



“Percussive Dance at its **BEST!**”

-Washington Performing Arts

SOLE Defined (@soledefinedlive) is the Maryland/ Washington Metro area's leading arts organization specializing in percussive dance, Tap Dance, Body Percussion, and Sand Dance, – using the body as an instrument to create evening-length sensory-driven immersive performances comprising audience participation, integrated media, technology, instrumentation and storytelling. Founders Ryan K. Johnson, M.F.A., Executive Artistic Director, and Quynn Johnson, Ed.M., Director of Arts Education, merge their expertise in education, performance, social justice, and community engagement to advance the legacy and techniques of African Diasporic percussive dance practices. SOLE Defined's mission is to be the institutional hub for African Diasporic Percussive Dance methodologies, providing full-time employment with health and retirement benefits to BIPOC artists, creatives, administrators, and crew.

about sd!

entertain

educate

empower

SOLE Defined uses percussive dance to **entertain**, **educate**, and **empower** communities through live performances and arts education programming to preserve the legacy of percussive dance. At the same time, SD exposes the art form to a new generation

founder

Executive | Director

Ryan K. Johnson, M.F.A



Ryan Johnson is an award-winning artist scholar who investigates and amplifies the histories and lived experiences of Black communities in North America, generating sonic and kinetic sensory-driven immersive evening-length performance experiences infusing percussive dance, technology, vocalization and embodied storytelling as a form of social justice and archiving practices. Johnson's credits include Gregory Hines, Marvin Hamlisch, Ayodele Casel's *Diary of a Tap Dancer*, BB&T Zelle Commercial as a composer, choreographer, and onscreen talent, *Step Afrika!*, STOMP, Cirque Du Soleil, Broadway's *After Midnight Tour*, *Rose Rabbit Lie*, and *The Washington Ballet*. He is committed to creating resource-driven, innovative programming and performance experiences that facilitate a collective understanding beyond individual lived experience and establish new ways of engaging with African Diasporic Percussive dance. He is a post-MFA Fellow at The Ohio State University Arts and Science Department.

founder

Director of Arts Education

Quynn Johnson, Ed.M.



Quynn L. Johnson Ed.M. is an International Arts Based Educator, Social Entrepreneur, Co-Founder of SOLE Defined, and a performing artist. Most recently awarded the 2020 John F. Kennedy Center Local Dance Commissioning Project, her performance highlights include soloist in the tour of After Midnight (NCL), Chasing Magic by Ayodele Casel, UnSung Sheros by Dormeshia, Lincoln Center Education Series, Dance Encore Festival, and The Great Gatsby by the Washington Ballet. Quynn curates and designs arts-based programs that integrate elements of tap dance with literacy and math, creating a 21st-century learning experience for learners. As a teaching artist, Quynn's work has reached over 40,000+ youth from pre-k -12th grade both nationally and internationally with assemblies, residencies, and workshops. Her arts-integrated residencies bridge tap dance with literacy, math, and Social-Emotional Learning. In 2011, Quynn became a self-published author with her children's book Lucky's Tap Dancing Feet.



SOLE Defined is a fusion of music, movement, and imagination, providing a multifaceted experience promoting an understanding and appreciation for African-American percussive dance forms rooted in the African Diaspora.

A woman with dark hair, smiling and waving her right hand, stands on a rooftop. She is wearing a red dress with a black and white pattern and white sneakers. A microphone on a stand is visible in the lower right foreground. The background shows a city skyline with several tall buildings under a clear sky.

"sole defined brings energy, story, and
artistry to every show they perform."

- Washington Performing Arts

main stage

Performance + Touring

"A percussive group that effectively fused tap and stepping foot work with a call and response vocalization"

- The Washington Post



touring highlights

united states



Kennedy Center Office Hours Residency 23'
Collage Dance Festival 23'
Inaugural Dance Place Artist In Residence 18' -20'
Battery Dance Festival 23'
Inaugural Little Island Dance Festival 21'
Jacob's Pillow Inside/Out Festival 15', 16', 23'
Queens Theatre 19' & 20' (Virtual Performance) 21'
The Kennedy Center Millennium Stage 13', 15', 16'
The Kennedy Center's Hip Hop Theater Festival 18'
The Lincoln Center's Clark Theater 17'
The Lincoln Center's Out of Doors Festival 19'
Harlem Stage 19' & 20'
Smithsonian Discovery Theater 17', 18', 19'
Velocity Festival at The Shakespeare Theater DC 14', 15', 16'
Intersections Festival at The Atlas Theater 12', 13', 15'
Wolf Trap Theater in the Woods 16'

international



Arts Inside Out, Johannesburg, South Africa
BACO Foundation, Kyangwali, Uganda
Tap In Rio, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
World Childrens Festival, Turin, Italy
Danse Encore, Quebec, Canada
International Festival de Cajon, Lima, Peru

The background image shows two women in dynamic, expressive dance poses on what appears to be a rooftop or elevated platform. The woman on the left is wearing a white and orange patterned halter top and a matching skirt, with her arms extended in a wide arc. The woman on the right is wearing a white and blue patterned halter top and a matching skirt, also in a dynamic pose. The background is a blurred city skyline at dusk or dawn, with warm lights visible. A semi-transparent grey box contains text in the center of the image.

sole defined live

A sensory- driven immersive rhythmic roller coaster ignites the senses of audiences by translating global rhythms to the human body, producing a rhythmic score of movement, music and technology building an original score through loop machines structured improvisation, narration, and instrumentation in real time commissioned by The John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts in an Office Hours Residency and premiered at Jacob's Pillow in 2023. This work includes an excerpt of Rhythm Is Our Business, honoring the legacy of African American Women in Tap, commissioned by The John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts Local Dance Commission Project.



zaz: the big easy

2023 NEFA NDP AWARDEE

Zaz: The Big Easy is a sonic and kinetic percussive dance musical exploring the impact of global warming through the lens of Hurricane Katrina as a physical storm and as a metaphor for "storms" humans experience when silenced, marginalized, and oppressed who persevere through community, spirit, and traditions.



"SOLE Defined's magnetic energy filled the theater- it was a powerful and joyful experience."

Taryn Sacrmone, Queens Theatre

"With a **roaring applause**, SOLE Defined engaged the audience with their melody's of **beat, wit, and dancing feet.**"

Adriana Brawley Jacobs Tillow



**800+ IN ATTENDANCE IN
2015, 2016 & 2023**

sole steps

Arts Education

Promotes positive self-expression through the performing arts. We achieve this by using percussive dance (tap and body percussion) to educate and promote collaboration, teamwork, and the importance of self-expression. The interactive assembly, workshop, and residency teach the traditions and history of tap dance and body percussion, basic steps and movement, and improvisation, where students enhance their ability to create their own movement.

"A crowd pleaser for all ages"

- Dance Place

The background image shows a group of approximately 20 children and a few adults on a stage. They are arranged in a loose formation, some standing and some in motion, suggesting a dance or performance. The stage is lit with purple and blue lights. Behind them is a large red screen with the text 'the r.e.m.i.x' written in white, lowercase, stylized font. The audience is visible in the foreground, mostly in silhouette.

the r.e.m.i.x

The REMIX is an action-packed, rhythmic rollercoaster that explores the five elements of percussive dance (rhythm, energy, musicality, improvisation, and our x-factor). This interactive performance fuses Hip Hop music with Tap and Body Percussion, bringing audiences dancing along the way. The REMIX creates a safe space for students to become dancers and musicians while remixing percussive dance elements. As we REMIX your school, get ready to explore ways to create music with your body!

Grade level: 1st- 12th

Classroom Connections: Dance, History, Teamwork, Collaboration

Length: 45-50 minutes

A group of children and an adult are on a stage. The image is overlaid with a red filter. A quote is written in white text across the middle. The quote reads: "the show was way more interactive then we thought it would be! it was great!! we enjoyed it very much." followed by "The Flower School, MI" in a cursive font. The children are dressed in casual clothing, and the adult is wearing a black t-shirt with "Old Defined" written on it. The background is dark, and the floor is light-colored.

"the show was way more interactive then we thought it would be! it was great!! we enjoyed it very much." The Flower School, MI

sole stepz: RESIDENCY

The SOLE Stepz® residency explores music and movement through percussive dance while embodying collaboration, teamwork, and learning the importance of self-expression. Students learn tap dance, stepping, and body percussion and explore ways to create their own musicality while retaining elements of dance and music.

Grade level: 1st- 12th

Classroom Connection: History, Dance, Math, Literacy, Collaboration, Social Emotional Learning

Length: 1-2weeks

"high energy and innovative programming"

- Washington Performing Arts

The background image shows a dance studio with a wooden wall and a large mirror. Several students are in various dance poses, and an instructor in a red shirt is in the foreground, also in a dance pose. The text 'sole stepz : WORKSHOPS' is overlaid on the image.

sole stepz : WORKSHOPS

Promoting fun and learning through the performing arts, our workshops teach basic movements for both tap dance and body percussion. Students learn artist-led choreography and creative ways to combine steps and present their movement.

Grade level: 1st -12th

Classroom Connections: Dance, Music, Collaboration

Length: 45- 50minutes

"The coolest number of the night with their high-stepping, toe-tapping blend of styles"

-The Washington Post

website

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performances requests

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arts education requests

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[@soledefinedlive](https://www.instagram.com/soledefinedlive)