dance at illinois

COLLEGE OF FINE + APPLIED ARTS | UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

LOCATE CENTER. AND GO FROM THERE.

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In May 2017, I was fortunate to become 12 dance leaders from distinguished US dance programs that were invited to participate in five days of performances, and lectures exploring Israel. My husband and I traveled to Jordan following the conference.

From Journal, 5-29-17.

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Choosing to study abroad was one of the most rewarding decisions I have made. DanceJerusalem is a vibrant program, operated jointly by the Rothberg International School and the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance. It combines artistic training in dance skills and technique with academic exposure to Israel’s historical and cultural environment. DanceJerusalem offers university-level artistic and technical training in a variety of classes, including Classical Ballet, Contemporary Dance, Gaga, Choreography, Repertory, and Improvisation. Having the opportunity to immerse myself in the dance culture of Israel offers further broadened my horizons, assisting me in obtaining valuable experience in the field of movement, as well as enhancing my dancing ability.

The initial month of the program offers a Hebrew language immersion to help students feel comfortable communicating in the language of the country. Alongside the university-level dance training, DanceJerusalem students are able to choose from a wide range of academic courses through the Rothberg International School. Another requirement of the program is to take a course titled, “Dance in Israel.” The course includes workshops, collaborations, demonstrations, and lectures with choreographers and companies currently working in Israel. These dynamic schedules include dance classes, performances, and a variety of classes including Classical Ballet, Contemporary Dance, and Improvisation. Having the opportunity to observe and experience dance in Israel offered me opportunities for growth in this incredible, well-rounded program.

The program, in its sixteenth year begins each day with Tai Chi on the roof of the monastery. Most of the participants had a theatrical background, but all had the same curiosity and openness as we worked together with people around the globe. Indeed I am continually enriched by my ongoing collaborations with people around the globe. I am the current Study Abroad point person in the Department of Dance, and I have often seen many students decide to venture across the seas. I have often seen these students return transformed. In a recent meeting, one of our graduating seniors told the faculty that it was her semester abroad in Israel that opened her up to the nuance, textures, and depth of what dance is. She was overcome by emotion as she spoke—proof of how deeply affected she has been by her experience.

The IUGTE program made me rediscover the effort put into bringing together an international guild of artists. I worked with in this program and all of the students decided to venture across the seas. I have often seen these students return transformed. In a recent meeting, one of our graduating seniors told the faculty that it was her semester abroad in Israel that opened her up to the nuance, textures, and depth of what dance is. She was overcome by emotion as she spoke—proof of how deeply affected she has been by her experience.

Why is it so important to travel abroad?

As someone who hails from the UK, was born in Kenya, and has traveled throughout my early life and later in pursuit of my passion for dance improvement, I consider myself a world citizen who is continually enriched by my collaborative experiences with people around the globe. Indeed, I am continually enriched by my ongoing collaborations with people around the globe. Because of my many years of experience, Sergei was able to plan a structure of activities that built on each other, so as one soared, flowed into the next without many of us noticing, and two hours worked together in close quarters, which only increased the closeness we felt at the culmination of the program.

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Our BA program is in full swing! The mission of the BA program in dance is to prepare an integrated, and individualized approach to understanding the study of dance. This program has been inspired by the vibrant dance communities in the Midwest and draws from the rich cultural traditions of the region for a unique and engaging experience. Students identify and pursue one key area of interest—such as theatre, music, or dance at Illinois. Another amazing, perspective-shifting experience is my collaboration as a performer with professor Cynthia Oliver in her work Comanche: Hero Complexities. This project has taken me to New York City, Los Angeles, Miami, Bermuda, and always changing. Since graduating from Illinois, my dance career has taken me to New York City, Los Angeles, Miami, Bermuda, and numerous other locations including LA’s Hollywood Bowl.
dance at illinois

Alex Gossen (BFA’17) in guest artist Ping Chong’s Baldwin/NOW

Madeline Mellinger (BFA ‘20) in Professor Renée Wadleigh’s THE QUENCH Lava and Logic, choreographed and performed by Jennifer Lu (BFA ‘17) Abigail Elliott (BFA ‘17), James Washington (BFA ‘18), Aryanna Aronson (BFA ‘17), Max Gorgol (BFA ‘17) in Assistant Professor Endalyn Taylor’s You Can’t Do That...
Kate Kuper (1954–2016) was the epitome of passion. She transformed every room she walked in. Within her, there was an entire community. Her work spanned generations: in the Nevada studios with the Creative Dance for People with Parkinson’s classes. She enlivened each experience for everyone—one that continues to enliven, and moving into a world of whimsy: her world of whimsy. Everyone, whether four or eighty, deserves a chance to dance freely in an open space surrounded by people they love while the music that Kate Kuper loved fills their ears. Dance has the power of healing, and Kate Kuper used herself as an example created a space free of judgment. She was eager to collaborate to figure out how to contribute to something larger than yourself. Join her in brainstorming new, bigger, better, bolder ways to teach, and wanted nothing more than for others to join her. Join her in making the world a better place. 

Kate Kuper teaching Dance for People with Parkinson’s, photo by L. Brian Stauffer

Kate was always a student herself. She constantly learned. She was eager to collaborate to figure out how to implement these new ideas in the classroom. Her willingness to containerize and sustainment of the dance community at large. Join her in her Ballad Dance, in her Ballad Dance with her Ballad Dance. She would always provide the scarves.

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dance partners

We take this opportunity to recognize and thank all Dance Partners, contributors to the Library of Dance at Illinois. Your gifts are reflected in all of our performances, and we are profoundly grateful for your support. Listed below are the donors from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017.

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- Dirk Mol and Jerry Wray
- Jane and Norman Milsap
- Regina McClellan
- Dr. Carolyn Casady-Trimble
- Central Illinois Chapter
- Charlie Maybee (MFA '19), Madeline Mellinger (BFA '20), Donna Carnow (BFA '17), Leah Wilks (MFA '19)
in choreographed by Elise Frost (MFA '17)

The four years spent in a dance program ignites a dancer’s career. Students are given studio time, mentorship, professional connections, exposure in the field, technical training, and the ability to sharpen their craft. Studies is higher education both a theoretical understanding of the field and the knowledge to nurture a high physical practice over a lifetime. Graduates become dancers, choreographers, curators, dance critics/writers, scholars, educators, arts administrators, program coordinators, teachers, somatic practitioners, etc. These knowledgeable, experienced, and versatile dance artists expand the field both artistically and academically, and our communities are enhanced by the embedded experiences they bring to our lives. No Debt for Dancers is a dynamic way to realize the full potential of dance as an art form.

scholarships

These scholarships support dance research at Illinois for graduate students working for a thesis, creative, performative, and/or scholarly work. Students are selected based on a diverse range of aesthetic within projects that mirror the contemporary perspective and the need for the project.

- Moe Family Dance Award (Est. 1996)
- Moe Family Dance Award (Est. 2002)
- Patricia Knowles Graduate Travel Award
- Perry Souchuk Memorial Scholarship
- A talent-based scholarship awarded to an alumnus to return to campus to teach, perform, choreograph, and otherwise enhance Dance at Illinois.

To make a gift, please designate the dance fund on your check, make it payable to the University of Illinois Foundation, Department of Dance, and mail it to U.S.F., PO Box 1906, Champagne, IL 61824-3429.

For information on how to contribute, visit www.giving.illinois.edu

dance at illinois
2017–2018
performance calendar
Flatlands Dance Film Festival
September 1–2
November Dance
November 9–11
February Dance
February 1–3
StudioDance I
March 1–3
StudioDance II
April 19–21
Senior Concerts
December 7–8, April 27–28
audition dates
Undergraduate Program
October 9, November 4, February 3, March 5
(*Chicago audition at Hubbard Street Dance Center)
Graduate Program
February 7–8
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2016–2017
faculty/staff list and magazine credits
Dance Faculty
Denis Chiaramonte, Instructor
Jan Eckels, Department Head and Professor
Rebecca A. Ferrell, Lecturer
Patricia Knowles, Professor Emerita
Kate Kuper, Lecturer and Community Engagement Liaison
Linda Lehovec, Associate Professor
Jennifer Mason, Professor
Sara Hook, Associate Professor and Undergraduate Program Director
Doreen Yavorsky, Professor
Sara Hook, Associate Professor
Jennifer Monson, Professor
C. Kemal Nance, Postdoctoral Research Associate
Rebecca Nettl-Fiol, Professor and Undergraduate Co-Director
Tere O'Connor, Professor
Cynthia Oliver, Professor and Graduate Program Director
Kirstie Simson, Associate Professor
Endalyn Taylor, Assistant Professor
John Toenjes, Associate Professor and Undergraduate Co-Director
Renée Wadleigh, Professor
Abby Zbikowski, Assistant Professor
Staff
Ken Beck, Specialist in Music
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Natalie Fiol, Photographer
Kimberly Hardin, Physical Therapist
Cindy Masko, Office Manager
Christopher H. Morris, Office Support Specialist
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Matt Vaessen, Space Coordinator/DRK Manager
Interns
Phoebe Ballard
Donna Carnow
Alex Gossen
Alex Hutton
Lauren Mendelson
Randi Townsend
Guest Artists
Lisa Fay
Michelle Gibson
Chad Hall
Ashley Murphy
Lisa Race
Aaron R. White
Accompanists
Sarah Cheng
David Americous
Ella Clapner
Brenda Klos
Cathy Zanter
Gordon Kay
Charlie Maloney
Mark McKnight
Algorithm, choreographed and performed by Charlie Maybee (MFA '19)
therapoda cast choreographed by Charli Brissey (MFA '18)

Editor: Rebecca A. Ferrell
Photography: Natalie Flat, unless otherwise noted
Design: Communications and Marketing at the College of Fine & Applied Arts
Magazine Credits (BA '17), and Jan Lu (BA '17) to Assistant Professor Abby Zbikowski's baby girl!
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Carol Trimble
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newsflash

Check out the newly established Beverly Blossom Foundation: BEVERLYBLOSSOM.ORG

Assistant Professor Abby Zbikowski was selected for the Caroline Heart Choreographer-In-Residence Program at Princeton. Professor Cynthia Oliver was selected as the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research for the Humanities, Arts, and Related Fields.