

# **Meet your Arts Integration Learning Labs Keynote Speaker! Yorel Lashley, PhD.**



**Yorel Lashley is the Director of Arts in the Office of Professional Learning and Community Education at UW—Madison’s School of Education and Director of Student Empowerment for the Center for Arts Education and Social and Emotional Learning. He is a developmental psychologist interested in self-efficacy and social-emotional learning in arts, academic and integrated environments as well as the Founder/Director of Drum Power. Drum Power uses West African Traditional, Afro-Brazilian, and Afro-Cuban percussion to help young people develop and practice social-emotional skills—discipline, community, and leadership. The program has supported more than 4,000 young people from New York City, Denver, and Madison, Wisconsin to date. Lashley, who also provides professional development, created the Relationships First framework for building and maintaining healthy classroom culture, fully integrating academic content with social-emotional learning. Yorel is also a trained musician who trained with the Kankouran West African Dance Company in Washington, DC and the Harbor Conservatory for the performing arts in Spanish Harlem and led bands in New York City.**

# Guest Speakers

**Christy Burgess** is the lead teacher for the award-winning Robinson Shakespeare Company, which provides quality drama instruction to over 400 students in schools throughout the South Bend community through after-school programs and in-class drama integration. Christy attended the University of Alaska Fairbanks and received her M.A. in Drama and Theatre Education from the University of Warwick. Before Moving to South Bend, Christy worked at the Fairbanks Shakespeare Theatre as Education Manager and had the pleasure of traveling to parts of rural Alaska to teach Shakespeare workshops to youth and Alaska Native Elders. In 2011-2012, she was honored to be a North American Teaching Consultant for the Royal Shakespeare Company. Christy was named a 2018 Journey Fellow, as well as Michiana's 40 under 40, and in 2016 she was awarded the D. Susan Wisely Youth Worker of the Year Award.



**Stephanie Carlson** is an educator and performer, who received her Bachelor of Arts in Music from the University of Northern Colorado, and her Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts (ABD) in Voice Performance from the University of Arizona. While in Arizona, Ms. Carlson spent fifteen years working in the Tucson Unified School District as a teaching artist for the Opening Minds through the Arts (OMA) program, a nationally recognized student achievement program that integrates the arts with the tested core curriculum of Language Arts, Social Studies, Math and Science. Five years ago, Ms. Carlson moved back to her hometown of Fort Wayne, serving at both Heartland Sings and the Fort Wayne dance Collective, where she continued her love of education and performing by establishing the Arts Integrated Residency that uses the genres of both opera and dance to teach Language Arts and Literacy year-round in Northeast Indiana schools.



**Leon Crosby** is an eclectic artist who loves to immerse himself in all styles of art. He began his art journey in Toledo, Ohio where he studied formally and also through an immersion in street art culture. In 2020 he received the People's Choice Award for his piece titled "Won't You Be My Neighbor?" in the Muncie Arts Walk Chalk it Up to Kindness event. Crosby values the relationships he's built with his students of all ages. Through his philosophy of "Meet students where they are to develop their own style," Crosby is pleased that his teaching artistry also serves as a mentorship to young artists.



**Lena Darnay** is the Assistant Director of Digital Content and Strategy for Keep Indiana Learning, a department of Central Indiana Educational Service Center. She supports Indiana educators by creating innovative and engaging professional learning content in digital platforms, social media, and blended learning experiences. She is dedicated to developing and establishing powerful structures and inclusive environments for learning that build engaging, learner-centered, and authentic learning experiences.



**Melli Hoppe** is a teaching artist with Arts for Learning Indiana, is a Nationally Credentialed Teaching Artist with Young Audiences Arts for Learning, and is co-chair of the Nationally Credentialed Teaching Artist group. She has a B.A. in Dance from Columbia College in Chicago, MFA in Interdisciplinary Arts from Goddard College in Vermont, and received a Teaching Artist Certificate from Teachers College at Columbia University. She was the Artistic Director of Susurrus, an Indianapolis based not-for-profit performance group, from 1993-2013. Melli taught site-specific theatre and stage movement at Butler University and taught dance at Indiana University (IUPUI), Butler University, Broad Ripple High School and Shortridge Middle School in Indianapolis.



As the Director of Artist Programs at Arts for Learning Indiana, **Clockwork Janz** manages a roster of 50 teaching artists and ensembles. Before joining Arts for Learning, Clockwork accrued nearly 10 years of experience as a teaching artist working primarily in music and culinary media. Arts for Learning Indiana has been Indiana's premier provider of Arts Integrated learning for the past 60 years, partnering with communities across the state to serve students wherever they are at. In 2020, Art for Learning launched the "Artist Building Community Fellowship," an initiative intended to disrupt the power structure of the traditional non-profit model, supporting greater agency in the people being served.



After a twenty-year career as an opera singer, performing internationally in the Middle-East, Europe and America, Dramatic Soprano **Susanna R. Lauer**, a native of Washington, D.C., took the part of her career she loved most – teaching students to use music to enrich their lives and build confidence on and off the stage – and turned to teaching. Upon moving to Fort Wayne, she became the Director of Education for Heartland Sings, a vocal nonprofit. Ms. Lauer holds a Bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance from the Benjamin T. Rome School of Music at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. and a Master's degree in Vocal Performance from West Virginia University, as well as a Masters in Teaching from University of St. Francis. Ms. Lauer lectures to professional and children's choirs in the Middle-East and holds vocal Masterclasses for professional musical productions on proper singing technique, emphasizing the importance of vocal health. Ms. Lauer is currently a fifth-grade teacher at Weisser Park Arts Magnet School in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where she uses her knowledge of Arts Integration daily in her 5th grade classroom.



**Josiah McCruiston** is a regional actor, teaching artist, and youth pastor/director who believes in the power of the creative spirit. He has performed across the nation, has worked in museum theatre, and has worked in arts education for over eight years. He is currently working on a master's in art education at IUPUI. He works as the program director and youth pastor of Witherspoon Presbyterian Church and believes in community partnerships and responsibility. This past year, he has created art programs for Indianapolis near-west and east side with free piano lessons and visual artist programs. In both programs, students were able to work under accomplished artists, bond with a cohort of their peers, and showcase their work because of their efforts. Everyone is an artist and can create - yes, you too.



**William Bryant Rozier** owns Scrambled Egg(s), a media production company out of Northeast Indiana that creates, among other things, education materials. Rozier studied Creative Writing and Film Studies as an undergrad at Ball State University (2001), where he initiated a Creative Writing class for Cardinal Filmworks, the campus film group. Since graduating, Rozier's photography credits include USA Today, Black Enterprise Magazine and Poets & Writer's Magazine, and Ebony.com and Indian Country Today as a writer. Since June 2021, he's been producing an animated film with middle school students, using English and grammar principles as a through line.



**Rachel Green Sharpe** is the International Baccalaureate Coordinator at Center for Inquiry at School 84 in Indianapolis Public Schools. Rachel's career has spanned a wide range of experiences: she has worked with students in grades K-12; she has taught Visual Arts, English, and Creative Writing as well as served as a literacy coach and assistant principal; and she has worked in schools in Chicago, Gary, and Dallas, TX. Rachel grew up in Indianapolis and earned her BA in Art History and French Studies from Rice University in Houston, TX. Rachel also holds an MA in School Building Administration from Teachers College, Columbia University. In her free time Rachel enjoys exploring various creative and culinary pursuits and spending time outdoors with her husband and two children.



**Robert T. Townsend** is a professor in the School of Educational Leadership at Indiana Wesleyan University. He has a Bachelor of Music Degree from Western Michigan University, Master of Music Education degree from Indiana University-Bloomington, and completed the Ph.D. at the University of Illinois. Dr. Townsend has 15 years of public and private school music teaching experience and over 18 years of university teaching and administration experience, having held positions at IUPUI, Northern Illinois and Wayne State universities as well as a teaching assistant position at the University of Illinois, Champaign/Urbana. In addition, he serves as executive producer/conductor for the Philharmonic Orchestra of Indianapolis' Annual Gospel Concert. He also serves as Founder/board member of The Performing Arts Conservatory; an after-school program helping youth to perfect their gifts and talents in the performing arts. The organization is working toward opening a performing arts secondary school in the Indianapolis Metropolitan area. Robert resides in Indiana with his wife. Their daughter is a teacher in MSDLT.

