



Presents



November 22, 2025 & November 23, 2025

Founder:
Linda Gold

Artistic Directors:
Jae Lee and Mark Tomasic

Guest Choreographers:
Vanessa Hernandez Cruz, Harry Weston

Faculty Choreographers:
Seda Aybay, Angela Jordan, Sophie Monat,
Mark Tomasic, Vanessa Van Wormer

Student Choreographers:
Sonny James Lira, Lessly "Mar" Marroquin, Oxana Safronova

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

kin

“...I go through life like a blind child who cannot see, arms outstretched trying to put together a world. And the world works on my behalf catching me in its arms when I go too far. I don’t know what I ever could have done to have earned such faith.” David Whyte, from *What I Must Tell Myself*

kin is dedicated to my beautiful brother Mike and honors the childhood bonds of siblings, best friends, and those we call “kin.”

Choreographer: Mark Tomasic in collaboration with the dancers

Music: “*DumDum*” by Nate Smith, “*If by Sea*” by John Philip Tomasic, “*So be It*” by Nate Smith, “*Relaxing Weekend*” by Cricket Sounds

Dancers: Kara Alexys, Marissa Aniel, Sophia Aponte, Isabella Buada, Sophia Davila, Maite Garcia, Emma Goncalves, Caroline Harrison, Oscar Herrera, Chloe, Hess, Michael Howard, Trudy Khaing, Nitzan Levy, India Loveless, Mar Marroquin, Oxana Safronova, Kongying Shi, Towa Soederstjerna, Meira Tuller, Samara Williams



CONTEMPORARY

Mercy Fever Mercy

In the heat between sin and salvation, the body becomes its own psalm. It burns toward grace through devotion, delirium, and desire — where motion becomes fever.

“I had the feeling as in a nightmare of it all being something repeated, something I had been through and that now I must go through again.”
— Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*

Choreographer: Sonny James Lira

Music: “Olé” by John Coltrane (edited)

Dancer: Sonny James Lira

Understudy: Michael Howard



JAZZ FUNK

Cuff it

Girls night out.

Choreographer: Angela Jordan

Music:

“*Cuff it*” by Beyonce, Nile Rodgers, Raphael Saadiq, The -Dream, Nova Wave Andrews, Brittany Coney, Morten Ristorp and Allen Mc Grier.

Dancers: Sophia Aponte, Isabella Buada, Sophia Davila, Kailyn Ferguson, Kongying Shi, Towa Soederstjerna, Meira Tuller



EXPERIMENTAL CONTEMPORARY DANCE

Lest We Remain Forgotten

Choreographer: Vanessa Hernández Cruz

Music: “Diving Bell” by Starset, “Song of Myself (instrumental)” by Nightwish, “Sleep After Toyle, Port After Stormie Seas” by Kammarheit, “Birthing Vats” by Coph Nia

Dancers: Kara Alexis, Marissa Aaniel, Christopher DeVant, Matie Garcia, Emma Goncalves, Guilherme Rosa, Caroline Harrison, Oscar Herrera, Taryn Key, Trudy Khaing, Nitzan Levy, Sonny Lira, India Loveless, Mar Marroquin, Oxana Safronova, Calen Sotebeer, Samara Williams

*A huge thank you to **Robert Huerta** who was our Teaching Assistant throughout our rehearsal process!*

CONTEMPORARY

The Cycles of Echoes

“They inherit a world built on sand, a shifting, unstable foundation that only sings the same ancient, tragic cycles of echoes.”

Choreographer: Seda Aybay

Music: “Solo? Repeat!” By Anne Müller, Alex Stolze, & Sebastian Reynolds.

Dancers: Sophia Aponte, Sophia Davila, Christopher DeVant, Kailyn Ferguson, Emma Goncalves, Guilherme Rosa, Oscar Herrera, Chloe Hess, Calen Sotebeer, Meira Tuller

INTERMISSION

CONTEMPORARY

SENSORIUM

The apparatus of an organism where it experiences, perceives and interprets the environments within which it lives.

An exploration of instincts, human nature, and community through the use of multi-media and aesthetics inspired by horror and film. We invite you to join us as we peak into a time and space unknown to us but so deeply connected to our souls, a look at what it means to exist.

Choreographer: Lessly “Mar” Marroquin

Music: “*Temple of Odin*” by Danheim, “*Sand Ft. Karen Whipple*” by Nathan Lanier, “*Safe Rain*” by AEON, “*Dzikaje Palavannie*” by Dzivia

Dancers: Kara Alexis, Sophia Aponte, Isabella Buada, Christopher DeVant, Kailyn Ferguson, Emma Goncalves, Guilherme Rosa, Chloe Hess, Michael Howard, Taryn Key, Sonny Lira, Calen Sotebeer, Samara Williams



CONTEMPORARY

to feel sun on her skin

“There is some strange intimacy between grief and aliveness, some sacred exchange between what seems unbearable and what is most exquisitely alive...to move in and out of the soul’s inner chambers, we must first clear the way.” Francis Weller, from *The Wild Edge of Sorrow*

Choreographer: Vanessa Van Wormer

Music: “Farewell” by Garth Stevenson

Dancer: Chloe Hess

Painting: *Blueprint* (2025) Chloe Hess

Special thanks: Santa Monica College Art Department



CONTEMPORARY BALLET

As One

“We need joy as we need air. We need love as we need water. We need each other as we need the earth we share.” Mayu Angelou

Choreographer: Sophie Monat

Music: “*Spiral for Violin, Piano, and Strings Parts 1 and 4*” and “*Skyward*” by Oliver Davis

Dancers: Sophia Davila, Kailyn Ferguson, Guilherme Rosa, Oscar Herrera, Calen Sotebeer, Meira Tuller



CONTEMPORARY

Feel The Void 2.0: To Whom It May Concern

“now
something so sad
has hold of us
that
the breath
leaves
and we can’t even
cry”
- Charles Bukowski

Choreographer: Oxana Safronova

Music: Sound Design by Oxana Safronova

Video: Oxana Safronova

Dancer: Oxana Safronova

Special thanks: Vanessa Van Wormer, Mark Tomasic, Jae Lee



HIP HOP AND HOUSE

We Know Where We Are

“We Know Where We Are” is a reactive, combative, reflective, and ultimately joyful piece. Each dancer navigates their internal process through gestures, tableau, choreography, and freestyle, taking a journey through aggression, contemplation, and absolution.

Choreographer: Harry Weston aka Fullout

Music: “Mix” by Gabriel “Magk” Avalos

Dancers: Kara Alexis, Isabella Buada, Christopher DeVant, Maite Garcia, Caroline Harrison, Michael Howard, Taryn Key, Trudy Khaing, Nitzan Levy, Sonny Lira, Kongying Shi, Towa Soederstjerna, Samara William



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, Taryn Key

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

Production Manager Siamanto Ismaily

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

Stage Manager Erin Newsom

Assistant Stage Managers.....Patricia Oliva,
Abigail Sharp, Richard Tahvildaran

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO:

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Department, SMC Web/Social Media Department

SMC College President, Dr. Kathryn E. Jeffery

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Tom Peters; Rob Rader; Sophia Manavi (Student Trustee)





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 2025 and received gala recognition.

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 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 (ACDA) Gala screening. This year the short film was featured in the ACDA dance on film retrospective. Mark's

piece “...*this way*” was selected for presentation at the gala performance of the ACDA Spring 2025 Baja Region conference. 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.

Faculty Choreographers

Seda Aybay is Seda Aybay is the Founder, Artistic Director, and Choreographer of the Kybele Dance Theater. Since emigrating from Istanbul, Türkiye, she was recognized as the 2019 Cultural Ambassador of LA by the city’s Department of Cultural Affairs. Aybay choreographed John Woo's movie *The Killer*, produced by Universal Pictures and Peacock. Her work has received numerous awards, including New Century Choreography, McCallum Choreography Festival, Front and Main Dance Festival, and Dance Under the Stars Festival. Seda’s works have been presented in Los Angeles, Chicago, Seattle, Las Vegas, San Francisco, New York, Istanbul, and Seoul. She was artist in resident at USC Glorya Kaufman School of Dance, Santa Monica College, Marcus Residency at Washington University/St. Louis, and Glorya Kaufman Performing Arts Center. Aybay is a certified Horton teacher and a Tenure Adjunct Faculty at SMC and LMU.

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.

Sophie Monat was born in London, England and began her professional career in Europe where she danced with the Lille Opera Ballet in France and the National Ballet of Portugal. Following eight years as Ballet Mistress to the New Jersey Ballet, she served as Director of the Classical/Contemporary Dance Department at the O.C. School of the Arts and was also Ballet Mistress to the State Street Ballet in Santa Barbara. Ms. Monat was a member of the full-time faculty at the CSULB Department of Dance and currently teaches for Santa Monica College and Westside Ballet. She also works extensively as a guest artist and has taught and choreographed for ballet companies, dance festivals, and universities including Stanford University, ODC/San Francisco, the Lyon Opera Ballet, Loyola Marymount University, and State Street Ballet. A three-time recipient of the finalist award at the McCallum Theatre's Choreography Festival in Palm Desert, Ms. Monat formed her dance company, Monat Dance, in 2009. Most recently, Ms. Monat was one of six artists invited to participate in the Cohan Collective, a choreographic residency directed by Robert Cohan, Founding Artistic Director of the London Contemporary Dance Theatre.

Mark Tomasic, see artistic director's bio.

Vanessa Van Wormer is originally from Spokane WA. She has performed and presented choreography for Ballet Spokane, Bill Evan Dance Company, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, The Spokane Opera, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, The American Dance Guild Festival, the Royal Academy of Music in London, The American School in Switzerland. Florence Summer Dance, and numerous regional festivals. Van Wormer is an Associate Professor at Santa Monica College where she teaches ballet, contemporary and choreography. Previously Van Wormer was Visiting Assistant Professor at SUNY Brockport where she was artistic director of Chamber Ballet Brockport.

Van Wormer holds an MFA from SUNY Brockport, and is an ABT certified instructor.

Guest Choreographers

Vanessa Hernandez Cruz (she/her/ella) is an interdependent Chicana Disabled dance artist & Disability Justice activist. She is currently the 2025 NEFA National Dance Project Production recipient. In late 2024, she was an Access Movement Play (AMP) Artist in Residency in New York. She was a recipient of the California Arts Council x The Center of Cultural Power Artist Disruptor Award (2023). Bridging the realms of dance, visual art, and writing—Vanessa is committed to radical accessibility and strives to transform dance into a space where marginalized bodies thrive, innovate, and lead.

Harry Weston, aka Fullout, graduated from UCLA with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in World Arts and Cultures with a concentration in Dance, as well as a Minor in Civic Engagement. He has been a touring Movement Artist with Versa-Style Street Dance Company since 2009 and served as a cultural envoy for the U.S. State Department’s “Next Level” program in Ghana, teaching Hip Hop and Street Dance in 2022. He remains humbled and grateful for the experiences and opportunities Hip Hop and Street Dance culture have provided him and pays respect and homage to all the dancers and culture bearers from the communities of color who created the dance and music he loves so much.

Student Choreographers

Sonny James Lira is a dancer, choreographer, actor, and director who has led several large-scale musical productions in Los Angeles. Through his company, Hyperactive Studios, he has produced two short films and staged a range of classical plays. He has worked as an actor in both Los Angeles and New York, and studied ballet and modern at SMC, along with training at other prominent dance studios. Follow him @sonnyliradance on Instagram to learn more.

Lessly “Mar” Marroquin is a Guatemalan-born dancer and choreographer based in L.A., known for using multimedia to build immersive worlds that explore the mind, nature, and the spaces in between by blending elements of contemporary, theatre, and horror. She is currently continuing her dance studies at SMC, where she has trained in ballet, modern, contemporary, jazz, hip hop, and more. Mar has performed multiple times with both Synapse Contemporary Dance Theatre and Global Motion World Dance Company and was selected to choreograph for both companies this semester.

Oxana Safronova is a dance artist and filmmaker currently pursuing her studies at Santa Monica College. Her experimental short film *Feel the Void* has been recognized by Dance Camera West and featured in multiple film festivals.

Her creative work centers on themes of displacement and forced migration, examining the psychological and emotional impact of war, genocide, systemic violence, and human rights violations. Through movement and film, Safronova investigates the embodied experience of trauma and the resilience of the human spirit.



Full-time Dance Faculty: Marissa Moreno, Jae Lee, Sri Susilowati, Mark Tomasic (Department Chair), 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, Joseph Wiggan, Roberta Wolin-Tupas

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

Dance Production Specialist: Endah Redjeki

Dance Department Administrative Assistant: Jocelyn Alex

SPRING AUDITIONS 2026

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/or choreographers. Styles range from modern to postmodern, contemporary ballet, jazz, and hip-hop fusion.

Student Choreographers:

Tuesday, February 17, 2026 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 19, 2026 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 18, 2026 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 20, 2026 at 3:00pm (sign-in at 2:00pm) in CPC 310

DANCE DEPARTMENT SPRING 2026

PERFORMANCES

Synapse, Contemporary Dance Theater

Saturday, May 2, 2026 at 7:30pm

Sunday, May 3, 2026 at 7:30pm

Global Motion, World Dance Company

Saturday, May 16, 2026 at 7:30pm

Sunday, May 17, 2026 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

