

THE SEATTLE PROJECT PRESENTS

Chapters

Chapters will focus on five black femmes – Akoiya Harris, Ashton Edwards, Nia-Amina Minor, Amanda Morgan, and Kenya Shakoor – highlighting previous chapters of their lives, and their current chapter. This new full-length explores ancestry and upbringing along with the intersections of Blackness and femininity.

Choreography and Direction: Amanda Morgan, *in collaboration with the performing artists*

Cinematography and Photography: Kenya Shakoor

Performing Artists: Amanda Morgan, Ashton Edwards, Akoiya Harris, and Nia-Amina Minor

Costumes: Janelle Abbott (JRAT)

Lighting and Tech: Britta Baer-Simon and Cole Wilder

Creative Production: Zane Ellis

Section 1.

Music: “Not Mr Rodgah’s Neighborhood” by Tank and The Bangas, “Only Synth in Church” by SAULT, “Unassigned” and “Unassigned II” by The Vernon Spring

Performers: Amanda Morgan, Ashton Edwards, Akoiya Harris, Nia-Amina Minor and Kenya Shakoor

Section 2.

“Amanda” a Film by Kenya Shakoor

Music: “Floating - Interlude” by Tank and The Bangas, “Little Blue Girl” by Nina Simone, “Goza Negra” by La Sonora Matancera and Celia Cruz, “DM Pretty” by Tank and The Bangas, and “Mood Indigo” by Nina Simone

Performers: Amanda Morgan and Ashton Edwards

Section 3.

“Nia-Amina” a Film by Kenya Shakoor

Music: “Home “ by Hannah Mayree, and “Griots of the Crenshaw District” by Terrace Martin

Performer and Choreographer: Nia-Amina Minor

Music: “Stranger Blues” by Sweet Honey In The Rock, and “My People” by Erykah Badu

Performer and Choreographer: Akoiya Harris

“Akoiya” a Film by Kenya Shakoor

Music: "Miss. Celie's Blues (Sister)" by Quincy Jones from The Color Purple Soundtrack, and "Prove it On Me Blues" by Ma Rainey

Performers and Choreographers: Nia-Amina Minor and Akoiya Harris

Section 4.

"Ashton" a Film by Kenya Shakoor

Music: "Mother's Love" by The Vernon Spring, and "Mother's Day Poem" by Ebony Stewart

Performer: Ashton Edwards

Section 5.

Music: "Momma's Groove - Jimpster's Hip Replacement Mix" by Osunlade and Jimpster

Performers and Choreographers: Amanda Morgan, Ashton Edwards, Akoiya Harris, and Nia-Amina Minor

The photography and cinematography for Chapters was made possible by a grant from the Washington State Arts Commission.

Amanda Morgan (she/her) is from Tacoma, Washington. Amanda joined Pacific Northwest Ballet as an apprentice in 2016 and was promoted to corps de ballet in 2017 and to soloist in 2022. In addition to her dance career, Amanda is a newly established choreographer. She has choreographed for Pacific Northwest Ballet's Next Step Program, premiering her works "Pages" (2018) and "The Argument" (2019) at McCaw Hall. She also was selected to be a choreographer in the Seattle International Dance Festival in 2019. In 2019, Amanda won a residency at Northwest Film Forum and Velocity Dance Center, giving her the opportunity to create her own show at Northwest Film Forum. Later in 2019, she launched her project titled "The Seattle Project" which is a group of collaborative artists, led by Amanda, that creates new work and dance that breaks down accessibility barriers in the community. In February of 2020, she had her first show "The How of It Sped" premiere at Northwest Film Forum, and in July of 2020 she created and premiered her piece "Musings" for Seattle Dance Collective's Continuum Program. In October of 2020, Morgan made her first piece for Pacific Northwest Ballet's Digital Season. Ms. Morgan was named "25 to Watch" in Dance Magazine for the 2020 year. She also has been featured on the National Endowment for the Arts podcast in February of 2021.

Kenya Shakoor (she/her) is a self-taught visual artist and lifelong Washington resident. She held her debut photo exhibition Dreaming in Black in 2019. The exhibition was an ode to the awe-inspiring softness and grace so intrinsic to Black life. In 2022, Kenya presented an original workshop at Tacoma Art Museum entitled Framing Portraiture as an Act of Love, exhibited a new photo series at Wa Na Wari's Walk the Block, and was named as a finalist for The Current, an artist award from Tacoma Art Museum. This year she joined the Tacoma Arts Commission and the commission's diversity, equity, and inclusion subcommittee to further illustrate her love and advocacy for Tacoma's creative community. She is committed to visual storytelling that facilitates conversation and expands our collective imagery. Keep up with her upcoming projects by visiting her website kenyashakoor.com.

Ashton Edwards (they/them) is from Flint, Michigan. They studied at the Flint School of Performing Arts and Pacific Northwest Ballet and attended summer courses at Joffrey Ballet Chicago, Houston Ballet, and Pacific Northwest Ballet. Ashton joined Pacific Northwest Ballet as an apprentice in 2021 and was promoted to corps de ballet in 2022. While a student at Pacific Northwest Ballet, Ashton performed in Company productions of George Balanchine's The Nutcracker® and Kent Stowell's Cinderella. They performed leading roles in Christopher D'Ariano's Follower and Joshua Grant's Bright Young Things for PNB's NEXT STEP choreographer showcase. Ashton is a recipient of the 2021 Princess Grace Award. They have performed with Amanda Morgan's The Seattle Project and was on the cover of the July 2021 Dance Spirit Magazine.

Akoiya Harris (she/her) is a Seattle based movement artist. She graduated from The Ailey School's Certificate Program and has performed as a company artist with Donald Byrd's Spectrum Dance Theater. Akoiya has recently shown her own work at Seattle Art Museum, Wa Na Wari, MadArt Gallery, Northwest Film Forum, and in 12 Minutes Max. She has the pleasure of teaching

students at Pacific Northwest Ballet, Ailey Camp, and Spectrum. Outside of her movement practice, Akoiya does work in cultural preservation through the collection of community members oral histories. Akoiya was recently named one of Seattle Theater Groups Artist in Residence.

Nia-Amina Minor (she/they) is a movement artist originally from Los Angeles. She approaches her practice as an imaginative space grounded in rhythm where improvisation, Black vernacular movement, and choreography meet. Her creative work focuses on the body and what it carries using physical and archival research to explore memory and history. Nia-Amina has presented work in St. Louis, Seattle, and Los Angeles. She holds a MFA from UC Irvine and a BA from Stanford University. From 2016-2021, Nia-Amina performed with Spectrum Dance Theater. In 2021, Nia-Amina was recognized as Dance Magazine's 25 Artists to Watch. Currently, she is a dance curator at Wa Na Wari and a 2023 Velocity Dance Center Made in Seattle Artist in Residence.

Janelle Abbott (JRAT) (she/her) was born into the fashion industry—her parents owned a clothing manufacturing company where they produced Tencel garments in Seattle for over 20 years. This early exposure to the behind the scenes of garment production gave Janelle a sense of reverence for the labor involved in creating clothing. She received a BFA in fashion design from Parsons School of Design in 2012. In the face of the exploitative labor and environmental damage perpetrated by corporate fashion, Janelle decided to carve her own path—one committed to upcycling, sustainability, hand craft, and the zero waste design methodology. Densely pleated, boldly clashing, and unexpectedly rhythmic, Janelle's work is scrappy, unapologetic, and a testament to just how much time and energy it takes for real humans to manufacture and produce every consumer product we engage with.

Britta Baer-Simon (she/they) is a designer who has been working in the Seattle scene for a year. You can find her running shows at the Can Can or working as a lighting technician for Seattle Shakespeare and other local theaters. She worked with Amanda on "Truth be Told" as the lighting designer and is thrilled to come back for "Chapters".

Zane Ellis (he/him) is the founding Managing Director of the Seattle Project and has been a collaborator since its inception. He has trained and performed professionally with the Pennsylvania Ballet, Richmond Ballet, Ballet Austin and Pacific Northwest Ballet. As a choreographer, he has been commissioned to choreograph multiple new works for The Richmond Ballet Trainee Program. Zane is currently the Development Manager for Base: Experimental Arts + Space, a nonprofit organization dedicated to elevating risk and invention in dance, performance and multidisciplinary art. He is also the Program Operations Manager for A Way Home Washington, a statewide movement to end youth and young adult homelessness in Washington.

Special thank you to Northwest Film Forum for hosting The Seattle Project