



BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC PETER JAY SHARP BUILDING 30 LAFAYETTE AVENUE BROOKLYN, NY 11217—1486

BAM Announces Full Festival Details for DanceAfrica 2025, Featuring *Mozambique: Movement! Magic! Manifestation!*

Connecting through African Dance, Music, and Community; Brooklyn's Memorial Day weekend tradition returns with performances, films, classes, visual art, and the iconic outdoor DanceAfrica Bazaar | May 23–26

DanceAfrica 2025

Mozambique: Movement! Magic! Manifestation!

Artistic Director Abdel R. Salaam

The Song & Dance Company of Mozambique

Mama Coumba Saaraba

The Billie's Youth Arts Academy Dance Ensemble

DanceAfrica Spirit Walkers

Lighting Design By Al Crawford

Sound Design by David Margolin Lawson

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House

Peter Jay Sharp Building, 30 Lafayette Ave

Friday, May 23 at 7:30pm

Saturday, May 24 at 2pm & 7pm

Sunday, May 25 at 3pm

Monday, May 26 at 3pm

Tickets start at \$25

Brooklyn, NY—March 26, 2025— DanceAfrica, BAM's longest-running program and the nation's largest festival of African dance and culture, returns for its 48th year with a full weekend of performances, films, dance classes, and community events over Memorial Day weekend. This annual tradition brings together Brooklyn's cultural institutions, artists, audiences, and

vendors from around the world, transforming BAM and its surrounding streets into a vibrant gathering place for African and diasporic traditions.

At the center of DanceAfrica 2025 is ***Mozambique: Movement! Magic! Manifestation!***, the headline dance performance series at the BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, running **May 23–26**. The program highlights the history, movement, and traditions of Mozambique, where artistic expression is a powerful form of cultural memory, spiritual connection, and resilience. Under the artistic direction of **Abdel R. Salaam**, this year's performance features traditional works—including the annual *Memorial Tribute to the Ancestors*—and showcases Mozambique's internationally recognized **Song & Dance Company of Mozambique**, alongside **Mama Coumba Saaraba**, **The DanceAfrica Spirit Walkers**, and **The Billie's Youth Arts Academy Dance Ensemble**.

Mozambique: Movement! Magic! Manifestation! will showcase traditional Mozambican dance forms that reflect the country's history, spirituality, and resilience. *Tufu* is a rhythmic dance often performed by women, featuring fluid movements and percussive clapping that emphasize grace and unity. *Xigubo*, a warrior's dance, is deeply rooted in Mozambique's legacy of resistance, and historically performed by fighters preparing for battle. *Ngalanga* is a celebratory dance traditionally showcased at festivals and gatherings, embodying joy and communal spirit.

The program also includes *Mapiko* and *Nhau*, dances that highlight Mozambique's diverse traditions—from the dramatic storytelling of masked performances to the powerful rhythms of drumming and movement. Across generations, these dances have served as more than performance; they are an embodiment of history, identity, and cultural preservation.

Mozambique: A Story of Resistance and Cultural Expression

On June 25, 1975, Mozambique gained independence through organized resistance against centuries of Portuguese colonial rule, becoming one of the last continental African nations to reclaim its sovereignty. As the country approaches the 50th anniversary of this historic moment, DanceAfrica 2025 offers a timely opportunity to reflect on the power of cultural expression in the pursuit of liberation. That victory ignited a renewed focus on self-determination, cultural preservation, and artistic expression.

A defining symbol of Mozambican cultural identity is the Capulana, a textile used in daily life and ceremonial practices. The fabric represents creativity, heritage, and resilience, worn as an expression of identity and tradition. In Mozambique, dance and music are central to cultural continuity—manifestations of history, memory, and transformation.

In addition to the performances at BAM's **Howard Gilman Opera House (May 23–26)**, DanceAfrica continues its tradition of African cultural engagement through classes, discussions, and films, and other programs held in collaboration with community partners.

DanceAfrica 2025 Festival Highlights

DanceAfrica 2025 extends beyond the stage, offering experiences in dance classes, film screenings, art, and cultural exchange in community with the **Billie Holiday Theatre at**

Restoration Plaza, Weeksville Heritage Center, Mark Morris Dance Center, Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy, the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts (MoCADA), and the African Film Festival.

The **DanceAfrica Bazaar** transforms the streets around BAM into a vibrant marketplace with over 200 vendors, while dance classes offer hands-on engagement with African movement traditions. This year's festival also features a new visual arts installation by Mozambican artist **Cassi Namoda**, presented with MoCADA, along with an artist talk where Namoda will discuss her work and creative process in conversation with the organization's Executive Director **Amy Andrieux**.

FilmAfrica, curated by the African Film Festival, returns with a selection of films from across the continent, adding to the festival's immersive exploration of African and diasporic culture.

For the full **DanceAfrica 2025** lineup, tickets, and registration for free events, visit [BAM.org](https://bam.org).

Highlights include:

- **May 7** Visual Art: "At the breast, at the motherhood (the place where your mother originates)"
- **May 17** Tribute to the Ancestors
- **May 17** Community Day
- **May 21** DanceAfrica Visual Art Artist Talk with Cassi Namoda
- **May 22** The Memorial Room
- **May 23–26** DanceAfrica 2025: *Mozambique: Movement! Magic! Manifestation!*
- **May 23–29** FilmAfrica
- **May 24–26** DanceAfrica Bazaar
- **May 24–26** Dance Classes
- **May 24** Late Night Dance Party
- **May 25** Council of Elders Roundtable
- **Ongoing** DanceAfrica and the BAM Hamm Archives

For more details, ticket purchases, and the full festival lineup, visit [BAM.org](https://bam.org).

For media inquiries, please contact: Cynthia Tate | ctate@bam.org.

Press Images Available: [Download Here](#)

DanceAfrica 2025 Full Programming

FilmAfrica 2025

May 23—29 | BAM Rose Cinemas (30 Lafayette Ave)

Curated by the African Film Festival this cinematic companion explores stories from Mozambique and across Africa, showcasing contemporary narratives, historical perspectives, and innovative storytelling. Additional film titles to be announced on BAM.org.

Tickets

- **\$17 per screening (adults) | \$11 (seniors & veterans) | \$8.50 (BAM Members 1-3)**
Tickets go on sale April 7 at BAM.org

Selections Include:

***After the Long Rains* (2023) Dir. Damien Hauser (Kenya)**

A young girl in a coastal Kenyan town dreams of escaping tradition to pursue acting in Europe. With the help of a local fisherman, she sets off on an unexpected journey of self-discovery.

***Granma Nineteen and the Soviet's Secret* (2020) Dir. João Ribeiro (Mozambique/Portugal/Brazil)**

Adapted from Ondjaki's novel, this coming-of-age story follows a young boy and his friends as they scheme to stop a Russian construction project that threatens to demolish their coastal African village.

***Hanami* (2024) Dir. Denise Fernandes (Cape Verde/Switzerland)**

A reflective portrait of migration, memory, and womanhood that bridges Cape Verdean traditions with contemporary European life.

***Katanga: The Dance of the Scorpions* (2024) Dir. Dani Kouyaté (Burkina Faso)**

A docu-drama uncovering the cultural and political complexities of post-colonial Congo through the lens of Katanga's fight for autonomy.

***Khartoum* (2025) Dirs. Ibrahim Snoopy Ahmad, Timeea Mohamed Ahmed, Rawia Alhag, Philip Cox, Anas Saeed (Sudan)**

A civil servant, a tea lady, a resistance committee volunteer, and two street boys, all in search of freedom, find their lives unexpectedly intertwined through animated dreams, street revolutions, and a civil war.

***Kunxa Kanema: The Birth of Cinema* (2003) Dir. Margarida Cardoso (Mozambique)**

A look into how Mozambique built a national cinema after independence, using film as a vehicle for unity, education, and cultural pride.

***Mueda, Memória e Massacre* (1979) Dir. Ruy Guerra (Mozambique)**

A seminal Mozambican film that reenacts a tragic colonial-era massacre through community performance, blending documentary and fiction.

***Nteregu* (2024) Dir. Manuel Loureiro (Portugal)**

A poetic short film capturing the rhythms and daily life of a coastal fishing village facing the realities of environmental change.

***Over the Bridge* (2023) Dir. Tolu Ajayi (Nigeria)**

When a high-profile investment project collapses, a successful banker's life unravels. Stranded in a remote fishing village, he begins to piece together his past while questioning his future.

***So Long a Letter* (2025) Dir. Angèle Diabang Brener (Senegal)**

An adaptation of Mariama Bâ's feminist classic, exploring the emotional landscape of widowhood, friendship, and tradition in post-colonial Senegal.

***Soundtrack to a Coup D'état* (2024) Dir. Johan Grimonprez (Belgium/France)**

An experimental collage of jazz, politics, and Cold War intrigue, uncovering the global forces behind the 1961 assassination of Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba.

***The Night Still Smells Like Gunpowder* (2024) Dir. Inadelso Cossa (Mozambique)**

A filmmaker returns to his grandparents' village in Mozambique, where he once sought refuge from war. As he retraces his childhood, the film reflects on memory, survival, and the long shadow of conflict.

***When I Say Africa* (2024) Dir. Cassandra Herrman (USA/Senegal)**

Exploring identity and cultural memory through the eyes of a young woman in the diaspora, this film reflects on what it means to belong.

***Where There Is Love, There Is No Darkness* (2025) Dir. Stevan Lee Mraovitch (France/Senegal)**

A heartfelt meditation on intergenerational love, resilience, and memory, told through the story of a family confronting loss.

DanceAfrica Community Class

Saturday, May 24 at 11am | Brooklyn Bridge Park (Pier 6 Liberty Lawn)

Rain Date: Sunday, May 25 at 11am

An engaging, family-friendly dance workshop led by BAM teaching artist **Dánice Jones**, this class introduces participants to rhythms and movement from across the African Diaspora in an open-air setting. Co-presented by BAM and Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy.

Tickets

- **Free with registration | Open to all ages.** (*Registration will be available starting May 1*)

DanceAfrica Family Class

Monday, May 26 at 10am | Duffy Studio (Mark Morris Dance Center, 3 Lafayette Ave)

Families are invited to explore Mozambican dance and music traditions in this hands-on, all-ages workshop that blends movement and culture. Co-presented by BAM and Mark Morris Dance Center.

Tickets

- **\$12 for adults | \$15 family of two | \$20 family of three | \$25 family of four. Tickets available starting April 4.**

DanceAfrica Physically Integrated Movement Class

Monday, May 26 at 11am | Studio E Mark Morris Studio (Mark Morris Dance Center, 3 Lafayette Ave)

Dancer and choreographer **Pat Hall** leads this inclusive, interactive session designed for participants with or without disabilities. Available in-person or via livestream, this class explores African diasporic dance traditions as a means of connection, storytelling, and cultural expression. Co-presented by BAM and Mark Morris Dance Center.

Tickets

- **\$12 for In-Person | \$10 for Virtual | Open to adults of all experience levels. Tickets available starting April 4.**

DanceAfrica Masterclass

Monday, May 26 at 12pm | Duffy Studio (Mark Morris Dance Center, 3 Lafayette Ave)

This high-energy immersive class, taught by a member of the Song & Dance Company of Mozambique, introduces intermediate to advanced dancers to the rhythmic traditions and movement vocabulary of Mozambican dance. Co-presented by BAM and Mark Morris Dance Center.

Tickets

- **\$12 per participant. Tickets available starting April 4.**

Visual Arts Talk with Cassi Nomada

Wednesday, May 21 at 6pm | MoCADA Culture Lab II @ L10 (10 Lafayette Ave)

A conversation with Mozambican artist Cassi Nomada, moderated by **Amy Andrieux (MoCADA)**, discussing the artistic inspiration behind this year's DanceAfrica visual arts commission.

Tickets

- **Free and open to the public, with registration**

BAM and MoCADA Present

DanceAfrica Council of Elders Roundtable: Legacy & Preservation

With members of the DanceAfrica Council of Elders

Sunday, May 25 at 12pm | MoCADA Culture Lab II @ L10 (10 Lafayette Ave)

This roundtable, led by the DanceAfrica Council of Elders, explores the role of African traditions, ancestral connections, and cultural preservation in today's evolving artistic landscape. In conjunction with the ongoing DanceAfrica Oral History Project.

Tickets

- Free and open to the public, with registration

“At the breast, at the motherhood (the place where your mother originates)” (2022)

Cassi Namoda

Starting May 7 | Dorothy W. Levitt Lobby (Peter Jay Sharp Building, 30 Lafayette Ave)

Located along the escalator wall

Presented in collaboration with MoCADA, this year’s visual art installation features “At the Breast, at the Motherhood (the place where your mother originates),” a recent acrylic work by Mozambican artist **Cassi Namoda**. Born in Maputo, Namoda is known for her vivid color palettes and narrative-driven paintings that explore heritage, cultural memory, and personal history. The piece offers a compelling visual meditation on identity and storytelling rooted in Mozambican traditions.

Tickets

- Free and open to the public to view

Tribute to the Ancestors

Saturday, May 17 at 10am | Weeksville Heritage Center (158 Buffalo Avenue)

A sacred tradition of DanceAfrica, this annual tribute honors those who came before us through music, drumming, dance performances, and a libation ceremony led by the DanceAfrica Council of Elders. Presented in partnership with Weeksville Heritage Center.

Tickets

- Free and open to the public

Community Day

Saturday, May 17 at 1pm | Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Plaza (1368 Fulton St)

The official kickoff to DanceAfrica 2025, this vibrant celebration features performances by The Billie’s Youth Arts Academy Dance Ensemble—now in its 28th year as part of the festival—alongside select participants of its general school along with special guest artists. Presented in association with The Billie Holiday Theatre.

Tickets

- Free and open to the public

DanceAfrica 2025 Bazaar

Saturday, May 24 – Monday, May 26 | Ashland Pl/ Lafayette Ave

A cornerstone of DanceAfrica, the Bazaar transforms BAM's neighborhood into a vibrant marketplace, featuring over 200 vendors offering African, Caribbean, and African American art, fashion, jewelry, crafts, and food. Drawing an estimated 30,000 visitors, this annual gathering is a cultural and commercial hub of African and diasporic creativity.

Tickets

- **Free and open to the public**

Late Night Dance Party

Saturday, May 24 at 10pm | The Adam Space/BAMcafe (Peter Jay Sharp Building, 30 Lafayette Ave)

The celebration continues with DJ YB, DanceAfrica's resident DJ, spinning a mix of Afrobeats, funk, soul, jazz, hip-hop, and global sounds for a night of movement and connection.

Tickets

- **Free and open to the public**

The Memorial Room

Thursday, May 22 – Monday, May 26 | Devitre Lounge (Peter Jay Sharp Building, 30 Lafayette Avenue)

Curated by Mama Linda Evans and the DanceAfrica Council of Elders, the Memorial Room preserves the tradition of honoring ancestors connected to DanceAfrica and its visiting artists.

Tickets

- **Free and open to the public**

DanceAfrica and the BAM Hamm Archives

Ongoing

LevyArchive.Bam.org

Discover the BAM Hamm Archives' ongoing mission to preserve the vast legacy of DanceAfrica through projects focused on oral histories and recordings. This is an ongoing initiative as part of the Shelby White & Leon Levy BAM Digital Archive.

About the Artists

Abdel R. Salaam is the Artistic Director of DanceAfrica, the Executive Artistic Director and co-founder of Forces of Nature Dance Theatre, and a critically acclaimed choreographer. Born in Harlem, he has served as a dancer, teacher, and performing artist on five continents throughout his 56-year career. He has received numerous awards and fellowships for excellence in dance and dance theater, and continues to dedicate his life's work to the healing and empowerment of us all.

The Song & Dance Company of Mozambique (CNCD) has been at the forefront of Mozambique's artistic and cultural landscape for over four decades. Founded in 1983, the company is dedicated to preserving and reinterpreting traditional Mozambican music and dance, blending folkloric, contemporary, and theatrical elements to tell the stories of Mozambique's diverse regions.

As Mozambique's premier cultural ambassador, CNCD has performed on five continents, earning acclaim at the Kennedy Center, New Jersey Performing Arts Center, and across the U.S., Europe, Africa, and Asia. At home, the company has reached hundreds of thousands annually, using dance and music as powerful tools for storytelling, education, and social engagement—addressing themes such as democracy, national unity, and cultural identity.

Bringing their artistry to New York for performances at DanceAfrica 2025, CNCD offers a rare opportunity for audiences to experience the depth and dynamism of Mozambican movement traditions—a powerful testament to the endurance, beauty, and evolution of African performance on the global stage.

Mama Coumba Saaraba is a Brooklyn-based dance and drum ensemble that specializes in Senegalese Thiossane, or traditional culture. Formed in 2018, the group is named in reverence to Artistic Director and founder Fatouseck Primus' mother, teacher, and longtime BAM DanceAfrica Elder Mama Koumba Andara, in combination with the Wolof word *saaraba*, meaning paradise. The group's debut and encore performances at the historic National Black Theatre in Harlem and Billie Holiday Theatre in Bed Stuy, Brooklyn, wowed audiences with the heartwarming story of *The Wedding*. The founding members consist of 12 dancers and drummers trained in Sabar, Djembe and Kutiro movement, history, and music. MCS artfully combines the intricacy of concert performance with the simple beauty of ancient tradition.

Cassi Namoda's work explores the history and culture of post-colonial Africa, especially the exchange between vernacular traditions and Portuguese colonialism in the Lusophone continent.

Namoda's syncretic paintings are woven from a capacious symbolic language—she references global mythologies, indigenous folk art, European painting traditions, colonial power systems and more in her dreamlike narratives and sensual landscapes. Characters and motifs (conjoined twins, fierce suns) recur within these intimate tableaux, often bolstered by references to literary, cinematic and architectural aesthetics. Washed colors, bold compositions and flat perspective further the paintings' aura of magical realism. The result is often a sense of romance and saudade injected into modernity and the art historical canon.

Her work is collected by several important museums, including The Pérez Art Museum in Miami, The Studio Museum in Harlem, Jumex in Mexico City and X Museum in Beijing, and she has held solo exhibitions at a number of notable galleries, including Xavier Hufkens and Goodman Gallery. Namoda was born in Maputo, Mozambique, in 1988, and has also lived in Kenya, Uganda, Benin, Haiti, Indonesia, the Dominican Republic and the United States. Currently she divides her time between New York and Italy.

This DanceAfrica favorite returns to the BAM Howard Gilman Opera House for the 28th year. **The Billie's Youth Arts Academy Dance Ensemble** serves as a symbol of youth involvement in the preservation of African heritage, celebrating both ancestral roots and the modern-day community.

The DanceAfrica Spirit Walkers were founded by Baba Abdel R. Salaam in 2016 to theatrically honor the ancestors of Africa and its diaspora through the annual DanceAfrica Memorial Tribute, originally developed by the late Baba Chuck Davis. The group comprises professional dance artists and musicians from the RestorationART alumni and Forces of Nature Dance Theatre, melding African vernacular forms, modern, hip-hop, and contemporary dance. The DanceAfrica Spiritwalkers is a division of Forces of Nature Dance Theatre.

Since its inception in 1977, DanceAfrica at BAM has grown into America's largest celebration of African and African-American dance, music, and culture. At its core is the **DanceAfrica Council of Elders**, a diverse group of artists and activists who preserve and expand African traditions. Under Chuck Davis's leadership, the Council provided vital support to the festival, guiding every aspect of production. Today, led by Abdel R. Salaam, they continue to uphold this legacy. Each year, DanceAfrica welcomes artists from across the diaspora to showcase traditional and contemporary performances, alongside community events and the famed DanceAfrica bazaar. Through their dedication, the Council of Elders ensures that the vibrant traditions of African culture thrive at DanceAfrica for generations to come.

Pat Hall is an internationally recognized dancer, choreographer, and educator, blending African, Caribbean, contemporary American, and Indigenous ceremonial dance traditions. She has worked with diverse communities across all ages and abilities, using dance as a tool for expression, healing, and cultural connection.

New York native **Dánice Jones**, also known as “Ms. Dánice,” is a choreographer, musician, and educator known for her genre-bending movement style and commitment to artistic development. With over three decades of experience at BAM, she has performed in multiple DanceAfrica seasons alongside professional companies from Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, and Guinea.

Beyond performance, Jones is deeply invested in arts education and community engagement, shaping curricula for BAM, Pace University, Ballet Hispánico School, and other institutions. She merges her background in psychology (M.A. & B.A.) and dance (B.F.A.) with her current doctoral studies in Dance Education at Columbia University, integrating therapeutic wellness and progressive arts education to inspire the next generation of artists.

The African Film Festival is dedicated to advancing an enhanced understanding of African culture through the moving image. It offers diverse platforms for the wide distribution of African media through its flagship annual film festival and complementary year-round programming. AFF is committed to increasing visibility and recognition for African media artists by introducing African film and culture to a broad range of audiences in the United States and abroad, bypassing economic, class, and racial barriers. In 1990, AFF's founders established goals that continue to enrich the organization's mission and organizational development: To use African cinema to promote and increase knowledge and understanding of African arts, literature, and culture; To develop an audience for African films; To expand the opportunities for the distribution of African films in the United States and abroad. africanfilmny.org

The Obie, AUDELCO, and National Medal for the Arts award-winning **Billie Holiday Theatre** (The Billie) is a state-of-the-art creative center located at Restoration Plaza in the historic Black cultural mecca of Bedford Stuyvesant, which is home to such artistic luminaries as Lena Horne, Max Roach, Eubie Blake, Stephanie Mills, Ben Vereen, Jay Z, Yasiin Bey, and more. The Billie is the only multi-platform performing arts center with a 22-year-old education program led by, for, and accountable to people of African descent in the heart of the largest African American community in the nation: Central Brooklyn. For 50 years, The Billie has elevated and promoted the critical voices of Black artists and the stories of the complex journey toward freedom for people of African descent that is far from over. thebillieholiday.org

Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy plays a vital role in creating and energizing this community-focused, world-class urban oasis on the Brooklyn waterfront. A 501(c)3 non-profit, we bring this unique park space to life with hundreds of innovative and engaging educational, cultural, fitness, and recreational programs each year. Our free and low-cost events create new and exciting opportunities for tens of thousands of NYC residents and visitors to learn, grow, and experience all that Brooklyn Bridge Park has to offer. brooklynbridgepark.org

Founded in 2001, the **Mark Morris Dance Center** serves as the home of the Mark Morris Dance Group and a cultural hub for the Brooklyn community. It offers nine fully equipped, column-free dance studios, two locker rooms with lockers and restrooms (one with showers), and a Wellness Center with space and equipment for work with partnering health practitioners, Pilates instructors, and personal trainers. All studios and ancillary spaces are available to rent for a wide range of uses, including rehearsals and Events.

The Dance Center offers a diverse range of dance and fitness classes for adults, novice to professional; as well as culturally responsive, inclusive, and non-gendered Youth & Family programs for students of all levels, with and without disabilities, ages 18 months to 18 years that include The School and work with community-based partners. The Dance Center is the flagship site for the internationally acclaimed, research-backed dance classes for people with Parkinson's, Dance for PD. markmorrisdancegroup.org

The Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts (MoCADA) uses art and education as vehicles for social change to celebrate the cultural breadth of Africa and its diaspora and connect the intersectional experiences of Black people around the world. MoCADA creates numerous multidisciplinary opportunities to amplify the work of creators who explore complex issues facing this community, to transform people and neighborhoods near and far.

MoCADA's mission was born in 1999 from the graduate thesis of our founder Laurie Angela Cumbo on the feasibility of an African art museum contributing to the revitalization of neighboring Black communities. Today, MoCADA is more than a museum. MoCADA is a community bridge, advocating for equity and access for underserved residents across multiple sectors (the arts, education, technology, climate change, etc.) while connecting individuals across socioeconomic divides to make the arts integral to neighborhood development and public safety. As an arts incubator, MoCADA has given a platform to over 100 artists from 20+ countries across Africa and its diaspora to inspire creative production and offer pathways that lead to economic mobility. Through interactive learning and cultural preservation, MoCADA also champions the diverse stories of Africa and its descendants to expand the narrative, dispel misconceptions, and foster safe spaces for cross-cultural exchange. mocada.org mocada.org

Credits

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