

Shaumba Yandje Dibinga, Founding Executive & Artistic Director

Shaumba-Yandje Dibinga is the founding Executive and Artistic Director of the **OrigiNation Cultural Arts Center**, a nonprofit performing arts organization that has been serving youth since 1994. She founded OrigiNation to provide a safe haven for youth where they can learn the importance of self-respect, health, nutrition, public speaking, education, self-confidence and the extent of African influences on various contemporary art forms. Its mission is to empower youth between the ages of 3 and 20 to reach their full potential and to have productive futures by developing self-esteem and promoting civic responsibility through the use of performing, education, and cultural arts.

OrigiNation serves over 5,000 youth annually through five main programs: **Professional Dance Division** (comprised of four professional dance companies - **NIA Dance Troupe, Girlz of IMANI, IMANI Jr. and Aleye Boyz Troupe**), **Performing Arts Program, Community Outreach & Education, IMANI Summer Program** and **Youth Empowerment through the Arts** which has taken the dance troupe to **South Africa, Senegal, Ghana, England, France** and **Louisiana** for performance opportunities and services projects. During these tours, the dancers perform in schools, facilitate dance workshops, immerse themselves in cultural exchanges with each country's youth and distributes clothes and school supplies to underprivileged students.

Ms. Dibinga has extensive training, teaching and performance experience in all areas of dance and theater and has been writing poetry and plays for nearly 20 years. She is the co-director and co-producer of **Our Story, A Celebration of the African American Experience through Music, Dance and Spoken Word** and is the director and writer of **Tafuta! A Young Boy's Search for the True Meaning of Kwanzaa**. She is a member of the **Barr Fellows Class of 2011** and has received numerous awards for her work with OrigiNation, including **The Philanthropic Initiative's Boston Fellows Award**, the **Boston Renaissance Charter Public School's Living Legend Award**, the **Afrikan Achievers Award**, the **Friends of Melnea Cass Youth and Community Service Award**, and the **Portraits of Courage Upstander's Award**. She has also appeared in several feature films, musicals, industrials, television commercials and interviews, including WCVB's **Chronicle**, **Sunday Morning with Liz Walker**, and **Urban Update**. She is also the author of the children's poetry book ***Pride in My Stride***.

In 2013, Ms. Dibinga founded **ShapeUp with Shaumba, Inc.** - a non-profit organization whose mission is to utilize dance, nutrition and poetry to help fight obesity and build self-confidence in children. (www.shaumbayandje.com). She has studied at the **Alvin Ailey School, the Boston Conservatory** and received her BA from the **University of Massachusetts**.