Castle of our Skins Announces Season 14: Imprinted

New curatorial leadership guides a season exploring how Black artists and communities preserve, transform, and carry culture forward.



Castle of our Skins logo

BOSTON, MA, UNITED STATES, September 8, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Castle of our Skins, Boston's premier Black arts organization dedicated to celebrating cultural curiosity and Black artistry, is thrilled to announce its 14th season, Imprinted. From October 2026 through June 2027, audiences are invited to experience a season of music, literature, interdisciplinary performance, community engagement, and collective reflection exploring the marks we inherit, the marks we make, and the legacies we carry forward. Season 14 also marks a new chapter for Castle of our Skins, with the appointment of Francesca McNeeley as Music Curator and Lyndsay Allyn Cox as Interdisciplinary Curator & Artistic Producer. The new curatorial leadership model follows the departure of COOS Co-Founder and longtime Artistic Director Ashleigh Gordon, whose artistic leadership helped shape the organization and its vision for more than a decade.

Imprinted explores the many ways Black artists, thinkers, and communities shape, preserve, and carry culture forward. Across music, literature, performance, visual art, and collective practice, the season considers how traditions endure while continually being transformed by new generations.

From African-American spirituals carried from sacred traditions into the concert hall, to the radical experimentation of the Harlem Renaissance; from embroidered memorials honoring lives lost to state-sanctioned violence, to the revolutionary ideas of the Combahee River Collective;

Imprinted celebrates the people, ideas, and creative practices that leave lasting marks on our communities and our culture.



From Castle of our Skins BSU Fellowship Concert (Credit: Niko Alexander / FPoint Productions)

SACRED TRANSCENDENCE
October 17 | 12th Baptist Church, Roxbury, MA (Presented by Vivo Performing Arts)
October 18 | Quick Center, Fairfield, CT
Sacred Transcendence traces the journey of the African American spiritual from the church pew to the concert hall. Featuring beloved spirituals and reimaginings by composers including Florence Price, William Grant Still, and Shawn Okpebholo, the program explores how songs of faith, resilience, and hope continue to inspire generations of artists.

FIRE!!: A Celebration of Radical Black Expression
November 6 | Longy School of Music, Cambridge, MA
Inspired by the revolutionary spirit of the 1926 literary magazine Fire!!, this performance, conversation, and artist salon brings musicians, writers, thinkers, and audiences into dialogue, creating space for experimentation, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas.

RADICAL IMPRINTS
BSU Intercollegiate Fellowship Concert
February 13, 2027 | Longy School of Music
The sixth annual Black Student Union Intercollegiate Fellowship culminates in Radical Imprints, an interdisciplinary performance featuring the next generation of Black artists from colleges and conservatories across Greater Boston. Co-created with the fellows, the performance celebrates bold new voices, artistic collaboration, and collective imagination.

WITNESS: Art, Remembrance, and Collective Care
March 8-18, 2027 | Hibernian Hall, Boston, MA
WITNESS is an interdisciplinary residency honoring African American youth lost to state-sanctioned violence. Inspired by visual artist Rosalyn D. Elder’s embroidered memorials from The Requiem Project, the residency brings artists and audiences together through exhibition, conversation, artistic engagement, and performance.

DeShaun Gordon King's Sound Ritual: Catalyst
April 9, 2027 | Longy School of Music
April 10, 2027 | Brattleboro Music Center, Brattleboro, VT
Created by DeShaun Gordon-King, The Sound Ritual: Catalyst is an immersive musical experience blending therapeutic music, chamber music, jazz, improvisation, electronics, and guided meditation, inviting audiences into a space of deep listening, reflection, restoration, and connection.

COMBAHEE: Black Feminism. Radical Roots. Liberated Futures.
April 25, 2027 | Museum of African American History, Boston, MA
Fifty years after the release of the Combahee River Collective Statement, COMBAHEE brings artists and audiences together through performance and conversation. Honoring the radical legacy of the Black feminist, lesbian, socialist organization founded in Boston by Barbara Smith, Beverly Smith, and Demita Frazier, the program explores the enduring influence of Black feminist and queer thought.

SPOT/LIGHT: BLACK COTTON CLUB & WE BLACK FOLK
June 12 & 26, 2027| More Than Words, Boston, MA
COOS' Spot/Light series showcasing innovative local Black artists across genres returns this June with two special evenings at More Than Words.

Beyond its seasonal programming, Castle of our Skins brings Black music, history, and creative practice into schools and community spaces through year-round edu-tainment workshops, youth programs, and partnerships. In 2026–27, COOS will workshop new student-centered repertoire with Project STEP through its Student Repertoire Commissioning Project, and continue year-long partnerships with the Quick Center for the Arts and ZUMIX. COOS will also continue edu-tainment engagements with partners including the Museum of African American History, Conservatory Lab Charter School, Boston School of the Arts, Rose Conservatory, Boston Housing Authority, United South End Settlements, and Boston Children's Museum.

Season 14 marks the beginning of a new era for Castle of our Skins. Following the conclusion of Ashleigh Gordon's tenure as Artistic Director after Season 13, the organization has embraced a collaborative curatorial leadership model designed to expand the ways COOS approaches music, interdisciplinary art, and community engagement.

As Music Curator, Francesca McNeeley brings her deep experience as a performer, educator, collaborator, and longtime member of the Castle of our Skins artistic community to the organization's musical programming. As Interdisciplinary Curator & Artistic Producer, Lyndsay Allyn Cox brings an expansive interdisciplinary practice to COOS, developing opportunities for artists and audiences to encounter Black creativity across disciplines and forms. Together,

McNeeley and Cox will collaborate with Castle of our Skins' artists, partners, staff, and communities to shape the organization's artistic future.

"We are incredibly excited about this next chapter," says Castle of our Skins Executive Director, Dr. Ciyadh Wells. "Ashleigh's leadership and vision have been foundational to who we are, and we are deeply grateful for the imprint she leaves on this organization. At the same time, we're energized by what becomes possible when new voices and perspectives enter the conversation. Francesca and Lyndsay bring distinct but beautifully complementary practices, and we look forward to the collaborations, experiments, and new relationships that will emerge through their leadership."

About Castle of our Skins
Founded in 2013 by Ashleigh Gordon and Anthony R. Green, 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 Black heritage and culture exploration, spotlighting both unsung and celebrated figures of past and present.

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