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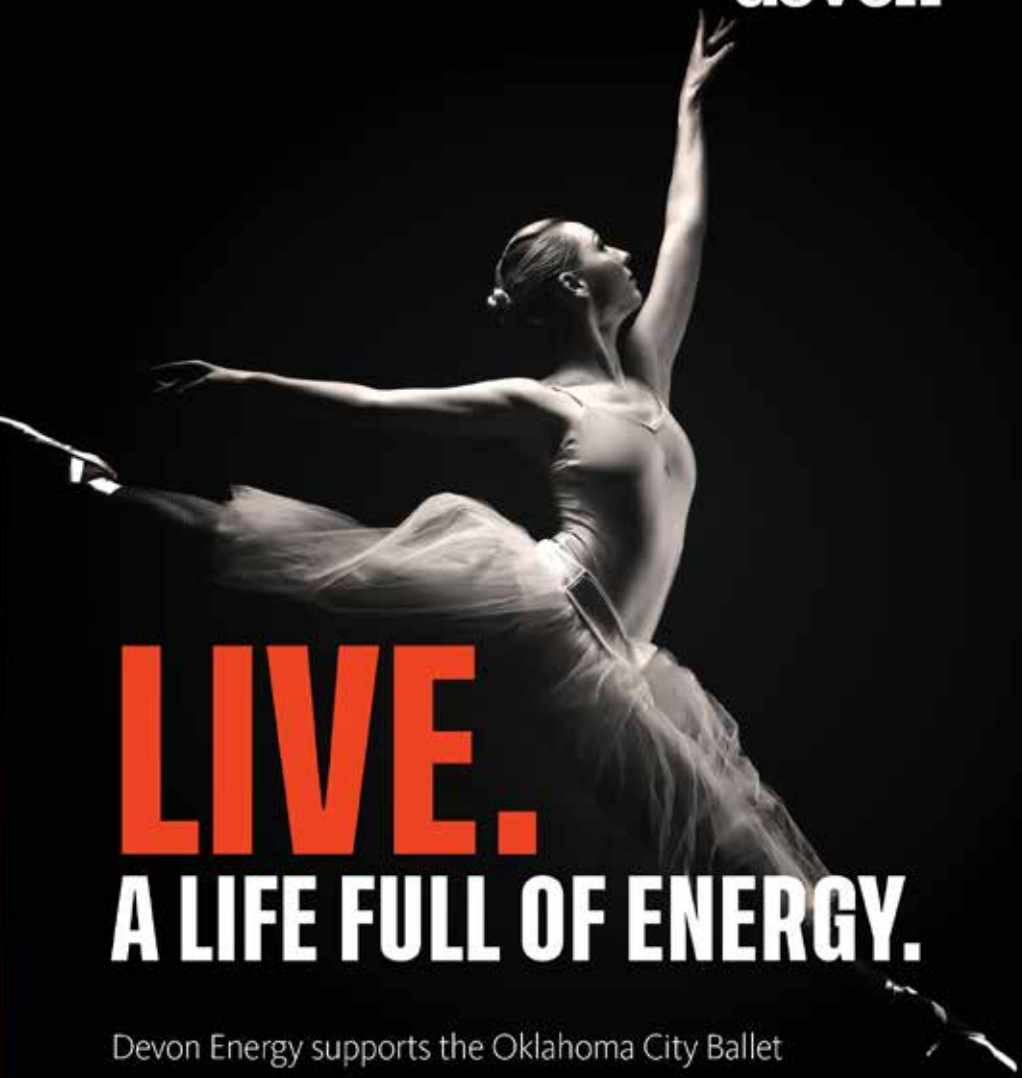
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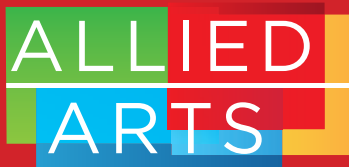


Photo by Jana Carson

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# OKLAHOMA CITY BALLET

## **ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

Ryan Jolicoeur-Nye

## ***Rehearsal Director***

DaYoung Jung

## ***Associate Rehearsal Director***

Benjamin Tucker

## ***Principal Artists***

Courtney Connor Jones

Roylan Ramos Hechavarria   Autumn Klein

## ***Soloists***

Alejandro González   Mayu Odaka

Erik Thordal-Christensen

## ***Corps de Ballet***

Ryland Acree III, Kara Troester Blythe, Mickayla Carr,  
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Paige Russell, Alexandra Schooling, Mayim Stiller,  
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Henrique Neumann, Carlie Preskitt, Flannery Werner

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Mikaela Guidice, Rachel Kundzins, Darcey Lynn, Jessica Lynn,  
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Aylani Guajardo, Katie Kelley, Olivia McFadden, Michael O'Neill,  
Isabella Saclolo, Tristan Thompson, Moira Kate Werner, Sarah Beth Wriston

# OKLAHOMA CITY BALLET

## JOHN KIRKPATRICK EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jo Lynne Jones

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**Box Office Manager** Justin Seal

**Development Manager** Charlie Ludden

**Digital Content Coordinator & Photographer** Jana Carson

**Development Associate** Rurie Dobson

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**Executive Assistant & Board Liaison** Kallie Olson

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**Costume Manager** Claire Kroeger

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**Company Teacher** Victoria Bearden

**Company Pianists** Karen Bentley, Miho Fisher

**Company Physician** Dr. Megan Meier, McBride Orthopedic Hospital

**Company Physical Therapist** Dr. Emily Love, Turning Pointe Physical Therapy

**Company Psychologist** Dr. Cody Commander, Commander Counseling & Wellness

**Company Chiropractor** Dr. Mila Mohsenzadeh, Fit Spa

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**Performance Photography** Diana Bittle, Jana Carson, Bill Crouch, Kate Lubner

**Videographers** Flight Agency, Resolute Visuals

# THE OKLAHOMA CITY BALLET

## YVONNE CHOUTEAU SCHOOL

### DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL & STUDIO COMPANY

Racheal Nye

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**Principal Faculty/ Director of Men's Programs** Olivier Muñoz

**Evening Program Principal** Kaitlin Alter

**School Coordinator** Emma Capen

**School Receptionists** Quincy Allen, Celeste Boullion

#### INSTRUCTORS

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Ryland Acree III, Kaitlin Alter, Victoria Bearden, Celeste Boullion, Natasha Brooksher, Emma Capen, Daniel Cooke, Morgan Dunham, Alejandro González, Joseph Hetzer, Chloe Jenson, DaYoung Jung, Sarah Klump, Olivier Muñoz, Ryan Jolicoeur-Nye, Racheal Nye, Macaira Pinto, Erica Portell, Madeleine Purcell, Jacob Sparso, Bruce Steivel, Evelina Sushko, Benjamin Tucker, James Williams

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Ann Vitali

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# ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY



## RYAN JOLICOEUR-NYE

Ryan Jolicoeur-Nye is a choreographer, arts advocate, teacher, and Oklahoma City Ballet's seventh Artistic Director since its founding in 1963. Originally from central Maine, Jolicoeur-Nye began his ballet training with Andrei Bossov at the age of 16, and after graduating from the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School, he danced professionally for Eugene Ballet, Ballet Idaho, Kansas City Ballet, plus many guest roles throughout North America before retiring from the stage in 2016.

In 2018, Jolicoeur-Nye was named Artistic Director of Northwest Arkansas Ballet Theatre based in Bentonville. Under his tenure, the company experienced exponential growth, creating more than 80 performances and reaching over 28,000 area residents.

As a choreographer, he has created ballets for Northwest Arkansas Ballet Theatre, Ballet Idaho, Chicago Repertory Ballet, Kansas City Ballet, Royal Winnipeg Ballet School, Moving Arts Dance Festival, Ballet Des Moines, Oklahoma City Ballet, among others. Jolicoeur-Nye was named "Outstanding Choreographer" at the 2017 Youth American Grand Prix as well as "Best Choreographer" at the World Ballet Art Competition (WBAC) Grand Prix 2019.

Jolicoeur-Nye joined Oklahoma City Ballet in August 2020 as a Rehearsal Director, working closely with company dancers. Since 2020, he has choreographed crowd favorite short pieces such as *Chan Chan*, *Abbey Road*, *Playlist*, and feature-length ballets *The Sleeping Beauty* and a fresh version of *The Nutcracker* which debuted in 2022.

Jolicoeur-Nye took on the role of acting artistic director in January 2022 and was officially named Artistic Director of Oklahoma City Ballet in October 2022 following an international search. Jolicoeur-Nye is married to Racheal Nye, School Director for the Oklahoma City Ballet Yvonne Chouteau School and together they have two children. In his free time, Ryan enjoys playing music, painting, cooking, and family time.

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY



## JO LYNNE JONES

As the John Kirkpatrick Executive Director of the Oklahoma City Ballet, Jo Lynne Jones inspires teams and drives operational results using her 30+ years' experience in communications, leadership, and development.

Jo plays an integral role in the Ballet's external affairs, such as fundraising, resource development, communications, marketing, leadership positioning, and driving strategic partnerships. She is a fierce advocate for the Ballet, its economic impact, and the Oklahoma City arts community as a whole.

Internally, Jo works closely with the Ballet's Artistic Director, Ryan Jolicoeur-Nye, in a shared leadership capacity to manage staff in executing the Ballet's mission. She oversees the operational management of the Ballet's facilities and finances, including developing the annual budget and any special project or capital budgets. She also acts as a liaison to the organization's various committees and Board of Trustees, as well as overseeing Board engagement in fundraising, marketing, public relations, community relations, and advocacy efforts.

A seasoned professional communicator, Jo got her professional start as a news anchor and reporter at stations in Oklahoma City; Lawton, Oklahoma; and Wichita Falls, Texas. She was a familiar face on OETA from 1991 to 2007, where she reported nightly on business and legislative issues and KWTW where she served as a weekend news anchor. No stranger to hard work, in 1994 Jo embraced her entrepreneurial spirit and opened an upscale children's clothing store, The Beanstalk, while still anchoring the news.

In 2001, she joined the team at Infant Crisis Services as the Director of Communications. She spent 10 years in this role before moving to Director of Development and Communications, in which she grew the agency's budget and visibility.

Jo attended Oklahoma State University and the University of Central Oklahoma and earned a bachelor's degree in communications. An Edmond native, she currently lives in Oklahoma City with her husband, Tom Mullen, an attorney. The couple enjoy traveling and have two sons.

The John Kirkpatrick Executive Directorship is a recently endowed position, with the endowment gift coming from the Kirkpatrick Family Fund. The position was named for John E. Kirkpatrick, who was an integral part of the founding of Oklahoma City Ballet with Yvonne Chouteau and Miguel Terekhov.

## PRINCIPAL ARTISTS



### COURTNEY CONNOR JONES

Hometown: Charlotte, NC  
Joined the Company in 2017

Courtney Connor Jones was born in Huntington Beach, California, but grew up in Charlotte, North Carolina. She began her training at the young age of three at Southland Ballet Academy. After moving to North Carolina at age five, she began training at the North Carolina Dance Theatre and Charlotte City Ballet before graduating from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts.

Connor Jones began her professional career at the Cincinnati Ballet where she danced for 11 seasons. During that time, she spent a summer in Russia where she performed in *Giselle*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Carmen*, and *Swan Lake*. She joined Oklahoma City Ballet as a principal in 2017.

Throughout her career, she has performed feature roles in many ballets, and some of her most treasured are Aurora in Ryan Jolicoeur-Nye's *The Sleeping Beauty*, Odette/Odile in *Swan Lake*, Juliet in Robert Mills' *Romeo & Juliet*, Mina Harker in Michael Pink's *Dracula*, The Sylph in *La Sylphide*, The Chosen One in Adam Hougland's *Rite of Spring*, The Eaglet in Septime Webre's *ALICE (in wonderland)*, and Jumping Girl in George Balanchine's *Who Cares?* Her repertoire also includes works by Jiří Kylián, Jessica Lang, George Balanchine, Val Caniparoli, Cayetano Soto, Helen Pickett, Robert Bondara, Ihsan Rustem, James Kudelka, and more.

Connor Jones and her husband, former dancer Sam Jones, have a young son and daughter; two of her all-time favorite roles! In her spare time, she enjoys gardening, creating custom jewelry, and educating others on healthy eating and lifestyle habits.



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# PRINCIPAL ARTISTS



## ROYLAN RAMOS HECHAVARRIA

Hometown: Camagüey, Cuba  
Joined the Company in 2022

Roylan Ramos Hechavarria, from Camagüey, Cuba trained at the National School of Camagüey from 1995-2000, Cuban National Ballet School (La Habana) from 2000-2002, and graduated from the National Ballet School Vicentina de la Torres Camagüey, Cuba in 2006.

Hechavarria danced with Ballet of Camagüey as a soloist dancer for five seasons. He joined Ballet of Cairo Opera House in 2011 and in 2012 worked for Tanz Company Innsbruck in Austria. Most recently Hechavarria danced for Ballet Opera of Lyon from 2014-2022 and joins Oklahoma City Ballet as a principal dancer for the 2022/23 season.

Hechavarria has performed *Diana and Acteon*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Paquita*, *Don Quixote*, *Swan Lake*, and Enrique Gaza Valga's *Faust*. Other repertoire includes works by Jiří Kylián, Johan Inger, Lucinda Childs, Trisha Brown, Pina Baush, Roland Petit, and William Forsythe.



## AUTUMN KLEIN

Hometown: Lincoln, NE | Joined the Company in 2012  
**Sponsored by: Curtis Teague and Loretta Simonet**

Autumn Klein, originally from Lincoln, Nebraska, trained at Houston Ballet's Ben Stevenson Academy and was a member of Houston Ballet II before joining Texas Ballet Theatre. During this time, she won several awards, including first place at the Youth America Grand Prix in Denver, Colorado.

Klein joined Oklahoma City Ballet in 2012 and was promoted to soloist in 2016. In 2022, she was promoted to principal as she enters her tenth season with Oklahoma City Ballet.

Her repertoire with Oklahoma City Ballet includes featured roles in Jiří Kylián's *Petite Mort*, Helen Pickett's *Petal*, Margo Sappington's *Cobras in the Moonlight*, Amy Seiwert's *Dear Miss Cline*, Twyla Tharp's *Nine Sinatra Songs*, Nacho Duato's *Without Words*, George Balanchine's *Serenade*, and *The Four Temperaments*, Jessica Lang's *To Familiar Spaces in Dream*, Bryan Pitts' *Variations for Six*, and Jerome Robbins' *2 & 3 Part Inventions*. She has also created roles in works by Matthew Neenan, Brian Enos, Sarah Tallman, DaYoung Jung, Carrie Ruth Trumbo, Ryan Jolicoeur-Nye, Robert Mills, and Penny Saunders.

She has performed many lead roles including the Cowgirl in Agnes de Mille's *Rodeo*, Wendy in Paul Vasterling's *Peter Pan*, *Le Corsaire* Grand Pas, Sugar Plum Fairy in Robert Mills' *The Nutcracker*, Mills' *Romeo & Juliet* Balcony Pas de Deux, Queen of Hearts in Septime Webre's *ALICE (in wonderland)*, Carabosse and Lilac Fairy in Ryan Jolicoeur-Nye's *The Sleeping Beauty*, and Lucy in Michael Pink's *Dracula*.

Outside her dance experience, she double majored in biochemistry and genetics at Texas A&M University and received presidential and congressional medals for volunteer service. Additionally, she created a style of pointe dance-painting which has been featured by Buzzfeed and her artwork has sold internationally. She would like to thank her husband, family, and four kitties for their continual support.

## SOLOISTS



### ALEJANDRO GONZÁLEZ

Hometown: Caracas, Venezuela | Joined the Company in 2017

Sponsored by: Susan E. Brackett and Gregg Wadley

Alejandro González, originally from Caracas, Miranda, Venezuela, trained with Isabel Franklin and Gloriant Herrera at the Gustavo Franklin School. He later trained for two years with the Houston Ballet Academy under Shelly Power, School Director. González joined Oklahoma City Ballet as a Studio Company dancer in 2017 and was offered an apprenticeship in 2018. He was promoted to corps de ballet in 2019, and was named soloist in 2021.

His repertoire includes works by Stanton Welch, Ben Stevenson, August Bournonville, Ryan Jolicoeur-Nye, Jerome Robbins, Jiří Kylián, Helen Pickett, Septime Webre, Robert Mills, Cayetano Soto, Nicolo Fonte, Jessica Lang, and Michael Pink.

González's favorite roles include Bell Boy in Michael Pink's *Dracula*, Nutcracker Prince and Cavalier in *The Nutcracker*, and Conrad in *Le Corsaire pas de deux*.

González was awarded Gold Medalist in 2016 at CIBC (Concurso Internacional de Ballet Clasico), Gold Medalist in 2020 at MIBC (Miami International Ballet Competition), featured in Pointe Magazine's "2020 Stars of the Corps," and was nominated "Next Generation Under 30" in 2020.

In addition to his career as a dancer, González is part of the faculty of the Oklahoma City Ballet Yvonne Chouteau School.



### MAYU ODAKA

Hometown: Los Angeles, CA

Joined the Company in 2015

Mayu Oda, from Los Angeles, trained at the Lauridsen Ballet Center in Torrance, California, where she danced in the pre-professional company Ballet California. She was offered an apprenticeship with Oklahoma City Ballet after participating in the 2015 Summer Intensive and was promoted to corps de ballet in 2017, then later to soloist in 2019.

Since joining Oklahoma City Ballet, her repertoire includes works by Helen Pickett, Septime Webre, Paul Vasterling, Agnes de Mille, Dennis Spaight, Robyn Pasternack, Ryan Jolicoeur-Nye, and DaYoung Jung. Favorite roles include Lucy in Michael Pink's *Dracula*, Lucille Grahn in Robert Joffrey's *Pas des Déesses*, Clara and Sugarplum Fairy in Robert Mills' *The Nutcracker* and Ariel in Robert Mills' *The Little Mermaid*. She has also performed feature roles that include Firebird in Robert Mills' *The Firebird*, The White Cat in Robert Mills' *The Sleeping Beauty* and demi-soloist roles in both George Balanchine's *Serenade* and *The Four Temperaments*.

In 2022, Oda was one of only two American ballerinas to be selected for the 2022 Helsinki International Ballet Competition in the senior division.

# SOLOISTS



## ERIK THORDAL-CHRISTENSEN

Hometown: Copenhagen, Denmark

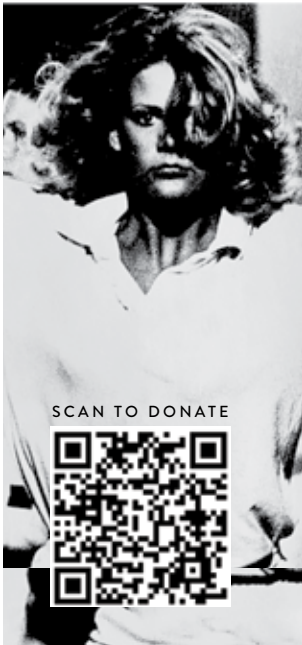
Joined the Company in 2018

**Sponsored by: Drs. Lola and Dean Sicking**

Erik Thordal-Christensen, from Denmark, moved to California at age seven and trained at the Los Angeles Ballet School with Colleen Neary and Thordal Christensen. He has danced as a member of the corps de ballet with the Los Angeles Ballet, Boston Ballet, and Sarasota Ballet, and performed feature roles such as Espada in *Don Quixote*, Ali in *Le Corsaire*, Romeo and Paris in *Romeo & Juliet*, Iago in José Limón's *The Moor's Pavan*, and Lysander in Frederick Ashton's *The Dream*.

Thordal-Christensen joined Oklahoma City Ballet in the 2018/19 season as a corps de ballet dancer, and performed principal and soloist roles such as Cavalier and Arabian in *The Nutcracker*, Sangunic in George Balanchine's *The Four Temperaments*, Arthur in Michael Pink's *Dracula*, Paris in Robert Mills' *Romeo & Juliet*, and Ali in *Le Corsaire pas de deux*. Thordal-Christensen was promoted to soloist in 2021.

Thordal-Christensen has also performed in George Balanchine's *Theme and Variations*, Stravinsky *Violin Concerto*, *Stars and Stripes*, *La Sonnambula*, *La Valse*, and *Serenade*. Additionally, his repertoire includes Ashton's *Illuminations*, William Forsythe's *Artifact*, Jiří Kylián's *Sechs Tänze*, Sonya Tayeh's *Beneath One's Dignity*, along with *Le Corsaire*, *Swan Lake*, and *Giselle*.



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# CORPS DE BALLET



**RYLAND ACREE III**

Hometown: Floyd, VA  
Joined the Company in 2021



**KARA TROESTER BLYTHE**

Hometown: Oklahoma City, OK  
Joined the Company in 2017  
Sponsored by:  
Michelle and Gary Brooks



**MICKAYLA CARR**

Hometown: Arlington, TX  
Joined the Company in 2016  
Sponsored by:  
AUE/John Hryshchuk



**DANIEL COOKE**

Hometown: Washington, D.C.  
Joined the Company in 2020



**RANDOLPH FERNANDEZ**

Hometown: Boston, MA  
Joined the Company in 2017  
Sponsored by:  
Susan E. Brackett and Gregg Wadley



**JOSEPH HETZER**

Hometown: Palos Verdes, CA  
Joined the Company in 2019  
Sponsored by:  
Julia Carrington Hall



**JAMESON KEATING**

Hometown: Santa Barbara, CA  
Joined the Company in 2021



**NICHOLAS KEEPERMAN**

Hometown: Wilmington, IL  
Joined the Company in 2019

# CORPS DE BALLET



**GABRIELLE MENGDEN**

Hometown: Houston, TX

Joined the Company in 2019

**Sponsored by:**

Susan E. Brackett and Gregg Wadley



**PAIGE RUSSELL**

Hometown: Silver Spring, MD

Joined the Company in 2020

**Sponsored by:**

Susan E. Brackett and Gregg Wadley



**ALEXANDRA SCHOOLING**

Hometown: Lancaster, PA

Joined the Company in 2016



**MAYIM STILLER**

Hometown: Seattle, WA

Joined the Company in 2020



**ANNA TATEDA**

Hometown: Tokyo, Japan

Joined the Company in 2022



**ZANE WINDERS**

Hometown: Levelland, TX

Joined the Company in 2020

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# APPRENTICES



**OSLANIEL CASTILLO**

Hometown: Havana, Cuba  
Joined the Company in 2021



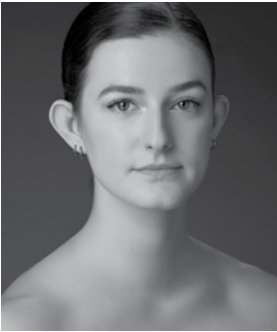
**ELENA DAMIANI**

Hometown: Westfield, IN  
Joined the Company in 2021



**JAMES KLUMP**

Hometown: Lake Charles, LA  
Joined the Company in 2021



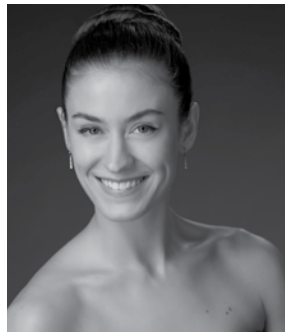
**GRACE MANUEL**

Hometown: New Orleans, LA  
Joined the Company in 2021



**HENRIQUE NEUMANN**

Hometown: Santo Ângelo, Brazil  
Joined the Company in 2021



**CARLIE PRESKITT**

Hometown: Denver, CO  
Joined the Company in 2021



**FLANNERY WERNER**

Hometown: Denver, CO  
Joined the Company in 2022

## Oklahoma City Ballet

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# STUDIO COMPANY



Left to Right: Jessica Lynn, Morgan Dunham, Amelia Aroneo, Kesler Colton, Maura Moody, Leah Reiter, Rachel Kundzins, Racheal Nye (Director of School & Studio Company), Olivier Muñoz (Principal Faculty/ Director of Men's Programs), Kira Robinson, Savannah Payne, Rayan Dridi, Mikaela Guidice, Ana Vega, Darcey Lynn



Left to Right: Katie Kelley, Carson Berry, Michael O'Neill, Madisen Acevedo, Grace Duhan, Tristan Thompson, Moira Kate Werner, Sarah Beth Wriston, Olivia McFadden, Freestone Dopp, Isabella Sacololo, Aylani Guajardo



# BIRTHDAY VARIATIONS

The performance of *Birthday Variations*, an Arpino Ballet, is presented with the permission of The Gerald Arpino Foundation and has been produced in accordance with the Foundation service standards established and provided by the Foundation.

## CHOREOGRAPHY

Gerald Arpino

### STAGED BY

Cameron Basden

### MUSIC

Giuseppe Verdi

### LIGHTING DESIGN

Thomas Skelton

### COSTUME DESIGN

Stanley Simmons

## COSTUMES COURTESY OF

The Joffrey Ballet | Ashley C. Wheeler MBE, *The Mary B. Galvin Artistic Director*

**WAFING** Mayu Odaka (May 5&6), Grace Manuel (May 7)

**ÉCHAPPÉ** Leah Reiter (May 5&6), Gabrielle Mengden (May 7)

**JUMPING** Anna Tateda (May 5&6), Mickayla Carr (May 7)

**BOURRÉE** Flannery Werner (May 5&6), Maura Moody (May 7)

**TURNING /PAS COUPLE** Paige Russell & Alejandro González (May 5&6)  
Mayu Odaka & Nicholas Keeperman (May 7)

• *INTERMISSION* •

# THE GOLDEN SECTION

World Premiere on 11/8/1983, by Twyla Tharp Dance.

## CHOREOGRAPHY

Twyla Tharp © Twyla Tharp

### MUSIC

David Byrne

### ORIGINAL COSTUME DESIGN

Santo Loquasto

### ORIGINAL LIGHTING DESIGN

Jennifer Tipton

### STAGED BY

Shelley Washington

Ryland Acree III, Oslaniel Castillo, Kesler Colton, Randolph Fernandez,  
Roylan Ramos Hechavarria, Joseph Hetzer, Mayim Stiller

Courtney Connor Jones, Autumn Klein, Gabrielle Mengden, Mayu Odaka,  
Paige Russell, Alexandra Schooling

• *INTERMISSION* •

# WESTERN SYMPHONY

The performance of *Western Symphony*, a Balanchine© Ballet, is presented in accordance with the Balanchine Style® and Balanchine Technique® service standards established and provided by the Trust.

World premiere on September 7, 1954  
at the City Center of Music and Drama, NYC, NY.

## CHOREOGRAPHY

George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust

### STAGED BY

Viki Psihoyos

### SCENIC DESIGN

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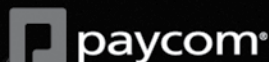
Carson Berry (May 7), Aylani Guajardo,  
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# CHOREOGRAPHERS' BIOGRAPHY



## GERALD ARPINO (1923-2008)

Gerald Arpino co-founded The Joffrey Ballet with Robert Joffrey and became artistic director after the passing of Mr. Joffrey in 1988. Born in Staten Island, NY, he met Robert Joffrey while stationed in Seattle with the Coast Guard. He studied with Mary Ann Wells, danced with Graham dancers May O'Donnell and Gertrude Schurr, and was a principal dancer with the original Joffrey company.

Arpino's style is most notably dynamic and passionate. As resident choreographer for the Joffrey Ballet, he contributed to over one third of the company's repertory which included a range of works from the sublime *Sea Shadow* to virtuosic *Suite Saint Saens* to crowd pleasing *Light Rain*. Arpino's ballets have been performed at the White House on several occasions, as well as around the world to both acclaim and controversial review. As one of the recipients of the 1974 Dance Magazine Award, his citation read: "To Gerald Arpino – more than any other choreographer, he has recognized the spirit of the times. His work speaks clearly of the anguish and the joy of being young in America today."

In 1995, Arpino moved the Joffrey Ballet to Chicago, where he established the Joffrey as a world-class company in the heart of the American Midwest, which continues to thrive today. In 2023, The Gerald Arpino Foundation will commemorate Arpino's 100th birthday with a special offering of Arpino ballets to dance organizations culminating with a celebration of participating dance companies from around the country in the fall of 2023. [www.arpinofoundation.org](http://www.arpinofoundation.org)

## *SEE OKC BALLET IN CHICAGO!*

Oklahoma City Ballet will perform *Birthday Variations* on September 23 at the Auditorium Theater in Chicago, as part of the Arpino Chicago Centennial Celebration.

The celebration is in honor of legendary choreographer and Joffrey Ballet co-founder, Gerald Arpino. Oklahoma City Ballet is honored to perform alongside the top ballet companies in the country, including: American Ballet Theatre, San Francisco Ballet, Ballet West, Eugene Ballet, Complexions Contemporary Ballet, and The Joffrey Ballet.

SCAN FOR INFO





# CHOREOGRAPHERS' BIOGRAPHY



## GEORGE BALANCHINE (1904-1983)

George Balanchine transformed the world of ballet. He is widely regarded as the most influential choreographer of the 20th century, and he co-founded two of ballet's most important institutions: New York City Ballet and the School of American Ballet. Balanchine was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1904, studied at the Imperial Ballet School in St. Petersburg, and danced with the Maryinsky Theatre Ballet Company, where he began choreographing short works. In the summer of 1924, Balanchine left the newly formed Soviet Union for Europe, where he was invited by impresario Serge Diaghilev to join the Ballets Russes.

For that company, Balanchine choreographed his first important ballets: *Apollo* (1928) and *Prodigal Son* (1929). After Ballets Russes was dissolved following Diaghilev's death in 1929, Balanchine spent his next few years on a variety of projects in Europe and then formed his own company, Les Ballets 1933, in Paris. There, he met American arts connoisseur Lincoln Kirstein, who persuaded him to come to the United States. In 1934, the pair founded the School of American Ballet, which remains in operation to this day, training students for companies around the world. Balanchine's first ballet in the U.S., *Serenade*, set to music by Tschaikovsky, was created for SAB students and premiered on June 9, 1934, on the grounds of an estate in White Plains. Balanchine and Kirstein founded several short-lived ballet companies before forming Ballet Society in 1946, which was renamed New York City Ballet in 1948. Balanchine served as the Company's ballet master from that year until his death in 1983, building it into one of the most important performing arts institutions in the world, and a cornerstone of the cultural life of New York City. He choreographed 425 works over the course of 60-plus years, and his musical choices ranged from Tschaikovsky (one of his favorite composers) to Stravinsky (his compatriot and friend) to Gershwin (who embodied the choreographer's love of America). Many of Balanchine's works are considered masterpieces and are performed by ballet companies all over the world.

# CHOREOGRAPHERS' BIOGRAPHY



## TWYLA THARP

Since graduating from Barnard College in 1963, Ms. Tharp has choreographed more than one hundred sixty works: one hundred twenty-nine dances, twelve television specials, six Hollywood movies, four full-length ballets, four Broadway shows and two figureskating routines. She received one Tony Award, two Emmy Awards, nineteen honorary doctorates, the Vietnam Veterans of America President's Award, the 2004 National Medal of the Arts, the 2008 Jerome Robbins Prize, and a 2008 Kennedy Center Honor. Her many grants include the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fellowship. She is a member of

the American Philosophical Society, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and an Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

In 1965, Ms. Tharp founded her dance company, Twyla Tharp Dance. Her dances are known for creativity, wit, and technical precision coupled with a street-wise nonchalance. By combining different forms of movement—such as jazz, ballet, boxing, and inventions of her own making—Ms. Tharp's work expands the boundaries of ballet and modern dance.

In addition to choreographing for her own company, she has created dances for The Joffrey Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, The Paris Opera Ballet, The Royal Ballet, New York City Ballet, The Boston Ballet, The Australian Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, The Martha Graham Dance Company, Miami City Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Atlanta Ballet and Royal Winnipeg Ballet.

Today, ballet and dance companies around the world continue to perform Ms. Tharp's works. In 1992, Ms. Tharp published her autobiography *PUSH COMES TO SHOVE*. She went on to write *THE CREATIVE HABIT: Learn it and Use it for Life*, followed by *THE COLLABORATIVE HABIT: Life Lessons for Working Together*. In 2019, her fourth book was published, *Keep It Moving: Lessons for the Rest of Your Life*. Today, Ms. Tharp continues to create.

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


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# GUEST ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

## **AARON MOONEY**, *Lighting Supervisor*

Aaron Mooney is delighted to be joining OKC Ballet for another season as Resident Lighting Designer. Mooney is also the Resident Lighting Designer and Professor of Lighting Design at Oklahoma City University, where he joined the faculty in 2012. Aaron holds an MFA in Theatre Design from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and a BA in Theatre Education from The University of Tulsa. Aaron has lit events in spaces as large as Radio City Music Hall (NYC), the Western Heritage Museum (OKC), and The Joint at the Hard Rock Casino (Tulsa) as well as spaces so small that they barely deserve to be called theatres. Recent design credits include: *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Of Dreams and Dice*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Firebird*, *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *La Sylphide*, *Our Private Rooms*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Nutcracker*, *Exurgency* (Oklahoma City Ballet); *An American in Paris* (Music Theatre Wichita); *Noises Off*, *Death of a Salesman* (Montana Shakespeare in the Parks); *Pageant* (Lyric OK); and *King Lear* (Oklahoma Shakespeare in the Park). Previous Lighting Designs for OCU include *She Loves Me*, *Spamalot*, *The Music Man*, *Crazy for You*, *Susannah*, *Side Show*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Sister Act*, *Three Sisters*, *Hairspray*, *Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play*, *As You Like It*, *RENT*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Street Scene*, *9 to 5: The Musical*, *Bernstein's MASS*, and *The Dialogues of the Carmelites*. In addition to all of his theatrical design work, Mooney has worked on exhibition lighting at the S.R. Guggenheim Museum, the National Academy of Design, the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum, the National Museum of the Native American (NYC), and the Morgan Museum & Library. Fashion lighting in New York City includes: Barneys New York, Prada, Armani, and Dolce + Gabbana.

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Aaron Mooney

### **ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGNER**

Jackson Maner

### **TECHNICAL DIRECTOR**

Emily Murphy

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Benjamin Tucker

### **PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER**

Courtney DiBello

### **ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER**

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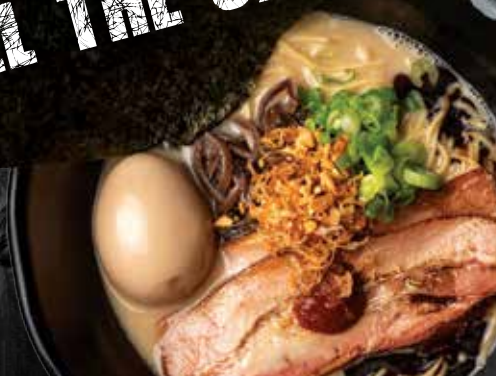
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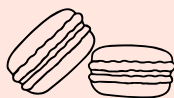
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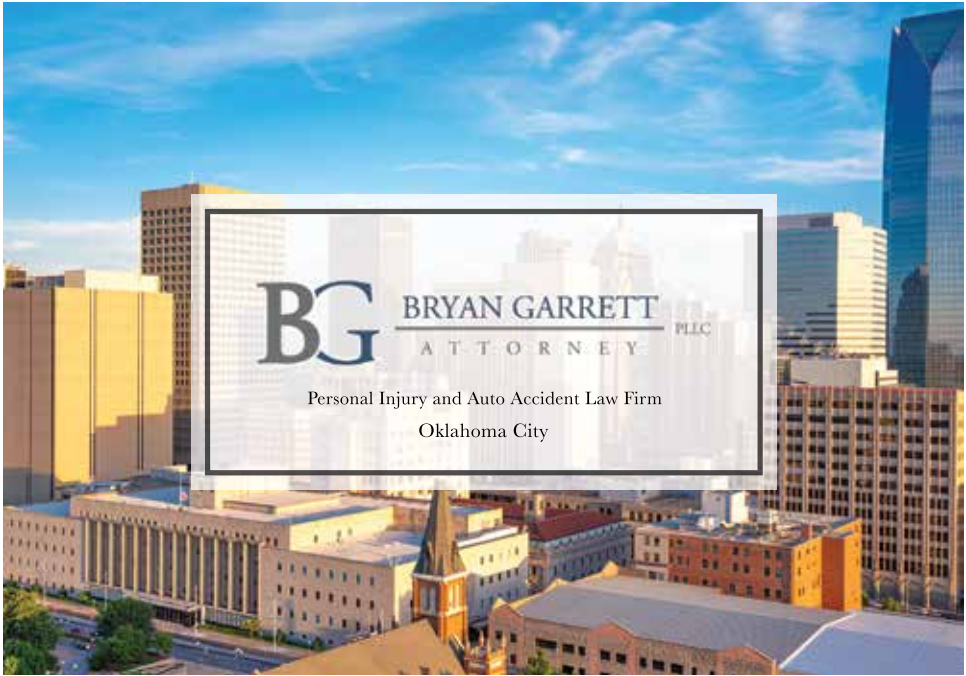


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Oklahoma City Ballet's Amy Potter dancing the *The Dying Swan* at the 2016 Green Box Arts Festival in Green Mountain Falls, CO. [greenboxarts.org](http://greenboxarts.org) - Photo credit: Tom Kimmell Photography





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