

Dear Marie-Soleil, Sophie, Kara, and Kevin,

In just a few weeks, we will gather in beautiful Bar Harbor, Maine for the 2025 edition of the Acadia Festival of Traditional Music & Dance. Thank you for joining us! I'm so excited to have this opportunity to work together!

****As we mentioned in a previous email, we've created a [password protected faculty reference page](#) on our website where we're archiving important emails like this one, PDF attachments, schedules, etc. so you can find it all in one place. The password is: tradfaculty2025. We will add to this page as things become available and keep it up to date with the latest information.****

Please read this email entirely regarding:

- Arrival and Departure
- Dance Program Philosophy and Curriculum
- Class Groups
- Teaching Schedule
- Music for Dance Classes
- Classrooms
- Dance Performances and Collaborations
- Student Concert
- Social Dances and Sessions/Jams
- Merch Info
- Gender-neutral Language for Social Dances

Arrival and Departure

AFTMD runs from Sunday, June 22 – Saturday, June 28 (departure by 9:00). Please arrive at camp no later than 3:30 on Sunday, June 22. Information about getting to the C.O.A. campus (including ride sharing) can be found on the [transportation page](#) of our website. We recommend arriving as early as possible so you have time to check into your room/unpack, check in your merch, get acquainted with where things are, etc.

We will have an all-faculty orientation meeting at 4:45 on Sunday on the porch of Deering (same building as Registration), followed by dinner at 5:30, and an opening celebration concert at 7:00. All faculty will be invited to perform a tune or a few steps in the opening celebration (curated by Mari Black, Music Director, and me). This will be followed by a short social dance with callers Will Mentor and Heather McAslan and an open band led by Armand Aromin and Ben Gagliardi. You are encouraged to play/dance, meet folks, and have fun!

Dance Program Philosophy

The dance program in 2025 The Dance Program in 2025 will offer a rotation of core instruction from Marie-Soleil Pilette (Québécois step dancing) and Kevin Doyle (Irish step dancing), plus a wide variety of electives from me — Dance Director, Kieran Jordan — along with Dance Faculty Assistant Kara Howgate-Mello, and other instructors on our music faculty. We will also offer a

dedicated “From the Ground Up” track with Sophie Wellington. Each day will begin with a dance-specific 30-minute warm-up class (Kieran and Kara), followed by two 60-minute core classes (Marie-Soleil, Kevin, Sophie). Afternoons will include optional enrichment workshops, sessions, ensembles, and social dances. Classes will incorporate a combination of recorded music and live music from our talented Artistic Work Study students.

Curriculum

Class content from each teacher should include: technique, repertoire, musicality, improvisation, as well as social dance. It is up to you to determine how much or how little in each area to present to each of your groups — so the curriculum can unfold organically, and it can vary from group to group. For example, perhaps the Seals would benefit more from social dance and learning about the music, while Bears might appreciate more improvisation skills. You are the expert on your teaching! We want students to experience a broad range of the many things that you offer as an artist within your tradition.

Class Groups

This year we are offering FOUR class groups for instruction — Moose (From the Ground Up) with Sophie, and Seals (Skill Building) and Bears (Nuance & Detail) taught in rotation by Marie-Soleil and Kevin. We also offer an Eagles class (pre-professional mixed-instrument/dance program) which is taught by our music faculty. (As you can see, we have tried to be inclusive of Maine wildlife in our groups 😊.) You will find the [class group descriptions here](#).

Some students have expressed concern that they may be “advanced” in one dance tradition but not in the two others. We understand this! The “animal” groups do NOT assume that a student has a consistent level of technique or repertoire in all styles, but rather describe things like: how quickly they learn, how comfortable they are with improvising and solo dancing, how experienced they are with interpreting music and rhythm, etc.

Your class material with each group should be progressive throughout the week, so students are encouraged to choose ONE level at the beginning of the week. They may switch if needed, but “dropping in” to different levels is not encouraged.

Teaching Schedule

9:00 - 9:30 Morning Warm-up for all dance students
9:45 - 10:45 Period 1 Core Classes
11:00 - 12:00 Period 2 Core Classes
13:15 - 14:30 Period 3 Social Dance or Enrichment Classes
15:00 - 16:15 Period 4 Enrichment Classes

Core dance classes are 60 minutes each, and enrichment classes are 75 minutes. Each of you is teaching three enrichment classes throughout the week. Enrichment classes are open to all students, not just “dance majors,” so these should be taught at a beginner-friendly level that is suited to the majority of whoever shows up for the class, unless a more focused topic has been specified. Workshops are offered on a first-come, first-served basis, as classroom spaces may

become crowded or full. Complete schedules for both morning classes and afternoon [workshops](#) and [concerts](#) are available on the [password protected faculty page](#).

Music for Dance Classes

Classes will be taught mostly with recorded music, so please bring the music recordings you need for all classes and enrichment workshops.

We have noted your needs for audio speakers:

Kevin - will provide own

Sophie - will provide own

Marie-Soleil - Kieran will provide speaker and aux cable

Kieran - will provide own

Kara - will provide own

In addition, we will provide live music from our Artistic Work Study (AWS) students for at least two of your morning classes during the week. Think of this as having a musical “guest artist” with your groups. It is a wonderful opportunity for students to dance to live music. The AWS schedule (including who is assigned to work with you) is available on the [password protected faculty page](#).

If you like, you can read about this year’s amazing AWS students [here](#)! We strongly recommend communicating with your Work Study student ahead of time about specific types of tunes you may need for class. Feel free to do so via email:

Mo	Brachfeld	morganearthsong@gmail.com
Nora	Carroll	noracarroll2468@gmail.com
Lily	Harwell	harwellmusic@gmail.com
Owen	Kennedy	fiddlerokennedy@gmail.com
Sean	McLeod	seanmcleod26@gmail.com

Classrooms

Dance classes will be taught in spaces with wood flooring. College of the Atlantic has old buildings and no formal dance studios. We have carefully assigned dance classes to the rooms with the most suitable floors, but they are not sprung and not perfect! If you need to take extra time and care for warm-ups/cool-downs, for you and your students, please do so.

Your core classes (mornings) will be held in the same location throughout the festival, while enrichment workshops (afternoons) may be in a different room. There is a map of all buildings and classrooms on the [password protected faculty page](#) and you will see your classroom assignments on each schedule.

Dance Performances and Collaborations

There are gala concerts each night in Gates Auditorium, featuring our faculty. The Dance Faculty are scheduled to perform a 40-minute concert slot to close out Wednesday night, as a dance-focused performance. Mari Black and Jake Charron are assigned to be with us as musical collaborators, and we can invite other musicians up to join us. We have a mandatory rehearsal on Monday during Period 4 (3:00 - 4:15) in the Deering Leadership Room, which is on the 2nd floor of Deering. Your sound check schedule can be found on the [password protected faculty page](#).

In addition to our Wednesday night concert, each of you will perform in one additional concert as a guest to the featured music faculty. You should plan to do just one or two dances, plus the finale, on those nights. Please coordinate with your music collaborators in advance, if possible!

Kara - Monday with Armand Aromin and Ben Gagliardi
Marie-Soleil - Monday with Asastasia DesRoches and Susan MacLean
Sophie - Tuesday with Eyrnn Marshall and Isa Burke
Kevin - Tuesday with Mari Black and Adam Hendey

You can see the full [concert schedule here](#).

Student Concert

On Friday night, we close out the camp with a Student Concert. Performances will be student-led and created. You are NOT expected to create group choreography or performance pieces in your classes. (The Moose are an exception to this — group participation is encouraged, but not required.)

Social Dances & Sessions/Jams

We will have social dances on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons (Period 3, with caller Will Mentor), and on Sunday night after the opening event, and Friday night after the Student Concert. We have asked that Marie-Soleil and Sophie call one dance each at the Friday night closing dance. Please see the note at the bottom of this email about gender-neutral language while calling social dances!

There will be informal Sessions and Jamming every night. You are encouraged to participate in evening activities as much as possible, but we also acknowledge the need to be “off-duty,” have personal space, or an earlier bedtime! Please take care of yourself and honor your needs.

Merch Info

- AFTMD will be happy to sell your merch in our “Trad Trader” store. Our Trad Trader Team this year is Kristen Spalding & Alice Slater, please tell them thank you for taking this on and keeping things running smoothly when you meet them!
- Due to limited space, each faculty member may check in a max of 4 titles of CDs, plus 2 instructional items (tune books, DVDs, etc.) We will not be able to accommodate “soft” items like t-shirts or bandanas.

- CDs will all be sold for \$20 each, and the artist will receive \$16.50. Books/DVDs will be sold for \$30 and the artist will get \$26.50. The cut we take will help to cover any credit card processing fees, etc. we incur.
- On the night of your concert, we'll make sure your CDs are in the back of the concert hall for concert-goers to purchase (no separate check-in and check-out procedure.)
- You will be responsible for all taxes (sales and otherwise) on the merch money you are paid when you check-out.
- Merch check-in will be in Deering (where Registration and the Trad Trader are located) on Sunday, June 22 from 2:00 - 4:15 and again on Monday during the second part of lunch hour from 12:30 - 1:00.
- Merch check-out will be in Deering on Friday, June 27 from 12:30 - 2:30.
- We'll have an inventory form for you to fill out / pick up and it's on the faculty web page in case you want to print it out and bring it filled out when you arrive (if not, we'll have copies on hand for you to fill out.)
- Payment for sales will be sent within a week after the festival by PayPal or Bank Transfer, the same as what you chose for payment for your contract. (Please remember that any PayPal fees are the artist's responsibility.)

Thanks for reading! Our team has been working hard to plan a dynamic week of immersive music and dance, and we really appreciate all that you are contributing to making this vision a wonderful, joyful reality! If you have any questions, please reach out. We're happy to help!

Please see the addendum below about gender-neutral calling.

Cheers,

Kieran
(and April, Mari & Heather)

Gender-based Language In Teaching and Calling Social Dance

Our DEI statement summarizes our aim to reduce barriers and discomfort for participants to the best of our ability:

The Festival acknowledges that it can be difficult for people from marginalized communities to feel welcome in traditional music spaces – whether due to a lack of racial diversity, gender binary language used in dances (expectations of female-male partners) ... Among the ways the Festival plans to foster a welcoming climate for everyone are to hire faculty that include people of different racial, ethnic and cultural identities and backgrounds and artists who exemplify the voyages of musical styles over time; to hold gender-neutral dances ...

(Taken from the full Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement [here](#) on our website.)

We understand that each of you may bring different approaches and experiences to this, and that you might not be used to calling/teaching using gender neutral language. We want to be sure that we have ample time to discuss ways in which we can create an environment for you, and for our students, where everybody feels comfortable, confident and safe — so that we can just enjoy dancing together!!

Our Admin Director, Heather McAslan, is a dance caller with a decade of experience in positional and gender-free calling. She has offered these helpful suggestions:

- Positional calling - using descriptions of dance figures that omit role terms altogether
- Using gender neutral role terms to replace 'ladies' and 'gents', for example 'larks' on the left and 'robins' on the right
- Starting sessions with a disclaimer, e.g. "I will be using 'ladies' and 'gents' as terms to describe roles and figures in this dance. These terms are signifiers for the purpose of teaching - everybody can dance with whomever they would like to, and in whichever role they feel comfortable."
- Being honest and open about your own experience, i.e. "I am new to gender neutral calling and I might make mistakes!"
- As well as this, avoiding gendering people when referring to them individually, i.e. "take your partner's hand" or "take their hand" rather than "take his/her hand"

Heather or I would be more than happy to chat about any of these topics, if you feel that could be helpful or interesting. Thank you!