Ysaÿe Alma

## **"The Axe Forgets, The Tree Remembers"**

Outdoors, 2:45pm

"The Axe Forgets, The Tree Remembers" (AFTR) is a dance piece that celebrates current and ancestral Black and Indigenous stewards of the land, honors their sacrifices and mourns the severances to these relationships. AFTR is also a meditation on the historical correlation between violence against the land and violence against Black and Indigenous women. The original work was created as a part of a Dance Activism series produced by LOUD BODIES, called LOUD VOICES. The piece features poetry written by Ysaÿe Alma and original music by sound designer, Najee Zaid-Searcy.

Performers: Aaliyah Christina, Cecilia Slongo, Jada Rose and Ysaÿe Alma

Choreographer: Ysaÿe Alma with contributions from the performers

Sound Composition & Engineer: Najee-Zaid Searcy

Costume Design: Pytron Parker



# Ysaÿe Alma, cont.

## "The Axe Forgets, The Tree Remembers"

Outdoors, 2:45pm

Ysaÿe Alma (she/her) is a professional dancer, choreographer and teaching artist working in Los Angeles and Chicago. Ysaÿe creates with the intention to heal self and community while honoring tradition and cultural differences. She is currently a Rehearsal Director for the touring production of The Queen's Ball: A Bridgerton Experience. She is also a company member with Viver Brasil dance company and studying Polynesian arts at Nonosina Polynesia. She graduated magna cum laude from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a BFA in Dance and Minor in Philosophy and also had the honor of studying dance at the Taipei National University of the Arts where she performed in work by Ming-Lung Yang. Since graduating, Ysaÿe has performed professionally and also worked in theater, acting as resident choreographer and an ensemble member with Teatro Luna since 2014. She has choreographed plays for Greenway Court Theater, Free Street Theater and Depaul University as well. Equally passionate about dance education, Ysaÿe has taught dance programming for well over a dozen public schools and community centers between Chicago and Los Angeles. She has also had the honor of being a guest instructor for University of California at Los Angeles and Ball State University, The Goodman Theatre and more. Ysaÿe earned her 200 Hour Yoga Teacher Certification and Social-Emotional Learning Teacher certificate and is currently a third year Dunham Technique Instructor candidate.



# Jasmine Lupe Mendoza, Lia Kohl, and Corey Smith

## "Anatomy for Interiors"

### Outdoors

Anatomy for Interiors begins with questions about space -- what is a space? Does it exist in our bodies, in architecture, or in between them? Jasmine Lupe Mendoza, Lia Kohl, and Corey Smith explore these questions by identifying and reconfiguring the elements which create both physical and ideological space. The trio moves in a combination of structured improvisation, choreography, and play. At times playful, boring, and vulnerable, the work reimagines space and bodies as it is formed by space and bodies.

Collectively devised by Lia Kohl, Jasmine Lupe Mendoza, and Corey Smith

This project is partially supported by an Individual Artist Program Grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events, as well as a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency, a state agency through federal funds provided by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Jasmine Lupe Mendoza, Lia Kohl, and Corey Smith are multidisciplinary artists from Chicago, united in a shared curiosity for somatic, musical, and architectural practices. The three wear many hats — as musicians, farmers, composers, birth-workers, dancers, performance artists, activists, and much more. The trio's creative process begins with the gravity between these identities and spins out and away — towards movement improvisation, music making, score creation, and play.

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Elevate Chicago Dance 2022 is supported by the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), Chicago Park District's Night Out in the Parks program, The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, Farley Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency. Food/Beverage donated by Dill Pickle, Illuminated Brew Works, Jewel Osco Andersonville, Milkweed Inn, and Whole Foods Edgewater. Additional support and partnership provided by 21c Museum Hotel, The Dance Center at Columbia College Chicago, High Concept Labs, Links Hall, Monira Foundation, and Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center. With this support, all participating artists and performers are being paid an honorarium that meets Working Artists and the Greater Economy (W.A.G.E.) requirements.

