

World Premiere and Live Online Q&A

The Gauntlet: Faraway Together Sxip Shirey and Coco Karol

A Surprising and Immersive
Audio Portrait of Abu Dhabi

WED
MAR
31

World Premiere 8:00pm GST (GMT+4),
Wednesday, 31 March 2021
on The Arts Center Website

London:
5:00pm, Wednesday, 31 March 2021

New York:
12:00pm, Wednesday, 31 March 2021

Shanghai:
12:00am, Thursday, 1 April 2021

Watch after at
thegauntletfarawaytogether.com and
on The Arts Center's YouTube Channel

An intimate experience
immersing audiences
in waves of harmony,
poetry, and gesture.

Photo by Shajahan,
Malami Exhibition by Nujoom Alghanem,
Maraya Art Center, Sharjah, UAE

COME CURIOUS. LEAVE INSPIRED.
Ticket Info at nyuad-artscenter.org

"... (Shirey's)
performances seem
a combination of
careful planning and
spur-of-the-moment
inspiration."

The New York Times

NYUAD
مركز الفنون
THE ARTS
CENTER

MEDIA PARTNERS:



AbuDhabiWorld



Welcome.

Welcome to the sixth season of The Arts Center at NYU Abu Dhabi.

In more normal times, we think of a performing arts center as a place to gather together with friends and strangers in place and time to experience the transformative power of the arts, creating community in the process.

But we're not in normal times. With the global pandemic and physical distancing still our current reality, we took a few steps back to reflect on what's important to you, our community, and to us as a performing arts center. We reflected on the conversations we have had with you over the past five years. We came to the realization that The Arts Center is more than a physical home for the performing arts. We are a bridge.

**A bridge linking curiosity with inspiration.
Connecting NYU Abu Dhabi with the Capital.
Joining the UAE with global audiences.
Spanning local and international talent.
Traversing cultures and disciplines.
Uniting hearts and minds.**

We focused on the most important tool of all artists: creativity. And decided to invest in brilliant artists who are inventing new forms to engage audiences. Across the distances. Despite the distances. Performances to be shared by thousands of people, and by audiences of only one or two people at the same time. We are supporting local and international artists by commissioning new works that will be shared in-person in the future.

We've turned to a number of artists whose names you may recognize, as many of them have previously performed at The Arts Center and know our community. Along with their performances, these artists are offering

a diverse array of *Off the Stage* events: virtual workshops in dance and in theater-making. Online Arts Chats, in partnership with NYUAD's Career Development Center and NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery, which will give you a peek into the artists' home studios, as they too are called to work from home. Virtual visits to NYUAD classes across many disciplines and academic divisions. Intimate online meals with the artists.

These times call for resilience and perseverance. We are grateful to the team at The Arts Center who have worked tirelessly to reinvent how we do what we do, while remaining who we are. We are also deeply appreciative to our sustaining sponsor GAC for their steadfast commitment to supporting the work, and to our media partners Al Ittihad, Yalla Magazine, The National, TimeOut Abu Dhabi and Abu Dhabi World for the ongoing support. To all returning Arts Center members, and all our collaborators throughout the university: thank you for believing in us.

This spring at The Arts Center will be a season unlike any other, offering a path to new ways of thinking about the arts and our community. And once again, we offer an invitation.

**Come curious.
Leave inspired.**

All the best,

Bill Bragin
Executive Artistic Director
The Arts Center at NYU Abu Dhabi

The Gauntlet: Faraway Together

CREATIVE TEAM

Created by
Sxip Shirey and Coco Karol

Composed by
Sxip Shirey

Movement Interviews
conducted by Coco Karol

Libretto
by Sxip Shirey and Coco Karol

Choral Director
Clare Lesser

Sound Designer
Subin Thompson

Director of Production
Christopher Pye

Associate Producer for the Movement Interviews
Bernice delos Reyes

CHORAL MEMBERS

Mohamed Albreiki, Lili Janka Bogнар, Yasmine Busaibe, Nichole Campbell,
Vera Ciocca, Jianna Jackson, Kevin Joseph, Asel Kularatne, Kacper Madejek,
Eliza Mic, Shyalina Muthumudalige, Vanessa Robinson, Chi-Ting Tsai,
Rosa Wang, and Baoyuan Zhang

FEATURING THE WORDS OF

Gaith Abdulla, Nujoom Alghanem, Omar Alshami, Christina Awad,
Tanya Awad, Khawla Barley, Bill Bragin, Brendalle Belaza, Bernice delos Reyes,
Sree Jyothish, Kevin Ke, Clari Lehmkuhl, Brian Lott, Alta Mauro,
Sakhawat Mehboob, Waleed Shah, Mariët Westermann, and Tala Worrell.

RECORDING CREDITS

New York University Abu Dhabi

Assistant Audio Supervisor
Estelle Galloway

Technical Theater Specialist
Philip Burger

New York University Shanghai

Assistant Arts Professor
Katherine A Girvin

New York University Steinhardt

Studio Manager
Parichat Songmuang

Studio Engineer
Erik Bell
Cale Bonderman

SPECIAL THANKS

Dean of Students, New York University Shanghai
David Pe

Professor, Music Technology, New York University
Steinhardt Robert Rowe



EMBODIED LISTENING MOVEMENT SUGGESTIONS FOR EXPERIENCING THE GAUNTLET: FARAWAY TOGETHER

Go to a place where you can be placeless.

Outside?

Inside?

Both?

Allow the edges to soften

Make a path by walking

Circumnavigate the space in footsteps

Become a threshold in stillness

Move from intimidation to inspiration

Reach out to touch something

Relate to the shadows with tenderness

Relate to the past with tenderness

Find a home you can give away

look into the eyes of a voice



We're here
for you
wherever
you are



The capital's favourite magazine
online and in print



www.adwonline.ae



@ADWuae



@AbuDhabiWorld



@ADWuae

AbuDhabiWorld

PERSONAL NOTES

SXIP SHIREY

The Gauntlet is an immersive choral form, in which an audience walks through a choir that is singing a libretto composed from the stories of their community.

We were so excited to come to NYU Abu Dhabi to create a piece for its uniquely diverse community.

We were just weeks away from getting on a plane to come to Abu Dhabi when the global pandemic and lockdowns made that impossible. We decided to proceed with *The Gauntlet* as a virtual performance, using a program called SPAT that places each individual singer into 3-D space. Still, I was disappointed.

I thought that this virtual version of *The Gauntlet* would be a shadow of the “real version”. However, when sound engineer Subin Thompson sent me back the audio of our first test with two singers, I was amazed. It sounded so alive. This process of creating *The Gauntlet: Faraway Together* with the team at NYU Abu Dhabi has been incredibly exciting. We have evolved new strategies and dug deeper into the language than ever before.

This Gauntlet was created by conducting recording sessions over Zoom with me in New York at my piano, the choir director Clare Lesser in the UK at her piano, the technician Phillip Burger at the sound studio in Abu Dhabi and producer Chris Pye at home in Abu Dhabi with individual students in Poland, China, Taiwan, USA, and the Emirates. The singers were never in the same room with each other, they did not hear a backing track of the other’s singing when they recorded their parts. They were in rehearsals over Zoom with each of their sections but needed to turn their microphones off when actually singing because of the time latency inherent in the technology.

The Gauntlet collapses the choir back into individuals. What you will hear in this composition is the sound of 15 singers, reaching across the world, reaching to hear, reaching to listen, reaching to harmonize. That reach, for me, is the most beautiful part of this piece. That reach is what we are all doing right now. This will be the first time the choir has heard the piece they are singing together. They are singing it for you, their community.

A deep thanks to our creative team at Abu Dhabi: Bill Bragin, Linsey Botswick, Lana Goliath, Clare Lesser, Christopher Pye, Estelle Galloway, Phillip Burger and Subin Thompson. They helped us wrestle this beast of a situation into something beautiful. Also it was a joy to work with the young singers, who created a choir in an impossible situation.



الاتحاد

حمّل تطبيق صحيفة الاتحاد الآن

وتابع آخر الأخبار لحظة بلحظة

بشكل عصري ومبتكر



#تتصدّر المشهد



www.alittihad.ae



alittihadae



@aletihadae

PERSONAL NOTES

COCO KAROL

The language of the libretto for *The Gauntlet: Faraway Together* comes from a process of interviewing individuals using movement and dialog with the idea that our bodies are archives of memory and knowledge, and that movement changes both our ability to access those archives, and how we make meaning of experiences. For *The Gauntlet: Faraway Together*, I conducted 'movement interviews' with 20 important voices in Abu Dhabi about being alone, together, faraway, and close, and how people reconcile connection and distance in the midst of a global pandemic.

I wish to thank Gaith Abdulla, Nujoom Alghanem, Omar Alshami, Christina Awad, Tanya Awad, Khawla Barley, Bill Bragin, Brendalle Belaza, Bernice delos Reyes, Sree Jyothish, Kevin Ke, Clari Lehmkuhl, Brian Lott, Alta Mauro, Sakhawat Mehboob, Waleed Shah, Mariët Westermann, and Tala Worrell for allowing me to interview them with movement. Their stories and voices make up *The Gauntlet: Faraway Together*.

And an enormous thank you to Bill Bragin and Linsey Bostwick who worked with Sxip and me for the past two years to make this performance happen. They were an integral part of both the creative and tactical process and never gave up on it. Bill took a huge risk choosing to move forward with a virtual Gauntlet and allow Sxip and me to be in a truly experimental and unknown process. The result of that risktaking on the side of the institution and curator is not only this performance you are experiencing, but also for me, a renewed enthusiasm for what art can do in times of crisis and need.



LIBRETTO

BY SXIP SHIREY & COCO KAROL

[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD THE ARABIC TRANSLATION](#)

Prelude

Mvt. 1, I Am The Foreigner

I am the foreigner
Wherever I go
Wherever I go
Wherever I go

Is this home?
Is this home?
Are we home?

I don't feel there's somewhere that I'm from
Anymore
I don't feel there's somewhere that I'm from
Anymore
I don't feel there's somewhere that I'm from
Anymore
Anymore
Anymore

"These days
I get the distinctive feeling
That I am in my present
I am in in my past
And I am in my future
All at the same time."

What are you fleeing?
What are you fleeing from?
I flee becoming
I flee becoming
The man my father was
Free the man
Free the man
Flee the man
My father was

What are you fleeing?
What are you fleeing?

I flee the things that I once told myself I was.

What are you fleeing?
What are you fleeing from?
My isolation
My despair
My boredom
With all this.
All this.
This

I am the foreigner
Wherever I go
Wherever I go
Wherever I go

Is this home?
Is this home?
Are we home?

You don't need to be a refugee
To be in diaspora

Mvt. 2 Are You Here?

Part 1, The Whisper Storm

“Recall a time when you were lost.”

(Choir members are asked to whisper a story from a prompt.
Their whispers form a storm of whispers.)

Part 2, Can you see me?

Are you here?
Can you hear me?
I am here but I can't hear you.

“This one, I saw this one -- a little child. His eyes haunted me.
So I drew him and I painted him. When I finished I felt like he became very real.
So I started destroying the paint but I kept the eyes. I kept the way he was looking
out at me. And then: from a little boy he became an old man.”

Part 3, I Forget, But What I Remember Is....

1.

On the farm of my childhood there's a lot of guava trees. I used to climb up there and stay for an hour or two and have my moments. The thing I see is a corn field and lots of coconut trees. The thing I see is lots of bushes around the field.

The thing I see is backstroke and butterfly. Its like flying in the sky. It feels more relaxed and...underwater.

2.

The thing that keeps coming to mind is my godson's suicide. The thing that keeps coming to mind is...the pressure that comes on a young black man, especially one who is sensitive, an artist type, a loner, one who doesn't really fit in. The thing that keeps coming to mind is, he was an artist. The thing that keeps coming to mind is, he was an illustrator.

3.

The thing that keeps coming to mind is. My son. He is living in the Philippines with my sister for now. He is 19. He just turned 19. When my son was a little boy -- I left him when he was 4 years old to work abroad taking care of other children. He did not grow up with me. He grew up with my mom. The thing that keeps coming to mind is, I remember when he was young. He was super cute. And so chubby that he can't walk and he can't carry his body. Yes, I can say yes. It's hard to take care of not your own son.

4.

My son just walked out of his room, he's 9. People ask how old is your son, 11? Statistically we know black children and Latinx children are assumed to be older than they are and so when they make innocent mistakes or do things that children do, they're evaluated as someone who's older. So a 12 year old with a toy gun is: here's a grown man with a gun. This absence of innocence is something to contend with. My son it seems ridiculous to say, I wish I'd raised my son in a rougher neighborhood so that he'd be more prepared for the life he's going to live. It's not inaccurate.

5.

The thing that keeps coming to mind is, my brother. He used to call me everyday. The last time I saw him its was raining, he rode his bike behind my auto rickshaw. I stop the driver and ask my brother that please go back. He give me tight hug and say bye after that I never met him again. After my brother's death I was worried how I am going to face my community, but they stand next to me. They didn't treat me like staff, but like family who is sad and broken-hearted.

6.

It's raining. This image keeps coming up from my childhood, I think its because I have been trying to quit smoking, it's the image of when I first went and bought myself a pack of cigarettes when I was 14. I keep remembering this room when this room was our playroom. This image of me laying on the floor with a white lace veil on my head and I'm wearing a white dress, and I'm kneeling with my hands together. I think I am lost in the spaces. How many breaths do you think you take in a cigarette 10, 12, 15 maybe?

7.

The thing that keeps coming to mind is, there's a photo of my mother holding me as a child in front of this blue house. I'd be the first one to wake up and I'd chase the ants, the ants would go through the cracks in the walls. The walls of this house that no longer exists. It broke down, and we left. There was this moment where we were like 'are we really leaving this house that meant everything to us,' but that house that no longer exists is what's in my head.

8.

What's in my head is the feeling of my mothers long black hair brushing against my face as she leaned over my crib to hand me my bottle of milk. She handed it over to me. I was really young but I remember that realization that I needed to drink the milk on my own.

What's in my head is my fathers words. I got sick when I was young. Everyone thought there is no chance for me to stay alive, but my father held me in his arms and said "my son, don't worry about that". I lost my dad, but I remember his words.

9.

I don't remember how old I was, maybe 6 or 7. I fell in a playground. I fell on a log. I still remember the pain, there was no one around me to help me to get up. I don't remember, but what I remember is

Distance feels arbitrary. My mom drove by in the car and found me alone on the street walking in the general direction of home.

Distance feels arbitrary. My parents live next door to me. We don't actually see each other often. They feel very close all the time, no matter how far we are. They are both far and close when they are both far and close.

10.

Here is a very sad story. In elementary school we had a party so I took my recorder with me. After, on the bus I was carrying one of the songs and we were dancing as girls. As soon as I reached home, apparently one of the girls who was on that bus one of the eldest students, called my aunt and said what a shame she was dancing on the bus. And my grandmother she didn't like that, so she asked me to go to my room without even eating lunch she locked me in there from the time I entered the house until the next day when I went to school. That was the longest and the harshest thing that a child can go through. I felt like if the solution is death maybe that's a good idea.

Did it stop you from dancing? Of course. Yes.

11.

I've always struggled with not knowing where I am from. My parents tell me where they're from, but I don't think it's true. By their appearance they must have come from somewhere else. It's hard to find where I belong, but I kind of got over trying to.

I forget, but what I remember is looking in the mirror at my face in our powder room, I must have been 11. And who is this? Who am I? It was frightening. The visual confrontation with your face, your eyes, I feel the screen in my face. I lean forwards a bit. I have stress in my eyes.

12.

I forget but what what I remember is this hunger to go -- I used to have these crazy habits that weren't taught to me that somehow I internalized, I would keep lists of people I set up practice matches with. I had this big yellow pad with the dates and times where I was supposed to play someone at 9 and then 10 and then 11. As I think back, that is the first time I really felt like "oh this is me who wants this, this isn't someone else who wants this."

13.

Stories are happening. Yes stories. When you leave your country to work abroad you miss everything. So I miss always my parents, my family. My life is completely changed.

The life I was living in my country was a completely different life.

Life is a completely different life. As you live your life, each step, stories are happening.

I miss my culture. I miss my country. I miss my family.

14.

Stories are happening. I have a lot of push-pins that are lost on the floor. I think I am lost in the spaces. Oh and a white board that I accidentally wrote on with a permanent marker.

It feels a bit like amnesia. New York is its thing. Beirut is its thing. And Abu Dhabi its thing. And every time I fly and go back everything is almost the same but something's not the same, or I'm not the same and therefore things don't feel the same.

15.

Even when I do go back now, my home feels like time capsule. All the piles, of unlistened to CDs, and unread books, and stacks of paper, are all there, the same way they were, when I left, with two suitcases and a pair of speakers.

I kept the eyes. I kept the way he was looking out at me. And then: from a little boy he became an old man.

Mvt. 3 Insan/ Nasiya

"The word for "human" in Arabic is "insan."

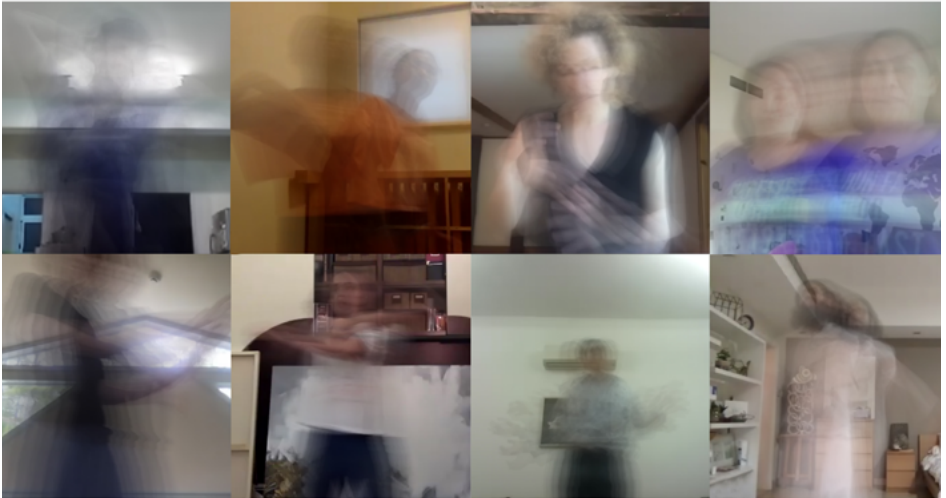
It comes from the root word "nasiya" "to forget."

The human condition is a state of forgetting and remembering."

Mvt. 4 Sand Dunes

Part 1

What would you give if you could give home?
Home? What home?
I would give this person a nest
An old growth forest
A city where the bars are filled with live music
Belonging without a passport
A cactus in bloom
An opera
Agency
A room emanating with laughter
Getting your flowers before you die
A painting with syncopated autumn colors
A salsa dance with my grandfather
A salsa dance with a stranger
I would give a gathering with friends
A place to recharge, a comfortable bed, a strong shower, and a well-stocked bar
A pool-- body floating in water like flying in the sky
A moment of suspended judgement
A camera
Friends
A chance to finish what you started
A chance to provide for your family
A chance to hold your children



Part 2

Sand dunes look like water frozen
The wind moves them
The wind blows them
The wind, The wind
The wind knows them

Tiny grains of sand,
They stand in waves

Waking after the sandstorm
my whole world is moved

No landmarks, no landmass
Not lonely, not lost,

Not alone
Not alone
Not alone

Suspended

Not alone

Suspended

Not alone
Not alone

Suspended



National harmony. Amplified

**The
National**

The Middle East. Explained



DOWNLOAD THE APP



FOLLOW US

@TheNationalUAE



@TheNational.ae

VISIT

www.TheNational.ae

CREATIVES

SXIP SHIREY

Sxip Shirey is a composer/producer/director/ performer based in NYC. He is the composer and MD for the theater/circus arts production *LIMBO* and *LIMBO UNHINGED*, developed by Melbourne based Strut N Fret Productions House, which brought him all over the world from The Sydney Opera House, to South Bank Center in London to play Madonna's Birthday Party in the Hamptons. Shirey teaches workshops in "Text and Object Oriented Composition" at Norwegian Theater Academy, Fredrickstad, Norway, which Shirey considers "The Black Mountain College of NOW." Shirey toured as the opening-act for the Dresden Dolls and has collaborated often with Amanda Palmer, and was a member of the band Luminescent Orchestrui. Shirey has played Appalachian music for Roma in Transylvania and gypsy music for Appalachians in West Virginia. Shirey has presented at TED (2008), is a 2011 United States Artist Fellow and is currently an artist in residence at Brooklyn premier contemporary music venue National Sawdust. He wrote music for the short film, *Statuesque*, written/directed by Neil Gaiman, starring Bill Nighy, which premiered on Christmas Day on SKY TV, UK. He created music for the app-version of Shaun Tan's book *Rules of Summer*, NSW Lothian Children's Books, 2013. Shirey has also served as artist curator in residence at National Sawdust bringing in artists including, Taylor Mac, Rhiannon Giddens, Ned Rothenberg, Baby Dee, Sarah Angliss, Theo Bleckmann, Todd Reynolds, Basil Twist, The Quintet of the Americas, and Lady Rizo. Shirey is currently working on an opera based on Winter Miller's play *No One is Forgotten*, co-composed by Paola Prestini through HERE Art Center, NYC, USA. He is also composing music for Lisa D'Amour's play *Ocean Filibuster* developed through the American Repertory Theater Company, Boston, USA. Shirey is currently developing his immersive choral works, *The Gauntlet*, with his artist partner Coco Karol, all over the world.



Sxip Shirey and Coco Karol
© Photography Tim Hawkings

COCO KAROL

Coco Karol, is a NY-based dancer/choreographer/ artist who makes cross-disciplinary performances that invite conversations between personal and shared experience.

A performer, choreographer, hospice volunteer, and dedicated teacher, Coco is interested in how we create meaning and connect to others. For her, dance joins poetic and physical experience. She holds a BFA from Tisch Dance NYU and an MFA from Hollins University. Among the choreographers she has danced for are Chris Elam/ Misnomer Dance Theater, Cherylyn Lavagnino/ CLD, and Christopher Williams. Her choreography has been toured internationally and premiered in reputable New York venues such as Carnegie Hall, Symphony Space, Galapagos, Brooklyn Studios for Dance, and been curated by AUNTS. She has worked with musicians including Bjork, Amanda Palmer, Ryan Lott, Sugar Vendil, Minna Choi/ MagikMagik, Lacy Rose, Alaina Ferris, and Inhyun Kim/ Ear to Mind; visual artists including Steven Sebring, Eve Bailey, Marcos Zotes, Benjamin Heller, and C. Finley. She teaches various dance and embodied inquiry techniques that she developed including Movement Before Dialogue workshops such as *Gestures of Care*, a movement and storytelling series for end-of-life care professionals. Ongoing works include *Movement Interviews* (dance as inquiry), *The Lullaby Project* (oral histories/ physical archives), and *The Gauntlet*, community-inclusive choral performances with her artistic partner and husband, Sxip Shirey.



CLARE LESSER

Clare Lesser (Choral Director) studied at the University of Birmingham, Birmingham Conservatoire, the University of Sussex and the University of York. She specialises in the performance of twentieth century and contemporary music, and her work in this field has been nominated for a Royal Philharmonic Society award. She also won the 2018 Terry Holmes award with Shu Yu Lin. She has worked with Karlheinz Stockhausen, James Dillon, Heinz Holliger, Michael Finnissy, and Hans-Joachim Hespos, amongst others, and regularly collaborates with composers on new works. She has given over seventy-five world premieres and has made critically acclaimed recordings of the music of Wolfgang Rihm, Michael Finnissy, Heinz Holliger, Richard Emsley, Milko Kelemen, Hans Werner Henze, and Giacinto Scelsi on the Métier label. 2021 will see the beginning of two new recording projects with Métier – works for voice, piano and clarinet by Michael Finnissy, and chamber music by David Lesser. She has performed throughout Europe and the Middle East, including at the Edinburgh, Gaudeamus and Avignon International Festivals and is currently engaged on major performance projects with Michael Finnissy and Hans-Joachim Hespos. She holds a PhD in performance from the University of York and her research interests focus on deconstruction, indeterminacy, graphic scores and variable form composition. She directs the NYUAD vocal ensemble and is a lecturer of music at New York University Abu Dhabi.

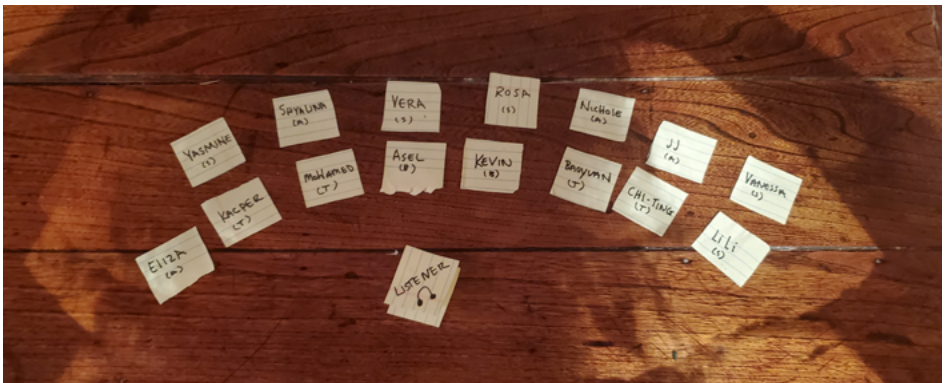


SUBIN THOMPSON

Subin Thompson (Sound Designer) is an expert sound engineer, composer and music producer. He has immense experience in working for world-class theatre productions, mixing live shows, sound designing, recording and broadcasting. Before joining The Arts Center at NYU Abu Dhabi, he was Sound and Broadcast Engineer at the Royal Opera House Muscat, Oman since 2011. He has worked with productions like Franco Zafferilli's *Turandot*, artists like Grammy award winner Michael League of Snarky Puppy and Bokante, Preservation Hall Jazz band, Prague Philharmonic Orchestra and BBC Symphony Orchestra. He has also mixed live broadcast shows for Oman TV. Thompson has composed, designed sound and produced music for stage shows, short films, and television. With a background in music and sound engineering, he knows the best of both worlds. His massive knowledge in arrangement and orchestration helps him and those who work with him express their musical ideas with clarity and contentment. Thompson is researching the potential and future of immersive audio in the entertainment industry and is currently involved in immersive sound designing a theatre production at NYU Tisch, which is to premiere in May 2021.

CHRISTOPHER PYE

Christopher Pye (Director of Production) is a seasoned production manager, master electrician and lighting designer with a varied experience of touring, production and corporate work. Before joining The Arts Center, he was Deputy Head of Lighting at the Royal Opera House Muscat in Oman since 2010. Prior to emigrating, he gained wide experience in all aspects of the performing arts from working in notable international arts venues such as; the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, The National Theatre, London and the Mick Jagger Centre for Performing Arts. He is also an experienced programmer of lighting and AV in family entertainment centres. Examples within the UAE include Ferrari World Abu Dhabi and the Yas Island Water Park.



What you do at home is your business.



What you do outside of it is ours.



timeoutabudhabi.com

CHOIR

MOHAMED ALBREIKI

I am a junior studying economics. I have been singing in the New York University Abu Dhabi choir ever since Fall 2020. I'm the kind of person that can't live without music, as it's been my saving grace in many happy and dark times.

As a result, I've been singing ever since I was young, and I've been trying to hone my voice and improve it ever since. I have an extensive love for music of every genre, be it classical orchestra, opera, electrical, rock/metal, hip-hop to even experimental, sounds and musicality are things I live by.

LILI JANKA BOGNAR

Lili Janka Bogнар resides in Abu Dhabi, where she is finishing her Bachelor of Arts in music at New York University Abu Dhabi. She specializes in Hungarian folk singing and has performed worldwide as a singer of the globally recognized *Holdviola*, which according to ethnomusicologist Stephen Winick is "one of Europe's foremost groups making electric folk". Lili received the "Muse Hope Award" in recognition of her dedication to preserving and promoting Hungarian folk culture in 2020. She is the co-creator of a new band *Zsaya* which can be considered an exclusive gem within the Hungarian music scene, embracing tradition and innovation.

YASMINE BUSAIBE

Yasmine Busaibe is a junior at New York University Abu Dhabi, majoring in chemistry and minoring in computer engineering. She is a soprano who has been involved with the vocal ensemble since her matriculation in 2018.

NICHOLE CAMPBELL

I am a sophomore from Taiwan, currently studying theater. I come from a family of artists and performers, and ever since I was a child I have devoted a huge part of my life to music. It means everything to me. I started out singing, but always had a fear of actually performing until one day when I decided to ignore my fears and do what I love. Music and performing are what I love to do, and I'm trying not to hide away from it any longer.

VERA CIOCCA

From an early age, Vera began her musical studies in Italy, singing medieval and baroque music and performing through different regions of Italy.

After moving to Colombia, she began her career as a soloist focusing on Pop/R&B music. Vera sings and speaks fluent Italian, English, and Spanish. She is currently studying music and the Business of Entertainment, Media & Technology at New York University Abu Dhabi. Some of Vera's highlights include participating in *The Voice Teens Colombia*, where she was among the top eight, and opening for Ricky Martin at the Dubai Jazz Festival, which counted with an audience of approximately 25,000 people.

JIANNA JACKSON

I am a 19 year old church-bred vocalist from Kingston, Jamaica. I have always been interested in and surrounded by music, whether it was my mother softly humming worship songs from my her hymnal, the crooning cadence of the R&B greats from my father's record player, the endearingly powerful drumming sessions seeping from my brother's music room and amplifying throughout our neighbourhood, the nine-year long tenure of a junior choir I was partaking in or simply existing in the primitively powerful musical landmark that is my home country. Whatever the medium is, it follows that all of these things influence what music is to me and continue to do so every day.

KEVIN JOSEPH

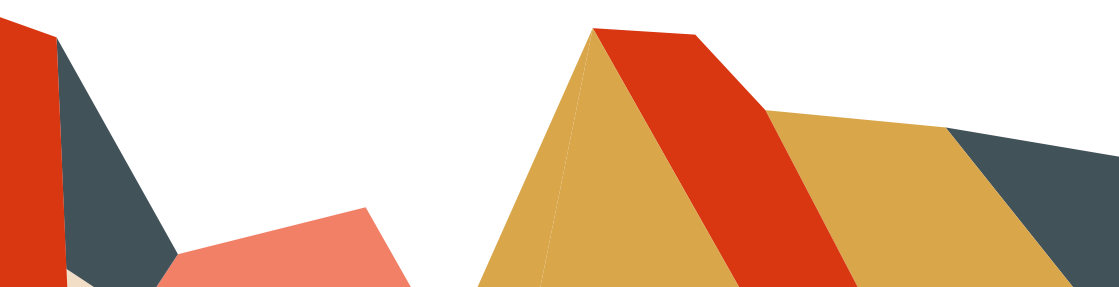
Kevin Joseph is a third-year student studying Mechanical Engineering at New York University Abu Dhabi. He has studied the piano since childhood, and has also been a part of various choirs. In 2019, he was selected for one of the most extraordinary theatre performances *The RealAD Show*, which addresses pertinent issues on campus and raises awareness of these issues in the NYUAD community. He was selected from a large pool of applicants to join the 12-member cast and travel to New York to write and rehearse the show. Since then, he has been involved in singing and performing in small theatre productions and choral groups.

ASEL KULARATNE

Asel Kularatne is currently a junior majoring in music and minoring in natural science at New York University Abu Dhabi. He plans on becoming a professional opera singer and is under the tutelage of Clare Lesser. His primary interests are opera and music performance, and he plans on attending a conservatoire after graduating from NYUAD to further his music studies. He took part in the prestigious reality show, *The Real AD Show*, in 2019. Additionally, he plays the piano and has taken part in several masterclasses hosted by The Arts Center at NYU Abu Dhabi with guests such as Arturo O'Farrill, Awadagin Pratt and most recently Emanuele Arcuili.

KACPER MADEJEK

Kacper Madejek holds academic and music scholarships from Poland and the United Kingdom, including the British Alumni Society Scholarship and Guild Music Scholarship. Since his matriculation at New York University Abu Dhabi in 2018, he has studied with internationally acclaimed composers, pianists, and Grammy Award winners. Madejek's compositional output aligns closely with his music research and incorporates multi-idiomatic influences of 19th and 20th centuries within works for voice, piano, strings, woodwinds, organ, and electronics. He remains an involved chorister since 2015.



ELIZA MIC

Eliza Mic is a senior-year student studying biology and specializing in brain and cognitive sciences. Despite her science background, music was one of her passions from early on. She went to her first violin lesson when she was 7 years old and started singing even earlier, when her grandfather would set up a chair as the stage and would give her a carrot as a microphone. Her ultimate goal is to find a way to combine both of her great passions and manage to make a living out of it.

SHYALINA MUTHUMUDALIGE

Shyalina Muthumudalige is from the small island of Sri Lanka and is currently a freshman at New York University Abu Dhabi, hoping to double major in music and political science. She is an amateur aspiring singer/songwriter and her plans involve exploring activism through the performing arts to inspire change and social justice. Her musical journey began under the tutelage of Natasha Senanayake and she is now exploring opportunities in music studies and performance at NYUAD.

VANESSA ROBINSON

I am from the United States and am currently a sophomore majoring in political science and minoring in music at New York University Abu Dhabi. I absolutely love music and singing, and I have been performing ever since I was young. When I'm not doing assignments or practicing for Vocal Ensemble, I can be found either exploring the city or relaxing and singing with my friends!

CHI-TING TSAI

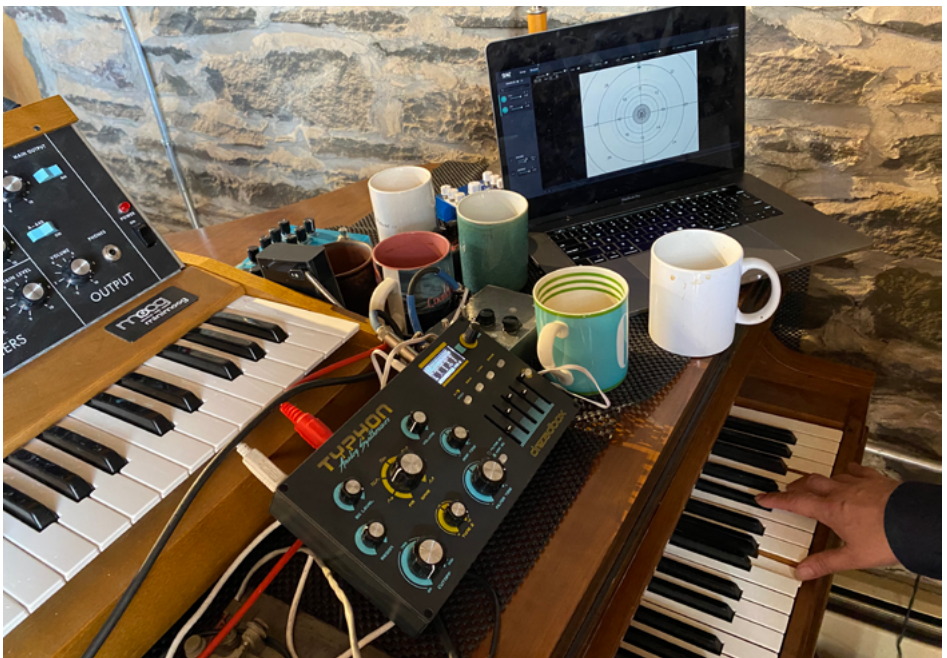
I'm a freshman at New York University Abu Dhabi. Singing has always been my passion to freely express myself. I see creating and playing music as framing a specific moment in my life with the emotions I went through, giving the fragments of recollections new meanings whenever I pull them out and see them in a different light. It's this kind of integration with my body and mind that has propelled me through two years of high school a cappella club. Now taking vocal ensemble at NYUAD, I can't wait to enjoy what music has prepared for me in the future!

ROSA WANG

Rosa Wang is from Beijing, China. Due to my obsession toward music, I learned piano and singing at 4 years old. The two are embodied in my life. Time passed, and I went to the United States to continue my education and participated in the All State Mixed Choir, which brought me pleasure and a sense of success in my junior year. Singing was, is, and will always be my trusted sidekick to go through the ebbs and flows.

BAOYUAN ZHANG

I am 20 years old and from the class of 2024. My major is currently undecided but I will likely take an engineering or science pathway. My hometown is Baoding, Hebei, China, where I was living and studying for 15 years before I moved to Singapore for pre-university education. Before being admitted to New York University Abu Dhabi, I spent four years in Singapore, which is a dynamic and vibrant city state. I studied the accordion for 10 years, and am very interested in singing Russian, Japanese and a few Spanish songs.



Yalla[®]
The Know It All Family Guide
for Abu Dhabi

Become an
Abu Dhabi
Know It All.



  @yallaabudhabi

www.yallaabudhabi.ae

PHOTO BY NATALYA ZARITSKAYA ON UNSPLASH

INTERVIEWEES

GAITH ABDULLA

Gaith Abdulla is a writer and Gulf studies specialist. He spends much of his energy engaging with the grassroots art spaces of the UAE.

NUJOOM ALGHANEM

Nujoom Alghanem is an Emirati poet, artist and filmmaker, who started her professional career in the early 1980's as a journalist. She has produced numerous films including seven feature documentaries and short fiction, documentary, and art films. Her films have won around 25 regional and international prizes. Nujoom considers filmmaking as her profession, whereas art and poetry are her passion.

OMAR ALSHAMI

Omar Alshami is a grade 12 student at Abu Dhabi International Private School. He is also on the national swimming team for the UAE Special Olympics. He won the gold and bronze medals for his team in the 2019 World Games.

CHRISTINA AND TANYA AWAD

Christina and Tanya Awad are sisters who work and live together. They are on a mission to reconnect the individual with the self and the collective - a sense of belonging is crucial, and it can exist wherever we are in the world. They are weaving their way in cities through various community building projects around the UAE, curating wholesome experiences, these days through Art and Wellness.

KHAWLA BARLEY

Khawla Barley is an American who has called the UAE home since 1998. She currently serves as Head of Initiatives for Special Olympics UAE, where she enjoys getting involved in everything from STEM to the arts and is always learning something new!



BRENDALLE BELAZA

Brendalle Belaza was born in the Philippines and loves spending her time doing street, portrait and landscape photography. She also enjoys painting in her spare time.



BILL BRAGIN

Bill Bragin is a transplanted New Yorker who has made a career of imposing his tastes on friends and strangers. He lives with his wife in Abu Dhabi, where he serves as executive artistic director of The Arts Center at NYU Abu Dhabi.



BERNICE DELOS REYES

Bernice delos Reyes is a multidisciplinary artist and an independent arts and culture journalist based in Dubai, where she also serves as Communications Executive at Alserkal. Originally from the Philippines, Bernice has a forever affinity for the sea.



SREE JYOTHISH

Sree Jyothish is an artist, student, and part-time overthinker/Malayalee. He currently studies theater and music at New York University Abu Dhabi, where he tries to make sense of what it is to be a brown man from Dubai, holding an Indian passport.

KEVIN KE

Kevin Ke is a budding art-maker based in Taiwan. He enjoys painting emotions on the floor with his body, singing his heart out through musical theater numbers, and exploring the enigmatic worlds of his dreams.

CLARI LEHMKUHL

Clari Lehmkuhl has been living in Abu Dhabi with her family for 14 years. She is the only qualified Down syndrome Zumba instructor in the UAE and is licensed to teach various Zumba classes. She was the only female tennis player representing the UAE at the Special Olympics in 2019. Clari loves staying fit and enjoys meeting new people and her motto in life is “With hard work, anything is possible.”

BRIAN LOTT

Brian Lott Brian is from the Land of Lincoln, and prides himself on integrating into the global community. He’s the head of communications for Mubadala in Abu Dhabi.

ALTA MAURO

Alta Mauro spends her time at the intersection of Black, womanist, critical pedagogy and whatever flight of fancy grounds her abstract musing at the moment. Her (American) Midwest-Middle East-Massachusetts meanderings position her to see a thing for more than just its immediately understood thingness, which she thinks is kinda cool. Alta is Associate Dean for Inclusion and Belonging at Harvard College.

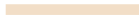
SAKHAWAT MEHBOOB

Sakhawat Mehboob is a Pakistani national living in UAE. He is known for being friendly and always available to help everyone. He is a public safety officer at New York University Abu Dhabi and prides himself for delivering good service to the community and ensuring the safety of the campus.



WALEED SHAH

Waleed Shah was born and raised in the UAE. He is a chemical engineer by education who started his career working in the oil industry, and slowly discovered his love for photography. His passion for photography earned the recognition by Fujifilm Middle East and he is honored to call himself an Official Fuji-X-Photographer.



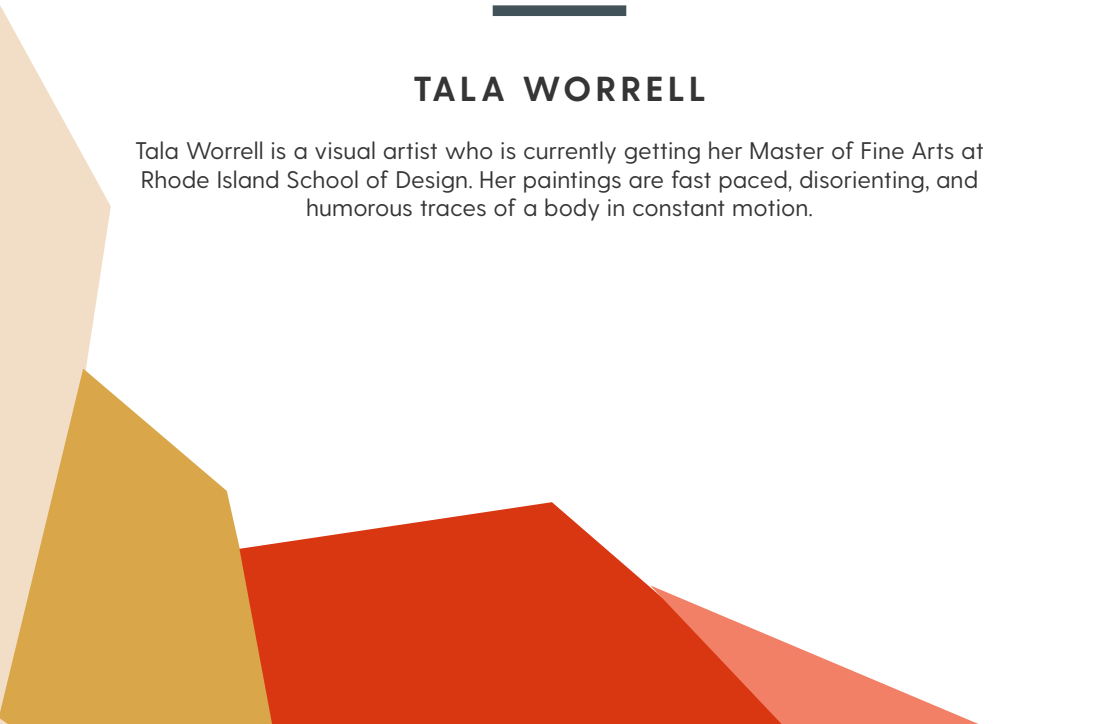
MARIËT WESTERMANN

Mariët Westermann is the Vice-Chancellor of New York University Abu Dhabi and an art historian. She is an avid walker and enjoys gardening and teaching others about the pleasures of art.



TALA WORRELL

Tala Worrell is a visual artist who is currently getting her Master of Fine Arts at Rhode Island School of Design. Her paintings are fast paced, disorienting, and humorous traces of a body in constant motion.



The Arts Center Team.

LINSEY BOSTWICK
Director of Artistic Planning

CHRISTIAN LEAR
Director of Business Operations

BILL BRAGIN
Executive Artistic Director

ADAM MILLS
Assistant Lighting Manager

PHILIP BURGER
Technical Theater Specialist

JONATHAN PETTIGREW
Theater Technical Specialist

LEILA DEBBAZI
Manager of Administration

CLIVE PRIMROSE
Director of Marketing

TIECE EDWARDS
Front of House and
Box Office Manager

CHRIS PYE
Director of Production

SIMON FRAULO
Lighting Supervisor

GARETH ROBERTS
Assistant Technical Stage Manager

ESTELLE GALLOWAY
Assistant Audio Supervisor

REEM SALEH
Associate Director of External Relations
and Partnerships

LANA GOLIATH
Associate Producer

ROGER SCHEEPERS
Audio Supervisor

JENNIFER HIND
Theater Technical Specialist

JOSIE SIMM
Theater Technical Specialist

NICO JAHNS
Technical Stage Manager

SUBIN THOMPSON
Theater Technical Specialist

HARSHINI KARUNARATNE
Theater Technical Specialist

ALL OF THE FRONT OF HOUSE
& BOX OFFICE STAFF

INTERNS

Hayat Abdul Samad Jan Chavez, Ensu Choi, Khola Jamshad, Tae In Jeong, Gauri Kedia, Lily Zahwa Khamizan, Michael Leo KoKkat, Abigail Koomson, Bea Laszlo, Victoria Marcano, Smrithi Nair, Denaf Negatu, Nour Samy, Rania Shaki, Julia Tymoshenko, Yağmur Unal, Haewon Yoon, Meski Zerdo.

SPECIAL THANKS

HE Noura Al Kaabi, HE Salem Al Qassimi, Mariët Westermann, Arlie Petters, Fatma Abdulla, Peter Christensen, Fatiah Touray

Awam Ampka, , Lily Burns-Hernandez, Kate Chandler, Hanover Communications, Reem Fekri, Bassam Moubarak, Sarah Paul, Rubenstein Public Relations, Farah Shamma, Jonathan Shannon, Liza Tait-Bailey, Bryan Waterman

Membership.

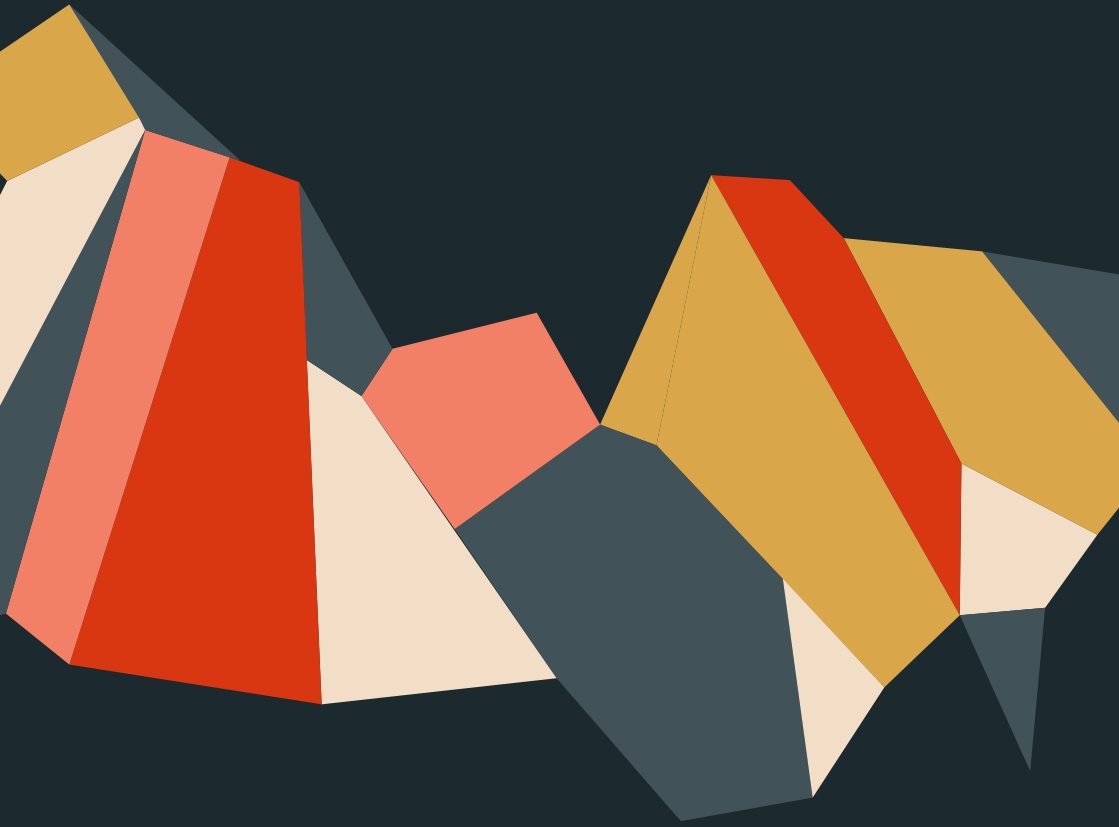
**Support the arts.
Become a member today.**

Get behind the scenes, extend your relationship with The Arts Center, and deepen your connection to the artists and your community.

Membership brings you an exclusive track to online events, talks, and conversations. Join the community of like-minded arts and culture enthusiasts.

**Find out more at
NYUAD-artscenter.org**





#NYUADArtsCenter

NYUADArtsCenter

www.nyuad-artscenter.org

nyuad.boxoffice@nyu.edu

+971 2 628 4555

جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي



NYU | ABU DHABI

NYUAD

مركز الفنون
THE ARTS
CENTER