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## PROFILE

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### **KANSAS CITY BALLET COMPANY**

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 Ballet is one of the region's great success stories. It is one of the most artistically dynamic and financially sound performing arts institutions of its size in the country.

This community jewel has earned the respect of the national dance community as well as the city and region as an organization devoted to excellence.

### **KANSAS CITY BALLET SCHOOL**

The Kansas City Ballet School provides excellence in dance training to a diverse student body. With locations in downtown Kansas City, MO., and Prairie Village, KS., the School is comprised of two divisions: The Academy, which begins at age 2, and the Studio Division, for ages 12 and older. The Academy's comprehensive approach is based on the traditions of classical ballet and prepares students for a wide spectrum of opportunities within the artistic community and professional dance world. In 2014, the School created a Trainee Program for students who have graduated from high school and in 2016, the School initiated a Daytime Program. These programs aim to nurture and develop young aspiring dancers' technical skills and artistry, ultimately preparing them for a professional dance career. Kansas City Ballet's KCB II, an emerging professionals program, is in its seventh year. The program gives extraordinarily talented young dancers a professional company experience as prelude to their joining a professional company. The School's Studio Division attracts teens and adults who wish to pursue recreational dance instruction in a supportive and encouraging setting. The School also provides classes for children with developmental delays through its Adaptive Dance program. The Kansas City Ballet School develops students of all ages whose lives are enhanced through their experience with the School's faculty, staff and artists. These students are in a position to elevate the community's appreciation of the arts through their outstanding dance education.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION**

Up to 20,000 people are served annually through Kansas City Ballet's Community Programs. Educational performances, engaging pre-performance activities, community partnerships, and a nationally regarded in-school dance residency program reaching over 1,100 students each season engages learners of all ages and backgrounds. Kansas City Ballet's community-wide R.O.A.D. Scholarship Program provides talented urban and rural 3rd grade school students the opportunity to study dance at the Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity during their school day. These diverse educational programs promote awareness, provide a deeper appreciation and understanding, and allow everyone to experience the power of dance.

## AT HOME AND ON THE STAGE

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### OUR HOME

In August 2011, Kansas City Ballet completed a 39 million dollar renovation of the historic Union Station Power House transforming it into the Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity.

Designed by local architect BNIM, this former coal-fired powerhouse had been abandoned for over a half century. Today it stands as one of the most talked about centers for professional dance and dance training in the nation. The facility emphasizes the presence of natural light, open space and vaulting ceilings which provide dancers “permission to fly”.



Photo by Anna Walters.

The seven studios, including the 180 seat Michael and Ginger Frost Studio Theater, provide space for company class, daily rehearsal, student training and performances such as New Moves, a series of world premieres presented annually, Kansas City Youth Ballet performances as well as performances by Kansas City Ballet’s Second Company.

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### OUR STAGE

Kansas City Ballet became the Resident Ballet Company of the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts in fall 2011. The Muriel Kauffman Theatre has quickly become known as one of the great stages for dance in the world. With only 1,800 seats — all designed for patron comfort — the distance from stage to the last row in the balcony is less than 120 feet. The remarkable acoustics and the state-of-the-art production and lighting equipment ensure an ideal experience.



The Kauffman Center experience starts well before the curtain goes up. Well-lit and convenient parking, the beautiful Brandmeyer Great Hall, patron reception areas, concierge customer service stations and more are designed to make live performance what it should be: convenient, comfortable, exciting, adventurous, breathtaking, and unique.

# ARTISTIC HISTORY

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For more than 60 years, Kansas City Ballet has offered an eclectic repertory varying from the traditional classics to contemporary ballets. A fully professional dance company, it is based in Kansas City, MO., and has served the region through its community engagement, education, touring and residency activities.

Tatiana Dokoudovska founded Kansas City Ballet in 1957 with the goal of establishing a regular presence for ballet in the city. For 20 years she nurtured the company with her time, love, talent and even her personal financial resources as artistic director, advisor and choreographer.

Upon Miss Dokoudovska's retirement in 1980 the trustees made a commitment to build a stronger professional company and selected Todd Bolender as artistic director. Mr. Bolender fulfilled his vision of developing a nationally recognized ensemble based on his extensive experiences as a dancer and choreographer with George Balanchine's New York City Ballet and as an international opera and ballet choreographer.

In 1986 the Company was renamed the State Ballet of Missouri following the announcement of a joint venture with Dance St. Louis whereby the Company would establish a second home in St. Louis, MO. In 1996, following a 10-year relationship, the venture was concluded and Kansas City Ballet reclaimed its original name in January 2000.

Mr. Bolender retired in 1995 to become artistic director emeritus, focusing his talents on his own choreography and coaching his original Balanchine roles. William Whitener was appointed artistic director after serving in the same capacity with Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet and Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal.

Mr. Whitener, whose tenure ended with the 2012-2013 season, diversified and expanded the repertory with his own choreography and that of his peers, reflecting the best of American dance. While Mr. Whitener ensured the Company's repertory was fresh and infused with popular, contemporary work, he also was committed to the ongoing presentation of the works that have been the Company's hallmark.

Devon Carney became Kansas City Ballet Artistic Director on July 1, 2013 and brought with him to Kansas City a renewed excitement about the future of dance in the nation. In his first year he created a second company titled KCB II that performs at a variety of venues throughout the region on a smaller scale to make dance more accessible. KCB II dancers also perform with the main company. Additionally, in his inaugural year, Mr. Carney created the annual program series titled "New Moves," performed in the Frost Studio Theatre in the Bolender Center. This program provides an opportunity for emerging choreographers from the local and national dance scene to create world premiere works with our Kansas City Ballet artists. The following year, Mr. Carney created the Trainee Program to complete the bridge from school to company. Together, KCB II and Trainees make up Kansas City Ballet's Second Company. Mr. Carney is dedicated to bringing a balanced repertoire to the Kansas City Ballet community by presenting authentic interpretations of the great classics of the dance world, as well as time honored 20th century creations and brand new world premieres from today's leading choreographers.

Kansas City Ballet numbers 30 professional dancers, six members of KCB II and 13 trainees. The artistic staff and dancers were trained at prestigious schools and training programs affiliated with such companies as National Ballet of Cuba, New York City Ballet, Miami City Ballet, The Joffrey Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Ballet West and the Boston, Cincinnati, Houston, Washington, San Francisco, Dance Theatre of Harlem and Pittsburgh Ballets. More than 603 dancers have performed with Kansas City Ballet.

Devon Carney was born in New Orleans, where he began his dance training with Harvey Hysell. He later joined the New Orleans Ballet, where he danced his first leading roles. In 1978, Mr. Carney was invited to join Boston Ballet. While a corps de ballet member, Mr. Carney was chosen by Choo San Goh to dance the title role of Romeo in Goh's first and only full-length ballet, *Romeo and Juliet*. Mr. Carney was promoted to principal dancer in 1986.

During his 21-year professional dance career, Mr. Carney was able to perform many leading roles in well-known classical ballets such as *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, *Don Quixote*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Raymonda Act III*. Mr. Carney had the opportunity also to perform leading roles in 20th century classical works such as John Cranko's *Eugene Onegin* and *Taming of the Shrew*, Ben Stevenson's *Cinderella*, Bruce Wells' *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Harald Lander's *Etudes*, and Anthony Tudor's *Lilac Garden*.

He also was able to dance roles choreographed by cutting-edge choreographers. These ballets include Maurice Bejart's *Le Sacre du Printemps*, Paul Taylor's *Company B*, Merce Cunningham's *Breakers*, Sir Frederick Ashton's *Monotones 1*, Mark Morris' *Mort Subite*, and Susan Marshall's *Overture*. His George Balanchine repertoire includes principal roles in *Square Dance*, *Agon*, *Mozartiana*, *Rubies*, *The Four Temperaments*, and *Theme and Variations*, among others.

As a dancer, Mr. Carney has toured extensively throughout Europe, the United States, Mexico and Asia with such greats as Rudolph Nureyev, Fernando Bujones and Cynthia Gregory. In 1994, Mr. Carney was the non-competing partner of the Senior Division Bronze Medalist at the Jackson International Ballet Competition.

Mr. Carney served as Ballet Master for Boston Ballet from 1998 to 2003. During this time he worked closely with choreographers Ben Stevenson, Christopher Wheeldon, Michael Corder, Michael Pink and Bruce Wells. Furthermore, he has worked closely with Anna-Marie Holmes in the staging of several major productions of the great classics.

Mr. Carney was appointed Artistic Director of Boston Ballet Summer Dance Program in 1994 and served in this capacity for nine years. Teaching credits include Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre, Arizona Ballet Summer Program, Ballet Austin, Boston Ballet, BalletMet, Cincinnati Ballet, Guangzhou Ballet of China, Hartford Ballet, Houston Ballet Summer Program, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, University of North Carolina School for the Arts, Texas Christian University, Boston Conservatory, Butler University, University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music Dance Department and various regional ballet companies and schools across the United States and Europe. He also has served as a judge of the 2002 Youth America Grand Prix Ballet Competition finals in New York City and the 2005 and 2006 American Ballet Competition as well as semi-finals of Youth America Grand Prix in 2018.

His choreographic endeavors include the ballets *Opus II* and *Interlude* for Boston Ballet, and *Cascades* and *Daystar* for Boston Ballet II. Through the years, he choreographed *Symphony #1*, *Awakenings* and *Wonderful Land* for the Boston Ballet Summer Dance Program, as well as staging several classical ballet excerpts.

He choreographed a work for BalletMet in August of 2007 titled *Speaking In Tongues*. He also worked very closely with the Cincinnati Opera from 2005 to 2012, choreographing works in *Aida*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Lucie de Lammermoor*, *Die Meistersinger*, *La Traviata* and many others. In addition, Mr. Carney has choreographed several ballets for Cincinnati Ballet including *U Too?*, *Just You and Me*, *Another Time Another Space*, *Blue Rondo* and in September of 2007, *Convergent Sight*. In February of 2006, Mr. Carney choreographed Acts II and IV of the full-length *Swan Lake* for Cincinnati Ballet. Then, in November of 2006, he choreographed his full-length version of *Giselle* for Cincinnati Ballet to rave reviews. He presented his full-length world premiere of *Dracula* in October of 2008 and then subsequently choreographed his world premiere of *World Citizen* in March of 2009 with a review stating, “Carney’s work is not only well crafted but moody and intense with a palpable sense of loneliness. His work grows more confident and more skillful with every piece he creates.” (David Lyman, *Cincinnati Enquirer*).

Mr. Carney was with the Cincinnati Ballet from 2003 to 2013, most recently serving as the Associate Artistic Director. He had the opportunity to work closely with choreographers such as Donald Byrd, Lynn Taylor Corbett, Jorma Elo, Victor Kabaniev, Trey McIntyre, Donald McKayle, Darrell Grand Moultrie, Kirk Peterson, Viktor Plotnikov and many others during this time.

He created for Cincinnati Ballet a new full-length version of the world renowned *The Sleeping Beauty* in 2010 to great critical acclaim. In addition he choreographed a world premiere, *Thrive On Here*, in the spring of 2011 set to the live music of the nationally known hit group Over the Rhine. In the summer of 2011 Mr. Carney again had the opportunity to choreograph for the Cincinnati Opera for the recently written opera *A Flowering Tree* by John Adams. In the spring of 2012 he choreographed a world premiere version of the Hans Christian Anderson story *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*. In the spring of 2013 he had the opportunity to choreograph two works back-to-back for Cincinnati Ballet. The first was *Concerto #4* in March of 2013. The second, which closed the 2012–2013 season, was *Boot It Up!* This was performed with the live musical accompaniment of rock-and-roll legend Peter Frampton and his entire band and hailed as a tremendous high point in the Cincinnati performing arts scene for the season.

Mr. Carney was appointed Artistic Director of Kansas City Ballet starting with the 2013–2014 season. Upon arrival he created his first work for the company, titled *Opus I*. In 2014, he choreographed for Lyric Opera of Kansas City’s productions of *Die Fledermaus* and *La Traviata* and in 2015, Kansas City Ballet presented his critically-acclaimed version of *Giselle*. Also in 2015, Kansas City Ballet debuted his newly-choreographed rendition of the timeless classic, *The Nutcracker*, with stellar reviews including: “The rebuilt and re-imagined *Nutcracker* ... is, among other things, a visually mesmerizing spectacle that will fill viewers’ heads with indelible images.” (Robert Trussell, *The Kansas City Star*). (This production was subsequently performed at the Kennedy Center in 2017.) This success was immediately followed in 2016 with his staging of the world-renowned classical masterpiece, *Swan Lake*. One review stated: “In Kansas City Ballet’s first ever presentation of *Swan Lake*, artistic director Devon Carney’s relentless enthusiasm and vision seems to have finally manifested—the performance Friday indicated a company capable of anything.” (Libby Hansen, *The Kansas City Star*). In 2017, audiences enjoyed his version of *The Sleeping Beauty* and his world premiere choreography of *Romeo & Juliet*. The 2017–2018 season closed with Mr. Carney’s world premiere choreography of *Peter Pan*. In 2019, he created two works for Kansas City Symphony performed by Kansas City Ballet’s Second Company.

Jeffrey J. Bentley has been involved in dance and theater for more than 50 years as a performer, administrator, festival director, dance presenter, teacher and consultant. Mr. Bentley began his professional ballet training as a scholarship student with the American Ballet Center, at that time the official school of the Joffrey Ballet in New York City. He later trained at the School of American Ballet. In 1967 he enlisted in the United States Army where he served as a military intelligence officer in the Republic of Vietnam.

Following his military service, he graduated from the University of Washington in Seattle and was selected to participate in the Arts Administration Fellowship Program funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. After a one-year intensive internship with the Washington State Arts Commission, he became administrative director for the Tony-award winning Seattle Repertory Theater. He then served as executive director for North Light Theater in Evanston, IL., and as general manager for the Dance Center of Columbia College in Chicago. He returned to the Pacific Northwest in 1985 to become the executive director of the Eugene Ballet Company in Oregon.

In 1987, he assumed the position of director of the DanceAspen Festival and School in Aspen, CO. During his seven-year tenure the festival grew from a three-week residency dedicated to a single ballet company to an eight-week festival featuring an eclectic array of companies and artists from around the world. In 1993, Mr. Bentley became executive director of Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet, the country's oldest and highly respected ballet company. Prior to arriving in Kansas City, Mr. Bentley served as managing director for Pacific Northwest Ballet in Seattle and executive director of the New Orleans Ballet Association. He was appointed executive director of Kansas City Ballet in 1998.

Mr. Bentley has served as a dance panelist and site visitor for the National Endowment for the Arts as well as the Illinois Arts Council, the Colorado Arts Commission and the Missouri Arts Council where he also twice served as a committee member to select the recipients of the annual Governor's Arts Award.

In the spring of 2018, Mr. Bentley was honored by Nonprofit Connect as Nonprofit Professional of the year.

Kansas City Ballet Music Director Ramona Pansegrau came to Kansas City via the Boston and Tulsa ballet companies, where she held the positions of principal pianist, solo pianist, music director, and conductor.

She has been called one of the best ballet pianists in the world. Robert Joffrey said of her ballet class, “The perfect music for every combination.” She was music director for Tulsa Ballet for nine years, and conductor of the Tulsa Symphony orchestra for ballet performances before she became the Kansas City Ballet music director in October 2006. She was principal pianist/solo pianist for 10 years at Boston Ballet and tenured keyboard for the Boston Ballet Orchestra for 15 years. Ms. Pansegrau was on the faculty at Aspen/Snowmass Dance Festival for 11 years, served on the faculty and as music director of seven International Ballet Competitions, and taught at the Boston Conservatory.

As a piano soloist for ballet, she has performed the piano concertos of Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Gottschalk, Hindemith, and Chopin to name a few, performing with many symphony orchestras, including the Kennedy Center Opera Orchestra. Of her performances, the Boston Phoenix stated, “the music...brought to sublime heights by pianist Ramona Pansegrau, allow[ing] you to experience the music anew each time.” Her arrangements of ballets are now in the repertory of the Western Australia Ballet, Charleston Ballet Theatre, Tulsa Ballet, Louisville Ballet, Washington Ballet, Ballet West, the San Carlo Opera House in Italy, and NBA Ballet in Tokyo, Japan.

As conductor, Ms. Pansegrau conducted the premiere of the Tulsa Symphony Orchestra with a full-length *Sleeping Beauty*, starring Italian ballerina Viviana Durante. Her performances were hailed as “giving life to the music and energizing the dancers.” Conducting for the Ballet Across America Festival, *The Washington Post* stated, “There is a delicious tension between the outpouring of the strings conducted by Ms. Pansegrau and the hushed anxiety of the dancing.” *The Kansas City Star* said Ms. Pansegrau’s Symphony No. 5 by Gustav Mahler was conducted with “heartrending sensitivity.” Ms. Pansegrau’s other ongoing engagements include Music Director and Conductor for the USA International Ballet Competition since 1990, guest conductor for Orlando Ballet, and special projects for Finnish National Ballet.



# WILLIAM WHITENER

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR 1996-2013

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William Whitener was artistic director of Kansas City Ballet from November 1996 to June 2013. He was active in the professional dance field for four decades as a renowned dancer, teacher, choreographer and director. He worked with the leaders who shaped the face of contemporary American ballet, including Robert Joffrey, Jerome Robbins and Twyla Tharp. Mr. Whitener served as artistic director of both Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet and Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal.

His early ballet training was with Karen Irvin at the Cornish School in Seattle. In 1963, at 11 years of age, he was the recipient of a Ford Foundation scholarship to study with the San Francisco Ballet School. As a child, he performed with the Bolshoi Ballet in their production of *Ballet School*. As a teenager, he was trained by Robert Joffrey, who invited him to join the New York City Opera Ballet and, subsequently, the Joffrey Ballet in 1969. For the next eight years, he performed a wide range of principal roles in ballets by Alvin Ailey, Gerald Arpino, George Balanchine, Kurt Jooss, Jerome Robbins, and Twyla Tharp, among others.

Mr. Whitener joined the original Broadway cast of Bob Fosse's *Dancin'* in 1978. Later that year, he began an eight-year association as a leading dancer with the Twyla Tharp Dance Company. He performed internationally and for President Reagan at the White House. He also expanded his career beyond the ballet stage into the world of film, appearing in *Amadeus*, and the ABC television production of *Bye Bye Birdie*. Other television credits include the premiere episode of the PBS series *Dance in America*, *The Dick Cavett Show* and the BBC production of *The Catherine Wheel*. In 1987, he assisted Jerome Robbins with the reconstructions and staging for *Robbins' Broadway*. He also performed in Martha Clarke's *The Garden of Earthly Delights* and assisted Twyla Tharp with works for American Ballet Theatre starring Mikhail Baryshnikov. He staged Ms. Tharp's ballets for Kansas City Ballet, The Joffrey Ballet, The Juilliard School and Ballet du Capitole de Toulouse in France.

Mr. Whitener choreographed works for many ballet companies including Kansas City Ballet, the Boston Ballet (International Choreography Competition Finalist), The Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal, Ballet Hispanico with the Tito Puente Ensemble, Hartford Ballet, Joffrey II, Princeton Ballet, and for dancers Martine van Hamel and Kevin McKenzie. In musical theater, he created dances for the Broadway production of *Alice in Wonderland*, directed by Eva LeGallienne, an Off-Broadway production of *A Little Night Music*, and *Guys and Dolls* starring Faith Prince for the Seattle Repertory Theatre. He also choreographed solos for Broadway performers Ann Reinking and Tommy Tune. Locally he choreographed the Lyric Opera of Kansas City's productions of *Eugene Onegin* and *The Pearl Fishers*, the Kansas City Symphony's *Nightlight Pops: The Magic of Christmas*, *The Winter's Tale* for Kansas City Repertory Theatre, and *Change of Heart* for Wylliams/Henry Contemporary Dance Company.

He staged the debut of *American Ballroom Theatre* at the Kennedy Center and Brooklyn Academy of Music and created a dance for Bill Irwin for *Alive From Off Center* on PBS television. Mr. Whitener choreographed dances for *Rusalka*, starring Renée Fleming and Ben Heppner, and *Aida* for the Seattle Opera, as well as dances for Ice Theatre of New York and the Olympic Gold medalist figure skater John Curry. He has been a member of the faculties of Harvard University, University of Washington, Concord Academy, and Pacific Northwest Ballet. He was nominated for the National Corporate Fund for Dance

# WILLIAM WHITENER

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR 1996-2013

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American Choreographer Award and served as an Evaluator and Advisory Committee member for the International Ballet Competition 2006 and 2010 in Jackson, MS. Mr. Whitener has served on the dance panels for National Endowment for the Arts, Pew Charitable Trust Fund, Bush Foundation, New England Foundation for the Arts, Herb Alpert/CAL Arts Awards, and the Board of Trustees of Dance/USA. In May 2008, Mr. Whitener was a member of the jury panel for the International Ballet Prize, Benois de la Danse at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. In 2010, Mr. Whitener became a trustee of the Gerald Arpino and Robert Joffrey Foundation.

## TODD BOLENDER (1914-2006)

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR 1981-1995



Todd Bolender's appointment as artistic director in the winter of 1981 opened a new chapter of opportunity for Kansas City Ballet. Confident that broader community support for classical ballet might be found, and emboldened by a small core of enthusiasts, he set about to build a company, a repertoire and a school. Successes were hard won at first, but they came more frequently. "Kansas City has, at last begun to do something about dance," said Bolender, "... to regard ballet as a serious and essential part of the art world ... necessary, important, and here to stay."

His career was a reflection of his boyhood in Canton, OH, recalling the early influence of a family steeped in music, theater and all forms of art. At 16, Bolender left home and formal schooling for New York City where he studied many forms of dance and savored the wealth of the literary, theatrical and visual arts the city offered. Professional associations with George Balanchine, Lincoln Kirstein and scores of extraordinary dancers, with painter Paul Cadmus, composers Virgil Thomson, Igor Stravinsky, Samuel Barber, and Aaron Copland, all influenced his ongoing self-education. As a principal dancer and promising young choreographer with Ballet Caravan, Ballet Society and New York City Ballet, he played a significant role in the coming of age of classical dance in America.

Before taking up residence in Kansas City, he served as ballet director of the opera houses in Cologne and Frankfurt, Germany and also in Istanbul and Ankara, Turkey. On Broadway, his choreographic credits included *Time Remembered*, *The Conquering Hero*, and *Cry for Us All*. His choreography for New York City Ballet included such works as *The Miraculous Mandarin*, *The Still Point*, *Mother Goose Suite*, and *Souvenirs*, all of which he restaged for this Company. In addition, he choreographed works for The Joffrey, Harkness and San Francisco Ballets as well as the Metropolitan Opera. His choreography for Kansas City Ballet serves as a kind of company chronicle, from the earliest *Classical Symphony* through the most recent work *Arena*. The list also includes *Coppelia*, *Chopin Piano Pieces*, *Grand Tarantella*, *The Nutcracker*, *Tchaikovsky Suite*, *Concerto in F* and *Tribute to Muriel*. He took great pleasure in the four major pieces created in collaboration with internationally acclaimed light sculptor, the late Dale Eldred. From *Voyager and Danses Concertante* through *An American in Paris* and *Celebration*, the collaboration was uniquely gratifying to the participants and patrons alike.

Upon his retirement in 1995, Mr. Bolender savored the artistic opportunities of his emeritus position with Kansas City Ballet. Over the next several years, he generously helped the Balanchine Foundation by contributing his knowledge and memory in coaching the current dancers in his Phlegmatic solo from *The Four Temperaments* and collaborating with ballerina Allegra Kent on coaching the ballet *Ivesiana*. In 2001, he restored the entire ballet *Renard*. It was performed for Kansas City's Stravinsky Festival and the Balanchine Centennial celebration in New York. At his 90th birthday celebration, it was announced that Kansas City Ballet's new permanent home would be named the Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity. Mr. Bolender was recognized with a 2006 Dance Magazine award but he passed away in October 2006, prior to the New York presentation. He was interviewed for a public television *Dance in America* special on his colleague and friend, Jerome Robbins, that also aired following his passing. Mr. Bolender was "the North star" of Kansas City Ballet and built a foundation of quality and grand proportion, scarcely imaginable in 1981.

# TATIANA DOKOUDOVSKA (1921-2005)

FOUNDER/ARTISTIC DIRECTOR 1957-1981



Without Tatiana Dokoudovska's tremendous artistic talent and distinguished professional career, plus the unswerving drive for furthering her art, the Midwest would be much poorer artistically—and there would not be a professional ballet company in Kansas City. For 20 years, she nurtured the company with her time, love, talent and even her personal financial resources as artistic director, advisor and choreographer. She brought the company from an outgrowth of the Conservatory of Music's recital program through gradual stages to a metropolitan-area civic company, and then to the threshold of the company's first professional season. In 1977, she asked the company to bring in a new artistic director, so she could devote her primary attention to teaching. Miss Dokoudovska's contribution to dance in general and especially to a professional ballet company cannot be over-estimated, nor is there any way to completely express the debt owed to her by all lovers of fine dance in mid-America.

Born in Beausoleil, France, a pupil of Olga Preobragenska, Miss Dokoudovska began her professional career at the age of 12, dancing in operettas and motion pictures. While attending l'Ecole des Artes (Professional School), she danced for the opera season in Monte Carlo, followed by an engagement as soloist with the Ballet Russe de l'Opera Comique de Paris, touring Europe, England and Ireland, with an annual season in Paris. She danced in two special performances of the operas *Boris Godounov* and *Prince Igor*, with guest star Feodor Hallapine, for the President of the Republic of France. After performing at the Colonial Exposition in Paris, she joined the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo as soloist for the opera and ballet season at the Monte Carlo Theatre and London's Drury Lane Theater.

Miss Dokoudovska came to America with the Mordkin Ballet for a tour of the United States and their season in New York, continuing with the company which later became American Ballet Theatre. During the years of World War II, she joined the Radio City Music Hall ballet, but returned to Europe after the war to join the Original Ballet Russe as a soloist for a season at Covent Garden, London and in France and Belgium.

Upon her return to the United States, Miss Dokoudovska became an American citizen. She continued her career performing in summer theaters, teaching at Ballet Arts, Carnegie Hall, New York and Regent Academy, New Jersey, giving private classes to movie stars and working with polio afflicted children.

In 1954, during an appearance as a soloist at Starlight Theatre, she was offered and accepted the position as head of the ballet department at the Conservatory of Music, which later became a part of the University of Missouri-Kansas City, a position she held until her retirement in 1989. In addition to the duties of this position, for four seasons she choreographed for the Kansas City Philharmonic, founded the Kansas City Ballet Company and brought about the Bachelor's degree program in dance at UMKC at a time when few such programs were available throughout the United States. She also worked with the National Association of Dance and Affiliated Artists (NADAA); Dance Educator of Windsor, Canada; Dance Caravan, and Empire State Ballet of Albany, NY.

# TATIANA DOKOUDOVSKA (1921-2005)

FOUNDER/ARTISTIC DIRECTOR 1957-1981

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In 1966, she was honored nationally by her election to the original Board of Directors of the Association of American Dance Companies, an organization of professional and civic companies in the United States. She was also a member of the Theater Arts Council and of the Committee on Dance of the Missouri State Council on the Arts.

Out of her wealth of experience, Miss Dokoudovska was able to teach the original choreography of many classical works, restage several others, create numerous new works and see former pupils as members of the New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Joffrey Ballet, Harkness, National Ballet in Washington, D.C., San Francisco Ballet, BalletMet, Urban Bush Women, Garth Fagan Dance Company and Alvin Ailey Dance Company. Today you will find her students in all branches of the dance world—the ultimate tribute to a distinguished and inspiring teacher.

# KANSAS CITY BALLET

COMPANY ROSTER 2021-2022

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## WOMEN:

Danielle Bausinger

Kaleena Burks

Amanda DeVenuta

Georgia Fuller (apprentice)

Sidney Haefs

Lilliana Hagerman

Kelsey Hellebuyck

Whitney Huell

Taryn Mejia

Emily Mistretta

Heather Nichols

Courtney Nitting

Amaya Rodriguez

Mia Steedle (apprentice)

Naomi Tanioka

Marisa DeEttre Whiteman

## MEN:

Gavin Abercrombie

Humberto Rivera Blanco

Joshua Bodden

Zachary Boresow

Angelin Carrant

Liang Fu

Joshua Kiesel (apprentice)

Javier Morales

Lamin Pereira

Andrew Rossi (apprentice)

Cameron Thomas

Craig Wasserman

Kevin Wilson

Paul Zusi

Beginning with the 2013-2014 season, our company has seen significant expansion. Driving it was the creation of the first-ever Second Company in the Ballet's 60-year history — a strategic initiative of Artistic Director Devon Carney. The Second Company includes KCB II and the Trainee Program, both Professional Division products of Kansas City Ballet School. The Second Company provides talented young dancers a professional company experience as prelude to their joining a professional company.

## KCB II

KCB II is comprised of seven aspiring dancers from across the US. Through the formation of KCB II — and the members' role as ambassadors for dance and KCB — we reach into communities throughout the region in ways never before possible. Additionally KCB II performs with KCB's professional company. Learning the essentials of the art form in a professional environment is an invaluable experience.

### WOMEN:

Sophie Hod

Autumn Steed

Nicole Townsend

Kaitlin Zeis

### MEN:

Jared Brouillette

Troy Santulli

Ben Zusi

## KANSAS CITY BALLET TRAINEE PROGRAM

The Kansas City Ballet Trainee Program, which is tuition based, aims to nurture and develop young aspiring post-secondary dancers' technical skills and artistry. It ultimately prepares them for a professional dance career by bridging the gap between the Kansas City Ballet School Academy and KCB II. Trainees participate in some company classes and are considered for performances with Kansas City Ballet during the season. They also perform in tandem with KCB II in their own educational and community engagement performances. This program is in its eighth season.

### WOMEN:

Brooke Amundrud

Maya Canestaro

Kayla DeGaray

Chloe Exline

Alena Harrison

Keira Holland

Meg Kataoka

Charlotte Kelsey

Malerie Moore

Olivia Newell

Katie Wolfe

Gillian Yoder

### MEN:

John Aguirre

Ian Anderson-Conlon

Charlie Cronenwett

Oscar Miller

Corben Simpson

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2021-2022

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