

USC GLORYA KAUFMAN SCHOOL OF DANCE
PRESENTS

SPRING 2026

SHOWCASE

BFA

APRIL 30-MAY 2 / BING THEATRE

Featuring Works by
USC Kaufman Faculty and Artists-In-Residence

FREE ADMISSION. RSVP REQUIRED.



POSTER IMAGE: KYSON KAI (BFA '26) / PHOTO BY LEE GUMBS

10
TEN YEARS

USC Kaufman



HONORING
GLORYA KAUFMAN
A VISIONARY PATRON OF DANCE

We honor Glorvya Kaufman for her extraordinary passion, vision, and generosity that have forever transformed the world of dance. Her journey began in childhood, dancing on her father's toes in their Detroit home—a moment that sparked a lifelong love for movement and expression.

Through the Glorvya Kaufman Foundation, established in 1983, she has profoundly enriched the cultural fabric of Los Angeles and beyond. Her philanthropic legacy includes Glorvya Kaufman Presents at The Music Center, a landmark gift to The Juilliard School, and the transformation of a synagogue into a theater and learning space for children with autism.

Her most groundbreaking achievement came with the founding of the USC Glorvya Kaufman School of Dance and the Glorvya Kaufman International Dance Center—one of the nation's leading hubs for dance education. As *The Los Angeles Times* declared, "The new biggest name in dance is Glorvya Kaufman."

More than a benefactor, she was a catalyst for change. Her unwavering belief in the power of dance to uplift, connect, and inspire is felt in every step her students take. We celebrate Glorvya Kaufman's legacy—a beacon of generosity, creativity, and enduring impact.



A NOTE FROM DEAN **JULIA M. RITTER**

Welcome to our Spring 2026 BFA Showcase.

We are pleased to unveil four world premieres and an excerpt of a contemporary masterpiece. New creations include works by Princess Grace Award winner Houston Thomas, Beijing Dance Theater co-founder and artistic director Yuanyuan Wang, pop star confidant and creative director Jana Thompson, and USC Glorya Kaufman School of Dance professor and USC Associates Award recipient Patrick Corbin. We are also pleased to present a special excerpt by the world-renowned Jiří Kylián, staged by professor Fiona Lummis.

As always, the Spring Showcase represents both an ending and a beginning as it marks the final USC Kaufman performance in the careers of our seniors. This year's graduating class of 2026 has shown a willingness to go beyond its artistic limits in pursuit of excellence. While this showcase is the culmination of their Kaufman performance careers, it also signals the start of their professional lives. Great things are ahead for all of them. I hope you will join me in applauding this cohort.

I wish you a wonderful performance experience. In the words of our late founder, Glorya Kaufman: "Dance spreads joy, crosses borders and makes life rich. It is important for the world."



A NOTE FROM **JACKIE KOPCSAK**

ASSISTANT DEAN OF PROGRAMMING
& SPECIAL PROJECTS

Thank you for joining us for the Spring 2026 BFA Showcase — and for being part of a truly special moment in our School’s history. This is the final performance of USC Kaufman’s 10th Anniversary Season, and we have shaped this program to honor the traditions that define us, embrace the global voices that expand us, and send our graduating class forward with joy.

Programming a dance evening is, at its heart, an act of storytelling. Each work is a chapter, and the order in which we arrange them shapes the journey we invite our audience to take. So how do we tell a story that reflects USC Kaufman at ten years old?

At the School’s founding, the two technical pillars of our students’ training were ballet and hip hop. While contemporary dance is often “home base” for many of our dancers, our commitment to these founding forms has never wavered. It feels right, then, that in this anniversary Showcase, we begin by returning to our roots and championing choreographers who are pushing these genres in thrilling new directions.

We open with *Echo Sax*, created by Princess Grace Award-winning choreographer Houston Thomas. Set to a score of solo saxophone, the music’s driving arpeggios and atmospheric reverberation propel Thomas’ new ballet with kinetic drive and kaleidoscopic complexity. Then, Jana Thompkins, Creative Director and Choreographer for Mariah Carey,

presents *Lite Werk*, a dynamic new hip hop work, rich in musical texture.

After intermission, the second half of our program turns to contemporary dance and three distinct, powerful voices: Patrick Corbin, Yuanyuan Wang, and Jiří Kylián.

Patrick Corbin, Associate Professor of Dance, has been part of USC Kaufman's journey from the very beginning. His deep commitment to the work and legacy of modern dance icon Paul Taylor is woven into the DNA of the School. Patrick has shared that his new creation, *Owed*, is at once a wordplay on Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* and a personal reflection on what he owes his mentor and the next generation of dance artists.

We are fortunate to have had a year rich in international collaboration — from our work with French choreographers and students from the Paris Conservatory last fall, to the honor of welcoming Yuanyuan Wang, Artistic Director of the Beijing Dance Theater, this spring. Yuanyuan and her wonderful assistant Yufei Han engaged our dancers in an extraordinarily rich process and their warmth and generosity of spirit have moved our entire community.

We close with an excerpt from Czech choreographer Jiří Kylián's *Whereabouts Unknown*, staged by faculty member Fiona Lummis. The sole work of repertory on an otherwise all-new program, the demanding and complex time signature and movement vocabulary presents a thrilling challenge for the dancers. Performed here by USC Kaufman juniors and seniors, *Whereabouts...* also serves as a joyful send-off for the Class of 2026.

On behalf of my Repertory & Performance colleagues and the USC Kaufman Artistic Advisory Committee, thank you again for sharing this milestone with us. Ten years of movement, of growth, of extraordinary young artists — and still so much more to come. Now, let's dance!

10

TEN YEARS

USC Kaufman



CAROLINA CENTENERA

CLASS OF 2026

Photo Credit: Eva Nys

10TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

SPRING 2026 BFA SHOWCASE

Please note that this production contains flashing lights and haze.

Glorya Kaufman: Building a Legacy of Dance

Welcome Remarks

ECHO SAX WORLD PREMIERE

Choreography: **Houston Thomas**

Music: **"Echo Sax" by Caleb Arrendondo**

Faculty Rehearsal Director: **Ebony Haswell Frazier**

Costume Design: **Bert Henert & Kathryn Poppen**

Lighting Design: **Brandon Baruch**

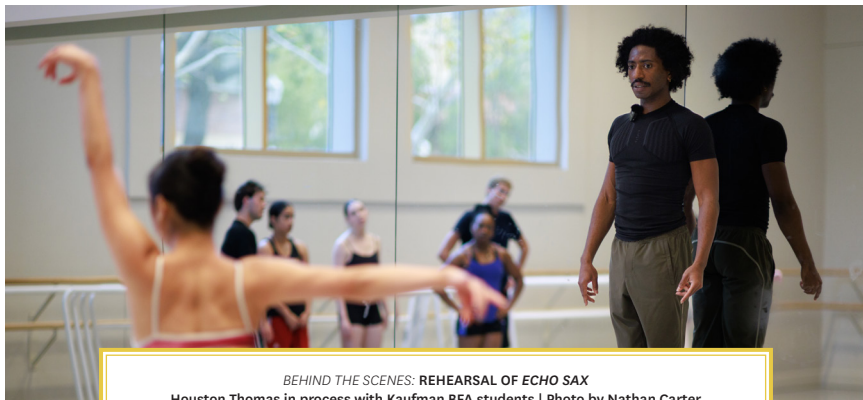
April 30th at 7:30 PM & May 1st at 2:00 PM:

Luke Barrett, Carolina Centenera, Christian de Jesus, Amara Duke, Adin Joseph, Emma Marcellana, Addison Middleton, Noah Roudreiw, Simone Peterson, Izabella Orozco, Mason Walker, Covin Washington

May 1st at 7:30 PM & May 2nd at 2:00 PM:

Travon Carter, Emmy Cheung, Chris Chun, Chloe Hennessy, Adin Joseph, Kali Knewitz, Kamryn Maddox, Samiyah Norris, Noah Roudreiw, Noah Schmidt, Mason Walker, Irena Yin

Understudy: **Cameron Kennedy**



BEHIND THE SCENES: REHEARSAL OF ECHO SAX

Houston Thomas in process with Kaufman BFA students | Photo by Nathan Carter

10TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

SPRING 2026 BFA SHOWCASE

LITE WERK

WORLD PREMIERE

Choreography: **Jana Thompkins**

Music: **03 Cut Killer Show - Rim K - Illegal Radio, 4 My People by Missy Elliot, Don't Hold the Wall by Justin Timberlake. Track mixed by Archie T Comma.**

Faculty Rehearsal Director: **Moncell Durden**

Costume Design: **Kathryn Poppen**

Lighting Design: **Brandon Baruch**

April 30th at 7:30 PM & May 1st at 2:00 PM:

Caleb Abea, Finn Bassett-Kennedy, Emmy Berg, Cat Cruise, Zuzu Duchon, Maliah Howard, Dayan Robinson, Dilianny Solano, Jasmine Teng, Isaiah Villegas, Jayde Woodard

May 1st at 7:30 PM & May 2nd at 2:00 PM:

Canaan Blansit, Kameron Couch, Ellery Donlon, Lucas Go, Lola Iglesias, Avery Jerome, Sophia Luu, Michaela Ramirez, Keira Redpath, Dayan Robinson, Kayla Uwagbai, Daniel Young

Understudy: **Daniel Young**

Intermission

OWED

WORLD PREMIERE

Choreography: **Patrick Corbin in serious collaboration with the dancers after Paul Taylor**

Music: **Symphonie No. 9 in D Minor, Op. 125 "Chorale": IV a-c Ludwig van Beethoven**

Costume Design: **Kathryn Poppen**

Lighting Design: **Brandon Baruch**

April 30th at 7:30 PM & May 1st at 2:00 PM:

Dayan Robinson

Canaan Blansit, Christian de Jesus, Maliah Howard, Lola Iglesias, Addison Middleton, Izabella Orozco, Kristina Poon, Noah Prim, Sky Russell, Dilianny Solano, Lana Zecchino

May 1st at 7:30 PM & May 2nd at 2:00 PM:

Jayde Woodard

Canaan Blansit, Christian de Jesus, Georgia Ehrlich, Lucas Go, Chloe Hennessy, Maliah Howard, Lola Iglesias, Avery Jerome, Samiyah Norris, Izabella Orozco, Kayla Uwagbai, Lana Zecchino

Understudy & Rehearsal Assistant: **Nyllah Allen**

10TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

SPRING 2026 BFA SHOWCASE

BORDERLINE

WORLD PREMIERE

Choreography: **Yuanyuan Wang**

Music: **"Step Back" and "Borderline" by Recondite**

Rehearsal Assistant: **Yufei Han**

Faculty Rehearsal Director: **Thomas Ford**

Costume Design: **Kathryn Poppen**

Lighting Design: **Brandon Baruch**

April 30th at 7:30 PM & May 1st at 2:00 PM:

**Caleb Abea, Luke Barrett, Ellery Donlon, Zuzu Duchon, Trey Gordon, Emma Marcellana,
Megan Matthieu, Caroline McAleavey, Taylor Patricio, Noah Schmidt, Jasmine Teng**

May 1st at 7:30 PM & May 2nd at 2:00 PM:

**Caleb Abea, Finn Bassett-Kennedy, Kameron Couch, Amara Duke, Adin Joseph,
Cameron Kennedy, Kali Knewitz, Sophia Luu, Kamryn Maddox, Keira Redpath, Isaiah Villegas**

Understudy: **Daniel Young**



BEHIND THE SCENES: REHEARSAL OF **BORDERLINE**

Yuanyuan Wang, Artistic Director of Beijing Dance Theater | Photo by Nathan Carter

10TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

SPRING 2026 BFA SHOWCASE

WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN (EXCERPT)

Choreography: **Jiří Kylián**

Assistant to the Choreographer: **Fiona Lummis**

World Premiere: **June 1, 1993 by Nederlands Dans Theater (NDT1) AT&T Danstheater, The Hague, the Netherlands**

Music: **Steve Reich, “The Four Sections” Part IV (1987); Michael de Roo, “Orignang” (1993), Interludes for Percussion**

Original Costume Design: **Joke Visser**

Original Lighting: **Michael Simons**

Light Adaptation (section): **Kess Tjebbes**

April 30th at 7:30 PM & May 1st at 2:00 PM:

Ryan Amato, Jaelin Born, Travon Carter, Tyler Chang, Cat Cruise, Kyson Kai, John Ledwith, Rhaine Marquardt, Ella Melideo, Andrea Rodriguez, Kali Sayles, Jalen Scriven, Lincoln Seymour, Mia Snape, Covin Washington

May 1st at 7:30 PM & May 2nd at 2:00 PM:

Emmy Berg, Travon Carter, Carolina Centenera, Tyler Chang, Emmy Cheung, Chris Chun, Emily Fluker, Kyson Kai, John Ledwith, Simone Peterson, Lincoln Seymour, Mason Walker, Irena Yin, Avery Zerr

Understudies: **Emily Liu, Michaela Ramirez**



BEHIND THE SCENES: REHEARSAL OF WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN
Emmy Berg '26 | Photo by Nathan Carter

10TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

SPRING 2026 BFA SHOWCASE | ABOUT THE ARTISTS

PATRICK CORBIN (*Associate Professor of Practice; Choreographer, Owed*) danced professionally with The Washington Ballet, Kansas City Ballet, ABT II, The Joffrey Ballet, the Paul Taylor Dance Company, Lar Lubovitch and Martha Clarke. He was featured in five PBS *Great Performances* and in the 1998 Academy Award-nominated documentary *Dancemaker*. He is a recipient of the New York Performance Award (Bessie) for sustained achievement with the Paul Taylor Dance Company. He received an MFA in dance from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. At USC, Professor Corbin 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.

JIRÍ KYLIÁN (*Choreographer, Whereabouts Unknown*) The world-renowned choreographer (Czechoslovakia, 1947) was artistic director of Nederlands Dans Theater for nearly a quarter century. He started his dance career at age 9 at the School of the National Ballet in Prague. In 1962, he was accepted as a student at the Prague Conservatory. He left Prague after receiving a scholarship to the Royal Ballet School in London in 1967. He then joined the Stuttgart Ballet, led by John Cranko. Kylián made his debut as a choreographer there with *Paradox* for the Noverre Gesellschaft. After creating three ballets for Nederlands Dans Theater (*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. It was intended to give young dancers the opportunity to develop their skills and talents and to function as a training ground for emerging artists. In 1991, he initiated NDT 3, a company that created opportunities for dancers older than 40. This three-dimensional structure was unique in the dance world. After an extraordinary

tenure, Kylián handed over artistic leadership in 1999 but remained the company's house choreographer until December 2009. Since his last piece, *Mémoires d'Oubliettes*, for Nederlands Dans Theater in 2009, Kylián's creative focus has shifted to smaller-scale projects and films. Kylián's body of work includes 100 creations to date, 77 of which were performed by Nederlands Dans Theater, and 75 created specifically for the company. He also made works for companies worldwide, including the Stuttgart Ballet, the Paris Opera Ballet, the Bavarian State Ballet in Munich and the Tokyo Ballet. In 2020, NDT 1 presented the program *Sometimes, I wonder*, marking the return of Kylián's work. Kylián has received many prestigious international awards and honors, including Officer of the Royal Dutch Order of Orange-Nassau, the Honorary Medal of the Order for Arts and Science of the House of Orange, awarded by Queen Beatrix, an honorary doctorate from 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 recognition was complemented by the academy's decision to change its statutes and add a special seat for dance. To this day, Kylián's works are frequently performed by dance companies and schools around the world.

HOUSTON THOMAS (*Artist-in-Residence; Choreographer, Echo Sax*) Born and raised in Chicago, Illinois, Houston Thomas embarked on his dance journey through the Joffrey Ballet Outreach Program under the tutelage of Pierre Locket. His passion for dance led him to further his education at the Joffrey Ballet Academy of Dance upon its inception in 2008, while concurrently honing his skills at the Chicago High School for the Arts (ChiArts) under Lisa Johnson-Willingham. In the summer of 2011, Thomas attended the School of American Ballet Summer Course, which later invited him to join as a full-time student for the subsequent

winter term. After graduating from the School of American Ballet in 2013, he found his artistic home with the Dresden Semperoper Ballet, rising to second soloist by 2018. His repertoire includes pivotal roles in acclaimed works by George Balanchine, Sir Frederick Ashton, William Forsythe and David Dawson, among others. His performance in Justin Peck's *Heatscape* earned him a "Best Male Performance" nomination at the 2018 Dance Europe Critics' Choice Awards. After a decade with Semperoper Ballet, Thomas gave his final performance during the 2022–23 season, marking a transition to focus exclusively on his choreographic career. His choreographic work gained recognition in 2018 with his debut piece, *Moonlit Variants*, presented at the Semperoper Ballet's Young Choreographers event. He was later commissioned to collaborate on *Alice—Eine Reise ins Wunderland* for Semper Zwei. Venturing into the digital realm, Thomas collaborated with New York City Ballet dancers Mimi Staker and Sebastian Villarini-Velez to create the film *An Afternoon of Angelic Voices*, conducted entirely over Zoom for the New York Choreographic Institute. He was later invited to the 2021 and 2023 fall sessions, creating *The Return Studies* and 001.3, featuring dancers from New York City Ballet and the School of American Ballet. In July 2022, Thomas premiered *Follow the White Rabbit* at the Young Emergent Choreographers Contest in Biarritz, France, receiving a commission to create *SKYWATCHER* for the Opéra National de Bordeaux. Since then, he has created works for schools and companies including The Washington Ballet, Cincinnati Ballet, The Juilliard School, ABT Studio Company, Ailey II, BalletCollective, the Grainger Academy of The Joffrey Ballet, Ballet San Antonio, the School of American Ballet, Point Park University, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School, Palucca University of Dance Dresden and the Hamptons Dance Project. His works have also been performed by Ballet 22 and Columbia Repertory Ballet. In addition to his creative work, Thomas has taught at Steps on Broadway, The Juilliard School, Ailey II and the International City School of Ballet. In recognition of his artistic achievements and emerging choreographic impact, he was named a recipient of the 2025 Princess Grace Award.

JANA THOMPSONS/THE NU CREATIVES (*Artist-in-Residence; Choreographer, Lite Werk*) "We aren't green, we're just waiting on the green light." That's the motto of the newly formed

Nu Creatives — but with more than 20 years of collective experience in the performance industry, there's nothing new about their talent. Before stepping into the spotlight, TNC honed its craft as trusted assistants to some of the industry's most celebrated choreographers, including Aakomon Jones, Jamaica Craft and Galen Hooks. Now, the group runs its own show — literally — serving as creative director and choreographer for one of the world's most iconic pop stars, Mariah Carey. Selected for its energy and versatility, TNC masterminded Carey's most recent Las Vegas residency, taking audiences on a story-driven journey told through a blend of song and movement. Billboard reviewer Tim Chan described it as "one ride that you never wanted to end." From there, TNC choreographed Carey's Christmas tour and, most recently, her 2025 BET Awards performance, where she debuted her latest single, *Type Dangerous*. They also brought that single to life in its official music video and contributed to new artist Jane Hancock's *Stare at Me*, featuring Anderson .Paak. With a track record like this, Nu Creatives isn't waiting on the green light anymore — it is the green light.

YUANYUAN WANG (*Artist-in-Residence; Choreographer, Borderline*) is co-founder and artistic director of the Beijing Dance Theater (BDT). She is an honorary fellow of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and a board member of the Beijing Dancers Association. Wang is an internationally celebrated modern dance and contemporary ballet choreographer. She holds degrees from the Beijing Dance Academy and the California Institute of the Arts School of Dance. Since co-founding BDT in 2008, Wang has led the company in creating numerous works in contemporary ballet. Of particular note are her choreographic works *Diary of Empty Space*, *Uncertain Space*, *Haze*, *Prism*, *The Color of Love*, *Harvester*, *Martlet*, *Stirred from a Dream*, *Golden Lotus*, *Wild Grass*, *Hamlet*, *The Nightingale and the Rose*, *37.2 Degrees*, *Poison*, *Requiem*, *A Leaf in the Storm* and *White Snake · Revelations*. She has also directed stage adaptations of Ibsen's *The Lady from the Sea* and Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*. Wang was resident choreographer at the National Ballet of China and a guest choreographer at the Royal Danish Ballet, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, New York City Ballet, Thüringer Staatsballett, Vanemuine Ballet in Estonia, Shanghai Ballet, Liaoning Ballet and Tianjin Ballet. Her choreography credits include *Raise the Red*

Lantern for the National Ballet of China, *The Color of Love* for the Royal Danish Ballet, *Early Spring* for the Shanghai Opera House, *Moorland Elegies* for Vanemuine Ballet in Estonia and multiple modern dance works. Wang has received best choreography awards at the French International Dance Competition, the Varna International Ballet Competition, the USA International Ballet Competition in Jackson, Mississippi, the Moscow International Ballet Competition and the Shanghai International Ballet Competition. She has taught master classes at the Mark Morris Dance Center, the Kennedy Center, the University of Chicago, Sadler's Wells, Theater Bonn, the National Theatre of Iceland, the Cervantes Arts Festival, the Israeli Opera, Washington Dance Center, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, the Beijing Dance Academy, the California Institute of the Arts and the USC Gloria Kaufman School of Dance. Wang served as director and choreographer of the opening ceremonies of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and the 2022 Beijing Olympic Winter Games. She has served on judging panels for the Seoul International Dance Competition, the China Lotus Awards modern dance category, the NCPA International Ballet and Choreography Competition and the Shanghai International Arts Festival Rising Artists Works. She is also director of dance for the China Performing Arts Agency Theaters.

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.

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Costume Technician:

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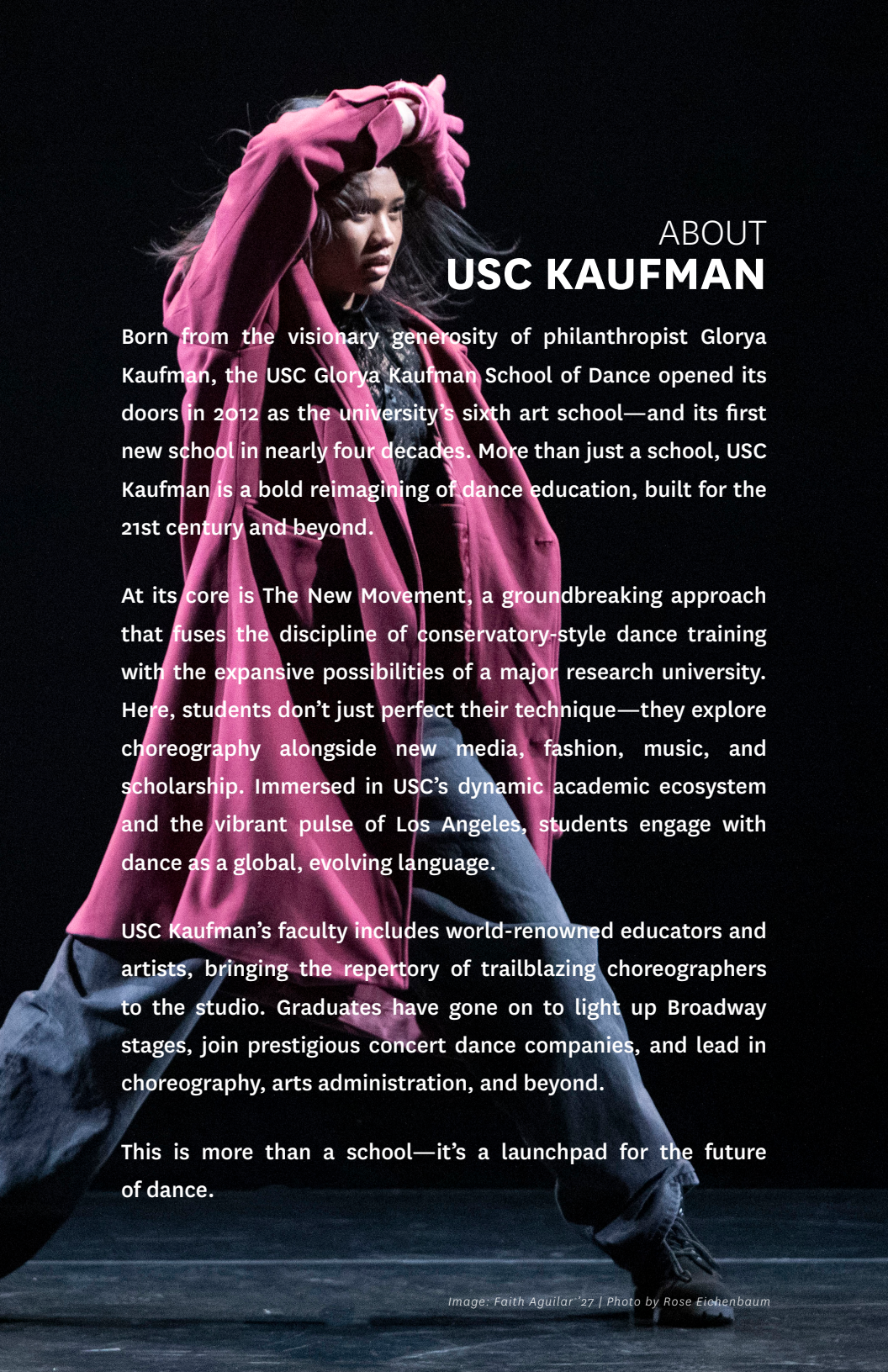
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ABOUT **USC KAUFMAN**

Born from the visionary generosity of philanthropist Gloria Kaufman, the USC Gloria Kaufman School of Dance opened its doors in 2012 as the university's sixth art school—and its first new school in nearly four decades. More than just a school, USC Kaufman is a bold reimagining of dance education, built for the 21st century and beyond.

At its core is The New Movement, a groundbreaking approach that fuses the discipline of conservatory-style dance training with the expansive possibilities of a major research university. Here, students don't just perfect their technique—they explore choreography alongside new media, fashion, music, and scholarship. Immersed in USC's dynamic academic ecosystem and the vibrant pulse of Los Angeles, students engage with dance as a global, evolving language.

USC Kaufman's faculty includes world-renowned educators and artists, bringing the repertory of trailblazing choreographers to the studio. Graduates have gone on to light up Broadway stages, join prestigious concert dance companies, and lead in choreography, arts administration, and beyond.

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10 || USCKaufman
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