Melanie Greene, Niya Nicholson, Joya Powell
with an introduction by: Eva Yaa Asantewaa

an accompaniment to Dance Your Future: Artist & Mentor Collaborative Residency 2017
~ a Pepatián project in partnership with BAAD! Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance ~

Featuring essays on the work of the 2017 residency artists:

Beatrice Capote  Miguel Aparicio  Tatiana Desardouin  Maleek Washington
I’m thrilled to have the opportunity to share the work of these three writers. It’s been fascinating to see how their writings accompany each of the three performances in this residency project, and how the performances also play their part in shaping these essays.

And thank you Eva for your always real talk!

Tatiana Desardouin’s Passion Fruit Dance Company works with “the groove,” and Joya Powell writes about the impact of groove on (and in) the stage itself. She writes about space that becomes charged in particular ways, enough so that an audience member feels comfortable getting up to dance and share the stage with the performers. That might just be the Bronx, because that is what can happen in our Boogie Down, and it’s also partly from the invitation present in the work. The groove finds you.

In Melanie Greene’s essay, she writes to quickly catch and keep up with a creative, free-flowing stream of structure and consciousness that folds and unpacks the latitude and longitude of materials into its skirts and songs and drums before being whisked away into the mist. It’s a conjuring trick, it’s a work that is very grounded and very much beyond where we are. You’ll see.

Niya Nicholson’s writing becomes part of the family of Maleek Washington’s work - the family-knowing, the neighborhood presence, the impression that in this community tribe, you-are-never-alone-here-really. It’s an almost unlimited place of deep richness - paintings and installation, and movement, music, cinematic characters, layers of photographs, intergenerational welcoming.

Come on in.

Jane Gabriels, Ph.D.
Producer, *Dance Your Future: Artist & Mentor Residency Project* & Editor, *Write Your Future*
Director, Pepatian [www.pepatian.org](http://www.pepatian.org)
WRITE YOUR FUTURE

by Eva Yaa Asantewaa

Real talk: Absolutely no one I know feels satisfied with the state of writing about dance in New York.

We live in a city famously saturated with makers, teachers, scholars, collaborators, curators, presenters and advocacy groups dedicated to the art of dance. We boast a long, vibrant history of pioneering choreographers pushing the art forward with rigorous inquiry, risk-taking practice and achievement. Yet few training resources exist for aspiring dance writers; few paying outlets exist in either mainstream or alternative media. We have few editors of color with jobs in this field and few support systems to nurture young writers of color and encourage them to commit time, energy and skill to this challenging pursuit. In the high-stakes atmosphere of our city, certain dance artists or troupes, dance genres and even venue locations (primarily downtown Manhattan and Brooklyn) receive far more media attention than others. Clearly, many New York artists compete for scarce opportunities for coverage, critical feedback and documentation of their creative labor—certainly true for dance artists based in the Bronx. And that leads me to the purpose of this writing project for Pepatián’s Dance Your Future project and its opportunity for Bronx-based dance artists.

The writers you will find in these pages—Joya Powell, Melanie Greene and Niya Nicholson— are all artists with thriving practices in dance. Like other dance artists who write about their colleagues, they reject the traditional notion that dance writing must be all about leveling judgment—the binary thumbs up/down approach. They claim the freedom to respond to dance with artful voices of their own; to pose provocative, generative questions; to offer sensitive insight into the process of creativity. They know what it means for artists to receive words that reflect back what they have offered in their work, words that honor and help us understand this elusive, ephemeral art.

These talented writers have watched and responded to works by current recipients of Pepatián and BAAD!’s Dance Your Future: Artist & Mentor Collaborative Residency, all artists of color based in the Bronx. In her closely-observed analysis, Powell journeys to find the GROOVE in Dance Within Your Dance, an Afrofunk Hip Hop/House ensemble piece by Swissborn choreographer Tatiana Desardouin. Greene invites readers into a sensory experience of deep witness and introduces you to emerging artists Beatrice Capote and Miguel Aparicio whose collaborative duet, Orb, draws from Afro-Cuban spirituality and rhythms. The third writer, Nicholson, describes how dancer-choreographer Maleek Washington, exploring Black masculinity through a feminist lens, conjures the life-shaping power of village and family within the close quarters of BAAD!’s space.

Dance Your Future’s writing project exists for all of us who care not only about dance’s future but how its past and present stories will be preserved and passed down to coming generations. Enjoy what you find in these pages. And may these reflections inspire you, next time you see dance, to jot a few notes of your own!

(c)2017, Eva Yaa Asantewaa
Navigating a contentious social and political climate in the United States, it becomes more refreshing each time I witness Black artists invest in their own story. Particularly, I am interested in how the people and places shape these stories, how they confront adversity, and, more interestingly, how their stories are revealed and to whom. At nightfall on December 3, 2017, Maleek Washington invited us into his “home;” a home defined by perseverance, vulnerability, angst, and love. A home built by family, and shaped by The Bronx.

Washington, who is widely known for his acclaimed career as a performance artist, and who is also a national and international teaching artist, has expanded his artistry to choreographic expression that centers reflection, narration, mapping, and preservation of memory. As a Pepatián and Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance (BAAD!) Dance Your Future: Artist & Mentor Collaborative Residency 2017 recipient, Washington constructed a carefully designed performance work rooted in reflection, homage, and commentary on his Black male experience from childhood to the present in Shadows of Heaven: Bronx Blues.

Staged at BAAD!, housed in St. Peter’s Episcopal Church’s Foster Hall, audience members were greeted with light refreshments in the intimate basement lobby where smiles and hugs immediately identified familiar faces, like Washington’s family members, mentors, and other curious viewers. As attendees were directed toward the performance space, we were soothed by a mix of Motown classics thanks to DJ DTTONYMONKEY (Antonio Brown), and dim mood-lighting that offered three areas of visual stimulation. One was a cozy nook designed by collaborative artist Sophia “Wet Paint” Dawson, in which elaborate gold hanging mobiles held aged childhood and family photo albums,
simulating an early 90s living room. The “living room” evoked audible, nostalgic reactions of surprise and laughter from family members who were present. Then followed Washington, who alternated between being an onlooker or an instigator in the “living room,” offering sporadic, darting, and emotionally textured movement improvisation within the small confines of the space. I could easily shift focus from following Washington as he moved through space to being engulfed in his family and friends’ reactions in the nook, to swaying to the feel-good music, or being struck by the image of an uninviting, large moth-colored building projected onto the front wall.

This image of this building primes audience members for a story not often shared by Washington, one that largely constitutes his “Bronx Blues.” Washington grew up directly across the street from the former Spofford-Bridges Juvenile Detention Center in the Hunt’s Point section of the South Bronx, which, as he said, “served as a visual and psychological reminder of how society viewed and valued Black families residing in the neighborhood.” He created this piece to reveal how his family grappled with the effects of mass incarceration and hyper-surveillance, namely his brother, father, and other male family members who were and continue to be incarcerated. These experiences and memories serve as the baseline of *Shadows of Heaven: Bronx Blues*, in which Washington unpacks the effects of a deconstructed family as a result of structural and institutional racism, and how the Black women throughout his life, in many ways, “saved” him.

Washington is not known to shy away from showing gratitude and respect for his village, and the feminist Black women—his mother, aunts, cousins, friends, and mentors - who have helped him become the person and artist he is today. As Washington said, these women have “shaped my understandings on being and survival…These women introduced this conflicted Black boy from the Bronx to the power of the arts when it comes to questioning, healing, and re-envisioning life’s offerings.” Audiences can see how Washington acknowledged the roles his village has played in his life in the movement and theatrical elements of the performance work. As audience members transitioned from the sneak peeks into this village from the “living room” to the seemingly life-size living room within the proscenium-seating configuration of the theater, we were captivated by the immediate
shift to upbeat Motown grooves like Chic’s “Le Freak,” disco ball lighting, and the visual set designs of abstract murals of family displayed on each surrounding wall and three monument-sized embellished gold picture frames by Dawson and Chet Gold. As Washington expressed, “[my] village is being honored in these murals, dialogues, and movement…I owe this nuanced imagination and creativeness to the support and opportunities I was given at home.” Beyond paying homage to his immediate village, he expands his work to that of the women who have supported his growth as an artist, namely his mentors Sidra Bell (Artistic Director, Sidra Bell Dance New York) and Francesca Harper (Artistic Director, The Francesca Harper Project).

Both Bell and Harper have witnessed Washington’s personal growth as a young dancer as well as his struggles with understanding his Black male experiences, and were integral to the motifs and narrative arc of this performance work. Specifically, Harper has provided guidance at critical stages in Washington’s dance career by encouraging him to annotate his struggles and victories. Additionally, Harper’s own artistic practice is rooted in social awareness and expression through dance, music, and theater works, and her influences were present within the melded theater and movement-based elements of Washington’s work. Similarly, Bell has been unapologetically supportive in artistically challenging Washington to grow, reflect, and build as a dancer and, now, in his artistic practice. Bell’s work, which explores the human condition through a feminist perspective, supported Washington as he sought to embed an intersectional lens in the work’s composition and with his collaborators.

A key component of Washington’s choreographic process is collaboration, and this was showcased with lifelong friends and interdisciplinary artists: Danielle Mills, Chet Gold, and Sophia “Wet Paint” Dawson. Washington has known “each member of the cast for many years and never worked closely with them, except for Danielle. So, to create with them and take them on this journey with him, as expressed by Washington, “has been exciting…It has been shocking to see where the dots connect from high school to adulthood.” What made the process so intimate and striking for his collaborators was that it was the first time they were made aware of the effects of Washington’s father’s incarceration on his upbringing and outlook on understanding love, home, and place. Mills portrayed Washington’s
mother in the work through movement and dialogue-based skits that depicted Washington’s childhood, including memories of his father and female family members. She stated that “it was a delicate balance for her to act as a woman she has known since childhood but to do so in a new and revealing way, to be as authentic as possible but through Maleek’s eyes.” Similarly, Gold, who portrayed Washington’s father from pre-birth to his early childhood to incarceration, revealed that “working with Maleek in this capacity was cathartic because [Chet’s] own father was incarcerated—not as long as [Maleek’s] father, but as friends this was not a topic or emotion we openly discussed or expressed. I learned something new about my friend, after all these years.” Both Mills and Gold were instrumental in driving forward the theatrical and dialogue-heavy narrative that revealed Washington’s evolution of fond and unpleasant memories of his parents, childhood, and the effects of incarceration on his family.

Audience members could notice the shift in gaze and interest whenever Washington appeared; he used bold, contemporary, and hip-hop infused dance soliloquies paired with classical and rap music to show the evolution from childhood to adulthood. The most striking moments in the work were the use of juxtaposition between Washington’s emotive dancing and Gold’s poetic monologues and gestural reactions to his “son’s” grief. Towards the end of the performance, Mills resurfaced along with the introduction of Dawson’s own eight year old son, who portrayed Washington as a young boy sitting within the gold frame set design.

I appreciated the raw but carefully structured narrative and conversation Washington sparks, especially how he positions the arts as a mechanism for survival. Washington hopes “the work would live beyond the stage; to spark conversation with one’s self, family, and community members and to encourage them to take reflection into their own story.” This performance work is unfinished, but Washington seeks to build upon this work by engaging communities and organizers working to reveal the dire effects of mass incarceration for marginalized people. The emergence of Washington’s multi-disciplinary, choreographic voice, as it will become more and more refined over time and will speak to the individual and structural hardships Black males in America face and navigate, is worth following.

Pharaoh, son of Sophia Dawson, © Marisol Diaz, 2017
A GROOVEology: Reflections on Dance Within Your Dance

by Joya Powell

It surges through the floor, up into the seats, pulses inside the walls and fills the air at the Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance/BAAD! - it takes hold and reverberates within the audience. The G R O O V E. On Friday, November 10, 2017, Passion Fruit Dance Company premiered their evening length piece Dance Within Your Dance presented by Pepatián in a substantial, collaborative residency project with BAAD!, choreographed by Tatiana Desardouin. The company features captivating international performers: Tatiana Desardouin (Switzerland), Mai Lê Ho (France) and Lauriane Ogay (Switzerland), all now residing in NYC. Dance Within Your Dance is a polyrhythmic ciphering portal that dives into the essence of The Groove in Hip Hop and House dance.

The G R O O V E...as described by Eriko, a dancer from Japan, interviewed in the film that accompanies the performance: “it’s like a secret ingredient of everything.”

The performance starts with music, by Maribou State Feat. Pedestrian, which starts softly, and is then layered with syncopated beats which allow the ear to hear each dynamic brake of silence. The rhythms toy with the senses, catches the audience off guard and turns them around until they feel energized, lifted. Inside this world of sound and space, the dancers effortlessly isolate different body parts - feet, head, arms, pelvis - while they move within the constraints of a diagonal ray of light. Body parts of each dancer move in different directions. The dancers’ movements start to morph and melt into possibilities; they explore the space with their bodies carving and swirling in percussive movements. They seem to be in a state of trance.

The G R O O V E...“When I see kids, they make so” (she bounces with her knees together and arms at her side), and “when they hear music” (she rocks her hips from side to side with arms bent in front of her, hands in fists). “That’s the Groove for me.” - Zeynep, a Nursery Nurse in Switzerland

Dancer, Lauriane Ogay, exits the space, and the duet that is left weave in and out of unison as if they are finishing each others sentences. The dancers seem to question - where do I start and where do you begin? How does the music tell the body what to do? They create unpredictable initiations of isolated body parts; the music calls hips to thrust in angles that are unexpected and delightful. Interspersed are moments where their limbs seem to float on the air around them. The dancers are vessels of virtuosity, creating a box-like floor pattern. They connect with each others body waves, and energy oscillates between them.

A voice echoes from above stating “I did what I had to,” as their bodies mirror the statement through a threading floor sequence - arms and legs looping through each other in a maze of limbs; puzzle pieces that seamlessly fit together yet have no defining edges. Their threading phrase turns into a Tutting exploration, a technique inspired by ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, with sharp angular movements with which the dancers punctuate the air. These gestures are an over-score to their footwork, which remains light yet grounded in intricate and fast patterns. The space surges with heightened energy when the dancers notice their similar moves. Their interaction becomes one of joy and their stoic gazes relax. Elation permeates the atmosphere and the audience is able to peer into the hearts of the dancers. Their passion becomes the nourishing fruit of dynamic choreography.
The G R O O V E... “is the soul of the dance.” - Miki Tuesday, Italian Dancer/Mentor at Soul Summit

Dance Within Your Dance includes clever choreographic devices where Hip Hop and House phrases are framed within the context of dance theater. One of the most intriguing sections of Dance Within Your Dance occurs in the middle of the work. In the duet, a competition ensues. Both Tatiana Desardouin and Mai Lê Ho begin by adjusting and re-adjusting their shirt collars, checking in with each other to see who is doing it better. They manipulate their shirttails - by holding onto the ends of their button down shirts, they extend the lines of their bodies. The shirts become an extension of self. They are pulled in one direction and then another. The dancers become intertwined - body parts, shirttails, body parts - threading and lacing themselves through the negative space each of them and their costumes create. The comedic timing and juxtaposition of awkwardly maneuvering bodies with the shirttails kept in motion while also keeping a straight face is flawless. They poke fun at the competitive nature of commercial dance. This tongue-in-cheek moment asks the audience to see the goal of creating space, rather than taking space, and figuring out ways to achieve cognitive dissonance rather than competition.

To contextualize the visceral understanding of The Groove, the choreography includes a video, edited by Loreto Jamlig. The dancers exit the stage and appear on the screen. The film brings the audience to the epicenter of Groove theory: Soul Summit, an annual outdoor summer festival in Brooklyn that celebrates life through music, dance, fashion, film, and art. Massive numbers of people gather in vibrant, diasporic clothing to commune with music and community. Sinewy syncopated conversations happen between movers, DJ’s and cypher groupings. Dancers in the video are asked (by Tatiana off screen): “what is the groove? can you show it?”

The G R O O V E... “the Groove for me is the embodiment of music that goes through your body.” Canadian dancer Nubian Nene’s arms create concentric circles overhead mixed with a reverberating torso.
Along with interviews at Soul Summit, the videographer and interviewer included quotes from people all over the world of various occupations,

The G R O O V E... Lily, a retired elder in Canada states “there’s something smooth, smooth and cool and warm” (arms softly caress the air). The interviewer asks: “can you show me?” Lily awkwardly laughs uncontrollably, surprised by the question and says, “oh, oh no,” (she puts one hand to her heart and the other held outward). She continues to laugh, “it’s hard, it’s taking you like that” (she does a subtle body wave that starts from her chest and flows out of her shoulders and arms).

The video returns to Soul Summit for more interviews and clips: dancers en masse, surging with an uplifting energy, embodying personal improvisational experiences while engaging with the collective kinesthetic conscious present there.

The film ends by posing the question, “can you show it?” and the trio returns to the stage. In the silence, they engage a rhythm that undulates through their body and comes out as snaps of their fingers. Lights come up in the audience while Mai Lê Ho, Lauriane, and Tatiana create an a cappella performance.
polyrhythmic score with their hands and voices. Their bodies reverberate with the rhythms - heads pulse side to side, shoulders alternate rocking back and forth. They encourage the audience to join them. The audience starts to clap, and mirrors the dancers body articulations in their chairs.

A woman from the audience accepts this invitation to get up and shake her Groove thang on stage with the dancers. She does a runway-esque walk back over to her chair - the three dancers encourage her spirited enthusiasm while aiding the audience in holding down the beat. It is a welcoming moment, as if Passion Fruit Dance Company is saying we see you, we honor you, and this is our collective story.

*The G R O O V E... “is being one with the rhythm. Saying a lot without saying much. Just riding the beat. The Groove is a mean two-step.”* - Sydney a New York dancer at Soul Summit.

Internationally acclaimed dancers, Tatiana Desardouin and Mai Lê Ho are breathtaking and captivating performers. Their execution and drive are mesmerizing. They effortlessly weave between urban techniques while flawlessly engage the audience with moments of comedic dance theater. Their generous deep listening of the body makes it easy for audience members to connect with their luscious moments of larger-than-life movements. Their musicality is impeccable, and are polyrhythmic forces of nature. Due to an injury, dancer Lauriane Ogay, was re-choreographed into the work with cameo appearances. She emerges in unpredictable spaces, like the windowsill, the audience, and with unpredictable props like a white coat. In performance, Lauriane Ogay’s movements marry a sustained sentiment of precision with angular isolations, embodying an other-worldly state. Even during the phrases in unison, the trio personify the notion that no two Grooves are the same. Their movement patterns stimulate a sense of awe that digs deep into the audience with an internal connection that is understood as it is lived, moved, embodied. The audience sits on the edge of their seats, watches carefully, trying not to blink.
The choreography ends in a Ring Shout-esque sequence with all three dancers celebrating The Groove between them and the audience. As the lights fade they move in a counterclockwise circle, slowly dip and turn, they snap to the beat with their arms in the air. The audience rejoices as they witness the dancers delight in embodying The Groove.

Through the multifaceted, polyrhythmic, dynamic of The Groove, Dance Within Your Dance takes the audience on a journey that mirrors and expands both inner peace and struggle. Various vignettes throughout the choreography echo the definitions of The Groove; they arrange and rearrange like a rubix cube, like time folding into itself, like the transcendent journey of House music. Bits of comedy are laced throughout, creating space for breath and entertainment. Music by Maribou State, Altered Natives, Mark de Clive Lowe & Daz-I-Kue, Sam I Am Montolla, Abjo, Question, and Frits Wentink, keep the audience jamming in their chairs. Dance Within Your Dance bridges the commercial, stage, street and club dance scenes, in an explosive ode to The G R O O V E.

The G R O O V E...“is something personal...something that comes out from your gut and that it explodes in very unexpected ways. I think of it as a way to communicate, a way to share.” - Tatiana Desardouin
Reflections on ORB

by Melanie Greene

Choreography and performance: Beatrice Capote and Miguel Aparicio/The Sabrosura Effect
Produced by: Pepatián and BAAD!
Sound Score edited by Miguel Aparicio
Support Cast: Charles Ferrer, Caja Karlsson, Zai Mora, Phil Ordonez, Carolina Mendoza
Mentor: Carlos Neto, assisted by Elodie Dufroux

“Sabrosura is this idea of the richness that is Latin culture. You know like when you eat something that’s really good? Yes. Or you hear some music and it’s like...ahhh yes. Or when you dance and you’re like...ahhh yes. It’s so satisfying to your soul. That is sabrosura. So The Sabrosura Effect is all those things. It’s the effect of Latin music.” Miguel Aparicio

PART 1

Allow me to take you on a journey. It may seem made up, but this story is real. Suspend disbelief and accept that the impossible is possible.

On November 10, 2017 Beatrice Capote & Miguel Aparicio/The Sabrosura Effect premiered Orb hosted by Pepatián and the Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance, BAAD! Orb is “a narrative of two people finding ways to reach their fullest potential through the unseen truths of spirit.” Developed during a seven-month residency project1 produced by Pepatián with BAAD!, Orb opens a portal into Afro-Cuban dance and music rhythms. Here, the personal, the spiritual, and the everyday collide.

Icy wind whips around my tapered goose down coat. I sink further into the fabric, walking intently from the 6 train at Westchester Square to BAAD!. Signage in front of the former gothic revivalist chapel points me toward the cemetery. A homeless man rests against a metal fence outside the cemetery. He shifts his long legs and adjusts a clear trash bag swelling with bottles and cans. Loose denim and white rags hang from his sturdy frame. “Hello” I say. He replies with a grunt.

Tiny lights illuminate a path to the basement door. Once inside, muffled sounds of Latin beats coax patrons to the stairs leading to the performance space.

I trudge up hollow steps, pass an altar of candles and photographs. I pull a silver handle to open a black door.

The earthy aroma of frankincense permeates the air. Red lights saturate the space, and create a nightclub/lounge vibe. Chairs along the perimeter carve out a U-formation with a cluster of small, round tables converging at the base. Tabletop tea candles twinkle next to drinks and light snacks.

Singer Chico Álvarez and percussionist Eddie Martinez serenade the audience with Latin rhythms. Behind them, a rectangular table holds a wooden cross, flowers, and sticks of incense. A black doll in a white gown sits adjacent to the altar in a chair. She is surrounded by folded garments and other props.

1 Dance Your Future: Artist & Mentor Collaborative Residency 2017 offers three artists of color and/or Bronx-based artists free rehearsal space, paid mentorship, and professional development opportunities. pepatian.org
The room goes dark. A plastic bag rustles. Clanking aluminum cans rattle and scrape across the floor.

*Orb* is a collection of episodes that share a through-line of our connection to the universe. To begin, soft lighting reveals Miguel Aparicio wearing a tan loin cloth with ankle and wrist cuffs. He summons an indigenous pre-colonial energy, a time when life practices connect closely to the earth and universe. He stretches to the sky and flexes both hands at the wrist. His body expands, sending energy through the tips of his toes. He stomps his feet, shaking the shells around his ankles. He is joined by two women wearing black business suits. One is holding a baby. There is also a pedestrian with a camera phone. The homeless man we passed outside, and Beatrice Capote as Yemaya also join the scene. Capote mimics the swell of ocean waves by swirling and swooping her cobalt blue skirt. In slow motion, the business women collide and respond in anger while the pedestrian captures the scene on his cell phone. Capote transforms into the Virgin Mary just in time to catch Aparicio falling into her arms.

Scenes like this, with multiple contextual access points, are generated and then dissipate with little fanfare throughout the show. Sometimes, vignettes sit next to one another without interacting. Other times, they bleed into one another. The brevity and sudden shifts stimulates feelings of being caught in a tropical storm. Capote and Aparicio are at the center of this vortex, conjuring memories.

Aparicio’s sound score also instigates the momentum. Audio rises and falls from the surface to complement each vignette. The homeless man wanders throughout each scene, omnipresent. He is a silent witness who anchors the work.

Scene: A video projection shows Aparicio running through city streets. Dance and pedestrian movement flow concurrently through his body in a marriage of mobility.

Scene: Capote embodies childlike innocence during a solo. She generates gentle waves with her arms. Thin wisps of smoke circle her frame. She invokes a hopeful, softer side of Yemaya and gently dances with a doll. With reverence, she gives the doll to her mother in the audience. This woman feels to be the keeper of her dreams and innocence. The homeless man moves freely in the space, watching.

Scene: Heavy metal music pierces through the calm. An angry entourage attacks Capote and violently drags her across the floor. She thrashes with resistance. Her clothes are forced off and her arms are shoved into a mustard color business suit jacket. She is literally thrust into adulthood. The homeless man only watches. He does nothing.

Scene: A group of commuters endure a subway ride as Aparicio tries to get Capote’s attention. She is unfazed, unwilling to engage. *Stand clear of the closing doors.*

Scene: Capote starts to thoughtfully remove her costume in her home-like corner of the stage as she gets ready to go out. Behind the audience, drunken partygoers indulge in conversation and a quick Salsa dance appetizer. They stumble off into the darkness and Capote emerges with a mermaid cut yellow skirt and top. She meets Aparicio. His cranberry red shirt flows as he moves, and his cherry red shoes glisten with every quick step. She throws her head back with laughter, channeling Oshun. They orbit like a solar system, rebounding in and out of each other’s arms. The homeless man picks up a trail of trash.

Scene: The homeless man finds his way behind three drums. He sits and begins to play. His rumba rhythms take control of Aparicio’s body. He basks in this musical possession. Capote changes into a leopard-print romper and is coaxed into the space by the clacking of the
Sound wraps around bodies. Limbs dance and slice through dense molecules...swirling, shifting, building. Vibrations.
The past and present collide.

Through the constant evolution of costume, movement, and scene changes, Orb reveals how transformation can inspire transcendence. The work builds until Capote and Aparicio are on the precipice of ascension. They share a complementary knowledge and passion for Afro-Cuban styles that embodies the richness of combined flavors, the sabrosura. When those flavors are both physical and spiritual, what can we uncover, experience and witness? The Sabrosura Effect takes viewers on this journey of curiosity and possibility.
PART 2

Their Words: An Interview with The Sabrosura Effect/Beatrice Capote and Miguel Aparicio

Before the premiere, I had an opportunity to sit down and chat with the duo about the show and process. Here is what came up!

Tell us a bit about your background:
Beatrice Capote: I’m in grad school studying Afro-Cuban dance forms. I’ve studied contemporary dance for my whole existence, so I wanted to focus more on Afro-Cuban dance. I’m also Cuban-American; both of my parents are Cuban. My family is very much immersed in music and dance, so I learned all about the Yoruba and Santería religion growing up. It was ingrained in my culture. Getting to know Miguel around the time I was also studying Afro-Cuban forms, and he was already well immersed within that, that’s really how our two kinetic souls surged.

Miguel Aparicio: I come more from the “on two New York salsa” but I also studied contemporary Latin theatrical dance in Austin, Texas. I used to have a rock n’ roll group in Texas for ten years. We were able to connect to the universe through the music - to connect to something much larger than us. That was before I danced. I studied biology at the University of Texas at Austin and started to dance because I didn’t have my band anymore. That frequency, that connection that we were able to reach through rock music is the same reached in Rumba and the folklore. It’s the same place. I just found it through a different way.

I moved to New York to keep studying. In Cuba, I had an amazing learning experience from grand master teacher Santiago Alfonzo. I got to meet people who grew up in Rumba and folklore like Barbaro Ramos (of Los Muñequitos de Matanzas). It was really an amazing experience to take class with Alfonzo. He and Barbaro showed me concepts that influence directly the work we’re doing now. I also studied with revolutionary musician, Andonis Calderon.

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2 New York Salsa has accent steps on beats two and six of a two-measure phrase with a 4:4 time signature. Learn more at www.danceus.org/salsa/7-reasons-why-new-york-style-salsa-is-a-worldwide-favorite
How did The Sabrosura Effect come about?
Capote: At this time last year, Carlos Mateo (Director of Herencia D’ Cuba), asked me to join his company. There I met Miguel. Carlos asked Miguel and I to create a piece for the company show that was a tribute to Candido Camero (an iconic congo player). The duet *Mayeya* was performed with a live band, and we continued to practice that piece. Later, my uncle Chico Alvarez, a singer and musician with a New York City Cuban band, asked us to perform at SOB’S. After that, we agreed to start The Sabrosura Effect.

What is *Orb* about for you?
Aparicio: Our show deals with the spiritual realm. The message is to wake people to acknowledge that the spiritual realm is always present. We’ve become dissociated with it, and when you find and harness it, the spiritual gives you strength and power. I also think we are brought up in a society that conditions us to believe what we can and can’t do, and this is influenced by social and societal values of what’s important or valuable. We then make decisions on what is possible or not. We never pursue what we think is impossible.

Capote: Breaking the hindrance that’s placed on us or the notion that we should follow the path of least resistance. We create these limitations, so we’re trying to send the message that we can go even deeper then what we do on everyday. I love watching people walking on the street, often so narrow minded with this tunnel vision. Are we even awake here? Are we aware? Do we even feel the energies that are happening right now. That to me is the orb.

How do you manifest the impossible to be possible or this awareness into your physicality for this work?
Click the video link below to see how!
https://youtu.be/c1rzrog_GFo
Background

Write Your Future

This writing is something that I wanted to add to this residency project for several reasons: to support emerging dancers of color and/or Bronx-based dance makers with writing that accompanies their work; to support emerging writers (of color) with paid opportunities to write and be mentored (Eva Yaa Asantewaa, Bessie award-winning writer, was the fabulous mentor for 2017); to share this work with others in the ways that writing and reading does; to give the artists more documentation and ways to build up their portfolios; to bring the artists further into conversation with others about the work on stage and on the page; to give more creative voice to artists making new works in the creative incubator that is also the South Bronx, and; to further raise visibilities for all involved.

2017 Writer Bios:

Niya Nicholson, a Harlem, NY native, is dedicated to intersectional racial and social justice work within the arts field and beyond. As a budding arts leader and creative entrepreneur, her work centers long-range, equity-based strategic planning and arts advocacy as it pertains to underserved and under-resourced cultural communities and organizations. Her fervor for the arts has been supported by former dance training at LaGuardia High School of the Performing Arts and her B.A. from Vassar College with concentrations in Psychology, Africana Studies and Educational Studies coupled with educational, legal, and performance research in Chicago, Cuba, and South Africa. She serves Gibney Dance – Development Manager and Steering Committee Member of the Equity Action Committee; MOVE(NYC) – Chief of Staff, and the 2017-18 Dance/NYC Junior Committee – Co-Chair. While in the gestational phase of developing transcontinental arts and education centers, Niya looks forward to continued arts advocacy, communal building, and connections to ancestry and space.

Melanie Greene, a 2017 Bessie Award Recipient for Outstanding Performance with Skeleton Architecture, is a movement artist swirling along the edges of the impossible while swimming in the sea of the minority. She has presented work at Dixon Place, Movement Research at Judson Church, Brooklyn Arts Exchange, WOW Cafe, Moon Show, Bronx Academy of Arts & Dance, and New York Live Arts. She has received generous support from the Gibney Dance boo-foo Space Grant, New York Live Arts Fresh Tracks residency, Actors Fund Summer Push Grant, and Dancing While Black Fellowship. She is a proud alumna of EmergeNYC, and has performed for sheros Sydnie L. Mosley, Paloma McGregor, Eva Yaa Asantewaa and Dancenoise. Greene is a contributing writer for The Dance Enthusiast, Dance Magazine, and her personal blog On the Scene With Lanie Reene. As a southern belle transplant, Greene values being in the trenches of ongoing anti-racist work and equity. She also holds a special place for biscuits, country ham, and collard greens. Stay tuned. www.methodsofperception.com

A native Harlemite, Joya Powell is a choreographer and educator passionate about community, activism, and dances of the African Diaspora. Her work has appeared in venues such as: BAM, Lincoln Center, SummerStage, The Bronx Museum of Arts, Symphony Space, Movement Research @ Judson Church, and BAADI. She has choreographed such Off Broadway plays as: Fit for a Queen by Betty Shamieh (The Classical Theatre of Harlem) and The Brothers Size by Tarell Alvin McCraney (Luna Stage, NJ). Joya has been a Guest Artist at various colleges, conferences and festivals; she has taught and studied internationally in Brazil, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Israel. Awards and recognition include: The 2016
Outstanding Emerging Choreographer Bessie Award, 2016-2017 Dancing While Black Fellow, 2017 SDC Observership Program. Currently Joya is a Women in Motion Commissioned Artist, a collaborating member of Dance Caribbean Collective, and teaches at Hunter College and SUNY Old Westbury. She received her M.A. in Dance Education from NYU, and her B.A. in Latin American Studies and Creative Writing from Columbia University.

2017 Mentor Bio:

Eva Yaa Asantewaa (2017 Bessie Award winner for Outstanding Service to the Field of Dance) is a writer, curator and community educator. Since 1976, she has contributed to Dance Magazine, The Village Voice, SoHo Weekly News, Gay City News, The Dance Enthusiast, Time Out New York, and other publications, and interviewed dance artists and advocates as host of two podcasts, Body and Soul and Serious Moonlight. She blogs on the arts, with dance as a speciality, at InfiniteBody.

Ms. Yaa Asantewaa joined the curatorial team for Danspace Project's Platform 2016: Lost and Found, and created the skeleton architecture, or the future of our worlds, featuring 21 Black women and gender-nonconforming performers for an evening of group improvisation. Her cast was awarded a 2017 Bessie for Outstanding Performers. As EYA Projects, she has begun partnerships with organizations such as Gibney Dance Center, Abrons Arts Center, Dance/NYC and Dancing While Black to curate and facilitate Long Table conversations on topics of concern in the dance/performance community.

She was a member of the inaugural faculty of Montclair State University’s MFA in Dance program. She has also served on the faculty for New England Foundation for the Arts’ Regional Dance Development Initiative Dance Lab 2016 for emerging Chicago-area dance artists. In May 2017, she served on the faculty for the Maggie Allee National Center for Choreographer’s inaugural Forward Dialogues Dance Lab for Emerging Choreographers.

A native New Yorker of Black Caribbean heritage, Eva makes her home in the East Village with her wife, Deborah, and cat, Crystal.
Dance Your Future: Artist & Mentor Collaborative Residency

This residency project evolved as the result of conversations I had with a few artists - Merián Soto, Milteri Tucker Concepción, Rokafella, and others - who talked about the need to do more in the Bronx to support emerging artists.

The residency also began because of a long-standing partnership with BAAD! Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance; Pepatián has worked with BAAD! since its inception. Arthur Aviles, in particular, has a long connection with Pepatián. In 1991 and in 1996, Merián Soto (co-founder of Pepatián) invited Arthur Aviles to perform in Puerto Rico as part of Rompeforma Maratón de Baile, Performance & Visuals (an international Latino artists’ festival in Puerto Rico that Soto co-directed with Viveca Vázquez from 1989-1996), and in NYC at Dance Theater Workshop through her 1991 curatorial project Muevete!

Pepatián had a small amount of funding in 2014 to create a five-day “micro-residency” and talked to BAAD! about hosting the event. Awilda Rodriguez Lora, who had performed in 2005 as part of a group piece via Pepatián, and who had also performed at BAAD!, was visiting NYC and agreed to participate. We invited Susana Cook (now known as the “Godmother” of this residency project) to meet with Awilda one afternoon as a mentor for creative feedback. Awilda completed her residency with a performance during a shared evening at BAAD! and immediately afterwards, used the video documentation to secure a performance a few months later in Chicago. Using this successful experience as a model for the project, Pepatián wrote a grant to the Jerome Foundation with BAAD! as the project partner, and the project received support. The next year, Pepatián secured 2016 funding from the Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation, and in 2017 from the New York Yankee Stadium Community Benefits Fund, in addition to support already in place from the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, the Bronx Council on the Arts, and the Rubin and Jerome Foundations.

Artists who have participated:

2014  Awilda Rodriguez-Lora
2015  Rebecca Lloyd-Jones, Richard Rivera/Physual Dance Company, Milteri Tucker Concepción/Bombazo Dance Co
2016  Fana Fraser, Jasmine Hearn, Alethea Pace
2017  Beatrice Capote and Miguel Aparicio/The Sabrosura Effect, Tatiana Desardouin/Passion Fruit Dance Company, Maleek Washington

The artists were invited to participate in Pepatián’s Bronx Artist Now: Showcase & Conversation APAP event, and all continue to perform and develop their work.

Mentors have included: Susana Cook, Charles Rice-Gonzalez, Merián Soto, Jorge Merced, Silvana Cardell, Ni’Ja Whitson, Aileen Passloff, Alicia Diaz. Selection committee of artists and cultural workers has included: Arthur Aviles, Christal Brown, Susana Cook, Alicia Diaz, Caleb Hammons, Charles Rice-Gonzalez, Merián Soto, Marýa Wethers.

Each year, there has been an increase in artist fees as well as in the numbers of applicants for this competitive residency, and we anticipate more wonderful things in 2018-19!

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