

NEW DIRECTIONS

3 evenings of work by student choreographers

Epstein Family Amphitheater

June 5-7 @ 8pm

TIX @ THEATRE.UCSD.EDU

empower
love
support
play
impact
transform
be



Cece Carton

Brenda Estrada

Katie Gillespie

Katarina Guillot

Kristina Little

Natalia Morales

Chenning Zhang

UC San Diego

ARTS AND HUMANITIES
Theatre and Dance

New Directions '25

Directed by Ana María Álvarez

Featuring Choreography by Cece Carton, Brenda Estrada, Katie Gillespie, Kristina Little, Katarina Guillot, Natalia Morales, Chenning Zhang

THE CAST

Heidy Amaro
Natania Asapokhai
Mark Betancourt
Catalina Bilandzija
Ella Breaux
Celia Carton
Audrey Chang
Ella Chan
Christie Chen
Italy Clark
Nicole Constan
Valeria Corona
Jillian Curry
Alexia Demiroska
Abby DeSpain
Brenda Estrada
Kaitlyn Fong
Katie Gillespie
Katarina Guillot
Momo Hasegawa
Kayla Hess
Zelie Neal Huerta

Mariah Huizar
Chazaiad Johnson
Rikki Kapiloff
Claire Kim
Arianna Kricun
Yoonjin Lim
Qinpei Deborah Li
Kristina Little
Idaliz Lua-Sandoval
Hannah Lucas
Natalia Morales
Evelyn Moreno
Mirelle Nakoud
Arden Noland
Mariana Noriega
Yuliana Noriega
Orelia Oiknine
Sona Ovasapyan
Lauren Pak
Autumn Pedranti
Nazia Quadir
Leilani Rivera

Nicole Sahrting
Hope Sato
Jianna Scordo
Yael Sela
Michelle Shen
Lexi Stahl
Mars Stern
Pawin Suksunpantep
Brandon Torres
Grace Trainor
Teresa Velasco
J'Sean Wiley
Clara Williams
Maile Wong
Anni Wu
Erin Yamaoka
Hannah Yuan
Chenning Zhang
Elaine Zhao

CREATIVE/DESIGNERS

Director	Ana María Álvarez
Assistant Director	Laura Manning
Lighting Designer	Melody Vilitchai
Lighting Designer	Haley Quynh Baugher
Lighting Designer	Michael Huang
Sound Designer	Scarlett Shi
Choreographer	Celia Carton
Choreographer	Katarina Guillot
Choreographer	Kristina Little
Choreographer	Natalia M. Morales
Choreographer	Katie Gillespie
Choreographer	Chenning Zhang
Choreographer	Brenda Estrada

FACULTY

Stage Management Faculty	Laura Powell
Lighting Faculty	Christopher Kuhl
Sound Faculty	Bobby McElver
Wardrobe Faculty	Debbie Mcallahan
Props Faculty	Jennifer Cheung
Costumes Faculty	Jan Mah
Epstein Faculty	Sam McLaughlin

STAGE MANAGEMENT

Production Stage Manager (Mentor)	Karina Ortega
Production Stage Manager	Piper Lord
Assistant Stage Manager	Laura Yang
Assistant Stage Manager	Clara Rowlett
Assistant (Prep) Stage Manager	Isabel Rademaker
Assistant Stage Manager	Royou Lu
Production Assistant	Samantha Pipkins

CREW

Scenic/Costume Crew	Lauren Sandoval
Scenic/Costume Crew	Keanne Pye
Scenic/Costume Crew	Camila Ruiz
Scenic/Costume Crew	Kiara Young
Scenic/Costume Crew	Juliette Kinderman Laufer
Scenic/Costume Crew	Makenna Holst

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Our bodies hold memory. Our bodies live and breathe our stories, the past, our ancestors' dreams and the possibility of a future of love, justice and belonging. I know that our choreographers are all feeling deep gratitude to be here, in this beautiful outdoor amphitheater, sharing their visions, imaginings, hopes with you all tonight. I am grateful for them! It has been a joy to help support each one of them bring their vision to life. I have learned so much from each of these courageous young people, and I feel the weight of this moment. Everyday seems to bring another major blow - we are taking nonstop hits - to public education, arts and culture, healthcare, social services, the list goes on. This year has left us reeling, holding on to one another to make sense of the world. I have found moments like this one - gathering in community, witnessing creative process, celebrating each other - to be critical for grounding in hope. There is so much we have taken for granted - like freedom of speech - freedom of expression - that don't feel safe or certain right now, yet we continue to make, to imagine, to move and to connect with one another. This relentless pursuit of connection - this unstoppable will to move, to dance, to feel - it's our lifeline.

I encourage you all to lean in, listen, be curious and be open as you witness these 7 artists lead a cast of 75 incredible human beings to practice what it means to move our bodies, together, with a vision and a purpose. Enjoy this work. Enjoy this night. Share your love with these artists as they discover their voices and practice what it means to SHOW UP!



SHOW ORDER

Much More Than This

Choreographer: Celia Carton

Music: "My Way" by Frank Sinatra

Dancers: Catalina Bilandzija, Ella Breaux, Celia Carton, Ella Chan, Christie Chen, Jillian Curry, Abby DeSpain, Kaitlyn Fong, Mirelle Nakoud, Lauren Pak, Nazia Quadir, Leilani Rivera, Yael Sela, Michelle Shen, Lexi Stahl, Mars Stern, Maile Wong, Elaine Zhao

Much More Than This is a manifestation of how my grandfather Koppy, who I never got to meet, has deeply impacted who I am and how I go about my life. This piece highlights important memories, stories, quotes, and interactions that have contributed to who we are as individuals and why we continue doing the things we love, our passions, or even why we get out of bed in the morning.

It is truly remarkable to think about the different challenges we have each faced throughout our lives and how we continue to keep going. As humans we are strong, determined, kind, loving, and extremely complex beings. This piece is a reminder of that unique resiliency, an acknowledgement and appreciation of the little things we each hold close, that keep us going.

Poder de la conexión

Choreographer: Katarina Guillot

Music: "CAFÉ CON RON" by Bad Bunny and Los Pleneros de la Cresta
"Que se mueran de envidia" by Joe Veras

Dancers: Mariana Noriega, Valeria Corona, Brandon Torres, Yoonjin Lim, Kayla Hess, Heidi Amaro

This piece is about connection—connection to self, to our community, and to the cultural roots of bachata.

Traditional bachata is more than just steps; it's a feeling, a conversation, a history. Through this choreography, I want to strip away performance, allowing you all to find comfort in your own movement, embrace vulnerability, and experience the raw essence of bachata. It's about learning to move with authenticity, honoring where this dance comes from, and, ultimately, discovering how we connect—both within ourselves and with those who share the dance with us

OOPS, he fumbled

Choreographer: Kristina Little

Poem: “Dear Young Women” by Britta B

Music: “Are You That Somebody” by Aaliyah, “Truth or Dare” by Tyla, “Burn” by Usher, “One Minute Man” by Missy Elliott, “squabble up” by Kendrick Lamar, “Look at Me Now” by Chris Brown ft. Lil Wayne & Busta Rhymes

Dancers: Heidi Amaro, Natania Asapokhai, Mark Betancourt, Audrey Chang, Alexia Demiroska, Kaitlyn Fong, Mariah Huizar, Zelig Neal Huerta, Claire Kim, Yoonjin Lim, Hannah Lucas, Mirelle Nakoud, Arden Noland, Nicole Sahrling, Jianna Scordo, Pawin Suksunpantep, Mars Stern, J'Sean Wiley, Clara Williams, Maile Wong, Hannah Yuan

This piece follows a collective journey of attraction, illusion, heartbreak, and ultimately, empowerment. What begins with curiosity and desire shifts into a reckoning — a realization that being wanted is not the same as being respected. Through layered storytelling and emotionally charged movement, this work explores how people can lose themselves in the chase for validation, only to find something more powerful: clarity, self-worth, and solidarity. Through moments of temptation, confrontation, and celebration, this piece is a reminder that the glow-up isn't just about being seen... it's about seeing yourself clearly and choosing better. This is about what happens when someone fumbles the real prize — and those they lost rise, unapologetically.

Ixchenantzin

Choreographer: Natalia M. Morales

Music: “Xiquiyehua in Xóchitl” by Anónimo, Ensemble Ditirambo, Nightingale, “Music for the Moon and Stars” by Xavier Quijas Yxayotl, “Angelito” (Parabienes) (Costa Chica) by Yolotecuani

Dancers: Yael Sela, Autumn Pedranti, Orelia Oiknine, Sona Ovasapyan, Teresa Velasco-De-La-Rocha

Ixchenantzin is a contemporary folklórico fusion work that honors the dual energies of Tonantzin and Ixchel—Aztec and Mayan goddesses who embody motherhood, healing, and resistance. Rooted in sacred femininity, the piece navigates identity, diaspora, and ancestral memory, serving as both a personal reclamation and a broader invocation of the motherlands from which we descend. Through movement, it conjures the internal landscape of the maternal spirit: beautiful, chaotic, protective, and endlessly resilient. The choreography unfolds in three sections—first, a spiritual realm invoking the presence of maternal ancestors; second, a warrior phase embodying fierce protection and survival; and finally, a space of grief, restoration, and quiet rebuilding. Ixchenantzin is an offering—a danced prayer for those who came before us, and those we are becoming.

A Bildungsroman

Choreographer: Katie Gillespie

Music: “Parfum D’etoiles” by Ichiko Aoba, “Supercell” by King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard

Katie Gillespie, Mariah Huizar, Arianna Kricun, Zelig Neal Huerta, Hope Sato, Grace Trainor, Clara Williams, Anni Wu, Erin Yamaoka

A *bildungsroman* is a coming-of-age story, particularly involved with a person’s education; it’s a transformation of the psyche from childhood to adulthood. “A Bildungsroman” centers my development as not only a dancer, but as a person, through my time here at UC San Diego. I have grown so much through my four years of involvement within the dance department. This piece serves as both a thank-you note and a love letter to this community I have grown into, spreading the joy and connection that I have felt in all of my dance classes and productions.

This piece also serves to tackle the question: when the world is constantly changing around us, how do we keep moving forward? This question gets more important every day. We keep going through the people we surround ourselves with, the communities we forge, and the company we keep. Together, we are strong. "A Bildungsroman" seeks to remind ourselves that the only way out is through, and the only way through is with each other by our sides. We are nothing without each other.

I Myself: Infinitely

Choreographer: Chenning Zhang

Music: "Crystal Clear Wind Chimes at Sunset - With Musical Intro" by Christopher Lloyd Clarke

Dancers: Chenning Zhang, Rikki Kapiloff, Momo, Anni Wu, Qinpei Deborah Li

Shhhhh... Do you want to know the story?

I Myself: Infinitely is embracing one's infinite power, celebrating the myths of individuals in a slow and meditating natural environment. We calm down, enjoy stretches, contract, and extension of our own body. Inspired by the significance of self care and solitary, embedded with a self growing story of letting go and making wishes for the future, the solo performer I myself is presenting my insights in a mythic and free imagination world, though always connected with nature. Along with spirits being but never affecting her from another dimension, they create a potential link between two worlds, though never effecting.

It's about free expression, it's about letting go, it's about being comfortable with solitary. Shall we move away from the hustle and bustle, and information bomb..

Can I see myself?

Ohyes, I believe I am never alone..

Ohyes, I'll make a wish..

I wish... every goodness is coming to me

I wish i'm always flying...

I shall see and feel my infinite power and goodness.

Eleftheria

Choreographer: Brenda Estrada

Music: “dandelion” by Ariana Grande, “Freedom” by Pharrell Williams, “Ritmo De Mi Pueblo” by Las Cafeteras and Making Movies, “Money Game” by Ren Gill

Dancers: Evelyn Mares Moreno, J’Sean Wiley, Mariana Noriega, Yuliana Noriega, Teresa Velasco, Nicole Constan, Chazaiah Johnson, Idaliz Lua-Sandoval, Italy Villarial

This piece offers a deeply personal and poetic exploration of the immigrant experience — intertwining a mother’s quiet resilience, the weight of being undocumented, and the universal longing for freedom, safety, and belonging. It challenges the dehumanizing narratives imposed on immigrants by amplifying the voices of those who live the reality — voices that walk, run, and sprint not only to survive, but to pursue dreams.

What does it mean to be truly seen? To be exhausted, yet keep going? To carry culture, memory, and pain in silence while facing judgment in plain sight? Through rhythmic storytelling and reflection, this piece calls for empathy instead of alienation, understanding over ignorance, and pride in identity rather than erasure.

Elefthería confronts erasure, challenges imposed ceilings, and makes visible the invisible labor of perseverance. It honors the dreams of those who came before us, the battles we continue to fight, and the radical act of refusing to give up. I do this for myself. I do this for my mother. And I do this for everyone who is still running toward a freedom they deserve to claim.

THE CHOREOGRAPHERS

Celia Carton - a fourth-year dance and psychology major with a minor in law and society, graduating in June 2025. She has been a part of many UC San Diego Dance Productions including: *51 Barrio* (2021), *Winter Works* (2022 & 2024), *Fall Dance Show* (2022), *New Directions* (2024), and *joyUs justUs* (2024). Cece is thrilled to have her last show at UCSD be *New Directions*! It feels fitting that her final dance performance would be a chance for her to create her own work and showcase all she has learned throughout these 4 years. Thank you to the department, her cast, friends, and most importantly family for the many years of support and encouragement.

Katarina Guillot - a fourth-year Dance major graduating in June 2025. Born and raised in Guatemala, Katarina's dance journey has been deeply shaped by her family and community. She has had the blessing of traveling around the U.S. teaching and performing bachata while juggling college. She is proud to finally share her work at UCSD before continuing her professional career in Latin dance. This piece is about connection—connection to self, to community, and to the cultural roots of bachata. Traditional bachata is more than just steps; it's a feeling, a conversation, and a history. Katarina hopes to inspire dancers to move authentically, embrace vulnerability, and discover how we connect, both with ourselves and those around us. With heartfelt gratitude, she extends her love to her family for their constant support, to her partner Josue for being a never-ending source of inspiration, and to her cast for bringing her vision to life with such dedication and passion.

Kristina Little -a fourth year public Health major with a minor in dance, graduating in June 2025. Born and raised in Maryland, Kristina has been dancing for 19 years and continues to find joy, purpose, and power through movement. Kristina first performed in *New Directions* during her first year as a soloist, and now, closing out her college journey as both a choreographer and performer in the same production feels bittersweet and full-circle. She believes her place in this world is to uplift others, share knowledge, and create meaningful connections across diverse communities. With a deep hope for a more unified world — one that learns from its past rather than repeating it — Kristina uses dance as a tool for both expression and change. She extends heartfelt thanks to Ozi Boms, Elizabeth Haldo, and Arden Noland for their invaluable contributions in bringing this piece to life.

Natalia M. Morales - a fourth-year Political Science and Dance Scholar, graduating in June 2025. Proudly from the suburbs of Los Angeles and rooted in a richly mixed heritage, *Ixchenantzin* is her offering to the world—woven from intellectual inquiry, cultural memory, and embodied storytelling of divine femininity, inspired by the quiet, fierce, and ethereal energy of her mother. Some of her proudest undergraduate moments include creating her independent dance film *Vueltas y Tradiciones* (2023); performing in *Little Ama*/with La Jolla Playhouse (2024); joining the Community Cast of CONTRA-TIEMPO's *joyUSjustUS* (2025); and co-directing Ballet Folklórico La Joya de México's 2024 Showcase. Her choreographic specialty lies in using movement as a political spearhead—exploring how the act of moving can reclaim, reimagine, and guide us back to our deepest truths. She is endlessly grateful to her incredible cast for their commitment over the past ten weeks, and sends all the love to her mom, dad, her twin sister Samantha, her rescue pup Romeo, and her mini chipin Zeus—her anchors, her safe place, her everything: “I love you guys, to the end of the world.”

Katie Gillespie - a fourth-year double major in Cognitive Science (Machine Learning) and Dance, graduating this June. She started getting more involved with the UC San Diego dance department productions in the last year, performing in *Winter Works* (2024) and *JoyUS JustUS* (2024). In her last year at UCSD, Katie has decided to find whatever scares her the most and run full force into it, leading her to

choreograph her own piece in *New Directions* (2025). She hopes that you enjoy what she has created. She would like to thank her parents and her sister, who have always supported her dancing, as well as all of her friends and mentors within the department. With their support, she is strong.

Chenning Zhang - a first year Human Biology international student, graduating in possible June 2028. This is her first time doing a self choreographed dance performance in UCSD. Originally being raised and growing up back in China, she has a distinctive cultural understanding and a broad worldview. Throughout her 18 years of exploring journey, she has been doing slowness art practices and spiritual meditation practices consistently. With her slow and reflective nature on exploring the world, along with the passion to body freedom and gracefulness to world origin, she sees the significance of being aware of one's own body control, and its dynamic nature in a changeable living society. With boundless creativity and passion in dance expression, she likes to feel and see the world with free imagination and express her feelings with movement. A book that gives her huge inspiration is *Unflattening* written by Nick Sousanis. It gives out solutions, art making and dancing, as our glue against the flattening of individual's characteristics in the current capitalist society. A dance artist she admired so much is German choreographer Pina Baush who is willing to discuss women and frustrations in the society with dance shows. Therefore in her choreography "I Myself, Infinitely", thanks to her amazing creativity, she herself is exploring the individual freedom of being and making. She would let go of concerns and social restraints, feeling the world freely. Best wishes to Chenning.

Brenda Estrada - a graduating Business Economics student at UC San Diego with a strong interdisciplinary interest in both performance and strategic thinking. Her academic work explores systems, markets, and decision making – a curiosity that complements her artistry on stage. Brenda has performed in several UCSD department productions, including *Fall Works*, *Winter Works*, and *New Directions*, and was a featured ensemble member *The Running Show* with Monica Bill Barnes & Company. This final performance marks the culmination of her undergraduate journey – where movement, identity, and purpose converge.

THE DANCERS

Much More Than This

Catalina Bilandzija is a second year Media Industries Communications major with a minor in Food Studies. Every dance performance at UCSD has been such a fun experience for her and she is so grateful

to be in Cece's piece as she has been a huge inspo for Catalina (love you Cece!) She dedicates this piece to Altadena and all her friends and family.

Ella Breaux is a second-year dance major from Laguna Beach, CA. She is very excited and grateful to be performing in Cece's piece *"Much More Than This."* This will be her second year participating in *New Directions* and she can't wait to share the stage with all her friends. She would like to thank her parents for their immense support through her dance journey and the UCSD dance department for the opportunity to train and perform.

Celia Carton is a fourth-year dance and psychology major with a minor in law and society.. She has been a part of many UC San Diego Dance Productions including: *51 Barrio (2021)*, *Winter Works (2022 & 2024)*, *Fall Dance Show (2022)*, *New Directions (2024)*, and *joyUs justUs (2024)*. Cece is thrilled to have her last show at UCSD be *New Directions*!

Ella Chan is a third-year Business Economics major with a minor in dance. She has been performing in *New Directions* since her first year and is thrilled to be performing in Cece's piece with this amazing cast.

Christie Chen is a third-year Business Economics major with a minor in Psychology. She is looking forward to her first performance with the UCSD dance department and to be dancing alongside her friends.

Jillian Curry is a fourth-year Environmental Systems major and a huge fan of being outside. This is her 6th UCSD dance performance and 3rd *New Directions*. She graduates next week and would like to say a massive thank you to everyone involved in this wonderful dance program and to all her loved ones: both family and friends.

Abby DeSpain is a fourth-year Psychology major with a minor in Education Studies. This is her first dance performance at UCSD and she feels so excited to be a part of Cece's piece.

Kaitlyn Fong is a third-year Human Biology major and Business and Dance minor from Redwood City, California. Her UCSD credits include *New Directions '23, '24, and '25* and *Winter Works '24 and '25*. She is performing in Cece's piece *"Much More Than This"* and Kristina's piece *"Oops, he fumbled."*

Mirelle Nakoud is a second-year General Biology major with a minor in Dance, performing in Cece's piece, *"Much More Than This,"* and Kristina's piece, *"Oops, he fumbled"*. This is her second year performing in *New Directions*. Mirelle has been dancing and competing for nine years in many styles of dance and is grateful for the opportunity to continue sharing her love of movement on stage.

Lauren Pak is a graduating fourth-year Cognitive Science Design and Interaction major from the greater Los Angeles area. She has been dancing for 16 years, predominantly training in ballet and contemporary

dance. This is her second year performing in New Directions and is so grateful for the UCSD dance community.

Nazia Quadir is a second-year Linguistics major from Petaluma, California, performing in Cece's piece "*Much More Than This*". Her UCSD credits include *New Directions* '24 and *Winter Works* '24, '25. Her experience in dance has led her to a close-knit community at both the UCSD Dance department and on-campus with Aequora Ballet. She feels grateful to share the stage and choreographic process with her peers, and is inspired by the UC San Diego dance community.

Leilani Rivera is a second-year microbiology major performing in Cece's piece, "*Much More Than This*". This will be her first time performing in *New Directions*, and she is so excited to get the opportunity to perform with such talented people! She hopes to be involved in more dance opportunities in the future at with the dance department at UC San Diego!

Yael Sela is a third-year visual arts media major performing in Cece's piece, "*Much More Than This*," and Natalia's piece, "*Ixchenantzin*". Her UC San Diego credits include *New Directions* '24 and *Winter Works* '24, '25. She has loved dancing since she was little and feels incredibly grateful for the opportunity to grow, learn, and perform within the UC San Diego dance community.

Michelle Shen is a fourth-year Math-Computer Science major and Dance minor from Santa Rosa, CA, and is performing in Cece's piece, "*Much More Than This*." This is her second time in New Directions, and she has cherished her time dancing at UCSD, where she is also deeply involved with Aequora Ballet Company. Michelle is incredibly grateful for the friendships, growth, and opportunities the UCSD dance community has given her.

Lexi Stahl is a senior studying Psychology with a specialization in Clinical Psychology performing in Cece's piece, "*Much More Than This*." This is Lexi's third time performing in New Directions and she is so excited for this year's show! Lexi is also a scholar athlete on the Women's Water polo team. She is grateful for all of the friends and family that have supported her throughout her time here at UCSD!

Mars Stern is a second-year Philosophy and Dance double major in Muir College. He is performing in Cece's piece, "*Much More Than This*", and Kristina's piece, "*Oops, he fumbled*". Mars has also performed in UCSD's "*The Promise*", *Winter Works* '24, '25, as well as *New Directions* '24.

Maile Wong is a third-year Ecology Behavior and Evolutionary Biology major performing in Cece's piece, "*Much More Than This*", and Kristina's piece, "*Oops, he fumbled*". Previous UC San Diego credits: *WinterWorks* '24, '25, *New Directions* '23, '24, and *FallWorks* '22.

Elaine Zhao is a senior majoring in Human Biology, performing in *“Much More Than This.”* She has been dancing for 15 years, both competitively and professionally, and this is her third time performing in New Directions. She is super excited to close out her senior year with this amazing cast!

Poder de la conexión

Mariana Noriega is a third-year Human Developmental Sciences major and Dance minor performing in *“Eleftheria”* and *“Poder de la conexión”*. She has loved to dance ever since she was little and began exploring different dance genres when she got to college. This will be her first New Directions performance and she is excited to share the stage with all these incredible dancers. She is beyond thrilled to perform and happy to share what they have been working on for the past 10 weeks.

Valeria Zóí Corona is a second year dance major from Calexico, California. She has been dancing since the age of three and is trained in over 20 styles of dance! Valeria’s UC San Diego credits include: *Winter Works; jazúcar! 2024*, UC San Diego Recreation; Dance By the Shores 2024, *CONTRA-TIEMPO Dance Activist Theater* Community cast member; *jazúcar! 2024, CONTRA-TIEMPO Dance Activist Theater* Community Cast Member; *joyUS justUS 2024, Kaleidoscope short film*; SAG credited; choreographed by Kara Mack 2025, UC San Diego Recreation; Dance By The Shores 2025, UC San Diego Recreation; Dancesport Showcase 2025.

Brandon Torres is a current UCSD student participating in this piece.

Yoonjin Lim is a fourth-year passionate undergraduate majoring in general biology and minoring in dance from Korea. Having just started the dance from Dr. Grace's class in 2023, she found out that dance would be one of the important mental relievers for her life. From her dance journey, she has valued the *dance* as a soul of healing, community supporting each other, the connection formed with others, and joy making. In the long dark tunnel of her life, dance was a ray of light for her. dance was the one that brought a bright smile, energy, and positivity back to her. As living her life where being right was always important the most, she realized that dance was one of the tools to solely express herself and find out who she was before without judging. For her, who is always afraid of trying something new, this dance community where we support each other was especially a great source of strength for her, helping to find her lost pride, self-confidence, and self-esteem. From the fantastic experiences in dance, she knows that she would keep continuing to dance because of joy coming from movements on her body. This is her second time performing on stage. She is very grateful to be part of both Katarina’s piece *“Poder de la conexión”* and Kristina’s piece *“Oops, he fumbled”* in New Directions for deeply understanding what the dance could be, while finding out who she is. She hopes everybody enjoys the show! Her UC San Diego credits include: *WinterWorks 25’*.

Kayla Hess is a first year psychology major from Berkeley, California. They have been dancing for 12 years and have been really enjoying continuing dancing at UCSD. Their first show at UCSD was *WinterWorks '25* and this is their first time in New Directions, in Kat's piece "*Poder de la conexión*".

Heidy Amaro is a graduating fourth-year Business Economics major performing in Katarina's piece, "*Poder de la conexión*", and Kristina's piece, "*Oops he fumbled*." Heidy began dancing about a year ago, and despite having little prior experience, she has become passionate about growing as a dancer and challenging herself with new styles. Coming from a hispanic background, she finds delectation in reconnecting with her roots through Latin dance. She feels determined to keep building her confidence through movement, leveling up, and seeing how far this journey can take her.

Oops, he fumbled

Heidy Amaro is a graduating fourth-year Business Economics major performing in Katarina's piece, "*Poder de la conexión*", and Kristina's piece, "*Oops he fumbled*." Heidy began dancing about a year ago, and despite having little prior experience, she has become passionate about growing as a dancer and challenging herself with new styles. Coming from a hispanic background, she finds delectation in reconnecting with her roots through Latin dance. She feels determined to keep building her confidence through movement, leveling up, and seeing how far this journey can take her.

Natania Asapokhai is a second year linguistics major from Lagos, Nigeria raised in Lancaster, California. She is a pro dancer with the San Diego Seals' Sirens Dance Team and has been dancing since the age of 3. This is her first time participating in New Directions and she is thrilled to be in Kristina's piece, "*Oops he fumbled*."

Mark Betancourt is a third-year Microbiology and Dance Major performing in New Directions for the second time. Mark has performed in New Directions 24' & WinterWorks 25'. He is excited to share his energy and connect to the audience.

Audrey Chang is a second-year cognitive science major and marketing minor from LA, California. She's been dancing since the age of 4 and attended Orange County School of the Arts concentrating in Commercial Dance from grades 7-12. After taking a break from dance her first year she joined Kristina's piece "*Oops, he fumbled*", wanting the opportunity to perform again.

Alexia Demiroska is a fourth-year Business Psychology and Dance double major. She was always interested in dance but really started in college, and is now in Kristina's piece "*Oops, he fumbled*". Credits include *New Directions 23'*, *WinterWorks 24'*, and *New Directions 24'*.

Kaitlyn Fong is a third-year Human Biology major and Business and Dance minor from Redwood City, California. Her UCSD credits include *New Directions* '23, '24, and '25 and *Winter Works* '24 and '25. She is performing in Cece's piece "*Much More Than This*" and Kristina's piece "*Oops, he fumbled*."

Mariah Huizar is a first year Public Health Major from Rancho Cucamonga, California. She is so excited to be dancing under UCSD New Directions for the first time, and has truly loved every moment of it. Performing in Kristina's and Katie's piece has allowed her to rediscover her love for dance and couldn't be more excited to bring their choreography to life. Mariah would like to thank her family for their constant support and dedication they have put into her, *los quiere mucho!*

Zelie Neal Huerta is a first year Human Developmental Science major from San Diego, California. She has been dancing for 11 years and is enthusiastic to be dancing under UCSD New Directions for the very first time. She is performing in Kristina's piece, "*Oops, he fumbled*" and Katie's piece, "*A Bildungsroman*" and is so happy to play a role in their senior year vision! Zelie would like to thank her mom, Marie O'Malley for supporting her throughout her entire dance journey and her dad, Eugene Neal for going to all those daddy daughter dances with her!

Claire Kim is a first year human biology major from Irvine, California. Before starting dance, Claire was a competitive rhythmic gymnast for 7 years and began dancing competitively in high school. Over the last four years, Claire has been on her high school's varsity dance team and song program as well as being the team's captain for two years. At UC San Diego, she continues her passion for dance as a member of the UCSD Dance Team and is very excited to be a part of New Directions this year.

Yoonjin Lim is a fourth-year passionate undergraduate majoring in general biology and minoring in dance from Korea. Having just started the dance from Dr. Grace's class in 2023, she found out that dance would be one of the important mental relievers for her life. From her dance journey, she has valued the *dance* as a soul of healing, community supporting each other, the connection formed with others, and joy making. In the long dark tunnel of her life, dance was a ray of light for her. Dance was the one that brought a bright smile, energy, and positivity back to her. As living her life where being right was always important the most, she realized that dance was one of the tools to solely express herself and find out who she was before without judging. For her, who is always afraid of trying something new, this dance community where we support each other was especially a great source of strength for her, helping to find her lost pride, self-confidence, and self-esteem. From the fantastic experiences in dance, she knows that she would keep continuing to dance because of joy coming from movements on her body. This is her second time performing on stage. She is very grateful to be part of both Katarina's piece "*Poder de la conexión*" and Kristina's piece "*Oops, he fumbled*" in New Directions for deeply understanding what the dance could be, while finding out who she is. She hopes everybody enjoys the show! Her UC San Diego credits include: *WinterWorks 25*'.

Hannah Lucas is a second-year clinical psychology major and dance minor, performing in Kristina's piece, *"Oops, he fumbled"*. With a passion for performance and creative expression, she has had the opportunity to participate in past UC San Diego works, including New Directions 2024 and WinterWorks 2024 and 2025. She is grateful to be a part of such a wonderful, hardworking production!

Mirelle Nakoud is a second-year General Biology major with a minor in Dance, performing in Cece's piece, *"Much More Than This,"* and Kristina's piece, *"Oops, he fumbled"*. This is her second year performing in New Directions. Mirelle has been dancing and competing for nine years in many styles of dance and is grateful for the opportunity to continue sharing her love of movement on stage.

Arden Noland is a second year Applied Mathematics major performing in *"Oops, he fumbled"*. She has been dancing for 17 years and trained intensively throughout childhood at Best Foot Forward Dance Studio in her hometown of Escondido, CA. She is now a member of the UC San Diego Dance Team and is an aspiring LA Rams Cheerleader and Laker Girl.

Nicole Sahrling is a third-year Psychology major performing in Kristina's piece, *"Oops, he fumbled"*. A former professional ballet dancer with the State Opera of Stara Zagora in Bulgaria, she has performed internationally in Dubai, Germany, and Cyprus. Nicole is grateful for the opportunity to broaden her repertoire and take on the challenge of exploring new movement styles.

Jianna Scordo is a first year majoring in Political Science, performing in *"Oops, he fumbled"*, Kristina's piece. Jianna is happy to be back on stage and to be performing with so many amazing people.

Pawin Suksunpantep is a 3rd year Human developmental science major. Getting to be a part of *"Oops, he fumbled"*, I really get to explore my personality, which makes me appreciate what it means to be human and delve myself into the art of emotions. I take every opportunity I can to do performing arts, no matter big or small. I hope to continue to perform and be a part of something great, like this show.

Mars Stern is a second-year Philosophy and Dance double major in Muir College. He is performing in Cece's piece, *"Much More Than This,"* and Kristina's piece, *"Oops, he fumbled"*. Mars has also performed in UCSD's *"The Promise"*, *Winter Works '24,'25*, as well as *New Directions '24*.

J'Sean Wiley is a second year majoring in Dance, performing in Brenda's piece, *"Eleftheria"*, and Kristina's piece, *"Oops, he fumbled"*. J'Sean is grateful for the opportunity to be casted in these pieces and the friends he is making along the way.

Clara Williams is a fourth year Theatre major graduating with her BA this Spring. She was trained in Ballet from a young age; later studying tap, modern, contemporary, jazz, bollywood, and other styles in high

school and college. She spent a semester studying dance on *The West End* in London, England. She is thrilled to be performing in Kristina's "*Oops, he fumbled*," and Katie's "*A Bildungsroman*," in this, her second year participating in New Directions. UC San Diego Credits: *New Directions '22, A Chorus Line, Into the Woods, Neha & Neel, No Singing in the Navy*, and *The Rogue's Trial*.

Maile Wong is a third-year Ecology Behavior and Evolutionary Biology major performing in Cece's piece, "*Much More Than This*," and Kristina's piece, "*Oops, he fumbled*". Previous UC San Diego credits: *WinterWorks '24, '25, New Directions '23, '24*, and *FallWorks '22*.

Hannah Yuan is a first-year cognitive science major with plans to minor in dance. She is performing in Kristina's piece, "*Oops, he fumbled*," her first piece at UC San Diego. Hannah is excited to begin her dance journey on campus and share the stage with these talented cast.

Ixchenantzin

Sona Ovasapyan is a fourth-year International Business major with a minor in Environmental Studies. With a background in Armenian traditional and folk dance, she has actively pursued opportunities to explore cultural dance forms. She performed in *Winterworks '25* in the Afro-Cuban piece called Briyumba Congo and is dancing in today's Baile Folklorico piece called *Ixchenantzin*. She leaves you with: "*Cut my branches, burn my leaves, but you will never touch my roots*"—a tribute to the resilience of her Armenian heritage in remembrance of the genocide, and a sentiment that echoes through today's piece about ancestry.

Autumn Pedranti is a third-year Sociology major with a concentration in Science & Medicine, who is graduating in June 2025. She is in Natalia's piece, "*Ixchenantzin*". She has been dancing for 8 years now, including having just been a part of *WinterWorks '25*, and is grateful to continue her dance journey here and perform on stage one last time.

Yael Sela is a third-year visual arts media major performing in Cece's piece, "*Much More Than This*," and Natalia's piece, "*Ixchenantzin*". Her UC San Diego credits include *New Directions '24* and *Winter Works '24, '25*. She has loved dancing since she was little and feels incredibly grateful for the opportunity to grow, learn, and perform within the UC San Diego dance community.

Teresa Velasco De La Rocha is a first-year transfer student at UC San Diego majoring in Communication and minoring in Dance. She is performing in Brenda's piece, "*Eleftheria*," and in Natalia's piece, "*Ixchenantzin*." She is a passionate, mostly self-taught dancer since high school, Teresa explores all styles of movement and loves the freedom and joy that performing brings. She's always eager to try new things, meet new people, and express herself on stage, something UCSD has helped her dive into even more. One

of her favorite roles was playing Sophie in a production of *Mamma Mia!* (a performance she proudly *killed it* in). When she's not dancing or singing, you can probably find her playing sports, being lazy, or just vibing with life.

A Bildungsroman

Katie Gillespie is a fourth year double major in Cognitive Science (Machine Learning) and Dance. She's also performed in *Winter Works* (2024) and *JoyUS JustUS* (2024), other UC San Diego productions. She's grateful to her family and this wonderful community for giving her the opportunity to continue to perform in college. She loves them all very much.

Mariah Huizar is a first year Public Health Major from Rancho Cucamonga, California. She is so excited to be dancing under UCSD New Directions for the first time, and has truly loved every moment of it. Performing in Kristina's and Katie's piece has allowed her to rediscover her love for dance and couldn't be more excited to bring their choreography to life. Mariah would like to thank her family for their constant support and dedication they have put into her, *los ama mucho!*

Arianna Kricun is a second year who is majoring in Literature/Writing from Los Angeles, California. She has been dancing for 16 years and has really enjoyed getting to continue expressing herself through dance at UCSD. She is so excited to get to perform in New Direction for her second time! She cannot wait for everyone to see Katie's piece.

Zelie Neal Huerta is a first year Human Developmental Science major from San Diego, California. She has been dancing for 11 years and is enthusiastic to be dancing under UCSD New Directions for the very first time. She is performing in Kristina's piece, "Oops, he fumbled" and Katie's piece, "A Bildungsroman" and is so happy to play a role in their senior year vision! Zelie would like to thank her mom, Marie O'Malley for supporting her throughout her entire dance journey and her dad, Eugene Neal for going to all those daddy daughter dances with her!

Hope Sato is a second-year Cognitive Science major with a specialization in Neuroscience and a dance minor. She is thrilled to be performing in her first New Directions, in Katie's piece, "A Bildungsroman". She hopes to continue pursuing her love of dance, performing, and storytelling here at UCSD, and hopes you enjoy the show!

Grace Trainor is a second year Data Science major who has danced for 9 years. She has danced all styles, but was mainly trained in ballet and is a part of Aequora Ballet company here. This is her first time performing in New Directions and appreciates any chance to dance and move. She is grateful for her family and friends who have supported her throughout her dancing!

Clara Williams is a fourth year Theatre major graduating with her BA this Spring. She was trained in Ballet from a young age; later studying tap, modern, contemporary, jazz, bollywood, and other styles in high school and college. She spent a semester studying dance on *The West End* in London, England. She is thrilled to be performing in Kristina's "Oops, he fumbled," and Katie's "A Bildungsroman," in this, her second year participating in New Directions. UC San Diego Credits: *New Directions '22, A Chorus Line, Into the Woods, Neha & Neel, No Singing in the Navy, and The Rogue's Trial.*

Anni Wu is a first-year Dance major at UC San Diego with plans to pursue a double major in Mathematics-Economics. She will be performing in Katie's piece, and Chenning's piece, ———. She has been dancing since the age of 3 for over 15 years of ballet training, along with 7 years of experience in contemporary dance. Her UCSD credits include *Winterworks 25'.*

Erin Yamaoka is a second year biochemistry major from Lake Tahoe. She has been dancing for 13 years and is trained in various styles, including ballet, tap, contemporary and jazz. She is grateful for the connections and space that performing fosters for herself and others to discover and create, and is excited for the opportunity to continue to dance.

I Myself: Infinitely

Qinpei Deborah Li is a senior dance and psychology major. Her passion in bringing forth what is invisible from within and giving form to what is formless makes her an ever exploring Innate choreographer. She loves to create, meditate and inquire. Science and myth are paths along her discovery journey as an explorer, thinker and pursuer. She is content in what she is becoming.

Rikki is a first year student at UC San Diego studying Cognitive Behavioral Neuroscience, Clinical Psychology, and the Philosophy of Cognitive Science. She is performing in Chenning Zhang's piece "*I Myself, Infinitely.*" She has been dancing for four years, primarily training in jazz, hip hop, and recently, ballet.

Momo is a third-year at UC San Diego majoring in international economics and minoring in Accounting. She is performing in Chenning's piece "*I Myself: Infinitely.*" She started dancing at the age of 6, influenced by watching ballet and musical performances at the theater in Tokyo, where her parents work as producers. She trained in ballet for 9 years and gained experience in hip hop and contemporary for 2 years in college.

Anni Wu is a first-year Dance major at UC San Diego with plans to pursue a double major in Mathematics-Economics. She will be performing in Katie's piece, and Chenning's piece "*I Myself:*

Infinitely". She has been dancing since the age of 3 for over 15 years of ballet training, along with 7 years of experience in contemporary dance. Her UCSD credits include *Winterworks 25'*.

Chenning Zhang - a first year Human Biology international student, graduating in possible June 2028. This is her first time doing a self choreographed dance performance in UCSD. Originally being raised and growing up back in China, she has a distinctive cultural understanding and a broad worldview. Throughout her 18 years of exploring journey, she has been doing slowness art practices and spiritual meditation practices consistently. With her slow and reflective nature on exploring the world, along with the passion to body freedom and gracefulness to world origin, she sees the significance of being aware of one's own body control, and its dynamic nature in a changeable living society. With boundless creativity and passion in dance expression, she likes to feel and see the world with free imagination and express her feelings with movement. A book that gives her huge inspiration is *Unflattening* written by Nick Sousanis. It gives out solutions, art making and dancing, as our glue against the flattening of individual's characteristics in the current capitalist society. A dance artist she admired so much is German choreographer Pina Baush who is willing to discuss women and frustrations in the society with dance shows. Therefore in her choreography "I Myself, Infinitely", thanks to her amazing creativity, she herself is exploring the individual freedom of being and making. She would let go of concerns and social restraints, feeling the world freely. Best wishes to Chenning.

Eleftheria

Brenda Estrada is a graduating Business Economics student at UC San Diego with a strong interdisciplinary interest in both performance and strategic thinking. Her academic work explores systems, markets, and decision making – a curiosity that complements her artistry on stage. Brenda has performed in several UCSD department productions, including *Fall Works*, *Winter Works*, and *New Directions*, and was a featured ensemble member *The Running Show* with Monica Bill Barnes & Company. This final performance marks the culmination of her undergraduate journey – where movement, identity, and purpose converge.

Evelyn Mares Moreno is a fourth year Computer Engineering major performing in "Eleftheria". As part of Muir's Welcome Week Committee for the past 3 years, Evelyn has co-choreographed and taught incoming Muir students preparation to compete in UnOlympics. She is excited to bring everything she's learned about herself thought [Brenda's piece] into this upcoming year's UnOlympics, hoping to win the Golden Shoe.

J'Sean Wiley is a second year majoring in Dance, performing in Brenda's piece, "Eleftheria", and Kristina's piece, [name of Kristina's piece]. J'Sean is grateful for the opportunity to be casted in these pieces and the friends he is making along the way.

Mariana Noriega is a third-year Human Developmental Sciences major and Dance minor performing in “Eleftheria” and “[Kat’s piece]”. She has loved to dance ever since she was little and began exploring different dance genres when she got to college. This will be her first New Directions performance and she is excited to share the stage with all these incredible dancers. She is beyond thrilled to perform and happy to share what they have been working on for the past 10 weeks.

Yuliana Noriega is a third-year Cognitive Science: Design and Interaction Major performing in “Eleftheria”. She has previously performed with her tap and contemporary class in the quarterly dance sharing. She is excited to get back on the stage this quarter! She is very thankful for this amazing opportunity to perform and thrilled for the audience to see Brenda’s piece.

Teresa Velasco is a first-year transfer student at UC San Diego majoring in Communication and minoring in Dance. She is performing in Brenda’s piece, “Eleftheria”, and in Natalia’s piece, “Ixchenantzin.” She is a passionate, mostly self-taught dancer since high school, Teresa explores all styles of movement and loves the freedom and joy that performing brings. She’s always eager to try new things, meet new people, and express herself on stage, something UCSD has helped her dive into even more. One of her favorite roles was playing Sophie in a production of *Mamma Mia!* (a performance she proudly *killed it* in). When she’s not dancing or singing, you can probably find her playing sports, being lazy, or just vibing with life.

Nicole Constan is a third-year double majoring in sociology and education and minoring in dance. She loves learning about the ways in which these three areas of study intersect, and is so grateful for the community the dance department has given her. Nicole is performing in “Eleftheria”, which will be her 5th dance show through UCSD.

Chazaiah Johnson is a first-year theater Major performing in Brenda Estrada’s piece, “Eleftheria.” Graduating in the projected year of 2028, he is very honored and excited to perform in such a compelling piece. He strives to be a performer one day and is glad to be accepting such a great opportunity to showcase his evolving skill in dance.

Idaliz Lua-Sandoval is a third-year Public Health major with a Concentration in Medicine Sciences, performing in “Eleftheria”. She has always loved to dance and hopes the audience enjoys the show as much as she enjoyed being a part of it. She also wants to recognize everyone who is a part of the show and everyone who made the show possible for all their hard work. Lastly, she thanks the audience for coming out to see the show!

Italy Villarial is a current UCSD student and is performing in this piece.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

Piper Lord (Production Stage Manager) is a second year theatre major graduating this Summer. UC San Diego Credits: *Baby Shower Katie* (Stage Management Sub), *Winter Works '25* (Light Designer), *New Directions '24* (ASM), *Dead Girl Quinceañera* (Light Board Op.), *The Half-Sibling Play* (Light Board Op.), & *It's Not Getting Better* (Actor, Co.157), *Feywild* (PA, Co.157), and *Fables Unfold* (Actor, Fall Labs '23). She also serves as the Asst. Managing Director of Co157, an undergraduate theatre organization on campus.

Clara Rowlett (Assistant Stage Manager) (she/her) is a second-year ICAM student pursuing minors in Theatre and Cognitive Science. UC San Diego Credits: *The Bench Play* (PSM, Co. 157) and *Hype!* (PSM, Co. 157). After being a dancer for the majority of her childhood, Clara is looking forward to helping bring a dance show to life from a stage management perspective.

Yifan (Laura) Yang (Assistant Stage Manager) (she/her/hers) is a third-year Math major and Dance minor at UC San Diego, currently pursuing a B.S. in Mathematics with a focus on Probability and Statistics. She leverages her analytical mindset to enhance efficiency in production logistics, blending her academic training with a background in dance. Laura served as Assistant Stage Manager for *WinterWorks 2025* and Lighting Assistant for *One Acts 2025* (*Nerve Ending* and *Dirty Martini*), continuing her exploration of the intersection between movement and production. Previously, she was Stage Manager for *An Evening of Dance 2024*. With over a decade of experience in Latin Ballroom dance, she brings a sharp eye for detail, timing, and rhythm to her work behind the scenes.

Rouyou Lu (Assistant Stage Manager) (she/her/hers) is a fourth-year theatre major and has years of acting experience in both theater and film. New Direction '24 (Acting/dancing ensemble).

Isabel Rademaker (Assistant (Prep) Stage Manager) (She/her) is a first year Environmental Policy and International Business double major. Her UC San Diego credits include: *She Loves Me* (Production Assistant, Muir Musical) , *Driven* (Assistant Stage Manager and Scenic Designer, Co. 157) and *The Five Bards of Desente* (Production Stage Manager and Scenic Designer, Co.157) . This is her first dance show and is very excited to work with such an incredible team.

Samantha Pipkins (She/her) is a double major in Theater and Political Science at UC San Diego. This is her first production at UCSD, but she has been acting and directing since middle school. Samantha is excited to support the show from a backstage perspective and gain experience working on the run crew.

Melody Vilitchai (Lighting Designer) (she/hers) is a fourth-year theatre major and an ETC 2024 Fred Foster mentee. UC San Diego credits: *Dirty Martini* (LD), *Nerve Endings* (LD), *The Rogues Trial* (ALD), *New*

Directions 2024 (LD), No Singing in the Navy (ALD), Romeo and Juliet (ALD), Thicker Than (ALD). Other credits: Footloose (LD), Other Desert Cities (ALD), The Five Bards of Desente (LD), Something Rotten! (ALD), Ups and Downs (LD), It's Not Getting Better (LD).

Michael Huang (Lighting Designer) (they/them) is a third-year theatre major. Coming from a background in acting, this is their first time designing lighting for a piece! UC San Diego credit: *Motherloss* (ALD).

Haley Quynh Baugher (Lighting Designer) is a fourth-year theatre major and this is her debut as a Lighting Designer. From the Bay Area, she has previously worked as a scene technician for Cal Performances at UC Berkeley and was a Teaching Artist Intern with San Francisco Youth Theatre. Select credits include Goldilocks Screentime at The WOW Festival (SM Swing; La Jolla Playhouse), *A View From The Bridge* (PA; North Coast), AAPI Playwright Festival (SM; Contemporary Asian Theatre), *Mary Poppins* (SM, South Bay Musical Theatre), *The Play That Goes Wrong*, *People Where They Are* (PA; San Jose Stage). UCSD credits include *Hells Canyon* (Script PA & ASM; Wagner New Play Festival), *Napoli Milionaria* (PA) *Gone Missing* (ASD).

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