

# An Evening with the Creative Class

*presents*

## Choreographic Voices Black Men Creating Dance with Purpose



Blake Arts  
David Blake



Brother(hood) Dance!  
Orlando Zane Hunter Jr & Ricarrdo Valentine



Theatre of Movement  
Duane Cyrus



Trent D. Williams Jr  
University of Florida

**Friday, December 11, 2020**  
7:00-8:30 pm EST

# PROGRAM

## From the Director



Welcome and thank you for attending this special holiday edition of “An Evening with the Creative Class!”

An Evening with the Creative Class is a series of presentations and discussions on the arts with a panel of curated guest artists engaging with community to share their talent in an enriching evening

of sharing, networking, and discussion. The topic for this event is **Choreographic Voices: Black Men Creating Dance with Purpose!** I’ve curated a group of artists with whose I have admired over the years. Although we share a common bond in the broad aspects of race, gender and creative discipline—we are each very distinct in our perspectives on how we purpose our art. I hope that you will be able to appreciate the messaging embedded in each work. The purpose and intention that each choreographer delivers through dance!

During this unprecedented time, my desire is to share with you the themes of activism, legacy, community, and expression inherent in this program. We want to hear from you! We want to engage with you in this virtual environment! And we want to see you in our face-to-face performance spaces as soon as it is possible!

Our program consists of London-based Blake Arts performing **Melanin Migration: Brothers in Arms**—an inspired choreographic account by David Blake of the personal stories of six male dancers, who are navigating a cultural space pre and mid Covid-19 and BLM. My group, Theatre of Movement will present two excerpts from **Hero Complexities**, a work created in honor of my uncle and military hero Charles W. David Jr, who lost his life saving drowning soldiers during WWII. The excerpts include community performers and professional dancers. New York-based Brother(Hood) Dance is the exciting duo of Orlando Zane Hunter Jr and Ricarrdo Valentine. Presenting an excerpt of their acclaimed **how to survive a plague** that is an interdisciplinary meditation on the artistic generational gap between those lost in the global epidemic, AIDS. Finally, Trent D. Williams Jr’s dance film **Black Stains** is part dance film, part documentary that depicts the reality of living while black in the United States with Williams leading an incredible cast of performers. We will conclude the evening with a Q & A and encourage you to post questions in the chat box. We focus on legacy by having our young brothers, mentees who follow in our footsteps—serve as the moderators for the interviews and Q & A sections of this program. Enjoy!

—Duane Cyrus

# Program Order

*Each presented work will be followed by a short moderated interview  
Program Order (details on following pages)*

Blake Arts/***Melanin Migration: Brothers in Arms*** (moderator—Billy J Hawkains III)

Theatre of Movement/***Hero Complexities*** (moderator—Devonte Wells)

Brother(hood) Dance!/***how to survive a plague*** (moderator—DeVontee Tanner)

Trent D Williams Jr/***Black Stains*** (moderator—Reece Darlington-Delaire)

Event will close with a 20-minute group discussion (moderator—Rashod C Wells)

## Blake Arts/David Blake



### ***Melanin-Migration-Brothers-in-Arms***

An inspired choreographic account of the personal stories of six male dancers, who are navigating a cultural space pre and mid Covid-19 and BLM, having to find a new way to look beyond their circumstances through the gift of dance. "Melanin Migration: Brothers in Arms premiered at Afro Dance Xplosion in October 2020 which coincides with the celebration of Black History Month (in the UK). This is an opportune time to bring attention to the issues addressed in this piece. Our hope is that it will serve to inspire and motivate young black artists and people of colour that, they can achieve excellence and to showcase the power of community,"

-David Blake

Blake Arts is an independent dance and mentoring programme, providing high quality performing arts experiences, dance training, projects, performances, and interactions with professional artists. Conceived in 2009, the programme targets professional and pre-professional artists, offering Lester Horton modern dance technique, audition prep, bespoke masterclasses/workshops, and career development.

<https://www.blakearts.org/>

[info@blakearts.org](mailto:info@blakearts.org)

Cast: <https://www.blakearts.org/cast>

# Theatre of Movement/Duane Cyrus



## ***Hero Complexities*** (excerpts)

Choreography, Direction, Costumes: Duane Cyrus

Music: Angus Tarnawsky, DJ Zinhle

Created in collaboration with the performers:

Akiba Hausson Byrd

Melvin Sutton

Billy James Hawkains III

DeVontee Tanner

Jhonathan Hill

Josephus Thompson III

Tyrell Simpson

Devonte Wells



The excerpts shown here are part of a larger work, *Hero Complexities* that premiered in 2017. *Hero Complexities* is a multidisciplinary performance and visual art project inspired by the selfless acts of Charles W. David Jr., a Caribbean-American United States Coast Guardsman who lost his life helping to save nearly 100 drowning servicemen in the North Atlantic during World War II. David is Cyrus' uncle.

Cyrus worked with the performers to explore the confluence of questions surrounding themes of rescue, self-sacrifice, and heroism with a cast of contemporary black male artists navigating and articulating their perspectives on this important historical legacy and its relevance for our present and future as Black men. The cast consists of my professional company dancers and community artists sharing the results of our

research that took place over a two-year period. *Hero Complexities* continues to be revised and reconfigured with every iteration. Heartfelt thank you to the collaborating performers!

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## Brother(Hood) Dance/Orlando Zane Hunter Jr & Ricarrdo Valentine



### *how to survive a plague*

how to survive a plague: An interdisciplinary meditation on the artistic generational gap between those lost in the global epidemic, AIDS. Brother(hood) Dance! investigates who survives and whose stories are told during and after life. This work will explore the methods of healing, care-giving, and living testimonies by creating an intentional space with sound, movement, and aroma. This ritualistic experience will venerate the Black African bodies that were exiled from the urgency of care and shun by their communities and government. How do we connect this work (how to survive a plague) as a reverential gesture to lost ancestral artistic dreams?



Brother(hood) Dance! is an interdisciplinary duo that seeks to inform its audiences on the socio- political and environmental injustices from a global perspective, bringing clarity to the same- gender-loving African-American experience in the 21st century. Brother(hood) Dance! was formed in April 2014 as a duo that researches, creates and performs dances of freedom by Orlando Zane Hunter, Jr. and Ricarrdo Valentine. We have performed our works at FiveMyles, Center for Performance Research, B.A.A.D! (Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance), VCU-The Grace Street Theater, DraftWork at St. Marks Church, JACK, Movement Research at Judson Church, Colby College, Denmark Arts Center, Universidad de las Américas Puebla/Performatica(MX), Escuela Profesional de Danza de Mazatlan/Viso Festival (MX), Jean-Rene Delsolins Institute (HT) and other venues.

B.hood B.you B.free

[www.bhooddance.com](http://www.bhooddance.com)

IG: [#bhooddance](https://www.instagram.com/bhooddance)

## Trent D. Williams Jr/University of Florida



### ***Black Stains***

Director: Tiffany Rhynard

Choreographer: Trent D. Williams Jr.

Cinematographer: Tiffany Rhynard

Editor: Heather Mathews

Composer: Farai Malianga

Producers: Heather Mathews, Tiffany Rhynard, Trent D. Williams Jr.

Cast: Jerel Hercules, Taariq Lewis, Daniel Morimoto, Michael "Mikell" Pinkney, Larry Rosalez, Ersom Williams, Trent D. Williams Jr., George Whitehead.

Inspired by the personal experiences of Trent D. Williams, Jr., an African American choreographer, *Black Stains* addresses the systemic pattern of racial profiling by the police. Interviews with black men encompassing a broad spectrum of age, background, and experience illustrate personal human stories that bring abstract issues into sharper focus. Woven together with robust athletic dancing, the film invites a conversation about how to best navigate complex racial issues in a country that refuses to make amends for its troubled past.



Trent D. Williams, Jr. a native Houstonian received his MFA in Dance Performance & Choreography from The Florida State University and BA in Psychology from Morehouse College. Mr. Williams was a founding member of Urban Souls Dance Company in Houston, Texas and he has been a guest artist with Tallahassee Ballet in Tallahassee, FL, EDGEWORKS Dance Theatre in Washington, DC. Additionally, Mr. Williams has performed alongside Destiny's Child, 112, and Janelle Monae among others. In 2007, Mr. Williams was invited to dance with Dayton Contemporary Dance Company (DCDC). Mr. Williams' choreography has been performed by Dayton Contemporary Second Company, Texas Tech University, Towson University, University of Trinidad & Tobago, Coker College Dance Company, Urban Souls Dance Company, and has been showcased at The American Dance Festival, The American College Dance Festival, The Modern Atlanta Dance Festival, The

Dance Gallery in Huntsville, Texas, and Kennedy Center: Millennium Stage. Mr. Williams is currently teaching as an Assistant Professor at University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida where he continues to advance his passion, emotional expression and a unique style of dance to the students.

## About Theatre of Movement

Theatre of Movement is a performing and visual art collective led by the artistic vision of Duane Cyrus that creates artworks informed by research into Black American and Caribbean histories and imagery.

Our vision is a world where the image of blackness is more equitably represented in all its diversity. To build a strong appreciation, better understanding, and value for diversity in the arts and American culture.

Our mission is to offer socially relevant performances, community engagement, workshops, and cultural events that incorporate dance, theatre, music, photography, and film. We work to share blackness in performance and imagery with the goal of impacting present day interactions—toward a more equitable future for all people. Theatre of Movement is committed to accessing and engaging audiences with a message that a more truthful vision and representation of blackness in art is a necessary part of our world.

Theatre of Movement engages and supports the development of informed, empowered, and capable artists through practicing professional development, and organizational skills-building in addition to in-depth study and delivery of multiple art forms. Theatre of Movement members also cultivate their strengths as mentors and teachers to pass the legacy of American culture on to the next generation.

Products: Performance, Photography & Film

Services: Workshops & Classes, Resources, Artist Development, Arts Education

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## SPECIAL THANKS

Amy Masters—Livestream Technician

Elijah Motley—Assistant Livestream Technician

Billy James Hawkains III—Moderator

DeVontee Tanner—Moderator

Reece Darlington-Delaire—Moderator

Devonte Wells—Moderator

Rashod C Wells—Moderator

Thanks to our supporters and community partners

Carolyn Lilly: [Learn More](#)

Chukwudi Egesimba

Devin Newkirk Photography: [Learn More](#)

Ajamu Ikwe-Tyehimba: [Learn More](#)

Joe Pilgram

Kiesha Law

UNCG School of Dance

Devonte Wells

Shout to the following for donations!

Rashod C Wells

...and Thank You! (Please pardon anyone we missed!)

