

A/Part To/Gather

New Works+

APRIL 26 – APRIL 29

REPERTORY FACULTY

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Bret Easterling
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Bella Allen (BFA '22) |
Photo by Rose Eichenbaum



REACH (WORLD PREMIERE)

Directed and Choreographed by: Micaela Taylor

Music: *Rain* by Ezio Bosso, *Voima* by Black Eyes & Pan Sonic

Costume Design: Micaela Taylor

Video Editing: RYBG

Ashton Benn, Valerie Chen, Jasmine Cruz, Jonathan Cubides, Nicole Denney, Atticus Dobbie, Jau'mair Garland, Jonacy Montero, Michael Naffier, William Okajima, Amanda Peet, Ava Sine, Jada Vaughan, Kaylin Williams, Louie Williams

About *Reach*

Reach follows the freshmen and sophomore students of USC Kaufman School of Dance on a journey of connectivity. As they execute the same choreography in different locations you will see a through line of resilience, expression, and hybridity. This 10 minute film will showcase clips of shadow like bodies reaching for one another and transcending location and diversity to find one voice.

I SEE THEM FALLING (WORLD PREMIERE)

Directed and Choreographed by: Doug Varone

Music: "Fire" from *Fire In My Mouth* by Julia Wolfe, Performed by New York Philharmonic, The Crossing & Young People's Chorus of New York City

Costume Design: Kathryn Poppen

Video Editing: RYBG

Eli Alford, Bella Allen, Ciara Billups, Isabella Caso, Luke Csordas, India Dobbie, Anijah Lezama, Jainil Mehta, Elise Monson, Jordan Powell, Anthony Tette, Wyeth Walker

About *I see them falling*

I see them falling was created in great collaboration with members of the junior and senior class and the video team RYBG. Julia Wolfe's score recounts the devastating Triangle Shirt Factory fire in 1911. Because the doors to the factory were locked, 146 workers were trapped and died in the flames. It is within this haunting score that we created the framework for a parallel work, exploring the confined spaces of our lives, both literally and figuratively.

WHENWER[E]VOLVE (WORLD PREMIERE)

Directed and Choreographed by: Marjani Forté-Saunders

Music: *Springtime Again* by SunRa; *Ezekiel's Wheel* featuring The-Dream by Jay Electronica + Jay Z; A "session" with Social Media Personality @iamtabithabrown; *Junkanoo* by Exuma

Costume Design: Kathryn Poppen

Film, Score, and VFX Arranged by: RYBG

Rehearsal/Production Support: Jennifer Lott, Patrick Corbin

Ashton Benn, Valerie Chen, Jasmine Cruz, Jonathan Cubides, Nicole Denney, Atticus Dobbie, Jau'mair Garland, Jonacy Montero, Michael Naffier, William Okajima, Amanda Peet, Ava Sine, Jada Vaughan, Kaylin Williams, Louie Williams

About *WhenWeR[E]volve*

WhenWeR[E]volve follows a prismic journey of young people at the precipice of life-changing discovery and deep rooted inquiry. Folding pasts, present states, and futuring, this work uses poet, Alexis Pauline Gumbs' *[M] Archive* and hallmark images from photographer Deanna Lawson's *Centropy* that "synthesize.. historical, tragic but also fertilizing process[es] of displacements," in the context of Black diasporic communities. In our creative process, these works (Gumbs and Lawson) conceptually anchor our dive into their "now" and their capacity to realize and shape future, as we learn from and herald the triumphant presence and strategies of disenfranchised peoples across the globe and (arguably) across dimensions.

PRELUDE (WORLD PREMIERE)

Directed and Choreographed by: Dwight Rhoden

Music: Corey Folta

Costume Design: Kathryn Poppen

Rehearsal Assistant: Clifford Williams

Video Editing: Laneway Media NYC

Eli Alford, Bella Allen, Ciara Billups, Isabella Caso, Luke Csordas, India Dobbie, Anijah Lezama, Jainil Mehta, Elise Monson, Jordan Powell, Anthony Tette, Wyeth Walker

About *Prelude*

Prelude was created specifically for the juniors and seniors of the USC Kaufman School, and is a work that explores compassion, empathy, and patience from a humanistic vantage point. It captures the feelings of fear, loss and the uncertainty - in a movement language that shows determination and resiliency of the human spirit, even in the eye of a storm.

RED/THE FORCE

World Premiere: 1994, Complexions Contemporary Ballet

Directed and Choreographed by: Dwight Rhoden

Music: Antonio Carlos Scott

Costume Design: DRSquared

Staged by: Desmond Richardson

Rehearsal Assistant: Clifford Williams

USC Kaufman Alumni Repetiteurs: Stephanie Dai, Paulo Hernandez-Farella, Megan Yamashita

Video Editing: Laneway Media NYC

Ashton Benn, Valerie Chen, Jasmine Cruz, Jonathan Cubides, Nicole Denney, Atticus Dobbie, Jau'mair Garland, Jonacy Montero, Michael Naffier, William Okajima, Amanda Peet, Ava Sine, Jada Vaughan, Kaylin Williams, Louie Williams

About *RED/THE FORCE*

RED/THE FORCE is about "the system," where Capitalism, Greed, Politics and our Ethics as people are put on display. RTF looks at everyday life as an equation where the expected outcome is to Gain. This work explores a world where a Bold, unforgiving, relentless quest for Power, is framed within the walls of a grid like system, where the absence of empathy creates division.

USC Kaufman Artists in Residence are supported in part through generous funding from The Choi Family Artists in Residence Fund. Program subject to change.

About Marjani Forté-Saunders

Marjani Forté-Saunders is an independent artist, co-founder with Nia Love, of LOVE|FORTÉ A COLLECTIVE, and one of two Directors of the Alkebu-lan Cultural Center of Northwest Pasadena, CA, alongside Sound Designer/Composer Everett Saunders. She is a proud recipient of the 2017 Outstanding Performance Bessie Award as one of 21 Black Womyn and Gender Non-Conforming artists of the collective Skeleton Architecture. Marjani is an Inaugural recipient of the UBW Choreographic Center Fellowship and a two-time Princess Grace Foundation (PGF-USA) awardee. As a recipient of the 2017 MAP Fund and Jerome Foundation General Grant, her performance installation, *Memoirs of a... Unicorn*, premiered with Co-Commissions from New York Live Arts and LMCC Extended Life Residency at the artist run space Collapsible Hole (November 2017). Saunders is a proud alum of the Urban Bush Women Dance company, having performed and co-created new works within the company's repertoire for over 5 years, and continues to share UBW's unique approach to community engagement and cultural organizing as a facilitator within Urban Bush Women's BOLD Teaching Network. She is also a proud alum of artist residencies at Brooklyn Arts Exchange (with LOVE|FORTÉ), New York Live Arts, Movement Research, LMCC Extended Life and the CUNY Dance Initiative.

With support from a SURDNA Foundation Thriving Cultures Grant, Saunders curated a three-month exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary African Diaspora Art in Brooklyn, NY titled being Here... in Memory, weaving the work of 4 distinct multi-media artists in conversation with her choreographic trilogy being Here...in Memory, LOVE|FORTÉ and Memory Withholdings.

As an educator, Forté-Saunders has served on Faculty and as a Visiting Artist at Hunter College CUNY, Princeton University, Bard College and the Graduate Yale School of Acting. Her latest collaborations include working alongside Sundance Award Winning director Kahlil Joseph (director of recording artist Beyoncé's *Lemonade*) as a choreographer on Sampha's *PROCESS* (a short film) and the Pantene ProV "Strong Is Beautiful" Commercial Campaign.

Gleefully, *Memoirs of a... Unicorn*'s installation includes contributions from an extraordinary team of designers including: Mac Arthur Genius Mimi Lien, media designer Meena Murugesan, lighting designer Tuce Yasak, husband and composer Everett Saunders, and her own father, master carpenter and contractor Rick Forté. The work continues to find new iterative developments across the nation with "next stage" support from the Maggie Allesee National Choreographic Center at FSU in Tallahassee, Florida.

Forté-Saunders is thrilled to join a dynamic line of artists in residence at the USC Kaufman School of Dance Fall 2018. With deep gratitude, she mobilizes her work, honoring that it stems from being born in and having engaged with culturally rich, vibrant, historic and politically charged communities.

About Dwight Rhoden

Dwight Rhoden has established a remarkably wide-ranging career, earning distinction from *The New York Times* as "one of the most sought out choreographers of the day."

A native of Dayton, Ohio, who began dancing at age 17, Rhoden has performed with Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Les Ballet Jazz De Montreal and as a principal dancer with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. As a performer, he has appeared in numerous television specials, documentaries and commercials throughout the United States, Canada and Europe and has been a featured performer on many PBS Great Performances specials.

In 1994, Rhoden, along with Desmond Richardson, founded Complexions Contemporary Ballet. Together they have brought their unique brand of contemporary dance to the world for over two decades. CCB is widely considered "America's Original Multicultural Contemporary Ballet Company." Complexions is celebrated for its pioneering spirit, and the building of a universal brand that continues to challenge traditional ideas, and redefine possibilities in the dance arena. Under Rhoden's direction, Complexions has become a dance institution that is much in demand. CCB has led the way in contemporary ballet in America, by removing traditional boundaries, and celebrating the beauty of differences – through courageous, innovative and cutting edge programming. Over the years, Complexions has remained consistent in delivering a profound passion for diversity that has framed its vision and become its hallmark.

For nearly three decades, Rhoden's choreography has been the lynchpin in the development of the Complexions repertory. Since 1994, Rhoden's work has filled some of the most prestigious theaters across the globe including, The Joyce Theater (NYC), The Bolshoi Theater (Moscow), The Mariinsky Theater (St. Petersburg), Maison De La Danse (Lyon), The Dorothy Chandler Pavilion (Los Angeles), BAM (Brooklyn) Cairo Opera House (Egypt), The Arts Center (Melbourne, Australia), The Auditorium Theater (Chicago), Tel Aviv Opera House (Israel), The ASB Theater (New Zealand), Holland Dance

Festival, Grand Theatre De Geneva (Switzerland), Isle De Dance Festival (Paris), as well as others. CCB and Rhoden's work has been presented on five continents and in over 20 countries, including the USA, Canada, South America, Mexico, Europe, Asia, Poland, Australia, New Zealand, Russia, The Baltic Region, Egypt, Israel, and the Middle East.

"Musicality, innovation, purpose, consistency, a brilliant use of stage space and the ability to tell a story — all these qualities make him (Rhoden) one of today's elect choreographers." – *The Los Angeles Times*

Rhoden has created over 100 ballets for Complexions, as well as numerous other companies, including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ballet Arizona, The Aspen Santa Fe Ballet Company, BalletMet, The Dance Theatre of Harlem, Colorado Ballet, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, The Joffrey Ballet, Miami City Ballet, New York City Ballet, Charlotte Ballet, The Pennsylvania Ballet, Philadanco, Mariinsky Ballet, Minneapolis Dance Theatre, Phoenix Dance Company, Sacramento Ballet, Oakland Ballet, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Ballet Nice Mediterranean, Tulsa Ballet, The Washington Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Western Australian Ballet and Zenon Dance Company among others.

Rhoden has also directed and choreographed for TV, film, theater and live performances including *So You Think You Can Dance*, E! Entertainment's "Tribute to Style," Amici, Cirque Du Soleil's *Zumanity*, and choreographed and appeared in the feature film *One Last Dance*.

He has also worked with, and/or created works for high-profile artists such as Prince, Lenny Kravitz, Kelly Clarkson, ELEW, David Rozenblatt, Nicholas Payton, The Drifters, Paul Simon, Billy Strayhorn, Nina Simone, Marvin Gaye, U2, The Turtle Creek Chorus and Patrick Swayze.

Rhoden was also commissioned to create a work for the centennial celebration of renowned collage artist Romare Bearden, choreographed a ballet for Diana Vishneva's *Beauty In Motion*, and has directed and choreographed *The Great Gatsby* ballet for soloists of the Mariinsky, Ukrainian National Ballet, and soloists from the United States.

"Rhoden's work is post-Balanchinean choreography, a new aesthetic in movement, stage, picture and performance concepts reflecting a post- modern, techno-savvy worldview." – *Dance Magazine*

Widely known as "a dancer's choreographer," Rhoden has worked with, coached and created for some of the most diverse artists spanning the worlds of ballet and contemporary dance including legendary dance artists Carmen De Lavallade, Misty Copeland, Wendy Whelan, Maria Kowroski, Diana Vishneva, Desmond Richardson, Sandra Brown, Jodie Gates and Gus Solomons.

Rhoden has served as Artist in Residence at universities around the United States including USC Gloria Kaufman School of Dance, New York University, Juilliard, UC Irvine, Skidmore College, The Boston Conservatory and The University of Mississippi, where his 2004 Racial Reconciliation Project was credited as a catalyst for dialogue in a community that had been historically divided.

Rhoden is a beneficiary recipient of various honors and awards including the New York Foundation for the Arts Award, and subsequent induction into the NYFA Hall of Fame, The Choo San Goh Award for Choreography and The Alvin Ailey Apex Award. Rhoden was nominated for a Benois De La Dance award for his libretto for *The Great Gatsby* ballet, and received an Honorary Doctorate degree from The Boston Conservatory in recognition of his extensive contributions to the field of dance. For more information, please visit dwhightrhoden.com.

About Micaela Taylor

Micaela Taylor is a professional dancer/teacher/choreographer from Los Angeles, Calif., where she trained at Marat Daukayev School of Ballet and Los Angeles County High School of the Arts. She graduated from Cornish College of the Arts and earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance in 2014. She has worked and performed with BODYTRAFFIC, Ate9 Dance Company, Zoe Scofield, Camille A. Brown and Kate Wallich. Her choreographic passion led her to found Los Angeles based contemporary dance company, The TL Collective in 2016. Her individual movement style of hip-hop combined with contemporary technique has led her to find a new way for people to move which is best described as Contemporary/Pop. Alongside the launch of The TL Collective, Taylor has been commissioned to choreograph and teach for LA Contemporary Dance Company, AMDA College, Springboard Danse Montreal, MoveNYC, Cal State Long Beach and Heidi Duckler Dance Theatre. Her work has been presented at Gelsey Kirkland Performing Arts Center, ACE Hotel, Raymond Kabaaz Theatre, Grand Performances and Odyssey Theatre Ensemble.

The TL Collective was founded by Micaela Taylor in 2016, ignited by her passion to create engaging, diverse, work. After a successful launch in LA of premiered work *Molecular Fuel*, Taylor continued to create new works that were performed throughout intimate spaces in LA including *PopMadness* (2017), *See Colour* (2018), and *ROSEWOOD* (2018). Due to rave reviews, in 2017, Taylor was commissioned to perform her work *PopMadness* in Grand Performances which further exposed her work to the greater Los Angeles community. Since then, The TL has solidified their repertoire with commissions and presentations by Grand Park, Ford Amphitheatre, The Broad Stage, The ACE hotel and Jacob's Pillow. Taylor also received the Springboard Danse Montreal EMERGE Choreographic Award in 2018. As a part of the prize, Taylor created a new work for Gibney Dance Company in their 2018/19 season, alongside Bobbi Jene Smith. She also has been commissioned by BODYTRAFFIC, and Cleo Park Robinson Dance Company to create for their upcoming seasons. The TL Collective is now on the rise as one of LA's emerging dance companies.

"A subtle spirituality emanates from her dances through an intuitive musicality that utilizes syncopation and counterpoint. Yet, even in fast, complex phrases of movement and gesture, Taylor and The TL Collective surprise in their ability to come together in virtuosic unison." – Candice Thompson, Dance Magazine.

About Doug Varone

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. Since its founding in 1986, Doug Varone and Dancers has commanded attention for its expansive vision, versatility and technical prowess. On tour, the company has performed in more than 125 cities in 45 states across the U.S. and in Europe, Asia, Canada and South America. Stages include The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center, Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), London's Queen Elizabeth Hall, Moscow's Stanislavsky Theater, Buenos Aires' Teatro San Martin, the Venice Biennale and at Jacob's Pillow, American Dance Festival and Bates Dance Festival. Varone, his dancers and designers have been honored with 11 New York Dance and Performance ("Bessie") Awards.

In the concert dance world, Varone has created a body of works globally. Commissions include the Paul Taylor American Modern Dance Company, Limón Dance 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 75 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 Berlioz'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 Theatre Club earned him a Lortel Award nomination. Recent projects include directing and choreographing MASTERVOICES production of *Dido and Aeneas* at New York'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.

Varone received his BFA from Purchase College where he was awarded the President's Distinguished Alumni Award in 2007. Numerous honors and awards include a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, an Obie Award (Lincoln Center's Orpheus and Euridice), the Jerome Robbins Fellowship at the Bogliasco Institute in Italy and two individual Bessie Awards. In 2015, he was awarded both a Doris Duke Artist Award and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Dance Guild.

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Eugene Bois & Haily Foster (BFA '23) | Photo by Rose Eichenbaum

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