

odc

50+ YEARS

ODC Theater Presents
2022 Fall Season

SAGE NI'JA WHITSON | THE NWA PROJECT
A Meditation on Tongues

October 28-30, 2022

Photo by Scott Shaw



A Note from Chloë L. Zimberg

Creative Director, ODC Theater

Welcome to ODC Theater's fall season. We are thrilled to be kicking off three weekends of stellar performance with *A Meditation on Tongues* by Sage NiJa Whitson and The NWA Project.

A Meditation on Tongues is a live interdisciplinary adaptation of Marlon T. Riggs' iconic *Tongues Untied* (1989). Sage has invited and led the ODC Theater team in a reimagination of our campus and spaces with the intent to take audiences on a journey through a series of abstract and layered vignettes of history and ritual.

Curated by amara tabor-smith and Charles Slender-White, the ODC Theater team is proud and excited to have Sage in San Francisco and the Bay Area to present this work. Charlie and amara note that our fall season artists "...are creating work that we feel will provide much needed breath, hope, and inspiration to move through this moment in time that we all find ourselves in. It is our hope that you too will experience the work in this way."

During the production process, Sage came from Los Angeles to visit the theater and I was invigorated thinking about realizing the final performances. The Bay Area is rich in connections to our nation-wide dance field and I am excited that ODC Theater is participating in building trans-regional exchanges across our fall season. I hope you'll return and join us for Marjani Forté-Saunders and Rosanna Tavarez and Bianca Cabrera over the next two weeks.

Please enjoy *A Meditation on Tongues*.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Chloë L. Zimberg', written in a fluid, cursive style.

Chloë L. Zimberg
Creative Director, ODC Theater

About ODC Theater

ODC Theater exists to empower and develop innovative artists. It participates in the creation of new works through commissioning, presenting, mentorship and space access; it develops informed, engaged and committed audiences; and advocates for the performing arts as an essential component to the economic and cultural development of our community. This 170-seat venue is the site of over 150 performances a year involving nearly 1,000 local, regional, national and international artists.

Since 1976, ODC Theater has been the mobilizing force behind countless San Francisco artists and the foothold for national and international touring artists seeking debut in the Bay Area. The Theater, founded by **Brenda Way** has earned its place as a cultural incubator by dedicating itself to creative change-makers, those leaders who give the Bay Area its unmistakable definition and flair. Nationally known artists Spaulding Gray, Diamanda Galas, Bill T. Jones, Eiko & Koma, Ronald K. Brown/EVIDENCE, Karole Armitage, Sarah Michelson, Brian Brooks and John Heginbotham are among those whose first San Francisco appearance occurred at ODC Theater. ODC Theater is currently under the Creative Direction of **Chloë L. Zimberg**.

ODC Theater is part of a two-building campus dedicated to supporting every stage of the artistic lifecycle—conceptualization, creation, and performance. This includes our flagship company, ODC/Dance, and our School, in partnership with Rhythm and Motion Dance Workout down the street at 351 Shotwell. For more information on ODC Theater and all its programs please visit: odc.dance/theater

ODC THEATER IS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY

Anonymous, APAP ArtsForward Grants Program, CalOSBA, Fleishhacker Foundation, John and Marcia Goldman Foundation, Hearst Foundations, Hellman Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Sam Mazza Foundation, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, San Francisco Grants for the Arts, U.S. Small Business Administration, Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation, and our many individual donors.

ODC Theater relies on the generous support of donors like you.
To give to ODC Theater, visit odc.dance/givetheater



ODC Staff

Artistic Director & Founder
Executive Director
School Director/Assoc. Choreographer
ODC Fellow
ODC Theater Creative Director

Executive Associate

Theater Venue Manager
Audience Services Coordinator
ODC Theater Assistant
Producer & Host of Dance Cast
Resident Strategist for Creative Partnerships and Curation
ASL Interpretation
ASL Interpretation

Associate Director of Artistic Planning

Director of Production
Associate Director of Production
Production Coordinator
Lighting Director
Wardrobe Coordinator

Director of Digital Programs
Digital Programs Coordinator
Digital Content Producer

Director of Marketing & Communications
Head of Content & Creative
Social Media Manager
Marketing Associate
Group Sales Coordinator
Public Relations Specialist
Public Relations Advisors
Encore Fellow, Public Relations Advisor

Director of Development
Director of Institutional Giving
Individual Giving Manager and Board Liaison

Director of Finance & Administration
Human Resource Manager
Development & Finance Coordinator
Accounting & Finance Assistant
Encore Fellow, Human Resources Advisor

Facilities Director
Operations Associate

Events Coordinator

Director of School Programming
School Operations Manager
School Administrative Associate
Youth & Teen Program Coordinator
Youth & Teen Program Associate

Health Initiatives Program Director
Health Program Coordinator
Medical Director, Healthy Dancer's Clinic
Director Emeritus, Healthy Dancer's Clinic

Rhythm & Motion Director
Rhythm & Motion Program Associate
Rhythm & Motion Program Administrator

Brenda Way
Carma Zisman, she/her/hers
Kimi Okada, she/her
KT Nelson
Chloë L. Zimberg, she/her

Garth Grimball, he/him/his

Brian Williamson, he/him
Charlie Levy, they/he
Luna Sofia Ruiz, she/her/hers
Sima Belmar, she/her
Charles Slender-White, he/him
Nicole Carlos Watson, she/they
Shawn Merriman-Roberts, he/him/they

Joseph Copley, he/him/his

Jack Beuttler, he/his
Thomas Bowersox, he/him/his
Chris Chamberlin-Miner, he/him
David Robertson
Kyo Yohena

Kellee McQuinn, she/her
Greg Meyers, he/him
Matt Shrimplin, he/him

Michael Davidson, he/him
Sophie Leininger, she/her
Ashley Johnson-Schwartz, she/they
Kara Nelson, she/they
Cecilia Qu'in
John Hill
Blake Zidell & Associates
Priss Penbrow

Emily Lieu-Harris, she/her
Zackary Forcum, he/him, they/them
Andrea Partridge

Carlos Lopez, he/him
Zarina Posada, she/her
Alex Zdanis, she/her/hers
Michelle Edwards
Lisa Askew

Jason Dinneen, he/him
Monica Ascencio

Karii Rurup-Coleman

Carlos Venturo
Molly Matuat, she/her/hers
Natalie Gutierrez, she/her
Katherine Orloff, she/her
Lucienne Alicea, she/her

Rachel Abair, M.S. she/her/hers
Chisom Nzerem
Celina Francesca De Borja, MD
Richard Couglin, MD

Dudley Flores, he/him/his
Maggie Connard, she/her/hers
Janet Roitz

ODC Theater Presents

Sage Ni'Ja Whitson | The NWA Project *A Meditation on Tongues*

Concept, Transcription, and Direction by Sage Ni'Ja Whitson

Choreographed by Whitson with collaboration from performers

Performers: The NWA Project - Kirsten Davis and Sage Ni'Ja Whitson

Opening Performance Choreographed by: SoHo LaBeija

Sound Design: Sage Ni'Ja Whitson, featuring vocal performance by Jonathan Gonzalez, and the music of Nina Simone, Alice Smith, Billie Holiday, Kendrick Lamar, nikhil trivedi, and excerpts from *Tongues Untied*.

Lighting Supervisor: Kevin E. Myrick

Costume: Sage Ni'Ja Whitson

Video: Sage Ni'Ja Whitson (Excerpts from *Tongues Untied* by Marlon Riggs, used with permission by Signifyin' Works)

Stage Manager: Morgan Johnson

Sage Ni'Ja Whitson – (they/them) artistic director/creator – is a multi award-winning Queer Trans artist and futurist, noted by *Brooklyn Magazine* as a culture influencer. They are a United States Artist Fellow, Creative Capital and two-time "Bessie" Awardee who engages transdisciplinarity through a critical intersection of the sacred and conceptual in Black, Queer, and Transembodiedness. Whitson is an 18th Street Artist in Residence (Los Angeles), 2020-2023 New York Live Feed Artist in Residence, featured choreographer of the 2018 CCA Biennial, 2018-2020 Urban Bush Women Choreographic Center Fellow, and invited presenter at the 2019 Tanzkongress international festival. Residencies and fellowships include Center for Performance Research, Jerome/Camargo, Dance in Process at Gibney, Hedgebrook, Movement Research, Bogliasco Fellowship with commissions including St. Mark's Church at Danspace, American Realness and Vision festivals, EMPAC, and the California African American Museum. Whitson received an MFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a second MFA in Creative Writing from Goddard College, receiving merit and artist awards at both.

Kirsten Davis - (they/them) is a Bessie Award nominated New York based queer non binary interdisciplinary artist. Their performance career began with a focus on disrupting the traditional and antiquated understanding of queer bodies in relationship to dance in the liturgy. Davis earned their BA in dance from Hunter College while performing internationally with the National Liturgical Dance Network. They have spent the last nine years as a founding company member of The NWA Project under the direction of artistic director and founder, Sage Ni'Ja Whitson.

SoHo LaBeija - (he/him) is Father SoHo LaBeija from HBO Max's *Legendary* Season 3. A military brat born in Monterey, CA, was raised in NC/NYC, has been dancing since the age of 5 and has never stopped. Fashion enthusiast with a love for the arts. SoHo has been in the First House in ballroom & Royal House of LaBeija for almost 10 years.

Kevin E. Myrick (lighting supervisor) - (he/him) studied technical theatre and design at San Francisco State University, and later earned degrees and worked in Computer Science and

Technology. Since 1974 Kevin has worked as a designer, technical director or theatre tech for many festivals, artists and arts organizations including civic organizations like the San Francisco Neighborhood Arts Program and the Atlanta Bureau of Cultural Affairs, theatre companies like AfroSolo, Cultural Odyssey, the Oakland Ensemble Theatre Company, the Atlanta Children's Theatre Company, Alliance Theatre Company and Just Us Theatre Company. Most recently he has designed lighting, sound and/or projections for the African-American Shakespeare Company (Othello, MacBeth, The Trial, Cinderella), the Lorraine Hansberry Theatre Company (Home, Urban Retreat, Soulful Christmas), TheatreFirst (The Last Sermon of Sister Imani), Throckmorton Theatre (Ragtime), Ray of Light Theatre Company (Caroline or Change) and Youth Musical Theatre Company (A Man of No Importance, Rent, Batboy, Parade).

Morgan Johnson (stage manager) - (they/theym) is a New York based independent arts worker in the realm of staged work and performance. More recently, they have been working on stage productions with BAM, Industry Opera, NYU, and Danspace Project. They have done movement based and devised work with keyon gaskin, Jonathan González and NIC Kay in various projects and Ebony Golden. Morgan spends their time staying connected to the arts by supporting artists and small institutions in all capacities. As things shift in the pandemic, they are thinking of ways to be more of service as the needs of the arts community changes. This year they have been happy to be in collaboration with PS122 (NYC), Kaneza Schaal, Lilleth Glimcher, and Toshi Reagon and the Parable team.

This work was created in part through the support of the Jerome Foundation, Mertz Gilmore Foundation, and residencies with Brooklyn Arts Exchange, Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance, and Movement Research

This project would not have been possible without the generous support of Signfiyin' Works and Redbone Press to this production and to the legacies of Marlon Riggs, Essex Hemphill, and Joseph Beam. We are also indebted to Blackberri, Alan Miller, and Djola Branner who were collaborators of Riggs and shared their stories and love as this work was being made. I must also thank the artists who contributed their talents, tears, and insight in the early development process: Carissa Matsushima, Alicia Raquel, Chafin Seymour, and Ricarrdo Valentine.



Photo by Scott Shaw



Opening Night Pre-Show Receptions

Subscribers and Supporter Level Ticket holders are invited to an **Opening Night Pre-Show** reception before each Friday Night performance. Open wine bar and light snacks provided from 6:00-7:00 pm.

Young Patrons' Affinity Night

Saturday Night ticket holders are invited to mingle and enjoy our **Young Patrons' Affinity Night**, a festive post-show event with drinks from Mezcal Amaras and music. Then, continue the night out with a complimentary community discount package (valued at \$50).



ODC Theater is an innovative venue

ideal for local events and private parties. Inquire today odc.dance/rentals

TICKETS ON SALE NOW

Fall Season at ODC Theater

Ni'Ja Whitson | The NWA Project:

A Meditation on Tongues

October 28-30, 2022

Marjani Forté-Saunders | 7NMS:

Memoirs of a... Unicorn

November 4-6, 2022

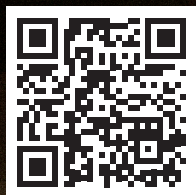
Rosanna Tavarez/LA DANSA DANSA :

Piece x Piece

Bianca Cabrera/Blind Tiger Society:

Fever Dreams

November 11-13, 2022



odc.dance/fallseason

The logo for Oregon Dance Center (ODC), featuring the lowercase letters 'odc' in a large, white, stylized font. The letters are thick and have a slight 3D effect, with the 'o' and 'd' being connected. The background of the entire poster is a photograph of a dancer in a purple sports bra and black pants, captured in a dynamic pose, with a bright light source creating a lens flare effect behind her.