

Vassar Dance Department

Spring 2024 Newsletter



We have had a busy semester here in Kenyon! Read on to learn more about the happenings in the Vassar Dance Department!

Please contact Helen Ambrose (hambrose@vassar.edu) to be added to the email list.

Save the Date!

April 11-13th:

Vassar Repertory Dance Theatre Spring Concert

April 26th:

Choreography, Performance and Production Showcase

Reserve all tickets at vassardance.tix.com

In May: Second Correlate Class

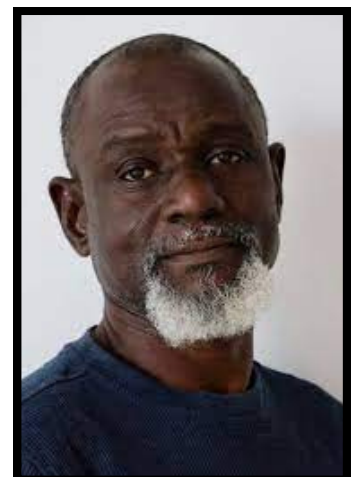


We applaud David Shively-Ertas, Emma Mazloom, Yoshi Sanders, Julia Dawson, and Courtney Spero (left to right), class of 2024, who have completed extensive work in technique, performance, choreography, and cross-disciplinary inquiry.

New Works for VRDT:

Souleymane “Solo” Badolo

Souleymane Badolo was born in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. He started his professional career as a dancer for the DAMA, a traditional African dance company, and in 1993, he founded his own Burkina Faso-based troupe, Kongo Ba Téria, fusing traditional African and western contemporary dance aesthetics. Since moving to New York City, Badolo has created works commissioned and presented by Danspace, New York Live Arts, Dance New Amsterdam, Jacob’s Pillow, The Apollo Theater, Harlem Stage, the 92nd Street Y, River to River Festival (R2R), and BAM. Solo’s choreography has twice earned him the prestigious Bessie award and in 2023, he was honored with the Creative Capital award which supports artists in the creation of groundbreaking new work. Solo has been an Assistant Professor of Dance at Bard College since 2017.



New Works for VRDT: Julian

Llanos



Julian Llanos joined Vassar dance faculty as their first Hip Hop dance instructor in the spring of 2021. His personal dance style incorporates traditional martial arts skills and may also include House, Pop & Lock, B-Boying and Tutting. He returns to choreograph his second piece for VRDT.

MODfest: Camryn Spero



VRDT dancer and choreographer, Camryn Spero '24 presented her senior thesis at the Francis Lehman Loeb Art Center as well as in the VRDT ModFest Performance. Challenging the separation between performers and spectators, *Reciprocal Visions* resituates who is viewing whom in the dance performance space. Placing cognitive science and dance into a direct dialogue, this thesis performance of original choreography will measure the dancers' physiological reactions to their environment and to the audience's visibility.

MODfest: Baye & Asa

Directed by Amadi "Baye" Washington and Sam "Asa" Pratt, Baye & Asa is a company creating movement art projects. Hip-hop and African dance languages are the foundation of their technique. With it, they build theatrical metaphors, interrogate systemic inequities and contemporize ancient allegories. Baye and Asa were one of Dance Magazine's "25 to Watch" for 2022, and were recognized for their work with the 2023 Harkness Promise Award. Their work has been commissioned by prominent dance organizations including the Martha Graham Dance Company, Baryshnikov Arts Center, The Joyce Theater, and Jacob's Pillow.



NYCB Field Trip

On February 18th, VRDT dancers traveled to Lincoln Center to watch the New York City Ballet perform a program that included George Balanchine's *Ballo Della Regina*, Albert Evan's *In a Landscape*, Peter Martins' *Hallelujah Junction*, and Jerome Robbins' *The Concert*, an excerpt of which was staged on VRDT dancers for the VRDT Fall Concert.



Courses: **Changemakers in Dance**

A new course offered in the dance department recognizes artists whose work has initiated a significant change and subsequent development in the art form of dance. The course focuses on major advances in dance, through the study of renowned dance artists in America over the past 100 years. Class sessions included lectures from prominent artists including Emily Coates, Jean-Pierre Frohlich, Steve Rooks, Merrill Ashley, and Virginia Johnson.



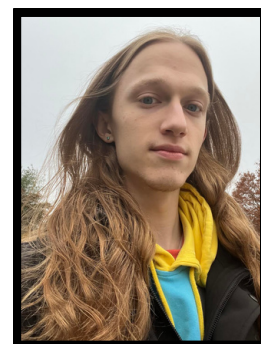
Coming Soon: Choreography, Performance and Production



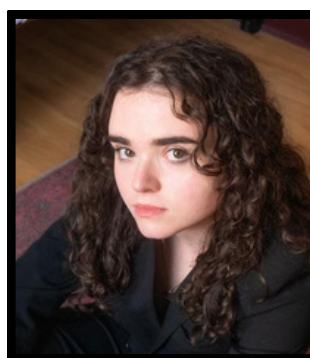
This new work reflects on boyhood, manhood, and the absurdity that lies in between. A celebration of authenticity, and an invitation for the audience to traverse the complex terrains of nostalgia, tradition, and identity.

Yoshi Sanders '24

Through the lenses of waking and dreaming, $\forall \exists$ explores the self in relation to reality - the experiences, explainable and noetic, that lead one to and propel one through the present moment. How can one integrate rational and fantastical experiences to realize and embody an attuned self and overcome challenges? What role may dance play in that integration?



David Shively-Ertas '24



"It's Not That Serious" is a self-aware, hyper-dramatic portrayal of the pressures of performativity, where the façade of exterior expressions is broken because, regarding life itself, it's not that serious.

Camryn Spero '24

Courses: **Carla Körbes**



Carla Korbes, former principal at Pacific Northwest Ballet and most recently, an associate professor at Indiana University, taught three Intermediate Ballet classes as well as an excerpt from William Forsythe's *In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated*.

"Processing" is an exploration of memory as a comparison between the human brain/mind and computer systems. Memory is analyzed through the interplay between its mechanisms and pathways, objectivity and subjectivity, reliance on interconnection, methods and consequences of malfunction, and persistence over time.

Courtney Spero '24

