

# Castle of our Skins Announces Season 13: Black Declaration of Independence

*The Black arts institution's 2025-2026 Season explores liberation, sovereignty, and self-determination through music, storytelling, and educational workshops.*

BOSTON, MA, UNITED STATES, August 19, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Castle of our Skins, Boston's premiere Black arts institution dedicated to celebrating cultural curiosity, is thrilled to announce its 13th season, Black Declaration of Independence – an exploration of liberation, sovereignty, and self-determination through music, storytelling, and educational workshops. From September 2025 through June 2026, audiences are invited to experience a season of events that celebrates Black communities' extraordinary contributions to American culture, asserts independence, and creates space for artistic and social freedom.

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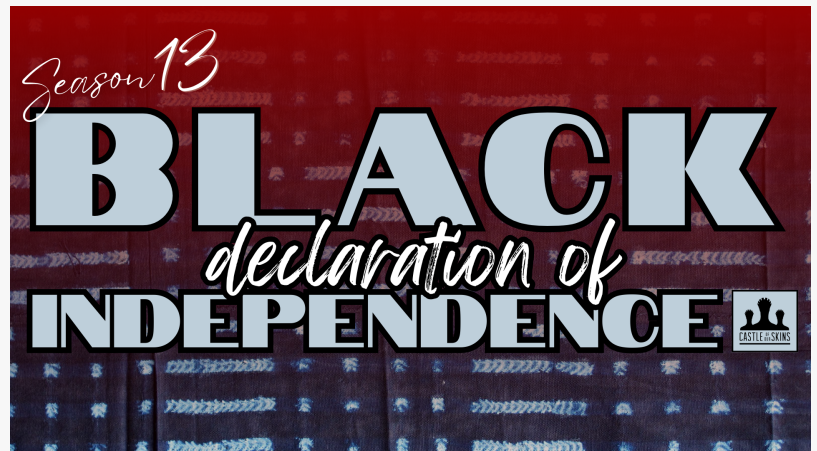
*Ashleigh Gordon, Artistic Director*

## A Season of Revolutionary Artistry

This season weaves performance, education, and community engagement to explore how Black communities have woven themselves into the very fabric of America, asserting independence, creating space, and building their own world.

“In wanting to invite reflection on the complicated history, present tense, and future of the United States in light of

the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, I wanted to offer a bold reply rooted in Black joy and agency,” notes Castle of our Skins’ Artistic Director Ashleigh Gordon. “This season delves into our own declarations of self-independence, inspired by our sheer creativity and collective power, that we’ve proclaimed time and time again.”



Castle of our Skins Season 13 Black Declaration of Independence

## Season Highlights:

### Centering Culture: MassQ Ball Panel Discussion

Sunday, September 14, 2025 @ 4:00PM  
| St. Augustine's Church in Cambridge

Join dancer/choreographer Mar Parilla, percussionist Cornell Colley, and interdisciplinary artist Ifé Franklin in a conversation rooted in culture, intentional place-making, and the creative connections that arise when both are centered. Moderated by Castle of our Skins' Artistic Director Ashleigh Gordon, this discussion serves as a prelude to [MassQ Ball 2025: Color](#), where all three artists will be featured. Part of the Black History in Action Cambridge (BHAC) Heart of the Culture series, this panel uplifts Black history through arts, activations, and shared joy.



### MassQ Ball 2025: Color

Saturday, October 4, 2025 10:00PM-4:00PM | Arnold Arboretum

MassQ Ball 2025: Color is a large-scale celebration of ritual, performance, and cross-cultural arts featuring the diverse artistry of Boston's communities of color. Free and family-friendly, this event weaves together music, dance, visual arts, and spoken word with ritual, nature, and the joy found in creative expression and cross-cultural celebration. Learn more and RSVP at [MassQBall.com](#).

Supported by the City of Boston, The Arnold Arboretum, Create & Record, [Celebrity Series](#) of Boston, Eastern Bank, Bethel AME Church, Blick Art Supplies, WCVB, The Bay State Banner, TCGT Entertainment and The Wellness Collaborative.

### Spot/Light Series

Saturday, November 22, 2025 & Feb. 21, 2026 @ 7:00PM | Black Market Nubian

The inaugural Spot/Light Series pairs innovative local Black creatives across genres—from jazz to global and genre-defying music—for a splitbill showcase. Each performance invites multigenerational audiences to celebrate artistic sovereignty, community, and self-expression.

Featured artists include Zili Misik (new world soul) paired with the Kevin Harris Project (jazz), and Tim Hall (poetry and jazz) paired with Zahili Zamora (Afro-Cuban jazz).

Supported by City of Boston Neighborhood And Downtown Activation grant.

#### [BSU Fellowship](#) Concert: Independence

Friday, Feb. 6, 2026 @ 7:00PM | Longy School of Music, Pickman Hall

For the fifth consecutive year, Castle of our Skins welcomes Black Student Union (BSU) students from local music colleges and conservatories to come together to collaborate, cultivate creative agency, and showcase their talents. Inspired by a theme of "Independence," students will curate and perform in a capstone showcase Friday, February 6, 2026, at the Longy School of Music.

Application Period: Oct. 1-31

#### The Dream the Dreamers Dreamed

Saturday, March 7th, 2026 @ 3:00PM | The Salvation Army Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center

In collaboration with the Boston Children's Chorus and Celebrity Series of Boston, COOS presents a program inspired by Langston Hughes' epic poem Let America Be America Again. Featuring Derrick Skye's American Mirror, this concert celebrates multigenerational unity and independence, reflecting the diverse journeys of refugees, immigrants, and descendants of enslaved people.

Presented as part of Celebrity Series of Boston's Neighborhood Arts Series.

#### ICONS

Sunday, March 29, 2026 @ 1:30PM | Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum

Experience three of Daniel Bernard Roumain (DBR)'s Civil Rights Portraits: a series of string quartets dedicated to iconic figures from the Civil Rights Era, including Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and Maya Angelou, blending history with contemporary composition and electrifying storytelling.

#### And, Perhaps, To Bloom

Saturday/Sunday, May 2 & 3, 2026 | Brattleboro Music Center, Vermont & Longy School of Music

Tracing journeys from swamps and maroon societies to northern and midwestern cities like Detroit, this program explores the Great Migration and the enduring resilience of Black communities seeking freedom, life, and humanity. Works include Undine Smith Moore's *Before I'd Be a Slave*, Carlos Simon's *Warmth of Other Suns*, and Shawn Okpebholo's *Great Day*.

Supported, in part, by the Alice M. Ditson Fund.

### Black Declaration of Independence

Saturday, June 6, 2026 @ 7:00PM | Hibernian Hall

World premieres of vocal chamber works by Yaz Lancaster, Kevin Day, and Joe Williams, commissioned by Castle of our Skins in honor of America 250, embodying themes of liberation, identity, and community.

Supported by City of Boston Neighborhood And Downtown Activation grant

### Additional Season Highlights:

- Storytelling and Improvisation workshop for kids, this September at MAAH
- Our seventh annual appearance at Longy School of Music, this year featuring GRAMMY-nominated composer, Valerie Coleman
- Collaborations with Boston Lyric Opera and West End Museum on revolutionary women and historical narratives

### Tickets & Information:

Individual event tickets, pre-concert workshops, and special programs are available at [CastleSkins.org](https://CastleSkins.org). Card to Culture holders receive discounted or free access.

### 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, interdisciplinary collaborations, and educational programming. Since 2013, COOS has presented world premieres, commissioned works, and immersive experiences that center Black communities, history, and creativity.

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