



ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

E.E. Balcos, Professor of Dance and Filipino-American trained with modern dance pioneer Hanya Holm and began practicing contact improvisation in 1982. He has performed and choreographed for over 35 years dancing for numerous well-known choreographers and has presented his work nationally and internationally. He maintained an artistic collaborative partnership with composer John Allemeier for over 10 years and their work, *Deep Water: The Murder Ballads* was produced at the Knight Theater in Charlotte. He recently presented and performed at numerous venues including several national Annual Body-Mind Centering Conferences, the Somatic Dance Conference & Performance Festival in Geneva, New York, the Dance and Somatic Practices Conference in Coventry, UK; the Body IQ Festival in Berlin, Germany; and the International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association conference. He is also a company member of Movement Migration and has performed in Charlotte, New York City, Pietrasanta, Italy, and Campeche, Mexico.

Audrey Baran (she / her) is a Filipina-American dance maker, performer, and educator. She holds a MFA in Dance from Hollins University and a BA in Dance and Graduate Certificate in Anti-Racism in Urban Education from UNC Charlotte, where she is the Visiting Assistant Professor of Dance. Baran is the founder / director of Baran Dance and a selected choreographer for Joffrey Ballet Academy's Winning Works 2022 and Charlotte Ballet's *Innovative: Direct from the LAB* 2021. She was the 2019 UNC Charlotte Dance Distinguished Alum, an ASC Creative Renewal Fellow, and has presented work through Charlotte International Arts Festival, Richmond Dance Festival, Sites in the City, FEMMEfest, NDEO Conference, Bill Evans Somatic Dance Conference, NCDF, Tobacco Road Dance Productions, Triangle Dance Project, Ladyfest CLT, Charlotte Dance Festival and more. As a 500-hour Registered Yoga Teacher, Baran thrives on sharing her research on movement and mindfulness throughout the Queen City and beyond.

Chelsea Brtis (her/they) is assistant professor of digital illustration at University of North Carolina at Charlotte. They received a Bachelor of Architecture from Iowa State University and an MFA in Arts, Technology, and Emerging Communication from the University of Texas at Dallas. In their research, they interrogate topics such as environmental politics, animal-human relations, and inclusive representation through game development.

Steven Bryant's music is chiseled in its structure and intent, fusing lyricism, dissonance, silence, technology, and humor into lean, skillfully-crafted works that enthrall listeners and performers alike.

"His compositional virtuosity is evident in every bar." – John Corigliano

Winner of the ABA Ostwald award and three-time winner of the NBA Revelli Award, Steven Bryant's music for wind ensemble has reshaped the genre. A prolific composer, his substantial catalogue of music is regularly performed throughout the world. Recently, his *Ecstatic Waters* was premiered by the Minnesota Orchestra to unanimous, rapturous acclaim. The son of a professional trumpeter and music educator, he strongly values music education, and his creative output includes a number of works for young and developing musicians.

Rebecca Buntrock is an Architectural Engineer (PE) who joined Silman in 2010 and was promoted to Senior Associate in 2021. As a studio leader, she has managed a variety of projects for all types of building construction and has a special expertise in historic preservation and existing buildings. She was the sixth Robert Silman Fellow for Preservation Engineering at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Buntrock is active in industry organizations and currently serves as the President of the Association for Preservation Technology, Northeast Chapter (APTNE).

Born in the Sunflower State, **Jessica Burke (J.B.)** is a figurative artist and educator living and working in North Carolina. She is an Associate Professor of Art and Foundations Coordinator at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Working in both traditional and digital drawing media, she focuses on concerns at the intersection of identity, popular culture, and mass media. Her drawings have been published in Manifest's *International Drawing Annual (INDA) 13*, Studio Visit Magazine and in North Light Book's *Strokes of Genius 9: The Best of Drawing*. Her work has been included in competitive group and solo exhibitions nationally and internationally that include the Mint Museum in Charlotte, North Carolina; the Florida State University Museum of Fine Arts in Tallahassee, Florida; the Toshima Gallery in Tokyo, Japan; the LuXun Academy of Fine Arts in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, China; the Élysees Modern and Contemporary Art Fair in Paris, France and the Kepco Plaza Gallery Museum in Seoul, South Korea.

Carrollton, Georgia native, **Katahj Copley (he/him/his)** premiered his first work, *Spectra*, in 2017 and hasn't stopped composing since. As of 2017, Katahj has written over 100 works, including pieces for chamber ensembles, large ensembles, wind ensembles, and orchestra. His compositions have been performed and commissioned by universities, organizations, and professional ensembles, including the Cavaliers Brass, Carroll Symphony Orchestra, California Band Director Association, Admiral Launch Duo, and the Atlanta Wind Symphony. Katahj has also received critical acclaim internationally with pieces being performed in Canada, the United Kingdom, Japan, China, and Australia. Katahj received two Bachelor of Music degrees from the University of West Georgia in Music Education and Composition in 2021. He is currently studying composition with Omar Thomas at the University of Texas at Austin.

Aside from composing, Katahj is an excited educator who teaches young musicians the joy of discovering music and why music is a phenomenal language.

CarlosAlexis Cruz holds an MFA in Physical Theatre (2007) from the Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theatre where he studied a range of movement techniques including Commedia dell'Arte, Laban, Lecoq-based theatre dynamics, Alexander Technique, as well as an extensive voice training in the Linklater voice method.

Cruz is the 2014 Arts and Science Council McColl Award-winner with which he developed a community-powered contemporary circus company/show, the Nouveau Sud project, from and about the city of Charlotte and the evolving concept of what is often referred to as the New South. The Nouveau Sud project had its debut production in April 2016, and it has been an ongoing initiative, with shows in 2017 and 2018. In 2019, Nouveau Sud received a \$25,000 Celebrate Charlotte Arts grant from the Knight Foundation and in 2020 received the prestigious Creation and Touring Grant from the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA).

Jonathan Dessi-Olive is a researcher, designer, and educator who joined the Department of Architecture at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in 2022. In his role as an Assistant Professor, Jonathan teaches architecture design studios, structures, and construction research seminars that take a critical approach to technology. He is also the director and founder of the MycoMatters Lab, a design and research practice that develops novel applications of fungi-based materials in structural design, architectural acoustics, and sculpture. Through interdisciplinary collaborations with architects, artists, engineers, biologists, farmers, economists, and students, the Lab's work contributes to the broad disciplinary areas of sustainable building technology, architectural acoustics, and computational design.

Jonah Elrod is a composer who researches cycles and signals from the Earth and incorporates them into his music. His works are inspired by and engage with issues surrounding our environment and human perception of the natural world. His music has been performed at many new music festivals including the Society of Composers, Inc. National Conference, the John Donald Robb Composers Symposium, the New Music on the Bayou Festival, the Hot Air Music Festival in San Francisco, the TUTTI Festival, the New Music Gathering, New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival, and the New Gallery Series in Cambridge, MA. He is currently a visiting professor of composition at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and is the chair of the Iowa Composers Forum. He earned his Ph.D. in music composition from the University of Iowa where he also served as an associate director of the electronic music studios.

Heather D. Freeman is a Professor of Art in Digital Media in the Department of Art & Art History at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She holds a BA in Fine Art and German Studies from Oberlin College (1997), an MFA in Studio Art from Rutgers University (2000), and has taught at Charlotte since 2006. Freeman has created work and taught a range of classes since 2001 in diverse digital technologies and is the author of *The Moving Image Workshop: Introducing animation, motion graphics and visual effects in 45 practical projects*, published by Fairchild Press, an imprint of Bloomsbury Academic. Freeman's artworks in print, film, and

interactive media combine traditional and digital technologies to weave together the symbolic forms of science, mythology, magic, and popular culture.

Kim Jones is an Associate Professor in Dance at UNC Charlotte, a Régisseur for the Martha Graham Center and artistic director of an dance collective [Movement Migration](#). She is Korean-American, born and raised in NYC. This summer Jones received an NEH for research at The Newberry Library. She is a two-time NEA Art grant recipient. Jones danced with the Martha Graham Dance Company, The Metropolitan Opera, and was a principal dancer in US National Broadway tours. Choreographer Paul Taylor offered *Tracer* (1962), as the subject of a scholarly reconstruction by Jones with performances at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and last June at the Joyce Theater in NY. She also re-imagined *Imperial Gesture* for the Martha Graham Company, it premiered at the Knight Theater followed by a performance at the Joyce theater and toured with the Graham Company. Jones' most recent publication is in *Dance Research Journal*, Palgrave, in *Dance Education in Practice*. For full Bio: <https://coaa.charlotte.edu/people/kim-jones>

Master Kie (Kiera N. Lewis) has been producing music since the age of 12. Formally known as DQ, the Dungeon Queen, for her dark and eerie tones, Kie transformed her sound into a fusion of hip-hop, jazz, classical, soul, and R&B into one unique sound! To this day Master Kie continues to develop her own style and work alongside other artists to make a name for herself! Her latest hobby includes taking various acapellas from looperman.com and producing tracks, a few are available for listening in her profile. Now, become a fan to jump aboard the journey or just to show some support! <https://www.reverbnation.com/masterkie>

Hunter Kopczynski (he/him) serves as Director of Bands and Assistant Professor of music at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, where he conducts the UNC Charlotte Wind Ensemble and teaches courses in conducting and music education. Dr. Kopczynski completed his graduate degrees at Michigan State University, where he held instructional and musical responsibilities with each of the concert and athletic bands and served the Graduate School as a Leadership Fellow. Prior to graduate study, he taught middle and high school music in Virginia. There he successfully led high school and middle school bands in the Roanoke County Schools and most recently for six years in the Williamsburg-James City County Schools.

Kopczynski earned the Doctor of Musical Arts and Master of Music degrees in Wind Conducting from Michigan State University. His principal conducting teachers were Kevin L. Sedatole and Travis J. Cross. He is an advocate for the expansion, development, and diversification of the wind repertoire and a supporter of music education in the schools. In his research and teaching, Dr. Kopczynski is especially interested in the intersection of experience and curriculum to influence ensemble culture.

A visionary and creator, **Elizabeth Kowalski** is an entrepreneur who designs innovative experiences in music and business. She also plays, creates, and teaches music as a multi-instrumentalist (piano/flute) and vocalist. With a love of adventure, Elizabeth works to tie her geographical exploration to her musical research and fieldwork back home in Charlotte, NC.

Experiencing, learning, and performing with other musicians from city to city and in 20+ countries she has forged her own journey in relevance, passion, music scene development, and community-building. She has produced internationally-attended music festivals, hundreds of concerts, played flute/piano and sang on albums, started a Charlotte-based contemporary music organization (Charlotte New Music - CNM), founded an orchestra (Your Neighborhood Orchestra - YNO), produced conferences, workshops, fundraisers, and community events. Find more information about Elizabeth at www.themusicqueen.com

Dr. **Ming-Chun Lee** is an Associate Professor in the School of Architecture at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He conducts research in the area of digital visualization, geographic information system, and their applications to urban design and community planning. He teaches urban planning and design studio courses, in which he introduces scenario analysis methods and geospatial mapping and modeling tools to his students and applies these techniques to real-world projects through university-community partnerships. Dr. Lee brings over 10 years of experience working with local government and nonprofit sectors on topics of geospatial technology, scenario planning, and community development. Dr. Lee was a Knight Foundation-Niantic Augmented Reality & Cities Fellow in 2018 and a Gambrell Foundation Faculty Fellow in 2021. Dr. Lee was named one of seven recipients of Data for Civic Engagement Grant from Knight Foundation in 2020 to foster civic engagement through access to public data.

LiF (pronounced Leaf) or Royal City LiF (Khalif J. Guiden) is a rapper-producer based out of Charlotte, NC. His sound has been coined as NEW.GOLD as he is the perfect bridge between the highly respected gold era of Hip Hop and the new age bounce. He incorporates style, lyrical content and catchy melodies with the hunger and love he has for his craft. His craft is evident in his music and performance which is fueling success.

LiF brings emotion, energy and the unexpected while performing. His show is a journey through varying concepts and levels to keep audiences pulled in. The mission is to connect with the audience while focusing on telling a story through the words, presence and music. LiF is a balance of intensity and composure while being unapologetically creative through the Hip Hop culture.

Quickly rising in the next wave of artists and producers, LiF has been focused on working the hardest and staying consistent in his upcoming releases. Stay tuned for what he has to offer in stores. <https://www.therylcty.com/royalcitylif>

Jessica Lindsey has established herself as a dynamic performer and pedagogue, pursuing a career that is equally devoted to both spheres. Dr. Lindsey has championed the music of living composers from a wide variety of backgrounds through two CD projects: *Little Spectacle & Set No Limits* (Albany Records). *Fanfare Magazine* described Dr. Lindsey as, “a master of her instrument, exhibiting wonderful dynamic shading and breath control.” She holds a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree from the University of Colorado at Boulder, and a Master of Music from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Dr. Lindsey is currently the Associate Professor of Clarinet and the director of the CoAA’s Digital Arts Center at UNC Charlotte.

Eric Millard is the Assistant Professor of Trumpet at UNC Charlotte. Millard regularly performs with the Charlotte Symphony and was formerly the Third/Associate Principal trumpet with the Tallahassee Symphony. Millard has also performed with the Charlotte Ballet, Opera Carolina, Boise Philharmonic, Ballet Idaho, Pensacola Symphony, Sinfonia Gulf Coast, Northwest Florida Symphony, and Albany Symphony. Millard's fond interest in chamber music has led him to cofound both the Bluegrass Brass and Garnet and Brass quintets and he currently performs with the UNC Charlotte Faculty Brass Quintet. In addition to brass quintets, Millard has won prizes at the National Trumpet Competition (NTC) and performed at the International Trumpet Guild Conference with multiple trumpet ensembles.

Millard received his Doctorate and Master's Degrees in Trumpet Performance from Florida State University and received a Bachelor's Degree in Trumpet Performance from the University of Kentucky. Millard's primary instructors were Dr. Christopher Moore, Vince Dimartino, Robert Sullivan, Mark Clodfelter, and Dr. William Stowman. Dr. Millard also serves as the Conference Stage Manager for the International Trumpet Guild and as the Book Reviews Column Editor for the International Trumpet Guild Journal. Eric Millard is an S.E. Shires performing artist.

Jeff Murphy is a Charlotte based artist working primarily with digital media. His creative career began while taking photography, film and animation courses as an Undergraduate at the Ohio State University. In fact, he took a number of courses while in school across a range of diverse majors. In the end, it was lens-based image-making that stuck while everything else fell away.

Jeff's work has been published in a diverse array of publications including **WIRED** Magazine, **World Art** Magazine, and the textbook **Exploring Color Photography**. His digital images, videos and installations have been viewed in over 40 National solo exhibitions and screening in the United States, Germany, Hungary, Spain, and Brazil. Jeff currently is an Associate Professor of Art at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte where he teaches digital imaging, interactive design, photography, video, and animation.

Omid Oliyan is a computational designer and researcher with backgrounds in both Structural Engineering and Architectural Technology. His research explores the capacities of digital technologies to inform and enhance the design and delivery process in engineering and architecture. His experimental design work explores the entangled relationships between materiality, structure and form through the lens of digital design and digital fabrication. Omid is also an educator in design and technology and has taught numerous seminars, and workshops on computational design and design optimization.

Saeed Ahmadi Oloonabadi is a Ph.D. candidate at North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC. His research focuses on using immersive technologies to engage communities in making their neighborhoods healthier and more walkable. He has been involved in research studies on immersive virtual environments (IVE), complete streets, active living, transit-oriented development (TOD), environmental justice in urban planning, collective memory, and urban conservation.

Jennifer E. Rose (b. 1978) is an American composer, sound designer, and audio editor. A former band director and music educator of 15 years, Rose is passionate about engaging students through performance. Lately, her genre-breaking scores that incorporate 8-bit sound design and orchestral elements have garnered the attention of ensemble directors worldwide.

Jennifer holds a Professional Artist Certificate in Composition and Master's degree in Composition & Technology from the North Carolina School of the Arts as well as a Bachelor's Degree in Music from the University of Arkansas.

David Sampson (b. 1951, Charlottesville, Virginia) has emerged as one of the truly unique voices of his generation. He was Composer-in-Residence with the Colonial Symphony Orchestra from 1998 through 2007. He was a recipient a 2014 New Jersey State Council on the Arts Individual Artist Fellowship.

His major works include *The War Prayer* for soloists, chorus and orchestra commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts and premiered by Princeton Pro Musica; *Hommage JFK* commissioned by the National Symphony Orchestra; *Triptych* for trumpet and orchestra commissioned by the International Trumpet Guild and premiered by Raymond Mase at the Aspen Music Festival and with the American Composers Orchestra at Carnegie Hall; *Dectet* commissioned by the Chicago Chamber Musicians; *Elements* commissioned by the Elements Quartet; *Strata* commissioned by the NEA and the American Brass Quintet; *Jersey Rain* commissioned by the NEA and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and premiered by Harmonium and Masterworks Choruses and the Colonial Symphony.

Odissi soloist, Dr. **Kaustavi Sarkar** is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Dance at UNC Charlotte. Her research employs choreographic analysis within South Asian studies, queer studies, religious studies, and digital methods. Her articles have been published by Research in Dance Education, Journal of Dance Education, Choreographic Practices, and Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy. Her book projects, "Dance, Technology, Social Justice" (explores Odissi as a technology of social justice) and "Shaping S Curves: Choreographic Process in Odissi" (explores female choreographers in Odissi) are in contract with McFarland Publishers and the University of North Carolina Press respectively.

Chloe Shade is a recent alumna of UNC Charlotte where she studied theater Directing, Dramaturgy, and Dramatic Writing (B.A.) and Communications and Mass Media (B.A.)

Joseph Skillen has come to UNC Charlotte after 22 years at Louisiana State University (LSU), where he served in numerous capacities, most recently as the Galante Endowed Professor and associate dean for graduate studies in music and theatre in the College of Music and Dramatic Arts.

Skillen is a respected performer, teacher, and scholar. His scholarly work includes more than 40 publications, three book chapters, 12 professional recordings, musical transcriptions, and multiple solo performances on four continents. Current research interests include brass

pedagogy, contemplative teaching practices, curricular design, commissioning and premiering new works for tuba, community engagement, and arts entrepreneurship.

Prior to his engagement at LSU, Skillen was a principal tubist in American orchestras, and he has performed with touring ensembles across the United States, Europe, and Asia. As a Fulbright Scholar, Skillen studied in Stockholm, Sweden, at the Royal Music Academy and performed as a substitute tubist with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra. His performances have been broadcast in the U.S. on National Public Radio and on Sweden's National Radio. He holds degrees in music education and music performance from Tennessee Technological University, Pennsylvania State University, and Michigan State University.

Elizabeth Sullivan is the Associate Professor of Oboe and Musicianship at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She is a passionate educator and performer dedicated to elevating others in all areas of music.

As a professor at Charlotte, Dr. Sullivan instructs at all levels, from advanced oboe classes to the rudiments of music. When she isn't teaching, Dr. Sullivan is a devoted performer. She frequently performs at national and international music conferences such as the Music by Women International Festival, College Music Society regional conferences and SEAMUS National Conference. Regionally, she frequently performs with Opera Carolina, Charlotte Symphony and the Rock Hill Symphony.

Dr. Sullivan studied under Ann Adams at Stetson University where she achieved her Bachelor of Music in Oboe performance. She continued her studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where she completed her masters and doctorate studies in Oboe Performance, Pedagogy and Literature. While there, she was a student of oboist John Dee and recipient of the Bill A. Nugent Fellowship. Previous academic appointments include Eastern Illinois University and Daytona State College.

Described as "elegant, beautiful, sophisticated, intense, and crystal clear in emotional intent," the music of **Omar Thomas** continues to move listeners everywhere it is performed. Born to Guyanese parents in Brooklyn, New York in 1984, Omar moved to Boston in 2006 to pursue a Master of Music in Jazz Composition at the New England Conservatory of Music after studying Music Education at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. He is the protégé of lauded composers and educators Ken Schaphorst and Frank Carlberg, and has studied under multiple Grammy-winning composer and bandleader Maria Schneider.

Now a Yamaha Master Educator, he is currently an Assistant Professor of Composition and Jazz Studies at The University of Texas at Austin. In 2019, he was awarded the National Bandmasters Association/Revelli Award for his wind composition "Come Sunday," becoming the first Black composer awarded the honor in the contest's 42-year history.

Omar's music has been performed in concert halls the world over. He has been commissioned to create works in both jazz and classical styles. His work has been performed by such diverse groups as the Eastman New Jazz Ensemble, the San Francisco and Boston Gay Mens' Choruses,

The United States Marine Band, the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, the Houston Symphony Orchestra, and the Showa Wind Symphony, in addition to a number of the country's top collegiate music ensembles.

Lorraine Turi uses photography to create photographic explorations that investigate the complex relationship between humans and the environment. They received their Master of Fine Arts in Photo Based Media at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography from The University of North Carolina, Charlotte. Lorraine is a Lecturer in Foundations at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte.

Alyce Cristina Vallejo is a member of Movement Migration, she trained at Charlotte Ballet, Charlotte School of Ballet, Northwest School of the Arts, and Florida State University. She's performed works by Balanchine, restaged by Suzanne Farrell and Patricia McBride, Jules Perrot, restaged by Richard Sais, Alonzo King, and Alex Ketley. Alyce has performed with Kinetic Works (12 seasons), CPCC Summer Theater, Moving Poets Charlotte/Berlin, and is a guest artist for the Charlotte Youth Ballet (10+ years). She's also a certified yoga teacher.

The **UNC Charlotte Wind Ensemble** is the university's most advanced organization for winds and percussion, performing a wide variety of music from traditional to contemporary. The Wind Ensemble generally presents two concerts per semester on campus and frequently gives concert tours throughout North Carolina and the Southeast. Past honors include invitations for performance at the state conference of the North Carolina Music Educators Association and regional conferences of the College Band Directors National Association. The Wind Ensemble regularly works with guest conductors from the United States and abroad and is active in the commissioning of new music for winds, including recent commissions with Roshanne Etezady, John Allemeier, John Mackey, Alex Shapiro, Nathan Daughtrey and Ricardo Lorenz.

Your Neighborhood Orchestra is based in Charlotte (NC) and is a professional orchestra that brings innovative art to the people to bridge, uplift, & unite.