# A REBOURS DIGITAL PROGRAM

The Department of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies Presents

*À Rebours*
[COUNTDOWN]

directed and choreographed by Aguibou Bougobali SANOU

FLANAGAN THEATRE
April 26–May 3, 2025

## CREATIVE TEAM

directed and choreographed by AGUIBOU BOUGOBALI **SANOU**
lighting and scenic design by JUSTIN THOMAS
costume design by ERIN HOWELL-GRITSCH
technical direction by ERIK SANNING ’89 and KATE BAUMGARTNER ’11
stage management by NATALIE NARDONE ’27 and ZEB O’HARA ’28
musical guest artist SOMDLAWEND EZEKIAL **ZONGO**

## ENSEMBLE

Jadyn Al-Fatah ‘27, Dancer/Spoken Word
Ileah Bonzi ‘25, Dancer
Bailey Irvin ‘25, Dancer
Rachel Krinke ‘28, Dancer
Jillian Poplau ‘27, Dancer/Spoken Word
Elizabeth Roberts ‘25, Dancer/Spoken Word
Lily Shoemaker ‘28, Dancer/Spoken Word
Zoe Zappas ‘27, Dancer

## CREW

Abby Harris ‘28, Wardrobe
Pensée Ismael, Sound Board/Livestream Operator
Andrew (A) Lim ‘25, Light Board Programmer
Kiera Rennick ‘26, Light Board Operator
Naomi Tange ‘28, Wardrobe

## LIVE MUSIC

Aguibou Bougobali SANOU, West African Drum/Voice
Somdlawend Ezekial ZONGO, Drum Kit/Voice
Daboh Ahn ‘25, Violin
Recorded music by Tamadia Dance Company (Burkina Faso)
    Kora: Domba SANOU
    Voice: Flora PARÉ
    Drum: Adama DEMBELE

## SCENIC ARTISTS

Ari Lebaron ‘27
Kyra Pruszinski ‘27
Kiera Rennick ‘26
Lillian Tuai ‘27
Justin Thomas

## STUDENT STAFF

More than 20 TDPS student staff members have contributed to bring this production to life. We value these students working in front of house, costume studio, scene shop, and admin roles. Due to privacy policies, we are not able to publish the roster of the student staff here. Instead, we will use this space to express appreciation for their collective time, skills, and artistry.

THANK YOU, STUDENT STAFF!

## SPECIAL THANKS

Putu Tangkas Hiranmayena
Tony Perman
Mark Laver
Erik Jarvis
Karie Miller
Mike Lorenzen
Christina Sporer
TDPS Faculty, Staff, and SEPC
Brenda Strong
Amanda Jones
Retta Kelley

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

*À Rebours* is, above all, a questioning—a meditation on what remains of the drum's role in contemporary society, from its sacred symbolism to its most profane uses.

Like the mask, the drum has held a place of privilege in many civilizations, poised between mysticism—protected by secret codes—and daily, communal life. A supreme vector of communication, the drum speaks. It proclaims. Wherever it sounds, it heralds an event, a change, a passage.

But today, the drums of the world seem to be beating in unison, announcing a shared countdown—the ticking toward the end of time…

*À Rebours* brings together a diverse symphony of sounds, rhythms, and symbols in a singular vision: to shatter the silence of the sacred, to transcend the barriers of difference, and to forge an alchemy between disparate tempos and traditions. The Boléro version of the French composer Maurice Ravel echoes alongside the pulsating rhythms of Burkina Faso's San ethnic groups. The haka chants of New Zealand's indigenous tribes beat in harmony with the

trembling pulse of a frightened human heart, one that senses the collapse of the world around it.

*À Rebours* draws from this rich material to craft a performance—a visceral fusion of dance, music, and voice—offering a choreography that is at once violent and delicate, balanced constantly between control and eruption.

*À Rebours* is a cry, a critique hurled at the face of States and their policies of cultural confinement, their systematic erasure of the Other. It is also a call—a fierce, necessary plea for cultural expression, for the preservation of diversity, and a warning to humanity of the excesses that might lead to its downfall.

- Aguibou Bougobali SANOU

NB: This performance is a revival and adaptation of À Rebours, a dance and music piece choreographed by Aguibou Bougobali SANOU for his Tamadia Dance Company in Burkina Faso in 2017.

# CREATIVE TEAM BIOS

**Aguibou Bougobali SANOU** (Director/Choreographer/ Musician) hails from Burkina Faso, West Africa, and is a dancer, choreographer, musician, storyteller, and director of the In-Out Dance Festival in Burkina Faso. He is a winner of the highly selective and prestigious U.S. State Department Scholarship Fulbright 2018–2019 where he taught "History and Appreciation of World Dance." He has also developed the African Traditional and Contemporary Dance curriculum at Naugatuck Valley Community College in Waterbury, CT. In 2016, he was a semi-finalist of Africa's Got Talent. SANOU trained with choreographers and theater directors such as Salia SANOU, Carolyn Carlson, Thierry de Mey, Luca Fusi GM and Régine Chopinot Alexandre de la Caffinière.

SANOU's work is a mix of West African Mandingo traditional dances, Brazilian capoeira, and theater expressions drawn from his work with influential European stage directors. His training in sacred and profane African

traditional dance in his native country combines with other forms of expression to create a unique theatrical statement. Aguibou received his Master in Fine Arts from The University of the Arts (UARTS) Philadelphia. He has won several choreographic awards including the bronze medal in the 2013 Jeux de la Francophonie in Nice, France; 2nd prize of SNC 2012; and Delphic Laurel Award in the 2009 Delphic Games in South Korea.

In the past ten years, SANOU has developed a dynamic performance and teaching presence which has led him to work

assignments in Mexico, Israel, South Korea, India, Indonesia, Morocco, France, and the United States. He has also created a dance program in a prison in Burkina Faso and has worked with more than 70 prisoners in order to help them reenter society. Sanou was a visiting faculty member at Bennington for fall 2022.

**Justin Thomas** (Lighting/Scenic Designer) is a Professor of Theatre and Design at Grinnell College, and is thrilled return from sabbatical and collaborate on this project with his Grinnell College family. At Grinnell, Thomas has been able to pursue two of his greatest passions: teaching and making theatre. Thomas' courses run the gamut of theatrical design and technology, theatre history, dramatic literature, and disability, accessibility, and inclusive arts practices. As a professional designer, his work includes lighting, scenery, and projection designs, which have been presented both in small and large venues, produced by theatres, dance companies, and musicians, and enhanced through collaboration with student and professional artists. Internationally, his work has been presented in Russia, Bangladesh, India, and France, and here is a little secret: he has performed on stage  a few times with professional theaters in Kalamazoo, Philadelphia, and France. He is honored to return to Grinnell College and build this production with an exceptional team of students, staff, faculty, and rock star friends.

**Somdlawend Ezekial ZONGO** (Drum Kit/Voice) is a musician from Burkina Faso, West Africa with technical mastery of various musical styles, including rock, jazz, funk, and pop. He has performed live across the United States, Africa, and Europe. ZONGO has collaborated with renowned artists such as Smarty (rapper), Floby (tradi-modern), Freeman (reggae), Alif Naaba (tradi-modern), Constance (Ivorian Gospel), DJ Mix (Coupé décalé), and Eze Wendtoin (Burkina-Allemagne).

**Erin Howell-Gritsch** (Costume Designer) has designed all mainstage costumes at Grinnell College since 1999, where she is the resident costume designer. As a Lecturer for the College, she has taught Costume Design, Costume Crafts and Construction, Costume on the World Stage, and Introduction to Technical Theatre. She was previously an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Cornell College. Other design credits include the University of Iowa (Theatre, Dance, Playwright's Festival, Black Action Theatre), Riverside Theatre, RT Shakespeare Festival, RT Young People's Company, Graffiti Theatre, Theatre de la Jeune Lune, Ballet Iowa, and Hurley Dancers. Erin holds a Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Design from the University of Iowa and a Bachelor of Science from Iowa State University.

**Erik Sanning** '89 (Technical Director) is a graduate of Grinnell College. He spent the first two years after graduation working as the Technical Director/Lighting Designer for Ballet Iowa. In the summer of 1991 Erik was able to return to Grinnell as the Technical Director. He is also one of the founding members of Grinnell Productions, a semi-professional theatre company that was based in Grinnell. Erik has been a member of IATSE, the professional stagehands union, since 1990.

**Kate Baumgartner** '11 (Assistant Technical Director) is a graduate of Grinnell College. She worked two seasons as a master carpenter with the Colorado Shakespeare Festival and two years for the Grinnell Area Arts Council as a program and facility coordinator. Kate returned to Grinnell College as the ATD in 2016. She has also served as technical director and scenic designer for

numerous Grinnell Community Theatre and Grinnell High School productions, as well as tech challenge coordinator for the Iowa Thespian Chapter of the EdTA.

**Natalie Nardone** ‘27 (Stage Manager) is a second year Computer Science and Spanish double major. She is from Arlington, Virginia and has been stage managing for over six years, including previous dance ensemble productions and other Grinnell College theatre productions. In her free time, Natalie enjoys playing piano, reading, and spending time with her cats.

**Zeb O’Hara** ‘28 (Assistant Stage Manager) is a first year student majoring in Chemistry, and potentially French or Classics. She is from Chicago, IL. Zeb has been stage managing for three years. In her free time, she enjoys swimming, knitting, crochet, and sketch comedy.

## ENSEMBLE BIOS

**Jadyn Al-Fatah** ‘27 (Dancer/Spoken Word) is a second year student double majoring in Music and Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies with a Film and Media Studies Concentration. He is a true southerner reigning from Gulfport, MS. This is his second semester performing in Dance Ensemble. Jadyn stays very involved in the performing arts and music scene as he is involved with Grinnell Singers, Con Brío, and various other performance groups. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with friends and thrifting.

**Ileah Bonzi** ‘25 (Dancer) is a fourth year student majoring in Sociology with a concentration in Policy Studies. She has performed in multiple student dance projects, and this is her second time performing in Dance Ensemble. She has been involved in the department and community arts more broadly by working in the box office and house managing shows, serving on the TDPS SEPC, and currently interning at the Grinnell Area Arts Council.

**Bailey Irvin** ‘25 (Dancer) is a fourth year student majoring in Psychology. Her hometown is Dallas and she is as sweet as Texas tea. She has performed in multiple TDPS performances. She is deeply involved in the psychology

department and Grinnell community. She is a photographer for GOGUE, a printed fashion publication. Her hobbies consist of art, diving, and yoga. Her previous performances at Grinnell: BOBO & GOURMANTCHÉ-DON (2024); FOLOKOTO, THE TORNADO (2024); *Everybody* (2023).

**Rachel Krinke** ‘28 (Dancer) is a first-year prospective Physics and English double major from Zumbrota, Minnesota. This is her second semester in Dance Ensemble and she is excited to be involved in her first major production through the program. When she isn’t dancing, Rachel enjoys reading, writing, and signing as part of the Grinnell Singers. She also was a part of the Grinnell Mock Trial team this fall, and is an avid pub quiz participant.

**Jillian Poplau** ‘27 (Dancer/Spoken Word) is a second year Biological Chemistry major and Health Medicine and Society concentrator. She is from Kansas City, where she was a competitive dancer in high school. This is Jillian’s fourth semester in Dance Ensemble. In her free time, Jillian enjoys discovering new coffee shops and taking care of her plants. She is passionate about the intersection of the arts and science, and loves finding creative outlets in both!

**Elizabeth Roberts** ‘25 (Dancer/Spoken Word) is a fourth year Chemistry major from Colorado Springs, Colorado. This is her first semester with Dance Ensemble. During her free time she is an avid reader, enjoys playing the cello, and participates in outdoor recreational activities.

**Lily Shoemaker** ‘28 (Dancer/Spoken Word) is a first year intended Psychology and Political Science double major. She is from a small town in Iowa called Montezuma. This is her second semester in Dance Ensemble. Last semester Lily enjoyed connecting with Dance Ensemble and (cont’d) meeting so many wonderful people. She loves how dance gives her an emotional outlet to deal with the stress that comes with college. She also helps manage social media pages for the F-Word radio show and Shelf Awareness.

**Zoe Zappas** ‘27 (Dancer) is a second year Gender, Women’s and Sexuality Studies and Spanish double major. Originally a Clevelander, she fell down the Ohio-to-California pipeline and is now labeled a fake midwesterner. This is her third semester in Dance Ensemble. She is the Community Editor of The Scarlet & Black. In her free time, she enjoys spending time outside, watching movies with friends, and mini art projects like latch hook.

## CREW BIOS

**Abby Harris** ‘28 (Wardrobe) is a first-year double majoring in Gender, Women’s and Sexuality Studies and History with a concentration in Educational Studies. She is from Des Moines, Iowa and this is her first time working on a performance. Abby runs a banned book club, is a board member of Students for Reproductive Justice, and goes to Swing and Contra every week. She spends her free time reading, crocheting, and volunteering in social justice advocacy.

**Pensée Ismael** (Sound Board/Livestream Operator) is an English major and a Fulbright visiting scholar from Alexandria, Egypt working in experimental cinema and performance. Ismael is a dog person and loves cooking and is learning to DJ in her free time. She is to start her MFA in Film and Video Production in the Department of Cinematic Arts at the University of Iowa in Fall 2026.

**Andrew (A) Lim** ‘25 (Light Board Programmer) is a fourth-year TDPS major from San Francisco who has spent the past four years designing and working on Grinnell College theatre productions. In addition to assisting Grinnell mainstage productions, they designed lights for the Neverland Players and the student productions of I Dig You and The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee.

**Kiera Rennick** ‘26 (Light Board Operator/Scenic Artist) is a third-year majoring in Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies and concentrating in Environmental Studies. He is from Columbus, OH, and enjoys all forms of theatrical tech, particularly set and lighting. They have participated in Grinnell

productions for two years and hope to continue to through their last year. In her free time, she enjoys walking and driving around with friends, playing with her cat Reno, and staying involved with queer cultural events across campus.

**Naomi Tange** ‘25 (Wardrobe) is a first year from Saint Paul Minnesota who intends on majoring in Studio Art. She is really excited to work on TDPS stage crews. Naomi worked as part of the stage crew for many shows in high school. She typically works on the sets, but enjoys filling in for a multitude of roles. She loves to dance, sew, draw, paint, and do anything creative.