

PENN LIVE ARTS
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA



24/25 IMPACT REPORT

BEYOND BOUNDARIES



ART IS OUR ONE TRUE GLOBAL LANGUAGE. IT KNOWS NO NATION; IT FAVORS NO RACE, IT ACKNOWLEDGES NO CLASS. IT SPEAKS TO OUR NEED TO REVEAL, HEAL, AND TRANSFORM. IT TRANSCENDS OUR ORDINARY LIVES AND LETS US IMAGINE WHAT IS POSSIBLE.”

—**RICHARD KAMLER**
ARTIST, EDUCATOR, ACTIVIST

Malandain Ballet Biarritz
Photo by Olivier Houeix

DEAR FRIENDS,

As I reflect on the 2024–25 season, I’m both humbled and proud to be part of Penn Live Arts. In a time marked by division, we embraced our theme of Beyond Boundaries to explore new ideas, perspectives, and artistic forms—brought to life by remarkable artists from Korea, Belgium, France, Italy, South Africa, India, Canada, and beyond. Through their stories, we were invited to see the world in new ways and reconnect with one another in our shared humanity.

Offstage, we deepened engagement through dance master classes, open studio rehearsals, extended high school residencies, and our ongoing INSIGHTS series—offering students, faculty, patrons, and community partners meaningful exploration of the themes, techniques, and creative processes behind the work.

In January 2025, we were thrilled to welcome Dr. Timothy Rommen as Penn’s inaugural Vice Provost for the Arts. A longtime collaborator with PLA, Chair of the Penn Music Department and on faculty since 2002, Dr. Rommen’s appointment marks an exciting step in the University’s commitment to the arts. We look forward to working closely with him as we advance our vision for a more integrated and expansive performing arts ecosystem—serving both Penn and the greater Philadelphia region.

This year also saw exciting momentum for our capital projects. Construction is underway on the new Student Performing Arts Center, and schematic design is complete for the new Weitzman Theatre at the Annenberg Center. Meanwhile, PLA began managing the Iron Gate Theatre, located in the historic Tabernacle United Church, significantly expanding our support for student rehearsal and performance needs.

As we look ahead to the new season—and the 250th anniversary of our city and nation — I’m grateful to be sharing this journey with you, fellow citizens who value and champion the transformative power of the performing arts.



In Gratitude,

Christopher A. Gruits
Executive & Artistic Director
Penn Live Arts

IN MEMORIAM

In memory of the friends, artists, and community members who have passed. We treasure your memory and remain grateful for your impact on Penn Live Arts.

ZAKIR HUSSAIN

Tabla virtuoso Zakir Hussain was one of the architects of the contemporary world music movement and an audience favorite at Penn Live Arts. Each sold-out performance showcased his masterful approach to the tabla and the rich traditions of Indian drumming, captivating audiences across generations.



Photo by Paul Joseph

JEREMY PHILIPS

Jeremy joined the Penn Live Arts team in the fall of 2024 as the Production & Facilities Manager of the Iron Gate Theatre. He was a valued member of our Penn Live Arts team and is deeply missed.





Dentro
Photo by Federico Sigillo

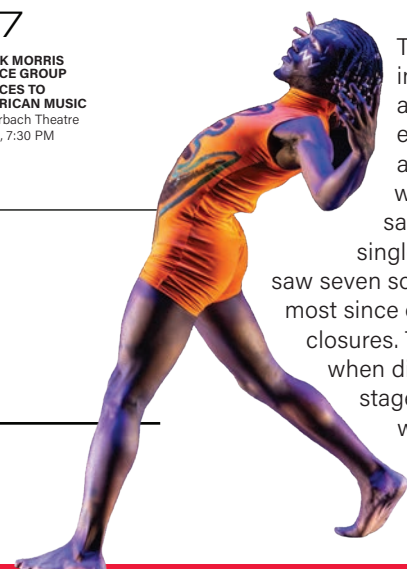
SEPTEMBER 2025

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--|----------------|-----|-----|-----|--|--|
| 31 | 1 LABOR DAY | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP DANCES TO AMERICAN MUSIC Zellerbach Theatre 7:30 PM | 27 MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP DANCES TO AMERICAN MUSIC Zellerbach Theatre 2 PM, 7:30 PM |
| 28 BRANFORD MARSALIS QUARTET Zellerbach Theatre 7 PM | 29 | 30 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

The 2024–25 season, **Beyond Boundaries**, was a powerful celebration of diverse artistry, showcasing creativity that transcended cultural and geographic borders. From South Africa to South Korea, Belgium to Benin, we welcomed artists from around the globe who reminded us of the humanizing and transformative power of live performance. In a testament to our role as a cultural bridge, nine of these artists made their Philadelphia debut, bringing new voices and fresh perspectives to our stages.

A key part of this season's success was our continued investment in new work through the **Penn Live Arts Accelerator Program**. Offering both technical and financial support, the program nurtured the development of groundbreaking projects that elevated not only the artists involved but also PLA's reputation as an incubator for bold, original performance. This year, the program supported four major works: **Minty Fresh Circus**, an Afrofuturistic homage to Black music and movement; **American Street Dancer**, a world premiere **by our artist-in-residence Rennie Harris**; the U.S. premiere of **Giuliana Musso's Dentro**, exploring the trauma of silenced abuse; and **Day of Absence**, the culminating performance of the **Negro Ensemble Company's three-year residency**.

The impact of this globally inclusive and artist-driven approach was reflected in the enthusiastic response from our audiences. For seven months, we broke our all-time cumulative sales records. We set a new single-show revenue high, and saw seven sold-out performances, the most since our return from COVID-19 closures. This season confirmed that when diverse stories take center stage, PLA audiences respond with resounding support.



Minty Fresh Circus
Photo by Mark Garvin



OCTOBER 2025

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|---|-------------------------------|-----|-----|---|--|---|
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 1 | 2 NEW YORK STAGE AND FILM, PLAYS IN PROGRESS Prince Theatre 7 PM | 3 NEW YORK STAGE AND FILM, PLAYS IN PROGRESS Prince Theatre 7:30 PM | 4 NEW YORK STAGE AND FILM, PLAYS IN PROGRESS Prince Theatre 2 PM SOWETO GOSPEL CHOIR PEACE Zellerbach Theatre 7:30 PM |
| 5 NEW YORK STAGE AND FILM, PLAYS IN PROGRESS Prince Theatre 3 PM | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 JORGE LUIS PACHECO Prince Theatre 7:30 PM |
| 12 | 13 INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S DAY | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 AAKASH ODEDRA COMPANY, SONGS OF THE BULBUL Zellerbach Theatre 2 PM, 7:30 PM |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 PENN FAMILY WEEKEND | 25 PENN FAMILY WEEKEND |
| 26 PENN FAMILY WEEKEND | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 |

This past season, Penn Live Arts expanded its support for student performing arts by taking on management of the **Iron Gate Theatre**, a 250-seat venue housed in the historic Tabernacle United Church. Widely used by student groups, Iron Gate—together with the Annenberg Center's theatres—enabled PLA to support more than 50 student-run productions across three venues over 28 weeks of the academic year.



In addition to supporting rehearsal and performance activities, Penn Live Arts invested in students' professional and personal growth, offering opportunities to connect with alumni and industry leaders. From a weekend retreat for graduates pursuing careers in arts and entertainment, to a professionally led a cappella workshop, to travel and performance opportunities, we supported students as they explored and expanded their creative potential.

Penn Live Arts remains committed to making world-class performances accessible to Penn students, offering deeply discounted tickets to all our professional shows. Through our partnership with **Penn First Plus (P1P)**, we ensure that low-income and first-generation students can experience the arts more fully. Faculty-led pre-show conversations deepen these engagements, turning performances into opportunities for reflection and dialogue.

In November, Ethnomusicology professor **Carol Muller** led a dinner discussion on South African jazz before a performance by the legendary **Abdullah Ibrahim**. In February, Assistant Professor of Africana Studies **Jasmine Johnson** guided a lunchtime conversation on Black movement traditions ahead of **Minty Fresh Circus**.



NOVEMBER 2025

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|---|-----|-----|-----|---|---|---|
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 |
| 2 CÉCILE MCLORIN SALVANT Zellerbach Theatre 7 PM | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 TWELFTH NIGHT St. Mary's Church 7 PM | 7 PENN HOMECOMING | 8 PENN HOMECOMING CHOIR! CHOIR! CHOIR! HALLELUJAH: AN EPIC ANTHEMS SING-ALONG Zellerbach Theatre 7:30 PM |
| 9 PENN HOMECOMING | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 EPHRAT ASHERIE DANCE WITH ARTURO O'FARRILL SHADOW CITIES Zellerbach Theatre 7:30 PM | 15 EPHRAT ASHERIE DANCE WITH ARTURO O'FARRILL SHADOW CITIES Zellerbach Theatre 2 PM, 7:30 PM |
| 16 DAKHABRAKHA Zellerbach Theatre 7 PM | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 MARTIN HAYES QUARTET Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral 7:30 PM |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 THANKSGIVING | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | | | | | | |

Penn Live Arts' alumni network continued to champion the performing arts both on and off campus, creating dynamic opportunities to connect, learn, and celebrate the arts together.

In October, the **Penn Performing Arts Regional Council of Los Angeles** hosted an event featuring *Wicked* producer and Penn Alumnus, **Marc Platt**, in conversation with Penn Theatre Arts Professor David Fox. Together, they explored the process of adapting the blockbuster Broadway musical for the big screen. The event was so well received that it was reprised the following month in NYC.

Over **Homecoming Weekend**, PLA welcomed alumni to a talk by **Dr. James Pawelski** of **Penn's Center for Positive Psychology**. His presentation, **Awe, Empathy, and Social Connection** highlighted the essential role the arts and humanities play in nurturing individual and collective well-being.

A recording of Dr. James Pawelski's presentation can be accessed by scanning this QR code.

In May, the **Penn Performing Arts Regional Council of New York** presented **Broadway Unplugged: Unveiling the Business Behind Broadway's Biggest Hits**. The panel discussion, featuring Penn Alumni working in the industry, offered a behind-the-scenes look at the strategies, investments, and creativity that drive Broadway success. The program culminated with a group trip to the Imperial Theatre for a performance of the Tony-nominated musical **Smash**.



Le Patin Libre
Photo by Nora Houguenade

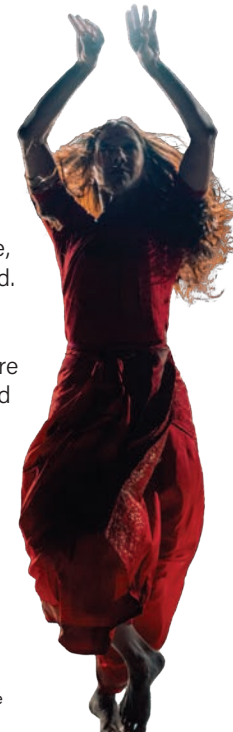
DECEMBER 2025

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--|-----|-----|-----|------------------------------------|--|--|
| 30 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 <small>A TOAST TO DEAR OLD PENN Carnegie Hall 7:30 PM</small> |
| 7 <small>DIANNE REEVES Zellerbach Theatre 7 PM</small> | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 <small>MOMIX ALICE Zellerbach Theatre 7:30 PM</small> | 13 <small>MOMIX ALICE Zellerbach Theatre 2 PM, 7:30 PM</small> |
| 14 <small>MOMIX ALICE Zellerbach Theatre 3 PM</small> | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 <small>IRISH CHRISTMAS IN AMERICA Zellerbach Theatre 7:30 PM</small> | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 <small>CHRISTMAS DAY</small> | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 <small>NEW YEAR'S DAY</small> | 2 | 3 |

Dance remains a cornerstone of Penn Live Arts, with 10 companies gracing our stages during the 2024–25 season. Audiences experienced a rich mix of returning favorites, such as **Pilobolus** and **Parsons Dance**, alongside exciting new voices. Among the debuts was Bharata Natyam dancer **Mythili Prakash**, performing *She's Auspicious*. With a cast of all women, Prakash delivered a performance of extraordinary rigor and artistry, weaving powerful storytelling with athleticism and grace to explore the complex, often conflicting identities of womanhood.

This commitment to innovation continued as Penn Live Arts welcomed boundary-pushing artists who are redefining dance. The world's first contemporary ice-skating company, **Le Patin Libre**, made their Philadelphia debut at the Penn Ice Rink, where *Murmuration* took audience members on a journey inspired by the aerial ballet of flocks of birds. Even further beyond the traditional stage **Agora de la Danse's Koros - VR Experience** invited patrons to step inside three dance works using VR headsets, immersing them in movement from an entirely new perspective.

For one performer, this season's celebration of dance was deeply personal. When the dance company **RUBBERBAND** took the stage in February, **Micah Sell**, a Philadelphia area native, saw a childhood dream realized. At eight years old, he attended a Penn Live Arts **Student Discovery** performance, where he first saw RUBBERBAND and told his mother he wanted to dance with them. This year, Micah returned—not as a student in the audience, but as a first-year apprentice performing with the very company that inspired him.



▶ Mythili Prakash
Photo by Josh Rose



Architectural renderings of the new Student Performing Arts Center on Hill Field. Courtesy Steven Holl Architects

JANUARY 2026

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----|-----|--|--|---|
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 NEW YEAR'S DAY | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM Zellerbach Theatre 7:30 PM | 17 DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM Zellerbach Theatre 2 PM, 7:30 PM |
| 18 DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM Zellerbach Theatre 2 PM | 19 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 ALCOLÉA & CIE RIGHT IN THE EYE Prince Theatre 7:30 PM | 24 ISAIAH COLLIER & KEYON HARROLD Zellerbach Theatre 7:30 PM |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 RUCKUS WITH DAVONE TINES WHAT IS YOUR HAND IN THIS? Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral 7 PM | 30 | 31 |

Penn Live Arts is making significant progress on capital projects that will transform the performing arts experience for students, professional artists, and the community.

Construction is underway on the **Student Performing Arts Center** on Hill Field, a state-of-the-art facility scheduled to open in winter 2027. Designed to serve the more than 2,000 undergraduates who participate in the performing arts each year, the Center will feature a 325-seat proscenium theatre, a 125-seat studio theatre, and five rehearsal spaces, providing much-needed resources for rehearsal, performance, teaching, and collaboration.

In addition, we have completed the schematic design for the **Weitzman Theatre**, a flexible new performance venue, extending onto the Annenberg Center Outdoor Plaza, that will add a fourth theatre to the Annenberg Center complex. Supported by a generous gift from **Stuart Weitzman, W'63**, construction is set to begin in 2027, with an anticipated opening in 2029. Once completed, the Weitzman Theatre will host a wide range of performances, supporting curricular and co-curricular student groups, professional artists, and West Philadelphia community partners.

Several spaces within these projects have already been named, but additional opportunities remain for donors to help shape the future of the performing arts at Penn and in the greater Philadelphia region. **To learn more, contact Kristin Winch at kwinch@upenn.edu.**



Architectural renderings of the new Stuart Weitzman Theatre. Courtesy Howeler & Yoon



Seo Jungmin
Photo Courtesy of Seo Jungmin

FEBRUARY 2026

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|---|-----|-----|---|---|---|--|
| 1 LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III & CHRIS SMITHERS Zellerbach Theatre 7 PM | 2 | 3 | 4 BLIND SUMMIT THEATRE, THE SEX LIVES OF PUPPETS Prince Theatre 7 PM | 5 BLIND SUMMIT THEATRE, THE SEX LIVES OF PUPPETS Prince Theatre 7 PM | 6 BLIND SUMMIT THEATRE, THE SEX LIVES OF PUPPETS Prince Theatre 2 PM, 7:30 PM TYSHAWN SOREY MEMBERS, DON'T GIT WEARY, Prince Theatre, 7:30 PM | 7 BLIND SUMMIT THEATRE, THE SEX LIVES OF PUPPETS Prince Theatre 2 PM, 7:30 PM |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 CIRQUE MECHANICS TILT! Zellerbach Theatre 2 PM JOHNNY GANDELSMAN, THIS IS AMERICA Christ Church 7:30 PM |
| 15 JOHNNY GANDELSMAN, THIS IS AMERICA Prince Theatre 3 PM | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 COMPAGNIE VIRGINIE BRUNELLE FABLES Zellerbach Theatre 7:30 PM | 21 COMPAGNIE VIRGINIE BRUNELLE FABLES Zellerbach Theatre 2 PM |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Through interdisciplinary partnerships across the University, Penn Live Arts invites audiences to engage more deeply with the work presented on stage.

Following her appearance at Penn Live Arts, Korean singer and Gayageum player **Seo Jungmin** joined Philadelphia-based Korean bandoneonist and composer **Shinjoo Cho** for a post-show conversation that offered audiences a richer understanding of Korean musical traditions. Similarly, Odanak First Nations singer and bassist **Mali Obomsawin** participated in a pre-show discussion with ethnomusicology graduate student **Hannah Junco**, connecting the performance to broader cultural and academic contexts.

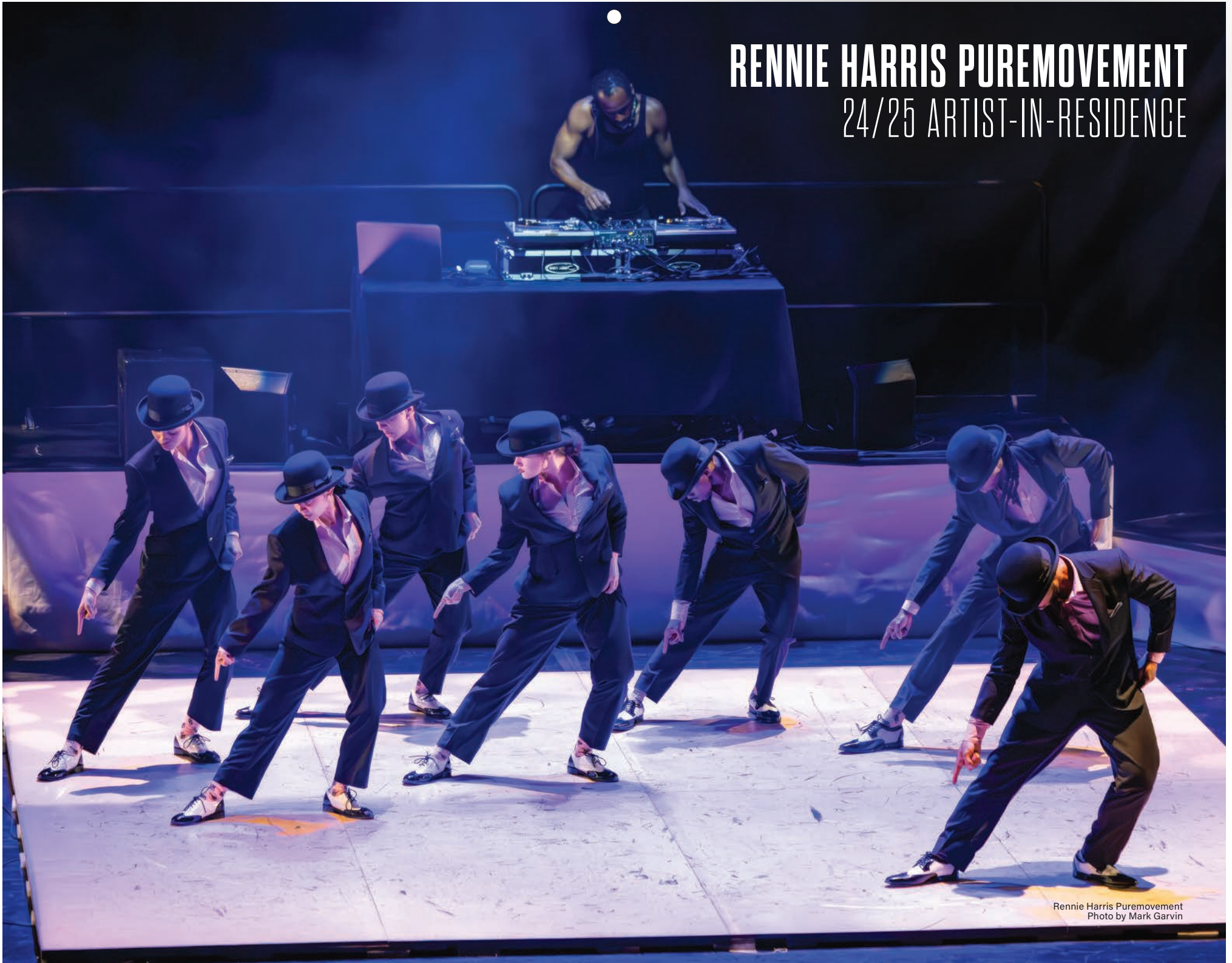
In January, early music artist and scholar **Benjamin Bagby** appeared with his medieval ensemble **Sequentia** to perform **Gregorius - the Holy Sinner** by Hartmann von Aue. In advance of the performance, Penn Live Arts partnered with **Penn Libraries** to host Bagby for **Storytelling and Music: 800 Years Before Netflix**, a special program that explored the roots of narrative performance before the printing press.

Through these conversations, Penn Live Arts' **INSIGHTS** programs continue to foster connection, reflection, and a deeper appreciation of the stories we share on stage.



► Mali Obomsawin
Photo by Jared and Abby Lank

RENNIE HARRIS PUREMOVEMENT 24/25 ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE



Rennie Harris Puremovement
Photo by Mark Garvin

MARCH 2026

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 <small>NATURALLY 7 Zellerbach Theatre 7:30 PM</small> | 7 |
| 8 <small>KAYHAN KALHOR Prince Theatre 7 PM</small> | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 <small>ALARM WILL SOUND WITH BORA YOON AMERICAN STORIES Zellerbach Theatre 7:30 PM</small> | 14 |
| 15 <small>THE PEKING ACROBATS Zellerbach Theatre 3 PM</small> | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 <small>RENNIE HARRIS PUREMOVEMENT LOSING MY RELIGION Zellerbach Theatre 7:30 PM</small> | 21 <small>RENNIE HARRIS PUREMOVEMENT LOSING MY RELIGION Zellerbach Theatre 2 PM, 7:30 PM</small> |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

The 2024–25 season marked the **second year of Rennie Harris’s three-year artistic residency** at Penn Live Arts, made possible by a major grant from **The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage**. A Philadelphia native and internationally acclaimed choreographer, Rennie Harris is a pioneer of street dance theater, known for elevating these forms to the concert stage.

This year, Harris and his company premiered **American Street Dancer**, a dynamic new work honoring street dance styles from across the country—including Chicago footwork, Detroit jitting, and Philadelphia’s own GQ. The production drew both critical praise and enthusiastic audiences and went on to play at New York’s **Joyce Theater** in November 2025.

In partnership with local teaching artists and RHPM dancers, Penn Live Arts led longterm residencies at **West Philadelphia High School** and **George Washington Carver High School of Engineering and Science**. These in-school programs introduced students to the themes, history, and techniques behind *American Street Dance*. Open rehearsals and pre-show discussions invited local artists and audiences into the creative process.

This sustained collaboration not only deepened public engagement but also gave Harris the time and space to experiment, refine, and premiere new work—demonstrating how long-term partnerships can spark artistic innovation and strengthen community connection.



► Rennie Harris Puremovement
Photo by Mark Garvin

LOS ANGELES



NEW YORK
PHILADELPHIA



To learn more about our aspiring student creatives, scan this QR code.

APRIL 2026

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--|-----|-----|-----|---|--|---|
| 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 UKULELE ORCHESTRA OF GREAT BRITAIN Zellerbach Theatre 7:30 PM |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 PAUL TAYLOR DANCE COMPANY Zellerbach Theatre 7:30 PM | 18 PAUL TAYLOR DANCE COMPANY Zellerbach Theatre 2 PM, 7:30 PM |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 TIBURTINA ENSEMBLE, CELESTIAL HARMONY: MUSIC BY HILDEGARD OF BINGEN Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral 7 PM | 24 | 25 |
| 26 DELBERT ANDERSON QUARTET Prince Theatre 7 PM | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 1 | 2 |

Since its launch in 2022, our **Arts & Entertainment Career Connections (AECC) program** has helped students explore careers in the arts and entertainment industry by facilitating internships with Penn alumni and providing funding for independently secured opportunities.

In 2025, AECC supported eight students in gaining hands-on experience at a range of local and national organizations across music, theatre, television, and film. Internship sites included **Hidden Pictures Media, FringeArts, 1812 Productions, Lionsgate Entertainment, Play On Philly, Paramount, and United Talent Agency**, with students placed in Los Angeles, New York, and Philadelphia. The cohort represented a broad range of majors—from mathematics to legal studies to cinema studies—reflecting the diverse paths into the industry.

In partnership with **Platt Student Performing Arts House**, Penn Live Arts also continued support for the **George and Jane Wallace** and **Peter Whinnery Summer Arts Internship Awards**, which fund summer internships in the performing arts. In 2025, three students received awards to support internships at the **Indian Performing Arts Association of Charlotte, North Carolina** and **PBS Kids**.

AECC has been supported with seed funding by the **Penn Live Arts Board of Advisors** and the **Classes of 1972, 1990, and 1993**. **To learn more about providing internship opportunities or supporting students through this program, please contact Kristin Winch at kwinch@upenn.edu.**



▲ Student Internship and Awards Celebration.



360 ALLSTARS
Photo credit Matt Loncar

MAY 2026

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|---|--|
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 ARTURO O'FARRILL AFRO LATIN JAZZ ENSEMBLE Zellerbach Theatre 7:30 PM | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 PENN ALUMNI WEEKEND | 16 PENN ALUMNI WEEKEND |
| 17 PENN ALUMNI WEEKEND | 18 PENN COMMENCEMENT | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 MEMORIAL DAY | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 MARTHA GRAHAM DANCE COMPANY Zellerbach Theatre 7:30 PM | 30 MARTHA GRAHAM DANCE COMPANY Zellerbach Theatre 2 PM, 7 PM |
| 31 | | | | | | |

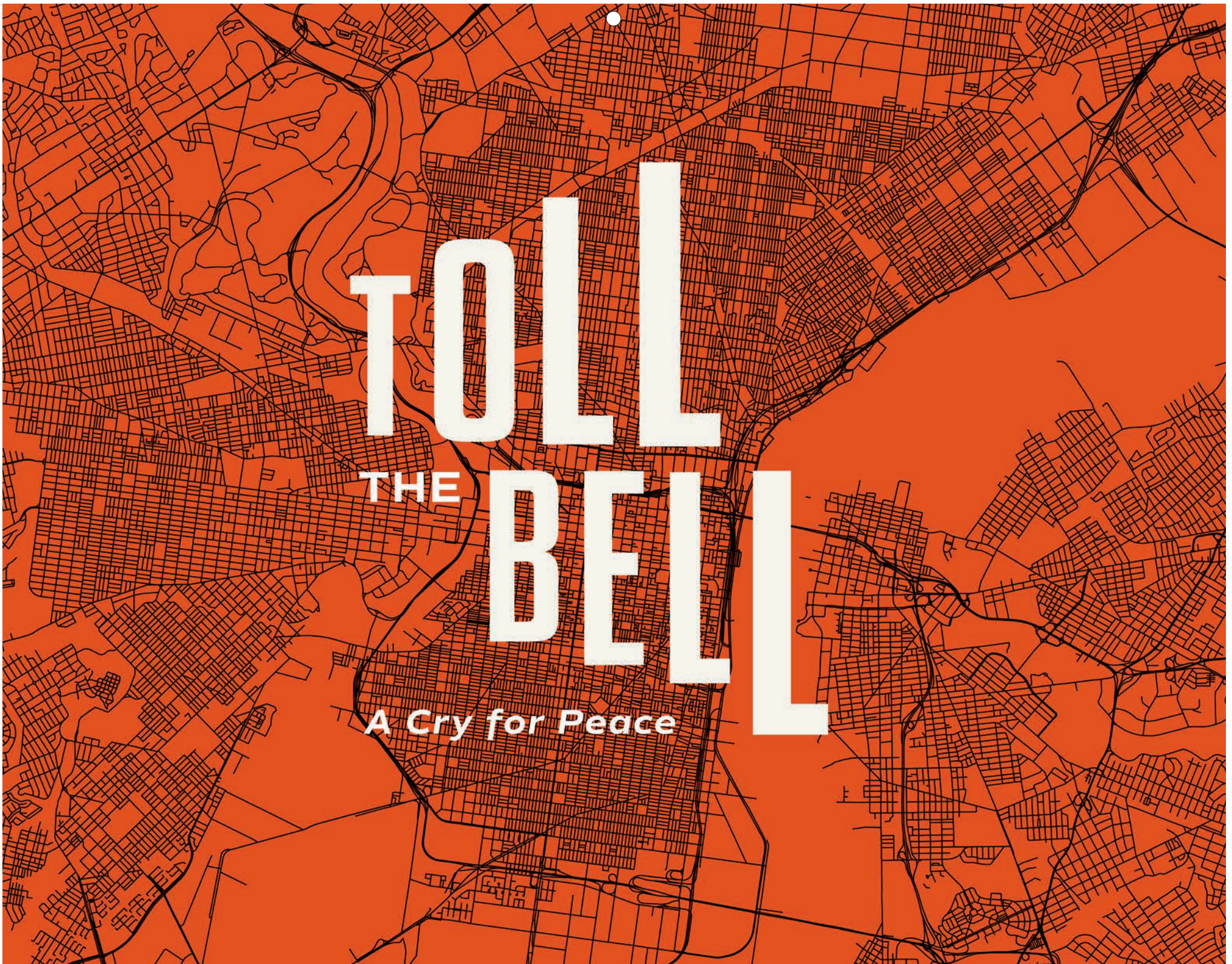
This past season, more than 5,000 children and youth experienced the power of live performance through Penn Live Arts' **Student Discovery Series** and the annual **Philadelphia Children's Festival**. Local school groups attended specially curated performances by **Limón Dance Company**, **Minty Fresh Circus**, and **Rennie Harris Puremovement**.



Photo by Mark Garvin

To deepen student engagement, in 2023 we expanded our pre-show workshop series, through which local teaching artists and professional performers visit classrooms in advance of the field trip to PLA. These sessions introduce students to the themes, techniques, and influences behind the performances, helping them build a richer understanding of the work before seeing it live. This season, 610 students from eight Philadelphia-area schools participated in these workshops—a 340% increase over last year.

The 2024–25 season also marked the 40th birthday of the **Philadelphia Children's Festival**, a three-day celebration for youth and families across our community. Inside the Annenberg Center, programming reflected a wide range of ages and interests. Literature to Life returned with a powerful adaptation of **Kao Kalia Yang's *The Latecomer***, a memoir exploring Yang's experience growing up in America as a Hmong refugee. **Terrapin Puppet Theatre** made its Philadelphia debut with ***The Paper Escaper***, a mesmerizing nonverbal performance for young audiences. The **360 ALLSTARS** closed out our season's cirque series with a high-energy show blending acrobatics, music, and movement.



JUNE 2026

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|
| 31 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 NATIONAL GUN VIOLENCE AWARENESS DAY TOLL THE BELL | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 JUNETEENTH | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Building on the overwhelmingly positive response to last season's **Toll the Bell: A Cry for Peace**, Penn Live Arts once again led Philadelphia's largest commemoration of **National Gun Violence Awareness Day**. On **June 6, 2025**, at 1 PM, more than 50 partners across the city joined in 10 minutes of bell ringing and sound-making—creating a sonic disruption to draw attention to the toll of gun violence and the urgent need to respond. The bells were also broadcast for one minute on **WHYY**, **WRTI**, and **WURD**, reaching the ears of hundreds of thousands of listeners.



Ruth Naomi Floyd
Photo by Mark Garvin

The program began with an interfaith vigil on the Annenberg Center outdoor plaza, where community partners gathered and faith leaders from diverse traditions offered prayers and reflections. As the bells tolled, vigil participants processed to the **Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral** for the premiere of **Echoes: Shattered Flesh and Breathless Souls**, a newly commissioned work by jazz vocalist and composer **Ruth Naomi Floyd**. "It's talking about lament as resistance," Floyd reflected. "When we cry, when we grieve, when we mourn, it's an act of resistance to all that is dark in the world."

Floyd's piece was performed again the next day at **Tindley Temple United Methodist** in South Philadelphia, alongside another PLA-commissioned work by West Philadelphia jam band **Omar's Hat**. Both commissions were supported by the **University of Pennsylvania's** inaugural **Draw Down the Lightning Grant**, which alongside continuing support from the **William Penn Foundation**, enabled Penn Live Arts to lead this expanded, multi-faceted, and deeply meaningful community collaboration.



Photo courtesy of Potted Potter

JULY 2026

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------------------|
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 INDEPENDENCE DAY |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 |

In the 2024–25 season, Penn Live Arts hosted more than 100 guest events and performances, welcoming thousands of new patrons to the Annenberg Center. Notably, 42% of rentals came from first-time clients, including [Theatre in the X](#), [Second Chance Dance](#), and internationally acclaimed Turkish pianist and composer [Fazıl Say](#). We also welcomed returning favorites such as [The Lady Hoofers](#) for their Spring Concert Series, [TEDxPenn](#), [Visit Philadelphia's TED Democracy Speaker Series](#), and the hit stage parody [Potted Potter](#)—which transformed the Annenberg Center into the magical world of Harry Potter, drawing nearly 5,000 patrons.

The Annenberg Center remained a central hub for Penn gatherings. The [Trustees Council of Penn Women](#) and the [Penn 25 Club](#) hosted receptions in the Feintuch Family Lobby, while our theatres hosted performances by [Wharton Follies](#), [Wharton Dance](#), [Penn Singers Light Opera Company](#), and many more.

This season also marked several exciting firsts. We hosted the [David and Lyn Silfen University Forum](#), themed [Waging Peace: Dialogue and Diplomacy in the Middle East](#). A few weeks later, we partnered with the [School of Engineering and Applied Science](#) to welcome the [Conference on Language Modeling](#) to Penn's campus and collaborated with the [School of Arts and Sciences](#) for the [Penn Lightbulb Café](#), where faculty shared insights from research in the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

Together, these events reflect Penn Live Arts' role as a vibrant gathering place—bringing the Penn community, regional partners, and community members together for meaningful experiences and to build shared memories.



AUGUST 2026

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| | 30 | 31 | | | | |

BY THE NUMBERS

- 7 Sold-Out Shows
- 18 Philadelphia & PLA Debuts
- 28 World & Philadelphia Premieres
- 340% Increase in In-School Workshop Participants
- 1,000+ INSIGHTS Participants
- 1,500+ West Philly Welcome Tickets
- 5,000+ Children Reached
- 93,000+ Total Patrons Reached

STUDENT PERFORMING ARTS

- 70+ Student Performing Arts Groups on Campus
- 2,000+ Students Involved in Performing Arts Clubs on Campus
- 26,000+ Student Performance Attendees

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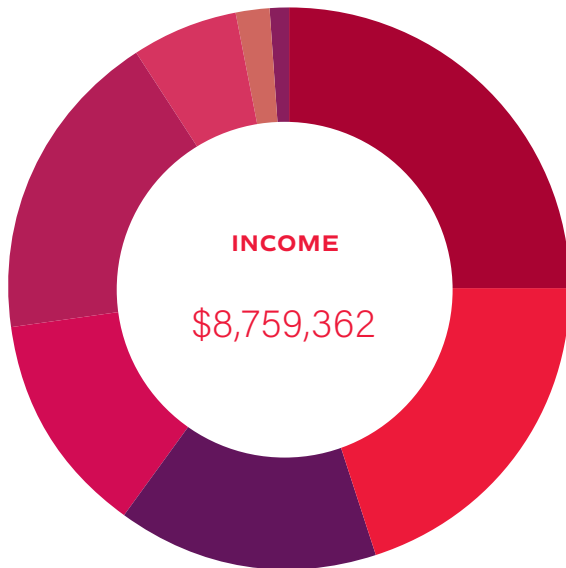
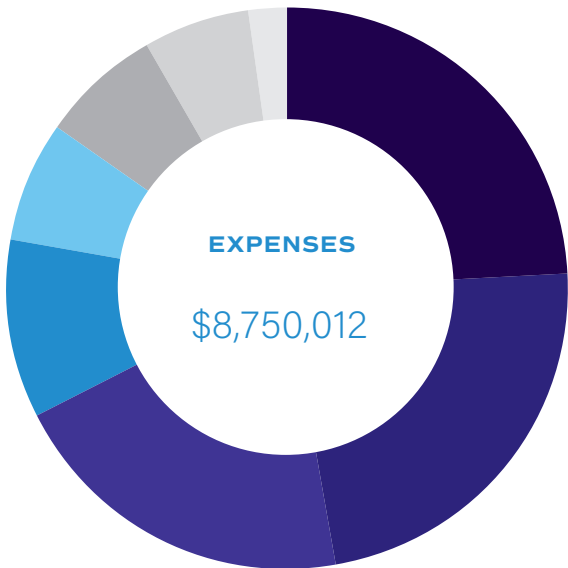
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Terrapin Puppet Theatre
Photo by Peter Matthew

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EXPENSES

- 24% University Allocated Costs
\$2,085,000
- 23% Production
\$2,047,930
- 20% Programming
\$1,778,732
- 10% Marketing
\$865,688
- 7% Events & Guest Services
\$650,701
- 7% Administration
\$608,333
- 6% Fundraising
\$532,619
- 2% Education & Engagement
\$181,009

INCOME

- 25% University Subvention
\$2,232,000
- 20% University Support
\$1,728,000
- 15% Ticket Revenue
\$1,242,266
- 13% Guest Rentals
\$1,174,438
- 18% Individual Giving
\$1,590,000
- 6% Foundation & Government
\$485,000
- 2% Other Income
\$209,658
- 1% Endowment Income
\$83,000
- 0.2% In-Kind
\$15,000



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▲ Parsons Dance
Photo courtesy of Parsons Dance

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