

ZOELLNER ARTS CENTER LEHIGH UNIVERSITY



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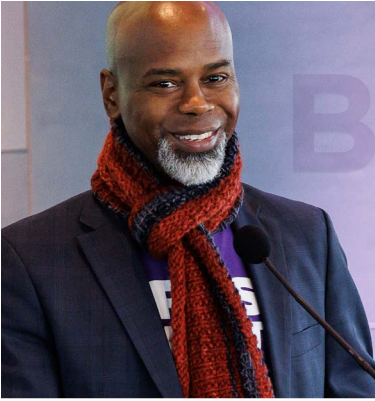


Photo By John Kish IV

DEAR FRIENDS,

It's hard to **believe**, but I've now spent over five years as executive director of Zoellner Arts Center. As I write this, I'm filled with gratitude. What an honor it has been—and continues to be—to come to work each day with a mission to connect our urban, suburban, and rural communities through the arts. Thank you for welcoming me so warmly to the Lehigh Valley and for continuing to walk alongside us on this journey.

This season opens on high notes — with The Bacon Brothers and Morgan Freeman's Symphonic Blues Experience. These

Hollywood heavyweights have also centered music in their award-winning careers. The world-renowned Philharmonia Orchestra, under the prestigious baton of Marin Alsop, will perform stirring works of Tchaikovsky, Bartók, and Prokofiev, filling our hall with beauty and power. Mark Morris Dance Group returns with their signature blend of live music, exquisite movement, and bold fashion—this time set to the music of Burt Bacharach.

We're thrilled to welcome back audience favorites like Postmodern Jukebox and the Vienna Boys Choir, and to continue our commitment to family-centered programming through the Lehigh Valley Reilly Children's Hospital Family Series. Our pre-show conversations with Lehigh Valley Health Network health professionals have become a highlight, and we're excited to continue exploring the growing intersection of arts and wellness. Stay tuned for more news on this front.

In the winter and spring, we invite you to experience the electrifying energy of Drum Tao, the return of the moving virtual reality installation *Traveling While Black*, and a celebration of Jane Austen's 250th birthday with a delightful project by The Jane Austen Playlist. The Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain will leave you smiling, while The Tallis Scholars—the world's preeminent early music vocal ensemble—will offer a transcendent performance in the beautiful Packer Memorial Church. Finally, we close the season with **the** joyful rhythms of the NYC Ska Orchestra.

Zoellner Arts Center embraces its role as a university-based presenter. We are a space for a community of practice where educators and future makers converge. Student artists, along with the Departments of Music and Theatre and Lehigh University Art Galleries (LUAG), present concerts, plays, and exhibitions that reflect both their talent and the faculty who inspire them.

As always, we're proud to be a space where creativity, community, and connection come together. Thank you for being part of this journey and for making Zoellner Arts Center such a vibrant home for the **arts**.

With gratitude,

Mark Fitzgerald Wilson

Executive Director

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Dideę: Rise Up



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2025.2026
SEASON

Zoellner Arts Center receives state arts funding support through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.



ABOUT

Didè is a piece inspired by the Guèlèdè tradition, whose ceremonies pay homage to the primordial mother, Iyà Nlà. Guèlèdè is the tribute to be paid to the mystical powers of women, which must be protected from and appeased in order to transform them into a beneficial power for society.” *Didè* goes beyond community issues, inviting us into a sincere and frank encounter with bodies that will be traversed by states, happenings that will write a singular story that questions gender. To introduce ourselves, to state... Who you are... Then bodies become the place where the intimate and the political become entangled, between the expression of feelings and the incorporation of oppressions.

“*Didè*” is a performance that immerses you in the mystical universe of the Gèlèdè cosmogony, where each dancer becomes a messenger of transfigured feminine energy. This choreographic creation by Marcel Gbeffa transcends the boundaries of time and space by blending respect for Beninese traditions with aesthetic innovation. The masks, created by artist Sarah Trouche and carved by Sébastien Boko, transform into contemporary sculptures that come to life with palpable intensity through the dancers’ movements. Each artist, coming from diverse choreographic backgrounds—from urban dance to afro dance—fuses their art with a profound understanding of ancestral rhythms, producing a magnetic gestural language. “*Didè*” is a true celebration of African culture, an opportunity to rediscover contemporary dance through an original lens while honoring the intangible and spiritual heritage of traditional Beninese dance. “*Didè*” offers a unique encounter between cultural heritage and contemporary artistic freshness.

BIOGRAPHIES

Marcel Gbeffa, dancer and choreographer from Benin, has lived between France and Benin since 2021. Founder and artistic director of the Multicorps Choreographic Center in Cotonou, Benin, he campaigns for the accessibility and circulation of contemporary dance in Africa. After training at the École des Sables in Senegal in 2008, Marcel Gbeffa launched his career the same year with his solo *Et si*, propelling him onto the international scene. As a performer and assistant choreographer, he has collaborated with artists such as Andreyra Ouamba (Congo-Brazzaville) and Reggie Wilson / Fist and Heel Performance Group (USA). Since 2010, he has taken part in several creations and collaborations in Benin, Africa, Brazil, Europe and the United States. His choreographic piece *Didè*, co-written with

visual artist Sarah Trouche and supported by CDCN Atelier de Paris, CDCN Rennes and CCN Nantes, was selected for the Biennale de la Danse as part of the Afrique 2020 season. In 2021, he will take part in artistic residencies at CCN Nantes and at the contemporary art space Le Centre (Benin). Winner of a Fulbright grant from the U.S. government in 2022/23, he directs research and teaching projects at several academic institutions in New York, including the Awakening project with the Purchase College, Conservatory of Dance, SUNY in New York. In 2024, he created the piece *Chthuluchene* with saxophonist Clément Duthoit and the support of the Institut Français, Alliance Française and CCN Nantes. In Benin, he also organizes transdisciplinary workshops, promoting international collaborations. In 2019, he creates the Connexion festival, for which he is artistic director. Marcel Gbeffa's artistic approach draws inspiration from his immaterial heritage, evolving through collaborations with other disciplines such as video, digital, visual art and music. Although the question of identity and gender remains central to his work, he also explores the question of the being's contribution to humanity. In particular, with performance artist Violaine Lochu, he questions notions of offerings, initiations and twinship, the place of women in contemporary society with visual artist Sarah Trouche, and mankind's relationship with his terrestrial cohabitants through the climate emergency with saxophonist Clément Duthoit.

Sarah Trouche (1983) is a French visual artist. She is part of the class of 2007 of the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts (Paris National School of Fine Arts), where she trained under artists such as Jean-Marc Bustamante, Jacky Chriqui and Guillaume Paris. She complemented her training under artist Mike Kelley at the Pasadena Art Center College of Design, where she graduated with a Master of Fine Arts in 2007 and at Goldsmiths, University of London, where she graduated with a Master in Performance-Making in 2008. She also took a short-film directing course in 2014 at the Gaîté Lyrique, a digital arts center located in Paris. In 2008, Sarah Trouche teamed up with architect Benjamin Herr to create a European multidisciplinary artist collective, whose “winterstory in the wild jungle” project was joined by more than 200 artists. The collective will receive a prize from the city of Paris for the “HitandRun” project, which turned a cargo container into a creation and exhibition space for a duration of thirty days. Sarah Trouche's work revolves around her many journeys and expeditions, which bring her in contact with a vast array of communities, from micro-societies to globalized metropolises. Her critical scrutiny reveals the growing anomalies, ambiguities, and social and political contradictions that underlie the places she's visiting. Her artistic media are mainly performance, photography and video. She is a recipient of the Extramural Villa

Mé dicis grant in the living arts category for her Arriba project and she participated in numerous collective exhibits, both in France (“Camera as release” for Paris Photo 2014, Centre d’art le Lait, le 104, the Brownstone foundation) and abroad (Artbat fest 2014 in Kazakhstan, Marrakech Biennial 2014 in Morocco, OCAC Taipei in Taiwan, New York Armory Show in the United States, Hokusen gallery in Tokyo, Japan). She’s also been invited to collaborate with several art schools, namely the É cole des Beaux-Arts de Metz and the É cole des Beaux-Arts d’Annecy in France and the University of North Carolina, Charlotte in the United States and the National Taiwan University of Arts abroad. Her work has been acquired by JP Morgan, Sjberwin, the Benenson Collection, the Mosquera Collection and the IADA Foundation.

Orphée Georgah Ahehinnou is a Beninese dancer, educator, and pedagogue who began his artistic journey in 2004. His work views the body as a site of memory, and is rooted in the artistic and cultural dynamics of Benin, navigating between tradition, performance, and transmission.

He collaborated with artist Anice Pépé beginning in 2008 and is a graduate of École des Sables (2018–2020). Since 2015, he has worked with international choreographers and performed with Ballet 3L IFÈDÉ and Compagnie Multicorps, where he remains an associated artist.

In 2016, he founded Aflikidjoo, a company dedicated to youth development and personal growth through dance. His solo *Ibéré* (2021) explores resistance and resilience, and his recent projects include *Didé* (Africa 2020), the residency *T(h)ree** with Compagnie ANIKAYA, and Ylô Connections, a transnational collaboration between Benin and Los Angeles.

GBEFFA Mawugnon Joseph is a multidisciplinary artist, dancer, and visual creator working at the intersection of choreographic dance and visual arts. A passionate self-taught artist, he develops a practice in which body, image, and contemporary forms of narration remain in constant dialogue.

Trained in traditional dance, contemporary techniques at Multicorps (including the Martha Graham Technique), the Acogny Technique at École des Sables, he has participated in numerous stage productions and festivals, including the International Zinli Wéfô Festival. His artistic path has been enriched by international experiences, notably the ANIKAYA Birds Intensive program in India (2025).

Since 2017, he has also worked as a freelance graphic designer with the Multicorps Choreographic Center, supporting artistic projects through the creation of visual identities and graphic and audiovisual content. This dual practice allows him to approach projects with a holistic, sensitive, and strategic vision. His work is grounded in transdisciplinarity, collaboration, and the pursuit of an engaged artistic language rooted in contemporary cultural realities.

Chegoun Bonaventure Sossou is a Beninese choreographer and founder of Compagnie Hôvidé (2008). He is a graduate of École des Sables in Senegal (2024) and was trained in heritage dances with the Tonassé troupe before joining contemporary companies such as Walô and Grand Cru.

His choreographic work includes *Mitongba*, *Femme polychrome*, and collaborative creations such as *Blessure émotionnelle*, as well as the solo *Doyigbé*. His artistic journey has been shaped through collaborations with associations and community-based projects.

Alongside his creative work, he leads dance workshops for youth, including street children, at Multicorps and other institutions, and regularly teaches diverse audiences. He has performed in numerous recognized productions across Africa and internationally, and has continued to develop his practice through encounters with choreographers such as Rachelle Agbossou, Marcel Gbeffa, Germaine Acogny, Richard Adossou, Serge-Aimé Coulibaly, Irène Tassambedo, and Julie Dossavi.

In 2022, he was selected for the Africa Diaspora training program at École des Sables, reinforcing an artistic approach centered on transmission, social engagement, and the transformative power of dance.

Beninese artist **Horace Yehouenou** grounds his movement practice in the rhythms and codes of traditional dances.. In 2017, he created Afro-Vogue, a distinct movement language shaped by African heritages and Ballroom Voguing. His artistic path has been shaped by mentorship from Wendy Jehlen, Marcel Gbeffa, Andréya Ouamba, and Marie Leca.

In 2020, he co-founded the Watchémi Créa Festival with Dreamkeys Bénin, fostering a space for research and experimentation. Trained at the Don Sen Folo Laboratory in Mali, he asserts a committed and sensitive artistic voice. His works include *First Step* and *Révélation*, presented on multiple African stages.

In 2024, he participated in the international professional training program at the L'École des Sables in Senegal, marking a new stage in his training, and that same year, he finalized his duo creation ALIKPLÉTIN in Benin. In 2025, he won First Prize in Ballroom Voguing in Cotonou at the *Défi'les danses* workshop and participated again in the festival *Un Pas Vers l'Avant*. He recently premiered his solo *Moi* at the Connexion Festival, co-produced by the Multicorps Choreographic Center.

PROGRAM CREDITS

Creation & Choreography - **Marcel Gbeffa**

Creation & Direction - **Sarah Trouche**

Lighting Design - **Ivan Matis**

Mask Design and Backset - **Sarah Trouche**

Mask Construction/Build - Artists from "Le Centre"

(Sébastien Boko, Albert et Mazoclet)

Costumes - **Shivakao**

Music - **Viktor Benev**

Dancers -

Orphée Ahéhéhinou

Joseph Gbeffa

Marcel Gbeffa

Bonaventure Sossou

Horace Yehouenou

Technical Direction - **Anika Nayak and Nathaniel Morrissey**

Production - **Cie Multicorps / Marcel Gbeffa,**

Cie Winter Story in the Wild Jungle, ANIKAYA

Co production - **French Institute of Benin & Le Centre**

Partners - **Ateliers de Paris /CDCN -**

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For more information, please contact Stephanie Tooman, U.S. Representative and Program Coordinator for Compagnie Multicorps, via email at stephanietoothman5@gmail.com

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 Janice S. Spirk '79G '25P
 Kelly B. 'F/S and Andrew L. Stazi
 Jerrilynn Stewart 'F/S
 Eugene Stokes
 David Torrey
 Kathleen Truskowski
 Barbara A. Turanchik '75 'F/S
 Raymond Ulmer II
 Maki Uragami
 Kristen and Nathaniel N. Urban 'F/S
 Jane & Gerry Uva
 Kathleen and William F. Van Loan III '82
 Maureen Valente
 Beatrice Vassil
 Susan A. 'F/S and Anthony C. Verbalis, Jr. '67
 Susan Vitez
 Sydney E. Weaver '25
 Judith O. Pennington and Steven H. Weintraub 'F/S
 Rosemarie Wertman
 Vassie C. Ware 'F/S and William J. Taylor
 Susanna Williams
 Gretchen M. Vasquez 'F/S
 Craig Wurst
 Karen & Edwin E. Yeakel '79G

Advisory Council

Anne Baum
 Marc Falato '87
 Oldrich Foucek III '72 '05P '09P, chair
 Ellen Baker Ghelardi
 Michele McGrath
 Maddie H Scheler '08 '09G

ENDOWMENTS:

Anne R. Kline '81 Endowed Fund for Creatively Integrated Programming
 Marc A. Falato '87 Presenting Series Endowment Fund
 The Long Family Endowment for Community Outreach in the Arts
 Claire and Ted Diamond '37 '85H Endowment
 Zoellner Arts Center Opportunity Fund
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 Zoellner Advisory Council Director's Endowment
 Klees Family Instrumental Ensemble Endowed Fund

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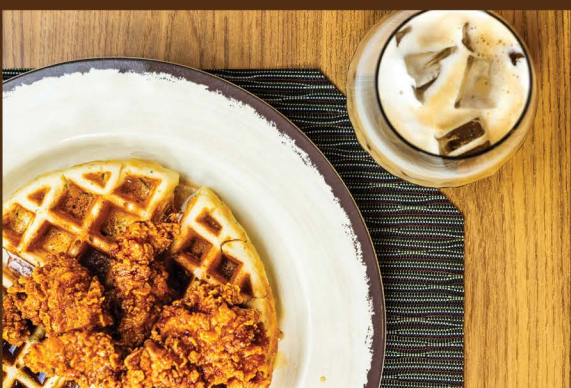
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INFORMATION

CAN'T MAKE IT? EXCHANGE OR DONATE YOUR TICKETS.

Contact us before the show to either **exchange** for another event, or convert the value of your tickets to a charitable contribution to Zoellner Arts Center. Subscribers and Friends may exchange for free, just \$1 per ticket for all others. Patrons are responsible for any difference in ticket price, exchanges must occur within event category (e.g., Music Dept. ticket for Music Dept. ticket). Excludes rental events. No refunds.

PARKING IS FREE in the garage attached to the center for all Presenting Series, Lehigh University Music Dept. and Dept. of Theatre events (excluding some weekday morning events, Christmas Vespers in Packer Chapel and Dolce in Lamberton Hall). Please note, there may be a parking charge for non-Zoellner sponsored events.

GROUPS SAVE UP TO 15% Just buy 10 or more tickets to a performance. Orders incur a one-time per-performance fee of \$6 per group order in lieu of per-ticket fees.

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Single tickets ordered by phone or online carry fees ranging from \$2.25-\$8.50 per ticket. Tickets purchased in-person may carry fees of up to 50 cents per ticket. The City of Bethlehem Amusement tax is 5% on tickets above \$10, with a cap of \$2 per ticket. Additional delivery charges may apply, check online for details.


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HOUSE NOTES

Concessions: Food and beverage service will likely be limited. Check the “Know Before You Go” email sent to ticket holders the week of the show. Be sure to give Ticket Services your email.

Please silence all mobile devices upon entering the theatre.

To leave theatres during performances, use the rear doors, if you are able, to minimize disruption of performance.

Late seating occurs at suitable intervals. While waiting, you may watch performance on lobby monitors.

Lost & Found: Contact Ticket Services. Not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Families with Children:

We welcome children of all ages to our Family Series shows. For performances not listed as Family Series in our brochure, we recommend that attendees be ages four and over. Everyone entering the theatre must have a ticket, and sit quietly in a seat throughout the performance. There are closed-circuit monitors in the lobby which supervised children may use to watch performances if they need a break.

Accessible seating can be requested when purchasing tickets. Accessible parking is on levels 1 and 3 in the parking garage.

Free assistive-listening devices are available through Ticket Services for amplified performances.

Free Sensory Kits are available to checkout, please inquire at the box office or with an usher.

Questions about your tickets?

Contact Ticket Services:

Phone: 610-758-2787 ext. 0
Email: inzactix@lehigh.edu

Box Office Hours:

TUE 12-6; WED-FRI 12-5
For ticketed events: SAT 2 hours prior to curtain, 90 mins. all other days.

All programs and artists are subject to change. In the event of a cancellation or material change, we will make every effort to contact all ticket holders. We must reserve the right to make any changes whatsoever in the event owing to any unforeseen or unavoidable cause or to cancel the event for any reason beyond our control without being liable to pay any ticket holder compensation for damages other than a ticket of comparable value to an event (based on availability).

Video recording or photography may occur for this performance that might include images of audience members. Your attendance at today’s performance grants permission for further usage of such images.

ZOELLNER ARTS CENTER

at LEHIGH UNIVERSITY

2026 SPRING SEASON AT A GLANCE



DRUM TAO	FRI JAN 23
JAZZ FACULTY	FRI JAN 30
BUGS FAMILY SERIES 	SUN FEB 1
SANGJARU	THU FEB 5
NEW YORK JAZZ REPERTORY ORCHESTRA	SAT FEB 7
LUVME	SUN FEB 8
TRAVELING WHILE BLACK	SELECT DATES FEB-APR
AKROPOLIS REED QUINTET	SAT FEB 14
THE JANE AUSTEN PLAYLIST	SUN FEB 15
<i>THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST</i>	FEB 20 - 28
PHILHARMONIC	FRI FEB 20, SAT FEB 21
JAZZ REPERTORY ORCHESTRA	SAT FEB 28
GRIMMZ FAIRY TALES FAMILY SERIES 	SUN MAR 1
DOLCE TREBLE CHOIR	THU MAR 5
DIRTY DANCING IN CONCERT	FRI MAR 6
TOMMY DORSEY ORCHESTRA	SUN MAR 22
CHOIR, DOLCE AND GLEE CLUB	FRI MAR 27, SAT MAR 28
CLICK, CLACK, MOO FAMILY SERIES 	SUN MAR 29
THE UKULELE ORCHESTRA OF GREAT BRITAIN	FRI APR 10
<i>INTO THE WOODS</i>	APR 10 - 18
THE TALLIS SCHOLARS	SAT APR 11
COMPAGNIE MULTICORPS / MARCEL GBEFFA	FRI APR 17
STUDENT JAZZ CONCERT	SUN APR 19
PHILHARMONIC.....	FRI APR 24, SAT APR 25
SYMPHONIC BAND.....	SUN APR 26
CHORAL ARTS.....	FRI MAY 1, SAT MAY 2
WIND ENSEMBLE	SUN MAY 3
NYC SKA ORCHESTRA	FRI MAY 15

KEY: **PRESENTING SERIES** | **MUSIC DEPARTMENT** | **DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE**

