

LOUISVILLE BALLET

FRANKENSTEIN



ÉTOILE

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Company Artist Aleksandr Q. Schroeder
Photo by Andrew Kung
Makeup by Matt Goodlett

A LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Dear Louisville Ballet Friends,

Bringing Mary Shelley's atmospheric, sprawling *Frankenstein* to the ballet stage requires a fundamental act of translation: capturing its psychological depth and shifting geography through movement, music, and visual design.

For my first choreographic work with this company, we set out to build an immersive world that feels as cinematic as it is theatrical, punctuated only by minimal spoken moments to heighten the drama. To solve the puzzle of moving fluidly from stark laboratories to the Arctic, we paired seamless projections and layered scenery with dramatic lighting. By projecting directly onto the stage elements, we shift environments in real time without sacrificing emotional or kinetic momentum.

Every design detail deepens this landscape. In our courtroom scenes, steeply angled pews expose the visceral reactions of the onstage spectators. Likewise, Costume Director Molly Duke and I crafted wardrobes that communicate mood, status, and internal turmoil, allowing physical expression to carry the true weight of the narrative.

Yet movement and visual design are only part of the equation. A production of this scale relies profoundly on its music and libretto to give structure to the narrative and soul to the movement. Every dramatic beat was meticulously charted alongside our librettist, Justin Gray, who also serves as Louisville Ballet's Music Manager. Justin's vision was foundational; his work distilled Shelley's epic into a clear dramatic spine, providing the musical blueprint upon which every step was choreographed. The score serves as the emotional voice of our dancers, guiding you through the Creature's tragic isolation and Victor Frankenstein's obsessive ambition.

Creating this ballet has been a remarkable journey of collaboration and artistic growth. We hope this production honors the timeless themes of Shelley's masterpiece while offering a bold, fresh theatrical experience.

Thank you for joining us, and enjoy the performance.

Sincerely,



Anthony Krutzkamp
Artistic Director

ÉTOILE

HALLIE BEARD
Editor

ANDY PEREZ
Designer

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ANDREW KUNG
Contributing Photographer

WELCH PRINTING
Printer

OCTOBER 30–31, 2026 | THE BROWN THEATRE

FRANKENSTEIN

Illuminated by: **LGE KU**
PPL companies

Choreography by Anthony Krutzkamp

Rehearsal Directors: Mikelle Bruzina and Helen Daigle

Librettist: Justin Gray

Stage Manager: Megan Meyer

Music by John Adams

Costume Design by Molly Duke

Scenic Design by Eric Allgeier

Lighting Design by Jesse Alford

Video Design by Kelly Tassin

Voice Actor: Jon Huffman

Run time: Approximately 2 hours, including one 20-minute intermission.

Doctor Atomic Symphony, I & II — John Adams, *John Adams Collected Works*, © Boosey & Hawkes © Warner Music Group.

Fearful Symmetries — John Adams, *John Adams Collected Works*, © Boosey & Hawkes © Warner Music Group.

Short Ride in a Fast Machine — John Adams, *John Adams Collected Works*, © Boosey & Hawkes © Warner Music Group.

City Noir, "Boulevard Night" — John Adams, *John Adams Collected Works*, © Boosey & Hawkes © Warner Music Group.

Shaker Loops — John Adams, *John Adams Collected Works*, © Wise Music Group, © Warner Music Group.

Harmonielehre — John Adams, *John Adams Collected Works*, © Wise Music Group, © Warner Music Group

ACT I

Victor Frankenstein: *There are moments when a single idea consumes a life. I believed that knowledge could conquer death. I searched where others feared to look. I gathered the broken pieces of humanity and dared to breathe life into silence. But creation without wisdom is not creation. It is catastrophe. This is not the story of a monster. It is the story of a man who forgot that every life created longs to be loved.*

PROLOGUE

Victor Frankenstein is preparing to leave home for university, where he will study natural philosophy, anatomy, biology, and chemistry. By his side are his father Alphonse, closest friend Henry Clerval, younger brother William, cousin and family friend Justine Moritz, and betrothed Elizabeth. Before Victor's departure, Alphonse gives him a locket bearing his mother's portrait. In an act of love, Victor bestows the token upon William before bidding the family farewell.

At university, Victor's fascination with the mysteries of life quickly becomes an obsession. Inspired by modern science, he experiments with electricity, anatomy, and the boundaries between life and death. After repeated failures, he accomplishes the impossible: creating life from human remains. A Creature awakens on Victor's laboratory table. For one brief moment, Victor is proud, but when the Creature reaches toward him for acceptance, Victor recoils in horror and abandons him.

The Creature enters the world knowing nothing of humanity. Traveling from town to town, he observes mankind and discovers the concept of community. His instincts urge him to find a place in the world, but everyone he approaches rejects him. Despairing, he happens upon a small cottage in the woods.

The De Lacey family live a humble life in relative isolation. Felix and Agatha care for their blind father, while Safie, Felix's love interest, helps tend to the family. Finding peace in their presence, the Creature keeps his distance and learns through observation, discovering nature, language, human relationships, and the meaning of family.

Believing the blind Mr. De Lacey might accept him without seeing his frightening appearance, the Creature finally reveals himself. Mr. De Lacey responds with kindness, but when the rest of the family returns, they attack the Creature and drive him away.

Heartbroken, the Creature's hope turns to rage. He encounters William Frankenstein in the woods and murders him. Discovering the locket Victor gave William, he devises a plan to torment Victor further. He finds Justine searching for William and manages to plant the locket on her. When the search party discovers it, Justine is arrested and tried for William's murder. Despite the Frankenstein family's efforts to defend her, she is wrongfully executed. Victor is tormented by the guilt of knowing he bears responsibility for the tragedy.

The Creature: *I ought to have been thy Adam. The first of thy creation. The child who opened his eyes and found wonder. I should have looked upon my maker and seen love. I should have walked beside thee, learning the beauty of this world. Instead I awoke alone. The first face I saw looked upon me with horror. The first hand that fashioned me abandoned me. I reached toward mankind and mankind fled. I learned kindness from those who could never bear to look upon me. I learned compassion, only to discover cruelty. I ought to be thy Adam. But I am rather the fallen angel. Not because I was born evil — but because I was cast from the only heaven I ever longed to know. You created my body. But it was your rejection that created the monster.*

Isolated in grief, Victor is unaware that his Creature is watching him. The Creature finally approaches and recounts the tale from his perspective, demanding that Victor create a companion with whom he can share his existence. Victor reluctantly agrees.

The Creature: *Tell me, Victor. Who is truly the creator of my misery? You must create a female for me, with whom I can live in the interchange of those sympathies necessary for my being. I am alone and miserable: man will not associate with me; but one as deformed and horrible as myself would not deny herself to me. My companion must be of the same species, and have the same defects. This being you must create. If you consent, neither you nor any other human being shall ever see us again. We shall*

make our bed of dried leaves; the sun will shine on us as on man, and will ripen our food. We shall live harmless, and free from the misery I now feel. Shall each man find a wife for his bosom, and each beast have his mate, and I be alone? I am malicious because I am miserable. Am I not shunned and hated by all mankind? I have love in me the likes of which you can scarcely imagine and rage the likes of which you would not believe. If I cannot satisfy the one, I will indulge the other.

INTERMISSION

ACT II

Months pass, and Victor and Henry embark on a Grand Tour of Europe. While in the Scottish Highlands, Victor urges Henry to continue ahead while he secretly withdraws to complete his task. Victor becomes lost in thought about the evil female creation. The Creature waits nearby, hopeful that he will soon find peace with his bride-to-be.

Victor works quickly. Unlike his first creation, there is no wonder or discovery; he knows what must be done. As the female body gradually takes shape, the Creature watches. Tired from anticipation, he sleeps and dreams of his future wife. Just as Victor is about to bring the bride to life, the Creature appears. In terror, Victor destroys the unfinished body. Though she never lived, her destruction feels to the Creature like the murder of his only hope. He vows to take from Victor everything he holds dear.

On Victor and Elizabeth's wedding night, Henry finds Victor physically and emotionally broken and attempts to restore the friend he once knew. When Victor briefly leaves him alone, the Creature appears and murders Henry in another act of revenge. Victor discovers his friend's body but cannot reveal the truth about his creation.

Victor and Elizabeth are married by Alphonse, but Victor remains consumed by anxiety, expecting the Creature to strike at any moment. To everyone's horror, the Creature appears and seizes Elizabeth, vanishing into the night. Alphonse collapses from a heart attack. In an instant, Victor has lost the last people he loves, along with his own humanity.

With nothing left but grief and rage, Victor pursues the Creature, determined to destroy him once and for all. Somewhere en route to the North Pole, explorer and ship captain Walton finds his ship trapped in the ice. A sailor spots movement in the distance: Victor Frankenstein, who collapses before them. Walton then glimpses the Creature across the frozen landscape.

Captain Walton: I sought the ends of the earth believing that greatness belonged to those who dared the impossible. Then I found a man who had already traveled that path. His name was Victor Frankenstein. His triumph became his torment. His genius became his prison. He pursued his creation across mountains, across oceans, across the frozen world...until nothing remained but vengeance.

As Victor recounts his tale, Walton recognizes the danger of following the same path of obsessive ambition. Victor urges him to pursue the Creature, but Walton tries to make him understand that the pursuit is over. Victor finally collapses and dies. Walton closes his eyes and withdraws with the sailors, leaving Victor alone.

The Creature silently boards the ship and discovers Victor's body. He lifts his lifeless creator: Victor once gave the Creature life; now the Creature holds Victor in death.

Reflecting on all that has brought him here, the Creature recognizes that his longing for love and companionship became consumed by anger and revenge. Though Victor's abandonment shaped his suffering, he acknowledges that he chose to kill innocent people. In the end, both creator and creation are destroyed by the consequences of their obsessions.

The Creature: You gave me life, but not a place in the world. I learned your language. I admired your kindness from afar. I reached for friendship and found only fear. Every face turned away. Every hand became a weapon. Tell me — what made me a monster? Was it my face... or your refusal to see my soul? I was born innocent. Your hatred taught me revenge.

Company Artists
Aleksandr Q. Schroeder and Caleb Emory
Photo by Andrew Kung
Makeup by Matt Goodlett



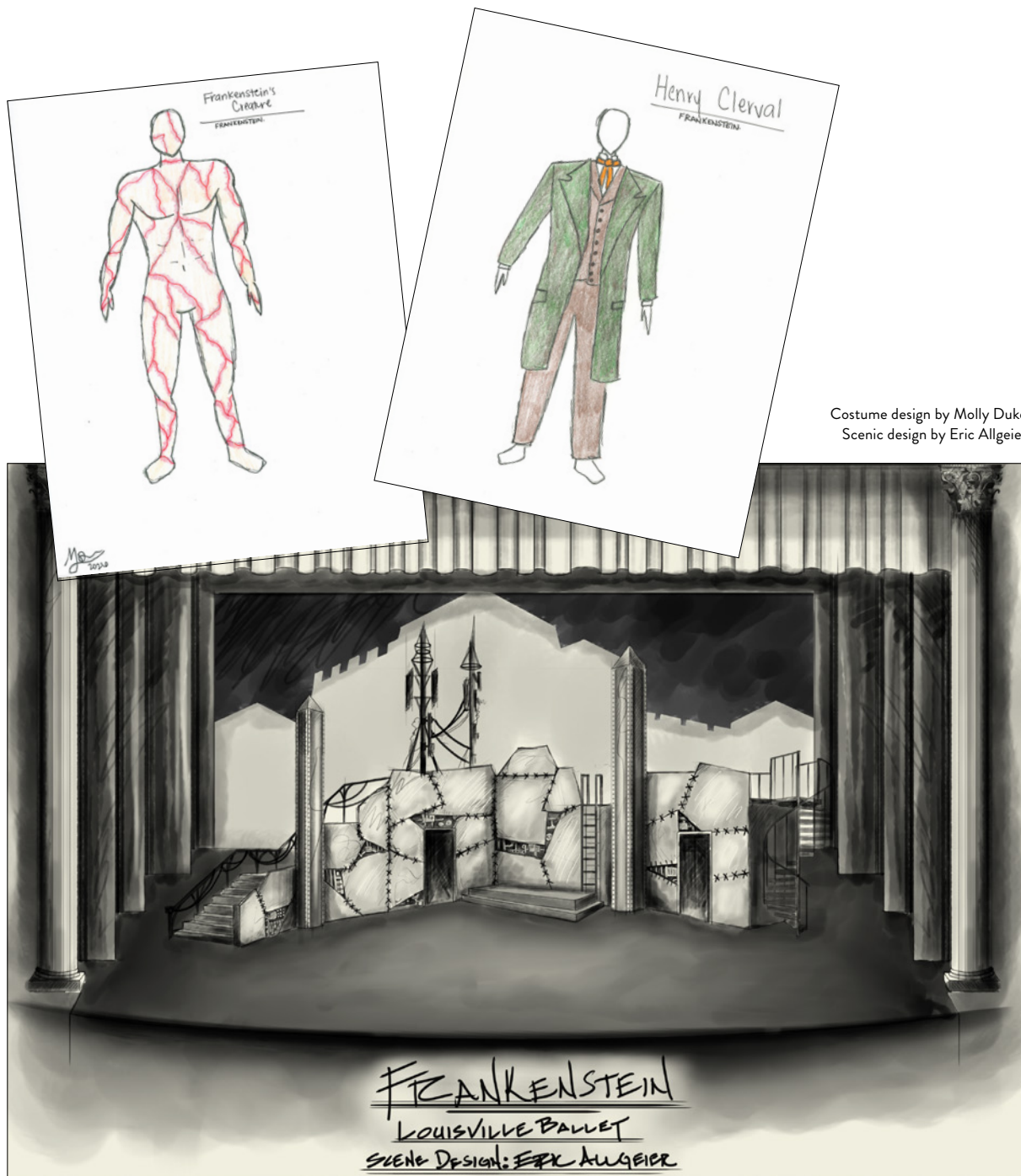


Company Artist Nikolas Gaifullin as the Creature
Photo by Kateryna Sellers

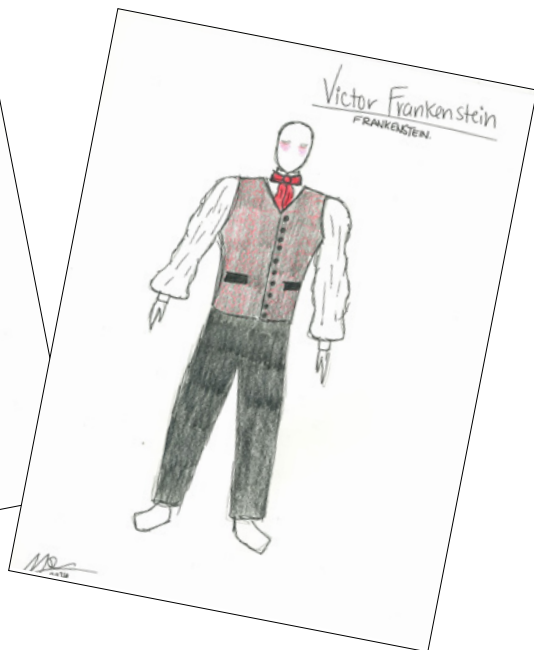
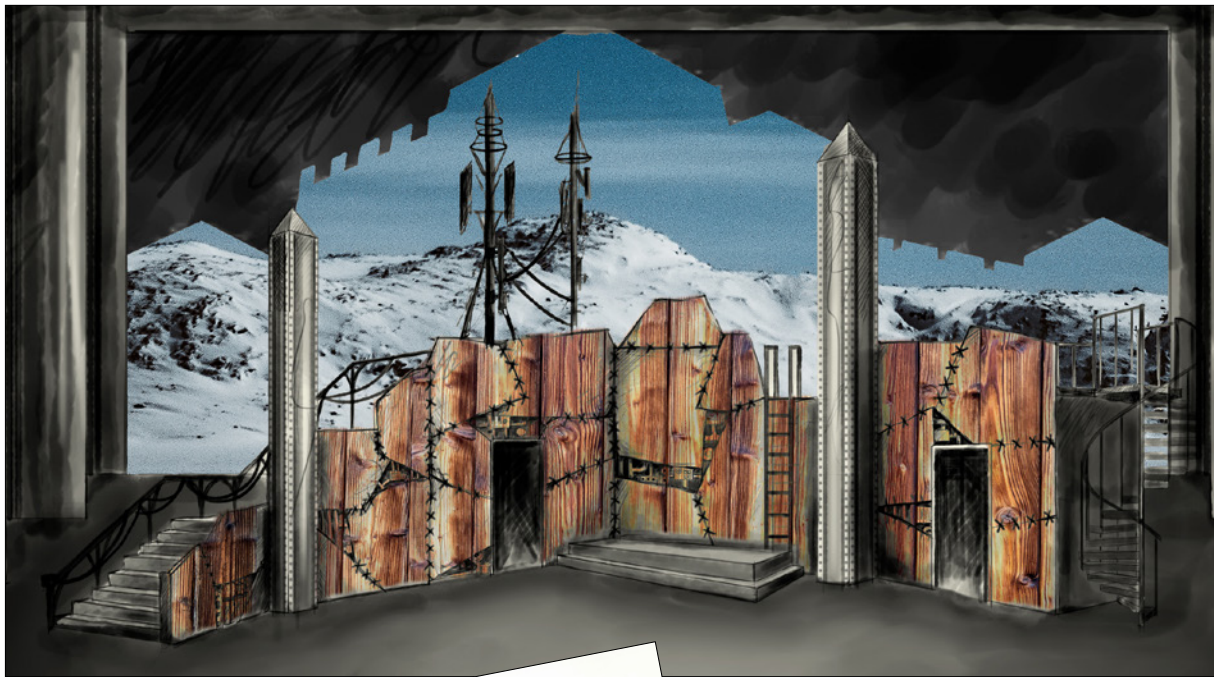


Artists in rehearsal
Photo by Kateryna Sellers

SCENIC + COSTUME RENDERINGS



SCENIC + COSTUME RENDERINGS



Projection design by Kelly Tassin
Costume design by Molly Duke



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ANTHONY KRUTZKAMP

Artistic Director, Choreographer

Anthony Krutzkamp is in his second season as Artistic Director of Louisville Ballet, bringing a vision shaped by his career as a dancer, choreographer, educator, and arts leader. A former Principal Dancer, Krutzkamp performed leading roles in classical and contemporary works by some of the world's most celebrated choreographers. Prior to joining Louisville Ballet, he served as Artistic/Executive Director of Sacramento Ballet, where he expanded programming, toured internationally, achieved record-breaking ticket sales, and championed innovative artistic initiatives. His international experience includes teaching and mentoring dancers throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia. Krutzkamp holds a degree in Business Management from Northeastern University. At Louisville Ballet, he is committed to honoring the company's rich legacy while advancing artistic excellence, cultivating emerging talent, and creating bold new works for the company.



FELICIA SWOOPE

Executive Director

Felicia Swoope brings more than two decades of leadership as an arts executive, producer, curator, educator, and former professional dancer. Throughout her career, Swoope has championed the transformative power of dance, equitable community access, and artistic excellence. Her leadership experience includes serving as Director of Fine and Performing Arts at Holton-Arms School, Executive Director of Newark Arts, Creative Campus Director at Cleo Parker Robinson Dance, and Associate Producer at Dartmouth College's Hopkins Center for the Arts. A dedicated champion of artists, Swoope is the Founding Curator of Harlem Stage's landmark E-Moves dance series, founder of GENDARC Dance NYC, and was the inaugural Director of AileyCamp Newark. Swoope holds a BA in English from Dartmouth College, an MFA in Dance from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, and served on the Board of Directors for Complexions Contemporary Ballet. This is her first season as Louisville Ballet's Executive Director.



MIKELLE BRUZINA

Senior Rehearsal Director

Born in Lexington, Kentucky, Mikelle Bruzina is a graduate of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. She retired as a Louisville Ballet principal artist in 2010, recognized for her excellence in classical, modern, and contemporary ballets. Mikelle discovered her love of teaching while living in Japan and developed vast teaching, staging, and coaching experience as a dancer, stager, and rehearsal assistant under the direction of former Artistic Directors Alun Jones, Bruce Simpson, and Robert Curran. She has choreographed many works for Louisville Ballet, including *Gloria*, *Sansei*, and *Tinny Wits*, and has choreographed for The Louisville Ballet School, Memphis Ballet, Lexington Ballet, Milwaukee Ballet, and others. She was Ballet Mistress for 13 seasons, Artistic Director for two seasons, and led the founding of the Trainee Program, now known as the Studio Company. With her husband and their son, she has lovingly called Louisville home for over 30 years.



HELEN DAIGLE

*Principal Repetiteur +
Senior Rehearsal Director*

Originally from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Helen Daigle began her training at Decatur School of Ballet in Decatur, Georgia. Returning to Louisiana, she continued her training at Dancer's Workshop under Molly Buchmann and Sharon Mathews. She also studied at Joffrey Ballet School and the School of American Ballet. She began her professional career with Feld Ballets/ New York and also danced with Ballet Hispanico and Miami City Ballet. Helen joined Louisville Ballet in 1998 and enjoyed 20 wonderfully fulfilling seasons performing featured and principal roles in a range of contemporary and classical works, including *Lark Ascending*, *Who Cares?*, *Serenade*, *Lamberena*, *Company B*, *Cold Virtues*, *The Magic Flute*, *Don Quixote*, *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *La Sylphide*, and *A Cinderella Story*, among others. 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.



JILL KRUTZKAMP

Studio Company Artistic Director

Jill Marlow Krutzkamp is a ballet director, educator, choreographer, and former professional dancer with 15 years of experience spanning Cincinnati Ballet, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, and Kansas City Ballet. She performed leading roles in works by George Balanchine, Jerome Robbins, Twyla Tharp, and other acclaimed choreographers. Jill directed and expanded Sacramento Ballet's Second Company from 13 to 30 dancers, overseeing artistic and operational programming. She co-founded the Kansas City Dance Festival and founded Movehealthier. Now leading Louisville Ballet's Studio Company, Jill is building a nationally recognized destination program with an ahead-of-its-time vision for developing exceptional artists and sustainable careers. She also serves as Affiliate Faculty at Bellarmine University, supporting a partnership enabling dancers to earn bachelor's degrees while pursuing professional ballet careers.



ERIC ALLGEIER

Scenic Designer

Eric is a Louisville native and freelance Scenic Designer. He has a BFA from Western Kentucky University in Theatre, an MFA from Boston University in Scenic Design, and an MAT from Spalding University for teaching. Eric was the Scenic Design faculty member at The Youth Performing Arts School for 13 years. He has worked with San Francisco Opera, Opera East Texas, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Kentucky Opera, Wolftrap Opera, University of Tennessee Opera, Florida State University Opera, Boston Playwright's Theatre, Kentucky Shakespeare Festival, Derby Dinner Playhouse, and Pandora Productions. Eric has also worked as an Assistant Scenic Designer at Actor's Theatre of Louisville and in New York City. At Louisville Ballet, he has previously created scenic designs for *La Sylphide* and *Dracula*.



KELLY TASSIN

Video Designer

A Louisville, Kentucky native, Kelly Tassin is a live events video engineer, video director, and creative technologist whose work exists at the intersection of technology, visual storytelling, and theatrical artistry. Kelly's creative credits include working with acclaimed artists such as Janet Jackson and New Edition, along with major live productions including Bourbon & Beyond and Louder Than Life. Kelly has also contributed to large-scale visual experiences, including projection mapping on Louisville Metro Hall. From live video direction and on-camera creative to projection, LED environments, and digital media, Kelly brings a distinctive visual sensibility to every production. With equal appreciation for precision and imagination, Kelly transforms technology into a dynamic part of the performance, creating visual moments that engage audiences and elevate the experience. From the control room to the stage, Kelly helps bring the story to life.



JESSE ALFORD

Lighting Designer

A former circus performer and coach turned Lighting Designer, Jesse is from Southern California, but settled in Louisville after a brief stint in San Francisco and graduating from Washington State University. He is the Lighting Director and Resident Lighting Designer at Louisville Ballet and has enjoyed an award-winning freelance career spanning more than 15 years, working with organizations including Kentucky Shakespeare, Cincinnati Ballet, Kentucky Opera, Va Va Vixens, Circus Flora, Big Apple Circus, Westchester Circus Arts, Tennessee Williams Festival St. Louis, Stage One Family Theater, Louisville Orchestra, Pandora Productions, Time Slip Theater, Theatre [502], and many more across the country. He has designed more than 250 productions for over 35 organizations. Favorite designs for Louisville Ballet include *Swan Lake*, *Dracula*, *502*, *Rite of Spring*, and *La Sylphide*. Working in circus, dance, theatre, and more, he specializes in the moments and productions that happen in between those disciplines.



MOLLY DUKE

Costume Designer

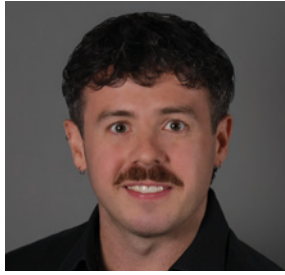
Molly is a costume designer from Louisville and currently serves as Louisville Ballet's Costume Director. This is their ninth season with the company. Molly has recently designed costumes for Ching Ching Wong's *502*, Roger Creel's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and created numerous original designs for annual choreographers' showcases with Company Artists and Studio Company Artists. They have also brought costumes to life for full-length ballets in Louisville Ballet's repertoire, blending archival designs and materials with new construction and creativity. Molly's designs support the creative development of new works and the artistic integrity of existing repertoire while helping bring distinctive visual identities to each production. She is a graduate of Bellarmine University, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degrees in Theatre and Art. Molly values the creative challenge of transforming a choreographer's vision into a fully realized design on stage.



TARA SIMONCIC

Music Director

Tara Simoncic is one of the top ballet conductors regularly appearing with the world's most renowned companies and was the first woman to conduct the prestigious American Ballet Theatre in the company's 85-year history. Ms. Simoncic is the principal conductor of the Flexible Orchestra in New York City. She has served as Music Director of Ballet West in Salt Lake City, Utah, and has been a recurring guest conductor with the New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, San Francisco Ballet, Teatro Colón's Ballet Estable, Cincinnati Ballet, Atlanta Ballet, and the Compañía Nacional de Danza in Madrid. 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. She is known for her unique connection with musicians and audience members, bringing passion, warmth, and clarity to every performance.



JUSTIN GRAY

Librettist

Justin Michael Gray is the Music Manager + Company Pianist for Louisville Ballet, where he plays a central role in shaping the company's musical voice. A former ballet dancer turned professional pianist, Justin brings over 20 years of experience as a dance accompanist and artistic collaborator. He holds bachelor's degrees in both Ballet Performance and Piano Performance from Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music — a unique combination that deepens his understanding of the relationship between movement and music. His previous work includes positions as class and rehearsal pianist with Fort Wayne Ballet, Fort Wayne Civic Theatre, New American Youth Ballet, Indianapolis Ballet, Indiana University Ballet Theater and Pre-College Program, and Grand Rapids Ballet. At Louisville Ballet, Justin provides daily accompaniment for company and school classes, serves as rehearsal pianist for mainstage productions, manages all scheduling and licensing for musical elements, and collaborates with artistic leadership to develop the company's creative direction.



JOHN ADAMS

Composer

One of the most influential living American composers, John Adams was born and raised in New England and is world-renowned for his work as a composer, conductor, and creative. His operatic and symphonic works stand out among contemporary classical compositions for their depth of expression and sound. Adams began composing at age 10 and later received degrees from Harvard University. He is the recipient of numerous Grammy awards and won the Erasmus Prize in 2019. His work is heavily influenced by the West Coast, where he has lived since the 1970s. He is also the author of *Hallelujah Junction* and has written for *The New Yorker* and *The London Times*. Characterized by critics as post-minimalist, his work brings colorful and expansive melodies to patterns rooted in minimalism.



JON HUFFMAN

Voice Actor

Jon Huffman is a huge fan of Louisville Ballet, proud to be a part of this production, and absolutely no dancer. As an actor/director, he has performed in and helmed hundreds of theatre productions all over the country, with companies including — locally — Kentucky Shakespeare, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and Derby Dinner Playhouse. A reformed Los Angeles actor, Jon has acted in dozens of feature films (including one Best Picture) and he's played many roles on network television (including one soap-opera bad guy who still gets occasionally recognized in the wild, after 20 years). He's been the narrator of over 250 audiobooks. Also a playwright, Jon's work has been staged across America, and he's the screenwriter of several films, one of which is a cult classic, particularly around Halloween and St. Patrick's Day.



ADAM HOUGLAND

Resident Choreographer

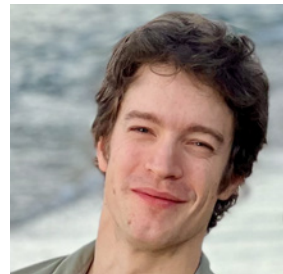
Adam Houglan grew up in Dallas, Texas, and trained at the Dallas Conservatory of Ballet, the Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, and The Juilliard School. Mr. Houglan has created works for American Ballet Theatre Studio Company, Introdans in Holland, The Limon Dance Company, Cincinnati Ballet, Tulsa Ballet, and Ballet X. He has won the Hector Zaraspe Prize for Choreography, the Princess Grace Award for Choreography, the Choo-San Goh Award for Choreography, and was one of *Pointe Magazine's* VIPs of 2006 and one of *Dance Magazine's* 25 To Watch For 2011. As Louisville Ballet Resident Choreographer, Adam has created 12 original works including *Romeo+Juliet*, *Petrouchka*, *Cold Virtues*, *Rite of Spring*, and *Sleeping Beauty*. Adam lives in Bristol, England with his husband Ashley.



ANDREA SCHERMOLY

Resident Choreographer

Born in South Africa, Andrea Schermoly trained at the National School of the Arts, on full scholarship at both Rambert Ballet and Contemporary School and The Royal Ballet School, London. She competed internationally as a member of The South African National Rhythmic Gymnastics Team and danced professionally for Boston Ballet and Nederlands Dans Theater (NDT). She has choreographed nationally and internationally for companies such as Royal New Zealand Ballet and Kansas City Ballet, among others, and has choreographed for movies, music videos, and commercials in Los Angeles. Andrea choreographed an all-new *Rite of Spring* dance film for the Company's 2020–2021 all-digital season. She most recently premiered *VIBES* for the Spring 2022 Spotlight Series and *Limbic* for the 2023 Spotlight Series.



ROGER CREEL

Resident Director of Shakespeare in Dance

Roger Creel, a Massachusetts native, is Resident Director of Louisville Ballet's Shakespeare in Dance series. Roger has created 10 works for the Company, including evening-length versions of *Tempest*, *King Lear*, *Cleopatra*, *As You Like It*, *Macbeth*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Roger danced with Louisville Ballet from 2013 to 2018, where he performed leading roles in works by Balanchine, Caniparoli, Hoagland, Jervies, Stevenson, and Tharp, in addition to classics such as *Giselle*, *La Sylphide*, *Coppélia*, *Swan Lake*, *Nutcracker*, and *Firebird*. He has also guested with numerous companies including The Mark Morris Dance Group, The Australian Ballet, Jose Mateo Ballet Theater, and Boston Dance Theater. Roger earned his PhD in Geophysics from Columbia University in 2024 and is currently an Assistant Professor in Geology and Geophysics at Texas A&M University. His research explores what sea level rise during past warm periods can tell us about Earth's hot future.

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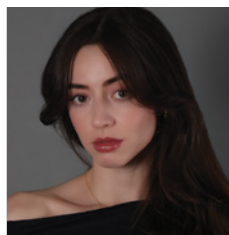


COMPANY ARTISTS



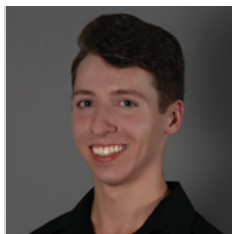
LEIGH ANNE ALBREHTA

Joined Company: 2009
Hometown: Fremont, OH



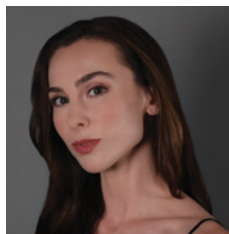
SARAH BRADLEY

Joined Company: 2022
Hometown: Cincinnati, OH



IAN ANDERSON-CONLON*

Joined Company: 2025
Hometown: Madison, WI



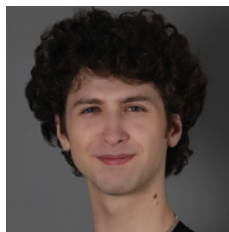
LEXA DANIELS

Joined Company: 2016
Hometown: Stoneham, MA



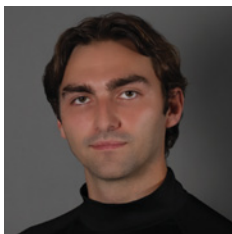
CHRISTOPHER BALBUENA*

Joined Company: 2025
Hometown: Alpharetta, GA



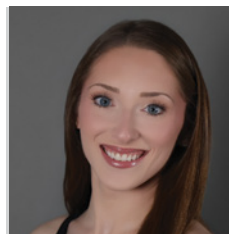
CALEB EMORY

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

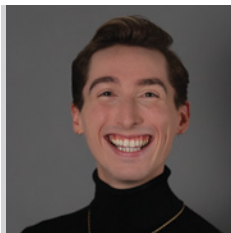
Joined Company: 2024
Hometown: St. Louis, MO



NICHOLAS GAIFULLIN*

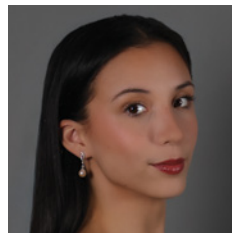
Joined Company: 2026
Hometown: Sarasota, FL

COMPANY ARTISTS



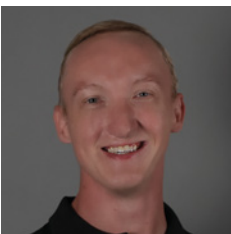
NICHOLAS BRADLEY GRAY

Joined Company: 2024
Hometown: Milwaukee, WI



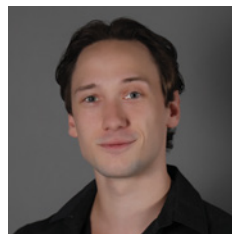
HANNAH POWELL*

Joined Company: 2026
Hometown: Austin, TX



RHYS HUDSON*

Joined Company: 2026
Hometown: Houston, TX



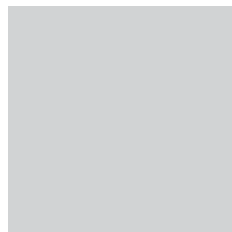
ALEKSANDR SCHROEDER

Joined Company: 2019
Hometown: Anderson, IN



JOEL MORIN-KENSICKI

Joined Company: 2024
Hometown: Chapel Hill, NC



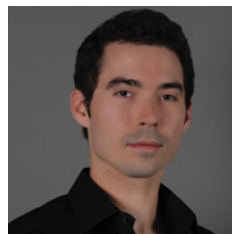
EMILY SAPSFORD*

Joined Company: 2026
Hometown: London, UK



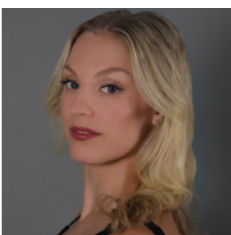
JORDAN NOBLETT

Joined Company: 2023
Hometown: Gastonia, NC



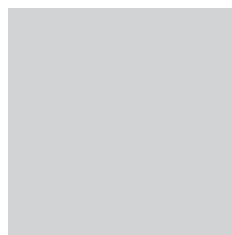
DANIEL SCOFIELD

Joined Company: 2022
Hometown: Louisville, KY



ELIZABETH PEMBERTON

Joined Company: 2022
Hometown: Overland Park, KS



DAVI TEÓFILO*

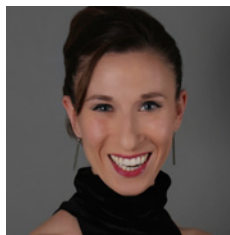
Joined Company: 2026
Hometown: Recife, Brazil

* New
Company
Artist

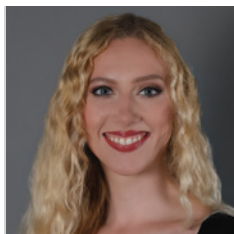
COMPANY ARTISTS



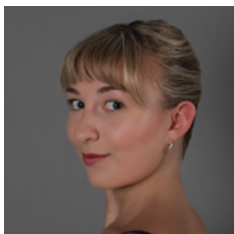
ASHLEY THURSBY
Joined Company: 2008
Hometown: Richmond, MO



BRIENNE WILTSIE
Joined Company: 2018
Hometown: Pittsburgh, PA



KAYLEIGH WESTERN
Joined Company: 2025
Hometown: Lexington, KY



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Joined Company: 2022
Hometown: Tenafly, NJ

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PHILLIP VELINOV
Joined Company: 2006
Hometown: Sofia, Bulgaria



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TO LEARN MORE
ABOUT OUR
COMPANY
ARTISTS

STUDIO COMPANY ARTISTS



Photo by Kateryna Sellers

The Louisville Ballet Studio Company is a program that provides professional-caliber training in technique and artistry. A post-secondary extension of the Pre-Professional Program at The Louisville Ballet School, this program is designed to further an aspiring dancer's education and prepare them for a career in dance through full-time immersion in a professional company environment. New this season: dancers may also pursue a Bachelor of Arts in Arts Administration (Dance Track) through Bellarmine University. This groundbreaking program integrates college education with professional dance training and creates pathways to arts careers on the stage and beyond.



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ABOUT OUR
STUDIO COMPANY
ARTISTS**

FIRST ROW

From left to right, kneeling: Guinevere Nelson, Julia Enwright, Ava Dhira Metzger, Abigail Wyrrick, Kate Barker, Julianne Arduino

SECOND ROW

Eva Pregont, Emily Grace Florio, Sadie Kern, Barbara Booth, Sarabella Reynolds, Bella Dunphy, Leanne Kanoa Dulay, Addison Koerner

THIRD ROW

Center, standing: Mackenzie Cohen, Audrey Mayernik, Joe Henn, Lilith Marchetti, Athena King

BACK ROW

Anna Horton, Annalise Bedrosian, Ava Carroll, Ella White, Babayel Diallo, Sam Blincoe, Owiin Merritt, Milo Sapien, Sarah Hutchison, Madison Dunham, Ansley Jackson, Katie Stuckenschneider

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NUTCRACKER

Choreography by Val Caniparoli



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Since its founding in 1994, the LG&E and KU Foundation has been a catalyst for positive change across Kentucky and in select communities in Virginia. With a philanthropic focus on economic development, education, and environmental stewardship, the Foundation invests in initiatives that strengthen communities, empower individuals, and build a more inclusive and sustainable future.

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Foundation

HANNAH POWELL

@hanxelle on Instagram

Hannah Powell is originally from Austin, Texas, where she started dancing at Ballet Austin at age three. She began her pre-professional training at Austin Metamorphosis Dance Academy under Melanie Kregel and Melissa Glouchkova while performing with Metamorphosis Dance Ensemble. In 2017, she joined the Atlanta Ballet Conservatory Program under the direction of Sharon Story. There, she had the opportunity to perform in the world premiere of Yuri Possokhov's *The Nutcracker*, Johan Kobborg's *La Sylphide*, and Bruce Wells' *Beauty and the Beast*. In 2019, Hannah was offered a scholarship to Richmond Ballet's trainee program under the direction of Judy Jacob and Stoner Winslett. Hannah joined New Orleans Ballet Theatre in 2021 and enjoyed performing roles such as Giselle, Cinderella, Sugar Plum Fairy (*The Nutcracker*), and Medora (*Le Corsaire Pas de Deux*).



What do you love about dance?

I love making a connection with the audience, sharing and creating those moments on stage where it can touch someone's heart or spark new thoughts. Making that link is one of the biggest drives in my dancing.

Favorite roles you have danced?

My favorite role I've had the chance to perform is Giselle. When I was 3 years old, the first ballet I learned about was *Giselle* while reading the *Illustrated Book of Ballet Stories*. I loved recreating the mad scene in my bedroom. It was a surreal, full circle moment to be able to bring Giselle's story and emotions to life on stage.

How do you prepare for a performance? Do you have any special rituals or superstitions?

I mostly shift the way I prepare depending on what I'm dancing. However, I always do my ritual of eating a Ferrero Rocher. I've always done this unintentionally since I was younger, but now it is a MUST for every performance.

What's one thing you couldn't live without?

My cat, Toulouse! She's a total cuddle-bug.



NIKOLAS GAIFULLIN

@nikartiste on Instagram

Born in Sarasota, Florida, Nikolas received his training from his parents, Stephanie Murrish and Daniil Gaifullin, and has performed across the United States and Europe. He performed the role of Drosselmeier in Yuri Possokhov's *The Nutcracker* with Atlanta Ballet and James in Johan Kobborg's *La Sylphide* in 2018. In 2019, he debuted the role of Tybalt in Johan Kobborg's *Romeo & Juliet* at Arena Di Verona, reprising the role in 2021 at London's Royal Albert Hall. Nikolas has performed Jade Hale Christofi's iconic solo to Hozier's "Take Me to Church" at the Gala De Danza in London in 2025 and at the Gala of the Stars in 2026 as a YAGP international principal guest artist. He has worked with many world-renowned choreographers, and his achievements and performances have earned him recognition and respect in the ballet community. Nikolas is excited to join Louisville Ballet for its 75th Anniversary Season.

How does ballet make you feel?

Ballet makes me feel spiritually free and at peace.

Favorite Louisville business?

My favorite restaurant is Meesh Meesh, and my favorite shop is POP's Collectibles and Comics.

Favorite ballet?

My favorite story ballet is a tie between *Spartacus* and *Ivan the Terrible* from Bolshoi Ballet. As for contemporary ballet, it would be Béjart Ballet's *Queen + Béjart: Ballet for Life*.

Favorite TV show or movie?

My favorite TV show is *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and my favorite movie is *The Princess Bride*.

Favorite books?

Jack Vance's *Tales of the Dying Earth* and Frank Herbert's *Dune*

Coffee or tea?

Coffee

Cats or dogs?

Cats



ANNA FORD

@annaflower02 on Instagram

Originally from Lilburn, Georgia, Anna began her training at the Northeast Atlanta Ballet. After graduating in 2020, Anna moved from her hometown to Louisville to join Louisville Ballet's Studio Company. While training in the Studio Company, Anna performed featured roles, including Marie in Val Caniparoli's *The Brown-Forman Nutcracker* and Cygnet in Robert Curran's *Swan Lake*. Her repertoire also includes works by Alun Jones, Adam Hougland, and George Balanchine. In 2023, Anna was promoted to the Company. Recent highlight performances include *Second Shade* in La Bayadère, *Autumn Fairy* in Alun Jones' *Cinderella*, and Marie in Val Caniparoli's *The Brown-Forman Nutcracker*. Additional credits include *Raymonda*, *Giselle*, *Romeo & Juliet*, Andrea Schermoly's *Appalachian Spring*, Ching Ching Wong's *502*, Stephen Mills' *Light / The Holocaust & Humanity Project*, and Adam Hougland's *Broken Totem*. Now entering her seventh year with Louisville Ballet, Anna is excited and grateful to continue sharing her artistry with the community.



What do you love about dance?

I love that dance combines discipline, passion, and creativity. I love being challenged to grow in my technique and artistry every day in the studio, and even more, I love bringing my hard work to the stage and sharing my artistry through performance.

How does ballet make you feel?

Ballet makes me feel elegant and peaceful, but also powerful and strong at the same time. I love the feeling of moving my body, connecting with the music, and telling a story through my movement.

Go-to coffee shop order?

I love my coffee to be like a treat. Anything sweet and flavored!

Zodiac sign:

Capricorn

CALEB EMORY

@caleb_emory16 on Instagram

Caleb Emory is from Corpus Christi, Texas. He began his studies at the age of 4 at Corpus Christi Ballet under Christina Munroe and Alex Emory. He then moved to Houston, Texas, at the age of 16 to study under Victoria Vittum at Houston Repertoire Ballet. After attending the Louisville Ballet Summer Intensive in 2022, he was offered a spot in the Louisville Ballet Studio Company under Robert Curran. After two years in the Studio Company, he was promoted to Company Artist by Mikelle Bruzina and Harald Uwe Kern. During his time with Louisville Ballet, he has had the privilege of performing the roles of Cavalier in Val Caniparoli's *The Brown-Forman Nutcracker*, Prince Siegfried in *Swan Lake*, Autumn Fairy Attendant in Alun Jones' *Cinderella*, and Johnathan Harker in Alun Jones' *Dracula*.



What do you love about dance?

I love being able to get lost in a character. Part of the appeal of ballet when I started dancing was the amount of acting required.

How do you prepare for a performance?

Do you have any special rituals or superstitions?

I like to bring some dressing room vibes with good music and fun snacks. I have to run through some choreography with my partners. This is a little superstitious, but I also knock three times on the wood stage floor before my first entrance.

Favorite Louisville business?

I'm obsessed with Revelry, The Vintage Banana, and Whirling Tiger.

Go-to coffee shop order?

Black cold brew

Cats or dogs?

Dogs

Zodiac sign:

Virgo





GENTLE MOVEMENT

Each Monday afternoon, music and laughter fill the activity room at ElderServe Senior Center in Louisville's California neighborhood as teaching artists from Louisville Ballet lead participants in a Gentle Movement class. The program provides a joyful, welcoming space where neighbors can connect, build community, and share meaningful experiences through movement and music.

This incredible partnership began three years ago with just a handful of participants and has since grown into a thriving program with a consistent group of seniors attending each week. Their commitment to staying active, engaged, and socially connected plays an important role in supporting independence, overall health, and quality of life. Several participants have performed in Louisville Ballet's annual Adaptive Dance Showcase and attended performances at the Kentucky Center at no cost — experiences that allow them to celebrate their creativity, build confidence, and experience the joy of dance beyond the classroom.

Research shows that dance can be particularly beneficial for the aging population, offering a range of physical, cognitive, emotional, and social benefits. Through this partnership, Louisville Ballet and ElderServe help to make those benefits accessible to seniors in the community.

75 louisville ballet
community engagement

Gentle Movement is especially beneficial for our seniors because it supports health, mobility, and overall well-being without placing excessive strain on our seniors' bodies! We have also seen firsthand the benefits to the overall disposition of our seniors, improving their mood and reducing anxiety while also supporting their memory and cognitive function."

—Tiffany Ellis, *ElderServe Director*

I really enjoy class. The movement really helps me. Instead of just sitting at home, I come up here for class and get to move my arms, my torso, and my legs. That movement really helps when you get to this age."

—Ardella Washington, *ElderServe participant*

This program is currently sponsored by Heaven Hill Brands through a Spirited Neighbor Grant.





The Louisville Ballet School



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FALL SHOWCASE

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louisville ballet
youth ensemble



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75 years of Louisville Ballet

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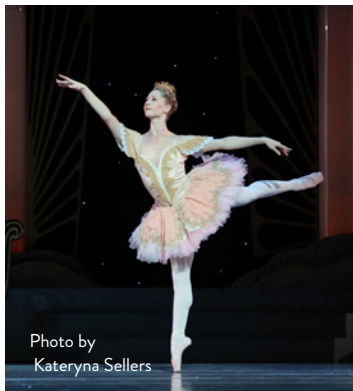


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The Starr Society was created to honor and celebrate the achievements of Helen Starr, who is a true gift to the dance world and a legend to Louisville Ballet. Membership is reserved for donors who contribute at least \$10,000*. We are grateful to the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

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

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IN WELCOMING
ANTHONY KRUTZKAMP.
IN HOPES FOR EVERY
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IN THANK YOU
FOR ALL THAT YOU DO,
DEAR LESLIE SMART
MARY AND
THOMAS HARDIN
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LESLIE SMART
PAULA AND
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IN HONOR OF
LESLIE SHARP
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IN HONOR OF EVERYONE
IN THE PRODUCTION
OF HAMLET, FROM THE
PERFORMERS TO THE
SUPPORT STAFF. THE
PERFORMANCE WAS A
SUCCESS THANKS TO YOUR
DEDICATION.
HUGH JONES
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FOR HIS OUTSTANDING
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PERFORMANCE!
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HIS KINDNESS, AND
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