



***A DARKLING AT NIGHTFALL***  
**ILLINOIS THEATRE**

By Mallory Raven-Ellen Backstrom

Lisa Gaye Dixon, director

Wednesday-Friday, September 21-23, 2022, at 7:30pm

Studio Theatre

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

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This performance of *A Darkling at Nightfall* is sponsored  
in part by the following generous donors:

**SUSAN & MICHAEL HANEY**

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# WELCOME

I'm delighted to welcome you to our Illinois Theatre 2022-23 production season. It has been a joy to watch our rehearsal rooms, stages, shops, and classrooms refill with the exciting energy and creative potential of new and returning students. Working together with faculty, staff, alumni, and guest artists, our students are helping to renew and reshape theatrical performances for our 21st-century audiences. Our season offers a range of rich storytelling styles, voices, and worlds that bring us together to illuminate the past, question our current paths, and imagine possible futures. Theatrical performance allows us to gather, join together in laughter and heartache, experience surprise and awe, and, hopefully, build stronger communities. Our season demonstrates our commitment to cultivating new voices for the

American stage through new work development as well as finding innovative approaches to drama that has endured many ages. As we continue to weather the surprises of this new decade, we can see how the performing arts around the globe have helped raise spirits, hold together struggling communities, reckon with fraught pasts, and provide hope and solace. Thank you for joining us. We're glad you are here and hope to see you again soon!

—Valleri Robinson  
Associate Professor and Head, Theatre

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# PROGRAM

## **A DARKLING AT NIGHTFALL**

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**PLACE: The Superconscious** – The ever-present crossroads where we are all one. An intersection of the four realms of mind, myth, and matter.

#### WORLD BUILDING

**The Preconscious** – *The Darkling*: Five ancient keepers of the alchemical elements of the natural world. Water, Wind, Forest, Stone, and Fire. \*Their world folds up from beneath the Earth.

**The Unconscious** – *The Faerie Factions*: The court of mind and magick. Under the dominion of the two branches of faerie folk - The Shimmering and the Nightfall. \*This realm descends from above.

**The Primitive Mind** – *The Beastlings*: The primal nature of instinct and intuition, governed by animal spirit guides that are empowered to traverse the other realms.

**The Conscious** – *The Mortal Realm*: Where human beings reign supreme. \*This dimension closes in from the sides.

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# ***A DARKLING AT NIGHTFALL***

## **PLAYWRIGHT**

Mallory Raven-Ellen Backstrom

## **DIRECTOR**

Lisa Gaye Dixon

## **SCENIC DESIGNER**

Reiko Huffman

## **LIGHTING DESIGNER**

Sarah Goldstein

## **SOUND DESIGNER**

Sarah Calvert

## **STAGE MANAGER**

Sidney Sprunger

## **DRAMATURG**

Toyosi Tejumade-Morgan

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# CAST

**EVREN ANDRASTE**

Kim Fernandez

**THE FOX SPIRIT**

Alex George

**SAMANYA ASHIDE**

Lauren Hayes

**ABBAS SAMAR**

Jaylon Muchison

**DARKLING**

Joseph Primes\*

**LIRIDON STERLING**

Noah Smith

**ELD**

Jamal Turner

**READER OF STAGE DIRECTIONS**

Destiny Jording

\*Appears through the courtesy  
of Actors' Equity Association



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## DRAMATURG'S NOTE

*A Darkling at Nightfall* is an astounding story of the creation and co-existence of beings, fairies, forests, animals, and heavenly bodies. It captures the formidable intents of ancient spirits from different realms on a quest to save the world after things deteriorated due to insatiable desires and personal ambitions. Evren, the magic and messiah, half human, half darkling, must harness her power to save the declination and extinction of the physical and mystical bodies that inhabit the universe. They say seeing is believing, but Backstrom unveils the secrets to the unfathomable events in the physical world, awakening us to the unfamiliar spirits that dwell amongst us, which demands not just a telescopic device but a reawakening of the mind to the preconscious and unconscious habitants of the universe.

Evren Andraste is a 700-year-old woman whose face and demeanor are that of an 18-year-old living in the forest with her father, a forest spirit called Darkling. Darkling's only mission is to protect his daughter from supernatural beings trying to kill, ruin, or turn Evren into a baby factory because of the rare genetic DNA she has born of a darkling and a witch. Darkling created a new world in the woods, telling ancestral stories, creating magic, and nurturing the forests they now call home. Trouble, though, comes knocking.

Backstrom helps us imagine how we would feel if we were the sea, wind, fire, or forest. The

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 1951 to 2010 reports show that human emissions and activities are responsible for 100 percent of global warming. The adverse effect of climate change has led to the destruction of lives, properties, and the earth's terrain. Backstrom transports us into the other realms, revealing that fire cries, water fumes, and the wind blows in agony when man desecrates the earth.

The unity message primarily focuses on humans and their relations to race, ethnicity, gender, religion, culture, traditions, laws, and nature. Backstrom draws attention to the guests at the table, unknown beings that eyes cannot see and ears may not hear, but whose impact and wrath will continue to destroy the planet if man continues to live in ignorance of their presence.

—Toyosi Tejumade-Morgan, dramaturg

# PROFILES



**Kim Fernandez (Evren Andraste)** (she/her) is a senior pursuing a BFA in acting at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Credits with Illinois Theatre include: *The Revolutionists* by Lauren Gunderson (Charlotte Corday), *The*

*Neverland* by Madeline Sayet (Chesa), *Redline Collection* by Kristen J. Bjorge (Laurel), *She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms* by Qui Nguyen (Tilly), and *Impulse 24/7*. Kim is a graduate of Niles North High School where her credits include: *The Matchmaker* by Thornton Wilder (Irene Malloy), *Tick, Tick...BOOM!* by Jonathan Larson (Susan/Karessa), *The Little Prince* by John Scoullar (Little Prince), and *In The Heights* by Lin-Manuel Miranda (Nina Rosario).

**Alex George (The Fox Spirit)** (they/any) is a senior in the BFA Acting Studio at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Credits with Illinois Theatre include *Varslaren: The Whistleblower* (Billing), *Redline Collection* (Stage Directions, Beth U/S), *'Night Mother* (Jessie), *Psh\*tter! A Drinking Song for The Year of Our Lord 2020* (Ross/Puppets on the Heath), and *She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms* (Evil Gabbi). They've also appeared in the Armory Free Theatre in Reasons to Go To Space (Piddles), *Bad F\*cking Hamlet* (Polonius/Gravemaker) and *Chasing the Ghost* (Patty). George proudly hails from southeastern Kentucky, the hub of the universe. They are a founding member of the nonprofit theatre group Flashback Theatre Co. in Somerset, Kentucky, where they worked as an actor, teaching artist, and administrator.



**Lauren Ashley Hayes (Samanya Ashide)** is a senior pursuing her BFA in acting at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign after completing her Associate's Degree at Rock Valley College in Rockford, Illinois. Her previous Illinois Theatre credits

include *Varslaren* (The Whistleblower) (Gertie), *Origin Story* (Val), and *She Kills Monsters: Virtual Realms* (Evil Tina). She was seen in the Armory Free Theatre's production of *Stupid F\*cking Bird* (Emma Arkadina). Her previous Starlight Theatre show credits include *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* (Lady Eugenia), *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Potiphar's Wife), *Mamma Mia!* (Ensemble), and *The Taming of the Shrew* (Tailor). Lauren is interested in pursuing acting opportunities in Chicago, Illinois in her near future. In the seemingly distant future, she intends to pursue her MFA in Acting to later become a professor with the intention of sharing the gifts of self-love, discovery, the unknown, and healing through theatre.

**Jaylon Muchison (Abbas Samar)** is a junior acting major at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. He has performed in nine productions with Illinois Theatre: two ten-minute plays through *Impulse 24/7*, a short film directed by Ryan Leshock entitled *Subliminal* (Male Protagonist), the monologue *Ghost Gun* (Black Boy), DePauw's virtual production of *Color Struck* by Zora Neal Hurston (John), an escape room production of *The Heist* as Hawk, the stage reading of *Redline* (narrating), *Sweat* (Chris), and *Urinetown* (Caldwell B. Cladwell). With the Illinois



Shakespeare Festival he played Lord, Sexton, Messenger in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Duke of Burgundy and Soldier in *King Lear*, and Tour Guide, Friar, Don John in *Much Ado About Quite A Lot*. He plans to complete his studies at U of I and work hands-on with the craft of acting.

**Joseph Primes (Darkling)** (he/him) is a Chicago based actor. Some of his Chicago credits include: *Two Trains Running* (Hambone), Court Theatre; *Gem of The Ocean* (Solly Two Kings u/s), Goodman Theatre; *Familiar* (Donald u/s), Steppenwolf Theatre; *EthiopianAmerican* (Girma Kifle), Definition Theatre. Regional credits include Indiana Rep.Theatre (Oliver Ford). Film credits include *Underdogs* and *#50Fathers*. Television credit: *Chicago PD*. Joseph is a member of AEA and SAG/AFTRA



**Noah Smith (Liridon Sterling)** (he/him) is a junior currently enrolled at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign pursuing a BFA in acting. His on-campus credits include an original, student-led piece, *Alternative Lifestyles* (Ian),

with the Armory Free Theater; *Sweat* (Brucie) by Lynn Nottage; and *Urinetown: the Musical* (Dr. Billeaux), opening in November. He is a Chicago native and a graduate of Lindblom Math and Science Academy where his credits include *Anything Goes* (Elisha J. Whitney), *Dreamgirls* (Marty), *The Wiz* (Ensemble), *Anon(ymous)* (Mr. Latus/Zyclo/Ensemble), *Mamma Mia!* (Bill Austin), and more. He is also an alum of the NHSI Cherubs Theater Arts Program where his credits include *The Other Shore* (Ensemble) by Gao Xingjian.



**Jamal Turner (Eld)** is a junior in the BFA Acting Studio at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Credits with Illinois Theatre include *The Neverland* (Beau), and *Urinetown* (Billy Boy Bill). Jamal is a graduate of Walter Payton College Preparatory

Academy where some of his credits included *Seussical The Musical* (Horton), *Peter and The Starcatcher* (Peter), and *Lord of The Flies* (Piggy). When not acting on the stage, Jamal enjoys playing video games, spending time with his fraternity members, and going to the gym.



**Destiny Jording (Stage Directions)** is currently a senior pursuing her BFA in acting at the University of Illinois. Her Illinois Theatre credits include her role as Emma in a scene from *Curse Of The Starving Class* and as Nina in the Armory free

theatre production of *Stupid Fucking Bird*. She has also performed in six other shows from her time at Illinois central college. She is working hard to learn every skill she possibly can while here at the university, and hopes you are pulled into a world of magic during the show tonight.

**Mallory Raven-Ellen Backstrom** (Playwright) creates *Fairy Tales for Sun-Kissed Women*, a whimsical anthology of short stories and immersive audiobooks. She's a member of the Goodman Theatre Playwrights Unit and the inaugural Sullivan Playwright in Residence at the University of Illinois. The recipient of the DCASE Esteemed Artist Award and the Chicago Dramatist Tutterow Fellowship. Her plays have been featured by the Goodman

Theatre, Sideshow Theatre, the New Coordinates Theatre, the Story Theatre, the Refracted Theatre Company, and the Athena Project. Her art has been on display at the Freedom and Movement Gallery.

**Sarah Calvert** (Sound Designer) is currently a third-year graduate student pursuing her Masters's in Sound Design at the University of Illinois. She attended Michigan Technological University for her undergraduate degree in Sound Design. Sarah was a resident Sound Designer for the Ohio Light Opera in the summer of 2019 where she worked on productions of *Into The Woods*, *Music in the Air*, and *The Devil's Rider*; which had its United States premiere that summer. Sarah was the Sound Designer for the University of Illinois's most recent production *Varslaren*. She is also a co-director for the SoundGirls organization and is an active writer for their website. After graduation, she will be pursuing a teaching position and is excited to develop her own program to help the progress of the audio industry.

**Lisa Gaye Dixon** (Director), Professor of Theatre, Professor of Dance, member of the Acting Faculty, Resident Director, and Producer for Illinois Theatre, has worked professionally across the country and around the globe. She began her professional career with Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago, and has been seen on the stages of the Royal Shakespeare Company and the New Globe Theatre in London, and regionally at the Attic Theatre, Performance Network, Lost Nation Theatre, The Kitchen Theatre, Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Milwaukee Shakespeare, and The Goodman Theatre of Chicago. She has done filmwork as actor, acting coach, and AD. At the University of Illinois, Lisa has directed several successful productions for the Department of Theatre, all dealing with a range

of social and political issues, and all addressing the common threads of humanity, and the universality of experiences across racial, cultural, class, economic, sex, and gender lines, all while 'keeping the passion' and 'finding the funny.'

**Sarah Goldstein** (Lighting Designer) is currently a first year MFA focused on lighting design at the University of Illinois. Sarah received her BA in Theatre Arts with a focus in Design and Technology and a minor in Studio Art at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania.

**Reiko Huffman** (Scenic Designer) is a freelance Scenic Designer seeking to change and impact the field with emotionally propelled design. Reiko's designs break tradition by bringing in new and wider perspectives into the design process. She incorporates critical awareness into her design process in order to authentically interweave the emotions that motivate her design choices. She embraces unconventional design methods, pursues daring designs, and takes on challenging narratives in order to truly grasp what genuine visual storytelling means. She believes that when we're brave enough to try what may ultimately fail we discover more about who we are as artists and what makes us unique. In addition to her design work, Reiko researches and actively practices critical and emotional awareness in her design process, teaching, and any artistic collaboration.

**Sidney Sprunger** (she/her), (Stage Manager) is a third-year MFA Stage Management Student originally from Berne, Indiana. Her credits at the University of Illinois include *Fun Home*, *The Undying*, and *Resilient* (Stage Manager); and *The Neverland* (Assistant Stage Manager). Other credits include *The Magic Flute* and *The Tender Land* with UFOMT; *Into the Woods* (a Deaf Theatre Project) with the 574 Theatre Company; *Twelfth Night* with Actors from the London

Stage; *God of My Own World* (a new play); *It's a Wonderful Life* (radio play); *The Tempest* with Actors from the London Stage; and more.  
Website: [sidneysprunger.weebly.com](http://sidneysprunger.weebly.com)

**Toyosi Tejumade-Morgan** (Dramaturg) (BA Hons.; MA) studied and taught theatre arts at the University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria. She specializes in Directing and Criticism. In 2019, she created "Theatre Maniacs," which specializes in productions of Theatre for Social Change employing a mix of the African Total Theatre with western performance aesthetics. Her experimental play, "I Won't Mind My Business," was commissioned for fringe performance at the British Council/Lagos Theatre Festival. She advocates for revolutionary theatre to jolt the status quo. Toyosi is currently a doctoral student/graduate teaching assistant in the Department of Theatre Arts at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She is a recipient of The Andrew Mellon Interseminar Fellowship, Humanities Research Institute, University of Illinois. 2021

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# PRODUCTION STAFF

## **ASSISTANT DRAMATURG AND CAPTIONING**

Cody McConnell

## **ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR**

Kashara Bennett

## **ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR**

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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.

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## MAKING THEATRE MAKERS SINCE 1967

We are living through history. In the midst of it, Illinois Theatre continues to be a leader in producing art that helps us know ourselves and the world we live in. We are training students today to imagine the art of tomorrow. If you'd like to help, we welcome you as a Friend of Illinois Theatre. We'll use your financial contributions to support our students through scholarships, visiting artist residencies, new work development, and production. Help Illinois Theatre make theatre that matters today, tomorrow, and beyond.

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*Contributions to Friends of Illinois Theatre can be made by visiting **[theatre.illinois.edu/about/giving](http://theatre.illinois.edu/about/giving)**, scanning the QR code, or by check payable to UIF/Friends of Illinois Theatre and sent to: University of Illinois Foundation, PO Box 3429, Champaign, IL 61826-3429.*



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The Illinois Department of Theatre is grateful to those who support us in providing opportunities for our theatre students to grow and develop their skills in all facets of production and performance.

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Seren Liu  
Sian Liu  
Yuanze Luo  
Christine Millins  
Samantha Moran  
Jess Nathan  
Daniel Oster  
Yueting Su  
Fu Sun  
Haley Van Patten  
Claire Wu  
Xuan Yi  
Andy Yoon  
Menghao Yu  
Yangxue Yu  
Lucia Zhang  
Valerie Zhao

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# KRANNERT CENTER STAFF

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Mike Ross, Director  
Terri Anne Ciofalo, Associate Director  
for Production  
Maureen V. Reagan, Associate Director  
for Marketing

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## EVENTS

Andrew Giza, Events Director  
Andrew Almeter, Senior Production  
Coordinator for Events  
Bree Brock, Production Coordinator  
for Events  
Seth Wheeler, Technical Coordinator  
for Events

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## PROGRAMMING AND ENGAGEMENT

Jason Finkelman, Artistic Director of  
Global Arts Performance Initiatives  
Emily Laugesen, Co-Director of  
Engagement  
Sam Smith, Director of Civic Engagement  
and Social Practice

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## ADVANCEMENT

Cheryl Snyder, Director of Advancement  
Bethany Whoric, Assistant Director  
of Advancement  
Ellen Fred, Advancement Support  
Associate

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## FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

### Business Office

Katie Brucker, Debbie Delaney, Stacey  
Elliott, Shelly Thomas-Eichorn,  
Accounting Staff  
Tara Heiser, Human Resources Support

## Building Operations

John O. Williams, Facility Manager  
Tony Mapson, Assistant Facility Manager  
Joe Butsch, Building Electrician  
Jared Painter, Assistant Chief Building  
Operations Engineer  
Scott Butler, Eric Carr, Emmett Catlin,  
Austin Dearth, John Ekstrom, Bryan  
Franzen, Mark Lashbrook, Jacob  
Lerch, Kevin Logue, Jessica Fancher,  
Attendants  
Glenda Dalton, Office Support Associate

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## MARKETING

Maureen V. Reagan, Associate Director  
for Marketing

## Communications

Sean Kutzko, Assistant Communications  
Director  
Nicholas Mulvaney, Senior Designer  
Jodee Stanley, Program and Web Editor

## Public Services

Lisa Lillig, Client & Food Services Director  
Elizabeth Henke, Catering Manager  
Michael Bunting, Intermezzo Supervisor  
Zia Moon, Krannert Center Showcase  
Director, Office and Communications  
Support Specialist  
Whitney Havice, Interim Ticketing and  
Patron Services Director  
Ty Mingo, Assistant Ticket Services  
Director  
Jon Proctor, Nick Wurl, Ticket Sales  
Supervisors  
Ann-Marie Dittmann, Patron Services  
Assistant Director  
Adrian Rochelle, Front of House  
Performance Supervisor

## PRODUCTION

Terri Anne Ciofalo, Associate Director  
for Production

## Audio Department

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

## Costume Shop

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

## Lighting Department

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  
Bobby Reynolds, Theatrical Scene Shop  
Assistant  
Liam Romano, Theatrical Scene Shop  
Assistant

## Stage Management

Cynthia Kocher, Production Stage Manager



# DINING

Our lobby services are open day and evening to serve you:



**intermezzo cafe**

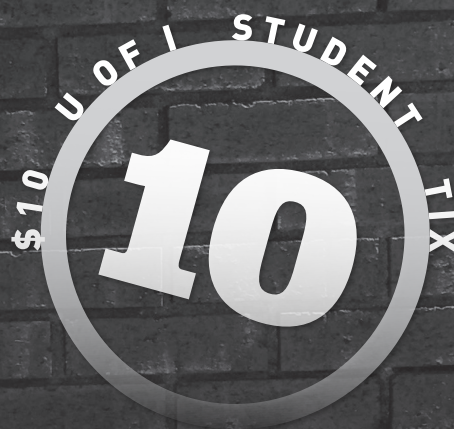
SUSTAINABLE SPECIALS +  
EVERYDAY INDULGENCES

**STAGE5BAR**

SMOOTH SELECTIONS +  
ARTISANAL APPETIZERS

## WHY WAIT?

Order before you head into the theatre, and we'll have your food and beverages waiting for you at intermission or after the show.



## COME AS YOU ARE. LEAVE DIFFERENT.



U of I students, come on in. In whatever clothes, whatever state of mind, from whatever world of experience, you are welcome here. We don't have a dress code, we don't have an opinion code, and we want the Center to be your kind of place. Because of the vital support of Krannert Center donors and the Krannert Center U of I student fee, U of I students never pay more than \$10 for a ticket, and dozens of events each year are completely free.

Your presence helps to make Krannert Center a place like nowhere else—and what you can experience here makes your education like nobody else's. If you are inspired by what you find here, invite others to join you.

When you come to Krannert Center, we promise that you'll leave different: refreshed, reaffirmed, renewed!

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