

COLLEGE OF ARTS + ARCHITECTURE

2025/26 PERFORMANCES



Welcome!

We are pleased that you have come to our theaters to support the performing arts at UNC Charlotte. At a time when so much of life is experienced through screens, we celebrate the opportunity to be in this place together.

Live performance is different. There is an energy, a connection with the performers and with fellow audience members that is special.

These are days in which it is important to gather, to share space and stories, to witness beauty, to feel and to learn in the presence of others. Thank you for being here! You are a vital part of the performance experience, and we are grateful for your curiosity and participation.

Look for us, too, throughout the Charlotte community, where you will frequently encounter the creativity and expertise of our faculty, students, and alumni.

We hope you will join us again soon! Stay up to date with our College news and programming on our website at coaa.charlotte.edu.

Connect with us! Follow us at [@CLT_COAA](#) on Instagram and [@CLTCOAA](#) on [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHARLOTTE
COLLEGE OF ARTS + ARCHITECTURE

The Department of Dance presents

Faculty Dance Concert

WORKS BY FACULTY

Alyah Baker

Kim Jones

Kaustavi Sarkar

Ashley L. Tate

Tamara Williams

LIGHTING DESIGN

Gordon W. Olson

STAGE MANAGERS

Keegan Martin and Amaree Ratliff

Anne R. Belk Theater
Robinson Hall for the Performing Arts
Friday, January 30, 2026 | 7:30 pm
coaa.charlotte.edu

Dear audience members,

Welcome, and thank you for attending the opening concert of our spring semester! The Faculty Dance Concert is a highlight of Dance's annual programming and presents the professional work of our esteemed faculty alongside invited guest artists. Tonight's concert features a range of dance genres, including modern and contemporary dance, the classical Indian dance form Odissi, and African-Brazilian dance, and includes guest performances by Department of Music faculty, Department of Dance students, and Charlotte and North Carolina community members.

As you watch the performance, I invite you to consider how the discipline of dance brings communities together in shared experiences. Those of us in the audience will witness embodied memories of times past and artistic responses to events and experiences that shape peoples' lives and beliefs. We then have the opportunity to carry images or meaningful moments with us into conversations when we leave the theater or to other areas of our lives. The choreographers' program notes provide insights into their artistic motivations, and I hope you find connections between tonight's work and something important to you.

I hope you enjoy this evening's performance, and that you will return later in the semester for other events. I am incredibly excited to share that the Departments of Dance and Music will co-produce *Nouveau Now*, a spring concert of dance and music at the historic Carolina Theatre in uptown Charlotte March 28–29. Other events include our student choreography concert, *Under Construction* (March 20–21), the CoA+A production of the musical *Cabaret* (April 16–19), and new to Charlotte this year, *No Tears Project*, a nationally recognized music, dance, education, and outreach program that explores the legacy of the civil rights movement (April 23–26). Please take a look at our [events calendar](#) for more details.

With gratitude for your support,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gretchen Alterowitz', with a stylized, flowing script.

Gretchen Alterowitz, Professor and Chair
Department of Dance
College of Arts & Architecture
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Mirabai: An Art-Song Cycle

CHOREOGRAPHY

Kaustavi Sarkar

MUSIC

John Harbison

PERFORMERS

Kaustavi Sarkar

Susan Gouthro, soprano; Claudio Olivera, piano

Harbison wrote the song cycle “Mirabai Songs” in 1982 for soprano (or mezzo-soprano) and piano. Mirabai is a sixteenth century mystic poet who devoted her life in loving devotion to her personal deity, *Krishna*. In this dramatic art-song cycle, one sees Mirabai’s yearning for, communion with, and eventual parting from *Krishna*. Harbison’s musical genius is complemented by soprano vocals by Gouthro alongside South Asian gestural and emotive aesthetics by Sarkar. Together, they bring to life the dramatic life of saint-poet Mira.

all good things

CHOREOGRAPHY

Alyah Baker in collaboration with the dancers

MUSIC

“Sometimes it Snows in April” by Meshell Ndegeocello

PERFORMERS

Jasmine Powell, Megan Ross, Tristen Matthews,
Julia Phu, Asha Chinfloo

“Sometimes It Snows in April” was written by Prince, one of my favorite artists. The song evokes nostalgic and bittersweet memories of the people and things I have loved and lost. Through the dance, I reflect on the “good things” of times past.

all good things originally premiered in Colorado as part of T2 Dance’s fall program, *Voices*, where I was an invited guest choreographer. The version presented today has been reimagined with the dancers of North Carolina’s own KT Collective.

Echoes in the Body, Where Memory Breathes

CHOREOGRAPHY

Kim Jones

MUSIC

“La Scomparsa di Giove” by Roberto Cacciapaglia,
edited by Alex Davis

PERFORMERS

Mariya (Masha) Dashkina Maddux,
Dominique Laura Willis

This duet examines power, care, and the quiet labor of empathy. It is shaped by remembrance, an offering to a loved one whose absence continues to move through time.

What You Carry, I Hold

CHOREOGRAPHY

Ashley L. Tate

MUSIC

“We Didn’t Know We Were Ready” by Talos,
Ólafur Arnalds, Niamh Regan, Ye Vagabonds

PERFORMERS

Jason Dawkins, Ashley L. Tate
Amber Isler, featured poet

This piece is rooted in resilience, grief, and the power of collective care. Spoken word moves through the choreography as a living, responsive layer that shapes the emotional and narrative landscape of the work. Together, the movement and text explore the labor of carrying personal, historical, and communal weight, and how resilience is created through relationship rather than in isolation.

Originally conceived in 2023 as a collaborative work, *We Didn’t Know We Were Ready* took on new meaning after the passing of Talos in 2024, becoming a living testament to grief, memory, and collective creation. Completed by Ólafur Arnalds, close collaborators, and Talos’ family, the final recording weaves together voices and orchestration into a space where absence and presence coexist.

Long MEmories (excerpt)

CHOREOGRAPHY

Tamara Williams

MUSIC

“Afro-Latina” by Elizabeth Acevedo,

“Chales Ilê” by Carlinhos Brown and Ilê Ayê

PERFORMERS

Laura Velez, Janise Rodriguez, and Tamara Williams

Please note: This piece contains explicit language and strong themes.

This work is an excerpt of an evening-length work originally choreographed in 2024 on Williams’ dance company, Moving Spirits, Inc. This dance piece celebrates the beauty, resilience, and strength of Afro-Latina women through honoring their legacies, histories, and cultural lineages through movement explorations. Developed from oral traditions and movement, the choreography weaves together gestures of memory, resistance, and pride of ancestral practices. Set to the powerful words of Elizabeth Acevedo, the piece plays between English, Spanish, and Spanglish, echoing the rhythmic hybridity of Afro-Latina identity. Through voice and movement, the dancers present a reclamation and celebration.

Music Clearances: Easy Song Licensing

Video and/or audio recording is strictly prohibited.

Faculty Biographies



Alyah Baker (Assistant Professor) is a choreographer, performer, and scholar working at the intersection of art and embodied activism. She holds an MFA in Dance: Embodied Interdisciplinary Praxis and a BA in Sociology from Duke University. Baker is the founder of AB Contemporary Dance, a project-based dance company, and Ballet for Black and Brown Bodies, an education and advocacy

platform committed to accessible, culturally relevant ballet training. Her choreography has been presented by the NC Dance Festival, Oakland Ballet, Choreography Project in Rhode Island, T2 Dance in Colorado, and American Dance Festival, among others. Baker's research has been recognized in local and national media, including *Dance Teacher Magazine* and *The New York Times*. **For Baker's full bio:** <https://coaa.charlotte.edu/people/alyah-baker/>



Susan Gouthro (Assistant Professor of Voice, Department of Music) For over a decade, soprano Susan Gouthro was engaged as a full-time soloist at the opera house in Kiel, Germany. Here she performed over fifty roles in the lyric soprano repertoire, including favorites Donna Anna, Fiordiligi, Micaela, Marguerite, Manon, Liu, Mimi, Violetta, and Rosalinde. In 2015/2016, Susan Gouthro was celebrated

as the opera-diva Carlotta in *The Phantom of the Opera* in Germany, singing eight shows a week in over 300 performances in a production cast and rehearsed by the creative team from *Phantom* on Broadway. Having performed contemporary music at The Banff Centre for the Arts in Canada, The Britten-Pears School in England, and in Germany with two world premieres, Susan Gouthro strives to present works by living composers. She currently teaches voice and voice-related courses as an assistant professor of music. **For Gouthro's full bio:** <https://coaa.charlotte.edu/people/susan-gouthro/>



Kim Jones (Associate Professor) is a Korean-American artist raised in New York City. She received her MFA summa cum laude from Florida State University and a BFA from Marymount Manhattan College. Jones was a dancer with the Martha Graham Dance Company, the Metropolitan Opera Ballet, a principal dancer on Broadway national tours, and danced for numerous NY-based

choreographers over three decades. She currently serves as Régisseur for the Martha Graham Center. Jones reconstructed major historical modern dance works, including Martha Graham's *Imperial Gesture* (1935) and Paul Taylor's *Tracer* (1962), presented at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, MoMA, and the Joyce Theater in NYC. Her research on 1930s Korean modern dancer Choi Seung-Hee led to her selection as a 2024 Dance Research Fellow at the Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. In 2025, Jones curated and choreographed a dance festival *Rhythm!* at the National Maritime Museum in London, U.K. Jones is the founder and Artistic Director of Movement Migration Dance Company. **For Jones's full bio:** <https://coaa.charlotte.edu/people/kim-jones/>



Claudio Olivera (Staff Pianist, Department of Music), began his musical studies in Venezuela at age eight, and debuted as a soloist with orchestra at 12. A prize-winning performer, he has received top honors in several national and international competitions. He has performed with nearly every major Venezuelan orchestra and internationally in Germany, Italy, Chile, Spain, France, and the U.S. Notable

appearances include Rachmaninoff's "Piano Concerto No. 3" with the RIAS Berlin International Youth Orchestra at the Rachmaninoff Festival in Catania, Italy. He holds a degree in Production Engineering from Universidad Simón Bolívar, a Pianist Certificate from Juan José Landaeta Conservatory, and a Master's in Piano and Pedagogy from Martin Luther Universität Halle-Wittenberg, supported by a DAAD scholarship. He later earned a Doctor

of Musical Arts in Piano Performance from the University of South Carolina under Dr. Marina Lomazov. As an educator and collaborator, he served as Adjunct Piano Faculty and Staff Accompanist at USC, received the Yamaha In-Residency Fellowship for innovative community engagement, and was a three-time recipient of the Steinway & Sons Top Teacher Award (2018, 2019, 2021). He has also worked in audio/video editing and livestream production for organizations such as the Four Seasons Chamber Music Festival, Seattle Chamber Music Society, and Vivace Music Foundation. Based in Charlotte since 2021, Olivera collaborates with Opera Carolina, Myers Park Baptist Church, and Queen City Performing Arts. **For Olivera's full bio:** <https://coaa.charlotte.edu/people/claudio-olivera/>



Kaustavi Sarkar (Associate Professor), founder of the *Odissi Odyssey* conference, has a dual career in solo Odissi, an eastern Indian traditional Indian art form. Sarkar investigates virtuosity in dance-theater as fostered in traditional Indian aesthetics through her research on choreography and creative processes towards written as well as performed outcomes. Her book *Dance*

Technology and Social Justice: Individual and Collective Emancipation Through Embodied Techniques (McFarland, 2024) was featured in Dance Studies Association's 2024-2025 Reading Seminars. Her second book project *Shaping S-Curves: Choreographic Process in Odissi* is due to be published by University of North Carolina Press in April 2026. Sarkar is a leader in dance scholarship and founded the journal *South Asian Dance Intersections*. Her K-12 project combining dance, music, and drama has been recognized by National Dance Education Organization as well as National Association for Music Education, providing credit, recognition, and appreciation for South Asian arts in mainstream arts education contexts.

For Sarkar's full bio: <https://coaa.charlotte.edu/people/kaustavi-sarkar/>

Ashley L. Tate (Assistant Professor) is a director, choreographer, educator, and performer from St. Louis, Missouri. She is an Assistant Professor of Dance at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, an affiliate faculty member in Africana Studies, and the founder and artistic



director of Ashleyliane Dance Company. She also founded the UNC Charlotte *To The Beat Y'all* Hip Hop Symposium and serves as Vice President of Communications for the North Carolina chapter of the National Dance Education Organization. Tate holds a BS in Computer Information Science from Texas Christian University and an MFA in Dance from Washington University in St. Louis, where

she received the Spencer T. & Ann W. Olin Fellowship. Her creative and scholarly work has been supported by grants from regional and institutional arts organizations, and her choreography has been presented nationally. Tate's research examines African diasporic dance as a vehicle for social justice and has been presented at national and international conferences.

For Tate's full bio: <https://coaa.charlotte.edu/people/ashley-l-tate/>



Tamara Williams (Associate Professor), BFA (FSU) and MFA (Hollins University/ADF/ Frankfurt), is a choreographer, scholar, activist, and founder of Moving Spirits, Inc. Her work has been performed internationally in Brazil, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Benin, Switzerland and Serbia. She is the author of *Giving Life to Movement: The Silvestre Dance Technique* and author/editor of the forthcoming book, *The African*

Diaspora and Civic Responsibility through publisher McFarland and Co. Other publications included articles in *The Dancer-Citizen* and *Jonkonnu Arts Journal*. Williams has received grants and residencies from Harlem Stage, Brooklyn Arts Council, Kaatsbaan, Mecklenburg County Arts and Sciences Council, Partners for Change and NCCAkron. Tamara is the co-creator for Charlotte's annual African Brazilian and Indigenous LAVAGEM Celebration. She is also the creator of the biannual International African Diaspora Dance Traditions Conference in Bahia, Brazil and co-creator of the International Benin Dance Exchange in Cotonou, Benin. Tamara serves on the Executive Board of Dance/USA and advises the National Dance Project. She is a 2026 Dance USA Fellow and Gambrell Research Fellow. **For Williams' full bio:**

<https://coaa.charlotte.edu/people/tamara-williams/>

Guest Artist Biographies

Asha Chinfloo is a dance artist and choreographer based in Durham, North Carolina. She holds a BFA in Dance with a concentration in Choreography and Performance from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG), where she studied under accomplished faculty members such as Janet Lily, BJ Sullivan, Robin Gee, Teresa Heiland, Clarice Young, Maurice Watson, Duane Cyrus, and Virginia Dupont. Her training spans modern, jazz, ballet, hip-hop, and traditional West African dance, which enriches her dynamic movement vocabulary and artistic versatility. Asha is currently a member of KT Collective.

Jason Dawkins is a dancer and creative from North Carolina. He attended Appalachian State University, where he began studying and training in various styles of dance. With over a decade of experience performing and choreographing, Jason truly loves any opportunity to use dance as a tool to express deep emotions and to connect with his audience. Jason has been teaching various levels and styles of adult classes here in Charlotte at NC Dance District since 2021.

Amber S. Isler is a dancer, emerging choreographer, and author from Raleigh, North Carolina. She is a senior student at UNC Charlotte where she studies Dance (Applied) and English (Creative Writing). With seventeen years of dance training, including hip-hop and street dance, contemporary and modern, her training is formally grounded through Enloe High School and UNC Charlotte, with much of her practice and exploration being independently developed. She has been writing creatively for twenty years, with self-published works including *Chairoodus* and a forthcoming poetry collection, *It Was Inevitable*. Her works are rooted in Afrofuturism, identity, and lived experience. Amber S. Isler intends to create intricacy in dance and literature by exhibiting realism, resistance, and what is yet to come through movement and writing.

KT COLLECTIVE is a project-based dance company in Durham, North Carolina. Founded by Kristin Taylor Duncan in 2012, the company produces works that stem from modern, contemporary, and jazz techniques.

Mariya (Masha) Dashkina Maddux, originally from Ukraine, is a professional dance performer and dance educator. She began her training in Kyiv and, after moving to the US, studied at Armour Dance Theater, graduating summa cum laude from New World School of the Arts in Miami,

Fl. In 2007, she joined the Martha Graham Dance Company, rising to the rank of Principal Dancer. Maddux has appeared in the feature film *Fall to Rise*, Martha Graham Dance Technique instructional videos, and on the covers of *Dior Magazine* and *The Art of Movement*. She founded the Wake Forest Dance Festival in NC, is a founding member of Movement Migration Dance Company, and is a Régisseur with the Martha Graham Center, NYC. She recently restaged a Graham work on the dancers at the English National Ballet in London, U.K. Maddux is a recipient of the Alto Jonio Best Dancer Award and New World School of the Arts Rising Stars Alumni Award.

Tristen Matthews, originally from Washington, DC, discovered dance at an early age and, by the age of 4, was dancing at the Dance Institute of Washington. Early training also included time at the Washington School of Ballet and the Kennedy Center in the Dance Theater of Harlem youth program. Tristen received a BFA from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, where she majored in contemporary/ modern dance and studied a variety of techniques, including Cunningham, Graham, Limon, and Ballet. Tristen is currently a member of KT Collective.

Julia Phu is a Durham-based dance artist whose work is rooted in ballet and modern technique, guided by a deep commitment to collaborative process. She is currently a company dancer with the Kristin Taylor Duncan Collective, where she performs, rehearses, and teaches. Julia holds a B.S. in Exercise Science with a Minor in Dance and Choreography from Virginia Commonwealth University. Outside of dancing, she works at Duke as a Fitness Specialist and as a Personal Trainer.

Jasmine Powell is a dance artist from Hillsborough, NC. Locally trained, her performance career began with Durham's Collage Dance Company, then moved to Dance Diaspora, and Philadanco, where she studied, performed, and choreographed original work. She continued exploring art and its meaning with a BA from Oberlin College and an MFA from Hollins University in collaboration with the American Dance Festival and Frankfurt University for Music and Performing Arts. Currently, she is on faculty at Elon University, where she brings cultural history into the dance curriculum through multiple forms. She is also a member of KT Collective.

Janise Lenet Rodriguez is a Dominican artist, choreographer, and instructor, bringing a deep embodiment of Latin dance forms through her training with RW Latin Dance. She has also found a passion backstage as a stage manager, which has led her to exciting opportunities in North

Carolina and New York. Janise is thrilled to return to the Anne R. Belk Theater onstage, dancing under the direction of Tamara Williams.

Megan Ross is a dance artist and educator based in Durham. Originally from Birmingham, Alabama, she graduated from Alabama School of Fine Arts (ASFA) with the Dance Achievement Award. Megan continued her education at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, PA, where she earned a BA in Dance Performance and French & Francophone Studies, Magna Cum Laude. Currently, Megan is the school director at Barriskill Dance Theatre School, teaches pilates at InsideOut Body Therapies, performs with the KT Collective, and creates her own work.

Laura Velez graduated from UNC Charlotte with a BS in Exercise Science and a Minor in Dance. Laura Velez is continuing her studies as a 2nd-year graduate student for an MS in Kinesiology with a concentration in Strength & Conditioning. Laura is working towards introducing Strength & Conditioning methodology for the preparation of dancers, reinforcing athleticism as a pillar of a healthy, successful dancer. Born and raised in Puerto Rico, Laura upholds her history and culture through movement and music, advocating for their freedom from colonialism.

Dominique Laura Willis is a classically trained modern and ballet dancer, choreographer, and educator with over fifteen years of professional experience. She has performed with companies including Movement Migration, Wonderbound Ballet Theater, Cleo Parker Robinson Dance, Bodiography Contemporary Ballet, and Gaspard & Dancers, and has toured internationally to Italy, Mexico, Bermuda, and the United Kingdom. Her choreography—movement-based, research-driven, and socially engaged—has been presented by organizations such as New Ballet Ensemble, Denver School of the Arts, and Bermuda Civic Ballet. As an educator, Dominique has taught across K–12 schools, universities, and community programs, guided by her philosophy that “dance is for every Body.” Currently based in Denver, she continues to perform, teach, and create works that connect cultural experience with human resilience.

Support the Department of Dance

The Dance Department Chair's Excellence Fund supports student welfare, educational supplies, scholarships, recruiting, guest artists, department events, and related needs. To make a gift and impact our students, [please visit this link](#). Thank you for your support!

About the Department of Dance

The Department offers Bachelor of Arts degrees in Dance with concentrations in Dance Education, Applied Dance, or Performance, Choreography, and Theory. Dance study is enhanced by the interdisciplinary nature of our College of Arts + Architecture, study abroad opportunities, and the activities of a vibrant campus and the bustling, arts-minded city of Charlotte.

Faculty and Staff

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Alyah Baker, Assistant Professor

E.E. Balcos, Professor

Dr. Ann Dils, Professor

Kim Jones, Associate Professor

Delia Neil, Associate Professor of Dance, Assoc. Dean for Academic Affairs

Dr. Marissa Nesbit, Assistant Professor, Dance Education Coordinator

Dr. Kaustavi Sarkar, Associate Professor

Ashley L. Tate, Assistant Professor, Concert + Events Coordinator

Tamara Williams, Associate Professor, Director of Undergraduate Studies

Hannah Harrell, Academic Advisor

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Courtney Mervine, Arts Education Specialist

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College of Arts + Architecture

Upcoming Events

FEBRUARY

[Music Departmental Collage](#)

Fri Feb 6 | 7:30 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

[The Slumber Party](#)

by E. Claudette Freeman

Thu Feb 19- Sat Feb 21 | 7:30 pm
Sat Feb 21 & Sun Feb 22 | 2:00 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

[Jazz Combo & Ensemble](#)

Mon Feb 23 | 7:30 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

[Wind Ensemble](#)

Wed Feb 25 | 7:30 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

[Orchestra](#)

Thu Feb 26 | 7:30 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

[Symphonic Band](#)

Fri Feb 27 | 7:30 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

MARCH

[Voice Area Showcase](#)

Faculty & Friends Concert Series

Tue Mar 24 | 7:30 pm
Rowe Recital Hall

Please join us Uptown at the
[Carolina Theatre](#) for
Nouveau Now!

Saturday, March 28, 2026 | 7:30 pm
Sunday, March 29, 2026 | 2:00 pm

Presented by the Departments of Dance and Music

Thank you!

An engaged audience is the most essential level of support we can receive. Thank you for being a part of this performance experience!

Revenue from ticket sales directly supports student scholarships in dance, music, and theatre. You can expand opportunities for students with a financial gift to fund scholarships, visiting artists and scholars, master classes, study abroad, and more. To make a secure gift online, please visit giving.charlotte.edu. Thank you for your support!

About the College of Arts + Architecture

The College of Arts + Architecture promotes the arts and design as engines of civic imagination through distinction in creative teaching and research, artistic performance, and community-driven work.

Through investigations in the performing and visual arts, design and affiliated pursuits, we provoke thought, cultivate aesthetic sensibilities, make space for memory and reflection, instigate creative action, and help build communities.

Established in 2008, the College of Arts + Architecture represents over 1,000 students and more than 100 full-time faculty members in five creative disciplines: art and art history, architecture, dance, music, and theatre.

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