

# The Daily Tar Heel

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Celebrating its 77th anniversary and entering into its 33rd season in Durham, the American Dance Festival poses a question as this year's theme, "What is Dance Theater?"

"We want to leave it as a question mark for the audience," said Jodee Nimerichter, co-director of the festival. "We are not necessarily going to answer the question."

This year's festival begins today and runs through July 24. Performances — featuring eight world premieres, one U.S. premiere and five American Dance Festival Company debuts — are split between the Durham Performing Arts Center and Duke University's Reynolds Industries Theater.

### AFRICAN AMERICAN DANCE

Time: 8 p.m. today through Saturday

Location: Reynolds Industries Theater at Duke University

Info: [www.americandancefestival.org](http://www.americandancefestival.org) <sup>[3]</sup>

The festival aims to support dancers and choreographers, both emerging and established, through its school and commissioned works.

"They are all like daughters and children of ours," Nimerichter said of participating artists. "We want to help celebrate and get audiences to come and see all of them."

The companies hail from all over the world, and their performances are stylistically diverse — from ballet and acrobatics to mime and ballroom, even hip-hop.

While differing in style and interpretation of the theme, all performances fall under a broad and ever-developing genre.

"Modern dance is indefinable," said festival Director Charles Reinhart. "Any time somebody tries to define what it is, a choreographer comes along and breaks that

definition.”

Durham’s African American Dance Ensemble will begin the festival, appearing at 8 p.m. today through Saturday at Duke.

The Argentina-based Brenda Angiel Aerial Dance Company will “take flight” July 8-10 at the Durham Performing Arts Center in its North American debut of “8cho,” an aerial display of tangos and waltzes.

Another exciting spectacle is the Inbal Pinto and Avshalom Pollak Dance Company’s presentation of “Oyster”. Based on a short story by Tim Burton — a filmmaker with a penchant for outrageous oddities — the performance blurs the lines of dance, theater and reality.

The American Dance Festival school will conduct auditions this weekend for its performance featuring student dancers, to debut at the end of the festival.

Some old friends will return to celebrate major milestones at the festival.

On July 24, Shen Wei, a returning favorite, will commemorate the 10th anniversary of his company with a world premiere solo dance.

“We support new and emerging artist, but we continue to support artists that we believe in,” Nimerichter said.

*Contact the Arts Editor at [arts.dth@gmail.com](mailto:arts.dth@gmail.com).*

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