

10
TEN YEARS

USC Kaufman

Glorya Kaufman School of Dance



SPRING 2025

BFA SHOWCASE

April 29-May 2

Bing Theatre

Brenan Gonzalez (BFA '25)

Photo by Lee Gumbs

SPRING 2025 **BFA SHOWCASE**

A Note from Dean Julia M. Ritter

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Spring 2025 BFA Showcase!

Each spring marks a meaningful milestone as we celebrate the close of the academic year with a dynamic performance that highlights the extraordinary range and artistry of our USC Kaufman BFA students. This moment is especially poignant for the graduating Class of 2025, as it represents one of their final opportunities to take the stage as Kaufman students. While we'll certainly miss them, we're filled with pride and anticipation for all that lies ahead in their professional journeys.

Looking forward, we are nearing a remarkable milestone: the 10th anniversary of the USC Glorya Kaufman School of Dance. In just a decade, Kaufman has evolved from a bold vision into one of the nation's leading institutions for dance education. Our alumni continue to make their mark globally, contributing their talent to the world's premier stages and creative platforms.

Tonight's program features six brand-new works, including three world premieres from our esteemed faculty: Kyle Abraham, Ebony Haswell Frazier, and Josette Wiggan. We're also excited to present new pieces by Artists-in-Residence Jillian Meyers and Jakevis Thomason, a proud Kaufman alum from the Class of 2020. Additionally, we bring you a reimagining of a Martha Graham masterpiece, staged by Elizabeth Auclair, along with an excerpt from the celebrated Jiří Kylián repertoire, set by faculty répétiteur Fiona Lummis Eddy and guest artist Urtzi Aranburu.

As we step into Kaufman's next chapter, we invite you to celebrate with us. Enjoy this unforgettable program of artistry, creativity, and passion as our students light up the stage and bring our spring semester to a stunning close.



Sincerely,

Julia M. Ritter, PhD, MFA
Dean, USC Glorya Kaufman School of Dance

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About USC Kaufman



Founded in 2012 by a transformational gift from visionary founder Glorya Kaufman, the University of Southern California created its sixth art school and, at that time, its first new school in nearly 40 years. The USC Glorya Kaufman School of Dance admitted its first class in 2015 and immediately expanded USC's unique signature as a world-class research institution with a deep commitment to the arts.

The exciting opportunity to create a new school brought the chance to rethink the professional degree for the 21st century and the role of a dance school within the greater national ecology. To fulfill this monumental intention, USC Kaufman envisioned a new model of dance education, called “The New Movement”—a hybrid and collaborative approach expressed in studio practice, music, choreography, performance, new media, and scholarship, where artistic preeminence is combined with thoughtful industry access.

By encouraging interdisciplinary and collaborative work, USC Kaufman seeks to transform dance. It embraces the artistic rigor of conservatory dance instruction with the unparalleled academic opportunity offered by one of the world's leading universities.

The program encourages students to think across boundaries and take advantage of the diverse cultures both on campus and within the Los Angeles arts community. Students approach the study of dance with a global perspective, reinforced through collaboration with national and international artists.

In addition to supporting the choreographic research of a stellar faculty, the school continues to forge relationships with some of the dance world's most innovative creators. USC Kaufman dancers have had the privilege of dancing the iconic repertory of Jiří Kylián, Ohad Naharin, and Crystal Pite, as well as working with recent Artists-in-Residence Tessandra Chavez, Peter Chu, Tyce Diorio, Justin Peck, Max Pham, Dani Rowe, Caili Quan, Toyin Sogunro, Spenser Theberge, Doug Varone, and Yin Yue, among others.

Graduates of the BFA program have secured contracts with Broadway productions, cruise ships, and dance companies including Ballet Austin, Ballet BC, Ballet Hispánico, Ballets Jazz Montréal, BalletX, Complexions Contemporary Ballet, Gibney Company, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, The Joffrey Ballet, LA Dance Project, Oregon Ballet Theatre, RUBBERBAND, Staatsballett Berlin, and Sydney Dance Company, among others. Alumni have also performed at the Academy Awards, Super Bowl, in movies and commercials, at Coachella and other music festivals, and on tour with artists like Kali Uchis, Olivia Rodrigo, and Jennifer Lopez. They have also gone on to pursue careers in choreography, arts administration, marketing, and business.



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**Congratulates
the Graduating
Class of 2025!**

STUDENT PROFILES

Scan the QR code to learn more about
USC Kaufman's current BFA students.





Celebrating **a decade** of excellence in dance

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Program

Un Ballo (excerpt)

Choreography: Jiří Kylián

Staged by: Urtzi Aranburu & Fiona Lummis Eddy

Rehearsal Assistant & Faculty Répétiteur: Bruce McCormick

Music: Maurice Ravel, *Pavane Pour Une Infante Défunte* (1910)

Costume Design: Joke Visser

Costume Recreation: Bert Henert

Lighting Design: Jiří Kylián (concept), Joop Caboort (realization)

Lighting Recreation: Nathan Scheuer

Premiere: January 17, 1991, AT&T Danstheater The Hague, the Nederlands Dans Theater 2

Performance: Dancers of the Class of 2028

Cast: April 29-30

Luke Barrett, Finnian Bassett-Kennedy, Ashley Choy, Anthony Dessables, Zuzu Duchon, Amara Duke, Lola Iglesias, Avery Jerome, Kamryn Maddox, Hannah Robertson, Dayan Robinson, Noah Schmidt, Caroline Skrable, Landon Spurbeck, Jasmine Teng, Isaiah Villegas

Cast: May 1-2

Luke Barrett, Finnian Bassett-Kennedy, Samuel Cool, Kali Knewitz, Emma Marcellana, Megan Matthieu, Holly McDowd, Hayden Mucha, Izabella Orozco, Ryan Pecorella, Dayan Robinson, Isaiah Villegas, Layla White, Daniel Young

"Un Ballo is the first piece I created for NDT 2, the junior company of Nederlands Dans Theater. It is an exercise in musicality, partnership and sensitivity in general. It is a piece without any complex emotional content. However, the composition by Maurice Ravel, which I chose for this work, was written on the theme of death. "Pavane pour une infante défunte": Ravel dedicated his "Pavane" to a young Spanish princess who died in the XVIIth century. My visual source of inspiration were Diego Velázquez' portraits of the 'infantes', the children of the Spanish royal family, among whom many died in their young age. In the vulnerable faces of the children, painted in great detail and with great affection, we can see premature sadness. Some kind of presentment of death. Their elaborate costumes are often executed with fleeting and almost nervous brushstrokes.

To see life and death presented so close to each other was shocking as well as inspiring for me.

There is nothing tragic in Un Ballo, as there is nothing tragic about death. The fact that we all will die, is the only thing we can be sure of. Everything else is uncertain. When we are born we receive a birth certificate. If we turn it around it becomes a death warrant."
—Jiří Kylián, *The Hague, April 2018*

Welcome Remarks

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Program

Hold to Keep

Choreography: Kyle Abraham
Dance Assistant: Diego Lopez
Rehearsal Assistant & Faculty Répétiteur: Thomas Ford
Music: *This Is For You* by Theo Parrish feat. Maurissa Rose
Costume Design: Kathryn Poppen
Lighting Design: Nathan Scheuer
Premiere: April 29, 2025
Performance: Dancers of the Classes of 2025 and 2026

Cast for April 29: Sam Amey, Tyler Chang, Catherine Cruise, Robert Hoffer, Jasmine Robinson, Andrea Rodriguez, Ryann Simone, Jonah Tran

Cast for April 30: Sam Amey, Tyler Chang, Catherine Cruise, Robert Hoffer, Jasmine Robinson, Andrea Rodriguez, Alexander Thomas, Jonah Tran

Cast for May 1: Ryan Amato, Travon Carter, Emmy Cheung, Emily Fluker, Brenan Gonzalez, Ambar Matos-Ortiz, Esi Samuels, Alexander Thomas

Cast for May 2: Ryan Amato, Travon Carter, Emmy Cheung, Emily Fluker, Brenan Gonzalez, Ambar Matos-Ortiz, Esi Samuels, Ryann Simone

Primary Objectives

Choreography: Jillian Meyers
Dance Assistant: Natalie Allen
Rehearsal Assistant & Faculty Répétiteur: Patrick Corbin
Music: *On Ya* by Zela Margossian Quintet; *Reddish* by Josh Johnson; *One In Seven* by Soulive; *Forecast* by Zela Margossian Quintet; Edited and mastered by Joe Berry
Costume Design: Kathryn Poppen
Lighting Design: Nathan Scheuer
Premiere: April 29, 2025
Performance: Dancers of the Classes of 2025 and 2026

Cast for April 29-30:	Red Kyson Kai Mia Snape Chelsea Correa	Yellow Carolina Centenera Arjun Kochhar	Blue Shea Hancock John Ledwith Jaelin Born
Cast for May 1-2:	Red Rhaine Marquardt Avery Zerr Irena Yin	Yellow Summer Vu Wyatt Florin	Blue Jayde Woodard Simone Peterson Emmy Berg

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Program

Ritual to the Sun from Acts of Light

Choreography: Martha Graham

Régisseur: Elizabeth Auclair

Rehearsal Assistant & Faculty Répétiteur: Holley Farmer

Music: Carl Nielsen, III. *Helios Overture, Op. 17*. Recorded by the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Herbert Blomstedt, courtesy of EMI Classics

Costume Design: Martha Graham and Halston

Lighting Design: Beverly Emmons

Lighting Recreation: Nathan Scheuer

Premiere: February 26, 1981, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, DC

Performance: Dancers of the Class of 2027

Cast for April 29-30: Chris Chun, Ashley Chung, Ellery Donlon, Sam Fine, Benjamin Jones, Belly Laird, Caroline McAleavey, Bella Mills, Garris Munoz, Michaela Ramirez, Jalen Scriven, Eloise Valero, Covin Washington, Quincy Wilson

Cast for May 1-2: Faith Aguilar, Braylon Browner, Austin Diaz, Ava La France, Emily Liu, Julia Lowe, Andrew Nash, Anthony Picarello, Ella Querry, Katie Tapalaga, Eloise Valero, Mason Walker, Mikaela Zarsky

“Thank you for all the Acts of Light which beautified a summer now past its reward.”
—Emily Dickinson

Lamentation Variations

Lamentation Variations is an event that was originally conceived to commemorate the anniversary of 9/11. It was premiered on that date in 2007. The work opens with a film of Martha Graham dancing movements from her then new, and now iconic, solo, *Lamentation Variations*. The variations that follow were developed under specific creative conditions. Each choreographer was asked to create a spontaneous movement sketch of their reaction to the Graham film, and was required to adhere to the following conditions: 10 hours of rehearsal, public domain music or silence, basic costumes and lighting design. Though it was planned to be performed on only one occasion, the audience reception for *Lamentation Variations* was such that it has become an ongoing creative project for the Company.

Lamentation (excerpt, 1943)

Choreography and Performance: Martha Graham

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Thomason Variation

Choreography: Jakevis Thomason

Rehearsal Assistant & Faculty Répétiteur: Holley Farmer

Music: Jakevis Thomason and Branden Akinyele

Costume Design: Kathryn Poppen

Lighting Design: Nathan Scheuer

Premiere: April 26, 2025, Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts, Northridge, CA

Performance: Dancers of the Classes of 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028

Cast for April 29-30: Faith Aguilar, Braylon Browner, Austin Diaz, Ava La France, Emily Liu, Julia Lowe, Andrew Nash, Anthony Picarello, Ella Querry, Katie Tapalaga, Mason Walker, Stella Wong, Mikaela Zarsky

Cast for May 1-2: Ryan Amato, Jaelin Born, Sam Cool, Anthony Dessables, Avery Jerome, Kyson Kai, Ambar Matis Ortiz, Hannah Robertson, Dayan Robinson, Jasmine Teng, Layla White, Jayde Woodard, Daniel Young

Shed the Metric /n./

Choreography: Ebony Haswell Frazier

Rehearsal Assistant & Faculty Répétiteur: Ebony Haswell Frazier

Music: Malcolm Parson: *Visions, Doves Fly, St.Charles Ave.*

Costume Design: Kathryn Poppen

Lighting Design: Nathan Scheuer

Premiere: April 29, 2025

Performance: Classes of 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028

Cast for April 29-30: Tyler Chang, Ashley Choy, Chris Chun, Ashley Chung, Catherine Cruise, Amara Duke, Hayden Mucha, Caroline Skrable, Landon Spurbeck, Mia Snape, Avery Zerr

Cast for May 1-2: Travon Carter, Carolina Centenera, Emmy Cheung, Robert Hoffer, Belly Laird, Emma Marcellana, Izabella Orozco, Ryan Pecorella, Jasmine Robinson, Jalen Scriven, Covin Washington, Irena Yin

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Love In Steps

Choreography: Josette Wiggan

Rehearsal Assistant & Faculty Répétiteur: Patrick Corbin

Music: Hot 8 Brass Band. (2007). *Love will tear us apart, Tru Thoughts*; Kokoroko. (2019). *Ti-de*, Brownswood Recordings; Huntertones. (2018). *Togo*, Resilience Music Alliance

Costume Design: Kathryn Poppen

Lighting Design: Nathan Scheuer

Premiere: April 29, 2025

Performance: Classes of 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028

Cast for April 29-May 2: Chelsea Correa, Emily Fluker, Shea Hancock, Lola Iglesias, Finnian Bassett-Kennedy, Rhaine Marquardt, Megan Matthieu, Caroline McAleavey, Bella Mills, Andrea Rodriguez, Esi Samuels, Noah Schmidt, Alexander Thomas

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KYLE ABRAHAM (Claude and Alfred Mann Endowed Professor in Dance, Choreographer, *Hold to Keep*), Founder and Artistic Director, A.I.M by Kyle Abraham (He/Him/His), has been profiled in Vanity Fair, Ebony, Harper's Bazaar, Kinfolk, O Magazine, Vogue & Vogue UK, W Magazine, among many other publications. He is an Olivier Award nominee for Best New Dance Production (2025 – An Untitled Love); Rose Prize for International Dance nominee (2025 – An Untitled Love); the proud recipient of a National Dance Critics Award for Choreography (2024 – Are You in Your Feelings / Alvin Ailey Dance Theater); Dance Magazine Award (2022); and The MacArthur Fellowship (2013). In addition to performing and developing new works for his company, Abraham has been commissioned by several renowned companies, including American Ballet Theatre, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, New York City Ballet, and The Royal Ballet. In 2024, Abraham premiered three celebrated new works, *Cassette Vol. 1* in Hamburg, Germany; *Mercurial Son* for American Ballet Theatre, and, *Dear Lord, Make Me Beautiful* at the The Park Avenue Armory, the last of which Jennifer Homans of The New York-er called an "Extraordinary Dance Memoir."

URTZI ARANBURU ADRADA (Stager, *Un Ballo*) is originally from San Sebastian, Gipuzkoa, Spain. At the age of 9, he began his ballet studies with Mentxu Medel at Thalía Ballet School in San Sebastian, Spain. At the age of 15, and during four years, he received scholarships to continue his ballet training with Luis Fuente at his Ballet School in Madrid, Spain, and graduated from the Royal High School of Drama and Dance in Madrid, Spain. He joined the Nederlands Dans Theater 2 in Den Haag, The Netherlands, in 1991 for two seasons under the direction of Gerald Tibbs. In 1993, the artistic director Jiri Kylian promoted Aranburu to the main company the Nederlands Dans Theater 1 under his direction, in which he continued to perform and tour internationally for fourteen seasons more. Urtzi has worked extensively with Jiří Kylián

and other renowned choreographers including William Forsythe, Ohad Naharin, Johan Inger, Hans van Manen, Mats Ek, and many more, creating and performing their works worldwide. From 2009 to 2013, he returned to the Nederlands Dans Theater 2 as the assistant of the artistic director Gerald Tibbs and as a Ballet Master. Since 2013 Urtzi works as a assistant for the choreographer Jiří Kylián, setting and staging his works for numerous dance companies including Nederlands Dans Theater, Lyon Opera Ballet, Les Ballets de Monte Carlo, Norwegian National Ballet, Compañía Nacional de Danza Spain, Paris Opera, Washington Ballet, Denver Ballet, Ballett Zurich, Boston Ballet, and many more.

ELIZABETH AUCLAIR (Artist-in-Residence, Répétiteur, *Ritual to the Sun from Acts of Light*) trained in New York City at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center and the Martha Graham School. She was a principal dancer with the Martha Graham Dance Company for over 16 years, performing many of Ms. Graham's seminal roles. She also danced with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, as well as numerous other companies and choreographers, and in films, both in NY and overseas. Elizabeth served as Associate Director for Graham II, Rehearsal Director for the Martha Graham Dance Company, 360 Dance, and Pearl Lang Dance Theater. She finds unique reward in staging the ballets of Martha Graham for professional companies, universities and academies worldwide, including the Dutch National Ballet, Ballet Am Rhein (Dusseldorf), National Ballet of Portugal, Point Park University, the Boston Conservatory, University of the Arts (Philadelphia), University of Illinois, and Kobe College (Japan), where she also held a three year post as visiting guest professor. Elizabeth is currently on faculty at Marymount Manhattan College, the Martha Graham School, Steps Academy NYC, and is a certified gyrotonic instructor. Martha Graham once noted, "The body says what words cannot". Elizabeth is grateful for the chance to share in the beautiful process of awakening and

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growth as dancers tap into their own life force and deeper selves through the art of dance.

PATRICK CORBIN (Associate Professor of Practice, Faculty Rehearsal Director, *Primary Objectives* and *Love In Steps*) is a celebrated dancer and choreographer whose career spans five decades and multiple dance forms. Patrick danced professionally with The Washington Ballet, ABT II, the Joffrey Ballet, the Paul Taylor Dance Company, Lar Lubovitch, and Martha Clarke. He is a recipient of the New York Performance Award (Bessie) for Sustained Achievement with the Paul Taylor Dance Company. Patrick was featured in five PBS Great Performances: Dance in America and the 1998 Academy Award-nominated feature-length documentary *Dancemaker*. Patrick has been a guest faculty member at the Conservatoire de Danse de Paris, University of California Irvine, George Mason University, SUNY Purchase, University of Kansas, University of Texas Austin, and University of Michigan and has taught professionally for American Ballet Theater, Miami City Ballet, and San Francisco Ballet. At USC Kaufman, Patrick laid the foundation for Dance and Health as an area of study, research, and practice resulting in his interdisciplinary course, DANC 140 Dance and Health: Dance and Ability in which USC students work and dance with people living with Parkinson's Disease, Down Syndrome and Autism Spectrum Disorder. CorbinDances holds the LA Moves Summer Intensive every July at the Gloria Kaufman International Dance Center. Patrick is the grateful recipient of the 2025 USC Associates Award for Excellence in Teaching.

HOLLEY FARMER (Assistant Professor of Practice, Faculty Rehearsal Director, *Ritual to the Sun from Acts of Light* and *Thomason Variation*) BFA MFA, a member of The Merce Cunningham Dance Company from 1997-2009, received the New York Dance and Performance Bessie Award for Sustained Achievement. Her performances with MDCD include a repertory of over fifty dances, and thirteen original roles created for her by Cunningham. She is described as his "Last Muse." After performing in multiple seasons at Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Paris

Opera, Théâtre de la Ville, the Barbican, and venues in 23 countries, with Twyla Tharp, she danced on Broadway originating the principal role of Babe in "Come Fly Away," for which she received an Astaire Award Nomination. In 2011, she began staging the work of Cunningham and creating her own choreographies. Her solo work has appeared at New York Live Arts, the Museum of Arts and Design, LaMama, the Joyce Theater, and Jacob's Pillow. At USC, and for the last thirteen years, in higher education, she has taught theory and practice courses and is currently enjoying a robust USC class of 59 general education students in her DANC 280 Introduction to Dance as an Art Form. She has served on the faculty at Mills College, Hunter College, Sarah Lawrence College, Nassau Community College, CSU Long Beach, and as Director and Assistant Dean at CalArts. National guest teaching and lecture engagements including Stanford University, and Southern California Institute of Architecture. Her early career was inspired by training with Hae Shik Kim, leading to positions in Theatre Ballet of Canada, Phantom of the Opera (785 performances), and The Oakland Ballet.

THOMAS FORD (Assistant Professor of Practice, Faculty Rehearsal Director, *Hold to Keep*) is an interdisciplinary contemporary dance artist and scholar. His research examines the mechanisms of identity and culture through an exploration of embodiment, choreography, and Black, queer, critical, and performance studies. Since 2016, he has collaborated with artistic partner—and husband—Steven Atwater. Using original sound scores, technology spanning mediated forms, and emergent movement vocabularies inspired by historically ostracized bodies and sci-fi folklore, they build worlds, where the social, political and cultural entangle with the aesthetics of their collective histories. Ford's choreographic work has appeared at the Joyce Theater, Symphony Space, Ailey Citigroup Theater and the Kaye Playhouse, and been presented at Next@Graham, the Peridance APEX Showcase, the Capezio A.C.E. Awards, the STEPS Performance Lab and the Joffrey Ballet School's winter and summer concerts. His writing has appeared in ELLE, Dance Magazine, Movement

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appeared in ELLE, Dance Magazine, Movement Research Performance Journal, the Brooklyn Rail, Dance Spirit—where he served as a contributing editor—Dance Teacher, the Dance Enthusiast, and CultureBot. His writing is part of a forthcoming anthology, edited by Sherrie Barr and Karen Schupp, that will be published in 2024. His performance credits include The Kennedy Center Honors, The Today Show (NBC), Debbie Allen's "Dreams," A Capitol Fourth (PBS), The Radio One Music Awards and performances with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. He has toured with Mike Minery's "Tapaholics" and the renowned D.C.-based troupe, Tappers With Attitude. He has performed Darvejon Jones' Afro-contemporary work at the Kraine Theater and La Mama Experimental Theatre Club in NYC. Ford has taught at the Joffrey Ballet School (NY), Marymount Manhattan College and Hunter College/CUNY, and serves on the editorial board of the Journal of Dance Education (JoDE). The National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA/YoungArts) recognized him as a Presidential Scholar. Ford holds a BA from Marymount Manhattan College and a MFA in dance from Hunter College/CUNY.

MARTHA GRAHAM (Choreographer, *Ritual to the Sun from Acts of Light*, *Lamentation*) TIME magazine named Martha Graham "Dancer of the Century," and People magazine named her among the female "Icons of the Century." As a choreographer, she was as prolific as she was complex. Graham created 181 ballets and a dance technique that has been compared to ballet in its scope and magnitude. Her approach to dance and theater revolutionized the art form and her innovative physical vocabulary has irrevocably influenced dance worldwide. Martha Graham's extraordinary artistic legacy has often been compared to Stanislavsky's Art Theatre in Moscow and the Grand Kabuki Theatre of Japan, for its diversity and breadth. Her legacy is perpetuated in performance by the Martha Graham Dance Company and Graham 2, and by the students of the Martha Graham School.

In 1926, Martha Graham founded her dance company and school, living and working out of a tiny Carnegie Hall studio in midtown Manhattan. In developing her technique, Martha Graham experimented endlessly with basic human movement, beginning with the most elemental movements of contraction and release. Using these principles as the foundation for her technique, she built a vocabulary of movement that would "increase the emotional activity of the dancer's body." Martha Graham's dancing and choreography exposed the depths of human emotion through movements that were sharp, angular, jagged, and direct. The dance world was forever altered by Martha Graham's vision, which has been and continues to be a source of inspiration for generations of dance and theatre artists.

EBONY HASWELL FRAZIER (Lecturer, Choreographer, *Shed the Metric /n./*) Originally from Miami, Florida, Ebony trained at The Miami Conservatory (Thomas Armour Youth Ballet) and New World School of the Arts before joining the Dance Theatre of Harlem at the invitation of the late Arthur Mitchell. She performed principal roles in works such as Apollo, Dougla, Dialogues, and Serenade. After her tenure at DTH, she later joined Complexions Contemporary Ballet and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Ebony holds a degree in Human Biology from the University of Southern California and has been a faculty member at the USC Gloria Kaufman School of Dance since 2021. She is deeply grateful to her family for their continued support.

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JIRÍ KYLIÁN (Choreographer, *Un Ballo*) The world-renowned choreographer Jiří Kylián was artistic director of Nederlands Dans Theater for nearly a quarter century. He started his dance career at the age of nine, at the School of the National Ballet in Prague. In 1962 he was accepted as a student at the Prague Conservatory. He left Prague when he received a scholarship for the Royal Ballet School in London in 1967. After this, he left to join the Stuttgart Ballet led by John Cranko. Kylián made his debut as a choreographer here with *Paradox* for the Noverre Gesellschaft. After having created three ballets for NDT (*Viewers*, *Stoolgame* and *La Cathédrale Engloutie*), Kylián became the company's artistic director in 1975 together with Hans Knill. In 1978 he put Nederlands Dans Theater on the international map with *Sinfonietta*. That same year, together with Carel Birnie, he founded NDT 2, which served as a bridge between school and professional company life and was meant to give young dancers the opportunity to develop their skills and talents and to function as a breeding ground for young talent. In 1991 he initiated NDT 3; a company that created opportunities for older dancers, above 40 years of age. This three dimensional structure was unique in the world of dance. After an extraordinary record of service, Kylián handed over the artistic leadership in 1999, but remained the company's house choreographer until December 2009. Since his last piece *Mémoires d'Oubliettes* for NDT in 2009, Kylián's creative focus has shifted to more small scale projects and films. Kylián's entire body of work counts 100 creations to date, of which 77 performed by NDT and no less than 75 were especially created for the company. Furthermore, he made pieces for companies worldwide such as the Stuttgart Ballet, the Opéra de Paris, the Munich Bayerisches Staatsballett, and the Tokyo Ballet. In 2020, NDT 1 presented the program *Sometimes, I Wonder*, which marked the return of Kylián's work. Kylián received many prestigious, international awards and honours, such as Officer of the Royal Dutch Order of Orange-Nassau, Honorary Medal of

Order for Arts and Science of the House of Orange given to him by Her Majesty Queen Beatrix, honorary doctorate of the Juilliard School in New York and the Honorary Medal from the President of the Czech Republic. In March 2019, Kylián was inaugurated as a member of the Académie des Beaux Arts in Paris. This highly prestigious recognition was complimented with the Academy's decision to change its statutes and add a special seat for "dance." To this day, Kylián's masterpieces are frequently performed by numerous dance companies and schools around the world.

FIONA LUMMIS (Lecturer, Stager & Répétiteur, *Un Ballo*) was a dancer for twenty years with Netherlands Dance Theater (1981-2001). Fiona created roles in 15 of Jiří Kylián's ballets, and in numerous works by Hans Van Manen, Nacho Duato, Ohad Naharin and Mats Ek among others. She danced featured roles in the repertoire of William Forsythe, Jerome Robbins, Lar Lubovitch and Glen Tetley. She graduated from the Elmhurst School of Dance and The Rambert School in England, and also has a comprehensive Pilates teaching certificate from B.A.S.I. (Body Arts and Science International). In 1992 she received the Gouden Theaterdans Prijs for her performances in William Forsythe's "Steptext" and in 2000 was awarded the "Oeuvre Prize" in recognition of her career in The Netherlands. Fiona can be seen on many of the Arthaus films of Kylián's ballets, including the "Black and White Ballets" and "Kaguyahime." She is also featured in 8 recordings of Hans Van Manen's ballets in his "Master of Movement" DVD collection, and is recognized as one of his Muses. Fiona works closely with the Kylián and Van Manen foundations, teaching their repertoire in colleges, schools, and companies in the US and Europe.

BRUCE MCCORMICK (Associate Professor of Practice, Faculty Rehearsal Director, *Un Ballo*) is an educator, choreographer, performer and scholar. He earned his BFA from The Juilliard School and his MFA from the University of Washington, where he was also on faculty.

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He performed in twelve countries on four continents as a member of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, the Bavarian State Ballet and the Bern Ballet, where he was a soloist and ballet master. Throughout his career, he was featured in works by ballet choreographers ranging from George Balanchine, John Cranko and Marius Petipa to contemporary choreographers Jiří Kylián, Ohad Naharin and Crystal Pite. He also served as Assistant Artistic Director of North Netherlands Dance and Guest Rehearsal Director with Ballet BC, where he assisted choreographers Roy Assaf, Andrea Miller, Emily Molnar and Medhi Walerski, among others. McCormick's choreography for the concert stage, opera, site-specific work and film has been performed throughout the Americas, Europe and Asia, and he has taught master classes for several companies including BalletX, Gibney Company and Whim W' Him. He joined the faculty at USC Kaufman in 2018 where he serves as Associate Professor of Practice.

JILLIAN MEYERS (Artist-in-Residence, Choreographer, *Primary Objectives*) grew up training in all styles of dance in Portland, Oregon. In 2004 she moved to Los Angeles to pursue her aspiration of becoming a professional dancer. During her time there she became a member of Mark Meismer's company "Evolution". She has also been an assistant to Brian Friedman, Tovarish Wilson, Mia Michaels, Wade Robson, Gil Duldulao and Mandy Moore on the hit show "So You Think You Can Dance." Jillian was also assistant choreographer with Mandy Moore on the Academy Award-winning film *La La Land*. Since 2006, Jillian has been a lead dancer for Janet Jackson. Over the past two years she has been involved with Janet's videos, overseas performances, and a variety of television appearances. She recently finished Janet's "Rock Witchu Tour". She has had the privilege of performing on "Dancing with the Stars" with Wade Robson as well as John Legend. Jillian remains a force in the Los Angeles dance scene: choreographing for major recording

artists, TV, film, and commercials; performing on stage and screen; and now teaching 'Dance for Camera' at PACE university.

KATHRYN POPPEN (Costume Design) is a Los Angeles-based theatrical and dance costume designer. She is an Associate Artist with theatre dybbuk, and her designs are featured in the current touring productions *The Villainy You Teach* and *The Merchant of Venice* (Annotated). Credits include work with Center Theatre Group, South Coast Repertory, Atlantic Theatre Company, Geffen Playhouse, Echo Theater Company, Bootleg Theater, Pasadena Playhouse and the Garry Marshall Theatre. She holds a BFA in Theatrical Design from the University of Southern California.

NATHAN W. SCHEUER (Lighting Design) is a faculty member of the USC School of Dramatic Arts and a lighting and projection designer. Select credits include designs for *The Munny*, *Tuacahn*, *Theatre Under the Stars*, *New York Opera Society*, *St. Louis Rep*, *Los Angeles Ballet*, *Barak Ballet*, *Capital Rep*, *Broadway Sacramento at Music Circus*, *Faculty Inc*, *Adirondack Theatre Festival*, *Berkshire Theatre Festival*, *Bucks County Playhouse*, *Arkansas Rep*, *TheatreSquared*, *Spectrum Dance*, *New Theatre*, and *Travis Wall's Shaping Sound*. Nathan has also had the pleasure of designing for Mandy Patinkin, Patti Lupone, Selena Gomez, Barry Manilow, and Alice Cooper, as well as companies such as *NYC Ballet*, *Paris Opera Ballet*, *Lincoln Center Festival*, *San Francisco Opera*, and *Center Theatre Group*. Proud member of USA-829.

JAKEVIS THOMASON (Artist-in-Residence, Choreographer, *Thomason Variation*) is from Greenville, South Carolina, and began his dance training at Dianne's School of Dance. He's a 2020 graduate from the University of Southern California's Kaufman School of Dance, where he trained closely with renowned faculty across a spectrum of forms, from concert to commercial work. Jakevis has performed with artists such as Lil Nas X, FKA

SPRING 2025 BFA SHOWCASE

Meet the Artists

twigs, The Weekend, and Kali Uchis. He enjoys choreographing for the camera and has had the pleasure of choreographing for vocal artists including Brandy and Beyoncé. Jakevis is now living in LA pursuing his career as a professional dancer, teacher, and choreographer.

JOSETTE WIGGAN (Choreographer, *Love In Steps*) began her dance adventure with the legendary duo, Paul and Arlene Kennedy in Los Angeles at the age of 12. A graduate of UCLA, Josette's career highlights include, the 2001 Spotlight Award winner in non-classical dance category, the 1st National Broadway Tour of 42nd Street, 2008 Bessie Award Nominee for Outstanding Performance in the Baker/Tarpaga Project, studying with Germaine Acogny at L'ecole les Sables in Dakar, Senegal and movies Idlewild, Princess and the Frog, and The Bride. Alongside her brother, Joseph Wiggan, she was part of two original casts of Cirque du Soleil's Banana Shpeel and Michael Jackson: The Immortal World Tour from 2009-2013. In collaboration with grammy nominated jazz trumpeter Keyon Harrold, Josette created her first evening length work entitled Praise: The Inevitable Fruit of Gratitude. It had its debut with the Dorrance Dance Cast at Jacob's Pillow in 2021. A co-creator and co-choreographer for a Christmas work entitled, ...The Nutcracker Suite... Josette, Michelle Dorrance and Hannah Heller created the very first tap dance Nutcracker, that has played at houses including the Joyce Theater, Kennedy Center, The White House (under the invitation of First Lady Jill Biden) and the Soraya. In 2023, Josette began her own tap company, Josette Wiggan Presents... debuting new works entitled, On Solid Ground: A Celebration of Black Joy and Freedom In Our America and Threshing Floor: A Place of Meditation and Melody, which had its debut at the Joyce Theater for the American Dance Platform Festival in 2024. In short, Josette is a Kennedy legacy holder, sought-after educator/ choreographer/ performer and can be seen teaching at festivals around the world. In addition, Josette is currently a Lecturer of Dance at

USC teaching Vernacular Jazz and Tap Dance at the Glorlya Kaufman School of Dance.

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ARJUN KOCHHAR (BFA '25)

Photo by Rose Eichenbaum

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10th Anniversary Gala

May 3, 2025

Glorya Kaufman International Dance Center

Commencement 2025

May 15-16, 2025

Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum and Bovard Auditorium

*Performance/event dates, times, and locations
always subject to change. Visit kaufman.usc.edu for more.*

