

DECEMBER 2021 | ISSUE NO. 6

the check-in.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO BOOM BISHOP

In this issue, we get to the root of what makes Burniss Earl Travis II aka "Boom Bishop" one of the top calls in the music industry



inside.

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This Edition's Contributing Writers

Gabby Byrd

Denise Ward

Taylor Scott

Capra Fellows



ON THE COVER

Burniss Earl Travis II (Jazz '05).

Photography by Nosa Malcolm at Summer Series @ Somerset House



A NOTE FROM
THE PRESIDENT



COMMONS



HAPPENINGS



CONVERSATION:
THE GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO
BOOM BISHOP



INTERLUDE



CALL BOARD



CLASS NOTES




WHO WE ARE

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WRITE: Share your thoughts on this issue and anything else PVA-related at hspvablackalumninetwork@gmail.com

Friends,

We have finally made it to the end of another year. Whew! As always, your support during these interesting times continues to propel our network forward and for that, we are truly grateful.

Since relocating to NYC, it's been incredible to witness just how wide our circle stretches. From Harlem to L.A., Boston, to D.C., we are everywhere, and we still find ways to have community with one another no matter where we are.

As we head into the new year and prepare for our 50th Celebration of our beloved HSPVA, we are excited to continue our BAN Night Out's in cities all over the country. NYC and L.A. family, stay tuned for more details, and also let us know if you'd like to be involved!

If the past couple of years has taught us anything, it's that we are stronger together. I invite you to lean into that this holiday season.

Sending you all love, and claiming prosperity and abundance for everyone in the new year!

WITH LOVE,

Denise Ward

PRESIDENT, HSPVA BLACK ALUMNI NETWORK



**a note
from the
president**

the commons.



2021 coming to a close means that our annual Holiday Jam is right around the corner! This year we'll be back in person on **December 26 at Day 6 Coffee**. Doors open at 7 PM and tickets are \$20 at holidayjamsocial.eventbrite.com. We are still looking for performers and members of the house band, so DM us on social media to sign up. **Use this special code CHECKIN** to get half off your ticket, which includes, entry, food, and a raffle ticket!

This is also a landmark year for HSPVA and we're excited to announce our celebration for the 50th Anniversary will be **August 5-7, 2022**. We'll gather for a weekend of performances, networking and comraderie. Mark your calendar now and stay tuned for more details.

HOME COMING

*We are closely watching the number of COVID cases and continue to place everyone's health as a priority. Out of an abundance of caution, please consider getting tested prior to attending each of these events, especially if you are unvaccinated. Masks are highly encouraged.

By Taylor Scott

In a season full of baked goods, here is an alternative that is less common. You are sure to not get bored with it.

Ingredients:

- 5 egg yolks
- 2 cups of granulated sugar
- 2 cups of sifted all-purpose flour
- 1 cup Buttermilk
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- Coconut Flakes (at least a cup)
- Chopped pecans (at least a cup)
- 8 oz. Philadelphia Cream Cheese
- 1 1/2 sticks of butter
- 1/2 cup of shortening
- Powdered sugar

Recipe:

- Beat ONE stick of butter and the shortening until combined. Then add in the sugar until smooth. Add 5 egg yolks ONE AT A TIME after this - you can discard the whites.
- Combine the flour and baking soda in a bowl. Add this to the liquid mixture alternatively with the buttermilk. After mixing, add ONE teaspoon of vanilla extract.
- Chop the coconut flakes and the pecans to a desired size. Add the pecans and coconut flakes to the mixture. (Once again, we measure this by feeling and not by a more defined cooking metric.)
- After greasing the pans, pour in the batter. I would use 3 9" pans for this batter so that the batter cooks into a blondie texture. Place in the oven at 350 degrees Fahrenheit and cook for approximately 25 minutes.
- Optional icing: Blend the rest of the butter and vanilla extract with the cream cheese and powdered sugar until the desired sweetness is met. Decorate with more chopped pecans.



happenings.

Kendrick Scott (Jazz '98), Reuben Rogers, and fellow alum, **Walter Smith III (Jazz '98)**, make their debut as the Corridors trio on January 3rd and 4th at the Blue Note NYC. Tickets for the 8 pm and 10:30 pm sets are available at the door and online at bluenotejazz.com.



Paul Cornish (Jazz '14) will be playing his first show as a bandleader at Ovarions Night Club on December 27th at 7:30 pm. Peep that lineup chock-full of PVA alumni! All tickets proceeds will go to Kids' Meals Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to ending childhood hunger in Houston.



Robert Glasper (Jazz '97) will be celebrating the 10 year anniversary of his crossover album, Black Radio, at The Vermont Hollywood in Los Angeles during Grammy weekend on January 30th at 7:30 pm. Tickets available online at shptickets.com



Peyton Booker (Vocal '15) will be performing at Gold Diggers in Los Angeles on January 21st at 8pm. The DJ set will be by Budgie and Angela Muñoz will serve as the opening act. Tickets available online at dice.fm





The Gospel According to ‘Boom Bishop

By Gabby Byrd

Even speaking in the most general sense, most would agree that it's important to have a solid foundation. Although the word “foundation” might immediately elicit thoughts about physical structures like homes and office buildings, the ones that follow are likely associated with intangible concepts like relationships, religion, or any set of personal experiences and values that tend to dictate the way we move through the world. When speaking in terms of how music is perceived on a surface level, the rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic elements are what many view as the most basic foundational material; but, on a deeper level it, of course, involves that and so much more. Because the bass is an instrument whose main role is to give essential information not just about harmony but also about rhythm and groove, its importance—across all genres of music—simply can not be overstated.

Neither can the talents of bassist [Burniss Earl Travis II aka Boom Bishop \(Jazz '05\)](#). One would think that after collaborating on projects with artists like Robert Glasper, Common, Esperanza Spalding, Lianne La Havas, and Big K.R.I.T (the list goes on and on), that maybe he's developed a superiority complex, but Travis remains humble as if his playing register was a metaphor for his modesty. Keep reading for an inside look at the man everyone wants on their bandstand and in their circle of collaborators.

Please note that the following interview has been edited for length and flow

CONVERSATION



G: I know you've been on tour and maybe you've just been listening to that music, but is there anything that you've been listening to a lot lately?

B: I'm trying not to listen to too much right now because I've been writing. I'm trying to keep my mind open, because I definitely play with a lot of different bands very often, so it's easy to get everybody's music just jumbled in your head sometimes. There's stuff I always like to listen to out of comfort, but pretty much I've been chillin and I just listen to whatever.

G: Are you working on an album per se, or just wanting to write?

B: Just a project. Music for whatever.

G: Nice, I'm really looking forward to that. So, who gave you the name Boom Bishop? I know it's your Instagram handle, but is that something people call you regularly?

B: Yeah, my family calls me Boom. They've called me that since I was a baby. That's just what people always called me because I have the same name as my dad. They call me by my nickname and they call my dad his name—well, our name. Boom has always been since I was a baby, but Bishop was because—actually, Jamire, for a while he kept calling me Bishop for some reason, and then I was just like "alright, 'Boom Bishop' then."

G: It works! Did you guys go to PVA together?

B: Jamire was a senior when I was a freshman but we grew up in the same neighborhood. I'm pretty sure we used to play together as little kids cause we grew up together. You know when it's hot during the summers everybody be at the pool and the clubhouse in the neighborhood? I know we've seen each other pretty much our whole lives. I realized he lived in the same neighborhood 'cause when I used to ride the bus, I kept seeing his car drive by. Then I realized, "Oh, he lives here too." Yeah, Jamire's my boy.

G: Who else was in your crew at PVA?

B: Chase Jordan. I grew up with him. We all went to Imani in Windsor Village.

G: Ah, I went to Windsor Village! I was baptized there.

B: Okay, yeah, I grew up in Windsor Village. I did Imani, all that stuff. Corey King, Cory Cox, Dustin Kaufman. Sheldon Reed, Justin and Jared Joseph, Taylor Barner. So many people... We had a big crew back then. The school was so small, so we were all friends [...] and there wasn't no drama like in middle school.

G: What are some of your favorite memories from your time at PVA?

B: The Black History play. The one I remember the most is probably my freshman year one 'cause Thomas Meloncon was still working there. I just remember going to PVA and doing all those rehearsals and the production and seeing all the dancers. That was my first time being a part of a play, honestly. Just seeing everybody, all the Black kids in the school participating... just the vibe. I'll never forget that.

G: Do you remember what the musical was?

B: Nah, I don't remember what that was. That was '02 though... [HSPVA's 2002 Black History production was *The Gospel According to Hip-Hop*]

G: What are some of the main lessons that you took away from that time that still resonate with you today?

"If you love it, live it, you know? You've got to really commit to it."

B: I think that's the biggest thing. I got into PVA for symphony orchestra because I didn't play jazz, really, until I got there. So, once I got to PVA and I met and started seeing all the jazz people, I immediately gravitated [to them] and was trying to hang around them because I felt that's where I was supposed to be. Like, all the people who I was best friends with back then, we're still the same close friends today. Jamire, Kyle Wilson... all the jazz people, we pretty much still all keep in contact, more or less. Most of us are fathers now and got families and stuff but—like, I still talk to Corey King at least four times a week, and Jamire? That's family. Those are the three people I kept in touch with the most. Chase, Corey King, and Jamire.



Left to right: James Francies (Jazz '13), Burniss Earl Travis II (Jazz '05), Jeremy Dutton (Jazz '12)

G: Who would you say are some bassists or even non-bassists that have kind of defined your playing? Do you have any role models for the bass?

B: Alan [Hampton]'s definitely been a role model since me growing up. Him and Mark Kelley. Just seeing the plaques and hearing stories about what they did... The infamous practice rooms [...] everybody love them practice rooms (*laughing*). The dude who really inspired me to start playing jazz bass was Joe Sanders. I was a freshman when Jamire was a senior and he brought Joe down to do his senior recital. That was the first time I saw somebody around my age a little older play jazz and do a concert and I was like, "Oh, I definitely gotta switch over" after that. So I have to put Joe Sanders in there because he always says, "I birthed you into this." Him and Jamire will say that very quickly. Especially Jamire, 'cause I definitely wouldn't have-- I was an orchestra kid back then. But for me, everybody got something to say, young or old. I either learn something that I do like or that I don't like and try to understand what is it, how it works for me, or how it doesn't work for what I'm trying to do. It's always a work in progress, just living it and trying to be a musician as the times are changing and the needs change. But the root is always just to be a good musician, good person, good player, good friend, good father.

G: Yeah, that's a good philosophy to have.

B: Mhmm. Everybody got something to say. Instrumental or not, vocal, just random people on the street--they'll do something and be like, "Wow!" They might not even realize what they just did, but it's just so inherent and instinctual for people to just live music. That's what I really feed off of more than somebody's particular instrument, but those are the people who definitely inspired me to start and commit in the beginning, for sure.

G: Why do you think you're the top call for so many artists?

"Being responsible, being able to communicate, being respectful--that will take you a lot of places before the talent. Everybody just say I'm just myself. Well, I always try to be myself. I don't know how else to be."

G: How do you define success for yourself? I know that a lot of the current students and some of the younger alumni, they're trying to find their way, and part of the reason why we have this network is a lot of our Black alumni have been convinced not to commit to it and instead pursue other avenues that aren't necessarily creative. You said, "if you love it, live it," but what does that look like? How do you define your success?

B: Some people define success as taking care of your family. I like to define success, for me, as just being true to my voice and how I feel in the moment--good or bad. Being able to take care of your loved ones and being a good friend, you know? Having love around, that's a success. Keeping good karma to where anywhere you go, you feel like you got family and friends there to support you. Of course, it's such a monetary based world, that's definitely a big part of it. And I guess for me, most of the true success that I yearn for and that I need to answer will come out when I start presenting my own music because I've been in a position of being around so many great artists, and people who I can call friends... I've been able to see how a lot of people make their magic work and put good teams around them to be successful. And I think a big part of success is being true to who you are [...] I don't know, everybody got different meanings.



G: Yeah, definitely. I was reading that some encounters you had with Stefan Harris really inspired you. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

B: When I was—I think I was—in 11th grade, Stefan Harris came and did a masterclass at school. He played. At some point I went up and played, and after, he told me, “When you get to New York, you gon’ play with me,” and I was like, “Okay, cool.” And I didn’t even think about it. When I got to New York, I wasn’t worrying about trying to do a gig. I mean, I was in New York. Our school was on 13th and 6th. I was enjoying the city! I was working, but just the experience of life, meeting people from all over, and being outside of Texas was more intriguing to me... and just interacting with people different from me.

So, the whole first semester goes by and the second semester he ran into me at New School I believe, and he was like, “Oh, you that dude from Houston. You ain’t called me!” I was like, “Oh, I don’t know man, I’m just out here!” (*laughing*). Then I think maybe a few days later he called a session at New School— me, him, I think Marc Cary, and Jamire, just in a practice room to play, and then like a week later, I think I did a gig with him in upstate New York. I was super nervous, but I did the gig and went home. It was cool.



And then I think a little while later, he called me for another gig [...] So the second gig I did, I felt more comfortable. It was in New Jersey outside in a park, and I felt way more comfortable and more in my body. You know, sometimes you get nervous. Especially like, for me, those are my heroes, you know? I never thought I’d be listening to their albums in the practice room and the next year they’d call me for a gig. Even Rob [Glasper] and pretty much everybody I’ve been working with. All the people, we used to just jam in the jazz room in between classes and on lunch break... but, anyway, I did the second gig and I remember I definitely felt more in my spirit and more comfortable and stuff. And like years later, Terreon [Gully] told me, he was like, “Yeah, the first gig you were so nervous, he didn’t think you could handle it.” And Terreon told him, “Nah, give him one more shot” [...] and then I played with him for years after that. Even still to this day, I still do gigs with him.

G: That’s Terreon...?

B: Terreon Gully. He played on pretty much all of Stefan’s records. He’s a world-class musician. He went to U of H, actually. You should check him out. He played with Christian McBride, Diane Reeves, everybody.

G: Oh, cool! Yeah, I think James [Francies] was working with Stefan Harris, too.

B: Yeah, me, James, Jamire. Chase Jordan was like Stefan’s protégé. Stefan named his son after Chase actually. That’s how deep the connections go. Stefan’s definitely a big part of a lot of people from Houston— their progression and stuff and just being present in people’s lives at some point or another.

G: Of course, this kinda goes without saying, but the pandemic affected everybody--not just in the entertainment industry but, literally, everybody. Did you pick up any new hobbies or anything like that or did you use this last year to really focus more on your sound and your music?

B: Really just spending more time with my family. I had never been home like this, honestly, since maybe my first year in college. Since I got up here, I’ve been moving around pretty much the whole time. My family’s definitely helped me to balance things and have been very patient with me. I’m just trying to be still a little more. This lifestyle is always up and go, and it’s not always fair to your family. I mean, it’s the life I chose. I’ve been doing more recordings, getting into film score stuff, but that’s really what I’ve been focusing on more: my family.

G: Do you have anything going on today or anything coming up?

B: Not today. I got the day off. I’m just doing domestic duties (*laughing*). Clean up the house, take care of my wife, go meet her, go do some Christmas shopping.

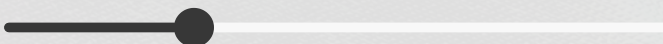
This holiday season, we encourage you to reflect on the people who keep you rooted, the practices that keep your mind, body, and spirit in harmony, and the memories of joy and community at HSPVA that have stood the test of time.

interlude.

Rooted at the core of every great song is a great bass line. Check out this playlist of some of our favorite tracks with our very own Boom Bishop. *Headphones highly recommended*



- The Light**
Big K.R.I.T.
- Weak**
Gretchen Parlato
- Sway**
James Francies
- The Mugician**
Keyon Harrold
- 'Til the Next Full (eyes)**
Helene Paquet
- Boom Bishop**
Jeremy Pelt
- Victoria**
Jesse Boykins III
- The Fold**
Sarah Elizabeth Charles
- For Hermeto**
Marc Cary
- Sinnerman**
Gregory Porter
- And Then the Anointing Fell**
Jamire Williams
- Memories of Home**
Common



scan playlist

call board.

Get to know **Morgan Harris (Vocal '13)**

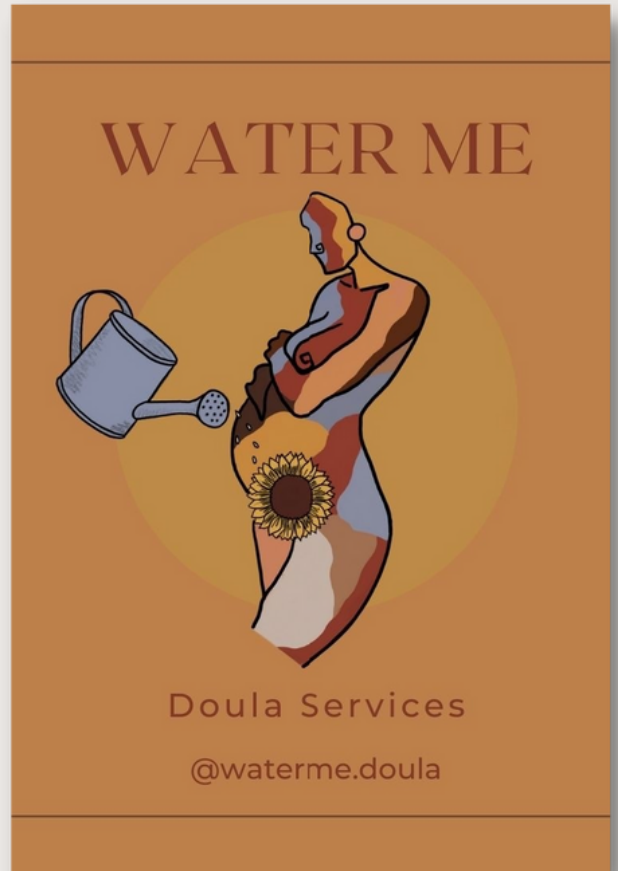


I am known as a birth worker, birth sister, or full spectrum doula. Allow me to introduce you to **Water Me, Doula Services!**

Now, what does “water me” mean? Well, I am in awe of the dynamic properties that water holds. I see water as therapeutic, transformative and enlightening. I feel most free, vibrating at a high frequency, in the shower, bathtub, or near a body of water. However, water is not always tranquil; it can be turbulent and rapid.

The motions of the water--the ebbs and flows--they symbolize the pathways of our journeys on this planet. There are various ways to identify with water, so I hope this has sparked an idea of how you resonate with this element.

So, metaphorically, my goal is to water the seed planted within the womb through spiritual, emotional, physical and informational support. It is vital to cultivate a sacred environment for both the baby and the birthing parent to thrive. Pouring into the birthing parent will enable the baby to properly grow and enter into this world with a fruitful soul, giving them the opportunity to fulfill their divine purpose.



call board.



Applications for the Diversity in Arts Leadership (DIAL) internship program are now open! Undergrads looking for a paid summer internship in the arts can be part of a cohort of like-minded future arts leaders and get real-world, hands-on experience at arts orgs in NYC, New Jersey, Nashville, Boston, Sarasota (FL), or Raleigh/Wake County (NC).

Applications are due Jan. 14, 2022.

Learn more at
AmericansForTheArts.org/DIAL.

Check out these opportunities for composers:

Composers chosen as the 2022 Fromm Foundation Fellows will be asked to submit a piece for performance at the the next Composers Conference taking place July 23 - August 6, 2022 at Brandeis University with Guest Composers Tonia Ko & Donnacha Dennehy.

Applications are due Jan. 31, 2022.

Email Executive Director Kathryn Welter at welter@composersconference.org with app questions.

The winning composer of Loadbang's 2022 International Commission Competition will receive \$1,000 to write a new chamber music piece to be premiered by the Loadbang ensemble in Spring 2023 or later.

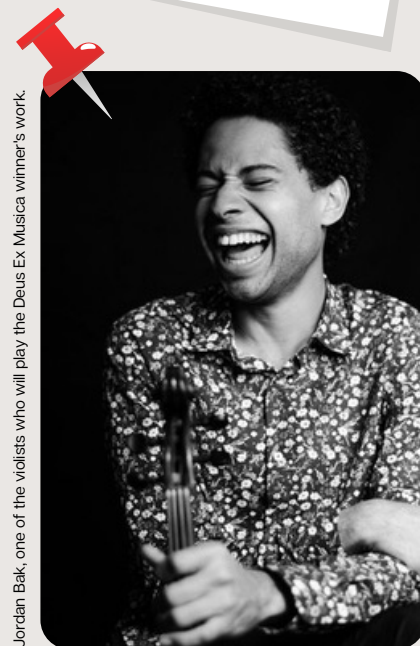
Applications are due Mar. 1, 2022.

Learn more at Loadbang.com/commission-competition.html

Deus Ex Musica is having a competition for a new work to be premiered in the fall of 2022 an ecumenical event combining live performance with discussion about faith, scripture, and the arts. One composer will be selected to write a new 4-5 minute unaccompanied viola piece inspired by one of the Biblical psalms that will join contributions written by a diverse group of Christian composers representing a wide variety of traditions.

Applications are due Mar. 1, 2022.

Learn more at deus-ex-musica.com/viola-competition



Jordan Bak, one of the violists who will play the Deus Ex Musica winner's work.

class notes.

straight A's

a.cknowledgements



Robert Glasper (Jazz '97)

His album, *Dinner Party: Dessert*, in collaboration with Terrace Martin, 9th Wonder, and Kamasi Washington, is a 64th Annual Grammy Award nominee for Best Progressive R&B Album.



Joy Yvonne Jones (Theatre '10)

Named the New Village Arts Theatre's new Associate Artistic Director



Adam DeWalt (Jazz '13)

Performed in the band for and also had a track placement in VH1's holiday special, *Hip Hop Family Christmas*, starring Terrence J, Serayah, Ne-Yo, MC Lyte, Redman, and Keri Hilson.



Brandon Willis (Vocal '12)

Performed with Jawwaad's ensemble as part of "Land of Broken Dreams", a concert series and gathering of creatives for "The Shape of Things" Carrie Mae Weems' latest exhibit on view at the Park Avenue Armory in NYC until December 31st.



John Hall (Theatre '18)

Landed his first national campaign as a model for Google Pixel x Cocau Hue. *(far left)*



Paul Cornish (Jazz '14)

Arranged the music and played piano for CW's holiday special, *Black Pack: We Three Kings*, starring Taye Diggs, Ne-Yo, and Eric Bellinger.



James Francies (Jazz '13)

Performed the national anthem at the Giants vs. Eagles game on November 28th.



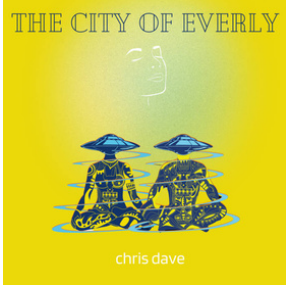
Seth Parker Woods (Instrumental '03)

The Chicago Tribune named his curation, performance, and directive work on "SOUND/SITES" for University of Chicago Presents as one of the top 10 moments that defined classical music, opera, and jazz this year.

Malcolm Jackson (Instrumental '10)

His mini composition "To Flow to the Horizon; Dance" for harp was premiered by Castle of our Skins for the second volume of their Black Composer Miniature Challenge.

a.lbums and other music



Chris Dave (Jazz '90)

His latest album *City of Everly* is now available to stream and purchase on Bandcamp. Stay tuned for his 3rd residency show in Houston on February 17th with Bilal as the guest artist.



Dominique Hammons (Instrumental '12)

A Soul Jazz Christmas is streaming on all platforms. Hammons also gave the national anthem and halftime performance at the December 8th Rockets vs. Nets game.



Olly Sholotan (Theatre '15)

The music video for his latest single "Lie 2 Me" can be found on Youtube.

a.ppearances



Grantham Coleman (Theatre '08)

Cast alongside Chris Rock and Jeffrey Wright in Netflix's *Rustin*, based on the life of civil rights activist, Bayard Rustin.

Jarvis B. Manning Jr. (Vocal '05)

Starring as Al Bryant and Norman Whitfield in the Broadway production of *Ain't Too Proud--The Life and Times of The Temptations* now showing at the Imperial Theatre.

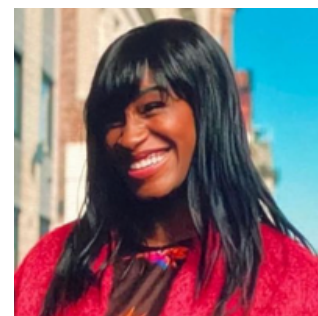


Jada Walker (Dance '19)

On tour dancing with Dixie D'Amelio.

Nneka Okafor (Theatre '04)

Plays the role of Brittany in Amazon Prime's new comedy-drama, *Harlem*, that tells the story of Black female business owners in the city.



K. Todd Freeman (Theatre '82)

Guest starred in season 3, episode 4 of CBS's *FBI: Most Wanted*. Airs Tuesday nights at 8pm CT. He also portrays Jimmy in the newly released film, *Naked Singularity*, starring John Boyega.

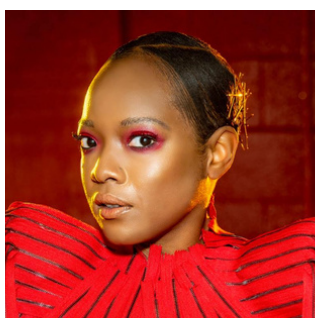
Jamal Cyrus (Visual '91),

Robert Hodge (Visual '98),

Jason Moran (Jazz '93),

& Kaneem Smith (Visual '91)

Their works are on display in "The Dirty South: Contemporary Art, Material Culture, and the Sonic Impulse" exhibit at Houston's Contemporary Museum of Fine Arts now until February 6, 2022.



Ashley Tamar Davis (Vocal '98)

In collaboration with Syren Entertainment and Media Group and ICLD, Davis' *A Very Merry Christmas*, featuring Anthony "Tony Grant" and Stephanie Ferrett, will be streaming on Christmas Day.

Jhardon Milton (Theatre '09)

Appears in episode 4 of *Sex in the City* revival, *And Just Like That*, and in Amazon Prime's *Harlem*.



WRITE TO US

We want to hear what you've been up to! Send us your stories and photos, and we'll share the highlights here. Email us at hspvablackalumninetwork@gmail.com

who we are.

The purpose of the HSPVA Black Alumni Network is to connect Black alumni of The High School for Performing and Visual Arts, support alumni and current students' endeavors, and provide resources, scholarships, and networking opportunities to champion the next generation of HSPVA artists and professionals.

creative team



DENISE WARD
Chair
Vocal '12



CAPRA FELLOWS
Vice-Chair
Theatre '11



GABBY BYRD
Secretary
Vocal '11



KIERRA MARTIN
Treasurer
Dance '13



HENRY ELLIS DAVIS
Technology Chair
Theatre '09



DABRINA SANDIFER
Scholarship Co-Chair
Theatre '06



TAYLAR LEWIS
Scholarship Co-Chair
Theatre '11



EDWARD BELL
Engagement Co-Chair
Vocal '10



MALCOLM JACKSON
Engagement Co-Chair
Instrumental '10



ALDARIAN MAYES
Jazz '10



TAYLOR SCOTT
Theatre '19



DJ CARR
Vocal '18



CHRISTIAN WARNER
Dance '12



STEPHEN HUDSON
Vocal '03

how you can help

Serve on the Creative Team

The Creative Team is a collective of HSPVA alumni who coordinate events, programming, and fundraising on behalf of the network.

Support one of our Alumni events

We host the Holiday Jam Social every December, an Alumni Happening in the summer, and we currently have additional performance opportunities and collaborations in the works.

Contribute to our scholarship fund

Support our 2021-2022 vision as we seek to increase our monetary giving and award at least (10) students with scholarships or grants.