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The Center for Arts at the Armory Announces Feet Keep the Beat Festival to Debut in August

The Center for Arts at the Armory (CAA) heats up the stage this summer with “Feet Keep the Beat”—a new annual multicultural percussive dance festival that CAA is both producing and presenting. CAA is thrilled to bring together vibrant and diverse communities of Flamenco, Irish, Tap, Kathak, Body Percussion and other flavors of percussive dance from around the world. The August 4th Feet Keep the Beat Festival Showcase Performance (doors at 7pm | show at 8pm) will include Ariaki Dandawate (Kathak), DrumatiX (Tap / Body Percussion / Drumming), Fourth Dimension (Tap), Khalid Hill (Tap), Yosi Karahashi (Flamenco), Anjali Nath (Kathak), and Jackie O’Riley and Rebecca McGowan (Irish). Performers and companies will dance a 15 minute set in their own percussive style, and the show will conclude with an intercultural grand finale jam with all of the artists.

This will be the Boston area’s first ever festival of this type, and will include four days of classes and jams, culminating with the exciting Showcase Performance on August 4th. Classes will be taught by the performing artists and companies participating in the August 4th Showcase, as well as Ian Berg (Tap & Musicality) and Anastasia Yendiki (Flamenco). There will be two free jams in the Armory Café—an Irish Jam on August 1st and a Flamenco Tablao on August 2nd.

“Our goals are to bring people of all backgrounds and all ages with a love of dance, music, and percussion to the same space, produce high-caliber work, enrich our participants’ lives through enthralling performances, provide platforms for cultural dance that is not as widely recognized or appreciated, provide chances to learn and participate in workshops, build community, and support the growing performing arts scene in Greater Boston,” says Stephanie Scherpf, Arts at the Armory Co-Director / CEO, who also conceived of the festival and is playing a leading role in producing it.

“I saw the Brooklyn, NY-based percussive trio Soles of Duende perform as part of CrashFest at House of Blues several years ago, and I thought, we have the same percussive dance communities represented by Soles of Duende in the Boston area, we just need to bring them together,” says Scherpf. “While we work on improving the Armory Performance Hall to better host dance, I think that we can do percussive dance well. I formed a group of the Boston-based percussive dance artists that I know and we started planning. We defined percussive dance as ‘dance that uses the feet or another body part to make percussive rhythms.’ In addition to

Flamenco, Kathak, Irish, Tap, and Body Percussion, we also wanted to include Step, Gumboot and Flatfooting. The artists in those forms who we are in touch with were not available this year but we are hoping to be able to include them in the future.”

Tickets and class registrations are available on [the Feet Keep the Beat event platform](#).

Feet Keep the Beat artists are available to participate in interviews upon request.

The Center for Arts at the Armory is located at 191 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143. To learn more please visit our website, <https://artsatthearmory.org/>, our [Facebook page](#), and follow us on Instagram at [@ArtsattheArmory](#).

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Ariaki Dandawate is a Kathak artist, teacher and performer based in the Greater Boston and New York Metropolitan Areas. Ariaki has been training for the last 17 years under legendary Kathak maestro Guru Archana Joglekar in New Jersey, gaining equal command over the technical and expressive aspects of the art form. In 2015, she earned her Visharad or Bachelor’s degree in Kathak from the SAMVED Exam Board, and in 2016 she performed her Rangmanch Pradarshan, or debut solo performance. Since then, she has performed full-length, immersive Kathak solos throughout India and the USA. Some of her notable performances in the United States include the Brooklyn Academy of Music’s SpringFest, The Rubin Museum in New York City, Geeva Arts Festival in Kentucky, Indian Fine Arts Academy San Diego, and Philadelphia Ganesh Festival, to name a few. In India, her performances include the Sanskriti Mahotsav at Ravindra Natya Mandir and Guru Wandana in Mumbai, and the Sundareshwara Temple in Kannur, Kerala. Holding a Bachelors in Biotechnology and Computer Science, Ariaki continues to teach, perform and study Kathak while working as an Associate Computational Biologist at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, MA.

Instagram: @ariaki.kathak
Facebook: Ariaki Dandawate

DrumatiX is a tap dance and creative percussion company founded in 2017 by dancer, musician, and award-winning choreographer Noa Barankin. Prior to DrumatiX, Noa’s notable works include performing as an international touring cast member with the music and dance group *Tararam* (2010-2013), working as a producer and lead dancer in Israeli tap master Yuval Beck’s *Time to Tap* (2013), touring with Boston Tap Company (2013-2018), and with Off Beat Tap (2017-2018). Since 2017, Noa’s work with DrumatiX has been presented at venues and festivals throughout New England and New York, including Jazz at Lincoln Center, Symphony Space, Clayton Opera House, Rochester Fringe Festival, and Provincetown Dance Festival as well as for global clients such as Cisco. Barankin’s DrumatiX is also on the roster for Young Audiences of Massachusetts, presenting educational programs in schools across the state. DrumatiX presents a family-friendly blend of rhythmic elements including tap dance, body percussion, and drumming, with/on everyday objects, large drums, barrels, as well as use of technology, audience interaction, and tons of humor! Their performances have been described as “Energizing, original, well-crafted, & impressively virtuosic.” as well as “Electrifying” and “full of enticing rhythms, clever execution, and high production quality that make this company a must-see!”

Website: www.drumatixdance.com

Fourth Dimension Tap Company was founded by Isla Niezgoda and Jeffrey Bird Jr. in 2022 with the intention to continue expanding the tap community in Boston and provide greater opportunities for tap dancers around the city. They create high-quality performances that appeal to a wide audience and pull in new patrons to the art form. Since the company's recent establishment, they have produced their inaugural show "Duration" and have been seen at many different performances around the greater Boston area including Mayfair, and Salem Arts Festival.

Instagram: [@fourthdimensiontapco](#)

Khalid Hill is a professional actor and tap dancer from Boston, MA who currently resides in Harlem, NY. He has been tap dancing for 33 years and holds a Masters Degree in Performing Arts Administration from NYU. He is also a trained actor with 3 years of training in the Meisner technique from the Ted Bardy Acting Studio in NYC. As a professional, Khalid has performed as a featured artist at colleges and theaters in 40 cities nationwide and abroad in the US, Canada and Germany. As a dance instructor and educator, he has taught master classes and lectured at Gordon College, UNC Charlotte, Bridgewater State University and Lehman College. He has also taught beginner, intermediate and advanced tap classes for Broadway Dance Center, Steps on Broadway and the Boston Tap Party Festival. His credits include: the first national tour of *Bring in Da' Noise, Bring in Da' Funk* under the direction of George C Wolfe; *Bounce* (in Disney World) with Moguee & Friends; *Rhythm is Our Business* with Derick Grant; *Invitations To A Dancer with Savion Glover*; *Cholesterol Low Down* (national tour) with Debbie Allen and Dick Clark. Khalid has performed as a featured soloist for Hillary Clinton, Bill Irwin and Maya Angelou. Khalid has also provided choreography and artistic direction for numerous productions, including *The Urban Nutcracker* in Boston (15 seasons), *The Purple Flower* in Charlotte NC, *The Medicine Showdown* in Atlanta and St Louis. In the Fall of 2022 Khalid was part of the tap ensemble in the movie *Spirited*, starring Ryan Reynolds and Will Ferrel. Khalid is known for his intricate "rapid-fire" footwork that has impressed audiences across the US.

Yosi Karahashi left Japan to fulfill her dream of studying flamenco and ended up staying in Spain for 16 years, studying at the legendary flamenco school Amor de Dios in Madrid, with renowned artists. She started her professional career performing in many tablaos around Spain and other countries such as Japan, Morocco, Portugal, France, Cyprus and Canada. Yosi moved to Boston in 2012, and since then has been an active teacher and performer, collaborating with many participants of the Greater Boston dance scene, such as The Dance Complex, Deborah Mason School of Dance, Jose Mateo Dance Theatre and Flamenco Boston, among others. Yosi firmly believes that Flamenco is not just a dance, but a way of life, that there should be no limits for expression and it should be shared with everybody. With this in mind, she founded Flamenco Therapy, a non-profit dedicated to bringing flamenco to nursing homes and those who don't have access to dance performances by themselves, and started an age-friendly dance class at Citywide Cambridge Senior Center, which she currently teaches twice a week.

Website: [flamencoyosi.com](#)

Youtube: [youtube.com/yosiflamenco](#)

Anjali Nath is an established Kathak dance performer and teacher, trained by the renowned, late Kathak master, Pandit Chitresh Das. Known for her swift chakkars (spins), crisp footwork and grace, Anjali's performances are rooted deeply in the Kathak tradition, dazzling to watch, and deeply moving. Anjali began her training in 1997 at Tufts University under Gretchen Hayden, Das' senior-most disciple, and trained and toured with the acclaimed Chitresh Das

Dance Company in California for eight years. Anjali carries forward a significant legacy ensuring accessibility to the art and excellence in training of the next generation of Kathak artists and students. She has passionately pursued a career in Kathak and public health simultaneously for over 25 years, building community and promoting the holistic benefits of Kathak for children through older adults. Anjali currently teaches at the Dance Complex, through Harvard University, and Young Audiences/arts for Learning MA.

Website: www.anjali-nath.com

Jackie O'Riley and Rebecca McGowan are a duet specializing in old-style traditional Irish dance, recognized for their unique synchronicity and musicality. Originally drawn to the grace, musicality, and subtlety of older steps, they have been dancing and creating together for the past 12 years. With original choreography and interpretation of traditional steps, Jackie & Rebecca's work magnifies the intricate movements and musical connections of traditional dance, bringing music and dance back together. Jackie & Rebecca have performed around the US at festivals including Catskills Irish Arts Week, CCE Musical Arts and Dance Week, and Mississippi CelticFest. Their visual album "From the Floor" (2019) was called "audacious, ground breaking, and brilliantly realized" (Irish Echo) and was shown at the Utah Dance Film Festival, St Patrick's Film Festival London, Motion State Dance Film Series, Leitrim Dance Festival, and others. They were recognized as 2022 Massachusetts Cultural Council Fellows in Choreography, and have received support from Next Steps for Boston Dance, Live Arts Boston, and NEFA, and recently had work selected for Dance Documentation in Isolation at the BCA; Dance Complex's Fest of Us; and the Boston Celtic Music Festival.

Website: www.fromthefloordance.com