



PERFORMING ARTIST · AUTHOR EDU-CULTURAL SPEAKER · CONSULTANT

Dr. Marguerite Mariama is an internationally recognized performing artist, educator, activist, cultural strategist, and transformational speaker whose work resides at the nexus of artistic excellence, social justice, education, and human development. A lifelong practitioner of the term *artivism*—the integration of artistic expression and social transformation—her career spans more than five decades of leadership in the performing arts, higher education, cultural diplomacy, and community engagement.

Dr. Mariama is the co-author of three Amazon bestselling books, *Book on Love*, *The Art of Connection* series, and *The Heart of Success*, which was written in collaboration with Jack Canfield (*Chicken Soup for the Soul*). Her forthcoming historical memoir, *Artivism: The Spirit of the 60s, Lessons for Today* (spring 2027), chronicles a lifetime devoted to cultural consciousness, civic engagement, and the transformative power of the arts.

Dr. Mariama's legacy mission is to empower others to recognize, trust, and honor the wisdom of their inner voice; to cultivate the courage to heed its call; and to consciously transform into the most expansive and authentic expression of who they are—thereby fulfilling their highest potential in service to the greater good.

Formative Years

An activist since adolescence, Dr. Mariama's civic engagement began at age thirteen when she participated in the historic Chicago school desegregation protests against the Willis Wagons, a pivotal event later chronicled in the Academy Award-shortlisted documentary *'63 Boycott*. Her activism expanded throughout the Civil Rights and Black Power eras, including participation in the 1966 Soldier Field rally and march led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Her artistic and intellectual development was profoundly shaped by extraordinary mentors, including academic and artistic tutelage from renowned educators such as Dr. Barbara A. Sizemore and international composer and teacher, Lena McLin. She played French horn in the Harlan High School concert band led by William Abernathy – and was a featured soloist in the dance performing ensemble, Orchesis, under the leadership of Alonza Austin. Her dance training was reinforced at Mayfair Academy – where alums include former First Lady of the United States, Michelle Obama.

Scholarship, in hand, she headed to Southern Illinois University and continued her dance training with W. Grant Gray, a former Martha Graham dancer, who invited Ms. Graham to perform at the University where she regaled the students with her stories and presence. Marguerite also co-founded the dance troupe *MUWARA DADA*, and the group traveled to East St. Louis to study with the legendary dancer and anthropologist, Katherine Dunham and her Senegalese drummers and dancers. Turning point:

"Sitting at Ms. Dunham's feet and hearing her stories was awesome; and she reminded us of our social responsibility as young artists. We answered the 'call' in performances throughout the Midwest that made social commentary on the turbulent 1960s and 70s."

Emerging from the cultural renaissance of the Black Arts Movement, Dr. Mariama belongs to a generation of artists who viewed creative expression not merely as performance, but as a vehicle for liberation, education, identity formation, and social change. Influenced by the cultural nationalism and Black consciousness movements of the 1960s and 1970s, she developed an artistic practice grounded in the belief that the arts are among humanity's most powerful instruments for personal and collective transformation.

Leveraging **Performance Pedagogy®** to Deliver Transformational Educational Outcomes

Professionally trained in music, dance, and theatre, Dr. Mariama is also a clinically trained dance/movement therapist and retired professor who taught within both the City University of New York (CUNY) and the City Colleges of Chicago systems. Her scholarly and practical contributions culminated in the creation of Performance Pedagogy®, an interdisciplinary theory and methodology that integrates the performing arts, arts therapies, educational psychology, and trauma-informed learning practices.

Performance Pedagogy® employs artistic performance as both a teaching methodology and an evaluative framework, enabling participants to engage in cognitive, emotional, physical, and social dimensions of learning simultaneously. Implemented in schools, universities, communities, and corporate environments, Ms. Mariama's trademarked model has demonstrated measurable outcomes, including increased student engagement, improved attendance and academic achievement, reduced behavioral conflicts, enhanced communication skills, strengthened self-efficacy, and heightened organizational creativity and innovation.

Case Studies Outline the Transformative Power of Performance Pedagogy®

Throughout her career, Dr. Mariama has designed educational initiatives and performing arts programs for nonprofit organizations, public institutions, and private-sector enterprises in both New York and Chicago. Central to her work is a commitment to advancing cultural literacy, fostering human potential, and utilizing the arts as a catalyst for healing, empowerment, and social cohesion. Below is a brief overview of some of her projects and the transformation impact of her work:

- Created, curated and performed in her 90-minute transformational master workshops that built a cultural bridge, and a permission structure for love-filled creative expression – U.S. Department of State, Arts Envoy Tour, Republic of Moldova.
 - *"I can't tell you how much we do need this dose of inspiration, the educational lessons... this is the healing power of music, this is what kept us going through wars, starvation and other bad situations. People here are kinda' afraid to express themselves...people who come to such events and see other people do that they're like – I can be like that, I always wanted to be like that, but I was afraid, but I can be like that. There's nothing wrong with being like that."* **Audience Member, ArtCor**
- Performing and presenting her signature keynote/concert – The Art of Becoming: Embracing Your Highest Self – at a Multicultural Women's Conference designed to inspire audiences to acknowledge and love their authentic self:
 - *"I could feel the energy in the room shift as you spoke and moved. You didn't just speak and perform, you elevated, empowered and inspired every person fortunate enough to witness it."* **Audience Member**
- Created, curated and performed in a transformational 2-hour program celebrating women in jazz with a presentation, interview, performance and exhibit, as a member of the Ravinia Festival Education Institute, in collaboration with the Ravinia/Woodlawn partnership.
 - *"We were mesmerized and uplifted by this inspirational program, and the exhibit was the icing on the cake!"* **Ravinia Staff Member**
- The transformational power of the arts exemplified in her role as the chief consultant responsible for the 2-year development of the Performing Arts Strand at King High School, Chicago, Illinois (CPS)
 - *"Dr. Mariama, thank you! You changed my son's life."* **Freshman Parent**
- The creation of a transformational 12-month program that unlocked self-esteem and upgraded the technology skills in a Women's Center cohort at LaGuardia Community College, Long Island City, New York (funder: New York City Partnership)
 - *"I am worth more than this job pays me. I know I can do better; and now I know how!"* **Adult Student**
- Transforming underperforming, low self-esteem Black students from gangbangers into family and community leaders in a 24-month educational program at the Institute for Student Achievement (ISA) (funder: Gates Foundation)
 - *"I didn't know...now that I have changed how I act I can see a different future for myself and my brothers."* **Senior Student**
- In the year leading up to its centennial celebration, transformed a struggling community-based institution into a magnet for national culture and music, Garfield Park Conservatory
 - *"Marguerite's innovative programming brought life and bodies back to this institution and expanded our vision."* **Board Member**

For additional testimonials please visit the website: <https://www.margueritemariama.com>

Impact as a Performing Artist

Arriving in New York after graduating from SIU as a master's degree *HUD Fellow*, she met and trained with Charles Moore, a former Dunham dancer, and guest performed with his *Drums and Dancers of Africa Dance Troupe*. Later, she trained with two other Dunham dancers, Lavinia Williams, and Ms. Dunham's primary protégé, Alvin Ailey.

Marguerite has performed with "some of the greatest musicians on the planet" – including her mentor, Jimmy Sigler – former music director to jazz great, Dinah Washington. Working together for 14 years, her CD, "*Wild Women Never Get the Blues...Well, Not Anymore*" was his final recording.

Over the years, acting programs and classes have led to roles and appearances in films, commercials, print, and theatre – including an 8-week run in Chicago in the role of matriarch, Madame Armfeldt, in the Stephen Sondheim/Hugh Wheeler musical *A Little Night Music*. She narrated the award-winning documentary "*70 Acres in Chicago: Cabrini Green*" and was a contributor to "*The Blues*" a history of blues music produced by Martin Scorsese as a 7-part PBS TV series. Mariama also made a cameo appearance in the Chicago segment, *Godfathers and Sons*.

Still active, she is in her 9th season as a member of the Chicago Bulls Basketball Team's *Swingin' Seniors Dancers*.

The International Impact

Marguerite has traveled the world as a national and international big band and small ensemble jazz and blues stylist. She has held music artist residencies and made cultural presentations in Singapore, Taiwan, Shanghai, Indonesia, and China.

The United States Department of State appointed Marguerite as an Arts Envoy (cultural ambassador) in 2023. Dr. Mariama has represented the United States internationally through multimedia performance-dialogues and cultural exchange initiatives. Previous cultural ambassadors include Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and her mentor, Katherine Dunham. Marguerite proudly complements that legacy with her signature series, *OurStories in the Music®*, which explores the American experience through the lens of African American musical culture. Illuminating themes of democracy, identity, resilience, and cross-cultural understanding, these programs have been presented domestically and internationally, including a cultural diplomacy tour in the Republic of Moldova. Audiences associated with the United Nations, the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility initiatives have also engaged her presentations and performances. In recognition of her contributions, she was honored during a United Nations-supported event with a glowing introduction by United States Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield.

Dr. Mariama currently serves as an advisor to the Global Citizens Circle, an international organization dedicated to advancing peaceful and just solutions to global challenges. Throughout its history, the organization has included such distinguished figures as Coretta Scott King, Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, President Jimmy Carter, Harry Belafonte, and Nobel Peace Prize laureate John Hume. She also co-authored and narrated *What the World Needs Now*, a documentary commemorating the organization's fiftieth anniversary.

Education, Civic Engagement and Honors

Among her many honors, Dr. Mariama is a Distinguished Alumna of Southern Illinois University's College of Liberal Arts, a former Illinois Humanities Road Scholar, a member of the International Dance Council (CID), the American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA), and the Smithsonian Regional Council. She is also a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.

Dr. Marguerite Mariama holds a Ph.D. in Performance Education with a specialization in African American Musical Culture. A member of SAG-AFTRA and represented professionally by Stewart Talent and SMG Speakers, she continues to create, teach, perform, and consult internationally.

At the heart of her life's work is a singular conviction: that the arts are not merely a reflection of society, but a transformative force capable of cultivating consciousness, restoring humanity, and inspiring individuals and communities to become their highest selves.

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