



Photo: Richard Scott

ARTIST BIO

Deneane Richburg is the founder and Artistic Director of Brownbody, a theatrical, modern dance repertory company that fuses dance and figure skating. Brownbody is the creative home for Richburg's choreographic work through which she honors the complex narratives of U.S.-based Black diasporic communities by taking participants on a journey that disrupts assumptions and encourages self-discovery, healing, and transformation. As a modern dance choreographer and former competitive figure skater, Richburg is interested in pushing the boundaries of creative expression on the ice via engaging these narratives as a framework in which somatic based movement exploration occurs. Richburg blends different movement worlds; she has created over 15 works for both the ice and the stage. A sought after artist, Richburg recently presented at the Overcoming Racism Conference, and translated classic Urban Bush Women works for the ice.

REPERTOIRE AVAILABLE FOR TOURING

Quiet As It's Kept (on ice)

Choreographed by Brownbody's Artistic Director, Deneane Richburg, and incorporating a soundscape written and performed by well-known Twin Cities jazz vocalist and actor, Thomasina Petrus, with music production by Charles "Chilly" Petrus, *Quiet As It's Kept* (QAIK), which premiered in May 2015, captures the complexity and turbulence of the post-Civil War Reconstruction period. Exploring the reconstruction era and the rise of Jim Crow on the ice, QAIK combines modern dance, figure skating, theater, and live vocals to understand its residual impact on our modern American lives.

Performers: 4-5 skaters, 2 dancers, 1 drummer, and 1 actress/vocalist

Tech:

- An indoor ice rink with audience seating area
- A small 12x8 ft "stage" on the ice rink, placed near the audience seating area
- Theatrical lighting
- A large lobby or other room connected to or in close proximity to the ice surface for the pre-show experience (please note, this work can be modified if such a space is unavailable)

Give Your Hands to Struggle

(on ice translation of Urban Bush Women's famed solo)

Give Your Hands to Struggle, choreographed by Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, was originally a solo piece within *Hands Singing Song* (1998). Set to music by Bernice Johnson Reagon, the piece begins with a recitation of key figures in African-American history, including Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Katherine Dunham, Ossie Davis, and the three civil rights workers killed in 1964 — James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner.

Performers: 1 and one announcer

Tech:

- An indoor ice rink with audience seating area
- Theatrical Lighting, a mic for the reciter
- Per Brownbody's agreement with UBW, rehearsal time with UBW representatives must be made available prior to the performance of this work

Walking With 'Trane (on ice translation of an excerpt of Urban Bush Women's newest work)

Walking With 'Trane (2015) is inspired by the musical life and spiritual journey of John Coltrane, a composer at the forefront of jazz innovation in a racially-charged America of the '50s and '60s. Informed by the unpredictability of the bandstand, the "Band State," the scary, risky place that potentially extends into "transcendence," this ethereal investigation lives within multiple layers of Coltrane's music, Coltrane's spirituality, and Coltrane's life. Originally choreographed by Jawole Willa Zollar, Samantha Speis working with Dramaturg Talvin Wilks and in collaboration with The Company, *Walking With 'Trane* is set to original music by Grammy Award-winning jazz pianist George Caldwell. The excerpt being translated to the ice comes from SIDE B, "Freed(om)," focused on Coltrane's 1965 album *A Love Supreme*.

Performers: 3

Tech:

- An indoor ice rink with audience seating area
- Theatrical Lighting
- Per Brownbody's agreement with UBW, rehearsal time with UBW representatives must be made available prior to the performance of this work

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS?



Photo: Tim Rummelhoff

In the next two years, I am working on a collaboration with singer/actor Thomasina Petrus. This is a solo work that explores my history growing up in the predominantly White world of competitive figure skating. I am integrating film into the work and creating it so it can be performed on the and off of the ice.

I will also begin work on a project tentatively called: *Outside*. This project will be a two-part extended residency that brings together Brownbody movement artists (professional Black figure skaters with modern dance experience) for the development of a new work based on perceiving blackness—its complexities and beauty—*Outside* of White American-informed ideology and on its own terms. The residency includes both on and off-ice time for movement exploration, artistic development, and the creation of an artistic work resulting from an organic movement research process.

As a company Brownbody is growing rapidly and is focused on building a sustainable operational model that continues to serve the communities of which we a part and furthers artistic excellence.

MCKNIGHT ARTIST FELLOWSHIPS

The McKnight Fellowships for Choreographers awards Minnesota choreographers whose work is of exceptional artistic merit, who have created a substantial body of work over a period of time, and who are at a career stage that is beyond emerging. Three fellows are selected each year to receive a substantial unrestricted cash award, as well as additional support for career and artistic development.

The McKnight Fellowships for Choreographers is a program of The Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts and is funded by the McKnight Foundation. Support for individual artists has been a cornerstone of The McKnight Foundation's Arts program since it began in 1981. The foundation recognizes that the arts cannot flourish or enhance community life without the ideas, energy, and drive of individual artists, and that artists cannot make these contributions without unfettered creative time. Awards are made in 10 disciplines through nine arts organizations and presenters.

THE COWLES CENTER

The Cowles Center for Dance & the Performing Arts is the flagship institution for dance in Minnesota. Centrally located in Downtown Minneapolis, The Cowles Center includes the 500-seat Goodale Theater, a historic Shubert building and the oldest theater in Downtown; the former Hennepin Center for the Arts, home to 20 leading dance and performing arts organizations; the state-of-the-art Target Education Studio, housing The Cowles Center's innovative distance learning program; the Illusion Theater; the James Sewell Ballet TEK Box; and the U.S. Bank Atrium. The Cowles Center is a catalyst for the creation, presentation, education, enjoyment, and celebration of dance and the performing arts in the Twin Cities.