

LOUISVILLE BALLET

# CHOREOGRAPHERS' SHOWCASE



ÉTOILE

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Cover: Company Artists  
Elizabeth Abbick Pemberton, Caleb Emory, and Khalil Jackson

Inside and back cover:  
Company Artist Jordan Noblett  
Photos by Andrew Kung

## A LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Dear Louisville Ballet Friends,

Welcome to the final production of our 2025–2026 Season. I am thrilled for you to be in our Main Street Studios, where our Company and Studio Company Artists spend their days learning, training, and rehearsing the works you see on stage. Now, you will truly see their hard work and artistry from a new perspective, up close and personal.

*Choreographers' Showcase* has been an annual tradition for over 30 years. It has become a fan favorite for its unique variety of pieces, the intimate studio setting, and the pure surprise of never knowing what will come next. No two iterations of *Choreographers' Showcase* are alike; works range from classical to contemporary to everything in between. It has been a pleasure to see these six pieces come to life and to see our dancers grow in the process.

I hope you appreciate these brand new works and discover how dynamic, athletic, and unexpected ballet can be. Looking forward, we hope you will continue to support us in our milestone 75th Anniversary Season; it's one you don't want to miss.

### ÉTOILE

**HALLIE BEARD**  
*Editor*

**ANDY PEREZ**  
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**DAVID KELM**  
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*Contributing Photographers*

**WELCH PRINTING**  
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Sincerely,



Anthony Krutzkamp  
*Artistic Director*

MARCH 20-29, 2026 | LOUISVILLE BALLET STUDIOS

# CHOREOGRAPHERS' SHOWCASE



Choreography by the  
Artists of Louisville Ballet

Stage Manager: Megan Meyer

Costume Design by Molly Duke

Lighting Design by Jesse Alford

The evening performance on March 28  
is generously sponsored by



Company Artist  
Leigh Anne Albrecht  
Photo by Andrew Kung



Studio Company Artist Natalie Schreiner  
and Company Artist Leigh Anne Albrecht  
*Choreographers' Showcase 2024: Variations* by Ashley Thursby  
Photo by Kateryna Sellers

# DON'T HOLD TIGHT

CHOREOGRAPHY BY  
NATALIE SCHREINER

REHEARSAL ASSISTANT: HELEN DAIGLE

## MUSIC:

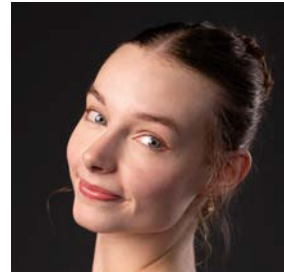
“Tabarly” by Yann Tiersen,  
“Dreamland,” “Bluebird,” and “Wishing” by Alexis Ffrench,  
“Nocturne (Interlude)” by Laufey

## CHOREOGRAPHER’S NOTE:

I never really wanted to grow up when I was younger. I desperately wanted time to move more slowly during childhood, a season in my life that seemed so good that I didn’t want it to end. I would push away things I thought were scary about adulthood and wanted to be a kid forever. But no matter how much you may want to go back to a certain moment in time, you have to move forward, because better things are in store for your future. While looking back on fond memories can be sweet, ruminating on one’s childhood can be detrimental to the mind, causing you to miss out on the present. This is the story of not wanting to let go of your younger self, pairing the fear of growing up with the desire to escape adolescence and reach your future faster than what is possible. In a nutshell: don’t hold on to the past or the future too much. As Eleanor Roosevelt said: Today is a gift. That’s why it is called the present.

## CAST:

Caitlin Kowalski and Sarah Hutchison  
Kayleigh Western and Ella White  
Addison Koerner and Christopher Balbuena  
Athena King and Nicholas Bentz  
Emmaline Fontanilla and Ezra Paisley



## ABOUT THE CHOREOGRAPHER:

Originally from Denver, Colorado, and a military brat, Natalie started dancing at the age of 10 in Honolulu, Hawaii. She started attending The Louisville Ballet School when her family moved to Louisville in 2022, and joined the Studio Company the following year after graduating high school. Some of her favorite pieces and roles she’s performed have been a soloist in Brandon Ragland’s *Silent Conversations*, David Senti’s *In Search*, various divertissements and corps roles in Val Caniparoli’s *The Brown-Forman Nutcracker*, and Ching Ching Wong’s *502*. When not dancing, Natalie enjoys many kinds of artistic hobbies and journaling.

“Tabarly” — Yann Tiersen. © Everything’s Calm; © Virgin.

Dreamland — Alexis Ffrench.

© Universal Music Publishing Limited; © Sony Music Masterworks.

“Bluebird” — Alexis Ffrench.

© Universal Music Publishing Limited; © Sony Music Masterworks.

“Wishing” — Alexis Ffrench. © Hal Leonard Corporation; © Sony Music Masterworks. “Nocturne (Interlude)” — Laufey.

© Vingolf Publishing; © AWAL Recordings.

# TUNED IN

**CHOREOGRAPHY BY  
AMBER WICKEY**

**REHEARSAL ASSISTANT: MIKELLE BRUZINA**

## **MUSIC:**

A sound collage assembled from  
“Kalypso” by Sorrow, “DMT” by xxyyxx,  
“Mirror Mirror” by Mohave,  
“Put It” by Shlohmo, and  
“Blue & Green” by Great Dane

## **CHOREOGRAPHER’S NOTE:**

This work is an exploration of movement and physicality. Rather than following a narrative, it celebrates what emerges through connection and energy among the dancers.

## **CAST:**

Ava Dhira Metzger, Guinevere Nelson, Caleb Emory,  
Joel Morin-Kensicki, and Aleksandr Q. Schroeder



## **ABOUT THE CHOREOGRAPHER:**

Amber Wickey is originally from Tenafly, New Jersey, where she began her dance training at Nunnbetter Dance Theater under the direction of Leath Nunn. She graduated from Butler University in 2020 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Dance Pedagogy. After dancing with the Louisville Ballet Studio Company for two years, she joined the Company in 2022. Amber has enjoyed performing a variety of works with the company, ranging from classical ballet to contemporary. Some of her favorite roles include the pas de trois in George Balanchine’s *Emeralds*, a soloist in Dysart Award winner Anne Jung’s *#fourwithsix*, the Confidence Fairy in Adam Houghland’s *Sleeping Beauty*, Dawn in Robert Curran’s *Coppélia*, Marie in Val Caniparoli’s *The Brown-Forman Nutcracker*, and Spring Fairy in Alun Jones’ *Cinderella*. Amber has also enjoyed dancing in Robert Curran’s *Swan Lake* and *La Sylphide*, George Balanchine’s *Scotch Symphony*, Alun Jones’ *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*, Andrea Schermoly’s *Appalachian Spring* and *Limbic*, Adam Houghland’s *Cold Virtues*, Ching Ching Wong’s *502*, and Stephen Mills’ *Light / The Holocaust & Humanity Project*. When Amber is not dancing, she can be found teaching at The Louisville Ballet School or relaxing with her cats and a good book. Amber is excited to continue bringing dance to the Louisville community!

“Kalypso” — Sorrow. © Sorrow; © Fent Plates.

“Mirror Mirror” — Louis Gabriel Gonzalez and Thomas Girettes. © © Divine.

“Put It” — Henry Loufer and Shlohmo. © Wedidit Collective; © Friends of Friends.

“Blue and Green” — Dane Morris. © Alpha Pup Records.

“DMT” — Marcel Everett. © XXYXXX; © Relief In Abstract Records.

# AGAPE

**CHOREOGRAPHY BY  
MARK A. KRIEGER JR.**

**REHEARSAL ASSISTANT: MIKELLE BRUZINA**

**MUSIC:**

“Grace” performed by Yo-Yo Ma and Bobby McFerrin,  
“A Touching Moment” by Michael Giacchino,  
“Flight of the Bumblebee” performed by  
Yo-Yo Ma and Bobby McFerrin,  
“Etude” by The Huntress and Holder of Hands

**CAST:**

**First movement:**

Madison Dunham and Fletcher Barr  
Anna Ford and Ezra Paisley  
*3/20, 21, 28 at 7:30 p.m., 3/29*

Ella White and Milo Sapien  
*3/21, 22, 28 at 1:30 p.m., 3/27*

**Second movement:**

Sarah Bradley and Nicholas Bentz  
*3/20, 21, 28 at 7:30 p.m., 3/29*

Anna Ford and Alexander Kingma  
*3/21, 22, 28 at 1:30 p.m., 3/27*

**Third movement:**

Fletcher Barr  
*3/21, 28, 29 at 1:30 p.m., 3/20*

Ezra Paisley  
*3/29 at 1:30 p.m., 3/20*

Milo Sapien  
*3/21 at 1:30 p.m.*

Khalil Jackson  
*3/21 and 28 at 7:30 p.m.*

Madison Dunham and Ella White  
*3/22 at 1:30 p.m., 3/27*

**Fourth movement: Full cast**



**ABOUT THE CHOREOGRAPHER:**

Mark, a Virginia native, studied dance under Jefferson Baum at Grand Valley State University in Michigan. In 2004, Mark joined Ballet Tucson, where he danced for two seasons before joining Columbia City Ballet. He spent five years with the Columbia City Ballet as a Principal Dancer. Mark has been a Company Artist with Louisville Ballet since 2012.

**CHOREOGRAPHER'S NOTE:**

The ancient Greeks identified multiple distinct forms of love, often cited as eight in modern interpretations. Among the most profound are Eros (romantic, passionate love), Philia (deep friendship and loyalty), Storge (natural familial affection), and Agape (unconditional, selfless love given freely without expectation of return). Of these, Agape stands as the highest ideal — a pure, sacrificial love offered regardless of reciprocation. This concept serves as both the title and the guiding inspiration for my work.

“Grace” — Bobby McFerrin and Yo-Yo Ma. © Universal Music Publishing;  
© Sony Masterworks.

“A Touching Moment” — Michael Giacchino. © Disney Music Publishing (DMP);  
© Varèse Sarabande.

“Flight of the Bumblebee” — Bobby McFerrin and Yo-Yo Ma.  
© ORIGINALARTISTS.COM; © Sony Masterworks.

“Étude” — The Huntress and Holder of Hands. © MorganEve Swain;  
© The Huntress and Holder of Hands.

# ANNE

**CHOREOGRAPHY BY  
NICHOLAS BRADLEY GRAY**

**REHEARSAL ASSISTANT: HELEN DAIGLE**

**MUSIC:**

“Excursions, Op. 20” by Samuel Barber,  
performed live by Justin Gray

**CHOREOGRAPHER’S NOTE:**

“That’s the worst of growing up, and I’m beginning to realize it. The things you wanted so much when you were a child don’t seem half so wonderful to you when you get them.”

– L.M. Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*

*Anne* is a ballet of becoming. In this piece, young people push against society’s expectations, defy rules, and discover that self-definition leads to liberation. The choreography embraces contradiction by juxtaposing tender moments with sudden volatility, echoing the unstoppable momentum of Barber’s “Excursions.”

To the nine children we meet in this schoolhouse, adolescence feels vast, but lingering in the background is their impending adulthood, quietly pressuring them to grow up too quickly. The students’ first experiments with rebellion inspire us to recall the turbulence of youth, a time when the body blooms faster than the mind learns the language to describe what is happening. Ultimately, this work leaves us with a question: How do we learn who we are at a time when everything within us is changing?

**CAST:**

*Anne Shirley Cuthbert:* Jordan Noblett

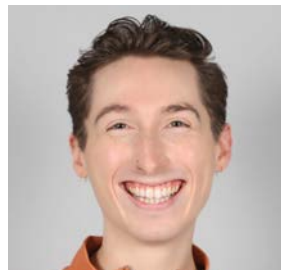
*Gilbert Blythe:* Caleb Emory

*Diana Barry:* Elizabeth Abbick Pemberton

*Cole Mackenzie:* Aleksandr Q. Schroeder

*Ensemble:* Christopher Balbuena, Julia Enwright,

Sarah Hutchinson, Caitlin Kowalski, Joel Morin-Kensicki



**ABOUT THE CHOREOGRAPHER:**

Born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Nicholas Bradley Gray (they/them) began their performing arts training at Milwaukee Ballet School and at First Stage Children’s Theater. Following their graduation from The Nutmeg Ballet Conservatory, Nicholas received their Bachelor’s Degree in Ballet with a minor in Theatre and Drama from Indiana University’s Jacobs School of Music. Throughout their youth, Nicholas attended summer intensives at Pacific Northwest Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, and Chautauqua Institution. In 2018, Nicholas moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan, where they lived for six years. They worked as a faculty member at Grand Rapids Ballet School and at Grand Rapids Civic Theatre’s School of Theatre Arts, as a freelance Director/Choreographer for Collegiate and Community Theatres, and as a frequent Guest Artist with Grand Rapids Ballet. Nicholas is thrilled to have accomplished so much in their first season as a Company Artist with Louisville Ballet. They have been honored to perform such roles as The Nutcracker Prince in Val Caniparoli’s *The Brown-Forman Nutcracker* and The Prince’s Friend in Alun Jones’ *Cinderella*. Nicholas is a proud faculty member of The Louisville Ballet School and serves their peers as the elected Dancer Representative. They are grateful for every single day they have the privilege to do what they love.

“Excursions, Op. 20” – Samuel Barber. © G. Schirmer, Inc. Performed live by Justin Gray.

# FORTE

**CHOREOGRAPHY BY  
LEIGH ANNE ALBRECHTA**

**REHEARSAL ASSISTANT: MIKELLE BRUZINA**



## **MUSIC:**

“Awe” by Roger Goula

## **CHOREOGRAPHER’S NOTE:**

What happens in the quiet spaces of a job? *Forte* examines the micro-dynamics of six women existing in a shared professional landscape. No linear story — just the persistent, rhythmic pulse of mentorship, competition, and survival. It is a study of how we lead, how we follow, and how we change each other in the pursuit of more.

## **CAST:**

Sarah Bradley, Addison Koerner,  
Athena King, Jordan Noblett,  
Elizabeth Abbick Pemberton, Kayleigh Western

## **ABOUT THE CHOREOGRAPHER:**

A native of Fremont, Ohio, Leigh Anne Albrechta trained at The Fremont Ballet School, Ballet Theatre of Toledo, and later graduated from The Nutmeg Conservatory for the Arts. She joined Charlotte Ballet for two years as a trainee and apprentice, earning the opportunity to work with Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux, Patricia McBride, Mark Diamond, and Dwight Rhoden. In 2009, Leigh Anne joined Louisville Ballet as a trainee and was hired as a Company Artist the following season. She has enjoyed performing a range of classical and contemporary roles, including Juliet in Adam Houghland’s *Romeo + Juliet*, Valencienne in Ronald Hynd’s *The Merry Widow*, the Sugar Plum Fairy, Rose, and Marie in Val Caniparoli’s *The Brown-Forman Nutcracker*, featured roles in Andrea Schermoly’s *Limbic* and *Rite of Spring*, and principal roles in George Balanchine’s *Serenade*, *Emeralds*, and *Kammermusik No.2*. Leigh Anne has danced with Moving Arts Company and Choreographic Residency of Marin during her summers. She is grateful for the support and generosity of the Louisville community.

# OUT OF THE BOX

**CHOREOGRAPHY BY  
DANIEL SCOFIELD**

**REHEARSAL ASSISTANT: HELEN DAIGLE**

## **MUSIC:**

“Prisencolinensinainciusol” by Adriano Celentano,  
“the perfect pair” by beabadoobee,  
“Death Note Suite” by Eminence Symphony Orchestra,  
“Lone Digger” by Caravan Palace

## **CHOREOGRAPHER’S NOTE:**

Watching a child play with toys, we see them swinging around plastic figurines, spitting and grunting their own sound effects, and hugging their miniature best friends close. On the outside, it seems simple, plain, and ordinary, but the child’s mind is forging grand adventures, deep friendships, and complex narratives. *Out of the Box* gives us the eyes of a child as we watch a collection of toys spring to life. High jinks and daring rescues ensue as our imaginations run wild.

## **CAST:**

*G.I. Joe*: Alexander Kingma  
*Dinosaur*: Brienne Wiltsie  
*Furby*: Fletcher Barr  
*Robot*: Ashley Thursby  
*Calico Critter*: Anna Ford



## **ABOUT THE CHOREOGRAPHER:**

Daniel Scofield joined Louisville Ballet as a Company Artist in 2022. A Louisville native, Daniel began his performing arts training primarily in musical theatre, later focusing more heavily on dance. Daniel graduated Cum Laude from Butler University in 2021, earning a B.S. in Dance/Arts Administration and a Minor in Business. He has performed as Romeo in Alun Jones’ *Romeo and Juliet*, the Nutcracker and Sugar Plum Cavalier in Val Caniparoli’s *The Brown-Forman Nutcracker*, an Ugly Stepsister in Alun Jones’ *Cinderella*, and in works by Anne Jung, Adam Houglund, Andrea Schermoly, and Ching Ching Wong.

As a faculty member of The Louisville Ballet School, Daniel has taught in almost every program, including the Summer Intensive and Louisville Ballet Youth Ensemble. He has created original works for Louisville Ballet (*Soma*, 2024), for The Louisville Ballet School, and has choreographed multiple local musical theatre productions. When he isn’t dancing or teaching, Daniel loves to hang out with his pets, family, and friends and enjoy the outdoors.

“Prisencolinensinainciusol” – Adriano Celentano. © Clan Celentano; © Universal Music Group.  
“the perfect pair” – Beatrice Laus and Jacob Bugden. © Sony/ATV Songs LLC; © Dirty Hit.  
“Death Note Suite” – Eminence Symphony Orchestra. © © Eminence Symphony Orchestra.  
“Lone Digger” – Caravan Palace. © Warner Chappell Music; © Le Plan Records.



Company Artist Aleksandr Q. Schroeder  
*Choreographers' Showcase 2024: Thoroughbred* by Minh-Tuan Nguyen  
Photo by Kateryna Sellers



Company Artists Elizabeth Abbick Pemberton and Daniel Scofield  
*Choreographers' Showcase 2025: Pas Noir* by Christian Chester  
Photo by Kateryna Sellers



Company Artists Alexander Kingma, Sarah Bradley, and Joel Morin-Kensicki  
Choreographers' Showcase 2025: *CLEAVE* by Leigh Anne Albrecht  
Photo by David Kelm



Company Artists Lexa Daniels and Alexander Kingma  
*Choreographers' Showcase 2024: A Day at the Derby* by David Senti  
Photo by Kateryna Sellers



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## **ANTHONY KRUTZKAMP**

*Artistic Director*

Anthony Krutzkamp is the former Artistic and Executive Director of Sacramento Ballet, where he led a dynamic revitalization of the company. Under his leadership, Sacramento Ballet achieved record-breaking ticket sales, launched a groundbreaking Second Company, and awarded more than \$125,000 annually in student scholarships. He expanded the repertoire to include works by George Balanchine, Alejandro Cerrudo, Penny Saunders, Ihsan Rustem, and others, while also creating acclaimed productions of *Swan Lake* and *The Nutcracker*.

A former principal dancer with Cincinnati Ballet and Kansas City Ballet, Krutzkamp performed leading roles in both classical and contemporary works, from *Romeo and Juliet* to Balanchine's *Concerto Barocco*. He co-founded the Kansas City Dance Festival and Moving Arts, fostering national and international collaborations, and directed Kansas City Ballet's Second Company. Recognized as a visionary leader, Krutzkamp blended artistry, community engagement, and strategic growth to position Sacramento Ballet as a vibrant cultural force. A Kentucky native, he is also a husband and father of two girls.



## **LESLIE SMART**

*Chief Executive Officer*

Leslie Smart, CFRE, is a seasoned nonprofit leader with deep and enduring ties to Louisville Ballet. Smart also chairs the national Dance/USA Tier 2 Executive & Managing Directors Network, serves on the Executive Committee and Board of Directors for Leadership Kentucky, and is Chair of the Music and Arts Committee for the Rotary Club of Louisville. She also serves on the Advisory Council of the international nonprofit Surfing Moms, advancing maternal wellness initiatives.

Smart has held several significant leadership roles, including two terms as president of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Greater Louisville Chapter, and service on the Committee on Directorship for the International Association of Fundraising Professionals. She is the co-founder of Lexington Forward, has been a board member of many nonprofit organizations in Lexington and Louisville, and is a graduate of Leadership Lexington, Leadership Kentucky, and Leadership Louisville.

Smart also brings a lifelong connection to ballet. She danced with Louisville Ballet in the 1970s and studied at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Dance and the School of American Ballet, the official school of New York City Ballet.



### MIKELLE BRUZINA

*Senior Rehearsal Director*

Born in Lexington, Kentucky, Mikelle Bruzina is a graduate of The Royal Winnipeg Ballet. In her 15 years as a Louisville Ballet Company Artist, she performed soloist and principal roles and was recognized for her diversity in classical, modern, and contemporary ballets. As a dancer, stager, and rehearsal assistant, she has worked with a breadth of choreographers. Mikelle has choreographed works for Louisville Ballet including *Gloria*, *Harmony of Contrasts*, *Life Rhythms*, *continuum*, *Sansei*, and *Tinny Wits*. She has also created ballets for Memphis Ballet, Boca Ballet Theatre, Lexington Ballet, Milwaukee Ballet, and The Louisville Ballet School.

Mikelle began teaching in Japan in 1991 under the guidance of Emi Okajima. Having worked under the direction of Alun Jones, Bruce Simpson, and Robert Curran, she carries a vast experience in teaching, staging, and coaching in classical, modern, and contemporary styles of dance.

She was Ballet Mistress for thirteen seasons, Artistic Director for two seasons, and was the leader in building the foundation and programming of the Trainee Program through its transition into what is currently recognized as The Louisville Ballet Studio Company.

Together with her husband and their son, Mikelle has lovingly called Louisville home for 30 years. She is thrilled to continue her stewardship in the growth and successes of Louisville Ballet.



### HELEN DAIGLE

*Principal Repetiteur +  
Senior Rehearsal Director*

Originally from Baton Rouge, Helen Daigle began her training at Decatur School of Ballet in Decatur, Georgia. Upon her family's return to Louisiana, she continued her training at Dancer's Workshop under the tutelage of Molly Buchmann and Sharon Mathews. She has also studied at Joffrey Ballet School and School of American Ballet. She started performing with Baton Rouge Ballet Theatre junior and senior companies and began her professional career with Feld Ballets/New York. She has also danced with Ballet Hispanico and Miami City Ballet.

Helen joined Louisville Ballet in 1998 and enjoyed 20 wonderfully fulfilling seasons. She performed featured roles in a range of works including *Lark Ascending*, *In the Glow of the Night*, *Who Cares?*, *Serenade*, *Lamberena*, *Scheherazade*, *Company B*, *Etesian* and *Cold Virtues*. She has performed principal roles in such full length ballets as *The Magic Flute*, *Don Quixote*, *Giselle*, *Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *La Sylphide* and *A Cinderella Story*.

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



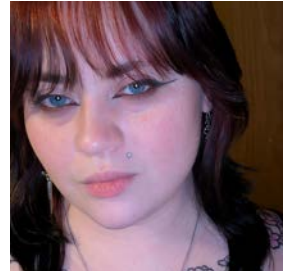
**JILL MARLOW KRUTZKAMP**

*Artistic Director of the Studio Company*

Jill Krutzkamp is the former Second Company Director of Sacramento Ballet, where she expanded the Second Company’s geographic diversity across 19 states and three continents. There, she curated, choreographed, restaged, and produced performances for a variety of audiences and events. Her leadership reflects a strong commitment to developing adaptable, confident artists prepared for the demands of professional ballet careers.

Jill enjoyed a distinguished career as a professional ballet dancer with Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Cincinnati Ballet, and Kansas City Ballet, performing an extensive range of soloist and principal roles. Her repertoire includes the Sugar Plum Fairy in *The Nutcracker*, the lead role in George Balanchine’s *Allegro Brillante*, and a featured Stomper in Twyla Tharp’s *In the Upper Room*.

Jill holds a Bachelor of Science in Health Education from the University of Cincinnati and has served as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Missouri–Kansas City Conservatory. She is the founder of Movehealthier, a Pilates and wellness practice grounded in the philosophy that thoughtful movement fosters a healthy mind, body, and spirit. She resides with her husband, two daughters, and family in Louisville, KY.



**MOLLY DUKE**

*Costume Designer*

Molly is a costume designer from Louisville and currently serves as Louisville Ballet’s Costume Director. This season marks Molly’s eighth season with Louisville Ballet. They have recently designed costumes for Ching Ching Wong’s *502*, Roger Creel’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and created numerous original designs for the annual *Choreographers’ Showcase* with Company Artists and Studio Company Artists. Molly’s work supports the creative development of new choreography while helping bring distinctive visual identities to each production.

Molly is a graduate of Bellarmine University, earning Bachelor of Arts degrees in Theatre and Art, and their academic training in both disciplines contributes to a strong foundation in design, visual storytelling, and theatrical collaboration.

Molly values the creative challenge of transforming a choreographer’s vision into a fully realized design on stage. The process of interpreting artistic concepts, developing costumes that support movement, and helping shape the visual world of a ballet remains a continual source of inspiration and professional fulfillment.



**JESSE ALFORD**

*Lighting Designer*

Jesse is a freelance lighting designer proudly based here in Louisville. Recent designs with Louisville Ballet include *Sleeping Beauty*, *Vibes*, *Swan Lake*, *Rite of Spring*, and more. He also regularly designs with Kentucky Shakespeare, Kentucky Opera, Louisville Orchestra, The Va Va Vixens, Circus Flora, and Pandora Productions. Other past collaborators include The Big Apple Circus, The Tennessee Williams Festival St. Louis, The Mary Shelley Electric Co., and others across the country. Working primarily in dance, circus, and theatre, Jesse specializes in the moments and productions that happen in between those disciplines.



**TARA SIMONCIC**

*Music Director*

Tara Simonic served as music director of Ballet West from 2015–2018 and is a frequent guest conductor with Louisville Ballet, Atlanta Ballet, and New York City Ballet. She recently made her conducting debut with the ballet at Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. Ms. Simonic is principal conductor of the Flexible Orchestra in New York City as well as music director of the Greenwich Symphony's Young People's Concerts. She holds a BM in Trumpet Performance from the New England Conservatory, an MM in Orchestral Conducting from Northwestern University, and a Professional Studies Diploma in Conducting from Manhattan School of Music.

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**COMPANY  
ARTISTS**



**LEIGH ANNE ALBRECHTA**

Joined Company: 2009  
Hometown: Fremont, OH



**SARAH BRADLEY**

Joined Company: 2022  
Hometown: Cincinnati, OH



**IAN ANDERSON-CONLON\***

Joined Company: 2025  
Hometown: Madison, WI



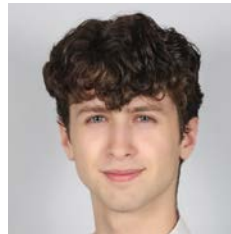
**LEXA DANIELS**

Joined Company: 2016  
Hometown: Stoneham, MA



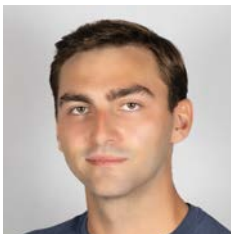
**CHRISTOPHER BALBUENA\***

Joined Company: 2025  
Hometown: Alpharetta, GA



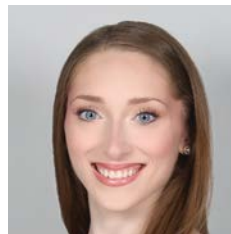
**CALEB EMORY**

Joined Company: 2024  
Hometown: Corpus Christi, TX



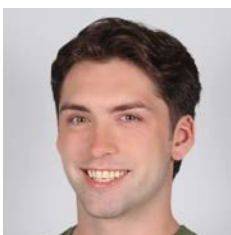
**FLETCHER BARR**

Joined Company: 2024  
Hometown: Owensboro, KY



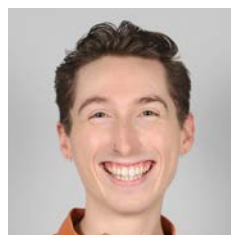
**ANNA FORD**

Joined Company: 2023  
Hometown: Lilburn, GA



**NICHOLAS BENTZ**

Joined Company: 2024  
Hometown: St. Louis, MO

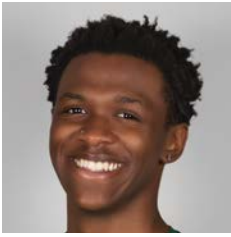


**NICHOLAS BRADLEY GRAY**

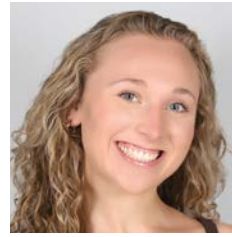
Joined Company: 2024  
Hometown: Milwaukee, WI

Headshots by  
Kateryna Sellers

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ARTISTS**



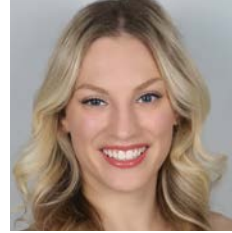
**KHALIL JACKSON**  
Joined Company: 2023  
Hometown: Dallas, GA



**JORDAN NOBLETT**  
Joined Company: 2023  
Hometown: Gastonia, NC



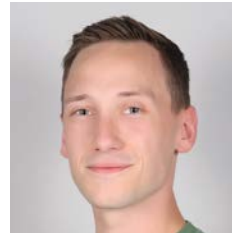
**ALEXANDER KINGMA**  
Joined Company: 2023  
Hometown: Lafayette, IN



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



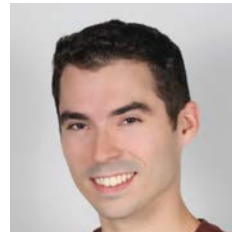
**CAITLIN KOWALSKI**  
Joined Company: 2021  
Hometown: Radcliff, KY



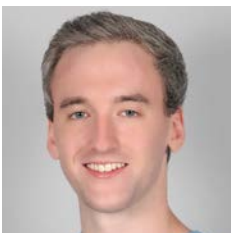
**ALEKSANDR Q. SCHROEDER**  
Joined Company: 2019  
Hometown: Anderson, IN



**MARK A. KRIEGER JR.**  
Joined Company: 2012  
Hometown: Alexandria, VA



**DANIEL SCOFIELD**  
Joined Company: 2022  
Hometown: Louisville, KY



**JOEL MORIN-KENSICKI**  
Joined Company: 2024  
Hometown: Chapel Hill, NC



**ASHLEY THURSBY**  
Joined Company: 2008  
Hometown: Richmond, MO

\* New Company Artist

**COMPANY  
ARTISTS**



**KAYLEIGH WESTERN**

Joined Company: 2025

Hometown: Lexington, KY



**BRIENNE WILTSIE**

Joined Company: 2018

Hometown: Pittsburgh, PA



**AMBER WICKEY**

Joined Company: 2022

Hometown: Tenafly, NJ

**RESIDENT CHARACTER ARTIST**



**PHILLIP VELINOV**

Joined Company: 2006

Hometown: Sofia, Bulgaria

Headshot by Andrew Kung



**SCAN HERE  
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR  
COMPANY ARTISTS AND  
STUDIO COMPANY ARTISTS**



## ASHLEY THURSBY

@athursbykern on Instagram

Ashley grew up in Richmond, Missouri, and began formal dance training at age nine on full scholarship with the Kansas City Ballet School. She later studied Ballet and Journalism at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music, where she was mentored by Violette Verdy, Cynthia Gregory, and other esteemed artists. Since joining Louisville Ballet in 2008, her notable roles have included the Ballerina in Twyla Tharp's *In the Upper Room*, a soloist in George Balanchine's *Rubies*, Myrtha in *Giselle*, Swanhilda in *Coppélia*, and the Sugar Plum Fairy in Val Caniparoli's *The Brown-Forman Nutcracker*. A passionate advocate for the arts, she is currently the co-curator of Louisville Ballet's 75th Anniversary Exhibit and a 2024 History Inspires Fellow, researching dance archives at the Filson Historical Society. Ashley also collaborates with community partners and leads The Louisville Ballet School's Adult Division.

### What do you love about ballet?

For me, dance is the expression of the present moment. As an artist, I'm interested in how the movement of my body can tell a story — one that invites the audience to feel connected to a shared, collective experience.

### How do you prepare for a performance?

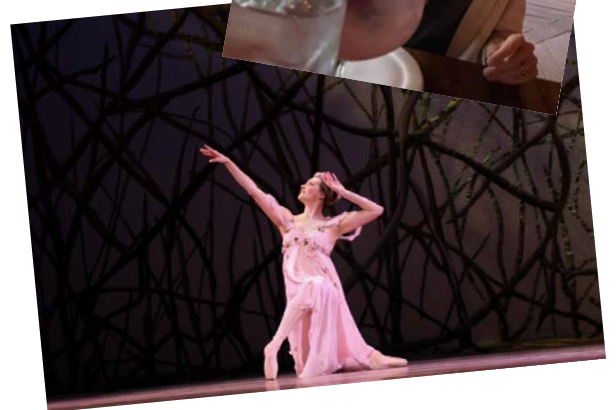
I like to be very organized and proactive before shows. I will often have my hair, makeup, and even headpieces ready much earlier than I need to in case anything unexpected comes up.

### Favorite Louisville businesses?

Stella's Resale Boutique, Monnik, Hop Atomica, Ultra Pop...and now that I'm a mother: Louisville Zoo, LFPL children's events, and Louisville's beautiful park system.

### Coffee or tea?

Matcha.

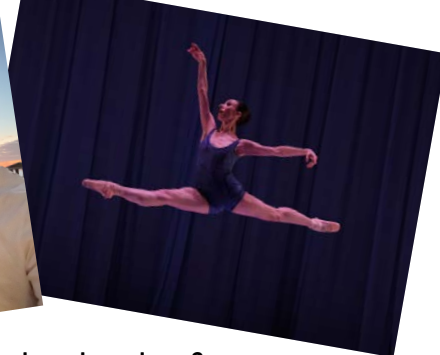
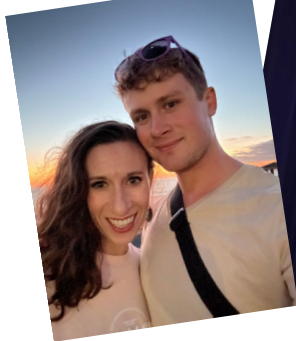


## BRIENNE WILTSIE

@brienne.wiltsie on Instagram

Brienne Wiltsie grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and danced professionally with Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre's company for two seasons after training in both their high school and graduate training programs. Her love of being on stage then brought Brienne to Louisville, where she performed with Louisville Ballet for two seasons. This year marks the beginning of Brienne's 15th year teaching at The Louisville Ballet School. She feels incredibly fortunate to work with the Pre-Professional students and the Louisville Ballet Youth Ensemble. In addition to teaching ballet, Brienne is also a certified Pilates instructor.

Brienne returned as a Company Artist during the 2018-2019 Season. She has treasured every minute of being able to perform in both classical and new works and was especially grateful and honored to perform the roles of Swanhilde in Robert Curran's *Coppélia*, Russian Girl in George Balanchine's *Serenade*, the principal lady in Jerome Robbins' *In G Major*, and the Sugar Plum Fairy and the Rose in Val Caniparoli's *The Brown-Forman Nutcracker*.



### What do you love about dance?

I love that there's always more to learn about ballet/dance. There is ALWAYS room to grow as a technician and an artist. There is always the influence of a new voice, mentor, or coach that makes you think about steps/performing in a new way. As we gain strength, wisdom, and experience as dancers, it may change the way we understand our art or the way we want to show up in the studio and on stage.

### How do you prepare for a performance?

I love eating an egg sandwich on wheat bread with ketchup on a show day. I try to slow down on my caffeine intake by the time we get to class on stage. I like wearing the pointe shoes I plan to wear for the performance on stage before the show, and I usually try to review as much of the choreography as possible out on stage before heading to the dressing room to do hair and make-up.

### What are your hobbies?

I love cooking and trying new recipes, doing yoga and Pilates, and hiking in the sunshine!

### Favorite musical artists?

The Avett Brothers, The Beach Boys, Frank Sinatra, Bahamas, and Pitbull.



## ALEXANDER KINGMA

Alexander began his ballet training at age 17 at the Lafayette Ballet School in Lafayette, Indiana, under the direction of Sandra Peticolas and Lisa Douglas, and pursued a B.A. in Dance Performance at Ball State University. Alexander then moved to Louisville for the first time, where he completed the then two-year trainee program under the artistic direction of Robert Curran. He danced professionally with Ballet Quad Cities (Artistic Director Courtney Lyon) and Central Illinois Ballet (Artistic Director Rebekah von Rathonyi). During his time at CIB, he danced roles such as Prince Charming (as well as a stepsister!) in *Cinderella*, the titular role in *Dracula*, Antoni in *Sweeney Todd*, and the Cowardly Lion in *The Wizard of Oz*.

Having returned to Louisville Ballet as a Company Artist in 2023, Alexander has since had the opportunity to perform several exciting roles, such as the second principal male in Adam Houglund's *Cold Virtues*, the Nutcracker in Val Caniparoli's *The Brown-Forman Nutcracker*, and Paris in Alun Jones' *Romeo & Juliet*.

### What do you love about dance?

I love the feeling of connecting with music through dance. I am very often quite literally moved by all kinds of music.

### When did you begin dancing? Did you always love ballet the most?

I began dancing ballet around age 17, but did other forms of dance before that, primarily ballroom. Ballet was not always my favorite; in college, I much preferred modern and contemporary classes.

### What are your hobbies?

I am in a bowling league!

### Favorite musical artist or album?

Britney Spears — every single album, but *Blackout* does reign supreme.

### Coffee or tea?

Coffee.

### Cats or dogs?

Cats.



# MEET A COMPANY ARTIST

## LEIGH ANNE ALBRECHTA

@laalbrechta on Instagram

A native of Fremont, Ohio, Leigh Anne Albrechta trained at The Fremont Ballet School, Ballet Theatre of Toledo, and later graduated from The Nutmeg Conservatory for the Arts. She joined Charlotte Ballet for two years as a trainee and apprentice, earning the opportunity to work with Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux, Patricia McBride, Mark Diamond, and Dwight Rhoden. In 2009, Leigh Anne joined Louisville Ballet as a trainee and was hired as a Company Artist the following season. She has enjoyed performing a range of classical and contemporary roles, including Juliet in Adam Houghland's *Romeo + Juliet*, Valencienne in Ronald Hynd's *The Merry Widow*, the Sugar Plum Fairy, Rose, and Marie in Val Caniparoli's *The Brown-Forman Nutcracker*, featured roles in Andrea Schermoly's *Limbic* and *Rite of Spring*, and principal roles in George Balanchine's *Serenade*, *Emeralds*, and *Kammermusik No.2*. Leigh Anne has danced with Moving Arts Company and Choreographic Residency of Marin during her summers. She is grateful for the support and generosity of the Louisville community.



### What do you love about dance?

The balance between intense personal discipline and outward storytelling connects the dancer with the audience. The constant challenge of mastering the body and pushing technical limits is addictive, but it's all in service of the art. What drives all the hard work is finding your way to tell a story and move people without saying a word.

### How do you prepare for a performance?

#### Do you have any superstitions?

Whatever my journey is on the first day in the theatre, I tend to replicate it for the run of the show.

### Favorite Louisville business?

I can't pick just one...but I'm most likely to be spotted at Yogast8, Quills, Sunergos, Bar Vetti, Nouvelle, or Pretty Decent.

### Favorite musical artists?

Bon Iver, SOHN, Hozier, and Jack Harlow.

### Cats or dogs?

Dogs.

# STUDIO COMPANY ARTISTS



## **LEVEL 10**

Julia Enwright, Emmaline Fontanilla, Ezra Paisley, Sameer Rhodes,  
Natalie Schreiner, Marissa Soluri, Gaven Stevens

## **LEVEL 9**

Joe Henn, Sarah Hutchison, Ava Dhira Metzger,  
Guinevere Nelson, Abigail Wyrrick


## **LEVEL 8**

Athena King, Eva Pregont, Arlen Milo Sapien, Ella White

## **LEVEL 7**

Samuel Blincoe, Barbara Booth, Ava Carroll,  
Madison Dunham, Addison Koerner

Photo by Kateryna Sellers



# From Studio to Stage — We've Got You Covered

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Louisville Ballet Community Engagement programs are designed to create access and inclusion by removing barriers to the world of ballet. Whether we are creating paths to high-quality dance training through Ballet Bound or teaching about the importance of boys in ballet at a Boys, Books, & Ballet workshop, we believe that dance is for everyBODY! Join us this summer at a park or a library near you.



## BALLET BOUND SUMMER AUDITION TOUR

Each summer, in partnership with Olmsted Parks, Louisville Ballet hosts audition workshops for students ages 7-9 years old in search of dancers for our Ballet Bound program. This initiative provides young dancers one free year of study at Louisville Ballet’s downtown studios and serves as a pipeline for future opportunities, including 10-year scholarships to The Louisville Ballet School and a potential career in dance. Auditions will take place across Louisville in June 2026.



**SCAN HERE**  
to learn more about  
Ballet Bound



## BOYS, BOOKS, & BALLET

Come spend the afternoon at the library and learn why boys are important in the world of ballet! Boys, Books, & Ballet is back this summer, highlighting male dancers from Louisville Ballet who will read stories about boys who dance and lead participants in a movement workshop that is sure to inspire the next generation of dancers. Families and children of all ages and gender identities are welcome to join us at a local library this June.



**SCAN HERE**  
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*Choreographers' Showcase 2024:  
Soma by Daniel Scofield  
Photo by Kateryna Sellers*



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IN HONOR OF MIKELLE BRUZINA  
DR. THOMAS LOEB  
IN MEMORY OF EDWIN PERRY

MICHAEL MARTIN LOSAVIO  
IN MEMORY OF  
GEORGEANNA DULANY  
LOSAVIO  
MICHAEL MARTIN LOSAVIO  
IN MEMORY OF MINX AUERBACH  
KATE MCCAULEY  
IN MEMORY OF JUDITH BEAN  
RONALD AND MARY MCKULICK  
IN HONOR OF ERWIN AND EVE MCKULICK  
CHRISTINE MERRITT  
IN HONOR OF CHLOE PUFFER  
R. CHARLES AND SALLY MOYER  
IN MEMORY OF KENNETH WERTZ, HIS KINDNESS, AND HIS LIFE  
FULL OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS  
REGAN AND MATTHEW NICHOLS  
IN HONOR OF MIKELLE BRUZINA  
SARAH AND CHARLES O'KOON  
TO HONOR THE SPECIAL BIRTHDAY OF HOWARD BERMAN.  
STEVEN RAPP  
IN MEMORY OF JOAN BRENNAN  
MARY AND RAY RATLIFF  
IN MEMORY OF KENNETH WERTZ  
ROBERT REDMON  
IN MEMORY OF KATHI PETERSON  
PHOEBE REID  
IN MEMORY OF FORD REID  
MARK AND KAY ROUNTREE  
IN HONOR OF JIM VOYLES  
RICHARD AND TAMAR SCHWARTZ  
IN MEMORY OF NIRA AND YAIR RIBACK  
MICHELE AND JIM SEARS  
IN HONOR OF ERICA DE LA O  
ELLEN AND MAX SHAPIRA  
IN HONOR OF KENNETH WERTZ  
ELLEN AND MAX SHAPIRA  
IN HONOR OF SHELBY SHENKMAN'S RETIREMENT  
SHELBY SHENKMAN  
DEDICATED TO THE ARTISTS OF LOUISVILLE BALLET  
LESLIE AND JOHN SMART  
IN HONOR OF  
ANTHONY KRUTZKAMP  
LESLIE AND JOHN SMART  
IN MEMORY OF KENNETH WERTZ  
LENNA SOLTAU  
IN HONOR OF LESLIE SMART  
LOUISVILLE BALLET  
IN MEMORY OF TERESA MAJOR GREER'S MOTHER AND HALLIE BEARD'S GRANDMOTHER,  
MARY ROBINSON  
EDGAR AND TERRY STANTON  
IN MEMORY OF ALICE STANTON  
JOHN AND LEE STOUGH  
IN MEMORY OF KENNETH WERTZ  
LINDA TILLER  
IN MEMORY OF DON GLASER AND GENE STOTZ  
ELLEN TIMMONS  
IN HONOR OF K. SHAVER AND  
IN MEMORY OF EDWIN PERRY

MICHAEL AND ERIN TRAGER-KUSMAN  
IN HONOR OF LEIGH ANNE ALBRECHTA  
INTA K. VOIGHT  
IN MEMORY OF THE LATE FORREST B. VOIGHT  
JEANNE D. VUTURO  
IN MEMORY OF AMY AND LISA VUTURO  
ALAN ROTH, M.D. AND FAYE WEINBERG  
IN MEMORY OF EDWIN PERRY  
ALAN ROTH, M.D. AND FAYE WEINBERG  
IN HONOR OF SHELBY SHENKMAN  
GRACE WOODING  
IN HONOR OF  
LISA BIDDLE-PUFFER  
JUDITH AND JOHN YOUNGBLOOD  
IN HONOR OF LESLIE SMART  
ZAURIE ZIMMERMAN  
IN HONOR OF  
MARIE G. ZIMMERMAN

## THE BRUCE SIMPSON FUND

The Bruce Simpson Fund provides annual income to support dancer salaries.

For more information, please contact 502-583-3150 ext. 238 or Regan Nichols, [rnichols@louisvilleballet.org](mailto:rnichols@louisvilleballet.org).

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# 75

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Company Artists Aleksandr Q. Schroeder,  
Lexa Daniels, and Joel Morin-Kensicki in rehearsal  
Photo by Kateryna Sellers

75

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Hamlet & Ophelia

Frankenstein

The Brown-Forman  
Nutcracker

Carmen

Bourbon & Ballet

Momentum

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