

Central Avenue
Dance Ensemble



Ron Parker, Chester Whitmore and The Central Avenue Dance Ensemble Present

The Best of The History of Black Dance in America

A retrospective of 10 years of HBDA performances

Produced, Directed and Narrated by

Ron Parker

Artistic Director and Host

Chester Whitmore

February 25, 2021

Presented as Live Zoom Webinar

www.HistoryOfBlackDance.org

Note to all Panelists: Microphones should be muted and video off at start of show.

HBDA 2012 Photo Montage

Photo montage of February 2012 HBDA performances at Santa Monica Bay Women's Club.
Almost all the costumes you see were destroyed in the November 2020 fire.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Chester Whitmore, World renown Tap Dancer and Vernacular Jazz Dance Historian

The Early Years

ZULU

Year: 2012

Music: Erica Zuniga and Dale Aranda on drums.

Dancers: Atiya El Amin, Salvador Corona, Adunni McPherson, Ron Parker,
Reginald Thornton, Beatriz Vasquez

Choreography: Nzingha Camara, Ron Parker, Beatriz Vasquez

SPIRITUALS

Year: 2015

Music: *Wade in the Water* sang live by Harry Bowens

Dancer: Beatriz Vasquez

Choreography: Beatriz Vasquez

BLUES

Year: 2012

Music: *Stop the Sun, Stop the Moon* - Mabel Scott

Dancers: Ron Parker and Erica Zuniga

Choreography: Ron Parker

Turn of the Century to 1920s

CAKEWALK

Year: 2012

Music: *Maple Leaf Rag* - Sidney Bechet

Dancers: Atiya El Amin, Salvador Corona, Ron Parker,
Reginald Thornton, Beatriz Vasquez, Erica Zuniga

Choreography: Chester Whitmore

BLACK BOTTOM

Year: 2012

Music: *Black Bottom* – Sidney Bechet

Dancers: Atiya El Amin, Salvador Corona, Adunni McPherson, Ron Parker,
Reginald Thornton, Beatriz Vasquez

Choreography: Chester Whitmore

The 1930s-40s

BIG APPLE

Year: 2011

Music: *Harlem Air Shaft* - Duke Ellington

Dancers: Atiya El Amin, Jasmine Carroll, Chester Whitmore, Chester Whitmore Jr

Choreography: Frankie Manning

LE HOT JAZZ

Year: 2012

Music: *Le Hot Jazz* – Jimmy Lunceford

Dancers: Atiya El Amin, Salvador Corona, Adunni McPherson, Ron Parker,
Reginald Thornton, Erica Zuniga

Choreography: Chester Whitmore

TAP

Year: 2015

Music: *Pussy Willow* - Duke Ellington

Dancers: Chester Whitmore, Deborah Perez and the By Your Side Dance Studio
Tap Team

Choreography: Chester Whitmore

The Later Years

STARDUST

Year: 2015

Music: *Stardust* – Nat King Cole

Dancers: Reginald Thornton and Beatriz Vasquez

Choreography: Ron Parker

FAD DANCES OF THE 1960S

Year: 2012

Music: *Dancing in the Streets* – Martha and the Vandellas / *Going to a Go-Go* –
Smokey Robinson and the Miracles / *Function at the Junction* – Shorty
Long

Dancers: Atiya El Amin, Rosalind Cook, Salvador Corona, Rosa Harris, Ron Parker,
Linda Sims, Paul Thornhill, Reginald Thornton, Beatriz Vasquez, Erica
Zuniga

Choreography: Chester Whitmore, Reginald Thornton

URBAN CHA CHA

Year: 2012

Music: *I'm So Glad You're Mine* – Al Green

Dancers: Atiya El Amin, Salvador Corona, Ron Parker,

Beatriz Vasquez, Chester Whitmore, Erica Zuniga
Choreography: Chester Whitmore

MAMBO

Year: 2015
Music: *Mambo Diablo* - Tito Puente
Dancer: Reginald Thornton
Choreography: Reginald Thornton

URBAN CONTEMPORARY BALLROOM

Year: 2012
Music: *Let Me Love You* – Mario
Dancers: Ta Ronce Allen and Michael Tyus
Choreography: Michael Tyus

KIZOMBA

Year: 2015
Music: *Kizomba Dude* - DJ Sponky
Dancers: Ron Parker & Kiana Stringfield, Reginald Thornton & Rosalind Cook,
Brian Yip & Beatriz Vasquez

End Remarks

Panelist Q & A

Panelists should turn on video but leave mics muted until called upon.

~ Artist Profiles ~

El Camino College
2016



CHESTER WHITMORE

Artistic Director / Choreographer / Principal Dancer

Chester Whitmore is a world-renown choreographer, tap dancer, lindy hop instructor and dance historian who toured the world with the original HBDA for over 15 years beginning in the late 1980s. He is one of the last surviving members of the famed "Hoofers Club" and has studied under and worked with some of the greatest vernacular jazz dancers of the 20th century. He has endeavored his entire career to preserve and promote American vernacular jazz dances and their history.

Dancing since 1974, Chester Whitmore originally studied to be a cinematographer. An encounter with famed tap dancer Fayard Nicholas changed his life. Eventually, Mr. Nicholas became his teacher and mentor. Mr. Whitmore has been traveling around the world on tour as dancer, teacher, choreographer, director and entertainer ever since. He and his dance company, Black Ballet Jazz, have performed with the Lionel Hampton Orchestra, the Duke Ellington Orchestra under the direction of Mercer Ellington, the Count Basie Orchestra under the direction of Frank Foster and the great Miles Davis.

The NAACP Image Awards (1989-1994), Soul of American Music, and Stellar Awards (Gospel Music Awards) show Mr. Whitmore's versatility in choreographing for diverse groups, such as the Nicholas Brothers with Savion Glover, M.C. Hammer, Lavert, Bebe and Cece Winans, Vickie Winans and dance tributes to Dick Clark and The Artist (formerly known as Prince).

Teaching assignments included Herrang (Sweden), and dance performances, Salzburg (Austria), the San Francisco Jazz Festival (1997), the Monterey Jazz Festival (1996), performing with veteran jazz greats Jon Hendricks and Joe Williams. Mr. Whitmore is actively involved in projects reaching young people through Los Angeles Cultural Affairs events as performer or as teacher for the Parks and Recreation Division, African Marketplace, and in schools and universities throughout the U.S. Chester Whitmore has taught almost everyone who has made a name in the swing scene.



RON PARKER

Director / Choreographer / Writer / Producer / Dancer

Ron Parker is a Ballroom dancer and dance historian who came to dance from the world of business and was also swept up by the importance of educating the community on its dance history. He has produced and directed the HBDA show for the past 5 years.

Ron Parker was born, raised and educated in Los Angeles and danced in high school musicals. After graduating from Los Angeles High School, he joined a community youth group that performed vintage Swing routines at senior citizen facilities around the city. Upon graduating from UCLA, Ron started a computer software business which he ran successfully for 20 years. Around 2000, because of the changing demographics in the city, he decided to take up Salsa. He went on to learn and master Ballroom, Argentine Tango and most of the partner social dances. In 2003, Ron joined Chester Whitmore, who wanted to form an all-black Lindy Hop dance group. They named it the *Central Ave Dance Ensemble*. Here, Ron gained both an interest in studying dance history as well as experience performing for and educating where he was quite active in promoting Ballroom dancing in the community. In 2010 he initiated a series of dance workshops designed to introduce South Central residents to dances they aren't normally exposed to: The Diversify Your Dance series. And, in 2011 and 2012, produced, directed and co-choreographed "The History of Black Dance In America", a retrospective of 200 years of African-inspired dance in America. It premiered to a sold-out crowd in 2011, and closed to a sold-out crowds in 2012. In 2014 Ron served as assistant director to Chester Whitmore for the Frankie Manning Centennial Show at the Apollo Theater in New York, hailed as one of the best shows at the Apollo in 25 years. Also in 2014, he initiated a successful Kickstarter campaign to raise funds to do HBDA in 2015. As a result of this successful campaign, Ron was nominated, along with Chester Whitmore, as a "Local Hero" by our local PBS station. Recently he was tapped by the El Camino College Center for the Performing Arts to present HBDA for Black History Month 2016.

Donors and Sponsors

Over the years, a lot of people have supported The History of Black Dance in America not only by purchasing tickets to performances, but also by direct donations of both time and money. The list is way too numerous to list. However, based upon past programs, here are some of the names that stand out:

Susan and Mark Fien, Donors

Natalie Linthorst, Donor

Doug Hammond, Donor

Deborah Fields Perez, By Your Side Dance Studio, Sponsor

Judy Pritchett, Frankie Manning Foundation, Donor

USA Dance - Los Angeles Chapter, Sponsor

2015 Kickstarter Donors | 2016 Hatch Fund Donors

In Memorial

There are several people who helped us over the years who are no longer with us. We do cherish the memories of their time with us.

Lance Benishek, Choreographer, Dance Historian (historical accuracy)

Marcia Gleason, Wardrobe (and spiritual motivator)

Gayle Goodrich, Photographer (took photos for most of our shows)

MaDonna Grimes, Hip Hop and Fitness Legend (honored at our 2016 show)

Paul and Arlene Kennedy, Universal Dance Designs (rehearsals at their studio)

Lynn Posner, Dancer (and beloved dance partner)

People Who Just Helped Out

There are many, many people who just helped us out along the way. Some on staff, some on their own time because they believed in what we were doing. Again, too many names to list exhaustively, but here are many of the ones you will find in our past programs:

- Gwen Allen
- Fumi Bankole
- Daniel Berney
- Angela Billingsley
- Paulette Brockington
- James Burns
- Laura Cannelias
- Deja Colon
- Charles Douglas
- Lauren Duda
- Karen Ellis
- Rusty Frank
- Gi Gi Gamble
- Joan Gelin
- Doug Hammond
- Jane Hammond
- Rosa Harris
- James L. Hubbert
- Alfredo Iraheta
- Lori Landau
- Macintosh County Shouters
- Michael McCarrell
- Sherrie Norwood
- Gaida Paulovska
- Deborah Fields Perez
- Judy Pritchett
- Joan Robinson
- Prince Ross
- Korinna Sehringer
- Leba Shana
- Joe Solario
- Livia Squires
- Barbara Stewart
- Brendell Stewart
- Josef Vinson
- Xia Wang