

BAM, 651 ARTS,
and Théâtre de la Ville
(Paris, France)

present

portrait of myself as my ~~father~~

nora chipaumire

Music and soundscore by
Philip White

DATES: Sep 14—17 at 7:30pm

LOCATION: BAM Fisher (Fishman Space)

RUN TIME: 1hr 15mins no intermission

#norachipaumire
#BAMNextWave

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This production is made possible with
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provided by
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the New England Foundation for the Arts'
National Dance Project, with lead funding
from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation
and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation,
with additional support from the
National Endowment for the Arts.

portrait of myself as my father

CONCEIVED, CHOREOGRAPHED,
AND DIRECTED BY
nora chipaumire

ORIGINAL MUSIC/SOUNDSCORE BY
Philip White

PERFORMED BY
nora chipaumire
with
Pape Ibrahima Ndiaye (Kaolack)
Shamar Watt

LIGHTING AND COSTUME DESIGN
nora chipaumire

CREATIVE MANAGEMENT
Mathilde Walker-Billaud

TECHNICAL DIRECTION/STAGE
MANAGEMENT
Julian Weller

COMMUNICATION & ADMINISTRATIVE
SUPPORT BY
Pia Monique Murray

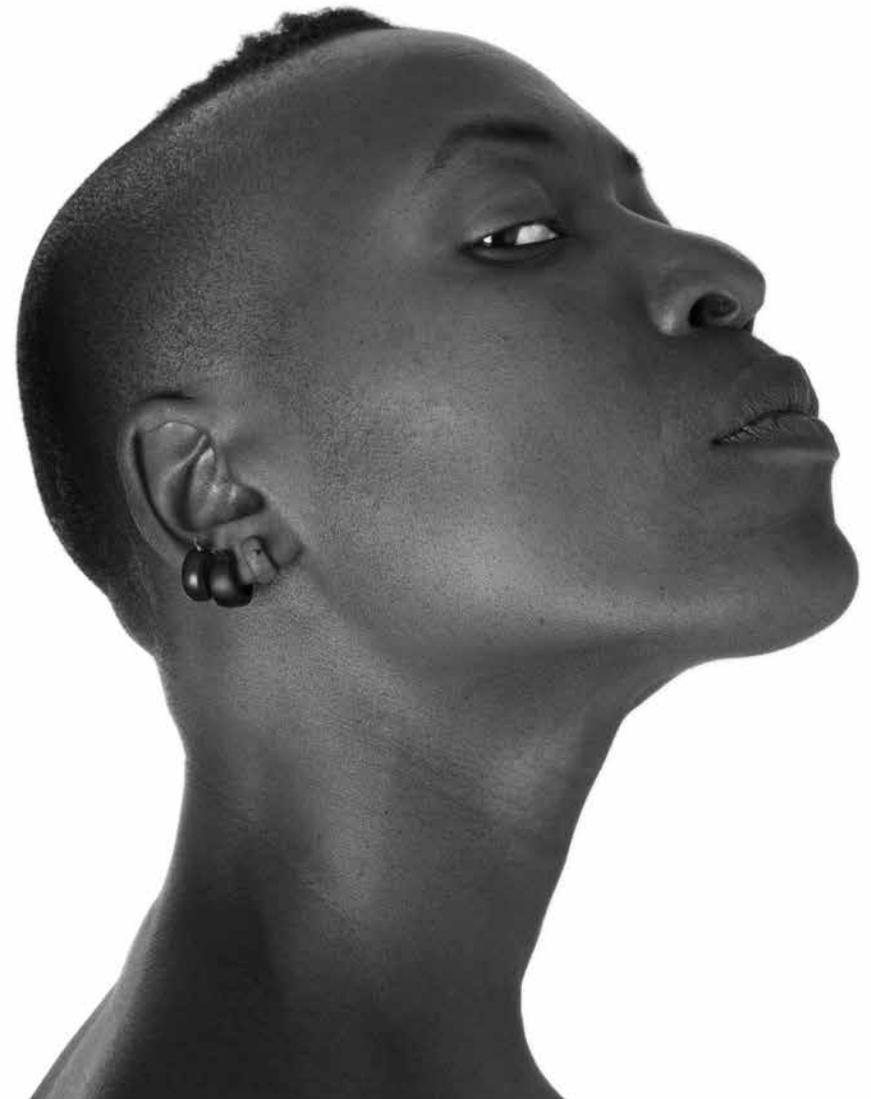
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portrait of myself as my father is commissioned by Peak Performances @ Montclair State University. Co-commissioned by MDC Live Arts in partnership with Miami Light Project, Georgia Institute of Technology, 651 ARTS, Dance Center of Columbia College, and company nora chipaumire. Development and production was funded in part by The Map Fund, supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, and New York State Council on the Arts.

portrait of myself as my father is a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation Fund Project. The Creation Fund is supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Ford Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency). The work has received residency support from MANCC, Baryshnikov Arts Center, Miami Light Project, 92Y Harkness Dance Center, Amherst College, and École des Sables.

chipaumire researched, developed, and honed *portrait of myself as my father* with financial, administrative, and residency support from the Dance in Process Program at Gibney Dance. Additional research and development has been supported by The Africa Contemporary Arts Consortium, The Suitcase Fund, The Japan Contemporary Dance Network (JCDN/ Kyoto), BAM, and Les Subsistances (Lyon, France).

Photo: nora chipaumire by Antoine Tempe



ABOUT *portrait of myself as my father*

When I discovered “concert dance” I hoped to use it to manifest the avant-garde. At the time I was overwhelmed by the idea and expectation (perhaps self-inflicted) that an African artist should be responsible for Africa’s rich and complicated past, its ancient cultures and rituals, and also be embraced by audiences both at home and abroad. My work has since developed to acknowledge and affirm that an African body can be simultaneously avant-garde and a guardian of the ancient. The intersection of these modes of expressions has helped me to create a dynamic and complex (physical) language. I am currently invested in language-building. My work is also expanding to include considerations from outside the performative realm. Could the language of the body create economies? Could dance engage civic society?

Statement about *portrait of myself as my father*:

Portrait: (noun) 1. a verbal picture or description, usually of a person; 2. a likeness of a person especially of the face, as a painting, drawing, photograph, or dance!

Father: (noun) a male parent who has raised a child or supplied the sperm through sexual intercourse or sperm bank.

God the father: (noun) a title given to god in religions such as Christianity and Judaism (in part because he is viewed as having active interest in human affairs in the way a father would take interest in his children who are dependent on him).

My father, Webster Barnabas Chipaumire, was born in 1938 and died in 1980. I had no contact or connection with him or his family from the age of five. It has taken me almost 45 years to engage with the idea of a father and what his role in a family could be. In April 2014, I returned to my father’s village in search of a way to draw his portrait. I cannot say exactly what has spurred this curiosity, but suffice it to say that the research and trip have been challenging.

Perhaps this curiosity came from his absence. Perhaps this curiosity came from compassion for the black male. Is the black male a victim of history and culture? Could the black male African body be a way to comprehend traditions, colonialism, Christianity, liberation struggles, and the impact of these ideas on the African family? Is the sacrifice of the black male body/object necessary for civilization’s god, the modernity’s god, the global capital’s god? As Stravinsky/Nijinsky suggest in their monumental work *The Rite of Spring*, is the sacrifice of a human being limited to primitive societies? I believe that in Africa the sacrificial offering has been the black African male, and not the young female virgin. In *portrait of myself as my father*, I offer a new reading of the ritual of spring as the slaughter of African maleness to feed and regenerate the capital’s god.



portrait... is less about my personal relationship (or the absence of it) with Webster Barnabas Chipaumire, than a portrait of a man who is nothing but a man of his time. I give him boxing gloves so that he can have a fighting chance. I have put him in a boxing ring to battle with himself, his shadow, his ancestors, the industrial gods, and that merciless tyrant: progress. To be a black male may be challenging in the 21st century. To be a black African father may be unattainable.

—nora chipaumire, 2014

Photo: Elise Fitte-Duval

Who's Who

nora chipaumire

Born in Mutare, Zimbabwe, and based in New York City, nora chipaumire has been challenging and embracing stereotypes of Africa and the black performing body, art, and aesthetic. She is a graduate of the University of Zimbabwe's School of Law and holds an MA in dance and MFA in choreography and performance from Mills College. She has studied dance in Africa, Cuba, Jamaica, and the US and has performed internationally in France, Italy, Japan, Senegal, Zimbabwe, and many other places.

Her newest work, *portrait of myself as my father* (2016), is a National Performance Network Creation Fund project, co-commissioned by Miami Dade College, in partnership with Miami Light Project, 651 ARTS, Columbia College, and Georgia Institute of Technology. It is the companion piece to *rite riot* (2013), a 75-minute solo rendering of *The Rite of Spring*, commissioned by French Institute/Alliance Française and presented at Crossing the Line festival in New York City and Les Subsistances in France.

chipaumire is a 2016 Foundation for Contemporary Arts grant recipient and a 2015 Doris Duke Artist. She was a

Hodder Fellow at Princeton University in 2014—15, a 2012 Alpert Award in the Arts recipient, and a 2011 United States Artist Ford Fellow. chipaumire is a three-time Bessie Awardee: in 2014 for the revival of her solo *Dark Swan* set as an ensemble piece on Urban Bush Women (UBW), in 2008 for her dance-theater work *Chimurenga*, and in 2007 for her body of work with UBW—where she was a featured performer for six years and associate artistic director in 2007—08. She was a MANCC Choreographic Fellow in 2007—08, 2009, and 2015, and was awarded the 2007 Mariam McGlone Emerging Choreographer Award from Wesleyan University Center for the Arts.

Her work has been reviewed by *The New York Times*, *Le Monde*, *Johannesburg Sunday Times*, and supported by the MAP Fund, the Jerome Foundation, NYFA B.U.I.L.D., National Dance Project, NYSCA, Joyce Theater Foundation with support from the Rockefeller Foundation's Cultural Innovation Fund, and the National Endowment for the Arts. chipaumire has also been featured in several dance films including *Cassa Cassa* (dir. Elodie Lefebvre, 2011) and *nora* (dir. Alla Kogan and David Hinton, 2009). She made her directorial debut in spring 2016 with *Afro Promo #1: Kinglady* commissioned by Dance for Film on Location at Montclair State University. Her current and ongoing projects include chicken farming in Burkina Faso and creating “living archives” with contemporary dancers in Harare, Zimbabwe.

PAPE IBRAHIMA NDIAYE
Performer

Pape Ibrahim Ndiaye a.k.a. Kaolack was born in Sénégal and lives in Prague, Czech Republic. He began his dance training with Papa Sy (Passtef Ballet Théâtre de Dalifor) in 2000. He trained in various traditional African dances and contemporary dance with Germaine Acogny at École des Sables, and performed with Jant-Bi Company for many years.

In 2008 his solo *I accuse (J'Accuse)* took the top prize at Rencontres Chorégraphiques Danse l'Afrique Danse, a choreography competition in Tunisia. Kaolack's young experiences of street life gave him a resistance open to life, history, and the society of his country that has become characteristic of his performance and choreography. Today Kaolack shines on the international scene as a choreographer, dancer, and music artist.

SHAMAR WATT
Performer

Shamar Watt is a socially conscious artist born in Kingston, Jamaica and raised in both Jamaica and Miami, FL. Most of his life, he has been involved with sports (mainly basketball and football) and started dabbling with dance by doing freestyle hip-hop and dancing in his home church during his later years in high school. He began his formal training (on the side) at Miami Dade College under the direction of Michelle Grant Murray where he was introduced to West African, modern,

and ballet dance techniques. Before transferring to Florida State University he received his associate's degree in psychology, and recently graduated with a BFA in dance and minor in psychology from Florida State University. Watt has worked with artists such as Ronald K. Brown, nora chipaumire, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Netta Yerushalmy, John Jasperse, and more. What drives Watt as an artist is the aim, dedication, and declaration to the emancipation and liberation of the whole self—mind, body, and soul— for first himself, the people, and for mankind.

PHILIP WHITE
Original Music/Soundscore

Composer, performer, improviser, and sound designer Philip White works with electronics at the intersection of noise, jazz, and contemporary concert music. Current and recent collaborations include R WE WHO R WE (with Ted Hearne), James Ilgenfritz Quartet (with Kevin Shea and Dan Blake), Ralph Lemon, nora chipaumire, Jim Findlay, and duos with Chris Pitsiokos, Paula Matthusen, Bob Bellerue, and Taylor Levine. His music has been released on New Focus Recordings, Carrier Records, Infrequent Seams, and Tape Drift Records. It has been described as “utterly gripping” (*Time Out Chicago*), “bona fide evocative music” (*Brooklyn Rail*), “for transmission to outer space” (*The New York Times*), and a “vibrant textural tapestry” (*Wall Street Journal*).

JULIAN WELLER

Technical Direction/Stage Management

Born and raised in New York City, Julian Weller grew up surrounded by music as the son of a violist and violinist. Although classically trained from a young age, Weller has enjoyed great professional success in artist management and as a producer. Since 2012, he has managed the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra under the direction of Arturo O’Farrill, touring internationally to critical acclaim at festivals such as Lincoln Center Out of Doors, Newport Jazz Festival, North Sea Jazz Festival, and Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival, and venues such as the Kennedy Center, Apollo Theater, and Hammerstein Ballroom. Weller co-produced the orchestra’s most recent album, *Cuba: The Conversation Continues* (Motéma, 2015), which won the 2016 Grammy Award for Best Instrumental Composition for “The Afro Latin Jazz Suite” and was nominated for Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album.

Weller has also been fortunate enough to produce concerts in collaboration with world-renowned artists across multiple disciplines such as Dr. Cornel West, nora chipaumire, Lionel Loueke, Malpaso Dance Company, and Antonio Sanchez. Weller currently serves on the board of directors for Festival Daniou (Brittany, France), holds the position of director of programs at the Afro Latin Jazz Alliance (NY, NY), and is thrilled to be part of nora chipaumire’s tour of *portrait of myself as my father*.

MATHILDE WALKER-BILLAUD

Creative Management

Mathilde Walker-Billaud trained and worked as an art editor in Paris. She was a program officer for the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, and for the center Villa Gillet in the USA. She is now an independent curator and cultural producer based in New York City.

PIA MONIQUE MURRAY

Communications Assistant

Pia Monique Murray, an NYC native, majored in African-American studies and dance at Oberlin College and was influenced by multidisciplinary performance art while attending the Trinity/LaMama Performing Arts Program. She performs with Vado Diomande’s Kotchegna Dance Company and leads Pia Monique Murray Dance Collective (PMMDC), an interdisciplinary performance art group. She is a Lincoln Center Scholar pursuing her master’s degree in dance education at CUNY Hunter, while teaching elementary school dance at PS 234 Independence School.

MAPP INTERNATIONAL PRODUCTIONS

Tour Management and Representation

MAPP International is a nonprofit producer of major performing arts projects that raise critical consciousness and spark social change. It supports all phases of an artist’s creative process, from concept and production to premiere and touring, while also engaging audiences in the issues behind the art. Through this heightened focus, it supports an evolving and elite cadre of creators whose work ignites communities worldwide. mappinternational.org

651 ARTS

Co-Producer

Since 1988, 651 ARTS has been committed to developing, producing, and presenting performance and cultural programming rooted in the African diaspora, with a primary focus on contemporary performing arts. 651 ARTS serves the cultural life of New York City, with a particular focus on Brooklyn, one of America’s most culturally diverse communities. In 2018 we will become one of the cultural tenants at 250 Ashland Place in the Brooklyn Cultural District. For more information please visit 651arts.org or find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as 651 ARTS.

Black Dance: Tradition and Transformation is an annual series featuring dance artists from around the world, contributing to the development of Black dance and an understanding

of its lineage from traditional African movement to its most contemporary expression.

Major funding for this presentation provided by NY City Department of Cultural Affairs, Mertz Gilmore Foundation, and Con Edison.

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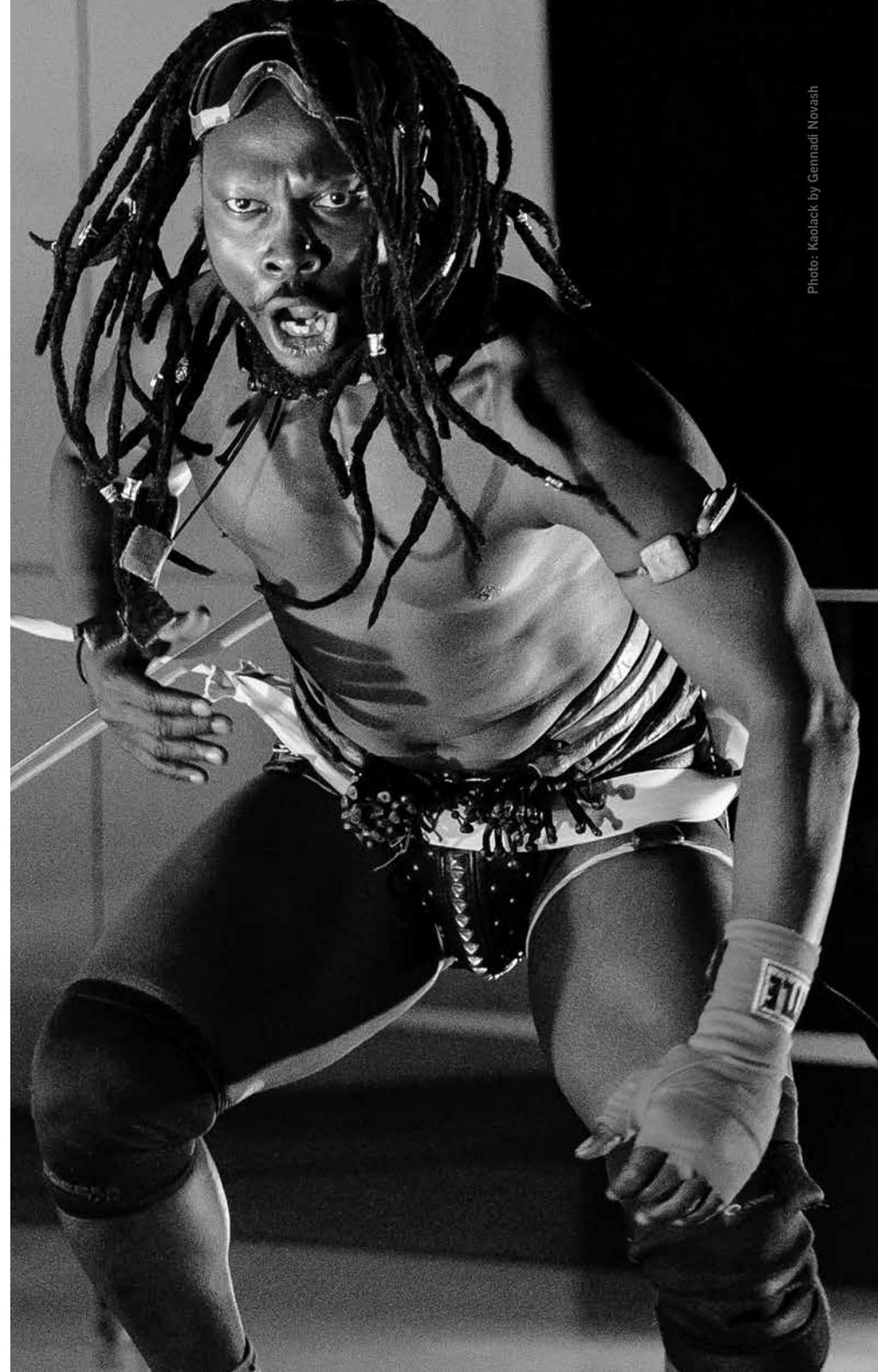
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THE BROOKLYN/PARIS EXCHANGE

The 2016 Next Wave Festival includes four engagements representing the Brooklyn/Paris Exchange, a new collaboration between BAM and Paris' Théâtre de la Ville. In this new cross-cultural initiative, companies chosen by the institutions' respective artistic leaders, Joseph V. Melillo and Emmanuel Demarcy-Mota, will make their Paris or Brooklyn debuts as part of the other's upcoming season. Melillo's selections—the explosive Zimbabwe-born choreographer nora chipaumire and innovative theater troupe The Civilians—represent the breadth of the borough's current creative output. Demarcy-Mota's selections are similarly expansive, bringing celebrated circus artist Yoann Bourgeois and the hip-hop-inflected movement of dance duo Company Wang Ramirez to Brooklyn for their Next Wave debuts (Oct 5—8 and Oct 12—15, respectively). Melillo and Demarcy-Mota are, in essence, giving one another carte blanche to program a section of their corresponding artistic seasons, while also placing trust in the artists, and audiences, that the work will transcend cultural barriers.

"I am so excited to embark on this creative partnership with my esteemed colleague Emmanuel Demarcy-Mota," says Melillo. "BAM and Théâtre de la Ville institutionally—and Emmanuel and I personally—share a set of values about the importance of performance in the creation and expansion of local and global communities. I think of this exchange as a cultural conversation that will enrich everybody involved."

"I am thrilled with this innovative partnership, a result of inspiring exchanges with Joe Melillo," says Demarcy-Mota. "BAM and Théâtre de la Ville are sister theaters, with common values based on community and global involvement, as well as artistic audacity. Most importantly, our relationship will make it possible for American and French artists' work to transcend borders and be seen more widely."



BAM

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Salutes