



JUL 25 - AUG 5
2025

THE CENTER WILL NOT HOLD

Wednesday, July 30, 2025
Vilar Performing Arts Center

Generously Underwritten by Sara Friedle & Michael Towler, additional support provided by the Marvin Naiman and Margery Goldman Family Foundation.

THE CENTER WILL NOT HOLD (2025)

Created and Directed by
Ephrat Asherie and Michelle Dorrance

Choreography by
Ephrat Asherie, Manon Bal, Tomoe “Beasty” Carr, Michelle Dorrance,
Zakhele “Bboy Swazi” Grabowski, Fritzlyn Hector, Donnetta “Lil Bit” Jackson,
Eriko Jimbo, Richie Maguire, Michael Manson Jr., Ron Myles,
Charles “Lil Buck” Riley, Matthew “Megawatt” West,
with solo improvisation by the dancers

Artistic Advisors
Brenda Bufalino, Buddha Stretch

Original Music by
Donovan Dorrance

Live Percussion by
John Angeles

Lighting Design by
Kathy Kaufmann

Lighting Supervisor
Devin Koenig

Sound Design by
Christopher Marc

Audio Engineer
Sid McCarty

Costumes facilitated by
Amy Page

Performed by
John Angeles, Ephrat “Bounce” Asherie, Manon Bal,
Tomoe “Beasty” Carr, Michelle Dorrance, Zakhele “Bboy Swazi” Grabowski,
Fritzlyn Hector, Donnetta “Lil Bit” Jackson, Michael Manson Jr.,
Ron Myles, Matthew “Megawatt” West

Dance Captain
Manon Bal

Swing
Eriko Jimbo

Lead commissioning support for *The Center Will Not Hold* is provided by the Jay and Susie Gogue Performing Arts Center at Auburn University.

Co-commissioning support for *The Center Will Not Hold* is provided by Sadler’s Wells, London; The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland; McCarter Theater Center; The Princeton Museum of Art; and Jacob’s Pillow. Additional project support is provided by New Music USA’s Organization Fund in 2024-25, the O’Donnell Green Music and Dance Foundation, and One World Fund. *The Center Will Not Hold* was developed in part through residencies at the Jay and Susie Gogue Performing Arts Center at Auburn University; Jacob’s Pillow; and MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA.

Excerpts of *The Center Will Not Hold* first premiered in 2023 as a commission by New York City Center for the Fall for Dance Festival. Support for the commission was provided by Stuart H. Coleman and Meryl Rosofsky and support for the composition was provided by The Charles and Joan Gross Family Foundation.

The Center Will Not Hold is a Dorrance Dance Production. The creation and development of new work is funded, in part, through the Laslo-Srere Fund for New Work; founding supporters: Hilary Srere and Michael Lemle.

Ephrat Asherie (Co-Director/Performer) is a NYC-based director, choreographer, performer and b-girl and a 2016 Bessie Award Winner for Innovative Achievement in Dance. Asherie has received numerous awards to support her work including Dance Magazine's Inaugural Harkness Promise Award and two National Dance Project Awards. As Artistic Director of Ephrat Asherie Dance (EAD), Asherie's work has been presented on stages nationally and internationally with commissions from companies including Malpasso, Philadanco! and Parsons Contemporary Dance and additional commissions from Vail Dance Festival, Fall for Dance, River to River Festival, Firatâtrrega, Works & Process at the Guggenheim and the Kennedy Center. She is a co-founding member of the all-female house dance collective MAWU and is forever grateful to her breaking mentor Richard Santiago (aka Break Easy) and NYC's underground dance community for inspiring her to pursue a life as an artist. www.ephratasheriedance.com | [@ephratasheriedance](https://www.instagram.com/ephratasheriedance)

Michelle Dorrance (Co-Director/Performer) is a lifelong tap dancer and long-time Festival Artist, whose innovative works have graced Vail's stages to great acclaim. Her full bio is available for viewing online at the Vail Dance Festival website: vaildance.org

John Angeles (Performer) is from Fort Worth, TX. John obtained a music degree from TCU, where he focused on Drumset, Marimba and Marching percussion. He was a member of the 2001 DCI World Champions, The Cavaliers. From 2007-2017, John performed with the New York and the touring productions of STOMP. After STOMP, John moved back to Texas and now focuses on being a father to his son and identical twin girls. Since moving back, John has returned to the stage with Dorrance Dance and is honored to be performing again with Michelle, Ephrat and company in The Center Will Not Hold. He is looking forward to performing for the first time in front of his kids.

Manon Bal (Dance Captain/Performer) is a versatile professional dancer from Marseille, France. She has trained at the IFPRO Rick Odums in Paris and at the prestigious Ailey School in New York City. She has been a member of Ephrat Asherie Dance since 2016. She has worked for respected choreographers such as Ronald K Brown, Rick Odums, Tweet Boogie, Michele Byrd McPhee, Jon Rua & Miki Tuesday. Manon is the co-founder of Maley Company in collaboration with Dhele Agbetou & Mozaik Dance in collaboration with Janine "J9" Micheletti and Sun Kim. She is also a New York City Center Teaching Artist.

Tomoe "Beasty" Carr (Performer) Born in New York, Tomoe spent a decade of her upbringing in Japan. She commenced her dance training at Next Generation Dance Studios in Japan and is the first graduate of KiNEXtionSM from NXGN Studios Japan. In 2019, she was recognized as an honorable mention recipient of the YoungArts competition. Tomoe has

performed behind renowned artists such as Alicia Keys, Swaelee, Jidenna, and Freddie Gibbs. Over the past decade, she has made significant contributions to the street style battle scene, emerging victorious at Red Bull Dance Ya Style Boston 2021, Jacob's Pillow, Ladies Of Hip Hop Festival, and Step Ya Game Up in 2022. Since 2021, Tomoe has embarked on a nationwide journey, engaging in battles, commercial endeavors, and cultural exchanges with diverse dancers. In 2023, she transitioned into the realm of yoga, obtaining her teacher training certificate in Bali. Tomoe is dedicated to becoming a valuable advocate for both the dance and non-dance communities, aiming to raise awareness within the industry.

Zakhele “Bboy Swazi” Grabowski (Performer) is a performing and competitive Tap dancer and Breaker. He has toured with Dorrance Dance, Rennie Harris Puremovement Street Theatre, and with the musical review, We Move In Color. In 2024 he won first Silver and then Gold in back-to-back international competitions at the Théâtre du Rond Point and Spot 24 in Paris, took Gold at World Kidz Breaking Championships USA (U18), won Bronze at World Kidz Breaking Championship in Slovenia, took Gold in the Detroit cypher sponsored by Red Bull BC One, and then went on to be in the top 8 at the National Championships in Los Angeles. He was the 2023 National Champion of USA Breaking', and a member of Teen Team USA Breaking For Gold. Additionally, he was one of the cohort for the Tap Ensemble at Jacob's Pillow that year. He is a member of Dynamic Rockers (NYC) Boxcrew (Paris) and Funky Rockerz (Worldwide). Zakhele was born in Eswatini, and is currently based in the NYC area.

Fritzlyn Hector (Performer) Bessie Award-winning director, choreographer, dancer, educator, actress, and performing artist with a dynamic 25-year career. A veteran performer and cast trainer for STOMP, she was the rehearsal director for its international tour in France. In 2023, Fritz was Associate Director/Choreographer for *Ain't Misbehavin'* at the Geva Theatre and Westport Country Playhouse (2023). Recently, she performed at the 2024 US Open and was featured in its national commercial. Her film credits include The Bride! (Warner Bros.), an Amazon Prime Music film, and Netflix's Julie's Greenroom starring Julie Andrews. She dances with Forces of Nature Dance Theatre, collaborates with top artists, and leads her own company, The Fritzation Experience. An esteemed educator, she has taught at Hofstra, Princeton, NYU, Lehman College, New Jersey Performing Arts Center, and Earl Mosely's Diversity Dance. She is currently a professor and Director of Dance at Long Island University Post.

Donnetta “Lil Bit” Jackson (Performer) is a versatile dance performer, instructor, choreographer, and actress. Born and raised on the Southeast Side of Chicago, IL, she began dancing at The Sammy Dyer School of the Theatre at the age of 7. At 11 years old, she became one of the original members of the prestigious M.A.D.D. Rhythms tap company, and later

joined the Chicago Footwork crew, Creation Battle Clique / Creation Global. She choreographs for and performs with Grammy award-winning artist, Chance the Rapper. One highlight of her career is performing alongside Missy Elliot at the 2019 VMAs for her Michael Jackson Video Vanguard Award performance. Jackson, recently acknowledged as a sister with superpower for rolling out magazines, has also footworked internationally, for corporations like Nike and Jordan and has competed on Season 6 of MTV's America's Best Dance Crew with the Chicago FootworkKINGz. Recently, Jackson appeared on the Fox/Hulu dance series, The Big Leap, as Tamra Smalls and was also one of the lead dancers in the red hot chilli peppers new video "The Drummer"!

Michael Manson Jr. (Performer) is a dancer, choreographer and educator, specializing in the form of Detroit Jit, the city's most iconic dance style. He has been a featured dancer on the television program "So You Think You Can Dance", and serves as a dancer and choreographer for the Detroit Pistons. He is the founder of the dance company House of Jit. He tours with the acclaimed street dance company Rennie Harris Puremovement and has been an invited teaching artist for the Rennie Harris Illadelph Legends Festival, teaching Detroit Jit. In 2020, he was awarded the Kresge Artist Fellowship grant, and he was one of five winners from across the Midwest of the 2022 Joyce Awards. In 2022, he was also honored with the Spirit of Detroit award for his dance accomplishments. In 2024, he won the Seed and Bloom: Detroit grant from the Gilbert Family Foundation. He is deeply committed to educating the next generation of Detroit dancers and frequently teaches workshops and classes in Jit and hip-hop. His teaching credits also include master classes at Arizona State University, the Columbia College Chicago Dance Center, and Broadway Dance Center. He has taught workshops and performed internationally in France, Bolivia, and Canada.

Ron Myles (Performer) admits that he has always been one looking to "shine in front of a camera." Born and raised in the city of Memphis TN. As a kid Myles developed a passion for music. Influencers such as his dad, older brother and childhood friend, would have sessions of free-style rapping or sitting in on sessions to watch and learn. Growing up around the best of Memphis artists such as 3-6 mafia, 8ball and MJG, Issac Hayes, The Bar-Kay's, Kingpin Skinny Pimp and Tommy Wright the 3rd just to name a few. Taking his southern ways of rap to California in 2009 where he initially branched himself out learning new cultural music becoming a self writer. Much time was spent for Myles working with various producers perfecting his craft along the way. This young and talented artist sets himself for higher grounds working alongside super producer Timothy (Bos) Bullock. Working together these two has created heat during score sessions for featured films as well for the KPop industry. As of today Myles has released a few singles Babbage, Boss Moves and Michael Jackson from his upcoming EP (Orange

Mound Baby) where you will find what it's like to be a part of what he calls "Yachts World" giving a taste of new trap sounds from the dirty south and taking it globally.

Matthew "Megawatt" West (Performer) started dancing at the age of 16 in Queens, New York. Growing up, his fascination with animals was undeniable and directly influenced his smooth, fluid, and animal-like movement style. Although the majority of Mega Watts' training is in bboying, he is also an avid listener of house music and a dedicated student of the dance style itself. He has attended numerous practice sessions held by renowned NYC house dancers, Conrad Rochester, James "Cricket" Colter and the Ladies of Mawu. Mega Watts is an active part of NYC's house dance community and teaches youth classes throughout the five boroughs. He can be seen in Baz Lurhman's recent Netflix series *The Get Down* and performing and battling with his crew, the Mellow Animals.

Eriko Jimbo (Swing) is a Tokyo born NYC based performing artist, educator, creative, and collaborator. Ranging from contemporary, hip hop, partnering, house, martial arts, aerial arts, sway pole, to acting, physical theater, and Taiko. Her credits include performing for Life & Trust, Pilobolus Dance Theater, the Met Gala, Sidi Larbi Cherkoui, Michael Arden, Ephrat Asherie, MAWU, Fuerza Bruta (NYC & global), and was also an original cast & show captain of Fuerza Bruta "WA!!" in Tokyo, as well as the lead in *Ships in the Night* by Gypsy Snider (Les 7 Doigts de la Main). She is also an associate director for *Untitled Dance Show Party Thing*, by Ani Taj & Sam Pinkleton. You can follow her adventures at www.erikojimbo.com or @jb0b0.

Donovan Dorrance (Composer) hails from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where he trained as a multi-instrumentalist. After earning a Bachelor's Degree at UNC, he moved to Brooklyn to work with Dorrance Dance, his sister's dance company, later becoming music director and composing original music for the company. Outside of dance, Dorrance scores films, teaches music technology, and produces and mixes music for other artists. His composition for *The Center Will Not Hold* was made possible, in part, by a New Music USA grant. If you'd like to hear music from this show or additional works, please visit www.donovandorrance.com.

Kathy Kaufmann (Lighting Designer) is a New York City native, and two time Bessie recipient. She is resident designer at Danspace Project at St. Marks Church, has taught at Sarah Lawrence and NYU, and has toured extensively throughout the world. She designs regularly for Dorrance Dance, Joanna Kotze, The Bang Group, Mariana Valencia, Ephrat Asherie Dance, Vicky Shick, and Music From The Sole.

Christopher Marc (Sound Designer) is a NYC-based sound designer and production manager from Minneapolis, MN. He has designed and

engineered sound for Michelle Dorrance, Music From the Sole, Variety Life Productions, Lincoln Center Restart Stages, Luke Hickey and Michael Jellick, as well as regional and Off-Broadway productions with the Kennedy Center, Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival, IJB Productions, Aquila Theatre and Mills Entertainment. Marc also designs/builds custom floors for percussive dance and is owner/operator of @CMarcAudio.

Devin Koenig (Lighting Supervisor) is a lighting supervisor, production manager, and programmer based in Astoria, New York. Currently, she is the lighting supervisor for Dorrance Dance, and has previously worked with Music from the Sole, Paul Taylor Dance Company, Joyce Theater Productions, and the Radio City Rockettes.

Sid McCarty (Audio Engineer) is an Appalachian sound designer and engineer. They use their work to explore identity, belonging, and permission while striving to be expressive, curious, and compassionate. Credits include Ohio University; Medea, Imaginary Audiences, Squeakers, What The Gods Gave Me, Concord Floral, Great River Shakespeare Festival: Venus in Fur, Merchant of Venice, Jacob's Pillow: Audio Engineer.

Dorrance Dance Productions (Producer) was founded in 2011 as a tap dance company, passionately committed to sharing the complex history, powerful legacy, and infinite possibilities of tap dance on a musical, conceptual, and emotional level. After 15 years of being the world's most lauded tap dance company, Dorrance Dance's mission has expanded.

As a producing entity, the organization seeks after work that continues to contextualize tap dance's history and its diaspora in a culturally significant way. The company aspires to support the development and touring of new works that continue to deepen the relationship between tap dance and the forms that have a direct relationship to its lineage.

Dorrance Dance is generously supported by The Harkness Foundation for Dance, Howard Gilman Foundation, The Hyde and Watson Foundation, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, New Music USA, The O'Donnell-Green Music and Dance Foundation, One World Fund, and The Shubert Foundation.

Rehearsal and development for this performance was supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts. These performances are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature. Dorrance Dance is a recipient of a U.S. Small Business Administration Shuttered Venue Operators Grant, made possible by the leadership of Senate Majority Leader Charles D. Schumer.

DORRANCE DANCE STAFF

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VAIL DANCE FESTIVAL PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO

While we share your enthusiasm for capturing our dancers in the moment, we ask that you refrain from taking any videos or photos during the performance. We DO encourage you to capture the moments in between, especially as your favorite artists are taking their bows during their standing ovations!

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PERFORMANCE PAVILION AT NOTTINGHAM PARK // AVON

FREE and open to all, this program showcases the beauty of BalletX, Colorado Ballet, DanceAspen, and Festival Artists with a performance by Celebrate the Beat's Celebration Team.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 1 // 7:30PM

INTERNATIONAL EVENINGS OF DANCE I

GERALD R. FORD AMPHITHEATER // VAIL

As the sun sets, the evening comes alive with energy, talent, and inspiration with some of the biggest stars in the world of dance.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 2 // 5:00PM

INTERNATIONAL EVENINGS OF DANCE II

GERALD R. FORD AMPHITHEATER // VAIL

Set in the warmth of daylight, this 60-minute, no-intermission performance delivers all the brilliance of the Festival's world-class dancers in a compact, family-friendly format.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 2 // 8:00PM

INTERNATIONAL EVENINGS OF DANCE III

GERALD R. FORD AMPHITHEATER // VAIL

The series concludes with a magical night under the stars. This late-evening performance takes full advantage of dramatic lighting and the beauty of a Colorado night sky.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 3 // 6:00PM

A.I.M BY KYLE ABRAHAM

VILAR PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Making its Festival debut, this program features Abraham's homage to Nina Simone, If We Were a Love Song, Abraham's celebrated MotorRover, along with the world premiere of Jermaine Spivey's In the act of undoing.

MONDAY, AUGUST 4 // 7:30PM

NOW: PREMIERES

GERALD R. FORD AMPHITHEATER // VAIL

The Festival's annual showcase of new commissioned dance works, all making their debut on one legendary night, performed by an extraordinary cast of dancers and musicians.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 5 // 6:00PM

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