

VARIANCE

BFA DANCE CONCERT
FALL 2026



Oct 08 at 8pm
Oct 09 at 8pm
Oct 10 at 2pm • 8pm

Martha B. Knoebel Dance Theater

CSULB
DANCE

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Dance

**CSULB
DANCE**

VARIANCE²⁰²⁶
bfa dance concert

presenting works by Niko Black
BFA choreographers Jeffrey Bull
Mia Katsaros
Nicolette Miguel
Maddie Youmans

and esteemed Guest Artist Ruthie Fantaye

Concert Director Rebecca Lemme
Lighting Designer Stacy Fireheart
Technical Director Stephanie Losleben
Stage Manager Erin Longhofer
Costume Supervisor Kelsey Vidic
Costume Technician Erika Hansen
Music Director Don Nichols

Oct 08 - 10, 2026
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 11th Variance Concert. This year marks the start of my 13th 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 five BFA student works, as well as choreography by Guest Artist Ruthie Fantaye. The evening includes collaborations with alumni from the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music (BCCM) and is a diverse collection of choreography examining topics affecting our collective humanity. The work ranges in styles from contemporary, to hip-hop, to acrobatics, and dance theater.

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 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

Blind Box

CHOREOGRAPHY

Jeffrey Bull,
in collaboration with dancers

MUSIC

"Silkworm" by Menahan Street Band;
"Coming Back" by Gotye;
"Uncle Ace" by Blood Orange

SOUND DESIGN

Don Nichols

COSTUME DESIGN

Kelsey Vidic

PROPS

Jessa Mendoza & South Coast Conservatory

PERFORMANCE

KingCaleb Chaney, Avriell Craig,
Mary Dale, Isabella Fick, Solana Laszlo,
Erick Tapia Escálera, Miguel Vasquez

UNDERSTUDY

Lillian McFarren

Special thanks to Jessa Mendoza and Jena Minnick-Bull for allowing me to use their equipment and space during the entire rehearsal and performance process. This project could not have come to fruition without your generosity.

to let you see me

CHOREOGRAPHY

Mia Katsaros,
in collaboration with dancers

MUSIC

“to let you see me”
original composition by Fernando Acosta
Kelsey Vidic

COSTUME DESIGN

PERFORMANCE

Lilian Alcabedos, Amanda Campos,
Diego Moreno, Tamar Roide,
Jasmine Valdez, Aaliyah Ybarra,
Tiffany Zhen

UNDERSTUDY

Isabela Muguira

Thank you to my incredible cast for bringing my story to life. Thank you to Andy Vaca and Becca Lemme for your mentorship. Your faith in me, from beginning to end, means the world to me. Thank you to Fernando Acosta for collaborating with me to create an original piece of music for my vision. Thank you to Elaina Greenawalt for being my “mini mentor” and supporting me throughout this process. And lastly, thank you to David Jo for breaking down my emotional walls and loving me unconditionally. This piece would not exist without you.

Supernova

CHOREOGRAPHY

Niko Black, additional movement generated by dancers

MUSIC

"Ambrosia" by EMIL; "SEX!", "we were just having a good time" by Hedo Hydr8; "SEX! - Entrañas Remix" by Hedo Hydr8 and Entrañas; "Eusexua" by FKA twigs; "A Barely Lit Path" by Oneohtrix Point Never

SOUND DESIGN

Niko Black, Don Nichols (Spatialization)

COSTUME DESIGN

Mateo Esparza

PERFORMANCE

Samantha Comley, Bruno Hernandez, Satsuki Higashi, Luke Higuera, Meilin Jokela, Brittany Lopez, Kellan McArthur, Ava Carolina Mora, Kaiya Rodriguez, Emily Schwartzfarb

***Supernova** takes inspiration from the present, past, and imminent future of queer lives in the setting of a bold, vibrant, time-warped and queer nightclub. "Supernova" explores how LGBTQ+ identifying people often experience time by referencing the theory of queer temporality and J. Jack Halberstam's "In a Queer Time and Place." This piece tackles the complicated duality of self acceptance as a queer person; liberation in discovering one's truest self (a sort of birth), and the shedding of past selves and expectations (a sort of death). Queering time opens up moldable and non-linear modes of being, and the way in which queer individuals disrupt and veer from heteronormative expectations and timelines. Uncovering one's true self later in life warps experiences, leaving many queer individuals asking, "Do I still have time?" [there is still time.]*

intermission

Personality Hire

CHOREOGRAPHY

Maddie Youmans,
in collaboration with dancers

MUSIC

“Berlin” by Lou Reed; “But I Can Dream”
by The Andrews Sisters;
“The World Becomes Flesh”
by Boards of Canada

SOUND DESIGN

Maddie Youmans

COSTUME DESIGN

Kelsey Vidic

PERFORMANCE

Anna Abrego, Eva Galindo,
Gabriella Parks, Gavin Uhl, Kacey Ura,
Xene Sommers, Ava Pacaoan

Personality Hire (noun): role defined by presence and a person’s ability to stabilize, entertain, or support— emotionally, socially, or performatively; Carries unseen emotional labor, while performing a skill set, in service of the collective; “The *Court Jester* archetype.”

Echo Chamber

CHOREOGRAPHY

Nicolette Miguel,
in collaboration with dancers

MUSIC

"Challengers: Match Point"
by Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross;
"Active" by Andreas Henneberg;
"I Could Be Your Dog"
by Kaitlyn Aurelia Smith, Emile Mosseri;
"Envelop" by Julianna Barwick;
"Safe" by Julianna Barwick

SOUND DESIGN

Nicolette Miguel

COSTUME DESIGN

Kelsey Vidic

PROPS

Stephanie Losleben

PERFORMANCE

Armita Azizi, Ava Barrett, Alexis Gutierrez,
Vaselisa Lauloto, Claire Rosetti,
Kyra Wescom

Echo Chamber immerses us into a centrifuge of internal unraveling of inner self. Surrendering to the new that leads us to euphoric presences and the softening of being healed, held by humanity. I would like to extend gratitude to my people in Fresno, always thinking of you. Thankful for the CSULB Dance community, my mentor Zakiya Atkinson, and all the wonderful faculty. My family, mom, dad, sister, te quiero mucho. I am eternally grateful for my dancers; you all will do beautiful things in this life.

The Recipe

CHOREOGRAPHY Ruthie Fantaye

**MOVEMENT
CONTRIBUTIONS** Colin Dean, Ayanna Dowell, Dylan Shube

**REHEARSAL
DIRECTOR** Danzel Thompson-Stout

MUSIC "Pops Intro", "Elm Street", "Stuck On It",
"Smoke Break", "We Out Here"
by Villain Park

SOUND DESIGN Ruthie Fantaye, Reyrzy
COSTUME DESIGN Kelsey Vidic

PERFORMANCE Colin Dean, Ayanna Dowell,
Jordan Esquibel, Carina Ford,
Autumn, Ruiz, Maya Sabbah, Kiera Salley,
Dylan Shube, Elyse Turner

UNDERSTUDIES Sami Cady, Salvador Gutierrez

BFA CHOREOGRAPHERS

NIKO BLACK (they/them) is a queer dancer and creator based in Southern California. They are proficient in contemporary, modern, jazz, ballet, and commercial hip-hop, training closely with Marie Hoffman, Azuki Umeda, Zach Groenewold, and Rachel Berman. Niko received their AA in Dance, Commercial Dance Certificate, and Dance Instructors Certificate from Orange Coast College (OCC), and is a current BFA Candidate at California State University, Long Beach. They have performed in various events such as American College Dance Association (ACDA) Nationals, Palm Desert Choreography Festival, and *&when the heart opens*. Niko has presented two works at Orange Coast College, *don't miss it* and *Anomaly*, a work also presented at the 2025 ACDA Baja Regional. Moving forward, Niko intends to continue performing, creating, and exploring to bring communities together and open spaces for queerness through dance.

JEFFREY BULL is a Los Angeles-based dancer, choreographer, and educator whose work explores the intersection of acrobatics and a diverse range of movement styles. Drawing on his dynamic physicality and multidisciplinary background, he creates work that is expressive, visually compelling, and grounded in both athleticism and artistry.

Jeffrey has worked with DIAVOLO | Architecture in Motion and has appeared in dance films, live productions, and performances throughout Southern California. He is currently pursuing his BFA in Dance at California State University, Long Beach, where he continues to develop his artistic voice as both a performer and choreographer.

At South Coast Conservatory, Jeffrey coaches acrobatics and teaches contemporary, tap, and hip-hop with an emphasis on technique, physical confidence, musicality, and individual artistry.

MIA KATSAROS is a dancer, choreographer, and dance teacher who is currently a BFA Candidate in Dance at California State University, Long Beach. At CSULB, she has performed multiple BFA student works including *WIRED* by Elaina Greenawalt, *Living Carcass* by Eva Anderson, *Fidget* by Elise Conlay, and *You* by Maya Sabbah. She has also danced for faculty members, Danzel Thompson-Stout and Tsiambwom M. Akuchu.

Outside of CSULB, Mia has been able to perform in four dance films, *WIRED* by Elaina Greenawalt, *Fidget* by Elise Conlay, as well as dance concept videos as a member of Summit, a Contemporary Fusion Group. She has performed twice at Au.thenticity Dance Company *& when the heart opens* (Vol. 3 and 4) and at MashUp Contemporary Dance Company Open Mic Night.

Throughout her collegiate career, Mia became inspired to develop her choreographic voice. Utilizing storytelling, musicality, and drawing from her own individual

experiences, Mia has been able to develop her choreographic style over the past three years with professors Andrew Vaca, Tsiambwom M. Akuchu, and Keith Johnson. She is ecstatic to be debuting her first choreographic work, to let you see me, at CSULB's Variance BFA Dance Concert in collaboration with music composer Fernando Acosta.

NICOLETTE MIGUEL is a Cuban Mexican woman born and raised in Fresno, CA. She is an artist, choreographer, teacher, dancer, and enthusiast of all realms in creating art. She reflects her work back on human and spiritual connection and the complexities of reality.

She trained at Fresno City College where one of her original works earned selection for adjudication at the American College Dance Association (ACDA) regional conference in Dominguez Hills, California. She went on to represent Fresno City College at four ACDA adjudicated conferences, including performing for choreographer Hannah Millar at the ACDA National Conference in Washington, D.C. That performance led to an invitation to perform with her school at Jacob's Pillow. She also submitted a dance film, "Not Despierta," that was selected for the ACDA National Conference.

Nicolette now is a BFA candidate in Dance at CSU Long Beach. Nicolette is drawn to her roots in folklorico and salsa where she now has even joined the CSULB Salsa performance team. She will continue to grow in the infinite beauty and flow of wherever dance will bring her next.

MADDIE YOUNG is a movement artist and teacher based in Southern California. Currently a B.F.A. candidate in Dance at California State University, Long Beach, she has performed works of Rebecca Bryant, Maggie Ogle, Hannah Thomas, and served as a Production Associate for the American College Dance Association under Andrew Vaca.

After graduating from California School of the Arts-SGV's Commercial Dance Conservatory, Maddie continued her education at Mt. San Antonio College, earning A.A.s in Dance and Communication, as well as a Dance Teaching Certificate. As a member of the Mt. SAC Repertory Company, she set multiple works, represented at events including the Palm Desert Choreography Festival, SoCal Choreography Festival, ACDA, and was a recipient of the JoElla Lewis Repertory Memorial Scholarship. She is currently a member of Summit Contemporary Fusion Company, working on projects for both stage and screen and performing repertory on both the East and West Coasts.

Maddie began teaching professionally in 2021, where she has spent the past few years teaching and choreographing in both competitive studios and public schools, looking to create a safe space for her students to grow as dancers, as well as humans, focusing on their artistry, individuality, and confidence.

GUEST ARTIST

RUTHIE FANTAYE, a Los Angeles native with Ethiopian roots, is a Hip Hop Freestyle Danceartist, choreographer, and educator who has been active in both choreography-based and street dance communities in California for over a decade, building a career that bridges structured performance and individual expression.



As a former director and choreographer for V MO Dance and LFG Crew, she assisted in leading these teams to several competition wins, including Hip Hop International. As a freestyle dance artist, Fantaye recently won Freestyle Session's 2v2 Open Styles Battle and was a finalist at VersaStyle's 20th Anniversary Hip Hop Battle.

Working at the intersection of freestyle and choreography, Fantaye has served as an Associate Choreographer and Freestyler for Passing The Crown featuring MC Lyte and Rapsody. She was also a finalist on Season 3 of the Korean television series World of Street Woman Fighter, an international competition where dancers both battle and create original choreography.

Fantaye travels internationally teaching workshops, creating work for teams and companies, competing in battles, and serving as a judge and headliner for World of Dance. She is the founder of All Black Collective, a performance group created to bridge Hip Hop Freestyle and choreography, providing space for Black dance artists who move fluidly between both worlds. Through her work, Fantaye is dedicated to inspiring the next generation of dancers to develop their own authentic voice in freestyle, choreography, and beyond.

CONCERT DIRECTOR

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 13th 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

PRODUCTION CREW

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR - Stephanie Losleben

ASSISTANT TECHNICAL DIRECTOR - Julian Fernandez

HOUSE MANAGER - Dante Cimo

BFA CHOREOGRAPHIC MENTORS

Tsiambwom Akuchu, Zakiya Atkinson, Rebecca Bryant,
Danzel Thompson-Stout, Andrew Vaca

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEO DIRECTION - Gregory R.R. Crosby

CAMERA OPERATOR - Nicholas Neira

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT - Elise Conlay

STAGE CREW

Darren Andre Ayala, Amelia Gonzalez, Isabella Lewis, Allen Mirnyy,
Amara Rhone, Signe Rodrigues, Arsen Schwartz, Aubrey Wheeler

HOUSE/PUBLIC RELATIONS CREW

Taylor Hill, Chloe Jimenez, Sophie McCrary, Leya Obyedkov, Ava Threedy

COSTUME CONSTRUCTION CREW

Ngozichukwuka Oduah, Jasmine Valdez, Mads Irving, Mateo Esparza

WARDROBE SUPERVISOR - Kelsey Vidic

WARDROBE ASSISTANT - Carina Covarrubias

WARDROBE CREW

Kohana Bridges, Jurnhi Cockerham, Mads Irving, Paiton Lee

SOCIAL MEDIA LEAD - Lillian McKenzie

PROGRAM & POSTER DESIGN - Gregory R.R. Crosby

2026-2027 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

CSULB DANCE AWARDS

Celeste Kennedy Endowment - Amy Ernst, Cammie Kao, Sofia Linggi-Perez

Martin Figoten Endowed Scholarship-Arts - Elyse Turner

Donald W. Leonard Endowed Scholarship

Avriel Craig, Jordan Esquibel, Maya Sabbah,
Ilancueitl Soberanis, Jasmine Valdez

Richard Baker Endowed Scholarship - Ava Barrett

Jamiesson-Pechstein College of the Arts Endowed Scholarship

Niko Black, Carina Ford, Christy Schneider

Fine Arts Affiliates Scholarship - Claire Rosetti, Anthi Yphantides

DAAG Scholarship - Lillian McFarren

Lana Alper Endowed Scholarship - Elisa Koike, Hanna Selander

CR Carolyn R. Cunningham Endowed Scholarship - Maelee Acosta

Dance Dept Scholarship

Maelee Acosta, Armita Azizi, Indya Bluford, Zion Davis,
Peri Hulse, Kellan McArthur, Jacqueline Pacyna, Kyra Wescom

COTA COMPETITIVE AWARDS

Carolyn Campagna Kleefeld COTA Endowed - Armita Azizi

COTA Student Travel Endowment - Gabriella Parks

For more information on CSULB Dance visit
www.csulb.edu/dance

CSULB COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

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

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

Anthony Byrnes, **Associate Dean**

CSULB DANCE FALL 2026

Colleen Dunagan, **Chair**

FACULTY

Tsiambwom M. Akuchu, Zakiya Atkinson, Rebecca Bryant,
Amy Campion, Liz Curtis , Stacy Fireheart,
Tashara Gavin-Moorehead, Ruth Gutierrez,
Francesca Jandasek, Teresa Jankovic, Lisa Johnson,
Lorin Johnson, Rebecca Lemme, Stephanie Losleben,
Manuel Macias, Parris Mann, Brenna Monroe-Cook,
Justin Morris, Maggie Ogle, Don Nichols, Jen Shetland,
Danzel Thompson-Stout, Andrew Vaca, Lora Wilson,
Brooke Winder, MJ Wolff

STAFF

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

DANCE CLINIC

John Siegel - Head Athletic Trainer

GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Amy Ernst, Cammie Kao, Sofia Linggi-Perez

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**



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



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CSULB DANCE AND THE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS PRESENT

6th ANNUAL CSULB DANCE CONCERT

IN CONCERT

featuring choreography by dance faculty
Rebecca Bryant | Rebecca Lemme
and a farewell presentation of work by Andrew Vaca
november 18 - 21
at 8PM + sat matinée at 2PM
Martha B. Knoebel Dance Theater
tickets | \$30 general \$25 student
*Ticket prices for November 21, 8 pm performance \$35 /\$25
Photo by Gregory R.R. Crosby

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

AND FOR OUR SPRING SHOWS AT THE MARTHA B. KNOEBEL DANCE THEATER

MFA DANCE CONCERT

March 11-13, 2027 at 8PM with a Saturday Matinee at 2PM
Culminating works by our MFA in Dance Candidates

CONTEMPORARY DANCE CONCERT

April 22-24, 2027 at 8PM with a Saturday Matinee at 2PM
Choreography by our undergraduate dance majors