

STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY

**STALLER**

CENTER FOR THE ARTS

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[PRESS RELEASE]: **Lil Buck in Memphis Jookin': The Show - Powered by Nike - at Staller Center for the Arts, February 4**



Memphis dance-legend, Charles “Lil Buck” Riley will perform with his company in Memphis Jookin’ the Show powered by Nike at the Staller Center for the Arts at Stony Brook University on February 4.

“I strongly believe dance has its own power. It’s not for background. I believe you can be just as entertained by watching dancers without other artists in front of them.” And entertained you will be, as award-winning performing artist Lil Buck takes the Staller stage this February. At 34, Lil Buck has mastered all kinds of dance styles – from jookin’, a street dance form native to his hometown of Memphis, to ballet, modern, and hip-hop.

“Memphis Jookin’: The Show powered by Nike” was conceived and choreographed by Buck as an ode to his hometown and the dance that started it all. The show takes its audience on a journey, to the emergence of the artform from street dance to global anomaly. It’s ultimately his love letter to both Memphis and to Jookin’, and that love shines through: “While his agile physical instrument is astounding, Buck’s power derives from the ability to get to the bottom of what something feels like for him and then to express it to the world” (*The New York Times*).

Over the course of his career, Buck has performed and collaborated with artists including Yo-Yo Ma, Alicia Keys, Wynton Marsalis, Cirque du Soleil, Madonna, and Lizzo, to name a few. In 2017, Buck gained sponsorship for Nike Air’s VaporMax shoes – the style of shoes that “Jookers” have historically worn while dancing. Born from the Memphis street dance “Gangsta Walking,” jookin’ requires heavy emphasis on footwork and body rhythm, including movements like toe stalls, ankle breaks, and glides.

Buck is featured in the [first episode](#) of the Netflix docuseries, “[Move](#).” The five-part program profiles choreographers and dancers from around the world, displaying their unique influences to dance styles they’ve created or popularized. More recently, Buck teamed up with media personality Kendall Jenner for Stuart Weitzman’s “Boot Camp” campaign, which celebrates movement as a source of power for all genders.

To celebrate Black History Month, the Staller Center is offering 50% off tickets. Use code STALLER23 at checkout. [Tickets can be purchased here.](#)

Stony Brook University students will receive free tickets and can RSVP on [sbengaged](#).

BACKGROUND: Lil Buck began to dance around the age of 6, unable to resist grooving to the sounds of a church choir. That moment is reimagined in his short film, “[Nobody Knows](#).” In the video, voices of a choir fill a shadowy church, propelling Buck to explore the struggles of being a Black man in America through his movements: “There are things I’ve experienced in life that are hard for me to verbally speak about,” he writes about the film. “Things that can’t be said through words can be expressed and felt through movement and music...from the global pandemic to the social injustices of Black Lives in America...with so much trauma in the world and in our lives, we all need something to help us heal.”

Such emotion drives not only Buck’s magnetic dancing, but other professional projects as well. In 2016, Buck released “[Color of Reality](#),” a short film he co-created with choreographer Jon Boogz and painter Alexa Meade. The film was created in direct response to the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement, exploring themes of protest, police brutality, and racial inequality. The dance solos of Buck and Boogz display the pain of prejudice, and the universal truth that action is the only way towards justice. The two dancers co-founded [Movement Art Is](#), an organization aimed at showing the world that street dance is not only art, but is no less rigorous than traditional styles like ballet.

VIDEO: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzODigcJ7mc>

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