

101 Dancers and Choreographers of Color to Add to Your Curriculum  
Compiled by Azaria Rianne Hogans

Below you will find a list of one hundred and one dancers and choreographers of color to add to your dance curriculum. In honor of highlighting black voices, over fifty percent of the list is comprised of black dancers. By no means is this a fully comprehensive list, but one hundred and one is a good place to start. The following was made primarily as a resource for educators to supplement their curriculum by providing names they may or may not have known about. This compilation has been categorized by the broad sections of Socially Derived & Ballroom Dance, Traditional & Classical Dance, and Contemporary & Modern Dance. Please keep in mind that many of the people listed belong in several categories but for the sake of this list have been placed into one category. The information provided on each person is to only provide a brief overview so that you can find out if they are a good candidate for the unit you are teaching.

**Socially Derived & Ballroom Dance**

Social Dance

1. Earl “Snakehips” Tucker  
(1906-1937) Black American dancer and performer during Harlem Renaissance known for his snakehips dance.
2. Eddie Torres  
(1950-Today) Latin American Latin and Jazz dancer known as the “Mambo King.”
3. Florence Mills  
(1896-1927) Black American comedian, dancer, and singer of the Harlem Renaissance.
4. Frankie Manning  
(1914-2009) Black American choreographer and dancer known for having significant contributions to the Lindy Hop
5. Griselle Ponce  
(1979-Today) Puerto Rican Latin dancer known as the “Mambo Diva.”
6. Johnny Vazquez  
(1979- Today) Mexican salsa dancer known for popularizing a style of salsa in Los Angeles.
7. Josephine Baker  
(1906-1975) Black American jazz dancer and singer who gain much of her fame in France.

8. Norma Miller  
(1919-2019) Black American dancer known for her significant contributions to the Lindy Hop.
9. Pedro “Tete” Rusconi  
(1936-2010) Argentinian Latin dancer first to teach close embrace Milonguero-style in the United States.
10. Ricardo Vidort  
(1929-2006) Argentinian choreographer and dancer known for his contributions to the Tango.
11. The Whitman Sisters  
(Mabel Whitman 1880-1942, Alberta Whitman 1887-1964, Essie Whitman 1882-1963, Alice Whitman 1900-1968) Four Black American sisters who found fame in the vaudeville circuit.

#### Hip-Hop

12. Buddha Stretch  
(1968-Today) Black American hip-hop dancer known for his “free-style” hip hop and bringing old school and new school hip hop.
13. Don Campbell “Campbellock”  
(1951-2020) Black American known for starting the “locking” style of hip hop. Also known as “the Father of Street Dance.”
14. James Brown  
(1933-2006) Black American famed singer/song writer and dancer. Known as the “Godfather of Soul” and precursor to hip-hop dance.
15. Paris Goebel  
(1991-Today) New Zealand choreographer and hip-hop dancer known for her dance crew “The Royal Family.”
16. Rennie Harris  
(1964-Today) Black American hip-hop choreographer and dancer who is known for hip hops first concert touring company Rennie Harris Puremovement.
17. Sam Solomon “Boogaloo Sam”  
(?-?) Black American dancer know for creating “popping” hip hop style.
18. Timothy Earl Solomon “Popin’ Pete”  
(1961-Today) Black American hip hop dancer known for popularizing “popping” hip-hop style.

## Jazz/ Musical Theatre

19. Chita Rivera  
(1933-Today) Latin American musical theatre actress, dancer, and singer. First Latin American to receive a Kennedy Center Honors.
20. Debbie Allen  
(1950-Today) Black American actress, choreographer, dancer, television director, and television producer. She owns dance company the Debbie Allen Dance Academy (DADA).
21. Garth Fagan  
(1940-Today) Jamaican born choreographer and dancer. Best known for his choreography in the Broadway production of The Lion King.
22. Jamie H.J Guan  
(?-Today) Chinese choreographer and dancer known for his Broadway work The King and I, M. Butterfly.
23. Paula Kelly  
(1942-2020) Black American actress, dancer, and singer most recognized for her role in "Sweet Charity."

## Tap

24. Bill Robinson  
(1878-1949) Black American actor, singer, and tap dancer who was the highest paid African-American entertainer in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.
25. Buddy Bradley  
(1905-1972) Black American tap and jazz choreographer and dancer who founded the Buddy Bradley Dance School in London.
26. Chloe Arnold  
(1980-Today) Black American actress, choreographer, dancer, director and producer. Started dance company Chloe Arnold's Syncopated Ladies.
27. Gregory Hines  
(1946-2003) Black American actor, choreographer, tap dancer, and singer. Renowned tapper who appears in over 40 films as well as appeared on Broadway.
28. John William Sublett "John W. Bubbles"  
(1902-1986) Black American tap dancer and vaudeville performer known as the father of rhythm tap.

29. Sammy Davis Jr.  
(1925-1990) Black American actor, comedian, singer, and tap dancer. Began his career in vaudeville.
30. Savion Glover  
(1973-Today) Black American actor, choreographer, and tap dancer. Developed tap style “free style hard core.”
31. The Nicolas Brothers  
(Fayard 1914-2006, Harold 1921-2000) Black American brother duo known for their flash dance style of tap.
32. William Henry Lane “Master Juba”  
(1825-1852) Black American dancer who is a precursor for tap dance. He was one of the first black performers to perform for a white audience.

### **Traditional & Classical Dance**

#### Ballet

33. Alicia Alonso  
(1920-2019) Cuban prima ballerina and choreographer who started the company Ballet Nacional de Cuba
34. Alonzo King  
(1952-Today) Black American ballet choreographer and dancer who founded the renowned Lines Ballet.
35. Arthur Mitchell  
(1934-2018) Black American ballet choreographer and dancer who founded the renowned Dance Theatre of Harlem.
36. Ingrid Silva  
(1988-Today) Brazilian ballerina who has currently risen to fame dancing with the Dance Theatre of Harlem.
37. Joan Myers Brown  
(1931-Present) Black American choreographer, dancer, and director who founded both PHILDANCO and the International Association of Blacks in Dance.
38. Janet Collins  
(1917-2003) Black American ballerina and choreographer who was one of the first ballerinas.

39. Lauren Anderson  
(1965-Today) Black American ballerina who was one of the first black ballerinas to become principal for a major dance company with the Houston Ballet.
40. Lorena Fiejóo  
(?-Today) Cuban prima ballerina and actress who performed as principal dancer with Joffrey Ballet of Chicago as well as San Francisco Ballet.
41. Lorna Feijo  
(?-Today) Cuban prima ballerina who performed as principal dancer with National Ballet of Cuba.
42. Maria Tallchief  
(1925-2013) Native American prima ballerina who is the first Native American to have held rank. She founded Chicago City Ballet with her sister.
43. Marjorie Tallchief  
(1926-Today) Native American ballerina who was the first Native American to be named “première danseuse étoile.”
44. Misty Copeland  
(1982-Today) Black American ballerina who was the first Black ballet dancer to become principal dancer for the American Ballet Theatre.
45. Moscelyne Larkin  
(1925- 2012) Native American ballerina who was one of the founders of Tulsa Ballet.
46. Raven Wilkinson  
(1935-2018) Black American ballerina who was the first Black American dancer to sign full time with a major dance company.
47. Rosella Hightower  
(1920-2008) Native American ballerina who dance under Basil’s Original Ballet Russe.
48. Sono Osato  
(1919-2018) Asian American ballerina who danced with Ballets Russe de Monte-Carlo and American Ballet Theatre.
49. Sylvester Campbell  
(1938-1997) Black American ballet dancer who was a part of the New York Negro Ballet and later founder of the Ellicott City Ballet Guild.

50. Virginia Johnson  
(1950-Today) Black American ballerina who was a founding member of Dance Theatre of Harlem and serves as its artistic director.

#### Traditional Dances

51. Alarmel Valli  
(1956-Today) Indian classical Bharatanatyam dancer who founded The Dipasikha Dance Foundation.
52. Amalia Hernandez  
(1917-2000) Mexican traditional dancer who founded Ballet Folklórico de México.
53. Asadata Dafora  
(1890-1965) Sierra Leone choreographer and dancer known for bringing authentic African dance and music to the United States.
54. “Baba” Chuck Davis  
(1937-2017) Black choreographer and dancer who created the companies DanceAfrica, the Chuck Davis Dance Company and the African American Dance Ensemble focuses on traditional African dances.
55. Lee Mae-bang  
(1927-2015) Korean traditional dancer who created the Lee Mae-bang school techniques.
56. Millika Sarabhai  
(1954-Today) Indian classical activist, actress, and dancer who used the Bharatanatyam dance for activism.
57. Padma Subrahmanyam  
(1943-Today) Indian classical choreographer, dancer, musician, and scholar who well known for her dances as well as her music.
58. Rukmini Devi  
(1904-1986) Indian classical activist, choreographer, and dancer who a revivalist of Bharatanatyam dance.
59. Sara Pereyra Baras  
(1971-Today) Spanish flamenco choreographer and dancer who started the company Ballet Flamenco de Sara Baras.
60. Souleymane “Solo” Badolo  
(?-Today) Burkina Faso dancer and choreographer who focuses on traditional African dance in his company Kongo Ba Téria.

## Neo Traditional Dances

61. Ananya Chatterjea  
(?-Today) Indian choreographer and dancer who creates contemporary Indian dance with her company Ananya Dance Theatre.
62. Eiko and Koma  
(?-Today) Japanese choreographers and dancers who create movement theatre works from the principals of traditional Japanese dances.
63. Kariamu Welsh  
(1949-Today) Black American choreographer, dancer, and scholar who is the founder to the contemporary African based Umfundalai dance technique.
64. María Pagés  
(1963-Today) Spanish flamenco choreographer and dancer who is known as one of the innovators of modern flamenco.
65. Nadia Gamal  
(1937-1990) Egyptian actress and dancer who is known for being the founder of a modern style of belly dance.
66. Omari Mizrahi  
(1993- Today) Senegal dancer who fuses traditional West African, house, and vogue into the style he founded called AfrikFusion.

## **Contemporary & Modern Dance**

### Modern Dance

67. Alvin Ailey  
(1931-1989) Black American choreographer and dancer known for creating the first racially integrated dance companies in the United State, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre.
68. Carmen de Lavallade  
(1931-Today) Black American actress, choreographer, and dancer who danced with many famous companies and choreographed for Broadway.
69. Diane McIntyre  
(1946-Today) Black American choreographer and dancer who has choreographed for many prestigious companies.

70. Donald McKayle  
(1930-2018) Black American choreographer, dancer, director, and writer whose works focused on racial injustice.
71. Donald Bryd  
(1949-Today) Black American choreographer and dancer whose works focus on racial injustice.
72. Eleo Pomare  
(1937-2008) Colombian American choreographer and dancer who started the dance company Eleo Pamare Dance Company.
73. H.T. Chen  
(?-Today) Chinese choreographer and dancer whose modern choreography is influenced by Asian dance forms in his company H.T. Chen & Dancers.
74. José Limón  
(1908-1972) Mexican choreographer and dancer who started the Limon technique as well as his company José Limón Dance Company.
75. Judith Jamison  
(1943-Today) Black American choreographer and dancer known for dancing with and being artistic director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre.
76. Katherine Dunham  
(1909-2006) Black American anthropologist, activist choreographer, and dancer known for starting the Dunham technique which merges Africanist and modern dance styles.
77. Mel Wong  
(1939-2003) Asian American choreographer, dancer, and painter who established the Mel Wong Dance Foundation and taught and performed nationwide.
78. Michio Ito  
(1892-1961) Japanese choreographer and dancer who was a pioneer of modern dance.
79. Pearl Primus  
(1919-1994) Trinidad and Tobago anthropologist, choreographer, and dancer who fused African and modern dance.
80. Talley Beatty  
(1918-1995) Black American choreographer, dancer, and director known for his prolific modern dances.



## Post Modern /Dance Theatre

81. Bebe Miller  
(1950-Today) Black American choreographer, dancer, and director who started the Bebe Miller Company.
82. Blondell Cummings  
(1944-2015) Black American choreographer and dancer known for her experimental choreography.
83. Eleanor Yung  
(1946-Today) Chinese choreographer and dancer who co-founded Asian American Dance Theatre.
84. Gus Solomons Jr.  
(1940-Today) African American choreographer and dancer who founded PARADIGM and the Gus Solomons Company/Dance.
85. Miguel Gutierrez  
(1971-Today) Latin American choreographer, dancer, singer, and writer known for works around Latin and queer identities.
86. Okwui Okpokwasili  
(1972- Today) African American choreographer, performer, and writer who creates social and political dance theatre works.
87. Ralph Lemon  
(1952-Today) Black American choreographer, dancer, director, and writer who creates experimental dance and installation work.
88. Shen Wei  
(1968-Today) Chinese American choreographer and painter who founded Shen Wei Dance Arts.

## Contemporary & Fusion

89. Camille A. Brown  
(1979-Today) Black American choreographer, dancer, and director known for her social dance fusion work.
90. Cleo Parker Robinson  
(1948-Today) Black American choreographer dancer, and director who started Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble.

91. Dana Tai Soon Burgess  
(1968-Today) Asian American choreographer, dancer, and performance artist who founded Dana Tai Soon Burgess Dance Company.
92. Hope Boykin  
(1972-Today) Black American choreographer and dancer who choreographs for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre.
93. Jawole Willa Jo Zollar  
(1950-Today) Black American choreographer and dancer known for starting the company Urban Bush Women.
94. Kyle Abraham  
(1977-Today) Black American choreographer and dancer known for starting the company Abraham in Motion.
95. Li Chiao-Ping  
(1964-Today) Asian American choreographer and dancer known for starting The Extreme Moves Training Method and Li Chiao-Ping Dance.
96. Minh Tran  
(?-Today) Vietnamese American choreographer, dancer, and director who started Minh Tran & Company.
97. Nelisiwe Xaba  
(1970-today) South African dancer and choreographer who bridges themes of postapartheid South Africa and contemporary dance.
98. Peggy Myo-Young Choy  
(?-Today) Asian American choreographer and dancer who explores Afro-Asian dance forms and founded Peggy Choy Dance.
99. Ronald K. Brown  
(1966-Today) Black American choreographer and dancer known for fusing modern and traditional West African dance.
100. Sun Ock Lee  
(1943- Today) Korean choreographer and dancer who created ZenDance a mix of meditation and movement.
101. Yin Yue  
(?-Today) Chinese choreographer dancer, and director who founded YY Dance Company.

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