

OCTOBER 16, 2024

The Music Center Launches Its Exhilarating 2024-2025 Dance Season With First-Ever Dance Performance at the Beloved Mark Taper Forum

Making Its Music Center Debut with the West Coast Premiere of a Dazzling Show Set in a Fictional Jazz Club, Urban Bush Women Will Be the First-Ever Dance Company to Perform at the Intimate 739-Seat Theatre

Photos Available

LOS ANGELES (October 16, 2024) -- The Music Center will make history when it kicks off its 2024-2025 dance season of **Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center** on November 22-24, 2024, with a first-ever dance presentation in the performing arts center's beloved Mark Taper Forum. The storied Brooklyn-based dance company **Urban Bush Women** (UBW) has the honor of becoming the first-ever professional dance theatre company in The Music Center's momentous 60 years to perform at the 739-seat theatre. Adding to the excitement, UBW will be making its Music Center debut with the West Coast premiere of *SCAT!... The Complex Lives of Al & Dot, Dot & Al Zollar*, a love story set in a fictional jazz club where two people make their journey to Kansas City as part of the Great Migration. *SCAT!* is presented in association with **Center Theatre Group**.

"What an incredible time Angelenos are having at The Music Center as we celebrate our 60th year and open the doors of the landmark Mark Taper Forum for *Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center* for the first time," said Rachel S. Moore, president and CEO of The Music Center. "To watch a dance performance inside the intimate Mark Taper Forum will be a new experience for audiences; it's the perfect venue for UBW to perform *SCAT!*, a gripping story that will resonate deeply with those of us who have ever chased their dreams boundlessly and fearlessly."

SCAT! is conceived, directed and co-choreographed by UBW founder Jawole Willa Jo Zollar--as her final work for the company. Growing up in the mid-20th century performing in Black neighborhoods in a segregated Kansas City, Zollar tells a powerful tale of the aftermath of the Great Migration in the 1940s and 50s when aspirations are impacted by the harsh realities of American life. According to UBW, *SCAT!* is a poetic performance orature in the style of African American Toasts (the couplet form of rhyming, which boast and toast the epic hero or heroine) and was influenced by novelist Chinua Achebe who combined the concept of the orality of African storytelling with literature. The electrifying 90-minute dance work is set to an original jazz score by Craig Harris and performed by live musicians.

"*SCAT!* is a post vaudeville revue of jazz improvisation to make memory, felt in the present while calling upon the past and imagining a future," said Zollar. "*SCAT!* is my ritual remembrance of my family migration through time and space from the Great Migration to the complex lives of Al & Dot Zollar in Kansas City. Part truth, part memory, part rumor, part myth... the journey begins again and again."

Zollar founded Urban Bush Women in 1984 as an engine and an amplifier for the unheard stories of Black women+. Today, under the artistic leadership of Channon Judson and Mame Diarra Speis, UBW combines revolutionary performance, deep-healing community engagement and ancestral knowledge from the African diaspora into a cultural force that is urgent, forward-looking and essential. For the last four decades, UBW has defied expectations and easy categorization with its bold, narrative storytelling. The very bodies of the seven founding members of UBW--Black women of various shapes and sizes--challenged and changed the landscape of who could be seen on stage as a dancer. The subject matter of the work placed the stories of such women, historically overlooked and undervalued in America, up front and center stage.

UBW remains committed to ensuring that underserved audiences, especially people of color who face systemic barriers to accessing conventional performance, are engaged, invited and made welcome wherever the company tours. UBW also embraces the power of radical storytelling to activate social change. Whether creating genre-defying work for the stage, guiding the development of Black women choreographers and producers, organizing for justice through art making or inspiring leaders across generations, UBW is an innovator, operating at the vanguard.

Tickets to Urban Bush Women are available for purchase now by visiting musiccenter.org/UBW or by calling (213)

972-0711.

Season subscriptions are available for purchase now by visiting musiccenter.org or by calling (213) 972-0711. As part of these residencies, The Music Center will offer arts and cultural experiences, such as panel discussions, master classes, student matinees, special events and more, all of which are free to the public.

CALENDAR LISTING

URBAN BUSH WOMEN (Music Center Debut)

Presented in association with Center Theatre Group

The Music Center's Mark Taper Forum

Friday, November 22, 2024, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, November 23, 2024, 2:00 p.m.

Saturday, November 23, 2024, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, November 24, 2024, 2:00 p.m.

Live Musicians

SCAT!... The Complex Lives of Al & Dot, Dot & Al Zollar (West Coast Premiere)

Conceived, Directed and Co-Choreographed by Jawole Willa Jo Zollar

Co-Choreography by Vincent Thomas

Original Music Composed by Craig Harris

Dramaturgy by Talvin Wilks

Assistant Director and Associate Producer: Cheri L. Stokes

Projections Designer: Brittany Bland

Costume Visionary: Chanon Judson

Lighting Designer: Russell Sandifer

Sound Designer/Supervisor: Bill Toles

Assistant to the Creative Team & Brittany Bland: Lyndon Bonnett

Associate Costume Designer: Lori Gassie

Writing Collaborator: Stephen Lloyd Helper

Production Stage Manager: Jason Kaiser

Movement Coach: Bennalldra Williams

Executive Producer: Jonathan D. Secor

Director of Production, Booking & Touring: Michelle Coe

Music Management: Darrel Bridges/Arts & Education Continuum, Inc.

Celebrating its 40th anniversary, Urban Bush Women (UBW) builds upon a repertoire of bold, life-affirming dance works with *SCAT!... The Complex Lives of Al & Dot, Dot & Al Zollar*. This new dance-driven jazz club spectacular was conceived, directed and choreographed by UBW founder Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, who grew up performing in floor shows in Black neighborhoods in a segregated Kansas City in the mid-20th century after World War II--an era when Black businesses were booming, and there was great hope of upward mobility. *SCAT!* tells the story of two people making their way from the Great Migration to Kansas City to the present. Performed with a live band on stage, and set to an original jazz score by Craig Harris, this West Coast premiere tells the powerful journey of what happens when aspirations encounter the harsh realities of American life in the 1940s and 1950s.

ABOUT GLORYA KAUFMAN PRESENTS DANCE AT THE MUSIC CENTER

Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center, a TMC Arts program, is one of the leading presenters of dance on the West Coast. The celebrated series offers significant works by prestigious ballet and contemporary dance artists

from around the world. Now entering its 22nd year, *Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center* is a powerful force, supporting new works and artists-in-residence projects by today's most influential companies and choreographers. Performances are complemented by special experiences for both ticket buyers and the public with opportunities to learn more about the choreography and the themes explored, including panels, master classes, dance film festivals, interactive experiences and more. The 22nd season of *Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center* is generously supported by Glorya Kaufman Foundation, Center Dance Arts, Dorothy B. Chandler Program Fund and Elisabeth Katté Harris.

ABOUT CENTER DANCE ARTS

Center Dance Arts is a dynamic community of patrons with a passion for dance. Center Dance Arts members bring dance to life in Los Angeles by promoting The Music Center's world-class dance performances, extensive educational outreach and free and low-cost community experiences so all may experience the transformative power of dance. For more information, visit musiccenter.org/cda.

ABOUT THE MUSIC CENTER

The Music Center convenes artists, communities and ideas with the goal of deepening the cultural lives of every resident in Los Angeles County. Celebrating its 60th year in 2024, the \$80 million non-profit performing arts organization has two divisions: TMC Arts and TMC Ops. TMC Arts, The Music Center's programming engine, provides year-round programming inside The Music Center's four theatres, on Jerry Moss Plaza, outside at Gloria Molina Grand Park--a 12-acre adjacent green space--in schools and other locations all over Los Angeles County. TMC Arts presents world-class dance with *Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center*, free and low-cost public concerts and events, as well as live and digital K-12 arts education programs, workshops, performances, interactive experiences and special events. TMC Ops manages the theatres, the Plaza and Gloria Molina Grand Park, which comprise \$3 billion in county assets, on behalf of the County of Los Angeles. The Music Center is also home to four renowned resident companies--Center Theatre Group, Los Angeles Master Chorale, LA Opera and LA Phil. For more information, visit musiccenter.org and follow The Music Center on social media @MusicCenterLA.

ABOUT URBAN BUSH WOMEN

Celebrating its 40th Anniversary, [Urban Bush Women \(UBW\)](https://www.urbanbushwomen.org) 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 (CCI) and the CCI Producing Program (CCI 2.0). 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. www.urbanbushwomen.org

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