

# ZOELLNER ARTS CENTER

LEHIGH UNIVERSITY



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PLAYBILL



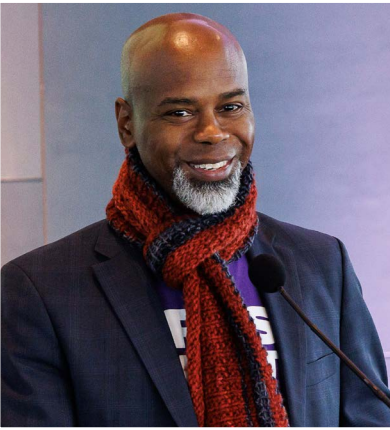


Photo By John Kish IV

## DEAR FRIENDS,

We are at the beginning of a new arts Renaissance. There are moments when one can feel the shifting tides of change and that moment is now as people return to live performing arts. I have had many conversations about the role of the arts in bringing our diverse urban, suburban, and rural Lehigh Valley communities together through shared experiences. The 2024-2025 season will rejuvenate our spirits through world-class artists as we continue to gather.

Montreal-based Cirque Kikasse starts our Presenting Series with a unique twist,

performing their production of *Santé* in front of Fritz Laboratory on our Lehigh University campus. This one-of-a-kind FREE performance, set on a food truck, will connect our campus, surrounding community, and local students in a truly memorable way. Our dedication to inclusivity and diversity in the arts is exemplified by our partnership with the internationally acclaimed disability arts ensemble, Kinetic Light. Their residency, a testament to our shared values, will intertwine with Touchstone Theatre's Festival Unbound, culminating in a breathtaking performance of *DESCENT*. This dance performance promises to be a powerful and moving experience, showcasing the transformative power of art and the positive impact of our partnerships.

In case you missed Marc Martel's sold-out tribute to Queen the last time, he is returning to perform his spectacular show, *One Vision of Queen*. I knew he had to come back. I could not go anywhere without people asking me to bring him back. He's back. And if you happen to be asking for a little R.E.S.P.E.C.T., join us for an electrifying tribute celebrating the music of the legendary Aretha Franklin.

With our commitment to nurturing the next generation of art enthusiasts and helping create a healthy community, we continue our Family Series partnership with Lehigh Valley Reilly Children's Hospital events like Family Day Fest, a celebration of community partners, free activities, and music by Somos Amigos featuring Sonia de la Santos and the Grammy Award-winning band, The Okee Dokee Brothers.

Zoellner Arts Center embraces our role as a university-based presenter to transcend entertainment. Lehigh University student artists are integral to this construct as they present concerts and plays celebrating their creativity and that of the faculty that inspires them.

We strive to empower the youth of our community by curating and co-curating high-quality multidisciplinary arts programs with educators that integrate the arts into their classrooms and inspire students to create their own artwork. We remain steadfast in our commitment to foster meaningful dialogue by utilizing the arts as a lens through which we explore and celebrate our shared humanity.

*Mark Fitzgerald Wilson*

Executive Director

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# BELLA GAIA

## *BEAUTIFUL EARTH*



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LEHIGH UNIVERSITY



2024.2025  
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

BELLA GAIA is a live concert that mixes music, dance, & NASA immersive imagery that turns the stage planetary. The award-winning BELLA GAIA tells a cosmic story, exploring both human and natural expressions of the Living Universe, illuminating the relationship between civilization and nature as we enter the Anthropogenic Age by visualizing our effects on the biosphere, while celebrating the evolution of art and culture. BELLA GAIA is a new story for our time, delivered in the language and technology of the future.

Inspired by astronauts who spoke of the life-changing power of seeing the Earth from space, BELLA GAIA successfully simulates this [Overview Effect\\*](#) from space flight, and makes audiences “Discover what it’s like to be an astronaut” (*Washington Post*). The moving experience leaves audiences with a transformative sense of wonder and inspiration seeing the Earth as a multifaceted yet cohesive working organism, and to realize deeply, emotionally, that there IS something to lose, and therefore there IS something to preserve, to steward.

Crafted by the neuroscience-driven methodology of director-composer Kenji Williams, the “transcendental” and “Stunning” effect of BELLA GAIA (*Scientific American*) has proven to generate the elusive but critical emotional response: A Reason to Care.

Scientific research suggests that our neurochemistry opens the door to cognitive learning through emotional and right-brain engagement, and without creating this deeper, memorable experience, the human brain does not learn. Humans absorb what they feel, not what they are taught, and this is what drives action. After one Bella Gaia show, NASA funded survey results show a 90% conversion rate in audiences reporting a greater understanding of our earth, and a more than doubling in the response of people who feel a more personal relationship with the Earth in their personal lives (31% -> 64%).

BELLA GAIA captures the [Overview Effect\\*](#), using satellite imagery of Earth, time lapses, cultural heritage footage, NASA data visualizations, dance, and an award-winning customized musical score to present a spectacular journey around the planet that illuminates the connections between natural systems and human activities through an immersive storytelling method threaded by an orbiting flight path from the International Space Station.

BELLA GAIA transforms complex scientific data into an accessible audio-visual experience to expand public understanding of global challenges we face and inspire audiences to act as stewards for our shared resources. A “Living Atlas” journey of our planet, BELLA GAIA creates a direct experience and connection with the creative forces of Earth. Bella Gaia’s powerful methodology transcends politics or belief systems and has been proven so effective that astronauts say the experience is an accurate simulation of space flight, NASA funds BELLA GAIA’s education program on Earth Science & Environmental Responsibility, and climate change skeptics have been converted after seeing one show.

\* *“The Overview Effect: Space Exploration and Human Evolution”*  
author: Frank White

## CONTRIBUTORS

### **Kenji Williams**

#### **FOUNDER - CREATIVE DIRECTOR - CEO**

Kenji Williams is an entrepreneur, composer and director for immersive live theater, mixed reality, and interactive data visualization, and is the creative director and producer of the NASA-powered earth-from-space show, BELLA GAIA. Named a “100 Top Creative” by *Origin Magazine*, a World Technology Network award finalist in Arts, Entertainment, and Education, and a Grammy voting member, Williams explores the nexus of art, technology, and transformation, through immersive technology platforms from IMAX, Fulldome, Holograms, and XR. Williams is an artist in residence at the new Movement Lab at Columbia University, and was an artist in residence and visiting scholar at the University of Colorado at Boulder developing a live 3D Holographic theatre show.

Kenji's unique vision translates into collaborations with orbiting astronauts aboard the International Space Station, Ocean pioneer Sylvia Earle, Deepak Chopra, to multimedia artist Paul Miller, earning international film awards from Sundance, Lumen Prize, Canadian Society of Cinematographers, Science Media Awards, Best Soundtrack Composition at Macau International Fulldome Film Festival, People's Choice Award, Fiske Fulldome Film Festival. Kenji has garnered media exposure from the *Washington Post*, *Village Voice*, BBC, NPR, PBS, Huffington Post and *USA Today*.

In its 13th year, BELLA GAIA has toured around the world to 15 countries, presenting over 300 shows, and has a Fulldome movie presenting at planetariums around the world including at Fantasy Domes / LINQ hotel on the Las Vegas strip. Williams tours around the world, at performing arts theaters, museums, and conferences such as, TEDx, Aspen Institute, Smithsonian, Guggenheim Museum, Strathmore, Marin Civic Center, Winspear Opera House, UNESCO, and the U.S. State Department.

### **Kristin Hoffmann**

#### **VOCALS & KEYBOARD**

*“My goal is to spread love, light, peace and awareness into the world through the vehicles of music and energetic frequency.” – Kristin*

Kristin Hoffmann is a Juilliard trained multi-instrumentalist with a transcendental ability to take audiences on a journey of deep awakening to spirit. Her music has been heard on major record labels, film and television, and she has performed throughout the world, collaborating with creative luminaries on projects ranging from individual albums to grand symphonic productions.

A strong advocate for peace and ocean conservation, Kristin has appeared internationally at environmental concerts and conventions: TEDx San Francisco, The Emoto Peace Project concert in Tokyo, the Unity Earth global event series, at the signing of The Fuji Declaration, and with The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London. In August 2016, the symphonic version of her “Song for the Ocean” was performed at Sydney Opera House by a choir of 800 Australian children. Kristin is the vocalist and keyboardist for the acclaimed show, BELLA GAIA, the multimedia theater experience created in conjunction with NASA. She is an inductee of the group Evolutionary Leaders and an active board member of FIONS (Friends of Institute of Noetic Sciences). [www.kristinhoffmann.com](http://www.kristinhoffmann.com)

**Sumie Kaneko**  
**VOCALS & KOTO**

Sumie Kaneko is a Japanese koto and shamisen player and vocal artist. In 2002 after studying Japanese traditional music at Tokyo National University of the Arts, Sumie moved to Boston and studied Jazz vocal at Berklee College of Music. She is renowned for her ability to collaborate with a diverse array of visionary international artists and writers: Pulitzer winner Paula Vogel, composer Evan Ziporyn, taiko artist Kenny Endo, and American Ballet Theater principal dancers Isabella Boylston and James Whiteside and many more, and the traces of the music have been performed at such prestigious venues as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Blue Note NY, TED talk, Google, Getty Center, Boston Ballet, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, etc. Sumie tours overseas as a cultural exchange artist. She has performed in over 20 countries. Also as an educator, she has lectured at large academic scenes including: Harvard University, Princeton University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Texas A&M University, and Aoyama Gakuin University as a renowned international artist.

**Irina Akulenko**  
**CHOREOGRAPHER & DANCE ARTIST**

Irina Akulenko is a New York City-based performer, teacher and choreographer, with a burning passion for arts of all genres. She has studied numerous styles of Belly Dance, Classical Indian (Odissi), Contemporary, Flamenco and other forms of movement, and now enjoys fusing these art forms to create unique performances. Irina's background in visual arts and interest in dynamic storytelling is continuously leading her to search for new ways to connect to her audience.

Today, Irina performs on various New York stages and frequently tours nationally and internationally, as a soloist and choreographer for NASA-powered multimedia show BELLA GAIA. She is proud to be the assistant artistic director to BELLA GAIA and its 3D holographic production "Origin Stories." Additionally, she is a principal dancer, instructor and choreographer with Bellyqueen Dance Theater, director of her company - Kiaroscuro Dance - which focuses on Classical Indian fusion and Tribal style dance; she has completed a variety of projects with numerous stellar dance companies and musicians, and has released an array of successful instructional products. Furthermore, she holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science, and has a strong interest in women's issues and visual arts. <http://www.danceirina.com>

**Mariyah**  
**DANCE ARTIST**

Mariyah is a dance artist/choreographer/instructor and one of NYC's most celebrated bellydancers. In addition to her performance of classic Oriental Dance, Mariyah is a theatrical artist drawing on her study of a variety of dance and movement forms and her passion for myth, mysticism and poetry to create dances which evoke archetypal figures and a journey of the Spirit.

Distinguished by her graceful and evocative dance style, she has performed countless shows for weddings, events, cabaret and theater stages in the NYC area and internationally. She is a member of the Dalia Carella Dance Collective since 2001, a cofounder of Entelechy Dance Theater and Infinity Bellydance, a performer with BELLA GAIA and has collaborated in projects such as the Arabic music and dance ensemble, Zikrayat and Bellyqueen.

A lifelong student, Mariyah's endless love for movement and music has led her to the continuing study of Vintage American-Cabaret, Turkish and Egyptian bellydance as well as Odissi, Persian, Contemporary and other dance forms. Mariyah is co-creator and a featured instructor of the DVD *Belly Dance Drum Solo: Concepts for Dancers and Drummers*. [www.bellydancernewyork.com](http://www.bellydancernewyork.com)

### **Rhiannon Catalyst**

#### **IMMERSIVE TOUR PRODUCER & LIGHTING DIRECTOR**

Rhiannon Catalyst is an interdisciplinary artist and immersive program & tour producer cocreating works at the intersection of art and science to catalyze change. A proud BELLA GAIA ensemble member for nine years, she builds tours and leads educational and VR outreach in collaboration with schools and institutions including NASA's JPL, Ames, and Langley research centers. As creative director and producer for Purpose Earth and select Unity Earth events, she co-creates global experiences uniting peace leaders, Indigenous leaders, artists, environmental advocates, and grassroots changemakers. In 2024, she co-produced and performed in international broadcasts across Japan with Unity Earth and Kristin Hoffmann, culminating in a historic International Day of Peace event in Hiroshima.

A featured artist with the "radically inclusive" art & technology incubator Music Not Impossible, Catalyst integrates haptic technology with immersive theater. Her original works—"To Sense the Sea," "Homesick," and "Ancestors and Glaciers"—incorporate elements like ambisonic sound from a melting Icelandic iceberg.

Catalyst is an arts advocate, panelist & author on the art of altruism and the transformative history of immersive arts, and serves on the Beautiful Earth Foundation board. She deeply believes in the power of purpose-driven collaboration across cultures, disciplines, and generations.  
[www.rhiannoncatalyst.com](http://www.rhiannoncatalyst.com)

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*Thanks to PPL for their support of the Bella Gaia school show performance.*





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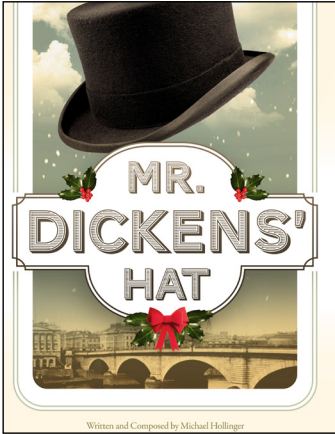
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# INFORMATION

## 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.

## TAXES AND FEES


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.


# OUR GIFT CERTIFICATES NEVER EXPIRE.

Purchase these at Ticket Services or online  
in any amount and give  
the gift of entertainment.

Certificates cannot be redeemed for rental events.

## CONNECT WITH US!

 ZoellnerArts

 zoellnerartscenter

 zoellnerarts

 inzactix@lehigh.edu



GO TO WEBSITE

[zoellnerartscenter.org](http://zoellnerartscenter.org)

[#artshaveimpact](https://twitter.com/artshaveimpact)

# HOUSE NOTES

**Concessions:** At this time, food and beverage service will likely be limited or not available. 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](mailto: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

## 2025 SPRING SEASON AT A GLANCE



LUVME .....	JAN 31
YAMATO: THE DRUMMERS OF JAPAN .....	FEB 1
JAZZ FACULTY .....	FEB 2
KING'S RETURN .....	FEB 7
ONE VISION OF QUEEN FEATURING MARC MARTEL .....	FEB 8
FIRST BIENNIAL SALERNI ART SONG RECITAL .....	FEB 9
PHILHARMONIC .....	FEB 14, 15
THE PRINCETON SINGERS .....	FEB 16
PROOF .....	FEB 21-MAR 1
THE ALUMINUM SHOW  FAMILY SERIES .....	FEB 22
BELLA GAIA .....	FEB 28
JAZZ REPERTORY ORCHESTRA .....	MAR 1
EUGENE ALBULESCU .....	MAR 2
ACADEMY OF ST MARTIN IN THE FIELDS .....	MAR 7
NEW YORK JAZZ REPERTORY ORCHESTRA .....	MAR 8
CHOIR, DOLCE AND GLEE CLUB .....	MAR 21, 22
GOODNIGHT MOON & THE RUNAWAY BUNNY  FAMILY SERIES .....	MAR 23
EARL.  .....	MAR 27
PASCUALA ILABACA Y FAUNA .....	MAR 28
THE SOUND OF (BLACK) MUSIC .....	MAR 29
CALPULLI MEXICAN DANCE COMPANY .....	APR 4
MICHAEL JORGENSEN, VIOLIN AND STEVE BECK, PIANO .....	APR 5
R.E.S.P.E.C.T. .....	APR 6
PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER .....	APR 10
AMERICAN BRASS QUINTET .....	APR 11
THE BOOKSTORE .....	APR 11-19
SYMPHONIC BAND  .....	APR 13
PHILHARMONIC .....	APR 25, 26
WIND ENSEMBLE .....	APR 27
CHORAL ARTS .....	MAY 2, 3
STUDENT JAZZ CONCERT .....	MAY 4
THE PAPER ESCAPER  FAMILY SERIES .....	MAY 11
THE DOO WOP PROJECT .....	MAY 17

KEY: PRESENTING SERIES | MUSIC DEPARTMENT | DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE

