

PRIOR

Performing Arts Center



Prior 2026–27
A Season 5 Engagement Invitation



Director's Invitation

Dear Collaborator,

In its Fifth Season, The Prior will continue hosting a rich kaleidoscope of activities including those supporting principal partners within our Arts Ecosystem as well as the broader Holy Cross and Worcester communities. In addition, the center will continue to present a series of self-produced performances, highlights of which are shared in the following pages.

These performances are typically the cumulative event of a residency. Discussions with artists and thinkers always include a variety of engagement options as a part of that residency. We invite you to explore the topics and subject material on offer. We hope some will resonate and provide opportunities to amplify specific instructional objectives during the 2026-27 academic year. Within the larger liberal arts context, we also continue to strive to generally build an environment designed to inspire and pursue diverse questions of the human experience.

Prior's Manager of Artistic and Engagement Initiatives, Marta Beyer, brings years of experience compiling logistics and fruitful formats to all her planning discussions. During the residency, she acts as chief coordinator of all associated efforts. While we have planted seedlings of ideas on the following pages, please do not allow that to limit your imagination. We'd be delighted to discuss any ideas you may have for interaction. You can express your interest in one or more of next year's residencies by [filling out this form](#), or alternatively, by reaching out to [Marta](#) or [myself](#) directly with questions or ideation explorations.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey de Caen
Nancy Savage Skinner '79 Director



The Last Pass

In Residency
Sep 14-19, 2026

Performances: **Sep 17 & 18, 2026 @ 7:30 p.m. | Boroughs Theatre**

Join us for the staged reading World Premiere of *The Last Pass*, playwright Vincent Murphy's adaptation of author Gary Pomerantz's NYT-bestselling book chronicling Celtics legend Bob Cousy's adventures with teammate Bill Russell throughout the racial tensions of mid-century America.

The stage reading of *The Last Pass* dives into issues of race, relationships, and sports. During the residency, Murphy and Pomerantz will be available to discuss how they worked together to create this powerful play featuring one of Holy Cross' most recognizable alums, Bob Cousy. In addition, Murphy and Pomerantz can speak to students about their own career paths in theatre and journalism. Murphy can also guide students through a hands-on writer's workshop focused on "the craft of adaptation."

Curricular Engagement Opportunities include:

- Post-show discussion
- Workshop on adapting material to the stage
- Discussions about careers
- Pre-residency panel on the historical context of race relations, sports in the '50s, or Holy Cross. Faculty interested in sharing relevant research should get in touch!

Submit interest, recommendations or questions by [CLICKING HERE](#).



BRKFST

STORMCLUTTER

In Residency
Sep 20-29, 2026

Performance: **Sep 24, 2026 @ 7:30 p.m. | Luth Concert Hall**

BRKFST fosters individuality and community through creation, performance, and mentorship while providing education in movement technique, methodology, and choreography in breaking, hip-hop's first dance style. STORMCLUTTER explores relationships and efforts to resolve opposing states of interpersonal tension and inner chaos.

While on campus, BRKFST can explain how *STORMCLUTTER* brings complex family and friendship dynamics to the fore. They can speak to how breaking allowed the emotional sensations associated with feelings of dissociation, paralysis, and isolation to resonate with audiences. In addition, BRKFST are able to connect with students through their signature adaptive workshops that combine movement practice with collaborative decision-making, open dialogue, and peer mentorship.

Curricular Engagement Opportunities include:

- Discussions about the creative process behind *STORMCLUTTER*
- Workshop on choreography and breakdancing
- Workshop on BRKFST's unique style merging streetstyle dance with classically trained musicians
- Discussions about the politics of the urban environment and the cultural context in which breaking and the associated musical traditions developed

Submit interest, recommendations or questions by [CLICKING HERE](#).



Los Angeles Guitar Quartet

In Residency
Nov 2-4, 2026

Performance: Nov 4, 2026 @ 7:30 p.m. | Luth Concert Hall

For over four decades on the concert stage, the Grammy® Award-winning LAGQ has set the standard for expression and virtuosity among guitar ensembles. Their critically acclaimed transcriptions of concert masterworks provide a fresh look at the music of the past, while their interpretations of works from the contemporary and world-music realms break new ground.

True masters of the guitar, LAGQ can share with students their expertise on composing, arranging, and writing music for guitars. The group can also speak about their wide-ranging experience in jazz, contemporary, and classical guitar repertoires. Particular topics that might connect with courses include LAGQ's emphasis on Brazilian music, their involvement in a Don Quixote project, and their work exploring wellness and musician health.

Curricular Engagement Opportunities include:

- Class discussions
- Masterclasses or coaching feedback
- Open rehearsal and Q&A opportunities

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Harmony of Nations: Songs from Around the Arab World

In Residency
Nov 12-13, 2026

Performance: **Nov 13, 2026 @ 7:30 p.m. | Luth Concert Hall**

Featuring the Center for Arabic Culture's Jazal Choir and Music Ensemble

Led by Arabic Studies faculty Alma Richeh, the Jazal Choir performs folkloric Arabic music as well as contemporary and modern Arabic songs. Their *Harmony of Nations* program blends Arabic and Middle Eastern musical styles with Western choral traditions of a cappella and harmony-based singing.

In advance of the concert, Richeh can join classes for interactive workshops exploring the history of Arabic music and the role of music in cultural and religious life in the region. Students will leave with a deeper sense of the roots of Arabic music and its relation to other musical styles. Additionally, class visits can focus on Arabic and Middle Eastern songs, composers, scales, and lyrics. No language experience required for students to join in the singing! Award-winning composer, orchestrator, and musician Akram Haddad similarly can engage students in an interactive workshop about the musical aesthetics associated with Arabic music including its scale structures, ornamentation, and improvisation tradition and how these practices can be included in contemporary composition. This session, designed for performers, composers, and curious musicians alike, also offers opportunities for active participation and creative application.

Curricular Engagement Opportunities include:

- Workshop introducing Arabic music and singing from a cultural and religious lens
- Workshop on Arabic music modal systems, rhythmic cycles, and performance traditions

Submit interest, recommendations or questions by [CLICKING HERE](#).



From The Ashes

In Residency
Mar 8-19, 2027

Performances: **Mar 18 & 19, 2027 @ 7:30 p.m. | Luth Concert Hall**

From The Ashes is a "chamber-jazz" live musical performance from composer [Daniel Weidlein](#) and choreographer Gwendolyn Gussman using contemporary dance and immersive film projections to journey through the life-cycle of a forest fire.

The multi-disciplinary piece *From The Ashes* explores climate change, one of the pressing issues of our time, through the topic of forest fires. The artists are eager to engage in conversations and examine this subject with students through a variety of perspectives such as the role of the arts, urban planning, or ecological and Indigenous land practices. Additionally, Weidlein and Gussman can bring their expertise in jazz music, producing, songwriting, choreography, and movement teaching to Holy Cross classrooms. Both can also speak to developing a touring work of this scale that integrates music, dance, and projections.

Curricular Engagement Opportunities include:

- Pre-performance panel and audience discussion on fire ecology, cultural burning, and the specific ecology of Massachusetts
- Cross-disciplinary conversations on approaching climate change
- Nature walk incorporating movement and musical elements as well as Indigenous knowledge
- Dance workshops in a variety of areas including somatic practice
- Masterclasses on jazz improvisation

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New West Guitars

A Celebration of the Blue Guitars Project

In Residency
Apr 19-22, 2027

Performance: **Apr 21, 2027 @ 7:30 p.m. | Luth Concert Hall**

New West Guitars' signature sound comes from an innovative style that highlights rhythm, beauty and virtuosity through classic "archtop style" jazz guitars. Their current tour features live performances and recordings representing newly commissioned guitars from The Blue Guitars Foundation, formerly featured in The Smithsonian.

The group's recent work with The Blue Guitars project can offer classes a chance to learn about past and present guitar history. Not only does this project shed light on the historical development and craftsmanship involved with "archtop guitars," but it also provides a unique philanthropic commissioning model to consider. Along with their involvement in this renowned collection, New West Guitars can share their experience creating original pieces, playing jazz standards and popular covers, and creating a podcast series interviewing prominent guitarists.

Curricular Engagement Opportunities include:

- Pre-concert lecture with The Blue Guitars collector
- Discussions and presentations on The Blue Guitars project and other aspects of the evolution of guitars
- Coaching sessions
- Career clinic for self-promoting musicians

Submit interest, recommendations or questions by [CLICKING HERE](#).