

LOUISVILLE BALLET



ROMEO & JULIET

ÉTOILE

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Photo by Andrew Kung 2023

A LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

Dear Louisville Ballet Friends,

As our Season of the Commonwealth comes to a close, we are filled with gratitude for your overwhelming generosity, both on and off the stage. Your philanthropic support has continued to sustain and inspire us — in our studios, in the theater, and in our community. We began this season working together as Artistic Directors for the first time, and with Helen Daigle as the third member of the Artistic team, we are more excited than ever about the bright future of Louisville Ballet.

Though our season must end, we could not have asked for a better closing production than Alun Jones' breathtaking *Romeo & Juliet*, making its triumphant return to Whitney Hall after 11 years. The well-known story of the star-crossed lovers is a stunning example of Alun's talent as a designer and storyteller, and we have been so fortunate to have Helen Starr's wisdom and gracious coaching. With so many familiar faces working on this production, as well as students of The Louisville Ballet School, the mind. body. balance. program, members of the Louisville community, and our beautiful Artists creating the bustling and intricate world of Verona, *Romeo & Juliet* has Louisville Ballet history woven into every step.

This production also marks the beginning of a new chapter for Natalia Ashikhmina, who has graced us with her exquisite technique, unmatched musicality, and kind spirit for 18 years. It has been an honor and privilege to work with Natalia, and we will greatly miss her presence and artistry on the Louisville Ballet stage.

While it is bittersweet to say goodbye to our 72nd season, we are eager to tell you about the coming 24–25 season, which will represent the future of Louisville Ballet and the strong foundations of our past that brought us here.

For now, in these precious moments, let us all be swept away one more time this season by the passionate story of *Romeo & Juliet*.

Thank you for joining us!

With warm regards,



Mikelle Bruzina
Artistic Director



Harald Uwe Kern
Artistic Director

ÉTOILE STAFF

HALLIE BEARD
Editor

ANDY PEREZ
Designer

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Photographers

WELCH PRINTING COMPANY
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ROMEO & JULIET

MARCH 1-2, 2024

THE KENTUCKY CENTER, WHITNEY HALL

Choreography by Alun Jones

Artistic Advisor: Helen Starr

Staged by Mikelle Bruzina, Helen Daigle, and Harald Uwe Kern

Fight choreography by Dale Brannon

Music by Sergei Prokofiev

Scenic Design by Wally Coburg

Lighting Design by Michael T. Ford

Costume Design by Alun Jones and John Truscott

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SYNOPSIS

ACT I

SCENE 1 & 2: *The Marketplace in Verona*

It is dawn and Romeo, the son of Lord Montague, is found declaring his love to the fair Rosaline. Romeo's reverie is interrupted by his friends Mercutio and Benvolio, who playfully mock him. With the sunrise the market place fills with townspeople, among whom are members of the rival families, the Capulets and the Montagues. Tempers flare and a quarrel develops. The Prince of Verona appears and commands the feud must end. Anyone disobeying his orders will be exiled from Verona.

SCENE 3: *A Room in the Capulets' House*

The young Juliet plays with her nurse. Lady Capulet enters with a ball gown for Juliet and tells her that the following day she will become betrothed to Paris, a young nobleman.

SCENE 4: *Outside the Capulets' House*

Rosaline is among the guests who arrive for the Capulets' ball. Romeo and his friends, disguised in masks, follow her and slip into the Capulets' house.

SCENE 5: *The Ballroom*

While dancing with Paris, Juliet is confronted by Romeo. Later, Tybalt, suspecting Romeo's identity, tries to start an argument but is prevented by Lord Capulet, who abides by the laws of hospitality.

SCENE 6: *Juliet's Balcony*

On the balcony outside her bedroom, Juliet dreams of Romeo. He appears below in the garden and they declare their eternal love.

INTERMISSION

Run time: approximately 2 hours and 40 minutes, including two 20-minute intermissions

ACT II

SCENE 1: *The Marketplace in Verona*

A carnival is in progress. Romeo, indifferent to the gaiety around him, is sought out by Juliet's nurse. She delivers a letter from Juliet asking Romeo to meet her at Friar Lawrence's cell.

SCENE 2: *Friar Lawrence's Cell*

In his cell, Friar Lawrence joins the young lovers in marriage. Friar Lawrence prays that their union will bring an end to the strife between their families.

SCENE 3: *The Marketplace in Verona*

At the height of the carnival, Romeo returns to the marketplace. Tybalt accosts him, but Romeo declines to fight. Mercutio engages in a duel with Tybalt and is killed.

Romeo, distraught, turns on Tybalt and kills him. The two bodies are brought before the Prince of Verona, who banishes Romeo from the city.

INTERMISSION

ACT III

SCENE 1: *Juliet's Bedroom*

In Juliet's bedroom, the lovers awaken at sunrise and Romeo, under sentence of exile, must leave Juliet and Verona. Lady Capulet informs Juliet that she must marry Paris.

Juliet declares that she will not marry him. Paris, hurt by her rebuff, leaves with Lord Capulet; and Lady Capulet angrily warns Juliet to prepare for her wedding. In despair, Juliet flees to seek the help of Friar Lawrence.

SCENE 2: *Friar Lawrence's Cell*

Juliet receives a potion from Friar Lawrence that will place her in a death-like sleep. Romeo will be warned of the plot and, finding her in a family crypt, will take her away from Verona.

SCENE 3: *Juliet's Bedroom*

Juliet returns home and pretends to agree to marry Paris. Paris leaves the room with the Capulets, and Juliet takes the sleeping potion.

SCENE 4: *Outside Juliet's Bedroom*

Juliet's nurse and friends find her unconscious on the morning of her marriage to Paris and believe she is dead.

SCENE 5: *The Capulet Family Crypt*

Romeo, who has failed to receive Friar Lawrence's message revealing the plan, believes Juliet to be dead and rushes to her tomb. Embracing Juliet for the last time, he takes poison. Juliet awakens to find Romeo dead. Grief-stricken, she kills herself with his dagger.



Company Artists Natalia Ashikhmina and
Mark Krieger as Romeo and Juliet.
Photo by Kateryna Sellers 2024



Company Artists Sarah Bradley and Khalil Jackson.
Photo by Kateryna Sellers 2024

Company Artists Stephen Myers and Amber Wickey.
Photo by Kateryna Sellers 2024



2024-2025 SEASON



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Helen Starr and Dale Brannon
in *Romeo & Juliet*, 1991

BECOMING ROMEO & JULIET

In 1985, Helen Starr and Dale Brannon stepped onto the Whitney Hall stage in Alun Jones' world premiere of *Romeo & Juliet*. But they did not step onto the stage as Starr and Brannon, esteemed principal dancers and choreographers of Louisville Ballet — they took those first graceful steps as two young, starry-eyed lovers in fair Verona, ruled by passion and fated to lose their lives in the battle of the Montague and Capulet families.

While Alun Jones, who led the Company as Artistic Director from 1978–2002, was the choreographer for the classic Shakespearean work, the debut was the product of hours of dedicated collaboration and character development between Jones, his wife Starr, and her dance partner Brannon.

“It was always a work we did together,” said Brannon. “You felt like you choreographed it, too, that it’s your ballet, too.”

Jones and Starr began working on *Romeo & Juliet* at the small studio on Bardstown Road Louisville Ballet called home at that time, now known as the Bellwether Hotel. The work grew in pieces, adjusting and adapting as a living piece of art. Even once completed and set on the stage, accompanied by opulent costumes and sets, it took on a life of its own through its vibrant central characters.

Brannon’s interpretation of Romeo “was always morphing, even during a performance. It all depended on the energy I felt from the audience and where I needed to take them.”

After a review of opening night that critiqued his performance as too serious, he reevaluated the character: “I needed to figure out how I could do the tomb scene with a smile on my face, for Romeo to be the romantic he was...remembering her beauty, referring back to the part that moved somebody – that crazy, fiery youth.”

For Starr, every movement originated with her emotional approach to the young Juliet.

“[The ballet] had to be created as if you were the character,” she said. “It couldn’t be me. It had to be Juliet reacting to make it work.”

In school, Starr had experienced the 400+ year old drama as many of us have — as a serious, cautionary tragedy. But a London performance of the play starring the esteemed Dame Judi Dench gave her a different take on the character. Dench had “a fit of the giggles” during her portrayal, lightening the role in a way she hadn’t seen before.

“I’ve never forgotten it, that extraordinary rush of emotion,” she said. “That’s what I put into the balcony scene, this feeling [Juliet] doesn’t know what to do with...the agonies of being a 13 year old having a crush!”

Taking on the role of Romeo had a similar effect on Brannon, who remembered dancing Romeo as a student. “My solo in the balcony scene was what I did as a kid, so it took me back to when I was passionately in love as a teenager.”

The success of the timeless classic extended beyond the joint work of the trio; Alun made a point to involve as many members of the community as possible as extras in the production, calling up dancers from the early days of the civic company to create the background of the sprawling story.

For many reasons, the production holds a special place in Helen Starr’s heart. She was 45 years old at the time of its premiere, and though she had danced many dream principal roles in her illustrious career, she had never had the opportunity to portray Juliet before.

“I’m just so grateful that I had a chance to do this role,” she said. “I’m just very grateful.”

THANK YOU

NATALIA ASHIKHMINA COMPANY ARTIST SINCE 2006

Through her many roles with Louisville Ballet, Natalia Ashikhmina has remained a true representation of artistry, passion, and generosity. Although we will miss her on the Louisville Ballet stage, we cannot wait to see what her next act reveals. Please join us in celebrating her beautiful career.

“I am so thankful and incredibly blessed to have had this beautiful 18-year period of my life within this community, with my Louisville Ballet family, my colleagues, partners, coaches, directors, donors, friends, and audience. Each of them has impacted me, shared their wisdom and given me a piece of their hearts. Their gift has shaped me into who I am today as an artist and a human. Thank you for pushing me, for holding me up, for trusting and inspiring me. I am also profoundly grateful for the continuous and unconditional love and support of my parents, husband, and children every step of the way. I am filled with gratitude.”


–Natalia Ashikhmina



Natalia Ashikhmina in *The Merry Widow*
Photo by Sam English



Helen Starr and Natalia Ashikhmina in rehearsal.
Photo by Kateryna Sellers 2024

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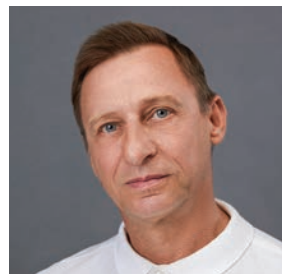


MIKELLE BRUZINA

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 Hougland, 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.

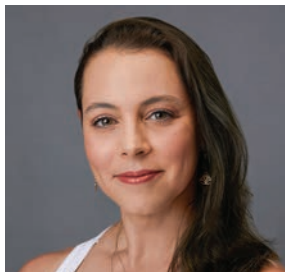


HARALD UWE KERN

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.



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.

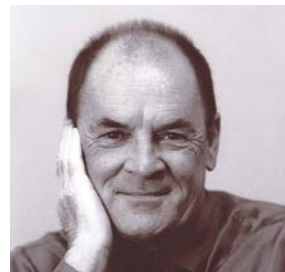
She is also Shoe Director for the Company, Children's Cast Director for *The Brown-Forman Nutcracker*, and a member of Louisville Ballet School's Faculty. She is thrilled to continue working for Louisville Ballet as Principal Repetiteur + Senior Rehearsal Director.



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.



ALUN JONES

Choreographer + Costume Designer

Alun Jones (1937-2019) led Louisville Ballet as Artistic Director from 1978-2002. Born and educated in Wales, he danced with the Welsh National Opera, London's Festival Ballet, and Zurich Opera Ballet and was a founding member of the New London Ballet. He and Helen Starr joined Louisville Ballet in 1975 to help establish The Louisville Ballet School. He catapulted the Company into local and global success, presenting seventy-eight world premieres and sixty-five Louisville premieres, increasing subscriptions exponentially, and arranging for the renowned Mikhail Baryshnikov to perform with the Company twice. He remained a prominent regional and global figure in the arts, serving on the jury for the European Stage Dance Union contest in Croatia and as a member of the International Dance Council in Greece. In 1998, he received the Milner Award, Kentucky's highest award in the Arts, and in 2002 received the Louisville Forum's Fleur-de-Lis Award.



HELEN STARR

Artistic Advisor

Helen Starr was born in England and trained at the Royal Academy of Dance and the Royal Ballet School. She spent 7 years with the Royal Ballet as Soloist and Assistant Ballet Mistress. She then joined London Festival Ballet (now English National Ballet) as a Principal Dancer and danced leading roles in all the classics and contemporary repertoire. Her partners have included John Gilpin, André Prokovsky, Peter Schaufuss, Peter Martins, Frank Augustyn and Mikhail Baryshnikov, with whom she danced *La Sonnambula*, *Petrouchka*, and the pas de deux from *Le Corsaire* in Louisville. During her 38 years with Louisville Ballet, Miss Starr staged *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Giselle*, *Coppélia*, *Les Sylphides*, *La Fete Etrange*, *Paquita* & Sir Frederick Ashton's *Les Patineurs*. Recognized nationwide as a fine ballet teacher and coach, she continues to stage ballets and give Master classes. Miss Starr regularly teaches Encore Classes for the Louisville Ballet Youth Ensemble and serves as a guest instructor at the Louisville Ballet Summer Intensive.



DALE BRANNON

Fight Choreographer

Dale Brannon was a principal dancer with Louisville Ballet under Alun Jones and enjoyed a 40-year, worldwide performing career.

Beginning at the Stuttgart Ballet in Germany, he worked with and performed in the ballets of John Cranko, Kenneth MacMillan, William Forsythe, Jiří Kylián, and others, while also touring around the world. From 1981-2001, Dale worked at Louisville Ballet as a principal dancer and partner to Helen Starr, with whom he created many roles for Alun Jones and visiting choreographers.

In addition to this production's combat scenes, Dale has choreographed many works for Louisville Ballet, such as *Carmina Burana*, *The Seasons*, and *Alice In Wonderland*. In 1987 and 1997, he received Al Smith Fellowships from the Kentucky Arts Council. Since retiring from the Louisville stage, Dale has choreographed ten full-length ballets, including *Aladdin* and the *Wonderful Lamp*, *Little Women*, and *The Little Mermaid*.



SERGEI PROKOFIEV

Composer

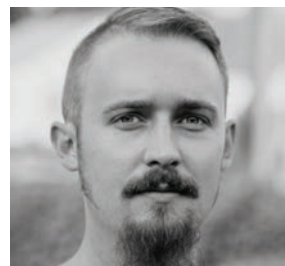
Sergei Prokofiev (1891 - 1953) was a prominent Russian composer, pianist, and conductor of the 20th century. Prokofiev composed eight ballet scores, including *Cinderella* (1945) and *Romeo and Juliet* (1935), and symphonic fairy tales such as *Peter and the Wolf* (1936), later adapted into a ballet. His compositions reflected his reputation for being brash and outspoken, resisting the light, romantic pieces popular at the time. He was influenced by modernist poetry, art, and theater. Much of his work was marked by dramatic exploration, satiric gestures, and emotional intensity, and many of his compositions were banned by Soviet authorities for their discordant, experimental nature. *Romeo & Juliet* was composed in 1935 and revised for its Soviet premiere in 1940.



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. 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.



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.



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.

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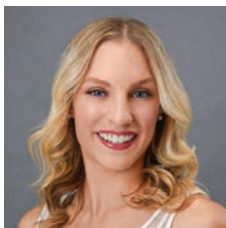
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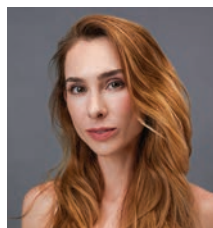
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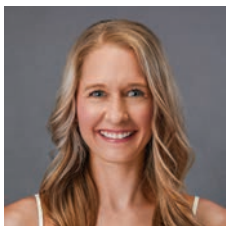
COMPANY ARTISTS



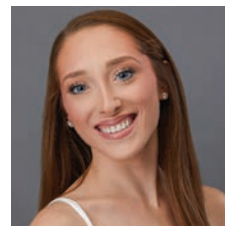
ELIZABETH ABBICK
Joined Company: 2022
Hometown: Overland Park, KS



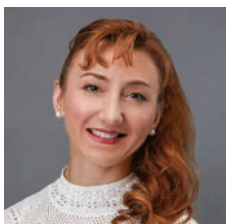
LEXA DANIELS
Joined Company: 2016
Hometown: Stoneham, MA



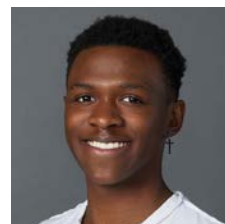
LEIGH ANNE ALBRECHT
Joined Company: 2009
Hometown: Fremont, OH



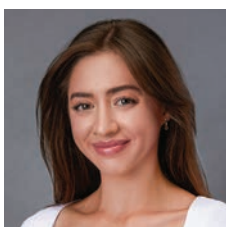
ANNA FORD*
Joined Company: 2023
Hometown: Lilburn, GA



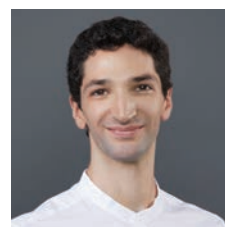
NATALIA ASHIKHMINA
Joined Company: 2006
Hometown: Bratsk, Russia



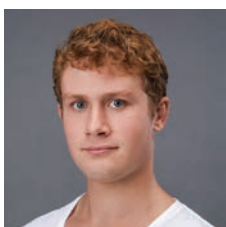
KHALIL JACKSON*
Joined Company: 2023
Hometown: Dallas, GA



SARAH BRADLEY
Joined Company: 2022
Hometown: Cincinnati, OH



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

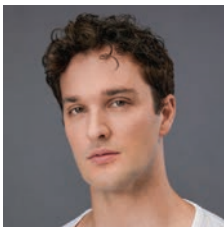


CHRISTIAN CHESTER*
Joined Company: 2023
Hometown: Sunbury, OH



CAITLIN KOWALSKI
Joined Company: 2021
Hometown: Radcliff, KY

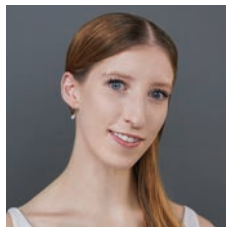
COMPANY ARTISTS



MARK KRIEGER

Joined Company: 2012

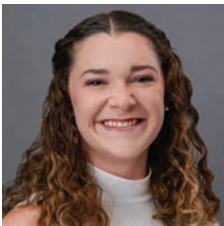
Hometown: Alexandria, VA



ELEANOR PRINCE*

Joined Company: 2023

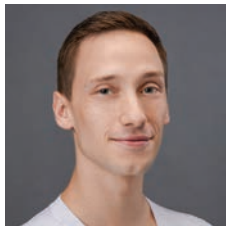
Hometown: Louisville, KY



ADDISON MATHES*

Joined Company: 2023

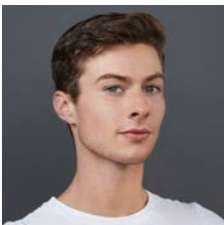
Hometown: Corydon, IN



ALEKSANDR SCHROEDER

Joined Company: 2019

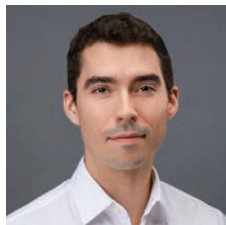
Hometown: Anderson, IN



STEPHEN MYERS*

Joined Company: 2023

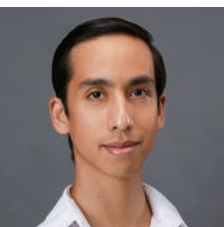
Hometown: Chesterfield, VA



DANIEL SCOFIELD

Joined Company: 2022

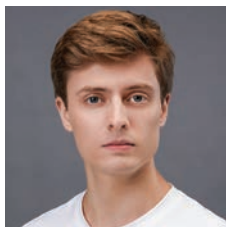
Hometown: Louisville, KY



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



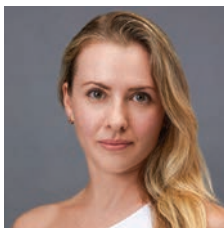
SHELBY SHENKMAN

Joined Company: 2016

Hometown: Boca Raton, FL

* new company artist

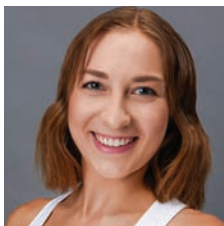
COMPANY ARTISTS



ASHLEY THURSBY

Joined Company: 2008

Hometown: Richmond, MO



AMBER WICKEY

Joined Company: 2022

Hometown: Tenafly, NJ

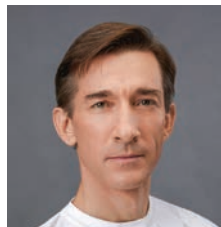


BRIENNE WILTSIE

Joined Company: 2018

Hometown: Pittsburgh, PA

RESIDENT CHARACTER ARTIST



PHILLIP VELINOV

Joined Company: 2006

Hometown: Sofia, Bulgaria

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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

**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE STUDIO COMPANY:
LOUISVILLEBALLET.ORG/STUDIO-COMPANY**

STUDIO COMPANY DANCERS



LEVELS 7-8

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

Ella Feleay, Ida Soranno, Caleb Emory, Danika McNees, 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 Atrostic

Photos by Andrew Kung 2023

Studio Company Dancers in rehearsal
Photo by Louisville Ballet Community Engagement



JOIN US IN WONDERLAND

By Stacey Blakeman, Director of Community Engagement

I remember as a child when The Blue Apple Players came to my elementary school to perform. I was fascinated! Being able to see a performance up close and personal and having a story come to life through the actors was something I had never experienced before, and it is something that I still remember 40 years later.



The arts can have such a lasting impact on a child's life, and I'm thrilled that Louisville Ballet is able to provide such a vast array of arts experiences for children and youth in our community in our community. This spring, the Louisville Ballet Community Engagement team will be touring Jefferson, Bullitt, Franklin, and Shelby counties through our Moving Stories program, which serves as an introduction to ballet for young audiences. In this assembly-style program, dancers from Louisville Ballet's Studio Company travel to local schools to present a brief ballet class demonstration, perform a short ballet, and dance with members of the audience. This year's Moving Stories program features the story of Alice in Wonderland, where students follow Alice on her adventure as she meets a cast of interesting characters. Choreographed by Community Engagement Manager Amy Haley, this production of Alice in Wonderland features classical ballet in a fun and playful way for young audiences to engage with the art of ballet — often for the very first time.

The performance concludes at each school with an opportunity for the dancers to introduce themselves and take questions from the audience. Participating classrooms receive an in-depth online study guide to help prepare students for the experience and reflect on the performance with follow-up activities. We always receive amazing letters and artwork from students and learn so much about how we can continue to grow the program and increase our lasting impression on their lives.

This year, Louisville Ballet is fully booked on our spring tour and will be traveling to 26 schools! Interested in seeing the performance for yourself? With the support of Republic Bank, Louisville Ballet is thrilled to offer a FREE community performance in partnership with Louisville Central Community Center on Sunday, April 21, 2024 at 3 p.m., with no ticket or reservation required. We hope to see you there!

**MOVING STORIES:
ALICE IN WONDERLAND**

FREE community performance
Louisville Central Community Center
1300 W Muhammad Ali Blvd, Louisville, KY 40203
Sunday, April 21, 2024 at 3 p.m.



SCAN HERE
to learn more about the
Moving Stories program!

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The Starr Society was created to honor and celebrate the achievements of Helen Starr, who is a true gift to the dance world and a legend to Louisville Ballet. Membership is reserved for donors who contribute at least \$10,000*. We are grateful to the following benefactors who pay tribute to the tradition of excellence she helped establish within our Company.

For more information, please contact
Regan Nichols, rnichols@louisvilleballet.org

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The Arabesque Society is a group of dedicated benefactors who have made arrangements in their estate plans to support Louisville Ballet in the future. For more information on how to include Louisville Ballet in your estate plans, please contact Regan Nichols, rnichols@louisvilleballet.org.

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