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Contact: Stephanie Scherpf

Co-Director / CEO

director@artsatthearmory.org

### **The Center for Arts at the Armory Deepens Collaboration With Leading Percussive Dance Artists in Third Annual Feet Keep the Beat Festival July 28 - August 3**

Somerville, MA—Now in its third year, Arts at the Armory’s Feet Keep the Beat Festival announces its annual jams, workshops, and Showcase Performance LINEAGE to premiere on August 1st in the Armory Performance Hall. Returning from prior festivals are Ariaki Dandawate (Kathak), Joh Camara (West African), Lekisha Limage (Step), Ryan Casey (Tap), Anjali Nath (Kathak), Antonio Tran (Flamenco guitar), Akili Jamal Haynes (percussion, trumpet and tabla), Sory Diabate (percussion), Giri Subramaniam (tabla), and Aidid Brayboy (percussion). Xianix Barrera, a renowned Flamenco dancer and educator based in New York City, will be joining the Boston-based collective of percussive dance and musical artists this year.

As the artists featured in the August 1st showcase performance perform a story of how feet have been keeping the beat over time, and across cultures and geographies, they will also deepen their collaboration this year by paying homage to their teachers, gurus, mentors and those who opened the path for them. Anjali Nath recounts this quotation shared by her guru, Pandit Chitresh Das to his disciples, “Guru se chela savai,” which translates to “The disciple steps on the shoulders of the guru and must aim to be 1/4 over one times better than the guru.” Dance legends such as Das and Thelma Goldberg are among the gurus/teachers who will be given homage by the Feet Keep the Beat artists this year.

The festival is being produced and presented by Arts at the Armory led by Co-Director/CEO Stephanie Scherpf and Co-Director/COO Jess White. Once again, Arts at the Armory is collaborating with Deborah Mason, who is serving as Artistic Advisor to Feet Keep the Beat, and is also bringing her lauded Boston Tap Party Showcase to the Arts at the Armory Performance Hall on August 2nd, the night after the Feet Keep the Beat Showcase.

“Feet Keep the Beat is about providing a platform for these rich percussive dance forms, almost all of which come to us from histories of oppression and marginalization, but it’s also an opportunity to put these dance forms into conversation with each other, providing a model for intercultural conversation and learning, and a chance for rhythmic fireworks and innovation to emerge,” says Scherpf.

On Monday, July 28th, from 7-9pm at ROOTED Armory Café there will be a Traditional Irish Session with participatory music and dance. On Sunday, August 3rd, Arts at the Armory will

host Feet Keep the Beat community workshops from 10-12:30pm. All jams and workshops are free admission. Tickets for the August 1st Showcase Performance LINEAGE are available [here](#).

Lead funding support for Feet Keep the Beat has been provided by Movement Arts Creation Studio. Other sponsors include The Cambria, RedBones, US2, and Wooden Kiwi Productions. Arts at the Armory is currently accepting sponsorships from businesses and individuals who would like to support this vital program and be associated with its intercultural brand.

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

**Monday, July 28th 7-9pm:** Traditional Irish Session at ROOTED Armory Café (free)

**Friday, August 1st 7pm:** Feet Keep the Beat Festival Showcase: LINEAGE (Arts at the Armory Performance Hall) | Tickets:

<https://the-center-for-arts-at-the-armory.ticketleap.com/feet-keep-the-beat-performance-show-case-lineage/>

**Sunday, August 3rd 10-12:30pm:** Free Community Workshops (Arts at the Armory Performance Hall) | [RSVP Form Here](#)

**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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**Xianix Barrera** is a renowned Flamenco dancer and educator based in New York City, celebrated for choreographic works that explore themes of female empowerment, sexual identity, and social justice. Her most recent work, QUEBRADA, is a multimedia Flamenco production inspired by the Japanese art of Kintsugi, symbolizing resilience, transformation, and healing.

A 2019 Bessie Award nominee for Outstanding Performer for her role in Latido, Xianix trained extensively in ballet, modern, jazz, and flamenco with masters in both New York and Spain. She has graced prestigious stages including The Joyce Theater, Lincoln Center, and Café Silverio in Sevilla, sharing the stage with flamenco legends such as Isabel Bayón, Rosario Toledo, and Soledad Barrio.

In 2012, she founded Xianix Barrera Flamenco Company (XBF), a vibrant NYC-based company that produces both theatrical flamenco productions and immersive cultural events. Blending tradition with innovation, XBF presents performances ranging from intimate tablaos to full-scale shows featuring international artists. The company also houses a thriving flamenco school, offering year-round training in technique and choreography for all levels while fostering an inclusive community dedicated to preserving and evolving the flamenco tradition.

Website: [www.xianix.com](http://www.xianix.com)

Facebook: Xianix Barrera

Instagram: [@xianixbarreraflamenco](#)

**Aidid Brayboy** is a Boston-based percussionist who frequently collaborates with and plays for Joh Camara.

**Sidi “Joh” Mohamed Camara**, popularly known as “Joh,” was born in Bamako, Mali in West Africa, and from the age of 5, trained in music and dance from his mother Fanta Kamissoko, a well-known *Jali* (*Jalis*, also known as *Griots*, are highly venerated in their traditional society as skilled oral historians who are not only singers, storytellers, and musicians, but also advisors and mediators). Camara has toured with companies Troupe Mande, Troupe Sewa, Troupe du District de Bamako, and Percussion Fabla throughout the Republic of Mali and West Africa, presenting hundreds of shows. He was chief choreographer for Troupe Mande and Troupe Sewa and led them to become among the most renowned and competitive companies in the world of West African dance and drumming.

Camara came to the U.S. in 1995 with the renowned guitarist Zani Diabate and Troupe Mande. He has taught and presented his work at universities across the country including Brown, Princeton, Brandeis, Harvard, University of Pennsylvania, Berklee School of Music, Boston University, Washington University, and Olympia (Washington State). He currently teaches at Boston Conservatory at Berklee, in numerous Boston Public Schools and other public and private schools and community centers, and collaborates with Boston Ballet, Boston Symphony Youth Orchestra and Choir, Upward Bound, Planet Aid, and others. Camara teaches traditional Mande culture, language, music, and dance as well as those of neighboring Guinea, Ivory Coast, and Senegal at various community centers and instructs a semester dance and drumming class at Boston University and Harvard University.

Website: [www.johonline.com](http://www.johonline.com)

**Ryan P. Casey** is a "whimsically inventive" (The Boston Globe) performer, educator, choreographer, and dance writer formerly named one of Dance Magazine's "25 to Watch." His dancing has been featured on So You Think You Can Dance, in an episode of the Audible podcast Authorized: Firsts, in a museum exhibit about shoes, in a music video for a Spanish pop star, and numerous other platforms. In addition to his solo work, he has danced for Michelle Dorrance, Aaron Tolson, Billy Siegenfeld, Lorraine Chapman, and Adrienne Hawkins. As a teaching artist, he has worked for colleges, festivals, studios, and arts programs throughout the country, including Summer Performing Arts with Juilliard. He has presented choreography throughout the Northeast with his company, Off Beat. A frequent contributor to Dance Magazine, Ryan is an alumnus of The School at Jacob's Pillow and YoungArts. In addition to The Dance Inn, where he initially trained under Thelma Goldberg and Kelly Kaleta, he is also on faculty at Endicott College. Ryan holds a B.A. from NYU's Gallatin School and an M.Ed. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Website: [www.ryanpcasey.com](http://www.ryanpcasey.com)

**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

**Sory Diabate**, originally from Bamako, Mali, comes from a long line of Djelis (griots) and began drumming in the early eighties, as an apprentice with Sidiki Camara. In Mali, Diabate was a member of Troupe Pionna, and a principal drummer with Troupe Doumba, Troupe Districte de Bamako, and Troupe Sewa. In 1997, he became Assistant Director of Troupe Sewa and traveled extensively throughout Mali, researching in depth the origins of traditional rhythms and dances whose authenticity is preserved in the smaller villages. In addition to the djembe and dun dun, Diabate plays the tama, or talking drum, the bara and the bondiala. Prior to coming to the U.S., he conducted percussion workshops for students visiting Mali from all corners of the world.

Diabate has performed nationally with Sambalolo, Group Badenya, Timinadi, Under the Sun Dance & Drum, Spirit of Africa, and Troupe Sewa directed by Joh Camara. He has taught workshops in North Carolina, at West Virginia University, Brown University, and SUNY Purchase and has performed at the Wang Center for Performing Arts, The Dance Complex, Harvard, MIT, Wellesley College, among others. Diabate is also the founder and Director of Benkadi Drum & Dance.

**Akili Jamal Haynes A.K.A. Chibuzo Dunun (dba)** is a composer, producer, drummer, dancer, actor, songwriter, and multi-instrumentalist. Akili held the role of The Drummer in the Huntington Theater production of the George C. Wolfe play, The Colored Museum, directed by Billy Porter. He also coached music for actors in the play Seven Guitars by August Wilson, an Actor's Shakespeare Project production directed by Maurice Emmanuel Parent which received seven Elliot Award nominations, and won four, along with being the first Critics' Pick in Boston history. Akili appears in the newly-released Whitney Houston film I Wanna Dance With Somebody.

Facebook: @PositiveAfricanImages  
Instagram: @becomingchibuzo

**Lekisha Limage** began her journey into the rhythmic realm at the age of 12, within the vibrant halls of her church. Lekisha established the Step Team at City on a Hill Charter High School. Her leadership saw her team flourish. Lekisha left an indelible mark on the stepping scene at Bentley College, now University. As one of the founding members of the university's Step Team, she cultivated a community of rhythm and expression. She graced the runway of the 2014 Paris Fashion Week as a stepper for the iconic Rick Owens. Today, Lekisha Limage continues to mesmerize audiences with her electrifying performances, infusing every step with a soulful rhythm that speaks to the heart.

**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](http://www.anjali-nath.com)

**Giri Subramaniam** is a Boston-based tabla player and percussionist known for his versatility, captivating tone, and ability to blend musical traditions. He has performed and recorded with internationally acclaimed artists like Ustad Zakir Hussain, Shankar Mahadevan, Shreya Ghoshal, Vijay Prakash, Indian Ocean, and others. Giri is also a member of the Berklee Indian ensemble, which received a GRAMMY nomination for its debut album, *Shuruaat*.

Website: <https://sites.google.com/view/giri-subramaniam/music>

**Anthony "Tiriti" Tran** studied flamenco guitar all across Andalucía with various teachers in Granada, Jerez, Córdoba, and more. For the past decade, he has managed Boston-based group Flamenco Boston and has worked with local dancers and dance companies to bring the excitement of flamenco through performances and workshops all over New England, including to museums such as the Isabella Stewart Gardner and the Museum of Fine Arts and to universities including MIT, Harvard, Northeastern, and most recently at Boston University, where he composed music for and performed in their production of Federico García Lorca's *Yerma*.