



Melanie George is a dance educator, choreographer, dramaturg, and scholar. Named one of Dance Magazine's *30 over 30* in 2021, she is the founder and director of Jazz Is... Dance Project and Associate Curator at Jacob's Pillow. Melanie is the curator for 2024 American Dance Platform at the Joyce Theater and is currently touring as performer/emcee/dramaturg with *LaTasha Barnes Presents the Jazz Continuum*.

As a dramaturg, she works closely with internationally recognized contemporary performing artists in the incubation of new works for the stage. She has contributed to projects by Susan Marshall & Company, Raja Feather Kelly, Helené Simoneau, Alice Sheppard/Kinetic Light, LaTasha Barnes, and SW!NG OUT, and David Neumann & Marcella Murray (on the Obie Award winning *Distances Smaller Than This Are Not Confirmed*), among others. She is honored to be among the dramaturgs affiliated with Urban Bush Women's Choreographic Center. From 2016 until the Covid-19 pandemic, she was the Dramaturg and Audience Educator at Lumberyard, making her the only full-time institutional dramaturg for dance in the USA.

In 2012, Melanie founded Jazz Is... Dance Project (Jazz Is...). An in-demand teacher of neo-jazz, her jazz choreography is frequently commissioned by college programs across the U.S. Recent commissions include works for Decidedly Jazz Danceworks, Muhlenberg University, Washington University, and Salve Regina University. Her choreography for the Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company production of *Women Laughing Alone With Salad* was recognized with a 2016 Helen Hayes Award nomination for Outstanding Choreography.

Under the umbrella of Jazz Is..., she launched Jazz Dance Direct, Direct (2018-2023), a digital research project and directory website devoted exclusively to the promotion and visibility of jazz dance companies, publications, events, organizations, and college programs. She has presented her research on jazz dance improvisation and pedagogy throughout the U.S., Canada and Scotland. Publications include chapters for *Jazz Dance: A History of the Roots and Branches*, and *Rooted Jazz Dance: Africanist Aesthetics and Equity in the Twenty-First Century* (University Press of Florida). Melanie is a featured contributor and consultant for the documentary *Uprooted: The Journey of Jazz Dance*.

Melanie has an extensive teaching history, bringing thirty years of experience to students and audiences. In 2023 she joined the dance faculty in the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University as a tenure-track Assistant Professor. From 2008-2016, she directed the dance program at American University. Melanie is regularly invited to teach and lecture in university dance programs throughout the USA. Recent engagements include Harvard University, Yale School of Drama, and The Juilliard School.

She has worked as a consultant in the arts for over a decade, applying her expertise in scholarship and education to assist artists and arts organizations in articulating language and facilitating the development and presentation of creative work. In addition to her work with independent choreographers and dance educators, Melanie has provided professional services for Dance/NYC, Works & Process at the Guggenheim, and BAM, among others. She has served on the boards of the National Dance Education Organization and Dance Metro DC, and committees for the National Endowment for the Arts, MAP Fund, the Society of Dance History Scholars, VelocityDC Dance Festival, the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, and the Ohio Board of Regents. Since 2020, she has been an Associate Curator and Scholar-in-Residence at Jacob's Pillow.

She holds a BA in dance from Western Michigan University, an MA in dance and Graduate Certificate in Secondary Teaching from American University, and movement analysis certification from the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies in New York. Melanie is the 2017 recipient of the Western Michigan University Department of Dance Distinguished Alumni Award, and a 2021 awardee for Outstanding Leadership from the National Dance Education Organization.