

CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING AND CINEMATIC ARTS

Boyer College of Music and Dance

MFA Thesis Concert:
Hannah Levinson,
Benja Newnam and Chang Xu

Reaching Out

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

Friday, February 20, 2026 at 7:30 PM
Saturday, February 21, 2026 at 7:30 PM
Conwell Dance Theater
1801 North Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19122

Program

Read It Back to Me

Benja Newnam

Performers: Jena Barton, cedar becher, Avis Chang and Lily Santana

Original Music: Michael Anthony, Jackie Ross

Musical Arrangement: Benja Newnam

Costumes: Jena Barton

Lighting: Dani Sala

Projection: Benja Newnam

Thank you to my thesis advisor Jillian Harris, and to my thesis committee members Dr. yaTande Whitney V. Hunter and Dr. Laura Katz Rizzo.

Special thanks to Laurie Benoit Mitchell, Alex Griffin, Kat Holloway, Stephen Hutt, Mitch Moste, Benjamin Avelindo Rowe, and Gray Wheeler for additional contribution and support for this work.

Foreign Princess

Chang Xu

Dancers: Eve Rutstein, Kayla Bailey, Longxuan Lian, Molly Lanza and
Chang Xu

Music: Qu Zhang, Philippe Rombi, Liszt Ferencz and Thomas Greenberg

Costumes: Chang Xu

Lighting: Laurie Benoit Mitchell

Thank you to my thesis advisor, Karen Bond, and to my thesis committee members, Jillian Harris and Xiang Xu.

Intermission

Trigger Warning:

This piece contains material related to gun violence and trauma responses, which may not be suitable for everyone. Please feel free to exit before this piece if needed.

The Aftermath

Hannah Levinson

Dancers: Elora Probyn, Avis Chang, Tess Berendt and Sara Hicinbothem

Music: Fractures, 2WEI, Fleurie, Eric Heitmann, Ryan Dimmock and

Too Far Moon

Costumes: Hannah Levinson

Lighting: Laurie Benoit Mitchell

Thank you so much to my advisor/thesis committee, Jillian Harris and Karen Bond, who have supported and assisted in my creative process for this piece

The use of photographic, audio and video recording is not permitted.

Please turn off all electronic devices.

Two hundred second and sixth performance of the 2025-2026 season.

Production Crew

Production Manager: Laurie Benoit Mitchell

Stage Manager: Zhaisia Lessey

Backstage Crew: Madison Forbes, Yihang Li, Trinity McFadden, Dani Sala
and Madison Wells-McFee

House Crew: Dasha Klim and Eduarda Melgar

Livestream: Blatino Cineninja

About the Artists

HANNAH LEVINSON is a choreographer, performer, and educator from New York, specializing in a variety of styles, such as contemporary, modern, jazz, and tap. She has created many pieces during her time at Temple in addition to undergrad, where she studied dance education and choreography in Allentown, PA. She is most passionate about creating contemporary work embodying raw emotions that are shown through intentional stylistic choices. Her choreography is described as incorporating fluidity, exploration, expression, contraction, and expansion.

BENJA NEWNAM is an interdisciplinary artist and educator from Durham, NC whose work explores the intersections of creative discoveries in the making of music, dance, and visual symbol. Benja's relationship to the arts began early with an interest in music form, theory and composition, and he performed vocally with a repertoire ranging from chamber music to showtunes. In college, Benja shifted his focus to study technique and composition in dance and now holds a BFA in Dance Choreography and Performance from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. There he expanded his studies into crafting narrative and creating messaging for the dance stage and further engaged in his passion for practicing and teaching dance in social partnered scenes. Benja is honored to have spent the last three years continuing his studies in dance at Temple University, investigating its relationship to storytelling and community building.

CHANG XU is a dance artist, choreographer, and dance educator currently pursuing a Master's degree in Dance at Temple University. Throughout his undergraduate and graduate studies, Chang Xu's training encompassed a wide range of dance forms, interwoven with research in dance history, choreography, and art history, forming a crucial foundation for his creative work. She has choreographed numerous works across both degrees, developing solo and group pieces in a variety of styles and performance contexts. Her work explores cross-cultural movement, physical transformation, and the meeting of Eastern and Western dance traditions.

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.

temple.edu

Boyer College of Music and Dance

Upcoming Events

Student Recital: Sherry Organ, jazz voice

Saturday, February 21 at 4:00 PM

Klein Recital Hall

Master's Recital: Kalia Page, instrumental conducting

Saturday, February 21 at 5:30 PM

Rock Hall Auditorium

Temple University Collegiate and Symphonic Bands

Sunday, February 22 at 3:00 PM

Temple Performing Arts Center

Master's Recital: Veronika Sveshnikova, violin

Sunday, February 22 at 5:30 PM

Rock Hall Auditorium

Graduate Conductors Chorus and Recital Chorus

Monday, February 23 at 7:30 PM

Rock Hall Auditorium

Master Class: Karen Slack, soprano

Tuesday, February 24 at 3:00 PM

Rock Hall Auditorium

Master's Recital: Yumeng Ai, mezzo-soprano

Tuesday, February 24 at 5:30 PM

Rock Hall Auditorium

Final Doctoral Recital: Sarah Lee, piano

Tuesday, February 24 at 7:30 PM

Rock Hall Auditorium

All events are free unless otherwise noted. Programs are subject to change without notice.

For further information or to confirm events, please call 215.204.7609

or visit www.boyer.temple.edu.