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Oklahoma International Dance Festival Welcomes World-Renowned Faculty to Oklahoma City

Oklahoma City, OK – July 25, 2025 — As the Oklahoma International Dance Festival (OIDF) reaches the midpoint of its 2025 Summer Intensive, the energy inside the studios at the University of Central Oklahoma is electric. Dancers from across Oklahoma, South America, and neighboring states are training daily with some of the most accomplished dance artists in the world—right here in the heart of Oklahoma City.

This year's faculty brings a level of international prestige and pedagogical excellence that is rarely accessible outside major metropolitan centers. Their collective experience spans top-tier ballet companies, groundbreaking contemporary ensembles, and decades of influence in the global dance community.

"We are truly honored to have this caliber of faculty sharing their knowledge with our students," said Austin Hartel, Artistic Director of OIDF. "Their mentorship and presence are transforming not just our dancers, but the entire cultural atmosphere around us."

Meet the 2025 Faculty Powerhouse

Raffaele Irace (Italy/Germany)

An internationally respected choreographer, curator, and former soloist with Jacopo Godani's

Dresden Frankfurt Dance Company, Raffaele Irace brings a powerful blend of European avant-garde vision and choreographic precision to O IDF. He currently serves as the Program Director for Dance and Performance at Gallus Theater in Frankfurt, one of Germany's most respected platforms for contemporary movement. He is also the founder of *The Very Secret Dance Society* and Artistic Director of *Solocoreografico Festival*, which now includes an Oklahoma edition in collaboration with O IDF. His teaching is deeply informed by Forsythe methodologies and grounded in a commitment to exploration, architecture of the body, and contemporary innovation.

Karen Boyd Bethel (USA)

A former Radio City Rockette, Karen Boyd Bethel is a dynamic and multifaceted movement artist whose work bridges the worlds of concert dance, musical theatre, and theatrical intimacy. She holds an MFA in Modern Dance from the University of Oklahoma and a BPA in Dance Performance from Oklahoma City University, and she brings decades of professional performance and choreographic experience to the studio. In addition to her choreography for regional and collegiate musical productions, Karen is a certified intimacy choreographer with a strong focus on communication and consent in movement creation. Her classes at O IDF challenge dancers to tell powerful stories with precision, musicality, and expressive range, nurturing versatility and confidence across disciplines.

Alba Nadal (Spain/Germany)

With 14 seasons at the Royal Danish Ballet, Alba Nadal brings to O IDF the grace, depth, and discipline of one of Europe's most revered classical traditions. Originally from Spain and trained at the Royal Ballet School in London, Alba has performed a wide range of classical and neoclassical repertory, gaining critical acclaim for her artistry, stage presence, and musicality. Most recently a soloist at the Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe in Germany, she combines pedagogical rigor with empathetic mentorship. At O IDF, her classes emphasize technical excellence and poetic expression, inspiring dancers to cultivate both their physical and emotional artistry within the ballet form.

Kevin O'Day (USA/Germany)

A globally sought-after choreographer and visionary artist, Kevin O'Day's career spans the most influential dance institutions of the 20th and 21st centuries. A former soloist with the Joffrey Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, and Frankfurt Ballet under William Forsythe, O'Day has created over 80 original ballets for major companies such as New York City Ballet, Les Grands

Ballets Canadiens, Royal Danish Ballet, and Ballet British Columbia. His choreography blends athleticism, musicality, and human connection, and he brings that same spirit to his teaching. At O IDF, O'Day guides dancers toward greater individuality, choreographic curiosity, and collaborative exploration—nurturing the next generation of creators. His mentorship challenges dancers to explore new movement vocabularies and bold artistic voices in an environment of thoughtful experimentation.

Ayinde Hurrey (USA)

A powerful cultural educator and performer, Ayinde Hurrey brings the vibrant rhythms and spirit of West African dance and drumming to the O IDF experience. A graduate of North Carolina Central University and the University of Florida's MFA Acting program, Ayinde is also the founder of *Hurrey-UP Consulting & Performing Arts*, a company focused on cultural awareness and arts education through performance, residencies, and workshops. His rich background in African diasporic traditions, theater, and percussion creates an immersive and celebratory classroom experience. At O IDF, he inspires dancers to connect with rhythm, heritage, and ensemble energy through movement and music.

Vincent Gros (France/Spain)

Vincent Gros brings a wealth of international experience and artistic refinement to O IDF. A finalist at the Prix de Lausanne and a graduate of The Royal Ballet School in London, he has performed as a soloist and principal dancer with companies including Leipzig Ballet, Ballet du Capitole de Toulouse, Ballet Madrid, and Cape Town City Ballet, interpreting both iconic classical roles and contemporary works by choreographers such as George Balanchine, Jiri Kylián, John Cranko, and Nacho Duato. Currently the Ballet Master of Ballet de Catalunya, Gros is also an acclaimed teacher and choreographer. At O IDF, his classes emphasize strength, alignment, and artistry, and he is deeply committed to helping dancers find confidence and clarity in both classical and contemporary technique.

Austin Hartel (USA/Paraguay)

As Artistic Director of O IDF, Austin Hartel leads with a global vision and a deep commitment to building community through movement. A former soloist and co-choreographer with the renowned Pilobolus Dance Theater, Hartel has toured internationally, performing in major theaters and festivals across five continents. He is the Founder and Director of *Hartel Dance Group*, a modern dance company based in Oklahoma City that tours both nationally and internationally, presenting original work rooted in physicality, theatricality, and storytelling. A

Fulbright Scholar, former Cultural Specialist for the U.S. Department of State, and longtime faculty member at the University of Oklahoma's School of Dance, Hartel's choreography has been featured at international festivals in Brazil, Italy, Paraguay, and across the U.S. At OIDF, he creates a space where exploration, excellence, and inclusivity thrive.

Training, Transformation, and Community

OIDF's two-week summer intensive offers rigorous training in ballet, contemporary, jazz, modern, African dance, and choreography. Each day, students engage in high-level classes, artist talks, and rehearsals in preparation for two culminating public performances at *The Magnolia* (722 N Broadway Ave #100, Oklahoma City, OK 73102)

Choreography Showcase

Friday, August 1 - Doors open at 8:00 p.m.

Closing Performance

Saturday, August 2 - Doors open at 8:00 p.m.

Both performances are open to the public and showcase works by faculty, students, and guest choreographers.

A Global Experience, Rooted in Oklahoma

OIDF is redefining access to world-class dance education in the region. By bringing global faculty to Oklahoma City, the festival creates a rare opportunity for local and regional dancers to receive elite mentorship and form international artistic connections—without leaving their home state.

For performance tickets, registration, and press inquiries, please visit: www.okdancefest.org

Press materials and images available at: <https://www.okdancefest.org/press-materials>

Onward with movement,

Thyrsa Da Rosa

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Oklahoma International Dance Festival

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