

For Immediate Release: January 28, 2026
[Cal Performances Press Room](#)



Photos of Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre performing *Gathering* are available for download from the Cal Performances [Press Room](#)

**CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS
THE WEST COAST PREMIERE OF
GATHERING
BY YAA SAMAR! DANCE THEATRE
FRIDAY–SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27–MARCH 1,
FOUR PERFORMANCES
AT ZELLERBACH PLAYHOUSE**

**FEATURING DRAMA, TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY
DANCE,
ORIGINAL MUSIC AND VIVALDI'S *FOUR SEASONS*,
ACROBATICS, PUPPETRY, AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

Berkeley, CA, January 28, 2026—Cal Performances at UC Berkeley presents the West Coast premiere of *Gathering*, an immersive and interactive story of community and resilience amid the

chaos of war by the internationally acclaimed **Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre** in its Cal Performances and West Coast company debut at Zellerbach Playhouse for four performances: Friday, February 27 at 8pm, Saturday, February 28 at 2pm and 8pm, and Sunday, March 1 at 3pm.

Conceived, written, and directed by choreographer **Samar Haddad King**, Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre's founder and artistic director, *Gathering*, which was given its world premiere at The Shed in New York City in 2024, tells the fictional story of Israa, a young woman who, on her wedding day, is trying to reconcile her fragmented memories in the aftermath of an attack on her village. Performed by an international cast of 13 performers from nine countries, the story unfolds through the interplay of monologues by Israa and movement amongst the other characters. The experience also includes original songs and classical music, contemporary and traditional dance, puppetry, and acrobatics. Embracing the theme of “gathering,” with a goal of uniting diverse groups through creative encounters, Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre invites audience members to choose a level of participation during the performance—from witnessing, to dancing, to interacting with the performers.

One key musical element in *Gathering* is Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*—in composer Max Richter's contemporary “Recomposed” version—the inclusion of which King links to the idea of “the repetitive cycles of war.” King also draws on the agricultural resonance of the seasons, with a special focus on the symbolic role of the orange. “It holds memories, the hard work, the strength of the soil, the sun’s warmth,” King said. “It’s unique in that you don’t need a knife to separate it into parts, yet it still retains its essence. In a way, it serves as a metaphor for a dispersed people, scattered into individual parts but still part of a whole, preserving their collective essence.” The metaphor comes to life vividly on stage, with both performers and (for those who opt in) audience members interacting with hundreds of oranges as the action unfolds.

The Company and Choreographer

Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre creates invigorating performance and education programs that expand access to and promote understanding through the arts, rooted in the belief that art should be liberating, transformative, and accessible to all. Founded in 2005 by Samar Haddad King, Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre has a repertoire of 30+ original works, and has performed in 21 countries across five continents. Since 2011, the company has worked transnationally between New York City and Palestine and is committed to uniting diverse artists and audiences in the creative process.

Samar Haddad King is the artistic/founding director of Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre. She has received commissions and had her work performed throughout the US and abroad, including presentations by the Hong Kong Arts Festival (Hong Kong), Hubbard Street 2 (Chicago), Ramallah Contemporary Dance Festival (Ramallah), The Walk/St. Ann's Warehouse (New York), Good Chance Theatre (Marseille), and The Herds (Paris). Her awards and fellowships include the Prix des Jeunes Créateurs Palestiniens pour la Diversité des Expressions Artistiques (Palest'In & Out Festival, Paris), La Fabrique Chaillot Residency (Chaillot–Théâtre national de la Danse, Paris), the Center for Ballet and the Arts at NYU, and Toulmin Creator (CBA/National Sawdust, NYC). She was a 2023 Creative Capital Wild Futures: Art, Culture, Impact awardee for her multidisciplinary project *Radio Act*.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Friday, February 27, 8pm

Saturday, February 28, 2pm

Saturday, February 28, 8pm

Sunday, March 1, 3pm

Zellerbach Playhouse
Bancroft Way at Dana Street
UC Berkeley campus

Theater

Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre

Gathering

Program:

Conceived, written, and directed by choreographer Samar Haddad King, *Gathering* is a full-length work exploring themes of love, loss, trauma, and dislocation. Through movement, text, song, and puppetry, an international cohort of collaborating artists tells a fictional story of a village under siege and one woman's struggle to reconcile her fragmented memories. Part staged work, part interactive experience, *Gathering* invites audiences to join as participants and witnesses in the collective action.

Tickets: \$74 (prices subject to change)

Tickets for all performances are available at calperformances.org, by phone at (510) 642-9988, or in person at the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, Tuesday–Friday, 12–5:30pm and Saturday–Sunday, 1–5pm.

There is a \$15 per order service charge on ticket purchases made by phone or online that are not part of a subscription package; there is no fee for tickets purchased in person at the Zellerbach Hall Ticket Office. There is a \$20 service charge on all subscription orders.

UC Berkeley students can access exclusive discounts, including half-price tickets in all sections of the theater. Information about UC Berkeley student tickets and discounts is available at calperformances.org/ucb-students; information about other discounts can be found at calperformances.org/discounts.

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PRESS CONTACT

Louisa Spier
Cal Performances
(510) 643-6714
lspier@calperformances.org