

#artswinthrop

NEWS & EVENTS



WINTHROP
UNIVERSITY

College of Visual & Performing Arts

SEPTEMBER 2025



A Welcome from Dean Karen Oremus

Dear ArtsWinthrop Community,

Welcome to the 2025–2026 academic year! The College of Visual and Performing Arts enters this year with energy, momentum, and deep gratitude for our faculty and staff, students, alumni, and our campus and community partners who champion our work.

MOMENTUM. We welcome 260+ new first-year and transfer students. CVPA enrollment has grown 12% over three years; from Fall '23 to Fall '24, the Bachelor of Design posted the largest undergraduate growth at Winthrop (+30.2%). External recognition mirrors this rise: **Niche ranks Winthrop #1 in South Carolina in Performing**

Arts, with ArtsWinthrop programs in the top 3% nationally. Students come to Winthrop for hands-on learning, close mentorship, and a creative culture tied to real audiences and industry.

FACULTY EXCELLENCE. Alongside our dedicated roster of practicing artists, designers, musicians, dancers, actors, and scholars, we welcome four new full-time and seven part-time colleagues (profiled in this issue).

COMMUNITY & OUTREACH. Last year we delivered 171 community events; 15 workshops reached 2,015 prospective students; Summer Institutes served 331 attendees. The ABC Institute hosted 14 events, engaging 6,000+ educators and positively impacting 37,800+ K-12 students across 17 SC districts. We're on pace to exceed these totals—keep an eye on our calendars for concerts, productions, exhibitions, lectures and showcases. Your presence in our audiences is a powerful form of support and encouragement.

ACADEMIC INNOVATION. A university-wide task force finalized the interdisciplinary B.A. in Game Design, launching this academic year. **Winthrop's new Virtual Reality Lab and renovated Music Technology studios** (profiled in this issue) will expand opportunities for learning and research.

FACILITIES & PHILANTHROPY. The historic [Byrnes Auditorium](#) reopened this spring. Explore it's renovated [Byrnes Reception/ Exhibition Hall](#) on the second floor, made possible by Charlie Wofford and Nancy (Thomas) Wofford '67; their support also established a **gallery archive room** to house their gifted **Juliet McIver Art Collection**, which students will research this fall, culminating in a public exhibition and publication. **A new Piano Lab**—funded by generous alumni and friends—elevates musicianship and pedagogy. The Class of '75 is supporting the **Byrnes Lighting Project**. Murray and Hazel Somerville (Hazel, Music '69) established the **Dr. David Lowry Endowment** for Organ Education in honor of Professor Emeritus Dr. Lowry. We also launch the 5,000-sq-ft **J. Robert Bazemore Design Center** at [The Thread](#), named for alumnus J. Robert "Bob" Bazemore '85 (full feature inside).

We continue to receive support from our alumni who give back to their alma mater and our community of generous supporters to our college and department excellence funds. Every contribution—financial, in-kind, time or presence—amplifies our mission and directly impacts our students.

ALUMNI & FRIENDS. [Share your news so we can feature you and stay connected.](#) Join us as mentors, guest critics, internship hosts, and partners. [Support scholarships, community arts events, facilities, and students experiential learning.](#)

IN MEMORIAM. This issue includes a special tribute and celebration details to [honor Professor Sandra Neels](#); who served Winthrop Dance for 35 years and inspired generations as an exceptional artist, teacher, and colleague.

We are proud of where we have been and optimistic about where we are headed. We love our people, and the many ways in which you contribute and support our community. Thank you for being part of the ArtsWinthrop family and for championing the CVPA's mission of creativity, scholarship, and cultural vitality.

With appreciation and warmest wishes for the year ahead,

Karen Oremus

*Dean, College of Visual and Performing Arts
Winthrop University*



**We're proud to celebrate the opening of
Winthrop University's
J. Robert Bazemore Design Center at [The Thread](#)!**

This 5,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art learning space—named in honor of alumnus J. Robert “Bob” Bazemore ’85—features five modern classrooms, advanced technology, and inspiring design elements that connect students directly to real-world practices. It also places Winthrop’s Interior Design program—the only program in South Carolina fully accredited by the Council for Interior

Design Accreditation—in the heart of a thriving community hub.

The center sits inside [The Thread](#), a redevelopment of the former Baxter Mill building, once the largest textile printing and finishing center in the world under one roof. Today, this historic transformation reflects how education, industry, and community continue to weave the fabric of York County together.

Special thanks to Bob Bazemore '85, the Winthrop Foundation Board, and Family Trust Credit Union for their partnership, vision, and generosity in making this milestone a reality.

We're excited to see this space shape the next generation of designers while strengthening the ties between Winthrop and our community.



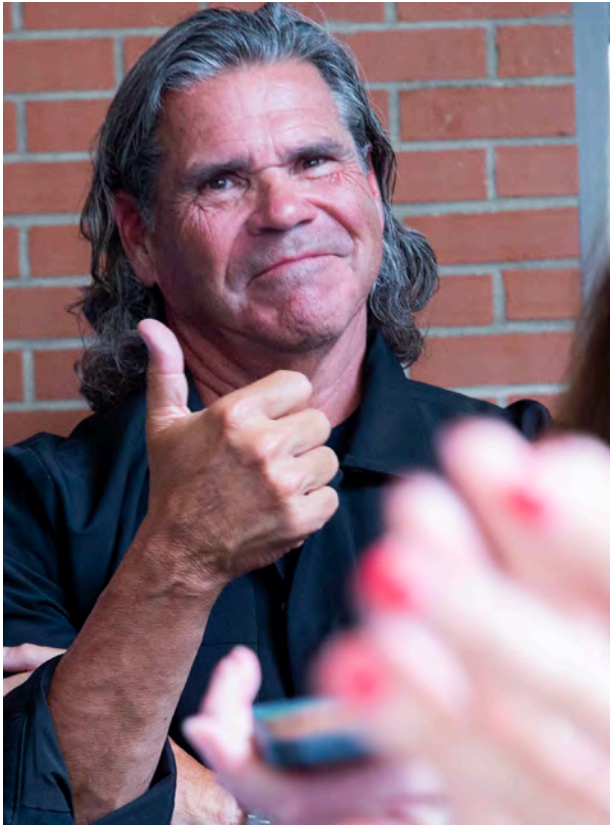
•Photo Credit: Tim Buchman Photography

Winthrop Interior Design Center – Reflections and Intent

By Bob Bazemore '85

"This project has been one of the most meaningful of my career because it brings together everything I value: design, education, and community. I believe that design has the power to shape how people learn, think, and collaborate. Investing my time and talents into a space that will directly inspire and prepare the next generation of designers feels like a natural way to give back to the university that helped launch me.

The Winthrop Interior Design Center was conceived with a clear parti: a minimalist, modern environment where the architecture recedes, and the work of students becomes the color, texture, and animation of the space. The palette is deliberately restrained with neutral tones, natural materials, and no accent walls. This decision was



at the forefront.

intentional, not a lack of design. By avoiding distraction, the walls and surfaces provide a blank canvas that invites students to project their creativity into the space. Their work, whether sketches, models, or installations, supplies the vibrancy, contrast, and depth.

The neutrality of the architecture ensures that the life of the space is constantly renewed by each generation of students. In this way, the Center becomes both a learning environment and an evolving gallery. The setting is flexible, timeless, and focused, allowing students to see their contributions as central to the experience of design. This approach connects back to the Bauhaus tradition, where Walter Gropius and later designers emphasized clarity, proportion, and honesty in materials. It also reflects Massimo Vignelli's canon of restraint and discipline, where simplicity becomes the highest form of elegance. Even the choice to name the center in lowercase letters, j robert bazemore design center, echoes that Bauhaus-inspired typographic humility, where the work rather than the ego stands

I plan to be present at the center several times each semester, both in lectures and in more informal mentoring settings. My talks will focus on areas where design intersects with business and culture, such as sustainability, product design, architectural interiors, branding, and the realities of building a design practice. I also want to share my experiences working with manufacturers and navigating the industry over decades.

The business of design has shifted dramatically since I began. When I started, design was often seen as an aesthetic layer applied at the end. Today it is integral to strategy, as companies recognize that design drives productivity, culture, and innovation. Technology has changed everything, from digital modeling to virtual collaboration, but the human side of design remains constant. Going forward, I see the profession becoming even more interdisciplinary, merging with fields such as sustainability, psychology, and technology.

To students, my advice is simple: build relationships because the design world is small and your reputation follows you. Stay curious and never stop learning new tools, materials, and perspectives. Understand the business side of design, because creativity must be supported by budgets, contracts, and execution. And do not be afraid to take risks and put your own stamp on your work.

During Phil Lader's administration, I was exposed to the Office of Campus Planning and Design, where he and his team led a major initiative to revitalize the Winthrop campus. That gave me real-world experience, actually working on projects and renovations while I was still a student. My portfolio ended up being filled not only with classroom assignments but also with professional-level work, which directly led to my first job at an architectural firm in Charlotte. The new center has that same potential. It can be a place where students gain hands-on, practical experience while developing the confidence and portfolios that will carry them into their careers.

What excites me most about the center is that it is not just a building, it is a platform. It is designed to evolve with students' creativity and to showcase their work as the true focal point.

My hope is that it becomes not only a hub for design education at Winthrop, but also a place where the broader community sees the value of design in shaping culture and daily life."

In Loving Memory



ArtsWinthrop and The Department of Theatre and Dance would like to take a moment to honor a colleague, friend, and long time dance faculty member Sandra Neels, who passed away in June after a remarkable career in dance. Sandra joined Winthrop in 1990 and spent 35 years shaping and inspiring our community. To honor her legacy, this year's Fall Dance Showcase will be dedicated to her work and contributions.

"She was a leading dancer for Merce Cunningham, a prolific choreographer and an admired teacher. Viewed on film, dancing from more than 50

years ago tends to have a period quality, a certain quaintness. But films of the dancer and dance teacher Sandra Neels performing the revolutionary choreography of Merce Cunningham have not dated in the least. Tall, slender, long-limbed, self-possessed, conveying an innocence bordering on unworldly, Ms. Neels appears onscreen as if she were filmed only yesterday, a lone figure commanding space with hands and feet that are exceptionally articulate. She danced for Cunningham from 1963 to 1973, creating roles and solos that are still performed today. Later, she became a successful choreographer in her own right and a renowned teacher, and when she died recently at 85, she had been eminent in American dance for more than 60 years." (-Excerpt from NYT article By Alastair Macaulay)

[Link to New York Times article \(subscription required to view\)](#)

[Link to Winthrop Article honoring Sandra Neels](#)

NOW HIRING

Director, Assistant/ Associate Professor of Arts Administration

**APPLY**<https://apply.interfolio.com/172459>

ArtsWinthrop is looking for a new Director and Assistant/ Associate Professor of Arts Administration!

The qualified candidate will teach courses within their area of expertise in the master's degree and/ or undergraduate minor in Arts Administration.

This is a full-time, 12-month, non-tenure track, 3-year teaching appointment.

[•FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE ARTS ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM HERE](#)

[•APPLY HERE!](#)

Upcoming Events

Quicken

Featuring:

Stacey Davidson,
Mark Fox, & Chris Sickels

August 18 - September 27

Reception: Thursday, September 11, 5:30 P.M.

Rutledge and Elizabeth Dunlap Patrick Galleries

WINTHROP
UNIVERSITY
GALLERIES

#artswinthrop



QUICKEN

August 18 – September 27, 2025

[Rutledge Gallery & Elizabeth Dunlap Patrick Gallery](#)

Reception: 09.11 | 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

An exhibition featuring works by artists Stacey Davidson, Mark Fox, and Chris Sickels.

***Liebeslied: Celebrating
the love of Robert and
Clara Schumann in their
songs on the anniversary
of their wedding,
September 12.***

**A recital featuring Kristen A.
Wunderlich, (soprano) and
Matthew Manwarren, (piano)**

09.12 | 7:30 p.m.

[Barnes Recital Hall](#)

Presents *Liebeslied*

Celebrating the love of Robert and Clara Schumann in their songs

*Presented on their
wedding anniversary,
September 12*

Featuring:
Kristen A. Wunderlich,
Soprano
&
Matthew Manwarren,
Piano

SEPT 12

7:30 PM

**BARNES
RECITAL HALL**

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The Department of Theatre and Dance will welcome DaMonte LeMonte Garner for a residency from September 15-20.

Garner will set an original work on both students and faculty to be performed in the Fall Dance Showcase in December. This work will focus on building a intergenerational piece that weaves together the strengths and experiences of students and faculty, a truly unique experience for all involved. Garner will also teach master classes and workshops throughout the week that they are on campus.

September Cultural Events



CE!
CULTURAL
EVENT

Artists' Panel
11 AM, Thursday, September 11
Rutledge Galleries

Puppet Workshop
10 AM, Friday, September 12
Rutledge 113

**WINTHROP
UNIVERSITY
GALLERIES**

#artswinthrop

Quicken Artists' Panel

11 a.m. | 09.11

[Rutledge Galleries](#)

Quicken Puppet Workshop

10 a.m. | 09.12

[Rutledge 113](#)



Dr. Justin Isenhour, (trombone), Faculty Recital

09.18 | 7:30 p.m.

[Barnes Recital Hall](#)

Coordinated by Winthrop University
Department of Music

Japanese Art & Popular Songs with Naoko Watanabe



Also featuring Dr. Tomoko Deguchi (piano) and The Commercial Music Ensemble directed by Dr. Tracy Patterson

09.28 | 4 p.m.

[Barnes Recital Hall](#)

Coordinated by Winthrop University
Department of Music



To Watch as Life Passes You By

**10.01 - 10.04 | 7:30 p.m.
10.05 | 2 p.m.**

An original dance work, student-choreographed by Mikey Kesler

[Johnson Studio Theatre, Johnson Hall](#)

Tickets: \$5 with Winthrop ID, \$10 general public

Coordinated by Winthrop University Department of Theatre & Dance

BUY TICKETS

FOR STUDENTS

Here are some helpful reminders for all of our new and returning ArtsWinthrop students:

•Looking for a job or internship? Visit the [Center for Career Development and](#)

[Internships here](#) to find out what's available!

●**Take advantage of all that ArtsWinthrop has to offer by auditioning** for one of The Department of Theatre and Dance's upcoming performances! You do **NOT** have to be a major to audition!

[**View Audition Information Here!**](#)

●**Join a student organization, and find out more about all of our student resources by visiting our "STUDENT" tab on the [ArtsWinthrop website!](#)**

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WE'RE HIRING!

VR &
CVPA
LAB



GRAD ASSISTANT

LEARN MORE:



ArtsWinthrop Updates/ Spotlights

ArtsWinthrop welcomed our
LARGEST incoming class of
Freshman and Transfers ever on



August 25 in [Dina's Place](#)! We are SO excited to have all of these talented, new faces around campus this year!



Long-time Winthrop Organist and Professor David Lowry Presented Order of the Palmetto

"S.C. Gov. Henry McMaster granted a gifted and influential Winthrop University organ professor the state's highest civilian honor, the Order of the Palmetto.

Supporters rallied this summer to ask the governor to give David Lowry,

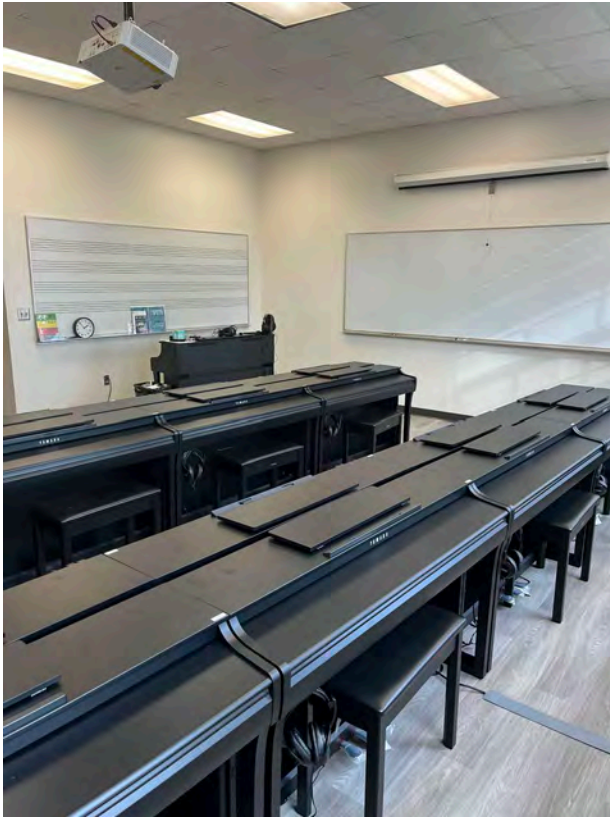
emeritus professor of music, the coveted recognition.

Upon approval, it was presented to Lowry on Aug. 3 with a small group of former students and friends in attendance.

Leading the effort were former students Lenora Morrow Jeffcoat '01, who was the last organ performance major taught by Lowry at Winthrop, and Jimmy Herlong, who is the son of the late Ann Herlong of Rock Hill and was a gifted pianist."

[Read Full Article Here](#)

In the Conservatory of Music, a new Piano Lab, was made possible through the generosity of various donors, many of which are Winthrop Alumni. This gift elevates musicianship, pedagogy, and access for students at all levels. These capital and equipment investments translate directly into stronger academic experiences and more vibrant public programming.



ArtsWinthrop's Department of Music has newly updated Music Technology Studios!

**Image on left: Ron Parks and Deven Bailey in CMUS 222 (Recording Control Room)*



ArtsWinthrop Department of Fine Arts has a new Virtual Reality Lab! Here, students taking specific courses can learn and explore locations throughout the world through our Virtual Reality technology.



Students and Faculty continue to enjoy performing and attending performances our newly renovated Byrnes Auditorium!

**Image on left: Cece Trower (Winthrop Symphony Orchestra Concertmaster in Byrnes Auditorium)*



After a semester of learning about Japanese traditional visual and performing arts taught by Dr. Alice Burmeister and Dr. Tomoko Deguchi, Dr. Deguchi led 18 students on a short-term study abroad trip to Tokyo and Kyoto, Japan in May, assisted by Dr. Catherine Chang from the history department. The students attended Noh and Kabuki Theatres, visited historic shrines and temples, looked at exhibits at Tokyo National Museum, and attended *nichibu* (Japanese traditional dance) and woodblock printing workshops among others.

Professor of Fine Arts, Claudia O'Steen is exhibiting in a solo show soon! *Limnologies*, is opening October 4 at the [Elizabeth Stone Harper Gallery, Presbyterian College, Clinton, SC.](#)



Professor of Fine Arts, Shaun Cassidy and his daughter, Lucy Cassidy are having a collaborative exhibition at the [Dalton Gallery, at the Arts Council of York County, Main Street Rock Hill](#). The exhibition, titled, *Held*, will have an opening reception on September 18, from 5.30 p.m. - 7.30 p.m.

**Image featured: Tongues, 2025, steel and ceramic.*

NYU STEINHARDT Music Theory Pedagogy Workshop

Home | Overview | Registration | Resources | Contact Us

Transitions:

A Pedagogy Workshop for Evolving Music Theory Curricula

Join us at NYU on June 6-8th for an exciting weekend of hands-on pedagogy workshops, collaborative poster sessions, and lively discussion as we reflect on recent curricular changes and highlight evolving directions in music theory pedagogy—including global music traditions, popular music, repertoire by underrepresented composers, and innovative approaches to curriculum.

Dr. Tomoko Deguchi led a music theory pedagogy workshop at New York University. Her workshop was titled *"Analysis and application of Japanese concert music."*

Professor of Fine Arts, Stacey



Davidson is currently a featured artist in a Winthrop Galleries exhibition *Quicken*, as well as the exhibition *Makers & Mentors – Balancing Art Practice & Teaching* at [The Upstairs Artspace](#) in Tryon, NC through Sept 5, 2025.



Professor of Fine Arts, Stephanie Sutton will be jurying the annual juried student exhibition at [Coastal Carolina University](#) this fall, as well as attending the [Institute of Electronic Arts at Alfred University](#) as their artist in residence for the Print and New Media residency in September 2025.

Welcoming new ArtsWinthrop Faculty!

David Wohl
Interim Director, Arts
Administration Program

Dr. David Wohl is a retired arts administrator, educator, and theatre professional with over four decades of experience. He served as Dean at both Winthrop University and West Virginia State University and has directed or acted in over 100 productions. A leader in arts advocacy, he has held key roles with the Southeastern Theatre Conference, served on numerous arts boards and grant panels, and received multiple



honors, including SETC's Hall of Fame and Winthrop's Medal of Honor in the Arts. He continues to teach and support arts education and nonprofit development.



Stephen Hicks
Instructor of Design, Graphic Design

Dr. Steven R. Hicks is an experienced educator and marketing professional with a strong background in communications, design, and photography. His award-winning work has been recognized by the American Advertising Federation and other industry groups. He is also deeply involved in community development, having served on multiple boards supporting economic growth and entrepreneurship.

Mikale Kalis
Assistant Professor of Design, Graphic Design

Mikale Kalis is a multidisciplinary designer and artist with over 20 years of experience spanning graphic



design, experiential design, architecture, and visual art. They have worked with organizations such as Whole Foods Market, the University of Virginia, and Pentagram, focusing on human-centered, concept-driven design solutions. As an independent design director, Mikale creates branded environments, immersive experiences, and visual systems that enhance user engagement. Returning to Winthrop University as an Assistant Professor of Graphic Design, they aim to inspire creativity and critical thinking through a practice rooted in systems-based design and artistic exploration.



Devin Waddell
Assistant Professor of Design,
Interior Design

Devin Waddell is an interior designer and educator with teaching and research interests in sensor-responsive spaces and human-centered parametric design. He is a member of several professional organizations, including IIDA, ASID, NCARB, and NOMA. His work has been featured in national exhibitions and competitions, including the 2020 COTE Top Ten Award for the "Up-Lift Technology Tower" and the 2024 Pave x FredMeyer Student Challenge.

Brian Bojanowski
Adjunct professor of Fine Arts,
Printmaking

Brian has spent the past 28 years as



an educator, with 24 of those years also dedicated to entrepreneurship and 11 as a practicing artist. Over the course of his career, he's had the joy of teaching thousands of students ranging in age from 2 to 19. As an artist, Brian—often known as Bojo—has pursued a variety of creative endeavors through his business, Bojo Print & Design. This venture specializes in creating merchandise for touring musicians, with a strong focus on design and the screenprinting of concert tour posters.



Sarah Abushakra
Adjunct Faculty of Music, Piano

Sarah Abushakra is a pianist, teacher, and choral director from Myrtle Beach, SC. She recently taught piano and pedagogy at Coastal Carolina University and is active with MTNA at all levels. In addition to her academic work, she teaches privately and serves as Director of Music/Organist at St. Anne's Episcopal Church. She holds degrees from Coastal Carolina University and the University of Georgia.

Teil Taliesin
Adjunct Faculty of Music, Oboe

Teil Taliesin is a classically trained oboist known for integrating looping pedals and effects into her



performances. She plays with ensembles like the Charlotte Symphony and Rock Hill Symphony and has performed at festivals worldwide. Teil co-founded Phoenix Down RPG and Burnt Reeds, creating immersive music experiences that blend classical music with gaming and diverse styles. She is also an active educator and advocate, with degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music and the University of Louisville.



Johnnie Felder
Adjunct Faculty of Music, Voice

Johnnie J. Felder, a tenor from Vance, South Carolina, holds degrees from Benedict College, the University of South Carolina, and earned his Doctor of Musical Arts in Vocal Performance in 2022. He has trained internationally in Austria and Bulgaria, where he made his European debut in Puccini's Gianni Schicchi. Known for his expressive range and lyricism, Felder has performed leading roles in operas by Donizetti and Mozart. He was a 2022 Spoleto Festival USA Vocal Fellow and has appeared in world premieres, including Omar and a Stevie Wonder tribute concert.

Amelia Binford
Adjunct Faculty of Dance

Amelia has over 35 years of dance experience, holding a Bachelor's Degree in Dance Performance and



Dance Education Certification from Winthrop University. She has performed extensively, including tours with Dance Caravan, appearances with the Charlotte Philharmonic Orchestra, and roles in theater productions like A Chorus Line. Currently, Amelia is in her 18th year teaching Modern, Jazz, and Tap at Northwest School of the Arts, where she also choreographs and inspires students through her innovative work.



Lorraine Crittendon
Adjunct Faculty of Dance

Lorraine Crittendon, a natural-born dancer, discovered her passion through neighborhood choreography and stepping before formally studying modern dance at UNC Charlotte, where she became the first in her family to attend a four-year university. Now a middle school dance educator in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and a Teaching Artist with Charlotte Ballet, Lorraine has earned multiple teaching awards and founded the Charlotte Cultural Collective, a troupe focused on Afro-Diasporic dances. Drawing from her diverse training and experiences, she inspires students to embrace dance's rich cultural diversity and continually grow as both artists and learners.

James Kopecky
Adjunct Faculty of Dance



Born and raised near Chicago, James trained in multiple dance styles before earning his BFA in Dance Performance from Butler University and joining Ballet San Jose, where he rose to Corps de Ballet and performed works by renowned choreographers. After five years, he joined Charlotte Ballet as a principal dancer, starring in leading roles in pieces by Dwight Rhoden, Jiri Kylian, Jerome Robbins, and more. Throughout his career, James has choreographed for several companies and was honored as a 2022 UBCI Choreographic Fellow, eager to create new works with talented dancers.

Are you an Alumn(us/a) of ArtsWinthrop?

We want to keep in touch with you! Please create your alumni profile at the link below so we can continue grow our alumni network, and share your good news and life updates!

[Create your alumni profile here!](#)

We love to keep in touch and brag about our alumni! Alumni are encouraged to use this portal to keep up with the latest alumni news and to keep their profiles up to date.

[CREATE/EDIT ALUMNI PROFILE](#)

[SUBMIT YOUR NEWS](#)

[SUBMIT ALUMNI OPPORTUNITY](#)

ALUMNI PROFILES

The ArtsWinthrop Alumni project is in the works and more profiles will be coming soon...

*"If you are an Alumnus/a, or know someone who is, **please create your alumni profile today** and help us build our online Alumni network!"*



JULIA MCCALLUM

M.M.E., 2010, B.M.E., 1997

mccallumj@winthrop.edu

[READ FULL BIO](#)



**CAMERON
VIPPERMAN**

B.A. THEATRE: MUSICAL THEATRE,
2024

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**MARY HORN
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COSTUMES, 2024

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RACHEL PETERSON

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CHOREOGRAPHY, 2024

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[READ FULL BIO](#)



Visit the [ArtsWinthrop Marketplace Store](#) to get your SWAG items today!

Prices range from \$1 - \$18!! Now that's a deal!!

**pick up only at Winthrop University's CVPA Dean's Office*

Don't miss out on everything ArtsWinthrop has to offer! Including a ton of cultural events, FREE art exhibitions, musical performances, dance performances, theatre productions, and visiting artist lectures!

[View Calendar of Events Here](#)



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