

LOUISVILLE BALLET

A ballerina in a white tutu and veil is captured in a graceful pose against a solid blue background. She is standing on her right leg, with her left leg extended horizontally to the right. Her arms are held in front of her chest, and her head is turned slightly to the left. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of her costume and the delicate lines of her body.

GISELLE

ÉTOILE



Company Artist Caitlin Kowalski
Photo by Andrew Kung, 2023

A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTORS

Dear Louisville Ballet Friends,

Welcome to Louisville Ballet! For the first time as dual Artistic Directors, and the first time in our Season of the Commonwealth, we are delighted to welcome you to the theatre for what we hope will be an enchanting experience.

It is with great anticipation and excitement that we announce the return of our original production of *Giselle*, a ballet masterpiece that premiered in 1841 and first graced the Louisville Ballet stage in 1961. *Giselle* holds a special place in our hearts, as both of us have had the privilege of performing various roles in this timeless classic, and have seen the ballet transform right here in our Company. Presented with our own sets and costumes, perfected by our Artistic and Production teams, and brought to life by our dance Artists, it is a ballet that resonates with all of us — for at its core, it tells a story of eternal love that transcends time and space.

Giselle is not merely a production; it's an experience that takes us on a journey through the depths of betrayal, forgiveness, and redemption, reminding us that the power of love knows no bounds. Each viewer may walk away with a unique interpretation of the bewitching story that unfolds onstage.

As we come together to witness the magic of this classic, we invite you to immerse yourselves in the world of dance and storytelling. Let the elegance of the choreography, the emotion of the music, and the mesmerizing talent of our Artists transport you to a realm of fantasy, or even memory: memory of the highs and lows of a first love, the pure joy of dancing freely, or the impact of forgiveness in the face of adversity.

We hope you are thoroughly enchanted by this tale we love so dearly. May the beauty and passion of this timeless love story — and how you experience it in the theatre — leave a lasting impression. Thank you for joining us!

With warm regards,

ÉTOILE STAFF

HALLIE BEARD
Editor

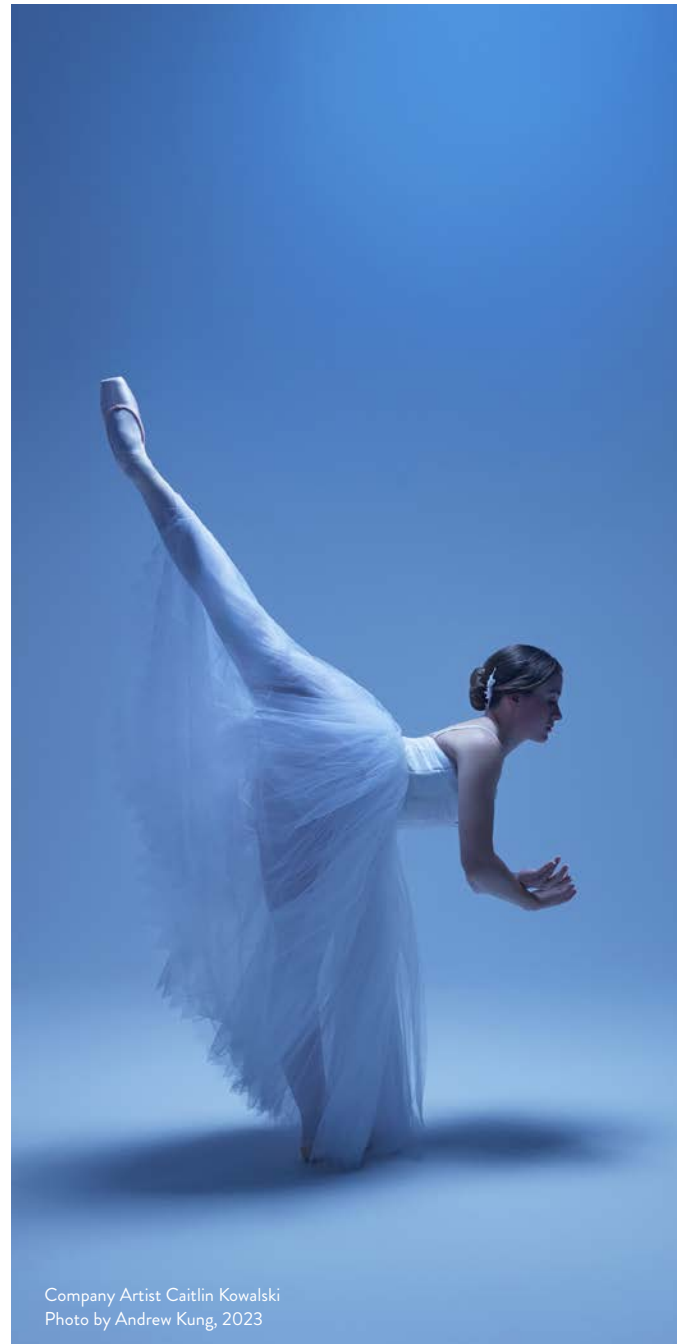
ANDY PEREZ
Designer

SAM ENGLISH
ANDREW KUNG
KATERYNA SELLERS
Photographers

WELCH PRINTING COMPANY
Printer

Mikelle Bruzina
Artistic Director

Harald Uwe Kern
Artistic Director



Company Artist Caitlin Kowalski
Photo by Andrew Kung, 2023

GISELLE

NOVEMBER 10–12, 2023

THE BROWN THEATRE

Choreography by Jules Perrot and Jean Corrali,
with additional choreography by Harald Uwe Kern

Staged by Louisville Ballet Artistic Staff

Music by Adolphe Adam

Scenic Design by Peter Cazelet

Lighting Design by Michael T. Ford

Costume Design by David Heuvel

This production is generously sponsored by Jim + Marianne Welch

Run time: Approximately 2 hours and 15 minutes

SYNOPSIS

ACT I: *A forest clearing in the Rhineland*

In a valley near a vineyard, a young peasant girl, Giselle, is courted by Albrecht, a young count who has disguised himself as a peasant. Wilfred, Albrecht's squire, warns his master against this folly and of the impending approach of a hunting party led by the Duke of Courland and his daughter, Bathilde, who is Albrecht's fiancée. Hilarion — also in love with Giselle — observes this courtship and in his jealousy breaks into Albrecht's cottage, hoping to learn more about this mysterious visitor. Berthe, Giselle's mother, worries that there may be tragic consequences for her daughter's fragile health while in this courtship, as Giselle dances far too much at the village celebration marking the end of harvest. The Duke and Bathilde stop to refresh themselves at Berthe's cottage where the new wine can be tasted, and peasants entertain them with dancing. Bathilde, charmed by Giselle, gives her a necklace. Hilarion discovers proof of Albrecht's true identity and reveals Albrecht's duplicity to Giselle just as she is being crowned Queen of the Village. Bathilde appears claiming Albrecht as her fiancé and, with this shock, Giselle loses her mind and dies of a broken heart.

INTERMISSION: 20 MINUTES

ACT II: *Giselle's grave in the forest*

As midnight sounds, Hilarion keeps vigil by Giselle's grave, which lies in unhallowed ground near the forest lake. The Wilis — ghosts of young girls who were jilted and died before their wedding day — exact their revenge upon men they encounter during the night by forcing them to dance to their deaths. The Queen of the Wilis, Myrthe, summons the Wilis and calls Giselle's spirit from her grave. They come across Hilarion, driving him deeper into the forest and ultimately to his death in the lake. Albrecht visits Giselle's grave, heartbroken and remorseful, where the Wilis turn upon him after Myrthe condemns him to dance until he dies. As night wears on, Albrecht becomes more and more exhausted and it is only the love of Giselle that sustains him. As dawn breaks, the Wilis' power fades, as does Giselle's spirit, and Albrecht is left alone, filled with sorrow.



Company Artists Natalia Ashikhmina
and Mark Krieger in rehearsal
Photo by Kateryna Sellers 2023



Company Artist Elizabeth Abbick in rehearsal
Photo by Kateryna Sellers 2023



Company Artist Lexa Daniels in *Giselle*
Photo by Sam English 2018



Company Artists and Studio Company Dancers
La Sylphide
Photo by Shelby Shenkman 2023

Company Artists Natalia Ashikhmina
and Mark Krieger in *Giselle*
Photo by Sam English 2018

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Illustration of Carlotta Grisi as the first Giselle, 1841

TRAGIC LOVE

The beauty of *Giselle* has haunted viewers for nearly 200 years. First performed in 1841 in Paris, the ballet was rooted in the literary lore of the Wilis — spirits of young brides who had died after heartbreak, and forced men to dance to their deaths. Having passed through generations of artists and performers, *Giselle* has evolved over the years. But what has remained constant, and entrancing, is the core of the Romantic masterpiece: love, betrayal, and redemption.

Artistic Directors Mikelle Bruzina and Harald Uwe Kern discuss their interpretations of the story, having danced and coached many roles from different perspectives over their careers.



Want to know more?
Scan here to read the
complete interview

Do you think *Giselle* is more of a love story or a tragedy?

MB: It's really both: she dies of a broken heart and at the end, and Albrecht is left alone. One can go back and forth about Albrecht's intentions. I think he truly did love Giselle; I think he was trapped in his obligations being from a royal family...It's a tragic love story, like they all are.

HUK: It's more of a love story, I think — I mean it's a tragedy, but it ends in harmony...She saves him, she forgives him, so that's the ultimate love: sacrifice. So I wouldn't call it a complete tragedy.

MB: It is a story about forgiveness as well. I suppose everyone is going to have a different take on it, you're going to relate to it based on your life's experiences. Some people might be very hateful of Albrecht — he's a cad and he betrayed her and he deserved to be left alone at the end, there's that viewpoint. Or poor Hilarion — I always feel very bad for him because he loves Giselle as well, and ends up losing her, but not really getting recognized for it.

What is your favorite moment of the ballet?

MB: I really like the first act when it's her first entrance out of the house and she's looking for Albrecht. That whole scene it's so iconic, too, because it's leading up to when she picks the petals off the flowers ... and this is probably not the first time that she's counted the petals off of the daisy to find out whether he really loves her or not. It's like this flirtatious thing, young love: innocent, pure, joyous love.

HUK: [Being on stage, as Albrecht], when you're lying on the ground, and Giselle comes over and helps him up. It's just so real, so pure. Being on stage, not as Albrecht, maybe a peasant — definitely the mad scene. I've been on stage and there's not one dry eye on the stage except the people who aren't supposed to cry, like the court.

When you're coaching dancers in the roles, what's the most important thing you want to communicate?

MB: It's telling the story, and so every step has a meaning. Even how you walk, there's meaning behind that.

HUK: Definitely, it's an actor's piece, which story ballets are. We are actors and our medium is to dance — we're not acrobats. The technique is very important; the stronger I am in my technique, the more focus I can put into my acting. The driving force behind the ballet is the acting and the emotions.

Why does *Giselle* stand the test of time? Why is it a classic?

HUK: Because [the story] just keeps happening. It's very human, falling in love with someone you shouldn't be in love with. ... The heartbreak is just universal, and that's what I think makes it timeless.

MB: Because it is a love story. [In] all the great classics, the music was written specifically for it, working alongside the choreographer, so the music tells the story, and the dancing tells the story, and you can't help but be moved by what's happening on the stage — because of what you're seeing, what you're hearing, and what you're feeling.



Artistic Directors
Harald Uwe Kern and Mikelle Bruzina
Photo by Kateryna Sellers 2023



Company and Studio Company in rehearsal
Photo by Kateryna Sellers 2023

A promotional graphic for the Louisville Ballet Relevé Society. It features a black background with a flowing golden ribbon. On the right, a ballerina in a black leotard is captured in a graceful pose with her arms raised. The Louisville Ballet logo is in the top right. The text 'RELEVÉ SOCIETY' is prominently displayed in the center. Below it, a QR code is on the left, and the text 'RISE TO THE OCCASION. SCAN HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MEMBERSHIP + BENEFITS' is on the right, followed by the website 'louisvilleballet.org/releve-society/'.

 louisville ballet

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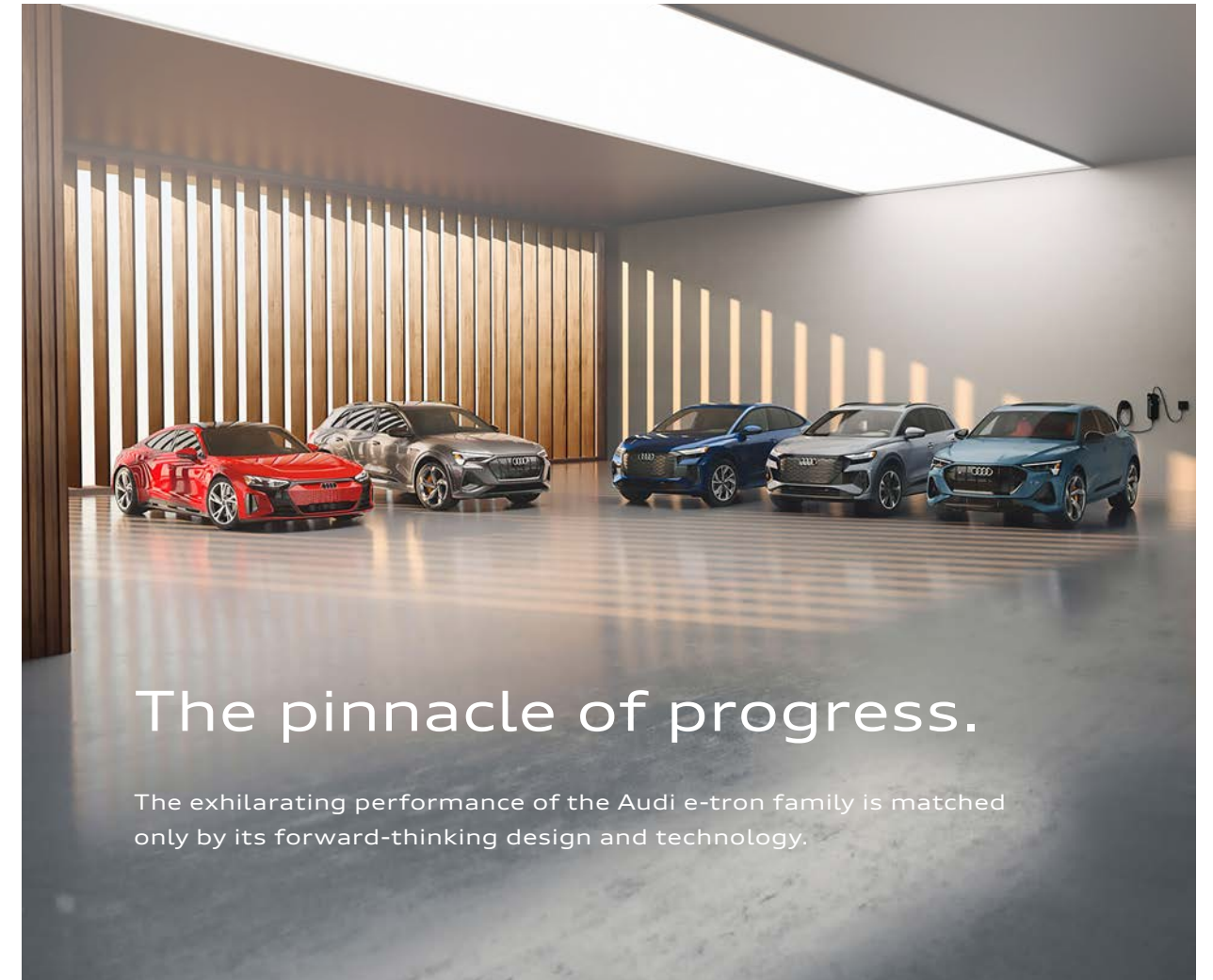
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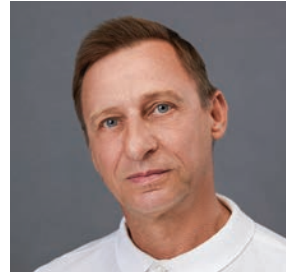


MIKELLE BRUZINA

Artistic Director

Born in Lexington, Kentucky, Mikelle Bruzina is a graduate of The Royal Winnipeg Ballet. In her 15 years as a Louisville Ballet Company Artist, she performed soloist and principal roles and was recognized for her diversity in classical, modern, and contemporary ballets. As a dancer, stager, and rehearsal assistant, she has worked with choreographers such as Val Caniparoli, Adam Houghland, Lucas Jervies, Andre Prokovsky, Andrea Schermoly, and many others. Ms. Bruzina has choreographed works for Louisville Ballet including: *Gloria*, *Harmony of Contrasts*, *Life Rhythms*, *continuum*, and *Sansei*. She has also created ballets for Memphis Ballet, Boca Ballet Theatre, Lexington's Ballet Under the Stars, and The Louisville Ballet School.

Ms. Bruzina began teaching in Japan in 1991 under the guidance of Emi Okajima. Her teaching experience includes ballet and pointe technique as well as rehearsing/coaching young dancers. She was Ballet Mistress for thirteen seasons and is also Co-Associate Artistic Director of the Louisville Ballet Studio Company. This is her first season as Artistic Director.



HARALD UWE KERN

Artistic Director

Harald Uwe Kern joined Louisville Ballet in 2005. His awards include the Rudolf Nureyev Scholarship Award, the Paris International Dance Competition — *prix d'interpretation*, and an Award for Artistic Achievement from the New York International Ballet Competition

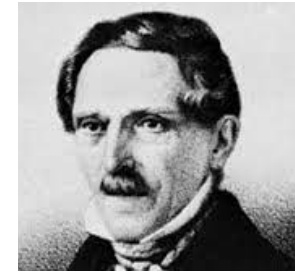
Mr. Kern has performed as a soloist and principal dancer with the Vienna State Opera Ballet, Basel Ballet, the Joffrey Ballet, Ballet Internationale, and Charleston Ballet Theater. He has danced leading roles in most major classical ballets and won critical acclaim for his roles in ballets by Sir Frederick Ashton, Cranko, Massine, Nureyev, Neumeier, Spörli, Balanchine, Kilian, and more. Under the guidance of Irina Kolpakova and Vladilen Semyonov, he became a teacher and coach. He has been the associate artistic director of the Channel Islands Ballet (California) and a guest instructor around the world. This is his first season as Artistic Director.



TARA SIMONCIC

Music Director

Tara Simoncic served as music director of Ballet West from 2015–2018 and is a frequent guest conductor with Louisville Ballet, Atlanta Ballet, and New York City Ballet. She recently made her conducting debut with the ballet at Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. Ms. Simoncic is principal conductor of the Flexible Orchestra in New York City as well as music director of the Greenwich Symphony's Young People's Concerts. She holds a BM in Trumpet Performance from the New England Conservatory, an MM in Orchestral Conducting from Northwestern University, and a Professional Studies Diploma in Conducting from Manhattan School of Music. Ms. Simoncic is Louisville Ballet's Music Director.



JEAN CORALLI

Choreographer

Coralli was a French ballet dancer and choreographer, best known for collaborating with Jules Perrot in creating *Giselle* (1841), the quintessential Romantic ballet of the nineteenth century. As a child he studied at the ballet school of the Paris Opera but chose to go to Vienna to make his debut as a dancer and choreographer. He danced for a short while at the Paris Opera in 1802 and at the King's Theatre in London and then returned to Vienna to assume the position of ballet master at the Hoftheater (Court Theater). During these early years, he and his wife formed the celebrated dancing couple Giovanni and Teresa Coralli and were often pictured in contemporary prints. From 1825 to 1829, Coralli served as ballet master of the Théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin in Paris, where he created ten full-length ballets and *divertissements* for fourteen plays. In 1831, Coralli was engaged as *premier maître de ballet* of the Paris Opera, replacing Jean-Louis Aumer. The pinnacle of Coralli's choreographic career was in 1841, when the ballet *Giselle, ou Les Wilis* was first presented during the summer season at the Paris Opera.



JULES PERROT

Choreographer

Perrot was a dancer and choreographer who later became Ballet Master of the Imperial Ballet in St. Petersburg, Russia. He created some of the most famous ballets of the 19th century including *Pas de Quatre*, *La Esmeralda*, *Ondine*, and *Giselle* with Jean Coralli. The Lyon-born Perrot danced often with Marie Taglioni but their partnership was short-lived. She eventually refused to dance with him fearing that he would outshine her. He left the Opéra in 1835 to tour European dance centers such as London, Milan, Vienna and Naples. Following the success of his contributions to the choreography of *Giselle*, Perrot went on to choreograph *Alma ou La Fille du Feu* (London 1842) for Fanny Cerrito, which was hailed as a major choreographic success. For the next six years he choreographed regularly at Her Majesty's Theatre in London. Perrot was engaged as a dancer in St. Petersburg for the Imperial Ballet and later was appointed Balletmaster there. He remained with the Imperial Russian Ballet until 1858.



ADOLPHE ADAM

Composer

Adam was a French composer, teacher and music critic. A prolific composer for the theatre, he is best known today for his ballets *Giselle* (1841) and *Le corsaire* (1856), his operas *Le postillon de Lonjumeau* (1836) and *Si j'étais roi* (1852) and his Christmas carol "Minuit, chrétiens!" (Midnight, Christians, 1844, known in English as "O Holy Night").

Adam was the son of a well-known composer and pianist, but his father did not wish him to pursue a musical career. Adam defied his father, and his many operas and ballets earned him a good living until he lost all his money in 1848 in a disastrous bid to open a new opera house in Paris in competition with the Opéra and Opéra-Comique. He recovered, and extended his activities to journalism and teaching. He was appointed as a professor at the Paris Conservatoire, France's principal music academy.

Together with his older contemporary Daniel Auber and his teacher Adrien Boieldieu, Adam is credited with creating the later Romantic French form of opera.



PETER CAZALET

Scenic Designer

Born in a mining town in Zambia, Peter Cazalet's first contact with ballet was at the University of Cape Town, where he was pursuing a degree in architecture. He began taking ballet lessons and eventually emigrated to London, where he danced with various companies for 14 years. During this period, Mr. Cazalet rose to the rank of principal dancer with Scottish Ballet. He was also designing for Scottish Ballet and Ballet Rambert (now Rambert Dance Company). Following a spinal injury, which brought a halt to his professional dancing career, he returned to Cape Town and began designing full time. He created numerous full-length ballets and operas and became the Head of Design for Cape Town Opera. Over the past 35 years, Mr. Cazalet has designed over 200 theatrical productions, including classical and one-act ballets in South Africa, throughout Asia, Europe, and the United States.



DAVID HEUVEL

Costume Designer

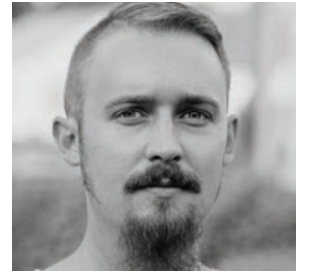
David Heuvel recently retired from Ballet West as the Director of Costume Production after fifty years in the arts. David started his career at the Opera Theatre in Pretoria, South Africa and became the director of the costume shop for PACT Ballet. David became Ballet West's costume shop director in 1979 and helped change the reputation of Ballet West from a regional company to one with international stature. He has designed and built costumes for ballet companies both nationally and internationally, including Ballet Du Nord (France), Alberta Ballet, Ballet Met, Singapore Ballet, Atlanta Ballet, American Repertory Ballet, Ballet Hawaii, Nashville Ballet, and Ballet Memphis. His works have also been featured in film, TV, and music videos. In 2018, he received Governor Gary Herbert's Artist Award for Visual Arts.



MICHAEL T. FORD

Lighting Designer

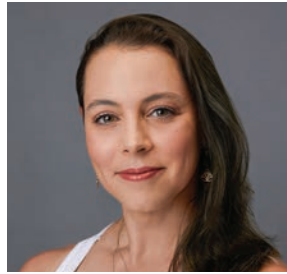
Michael Ford started his career with Louisville Ballet in 1974 as the light board operator for *The Nutcracker* and became Lighting Designer and Production Stage Manager in 1978. He has worked with former Artistic Directors Alun Jones and Bruce Simpson on over 60 new ballets. This is his fourth *Nutcracker* production with Louisville Ballet. Michael served as Production Manager of Iroquois Amphitheatre, resident Lighting Designer for the Corning Glass Center in Corning, New York, and guest designer for North Carolina Dance Theatre, American Ballet Theatre, Cincinnati Ballet, Tulsa Ballet and Smuin Ballet. He has worked with KET — including the Emmy award-winning "Lucy" — Intel, KFC, Churchill Downs, and the State of Kentucky. Michael would like to thank Warwick Musson and his much-missed wife Jan for their many years of support in his work and all the arts in Louisville.



JESSE ALFORD

Lighting Director

Jesse is a Freelance Lighting Designer, proudly based here in Louisville. Recent designs with Louisville Ballet include *Sleeping Beauty*, *Vibes*, *Swan Lake*, *Rite of Spring*, and more. He also regularly designs with Kentucky Shakespeare, Kentucky Opera, Louisville Orchestra, The Va Va Vixens, Circus Flora, and Pandora Productions. Other past collaborators include The Big Apple Circus, The Tennessee Williams Festival St. Louis, The Mary Shelley Electric Co., and others across the country. Working primarily in dance, circus, and theatre, Jesse specializes in the moments and productions that happen in between those disciplines.



HELEN DAIGLE

Principal Repetiteur + Senior Rehearsal Director

Originally from Baton Rouge, Helen Daigle received her training at Decatur School of Ballet, Decatur Georgia, Dancer's Workshop, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Joffrey Ballet School, and School of American Ballet, New York. She started performing with Baton Rouge Ballet Theatre and danced professionally with Feld Ballets / New York, Ballet Hispanico, and Miami City Ballet. Mrs. Daigle joined Louisville Ballet in 1998 and performed principal and soloist roles throughout her 20-year career

She is also Shoe Director for the Company, Children's Cast Director for The Brown-Forman Nutcracker, and a member of Louisville Ballet School's Faculty. She is thrilled to continue working for Louisville Ballet as Principal Repetiteur + Senior Rehearsal Director.



ROGER CREEL

Resident Director of Shakespeare in Dance

Roger Creel, a Massachusetts native, is Resident Director of Louisville Ballet's Shakespeare in Dance series. Roger has created nine works for the Company, including evening-length versions of *Tempest*, *King Lear*, *Cleopatra*, *As You Like It*, and *Macbeth*. Roger danced with Louisville Ballet from 2013 to 2018 after graduating summa cum laude from Amherst College with degrees in Geology and English. With Louisville Ballet, Roger performed leading roles in works by Balanchine, Caniparoli, Hoagland, Jervies, Stevenson, and Tharp, in addition to classics such as *Giselle*, *La Sylphide*, *Coppélia*, *Swan Lake*, *Nutcracker*, and *Firebird*. He has also guested with numerous companies including The Mark Morris Dance Group, The Australian Ballet, Jose Mateo Ballet Theater, and Boston Dance Theater. Roger is currently a PhD candidate in geophysics at Columbia University, New York. His research explores what sea level rise during past warm periods can tell us about Earth's hot future.



ADAM HOUGLAND

Resident Choreographer

Adam Houglan grew up in Dallas, Texas, and trained at the Dallas Conservatory of Ballet, the Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, and The Juilliard School. Mr. Houglan has created works for American Ballet Theatre Studio Company, Introdans in Holland, The Limon Dance Company, Cincinnati Ballet, Tulsa Ballet, and Ballet X. He has won the Hector Zaraspe Prize for Choreography, the Princess Grace Award for Choreography, the Choo-San Goh Award for Choreography, and was one of *Pointe Magazine's* VIPs of 2006 and one of *Dance Magazine's* 25 To Watch For 2011. As Louisville Ballet Resident Choreographer, Adam has created ten original works including *Romeo+Juliet*, *Petrouchka*, *Cold Virtues*, *Rite of Spring*, and *Sleeping Beauty*. Adam lives in Bristol, England with his husband Ashley.



ANDREA SCHERMOLY

Resident Choreographer

Born in South Africa, Andrea Schermoly trained at the National School of the Arts, on full scholarship at both Rambert Ballet and Contemporary School and The Royal Ballet School, London. She competed internationally as a member of The South African National Rhythmic Gymnastics Team and danced professionally for Boston Ballet and Nederlands Dans Theater (NDT). She has choreographed nationally and internationally for companies such as Royal New Zealand Ballet and Kansas City Ballet, among others, and has choreographed for movies, music videos, and commercials in Los Angeles. Andrea choreographed an all-new *Rite of Spring* dance film for the Company's 2020-2021 all-digital season. She most recently premiered *VIBES* for the Spring 2022 Spotlight Series and *Limbic* for the 2023 Spotlight Series.

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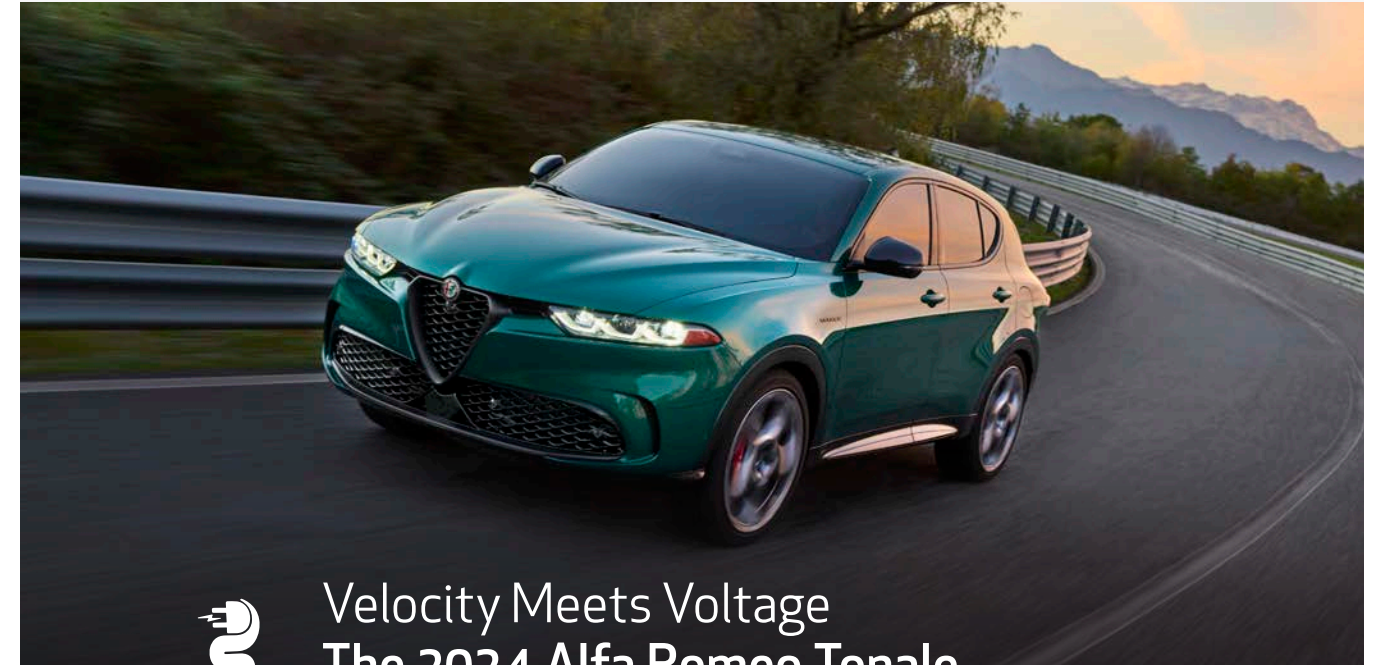


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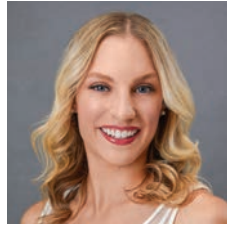
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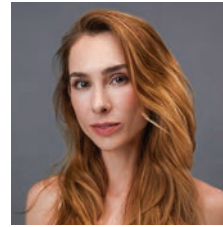
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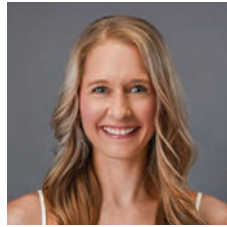
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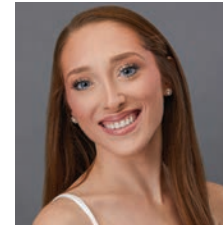
ELIZABETH ABBICK
Joined Company: 2022
Hometown: Overland Park, KS



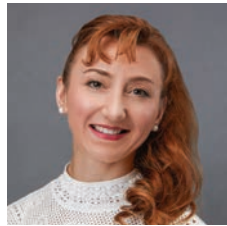
LEXA DANIELS
Joined Company: 2016
Hometown: Stoneham, MA



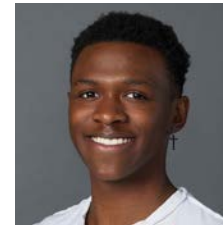
LEIGH ANNE ALBREHTA
Joined Company: 2009
Hometown: Fremont, OH



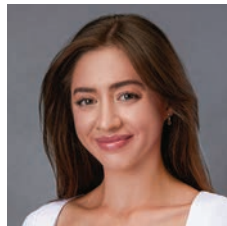
ANNA FORD*
Joined Company: 2023
Hometown: Lilburn, GA



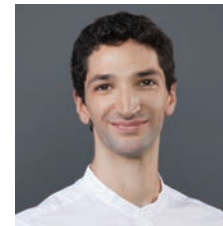
NATALIA ASHIKHMINA
Joined Company: 2006
Hometown: Bratsk, Russia



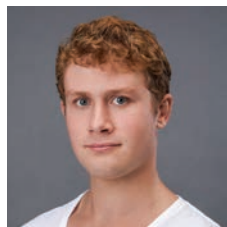
KHALIL JACKSON*
Joined Company: 2023
Hometown: Dallas, GA



SARAH BRADLEY
Joined Company: 2022
Hometown: Cincinnati, OH



ALEXANDER KINGMA*
Joined Company: 2023
Hometown: Lafayette, IN

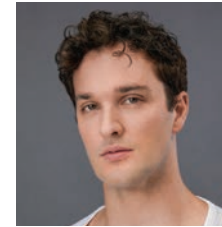


CHRISTIAN CHESTER*
Joined Company: 2023
Hometown: Sunbury, OH

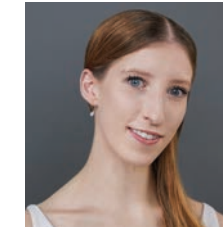


CAITLIN KOWALSKI
Joined Company: 2021
Hometown: Radcliff, KY

**COMPANY
ARTISTS**



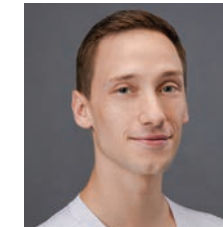
MARK KRIEGER
Joined Company: 2012
Hometown: Alexandria, VA



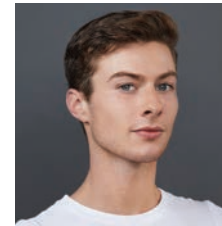
ELEANOR PRINCE*
Joined Company: 2023
Hometown: Louisville, KY



ADDISON MATHES*
Joined Company: 2023
Hometown: Corydon, IN



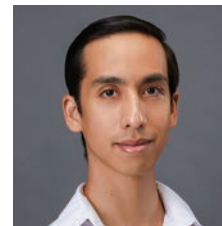
ALEKSANDR SCHROEDER
Joined Company: 2019
Hometown: Anderson, IN



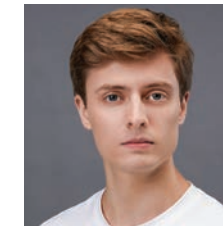
STEPHEN MYERS*
Joined Company: 2023
Hometown: Chesterfield, VA



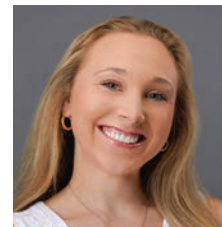
DANIEL SCOFIELD
Joined Company: 2022
Hometown: Louisville, KY



MINH-TUAN NGUYEN
Joined Company: 2018
Hometown: Cupertino, CA



DAVID SENTI
Joined Company: 2021
Hometown: Holland, MI



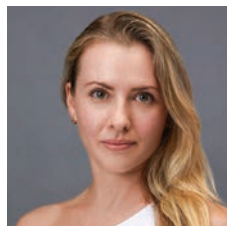
JORDAN NOBLETT*
Joined Company: 2023
Hometown: Gastonia, NC



SHELBY SHENKMAN
Joined Company: 2016
Hometown: Boca Raton, FL

* new company artist

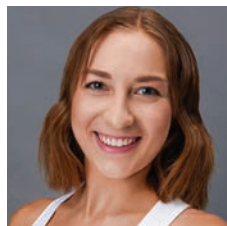
COMPANY
ARTISTS



ASHLEY THURSBY
Joined Company: 2008
Hometown: Richmond, MO

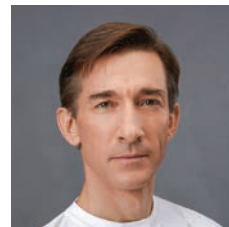


BRIENNE WILTSIE
Joined Company: 2018
Hometown: Pittsburgh, PA



AMBER WICKEY
Joined Company: 2022
Hometown: Tenafly, NJ

RESIDENT CHARACTER ARTIST



PHILLIP VELINOV
Joined Company: 2006
Hometown: Sofia, Bulgaria

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Company Artist Brienne Wiltsie
Photo by Kateryna Sellers 2023

STUDIO COMPANY
DANCERS



LEVELS 9-10

From left to right, back row (Level 10):

Tarique Logan, Ruthanna Dalby, Claire Schoellerman, Gabrielle Savka, Samantha Schuermann, Claire Churchill, McKenna Hoek.

Front row (Level 9):

Mackenzie Wandel, Elizabeth Hines, Shayda Honda, Hope Farrar, Paige Riffer, Chloe Puffer, Adrah Cook, Ezra Paisley

STUDIO COMPANY
DANCERS



LEVELS 7-8

From left to right, back row (Level 8):

Ella Feleay, Ida Soranno, Caleb Emory, Danika McNeese, Gaven Stevens, Ava Ownby, Sameer Rhodes, Emmaline Fontanilla, Victoria Saboura.

Middle row (Level 7):

Sarah Hutchison, Jessica Bealer, Natalie Schreiner, Marissa Soluri, Andrey Obolonchik, Emi Makimura, Gwyneth Holliday, Abby Burnette, Kirsten Smerud (standing).

Front row (Level 7):

Brad Delaney, Ava Dhira Metzger, Abigail Wyrrick, Guinevere Nelson, Desmond Atroscopic



Studio Company Dancer and Ballet Bound teaching artist in training, Sameer Rhodes, with Ballet Bound students. Photo by Community Engagement team



Scan here to learn more about Louisville Ballet's Community Engagement programs, including Ballet Bound: louisvilleballet.org/community-engagement/

Louisville Ballet's Community Engagement programs provide arts education opportunities that make a lasting impact on participants' lives. One of those initiatives is Ballet Bound, a tuition-free program providing young dancers from all across Greater Louisville the opportunity to study classical ballet, free of charge, in a professional setting.

At the first Ballet Bound class of the season, that impact was plain to see in Kayden, a new Ballet Bound student, and Sameer, a Level 8 Studio Company Dancer.

"You're the reason I'm here!" Kayden exclaimed as Sameer was introduced to the newest class of Ballet Bound dancers at Louisville Ballet's Main Street Studios.

"You danced at my school and that made me want to dance," Kayden continued, "and you are a really good dancer."

A smile grew wide across Sameer's face. Amy chimed in, "I thought it was me!"

"And then I met you and found out about Ballet Bound," Kayden said.

Amy and Sameer looked at one another and thought, how awesome is that?

Last spring, through a program called Moving Stories, dancers from Louisville Ballet's Studio Company traveled to local schools to perform for students, including Brandeis Elementary — where Kayden first saw Sameer perform. Over the summer, Kayden attended the JCPS Backpack League at Wesley House, where Ms. Amy was teaching dance workshops and distributing flyers about the Ballet Bound Audition Tour. Kayden jumped at the opportunity to try out for the Ballet Bound program and begged his parents to change their weekend plans so he could attend the audition, which they did. Six weeks later, Kayden saw Sameer at Louisville Ballet's Main Street Studios.

In that moment, an enormous impact on two people's lives was revealed. Kayden saw the

young male dancer that inspired him to give ballet a try, making his dream of dancing on stage one day seem a little more attainable. And that young male dancer realized that he was a positive role model and could make a lasting impact on a child's life.

Louisville Ballet Community Engagement works in schools and neighborhoods all across the city, reaching approximately 16,000 children, youth, and adults through a myriad of programs aimed to provide access, promote inclusion, and build diversity in the world of ballet. Sometimes participants in these programs overlap, just as Kayden's story illustrates.

Now in its fourth year, Ballet Bound is designed to build diversity in the world of ballet while serving as a pathway for dancers to The Louisville Ballet School, Louisville Ballet Studio Company, and eventually a career with Louisville Ballet.

Kayden and Sameer will have the opportunity to work together all school year, as Kayden participates in one year of tuition-free ballet training at Louisville Ballet through the Ballet Bound program, and Sameer begins his training to become a Louisville Ballet Teaching Artist.

It's these kinds of connections that show just how important access to dance is, and we strive to make more of them with each class, school visit, audition, performance, and interaction with budding young artists of the Commonwealth.



Interested in bringing dance to your school? We have a variety of programs available:

- Moving Stories:*
- In-school Performance Assemblies*
- Student Matinees: Field Trips to the Theatre*
- Behind the Scenes Tour: Visit Louisville Ballet's Main Street Studios*
- Before and After-School Dance Programs*
- In-School Residencies & Workshops*
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Assistant Stage Manager***JOEI BALDWIN***Costume Shop Assistant***KATIE JOACHIM***Stitcher***TERESA GREER***Stitcher*COMPANY PHYSICIANS
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Classical Ballet Program Manager***MOLLY KAYS***Children's Program Manager***BRIENNE WILTSIE KEEHNER***Louisville Ballet Youth Ensemble Manager***ADDISON MATHES, NATALIE ORMS***Administration Assistants***AMY HALEY***Uniform Coordinator***ASHLEY THURSBY***mind. body. balance. Program Manager***OLIVIA ECKERT***Complementary Program Manager*FACULTY
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For more information, please contact Regan Nichols, rnichols@louisvilleballet.org

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