



**Media Contact:**

Mariclare Hulbert, NCCAkrON Publicist

585.278.2302

[mariclare.hulbert@gmail.com](mailto:mariclare.hulbert@gmail.com)

**NCCAkrON AND THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON SCHOOL OF DANCE, THEATRE, AND ARTS ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCE THE SIXTH YEAR OF 21ST CENTURY DANCE PRACTICES**



Pictured (left to right): Bryan and Shaina Baira (photo by Effy Grey), Kara Jenelle (photo by Wes Klain), and George Staib (photo courtesy of Dance/USA).

AKRON, Ohio (December 12, 2024)—**The National Center for Choreography-Akron (NCCAkrON)** and **The University of Akron School of Dance, Theatre, and Arts Administration (DTAA)** are proud to announce the sixth year of **21st Century Dance Practices**, a capsule series of classes guest taught by today’s working dance artists. The choreographers for this program include **Shaina and Bryan Baira** (Detroit, MI) of **BAIRA MVMNT PHLOSPHY**, **Kara Jenelle** (Los Angeles, CA), and **George Staib** (Atlanta, GA).

21st Century Dance Practices is a capsule series that represents genres, geographies, and cultural and social contexts outside the traditional binary of modern dance and ballet in a conservatory setting. This year’s lineup includes artists who move individually as well as collectively beyond borders; who represent contemporary and Afro-diasporic genres; and who will come to the UA community from all corners of the country. The series challenges UA students to stretch past the basic dance curriculum and receive benefits beyond the typical one-off master class.

“As a research and development space for the national dance landscape, NCCAkrON seeks to build a bridge between 20th century working knowledge and building a 21st century dance ecosystem,” says NCCAkrON Executive/Artistic Director **Christy Bolingbroke**. “As an arts organization that is adjacent to academia, curating and producing this series is our way of elevating today’s dance artists and generating alternate knowledge to expand and to evolve the curriculum beyond ballet and modern.”

21st Century Dance Practices takes place for three of the 15 weeks in DTAA's Modern I-IV and Modern V-VIII Spring 2025 semester. **Bolingbroke** adds, "This connection to different artists making their own careers in dance is crucial to students' understanding of what dance can be and what is possible in this field."

"It is wonderful to see our students experience different teaching philosophies, giving them the tools and skills that will benefit them in their future careers as artists. As both a working artist and professor, I see the impact and the importance that NCCAkron artists bring to our program, giving our students and department the opportunity to engage with and learn from these amazing practitioners," shared **Hank Bamberger**, UA Visiting Assistant Professor of Dance.

The capsule series is the annual spring phase of **Ideas in Motion**, a larger initiative launched in 2020 and supported by NCCAkron, The University of Akron, The University of Akron Foundation, and the Mary Schiller Myers Lecture Series in the Arts.

In addition to teaching classes, visiting artists will participate in recorded interviews for NCCAkron's podcast ***Inside the Dancer's Studio***.

Artist biographies are listed below.

###

### **About NCCAkron**

The National Center for Choreography at The University of Akron supports the research and development of new work in dance by exploring the full potential of the creative process. In addition to offering studio and technical residencies to make new work, activities focus on catalyzing dialogue and experimentation; creating proximity among artists and dance thinkers; and aggregating resources around dance making. For more information, visit [nccakron.org](http://nccakron.org).

### **About The University of Akron School of Dance, Theatre & Arts Administration**

The University of Akron School of Dance, Theatre, and Arts Administration (DTAA) prepares students for successful performing, academic, and administrative careers in the arts. Its diverse student body works with distinguished, award-winning faculty in classes that offer technical training, theoretical study, practical experience, and creative skill-building. The Dance Program offers both a B.F.A. and a B.A. with Business Cognate. The Theatre Arts Program offers a B.A. with four tracks, including applied theatre and social entrepreneurship. The school's M.A. in Arts Administration provides students with the education necessary to work in all disciplines of the non-profit arts. DTAA is headed by Marc Reed, D.M.A., who also directs the School of Music. For more information, visit [uakron.edu/dtaa](http://uakron.edu/dtaa).

### **About the Mary Schiller Myers Lecture Series in the Arts**

Ideas in Motion is made possible by the support of The University of Akron Foundation's Mary Schiller Myers Lecture Series in the Arts. NCCAkrón is grateful to Stephen E. Myers, trustee of the University of Akron Foundation and the Myers Foundation and son of Mary Schiller Myers, for his support.

Established in 1979 under the sponsorship of the Mary and Louis S. Myers Foundation, this endowed lecture series brings significant representatives of the arts to campus and community annually to share their particular talents with students, faculty, and residents of the community. These events can include performances, lectures, and masterclasses.

### **Artist Biographies**

**Shaina and Bryan Baira** (Detroit, MI) are life partners and founders of BAIRA MVMNT PHLOSPHY, a dance-theater company based between NYC and Detroit. The two create and share their work through live performance, immersive and virtual-reality experiences, and movement training/pedagogy. Shaina received her BFA in Dance at the University of Iowa. She completed her certification as a Movement Analyst at the Laban Institute of Movement Studies and completed studies in religion and philosophy at the New York All Faiths Seminary International, where she was ordained as an Interfaith Minister and began developing MVMNT PHLOSPHY; a synthesis of movement research, mysticism, and philosophical inquiry. Bryan is a dancer, choreographer, and musician sharing his artistry professionally for over 15 years. He received his BFA in dance from Wayne State University and has danced with companies such as Nicholas Leichter Dance, Brian Brooks Moving Company, David Dorfman Dance, Third Rail Projects, and The Feath3r Theory. His passion and expertise for sound and visual/graphic design have been featured in commissions by artists and companies including 10 Hairy Legs, Raja Feather Kelly and Pioneers Go East Collective among others. Together Shaina and Bryan create and share their movement culture, artistry, and collaborative methods – rooted in Curiosity, Courage, and Vulnerability – as our contribution to manifesting a listening world. Shaina and Bryan are 2023 Bessie Nominees for Outstanding Breakout Choreographer, recipients of 'Creators of Culture' in 2023 through Culture Source Detroit, and currently Artists-in-Residence at the Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts. [baira.co](http://baira.co)

**Kara Jenelle "KJ"** (Los Angeles, CA) is a choreographer, spoken word artist, and international arts educator. She earned her MFA from UCLA's Department of World Arts & Cultures/Dance where her thesis, *ÌYÁguration*, gained her acknowledgment in multiple film festivals. KJ's credits include: Beyoncé's *Black Is King*, Janet Jackson, Lauryn Hill, *Coming 2 America*, Daddy Yankee, Wiz Kid, Tiwa Savage, Yemi Alade, Burna Boy, Jidenna, Nike, BET, Latin Grammys, Will Smith, Ellen, Black Eyed Peas, Step Afrika!, and more. KJ's repertoire highlights dances and music of the African diaspora + Black culture and street dance. She's had a global reach through 19 million views on her YouTube channel and teaching abroad in Costa Rica, Cuba, Spain, Taiwan, Netherlands, France, the UK, Nigeria, Kenya, El Salvador, and beyond. KJ is the founder of Delta Chi Xi Honorary Dance Fraternity, Inc. and a proud member of Delta Sigma

Theta Sorority, Inc. She serves as an associate Artistic Director for Ladies of Hip Hop based in New York City and she recently began her latest initiative, Kaliba Jah Creative Collective.

[karajenelle.com](http://karajenelle.com)

**George Staib** (Atlanta, GA) is the Iranian-Armenian-born Artistic Director of staibdance, an Atlanta-based contemporary dance company committed to the development and sharing of new work, educational outreach, and community building. Crowning achievements for the company include the development of a two-week summer intensive in Sorrento, Italy, now in its 13th season; the development of the first and only multicultural dance festival in Atlanta, now embarking on its 3rd season; and a 10-part podcast series (Secret Architecture) and a 12 part docuseries (Meaning and Movement) both featuring culturally based artists from across the country. Staib is a two-time recipient of Emory's prestigious Winship Award, was recognized by Dance Teacher Magazine as a "top five" dance educator in the US, and has been commissioned as a teacher and choreographer for over 25 institutions and companies nationally and abroad including Sweden, Israel, and Italy. Staib currently serves as an adjudicator for the American College Dance Association, delighting in all opportunities to talk about dance and dance-making. Staib's most recent accomplishments include promotion to the rank of Professor of Practice at Emory University, engagement as an educator with ImmerseATL, writer and dance critic for ArtsATL, recognition by the Atlanta Regional Commission as an Arts Leader of Metro Atlanta, and a faculty member and choreographer for the American Dance Festival in 2022.

[staibdance.com](http://staibdance.com)

###