

**NASAA**  
Leadership Institute

SEPTEMBER 18-20 | PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

2019



## Featured Speakers and Artists

### Featured Speakers

#### **Edwin Torres**

PLENARY SESSION: HOW GRANT MAKERS CAN ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1:45 P.M.



Edwin Torres has served as president & CEO of [Grantmakers in the Arts](#) since October 2017. He most recently served as deputy commissioner of cultural affairs for New York City. Prior to joining the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, he was a program officer with The Rockefeller Foundation. He has served on the arts and culture team at the Ford Foundation as well as on the staff of the Bronx Council on the Arts. Torres holds a master of arts in art history from Hunter College and a master of science in management from The New School.

#### **Crystal Williams**

PLENARY SESSION: HOW GRANT MAKERS CAN ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1:45 P.M.



As Boston University's inaugural associate provost for diversity & inclusion, Crystal Ann Williams provides leadership, vision, management and strategic direction for initiatives that promote diversity, access and inclusion across BU's Charles River and Medical campuses. She works with academic and administrative leaders on efforts to build the inclusive excellence of BU faculty and academic appointees, to nurture a positive campus climate, and to enhance diversity within the pathways through higher education. Williams arrived at BU in October 2017 from Bates College, where she'd served since 2013 as associate vice president for strategic initiatives, professor of English

and a senior advisor to the president, developing programs and strategies that resulted in increased diversity among the faculty, staff and students while enhancing engagement across campus. She was previously a faculty member and the inaugural dean for institutional diversity at Reed College (2000-2013), leading multiple faculty-driven initiatives to create an infrastructure to support diversity and inclusion. Williams is an award-winning poet, the author of four books, and the recipient of several artistic fellowships, grants and commissions. She is consistently recognized as a thought leader on diversity in the arts, and has helped to lead and convene programs at the state and local levels involving arts, civic and philanthropic leaders. She holds a B.A. from New York University and an M.F.A. from Cornell University.

## Mary Anne Carter

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS PLENARY, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 9:15 A.M.



Mary Anne Carter was confirmed as the 12th chairman of the [National Endowment for the Arts](#) on August 1, 2019, receiving unanimous consent from the U.S. Senate. Carter served as acting chairman of the Arts Endowment beginning on June 5, 2018, and following 18 months as the agency's senior deputy chairman.

Since arriving at the agency, Carter has pushed to make the National Endowment for the Arts more accessible to the American people, directing an expansion of Creative Forces (an arts therapy program for U.S. service members and veterans recovering from post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, and other psychological health conditions) and bolstering many of its national initiatives, including Shakespeare in American Communities, NEA Big Read, Poetry Out Loud, and the Jazz Masters and National Heritage Fellowships.

To further expand the reach of the arts endowment, Carter has held the past several public meetings of the National Council on the Arts at locations outside the agency's offices. These include a June 2018 meeting in Charleston, West Virginia—the first such meeting outside of Washington, D.C., in 27 years—and in June 2019 in Detroit, Michigan.

Carter brings a unique perspective to the arts endowment. Prior to her appointment, she was engaged in public policy analysis, issue tracking, and

corporate and campaign communications through her work as a public affairs consultant. During her time at the arts endowment, she has demonstrated that lessons learned in her prior professional life are effective tools in directing the work of an agency dependent upon the support and confidence of Congress.

Her knowledge and genuine love for the arts are rooted at the most personal of levels—through the learning differences initially observed in her daughter at age seven. This challenge led Carter to schools that employ the arts as a teaching method in every class, making the learning process both productive and enjoyable for her daughter. Carter understands the power of the arts, as she witnesses that power every day.

Photo courtesy National Endowment for the Arts

## Artists

### Czesare Santana

OPENING RECEPTION, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 6:00 P.M., RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN MUSEUM



Czesare Santana is a Dominican singer-songwriter and producer. Prior to coming to the United States, Czesare took piano lessons and wanted to be a classical pianist. But it was in New York City, where he arrived at the age of 13, that he discovered a new passion for the guitar and the world of songwriting. Over time, Czesare has been perfecting his songwriting craft, and for the past year he has been releasing a single a month on all major digital platforms—original songs that include a variety of styles ranging from bachata and bossa to world and pop. Czesare has collaborated with international artists, including Alex Cuba on his album *Healer*, winner of the 2015 Latin Grammy Best Singer-Songwriter Album of the Year. Czesare continues to perform nationwide and collaborate with other artists internationally, writing songs with and for them. He performs his songs and standard covers vocally/lyrically or instrumentally, as a solo artist, as a quartet or with a full band. Listen to Czesare’s music on all major platforms.

## Vatic Tayari Kuumba, Conference Artist in Residence

WELCOME PLENARY & ROLL CALL OF THE STATES, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 9:00 A.M.;  
CLOSING PLENARY, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 3:30 P.M.



I am a creator. I was created by two veterans of a Jim Crow Florida. My mother was educated by all-black institutions, then became only the black teacher in an all-white rural school during integration. I grew up inside of a redline box. When I go back there, I see the signs commemorating the historic blackness of the neighborhood. I wrote my first rap and dreamed my first dreams in this context. Therefore my satire is rooted in the rhythms of cicadas and crickets. I moved from that place in 2012. The last hour of 2013 my oldest daughter was born in the state of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. That same year I competed on my first poetry team in Oakland, California. In 2014 I was arrested during a protest on I-95. I was working at the YMCA as director of a 21st Century Community Learning Center in Providence. I almost lost my job because of my activism. In 2016 I started working at AS220 Youth. That same year *Invisible UpSouth* premiered at Wilbury Theatre Group, the first play I had done any writing on. I also costarred in it. In 2017 I completed a live arts residency at AS220, culminating with *A Furtive Movement*. Currently I am developing a cycle of plays with partners such as Rites and Reason Theatre at Brown University and Trinity Repertory Company. Becoming a father happened for me around the same time I became an artist. I have always been a creator but when I found my audience I was able to hone my voice. The same is true with fatherhood. When Irislouse and Ellaquinn were born I found an audience for the nurturing I always had on the periphery. I am driven by ideas. My passion belongs to creation. Words are the most economical medium. One can create a universe with words and never spend a penny. At the conception of every creation is a thought. I think in universes and like every poet I write with worlds.

## The Exiles

DONOR RECEPTION, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 6:00 P.M.



The Exiles focus on the instrumental music of Ireland—the jigs, airs, reels and hornpipes. The band is Bob Drouin on fiddle, bouzouki, and bodhran; Russell Gusetti on guitar and concertina; and Torrinn

Ryan on uilleann pipes (the Irish bagpipes). In Ireland, Torrinn Ryan has won five All-Ireland medals across Tullamore, Derry and Ennis and is the 2013 All-Ireland Uilleann Pipes Slow Airs champion. Drouin and Gusetti were cofounders of the award-winning Rhode Island Celtic band Pendragon, which performed throughout New England from 1983-2017. Gusetti and Drouin are cofounders of Cumberland's Blackstone River Theatre, which has brought traditional and roots music to Rhode Island since 2000.

## Sidy Maiga

CLOSING PLENARY, FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 20, 3:30 P.M.



A native of Mali, West Africa, Sidy Maiga has been drumming since he was in his early teens. He learned to play in the traditional African way, by apprenticing with master drummers. Sidy was a gifted student and soon began playing professionally. He has played with two national touring companies in Mali and many internationally known Malian artists. In 2003, Sidy was a member of Fakoli Percussion Troupe, which won in the Mali National Drumming competition. In 2006,

Sidy moved to Rhode Island. Since then he has become a regular on the music

scene, playing not only traditional Malian music but also a fusion of Malian music with Latin, blues and Brazilian, alongside DJs for events throughout New England and around the world. In addition to performing, Sidy teaches djembe and dundun drumming to students at schools and universities throughout the country. Sidy loves to share his culture. Since 2009, he has produced the annual West African Dance and Drum Festival: Afrika Nyaga, which has been funded primarily by the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (RISCA). This event brings together local and international musicians and dancers to perform in Rhode Island. Sidy is the winner of multiple awards and fellowships, most notably the prestigious MacColl-Johnson Fellowship in 2012. He also has been the recipient of grants and fellowships from RISCA. In 2011, Sidy recorded and released his first album, Malidén. In 2014, he recorded and released his second album, Africa United, which includes musicians from across the world, including Grammy Award-winner Oumou Sangaré. In this album, Sidy infuses traditional African styles with modern music. In 2016, Sidy began studying production, business and arranging at Berklee College of Music. [sidymaiga.com](http://sidymaiga.com)