

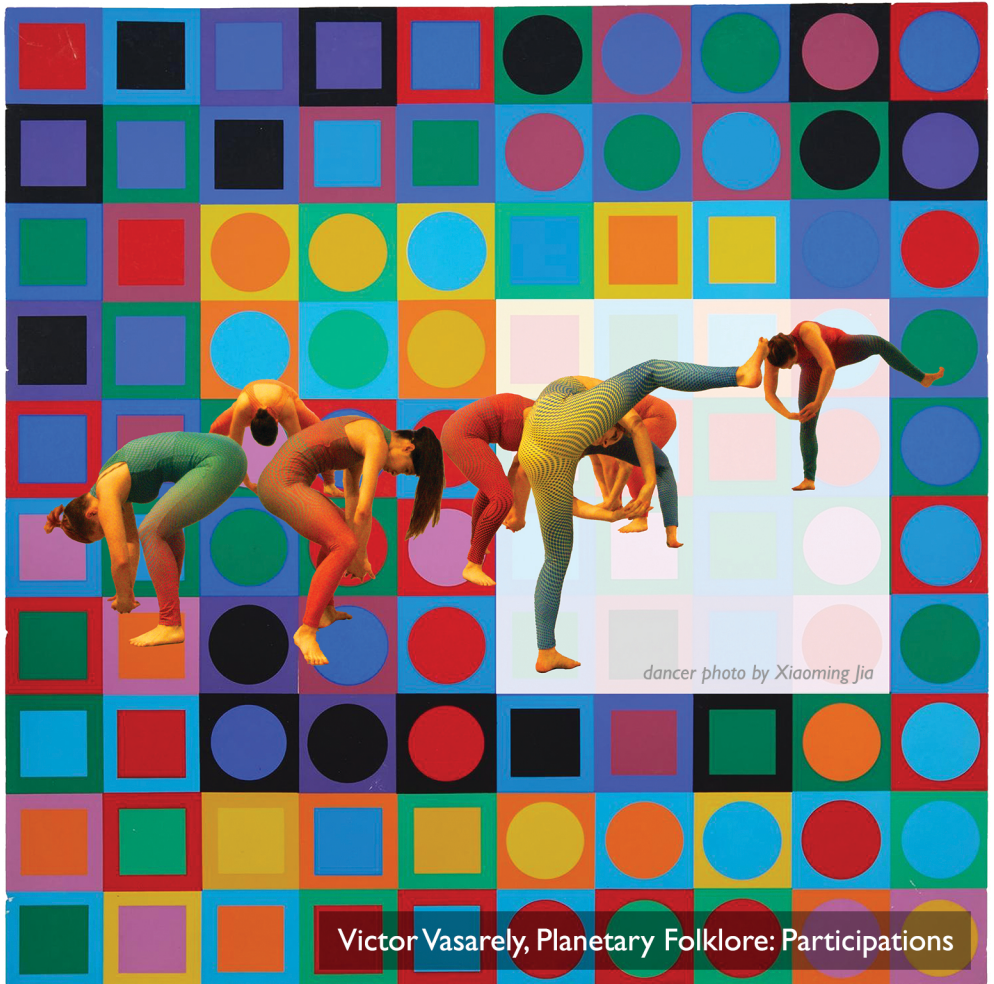
natasha  
carlitz  
dance  
ensemble

Gallery

Fri, March 29 | Sat, March 30  
Cubberley Theatre, Palo Alto

2024

*an evening of dances inspired by five centuries of painting & sculpture*



dancer photo by Xiaoming Jia

Victor Vasarely, Planetary Folklore: Participations

# Gallery

artistic director  
natasha carlitz

choreography by  
natasha carlitz  
alyssa plummer  
avery rissling

natasha  
carlitz  
dance  
ensemble

company dancers  
kerry aradhya  
audra edwards  
marie hamel  
maggie hurd-fleck  
jeanne-claudius martin  
elizabeth musco  
alyssa plummer  
avery rissling  
yu-chen rockwell  
clara yang

with guests  
skylar rose adams  
samantha kennedy  
liam mccullar  
sophie otewalt  
and ~  
high release dance  
marcy auerbach-unal  
virginia bock  
yuna choi  
elena grindley  
ysabel sanchez  
corinne selvin  
erika tingey

# Concert Program

*All choreography by Natasha Carlitz with the dancers, unless otherwise noted*

## Prelude

music Modest Mussorgsky, "Pictures at an Exhibition"  
~ Elisabeth Leonskaja, piano

## Still | 2023

inspiration Ansel Adams, "Evening, McDonald Lake, Glacier National Park" ♦ 1942  
music Ludovico Einaudi, "Seven Days Walking: Birdsong (Day 7)"  
dancers Kerry Aradhya, Marie Hamel, Maggie Hurd-Fleck, Jeanne-Claudius Martin,  
Avery Rissling, Alyssa Plummer, Clara Yang  
alternate Elena Grindley ~ *with special thanks for being there during development*  
costumes Natasha Carlitz & Karen McWilliams

## Jouissance | 2023

inspiration Master of the Female Half-Lengths, "Three Musicians" ♦ early 1500s  
music Claudin de Sermisy, "Jouissance Vous Donneray"  
~ Emily van Evera, soprano  
dancers Audra Edwards, Elizabeth Musco, Yu-Chen Rockwell  
alternates Maggie Hurd-Fleck, Alyssa Plummer, Avery Rissling  
costumes Natasha Carlitz

## Square Dance | 2023

inspiration Piet Mondrian, "Composition with red, blue and yellow" ♦ 1942  
music Johann Sebastian Bach, Fugue in B minor on a Theme by Tomaso Albinoni  
(BWV 951) ~ Glenn Gould, piano  
dancers Maggie Hurd-Fleck, Jeanne-Claudius Martin, Avery Rissling, Clara Yang  
alternates Marie Hamel, Alyssa Plummer  
costumes Natasha Carlitz

## Above and Below | 2023

*choreographed for and performed by High Release Dance*

inspiration Georgia O'Keeffe, "Abstraction Blue" ♦ 1927 & "From the Lake" ♦ 1924  
music Ludwig van Beethoven,  
String Quartet No. 13 in B Flat Major, Op. 130: IV. Alla danza tedesca;  
Serenade in D major for Flute, Violin & Viola, Op. 25:  
II. Tempo ordinario d'un Menuetto  
dancers Marcy Auerbach-Unal, Virginia Bock, Yuna Choi, Audra Edwards,  
Elena Grindley, Ysabel Sanchez, Corinne Selvin, Erika Tingey  
alternate Laurel Howard  
costumes Natasha Carlitz

## Pavane for Three | 2023

inspiration Barbara Hepworth, "Forms in Movement (Pavan)" ♦ 1956  
music Eric Coates, "The Four Centuries Suite: II. Pavane"  
dancers Marie Hamel, Jeanne-Claudius Martin, Avery Rissling  
alternates Audra Edwards, Maggie Hurd-Fleck, Alyssa Plummer, Clara Yang

## Camaraderie | 2023

inspiration Gustave Caillebotte, "The Floor Scrapers" ♦ 1875  
music Les Lunaisiens, "Chanson de l'Oignon"  
dancers Kerry Aradhya, Audra Edwards, Maggie Hurd-Fleck, Jeanne-Claudius Martin, Elizabeth Musco, Alyssa Plummer, Yu-Chen Rockwell  
alternate Avery Rissling  
props courtesy of JC Martin & Cory Casanova

## Hierarchy | 2024

*choreography by Alyssa Plummer with collaboration from the dancers*

inspiration Dorothea Rockburne, "Guardian Angel, II" ♦ 1982  
music Parov Stelar, "Dirty Mariposa"  
dancers Samantha Kennedy & Liam McCullar

## Four Stories | 2023

inspiration Edward Hopper, "Nighthawks" ♦ 1942  
music Mike Coffin, "Conversation Piece"  
dancers Kerry Aradhya, Marie Hamel, Maggie Hurd-Fleck, Alyssa Plummer  
alternates Jeanne-Claudius Martin, Avery Rissling  
props courtesy of Barbara Carlitz

## Shtetl | 2023

inspiration Marc Chagall, "The Tribe of Issachar" ♦ 1964  
& "Introduction to the Jewish Theater" ♦ 1920  
music Apollo's Fire, "Karev Yom" (Daphna Mor, vocals)  
& "La Komida La Manyana"  
dancers Marie Hamel, Jeanne-Claudius Martin, Avery Rissling  
Alyssa Plummer, Clara Yang  
Kerry Aradhya, Maggie Hurd-Fleck  
Audra Edwards, Elizabeth Musco, Yu-Chen Rockwell  
costumes Natasha Carlitz with many friends

~ intermission ~



## Float | 2023

- inspiration Alexander Calder, "Maripose" ♦ 1960
- music Erik Satie, "Gymnopédie No. I," arranged for marimba & vibraphone, performed by Kasia Kadłubowska & Dominik Bukowski
- dancers Kerry Aradhya, Audra Edwards, Marie Hamel, Maggie Hurd-Fleck, Jeanne-Claudius Martin, Elizabeth Musco, Alyssa Plummer, Avery Rissling, Yu-Chen Rockwell, Clara Yang

## I Scream, You Scream | 2024

*choreography by Avery Rissling, with collaboration from Skylar Rose Adams, Sophie Otewalt, Katherine Seely, and Isaiah Youngblood*

- inspiration Wayne Thiebaud, "Jolly Cones" ♦ 2002
- music Andrew Bird, "Lazuli Bunting"
- dancers Skylar Rose Adams & Sophie Otewalt

## L'Escargot | 2023

- inspiration Henri Matisse, "The Snail" ♦ 1953
- music Claude Bolling, "Invention"  
from the Concerto for Classical Guitar & Jazz Piano Trio
- dancers Kerry Aradhya, Marie Hamel, Maggie Hurd-Fleck, Jeanne-Claudius Martin, Elizabeth Musco, Alyssa Plummer, Clara Yang
- alternates Audra Edwards, Avery Rissling, Yu-Chen Rockwell

## Clean Sweep | 2024

- inspiration Martin Watson, "The Sweeper" ♦ 2019
- music Claude Bolling, "Africaine"  
from the Concerto for Classical Guitar & Jazz Piano Trio;  
Christine and the Queens, "Je Te Vois Enfin," played by Backing Business
- dancer Jeanne-Claudius Martin ~ *with thanks for creating this role*

## Altitude : Latitude (excerpt) | 2023

*a project from NCDE dance camp*

- art Aaron Johnson & Joel Anderson, "Rocky Mountain Wildflowers" ♦ 2022
- music Mike Coffin
- dancers Marie Hamel, Jeanne-Claudius Martin, Avery Rissling (live)
- videography Natasha Carlitz

## Summer Days... | 2022

- art gnat/Al, "Summer Shades," a tribute to Aaron Douglas ♦ 2024
- music George Gershwin, "Summertime" ~ Charlie Parker, trumpet
- dancers Kerry Aradhya, Maggie Hurd-Fleck, Jeanne-Claudius Martin, Alyssa Plummer, Clara Yang
- costumes Natasha Carlitz & Karen McWilliams

## ...and Nights: Portrait with Purple Hat | 2001

art gnat/Al, "Portrait with Purple Hat" ♦ 2024  
music Cole Porter, "All Through the Night" ~ Ella Fitzgerald, vocals  
dancer Marie Hamel  
costume Karen McWilliams; hat courtesy of Janet Negley

## Joker | 2023

inspiration Sonia Delaunay, "Joker" ♦ 1962  
music New Quintette du Hot Club de France, "Minor Swing" & "Corail"  
dancers Kerry Aradhya, Maggie Hurd-Fleck, Jeanne-Claudius Martin,  
Alyssa Plummer, Avery Rissling  
alternates Marie Hamel, Clara Yang  
costumes Natasha Carlitz

## Connect | 2024

inspiration Yayoi Kusama, "Ascension of Polka Dots on the Trees" ♦ 2021  
music Peter Gabriel, excerpts from "Olive Tree (Dark-Side Mix)"  
dancers Elizabeth Musco & Sophie Otewalt

## Chroma | 2023

inspiration Victor Vasarely, "Planetary Folklore (Participations)" ♦ 1942  
music Steve Reich, "Drumming" (excerpts), performed by So Percussion  
dancers Kerry Aradhya, Audra Edwards, Marie Hamel, Maggie Hurd-Fleck,  
Jeanne-Claudius Martin, Alyssa Plummer, Avery Rissling,  
Yu-Chen Rockwell, Clara Yang  
alternate Elizabeth Musco

# Director's Note

Enormous thanks to a truly exceptional group of dancers, who have put their creative genius, sweat, and many hours into building this production. Thanks to my parents for nurturing a love of art throughout my childhood; my mother probably remembers my first encounters with many of the pieces that inspired these dances, and my father would, I think, have enjoyed the results immensely. Thank you to Ralph Cahn for his support; to Jennifer Cahn and Kerry Aradhya for help with program notes; to Erika Tingey for rehearsal feedback; to Bob & Katy Carlitz for making the trip; to Mike, Perboly, and Bertie for everything. Thank you to our patrons: Ben, Deb, & Moya; Toni Deser & Paul Rodman; Ralph & Christine Hurd; Charles & Barbara Kingsley; Diane Posnak; Joan Rabin; Michael Strelo-Smith; Mark Weiss; and any who contributed after this went to print. Thanks to DanceVisions for sponsorship and to our volunteers, especially the amazing I-Heng McComb, for their time. Thanks, as always, to Grace, who got me started.

# Program Notes

Over the past year I've loved working with art I've known all my life and discovering new inspirations. Choosing the "right" music to accompany each of the artworks was a delightful challenge. Here are the connections I found, chronologically by artist.

**"The Master of the Female Half-Lengths"** (Netherlandish, early sixteenth century) is the appellation given to an anonymous artist who painted half-length portraits of women engaged in various pursuits. In **"Three Musicians,"** the flautist in the foreground is clearly reading from a score of **"Jouissance Vous Donneray"** by **Claudin de Sermisy** (French, 1490–1562), whose music was popular at the time of the painting.

**Gustave Caillebotte** (French, 1848–1894) was initially ridiculed for portraying ordinary working people such as the floor scrapers of the eponymous painting. **"Chanson de l'Oignon,"** a Napoleonic marching song (about the French army's love for onions), was a popular tune that floor scrapers in 1875 Paris might well have sung as they worked.

**Henri Matisse** (French, 1869–1954) is known for his use of colour both in his oil paintings and in his later large-scale paper cut-outs, including the series **"Jazz"** as well as **"The Snail,"** completed while he was bedridden in Nice. Contemporaneously performing in Nice, **Claude Bolling** (French, 1930–2020) was a jazz piano prodigy who would go on to compose music for film and TV as well as "crossover" collaborations with classical musicians. One likes to think that the young Bolling might have inspired the aging Matisse and vice versa...

**Piet Mondrian** (Dutch, 1872–1944) worked through representational paintings to increasing levels of abstraction, reaching the spare grid-based paintings in black, white, and primaries for which he is best known. He was partial to the structural music of **Johann Sebastian Bach** (German, 1685–1750), and who can express that mathematical quality better than pianist Glenn Gould?

**Edward Hopper** (American, 1882–1967) often worked on themes of isolation and loneliness, and **"Nighthawks,"** painted immediately following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, is situated during a particularly uneasy period. Composer **Mike Coffin** (American, born 1956) wrote **"Conversation Piece"** in the form of a dialogue to represent the disparate voices seeking companionship in Hopper's diner scene.

**Sonia Delaunay** (Ukrainian, 1885–1979) spent most of her career in Paris, working in textile and fashion design as well as painting. In 1931, her son Charles co-founded the Hot Club de France, whose jazzy sounds reflect the jaunty spirit of Delaunay's paintings and designs.

**Marc Chagall** (Belarusian, 1887–1985), whose artistic career spanned periods in the Russian Empire, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States, grew up in a shtetl near Vitebsk and is known for his dreamlike portrayals of Jewish folk themes and culture. Later in his career, he created stained-glass windows for both churches and synagogues in Europe, Israel, and the United States, insisting that art should unite people across religions. The period music ensemble **Apollo's Fire** has explored early music of many traditions, including Jewish music of the diaspora; their songs featured here encompass both Hebrew ("Karev Yom," a Passover song) and the Ladino or Judeo-Spanish of Sephardic Jews ("La Komida La Manyana," a celebration of food and family).

**Georgia O'Keeffe** (American, 1887–1986) found inspiration in the landscapes of the American Southwest and in listening to music, which she sometimes translated into visual form as an experiment in synesthesia. Her record collection, catalogued after her death, eschewed contemporary composers in favour of copious amounts of **Ludwig van Beethoven** (German, 1770–1827).

**Alexander Calder** (American, 1898–1976) invented the concept of the sculptural mobile: art that moves, dancing in response to movements of air and people around it. Like composer **Erik Satie** (French, 1866–1925), Calder worked extensively in Paris; upon his return to the United States he was invited to create the stage decor for a "symphonic drama" by Satie, which provided one of his first opportunities for large-scale moving sculpture. The constantly shifting spaces around the forms in Calder's mobiles echo the importance of space between the notes in Satie's music.

gnat/Al, tribute to **Aaron Douglas** (American, 1899–1979): Both "Summer Shades" and "Portrait with Purple Hat" are works I generated with AI tools, intentionally referring to the style of Aaron Douglas. An artist of the Harlem Renaissance, Douglas worked with shadows and translucent layers of colour in art that addressed issues of race and segregation, frequently including imagery of Black musicians and dancers. George Gershwin's "Summertime," played by the inimitable **Charlie "Bird" Parker** (American, 1920–1955), and Cole Porter's "All Through the Night," as rendered by **Ella Fitzgerald** (American, 1917–1996), are the essential companions to these celebrations of humid days and sultry nights.

**Ansel Adams** (American, 1902–1984), a dedicated environmentalist, nature photographer, and hiker, captured his photograph of Macdonald Lake on an evening in Glacier National Park. **Ludovico Einaudi** (Italian, born 1955) wrote the score for "Seven Days Walking" following his walking trips through the Alps, which he documented with Polaroid photos.

**Barbara Hepworth** (British, 1903–1975) was fascinated by early English music and co-founded the St Ives Festival of Music and the Arts in the Cornish town where she lived and worked (and still has a dedicated sculpture garden). Her “Forms in Movement (Pavan),” one of many sculptures she named for musical and dance forms, sought to portray the lines of a pavane, one of the court dances her contemporary **Eric Coates** (British, 1886–1957) preserved in his “Four Centuries Suite.”

**Victor Vasarely** (Hungarian, 1906–1997) worked as a graphic artist in Paris, where he began the experiments that led to his renown as “the father of Op Art.” His “Planetary Folklore” series was based on a system of repeating shapes and colours that could be rearranged into endless permutations. During the same time period, but across the Atlantic, composer **Steve Reich** (American, born 1936) was making parallel experiments in music, including the cyclical composition “Drumming,” which uses a “phasing” technique in which players repeat identical rhythmic patterns simultaneously but at slightly different speeds, shifting in and out of sync.

**Wayne Thiebaud** (American, 1920–2021), a giant in American art, thought when he started painting things like pies, hot dogs, and penny gumball machines that it would end his career as an artist. He saw the foods as assemblages of basic shapes such as circles, triangles, half-circles, and rectangles. To brighten them, Thiebaud hit on the idea of outlining shapes like the ice cream cones in vivid blues and greens. His unique “rainbow” edges came about accidentally as he layered deeper shades on his initial shapes and discovered he liked the resulting halos. *Note by Avery Rissling*

**Yayoi Kusama** (Japanese, born 1929) uses polka dots to blur the lines between fantasy and reality and to highlight universal connectedness. Her long career has included artistic collaborations with singer **Peter Gabriel** (British, born 1950), for whom she has designed album and video art. Gabriel’s song “Olive Tree,” whose lyrics use the tree as a metaphor for connection, is an apt partner to Kusama’s arboreal installation.

**Dorothea Rockburne** (American, born 1932), a mathematician, astronomer, dancer, and visual artist, takes inspiration from a myriad of disciplines. Her work “Guardian Angel, II” reflects her repeated interest in hierarchies and pyramids. Also a polymath, **Parov Stelar** (Austrian, born 1974), a DJ, musician, producer, and artist, combines jazz, swing, and electronic beats in a series of ascending and descending melodies throughout his piece “Dirty Mariposa.” *Note by Alyssa Plummer*

**Martin Watson** (Norwegian, born 1984) specializes in stencil art that integrates graffiti. To accompany his work, I chose to overlap compositions by **Claude Bolling** and the contemporary singer/songwriter **Christine and the Queens** (French, born 1988) in a competition for auditory space that reflects graffiti’s competition for wallspace.

# About the Company

Founded in 2005, the **Natasha Carlitz Dance Ensemble** presented its inaugural concert in partnership with the internationally acclaimed California Guitar Trio and since then has produced twelve more full-length programs as well as appearing in dozens of showcases and festivals around the Bay Area. Athletic and spirited, NCDE dancers bring both strong technique and emotional depth to their performances. "Serious and graceful work... displays creativity and talent that are worth seeing... One of the really successful features of Carlitz' work is that the selected music and choreography fit so well together," wrote Michael Phelan on *baydance.com*. With its strong focus on musicality, the company has commissioned work from several composers and seizes opportunities to perform with live music.

In 2010, NCDE was invited to represent the United States at the Egyptian International Modern Dance Festival, performing full-length concerts in Cairo and Alexandria. "Last week the Natasha Carlitz Dance Ensemble presented a breathtaking show," wrote Rania Khallaf for Cairo's *Al-Ahram Weekly*. "A choreographer and dancer, Carlitz imbued the stage with a spirit of enthusiasm, romance and joy. The ensemble... resonated with a sense of ecstasy and challenge."



Artistic Director **Natasha Carlitz** began her dance training in Palo Alto nearly 50 years ago with Grace Butler, a former Nikolais dancer, and performed as a child and young adult with CHORD (Children's Original Repertory Dance) and SMDC (the Saturday Morning Dance Company). She has studied dance in London, Amsterdam, Massachusetts, and Maine—including improvisation and choreography workshops with Pilobolus

founder Jonathan Wolken and aerial dance in the Sierras with Bandaloop. For the past 30 years, Natasha has choreographed and performed around the Bay Area, both independently and as a member of the collective High Release Dance. She has created more than 60 dances for NCDE. Critics have heralded her choreography as "daring," "thought-provoking," and "proof that creativity knows no bounds."



Composer in Residence **Mike Coffin** started playing classical guitar in grade school and began writing guitar music soon after. Thankfully, most of his early music has been lost. In the last few years he has begun composing for other instruments and ensembles as well. His new music sounds as if it might have been written by one of the slower-witted students of J.S. Bach, though he also sprinkles in bits of flamenco, jazz, and blues. He first

collaborated with NCDE in 2012 and has been the company's Composer in Residence since 2015, composing all the music for NCDE's 2017 production *Acadia and other stories*. You can listen to his compositions at [soundcloud.com/mhcoffin](https://soundcloud.com/mhcoffin).

# About the Dancers



**Kerry Aradhya** began her eclectic dance training at Long's School of Dance in Erie, Pennsylvania, but fell head over heels for modern dance during her college days at Duke University. Barbara Dickinson, Clay Taliaferro, Betty Jones, Gerri Houlihan, and Alvin Mayes are among the teachers who have inspired her the most over the years. A founding member of NCDE, Kerry is honored to be dancing with the company again (for the past five years) after a long hiatus. She has also performed with the Houston Grand Opera, the Isadora Duncan Project, Joan Karff's New Dance Group, the Michele Brangwen Dance Ensemble, and Kinor Dance Company. When not hopping and bopping in the dance studio, Kerry works as a freelance science writer and editor, writes poetry and picture books for young children, and occasionally muses about the intersection between children's literature and dance at her blog, Picture Books & Pirouettes. Visit her online at [www.kerryaradhya.com](http://www.kerryaradhya.com).



**Audra Edwards** grew up in Eagle, Idaho, where she studied ballet at Eagle Performing Arts Center with Jeff and Cathy Giese and Lisa Moon. While in high school, she also studied vocal music and theater. She continued her dance and vocal studies at Butler University, where she fell in love with modern dance. Audra has also trained with Alonzo King Lines Ballet, Joffrey Chicago, Boston Ballet, The Rock School, and American Conservatory Theater. Upon receiving her BFA from Butler, Audra moved to New York City, where she was a company dancer with Impact Movement Collective and an apprentice with Lydia Johnson Dance. Audra moved to Denver in 2017, where she was a dancer with Hannah Kahn Dance Company from 2017-2022. While in Denver, Audra was also a company member with Maureen Breeze Dance Theatre and T2 Dance Company. In November 2022, Audra moved to England where she danced with Northern Dance in Newcastle upon Tyne. Audra is new to the Bay Area, and is excited to be joining NCDE!



**Marie Hamel** is originally from Portland, Oregon, where she studied dance with Christine Hamel (her mother) at Hamel Dance Academy. In high school, she joined the Junior Artist Generator program at BodyVox, where she trained under Sara Parker and Heather Jackson. She now studies marketing and dance at the University of San Francisco while also working at ODC. Marie has been with NCDE since January 2023.



**Maggie Hurd-Fleck** grew up in the Bay Area and began her dance training at the Adage School of Performing Arts and Teen Dance Company of the Bay Area. She received a BFA in Dance from UC Santa Barbara and joined NCDE in 2013. In 2015, Maggie moved to New York to pursue her doctorate in Physical Therapy at Long Island University Brooklyn. She returned to the Bay Area in 2018 and has enjoyed dancing again with NCDE ever since. She has had the opportunity to perform with many dance projects throughout California, including Blind Tiger Society, Ka.nei.see Dance Collective, Scratch Dance, and H2O Dance Company. Maggie is currently a Physical Therapist at Westcott Physical Therapy in Los Altos and enjoys her free time practicing yoga and spending time with her husband and their dog, Cooper.



**Jeanne-Claudius (JC) Martin** is a local human who began performing at a young age, learning jazz dance with Marie Stinnett and appearing in Sunnyvale Community Players productions both on and offstage. They continued dancing through their time at Cal Poly Humboldt with a modern dance minor in addition to their biology degree. Since emerging from the emerald forests of Northern California, they're happy to have found a home for their love of dance and performing at NCDE. JC teaches 5th grade at Stratford Middle School and, as a former Girl Scout camp counselor, is the designated removal escort for any bugs that find their way into the studio during rehearsal.



**Elizabeth Musco**, originally from Fort Wayne, IN, began her dance journey at age twelve, training primarily in hip-hop at a competition studio. In 2016, she became one of the first dance majors at University of Dayton, where she was given opportunities to study a variety of genres and trained under past and present Dayton Contemporary Dance Company members. She graduated Summa Cum Laude with dual degrees: a BME in Mechanical Engineering and a BA in Dance, earning the "Dr. G Award for Excellence in Mainstage Theatre." Now navigating the Bay Area dance community, she performs whenever she can. This is Elizabeth's first year with NCDE, and she wants to thank Natasha and her fellow dancers for making her feel so welcome.



Originally from Sunnyvale, **Alyssa Plummer** began dancing ballet at a young age and then continued to dance throughout college, finding a love for all forms of dance thanks to the dance department at Saint Mary's College of California. She earned a double major BS in Dance Choreography and Performance and Biochemistry, graduating Summa Cum Laude. Her choreography thesis performance was presented at the American College



Dance Association. She currently works as Manager of Academic Services and Budget Analyst for various Saint Mary's Graduate programs. Alyssa also teaches dance for students aged three to eighteen. In her free time she enjoys playing with her four cats: Alastair, Haze, Hermes, and Luci.



A dance artist rooted in social justice work, **Avery Rissling** is an experienced performer, choreographer, and instructor. In addition to concert dance experience, she has choreographed for poetry, percussion, spoken word, and plays including *Eurydice*, *Love\_Stories*, and *Sorry for the Wait*. Avery has performed with NCDE, Kusanovich Dance of San Francisco, and Cat Machines Dance, and enjoys teaching dance classes at local studios across

the Bay Area. Avery holds a dual BA in Dance and Political Science with a minor in Women's and Gender Studies from Santa Clara University. She graduated Summa Cum Laude in 2020, was inducted into the National Honors Society for Dance Arts, and received the Anna Halprin Dance Award for the graduating dancer who best exemplifies excellence in dance and an awareness of community values.



**Yu-Chen Rockwell** graduated from the Department of Dance at National Taiwan University of Arts. She has been a lead dancer for TUI-Mein Schiff in Germany; a musical tour dancer for Mark Thompson Productions in the UK; a performer, manager, and art director for Leofoo Village amusement park in Taiwan; a contemporary dancer for Taipei Circle Dance company; and an actress/dancer for Shanghe Taiwanese Opera. In addition, she has parti-

cipated as a dancer in many well-known musicals (including *Burlesque*, *Tanz der Vampire*, and *Tina*) in Europe. Beyond her extensive performance background, she has engaged in dance teaching and choreographing work in various places and won many awards in cheerleading jazz dance competitions.



**Clara Yang** fell into the wonders and joys of dance through her seven years competing in colorguard and winterguard. She loves the whole rehearsal process and how movement, colors, breath, song, and acting all come together for a moment's connection with a stranger. At Syracuse University, she dove deeper into the world of dance through a potpourri of dance classes and through dancing and choreographing with Orange Pulse Dance

Troupe. After graduation, she returned to the Bay Area where she got the privilege to pioneer and teach a dance and flag ministry at Forerunner Christian Church and dance with ArtistEdge Dance Company and Cat Machines Dance. She is thrilled now for the opportunity to grow as a dancer and performer with the talented and fun group of NCDE and to be a part of bringing Natasha's creative ideas to life.

# Guest Dancers

Focused on work elevating connection, social justice, and cultural consciousness, **Skylar Rose Adams** has performed and developed original dance and theatre works across the West Coast, in Nicaragua, and in England, with companies including Kusanovich Dance, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and many more. She holds a BA in American Musical Theatre Performance with a minor in Urban Education from Santa Clara University and is an alumna of Queen Mary University of London School of Drama and the American Conservatory Theatre. Skylar Rose is also a teacher, a proud indigenous Mexica/Aztec dancer, and a member of Calpulli Ocelocihuatl.

**Samantha Kennedy**, originally from San Diego, has been dancing for fifteen years. Starting at the California Ballet School, she has explored and competed in styles such as contemporary ballet, jazz, lyrical, modern, hip-hop, and flamenco. In high school, she joined (and eventually captained) Academy of Our Lady of Peace's competitive dance team. Samantha is currently pursuing a BS in Chemistry with a minor in Dance and hopes to receive her MS and possibly PhD in Synthetic Chemistry.

**Liam McCullar** is a mixed-race dancer who identifies with his Latino and Native American roots. From the age of four, he began developing his artistry through the musical discipline of classical and folk violin. At twelve he moved away from the music medium and transitioned to beginning his dance journey at a local studio in Fresno, Shirley Winters Ballet. He later moved under the mentorship of Jimmy Hao, whose leadership shaped the Fresno City Community College dance company. Currently, he is studying an extensive range of dance styles at Saint Mary's College.

Born and raised in San Jose, **Sophie Otewalt** received her BFA in Dance from San Jose State University. She studied ballet, jazz, Limón technique, Gaga, and contemporary during her time at SJSU and she was a member of the modern company University Dance Theater. Post grad, she has participated in the Emerging Choreographer's forum with MFDPI/SF for two years, danced with Cat Machines Dance by Jen Costillo, and worked as a company assistant with Margaret Jenkins Dance Company. As she continues her training and builds a life with dance at the center, she is grateful for the opportunity to perform with NCDE!

**High Release Dance**, founded in 1994, provides a collaborative environment for dancers and choreographers. High Release is unique in that the group has no director, but works as a democratic organization in which each member has equal voice and contributes her particular talents. While primarily based in modern dance, the company explores a range of styles. The group continually creates and presents new material, performing a full-length concert of new works once every two years, as well as showing pieces in various productions and venues. Please see [www.highrelease.dance/team-4](http://www.highrelease.dance/team-4) for biographies of each dancer.



dancer photo by Kyle Adler

# Production Crew

director & producer	Natasha Carlitz
stage manager	I-Heng McComb
theatre manager	Brian Haines
lighting designer	Brian Kimmy
sound & projections	Byron Binns
graphic designer	Natasha Carlitz
web developer	Xiaoming Jia
videographer	Jenny Chu
photographer	Sasakthi Abeysinghe
lobby display	Natasha Carlitz & Corinne Selvin
box office managers	Alice & Paul Colley
ushers	Monika Chock, Emma Jahde, Hideko Sakamoto, Rankin Salinas
set-up crew	Mike Coffin, Howard Coffin, Luiz-Otávio Zorzella

