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THE TAPESTRY OF US

FEB. 1-28, 2026

Cleo Parker Dance Ensemble Performance

**Wednesday,
Feb. 11, 2026
7:00 PM- 8:00 PM**

Otis S. Johnson, Ph.D.
Cultural Arts Center
201 Montgomery St,
Savannah, GA 31401

**37th ANNUAL
SAVANNAH BLACK HERITAGE FESTIVAL**



www.SavannahBlackHeritageFestival.org

*Events, dates, times, and performances are subject to change. Call 912-358-4309



CLEO PARKER ROBINSON DANCE – INSPIRING MOVEMENT!

Currently celebrating its 55th Anniversary Season, Cleo Parker Robinson Dance is an international performing arts and educational institution rooted in African American traditions and the Diaspora, dedicated to excellence in providing cross-cultural performances, and enrichment programs - empowering all our communities by cultivating healthy mind, body, and spirit

development for intergenerational students, artists, and audiences. Viewing dance as a universal language of movement that transcends boundaries of culture, class, and age, Cleo Parker Robinson Dance is committed to honoring diversity and inclusiveness throughout the global community.

RAINDANCE Cleo Parker Robinson Dance World Premiere 1984

Milton Myers, former artistic director of the Joyce Trisler Dance Company, and member of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Company, came to Denver in 1984 at the invitation of Cleo Parker Robinson to create this unique work solely for performance by the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble. Inspired by the afternoon thunderstorms that would build each day over the Rockies, Myers

created "Raindance" which has since become the Ensemble's signature work, symbolically uniting people of all ages and cultures through the dance. This work has been performed all over the world - from Masai villages to the world's greatest performance venues.

Choreographer	Milton Myers
Music	"Equinoxe" by Jean Michel Jarre
Costume Design	Milton Myers
Opening	The Ensemble
Duet	Jasmine Francisco and Corey Jamel
Quartet	Adrian Dominguez, Max Nelson-Steinhoff+, Lauren Slaughter, Nasira Watson+
Men's Duet	Michael Battle, Lamar D. Rogers
Trio	Caeli Blake, DJ Jefferson, Lamar D Rogers
Women's Section	Caeli Blake, Tori Carter, Jasmine Francisco, Gabriela Maduro, Lauren Slaughter Nasira Watson, Koura Wright*
Men's Trio	Corey Jamel, DJ Jefferson, Lamar D, Rogers
Sextet	Jasmine Francisco and Corey Jamel Gabriela Maduro and DJ Jefferson Tori Carter and Lamar D, Rogers
Soloist	Jasmine Francisco
Closing	The Ensemble

Pause

FOUR WOMEN Cleo Parker Robinson Dance World Premiere 1972

Written by jazz singer, composer, pianist and arranger Nina Simone, "Four Women" was released on the 1966 album "Wild Is the Wind". It tells the story of four African American women, each representing an African American stereotype in society.

Thulani Davis of The Village Voice called the song "an instantly accessible analysis of the damning legacy of slavery, that made iconographic the real women we knew and would become."

Choreographer	Cleo Parker Robinson
Music	Nina Simone
Dancers	Jasmine Francisco "Aunt Sarah" Lauren Slaughter "Saffronia"
Caeli Blake	"Sweet Thing"
Tori Carter	"Peaches"

Pause

The MOVE/ment World Premiere 2019

This incredible opportunity brings together a diversity of dancers, in both culture and genre, creating a work reflective of these powerful times in our community and the world. The arts have always been a powerful catalyst for positive social transformation. My challenge, as the choreographer, has been to awaken my personal memories of the Civil Rights Movement, while finding new ways for the dancers to develop their

own voices, in recognition of social change that is yet to come. When my Ensemble performed In Montgomery, AL in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of Dr. King's assassination, I was inspired by his words "We have no other choice but to keep moving with determination. We've gone too far now to turn back. We can change the world with non-violence."

Cleo Parker Robinson

Choreographer	Cleo Parker Robinson
Original Lighting Design	Lloyd Sobel
Lighting Adaptations	Anastazia Coney
Costume Designers	Shirin Lankarani (Colorado Ballet), Alex J. Gordon
Vocals and Spoken Word	Cleo Parker Robinson and the Ensemble
Dancers	The Ensemble

I Turbulent Times

Music "Tears for Johannesburg" Max Roach

II Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me 'Round

Music "Wade In the Water"
"Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me 'Round"

III Father to Son: A Change Is Gonna Come

Music "A Change Is Gonna Come" Brian Owens, Thomas Owens
The Father Lamar D. Rogers
The Son DJ Jefferson
The Men Michael Battle, Adrian Dominguez, Corey Jamel,
Max Nelson-Steinhoff

IV Healing Waters

Music "By the Waters of Babylon" Bettye Miller and Milt Abel

V We Rise

Music "We Rise" Groove Junkies, Opolopo & Solara

VI Dream the Dream

Music "I Dream a Dream" Aretha Franklin
Solo Caeli Blake
The Women Tori Jasmine Francisco, Gabriela Maduro, Lauren Slaughter
Nasira Watson, Koura Wright

+ Apprentice to the Ensemble *Cleo II

Program selection, order, and casting are subject to change without prior notice. Audio and video recordings on any devices are not permitted without prior written notice from Cleo Parker Robinson Dance and/or The Savannah Black Heritage Festival.



CLEO PARKER ROBINSON leads the renowned 55-year-old Denver-based dance arts institution encompassing five operational pillars at a 50,000 square-foot creative campus of historic and modern landmarks. Inside there are two professional and two student ensembles, the CPRD Academy, Arts-In-Education and Arts-In-Wellness outreach programs, and CPRD facilities rentals supporting arts development for 30 groups.

Ms. Parker Robinson's recognitions span local to international work in dance and educational outreach from corporate, civic, community, and artistic entities. As a master teacher/choreographer and cultural ambassador, she and the CPRD Ensemble toured 40 countries throughout Europe, Asia, and the Caribbean, Mexico, and Colombia. In 2025 she was a guest artist at Brazil's renowned Sacatar Institute.

Awards and honors began since founding CPRD: the 1971 Peabody Award, Colorado Governor's Award for Excellence (1974), Denver Mayor's Award (1979), induction into the Colorado Women's Hall of Fame (1989) and the Blacks in Colorado Hall of Fame

(1994). Recognized in Who's Who in America Colleges and Universities, she holds four Honorary Doctorates: University of Denver (1991); Colorado College (2003), Regis University (2008), and the University of Colorado at Boulder (2021). The International Association of Dance Medicine and Science inducted her in 2021.

At the federal level from 1999 to 2005, Ms. Parker Robinson served on NEA panels on Dance, Expansion Arts, Arts America, and Inter-Arts panels for the USIS, and for the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts. She served on the National Council on the Arts advisory panel to the NEA Chair for policy, programs, and grants.

In 1987, she and four founders established the International Association of Blacks in Dance; in 2023 IABD received the National Medal of the Arts from President Biden. In 1992, she co-founded National Bahamian Dance Company. In 2005, she received the Kennedy Center Medal of Honor in the "Masters of African American Choreographers" series. In 2011, she was named an Honorary Lifetime Trustee of the Denver Performing Arts Complex. In 2017, she received the highly prestigious Dance USA Honor Award. In 2018, the CPRD Academy created the BA in Dance program with Metropolitan State University; there in 2023 she was the Rachel B Noel Distinguished Visiting Lecturer. In January 2026, she accepted the Award of Merit in New York by the Association of Performing Arts Professionals.

Her philosophy of "One Spirit, Many Voices" carries her creative voice to the world community as an example of Peace, Love, and Respect.... for Everybody!!



WINIFRED R. HARRIS Associate Artistic Director. Ms. Harris currently serves as Associate Artist Director for Cleo Parker Robinson Dance, honoring both the company's new and historical repertoire. She is co-creator of Dance for Schools, a codified curriculum for public education that is currently being taught in different high school programs throughout the United States. Ms. Harris has been described as "a visionary who creates art as conversation, viewing it as connective tissue to the world. A means to see beyond what we think of as limits". Her choreography is story-telling with a balance of technical prowess and expression.

She founded Winifred R. Harris Between Lines, a contemporary modern dance company that performed both nationally and internationally and was also a part of the Music Center on Tour. Inclusive of educational and performance components, the significance of the company's name is grounded both in movement and life perspectives. She also founded Your Souls Movement Performing Arts, in Denver. A life-long student of mind-body spirit, Harris is a certified Yoga instructor as well as a Life Mastery Consultant. As a dance artist, she had the opportunity

to perform long before she began her formal training, as part of To My Father's House, choreographed by her first dance teacher Cleo Parker Robinson. Through that work she learned to love dance and advanced her training at such a rapid rate that she became a company member at a young age. She is grateful for the long list of dance luminaries with whom she has trained or performed their works, including the incredible faculty at California Institute of the Arts. Harris was also a member of Dallas Black Dance Theater, where she headed the professional dance division. Subsequently, she traveled to New York, working with an array of companies. She later returned to California where she performed with different companies and music artists, and for industry events and film projects. Her passion for choreography and her connection to the wonders and concerns of our society helped birth the artist she is continually becoming.

Her teaching career spans residencies with the California University system: Long Beach, Northridge, and Los Angeles, the Orange County Performing Arts High School, the Los Angeles Music Center teaching division, Reykjavík Iceland, and London England. She continued choreographing for her company, as well as musicals, stage plays, fashion shows and other dance companies. Motivated by engagement and purpose in the choreographic space that engages the heart and mind, Harris spent time teaching within shelters for women and children, engaging them in the art of dance, helping strengthen their voice in the world. She was also part of The Heart Project, a special engagement for youth in a critical place within their lives, either being released or on their way to lock-up facilities. This purpose-driven work was awarded with the Mayor's Award for Community Engagement.

Along with a nomination for the Lester Horton Award. Harris is grateful to be a Legends of Dance award winner. Through her love of teaching and dance making, Ms. Harris is elated that she is able to train, and endeavors to inspire generations of dance artists to come.

THE CLEO PARKER ROBINSON DANCE ENSEMBLE

MICHAEL BATTLE Ensemble Member / Wardrobe Supervisor

A native of Detroit, MI, Mr. Battle began his dance training at Detroit School of the Arts at the age of 14. In 2009, he joined the Lula Washington Dance Theatre as a company member, and in 2019, joined Ronald K. Brown/ Evidence, A Dance Company as a company member. Mr. Battle has traveled to China, Russia, Haiti, Mexico, Brazil, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Italy-performing works by nationally and internationally acclaimed choreographers worldwide. He has performed with Grammy Award Winning and Nominated artists Kamasi Washington, Meshell Ndegeocello, Terence Blanchard, Aurturo O'Farrill, and Jody Watley. After guesting with the Ensemble in 2022, he is now in his fourth season as an Ensemble member with Cleo Parker Robinson Dance.



CAELI BLAKE Ensemble Member / Wardrobe Supervisor

From Washington, DC, Ms. Blake began her formal training at BalletNova Center for Dance in Arlington, VA. She attended Duke Ellington School of the Arts under the tutelage of Charles Augins, Sandra Fortune-Greene, & Katherine Smith. Ms. Blake has also studied with various company institutions such as Deeply Rooted Dance Theater, Dance Theater of Harlem at the Strathmore, and Joffrey Ballet Summer Intensive. Blake graduated from Southern Methodist University, with a BFA in Dance Performance and BS in Education & Human Development. While being a full-time student at SMU, she joined B.Moore Dance. She has performed in choreographic works by Katherine Dunham, Alvin Ailey,



Donald McKayle, Robert Battle, Christopher Huggins, Kevin Iga Jeff, Silas Farley, Nicole Clarke-Springer, and many more. Ms. Blake joined the Ensemble in 2022. Now in her fourth season, Ms. Blake has performed at Jacob's Pillow & Vail Dance Festival with the CPRD Ensemble.

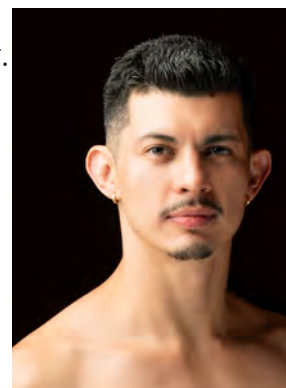
TORI CARTER Ensemble Member

A Dallas, TX native, Ms. Carter began training at Dallas Black Dance Academy and Ozsoy's School of Ballet. She graduated Valedictorian from Grand Prairie Fine Arts Academy and earned her BFA in Dance Arts with a minor in Afro-American Studies from Howard University. In 2022, she showcased her choreography set on Company | E at the Richmond Dance Festival. Upon graduation, she performed for two seasons with Dallas Black Dance Theatre's DBDT: Encore! under the direction of Nycole Ray. She's had the privilege of performing works by Kevin Iga Jeff, Ronald K. Brown, Dwight Rhoden, Tommie-Waheed Evans, and more. Ms. Carter now joins the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble for her first season.



ADRIAN DOMINGUEZ Ensemble Member

A native of Denver, CO, Mr. Dominguez graduated from Anderson University with a B.A. in Dance Performance and has since made significant strides in his dance career. Most recently, he performed with Dance Kaleidoscope under the direction of Joshua Blake Carter, and previously under the guidance of David Hochoy. He has also had the privilege of dancing with Gregory Hancock Dance Theater, where he further developed his artistry. He has had the pleasure of performing works by renowned



choreographers including David Hochoy, Joshua Blake Carter, Earl Mosley, Nicole Springer, Eddy Ocampo, Sidra Bell, Christal Brown, Alexander Diaz, Vincent Hardy, and Matthew Rushing. Additionally, he spent his summers training at Earl Mosley's Institute of the Arts, enhancing his skills and artistic expression. Having been a guest artist with Cleo II, and an Apprentice to the Ensemble for one year, he is now in his first season as an Ensemble member.

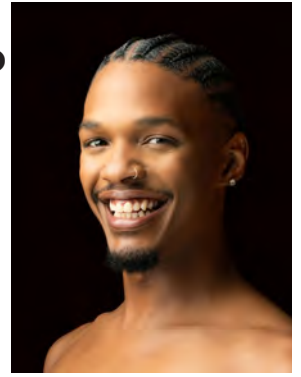
JASMINE FRANCISCO
Ensemble Member /
Ensemble Rehearsal
Coordinator

Originally from Houston, TX, Ms. Francisco began her training at the Fine Arts Magnet School and graduated from The High School of Performing and Visual Arts as a dance major under the directions of Luanne Carter and Janie Carothers in 2012. She continued her education and received her Bachelors of Fine Arts 2016 from Point Park University while having an esteemed repertoire from Jessica Lang, Terrance Marling, Troy Powell, Bennyroyce Royon, Garfield Lemonius and MADBOOTS. In her sophomore year of 2010, her student choreography project Tales of Courage was chosen to be featured at ACDA for the University. Six months after graduating from Point Park, she joined the Lula Washington Dance Theater in Los Angeles, CA for two seasons performing works by Kyle Abraham, Donald Bryd, Rennie Harris, Christopher Huggins and David Roussève. Ms. Francisco moved to Denver, CO to begin her journey with the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble. She is now in her seventh season as an Ensemble member and also serves as the Ensemble Rehearsal Coordinator.



COREY JAMEL
Ensemble Member / CPRD
Youth Ensemble Director

Born in Chicago, IL and growing up in Hammond IN, Mr. Jamel trained in multiple dance techniques at the Hammond Academy for the Performing Arts. An alum of Indiana University, he performed there in notable works including Kyle Abrahams Radio Show, Jose Limon's Psalm, Andrea Millers Spill, Jerome Robbins Fanfare, and the original restaging of Twyla Tharp's Deuce Coupe and Rennie Harris' Home. He has also toured professionally with Elizabeth Shea Dance in Philadelphia and New York, performed overseas with Norwegian Creative Studios and toured with Anita Baker during her Songstress tour. After one season as an apprentice, Mr. Jamel is now in his sixth season as a Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble member, and his first season as Youth Ensemble Assistant Director.



DJ JEFFERSON
Ensemble Member

A native of Atlanta, GA., Devrae "DJ" Jefferson began his training in the Magnet Program for Visual and Performing arts at Tri-Cities HS where he focused on all genres of dance. With a special affinity for ballet, he attended summer programs including Metropolitan Ballet Theater and Lines Contemporary Ballet. Having furthered his training, he subsequently received a BFA from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts in Winston-Salem NC. Mr. Jefferson has performed with BallethnicDance Company and Dallas Black Dance Theater Encore. With extensive experience in coaching gymnastics and teaching a variety of dance techniques, he first joined Cleo Parker Robinson Dance as a guest artist for the holiday production Granny Dances to a Holiday Drum before



becoming an Apprentice to the Ensemble. He is now in his second season as an Ensemble member.

GABRIELA MADURO
Ensemble Member /
Props Supervisor

Originally from Fremont CA, Ms. Maduro began her dance training at Yoko's Dance and Performing Arts Academy and Nor Cal Dance Arts. She has attended Summer Intensives with the Ailey School, the Martha Graham School, and the San Francisco Conservatory of Dance. She is a graduate of the University of California, Irvine where she graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Dance Performance. While at UCI, she was honored to perform as part of the distinguished Donald McKayle's Etude Ensemble. She has performed works by Donald McKayle, Martha Graham, Darshan Singh Bhuller among others. Upon graduation, Ms. Maduro joined Cleo II. After one season with the second company, she joined the Ensemble, where she is now in her sixth season.



MAX NELSON
STEINHOFF
Apprentice
to the Ensemble

Originally from Denver, Max Nelson-Steinhoff began his dance training at the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Academy in 2009. He is a graduate of the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory, where he earned his BFA in Dance Performance and Choreography, with an emphasis in Ballet and Modern. Mr. Steinhoff has trained on full scholarship at the Ailey School and the Kansas City Ballet, furthering his training at The School at Jacob's Pillow under the direction of Milton Myers. During his time at UMKC, Mr. Steinhoff performed with companies such as Wylliams/Henry



Contemporary Dance Company, the Kansas City Lyric Opera, and Owen/Cox Dance Group. He is honored to have performed works by José Limón, Gary Abbott, Jennifer Archibald, Omar Román De Jesús, and Jae Man Joo. This is his first season as an Apprentice with the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble

LAMAR D. ROGERS
Ensemble Member

Mr. Rogers is a performer and choreographer hailing from Philadelphia, PA. Having graduated from The Philadelphia High School for the Creative and Performing Arts, he later earned a Bachelors of Fine Arts in Dance Performance from The University of the Arts under the direction of Donna Faye Burchfield. During his college career, he toured and performed with Eleone Dance Theatre under the direction and mentorship of Shawn-Lamere Williams. He has trained at various institutions throughout the Philadelphia area as a scholarship student attending Koresh School of Dance, DCNS Summer Dance Intensive and the Rock School for Dance Education. Following graduation, he joined the Philadelphia Dance Company (PHILADANCO!) as a full-time company artist. He has performed works by Sidra Bell, Kyle & Dinita Clark, Merce Cunningham, Ulysses Dove, Tommie-Waheed Evans, Helen Simoneau, Rennie Harris and other acclaimed choreographers. He is now in his third season with the Ensemble.



LAUREN SLAUGHTER

Ensemble Member

Lauren Slaughter, a Colorado native, began her dance training at Miller's Dance Studio where her love for dance grew through ballets, showcases, and competitions. Lauren is a 2020 graduate of Washington University in St. Louis where she earned a B.A. in Biology and a Minor in Dance. At the University, she danced with the Washington University Dance Collective and performed works by choreographers such as Ting-Ting Chang, Diadie Bathily, Kirven Douthit-Boyd, and Dana Tai Soon Burgess. Following graduation, Lauren returned to Colorado where she began her professional dance career with Cleo Parker Robinson Dance. With the company, she has performed works by Donald McKayle, Christopher Huggins, Milton Myers, and Gary Abbott among several others, as well as toured at the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. Lauren first joined the company as a Cleo II member, and after a season as an Apprentice, is now in her second season as an Ensemble member.



Huggins, Troy Powell, Darrell Moultrie, Ronald Alexander and Caridad Martinez, among others. After a season with Cleo II, she now joins the Ensemble for her first season as an Apprentice.

KOURA WRIGHT

Member of Cleo II (2nd Company)

Born in Ithaca, NY, Ms. Wright began her dance training at age 10 in Knoxville, TN with Amy Morton Vaughan, and later attended Austin-East Magnet High School, studying Graham, Horton, and Humphrey techniques, as well as West African dance. She attended the University of Vermont and later became a company member with the Ithaca Ballet. She attended the Ailey School, then became a guest artist, then soloist, with the Appalachian Ballet Company. Upon graduating in 2020 with a B.S. in Dance Performance and Choreography from Middle Tennessee State University, she moved to Las Vegas to dance with Contemporary West Dance Theater, under the direction of Bernard Gaddis, and became the director of the Youth Training Division for the school. She later became director of the youth program for Live Arts, with Avree Walker, and performed in a Tina Turner Tribute show. This is her first season as a member of Cleo II.



NASIRA WATSON

Apprentice to the Ensemble

Ms. Watson is a dance artist born and raised in Cleveland Ohio. She began her formal dance training at Cleveland School of the Arts where she studied ballet, modern, jazz, and contemporary styles for nine years. She subsequently continued her training at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, with a focus in contemporary dance. She then went on to study at the Ailey School in New York City. Ms. Watson has trained, studied and worked with numerous world-renowned dance artists and choreographers including Robert Battle, Christopher



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CENTER FOR THE HEALING ARTS**

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