PERFORMING ARTS AT IOWA

DANCE GALA: AGILE

October 17–19, 2024, 7:30 p.m.
October 19, 2024, 2:00 p.m.
Hancher Auditorium

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Department of Dance

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DANCE GALA: AGILE

Thursday, October 17, 2024, at 7:30 p.m.
Friday, October 18, 2024, at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, October 19, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Hancher Auditorium, the University of Iowa
The Auditorium / Hadley Stage / Onstage Seating

Co-produced by UI Department of Dance,
Performing Arts Production Unit, and Hancher Auditorium

Please be advised this production contains haze.

Photography, videography, and audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited. If you will be using a personal device for accessibility purposes, please inform a Hancher usher. We are committed to providing accessible experiences for all.

Please silence all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices.

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DANCE GALA: AGILE ARTISTIC TEAM

DIRECTOR
Eloy Barragán

GUEST CHOREOGRAPHER
Annabelle Lopez Ochoa

FACULTY CHOREOGRAPHERS
Eloy Barragán
Armando Duarte
Kristin Marrs
Stephanie Miracle

GUEST ARTIST RESTAGER
Chris Bloom

REHEARSAL ASSISTANTS
Jack Delaney
Enza Handzel

COMPOSERS
Jacob Bancks
Douglas Baker
Christian Cherry
Katie Robbins

MUSICIANS
Sabrina Tabby

COSTUME DESIGNER
Margaret Wenk-Kuchlbauer

LIGHTING DESIGNERS
Joshua Preston
Laurel Shoemaker

DRAMATURG, PERFORMING SCULPTURES
Mariana Tejeda

ROBOT ENGINEERING TEAM
Deema Totah
Jinann Abudagga

STAGE MANAGER
KatyBeth Schmid*

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
Bonnie Ruble

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, The Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

PRODUCTION AND DEPARTMENT OF DANCE STAFF

DEPARTMENT OF DANCE

Department of Dance Chair ..... Rebekah Kowal
Department of Dance Production Directors ..... Eloy Barragán, George de la Peña
Dance Faculty ..... Gloria (Sitso) Ahlijah, Jim Albert, Eloy Barragán, Zena Bibler, George de la Peña, Armando Duarte, Daniel Fine, Jennifer Kayle, Rebekah Kowal, Kristin Marrs, Christopher-Rasheem McMillan, Stephanie Miracle, Melinda Jean Myers, Tony Orrico, Jenn Pray
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Production Stage Manager/Stage Manager ..... KatyBeth Schmid*
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Props Manager ..... Gina Smothers
Props Artisan ..... Reese Morgan
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Scenic Artists ..... Leslie Delavan
Scenic Painters ..... Nicole Vogt, Bella Fortunato, Ava Slater, Caroline Börk, Isabella Hogan

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Deck Carpenters ..... Evelyn Becker, Mike Nolte

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Additional labor provided by IATSE Local 690

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, The Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE

We warmly welcome our audience of the University of Iowa and community of Iowa City to our annual *Dance Gala: Agile* at Hancher Auditorium.

This year, we are thrilled to present a unique experience with onstage seating in a chamber configuration. This innovative setup will bring you closer to the art of dance, promising a captivating and inspiring experience. We take pride in showcasing the innovative works of four esteemed UI faculty choreographers: Kristin Marrs, Stephanie Miracle, Armando Duarte, and Eloy Barragán. Their new creations, viewed from this intimate perspective, will leave a lasting impression. We would like to express our profound appreciation to these choreographers for sharing the language of movement through their artistic lenses. We are honored to acknowledge the internationally renowned choreographer Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, who has graciously entrusted our talented dancers with her work *Sombrerísimo*. This piece, widely performed by national and international professional companies, will be executed with dignity and professionalism under the restaging of Chris Bloom—our deepest gratitude to him for his invaluable teaching and mentorship.

The success of this production is a testament to the unwavering dedication of our artistic and production staff. Their tireless efforts have brought this unique experience to life, ensuring that it is an exceptional representation of our Department of Dance at the University of Iowa. We congratulate our students for their commitment and hard work—we would not be here without them. Gracias!

We are deeply thankful to our esteemed audience and followers of this institution. Your support and presence make our efforts worthwhile. We look forward to sharing this unique experience with you.

The Department of Dance's most important goal is to provide excellent education and opportunities to the maximum number of students, and your attendance at this prestigious event is a crucial part of this mission. We thank you again and encourage you to immerse yourselves in this beautiful performance experience.

Gracias, and enjoy the show.

Eloy Barragán

THE PROGRAM

Stillness Knitting Breath (Premiere)

Dedicated to my boys, Orlando and Apolo Barragán

In Stillness Knitting Breath*, Barragán looms together family lineage, memories, and the world of dreams to create a dance that moves seamlessly through time and cultures, rarefying the here and now with tints of surrealism.*

Collaborator and visual artist, Mariana Tejeda, crafted Mesoamerican-inspired masks and textile sculptures that interact with the dancers and transform their appearance to transport them and the audience to different realities.

Stillness Knitting Breath *is underscored with original compositions by Douglas Baker and Katie Robbins, who give voice to the tender melody of a traditional lullaby with custom lyrics that Barragán continues to sing to his sons.*

Advisory: This piece contains haze.

CHOREOGRAPHER: Eloy Barragán

COMPOSERS: Douglas Baker, Katie Robbins

LIGHTING DESIGNER: Laurel Shoemaker

COSTUME DESIGNER: Margaret Wenk-Kuchlbauer

DRAMATURG, PERFORMING SCULPTURES: Mariana Tejeda

REHEARSAL ASSISTANT: Jack Delaney

DANCERS: Evelyn Becker, Payton Conrad, Ellie Junius, Isabella Kees, Elly Medina; Understudy: Abbey Thornton

Special Thanks from Eloy: I would like to express my gratitude to the dancers for their openness to trying new things and for sharing their talent during this creative process. I also want to thank the artistic team for believing in me, and the Production Unit for their endless support. I am grateful to my rehearsal assistant, Jack Delaney, as well as my collaborators: Mariana Tejeda, Douglas Baker, and Katie Robbins. Additionally, I am thankful to the entire Department of Dance for all of their support.

THE PROGRAM

Since we have come this far how do we get back?

What can an aesthetic dialogue between dancers and robots reveal about the capacity of both human and nonhuman bodies to feel, think, and connect with the world through movement? This series of four short choreographies, crafted in collaboration with dancers and robotics engineers, explores how we relate to the rapidly evolving world of automation and AI. The strange, creature-like machines in this piece offer a playful invitation to reflect on our interactions with technologies that increasingly shape our lives.

CHOREOGRAPHER: Stephanie Miracle in collaboration with the artistic team

ROBOTICS ENGINEER: Professor Deema Totah

ROBOT DESIGNER: Jinann Abudagga

MUSIC: Terence F. Clark and John Arndt

LIGHTING DESIGNER: Laurel Shoemaker

COSTUME DESIGNER: Margaret Wenk-Kuchlbauer

DANCERS: Maddie Bulman, Karissa Burkhardt, Rachel Carpenter, Garin Clinton-Nelson, Olivia Farmerie, Ellen Lee, Lauren Linder, Camryn Nease, Emily Pyburn, Jason Vernon

Special Thanks from Stephanie: To Deema, for your time, labor, creativity, and care throughout this ambitious project. What a truly wild and joyful collaboration this has been! To every single dancer, for your generosity in the studio and your brilliance on stage! To Jinann, for your incredible work designing and programming! To Casey and members of the Robotics and Assistive Devices Lab, for assisting with robot development! To Terence and John, for granting us permission to use their music. To my mother, my husband Jimmy, and our son Christopher, who was generous in letting me play with a few of his electronic toys in developing the piece.

This work was partially supported by start-up funds from the College of Engineering.

THE PROGRAM

O Quanta Qualia

"It is ours in the meantime to raise up our hearts and seek our homeland…"
–Peter Abelard (trans. Mark Walker)

CHOREOGRAPHER: Kristin Marrs

COMPOSER: Jacob Bancks

VIOLINIST: Sabrina Tabby

LIGHTING DESIGNER: Laurel Shoemaker

COSTUME DESIGNER: Margaret Wenk-Kuchlbauer

REHEARSAL ASSISTANT: Enza Handzel

DANCERS: Lilly Aylward, Samantha Leverence, Allyson Meinders, Trinity Woody

Special Thanks from Kristin: With gratitude to these talented dancers, to my incredible collaborators Jacob and Sabrina, to Enza for her organization and keen eye, and to Mom, Dad, P, T, and A.

THE PROGRAM

Barro (Premiere)

Barro *(Clay) is inspired by the theme of Quilombos–communities organized by fugitive slaves in colonial Brazil. Located in inaccessible areas, these communities survived by farming and raiding; with the most famous being Palmares, that under the leadership of Zumbi, nationally recognized as one of the greatest Black Brazilian leaders, were able to grow and resist the atrocities of slavery. Specifically,* Barro *is based on the action of "resistance."*

CHOREOGRAPHER: Armando Duarte in collaboration with the dancers for the development of movement material

COMPOSER: Christian Cherry
with traditional Afro-Brazilian music

LIGHTING DESIGNER: Laurel Shoemaker

COSTUME DESIGNER: Margaret Wenk-Kuchlbauer

DANCERS: Noah Fox, Ruby Gentzler, Sydney Gorak, Ethan Hooten, Claudia Jacobson, Tori Lefler, Erin Muntz, Katelyn Perez

Special Thanks from Armando: Thanks to this cast for their commitment to this process! And much gratitude to Christian Cherry for saying 'yes' to my invitation!

THE PROGRAM

Sombrerísimo

Influenced by her multicultural heritage, Belgian-Colombian choreographer Annabelle Lopez Ochoa takes inspiration from the paintings of René Magritte and Latin music/rhythms to ask questions about identity.

Sombrerísimo *explores how cultural identity enriches lives but can also feel weighted for those who find themselves caught between multiple cultural influences. The piece is a physical tour de force pushing the speed and togetherness of the six performers to their limits.*

CHOREOGRAPHER: Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, originally created in 2013 for Ballet Hispánico

STAGING: Chris Bloom

MUSIC: "Espinita" by Banda Ionica, "Klute" by Revise and Adaline, "Payo Michto" by Titi Robin

LIGHTING DESIGNER: Joshua Preston, recreated by Laurel Shoemaker

COSTUMES: Courtesy of Ballet Austin, Stephen Mills Artistic Director
Special thanks to Kristen Wheeler, University of Arizona

REHEARSAL DIRECTOR: Eloy Barragán

DANCERS: Cassidy Banwart, Madison Burkhart, Soraya Cohen, Ellie Daley, Brenna Labus, MJ Van Ostrand; Understudies: Ruby Gentzler, Isabella Kees, Allyson Meinders

BIOGRAPHIES

ELOY BARRAGÁN
Faculty Choreographer

Eloy Barragán has an MFA degree from Hollins University. Associate Professor, Choreographer, Filmmaker, Founder and Director: International Iowa ScreenDance Festival, Co-Director: Iowa Dance Festival. American College Dance Association Board Member and Screen-Dance Committee Member. Recipient of the choreographers' fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Boise Arts Council, Lifetime Career Fellowship: Idaho Commission of the Arts. 2017 Artist Project Grant - Iowa Arts Council. Eloy's choreography and films have been presented in Mexico, NYC, Cuba, Finland, France, Panamá, China, and Russia. Performed with Joffrey II, Washington Ballet, Compañía Nacional de Danza México, Ballet Royal de Wallonie, Mainz Stattheater, Eugene Ballet, and Ballet Idaho.

ARMANDO DUARTE
Faculty Choreographer

Armando Duarte's prolific choreographic career includes the creation of 89 original choreographies plus re-staging works for companies and dance programs in the U.S., Europe, and Brazil. As an educator he has worked with all levels of dance artists nationally and internationally. His academic research involves an investigation on Brazilian samba and carnival, for what he created courses at the UI: "Brazilian Culture and Carnival" and "Brazilian Social Dance, the Samba." He has led students to study abroad in Brazil, and he has presented lectures at universities and conferences throughout the U.S. Most recently, he received the Obermann Fellow (AY23/24), and the prestigious International Teaching Engagement Award from the UI College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the International Program for his teaching and research involvement in international education for UI students.

BIOGRAPHIES

ANNABELLE LOPEZ OCHOA
Guest Choreographer

Annabelle Lopez Ochoa is a prolific and award-winning choreographer that has created more than 100 ballets for 80 dance companies around the world. Annabelle's choreography career started in 2003. Her wide-ranging body of work includes short conceptual pieces, full-length narratives, and dance films. Annabelle is one of the very few female choreographers who excels in narrative ballet. She has successfully created 14 narrative ballets to date. In 2019, she received the prestigious Jacob's Pillow Dance Award and was appointed as the program director of the Contemporary Ballet Summer Intensive of the School at Jacob's Pillow.

KRISTIN MARRS
Faculty Choreographer

Kristin Marrs explores the evolution of ballet as a technique and narrative form in her choreography and teaching. Past collaborations with composer Jacob Bancks include the original opera *Karkinos*. Marrs is the recent recipient of a Laura Spelman Rockefeller grant through the Obermann Center for Advanced Studies in support of her dance theater work *Chalk*. Co-written and performed with theater artist Anne Marie Nest, *Chalk* will premiere in Iowa City and Denver in 2025.

STEPHANIE MIRACLE
Faculty Choreographer

Stephanie Miracle is an assistant professor in the Department of Dance, a certified teacher of Klein Technique™, and the artistic director of the international project *FAKERS CLUB: a live-cinema public performance*. Described as "iconic and nuanced … with an irreverence that makes you smile unconsciously," her choreography manifests as stage productions, site-specific spectacles,

BIOGRAPHIES

experimental films, and sound walks. From 2014–15 she was a U.S. Fulbright Fellow to Germany, following which she became a company member and guest choreographer with the Folkwang Tanzstudio. As a professional dancer she has worked with Susan Marshall, Liz Lerman, Deborah Hay, Shannon Gillen/VIM VIGOR, Laura Peterson, and David Dorfman. Stephanie continues to perform with Jennifer Kayle, Heart Stück Bernie, and PEARSONWIDRIG. To learn more about upcoming local and international interdisciplinary projects visit stephaniemiracledances.com

JINANN ABUDAGGA
Robot Designer

Jinann Abudagga is a high school senior at West High in Iowa City, where she is part of the swim and robotics teams. She also serves on the Student Leadership Board of Iowa FIRST Robotics. Jinann had so much fun creating the robots on stage with Dr. Totah and the Robotics and Assistive Devices Lab this summer. She is currently applying to colleges to pursue an engineering degree.

JACOB BANCKS
Composer

Jacob Bancks's music has been praised as "invitingly lyrical" (*The New York Times*) and "highly caffeinated" (*The Boston Globe*). Performance and commission credits include the Philadelphia Orchestra, clarinetist Ricardo Morales, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, eighth blackbird, U.S. Marine Band, Quad City Symphony, and others. He has been honored by the National Endowment for the Arts, American Academy of Arts and Letters, BMI, Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music, and others. He serves on the faculty of Augustana College.

BIOGRAPHIES

DOUGLAS BAKER
Composer

Douglas Baker is a professional dance accompanist whose hobbies include composition, dance, video games, languages, and various modes of art and craft. He received a BA degree in piano and Japanese at the University of Iowa and was a Fulbright scholarship recipient in 2015. Douglas is currently employed at the university's Department of Dance as well as the Youth Ballet and Community Dance School.

CHRIS BLOOM
Stager

Chris Bloom is from Fredrick County, VA, where he began dancing at the Blue Ridge Studio for the Performing Arts & Vostrikov Academy of Ballet. Chris graduated Summa Cum Laude from the Ailey/Fordham BFA Program subsequently dancing for Parsons Dance, the Peridance Company, and Ballet Hispánico. During his decade at Ballet Hispánico, Chris originated roles in new works by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Fernando Melo, Michelle Manzanales, Gustavo Ramírez Sansano, Stephanie Martinez, and many others. Chris is a founding member of PARA.Mar Dance Theatre and currently works as a freelance dancer, choreographer, and stager.

CHRISTIAN CHERRY
Composer

Christian Cherry is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, and performer whose work is presented in the U.S. and abroad. *Tales from Dapple Creek* ('22) for Kista Tucker, has won multiple international awards. He presented at Il Corpo nel Suono, at the Accademia Nazionale di Danza in Rome in 2019. As a dance educator, Christian was part of several prominent dance departments: Ohio State, the University of South Florida, and the University of Illinois. Christian has served as head, undergraduate director, and music director at the University of Oregon where he teaches music, dance theory, collaboration, and contact improvisation.

BIOGRAPHIES

JACK DELANEY
Rehearsal Assistant

Jack Delaney is a fourth-year BFA student in the Department of Dance and is the rehearsal assistant for *Stillness Knitting Breath*. He has previously performed in *Dance Gala* 2022 and 2023 where he performed works choreographed by Stephanie Miracle, Aaron Samuel Davis, and Eloy Barragán. Outside of the department, Jack works as an instructor at Prestige Dance Studio in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and as a choreographer for multiple show choirs in the corridor.

ENZA HANDZEL
Rehearsal Assistant

Vincenza (Enza) Handzel is from Chicago, Illinois, and is a fourth-year double major in dance (BFA) and communication studies (BA). Beginning her training at 2 years old, she trained in a variety of styles with Impact Dance Studio, Hubbard Street's Youth Department, and Jones College Prep Dance Department. During her time here at Iowa she has had the opportunity to perform works by and train with esteemed faculty, graduate students, and guest artists.

KATIE ROBBINS
Composer

Katie Robbins is a dynamic live performance artist, musician, composer, and improviser. She earned a BFA degree from the University of Iowa's Department of Dance, specializing in compositional improvisation and choreography—skills that continue to shape her songwriting today. For nearly 15 years, Katie has been a musical force in Iowa City, energizing audiences with bands like The Fez, OSG, Wefunk, and the Miles Kean Epictet. She is thrilled to blend her diverse talents and contribute once again to *Dance Gala*.

BIOGRAPHIES

SABRINA TABBY
Violinist

Since performing at Carnegie Hall as a teenager, violinist Sabrina Tabby has performed in top venues around the world, including Red Rocks, the Taormina Amphitheater in Sicily, and beyond. As a founding member of string quartet ATLYS, she represented Lincoln Center at Sea (including a private performance for Oprah!), and released four original albums with over 16-million streams. She is also a founding member of the NYC-based ensemble Contemporaneous whose debut at Disney Hall was named one of 2023's "best classical music performances" by *The New York Times*. Sabrina is concertmaster of the Mankato Symphony, assistant concertmaster of the Owensboro Symphony, and acting principal second of the Quad City Symphony. In her current hometown of Nashville, she is a sought-after session musician in the bustling recording industry.

MARIANA TEJEDA
Dramaturg, Performing Sculptures

Mariana Tejeda is a multidisciplinary artist with two MFA degrees from the University of Iowa: one in stage management and one in Spanish creative writing. She is currently a third-year MFA candidate in choreography. In 2021, Mariana created *The Laphin MirRoooar*, a poetry exhibition where she invited artists from diverse backgrounds and disciplines to reinterpret her poems. Mariana co-choreographed *Cempasúchil* for *Dance Gala* 2023 and returns to *Dance Gala* this year as visual artist for Barragán's work.

DEEMA TOTAH, PH.D.
Robotics Engineer

Deema Totah, Ph.D., is a Palestinian-American, assistant professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Iowa, and director of the Robotics and Assistive Devices Laboratory (RAD Lab). Dr. Totah's research interests lie in improving the efficacy of assistive devices for customized

BIOGRAPHIES

patient care. She is passionate about building robotic and mechatronic systems with integrated wearable sensing to test assistive device properties, study human movement and behavior, and understand how humans and devices interact with each other.

LAUREL SHOEMAKER
Lighting Designer

Laurel has been working in the performing arts as a lighting designer and theater artist for 30 years. Credits include productions with Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Hubbard Street 2, the Chicago Dancing Festival, the Joyce Soho (with Charlotte Adams), the University of Iowa, and the University of Nebraska. Specific design credits include: *The Seen*, world premiere, Choreographer Jermaine Spivey, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago; *Peter and the Starcatcher*, Mesa College, Arizona; The Chicago Dancing Festival (lighting director); *Flipside: The Patti Page Story,* 59 E. 59th Street Theatre, NYC, NY; *The Marriage of Figaro* (lighting), winner of the 2002 National Opera Association Award for Best Production, produced by the Martha Ellen Tye Opera Theatre at the University of Iowa; *Dead Man Walking* (scenic designer), winner of the 2008 National Opera Association Award for Best Production; and *Street Scene* (scenic designer), winner of the 2001 National Opera Association Award for best production. A native of California, Laurel has trained at the University of Nebraska and Florida State University, and early in her career she was mentored by Pat Simmons. She is a proud member of United Scenic Artists 829. She holds an MFA degree in lighting design from Florida State University and a BFA degree in theatrical design from University of Nebraska.

MARGARET WENK-KUCHLBAUER
Costume Designer

Margaret Wenk-Kuchlbauer is the costume and scenery designer for UI Performing Arts Production Unit, collaborating with many UI faculty and guests on productions for the Department of Dance and the School of Music. Recent costume and scenery designs for dance include UIDC 2023, *Dance Gala* 2023, UIDC 2024. *Fierce*, *L'amico Fritz*, and *La Traviata* are her latest designs for UI Opera Theatre.

BIOGRAPHIES

KATYBETH SCHMID
Stage Manager

KatyBeth Schmid is the production stage manager for the Department of Dance and the Martha-Ellen Tye Opera Theatre at the University of Iowa. She received an MFA degree in stage management from Iowa in 2013 and spent the following years working for Cirque du Soleil in Las Vegas (*KÀ*, *Criss Angel Believe*, and *Criss Angel Mindfreak LIVE!*) and internationally (*Ovo* Arena Tour). Recent work at Iowa includes *Fierce*, *L'amico Fritz* and *La Traviata*, *Dance Gala* 2022 and *Dance Gala* 2023. KatyBeth is a proud member of the Actors' Equity Association.

BONNIE RUBLE
Assistant Stage Manager

Bonnie Ruble is a first-year MFA stage management candidate from Cedar Falls, Iowa. Previously, they were the production manager of the Waterloo Community Playhouse while also professionally freelancing around the Midwest area. This summer they were the assistant properties supervisor at Peninsula Players in Fish Creek, WI. This fall they will stage manage Thesis I through the graduate dance program. They are excited to kick off their first project here at the University of Iowa with the *Dance Gala*.

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