

# ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2017 – JUNE 30, 2018



Tacoma Urban Performing Arts Center

**STUDENTS 83**

Creative Movement, Pre-Ballet, Ballet, Liturgical, West African, Hip Hop

**PART TIME TEACHING ARTISTS 8**

**PART TIME ACCOMPANISTS 1**

**T.U.P.A.C. Tacoma Urban Performing  
Arts Center**



Founded in March 2017, Tacoma Urban Performing Arts Center has made a huge impact in the Greater Tacoma Community due to the pedigree of its teaching staff.

Founder, Kabby Mitchell III: the first black company member of Pacific Northwest Ballet, international performer, choreographer, teacher had a long lived dream to open a first rate dance school dedicated to teaching racially, economically and gender marginalized children of Tacoma by top flight instructors who looked like them as they pursued lessons in the performing arts.

He co-founded TUPAC — Tacoma Urban Performing Arts Center — with Klair Ethridge as a school dedicated to introducing and teaching the performing arts to underserved youth, 6-18. Mitchell and Ethridge set July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017 as the opening day for classes to begin. Mitchell passed away on May 4<sup>th</sup> of congestive heart failure.

## MISSION

To provide our most deserving racially and socioeconomically diverse youth with world class opportunities to achieve Artistic Excellence in the performing arts.

## VISION

T.U.P.A.C. envisions a future where our students will be globally recognized as T.U.P.A.C. artists by the content of their character, their poise, the generosity of their spirit and the phenomenal contributions they make to their communities and the planet.

## ARTISTIC STAFF

Interim Artistic Director Jade Solomon Curtis

Ballet Director Julie Tobiason

Ballet Instructors Julie Tobiason – Erricka Turner Davis – Heather Arneson  
Lynne Short, Nathan Cook

Liturgical Instructor Vania Bynum

Hip Hop Instructor Angel

West African Instructor Etienne Cakpo

**July** Kabby's vast network of friends, colleagues, fans, eager new students and their parents galvanized to make what had been a neglected building located in downtown Tacoma into a vibrant ballet studio. With the encouragement of T.U.P.A.C.'s Board of Directors, the school realized the opening date Kabby so looked forward to.

Josh LaBelle, Executive Director of Seattle Theatre Group, STG and Vivian Phillips, Commissioner of the Seattle Arts Commission learned of the projected Opening Date of Kabby's Tacoma Urban Performing Arts Center, and orchestrated a

magnificent Memorial at the Paramount Theater celebrating the glorious life of Kabby Mitchell III to coincide with the July 8<sup>th</sup> Opening Day Ribbon Cutting and Open House, sharing Free Dance Classes with the Tacoma Community. Over 1000 children and adults some traveling from New York, France, Italy, Mexico, California, Oregon and other environs attended Kabby's Memorial.





Virginia Johnson, Artistic Director of the Dance Theatre of Harlem taught the first ballet class to six little girls, who were enthusiastic to begin their ballet training. Ms. Johnson was a Principal Dancer with Dance Theatre of Harlem before taking over the reigns from co-founder, Arthur Mitchell (no relation to Kabby).

Providing top-notch world-class arts education for children of color with limited means is the main-focus of T.U.P.A.C. Through grants and donations, every child who desires to learn gets to dance. Low finances of parents will never be a barrier in the pursuit of first-rate ballet instruction at T.U.P.A.C. Studies constantly stress how important the arts are in forming complete human beings.

Under the direction of Klair Ethridge, the school offers a pre-professional ballet curriculum to the underserved children, teens and adults who desire to pursue pre-professional or recreational dance instruction in a supportive and encouraging environment.

Professional Dancer, Jade Solomon Curtis took a break from her one woman show, *Black Like Me: An Exploration of the word "N"*, to step in as Interim Artistic Director to help get our school on its feet.



**August** Liturgical students performed original choreography by Teaching Artist, Vania Bynum for the Northwest First AME'S 50<sup>TH</sup> Annual Black Women's Conference in the Pavilion Room at the Murano Hotel to great acclaim.

Professional Guest Artists, Davion Gordon, Lauren DuPree, Alex Crozier and other seasoned professional artists volunteered their time to teach Master Classes to our students.

PNB instructor, friend to Kabby and retired PNB Dancer, Lynne Short joined the T.U.P.A.C. family as Master Ballet Instructor.

**September** Famed recently retired Pacific Northwest Ballet Principal Dancer, and current ballet instructor, Julie Tobiason came on board as T.U.P.A.C.'s Ballet Director. Ms. Tobiason designed the school syllabus which concentrated on introducing our students to the same ballet instruction offered at PNB.

T.U.P.A.C. begins daily afterschool and weekend classes.

Dr. Gilda Shephard casts T.U.P.A.C. Liturgical Students in her film, "Since I Been Down", filmed at the Washington State Capital in Olympia.



The Links, Inc., Tacoma Chapter - an organization of accomplished, dedicated African American women who are active in elevating youth from kindergarten through college through sponsorship and purposeful service. The Links, Inc. embraced T.U.P.A.C. and focused their energies on sharing their core facets of: Services to Youth, The Arts, National Trends & Services, International Trends & Services and Health & Human Services with our students and their families.





**October** The Tacoma Arts Commission invites T.U.P.A.C. to perform at the Kaleidoscope 2017, Tacoma Arts Month Opening Party. Our students performed under the direction of T.U.P.A.C. Master Teacher, Etienne Cakpo and Master Drum Instructor, Yaw Ampinsah, traditional West African Dancing and Drumming. The audience which included Tacoma's Mayor Strickland was thoroughly engaged.



PNB provides tickets for our students to attend their production of Circus Polka at McCaw Hall. This is the first time many T.U.P.A.C. students attended a live ballet performance.

**November** T.U.P.A.C. applies for first Grant with the City of Tacoma. The entire Board Volunteers and Staff prepare our studio space and work on procuring auction items for T.U.P.A.C.'s first fundraiser.

**December** T.U.P.A.C. Students, parents and staff took another field trip to PNB as their guests for the Dress Rehearsal of PNB's Nutcracker.

T.U.P.A.C. holds its first Fundraiser. Comedienne, Traci Davis was the MC and Pat Wright, International Gospel Star and Director of the Total Experience Gospel Choir, were the headliners, many wonderful items were bid on via a Silent Auction. Kabby & Pat made the arrangements for this Fundraiser in April before he became ill and died in May. T.U.P.A.C. Students performed several dances for the event. **\$4,963.00** was raised.



# T.U.P.A.C.

## The Season 4 Giving: On Pointe 4 T.U.P.A.C.

**Pat Wright and  
The Total Experience Gospel Choir**

Mistress of Ceremonies: Tracie Davis, Gospel Comedienne  
An evening of Soulful Music, Exciting Dance,  
Tasty Tidbits, Lively Spirits and  
Laugh in the aisle Comedy!!! At 733Arts

**Saturday December 9th, 2017  
6:00 - 10:00 Pm  
733 Commerce St Tacoma**

Tax Deductible Tickets Available at the Door or Online  
at [BrownPaperTickets.com](http://BrownPaperTickets.com)



**BROWNPAPERTICKETS.COM EVENT # 3178436**

## January

Inaugural Ball.

T.U.P.A.C. students perform at Mayor Victoria Woodards



We celebrated MLK Day with a free community West African Dance Class, Complimentary Soul Food Buffet and Afrocentric Vendors. Students from UPS attended and volunteered to help organize our Library in the coming weeks. Over 80 people attended the festivities.

## February

T.U.P.A.C. celebrated Black History Month with another festival of free community dance classes.

SONGS OF HOPE an Award-winning Performing Arts Camp attracting International Campers, located in St. Paul MN extended full scholarships for two of our deserving students. We began a campaign to raise the funds to cover their transportation to and from Minneapolis.

## March

The Village Theater of Issaquah holds auditions at our studio for their production of Matilda. T.U.P.A.C. student, Olivia Frieson received a call back.



Dammiel Cruz, founder of Daz Dance extends full scholarships to all of our students to participate in Dancepalooza a dance weekend that encourages diversity and friendship. Young talent from all-over the greater Puget Sound converged in Seattle's Capitol Hill to take classes from International Dance Masters including recently retired PNB Principal Dancer, Ariana Lallone and acclaimed star of Alvin Ailey, Michael Leon Thomas.

## April

8-year-old T.U.P.A.C. student, Olivia Frieson auditions for the Village Theater's production of Hairspray. She had several callbacks, but didn't book the show: nevertheless, a giant talent in a small package.



T.U.P.A.C. takes a field trip to the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Theater to see former Interim Artistic Director, Jade Solomon Curtis and Guest Master Teacher, Davion Gordon perform in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

**May** T.U.P.A.C. students perform for The Links, Inc.'s Spring Gala at the Greater Tacoma Convention Center.

T.U.P.A.C. students perform at the Olympia Campus of The Evergreen State College's Memorial for Kabby Mitchell III.



## June

T.U.P.A.C. students perform at the SOAR Academy Commencement Ceremony.

Washington Contemporary Ballet closes its doors and Artistic Director, Nathan Cook joins the T.U.P.A.C. Ballet Teaching Artist Staff. T.U.P.A.C. purchased costumes, flooring, ballet barres, a piano and costumes from WSB. Several WSB students make T.U.P.A.C. their new ballet instruction home.

T.U.P.A.C. inherits PNB's Shell from their production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

T.U.P.A.C. is invited to perform at Ocean Fest, we present a fusion of Classical Ballet and West African Dance and music entitled, *Water is Life*. This ballet tells the story of The Middle Passage, and arrival of a people in North America. How lives were lost, freedom was lost, and the Eurocentric dominance defined the future of a people.



Julie Tobiason presents an In-Studio Benefit Concert featuring professional dancers performing her new works. Arc Dance directed by Marie Chong performed classical ballet selections including the Don Quixote Grand Pas de deux from their repertoire. **\$3,438.00** was raised.



