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\*Media passes, photographs, videos, interviews and additional materials available upon request.



**SOUTH CHICAGO DANCE THEATRE OPENS THE CENTER AT GOVSTATE'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY  
LEGACY SEASON, SATURDAY. SEPT. 27**

University Park, IL — The Center for Performing Arts (The Center) at Governors State University (GovState) launches its 30th Anniversary Legacy Season by honoring the extraordinary artistic talent rooted in our region with a performance by South Chicago Dance Theatre (SCDT) on Saturday, Sept. 27, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$29 - \$74, with \$20 tickets available for students and children and additional discounts for seniors and groups. To purchase tickets, visit [GovSt.edu/SouthChicagoDance](https://GovSt.edu/SouthChicagoDance) or call the box office at 708.235.2222.

“This opening night event is more than a performance—it is a celebration of homegrown excellence that has earned national and international acclaim,” said **The Center Executive Director Scott Sowinski**.

Led by visionary choreographer **Kia S. Smith**, the evening will highlight nearly a decade of South Chicago Dance Theatre’s genre-defying work while centering the voices and talents of choreographers working in Chicago and around the world.

Smith is a Chicago native and proud product of the South Suburban dance training, including early instruction at Homewood’s American Dance Center. She was recently named one of *Dance Magazine*’s “25 to Watch” (2024) and one of *Chicago Magazine*’s “Rising Stars” (2023). She has received commissions from Giordano Dance Chicago, Houston Contemporary, Scottish Ballet School, Chicago Opera Theater and others.

South Chicago Dance Theatre is one of the few in Chicago that platforms and supports living choreographers rooted in the city—many of whom are women and artists of color—while providing

salaried, sustainable employment for South Side-based dancers. For Smith, who spent many of her high school years with her aunt and uncle in Monee after the loss of her mother, this performance is deeply personal. “The south suburbs were my second home,” says Smith, “To open this milestone season in the Southland is a full-circle moment.”

Sowinski shares that sentiment: “This is not just the start of a season. It’s the next chapter of a movement—led by artists who grew up here, made their mark on the world and still call Chicagoland their home.”

The evening will feature a curated selection from SCDT’s diverse repertory, spanning nearly a decade:

“Soul Power” choreographed by Monique Haley, this work celebrates the vitality of Black culture and music. Haley was the first Black woman to dance with River North Dance Company.

“On a Lark” choreographed by Stephanie Martinez: a contemporary piece that follows five dancers as they move through famous film soundtracks.

“Under the Skin” choreographed by Tsai Hsi Hung, this abstract contemporary piece explores themes of identity and transformation through virtuosic movement.

“IN/WITHIN” choreographed by Kia S. Smith, delves into the imaginary landscape of the lead performer as she ventures through the characters, objects and ephemera of her subconscious mind. Irrationally juxtaposed scenes spark joy and delight, absurdity, melancholy, empathy and actualization. “IN/WITHIN” jostles between authenticity and spuriousness through the language of contemporary dance theater.

In addition to the mainstage performance, SCDT will engage the Southland community through a masterclass with Smith prior to the show at 5 p.m., furthering the company’s mission to provide access, education and professional opportunities in underrepresented areas of Chicagoland.

### **About South Chicago Dance Theatre**

South Chicago Dance Theatre is a multicultural organization that seamlessly fuses classical and contemporary dance styles as well as preserving historic dance work. With Choreographic Diplomacy™ at the heart of the organization, SCDT creates, performs and teaches dance on a local, national and international platform. Notable performances to date include SCDT’s sold out Harris Theater For Music and Dance debut in 2022, Kia S. Smith’s first evening length work “Memoirs of Jazz in the Alley” which coincided with SCDT’s debut at the preeminent Auditorium Theatre of Chicago in 2023, SCDT’s Jacob’s Pillow debut in 2024 and international tours to Vietnam, South Korea, the Netherlands and South America.

SCDT's performances also span collaborations with lauded institutions such as Music of the Baroque, Giordano Dance Chicago, Chicago Opera Theater, the Isaiah Spencer Collective, Isaiah Collier and the Chosen Few, Chicago Public Schools, Stony Island Arts Bank, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Choomna Dance Company, Opera Laguna and many others.

### **About the Center for Performing Arts at Governors State University**

The Center for Performing Arts at Governors State University has brought world-class arts programming to Chicago's Southland for 30 years. With a commitment to accessibility, equity, and community-centered programming, the Center serves audiences of all ages and backgrounds—from Broadway enthusiasts to first-time theatergoers. Located just 35 miles south of downtown Chicago, the Center is a cultural anchor in the region and a proud supporter of local, national, and international talent.

### **How to Purchase Tickets**

- Online at [CenterTickets.net](https://CenterTickets.net)
- Over the phone at 708.235.2222
- In person at the Box Office: 1 University Parkway, University Park, IL 60484

Regular Box Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Thursdays: 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. and two hours prior to all performances. Summer Box Office Hours: Tuesday-Thursday: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

### **Know Before You Go**

Ask about additional opportunities for box seating and special events. Discounts are available for students, children, seniors 65+, groups of 10+, and patrons purchasing tickets to three or more shows.

Parking is free. For best GPS directions, use the location search term “Governors State University.”

### **Connect With The Center**

Like The Center on Facebook @CenterAtGSU and subscribe on [YouTube](#) for updates on events, offers, and more. Share your experience at The Center on Instagram: @gsu\_center #govstatearts.

## **Center for Performing Arts 2025 - 2026 Season Lineup**

### **September 2025**

#### **27**      [South Chicago Dance Theatre](#)

Led by South Chicago native and one of WBEZ's breakout artists of 2024 - Kia S. Smith - South Chicago Dance Theatre will make its Center debut with a retrospective of its most acclaimed works including “IN/WITHIN” and “Soul Power”.

### **October 2025**

11

**[The Center Southland Spotlight](#)**

From powerhouse vocals to genre-spanning sounds—jazz, pop, soul, and beyond—this celebration of local talent brings together the Southland’s finest artists for one electrifying night of music and community.

16

**Arts in Education - [Maddi’s Fridge](#)**

Based on the book by Lois Brant. Recommended for Grades 1-6.

18

**[Ballet 5:8 La Llorona](#)**

Ballet 5:8 engages communities in Chicago, the Midwest and across the nation in conversation of life and faith through innovative storytelling and breathtaking dance. Explore the Mexican myth of "La Llorona," where choreographer Julianna Rubio Slager reinterprets Maria’s journey through a lens of compassion and nuance. With each poignant movement and evocative scene, "La Llorona" sheds light on the silent struggles faced by new mothers, fostering empathy, understanding and a call to action for greater awareness and support.

21

**Arts in Education - [Maleta de Maebelle](#)**

A bilingual adaptation of the celebrated & beloved *Reading Rainbow* picture book *Maebelle’s Suitcase* by Tricia Tusa. Recommended for Grades K-6.

25

**[The Rocky Horror Picture Show with Live Shadow Cast](#)**

Feel the antici...pation! One of the highlights of the Halloween season, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* with a live shadow cast returns to The Center’s stage with this classic cult rock’n’roll, science fiction, horror satire. Come in costume or just come for the fun, the live shadow cast takes the film to the next level as audiences experience the action with the whole theatre involved. Whether it’s an introduction to the camp or your 100th, get ready to do the “Time Warp, again!”

31

[John Waters](#)

The Center welcomes the king of camp, John Waters, for an unforgettable evening of cult cinema and twisted storytelling. Expect an endless bag of transgressive tales and hetero-non-aggressive wit that'll warm the dark little hearts of non-binary brats everywhere. Waters will screen one of his classic films with live commentary—sharing behind-the-scenes stories, real-life inspirations, and unfiltered observations. Over-sharing? Absolutely. Too much information? Probably. But airing his dirty laundry just makes him feel clean. Includes post-screening Q&A.

**November  
2025**

6-9

[Anon\(ymous\) presented by GovState Theatre and Performance Studies \(TAPS\)](#)

Separated from his mother, a young refugee called Anon journeys through the United States, encountering a wide variety of people -- some kind, some dangerous and cruel -- as he searches for his family. From a sinister one-eyed butcher to beguiling barflies to a sweatshop, Anon must navigate through a chaotic, ever-changing landscape in this entrancing adaptation of Homer's "The Odyssey."

7

[CeCe Teneal's Divas of Soul](#)

Hop on the "Midnight Train to Georgia" over "River Deep, Mountain High" while award-winning vocalist CeCe Teneal delivers the "R-E-S-P-E-C-T" you deserve in *Divas of Soul*, a one-of-a-kind concert event! This spectacular celebration of fifty years of chart-topping music from artists like Aretha Franklin, Gladys Knight, Chaka Khan, Tina Turner, Whitney Houston and others has wowed audiences worldwide.

13

**Arts in Education - [When Good Broccoli Goes Bad](#)**

A foot-tapping children's musical that playfully encourages children (and adults) to make healthier choices. Recommended for Grades PreK-5.

22

[Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra presents: NIGHT MOVES: The Planets, E.T. and Star Trek](#)

Experience a celestial journey through music! IPO presents *Star Trek Through the Years*, *E.T. 's Adventures on Earth*, and Holst's epic *The Planets*, accompanied by stunning visuals from Adrian Wyard. This out-of-this-world concert will forever change how you see—and hear—the night sky.

**December  
2025**

6-7

**Ruth Page's The Nutcracker**

Returning to The Center after sold-out performances in 2024, this beloved holiday family classic is the only production that recreates the original version's full-length staging. Little Clara, her mysterious godfather magician, a handsome prince, the battle between toy soldiers and mice, and a forest glade of dancing Snowflakes are all brought to life in this beautiful and joyful production. Featuring international guest artists alongside the Ruth Page Civic Ballet elite dancers, experience exquisite performances, Tchaikovsky's magical score, stunning costumes, and imaginative settings in the Land of Snow and the Kingdom of the Sweets!

13

**IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE: A Live Radio Play**

The holiday season continues with The Center's, *It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*. Rediscover the magic of Frank Capra's timeless masterpiece, "It's a Wonderful Life," in a fun and immersive way. With the help of an ensemble led by the Center's staff, this live radio play adaptation takes audiences back in time to the 1940s, perfect for the whole family, as everyone becomes part of a live studio audience attending a radio broadcast of this beloved holiday tale.

**January  
2026**

29

**Arts in Education - Finding North**

Based on the stories of African-American Underground Railroad hero John P. Parker. Recommended for Grades: 6-12.

**February  
2026**

5

**Arts in Education - South Chicago Dance Theatre presents Dancing Through the Great Migration**

This show uses the art of dance to educate about The Great Migration: an iconic movement of about 6 million African Americans from the South to the North and West between 1910 and 1970. Recommended for Grades 5-12.

7

**Opera Up Close presents: Halftime High Notes: Honoring the Opera Up Close Legacy with John Concepcion and Friends**

After 16 years of incredible music and memories, John Concepcion takes his final bow with a program of halftime high notes and a celebration of the program that shares the beauty, drama and power of opera.

15

**[The Rat Pack](#)**

Featuring the timeless music and charisma of Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., and Dean Martin, this high-energy show transports you to vintage Las Vegas. Enjoy a night of signature Rat Pack humor, classic songs, and maybe even a surprise visit from Marilyn Monroe! Whether you're sharing it with a special someone or the entire family, you'll be transported to a bygone era where love, laughter, and music collide.

**March 2026**

5

**Arts in Education - [All That Jazz presented by GovState Theatre and Performance Studies Dance Performance](#)**

6

**Arts in Education - [Click Clack Moo](#)**

Based on the Caldecott Honor Book by Doreen Cronin and Betsy Lewin.  
Recommended for Grades: K-4.

7

**[All That Jazz presented by GovState Theatre and Performance Studies](#)**

Celebrate the rhythms of American dance in this lively performance featuring jazz classics and fresh new works. Presented by GovState's Theatre and Performance Studies and Dance Company, the show highlights choreography by students, faculty and alumni in a tribute to jazz past and present.

21

**[Center Stage Icons – 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Legacy Celebration with The Rostons](#)**

Award-winning duo Alexis J. Roston & Kelvin Roston Jr. pay musical tribute to the Center for its 30th Anniversary. From Kelvin's unforgettable turn as Donny Hathaway in *Twisted Melodies* to Alexis' show-stopping vocals, this dynamic couple celebrates the music, memories, and moments that have shaped the Center's stage.

25

**Arts in Education - [Professor Wow's FUN-believable Science Show](#)**

When students experience the fantastic, 12-foot tall "Foam Monster," the impossible "Balloons in Orbit," the uproariously funny "Bernoulli TP Wipe Out Challenge" and the "Super-Colossal Vortex Cannon," they learn that nothing is impossible—as long as it obeys the laws of science! Recommended for Grades K-8.

28

***Unleash the Beats* by [Chicago Tap Theatre](#)**

Chicago Tap Theatre brings energy, artistry, and rhythm to the stage. With dazzling footwork and musicality, this celebrated company honors the tradition of Tap while making it fresh and fun for all ages. A joyful, high-energy performance perfect for dance lovers and newcomers alike.

**April 2026**

9-12

***By The Way, Meet Vera Stark* presented by [GovState Theatre and Performance Studies \(TAPS\)](#)**

This play by Lynn Nottage follows the life of Vera Stark, a headstrong African-American maid and budding actress, and her tangled relationship with her boss, a white Hollywood star desperately grasping to hold on to her career. When circumstances collide and both women land roles in the same Southern epic, the story behind the cameras leaves Vera with a surprising and controversial legacy that scholars will debate for years to come.

17

**Arts in Education - [Pete the Cat](#)**

Based on the book series written by Eric Litwin and illustrated by James Dean. Recommended for Grades PreK-3.

25

**[Lizzy and the Triggersmen](#)**

Dubbed “10-piece jazz sensations” (LA Weekly) and “one of the hottest swing bands in LA” (Good Day LA), Lizzy & the Triggersmen is redefining vintage jazz for modern times. With sold-out shows at iconic venues like the Troubadour and a top 3 spot on the iTunes jazz charts alongside Miles Davis and Kamasi Washington, they blend old-school swing with contemporary edge.

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