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**Contact:**

Katlyn Morahan  
Morahan Arts and Media  
[katlyn@morahanartsandmedia.com](mailto:katlyn@morahanartsandmedia.com)  
(646) 378-9386

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## URBANITY DANCE ANNOUNCES FIVE RECIPIENTS OF NEW CHOREOGRAPHIC RESIDENCY PROGRAM, URBANITY X



### First Urbanity X Performance, *The Sky & the Sea*, Choreographed by Kendall Niblett, March 25 and 26 at Urbanity Central

**March 15, 2022, Boston, MA** — [Urbanity Dance](#) announces the five recipients of its new residency program, [Urbanity X](#). Urbanity X resident artists include: **Boaz "Statix" Deceus**, **Miranda Lawson**, **Sandra "Sasi" Marcelino**, **Kendall Niblett**, and **Ronnie Terrell Thomas**. The program serves as an incubator and career launching pad for talented Boston-based artists providing mentorship, dedicated rehearsal space, a \$1,000 stipend, and access to performance space and technical support.

The five Urbanity X residency recipients were selected by a panel of Boston-based dance leaders including **Tarikh Campbell** (founding member and Executive Director of The CONcept ARTists Dance Company), **Betsi Graves** (Founder/Director of Urbanity Dance), **Adrienne Hawkins** (former Artistic

Director of Impulse Dance Company), **Peter DiMuro** (Executive Artistic Director of The Dance Complex) and **Marissa Molinar** (Founder/Director of Midday Movement Series).

The residency includes the opportunity to create and showcase new choreographic work. The first performance of the Urbanity X residency series, ***The Sky & the Sea***, a work in progress choreographed by **Kendall Niblett** in collaboration with Will Neely and ONASMA: Shadow Dance, takes place on **Friday, March 25** and **Saturday, March 26 at 6pm and 7:30pm** at **Urbanity Central** (725 Harrison Avenue). A Zoom viewing option is also available for both 7:30pm shows. Tickets are available at <https://www.classy.org/event/urbanity-x-the-sky-and-the-sea/e385650>.

*The Sky & the Sea* is an interdisciplinary performance, combining dance, film, and code to illustrate the complexity of how one's real and virtual identity coexists—asking how one's virtual identity relates to and affects their real one and vice versa. It is performed by Urbanity Underground and Junior Apprentice dancers.

“The Urbanity X residency has been such a positive influence in my daily life,” said residency recipient and choreographer of *The Sky & the Sea* Kendall Niblett. “To be able to share with a live audience again has given me something to look forward to every day. I am grateful for the space to create with a wonderful cast of people who have inspired me throughout the whole process.”

Urbanity X is possible due to the generous support of the Garth Family Foundation.

### **About Urbanity Dance**

**Urbanity Dance** was founded as a non-profit arts organization in 2011 by Director Betsi Graves with the mission to engage, inspire, and empower individuals and communities through the art of dance and movement. This mission is manifested through Urbanity's organizational pillars of Company, School, and Community, which strive to achieve three objectives: to propel contemporary dance to the forefront of Boston's cultural landscape; fill an unmet demand for access to training in diverse dance forms; and use dance as a tool for fostering bodily autonomy and creativity in local schools and community spaces. Through its three South End studios and work in the community, Urbanity is proud to provide high-quality dance experiences to over 10,000 dance-lovers of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities every year.

Urbanity's Professional Company offers challenging, entertaining, and visionary experiences that leverage excellence to activate space, engage art, and build connection. With its blend of disciplines ranging from modern jazz to breakdance, it embodies Urbanity's commitment to community by celebrating the collective tapestry of lived experiences and training of its dancers. Company performances, workshops, and classes promote empathy and harness the collaborative spirit and energy of Boston residents and its multidisciplinary arts network. Through these efforts, the Company has been recognized as one of Boston's Best by *Improper Bostonian*, a “Best of Boston” winner by *Boston Magazine*, and a Top Ten Critics' Pick by *The Boston Globe*. To date, it has presented work at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, The Alvin Ailey Citigroup Theater, The Institute of Contemporary Art, and venues across New England, New York, New Mexico, Virginia, Texas, and Florida.

The School at Urbanity Dance offers high-quality dance training in several styles and genres for over 500 students of all ages and experience levels each year through its three South End studios. The faculty, all from diverse cultural and dance backgrounds, supports each student in their training through a structured, nurturing classroom environment that fosters growth, discipline, and fun. The School's teaching philosophy aims to teach to the whole dancer and develop students' emotional, social, and physical well being to become fully empowered individuals.

Urbanity's commitment to Community encompasses a diverse range of partnerships with schools, health centers, local arts institutions, enrichment camps, and juvenile detention centers through its three flagship programs: Urbanity in the Community, which provides dance curriculum to Boston Public School students who otherwise would not have access; Dance with Parkinson's, which uses movement to improve the mobility, balance, and coordination of those with Parkinson's Disease and other neurodegenerative disorders; and Movement Mends, which uses movement to empower and inspire those who have

experienced incarceration, homelessness, or violence.

Together, the Company, School, and Community programs create an interwoven network that provides high-quality art experiences to students of all ages and backgrounds, as well as paid opportunities for all professional dancers, dancemakers, artistic collaborators and teachers, that serve Urbanity's mission, its South End neighborhood in Boston, and the city at large.

#### **About Boaz "Statix" Deceus**

**Boaz "Statix" Deceus** is an up and coming dancer from Boston, specializing in street dance, such as Krump, Hip Hop and popping. He has performed and competed in the greater Boston area and traveled and danced in Texas, New York, California, and Minnesota. Boaz has taught at Urbanity and other studios as well. His goal as a dancer is to teach and show people the street dance culture, and how they can use it as therapy. His motto in life is "Practice makes progress".

#### **About Miranda Lawson**

**Miranda Lawson** (she/her) is a dancer and choreographer originally from Somerville, Massachusetts where she trained at The Studio Dance Complex (TSDC). She participated in regional and national level dance competitions with TSDC for ten years and frequently returns there to teach. She is in her final semester at Mount Holyoke College and during her time there, Miranda has performed in works by Shakia Barron, Barbie Diewald, Katie Martin, Jenna Riegel and in TU Dance's "One" restaged by Kaitlin Bell. She has also worked professionally with Urbanity Dance and has had many collaborations with Contemporarily Out of Order. Miranda has attended Bates Dance Festival, was the recipient of the Leadership Scholarship from American Dance Festival, has been an intern for Boston University's REACH Summer Dance program, and has had her work selected to be shown at the American College Dance Association Conference. She is currently working professionally on "Concourse" with Barbie Diewald and Shakia Barron, which was most recently in residence at Jacob's Pillow and High Street Studios.

#### **About "Sasi" Marcelino**

**"Sasi" Marcelino**, is a multi-disciplined performing artist and producer with a passion for investigation, preservation, and conscious continuance of Afro-Caribbean culture through music and dance. Born in the Caribbean, raised in Boston, with over 25 years of performance experience, Sasi tours internationally performing as a vocalist, dancer, and percussionist.

#### **About Kendall Niblett**

**Kendall Niblett** (he/they), a native of Morris, Alabama, obtained their BA in dance and creative writing from the University of Alabama. Kendall is currently in their third season dancing with Urbanity Dance Company. He has performed and choreographed internationally with Yonder Contemporary Dance Company at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and Jellybean Dance Collective at the International Fitzgerald Conference. Kendall has worked with CREATE, BCA's Dance Makers Laboratory, Alabama Dance Festival, Koresh Come Together Festival, Young Choreographers Festival, Boston Contemporary Dance Festival, Frame x Frame Film Festival, Alabama Repertory Dance Theater, and Dance Alabama Film Festival.

#### **About Ronnie Terrell Thomas**

**Ronnie Terrell Thomas** is an interdisciplinary artist who journeyed in the rigor of visual and performing arts. With a hand in drawing from a very young age, Ronnie explored the performance world. He started training as an actor, then ventured into ballet and modern dance as a teenager, and later expanded to include Breakdance, Aerial work, Vogue, and Hip Hop. Ronnie has performed with many companies from New York City to Boston. In 2014, he was invited to work in Europe with Teatrul De Balet Sibiu, Romania, which included performing *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *The Nutcracker*. In 2015, he returned to the US and started Mystique Illusions Dance Theatre. In recent years, Ronnie has explored photography, and film work.

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