

# ChoreoLab 2023

## SPRING DANCE CONCERT

April 14 & 15, 2023

7:00pm

von der Heyden



# Program

## acceptance, reimagined

Choreographed by Coral Lin

Music & composition: *transition state* by Tyler King

Dancers: Michela Aretti, Grace Kurtz-Nelson

The piece centers on our personal and societal relationships and retells of narratives around acceptance. Often, we find ourselves drawn to stories with complete resolutions, while in real life this is hardly the case. We wanted to explore what acceptance might look like in a more revolutionary light; perhaps we may need to accept the conflicts in our relationships or failures in our societal systems to move forward and build something new, just or meaningful. Both the choreography and music for this piece were created in a collaborative process including the choreographer, composer and dancers.

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## [address]

Choreographed by Luna Beller-Tadiar

Music: mixed sound with music by Carmilla (*Pieces*); Liv k.

(*Warehouse rave*, DJ mix); DM R (*talks to the moon, talks to the beach, has no fortune*); and Tigray Hamasyan (*Fides Tua*); Pantyo (*Bronsé*)

Dancers: Luna Beller-Tadiar, Amanda Black

Who must you be to be the “you” that I address? Inflected by global Philippine labor and queer world-making practices, *[address]* is a work in progress that thinks about the labor of a malleable body, on and off-line, and across gendered forms, as it is interpellated by others and interpellates in turn.

# Almost but not quite —

Choreographed by Kayla Lihardo

Music: *Road Signs Variations: Stop, You Can't Stop the Resitance* by Ezio Bosso

Dancers: Sarah Broders, Kayla Lihardo, Alyssa Shi, Abigail Ullendorff

It sits just out of grasp – perhaps the catharsis is in the reach.

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# Blessing on Blessings/I won't Lose, I Either Win or I Learn

Choreographed by Andrea E. Woods Valdés and dancers

Music: Triangle Afrobeat Orchestra: Scoot Bornluf; Andrea E. Woods Valdés; Bryan McCune; Mary Huntimer; Ron Baxter; Justin Berry; Dré Supafly Dobson; Freddy Greene; Guhl Mustafa; Brad Newell; Bakru Hunsel; Thomasi McDonald; Beverly Botsford; Vattel Cherry (TAO Director)

Dancers: Alyah Baker, Katie Duncker, Ayan Felix, Helena Freire Haddad, Julia Piper, Angela Risi

Woods Valdés' performance featuring Triangle Afrobeat Orchestra Live!  
The performance concludes with a dance party for the audience!

# Giovanni's Room, Giovanni's Descent

Choreographed by Iyun Ashani Harrison

Composition: Aaron Brown

Music: Maurice Ravel, *String Quartet in F Major*, Très lent & Vif et agité, performed by the Mandelring Quartett

Maurice Ravel, *Habanera* performed by Eva Nemeth & Roland Leonard

Scenic design: William Paul Thomas

Costumes: Iyun Ashani Harrison

Giovanni: Anthony Nelson, Jr.

Hella: Alyssa Shi (Friday) and Abigail Ullendorff (Saturday)

David: Jam Niel Delgado

Guillaume: Iyun Ashani Harrison

Dancers: Michela Arietti, Sarah Broders, Jacey Curd, Taylor Donovan, Leah Esemuede, Kayla Lihardo, Sara Oberle, Isabella Rundell, Abigail Ullendorff

*Giovanni's Room, Giovanni's Descent* is an excerpt from Iyun Ashani Harrison's forthcoming adaptation (September 10-12, 2023) of James Baldwin's novel. The section explores the events leading to Giovanni's downward spiral to his inevitable death.

# Jam Suite

Choreographed by Nina Wheeler

Music: *Tank* by The Seat Belts, *Europa* by Gato Barbieri, *Big Breakdown* by Hans and Candy Dulfer

Dancers: Lacey McLamb, Ryan McGrory, Isabella Swigart, Aviv Yochai

Known classically as avant-garde, the saxophone becomes a familiar sound in many musical genres: a provocative sound that allures, soothes and excites the souls is as allusive as it is apparent.

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## Listen Twice

Choreographed by Leah Esmuede

Music: Music from Moonlight (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack) by Nicholas Britell  
Tracklist: The Middle of the World, You Don't Even Know, Chiron's Theme, Chiron's Theme Chopped & Screwed (Knock Down Stay Down), Chef's Special, The Spot, Sweet Dreams  
Arrangement: Terrence Jung

Dancers: Leah Esemuede, Amy Labrador, Kayla Lihardo, Jackie Palmer, Joey Rauch, Isa Rundell, Alyssa Shi, Isabella Swigart, Aviv Yochai

Drawing upon experiences of Summer 2020, this piece serves as an exploration of how we communicate with one another. What distinguishes confrontation and expression? How does successful communication deteriorate and by what forces? How can we learn to communicate in healthy ways and who can teach us to do so? This piece is a working progress, much like our journey in improving our communication styles.

# Minor Feelings

Choreographed by Florence Wang

Music: *home with you* by FKA twigs, *Minor Feelings* by Rine Sawayama  
and quotes from YuTian Wong's *Choreographing Asia America*

Dancers: Michelle Huang, Nicole Park, Alyssa Shi, Arely Sun, Isabella  
Swigart, Florence Wang, Emily Zhen

*Minor Feelings* is a piece centered around Asian American female representation and the experiences that define our subjective identities as Asian American females. How do our intersectional identities contribute to our positionalities in U.S. society? Drawing inspiration from YuTian Wong's *Choreographing Asian America*, this piece aims to utilize dance as a medium for highlighting the unique experiences of Asian American females.

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# RenHERsance

Choreographed by Ife Michelle Presswood

Music: *Renaissance Act I* by Beyoncé Knowles-Carter

Dancers: Cassandra Zia Claros, Corali Francisco, Kyra Lewis, Julie  
Mandimutsira, Chloe Williams, Huiyin Zhou

*RenHERsance* presents ideas of self-expressionism, assertion, and liberation through movement. Engaging the liberatory practices and frameworks embedded in hip-hop and vogue dance styles, alongside the evocative *Renaissance* (Beyoncé) album, *RenHERsance* is a visual manifestation of the unfettered self through the body.

# Seruba, Lenjen, and Ekonkon

Choreographed by Ava LaVonne Vinesett

Music: Beverly Botsford, Ayinde Hurrey, Christopher P. Kannenberg,  
Richard J. Vinesett (Musical Director), Wesley Williams  
Costume support: Dr. Janice Clark

Dancers: Ella Cariello, Anna Gray Davis, Millie Evonlah, Bonita Joyce,  
Malaika Khumalo, Adriana Morales, Ashley Marie Rea, Tria Smothers

*Seruba, Lenjen, and Ekonkon* are three rhythms/dances from the Mandinka and Jola of the Senegambia region of West Africa. Typically, they are part of a communal event where there are no spectators. Everyone flows in and out of the circle comprising the *bantaba* or “dancing ground,” expressing the fullness of life through extraordinary drumming and dance.

**The Duke Dance Program would like to  
congratulate our graduating seniors  
and M.F.A. cohort.**

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# Biographies

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**Michela Arietti** is a first-year student majoring in Dance and Biology. She is from Milan, Italy, where she studied at Accademia Teatro alla Scala since she was 7 years old. Her favorite styles are ballet and contemporary. At Duke, she has been dancing with the Dance Program, notably through the November Dances 2022 performance of *NOT AT REST* by Kristin Taylor Duncan.

**Alyah Baker** is a dance artist exploring art and embodied activism. She is a graduate of Duke University, holding a B.A. in Sociology and a minor in Dance, and an M.F.A. in Dance: Embodied Interdisciplinary Praxis. She currently teaches dance in Durham, NC, and works as a freelance choreographer.

**Erin Bell** is based in Durham, NC. Previous lighting design credits include *Lady Misrule* (Tiny Engine), *Indigo Blue* (Walltown Children's Theatre), *What If I'm the Becky?* (The Rebecca Show), *Peerless* (Bulldog Ensemble), *Garbologists* (Bulldog Ensemble), *Motherworld* (Monét Marshall), and *Infinite Infant* (Miki Zhu).

**Luna Beller-Tadiar** is a queer mixed-Filipinx-American multi-media artist, as well as a second-year Ph.D. student in Literature. In both her academic and movement-based work, she is interested in investigating socio-historical forces of gender, colonialism, diaspora and new media at the level of the moving body. Luna's movement training has been puzzled together from an ad hoc mix that includes capoeira, Argentine tango and almost two decades of aikido, in which she holds a black belt.

**Amanda Black** is originally from Boston, Massachusetts, and is a student in the School of Nursing (and graduates in May)! She is thankful for the opportunity to perform with the Duke Dance Program students and community.

**Beverly Botsford** is a cross-cultural percussionist and educator celebrating four decades of professional experience. Grammy nominated, she has played jazz in major venues around the world and shared with more than 40,000 students in schools. Dance experience includes work with the African American Dance Ensemble, ADF, Donald McKale, Ron Brown, Urban Bush Women and Duke Dance.



**Sarah Broders** is currently a junior from Phoenix, Arizona, majoring in Biomedical Engineering. She danced throughout her childhood primarily in ballet and is a member of the student group Devils En Pointe. She is also a member of the Bursac lab working on cardiac engineering.

**Aaron Brown** is an audiovisual artist working out of Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts. He received a B.F.A. from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts and has focused his efforts toward his sound art project *Baron* and highlighting the work of his peers via his independent cassette label. Aaron has begun to push his compositional work into a more physical direction, mostly composing contemporary dance works.

**Ella Cariello** is a first-year student from Yorktown Heights, New York, studying Psychology and Medieval and Renaissance Studies on a pre-med track. Ella is a designer for the feminist publication *The Muse*, a volunteer at Duke Children's Hospital and is currently creating a fully inclusive dance club called Odds & Ends. When she is not dancing or studying, you can find her creating new recipes in the kitchen, singing Billy Joel or playing card games with her friends and family. Even though she knows her interests can change at any point, she currently aspires to go to medical school after undergrad and become a pediatric surgeon.

**Cassandra Zia Claros** (she/her) is junior double majoring in Computation and Design-Computer Science from Duke University and Duke Kunshan University. Her passions lie in the intersection of art, ethics and technology. "Through dance, I am able to find my own freedom, happiness, and confidence."

**Anna Davis** is a Duke SPIRE Fellow and senior who first trained in ballet and modern dance but has rediscovered her love of movement through new techniques at Duke. Alongside such an incredible cast and supported by her family and friends (who make the best cheerleaders), she is grateful for the opportunity to perform again.

**Jam Niel Delgado** was born in Puerto Rico. He first pursued dancing at 16 at the School of the Arts in Trujillo Alto, PR, and later joined the dance team, where he competed in the college olympics. In 2014, Jam Niel moved to the states to further his technical training. He has since worked with Koffee Dance Company under the direction of Avis Hatcher-Puzzo, Winston Salem Festival Ballet and Gary Taylor Dance. In 2018, he performed in the annual Wake Forest Dance Festival and began teaching with Infinity Ballet Theater and Wake Forest Academy of Fine Arts. Most recently, Jam Niel has performed in Durham with Shaleigh Dance Works' The In-Between at The Fruit and with Gaspard&Dancers in American Dance Festival's The Stars Are Out event in 2021. Jam Niel is excited to be part of the Duke Dance Program's ChoreoLab 2023 and Ballet Ashani this season under the direction of Iyun Harrison.

**Katie Duncker** is a Biomedical Engineering Ph.D. student at Duke. She grew up dancing for 15 years near Chicago and then was a cheerleader for three years at Northwestern University. She began dancing again over a year ago in Durham and is excited to perform alongside Duke's incredible dancers!

**Leah Esemuede** is a junior from Frederick, Maryland, majoring in Dance and Psychology with a minor in Spanish. In her time at Duke, Leah has performed in works within the Dance Program and explored leadership and choreographic roles as a member of Embodiment Contemporary Dance and Outreach Chair of Street Medicine.

**Millie Evonlah** is a David M. Rubenstein Scholar and sophomore at Duke University. Studying Neuroscience on a pre-medicine track, she aspires to be a surgeon and work in Ghana, where her family originates. Millie's love of African dance forms stems from the energy and cultural connection she is able to share with the world.

**Ayan Felix** (they/them) is a Gulf Coast-bred movement artist, dreamy storyteller and cultural organizer. Their meandering screendances and public performances have premiered at Barnstorm Dance Festival (HOU), Houston Fringe Festival, The Movement Lab ATL and freeskewl (NYC). They are among the first to graduate from the Duke Dance M.F.A. program in 2021. They currently reside in Durham, NC.

**Coralí Francisco** (she/her) is a junior studying Cultural Anthropology and Global Health. She started her colligate dance journey in her sophomore year after joining Street Medicine, Duke's street-style team and Nakisai, Duke's premiere African dance ensemble. "Through my dance, I am showcasing how movement represents culture, power, resilience, and vulnerability."

**Helena Freire Haddad** is a Ph.D. student in Biomedical Engineering at Duke. She earned her undergraduate degree in BME and Dance at Northwestern University. She is trained in modern, contemporary and, more recently, African dance forms.

**Iyun Ashani Harrison** is the director of Ballet Ashani and an Associate Professor of the Practice of Dance at Duke University. A graduate of the Juilliard School and Hollins University (M.F.A.), his professional credits include Dance Theatre of Harlem, Ballet Hispanico, and Ailey II. His television appearances include PBS' *Setting the Stage* and *Who's Dancin' Now?*, NBC's 20th Hispanic Heritage Awards, and *The South Bank Show*, England. Choreographic commissions include the Juilliard School, Ailey School, Boston Conservatory, Collage Dance Collective, University of Florida, Jamaica School of Dance, and University of the West Indies, Barbados.

**Michelle Huang** is a senior from San Jose, California, studying Computer Science with a minor in Psychology. Having danced since she was five years old, she grew up primarily training in contemporary, ballet, jazz and tap. She is currently a member of two student dance groups, Defining Movement and Embodiment Contemporary Dance, and has previously taken jazz through the Duke Dance Program.

**Bonita Joyce** has had the opportunity to learn from teachers deeply rooted in African dance, music and history. She has performed with the Duke African Repertory Ensemble with Professor Ava L. Vinesett and SUAH African Dance Theater with Wesley Williams. There will always be heart-space for her teachers at the Hayti Community Center and the CAARE Healing Center who invested energy into her growth as a dancer... before performance was even thought of. She sends continuous love and appreciation for the dancers and drummers who continue to strengthen her understanding of the rhythms and connection to the movement-physically and spiritually. IYG has created space for personal and collective healing whether one is organizing, performing or applauding. It is a beautiful experience.

After a brief musical experience playing the trombone as a teenager, it wasn't until midlife as an adult that **Chris Kannenberg** found and nurtured his percussive passion. He's grateful to his teachers Mamady Keita, Bolokada Conde, Khalid Saleem, Fode Lavia Camara, Beverly Botsford and Richard Vinesett for their patience and willingness to share their gifts.

**Malaika Khumalo** is a current Robertson Scholar sophomore studying Exercise and Sports Science at UNC and Markets & Management at Duke. Malaika hails from Johannesburg and carries her South African culture everywhere she goes. In her free time, she loves discovering new creative ways of expressing herself, and most recently, she has taken to dance.

**Tyler King** is a sophomore from Houston, TX majoring in Biomedical Engineering and English. He has previously written music for student choreographers at the Houston Ballet Summer Intensive and is a member of Hoof 'n' Horn. He's excited to be premiering this work with his friend and choreographer, Coral Lin, and hopes you enjoy the show!

**Grace Kurtz-Nelson** is a sophomore from Chicago majoring in Public Policy and French. She trained in ballet and contemporary dance at AGA Ballet in Chicago for about 6 years. At Duke, she is a member of Devils en Pointe and has enjoyed dancing in the *Nutcracker* and other DEP productions, as well as taking classes in the Dance Program. Outside of dance, she is an internal programming chair for the Alexander Hamilton Society, a student-run foreign policy club. Grace is very excited to perform in ChoreoLab for the first time and be part of a collaborative process!

**Kyra Lewis** (they/she) is a senior at Duke University studying Linguistics. Raised in Houston, Texas, they have been surrounded by and have experienced the liberating quality of dance and music since a young age, yet never in a formal setting. Upon arriving at Duke, they joined the African dance team Nakisai and blossomed. "I am courageous, assertive and bring my whole self into this dance and the space I occupy."

**Kayla Lihardo** is a sophomore from California pursuing interdisciplinary studies in Neuroscience. She has studied ballet all her life and continues to explore this passion as an artistic director of Devils en Pointe and as a member of Embodiment Contemporary Dance.

**Coral Lin** is a sophomore from Newton, Massachusetts, majoring in Public Policy and Economics and minoring in Environmental Policy. A dancer since before she can remember, she is grateful to continue her learning by taking modern technique classes from the Dance Program and performing with Momentum Dance Company. This is her first time participating in ChoreoLab and working with her friend and musician Tyler, and she hopes you enjoy the show!

**Julie Mandimutsira** (she/her) is a junior from Sugar Land, Texas, majoring in Biomedical Engineering and minoring in Computer Science and Spanish. Through her time at Duke, she has trained in hip-hop, vogue, heels, modern and African dance. "I am honored to introduce you to my love for dance and movement, queer joy and Black womxnhood through my first formal dance performance."

**Lacey McLamb** is a sophomore at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is president of UNC's student-led dance organization called ModernExtension. She has been dancing since the age of three and continues to teach preschool and elementary tap, jazz, ballet, hip-hop and acro at Nina's School of Dance.

**Adriana Morales** is a senior studying Biomedical Engineering from Houston, Texas. African Dance Technique I is the first dance class she's taken at Duke, but she's really enjoyed the experience. Outside of dance class, she's involved in Hoof 'n' Horn, Sabrosura and her senior design project.

**Anthony Nelson Jr.** is a Durham, NC-native performer, dance educator and arts-activist. Dancing in earnest from 15 years on, Nelson's career has led him to seek training in various styles, building his repertoire in modern, contemporary, ballet, jazz, voguing and refining his focus in a personal style that blends these traditions. With over a decade of dance theatre experience, Nelson has performed with renowned choreographers in the Triangle and beyond, has taken the stage at Jazz at Lincoln Theatre and Dixon Place in NY, has been a UNC-Wilmington Fellowship Artist Mentor, an artist-in-residence for UNC-Chapel Hill's Carolina Performing Arts and has been awarded the North Carolina Arts Council's Artist Support Grant Award in support of his work. He currently works as an independent and collaborative performer making socially conscious work and is a current long-term artist-in-residence for Culture Mill in Saxapahaw, NC.

**Sara Oberle** is a first-year student from Louisiana pursuing a major in Neuroscience, a minor in Psychology and a certificate in Child Policy Research. She has danced since the age of three and stays engaged with this passion at Duke through involvement in Devils en Pointe, Sabrosura and dance classes. While her dance experience ranges from Horton to tap, her love for ballet and pointe ground her practice.

**Jackie Palmer** is a first-year student from Ellicott City, Maryland, currently majoring in Neuroscience. Jackie has explored versatility in dance through her participation in the contemporary-focused Embodiment Dance and hip-hop focused Street Medicine.

**Nicole Park** is a senior from Los Angeles, California, studying Visual Media Studies and Cinematic Arts. On campus, she dances with Embodiment Contemporary Dance and Defining Movement, where she explores her love for all styles of movement.

**Julia Piper** (MFA in Dance: Interdisciplinary Embodied Praxis '24) is a K-12 dance educator and choreographer. She is studying intersections of dance and ecology here at Duke and holds a B.A. in Dance and Environmental Studies from Goucher College in Baltimore. Originally from Ann Arbor, Michigan, she enjoys many varieties of dance and performance, and she is excited to expand her experience at Duke.

**Ife Michelle Presswood** (she/her) is a choreographer, dancer, Black/Queer culture educator and artistic spacemaker. She is a graduate of the Duke Dance M.F.A. program and engages dance praxis as a means of exploring individual, communal and cultural identity. She is currently teaching at Duke University, Fayetteville State University and North Carolina State University. "I am a mover, a shaker, a risk taker."

Originally from Dubuque, Iowa, **Joey Rauch** is a senior majoring in Public Policy and Dance. Between the mentorship of the Dance Program and student group Embodiment Contemporary Dance, he has trained in a variety of styles with a focus in contemporary and improvisational techniques.

**Ashley Rea** is a graduating senior who, as a first-year student, took her first African dance class with Professor Ava LaVonne Vinesett. Since then, she has never looked back. This performance is a culmination of her time spent with the wonderful community she has learned from.

**Isabella Rundell** is a junior from Miami, Florida, majoring in Computer Science while on the pre-medical track. Before coming to Duke, Isabella trained at Miami City Ballet School, attended various competitions and conventions and graduated from New World School of the Arts high school as a member of the dance strand. At Duke, Isabella is a member of Devils en Pointe and Embodiment Contemporary Dance. In the future, Isabella hopes to specialize in sports medicine as an orthopedic surgeon.

**Alyssa Shi** is a senior from Portland, Oregon, studying Statistics, Dance and Science & Society. At Duke, she performs with Embodiment Contemporary Dance, Devils en Pointe and the Dance Program.

**Tria Smothers** is a 2014 Duke Dance Program graduate and continues to dance with the Duke African Repertory Ensemble and Indigo Yard Gals. She uses movement to help others with getting in touch with their bodies and help their healing process.

**Arely Sun** is a first-year student from California majoring in Computer Science and minoring in Visual Media Studies. She has mostly trained in ballet and contemporary. At Duke, she is seeking to explore dance with the groups Defining Movement and Embodiment Contemporary Dance.

**Isabella Swigart** is an a senior from McLean, Virginia, double majoring in Statistical Science and Chinese with a minor in Computer Science. On campus, she is a member of Embodiment Contemporary Dance and Devils en Pointe and currently serves as the president of Duke Dance Council, the overseeing body of 15 undergraduate dance groups. This is her first show with the Dance Program, and she is grateful to have spent four incredible years as part of Duke's dance community!

**William Paul Thomas** is a Durham-based visual artist and is currently the Visiting Assistant Professor of Painting Foundations at Guilford College in Greensboro, NC. His creative practice is centered on highlighting the individuals and moments that are often overlooked in the mainstream projections of Black life. Through collaborative projects such as serving as guest curator for the 2019 MFA Exhibition at the Ackland Museum at UNC-Chapel Hill, he serves as an arts advocate around the Research Triangle.

The Durham-based **Triangle Afrobeat Orchestra** (TAO) is a diverse, multi-generational, multi-ethnic band founded in 2018 by bassist and composer Vattel Cherry. The members include: a former firefighter; a professor of dance; a prison physical therapist; a newspaper journalist; two doctors of pathology; and full-time musicians, who have toured and recorded internationally. TAO takes its inspiration from Afro Funk pioneer Geraldo Pino; Afro Beat creator Fela Kuti; pianist and singer Nina Simone; trailblazing queen of Funk Betty Davis; and activist and revolutionary Fred Hampton. Afrobeat is a music genre involving the combination of elements of West African musical styles such as fuji music and highlife with American funk and jazz influences, with a focus on chanted vocals, complex intersecting rhythms and percussion. Instagram: @triangleafrobeatorchestra/ bandcamp: triangleafrobeatorchestra.bandcamp.com

**Abigail Ullendorff** is a junior studying Economics and German. She started training in classical ballet in Los Angeles at 11 years old and became a trainee at the Boston Ballet her senior year of high school. At Duke, she enjoys being a part of Devils en Pointe, Runway of Dreams and the non-profit Ballet & Books.

**Ava LaVonne Vinesett** began a professional dance career as one of the founding members, and later Assistant Director, of the Chuck Davis African-American Dance Ensemble. Vinesett is a performance scholar, prolific choreographer, Full Professor of the Practice in Dance/ Faculty Director of the Alice M. Baldwin Scholars, a recipient of a Duke Alumni Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching Award/Duke University and a founding member of the Collegium for African Diaspora Dance (CADD). With Almy-Pagán, Vinesett is the co-founder of *Indigo Yard Gals*, a collaborative of performance artists exploring the intersections of social justice, environmental activism, ritual and identity as a danced concept. Through site-responsive work, *IYG* embeds regional histories and present-day narratives of locations, health, power, access, language, religion and the sacred. Coining the term “dance translator” to address her process of examining her personal voice in dance and her method of centering *ashé*—that sacred energy of the Divine found in all that is both visible and invisible—she navigates the interplay of ritual and performance.

**Richard Vinesett** has studied African percussion, specifically the instrumentation of the jembe orchestration, under the guidance of Khalid Saleem. He was a performing artist with the Chuck Davis African-American Dance Ensemble, Rhythms of Life under the direction of Khalid Saleem, Cultural Journey under the direction of Bradley Simmons, and Kambankafo Dance & Drum Ensemble under the direction of Mohammad Da Costa. Under the tutelage of Bira Santos, Richard added Candomblé drumming to his performance roster, and with David Font-Navarrette and Eluaye, Lucumí batá. Richard is a musical accompanist for the Duke Dance Program and Musical Director of the Duke African Repertory Ensemble.

**Florence Wang** is a senior from Columbia, South Carolina, majoring in Statistics and Neuroscience with minors in Chemistry and Dance. She started her dance training in ballet at three years old and later trained in contemporary and modern dance at Columbia City Jazz Conservatory. At Duke, she is one of the founders of Embodiment Contemporary Dance as well as a member of Defining Movement dance group, where she has performed in many campus-wide events and showcases.

**Nina Wheeler** is a Durham native and has taught beginner, intermediate and advanced jazz dance at Duke University of 17 years. Since 1974, she has owned and operated Nina's School of Dance. She is responsible for the birth of the North Carolina Scholastic Dance Awards, which challenge and promote dance in the public schools, and received the Laramie Hitchings Dance Award in 1993 for her dance contributions to the Durham community. In 1986, Nina launched Multiple Choices for Children, a jazz dance benefit for Duke Children's Hospital that raised over \$500,000.

**Chloe Williams** (she/her) is a junior here at Duke. She has danced all four years of high school, competing primarily in hip-hop. Since coming to Duke, she has taken three dance classes, all of which were hip-hop, under the instruction of Ife Presswood. "When I dance, I am calm and confident. I am at peace."



Dancer, choreographer and musician **Andrea E. Woods Valdés** is the chair of the Duke University Dance Program, artistic director of Soulworks/Andrea E. Woods & Dancers and founding member of the Triangle Afrobeat Orchestra. She founded the wimmim@work showcase and the Calabasa Calabasa summer intensive to develop Black audiences and performing and teaching opportunities for wimmin of color. She is a former dancer/rehearsal director with Bill T. Jones/Arnie Dance Co. She holds an M.F.A. in Dance from The Ohio State University and a M.A.H. in Caribbean Cultural Studies from SUNY Buffalo. She is also a Ph.D. candidate in Dance at Texas Woman's University. Woods Valdés has received grants from The Jerome Foundation, (NEFA) The National Dance Project, National Performance Network, Arts International and the North Carolina Arts Council. Woods Valdés creates dances as contemporary African American folklore inspired by folk traditions such as blues, jazz, folk music, African American literature, family folklore and movement reflective of the African Diaspora social and cultural experience. She has created collaborative works with musicians Randy Weston, David Pleasant, Tiyé Giraud, Madeleine Yayodele Nelson, Philip Hamilton, Shana Tucker, Atiba Rorie and performance poet hattie gossett. [www.SOULOWORKS.com](http://www.SOULOWORKS.com)

**Aviv Yochai** is a first-year student from Israel and Hong Kong, intending to major in Psychology and Dance. He has been dancing since the age of 6, starting with ballroom and Latin and continuing with contemporary, jazz, hip-hop and ballet. He enjoys participating in the jazz repertoire and is very excited to perform this spring!

**Emily Zhen** is a second-year student from Durham, North Carolina, majoring in Biology and minoring in Economics and Global Health. She has been dancing since she was three, and her favorite style of dance is contemporary. She has really enjoyed the dance spaces at Duke and preparing for this performance has been a great part of her semester.

**Huiyin Zhou** (they/she) is a junior studying Cultural Anthropology, Asian American Diaspora Studies and Documentary Studies. They are a diasporic queer feminist from Dongguan, Guangdong, China, and are interested in the intersections of art and organizing. "Dance is a liberatory practice that enables me to reimagine intimate relationships to my body and others."

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# Duke University Dance Program

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## Faculty

**Andrea E. Woods Valdés** – Director of the Dance Program; Associate Professor of the Practice of Dance

**Iyun Ashani Harrison** – Director of Undergraduate Studies; Associate Professor of the Practice of Dance

**Sarah Wilbur** – Director of Graduate Studies; Assistant Professor of the Practice of Dance

**Michael Kliën** – Professor of the Practice of Dance

**Purnima Shah** – Associate Professor of the Practice of Dance

**Ava LaVonne Vinesett** – Professor of the Practice of Dance

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## Emeritus

**Barbara Dickinson** – Professor of the Practice Emerita of Dance

**M'Liss Dorrance** – Associate Professor of the Practice Emerita of Dance

**Keval Kaur Khalsa** – Professor of the Practice Emerita of Dance

**Clay Taliaferro** – Professor of the Practice Emeritus of Dance

**Julie Janus Walters** – Assistant Professor of the Practice Emerita of Dance

**Tyler Walters** – Associate Professor of the Practice Emeritus of Dance

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## Instructional Faculty

**Glenna Batson**

**Alyah Burnett-Baker**

**James Clotfelter**

**Kristin Clotfelter**

**Kristin Duncan**

**Ife Michelle Presswood**

**Katya Wesolowski**

**Nina Wheeler**

# Musicians

**John Hanks** – Supervisor of Musicians

**Beverly Botsford**

**Natalie Gilbert**

**Westin Portillo**

**Richard J. Vinesett**

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# Staff

**Jenise Taylor** – Program Coordinator Senior

**Adrienne Brandon** – Assistant to the Director of Undergraduate Studies;  
Staff Assistant

**Dierdre Shipman** – Assistant to the Director of Graduate Studies

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# Production staff

Lighting Designer & Stage Manager: **Erin Bell**

Photography: **Alec Himwich**

Cover Photo: **Alec Himwich**

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