

2020 10 03 AFRRN: “Queering the Jazz Aesthetic: An Interview with Sharon Bridgforth and Omi Osun Joni Jones”

what i took from passage

- improvisation is the heart of their work
- a big part of black expression i think?
- heavily influential to theatrical jazz
- this show uses the text as a framework, but each time they improvise sections of it so its different every time, in a good way
- art more based on feeling than telling a specific and coherent story, can make it more impactful to the individual
- this kind of performance also doesnt have a strict sense of time, more of a mixture of past present and future
- is also very spiritual
- everyone works together to make the piece what it is

quotes i thought were important or liked

- O: Improvisation is the heart of the work. I have been really moved by Fred Moten’s understanding of improvisation as a space for black folk for freedom. So if we think of improvisation acknowledging a structure and within that finding new possibilities, theatrical jazz does a lot of that work. And it is interesting: audiences . . . witnesses or participants
- S: I think it’s all the work I’ve been doing in my own personal journey. So I had cancer in 2005, and after I got my strength back—which took a year, I don’t care what they say. It took me at least a year before I felt like I had normal enough energy to really do a day
- So the aesthetic and the way
I’ve been changed, we bring simultaneity, so there’s multiple things going on at the same time. We use polyrhythms and dissonance, and a layering and exploration of time. So in my writing what that looks like is the past, the present, the future/the living, the dead, the unborn coexist. And often, you don’t know who’s flesh and who’s spirit. And the way that I use language, at least in my mind, is to create music out of the text [so] that there is a sonic journey that takes us in and out of different time realities. So I like to play with the journey of the text, as opposed to giving stage directions, because what I’m really interested in is what my collaborators are going to do with that. And so working with collaborators who can take the text and make songs out of it, or can take the texts and understand which and what form of dance is necessary, and then the layering of that.