



Presents

synapse
contemporary dance theater

November 9, 2024 & November 10, 2024

Founder:

Linda Gold

Artistic Directors:

Jae Lee and Mark Tomasic

Guest Choreographers:

Leonardo “Inner-G” Flores, Jordan Slaffey

Guest Company:

Entity Contemporary Dance

Faculty Choreographers:

Seda Aybay, Angela Jordan, Jae Lee, Mark Tomasic,
Vanessa Van Wormer

Student Choreographers:

Sophia Aponte, Durami Chang, Jada Richmond, April Torres

Directors' Note

Through this production, we delight in sharing the creativity of prestigious faculty and guest artists as well as our own Synapse student choreographers. You will witness many contemporary voices in dance expressed by and through our dancers. As you engage in this performance, we invite you to open your hearts and find truth, beauty, inspiration, and meaning wherever you might.

Jae Lee & Mark Tomasic



CONTEMPORARY HIP HOP

How free do you want to be?

About rebirth, rejuvenation, and regeneration. What does one's self-resurrection look like? To be free is the end result of struggle & hardship. What does freedom look like before you reach it? How hard are you willing to fight for your eternal & spiritual freedom? How free do you want to be?

Choreographer: Jordan Slaffey

Music: “No better time than now” by Shigeto; “Round n Round” feat. Ale Van Allure by Cody Parkins

Dancers: Sophia Aponte, Armita Azizi, Veronica Berndes, Durami Chang, Aidan Cook, Michael Howard, Taryn Key, Deborah Nosrati, Xeandric Ross, Erille Weiss, Samara Williams

Understudy: Zohar Oriana Yentov

CONTEMPORARY

ilkel (primortal)

Two creatures with no common biology, history or language share a brief encounter of acknowledgement and mutual co-existence.

Choreographer: Seda Aybay

Music: “M. = Addiction.” by Dictaphone

Dancers: Aidan Cook, Miyu Fujiwara

Understudy: Gary Lai

POPPING, HOUSE, HIP HOP

The Conductor

The Conductor showcases a reactive relationship between the movement artists and music to focus on a Street Dancer's relationship to the music. The Dancers' movements are informed by music cues and rhythms to influence textures and timing within Street Dance vernacular. The Conductor and dancers react to each other's movements to emulate a symphony with their bodies. The piece highlights variations in energy manipulation in versatile approaches within Popping, House, and Hip Hop to create a Street Dance Orchestra.

Choreographer: Leonardo "Inner-G" Flores

Music: "Mix" by Gabriel "MAGK" Avalos, "Songs" by Kaytranada, FREE THINGS IN LIFE and LITE SPOTS

Dancers: Michael Howard, Amanda Lindqvist, Rebecca Lo, Ameri Maeda, Rimi Maruse, Chai Nwagbara, Jada Richmond, Xeandric Ross, Jamie Rush, Akiha Taguchi, April Torres

CONTEMPORARY FUSION

'in honor of all the times I wasn't myself' (excerpt)

What is authenticity, anyway?

Choreographers: Will Johnston & Marissa Osato Moreno

Music: "in honor of all the times I wasn't myself (excerpt)" – original composition by Kurtis Sprung

Dancers: Entity Contemporary Dance: Shiori Kamijo, Grayson McGuire, Vickie Roan

JAZZ FUNK

Blue

Strong. Determined. Victorious.

Choreographer: Angela Jordan

Music: “*Power and Energy*” by Beyonce (DJ mix)

Dancers: Miyu Fujiwara, Amanda Lindqvist, Rebecca Lo, Ameri Maeda, Rimi Maruse, Chai Nwagbara, Jada Richmond, Jamie Rush, Akiha Taguchi, April Torres



INTERMISSION

KOREAN FUSION

La Li Li La La

To all the times Asian women have been silenced: we sing, we dance, we shout.

Choreographer: Durami Chang

Music: “*Minjokyo (ENTRANCE)*” by Lim Kim, “*Yo-Soul*” by Lim Kim, “*Digital Khan*” by Lim Kim, “*Yellow*” by Lim Kim

Dancers: Durami Chang, Rebecca Lo, Ameri Maeda, Rimi Maruse, Deborah Nosrati, Jada Richmond, Jamie Rush, Akiha Taguchi, Samara Williams

CONTEMPORARY

Through the waves

Capturing the moments of underwater...

Choreographer: Jae Lee

Music: “*Children’s Corner*” by Claude Debussy, performed by Isata Kanneth

Dancers: Sophia Aponte, Veronica Berndes, Miyu Fujiwara, Taryn Key, Amanda Lindqvist, Chai Nwagbara, April Torres, Erille Weiss, Zohar Oriana Yentov

CONTEMPORARY

...this way

“We are all born superstars.”

Choreographer: Mark Tomasic in collaboration with the dancers

Music: “*Born this Way (The Country Road Version)*” written by Lady Gaga and Jeppe Laursen, performed by Orville Peck.

Dancers: Aidan Cook, Michael Howard, Gary Lai, Xeandric Ross, Mark Tomasic



CONTEMPORARY

Light of the Landing

The moonlight breaks upon the city's domes,
And falls along cemented steel and stone,
Upon the grayness of a million homes,
Lugubrious in unchanging monotone.
Upon the clothes behind the tenement,
That hang like ghosts suspended from the lines,
Linking each flat to each indifferent,
Incongruous and strange the moonlight shines. (Excerpt from “Song of the Moon” Claude McKay)

Choreographer: Vanessa Van Wormer

Music: “*House Nocturne in C Sharp Minor*” by Frédéric Chopin

Musician: Michael Siess, Violin

Dancer: Armita Azizi



CONTEMPORARY

“Where Do We Go Now?”

“Where Do We Go Now?” explores what happens when there is a sudden change to our daily routines, and we are left to put old pieces together to form a new way of living.

Choreographer: April Torres

Music: “*Borgov III*” & “*Borgov I*” by Carlos Rafael Rivera

Dancers: Armita Azizi, Veronica Berndes, Aidan Cook, Gary Lai, Ameri Meada, Chai Nwagbara, Akiha Taguchi, Erille Weiss, Zohar Oriana Yentov



HIP HOP, JAZZ FUSION, MODERN

Whispers through Time

An exploration of movement and identity where the past and the present merge in the singular point that we see today. With each look through a door, a new chapter unfolds, inviting the viewer through the world where femininity and self-discovery intertwine.

Choreographers: Sophia Aponte, Jada Richmond

Music: “Gimme! Gimme! Gimme!” by ABBA, “Boogie Wonderland” by Earth, Wind & Fire, “Material Girl,” “Vogue” by Madonna, “Drop” by Timbaland & Magoo ft. Fatman Scoop, “Diva” by Beyoncé, “Escapism (Mashup)” by Raye featuring 070 Shake

Dancers: Sophia Aponte, Durami Chang, Miyu Fujiwara, Michael Howard, Taryn Key, Amanda Lindqvist, Rebecca Lo, Rimi Maruse, Deborah Nosrati, Jada Richmond, Xeandric Ross, Jamie Rush, Samara Williams,

Additional Credits: Filmographers: Alan Gurolla, Mac Frelix, Elijah Watson, Katie B. Cogshell



PRODUCTION CREDITS

Synapse Founder Linda Gold

Artistic Directors: Jae Lee & Mark Tomasic

Dance Production Specialist Endah Redjeki

Dance Administrative Assistant..... Jocelyn Alex

SMC Marketing Coordinator Ming-Yea Wei

Graphic Design Vivian Chu, Jonathan Ng

Web/Social Media.....
.....Paul Trautwein, Jae Lee, Marissa Osato Moreno,
Rebecca Lo

Program Information Contributed.....
.....by Synapse Choreographers

Program Editors Jae Lee & Mark Tomasic

Costume Designer..... Barbara Rain

Lighting Designer Joy Bice

Videographer and Editor.....Nestor Trujillo

Photographer Jonathan Ng, Amy Williams

Theater Technical Director Siamanto Ismaily

Lead Theater Technicians Joy Bice,
..... Tom Carter, Carlos Lucio

Production Manager.....Robert Rudolph

Stage Manager Sarah King

Assistant Stage Manager.....Sheila Ayundha, Patricia Oliva,
Abigail Sharp, Richard Tahvildaran

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO:

SMC Media Services, SMC Marketing Department, SMC Web/Social
Media Department

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For over 50 years, Synapse Contemporary Dance Theater has contributed to the cultural life of Los Angeles by offering innovative dance presentations on campus, in schools, and in area theaters. Past performances include the Broad Stage, Getty Center, Highways Performance Space in Santa Monica, The Cast Theater in Hollywood, Electric Lodge in Venice, The Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum in Topanga Canyon, Inter-College Consortium and University Exchanges, College Dance Festivals in New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, California, Georgia, and New Jersey as well as travel-study tours to New York City, England, France, and Switzerland. Dances from *Synapse Contemporary Dance Theater* (Dance 55A) were presented at the **American College Dance Association** (ACDA) conference 2023.

Linda Gold (Founder) was the first full-time faculty in Dance at SMC and was able to initiate a full curriculum Dance Program (now Department), Dance Major, numerous dance series, university transfer agreements, travel-studies in Dance and Synapse Contemporary Dance Theater. She has taught in the Mentor Program, been advisor to Dance Club, arranged interdepartmental performing/arts events, community outreach, intercollegiate dance consortium and has served on a variety of college committees. She has performed with the Joffrey Ballet Company, Wolf Trap Company, Contemporary Dance Ensemble, Dance/L.A. and won critical praise from international tours with her own Concert Ensemble. She has received grants for her creative work, presented papers at scholarly conferences and adjudicated dance and film competitions. Professor Gold has a BFA in Dance and a Special Education Teaching Certificate from the University of Cincinnati, an MA in Performance and Choreography from UCLA, and is completing work on her doctoral degree from the University of Helsinki.

Artistic Directors

Jae Lee began her dance training in South Korea where she earned a BS degree in Ballet from the Han Yang University. In Korea, she was a member of the Lee Ballet Company and danced professionally. Lee attended the State University of New York, College at Brockport and earned an M.A. degree in Dance. Lee also holds an M.F.A. degree in Dance with an emphasis in choreography from the University of California, Irvine. She has been actively participating in the American College Dance Association and her choreographies, *Interwoven* (2013), *Entangled Somewhere...* (2017), and *A-15510* (2020) have been selected to be performed in 'best of festival' Gala Concerts, as well as the first alternate choice for the National Festival. Lee is an ABT® certified Teacher, who has successfully completed the ABT® Teaching Training Intensive in Pre- Primary through Level 5 of the ABT® National Training Curriculum. Currently, she is a full-time faculty member at Santa Monica College Dance Department, teaching ballet, dance history, while co-directing Synapse Dance Contemporary Theatre as an artistic director.

Mark Tomasic is Chair of the Dance Department of Santa Monica College. At SMC, he has been awarded recognition as “Equity Champion” and “Outstanding Faculty Member of the Year” (2018-19). Mark has performed with a variety of internationally renowned dance companies throughout his professional career of over 20 years. Among others, Mark has performed principal and featured roles in the masterworks of such notable choreographers as Martha Graham, Donald McKayle, Paul Taylor, David Parsons, Sean Curran, May O’Donnell, George Balanchine, Antony Tudor, Flemming Flindt, Talley Beatty and Agnes de Mille. As a choreographer, Mark has created works for numerous dance companies, colleges and universities across the country. In Spring 2022, his work “a shard” was selected for presentation at the American College Dance Festival Gala screening. Mark has worked extensively in the field of physically integrated dance with the Dancing

Wheels Company & School, one of the premier arts and disability organizations in the United States. Serving as Artistic Advisor to the Company, Mark travels nationally and internationally to teach physically integrated dance to students and professionals alike and is the author of the inclusive dance training manual, “Physically Integrated Dance: The Dancing Wheels Comprehensive Guide for Teachers, Choreographers and Students of Mixed Abilities.” Mark holds an AA from Cuyahoga Community College, a BFA in Ballet from the University of Cincinnati, and an MFA in Dance from the University of California, Irvine.

Guest Artists

Leonardo “Inner-G” Flores is a Los Angeles native born and raised in the San Fernando Valley. He has a B.A. in History and B.A. in Dance from UCLA. Leonardo is a teaching artist with Versa-Style Dance Company working with at-risk and low-income youth including incarcerated youth across Los Angeles. As a Street Dance artist, Leo has choreographed original Street Dance works at UCLA and UWM. Within Versa-Style, Leonardo is Co-Manager of Versa-Style Next Generation and a principal dancer within Versa-Style Legacy. Leonardo is an educator, choreographer, and practitioner of Street Dance, always emphasizing cultural integrity and technique to elevate Street Dance culture.

Jordan Slaffey, dancer, singer & choreographer has been breaking barriers with non-orthodox movement combined with her dance training. Showing her worth professionally since 2018, she strives to bring experimental hip hop movement with layers of contemporary & modern to the frontier of the artistic community.

Faculty Choreographers

Seda Aybay is the Founder/Artistic Director/Choreographer of Kybele Dance Theater (2003 LA). Since emigrating from Istanbul, Türkiye, she has won multiple choreography awards including 2024 New Century

Choreography Award and received the Marcus Residency at Washington University in St. Louis, the USC New Movement Residency, Santa Monica College Residency and Gloria Kaufman Performing Arts Residency. Her works have been presented and toured including in Los Angeles, Chicago, Seattle, Las Vegas, San Francisco, NYC, Istanbul and Seoul. As Aybay is a certified Horton teacher, Adjunct Tenure Professor at SMC and LMU. Aybay was named 2019 LA Cultural Trailblazer by the city. Seda created dance scenes for director John Woo's 2024 Universal Studios movie "The Killer".

Angela Jordan received her BA and MFA in Dance from UCLA. A recipient of several fellowships, Jordan has conducted research in Havana, Cuba and Guinea, West Africa. She has choreographed and danced in music videos, TV shows, and independent films. Jordan has taught at the Bates College Dance Festival, American College Dance Festival, UCLA, Cal State Long Beach, Lula Washington Dance Theater, Long Beach City College, and El Camino College. She is currently on staff at Santa Monica College and the Debbie Allen Dance Academy.

Jae Lee, see artistic director's bio.

Mark Tomasic, see artistic director's bio.

Vanessa Van Wormer is originally from Spokane WA and is currently Associate Professor at SMC where she teaches ballet, contemporary, choreography, and dance history. She has danced for the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Bill Evans Dance Company, Ballet Spokane, The Spokane Opera, as well as several companies as a freelance artist in New York. Her bi-coastal collective VVWdance has presented work in NYC, regionally, and internationally with TICINO in DANZA, and The American School in Switzerland. Van Wormer is also an ABT® certified Teacher.

Guest Company Entity Contemporary Dance

Founded in 2009 and directed by Marissa Osato Moreno and Will Johnston, Entity Contemporary Dance is a Los Angeles-based professional contemporary dance company that interweaves modern, jazz, and hip hop dance techniques to explore the nuances of emotionality and intercultural connectivity. Comprised of working professionals in LA's commercial dance industry, Entity creates live stage, site-specific, and film/TV work that prioritizes rhythm, dynamism, power, and vulnerability. Through its educational outreach programs geared towards young artists and pre-professional students, Entity cultivates connection points to various dance career pathways in performance, choreography, education, and production. Entity has performed and hosted workshops across the U.S., Mexico, Asia, and Australia. @entitycontemporarydance, entitycontemporarydance.com

Student Choreographers

Sophia Aponte has trained in a wide variety of styles including ballet, jazz, contemporary, hip hop, salsa, etc, and continues to expand her range performing with the SMC dance department. She looks forward to future opportunities at a four-year college and beyond. It has been exciting and rewarding for her to have the opportunity to incorporate her passion for dance and choreography while collaborating on this piece.

Durami Chang is a student at SMC anticipating continuing her studies at UC Berkeley as a Cognitive Science major next spring. She has recently attained her Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts - Social and Behavioral Science with Highest Honors (4.0 GPA). She has 4 years of training in K-pop, yet much of her choreographic inspiration comes from traditional Korean and street dance styles. While she aspires to become a UX (user experience) designer studying user behaviors and intuitions, she perceives dance as the physicality of human cognition and creativity.

Jada Richmond is pursuing her certificate of achievement in commercial dance at SMC, hoping to transfer to a four-year institution by next Fall. She has trained and performed in ballet, jazz, hip hop, house, voguing, and modern and will continue to garner more styles under her belt. Most recently, she was awarded the Judith Douglas Scholarship for Excellence in Dance at SMC.

April Torres is currently in her 4th semester at Santa Monica College. She is pursuing a Degree in Dance as well as the Dance Teaching Certificate. Originally from Northern California, April has been dancing, teaching, and choreographing for a majority of her life. She is excited to showcase her work and thanks her cast for their hard work and dedication to her vision.





Department Chair: Mark Tomasic

Full-time Dance Faculty: Jae Lee, Marissa Moreno, Sri Susilowati, Mark Tomasic, Vanessa Van Wormer

Part-Time Dance Faculty: Seda Aybay-Owens, Laura Canellias, Keali'i Ceballos, Angela Jordan, Karen McDonald, Cynthia Molnar, Sophie Monat, Raquel Ramírez, Charlotte Richards, Caprice Walker, Roberta Wolin-Tupas

Dance Accompanists: Mark Litver – lead accompanist, John Carbone, Matthew Mallinger, Alla Plotkin, Gnenemon Soro, Malik Sow, Nonna Ter-Avanesova

Dance Production Specialist: Endah Redjeki

Dance Department Administrative Assistant: Jocelyn Alex

SPRING AUDITIONS 2025

SYNAPSE CONTEMPORARY DANCE THEATER

Synapse Dance 55A

This course offers performance experience and is organized as a modern dance company for concerts and dance productions. Students participate as dancers and choreographers. Styles range from modern to postmodern, contemporary ballet, jazz, and hip hop fusion.

Student Choreographers:

Tuesday, February 18, 2025 at 3:00pm (sign-in at 2:30pm) in CPC 310
Students must present two minutes of live dance material they wish to be developed for the Spring production.

Dancer Audition:

Thursday, February 20, 2025 at 3:00pm (sign-in at 2:00pm) in CPC 310. Students must be warmed up and wear black-on-black dance wear.

GLOBAL MOTION WORLD DANCE COMPANY

Global Motion Dance 57A

This course offers performance experience and is organized as a world dance company. Dancers and choreographers audition, rehearse, and perform on stage traditional and contemporary forms of world dance. Styles include dances of Africa, Asia, Latin America, México, Europe (ballet), and USA (jazz, tap, hip hop).

Student Choreographers:

Wednesday, February 19, 2025 at 6:00pm (sign-in at 5:30pm) at CPC 310. Students must present three minutes of their work to be developed along with a description of origin and authenticity.

Dancers Audition:

Friday, February 21, 2025 at 3:00pm (sign-in at 2:00pm) in CPC 310

DANCE DEPARTMENT SPRING 2025 PERFORMANCES

Synapse, Contemporary Dance Theater

Saturday, May 3, 2025 at 7:30pm

Sunday, May 4, 2025 at 7:30pm

Global Motion, World Dance Company

Saturday, May 17, 2025 at 7:30pm

Sunday, May 18, 2025 at 7:30pm

For the latest updates on current and future SMC Dance Department events, please visit: www.smc.edu/dance or visit us on Instagram @[smc_dance_dept](https://www.instagram.com/smc_dance_dept)

