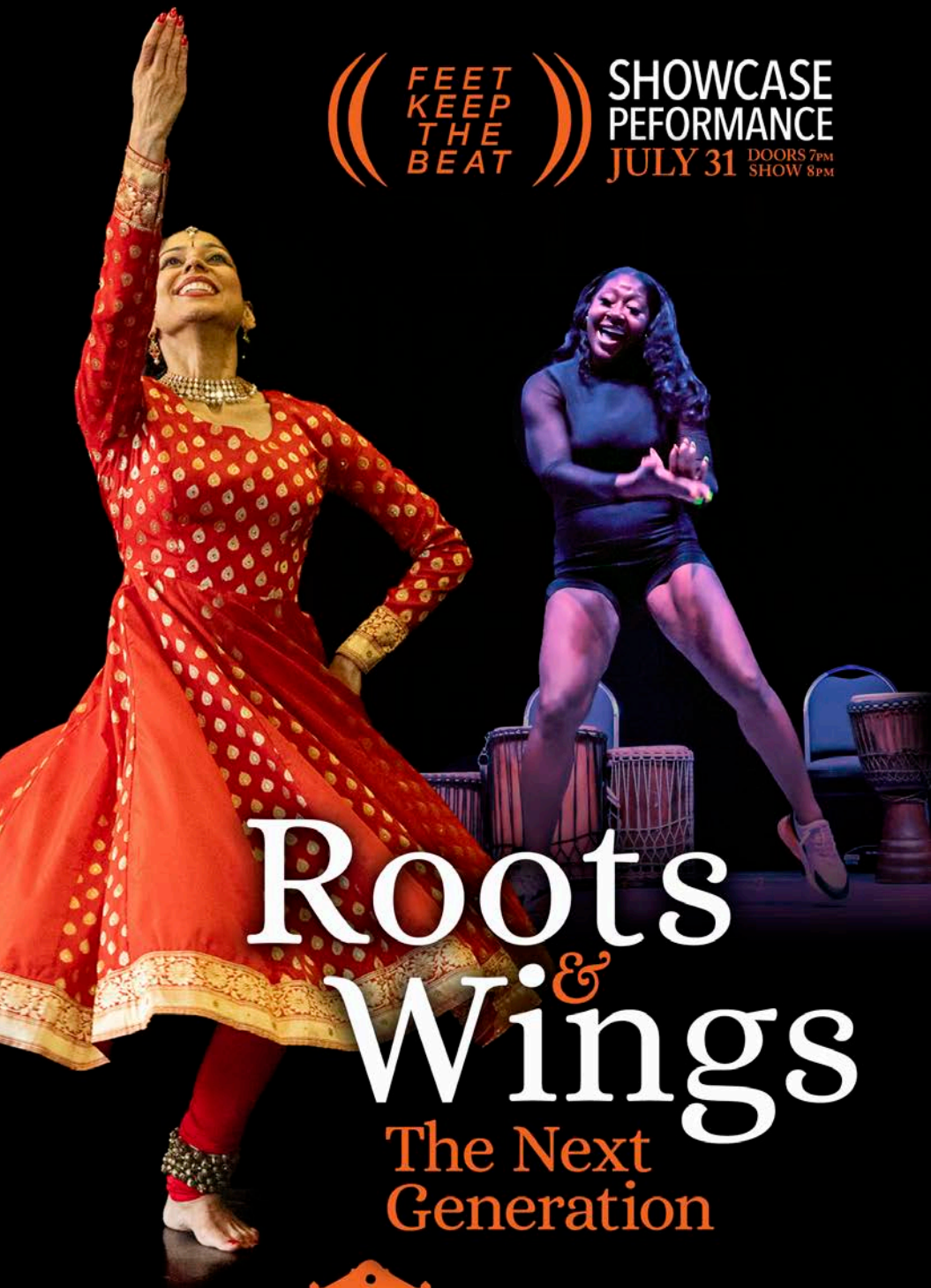


FEET  
KEEP  
THE  
BEAT

SHOWCASE  
PERFORMANCE  
JULY 31 DOORS 7PM  
SHOW 8PM



# Roots & Wings

The Next  
Generation



ARTS AT THE ARMORY

The Center for Arts at the Armory  
Performance Hall • Somerville, MA

**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 with his mother Fanta Kamissoko, a well-known *Djeli* (griot). Camara has toured with companies Troupe Mande, Troupe Sewa, Troupe du District de Bamako, and Percussion Faba 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.

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

**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.

**Anthony “Tirti” Tran** studied flamenco guitar throughout Andalusia with teachers in Granada, Jerez, Córdoba, and more. For over a decade, he has directed Boston-based Flamenco Boston, presenting performances, workshops, and educational programs throughout the Northeast. He has worked at institutions including the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, MIT, Harvard University, Northeastern University, and Boston University, where he composed music for and performed in their production of Federico García Lorca's *Yerma*. Alongside his work in traditional flamenco, Anthony frequently collaborates across artistic disciplines, creating projects that blend flamenco with Kathak dance, contemporary dance, bolero music, contemporary Latin American music, and theater. Recent collaborations include composing and performing with Boston-based choreographer Anna Myers and BeHeard. World, a collective of artists and educators creating performances that foster dialogue around social justice. Anthony performs regularly throughout Boston and New York City.

**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.

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.

**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](https://www.facebook.com/XianixBarrera)

Instagram: [@xianixbarrerreflamenco](https://www.instagram.com/xianixbarrerreflamenco)

**Ariaki Dandawate** is a Kathak artist, teacher, and performer based in the New York Metropolitan and Greater Boston areas. She has trained for over 20 years under her Guru, Pandita Archana Joglekhar, and holds a Master's degree in Kathak. As a first-generation American, Ariaki's artistic vision is rooted in honoring traditional pedagogy while reimagining Kathak's cultural relevance for contemporary audiences. She has presented immersive solo and group work across North America and abroad, with appearances at the Rubin Museum (NYC), Aki Studio (Toronto), Ursuline Arts Center (Kentucky), Multicultural Arts Center (Boston), and David & Dorthea Garfield Theater (San Diego). Ariaki's choreographic works have been commissioned by institutions such as the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Arts at the Armory, and the Multicultural Arts Center. In addition to Kathak, Ariaki has been training in Odissi with Guru Bijayini Satpathy since 2019 through virtual, in-person, and residential intensive formats. She has performed at the Battery Dance Festival (NYC) and the Rose Wagner Performing Arts Center (Utah). She is currently a Lotus Fellow with Arts India US, where she is working on embedding her research, process, and training to create original choreography that deeply interrogates the internal movement structure at Kathak's core. In addition to her career in dance, Ariaki is a PhD Candidate in Computational Biology at the Weill Cornell Graduate School in New York.

Instagram: [@ariaki.kathak](https://www.instagram.com/ariaki.kathak)

Facebook: [Ariaki Dandawate](https://www.facebook.com/AriakiDandawate)

**Pranav Ghatraju** began his training in Tabla under Dr. Nishikant Sonwalker when he was 5 years old. Currently, he is under the tutelage of Ustad Shabbir Nisar son of Tabla Nawaz Ustad Shaikh Dawood Khan of Hyderabad, India. Pranav has been actively accompanying artists and giving solo performances across both the USA and India since a young age. His talents have been well appreciated by many of today's greatest maestros. Pranav was awarded a scholarship by the New England Conservatory in 2007 to attend the World Rhythm boot camp. In 2010, Pranav was the youngest recipient of the 20 Under 20 award by the INDIA New England magazine for academic, extra-curricular, and community related activities. Pranav won the mega finals for the under-15 category at Crescendo 2011, a North Indian classical music competition conducted by Swarganga in Atlanta, GA. In 2023, Pranav was recognized as a “Rising Star” by India New England for his community and professional work.

Instagram: [@pranav\\_tabla](https://www.instagram.com/@pranav_tabla)

**Ryan P. Casey** is a “whimsically inventive” (*The Boston Globe*) performer, choreographer, teaching artist, and writer in the greater Boston area specializing in joyful, rhythm-driven movement. 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. A founding member of Dorrance Dance, he trained primarily with Thelma Goldberg and Kelly Kaleta in his hometown of Lexington, MA, and was formerly recognized as one of *Dance Magazine*’s “25 to Watch” for his “freakishly clean footwork...reminiscent of Fred Astaire.” As an educator, Ryan has worked with studios, universities, festivals, and youth companies both nationally and internationally, including: Summer Performing Arts with Juilliard, Brandeis, Hofstra, Boston Tap Party, Tri-Tone Youth Rhythm Ensemble, BoSoma School of Dance, Candy Apples Dance Center, and many others. He was formerly on faculty at Boston University and choreographed for the University of Connecticut Tap Team. Additionally, he is a frequent contributor to *Dance Magazine* and has also been published in *Dance Teacher*, *Dance Spirit*, and the *Journal of Dance Education*.

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

**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*.

Website: [www.worldofchibuzo.org](http://www.worldofchibuzo.org)

Instagram: [@becomingchibuzo](https://www.instagram.com/becomingchibuzo)

**Anjali Nath** Anjali Nath is an accomplished performer and educator of Kathak, the classical dance tradition of northern India. Her dance journey began with ballet in early childhood, but it was at Tufts University—at age 20—that she discovered Kathak and found her artistic home. Since 1997, she has trained intensively under the late Pandit Chitresh Das and his senior disciple, Gretchen Hayden, founder of Chhandika Boston, developing a deep command of the form’s intricate rhythms, movement, and expressive storytelling. She toured the U.S. and India with the Chitresh Das Dance Company for eight years and was a core member of Chhandam and Chhandika, two premier Kathak institutions where she performed and nurtured the next generation of kathak dancers and audiences. Now, as an established solo artist, she is dedicated to her lineage of high caliber performance and teaching as faculty of Harvard Dance Center and The Dance Complex. In 2024, Anjali founded Kathak Khelna (to play!), a performance and study platform that celebrates the lineage of her training through authentic, collaborative presentations, bringing together local and international artists.

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

Instagram: [@anjnath](https://www.instagram.com/anjnath), [@khelna\\_kathak](https://www.instagram.com/khelna_kathak)

Facebook: Anjali Nath Kathak Artist

**Tiemoko Camara** recently completed his freshman year of high school at Concord Academy. Tiemoko regularly performs, teaches, and studies alongside his father, the renowned master dancer and drummer Joh Camara. Tiemoko was awarded a Traditional Arts Apprenticeship by MA Cultural Council in 2016

**Thank You** to this Year’s  
Feet Keep the Beat **Sponsors!**

Lead Program Funding Support from  
**Valentine Talland and Nagesh Mahanthappa**



**Boston’s Best  
Night of Tap**

Directed and Produced by Deborah Mason

**Saturday, August 1st 7pm**

Armory Performance Hall

Tickets: [www.bostontapparty.com](http://www.bostontapparty.com)



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

In addition to the artists performing tonight, and our generous sponsors and donors, we thank the following individuals who have helped make Feet Keep the Beat possible:

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Bart Reidy, and Sandra Rumbolt

**Debra Mason Dudley,**  
Feet Keep the Beat Artistic Advisor

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Wooden Kiwi Productions is a project management, design and construction firm located in Waltham, MA, specializing in production support for the dance and theater communities. Founded in 1991 to design, develop and build specialty dance floors, Wooden Kiwi has been serving the arts and entertainment industry ever since. [www.woodenkiwi.com](http://www.woodenkiwi.com)



# PROGRAM

## Invocation Percussion by Sory Diabate, Akili Jamal Haynes, Tiemoko Camara

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>I</b>    | <b>Introducing the Next Generation</b> with <b>Lekisha Limage</b><br>Maya Camara, Yassi Camara, Laila Smith, Sayla Wilgren                                                                  |
| <b>II</b>   | <b>Lekisha Limage</b> ( <i>Step</i> ) and <b>Joh Camara</b> ( <i>West African</i> )<br>Music by Sory Diabate, Akili Jamal Haynes, Tiemoko Camara                                            |
| <b>III</b>  | <b>Joh Camara</b> accompanied by <b>Maya Camara</b> and <b>Yassi Camara</b><br>Music by Sory Diabate, Akili Jamal Haynes, Tiemoko Camara                                                    |
| <b>IV</b>   | <b>Joh Camara</b> and <b>Xianix Barrera</b> ( <i>Flamenco</i> )<br>Music by Sory Diabate, Akili Jamal Haynes, Tiemoko Camara, Antonio Tran                                                  |
| <b>V</b>    | <b>Xianix Barrera</b><br>Music by Antonio Tran                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>VI</b>   | <b>Xianix Barrera</b> and <b>Ariaki Dandawate</b> ( <i>Kathak</i> )<br>Music by Antonio Tran and Pranav Ghatraju                                                                            |
| <b>VII</b>  | <b>Ariaki Dandawate</b><br>Music "Tarana" by Bageshree Vaze; <b>Padhant</b> : Bageshree Vaze and Vineet Vyas; <b>Tabla</b> : Vineet Vyas; <b>Choreography</b> : Pandita Archana Joglekar    |
| <b>VIII</b> | <b>Ariaki Dandawate</b> and <b>Ryan Casey</b> ( <i>Tap</i> )<br>Music by Pranav Ghatraju and Akili Jamal Haynes                                                                             |
| <b>IX</b>   | <b>Ryan Casey</b> and <b>Sayla Wilgren</b>                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>X</b>    | <b>Ryan Casey</b><br>Music by Akili Jamal Haynes                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>XI</b>   | <b>Ryan Casey</b> and <b>Anjali Nath</b> ( <i>Kathak</i> )<br>Music by Akili Jamal Haynes                                                                                                   |
| <b>XII</b>  | <b>Anjali Nath</b><br>Music by Akili Jamal Haynes and Pranav Ghatraju                                                                                                                       |
| <b>XIII</b> | <b>Anjali Nath</b> and <b>Lekisha Limage</b> ( <i>Step</i> )<br>Music by Akili Jamal Haynes and Pranav Ghatraju                                                                             |
| <b>XIV</b>  | <b>Lekisha Limage</b> accompanied by <b>Laila Smith</b> ( <i>Lekisha's Niece</i> )<br>Recorded Music by Mestre Suassuna e Dirceu overlaid with spoken word by Besouro Zagon (Lekisha's Dad) |
| <b>XV</b>   | <b>Ensemble</b>                                                                                                                                                                             |

## Community Workshops & Jam

**10:00 - 10:30:**  
Kathak with Ariaki Dandawate

**10:30 - 11:00:**  
Step with Lekisha Limage

**11:00 - 11:30:**  
Flamenco with Xianix Barrera

**11:30 - 12:00:**  
Final Sharing and Jam

All are welcome to participate in these free workshops. There is more information and an RSVP form on our website: [artsatthearmory.org/feetkeepthebeat](https://artsatthearmory.org/feetkeepthebeat)

# Feet Keep The Beat Program Statement

July 31, 2026

Dancing feet have kept the beat of the human experience across continents and cultures, a rhythmic expression of the human instinct to communicate and collaborate. The varied percussive dance traditions that span the globe are living embodiments of specific cultural legacies, each with its own distinct roots, rhythms, and geographic provenance. Long before these percussive art forms found homes in studios and schools, they developed on street corners and plantations, in cafés and community centers, inside places of worship, and in families.

Many percussive forms derive from West African cultures, where polyrhythmic music and dance emphasize community and spirituality. When enslaved Africans were forbidden from using drums to communicate, they put the beat in their bodies. The African Diaspora brought those beats to the Americas, where step dancing, jazz dancing, and other social dances flourished. Some historians pinpoint tap's development to the Five Points neighborhood in Lower Manhattan, and the art form became so embedded in American culture that National Tap Dance Day is celebrated each year on May 25th, the birthday of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson.

Similarly, flamenco dance, which emerged from gypsy culture in southern Spain, is considered an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). The story of its development in the country's Andalucía region is, like many forms of foot percussion, one of resistance and discrimination as well as joy and identity.

Flamenco is believed to have historical connections to classical Indian dance due to the migration of the Romani people from India to Europe, bringing elements of dance and music with them. Kathak – one of India's eight major classical dance styles – finds its roots in "katha," or stories. Deriving from the storytelling and dance traditions of Northern India, Kathak evolved over centuries to incorporate influences from Persian and Mughal cultures, which helped define itself as a percussive style.

All of these art forms have been shaped by histories of oppression, racism, and bigotry. Yet they also stand as powerful expressions of resilience, creativity, and cultural continuity. As if they were trees in a shared cultural forest, these traditions have grown alongside one another, sustained by the strength and ingenuity of the communities that created them. Like trees, they are deeply rooted in the earth. Percussive dance traditions are grounded, connected to the floor, and in constant conversation with their origins. They continue to grow and evolve as artists, elders, teachers, and mentors plant the seeds for the next generation to flourish. Today, the family tree of percussive dance is expansive, vibrant, and ever-evolving, continuing to support the vitality and evolution of these culturally significant art forms.

Tonight, the artists of **FEET KEEP THE BEAT** are proud to share the stage with some of their own children, students, and relatives, all of whom are essential to the thriving percussive dance ecosystem.



*–Ryan P. Casey with input from  
FEET KEEP THE BEAT artists and producers*

## **Additional Program Information**

### **Ryan's Solo: *Escape for the Epicurean***

Music written by Akili Jamal Haynes (piano)

### **Ryan/Anjali Transition/Duet: *Iwa Pelè***

Music written by Akili Jamal Haynes (piano)

### **Anjali's Solo: *Raag Janasammohini***

Traditional Indian melody shared through the teachings of Pandit Chitresh Das, and arranged by Akili Jamal Haynes for piano.

Anjali's solo is split into sections where Akili transitions from Piano, Tabla, Ektara, Dolak/Tabla.

### **Anjali/Lekisha Transition/Duet: *5.5 beat cycle***

Composed by Pandit Chitresh Das, and adapted to Beatbox by Akili Jamal Haynes