October Dance

Dance at Illinois

Thursday-Saturday
October 15-17, 2026
7:30pm

Colwell Playhouse

WELCOME

Welcome to Dance at Illinois' October Dance Concert

Welcome to October Dance 2026! Tonight's program honors the power and precarity of collaboration. The seed of tonight's curation was planted several months ago at a faculty meeting, when our colleague Jennifer Monson — a masterful improvisor in multiple senses of the word — suggested it was time for faculty members to work together in choreographic process. Dance is inherently a multidisciplinary, collaborative venture, but co-authoring new dances is not something most of us do often. To make together is to collide value systems, aesthetics, and the ambitions each of us hold as individual artists — a challenge, yes, but also an opportunity to practice that most basic microcosmic version of democracy: listening. It's been a very rewarding experiment for us and we are thrilled to share its fruits with you tonight.

Artifact and *Philosophy of Wonder* were made just across the hall from each other in the Nevada Studios by cliques of five and three professors respectively. Having finally gotten to see what was happening in the other room (the two of us worked on the latter piece), we can safely say that both of these dances contain some surprising common themes, as though we were secretly conspiring through the walls that separated us. Both works depict landscape through the body and share a concern with how human beings relate to the vastness of our environment(s). Both also seem to invite questions about how the geographies we call home can still disorient us when we begin to consider the vastness of time as well as space.

Lest we find ourselves too lost in the transcendental, the other two works you'll see tonight ground us in the thorny problems of contemporary life. A new premiere featuring our freshman dance majors — *dancing in the fault line, or a need for glue* — and a seminal work by New York choreographer Doug Varone converse (with us and with each other) about what it means to live in the landscape currently known as the United States. There's an aura of resistance and expressive distress in these two dances that both fit the moment and remind us of the cyclical churn of history — even though the entire cast of Paige Cunningham-Calderella's new work was yet to be born when Varone's *Strict Love* was premiered in 1992.

We're glad you're here, and we look forward to the conversations these collaborations across space and time are sure to incite.

Sara Hook & Samuel Hanson
Co-Directors of October Dance

PROGRAM

October Dance

Dance at Illinois

Head of Dance at Illinois: Sara Hook

Concert Director: Sara Hook & Samuel Hanson

STRICT LOVE

CHOREOGRAPHY

Doug Varone, set by Hollis Bartlett

ARTIFACT

CHOREOGRAPHY

Serouj Aprahamian, Laura Chiaramonte,
Jacob Henss, Rebecca Nettl-Fiol
and Anna Sapozhnikov

PHILOSOPHY OF WONDER

CHOREOGRAPHY

Roxane D' Orléans Juste,
Samuel Hanson, and Sara Hook

dancing in the fault line, or a need for glue

CHOREOGRAPHY

Paige Cunningham Caldarella

This performance will be presented without an intermission.

STRICT LOVE (1992)

CHOREOGRAPHY

Doug Varone, set by Hollis Bartlett

MUSIC

Radio Broadcast of Popular Music

Spirit in the Sky, written and performed by Norman Greenbaum

I Want You Back, written by Berry Gordy, Freddie Perren, Alphonzo Mizell, Deke Richards, performed by Jackson 5

ABC, written by Berry Gordy, Freedie Perren, Alphonzo Mizell, Deke Richards, performed by Jackson 5

Ain't No Mountain High Enough, written by Nickolas Ashford and Valerie Simpson, performed by Diana Ross

COSTUME DESIGNER

Devin Findlay and Sophia Doret
based on the original design by Lynne Steincamp

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Wesley Lu
based on the original design by David Ferri

SOUND DESIGNER

Ryan Olsen

MEDIA DESIGNER

Ethan Borrok

STAGE MANAGER

Sarah Lenehan

DANCERS

Jayla Anderson
Lena Baumann
Marlee Doniff
Sofia Garcia
Jessica Ji (Understudy)
Jeremiah Jordan (Understudy)
Elle Kramer
Gabriella Quaresima
Cheyenne Smith
Nattie Trogdon

NOTES

This performance of Strict Love is presented by arrangement with DOVA, Inc., Doug Varone and Dancers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Doug Varone is a Jan Erkert Legacy guest artist.

PHILOSOPHY OF WONDER

CHOREOGRAPHY
Roxane D' Orléans Juste,
Samuel Hanson, Sara Hook

MUSIC
John Toenjes

MUSICIANS
Xin Xu
Faith Russell

SCENIC DESIGNER
Noir Navarrete-Aguilar

COSTUME DESIGNER
Sophia Doret
Devin Findlay

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Wesley Lu

SOUND DESIGNER
Ryan Olsen

MEDIA DESIGNER
Ethan Borrok

STAGE MANAGER
Margaret M Evans

DANCERS
Anna Brady
Fiona Degedah
Jenna Duncan
Sarah Kubik
Logan Radostits
Isabella Schwager
Sophia Vangelatos
Chelsea Wahrendorf

NOTES
"Wonder is the feeling of the philosopher,
and philosophy begins in wonder."
- Plato

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
The choreographers would like to thank the cast members for their generous creative contributions.

The John Toenjes Live Music for Dance Fund is used to support the commissioning of new musical and sound scores and to pay musicians to play live at performances within the Department of Dance. This fund honors the 25-year-long career of Professor Emeritus, John Toenjes, music director for Dance at Illinois. If you would like to make a donation to this fund, please give today at go.illinois.edu/JohnToenjes

ARTIFACT

CHOREOGRAPHY

Serouj Aprahamian, Laura Chiaramonte,
Jacob Henss, Rebecca Nettl-Fiol, Anna Sapozhnikov
in collaboration with the dancers

MUSIC

Stephen Taylor with Jason Finkelman

SCULPTURE CREATOR

Janet Chiaramonte

COSTUME DESIGNER

Jacob Henss

COSTUME COORDINATOR

Sophia Doret

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Wesley Lu

SOUND DESIGNER

Ryan Olsen

MEDIA DESIGNER

Ethan Borrok

STAGE MANAGER

Amelia Jones

DANCERS

Molly Brick
Rose Boder
Gillian Jarett
Emma Kunz
Paula Sousa
Leila Zou

NOTES

/ ar·ti·fact / "An excavated object that shows characteristic signs of human workmanship or use" (Oxford English Dictionary). Long after their creators have vanished, artifacts remain. They serve as special sources of memory and identity, resisting destruction and leaving behind traces of knowledge, movement, and meaning. Often made from the earth itself, they hold the weight of our environment and the bodies that are no longer with us. We bear witness to these arts turned facts and the collective consciousness they conjure.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the Department of Dance at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign for making this faculty collaboration possible, Janet Chiaramonte for her stunning sculptures, Stephen Taylor and Jason Finkelman for their moving sound score, our tenacious team of dancers who brought this work to life, and the Level 21 Production team for guiding it all into fruition.

dancing in the fault line, or a need for glue

CHOREOGRAPHY
Paige Cunningham Caldarella
in collaboration with the dancers

REHEARSAL ASSISTANT
Cheyenne Smith

MUSIC
Cody Jensen

DRAMATURG
Alexandra Barbier

COSTUME DESIGNER
Sophia Doret
Devin Findlay

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Wesley Lu

SET DESIGNER
Noir Navarreye-Aguilar

SOUND DESIGNER
Ryan Olsen

MEDIA DESIGNER
Ethan Borrok

STAGE MANAGER
Margaret M Evans

DANCERS
LeiLani Barnes
Molly Brezina
Adalynn Forsyth
Alisia Glick
Kenzi Gowans
Grace Harris
Ellie Johnson
Yatta Johnson
Erica Lu
Arielle Lytle
Ava Modine
Sanah Ramchandani
Ginger Salvaggio
Amara Simun
Aimee Trehan
Charlotte Vukojevich
Evie Webber

NOTES

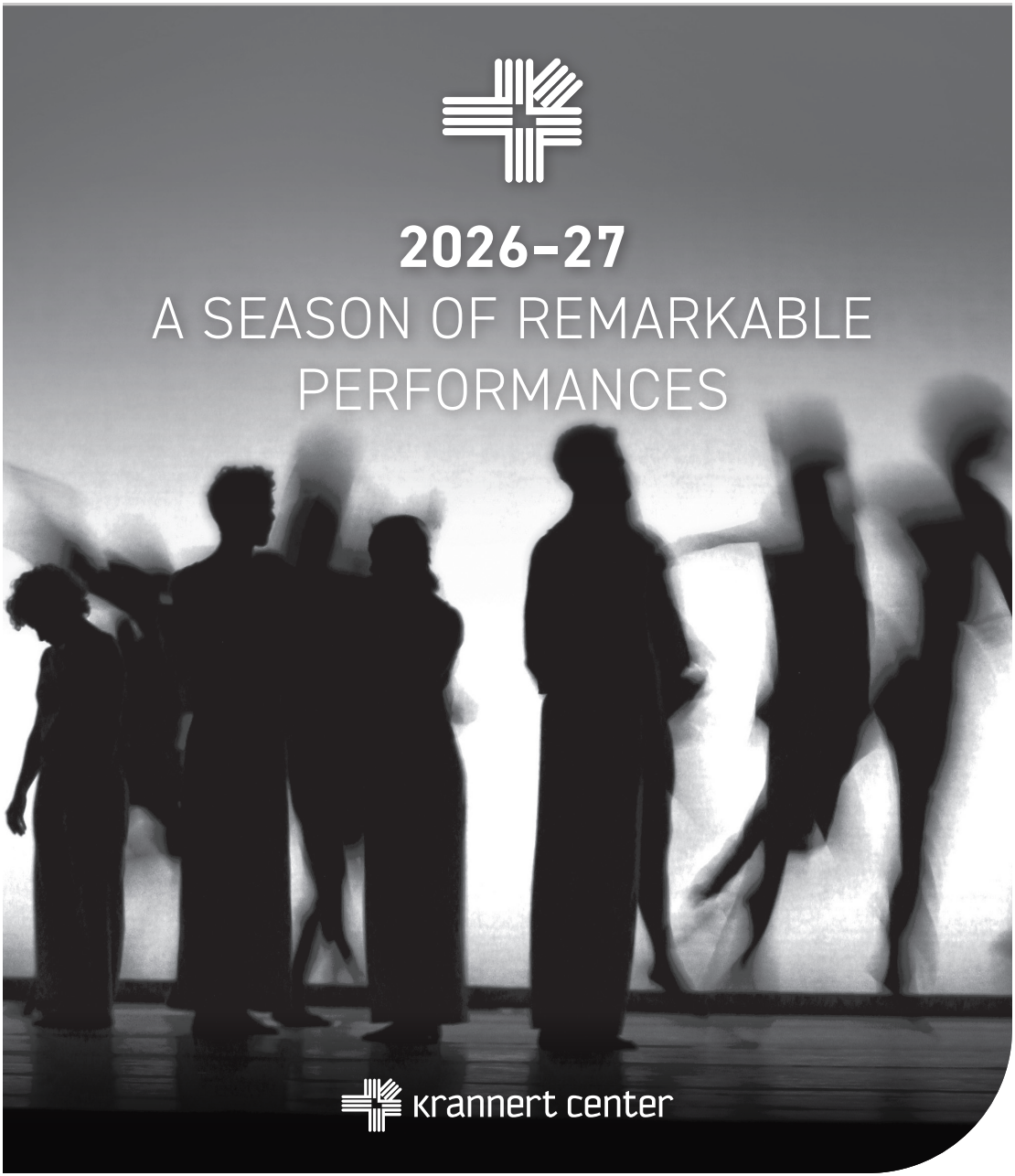
The title dancing in the fault line, or a need for glue draws, in part, from Charles Bukowski's poem "A Need for Glue," published in 1971.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to the Class of 2030 for diving into the unknown with me during the creation of this piece. Thank you to Jacob and Alex for lending your eyes and ears throughout the creative process. And thank you to Cheyenne for going along for the collaborative ride!

2026–27

A SEASON OF REMARKABLE PERFORMANCES

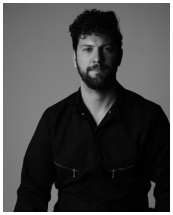


krannert center

PROFILES: CHOREOGRAPHERS

SEROUJ APRAHAMIAN
(Choreographer)

Serouj Aprahamian is Associate Professor of Dance at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and a seasoned practitioner of breaking, popping and underground hip-hop dance styles. In 2002, he helped produce a globally influential experimental dance video called *Detours* and, together with his group Style Elements Crew, has contributed to such cross-cutting concepts as threading, tracing, freeze framing, and mannequinism. Aprahamian is also the author of *The Birth of Breaking: Hip-Hop History from the Floor Up* (Bloomsbury 2023) and his academic writings have appeared in numerous scholarly publications.



HOLLIS BARTLETT
(restaged Strict Love)

Hollis Bartlett (he/him) is a performer, teacher, and creator. His curiosity for movement and performance began at an early age and led him to NYU where he received a BFA in Dance. He spent 12 years as a performer, rehearsal director and licensing/staging manager for Doug Varone and Dancers, touring throughout the US and internationally. As an educator, he has taught at the Bates Dance Festival and at universities including Rutgers, Montclair, and SUNY Purchase. He collaborates with life partner Nattie Trogdon constructing dance works and films aimed to disrupt assumptions of performance and personhood. www.hollisandnattie.com

LAURA CHIARAMONTE
(Choreographer)

Laura Chiaramonte is a choreographer, videographer, performer, and educator who has worked in dance throughout the United States and abroad for over twenty-five years. Her choreographic practice explores intersections of somatics and interdisciplinary art, integrating sound, moving image, and sculptural design into live performance, including recent collaborations with visual artists to create sculptural works for the stage. Her creative work has been presented at festivals and venues nationally and internationally. She is an Associate Teaching Professor in the Department of Dance at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Director and Curator of the Flatlands Dance Film Festival, and Video Archive Director for the Bates Dance Festival.

PAIGE CUNNINGHAM CALDARELLA
(Choreographer)

Paige Cunningham Caldarella, originally from Cincinnati, Ohio, joined the Dance faculty at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in August 2022, following fifteen years at Columbia College Chicago. She performed internationally with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, appearing at venues including the Joyce Theater, the David H. Koch Theater, Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Barbican Center in London, the Tate Modern Museum, and Théâtre de la Ville in Paris. After MCDC, Paige danced with the Chicago-based company The Seldoms, including performances at the Dance Isadora Festival in Krasnoyarsk, Siberia. Additionally,

she has performed with Onye Ozuzu, Sara Hook, Timothy Buckley, Darrell Jones, Alfonso Cervera, Anna Peretz Rogovoy, and is currently performing and touring in Cynthia Oliver's *Turn. Turning. TURNT.* She holds a B.F.A. from The Juilliard School and an M.F.A. from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

ROXANE D'ORLÉANS JUSTE

(Choreographer)

Roxane D'Orléans Juste was born in Canada and is of Haitian descent. She shares her artistic homes between Urbana- Champaign, New York City, and Caracas, Venezuela.

During her 35-year career D'Orleans Juste performed and taught worldwide with the Eleo Pomare Dance Company, Annabelle Gamson Dance Solos, and the Limón Dance Company where she serves as a reconstructor and which she led as Artistic Associate and Associate Artistic Director.

Hailed for her technical and musical versatility, D'Orleans Juste was awarded New York's Bessie Award for Outstanding Sustained Achievement and the Jacqueline Lemieux Prize for Outstanding Contribution to Dance in Canada. Her current scholarly research centers on creating works by retracing and reimagining migration patterns and sites of memory of indigenous communities along riverbanks and cliffsides, specifically in Canada and South America. Her dance pedagogy and choreographic structures intersect meticulous attention to form and design with the inherent risk of questioning the mystery of the unknown. They are infused with her multicultural heritage's rich tones and textures and position the female choreographic voice as a powerful catalyst for change.

Her choreography has been commissioned and presented in Canada, the United States, Europe, South America, and Israel. She was named Choreographer-in-Residence for the Fundación Contemporeaña Corearte in Caracas, Venezuela, and co-chairs its Executive Board (2009). D'Orleans Juste is an Associate Professor in the department of dance where she earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in 2021.

SAMUEL HANSON

(Concert Director, Choreographer)

Samuel Hanson has collaborated in the work of many icons — including Hilary Carrier, Isabel Lewis, Ishmael Houston-Jones, Mina Nishimura, Yve Laris Cohen, Yvonne Meier, Simone Forti, Alexandra Pirici and Alexandra Barbier. Here at Dance at Illinois, he is excited to be working on creating a new online departmental journal called *Rehearsal*.

As you'll see tonight his choreography tends toward the intimate and the absurd. Before living in NYC, he worked closely with Utah-based Ashley Anderson as a performer, curator, and editor through her platform loveDANCEmore, an incubator of experimental dance for the Western US, which he now serves as director.

JACOB HENSS
(Choreographer)

Jacob Henss (he/him) is a dancer, producer, choreographer, and teacher primarily based in the Midwest. He currently works at the University of Illinois as an Assistant Teaching Professor. Prior, he was on faculty at Illinois State University and Millikin University where he was awarded outstanding adjunct faculty in 2023. Henss also was a Lecturer for the University of Illinois-Urbana (UIUC) from 2022-24. He holds an MFA in Dance from UIUC (2019-22) where he was awarded best graduate performer in 2021 & 2022. He is also a graduate of Webster University (2013–17) with a BA in Dance and Music where he was awarded dance honors and the emerging choreographer award.

Henss has performed with the Modern American Dance Company (MADCO), located in St. Louis, MO. Work post undergraduate graduation includes becoming the Artistic Director for Space Station Dance Residency, an organization dedicated to presenting experimental dance work in the St. Louis area.

SARA HOOK
(Concert Director, Head of the Department of Dance and Choreographer)

Sara Hook is a performer, choreographer and educator who actively promotes the synergy between the professional and academic arenas of dance. Her diverse performing career includes touring the world with *Nikolais Dance Theater*, 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 (Dance Theater Workshop-*now NYLA*, Danspace, Dixon Place, Symphony Space, DanceNowNYC's Series at Joe's Pub of the Public Theater etc.), in venues across 25 American states, and in the Netherlands, Canada, Mexico, Italy, Ecuador, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. Both her work and teaching focus on questions about dance history, gender expression and identity, and the role of somatic exploration in meaning-making. 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. She has toured widely as a guest artist and been an adjudicator for numerous American College Dance Conferences. She has taught at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center, Princeton University, Paul Taylor Dance Company Summer Intensives, and the Bates Dance Festival. Currently she is Professor and Head of the Department of Dance at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign, where she won the College of Fine and Applied Arts Excellence in Teaching Award in 2010 and the campus award for Excellence in Faculty Mentoring in 2020. Her service to the field includes being a founding member of The Pink Ribbons Project, Dancers in Motion Against Breast Cancer. Hook's aim (in all her roles) is to be a good role model/citizen, helping to create opportunities for other dance artists, and to make work that both honors our artistic forebears and enlivens our experience of contemporary culture.

REBECCA NETTL-FIOL

(Choreographer)

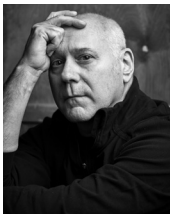
Rebecca Nettl-Fiol, Professor of Dance at the University of Illinois is a choreographer, educator, and author. Her research includes the integration of the Alexander technique principles to dance training, resulting in her co-authored book, *Dance and the Alexander Technique: Exploring the Missing Link*, along with the soon to be released, *The Dance of Everyday Movement: A Developmental Framework for Whole-Body Integration*. Other publications include *The Body Eclectic: Evolving Practices in Dance Training* and a chapter in *Mindful Movement: The Somatic Arts and Conscious Action*. A frequent presenter and guest teacher throughout the U.S. and abroad, she is also the recipient of the University of Illinois Campus Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and the National Dance Education Organization's Lifetime Achievement Award. Her choreography has been produced regularly at the Krannert Center since 1982 for Dance at Illinois as well as University of Illinois Opera Theatre and Lyric Theatre @ Illinois. Her work has also been presented at Merce Cunningham Studio, Performance Space 122, and American Dance Guild Performance Festivals in New York, Links Hall and Harvest Chicago Contemporary Dance Festival in Chicago, Frente de Danze Independienta Sala de Artes Escenicas de Jesus in Ecuador, and at numerous American College Dance Festivals. She has choreographed over 50 opera and musical theatre productions at venues including Champaign-Urbana Theatre Company, Station Theatre, Peoria Civic Opera, Millikin University, State University of New York at Potsdam, Interlochen Center for the Arts, and Krannert Center.

ANNA SAPOZHNIKOV

(Choreographer)

Anna Sapozhnikov is a teacher, choreographer, and performer with roots based in Chicagoland. As an educator, Anna created the dance program at York High School in Elmhurst, Illinois, where she taught from 2008 to 2019. Her teaching credits also include serving as dance faculty at the Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, the Youth Performing Arts High School in Louisville, Kentucky, as well as the Louisville Ballet School. Anna received her BFA and MFA in dance from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she is currently Senior Assistant Head of Program Administration & Engagement, Undergraduate Recruitment Director, as well as a Lecturer in the Department of Dance. She holds her K-12 teaching certification from the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee.

Anna is the founder and artistic director of MOYAMO DANCE as well as co-director of the duet collective she shares with Erika Randall, Sweetie Pie Productions. Her choreography has been produced in various venues throughout New York and the Midwest. Her current research, "Good House Keep," focuses on the intersection of movement and midcentury modern architecture throughout the Champaign Urbana community and beyond. She is the recipient of numerous grants from the Illinois Arts Council, the Kentucky Foundation for Women, the Office of Arts Integration at UIUC, and was a recent Chicago Dancemakers Forum DanceChance awardee as well as a featured choreographer with Hedwig Dances at Ruth Page Center for the Arts in Chicago. Anna has enjoyed being a frequent collaborator and performer with Sara Hook Dances, David Parker and the Bang Group, and Rebecca Nettl-Fiol.



DOUG VARONE
(Choreographer)

Award-winning choreographer and director, Doug Varone works in dance, theater, opera, film, and fashion. He is a passionate educator and articulate advocate for dance. By any measure, his work is extraordinary for its emotional range, kinetic breadth and the many arenas in which he works. His New York City-based Doug Varone and Dancers has been commissioned and presented to critical acclaim by leading international venues for close to three decades.

In the concert dance world, Varone has created a body of works globally. Commissions include the Paul Taylor American Modern Dance Company, Limón Company, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Rambert Dance Company (London), Martha Graham Dance Company, Dancemakers (Canada), Batsheva Dance Company (Israel), Bern Ballet (Switzerland), and An Creative (Japan), among others. In addition, his dances have been staged on more than 100 college and university programs around the country.

In opera, Doug Varone is in demand as both a director and choreographer. Among his four productions at The Metropolitan Opera are Salome with its *Dance of the Seven Veils,* the world premiere of Tobias Picker's *An American Tragedy,* Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps,* designed by David Hockney, and Hector Berloiz's *Les Troyens.* He has staged multiple premieres and new productions for Minnesota Opera, Opera Colorado, Washington Opera, New York City Opera, and Boston Lyric Opera, among others. His numerous theater credits include choreography for Broadway, Off-Broadway, and regional theaters across the country. His choreography for the musical *Murder Ballad* at Manhattan Theater Club earned him a Lortel Award nomination. Film credits include choreography for the Patrick Swayze film *One Last Dance.* In 2008, Varone's *The Bottomland,* set in the Mammoth Caves of Kentucky, was the subject of the PBS Dance in America: Wolf Trap's Face of America. Recent projects include directing and choreographing MASTERVOICES production of Dido and Aeneas at NY's City Center, starring Tony Award winners Kelli O'Hara and Victoria Clark, and staging Julia Wolfe's Pulitzer Prize winning oratorio *Anthracite Fields* for the Westminster Choir and the Bang on a Can All-Stars.

The Company's creative output is as varied as Varone's interests. Recent projects include: everything is fine, a full evening movement play based on the poems of Billy Collins, with a new score by David Van Tieghem; The Scrapbook, a digital journal of 10 films created and directed by Varone, set to iconic songs from the 1940s-50's, and *Somewhere,* Varone's acclaimed non-narrative version of Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story,* and *To My Arms/Restore* set to the music of G.F. Handel.

PROFILES: DANCERS

JAYLA ANDERSON
(Dancer)

Jayla Anderson (she/her) is a fourth-year undergraduate at the University of Illinois. She began her dance training at a local studio in Missouri and has continued to expand her artistic knowledge and practice at the University. During her time with Dance at Illinois, Jayla has worked with artists and choreographers including Hope Boykin, Paige Cunningham Caldarella, Nik Owens, Kemal Nance, and more. She has also participated in restagings of works by José Limón and Katherine Dunham. Jayla is actively involved in the department as an intern and serves as President of the Student Board.

LEILANI BARNES
(Dancer)

My name is LeiLani Barnes, and I am a unique dancer with technical, leadership, collaborative, and chorographical training. My dance journey began at 3 years old, learning ballet and tap techniques. As the years progressed, I became trained by professionals in Jazz, Horton, Graham, West African, Contemporary, Majorette, Competitive and Acrobatic styles of dancing. In addition to my dance experience, I also competed in competitive gymnastics for 11 years, which allowed me to improve my acrobatics and artistic style in my dancing. As a leader, I became captain of my high school's dance team and was honored to work alongside my fellow dancers helping teach choreography for performances. Additionally, I was a student choreographer for a piece called "Her" that got performed in the Illinois High School Dance Association Choreography Showcase. I've been part of dance ensembles for companies like Deeply Rooted Dance Theatre and had the privilege to participate in the 2025 University of Illinois Summer Dance Intensive, which only intensified my passion. My love of dance is what keeps me going, and I stand today as a proud African American dancer who is excited to share.

LENA BAUMANN
(Dancer)

Lena Baumann (she/her) is in a constant state of query. Her curiosity has led her to what is now her fourth and final year pursuing a BFA in Dance at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign with a minor in Recreation. In the last three years Lena has performed in works by Anna Sapozhnikov, Alexandria Barbier, Jenifer Monson, Paige Cunningham-Caldarella, as well as in multiple undergraduate and graduate works. Additionally, Lena has worked intimately in creative processes with her fellow dancers, finding a love for experimental dance and improvisation. With her desire for movement, Lena is currently working towards her Yoga Teacher Certification. She has been awarded the Jan Ekert Leadership Award in 2026 for her strong and empathetic guidance of those around her. Lena is also the president of the "makesmewanna" art collective where she has showcased multiple of her own works in their free, accessible art festival. Throughout her scholarly career, Lena was a part of the Dance at Illinois' video crew where she cultivated her passion for dance documentation and screendance. She sends her love to friends and family for their unwavering support.

MOLLY BREZINA
(Dancer)

Molly Brezina is a Dance/Kinesiology student at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She previously competed for the Artistic Pursuit Dance Company and the Downers Grove North Athenas. She is trained thoroughly in Jazz, Lyrical, Musical Theatre, Contemporary, Ballet, and Pom.

ROSE BODER
(Dancer)

Rose Boder is a junior at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign pursuing a BFA in dance and a BS in molecular and cellular biology. She is from Knoxville, Tennessee, where she trained in modern, ballet, and jazz techniques at Dancers Studio under the direction of Irena Linn. She danced for the Tennessee Children's Dance Ensemble until its closing and subsequently was a founding member of Ignite!. During her time with Dance at Illinois, she has performed works by Rachel Rizzuto, Banafsheh Amiri, Katherine Dunham, Laina Reese Werner-Powell, and Hope Boykin, as well as several student works.

ANNA BRADY
(Dancer)

Anna Brady is a dancer and choreographer pursuing a BFA in Dance from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She began her dance training in her hometown of Alton, Illinois where she studied techniques such as ballet, modern, tap, and jazz. In her time at DAI, she's performed in works by Anna Sapozhnikov, Banafsheh Amiri, Adanya Gilmore, Juli Brandano, Alexandra Barbier, Jose Limon, and many other faculty members and fellow students. She was also recently awarded the William McClellan Memorial Scholarship for outstanding undergraduate performance and choreography.

FIONA DEGEDEH
(Dancer)

Fiona Degedeh is a senior studying Environmental Engineering and a first-year Dance minor. Originally from Bourbonnais, Illinois, Fiona began dancing at age 10 and continued throughout high school, training in ballet, jazz, modern, and contemporary styles. This concert marks her first performance at the university, and she is grateful for the opportunity to dance again and share this experience with her fellow dancers.

MOLLY BRICK
(Dancer)

Molly Brick (she/her) is a second year BFA student from Tualatin, Oregon. A proud graduate from Tualatin High School and alumna from Fired Up Dance Academy where she trained in a wide range of techniques, who is thrilled to continue her academic and artistic knowledge at UIUC. Molly took part in seven pieces last year choreographed by: Dr. Kemal Nance, Laina Reese Werner-Powell, Anna Brady, Jayla Anderson, Avi Pellegrinetti and Lily Freebery. She also participated in ACDA 2026 with Laina Reese Werner-Powell's piece. As a

co Vice President of DAI student board and being an intern, she is very involved in DAI. Molly looks forward to another year full of performing and working with new people.

MARLEE DONIFF
(Dancer)

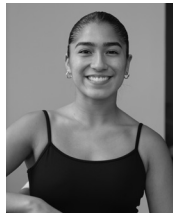
Over the last two decades Marlee's relationship to dance has been tumultuous, but ultimately fated. Her work cultivates conditions for trust through BIG MOVES, durational scores, and sometimes karaoke which she explores through her annual residency in St. Louis, MO. This past summer they served as the US Representative for the American Dance Festival's International Choreographer in Residency Program. She is in her final year of the MFA program at THIS SCHOOL and holds a BA in dance from Webster University. In short, dance is both how Marlee makes a living and how she lives. You can learn more about her at marleedoniff.com

JENNA DUNCAN
(Dancer)

Jenna Duncan was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico and is a second year Dance BA student at University of Illinois. She is also a Psychology major and an Art and Design minor. After moving to Illinois at seven, she initiated dancing and trained pre- professionally in ballet for over ten years in Illinois and the Chicago area before teaching and performing locally. At Dance at Illinois she has performed under direction of Dr. Kemal Nance, as well as in a graduate thesis work by Nik Owens and two senior BFA thesis works. Jenna is honored to dance under the tutelage of her professors and choreographers in "Wonder."

ADALYNN FORSYTH
(Dancer)

Adalynn, an 18 year-old dance major at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, is so excited to experience her first dance show here at UIUC! Prior to college dance, Adalynn has been a competitive dancer for the past five years, as well as a performance dancer for the past 13 years. She has been trained in contemporary, lyrical, jazz, hip hop, tap, ballet, and occasionally modern and African techniques. She has been recognized numerous times throughout her competition years for outstanding performance awards, as well as overall high point awards. All of which have inspired Adalynn to work harder, be relentless, and to forever chase what sets your soul on fire! However, perhaps the most important, is her love and drive for dance that extends far beyond what any awards could give! She finds true joy on the stage performing with her friends, peers, and colleagues, in an artform they all have the ability to find comfort, security, and home in.



SOFIA GARCIA
(Dancer)

Sofia Garcia (she/her) is a diverse dancer with abundant dance opportunities under her belt. Her talent and passion have guided her to work with guest artists like Rena Butler, Laina Reese, and Hope Boykin. As she continues her last two years at college she hopes to gain more experience and training from her professors and other future artists that may come. Her dream is to be a professional dancer, performing for companies and having exposure to the dancer life.

ALISIA GLICK
(Dancer)

Alisia Glick is a freshman at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign pursuing a dual degree in Dance (BA) and Kinesiology (BS). Originally from Chicago, Illinois, Alisia began dancing at the age of three and trained competitively for nine years at All About Dance Company. During her time there, she trained and performed in ballet, contemporary, jazz, hip-hop, tap, and ballroom. In high school, Alisia served as co-captain of Whitney M. Young Magnet High School's dance team, Guys and Dolls.

MACKENZIE GOWANS
(Dancer)

Mackenzie Gowans is currently a dance major student at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She graduated high school from The Chicago High School for the Arts. She is a former member of Inside Out Dance Crew and Hyde Park School of Dance. She's been dancing since youth.

GRACE HARRIS
(Dancer)

Grace Harris is a current first year student from Skokie, IL - working towards her BA in dance and her BS in Kinesiology. Grace began dancing at age 4 across multiple programs in the Chicagoland area. All throughout high school, Grace trained with the Regina Dominican Orchesis Dance Company, where she was co-captain in her senior year. With Orchesis, Grace attended many dance festivals, choreographed original pieces, and had the opportunity to work with professional members of Giordano Dance Chicago. Additionally, Grace trained competitively with the Devonshire Dance program. Grace has immense passion for moving, creating, and teaching dance and hopes to become an educator in her future. She is thrilled to be performing in OctoberDance.

GILLIAN JARETT
(Dancer)

As a second year BFA student in dance, Jarett is overjoyed to be performing with DAI during the 2026 season! Originally from Louisville, Kentucky, she trained at the Youth Performing Arts School and Louisville Dance Alliance in Contemporary, Jazz, Ballet, and Hip-hop. Alongside her hometown training, she has also studied at The Joffrey Ballet School, and the Kentucky Governor's School for the Arts. She has most recently appeared in works by Avi Pellegrinetti, Maggie Segale, Dr. Kemal Nance, and Gabriella Quaresima. She thanks her family and friends for their endless support!

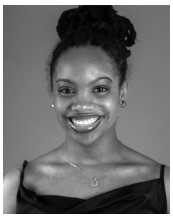
JESSICA JI
(Dancer)

Jessica Ji (she/her) is a second year dance and kinesiology major at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). Jessica received studio dance training as a company and competition dancer at Jenny's Dance Centre before attending college for eight years. She is a graduate from Deerfield High School in which she participated in the dance

company in addition to being a student choreographer in school musicals. Jessica has trained in various techniques of ballet, jazz, tap, street styles, and modern. Although Jessica has won many titles as a soloist during her time as a competition dancer, she most enjoys being able to share her expression with others in ensemble pieces. At UIUC, she has had the privilege of being in many such works. Jessica is incredibly grateful for all the amazing opportunities she received growing up, and the space dance offers for her to explore her artistry in a beautifully fulfilling way.

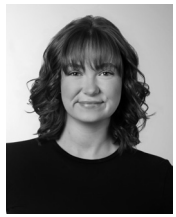
ELLIE MARIE JOHNSON
(Dancer)

Ellie Marie Johnson is a student in Dance and Kinesiology at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She grew up in China and developed her understanding of dance through ballet and Chinese traditional dance. She served as the leader of the Chinese Traditional Dance Team at Tsinghua International School, where she choreographed and performed in numerous productions.



YATTA JOHNSON
(Dancer)

Yatta Johnson (she/her) is an accomplished leader and versatile dancer with extensive training in West African, modern, ballet, contemporary, and hip-hop dance. My journey began with the Ayodele Drum & Dance Youth Company and has continued through programs such as Deeply Rooted Youth Ensemble, Ailey Camp Chicago, Joel Hall Youth Performance, Lindblom Dance Ensemble, and Chicago Black Dance Legacy. Beyond performance, I have developed a strong passion for choreography, particularly through mentoring and creating work for younger dancers at RaMessut Academy. Through dance, I continue to strengthen my leadership, creativity, discipline, and identity as a proud Black woman.



ELLE KRAMER
(Dancer)

Elle Kramer (she/her) is a junior BFA Dance major from Elmhurst, Illinois. She began her training as a competitive dancer at a local studio and performed in concert dance with York Community High School. While at York, she appeared in numerous plays and musicals. Elle has trained extensively in ballet, modern, jazz, hip hop, contemporary, lyrical, and musical theater, among other styles. At the University of Illinois, she has performed in works by Rachel Rizzuto, alumna Laina Reese Werner Powell, and the restaging of a Katherine Dunham work. She has also attended the American College Dance Association twice.

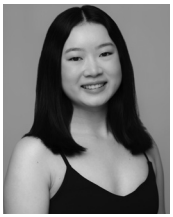
EMMA KUNZ
(Dancer)

Emma Kunz is a junior at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign pursuing her BFA in Dance and her BS in Clinical Psychology. She is a multi-disciplinary dancer versed in a multitude of styles including, but not limited to, ballet, contemporary, modern, jazz,

improvisation, and choreography. She has performed in various works by world-renowned choreographers, specifically as a dancer in Rena Butler's world premiere of "Les Pigeons" in October 2025. She has attended several prestigious summer intensives where she worked closely with dance master's across the globe. Most recently, she attended the Hubbard Street Dance Chicago Professional Summer Intensive. She has also trained with Visceral Dance Chicago and DanceWorks Chicago.

SARAH KUBIK
(Dancer)

Sarah is an undergraduate at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where she balances her passions as a Molecular and Cellular Biology major and Dance minor. Sarah trained for three years in high school across a wide range of styles, including contemporary, ballet, jazz, hip-hop, and musical theater. She is thrilled to be making her UIUC performance debut in this production and would like to thank her directors, fellow dancers, and family for their endless support.



ERICA LU
(Dancer)

Erica Lu is a freshman from Wilmette, IL majoring in Dance and Kinesiology. She has been a dancer since age 3, receiving training in ballet, jazz, and tap at Dance Center Evanston. She was a member of Kinesis Dance Company in New Trier High School. She is also certified in Cecchetti Grade III ballet by the Cecchetti Council of America (CCA).

ARIELLE LYTLE
(Dancer)

My name is Arielle Lytle, and I am a BFA Dance major with experience in leadership, collaboration, technical training, and choreography. My dance story started at four but intensified at ten. I have trained in Tap, Jazz, Modern, Ballet, Acro, Contemporary, West African, Majorette, and Competitive Dance. I have performed in concerts, parades, pep rallies, scholarship dinners, and more. As captain of my high school dance team, I choreographed, taught, and prepared for performances. Dance holds a special place in my heart. The drive, passion, and experiences I have gained throughout the years have made every drop of blood, sweat, and tears worthwhile. With every opportunity I step onto the stage, I continue to grow as both an artist and an individual. Now, I am proud to share my gift, passion, and love for dance with others.

AVA MODINE
(Dancer)

Ava Modine is a Freshman at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign majoring in dance and chemical engineering. She mainly trained at a Ballet focused school, where she found a love for performing in various styles including tap, hip-hop, and modern. In addition to her focus on dance, Ava is also excited to see how her love for math and science may play a role in helping her become a growing artist in the next four years.

GABRIELLA QUARESIMA
(Dancer)

Gabriella Quaresima is a multi-talented 4th year undergraduate student working towards her BFA degree in dance. Over her past 3 years at DAI, she has performed in works by Anna Sapozhnikov, Kemal Nance, Joe Bowie, Maggie Segale and other faculty and students. Quaresima is currently a choreographer and teacher at Elevation Dance Company in Lemont, IL. She has also had the opportunity to work under the guidance of Laura Chiaramonte in videography archival processes and live stream direct many other DAI performances Gabriella wants to thank her family and friends for all their love and support.

LOGAN RADOSTITS
(Dancer)

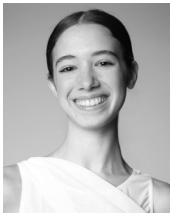
Logan Radostits, a second-year BFA student from Aurora, Illinois, has been passionate about the arts since childhood. He completed a 14-year journey as a competitive dancer with Xtreme Dance Force of Naperville, Illinois. A 13-time Victory Cup National Hip Hop Champion and 2025 Xtreme Icon Award recipient, Logan's dance experience includes hip hop, jazz, ballet, and tap. He performed percussion in Oswego East's Honors Wind Symphony and marching band. Logan aims to pursue a career of performance and teaching after completing his UIUC and DAI dance education with a minor in Critical Film Production.

SANAH RAMCHANDANI
(Dancer)

Sanah Ramchandani (she/her) is a contemporary dancer and student at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, pursuing a dual degree in Dance and Kinesiology. She has trained in dance for 15 years, with a primary focus on contemporary dance, training in Indian classical dance and Royal Academy of Dance ballet. She has performed at venues including the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) and G5A. She has choreographed work for national level competitions as well.

FAITH RUSSELL
(Musician)

Faith Russell is an 18-year-old college sophomore at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, pursuing majors in Music Performance (Oboe) and Dance. A dedicated multi-instrumentalist and dancer, Faith has performed with ensembles including the UIUC Philharmonia Orchestra, Hindsley Symphonic Band, and Steel Band World Percussion Ensemble. Her musical experience includes flute, oboe, alto saxophone, percussion, and drumline. In high school, she served as a marching band section leader and performed at the 2024 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Faith is also the Artistic Director of Stiletto Queens at UIUC and continues to explore her passion for performance, creativity, leadership, and the arts.



GINGER SALVAGGIO
(Dancer)

Ginger Salvaggio is a first-year BFA Dance student at the University of Illinois, Urban-Champaign. She previously trained at City Center Dance and with Hudson Ballet Theatre (HBT) in Westchester County, NY. She has performed with City Center Dance Company and in multiple featured roles with Hudson Ballet Theatre. Prior to that, Ginger trained at Ballet Academy East in New York, NY.

ISABELLA SCHWAGER
(Dancer)

Isabella Schwager is a second-year student at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign pursuing a dual degree in Dance and Psychology. Originally from Oak Park, Illinois, she began dancing at the age of six and has trained in various styles including ballet, contemporary, jazz, and musical theatre, performing in many musicals throughout her training. Schwager graduated from Oak Park and River Forest High School where she performed with and choreographed for Orchesis Dance Company. She also previously trained and performed with Intuit Dance. This past summer she had the honor to train with the Hubbard Street Summer Dance Intensive.

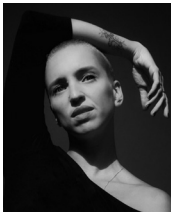
AMARA SIMUN
(Dancer)

Amara Simun is a Freshman at the University of Illinois, where she studies dance and kinesiology on a pre-physical therapy track. She is originally from New Jersey, where she trained as a competitive dancer at Center Stage Dance and Theater School for 13 years. Throughout her dance journey, she has trained in a variety of styles and performed in numerous competitions, showcases, and productions, and has received 5 national opening number invitations. Additional credits and training include: Over the Rainbow: The Rock Ballet in New York City (Off-Broadway), Princeton Ballet Intensive (American Repertory Ballet).

CHEYENNE SMITH
(Dancer)

Cheyenne Smith (she/her) is a dancer, choreographer, and visual artist from Joliet, Illinois. She will graduate from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in May with a BFA in Dance. For all four years, she has also worked in sports media and video with Fighting Illini Athletics. During her time at UIUC, Cheyenne has performed works by Anna Sapozhnikov, Paige Cunningham-Caldarella, Joe Bowie, Merce Cunningham, Ty'esha Lewis & Rachel Rizzuto, Gabriel Bruno Eng Gonzalez, Katherine Dunham, Hope Boykin, Dr. C. Kemal Nance, and several undergraduate works. In spring 2025, she presented her first screendance film, *luminous vision*. She is also the rehearsal assistant for *dancing in the fault line, or a need for*

glue, choreographed by Paige Cunningham-Caldarella and premiering in October Dance 2026. Her interests include sociocultural anthropology, intersectionality, embodied musicality, and exploring how movement can amplify music.

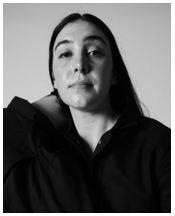


PAULA SOUSA
(Dancer)

Paula Sousa *@sousapaula* (she/her) is a Brazilian movement artist whose career has developed across Brazil, Europe, and the United States, where she is currently based. She works as a choreographer, performer, and educator. She is currently pursuing her MFA in Choreography at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. More of her work can be found at paulasousa.art

AIMEE TREHAN
(Dancer)

Aimee Trehan is a sophomore and first-year dance major, also pursuing degrees in psychology and economics. She is originally from Glencoe, Illinois, and graduated from Loyola Academy, where she danced with the school's company, serving as student leader, and performing in various shows. Over the years, she also trained with North Shore School of Dance, Chicago Ballet Arts, and Evanston Dance Center, focusing on contemporary, ballet, jazz and musical theater.



NATTIE TROGDON
(Dancer)

Nattie Trogdon (she/her) is a performer, choreographer, and educator, part of a collaborative duo with her life and creative partner, Hollis Bartlett. She creates dance works, films, and research-based practices aimed to disrupt assumptions of performance and personhood. Her collaborations have been presented in NYC at venues such as LMCC's River to River Festival, Movement Research at Judson Church, Gibney, Center for Performance Research, Coffey Street Studios, The Newhouse Center at Snug Harbor, Duo Multicultural Arts Center, and the Future Dance Festival at the 92nd Street Y. She's been an artist in residence at Marble House, The Atlantic Center for the Arts, Mana Contemporary, 14th Street Y and was the first collaborative pair selected for the New Directions Choreography Lab at The Ailey School. Her performing and teaching practices are deeply tied into her dance making. As a performer, Nattie has worked with Kathy Westwater, Catherine Galasso, Joanna Kotze, Kimberly Bartosik, David Dorfman, and Doug Varone. Born and raised in rural North Carolina, she is a graduate of the high school program at the UNC School of the Arts and received her BFA in Dance from SUNY Purchase. Currently she is an MFA candidate and teaching fellow in the Department of Dance at UIUC. www.nattieandhollis.com

SOPHIA VANGELATOS
(Dancer)

Sophia Vangelatos is a Chicago-based dance artist, choreographer, and educator. Sophia previously danced as a main company artist with Hedwig Dances and South Chicago Dance Theatre. She holds a BFA in Dance Performance, a BFA in Choreography, and a BA in Business Economics from the University of California, Irvine. Sophia is currently pursuing her MFA in Dance at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

CHARLOTTE VUKOJEVICH
(Dancer)

Charlotte Vukojevich is a first-year Dance and Kinesiology double major at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Originally from Pasadena, California, she began dancing at age three and trained at Pasadena Civic Ballet. She also performed on her high school's dance team. Some of her favorite roles at her studio include Jasmine in *Aladdin*, Tinker Bell in *Peter Pan*, and the Snow Queen in *The Nutcracker*. Charlotte is excited to continue her training and expand her performance experience here at the University of Illinois.

EVIE WEBBER
(Dancer)

Evie Webber is a freshman dance and kinesiology major at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign from Barrington, Illinois. Before continuing her dance career at the collegiate level, she was an active member in her high school orchesis dance company and held the role of artistic director. Her piece "Muse" was chosen to be showcased in the 2026 Illinois High School Dance Festival as 1 of the top 15 dances in the state choreographed by high school age students.

LEILA ZOU
(Dancer)

Leila Zou (she/her) is a second year at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is pursuing a dual degree with Dance (BA) and Molecular & Cellular Biology (BS) while exploring a pre-health track. Originally from Plano, Texas, she started her training at JiaPing School of Dance, where she studied Chinese folk-dance under Professor Shi. Soon after, she expanded into ballet, attending programs at City Ballet and the Dallas Ballet Center. Upon moving to Hinsdale, Illinois in 2020, she joined the Hinsdale Ballet Theatre, where she performed lead roles in various ballet productions, such as The Nutcracker (Clara and the Sugar Plum Fairy) and Sleeping Beauty (Princess Aurora). At the University of Illinois, she has had the privilege to be a part of several works. Most recently, she danced in Avi Pellegrinetti's "Things that have never happened before happen all the time" and Jasmine O'Conner's "Affinity" in the 2026 Senior Thesis Show. Zou looks forward to her second year at the University of Illinois, and she is excited to cultivate her physical and intellectual practices.

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PROFILES: DESIGNERS/COLLABORATORS

ALEXANDRA BARBIER
(Dramaturg)

Alexandra Barbier is an interdisciplinary artist whose work examines formative memories, identity, personal and familial histories, and the zeitgeists in which these develop. She has developed and presented work throughout North America, through platforms such as NCCAkron, Movement Research at the Judson Church, loveDANCEmore, RADFest, the International Association of Blacks in Dance conference, the Collegium for African Diaspora Dance, Wild Space Dance Company, and the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge, to name a few. Originally from Louisiana, Alexandra currently resides in Illinois where she is an Assistant Professor of Dance at the University of Illinois.

ETHAN BORROK
(Media Designer)

Ethan Borrok is a second-year MFA candidate in media design.Originally from Long Island, New York, he received his BFA from University at Buffalo where he focused on digital media design and lighting design. Borrok's previous design credits include Little Women (Lyric Theatre), The Pajama Game (Drama Theatre @ UB Center for the Arts); Mr. Burns, A Post-Electric Play (Black Box @ UB Center for the Arts); and multiple Zodique Dance Concerts (Drama Theatre @UB Center for the Arts) to name a few. He thanks his friends and family who have supported him on this journey.

JANET M CHIARAMONTE
(Artifact Artist)

Janet M Chiaramonte received her BAArtEd degree in 1985 from the University of Cincinnati. She graduated Magna cum laude and was given the Outstanding Senior Award in Art Education. She participated in juried craft shows in Ohio: Ceramics, Metal Smithing and Mixed Media receiving merit and most outstanding awards. Concentrating in mixed media, she has developed a print making process using oxidation to create imagery which is then enhanced with metal leafing and added elements. Janet extends her thanks to the University of Illinois Dance Department for allowing her to work in collaboration with her daughter Laura Chiaramonte, faculty and students.

SOPHIA DORET
(Costume Coordinator)

Sophia Doret is a third-year MFA candidate in Costume Design at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She holds a BA in Theatre and French from Lake Forest College. Sophia's recent credits at the University of Illinois include serving as the costume designer for Illinois Theatre's *Radium Girls*, and the assistant costume designer and wardrobe supervisor for both Lyric Theatre's *Oklahoma!* and Illinois Theatre's *Plumas Negras*. Sophia is honored to serve as a costume coordinator for the University of Illinois' Department of Dance and extends her gratitude to her family for their continued support.

MARGARET M. EVANS
(Production Stage Manager)

Margaret Evans (they/them) is a 2nd year MFA Stage and Production Management candidate at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. A travelling nomad from the Greater LA area, Margot's most recent credits include *Sterling Renaissance Festival*, *Sherwood*, *Radium Girls*, *Anastasia*, *Lasers and Feelings*, *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, *Faithless*, *Back Porch*, *Cradle Will Rock*, *Stop Kiss*, *Macbeth*, *The Stranger Things Experience, and Jon Braver's Valley of Hallows.* Their goals are to study the ways that interactive and immersive theatre can be made accessible, safe, and fun for everyone regardless of their ability. Upcoming Credits: *Sense and Sensibility, February Dance, IMMERSE*

CODY JENSEN
(Composer)

Cody Jensen is a versatile multi-instrumentalist and composer based in Urbana, Illinois. He has developed a deep musical understanding through both formal training and immersive cultural experiences. His performance career spans over a decade, with notable contributions to groups such as *Bones Jugs*, *Chicago Farmer*, and *Alma Afrobeat Ensemble*, in addition to extensive solo and collaborative work in the americana and world music scenes.

Jensen's extensive study in West African and Balinese music has shaped his distinctive musical voice, honed through over 1,000 hours of apprenticeship under renowned masters such as Moussa Bolokada Conde, Khaly Camara, and I Ketut Gede Asnawa. His work in global music traditions and improvisation informs his contemporary performances and compositions, which have been featured at venues like the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Roulette Intermedium, and the Chocolate Factory Theater.

He serves as the Music and Technology Director for the University of Illinois Dance Department, and has given lectures and masterclasses at various universities, with topics ranging from "Composing for Dance," to "Improvising on the Xylophone and Steel Pan."

Jensen's compositional work for dance includes collaborations with renowned choreographers like Angie Pittman, Alfonso Cervera, and Paige Cunningham Caldarella. He has three solo albums, *banjoboy*, *COVID Commissions*, and *Moon Songs*, which reflect his unique musical vision. He is currently a candidate for a Master of Music degree in Jazz Performance at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign.

AMELIA JONES
(Stage Manager)

Amelia Jones is a senior pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Stage Management with a minor in Hospitality Management at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Originally from Jerseyville, Illinois, she has worked on numerous productions during her time at Illinois. Her Dance at Illinois credits include: Senior Thesis 2026 (Production Stage Manager), Studio Dance 2026 (Stage Manager), *Student Works Concert* (Stage Manager), *Studio Dance* 2025 (Assistant Stage Manager), and *Studio Dance: Extended* (Assistant Stage Manager). Her Illinois Theatre credits include: *A View from the Bridge* (Assistant Stage Manager), *Plumas Negras* (Assistant Stage Manager) and *No Puedo, I'm Sorry* (Assistant Stage Manager). Outside of Krannert Center, Amelia is the production manager for the Armory Free Theatre.

SARAH LENEHAN
(Stage Manager)

Sarah Lenehan is a senior pursuing a BFA in stage management, her previous credits with Dance at Illinois include: Studio Dance 2025 (assistant stage manager) and Dance Senior Thesis Concert 2025 (stage manager). Previous credits with Lyric Theatre and Illinois Theatre include Orlando (assistant stage manager), Lyric Under the Stars 2025 (stage manager), Little Women (assistant stage manager), and Lyric Under the Stars 2026 (production manager). This academic year, she will also serve as the stage manager for Pippin, with Illinois Theatre, in the spring.

WESLEY LU
(Lighting Designer)

Wesley Lu is a junior in Lighting Design and Technology, originally from Taipei, Taiwan. He is currently pursuing his BFA at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, with a focus on lighting, stage, and media design. His design practice spans multiple disciplines, exploring the relationship between light, space, and visual storytelling. Previous design credits include Lyrics Under the Stars (Lyric Theatre @ Illinois), Guards at the Taj (Armory Theatre), Clouds Shaped Like Pianos (Illinois Theatre), and The Secretaries (Armory Theatre), and more. His technical credits include: Head Electrician for Radium Girls (Illinois Theatre) and lighting supervisor for the Armory Free Theater. From concept to performance, he weaves together the three main elements to evoke emotion and spark imagination. Guided by the spirit, love, and magic of the world around us, Wesley transforms stages into living narratives that invite audiences to experience stories in new and meaningful ways.

NOIR NAVARRETE
(Scenic Designer)

Noir Navarrete is a BFA scenic designer and artist passionate about exploring storytelling through space. Her previous work includes assisting the scenic designer for Sense and Sensibility, co-designing the Urbana Free Library's Fairy Tale Ball, and co-designing and constructing a children's event for the Champaign Park District inspired by The Wizard of Oz. Noir also serves as the event decorator for a student run magazine, The Collective, where she develops visual concepts and creates a visual identity for different events. They are interested in creating immersive spaces that support storytelling, evoke emotion, and uplift diverse communities through a visual experience.

SIGGI PREDERGAST
(Livestream Director, he/him)

Siggi Prendergast is a dancer, aspiring choreographer, and writer pursuing a BFA in Dance at the University of Illinois. He trained at the Urbana Fine Arts Center and at the UNCSA, with intensives at the Bolshoi Ballet, Kaatsbaan Cultural Park, and Trisha Brown Dance Company. He has recently expanded into release-oriented work and other twentieth-century modern techniques. At Illinois he danced in Katherine Dunham's *Afrique*, and in works by Avi Pellegrinetti and Anna Brady. He writes the neurobiology blog *Biomusings*, sits on the board of makesmewanna, and ran the house venue The Mirror until its closure in 2026

JOHN TOENJES
(Composer)

Recently retired as Music Director at Dance at Illinois, John Toenjes has written many scores for choreographers across the US and Europe. He has produced motion capture-activated dances such as *Inventions Suite* (2008) and smartphone-enhanced works such as *Kama Begata Nihilum*, featuring networked iPads and an audience app. In 2014 he established the Laboratory for Audience Interactive Technologies which designed a phone app for live performance called "MoSho." MoSho-integrated dances include *Critical Mass* (2017), and *Alternate Reality* (2018). He now produces immersive dance experiences like the 360-degree video installation "Frame[s] of Reference" (2026) and a dance adventure game called "Master Dancer," which is being released this fall on platforms such as STEAM and Meta.

PAGE VICK
(Head Electrician)

Paige Vick (she/her) is a second-year graduate student in the lighting department here at Krannert center. She is excited for her first head electrician credit at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign as well as first collaboration with the dance department.

XIN XU
(Musician)

Xin Xu is a bassist and doctoral student in Jazz Performance at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Jazz Bass from the New England Conservatory and her Master's degree from Manhattan School of Music. Xu began studying classical piano at age seven and turned to jazz at 17, inspired by legendary bassists Ray Brown and Paul Chambers. At the New England Conservatory, she also studied classical bass with Don Palma. In 2022, Xu presented a solo recital at the New England Conservatory. In 2023, she performed her original composition "Cactus" as a student representative at Arnon Palty's masterclass at Manhattan School of Music. She also appeared in MSM's annual promotional video, "Season's Greetings," and performed at Tartina in New York City.
In 2024, Xu joined the MSM Jazz Orchestra and performed with acclaimed jazz trumpeter Ingrid Jensen at Neidorff-Karpati Hall and Dizzy's Jazz Club. She also formed her own band and performed with Ben Wendel at his masterclass. Her original solo concert, "As Time Goes By," received recognition from jazz artists including Marc Cary, Jeremy Manasia, and Jamie Baum. In summer 2024, she won First Prize in the Adult Style category of the 7th Bass China Competition.

PRODUCTION STAFF

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Terri Ciofalo

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
Dylan Scott

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
Margaret M Evans

STAGE MANAGERS
Sarah Lenehan
Amelia Jones

PROPERTIES MANAGER
Kira Lyons

COSTUME COORDINATORS
Sophia Doret
Devin Findley

DANCE MEDIA COORDINATOR
Laura Chiaramonte

ASSISTANT DANCE MEDIA COORDINATOR
Samuel Hanson

VIDEO ARCHIVE COORDINATOR
Laura Chiaramonte

HEAD ELECTRICIAN
Paige Vick

AUDIO ENGINEER
Landen Norton

VIDEO CREW/ LIVESTREAM DIRECTORS
Jessica Ji
Siggi Prendergast

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2026–27 SEASON

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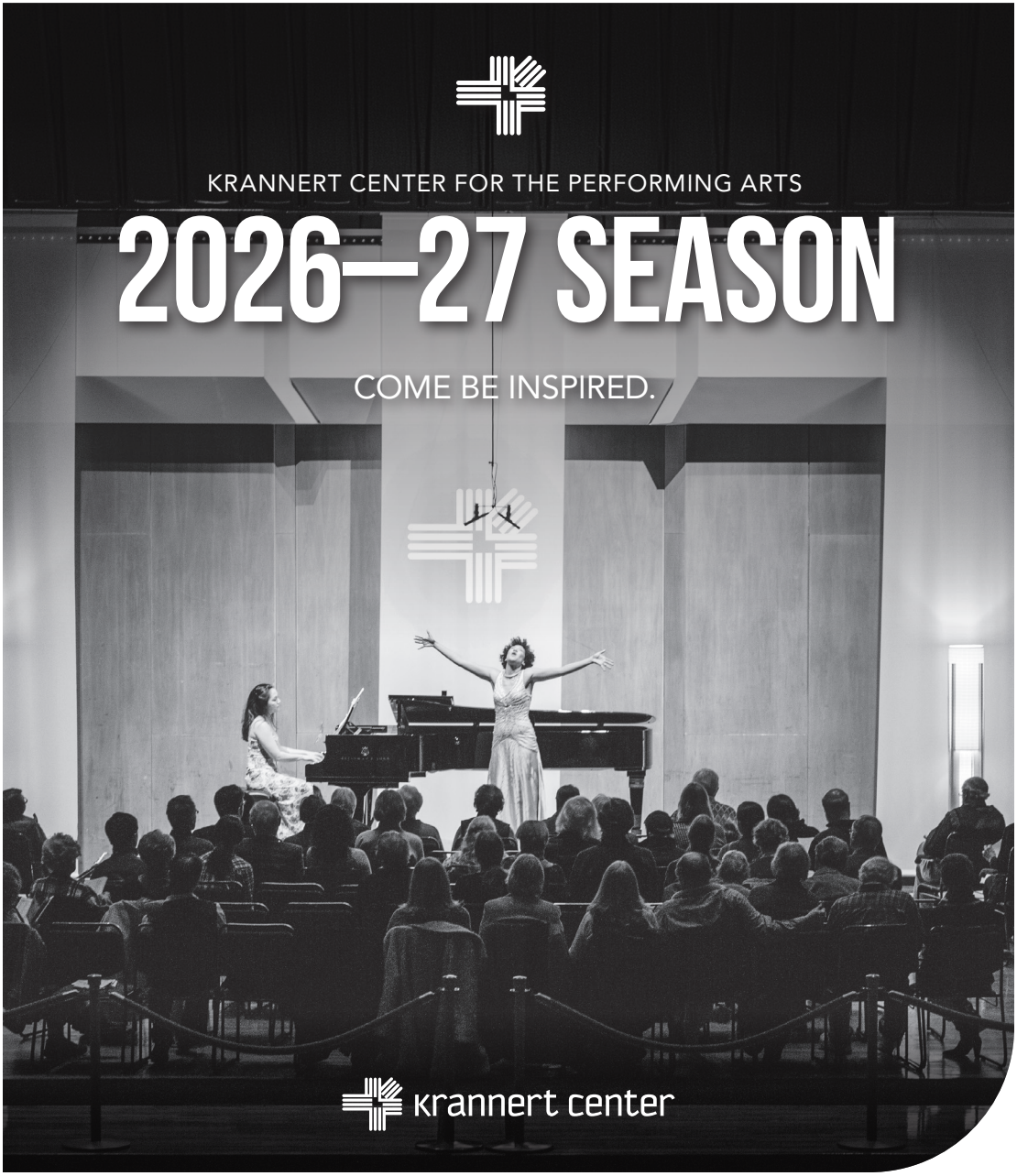

krannert center

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. 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.

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.

The Department of Dance at the University of Illinois

Dance.illinois.edu

DANCE FACULTY

Betty Allen, Lecturer and Creative Dance for Children Director
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Alexandra Barbier, Assistant Professor
Betsy Brandt, Associate Teaching Professor and Non-Majors Program Director
Laura Chiaramonte, Associate Teaching Professor and Media Coordinator
Taylor King Crocker, Lecturer
Paige Cunningham Caldarella, Associate Professor
Roxane D'Orléans Juste, Associate Professor
Jan Erkert, Professor Emerita
Samuel Hanson, Assistant Teaching Professor and Assistant Media Coordinator
Jacob Henss, Assistant Teaching Professor
Sara Hook, Head and Professor
Cody Jensen, Music and Technology Director
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Linda Lehovec, Associate Professor Emerita
Ty'esha Lewis, Lecturer
Nicole Marini, Lecturer
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Tere O'Connor, Professor
Cynthia Oliver, Professor and Special Advisor to the Chancellor for Arts Integration at Illinois
Rachel Rizzuto, Assistant Teaching Professor
Anna Sapozhnikov, Senior Assistant Head of Program Administration and Engagement, Lecturer, and Undergraduate Recruitment Director
Aleksander Tecza, Lecturer
John Toenjes, Professor Emeritus
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Sandra Ruiz, Associate Professor, Department of Latina/Latino Studies
Deke Weaver, Professor, School of Art & Design

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Be a pivotal force

Donors play a pivotal role in the realization of the department's ambitions to become a national center for the development of dance artists and leaders. The collaborative work generated in our program has been spreading across campus and out into the world, and we can do even more to share what dance can contribute to our society. Dance Partners—our generous donors—provide the core strength for our students, our creative work, and our vision for advancing the art of dance.

Our No Debt for Dancers campaign strives to eliminate college debt and eradicate the notion of the "starving artist" by raising funds for alumni projects, summer study, and tuition scholarships.

We hope you will join us in our mission to cultivate imaginative, innovative, and sustainable artistic lives.

Contributions to Dance at Illinois can be made by visiting:

go.illinois.edu/give-dance

or by check payable to:

University of Illinois Foundation/Department of Dance

and sent to:

University of Illinois Foundation, P.O. Box 734500, Chicago, IL 60673-4500

For information on how to donate online:

giving.illinois.edu

COME BE
CONNECTED.
Bringing the
community together
krannert center

WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU

Dance at Illinois would like to extend a very special thanks to all our Dance Partners. Your gifts help support and sustain our performances and programs. Listed below are the 2025-2026 donors.

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Julieanne Ehre, Assistant Director for Programming and Engagement
Craig Miles, Assistant Director for Marketing and Communications

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Carla Sanches, Production Coordinator for Events
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Nick Wurl, Engagement and Programming Coordinator

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David Drake, Advancement Team Assistant
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Kari Little-McKinney, Theatrical Stitcher

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Nicole Rataj, Assistant Lighting Director

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Kira Lyon, Assistant Properties Director

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Productions at Krannert Center are supported by the skilled stagehands of IATSE Local 482.

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

Restrooms are located in the foyers of Foellinger Great Hall, Tryon Festival Theatre, and Colwell Playhouse; the east entrances on the Lobby level; and gender-neutral restrooms can be found 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 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 call 911 in case of an emergency.

Please take a moment before the performance to note the 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.

Large bags and backpacks, or any other item deemed to be dangerous or to pose an obstruction will not be able to enter the theatres. Please approach the Patron Services counter for assistance with these items.

Please note that food and drink are not allowed in the theatres, except bottled water.

Phones and Devices

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.

Accessibility

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 contact patronservices@krannertcenter.illinois.edu or 217.333.9716 or visit go.KrannertCenter.com/Accessibility.

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COME BE MOVED.

Art at Krannert Center isn't something you just watch—it's something you feel.

COME ON IN.
WE'LL SAVE A SEAT FOR YOU.

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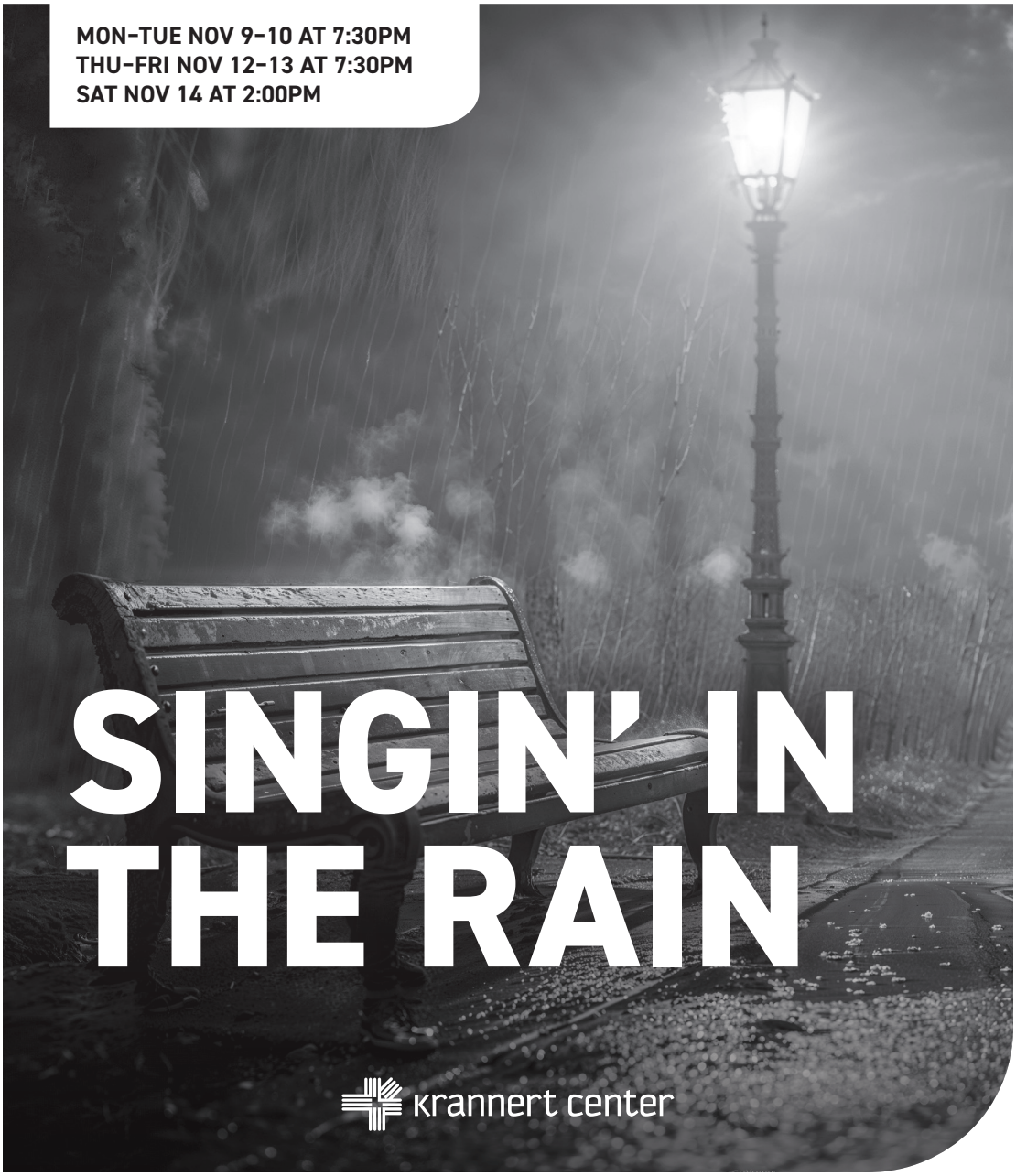
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