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## **Dance Caribbean Collective**

is an organization of choreographers, educators and scholars based in Brooklyn, NY, working together to support the growth of Caribbean dance.



At DCC, we produce performances, hold public classes and community events, develop educational programming and provide online resources for both artists and audiences. We work collectively to create space for connection, community building and learning.

**DCC supports Caribbean cultural practitioners** – Through a collective model, we facilitate connections and collaboration between peers, share our resources and create platforms to present our work.

**DCC serves the Caribbean diaspora community** – Through our innovative programming and content, we cultivate audiences' appreciation for both contemporary and traditional dances; we reflect our communities' experiences, traditions and narratives on the stage; we offer students opportunities to reconnect to their cultural roots; and we provide a space to address the issues facing our communities.

**DCC connects with wider dance audiences** – Across all our platforms, we provide a place for the wider dance audience to connect to Caribbean culture, boosting the visibility of our diverse forms, and facilitating relationships with new audiences.







## The New Traditions Festival

is a series of events happening this June in Brooklyn, NY in celebration of Caribbean Heritage Month. The festival includes intensive workshops and masterclasses open to the public, a residency and mentorship program for Caribbean choreographers, and a culminating performance featuring their work.





At The New Traditions Festival, we are bridging the Caribbean and the Contemporary dance communities. This is a space for choreographers to explore Caribbean identities, stories and collective experiences through a contemporary dance praxis. We are opening up the concert-stage format to include our voices and support the investigation of our traditional cultures. We are centering dance making as an essential part of cultural heritage and retention.



### **The Artist Residency**

is a program designed to support the New Traditions artists through their artistic journey, providing access to rehearsal space, mentorship, peer feedback and engagement with West Indian audiences through partnerships with social service, community and education organizations in NYC.

### **The Masterclass Series**

is a collection of intensive workshops for professional dancers, featuring Caribbean Contemporary Dance techniques currently under-represented in NYC and repertory classes with choreographers featured in the festival.

### **The Culminating Performance**

is a two night showing of the work produced by New Traditions choreographers, utilizing the format of concert stage dance to investigate Caribbean traditions and narratives.



## Our Directorship

Dance Caribbean Collective is run by a passionate group of artists, teachers and organizers working in the Caribbean community. We are directed by a committee that serves for the period of one year with various supporting subcommittees.



**Advisory Council:** A. Nia-Austin Edwards, A'Keitha Carey, Sita Frederick, Marguerite Hemmings, Valerie Katz, Paloma McGregor, Maxine Montilus, Sydnie Mosley, Joya Powell, Jessica St. Vil-Ulysses, Andre Zachery

## **DCC Committee 2016**

### **Candace Thompson – Founding Executive Director**

Candace Thompson is a dancer, choreographer and performer from Trinidad and Tabago. Candace is a graduate of Adelphi University and the founder of Dance Caribbean COLLECTIVE. She is fluent in many dance styles – Modern, Contemporary, Caribbean Diasporic, and Soca Dance. She currently performs with Renegade Performance Group, Sydnie L. Mosley Dances, Areytos Performance Works, and her own work ContempoCaribe.

### **Ellen Maynard – New Traditions Artist Liaison**

Ellen Maynard is a dancer, artist and filmmaker based in Brooklyn. She is a graduate of The Ohio State University Department of Dance and the co-creator of The Fleet, a company that documents dance performance throughout New York. Ellen is a dancer with Quentin Burley Dance Group, and she choreographs site-specific works for The West Harlem Art Fund “Under the Viaduct” Series. Ellen spends her summers as a videographer at Bates Dance Festival.

### **Tanaya Thomas – Social Media Coordinator**

Tanaya Thomas is a movement artist, performer and writer residing in Philadelphia. She studied performance at Drake University and continued her studies at Wise Fool New Mexico, Dance and Performance Institute, Trinidad & Tobago, and Pig Iron Theater School. Her work has been featured with Brotherhood Dance “Passport Travel Through Resistance”, SUPERobject’s “Birth”, and Black Quantum Futurism “Black Bodies as Conductors of Gravity”. She is currently working on a piece called “bittersweet”, which explores how healing, resistance and nostalgia manifest in carnival masquerade.

### **Brittany Williams – Artist Residency Coordinator**

Brittany Williams is an international artist and choreographer, working in the Caribbean, South America, and Europe. She is the founder of “Dancing for Justice” and Obika Dance, and has studied with Urban Bush Women and the Rennie Harris Academy of Legends Summer Program. Currently, she is a resident at Dancing While Black: Dancing on Fertile in New Orleans. She has performed with Forces of Nature, INSPIRIT, Venus Rising and in Ntozake Shange’s latest work, “Lost in Language and Sound,” with choreographer Dyane McIntyre.





## **Brooklyn Arts Council's Grantee & Fiscal Sponsee**

### **Interview Series: Friends with Money**

**May 19, 2016**

BAC: What project did you receive funding for? Tell us about it.

CT: I received funding for New Traditions Festival 2016: Dance Your Caribbean! It's a performance festival run by the initiative I started, Dance Caribbean COLLECTIVE, to create a platform for dance artists creating work for and about their Caribbean heritage. Through New Traditions, Dance Caribbean COLLECTIVE is committed to presenting concert dance works rooted in Caribbean cultural traditions and experiences. The 2016 festival will be a two night dance festival on June 11th and 12th, featuring 7 choreographers: Chris Walker and Kevin Ormsby, Candace Thompson, Jessica St. Vil, Maxine Montilus, Safi Harriott, and Shola Roberts.

BAC: How does BAC funding help sustain your work? Is there anything you're creating or doing now that you wouldn't be able to do without the extra support?

CT: BAC's funding was key to us being able to afford a venue that could accommodate concert dance in Brooklyn. Our work this year requires a traditional proscenium theater which is unfortunately super-expensive in our borough. Through the grant funding we've been able to secure a venue and ensure that all participating artists would be paid independently of ticket sales.

BAC: Tell us about some of the most exciting collaborations and performances you have coming up.

CT: Our next event is the Dances of Jamaica & the Caribbean: New Traditions Masterclass, which is a masterclass led by Chris Walker on May 29th, and then the big show on June 11th and 12th at Gelsey Kirkland Academy. I'm super excited that Chris Walker and Kevin Ormsby will be bringing their work Facing Home: Love and Redemption, a piece that's toured Toronto, Wisconsin, and Jamaica, right here in New York City! Walker and Ormsby come with a wealth of knowledge of Caribbean and contemporary dance and I can't wait for the dance community here to get to experience them. The show will see their work paired with the work of local choreographers.

BAC: Who or what inspires you most right now?

CT: The kids I teach, actually. I've been teaching at a few elementary schools and it's been amazing to watch these little humans operate who are so free with how they express themselves.

BAC: Tell us a bit about your creative process. How does the work get done?

CT: Well, that's a good question. I research topics that are related to themes of the work and then write tons and tons of notes. I spend a lot of time sitting down creating entire dances in my head. The worst is when I create an entire section in my head and forget to write it down and then I lose it. But then I've learned that, somehow, another idea always presents itself. As much as creating dance work is a refined skill, it is also just play. So I try to think about it that way to make it less terrifying. In terms of practice, I teach a Soca Dance class every week so that vocabulary is very much in my body and it's the source of a lot of my work. I've also been lucky enough to work with two dancers recently, Alicia Dellimore and Shola Roberts, who share my passion for Caribbean culture and bring their own perspectives to the work.

BAC: When you're not making art, you are:

CT: Teaching in various in-school and after-school programs, personal training, doing administrative and organizing work for DCC and dancing in others' work.

BAC: What's next for your work and for your organization? How are you planning your next steps forward?

CT: Personally, I have a few choreographic opportunities coming up in the fall through 2017 that I'll be focusing on. Dance Caribbean COLLECTIVE will be taking time after the show to figure out its next steps but for sure there will be more workshops, events, and possibly education programs.

BAC: Any words of advice for artists hoping to apply for BAC funding or other grants or support?

CT: Just that it takes time. It took me about three weeks of intense focus to get through writing the grant. Give yourself time to write, review, rewrite if necessary, and to be clear about what your project is about.





## **Caribbean Film Series**

### **Spotlight Interview with Curtis John**

**March 1, 2016**

Trinidadian-born Candace Thompson exemplifies the ultimate expression of body & soul through dance that fellow Trini young women and men in our upcoming The Caribbean Film Series at BAM event Art Connect” are taught in order to communicate their feelings in positive ways. We recently sat down to interview the multi-talented Thompson, who is fluent in several dance forms including Modern, Contemporary, Caribbean/Diasporic, and Soca. She is the Founding Executive Director of ContempoCaribe and the founder of Dance Caribbean COLLECTIVE. The Adelphi University graduate also currently performs with Renegade Performance Group, Sydnie L. Mosley Dances, and Areytos Performance Works.

Caribbean Film Series: Why is dance so important to you?

Candace Thompson: Dance is literally the stuff I’m made of. It’s the way I go through the world. It’s what wakes me up in the morning. I believe that my role as a dancer is to embody the feelings and traditions that the regular person has forgotten how to express. Dance has become so separate from our daily lives that I dance and create space for others to dance, to try to bring the two closer together again.

CFS: How did you get introduced to using dance as a form of personal expression?

CT: My mother put me in dance when I was 5 years old and I haven’t really looked back since. Fast forward to working professionally as a dancer and collaborating with various choreographers, especially my work with Sydnie L. Mosley dances, it became necessary to draw from my own personal histories to perform the roles I was asked to portray. But it wasn’t until I started choreographing my own work that I felt my story was being told openly through my dancing. It’s an amazing feeling when you release part of yourself into the world, but it’s also a scary and vulnerable place to be as well.

CFS: When did you first perceive dance as an art? Do you feel it’s important to get introduced to the arts very early in life?

CT: Probably not until I started working professionally did I perceive dance itself to be an art. For me, up until that point, it was a means to an end. My training was what I focused on, to make my body achieve certain feats. Making myself as virtuosic as possible - high legs, big jumps, extreme flexibility - because I thought my skill as a dancer was inextricably linked to being able to be super human, to do things I thought would be physically impressive. But as I got more experience, I realized that dance was more than just athleticism. The ability to lead your audience through a story or emotion while exploring physicality is where the art in performance lies. The many layers to any dance piece is a very complex equation.

CFS: What impact does being from Trinidad have on your art or expression?

CT: That’s the place I create work from. All of my work is linked to or influenced by where I’m from. Maybe one day it won’t be obviously so but for now that’s what interests me most.





CFS: Do you have a favorite form of dance (at the moment) and why this form?

CT: Ahhhhhhhh I can't choose! I teach Soca dance at Mark Morris Dance Center on Saturdays at 3:30pm which is a form near and dear to my heart. I look forward to teaching this class each week and being with my people. But I grew up in the modern/contemporary dance tradition so my heart lies there too, which is why in my work I'm usually looking for ways for the two worlds to work tandem with each other.

CFS: Your most recent works seem to be about recognizing & addressing misconceptions about Caribbean life and structure. Why is this so important to you?

CT: Well, I believe in [Caribbean people] being able to have a variety of expressions of who we are. That was the motivation behind creating Dance Caribbean COLLECTIVE, where choreographers from the Diaspora could explore the issues that they weren't able to delve into in other spaces. And also large parts about our culture remain misunderstood to the wider world. I hope to keep educating people about us.

CFS: Lastly, what other forms of expression, if any, are important to you?

CT: It's mainly dance for me and maybe writing to some extent. I started a blog last year that was therapeutic for me in ways I didn't foresee and allowed to reach a lot of people. I'm also an over-analyzer so writing seems to help make sense of the thoughts in my head. But as a consumer I would probably say music and literature.





## **InfiniteBody:** **art and creative consciousness** July 22, 2015

### *Caribbean dance artists step forward* by Eva Yaa Asantewaa

EYA: How did your Dance Caribbean COLLECTIVE come about?

CT: There were choreographers whose work I wanted to see more of, and when I started making my own work, I realized that it was difficult to find places to perform it. One day, I called a friend who's also Caribbean, and we got to talking, and he said, "Oh, I was having the same idea!" We had a meeting, right then and there, outlining a bunch of things that we were interested in making happen. That was the beginning, last December.

EYA: What kind of visibility would you like to see for Caribbean dance artists?

CT: Contemporary dance isn't necessarily interwoven into our Caribbean culture. It's hard to connect with audience members who might possibly appreciate the work. We are interested in taking our work to the community, to people who share our background and heritage, getting them to know about us and invest in us creating work.

EYA: Do you feel that there's a kind of stereotype or a box that Caribbean artists are put into?

CT: To a certain extent. Because a lot of Caribbean work—and this, of course, is a generalization—infuses a lot of concepts and ideas from our culture, folkloric culture, movement and vocabulary, with contemporary dance, it's just hard to put that next to traditional modern dance or contemporary downtown dance. It's hard for people to see them in the same way. It becomes hard to put that on stage in venues that are widely known for producing modern or contemporary work. It gets written off as fusion or whatever term people use when they don't know how to categorize something. For me, it's still contemporary dance. It's just coming from where I come from, from my background, my nationality. It's like when Urban Bush Women or other companies do work that is part of the diaspora. For some reason it gets separated from contemporary dance because it has this diasporic angle.

Caribbean artists, to a large extent—and, again, I am generalizing—see identity as being a large part of how we think about ourselves. So, a lot of times, work becomes about identity, but Caribbean artists make other kinds of work, too. It gets tricky when people can't see past [identity]. Why can't that work be alongside any other work?

EYA: So far, who's involved and how are they working within the COLLECTIVE?

CT: We had our first meeting in April and decided that we would do a show. I asked people I knew to submit work for the show in June—"New Traditions: A Showcase for Caribbean Choreographers"—at St. Francis College in Brooklyn. We had works by Beatrice Capote, Shola K. Roberts, Maxine Montilus, Alicia C. Dellimore, Davalois Fearon, Adia Whitaker and myself, and it went really well. People gave of their time.





# Caribbean Life

## **Caribbean Life News**

June 10, 2015

**DANCE CARIBBEAN** by Alley Olivier

Who are you? What are you? Where are you from?

These seemingly simple questions turn out to be loaded with layers of complexity to explore through what should be a short answer.

Exploring the dimensions of what contributes in shaping our identities while managing the influence of Caribbean heritage – whether native or a descendant – Candace Thompson aims to push those conversations through dance.

"The piece you saw me perform tonight I created during a choreo-lab last fall. I didn't know where it was going until it was finished and then I realized there was so much about me and where I was from in the solo that I wished more people of Caribbean descent could have seen it," Thompson said. "It's always been in the back of my mind to get people together."

Thompson, a Trinidadian native, moved to the United States at 20 years old where she continued her training in ballet and contemporary dance at Adelphi University.

In her navigation of the professional dance world as a Caribbean American for nearly 10 years, Thompson came to realize the particular challenges she faced when selling her pieces that merged her professional training with her Trinidadian roots.

Her particular piece, "Of Circles and Bright Colours," explored the stereotypical associations with the Caribbean experience and hasn't been an easily sold piece to other performances.

"A lot of times our type of work isn't easily sold to venues," Thompson explained. "I've applied my performance to a few other things but it hasn't been picked up because there isn't a category they can put on it within a show."

This need to provide a platform that can showcase the merging between being Caribbean and the contemporary arts called for the creation of Thompson's Dance Caribbean Collective (DCC). "I kept meeting people who are trudging along by themselves and when you're doing it alone and your work isn't easily sold, it can be discouraging but I feel like if we can all figure out who we are in the game and form a joint effort, it will be a lot better for all of us," she said.

DCC's first program, "New Traditions: A Showcase for Caribbean Choreographers," brought together six dynamic choreographers representing the islands of Jamaica, St. Vincent, Grenada, Haiti and Cuba. Of the seven performances, only one performance was choreographed by a woman of African American descent.

Held at St. Francis College on Sunday, June 7, the audience was taken on a journey of exploration as the dancers unpacked the complexities of living in two worlds – being perceived as an American but wearing the badge of their heritage.

For audience members such as Rachel Goldstein, the show resonated with her as she is always asked 'where are you from.' "I think with anybody who comes, especially to New York, there's always a question of identity and people always ask 'what are you' and I just think it's an interesting way to think about the different parts of yourself. That resonated with me a lot in this show how so many people are made up of so many different parts."

Each performance explored a choreographer's relationship with the shaping of their identities. While many showcased an internal turmoil, such as Cuban American Beatrice Capote who utilized a mixture of music that showcased her Latin roots and Americanness; St. Vincent descendant Alicia Dellimore overtly battled being between worlds in "Diluted Vincy."

"I got an Instagram because my job made me get one and whenever I posted something I would use the hashtag #DilutedVincy because that's how I identify myself to be. I didn't know that the Caribbean influence had an impact on me," Dellimore said. "Growing up I felt very out of place and in between worlds because I wasn't acting black enough or I didn't know what certain things were and when I went to St. Vincent I was a foreigner."

Throughout Dellimore's piece she incorporates words over the instrumental like "oreo" and "foreigner" but finishes with an assertion of her identity. "This piece in a microwave way of the process of me finding who I am and there's a part where I assert who I am because there was a time in my life where I felt I had to identify who I am and I'm at a place where yes we have these forms our identity but at the end of the day we are all human."

For Haitian American Maxine Montilus, her piece reflected the experiences of other Haitian Americans who aren't equipped with the language of Kreyol. Also using audio of a real situation, Montilus explores owning your heritage despite what others might cast shade for like being unable to communicate in the native tongue.

Montilus finds that though her experience is navigated through a Haitian American perspective, during her performance of this solo at other shows men and women of other cultures share the same experience.

"What's been powerful for me in performing this solo I didn't come across Caribbean Americans but I remember this Russian woman came up to me and said 'I can't speak Russian fluently and my family makes fun of me,'" Montilus said. "Even the man who mixed my music was half Peruvian and he said 'I can't speak Spanish fluently and my family makes fun of me.' People of other cultures were able to tap into that experience even though I was speaking from a Haitian American perspective."

For Thompson and her collective of performers, the work to highlight Caribbean Americans involved in the contemporary arts goes beyond their first show. Thompson intends to make "New Traditions" an annual showcase with hope of creating a festival that will include not only the showcase but also include master classes and other discussions to further discuss the Caribbean experience.

Dellimore views this collective as a prominent step in the direction to return to the islands and create platforms for interested nationals to know there is an outlet for them to explore contemporary dance.

"In St. Vincent, dance isn't taken seriously to my understanding," Dellimore said. "There aren't many schools where people can train and I feel like the more that we create pieces that deal with the political issues in the Caribbean and being Caribbean American as a collective we're able to influence that change."

Kriston Chen flew from Trinidad to view the show and considers it a step in the right direction to start showing that Caribbean contemporary arts does not have to be pigeon holed into one type of mainstream dance.



# Point of Contact

Critical encounters with dance and performance art in New York City and beyond

## ***Point of Contact: Critical Encounters with Dance and Performance in NYC and Beyond***

June 2, 2015

### **DANCE CARIBBEAN COLLECTIVE STRENGTHENS “NEW TRADITIONS” WITH SECOND ANNUAL FESTIVAL by Katherine Bergstrom**

On a Sunday afternoon, 15 dancers and choreographers gather in a Brooklyn dance studio to share their works in progress under the careful eye of Candace Thompson, the founding Executive Director of Dance Caribbean Collective. Together, they are preparing for DCC’s second annual New Traditions Festival, a performance series that celebrates Caribbean diasporic dance traditions in New York City and the immigrant communities – many historically centered in Brooklyn – from which they come...

“We wanted to make it more visible,” says Thompson. “The first showcase was literally a “showcase”: it was one night. We wanted to expand it to be able to show more people, more diversity, draw a bigger audience, and highlight some of the more established Caribbean choreographers who have been doing this type of work for a long time.”

With connections to Trinidad & Tobago, Grenada, Jamaica, and Haiti, the 2016 New Traditions artists speak with varied voices. Over two nights, the festival will feature dance works by five local emerging choreographers (including Thompson), as well as a special presentation of Christopher Walker and Kevin A. Ormsby’s *Facing Home: Love and Redemption*. Through the lens of Bob Marley’s music, Walker and Ormsby search for love and hope in the face of homophobia, both in Walker’s homeland of Jamaica and beyond. “I’m in love with it,” says Thompson of Walker and Ormsby’s piece. “It’s so specific, so much derived from a lot of the things we experience as Caribbean cultures.”

Their fusion of dance genres is another draw. Though their piece is designed as a concert dance work, “Chris is Jamaican, so he pulls a lot from dancehall and its references,” Thompson explains. Indeed, the New Traditions Festival aims to highlight those artists who are working at the crux of several intersecting identities, melding the heritage and history of their families’ Caribbean communities with their experiences in the U.S. to unpack the social politics of the Caribbean-American experience through dance.

For choreographer Maxine Montilus, inspiration comes from her father’s three attempts to leave Haiti, and the spiritual devotion that guided him to the United States. “I’ve been making it a point to ask my parents more about their history lately, just for my knowledge of getting further into understanding my heritage and where I come from,” says Montilus. “It was him telling this story that inspired me to want to create a piece about it, to honor his story of struggle and overcoming that to get to America.”





*Maxine Montilus rehearses "Boutilier." Photo by Katherine Bergstrom.*

In Montilus's solo, entitled *Boutilier* (after a mountain in Haiti that proved pivotal in her father's story), reverence and hope shine through moments of hardship. "Ritualistic practices and spirituality influenced these [choreographic] motifs," explains Montilus. In one movement, repeated several times throughout the piece's journey-like structure, she lifts her face to the sky, then bends a leg to bow down and gesture to the earth. It's a reference to her father's Christianity: "the idea of looking up to honor the creator but also looking down to honor ancestors."

While Montilus's choreography uses a personal story to introduce wider themes from the Caribbean-American experience, Thompson's work starts by analyzing large cultural changes and looks inward from there.

With her trio "*Neath De Mas*," Thompson addresses "the history of the Carnival tradition, and looking at that in comparison to how the celebration happens now." Through the invigorating rhythms of soca music and dance, the work broadens to consider the life cycle of regional traditions. Thompson also acknowledges the wisdom that her fellow performers, also of Caribbean descent, bring to her rehearsal process just "by being themselves." As the three women dance, bonds are formed and broken, freedoms gained and lost; an apt echo of experiences shared throughout generations.

Over the past year, Dance Caribbean Collective has built up an impressive following, a direct indication of New Yorkers' excitement about Caribbean dances and dancers. As such, Thompson never loses sight of the people she strives to serve. In assembling this year's line-up, accountability was key. "You want to hold the work accountable to your community," she resolves. Her idea of a successful show? For the curtain to rise and audiences to see a piece of their lives on stage; to say, "in some small part, 'yeah, that's like me.'"



***Style & Vibes: For the Fly  
Caribbean Chic***

**June 6, 2015**

**DANCE YOUR CARIBBEAN NEW TRADITIONS FESTIVAL –  
A #CAHM EVENT IN NYC by Mikelah**

# Style & Vibes

FOR THE FLY  
CARIBBEAN CHIC

Dance Your Caribbean New Traditions Festival 2016 is a dance performance festival celebrating contemporary expressions of Caribbean Culture, running from June 11-12, 2016 that includes, 2 evening performances and a post-show discussion and reception. The festival will feature Facing Home: Love and Redemption by Christopher Walker and Kevin A. Ormsby.



The work explores the global impact of Bob Marley's music and the culture of homophobia in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean. In addition, the festival will present NYC-based Caribbean choreographers – Jessica St. Vil, Maxine Montilus, Safi Harriott, Shola Roberts and Dance Caribbean Collective Founder, Candace Thompson. I had a chance to speak with Dance Caribbean COLLECTIVE Founder, Candace Thompson about the festival! Be sure to join me there Saturday!

*What is the importance of cultural events like these?*

I think the general public doesn't understand the work involved in keeping traditions and cultural knowledge alive. It is work. The choreographers in the program all stay on the pulse of Caribbean dance traditions and practices and use them to inform their work. Not to mention the fact that most of us teach in schools, perform at events, showcases, conferences (many times without being adequately compensated) because we believe in the importance of our culture. Events like this keep the cycle of knowledge going by putting our experiences on a public platform. Additionally, an event that is produced within the community by Caribbean people gives us a chance to present ourselves without filter, as we would like to be represented.

*How does Caribbean Culture impact dance and vice versa?*

Dance and movement is such a big part of how many of us identify. All of our major festivals and celebrations involve movement – Carnival, Jouvay, Dancehall, Wakes, Orisha rituals, Mashramani, Junkanoo, Parang the list goes on. Furthermore our ways of moving are becoming popular the world over now. Our 'wine' and other dances are making their way to the mainstream. When I first moved to the U.S. 10 years ago I would have to explain to most people what Soca was. Now, folks offer it in conversation once they know I'm West Indian!

*What can people expect from the event?*

This festival is creating a bridge between concert dance (i.e. New York City Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Camille A. Brown & Dancers, Garth Fagan etc.) and our experiences as West Indians. We're using what we know, to create new dance works dedicated to our folks. People can expect to see a part of themselves onstage and some of the issues facing our people. DCC's featured choreographers Chris Walker and Kevin Ormsby, are presenting an excerpt of their work 'Facing Home: Love and Redemption' that explores the global impact of Bob Marley's music—its expression of humanity's struggle and inspiration toward love, redemption and hope—and the culture of homophobia in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean. The full show includes choreographers representing 4 islands; Shola Roberts – Grenada, Maxine Montilus and Jessica St. Vil – Haiti and Safi Harriott and CW + KO from Jamaica. All this plus amazing dancers and a post-show discussion on each night. On Sunday we have a reception sponsored by Feedbaq that's open to all attendants once they complete a short survey. It's all encompassing event. We want folks to have a good time with us!





## Additional Press Excerpts

# BROOKLYN RAIL

### *Brooklyn Rail*

September 8, 2015

*Five on the Black Hand Side / Dapline!* by Jaime Shearn Coan

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN ANDRÉ M. ZACHERY AND LAMONT HAMILTON THE PERFORMANCE PROJECT AT UNIVERSITY SETTLEMENT JULY 30 – AUGUST 1, 2015

[...] Next, Candace Thompson and Nehemoyia Young present *Colliding Scopes/Circles of Inquiry*, a duet that highlights the dissonance between various lineages of dance... One effect of these parallel narratives placed side by side is that Thompson evokes a representation of femininity as binding and precarious, while Young appears at ease in a more androgynous mode of expression, at times watching Thompson, and towards the end of the performance, fixing the audience with a full frontal gaze. I experienced the duet as more a sharing of space than a conversation. In the talkback after the show, Young and Thompson confirmed that, while they were working in relation to different lineages, they were both exploring the “innate resistance in claiming bodily movements of resistance that have been lost.” [...]

## THE DANCE ENTHUSIAST

### *The Dance Enthusiast*

June 2, 2015

Meet Candace Thompson, the Force  
Behind The Dance Caribbean Collective  
by Christine Jowers

#### 20 Tings (it's Tings, not a typo) To Know About Candace Thompson

1. She is from Trinidad!

[...] 10. Carnival History! Thompson appeared in La Shaun Prescott's choreography of Soca in 2008 for the band leader Machel Mantano. This work exploded Carnival Dance in Trinidad. Prior to 2008, dance was viewed as an extra to the Carnival festivities. Today, Soca dance and dancers are seen as integral elements for any local band, and people look forward to the dance as much as the music!!!!

19. When asked, “What defines the Caribbean spirit?” Thompson replies: “There are two things. One is our ability to elevate ourselves beyond the problems we may be facing and have a good time. That is what makes us unique, our ability to have a good time and let things go. Two, our global perspective. In Trinidad, for example, so many cultures exist side by-side you have no choice but to be tolerant, and you have no choice but to be knowledgeable about cultures besides the one that you and your immediate family are part of.” [...]

# THE HAITIAN TIMES

BRIDGING THE GAP

## *The Haitian Times*

June 10, 2015

### *Haitian American Dancer Performs in the First Dance Caribbean COLLECTIVE Event of the Year by Carlotta Mohamed*

Seven choreographers and dancers performed in the first Dance Caribbean COLLECTIVE event of the year, at St. Francis College in Brooklyn on Sunday night.

[...] One of those choreographers, Maxine Montilus, born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, to Haitian parents, did her solo performance, "Ou Pa Pale Kreyol?!?! ("You Don't Speak Kreyol?!?!).

"It's a fusion of contemporary folklore movement that speaks to the issues arising around language in the Haitian-American diaspora," said Montilus. "Growing up I felt stuck between two worlds, not being Haitian enough or American enough."

Montilus added that dance gives her an emotional release being able to connect with an audience, and is proud of who she is sharing it with others. [...]





## **Love Stutter Blog**

June 9, 2016

**SHINING, SHAPING + STANDARD MAKING: CANDACE THOMPSON  
CRAFTS DANCE CARIBBEAN COLLECTIVE** by Sydnie L. Mosley

[...] SLM: In terms of being the “standard keeper,” what are these standards and how did you arrive at them?

CT: The standards are... in terms of Caribbean content, knowing your content matter, doing the research. The standards are your performance craft – the use of whatever form you are using - in its fullest, widest, highest potential. The standards are making work that can connect to a Caribbean audience because that’s what we’re interested in, and creating work that can be broken down, and defended, and explained, and that’s thorough. It’s this bridging “high art” and “low art” and [these standards] are the things that separate the two. It’s your ability to carefully construct a piece that tells a story, or gives a feeling, or quotes a culture, or uses tradition in a sensible and responsible way. In creating a platform that elevates our culture, elevates our traditions onto a public stage, it’s giving [our culture and traditions] the respect that it deserves because it has been delved into inside and out. consistently evolving and remaining interesting. [...]



# Caribbean Life

## **Caribbean Life News**

March 25, 2016

### **DANCE YOUR WAY TO FITNESS, CARIB STYLE by Alley Olivier**

A vision written down with a due date is no longer a dream; instead, it evolves into a goal. Just a year ago, Candace Thompson envisioned a dance collective to support and celebrate Caribbean American dancers in the Diaspora. Today, the Dance Caribbean Collective is still catapulting forward with new elements including fitness dance classes, bigger shows and more.

According to Thompson, "There are a lot of people using Caribbean culture to create these dance fitness classes that are more open to the general public; I just wanted to highlight all these different styles and cultures that are being taught and bring them to the light that we have a lot to share."

The Trinidadian native has remained busy teaching classes, performing, and planning the next steps for the collective.

[...] While Caribbean-style dance fitness classes have become a new trend, [Candace] Thompson does see [the "DCC Diaspora Dance Series"] withstanding pass the fad phase as the dances are consistently evolving and remaining interesting.

## **The Dance Enthusiast**

June 12, 2016

### **ALL AH WE IS ONE FAMILY - Audience Review**

## THE DANCE ENTHUSIAST

[...] Montilus' solo piece "Boutilliers" illustrated her father's journey to the United States from Haiti and the struggles that he encountered. The deeply reflective, spiritual, and ritualistic work delved into both the Christian and Vodoun religions providing a wonderful balance of struggle and redemption through spirituality, motion, and chant. Thompson's work "Neath the Mas," performed as a trio provided an au courant perspective on "carnival practices and their underlying roots in rebellion." Visually and aurally stimulating, one was drawn into the struggles, taming, and frenzy that these efficacious female Caribbean bodies articulated. KasheDance brought it home with "Facing Home: Love and Redemption" choreographed by Chris Walker and Kevin Ormsby. "Facing Home" not only overtly portrays the international influence of Bob Marley's music but it also depicts through a powerful narrative, the abhorrent history of homophobia in Jamaican/West Indian culture. Moving and poignant, this work demonstrates through physicality, despair, sensitivity, and empathy the struggle for both identity and survival. [...]



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