Originally from Wilmington, Delaware, Raphael Xavier is a self-taught Hip-Hop dancer and Breaking practitioner since 1983, Raphael has forged an exceptional approach to improvisation. Brenda Dixon Gottschild deemed Xavier, ‘A fine rhythm technician who transforms a bravado dance style into an introspective meditation.’

A self-described Innovative Movement Conceptualist, Xavier creates new ways to expand the vocabulary of the dance form. He draws not only upon the culture but also his equally important visual background as a Hip Hop magazine photographer and musical artist. As the sound designer for his works, Xavier’s understanding of movement and musicality allows him to structure beats, noises and sounds into captivating music that draws upon emotion and coincides with his choreography.

His extensive research in the Breaking form has led to the creation of Ground-Core, a Somatic dance technique that gives the practitioner a better understanding of the body within all dance forms. As an active alumnus of the world-renown Hip Hop Dance Company, Rennie Harris Puremovement, his solo and ensemble choreographic dance works have been performed worldwide. His dance works have been performed at REDCAT Los Angeles, Kennedy Center in Washington DC, ART (American Repertory Theatre in Boston), Dance Theatre Workshop in NYC, the Dance Center at Colombia College Chicago and Painted Bride in Philadelphia, PA among others.

He currently lives in Philadelphia and is a Guest Lecturer in Dance at Princeton University.

Awards and Accolades:
2013 Pew Fellowship
2014 MacDowell Fellowship
2016 Guggenheim Fellowship for Choreography
SASSAFRAZZ: From Roots to Mastery

Premiere: FALL 2020, New York Live Arts
Running Time: Evening Length, TBD Choreography: Raphael Xavier
Music and sound design: Raphael Xavier & musicians

Touring Personnel
Performers: 4 dancers, 4 musicians
Administrative/Production Staff : 1

The culmination of a 20-year exploration, Sassafrazz is Xavier’s newest work inspired by three distinct interpretations of the word itself: 1) The word sassafras: a dried root used for flavoring; 2) The old character based dance styles and flavor in Breaking; and 3) The acceptance/privilege of maturing as a dancer in the Breaking genre in search of the combined: aging & mastery.

Sassafrazz is an original composition of structured improvisation for four Breakers and four musicians. It focuses on the three stages of Break Life: birth, life, and death, that are represented by three styles of Breaking: Top, Footwork, and Ground Text. Ken Swift, a pioneering B-boy from NYC, will be working closely with Xavier to keep the traditional elements of Breaking in the forefront of this dance theatre piece. The work highlights the parallels between traditional Breaking and Jazz music and the practitioner’s search for graceful maturing/aging in an art form associated with youth.

See a work-in-progress excerpt: https://vimeo.com/355577960

Sassafrazz is a recipient of the New England Foundation for the Arts’ National Dance Project Touring Award, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.
“...Xavier captivated his audience with the impassioned lyrical delivery of a hip-hop artist.”
- Jim Rutter, The Broad Street Review, July 2011

"I love watching Raph impress and relate to the older and the younger generations. He's an elder in the breaking community and is teaching hip-hop to seniors and youth alike. His work is masterful and there couldn't be a better fit for dance in our American Roots Festival."
- Steven Raider-Ginsburg, Dance News Desk, February 2017

“Top 10 of the Year in Dance”
- Jeffrey Gantz, The Boston Globe, December 2016

“But the point of “Point of Interest” is how Culbreath, LaPlante, Trihn, Valme, and Xavier subsume their individual styles into a group effort that’s less about showing off and more about exploring the essence of breakdancing.”
- Jeffrey Gantz, The Boston Globe, October 2016

“Xavier's Guide explored the broader themes of artistic dedication as a total, almost ethical commitment across an entire life—”
- Jim Rutter, The Broad Street Review, July 2011

“...each exemplified the creative instincts that ultimately define genius.”
- Jim Rutter, The Broad Street Review, July 2011
For all booking inquiries:

Sandy Garcia
Director of Booking, Pentacle
T: 212.278.8111 ext. 3425
E: sandyg@pentacle.org

Nathalie Matychak (SOUTH)
Booking Associate, Pentacle
T: 212.278.8111 ext. 3422
E: nathaliem@pentacle.org

www.pentacle.org

For all press/marketing inquiries:

Nathalie Matychak
Booking Associate, Pentacle
T: 212.278.8111 ext. 3422
E: nathaliem@pentacle.org