

Introducing Our 2022 “25 to Watch”

By: Gigi Berardi
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TO WATCH

What's next? Our annual list of dancers, choreographers and companies on the verge of breaking through offers several answers to the question of where our field is headed. We're betting we'll be seeing—and hearing—more from these 25 artists not just this year, but for many more to come.

SIERRA ARMSTRONG | BALLET22 | BAYE & ASA | CHRISTINA CARMINUCCI |
ASHLEY GREEN | JOHNATHON HART | MAXFIELD HAYNES |
JOYA JACKSON | DARIAN KANE | SIENNA LALAU | DARVENSKY LOUIS |
BRIANNA MIMS | COURTNEY NITTING | MTHUTHUZELI NOVEMBER |
PARA.MAR DANCE THEATRE | BO PARK | GENEVIEVE PENN NABITY |
ADRIANA PIERCE | ARIELLE SMITH | SIMONE STEVENS | OGEDMI UDE |
IMRE AND MARNE VAN OPSTAL | ILYA VIDRIN AND JESSI STEGALL |
ADRIANA WAGENVELD | CARTER WILLIAMS

OGEDMI UDE

Dance artist, educator and doula

If there's a throughline to the genre-bending work of choreographer Ogemdi Ude, it's how Black folks' experiences—especially their grief—lives in their bodies.

It shows up in *Living Relics*, a collaboration with visual artist Sydney Mieko King that asks participants to locate grief in their own bodies and then physicalize it by making plaster molds of those places, and in her tour-de-force solo *Nothing Like That Is Ever Going to Happen to Me Again*, where she searches for memories of those she's lost, desperately piecing together bits of movement and text.

But there's also joy to be found in Ude's work: Though she claims she isn't tech-savvy, she's been playfully exploring video and multimedia since long before virtual work became the norm, and she often sources memories from her Atlanta upbringing, where her first exposure to dance was majorettes. Ude works as a doula, as well, which she sees as deeply interconnected to her dance practice—especially in the form of AfroPeach, a collaboration with fellow dancer/doula Rochelle Jamila Wilbun that offers postpartum dance workshops.

Through a pandemic defined by collective grief, Ude has been prolific—and she's gotten her due notice. In addition to continuing to perform with choreographers like iele paloumpis and Marion Spencer, her 2022 and 2023 are stacked with commissions and residencies, including at Abrons Arts Center, Gibney, Danspace Project, The Watermill Center and BRIC, plus more to be announced. —Lauren Wingenroth



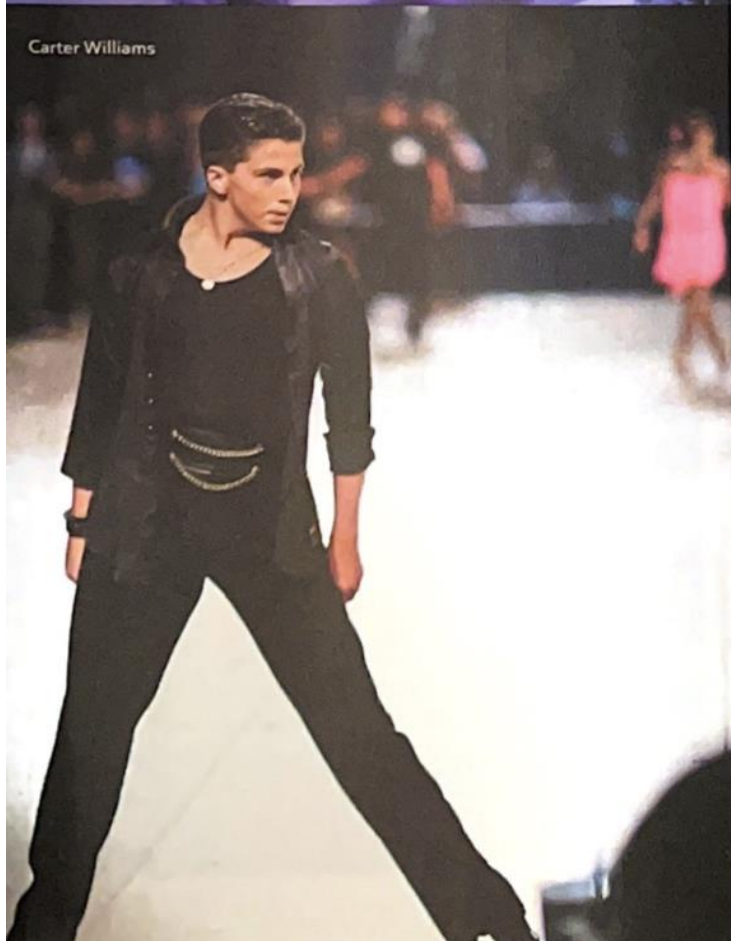
Ashley Green (above) with Whim W'Him's Lane Cracovaner

ASHLEY GREEN

Dancer, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Ashley Green was a standout dancer—and actor—throughout Whim W'Him's all-digital 2020–21 season, her first with the company. Artistic director Olivier Wevers, who discovered her soon after her graduation from Point Park University, says her vitality is “a rare gift. She’s a creative soul, radiating joy, an extraordinary collaborator with an innate way of approaching movement that pulls you in.” The 23-year-old picked up a 2021 Princess Grace Award last summer, and shortly thereafter moved across the country to join Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. “Explosive, in a word,” describes Ailey artistic director Robert Battle. “She’s not trying on the movement, she’s living it. Even in a little Instagram improvisation, she jumps through the screen.” This unpretentious, passionate dancer has staying power, predicts Battle. “She’ll continue to grow.”

—Gigi Berardi



Carter Williams

CARTER WILLIAMS

Ballroom dancer

Ballroom phenom Carter Williams’ fluidity and striking stage presence have landed him accolades you don’t expect to see on a 19-year-old college student’s resumé. He’s already been a four-time World Latin Dance Finalist and a two-time National DanceSport Latin Dance Champion. On screen, his credits include the first two seasons of NBC’s “World of Dance” and three seasons of “America’s Got Talent.” His longtime private coach Afton Wilson says it’s not just Williams’ extreme versatility, but also his super-sensitive partnering and precision turns that make him stand out on a crowded floor. He’s racking up even more wins as a member of Utah Valley University’s dance team as he works towards a degree in marketing and aims for a professional career. With his easy, self-assured air and clean, quick moves, he already dances like a pro. —Gigi Berardi