The Consortium for Black Studies in California presents

Embodying the Present Moment: Theatrical Jazz Performance in Community Connection and Leadership

With master class facilitators Sharon Bridgforth and Omi Osun Joni Jones

October 24, 26 and 27, 2017
UCSB MultiCultural Center Lounge and Theater
Tuesday, October 24

Living a Life of Resilient Love in a Time of Hate Series
Dat Black Mermaid/Healing & Transformation Through Art
7:00 pm, MCC Theater

Friday, October 27

Embodying the Present Moment
Master Class Open Practice
3:30 pm MCC Lounge


HTTP://HEMSOUTHS.ENGLISH.UCSB.EDU/
Embodying The Present Moment
Master Class With Sharon Bridgforth and Omi Osun Joni L. Jones

Bridgforth and Jones believe in the power of the body to say what words do not, and the power of words to guide us to our most courageous selves. For them, our stories and our bodies reveal our deepest humanity, power, and joy.

Using the principles of theatrical jazz—being present, improvisation, solo virtuosity, ensemble-building—Jones and Bridgforth guide participants through a series of practices designed to strengthen authenticity and selfhood. Through movement, truth-telling, and collaboration, this workshop explores the themes of vulnerability, life challenges, embodied stories, family history, and intention. In this workshop participants will be asked to

- Create and embody art
- Engage in an improvisational process
- Give voice to and embody their personal identities/culture(s)/memory/family/history/socio-political reality/dreams
- Explore the relationship between art and their lives
- Learn from their bodies
- Consider the relationship between spirit, art, healing, and service
- Share their work with others
Sharon Bridgforth is a 2016 Doris Duke Artist and a 2016 Creative Capital awardee. A New Dramatists alumnae, Sharon collaborates with actors, dancers, singers and audiences live during performance as she composes moving soundscapes of her ritual/jazz texts. A MAP Fund and National Performance Network Creation Fund recipient, her work has been presented by Links Hall, Pillsbury House Theatre, The New Black Fest and New York SummerStage Festival and the John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies. Sharon is Artist In-Residence at IDEX/Thousand Currents and has served in residence at: allgo, statewide queer people of color organization; Brown University’s MFA Playwriting Program; University of Iowa’s MFA Playwrights Program; The Theatre School at DePaul University; and The Department of Performance Studies at Northwestern University. Publications include: love conjure/blues and the Lambda Literary Award winning the bull-jean stories. Sharon is co-editor, with Omi Osun Joni L. Jones and Lisa Lynn Moore, of Experiments in a Jazz Aesthetic: Art, Activism, Academia and the Austin Project. Sharon’s delta dandi is published in solo/black/woman and The love conjure/blues Text Installation is in Blacktino Queer Performance. Sharon is currently developing dat Black Mermaid Man Lady/ Home.
“I believe that through the act of sharing our stories: of opening, of being present while being vulnerable, of revealing who we are/where we come from/what we dream...by trusting ourselves enough to push beyond limits of what we think we know, of following the roads that the right questions can take us on...we can more powerfully, embrace, share, be ourselves. This strengthens our capacity to hear and see one another, to hold space for each other, to connect more authentically, to work together more effectively. Ultimately, these are acts of generosity and compassion. These are things we do to be of greater service. To be ourselves more fully. We do this even if it scares us.”

— Sharon Bridgforth
Omi Osun Joni L. Jones is an artist/scholar and Professor in the African and African Diaspora Studies Department at the University of Texas at Austin. Jones’s scholarship focuses on performance ethnography, theatrical jazz, Yoruba-based aesthetics, Black Feminisms, and activist theatre. Her scholarship has appeared in Theatre Journal, Text and Performance Quarterly, Theatre Topics, The Drama Review, and Black Theatre News. Her original performances include “sista docta”—a critique of the academy, and “Searching for Osun”—a performance ethnography around Yoruba identity. Jones has facilitated performance workshops for The Ford Foundation (NY), Thousand Currents (formerly IDEX, San Francisco, CA), JACK Arts Center (NY), Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (San Francisco, CA), Educafro (Sao Paulo, Brazil), and the Gardner-Betts Detention Center (Austin, TX). She is a member of the Urban Futures Think Tank at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and is co-editor of Experiments in a Jazz Aesthetic: Art, Activism, Academia, and the Austin Project. Her most recent book, Theatrical Jazz: Performance, Àṣẹ, and the Power of the Present Moment, was released through Ohio State University Press in May, 2015.
“It is important that we push beyond the political and intellectual approaches to the world’s most intractable problems, and move toward possibilities that have been given less opportunity to support substantive transformation. These possibilities include the structures of theatrical jazz—improvisation, ensemble building, virtuosity, and joy. When we foreground these strategies, we allow ourselves to be present with our vulnerability, to take risks, to innovate, and to live more fully in the world as the selves we want to be. Doing this individual work is the foundation for strong communities, neighborhoods, and gathering places. I offer these strategies to others for individual expansion and community power.”

—Omi Osun Joni L. Jones
Scholar, poet, and performer, Professor Batiste brings a politics of liberation to her writing, teaching, and stage work. Batiste obtained her Bachelor’s degree *cum laude* from Princeton University. She received her MPhil and PhD in American Studies from The George Washington University in Washington, DC. Dr. Batiste’s interests include the relationships between representation, performance, identity, race, and power. Her research and teaching focus on the ways in which cultural texts, like literature, theater, performance, film, art, and bodies, act as imaginative systems that create identity, cultural values, human interactions, and possibilities of justice. Her teaching reflects this in the broad array of materials and methods she uses to bring students to an interdisciplinary understanding of texts, theory, and history.

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**UC Santa Barbara**
I am currently working on my dissertation “A Child’s Call: Ethics in the Bildungsroman and Braided Narrative,” which seeks to attest to the ways narrative fiction can help imagine new ways of moving forward from racial violence and sexual violation. For the past ten years, I have volunteered with No More Deaths and organization that provides humanitarian aid on the US Mexico Border. As a volunteer ombudsperson for the Santa Barbara Jails Project, I help to document abuses at the local jail. I am also associated with the Literature and Mind Initiative.

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UC SANTA BARBARA
Shamell Bell

Mother, community organizer, choreographer and PhD student in Culture and Performance

Bell received her M.A. in Ethnic Studies from UC San Diego and B.A. with Honors in American Studies and Ethnicity specializing in African American Studies at the University of Southern California. Involved in the original formations of the #blacklivesmatter movement, her activism focuses on using her artistic talent and knowledge of arts and culture for the movement. She is also a member of Blackout 4 Human Rights with notable directors Ryan Coogler, Ava Duvernay, Jesse Williams, among others, serving as a community organizer liaison assisting with campaigns such as #Justice4Flint and #iKneelwithColin. She also co-founded the Black Infinity Complex, a liaison organization building coalitions and an united front between those fighting against Black premature death and state-sanctioned violence.

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UC Los Angeles
Dr. Felice Blake has published work on contemporary racism, culture, and resistance in *Al Jazeera, Ethnic and Racial Studies, and SOULS: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society.*

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UC Santa Barbara
Dr. Micaela Jamaica Díaz-Sánchez

Assistant Professor, Department of Chicana/o Studies, Affiliate Faculty: Theater & Dance, Feminist Studies, Latin American & Iberian Studies

Micaela J. Díaz-Sánchez - teatrista, bailadora and artivista from San Anto, Tejas - is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies at UCSB where she teaches Chicana Art and Feminism, Afro-Latina/o/x Diasporic Performance, Chicana/o/x Performance Studies, and Teatro Chicana/o/x.

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UC Santa Barbara
Treva Ellison is a committed troublemaker, prison abolitionist, amateur herbalist, and talented grilled cheese chef. Treva works as an Assistant Professor of Geography and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Dartmouth College and their research interests are trans and queer historiography, black geographies, social movements, and history and theories of the carceral state. Treva is currently working on their manuscript project, *Flex Zones*, as well as on a public art and design project with Ron Morrison as artists in Residence with the Extrapolation Factory. Treva received their doctorate in American Studies and Ethnicity from the University of Southern California in 2015.

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Dartmouth College
Iyatunde identifies as an AfroQueer artist and community builder. She is a Detroit native, who co-founded, S.P.I.C.E., Sistah’s Providing Intelligence Creativity and Empowerment for Detroit’s Black Lesbians. Iyatunde served as a producer and music researcher for the PBS documentary, *A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde*. After moving to the west coast, she co-founded *Some of Us Are Brave*, the first radio show for Black women on 90.7 FM KPFK in Los Angeles. She co-programmed *A Burst of Light*, Long Beach’s first Black Lesbian film and poetry series with Dorothy Randall Gray. In 2008, with Yardenna Aaron, she founded The Here To Stay Coalition, which organized the largest Black LGBTQ+ contingent to march annually in Los Angeles Kingdom Day Parade for 4 years. Iyatunde is a proud member of Black Lesbian United (BLU), a gatekeeper at the EarthLodge Center for Transformation (LBC) and a part of the Movement for Black Lives. She enjoys building a world where all her beautiful intersecting communities are safe, brave and thriving.

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Kelli Forman is a dance instructor and the National Director for Everybody Dance Now!, a non-profit that offers free or low-cost dance programming to hundreds of underserved youth each week. Kelli grew up in Missouri, and then moved to New York City and Los Angeles where she worked professionally dancing for various entities from Glee to Reebok. Kelli continues her passions of teaching underserved youth, choreographing for local companies, building the local dance community, and advocating for equity and diversity in arts education. As a UCSB Senior last year, she received the Jeremy D. Friedman Award for her advocacy.

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Magda García is a Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Chicana/o Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her research focuses on affect theory, Tejana/Chicana cultural productions, Chicana/Latina Feminisms, and Chicanx/Latinx literature. She is a UC Regents Special Pre-Doctoral Fellow and a 2017 Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellow.

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UC Santa Barbara
Deirdre Harris is currently working on a memoir tentatively entitled, *Initiations: A Black Girl’s Journey to Womanhood*, in which she explores the intersectionality of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and surviving the murder of her father by police in Texas in the 1970s. She has been an English teacher for 18 years, and is currently teaching an African American Literature class at Fairfax High School in Los Angeles, where students dismantle current issues impacting Black people and relate these issues to their historical, geographical, political, economical, and/or cultural contexts through African American literature.

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Ming Lauren Holden is an activist, actor, educator, and writer with experience in international development on four continents in thirteen countries over the last twelve years, primarily in the realm of refugee advocacy. She studied Literary Arts at Brown and is currently pursuing a PhD in Theater and Dance at UCSB, where she specializes in theater for refugees and incarcerated youth. She is the author of REFUGE, the winner of the inaugural Kore Press Memoir Award.

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UC SANTA BARBARA
Jonathan is a member of the six-person leadership circle for the Ventura County chapter of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ), and a graduate student in Pacifica Graduate Institute’s Community Psychology, Liberation Psychology, and Ecopsychology PhD program. SURJ facilitates community education in developing critical consciousness of, and resolution to end, white supremacy in our community, and in the nation, through solidarity, action, and accountability with multi-racial justice movements. We provide a space for white people to understand privilege and the legacy of white violence in the U.S., and support each other in turning that consciousness into action.

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Showing Up for Racial Justice - Ventura County
Originally from San Francisco, I received my BA in Black Studies and Political Science at UCSB, and am currently finishing my PhD in the Department of Education. Among many other student groups, I work directly with the AS Isla Vista Tenants Union to address the diverse needs of IV residents. During the 2015-16 academic year I also served as President of the Graduate Student Association. Most recently, I was named a 2107 Margaret T. Getman Service to Student Award winner. I consider myself an advocate, activist and ally and I value serving as a resource to students and community members on all things community related.

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I am an advocate for social justice and interested in impactful change. I strongly feel that the performing arts is a powerful medium for raising consciousness about race, class and sexual orientation. Ultimately I am a proponent for human dignity. I have been organizing at UCSB for 30 years with my work at the MultiCultural Center. The work MCC is centered on anti-racism and serving marginalized communities. It is a space that builds and creates community space.

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UC Santa Barbara
Dr. Meridith Merchant is a licensed psychologist, advocate, consultant and speaker. She serves as a full-time psychologist at UC Santa Barbara Counseling and Psychological Services. She also serves as a faculty advisor and Community Health Advocate with iDREAM for Racial Health Equity, a project of Community Partners, focused on improving health outcomes for mothers and babies throughout the course of their lives. Through her community commitments, personal endeavors, and her role as a psychologist at CAPS, Dr. Meridith continues to use her daughter as inspiration and fuel for her passion to increase awareness and activism toward empowered health and wholeness.

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UC SANTA BARBARA
Ben Olguín’s research, writing, teaching, and service activities explore the complex relationships between vernacular culture and performances of power and counter-power in local, transnational, cross-border, and hemispheric venues. Olguín’s research and teaching are integrated into community service and civic engagement activities across a range of initiatives. These include service learning projects in community centers and schools in underserved communities, as well as prisons, juvenile jails, and immigrant detention centers.

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UC SANTA BARBARA
Marisol Ortiz is a Santa Barbara native and has 15 years of experience working with the local community with access to services and helping underserved people fight for justice in their daily lives. In her role as La Casa’s FRC Director, Marisol works to build networks among agencies with similar goals, and collaborates with partner organizations to create new and ongoing projects that serve and empower the Latino/a community. She helps families navigate through difficult situations and is often sought for her experience translating and advocating for clients in the courtroom and in consumer fraud cases. Marisol is also a member of the Network of Family Resource Centers of Santa Barbara County promoting high quality, family-centered practices that promote efforts to strengthen families and communities. In addition, Marisol has been instrumental in creating local indigenous healing circles for women/youth and incorporating the arts, indigenous drumming and the natural world in her teachings.

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Dr. Alison Reed

Co-Founder and Director, Humanities Behind Bars

Alison Reed is an assistant professor of English at Old Dominion University in Virginia, where she co-founded and directs Humanities Behind Bars, a grassroots network of prison education programs committed to abolitionist praxis. Her critical and creative work focuses on social identities and power as well as abolitionist pedagogy. Her research has appeared across several publications, including Abolition: A Journal of Insurgent Politics; No Tea, No Shade: New Writings in Black Queer Studies; Lateral: The Journal of the Cultural Studies Association; and Text and Performance Quarterly. Her poetry has appeared most recently in Hot Metal Bridge, CutBank, Ocho, and Matter.

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Old Dominion University
Sekani Robinson is a second year MA/PhD student in the sociology department at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and she is also the student assistant for the UC Consortium at UCSB. Her research interests include race, gender, sports/performing arts, and the sociology of the body. Her current research looks at race and ballet, more specifically the lack of Black representation within major ballet companies. She plans to address how Black women’s bodies are perceived and stigmatized within the ballet institution and identify how we can destigmatize the perception and diversify within the ballet institution.

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On campus, I work towards creating a more inclusive institution with systematic improvements for the protection and success of minority and marginalized students. As a musician, I believe that music is at the core of our lives, whether or not we recognize it as so, and the music we listen to and create should reflect who we are and all that we experience. For me, artistic expression is one of the most powerful means of achieving change and rallying people together. My hope as both a musician and activist is to promote a society which demands a great deal of respect and dignity for ALL people, not just the few that the system was designed to protect.

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Dr. Chela Sandoval

Professor, Chicana/o Studies

Chela Sandoval received her doctorate from the University of California, Santa Cruz and her research focuses on cyber and millennial studies, third space feminism, critical media theory and production, oppositional consciousness, and social movements. Her publications include the seminal *Methodology of the Oppressed*, *The Chicano Studies Reader*, and articles on cyborg feminism and technologies of crossing.

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UC Santa Barbara
Wendy Sims-Moten, a lively Capricorn born in Texas, came to Santa Barbara over 30 years ago. She loves spending time with her husband and their son. Her favorite things to do, reading, tennis, acting, singing and laughing out loud with friends. Wendy is the Business Manager for First 5 Santa Barbara Children & Families Commission since its inception May 1999, in December 2016 became the district’s second African American to serve on the Santa Barbara Unified School Board since the 1970’s. Community service includes GMC Co-Chair of the Fund for Santa Barbara, Cause Action Fund Board Member, Board Member of Gateway Education Services, President of George Washington Carver Scholarship Club, Organizer of the African American Women of SB County Annual Luncheon, member of St. Paul AME Church and Emerging Leaders Alumni.

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Amoni Thompson is a PhD student in the Feminist Studies program at UC Santa Barbara. A graduate of Spelman College, she currently serves as the Vice President of the Black Graduate Student Association. Her research examines the cultural representations of Black girl artists in the U.S. South to understand how Black girls create geographies of pleasure and joy. It examines the ways spatial politics impact how Black girls in the South use expressive culture as a tool to enact their own visions of freedom and pleasure.

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UC Santa Barbara
Jamaal H. Tolbert is a Southern California native. His studies took place at California State University, Bakersfield where he received a B.A. in Sociology & Art. He continued his studies at Claremont Graduate University where he received his MFA in Studio Art. His work introduces viewers to a world of critical issues often avoided by society. The works, presented both physically and online, entice the viewer to contemplate difficult questions and spark conversations. His work has been exhibited in different group shows within the United States.

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Maite Urcaregui is a second year PhD student in the English department at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She studies twentieth century American culture and literature through a transdisciplinary perspective that draws from cultural studies, gender and sexuality studies, and critical race studies. Her research explores the relationship between and among form, aesthetics, and agency as well as the possibilities for activism and resistance within popular culture, specifically genre fiction, zines, and comics. Her most recent research investigates intersectional feminism and fandom in the dystopian comic *Bitch Planet*.

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UC Santa Barbara
Embodying the Present Moment
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