

About the Artists



Photo: Dave Dja

Melanie Dyer (Mabou Mines Associate Artist) is a violist whose main practice is creative improvisation. She attended the University of Denver's LaMont School of Music and studied with William Lincer, Lee Yeingst, John Jake Kella and Naomi Fellows. She has performed/recorded with the Sun Ra Arkestra under Marshall Allen, William Parker, Tomeka Reid, Heroes Are Gang Leaders, and other notable artists. She founded the WeFreeStrings ensemble in 2011. She co-produced Scientific Soul Sessions, a series of underground salon performances, dialogues, plays and film in her Harlem home from 2004-11. She is currently a Jerome Hill Artist Fellow, and has received support from NYSCA Support for Artists, Herb Alpert Ragdale Prize, New Music USA, Chamber Music America, and Jazz Road South Arts. <https://melanievioladyer.weebly.com/>

Sandye Wilson is a filmmaker and performer whose creative voice has been shaped by wide-ranging experiences, including years in Corporate America. She created the award-winning short films, "So Many Things to Consider"—which premiered at the New York Film Festival and Sundance—and "notsoprivate", a semi-documentary with Carrie Mae Weems exploring sex, love, and desire through the voices of African American women. An early recipient of the National Black Programming Consortium's Emerging Artist Award, Wilson's work is celebrated for its honesty and intimacy. Collaboration is at the heart of her practice. She was a member of the pioneering collective Rodeo Caledonia High-Fidelity Performance Theater and of Gap-Tooth Girlfriends: The Third Act, where she first worked with Melanie Dyer. She and her creative partner, Sally Stewart, co-created Pop Pairings, a lifestyle show celebrating wine, food, life, and storytelling.

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Hao Bai is a multidisciplinary designer in lighting, sound, and video projection for live and virtual performances. Hao works with groundbreaking and innovative artists including Charlotte Braithwaite, Abigail DeVille, Mei Ann Teo, Ping Chong Company, The Talking Band, Mabou Mines, The Wooster Group, The Builders Association, The Hawtplates (Justin Hicks), Pioneers Go East Collective, Loco7, Nia Witherspoon, and New Stage Theatre, etc. Hao's work has been seen internationally at Asia Culture Center (South Korea), WuZhen Festival (China), in the states at CAC (Cincinnati), Stanford, Jone Hall (Houston), and in New York at The Public Theatre, NYU Skirball, BAAD!, La MaMa, JACK, Bushwick Starr, Performance Space New York, New Stage Theatre, 59E59, A.R.T./New York Theatres, 14 Street Y, Stella Adler, The Performing Garage, The Gallery Players, The Tank, etc. <https://www.haobaidesign.com/about>

Charles Burnham is a multi-instrumentalist from Brooklyn, New York whose main instrument is the violin. He gained international recognition in 1983 as a member of James Blood Ulmer's much acclaimed 'Odyssey Trio'. In 1985, Burnham began a 6-year tenure performing worldwide and recording four albums with the 'String Trio of New York'. Burnham's work appears on the Grammy nominated album "Blue Light 'til Dawn" by Cassandra Wilson in 1992, with whom he continued touring for the next decade. Charles Burnham's participation in New York's rich musical scene includes live and recorded performances with Wynton Marsalis, Henry Threadgill, Nora Jones, Henry Butler and Vernon Reid. He is currently playing with Martha Redbone and numerous projects in the U.S. and abroad. Charles' debut album as a composer/leader, "Pitch, Rhythm, and Consciousness" was released by REVA Records in May 2025. He is also a founding member and composer for the vocal group "Eureka Shoes" which recently released "Beautalina" on Adhyâropa Records, October/2024. <https://www.artsforart.org/charles-burnham/>

Carla Cook, Brooklyn-based and Detroit-bred, is a sophisticated jazz singer who finds inspiration in R&B, Motown, pop, gospel and country. Her remarkable voice has earned Cook a Grammy nomination for her debut album, It's All About Love, and widespread critical acclaim for her two subsequent recordings, Dem Bones, ("an intoxicating album that is as adventurous as it is accessible") and Simply Natural ("she remains delightfully free of artifice or affectation"), which solidified her reputation as a songwriter as well as a singer. <https://www.carlacoook.com/>

Warren "Trae" Crudup III ignites drums with wild, tender fire, a sound The Washington Post's Chris Richards hails as "fresh firecrackers" with "profound ceremonial depth." From Dothan, Alabama, to the DMV, Trae's rhythm sparked at three, fueled by a melodic family and the soulful Church of God in Christ (COGIC), carrying him from pews to global stages. Now in New York, Trae blends jazz, gospel, funk, go-go, and global beats into a bold, authentic sound. His sticks have danced with legends—Edward "Butch" Warren, Cecil McBee, James Brandon Lewis—and he drives BLACKS' MYTHS with bassist Luke Stewart, lifting Stewart's 2024 album Unknown Rivers with "explosive rhythms that elevate the work to new heights," per a review. He's electrified crowds from North Sea Jazz Festival (2019) with James Brandon Lewis to Newport Jazz Festival (2024) with the Luke Stewart Silt Trio, his magnetic warmth and relentless groove pulling fans deep into the moment. A UDC Big Band alum, Trae honors his roots while drumming a fierce, joyful path into the future.

Jordyn Davis is an award winning bassist, composer, songwriter, vocalist, and multi-instrumentalist from Detroit, Michigan and currently based in Brooklyn, NY. In May 2019, Davis became the first African-American woman to receive a Bachelor's Degree in Music Composition from Michigan State University as well as the first Michigan State student to receive a Bachelor's Degree in Music Composition and Jazz Studies concurrently. She is the proud leader of her own band **Composetheway** and is one of two inaugural Jazz Leader Fellowship recipients from the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music as well as a teaching artist for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. <https://www.theejordyndavis.com/>

Nikolas Francis is a percussionist, electronic musician, and auditory neuroscientist. Francis began taking lessons in classical piano as a child, while also teaching himself computer music and analog audio electronics. Francis uses the study of sound and the practice of music to facilitate interpersonal exchanges of higher consciousness and well-being. Having found an interest in the neuroscience of listening, Francis earned both a B.A. (Ulowa) and Ph.D. (MIT) in Speech and Hearing Sciences. Today, Francis is a neuroscientist at the University of Maryland and a performing artist living in Washington, D.C.. Francis's electronic music has explored the use of granular synthesis and electro-acoustic instrumentation. For nearly two decades, Francis has focused on improvised music—initially with computers, and more recent ly concentrating on percussion. Francis has worked with artists such as Tyler Higgins, Jim Ryan, Layne Garrett, Dave Sewelson, William Parker, and Jamal Moore. <https://biology.umd.edu/news/sound-decisions-nikolas-francis-beats-his-own-drum-considering-how-brains-process-and>

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Lezlie Harrison is an international singer, recording artist, and radio host whose work bridges jazz, gospel, and contemporary music. She hosts "Come Sunday" on WBGO, celebrating the spiritual and soulful roots of American music, and co-hosts "Singers Unlimited", a showcase of vocal artistry on the global leader in jazz radio. Harrison is the recording artist behind two acclaimed albums, "Soul Book Vol. 1" and her latest, "Let Them Talk", which highlight her rich voice and dynamic interpretive range. Beyond the microphone, she is a co-founder of one of New York City's premier incubators for innovative jazz, The Jazz Gallery. Launched alongside the late trumpeter Roy Hargrove and Dale Fitzgerald, the space has become a vital venue nurturing the next generation of jazz artists. As a performer, broadcaster, and curator, Harrison brings a lifelong commitment to sharing the power and joy of music with audiences worldwide.

Brandi Holt, an independent arts administrator and designer based in Brooklyn, NY, holds a master's degree in arts and cultural management from Pratt Institute. Recently completing the NYFA Incubator for Executive Leaders of Color, Brandi is dedicated to advancing the collaborative practices and operations of contemporary artists, collectives, and institutions. With a focus on non-profit operations, program/project coordination, and artist partnerships, Brandi collaborates with leading artists to bring their visions to life while building operating structures that make them shine.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/brandi-holt-3a3242a1/>

Žilvinas Jonušas graduated from Vilnius University in his native Lithuania with a B.F.A. in Theater and Philology and later received his M.A. in Media Arts and M.F.A. in New Media Arts and Performance from Long Island University. His thesis Epistemologies of Death, Desire, and Disgust in the Films, The Psychological and Social Usefulness was published by VDM Verlag in 2008. His short play The Cleaning was included in The Best American Short Plays of 2006-2007. In addition to his extensive theater work, Žilvinas is a screenwriter, filmmaker (of both live action and animated shorts) a film composer, graphic designer and a visual artist. Very often you can find him designing and building sets and lights for theater and film. <http://zilvinasjonusas.com/filmVideo.html>

Kyoko Kitamura is a vocal improviser, composer and multidisciplinary artist based in Brooklyn, NY. She co-leads the quartet Geometry with cornetist Taylor Ho Bynum, guitarist Joe Morris and cellist Tomeka Reid, and the trio Siren Xypher with violist Melanie Dyer and pianist Mara Rosenbloom. Siren Xypher produces the Brooklyn Free Spirit Festival. For over a decade, Kitamura performed extensively with composer Anthony Braxton and created the acclaimed documentary Introduction to Syntactical Ghost Trance Music, which DownBeat Magazine calls "an invaluable resource for Braxton-philies." A sought-after vocalist for multidisciplinary projects, Kitamura's credits include Matthew Barney's Secondary, Audra Wolowiec's (waves) and Rachel Bernsen's Novel Formats. <https://www.kyokokitamura.com>

Gwen Marie Laster is an award winning creative violin player and conceptual composer. Her devotion to exploring creative writings, readings, spirituality and current events inspire adventurous compositions rooted in the African Diaspora and other Global cultures. Being born and reared in Detroit's community of jazz educators and artists inside the constructs of traditional classical training created the pathway to her broad aesthetic expression. Laster conveys her art through her "alternative chamber ensemble" New Muse 4tet who play new and original works for social activism and her fusion global ensemble "Gameboard". As a soloist, bandleader and improviser, she has performed in Europe, the Caribbean and the U.S. since the early 2000's. Her commissions include Arts Mid Hudson, Composers NOW and Mutual Mentorship for Musicians. She's a 2025 Guggenheim fellow and recipient of the NEA/ Jazz Fellowship, Chamber Music America, MPower Sphinx, Jubilation Foundation, Puffin Foundation and the Mutual Mentorship for Musicians. Her degrees are from the University of Michigan School of Music (BM,MM). Writings include "Is My Black Still Beautiful" (M3) Anthology 5, "Parallel Lives: Suzuki and the Art of Improvisation and Jazz"; The Suzuki Journal and "Music for the Creative String Player" method book. She is a visiting artist in residence at Bard College. <https://www.gwenlaster.net/>

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Alexis Marcelo is a New York City-based pianist whose musical journey began with classical training, providing a solid foundation for his diverse style. Influenced by the vibrant musical landscape of 1980s and 90s New York City and the rich sounds of the African diaspora, Alexis embraces his identity as a Black Latino-American artist. He holds a Bachelor's degree in African Music/Jazz Piano from the University of Massachusetts, where he studied under Dr. Yusef Lateef, exploring composition and improvisation through the unique lens of audiophysiopsychic music, an approach to creative focusing on new music theory, introspection, and fellowship with the other musicians and the audience. This approach fosters deep listening and the creation of new musical ideas that resonate with the essence of his teaching which is to play your true self. Alexis has performed extensively across Europe and the United States as a solo artist and in collaboration with other artists from across the musical landscape. Some of the artists include the GZA of the Wu-Tang Clan, Abiodun Oyewole of the Last Poets, Malcolm Mooney (CAN), Craig Harris, James Brandon Lewis, and many more. Alexis released a record through Infrequent Seams titled *Nananom Xu* in 2024 featuring JD Parran and Daniel Carter, and is preparing to release a solo record soon through Intakt Records (Switzerland). Through innovative performances Alexis continues to explore the limitless possibilities of sound. <https://www.alexismarcelo.com/about>

Teddy Rankin-Parker is a Brooklyn-based cellist and Gestalt therapist whose work explores improvisation and the practice of deep listening. Inspired by Pauline Oliveros's view of listening as an ethical act, he approaches performance as a way of staying in relationship with sound, with others, and with the histories that live through us. He is grateful to be part of Incalculable Likelihood and the community of artists bringing it to life. <https://www.teddyrp.com/>

J.D. Parran, an acclaimed international woodwinds artist, founded the Dance Clarinets jazz orchestra at New York City's Greenwich House Music School in 2013. The orchestra, currently in its 12th year, headlined the Black Composers Upsouth series in 2025. J.D. was a founding member of the St. Louis Black Artist Group (BAG). He has performed with Oliver Lake, James Jabbo, William Parker, Reggie Workman, Lena Horne, Cecil Taylor, Amiri Baraka, Randy Weston, Rosemary George, and many others. He's made numerous appearances on the Interpretations series, New York's Vision Festival, and the New York AACM series. In 2023, he appeared as a soloist in the Metropolitan Opera production of *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*. His recordings include *Spirit Stage* with Shirley LeFlore (1997); *Kokpilau* with Michael Castro (2008); *Omegathorp: Living City* (2007) and *California Street Sessions* (2023) both with Mark Deutsch, and his solo CD *Window Spirits* (2021). <https://greenwichhouse.org/person/jd-parran/>

Eriq Robinson is a musician, audio technician, and life appreciator based in Jersey City.

Shanyse Strickland is a multi-instrumentalist, vocalist, composer and arranger. While French horn is her primary instrument, Ms. Strickland plays a variety of woodwind and brass instruments. Originally from Akron, OH, Shanyse Strickland has led a life full of music in various shapes, forms and sizes. While pursuing her undergrad at Youngstown State University, she played trombone and flute for the reuniting Ohio Players, under the direction of the bands piano player and songwriter, Billy Beck. After moving to New Jersey, Shanyse performed at the 2019 and 2021 Heisman Trophy Ceremony aired on ESPN, along with performing and recording parts for an NBA commercial. Expanding her love for writing music, Shanyse has written and published four original works, one of which was performed by the horn section of the New Haven Symphony titled "Moods." Shanyse has written commissioned works for brass faculty at the University of North Texas, along with many other soloists around the country. <https://www.chromaticbrass.org/shanyse-strickland>

Brooklyn vocalist **Jason Walker** hails from a multi-generational music family — he was cradled in the arms of Mahalia Jackson as a child and has shared the stage with Mick Jagger, Bono, and Elvis Costello. This velvety-smooth vocalist combines jazz, gospel, classical, and soul in an uplifting, honey-sweet sound that's a pure pleasure to take in. Fans rave about this crooner's gorgeous vocals, bluesy bassline interludes, and joyous lyrics that coalesce in his self-coined style of "folk-soul," a revelatory combination of spiritual and secular music that anyone can enjoy. Walker discovered an inclination for music at an early age, and his talent was fostered by his family's deep music roots. After finding his calling in music theatre at Kenyon College, Walker went on to be a featured soloist and ensemble leader for Robert Wilson and Bernice Johnson Reagon's opera, *Temptation of Saint Anthony*, an all-African American production, rooted in the gospel tradition. He most recently toured with Philip Glass and Robert Wilson's *Einstein on the Beach*. In addition to his prolific theater resume, Walker has an impressive solo career. His first album *Just Like You* debuted in 2008, and draws from Walker's musical expertise in the genres of jazz, gospel, classical, and opera. <https://www.soapboxgallery.org/events/jason-walker>

Damayanti Wallace, is a proud Chicago born theatrical director, now based in New York City. Damayanti creates work that centers love, tenderness, and the emotional landscapes of intersectional identity. She has stage-managed for *The 24 Hour Plays: Nationals* and on Broadway, as well as for *ENRON* and *The Moors* at The Atlantic Acting School. Her directing credits include *Persephone*, *The Black One* by Tyler Exum for Sapphest, *Bodies and Beds* by Nadel Henville for Re/Venue at Mabou Mines, and various staged readings, including *Liahona* by Anike Sonuga at Clubbed Thumb, *Gray Mud* by Brie Leftwich with Frayed Knot, and an upcoming production of *Girls! Girls! Girls!* with 'Plays to Look Out For.' Damayanti is committed to building collaborative, emotionally honest work that makes space for underrepresented voices in both theater and film. <https://www.damayantiwallace.com/>

SOURCE CITATIONS

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16. Cover Page "A Narrative of The Life And Adventures of Venture, A Native Of Africa: *But Resident Above Sixty Years in the United States of America*, New London: Printed in 1798. Reprinted A. D. 1835, and published by a descendant of Venture. Rev. and republished with traditions by H. M. Selden, Haddam, Conn., 1896. U.S. Library of Congress.
17. 1743 Map. Homann Erben, Jean Baptiste Bourguignon D' Anville, and R. De Marchais. Gvinea propria, nec non Nigritiae vel Terrae Nigrorum maxima pars: geographis hodiernis dicta utraque Aethiopia inferior, & hujus quidem pars australis. [Norimbergæ: Homannianorum Heredum, 1743] Map. <https://www.loc.gov/item/96687096/>.
18. Photo: African American Coal Miners at New River Gorge, National Park Service , African American Coal Miners: Helen, WV. National Park & Preserve at West Virginia. 1. Dr. Ronald L. Lewis, *Black Coal Miners in America: Race, Class, and Community Conflict 1780-1980* , The University Press of Kentucky, 1987; 2. Christopher Wildinson, *Big Band Jazz in Black West Virginia, 1930-1942*, University Press of Mississippi, Jackson. 2012.
19. Woman Boxing, Photo Credit: Curtis Adams, Creative Impressions Media, Corp on Pexels
20. Woman Boxing in shadow, Credit: Photo by Ron Lach on Pexels
21. Young Black Female Fencers - Photo Credit: [Wavebreakmedia](https://www.gettyimages.com), on iStock, Getty images
22. Young Couple kissing outdoors, Photo Credit Mart Productions, on Pexels
23. Woman with a megaphone! Photo Credit by Kelly on Pexels
24. Protest Sign on the Street, Photo Credit by Kelly on Pexels
25. Landfill Photo credit by [Roman Bulatov](https://www.gettyimages.com) on iStock, Getty images
26. Family Photos:
 - Gwen Laster - Mattie Will Tinsley Laster (Mother)
 - Melanie Dyer - Arthur Moore (Father), Young Karen & Freddy Lou Dyer, James Morrison, Rebecca Elliott, Aunt Rebecca's Son, Cousin Suzette, William and Lydia Wetzel Wallace, Mary Elizabeth Burton & Morrison Siblings, Wallace Women @ Bohemian Cavern in Wash., D.C., The Flamingos/Ezekiel Carey (father) Promo Shot 1957)
 - Kyoko Kitamura - Reiko Kitamura (Mother & Great Grandmother)
 - Charles Burnham - Louis Burnham (Father)
 - J.D. Parran - Gore's New Era Orchestra, 1933; Rev. Herman Gore Sr. out front; Deacon J D Parran Sr. middle rank, 6th from right with soprano saxophone; The Harris Saxophone Trio, Walter Harris, Director- rt to lt: Robert Salter, Darrell Washington, J D Parran; Parran residence in Central West End, ca.1960/61
 - Sandye Wilson Family - Norma Brown & Stanley Wilson
27. James Baldwin Excerpt, Dick Cavett Show May 16, 1969. Internet Archive

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Noise Form

INCALCULABLE LIKELIHOOD is part of the inaugural season of **NOISE FORM** - Mabou Mines' new performance series and forum that draws on every genre yet belongs to none. Each event might unfold as an installation, a work of music-theater, a listening party, a concert . . . a conversation. What binds them is the sense that sound itself carries story, critique, and memory.

Noise Form is the shape that sound assumes when it refuses to be contained. It is a principle of expression: the irreducible friction of presence against expectation. It is the murmur beneath speech, the awkward fracture in movement that resists choreography's elegance. Noise here is revelation - the body speaking in its raw mechanics.

Noise Form is a way of registering the world's refusal to be smoothed into harmony. Where music seeks coherence Noise Form embraces fracture. To invoke **Noise Form** is to recognize that performance does not require resolution. It can thrive on contraction, on dissonance, on the unstable relations between gesture and meaning – the dance that falls apart as it is danced, the conversation that unravels as it seeks to communicate. It is not the enemy of form but its necessary shadow, its echo, its excess. It is performance as the living trace of what cannot be captured, repeated or domesticated.

The series, guided by Co-Artistic Directors Mallory Catlett, Karen Kandel and Carl Hancock Rux, affirms our work remains centered on the interdependence of language, rhythm, and sound.

MABOU MINES

Mabou Mines is a collaborative hub for diverse, intergenerational, avant-garde theater artists. Mabou Mines' creative vision is informed by the ethos of our co-founders: JoAnne Akalaitis, Lee Breuer, Philip Glass, Ruth Maleczek, and David Warrilow. Fifty-six years later, the company remains committed to collaboration and providing a platform for work that interrogates, innovates, and represents a multiplicity of identities and experiences.

Artistic Directors

Mallory Catlett,
Karen Kandel, Carl Hancock Rux

Associate Artists

Tei Blow, Perel, David Thompson,
Carrie Mae Weems, Tamar-kali, Melanie Dyer

Senior Artistic Associates

JoAnne Akalaitis, Clove Galilee, Philip Glass,
Greg Mehrten, Maude Mitchell, David Neumann, Bill
Raymond, Terry O'Reilly, Dianne Smith, Basil Twist,
Sharon Ann Fogarty

Board of Directors

Mallory Catlett, Leonore Cooney, Nicole Kassell,
Jason Jaffrey, Esther Fortunoff, Karen Kandel, David
Preminger, Carl Hancock Rux, Fredrick Sherman

Producer

Autumn Angelettie

General Manager

Brandi Holt

Production Manager

Žilvinas Jonušas

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