



## DAHLAK BRATHWAITE: TRY/STEP/TRIP

MARCH 24 - 26, 2022

8:30pm

presented by

REDCAT

Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater

California Institute of the Arts

CalArts

*We gratefully acknowledge that we operate on the traditional lands of the Tongva, Tataviam, and Chumash peoples—including the Gabrieleño, Fernandeño, and Ventureño; members of the Takic and Chumashan language families; and other Indigenous peoples who made their homes in and around the area we now call Los Angeles. We honor their ancestors past, present, and future, and recognize their continued existence and contributions to our society.*

# DAHLAK BRATHWAITE: TRY/STEP/TRIP

Written by Dahlak Brathwaite

Directed by Roberta Uno

Performed by Dahlak Brathwaite, Jamal Douglas\*, Jasmine Gatewood, Derek Jackson,  
Freddy Ramsey, Jr., Max Udell

Dramaturgy by Roberta Uno

Choreography by Toran X. Moore

Composition by Dahlak Brathwaite, Teak Underdue

Assistant Choreographer Freddy Ramsey, Jr.

Additional Choreography by Delina Patrice Brooks

Additional Dramaturgy by Skyler Gray

Costume Design by Dana Rebecca Woods

Lighting Design by Brianna Pattillo

Poster Design by Elizabeth Webb

Vocal Coach: Jasmine Gatewood

Stage Manager: Sophia Sanchez\*

Production Manager/Scenic: Brittany White

\* appears courtesy of Actors Equity Association

This REDCAT presentation of *Try/Step/Trip* is made possible in part by support from the NPN/VAN Artist Engagement Fund. Major contributors include the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency).

Originally developed, commissioned and made possible by CalArts Center for New Performance California Institute for the Arts. Critical support for the work has been supported through residencies at CalArts Center for New Performance. *Try/Step/Trip* is a National Performance Network/Visual Artists Network (NPN/VAN) Creation & Development Fund Project co-commissioned by Youth Speaks, Inc. in partnership with The Living Word Project, a fiscally sponsored project of Intersection for the Arts, CalArts Center for New Performance, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Miami Light Project and NPN/VAN. For more information: [npnweb.org](http://npnweb.org). *Try/Step/Trip* was made possible with funding by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Theater Project, with lead funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and additional Support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and originally Premiered at Dance Mission Theater in February of 2020. Additional support for the work has been contributed by residencies at Hi-Arts, Harlem NY, Ko Festival, Amherst MA, Montalvo Art Center, Saratoga CA, Meadows School of the Arts at Southern Methodist University, Dallas TX, Japanese American Cultural & Community Center, Los Angeles, CA, WACO Theater Center, Los Angeles CA, Victory Gardens Theater, Chicago, IL and ACT Artshare, San Francisco, CA.

For Booking and Touring: Joan Osato, Producing Director, [joan.osato@gmail.com](mailto:joan.osato@gmail.com), 415-710-7427

The company wishes to thank Travis Preston, Artistic Director of the CalArts Center for New Performance and Dean of the CalArts School of Theater, and the great champions of this work over the years, including Alison De La Cruz and Gilberto 'Mago' Morales, Chay Yew and Skyler Gray, Shay Wafer, Yolanda Cesta Cursach, Tara Willis, Candace Feldman, Clyde Valentin, Raymond Codrington, Aaron L. McKinney, Sabrina Hamilton, Len Berkman, and Beth Boone. Our gratitude goes to former cast and crew members Preston Butler, Dante Rossi, TaiReikca Glover, Venice Yang, Ceton Tate and Morgan Camper; the ArtChangeUS team: Elizabeth Webb, Morgan Camper, Genevieve Fowler, Cassandra Khalil, Daniel Alcazar, Aydi Ortiz, Juan Carlos Herrera, Daniela Alvarez, and Kapena Alapa; and our gracious hosts at REDCAT, including Edgar Miramontes, and the entire Marketing and Production Staff.



## ABOUT THE WORK

*Try/Step/Trip* emerges from the belief that the subjugation of Black people is an American ritual; that the criminal justice system now functions as a normalized rite of passage for too many young Black males. *Try/Step/Trip* offers an alternative ritual; a rite of passage orchestrated to save one of the justice system's newest inductees from the ultimate plight of criminalization: to be remade in the image of its judgment. World views are delivered within musical numbers, ancestors are conjured through step, and archetypes are sampled from pop culture and folklore, all to guide a familiar young Black man in his unique search for redemption and self-definition.

With Writer/Composer Dahlak Brathwaite and Director Roberta Uno, Choreography by Toran X. Moore with Assistant Choreography by Freddy Ramsey, Jr. and Orchestration and Additional Composition by Teak Underdue, *Try/Step/Trip* is a spoken word, multi-character musical performed in the body through the language of step dance. The story follows the journey of an anonymous narrator as he re-imagines his experience in a court-ordered drug rehabilitation program. Inspired by Brathwaite's own history, *Try/Step/Trip* layers characters, poetic verse, and dialogue over music to create a theatrical piece that blurs the lines between hip-hop and dramatic performance.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Dahlak Brathwaite** is an award-winning playwright, composer, and performer. His work has been presented at The Smithsonian, Brooklyn Academy of Music, The Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, REDCAT, MCA Chicago, Ars Nova, The Public Theater, SXSW, by Creative Time, and on HBO's last two seasons of *Russell Simmons Presents Def Poetry*. Dahlak's trilogy of works - *Spiritrials* (solo play), *Try/Step/Trip* (musical), *Adapting History* (documentary film) - take a personal look into the criminal justice system and the relationship between Black American music and Black American subjugation. Development of the work has been supported by CalArts, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Victory Gardens, and Montalvo Arts Center. Dahlak has received awards and support from NEFA, the Doris Duke Foundation, The U.S. State Department, NYU Tisch, and MAP Fund. He is a graduate of NYU's Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program, where he was awarded the Dean's Full-Tuition Fellowship, and currently serves as the Assistant Director for the national tour of the Tony-winning revival of *Oklahoma!*

**Roberta Uno** is a theater director and dramaturg. She founded and was Artistic Director of New WORLD Theater 1979-2002 in Amherst, MA. Her numerous directing credits include *The Dance and the Railroad* by David Henry Hwang, *Clothes* by Chitra Divakaruni, *Unmerciful Good Fortune* by Edwin Sanchez, *Flyin' West* by Pearl Cleage, *Stop Kiss* by Diana Son, *Sneaky* by William Yellow Robe, *Sheila's Day* by Duma Ndlovu, *I Land* by Keo Woolford, *the bodies between us* by thuy le, and the musical theater concert *Bone Hill*, co-written with and composed by Martha Redbone and Aaron Whitby. She was the last theater director to work directly with James Baldwin; directing *Blues for Mr. Charlie* and as a dramaturg she has spanned generations working with Pearl Primus, Alice Childress, Sekou

Sundiata, Marc Bamuthi Joseph, Crystal Truscott, Dionna Daniel and others. She will be directing *We the Peoples Before* at the Kennedy Center July 1, 2022, celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the First Peoples Fund. Much gratitude for this creative journey with Dahlak Bathwaite, Toran Moore, and the talented cast and crew of *Try/Step/Trip*.

**Toran Xavier Moore** is a creative producer hailing from Montgomery, AL. As a graduate of the creative producing and management program at California Institute of the Arts, Moore's work centers around concepts of social justice, representation, and race. Recent collaborations include lead choreographer for new work *Try/step/Trip* (Center for New Performance/Youth Speaks ) & the upcoming premiere of *We The Peoples Before* (First Peoples Fund / Kennedy Center).

The phrases "two-time Grammy-nominated" and "chart-topping producers" are synonymous with the name Hallway Productionz. Hallway Productionz is a 3-time Grammy-nominated, Dove Award-winning, music producing duo, brothers Dee and **Teak Underdue**. Their sound is described as eclectic, hard hitting, musical and influential. With four top 10 albums on Billboard's Top 200 Albums Chart and seven albums on Billboard's Top 10 Hip Hip/R&B Charts throughout their career, Hallway Production's sound is simply undeniable. In 2004, Teak and Dee began working with critically acclaimed gospel rapper T-Bone from *The Fighting Temptations* movie and rapper WC of Westside Connection. In 2005, Ice Cube began work on his seventh solo LP *Laugh Now Cry Later*. The album was certified Gold in 2006, selling over 500,000 copies and making the album the biggest independent release of that year. Teak & Dee began producing songs for the *Bone-A-Fide* album by T-Bone. The album featured two songs ("Let That Thang Go", "I Been Looking Around") produced by Hallway. That winter, the *Bone-A-Fide* album was nominated for the Best Gospel Rock/ Rap Grammy. In 2007, Hallway Productionz won Rap/HipHop Song of the Year at the prestigious Dove Awards for "Name Droppin" by T-Bone. In 2009, Teak played bass, guitar & keyboards on the song "Runnin" on the album *Turn Me Loose* by Ledisi. In December 2009, "Turn Me Loose" was nominated for a Grammy in the Best R&B Album category. Teak also played bass guitar & keyboards on the Ledisi album *Pieces of Me* which was also nominated for a Grammy in the Best R&B Album category. Teak and Hallway Productionz continue with their formula of great music and quality in every genre. Their current clients include Mindless Behavior, Ice Cube, WC, Blackalicious, Angie Stone, Dave Hollister, Brandy, Tinashe, E-40 and various independent artists. After co-producing new albums by Angie Stone, Mindless Behavior and Dave Hollister, Hallway Productionz is adding executive producers to their credentials.

**Delina Patrice Brooks** is a producing artist, writer, director, and diasporic dancer from the Bay Area. Highlighted performances include: Campo Santo's *Superheroes*, *Babylon is Burning*, *Global Masquerade*, and *Casa de Spirits* (actor & movement director), written & directed by Roger Guenvuer Smith, and Marc Bamuthi Joseph's *Scourge* and *Peh-lo-tah* and more. Commissioned & presented by AfroSolo, CounterPulse Theater, Yerba Buena

Center for the Arts, LA Women's Theater Festival, Dance Brigade's D.I.R.T. Festival, The Black Choreographer's Festival and more. In addition to her work with Bay Area theater and dance companies, she produces her own work including the recent *Bare Soles Bare Soul*, a docuseries premiered at Grand Lake Theater, and Izzie-awarded *An Open Love Letter to Black Fathers: A Choreopoem*. Delina is also the co-producer and curator of *Life is Living's Africa* in Oakland Dance Zone. Visit her at [delinadream.com](http://delinadream.com)

**Jamal Douglas** is originally from Maryland, currently residing in Los Angeles. He has been seen onstage at the National Constitution Center, Arden Theatre, Delaware Shakespeare Festival, Simpatico Theatre, and The Old Globe, among others. In 2018, he starred in the queer horror film *The Quiet Room*, which was an official selection in over 40 film festivals worldwide and won Jamal several Best Actor awards. It is currently streaming on Crypt TV and Shudder. He is a teaching artist at Cypress Community College, and has been working with SAY (Stuttering Association for the Young) for 12 years, facilitating art making. He serves on the board at SAY, and works with alumni at The Spark Project, creating art about the urgency of now in the political, racial, and socio-economic challenges we face today. Check out the documentary *My Beautiful Stutter* now streaming on Discovery+. He holds his MFA in Acting from USD/Old Globe. *This one is for my momma, Brenda Michelle Douglas, resting peacefully while guiding me. Be good to you and those next to you. Peace and love!*

**Jasmine T.R. Gatewood** graduated with her B.A. in Theatre Arts-Performance from Alabama State University, Montgomery, AL, and her Master's in Acting from California Institute of the Arts, School of Theatre, Santa Clarita, CA. Jasmine's voice-over work and singing is featured on seven seasons of Dreamworks' *Madagascar: A Little Wild*. Her credits also include Nickelodeon's *Cousins For Life*, TNT's *Animal Kingdom*, and the *Fallout* video game franchise. She loves what she does, living true to Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." *I get an overjoyed sensation that races through my veins when I am able to break down and build up self to create new characters. It is so amazing to me to witness the power of storytelling when it manifests itself throughout an audience because someone can always relate and even if only one person is touched my job is done.*

**Derek Dubrae Jackson** is a teaching Artist, Director, Activist, and the proud recipient of the 2020 NAACP Award for Best Male Lead for his role in *Gunshot Medley*. Derek has performed at some of the most beloved and important theatrical spaces, on a national and international level. Derek believes in the transformative healing power of art and feels a great sense of responsibility as it relates to telling stories that matter, push communities and narratives forward, and using the art of performance as a way to preach, teach, educate, and inspire. Derek feels extremely grateful to be returning to the stage in the leading role of *Try, Step, Trip* and later this year will be starring in his first one man production, *Black Box*, written and directed by Rickerby Hinds | [contactderekjackson@gmail.com](mailto:contactderekjackson@gmail.com)

**Briana Pattillo** is an international theatre artist and maker, working primarily as a Lighting Designer for themed entertainment and performance. She designed *Fatwa! The Musical*, starring Lin-Manuel Miranda, for HBO's *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. CalArts Center for New Performance productions include *Try/Step/Trip* and *Rueda* (Havana, Cuba). Bri has designed for The Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles, Los Angeles Mission College, Angels Vocal Arts, Padua Playwrights, Chase What Flies, Odyssey Theatre Ensemble, Diagnostic Theatre Company, 2Cents Theatre Group, The Los Angeles Ballet Academy, Rubicon Theatre Company, and Prospect House Entertainment. Bri has designed concert lighting for Jefferson Starship, Big Bad Voodoo Daddy, Jo Dee Messina, Rosanne Cash, Robby Kreiger of The Doors, and Lee Rocker of Stay Cats. Bri is also an Associate Lighting Designer for Six Flags Magic Mountain's Fright Fest and Holiday in the Park events. Bri has assisted award-winning Lighting Designers Anne Militello, James F. Ingalls, and Ken Booth. Bri interned as an Assistant Lighting Designer on the National Tour of *Hamilton* in Los Angeles at the Pantages Theatre.

**Freddy Ramsey Jr.** I'm Freddy, originally from Baltimore but I currently live in Los Angeles. I have two beautiful and amazing sisters that I love dearly, and two parents that sacrificed and provided for all three of us. So, for that, I am grateful. Now, I'm going to do this weird thing where I talk about myself in the third person, because that's how someone told me my bio "needed to be". Sorry, not sorry. Freddy is an actor, writer, and director best known for his role as Quinton on NBC's *This Is Us*, as Nick in the *South Central Love* movie, and making his directorial debut for the anthology film *00:08:46*. He received his MFA in Acting from California Institute of the Arts and has trained with Deborah Aquila, Roger Guenveur Smith, Shari Shaw, and is currently studying with the Lewis Smith Actors Academy. Freddy is currently in the process of writing an eight episode miniseries, *For Love*, that is based on the true story of his 3x great grandparents, and their journey north from the newly free antebellum south. He is also shooting a sketch show, *The Reynolds*, which is an original piece written and directed by Freddy. Imagine if Martin Lawrence's *Martin* and Eddie Murphy's *The Nutty Professor* made a baby! Ok, I won't torture you any longer. Since you shared your time with me, I will share one of my favorite quotes with you. Deal? Ok great!. "What's for you, won't miss you, if you are you"

**Sophia Sanchez** is excited and grateful to be stage managing *Try/Step/Trip* again. For the past ten years she has stage managed many productions. Her most recent works include *American Mariachi* at South Coast Repertory, *Invincible: The Musical* with Pat Benatar and Neil Giraldo, and *La Virgen de Guadalupe, Dios Inantzin* by the Latino Theater Company. Other productions include *Brown & Out*, a short play theater festival celebrating the Latino/a LGBTQ experience at CASA 0101 in Boyle Heights. It was also presented at Fringe NYC festival in New York in 2014 and the International Gay Dublin Theater Festival in Dublin in 2013. She would like to thank her husband, Michael, and the kids for all their love and support.

**Max Udell** grew up in Highland Park, Illinois, before moving to California in 2014 to attend California Institute of the Arts. While there, he was fortunate enough to be cast in *Try/Step/Trip*, and has enjoyed the privilege of getting to perform with it ever since. He has received numerous rave reviews throughout his lifetime, such as “he’s a really good kid” -his Mother, and “You just wanna squeeze that little punum for days” -Grandmother. He is beyond excited to be back with the show, and can’t wait to perform live theater after the last few years. He deeply appreciates you all coming, and hopes you enjoy the show!

**Dana Rebecca Woods** is happy to be collaborating with Roberta Uno, Dahlak Brathwaite and the wonderful cast and production team assembled for *Try Step Trip*. Her design work includes *Pipeline* at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival; *The Color Purple* directed by Jeffrey Polk at the Greenway Court Theater; Sheldon Epps’ *Blues in the Night* at San Francisco’s Post Street Theater, Laguna Playhouse and The Lovelace Studio Theater at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts; *In the Red and Brown Water* at UC Santa Barbara; *Shout Sister Shout*, *Stop Kiss*, *Above the Fold*, *Fences*, and others for The Pasadena Playhouse; *Jitney* and *Fences* at South Coast Repertory. Her film and television designs include *Go For Sisters*, written and directed by John Sayles; and *Watch Over Me*, a telenovela that aired on My Network TV. Dana was an Assistant Professor at the University of Central Florida and is a member of USA Local 829, Costume Designers Guild Local 892, and Motion Picture Costumers Local 705. She is a Labor Organizer for the Costume Designers Guild and an IATSE Delegate to the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. When not designing productions or involved with labor activities, Dana creates teaching artist curriculum for afterschool programs.

**The Living Word Project** is a theater commissioning, developing and producing company, whose work crosses disciplines integrating photography, film, visual arts and new media into its creations. As a collective of designers, performers, directors and technicians, our work endeavors to break open new modes of narrative, employing emerging aesthetics and techniques that push the possibilities of storytelling and theatre. We commission, develop, premiere and tour our repertory works such as *The Break/s*, *Word Becomes Flesh*, *Scourge, red, black and GREEN*; *a blues*, *Nogales*, */peh-LO-tah/*, *Moving & Passing*, *Chasing Mehserle* and *Translating Selena* by Richard Montoya. Upcoming work includes *Rashomon* by Sean San Jose, directed by Mina Morita; *Last Days a Pu’unene Mill* with Tanya Orellana; and *Prieto* by Yosimar Reyes, Kat Evasco and Jose Antonio-Vargas.



**Actors' Equity Association ("Equity")**, founded in 1913, is the U.S. labor union that represents more than 51,000 professional Actors and Stage Managers. Equity fosters the art of live theatre as an essential component of society and advances the careers of its members by negotiating wages, improving working conditions and providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. Actors' Equity is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions.

## REDCAT TECHNICAL STAFF

Technical Director: Bill Ballou  
Ass. TD, Sound and Video: Pete Pace  
Ass. TD, Lighting Director: Chu-Hsuan Chang  
Audio Engineer: Cordey Lopez

Lighting Support: Donato Karingal  
Deck: Sarah Dawn Lowry  
Wardrobe: Alejandra Aleman Garcia  
Camera Operator: Joshua Hill, Emory Royston

### UPCOMING AT REDCAT

#### **Studio 2022**

March 19 - May 8, 2022

REDCAT's STUDIO series is an annual program supporting multidisciplinary work-in-progress. Responsive to changing needs and concerns, the series adopts various formats and locations, from performances and workshops to public interventions and commissions, to support the development of new work and novel reflections from within the communities of LA-based artists. STUDIO 2022 features the work of Tarrah Krajnak, Sara Lyons, Christina Catherine Martinez, Pastiche Queen, The Revolution School, and DeLanna Studi. Occupying the gallery at REDCAT as an informal space for gathering, storytelling, and performance, STUDIO 2022 focuses on exploratory works across disciplines and media, activating REDCAT's gallery with a variety of practices in a setting for convening with furniture from local designer Sean C Flaherty.

March 29 - April 3: Sara Lyons

April 5 - 10: Pastiche Queen

April 12 - 17: The Revolution School

April 19 - 24: DeLanna Studi

April 26 - May 1: Tarrah Krajnak

May 3 - 8: Christina Catherine Martinez



KCRW is the Official Radio Sponsor of REDCAT

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram: @calartsredcat  
For more information, email [info.redcat@calarts.edu](mailto:info.redcat@calarts.edu) or visit [redcat.org](http://redcat.org)