

Alanna Morris & Collaborators

Black Light a re:Search performance

Co-presented by The Great Northern, Northrop, and The Cowles Center

February 4–6, 2022 In-person & Livestream

Photo by Canaan Mattson

Black Light is a multi-year collaborative performance directed by Minnesota-based dancer-choreographer, Alanna Morris.

This work explores birth, creation, death, and life transitions while honoring noble ancestry. It ventures into the nobility of black-ness; the divinity of feminine creative energy; and the harnessing of sensual expression. *Black Light a re:Search performance* is an expression of season and interwoven local and global identities.

Alanna Morris

Alanna Morris (formerly Morris-Van Tassel), dancer-choreographer/educator/artist organizer, is a Brooklyn native and Saint Paul-based artist excavating cultural retention and fragmentation within their Caribbean diasporic identity. Alanna is a graduate of The Juilliard School and LaGuardia High School for Music & Art and Performing Arts (NY). Morris was a performer with TU Dance (MN) from 2007-2017, featured in works by Kyle Abraham, Gioconda Barbuto, Camille A. Brown, Ronald K. Brown, Gregory Dolbashian, Katrin Hall, Francesca Harper, Dwight Rhoden, and Uri Sands. In 2020, Alanna served as the TU Dance company's Artistic Associate and is a founding Teaching Artist at The School at TU Dance Center. As a freelancer, Alanna is

the Artistic Director of AMVTP, founded in 2017 to produce dance works that center the genius of the Afro-Caribbean archive, educational programs that bring wholistic learning and development to all communities, and community-building initiatives that give mid-career women Creatives resources to thrive. Alanna has developed projects and collaborated with Idan Sharabi (Israel), Morgan Thorson (MN), Karen Sherman (MN), and Ashwini Ramaswamy (MN) and is currently touring Ramaswamy's *Let The Crows Come*. In 2018, they were named *Dance Magazine's 25 to Watch!* Alanna is a 2015 McKnight Dance Fellow, a Minneapolis' *City Pages' Artist of the Year (2019)*, and *Best Choreographer (2019)*. They have recently been awarded a 2021 McKnight Fellowship in Choreography. Alanna is the Artistic Director of AMVTP, founded in 2017 to produce dance works that center the genius of the Afro-Caribbean archive, educational programs that bring wholistic learning and development to all communities, and community-building initiatives that give mid-career women Creatives resources to thrive. Alanna's choreography has been commissioned by Minnesota Dance Theatre, Penumbra Theatre, Children's Theatre Co., the Dance Department at Carleton College, and The Cowles Center for Dance. This spring, Morris joined the dance faculty at Bard College as a Guest Teaching Artist through Gibney Dance (NY). Alanna is currently an Artistic Advisor to Springboard Danse Montreal.

A foreword to move forward by Jamie J. Philbert

Founder, Art On Purpose Pointer, Bois Academy of Trinidad and Tobago

This work invites you into the light of blackness, a birthing place. A place where the light exits and black enters, where black exits and light enters. You are invited into this space as doulas of 'Black Light.' It is not meant to be the average idea of bringing an idea to being. It is meant to tickle the shape of archetype as we might know it or we might have known it. It is the place of knowing even when you think you don't know. Knowing is feeling. Feeling is knowing. SO what do you feel when you hear, see, 'Black Light?' This is a research performance. A performance that translates research as search again. It questions the questions and answers the answers. It asks you to think with the performance and not about. It asks Alanna to look at the findings within her finding while in the act of finding. The research performance is not the end, it is a continuous beginning. 'Black Light.'



Scan for closed captioning

Funders

Alanna Morris is the recipient of a 2021 McKnight Choreography Fellowship, administered by The Cowles Center and funded by the McKnight Foundation. This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund. This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.



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Invocation to Oya

This is an expression of my encounter with Oya. I am going through a journey and researching that process performatively. I am not an Ifá initiate and this choreography and staging reflects my personal homage to Oya, divine force of change and transformation in Yoruba cosmology. Warrior and defender of women, she stands at the cemeteries of our life and has a close relationship to iku (death). We know her by the storms she creates, the destructive-creative life force. Iba Oya! Iba Yansan!

Choreographer: Alanna Morris with additional choreography by Patriann Edwards

Music Credits: Songs performed by Ella Andall

Cast: Alanna Morris, Gabrielle Abram, Andréa Potter, Demetrius McClendon

Self Pleasure/Self Love

Tohimagod.

Choreographer and Solo Performer: Alanna Morris

Research Assistants: Imagine Joy and Vie Boheme

Music Credits: "Orange Moon" by Erykah Badu

Latent Psyche

Analytical psychology posits that there are aspects of our personalities that we can be unaware of, unidentify with, or even shun; and yet they are as real as the aspects with which we fancy ourselves. What source of the light is there being cast onto our shadows?

Choreographer: Alanna Morris and Collaborators

Music Credits: "Las Muchachas" by Susana Baca; "Songs She Never Heard" by Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah; "Moist" by Janet Jackson; and "Morning Bird" by Sade

Cast: Alanna Morris, Gabrielle Abram, Andréa Potter, and Demetrius McClendon

Mooji/Self Realization

During the pandemic I learned how to sit in Self. I discovered inner quiet and stillness through the Vedantic tradition. Moojibaba has been a way-opener.

Choreographer and Solo Performer: Alanna Morris

Movement Coach: Adam Barruch

Music Credits: Mooji

Production Credits

Allana Olson (Stage Manager)

Dakota Blankenship (Stitcher)

Rebecca Karstad (Seamstress)

Valerie Oliveira (Lighting Design)

Beaudau Banks (Lighting Design)

Trevor Bowen (Costumer)

Gabrielle Abram (Dancer-Collaborator)

Demetrius McClendon (ImagineJoy) (Dancer-Collaborator)

Andréa Potter (Dancer-Collaborator)

Djenane Saint Juste, Florencia "Fofó" Pierre, Jacinthe Jean, Wilson Charles, and Beavois Anilus "Zangi"

(Afoutayi Haitian Dance, Music and Arts Co.)

Sokah

A few years ago I discovered the medicine of a good "whine" and surprisingly, there was no man present to assist. The music of my people is all I need to source the delightfulness of life! I hope you don't look too hard at the stage here. I invite you to feel into the beauty that is you, that soca music holds for all of us.

Choreographer and Solo Performer: Alanna Morris

Research Assistant: Gabrielle Abram

Music Credits: "Workout" by Kes and Nailah Blackman

Intermission

As we prepare for the next phase, after you take care of your personal needs, feel free to come back to your seat to ground and center. As you sit we invite you to tap into your inmost Self with the support of this frequency. Relax your body and relax your mind. Your quality of presence is supported and valued here!

Yanvalou and Mayi

In my research, I keep encountering the Haitian Revolution. Jean-Jacques Dessalines (The Liberator) declared *Hayti/Ayiti as the Empire of Freedom. A place where all who rise up against the tyranny of European imperialism and colonialism would be bestowed upon them the identity as "honorary blacks." Haiti/Ayiti is the first Black Republic and much praise is due her name. In Haitian Vodou, Yanvalou is a rhythm to welcome all the Spirits. It calls us to participate in the work of rebirth and healing.

Mayi is a warrior dance of the Tainos, the indigenous peoples of Ayiti/Haiti. It was named after the corn harvested at the time — a substance that provided practical and spiritual power. Mayi is danced to prepare oneself to go to war. It brings healing and strength.

**French and indigenous names respectively for Haiti*

Choreographer: Djenane Saint Juste

Concept and Staging: Alanna Morris, Florencia

"Fofó" Pierre and Djenane Saint Juste

Music Credits and Cast: Yanvalou and Mayi by Florencia

"Fofó" Pierre (manbo and singer), Djenane Saint Juste (choreographer, dancer and singer), Jacinthe Jean (houngan and singer), Beavois Anilus "Zangi" (lead drummer), Wilson Charles (drummer), and Alanna Morris (solo dancer)

Special Thanks

Vie Boheme; Canaan Mattson; AMVTP Administrative Assistant, Sea Thomas and Advisory Board Members, Lorna Morris, Christine Van Tassel, Stephanie Brown, and Michael Kleber-Diggs; Jamie Philbert; Yesenia Selier; Eniolá O. Adélékàn; Efuwape Andall; Baba Louis Alemayehu; Adam Barruch; Patriann Edwards; Second Shift Studio Space of Saint Paul; The Croft Residency; Jackie @ Center for the Performing Arts; Morgan Thorson @ MOVO Space; The Dance & Theater Department at Carleton College; Dana Kassel; Colin Edwards; and Alexandra Wells.

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Gabrielle Abram

Gabrielle Abram is a self-taught dancer and multilingual Hip Hop artist; a member of STRONGmovement, directed by Darius Strong and of Atlantis13 Dance Collective, directed by Peace Madimutsa and Jonathan van Arneman. Abram continues to produce, dance and create work in the Twin Cities.



Andréa Potter

Andréa Potter is a Capoeirista and dancer of traditions within the African diaspora, especially those in Cuba, Brazil and West Africa. She is a Nurturer of community, prioritizing Black people and their liberation through body and energy work to promote healing from systematic, generational and personal trauma.



Demetrius McClendon

Demetrius McClendon (ImagineJoy) was born and raised in the south side of Chicago. They began dancing with street hip-hop at the age of 15 and have traveled nationally and internationally as a professional dancer, teacher, and choreographer sharing their passion for the arts.



Djenane Saint Juste and Florencia "Fofó" Pierre

Afoutayi Haitian Dance, Music and Arts Co. is a performance company and nonprofit arts organization incorporated in the state of Minnesota. Our mission is to promote Haitian heritage and diversify contemporary representations of Haiti through music, art, dance, and history education. Afoutayi was founded in 2009 and is directed by Djenane Saint Juste and Florencia "Fofó" Pierre.



Northrop Dance Series

Paul Taylor Dance Company

In-person Feb 12



Ragamala Dance Company

In-person Feb 26



Martha Graham Dance Company

In-person Apr 2



Northrop + Walker Art Center Present

Third Coast Percussion with Movement Art Is

In-person Apr 30



Tickets at northrop.umn.edu

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