



RUTGERS-NEW BRUNSWICK

Mason Gross School of the Arts

GOLDEN KICK-OFF: 50 YEARS OF MGSA



Sunday, February 1, 2026 | 2 p.m.

Nicholas Music Center
Douglass Campus
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

WELCOME

Greetings,

As we grow older, the wisdom of our ancestors about the importance of gratitude becomes ever more resonant. This is why today I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to former Mason Gross dean, Jason Geary, who now serves as Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at Rutgers—New Brunswick.

In the summer of 2024, Dean Geary approached me to coordinate the artistic programming for the **50th Anniversary of Mason Gross**, set to take place in just two years. What an honor! That unforgettable summer was very inspiring (with the possible exception of the Australian break-dancer). It's also been an honor working with so many of our tremendously talented faculty throughout all five departments. What a treat—particularly working so closely with our co-programmer, Maureen Hurd.

So, in the spirit of the Olympics, Mason Gross is pleased to present this fabulous opening ceremony—our Golden Kick-Off—where we celebrate 50 years of academic excellence in the arts in higher education.

Be sure to participate in all of our programming throughout the anniversary year, particularly our closing ceremony in December!

— Marshall Jones III, Associate Dean for Equity



“Students no longer want just to appreciate, look at, or analyze a thing. They want to do it—they want to act, build scenery, paint, play music, dance. In short, they want to be involved.”

— John Bettenbender, MGSA's first dean (1977-1988)
The Home News, July 8, 1973

QUOTES FROM ALUMNI

“I like to challenge myself. I like to learn from my mistakes. Sometimes you have to go through the darkest times to find the light ... My job as an actor is to just tell the story as best I can from my character’s point of view and let the audience decide.”

— Sebastian Stan, Theater BFA 2005



“Discipline carries you when inspiration doesn’t.”

— Kyle Marshall, Dance BFA 2011

“Essential lesson learned! You can erase what you draw ... and incorporate it into something new. Tell the truth in situations where the truth is not welcome.”

— Dr. Nell Irvin Painter, Art & Design BFA 2009



PROGRAM

Co-Hosts:

Karen Alvarado (Acting MFA 2018)

Audrey Arias-Justo (Art & Design BFA 2024)

Rutgers University Kirkpatrick Choir

Dr. Brandon Williams, Conductor

Consecrate the Place and Day - Lloyd Pfautsch, Composer

On the Banks of the Old Raritan

Abdon Andahur

Maggie Barber

Kieran Calderaro

Jordan Calderon

Gianna Capello

Joe Chappel

Ezra Chechik

Eunil Cho

Kai Cleary

Tal Daan

Emma Daniels

Ethan Del Valle

Sharanya Devarakonda

David Doherty

Croix Ellison

Luca Ettore

Farrah Fang

Lewis Fang

Aliyah Follaco

Harry George

Amina Goldenberg

Miguel Granda

Elyse Guadagno

Owen Ing

Ryan Kalin

Paige Liloia

Cordelia Lucid

Maddie Marsola

Sean Masino

Mariah McDonald

Vincent Meo

Erick Moesteller

Anna Musumeci

Marcus Peña

Jules Ravenna

Kat Rich

Gianna Scaduto

Sonia Sinha

Fiona Tasarek

Kerri Thompson

Sam Tunkel

Romulo Vite

Rayan Yamout

Alex Yedida

Matthew Zabiegala

50 Tiny Dances - Faculty, alumni, and students perform

Left side

1%

Music: "Body Horror for Birds" by
Callous Daaoboys
Dancer/Choreographer: Katie Bateman (Dance
BFA 2024, Dance EdM 2025)

Responding

Music: "Spikes Interlude" by MrBigB
Dancers/Choreographers: Lily Collins,
Jake Fredericks

Oh Dear

Music: "Siento Que Merezco Más" by
Latin Mafia
Dancers/Choreographers: Laura Luzardo
(Dance BFA 2024), Gem Tantucio (Dance
BFA 2024)

Center stage

Lighthouse

Music: "Riverside" by Ann Annie
Dancers/Choreographers: Matt Gal (Dance
BFA 2025), Willa O'Connor

WELCOME

Maureen Hurd, Associate Director, Department of Music
Marshall Jones III, Associate Dean for Equity

Rutgers Chamber Jazz II

Professor Kenny Davis, Director
Alabama - John Coltrane (1926-1967)
I Have a Dream - Herbie Hancock (arr. M. Stasio)

Logan Soltys, Drums
Daniel Karnaukh, Piano
Aidan Vera, Trombone
Matt Estabrook, Reeds

À La Recherche De Toi

Music: "Lanterns Lit" by Son Lux
Dancers/Choreographers: Naomi Jones,
Luke Loos

Kick Me Catch Me

Music: All Creatures Will Drink Joy by
American Cream Band
Dancers/Choreographers: Leigha Bartko (Dance
BFA 2023), Arianna Bealer (Dance BFA 2023)

Right side

5 115

Music: "5 115" by Michael Wall
Dancers/Choreographers: MJ Canzonieri,
K Sainato

Magic, Alive!!

Music: "Magic, Alive!!" By McKinley Dixon
Dancer/Choreographer: Timyra Henderson

I Have Friends in 4x4 Spaces

Music: "I Have Friends In Holy Spaces"
Dancers/Choreographers: Katie Bateman (Dance
BFA 2024, Dance EdM 2025),
Grace McCombs (BFA 2024, Dance EdM 2025),
Lily Mollicone (BFA 2025)

Micah Silverstein, Reeds
Derek Burnett, Reeds
Carlos Hernandez, Trumpet/Flugel
Professor Kenny Davis, Bass

SPECIAL PRESENTER

Ben Bettenbender, (Acting BFA 1980)

History of the Mason Gross School of the Arts

Directed and edited by Parthe Marathe

Narration by Cameron Knight

Written by Kathleen Tolan

Sound by Kevin Allen

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

January 15, 1979 by Marshall Jones III

Fictional historical account of the 50th birthday of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Performers: Jeff Bender, Mercedes Robinson, Maia Branham, Scythe Malone,

Jaden Wyche

Costume Designer: Janna Lamantia

Jersey Pulse, Jersey Flow

Selections from Art & Design Undergraduate students of Media Works: Abigail Hoagland, Luca Danielski, Eve LaRue, Shay Elfreedah

The Work, The Love, The Art

Libretto: Marshall Jones III, Barbara Angeline, Kevin Farrell

Director: Marshall Jones III

Music: composed by Kevin Farrell

Choreography: Barbara Angeline, featuring choreography by Emma Greenspan (Filmmaking section)

Assistant Choreographer: Emma Greenspan

Fight Direction: Rick Sordelet

Rap written/performed by: Imani Patino, Jamar Felder

Costume Designers: Estella Burke, Edana Freeman

Tenor Saxophone: Paul Carlon

Percussion: Glenn Schloss

Marianna Allen

Dasia Darden

Victoria Dillon

Kelly Dooley

Kaylyn Gilchrist

Meira Klafter

Juliana Martino

Daryel T. Monson

Sophia Nicholas

Hamsini Radhakrishnan

Keira Sainato

Zoe Scotto

Alex Silvis

Cara Stine

Mesai Williams

Abigayle Wolski

CLOSING REFLECTIONS

Ellen Bredehoft, Interim Dean

PERSONNEL

PRODUCTION STAFF

Marshall Jones III	Artistic Co-Coordinator
Maureen Hurd	Artistic Co-Coordinator
Adam Klein	Production Stage Manager/Engineer
Stephanette Schwartz-Smith	Lighting Designer
J.J. Cooper	Manager
Jen Guarino	Program Coordinator

FRONT-OF-HOUSE STAFF

Jessica Cogan	Operations Manager, Ticket Office
Christiane Cayea	Program Coordinator, Ticket Office

PRODUCTION CREW

Annie Jandoli	Stage Manager
Lara Mitofsky Neuss	FOH Audio-Visual Playback
Brandon Mejia	FOH Audio Mixer
Zachary Nasto	Audio-Visual Recording & Livestreaming
Ginger Meyer, Michael Oddo, Lexi Ulrey	Stagehands

SPECIAL THANKS

Denise Agnew, Stephen A. Alexis, Karin Anderson, Ben Bettenbender, Kimberly Goodis, Chantal Jean-Pierre, Cameron Knight, Gabriella Lopez, Carrie Mossman, Valerie Ramshur, Marc Stasio, Christopher Wolfe

MASON GROSS SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Ellen Bredehoft	Interim Dean
Stephanie Cronenberg	Interim Associate Dean for Academic Affairs/ Director of Research
Annabelle Luu	Associate Dean for Finance & Administration
Marshall Jones III	Associate Dean for Equity
Lisa Sanon-Jules	Assistant Dean for Advising & Student Success
Alana Integlia	Assistant Dean for Admissions & Enrollment Management
Laurie Granieri	Director of Communications
Maritza McGraw	Director of Operations and Events
Eugene Jun	Director of Information Technology
Anjum Mansuri	Director of Business Services
Denyse Reed	Director of Development
Jacqueline Thaw	Chair – Art & Design
John Evans	Chair – Dance
Patrick Stettner	Chair – Filmmaking
Amanda Eubanks Winkler	Director – Music
David P. Gordon	Chair – Theater
Kevin Bott	Director – Rutgers Arts Online

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