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**NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHOREOGRAPHY - AKRON RELEASES FOURTH SEASON OF
*INSIDE THE DANCER'S STUDIO***

– Podcast Features Interviews with Choreographers from Across the U.S. –



Left to right: Annie-B Parson (Shira Friedman), Tendayi Kuumba (Angie LMV Photography), Donna Uchizono (Peggy Jarrell Kaplan), Raphael Xavier (Joanna Futral), taylor knight and anna thompson of slowdanger (Audrey Gatewood), Errin Weaver (Trestle Board), Joseph Tran and Lisa Berman of BRKFST Dance Company (Adam Adolphus), André M. Zachery (courtesy of the artist), Brendan Fernandes (Nathan Keay), and Dr. Jeff Katzin (courtesy of the Akron Art Museum).

AKRON, Ohio (July 28, 2023)—**The National Center for Choreography - Akron (NCCAkron)** has launched the fourth season of [*Inside the Dancer's Studio*](#), a podcast that brings listeners into the process of creating dance. Through interviews with choreographers from across the United States, *Inside the Dancer's Studio* dissolves the mystique of dance-making into engaging, fun, and deeply human conversation about what moves artists to express their truths through creation and performance.

Artists featured in Season 4 include **Errin Weaver** (Cleveland, OH), **André M. Zachery** (Brooklyn, NY), **BRKFST Dance Company** (Saint Paul, MN), **Raphael Xavier** (Philadelphia, PA), and **slowdanger (anna thompson + taylor knight)** (Pittsburgh, PA).

The podcast's host, NCCAkron Executive/Artistic Director **Christy Bolingbroke** (Akron, OH), poses a series of questions about craft, process, and perseverance to each interviewee, including: how do they name a piece? What do they look for in collaborators? What do they do if they find themselves stuck, creatively?

Each episode was recorded as part of a conversation series presented by NCCAkron, with support from The University of Akron. These short talks are perfect for budding dancers, dancemakers, creatives, or anyone who has ever built something from scratch.

This new season will also feature two bonus episodes from recent Dancing Conversations. The first from a Creative Residency with **Big Dance Theater** in April 2023, including New York-based choreographic collaborators **Annie-B Parson**, **Tendayi Kuumba**, and **Donna Uchizono**. The second from a panel discussion reflecting on artist Keith Haring's work and the challenges of creating both inside and outside museum institutions at NCCAkron's Creative Administration Research Summit Convening in June 2023 — with artist **Brendan Fernandes** (Chicago, IL) and Akron Art Museum Curator **Dr. Jeffrey Katzin** (Cleveland, OH).

"I'm thrilled to share these new episodes," says Bolingbroke. "With each conversation we get yet another perspective on the choreographic process. The series represents the broad expanse and possibilities of dance making today."

Jennifer Edwards produces the podcast with editing by James Sleeman, theme music by Floco Torres, cover art by Micah Kraus, and transcription by Arushi Singh.

Inside the Dancer's Studio is supported by NCCAkron, The University of Akron, The University of Akron Foundation, the Mary Schiller Myers Lecture Series in the Arts, the GAR Foundation, the Ohio Arts Council, the Akron Community Foundation, and Peg's Foundation.

New episodes are released each Friday beginning July 28, 2023 on most streaming platforms, including Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

For more information and to listen to episodes, visit nccakron.org/insidethedancersstudio.

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About NCCAkron

The National Center for Choreography at The University of Akron supports the research and development of new work in dance by exploring the full potential of the creative process. In addition to offering studio and technical residencies to make new work, activities focus on catalyzing dialogue and experimentation; creating proximity among artists and dance thinkers; and aggregating resources around dance making. For more information, visit nccakron.org.

The establishment and general operation of NCCAkron is made possible by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

About the Host

As the Founding Executive/Artistic Director for NCCAkron, **Christy Bolingbroke** is responsible for setting the business model and curatorial vision for all programs. She works closely with every artist to support their artistic/administrative growth and to develop engagement opportunities for the local community to interact with the visiting artists. Previously, Christy served as Deputy Director for Advancement at ODC in San Francisco, overseeing curation and performance programming as well as marketing and development organization-wide.

Prior to ODC, she was Director of Marketing at the Mark Morris Dance Group. She is currently a member of the Akron Civic Commons core team and a mentor in the South Arts MOMENTUM initiative. In the past, she has also served as a consulting advisor for the Bloomberg Philanthropies Arts Innovation Management initiative and on the New England Foundation for the Arts National Dance Project Advisory Panel. In 2017, *Dance Magazine* named Bolingbroke among the national list of most influential people in dance today.

About the Guests

Episode 1 – Big Dance Theater (Brooklyn, NY)

Annie-B Parson is the artistic director of Obie award-winning Big Dance Theater, which she co-founded in 1991. Parson has co-created over twenty large-scale works for such venues as the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Old Vic/London, Saddler's Wells/London, The Walker, The National Theater in Paris, Japan Society, and The Kitchen. Outside of her company, some of the artists she has worked with include David Byrne, David Bowie, Lorde, St. Vincent, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Wendy Whelan, Anne Carson, Esperanza Spalding, Suzan-Lori Parks, Laurie Anderson, Salt n Pepa, Jonathan Demme, and the Martha Graham Dance Company. Parson choreographed and did musical staging for *American Utopia* and Byrne's musical *Here Lies Love*, as well as his tours with Brian Eno and St. Vincent. Parson recently choreographed two operas: *Candide* at the Lyon Opera and *The Hours* at The Met. Parson's writing has been published in *The Atlantic* and *The Paris Review*; her book *The Choreography of Everyday Life* is published by Verso Press. Upcoming, with Thomas F. DeFrantz, she is co-editing a book entitled: *Dance History(s): Imagination as a Form of Study*. bigdancetheater.org

Tendayi Kuumba is an international dancer, choreographer, singer, songwriter, and Spelman College grad. Recently, Tendayi performed as a background vocalist/dancer and original cast member of Special Tony Award Winning David Byrne's *America Utopia* on Broadway as well as its World Tour and HBO Film adaptation directed by Spike Lee, and was the Chita Rivera Outstanding Female Dancer on Broadway 2022 as Lady in Brown in the Tony Nominated Broadway Revival of *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf*. Former touring company member of Urban Bush Women, Tendayi is also a longtime collaborator with partner Greg Purnell under the alias UFLYMOTHERSHIP with sonic/choreographic projects *Heroiné*, *Incog-negro*, *U.F.O: Unidentified Fly Objects*, *U.F.O: Stardust Melanin*, and *U.F.O "The Mixtape."*

Other solo/collaborative choreographic works have been featured at Gibney Dance, in partnership with Stephen Petronio Residency Center, Live Ideas: Drexciya Redux - An Afrofuturist Cabaret at NYLA, Movement Research: Spring Festival, Czech Center – New York: Prague-New York Effects, Dancespace: Collective Terrains, Spelman College: Toni Cade Bambara Scholar Activism Conference, Harlem Stage E-Moves 2019, Hi-ARTS: Critical Breaks Residency, BRICLab, Dance Mission Theater: D.I.R.T Festival 2021, Park Armory: 100 Women/100 Years, and Lincoln Center: Restart Stages.

She's worked with choreographers T. Lang, Marjani Forte'-Saunders (7NMS), ASÉ Dance Theater Collective, Nathan Trice/Rituals Performance Project *StrangeLove*, Jim Findlay's *Electric Lucifer* workshop, and Philadelphia Opera's *We Shall Not be Moved* directed by Bill T. Jones. She continues to build her pedagogy as a teaching artist occasionally at NYU Tisch and as a B.O.L.D Facilitator for Urban Bush Women. She gives thanks and blessings for life, love, breath, and the pursuit of happiness through creativity. whostendayi.com

Donna Uchizono is a dance artist based in New York City and Artistic Director of Donna Uchizono Company, which has toured throughout the U.S., Europe, Asia, South America, and Australia. A United States Artist Awardee, Guggenheim Fellow, and Bessie recipient, Uchizono has been distinguished by numerous national awards and grants.

She has been commissioned to create work for notables Mikhail Baryshnikov, Paula Vogel, David Hammons, and Oliver Sacks. Uchizono is active in the community and is committed to mentorship/advocacy for young dance makers. She served as a mentor for Sugar Salon, DoublePlus at Gibney Dance Center, and currently through Donna Uchizono Company's own choreographic mentorship program, "Shared Choreographic Practice."

She founded the Artist Advisory Board at Danspace Project, initiated a panel series on issues in the Dance Field at Gibney, and has served as a grants panelist for various funding institutions. Since 2022, Uchizono has been humbled by the distinction of being the first and only American-born choreographer of Asian ancestry in the history of Modern Dance, who has received cumulative national award recognition and toured an eponymous dance company across the US and internationally. She has been continuously grappling with issues of invisibility/visibility and the subsequent sense of isolation from the lack of American-born of Asian descent dance mentor(s) who share the experience of growing up with the invisibilized scars of racism. donnauchizono.org

Episode 2 – Raphael Xavier (Philadelphia, PA)

Raphael Xavier has forged an exceptional approach to improvisation, clearing the path for those interested in breaking as an art form. A multifaceted creator who draws inspiration from his many talents in dance, music, photography, and writing, Xavier's original works are a transcendent mix of poetry, precision, and spontaneity. His extensive research in Hip Hop forms and culture, specifically Breaking, has led to the creation of Ground-Core, a Somatic dance technique. Originally from Wilmington, Delaware, Xavier is a 2013 Pew Fellowship Grantee and 2016 Guggenheim Fellow. Xavier currently lives in Philadelphia and is a professor at Princeton University. raphaelxavier.org

Episode 3 – slowdanger (Pittsburgh, PA)

taylor knight and **anna thompson** are co-founding artistic directors of slowdanger, a multidisciplinary performance entity utilizing movement, found material, integrative technology, electronic instrumentation, and vocalization to produce performance work since 2013. They have been listed in *Dance Magazine's* "25 to Watch" (2018) and featured by MoMA, The Kennedy Center, The Warhol Museum, Usine C, and more. They are 2022 awardees of the

NPN Creation Fund and NEFA/National Dance Project to create their upcoming work, SUPERCELL. slowdangerslowdanger.com

Episode 4 – Errin Weaver (Cleveland, OH)

Errin Weaver is a community activator and the Executive Artistic Director of Mojuba! Dance Collective based in Cleveland, Ohio. She is currently completing her thesis toward an MFA in Choreography and Interdisciplinary Studies from Wilson College. Errin has taught, been in residency, and sat on panels regarding sacred dance rooted in the Gospel tradition and Africanist dance forms extensively. Through her work, she has created the Emerging Black Choreographers Incubator, hosted countless workshops and festivals, and become a published author. Her choreography has been presented regionally and internationally, and has received awards and commissioned support. She has been deeply vested in wellness and the community arts where she has facilitated training sessions, free outdoor movement workshops, and a collaborative evening length work uniting professional and aspiring artists in a telling of Black American history. Mojubadance.com

Episode 5 – BRKFST Dance Company (Saint Paul, MN)

Lisa 'MonaLisa' Berman is the founder and Artistic Director of BRKFST Dance Company. She is the recipient of the 2019 Artist Initiative Grant, 2016 McKnight Dancer Fellowship, and 2008 Jerome Travel Grant. Berman, alongside BRKFST, has set repertoire and original works on dancers at Bates Dance Festival, Dance2Connect Hip Hop Festival in Dublin, Ireland, The University of Minnesota, Carleton College, and Hamline University. She has performed in Minnesota, Connecticut, Florida, Washington DC, New York, Netherlands, and Ireland. Berman works as a Breaking instructor for Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists and a resident Teaching Artist for The Cowles Center.

Joseph 'MN Joe' Tran is a founding member of BRKFST Dance Company and a member of Knuckleheads Cali breaking crew. Tran is known for his signature moves which have earned him multiple victories in breaking competitions across the US, Europe, and South America. He is the recipient of the 2023 Jerome Hill Artist Fellowship and the 2019 McKnight Dancer Fellowship, and has performed locally throughout Saint Paul/Minneapolis, nationally in Connecticut, and internationally in Ireland. Tran has set repertoire with BRKFST at the University of Minnesota, Carleton College, and Bates Dance Festival. Tran currently works as a Breaking instructor for Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists and Young Dance. brkfstdance.com

Episode 6 – André M. Zachery (Brooklyn, NY)

André M. Zachery is an interdisciplinary artist and the artistic director of the Brooklyn-based dance company Renegade Performance Group. André holds a BFA from Fordham University/Alvin Ailey and MFA in Performance & Interactive Media Arts from CUNY/Brooklyn College. He is a 2016 New York Foundation for the Arts Gregory Millard Fellow in Choreography and a 2019 Jerome Hill Foundation Fellow in Choreography. His works through RPG have been presented domestically and internationally, receiving support through several residencies, awards, and commissions. André is currently a faculty member of the NYU Tisch Dance

Department. As a scholar, he has been a member of panels, led group talks, facilitated discussions, and presented research on a myriad of topics including Afrofuturism, African Diaspora practices and philosophies, Black cultural aesthetics, technology in art and performance, and expanding the boundaries of art making within the community. He is an advisory board member of ATLAS Institute at the University of Colorado. André has taught at Brooklyn College and been a guest faculty member at the dance programs of Florida State University, Virginia Commonwealth University, The Ohio State University, the University of California Los Angeles, and the University of California Riverside. renegadepeg.com

Episode 7 – Against All Odds: Moving in Museums

Brendan Fernandes (Chicago, IL)

Brendan Fernandes is an internationally recognized Canadian artist working at the intersection of dance and visual arts. Currently based out of Chicago, Brendan's projects address issues of race, queer culture, migration, protest, and other forms of collective movement. Always looking to create new spaces and new forms of agency, Brendan's projects take on hybrid forms: part Ballet, part queer dance hall, part political protest...always rooted in collaboration and fostering solidarity. Brendan is a graduate of the Whitney Independent Study Program (2007) and a recipient of a Robert Rauschenberg Fellowship (2014). In 2010, he was shortlisted for the Sobey Art Award and is the recipient of a prestigious 2017 Canada Council New Chapters grant. Brendan is also the recipient of the Artadia Award (2019), a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship (2020), and a Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation grant (2019). His projects have shown at the 2019 Whitney Biennial (New York); the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York); the Museum of Modern Art (New York); The Getty Museum (Los Angeles); the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa); MAC (Montreal); among a great many others. He is currently Assistant Professor at Northwestern University and represented by Monique Meloche Gallery in Chicago. Recent and upcoming projects include performances and solo presentations at the Noguchi Museum, New York, NY; The Richmond Art Gallery, Richmond, BC; The National Gallery of Canada and new commissions with The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia; The DR Vocal Ensemble, Copenhagen, Denmark, and a new dance performance with Munch Museum, Oslo, Norway. brendanfernandes.ca

Dr. Jeffrey Katzin (Cleveland, OH)

Dr. Jeff Katzin is the Curator at the Akron Art Museum. He specializes in modern and contemporary art with research ranging from painting to photography, film, and video art. Jeffrey has received a certificate in Art Museum Studies from Smith College, a BA from Wesleyan University, an MA from the University of Texas at Austin, and a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania, where his doctoral dissertation explored the history and potential of abstract photography, with particular focus on Alvin Langdon Coburn's Vortographs of 1916–17. Since coming to Akron Art Museum in 2019, he has curated several exhibitions, including Keith Haring: Against All Odds and Afterimages: Geometric Abstraction and Perception. akronartmuseum.org