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Kansas City Ballet Announces 2021-2022 Season

Dracula, The Wizard of Oz, and Celts
and return of holiday favorite *The Nutcracker* welcome back
audiences

KANSAS CITY, MO (May 14, 2021) — Kansas City Ballet Artistic Director Devon Carney today announced the company's 2021-2022 season, which opens with a mixed repertoire featuring Lila York's *Celts* celebrating movement and music, continues with Michael Pink's mesmerizing *Dracula*, and concludes with Septime Webre's return of *The Wizard of Oz*. Along with the season, Carney is pleased to note the highly anticipated return of Carney's *The Nutcracker* in December and **New Moves** performances of brand new choreographic works in March—an annual favorite. High res photos, artwork and more can be found at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/67555847@N06/sets/>.

"The three headline performances of the upcoming season invite audiences to join our talented company as they perform a trio of incredible works this fall, then take us on a breathtaking journey into Gothic darkness, and finally share unexpected comradery on the yellow brick road," Carney says.

"It's an incredible season of crowd favorites. What's not to love?" he concludes.

Subscriptions, which range from \$141 to \$305 for the three-ballet package — a savings of 20 percent compared with single-ticket prices — now are available online at www.kcballet.org or by calling the Kansas City Ballet ticket office, 816-931-8993.

Celts

Oct. 15-24, 2021 | Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

The 2021-2022 season opens with a mixed-repertoire performance featuring three acclaimed ballets that celebrate the emotional combination of movement and music. Edwaard Liang's *Wunderland*, a winter wonderland of athletic dancing and intense passion, opens the show and is a gorgeous ballet washed in red and inspired by a giant snow globe.

George Balanchine's *Serenade* is set in moonlight and is known as Balanchine's most romantic ballet, an ode to the classic ballets *Swan Lake* and *Giselle*. *Serenade* is a milestone in dance and the first original ballet George Balanchine choreographed in America.

Finally, the program concludes with the featured work, *Celts*, the Kansas City premiere of a fiendish fusion of ballet and Irish step dance. Lila York debuted *Celts* at Boston Ballet – a year before Michael Flatley's *Riverdance* became a sensation – and is a stunning fusion of Irish folk dance and ballet. Set to the music of The Chieftains and more, this celebration of Irish culture has brought audiences to their feet with its choreographically intense jig and captivating energy.

Wunderland

Choreography by Edwaard Liang

Music by Philip Glass performed by The Opus 76 Quartet

Inspired by Choreographer Edwaard Liang's fascination with a replica of a small Siberian town captured within a snow globe, *Wunderland* is an abstract experience that allows audience members to find their own way through the beauty, emotion, and humanity of a winter wonderland. To match the pulsating rhythms of music by Philip Glass, Liang created movement that seamlessly molds striking poses and geometric formations to inspire both tension and harmony.



The Opus 76 Quartet was formed in 2017 by Keith Stanfield, Zsolt Eder, Ashley Stanfield and Sascha Groschang, while all four were performing together frequently in various orchestras. They are coached by recently retired founding member of the Takács Quartet, Károly Schranz. The Opus 76 Quartet, now in its 4th season, has become known for its entertaining and energetic interpretations of the classics. *The Kansas City Star* recently described the group as "Kansas City's gem of a quartet." For more information, please visit [Opus 76 Quartet](#).

Serenade

Choreography by George Balanchine
Music by Peter I. Tchaikovsky



The first original ballet Balanchine created in America; *Serenade* is considered a milestone in the history of dance. Originated as a lesson in stage technique, Balanchine worked unexpected rehearsal events into the choreography. When one student fell, he incorporated the fall into the dance. When a student arrived late, this too became part of the ballet. The score, Tchaikovsky's 1880 *Serenade for Strings in C*, reveals the special affinity Balanchine had for the romantic works of the Russian composer. "In everything I did to Tchaikovsky's music, I sensed his help," Balanchine once told an interviewer. "It wasn't

real conversation. But when I was working and saw that something was coming of it, I felt that it was Tchaikovsky who had helped me."

Celts

Choreography by Lila York
Recorded Music by The Chieftains, William J. Ruyle, Bill Whelen and Mason Daring



Lila York debuted *Celts* at Boston Ballet in 1996 — a year before Michael Flatley's *Riverdance* became a sensation — and it was an immediate hit. Exuberant, complex, and fantastically fast, its modern and imaginative fusion of Irish step dance and ballet (including pointe work) requires virtuosic technique infused with pure joy. In its Kansas City premiere, the ballet springs across the stage to the irrepressible beat of Irish tunes by the Chieftains and others as the dancers attack speedy pirouettes and leaps. Super-charged roles give individual performers the opportunity to shine, but *Celts* is first and foremost an ensemble work in which the entire company of

dancers is keenly alive.

Dracula

Feb. 18-27, 2022 | Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

Based on Bram Stoker's classic gothic horror story and performed by the world-class dancers of Kansas City Ballet, *Dracula* is a spellbinding story of the nocturnal Count who survives on the blood of the living. Audiences will be mesmerized as they venture into the dark and eerie world of the infamous Count Dracula. With the combination of dramatic choreography by Michael Pink, an original, haunting score by Philip Feeney, dazzling costumes by Lez Brotherston, thrilling sets, and shocking special effects, *Dracula* delivers sensuality and danger in a dance/theater narrative combining story-enhancing sound effects like the beating heart that opens the show and the frightened voices of the humans Dracula is stalking. Accompanied by Kansas City Symphony, conducted by Kansas City Ballet Music Director Ramona Pansegrau, and featuring Feeney's gripping score, the dramatic music and cinematic scenery will captivate audience members from curtain rise to curtain fall.



Created in 1996 by Michael Pink, Artistic Director of Milwaukee Ballet Company, this terrifying yet romantic three-act drama has won critical acclaim in England, Australia, and North America. According to *The Rocky Mountain News*, Michael Pink's *Dracula* is "a bravura work of theatre - a taut, dark tale that happens to speak in the language of dance."

Choreographer Michael Pink states, "*Dracula* is unlike any other ballet. It's sinister and sensual at the same time; breathtaking yet horrific. The show has developed somewhat of a cult following, breaking box office records all over the world. I'm thrilled to be bringing it to Kansas City Ballet for the first time."

"Kansas City Ballet is excited to present *Dracula* to our community," Artistic Director Devon Carney said. "This fast-paced work—full of tremendous dramatic content and great moments of terror and love—will challenge and invigorate our artists to craft true three-dimensional characters to tell the haunting tale of Count Dracula."

The Wizard of Oz

May 13-22, 2022 | Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts



The 2021-2022 Season concludes with the much-anticipated return of the record-breaking production of *The Wizard of Oz*, a \$1 million production. Every aspect of this ballet has been custom designed and created to wow audiences including choreography by **Septime Webre**, the creator of *Alice (in wonderland)*, new music composed by **Matthew Pierce**, set design by **Michael**

Raiford, costume design by **Liz Vandal**, lighting design by **Trad A Burns**, puppet design by **Nicholas Mahon**, and projection design by **Aaron Rhyne**.

The production will be accompanied by Kansas City Symphony conducted by Kansas City Ballet Music Director **Ramona Pansegrau** and runs May 13-22, 2022 at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts.

Story lines and visual elements from the classic motion picture provided by Warner Bros. Theatre Ventures.

The scale and grandeur of the production is impressive.

- At least 120 people, not including dancers, were part of this collaboration team including designers and makers.
- In Kansas City, 30 company dancers and 15 second company dancers make up the cast, not counting children.
- There are 23 children's roles and two casts for a total of 46 children performing in *The Wizard of Oz*, providing a huge asset to the development and growth of the Kansas City Ballet School.
- The musical score composed by Matthew Pierce, the same composer for *Alice (in wonderland)*, is 471 pages long.
- There are 120 stunning costumes and 112 hats in the production. The costume shop paints 220 shoes. There are at least 60 costume changes during the production.
- There are upwards of 20 puppets including a mechanical Toto.
- More than 300 light cues take place using over 1000 channels of lights.
- There are eight flying effects by FOY executed by multiple characters.
- The animated projections, using a combination of three state-of-the-art projectors, add an integral design element that helps provide atmosphere and dimensionality, and enhance the experience.
- A total of 100 yards of LED lights running along the stage.

Kansas City Ballet 2021-2022 Season

Kansas City Dance Day

Sat., Aug. 28, 2021, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. | Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity
500 W. Pershing Rd., Kansas City, MO 64108

Kansas City Ballet's 11th annual celebration of dance and movement features FREE dance performances, dance and fitness classes, demonstrations, and FUN for the whole family.

Dance Speaks: New Dance Partners

Sept. 8, 2021 | Frost Studio Theater | Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity
5:30-6:00 p.m. | New Dance Partners Rehearsal
6:00-7:00 p.m. | Dance Speaks Panel

Get a sneak peek of a New Dance Partners rehearsal and gain insightful information regarding the production. Kansas City Ballet Artistic Director Devon Carney and guest choreographer Irene Rodriguez invite you to join them in an engaging conversation inspired by this dramatic work! Moderated by Devon Carney, the panel activity includes an audience Q and A.

New Dance Partners

Sept. 17-18, 2021 | Johnson County Community College Midwest Trust Center
12345 College Blvd., Overland Park, KS 66210

A project celebrating new work in dance, the Midwest Trust Center Performing Arts Series at Johnson County Community College has produced New Dance Partners since 2013. The project furthers artistic growth in dance by creating new works and encouraging collaboration between Kansas City arts organizations. The performances feature local, professional dance companies in new works that are commissioned on their behalf and that are directed by renowned choreographers.

Dance Speaks: *Celts*

Sept. 22, 2021 | Virtual
5:30-6:00 p.m. | Celts Rehearsal
6:00-7:00 p.m. | Dance Speaks Panel

Get a sneak peek of *Celts* rehearsal and gain insightful information regarding the ballet. Kansas City Ballet Artistic Director Devon Carney, Choreographer Lila York and guests invite you to join them in an engaging conversation inspired by this dramatic work! Moderated by Devon Carney, the panel activity includes an audience Q and A. The *Celts* rehearsal and Dance Speaks panel takes place on Facebook LIVE.

www.facebook.com/kcballet

Dancer Chat: Fall Program Dancers

Oct. 6, 2021, 6:30-7:30 p.m. | Virtual on Facebook LIVE

KCB Dancer Chats, a community engagement and education series, are designed to engage the broader public with professional dancers from Kansas City Ballet.

Each Dancer Chat provides an opportunity for the public to get to know different

company dancers through relaxed, informal conversations sharing their unique perspectives on various topics of the day. Moderated by prominent members of the community and arts enthusiasts, these engaging Chats will reveal the diverse backgrounds, extraordinary experiences, and strong relationships between professional artists. The Chats take place on Facebook LIVE. www.facebook.com/kcballet

Celts

Oct.15-24, 2021 | Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts
1601 Broadway, Kansas City MO 64108

The 2021-2022 season opens with a mixed-repertoire performance featuring three acclaimed ballets that celebrate the emotional combination of movement and music. *Celts*, the Kansas City premiere of a fiendish fusion of ballet and Irish step dance, *Wunderland*, a winter wonderland of athletic dancing and intense passion, and *Serenade*, a milestone in dance and the first original ballet George Balanchine choreographed in America.

Wunderland

Choreography: Edwaard Liang
Music: Philip Glass performed by The Opus 76 Quartet

Serenade

Choreography: George Balanchine
Music: Peter I. Tchaikovsky performed by Kansas City Symphony

Celts

Choreography: Lila York
Music: Recorded Music by The Chieftains, William J. Ruyle, Bill Whelen and Mason Daring

Fri., Oct. 15	7:30 p.m.
Sat., Oct. 16	7:30 p.m.
Sun., Oct. 17	2 p.m.
Fri., Oct. 22	7:30 p.m.
Sat., Oct. 23	7:30 p.m.
Sun., Oct. 24	2 p.m.

Dancer Chat: *Nutcracker* Dancers

Nov. 17, 2021, 6:30-7:30 p.m. | Virtual on Facebook LIVE

KCB Dancer Chats, a community engagement and education series, are designed to engage the broader public with professional dancers from Kansas City Ballet. Each Dancer Chat provides an opportunity for the public to get to know different company dancers through relaxed, informal conversations sharing their unique perspectives on various topics of the day. Moderated by prominent members of the community and arts lovers these engaging Chats will reveal the diverse backgrounds, extraordinary experiences, and strong relationships between professional artists. These Chats take place on Facebook LIVE.

www.facebook.com/kcballet

Nutcracker Ball

Benefitting Kansas City Ballet and Kansas City Ballet School

Presented by Kansas City Ballet Guild

Nov. 20, 2021 | Loews Kansas City Hotel

1515 Wyandotte St. Kansas City, MO 64108

In celebration of the return of the performing arts in our community, the Kansas City Ballet Guild is proud to kick-off the coming holiday season with the 54th annual Nutcracker Ball. Enjoy a fabulous evening of cocktails, dinner, and dancing. Presented by Kansas City Ballet Guild. <http://www.kcballetball.org/>

The Nutcracker

Dec. 3-24, 2021 | Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

Choreography by Devon Carney

Music by Peter I. Tchaikovsky performed by Kansas City Symphony

Kansas City Ballet's beloved annual tradition entices the young and young-at-heart to let wonder ignite as childhood dreams dance once again. Clara, The Nutcracker Prince, Dr. Drosselmeier and the Sugar Plum Fairy unveil a magical theatrical experience wrapped with exquisite costumes, grand sets and captivating choreography.

The Nutcracker tickets on sale Mon., Aug. 30.

Fri., Dec. 3	10:30 a.m. (Student Matinee) and 7:30 p.m.
Sat., Dec. 4	2 p.m.* and 7:30 p.m.
Sun., Dec. 5	1 p.m.
Thurs., Dec. 9	10:30 a.m. (Student Matinee) and 7:30 p.m.
Fri., Dec. 10	10:30 a.m. (Student Matinee) and 7:30 p.m.
Sat., Dec. 11	2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Sun., Dec. 12	1 p.m. and 5 p.m.
Wed., Dec. 15	6 p.m. (sensory-friendly performance)
Thurs., Dec. 16	7:30 p.m.
Fri., Dec. 17	7:30 p.m.
Sat., Dec. 18	2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Sun., Dec. 19	1 p.m. and 5 p.m.
Tues., Dec. 21	7:30 p.m.
Wed., Dec. 22	2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Thurs., Dec. 23	2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Fri., Dec. 24	1 p.m.

(*) The Nutcracker Children's Ball Luncheon

Dance Speaks: *Dracula*

Jan. 26, 2022, | Frost Studio Theater | Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity
5:30-6:00 p.m. | *Dracula* Rehearsal
6:00-7:00 p.m. | Dance Speaks Panel

Get a sneak peek of a *Dracula* rehearsal and gain insightful information regarding the ballet production. Kansas City Ballet Artistic Director Devon Carney, Choreographer Michael Pink, and guests invite you to join them in an engaging conversation inspired by this dramatic work! Moderated by Artistic Director Devon Carney, the panel activity includes an audience Q and A.

Dancer Chat: *Dracula* Dancers

Feb. 9, 2021, 6:30-7:30 p.m. | Virtual on Facebook LIVE

KCB Dancer Chats, a community engagement and education series, are designed to engage the broader public with professional dancers from Kansas City Ballet. Each Dancer Chat provides an opportunity for the public to get to know different company dancers through relaxed, informal conversations sharing their unique perspectives on various topics of the day. Moderated by prominent members of the community and arts lovers these engaging Chats will reveal the diverse backgrounds, extraordinary experiences, and strong relationships between professional artists. These Chats take place on Facebook LIVE.

www.facebook.com/kcballet

Dracula

Feb.18-27, 2022 | Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts
Choreography by Michael Pink
Music by Philip Feeney performed by Kansas City Symphony

Back by popular demand and based on Bram Stoker's classic gothic horror story, *Dracula* is a lush theatrical work complete with sensuous costumes, thrilling sets and special effects, and a gripping original score that will take your breath away.

"*Dracula's* story speaks in the language of dance, and the show has developed somewhat of a worldwide cult following," Choreographer Michael Pink says. "Kansas City Ballet dancers first performed it six years ago, and I am thrilled that they will bring it to life — and immerse audiences in the vampire's version of eternal life — once again."

Parental discretion is advised.

Fri., Feb. 18	7:30 p.m.
Sat., Feb. 19	2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Sun., Feb. 20	2 p.m.
Thurs., Feb. 24	7:30 p.m.
Fri., Feb. 25	7:30 p.m.
Sat., Feb. 26	2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Sun., Feb. 27	2 p.m.

Dance Speaks: New Voices, New Moves

March 16, 2022 | Frost Studio Theater | Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity
5:30-6:00 pm | New Moves Rehearsal
6:00-7:00 pm | Dance Speaks Panel

The Creative Process: Cutting-edge choreographers' works brought to the stage! This Dance Speaks provides up-close and personal insights behind the diverse choreographers creating original, contemporary works for a ballet company. This event will include an audience Q and A.

New Moves

March 24-27, 2022 | Frost Studio Theater | 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 Bolender Center's Michael and Ginger Frost Studio Theater. Come see our 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 24	7:30 p.m.
Fri., March 25	11:00 a.m. (Student/Senior Group Matinee) and 7:30 p.m.
Sat., March 26	2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Sun., March 27	2:00 p.m.

Dance Speaks: *The Wizard of Oz*

April 13, 2022 | Virtual on Facebook LIVE
5:30-6:00 p.m. | Oz Rehearsal
6:00-7:00 p.m. | Dance Speaks Panel

Get a sneak peek of a *The Wizard of Oz* rehearsal and gain behind the scenes information regarding Kansas City Ballet's production. Kansas City Ballet Artistic Director Devon Carney, Choreographer Septime Webre, and guests invite you to join them in an engaging conversation inspired by this classic work! Moderated by Devon Carney, the event includes an audience Q and A. *The Wizard of Oz* rehearsal and Dance Speaks panel takes place on Facebook LIVE. www.facebook.com/kcballet

Second Company @ HOME

April 21, 2022, 7:00 p.m. | Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity

Second Company @ Home is an evening of dance with Kansas City Ballet's Second Company performing a variety of both classical and custom-made contemporary works. This emerging professionals' program gives extraordinarily talented young dancers a professional company experience as a prelude to their joining a professional company. KCB's Second Company performs throughout the region through public performances,

lecture demonstrations, residencies, and workshops, enabling the community to experience live dance in a public setting.

Dancer Chat: *The Wizard of Oz* Dancers

May 4, 2021, 6:30-7:30 p.m. | Virtual on Facebook LIVE

KCB Dancer Chats, a community engagement and education series, are designed to engage the broader public with professional dancers from Kansas City Ballet. Each Dancer Chat provides an opportunity for the public to get to know different company dancers through relaxed, informal conversations sharing their unique perspectives on various topics of the day. Moderated by prominent members of the community and arts enthusiasts, these engaging Chats will reveal the diverse backgrounds, extraordinary experiences, and strong relationships between professional artists. These Chats take place on Facebook LIVE.

www.facebook.com/kcballet

The Wizard of Oz

May 13-22, 2022 | Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

Choreography: Septime Webre

Music: Matthew Pierce performed by Kansas City Symphony

Septime Webre's fantastical journey to the Emerald City is back! Filled with all the familiarity of the classic movie—Dorothy and Toto swept to Oz join three unlikely heroes on a quest to see the Wizard and must battle a Wicked Witch in order to return home. This award-winning production seamlessly combines bold new elements like costumes, sets, projections, and special effects with an incredibly original soundtrack making it the must-see family event of the season.

Story lines and visual elements from the MGM Motion Picture *The Wizard of Oz* provided by Warner Bros. Theatre Ventures.

Fri., May 13	7:30 p.m.
Sat., May 14	2:00 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.
Sun., May 15	2 p.m.
Thurs., May 19	7:30 p.m.
Fri., May 20	7:30 p.m.
Sat., May 21	2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.
Sun., May 22	2:00 p.m.

Visit www.kcballet.org for more information about Kansas City Ballet's 2021-2022 season and www.kauffmancenter.org for a downloadable media kit about the Kauffman Center. Find high-resolution photos of the 2020-2021 season [here](#).

COVID Protocols

The health and safety of our patrons is our top priority. The Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts has developed a COVID 19 plan, details of which can be found at <https://www.kauffmancenter.org/the-center/health/>.

Sponsors

The Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation, Kansas City Ballet Guild, the Missouri Arts Council — a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) support Kansas City Ballet's 2021-2022 Season.

Accessibility

Kansas City Ballet is committed to providing assistance to those with disabilities. Direct questions and requests to Patron Services, 816.931.1348. Callers who are hearing impaired or hard of hearing can get help with telephone access by using the free relay service — 711.

Student Matinees

Kansas City Ballet presents full-length morning performances for schools designed to enhance interdisciplinary learning, integrating dance with English Language Arts, Social Studies, and Music. For the 2021-2022 Season, student matinees will be as follows:

The Nutcracker

Fri., Dec. 3	10:30 a.m. (Student Matinee)
Thurs., Dec. 9	10:30 a.m. (Student Matinee)
Fri., Dec. 10	10:30 a.m. (Student Matinee)

The Nutcracker Audience: Recommended for 2nd grade and older. For school groups at this special rate of \$12 per person; 1 adult/teacher chaperone is required to accompany every 10 students that attend. Reservations are made on a first come first serve basis and groups must have a minimum of 10. Seating at 10:00 a.m.

New Moves

Fri., March 25	11:00 a.m. (Student/Senior Group Matinee)
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New Moves Audience: Recommended for 6th grade and older. For school groups at this special rate of \$12 per person, 1 adult/teacher chaperone is required to accompany every 10 students that attend. Reservations are made on a first come first serve basis and groups must have a minimum of 10. Seating at 10:00 a.m.

For more information contact aberry@kcballet.org.

Ticket and Season Subscriber Information

If you would like to learn more information about new subscriptions and renewals, please call the Kansas City Ballet ticket office **816.931.8993**. Single tickets will go on sale Monday, Aug. 30.

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 professional ballet company led by Artistic Director Devon Carney and Executive Director Jeffrey J. Bentley. The company's mission is to

establish Kansas City Ballet as an indispensable community asset 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 which, with an enrollment of more than 2,000 children and adults, offers 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 and education programs, Kansas City Ballet seeks to nurture and develop artists, audiences, and students in the values inherent in the creativity, diversity, and joy of dance. The company's 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, positions Kansas City as a destination for dance. Visit www.kcballet.org/kansas-city-ballet-press-releases/ for more info.

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Direct all media inquiries to Ellen McDonald, 816-213-4355 or publicity@kcballet.org