

# CONNECT

Claire Trevor School of the Arts Magazine

Arts &  
Community



**UC Irvine**  
Winter 2026

Seegerstrom Center for the Arts is proud to deepen our partnership with UCI and UCI Arts as we continue to shape the future of creativity and innovation in Orange County. Together we are building bridges between education, performance and community advancing a shared mission — to inspire, educate and connect through the power of creativity. We are excited to continue building meaningful partnerships that expand opportunities for artists, students and audiences. The future of the arts in our community is bright, and together we are shaping it.

— Casey Reitz, President and CEO  
Seegerstrom Center for the Arts



# Message from the Dean



**Dear UCI Arts Community,**

At the Claire Trevor School of the Arts, the intersections of art and community shape how we create, collaborate and grow. I am delighted to share our Winter 2026 issue of CONNECT, themed "Arts & Community." This issue highlights the creative connections the school has cultivated through professional partnerships across Orange County — partnerships that create pathways for our students to thrive as the next generation of artists and leaders in the region's creative economy.

These collaborations are vital to both the university and our community partners.

As a research university, UC Irvine serves as a conduit for innovation, creativity and discovery — connecting emerging talent with professional opportunities that strengthen and sustain the broader arts ecosystem.

In these pages, you'll find stories that celebrate our expanding partnerships with organizations that shape the cultural landscape, including those across Segerstrom Center's Argyros Plaza: Segerstrom Center for the Arts, South Coast Repertory (SCR) and Pacific Symphony. From the Side-By-Side rehearsal series between the UCI Symphony Orchestra and Pacific Symphony to immersive apprenticeships at SCR, our students are gaining invaluable hands-on experience in their creative fields.

You'll also hear from alumni working across nearly every major arts organization in Orange County, including a feature on Irvine Barclay Theatre program director Michelle Maasz Brouwer. In addition, arts advocate John Forsyte, president and CEO of the Pacific Symphony, shares his reflections on leadership, creativity and connection. Finally, you'll meet our Access & Engagement team — the dedicated group behind Creative Connections and the Arts Launch Internship Program, which expands professional opportunities for our students.

Together, these stories reflect our deep commitment to nurturing professional development, fostering meaningful community engagement and strengthening the network of arts partnerships in Orange County and beyond.

*Tiffany Ana López*

Tiffany Ana López, Ph.D.  
Claire Trevor Dean of the Arts

**Cover image:** (left to right) Katherine Yang '03, vice president of education and community engagement, Philharmonic Society of Orange County; Casey Reitz, president and CEO, Segerstrom Center for the Arts; Suzanne Appel, managing director, South Coast Repertory; David Ivers, artistic director, South Coast Repertory; Tiffany López, Claire Trevor Dean of the Arts; Chloe Saalsaa '17, senior manager, Studio D: Arts School for All Abilities, Segerstrom Center for the Arts; and John Forsyte, president and CEO, Pacific Symphony.

Photos: Will Tee Yang

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## Celebrating 25 Years of Orange County Arts Leadership

The 25th annual Orange County Arts Awards brought together artists, educators and cultural leaders from across the region for an evening that reflected the strength of the county's creative community. Co-hosted by Dean Tiffany López of the UC Irvine Claire Trevor School of the Arts and Patrick Brien, president and CEO of Arts Orange County, the celebration at the Samueli Theater at Segerstrom Center for the Arts recognized outstanding contributions in arts leadership and advocacy.

Among those honored was Richard Stein, founding president and longtime leader of Arts Orange County, who was recently appointed to the California Arts Council by Gov. Gavin Newsom. His recognition underscored the event's broader message about the enduring power of collaboration across sectors.

Dean López's participation as co-host affirmed UCI Arts' position as a bridge between campus and community. By working alongside regional organizations and leaders, the school continues to strengthen Orange County's cultural network and deepen its commitment to advancing the arts through education and public engagement.

To learn more about how UC Irvine Claire Trevor School of the Arts partners with Orange County's creative community, visit [arts.uci.edu](http://arts.uci.edu).

**Image:** (left to right) Patrick Brien and Tiffany López co-hosting the 25th annual Orange County Arts Awards.

Photo: Laila Freeman



IN RETROSPECT

# Anteaters in the Arts

Alumni keep arts & culture  
vibrant in O.C.

By Christine Byrd



**From innovative community theaters** to world-class concert venues, Orange County is home to a vibrant arts community — powered, in no small part, by UC Irvine Claire Trevor School of the Arts (UCI Arts) alumni.

Every day, UCI Arts' alumni work tirelessly behind the scenes at arts organizations both large and small to introduce emerging artists to the communities, invite children and adults with disabilities to dance, and orchestrate a bit of magic at the Happiest Place on Earth. At the same time, many of them are mentoring a new generation of arts students, helping them discover a variety of professional pathways in the arts as they start building their own creative careers.

Here are just a few of the dynamic leaders who keep OC's arts thriving and share a common backstory: UC Irvine.

## Expanding Music Education in Orange County

### Katherine Yang '03

**Vice President of Education and Community Engagement**

### Philharmonic Society of Orange County

As a UC Irvine Department of Music student, Katherine Yang helped organize a music education program in local elementary schools. Now, as vice president of education and community engagement for the Philharmonic Society of Orange County, she oversees a department that last year reached more than 85,000 students and 416 schools across the county.

*Image: Katherine Yang giving opening remarks for the Philharmonic Society's Orange County Youth Symphony and String Ensemble Fall Concert in November 2024 at Soka Performing Arts Center.*

Photo: Paul Cressey





**Image:** Katherine Yang outside of Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall.

Photo: Will Tee Yang

"It's so meaningful to be able to bring a love of music to people, whether through educational institutions or the community more broadly," said Yang. "Working with UCI, specifically, has given me a lot of wonderful full-circle moments."

Through ArtsBridge (now Creative Connections), 25 years ago, Yang and

a fellow student went from school to school introducing music to young students — a process that required them to meet with principals, coordinate schedules with teachers, and conduct evaluation surveys. It's work that's not all that different from what Yang does today on a much larger scale.

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## **“That UCI program was a way to launch students like me out into the community.”**

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“That UCI program was a way to launch students like me out into the community,” said Yang. “It really laid the foundation for me to do exactly what I’m doing now.”

After earning a bachelor’s of music in French horn performance and a B.A. in sociology from UC Irvine in 2003, Yang went to New York University for a master’s in performing arts administration. Back in California, she held a variety of arts administration roles

with the Pasadena Symphony, Pacific Symphony and Pacific Chorale. Then, as a new parent, she led the launch of Irvine’s first Montessori Mandarin immersion program, leading the school for a decade before joining the Philharmonic Society two years ago.

UCI Arts has a long history with the Philharmonic Society. When Yang was a student, she enjoyed a master class from celebrated cellist Yo-Yo Ma thanks to the Philharmonic Society. Now, Yang’s job puts her at the nexus of the two organizations’ collaborative efforts. She and her education team arranged a master class at UC Irvine with the London Symphony Orchestra in 2025 and an interactive session with pianist and composer Conrad Tao in 2024. Last year, the Philharmonic Society also brought the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra’s STROKESTRA® program to campus,



**Image:** Katherine Yang participating in the Philharmonic Society’s Sound Playground ahead of a sensory-adapted Nutcracker performance with the Irvine Barclay Theatre.

Photo: Drew Kelley



**Image:** Shinshin Yuder Tsai, courtesy of Orange Coast Magazine.

Photo: Ralph Palumbo

working with UCI students to offer rehabilitation through music to recent stroke patients.

She's also introducing a new generation of students to the possibilities in arts education and administration. By hosting interns at the Philharmonic Society through the Arts Launch program, she's helping to prepare students for professional pathways while bringing more music to the community.

"When I was a young music student, band and orchestra gave me built-in friendship and community and provided so many positive life experiences," said Yang. "Being able to create opportunities like that for others now is really impactful for me personally."

## Creating Community through Theater

### Shinshin Yuder Tsai '16

Producing associate and resident intimacy and casting director

#### Chance Theater

Shinshin Yuder Tsai joyfully takes UCI Arts students under his wing at Chance Theater in Anaheim, Calif., where he is the producing associate and resident intimacy and casting director. He sees some of himself in the two interns he has mentored — one through the Arts Launch program — and passes along what he's learned about establishing a career in the industry.

"I haven't witnessed many schools helping students build those bridges to careers in theater, arts management and arts administration," said Tsai. "That part of UCI Arts' mission is lovely."

Tsai, who graduated with a B.A. in drama in 2016, was an "itinerant contractor" early in his career, taking jobs that included reading scripts and operating an Oscar party livestream camera, before he settled into his role at Chance.

With eight productions each year, Chance Theater focuses on emerging voices and premieres, with the goal of supporting compassion and connection in the community. The theater's creative connections with UCI run deep. Resident playwright Benjamin Benne's new work, *at the very bottom of a body of water*, will debut at UC Irvine's Robert Cohen

Theatre in May 2026, directed by drama professor Juliette Carrillo.

"There's a focus on connection and community at UCI Arts and at Chance," said Tsai. "It was a really easy transition to Chance because of the similar culture — storytelling first and foremost but also connection and kindness."

Building community inside the theater and out is part of what drives Tsai to want to eventually become an artistic director. The late drama professor Keith Fowler taught him this: "Theater influences people to ask new questions and consider new ideas. It's how you change the world one community at a time."

**Image:** Chance Theater production of *Tick, Tick...BOOM!* in 2025.

Photo: Doug Catiller



## Supporting Emerging Artists in Irvine

**Virginia Arce, M.F.A. '17**

**Exhibitions Program Coordinator**

**City of Irvine**



**Image:** Virginia Arce, courtesy of South Coast Magazine.

Photo: Irvin Rivera

"My role is being a bridge to the community – not just Irvine but across Orange County," said Virginia Arce, exhibitions program coordinator for the City of Irvine. Despite its reputation for beige buildings and well-manicured parks, Irvine holds exciting artistic potential.

"Because of the city's size and the proximity of a high-caliber research institution, Irvine is able to support the arts in a special way," said Arce. "When you look closely, you realize that both the city and the university have a history of bringing great artists and exhibitions to the community."

Arce has several municipal spaces to work with. The city showcases up-and-coming artists at City Hall and the Great Park (which is hosting an exhibition on UC Irvine's Beall Center for Art +

Technology's 25th anniversary through Dec. 28, 2025) and hosts an annual juried exhibition. At the Irvine Fine Arts Center, kids as young as 6 can take art classes, and artists can access studios for ceramics, jewelry, photography and printmaking – evidence of art as a public good.

Since joining the city in 2019, Arce has curated exhibits featuring emerging artists including William Camargo, Erik Benjamins, Zara Kuredjian and Katie Shapiro, M.F.A. '15. Arce attends UC Irvine's M.F.A. thesis shows each year and travels to exhibitions and galleries across the region to discover new work and foster connections. It's a process she honed while earning her master's in curatorial studies

"In the M.F.A. program, the advisors didn't tell us which artists to work with. We had to go find the artists we connected with and build those relationships ourselves. I've brought that ethos with me," said Arce. "I came into this position really passionate about supporting artists at different stages of their careers, and I feel very fortunate to be able to do that here."



**Image:** (left to right) Dakota Noot, Virginia Arce, Stephanie Sherwood and Elizabeth Munzon at the 2025 Irvine Annual exhibition.



**Image:** Chloe Saalsaa outside of Segerstrom Hall.

Photo: Will Tee Yang

## Ensuring Access to Arts for All

### Chloe Saalsaa, '17

#### Senior Manager

#### Studio D: Arts School for All Abilities, Segerstrom Center for the Arts

Segerstrom Center's Studio D: Arts School for All Abilities opens the world of music, dance and theater to hundreds of local children and adults with disabilities.

"The conversation around disability and accessibility, and where they belong in the arts, is very exciting," said Chloe Saalsaa, manager of the program. "Studio D is such a unique program with many brilliant thought partners working

together to create a space for this community to ensure they have a place in the arts."

Saalsaa has been with Studio D at Segerstrom Center for the Arts since 2017, the year it opened and she graduated from UC Irvine with her B.F.A. in dance. Though she started as an administrative assistant, today she leads operations, manages a team of 16 instructors, therapists and administrators, and scheduled classes for 640 students last year.

Saalsaa credits UCI Arts for finding this career path. As a dance major, she heard about opportunities to work for the American Ballet Theatre (ABT) William

J. Gillespie School at Segerstrom Center for the Arts, and went on to be a camp counselor and eventually a certified ABT teacher. But her focus shifted during her senior year, when she took an arts management course taught by Molly Lynch, professor of dance. The class opened her eyes to professional opportunities she had never considered before.

"I wanted to dance and perform, but then arts administration came into my world and I said, 'Yes, let's give it a try,'" Saalsaa said. "It turned out to be the right fit for me."

Now, she gets to share her love of dance with the community, while creating new opportunities for people of all abilities to engage with the arts.

"I love to see our program welcoming students who at first might feel anxious or want to stay off to the side

of class," said Saalsaa. "Down the road, when they realize we've created a safe place for them to express themselves through the performing arts, we see their growth as individuals and the center's growth as a more welcoming arts hub."

## Creating Magic at the Happiest Place on Earth

**Jennifer Magill, M.F.A. '96**

**Executive Producer**

**Disney Live Entertainment**

In 1996, Jennifer Magill missed her own M.F.A. commencement ceremony at UC Irvine. But she was even more excited to be where she was: working at the world premiere of Disney's *Hunchback of Notre Dame* at the New Orleans Superdome.



**Image:** Chloe Saalsaa at Studio D's 2024 Share event on the Julianne and George Argyros Plaza.

Photo: Brian Gomez

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**“UCI gave me so much, and I would like to pay it forward to the next generation.”**

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Magill was studying stage management at UC Irvine when she started her Disney career 30 years ago. As her peers took internships in theaters, Magill's beloved mentor and faculty advisor, Lilia Illes, asked if she'd interested in an internship at Disneyland. “I gave it about as much thought as, ‘Do you want fries with that?’ before saying yes,” said Magill.

As a stage manager, production manager, managing producer and now an executive producer for Disney Live Entertainment, Magill has worked on projects as diverse as opening Hong Kong Disneyland Resort to D23: The Ultimate Disney Fan Event with a live audience of 12,000 at the Honda Center.

But the project she is most proud of is *World of Color*, which she stewarded from a sketch on a napkin into a full-length spectacle of lights, water fountains, fire, fog, projections and music at Disney California Adventure Park.

“That team truly pulled off the impossible,” Magill said. Because she knows the ins and outs of *World of Color*, she is often asked her favorite place to watch from.

“It’s where I can see the faces of the guests watching the show,” Magill said. “I’m not curing cancer or saving the world, but I’m helping to make the world a happier place. Something Disney does really well is help find those moments of connection that we desperately need.



**Image:** Jennifer Magill

No matter your background or interests, we can offer a safe space to celebrate together and create special memories.”

Magill returns to UCI periodically to speak to graduate classes as they chart their own professional pathways.

“I am so excited to come back to UCI whenever I get the opportunity,” said Magill. “UCI gave me so much, and I would like to pay it forward to the next generation.”

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*To learn more about alumni news, visit [arts.uci.edu/news/alumni](http://arts.uci.edu/news/alumni).*

# The Next Stage

A photograph of three people standing in front of a modern theater building. From left to right: a man with glasses and a beard in a black shirt and dark pants; a woman in a black top and green skirt; and a man in a dark suit and patterned shirt. The building behind them has a curved glass facade and a large, orange and blue striped tower in the background.

A UC Irvine & South Coast Repertory collaboration ushers in a new era of O.C. theater

*By Christine Byrd*

**South Coast Repertory (SCR)** and the Claire Trevor School of the Arts are opening a new act in their longstanding relationship. With support from the Nicholas Foundation, they are launching a bold new partnership that aims to become a model for regional theaters and arts education institutions in uncertain times.

From January through March 2026, SCR will produce two American classics, with UC Irvine M.F.A. students involved behind the scenes and on stage. At the same time, SCR artists will be at UC Irvine teaching drama courses, culminating in hundreds of students experiencing the performances that their peers have worked on.

"We're thrilled about the partnership between SCR and UCI, which opens up exceptional opportunities for students," said Daniel T. Stetson, trustee and executive director of the Nicholas Endowment, whose mission is to enrich our community and the world by supporting the performing and visual arts, assisting in the advancement of science and education, and engaging other charities to make a difference in people's lives. "Through this collaboration, students will receive top-tier training from some of the most respected professionals in the industry. They'll also have the chance to apply and refine their newly developed acting skills on stage at SCR."

### Artistic Residencies

SCR first raised its curtain in 1964, less than a year before UC Irvine's classes opened. The Orange County institutions have grown up together and collaborated informally over the years, with faculty working professionally at the theater, students getting early career opportunities, and artists guest lecturing on campus.

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**"I love UCI students and being on campus, where people are thirsty and hungry for knowledge."**

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"There has always been a spoken and unspoken connectivity between SCR and UCI, but now we're looking to provide a platform for each other in the true sense of partnership, collaboration and community building," said David Ivers, artistic director for SCR.

Ivers has worked with UC Irvine faculty and students for more than two decades and early in his acting career was directed by the late founding faculty member Robert Cohen and current Chancellor's Distinguished Professor of drama Eli Simon. This year, Ivers held a general audition for UC Irvine M.F.A. actors and hired Doshima Iyorlu as an understudy for fall's production of *Million Dollar Quartet*.

"I love UCI students and being on campus, where people are thirsty and hungry for knowledge," said Ivers. "It reminds us that investigation is still key — that imagination and wonder flourish best alongside virtuosity and hard work."

Through this new partnership, five UC Irvine students will have formalized roles in the theater's repertory productions

**Image:** (left to right) David Ivers, Suzanne Appel and Joel Veenstra outside the David Emmes/Martin Benson Theatre Center, South Coast Repertory.

Photo: Will Tee Yang

this winter: two actors, a stage manager, a sound designer and a dramaturge.

Joel Veenstra, chair of the Department of Drama, said the partnership will bolster the program: "Through this residency framework, our students can add Tony Award-winning theater credits to their résumés while also building connections and receiving mentorship that will help advance their careers."

## Educational Experiences

The partnership will also bring SCR teaching artists to UC Irvine as instructors in the drama department, filling in for the M.F.A. students who will be working on the productions instead of in classrooms.

"I think it's thrilling to have this unique collaboration bringing in professionals with different lenses to invigorate the educational experience of our undergraduate population," said Veenstra. "It's another exciting opportunity for cross-pollination between our organizations, and it gives even more students opportunities to build relationships with industry professionals."

Lessons this winter focus on the Tony Award-winning plays being produced by SCR: *God of Carnage* by Yasmina Reza, directed by Marco Barricelli, and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* by Edward Albee, directed by Lisa Rothe. Both center



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**“It’s rare for us to get the entire department together in one place, so inviting all the drama students to come experience these plays at one time is momentous.”**

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on two married couples and, in darkly humorous ways, reveal power struggles and manipulations beneath a polite social veneer.

“There are so many ways in which these American classics, one from the 1960s and the other set in today’s era, speak to each other, revealing what has changed over the generations and what has stayed the same about our intimate relationships,” said Suzanne Appel, managing director of SCR. “We hope that seeing these plays in the theater after studying them in class will make for a transformative experience for the students.”

### **Inspiring Audiences**

Ultimately, the collaboration will bring hundreds of UC Irvine students to SCR to watch the performances and delve into the art making process with an educational pre-show event and post-show panel.

“It’s rare for us to get the entire department together in one place, so inviting all the drama students to come experience these plays at one time is momentous,” said Veenstra. “We’re trying to create a quintessential college arts experience, reminiscent of when everyone goes to a big football game that they remember and talk about long after they graduate.”

These two plays were specifically selected with the goal of attracting students and first-time theatergoers. While it may seem like edgy new plays will draw younger crowds, SCR leaders point out that those audiences prefer to watch highly recognizable titles as part of their quest to become educated, artistically literate global citizens.

**Image:** (left to right) SCR Director of Development and Department of Dance alumna Clare Kiklowicz '06 with Department of Drama student and SCR intern Kate Sheehan '27. Courtesy of SCR.



**Image:** (left to right) David Ivers, Joel Veenstra and Suzanne Appel in the Julianne Argyros Theatre, David Emmes/Martin Benson Theatre Center, South Coast Repertory.

Photo: Will Tee Yang

"These classics have endured because there is something timeless and universal about the works that continues to be resonant," said Ivers. "These plays are structurally beautiful like well-crafted pieces of furniture made from substantive material — they stand the test of time."

Presenting the plays in repertory format, with two plays in rotation on the same

set, creates a special opportunity for both the audience and the creative team.

"There's an athleticism to performing two plays in repertory, and the intensity of that experience really builds resilience for students of theater," said Appel. "From the audience's perspective, it's like taking a vacation in theater-land, where you can see two shows back to back in a day or a weekend."



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**“There’s an athleticism to performing two plays in repertory, and the intensity of that experience really builds resilience for students of theater.”**

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“We hope this partnership is a transformative way to invest in our regional theater and the next generation of theater-goers,” said Veenstra. “It’s creating a win-win with some cost savings, collaborative education, and hopefully can help reinvigorate the field.”

After the launch of the pilot this year, Veenstra and colleagues hope to expand the collaboration into future years with additional support. They will also publish reports about the pilot’s impact with the hope that it might become a model for other regional theaters.

“It really does take a village to produce theater, so we’re grateful to the Nicholas Endowment, UC Irvine, and all the other donors who are supporting these productions,” said Appel. “Young people are the future of our art form — both as artists and audiences — and we hope this marks the beginning of a new era in our institutions’ shared story.”

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*To learn more about the Department of Drama, visit [drama.arts.uci.edu](http://drama.arts.uci.edu). To learn more about South Coast Repertory, visit [scr.org](http://scr.org).*

## **Sustaining Theater**

Behind the scenes, leaders hope this program will spark a love of theater in a new generation and provide a pathway to the profession for students that will help sustain the industry as it faces financial headwinds. Professional theaters across the country have shuttered in recent years, and several campuses have closed or paused admissions to their theater programs — includig the University of Southern California’s graduate acting and dramatic writing programs, and UCLA’s 2026 M.F.A. acting cohort.

# *Voices*

# **Heard Round the World**

Conductor Irene Messoloras creates community around excellence

By Christine Byrd

## ***The voices of UCI Chamber Singers***

**Singers** have filled the concert halls and cathedrals of Portugal and Ireland as well as New York's historic Carnegie Hall — twice — performing to sold-out audiences. Their holiday mini album has racked up hundreds of thousands of streams. Behind these achievements is Irene Messoloras, whose vision, voice and ear for excellence are propelling UCI students to new heights.

"UCI welcomes anyone who wants to be involved in the arts, and vocal music is one of the easiest ways to get involved," said Messoloras. "We take singers from where they are — at any level — and help them grow as musicians while building a

strong sense of community. From there, our program offers them opportunities to perform in some of the world's most iconic venues, like Carnegie Hall. I want them to know that if they can dream it, it's within their reach."

Messoloras grew up in a home full of music and song. Her family has a video of her, at age 6, conducting a choir of her sister and a row of stuffed animals. Messoloras kept chasing those early dreams and went on to earn a Doctorate of Musical Arts in choral conducting from UCLA, under the mentorship of the legendary Donald Neuen. That lifelong love of choral music now fuels her work at UC Irvine.



When Messoloras arrived at UCI — initially as interim director in 2019 and later as associate professor and director of choral activities in 2022 — the Chamber Singers numbered just 20 members. Today, that ensemble has grown into a nationally recognized, award-winning choir, and the overall UCI choral program now includes more than 180 students each quarter. The UCI Chamber Singers have won national awards, including first prize in the 2024 American Prize for the Ernst Bacon Award for the Performance of American Music.

The UCI Choir welcomes students, alumni and community members, while the UCI Chamber Singers are selected by

audition. Known to her students as Dr. M, Messoloras values the diversity of her ensembles, and most of the singers are pursuing degrees outside of music.

"It's really important for me to provide students with an understanding that they can make music a part of their life no matter what field of study or career they choose — there are endless ways to stay connected through it," said Messoloras.

***Image:*** Irene Messoloras

Photo: Jeanine Hill

**FACULTY**

## Beyond the Songs

The UCI Chamber Singers are waiting to find out if their holiday mini album, *Winter Night*, will make it through the submission process to be on the Grammy ballot. The 2024 EP was produced by 25-time Grammy winner David Frost for Signum Records, and the students worked directly with composer Ola Gjeilo on some of the tracks.

"It was an amazing experience," said baritone Michael Balerite, a double major in music and political science. "But I refrain from calling it 'once in a lifetime' because Dr. M has prepared all of us to have more of these experiences in our lifetimes. The UCI Chamber Singers just does amazing things all the time."

Earlier this year, Messoloras brought composer Robert S. Cohen to campus to work with students on his choral piece *Finding Light: Alzheimer's Stories*. To deepen their understanding, she collaborated with the UC Irvine Institute for Memory Impairment and Neurological Disorders (UCI MIND),

inviting Alzheimer's researchers, a caregiver and a patient to speak with the singers.

"The libretto explored themes of cognitive decline and disorientation, and UCI MIND joined us to discuss the science behind the music," said Messoloras. "Understanding the human reality behind those words made the experience deeply moving."

Balerite, who is studying conducting, sometimes takes the podium for the UCI Chamber Singers. *For Finding Light*, he led "Light of a Clear Blue Morning."

"Meeting the composer and then learning about neurodegenerative diseases is not something that a typical music student does in any conservatory or any university," said Balerite. "The magic of being a choir member here at UCI is that Dr. M makes sure that we become not just artists who sing but artists who realize the societal imperative for these kinds of performances that contribute to the larger message of hope in the search for a cure."

**Image:** Irene Messoloras conducting with choir and orchestra that includes members of UCI Chamber Singers at Carnegie Hall.

Photo: DCINY Production/Dan Wright photography



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“...Dr. M makes sure that we become not just artists who sing but artists who realize the societal imperative for these kinds of performances...”

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## Building Community

Having brought contemporary composers like Cohen and Gjeilo to work with UCI artists recently, Messoloras is turning toward older canonical pieces for the next few months, including Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Requiem*, which the UCI Choirs will perform at the Irvine Barclay Theatre on March 10, 2026. For their third appearance at Carnegie Hall, a couple of weeks later, the UCI singers will perform works by Gabriel Fauré and Johannes Brahms.

For Messoloras, programming is about balance — honoring tradition while reflecting the world we live in. “I’m passionate about choosing music that challenges and inspires my singers while speaking to the communities we’re part of,” she said. “Music brings people together, and I feel a responsibility to program works that are both relevant to our time and true to the choral art form at its highest level.”

While performances can feel otherworldly for audiences, it’s the rehearsals where the true magic takes place. Balerite says their director’s keen ear will always pick up every detail, but Messoloras encourages her singers to embrace mistakes as opportunities for artistic and personal growth.

“Singing is a very vulnerable act, and I’m giving my singers challenging



*Image: UCI Chamber singers after performing in a cathedral in Portugal.*

pieces; therefore I want them to feel supported and open to the music-making aspect of our work together.” said Messoloras. “My goal is to create moments my singers will carry with them — experiences that remind them why music matters and inspire them to keep singing long after they leave UCI.”

Of course, taking an entire choir to perform in world-class venues is not without challenges — especially budgetary ones. One of Messoloras’ priorities is securing funding to ensure as many students as possible have opportunities to perform not only at the highest level of musicianship but at the highest-caliber venues.

“She is obsessed with excellence that comes from a genuine desire to bring out the best in us,” said Balerite. “She has a fire and a desire for greatness, and that bleeds into each and every single one of us.”

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*To learn more about the Department of Music, visit [music.arts.uci.edu](http://music.arts.uci.edu).*



# Curating Community

Michelle Maasz Brouwer '14 connects audiences and artists as director of programming at Irvine Barclay Theatre

By Diana Kalaji

## **At Irvine Barclay Theatre (IBT),**

Michelle Maasz Brouwer curates experiences that bring together students, artists and audiences, strengthening the creative connection between UC Irvine and the wider community.

"I would love for every student to see a show at the Barclay," said Brouwer. "It's right here on campus. Our doors are glass for a reason; we want you to come in and see what's going on inside."

As director of programming, Brouwer curates a full season of performances at a venue that bridges campus and community. Founded as a three-part collaboration between the Barclay, UC Irvine and the city of Irvine, the theatre continues its 35-year mission as a shared space for UCI Arts, local community groups and touring artists.

## **At Home**

Brouwer grew up in northeast Ohio, where winters nudged her family indoors, often to the Cleveland Museum of Art or local theater productions.

"I always enjoyed the whole ritual of getting dressed up to see something amazing on a stage or walking through a gallery," said Brouwer. "Those have been lifelong interests."

**Image:** Michelle Maasz Brouwer outside the Irvine Barclay Theatre.

Photo: Emily Zheng

When her grandparents took her to see *The Nutcracker* at age 7, ballet quickly followed. Through Canton Ballet, she trained in a setting that felt like its own artist village, with studios, a museum and a historic theater within walking distance.

"I was really lucky to grow up in that kind of environment," said Brouwer. "The studio was where I was happiest."

In high school, her family relocated to Southern California. When applying to colleges, Brouwer planned to one day open a dance studio like the one that had shaped her. With an interest in dance and working behind the scenes, UCI Dance was the only school she auditioned for, knowing there would be other career opportunities at a research university.

"When I came on campus for the audition, my intuition told me, 'This feels good. Let's pursue this,'" said Brouwer.

Brouwer was admitted into the Department of Dance and the Campuswide Honors Program. Midway through her first year, a severe foot injury upended her carefully laid plans.

"I seriously thought I was going to drop out of school," she said. "I couldn't train. I couldn't do anything."

Through the Campuswide Honors Program, Brouwer met mentors who

ALUMNI

encouraged her to map a four-year plan and consider adding another major.

"I kept asking, 'What kind of environment do I want to work in? A gallery or a theater, hopefully,'" said Brouwer.

She added art history as a second major, a pairing she found natural. Her setback became a turning point, one that mentors like dance professor Molly Lynch helped her transform into a professional calling.

"Michelle was really the poster child of my arts management course," said Lynch. "That course connects students to the professional world through internships and assistantships. Artists need to understand the business side of their craft, and Michelle really embodied that balance between artistry and organization."

**Image:** Michelle Maasz Brouwer during undergraduate studies at UC Irvine.



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## "Home is always in the studio."

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As a senior, Brouwer created the MIX Melting Pot Festival, a campuswide showcase of cultural dance organizations that foreshadowed her career in arts programming.

"Coming from a multicultural background, it felt natural to create a space for people to experience a variety of cultural dance forms," said Brouwer.

The festival was presented on the UCI Arts campus in Winifred Smith Hall and later at Segerstrom Center's Samueli Theater. The event was covered in local outlets, amplifying student artists while previewing the work that now defines her role.

### Saying Yes

After graduating in 2014, Brouwer began as a development coordinator and supported marketing for local dance companies, including Festival Ballet Theatre.

A blind date led to marriage, and soon after, an international move to Germany with two weeks' notice. In Wiesbaden, near Frankfurt, Brouwer found her way back to the studio, where she took ballet classes, taught dance to adults in English and performed in local productions. She also did administrative work for her former studio in San Diego, long before remote roles were common.

"Home is always in the studio," said Brouwer. "You just have to find the studio wherever you are."

Ready to return to Southern California, Brouwer posted on Facebook about her job search. The Barclay's former marketing director, who once supervised her UCI internship, offered a part-time role. Brouwer said yes and soon became



**Image:** Michelle Maasz Brouwer in 2014 with an OC Register article spotlighting her MIX Melting Pot Festival.

known as the “Swiss Army knife,” tackling projects of all kinds and advancing to director of programming in 2024.

Brouwer curates about 50 engagements each season, from jazz and Hawaiian music to contemporary dance and special events. She is also the principal contact with the Barclay’s partnership with UCI Arts, facilitating the opportunity for students in dance, drama and music to perform on a professional stage and strengthen their training.

Inside the theater, ties to UCI Arts are everywhere. Many box-office and front-of-house staff are arts majors, and alumni support marketing and fundraising — including Brouwer’s colleague Christopher Adriance ’11, vice president of marketing and a UCI-trained cellist.

As the Barclay celebrates 35 years, Brouwer is focused on growing its visibility, expanding programming and making the theater a refuge to its community.

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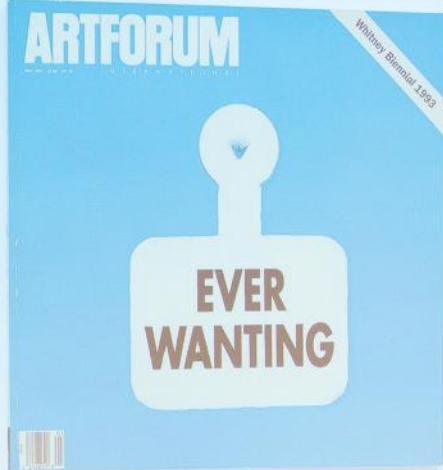
**“If I can steward it so that it’s better than how I found it, and work as hard as I can for the smiles on people’s faces, it’s all worth it.”**

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“The studio has always been home for me,” said Brouwer. “For a lot of our patrons, the Barclay feels like a second home. If I can steward it so that it’s better than how I found it, and work as hard as I can for the smiles on people’s faces, it’s all worth it.”

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*To learn more about Irvine Barclay Theatre and upcoming performances, visit [irvinebarclay.org](http://irvinebarclay.org).*



*Artforum* (May 1993), featuring a detail of Daniel Joseph Martinez's *Museum Tags: Second Movement (Overture); or, Overture con Claque (Overture with Hired Audience Members)*, 1993.

Photo by Yubo Dong

**The Inoperative Community**  
1990-1999

## A 60-Year Conversation on Art and Community

Irvine Mayor Larry Agran joined *Inoperative Community* exhibition curators Juli Carson, professor of art and executive director of the University Art Galleries; Kevin Appel, chair of the Department of Art; and Sasha Ussef, associate director of the University Art Galleries; along with Jesse Jackson, artistic director of the Beall Center for Art + Technology and associate dean of research and innovation, for *An Inoperative Community: UC Irvine* — a panel exploring the intertwined histories of UC Irvine, the City of Irvine, and the region's cultural evolution.

Presented in collaboration with the Beall Center, the discussion was part of *The Inoperative Community: Exhibition X Practice, UC Irvine 1965-2025*, an archival exhibition celebrating six decades of artistic and curatorial innovation at UCI. A highlight came when Agran expressed enthusiasm for a future collaboration, envisioning a UCI Arts exhibition at Irvine City Hall to further strengthen the university's bond with the city it helped shape.

Photo: Yubo Dong





SYMPHONIC LEADER

# Q&A with John Forsyte

*John Forsyte is president and CEO of the Pacific Symphony. During his 27-year tenure, he has been a strong advocate for music education across Orange County, including at UC Irvine, where the Pacific Symphony's Side-by-Side rehearsal series features professionals alongside UCI students. Forsyte is also a member of the Claire Trevor Society and UC Irvine's Chief Executive Roundtable.*

## Q. From your perspective, what makes the partnership between Pacific Symphony and UCI Arts so successful and enduring?

**JF:** Our partnership lasts because of the relationships we've built over time and our institutions' shared purpose. Our concertmaster Dennis Kim serves on the music faculty. Over the years, I've had the privilege to work with Chancellor Howard Gillman, Vice Chancellor Brian Hervey, Chief Executive Roundtable Executive Director Goran Matijasevic, and several deans and faculty and have always been incredibly impressed with their leadership and vision as it relates to the arts.

## Q. What outcomes from the Side-by-Side rehearsal series are you most proud of?

**JF:** As an amateur violinist myself, I sat with the symphony, and one thing I took away from that is a better appreciation of the speed, agility and concentration required of a professional musician. The Side-by-Side rehearsals give students opportunities to have conversations with professional musicians, to work with a world-renowned conductor, and then play in the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall. It's an electrifying experience for a young musician.

**Q. As a leader in the arts, how do you approach building partnerships that are mutually beneficial for institutions while serving a greater public good?**

**JF:** It starts with asking the right question: Why does this matter to the people we're going to serve? A great example was working with Magnus Egerstedt, dean of the Samuels School of Engineering, and Tiffany López, dean of the Claire Trevor School of the Arts, on the Engineering Symphonic-Orchestra New Instrument Challenge (E-SONIC). It started with a conversation about a fun engineering challenge and ended up with an experience that broadened students' perspective of the arts. UC Irvine's deans are fast, entrepreneurial and unafraid to work with organizations outside their expertise. The university's enthusiasm for creativity is really a cultural phenomenon and makes it a very exciting partner.

**Q. How have you seen Dean López's focus on community partnerships and career pathways for students helped bolster arts more broadly across our community and our region?**

**JF:** I've had the privilege of working with a number of very talented deans at UC Irvine, but Tiffany's exuberance for her work and for external partnerships is unlike anyone else. We've talked a lot about the future of arts students and where music majors can go, knowing that the degree of competition for symphony orchestra jobs is exceptionally difficult. Young musicians need to know their music degree is so much more than playing an instrument. Music is one of the most rigorous ways to develop your creative abilities and kinesthetic memory. Music is a lifetime avocation, and she's working to develop ways for students to see the big world they can pursue with music.

**Q. With the pressures facing both arts and education, how do you envision universities and arts organizations working together to continue to inspire the next generation of musicians and audiences?**

**JF:** The financial pressure is real. The opportunity to partner and explore new pathways performing music that's relevant to a new generation can be extremely powerful. I can't incubate all the new directions that the art can take, but university artists and students — by virtue of their perspective and connection to technology — can offer new insights. And within a research institution, we can create fast prototypes for projects and experimental programs. We have Alexander Shelley joining the symphony as Music Director Designate in 2026, and many students came to see him conduct earlier this year. Honestly, nothing is more joyous for me than to see a bunch of young people at the concert hall — it's very promising for the future.

*To learn more about ways to support CTSA, contact Sarah Strozza, executive director of development, at (949) 824-0629 or [sstrozza@uci.edu](mailto:sstrozza@uci.edu).*

# The Art of Opportunity

Through two paid internship programs, the office of Access & Engagement uses the arts as a catalyst for developing creative career pathways for students

By Greg Hardesty



**Simon Harrison '17 was 8 years old** when he discovered his passion for dance.

He credits his involvement with the office of Access & Engagement at UC Irvine's Claire Trevor School of the Arts (UCI Arts) for broadening that passion into teaching the next generation of dancers.

During his senior year at UCI in 2016-17, Harrison completed a teaching artist internship through Creative Connections, a longstanding program of the office of Access & Engagement that pairs UCI Arts majors with arts instructors at local K-12 schools where they help teachers develop and implement curriculum.

Harrison recalls a standout dance student at Northwood High School. In a serendipitous occurrence six years later, the two ended up performing together for Re:borN Dance Interactive, a professional dance company.

"It was a real 'small world' moment for me," said Harrison, a triple major in dance performance, choreography and education sciences.

In a full-circle moment, Harrison is now back at UCI Arts as a part-time employee at Access & Engagement, managing — you guessed it — Creative Connections.

## Expansive Views

Harrison's journey illustrates Access & Engagement's mission to provide paid, hands-on experiences for students as teaching artists through Creative Connections and as arts management professionals through a second program, Arts Launch, that started two years ago.

Together, the programs — unique within the UC system — illustrate Access & Engagement's role in fulfilling the school's mission of using the arts as a

***Image:*** (left to right) Megan Belmonte and Kaysie José with UCI Arts students participating in the Arts Launch Internship.

Photo: Emily Zheng

catalyst for developing creative career pathways for students.

"It's important for our students to have an expansive view of what they can do and be successful in the creative sector," said Megan Belmonte, director of Access & Engagement. "Many of them come here with a very narrow view of what success looks like — for example, many performers think 'it's Broadway or nothing.' But the reality is, these students can work in the creative sector of their choice in infinite ways.

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**"It's important for our students to have an expansive view of what they can do and be successful in the creative sector."**

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"For example, a drama major may end up finding their calling as a casting director, or a dance major may realize their true calling in teaching," added Belmonte. "And while getting paid, they are also becoming exposed to a wonderful world of possibilities while they are still earning their undergraduate degrees."

Typically, 15 to 20 students per school year serve as interns through Creative Connections, partnering with instructors up to three hours a week. They undergo training in the fall and teach in the winter and spring quarters.

Arts Launch began with five interns, and this year has seven. The interns undergo training in the summer and work fall through the end of the spring quarter.



**Image:** (left to right) Office of Access and Engagement team members Megan Belmonte, Simon Harrison and Kaysie José.

Photo: Emily Zheng

They can work up to 19.5 hours a week in such areas of the creative sector like marketing, accounting, finance and program development.

The programs are a win-win for both sides, Belmonte says, providing students not only with invaluable experience in the “real world” but also schools and arts organizations – many of which don’t enjoy robust funding – with employees.

In addition, a new partnership with the Orange County Department of Education provides Access & Engagement interns the opportunity to earn apprenticeship certifications from both the state and the federal government.

## Showing Up

Hitesh Benny ’26, a fifth-year double major in music and business administration, had been frustrated by regulations within the immigration system that had forced him to walk away from many worthwhile experiences when he saw a flyer about an information session about Arts Launch.

Benny, assistant conductor of the UCI Symphony Orchestra and Opera, is now an education and community engagement intern with the Philharmonic Society of Orange County.

Learning under UCI alumna Katherine Yang ’03 and Jennifer Niedringhaus-Lopez, Benny has found an engaging and supportive environment.



"I'm excited to show up to work because I know I'm contributing to the industry I want to build a career in," said Benny. "I look forward to serving as a leader in classical music, whether as a conductor or as an administrator."

Other Arts Launch interns this year are matched with professionals at Arts Orange County, Chance Theater and the Muckenthaler Cultural Center, among other organizations.

## Bridging Passions

Ysa Padua '27, a third-year double major in music theater and psychological sciences, is serving in her second year as an Arts Launch intern. She's a program coordinator who mentors first-year interns.

"I'm deeply enthusiastic about bridging my passions for advocacy and the arts," said Padua, who during her first year at Arts Launch helped run several elementary school-level acting workshops, junior high musicals and band practices.

"I see my involvement in Arts Launch as an opportunity to give back to the artistic community of Orange County," Padua says.

Kaysie José '11 has worked for 10 years at UCI Arts with Belmonte and now manages Arts Launch.

"When I was an undergraduate drama major, I was not very involved in the School of the Arts and didn't take advantage of professional development programs or internships," said José.

Now José is passionate about expanding the professional development and career-readiness opportunities for UCI Arts undergraduates.

"We really want to have students realize that there are so many more opportunities to work in the arts beyond being a performer or artist," said José. "I bring a lot of my personal experience of feeling somewhat lost in terms of what I wanted to do after I graduated."

## Creative Openings

Alexis Phuong Pham '26 is a double major in art and education. She serves as a teaching artist intern at Creative

**Image:** Department of Music student Michael Balerite '26 conducting in a high school class through Arts Launch.

Photo: Will Tee Yang





**Image:** Former Arts Launch intern Mafer Reyes '24 teaching a high school dance class.

Photo: Will Tee Yang

Connections, engaging middle school students in digital art and design classes.

"I assist in developing and adapting curriculum to meet diverse skill levels and learning styles, ensuring that each student receives the support they need," said Pham.

Pham also provides individualized feedback to enhance students' creativity and technical abilities, while working closely with other teaching artists and program coordinators to organize workshops and outreach events that engage the community.

"This program has really opened my eyes to the possibilities that are available to me as an artist and educator," said Pham.

Now joining the Creative Connections team, dance and education double major Mia Gabbey '27 is blending her passions in the classroom at Irvine High School.

"I truly love working with kids, so this is just a win-win situation for me to do something I love and also get paid for it," said Gabbey. "It's a nice challenge for me to broaden my experience. The Creative Connections program is so helpful for me not only as an artist but as someone who's about to go out into the world and look for a job."

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**"This program has really opened my eyes to the possibilities that are available to me as an artist and educator."**

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Belmonte says programs like Arts Launch and Creative Connections empower students to explore their evolving interests while gaining paid professional experience that shapes their futures.

"By combining hands-on learning with meaningful community partnerships," she says, "these programs bridge education and professional practice, helping students build confidence, clarity and purpose as they become the next generation of artists, educators and professionals."

To learn more about the office of Access & Engagement, visit [arts.uci.edu/outreach](http://arts.uci.edu/outreach).

# SEASON EVENTS – WINTER 2026



**Tickets & Info**



Scan the QR code to view upcoming events, purchase tickets and explore the full fall season lineup.

[arts.uci.edu/tickets](http://arts.uci.edu/tickets) | [artstix@uci.edu](mailto:artstix@uci.edu) | (949) 824-2787

# 2025-26 Season-At-A-Glance

## Winter 2026

|                  |                                                                                 |        |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Through Feb. 28* | <i>Against Outer Space</i>                                                      | BC     |
| Jan. 24-April 4* | <i>The Unworld to Come. Imagining an Otherwise...</i>                           | CAC    |
| Jan. 31*         | <i>Listen to the Motion: Works by ICIT Ph.D. Students</i>                       | xMPL   |
| Feb. 7-8         | Music Artist Series   <i>Sounding Iran: Musical Pasts, Presents and Futures</i> | WSH ●  |
| Feb. 7-28*       | M.F.A. 2nd Year Exhibition                                                      | UAG, R |
| Feb. 11*         | UCI Symphony Orchestra Express                                                  | WSH    |
| Feb. 13          | Music Artist Series: <i>Songs About Love and Sorrows</i>                        | WSH ●  |
| Feb. 18*         | UCI Jazz Combos                                                                 | WSH    |
| Feb. 19-21       | <i>Dance Visions 2026</i>                                                       | IBT    |
| Feb. 25          | UCI Jazz Orchestra                                                              | WSH ●  |
| Feb. 28          | UC Irvine Homecoming Festival 2026                                              | AC     |
| Feb. 28          | Music Artist Series: <i>Song and Wind</i>                                       | WSH ●  |
| March 5          | UCI Symphony Orchestra                                                          | IBT    |
| March 6-14       | <i>Noises Off</i>                                                               | CTT ●  |
| March 9          | UCI Wind Ensemble                                                               | WSH ●  |
| March 10         | UC Irvine Choral Concert: Mozart's Requiem                                      | IBT    |
| March 12*        | Tenth Thursday Undergraduate Student Exhibition                                 | AC     |
| March 12*        | Art of Performance @ UC Irvine - 11th Edition featuring Meredith Monk           | WSH    |
| March 12-21*     | 21st Annual Guest Juried Undergraduate Exhibition                               | UAG, R |
| March 16*        | UCI Chamber Music Concert                                                       | WSH    |

## Spring 2026

|                  |                                                                                                        |             |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Through April 4* | <i>The Unworld to Come. Imagining an Otherwise...</i>                                                  | CAC         |
| April 4-June 27* | <i>Disruptive Cultures: Affects and Effects of Social Media</i>                                        | BC          |
| April 5*         | Music Honors Concert                                                                                   | WSH         |
| April 10*        | Vocal Arts Concert   <i>Echoes of England: Henry Purcell, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Benjamin Britten</i> | WSH         |
| April 18         | Music Artist Series   <i>The Art of the Viola: From Poland With Love</i>                               | WSH ●       |
| April 18-May 2*  | M.F.A. Thesis Exhibition (part 1)                                                                      | UAG, CAC, R |
| April 21         | UC Irvine Giving Day 2026                                                                              | ONLINE      |
| April 30-May 2   | <i>Physical Graffiti 2026</i>                                                                          | CTT ●       |
| May 9            | UCI Opera Workshop: Gian Carlo Menotti's <i>The Old Maid and the Thief</i>                             | IBT         |
| May 9-23*        | M.F.A. Thesis Exhibition (part 2)                                                                      | UAG, CAC, R |
| May 13*          | UCI Jazz Combos                                                                                        | WSH         |
| May 16*          | ICIT Showcase Concert                                                                                  | xMPL        |
| May 20           | UCI Jazz Orchestra                                                                                     | WSH ●       |
| May 28-June 6    | <i>at the very bottom of a body of water</i>                                                           | RCT         |
| May 29*          | UC Irvine Choral Concert                                                                               | WSH         |
| June 1           | UCI Wind Ensemble                                                                                      | WSH ●       |
| June 4*          | Tenth Thursday Undergraduate Student Exhibition                                                        | AC          |
| June 4-13*       | Undergraduate Honors Thesis Exhibition                                                                 | UAG, R      |
| June 5           | UCI Symphony Orchestra                                                                                 | IBT         |
| June 8*          | UCI Chamber Music Concert                                                                              | WSH         |

# Box Office Information

## Hours

**Wednesday & Thursday, noon-4 p.m.**

1 hour before performances at venue box office  
with seasonal/intermittent closures; check [www.arts.uci.edu/boxoffice](http://www.arts.uci.edu/boxoffice)

## Contact

(949) 824-2787 | [artstix@uci.edu](mailto:artstix@uci.edu)

**UAG** University Art Gallery

(949) 824-9854 | [gallery@uci.edu](mailto:gallery@uci.edu)

## Tickets

[www.arts.uci.edu/tickets](http://www.arts.uci.edu/tickets) (24/7) | Phone | UCI Arts Box Office Window



## Venues

|              |                                   |        |                                         |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------------|
| AMP          | Arts Plaza Amphitheatre           | NS     | New Swan Theater                        |
| AC           | Arts Campus                       | RCT    | Robert Cohen Theatre                    |
| BC           | Beall Center for Art + Technology | R      | Room Gallery                            |
| BCH $\Delta$ | Bethel Church                     | ONLINE | Live or recorded event presented online |
| CAC          | Contemporary Arts Center          | UAG    | University Art Gallery                  |
| CTT          | Claire Trevor Theatre             | WSH    | Winifred Smith Hall                     |
| GPG $\Delta$ | Great Park Gallery                | xMPL   | Experimental Media Performance Lab      |
| IBT $\Delta$ | Irvine Barclay Theatre            |        | Check website for specifics.            |

$\Delta$  Venue not on UCI Arts campus. Consult UCI Arts website maps: [www.arts.uci.edu/directions](http://www.arts.uci.edu/directions)

Dates, venues, titles are subject to change.

Please check our online events calendar ([www.arts.uci.edu/calendar](http://www.arts.uci.edu/calendar)) for the most current information.

\* indicates free event / ● indicates tentative shuttle availability.

# Winter Quarter 2026 Highlights

UCI Arts invites you to explore Winter 2026's exciting lineup, featuring new exhibitions and compelling performances across dance, drama, music and art. From *Dance Visions 2026* to *Noises Off*, it is a season of bold creative talent.

## BEALL CENTER FOR ART + TECHNOLOGY



**On view now through Feb. 28, 2026**

### **Against Outer Space**

*Valerie Olsen and Zachary Korol Gold, curators*

*Against Outer Space* engages an ancient paradox: Earthly life unfolds against and within unearthy space. Artists in the exhibition present this paradox both *with and against* dominant technoscientific ideas about outer space. In doing so they work otherwise to government agendas, military-industrial powers and space capitalism. For these artists, outer space is not separate. It is an intimate extension of ancestry and becoming. Its vibrant outsideness allows new questions, new recognitions, new ways of being. Through their work we enter *open space*.

This exhibition is presented by the Beall Center for Art + Technology with generous support from The Beall Family Foundation.

*Beall Center for Art + Technology*

*Free admission*

*Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Saturday, noon-6 p.m.*

**Image:** Sarah Rosalena, "CMB RGB," 2021; Glass beads, gourds, pine sap, beeswax, Cosmic Microwave Background visualization. Courtesy of the artist. Photo by Ian Byers-Gamber.

## DEPARTMENT OF ART / UNIVERSITY ART GALLERIES

**Jan. 24-April 4, 2026**

**Opening reception: Saturday, Jan. 24, 2 p.m.**

***The Unworld to Come. Imagining an Otherwise...***

*Juli Carson, Annika Haas and Sasha Ussef, curators*

Inspired by the idea of "beyond repair" from artist Natascha Sadr Haghian, this exhibition seeks to intervene in the repetition of repair fantasies and the assertion that things can and need to be fixed.

This exhibition is produced in the context of The Art of Resilience: UC Climate Action Arts Network program as part of the UC Multicampus Research Program Initiative.

*Contemporary Arts Center Gallery*

*Free admission*

*Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Saturday, noon-6 p.m.*

**Feb. 7-28, 2026**

***M.F.A. 2nd Year Exhibition***

Featuring works by second-year M.F.A. students, this exhibition marks an important milestone in their advancement to candidacy at UC Irvine's Claire Trevor School of the Arts. A range of practices and perspectives are presented, offering a glimpse into the next generation of contemporary art.

*University Art Gallery, Room Gallery*

*Free admission*

*Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Saturday, noon-6 p.m.*



**Thursday, March 12, 2026, 8 p.m.**

***The Art of Performance @ UC Irvine 11th Edition featuring legendary artist***

***Meredith Monk***

*Deborah Oliver, curator and producer*

Recognized as one of the most unique and influential artists of our time, composer/performer Meredith Monk offers one of her rare, more intimate concerts with renowned members of her Vocal Ensemble, Katie Geissinger and Allison Sniffin. The concert reflects Monk's six decades of innovation and awe-inspiring vocal mastery, mining the depths of the myriad possibilities of the human voice.

*Winifred Smith Hall*

*Free admission*

*Register online*

***Image:*** Christine Alicino

# DEPARTMENT OF DANCE



**Feb. 19-21, 2026**

## **Dance Visions 2026**

*Kelli Sharp and Lindsay Gilmour, artistic directors*

Presented by the Department of Dance, *Dance Visions 2026* is the department's annual premier showcase highlighting the range and depth of faculty choreography. Featuring original works performed by UCI's exceptional dance students, the concert blends contemporary and classical forms with theatrical and musical elements.

*Dance Visions 2026* reflects the department's ongoing commitment to artistic inquiry, creative collaboration and rigorous performance. Each piece invites audiences into a dialogue between movement and meaning – where choreography becomes a platform for exploration, expression and innovation.

*Irvine Barclay Theatre*

*Feb. 19, 20, 21*

*8 p.m.*

*Feb. 21*

*2 p.m.*

*\$ 30 / 26 / 26 / 24 / 10*



**\$ / \$ / \$ / \$ / \$**

General / Seniors & UCI Affiliates / Groups 10+ / Arts Packages /  
UCI Students & Children under 17

*Please note: Tickets purchased at the Barclay Box Office will incur a \$3-5 fee per ticket.*

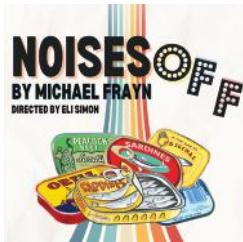
Service is available for guests with disabilities or mobility issues, from the Mesa Parking Structure to select shows. Shuttle service will begin one hour before showtime and will meet patrons on level two near the elevator. Advance notice is appreciated. For more info, please call the Arts Box Office at (949) 824-2787, email [artstix@uci.edu](mailto:artstix@uci.edu), or visit [www.arts.uci.edu/shuttle](http://www.arts.uci.edu/shuttle). Schedule is subject to change.

**Tickets**

**Complimentary  
Shuttle Service**



## DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA



**March 6-14, 2026**

### ***Noises Off***

By Michael Frayn

Directed by Eli Simon

*Noises Off* is a brilliantly crafted, side-splitting farce that pulls back the curtain on a theater company in total disarray. As the hapless cast and crew attempt to stage the fictional play *Nothing On*, everything that can go wrong does, from forgotten lines and missing props to romantic entanglements and mistimed entrances. Doors slam, sardines fly and egos clash in this uproarious play-within-a-play, where backstage drama and onstage mishaps collide in a whirlwind of slapstick chaos. Hailed as “the funniest farce ever written” (New York Post), Michael Frayn’s *Noises Off* is a love letter to the theater and a masterclass in perfectly timed comedic mayhem.

*Major support is provided by Robert and Lorna Cohen Endowment for Excellence in Drama, the Theatre Guild and the Claire Trevor Society.*

*Noises Off* is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. [www.concordtheatricals.com](http://www.concordtheatricals.com)

*Claire Trevor Theatre*

March 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14

8 p.m.

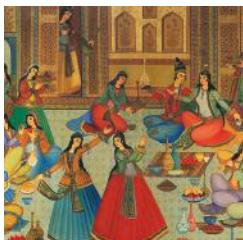
March 8, 14

2 p.m.

\$25 / 22 / 20 / 21 / 10



## DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC



**Feb. 7-8, 2026, 8 p.m.**

### ***Artist Series | Sounding Iran: Musical Pasts, Presents and Futures***

Featuring UC Irvine Professor Hossein Omoumi

This two-day interdisciplinary conference is organized by UC Irvine Professor Hossein Omoumi, UC Irvine ICIT Alumni Hesam Abedini and University of Florida Professor Payam Yousefi.

Each night will be a different concert — highlighting the richness and diversity of music in Iran and its diaspora while featuring performances that reflect the evolving traditions, experimental practices and transnational dialogues shaping Iranian musical life today.

*This event is co-sponsored by the Music Department at UC Irvine and UCI Jordan Center for Persian Studies and Culture.*

*Winifred Smith Hall*

\$20 / 17 / 17 / 15 / 10



## DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC



**Friday, Feb. 13, 2026, 8 p.m.**

### **Artist Series | Songs About Love and Sorrows**

*Featuring UC Irvine musicians Yuliya Minina, Frances Bennett and Sarah Koo Freeman*

Yuliya Minina will be exploring the usage of song forms in instrumental music. She will be joined by Frances Bennett and Sarah Koo Freeman. The program will consist of solo piano and piano and cello pieces as well as several sets of art songs, featuring works of Pauline Viardot, Clara Schumann, Jean Sibelius, Viktor Kosenko and others.

*Generous support is provided by the Marjorie and Robert Rawlins Endowment Fund.*

*Winifred Smith Hall*

*\$20 / 17 / 17 / 15 / 10*



**Wednesday, Feb. 25, 2026, 8 p.m.**

### **UCI Jazz Orchestra**

*Jerry Pinter, director*

Experience the energy of large-ensemble jazz with the UCI Jazz Orchestra, performing a vibrant mix of big band classics and contemporary works. This concert highlights the ensemble's versatility and celebrates the richness of the jazz tradition.

*Generous support is provided by the Marjorie and Robert Rawlins Endowment Fund.*

*Winifred Smith Hall*

*\$10*



**Saturday, Feb. 28, 2026, 8 p.m.**

### **Artist Series | Song and Wind**

*Featuring UC Irvine Professor Patricia Cloud*

Flutist and UC Irvine Professor Patricia Cloud presents a program of expressive works for flute as part of this season's Artist Series. Showcasing her artistry and versatility, the concert offers an engaging exploration of sound and breath.

*Generous support is provided by the Marjorie and Robert Rawlins Endowment Fund.*

*Winifred Smith Hall*

*\$20 / 17 / 17 / 15 / 10*





**Thursday, March 5, 2026, 8 p.m.**

**UCI Symphony Orchestra**

*Geoffrey Pope, conductor*

The UCI Symphony Orchestra performs an evening of beloved orchestral classics, featuring works by favorite composers and a special appearance by the winner of the 2026 UC Irvine Concerto Competition.

*Join Maestro Geoffrey Pope for a Pre-Concert Conversation at 7 p.m.*

*Generous support is provided by Charlie and Ling Zhang, Friends of UC Irvine Music and the Marjorie and Robert Rawlins Endowment Fund.*

*Irvine Barclay Theatre*

*\$21 / 18 / 18 / 16 / 10*



**Monday, March 9, 2026, 8 p.m.**

**UCI Wind Ensemble**

*Kevin McKeown, conductor*

The UCI Wind Ensemble performs a wide-ranging program that blends traditional works with contemporary pieces for wind band.

*Generous support is provided by the Marjorie and Robert Rawlins Endowment Fund.*

*Winifred Smith Hall*

*\$10*



**Tuesday, March 10, 2026, 8 p.m.**

**UC Irvine Choral Concert | Mozart's Requiem & Brahms'**

***Schicksalslied: An Evening of Masterworks***

*Featuring the UC Irvine Chamber Singers and Concert Choir with UCI Symphony Orchestra*

*Irene Messoloras, conductor*

Mozart's *Requiem* grips the soul with its passion, mystery and beauty. Brahms' *Schicksalslied* (Song of Destiny) soars from luminous calm to storm and struggle, offering a moving reflection on the human journey. Together, these masterpieces promise a concert of unforgettable power and artistry.

*Generous support is provided by Friends of UC Irvine Music and the Marjorie and Robert Rawlins Endowment Fund.*

*Irvine Barclay Theatre*

*\$21 / 18 / 18 / 16 / 10*

**Tickets & Info**



To see all 11 events for the winter 2026 quarter in the Department of Music, visit [arts.uci.edu/events](http://arts.uci.edu/events).

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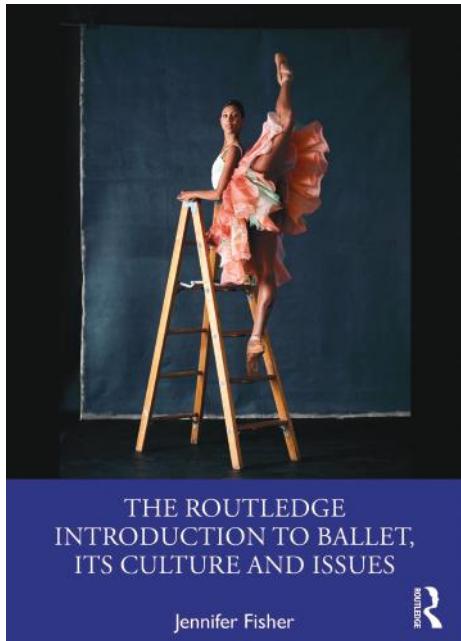


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# Faculty Books

New books from faculty in the Claire Trevor School of the Arts



## ***The Routledge Introduction to Ballet, its Culture and Issues (1st Edition)***

**By Jennifer Fisher**

**Jennifer Fisher, Professor of Dance**

**Jennifer Fisher**, professor of dance in the UC Irvine Department of Dance, is the author of *Nutcracker Nation* (2003) and *Ballet Matters* (2019) and co-editor of *When Men Dance: Choreographing Masculinities across Borders* (2009).

*The Routledge Introduction to Ballet, its Culture and Issues* offers a contemporary examination of ballet's history, culture and the issues that plague it. Drawing on the latest scholarship, Fisher traces the form's

evolution and the social and political forces that have shaped it.

Organized around central themes, the book explores how the manners, style and hierarchies of ballet became embedded in its identity. It also considers how dancers and audiences have experienced ballet, how films have represented it, and how questions of inclusion and reinterpretation continue to transform the field.

Each chapter highlights pivotal figures, institutions and works while introducing new perspectives and resources for deeper study. The result is an essential introduction to how ballet both reflects and redefines the cultures from which it emerges.

Published by Routledge

Dec. 2024 | 208 pages | 54 b/w illustrations

ISBN: 9780367434762

**BOOKS**

# UC Irvine

Claire Trevor School of the Arts

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