

Dance Faculty Concert 2024

Featuring choreography by
Jillian Harris & Marie Brown, Laura Katz Rizzo,
Merián Soto, Xiang Xu and
Guest Artist Fairul Zahid

*Dance performances are sponsored in part by
Temple University's General Activities Fund and the Rose Vernick Fund*

Friday, February 9, 2024 • 7:30 PM
Also livestreamed at youtube.com/boyercollege
Saturday, February 10, 2024 • 7:30 PM
Conwell Dance Theater
1801 N. Broad St.
Philadelphia, PA 19122

Program

Nocturne

Choreographer: Xiang Xu

Temple Dance Ensemble Dancers: Olivia Al Samadi, Jena Barton, Jamie Chen, Dyn Garcia, Michaela Delaney Guthrie, Venrick James, Akino Lessey, Longxuan Lian, Esmeralda Luciano, Alicia Mears, Karly Meehan, Rosy Nunez, Lily Santana, Jazlyn Tan, Nadia Urena

Music: Frederic Chopin, Schumann Schubert

Costumes: Xiang Xu

Lighting: Laurie Benoit

The perception of separation has long been a cornerstone of our understanding, delineating individuals from one another, matter from spirit, and humans from nature. This worldview casts us as discrete and distinct entities, existing within an objective universe governed by forces, masses, atoms, and the void. However, the profound truth lies in the fact that everything, at its core, is composed of stardust, rendering the universe a tapestry woven from the same cosmic fabric. This unity, though often elusive in our perception, is a foundational tenet of existence.

Decolagem

Concept & Direction: Merián Soto

Movement generated by the performers

Viola: Mayte Olmedilla

Dancers: Muyu Yuan Ruba, Esmeralda Luciano, Nylah Jackson, Blake Hudson, Saige Hollis, Jamie Chen, Olivia Alsamadi

Recorded music: Ravi, Tunico

Costumes: Christine Darch REMIX

Lighting: Laurie Benoit

| Intermission |

Prim and Proper

Dancers and Choreographers: Jillian Harris and Marie Brown

Music: Section I: Low Probability of a Hug (Širom)

Section 2: Jillian Harris and Marie Brown (vocal improvisation)

Section 3: Rostfrei (schroothoop)

Section 4: Sluikstort (schroothoop)

Section 5: Spiritus Operis (Ka Baird)

Video Production: Robert Thompson

Lighting Design: Laurie Benoit

Costume Design: Jillian Harris and Marie Brown

This live, multimedia dance piece interrogates female stereotypes through the metaphor of the chimera, a mythical creature composed of incongruous parts. The duet abstracts the tension within a patriarchal culture in which women must shapeshift to accommodate the expectations of those in power while struggling to maintain a sense of inner coherence. In its construction, the piece employs a new method and creation model titled R.E.A.L. (Relational Embodied Active Learning) developed by Prof. Harris as well as RE:Flex, a digital warping and morphing application. With the overturning of *Roe vs. Wade*, the autonomy of the female body is no longer certain, making this chimera image even more potent. Like the chimera, the “perfect woman”, one who meets often conflicting societal definitions is a mythical creature.

A portion of this project was funded by a Vice Provost for the Arts Grant from Temple University, Philadelphia, PA, USA.

Interference is Coherence

Choreography: Laura Katz Rizzo

Performers: Mackenzie Barnett-Mcnab, Alicia Mears, Laura Katz Rizzo

Music: *Lightyears*, Juan Atkins & Moritz von Oswald (2016) Tresor Records

Costumes: Laura Katz Rizzo

In process study of three coherent waveforms as they interfere with one another. The trio investigates these patterns, particularly the phenomenon of diffraction, as a source of iridescence and chaotic brilliance.

Anthropoidal

Choreographer: Fairul Zahid (LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore)

Temple Dance Ensemble Dancers: Olivia Mohsen Al Samadi, Mackenzie

Barnett-Mcnab, Jena Barton, Jamie Chen, Dyn Garcia, Michaela Delaney

Guthrie, Venrick James, Akino Lessey, Longxuan Lian, Esmeralda Luciano,

Alicia Mears, Rosy Nunez, Lily Santana, Jazlyn Tan, Nadia Urena

Music: Undergrowth by Ka Baird & Bernadac – Abarukas, ORI - Black

Book, Edited by Fairul Zahid

Costumes: Fairul Zahid

“At times, the essence of being human appears to transcend the expected boundaries of individual or collective actions. This contemplation stems from observing human behaviors, where some individuals exhibit extraordinary selflessness, transcending the ordinary, while others demonstrate acts of profound depravity that question the very essence of humanity. It’s a nuanced exploration of the spectrum between exceptional altruism and the stark absence of humanity, unveiling the multifaceted nature of human existence.”

Production Crew

Stage Manager: Liam Shaffer

Assistant Stage Manager: Karly Meehan

Backstage Crew: Kayla Bailey, Brianna Dupree, Dani Sala, Scarlett Schutzberg, Nyah Wise

Livestream by Les Rivera, Blatino Cineninja

About the Artists

MARIE BROWN, originally from Jacksonville, Florida, moved to Philadelphia in 2005 after graduating from Radford University with a BFA in Dance. While in Philadelphia, she had the honor to work with a variety of companies and independent artists such as Scrap Performance Group, Group Motion Dance Company, MacArthur Dance Project, StoneDepotDance Lab, Chisena Danza, Beau Hancock, Jodi Obeid, <Fidget>, and Olive Prince Dance. In 2014, she received her MFA from the University of Iowa and returned to Philadelphia to continue dancing and teaching. She is currently an adjunct professor at Temple University, Pilates instructor, and runs her own independent cleaning business. She is grateful to be collaborating with Jillian Harris on her current project *Prim and Proper*.

An Associate Professor of Dance at Temple University, **JILLIAN HARRIS** explores the intersections between dance, film, and new technologies. She has had a distinguished career, touring nationally and internationally with the Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company and Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers. She appeared in the Metropolitan Opera world premiere of “Benvenuto Cellini” and played the feature role in the PBS broadcast of Della Davidson’s “Night Story”. A youngARTS award winner, Jillian has performed works by noted choreographers such as Doug Varone, Murray Louis, Laura Dean, David Rousseve, and Moses Pendleton. Her choreography has been shown at venues like Joyce SOHO (New York City), Chi Movement Arts Center (Philadelphia), The Rose Wagner Performing Arts Center (Salt Lake City), and Bravo Caffè (Bologna, Italy). Jillian is the co-producer, featured dancer, and assistant choreographer for *Red Earth Calling*, a short dance film in collaboration with Flying Limbs Inc. that won the Best Narrative Short award at the 2015 Maui Film Festival (Maui, Hawaii), Best Experimental Short award

at the 2015 Toronto Independent Film Festival, and Best Narrative Short award at the Moondance International Film Festival (Boulder, CO). The film (<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/redearthcalling/202593019>) has also been an official selection of the Athens International Film and Video Festival, Citizen Jane Film Festival, Columbia Gorge International Film Festival, Toronto Independent Film Festival, Action on Film International Festival, Movies by Movers Festival, and Pineapple Underground Film Festival (Hong Kong). Her most recent online project, *Mud: Bodies of History*, is an interactive dance film produced in Colombia accessed for free here: www.mudbodies.com. This summer, Jillian will present at the Dance and Child International Conference in Slovenia on *Dancing the Trail Towards Peace*, an interactive embodied cartography project which charts a future journey along a path tracing the former WWI's Isonzo Front.

LAURA KATZ RIZZO holds a Ph.D. in dance Women's Studies, an Ed. M. in Dance and a B.A. in History and English. She has performed with several classical and contemporary dance companies including: the Joffrey Ballet, New York City Ballet, Ballet South, the Russian Ballet Theatre of Delaware, the Santa Fe Opera Company, and the Ballet Theatre of New Mexico. Dr. Katz trained in archival and oral history work through the Legacy Oral History Project and has written for dance publications as diverse as Dance Chronicle, Playbill Magazine, WRTI Radio, The Brooklyn Academy of Music, and Critical Correspondence and The Journal of Performance as Research.. She is the author of *Dancing the Fairy Tale: Producing and Performing "The Sleeping Beauty"* (TU Press, 2015), and many other publications. Katz has shown her choreography widely, at independent venues around the United States, and her dances for film have been selected and screened at festivals around the world. Currently an associate professor of Dance at Temple University, Katz has taught also at Mount Holyoke College, Bryn Mawr College, and Drexel University, among other institutions.

Dancer, choreographer, and video artist **MERIÁN SOTO**, is the creator of aesthetic-somatic dance practices and methodologies, Branch Dancing and Modal Practice. Her 40+ years career in dance has spanned various artistic movements including the '80s and '90s Latina Arts, Equity, and Community Arts movements in New York City. Soto has collaborated extensively with visual artist Pepón Osorio on full-evening interdisciplinary works such as *Historias* (1992-1999), and *Familias* (1995). She is known for her experiments with Salsa, in works such as *Así se baila un Son* (1999) and *La Máquina del Tiempo* (2004). Since 2005, she has developed Branch Dancing, a meditative movement practice with branches that investigates consciousness in performance, and the Branch Dance Series, which includes dozens of performances on stage, in galleries, and in nature, as well as video installations, and year-long seasonal projects including the award-winning One Year Wissahickon Park Project (2007-08).

Soto is Founding Artistic Director, along with Patti Bradshaw and Pepón Osorio, of Pepatián, the Bronx-based, multi-disciplinary Latino arts organization. In that capacity, she developed and produced projects featuring works by emerging Latino dance and performance artists, including the Latino dance and performance festival, *Rompeforma: Maratón De Baile, Performance y Visuales*, co- directed with Viveca Vázquez, and presented in Puerto Rico from 1989-1996.

Soto has received numerous grants and awards including a New York Dance and Performance award, BESSIE, for sustained achievement in 2000, a Greater Philadelphia Dance and Physical Theater Award, "ROCKY" (2008), a Pew Fellowship in the Arts (2015), a Leeway Foundation Transformation Award (2016), and a United States Artists Doris Duke Fellowship in Dance (2019).

Current projects include *Fenomenal, Rompeforma 1989-1996*, a documentary co-directed and produced with Viveca Vázquez; and *Legacy Unboxed*, with choreographers Liz Lerman, Jawolle Zollar, Johanna Haigood, Eiko Otake. She has performed with Cardell Dance Theater since 2017. Since 1999, Soto has taught at Temple University in Philadelphia, where she is Professor of Dance.

XIANG XU holds the position of esteemed Assistant Professor of Dance at Temple University's Department of Dance in the USA. Rooted in Philadelphia and New York City, he has earned international acclaim for his contributions as a choreographer, dancer, and educator. Xu's journey includes the attainment of a Master of Fine Arts degree in Dance from the renowned Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, solidifying his commitment to the art form at its highest levels.

Originally from Ningbo, China, Xu's exceptional talent blossomed at an early age. He honed his skills at the renowned Beijing Dance Academy, where he earned his bachelor's degree. Xu's artistic prowess has garnered numerous accolades, including the coveted "Gold Lion" top prize at the Singapore World Music & Dance Competition and a national grant to choreograph the premiere of the grand opus "The Soul of Water," performed at Beijing's prestigious Great Hall of the People.

Known for his groundbreaking choreography, Xu has redefined contemporary dance through his exploration of new Asian bodily aesthetics. His collaborations span across prominent dance companies worldwide, including the Boris Eifman Dance Academy (Russia), Aakash Odedra Dance Company (UK), Deeply Rooted Dance Theater, Merce Cunningham Trust, Palestinian Diyar Theater, The Joffrey Academy of Dance, and the Cambodian National Arts Center. In 2015, Xu founded Xiang Xu Dance, and his scholarly work "Exploration of the Foot-Binding in Chinese Classical Dance" was published in bilingual editions.

Selected by The Joffrey Academy of Dance, Xu premiered his latest work at the esteemed Winning Works Choreographic Competition in March 2019. He was also appointed as a Next Generation Leader (NGL) for the 2022 cohort in the Committee of 100, an esteemed organization in New York City and Washington DC.

Xu's extraordinary talent as a soloist and featured dancer has graced renowned venues such as UCLA Royce Hall, The Broad Stage in Santa Monica, the Jewish Community Center Manhattan, and the Jamaica Performing Arts Center in Queens, New York. His repertoire encompasses contemporary and traditional Chinese dance styles, and he has also studied and performed Thai, Indian, and West African dances. As a Chinese

American choreographer and professor, Xu has dedicated years to researching and comparing traditional and contemporary dances. His artistic vision seamlessly integrates traditional Asian kinetic aesthetics with Western contemporary dance techniques, Chinese classical dance, martial arts, and folk dance, resulting in a profound reflection of Chinese body aesthetics.

Xu has developed Sino-Contemporary, a groundbreaking dance training system that draws upon Chinese Han and Tang classical dance, martial arts, and other Asian dance aesthetics. This system seamlessly combines techniques from Western traditional modern dance and contemporary dance, incorporating the latest animal flow movement patterns. Sino-Contemporary emphasizes the three curves of the body, a low center of gravity, and the cultivation of internal energy, Qi. Dancers learn to utilize inner breathing to control their bodies and project their movements into space. Xu's ultimate aspiration is to elevate Chinese traditional body aesthetics to the forefront of the globalized world in the 21st century.

FAIRUL ZAHID is an accomplished artist pursuing a dual Ph.D. at the University of Education Indonesia and University Technology MARA (UiTM), enhancing his MFA from New York University, Tisch School of the Arts. As a former principal dancer/choreographer for esteemed companies like ASK Dance Company and The Nutcracker New York City Ballet, Zahid has evolved into an esteemed dance lecturer at LASALLE College of the Arts, School of Dance and Theatre in Singapore.

His extensive career includes lectureships at prominent Malaysian institutions, including the National Academy of Arts, Culture and Heritage (ASWARA) and University Technology MARA (UITM). Zahid's influence extends globally, having been invited as a guest lecturer and choreographer by institutions like Minzu University, Capital Normal School (Beijing), University of the Philippines, and Education University of Indonesia.

Zahid's choreographic prowess spans multiple disciplines, from contemporary ballet to Malay, Chinese, and Indian classical dances, as well as jazz. He's showcased his versatility through collaborations with a myriad of local and international artists, including luminaries like Akram Khan, Crystal Pite, and Sean Curran.

A Top 20 finalist of So You Think You Can Dance 2008 (Malaysia), Zahid has achieved significant recognition. In 2020, he clinched the Best Group Performance at the Cameronian Arts Award for Oedipus, a FiTA Theatre Assemble production, and earned a Best Choreographer nomination for TRANSCENDENCE.

His 2018 work, CanSur, received the Best Group Performance at the Cameronian Arts Awards and a nomination for Best Choreography. Additionally, Zahid secured the Dance Escalator Project for Choreography under the Goethe Institute of Germany and, most recently, the Yokohama Dance Collection Choreography Award in 2023. His artistic journey embodies a rich tapestry of achievements, collaborations, and contributions to the global dance landscape.

Boyer College of Music and Dance

The Boyer College of Music and Dance offers over 500 events open to the public each year. Students have the unique opportunity to interact with leading performers, composers, conductors, educators, choreographers and guest artists while experiencing a challenging and diverse academic curriculum. The Boyer faculty are recognized globally as leaders in their respective fields. Boyer alumni are ambassadors of artistic leadership and perform with major orchestras, opera and dance companies, teach at schools and colleges and work as professional music therapists, choreographers and composers. Boyer's recording label, BCM&D records, has produced more than thirty recordings, five of which have received Grammy nominations.

boyer.temple.edu

The Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts

The Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts consists of the Boyer College of Music and Dance, School of Theater, Film and Media Arts, the George and Joy Abbott Center for Musical Theater and the Temple Performing Arts Center. The School of Theater, Film and Media Arts engages gifted students with nationally and internationally recognized faculty scholars and professionals. A hallmark of the School of Theater, Film and Media Arts is the Los Angeles Study Away program, housed at historic Raleigh Studios. The George and Joy Abbott Center for Musical Theater engages visiting performers, guest artists, set designers, playwrights and other Broadway professionals. The Temple Performing Arts Center (TPAC), a historic landmark on campus, is home to a state-of-the-art 1,200 seat auditorium and 200 seat chapel. More than 500 concerts, classes, lectures and performances take place at TPAC each year.

arts.temple.edu

Temple University

Temple University's history begins in 1884, when a young working man asked Russell Conwell if he could tutor him at night. It wasn't long before he was teaching several dozen students—working people who could only attend class at night but had a strong desire to make something of themselves. Conwell recruited volunteer faculty to participate in the burgeoning night school, and in 1888 he received a charter of incorporation for "The Temple College." His founding vision for the school was to provide superior educational opportunities for academically talented and highly motivated students, regardless of their backgrounds or means. The fledgling college continued to grow, adding programs and students throughout the following decades. Today, Temple's more than 35,000 students continue to follow the university's official motto—*Perseverantia Vincit*, or "Perseverance Conquers"—with their supreme dedication to excellence in academics, research, athletics, the arts and more.

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