

Revivals of Blackness - Core Ensemble Member Biographies

Lela Aisha Jones is a movement performance artist, an interdisciplinary collaborator, a community-grounded organizer/curator, and the Founding Director of Lela Aisha Jones | FlyGround. A proud Tallahassee, Florida native, her research intimately and artistically archives lived experiences of diasporic blackness to create contemporary cultural memories and ceremony. Themes that rise from her endeavors include cultural nomadism, reciprocal living, and spiritual translineages. Lela's artistic and activist labor has earned her a 2015 Leeway Transformation Award, a 2016 Pew Fellowship in the Arts, and a 2017 New York Dance and Performance/Bessie Award Nomination. Her most influential experiences have been in movement practice with Brownbody | Deneane Richburg, Christal Brown | Inspirit, Barak Ade Sole, Moustapha Bangoura, Edileusa Santos, Anssumane Silla, Sulley Imoro, Omi Osun Joni L. Jones, Urban Bush Women | Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, and Nia Love. Lela earned a B.S. at University of Florida, an M.F.A. at Florida State University, a Ph.D. at Texas Woman's University, and is a member of the Bryn Mawr College Dance Program faculty. More info at <https://www.flygroundera.com/>

Luke Carlos O'Reilly is an award-winning pianist and composer that has had a passion for music since the early age of 4. He is most heavily influenced by Jazz, Soul, R&B, Gospel, Latin Jazz, Hip-Hop and Classical music. Before the age of 17, Luke had been given the opportunity to play with the likes of Clark Terry, Joshua Redman, Walter Blanding, and Steve Turre. After graduating from Lexington High School in Massachusetts, Luke moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to attend Esther Boyer School of Music at Temple University on an academic and music scholarship. There he studied under Terrell Stafford, Mulgrew Miller, Bruce Barth and many other world-renowned jazz educators. Before graduating in 2004, Luke had fully immersed himself on the Philadelphia jazz and r&b scenes, as well as made a name for himself on the nearby New York scene. After graduating, he recorded and/or toured with Curtis Fuller, Dave Valentin, Billy Paul, Slide Hampton, Nicholas Payton, Fred Wesley, Red Holloway, Steve Turre, Musiq Soulchild, Carol Riddick, K'naan and many others. Luke has released 3 albums as a leader; 'Living In The Now' (2011), '3 Suites' (2013) and most recently, 'I Too, Sing America: A Black Man's Diary' (2021). Between the 3 albums, he has recorded over 20 original songs. Recently, in 2017-2018, Luke was chosen to be an Artist-in-Residence for Philadelphia's prestigious Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. He is currently a teacher for the Kimmel Center, as well as the University of The Arts (Philadelphia).

Alex Shaw is a Philadelphia-based percussionist, sound artist/composer, cultural producer, and arts educator working in the field for over twenty years. Intercultural, interdisciplinary collaborations and compositions merging diverse percussion traditions, vocal textures, field recordings, and digital imagination encompass his current artistic focus. He is the director of renowned Brazilian ensemble, Alô Brasil, and was a section leader in the award-winning Spoken Hand Percussion Orchestra for over a decade, sharing stages with Zakir Hussain, Rennie Harris, and Yacouba Sissoko among others. Alex has produced dozens of public performances and cultural programs including *Consciência Negra: The Legacy of Black Consciousness in Brazil*, a 3-day symposium at Swarthmore College in 2016 that culminated with his original interdisciplinary production, *The Mandinga Experiment*, in homage to Capoeira Angola and its legacy of cultural resistance. He is a faculty member at University of the Arts, the former Artistic Director for Intercultural Journeys (2014-2020), and Co-Director of *Modupúe | Ibaye: The Philadelphia Yoruba Performance Project*. Alex is also a founding board member and lead

teaching artist for World Cafe Live's education programs since 2008. He has received several competitive artist grants and an Emerging Legacy Award at the UPenn MLK Commemorative Symposium for Social Justice. Some of his teachers include Randy Gloss, Kahlil Cummings, Eduardo Santos, Nani Agbeli, Bernardo Aguiar, and Mestre Cobra Mansa, among many others. Alex holds a BA from Swarthmore College and an MFA in World Percussion from the California Institute of the Arts.

Aidan Un is a French-Korean-American filmmaker and photographer based in West Philadelphia. He works primarily in the genre of documentary and is interested in questions of culture, place, and identity. Recent works include *Sisters of the Soil* (2021), a short documentary film made in collaboration with Raishad Momar about a Black-owned bookshop in Philadelphia; *The Ancestors Live* (2020), a feature-length documentary about Kùlú Mélé African Dance and Drum Ensemble; video and photo documentation of *Modupúe | Ibaye: The Philadelphia Yoruba Performance Project*, a community-embedded exploration of the city's rich and diverse expressions of Yoruba-rooted traditions and culture. His work has been featured at the Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival, Mustard Seed Festival, The Outlet Dance Project Festival, New Urban Film Festival, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Blackstar Film Festival. Aidan is also a member of traditional Korean percussion group URIOL and of the Philadelphia chapter of FICA (Fundação Internacional de Capoeira Angola/International Capoeira Angola Foundation).