

# CU ★ PRESENTS

THEATRE & DANCE 2025-26 EVENTS



Theatre & Dance

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

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# The Current

Dance works by faculty and guest artists

April 2-5, 2026

Charlotte York Irey Theatre

## CREATIVE TEAM

Choreography

**Larry Southall**

**Chrissy Nelson**

**Erika Randall and Jesse Manno**

**Makisig Akin**

**Jessica Bertram Williams**

Lighting Designers

**Kate Bashore**

**Jonathan Spencer**

Stage Manager

**Hazel Palmer**

Assistant Stage Manager **Alysia Villarreal**

# **Mother of the Universe**

## **Choreography**

Larry Southall in collaboration with performers

## **Performers**

Rhianna Cranston and Layla Denise

## **Music**

Andrew Cyrille, Jeanne Lee, Jimmy Lyons and Gil Scott-Heron

## **Lighting Design**

Jonathan Spencer

## **Choreographer's Notes**

Thank you to my wonderful dancers and crew. Thank you to my colleagues and staff. I love working with you all! Also, much respect to my family; you are my inspiration.

## **About the Choreographer**

Larry Southall holds an MFA in performance and choreography from the University of Colorado Boulder. Native of the Bronx, he began working with hip-hop dance forms in the early 1980's. He has worked with the Boulder Ballet, The Harambee African Dance Ensemble, Blue Moon Dance Company, Motion Underground, Longmont Symphony and Dance Theatre, Cleo Parker Robinson Summer Institute, Denver school of the Arts and Steamboat Springs Dance Theatre. He has served as a master teacher at Dance Place in Washington, D.C., at Slippery Rock University,

and for the American College Dance Festival. Southall has choreographed for the Native Tongue Dance Theatre, Skeleton Dance Project, The Black College Dance Exchange, and the Legacies concert of the American College Dance Festival in Boulder, Co and is respected nationally as one of the great traditional hip-hop teachers. Southall is currently artistic director of The Grass Roots Project under the direction of Rennie Harris.

# the roots will hold

## Choreography

Chrissy Nelson in collaboration with performers

## Performers

Sam Antell, Riley Carter, Ashley Cazier, Jamie Chavez, Talli Fox, Emily Garza, Nika Ipakchi-Saiy, Amanda Lopez, Jessica McKay, Emma (EmJ) Sammoury, Claire Urschel and Adin Williams

## Music

Live Singing: Talli Fox

Recorded Sound: *Some Bright Morning* by Albert E. Brumley, performed by So Percussion and Caroline Shaw; *Goldberg Variations* by Johann Sebastian Bach, performed by Glenn Gould

## Lighting Design

Kate Bashore

## Choreographer's Notes

I am remembering the Cal-wood fire from 2020; the wind from 2025; and the second fire from 2026. Hiking at Heil Ranch makes me see. What actually is. There is fatigue from the wind and fire. Fatigue from the repeated falling limbs. Yet the trees are still standing. Their roots are collaborating, vibrating, and singing. And, so are we ... repeatedly spent ... fatigued and falling down. Let us remember ... that our roots, our community, will hold. In the words of Michelle Ellsworth, thank you bodies. From me to them, thank you dancers. Thanks for holding on.

## About the Choreographer

Chrissy Nelson is a dance artist, physical therapist, certified Pilates instructor and Somatics-based movement educator. Influenced by Movement Fundamentals®, with Contact Improvisation as a foundation, Nelson has taught CI at EarthDance, Contact Improvisation Iowa, Luther College and the Texas Dance Improvisation Festival. She has been a lecturer at CU Boulder since 2013 while also serving as the facilitator of the Theater & Dance Wellness Program. In addition to her teaching, Nelson directs *The Field / Boulder*, has collaborated frequently with sound and visual artists, and has presented original works in Iowa, Pennsylvania, New York and Colorado. Nelson's work oscillates between intimate duets (*Lettuce & Pancakes* 2024) to highly collaborative evening-length work (*Loose Gravel* 2023) where the artists navigated the rocky terrain of shifting from rock concert to boxing match to chasing fireflies. She received an MFA in Dance from CU Boulder (2013) and an MPT and BSS from Ohio University (1998, 1995).

# **the color of the ocean after a heavy rain**

## **Choreography**

Erika Randall

## **Performers**

Soloist: Allyson Hineman

Duets: Riley Carter, Maya Rasmussen (4/2, 4/4)

Shamus Noonan, Harley Butler (4/3, 4/5)

Kylie Auerbach, Catherine Bircher, Abigail Brainard, Lilly Brunnick, Bridgeth Church, Mercedes Clayburn, Grace Cochran, Khaki Criss, Gemma DeNofa, Leila Gridley, Catherine Knecht, Mailin Kulm, Skyler Martin, Cayleigh Morton, Addisson Pribble, Bella Quigley, Jordyn Richard, Charlotte Rindfuss, Babette Rubey, Veronika Silerova, Olivia Sweeterman, Claire Urschel, Abigail Weinstein

## **Rehearsal Director**

Allyson Hineman

## **Rehearsal Assistants**

J Parker, Madison Jones and Blair Schulze

## **Music**

Original Score by Jesse Manno

## **Costume Design**

Markas Henry with Erika Randall

## **Costume Assistant**

Olivia Sweeterman

## **Lighting Design**

Kate Bashore

## **Sound Design**

Kate Bashore and Jesse Manno

## **About the Choreographer**

Erika Randall is a dance professor and interim dean and vice provost for undergraduate education. She co-authored and co-directed the award-winning feature film, *Leading Ladies*, in 2010. In 2014, Ira Glass awarded her “Best Dance on the Radio” for *Hello, Blue Soul*, a piece that merged storytelling and sound. Her choreography has been seen in four countries and 16 states over the last decade and her internationally award-winning screendance works, including: *Paula + Francesca*, *Down for the Count*, *less*, *more*, and *self defense*, have screened at festivals such as the Beirut International Women Film Festival, the Beyond the Curve International Film Festival in Paris, France, the Starz Denver Film Festival, the Florence Queer Festival in Italy, and the Façade Film Festival in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. She co-writes and hosts the podcast *The Ampersand*, and her newly released novel, *Music for Leaving*, can be found on her website: [erikarandall.com](http://erikarandall.com)

# pre(tender)

## Choreography

Makisig Akin

## Performers

Eli Denning, Amanda Lopez, Camden Sharkey, Talli Fox and Nika Ipakchi-Saiy

## Music

*Ableton Live Performances* by Makisig Akin; *The Great Pretender* by Freddie Mercury (edited)

## Costume Design

Makisig Akin with Markas Henry

## Lighting Design

Jonathan Spencer

## Sound Design

Makisig Akin

## About the Choreographer

Makisig Akin (they/them) is a queer, transgender Filipino choreographer, dance artist, facilitator, curator and activist. Akin was born and raised in the Philippines and is currently based in Colorado and Berlin, Germany. Their choreographic work has been presented nationally and internationally. Akin's work focuses on the recognition of intersectional identities, reconnecting with

their ancestry, and decentralizing Western ideologies in dance making. Holding spaces for Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous and People of Color is an integral part of their artist activism. Important collaborators and teachers include mayfield brooks, Jason Tsou, Anya Cloud, Nara Virgens, Eric Geiger, Ajani Brannum and taisha paggett, among others. In 2021, Akin co-founded The Love Makers Company, an experimental project-based dance company, with Anya Cloud. In 2024, they co-founded Emerging Change Tanzfestival, a Berlin-based experimental dance festival featuring and curating QTBIPoC artists and their collaborators, with Nara Virgens. In 2019, they received their MFA from UCLA.

# BUT WHO IS YOU

## Choreography

Jessica Bertram Williams

## Performers

Angel Anderson, Lisa Engelken, Tyreis Hunte and Adin Williams

Understudy: Riley Carter

## Music

*Subtemple* by Burial; *Watching Me* by Jill Scott

## Lighting Design

Kate Bashore

## Rehearsal Director

Riley Carter

## Choreographer's Notes

I am in deep gratitude for this process, for this incredible cast, and for the opportunity to return home again. Thank you to the dancers for their full commitment throughout this week of reflection and rigor. In such a short time, we built something rare—a small family grounded in play and generosity.

As the work asks (and as we asked ourselves): how does surveillance shape the body? What does it mean to move while being watched, held within the frame of an external gaze? Together we practiced disruption and reclamation, searching for ways to exceed and rupture that frame.  
SHOW THEM, then STOP.

## About the Choreographer

Jessica Bertram Williams, MFA (she/her) is a Southern-bred movement artist, educator and scholar whose work is rooted in storytelling, play, and Afro-Diasporic traditions. She holds degrees in dance & movement studies and anthropology & human biology from Emory University and an MFA in dance from the CU Boulder with emphases in critical ethnic studies and arts administration. Williams is currently an assistant professor of dance at Gonzaga University in the Pacific Northwest.

Guided by Black feminist and womanist thought, her teaching and artistic work center empowerment, self-determination and collective meaning-making. Her choreographic practice blends improvisation and contemporary techniques with Africanist aesthetics, cultivating vitality, ancestral connection and communal engagement while exploring intersections of identity, spirituality and liberation.

Her work has been presented at colleges and universities, as well as the Black Women's Studies Association, 7Stages Theatre, The Ferst Center for the Performing Arts, Rialto Center for the Arts, and The Atlanta Contemporary Museum.

# **Somethin Ain't Right**

## **Choreography**

Larry Southall

## **Performers**

Avery Maxwell, Chris Bremner, Riley Carter, Elizabeth Ervin and Rhianna Cranston

## **Music**

Tekitha and MFSB

## **Lighting Design**

Jonathan Spencer

## **Choreographer's Notes**

Thank you to my wonderful dancers and crew. Thank you to my colleagues and staff. I love working with you all! Also, much respect to my family; you are my inspiration.

# PERSONNEL

**KATE BASHORE** (Lighting Designer) Recent design credits include: *Agent Romeo* (Wonderbound Ballet); *Momentum* (DanceAspen); *Romeo & Juliet*; *Once Upon a Mattress*; *Damn Yankees*; *The River Bride* (Arvada Center); Disney's *Frozen* (Arrow Rock Lyceum Theatre); *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Theatreworks); *The Prom*; *Memphis* (Town Hall Arts Center). Bashore has served as the Associate Lighting Director for Fall for Dance Festival in NYC and she has toured with Mark Morris Dance Group and Jessica Lang Dance as the lighting supervisor. MFA: University of Tennessee – Knoxville.

**JESSE MANNO** (Music) (BA Asian Studies, CU, 1988) has been music director of the CU Boulder Dance Program since 1991, and accompanist/composer in residence at the Bates Dance Festival most years since 1998. He's played for thousands of dance classes, and created original music for hundreds of dance, theatre, circus art, site specific and film projects with a wide variety of collaborators including David Dorfman, Onye Ozuzu, Michael Foley, Claudia LaVista, Marianela Boan, Liz Lerman, Lazer Vaudeville and many fine Colorado artists. His collaboration on the soundtrack for the film *Quantum Qi* (premiered in 2025) received the Silver Medal at the Global Music Awards, and multiple best music awards from film festivals worldwide including the London Women Film Festival, Shanghai Independent Film Festival, and the Zepstone International Film and Music Festival. He is the only musician to be honored by The Dance Archive as a "Colorado Legend In Dance." [jessemannomusic.com](http://jessemannomusic.com).

**JONATHAN SPENCER** (Lighting Designer) has worked principally for Broadway, Touring, Regional and Off-Broadway productions. Having collaborated on more than 130 productions and counting, lighting designs include world premier *Mr. Hollands Opus* at Ogunquit Playhouse and the *RENT* 20th-25th Anniversary National Tours which ran for more than 1200 performances, *The Priscilla Queen of the Desert* First National Tour, Off-Broadway: *Who's Holiday* (West Side Theatre), Carrie Mae Weems' *Grace Notes: Reflections for Now* (John F Kennedy Center, Yale Repertory and Spoleto Festival USA) and *You Are Mine Own* Directed by Atom Egoyan (Spoleto Festival USA). Theater Under the Stars at the Hobby Center in Houston include *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Newsies* and *White Christmas*. Within Colorado recent designs include *DOWNSTATE* at Curious Theater Co. and *Daisy Violet the Bitch Beast King* at the Dairy Arts Center. Spencer teaches lighting design at the CU Boulder Theatre & Dance. Member USA 829. [JSpencerDesign.com](http://JSpencerDesign.com)

# PRODUCTION TEAM

## Lighting Programmers

Ayana Glass

Rory Smith

## Light Board Operator

Brianna Meza-Sauzamede

## Sound Operator

Elinor Zugazagoitia

## Run Crew

Amelia DeCaporale

Evan Hunter

## Wardrobe Crew

Maddie Drusel

Peyton Melun

## Costume Assistants

Emilee Novak

Olivia Sweeterman

**Costume Shop Assistants:** Katie Barcroft, Jonathan Bashford, Elena Diederich, Savannah Gullett, Koral Jackson, Shannon Kosman, Avery Lichty, Kirra Lindauer, Dagny McGinty, Hope Mills, Adison Palmer, Davy Platt, Cyrus Porter, Brooke Rawcliffe, Ava Scott, Quinn Shultz, Sasha Solovyev, Sydney Sowl, Kai Symons, Emily Zhou, Clara Bailey, Alex Esquibel-Melanson, Zeph Garvin, Sophie Green, Riley Oswald, Kaylee Prestia, Kendall Wilson

**Dance Production Crew:** Samantha Antell, Cheri Bauman, Katrina Chandrashekar Sonwane, Lisa Engelken, Ayana Glass, Leila Gridley, Evan Hunter, Nathan Klimpel, Summer Levin, Marlee Marney, Hazel Palmer, Veronika Silerova, Rory Smith

# THEATRE EVENTS 2025-26

Oct. 3-12: **Pride and Prejudice**

By Kate Hamill

Adapted from the novel

by Jane Austen

“It hasn’t met a rib it can’t tickle.”

—The New York Times



Nov. 7-16: **The Olive Tree**

By Satya Chávez

It’s “Over the River and Through the Woods” —but instead of meadows and forests, it’s “Across the abyssal ocean and up the unforgiving heights of the capitalist mountain.”



Feb. 20-March 1: **Mr. Burns, a post-electric play**

By Anne Washburn

and Michael Friedman

“Downright brilliant.”

—The New York Times



April 10-19: **The Prom**

By Chad Beguelin, Bob Martin

and Matthew Sklar

Drama Desk Award for Best Musical



# DANCE EVENTS 2025-26

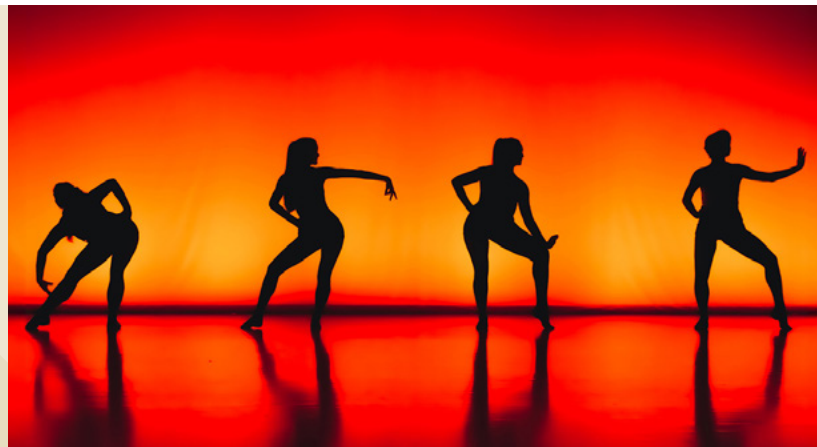
Oct. 17-19: **An Offering in Time**  
MFA Thesis Works



Nov. 14-15: **Revel**  
An evening of works presented  
by MFA candidates in Dance



Nov. 20-21: **FRESH: Fall 2025**  
A showcase of students' works  
in progress



# DANCE EVENTS 2025-26

Jan. 30-Feb. 1: **Catapult**  
A BFA dance concert



Feb. 27-March 1: **Open Space**  
Curated by CU Dance  
Connection



April 2-5: **The Current**  
Dance works by faculty and  
guest artists



April 17-18:  
**FRESH: Spring 2026**  
A showcase of students' works  
in progress



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# PERSONNEL

## **DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE & DANCE**

### **Department Chair**

Kevin Rich

### **Associate Chair of Theatre**

Ted Stark

### **Associate Chair of Dance and Director of Dance**

Michelle Ellsworth

### **Production Coordinator**

Bethany Rachel

### **Director of Dance Production**

Kate Bashore

### **Dance Production Associate**

Mackenzie Derrick

### **Assistant Director of Dance Production**

Lisa Engelken

### **Costume Production Director**

Ted Stark

### **Assistant to the Costume Production Director**

Veronica Dewey

### **Technical Director**

Jordan Feeler

### **Associate Technical Director**

Stephen Balgooyen

### **Production Electrician**

Thomas Woolner

### **Music/Accompanist Coordinator for Dance**

Jesse Manno

### **Business Manager**

Jeanine McCain

### **Program Coordinator**

Teresa Gould

### **Graduate Program Assistant**

Kathryn Ross

### **Administrative Coordinator**

Madysen Hunter

### **Academic Advisor**

Jessica Baron

### **Costume Storage Supervisor**

Savannah Gullet

### **Costume Shop Bookkeeper**

Sydney Sowl

### **Wardrobe Supervisor**

Brooke Rawcliffe

### **Dance Costume Coordinator**

Tyreis Hunte

### **Dance Events Coordinator**

Rhianna Cranston

### **Theatre Recruiting Assistant**

Ava Scott

### **House Manager Lead**

Amanda Sturman

### **House Managers**

Peyton Melun

Beatrice Hunt

Lily Gentry

William Lewis III

Kieran Varela

August Straumanis

Izzy Lauer

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*Current as of Jan. 30, 2026*