



THE ARTHUR MITCHELL PROJECT SYMPOSIUM

October 26, 2015
6:30pm - 8:00pm
Barnard Hall - James Room
Broadway & 117th

October 27, 2015
1:00pm - 5:30pm
Butler Library - Room 203
Broadway & 114th



Arthur Mitchell, dance pioneer and icon, continues to be a pivotal figure in the dance world and a self-described “political activist through dance.” He is internationally known as a critically acclaimed dancer, educator, choreographer, artistic director, and dance visionary.

A native of Harlem, New York, and a graduate of the prestigious High School for the Performing Arts, in New York City, he was awarded a scholarship to study ballet at the School of American Ballet at the age of 18. In 1955, Mr. Mitchell broke the glass ceiling of classical ballet by becoming the first African American

principal dancer of The New York City Ballet under the direction of George Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein, where he remained for fifteen years. He is best known for two roles choreographed especially for him by his mentor George Balanchine, the pas de deux in *Agon*, and the light-hearted “Puck” in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

Inspired by the changes sweeping America during the Civil Rights movement, the message of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and his own determination to provide young people in the Harlem community the opportunity to positively transform their lives, Mr. Mitchell cofounded the Dance Theatre of Harlem (DTH) with Karel Shook in 1969. The organization that began as a school with 30 students and a company of two professional dancers, grew into the first permanently established African American ballet company in the United States. The company was described in *The New York Times* as “one of the dance world’s more visionary experiments.” In 1988, DTH was the first ballet company invited by the U.S. / U.S.S.R. Initiative. In addition, DTH and The Royal Ballet of England launched an educational project that trained talented children of all races in the art of ballet in England. At the invitation of President Mandela, the company was the first American performing arts company to visit South Africa, breaking the country’s 30-year cultural ban. To further his belief that dance can be used as a vehicle for social change and to ensure the legacy of his career, Mitchell founded The Arthur Mitchell Project (AMP). With the generous support of the Ford Foundation, AMP’s first initiative brought the Arthur Mitchell archive to the prestigious Rare Books and Manuscript Library at Columbia University and continues to develop companion programming. Additionally, Mitchell serves as advisor to The School of American Ballet on their diversity initiative.

Within the US and abroad, Mitchell continues to educate and advise professional dance companies and cultural institutions on the issue of diversity in the classical arts. With a concern for social justice that has spanned more than half a century, Mr. Mitchell has carved a place for African American dancers in classical ballet and forever changed the face of dance in America and around the world.

THE ARTHUR MITCHELL PROJECT SYMPOSIUM

**MONDAY,
OCTOBER 26,
2015**

6:30 - 8:00 pm

Barnard College Welcome

Linda Bell, Provost and Dean of the Faculty, Barnard College

Retrospective of An Artist: Arthur Mitchell on Film

A film montage chronicling the life and career of Mr. Mitchell, including his time with the New York City Ballet, on Broadway, and co-founding the Dance Theatre of Harlem.

This film was produced by Gillian Lipton, Project Director, The Arthur Mitchell Project, and edited by Anna Auster.

Introduction of Arthur Mitchell

Marcia Sells, The Arthur Mitchell Project Symposium Curator and former Dance Theatre of Harlem dancer

In Conversation with Arthur Mitchell

Mr. Mitchell is joined by former New York City Ballet partners and Broadway stage colleagues to discuss their work together and the dance world of the 1950s and 1960s.

PANELISTS

Carmen de Lavallade, world-renowned dancer

Allegra Kent, Adjunct Professor of Dance at Barnard College, Columbia University, legendary ballerina and muse of George Balanchine

Kay Mazzo, former New York City Ballet star and Vice-Chairman of Faculty, School of American Ballet

MODERATOR

Lynn Garafola, Professor of Dance & Co-Chair, Dance Department, Barnard College, Columbia University

IN CONVERSATION WITH ARTHUR MITCHELL



Carmen de Lavallade

Panelist

Carmen de Lavallade has had an unparalleled career in dance, theater, film, and television beginning in her hometown of Los Angeles performing with the Lester Horton Dance Theater. While in Los Angeles, Lena Horne introduced the then 17-year-old de Lavallade to the filmmakers at 20th Century Fox where she appeared in four movies, including *Carmen Jones*. During the filming, she met Herbert Ross, who asked her and Alvin Ailey to appear as a featured dancers in the Broadway production of *House of Flowers* – where she first worked with Arthur Mitchell. From Broadway to the Metropolitan Opera, Ms. de Lavallade has performed on the world's greatest stages and with such legendary artists as Josephine Baker, Duke Ellington and Alvin Epstein. In her eighties and still performing with a supreme level of grace and elegance, Carmen de Lavallade is an icon in the truest sense of the word – inspiring generations of artists and audiences.



Allegra Kent

Panelist

Allegra Kent, Adjunct Professor of Dance at Barnard, is a legendary ballerina and muse of George Balanchine—who created "The Unanswered Question" section in *Ivesiana* on her as well as leads in *Bugaku*, *La Sonnambula*, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, and other masterpieces and cast her in principal parts throughout his repertoire—and of Joseph Cornell, who created boxes and collages with her image. She was a member of the original casts in Jerome Robbins's *Dances at a Gathering* and *Dumbarton Oaks* and was also cast by Robbins throughout his repertoire. A native of California, where she studied with Carmelita Maracci and Bronislava Nijinska, she came to New York at 14 as a scholarship student at the School of American Ballet. The following year, Balanchine invited her to join his company, where she danced for the next 30 years. During that time, she performed often with Arthur Mitchell. Ms. Kent is an author of critically acclaimed books, including her memoir, *Once a Dancer. . .* and her first book for children, *Ballerina Swan*. In 2009, she was a recipient of a *Dance Magazine* Award.



Kay Mazzo

Panelist

Kay Mazzo was born in Chicago, where she received early training before attending the first of three consecutive Summer Courses at the School of American Ballet at age 12. She subsequently enrolled as a full time student in 1959. Following performances with Jerome Robbins' Ballets U.S.A., Ms. Mazzo was invited by George Balanchine in 1961 to join New York City Ballet. She rose to Soloist in 1965 and Principal in 1968. Over the course of her nearly twenty-year career, Ms. Mazzo danced virtually every female role in NYCB's repertoire and created parts in numerous new works by Balanchine and Robbins. Balanchine appointed her to the School of American Ballet's faculty in 1982. She was named Coordinator of Curriculum in 1993 and Co-Chairman of Faculty in October 1997. Ms. Mazzo is a founding member of The George Balanchine Trust.



Lynn Garafola

Moderator

A historian and critic, she is the author of *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes* and *Legacies of Twentieth-Century Dance*, editor of *José Limón: An Unfinished Memoir* and other books, and curator of the New-York Historical Society's exhibition *Dance for a City: Fifty Years of the New York City Ballet*, and several shows at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, including *New York Story: Jerome Robbins and His World*. She is currently working on a book about the choreographer Bronislava Nijinska.

**TUESDAY,
OCTOBER 27,
2015**

1:00 - 5:30 pm

Columbia University Library Welcome

Sean Quimby, Director Rare Book & Manuscript Library

A Salute to Arthur Mitchell

Kathleen Hughes, Assistant Commissioner, New York City
Department of Cultural Affairs

Introduction of Panels

Marcia Sells, The Arthur Mitchell Project Symposium Curator and
former Dance Theatre of Harlem dancer

Panel I: 1:30 - 2:30pm

Mr. Mitchell joining the New York City Ballet had a direct impact on ballet and his development as an artist. His stature provided opportunities for him to create ballets and start dance companies. In founding the Dance Theatre of Harlem with Karel Shook, Mr. Mitchell opened avenues to other artists of color to present their talent and skill. These panels bring together former composers, choreographers, dancers and designers in conversation on the Arthur Mitchell legacy.

PANELISTS

Karen Brown, former Artistic Director of the Oakland Ballet and
Dance Theatre of Harlem Principal dancer

Karyn D. Collins, Dance critic and Professor of Journalism, Rutgers
University

Robert Garland, Dance Theatre of Harlem Choreographer and
former DTH Principal dancer

Vernon L. Ross, Wardrobe Master, Metropolitan Opera & Radio City
Music Hall, and former DTH Wardrobe Master and Designer

Tania León, Composer-Conductor. Distinguished Professor, City
University of New York. Artistic Director of Composers Now and
DTH Founding Music Director

MODERATOR

Margo Jefferson, Professor, School of the Arts Writing Program,
Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist and author of *Negroland: a Memoir*

Panel II: 2:25 - 3:40pm

60 years ago, Mr. Mitchell danced into history by becoming the first African American dancer with the New York City Ballet. He blazed a path for many dancers of color including Misty Copeland, the first African American woman named Principal Dancer for the American

Ballet Theater in 2015. Performers, writers and scholars discuss Mr. Mitchell's impact in the dance world.

PANELISTS

Anjali Austin, Professor of Dance, Florida State University & former
DTH dancer

Lynn Garafola, Professor of Dance & Co-Chair, Dance Department,
Barnard College, Columbia University

Sarah L. Kaufman, Pulitzer Prize-winning critic, Washington Post
Virginia Johnson, Artistic Director of DTH & former Principal
Ballerina DTH

MODERATOR

Brent Hayes Edwards, Professor, Department of English and
Comparative Literature, Center for Jazz Studies, Institute for
Comparative Literature and Society, Columbia University

Panel III: 3:40 - 5:15pm

Artists and their creations are often the inspirational conduits of change. Song, dance, and movement spark imagination, recast old social construct, and prompt us to see infinite possibilities for the future.

PANELISTS

Zita Allen, Dance Journalist/Historian and Strategic
Communications Consultant (retired Communications Director for
District Council 37)

Patricia Cruz, Executive Director, Harlem Stage

Farah Jasmine Griffin, William B. Ransford Professor of English &
Comparative Literature, Columbia University

Brenda Dixon Gottschild, Professor Emerita of Dance Studies,
Temple University

MODERATOR

Kendall Thomas, Nash Professor of Law and Director for the Center
of Law & Culture, Columbia University School of Law



Zita Allen

Panelist

Zita Allen, dance writer and historian, was the first African American dance critic for *Dance Magazine* and has written widely on dance for other major publications including *The Amsterdam News*, *New York Times* and *Essence Magazine*. She wrote and edited the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's 25th anniversary souvenir book, was a consultant on the PBS/American Dance Festival documentary, *Free to Dance* and the editor of its companion website. She also wrote the Kennedy Center's *Masters of African American Choreography*, and contributed to the Smithsonian's book *Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing: How the Apollo Theatre Shaped American Entertainment*. She is also the author of *Black Women Leaders of the Civil Rights Movement* (Random House), Ms. Allen holds a Masters Degree in Dance History from New York University.



Anjali Austin

Panelist

Anjali Austin is a distinguished interdisciplinary artist whose career includes thirteen years of performing with the critically acclaimed Dance Theatre of Harlem. A vocalist and movement artist, she choreographs nationally and internationally, and is a Specialized Master Trainer in GYROTONIC® and GYROKINESIS®. Anjali holds an MFA in Interdisciplinary Arts from Goddard College, is an Associate Professor in the School of Dance at Florida State University, serves on the Board of CORPS de Ballet International, conducts lectures and presentations on her research, *Where Are the Black Ballet Dancers in America?*, and is currently completing her first solo concert titled, *THREADS*.



Karen Brown

Panelist

Augusta, GA native, Karen (KB) Brown's pursuit of artistic excellence in the dance world includes being a Principal Ballerina with the Dance Theatre of Harlem (DTH), Artistic Director of Oakland Ballet, 2011 "Bessie" Award recipient and Assistant Professor of dance at the University of the Arts. Ms. Brown has received certification in all levels of the ABT® National Training Curriculum and currently conducts workshops utilizing computerized motion analysis to help students advance their technique. Ms. Brown is also an entrepreneur and founder of Karenina, a published writer, sought after adjudicator, keynote speaker and requested panelist for national and international dance industry conferences. www.kareninaballerina.com.



Karyn D. Collins

Panelist

Karyn D. Collins has been a professional journalist since 1984. A native of Chicago, Ms. Collins is a freelance journalist specializing in feature writing, including dance, fashion, beauty and entertainment. Her work has been published in numerous publications including the *Associated Press*, *Essence Magazine*, *Dance Magazine* and *Playbill Magazine*. In addition to her work as a journalist, she is an educator, teaching journalism, public speaking and communication at Rutgers University, William Paterson University and Bloomfield College. She is also a former Chair of the Dance Critics Association and the founding chair of the National Association of Black Journalist's Arts and Entertainment journalism task force.



Patricia Cruz

Panelist

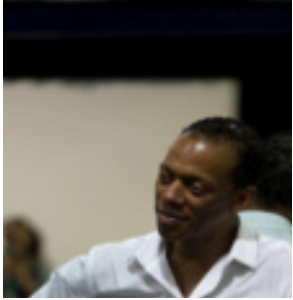
Patricia Cruz began her term as Executive Director of Harlem Stage in 1998. She is member of the Board of Directors and is responsible for overseeing Board Development, long-term planning, fundraising, and program development. The highlight of her tenure has been the renovation of the Gatehouse for use as Harlem Stage's new home. Cruz serves on the board of The Urban Assembly and the CalArts Board of Overseers. She is a past Board Member of The Andy Warhol Foundation. She is also past president of The New York Foundation for the Arts and ArtTable.



Brent Hayes Edwards

Moderator

Brent Hayes Edwards is professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, where he is also affiliated with the Center for Jazz Studies. He is the author of *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (2003) and the forthcoming *Epistrophies: Jazz and the Literary Imagination*. His translation of Michel Leiris's *Phantom Africa* will be published by Seagull Books in 2016. He is the recipient of a 2015 Guggenheim Fellowship.



Robert Garland

Panelist

Robert Garland was a member of the Dance Theatre of Harlem Company achieving the rank of principal dancer. After creating a work for the DTH School Ensemble, Arthur Mitchell invited him to create a work for The Dance Theatre of Harlem Company and appointed him the organization's first Resident Choreographer. He is also Director of the Professional Training Program of the DTH school and the organization's webmaster.

In addition to choreographing several ballets for DTH, Mr. Garland has also created works for New York City Ballet, Britain's Royal Ballet, Oakland Ballet and many others. His commercial work has included music videos, commercials, and short films, including the children's television show *Sesame Street*, a Nike commercial featuring New York Yankee Derek Jeter, the NAACP Image Awards, a short film for designer Donna Karan, and the "Charmin Cha-Cha" for Proctor and Gamble. Mr. Garland holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from the Juilliard School in New York City.



Brenda Dixon Gottschild

Panelist

Brenda Dixon Gottschild is the author of *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts*; *Waltzing in the Dark: African American Vaudeville and Race Politics in the Swing Era* (winner of the 2001 Congress on Research in Dance Award for Outstanding Scholarly Dance Publication); and *The Black Dancing Body – A Geography from Coon to Cool* (winner of the 2004 de la Torre Bueno prize for scholarly excellence in dance publication). Her most recent book, *Joan Myers Brown and The Audacious Hope of the Black Ballerina-A Biohistory of American Performance*, was published in 2012. She received the Congress on Research in Dance Award for Outstanding Leadership in Dance Research (2008) and the International Association for Blacks in Dance Outstanding Scholar Award (2013).

A freelance writer, consultant, performer, and presenter and former consultant and writer for *Dance Magazine*, she is Professor Emerita of dance studies at Temple University. www.bdixongottschild.com



Farrah Griffin

Panelist

Farah Griffin, B.A., Harvard (1985); Ph.D., Yale (1992). Professor Griffin's major fields of interest are American and African American literature, music, history and politics. The recipient of numerous honors and awards for her teaching and scholarship, in 2006-2007 Professor Griffin was a fellow at the New York Public Library Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers. She is the author of *Who Set You Flowin': The African American Migration Narrative* (Oxford, 1995), *If You Can't Be Free, Be a Mystery: In Search of Billie Holiday* (Free Press, 2001) and *Clawing At the Limits of Cool: Miles Davis, John Coltrane and the Greatest Jazz Collaboration Ever* (Thomas Dunne, 2008). She is also the editor of *Beloved Sisters and Loving Friends: Letters from Addie Brown and Rebecca Primus* (Knopf, 1999), co-editor, with Cheryl Fish, of *Stranger in the Village: Two Centuries of African American Travel Writing* (Beacon, 1998), and co-editor, with Brent Edwards and Robert O'Meally, of *Uptown Conversations: The New Jazz Studies* (Columbia University Press, 2004).



Kathleen Hughes

Speaker

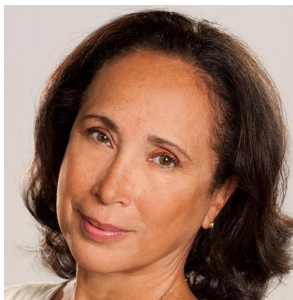
Kathleen Hughes, Assistant Commissioner for Cultural Affairs for the City of New York City, oversees a budget that this year will award \$49.5M to over 925 cultural organizations. She has served under five mayors, and was the recipient of the prestigious Sloan award for public service in 2015. She is a frequent guest speaker, and will talk to anyone who will listen on the arts, arts administration and funding, and is the proud mother of a second-generation arts administrator.



Margo Jefferson

Moderator

Margo Jefferson is a Pulitzer Prize-winning cultural critic. She has been a staff writer for *The New York Times* and *Newsweek*; her reviews and essays have appeared in *New York Magazine*, *Grand Street*, *Vogue*, *Harper's*, and many other publications. Her book, *On Michael Jackson*, was published in 2006. She has received a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Rockefeller Foundation/Theater Communications Group grant. She has also written and performed two theater pieces at The Cherry Lane Theatre and The Culture Project. She recently published *Negroland: A Memoir*.



Virginia Johnson

Panelist

Virginia Johnson is now Artistic Director of Dance Theatre of Harlem having been a founding member and former principal dancer. Her 28-year performance career with DTH and guest appearances took her around the world, gaining acclaim in a broad range of works including *Creole Giselle*, *Streetcar Named Desire* and *Fall River Legend*, all filmed and broadcast on television. Her post-performance career included choreography for Goucher College, Dancers Responding to AIDS, the Second Annual Harlem Festival of the Arts, Thelma Hill Performing Arts Center, and Marymount Manhattan College, and founding *POINTE Magazine* where she was editor-in-chief from 2000-2009. Her honors include a Young Achiever Award from the National Council of Women, the *Dance Magazine* Award, a Pen and Brush Achievement Award, the Washington Performing Arts Society's 2008-2009 Pola Nirenska Lifetime Achievement Award, the 2009 Martha Hill Fund Mid-Career Award, and an honorary doctorate from Cornish College of the Arts. She is a Trustee of Dance USA and serves on the advisory board of Dance NYC.



Sarah L. Kaufman

Panelist

Sarah L. Kaufman is the dance critic of the *Washington Post*, where she has written about the arts, sports, and culture for more than twenty years. Her many journalism awards include the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Criticism. She is the author of *The Art of Grace: On Moving Well Through Life*.



Tania León

Panelist

Tania León, born in Cuba, is a highly regarded composer and conductor recognized for her accomplishments as an educator and advisor to arts organizations. Recent commissions include *Little Rock Nine*, an opera with libretto by Henry Louis Gates. Appearances as guest conductor include the Symphony Orchestra of Marseille, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, and the Thailand Philharmonic orchestra among others. Her honors include the New York Governor's Lifetime Achievement Award, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Fromm and Guggenheim Fellowships. A founding member of the Dance Theatre of Harlem, she instituted the Brooklyn Philharmonic Community Concert Series, was co-founder of the American Composers Orchestra "Sonidos de las Americas Festivals", New Music Advisor to the New York Philharmonic, and founder of Composers Now.



Sean Quimby

Speaker

Sean Quimby has been the Director of Columbia University's Rare Book and Manuscript Library since September 2014. Prior to coming to Columbia he held positions at Syracuse and Stanford Universities. He holds a Master of Arts in American History from the University of Delaware's Hagley Fellows Program and a Master of Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



Vernon L. Ross

Panelist

Vernon L. Ross joined the Dance Theatre of Harlem in 1981, working in various areas of production before becoming the company's touring production supervisor in 1994. He has toured extensively both nationally and internationally, supervised the staging of noted ballets such as Frederic Franklin's *Creole Giselle* and Michael Smuin's *St. Louis Woman: A Blues Ballet*. Mr. Ross currently works annually for Radio City Music Hall *Christmas Spectacular* and the American Ballet Theatre at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. He has managed and coordinated special events for The Dance Theatre of Harlem, The NAACP, The Black Alumni of Pratt Institute, The Dance Institute of Washington, Verizon, and The American Foundation for the University of the West Indies. He also served for five years as the production manager and co-producer for Partners Achieving Success' 105 Voices of History HBCU National Concert Choir.



Marcia Lynn Sells

Speaker

Marcia Lynn Sells, Dean of Students at Harvard Law School, was a long time Columbia University senior administrator. She held positions as Associate Dean in the School of the Arts for Outreach & Education and Associate Vice President, Program Development and Initiatives, for the office of Government and Community Affairs. Dean Sells has held a variety of progressively responsible positions in academia, the private sector, and public service including: Educational Consultant for Dance Theatre of Harlem, Vice President of Employee and Organizational Development for Reuters America, Vice President of Organizational Development & Human Resources, and Vice President Player Education and Development for the National Basketball Association, Dean of Students at Columbia University School of Law, and Assistant District Attorney trying rape and child abuse cases for the Kings County District Attorney's Office. Marcia earned her Juris Doctorate from Columbia University School of Law and her Bachelor of Arts from Barnard College.



Kendall Thomas

Panelist

Kendall Thomas is the Nash Professor of Law and the Director of the Center for the Study of Law and Culture at Columbia University. Professor Thomas teaches and writes about race, sexuality, gender and law, law and film, constitutional law and theory, and human rights. With his students, Professor Thomas created and directed Human Rights: Culture, a seminar performance project at Columbia's Miller Theatre, and collaborated with choreographer William Forsythe on "Human Writes," a participatory performance-installation on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which has been staged in Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden and Turkey.

The Arthur Mitchell Project (AMP)

is an arts, education, and research program dedicated to collaborations between artists, scholars, and community builders that foster social change.

AMP's recent work at Columbia University has brought the Arthur Mitchell archive to the Rare Book and Manuscript Library and helped conceive of the AMP Symposium at Barnard College and the Butler Library. AMP develops programs that build partnerships between Harlem and Columbia University with the goal of promoting diversity in the arts and works closely with the School of American Ballet on their Diversity Initiative. AMP is dedicated to furthering Mitchell's legacy, rooted in his unshakable belief that the arts can both empower individuals and inspire social change. AMP is grateful for the support of the Ford Foundation.

Photo credits: Pat Cruz photo by Chester Higgins; Margo Jefferson photo by Michael Lionstar; Virginia Johnson photo by Rachel Neville; Sarah Kaufman photo by Tony Powell; Tania León by Michael Provost; Kay Mazzo photo by Rosalie O'Connor; Arthur Mitchell black & white Jumping Man photo by Martha Swope.

Gillian Lipton, Project Manager and Archivist, the Arthur Mitchell Project. Lipton works as a writer, dancer, teacher, and dramaturge of dance. She has taught in the Art and Public Policy Program at NYU and the Dance department at Queens College, CUNY. She has collaborated on numerous performance projects and installations for the Museum of Modern Art and other venues internationally, and acted as dramaturge at Dance Theater Workshop (now New Live Arts). A participant in the Mellon Postdoctoral Program in Dance Studies, Lipton holds a Ph.D. in Performance Studies from NYU.

Special Thanks

We wish to thank all our financial sponsors: Barnard College, Department of Dance, Columbia University, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University School of the Arts, Institute for Research in African American Studies, Center for Science & Society and Columbia University Office of University Life. We appreciate the support of all the departments that helped us develop the plans and ideas for the Arthur Mitchell Symposium. Thanks to Annette Ralph, Christina Rumpf and Schawannah Wright for their hard work. Special thanks to the Ford Foundation for their development of the African American Cultural Pioneers Program and Gillian Lipton, Project Manager for the Arthur Mitchell Project.

Celebrating
50 Years
**Columbia
University
School
of the Arts**

CJS the center for jazz studies
at columbia university

IRAAS Institute for Research in African-American Studies at Columbia University

 COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
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