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Kansas City Ballet Presents “New Moves”

Original Works in an Intimate Setting

March 26 - 29

at the Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity

KANSAS CITY, MO (March 9, 2020) — Artistic Director Devon Carney today announced the choreographers chosen for **New Moves**, a unique performance event designed to search out, develop and showcase emerging choreographers, both from the national dance scene as well as locally within Kansas City Ballet. **New** provides time and space for choreographers to create world premiere works with accomplished professional dancers. **New Moves** features the works of choreographers **Melissa Gelfin**, **Rasta Thomas**, **Melody Mennite**, KCB Company Ballet Master **Parrish Maynard** and Dancers **Christopher Costantini**, **Emily Mistretta**, **Courtney Nitting** and **James Kirby Rogers**.

Carney said, “Our 2019-2020 Season continues with another annual audience favorite, **New Moves**, a choreographic incubator for new and emerging creative voices from the local, regional and national dance scenes who will all be constructing brand new works for the highly talented Kansas City Ballet artists.”

New Moves

March 26-29, 2020 | Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity

New Moves, one of Kansas City Ballet's most popular performances, showcases contemporary ballet in an intimate setting. This limited-run production gives audiences a chance to see tomorrow's sought-after choreographers today! It is a very up close and visceral experience for audience and dancer alike, with all performances held in the Todd Bolender Center's Michael and Ginger Frost Studio Theater. Come and see Kansas City Ballet artists and emerging choreographers discover bold new ways of expression and feel the athleticism, beauty, power and passion of never before seen dance creations!

Thurs., March 26	7:30 p.m. (post-show Q&A)
Fri., March 27	10:30 a.m. (student/senior matinee) and 7:30 p.m.
Sat., March 28	2:00 and 7:30 p.m.
Sun., March 29	2:00 p.m.

H2O

Choreography: Courtney Nitting
Music: Waterfalls and Reborn/Alexis Ffrench
I was wrong /Mikael Karlsson

Quanta

Choreography: James Kirby Rogers
Music: ODESZA and A Winged Victory for the Sullen

Un Dia Mas

Choreography: Melissa Gelfin
Music: Kaleidoscope Eyes/Eric Bates

Vectors

Performance by Kansas City Ballet Second Company
Choreography: Parrish Maynard
Music: Franz Schubert

Paper or Plastic?

Choreography: Rasta Thomas
Music: Piano Sonata No. 20 in A Major D. 959 II. Andantino/Franz Schubert played live by KCB Music Director Ramona Pansegrau

Warped Prism

Choreography: Christopher Costantini
Music: Spitfire/Peter Robinson

Looking for Perilune

Choreography: Emily Mistretta
Music: Arrangements by Paul Craig
Piano by Joep Beving, The Gift, Sleeping Lotus and Midwayer
Music excerpts from Svefn-g-Englar by Sigur Rós and La Ritourenelle by Sébastien Tellier.

Untitled

Choreography: Melody Mennite
Music: original composition/James Templeton

Melissa Gelfin joined Cincinnati Ballet as a New Dancer for the 2014-2015 Season and was promoted to Corps De Ballet in February of 2015. She was promoted to Senior Soloist in 2017 and Principal Dancer in 2018. As a dancer with Cincinnati Ballet, Gelfin's repertoire includes classical and contemporary works by Septime Webre, Yuri Possikov, Victoria Morgan, Val Caniparoli, Jerome Robbins, George Balanchine, Nicolo Fonte, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Adam Houglan, Sarah Van Patten and Ma Cong. She has danced Principal roles in Septime Webre's *Alice (in wonderland)*, Victoria Morgan's *The Nutcracker*, *King Arthur's Camelot* and *Romeo and Juliet*, Kirk Peterson's *Coppélia*, George Balanchine's *Rubies* and *Serenade*, Devon Carney's *The Sleeping Beauty* and originated roles in Penny Saunders *Nannerl*, Myles Thatcher's *Anamoly*, Andrea Schermoly's *Swivet* and several works by Jennifer Archibald. Ms. Gelfin's choreographic debut was a solo work in the inaugural 2018 Female Choreographic Initiative Festival hosted by Houston Ballet. She made her professional choreographic debut in Cincinnati Ballet's Kaplan New Works Series 2019 with her piece *Clockwise*. During the summer months, you can catch Ms. Gelfin dancing with Moving Arts Festival.

Rasta Thomas trained in martial arts and gymnastics before starting Ballet in Washington D.C. He is a multi-international gold medal competition laureate. He has had the pleasure of performing both classical ballet repertoire and works by some of today's most acclaimed choreographers. As a dancer his career consisted of being a guest artist with over 20 companies before founding his own company Bad Boys of Dance. He has toured the world, and both produced and directed shows time and time again over his career. More recently he has turned his focus to choreography and is excited to present his latest work for Kansas City Ballet.

Melody Mennite was born in Santa Cruz, California. She began dance training in tap and jazz at the age of 3 and expanded to classical ballet at 9. Always interested in experiencing as many types of dance as she could, Ms. Mennite also was a frequent student of hip hop, African, house, salsa, and swing dance. When she was 13, she traveled to Houston to experience a summer ballet intensive that led to a continued relationship with Houston Ballet and her eventually moving to Houston and joining the professional company. Ms. Mennite joined as an apprentice in 2001 and was promoted to principal in 2007. She has performed many full-length classical ballet leads, worked with contemporary choreographers from around the globe and had multiple roles created for her over the years. Her career in choreography began as a teenager in California. Her choreographic style has influences in an array of styles of dance and theatricality and she also depends on the dancers to bring their own unique fingerprint to each piece to shape its language of movement. She has had works commissioned by Houston Ballet, Ballet Arkansas, Cincinnati Ballet, Regional Dance America, and created work for Episcopal Highschool and Kingwood Dance Theatre. She had the pleasure in 2009 of being the head choreographer for The Michael Jackson Tribute at The Four Seasons Houston and was featured as choreographer and dancer/actress in the Festivus Film Festival award winning "Self Sabotage".

Christopher Costantini, a native of Milan, Italy, started his dance training at Princeton Ballet School at the age of 12. After attending summer courses at American Ballet Theatre in New York City, he completed his pre-professional studies at San Francisco Ballet School on full scholarship. Upon graduation, he appeared with the Paris Opera Ballet in Maurice Béjart's *Bolero* for the company's 2012 North American tour. Mr.

Costantini subsequently joined Oregon Ballet Theatre, where he danced for two years under the direction of Christopher Stowell and Kevin Irving. Since joining Kansas City Ballet, Mr. Costantini has had the pleasure of performing the second theme in George Balanchine's *The Four Temperaments*, The Baron in Val Caniparoli's *Lady of the Camellias*, Snow King and Marzipan Shepherd in Devon Carney's *The Nutcracker*, the Fish in Septime Webre's *Alice (in wonderland)*, Demetrius in Bruce Wells' *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the Pas de Deux in Amy Seiwert's *Concertino*. His repertoire also includes George Balanchine's *Square Dance*, *Prodigal Son*, *Theme and Variations*, *Stravinsky Violin Concerto* and *Who Cares?* as well as Val Caniparoli's *The Lottery*, Edwaard Liang's *Wunderland*, Adam Hougland's *Rite of Spring*, Andrew Skeels' *Seven Bridges*, Yuri Possokhov's *Diving into the Lilacs*, and Christopher Stowell's *Swan Lake*.

Emily Mistretta began her training at Inland Pacific Ballet Academy in Montclair, California. In 2005, Ms. Mistretta attended Boston Ballet's Summer Dance Program, where she was asked to join the Boston Ballet School and received a tuition scholarship with generous funding from Jack Rugheimer. In 2006, she joined Boston Ballet II, and she was promoted to Corps de Ballet in 2008. She was featured in several works throughout her career with Boston Ballet, including; *The Sleeping Beauty* (Pas de Trois, Little Red, Woodland Glade Fairy), Florence Clerc's *La Bayadère* (Tall Gamzatti's Friend, Small Gamzatti's Friend, Lead D'jambo), Michel Fokine's *Les Sylphides* (Soloist Sylph), Jerome Robbins' *Antique Epigraphs* and *The Concert*, *Balanchine's Jewels*, *Symphony in C* (3rd Movement Soloist), *Coppélia*, *Serenade* (Russian Girls), *The Four Temperaments*, *Episodes*, *Theme and Variations*, *Divertimento No. 15*, *Symphony in Three Movements*, *Jorma Elo's Elo Experience* and *Awake Only*, Yuri Yanowsky's *Smoke and Mirrors*, Jeffrey Cirio's *Fremd*, Jiří Kylián's *Bella Figura*, *Wings of Wax*, *Tar and Feathers* and *Symphony of Psalms*, and Alexander Ekman's *Cacti*.

Courtney Nitting was born in Lafayette, New Jersey, and began her dance training at the age of 3 at The NJ School of Ballet on scholarship. After nine years at NJB, she was invited to continue her training at The School of American Ballet. It was at SAB that Ms. Nitting received a review from critic Alastair Macaulay for her featured role in George Balanchine's *The Four Temperaments* during the annual workshop. Over these years, she also attended summer programs such as American Ballet Theatre, Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, and Boston Ballet. After graduating from SAB on scholarship, she performed with Eglevsky Ballet, Neglia Ballet, and Tom Gold Dance. Ms. Nitting then went on to join Pennsylvania Ballet II for the 2017-2018 season performing in ballets such as Angel Corella's *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake*, and George Balanchine's *The Nutcracker*. She joined KCB for the 2018-2019 season where she performed featured roles in William Forsythe's *In the Middle*, *Somewhat Elevated* and David Parsons' *A Play for Love*. She also had the privilege of performing in Septime Webre's world premiere of *The Wizard of Oz*, Devon Carney's *The Nutcracker*, and Val Caniparoli's *Lady of the Camellias*, along with KCB's New Moves where she choreographed her work *Men in Red*, and danced in Gary Abbott's *Parallel Lives*. Ms. Nitting was also featured in the 2019 February/March Pointe Magazine article *200 Auditions, 1 Contract*.

James Kirby Rogers, a native of San Francisco, California, began his training at the age of 9. Mr. Rogers then went on to study at UNCSA before competing in the 2015 Youth America Grand Prix where he was a finalist. From YAGP, he was offered the chance to

join Houston Ballet II under the directorship of Claudio Munoz and Sabrina Lenzi where he danced numerous roles including The Father in John Neumeier's *Yondering* and the principal role in George Balanchine's *Allegro Brillante*. After completing his training with Houston Ballet II, he joined Kansas City Ballet in 2016. Here, Mr. Rogers has danced many leading roles including Armand in Val Caniparoli's *Lady of the Camellias*, Pas de Trois in *The Sleeping Beauty*, Tybalt in *Romeo & Juliet*, Scarecrow in Septime Webre's *The Wizard of Oz*, and the 6th pas in *Petite Mort*. Most recently he gave his debut performance as Prince Siegfried in Devon Carney's full length *Swan Lake*.

Parrish Maynard danced with American Ballet Theatre, where he was invited to join by Mikhail Baryshnikov, and as a principal dancer at The Joffrey Ballet and San Francisco Ballet. In addition to being a recipient of the Princess Grace Award and the Presidential Scholar Award, he was a silver medalist in the International Ballet Competition. Mr. Maynard has performed in Dance in America's American Ballet Theatre Now, danced Nacho Duato's *Romanso*, and danced San Francisco Ballet Lar Lubovich's *Othello* in the role of Iago which was created on him. In 2005 Mr. Maynard joined the faculty of San Francisco Ballet School. In his 10 years at San Francisco Ballet, Mr. Maynard choreographed more than 20 ballets for the San Francisco Ballet School, some of which have been danced by companies around the world including Royal Ballet School, Royal New Zealand Ballet and National Ballet of Canada.

Ticket Information

Tickets may be purchased by telephone at 816.931.8993, in person at the Kansas City Ballet Box Office located at the Todd Bolender Center at 500 W. Pershing Rd. (west of Union Station) or with the "Select Your Own Seat" capability online at kcballet.org. Visit the Kansas City Ballet website for more information about performance times, seating options and parking at kcballet.org.

Sponsors

The Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation; Kansas City Ballet Guild; the Missouri Arts Council; and ArtsKC are among the many supporters of Kansas City Ballet's 2019-2020 season. New Moves is sponsored by BOK Financial.

Kansas City Ballet is a proud recipient of a grant award from Dance/USA, in partnership with the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, in recognition of Kansas City Ballet's historic track-record and ongoing commitment to presenting new works by female choreographers.

Season Info and Media

Visit kcballet.org for more information about Kansas City Ballet's 2019-2020 season. High resolution photos of the 2019-2020 season can be found [here](#).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND EVENTS

DANCE SPEAKS: New Voices, New Moves

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

6:30-7:30 p.m. | Panel Discussion

ArtsKC Gallery | 106 Southwest Blvd.

As part of Kansas City Ballet's commitment to engage the community-at-large, we offer a unique educational series titled DANCE SPEAKS, held at various community venues.

New Moves choreographers and KCB Artistic Director Devon Carney provide an up-close and personal look into the creative process that emerging, cutting edge choreographers employ in creating original contemporary works. Tickets are \$12 and are on sale now. Tickets must be purchased in advance online at [Dance Speaks: New Voices, New Moves](#).

Social Media

Kansas City Ballet's website is mobile and ticket-purchase friendly. Receive daily updates by joining the KCB Fan Page at www.facebook.com/kcbballet, on Twitter @kcbballet, or on Instagram @kc.ballet. Follow our blog at www.kcbballet.org/blog, watch our channel on YouTube at www.youtube.com/kansascityballet, or follow us on LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/company/kansas-city-ballet.

About Kansas City Ballet

MISSION: To Inspire and Engage Through the Beauty, Power & Passion of Dance
VISION: Outstanding Dance Experiences Accessible to All

Founded in 1957, Kansas City Ballet is a 30-member professional ballet company under the leadership of Artistic Director Devon Carney and Executive Director Jeffrey J. Bentley. The company's mission is to establish Kansas City Ballet as an indispensable asset in its community through exceptional performances, excellence in dance training and quality community education programs for all ages.

Kansas City Ballet is home to Kansas City Ballet School with an enrollment of 2000+ children and adults offering professional training for the career-minded student as well as for those simply seeking a healthy lifestyle.

Through the professional company, second company (KCB II & Trainees), and community engagement programs for all ages, we seek to nurture and develop our artists, audiences and students in the values inherent in the creativity, diversity and joy of dance.

Our home, the Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity, in conjunction with our Resident Company status at the world-class Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, has truly positioned Kansas City as a destination for dance.

Visit www.kcbballet.org/media-center/ for more info.

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