November Dances 2023

FALL DANCE CONCERT

Fri–Sat, Nov. 17 & 18, 2023 / 7:00pm
Reynolds Industries Theater
In Memory

This performance is dedicated to our beloved Angela Risi (1993-2023). Angela will be remembered as the moving essence of brilliance, laughter, and light.
The work presented here is deeply influenced by the structure of the ballet class. Specifically, it draws inspiration from the rigorous daily ballet barré practice, the center technique, and the interplay between classical and neoclassical ballet forms. The underlying theme explored is the human body's ability to express creative physicality and dynamic shifts in movement and vigor.

Through this exploration, the work sheds light on the significance of the ballet class structure in cultivating dancers' physical and artistic talents. It highlights the importance of rigorous training and practice in honing technical skills and expressing creative artistry.

Overall, this work serves as a testament to the enduring legacy of ballet as a form of physical and artistic expression. It offers valuable insights into the role of ballet in shaping the human body's capacity for movement and creative expression.

Echoes of a life lived
Points of Arrival

Choreographed by Jingqiu Guan  
Music: original score by Karam Salem  
Visual design: Jingqiu Guan  
Projection design: Augustus Wendell  
Voice-over: Bryonn Bain & sound recording at the Angel Island Detention Center  
Dancers: Natalia Cervantes, Indigo Cook, David Liu, Amare Swierc, Azie Zong

Points of Arrival is a multimedia dance work inspired by the poems carved on the walls by Chinese immigrants who were detained and interrogated upon their arrival in the US between 1910 and 1940 at the Angel Island Immigration Station in San Francisco. Engaging with the dancers' individual experiences and family histories, Points of Arrival presents a collective reflection upon this racialized and discriminatory part of the U.S. immigration history. The work asks the questions of how we can listen to our own histories with openness and humility and how their experiences of arrival remain relevant today.

For The Mind Excerpt: GRAY

Choreographed by Chania Wilson  
Rehearsal Assistants: Faith Hidenfelter and Riley Howell  
Music: GGosh by Jamie xx, GONE GONE/THANK YOU by Tyler The Creator, Stereo Colour Cloud (Shaman's Dream) by Sampha  
Dancers: Aubria Battle, Katherine Champion, Payton Chopp, Sara Dellinger, Becca Garguilo, Tara Rooks, Safa Salahaldeen, Marsha Thomas

Is it possible to capture the complexity of the mind? The possessive thought. The nagging thought. The thought you lost. The passing thought. It is synchronous, never black and white.
Discovering Your Voice: A Dance Class

Choreographed by Juel D. Lane
Rehearsal Director: Andrea E. Woods Valdés
Assistant Rehearsal Director: Chania Wilson
Musical direction and lyrics: Juel D. Lane
Composer: Munir Zakee with additional edits from Leo Ra Soul
Costume consultant: Jarrod Barnes

Lately, my thoughts have revolved around the concept of the future while also focusing on upholding the practice of liberation, imagination and agency within the realm of dance. I’m curious about what dance classes will be like in the future, who will instruct these classes and how we can preserve the authentic voices that define our individuality.

Gran Chimen [2002]

Choreographed by Mona Estimé-Amira
Rehearsal Director: Ava LaVonne Vinesett
Rehearsal Assistant: Tria Smothers
Traditional rhythms of Haitian Vodun arranged by John Amira
Costumes: Artistic Visions of Aché
Musicians: Beverly Botsford, Richard J. Vinesett, Wesley Williams
Dancers: Ella Cariello, Helena Freire Haddad, Bonita Joyce, Catherine Nachalwe, Sierra Putney, Tatiana Reynolds, Tria Smothers, Destiny Touchine

Legba — the first loa/lwa (venerated spirit) invoked during African-Haitian Vodun services — is the spirit of the crossroads (cardinal points) and gatekeeper of the Gran Chimen, the celestial Great Way (arc of the sun’s course and of the human life span/destiny) which links mortal and divine realms.
Michela Annamaria Arietti is a sophomore majoring in Dance and Neuroscience. She is from Milan, Italy, where she studied at Accademia Teatro alla Scala, and then later at the Bolshoi Ballet Academy in Moscow. At Duke, she has been dancing with the Dance Program, notably in the November Dances 2022 performance of *NOT AT REST* by Kristin Taylor Duncan.

Alyah Baker is a dance artist exploring identity and embodied activism. She is a graduate of Duke University, holding a B.A. in Sociology with 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.

Aubria Battle is a multidisciplinary artist, dancer, choreographer, musician, producer, cinematographer and lighting designer. She graduated with her B.F.A. in Dance Performance and Choreography with a minor in Psychology in 2023. Aubria recently worked as an intern at the American Dance Festival as a production crew member and is currently in the technical theater field in Greensboro.

Beverly Botsford is a cross-cultural percussionist and educator deeply committed to building bridges with music, movement and word. Embracing drumming traditions of Africa, Cuba, Brazil and the U.S., she celebrates more than four decades of professional experience. Grammy nominated, she has toured and recorded with jazz vocalist Nnenna Freelon, performing in major venues around the world. As an educator, she has shared with more than 4,000 students. Music for dance experience includes work with Chuck Davis and the African American Dance Ensemble (founding member), ADF, Duke Dance and projects with Donald McKayle, Ron Brown and Urban Bush Women.

Sarah Broders is a senior from Phoenix, Arizona, majoring in Biomedical Engineering. She has trained in classical ballet since she was a child and is the current president of the student group Devils En Pointe. She is also a member of the Bursac lab working on cardiac regeneration research.
Angelica Burgos is of Dominican-Armenian heritage. She received her M.F.A. in Choreography from Jacksonville University in Florida; she also has a Bachelor of Arts degree from the LEAP Program with Saint Mary's College of California and is an ABT Certified Teacher who has completed all of ABT Teachers National Training Curriculum. Over the 16 years of her performing career, she danced with the Joffrey Ballet of Chicago under Gerald Arpino, Sacramento Ballet under artistic directors Ron Cunningham and Carinne Binda, Ballet Hispanico under founder Tina Ramirez and in the West Side Story on Broadway revival in 2010. In 2022, she became co-director of Conflux Dance Theater. Additionally, she is a faculty at the University of Richmond and Virginia Commonwealth University.

Ella Cariello is a sophomore majoring in Neuroscience with minors in Dance and Medieval and Renaissance Studies. Ella was primarily trained in ballet, modern and Bollywood but has found a love for different forms of African dance since starting classes at Duke with Professor Ava LaVonne Vinesett. Beyond her studies and dance training, Ella works as a volunteer at Duke Children’s Hospital, writes recipes for the Chronicle and is the communications officer for the Jewish Student Union. She’s also working with her friends to create a fully inclusive dance club called Odds & Ends, as well as a pop-up restaurant run out of her dorm kitchen.

Natalia Cervantes is an artist, a proud Latina and a first-year graduate student pursuing an M.F.A. in Dance: Embodied Interdisciplinary Praxis at Duke. She grew up in Manhattan Beach, California, and earned a B.A. in Psychology and Dance with a minor in Latina/o/x Studies from The American University in Washington, D.C. She is invested in researching the ways that dance functions as a tool for intergenerational healing and celebration, specifically within Latinx communities.

Katherine Champion is a dancer, choreographer and educator based in Raleigh, North Carolina. Her teaching pedagogy and choreography stem from modern and contemporary release techniques. She attended Meredith College, where she earned a B.A. in Dance with a K-12 NC teaching licensure. She is currently teaching dance at Enloe High School and is director of the Enloe Dance Ensemble.
**Payton Chopp** is a dance artist and educator based in Raleigh. In her personal practice, Payton explores the idea of “process” in modern dance by integrating improvisation and play with her passion for technique. She has had the pleasure of training with American Dance Festival, Carolina Ballet Professionals and Arts Together. She currently dances with Black Box Dance Theatre, a nonfiction modern dance company.

**James Clotfelter** is committed to the creation of collaborative and socially conscious work for live performance, the built environment and public space. Working broadly as a designer with a specialization in light, James works as a lighting designer for live performance, an architectural lighting consultant and is co-founder of Studio C Projects, a performance-based, collaborative research studio that investigates the intersections of movement, design and architecture. James currently serves as the production mentor for the Duke MFAEIP program.

**Indigo Cook** is a percussionist, dancer, and interdisciplinary artist from Salt Lake City. They received their bachelor’s degree from Westminster College in Percussion Performance. Their work focuses on interdisciplinary collaborative creative processes, particularly within the avant-garde and experimental realms. Indigo is the founder/facilitator of Interdisciplinary Arts Collective, a multi-disciplinary performance group through which they love collaborating with other artists, non-artists and anti-artists. They are currently an M.F.A. student in Duke’s Embodied Interdisciplinary Praxis program, and they relish any opportunity to make strange things, listen deeply and remain ever in flux.

**Sara Dellinger** is a freelance movement artist based in North Carolina. Sara received their B.F.A. in Dance & Choreography from Virginia Commonwealth University and went on to perform the world premiere of Shen Wei’s *Summary* through the ADF Footprints program. Sara is a somatics practitioner and received their teaching certification for Scott Putman’s Elemental Body Alignment System in 2022. Sara is currently studying Thai massage with Damion Bond of Woven Body Healing Arts.

Professor Emerita **Barbara Dickinson** was the Dance Program director for 18 years and faculty member for 34. As dancer and choreographer, she created many full-length collaborative works. Her research in age produced a chapter in *Staging Age*, eds. Marshall and Lipscomb, 2010; and “Margie Gillis: The Indelible Art of an Integrated Artist” in *Dance Chronicle*. 
Helena Freire Haddad is a Ph.D. candidate in Biomedical Engineering. Outside of her time in the lab, she nurtures a passion for dance and has been very fortunate to engage in it during her time in graduate school. She was first trained in ballet and modern techniques, but since coming to Duke, she has discovered an interest in the practice of African dances thanks to Professor Ava and her mentorship. She is very excited and grateful for this opportunity to perform again!

Becca Gargiulo is a dance artist based in Durham, North Carolina. In May 2022, she graduated with her B.F.A. in Dance and Choreography from Virginia Commonwealth University and received her teaching certification for Scott Putman’s Elemental Body Alignment System shortly thereafter. Since returning home to NC, Becca has continued her training and begun teaching at local studios. She also works as the marketing and audience services associate at the American Dance Festival and performs regularly with Footnotes Tap Ensemble.

Originally from Chengdu, China, Jingqiu Guan is a filmmaker, choreographer, scholar and dancer. She is an Assistant Professor of the Practice of Dance at Duke University. Jingqiu has presented her dance films and documentaries in a number of film festivals in the U.S., the U.K., India, Norway, Spain, Austria, Italy, Turkey, Mexico, mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau. Centering voices and expressions of women, immigrants, people of color, as well as people of disabilities, her works engage with the exploration of cultural identities and motherhood, and addresses issues of racial justice and disability justice.

Sadé M Jones is a movement alchemist. Her talent as a dancer and theater maker, paired with her expertise as a social psychologist, griot and energy worker, supports this. She's trained/Performed with Ananya Dance Theatre, Ballet East, ModArts Dance Collective, Andrea Ariel Dance and more. Her work as choreographer and creative director has been featured in AfroPunk magazine with Riders Against the Storm, Magna Carda and Trouble in the Streets. Her ability to work the liminal spaces in which she lives provides artistic, mindful and culturally relevant ways for individuals and groups to embody innate wholeness and walk their path with it.

Bonita Joyce resides in the culturally rich community of Durham, North Carolina, where she 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. Vineset and SUAH African Dance Theater with Wesley Williams.
Atlanta native **Juel D. Lane** honed his artistic talents at Tri-Cities High School, The Youth Ensemble of Atlanta and The University of North Carolina School of the Arts. *Dance Magazine* recognized him as one of their “25 to Watch,” and his captivating performances have enthralled audiences worldwide. He’s shared the stage with luminaries like Ronald K. Brown/Evidence and is currently a vital member of the acclaimed Bessie Award-winning Camille A. Brown & Dancers. Lane’s choreography has graced Ailey II, Dallas Black Dance Theater, Atlanta Ballet, Carolyn Dorfman Dance Company and various universities. He’s also performed in productions such as The Metropolitan Opera’s *Fire Shut Up In My Bones*; *Harlem*, Amazon Prime’s series; and NBC’s *Jesus Christ Superstar Live*. His theatre credits include PCLO’s *Once* (Associate Choreographer) and choreographer for The DCPA & ACT Theatre’s *Choir Boy*. Lane received the Bronzelens film festival award for his remarkable film, *The Maestro* and showcased his directing and choreography talents in the captivating collaboration *Only-1* with Roc Nation artist Dixson.

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

**David Liu**, a Shanghai-born enthusiast, embodies diverse passions. Badminton and popping dance are his playgrounds, nurturing his discipline and creativity. At 14 years old, he ventured from China to California, immersing himself in the artsy Dunn School. In this melting pot of culture, his artistic talents blossomed. David dreams of a future in the dance industry, eager to inspire global audiences. Beyond his artistic pursuits, he’s an avid food explorer, relishing new flavors and experiences.

**Eliza Miller** is a junior majoring in Physics and minoring in Philosophy. She is a Durham native, trained in ballet, contemporary, jazz and hip hop by local Barriskill Dance Theatre School. She is furthering her dance education, mainly in ballet, through Duke's Dance Program and as an executive member of Devils en Pointe. Eliza is also on the board of Duke's Body Empowerment Project chapter and an active member of Duke's Astronomy Club.
**Catherine Nachalwe** is an undergraduate student in the class of 2027, currently exploring interests in public policy, economics, development studies and environmental science. Beyond academics, Nachalwe enjoys singing, songwriting and dancing and is passionate about playing sports such as volleyball, netball and soccer. In the past year, Nachalwe worked with two non-governmental organizations, SolidarMed and Our Moon Education, leveraging her passion for environmental conservation to advocate for green and energy-sustainable practices in their offices. She also served as a student waste management manager.

Pianist **Carolyn S. Morgan** received her M.M. from Peabody Conservatory and held professorships at New Mexico Highlands University and Wells College in New York. She toured with the N.C. Symphony as a first-place winner in their auditions, performing Prokofiev’s *Piano Concerto No. 1*. Morgan and her duo partner, pianist Douglas Riva, performed works by American composers for their Carnegie Hall debut, and toured Spain sponsored by the U.S. State Department. She was a featured soloist with orchestra in Beethoven’s *Choral Fantasy, Op. 80*, and is currently accompanist for the Broward Women's Chorale and the Girl Choir of South Florida.

**Helen Pertsemlidis** is in their second year at Duke and intends to major in Mathematics with a minor in Dance. They grew up in New Jersey and trained at Studio Allegro School of Ballet in ballet, jazz, modern and musical theater jazz. Since coming to Duke, Helen performed in November Dances 2022 in *Obsessed With You*, choreographed by Avery Lythcott-Haims and attended American Dance College Association’s 2023 conference, where they performed *Obsessed With You* for adjudication. Helen also danced in Avery Lythcott-Haims's senior capstone, *This Way Out*. As a member of the Duke Swing Dance team they perform, choreograph and teach swing lessons.

**Sierra Putney** is an undergraduate student majoring in Neuroscience with a minor in Dance. She aspires to investigate and better understand the connection between artistic expression and clinical application, particularly as it relates to the brain and mental health. Outside of the lecture hall and dance studio, and alongside her campus clubs, Sierra attends and assists with leading events that facilitate lasting and edifying relationships between her peers, as well as events that help her peers get more connected with the Durham community through learning and service opportunities.
Tatiana Reynolds is a sophomore at Duke pursuing a dual degree in Public Policy and Cultural Anthropology. Beyond her studies, Tatiana is deeply involved in various student organizations on campus. She currently serves on the student executives boards of Duke Justice Project, Black Student Alliance, NAACP and Duke’s street-style dance team, Street Medicine. While involved in student organizations, she also interns for Duke Athletics’ Creative Service Team. By the time she graduates, she hopes to utilize her passions to positively impact her community.

Neha Rodricks is a senior majoring in Economics, minoring in Sociology and pursuing a Markets & Management certificate. She is very passionate about dance and fills her weeks with dance rehearsals between dance classes in the Ruby and dancing in Defining Movement, Duke’s multicultural dance group. Prior to Duke, Neha was a competitive dancer, practicing primarily ballet, jazz, lyrical, tap and hip-hop styles. As a part of Defining Movement, she has been able to work on these styles, as well as explore South Asian, African and Latin dance styles. This is Neha’s first time performing in November Dances, and she is looking forward to pushing herself in a style outside of her comfort zone.

Tara Rooks is a graduate of UNC Greensboro with a B.F.A. in Dance Choreography and Performance. She has been a company member of Theatre West Virginia, West Virginia Dance Company and Annex Dance Company. She is thrilled to be back in North Carolina, currently residing in Chapel Hill, and is the dance teacher at Oberlin Magnet Middle School.

Safa Salahaldeen is a versatile artist in the fields of design, art, dance and choreography. With a degree in interior design and a minor in studio art from Meredith College, she combines her artistic sensibilities with a deep passion for dance. Safa has set work as a guest artist at Broughton and Enloe High School and served as the 2022 Artist in Residence for the Meredith Dance Theatre.

Tria Smothers is a Duke graduate, Class of 2014, who continues to dance with the Duke African Repertory Ensemble. She incorporates movement into her mental health practice and assists others with getting in touch with their bodies and helping them to live fulfilling lives.
Amare Swierc is an undergraduate student originally from Missoula, Montana. She has danced for 11 years at Rocky Mountain Ballet Theatre, including summer intensives at Opus One Ballet Firenze, Ballet Beyond Borders and California Dance Theatre. She is trained in ballet, contemporary and cultural dance. She is in Devils en Pointe and House Council, and is a photographer for the Chronicle. Amare plans to major in International Comparative Studies, minoring in Public Policy and Dance. She hopes to work in international relations, specializing in cultural connection through the arts.

Marsha Thomas is a full-time mom to Dylan, Aspen and Daniel. She is currently dancing with OM grown dancers. Marsha continues her training with Advanced Community Ballet at Barriskill Studio, The Body Mechanic and American Dance Festival. She has performed and choreographed Tobacco Road Dance Productions and the Queen City Jazz Company. Marsha has a B.F.A. in Dance Performance from East Carolina University, a professional diploma from Laban Centre London and a pilates certification.

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, Professor of the Practice in Dance/Faculty Director of the Alice M. Baldwin Scholars, 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, spirit 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. Richard is a musical accompanist for the Duke Dance Program and musical director of the Duke African Repertory Ensemble.
Chania Wilson is a dance artist and educator from Raleigh. She received her B.F.A. in Dance at UNC Greensboro with a concentration in performance and choreography. For the past few years, she was co-dance director at Enloe High School, where she taught honors modern and jazz. While there, she guest taught and choreographed for local companies in the area and started a county-wide dance intensive in 2022. She is a dance company member and member of the Board of Directors for Black Box Dance Company. Currently, she is a first-year M.F.A. in Dance student at Duke and a 2023 NC Dance Festival Artist in Residence.

Andrea E. Woods Valdés is the Chair of the Duke University Dance Program and artistic director of Souloworks/Andrea E. Woods & Dancers. She found 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, an M.A.H. in Caribbean Cultural Studies from SUNY Buffalo, and a Ph.D. in Dance at Texas Woman's University. Woods Valdés creates dances as contemporary African American folklore. Her creative process is inspired by blues, jazz, folk music, experimental sound and storytelling, 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.

Azie Zong is a student and dancer from Nanjing, China. She serves on the executive board of Duke Chinese Dance (DCD). She has been choreographing for DCD for three years and is now producing pieces in collaboration with other artists. In addition to her dedication to dance, she is driven by a deep curiosity about the world, reflected in her academic pursuit of history and economics at Duke's Trinity College. She hopes to remain a vibrant ambassador for Chinese dance culture and retain an unwavering curiosity of the world as she continues along her journey.
The Dance Program welcomes our newest core dance faculty member, Assistant Professor Jingqiu “JingJing” Guan, who comes to Duke from the West Coast (by way of Chengdu China), and whose research as an artist and scholar spans dance performance, film, and documentary aesthetics.

JingJing's impressive profile and expertise enhances our connections to Asian/Sinophone aesthetics and diasporas, and her interdisciplinary offerings in dance on stages and screens is world-class. She will develop courses in dance practice, dance making, screendance methods and scholarly offerings that she has planned in the semesters to come.

A welcoming reception at Penn Pavillion follows Saturday's performance.
Duke University Dance Program

Faculty
Andrea E. Woods Valdés: Director of the Dance Program and Associate Professor of the Practice of Dance
Iyun Ashani Harrison: Director of Undergraduate Studies and Associate Professor of the Practice of Dance
Sarah Wilbur: Director of Graduate Studies and Associate Professor of the Practice of Dance
Jingqiu Guan: Assistant Professor of the Practice of Dance
Michael Kliën: Professor of the Practice of Dance
Purnima Shah: Professor of the Practice of Dance
Ava LaVonne Vinesett: Professor of the Practice of Dance

Emeritus
Barbara Dickinson: Professor of the Practice Emerita of Dance
M'Liss Dorrance: Associate Professor of the Practice of Dance
Keval Kaur Khalsa: Professor of the Practice Emerita of Dance
Clay Taliaferro: Professor of the Practice of Dance
Julie Janus Walters: Assistant Professor of the Practice Emerita of Dance
Tyler Walters: Associate Professor of the Practice Emeritus of Dance

Instructional Faculty

- Alyah Burnett-Baker
- Kristin Clotfelter
- Kristin Duncan
- Lee Edwards
- Ife Presswood
- Ray Schwartz
- Katya Wesolowski
- Nina Wheeler

Staff Musicians

- Beverly Botsford: West Portillo
- Natalie Gilbert: Richard Vinesett
- John Hanks

Staff

Jenise Taylor: Business Manager
Adrienne Brandon: Assistant to the Director of Undergraduate Studies; Staff Assistant
Dierdre Shipman: Assistant to the Director of Graduate Studies

Production Staff

Senior Director, Venue & Production Management: Marcy Edenfield
Director, Venue & Production Management: Rich Kless
Assistant Manager, Theater Operations: Leah Austin
Lighting Design & Production Stage Manager: James Clotfelter
Audio Engineer: Paul Chapman
Production Technician & Sound Board Operator: Reed Smith
Master Electrician & Lighting Programmer: Haze Grissett
Assistant Manager & reservations: Madi Kartcheske