



# BALLET CHICAGO.

**Daniel Duell**  
Artistic Director  
Founder

**Patricia Blair**  
Associate Artistic Director  
School Director

# Balanchine + *Beyond*

# FASCINATIN' RHYTHMS



## MAY 9, 2026 | 2PM & 7PM

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## Welcome!

It's been a remarkable year at Ballet Chicago, one defined by growth, momentum, and a deepening connection between our work on stage and the communities we serve.

That spirit comes to life in the performance you're about to see. *Balanchine + Beyond: Fascinatin' Rhythms* brings together a range of works that highlight the musicality, precision, and energy at the core of our training. From the elegance and vitality of George Balanchine to the richness of Ted Seymour's new choreography, this program illustrates the breadth and depth of our repertory while showcasing the technical skill and artistry of our dancers.

And while we're very proud of the art we create, Ballet Chicago's progress over the past year has been fundamentally connected to community outreach. Building on the success of our first sensory-friendly *Nutcracker* performance in December, we're expanding our commitment to accessibility by making sensory friendly shows part of our regular programming as well as through ongoing partnerships with organizations such as Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, KEEN Chicago, and Bounce Children's Foundation.

We're also growing our Gift of Dance ticket initiative to make free performance tickets available to even more community groups throughout the city. These efforts reflect our belief that the experience of live performance should be available to everyone.

Our dancers are at the center of everything we do. Their discipline and artistry transform daily work in the studio into vibrant, joyful performances that bring ballet to new audiences across the city. We're incredibly proud of their hard work and professionalism.

We are grateful to have you with us, and to share these *Fascinatin' Rhythms* with you today. Enjoy the performance!

Daniel Duell  
Ballet Chicago Founder and Artistic Director

# Balanchine + *Beyond*

## **THE BALLET CHICAGO STUDIO COMPANY**

Leighton Baumgartner, Greer Den Houter, Addison Diaz,  
Lily Guntz, Trevon Haggard, Lucy Hoy, Sofia Mae Hunt,  
Sofia Hutton, Brielle Jones, Leila Kantner, Alec Kherson,  
Alana Larry, Mimi McKelly, Isabella Medina, Anne Muschenheim,  
Lucia Neibel-Spruill, Amelia Oster, Katelyn Park,  
Eliza Poston, Quinn Rutman, Skylar Rutman,  
Caroline Stoughton, Nicole VanEekeren,  
Nadya Wang-Lee, Olivia Wolcott, Gracyn Wylie

## **APPRENTICES**

Celeste Arevalo, Zoe Keenan, Arabella Vitale

## **BALLET CHICAGO STUDENT DIVISION DANCERS**

Olivia Baldwin, Arsheen Baniassadi, Lena Camic-Surdell,  
Madeline Caron, Aurora Catenacci, Emilia Catenacci,  
Sofia Catenacci, Sarina Chaturvedi, Shaila Chaturvedi,  
Riya Chinnappan, Samantha Chorak, Jordan Chung,  
Lois Classen, Aditri Das, Pepper Dubuque, Genevieve Drummer,  
Mila Eickhoff, Isla Garcia, Athena Gunasinghe, Illyria Hauner,  
Rada Humenchuk, Elizabeth Jarousse, Zarah Javed,  
Mira Kindelsperger, Alice Li, Elissa Li, Quinnie Li,  
Shiloh Marshall, Honor Martinez, Amelia Mickelsen,  
Isla Miller, Noa Ramos, Isabella Rossi, Camila Serna,  
Margot Shriner, Madeleine Streicher,  
Zoya Szidik, Caroline Tang



# BALLET CHICAGO®

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## GUEST ARTIST

**Christian English**  
**Independent Artist**



Christian English was born and raised in Amarillo, Texas, where he began his formal ballet training at age thirteen under the direction of Mark Leber at Doxa Dance Ministry. Upon graduating in 2022, Mr. English relocated to Chicago to join Ballet 5:8, progressing through the Conservatory and Trainee programs before being invited into the company as a Company Apprentice and later promoted to Company Artist. During his time with Ballet 5:8, Mr. English performed as a featured soloist in Steve Rooks' *Wind* and originated a role in Kevin Jenkins' *These Quiet Moments*, in addition to performing soloist, principal, and pas de deux roles across numerous original works. Mr. English is honored to perform with Ballet Chicago in this production of *Fascinatin' Rhythms*.

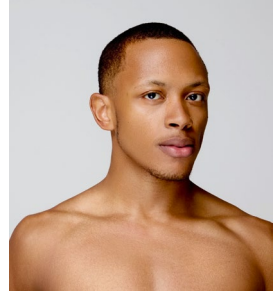


# BALLET CHICAGO®

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## GUEST ARTIST

**Nikyle Scott**  
**Ballet Chicago Alum**  
**Deeply Rooted Dance Theater**



From Gary, IN, Nikyle began his dance training at the age of 11 under the guidance of Larry Brewer, Joshua L. Ishmon, and Cheryl Barnes. He attended Wirt-Emerson Visual and Performing Arts School, majoring in Dance, while also training and performing with South Shore Dance Alliance. In 2022, after rediscovering his passion for dance, Nikyle trained with Ballet Chicago for four years under Daniel Duell and Patricia Blair on a full Philip and Marsha Dowd Merit Scholarship. There he has performed an extensive repertory including George Balanchine's *Rubies*, *Divertimento No. 15*, *Concerto Barocco*, *Sugar Plum Pas de Deux*, lead Angel in Daniel Duell's *Hansel and Gretel*, was featured in Duell's *Ellington Suite*, and also danced leading roles in Ted Seymour's *Danzon!*, *Secrets de Printemps*, and *Four Hands for Eighteen Feet*. He is honored and inspired to add leading roles very special to him this season in Balanchine's *Allegro Brillante*, *Tarantella*, and *Who Cares?*

Nikyle has participated in several of Deeply Rooted Dance Theater's pre-professional programs, performing works by Nicole Clarke-Springer, Gary Abbott, and Kevin Iga Jeff. He is grateful to begin his first season as an apprentice with Deeply Rooted and looks forward to expanding the boundaries of his artistic voice.



# BALLET CHICAGO®

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## GUEST ARTIST

**Christopher Stone**  
**Deeply Rooted Dance Theater**



Christopher Stone (Richmond, Virginia) began his dance journey at age 12 through Minds in Motion and quickly grew his passion into a career nurtured at The Richmond Ballet and Howard University's Chadwick A. Boseman College of Fine Arts. Under the guidance of Patricia Thomas, affectionately known as Mama Pat, and her circle of family, Christopher was given a wealth of opportunities that expanded his artistry and training. He went on to study with world-class institutions such as Complexions Academy in New York and Deeply Rooted Dance Theater in Chicago, performing works by celebrated choreographers including Kevin Iga Jeff, Gary Abbott, Nicole Clarke-Springer, Desmond Richardson, Dwight Rhoden, Christopher Huggins, Ny'Cole Ray, and Sidra Bell. Christopher has brought life to pivotal works such as *Black is Beautiful* by Dwight Rhoden & Desmond Richardson, *I THINK* and *Journey 5* by Christopher Huggins, and *Touch* by Kevin Iga Jeff, and had the privilege of being featured in *We Worship Sunday Service*, directed by Phylicia Rashad. His performances have graced renowned stages including The Joyce Theater, The Kennedy Center, and the International Association of Blacks in Dance (IABD), where he is recognized for bringing depth, strength, and vulnerability to each role. Now continuing his evolution as an apprentice with Deeply Rooted Dance Theater, Christopher carries gratitude into every performance, seeking to inspire, uplift, and bring healing through the gift of dance, while building a lasting legacy of artistry that speaks to generations to come. This is a second season performing with Ballet Chicago.

# Balanchine + *Beyond*

MAY 9TH AT 7:00 PM

THE HARRIS THEATER

## **ALLEGRO BRILLANTE**

Choreography by George Balanchine

© The George Balanchine Trust

Music: Piano Concerto No. 3 in E-Flat major,

Op. 75 by Pyotr Ilyitch Tchaikovsky

Répétiteurs: Daniel Duell and Patricia Blair

Costumes: Corrine Budris

Lighting Design: Margaret Nelson

New York City Ballet Premiere: 1956

Ballet Chicago Premiere: 2005

CAROLINE STOUGHTON – QUINN RUTMAN

Leighton Baumgartner, Addison Diaz, Christian English,  
Nikyle Scott, Alec Kherson, Amelia Oster,  
Christopher Stone, Nadya Wang-Lee

*Allegro Brillante* embodies George Balanchine's vision of ballet as music made visible. Centered around a lead couple who perform with an ensemble of dancers that amplify their energy, the ballet unfolds with speed, precision, and exhilaration. Patterns emerge and dissolve with structural clarity, yet the work never feels cold or repetitive. Instead, it delights the audience with fifteen dazzling minutes of pure energy, joy, and wit. From start to finish, the piece demonstrates Balanchine's mastery of classicism combined with modern brilliance all while celebrating technique, musicality, and the sheer delight of motion.

# Balanchine + *Beyond*

MAY 9TH AT 7:00 PM

THE HARRIS THEATER

## **BACH SUITE**

Choreography and Staging by Ted Seymour

Music: *Little Suite*, *Anna Magdalena Bach Notebook (1722, 1725)*  
by J.S. Bach

Children's Rehearsal Director: Kara DelGrosso

Costumes: Corrine Budris

Lighting Design: Margaret Nelson

Ballet Chicago Premiere: 2010

## LILY GUNTZ

Sofia Catenacci – Mira Kindelsperger

Shaila Chaturvedi, Lois Classen, Elizabeth Jarousse, Mila Eickhoff,  
Zarah Javed, Alice Li, Isabella Rossi, Zoya Szidik

Olivia Baldwin, Arsheen Baniassadi, Madeline Caron,  
Aurora Catenacci, Sarina Chaturvedi, Samantha Chorak,  
Jordan Chung, Aditri Das, Genevieve Drummer, Isla Garcia,  
Rada Humenchuk, Elissa Li, Ilyria Hauner, Honor Martinez,  
Camila Serna, Margot Shriner

Lena Camic-Surdel, Emilia Catenacci, Riya Chinnappan,  
Pepper Dubuque, Athena Gunasinghe, Quinnie Li,  
Shiloh Marshall, Isla Miller, Amelia Mickelsen,  
Noa Ramos, Madeleine Streicher, Caroline Tang

– Intermission – 15 minutes –

# Balanchine + *Beyond*

MAY 9TH AT 7:00 PM

THE HARRIS THEATER

## INTERMEZZI

Choreography and Staging by Ted Seymour

Pianist: John Mannos

Music: *Three Intermezzi* for Piano, Op. 117 (1892)

by Johannes Brahms

Costumes: Corrine Budris

Lighting Design: Margaret Nelson

New York City Ballet Choreographic Institute Premier: 2003

Ballet Chicago Premier: 2014

ADDISON DIAZ – TREVON HAGGARD –  
KATELYN PARK – NADYA WANG-LEE

Celeste Arevalo, Brielle Jones, Lelia Kantner, Zoe Keenan,  
Alana Larry, Isabella Medina, Anne Muschenheim,  
Eliza Poston, Olivia Wolcott, Arabella Vitale

*Intermezzi* unfolds to the tender intimacy of Brahms, performed live by Ballet Chicago Principal Pianist John Mannos. Across its three movements, the ballet depicts the metamorphosis of the lead ballerina as she moves through three distinct phases of her life. The work becomes a physical meditation on the tension between devotion to one's art and the realities that threaten to pull one away from it.

The genesis of *Intermezzi* dates back to 2003, when Ted Seymour was invited by Peter Martins to create a new work for The New York Choreographic Institute, where the first two movements were completed. The trilogy was completed in 2014 with a full production at the Harris Theater.

# Balanchine + *Beyond*

MAY 9TH AT 7:00 PM

THE HARRIS THEATER

## TARANTELLA

Choreography by George Balanchine

© The George Balanchine Trust

Music: *Grand Tarantelle for Piano and Orchestra*, Op. 67 (ca. 1866)

by Louis Moreau Gottschalk

Répétiteurs: Daniel Duell and Patricia Blair

Costumes: Kathryn Koesling

Lighting Design: Margaret Nelson

New York City Ballet Premiere: 1964

Ballet Chicago Premiere: 1988

GREER DEN HOUTER – QUINN RUTMAN

This spirited ballet features two dancers engaged in a playful exchange of daring ballet one-upmanship. The duo whirls together around the stage, dazzling the audience with razor-sharp precision and infectious exuberance in a cascade of rapid footwork, buoyant jumps, and heart-racing lifts. Throughout, Balanchine infuses classical technique with a vibrant, folk-inflected flair evoking the spirit of the traditional Italian dance. The result feels at once technically brilliant, rhythmically alive, and gloriously cheeky.

– Intermission – 15 Minutes

# Balanchine + *Beyond*

MAY 9TH AT 7:00 PM

THE HARRIS THEATER

## WHO CARES?

Choreography by George Balanchine

© The George Balanchine Trust

Music: George Gershwin, Orchestration by Hershy Kay

Répétiteurs: Daniel Duell and Patricia Blair

Assisting Rehearsal Director: Ted Seymour

Costumes: Patricia Blair

Lighting Design: Margaret Nelson

New York City Ballet Premier: 1970

Ballet Chicago Premier: 2006

GREER DEN HOUTER – ALEC KHERSON – MIMI MCKELLY –  
SKYLAR RUTMAN – NIKYLE SCOTT – CHRISTOPHER STONE

Addison Diaz, Christian English, Lily Guntz, Trevon Haggard,  
Sofia Mae Hunt, Sofia Hutton, Lucy Hoy, Leila Kantner, Alana Larry,  
Isabella Medina, Anne Muschenheim, Lucia Neibel-Spruill,  
Amelia Oster, Katelyn Park, Quinn Rutman, Caroline Stoughton,  
Nicole VanEekeren, Gracyn Wylie

### *Strike up the Band (1927)*

Full Ensemble

### *Sweet and Low Down (1925)*

Lily Guntz, Sofia Mae Hunt, Lucy Hoy, Sofia Hutton, Leila Kantner,  
Alana Larry, Isabella Medina, Anne Muschenheim,  
Lucia Neibel-Spruill, Katelyn Park

### *Somebody Loves Me (1924)*

Addison Diaz, Amelia Oster, Caroline Stoughton,  
Nicole VanEekeren, Gracyn Wylie

***Bidin' My Time (1930)***

Christian English, Alec Kherson, Trevon Haggard, Quinn Rutman,  
Christopher Stone

***The Man I Love (1924)***

Skylar Rutman and Nikyle Scott

***I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise (1922)***

Mimi McKelly

***Embraceable You (1930)***

Greer Den Houter and Alec Kherson

***Fascinatin' Rhythm (1924)***

Skylar Rutman

***Who Cares? (1931)***

Mimi McKelly and Christopher Stone

***My One and Only (1927)***

Greer Den Houter

***Liza (1929)***

Nikyle Scott

***I Got Rhythm (1930)***

Full Ensemble

One of George Balanchine's most joyous and playful celebrations of American music and dance, *Who Cares?* radiates humor, sophistication, and effortless style. The work moves fluidly between ensemble brilliance and virtuosic solos, blending the precise Balanchine technique with sophisticated urban accents, sharp musical timing, and the romance of the jazz age. Glittering costumes and surprising mood shifts give the ballet a spontaneous feeling, even as every step is precisely composed and performed. Ultimately, *Who Cares?* celebrates the sheer pleasure of performance and American innovation.

These performances of *ALLEGRO BRILLANTE*, *TARANTELLA*, and *WHO CARES?*, **Balanchine® Ballets**, are presented by arrangement with **The George Balanchine Trust** and have been produced in accordance with the **Balanchine Style®** and **Balanchine Technique®** Service standards established and provided by the Trust. The Balanchine® Ballets presented in this program are protected by copyright. Any unauthorized photography or recording is prohibited without the express written consent of The George Balanchine Trust and Ballet Chicago.



# BALLET CHICAGO®

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## ARTISTIC DIRECTION

**Daniel Duell**

**Ballet Chicago Founder and Artistic Director**  
**Répétiteur, The George Balanchine Trust**



Daniel Duell is a leading advocate for American Classicism and the advancement of ballet technique in its most dynamic and refined form. A member of New York City Ballet from 1972 to 1987, he was coached by George Balanchine and rose rapidly through the ranks, becoming a Principal Dancer in 1979. His repertoire included leading roles in works by Balanchine, Jerome Robbins, Peter Martins, and Jacques d'Amboise, and he originated roles in ballets created especially for him.

A Ford Foundation Scholarship recipient, Mr. Duell trained at the School of American Ballet and joined NYCB at 19. He has choreographed since 1980 for Ballet Chicago and other major institutions, and his work with WTTW earned an Emmy Award for Outstanding Cultural Programming. He is the recipient of the Ruth Page Award for artistic direction.

A renowned *répétiteur* for The George Balanchine Trust, Mr. Duell has staged Balanchine ballets nationwide and teaches master classes across the U.S. and Europe. He maintains ongoing teaching engagements with the School of American Ballet and New York City Ballet.

Most recently, Mr. Duell was invited by the Balanchine Foundation to be filmed coaching NYCB dancers in Balanchine's *Sanguinic* from *Four Temperaments*. This initiative documents artists who were personally coached by Balanchine, preserving the integrity and stylistic authenticity of his ballets for future generations.



# BALLET CHICAGO®

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## ARTISTIC DIRECTION

### **Patricia Blair**

**Associate Artistic Director and School Director  
Répétiteur, The George Balanchine Trust**



Patricia Blair, a native of New York City, began dancing at age two and launched her professional career at seventeen. She trained at the North Carolina School of the Arts and Harkness House for Ballet Arts, crediting a summer at the School of American Ballet with inspiring her lifelong commitment to the Balanchine Technique. At NCSA, she performed Myrtha in *Giselle* alongside principal dancers.

She returned to New York to study with Wilhelm Burman, David Howard, and Nanette Charisse, then joined the Eglevsky Ballet under Edward Villella, later serving as Ballet Master. Ms. Blair performed extensively as a guest artist, collaborated with New York choreographers, appeared in musical theater across the U.S. and Broadway, and starred in the solo dance film *Pavanne for a Dying Princess*.

Teaching since age fifteen, she has worked with at-risk youth and trained students at Steps NY and Harkness House. In 1987, she moved to Chicago to join Daniel Duell's artistic team, and together they co-founded Ballet Chicago, where she now shares artistic and administrative leadership. She has been a guest teacher at leading companies and schools nationwide, including the School of American Ballet.



# BALLET CHICAGO®

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## RESIDENT CHOREOGRAPHER

**Ted Seymour**

**Ballet Chicago Resident Choreographer &  
Marketing Associate**

**The Chicago High School for the Arts,  
Conservatory Faculty**

**Choreographer: *Bach Suite, Intermezzi***



Ballet Chicago alumnus Ted Seymour brings exceptional breadth to his work with young dancers. He began training at Dallas Metropolitan Ballet, then studied on full scholarship at Ballet Chicago, performing principal roles in George Balanchine masterpieces with the Ballet Chicago Studio Company. He continued at School of American Ballet, where Peter Martins invited him to choreograph for the New York Choreographic Institute. His graduation performance featured the demanding “Waltz Boy” role in *Serenade*.

Seymour danced with Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet, working with leading choreographers, and joined The Suzanne Farrell Ballet in 2007. He performed featured roles in Balanchine works including *Episodes*, *La Valse*, and Act II of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and was promoted to soloist in 2015 by Suzanne Farrell.

A faculty member since 2009, Mr. Seymour is known for musical precision, technical clarity, and rigorous attention to detail. His choreography includes *Creatures of Prometheus* (2012 International Beethoven Festival), *Celestial Rites* (Ballet Chicago’s 25th anniversary, Harris Theater for Music and Dance), *Danzón No. 2* (2014, with the Lakeview Orchestra), and *Intermezzi* (2014). Named Resident Choreographer in 2012, Mr. Seymour also teaches at The Chicago High School for the Arts.



# BALLET CHICAGO®

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## LEAD PIANIST

**John Mannos**  
**Ballet Chicago Lead Pianist**



John Mannos happily serves his community as music director and principal pianist for Ballet Chicago. Equipped with a diverse breadth of dance experience, John received rigorous training at the collegiate dance program of SUNY Purchase in New York where he completed his Master of Music degree in piano performance. John has worked for the Tulsa Ballet Theatre as company pianist and has also played for Hubbard Street Dance, the Joffrey Ballet, Chicago Ballet Arts, Ruth Page Center, A&A Ballet, Visceral Dance Chicago, and Columbia College where he expanded into modern dance with drum accompaniment. He collaborated on new live music projects with Ballet Chicago's resident choreographer Ted Seymour starting in 2014 when he debuted the Brahms *Intermezzi* Op. 117 at the Harris Theater and again in 2018 for Ballet Chicago's *DanceVision* program featuring the music of Claude Debussy and a new duet by composer and colleague Kyle Kunkler.

His work with Ballet Chicago has brought particular emphasis to the musical selections of choreographer George Balanchine. John has an active YouTube channel focused on dance accompaniment as a resource and listening guide for pianists and dancers. He also regularly trains pianists who are new to the styles and fundamentals of dance accompanying. John teaches music theory seminars to dance students, focusing on rhythmic fundamentals and the history of Classical music's relationship to ballet. He has learned many ballet scores and played for rehearsals for *Swan Lake*, *La Bayadère*, *Don Quixote*, *Paquita*, *Coppélia*, *La Source*, *The Nutcracker*, and *Sylvia*.

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# ARTISTIC DIRECTION



## **George Balanchine (1904-1983)**

### **Choreographer, *Allegro Brillante*, *Tarantella*, *Who Cares?***

Born in St. Petersburg, Russia, George Balanchine reshaped classical ballet into a distinctly modern art form. Invited to the United States in 1933 by Lincoln Kirstein, he co-founded the School of American Ballet in 1934 and later established the New York City Ballet in 1948, laying the foundation for a new American ballet tradition.

Working from the foundation of classical technique, Balanchine reshaped the vocabulary of ballet, extending line, accelerating tempo, and stripping away unnecessary embellishment to emphasize structure and musicality. His choreography places music at the center, demanding precision, responsiveness, and expressive immediacy from the dancer. This approach became the hallmark of what is now recognized as the “Balanchine style.”

Balanchine’s influence on American ballet is unparalleled. One of the 20th century’s most influential classical choreographers, Balanchine created more than 400 ballets, many of which are considered masterpieces of American ballet. Through his work with New York City Ballet and the repertory he created, he established a body of work that continues to define the art form. Today, his ballets are performed by leading companies around the world, a testament to the enduring vitality and reach of his vision.

**Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)** was a central figure of the Baroque era, and is celebrated for music of extraordinary complexity, clarity, and expressive depth. Born in Eisenach, Germany, into a long line of musicians, he spent much of his career working as an organist and composer in churches and courts across Germany.

Bach's vast output includes sacred and secular works, from the *Brandenburg Concertos* to the *Mass in B minor* and *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. His music is renowned for its intricate counterpoint and architectural brilliance, and has influenced composers and performers across generations.

**Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)** was a leading Romantic era composer, known for music that combines expressive warmth with classical structure. Born in Hamburg, he rose to prominence through the support of Robert Schumann and later settled in Vienna.

Brahms composed symphonies, concertos, chamber works, and short songs, including the *German Requiem* and *Symphony No. 4*. Influenced by Ludwig van Beethoven, his music is admired for its depth, craftsmanship, and emotional power, and remains central to the concert repertoire today.

**George Gershwin (1898–1937)** was a defining voice of American music in the 20th century, celebrated for blending classical traditions with jazz and popular song. Born in Brooklyn, New York, he rose to prominence writing popular songs and ballads before achieving success as a serious composer.

Gershwin's best-known works include *Rhapsody in Blue*, *An American in Paris*, and the opera *Porgy and Bess*. His music is admired for its rhythmic vitality, memorable melodies, and distinctly American character, and it remains a vibrant part of both the classical and popular repertoire.

**Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829–1869)** was a pioneering American composer and virtuoso pianist, known for blending European classical traditions with Caribbean and Latin American influences. Born in New Orleans, his music reflects the rich cultural diversity of his upbringing, incorporating rhythms and melodies inspired by Creole, Afro-Caribbean, and popular folk traditions.

A celebrated performer across the United States, Europe, and South America, Gottschalk composed works such as *Grande Tarantelle* and *Souvenir de Porto Rico*. His music is admired for its rhythmic vitality, color, and distinctive American voice, and it helped lay the groundwork for a uniquely American classical style.

**Pyotr Ilyitch Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)** was a Russian composer whose deeply expressive music has made him one of the most beloved figures in classical music. His gift for melody, emotional depth, and dramatic flair helped define the Romantic era, and his works continue to captivate audiences worldwide.

Tchaikovsky's contributions to ballet are especially enduring. His four full-length ballets—*Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Eugene Onegin*, and *The Nutcracker*—revolutionized ballet music, elevating it from mere accompaniment to an integral, storytelling force. These scores remain staples of the repertoire and have inspired generations of choreographers, including George Balanchine, who revered Tchaikovsky and created masterful interpretations of his work, most famously *The Nutcracker* and *Serenade*, set to his *Serenade for Strings*, which Ballet Chicago performed at the Harris Theater in May 2025.



## About Ballet Chicago

When Daniel Duell and Patricia Blair founded the School of Ballet Chicago in 1995, they envisioned a place where dancers would receive exceptional training in a nurturing environment. Ballet Chicago's mission remains centered on educating and inspiring young dancers, empowering each to realize their full potential with poise, passion, and purpose. Their efforts focus on our students' growth both as classical ballet dancers and as individuals equipped to navigate life's challenges. Renowned for rigorous training, they remain steadfast in ensuring that their students excel both in the studio and beyond.

Now in its 31st year, Ballet Chicago is dedicated to impacting lives through the beauty and power of ballet, to inspiring generations of dancers and audiences, and to ensuring that the impact and spirit of Ballet Chicago will endure far into the future.

### George Balanchine Trust

Through a unique partnership with the George Balanchine Trust, Ballet Chicago students learn and perform a repertoire typically reserved for professional companies. Ballet Chicago co-founder Daniel Duell danced under Mr. Balanchine's direction at the New York City Ballet from 1972 to 1987.

Both Mr. Duell and Ms. Blair are *répétiteurs* for the Balanchine Trust, a designation that enables them to teach and stage Balanchine's ballets, which they have done not only for Ballet Chicago but also for professional companies nationwide.

### Ballet Chicago's Gift of Dance

Every year, Ballet Chicago shares the magic of ballet through our Gift of Dance program, which provides complimentary tickets to our performances, including *The Nutcracker* and our Spring Series: *Balanchine + Beyond*.

*This weekend, we are proud to welcome guests from the following organizations:*

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Chicago  
Chicago Multicultural Dance Center  
Deeply Rooted Dance Theater  
Family Focus Regional Centers  
Hemenway United Methodist Church  
Hyde Park School of Dance  
Forward Momentum Chicago  
KEEN Chicago  
Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital  
Ronald McDonald House Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana  
VetTix

Please contact Sharyn Pulling at [spulling@balletchicago.org](mailto:spulling@balletchicago.org) for information about underwriting Gift of Dance performances or to recommend organizations that would benefit from receiving free or reduced tickets.

Together, let's make ballet accessible to all!



# BALLET CHICAGO®

## BALLET CHICAGO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Jing Cheng, Hugh Park Jedwill, Diana Kantner, Mahima Keswani,  
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This committee was formed to strengthen Ballet Chicago's partnerships with companies across the city to expand support for our performances, training programs, and community initiatives.

If you have a connection to a Chicago-based company, we'd love to hear from you. Please contact Sharyn Pulling to start the conversation ([spulling@balletchicago.org](mailto:spulling@balletchicago.org)).

## **BALLET CHICAGO ARTISTIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

Daniel Duell, *Artistic Director & Founder*

Patricia Blair, *Associate Artistic Director & School Director*

Ted Seymour, *Resident Choreographer & Marketing Associate*

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Patricia Blair, Daniel Duell, Ted Seymour, *Senior Faculty Members*

Katherine Alvarado, Kara DelGrosso, Patti Eylar, Elly Green, Emma Kapteyn,

Emily Rice, Stephen Sanford, Nikyle Scott, Emma Wittig

## **ACCOMPANISTS**

John Mannos, *Principal Pianist*

Jeremy Harris, Andrew Milliken, Jonathan Schang

## **PRODUCTION**

Margaret L. Nelson, *Production Manager & Lighting Designer*

Jesus Chavez, *Production Assistant*

Corrine Budris, *Wardrobe Supervisor*

Aislinn Cantin, Kiersten Davis, Kate Denny, YiJing Yang, *Wardrobe Interns*

Gary Guidi, *Photographer*

## **NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY CAUSE MARKETING INITIATIVE**

Ballet Chicago is thrilled to partner for a second year in a row with a team of graduate students from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism to market our spring performance.

Many thanks to our 2026 CMI team:

Cristina Hirmas Suarez, **Team Leader**

Cristy Lin, Jia Xu, Mandy Xu

## **BANKING SERVICES**

Wintrust Bank Community Bank

Matthew Gambs, *Community Impact Officer*

Marcus Matthews, *Vice President Relationship Manager*

## **LEGAL SERVICES**

Barnes & Thornburg, LLP

Jason Clagg, Beth Nattaraco, Wes Broquard, Jonathan Froemel

## **MEDICAL SERVICES**

Endeavor Health



# BALLET CHICAGO®

## Special Thanks

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Broadway in Chicago  
Chicago Line Cruises – The Johnson Family  
Chicago Loop Alliance  
The Chicago Cultural Center  
Connie Hochman, *In Balanchine's Classroom Digital Archive*  
DCASE  
Deeply Rooted Dance Theater  
Endeavor Health  
Gary Guidi  
The George Balanchine Trust  
The George Balanchine Foundation  
Harris Center for Music and Dance  
Illinois Arts Council  
Kendra Scott Jewelry  
The Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts  
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Tutu School Chicago  
Wintrust Community Bank

## Thank You to Our Volunteers

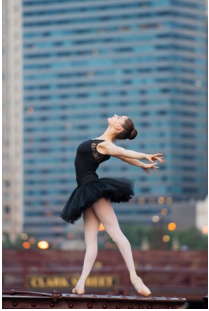
Ballet Chicago extends its deepest gratitude to the incredible volunteers who make our Spring Repertory performance possible. We are honored by your generous offer of time, talent, and spirit. Your efforts enable our dancers to shine and make our audiences feel welcomed and cared for. Your support brings our mission to life.

Meghan Catenacci, Andrea Cerniglia, Jing Cheng, Shyamali Das, Samantha Dubuque, Alison Gunasinghe, Josh Hunt, Katie Jackson-Meara, Mahima Keswani, Abby Kindelsperger, Laura Kupperman-Caron, Jenny Ludwig, Harley Qin, Jessica Serna, Kristen Zaharski

**Thank you for being an essential part of the Ballet Chicago family.**

# Summer Programs

**Inspired by what you see tonight?** Join us this summer! Ballet Chicago is acclaimed for its focus on George Balanchine's repertory and unwavering commitment to artistic and technical excellence. With small class sizes – typically around 20-25 per level – dancers receive personalized attention and detailed corrections ensuring an exceptional level of summer instruction. We hold classes 6 days a week for our pre-professional and summer programs.



## Summer Intensive – June 22 - July 24, 2026

An unparalleled training experience. Our expert faculty, led by Artistic Director Daniel Duell, School Director Patricia Blair and Resident Choreographer Ted Seymour, is known for its ability to transform dancers through highly focused guidance, correction, and validation for each student. Classes are demanding, and results are clear. **Acceptance is by audition only.** Ages 11+.

## Balanchine Repertory Workshop – July 27- August 7, 2026

Ballet Chicago's two-week Balanchine Repertory Workshop is a perfect complement to our five week Summer Intensive.

This year, we are excited to welcome former NYCB principal dancer and international star **Ashley Boudier** as master guest teacher during our Balanchine Repertory Workshop. Throughout her performing career, **Acceptance by audition only.** Ages 12+

## Children's Programs Junior Intensive

**Session 1: June 15 - 19, 2026**

**Session 2: July 27 - 31, 2026**

**Session 3: August 3 - 7, 2026**

Ballet Chicago's Junior Intensive, designed for dancers ages 7 to 12, gives students the foundation necessary to excel. **No audition required. Registration now available!**



Contact School Administrator, Emma Kapteyn ([ekapteyn@balletchicago.org](mailto:ekapteyn@balletchicago.org)) or visit [balletchicago.org](http://balletchicago.org) for more information.

# Annual Programs

Fall Classes start on September 9, 2026

**Preparatory Division:** Ages 3-7 – Our Preparatory Division classes provide an inspired introduction to the arts with a focus on group interaction, motor skill development, and creative self-expression.

**Student Division:** Ages 7-14 – The Student Division consists of Levels 1-5. The curriculum for each level is carefully structured to provide students with a strong ballet foundation. All classes are conducted by teachers experienced in ballet instruction for young dancers and are taught with live piano accompaniment. Advancement from level-to-level is based on an assessment of the dancer's technical ability, physical aptitude, strength, and effort.

**Pre-Professional Program:** Ages 14+ – Ballet Chicago's Pre-Professional Division offers advanced training for those pursuing a career in ballet. We offer a comprehensive curriculum including women's technique and pointe, men's technique and weight training, pas de deux, repertory, Pilates, and stretch classes.

**The Ballet Chicago Studio Company (BCSC):** Levels 6-8 & Men – The Ballet Chicago Studio Company replicates a professional company experience and is recognized as one of the top training programs in the country. Through a special arrangement with the George Balanchine Trust, BCSC dancers participate in the Balanchine Repertory Project, offering them the rare opportunity to learn and perform works by George Balanchine.

Depending on level, dancers enrolled in our programs are eligible to perform in the following performances in 2026-2027:

October 17, 2026 -- Chicago Loop Arts Festival

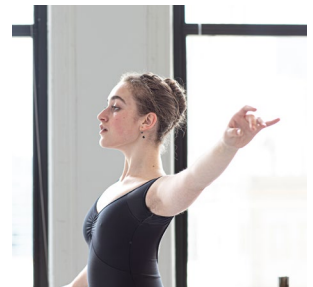
November 2026 -- *DanceVision*

December 11-13, 2026 -- *Nutcracker* at the Athenaeum Center

December 18-20, 2026 -- *Nutcracker* at the Harris Theater

May 7-8, 2027 -- *Balanchine + Beyond: Spring Series* at the Harris Theater

May 2027 -- Annual School Performance



Contact School Administrator, Emma Kapteyn ([ekapteyn@balletchicago.org](mailto:ekapteyn@balletchicago.org)) or visit [balletchicago.org](http://balletchicago.org) for more information.

Photo Credit Mya Davis



# BALLET CHICAGO.®

## Celebrating Artistic Excellence

We gratefully acknowledge our 2025-2026 donors.

As a nonprofit arts organization, Ballet Chicago depends on the generosity of individuals, families, and partners who believe in the power of dance to bring people together.

This is a challenging time for organizations like Ballet Chicago as we confront a changing cultural, social, and economic landscape. Yet it is precisely in such moments that the arts matter most. That's why Ballet Chicago is more committed than ever to making ballet accessible to the widest possible audience. Our arts equity initiatives aim to break down barriers to ballet by offering scholarships, free or reduced rate performance tickets, and inclusive programming.

We invite those who share our commitment to artistic excellence and access to join our community of supporters. Every gift, at every level, plays a meaningful role in ensuring that Ballet Chicago can continue to train young artists, present vibrant performances, and expand access to ballet. Whether by donating to our special initiatives or general operating fund, our supporters provide the lifeblood of Ballet Chicago, and we are deeply grateful to our supporters for their generosity and belief in our mission.

### \$25,000+

#### Artistic Directors Circle

Philip and Marsha Dowd  
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### \$10,000-\$24,999

#### Choreographers Circle

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Stephanie VanEekeren  
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#### Faculty Circle

Shameem Abbassy  
Andrew Bedesem  
Jeremy and Tabitha De Francisco  
Hugh Park Jedwill  
Paul Levin  
Aleksandra Matic  
Oswaldo and Jackie Medina  
Michelle Moore  
Bernice Park  
Harriet Pontikes  
David Rosenzweig  
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Tutu School Franchises

### \$250-\$499

#### Dancers Circle

Alka Basil  
Marquita Bedway  
James Brennan  
Meghan Catenacci  
Laura Clementi-Tyler  
Mary Hess  
Margo and Jason Hawk  
Margaret Hughes  
Gail Kalver  
Elizabeth Kirchner  
Frances Kucich  
Kathryn Leshner  
Melanie Marshall  
Sandra Popik  
Sharyn Pulling, Ph.D.,  
and James McKelly, Ph.D.  
Marjory Olikier  
Megan Sindelar  
Lisa Vitale  
Allyson Wolcott

### \$100-\$249

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Povitra Kotini-Shah

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Shiri Nissim

Norma Rodriguez

Robert Ruckman

Julie Shapiro

Cynthia Steffen

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Clifford Wallach

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Shawn Baniassadi  
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Ian Bethany  
Timothy Brandt  
Anna Graczyk  
Barbara Grunewald  
Elizabeth Hogen  
Vincent Kucich  
Linda and Clark Landis Andrews  
Donald McKay  
Marla Michalik  
Marisa Pippion  
Alan Murphy  
Mark Muschenheim  
Amy Reusch  
Jeffrey Seymour  
Ted Seymour  
Steven Sondheim  
Anya Szidik  
Peeranut Visetsuth



# BALLET CHICAGO®

## A Special Thanks to Our Masterworks Society Members

Masterworks Society Members provide critical annual funding for the scholarships and opportunities that are available to the young people who train here. Masterworks Society Members ensure top-quality performance opportunities for students on the professional stage through the Nutcracker and Spring Series performances.

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Alexandria Tsevis

Natalia Torres & Charles Miller

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Stephanie VanEekeren

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Kristen Zaharski

William Ziemann



# BALLET CHICAGO®

## **In Memory of Sonia Florian**

With deep gratitude, we remember Sonia Florian, a cherished member of the city's art community and a generous supporter of Ballet Chicago.

Sonia deeply believed in the transformative power of the arts, and her life was a testament to that belief. Her support of Ballet Chicago and the city's broader arts community was not simply philanthropic. It was personal, thoughtful, and unwavering. She understood that great art depends not only on talent and discipline, but also on the care and commitment of those who have the capacity to make it possible. Through her abundant generosity, Sonia helped ensure that our dancers are able to train, perform, and grow, and that audiences across the city can experience the beauty and vitality of our work.

We are profoundly grateful for Sonia's life, her generosity, and her commitment to the arts. She will be deeply missed and fondly remembered by everyone at Ballet Chicago.

## **SUPPORT BALLET CHICAGO'S FUTURE**

The Future Forward Fund is Ballet Chicago's investment in our next chapter. Building on over 30 years of artistic excellence and resilience, this fund strengthens our long-term stability while creating new opportunities for dancers, audiences, and the community we serve. It enables us to support exceptional training, vibrant performances, and expanded access through initiatives like the Gift of Dance and sensory-friendly programming.

By growing our financial reserves today, the Future Forward Fund allows us to plan for the future with confidence. This Fund is not only meant to sustain what we already do; it's also about expanding our mission and responding to the evolving needs of our community. Fundamentally, the Fund is a commitment to both continuity and possibility, ensuring that Ballet Chicago can continue to educate and inspire generations of dancers well into the future.

Be a part of Ballet Chicago's bright future. Please join our seed donors Phil and Marsha Dowd, Sonia Florian, and Charles Richard, and make your contribution to the Future Forward Fund today.

Scan the QR code or contact Sharyn Pulling [spulling@balletchicago.org](mailto:spulling@balletchicago.org) to donate.





# BALLET CHICAGO

**Daniel Duell**  
Artistic Director  
Founder

**Patricia Blair**  
Associate Artistic Director  
School Director

# ANNUAL PROGRAMS 2026 - 2027

**Preparatory Division**  
Ages 3 - 7

**Student Division**  
Ages 7 - 14

**Professional Division**  
Ages 14+



[balletchicago.org](http://balletchicago.org)

**BALLET CHICAGO ALUMNI - WHERE ARE THEY NOW...**

Ballet Chicago alumni are making their mark across the globe! Since 2001, when our first students began branching out on their own, they have joined prestigious companies, attended top universities, and become professional dancers, teachers, choreographers, actors, designers, doctors, lawyers, writers, and business professionals in various fields. Most importantly, they have grown into remarkable human beings. We are proud of each and every one of them and are honored to have been part of their journey.



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## UNIVERSITIES ATTENDED





## Launching the Next Generation of Artists and Professionals

Each spring brings a bittersweet moment for Ballet Chicago as we celebrate dancers who are taking their next steps beyond our studios.

Some are graduating seniors preparing to begin college programs and professional training opportunities, while others are continuing their artistic development through trainee positions, apprenticeships, companies, and new academic pursuits. This year, our dancers are going to programs as diverse as Ballet Idaho, New York University, and the Fordham University/Alvin Ailey School. Though we will miss them, we take enormous pride in all they have accomplished and look forward to watching them grow as artists, scholars, and professionals.

### Ballet Chicago Alumni

Our alumni continue to excel in a range of fields. Here are a few notable accomplishments we celebrate this year:

**Vivian Nereim**, *Gulf Bureau Chief, New York Times*:

Vivian was awarded a prestigious 2026 George Polk Award George Polk Award for foreign reporting for her co-authored article “Why Maids Keep Dying in Saudi Arabia.”

**Lucie Richard**, *Corps de Ballet, New York City Ballet*: Lucie received the Mae L. Wien Award from the School of American Ballet last spring and in her first year as an Apprentice with the NYCB, performed roles such as Demi-soloist in Alexei Ratmansky’s *Paquita*, and Ensemble in *Waltz of the Snowflakes* and *Waltz of the Flowers* in Balanchine’s *The Nutcracker*. She was recently received a company contract and was promoted to the *corps de ballet*.

We look forward to seeing how our graduates and alumni continue to develop as artists and individuals, and we’re honored to have been part of their journeys.



# BALLET CHICAGO

## SUMMER PROGRAMS 2026

SUMMER INTENSIVE

6/23 - 7/25

JUNIOR INTENSIVE

6/16 - 6/20

7/28 - 8/1

8/4 - 8/8

BALANCHINE

REPERTORY WORKSHOP

7/28 - 8/8

ANNUAL PROGRAM

September 2026 - May 2027



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