



The
Nutcracker

McANINCH ARTS CENTER
Dec 14-15, 2024



Welcome to the MAC! Your home for entertainment.

I have worked in the performing arts for the entirety of my career and after 10 seasons at the MAC, I can unequivocally say our patrons are ***Simply the Best!*** The support you provide and the sense of community you have fostered make the

MAC such a special place for all who step through the doors. In honor of our patrons, the MAC is bringing you ***Simply the Best*** in the 2024-2025 season. Get ready for an incredible year with the best shows.

Join us for a complimentary pre-show MAC Chat or Q&A following specific performances. Our arts center, located in a community college, offers over 60 student productions supported by professional lighting, sound, and costumes. These can be enjoyed at affordable costs, or you can attend our FREE programs like Music Fridays at Noon and our free International Global Film series in February. We hope to exceed your expectations with excellent service and special pre- and post-show engagement opportunities. These will help you connect with the artists and art forms more deeply. While you are here, don't forget to visit the Cleve Carney Museum of Art in the lobby to experience cutting-edge contemporary art. You can also enjoy our full-service concession area and gift shop.

After your visit, please stay connected with us by joining us on Facebook (AtTheMAC) or subscribing to our e-newsletter to find out about added shows, events, and special offers (www.AtTheMAC.org). We challenge you to try something new at the MAC and expand your cultural palate. Come see the New Philharmonic Orchestra or a Buffalo Theatre Ensemble play. Or join us this summer for the Hokusai exhibit. We are grateful for your presence here and we want to ensure that your visit is enjoyable. If you need anything, please don't hesitate to ask any of the staff and we will do our best to accommodate you.

Thank you for being a part of our community of arts enthusiasts and being ***Simply the Best!*** We can't wait to share these unforgettable experiences with you and hope you have a wonderful time. We look forward to entertaining you and seeing you at the theater.

Enjoy the show!

Diana Martinez
Director, McAninch Arts Center

McAninch Arts Center
at College of DuPage
presents

SALT CREEK BALLET:

The Nutcracker

Music by **Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**

Based on a story by **E.T.A. Hoffman**

Staged & Choreographed after **Dace Dindonis & George Verdak**

Re-worked by **Erica De La O & Kristopher Wojtera**

Erica De La O, Artistic Director

Kristopher Wojtera, Artistic Director

featuring

Daynelis Muñoz & Wilhelm Josue Gomez Sarria

and

New Philharmonic

Kirk Muspratt, Music Director and Conductor

New Philharmonic is grateful for support from:

**Frank B. Modruson
and Lynne C. Shigley**



Anonymous

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**College of DuPage
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**John Rutledge
and Betty Joseph**

**The Grover Hermann
Foundation**



*This program is
partially supported
by a grant from the
Illinois Arts Council Agency.*

Salt Creek Ballet is a not-for-profit Illinois corporation dedicated to excellence in dance.

*As a courtesy to our dancers and fellow audience members,
photography or videotaping is strictly prohibited.*

Sat, Dec 14, 2024, 1 and 5p

Sun, Dec 15, 1 and 5p

Belushi Performance Hall

A LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we enter our 39th year as a nonprofit, we are filled with gratitude as we reflect on the far-reaching impact of our work—touching over 10,000 lives through our productions, outreach programs, and community engagement. We are proud to be a positive force for the arts, inspiring both our communities and the households of our students.

At Salt Creek Ballet, we celebrate our students, whose dedication and discipline bring each production to life. Our legacy of excellence in dance education continues to grow, shaping leaders and nurturing character that extend far beyond the studio.

As we approach our 40th anniversary, we step into a year of exciting possibilities, beginning with our family-friendly spring production of *Sleeping Beauty* on March 22nd at the McAninch Arts Theater. This production will offer immersive, on-stage experiences for families to enjoy together.

We take this moment to express our deepest thanks to everyone who has made this journey possible. The spirit of collaboration and dedication within the Salt Creek Ballet family—our dancers, staff, board members, volunteers, and supporters—is the foundation of everything we do. Together, we continue to inspire, create, and share the joy of dance, offering excellence in everything from our curriculum and productions to our costumes and culture.

May Tchaikovsky’s music continue to whisk you away and may your holiday season be filled with joy. Thank you for being a vital part of this artistic journey.

With deepest gratitude,



Erica De la O
Artistic Director



Kristopher Wojtera
Artistic Director

ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

Erica De La O

Kristopher Wojtera

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Walker Rediehs, Administrator

Dr. Kelly Stokes, Community Engagement Coordinator

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION STAFF

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Scenic Design | Simon Pastukh |
| Costume Design | Galina Solovyeva |
| Production Designer and Painter | Oleg Smirnov |
| Wardrobe Coordinator | Joelle Ferano |
| Technical Director | Brandon Lewis, <i>Midwest Event Solutions</i> |
| Lighting Designer | Charles Cooper, USA* |
| Rehearsal Assistants .. | Joelle Ferano, Jayne Friscia, Anna Spelman, Vera Zhukova |
| Costumers | Kay Johnson, Emily Lorenz, Sabena Sellnow & Carl Gramza, Halsey Onstage, Travis Halsey, Rachel Young, Rick Coleman, Redding Baker |
| Photographer | Keith Gerling, Jacqueline Barkley |
| Poster | Lauren Kavanaugh |
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A special thank you to the committee chair volunteers:

Jennifer Bogs, Christine Carney, Kristin Challacombe, Danielle DeChristopher, Terri Deckys, Sarah Djordjevic, Farrah Fahmy, Stephanie Johnson, Jacque Kent, Dana Meinkow, Dani Morelli, Heather O'Hara, Alison Poteracki, Steve Ring, Sari Rosenburg, Aigul Sharshenova, Georgia Tsantillis, Rebecca VanDeCastele, Aida Yanahan, Megan Zepeda, Larisa Barboshov, Steve Ring, Dawn Ring

Salt Creek Ballet would like to thank our esprit de corps volunteers
who help make this exceptional production a reality!

*Those designers and scenic artists identified by USA are members of United Scenic Artists, IATSE
Local 829, AFL-CIO



Dining Partners

Eat, drink & enjoy - MAC dining partners

Coupons are only valid on performance days or nights.

For all your pre-show meals and post-show bites, we are thrilled to be partnering with these neighborhood restaurants. Our dining partners offer MAC patrons exclusive discounts and special offers. All MAC ticket orders receive coupons to these local favorite restaurants!



PROGRAM

Act I

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Counselor Von Stahlbaum | Kristopher Wojtera*, Brandon Penn* |
| Frau Von Stahlbaum..... | Carle Scurlock, Eleanor Zepeda |
| Their Daughter, Clara | Alice Barbashov, Emma Botha, Tatum Flanagan |
| Their Son, Fritz | Joey Miller-Cox, Walter Boecker |
| Nurse..... | Lyla Barkley, Virginia Birmingham, Kaitlynn Kurosaki |
| Party Guests | Briana Jaskevicius, Sabrina Yanahan, Alina Djordjevic, Mia Meinkow, Amelia Challacombe Nicoletta Deckys, Noah Ring, Aaron Renteria*, Luis Caro*, Brandon Penn* , Genna Bradley |
| Children at the Party | Anna Guth, Evelyn Poteracki, Nail De Angel, Addison Johnson, Adeline Anderson, Mia Botha, Marissa Martinez, Embry Rediehs, Liv Cordero, Lucia DeChristopher, Brooklyn Morelli, Polina Hedroyts, Alexa Zitkevicius, Sienna Barkley, Grace Ring, Katelyn Warner, Natalie Anderson, Geneva McNutt, Molly VanDeCastele, Joanna Tsantillis, Nina Guth, Alyssa Martinez, Annie Spencer, Milly O’Hara, Giavanna Fahmy, Raleigh Kent, Aidana Argynova, Cecilia Aranauskas, Zoey Lewis, Nadia Bizior, Sophie Xu |
| Dr. Drosselmeyer | Ricardo Garcia*, Kristopher Wojtera* |
| Columbine | Amelia Challacombe, Alina Djordjevic, Mia Meinkow |
| Soldier Dolls | Scott Reed*, Noah Ring, Nicoletta Deckys, Briana Jaskevicius, Sia Erter, Sabrina Yanahan |
| The Mouse King | Edson Cabrera* |
| Baby Mice | Annie Biesel, Sophia Moura, Lily Jansen, Anna Rosenberg, Daisy Veselik, Emilia Aranauskas, Divya Culen, Virginia Hofheimer, Eliana Tsantillis, Molly McKeague, Emma Ross |
| Big Mice | Athena Baum, Virginia Birmingham, Lyla Barkley, Alexandra Didzbalis, Tatum Flanagan, Genna Bradley, Kaitlynn Kurosaki, Alice Barbashov, Emma Botha |
| The Nutcracker..... | Noah Ring |
| Soldiers..... | Giavanna Fahmy, Raleigh Kent, Aidana Argynova, Cecilia Aranauskas, Nadia Bizior, Zoey Lewis, Milly O’Hara, Natalie Anderson, Geneva McNutt, Molly VanDeCastele, Joanna Tsantillis, Nina Guth, Alyssa Martinez, Annie Spencer |

PROGRAM

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|----------------------------|---|
| Toys..... | Vivienne Bogs, Charlotte Crampton, Cori Dunleavy, Charlotte Matthiesen, Seraphina Roseri, Genevieve Carney, Hailey Stout, Emily Herrmann, Claire Kavanaugh, Finola Cordero, Grace McDonald |
| Princess Clara | Alina Djordjevic, Mia Menkow, Sia Erter |
| The Nutcracker Prince..... | Norbert Nirewicz*, Brandon Penn* |
| Snowflakes | Carle Scurlock, Amelia Challacombe, Nicoletta Deckys, Sabrina Yanahan, Alina Djordjevic, Sia Erter, Jayne Fricia, Hannah Stahl, Briana Jaskevicius, Tatum Flanagan, Giovanna Fahmy , Emma Botha, Eva Gregerson, Alice Barbashov, Vera Brenneman**, Natalie DiBartolo**, Olivia Castello** Astrid Westerfield* |

Act II

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|-----------------------------------|---|
| Sugar Plum Fairy & Cavalier | Tenley Connors and Aaron Renteria, Daynelis Munoz & Wilhelm Josue Gomez Sarria, Ariel Morilla Tamayo |
| Angels..... | Annie Bieselin, Julia Jakubowski, Violet Johnson, Daisy Veselik, Alma Chmielnicki, Marcy Raczek, Florence Stout, Molly McKeague, Emma Ross, Eliana Tsantillis, Harper Dues |
| Archangels..... | Sophia Maura, Lily Jansen, Anna Rosenberg, Harper Dues, Emilia Aranauskas, Divya Culen, Virginia Hofheimer |
| Spanish Dance..... | Nicoletta Deckys, Alina Djordjevic, Mia Meinkow |
| Chinese Dance..... | Briana Jaskevicius, Amelia Challacombe, Sabrina Ynahan, Nicolleta Deckys |
| Mirlitons..... | Mia Meinkow, Sabrina Yanahan, Amelia Challacombe, Carle Scurlock, Nicoletta Deckys, Briana Jaskevicius, Sia Erter |
| Russian Dance | Scott Reed*, Wilhelm Josue Gomez Sarria*, Ariel Morilla Tamayo*, Noah Ring |
| Arabian Solo | Brandon Penn*, Mia Meinkow, Alina Djordjevic, Sia Erter, Amelia Challacombe, Norbert Nirewicz* |
| Arabian Corps..... | Athena Baum, Virginia Birmingham, Genna Bradley, Alexandra Didzbalis, Eva Gregerson, Kaitlynn Kurosaki, Lyla Barkley, Raleigh Kent, Alice Barbashov, Tatum Flanagan, Emma Botha, Giovanna Fahmy |

PROGRAM

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|---------------------------------|--|
| Mother Ginger | Luis Caro, Ann Lockhart* (11/30, 12/01) |
| Her Children, the Bon Bons..... | Liv Cordero, Lucia DeChristopher, Brooklyn Morelli, Polina Hedroyts, Alexa Zitkevicius, Sienna Barkley, Grace Ring, Katelyn Warner, Anna Guth, Evelyn Poteracki, Nali De Angel, Addison Johnson, Adeline Anderson, Mia Botha, Marissa Martinez, Emily Angileri |
| Bon Bon Soloists..... | Alice Barbashov, Tatum Flanagan, Emma Botha, Giovanna Fahmy |
| Dew Drop Solo | Mia Menkov, Carle Scurlock, Alina Djordjevic |
| Waltz Demi Soloists | Nicoletta Deckys, Amelia Challacombe, Alina Djordjevic, Mia Meinkow |
| Waltz Corps | Nicoletta Deckys, Amelia Challacombe, Alina Djordjevic, Carle Scurlock, Sabrina Yanahan, Briana Jaskevicius, Sia Erter, Mia Meinkow, Jayne Friscia*, Hannah Stahl*, Vera Brenneman**, Natalie DiBartolo**, Olivia Castello**, Astrid Westerfield |
| Finale & Apotheosis | Salt Creek Ballet Company and Guest Artists |

* Denotes Guest Artist

** Denotes Returning Alumni

PROGRAM NOTES

The Nutcracker

Music by Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Based on a story by E.T.A. Hoffman

It is Christmas Eve and the Von Stahlbaums are preparing to welcome their party guests, who arrive family by family, bearing gifts for the host's children, Clara and Fritz. The presents are all carefully placed under the Christmas tree. Clara's Godfather, the mysterious Herr Drosselmeyer, arrives with a marvelous group of mechanical dolls. In addition, the magical and eccentric Herr Drosselmeyer has planned a special surprise for his beloved Godchild, Clara. He presents her with a wonderfully mysterious nutcracker. Clara is immediately taken with her strange gift. Fritz is jealous and steals the nutcracker from Clara. In the chaos of his teasing, Fritz accidentally breaks the nutcracker. Herr

PROGRAM NOTES

Drosselmeyer comes to the rescue and assures Clara that all will be well. The guests perform a contredanse, after which they depart and the Von Stahlbaums prepare for bed.

Just before the stroke of midnight, Clara returns to the darkened living room to check on her nutcracker. She is frightened by large mice, but suddenly Herr Drosselmeyer appears and the mice flee. Much to Clara's amazement, Herr Drosselmeyer commands the Christmas tree to grow to such an enormous size that it pushes away the entire room. Next, he changes her little toy into a life-size nutcracker. The mice suddenly reappear and a vicious battle ensues. Just when the soldiers seem to be winning, the great Mouse King appears and the tide turns. The Nutcracker and the Mouse King fight. The Mouse King is about to overpower The Nutcracker when Clara distracts him with her shoe, giving The Nutcracker the chance to run the Mouse King through with his sword. The Nutcracker, released from an enchanted spell, turns into a handsome prince. Clara becomes a Princess. The Nutcracker Prince takes Princess Clara's hand, and escorts her on a magical voyage to the Kingdom of Snow and beyond.

Princess Clara journeys to the Kingdom of Sweets where the Sugar Plum Fairy greets her. A series of entertaining divertissements are ordered. Princess Clara and The Nutcracker Prince dance together surrounded by radiant flowers. The Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier then dance for Clara and the Prince. When the festivities are over, everyone bids goodbye to The Nutcracker and Clara who leave together for her home, where she awakens, uncertain if her magical journey was a dream or reality.

GUEST ARTIST PROFILES



A Cuban-born Principal International Guest Artist, **Daynelis Muñoz**, showcased her exceptional talents with the National Ballet of Cuba, Mexico Ballet, and Tulsa Ballet before embarking on a freelancing journey.

Muñoz has graced stages across Spain, France, Colombia, Mexico, and more. Her repertoire includes leading roles in iconic classics such as Swan Lake, Giselle, Don Quixote, Nutcracker, Sleeping Beauty,

GUEST ARTIST PROFILES

Romeo and Juliet, Serenade, La Bayadere, as well as pieces by internationally acclaimed choreographers like John Cranko, Edwaard Liang, Marcello Angelini, George Balanchine, Wayne McGregor, Ma Cong, and the legendary Alicia Alonso.

Muñoz has left an indelible mark on the international ballet scene, having earned Gold Medals in various International Ballet Competitions in Cuba and Mexico, including the prestigious Youth America Grand Prix. Her contributions extend beyond performance, as she has served as a jury member for dance competitions, International Dance Meetings, and Congresses of Spectacles in Mexico.

Currently, Muñoz holds the esteemed position of Principal Guest Artist and Ballet Coach on the international stage. Her expertise has been sought after, leading to invitations to guest teach in numerous Galas, Master classes, and Ballet Productions around the world. Muñoz continues to be a beacon of excellence, enriching the global ballet community with her artistry and dedication.



Wilhelm Josue Gómez started his dance training at the age of six at the “Teatro Municipal” in Cali, Colombia with Cesar Mosquera. He then enrolled at the Instituto Colombiano de Ballet (IncolBallet) where he received his formal training from age eight until he graduated from high school. He went to train under full scholarship with

Fort Lauderdale Youth Ballet under the Artistic Direction of German Dager where he graduated in 2021. Gómez was Fort Lauderdale Youth Ballet’s first Nutcracker Prince.

Josue won the Youth American Grand Prix in New York Semi-Finals and was a YAGP Finalist at the NY Finals performing his Talisman Variation at Lincoln Center’s David Koch Theatre. He won 1st Place all around in Classical and Contemporary at The Miami International Ballet Competition at age 15 and was invited to dance at the closing Gala with La Boheme, his contemporary piece. At the American Dance Competition, for two years in a row, he won 1st Place in Classical and Contemporary. His Pas de Deux from Le Corsaire also won 1st Place and was invited to perform the Pas de Deux and Talisman Variation at the closing gala. Josue also won 1st Place for Diana & Acteon Pas de Deux

GUEST ARTIST PROFILES

and Coda at the Universal Ballet Competition & Shake the Ground Competition.

Josue has won full scholarships to San Francisco Ballet School, the American Ballet Theatre (two scholarships and invitation by Sasha Radetsky to take class at the American Ballet Theatre Studio Company). He also won a scholarship to The Paris Opera Ballet School in Paris, France, The Dutch National Ballet Academy in Amsterdam, Netherlands, all year round program, The Elmhurst School of Ballet, The School of American Ballet (SAB), Pacific Northwest Ballet, Houston Ballet Academy, The Bolshoi Ballet Academy, Pennsylvania Ballet, Orlando Ballet School, The Joffrey Ballet School, Next Generation Ballet / Patel Conservatory, and Sarasota Ballet. Josue spent two summers with full scholarship at the San Francisco Ballet School and The Fort Lauderdale Youth Ballet.

At the Youth American Grand Prix Semi-finals in Tampa, Florida, Gomez won the Youth American Grand Prix in the Senior Category and won 1st Place in Pas de Deux with Grand Pas Classique. He also had the honor to have been invited to dance in the Gala. Gomez has also been invited to dance at the two Gala's at the Youth American Grand Prix Mexico ~ Festival Internacional de Danza in October 2019.

At the Universal Ballet Competition, Josue won 1st Place in the Senior men Classical with his Albrecht Variation, 1st Place in Contemporary with his Revive, and 1st place in the Senior Pas de Deux Competition with Grand Pas Classique.

Josue has danced the Cavalier in the Sugar Plum Pas de Deux and Snow Pas de Deux at the Fort Lauderdale Youth Ballet Nutcracker Ballet, for three years in a row. He danced at Birmingham Royal Ballet in the United Kingdom, where he was a company artist and danced professionally for the 2021-2022 Season. In 2023 Josue danced with English National Ballet for the Spring Production of Cinderella where he danced 30 show at the Royal Albert Hall in London, UK.

In the Summer of 2023, Josue was invited to guest dance with the Kenneth McMillan Project at the Kaatsbaan Cultural Park Festival in Tivoli, NY where he danced "Ballade" by Kenneth McMillan.

GUEST ARTIST PROFILES

Recently, Josue was invited to be part of the Sugar Hill Production where he will be the lead in The Nutcracker Movie. He will be performing eight performances at the Benedum Center in Pittsburgh, PA, 16 performances at the New York City Center and 16 performances at the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago, IL

SALT CREEK BALLET PROFILES



ERICA DE LA O (Artistic Director) was born in East Los Angeles, CA, and is a Principal Artist with The Louisville Ballet. Her repertoire has included leading roles in much of the classical canon, including La Sylphide, Giselle, Swan Lake, Romeo, and Juliet), Cinderella, Coppelia, Don Quixote, Sleeping Beauty, Les Sylphides, Lady of the

Camellias, and The Nutcracker. She also has performed leading roles in works by Balanchine, Paul Taylor, Twyla Tharp, Adam Houghland, Lucas Jervies, Val Caniparoli, Ben Stevenson, Dave Ingram, Harrison McEldowney, Helen Pickett, Ma Cong, and many others. Beyond ballet, she has also forged a career as a choreographer and collaborative artist in music, film, and graphic design. Her honors include the Sono Osato award, the John Orr Award from the Pasadena Arts Council, an award from the Kentucky Women Foundation to shed light on social topics, a fellowship from Hadley Creatives, and a silver medal at the Los Angeles' Music Center Spotlight Awards. She created Bunhead Talks, an educational vehicle for dance history, female empowerment in ballet culture, and parent/student dance education. Ms. De La O holds an MFA from Hollins University. She earned an EMBA from the University of Louisville and University of Kentucky Schools of Business.



Kristopher Wojtera (Artistic Director) Joining Erica is her husband, Kristopher Wojtera, born in Poland. Mr. Wojtera began ballet studies at the National Ballet School in Gdansk at age ten. He joined the Polish National Theatre in Warsaw and worked with prominent choreographers such as Lorca Miasin, Emil Wesolowski, Yuri Grigorovich, Krzysztof Pastor, and Mats Ek. During Mr. Wojtera's 28 year career, his repertoire as a Principal artist included leading roles in Giselle, Swan Lake, Nutcracker, The Three Musketeers, Don Quixote, Lady of the Camellias, Le Patineurs, Theme and Variations, Billy The Kid, as well as contemporary

works by Ma Cong, Val Caniparoli, Twyla Tharp, Antony Tudor, Harrison McEldowney, and many others. He danced professionally with Baltic Opera (Gdansk, Poland), Columbia City Ballet (South Carolina), Louisville Ballet (Kentucky), and English National Ballet (London, England). While still performing, he completed a Master of Fine Arts degree in Dance from Hollins University in association with the Forsythe Lab and the Mousonturm in Frankfurt, Germany. He earned an Artist's Diploma from The National Ballet School of Gdańsk in Poland and certificates in Vaganova Teaching methodology (levels 1 – 5) from Bryn Mawr College. Mr. Wojtera's awards include the Carolina New House Scholarship, the Sono Osato Award, and the Hollins University Fellowship. As Artistic Director, he will be teaching a mix of classes, coaching, and implementing the artistic vision of SCB. He looks forward to working together to advance the mission of Salt Creek Ballet.

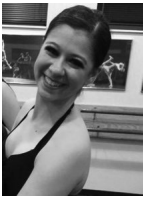


Charles Cooper (Lighting Designer) is an award-winning Chicago-based lighting designer for theatre and dance currently returning to Salt Creek Ballet for his 14th season of lighting *The Nutcracker*. His regional and Chicago credits include work for Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Writers' Theatre, Drury Lane Oakbrook, Victory Gardens Theatre, Northlight Theatre, First Stage Milwaukee, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, American Theatre Company, Peninsula Players Theatre, The House Theatre of Chicago, and many more. Cooper is proud to be an Associate Artist of Chicago's TimeLine Theatre where he has designed more than 15 productions. Frequent collaborators include directors William Brown, Kimberly Senior, Erica Weiss, Hallie Gordon, and Sandy Shinner, designers Keith Pitts, Kevin Depinet, Andrew Hansen, Chris Kriz, and Rachel Healy. He studied at Purchase College and De Paul University. Awards include the 2016 Joseph Jefferson award for Outstanding Lighting Design, six Joseph Jefferson nominations for Outstanding Lighting Design, and two After Dark Awards for best overall design. Since 2002, he has been on the faculty of Hinsdale Central High School teaching the basics of theatrical design and production. Through his teaching and design work, Cooper is proud to be inspiring a new generation of theatre artists. He lives in Oak Park, Illinois with his wife Angela and sons, Ethan and Gavin. Cooper has been a proud member of United Scenic Artists Local 829 since 2005.

SALT CREEK BALLET PROFILES



Brandon Lewis (Technical Director) is thrilled to be back at Salt Creek Ballet for *The Nutcracker*. He has worked with Salt Creek Ballet since 1997 only missing a few years here and there. He is an account executive at Midwest Event Solutions who specialize in lighting, audio, and video. In addition, he is the Theatre Program head at St. Francis High School in Wheaton, Illinois. Much love to his family, and his favorite Bon-Bon ever.



Joelle Farano, (Rehearsal Assistant) a native of Darien, IL, obtained her Doctor of Pharmacy and a minor in dance at Ohio Northern University, and completed her MBA and two-year administration residency at the University of Chicago Medicine. She has been dancing since the age of 10 in tap, jazz, hip hop, ballet/pointe, lyrical, contemporary, pom, and kick. Farano was a member of the Steppin' Out Dance Company, where she and her teammates won numerous awards at local and national dance competitions under the direction of Donna Johnson and Ashley Goletz (DeForest). During her high school career, Farano was captain of the Varsity Danceline, dancing at football and basketball games and competing in Kick and Pom and solo categories. In college, she was a part of the Ohio Northern University Dance Company under the direction of Dr. Laurie Bell, where she performed with various dance companies, including Paul Taylor II, Amy Marshall Dance Company, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, and Ballets with a Twist. She has taken tap master classes with Sean Kaminski, Jay Fagan, Nico Rubio, and Savion Glover. She enjoys combining and adapting her expertise in rhythm and Broadway tap techniques to provide her students with strong technical skills while encouraging them to explore their artistry.



Jayne Friscia (Guest Artist and Rehearsal Assistant) is a dance artist based in Chicago, Illinois. Born in San Diego, California, she earned her BA in Dance from the University of California, Irvine, receiving the Cloud Hsueh Scholarship for Outstanding Student in Dance. At UCI, she trained in both dance and arts administration under the direction of Molly Lynch, learning from esteemed faculty such

as Vitor Luiz, Tong Wang, Katarzyna Skarpetowska, Lar Lubovitch, and Diane Diefenderfer.

Frischia has attended intensives with Ballet Arizona and Backhausdance on scholarship, as well as with Complexions Contemporary Ballet. In 2022, she was chosen as a dancer for SALT Dance's LINK Festival, where she had the pleasure of performing in an original work by Omar Román De Jesús. Friscia has danced professionally with City Ballet of San Diego as part of their studio company and as a company artist with Ballet Quad Cities. During her time in Chicago, she was awarded the Claire Bataille Legacy Program Scholarship and currently dances with Chicago Repertory Ballet. In addition to dancing, she has worked in non-profit administration with organizations such as the Bare Bones Dance Theatre, Irvine Barclay Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, and Scripps Research. She began her teaching career at San Diego Civic Youth Ballet under the guidance of Danika Pramik-Holdaway, and has since taught in the children's division at various dance schools in both California and Illinois. Most recently, she was on faculty with Davenport Junior Theater and A Fairytale Ballet.



Vera Zhukova (Research Assistant) trained and received her diploma in the pedagogy of ballet and character dance from the prestigious State Academy of Art and Culture in Chelyabinsk, Russia. Zhukova was a principal dancer with the State Ural Folk Choir and Dance Ensemble from 1975 to 1981, performing in several countries around the world. She was the artistic director of the Municipal Children's Dance Theater in Ekaterinburg, Russia, for thirteen years. Under her direction, students of the dance theater successfully participated in competitions in the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Turkey, and Finland. She received the Russian Federation's honorable dance teacher award in the year 2000. Several of Zhukova former students have pursued dance careers, either as professional performers or dance instructors. She is also the author of a book on dance teaching methods, which has been well-received by dance instructors in her native Russia. Prior to founding Ballet Academy in Lincoln Park, she was the artistic director of the Dmitri Roudnev Ballet School of Chicago, where she taught ballet and character dance. Her ballet teaching is based on the Vaganova syllabus, which has proven to be highly successful with young

children. She enjoys working with children and strives to help her students achieve their full dance potential.



Anna Spelman (Rehearsal Assistant) began her rigorous ballet training and performing career at the San Diego Ballet at the age of nine. By eleven, with the influence of NYCB principal dancer Jillana, she attended and received scholarships to the School of American Ballet summer intensives in New York City. Under the artistic co-

directorship of renowned Bulgarian ballerina Sonia Arova and her husband Thor Sutowski, Spelman thrived in classical ballet training and Thor's contemporary choreography. She enjoyed performing "Clara" in *The Nutcracker*, "Four Little Swans" and later, "Big Swans" in *Swan Lake*, the 2nd Shade variation in *La Bayadere*, Prokofiev's *Romeo & Juliet* and the Bournonville ballets *Napoli*, *La Sylphide* and *Etudes*. At twelve, Spelman along with twenty San Diego Ballet dancers experienced a summer abroad at L' Ecole Supérieure de Danse de Cannes Rosella Hightower and performed *Raymonda* and *La Sylphide* on the French Riviera. At fifteen years of age, she was given an opportunity to join a Columbia Artist Tour, performing ballet every night in a different city in the northwest. During the summer, she competed as a junior at the International Ballet Competition in Varna, Bulgaria. In the fall, after her ballet teachers were appointed Directors of the Alabama School of Fine Arts Dance Department in Birmingham, Spelman was invited to continue her demanding artistic training. She performed in outreach projects at high schools in Alabama to educate students in the arts, as well as, onstage in August Bournonville's *The Flower Festival* in Genzano Pas de Deux and leading roles in Michel Fokine's *Les Sylphides* which prompted her to win an Obelisk award for best female dancer. Later, while on scholarship at American Ballet Theatre School, Spelman had the opportunity to perform Richard England's *Vivaldi Pas de Deux* with ABT's 2nd company on the Metropolitan Opera House stage. The very next day, she was asked to join American Ballet Theatre to perform in Mikhail Baryshnikov's *Nutcracker*, which marked the beginning of her career with ABT. During her ten-year professional career with ABT under the directorship of Mikhail Baryshnikov, she toured the major cities of the US as well as France, Italy, Japan, and Israel. In Israel, she performed Michel Fokine's *Le Spectre de la Rose*, *Emilia* in Moor's *Pavane* by Jose Limon and *Paquita* under the direction of Elena

Tchernichova. Spelman danced and acted in the films *Hair*, directed by Milos Forman and choreographed by Twyla Tharp, and *Dancers*, directed by Herbert Ross and filmed in Livorno, Italy. Her television credits include: *Live from Lincoln Center*, PBS special *Twyla Tharp with ABT*, and *American Ballet Theatre in San Francisco*, and *Don Quixote ABT with Mikhail Baryshnikov at the Met*, and the David Gordon television special *Dance in America* where she was featured as *The Woman in White* in Gordon's ballet *Murder*, dancing with Baryshnikov. Spelman has worked closely with choreographers in both ballet and modern dance including George Balanchine, Kenneth MacMillan, Jerome Robbins, Antony Tudor, Frederick Ashton, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Merce Cunningham, David Gordon, Paul Taylor, and Twyla Tharp. She continues to fuel her passion for dance by teaching her craft. She completed intensive training in the American Ballet Theatre National Training Curriculum and is ABT certified to teach Primary thru Level 7 & Partnering. After acquiring her ABT certification, Spelman has been teaching ballet in the Chicago land area at dance schools, such as Faubourg School of Ballet, Plainfield Dance Academy, Steps Dance Center, Ruth Page Center for the Arts, Salt Creek Ballet and Chicago Ballet Conservatory. Last year, in 2020, YAGP awarded "Outstanding Studio" to the Chicago Ballet Conservatory where Spelman has been an integral part of the ballet foundation at the University of Tampa.



Edson Cabrera (Guest Artist) was born in Cuba and graduated from the highly regarded Escuela Nacional de Arte in Dance in 2005. During this training period at the National School of Art in Havana, he participated in the ITs Festival in the Netherlands under the direction of Feri de Geus and Noortje Bijvoets. Subsequently, he joined the Cuban dance company Ballet Rakatan, dancing as a soloist.

In 2007, he became a member of Danza Contemporánea de Cuba, participating in several international tours to England, Mexico, Hungary, Poland, Spain, the Netherlands, Australia, and the USA. He has also performed in the Sziget Festival in Budapest, Mercat de Les Flors in Barcelona, Brisbane Festival, Manchester International Festival, The Bydgoszcz Opera Festival, and Virginia Arts Festival. Cabrera was made Principal Dancer in 2010.

During his tenure with Danza Contemporánea de Cuba, he worked with choreographers Rafael Bonachela, Carlos Junior Acosta, George Céspedes, Julio César Iglesias, Juan Kruz Díaz de Garaio Esnaola, Mats Ek, Itzik Galili, and Pedro Ruiz, and performed works by Jan Linkens, and Kenneth Kvarström.

He joined artistic forces with Hedwig Dances in 2012.

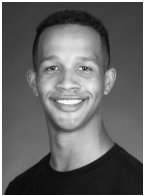


Luis Caro (Guest Artist), originally from Puerto Rico, began his dance training in Lansing, Michigan where he was a theatre student. In 1993, he earned his B.F.A. from Butler University in Indianapolis. Since that time he has danced professionally with Louisville Ballet, Montgomery Ballet, Eugene Ballet, and performed as guest with several other dance troupes around the U.S. In Chicago, Caro has been a dance faculty member at Columbia College and The Chicago Academy for the Arts. Also, he performed with the Ruth Page Foundation under the former direction of Larry Long, Ballet Chicago, Ginger Farley's former 58 Group, and various contemporary companies. He is a certified Pilates, Active Red Cord, and core trainer as well as a Thai and clinical Thai bodyworker practitioner. With the exception of last year, Caro has been a guest performer with Salt Creek Ballet since 1998.



Ricardo J. Garcia (Mayaguez, Puerto Rico) (Guest Artist) began his dance training at Point Park University in Pittsburgh, where he earned a BA in Dance. Upon graduating, he joined the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company (DCDC), under the direction of founder Jeraldine Blunden and subsequently Kevin Ward. At DCDC, he had the honor to work with acclaimed choreographers Bill T. Jones, Doug Verone, Donald McKayle, Ronald K. Brown and Dwight Rhoden, among others. Additionally, he was the recipient of the Josie Award for Outstanding Male Dancer of the Year in 2002. He relocated to Chicago and spent five seasons with Luna Negra Dance Theater and performed as a guest with The Joffrey Ballet, Illinois Ballet, Peoria Ballet and Salt Creek Ballet. He has conducted classes throughout the US, Europe and Russia, and his choreography have been performed by Luna Negra Dance Theater, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company II, South Dayton Dance Theater, Stivers School for the Arts, After School Matters

and Piel Morena Contemporary Dance. Garcia holds a Master of Science in Nonprofit Management and Philanthropy from Bay Path University and has been the Administrator of Career Transition For Dancers/Midwest, the Managing Director for Lucky Plush Productions, the Co-Artistic Director of the Blue Lake International Ensemble, on the faculty of The Chicago High School for the Arts, the Manager at the American Rhythm Center, the Sr. Pantry Programs Manager at Beyond Hunger, and is currently the Manager of Place-Based Initiatives at Feeding America National Organization.



Brandon Penn (Guest Artist) was born and raised in Richmond, VA and at the age of 10 began his dance training at the Pine Camp Cultural Arts Center where he studied with Annette Holt, Rodney Williams and Willie Hinton learning a variety of styles. He later enrolled into the School of Richmond Ballet where he studied under Igor Antanov, Malcolm Burn, and more.

After spending three years at the Richmond Ballet Penn was accepted as a trainee of the company whilst completing his senior year. After graduating, Penn spent one year at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Purchase College Conservatory for Dance, studying under Larry Clark, Taryn Russell, Ted Kivitt, and others. After spending a year at SUNY, Penn was offered a position with Atlanta Ballet 2.

After two years there, Penn was offered a company position with the Columbia City Ballet. Later, after much experience and repertory under his belt, he accepted a principal contract with the Fort Wayne Ballet where he just finished his second season. He would like to immensely thank his family for all of their love, support and words of wisdom.



Hannah Stahl (Guest Artist) started her training with Elise Flagg; Founder of Elise Flagg Academy of Dance and former New York City Ballet Company Artist under the direction of George Balanchine, at the age of 13. Stahl spent her summers training with Carolina Ballet (2017) and Grand Rapids Ballet (2018, 2019) on scholarship. She

moved to Michigan in 2019 and became a student with Grand Rapids

SALT CREEK BALLET PROFILES

Ballet. While studying with the school, Stahl was invited by the artistic director, James SoFranko, to work with their professional company.

SALT CREEK BALLET COMPANY, APPRENTICE AND TRAINEE



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Nicoletta Deckys



Alina Djordjevic



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Sia Erter



Briana Jaskevicius



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*Denotes apprentice



Kirk Muspratt (Music Director and Conductor) recently received the Conductor of the Year award from the Illinois Council of Orchestras. He was also named “Chicagoan of the Year” in classical music by John von Rhein and the staff of the *Chicago Tribune*. In honoring Muspratt, von Rhein said, “Ask the delighted adults and

kids who this year flocked to his concerts in west suburban Glen Ellyn with the New Philharmonic Orchestra ... They will tell you he made concert going an interactive experience that was both enlightening and — are you ready? — fun.”

Recognized as one of the outstanding figures in the new generation of conductors, Muspratt has garnered international critical acclaim as a “born opera conductor” (Rheinische Post), “a knowledgeable musician who delivers superbly controlled, gorgeously shaped readings” (St. Louis Post-Dispatch), and “friend to local music” (Midwest Beat Magazine). The Los Angeles Times declared, “Watch him!”

This season marks the 20th anniversary of Muspratt being both Music Director of New Philharmonic and Artistic Director/Music Director of DuPage Opera Theatre (now New Philharmonic Opera). In his last fifteen years, productions featured *Otello*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *La Boheme*, *Faust*, *Otello*, *Tosca*, *The Beggars Opera*, *Elixir of Love*, *Turandot*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Così fan Tutte*, *The Mikado*, *La Traviata*, and *Die Fledermaus*.

In 2017 and 2009, New Philharmonic was awarded Professional Orchestra of the Year by the Illinois Council of Orchestras.

In his first months at New Philharmonic, Muspratt instituted a Side-by-Side program for local high school students. Five years ago, Muspratt initiated a popular Solo Competition for Children that results in a child performing at every New Philharmonic concert. In order to involve the community to the maximum, Muspratt has created “Just Ask Kirk™” cards for audience members’ questions and a “Kirkature™” cartoon to help advocate the credo: “Classical music is for everyone.”

Muspratt begins his 23rd acclaimed season as Music Director of the Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra (NISO). In 2006, with NISO, he initiated the South Shore Summer Music Festival.

NEW PHILHARMONIC PROFILES

From 1991 through 1996, Muspratt served as resident conductor to Lorin Maazel at the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. Prior to that, he was appointed as associate conductor to Joseph Silverstein at the Utah Symphony Orchestra (1990-1992). From 1987 through 1990, Muspratt served as assistant conductor to Leonard Slatkin at the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra as well as music director of the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra. He was music director of the Alberta Ballet from 1997 through 1999. At the New York Philharmonic, Muspratt has served as a cover conductor. During the 2018 and 2019 season Muspratt served as a guest conductor at the Joffrey Ballet.

In addition to his work in Pittsburgh, Utah and St. Louis, Muspratt has guest conducted the orchestras of Los Angeles, Montreal, London, Korean Broadcast Symphony, Detroit, Rochester, National Arts Center, Vancouver, Knoxville, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, Hamilton, Victoria, Thunder Bay, New Orleans, Stamford, Binghamton, Lafayette, South Bend, Puchon, Annapolis, Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra and Baltimore Chamber Symphony. Summer debuts have included the Tanglewood, Chautauqua and Sewanee Music Festivals and the Banff Center for Performing Arts.

In Europe, Muspratt was assistant conductor in the opera houses of Monchengladbach/Krefeld, Germany, from 1985 to 1987. His American opera-conducting debut came with the Utah Opera in 1991. He returned there to premiere Mascagni's *L'Amico Fritz*. Maestro Muspratt has conducted *Die Fledermaus* for the Calgary Opera, *Faust* and *Merry Widow* for the Utah Opera, *Of Mice and Men* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for the Arizona Opera, all to stunning critical acclaim. In addition, he debuted at the Ash Lawn-Highland Summer Opera Festival in Virginia. He returned to Arizona Opera to conduct their production of *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, to the Utah Opera for their new production of *Faust* and *Amahl and the Night Visitors* at Opera Illinois.

In 1983 and 1984, Muspratt was invited to be a scholarship student at the Chautauqua Institute and in 1986 was selected as a conducting fellow at the Aspen Music Festival. A year later, he was invited into the Conducting Program at the Tanglewood Festival. In 1988, he was chosen to be one of three conducting fellows for the Los Angeles Philharmonic Institute at the Hollywood Bowl.

NEW PHILHARMONIC PROFILES

As a teacher, Muspratt has taught at the Conductors' Institute of the University of South Carolina, the Conductors' Guild National Workshops, Association of Canadian Orchestras National Conference in Toronto, the Conductors' Studio at Illinois State University and at Westminster Choir College in Princeton. During the summer, he has often taught a graduate conducting class at VanderCook College of Music and for the last three summers has been teaching at the Northwestern University Summer Opera Seminar. In 2019, he taught graduate conducting master classes at Illinois State University and judged the concerto competition at Northwestern University.

Having always enjoyed working with young people, he has conducted the Pennsylvania Regional Orchestra and the Pennsylvania All-State Orchestra and most recently the IMEA District 9 orchestra. Muspratt has conducted the Boston University Tanglewood Orchestra at the Tanglewood Festival.

Muspratt has been the recipient of numerous awards, among them grants from the Canada Council and the Presser Foundation. In 1983 and again in 1984, he was winner of the Strauss Conducting Prize while a conducting student at the Vienna Conservatory. During his tenure in Utah, he received the first Utah Up 'n Comers Award ever given to a classical musician. This honor was awarded to Muspratt for his work and involvement in the Utah Arts Community. In 1987, he was named winner of the prestigious Exxon/Affiliate Artists Award.

He began his studies as a pianist in New York with Harold Zabrack and continued his studies at Temple University with Adele Marcus and Alexander Fiorillo. After completing graduate studies, Muspratt was accepted into the conducting program at the Konservatorium in Vienna, Austria.

Muspratt is a native of Crows Nest Pass, Alberta, Canada. He became an American citizen in the summer of 2010.

In 2016, he was honored to become a Paul Harris Fellow, an award named for the Rotary International Founder, Paul Harris.



Benjamin Nadel is a classically trained conductor, pianist, and violinist based in the Chicago area. From 2016–2024 he was the Associate Conductor and Orchestra Librarian for the Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra. He has held those same two positions at the New Philharmonic since 2016. In addition, he has been the Orchestra Director at North Central College since 2017 and the Northwest Indiana Symphony Youth Orchestra since 2022. Fall of 2024 marks his first season as Music Director for the Youth Symphony of DuPage.

From 2011 – 2015 Nadel spent his summers with the Midwest Institute of Opera, as the assistant conductor to Maestro Joshua Greene of the Metropolitan Opera. While there, he conducted productions of *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte*, and *Carmen* in addition to assisting and coaching productions of *Die Zauberflöte* and *La Cenerentola*.

Nadel began his conducting studies with Dr. Glenn Block at Illinois State University while completing his undergraduate degree in Music Education.

He then went on to receive his MA in Orchestral Conducting at the University of Iowa with Dr. William LaRue Jones. He has participated in several summer music festivals, including a program with Cincinnati Conservatory as a part of the summer music festival in Spoleto, Italy.

Aside from his work as a professional conductor, Nadel has a strong connection and personal interest to music education. He believes that one of the most important aspects of being an artist is to pass along that experience and knowledge to the next generation of musicians. To that end, Nadel has worked with several high school ensembles in the Chicago area, including New Trier, Metea Valley, Glenbard West, Glenbard South, and Stevenson High School. His work has included side by side concerts with New Philharmonic. He has also led conducting workshops for the Opus Chamber Music camp, North Central College, and Illinois State University.

Nadel is a current member of the International Conductor's Guild (ICG), Major Orchestra Librarians Association (MOLA), and the Illinois Council of Orchestras (ICO).



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We are always looking for enthusiastic, dedicated, reliable and customer service-oriented people to become Volunteers serving as ushers, greeters and docents at our events.

Volunteers provide invaluable service by assisting guests to their seats, answering questions and most importantly creating a welcoming environment for our guests.

Volunteers are unpaid, but that doesn't mean you won't be rewarded. The cultural perks you'll enjoy as a volunteer include vouchers for every shift worked offering discounts to use at the MAC Box Office and invitation to our annual volunteer appreciation dinner including prizes and gifts.

Visit AtTheMAC.org/Volunteer to fill out an online application and for more information on requirements and qualifications. Applications accepted year-round.

Questions or for more information, contact Volunteer Coordinator Rob Nardini: email nardinir@cod.edu, phone (630) 942-3705.



HOUSE NOTES

- Cameras and recording devices are not allowed in the theater and are prohibited by our contracts with the artists.
- Smoking is not permitted in the theater or on campus.
- For your comfort and security, all backpacks and large bags must be checked.
- Please turn off all cell phones and any other alarms while in the theater.
- Emergency phone number at COD Police Department for after-hour calls is (630) 942-2000.
- Latecomers seated at discretion of the House Manager.
- Groups of 10 or more may contact (630) 942-3026 or grouptix@cod.edu to arrange for group discounts.
- If you notice a spill in the theater, please notify an usher.
- McAninch Arts Center volunteers are people who assist the house staff in areas of ticket taking, ushering and general management during performances. To get involved, call (630) 942-3705.
- For **Americans With Disabilities Act** accommodations, call (630) 942-2141 (voice) or (630) 858-9692 (TDD).
- **Infrared Assistive Listening Devices:** For audience members who desire audio amplification of performances, headsets with individual volume controls are now available. You may check out the headsets at the Box Office with a driver's license. *Underwritten by a generous gift from The Knowles Foundation.*

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