



Celebrating
Black Artistry
Through Music



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Nicole Maxey
Email: nicole@maxeymizepr.com
Phone: 617.680.8163

Communities of Color Unite to Celebrate Nature and Arts with MassQ Ball

Boston, MA - Co-producers **Castle of our Skins**, **The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University**, and visual artist **Daniel Callahan** of **Create & Record**, team up to present **MassQ Ball 2022: Origin**, a large-scale celebration grounded in ritual, performance and cross-cultural arts that asks the question: "If we, together, could author our own creation story, what would we create?" Held on Saturday, July 9th at the Arnold Arboretum, the event will feature the diverse artistic expressions of and for Boston's communities of color.

In conjunction with major anniversaries - **Castle of our Skins'** 10th and **The Arnold Arboretum's** 150th - the **MassQ Ball** will be a co-created space for connection and healing collaboratively envisioned with multimedia artist and designer **Daniel Callahan**. "I am passionate about revealing connections between cultures, peoples, and ideas through the platforms of entertainment, fine art, education, and cultural activism," **Daniel Callahan** relays.

"Very much central to our work is the idea of celebration, being proud of where we come from, being proud of who we are, and being proud of the collective energy and excellence that we, as people of color have," **Ashleigh Gordon**, Violist, Executive and Artistic Director of **Castle of our Skins**, said. "The **MassQ Ball** is a showcase of all sorts of artistic disciplines from different communities of color that collaboratively work together to create something new."

"For 150 years, the Arnold Arboretum landscape has provided a free and open environment to connect the diverse people of Boston to the wonders and restorative power of nature," said Arboretum Director **William (Ned) Friedman**. "We are thrilled to collaborate with Castle of our Skins and remarkable artists like **Daniel Callahan** to craft unique experiences that make the Arboretum more welcoming and inspiring for everyone."

The **MassQ Ball 2022: Origin** will be preceded by a six-part series of lectures, panels, and interactive workshops designed to deepen attendee's collective understanding. All events will be either in-person at The Arnold Arboretum or live-streamed, free with advanced registration, and open to all ages, cultures, and communities. Registration, event locations, and COVID-19 guidelines can be found by visiting www.MassQBall.com.

The precursor events will begin with a live-streamed panel on identity, culture, and the arts on Saturday, March 26, 2022, from 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. The panel will feature visual activist **L'Merchie Frazier**, dancer **Jenny Oliver**, and restaurateur **Biplaw Rai**. *Identity | Culture | Arts* will explore the deeply intertwined relationship between identity, artistic expression, and how both can be leveraged for cross-cultural connectivity.



Celebrating
Black Artistry
Through Music

On Saturday, April 30, 2022 from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m., *Soul: An Ancestor Workshop* will be led by poet and **Castle of our Skins'** **Shirley Graham Du Bois** Creative in Residence **Marlanda Dekine**. The participatory workshop will use writing and meditation to consider how our individual origin stories and ancestries influence our being.

Dr. Liseli A. Fitzpatrick, a Trinidadian-scholar in the field of African Diasporic cosmologies and sacred ontologies, will lead an engaging lecture and discussion exploring African mythologies and folkloric cultures on Saturday, May 14, 2022 from 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. On Saturday, May 21, 2022, from 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m., **Castle of our Skins'** Director of Education, **Taylor Lena McTootle**, will lead the *Making a Mythos* workshop focused on the creative power of storytelling. Young participants, ages 8-12, will experience firsthand how fictional tales can reflect our cultural values and create them.

On Saturday, June 4, 2022, **Daniel Callahan** will lead a *MassQing Workshop* from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. Participants will learn the origin, technique, and meaning behind Daniel's artistic practice of MassQing, which uses the human face as a canvas to reveal one's inner state to create their own MassQ.

On Saturday, June 25, 2022, Bengali culture worker Pampi will lead a *Making of Ceremonial Vessels Workshop*. Attendees will weave love letters to their loved ones into hand-crafted ceremonial vessels. The vessels will be fashioned out of natural materials sourced from the grounds of the Arboretum and displayed in the **MassQ Ball** July 9th event.

"We are pleased to partner with community movements, such as **MassQ Ball**, that share Arnold Arboretum's values of education and environmental equity in the landscape," said **Courtney Allen**, Head of Public Programs at The Arboretum.

"These growing relationships support our continuing efforts to engage all people of Boston and to offer innovative public programs that engage people with plants and one another."

The **MassQ Ball 2022: Origin** is supported, in part, by a Transformative Public Art grant from the City of Boston Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture, an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, The Celebrity Series of Boston, The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, and Create & Record. For more information and updates please visit MassQBall.com.

ABOUT CASTLE OF OUR SKINS

Castle of our Skins is a Black arts institution dedicated to fostering cultural curiosity and celebrating Black artistry through music. In classrooms, concert halls, and beyond, **Castle of our Skins** invites exploration into Black heritage and culture, spot-lighting both unsung and celebrated figures of past and present. For more information, visit www.castleskins.org.

ABOUT THE ARNOLD ARBORETUM

A 281-acre preserve in the heart of Boston, **The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University** stewards one of the world's most comprehensive and best documented collections of temperate woody plants, with particular focus on the floras of eastern North America and eastern Asia. For more information, visit <http://arboretum.harvard.edu>.

ABOUT DANIEL CALLAHAN

Daniel Callahan is a multimedia artist, filmmaker and designer. Merging a legion of disciplines including painting, digital photography, film, music, writing and performance, Daniel works to craft immersive experiences incorporating story, ritual, and the human form to explore aspects of resilience and mysticism. For more information, visit <http://danielcallahan.com>.

###