

LOUISVILLE BALLET

# #CHORSHOW

ONE FILM, FIVE NEW WORKS



MAY 19 – JUNE 30, 2021

CHORSHOW



# #CHORSHOW 2021

Featuring new works by  
Danielle Rowe, Justin Michael Hogan, Sanjay Saverimuttu, Natalie Orms, and Brandon Ragland.

Cinematography & Post Production by KERTIS:

Producers: Aaron Mikel & Sawyer Roque

Videographers: Aaron Mikel & Alan Miller

Editors: Kaylee Everly, Tobias Van Kleeck, & Wesley Bacon

Lighting: Jesse Alford

Costume Design: Alexandra Ludwig

Stage Manager: Kim Aycok

Technical Director: Brian Sherman

**Louisville Ballet would like to thank our generous donors for making this production possible.**

Louisville Ballet would also like to thank The Fund for the Arts for its generous investment in our Organization and support for our fellow arts organizations across the state. We also deeply appreciate the Kentucky Arts Council, the state arts agency, which provides operating support to Louisville Ballet with state tax dollars and federal funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as significant advocacy on behalf of Louisville Ballet and our fellow arts organizations across The Commonwealth.

# NOTES FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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ROBERT CURRAN

Welcome to the final, original film of our fully digital Season of Illumination, *Choreographers' Showcase*, fondly known as *#ChorShow*, a program created by and for our Louisville Ballet dancers. This always popular, often sold out, in-studio production might feel a little different this year, but the process and the intimacy remain. As always the final production features new works by dancers from the Company, as well as a piece by San Francisco-based guest choreographer, Danielle Rowe, this time created remotely, from a screen to our studio.

This time around the seats are wherever you want them to be, only limited by the screen where you want to view, remotely.

We worked hard alongside our incredible KERTIS Creative production team to capture the immediacy, thrill, and intimacy of the in-studio performance.

Thank you for inviting us into your homes, or wherever you choose to watch with a wi-fi connection, and for being a part of this virtual journey. Thanks also to our donors, our supportive Board Members, and to our tenacious, talented, committed dancers, staff, and artistic team.

We made it. Together. And we can't wait to share this innovative, thoughtful, and so human experience with you all.



## ABOUT ROBERT CURRAN

Trained at The Australian Ballet School and having enjoyed a thrilling and fulfilling career with The Australian Ballet as a Principal Artist, Robert Curran took the passion and discipline he developed as a dancer and set his sights on diversifying his knowledge, skills and abilities. Education and experience continually expanded his ability to move his own body on stage and through this, move an audience through a wide range of emotions.

For more about Robert and Louisville Ballet's Artistic Staff, visit [louisvilleballet.org/the-company](https://louisvilleballet.org/the-company)

Louisville Ballet Company Dancer  
Shelby Shenkman from "I Am" /  
photo by Sam English 2021



Louisville Ballet Artists Ryo Suzuki, Elizabeth Abbick, Tyler Ferraro with Jahi Bogard from "The Movement" / ChorShow 2021



Louisville Ballet Studio Company Dancer Nicholas Bentz from "The Misfits" / ChorShow 2021





Louisville Ballet Artists (L to R) Addison Mathes,  
David Senti, Stacey Blakeman, Kelsey Corder,  
Nicholas Bentz from "The Misfits" / ChorShow 2021



# THE MISFITS

DANIELLE ROWE,  
CHOREOGRAPHER

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## CHOREOGRAPHER'S NOTES

Set during a weekly counseling session for oddballs and outsiders, four well known story-ballet disruptors share their stories. As each character revisits the moment that shaped their personality, the audience witnesses that moment told through dance. Completely created remotely, and even in different time zones, this short dance film came together through great tenacity, flexibility, and generosity of the dancers and with the unwavering support of Louisville Ballet's artistic and production staff.

## ABOUT

Choreographer Danielle Rowe was born in Shepparton, Australia and trained at the Australian Ballet School.

Rowe has created works for San Francisco Ballet, Nederlands Dans Theater's SWITCH program, Royal New Zealand Ballet, Co.Lab Dance (featuring dancers from American Ballet Theater), Ballet Idaho, Grand Rapids Ballet, SFDanceworks, Barak Ballet, Diablo Ballet, Oakland Ballet and Berkeley Ballet Theater.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Rowe pivoted to film making; writing, choreographing and directing eight dance films, namely Wooden Dimes for San Francisco Ballet which was hailed "a modern masterpiece" (Rachel Howard, SF Chronicle) and Wilis in Corps-en-tine for The Australian Ballet (with creative partner, Garen Scribner) which was voted "one of the best things to come out of quarantine" by Vogue.

From 2001-2015 Rowe was a Principal Dancer with the Australian Ballet and Houston Ballet, and also danced with the prestigious Nederlands Dans Theater. She is the former Associate Artistic Director of SFDanceworks.

Rowe lives in San Francisco, California.

## CREDITS

Choreographer's Assistant: Helen Daigle

## MUSIC

"The Duel" (bensound.com)

"Nutcracker: Act 1: March"

by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (San Francisco Ballet Orchestra)

"Giselle: Act 2: Apparition de Giselle: Allegretto Asai Vivo"

by Adolphe Adam (London Symphony Orchestra)

"Giselle: Act 2: Apparition de Giselle: Moderato-Andante"

by Adolphe Adam (London Symphony Orchestra)

"Swan Lake: No.18- Allegro- Allegro Giusto"

by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (Royal Philharmonic Orchestra)

"The Sleeping Beauty: Op.66 Act 1- The Spell- Andante"

by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (unknown)

## CAST

The Counselor: Stacey Blakeman

Drosselmeyer: Nicholas Bentz

Myrtha: Kelsey Cordor

Rothbart: David SentiCarabosse: Addison Mathes



# A L'ŒUVRE ON CONNAÎT L'ARTISAN

JUSTIN MICHAEL HOGAN,  
CHOREOGRAPHER

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## CHOREOGRAPHER'S NOTES

I have resisted the urge to say that *A l'œuvre on connaît l'artisan* is a Covid-inspired work. While I still believe that, it is also impossible to ignore the role Covid played in its creation. *A l'œuvre* explores the dynamic between the Dancer, the Space, and the Music as equal, necessary partners; something that was impossible to have together at the height of the pandemic. As we took our first steps back into the studios in August, the fear and trepidation surrounding the experience was matched only by the happiness of bringing those elements together again. Those initial moments back provided the inspiration for this work.

Beyond the dynamics above, various relationships are explored by the other dancers. Intimacy, playfulness, and antagonism provided the initial framework for how they engaged with the music and the space, which in turn added further complexity to those respective emotions. When brought together, it is my hope that you experience the same transcendent calm and reverent joy I felt all those months ago.

A special thank you to every artist involved in the creation of this work. I bow to your collective grace, tenacity, and artistry that inspires me daily.

## ABOUT

Justin is from nearby Cincinnati, Ohio, where he received his initial training at the School for the Creative and Performing Arts. He furthered his education and training at Mercyhurst University, earning his B.A. in Dance Performance and Choreography. Professionally, Justin began his career at the North Carolina Dance Theatre (now Carolina Ballet) before joining St. Louis Ballet. In 2012, Justin joined Louisville Ballet. Since then, he has the wonderful opportunity to work with former Artistic Directors Bruce Simpson, Helen Starr and the late Alun Jones, and choreographers Daniel Riley (*Tonal*), Lucas Jervies (*Firebird*), Val Caniparoli (*A Cinderella Story*), Andrea Schermoly (*At High*), Ronald Hynd (*The Merry Widow*), and Adam Hougland (*Romeo + Juliet*) among others.

## CREDITS

### MUSIC

"Impromptu": Composed and played by: Ethan James McCollum

### CAST

Ashley Thursby

With:

Leigh Anne Albrechta and Elizabeth Abbick

Ryo Suzuki and Aleksander Schroeder

Brienne Wiltsie and John Aaron Brewer





# THE MOVEMENT

**SANJAY SAVERIMUTTU,  
CHOREOGRAPHER**

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## **CHOREOGRAPHER'S NOTES**

This new work explores the dynamics of queer friendships, chosen family, and other non-romantic relationships developed within the LGBTQ+ community, set against the backdrop of racial protests in Louisville. In collaboration with playwright, Allie Fireel, and artist Cris Eli Blak, *The Movement* is a dance/theatre hybrid performance, seeking to combine voice, movement, and technology in one performance space

## **ABOUT**

Sanjay Saverimuttu is a Louisville-based choreographer who aims to develop the art form of contemporary ballet beyond its European hetero-normative base. Sanjay has received commissions for his own choreography from the Louisville Ballet, the Louisville Ballet Youth Ensemble, Boca Ballet Theatre, Waterfront Botanical Gardens, Ballet Arkansas, and the University of Kentucky. Sanjay is a member of the second generation of the Hadley Creatives and served as an Artist in Residence at the University of Kentucky. He has been featured in *Pointe Magazine*, co-produced *Dis/Comfort Zones* at Actors Theatre of Louisville, and hosts a book club through Louisville Pride Foundation. Sanjay has been a Louisville Ballet Company Artist since 2012.

## **CREDITS**

Screenplay: Allie Fireel

Voice Direction: Ariadne Calvano

## **CAST**

Emerson: Cris Eli Blak (writer) and Jahi Bogard (voice, dance, and choreography)

Brent: Allie Fireel (voice) and Ryo Suzuki (dance)

Annie: Mollie Murk (voice) and Elizabeth Abbick (dance)

Cat: Izzy Keel (voice) and Emmarose Atwood (dance)

Dani: Sarah Elston (voice) and Tyler Ferraro (dance)



# CIRCADIAN

NATALIE ORMS,  
CHOREOGRAPHER

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## CHOREOGRAPHER'S NOTES

*Circadian* dives into the emotions of a sleepless night. It explores movement through feelings of anxiety, anger, and exhaustion. Following the dancers through a dream like state. Leaving you questioning what was real and what was just a dream.

The choices I made for this piece were inspired by the emotions I went through during the pandemic. Most everyone has had anxiety about the events of this past year, especially my young peers. The main challenge was helping them find those emotions within my choreography and challenge their movement qualities.

The filming process was so exciting and something I had never been a part of. I knew we would be filming from the very beginning so I planned this piece around the different shots I wanted to take. I used the music as a blueprint to find distinct sections and transitions. From there I experimented with ideas for camera angles including aerial views and hand held follow cameras.

In the end I am very proud and grateful to my peers for helping this vision come to fruition. I could not have done it without the hardwork and dedication of my cast and the Ballet Mistress Mikelle Bruzina.

## ABOUT

Natalie Orms was born and raised in Louisville, Ky. She started her training at the University of Louisville Dance Academy before

transferring to The Louisville Ballet School. Natalie attended the Youth Performing Arts School at duPont Manual High School as a dance major, and became a member of the Louisville Ballet School Ensemble. Natalie attended several summer intensive programs including The Harid Conservatory, Atlanta Ballet, and Miami City Ballet. After graduating from high school, she joined the trainee program at Louisville Ballet which has since become the Louisville Ballet Studio Company. During her four year tenure, she had the privilege of training with the Artistic team of Louisville Ballet including Artistic Director, Robert Curran, as well as performing in Louisville Ballet production corps de ballet roles including *Giselle* (Curran), *The Merry Widow* (Hynde), *Serenade* (Balanchine), and *The Brown Forman Nutcracker* (Caniparoli). *Circadian* is Natalie's first choreographed work, created in her final year with the Studio Company.

## CREDITS

### MUSIC

“Vibrations on a Srting” / “Forwardism” by Rival Consoles

### CAST

Sarah Bradley

With: Courtney Ramirez, Kaleigh Western, Sarah Ray,  
Emma Fridenmaker, Isabella Sumera



# I AM

**BRANDON RAGLAND,  
CHOREOGRAPHER**

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## CHOREOGRAPHER'S NOTES

“Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future and renders the present inaccessible.”

- Maya Angelou

## ABOUT

Born and raised in Birmingham, Alabama, Brandon joined Louisville Ballet in 2010. He is a graduate of Butler University with a B.S. in Dance-Arts Administration. Since joining the Louisville Ballet, he has had the opportunity to perform leading roles in classical and neoclassical works such as Ronald Hynd’s *The Merry Widow*, Stanton Welch’s *Velocity*, Adam Hougland’s *Romeo + Juliet*, Val Caniparoli’s *The Brown-Forman Nutcracker*, *Lamberena*, *Lady of the Camellias*, Robert Curran’s *Coppélia* and *Swan Lake*, Serge Lifar’s *Suite en Blanc*, George Balanchine’s *Square Dance*, *Kammermusik #2*, *Divertimento No. 15*, *Serenade*, and *Western Symphony*. Brandon has originated roles in new works such as Lucas Jervies’ *Human Abstract* and *Firebird*, and Tim Harbour’s *Models* and *Odyssey*. As a choreographer, he has created works for Louisville Ballet, Louisville Ballet Youth Ensemble, Alabama Ballet, Alabama Ballet School, AROVA Contemporary Ballet, Ballet Arkansas, Next Generation Ballet, J. Lockhart Performing Arts Institute, and Sedona Chamber Ballet. In 2019, Brandon received The Lift a Life Foundation: Emerging Leader in the Arts Award.

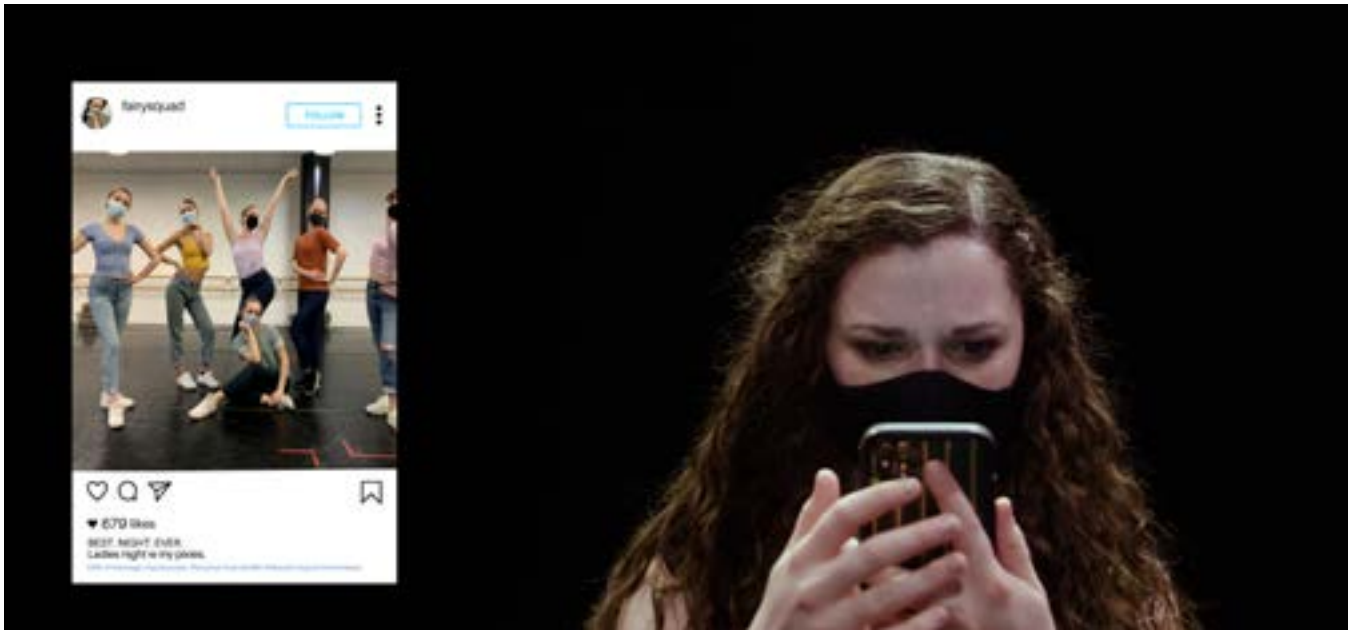
## CREDITS

### POETS

Isiah Fish  
Hannah Drake  
Lance G Newmann II

### DANCERS

Natalia Ashikhmina  
Lexa Daniels  
Erica De la O  
Erin Langston Evans  
Mark Krieger  
Minh-Tuan Nguyen  
Kateryna Sellers  
Shelby Shenkman  
Phillip Velinov



Louisville Ballet Studio Company Dancer Addison Mathes from “The Misfits” / ChorShow 2021



Louisville Ballet Company Dancers Philip Velinov + Natalia Ashikhmina from “I Am” / ChorShow 2021



### **ETHAN MCCOLLUM**

Composer and Musician

*A l'œuvre on connaît l'artisan*

Ethan is a classical pianist and choral conductor from Berea, Kentucky. He has been an accompanist for the Louisville Ballet since 2018. He regularly accompanies instrumentalists, singers, and choirs throughout the Kentuckiana area, and is also an experienced large ensemble and pit pianist. He performs solo and chamber music, most notably with violist Lydia Mercer in the touring Mercer-McCollum duo.

Ethan received both his bachelor's degree in piano performance and master's degree in choral conducting from the University of Louisville. He has played piano at First Unitarian since the summer of 2013, and became the choir director in 2016.



### **ALLIE FIREEL**

Playwright and Actor

*The Movement*

Allie Fireel (they/them) is a bi-polar non-binary queer writer, performer and producer based in Louisville. As an actor, playwright and journalist Fireel works to de-stigmatize neurodivergence and emerging queer identities through their work.

As founding Artistic Director of The Louisville Fringe Festival, Fireel works to end assault and abuse in the theatrical community and to break down the racial divide in Louisville's entire creative scene. #BraveArtistsDeserveSafeSpace #BlackArtistsMatter

Spring 2020 Louisville Review | 2019 Hadley Creative | Work produced by Hadley Creatives x Actors Theatre of Louisville, Theatre [502], Looking for Lilith, Derby City Playwrights | Best New Play 2018 Arts Louisville



**CRIS ELI BLAK**

Writer

*The Movement*

Cris Eli Blak is a writer for the page, stage and screen as well as a performer. His work aims to use race, religion, gender, and sexuality as catalysts for conversations that are not typically had, and views that are not typically presented. He is the winner of a Bronze Remi from the Worldfest Houston International Film Festival, the Christopher Hewitt Award in Fiction and is a Pushcart Prize nominee. He is currently having work developed with Columbia University's Black Theatre Ensemble, The Pressure Players, Common Ground Theatre, Garage Theatre Ensemble and Et Alia Theater.



**ISIAH FISH**

Poet

*I Am*

Isiah Fish is a queer poet & performer from Louisville, Kentucky. He holds an M.F.A. from Southern Illinois University Carbondale where he worked as an editor for Crab Orchard Review. His work has been published in Albion Review, Blood Orange Review, Foglifter, & Miracle Monocle.



**HANNAH L. DRAKE**

Poet

*I Am*

Hannah L. Drake is a blogger, activist, public speaker, poet, and author of 11 books. She writes commentary on politics, feminism, and race. Hannah’s message is thought-provoking and at times challenging, but Hannah believes that it is in the uncomfortable spaces that change can take place. “My sole purpose in writing and speaking is not that I entertain you. I am trying to shake a nation.”



**LANCE G NEWMAN II**

Poet

*I Am*

Lance G. Newman II, was raised in Louisville, Kentucky. He is a writer, poet, host, actor, performing, visual and teaching artist. His experience is the culmination of a 16 year career performing around the country. As a playwright, he helped create plays such as the “Smoketown Poetry Opera,” “The Westend Poetry Opera” and “The Blood Always Returns.” Under the name, SpreadLovEnterprise, he teaches his creative writing and public speaking curriculum in schools, community centers and service providing organizations. He co-host the largest and longest running poetry slam in Louisville; created the public art “LITS Project” on 4th st; and has been featured in newspapers, commercials and the feature film “Fratthouse.” Better known as ‘Mr. SpreadLove,’ a local man of worldly talent.

Pianist and Composer Ethan McCollum with Louisville Ballet  
Artists Elizabeth Abbick + Leigh Anne Albrehta from "A  
l'œuvre on connaît l'artisan" / Chorshow 2021







**JESSE ALFORD**

Lighting Designer

Jesse is a freelance Lighting Designer and Circus Coach based in Louisville. His previous designs with Louisville Ballet include *Force Flux* and សុំនាមប៊ូរឡាត់. His work can also be seen with The Big Apple Circus, Theatre [502], Pandora Productions, Stage One, Acting Against Cancer, Circus Flora, Suspend Louisville, The Louisville Orchestra, Va Va Vixens, and more. He is the Head Coach at My Nose Turns Red Youth Circus, and serves as the Board President for the American Youth Circus Organization and the American Circus Educators.



**KERTIS**

*Film Production + Cinematography*

KERTIS is a creative agency in Louisville, Kentucky, founded on the belief that human connection inspires action. Our team of strategists, filmmakers, photographers, writers, and designers makes beautiful, honest, and thoughtful work that amplifies ideas worth sharing. We are committed to telling the stories of people, organizations, and brands that make our communities more livable, equitable, and interesting.



**ALEXANDRA LUDWIG**

*Costume Designer*

Now in her third full season, Alexandra has enjoyed designing a handful of shows with Louisville Ballet. In the past, she has worked as the head of wardrobe for Moscow Ballet, Barrington Stage Company and Company XIV. She also toured with Ringling Brothers and began her career at Universal Studios.

Originally from Los Angeles, Alexandra has styled music videos and short films. Her design career has brought her all over the world from Guilin, China to Turks and Caicos. She has designed extensively for circus troupes, flying trapeze acts and for musical theatre. However, she has found a home with Louisville Ballet.



Louisville Ballet Company Dancer Kateryna Sellers from "I Am" / ChorShow 2021

**COMPANY DANCERS**

Leigh Anne Albrechta, Natalia Ashikhmina,  
Emmarose Atwood, John Aaron Brewer,  
Lexa Daniels, Erin Langston Evans,  
Tristan Hanson, Justin Michael Hogan,  
Mark Krieger, Minh-Tuan Nguyen,  
Erica De La O, Brandon Ragland,  
Sanjay Saverimuttu, Aleksandr Schroeder,  
Kateryna Sellers, Shelby Shenkman,  
Ryo Suzuki, Ashley Thursby, Phillip Velinov,  
Trevor Williams, Brienne Wiltsie

**STUDIO COMPANY**

Savanna Airee, Owen Bakula, Teagan Bentley,  
Nicholas Bentz, Sarah Bradley, Anthony Cefalu,  
Christian Chester, Reece Conrad, Kelsey Corder,  
Emma Delaney, Anna Ford, Emma Fridenmaker,  
Griffin Greene, Veronica Higgins, Isabelle Hilton,  
Caitlin Kowalski, Kinsey Love, Addison Mathes,  
Jake Mingus, Natalie Orms, Hannah Pidgeon,  
Courtney Ramirez, Sarah Ray, David Senti,  
Madison Skaggs, Isabella Sumera, Kayleigh Western, Amber Wickey

**GRADUATE INTERNS**

Elizabeth Abbick, Tyler Ferraro, Allison Haan

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

about Louisville Ballet's Company + Staff, visit [louisvilleballet.org/the-company](http://louisvilleballet.org/the-company)

LOUISVILLE BALLET

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