



**STUDIODANCE I: *DANCING 50:*
MOVING FORWARD/LOOKING BACK
DANCE AT ILLINOIS**

Thursday, February 28, 2019, at 7pm (Program A) and 9pm (Program B)

Friday, March 1, 2019, at 7pm (Program B) and 9pm (Program A)

Saturday, March 2, 2019, at 7pm (Program A) and 9pm (Program B)

Studio Theatre

WELCOME

Program notes are tricky. Contemporary choreographers resist them because we are afraid the frame we provide might limit an audience's individual experience of the works on their own terms. But I have a feeling that hearing directly from each of these articulate choreographers might serve to catalyze your imaginations and curiosity. So, we take our chances, and invite you to read in each of the choreographers' notes what was on our minds during the creative process.

The Studio Theatre stage is filled with alumni guests this evening. We value our relationships with them and are proud that Dance at Illinois

engenders long-term relationships and collaborations with both current and former students. Our department builds a sense of community. We stress agency and autonomy to follow one's personal creative path. And we are proud to respect and promote diversity of all kinds through aesthetic, racial, sexual, and identity expression, and on and on.

Meet us at Stage 5 after the show to talk and celebrate! And please return to see both programs . . .

—Sara Hook, concert director

PROGRAM

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Studio Theatre

PROGRAM A

The Promise of Stormy Weather

Charles Maybee

PROGRAM B

Double Flower Possibility

Tere O'Connor

sous la peau d'un autre

Momar Ndiaye

Janes

Sara Hook

g1(host): lostatsea

Nia Love

This production will be presented with no intermission.

This production contains nudity and is intended for mature audiences only.

The Promise of Stormy Weather (PROGRAM A)

CHOREOGRAPHY

Charlie Maybee

MUSIC

Composed and arranged by Charlie Maybee
in collaboration with the performers

COSTUME DESIGNER

Larissa Almanza

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Gillian Frame

SOUND DESIGNER

Brandon Reed

DANCERS

Isiah Asplund

Hannah Dziura

Elliot Emadian

Jon Faw

Jessica Ingalbe

Lauren Mendelson

Alexis Miller

Randi Townsend

Leah Wilks

NOTES

I approached this work as if I were writing a piece of science fiction. I have been fascinated with the process of character creation, and so I had my performers create tap dancing alter-egos that exist in a dystopian world where spoken language results in bodily decay. The goal was to explore what would happen if tap dance was a primary method of navigating the world, so I looked to the history of the form and reimagined it through the lens of survival in the wake of the apocalypse.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I'd like to thank my life partner, manager, and advisor Rebecca Ferrell for seeing and nurturing my potential to make a project like this long before I could. Big thank you also to my remaining advisory committee members, Trish Loughran and Cynthia Oliver. Your keen eyes, ears, and minds have helped me traverse through this weird, new world. To Mom, Dad, and Simon: I wouldn't be here without your intense love and support. Thank you for gifting me with your nerdiness and helping me find my own. Finally, I'd like to thank my wonderful cast and their posthuman alter egos for their undying commitment to this project. Without your brilliant creativity and choice-making, *The Promise of Stormy Weather* would remain unfulfilled.

(PROGRAM B) ***Double Flower Possibility***

CHOREOGRAPHY

Tere O'Connor

REHEARSAL DIRECTOR

Angie Pittman

COSTUME DESIGNER

Larissa Almanza

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Gillian Frame

DANCERS

Nico Brown

Charles Gowin

NOTES

This is a work I made for myself and my favorite dance partner Christopher Batenhorst. I originally made this work for a benefit gala for ACT UP (the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) at PS122 in 1989. We ended up performing it quite a bit for five years after. On a tour to Europe and South America, I performed it with Rob Besserer, another great dancer and friend. This dance was part of my first research exploring unison in dance. Seductive as it is, unison can hold a sort of outside control that entraps the dancers as they struggle to individuate. I worked with extreme unison for seven years to try and understand it from inside the experience. Against the backdrop of the AIDS emergency in the 1980s, I tried to situate unison differently as a survival technique and an anchor of queer connectivity in my work.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My sincere gratitude goes to Nico and Charles for wresting it from the past and working so exactly to find a fresh version of the work.

Pause

sous la peau d'un autre (PROGRAM B)

CHOREOGRAPHY

Momar Ndiaye

MUSIC

Momar Ndiaye

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Gillian Frame

SOUND DESIGNER

Brandon Reed

DANCER

Abigail Zbikowski

NOTES

As the title *sous la peau d'un autre* suggests, this piece explores the idea of transferability, embodiment of persona, and the construction of an imaginary environment. This comes from an interest in investigating *la folie* (mental illness) from a philosophical and physical standpoint. We are looking at physical frenzy conditioned and stimulated by forces we are alone to see, understand, and respond to. Deep gratitude to Abby Z, collaborator and mentor.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Abby Zbikowski for trusting me; Dance at Illinois for this opportunity.

Pause

CHOREOGRAPHY

Sara Hook

MUSIC

M. Anthony Reimer

REHEARSAL ASSISTANCE

Chloe Nagle

DRAMATURGICAL ASSISTANCE

Phoebe Ballard
Betsy Brandt

COSTUME DESIGNER

Sara Hook

COSTUME ASSISTANCE

Larissa Almanza

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Gillian Frame

SOUND DESIGNER

Brandon Reed

DANCERS

Besty Brandt
Elliot Emadian
Roxane D'Orleans Juste
Mauriah Kraker
Mya McClellan*
Chloe Nagle
Kendra Portier
Randi Townsend
Leah Wilks

NOTES

I am fascinated by the relationships between sexuality, somatic work, and classical modern and ballet technique. Drag performance artist Monique Jenkinson says that “ballet is also drag, a codified way of being feminine.” Finding this quote was a tipping point for me. I intuitively, maybe even cellularly, understood what she was describing. In drag, this codification of the feminine helps empower individualized liberty. Can the codified “feminines” of ballet and modern dance also serve to pluralize and liberate, rather than homogenize and repress? These questions fuel the work.

I hope to evoke in the title the memory of the multitudes of *Janes*—all the famous Janes and the forgotten Jane Does—because for me, Jane has come to be a name that is a symbol of feminism and inclusivity.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Huge gratitude for the grit, grace, and generosity of my performers who developed the material with me and wholeheartedly navigated a complicated process.

*Understudy

Pause

g1(host): lostatsea (PROGRAM B)

CHOREOGRAPHY

Nia Love

FILM/VIDEO DIRECTOR

Orion Gordon

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Gillian Frame

SOUND DESIGNERS

Orion Gordon

Nia Love

DANCER

Nia Love

NOTES

A performance unfolding the term “ghost” grapples with conditions of what scholar Christina Sharpe calls “the wake” of transatlantic slavery. The work unpacks the fears—physical, mental, emotional— of this terror, asking, “What remains of the Middle Passage as force and affect?”

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful for the Dance Department at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign for bringing me in as 2019 artist-in-residence. It has been a pleasure to be a part of such young, wonderful artists and amazing faculty and staff!

PROFILES

Sara Hook (Choreographer and Concert Director) had a diverse performing career including touring the world with Nikolais Dance Theatre, dancing for Martha Graham luminaries Pearl Lang and Jean Erdman, and being a frequent guest artist/collaborator with David Parker and the Bang Group. Her choreography has been produced in numerous New York City venues, in 23 American states, and in the Netherlands, Canada, Italy, Ecuador, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. Recent creative research includes collaborating with choreographer Paul Matteson on an evening-length work premiering at the West End Theatre in New York City; touring the Midwest with *Dancing on the Ceiling*, a concert of solos by mature women; and collaborating with dramaturg Betsy Brandt on a *Dance for Camera*. Hook holds a BFA from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, an MFA from New York University, and a certification as a movement analyst from the Laban Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies. Hook has toured widely as a guest artist and taught at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center, Princeton University, Paul Taylor Dance Company Summer Intensives, and the Bates Dance Festival. She has also adjudicated numerous American College Dance Association Conferences. Currently, she is a professor of dance at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Nia Love (Choreographer) is a 2017 Bessie Award recipient for Outstanding Performer as part of the Skeleton Architecture ensemble convened by Eva Yaa Asantewaa. She is a mother, grandmother, activist, choreographer, educator, co-founder of LOVE|FORTÉ *the collective*, and former artistic director of nia love|Blacksmith's Daughter Dance. She is a two-time Fulbright Fellow for research in Ghana, a two-time recipient of the Brooklyn Arts Exchange/BAX Artist-in-Residence program, and two-time recipient of New York Live Arts' Suitcase Fund Award/Africa and Middle East Cultural Partnership. Additionally, she has been the recipient of the City University of New York (CUNY) Dance Initiative residency, a Movement Research Artist-in-Residence, and the CUNY Incubator Grant. Love's work has been presented at many venues including New York University's Skirball Center, Danspace Project, Harlem Stage, Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center Out of Doors, New York Live Arts, NOLA Cultural Arts Center, MOCADA, Montpelier Arts Center, Snug Harbor, and the Nafasi Art Space-Tanzania. In 2018, Love was a visiting professor at UCLA, the New School, and Bard College. Presently, she is an artist advisor to the BAX Artist-In-Residence program and the BAX racial equity advisor and is currently a visiting artist-in-residence at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She was recently awarded the 2019 Gibney Dance in Process (DiP) Artist-in-Residency and the Gibney Presents Artist-in-Residence for a world-premiere season, 2019 through spring 2020.

Charlie Maybee (Choreographer) is a music and dance artist hailing from Woodbridge, Virginia. An alumnus of the Metropolitan Youth Tap Ensemble (MTYE) and Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Department of Dance and Choreography BFA program, he is currently pursuing an MFA in dance from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He has been an adjunct instructor, production manager, space coordinator, and accompanist for Dance at Illinois as well as the director of dance arts for the Champaign Park District. Maybee is also the founder and artistic director of Polymath Performance Project, a multi-faceted collective of performers who embrace the notion of entangling many methods of making to create interdisciplinary performance artwork. Since 2014, his work has been shown nationally at events and venues such as Eden's Expressway in New York City, Panoply Performance Laboratory in Brooklyn, New York, Links Hall in Chicago, Richmond Dance Festival at Dogtown Dance Theatre in Richmond, Virginia, Krannert Center for the Performing Arts in Urbana, Illinois, and the American College Dance Association at Wichita State University in Wichita, Kansas. He is currently researching creative processes where tap dance is the central medium of expression and how to further integrate tap dance into the scope of contemporary performance and scholarly study.

Momar Ndiaye (Choreographer) is an international performer, choreographer, and videographer from Senegal. He has created and toured several staged, contemporary dance works along with choreographies for music videos with his own company since 2004. Ndiaye has also worked as a performer with many well-known choreographers from Africa, Europe, Asia, and America, such as Andrey Quamba and Keith Hennessy. He received the Danceweb scholarship in 2012 and was a Dance l'Afrique Dance laureate

in 2015. Ndiaye received his MFA in dance from the University of Illinois in 2017 and was awarded with the prestigious Wanda Nettl Prize for excellence in choreography for his thesis work *Point 0* upon graduation. Since 2017, he has been working on international collaborative projects: 1space project, Shifting Realities, and currently Share.creative.Africa.

Tere O'Connor (Choreographer) is a Center for Advanced Studies professor of dance at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the artistic director of Tere O'Connor Dance. He has created over 45 works for his company and toured them throughout the US, Europe, South America, and Canada. He has created numerous commissioned works for other dance companies including the Lyon Opera Ballet, White Oak Dance Project, and solo works for Mikhail Baryshnikov and Jean Butler. O'Connor received a 2013 Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, is a 2009 United States Artist Rockefeller Fellow and a 1993 Guggenheim Fellow, and has received numerous other grants and awards. In 2014, he was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He has received three Bessie Awards (New York Dance and Performance Awards). An articulate and provocative educator, O'Connor has taught at festivals and universities around the globe for 25 years. He is in residence at the university for the spring semester each year and in New York or on tour for the remainder of the year. His most recent work *Long Run* premiered at Bard College in upstate New York in October 2017. The company continues to tour this piece and will present the work at Krannert Center in November 2019.

Larissa Almanza (Costume Coordinator) is in her second year of the MFA costume design program at the University of Illinois. She was born in Tamaulipas, Mexico, and was raised in the Rio Grande Valley located in South Texas. She received her BFA in studio art and design at the University of Texas Pan-American. Prior to her arrival at the University of Illinois, she worked as a freelance costume designer and commissioned artist in South Texas. She most recently designed *La Bohème* (2018), directed by Nathan Gunn for Lyric Theatre @ Illinois, and *Terminal C*, choreographed by Kemal Nance for Dance at Illinois' February Dance concert (2018). She is the new costumes coordinator for Dance at Illinois and most recently worked on November Dance 2018.

Phoebe Ballard (Dancer and Dramaturgical Assistance) is a mover, maker, teacher, and writer, returning to the East Coast after an incredibly enriching stint living in Urbana, Illinois, while earning her BFA in dance from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. A time filled with big moves and lots of laughs, she has had the privilege of performing in the works of Charli Brissey, Elise Frost, Sara Hook, Linda Lehovc, Jennifer Monson, Kendra Portier, Renee Wadleigh, and Abby Zbikowski. Her choreographic practices have been founded in her love of improvisation and cemented in her proclivity for writing, a practice she believes has a physicality all its own. Through movement and language, she seeks to develop a new way of seeing and making dance—consciously and consistently prioritizing dance as a way of being together, as a way of becoming more fully human.

Betsy Brandt (Dancer and Dramaturgical Assistance) is an interdisciplinary dance artist, teacher, and dramaturg. She currently holds faculty appointments at Webster and Lindenwood Universities, teaching courses in history, composition, and technique. Her dramaturgical work includes collaborations with Kate Corby, Sara Hook, Paul Matteson, Jennifer Monson, Elizabeth Johnson, Joanna Dee Das, and Tere O'Connor. Her scholarship has been presented at the Congress on Research in Dance, the Lorado Taft Lectureship Series, and the inaugural Dance Writing Lab at the National Center for Choreography. Brandt currently serves on the Artist Advisory Board for The Luminary. She earned her MFA in dance from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Megan Dietrich (Properties Master) is the assistant properties director and rentals manager at Krannert Center, as well as a member of the Properties Design and Management MFA program faculty for the Department of Theatre. Megan has also worked for the Humana Festival at Actor's Theatre of Louisville, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Chautauqua Theatre Company, Kitchen Theatre Company, and the Pacific Conservatory for the Performing Arts. She has a BLA from Whittier College and an MFA from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Gillian Frame (Lighting Designer) is a first-year graduate student studying lighting at the University of Illinois, and this is her first design here. She has also designed the shows *Big Fish*, *Panic*, and *To Kill a Mockingbird*, for which she won a Theatre Association of New York State Merit Award. This production, however, is her first delve into designing for dance. Frame has also assistant-designed at Finger Lakes Musical Theatre Festival and has worked with many theatre companies in and around central New York.

Alex Gill (Technical Director) is in his last year at the University of Illinois pursuing a BFA in scenic technology. This is his first show serving as technical director, but he was previously the assistant technical director for *La Bohème* and *Twelfth Night*. Both shows staged grand sets and complex technical elements.

María Miguens (Production Stage Manager) is a first-year MFA candidate in stage management at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She was previously the assistant stage manager for Lyric Theatre's *La Bohème*, *Strange Window*; *Turn of the Screw* (Builders Association), and *Dance at Illinois' February Dance 2019*. She also worked as assistant stage manager for The Celebration Company (Urbana) in *August: Osage County*. In Argentina, she served as production and stage manager for *Ya Nadie Nota tu Dolor* and *Nadie Mejora*, both directed by Andres Binetti, and *Chau Misterix* directed by Jorge Sanchez Mom.

Chloe Nagle (Dancer and Rehearsal Assistance) is a choreographer, performer, and teacher. She received an MFA in dance at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2018 and a BFA with honors in performance and choreography from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 2015. Nagle has performed her choreography at Krannert Center for Performing Arts, Danceworks Milwaukee, and Milwaukee Summer Series. She has performed with Wildspace Dance Company as a performance intern and has worked with choreographers in academic contexts including Charli Brissey, Sara Hook, Luc Vanier, Elise Frost, and Ping Chong. She is currently completing 200 hours of yoga teacher training at Amara Yoga and Arts in Urbana.

Mark Quiles (Dance Technical Director) is a second-year MFA candidate in scenic technology. He was the assistant technical director for the Summerscape Festival's 2018 season at Bard College in Red Hook, New York, and will be returning for the 2019 season. At the Summerscape Festival he worked on Pam Tanowitz's *Four Quartets* and Anton Rubenstein's *Demon*. Additional technical direction credits include Illinois Theatre's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and *Marat/Sade* at the Krannert Center, as well as *The Shadow of a Gunman* at the State University of New York (SUNY) at New Paltz. Quiles came to the University of Illinois after working as a carpenter at the Utah Shakespeare Festival for its 2017 season and receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree in theatre design and technology at SUNY New Paltz.

Brandon Reed (Sound Designer) is a Joseph Jefferson Award nominee and third-year MFA student in sound design and technology at Krannert Center. His previous Krannert Center designs include *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*, *Twelfth Night*, *In The Next Room (or the Vibrator Play)* (Illinois Theatre); *The Light in the Piazza*, *Poppea* (Lyric Theatre); and several student productions at the Armory Free Theatre. Reed has worked regionally for companies such as Lake Dillon Theatre (Colorado), Cardinal Stage Company (Indiana), Chautauqua Theater Company (New York), Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre (Arkansas), and Bristol Valley Theatre (New York). Previously based in Chicago, he worked for Congo Square (2016 Jeff Award nomination), The Hypocrites, Teatro Vista, Windy City Playhouse, Bluebird Arts, About Face, Underscore, and many others.

M. Anthony “Tony” Reimer’s (Composer for *Janes*) award-winning compositions, sound designs, and interactive works have been heard and seen in venues across the country and internationally for over 30 years. His passion is designing sound effects and writing music for live theatre, film, dance, video games, and interactive experiences. In addition to an active freelance career in theatrical sound design, Tony has also served as a sound designer and composer on many video projects and as the audio director and composer for the Mutiny Games company. He has also designed and implemented multiple interactive installations and data sonification projects nationally and internationally. Currently, Tony teaches theatrical sound design and arts technology classes at Illinois State University as well as at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He works on projects that aid collaborative efforts among artists including concepts such as a framework for collaborative development of multi-user virtual worlds, audience interaction technology through the use of mobile devices, and support for telematic (a.k.a., co-located) performances. A complete list of works and other materials can be found at: <http://www.toneguy.net/about.html>.

Devin Richard (Stage Manager) is a junior at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, originally from Crystal Lake, Illinois. This is his first time as a stage manager at Krannert Center with previous roles as an assistant stage manager for *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Barbecue*, and *February Dance 2017* and as a production assistant for *Poppea*. He has also had the opportunity to be a general production intern for several productions at Hope Summer Repertory Theatre where he helped with almost every facet of the company.

Isiah Asplund (Dancer) is a Dance at Illinois alumnus. After graduating in 2017, he stayed in the Champaign-Urbana area to focus on writing and performing music with Charlie Maybee and Jon Faw. In the meantime, he has been choreographing for theatre works such as *Fun Home* at the Station Theatre and *A Well*, a devised theatre piece that was performed at the Armory Free Theatre and later at the Rhinoceros Theater Festival in Chicago.

Nico Brown (Dancer) is a dance artist originally from rural Southern Illinois, now living and working in Brooklyn. His work is often described as minimal, formal, and irrevocably queer. His work has been presented by Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival, New York Live Arts, Gibney Dance Center, Brooklyn Arts Exchange, Movement Research at Judson Church, Links Hall, and Pieter Performance Space. Recently, he collaborated with music artist Fischerspooner for three concert performances and a music video. Elsewhere, he has worked with Jon Kinzel, Jennifer Monson, Wally Cardona and Jennifer Lacey, Kirstie Simson, and Renée Wadleigh. He holds an MFA in dance and a BFA in theatre stage management from the University of Illinois. As an administrator, he has worked in various capacities for Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival, the American Dance Festival, Movement Research, and Trisha Brown Dance Company.

Roxane D’Orleans Juste (Dancer) is a performer, choreographer, and dance educator. She was a principal dancer for the Eleo Pomare, Annabelle Gamson, and Limon Dance companies (1981-2016). As the Limon Dance Foundation’s associate artistic director, she created and directed the Limon4Kids programs and teacher training programs. Her career includes creating En Solo Dance Concerts, co-producing the Choreographers’ Collective Dance Series, and teaching for the Tanztheater Wuppertal-Pina Bausch. Named choreographer-in-residence for the company Corearte in Caracas, Venezuela, her choreography was also presented in the United States, Canada, Germany, and South America. She is the recipient of the Canadian Dance Award Le Prix Jacqueline Lemieux and the Bessie Award for Outstanding Sustained Achievement.

Hannah Dziura (Dancer) is a junior at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign pursuing a BA in dance with a pre-physical therapy concentration. During her freshman year, she attended Columbia College Chicago and danced with BOOM CRACK! Dance Company under the direction of Trae Turner. After transferring to the U of I in the fall of 2017, Dziura has been given the opportunity to revisit her passion for tap dancing and expand her modern dance palate. Upon graduation, she hopes to attend graduate school to receive a doctorate degree in physical therapy and continue to teach dance in the Chicagoland area.

Elliot Emadian (Dancer) is a gender-nonconforming interdisciplinary artist, dancer, teacher, and scholar currently operating out of Urbana, Illinois. They began dancing at the ripe age of two, and their love of rolling on the floor and tie-dyed costumes continues to this day. Their research utilizes the choreography

of mathematics as a means to upset seemingly concrete assumptions around binaries of gender, sexuality, and power. Emadian is currently a teaching assistant pursuing a Master of Fine Arts in dance at the University of Illinois.

Jon Faw (Dancer) is making his mainstage debut with Dance at Illinois in this show. He has appeared in many other musicals, plays, dances, and other performance ventures in the Champaign-Urbana and Chicago areas. His favorite roles include Johnny (*American Idiot*), Moritz (*Spring Awakening*), and Tom (*The Glass Menagerie*). He will also appear in Lyric Theatre’s production of *Crazy For You*. Jon is also a founding member of Charlie & the Possibly Wilds, a local band.

Charles Gowin (Dancer) is a performer from Columbia, Missouri. He received a BFA in dance from the University of Illinois in the fall of 2015. Since moving to Brooklyn, he has had the pleasure of dancing for Katy Pyle’s Ballet in *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Beast* and *Slavic Goddesses*; for Brendan Fernandes in *Clean Labor*; and for Ishmael Houston-Jones and Miguel Gutierrez in their Bessie Award-winning *Variations on Themes from Lost and Found: Scenes from a Life*; and other works by John Bernd. Gowin has also performed with Sônia Soares, Christine Bonansea, Juri Onuki, and Emma Brown.

Mauriah Kraker (Dancer) has a love for precision and wide-open spaces from years competing as an Olympic-level athlete, touring with Pilobolus, and being raised in a family that believed in biking and walking to all destinations. She has created projects on printing presses in Germany, underpasses in the Midwest, mountainsides in Italy, outdoor skating rinks in Taiwan, and in Bangkok’s zombie buildings. Kraker has been awarded the Vannie I. Shier Memorial Dance

Scholarship for outstanding performance at the University of Illinois and has performed with Jennifer Monson/iLAND. While at the University of Illinois, she has been working on her MFA in choreography and performance, directing the children's dance program, studying body-mind centering, and walking the prairie and fields.

Lauren Mendelson (Dancer) is a dancer, choreographer, and teacher residing in the Chicagoland area. She is a recent graduate of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where she received her BFA with honors in dance. She is currently an instructor at Reverie Dance Academy in Buffalo Grove, Illinois, and is also a collaborator and performer for Polymath Performance Project created by Charlie Maybee. Mendelson's work as an artist stems from tradition, community, and togetherness—values she holds in high regard in all facets of her life. She is thrilled to keep sharing these principles with everyone whose paths overlap with her own.

Alexis Miller (Dancer), a native of Rantoul, Illinois, has been dancing since the age of four. Her training includes the Joffrey Ballet School, Giordano Dance Chicago, Broadway Dance Center, and most recently with the Radio City Rockettes. This past May, she graduated from the University of Illinois with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in dance. Miller is currently teaching multiple dance styles at the Urbana Fine Arts Center and is receiving her 200-hour yoga teacher training from Amara Yoga and Arts.

Kendra Portier (Dancer) is a New York City-based maker, teacher, and performer. Born at home in Ohio, Portier holds a BFA from The Ohio State University and an MFA from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She has taught and performed internationally including a nine-year tenure with David Dorfman Dance and ongoing partnerships with Gibney Dance Center (New York City) and Bates Dance Festival (Maine). Portier's work has been presented by multiple venues, with her current work premiering fall 2019 at the University of Maryland where she is artist-in-residence.

Randi Townsend (Dancer) was born and raised on the Southside of Chicago, where she began to dance at the age of three. Townsend is an alumna of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where she received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in dance. Her work explores her experience of friction and understanding of intersectionality within her black womyn body.

Leah Wilks (Dancer) will graduate with a Master of Fine Arts in 2019. She is a dancer, choreographer, and teacher originally hailing from North Carolina. Most recently, she has performed with Renay Aumiller Dances, real.live.people.durham, Thomas DeFrantz-SLIPPAGE, and Kendra Portier/BAND. Leah has taught at a variety of locations including the American Dance Festival, North Carolina State University, the Ponderosa Tanzland Festival (Germany), and the Hemispheric Institute's Graduate Student Initiative Convergence (Toronto, Ontario, Canada). Her additional service to the field includes cofounding Durham Independent Dance Artists, an independent season of dance in Durham, North Carolina, and Culture Mill, a non-profit and performing arts laboratory in Saxapahaw, North Carolina.

PRODUCTION STAFF

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Maria Miguens

STAGE MANAGER

Devin Richard

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Alexander Gill

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