



# 2022 Annual Report

Image: Heather Carlson (c) Shawn Short

## Table of Contents

Letter to Our Community **Pg 1**

March 2022 - Open for  
Business **Pg 2**

Dissonance Dance Theatre  
**Pg 3**

Filmworks - Company D **Pg 4**

Fire @ Ngoma HQ **Pg 6**

In The Community **Pg 7**

Ngoma Works With Netflix **Pg 8**

The Ngoma School **Pg 10**

On the Way to Broadway  
**Pg 10**

A “Working” Star is Born  
**Pg 11**

Ngoma Receives \$60K  
Building Planning Grant **Pg 12**

Promotions @ Ngoma **Pg 13**

Finances **Pg 15**



Image: Dissonance Dance Theatre (c) Shawn Short

# And We Begin Anew...

Ngoma Center for Dance embarked on a new year of the COVID pandemic in 2020. Through many hardships – a fire, inability to produce live art, and an exodus of DC dancers – Ngoma Center for Dance used creativity to sustain itself and develop more robust ways to support artists while serving communities through dance.

Dissonance Dance Theatre celebrates its 15th season through alternative means due to the COVID-19 pandemic. DDT dancers guest perform in local performances. DDT utilized its artistic footprint to give access to local talent for film and theater projects. Dissonance Dance Theatre's Resident Choreographer Kareem Goodwin makes his choreographic debut in Texas.

As the year went on, our education programs returned. Ngoma virtually adjudicated at the International Association of Dance. The Ngoma School began, again, with our annual Summer DanceLab in June. Summer DanceLab welcomed a new generation of aspiring dancers ready to learn and develop their dance skills. New alumni starts their professional dance career.

With a commitment to providing opportunities to DC's dance ecosystem in 2022, Ngoma Center for Dance became the first DC dance organization to work with **NETFLIX** to assist in the casting of its new DC production ***The Queen's Ball: A Bridgerton Experience***. Secondly, NYC's **Society TV** received casting assistance from Ngoma Center for Dance to film their DC-located film - showcasing local Black female dancers and choreographers. Next, Ngoma workshop award-winning alumni auditioned and made it to second-cut auditions with coaching from Ngoma professionals for **Broadway's revival of The Wiz**. Lastly, Ngoma Center for Dance aided in the new dance festival – Uplift Festival – produced by Publick Playhouse.

In October 2022, Ngoma's main office experienced a building fire damaging seven out of 12 units. The experience challenged Ngoma operations – displacing office activity and lessening operational activity. Through the help of our community, Ngoma Center for Dance quickly transitioned to its new DC location in Fort Totten NE area.

Increasing infrastructure and operations in 2022, Ngoma expanded its staff with promotions from within. Ngoma welcomes its first school and rehearsal manager. This additional staff increase is humbly provided through Ngoma Center for Dance's increase in annual income; **increasing its annual income from approximately \$261K to \$435K**. Additionally, Ngoma receives its first building planning grant providing research and development toward our envisioned future dance home. These advancements are due in part to my recent education attainment, through the completion of my Certification of Product Management from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management.

I encourage you to read on and explore what we accomplished together on the pages to follow.

Yours in Dance,  
Shawn Short, MFA, PGC in Business  
Founding Director



Shawn Short







## March, 2022

“More than 1,000 businesses closed in the first part of 2020, although license applications for new businesses have since picked up. Data shows that although more than 2,300 businesses left downtown D.C. from February 2020 to March 2022...”

- **Julie Zauzmer Weil, 8/29/2022, Washington Post**

In March 2022, Ngoma Center for Dance was given the approval to begin programs again in Washington, DC, and in Maryland. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the dance community was decimated with many dancers moving from the area and/or sector. Ngoma quickly assessed its capacity and quickly moved to serve the community. Programs that needed a minimum of a year of planning, were reduced to initializing with less than several months of prep time; facing the reality of reduced staff and resources. Dissonance Dance Theatre worked on individual projects and assisted dancers with guest performance opportunities.

# Dissonance Dance Theatre



Goodwin rehearsing with company dancers.



J. McKinley, K. Goodwin, Z. Ingram

DDT's Resident Choreographer Kareem Goodwin makes his Texas debut as Guest Choreographer at 6 O'Clock Dance Theatre.



Daniel performing with cast.



Daniel with cast. (Third from the left)

Dissonance Dance Theatre Dancer Daniel Artis, assisted the respected ballet school, Maryland Youth Ballet with their first post-COVID *Nutcracker* as a guest artist performer.



JOMDC Studios on H Street NE

Dissonance Dance Theatre works with Joy of Motion Dance Center to utilize their H Street dance studios to assist DDT with its in-person rehearsal schedule. In DC, art space is limited for professional dance, and Ngoma Center for Dance is excited for the support of Joy of Motion Dance Center as it rebuilds its annual in-person production season.



# Company D

Starting Fall 2021, Ngoma Filmworks began pre-production work for a documentary that showcases the story of Dissonance Dance Theatre. Inspired by the success of the web series *His Eyes Saw Dance*, production staff believed it time to tell the story of the only Black-managed, nationally-recognized contemporary ballet company between NYC and ATL.

“As Dissonance Dance Theatre turns 15 years old, I’m reminded by the artists, staff, and supporters who made it all possible. There should be a celebration and telling of this story. - Shawn Short, Founder

The only Black-managed contemporary ballet company between NYC and ATL, Company D reveals the behind-the-scenes and performance of Dissonance Dance Theatre’s early-COVID production, *Diaspora*, shedding light on DDT’s cultural adversity, racial dissension, COVID realities, and economical and personal strife endured to create a home for Black classical and contemporary dancers and their supporters in Washington, DC.



DDT in Short’s *The Sun Will Rise Again*



Caitlin Granville, Former DDT Soloist



Olivia Crosby, Former Corp de Ballet



Sean Burns, Former DDT Apprentice



Anthony Spivey, Former Corp de Ballet



Nicolette Jackson, Former DDT Soloist

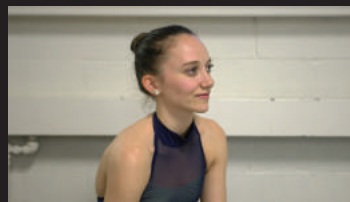


Shawn Short, Founding Director

In 2022, Ngoma FilmWorks invested more than \$100K in expenses and in-kind services toward the production phase of the feature-length documentary. The project - once completed - will bring more awareness of Dissonance Dance Theatre within streaming platforms - expanding its reach.



Bernice Hammond, DC Dance Elder



Christine Motta, Soloist



Daniel Artis, Corp de Ballet



Emma Button, Soloist



Heather Carlson, Corp de Ballet



Jazmine Rutherford, Soloist



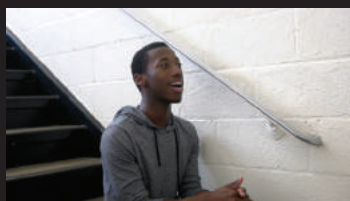
Jonathon Carrington, G. Manager



Keith Lee, Capital Ballet AD



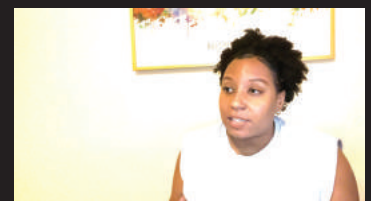
Kelsey E. Collie, DC Theater Elder



Kenniston Brown, Apprentice



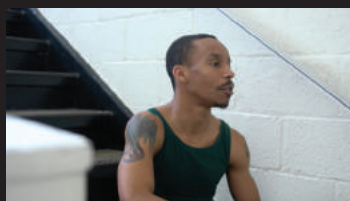
Kevin McEwen, Ward 7 ANC/D. Artist



Melissa Victor, AEA Performer



Moyston Henry Jr, Corp de Ballet



Phillip Fobbs, Soloist



Shawn Rawls, NYC Dance Artist



Tony Sewer, Corp de Ballet





On October 6th, 2022 - approximately 11 am - a fire was caused by a careless tenant whose drug use impeded his judgment as they smoked while leaving the gas on in the apartment. The incident caused a fire that escalated quickly, damaging seven out of 12 units from the gas explosion. Ngoma Center for Dance was founded at this location in 2007. The experience challenged Ngoma operations – displacing office activity and lessening operational activity. Through the help of our community, Ngoma Center for Dance quickly transitioned to its new DC location in Fort Totten NE area.

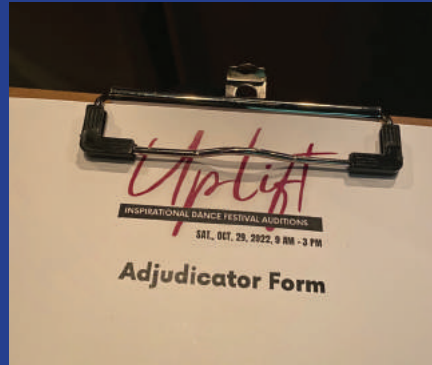


**Top images clockwise:** furniture and debris in the back of the building, ANC Commissioner Dorothy Douglas with Red Cross and Fire Department staff, fire trucks on the street, burned building and damaged windows from the gas explosion. **Bottom images clockwise:** Lobby and new spaces.





Modern Dance Master Teacher Stephanie Powell  
with Ngoma/DDT (Former Student) Shawn Short



In October 2022 Founding Director Shawn Short adjudicated Publick Playhouse's inaugural audition for the Uplift Festival. The dance festival is a redevelopment of the annual Liturgical Dance Festival hosted in previous years. The festival brings uplifting dance works that lend their artistic voices to feelings of healing, comfort, and gratitude - showcasing liturgical, lyrical, modern, hip-hop, tap, and traditional dance styles.

Short joined fellow dance adjudicators as they provided feedback to emerging choreographers and a kind word to the dance companies. The audition staff provided Publick Playhouse with advisement on the new dance festival development, with possible enhancements for future programming features.



The International Association of Blacks in Dance held its annual dancer auditions virtually in 2022.

Ngoma Center for Dance represented Washington, DC as the sole dance organization providing scholarships for pending programs.

Ngoma Center for Dance has been a member of IABD since 2017.

Whitfield Entertainment Group Studios  
1235 W St NE  
Washington, DC 20018

# Netflix Is Looking For Dancers!

Starting at \$1,200 a week! Ngoma/DDT is assisting local casting staff find their cast for a new show produced by Netflix, Shondaland, and Fever! Apply below! Please share ASAP! Casting materials are given to casting Jan 23rd after 5pm.

## The Queen's Ball: A Bridgerton Experience

An Immersive Theatre Production  
Non-Union

Exec. Producers: Netflix, Shondaland, Fever

Casting Executive: Paul Weber CSA, Chris Downey-Asher

Casting Coordinator: JP McLaurin

Submissions: Are on going till 5pm Jan 23rd, 2022

Rehearsals: Begin March 8, 2022 - End of July 2022

Rate: \$1,200 - \$1,500

Same rate applies for rehearsals and performances

15 performances a week

Each show is 90 minutes

(2) shows Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday (3) shows Friday, Saturday, Sunday

Location: DC

Seeking Local D.C. Talent Only: Urban or Classical/Contemporary Ballet

Netflix, Shandaland, and Fever slated a new DC theatrical production based on Netflix's popular episodic series *Bridgerton*. The production giant attempted to find local dancers for the new project. Casting Coordinator JP McLaurin needed assistance. Partnering with Ngoma Center for Dance, Ngoma utilized its network to secure 75 dance candidates in 72 hours. **Netflix's Executive Casting Directors were pleased and hired DDT Alumnus Daniel Moore! Ngoma became the first local dance organization to work with Netflix.**



Daniel Moore with Announcer



DDT's Anthony Spivey with Daniel Moore Backstage



Daniel Moore in The Queen's Ball: A Bridgerton Experience

Major Opportunity!



# Black Female Modern Dancers Needed **For Film!**

Following the successful casting of *The Queen's Ball: A Bridgerton*, Ngoma Center for Dance was contacted to assist with another casting project for local dance talent.

Society TV - a production in NYC - utilized Ngoma Center for Dance's efforts as its community communications coordinator and marketing liaison for its project celebrating Black women fighting for restorative justice.

**Ngoma secured the film's cast with a local Black female choreographer chosen for the project.**

**\*Community Announcement**  
*\*Not Sponsored by Ngoma Center for Dance*



**Shoot Date:** May 24

**Project Name:** A sexual health and reproductive rights org that supports people who need abortions, birth control, sti testing and treatment

**Shoot Time:** Specific time TBD, 5 hour day

**Compensation:** \$300 (additional for Choreographer)

**Description of the project:**

This PSA, featuring Black women leaders in the reproductive justice movement, will highlight the threats ahead for abortion access, and express unwavering support for policies that protect the right to reproductive freedom and abortion justice. A salient priority this year in the reproductive movement.

Throughout the video, portraits of Black women leaders in Reproductive Justice, juxtaposed with archival footage and strong voice over tells a beautiful story

# The Ngoma School



Images (L-R) Education Manager Anthony Spivey with student, Summer Dance Lab Staff, Students, Parents.



Students in Summer DanceLab Finale

The opening of local commerce in March 2022, allowed Ngoma Center for Dance to quickly organize programming and launched auditions for its annual summer program - Summer Dance Lab. With less than three months to plan - summer programs take a year to plan successfully - Ngoma Center for Dance launched its summer program and later its annual school year programming.



## On The Road To Broadway

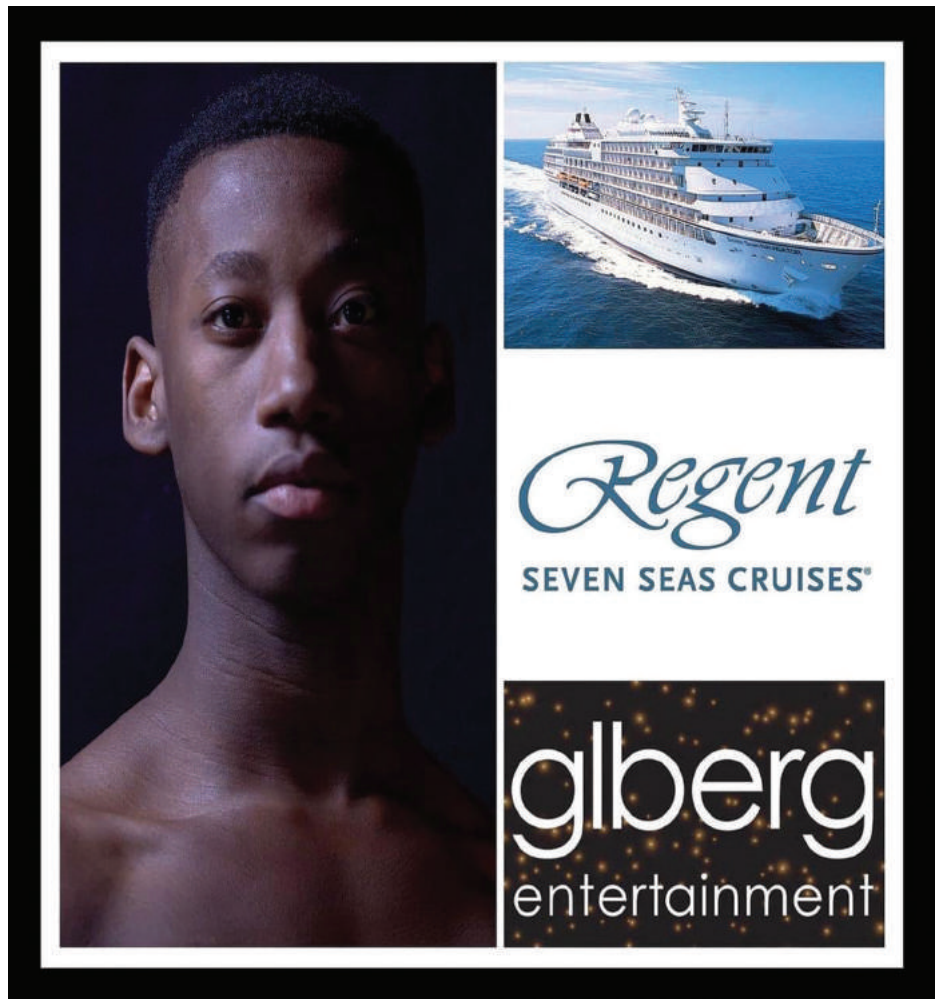
Olivia Reed and Melissa Victor with Shawn Short

Once a student, always a student. Ngoma workshop alumni Olivia Reed and Melissa Victor, have accomplished regional, national, and international professional touring experience as union musical theater performers. To assist them with the quickly approaching auditions for *The Wiz's* Broadway revival, they requested the aid of their former teacher Ngoma Founding Director Shawn Short. Short worked virtually, to assist the former students. To their accomplishments, the ladies made it to the second round of auditions.





Images (top to bottom): Kenni in class, Kenni in front of Norwegian Cruise's creative studios.



## A “Working” Star is Born

Ngoma Center for Dance congratulates Moses Kenniston Brown on his graduation from the University of Maryland College Park with his Bachelor's degree in Graphic Design. Kenni worked hard before and after his class schedule as a Ngoma Student - even more as an apprentice with Dissonance Dance Theatre.

Kenni now joins the ranks of other dance artists who have launched their professional careers. **Mr. Brown is now a performer with Norwegian Cruises.** Kenni is a child immigrant from Jamaica, one who is one of several children to a single part-time retail working mother who supported his time with Ngoma. We know she is as proud as we are of him.

Kenni graduating from UMD





# Case Statement/Purpose

Washington, DC has a Black dance history that is vast. Since 1932, the time of DC's roaring 30s Black U Street history, Black dance artists have been a part of the fabric of DC's social culture. It all began when Bernice Hammond (a Howard University alumnae) established the first dance studio as a licensed DC business for U Street Black socialites. Ngoma Center for Dance embraced said history and quickly dedicated more than 10 years to develop spaces for developing and increasing the visibility of Black dance artists and ensembles.

**In the aftermath of the COVID pandemic, political and racial awakenings abounded leaving Washington, DC's dance sector greatly diminished. According to Cause IQ, there are 172 theater companies in the District.** Washington, DC only hosts one Black-managed dance institution with permanent residence. With the continuous rise of rent prices, autonomous high cost of living, and limited access to affordable arts spaces in Washington, D.C., many artists (dancers, administrators, and choreographers) have voiced their frustrations in launching and sustaining their careers in the District... we hear them.

Ngoma Center for Dance HQ (NCFDHQ) will be an equitable destination for artists, students, creatives, and tourists alike. A permanent home for Dissonance Dance Theatre after 16 years of operations, the building, will also be home to The Ngoma School – DDT's professional school founded in 2014. NCFDHQ's purpose is to foster a new era for dance in the district; providing a new artistic home for the local dance community – especially for artists of color. The building will provide a more conducive space for rehearsal rentals and performances, along with streaming and digital productions and workshops. In the future, NCFDHQ will host joint college dance programs and will assist DC's growing film industry with movement-inspired creativity.

Background Image: Ngoma Center for Dance's HQ, Ward 7

## Ngoma Center for Dance Receives First Planning Grant of \$60K!

Ngoma receives its first building planning grant of \$60k; providing research and development toward our envisioned future dance home. These advancements are due in part to my recent education attainment, through the completion of Director Short's Certification of Product Management from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management.





# Promotions from Within

Anthony Spivey



A Mississippi native, Anthony joined Dissonance as an Apprentice in 2017 and danced as a Corp de Ballet dancer with the company until 2020. Within The Ngoma School, Spivey has assisted in growing the budding program as an annual teacher and assistant administrator - serving more than 70 students. Since 2017, Anthony has aided Director Shawn Short as he further develops the organization's infrastructure. **Spivey now takes Ngoma's new position as Education Manager. He will now manage The Ngoma School's school year and Summer DanceLab programs.**

Phillip Fobbs



A native of the DC area, Phillip joined Dissonance Dance Theatre as an Apprentice in 2016 and was quickly appointed to Soloist in 2019. As a dancer, Phillip assisted DDT's production team as Rehearsal Associate since 2017. Assisting four to six production annually, Fobbs's administrative and customer service were essential to the success of Dissonance Dance Theatre's annual season. **Fobbs is now DDT's Rehearsal Manager. He will now expand his roles and responsibilities as DDT ramps up their upcoming performances and 2023-24 season.**

We congratulate Anthony Spivey  
and Phillip Fobbs on their recent promotions  
within the organization!



Image: Above: Damon Foster (c) Shawn Short



# Finances

## 2022

### Expenses

Artistic Staffing	\$130,380.00
Facilities	\$12,357.00
Production	\$89,197.00
General Operations:	\$175,050.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$406,984.00</b>

### Income

Individual Contributions:	\$103,015.00
Earned Revenue	\$25,100.00
Foundations	\$8,550.00
Funding - DC Gov	\$262,580.00
Ticket Sales	\$1,250.00
Special Events/Workshops	\$1,441.00
Tuition	\$23,041.00
Board Contributions	\$10,000.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$434,977.00</b>

Note: Ngoma Center for Dance, again, humbly received more than \$150k in gift-in-kind services.

Founding Director/CEO  
Shawn Short, MFA, PGC in Business

Technical Director  
Chris Holland

Interns  
Jessica Potts  
Olivia Reed  
Kareem Goodwin

## Board of Trustees

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Dave Domzalski, BS

Vice Chairman  
Tyler Lewis, BA

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