



DANCERS UNLIMITED
NYC & HAWAII



Photo Credit: Matthew Venanzi

About DU

Dancers Unlimited (DU) is a bi-coastal professional company based in NYC and Hawai'i. The company **creates authentic moveMEANT narratives for the advancement of our community** through creative expression, community collaboration and social justice work.

Dancers Unlimited is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization.

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History

Established in **2009**, Dancers Unlimited (DU) started as free youth dance classes on Furlough Fridays in Hawai'i, when public schools were canceled on Fridays due to funding cut. The company has since presented work in NYC and Hawai'i, has toured extensively in Asia, produced National Dance Week Hawaii & Bboy In Shanghai USA Finals, and offered scholarship trips to dancers in NYC and Hawai'i.

In **2010**, DU presented its first full-length repertoire at Shanghai World Expo. The company represented the USA Pavilion and performed on stages throughout the Expo, and provided street shows to guests in a queue for the Pavilion. DU's Shanghai debut led to the company and its Artistic Director, Linda Kuo, working with various educational and creative partners in Shanghai, including the US Embassy, Youth Town, MCreative Center, Qianshuiwan Culture Center, and Bboy In Shanghai. In 2012, DU collaborated with House DJ company A Room Of House for an evening celebration of contemporary artists, musicians and dancers from Hawai'i at Qianshuiwan Culture Center.

In **2014**, DU established its NYC company, DUNYC. The company has since performed on stages throughout NYC, including Ailey Citigroup Theatre, Jazz Choreography Festival, NY City Center Studios, Triskelion Arts Center, and Time Square Open House Festival. Rooted in the street and underground dance scenes, DUNYC continues to perform at industry showcases including Sybarite: Love in Love and Boogieland Central/Funkbox NYC.

In January **2019**, DUNYC and DU Hawaii united for the first time on Oahu for its community engagement projects and performances at Oahu Fringe Festival. In March 2019, DUNYC produced two sold-out evening productions at Mark O'Donnell's Theater at The Actors Fund Arts Center, featuring choreography by award-winning choreographer Sekou Heru (Dance Fusion NYC, MOPTOP Family) and original music by Grammy-nominated artist Carolyn Malachi. In April, the company presented two community programs at Honolulu Biennial.

Entering the **new decade**, DUNYC performed at International Human Rights Arts Festival and Jazz at Lincoln Center. The company launched its inaugural dance travel program: MoveMEANT Destinations, intersecting dancing and social responsibility around the world. Most recently, Dancers Unlimited was awarded the choreographic residencies at **Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Downtown Brooklyn Partnership, Waiwai Collective** and **Gibney Dance**. The company also received funding from **Hawaii Council for The Humanities** and **Women's Sports Foundation** to support its ongoing community programs.



Photo Credit: Matthew Venanzi

Mission

Artistry

The essence of Dancers Unlimited is creating powerful & authentic movement narratives for the advancement of our community, as well as communities we enter. Our artistic voice blends Contemporary, Street and Club dance styles while being rooted in cultural practices. Our work seeks to inspire healing, generate dialogues and elevate authentic expression.

Community Engagement

Established as a free youths program, we have remained rooted in growing and refining our community programs. We have worked with partners in the US and abroad to provide public dance classes and events.

In 2019, we introduced MoveMeant For Every Body, a program designed to encourage authentic movement expressions and facilitate community dialogues and celebrate the individual body through panel discussions, dance workshops and travel partnerships.

Since the Pandemic, we have shifted program offerings virtually, including the new Edible Tales community programs and documentary project.



Photo Credit: Phil Mahabeer



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Linda Kuo

Executive & Co-Artistic Director

As a choreographer, Linda's work has been presented on stages in NYC, Hawaii and abroad. Some of her choreographic credits include Shanghai World Expo 2010, US Embassy in China, The Contemporary Museum of Honolulu, Honolulu Academy of Art, NYC 10 / NYC Dance Week, Peridance Capezio Center, Triskelion Arts SummerFest, Oahu Fringe Festival, Honolulu Biennial 2019, International Human Rights Arts Festival, and Jazz at Lincoln Center.

Linda recently debuted her theater choreography at Off-Broadway Production "Maternity Monologues," written and produced by award-winning BBC contributor Catherine Higgins-Moore.



Photo Credit: Johnathan Michaels

Born in Taiwan and raised in Hawaii, Linda is shaped by cultural diversity and performing arts including dancing the Hula. Her Hawaii upbringing as an immigrant helped cement her belief in dance as the backbone of cultural identities and resilience. Her choreography addresses social and cultural issues while fusing contemporary, Street and cultural dances with a strong emphasis on authentic & diverse storytelling. Her creative vision has shaped DU artistic and community engagement missions.

Linda has a versatile dance background in Hula, Ballet, Jazz, Contemporary, Hip Hop, House, Swing, Hustle, Voguing, and Waacking. She continues House dance and Capoeira training with House Dance Pioneer, Sekou Heru. She is part of BOLD initiative at Urban Bush Women and is an alumnus of 92nd Y's Dance Education Lab. Most recently she was a panel speaker at the Dance/NYC Symposium, an artist in residence at Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, and a grant awardee for Hālāwai NYC.

Linda is a MFA in Dance Candidate from University of The Arts and holds a Nonprofit Arts Management Certificate from New York University.



Photo Credit: Candice Taylor

Candice Taylor

Co-Artistic Director

Candice Taylor, born and raised in Boston Massachusetts. She began her dance training in high school at Boston Arts Academy, where she was trained in Ballet, Modern, Tap, Jazz, and African. She continued her studies at Dean College in Franklin, Massachusetts. After receiving her bachelor's she went on to work for Disney Cruise Line as a character performer. In 2017, she moved to New York and since then she has worked with artists such as Bill T.

Jones, Sidra Bell, Tweet Boogie and many more. Candice has also done commercial work with Paula Abdul and film work with Comedy Central. Most recently, she was an artist in residence with Ladies of Hip Hop and Black Dancing Bodies at Bethany Arts Center and Lincoln Center.

She enjoys using dance as a way of connecting with humans and communicating and exchanging feelings, ideas, and philosophies. In 2020, she began Catch A Vibe, which is a pop-up dance improvisation session based in different neighborhoods in New York. It is a safe space that is curated to explore movement through various prompts that are meant to challenge the minds and bodies of the participants. She wishes to continue to use movement as a vessel for cultivating change. Her body is her voice and she feels it is her duty to speak as loud as possible.

Candice joined Dancers Unlimited in 2019, after creating and training with the company at its community rehearsals since 2017. She has helped establish collaborative relationships with organizations such as Brooklyn Grange, and she has facilitated workshops in NYC, Hawai'i and virtually.

Collaborators & Advisors



Sekou Heru

(Dance Fusion NYC, MOPTOP Crew)

A Hip Hop and House dance pioneer, Sekou has served as DU's advisor since 2014. He fuses an array of forms from Hip Hop, House, martial arts, and fitness training. He has performed with Jazzy Jeff/Fresh, Prince, Mariah Carey, Michael Jackson, Will Smith, Aretha Franklin, MC Lyte's and Foxy Brown/JayZ. Sekou's choreography for Fall Out Boy's "Dance Dance" music video has won many awards, including Viewer's Choice at the MTV Video Music Awards and two Teen Choice Awards. Sekou played the main character Malcom X in his most recent stage performance "The Greatest" with The Peggy Choy Dance Company at La Mama Theater in New York and the University of Madison in Wisconsin. Sekou is one of the most respected House dance teachers around the world. As our advisor, Sekou brings to the company his performance and training expertise, while offering artistic feedback for our repertoire work



'Auli'i Aweau

'Auli'i has served as DU's cultural and spiritual advisor since 2010. With her background in counseling and spiritual work, as well as Hawaiian cultural education, 'Auli'i brings to the company a plethora of tools to create socially powerful work that speaks to our authentic experiences. 'Auli'i is the founder and Kumu of Na Wahine o La'akea, DU's sister Hula group with a mission to heal individuals and communities through the art of Hula and Hawaiian cultural practices. 'Auli'i is also the founder and director of La'akea Healing Services, a grass roots organization that offers an array of educational and therapeutic services. She is excited to share her love of hope, healing and recovery with the world.



Jermaine Fletcher (DJ Maineframe)

Maineframe is our in-house music producer, responsible for most of the music in our repertoire work. Maineframe grew up in a musician family with a heavy Jazz influence. He started producing music in high school, and his work has been featured in commercials, featured films and TV productions including Bric TV's Brooklynification and The Curators of Hip Hop documentary series. Most recently he was a featured musician at Sundance Film Festival & Tribeca Film Festival. In addition to making music, Maineframe is a filmmaker who has worked for Bloomberg Media, ESPN and The Grammy Academy.



Photo Credit: Johnathan Michaels

Dancers

NYC

Abril Amparo
Kingsley Ibeneche
Angie Miller
Litsie Monier
Melvin Shieh
Candice Taylor
Marmara Tobal

Hawai`i

Alaina Cota
Chloe Groom
Keala Fung
Nicole Woo




Photo Credit: Jordan Medeiros

Repertoire





Watch on  YouTube

CYPHER: Homecoming

Number of dancers: 8

Length: 60 minutes

Original Music: DJ Maineframe and Nadelle Scott.

Tech notes: Video projection and live DJ if possible

CYPHER: Homecoming embraces the dance circle as a place of HUEMan connection, expression, and celebration. It blurs social and political boundaries and finds commonality using the universal language of dance.

CYPHER also pays tribute to our ancestors on and off the dance floor, who have empowered us all with dance steps coded with messages of resilience, hope and joy.

A special 10-minute slot has been build into the production to collaborate with local talents or invite the audience into the cypher wherever the show is presented.

CYPHER: Homecoming is a collection of the following repertory:



Photo Credit: Michael Yu

I'mMigration

Choreography: Linda Kuo

Original Music:

DJ Outsource & DJ Mainframe

Length: 20 minutes

Number of dancers: 5

Tech Notes: Projection

I'mMigration is a collaboration between professional dancers, artists, and local students. The project aims to create a platform for discussion on immigration topics, including cultural identities, legislative and discriminatory challenges, and the reasons for immigrating to a new country.

The creative process for I'mMigration includes unique, accessible experiences that take place both inside and outside of traditional dance spaces. The culminating interactive dance experience includes a staged performance and multimedia installations.

Our hope is for the project to serve as a springboard for further conversations and collaborations that embrace empathy and collective growth in our communities.

WATCH



Photo Credit: Mahina Choy

Ola Ka Huaka`ihele O Hi`iaka

Becoming Hi`iaka

Choreography: Linda Kuo, Anthony Aiu, Keala Fung, and Hula from Mauna Kea
Fashion Designer: Kauila Kanaka`ole

Music: Live percussion & nose flute, DJ Mainframe

Length: 60 minutes

Number of dancers: 7

Tech Notes: Video Projection

WATCH

Celebrating Hawaiian culture and identity, we collaborated with designer Kauila Kanaka`ole, great-grandson of the legendary Kumu Edith Kanaka`ole to create the story and designs of the fashion show.

This show combines a`ahu, ceremony, fashion and movement to tell a story of a people who are being silenced and lied about, revealing the real truths of where they began and what they stand on.

Fashion and live performance art connect hand in hand in this earnest yet cultural storytelling beginning with the telling of the origins then onto the reclamation and then concluding in which the audience is invited to chant, dance, and feel the vibration of Hawaiian culture as well as how it is connected to the land and space we live on.



Photo Credit: Jordan Medeiros

Edible Tales

Choreography: Linda Kuo & Dancers
Music: Shylah Ray, DJ Mainframe, DJ
Outsource, VHOOR, Earth People, Air
Family, Kingsley Ibeneche
Length: 75 minutes
Number of dancers: 7
Tech Notes: Video Projection

Available performances:
Hawai'i
Nyc

[WATCH](#)

Edible Tales explores cultural heritage, social justice and environmental sustainability through food-related topics. Our creative process is collaborative with the general public and food / farm industry experts. Through open discussions and movement exploration sessions, we co-created phrases and ideas with the participants and later develop them for the stage and dance film.

Edible Tales is a dance documentary project consists of live performances, dance films, and community interviews. Each segment of the project can be presented as its own event.

Edible Tales

Highlights

Soul Food

Choreography: Candice Taylor

Dancers: Candice Taylor and Kareem Woods

Djembe: Maineframe

Music track(s): Yogurt by Levantis, Oblivious ft. Bruno_M (Afro House Mix) by DJ Kev Karter (ALL Licensed); mixed by Jermaine Fletcher (DJ Maineframe)

This piece is about how our ancestors turned scraps into magic that allowed them to transport back home, touching on the spiritual aspect of soul food.

Sisterhood of the Traveling Seeds

Choreography: Candice Taylor and Marmara Tobal

Dancers: Candice Taylor and Marmara Tobal

Music: Wayfare by Makzo The Kount, Freedom by TEK.LUN, Spanish Guitar by Groove Garcia (ALL Licensed); mixed by Jermaine Fletcher (DJ Maineframe)

This piece highlights our human interconnectedness with one other and the Earth, telling the story of regeneration & showing the beauty we can create when we come together.



Celebrations

Choreography: Marmara Tobal

Dancers: Brit Hay, Marmara Tobal, Candice Taylor, Kareem Woods, Hara Zi

Music: Isolee by Beau Mot Plage (Licensed)

This piece is inspired by cultural celebrations, how different cultures around the globe celebrate their traditions and ancestors.

Lawa'ia

Ke Ao: Nicole Maileen Woo

Ke Kai/Limu 'Ele'Ele: Marnita Billups, Chloe Bee


Ulua: Keala Fung, Maureen Kearn

Choreographer: Keala Fung

Music: Kukulu Ka Pahu- chanted by Taupori Tangaro, He Mele no Kāne- chanted by Nani Peterson and Makaio Villanueva

This piece honors the natural processes of this particular part of the coastline that I kilo. The entire ecosystem functions and exists because of the freshwater springs present. When this whole cycle thrives, I thrive. None of this would be possible without fresh water. Ola i ka wai!





"Edible Tales features awesome 'āina experts and warriors teaching us about our food systems. The presentations are then followed by a creative way to reflect together as a community — through questions and discussion, but then also through moving our bodies and making up dance moves!

I attended the last presentation on pōhaku and fishponds, by Kinohi Pizzaro Fukumitsu, virtually, with my little brother, and we left the gathering feeling stoked to do more and be a part of the story."

– Aiko Yamashiro, Executive Director of Hawaii Council for the Humanities

**Edible
Tales**

Edible Tales

Community Sessions

"Edible Tales is inspired by our community, and guided by our individual and collective experiences. It's an ode to our shared humanity and an opportunity to build a better future for the future generations."

– Linda Kuo, Co-Artistic Director



Photo Credit: Linda Kuo



Food MoveMEANT Session Topics:

- Personal Food Memories
- Soul Food
- Cultural Celebrations
- Kalo (Taro) & Ohana
- Indigenous farming and harvest
- Water - origins and access
- Ancestral food & altar building
- Foods In School System
- Food sovereignty & food apartheid
- Food Cultivation & land restoration

Edible Tales Is Supported by:

- [Hawai'i Council For The Humanities](#)
- [National Endowment For The Humanities](#)
- [Lower Manhattan Cultural Council](#)
- [Downtown Brooklyn Partnership](#)
- [Brooklyn Grange Urban Farm](#)
- [Brooklyn Arts Council](#)
- [Waiwai Collective](#)
- [Na Wahine O La'akea](#)
- [Ola Loa Organics](#)



Audience Feedback

"We were so grateful to learn, grow and connect with so many beautiful human beings at Edible Tales. We admire how you have created a special space full of ALOHA."

**– M. Minturn,
Dance Educator &
Raúl Sabor Uno**

"Your message about your mission is so clear, and the live performances and dance films are beautifully done. I loved that I could actually take part in the hands-on activities!"

**– M. Wu,
Dancer & Multimedia Producer**

"There's a genuine sense of curiosity, kindness and respect that you've cultivated in your community and events, that I cannot say is true of all organizations and events."

**– C. Tsuchida
PR Specialist and Audience**

"Edible Tales was an unexpected unique experience which was interactive and fun. Food stories and visuals were created to share tales about culture, sustainability and to explore "what feeds our souls". The performances were beautiful. The dinner from Waiahole Poi Factory was delicious. I am so glad that I attended this event!"

**– Mel Kel
Community Member**

"It was fun and great to see everyone having a good time learning about the food we eat, and how we take care of the 'āina as Kanaka. Thank you for having me join you guys for the event."

**– Uncle Calvin Hoe
Hawaiian Cultural Practitioner
& Educator**



Dance Films

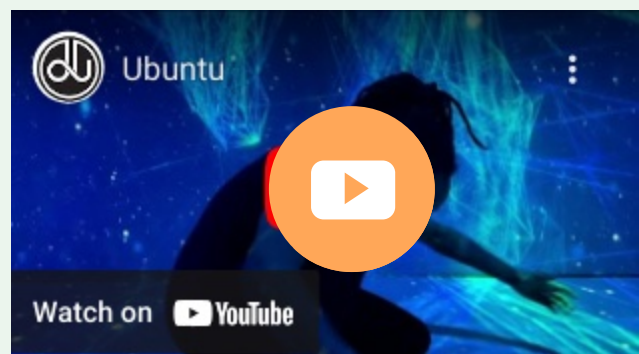
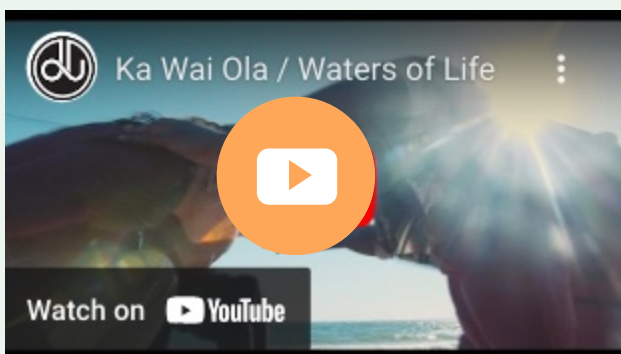
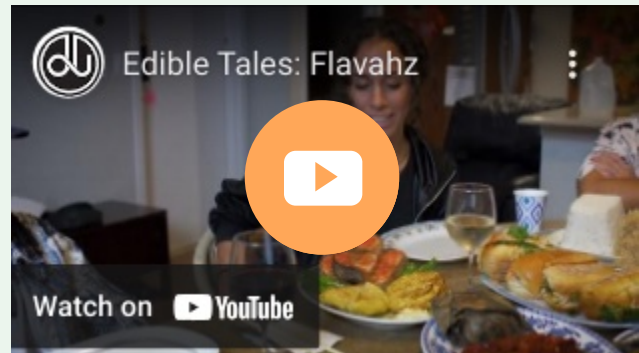
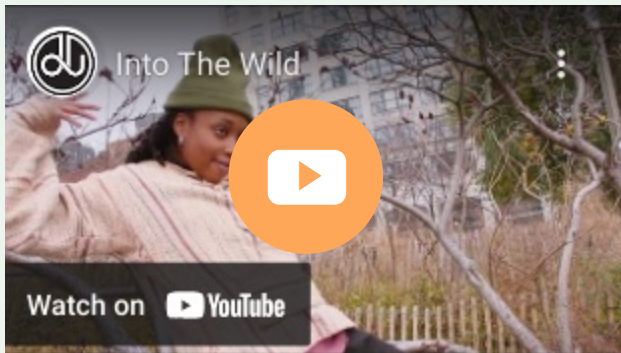
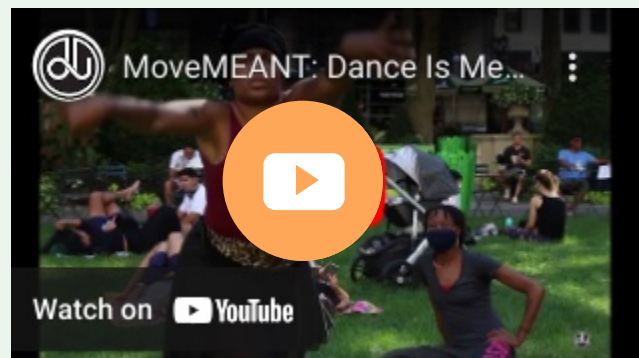
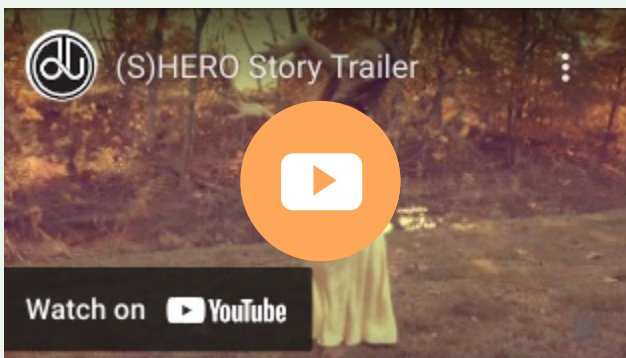
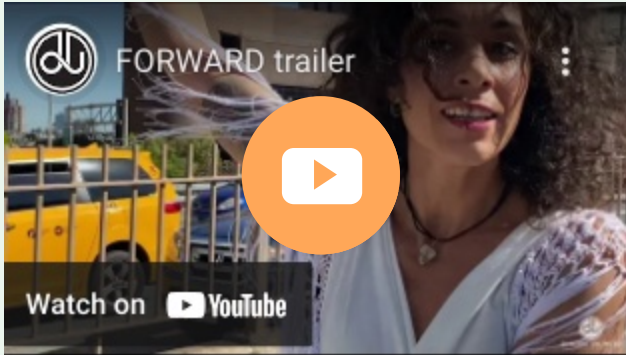




Photo Credit: Michael Yu



Photo Credit: Michael Yu



Photo Credit: Michael Yu

Community Engagement

Community collaboration and outreach are a key part of our identity. Our programs are community driven and designed with justice, equity and inclusion in mind. Program offerings include:

- Residencies
- Repertoire workshops
- Technique Classes
- Community Rehearsals / Choreo Lab
- MoveMEANT Sessions
- MoveMEANT Destination Travel
- Panel Discussions
- Speaking Engagement

All programs can be in-person and virtual.

[Download our community program brochure](#)



School Residency:

Cultural Identity, Resilience & Sustainability in Hip Hop

Description

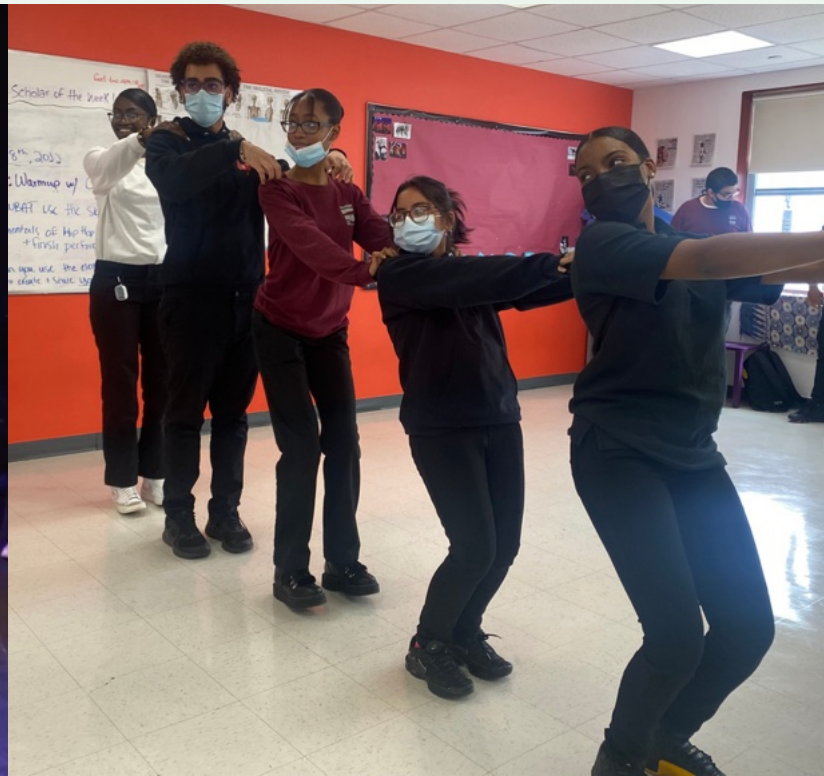
Students will examine dance as a social documentation of cultural identity, and discover how the intersections between cultural identity and dance-making can help them create their own dance stories around personal identity/culture narratives.

Students perform their original choreography at our community performance with guest dance companies.

Past Facilitators & Teaching Artists:

- Bgirl Rokafella
- Willie MB Estrada
- Candice Taylor
- Bboy Spydey
- Kareem Woods

Nuasin Next Generation Charter School



Spring CommUNITY Week

Each May, DU celebrates AAPI Heritage month and our NYC Dance Community with The Spring CommUNITY week. The week features **donation-based workshops, dance battles, guest performances, sustainable fashion dance show and community discussions.**

The festival has been funded by the Women's Sports Foundation in partnership with Athleta and Alicia Keys, with community partners including Mark Morris Dance Center, Peridance Center, and H+ Hip Hop Dance Conservatory.



Asia Pacific Dance Festival 2022

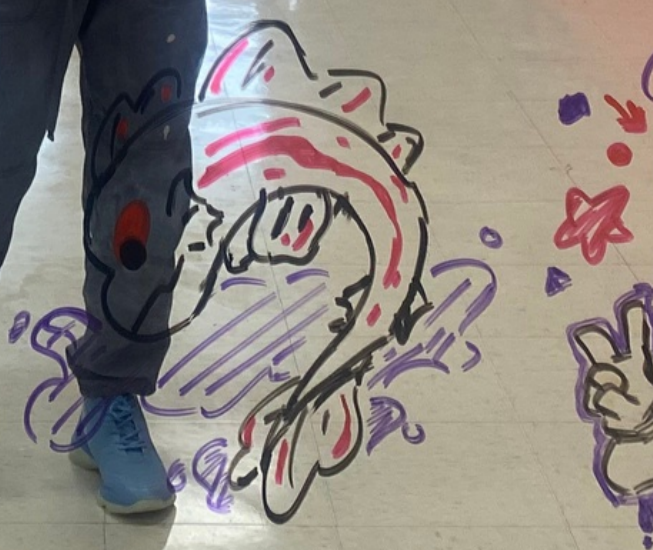
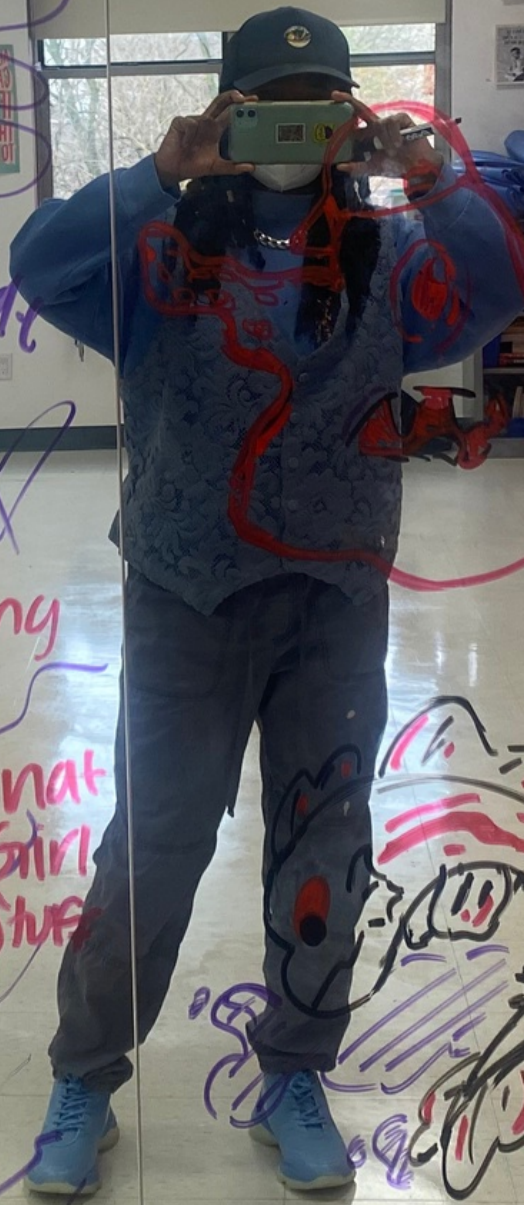
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa , Honolulu, Hawaii



The Asia Pacific Dance Festival Conference is a three-day conference offering the best of culture-based dance research, approaches, and issues.

DU taught an Edible Tales workshop and performed an excerpt of the repertoire work.

Family
Fresh Start
Outside
hot
It's giving
That Girl Stuff
2023
me to be
has



Press



“Whatever [Linda Kuo] learns, whatever she does, it feels like dance is part of her – roots keeping her grounded, content, fulfilled. Even with connections in NYC and L.A., she’s also rooted in the waters and soil of Hawaii . . . She’s found ways to bloom far and wide from those roots – and in the process, bring the magic of dance to so many who may otherwise never have known it.”

– **Kathryn Boland of [Dance Informa](#)**

“Throughout its [history], Dancers Unlimited’s guiding principle has been a . . . ‘call and response’ with the community. [It has] curated the space to hold people to come as their full selves . . . [It] is very much rooted in autonomy and sovereignty of the [individual].”

– **Chelsea Tsuchida for [PALM Magazine](#)**

“Community and cultural awareness isn’t something Linda just instilled within her organization; it is a lifestyle for her . . . As DU continues to give back to the community [with] projects like MoveMEANT for Every Body and I’mMigration, there are lessons to be learned and stories to inspire us all.”

– **Brooklyn's Lifestyle**

“[DU] delved into food-adjacent social justice topics . . . through conversations about immigration, assimilation, the loss of connection to cultural food, or the loss of land . . . The conversation shifted from comfort food towards social justice and cultural heritage.”

– **Sophie Bress for [Dance Magazine](#)**

“[Edible Tales] provides a safe space for dancers and non-dancers alike, to discuss healing, the fight for justice and much more through movement inspired by food, recipe sharing and intimate conversations.”

– **Yannise Jean for [BKReader](#)**

Please visit our [press page](#) for additional media coverage.



DUTV APP

Download our mobile app for FREE on-demand content: classes, performances, community events, dance films and more! Available soon: DUTV+ paid content.



Download here!





Photo Credit: Dianna Cruz



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Contact

Linda Kuo

linda@dunyc-hi.com

(808) 888-9858

Executive & Co-Artistic Director

Candice Taylor

candice@dunyc-hi.com

Co-Artistic Director

Keala Fung


Hawaii@dunyc-hi.com

Hawai'i Program Coordinator

 www.DUNYC-HI.com

 Community@dunyc-hi.com

 [/dunyc.hi](https://www.facebook.com/dunyc.hi)

 [@dunyc.hi](https://www.instagram.com/dunyc.hi)

 [@DancersUnlimitedHi](https://www.youtube.com/DancersUnlimitedHi)

 [Dancers Unlimited](https://www.tiktok.com/DancersUnlimited)

**Community Engagement
& Residencies**

Community@dunyc-hi.com

Mahalo | Thank You