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**THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHOREOGRAPHY-AKRON WELCOMES  
CRISTINA GONZÁLEZ ALCALÁ AND LIONEL POPKIN TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS**



*Cristina González Alcalá (photo courtesy of Alcalá) and Lionel Popkin (photo Lucza Brewer)*

Akron, OH (October 20, 2026) — The National Center for Choreography-Akron (NCCAkron) welcomes community and arts leaders **Dr. Cristina González Alcalá** (Akron, OH) and **Lionel Popkin** (Los Angeles, CA) to its Board of Directors.

An Akron civic leader, González Alcalá is Program Director of Connecting People to Prosperity of Cleveland Foundation and has served in board and advisory roles spanning arts and culture, higher education, leadership, and environmental stewardship. Popkin is a choreographer, dance leader, and professor of 30+ years, who explores cultural identity, diaspora, and the representation of South Asian identity through contemporary performance. (Full bios below.)

“NCCAkron’s Board of Directors continues to evolve and match our efforts to support the hyperlocal and national communities we aim to serve,” shares **Christy Bolingbroke, NCCAkron Executive/Artistic Director and Board Member-at-Large**. “Cristina was a past program officer for NCCAkron in her previous role at the Akron Community Foundation; she also embodies entrepreneurship as an Akron business owner and has addressed shifting cultural power as part of our Dancing Conversations series. Lionel has participated in multiple

NCCAkron programs and activities since 2019. Now, he is the first NCCAkron Artist Alum elected to our Board of Directors. We are proud to welcome Cristina and Lionel to the board; their multiplicity of experiences reflect an embedded NCCAkron value across leadership, staffing, and curation.”

NCCAkron is one of only two national centers for choreography in the U.S., a research and development hub for dance. For ten years, NCCAkron has worked with more than 800 dance artists across 100 U.S. cities. NCCAkron has become a matchmaker between national choreographers and the robust cultural ecology in and around Akron, OH, as well as a hyperagent for dance across the national landscape.

### **NCCAkron Board of Directors** (as of 9/25/26)

#### Board Chair |

Dacquiri Baptiste (Memphis, TN), Vice President and Chief Operations Officer for the Orpheum Theatre Group

#### Immediate Past Board Chair |

Eduardo Vilaro (New York, NY), Artistic Director & CEO of Ballet Hispanico

#### Treasurer |

DeMarcus Akeem Suggs (Memphis, TN), Director of Creative & Cultural Economy, City of Memphis

#### Secretary |

Bonnie Brooks (Falls Church, VA), writer and cultural worker

#### At-Large Members |

Christy Bolingbroke (Akron, OH), Executive/Artistic Director of NCCAkron

Meg Booth (Houston, TX), President and CEO of Performing Arts Houston

Dr. Cristina González Alcalá (Akron, OH), Program Director of Connecting People to Prosperity of Cleveland Foundation

Virginia Johnson (New York, NY), performer, editor, artistic director

Lionel Popkin (Los Angeles, CA), Dean of the UCLA School of the Arts and Architecture

Mark Williams (Solon, OH), Managing Director of Manchester Partners

**Dr. Cristina González Alcalá** is Program Director of Connecting People to Prosperity at the Cleveland Foundation, where she advances investments that help people build opportunities to thrive. Previously, she served as Director of Community Investment at Akron Community Foundation, leading grantmaking and initiatives across education, health and human services, arts and culture, and civic affairs.

An Akron civic leader, Cristina has served in board and advisory roles spanning arts and culture, higher education, leadership, and environmental stewardship. She is a Senior Lecturer at The University of Akron and founder of Not Yo’ Daddy’s Mexican Hot Sauce.

Cristina earned a Ph.D. in Urban Studies and Public Affairs, an MPA, and an MA in Communication from The University of Akron, and a bachelor’s degree from the University of Louisville. A Mexican-born American and proud Akronite, she is committed to cultural

expression, equitable opportunity, and building stronger, more connected communities throughout Akron and beyond.

**Lionel Popkin's** body-based choreographies, installations and dance for camera works have been presented on four continents. His book, *Reorienting Performance*, is slated for publication in March 2027. He is a Professor of Choreography at UCLA, a former member of the Trisha Brown Dance Company, a current resident artist at the 18th Street Arts Center, a teacher of Skinner Releasing Technique, and the Dean of the School of the Arts and Architecture and UCLA.

### **About NCCAkron**

For ten years, the National Center for Choreography–Akron (NCCAkron) has been a leader in dance research and development and a connector for artists. As one of only two choreography centers in the U.S., NCCAkron is an incubator and hub for dance. We also offer audiences opportunities to experiment with and understand dance through conversations, events, podcasts, and books. Over the past decade, NCCAkron has supported 800+ dance artists across 100 U.S. cities, serving as a cultural matchmaker for choreographers and a hyperagent for the national dance field. Offering space and resources for rigorous play and positive failure, NCCAkron has redefined what it means to support dance artists. For more information, visit [nccakron.org](http://nccakron.org).

A discrete nonprofit organization, separate from The University of Akron but with offices based there, the establishment and general operation of NCCAkron are made possible by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

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