In their fifth year and fourth MIXTAPE performance, THE MIXTAPE Collective continues to celebrate and deepen their connection to the Street dance and musical communities of the Twin Cities. They search the intersections of individual and group narratives to intentionally work within what Angela Davis calls “a complex unity.”

THE MIXTAPE Collective honors vulnerability as strength and resists a political landscape that would keep us apart. This year’s performance is presented as a virtual, livestreamed experience meant to bring us together in the “Now.”
Andy Asong-Morfaw is originally from Cameroon and moved to the Twin Cities in September 2003. His dance background is likened to the West African style called Makossa, common in Cameroon. Throughout his dance career, he has worked with the Timberwolves’s 612 Crew and THE MIXTAPE Collective. Asong-Morfaw also runs a health care business that facilitates personal care assistance and supplemental staffing.

McKnight Fellow Herb Johnson III AKA Jdot Tight Eyz graduated from Perpich Center for Arts Education in 2010 and studied for three years at Lundstrum Performing Arts. Johnson is now at the University of Minnesota teaching Urban & Street Dance. His professional work includes “America’s Got Talent,” choreographing G-Eazy’s Genesis Halftime Show, and the Super Bowl LII Halftime Show with Justin Timberlake.

This year, Herb Johnson III, Darrius Strong, and J-Sun are mentoring Andy Asong-Morfaw and Averie Mitchell-Brown by providing critical insights about the choreographic process. Stefan “Bionik” Taylor is expanding the mentorship mission of MIXTAPE to include aspiring music directors, working with MAYA in that capacity. Visual Director V. Paul Virtucio is similarly expanding the program to videographer mentee Gregory Addison.

Averie Mitchell-Brown is a University of Minnesota - Twin Cities graduate aspiring to touch as many lives as possible with her love, light, and talent. She has worked with well-known Midwest artists like Al Taw’Am - The Twins, Kenna Cottman, Aneka McMullen, and more. When not dancing, she touches lives as a wedding DJ, and she travels with her family.

As a break(danc)ing choreographer, J-Sun Noer is a break(danc)ing choreographer who believes in accountability and artistic collaboration as key elements of social change. He is the Artistic Director for THE MIXTAPE Collective and is pursuing a Ph.D. in Theater Historiography at the University of Minnesota.

Darrius Strong is a Twin Cities-based dancer, choreographer, and instructor. His dance company, STRONGmovement uses the universal language of dance to tell stories related to society and humanity. Strong is a graduate of University of Minnesota – Twin Cities (BFA 2015) where he is currently faculty. He is a grateful recipient of a 2017 Momentum New Works Award and 2019 Jerome Hill Fellowship.

Stefon “Bionik” Taylor is a composer, producer, multi-instrumentalist from the Twin Cities who strives to contribute to the community through creation, collaboration, and teaching. His music is featured in countless movies, shows, video games and albums. Bionik is a COMPAS resident teaching artist, and a 2019 McKnight Composer Fellow. This is Bionik’s 6th year as Music Director for the MIXTAPE series.

Visual Director V. Paul Virtucio started photographing dance performances in 2000 while working as an arts & entertainment newspaper reporter. It wasn’t until he tried choreographing works that his video projects became more cinematographic – his first attempt at such being the #picturedance series at 9x22 Dance/Lab in 2012. Virtucio has videotaped the last three THE MIXTAPE Collective shows at The Cowles Center.

Pianist/composer Yan Pang is a contributing artist to the MIXTAPE IV: Now Streaming soundtrack.
**Germination**

*Germination* comes from the concept of a seed planted into soil which becomes a beautiful plant. But the seed’s growth is stunted because there are certain factors limiting its growth into a healthy plant. Certain factors are due to lack of oxygen, sunlight, and water. In order to take care of this seed, and to help it grow healthily in the process, it must be properly cared for. The negative factors in *Germination* tie to concepts of racism and discrimination, which Black people face every day in America.

**Choreographer:** Andy Asong-Morfaw  
**Performers:** Monica Chung, Tottianna Duffy, Rachel Harris, Karen Yang  
**Original Score:** Stefon “Bionik” Taylor

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**In This Time**

**Choreographer:** Herb Johnson III AKA JDot Tight Eyez  
**Performers:** Raphael DowI, Tumelo Khune, Nehemiah Lucas, Cecil Neal  
**Original Score:** Antix the JoaI, JusHerI, Stefon “Bionik” Taylor, Dizzy Wright

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**Over My Head**

“Be the change you want to see in the world,” is a common mantra, but what if it feels like the rest of the world won’t change with you?

**Over My Head** is a reimagined story of the Black woman’s plight in America. Through dance and visual art set to the theme of the game of chess, this is my effort to give you a glimpse of the many struggles black women face today.

**Choreographer:** Averie Mitchell-Brown  
**Performers:** Jessika Akpaka, Gabriel Blackburn, Desaré Cox, Ololade Gbadamosi-Alashe, Zhané Jackson  
**Original Score:** Stefon “Bionik” Taylor

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**Kindred Spirits**

STRONGmovement always works to tell a story related to the human experience. In *Kindred Spirits*, the company explores the impact that individuals have in building a community. To guide their exploration, STRONGmovement focused on its company’s community, and how every single company member brings a certain aesthetic and flavor to the work that they produce, in hopes to merge with other communities.

**Choreographer:** Darrius Strong and Dancers  
**Performers:** Darrius Strong, Cheng “Technica” Xiong, Gabby “the baddie” Abram  
**Original Score:** Stefon “Bionik” Taylor

**Ground Theory**

An encounter between two different dimensions that calls attention to how we see the world and each other. What is brought into this meeting?

**Choreographer:** J-Sun Noer  
**Performers:** Andrew Allen, Mia Johnson, Rowan Munson, Vivian Wolkoff  
**Original Score:** Stefon “Bionik” Taylor, Yan Pang, and Queen Drea

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**Please Note:**

Photography, video, and audio recording are strictly prohibited.  
Thank you & enjoy the show!
THE MIXTAPE Collective would like to thank Jonathan Ackerman for his continued support and his role in getting Red Bull to sponsor this event. We would also like to thank Carl Flink and Mike Grogan for providing space and time at the University of Minnesota to shoot our work. Indigenous Roots also deserves a big shout out for space and time - support this venue! This project was also funded by a grant from New Music USA and Springboard for the Arts - thank you so much! Finally, thank you to the hard-working staff at The Cowles Center that invested in MIXTAPE’s new direction.

Photo by Shelly Mosman

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With donors’ support, The Cowles Center is able to provide education, rehearsal, administrative, and performance resources to local dance companies and independent choreographers, in addition to funding free and deeply discounted dance workshops and performance tickets for local school groups.

For further information on how you can support The Cowles Center, please contact Mary Meyers, Individual Gift Manager, at mary.meyers@artspace.org or (312)-485-4063.

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