

JOFFREY ★ BALLET  
CHICAGO

ASHLEY WHEATER MBE  
THE MARY B. GALVIN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

CELEBRATING  
70 YEARS

# CARJYEN

SEPTEMBER 18–28 | 2025

# JOFFREY ★ BALLET

CHICAGO

ASHLEY WHEATER MBE  
THE MARY B. GALVIN  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

GREG CAMERON  
PRESIDENT  
AND CEO

JAMES D. MCDONOUGH  
BOARD  
CHAIR

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# CARYN

Cover: Joffrey Company Artists Amanda Assucena and José Pablo Castro Cuevas. Photo by Carolyn McCabe.  
Above: Artists of The Norwegian National Opera & Ballet. Photo by Erik Berg.

PERFORMS AT LYRIC OPERA HOUSE  
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# ASHLEY



Welcome!

For most of us, *Carmen*, is the hugely successful opera dating from 1875 by composer Georges Bizet.

Bizet's libretto was drawn from a novella by Prosper Mérimée. Set in Andalusia, the primary characters are Carmen, a spirited and seductive Gypsy, and Don José, a corporal in the dragoons, who is enchanted by her. Don José is obsessed, but Carmen will not be possessed. Mérimée refers to the "untamable nature of love" and establishes a tension between the two people. Carmen foresees the tragic conclusion.

In Mérimée's novella, he offers this explanation, "Carmen will always be free."

Choreographer, Liam Scarlett, finds the humanity in both characters. As with all great art, we identify with these people: we see elements of ourselves in each. His *Frankenstein*, staged by the Joffrey in 2023, shares this same empathy for the Creature, moving beyond the "monster" to reveal human emotion.

We miss Liam, whose life ended too soon. We remember him by presenting his creations. *Carmen* is the fourth of his ballets to join our repertoire.

I hope you enjoy the performance.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ashley".

Ashley Wheeler MBE  
The Mary B. Galvin Artistic Director  
The Joffrey Ballet

GREG



Some stories refuse stillness. They leap from page to stage, from sound to movement, insisting that each retelling be alive and new. Born as opera, reborn as ballet, *Carmen* is one of those stories.

How fitting, then, to open our 2025–2026 season with this production on the stage where opera has thrived for decades. This summer, we announced that the Joffrey will call the Lyric Opera House home through 2034, a renewal of place and purpose as we celebrate our 70th anniversary as a Company and 30 years in Chicago.

Anniversaries invite reflection. Since our founding, we have grown into an organization the *Chicago Tribune* recently described as “a balletic model for the nation.” We’ve built the Grainger Academy that feeds directly into the Company, launched a robust Community Engagement program, and created an artistic identity that is at once daring, relevant, and enduring.

Thank you to our community, and to *Carmen* Production Sponsors Holly Palmer Foundation and Max Mara, whose support keeps us moving.

Opening a season is always a threshold, but this year feels especially inspiring: the start of a chapter, the celebration of a history, and the promise of a future unbound by stillness.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg'.

Greg Cameron  
President and CEO  
The Joffrey Ballet

# JAMES



It is my honor to welcome you to the Joffrey's 2025–2026 season. Stepping into my first year as Board Chair, I am reminded why I've been drawn to this Company for more than fifteen years: I see an organization shaping the future.

My own story with the Joffrey began in 2013. What started as admiration soon became a calling. I joined the Board of Directors, eager to serve an organization that not only pushes artistic boundaries but also brings dance within reach for everyone.

Robert Joffrey believed that it was necessary for ballet to evolve. That belief still drives the Company today. With The Mary B. Galvin Artistic Director Ashley Wheater MBE and President and CEO Greg Cameron at the helm, the Joffrey never settles. Every season premieres the new alongside the beloved, and every year we grow deeper roots in our city.

In October, their story comes full circle. Chicago's Wrightwood 659 exhibition space will present *The Joffrey + Ballet in the U.S.*, the first major retrospective of the Company. Drawing from the Joffrey's archive, acquired by the New York Public Library's Jerome Robbins Dance Division, the exhibition offers an in-depth look at the Company's contributions to ballet. It's a portrait of risk-taking, reinvention, and resilience.

I am grateful to our 70th Anniversary Season Sponsors and partners who made this landmark year possible, and to you, our audience, who give the Joffrey its pulse.

Thank you for joining us.

James D. McDonough  
Board Chair  
The Joffrey Ballet

JOFFREY ★

# THE JOFFREY BALLET

ASHLEY WHEATER MBE  
**The Mary B. Galvin Artistic Director**

GREG CAMERON  
**President and CEO**

JAMES D. MCDONOUGH  
**Board Chair**

ROBERT JOFFREY  
**Founder**

GERALD ARPINO  
**Founder**

## COMPANY ADMINISTRATION AND PRODUCTION STAFF

CODY CHEN  
**General Manager**

CATHERINE EBY  
**Company Manager**

AMANDA HEUERMANN  
**Stage Manager**

CHRIS MARAVICH  
**Lighting Supervisor**

EMMY MASTELLER  
**Artistic Administrator and  
Assistant to the Artistic Director**

KATHERINE SELIG  
**Principal Stage Manager**

JOSHUA STENGER  
**Artistic and Production Fellow**

SHANDEE VAUGHAN  
**Production Manager**

SCOTT WOLFSON  
**Technical Supervisor**

## ARTISTIC AND MUSIC STAFF

NICOLAS BLANC  
**Rehearsal Director**

ADAM BLYDE  
**Rehearsal Director**

JORGE IVARS AND  
JARED WRIGHT  
**Company Pianists**

CHRISTINE ROCAS  
**Rehearsal Director**

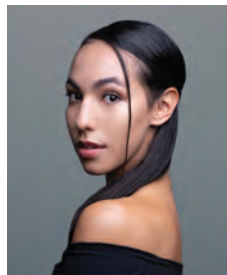
SCOTT SPECK  
**Music Director and  
Principal Conductor**

Patrons are requested to turn off pagers, cellular phones, and signal watches during performances. The taking of photographs and the use of recording devices are not allowed in this auditorium. Program and artists subject to change.

# ARTISTS OF THE COMPANY



Coco Alvarez-Mena  
Miami, Florida



Amanda Assucena\*  
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



Edson Barbosa  
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



Evan Boersma\*  
Chicago, Illinois



Dayla Bowman\*  
Youngtown, Australia



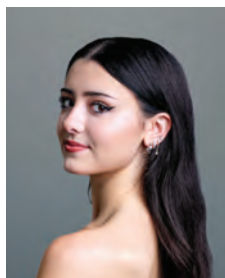
Anais Bueno  
Córdoba, Mexico



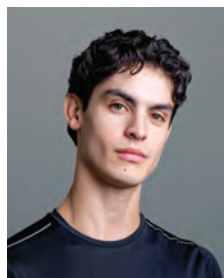
Guillem Cabrera Espinach\*  
Manresa, Spain



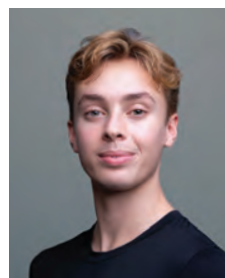
Lucia Connolly  
Los Angeles, California



Tenley Connors  
Hutchinson, Kansas



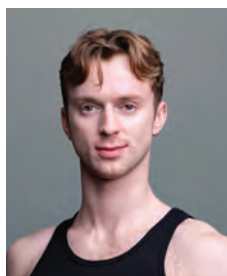
José Pablo Castro Cuevas\*  
Queretaro, Mexico



Maxwell Dawe\*  
Dorset, United Kingdom



Anabelle de la Nuez  
Cincinnati, Ohio



Jonathan Dole\*  
Sacramento, California



Derek Drilon\*  
Vancouver, Washington



Fernando Duarte\*  
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



Olivia Duryea\*  
Haslett, Michigan



Stefan Gonçalves  
São Paulo, Brazil



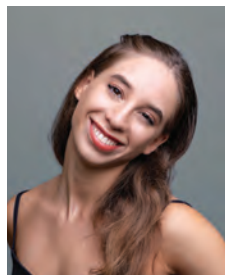
Dylan Gutierrez  
Los Angeles, California



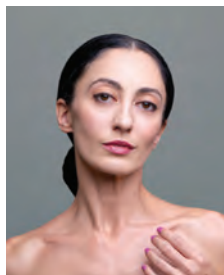
Reed Henry  
Princeton, New Jersey



Dara Holmes\*  
Wilmington, North Carolina



Amanda Illuminati\*  
Monterrey, Mexico



Victoria Jaiani  
Tbilisi, Rep. Of Georgia



Hansol Jeong  
Namyangju, South Korea

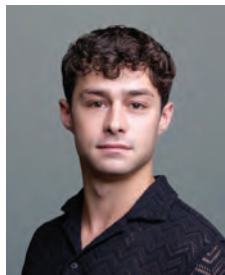


Gayeon Jung  
Seoul, South Korea

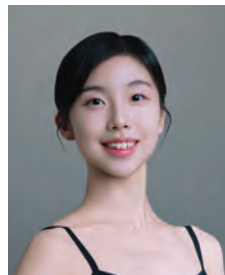
# ARTISTS OF THE COMPANY



Yumi Kanazawa  
Los Angeles, California



Blake Kessler  
Jacksonville, Florida



Minjoo Kim  
Incheon, South Korea



Seehyun Kim\*  
Siheung-si, South Korea



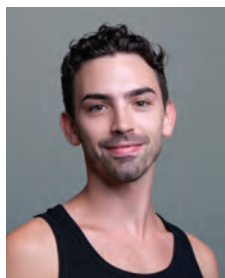
Hyuma Kiyosawa  
Nagano, Japan



Nae Kojima\*  
Gold Coast, Australia



Laila Madison  
Los Angeles, California



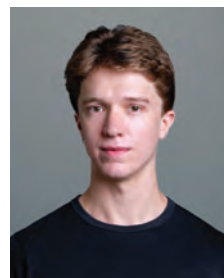
Zachary Manske  
St. Paul, Minnesota



Jeraldine Mendoza  
San Francisco, California



Lindy Mesmer  
Blacksburg, Virginia



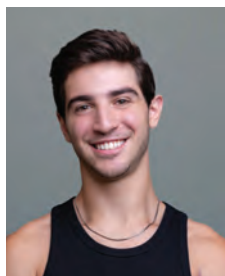
Jackson Miles  
Denver, Colorado



Valentino Moneglia Zamora\*  
Murcia, Spain



Xavier Núñez  
Caguas, Puerto Rico



Davide Oldano\*  
Turin, Italy



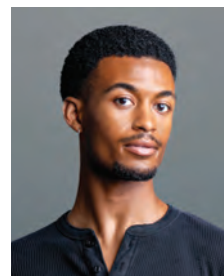
Wictor Hugo Pedroso  
Uberlândia, Brazil



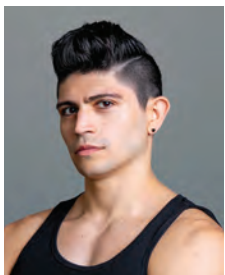
Lauren Quinn\*  
Fort Wayne, Indiana



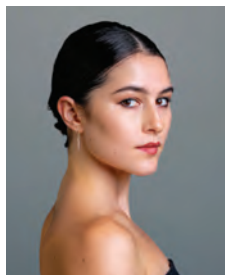
Paolo Randon  
Valdagno, Italy



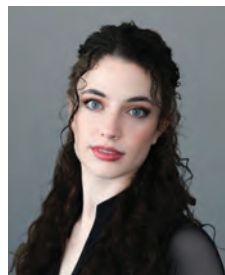
Scott Reed  
Marietta, Georgia



Aaron Renteria  
Corona, California



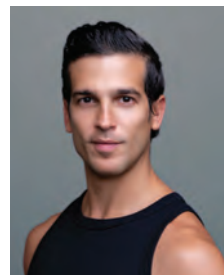
Basia Rhoden  
Fresno, California



Julia Rust  
Noblesville, Indiana



Natali Taht  
Tallinn, Estonia



Alberto Velazquez  
Havana, Cuba



Ao Wang  
Beijing, China

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DANCERS, VISIT: [JOFFREY.ORG/ARTISTS](https://joffrey.org/artists)

# CARMEN

LIVE ACCOMPANIMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE LYRIC OPERA ORCHESTRA

Music Director and Principal Conductor: SCOTT SPECK

Guest Conductor: MING LUKE

Choreography: LIAM SCARLETT

Music: GEORGES BIZET

Arrangement and Orchestration: MARTIN YATES

Scenic and Costume Design: JON BAUSOR

Lighting Design: JAMES FARNCOMBE

Staging: KRISTEN MCGARRITY, LAURA MORERA,  
and LAUREN STRONGIN

Lighting Recreation: CHRISTOPHER MARAVICH

Projection Programming: TROY FUJIMURA

World Premiere: Norwegian National Ballet,  
Thursday, March 19, 2015, The Oslo Opera House,  
Oslo, Norway

Joffrey Premiere: Thursday, September 18, 2025,  
The Lyric Opera House, Chicago, IL

Set and Costumes Courtesy of the  
Norwegian National Opera & Ballet.

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Casting details for performances  
of *Carmen* can be found online at:  
[JOFFREY.ORG/CARMENCAST](http://JOFFREY.ORG/CARMENCAST)



# SPECIAL THANKS

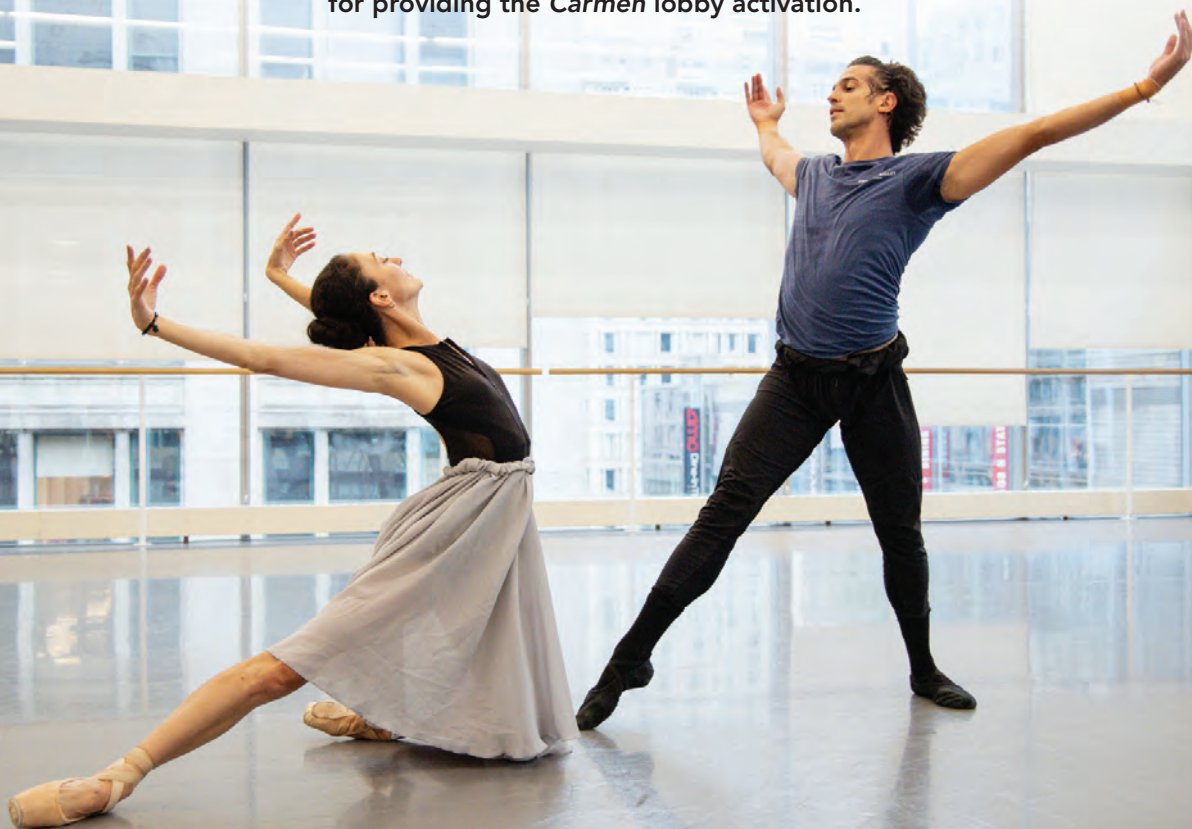
CARMEN PRODUCTION SPONSORS

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HP | HOLLY PALMER  
FOUNDATION

MaxMara

Special thanks to Bill Heffernan and HMR Designs  
for providing the *Carmen* lobby activation.



# SYNOPSIS

## CARMEN

Micaëla has travelled from a nearby village to a cigarette factory to see her teenage sweetheart, Don José, in order to deliver a message from his mother. The women working at the factory are supervised by a guard, Zuniga. The atmosphere is tense. The monotony of factory labour is only interrupted by the changing of the guard. After Zuniga's departure, Carmen entertains the guards and notices Don José, throwing a flower to him. Micaëla finally meets Don José and their old feelings are reignited. The encounter is interrupted by a scream from the factory: a fight has erupted between Carmen and the other women. She is taken away from the others and Don José is assigned to guard her. To get away, Carmen seduces Don José, who is arrested for his negligence.

Carmen and her friends have taken refuge in a tavern. The famous bullfighter, Escamillo, arrives and seduces Carmen. The next day, Escamillo leaves and Don José arrives, declaring his love to Carmen.

Carmen and Don José plan to run away together and get married. Don José travels to the romani camp to wait for Carmen, but before leaving to join him, Carmen runs into Escamillo. He promises her a perfect life by his side. Carmen writes in a letter to Don José that she doesn't love him after all. Micaëla arrives at the tavern and she is trusted with delivering the letter to the camp. At the camp, Micaëla tries to talk Don José to follow her, but he professes his love for Carmen. Having read Carmen's letter, Don José falls into despair.

At a party to celebrate Escamillo's victorious bullfight and marriage, Carmen starts to doubt whether she should've ever got married. Don José still tries to convince Carmen to run away with him. Consumed by his passion, Don José stabs Carmen to death. Carmen dies in his arms.

JOFFREY ★ BALLET

CHICAGO

ASHLEY WHEATER MBE  
THE MARY B. GALVIN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

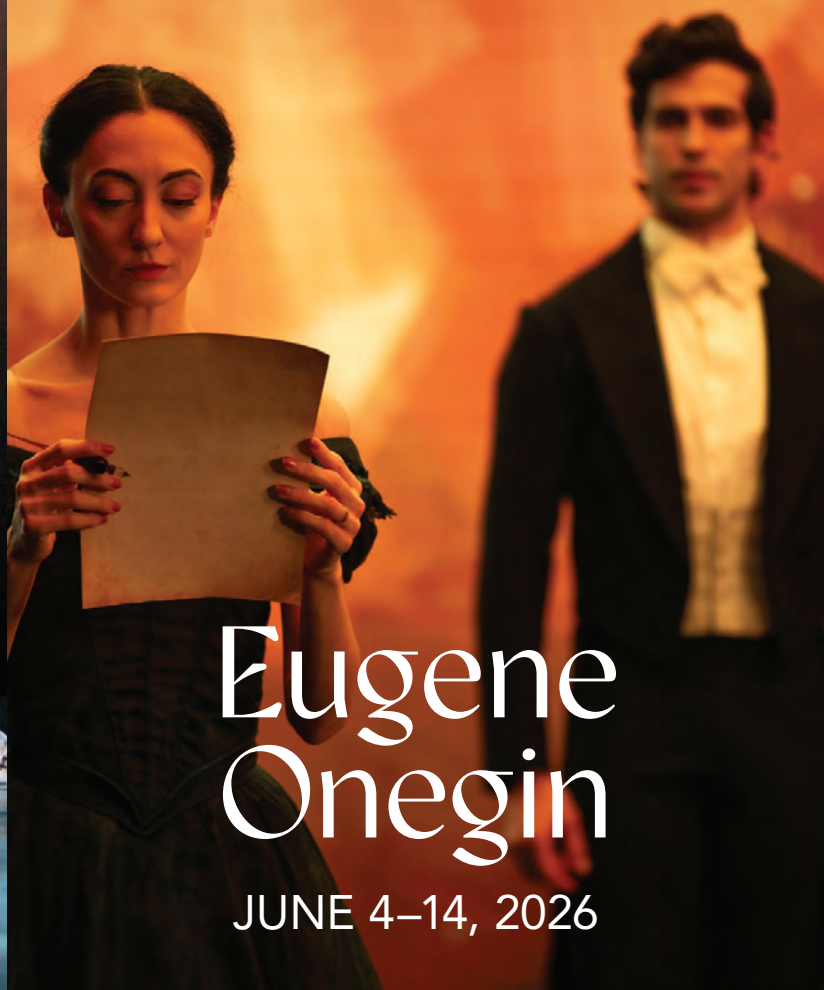


## AMERICAN ICONS

FEBRUARY 19–MARCH 1, 2026



TWO MORE  
CAPTIVATING  
PRODUCTIONS



## Eugene Onegin

JUNE 4–14, 2026

2025–2026 SEASON 2-SHOW SUBSCRIPTION  
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AMERICAN ICONS: Artists of Norwegian National Ballet in Voluntaries. Photo by Erik Berg. EUGENE ONEGIN: Joffrey Company Artists Victoria Jaiani and Alberto Velazquez. Photo by Carolyn McCabe.

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THE  
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#### PRODUCTION SPONSORS



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### MATTERS OF THE HEART SPONSORS

Commissioning support for this program has been provided by the Harris Theater for Music and Dance.

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#### THE NUTCRACKER MAINTENANCE FUND

In Memory of the late Richard H. Driehaus  
Roderick Branch  
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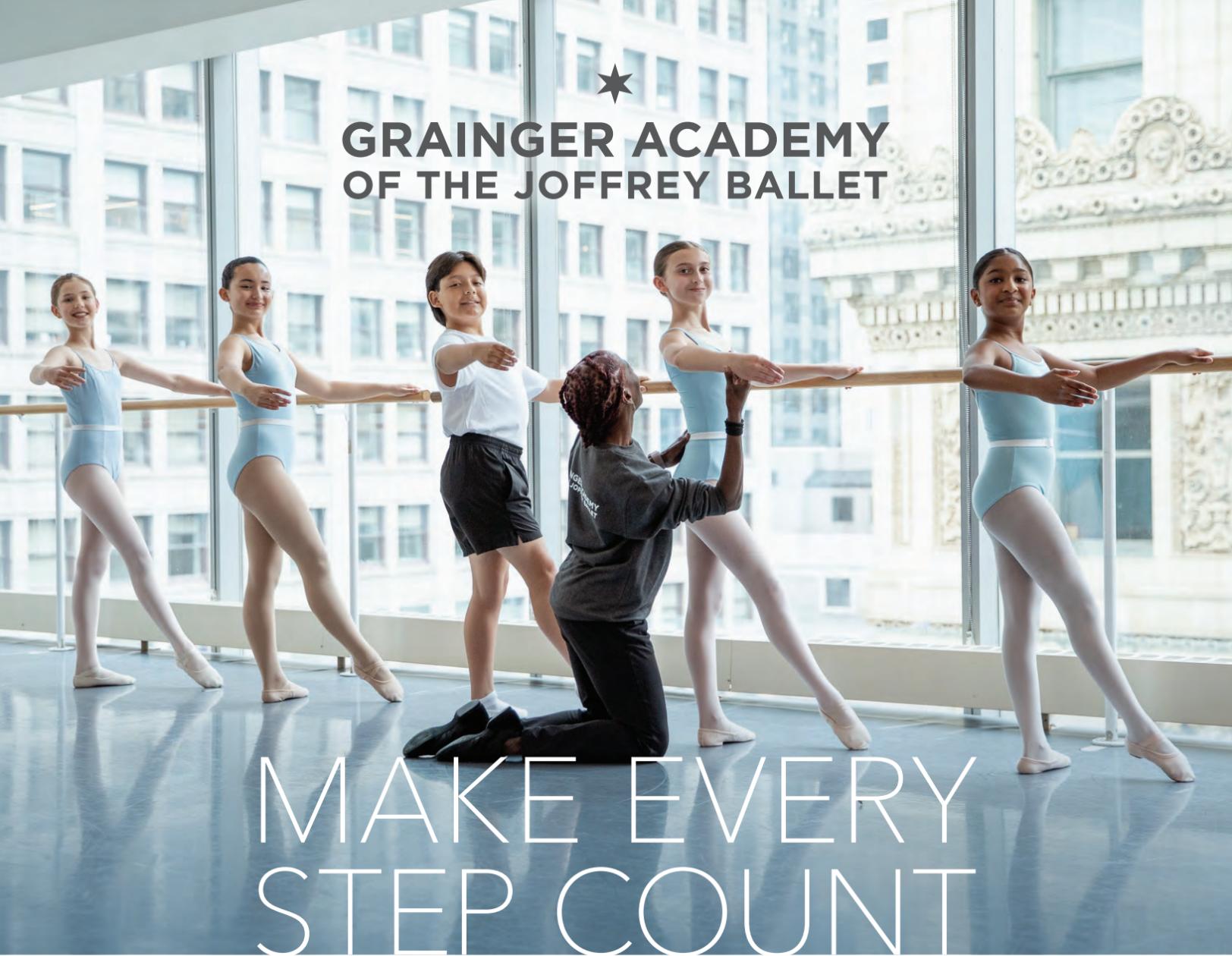
#### SCORE SPONSOR

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## **CELEBRATING 70 YEARS OF ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE.**

The 2025–2026 season marks  
The Joffrey Ballet's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary as one of  
the world's premier dance companies and  
30 of calling Chicago home, and 10 years of  
Christopher Wheeldon's *The Nutcracker*.



★  
**GRAINGER ACADEMY  
OF THE JOFFREY BALLET**

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STEP COUNT

**CLASSES AVAILABLE  
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SOUTH LOOP STUDIOS**

Classes at the Grainger Academy are available for adults and children alike, offering world-class training for students of all ages, levels, and abilities.

**ENROLL TODAY**  
[JOFFREY.ORG/ACADEMY](https://www.joffrey.org/academy)

Ashley Wheeler MBE, The Mary B. Galvin Artistic Director  
Greg Cameron, President and CEO  
Suzanne Lopez, Abbott Academy Director

OFFICIAL PROVIDER OF  
PHYSICAL THERAPY

**ATHLETICO**  
PHYSICAL THERAPY

Grainger Academy of The Joffrey Ballet is the only training program owned, operated or endorsed by The Joffrey Ballet. The Joffrey Ballet is not affiliated with any other dance training or school program, including the Joffrey Ballet School in New York. Grainger Academy of The Joffrey Ballet, located in the Exelon Education Center at Joffrey Tower in Chicago, Illinois is the only school that follows the organizational mission, training syllabi, and artistic vision of The Joffrey Ballet. No other program, including those holding the Joffrey name, is sanctioned by The Joffrey Ballet. For more information, please contact Academy Reception at 312.784.4600.

Photo by Carolyn McCabe.

JOFFREY ★ BALLET  
CHICAGO

ASHLEY WHEATER MBE  
THE MARY B. GALVIN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

HARRIS THEATER  
MILLENNIUM PARK

# MATTERS OF THE HEART

A dynamic one-weekend engagement featuring two works  
by Chanel DaSilva and Annabelle Lopez Ochoa

NOVEMBER 6–9, 2025 | HARRIS THEATER FOR MUSIC AND DANCE



The Joffrey Ballet is pleased to announce our first standalone performance in the *Harris Theater Presents* series this November. *Matters of the Heart*, a program that draws on themes of love and resilience, features the world premiere of Chanel's DaSilva's *Wabash & You* set in Chicago with music by *The Main Squeeze* and the critically acclaimed *Broken Wings* inspired by the life of Frida Kahlo with choreography by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa and music by Peter Salem.

JOFFREY AT THE HARRIS | TICKETS ON SALE | [HARRISTHEATERCHICAGO.ORG](https://harristheaterchicago.org) | 312.334.7777

#### MATTERS OF THE HEART SPONSORS

**Commissioning support for this program has been provided by the Harris Theater for Music and Dance.**

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Phil Lumpkin and Bill Tedford  
Mr. and Mrs. Alejandro Silva

Top: ©Rosalie O'Connor, Courtesy of Ballet Arizona. Headshots: Chanel DaSilva photo by Stephanie Diani. Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, photo by Joe Shults.



ASHLEY WHEATER MBE  
**The Mary B. Galvin Artistic Director**

Ashley Wheeler has dedicated his life to dance. He was born in Scotland and trained at The Royal Ballet School in England. He worked with Frederick Ashton, Kenneth MacMillan, and Michael Somes in numerous ballets at Covent Garden, including *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Giselle*, *Manon*, *Anastacia*, and *The Dream*. Wheeler danced with Rudolf Nureyev in *Nureyev and Friends* at the London Coliseum.

On Nureyev's advice, Wheeler joined the London Festival Ballet and danced in his *Romeo and Juliet* and *Sleeping Beauty*. He danced in Glen Tetley's *Sphinx and Greening* and in Festival Ballet's large repertoire of classics and new creations. Under the artistic direction of John Field, he was promoted to Principal Dancer at the age of 20.

In 1982, he joined the Australian Ballet where he continued dancing principal roles in both classical and contemporary work, especially in the John Cranko full-length ballets.

In 1985, at the invitation of Gerald Arpino, Wheeler joined The Joffrey Ballet. For the next four years, he performed various works by American choreographers including William Forsythe, Gerald Arpino, Mark Morris, Paul Taylor, and Laura Dean, as well as repertoire by Ashton and Cranko.

Joining the San Francisco Ballet in 1989, he continued his creative career working under Helgi Tomasson, and with choreographers James Kudelka, David Bintley, and many more. In 1997, he retired from dancing and was appointed Ballet Master and, later, Assistant to the Artistic Director at the San Francisco Ballet.

Since his appointment in 2007 as artistic director of The Joffrey Ballet, his passion and commitment to the Joffrey have been evident in the quality that he has brought to the dancing and to the repertoire. He has invited world-renowned choreographers, as well as fresh young talent, to create new work for the company. Wheeler has added new full-length works to the Joffrey's repertoire, including Lar Lubovitch's groundbreaking *Othello*, Ronald Hynd's *The Merry Widow*, and Yuri Possokhov's *Don Quixote*.

In 2008, Wheeler was the recipient of the Boeing Game-Changer Award in recognition of his commitment to community engagement in Chicago and to the celebration of diversity through dance. He sits on the Advisory Board for *Dance Magazine*, serves as the Artistic Advisor for ChiArts, and is the Advisor to the Arts for the Lincoln Academy of Illinois. In 2010, Wheeler, representing The Joffrey Ballet, was named Lincoln Academy Laureate, the highest honor presented by the State of Illinois, and in 2013 the *Chicago Tribune* named him "Chicagoan of the Year." In 2015, Wheeler received the University of Chicago Rosenberger Medal for Outstanding Achievement in the Creative and Performing Arts. In December 2019, he was appointed to be a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.



**GREG CAMERON**  
**President and Chief Executive Officer**

Driven by his lifelong love for the arts, for his hometown, and for connecting with people from every background, Greg Cameron leads The Joffrey Ballet as President & CEO, responsible for organization-wide administration and strategy. Under Greg's partnership with The Mary B. Galvin Artistic Director Ashley Wheeler MBE, the Joffrey has set new records at the box office and built the strongest financial foundation in its history.

His 2013 appointment was the culmination of three decades of work in arts administration and philanthropy. "I always loved art, but I wasn't a great artist," he says. "I could paint by numbers, or I could connect the dots. I realized early on I was a good dot connector. I could connect people to each other and help them get involved with the things they believe in."

As a child in suburban Chicago, Greg ran a makeshift theater out of his garage and sold more mints than anyone else for his local YMCA. And as an adult, he turned those passions into a career raising funds for the cultural organizations he loves. At the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Museum of Contemporary Art, where he rose to the role of Deputy Director and Chief Development Officer; and WTTW/WFMT, where he served as COO, Greg dedicated himself to supporting art and artists and to creating meaningful experiences for others.

"The Joffrey brings it all together for me," he says. "It's about collaboration, partnership with the community, honoring and supporting artists, and telling stories that truly move people."

Today, Greg leads the Joffrey's efforts to support unforgettable productions and new commissions, reach out to organizations and communities across Chicago, and open up world-class ballet for audiences from all backgrounds. Throughout the span of his 40-year career as an arts administrator in Chicago, Greg has volunteered for a wide range of nonprofit organizations and civic committees. He currently serves on the Facing History and Ourselves Chicago Advisory Board and the State Street SSA Commission. Greg was recently honored by the Association of Fundraising Professionals Chicago Chapter with their Benjamin Franklin Award, in recognition of the significant achievements throughout his long career, serving as a role model for his profession.



**SCOTT SPECK**  
**Music Director & Principal Conductor**

With recent performances in London, Paris, Moscow, Beijing, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Washington, Scott Speck has inspired international acclaim as a conductor of passion, intelligence and winning personality.

Scott Speck is one of the most active conductors on Chicago's cultural scene. In addition to his many Joffrey performances, he is Artistic Director of the Chicago Philharmonic, and he has become a frequent guest for the Chicago Symphony's family concerts. He is currently the Illinois Council of Orchestras' Conductor of the Year.

Speck's concerts with the Moscow RTV Symphony Orchestra in Tchaikovsky Hall garnered unanimous praise. His gala performances with Yo-Yo Ma, Itzhak Perlman, Joshua Bell, Renée Fleming, Midori, Evelyn Glennie, and Olga Kern have highlighted his recent seasons as Music Director of the Mobile Symphony. He has collaborated with Carnegie Hall as Music Director of the West Michigan Symphony. He was invited to the White House as former Music Director of The Washington Ballet.

In recent seasons, Speck has conducted at London's Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, the Paris Opera, New York's Lincoln Center, Washington's Kennedy Center, Chicago's Lyric Opera House, San Francisco's War Memorial Opera House, and the Los Angeles Music Center. He has led numerous performances with the symphony orchestras of Baltimore, Houston, Chicago, Paris, Moscow, Shanghai, Beijing, Vancouver, Romania, and Slovakia, among many others.

Previously, he held positions as Conductor of the San Francisco Ballet; Music Advisor and Conductor of the Honolulu Symphony; and Associate Conductor of the Los Angeles Opera. During a tour of Asia, he was named Principal Guest Conductor of the China Film Philharmonic in Beijing.

Speck is the co-author of two of the world's best-selling books on classical music for a popular audience, *Classical Music for Dummies* and *Opera for Dummies*. These books have received stellar reviews in the international press and have garnered enthusiastic endorsements from major American orchestras. They have been translated into twenty languages and are available around the world. His third book in the series, *Ballet for Dummies*, was released to great acclaim as well.

Speck has been a regular commentator on National Public Radio, the BBC, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and Voice of Russia, broadcast throughout the world. His writing has been featured in numerous magazines and journals.

Born in Boston, Speck graduated *summa cum laude* from Yale University. There he founded and directed the Berkeley Chamber Orchestra, which continues to perform to this day. He was a Fulbright Scholar in Berlin, received his Master's Degree with highest honors from the University of Southern California, served as a Conducting Fellow at the Aspen School of Music, and studied at the Tanglewood Music Center.

Scott Speck can be reached at [scottspeck.org](http://scottspeck.org), and on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @ScottSpeckMusic.



**MING LUKE**  
**Guest Conductor**

With the “energy, creativity and charisma not seen since Leonard Bernstein” and “vibrant,” “mind-blowing,” and “spectacular” conducting, Ming Luke is a versatile conductor that has excited audiences around the world. Highlights include conducting the Bolshoi Orchestra in Moscow, performances of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella* at the Kennedy Center, *Swan Lake* at the Teatro Real in Madrid, his English debut at Sadler’s Wells with Birmingham Royal, conducting Dvorak’s *Requiem* in Dvorak Hall in Prague, recording scores for a Coppola film, multiple Asian cultural programs with the San Francisco Symphony, and over a hundred and fifty performances at the San Francisco War Memorial with San Francisco Ballet. Luke has soloed as a pianist with Pittsburgh Symphony, Sacramento Philharmonic, and San Francisco Ballet, and he currently serves as Music Director for the Las Cruces Symphony, Merced Symphony, and Berkeley Community Chorus and Orchestra; Music Director and Principal Conductor of the Nashville Ballet, Education Conductor and Director for the Berkeley Symphony; and Principal Guest Conductor for the San Francisco Ballet. Long time critic Allan Ulrich of the San Francisco Chronicle said, “Ming Luke delivered the best live theater performance I’ve ever heard of [Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet*]” and in 2016 Luke’s *War Requiem* was named best choral performance of 2016 in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Luke is proud to cultivate a dynamic career in both symphonic and theatrical conducting, and has conducted hundreds of opera and ballet performances worldwide. He has performed and collaborated with some of the world’s leading singers, including Sylvia McNair, Christian Van Horn, Nicolas Phan, Kiera Duffy, Erie Mills, Kevin Short, and Monica Yunus, to name a few. Sylvia McNair remarked that “Ming is a very talented musician and conductor... when Ming was in charge of something, anything, I knew I had no worries.” His recent performances with members of the Metropolitan Opera orchestra at Classical Tahoe were broadcast on PBS. Passionate about collaboration with dance companies and deepening the impact of movement to live music, Luke has collaborated with many of the world’s leading choreographers, including Mark Morris, Christopher Wheeldon, Justin Peck, Alexei Ratmanský, Cathy Marston, Benjamin Millepied, David Dawson, and more. Luke has guested with Boston Ballet, Houston Ballet, New York City Ballet Orchestra, Cincinnati Ballet, Nashville Symphony/Ballet, San Diego Ballet and others and conducted l’Orchestre Prométhée in Paris as part of San Francisco Ballet’s residency with Les Étés de la Danse. Famed dancer Natalia Makarova stated, “Ming has a mixture of pure musicality and a sensitivity to needs of the dancers, which are such rare qualities.”

Luke has been recognized nationally for his work with music education and has designed and conducted over 150 education concerts and programs with organizations such as the Berkeley Symphony, Houston Symphony, Sacramento Philharmonic, San Francisco Opera and others. Luke has served on grant panels for the National Endowment of the Arts and the Grants and Cultural Committee of the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission. An exciting pops conductor, Luke has created and conducted a variety of pops concerts in many venues, from baseball stadiums, to picnics in the park with over 4,000 people in attendance, traditional concert halls and recording for Major League Baseball.

Ming Luke holds a Master of Fine Arts in Conducting from Carnegie Mellon University and a Bachelor of Music in Music Education and Piano Pedagogy from Westminster Choir College of Rider University.

## BIOS



### LIAM SCARLETT

#### Choreographer

(1986–2021) English choreographer Liam Scarlett was The Royal Ballet's Artist in Residence. His works for The Royal Ballet includes *Despite*, *Vayamos al Diablo*, *Consolations* and *Liebestraum* (nominated for a Critics' Circle Award), *Asphodel Meadows* (nominated for a South Bank Award and an Olivier Award, and winner of a Critics' Circle National Dance Award), *Sweet Violets*, 'Diana and Actaeon' in *Metamorphosis: Titian 2012*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Jubilee pas de deux* (in celebration of HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee), *The Age of Anxiety*, *Summertime*, *Frankenstein* (a co-production with San Francisco Ballet) and *Symphonic Dances*. In the 2017/18 Season, he produced a new production of *Swan Lake* for The Royal Ballet.

Scarlett was born in Ipswich and trained at the Linda Shipton School of Dancing before joining The Royal Ballet School, White Lodge. While at the School he won both the Kenneth MacMillan and Ursula Moreton Choreographic Awards and was the first recipient of the De Valois Trust Fund Choreographers' Award. He graduated into The Royal Ballet in 2005, promoted to First Artist in 2008. He retired as a dancer in 2012, that year becoming The Royal Ballet's first Artist in Residence.

Scarlett's work for other companies includes *No Man's Land* (English National Ballet), *Gargoyles* and *Funérailles* (New York City Ballet), *With a Chance of Rain* (American Ballet Theatre), *Vespertine*, *The Firebird* and *Carmen* (Norwegian National Ballet), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Royal New Zealand Ballet and Queensland Ballet), *Viscera* and *Euphotic* (Miami City Ballet), *Hummingbird* (San Francisco Ballet), *Promenade Sentimentale* (K-Ballet), *Serpent* (BalletBoyz: The Talent) and *Hinterland* and *Indigo Children* (Ballet Black). In 2016, he was appointed Artistic Associate at Queensland Ballet, created *Fearful Symmetries* (San Francisco Ballet), and made his first main stage full-length production for The Royal Ballet *Frankenstein* (a co-production with San Francisco Ballet). In 2018, Scarlett created the closing ceremony for the Commonwealth Games, *The Queen of Spades* (Royal Danish Ballet), a new *Swan Lake* for The Royal Ballet, and choreographed for Disney's motion picture *The Nutcracker* and the *Four Realms*. In 2019, he created his first full-length work for Queensland Ballet, *Dangerous Liaisons*, as well as a one-act commission for San Francisco Ballet, *Die Toteninsel*.



## GEORGES BIZET

### Composer

Georges Bizet is considered to be a great French opera composer. Both of his parents were professional musicians. Georges' mother was a pianist. Georges' father was a composer and a singing teacher and gave Georges his first music lessons at the age of 4.

Georges' talent for music was displayed early in his childhood. When Georges was 9, he entered the Paris Conservatory of Music. He studied harmony and composition and took lessons on the piano and the organ. He was considered a master of the piano at age 14, won a First Prize for piano, and was encouraged to write compositions for the piano. He wrote "Jeux d'enfants," a suite for piano featuring four hands (two people playing the same piano), as well as 150 other compositions for the piano. He won several awards while at the conservatory: the Offenbach First Prize for comic opera and also the Grand Prix de Rome in 1857.

Georges went on to study in Italy, but returned to Paris to teach music. He composed music for a play by Daudet, called *L'Arlesienne*. This music is still popular today as a suite for orchestra. In 1875, he wrote *Carmen*, a four-act opera. The opera was based on a story by Merimee. Georges incorporated Spanish rhythms in his music specifically to set the stage for the story. Georges also composed a symphony, orchestral suites, other operas, and songs. His masterpiece, *Carmen*, is performed all over the world.



MARTIN YATES  
Orchestration

Martin Yates made his Royal Opera House debut in 2004 conducting *Agon*. He has conducted there regularly since in repertoire to include *Manon*, *Mayerling*, *L'invitation au Voyage*, *Swan Lake*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, *Don Quixote* and *Carmen*.

For The Royal Ballet he created the new orchestration for Kenneth MacMillan's classic *Manon* (2011), composed Will Tuckett's *Elizabeth* (2016), as well as arranging and orchestrating Carlos Acosta's new productions of *Don Quixote* (2013) and *Carmen* (2015).

For Liam Scarlett he arranged and orchestrated *Carmen* (Norwegian National Ballet 2015), *The Queen of Spades* (Royal Danish Ballet 2018) and *Dangerous Liaisons* (Queensland Ballet 2019). He also arranged and orchestrated Gregory Dean's *Blixen* (Royal Danish Ballet 2019), Will Tuckett's *The Tragedy of Macbeth* (Japan National Ballet 2022) as well as orchestrating Kenneth MacMillan's *The Scandal at Mayerling* (Scottish Ballet 2021), Hans Van Manen's *Four Schumann Pieces* (Dutch National Ballet 2002) and Will Tuckett's *The Nutcracker* (Japan National Ballet 2025).

Yates studied as a pianist, composer and conductor. He has conducted all the UK's symphony orchestras, the important European orchestras as well as the major orchestras of Australia, Japan and China. He has made over one hundred recordings, mainly on the Dutton Epoch label, and is best known for his recordings of British and neglected French music.

His important orchestrations and completions include Vaughan Williams *Fat Knight*, *The Bluebird*, *Henry V Overture*, *Scott of the Antarctic* (complete score) *49th Parallel* (complete score), *The Future*, *The Steersman*, Elgar *Pageant of Empire*, *Spanish Lady Suite*, Richard Arnell *Symphony no.7*, John Ireland *Sarnia*, *A Downland Suite*, Cyril Scott *Piano Concerto & Cello Concerto*, the ballet *Callirohe* by Cecile Chaminade, Mendelssohn *Piano Concerto in E*, and most famously EJ Moeran's *Symphony no.2*.



**JON BAUSOR**  
**Costume and Scenic Designer**

Jon is a multi award winning international stage designer and creative director based in London. He designed the opening ceremony of the 2012 Paralympic Games in London and was nominated for an Emmy award in 2022 for Best Production Design on the Redbull film, Human Pinball.

Jon trained as a singer and cellist at the Royal Academy of Music and Oxford University before retraining on the Motley Theatre Design Course graduating as a Linbury Prize finalist in 2000. Since then he has designed extensively in dance, opera and theatre for companies worldwide including the Royal Opera House, the Royal National Theatre, National Theatres of Scotland and Wales, Abbey Theatre, Dublin, Toho Stage, Japan, both Finnish and Norwegian National Ballets and for many Broadway and London/ West End stages. He is an associate artist of the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Theatre design includes: The stage adaptation of Miyazaki's legendary anime SPIRITED AWAY (TOHO/ Studio Ghibli, Japan/ London); the musical BAT OUT OF HELL (London/ Germany/ New York/ Toronto- nominated Best Design Whats on Stage awards); the first non replica version of WICKED (Stage Entertainment, Hamburg); Idris Elba's TREE (Manchester International Festival/ Young Vic); TRUE WEST (West End); KNIGHTS' TALE (Imperial Theatre/TOHO, Tokyo); FATHERLAND (Underworld and Frantic Assembly for Manchester International Festival); THE BAND- the Take That musical (UK Tour); THE GRINNING MAN (Bristol Old Vic/Trafalgar Studios- WINNER Best Design UK Theatre awards); THE JAMES PLAYS (National Theatre/ National Theatre of Scotland/ World tour); KURSK (Sound and Fury/Young Vic- nominated Best Design Evening Standard awards); GHOST STORIES (West End/ Toronto/ Moscow); LORD OF THE FLIES (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre- Evening Standard nomination for Best Design); MAMETZ (National Theatre of Wales- WINNER Best Design UK Theatre awards, WINNER Welsh Theatre awards); YOU FOR ME FOR YOU (Royal Court- nominated Best Design Evening Standard awards); I AM YUSUF (Shebbahurr, Palestine/ Young Vic, London).

As an associate artist of the RSC he has designed numerous productions including HAMLET, KING LEAR and the entire 2012 season.

Design for Dance includes: THE NUTCRACKER (also co director with Kaloyan Boiadjiev and Liam Scarlett's FIREBIRD (Norwegian National Ballet); HANSEL AND GRETEL also by Liam Scarlett (Royal ballet); BEFORE THE TEMPEST; GHOSTS by Cathy Marston and Will Tuckett's PLEASURE'S PROGRESS (Royal Opera House); CLARA by Cathy Marston (Bern Ballet); SCRIBBLINGS by Doug Varone, THE CASTAWAYS by Barak Marsall, and HYDRAGYRUM by Patricia Okenawa (all for Rambert); WONDERLAND (Gallim, New York); IN MEDIA RES by Andrea Miller (Nederlands Dans Theater); SNOW WHITE IN BLACK by Arthur Pita (Phoenix Dance Theatre, Sadlers Wells) and Liam Scarlett's LEST WE FORGET (English National Ballet).

Opera includes: AINADAMAR (Scottish Opera, Welsh National Opera, Metropolitan Opera NYC); A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, RIGOLETTO, LA BOHEME, THE GOLDEN DRAGON (Halle Oper); DIE WALKÜRIE (Bordeaux National Opera); CENDRILLON (Glyndebourne); THE KNOT GARDEN (Theatre an der Wien); AGRIPPINA (Grange Park Opera); THE LIGHTHOUSE (Teatro Poliziano, Montepulciano) and THE SOLDIER'S TALE (Old Vic, London/ Iraq).

Jon proudly serves on the committee for the Linbury Prize for Stage Design ([linburyprize.org.uk](http://linburyprize.org.uk)), is a designer advocate sustainability for SiPA ([sipa.org.uk](http://sipa.org.uk)) and a founder member of SceneChange ([scene-change.com](http://scene-change.com)).



## JAMES FARNCOMBE

### Lighting Designer

British lighting designer James Farncombe designs lighting for opera, theater and ballet. Recent productions in 2023 include Phaedra at the National Theatre and Jenůfa at Palau Des Artes, Valencia.

### Career Highlights

Previous opera credits include: Jenůfa, Lessons in Love and Violence (also Gran Teatredel Liceu, Dutch National Opera, Opéra de Lyon, Hamburg State Opera), Theodora (ROH); Luciadi Lammermoor (Metropolitan Opera, Los Angeles Opera); Le Vin Herbé (Berliner Staatsoper); Innocence (also Helsinki and ROH), Pelléas et Mélisande, Alcina (also Bolshoi Theatre of Russia); Tristan und Isolde, Ariadne auf Naxos, Trauernacht (Aix-en-Provence); La traviata (Opéra de Paris, Palais de Garnier, Wiener Staatsoper); Street Scene (Teatro Real, Madrid); Jen fa (also Palau de les Arts, Valencia), Der Zwerg, (Dutch National Opera); Francesca da Rimini (Opéra National du Rhin); Miranda (Opéra Comique); The Barber of Seville (Glyndebourne); The Marriage of Figaro (Opera North); Pelléas et Mélisande (Den NorskeOpera); Der fliegende Holländer, Ariodante (Scottish Opera); Benjamin, dernière nuit (Opéra de Lyon).

Theatre includes: Phaedra, People, Places and Things, Edward II (RNT); John Gabriel Borkman (Bridge); Yerma (also Armory NYC, Schaubühne Berlin), Ibsen House (International Theatre Amsterdam); Three Sisters, The Cherry Orchard (Young Vic).

## BIOS



### KRISTEN MCGARRITY

#### Stager

Born in Glasgow, Kristen trained at The Royal Ballet School (RBS) before graduating into Birmingham Royal Ballet where she danced most of the company's Soloist and Corps de Ballet repertoire over eight seasons, whilst studying towards her BSc (Hons) Psychology degree. After a difficult injury, she returned to London where she gained her RBS Teaching Diploma (PDTC) whilst branching out into the music, film and musical theatre industries. She has toured the UK and Europe as a singer songwriter, backing vocalist and keyboardist and has vocal credits on Channel 4's *The Snowman* and *The Snowdog*. Her film credits include *An American in Paris: The Musical*, *Annihilation* (Lena double), Disney's *The Nutcracker* and the *Four Realms* (Dancer and Assistant Choreographer) and *Red Nose Day Actually* (Movement Director for Hugh Grant). As well as appearing in the ensemble, Kristen played the lead role of 'Lise Dassin' in the original West End cast, Asia tour and Paris productions of Christopher Wheeldon's *An American in Paris*. She has also worked with Fallen Angels Dance Theatre; a charity established to support those in recovery from addiction through dance theatre. Kristen has worked with The Royal Ballet as a Principal Coach (*Frankenstein*), Assistant Choreographer (*Swan Lake*) and Teacher/Repetiteur for RBS students involved in RB productions (*The Nutcracker*, *Frankenstein*, *Raven Girl*). Her staging and rehearsal directing experience includes Joffrey Ballet (*Vespertine*) and Bayerisches Staatsballett (*With a Chance of Rain*). She has guest taught at The Royal Ballet School, Elmhurst Ballet School, Urdang Academy, Yorkshire Ballet Seminars and on many vocational training Winter, Easter and Summer Schools. Kristen was the ladies' teacher for the graduate year of English National Ballet School in 2020. After recently relocating back to Scotland, she has been guest teaching at Scottish Ballet and The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, as well as providing 1–1 virtual bespoke ballet, personal and career coaching to preprofessional and professional dance artists through her business Coaching with Kristen. She is currently studying towards an MSc in Applied Positive Psychology as well as her Mindfulness and Meditation teacher accreditation. She is an advocate for wellness and wellbeing in the dance industry and believes in a holistic approach towards movement and the artists' experience both inside and outside the studio.

# BIOS



## LAURA MORERA

### Stager

Spanish dancer Laura Morera is a retired Principal of The Royal Ballet. She trained at The Royal Ballet School and graduated into the Company in 1995, promoted to First Artist in 1998, Soloist in 1999, First Soloist in 2002 and Principal in 2007. Morera was born in Madrid and trained locally before joining The Royal Ballet School aged 11. Her repertory with the Company includes Lise (*La Fille mal gardée*), Anastasia and Anna Anderson, *Cinderella*, Lykanion (*Daphnis and Chloë*), Diana (*Sylvia*), Gypsy Girl (*The Two Pigeons*), Effie (*La Sylphide*), Irena (*Winter Dreams*), Tatiana (*Onegin*), Giselle, Kitri (*Don Quixote*), Sugar Plum Fairy (*The Nutcracker*), Swanhilda (*Coppélia*), Gamzatti (*La Bayadère*), Manon and Lescaut's Mistress (*Manon*), Mary Vetsera, Mitzi Caspar and Marie Larisch (*Mayerling*), Pig-Wig and Jemima Puddle-Duck (*Tales of Beatrix Potter*), the Queen of Hearts (*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*), Paulina (*The Winter's Tale*), Titania (*The Dream*), Masha (*Winter Dreams*), Jealous Sister (*Las hermanas*), Pianist (*The Lesson*), Wife (*The Concert*), Viscera and Acosta's Carmen and roles in other works by Frederick Ashton, George Balanchine, Mikhail Fokine, William Forsythe, Kenneth MacMillan, Wayne McGregor, Jerome Robbins, Liam Scarlett, Christopher Wheeldon, Ashley Page, Twyla Tharp and Will Tuckett, among others. Her awards include Outstanding Female Performance (Classical) in the 2015 Critics' Circle National Dance Awards for her performances as Lise with The Royal Ballet. Morera's many role creations include in Kim Brandstrup's *Rushes — Fragments of a Lost Story* and 'See, even Night herself is here' pas de deux, McGregor's *Qualia*, Scarlett's *Of Mozart*, *Asphodel Meadows*, *Sweet Violets*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *The Age of Anxiety*, *Frankenstein* and Wheeldon's *Like Water for Chocolate* (Mama Elena) and *Tryst*.

# BIOS



## LAUREN STRONGIN

### Stager

Lauren Strongin (she/her) was born in Los Gatos, California, and grew up in Scottsdale, Arizona. At 11, she was offered a full scholarship to attend The Kirov Academy of Ballet in Washington, DC. In 1999, she was awarded a full scholarship to the John Cranko-Schule in Stuttgart, Germany. She was a finalist at the Prix de Lausanne International Ballet Competition in Switzerland and IBC at Jackson, Mississippi.

Lauren joined Sarasota Ballet and quickly was promoted to Principal dancer. She then danced for Houston Ballet and finally, as a soloist for San Francisco Ballet. Her classical repertoire includes principal roles in *Swan Lake*, *Don Quixote*, *Les Sylphides*, *Paquita*, *Giselle*, Balanchine's *Coppélia*, *The Nutcracker*, *Le Corsair*, Scarlett's *Frankenstein*, and Cranko's *Onegin* among others. She danced principal roles by Ashton, MacMillan, Balanchine, Robbins, Van Manen, Bourne, Tudor, Cranko, Kylián, Scarlett, Morris, Tharp, Possokhov, Wheeldon, Tomasson, Ratmansky, and Forsythe. She created roles in ballets by Scarlett, Morris, Elo, Barton, Peck, and others.

Lauren retired from a professional ballet career in 2019. She is a certified instructor for the Dance for Parkinson's program, has interned with the SF Ballet in their wellness department, focusing on mental healthcare accessibility for dancers. Lauren has designed costumes for SFDanceworks and other companies and has managed social media and marketing. Currently, she is a stager and trustee for the Liam Scarlett Trust and is completing her degree in medical anthropology at Stanford University.

She is most proud to be a new mother to her daughter Cy with her husband Joseph Walsh. They live in San Francisco with their bulldog, Orson.

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Artist of The Norwegian National Opera & Ballet in Carmen. Photo by Erik Berg.

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Jorge Ivars

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Christine Rocas

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Scott Speck

**Music Director & Principal Conductor**

Jared Wright

**Company Pianist**

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Catherine Eby

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**Head Carpenter**

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Ming Luke  
**Guest Conductor**  
Martin Yates  
**Orchestration**

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**Assistant Concertmaster**  
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Robinson  
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**Assistant Principal**  
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Joffrey Company Artists Amanda Assucena and José Pablo Castro Cuevas. Photo by Carolyn McCabe.