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Kansas City Ballet Announces \$1.8M Expansion of Kansas City Ballet School South Campus

**Additional Space and Renovations Set to Begin Fall 2022
to address demand for more bi-state growth and service**

KANSAS CITY, MO (June 21, 2022) — Kansas City Ballet Executive Director Jeffrey Bentley today announced a \$1.8M major expansion and renovation of the Kansas City Ballet School South Campus located at 5328 W. 95th Street in Prairie Village, KS. The project will increase its current number of studios from two to four and triple its square footage from 3,400 sq/ft to 10,800 sq/ft. While remaining in the same building, the expanded space will relocate the school from the back of the structure to the front, plaza level, increasing public visibility, parking, and ease of access. The current site will remain open throughout the renovations and the new space is expected to open in January with celebration event details to come. High-res photos, artist renderings and more can be found [here](#).

Bentley stated, “This project signals a significant commitment to the families and neighborhoods to the South. Not only will it provide larger studios and dressing rooms as well as modernized waiting and administrative areas, but importantly, it will permit all students from the youngest beginners to our most advanced pre-professional aspirants to study in a state-of-the-art environment. No longer will our south campus location be perceived as a second-class environment for a first-class program. There are many students to the south who wish to undertake serious, intensive study in dance but cannot venture daily to the Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity in downtown Kansas City, MO. There will now be a modern center for dance in Prairie Village that will provide all of the necessities and aesthetics for a satisfying

and successful experience whether the intention is simply recreational or professional.”

Kansas City Ballet, the flagship professional ballet company in a seven-state region, also views this enhanced space as an opportunity to strengthen its commitment to community programming such as the successful Reach Out and Dance (R.O.A.D.) program as well as an opportunity to build new relationships with other community-based organizations that focus on seniors, children, and other constituencies. Also, its nationally recognized Summer Dance Intensive will benefit since it will essentially allow the company-based school to increase its studio inventory from seven to 11 (Bolender Center and South Campus combined) which then provides the option of accepting more promising talent from around the country. Much of the company’s Trainee ranks are selected from the summer crop of students.

Kansas City Ballet Artistic Director Devon Carney had this to say: “We are pleased to be raising our profile for our art form in Johnson County. We are positioned to be a leading arts institution contributing not only an appreciation for ballet and other dance, but helping lead the way in meeting the needs of dance education in our regional community. It’s great to have the opportunity to serve this community with an expanded selection of high level dance education even beyond ballet.”

And Kansas City Ballet School Director Grace Holmes stated: “Kansas City Ballet School is so excited for the expansion and upgrades at our Prairie Village campus. I cannot wait to see our school grow into the new facility, not only in the number of students we can accommodate with double the number of studios, but also watching the growth of students training in a beautiful professional environment. With the extra space, we will be able to expand programming for our community, offering classes for older adults and more advanced Academy students. We look forward to inviting people across age groups and abilities to enjoy dancing in our lovely new space. We are thankful that we can continue to hold classes while the construction is underway, and we are truly excited for this opportunity to grow!”

Two major philanthropic gifts are making the project possible. The first is a leadership gift from The Sunderland Foundation. The Sunderland Foundation is a local foundation with a history of supporting capital building projects to improve the quality of life in the community. The second is a major grant from the Richard J. Stern Foundation for the Arts – Commerce Bank, trustee. Charlotte Kemper Black, foundation director, commented: “The Stern Foundation is a longtime supporter of the Kansas City Ballet and appreciates the importance of a strong School in building a pipeline of both future dancers and ballet audiences. This upgraded facility will improve accessibility to premiere dance education for more Kansas City-area students of all ages.”

Bentley continued, “The benefits of dance training can be employed in so many ways beyond the usual understanding. It is a powerful tool that enhances learning, opens fresh ways of thinking and impacts youngsters, adults, and special populations. That, I believe was the core motivation behind the generous support from The Sunderland

Foundation and the Stern Foundation which has provided over half of the project's budgeted goal."

BNIM is designing the renovated space. JE Dunn Construction will serve as the general contractor.

Media

Visit kcballet.org or kauffmancenter.org for a downloadable media kit about Kansas City Ballet and the Kauffman Center. Find high-resolution photos at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/67555847@N06/sets>.

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. Kansas City Ballet is 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.

Kansas City Ballet's website is mobile and ticket-purchase friendly. Receive daily updates by joining the KCB Fan Page, www.facebook.com/kcballet, and following @kcballet on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/kcballet>. Follow our blog at www.kcballet.org/blog. Watch videos at www.youtube.com/kansascityballet, and view photos at <https://www.instagram.com/kcballet/>.

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