

# VARIANCE

BFA DANCE CONCERT  
FALL 2025



Oct 09 at 8pm  
Oct 10 at 8pm  
Oct 11 at 2pm • 8pm

Martha B. Knoebel Dance Theater

**CSULB**  
**DANCE** CSULB • College of the Arts  
Dance

Template design by **Kianna Peppers**—[behance.net/kiannapeppers](https://behance.net/kiannapeppers)  
Photography by **Gregory R.R. Crosby**

**CSULB  
DANCE**

# VARIANCE<sup>2025</sup>

bfa dance concert

**presenting works by  
BFA choreographers** Elise Conlay  
Precious Ellis  
Brian Helm  
Indigo Jacobs  
Trinity Massey  
Nathan Waters

**and esteemed Guest Artist** Nina McNeely

**Concert Director** Rebecca Lemme

**Lighting Designer** Stacy Fireheart **Technical Director** Stephanie Losleben

**Music Director** Don Nichols **Costume Technician** Erika Hansen

**Costume Designer/Costume Shop Supervisor** Kelsey Vidic

**Oct 09 - 11, 2025**  
**Martha B. Knoebel Dance Theater**

COLLEGE OF  
**THE ARTS**  
 **CSULB**

This program made possible through CSULB's Instructionally Related Activities funds.



## A MESSAGE FROM CONCERT DIRECTOR REBECCA LEMME



On behalf of the CSULB Department of Dance I am so excited to welcome you to the Martha B. Knoebel Dance Theater for our 10<sup>th</sup> Variance Concert. This year marks the start of my 12<sup>th</sup> year on faculty, and it has been a true highlight of my time in the department to be able to work with so many emerging choreographers, performers, and guest artists.

Tonight you will see six BFA student works, as well as choreography by Guest Artist Nina McNeely. The evening includes collaborations with composers from the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music (BCCM) and is a diverse collection of choreography examining topics from interpersonal connection to critiques of systemic racism and capitalism to the work of navigating the unexpected.

Following Thursday's performance I will moderate a short Q+A session with the choreographers. This is an opportunity for audience members to get more perspective on each of the artists' approach and process. Students especially are encouraged to stay and engage in this discussion. Saturday's matinee will be preceded by a community college engagement event; interested dance departments should email me at [rebecca.lemme@csulb.edu](mailto:rebecca.lemme@csulb.edu) for details.

Thank you so much for joining us. Do stick around after the show to share some of your thoughts with our artists.

Now please enjoy, VARIANCE!

A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Rebecca Lemme".

Rebecca Lemme, Concert Director

## program order

# Beneath the Veil of Ember and Bone

**CHOREOGRAPHY** Nina McNeely

**MUSIC** "Babel", "Abans Abans"  
by Merlina Herlop

**SOUND DESIGN** Don Nichols  
**COSTUME DESIGN** Kelsey Vidic  
**SET DESIGN** Stephanie Losleben

**PERFORMANCE** Jade Madrigal  
Gabriella Parks  
Rachel Olivier

**UNDERSTUDIES** Jayden Cardona, Maya Sabbah

*Beneath the Veil of Ember and Bone is a meditation on aging and the feminine condition where what hides, survives, what endures, transforms, and what binds, cannot be seen.*



# Insight into Madness

**CHOREOGRAPHY** Brian Helm

**MUSIC** "Sleep Dealer"  
by Oneohtrix Point Never;  
"Start Again" By Luca D'Alberto

**SOUND DESIGN** Don Nichols

**COSTUME DESIGN** Brooke Grayton

**PERFORMANCE** Brian Helm, Xene Sommers

**UNDERSTUDIES** Brittany Lopez, Miguel Vasquez

# Unraveled

**CHOREOGRAPHY** Indigo Jacobs

**MUSIC** "Never Catch Me"  
by Kendrick Lamar & Flying Lotus;  
"In a Sentimental Mood"  
by Duke Ellington

**SOUND DESIGN** Don Nichols  
**COSTUME DESIGN** Kelsey Vidic  
**SET DESIGN** Stephanie Losleben

**PERFORMANCE** King Caleb Chaney, Colin Dean,  
Alana Lopez, Ageha Nagatomo,  
Sydney Robinson, Claire Rosetti,  
Madeline Skalet

**UNDERSTUDY** Diego Moreno

## intermission

Please join us in the lobby for a sneak peek of *Fidget*.



# Under The Placemat

**CHOREOGRAPHY** Precious Ellis

**MUSIC** "Into the Ether (A Suite for M.C.)"  
by Deanna Watkins;  
"Shades of Black"  
by Ronny "Cash" Jones

**VOICE** Amari Rathers

**SOUND DESIGN** Don Nichols

**COSTUME DESIGN** Kelsey Vidic

**SET DESIGN** Stephanie Losleben

**PERFORMANCE** Indya Bluford  
Brooke Grayton  
Avalon Kelly  
with  
Jasmin Ceballos-Olaiz, Zoe Miller,  
Jordyn Sanchez, Kenya Smith

*A warm thank you to my mentors, Manny Macias, and Zakiya Atkinson, for being pillars of encouragement and support by helping me be the best version of me. Thank you, Stephanie Losleben, for the set design and the many hours you spent to bring my vision to life, as well as to all faculty and staff associated with the production for your support throughout this process.*

# Fidget

## CHOREOGRAPHY

Elise Conlay  
in collaboration with dancers

## MUSIC

"Fidget"  
by Mia Grajales and Myles Gutierrez

## COSTUME DESIGN

Kelsey Vidic

## PROPS

Stephanie Losleben

## PERFORMANCE

Michelle Delgado-Perez, Mia Katsaros,  
Malia Marchant, Allison Matthews,  
Maggie Ogle, Ashlyn Yoshikawa

## UNDERSTUDY

Meilin Jokela

*Thank you to my cast for your dedication to this project and your willingness to push boundaries with movement and to my composers, Mia and Myles. Thank you as well to Rebecca Bryant for your mentorship and to Becca Lemme, in addition to all faculty and staff associated with the production, for your support in this process.*



# Fish Fight

**CHOREOGRAPHY** Nathan Waters

**MUSIC** Original Composition by Nathan Waters  
**COSTUME DESIGN** Kelsey Vidic

**PERFORMANCE** Anna Boyle, Sami Cady, Alexis Gutierrez,  
Lauren Kay, Isabella Ladine, Autumn Ruiz

**UNDERSTUDY** Eva Galindo

***Fish Fight** is the culmination of my experimentation with generative partner work and also my way of processing the nature of competition which seems to plague all states of existence. Thanks to my amazing cast for your collaborative efforts and creativity throughout the process and thank you to my family, friends, and mentors for all your support. I hope you enjoy the show!*

# & then what?

## CHOREOGRAPHY

Trinity Massey  
in collaboration with the dancers

## MUSIC

Original Composition by Mia Grajales;  
"AWARDS SEASON" by Bon Iver

## COSTUME DESIGN

Kelsey Vidic

## PERFORMANCE

Carina Ford, Leah Leon, Elisa Murray,  
Ashley Temeyer, Kacey Ura

## UNDERSTUDY

Kaiya Rodriguez

*& then what* explores manifestations of grief and loss, the unanswered questions we are left with in these circumstances, and the ways it manifests into unpredictability, uncertainty, interruption, repetition, and vulnerability. This work is very near and dear to my heart and soul, and I could not have asked for better people to work with. A huge thank you to concert director Rebecca Lemme, my mentor Andrew Vaca, and to every person that has collaborated on this work. A special thanks to my dancers for always diving headfirst into this work and never being afraid to try new things alongside myself.



## **PRODUCTION CREW**

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**TECHNICAL DIRECTOR** - Stephanie Losleben

**ASSISTANT TECHNICAL DIRECTOR** - Julian Fernandez

**STAGE MANAGER** - Erin Longhofer

**RES. HOUSE MANAGER** - Sylvia Rodriguez-Scholz

**HOUSE MANAGER** - Sierra Tanji

### **BFA CHOREOGRAPHIC MENTORS**

Tsiambwom Akuchu, Zakiya Atkinson, Rebecca Bryant, Lorin Johnson, Manny Macias, Danzel Thompson-Stout, Andrew Vaca

**PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEO DIRECTION** - Gregory R.R. Crosby

**CAMERA OPERATOR** - Nicholas Neira

**PRODUCTION ASSISTANT** - Talisa Solorzano

### **STAGE CREW**

Ava Barrett, Abby Boudreau, Claire Colbert, Zion Emerald Davis, Jordan Esquibel, Lisa Lauloto, Matthew Manuel, Nicolette Miguel, Ava Pacaoan, Signe Rodrigues, Hanna Selander, Tlakatl Soberanis, Jameshia Taylor, Morgan White

### **HOUSE/PUBLIC RELATIONS CREW**

Melodee Aguilera, Kharissa Darden, Laila Jackson, Mandi Jeffery, Lena Moulton

**SCENE SHOP STUDENT ASSISTANT** - Isabella Ladine

**CONSTRUCTION CREW** - Precious Ellis, Joycie Montillo, Brooke Grayton

**WARDROBE SUPERVISOR** - Kelsey Vidic

**WARDROBE CREW** - Gael Martinez-Castaneda, Aimee Ilog, Isabela Muguira

**LAUNDRY/LABEL CREW** - Lilly Mcfarren

**PROGRAM & POSTER DESIGN** - Gregory R.R. Crosby

## BFA CHOREOGRAPHERS

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**ELISE CONLAY** is a BFA Candidate in Dance and BA Candidate in English Education at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB). She is also a Department of Dance Scholarship recipient for the 2025-2026 academic school year. At CSULB she has performed in works by alumnus Jesus Gallardo, MA alumni Eliza and Madison, and MFA alumnus Tamsin Carlson. She is currently in process for MFA candidate Maggie Ogle's thesis piece. Elise has her teaching certifications 1A and 1B through Cechetti USA, an American organization that represents the Cecchetti method of ballet. A dance instructor for about four years, she is a faculty member at Kick It Up Dance and Fitness. Elise is interested in exploring the human experience and our understanding of it (both individual and communal) and has previously shared work at Orange County Dance Festival.

**PRECIOUS ELLIS** is a director, choreographer, and performer whose work merges storytelling, sociology, and activism. Going into their last semester as a BFA candidate in Dance at California State University, Long Beach. Precious has performed in works such as *communion* by Rebecca Lemme and *Rubberrabbitbrush* by Tamsin Carlson. They have also directed award-winning dance films such as *TINGLER* and *DSYMORPHIA*, as well as featured in MFA screen dance films such as *Well-Behaved Women* and *Murder in the Martha B*. They are the founder of VaseJar LLC and a co-lead of NO PANIC LLC, through which they direct, produce, and conceptualize story-driven projects that have been screened internationally. Their creative mission is rooted in reclaiming narratives and amplifying marginalized voices, particularly those of Black communities. Precious approaches dance as both a cinematic and embodied language, one that resists erasure, sparks dialogue and fosters collective healing.

**BRIAN HELM** is an artist, choreographer, and performer from the South Bay, California. He is currently a Dance BFA candidate as well as pursuing an International Business minor at Cal State University Long Beach. Helm is also a transfer student from El Camino College where he studied and learned from his mentors Liz Adamis and Jonathan Bryant. His work is rooted from Modern and Contemporary dance movement practices which he uses to explore movement through abstract ways. As Helm continues to make work, he hopes to invigorate audiences through his movement and choreography. Along with giving them a glimpse of his brain and making them wonder about the meaning of it and ask questions.



**INDIGO JACOBS** is an artist, dancer and choreographer interested in the process of unveiling deeper truths through movement and prop exploration. Indigo is a 3rd year BFA candidate in Dance and BS candidate in Dance Science at California State University, Long Beach. She has performed in faculty works such as communion (2023) and Laden Form (2024) by Rebecca Lemme. She has also worked with student choreographers in pieces such as fata amortita by Jordyn Apostolache(2024) to make room for you by Eva Watson (2024) and to let go to hold on by Jayden Cardona(2025).

In addition to her dance training, Indigo completed two years of AP 2D Design in high school, exploring visual art and photographic history—interests that continue to inform her creative practice. Her work is driven by a deep curiosity about the intersections of movement, space, musicality, and visual design, aiming to create an immersive, layered world that echos truths of today's climate on stage.

**TRINITY MASSEY** is an artist, teacher, and choreographer deeply interested in the human experience and the ways it can be transformed into visual art. Trinity is a BFA candidate in Dance and BS candidate in Dance Science, as well as a COTA scholarship recipient at CSU Long Beach. In her academic career she has performed in faculty works from Rebecca Lemme and in works by MFA alumna Azuki Umeda, and BFA alumni Tori Cone, Jayde Spiegel, Colin Harabedian, Jordyn Apostolache, and Samuel Macias. & then what? marks her choreographic debut on the Martha B. Knoebel stage, while her collaborative work, -Co, created with choreographer Maretzys Gandara, premiered at MashUp Contemporary Dance Company's Open Mic Night in May 2025. Through her choreography, Trinity continues to delve into personal and collective human experiences that invite the audience into introspection and an impression that lasts long after they leave the space.

**NATHAN WATERS** is an artist, choreographer, dancer, and instructor based in Orange County. Nathan is interested in many things within his work, including process based movement generation, partner work, and screen dance. Nathan obtained his Associate's degree in Dance with an emphasis in Social and Behavioral Sciences from Irvine Valley College. He now attends California State University, Long Beach, where he is a BFA candidate in dance. He has had the opportunity to present work at the American College Dance Association BAJA Conference in 2023 and was hired as a guest choreographer for Portola High School Performing Arts in 2024. Additionally, he teaches at Strong Dance studios, where he choreographs for the Strong Pre-Professional Dance Company. Nathan hopes to create and teach as much as he can while sharing his love for dance with others.

## GUEST ARTIST

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**NINA MCNEELY** is a storyteller, provocateur, and a creator. She is an Emmy winning choreographer, a director, visual artist, creative director, and animator. Nina is madly in love with people, and finds no greater pleasure than studying the human condition. In her experience, the human form in motion is both poignant and poetic, capable of expressing concepts and feelings that words simply cannot. She sees the connection and chemistry between people as an immeasurable force, containing pure electricity. Nina's work is visceral, rebellious, rowdy - and at once introspective, delicate, and alluring. She strives to be an unknowing vessel that channels artistic expression, and a guide that may lead any willing artist towards their own truth. As an avid believer in Magick, Nina has a keen

eye for those who contain it. She prides herself in her preparedness, attention to detail, and work ethic - she never shies from a challenge. Throughout her career, Nina has been fortunate to work with Björk, Gaspar Noé, The Weeknd, Rihanna, Doja Cat, Foo Fighters, Sam Smith, Alicia Keys and black midi to name a few - all legends in their own right.

## CONCERT DIRECTOR

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**REBECCA LEMME** is a choreographer, performer, educator, and visual artist. She is the Founder and Artistic Director of Acts of Matter, a vehicle for collaborative making, performing, and exploration and is in her 12<sup>th</sup> year at CSULB, now as a Professor of Dance. Lemme has been commissioned and presented by LA Contemporary Dance Company, Visceral Dance Chicago, Santa Barbara Dance Theater, River North Dance Chicago, Thodos' New Dances, California Institute of the Arts, Loyola Marymount University, Columbia College Chicago, Loyola University Chicago, among others. Additionally, she has toured nationally with contemporary repertory companies Luna Negra Dance Theater and River North Dance Chicago. Lemme was formerly a full-time faculty member at CalArts and has additionally been on faculty at Columbia College Chicago, Roosevelt University, Hubbard Street's Lou Conte Dance Studio, Visceral Dance Center, and Joffrey Ballet Chicago. Rebecca holds a BA in English and Theater from Princeton University and an MFA in Choreography from California Institute of the Arts.

@actsofmatter actsofmatter.com

# Give to **Dance**

The CSULB Dance faculty and staff are committed to creating an inclusive, student-centered community where students will discover educational pathways that reflect and expand upon their creative potential, intellectual curiosity, and career aspirations.

While state support and student tuition fund basic operations of the university, gifts from donors like you make this Department and institution truly exceptional. Can you help support our next generation of dance artists and practitioners?

Visit our donation page:

**Giving for CSULB Dance**

Gifts may be directed to Dance scholarships, the Department, or you can create a scholarship in your name or the name of a loved one.

For more information, contact Department Chair Colleen Dunagan at **[Colleen.Dunagan@csulb.edu](mailto:Colleen.Dunagan@csulb.edu)**



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**Dance**

photo by Gregory R.R. Crosby  
featuring BFA Candidate Malia Lyons



# 2025-2026 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

## CSULB DANCE AWARDS

**CR Carolyn R. Cunningham Endowed Scholarship** - Mandi Jeffery

**Celeste Kennedy Endowment** - Amy Jan Ernst, Cameron Kao, Sofia Linggi-Perez

### **Dance Dept Scholarship**

Kaela Alvarez, Elise Conlay, Grace Hager, Alana Lopez, Kenya Smith

## DANCE, MUSIC, THEATRE

**Martin Figoten Endowed Scholarship-Arts** - Tlakatl Soberanis

**Lana Alper Endowed Scholarship** - Amanda Campos, Aimee Ilog

**Jamiesson-Pechstein College of the Arts Endowed Scholarship**

Melodee Aguilera, Trinity Massey, Maya Sabbah, Elyse Turner

**Harvey and Amy Waggoner Endowed Scholarship** - Colin Dean

## COTA COMPETITIVE AWARDS

**Carolyn Campagna Kleefeld COTA Endowed** -Kennedy Berthiaume

**Carolyn Campagna Kleefeld COTA Endowed** - Sydney Robinson

## COTA AWARDS

**Donald W. Leonard Endowed Scholarship**

Indya Bluford, Mateo Esparza, Isabella Ladine

**Richard Baker Endowed Scholarship** - Leah Leon

**DAAG Scholarship** - Salvador Gutierrez

**Fine Arts Affiliates Scholarship** - Madylin Leier, Kylie Sanders

## CSULB AWARDS

**CSULB Graduate Fellowship** - Ricky Medina, Maggie Ogle

For more information on CSULB Dance visit  
[www.csulb.edu/dance](http://www.csulb.edu/dance)



## **CSULB COLLEGE OF THE ARTS**

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Royce W. Smith, Ph.D, **Dean**

Chiara Ferrari, Ph.D, **Associate Dean**

Anthony Byrnes, **Interim Associate Dean**

## **CSULB DANCE FALL 2025**

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Colleen Dunagan, **Chair**

## **FACULTY**

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Tsiambwom M. Akuchu, Zakiya Atkinson, Rebecca Bryant, Amy Campion, Liz Curtis , Stacy Fireheart, Erika Hansen, Tashara Gavin-Moorehead, Francesca Jandasek, Teresa Jankovic, Lisa Johnson, Lorin Johnson, Rebecca Lemme, Stephanie Losleben, Manuel Macias, Brenna Monroe-Cook, Shyamala Moorty, Justin Morris, Don Nichols, Sarah Stanley, Danzel Thompson-Stout, Andrew Vaca, Kelsey Vidic, Kevin Williamson, Lora Wilson, Brooke Winder, Aimée Wodobodé, MJ Wolff, Steve Zee

## **STAFF**

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Gregory R.R. Crosby, Erika Hansen, Stephanie Losleben, Lillian McKenzie, Don Nichols, Sylvia Rodriguez-Scholz, Kirsten Sumpter, Kelsey Vidic

## **DANCE CLINIC**

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John Siegel - Head Athletic Trainer

## **GRADUATE ASSISTANTS**

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Kennedy Berthiaume, Amy Ernst, Cammie Kao, Sofia Linggi-Perez, Ricky Medina, Maggie Ogle

CSULB DANCE AND THE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS PRESENT

# 2025 CSULB DANCE IN CONCERT

featuring choreography by dance faculty

**Tsiambwom M. Akuchu &  
Danzel Thompson-Stout**

**Rebecca Bryant | Lorin Johnson**

**Rebecca Lemme | Andrew Vaca**

with guest artist

**Tashara Gavin-Moorehead**

**nov 19-22 at 8PM**  
+ saturday matinée at 2PM

**Martha B. Knoebel  
Dance Theater**  
tickets | \$25 general  
\$16 student  
[csulb.edu/dance](http://csulb.edu/dance)

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Photo by Gregory R.R. Crosby