INTRODUCTION
BY JEAN FLORMAN

The notion of commissioning work was hardly new when the Joffrey Ballet accepted the first Hancher commission in 1984. After all, for thousands of years, patrons around the world have financially supported the creation of music, paintings, sculpture, plays—even love sonnets. But Hancher’s first commission was an invigorating sea change for the University of Iowa’s performing arts venue. It heralded a new creative future for Hancher. In addition to serving as a presenter of the performing arts, Hancher now would become a creative force.

1986–2023
The number of works commissioned or co-commissioned by Hancher Auditorium and the University of Iowa.

39 commissions in dance
54 commissions in music
22 commissions in theatricals
115 commissioned works
James Kudelka, for the Joffrey Ballet · The Heart of the Matter
1986 | February 25 · World premiere

Robert Joffrey and Gerald Arpino, for the Joffrey Ballet · The Nutcracker
1987 | December 10-12 · World premiere

Laura Dean, for Laura Dean Dancers and Musicians · Equator
1988 | March 4 · American premiere

David Gordon, for Pick Up Company · United States
1989 | February 11

Alessandro Moruzzi, for the Kronos Quartet · concept/visual design for Assembly Required
1989 | April 2

Paul Dresher Ensemble · Power Failure
1989 | October 27-28

David Parsons, for the Parsons Dance Company · Incandescence (a.k.a. Simply So)
1990 | January 19-20 · World premiere

Larry Neff, for the Kronos Quartet · visual design for Salome Dances for Peace, by Terry Riley
1990 | April 6 · World premiere

Larry Neff, for the Kronos Quartet · visual design for Black Angels, by George Crumb
1990 | April 7 · World premiere

Alexander Goehr, for the Arditti String Quartet · Quartet No. 4
1990 | October 8 · World premiere

Nina Wiener, for the Nina Wiener Dance Company · Harmonic Landscapes
1990 | October 12-13

Meredith Monk · Atlas (1991)

Dumi Maraire, for the Kronos Quartet · Mai Nozipo
1991 | January 26 · World premiere
Christian Marclay and the Kronos Quartet  •  New Work  
1991 | January 26  •  World premiere

Bill T. Jones and Julius Hemphill, for the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company and the Julius Hemphill Sextet  •  Last Supper at Uncle Tom’s Cabin/The Promised Land  
1991 | February 2

Paul Dresher Ensemble  •  Pioneer  
1991 | February 8-9

Libby Larsen, for the Cleveland Quartet  •  Quartet: Schoenberg, Schenker Schillinger  
1991 | May 1  •  World premiere

Wim Vandekeybus, for Ultima Vez  •  Always the Same Lies  
1991 | October 16

Rinde Eckert  •  The Gardening of Thomas D.  
1992 | January 22-25  •  World premiere

Jimmy Gamonet De Los Heros, for the Miami City Ballet  •  Danzalita  
1992 | April 28

Scott Johnson, for the Kronos Quartet  •  How It Happens (says I. F. Stone)  
1992 | November 5  •  World premiere

Laura Dean, Charles Moulton, Margo Sappington, Peter Pucci, and Prince for the Joffrey Ballet  •  Billboards  
1993 | January 27-31  •  World premiere

Pilobolus Dance Theatre  •  Rejoyce—A Pilobolus Finnegans Wake  
1993 | February 27  •  World premiere

Trimpin  •  D.R.A.M.A. ohno  
1993 | September 14-15
David Parsons, for the Parsons Dance Company • Ring Around the Rosie
1993 | October 1 • World premiere

Bebe Miller, for Bebe Miller Company • Nothing Can Happen Only Once
1994 | February 26

Joan Tower, for the Muir String Quartet • Night Fields
1994 | March 1 • World premiere

Michelle DiBucci, for the Kronos Quartet • arrangement of Raymond Scott’s Powerhouse
1994 | March 14

Randall Woolf, for the Kronos Quartet • arrangement of Raymond Scott’s Twilight in Turkey
1994 | March 14

John Oswald, for the Kronos Quartet • Mach
1994 | March 14

Bright Sheng, for the Takács Quartet • String Quartet No. 3
1994 | April 4

Bill T. Jones, for the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company • Still/Here
1994 | September 30–October 1 • American premiere

David Parsons, for the Parsons Dance Company • Touched by Time (1994)

Minoru Miki, for Pro Musica Nipponia • Lotus Poem
1994 | October 17 • World premiere

Rinde Eckert • The Idiot Variations
1995 | January 19–20 • World premiere

Susan Marshall, for Susan Marshall & Company • Fields of View
1995 | February 10

Brent Michael Davids, for the Kronos Quartet • Tunpao Nenangpe (Turtle People)
1995 | April 8
Ben Johnston, for the Kronos Quartet • arrangement of Harry Partch's Barstow: Eight Hitchhikers' Inscriptions from a Highway Railing at Barstow, California
1995 | April 8

Meredith Monk • Volcano Songs
1995 | May 2–3

Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, for Urban Bush Women • Bones and Ash: A Gilda Story
1995 | September 15 • World premiere

Marc Neikrug, for the Tokyo String Quartet with Pinchas Zukerman • String Quintet
1995 | October 13 • World premiere

John Corigliano, for the Cleveland Quartet • String Quartet
1995 | October 30

P.Q. Phan, for the Kronos Quartet with Nguyen Thuyet Phong
Hoi uc cau ke lac loi (Memoirs of A Lost Soul)
1996 | February 10 • World premiere

Tan Dun, for the Kronos Quartet with Wu Man • Ghost Opera
1996 | February 10

Diamanda Galás • Schrei X
1996 | March 27–28

Mark Morris, for the Mark Morris Dance Group with the Handel & Haydn Society conducted by Christopher Hogwood • Christoph Willibald Ritter von Gluck's Orfeo ed Euridice
1996 | April 8–9 • World premiere

Ben Johnston, for the Kronos Quartet • arrangement of Harry Partch's Two Studies on Ancient Greek Scales
1998 | January 24

Robert Lepage, for Ex Machina • Geometry of Miracles
1999 | September 9–11 • American premiere
Traveling Music, for the Kronos Quartet
Osaldo Golijov, arrangement of Anibal Troilo’s “Responso”
Aleksandra Vrebalov, “Panonia Boundless”
Alicia Svigals, “Kale Baveynen II”
Hyo-Shin Na, “Kahk-seo-reet-ta-ryeung” (Song of the Beggars)
Kayhan Kalhor, “Gallof a Thousand Horses”
1999 | September 15 · World premiere

Twyla Tharp, for Twyla Tharp Dance · Diabelli
1999 | September 17-18 · American premiere

Ushio Amagatsu, for Sankai Juku · Hibiki (Resonance from Far Away)
1999 | October 1-2 · American premiere

Susan Marshall, for Susan Marshall & Company · The Descent Beckons
1999 | October 8 · World premiere

Paul Taylor, for the Paul Taylor Dance Company · Arabesque
1999 | October 15-16 · World premiere

Bill T. Jones · The Breathing Show
1999 | October 23 · World premiere

Lar Lubovitch, for American Ballet Theatre · Meadow
1999 | November 2-3

Jawole Zollar, for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater
C-sharp Street – B-flat Avenue
1999 | November 19-20 · World premiere

Paul Schoenfield, for the Ahn Trio · Four Music Videos
2000 | January 27 · World premiere

Bill T. Jones, for the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company · You Walk?
2000 | March 24-25 · World premiere
Michael Gordon, David Lang, and Julia Wolfe, for Bang on a Can All-Stars with the Australian Chamber Orchestra · Haircut
2000 | April 8 · World premiere

Brett Dean, for Bang on a Can All-Stars with the Australian Chamber Orchestra · Game Over
2000 | April 8 · World premiere

Steve Martland, for Bang on a Can All-Stars with the Australian Chamber Orchestra
Hard Times
2000 | April 8 · World premiere

Richard Danielpour, for the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio · A Child’s Reliquary
2000 | April 13 · World premiere

Michael Daugherty, for Ethos Percussion Group · Used Car Salesman
2000 | April 18 · World premiere

Gabriela Ortiz, for Dawn Upshaw and the Kronos Quartet · Baalkah
2000 | May 3 · World premiere

Pilobolus Dance Theatre, with Leonard Eto · Tsu-Ku-Tsu
2000 | September 29-October 1

Bill T. Jones, for the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center · Evenings of dances and chamber music
2002 | January 25-26 · World premiere

Kronos Quartet · Nuevo
2002 | March 2 · World premiere

Terry Riley, for the Kronos Quartet, with Kantorei and University Choir · Sun Rings
2002 | October 26 · World premiere

Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, for Urban Bush Women, in collaboration with the National Song and Dance Company of Mozambique · Shadow’s Child
2003 | January 24
Lera Auerbach, for David Finckel and Wu Han  •  Sonata No. 1 for violoncello and piano  
2003 | February 19  •  World premiere

Bill T. Jones, for the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company  
Reading, Mercy and the Artificial Nigger  
2003 | October 11  •  World premiere

Lin Hwai-min, for the Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan  •  Cursive  
2003 | November 12

Paul Taylor, for the Paul Taylor Dance Company  •  Dante Variations  
2004 | April 16-17

Lucas Crandall, for Hubbard Street Dance Chicago  •  Gimme  
2004 | October 9

Augusta Read Thomas, for Chanticleer  •  Purple Syllables  
Commissioned by the Music Accord consortium, of which Hancher is a member.  
2006 | September 28

Lukas Foss, for the Guarneri Quartet  •  String Quartet No. 5  
Commissioned by the Music Accord consortium, of which Hancher is a member.  
2007 | April 10

David Del Tredici, for the Orion String Quartet and David Krakauer  •  Magyar Madness  
Commissioned by the Music Accord consortium, of which Hancher is a member.  
2007 | October 9

Brian Enos, for Hubbard Street Dance Chicago  •  B-Sides (12” Mix)  
2007 | October 12

Stefon Harris, for the Imani Winds  
The Anatomy of a Box: a sonic painting in wood, metal and wind  
Commissioned by the Music Accord consortium, of which Hancher is a member.  
2009 | September 25

Rinde Eckert, with students from the University of Iowa Division of Performing Arts  •  Eye Piece  
2010 | February 5-14  •  World premiere
Tomáš Kubínek, with Orchestra Iowa and with Omaha Symphony  
*Professor Kubínek Meets the Symphony*  
2010 | November 5, 6, 7, 13, & 20 · World premiere

Clébio Oliveira, for Hubbard Street 2 · *The Fantastic Escape of the Little Buffalo*  
2011 | September 22-23 · World premiere

Dave Pietro · *New Road: Iowa Memoirs*  
2012 | April 5 · World premiere

Sean Christopher Lewis, for Working Group Theatre · *Mayberry*  
2012 | April 26-29 · World premiere

Stew & The Negro Problem · *Songs about Iowa City*  
2012 | September 27 · World premiere

David Lang for Anonymous 4 · *love fail*  
2012 | October 11

Mervyn Warren and Jeff Marx, for *it gets better* presented by the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles · *“You Have More Friends Than You Know”*  
2012 | October 19

Aaron Jay Kernis, for eighth blackbird · *Pieces of Winter Sky*  
Commissioned by the Music Accord consortium, of which Hancher is a member.  
2013 | February 6

Jennifer Fawcett, for Working Group Theatre · *The Broken Chord*  
2013 | April 12-14 · World premiere

Rinde Eckert and San Jose Taiko · *Hancher Site Ceremony*  
2013 | June 29
Jennifer Fawcett, for Working Group Theatre • Out of Bounds (for children)
2013 | November 18-20 • World premiere

Jennifer Fawcett, for Working Group Theatre • Out of Bounds (for general audiences)
2014 | May 1-4 • World premiere

Mary Kouyoumdjian, for the Kronos Quartet • Bombs of Beirut
Co-commissioned through Kronos Performing Arts Association's Under 30 Project.
2015 | February 7

Shulamit Ran, for the Pacifica Quartet • Glitter, Doom, Shards, Memory
Commissioned by the Music Accord consortium, of which Hancher is a member.
2015 | March 6

Sean Christopher Lewis, for Working Group Theatre, featuring Awful Purdies
All Recipes Are Home
2015 | April 17-18 • World premiere

Taylor Mac • “1846–1856, Whitman vs. Foster: Songs Popular Near the Breaking Point”
From A 24-Decade History of Popular Music
2015 | December 5

Step Afrika! • The Migration: Reflections of Jacob Lawrence
2016 | October 20

David Lang, for Maya Beiser • the day
2016 | October 27

Tomáš Kubínek, with Orchestra Iowa, University of Iowa Choirs, and Wycliffe Gordon
Pomp, Brass, and Lunacy!
2016 | November 5 • World premiere

Christopher Wheeldon, for the Joffrey Ballet • The Nutcracker
2016 | December 1-4 • Preview performances

Samuel Carl Adams, for Emanuel Ax • Impromptus (2016)
Commissioned by the Music Accord consortium, of which Hancher is a member.
Rachel Grimes, Angélica Negrón, Shara Nova, Caroline Shaw, and Sarah Kirkland Snider
for A Far Cry and Luciana Souza • The Blue Hour
2017 | November 16

Camille A. Brown, for Camille A. Brown & Dancers • ink
2018 | January 27

Cirque Éloize • Hotel
2018 | October 5

Third Coast Percussion • Go Hawks!
2020 | April 27 • Virtual premiere

Step Afrika! • “Stono,” from Drumfolk
2020 | September 9 • Virtual premiere on Facebook and YouTube

Third Coast Percussion • Three videos for Hancher Youth & Family Talent Show
2020 | September 10 & 18; October 1 • Virtual premieres

Paola Prestini, for Anthony de Mare • “Always” (after Stephen Sondheim’s “I Wish I Could Forget You,” from Passion)

Step Afrika! • Drumfolk
2021 | September 11

Soweto Gospel Choir • HOPE: It’s Been a Long Time Coming
2022 | September 29 • World premiere

Michael Abels and Nikky Finney, for the Kronos Quartet
At War With Ourselves - 400 Years of You
2023 | February 11
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OUR MISSION
Hancher enriches lives and helps build community through the transformative power of the performing arts.

Hancher’s mission is to enrich lives and foster community through creating and sharing performing arts. Hancher is both a landmark destination and a creative spirit. We work to support the creation of new art and to make a wide range of performing arts accessible to broad audiences. A central element of this work is ensuring that art is a vital element of education for the University of Iowa students, faculty, and staff across disciplines, as well as for students and educators throughout the region. We believe that creating and sharing art this way can enrich individuals’ lives and strengthen community through the broadened perspectives and understanding that result from meaningful engagement with the arts.

OUR VISION
Hancher is essential to the work of the university, the cultural richness of the state, and the advancement of the performing arts around the world.

Our vision is that, by 2025, Hancher will have a secure place at the heart of what makes the University of Iowa a destination university for students, faculty, and staff; will be a primary means by which Iowans in every corner of the state experience and learn about the performing arts; and will be an active and valued contributor to the advancement of the performing arts across the globe. Hancher’s role in creating and sharing the performing arts will be as prominent in the hearts and minds of Iowans and the performing arts world as its unique physical presence is at the gateway to Iowa City for all who pass by.

OUR CORE VALUES
People First: We extend a welcoming invitation to all and value the vast diversity of the human experience. We listen, foster dialogue, and amplify stories of all kinds. People are at the heart of everything Hancher does.

Shared Experience: We prize the power of art to connect people, spark learning, and build community. We develop opportunity for collaboration—among artists, students, teachers, and community members—that leads to creative expression and new understanding.

Bold Creativity: We are catalysts. We help ignite innovation and push the limits of today to create new knowledge, insight, and art for tomorrow.

Inspired Excellence: We give the very best of ourselves, and we move others to do the same. We strive to develop and maintain the highest quality practices and facilities in the service of the performing arts and the people engaging with them.