

# Borders Spring Dance Concert

ST. OLAF COLLEGE DANCE DEPARTMENT - 2026



ST. OLAF COLLEGE,  
KELSEY THEATER  
APRIL 30, MAY 1 & 2

# **The St. Olaf College Dance Department**

The St. Olaf College Dance Department offers a nurturing environment in which to pursue a BA in Dance with scholarly research, performance, and choreographic opportunities in Contemporary/Modern Dance, West African Dance, Hip Hop Dance, Ballet, International Dance, Ballroom, Jazz Dance, and Tap. The department consists of four core faculty plus adjunct faculty, a full-time technical director, and a staff musician. The Dance Department typically graduates approximately 10 dance majors per year while serving over 500 students annually. Notably, this year's senior class includes 14 dance majors, reflecting continued growth in the program.

The St. Olaf College Dance Department engages students in the study of dance as a vital community and artistic practice. Partnering with the College's liberal arts curriculum and making connections with other academic fields, the dance program encourages the exploration of complex ideas through investigation, knowledge, and expression of the body.

Our program combines embodied practice with critical thinking and academic rigor to root dance forms from around the world in their culturally, socially, and politically informed values. This is a fundamental means of self-discovery, understanding other dancing bodies, and advancing an anti-racist, equitable, and just community. Whether students in our program become dance artists, choreographers, scholars, teachers or integrate their skills and knowledge into other fields, they grow into movers, makers, and thinkers who responsibly respond to, serve, and shape the world around them.

## **For the Audience**

- \* No recording allowed.
- \* Please silence cell phones.
- \* This production contains brief mature language, flashing lights, and depictions of violence.

## Directors' Note

Welcome to *Borders*! We are honored to have you join us for this performance, the culmination of a year-long exploration by our department into the complex nature of borderlands. In a world increasingly defined by political fragmentation and rigid divisions—where borders are often debated as lines of exclusion, walls of defense, or sites of intense conflict—we have chosen to investigate the "border" as a living, breathing space. This evening's work explores the border as a dynamic zone of paradox; areas undeniably dangerous and fraught with friction, yet also fertile grounds for connection, intrigue, cross-pollination, and creativity. Borders are the jagged edges where groups split apart, but they are also the singular places where difference meets, interacts, and ultimately transforms.

Our dancers and choreographers have used both stage and classroom as laboratories to ask what it means to exist on the periphery or in the overlap between worlds. We have explored how the body reacts to restriction and enduring attachment, how it navigates the unknown, and how human connection can be forged even in the heat of a collision. In these performances, you will see the border portrayed not just as a barrier of conflict, but as a site of profound human encounter. We invite you to lean into the discomfort and beauty of these movement landscapes, joining us in exploring the tension found at the very limit of where one story ends and another begins.

*Borders* also marks a unique merging of St. Olaf's two distinct dance ensembles: Companydance, with its focus on a diverse range of contemporary explorations, and the Veselica International Dance Ensemble, which brings the rich traditions and global perspectives of folk and character dance. By bringing these two companies together, we explore the "borderlands" between genres. This collaboration showcases the broad range and diversity of the St. Olaf College Dance Department, highlighting the beautiful friction and unexpected harmony that arise when different styles collide.

Tonight, you will see dancers navigate many types of borders—physical, cultural, and artistic. This concert celebrates collaboration and reminds us that when we lean into the spaces between us, new forms of expression emerge. There is great beauty in the borders.

-Veselica Artistic Director Dr. Andrea Conger, and Companydance Artistic Directors Brian J. Evans, Brianna Rae Johnson, and Heather Klopchin and Concert Director Erin Drummond

# Who's in the Room?

**Choreographer:** Brian J. Evans in robust collaboration with the student-artist cast, Josie LaMere contributed during Fall of 2025 as a student artist.

**Rehearsal Directors:** Sophie Smith and Kathryn Sprandel

**Music:** Part I -- Bad Bunny, Bo Burnam, Childish Gambino, Colin Stetson and Sarah Neufeld, Dylan Thomas by Michael Sheen, Janae Johnson, Kendrick Lamar, Maya Angelou, Oliver Anthony, Paris Paloma, Ren, Roxane Gay, Rudyard Kipling by Ria Lamsal; Part 2 & 3 -- TOE (Theory of Everything)

**Music:** Kathryn Sprandel

**Dancers:** Ivy Anderson, Kaylin Averbek, Audrey Degener, Maggie Doran, Owen Erickson, Sara Griffith, Jessica Olson, Mickenson Sanon, Louise Skokan, Sophie Smith, Kathryn Sprandel, Mary Staplin

**Costume Designer:** Rebecca Bernstein

**Lighting Designer:** Stephen Schroeder

**Notes:** "Who's in the Room?" is both an invitation and a question. Told in three parts, the piece returns again and again to what it means to enter a space shaped by stories, identities, systems, and memory. Who is already there when we arrive? Who do we choose to see, to hold, to make space for once we are inside? How do we balance joy and rest, tension and possibility, in order to make room for ourselves, too? Ultimately, this work asks us to consider not only who is present, but who else might we invite.

**Special Thanks:** Special thanks to the cast and the department for taking on a work of this scale and spirit. Forty full minutes of dancing is no joke, especially when so much of the practice, persistence, and labor happens unwitnessed. And to you, the audience: thank you for filling the room, for holding the space with us. May we be an invitation to keep making room, to keep asking who is missing, and to bring someone with us next time.

# LOREM IPSUM

**Choreographer:** Rel Edwards, Maya Fonseca-Jersild

**Creative Collaborators:** Dr. Pillatzki-Warzeha - research, insight, and great encouragement

**Music:** Sound and Music edited by Rel Edwards and Maya Fonseca-Jersild,

**Dancers:** Alice Boerner, Rel Edwards, Maya Fonseca-Jersild, Sara Griffith, Sophie Smith

**Costume Designer:** Rel Edwards, Maya Fonseca-Jersild

**Lighting Designer:** Stephen Schroeder

**Notes:** We hope you leave with a renewed, expanded sense of what it means to be a part of a community, based on the vital Dakota value of being a good relative. Fight practices of guilt, ignorance, and apathy. Instead, utilize your power to truly listen. From there, we move.

Rel and Maya will host a session open to the St. Olaf community for reflection on practical steps toward meaningful acknowledgement of the land we steward.

**Special Thanks:** Thank you to Dr. Pillatzki-Warzeha, Dr. Sherman-Conroy, Brian J. Evans, and Dr. Andrea Conger for providing your insights, expertise, and encouragement in our exploration of contentious territory. Your guidance inspired us to make bolder, more educated, choices in the development of the piece.



## Slow Down!

**Choreographer:**

Delaney Dresser

**Music:** "The End of

a Sailing Soul" -

Icare Sandials,

"Now, Feeling" -

Photay, Carlos Niño

**Dancers:** Katie

Fugate and Nina

Hodder

**Lighting Designer:** Stephen Schroeder



## 2000's Club

**Choreographer:** Mickenson Sanon

**Music:** "Goodies" - Ciara

**Dancers:** Ariel Edwards (Rel) and Mikenson Sanon (Mickey)

**Costume Designer:** Mickenson Sanon

**Lighting Designer:** Stephen Schroeder

**Notes:** This piece is a combination of Hip Hop and Jazz Funk, It highlights dance battling in the club during the year of 2000s.

The movements are strong, sharp, feminine, and sassy at the same time.



**Special Thanks:** A special thanks to the Oles and close friends that show up to every single one of my performances. It really brings me joy watching you in the audience as I am on stage. I am very grateful for all of you and I appreciate your support.

# Coregulated Effervescence

**Choreographer:** Ivy Anderson

**Music:** Excerpts from "Voodoo Mama" - Justin Hurwitz, "Tonight I Am Throwing My Dreams Away" - Lowering

**Dancers/Collaborators:** Isabella Baker, Maggie Doran, Delaney Dresser, Nina Hodder, Anna Jacobsen, Z Johnson, Jess Olson

**Costume Designer:** Rebecca Bernstein

**Lighting Designer:** Stephen Schroeder

## RED WAGON

**Choreographer:** Jake Nehrbass

**Music:** "Little Red Wagon" - Silas Carpenter, "Mining" - Vainio, "Stranger" - Silas Carpenter, "Teutons" -Mika Vainio, "What's the Big Idea?" - Silas Carpenter

**Dancers:** Magdalena Bubar, Ava Brewer, Tess Concannon, Kate Heston, Annikka Howe, Owen Linder, Clare Martin, Sophia Rasmussen, Lily Vonderlage, Morgan Weitzell, Gwenna Wetzel,

**Costume Designer:** Rebecca Bernstein

**Lighting Designer:** Stephen Schroeder

**Notes:** "Red Wagon" generally refers to a classic American child's toy, most famously the Radio Flyer. Idiomatically, "your little red wagon" symbolizes personal responsibility for one's actions, while as a brand name, it often represents nostalgia, community, or strategy.

### Special Thanks:

Thank you to the dancers of the First Year Dance Project for taking risks and trying new things, and to the St. Olaf Dance Department, for the opportunity.



## La Crue

**Choreographer:** Maggie Doran

**Music:** "Driven" - Felix Rosch

**Dancers:** Maggie Doran

**Costume Designer:** Maggie Doran

**Lighting Designer:** Stephen Schroeder



## Passing Time II

**Choreographer:** Brian J. Evans and Rush Benson



**Music:** School Bell - Wiley Vision Alarms; Dragon Ball Z — Kamehameha Sequences and Power-Up Effects (compiled by Kamikaize); Fairy Song for Relaxing — Fairy Vibe Vol. 15 (Tworld Music); Happy and Fun Pop Background Music for Videos (MorningLightMusic);

Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots Soundboard Effects; Star Wars Music & Ambience — Darth Vader Theme and Environmental Sounds (Ambient Worlds); Street Fighter II Arcade Music — Ryu Stage (Composed by Yoko Shimomura); The Sims™ 2 — "Bare Bones" (TheGenOST) "Thriller" — Michael Jackson **Dancers:** ariel edwards, Hailey Frank, Katie Fugate, Nina Hodder, Z Johnson, Emma Linder, Sam Suro

**Costume Designers:** Rebecca Bernstein, Brian J Evans and Dancers

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## Intermission

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# Silk Road

**Choreographer:** Andrea Conger

**Music:** Live improvisational percussion by Tim O'Keefe and Jane Dagar

**Dancers:** Audrey Degener, Sonja Ebey, Liya Wetzler

**Costume Designer:** Anne von Bibra

**Lighting Designer:** Stephen Schroeder

**Notes:** Silk Road attempts to trace the threads of movement, music, and dress across the vast landscapes of an ancient trading route that once stretched from China to Europe and the Middle East. The piece places the distinct solo techniques of classical Persian, Tajik, and Mongolian dance into conversation by performing them simultaneously on stage. Doing so required innovative thinking around traditional movement and accompaniment. Renowned musician, Tim O'Keefe joined by student drummer Jane Dagar, create a live improvised soundscape using traditional instruments from across these regions. This piece attempts to capture the innovation of movement transformed by geography, celebrating the radical creativity found in the overlaps between worlds where borders serve as sites of profound human encounter.

**Special Thanks:** to Ann Wagner for her generous support



# Bus Stop Boogie

**Choreographer:** Z Johnson

**Music:** "Bogata by Bus" - Jesse Cook

**Dancers:** Alice Boerner, Magdalena Bubar, Maggie Doran, Delaney Dresser, Ariel Edwards, Katie Fugate, Nina Hodder, Anna Jacobsen, Esther Staplin, Lily Vonderlage, Gwenna Wetzel



**Costume**

**Designer:** Z

Johnson and Cast

**Lighting**

**Designer:**

Stephen  
Schroeder

**Special Thanks:**

Thank you to my cast for working with me through the chaos of everything. You

guys are amazing dancers and human beings, and I am glad that you are a part of this project!!

## in the next

**Choreographer:** Hailey Frank and Mary Staplin

**Music:** "Walking and Falling" - Laurie Anderson, "Moss II" - Elori Sal

**Dancers:** Hailey Frank and Mary Staplin

**Costume Designer:** Hailey Frank and Mary Staplin

**Lighting Designer:** Stephen Schroeder



# Electric Counterpoint

**Choreographer:** Kaleena Miller

**Rehearsal Director:** Joel Arpin

**Music:** Composer: Steve Reich; Played live by: Toivo Hannigan

**Dancers:** Katie Fugate, Sara Griffith, Nina Hodder, Emma Linder, Owen Linder, Joy Meyers, Mara Oyen

**Costume Designer:** Rebecca Bernstein

**Lighting Designer:** Stephen Schroeder

**Notes:** This work begins with the notion that any sounding-dance composition created to and for a piece of pre-recorded music *might* be a non-consensual duet. With that in mind, this presentation of *Electric Counterpoint* attempts to be an offering of an additional sonic voice that feels woven into the already existing beautifully dense composition; footwork phrasing that the work never asked for, but nearly 40 years after its premiere, adds a layer of human percussion that continues the embodied sonic dialogue.

**Special Thanks:** What a gift it has been to be at St. Olaf so many years after my freshman year spent here. BIG big thanks to Heather Klopchin for bringing me in; Katie, Sara, Nina, Emma, Owen, Joy and Mara for their wonderful and committed work; to Karla Grotting for keeping tap dance alive at St. Olaf and being my first inspiration in dance; and to Ali Flannery, Stephen Schroeder, Rebecca Bernstein, Joel Arpin and Toivo Hannigan for their logistic and artistic support.



# Revolving Echoes

**Choreographer:** Heather Klopchin

**Music:** "Piano Prelude No. 2" - George Gershwin

**Dancers:** Delaney Dresser, Heather Klopchin, Olivia Lovrich, Esther Staplin

**Costume Designer:** Rebecca Bernstein

**Lighting Designer:** Stephen Schroeder

**Notes:** *Revolving Echoes* looks at the borders between the young body and the aging body in dance. These borders are not



fixed lines, but shifting thresholds. The young body may carry speed, elasticity, and an untested openness, while the aging body holds memory, nuance, and

a deeper relationship to time. In performance, these borders are porous; strength can reside in stillness, vitality can emerge from restraint, and wisdom can shape movement and expression as profoundly as physical agility. Dance reveals that the boundaries of age are less about limitation and more about transformation, inviting us to see the continuum of the dancing body as an embodied living archive of experience. The movement material for *Revolving Echoes* is based on the solo *A failing/falling* choreographed and performed in 2008.

# Boundary Conditions

**Creators:** Dr. Andrea Conger (Dance), Prof. Kim Mandary (Computer Science), and Dr. Will Leeson (Computer Science) in collaboration with students in **Dance:** Savannah Carr, Hailey Frank, Josie Hauck, Anna Jacobsen, Emma Linder, Sophie Smith, Donovan Timmerman, Gwenna Wetzel, and **Computer Science:** Anotida Hove, Ekarhi Maruwo, and Lara Oliveira Cutrim

**Music:** Traditional Bulgarian Kopanitsa performed by Arany Janos "Hubava Bilyana" by Deep Zone Project x Bisera & Lidia

**Costume Designer:** Anne von Bibra

**Lighting Designer:** Stephen Schroeder

**Notes:** "We investigate the border not as a wall, but as a dynamic transition – a borderland where organic movement and non-human logic inhabit the same physical space."

Building on Merce Cunningham's experiments with objective randomness, Boundary Conditions explores the collision of two seemingly disparate worlds: Veselica International Dance Ensemble and the Computer Science Department. Developed through an intensive partnership, the work moves beyond traditional narratives to embrace the "discomfort and beauty" of risky pedagogical encounters.

To bridge the gap between ancient heritage and modern computing, we mapped the 11/16 rhythmic "building blocks" of the Bulgarian Kopanitsa into Markov Chains making choices based on probability then testing them against human choices. This allowed us to treat centuries of traditional footwork as a predictive sequence, where the logic of the dance line functions like data that balances individual choice within a communal structure. These patterns are then pushed through Evolutionary Algorithms, forcing the choreography to "mutate" and change in real-time, a process that demands radical adaptability and split-second shifts from the performers as they navigate evolving, non-linear patterns.

By weaving the mathematical logic of Large Language Models (LLMs) into the traditional fabric of Bulgarian folk dance—honed by centuries of human doing—we reveal the "code" behind the choreography while the dance, in turn, reveals the code. The result is an experiment in "beautiful friction" that moved students and faculty beyond their specialized silos to develop radical adaptability and cross-disciplinary literacy. By placing ancient heritage and modern code in the same space, we invite the audience to witness a collaboration where the potential for learning outweighs the safety of a guaranteed result. In this overlap, we ask: what does it mean to create in an age where the organic and the algorithmic are inextricably linked?



*\*\*Want to know more about this project? Check out the experiment website.*



**Special Thanks:** Ann Wagner for her generous support and Ethnic Dance Theatre for costume support.

# Faculty Biographies

**Dr. Andrea Conger** is an Associate Professor of Practice at St. Olaf College, where she teaches across the departments of Dance, Sociology/Anthropology, and Gender Studies. A St. Olaf alumna ('98) and former member of the Veselica International Dance Ensemble, she is honored to return to the ensemble this year in her first season as Artistic Director.

Andrea enjoyed a twelve-year professional dance career spanning the Twin Cities and Europe, including 6 yrs in Hungary before heading to graduate school. She holds an MA in Ethnochoreology from the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick and a PhD in Anthropology from Indiana University, Bloomington. An active researcher and scholar, Andrea has authored numerous academic publications and maintains a robust research agenda exploring the intersections of movement, culture, and identity.

**Erin Drummond** is a director, artist and educator with over two decades of professional experience as a dancer and choreographer. She cultivates creative inquiry through interdisciplinary and collaborative projects, ever turned on by embodied research as a catalyst for personal, societal and environmental shift. She earned a BA from Columbia University and an MFA in Dance through Hollins University, in collaboration with institutions in Frankfurt, Germany. She danced with a number of companies and collaborators in NYC, Minneapolis, along the West Coast and abroad, including Dancing People Company and Rosy Simas Danse. Her creative work has been presented nationally and internationally and supported by the Minnesota State Arts Board and Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council. She directed the dance program at Winona State University for five years and is now based in the Twin Cities, on faculty at St. Olaf College and St. Paul Ballet. She loves mentoring student development, nurturing radical creativity, and expanding the possibilities of pedagogy.

**Brian J Evans** is a Citizen Artist, defined by the Aspen Institute Arts Program as:

Individuals who reimagine the traditional notions of art-making, and who contribute to society either through the transformative power of their artistic abilities, or through proactive social engagement with the arts in realms including education, community building, diplomacy and healthcare.

Mixing disciplines, mixing professions, and mixed race, Brian J. Evans unpacks the “moments of suspension” that reside in the spaces between spaces—convinced that connections exist between us all and it is the responsibility of the Arts to remind us to be holistically human, lest we forget. Courageous vulnerability and intentional equity keep him aloft as he finds ways to give back and add to the communities, mentors, and ancestors who blazed trails and continue to do so! Evans believes it is the responsibility of the Arts to rediscover existing connections within humanity.

Special thanks to Rush Benson and Joe Cvala for providing the space to create my being! My spouse and daughter for supporting that being. My mama for bringing me into being.

Currently, **Heather Klopchin** is a Professor of Dance and Chair of the Dance Department, and the Oscar and Gertrude Boe Overby Distinguished Professor at St. Olaf College where she teaches Modern Dance, Senior Seminar, and First Year Seminar. She also choreographs for Companydance. Heather holds a BS degree in Management from the State University of New York (SUNY) at Geneseo and an MFA degree in Dance choreography and performance from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Heather is passionate about performing, choreographing, researching, and teaching dance. Highlights of her career to date include performing in works by Danny Buraczeski, Joe Chvala, Robert Cohan, Suzanne Costello, David Dorfman, Bill Evans, Karla Grotting, Judith Howard, Doris Humphrey, Mathew Janczewski, Walter Kennedy, Jennifer Isle, Linda Lehovec, Paula Mann, Gabriel Masson, Mark Morris, Jeffrey Peterson, Stuart Pimsler, Anthony Roberts, Melissa Rolnick, Zoe Sealy, Karis Sloss, Daniel Stark, Robin Stiehm, Deborah Thayer,

Doug Varone, and Renée Wadleigh. She has performed with Stuart Pimsler Dance and Theater, ARENA Dances, Zenon Dance Company, Eclectic Edge Ensemble, Linda Lehovec & Dancers, Joe Chvala Flying Foot Forum, Dancing People Company, Off Leash Area, and Alternative Motion Project. Heather also currently serves as the ACDA (American College Dance Association) North-Central Regional Director.

**Will Leeson** began studying computer science at Drake University. He then continued his learning at the University of Virginia where he earned his Ph.D. in 2024. Prof. Leeson's main research area is in software engineering, specifically program analysis. Software is invading most facets of life, and his research is aimed to ensure that these programs are rigorously tested and analyzed to ensure they do no harm. Additionally, Prof. Leeson is interested in graph neural networks, a class of machine learning models designed to handle data that can be represented using a graph.

**Kim Mandery** studied applied mathematics and statistics at the University of Minnesota - Duluth, and has worked in industry and government sectors prior to coming to academia. Her research dives into the ethical side of AI, inclusive tech design, and anything that makes machine learning more transparent and fun to learn.

## **Guest Artists/Musicians**

**Toivo Hannigan** is a guitarist, composer and producer born and raised in the twin cities. After graduating from Berklee in August 2020, Toivo moved back to the twin cities and has since furthered his career as a freelance musician. Toivo regularly performs with bands/artists including, but not limited to Jake Baldwin, JT Bates, Bryan and the Haggards, and Larry Wish.

**Kaleena Miller** is a sound-focused dance artist (tap dancer, choreographer, improviser, educator, and deep listener) whose work has found form as live performance, video, sound

installation, written scores and wood works. Named one of DANCE Magazine's 25 to Watch, her work has been presented in Minneapolis, New York and Chicago, including commissions from the American Tap Dance Foundation, Cowles Center for Dance and Walker Art Center.

Born and raised in Minnesota, Miller toured internationally with Rhythmic Circus' Feet Don't Fail Me Now! for 10 years, co-directed the acclaimed Twin Cities Tap Festival from 2015-2021, and founded Kaleena Miller Dance, a forward-thinking tap dance company that produced new work and provided mentorship. She has performed in works by Roxane Butterfly, Joe Chvala, Heather Cornell, Michelle Dorrance, Derick Grant, Lisa La Touche, Michael J. Love, Sandy Silva, Jumaane Taylor and Laurie Van Wieren. Honors include a Sage Award for People's Choice, McKnight Dancer Fellow, and MacDowell Fellow.

Now living in New York, and having recently completed a Deep Listening Certification from the Center for Deep Listening as well as an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Miller has founded LOUNDOVING projects (a portmanteau of listening + sounding + moving), dedicated to highlighting the nuance, variation, and possibilities of percussive dance work.

**Jake Nehrbass** grew up in Minneapolis and has been passionate about dance since he was three years old. Over the years, he has had the privilege of studying and performing various styles, including tap, modern, jazz, hip hop, international, and ballroom. Jake earned his BA in Dance and Exercise Science, which has allowed him to explore the physical and anatomical aspects of movement, giving him a deeper understanding of how the body moves and functions.

Jake is also interested in physical therapy and yoga, and these interests inform both his dance practice and teaching. His work as a performing artist, choreographer, and teacher in the Twin Cities is deeply rooted in a love for the art form and a desire to share it with others.

Currently, Jake is a company member with Arena Dances, Black Label Movement, Ruby Josephine Dance Theatre, and Rhythmically Speaking. He has had the opportunity to collaborate as a guest artist with several wonderful local companies, including Contempo Physical Dance, Concerto Dance, Mixtape, Threads Dance Project, Flying Foot Forum, Katha Dance Theatre, Hatch Dance, Honey Works, Buckets and Taps, Eau Claire Dance, STRONGmovement, and in Stephan Koplowitz's Northfield Experience. He is grateful for each of these experiences, which have allowed him to grow as an artist and connect with talented individuals in the community.

In addition to performing and choreographing, Jake enjoys teaching at Prairie School of Dance and Ballare Teatro Performing Arts Center. Teaching allows him to give back to the dance community and support others in their own creative journeys. He strives to create a supportive and inclusive environment for students, emphasizing the joy of movement and the importance of self-expression.

Jake remains passionate about the art of dance, and he is always open to new opportunities to collaborate, learn, and grow with other artists. He hopes to continue making dance more accessible and meaningful for everyone, both on and off the stage.

Multi-instrumentalist **Tim O'Keefe** has been performing and teaching for over forty years. He has performed with some of the most notable world music artists including Simon Shaheen, Siwan Perwar, Bassam Saba and many others. Tim is a Smithsonian certified World Music Instructor and is on music faculty at Macalester College. He also performs with his ensembles Amwaaj, Choro Borealis, Caravan and many others.



## Student Biographies

**Ivy Anderson** is a Junior dance and psychology major. Ivy has been dancing since she was three and grew up classically trained in ballet. Ivy is interested in somatic therapy--- or how movement can be used through a therapeutic lens---and enjoys creating from a space of exploration in what feels good. Ivy's favorite styles to dance are West African and Jazz :)

**Jane Dagher** grew up in Lebanon, playing the piano and the guitar with my dad, and I took music with me everywhere I went, from churches to bonfires, beaches, volunteering camps, Christmas concerts, literally anywhere. There's something about music that makes life more memorable when there's a guitar playing, and your friends are singing their favorite songs around a small fire.

My inspiration for my music is my country. The people, the food, my friends, and my family, especially my aunties, because they were my biggest supporters. This deep connection is what continuously motivates me to create and engage with music in all its forms, whether I'm DJing, producing, or writing songs. Currently, I live in Northfield, Minnesota, to pursue a Bachelor's degree in biology at St. Olaf College. Here, I discovered a

profound compassion for animals, which led me to join the pre-veterinary track. Many say you can't pursue two opposite interests, but I've found it's entirely possible to pursue both music and veterinary medicine.

Do what you love, follow your heart, because you only live once, habibi.

**Maggie Doran** is a sophomore dance and economics major. At St. Olaf she has participated in the Ole Tap Collective, film production society, and various other dance performances and groups. Throughout her dance career she has explored modern, contemporary, jazz, musical theater, ballet, and tap. Not only has she been able to explore these styles as a performer but also as a choreographer in both college and high school. In the future she hopes to continue dancing and choreographing while working in performing arts administration.

**Delaney Dresser** is a junior Dance major from Stillwater, Minnesota. She grew up in the circus doing aerial arts, and that movement passion later in high school translated to dance at a performing arts school. She hopes to combine the two worlds in her work. Now she is at St. Olaf, where she is a part of Company Dance. She will be interning at American Dance Festival this summer and tries to dance as much as she possibly can!

**Rel Edwards** is a stubbornly over-committed artist, nerd, and Jesus lover. She graduates this year with a degree in Dance, and med school on the horizon. Working with lovely people (like Maya!) to create work that challenges both artist and viewer is a dream come true for her.

**Maya Fonseca-Jersild** is a sophomore majoring in Mathematics, with concentrations in Business & Management and International Relations. She brings a global perspective to her art, hailing from Thailand and a Cuban-Danish background while being passionate about West African dance. She aims to create a vibrant, authentic voice in her works, utilizing movement to explore complex, diverse topics.

**Hailey Frank** is a senior Dance and Gender & Sexuality Studies major with a Film & Media Studies concentration from Coralville, Iowa. Her dance journey started at Nolte Academy, under the direction of Leslie Nolte, with studies in primarily modern, ballet, contemporary, and jazz. Her time at St. Olaf has provided the opportunity for that journey to intersect with her passions for videography and queer expression/advocacy in performance. Hailey extends big hugs to her endlessly supportive friends and family and deep gratitude to the St. Olaf Dance community.

**Z Johnson** As a dancer, I'll admit that writing this isn't easy for me. Talking about myself, my achievements, who I am, even what I'm wearing, just isn't something I enjoy. So, let's keep it simple. I'm an African American boy from Phoenix, Arizona. I come from the hope and uncertainty of a single mother who had no manual for raising a child. I come from the anxieties and fears of being judged, of facing the unknown, and from wondering if I would ever be remembered. I've always faced questions: Who are you? Where do you come from? What do you stand for?

I come from the panic of not feeling accepted, of not being "Black enough," of being called too whitewashed, of being too "straight-looking" for the gay crowd, and too gay for the straight crowd. Still, through all of this, I've found myself, ZeVon, ZeVon Amir Johnson. I'm someone still on a journey to discover who I am, what I stand for, and how to find hope and inspiration in both the dark and the bright moments. I'm memorable, not because I've climbed Mount Everest or found a cure for something, but because of who I am. Because I refuse to back down from a challenge, because I keep moving forward even when I'm sad or scared. I get up. I try. And I try again. And I realize, regardless of my skin color, my sexuality, or whatever else might define me, there will always be a part of me that is scared, worried, and uncertain about my place in the world. But as I said, I'm stubborn. I fight, I cry, I laugh. I remember that I'm a citizen of the earth, living this experience for the very first time. I have to give myself grace and remember that I'm still on this

journey to discover what it means to be me, what it means to be ZeVon Amir Johnson.

**Mickenson Sanon** is a sophomore majoring in Quantitative Economics and Dance. His dance story begins in his home in Haiti, where he was born. Around age seven, Mickenson learned traditional Haitian dance from his older sisters, then trained in salsa, konpa, Afro-Caribbean dance, and gymnastics. Mickenson became one of the best students, competed, and started teaching. When he moved to the United States at 19, he discovered ballet, contemporary, and modern dance. Mickenson found a connection to Katherine Dunham, whose technique blends classical dance with Afro-Caribbean traditions like his background. At first he was shy and lacked confidence because his style was different, but with support from the St. Olaf Dance Department, he became more confident. Now when he choreographs, Mickenson creates movements from his history, using body waves, isolations, hip undulations, partner moves, jumps, and strong walking and running. Mickenson understands that his movement is not just steps, it is part of his cultural history, and by knowing this, he can create in a way that honors his roots instead of erasing them...

**Mary Staplin** is a senior Dance major from Des Moines, Iowa with concentrations in Management & Business, Race & Ethnic, and Gender & Sexuality studies. She grew up dancing at Des Moines DanzArts Studio under the direction of Paula McArthur studying ballet, contemporary, and jazz before coming to St. Olaf and focusing her training on contemporary modern dance. At St. Olaf she has enjoyed working on the social media teams of St. Olaf Marketing and St. Olaf Dance, and has been on club leadership for Ballet Club and Ole Tap Collective. Mary extends her utmost gratitude to friends, family, and the dance faculty for their guidance and support.

## Technical Designer

**Stephen Schroeder**, Lighting Designer and Technical

Director, joined the St. Olaf community in 2019 as the Technical Director of the Dance Department and has enjoyed lighting dance and playing backstage since 1996 when he came upon the technical aspects of the theater while pursuing his BFA in Dance from the University of Colorado-Boulder. During his professional dance career he was also the touring Technical Director for Zenon Dance Company and ARENA Dances. When not on or backstage he can be found playing with his partner, three children, horse, two dogs, and two cats or tinkering in some aspect of home improvement.

## Costume Designers

Professor Emerita **Anne Louise von Bibra** joined the St. Olaf dance faculty in 1987 after completing her Masters in Dance with a specialization in Ethnology at the University of California, Los Angeles and retired in 2025. Before moving to Minnesota, Anne performed with Avaz International Dance Theatre and Karpatok Hungarian Folk Dance Ensemble in Los Angeles. She was a dancer with the Minneapolis-based Ethnic Dance Theater from 1988-2017 as well as a resident choreographer for that ensemble. Anne also performs Javanese dance with Sumunar Gamelan and Dance Ensemble in St. Paul. In 1989 she founded Veselica International Dance Ensemble at St. Olaf College, serving as its Artistic Director until her retirement; she continues to volunteer her time to coordinate the ensemble's costumes. Anne is a member of the Study Group on Ethnochoreology of the International Council for Traditions of Music and Dance. Anne's research interests include dance transmission, continuity and 17 change in dance events in Germany and the use and misuse of folk-dance in political contexts.

**Rebecca J. Bernstein**, Costume Supervisor, is in her fourth year as the Costume Designer and Supervisor for St Olaf College. External costume design credits include: 12th Night, Always Patsy Cline, The Tempest, Cymbeline, Servant of Two Masters, Midsummer, Shakespeare in Love, Richard III, Shipwrecked!, Julius Caesar, Much Ado (Great River Shakespeare Festival); Little

Women (The Jungle); The Rocky Horror Show, The Pirates of Penzance, The Liar, The Snow Queen (Park Square Theatre); Memory Boy (MN Opera/Project Opera); Salome (MN Orchestra); You're a Good Man Charlie Brown, Same Time Next Year (Theatre Aspen); Jailbait\*, Hoodoo Love\*, Dutchman\*, Bhutan\*, Huck and Holden\*, (The Cherry Lane Theatre); Agamemnon (LaMama ETC/ 11 th Hour Prod.); Seussical (Theater West Virginia); When in Disgrace... (Examined Man/ The Theatre at St. Clement's); Anna Christie (Metropolitan Playhouse); Ward 9 (NYMF); The Rise of Dorothy Hale\* (The Theatre at St. Luke's); Rebecca also taught Costume Construction at Brooklyn College and Costume Design at Kingsborough College in NYC. (\*Denotes Off-Broadway)

## Production Staff

### **Technical Director and Lighting Designer:**

Stephen Schroeder

**Stage Manager:** Cian Peery

**Light Board Operator:** Katie McManus

**Sound Board Operator:** Annie Rezac

**Fly Rail:** Nora Smentek

**Assistant Stage Managers:** Alice Boerner, Jane Dagher, Sophie Higgs, Sophia Rasmussen

**Dance Department Stage Technicians:** Jane Dagher, Sophie Higgs, Sydney King, Katie McManus, Ava Messinger, Zoe Ottinger, Cian Peery, Nora Smentek, Sophie Smith

### **Costume Designer & Costume Shop Supervisor:**

Rebecca Bernstein

**Assistant Costume Shop Supervisor:** Rane

Oganowski

**Wardrobe Supervisor:** Kathryn Sprandel

**Assistant Wardrobe:** Alannah Brooks, Katie Fugate

**Costume Shop Crew:** Nathan Burns, Gabbi Chau, Kiara Fonseka, Jack Goodman, Rylie Hansen, Gwynnie Hayes, Sophie Hoff, Lucy Korman, Kai Lebowski, Auggie Lehn, Ywj Siab Lor, Elliot Mevissen, Sevag Koussa Ogli, Cian Peery, Aliza Regmni

**Front of House Services:** Provided by St. Olaf Theater

Department

**Dance Digital Assistants Social Media Team:**

Owen Erickson, Clare Martin, Mary Staplin

**Dance Digital Assistants Processing Team:** Leo

Sanchez, Dexter Schreck

**Livestream Provided By:** St. Olaf Broadcast/Media Services

## **SPECIAL THANKS TO:**

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- Heather Klopchin, Department Chair of Dance
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- Ann Wagner, First Chair of the St. Olaf College Dance Department and generous financial supporter
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## **Looking Ahead**

**Celebratory Showing:** May 8 at 4:00 pm in CAD Wagner Bundgaard Studio 1

**Dance 374: Advanced Choreography Showing:** May 14 at 7:00 pm in CAD Wagner Bundgaard Studio 1