

Candice Hoyce, I'm so excited to have you as my guest today on Beyond Beauty. Thank you so much for making time in your busy, busy day. I know you've been traveling and everything. I'm really grateful to have this moment to be in community with you this afternoon. Thank you. Like what? Yes. And it's so funny because we have a mutual friend who I'll call a refer to as Dr. E, who was a childhood friend of mine. I grew up with her and you went to Harvard with her, I believe. And yes, it's so funny, the small world and she was telling me about you. And then I went to new museum and I saw B.S. Ergates performing and there was this beautiful woman with this beautiful voice singing that I was like capturing. I had no idea that that was you, the same woman that I had been told about just days before. So it's just such a small world how, and it's just so fascinating how there's so much synchronicity going on right now. I don't know, for me, definitely I'm feeling that happening over and over again. So it's such a small world. It's so exciting that we have that mutual friend who we both love. I'm going to shout her out. Not only is she a world renowned neurologist, but she and I were actually roommates. not just at college, but over the summer in New York and one of my favorite travel buddies. And they just, we've thrown dinner parties together even in college. I could go on and on. That's like a different book, but I just very much, she's one of my muses. - Ah, she's just a phenomenal scholar. Just everything, mom, friend, everything. I just, that's so amazing. Such a small world. So you were at Harvard. What were you studying at Harvard when you were there? sociology and African American studies. And as I think about it now that I am a some time lecturer and working with university students, I was actually cultivating so many different skills. Certainly was very exciting to write a thesis and I conducted original research for that interview-based interviewing black adolescent girls about images in music, popular media, and their sense of really burgeoning womanly identity or sexuality, and just the way they identified, and how that related to their sense of community. And so that thesis was something that I feel was a beautiful culmination of my studies in sociology. And I was also a research assistant for Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham in African-American studies and history departments. And I use so much of those skills as an archivist now and an artist. And with my friend Erica, one of my best friends, who's a doctor now that we mentioned, Erica and I produced the first hip hop conference at Harvard. So community organizing and cultural events and learning how to be a producer and co-producing with one of my best friends with another formative experience. And yeah, in those years, I met my husband, life partner. He didn't go there, but we met at that time. So it was a really formative experience for me. And even now, I'm very involved as an alum. That's so amazing. I think that was one of the things that intrigued me about you when I started researching you at that time, when Erica recommended that I look into your work. And I was just like, "Wow, she went to Harvard then, she went to Columbia Law School." And so I was wondering about this journey that you've had that started very scholarly. You said you've been doing research and you were, I see now that you were definitely an activist at that time. You were still engaging your musical sensibilities at that time. And wow, the first hip hop conference at Harvard. I know that they have that still going on because I have friends who go and speak at that now. So that's amazing. I didn't realize it. You had... But long before that, there was our conference that was produced by just two black girls. You are so fascinating because you have this really diverse background, this interdisciplinary background where you study sociology at Harvard for undergrad, and then you went to Columbia Law School. Actually, I want to stop there. So you knew that you were... I can

see because you said that you had this, you were at Harvard, you were still doing musical activities. You were doing Activism, you were producing hip hop conferences, you were doing research, dealing with music. Because I was curious, like, were you abandoning at that time your musical interest? Was that something that you had sort of put to the side while you were at Harvard? But I see it's not the case. So you've been always, I imagine, all this time musically inclined. Why did you choose to go to Columbia Law School? What was your interest in going there before really pursuing your music? Well, I think I'm first generation American. My family's from Jamaica. And for me, that meant many things because I'm very close. I was very close to my parents. Our nuclear family was like a wonderland and a refuge in predominantly white institutions growing up where my father worked, my mother worked in sort of all the neighboring areas surrounding us. That was the norm. And then inside of that was this enclave, which was my family, very colorful, very educated, very well traveled very righteous, very dissuity and vibrant and Caribbean. And so I understood only the most stereotypic things about the artist's life that I had heard, especially from generations of my family that didn't really understand why someone would have all these opportunities and then choose the struggle path of being an artist. And it's only as I've become a woman, a mature woman, I can see all the artistry woven into the tapestry of my family, my two grandmothers who were not formally educated but were genius in there, especially well, as women, you know, creating a life here and crossing borders and creating strategies and building such a beautiful family, genius in that regard, but also out of their own hands as seamstresses and designers and ghost designing for white designers here, you know, before the civil rights movement. And, you know, while concurrently building this life. So I'm I'm descended from those artists and I understand that now at the time when I left college I was best equipped to become a lawyer. I don't think that Harvard was a place that where I saw anyone who I could emulate who would be able to become a mixed media interdisciplinary artist in the way that I am today. I didn't really have any role model for that. And so with the skills that I had at that point, which was very strong analytical skills, strong sense of curiosity about citizenship, about governments, and an awareness of my personal politics and excellent research and writing skills and a strong desire to be in New York, I applied to Columbia Law School and I was accepted. I had a really conflicted and wonderful law school experience. My note was published in the Journal of Gender and Law. I was a very high-achieving student in many regards, especially in Dr. Kimberlake Crenshaw's intersectionality seminar, never knowing how profoundly intersectionality and the proposition of that and all the thought that came out of that, all the creativity that's come out of that theory, would be kind of the bread and butter of my artistic practice. It's something that I either incorporate or can be seen in all my music. And certainly when I'm in a scenario where I'm lecturing, as I often do now, to be able to draw upon intersectionality and not just talk about gender and race, but to talk about citizenship and to be able to talk about, you know, human rights, international context. I think all those things are informed by being a lawyer. And yeah, it's just, I think I see my community as more eclectic than many artists do because I belong in these different places. So interesting. I'm thinking going back to like your childhood, thinking about your educational experiences then, your adolescence, teenage years, were there any experiences or persons that influenced you or sort of motivated you to explore your musical talents or conversely that shifted you away from pursuing your musical talents? Well, unbeknownst to her, my mom has to get the credit for my

first musical explorations because she stuck me in piano lessons as early as seemed possible. And that was a really beautiful thing. My mom has always had a passion for piano and the fantasy of me being able to sit down at any piano and play. And I kind of like, I've been a little estranged from the piano since I, I guess you'd say the last 10 years, I haven't been as dedicated to my piano time because becoming a mother shook up my schedule in a way that I haven't able to get there yet, to get all my practice in. But the point is that she started me there. And then I quickly realized and say, when did I realize about third or fourth grade that I have a very excellent singing voice. And I also noticed that I was never put in a prominent place. In these schools, I was in, I was not given like a starring feature all the way through up to high school. I wouldn't get like the title role or something. I'd be like the sidekick or the buddy and then I would sing it down. And I got some many awards in high school about singing because I would just, you know, take no prisoners and sing my song, whatever song I got, I would sing the hell out of it. And that's a good way to, I mean, when you're the underdog, it's not a bad lesson. But it was also very racialized, the fact that I couldn't be like the leading lady end. It was not inconsistent with many of my experiences as a professional now. So, I would say that, but I would also say, so mom definitely gets a lot of credit for giving me music skills at the start of my life. And then I found my voice and I found my voice also through hearing an amazing canter in our church, Mrs. Joan Wilson, who was a phenomenal mezzo-soprano with even Contralto range and organist. And my parents loved and respected her. And she was such a warm and radiant example of female leadership in a spiritual capacity, in a musical capacity, and interpersonally, just like a role model. So then her beautiful daughter and granddaughter have gone on to become professionally trained opera singers. And but I remember her as a major figure for me, inspiring me to understand that the voice can be, you know, contain multitudes, be very expansive and defy rational thought, which is I think something that every artist needs to know at the beginning because unless you have a lot of certain supports and inroads. It doesn't always feel rational to take the course. That's amazing. It sounds like your parents really developed this curricula for you, for your artistic talent outside of the school space, because in the school space, it wasn't really getting supported in the way that it should nurtured in the way that it should have been. It was there. It's just that it wasn't, I had to make sure that I had to insist upon myself. It wasn't like I was discovered. I felt as a singer, I had to insist upon myself until I was, I couldn't be ignored. But I think when my parents introduced me to music, they thought it would be like an enhancement. They didn't think it'd be my main thing. And it would be again, who definitely insisted that this would be my main thing. I love it. When you were talking, I was thinking about when I was in elementary school, there was a play and I auditioned and the lead character was a boy and I just wanted to be the lead. And so I like made it towards the end. And then I was like, you know what, there's no reason why I shouldn't be able to play a boy. I mean, we're acting. So I mean, we'll just put my hair back. And so I made a case for it and I played a boy. So it's like, you know, that agency that we have to like even develop is young people and trying to find our way. And then also when you were talking, I was thinking about, I grew up playing saxophone. And it's been like a decade since I even touched my saxophone. And when I had my daughter, I was thinking, oh, maybe I'll learn the flute because I can put it in my purse and travel with it and stuff. I took a lesson and there was this activity where we had to blow and keep a paper on the wall and I couldn't do it. I was like, oh my gosh, I have lost so

much of my lung strength. it was really hard. So I'm curious about your practice. If we were to watch you sort of preparing to perform, do you have any rituals or routines that you follow? Is there anything that you require or prefer in terms of the space that you're in? Just thinking about those dynamics of your performances that are sort of behind the scenes. - Before I answer your question about process, I would share just one addendum to what you said, like, as far as that childhood sensibility of self-definition and, I guess, just self-assertion, I wrote a song about this called Zora's Moon. And it's a song where I was listening in my research process to all kinds of sources around I'm Zora Neale Hurst and I had decided in my spirit that I needed to connect with Hurston. I think I was having very hard time really. So I did and I was listening to some interviews and I found one in the Library of Congress from around 1946 where she was telling on the radio a story that she recounts in dust tracks on a road, one of her autobiographies about being a little girl and believing that the moon followed only her when she read the night. And so I used that language, her own language about her own life. And that's the lyric for the song. And then took a quite a long time writing that song so I could get it where I felt it was right. So, and I put that song out in 2020 when I, all my work was gone and I really needed that for myself. So I think the questions that you, however, here, fortunate enough, to have adults who inspire you in their own way. And if you're somehow have the capacity as a child to understand that your adults can only help you part of the way and that you'll have to imagine the rest of it, I think that's how you become a child who grows into an adult artist. I think if you think you're gonna be told all the steps, somewhere the adults have to let you know that the rest is up to you.

[Laughter] But I think that that song is very important for me because it's, again, me making a territory for myself where no matter how crazy the whole process of even releasing music feels, I have that song, among others, but I know what that song is about. And it's about me. There's an expression that I love, which is something like something to the effect of I needed a map not to map the location, but to tell me where I am in it. And the song for me, it tells me where I am in the midst of everything always. And I think that's always why I write songs. And I think that's why I sing too. It's me mapping how I feel about things at a particular time. And you ask me about process before show or daily. Again, it's very much about that. It's just that I'm not really, I don't do anything like skip dairy, although I prefer certain things as a singer, like some humidity, so a hot shower or steamer. I prefer apples and fruits in my dresser room. that's what I asked for, very simple. I try to eat some kind of protein at home. And then one of my best things, because I don't have anyone who assists me at the moment, I never really have, I hope to have one though. I often have to get around, and so I will pack a small, rollable, like roll, like what you call it, like a hand luggage type of thing, so that I can do everything I need and not have to carry anything if I need to, which just helps my body and my stamina. And I carry a little yoga mat for the same reason. And I always go to familiar things to get into my show. By that, I mean, maybe an old voice lesson with a warmup or a song that I know will warm my voice up. And I just, I try to make things in this, you know, I'm often multitasking because I am self-managed and everything like that. So I have to do a lot of different things. I have two children and they each need their own things, of course, before I even leave the house. And then there's me, but it's, it's, honestly, if I had to change anything, it's too often not about me and what I need. It's many times about trying to stabilize a scenario I'm walking into to perform. I remember one concert a few years ago at one of the large libraries in New York, and I got there and the stage was a

mess. And I said to my, I looked at it, I was like, this is now what I'm going to be doing when I'd be warming up. I'm just looked the way that it should. I don't know why it was like that, but it had to be fixed. And so, and sometimes there's someone to ask and sometimes there's not. So there are millions scenarios like that when you're a live performer. And it's, uh, you have to also, I think the most important thing about your rituals is how you're going to leave the performance. That's an important ritual because many times when you have a scenario like that, or you've been thrown a few curves, how are you going to come down off of that all and like reconnect with what you need as a person? Many times when you're performing somewhere you're in service of the event and it's not really too easy on you. So how are you going to restore yourself after you've met the needs and demands of whatever you walk happen to walk into that day? Wow. I can only imagine how, um, distracting that must be in those, you know, cases and what, and you are performing, that's a very embodied activity. And so the having negotiate your imbalance between figuring out how to, you know, sort of correct these spaces so that your body can be the way it needs to be. That's really, really something poignant that I hope listeners can think about when they're working with performing artists. So in addition to your music, you're known for being an advocate for social and cultural issues. How do you integrate activism into your artistry? I'm often asked that question and I love to kind of also in relation to the thing we were just speaking of where I'm there. Sometimes I'm presented and many times I'm presented and it's all there's been enough like support and helps to have everything land, you know, the way they wanted to. And it's beautiful and it looks great and everything is, you know, ready to go. Sometimes, like I told you, I have to come in and support in ways that don't have anything to do with singing. But every time I do show up, I think that is an act of political expression because of who I am, because of what I know, because of what I share, because of the songs I choose, because of the history and the music that I interspersed throughout the songs. And that's a style that I cultivated since my first album on a turquoise cloud, which is a collection of rare Ellington songs that are not widely performed that I found in the Ellington collection of the Smithsonian. And I did my own research on those and executive produced that for myself. And I created it again, to give myself a territory where I felt like I could not only sing, but I could talk about the things that I know, share those, and hopefully, you know, present the work in a way that I felt was thorough and, you know, necessarily complex. I think that the challenge of that that comes probably for most people who have this dimension to their work is that it's a challenge. You know, people's education, educating people, reaching them, even just any aspect of collective change requires impolite moments and it requires a certain certain eagelessness that you always have, especially when it's an artist who's basically curating because that's, you know, that in the traditional model of performing arts, you are a singer and you sing and what you sing is written for you by the composer and you are told how to sing it by the conductor and you are programmed by the programmer as to when you can do it. So a lot of these things are categorized, they're compartmentalized, but with my practice what I present and I'm doing some of all those things and doesn't sit with everybody in the same way not everyone's open to it Because I started that in 2016, so long before the racial reckoning in the performing arts industry, which has somewhat dissipated really, but just even two or three years later, I think a lot of people who deal with institutions and corporations have discovered it's just something that it couldn't happen in one swoop. It's something that needs to be sustained.

engagement and sustained resistance in many times. So I think in a nutshell, my presence is activist. Of course, I would say in granular detail, I am almost always performing in conjunction with work at a school, a community center, or some aspect that's a contribution to historically underserved population of audiences. And so there can be young people, very much older people. It's a great mix of communities that I play in from more affluent performing arts centers to more economically challenged cities and communities and venues. My music and a lot of the figures who play heavily in my music often were very prominent activists themselves. So in that sense, I continue this lineage to work and I keep, I speak their name and keep that alive. And as you said, very pointedly, the main thing that people talk about with my music is that it's centering stories that are systemically obscured, erased, you know, subject to racism and violence and really, you know, at the same time crucial to the way I see myself and the way I envision Black futurity, I feel like a lot of the understanding that we need to make sense of this overwhelming time lies in an understanding of our history. Absolutely. I mean, that's one of the things I've just really, really fascinated with you about you is just your multidisciplinary. I mean, your interest in research, not only like engaging with research has been done, but also looking at your practice as a form of research and also you engaging in scholarly research and writing. I mean, I just love that you take on these different roles to counter that invisibility of people like you that you mentioned that you didn't see when you were younger. So that I absolutely agree that this idea that you showing up who you are is already sort of this form of activism or artivism. So thinking about collaboration, you've worked with many notable musicians and artists. When I saw you first perform, that was a sort of collaboration with Fyestergaetz. And I was just wondering if you could speak to how these collaborations enrich your creative process. Well, I don't really, I think that it's a privilege sometimes when folks have done so much experience, like decades of artistic experience. That's really wonderful. And certainly, I think about notability in that a lot of times I get to play with people that they've been recording a lot of music that I listened to before I had the ability I have now. And so that's a profound thing for me when I'm playing with someone who's recordings I've listened to a lot or I'm interpreting. I recorded a song of Wayne Shorter's in 2021 with my band Night Beauty with Val, Jean-T and Mimi Jones. And I know because it was on a Zoom call where Mr. Shorter talked about the recording, that he listened to it. And so that's something I think is, I don't have the words to describe the meaning of it for me. But other than that, I mean, to say, it has this intimate connection for me when I can see that progression of my life in those units of like completing a circle, like from someone who I listen to very far away to something that feels really concrete like that, where it's then that dawns on me and it's a wow. But other than that, I don't think of... I don't try not to get too much thinking about notability. I mean, to somebody else, I'm a notable person. So I don't put them... I'm not seeking out to, you know, notable artists, but I allow... Because I am often presenting myself, I allow myself the freedom to say yes, I will record a Wayne Shorter song and I will share it with, you know, so that Wayne Shorter has heard it. Rest in peace and rest in power. That's a big step. I would like to do that. That's a big step. These are big steps in a way for me because I admire their, like, yeah, that's all I can say. I mean, I've had a lot of wonderful moments and I hope there'll be more being painted by Amy Sherralt. The absolutely, I think, the most important visual artist of our lifetime, in my opinion, was a huge honor. Awesome. Really, really awesome. Yeah. I mean, there are many, and that inspires me. I think about, I

experienced their work and it's beautiful. I think it's why, if the reward, enjoying the work of people who are, I mean, I'm connected to and collaborating with is one of the rewards of this, more than the notability. I'm thinking about how you, and you talked about this, you reference these music that is century old music in, and then you're, you know, sort of reinterpreting it for today's audiences or reimagining it. And I was just wondering if you could speak to your motivations around that or any challenges that you encounter. Yeah, I'm really curious about that. I think that's really fascinating to, to, to, you know, bring this it's sort of like pedagogical as well, because you're teaching, you know, these young audiences or new audiences or audiences that may not know about these histories of music. So I'm just wondering about, like, you know, what any struggles that you may have about that while you're doing that and also your motivations around it? Well, I think, first of all, I want to say there's this misconception that if you're teaching, I mean, it's not really a misconception. There's some validity to it. That teaching is, especially for a black women artist, that the teaching is all around like teaching younger generations. I have to say, there's so many assumptions about black women that need to be unlearned with older generations of people, especially elites who feel like they have domain over the performing arts and the canon and who should be the leaders of things and who should be deciding, you know, what's normative. And I think a lot of the teaching that is unpaid for black women artists is that teaching. We are paid in, you know, as professors and lecturers, but some amount probably still not enough. We're paid as music educators teaching kindergartners, instruments, leading choirs were paid some things, not enough probably. The work that we do teaching, I think that's unseen in many times is educating our colleagues. And I think that the most vital, and I'll have to listen back to this Jacqueline because I think I need to hear this from my own mouth. The most final reason to interpolate and reclaim historical music is how often I hear contemporary gatekeepers tell me that for various reasons, things can't be done. And then I share some Bessie Smith and I will inform them that, you know, she was the highest paid performing artist in her time as a black woman. And that she had minimal formal education, I would say probably, you know, early, like some form of child, you know, middle school age was an out black woman. and, you know, really running her own business and, and excelling was also undermined by her by record companies and different and obviously Jim Crow. But the point is, there's just so many things that we still are doing and wanting to do and people tell us that we can't do them and we have to show them that it's already been done. I'm stepping my fingers. It's already been done. And the reason, because of the consumerism of this country, because some of these things weren't commodified or ascribed in certain ways or presented in certain spaces, it's by or or co-signed by certain institutions in their time, people act like they didn't friggin happen. And it's like I am not really the first of anything I'm doing, it's just I'm grabbing the credit. I am insisting on, we insist, you know, as Max Roach and I like it said, I I'm insisting on certain crediting. So the overall effect of not knowing that history and not revisiting it on your own terms, you know, often and deeply, is that you feel alone or you feel odd or you'll feel, you know, God forbid, unnecessary. I think like with social media, we sometimes, you know, express it like we're just magical or we're being extra because we can. And it's not just that. It's also because it's founded in facts and history. And as I revisit those in music, I remember I'm not alone, you know, and that's something I need because it definitely feels it was actually when I was studying with Dr. West, who I love dearly. He is so amazing. You know, he's

on my dissertation committee. Yes, you mentioned that. I love him. And he talked about Dostoyevsky. I think we read some in his class. And he was-- I remember him one day talking about the notion of alienation in the path and the journey of an artist. And I'm glad that I learned that from him at that age 18 to think about that. Because a lot of people think about the adoration. And then with these biopics of artists, they are like, why, how did they have such a, I never knew they were so popular. I never knew that they could have had so many challenges. And it's like, well, you have to, as an artist, it's not necessarily that things feel like they can come in balance. But I think you have to be grounded in a sensibility that, when you're the only one that sees something, there's a necessary like loneliness or alienation that comes with that. And then you do and you create and more people are able to see what you see. And sometimes it's a, that number grows slowly and sometimes it grows in spurts. Sometimes it doesn't grow, I guess. And sometimes every once in a while grows quickly. But the point is that you go through that before anyone else can see it. And that's not even getting into the conversation about whether you think it's good or not. But knowing that you are part of a bigger picture through history and knowing that I am part a bigger picture through history is meaningful every day for that reason. It keeps me enmeshed in the possibility of what I do. And that's what I need to make music. Wow. I mean, that's literally like that message resonated with me personally from even today after my long walk this morning, I was thinking about that loneliness of the creative process and, you know, and because I'm in that process right now with dissertating and all this kind of stuff. And I cannot believe that you just spoke, you know, directly to something that I was personally thinking about this morning. That's so, so powerful. Thank you for that message, Candace. I'm glad. I think that's who as a vocalist is I'm always reading energy. And I do try, I do sing the song or interpret the music for exactly who I'm with. I know that every show is different. That's why jazz is always improvisation that are in connection with the ensemble, the people you're playing with, and also the energy of the room. So I'm glad that it arrived, But that's what I think music does and what musicians do is they know how to plug into, you know, the energy of the company they're with. >> I mean, I just have to be with that for a moment. Thank you. Thank you so much for that offering. Okay. So I want to ask you this last question. Are there any specific lessons, experiences or advice that you have received and that you feel that have been particularly valuable to you as an artist, as a black woman creative, that would be also useful to other women artists on their creative journeys. - Well, I think what I just was sharing is the answer to that. Like I truly do. I think understanding the why of what you're doing and figuring out how you're gonna keep track of that through the demands, you know, when you step out of the training season of your life and you're just being, because everything after being freshly trained or freshly awarded or lauded or whatever the case is, is like new reality. You know, what are the things that you need for your sustained practice if you're meant to do this? I always, I think you can't really prescribe for other artists who are starting out because I think that not every artist wants to practice into old age. Maybe there's some artists who will want to do this for some period of time and then have another career. But I think that's another question to ask too is like, you know, how long would you want to do this if it were all up to you? Because it kind of is. I mean, there's a lot going on out here and they're, the gatekeeping is alive and well. But nonetheless, when you wake up in the day, how would you foresee for yourself as far as how long do you want to be doing this? And that will help you to strategize your next steps always. If



you know that you're thinking to do something for 20 years versus like, "I'll do this for five and then I'll maybe apply for a university position," or those are all viable things. I have colleagues who've done all those different things. So I would think about that, and that's something no one else can tell you. And I guess also probably ask your questions. Do you ever have to ask your questions out of nervousness or self-consciousness? Ask them if you need to, but also pay attention and try to figure it out. Because a lot of the people who you see who have a result, you see them there with the result, doesn't mean that they're the best person to explain you how to always get that. Sometimes they'll say, "I've even had people tell me before that they just think they were lucky or something." It's been my analytical mind that's carried me where I'm like, "Oh, this person was not lucky actually, such and such." They have the same manager as so-and-so, and so that would probably have a great impact on where they get invited or what they are exposed to. You have to be analytical and understand even when you ask questions. But ask, I mean, ask your questions, but know that your analysis is gonna be the most helpful thing for you. So how do you build that? I think by going to a lot of things, hearing, seeing a lot of things, reading articles about reading between the lines, what's PR and marketing, what's the substances of how things happen and the better you analyze it, the better your expectations will match your, you know, what you're attaining. That's my approach. I'm a different kind of artist. I'm very, I don't know that everyone's analytical like me. I am though, and probably has something to do with the legal training. I was just about to say, "Well, you are a lawyer." Yeah, but before that, before I was, I was like that. I always, I like to be very resourceful, which I think really comes from my family background and my family, like the ethos of my family, which is to always be, find abundance in what you have by putting it together yourself. I've watched my dad and my mom make so many things physically or conceptually or financially my whole life that that's always my touchstone is like in abundance of resources I have. What will I make?

Candice, I literally could keep talking with you. I mean, you're just really a phenomenal person to talk to. I'm just so happy that you, you know, took time to talk with me today. I know I said that was my last question, but I couldn't like help myself like because of what you were just saying. I have to ask you a last, last question, which is, you know, looking ahead, what are your aspirations and goals for the future of your artistic endeavors? That's a beautiful question.

Thank you for asking that. It's a generous question too, because. I was just talking to a good friend of mine who's an artist and I said, and my mentor is someone who I thought of as a mentor is, is not going to be available and isn't is healing right now. And I said, wow, I was going to do this, this conversation where I think about the next three years. And now I think I'll have to do it by myself. So I appreciate you're asking me today. It's kind of what I needed. I would say I want to be more adventurous in the grants that I'm writing for. And I want to be, I want to put myself in the running for much bigger grants, which is also when you listen to the songs Aura's Moon, you'll understand the message I was giving myself. I won't reveal the, I won't spoil it, but if you go wherever you listen to music and listen and Dazora's Moon. As you listen to the first sample that I used on the track, you'll see what I was doing there with that. (laughing) I need to reach higher for the stars. That's what I'm gonna be doing. The first order of business is I'm releasing a new album, July 28th, 2023, called Night Beauty of Experts. As we're three black women and all the work is improvised, all the music is improvised, the three of us produced it ourselves. And every element I have a hand in, like I created, directed the cover, the layout, I

made the logo, I made the t-shirts, I made the website, I made the Instagram, I made the music videos. When I found out that our label wasn't doing those things, I did those things. So that's coming out July 28th. And I'm excited to share that music and I love the album. And I've never heard anything quite like it. And having Mr. Shorter say those wonderful words about how he felt, he said that we're not just out there for the sake of being out there. He's talking about the sound, the experimentalism in the music. He said, we just, we really say it with our chest. And I, it warped all over when And he said that I couldn't, I was, I mean, coming from him, it meant a lot. So I'm very excited about this album. And I hope that everyone in this community gets a chance to hear it. And I'm excited to start my MAP fund. I'm a 2022 MAP fund recipient. And I have a new direction I'm going to take with making a work for my voice, a classical work where I'm working hand in hand with a composer, a classical composer, and I'm figuring out how to do the thing I want to do as far as producing that work using this grant and how to allocate the funds and do I need a second grant for more funding and I'm writing the book for the piece. So I'm at the beginning of writing a book, really, which I haven't done before, not, you know, not a novel, but a musical book, like the book of a show. So I've been excited for the album to come out, and all those things that I told you that I've been doing, they're quite, you know, absorbing and mechanical, and to like transition back into the dream state to be writing this book. and my kids are still in school. We're almost done with that. So I'm juggling that too. And I also, like I told you when we were in the thick of this conversation, I want to be grounded. I want to feel well and have love in my heart while I'm doing these things and not, you know, slide into any self-criticism or any anxiety that would hold me. I want to fly in these things and do them with love. So I'm going to be finding ways to do that. Oh, well, I am so excited for all the things that you just mentioned. I'm so excited that I get to watch all of this develop over the next period of time that you're working on and all of these, I mean, so many exciting, different kinds of projects. I'm so happy that my first time hearing your beautiful voice was live, your voice is not like anything I've ever heard. And so, I mean, that's why I sat there and was filming you that day. But I was just like, who is this woman with this amazing voice? I couldn't, like I had to capture it. - If you have it, please share it with me. I'd love to see that. Yes, it was so amazing. I mean, and so, yes, I'm so excited for it all. And I'm definitely gonna be checking out Night Beauty and actually this episode will come out around that time just right after you will have launched that. So I'm excited to share this with the community as well. - Thank you. - Absolutely, absolutely. You are just a phenomenal creative and I'm so excited for all that's to come. Thank you so much, Candice Hoys, for spending this afternoon chatting with me here on the podcast Beyond Beauty. Thank you for taking a leap of faith because I know my podcast hasn't come out yet. And so you are also, you know, part of that journey with me. And I'm just thrilled that we have come together at this time for both of us. I'm honored. Thank you. And thank you for sharing your space with me. I appreciate it. to everyone. Thank you. Thank you so much. And I wish you a wonderful, beautiful day today. Reflective of all the beauty that you just shared with me, Mara here and all the listeners who will hear this. Thank you beyond beauty. And thank you, Jacqueline. Thank you so much.