



## PRESS RELEASE

### Sarasota Performing Arts Foundation Announces Urban Bush Women as Artists-In-Residence

**Sarasota, Florida – April 22, 2024** – Sarasota Performing Arts Foundation is pleased to welcome Urban Bush Women (UBW) as [Artists-In-Residence](#). UBW galvanizes artists, activists, audiences, and communities through performances, artist development, education, and community engagement. Beginning May 8, UBW dancers and BOLD facilitators will collaborate with local female artists and partner organizations to explore and build community through dance. The residency will culminate with a performance and workshop mashup featuring Urban Bush Women and local artists in a free public event at The Oval at the Bay on Saturday, May 11 at 1 p.m.

The Urban Bush Women Artists-In-Residence are Jaimé Yawa Dzandu, Kentoria Earle, Love Muwwakkil, and Mikaila Ware.

“As we welcome Urban Bush Women to Sarasota, we embark on a journey of cultural enrichment and artistic exploration,” said Tania Castroverde Moskalenko, CEO of Sarasota Performing Arts Foundation. “At the heart of our mission lies the belief in the transformative power of the arts to engage and inspire, and I eagerly anticipate the impact they will have on our local artists, students, and community.”

UBW promotes artistic legacies, projecting the voices of the under-heard and people of color by addressing issues of equity in the dance field and throughout the United States, while also providing platforms for community exploration and discussion with art makers through its BOLD programming.

BOLD (Builders, Organizers, and Leaders through Dance) is UBW's unique approach to facilitating a dialogue within a community. The ensemble will facilitate multiple BOLD workshops in Sarasota using a unique blend of dialogue and movement. Workshops will be held at Senior Friendship Center, Resilient Retreat, Booker High School, and Sarasota Contemporary Dance.

Collaborating artists include: Leymis Bolaños Wilmott (Co-Founder/Artistic Director of Sarasota Contemporary Dance); Monessa Salley (Sarasota Performing Arts Foundation Teaching Artist/Sarasota Contemporary Dance); Maria Schaedler-Luera (Sarasota Performing Arts Foundation Teaching Artist/Atomica Arts); Barbara Monteiro (Sarasota Contemporary Dance); Xiao-Xuan (Sarasota Contemporary Dance); Carolina Franco (Creato Latino); Samantha Miller (Sarasota Contemporary Dance); Jessica Obiedzinski (Sarasota Contemporary Dance), Melanie Lavender, and Sydney Lemelin.

Two of these community members have a history with UBW: Leymis Bolaños Wilmott saw the ensemble while at FSU and it inspired her to create her own company. And Courtney Smith, a dance teacher and Visual and Performing Arts coordinator at Booker High School, took a workshop with them and it changed the way she thought about dance.



## Urban Bush Women Schedule of Events

### Wednesday, May 8

Community Initiative - open to community members aged 50+  
Workshop: Dance For Every Body  
Community: Senior Friendship Center  
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
1888 Brother Geenen Way, Sarasota, FL

Community Initiative - screening process required to attend  
Workshop: Mindful Bodies and Reflective Practices  
Community: Resilient Retreat  
5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.  
13010 Fruitville Rd, Sarasota, FL

### Thursday May 9

Community Initiative – not public  
Workshop: Collab Lab  
Community: Booker High School Dance Students  
12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

### Friday, May 10

Community Initiative – not public  
Workshop: Local Artists Collab Lab  
Community: Sarasota Contemporary Dance

### Saturday May 11

FREE PUBLIC EVENT! | Registration requested [here](#).  
Community in Motion: Performance of *Haint Blu* (Excerpt) and Collab Lab Sharing with local artists followed by Dance for Every Body Workshop  
Community: Urban Bush Women and local artists  
1:00 p.m.  
The Oval at the Bay, 655 N Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL

#### *Haint Blu* (Excerpt)

Choreography by Chanon Judson & Mame Diarra Speis, Co-Artistic Directors,  
in collaboration with the company: Courtney J. Cook, Kentoria Earle, Roobi Gaskins, Symara Sarai,  
Bianca Leticia Medina, and Mikaila Ware  
Writer: Nina Angela Mercer  
Dramaturg: Talvin Wilks  
Sound Designer, Composer: Everett Saunders  
Music: Percussion performed by Lucianna Padmore, guitar and vocals performed by Grace Galu Kalambay



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*Haint Blu* is an ensemble dance-theater work seeped in memory and magic. Known as the color that Southern families paint their front porches to ward off bad spirits, *Haint Blu* uses performance as a center and source of healing, taking us through movement into stillness and rest: remembering, reclaiming, releasing, and restoring. It is an embodied look into familial lines and the movements, histories and stories of our elders and ancestors. It reflects on what has been lost across generations and what can be recovered. *Haint Blu* takes us to the magical place where spirits share their legacies, journey onward, and leave the thick residue of their knowing behind.

### **About Urban Bush Women**

[URBAN BUSH WOMEN \(UBW\)](#) is a groundbreaking Black women-led theatrical dance company and social activism ensemble founded in 1984 by visionary choreographer Jawole Willa Jo Zollar. Through its mission of engaging with artists, activists, audiences, and communities through performances, artist development, education, and community engagement, the award-winning nonprofit has performed throughout the United States, as well as Asia, Australia, Canada, Germany, South America, Europe, and Senegal (in collaboration with Germaine Acogny and her all-male Compagnie JANT-BI). UBW has been an engine and amplifier for the stories of Black Women+ for forty years. UBW affects the overall ecology of the arts by promoting artistic legacies; projecting the voices of the under-heard and people of color; bringing attention to and addressing issues of equity in the dance field and throughout the United States; and by providing platforms and serving as a conduit for experimental art makers. Signature programs run by UBW include the [Summer Leadership Institute](#) (SLI), [BOLD](#) (Builders, Organizers & Leaders through Dance) and the [Choreographic Center Initiative](#). Now directed by artistic leaders Chanon Judson and Mame Diarra Speis, UBW combines radical performance, deep engagement, and ancestral knowledge from the African diaspora into a force that is urgent, forward-looking, and essential.

### **About The Sarasota Performing Arts Foundation**

Sarasota Performing Arts Foundation's mission is to create and sustain a vibrant performing arts center, advance education, and enrich communities by inspiring minds through the power of the arts. The Foundation has partnered with the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall since 1987 to support arts education throughout our region, serving more than 35,000 students and their families annually with arts-based education opportunities and professional development for more than 400 teachers across five counties.

Sarasota Performing Arts Foundation is leading the vision to build a new Sarasota Performing Arts Center as a public-private partnership with the city and in collaboration with the Bay Park Conservancy and Van Wezel Hall. For more information about the Sarasota Performing Arts Foundation, please visit [performingartsfoundation.org](http://performingartsfoundation.org).

### **About Artists-In-Residence**

Sarasota Performing Arts Foundation's Artist-In-Residence program started in 2021 with Kennedy Center Citizen Artist, Olmeca. The program brings distinguished artists to the Gulf Coast region to engage in artistic exploration of a community need. In 2024, Artists In Residence will explore building community while continuing to explore barriers to arts accessibility. Adrian Anantawan is also a 2024 Artist-In-Residence. Learn more at [performingartsfoundation.org/artist-in-residence](http://performingartsfoundation.org/artist-in-residence).