

# ROMEO & JULIET

MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE GENEROSITY OF LAURENCE & SUSAN COSTIN



ORLANDO  
BALLET

ZAVESCO PHOTOGRAPHY  
DAHLIA DENICORE - AMIR DODARKHOUJAYEV

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR **JORDEN MORRIS**  
CHOREOGRAPHY **JAMES SOFRANKO**

SCORE **SERGEI PROKOFIEV**  
LIVE MUSIC **ORLANDO PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA**

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

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# ORLANDO BALLET

JORDEN MORRIS • ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

# ROMEO & JULIET

## CHOREOGRAPHY AND DIRECTION

JAMES SOFRANKO

## COMPOSER

SERGEI PROKOFIEV

### RÉPÉTITEURS

DAWNELL DRYJA  
JAMES SOFRANKO  
CINDY SOFRANKO  
JOE SOFRANKO

### COSTUME & SCENERY

ALAIN VAËS

### LIGHTING DESIGN

TRAD A BURNS

### REHEARSAL DIRECTORS

LISA THORN MORRIS  
HEATH GILL

### FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER

JOE SOFRANKO

### ORLANDO PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

JOHN VARINEAU, CONDUCTOR

### DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION

JOHN BEAULIEU

### TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

JAMES CARTEE

### PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER

KEVIN "KP" PAULSEN

### ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

ALEX GERMAN

### COSTUME DIRECTOR

EDDY FRANK FERNANDEZ

### WARDROBE SUPERVISOR

NORELIS DEAN

### WARDROBE COORDINATOR

GINA MAKAROVA

### SCENERY & COSTUME RENTAL

COURTESY OF BALLET ARIZONA

*Romeo & Juliet* world premiered on February 17, 2023, by Grand Rapids Ballet.  
Additional costumes are courtesy of Grand Rapids Ballet.



dr. phillips  
center

## LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Welcome to Orlando Ballet's new 2024-2025 season which promises to be one inspired by love – love as a force for joy, romance, heartbreak, healing and, of course, as the foundation for remarkable ballet. As I curated the season, my focus was on finding strong stories for the audience's enjoyment which can be told through challenging choreography for the dancers all with the goal of creating a powerful, shared artistic experience for all.

I can think of no better story of love and its power for healing than the world's most classic and tragic tale of romance. *Romeo & Juliet* has evolved to become Mr. Shakespeare's classic play that easily translates from page to the stage through the eloquence of dance.

Guest choreographer James Sofranko, who serves as Artistic Director at Grand Rapids Ballet in Michigan, clearly loves this story and all its surprises, conflicts and sorrows. James, who danced this ballet early in his career, has incorporated his own choreographic vision to create a very special experience whose complexities and intricacies are heightened by Sergei Prokofiev's recognizable score to be performed live by Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra.

Orlando Ballet's dancers return to deliver a masterfully emotional performance, amplified by dramatically realistic swordfight scenes rarely performed in ballet. So committed to the drama of it all, James collaborated for the first time with his younger brother, Joe Sofranko, an actor and Shakespeare aficionado who choreographed the stunning swordfights.

Unlike the feuding families in William Shakespeare's story, the Sofranko siblings are close and share in their drive to tell this heartbreaking story of young love and the horrors that can occur when family dynamics explode and how healing is necessary even when it sadly comes too late.

I know that, like me, you are looking forward to another exhilarating season of ballet so thank you for coming! And if this is your first time with us, I'm so glad you're here. *Romeo & Juliet* offers the perfect beginning of a romance with dance and with Orlando Ballet.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jordan Morris". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**JORDEN MORRIS**

Artistic Director

## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Welcome to Orlando Ballet's 2024-2025 season which begins with the ultimate in epic love stories – *Romeo & Juliet*. Told through the artistry and elegance of dance fortified by a majestic and sweeping musical score played live, Shakespeare's message about the power of love rings magnificently

I remember as a child falling in love with Shakespeare's beautiful poetry which inspired and solidified my desire to study theater and dance. *Romeo & Juliet* stands the test of time because it is relevant to us all in terms of love, heartache and complicated family dynamics. Thanks to the vision of creative artists like our guest choreographer James Sofranko from Grand Rapids Ballet, telling this extraordinary story with his own artistic perspective is why

dance influences so many.

Having just stepped into the role of Orlando Ballet's Executive Director, I can't think of a more exhilarating welcome and representation of the power of this extraordinary professional dance company than a stunning classic production like *Romeo & Juliet*. The energy is high as this tremendously talented company of dancers takes to the stage and uplifts us all with joy, amazing athleticism and artistry.

With immense gratitude I'd like to thank our sponsors who made this production possible, including live music performed by Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra. It didn't take long for me to know that Orlando is fortified by having an extraordinary ballet company and community. Like you, I can't wait to see what promises to be a bold, vibrant and compelling season of breathtaking dance and entertainment.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brad". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

**BRADLEY RENNER**

Executive Director

# ROMEO & JULIET CAST

Thursday, Friday, Saturday – 7:30 p.m.

## JULIET

Hitomi Nakamura

## ROMEO

Amir Dodarkhojaye

## LADY CAPULET

Anita Boer

## LORD CAPULET

Francis Mihm

## LADY MONTAGUE

Sierra Willis

## LORD MONTAGUE

Devin Hammond

## MERCUTIO

Israel Zavaleta Escobedo

## BENVOLIO

Jaysan Stinnett

## TYBALT

Nathan Rowell

## ROSALINE

Kera Fernstrom

## PARIS

Thomas Gerhardt

## ESCALUS, PRINCE OF VERONA

Heath Gill

## JULIET'S NURSE

Kenna Gold

## FRIAR LAWRENCE

Cameron Bailey

## HARLOTS

Jackie Nash • Aria Smith

## JULIET'S FRIENDS

Dahlia Denicore • Maya Fazzari  
Ellie Iannotti • Cielo Ibarrola  
Renee Shubov

## STREET PERFORMERS

Ellie Iannotti • Cielo Ibarrola  
Charlie Mellor

## MONTAGUES

Zach Mench • David West

## CAPULETS

Sebastian Marriott-Smith  
Charlie Mellor • Zach Mench  
Jack Ragland • Tolly Stewart

## CITIZENS OF VERONA

Aurora Chernis • Kellie Fulton  
Kate Gardinier • Hazuki Kishida  
Lillian Munson • Anna Neudorf  
Kate Shibagaki-Ong • Sabrina Sierens  
Natalie Taylor • Sebastian Cazares  
Sebastian Marriott-Smith • Alberto Peñalver  
Jack Ragland • David West

## MARKET VENDORS

Noe Leilani Aldarondo-Jeffries • Rony Baseman  
Samuel Portilla • Tolly Stewart

## CHILDREN OF VERONA

Reece Cravens • Hunter Moreland

## BALL GUESTS

Kellie Fulton • Kate Gardinier  
Hazuki Kishida • Lillian Munson  
Anna Neudorf • Sabrina Sierens  
Natalie Taylor • Rony Baseman  
Charlie Mellor • Zach Mench  
Alberto Peñalver • Jack Ragland  
David West

## SERVANTS

Avery Grace McDougall • Sofia Marquez  
Bradyn Harris • Joel Ruybalid

## GUARDS

Bradyn Harris • Joel Ruybalid

CASTING SUBJECT TO CHANGE

# ROMEO & JULIET CAST

Saturday, Sunday – 2:00 p.m.

## JULIET

Sofia Abenanty

## ROMEO

John Abenanty

## LADY CAPULET

Anita Boer

## LORD CAPULET

Francis Mihm

## LADY MONTAGUE

Laura Sonnek

## LORD MONTAGUE

Devin Hammond

## MERCUTIO

Israel Zavaleta Escobedo

## BENVOLIO

Jaysan Stinnett

## TYBALT

Cameron Bailey

## ROSALINE

Sabrina Sierens

## PARIS

Thomas Gerhardt

## ESCALUS, PRINCE OF VERONA

Heath Gill

## JULIET'S NURSE

Sierra Willis

## FRIAR LAWRENCE

Nathan Rowell

## HARLOTS

Hazuki Kishida • Kellie Fulton

## JULIET'S FRIENDS

Dahlia Denicore • Maya Fazzari • Ellie Iannotti  
Cielo Ibarrola • Renee Shubov

## STREET PERFORMERS

Maya Fazzari • Renee Shubov • Charlie Mellor

## MONTAGUES

Zach Mench • David West

## CAPULETS

Sebastian Marriott-Smith • Charlie Mellor  
Jack Ragland • Tolly Stewart

## CITIZENS OF VERONA

Kera Fernstrom • Kate Gardinier  
Kenna Gold • Dominique Guerrar  
Lillian Munson • Jackie Nash  
Kanon Nomura • Kate Shibagaki-Ong  
Aria Smith • Natalie Taylor  
Sebastian Cazares • Zach Mench  
Alberto Peñalver • Jack Ragland • David West

## MARKET VENDORS

Dru Oetjen • Rony Baseman • Samuel Portilla

## CHILDREN OF VERONA

Cece Goldsberry • Daniel Ocean

## BALL GUESTS

Aurora Chernis • Kera Fernstrom  
Kate Gardinier • Kenna Gold  
Jackie Nash • Anna Neudorf  
Kate Shibagaki-Ong • Aria Smith • Natalie Taylor  
Rony Baseman • Alberto Peñalver  
Jack Ragland • Sebastian Marriott-Smith  
David West • Zach Mench

## SERVANTS

Rachel Cravener • Miri Mochizuki  
Brady Harris • Joel Ruybalid

## GUARDS

Brady Harris • Joel Ruybalid

CASTING SUBJECT TO CHANGE

2024/2025 SEASON

# ORLANDO PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

## VIOLIN 1

- 1 Rimma Bergeron-Langlois  
Annabelle Gardiner
- 2 Olga Ferroni  
Joni Hanze
- 3 Maria Chirinos  
Sacha Phelps
- 4 Julia Gessinger  
Daniel Seymour

## VIOLIN 2

- 1 Alexander Stevens  
Victor Ferroni
- 2 Galen Kaup  
Dina Fedosenko
- 3 Linda Van Buren  
Jennie Rudberg

## VIOLA

- 1 Mauricio Céspedes-Rivero  
Joseph Henderson
- 2 Douglas Pritchard  
Tyler Pacheco

## CELLO

- 1 Ronald Gardiner  
Isaac Moorman
- 2 Jonathan Stilwell  
Christopher Glansdorp

## BASS

- 1 Don-Michael Hill  
John-Paul Norpoth

## FLUTE

- Colleen Blagov  
Carrie Wiesinger  
Claudia White

## OBOE

- Jamie Strefeler  
Sherwood Hawkins  
Sotos Djiovanis

## CLARINET

- Nikolay Blagov  
Seok Hee Jang  
Nick Hecker

## BASSOON

- Gabriel Bergeron-Langlois  
Diane Bishop  
Kathryn Sleeper

## HORN

- August Haller  
Mark Fischer  
Kathleen Thomas  
Kevin Brooks  
Benjamin Lieser  
Joseph Lovinsky

## TRUMPET

- Matt Pieper  
Thomas Macklin  
Johnathan Copella  
Lyman Brodie

## TROMBONE

- Jeffrey Thomas  
Alexis Regazzi  
Brian Brink

## TUBA

- Robert Carpenter

## TIMPANI

- Carl Rendek

## PERCUSSION

- Mark Goldberg  
Kirk Gay  
Christopher Nolin  
Gavin Pritchard

## HARP

- Haley Rhodeside

## KEYBOARD/EXTRA

- George Weremchuk, Saxophone  
Angelyn Chen, Keyboard

## ACT ONE

### **A Public Plaza**

Verona is waking up to the activities of the day. The town is dominated by two feuding families, the Montagues and Capulets. Romeo, a Montague, is enamored with fair Rosaline, while Benvolio, his cousin, and their friend Mercutio are more interested in making revelry. A quarrel between a Montague and Capulet erupts into a street brawl, with Tybalt, nephew of Lady Capulet and a skilled swordsman, leading the charge. Lord Montague and Lord Capulet join the fight until it is stopped by Prince Escalus, who admonishes the families and demands they stop fighting upon pain of death.

### **The Courtyard of the Capulet House**

Young Juliet is playing with her friends and avoiding her nurse who insists she try on the dress she is to wear at the upcoming ball. Her parents, Lord and Lady Capulet arrive with Paris, a nobleman to whom they wish her to marry.

### **Outside the Capulet House**

The masked ball guests arrive. Romeo, Mercutio, and Benvolio adorn their masks and enter the house.

### **Inside the Capulet House**

The masked ball begins and Juliet is brought forth by her parents to dance with Paris. Romeo is taken with the sight of Juliet. Mercutio and Benvolio distract the guests to prevent his unmasking. Romeo and Juliet meet privately and are instantly taken with each other. Tybalt comes upon the couple and demands that Romeo leave the house at once. Lord and Lady Capulet intervene as the party continues and the guests begin to depart.

### **Outside the Capulet House**

As the guests are departing, Romeo leaves Mercutio and Benvolio, and the two friends go off into the night.

### **The Capulet Garden**

Juliet stands on her balcony dreaming of Romeo. Romeo arrives, having snuck into the garden, and they declare their love for each other.

## ACT TWO

### **A Public Plaza**

The following day the friends are discussing the events of the night before. Street performers arrive to entertain the crowd. Juliet's nurse comes looking to deliver a letter to Romeo. He reads that Juliet has arranged for them to be married in secret by Friar Lawrence later that day.

### **Friar Lawrence's Chapel**

Romeo is greeted by Friar Lawrence who is waiting for the couple. Juliet and her Nurse arrive and the two lovers are married.

### **A Public Plaza**

Mercutio, Benvolio, and the harlots engage the people of Verona in a festive dance. Tybalt arrives looking to engage Romeo in a duel. Romeo, who is now secretly married to Tybalt's cousin will not fight, but Mercutio is happy to take his place. When Romeo is trying to break up the fight, Mercutio is wounded by Tybalt. Mercutio falls dead into Romeo's arms. Romeo, overcome with rage, picks up Mercutio's sword to seek revenge, and kills Tybalt. Lord and Lady Capulet arrive to find Tybalt slain and are overcome with grief. Prince Escalus banishes Romeo from Verona.

## ACT THREE

### **Juliet's Bedroom**

Romeo and Juliet have spent their wedding night together. Romeo must leave before he is discovered. Lord and Lady Capulet arrive with Paris to prepare for the wedding. Juliet refuses to marry Paris and her parents are furious. Juliet sends her Nurse away and in despair, runs to Friar Lawrence to seek his help.

### **Friar Lawrence's Study**

Juliet explains the developments to Friar Lawrence, and he has an idea. Skilled with herbs and drugs, he creates a potion that will send her into a deep sleep. Thinking her dead, her parents will place her in the family crypt. Meanwhile, Friar Lawrence will write to Romeo and inform him of the plan so the lovers can be reunited when she awakes. Juliet is grateful and returns home.

### **Juliet's Bedroom**

Once more approached by Lord Capulet, Juliet agrees to marry Paris the next day. Left alone, she drinks the potion. In the morning, Juliet's friends and her nurse arrive to prepare for the wedding, but she appears to be dead.

### **The Capulet Crypt**

The wedding has turned into a funeral, and Juliet is laid to rest in the family crypt. Romeo, not having received the message from Friar Lawrence, has heard of her death and believes it to be true. Romeo arrives at the crypt and comes upon Paris who is paying his respects. They struggle and Romeo kills Paris. Upon seeing Juliet's lifeless body, Romeo drinks a poison to kill himself to lie eternally with Juliet. As Romeo dies, Juliet wakes to discover first the body of Paris, and then Romeo. Unable to live without Romeo she kills herself.

## EPILOGUE

The Montagues and Capulets, having been the cause of such a tragedy, unite in their grief and vow to end the feud.

# ORLANDO BALLET ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



## JORDEN MORRIS

Artistic Director

The obvious transition for a professional ballet dancer after a performance career, is teaching and choreography. After retiring from the stage, Jorden Morris followed an academic path that included studying teaching and choreography at Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet (RWB) and later dance and theatre arts at New York University. Morris focused on early French choreography and pedagogy by training with Claude Bessy and Serge Golovine at the prestigious Paris Opera, and continued his studies with Russian masters Sergei Berejnoi and Tatiana Terekhova at Boston Ballet.

Morris' elite training steered his trajectory toward artistic leadership and choreography at the RWB where he premiered his first work – a one-act interpretation of Alexander Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*.

In 1999, he joined Boston Ballet's artistic staff and thrived working with choreographers Nacho Duato, William Forsythe, Chris Wheeldon and Rudi Van

Dantzig. There, he choreographed two pieces for Queen Elizabeth II during her visit to Canada. Ultimately, Morris became Chief Ballet Master, lighting a route for his return to Canada as demand for his creativity grew.

From 2002 to 2013, Morris served as RWB's associate school director and was commissioned to create his first, full-length production – the charming and whimsical *Peter Pan*, which premiered in 2006, to become the company's best-selling production, surpassed three years later by Morris' own *Moulin Rouge® the Ballet*, whose debut was so grand that performances had to be added.

Never content to work on just one thing, in 2002 Morris directed and choreographed *Head Start/Feet First*, a collaboration between the RWB and four intercity academic schools, which transformed Canada's popular children's television show, "The Toy Castle." Repurposing the program as an interactive performance with a live host and interactive dance for pre-school children, Morris also starred in the series.

The RWB later premiered two other new works by Morris - *The Doorway*, set to the music, poetry and voice of Leonard Cohen; and *MOA*, a work inspired by the artist Egon Schiele.

Meanwhile, in 2013/2014, *Moulin Rouge® the Ballet* returned to Canada after a successful world tour before 240,000 people throughout North America and Europe, inspiring Morris to translate his live dance production into a feature film. The sweeping romance later toured through China, Europe, and again in the US while *Peter Pan* was being performed by the RWB, Pittsburgh Ballet, and Nevada Ballet Theatre.

While Morris' creations traveled, he was serving as Artistic Director of Edmonton's Citie Ballet where he premiered more new work, including *Ophelia and Mozart 42* and *Jacinto and Tierra*. He also choreographed *Turas* and *Bach to Bach*. While in Edmonton, Morris held another title, that of Senior Creative Director with Canada's Shumka Ukrainian Dance company.

In 2019, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre premiered *The Great Gatsby*, Morris' new glamorous epic ballet with an original score by composer Carl Davis. Soon after, Morris came to Orlando Ballet in 2020 as Artist in Residence and where he staged his trio of grand ballets. In 2021 he became the ballet's Artistic Director. In 2023, Morris debuted his newest creation, a completely reimagined and newly choreographed production of *The Nutcracker*, a highlight of Orlando Ballet's 50th anniversary season.

# ORLANDO BALLET ARTISTIC TEAM

## LISA THORN MORRIS

Associate Artistic Director

As Associate Artistic Director at Orlando Ballet, Lisa Thorn Morris brings extensive professional experience that includes performing as a principal dancer, choreographer, and educator. Lisa has been significantly contributing to the success of the professional company's artistic development since she joined Orlando Ballet in 2015.



Lisa transitioned to artistic leadership after her 20-year dance career as an artist of the Kansas City Ballet where she performed numerous principal roles by some of the world's greatest choreographers including favorite roles by Alvin Ailey, George Balanchine, Todd Bolender, August Bournonville, Merce Cunningham, Agnes DeMille, Nacho Duato, Ruth Page, Marius Petipa and Twyla Tharp, to name a few.

While at Kansas City Ballet, she served as Associate Ballet Mistress before being elevated to Ballet Mistress in Residence.

In addition to dancing professionally, Lisa has also choreographed for numerous organizations including the Orlando Ballet, Kansas City Ballet, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Actors Theatre of Kansas City, and the Kansas City Youth Ballet. Lisa's choreographic skill and success led to her being named 2005's Emerging Choreographer at the Craft of Choreography Conference.

Lisa earned a bachelor's degree in fine arts in Dance, graduating Summa Cu Laude from the University of Missouri where she served as an Adjunct Professor at the Conservatory of Music and Dance. She has served as guest instructor for the University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA) and Kansas City Ballet School. Originally from Dryden, New York, Lisa began her dance training as a child with the Ithaca Ballet before training with UNCSA.

Lisa re-staged the Company's production of *Giselle* alongside Artistic Director, Jorden Morris. Additionally, she assists Artistic Director Jorden Morris in staging his highly popular ballets including *Moulin Rouge® the Ballet*, *Peter Pan*, and *The Great Gatsby*. She spent two years as choreographic assistant to Morris in the development and world premiere of his new multi-million-dollar production of *The Nutcracker* during Orlando Ballet's 2023-2024 season.

"Never could I have imagined that when I started my career, I would experience the range of performance and creative opportunities that I've been involved in and enjoyed so much," Lisa says.

## HEATH GILL

Rehearsal Director

Originally from a small town in Southern Illinois, Heath spent much of his performance career with Atlanta Ballet. He quickly rose to performing featured and principal roles in Atlanta Ballet's widely varied repertoire that included renowned creators such as:

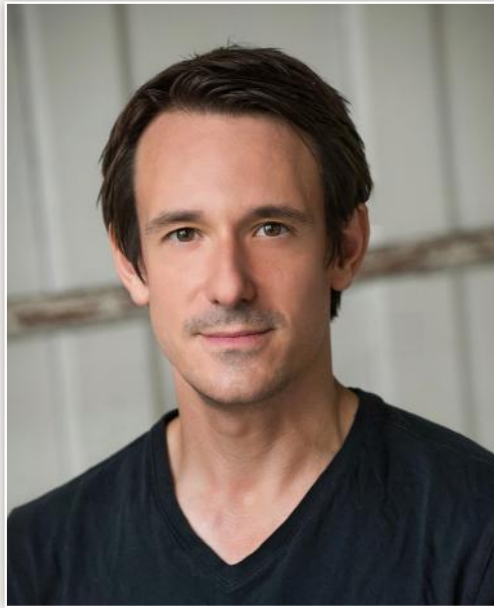
John McFall, Jorden Morris, Christopher Wheeldon, James Kudelka, Twyla Tharp, David Bintley, Jean-Christophe Maillot, Jorma Elo, Val Caniparoli, Helen Pickett, Liam Scarlett, Jiri Kylian, Alexander Eckman, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Michael Pink, and Ohad Naharin. Heath received critical acclaim for his performances and was recognized as one of ArtsATL's "30 under 30" and Dance Magazine's "25 to Watch".



Throughout his performance career, Heath had opportunities to step into leadership roles as a stager and choreographer. His early choreographic works were created for Atlanta Ballet's summer company Wabi Sabi, where he also helped produce the performances in a production manager role. In 2017 Heath co-founded Terminus Modern Ballet Theatre in Atlanta, Georgia. The new contemporary ballet company quickly boomed into a year-round company with a strong school. Beyond bringing his skills to the stage for TMBT, Gill served on the Board of Directors and as the company's Production Director and Resident Choreographer. In his time at Terminus, he created many full evening dance works and his production, *Marley Was Dead, To Begin With* was named "Best Dance Production of 2020" by ArtsATL.

Gill received acclaim in Orlando in 2022 when his production *Confronting Genius* was performed by Orlando Ballet. Following the success of his previous visit, Heath was thrilled to join the artistic team at Orlando Ballet as the Rehearsal Director. In his new role, Heath brings with him his wide net of knowledge of movement styles, as well as background in music, experience in production design, and a deep understanding of the needs of a non-profit organization. He has also continued to create works for Orlando Ballet including *The Next Big Thing* and *Memento*. Heath has a sincere love for coaching and is thrilled to be passing his skill and love of the artform on to the next generation.

## GUEST ARTISTIC



### JAMES SOFRANKO

#### Choreographer

James Sofranko assumed the position of Artistic Director of Grand Rapids Ballet in 2018 after an 18-year career as a soloist with the San Francisco Ballet. He received his dance training at The Harid Conservatory in Florida and later at The Juilliard School in New York City, where he received his BFA in Dance.

At San Francisco Ballet, he danced in numerous works and world premieres by leading choreographers of the day, including Helgi Tomasson, William Forsythe, Justin Peck, Alexi Ratmansky, Lar Lubovitch, Mark Morris, Yuri Possokhov, Christopher Wheeldon, Paul Taylor, Hans Van Manen, Jiri Kylian, John Neumeier, Kenneth Macmillan, George Balanchine, and Jerome Robbins.

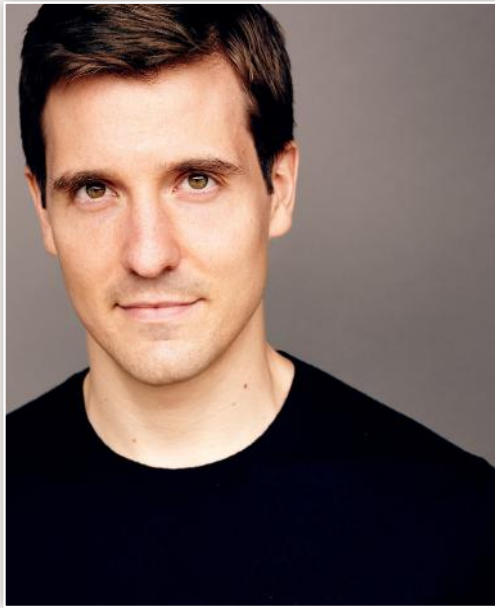
In 2011 he starred in the principal role of Eddie in the Broadway touring company of *Movin' Out*, a musical choreographed by Twyla Tharp to the songs of Billy Joel. In 2012 he co-founded DanceFAR (Dance For A Reason), an annual benefit performance and after-party that brings the Bay Area dance community together to support the work of the Cancer Prevention Institute of California (CPIC). In 2014, he formed a new contemporary repertory company in San Francisco, SFDanceworks. He continues his work with SFDanceworks currently in the role of Artistic Advisor.

Sofranko has created 12 original works for Grand Rapids Ballet, including a world premiere full length ballet, *Romeo and Juliet*. He has also created works for San Francisco Ballet School, SFDanceworks, Long Beach Ballet, and Marin Dance Theater. James has also worked as a repetiteur for Yuri Possokhov, resident choreographer for San Francisco Ballet.

Under Sofranko, Grand Rapids Ballet's repertoire has grown to include classical and contemporary works by some of the most sought after choreographers working today. The dancers have come from across the United States and around the world.

He instituted a program entitled Jumpstart which allows new choreographic talent to emerge from within the ranks of the dancers and the company collaborates frequently with other cultural organizations in the area, including with the Grand Rapids Symphony, ArtPrize, Festival of the Arts, the Grand Rapids Art Museum, and the Frederick Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park.

James would like to thank his wife Cynthia Sheppard Sofranko for her ongoing support and creative input in all of his work.



### JOE SOFRANKO

Fight Choreographer

Joe Sofranko is a writer, director, actor, and fight choreographer based in Ashland, Oregon. Growing up in Cincinnati, Ohio, alongside James, his older brother, Joe found his passion in theatre, acting in productions at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Cincinnati Children's Theatre, Ovation Theatre Company, Clear Stage Cincinnati, and more. As a high schooler, Joe was a YoungArts Winner in Theatre in Miami, a Presidential Scholar in the Arts at the Kennedy Center, and the winner of the National Shakespeare Competition at Lincoln Center.

Joe moved to Los Angeles to attend the USC School of Dramatic Arts, where he earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting. After graduation, he appeared in numerous films and TV shows, including *Scorpion* (CBS), *Rules of Engagement* (CBS), *The Sing Off* (NBC), *Swedish Dicks* (POP TV), *Strange Angel* (CBS), among others, and he created, directed, and starred in an original mini series, *Complete Works*, which premiered on Hulu. Joe is an advanced actor combatant in the Society of American Fight Directors and has staged the violence for productions at Grand Rapids Ballet, Rogue Machine Theatre, El Portal Theater, Odyssey Theatre Ensemble, The Electric Lodge, Hollywood Fringe Festival, Boom Kat Dance Theatre, The Casitas Group, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, Southern Oregon University, as well as over 20 shows at the USC School of Dramatic Arts. As a writer, he has created and developed original series for Fox and Netflix. He currently works for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.



### SERGEI PROKOFIEV

Composer

Russian composer and pianist Sergei Prokofiev was born in 1891 in Sontsovka, a small village in Ukraine. Early on, it was clear that he had musical talent. His mother, who was a very good pianist, encouraged him, and taught him to play the piano. Sergei began composing at the age of five. When he got a bit older, he and his mother moved to St. Petersburg, so that he could study music there. After Prokofiev graduated from school, he traveled around Europe to learn more about music.

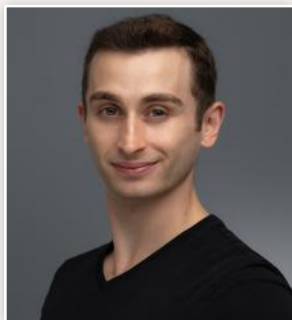
World War I and the Russian Revolution made living and working in Russia very difficult, so Prokofiev left the country in 1918. Paris eventually became his home, but he also spent time in the United States and the Bavarian Alps. But the whole time he was away from Russia, Prokofiev longed for his homeland. In 1936, he made the unusual decision to move back to the Soviet Union. Prokofiev was a master at using music to tell a story. One of his most famous musical stories is *Peter and the Wolf*, which was written for Russia's Central Children's Theatre. You may have seen it performed in school, or on the concert stage. In addition to symphonic music, Prokofiev wrote ballets, operas, and music for films — like *Lieutenant Kijé*.



### JOHN P. VARINEAU

Conductor

John Varineau has been the conductor for the Grand Rapids Ballet for nearly thirty years. He was the associate conductor of the Grand Rapids Symphony for thirty-six years, and the conductor of the Grand Rapids Youth Symphony and Classical Orchestras for thirty-three years. He has appeared as guest conductor for numerous orchestras in the Midwest and was the Music Director of the Holland (MI) Chamber Orchestra (now the Holland Symphony Orchestra) for four years. He served on the faculties of Cornerstone University, Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids Community College and, most recently, Calvin University where he was Professor of Music and conductor of the Calvin University Orchestra and the Calvin Community Symphony. He is the program annotator for the Grand Rapids Symphony, the Lansing Symphony, and the Reading Symphony. John Varineau grew up in the state of Wyoming, the child of a mathematics professor and a Cheyenne Frontier Days queen, and studied at Michigan State University, the University of Wyoming, and Yale University.



### JOHN ABENANTY

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Born in Brooklyn, John Abenanty is a graduate of The Harid Conservatory. He was the first American principal dancer of the Sofia National Opera & Ballet and has toured to many countries. John is also a laureate of the Varna International Ballet Competition and a USA IBC finalist. He is in his fourth season with Orlando Ballet.

### SOFIA ABENANTY

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Born in Bulgaria, Sofia Abenanty trained at Bulgaria's National School of Dance Arts, later becoming a soloist at Sofia National Opera and Ballet. She is a Varna International Ballet Competition Bronze Medalist. She is in her third season with Orlando Ballet.



### CAMERON BAILEY

---

Born in England, Cameron Bailey trained at the Royal Ballet in the junior associate program, followed by joining Elmhurst Ballet School. Bailey represented the UK at the 2017 Cecchetti International Ballet competition, earned a scholarship with Oklahoma City Ballet and later graduated from English National Ballet School. He is in his second season at Orlando Ballet.



### DAHLIA DENICORE

---

Born in Virginia, Dahlia Denicore trained at San Francisco Ballet School. She joined Orlando Ballet in 2023 as an Apprentice and made her professional debut as Lucy in *Dracula* and Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. She is in her third season with Orlando Ballet.



### AMIR DODARKHOJAYEV

---

Born in Kazakhstan, Amir Dodarkhojayev trained at Harid Conservatory. He won first place at Youth America Grand Prix Dallas in 2021 and later joined Orlando Ballet as an OBII. He is in his fourth season as a Company Dancer with Orlando Ballet.





### ISRAEL ZAVALETA ESCOBEDO

Born in Mexico, Israel Zavaleta Escobedo is a proud Orlando Ballet School alumnus. Prior to attending Orlando Ballet School, he received training from his family's dance company Ballet Folklorico Texcoco de Noe Zavaleta. He is in his seventh season with Orlando Ballet.

### MAYA FAZZARI

Born in Canada, Maya Fazzari trained at Canada's National Ballet School. Following her graduation in 2021, she joined their post-graduate program and performed with the National Ballet of Canada. She joined OBII in 2023, and this is her first season as a Company Dancer with Orlando Ballet.



### KELLIE FULTON

Born in New Jersey, Kellie Fulton trained at the School of Pennsylvania Ballet. She joined the second company and completed the Butler Fellowship Program at Ballet Austin. Her journey also includes programs at Boston Ballet and San Francisco Ballet. She is now in her sixth season with Orlando Ballet.



### KATE GARDINIER

Born in Pittsburgh, Kate Gardinier trained at the Washington School of Ballet's Professional Training Program where she had the opportunity to perform under the direction of Julie Kent. She joined OBII in 2021. She is in her third season as a Company Dancer with Orlando Ballet.



### THOMAS GERHARDT

Born in England, Thomas Gerhardt trained at the Royal Ballet School in the Junior Associate Program. He soon joined the Royal Ballet Upper School and worked with choreographer Ashley Page, Carlos Acosta and the Birmingham Royal Ballet. He is in his fourth season as a Company Dancer with Orlando Ballet.



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### KENNA GOLD

Born in California, Kenna Gold trained at The Rock School on a full scholarship. She joined Orlando Ballet in 2018 as a trainee and has since danced numerous lead roles. She is in her fourth season with Orlando Ballet.



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### ELLIE IANNOTTI

Born in New Jersey, Ellie Iannotti trained at The Rock School for Dance Education, and later became a part of ABT's National Training Scholar program. She then attended the ABT Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School on scholarship for a year before joining OBII. She is in her third season with Orlando Ballet.



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### HAZUKI KISHIDA

Born in Canada, Hazuki Kishida trained at the Victoria Academy of Ballet and graduated from their Post-Secondary Bridge Program in 2022. Upon graduation, she joined Orlando Ballet II, and was later promoted to an Apprentice for the 23/24 season. She is in her second season as a company dancer with Orlando Ballet.



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### CIELO IBARROLA

Born in Paraguay, Cielo Ibarrola trained at the Miami City Ballet School Pre-Professional Program, graduating in 2022. Joining OBII in 2022, then promoted to an apprentice, she has performed in *Western Symphony* (MCBS) and *Paquita* (OBII). She is in her second season as a Company Dancer at Orlando Ballet.



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### SEBASTIAN MARRIOTT-SMITH

Born in England, Sebastian Marriott-Smith trained at the Royal Ballet School, later graduating from English National Ballet School where he worked with Tamara Rojo on the World Premiere of her production *Raymonda*. Joining OBII in 2022 this is Sebastian's second season as a Company Dancer with Orlando Ballet.



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### CHARLIE MELLOR

Born in England, Charlie Mellor trained at Tring Park School. There, he secured First Place at the Cecchetti Children's Awards at Sadler Wells and is a Mabel Ryan Junior Award runner-up. His TV debut in BBC Young Dancer of the Year showcased a La Fille Mal Gardée pas de deux. He is in his third season with Orlando Ballet.



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### ZACH MENCH

Born in California, Zachary Mench began his training under former Bolshoi Ballet Soloist, Sobir Utabaev, in Kaiserslautern, Germany. He then moved to the states and resumed training with The School of Washington Ballet and joined the Houston Ballet Academy at the age of 16. He then trained under the direction of Claudio Muñoz and Orlando Molina. He is in his first season as a Company Dancer at Orlando Ballet.

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### FRANCIS MIHM

Born in Iowa, Francis Mihm trained at Heartland Academy. He attended American Ballet Theatre and Milwaukee Ballet summer intensives and earned a Bachelor's Degree in Dance Arts Administration from Butler University. He is in his third season with Orlando Ballet.



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### HITOMI NAKAMURA

Born in Japan, Hitomi Nakamura trained at Houston Ballet's Ben Stevenson Academy. In addition, Hitomi is an alumna of Orlando Ballet School, class of 2014. She is in her eleventh season with Orlando Ballet.

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### JACKIE NASH

Born in Connecticut, Jackie Nash trained at Connecticut Dance School and The Rock School. She danced with Atlanta Ballet for twelve seasons and Terminus Modern Ballet Theatre for two seasons, performing varying lead roles. She is currently in her second season with Orlando Ballet.



# ORLANDO BALLET COMPANY



## ALBERTO PEÑALVER

---

Born in Spain, Alberto Peñalver trained at the Conservatorio Profesional de Danza of Murcia, John Cranko Schule, and School of American Ballet. He was a Tulsa Ballet II member before becoming a company dancer at Ballet Arizona. He is in his third season with Orlando Ballet.

## JACK RAGLAND

---

Born in South Carolina, Jack trained at South Carolina Christian Dance Theatre and attended Summer programs at Charlotte Ballet, University of SC Dance conservatory and Pennsylvania Ballet. Jack was invited to The Youth America Grand Prix Finals in 2021 as well as being invited to perform in the Danza in Arte a Pietrasanta festival. This is his first season as a Company Dancer with Orlando Ballet.



## NATHAN ROWELL

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Born in Oregon, Nathan Rowell trained at Houston Ballet Academy and then later at the Texas Ballet Theatre. He joined Orlando Ballet in 2019 as an OBII. He is currently in his fourth season with Orlando Ballet.



## RENEE SHUBOV

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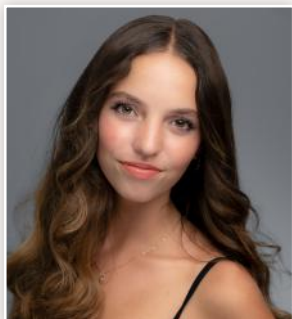
Born in New York, Renee Shubov started her training at the Academy of Dance Arts in New Jersey. At 14, she moved to Houston to train at the Houston Ballet Academy. After two years, she joined Houston Ballet II under the direction of Claudio Muñoz. In 2023, Renee joined OBII. She is in her first season as a Company Dancer with Orlando Ballet.



## ARIA SMITH

---

Born in Southern California, Aria Smith began her training at Maple Conservatory of Dance. At 10, she joined Ballet West Academy where she participated in many performances. Aria graduated from the Ballet West Professional Training Division in 2022 and joined OBII that fall. She is very excited to be joining the Company this year.





### JAYSAN STINNETT

---

Born in Tennessee, Jaysan Stinnett trained at the Thomas Armor Youth Ballet in Miami, followed by additional training at the Harid Conservatory. He garnered full scholarships for various prestigious summer programs. He is currently in sixth season with Orlando Ballet.

### DAVID WEST

---

Born in New Jersey, David West trained at Petrov Ballet School. Achieving recognition in the Youth American Grand Prix, he earned a full scholarship to Boston Ballet's trainee program. He is in his third season with Orlando Ballet.



### ANI BOER, GUEST ARTIST

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Born in Baltimore, Maryland, Anita Boer trained with the Susan Ina Dance Studio, Sudbrook Arts Center and Carver Center for Arts and Technology. She continued her studies graduating on scholarship from the Kirov Academy in Washington DC and furthered her studies with the American Ballet Theater (NY), Boston Ballet and Richmond Ballet. She performed soloist and principal roles as a Company Dancer for Orlando Ballet from 2007-2021 and is currently performing as a guest.



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## Grab a Drink, Grab a Snack.

- Pop by the bars on tiers 1, 3, or 4 for a range of food and drinks—including delicious culinary offerings created by our in-house chef. Bar service starts 1.5 hours before shows. You can also preorder drinks for intermission.
- On tier 2, you can visit Crafts on two and enjoy local craft beer, wine, cocktails, and Foxtail Coffee. Beverages in the auditorium are allowed if they are purchased in the Dr. Phillips Center. Please enjoy your food before taking your seat.

## Feel at Home

- Restrooms are available on each tier, and all are wheelchair accessible.
- Elevators reach all tiers of the theater. One elevator is on the north side of the Harvey & Carol Massey Family Grand Staircase, and two are on the south side.
- Applause is welcome! The dancers love to know if you're enjoying the performance, so don't be afraid to applaud after a dancer does something spectacular onstage, when the dancers take a bow, or at the ballet's end.

## Be a Good Neighbor

- We all want to enjoy the performance. Please refrain from talking or whispering during the performance. Help keep an unobstructed view by arriving on time, being seated before the performance starts, and not leaning forward or resting your head on your seatmate's head or shoulder.

## Need Some Help?

- Ticket services are available through the Dr. Phillips Center Box Office Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 pm, Saturday, 12 p.m. to 4 pm, or two hours before showtime.
- Visit [drphillipscenter.org](http://drphillipscenter.org) or call 407-358-6603.
- Subscriber services are available through the Orlando Ballet Box Office Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Visit [orlandoballet.org](http://orlandoballet.org) or call 407-418-9828.
- Lost and Found is at the concierge desk behind the Harvey & Carol Massey Family Grand Staircase in Della Phillips Grand Lobby.

## Important Policies

- Late seating isn't allowed while a performance is in progress. You'll be asked to stand until a break, at the discretion of house management, which may be at intermission. Guests can watch a live stream of the performance from monitors in the Della Phillips Grand Lobby until entry is permitted.
- Guests can freely leave and re-enter the performance at any time during our Family & Sensory-Friendly performances.
- Occupying a seat other than the seat for which you hold a ticket isn't allowed. Please sit only in your ticketed seat.
- Audio/visual recordings of any kind of the performance are strictly forbidden.
- Mobile devices should be turned off and put away before the performance. The lights and sounds are a distraction to the performers and your fellow patrons.



ADA ACCESSIBLE



dr. phillips  
center

# Bring the Show Home

Be your own mixologist and craft this performance-inspired cocktail.



## VERONA VELVET

### Ingredients:

4oz Rosé Champagne

$\frac{3}{4}$ oz Hendrick's Gin

1oz Coconut Water

$\frac{3}{4}$ oz Blueberry Syrup

1T. Blueberry Popping Boba

Slice of Lemon

Cocktail Sword

# COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT BY THE NUMBERS



**25**

NUMBER OF  
TEACHING ARTISTS



**900**

PAIRS OF  
BALLET SHOES  
PROVIDED

**4**

YOUNGEST  
PARTICIPANT



**103**

OLDEST  
PARTICIPANT



**140**

NUMBER OF  
RESIDENCIES

**\$0**

COST TO  
PARTICIPANTS



**+40,000**

MILES TRAVELED



**18,800**

PEOPLE SERVED

**7**

COUNTIES  
SERVED



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THE MALL  
AT MILLENIA  
APPLAUDS  
ORLANDO  
BALLET

THE MALL AT MILLENIA

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A man in a teal suit, white shirt, and dark tie is walking on a cobblestone street. He is holding a newspaper in his left hand. The background shows a building with windows and a green van.

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LEGGI  
"L'eleganza è l'equilibrio tra  
proporzioni, emozione e sorpresa"



# Macbeth



Macbeth  
Norman Garrett



Lady Macbeth  
Mary-Hollis Hundley



Banquo  
Ben Wager



Macduff  
Ganson Salmon

DESTINY TAKES A DARK TURN

Friday | October 25, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.  
Sunday | October 27, 2024 at 2 p.m.

 dr. phillips center STEINMETZ HALL



OPERA ORLANDO

# 2024-2025 Announcing the Season



Orlando  
Philharmonic  
Orchestra

ERIC JACOBSEN - MUSIC DIRECTOR



## **Young People's Concerts: Orchestra Overboard!**

Walt Disney Theater | Oct 2, 16 & 20

## **Opening Night featuring Aoife O'Donovan**

Steinmetz Hall | Oct 12 & 13

## **An Evening with Jamie Bernstein**

Steinmetz Hall | Nov 9 & 10

## **Benjamin & Brandenburg**

The Plaza Live | Nov 20

## **Home for the Holidays featuring Byron Stripling in Holiday Swing**

Steinmetz Hall | Nov 30

for tickets, visit or call  
[orlandophil.org](http://orlandophil.org) | 407.770.0071

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THE NUTCRACKER

PETER PAN

BALANCHINE, GRAHAM, PIRES

GISELLE

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## ORLANDO BALLET

JORDEN MORRIS • ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

