

PHOTO BY MARCIA DAVIS



**SPECTRUM DANCE THEATER:
*STRANGE FRUIT***

Saturday, February 19, 2022, at 7:30pm
Colwell Playhouse

PROGRAM

SPECTRUM DANCE THEATER: *STRANGE FRUIT*

THE CAST

She Who Sees

Nia-Amina Minor

The Man

Davione Gordon

The Woman

Nile Alicia Ruff

The Singer

Josephine Howell

The Mob

Chloe Brown, marco farroni,
Hutch Hagendorf, Justine
Hannan, Marte Osiris Madera,
Kaitlyn Nguyen, Lillie Pincus,
Nathanaël Santiago, Mary
Sigward (understudy), and Jaclyn
Wheatley

Speaker and Talkback Facilitator

Theresa Ruth Howard

Artistic Director

Donald Byrd

Executive Director

Tera Beach

Choreography and Direction

Donald Byrd

Scenic Design

Jack Mehler

Lighting Design

Sara Torres

Reconstructed by David Mackie

Video Design

Travis Mouffe

Sound Design

Robertson Witmer

Costume Design

Doris Black

Music

Dr. Watts Prayer
Low Down Death Right Easy
Gotta Find my Way Back Home
Ain't No Grave Can Hold my
Body Down
Soon I Will be Done
My Soul is a Witness

GUEST ARTISTS

marco farroni, Davione Gordon,
Josephine Howell, Nia-Amina
Minor, Mary Sigward

SPECTRUM COMPANY ARTISTS

Chloe Brown (apprentice), Hutch
Hagendorf, Justine Hannan,
Marte Osiris Madera, Kaitlyn
Nguyen, Lillie Pincus (apprentice),
Nile Alicia Ruff, Nathanaël
Santiago, Jaclyn Wheatley

This performance will not include an intermission.

Music Acknowledgements:

Sample from *Contracanthus* composed by Cecilie Ore and performed by Bjørn Ianke © Simax Classics

Sample from *Lay Down, You Weary One, Lay Down* courtesy of the Alan Lomax Archive

Sample from *Attack/Transition* composed by Alva Noto & Ryuichi Sakamoto and performed by Ensemble Modern © raster-media

Sample from *My Soul is a Witness from the album Negro Religious Field Recordings, Vol. 1 - From Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee (1934-1942)* © document Records

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Spectrum Dance Theater appears by arrangement with:

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PROGRAM NOTES

A NOTE ON *STRANGE FRUIT*

Strange Fruit draws its title from the 1937 poem and song of the same name by Abel Meeropol and made famous by the great jazz singer Billie Holiday. The song makes the metaphor of the swinging body of the lynching victim and fruit hanging from a tree. The song is not used in the piece.

The impetus for this work is lynching and its usage as a tool of racial terrorism during the Jim Crow Era. Lynching emerged as a vicious and horrific tool of racial control and as a way to reestablish white supremacy and suppress Black civil rights in the South at the end of Reconstruction. While there are more than 4,075 documented racial terror lynchings of African Americans in southern states between 1877 and 1950, most white Americans and young African Americans have very little to no knowledge of this brutal campaign of racial violence. For this dance/theatre work, the facts of lynching act as a springboard into an interior space, a state of mind. *Strange Fruit* tracks my feelings as a response to these acts of terror and plays out as a series of Expressionist vignettes. The piece is abstract but informed by the reality of these brutal acts of violence and terrorism.

Donald Byrd

THE MUSIC

African American Spirituals

The African American Spiritual, also called the Negro Spiritual, constitutes one of the largest and most significant forms of American folksong. A spiritual is a type of religious folksong that is most closely associated with the enslavement of

African people in the American South and the songs proliferated in the last few decades of the 18th century leading up to the abolishment of legalized slavery in the 1860s.

Spirituals are typically sung in a call and response form, with a leader improvising a line of text and a chorus of singers providing a solid refrain in unison. Many spirituals, known as “sorrow songs,” are intense, slow, and melancholic, describing the struggles of enslaved people and drawing parallels with the suffering of Jesus Christ. Other spirituals are fast, rhythmic, and often syncopated, and are known as “jubilees,” or “camp meeting songs.”

Spirituals are also sometimes regarded as codified protest songs and incitements to escape enslavement. Because the Underground Railroad used terminology from railroads as a secret language to assist enslaved people to reach freedom, it is often speculated that some songs may have been a code for escape. While hard evidence is difficult to identify, a spiritual that was certainly used as a code for escape to freedom was *Go Down, Moses*, used by Harriet Tubman to identify herself to enslaved people seeking to flee north.

Spirituals played a significant role as vehicles for protest during the 20th and early 21st centuries. Many of the “freedom songs” associated with the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s were adapted from old spirituals, sometimes combined with gospel hymns. Freedom songs based on spirituals continue to help define struggles for democracy today, both in the United States and in many countries around the world.

Adapted from loc.gov/item/ihas.200197495

BLACK MURDER AND CREATIVE RECOVERIES: THE CHOREOGRAPHIC HISTORIES OF STRANGE FRUIT

The inhuman calculus that supported chattel slavery produced the ways of being that we now call Black life. In one view, Black Life is entirely a creation of the Middle Passage of slavery, and the willingness of some whites to determine that African souls could be counted as assets on a balance sheet, as property, as much less than human. Slavery, as it was practiced in the movements of a seemingly inevitable modernism, allowed for difference to be a register of torment, disavowal, disdain, rejection, and the normalization of trauma. Slavery drove us to the modernism that has produced the theatrical containers we still enjoy, like this one where the performance of *Strange Fruit* by Spectrum Dance Theater occurs; slavery produced the systems that allow some people to be very comfortable telling others what they can and cannot do, no matter their desires, abilities, or creative resources.

While the US Civil War was surely fought to preserve the possibilities of slavery among whites who enjoyed the modern conveniences of wealth, the civil war also allowed many poor whites to rely on racial difference to encourage the group to exercise hate. Hate. And hate, like other emotional valences, is a practice that has to be nurtured to endure. Many whites learned to hate through the dehumanizing practices born of modern capital, slavery, and the disavowal of Black humanity.

After the civil war, hating hordes of whites had less judicial recourse to violence as a way to exercise hatred and fear. The laws of the State shifted because of the outcome of the civil

war. We might remember that the State is the institution that is allowed to use violence to quell dissent. After the civil war, the state did not endorse rampant violence, and instead we endured a precipitous rise in the mob violence known as lynching.

Lynching is an extrajudicial killing by a group. A public execution by a mob. An extreme form of social control conducted as public spectacle for maximum intimidation. It is mob violence, that often involves public hanging. Often lynchings were staged on a large tree, known to many who live in the area of the murdering.

An irony of lynching might be its general reliance on nature in this way, and on mature, magnificent trees used to perform the heinous action. The lynching tree, generally older than the communities that surround it, was repurposed to foment hatred and murder. Black murder.

Lynchings of African Americans became frequent in the South during the period after Reconstruction. Interestingly, the actual "Lynch Law" that lynching references is a Revolutionary War-time declaration; it is an 18th century claiming of a state of exception that allowed for otherwise illegal activity against British loyalists. So then, maybe lynchings in the 19th and 20th century continued a different war, a certain war against Blacks, as we had been cast in our difference from a white norm as the source of an intractable "peculiar institution;" being "the problem of the Negro."

About lynchings: Wikipedia offers us statistics. From 1883 to 1941 there were 4,467 victims of lynching. Of these, the overwhelming majority were male but some were female. Most, of

course, were Black but over 1000 were white, and some number were Mexican descent and Native American.

Lynching, then, is mob violence staged as a means of enforcing White supremacy, a practice that quickly became an aspect of systematic political terrorism. After whites who supported slavery lost the civil war, white supremacist terrorist groups including the Ku Klux Klan rose in number. Public murders of Black people instilled fear. The ideology behind lynching, directly connected to white fear, flourished in the denial of political and social equality.

Consider a statement by a certain South Carolina Senator offered on the Senate floor in 1900:

We of the South have never recognized the right of the negro to govern white men, and we never will. We have never believed him to be the equal of the white man, and we will not submit to his gratifying his lust on our wives and daughters without lynching him.

So, then, lynching, an anti-black form of political terrorism, was a distinctive enactment of hatred and fear. Whites suffered financial losses whenever a slave died, but once blacks were no longer chattels, there was no incentive to avoid killing them. The post-Reconstruction decades were also punctuated by race riots. Violence helped turn the century, with massacres in Wilmington, North Carolina, 1898; Atlanta 1906; and the mayhem that overtook Springfield, Illinois, President Lincoln's birthplace, in 1908. Understanding the last turn-of-the-century U.S. culture is therefore impossible without attending to our histories of racialized bloodshed.

Black Murder and Creative Recovery

When scholars tell stories of Black life, and attend to racial violence, we can too easily overlook the fact and function of artistic output. Even in our darkest days black political activism continues. Black people have survived, and we have worked for equality for ourselves and for future generations.

But more than this, we continually create art. Again and again, we turn to the technologies of artmaking to document our experience, as well as our wonder towards a different outcome, one that might allow us to engage in a full complex humanity, replete with contradictions. An outcome aware of the ongoing violences, even as we imagine another way to be.

While lynching photographs sent a powerful message that African Americans were not citizens or even human, black artists and our allies created poetry, music, drama, and dance in spite of that disavowal. Theatre historian and theorist Koritha Mitchell has brilliantly documented the ways that many plays about lynching that stand as evidence of a critical reading of the nation's racist practices. Mitchell reminds us that lynchings became spectacular theatrical events, especially between 1890 and 1930. The lynchings, she writes, would follow a predictable script, and "white participants would often bring food and drink to the place of execution . . ." Once in attendance, "white men, women, and children would hang or burn (frequently both), shoot, and castrate the [alleged] offender, then divide the body into trophies." In special cases, newspapers announced the time and location so that crowds could gather, and spectators knew that they would see familiar characters (so called black "rapists" and white "avengers") perform a predictable script of forced confession and mutilation. Souvenir hunting would complete the drama with audience participation. And photographs from lynchings became souvenirs.

Black artists, and others who believed in our humanity, created myriad artworks to register the complex emotions surrounding racist mob violence. In the most obvious example, the song "Strange Fruit" was composed by first-generation Jewish immigrant Abel Meeropol in 1937, inspired by the photograph of a lynching in Marion, Indiana. Meeropol said that the photograph "haunted him for days." After he published the poem under a pseudonym, he later set it to music. The resulting song, performed by Billie Holiday, achieved an astonishing popularity, considering its theme, and quickly became a standard of the great American songbook repertory.

American choreographers also responded to the terror of lynching with dance works presented in the United States and abroad. In 1936, white American choreographer Charles Wideman created *Lynchtown* a dynamic early modern dance work that depicts a group as a carnal and bloodthirsty mob, behaving like vultures devouring prey.

Almost a decade later, the very famous Trinidadian-American artist Pearl Primus created *Strange Fruit* in 1943. Primus' dance was a solo work, that depicted the anguish of a white woman who had witnessed a lynching and who was subsequently filled with regret. Amazingly, for the time, Primus danced the role of the white woman herself.

Describing the dance later, Primus characterized it as a question, or a wondering: "What have we done to allow ourselves to get to this place?"

One other very famous choreographic work that took on lynching was the extraordinary dance *Southland*, created by the inimitable Katherine Dunham. Premiered in 1951, this is the work that essentially shuttered the Dunham company, as its theme and execution bore strong critique of the continued enactment of Black murder in the

United States. The dance researcher Constance Valis Hill interviewed Miss Dunham several times before her transition in 2006, and has detailed the circumstances surrounding the dramatic ballet.

Dunham's work was a large-scale production, with dancers, musicians, and scenecraft not entirely unlike the amazing work that we have witnessed tonight from the artists of Spectrum Dance Theater. In the program notes to the ballet that premiered at the Opera House in Santiago de Chile, Dunham wrote, "This is the story of no actual lynching in the southern states of America, and still it is the story of every one of them." In 1951, Dunham spoke the Prologue onstage, in Spanish: Though I have not smelled the smell of burning flesh, and have never seen a black body swaying from a southern tree, I have felt these things in spirit.... Through the creative artist comes the need to show this thing to the world, hoping that by exposing the ill, the conscience of the many will protest."

Constance Valis Hill reminds us that *Southland* arrived as a protest as much against lynching as against the destructive powers of hatred. It was created before the Selma march of 1965, the Freedom rides, the student sit-ins; before the Montgomery bus boycott and before the 1955 lynching of Emmett Till. In the early 1950s, artistic expression could provoke suspicion and outright repression. It was a time when dissent itself seemed illegitimate, subversive, an un-American.

Southland, like *Lynchtown*, and *Strange Fruit*, affirm the vitality of protest expression rooted in an African American political struggle, an expression that is both a public act and a private rite of passage. An artistry that affirms dancing as a healing process as well as a political act. And this is what we are participating in tonight, here: dancing through difficult material and towards deliverance.

As we move well into the 21st century, we understand diminished access to social resources as an ongoing aspect of Black life. Epigeneticists explain that trauma becomes part of our DNA; we become predisposed to perform poorly in social circumstances and to succumb to certain illnesses. Afropessimists opine that Black people are eternally the site of the non-human; having been cast as objects and property so long ago on the slave ships, our destiny seems to be bound up in the recurrences of traumatic dissolving.

And yet, we make art. The dance will not be denied. In crafting artworks that challenge us to rethink the violences that have produced the present moment, we move. We move towards a something else that we sorely need; a thinking together that moves us toward a deeper understanding of the chaos of the current moment; the continuing violence that art forces us to feel, carefully. We move.

The performance tonight and our discussion of its contents compel us, once again to move. How do you feel? What do you wonder? What do you want to ask the artists? What do you want to ask of yourself?

In considering our messy shared histories that include legacies of Public Black Murder, we also consider our creative recovery. We consider the mistreatments of the past, because in some ways they are ongoing, they never left. These wounds are surely unresolved. And we wonder, what else could there be, as we explore these histories and imagine, hopefully, as Donald Byrd has called for before, an America that is to be.

Thank you for your attention.

Thomas F. DeFrantz

References

Mitchell, Koritha. "Black-Authored Lynching Drama's Challenge to Theater History" in *Black Performance Theory*, edited by Thomas F. DeFrantz and Anita Gonzalez, Duke University Press, 2014.

Valis-Hill, Constance. "Katherine Dunham's Southland: Protest in the Face of Repression" in *Dancing Many Drums: Excavations in African American Dance* edited by Thomas F. DeFrantz

"Lynching" <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lynching>.

CHOREOGRAPHY & DIRECTION

DONALD BYRD (choreographer, director, libretto) has been the artistic director of Spectrum Dance Theater since December 2002. Formerly, he was artistic director of Donald Byrd/The Group, a critically acclaimed modern contemporary dance company, founded in Los Angeles and later based in New York, that toured both nationally and internationally. His career has been long and complex, and his choreographic and theatrical interests are broad. *The New York Times* describes him as “a choreographer with multiple personalities . . . an unabashed eclectic.” He is a Tony-nominated (*The Color Purple*) and Bessie Award-winning (*The Minstrel Show*) choreographer.

Byrd has frequently been referred to as a “citizen artist,” a descriptive that perfectly aligns with an important component of Spectrum Dance Theater’s mission and Byrd’s personal beliefs: “dance as an art form and as a social/civic instrument.”

Early projects that were the beginnings of his citizen artist work at Spectrum are *Interrupted Narratives/WAR* (2007), a critique on the War in Iraq, and *The Theater of Needless Talents* (2008), a memorial to the artist victims of the Holocaust. Byrd’s early repertoire also includes three evening-length works that sought, through dance, to stimulate dialogue around a post-9/11, globalized America: *A Chekhovian Resolution* (2008), a personal, diary-like reflection on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict; *Farewell: A Fantastical Contemplation on America’s Relationship with China* (2008), inspired by the novel *Beijing Coma* from Ma Jian and the 1989 pro-democracy

demonstrations in Tiananmen Square; and *The Mother of Us All* (2010) a dense, collage-like abstract meditation on contemporary Africa.

Spectrum’s recent seasons, conceived, choreographed, and directed by Byrd, are a testament to his commitment to art as a credible partner of social justice:

Season 2015/16 *#RACEish—An Exploration of America’s 240 Years of (failed) Race Relations*

Season 2016/17 *AMERICAN—IDENTITY, RACE, CULTURE?*

Season 2017/18 *Bringing It Home—DANCING TOWARDS A MORE JUST AND EQUITABLE AMERICA*

Season 2018/19 *WOKE???*

Season 2019/20 & Season 2020/21 *Race and Climate Change*

He continues to demonstrate this by creating dance/theatre that is meant to question, to create awareness, to activate, and to move audiences and citizens into action around the persistent social issues that plague contemporary American society and the world: racism and white supremacy, climate change and the climate gap, gender equality, gender identity biases, xenophobia, and police brutality.

Throughout the more than 40 years of his choreographic career, Byrd has created numerous works for his companies as well as works for many leading classical and contemporary companies. This list includes Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, The Joffrey

Ballet, The Philadelphia Dance Company (Philadanco), Dance Theater of Harlem, and many others. He has worked extensively in theatre and opera, both in America and abroad, including Seattle Opera, The Atlanta Opera, The Israeli Opera, New York City Opera, San Francisco Opera, The New York Public Theater, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Intiman Theatre, and Center Stage (Baltimore, Maryland).

Byrd's many awards, prizes, and fellowships include the Doris Duke Artist Award; Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts, Cornish College of the Arts; Masters of Choreography Award, The Kennedy Center; Fellow at The American Academy of Jerusalem; James Baldwin Fellow of United States Artists; Resident Fellow of The Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center; Fellow at the Institute on the Arts and Civic Dialogue, Harvard University; and the Mayor's Arts Award for his sustained contributions to the city of Seattle, Washington.

A high point of Byrd's career was a solo museum exhibition *Donald Byrd: The America That Is To Be* at the Frye Art Museum in Seattle in 2019. It was the culmination of his 2016 James W. Ray Distinguished Artist Award, which was funded by the Raynier Institute & Foundation through the Frye Art Museum | Artist Trust Consortium. The award supports and advances the creative work of outstanding artists living and working in Washington State.

Byrd's upcoming projects include:

Orpheus & Eurydice—Seattle Opera

Romeo and Juliet—Houston Grand Opera

Insidious—Spectrum Dance Theater Spring Season 2022

DESIGNERS & PRODUCTION STAFF

DORIS BLACK (costume design) has designed costumes for Spectrum Dance Theater since 2011. A few of her favorite productions include *Strange Fruit*, *(Im)Pulse*, *A Rap on Race*, *LOVE*, and *The Beast*. Other collaborations with Donald Byrd include *Geography of the Cotton Fields* for Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, *Love and Loss* for Pacific Northwest Ballet, and *Greenwood* for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Black designs costumes for many different production companies, including Seattle Shakespeare Company, The Seagull Project, Seattle Gilbert and Sullivan Society, Intiman, ArtsWest, theater simple, Freehold, and Book-It. She is the company designer for the Seattle Men's Chorus and Seattle Women's Chorus. Her film credits include *Cthulhu*, *The Dark Horse*, and *Police Beat*. Black received her MFA in costume design from the University of Washington.

DAVID MACKIE (technical and lighting director) is from the Pacific Northwest and has a passion for lighting emotion on stage. He's enjoyed working with Spectrum in the past, and is looking forward to future collaborations. Prior work spans from international productions of *Porgy and Bess* to local productions of *Angles in America* and working as Village Theatre's master electrician. After realizing full-time freelancing was not for him, Mackie settled in Mt. Vernon to start a farm with his wife Bonnie. They, along with a three-year-old, tend to 12 acres of mixed veggies, pigs, and chickens, and while the farm is now his full-time job, Mackie will always continue to find his way back to the soul-satisfying art of lighting emotion on stage.

JACK MEHLER (scenic designer) has been based in New York for 30 years and designs for a wide variety of dance, theatre, and related projects, several of which have been award-winning. He has designed scores of projects with Donald Byrd including *Lyric Suite*, *Strange Fruit*, *A Rap on Race*, *Shot*, *(Im)Pulse*, and *Theatre of Needless Talents* for Spectrum Dance Theater; *Motown Suite* and *To Know Her* for the Joffrey Ballet; *Greenwood*, *Burlesque*, and *Fin de Siècle* for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and many others for Donald Byrd/The Group. He was the co-creative director for Spectrum's Race and Climate Change Festival. Other dance projects include work with Ballet Austin, Ballet Memphis, BalletMet, Ballet West, Buglisi Dance Theatre, Houston Ballet, Hubbard Street, Joffrey Ballet, José Limón, Lar Lubovitch, and San Francisco Ballet, among many others.

TRAVIS MOUFFE (video design) is from Steamboat Springs, Colorado, studied film at the University of Colorado in Boulder, and first began projection design for dance thesis concerts with CU's School of Theatre and Dance. After moving to Seattle, Washington, he worked with MODE Studios and created his first professional video design for Mount Baker Theatre's production of *Into The Woods*, later working on projects for Microsoft, Nordstrom, Holland America Line, the off-broadway tour of *Catch Me If You Can*, music tours including Paramore and Postmodern Jukebox, and was principal video designer for Seattle Opera's *An American Dream* and Pacific Music Works' *Orpheé et Eurydice*, as well as Spectrum Dance Theater's productions *SHOT* and *(IM)PULSE*. Mouffe currently works full-time with Commerce House, a strategic branding agency, in Dallas, Texas.

SARA TORRES (lighting design) is a lighting designer, technical director, and stage manager based in Seattle, Washington. She graduated from Cornish College of the Arts in 2008 with a degree in performance production. Her body of work includes serving as touring technical director and stage manager for Solo Magic (2019), production manager, lighting designer, and stage manager for Spectrum Dance Theater (2015-2019), and technical director, stage manager, and lighting designer for the Seattle International Dance Festival (2007-2017). In addition to her work in dance, she exercises her talents designing lights for theatre, circus, and events. Select examples of her work can be found at penumbbralux.com.

ROB WITMER (sound design) previously worked with Spectrum Dance Theater on *Strange Fruit*, *SHOT*, *IM(PULSE)*, and *H.R. 3244*. Other recent credits include *Dracula* (ACT Theatre); *Richard III*, *Bring Down the House* (Seattle Shakespeare Company); *Flight*, *Tosca* (Seattle Opera); *The Ghost of Splinter Cove* (Children's Theatre of Charlotte); *Black Beauty* (Seattle Children's Theatre) and *Greenwood* (Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater). His designs have also been heard at Seattle Rep, Village Theatre, and Teatro ZinZanni. Witmer is a lecturer in sound design at the University of Washington, and is a member of United Scenic Artists 829. Witmer also plays with several bands, including the Love Markets and "Awesome."

GUEST ARTISTS

MARCO FARRONI started life in Bonao, Dominican Republic. He emigrated to the United States in the sixth grade, and ten years later earned a BFA in dance from The University of the Arts. In fall of 2017, they joined Spectrum Dance Theater as a company artist, where he danced for two seasons. He has had the pleasure of working with dani tirrell, Zoe|Juniper, Jumatatu M. Poe, Nia-Amina Minor, and others. In 2018, they started a solo performance practice, and has presented work in various venues across Seattle. IG: @farronimarco

DAVIONE GORDON is from Fort Washington, Maryland. He studied at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia as a ballet major. He performed with Spectrum Dance Theater for four seasons, first as an apprentice and then as a company artist. Gordon has also worked with The 5th Ave Theatre, Village Theatre, several operas in the DC metropolitan area, and has danced for the NBA as a Washington Wizards dancer. He currently resides in DC and teaches low-impact workouts with Pure Barre DC, while also freelancing as a dancer on the east coast. IG: @only1davione

THERESA RUTH HOWARD is the founder and curator of *Memoirs of Blacks in Ballet* (MoBBallet.org), a digital platform that preserves, presents, and promotes the *Memoirs of Blacks in Ballet*. She is a respected advocate and leader in the conversations surrounding diversity and culture in ballet and the arts as an internationally sought-after diversity strategist, speaker, consultant, and coach to artistic, executive, and school directors and board members of ballet and opera. Her background as a dancer (Dance Theater of Harlem and Armitage Gone! Dance) and dance educator make her uniquely qualified to target, address, and facilitate much-needed cultural

shifts in ballet leadership. In 2018, she was a member of the Design and Facilitation Team of *The Equity Project: Increasing the Presence of Blacks in Ballet*, a three-year initiative funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which assembled a cohort of 21 North American Ballet companies.

As a curator, Howard has presented at both in-person and virtual symposiums. In October 2019, they held their first MoBBallet Symposium (MBBS), a multi-generational personal development and educational intensive, which convened an elite and diverse faculty of Black ballet professionals and pre-professional ballet students. In August 2020 during the Black Lives Matter uprisings, MoBBallet hosted a 3-weekend virtual symposium that centered blackness and promoted education, communication and restoration and in March 2021, the Ballet IS Woman symposium celebrated female artistic and executive directors in ballet.

Howard has been member of the design team for the Dutch National Ballet's (DNB) bi-annual conference, *Positioning Ballet*, a convening of over 40 European and international companies, and curated their 2019 Black Achievement Month photo exhibition paying homage to all of the Black Ballet artists who have danced with the company since 1961. In 2019, Howard curated The Royal Opera House's inaugural Young Talent Festival 2019 Symposium, "Exposure, Access, and Opportunity: Exploring the Cultural Barriers to Ballet Training." Most recently she has been tapped to curate a week of Ballet for the Kennedy Center's 2022 summer season. In addition Howard is a dance journalist, having contributed to *The Source*, *Pointe*, *Expressions* (Italy), and *Tanz* (Germany), and *Opera America* Magazines. Currently she is a contributing writer for *Dance*

Magazine. Alastair Macaulay cites her as “One of the most valuable writers on dance today . . . Theresa Ruth Howard has written some of the most provocative pieces on ballet today”.

Over the years she has been a mentor for many of the young men and women that she has taught over the years. Her life motto is: “The only way to make the world a better place, is to be better people in it!”

JOSEPHINE HOWELL was born in Chicago, Illinois. She possesses a God-given endowment for the arts. Howell’s range of talent extends from singing, activism, dancing, and acting to the very production and direction of the arts. She has performed in world-renowned venues and most recently won The Seattle-Kobe Jazz Female Vocalist Competition in 2019, while performing her finale in Kobe, Japan. Howell’s artistic curriculum vitae is extensive, and she has graced stages solo as well as sharing stages with amazing artists in Chicago; Seattle, Washington; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Juneau, Alaska; Michigan; Indiana; Virginia; Oklahoma; Nashville’s The Grand Ole Opry; Austria; Mombasa, Kenya; The White House; London, England; Los Angeles, California; The MTV Awards, The Grammy Awards, and ten years as lead artist in Seattle’s acclaimed Black Nativity production.

NIA-AMINA MINOR, originally from Los Angeles, California, is a movement artist residing in Seattle, Washington. Her creative work converses with Black realities and investigates the intersection of movement, memory, and rhythm. Minor holds a MFA from UC Irvine and a BA from Stanford University. She has taught and guest lectured at UC Irvine, Saddleback College, Cypress College, and University of Washington. Minor is co-founder/former curator of LA-based collective No)one Art House. She was company dancer and community engagement liaison with Spectrum Dance Theater for five seasons, performing in acclaimed works created by Donald Byrd including *Rap on Race*, *SHOT*, and *Strange Fruit*. Minor is Velocity Dance Center’s 2021 Made in Seattle Artist and was recently recognized as *Dance Magazine*’s 25 Artists to Watch in 2021.

MARY SIGWARD was born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio. In 2015 she graduated from the University of South Carolina with a BA in dance performance and a minor in biology. Upon graduating, she moved to Seattle to join Spectrum Dance Theater as a company artist under the direction of Donald Byrd, where she performed with the company for four seasons before leaving in 2019 to freelance in the Seattle area. Sigward has had the joy of being the academy coordinator for The School of Spectrum Dance Theater since 2017, where she continues to work and mentor young aspiring students. Her work has been performed at 12 Minutes Max (Washington), Seattle International Dance Festival, and by the Academy Program at the School of Spectrum Dance Theater.

COMPANY ARTISTS

CHLOE BROWN is from Seattle, Washington, and trained at Pacific Northwest Ballet School from 2007–2019. Brown received additional training at Boston Ballet, Miami City Ballet, and the Royal Danish Ballet. She attended Alonzo King’s Lines Ballet Training Program under Alonzo King and Karah Abiog. In the training program, Brown performed works by Sidra Bell, Erik Wagner, Alonzo King, and Gregory Dawson. Brown is also the co-founder and director of the Ancient Lakes Dance Festival, an annual contemporary dance performance based in the Pacific Northwest. This is her first season as an apprentice with Spectrum Dance Theater.

HUTCH HAGENDORF, originally from Houston, Texas, began dancing at age nine at West University Dance Center under Evelyn Ireton. During high school, he danced with his studio’s competition group Soul Discretion (under artistic director Kelly Ann Vitacca) and performed with Exclamation Dance Company (under director Kenneth Epting). He received his BFA in dance at the University of Arizona School of Dance. Workshops include Perry-Mansfield, David Parsons, Alvin Ailey Extension, Paul Taylor, Doug Varone, NW Dance Project Launch, and Axis Connect. After graduating in 2015, Hagendorf completed two cruise contracts with Royal Caribbean International before moving to New York City in 2017 and working with iKADA Contemporary Dance Company and De Funes Dance. He is in his fourth season with Spectrum Dance Theater, and his first as a teaching artist.

JUSTINE HANNAN grew up in Tucson, Arizona, and trained at Tucson Dance Academy under Tammy Booth until high school graduation. She spent summers training at Pacific Northwest Ballet, LINES, Hubbard Street, Complexions, Perry-Mansfield, and Juilliard. Hannan continued her pre-professional dance training at the University of Arizona School of Dance under directors Melissa Lowe and Jory Hancock and other world-class instructors: Tamara Dyke-Compton, Christopher Compton, Autumn Eckman, Amy Ernst, Elizabeth George, and Hayley Meier. While at UA, she performed works by Paul Taylor, Jessica Lang, Christopher Wheeldon, Jerome Robbins, Larry Keigwin, and George Balanchine. In May 2021, she graduated with her BFA in dance. Hannan is honored and excited for the opportunity to dance in her first season with Spectrum Dance Theater.

MARTE OSIRIS MADERA was born in Guadalajara, Mexico. He graduated with an MFA in dance from the University of Washington and a BFA in dance from San Jose State University. Madera has danced professionally with companies across the United States, including Dance Kaleidoscope, Lustig Dance Theater, Central West Ballet, Oakland Ballet, Menlowe Ballet, Robert Moses Kin, sjDANCEco, and the Margaret Wingrove Dance Company. He has also choreographed and taught dance at various institutions to students of all ages and abilities. This is Madera’s third season with Spectrum Dance Theater.

KAITLYN NGUYEN, from Diamond Bar, California, started dancing at age seven under Janaina Watkins at Fine Arts Academy of Dance. She trained at The Ailey School and received a BFA in dance and a minor in management at UC Irvine. During her time at UCI, she had the privilege to dance in Donald McKayle's Etude Ensemble, performing new works and repertory. She has danced with NYC-area companies including Nimbus Dance Works, iKada Contemporary Dance, and Armitage Gone! Dance, and Southern Californian companies such as Re:borN Dance Interactive and Nouveau Chamber Ballet. Nguyen became a mother to Lucile in 2018 and is grateful to be a full-time mom while contributing to Spectrum Dance Theater's important work. This is her third season with Spectrum Dance Theater.

LILLIE PINCUS is originally from Rochester, New York, where she trained in ballet and performed with contemporary fusion company, FuturPointe Dance. She continued her training at Walnut Hill School of the Arts. In 2020, she graduated Magna Cum Laude from USC's Glorja Kaufman School of Dance under the direction of Jodie Gates and William Forsythe. While in school, she performed works by William Forsythe, Jiri Kylian, Barak Marshall, and Rauf "Rubberlegz" Yasit. Since graduating, Pincus has performed with New York State Ballet and in various festivals in Rochester. She is excited to be joining Spectrum Dance Theater this season as an apprentice.

NILE ALICIA RUFF (she/they) was born & raised in Washington DC's "Chocolate City" and began dancing with Kankouran West African Dance Company and Coyaba Dance Theatre. Ruff attended Jones-Haywood School of Ballet, Duke Ellington School of the Arts and Point Park University, earning a BFA in modern dance. Ruff has danced professionally with Deeply Rooted Dance Theatre, Attack Theatre, and Dayton Contemporary Dance Company. She joined Spectrum Dance Theater in March 2021.

NATHANAËL SANTIAGO was born in Puerto Rico and began his ballet studies at age ten at Ballets de San Juan. In 2006, he studied at Orlando Ballet School and later attended Miami City Ballet School in 2008. He danced with Ballet Concierto de Puerto Rico (2009–2012), Andanza Contemporary Dance Company (2013–2016), and Cleveland's Verb Ballets (2016–2018). During the summer of 2018, he danced for Visceral Dance Chicago and worked as a guest artist with Ballet Memphis from fall 2018 until spring 2019. Santiago holds a BA in modern languages from the University of Puerto Rico and the University of Coimbra, Portugal. This is his 3rd season with Spectrum Dance Theater.

JACLYN WHEATLEY, from Vancouver, British Columbia, received her early dance training under K.M. Robbins, Rachael Poirier, and Li Yaming. Wheatley graduated Summa Cum Laude from the Alvin Ailey/Fordham University BFA program in 2014. In addition to performing works by Alvin Ailey, Ronald K. Brown, Joshua Beamish, Alex Crozier, Vincent Michael Lopez, Arch Contemporary Ballet, and appearing in aerial dance productions with The Cabiri, she has traveled to Central America to participate in dance outreach activities with the JUNTOS Collective. At Spectrum Dance Theater, Wheatley has performed featured roles in Donald Byrd's *Drastic Cuts*, *The Minstrel Show*, and *The Harlem Nutcracker*, Merce Cunningham's *Crises*, and appeared as "Minnie" in *West Side Story* at The 5th Avenue Theater. This is her eighth season with Spectrum Dance Theater.

SPECTRUM DANCE THEATER

Under Donald Byrd's artistic leadership since 2002, Spectrum Dance Theater has become the foremost contemporary modern dance organization in the Pacific Northwest, gaining recognition nationally and abroad. For over thirty years, Spectrum Dance Theater has brought dance of the highest merit to a diverse community working to make dance accessible to all through contemporary dance performances and high-quality dance training in a variety of dance styles. Three components comprise the organization: the professional Company, the School, and Community Engagement programs. With Donald Byrd's visionary artistic leadership,

the organization has embarked on an exhilarating transformation that has attracted world-class dancers, produced some of the most ambitious works in contemporary dance, and generated local and national praise. spectrumdance.org

For more information about booking Spectrum Dance Theater for touring, please contact: David Lieberman Artists' Representatives info@dlartists.com or 714.979.4700. For more about sponsoring or contributing to Spectrum Dance Theater, please contact: Tera Beach, tera@spectrumdance.org or 206.325.4161.

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Land Acknowledgement

The University of Illinois System carries out its mission in its namesake state, which includes the traditional territory of the Peoria, Kaskaskia, Piankashaw, Wea, Miami, Mascoutin, Odawa, Sauk, Mesquaki, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Ojibwe, Menominee, Ho-Chunk, and Chickasaw Nations. These lands continue to carry the stories of these Nations and their struggles for survival and identity.

As a land-grant institution, the University of Illinois has a particular responsibility to acknowledge the peoples of these lands, as well as the histories of dispossession that have allowed for the growth of this institution for the past 150 years. We are also obligated to reflect on and actively address these histories and the role that this university has played in shaping them. This acknowledgement and the centering of Native peoples is a start as we move forward for the next 150 years.

Krannert Center affirms the commitment by the university to move beyond these statements, toward building deeper relationships and taking actions that uphold and preserve Indigenous rights and cultural equity.

As we gather to experience this performance, we have an opportunity to reflect on the ways that systems of oppression have shaped our society. We can work together to create systems that support human dignity, establish equity, strengthen cross-cultural relationships, and draw upon the creative capacity of all people that make up this community, state, nation, and world.



MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

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I

Inspiring Joy

Krannert Center is grateful for the heartwarming experiences that live, in-person performances have brought back to our halls and stages. The support from our friends and donors enables the Center to bring in more visiting artists from a breadth of performing arts genres so that we can continue to produce thought-provoking programming and foster cross-cultural understanding.

The importance of philanthropy has never been greater. Together, we can create powerful impact in the present and for generations to come.

Please consider making a gift to Krannert Center today. Together, we can strengthen the lasting impact of the Center's work, while ensuring that students and the greater community have access to enriching performances and cultural experiences.

Join us as we move forward together.

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Visit go.krannertcenter.com/legacy and contact Cheryl Snyder (217.333.2533 | casnyder@illinois.edu) or Bethany Whoric (217.300.6042 | bbwhoric@illinois.edu) to learn how your planned gift can qualify for matching funds to immediately benefit Krannert Center or another approved fund.

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Krannert Center's dedication to the celebration, exploration, and cross-pollination of the arts is advanced through these special programs. Donors who champion such work make it possible for more people in our community to participate in life-affirming experiences.

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This passionate group of arts advocates assists Krannert Center staff in expanding the Center's leadership and financial resources.

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2021-2022 KRANNERT CENTER YOUTH SERIES

The Youth Series features daytime performances, online media created by performing artists, and educational activities designed especially for pre-K through high-school-aged students. Children who participate learn to appreciate the performing arts, gain knowledge, build social skills, and integrate live performance experiences into classroom work. Thank you to our Youth Series sponsors. If you'd like to learn how you can become a sponsor for the Krannert Center Youth Series, please contact Krannert Center Advancement at 217.333.6700 or advancement@krannertcenter.illinois.edu.

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2021-2022 CAMPAIGN FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

Through the Campaign for Young Audiences, students at the U of I enjoy \$10 tickets for nearly every event presented at Krannert Center while other college students and children receive significant discounts. If you'd like to learn how you can become a sponsor, please contact Krannert Center Advancement at 217.333.6700 or advancement@krannertcenter.illinois.edu.

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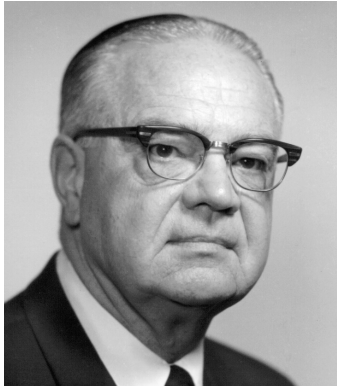
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The University of Illinois, the College of Fine and Applied Arts, and Krannert Center are profoundly grateful for the commitment of Krannert Society members. Through donations, pledges, and residual gifts of \$1 million or more, these open-hearted visionaries help build a thriving community and encourage cross-cultural understanding. Their support sustains the extraordinary vision of Herman and Ellnora Krannert to create a vibrant gathering place like no other.



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G. WILLIAM ARENDS (1914-1997)
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(1928-1996)
November 2003



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Demonstrating their steadfast dedication to the arts, members of the Foellinger Society have donated or pledged \$500,000 to \$999,999. Because of their generosity, everyone in this community can unite in joyful and engaging experiences. These magnanimous arts lovers celebrate the spirit of Helene Foellinger, whose memorial gift honored her sister, Loretta Foellinger Teeple, and established the Marquee Performance Endowment.



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University of Illinois President Emeritus and First Lady Stan and Judy Ikenberry have long demonstrated their love for the arts and their deep commitment to enhancing learning experiences for all University of Illinois students. Krannert Center gratefully acknowledges their steadfast support by introducing the Ikenberry Society to recognize donated gifts or pledges of \$250,000 to \$499,999.



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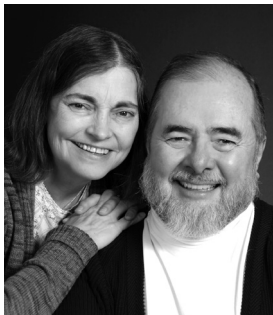
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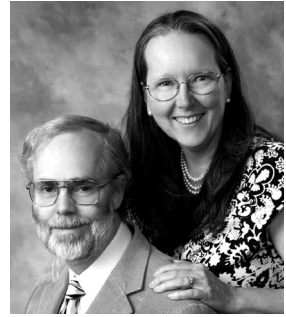
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ANONYMOUS
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Dr. John B. Colwell, Pauline Groves Colwell, and R. Forrest Colwell provided critical funding for the Marquee Performance Endowment, and the Colwell Society gratefully acknowledges their invaluable assistance. Members have donated or pledged \$100,000 to \$249,999 for celebrating, preserving, and exploring the arts right here and around the globe.



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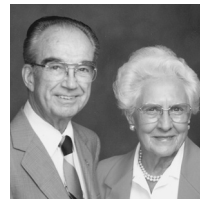
EMILY GILLESPIE
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JAMES GILLESPIE
(1905-1999)
December 1996



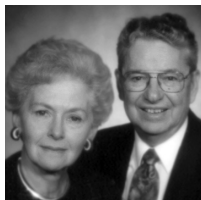
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JUNE SEITZINGER
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**JUDITH & STANLEY
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RICHARD MERRITT
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ANNA MERRITT
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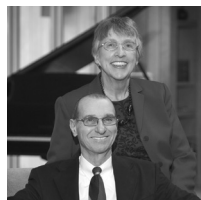
JOHN PFEFFER
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ALICE PFEFFER
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ANONYMOUS
November 2006



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**JUDITH & JON
LIEBMAN**
January 2008



**MICHAEL
CARRAGHER**
(1946-2009)
September 2008

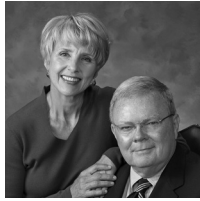


VIRGINIA R. IVENS
(1922-2008)
February 2009

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LEA GIESELMAN
(1932-2014)
BOB GIESELMAN
(1932-2015)
April 2013



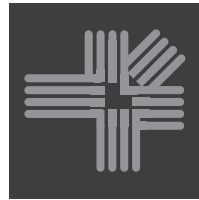
**JULIE & NATHAN
GUNN**
April 2014



MICHAEL SWINDLE
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VERMETTE**
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**MARGARET
STEFFENSEN**
June 2017



**CECILE & IRA
LEBENSON**
December 2017



BURT SWANSON
(1939-2020)
IRIS SWANSON
December 2017



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The Illinois Arts Council Agency provides general programming support to ensure that audiences of all ages have direct access to world-class theatre, dance, and music.

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The presentation of PHILADANCO is made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project,

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This grant, a generous gift from the Rohlen Family, supports *The Song of the Earth—A Contemplation of Art, Science, Nature, and Humanity*.

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THIS PROJECT FUNDED BY
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The Student Sustainability Committee provided funding for the Krannert Center Audiences Lighting Retrofit Project, which increases energy efficiency, decreases labor requirements, and improves safety conditions.

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Emily Laugesen, Co-Director of
Engagement
Monique Rivera, Co-Director of
Engagement
Sam Smith, Director of Civic Engagement
and Social Practice

Patron Services

Lisa Lillig, Co-Director of Patron Services
Elizabeth Henke, Catering Manager
Michael Bunting, Intermezzo Supervisor
Chuck Hanson, Intermezzo Assistant
Taylor McCoy, Snack Bar Attendant
Zia Moon, Patron Services Assistant

Ticket Services

Whitney Havice, Ticket Services Director
Ty Mingo, Jon Proctor, Ticket Office
Supervisors
Nick Wurl, Ticket Sales Supervisor

PRODUCTION

Terri Anne Ciofalo, Associate Director
for Production
Amber Dewey Schultz, Assistant
Production Director

Audio Department

Rick Scholwin, Audio Director
Alec LaBau, Assistant Audio Director/
Video Director

Costume Shop

Andrea Bouck, Costume Director
Richard Gregg, Costume Rentals Director
April McKinnis, EB McTigue,
Cutters/Drapers
Julianna Steitz, Theatrical Stitcher

Lighting Department

Michael W. Williams, Lighting Director
Lisa Kidd, Associate Lighting Director

Properties Department

Adriane Binky Donley, Properties Director
Kira Lyon, Assistant Properties Director

Scene Shop

Ryan Schultz, Technical Director
Tatsuya Ito, Associate Technical Director
Bill Kephart, Scene Shop Chief Clerk
Dylan Kind, Theatrical Scene Shop
Coordinator
Vincent Meade, Theatrical Scene Shop
Assistant
Bobby Reynolds, Theatrical Scene Shop
Assistant

Stage Management

Cynthia Kocher, Production Stage Manager

WE'RE SO GLAD YOU'RE AT THE CENTER

We work to create the best possible setting for the experiences you seek and find here.

NECESSARIES

At the time of printing this program booklet, all audience members must wear a face covering throughout any in-theatre event or performance.

Restrooms are located in the foyers of Foellinger Great Hall, Tryon Festival Theatre, and Colwell Playhouse; the east entrances on the Lobby level; and in each elevator lobby on Level 1 and Level 3. Lobby restrooms and one restroom in each elevator lobby are fully accessible and contain baby-changing stations.

Ushers will be happy to provide you cough drops courtesy of St. Joseph Apothecary, or disposable foam earplugs if the place starts rockin'.

If you or a companion needs medical assistance, contact an usher or other staff member.

Please take a moment before the performance to note the theatre exits nearest to you. If it becomes necessary to evacuate the theatre, please remain calm, follow the instructions of the house staff, and exit in an orderly fashion to the appropriate safe meeting location, which will be announced to you.

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

The use of cell phones, cameras, and recording devices during performances is prohibited unless otherwise announced from the stage.

LATE ARRIVALS

As a courtesy to performers and audience members, latecomers will be seated only at times selected in advance by the artist. Should you find that you've arrived late to a performance, our Patron Services staff will keep you informed about the earliest seating opportunity.

LOST ITEMS

If you are in need of Lost and Found, please visit the Patron Services counter. We will do our best to reunite object and owner!

TICKET RETURNS

If you find you can't attend a performance, please contact the Ticket Office in advance, preferably by 6pm the day before the performance (kran-tix@illinois.edu or 217.333.6280). We never charge a handling fee on ticket transactions.

SERVICES

Krannert Center for the Performing Arts is committed to making experiences accessible for all patrons, and we are delighted to provide a number of services to assist you. Krannert Center is equipped with an assisted listening system, wheelchair-accessible and no-step/few-step seating, and large-print programs, Braille programs, and American Sign Language interpreters are available with three weeks' advance notice.

For assistance regarding your visit, please email: Para ayuda en relación con su visita, favor de enviar un email a:

Pour vous aider dans votre visite, prière de nous envoyer un courriel à:

欢迎! 如若您对您的造访需要帮助, 请发送电子邮件至:

स्वागत है! अगर आपको अपने रहने के लिए मदद चाहिए, ईमेल कीजिए:

환영합니다! 방문에 관해 도움이 필요하실 때에는...

에게 이메일로 문의하시기 바랍니다:

PATRONSERVICES@KRANNERTCENTER.ILLINOIS.EDU
217.333.9716