

UC SANTA BARBARA

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Santa Barbara Dance Theater's FORUM explores connection and collaboration

Contemporary dance takes center stage at UC Santa Barbara this month as Santa Barbara Dance Theater (SBDT) premieres FORUM, a new work inspired by collaboration and creative research. Returning to the stage this fall, the company presents the evening-length production as part of the Department of Theater and Dance season. FORUM reflects SBDT's long-standing commitment to exploration and collective creation. Performances run Oct. 23-26 at Hatlen Theater.

"FORUM is the true product of collaboration on so many levels," said artistic director [Brandon Whited](#). "A 'forum' is a site of discourse, a place to share ideas. The work taps into threads of humanity and connection that we think will resonate with audiences in light of the present moment we find ourselves in."

Under the artistic direction of Whited, associate professor and chair of the Department of Theater and Dance, the company continues to advance its research-driven approach to contemporary dance as it moves toward its 50th anniversary season. Whited, also the author of "Dance Partnering Basics: Practical Skills and Inclusive Pedagogy" (Human Kinetics, 2024), emphasized that collaboration is central to the creation of FORUM.

Developed through a process-driven choreographic approach, FORUM features new work by company members Dalya Modlin, Calder White and Whited, created in close

partnership with the dancers. The piece balances individual artistic voices with a sense of shared movement and structure across the ensemble.

The performance features Modlin and White, along with eight UCSB student apprentices — Sophie Berls, Charlotte Breier, Drew Caswell, Zorah Chappel, Tanner Carmichael, Lara van Diggelen, Bijou Douglas and Kate Monney — who gain hands-on professional experience performing alongside company members.

FORUM also includes original lighting design by UCSB faculty member Vickie J. Scott and music by composer Michael Wall. With a run time of approximately 60 minutes, performances take place at 7:30 p.m. Oct. 23-25, with a 2 p.m. matinee on Oct. 26. The Friday evening performance will be followed by a post-show discussion with the artists.

Founded in 1976 as a platform for faculty research, SBDT serves as UCSB's resident professional company and a bridge between academic and professional practice. Through its apprenticeship program, the company offers students direct experience working with established artists and choreographers.

Tickets and more information are available through [UCSB's Theater and Dance website](#) and the [UCSB Campus Calendar](#). Learn more about the company at sbdancetheater.org.

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About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the

edge of the Pacific Ocean.