

Central Avenue
Dance Ensemble



Los Angeles Public Library
LA Made
and
Ron Parker

present

The History of Black Dance in America – Part 2

10 years of HBDA performances

Hosted by

Ron Parker

February 10, 2022

Presented as Live Zoom Webinar

www.HistoryOfBlackDance.org

Introduction

Kevin Awakuni, Librarian II
Exploration & Creativity Department
Engagement & Learning Division
Los Angeles Public Library

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Ron Parker, Director, Central Avenue Dance Ensemble

Act I The 1950s – 1970s

Stardust

Year: 2015
Music: “*Stardust*”, Nat King Cole
Choreography: Ron Parker
Dancers: Reginald Thornton, Beatriz Vasquez
Notes: Tribute to Nat King Cole

Mambo

Year: 2015
Music: “*Mambo Diablo*”, Tito Puente
Choreography: Reginald T. Thornton
Dancer: Reginald T. Thornton

Bop

Year: 2011
Music: “*Pride and Joy*”, Marvin Gaye
Choreography: Chester Whitmore
Dancers: Rosalind Cook, Ron Parker

Fad Dances of the 1960s

Year: 2012
Music:

- “*Dancing in the Street*”, Martha Reeves and the Vandellas
- “*Going to a Go-Go*”, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles
- “*Function at the Junction*”, Shorty Long

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

Urban Cha Cha

Year: 2012

Music: *"I'm Glad You're Mine"*, Al Green

Choreography: Chester Whitmore

Dancers:

Atiya El Amin, Salvador Corona, Ron Parker, Beatriz Vasquez, Chester Whitmore,
Erica Zuniga

Notes:

The camcorder stopped working one night, and ran out of recording space
another night, so this was the best recording we could get.

Disco

Year: 2012

Music: *"Saturday Night Fever"*, *"More Than a Woman"*, BeeGees

Choreography: Ron Parker

Dancers:

Salvador Corona, Adunni McPherson, Ron Parker, Reginald Thornton, Beatriz
Vasquez, Erica Zuniga

Act II The 1980s – 2000s

Fad Dances 1980s-1990s

Year: 2012

Music: *"Wanna Be Startin' Somethin'"*, Michael Jackson

Choreography: Chester Whitmore

Dancers:

Atiya El Amin, Salvador Corona, Rosalind Cook, Rosa Harris, Ron Parker, Reginald
Thornton, Beatriz Vasquez, Chester Whitmore, Erica Zuniga

Salsa

Year: 2012

Music: *"Ran Kan Kan"*, Tito Puente

Choreography: Ron Parker

Dancers:

Salvador Corona, Adunni McPherson, Ron Parker, Reginald Thornton, Beatriz
Vasquez, Erica Zuniga

Urban Contemporary Ballroom

Year: 2012

Music: *"Let Me Love You"*, Mario

Choreography: Michael Tyus

Dancers: Ta Ronce Allen, Michael Tyus

Chicago Style Step

Year: 2012

Music: "*Champagne Life*", Ne-Yo

Choreography: Ron Parker

Dancers: Rosalind Cook, Ron Parker

Argentine Tango

Year: 2015

Music: "*La Violetera*", The Tango Project

Choreography: Ron Parker

Dancers: Kiana Stringfield, Ron Parker

Kizomba

Year: 2015

Music: "*Kizomba Dude*", DJ Sponky

Choreography: Ron Parker

Dancers:

Rosalind Cook, Ron Parker, Kiana Stringfield, Reginald Thornton, Beatriz Vasquez,
Brian Yip

Hip Hop

Year: 2012

Music: "*Phenomenon*", LL Cool J

Choreography: Reginald T. Thornton

Dancers:

Salvador Corona, Atiya El Amin, Reginald Thornton, Beatriz Vasquez, Erica Zuniga

End Remarks**Q & A**

~ 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 Memoriam

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)

Deandre Marquis Parker, Beloved Son (and Ron's biggest fan)

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

And, of course, a HUGE thank you to

The Los Angeles Public Library LA Made Program

For believing in our mission to educate and entertain the public with important culture and history.