
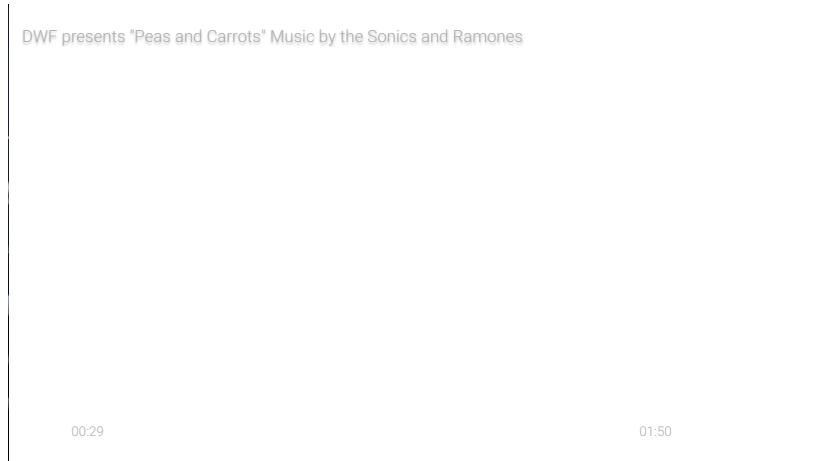


KANSAS CITY ENTERTAINMENT

## Double dose of Tchaikovsky, including 'Swan Lake,' to highlight KC Ballet in 2025-26

By Dan Kelly  
March 14, 2025 5:00 AM | 

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Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky composed only three ballets — all now among the world’s most popular — and the [Kansas City Ballet](#) will perform two of them during its 2025-26 season.

Tchaikovsky’s “Swan Lake” will open the KC Ballet’s 2025-26 season, which artistic director Devon Carney announced Friday, March 14. It will be followed by “The Nutcracker,” which has thrilled Kansas City audiences for decades and will return for [its annual holiday run](#).

Also on tap are “Stars and Stripes,” a collection of three short dance works celebrating the nation’s 250th birthday, and the Kansas City premiere of Cuban-American choreographer Septime Webre’s “The Great Gatsby.”

Carney choreographed this version of “Swan Lake” for its KC Ballet premiere in 2016, a year after he created a new “The Nutcracker” and a year before he did the same with “Sleeping Beauty,” Tchaikovsky’s third masterpiece.

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KC Ballet also performed “Swan Lake” in 2020, just before the pandemic shut down operations for 20 months. Carney said it’s important to bring back classics such as “Swan Lake” on a regular basis.

“If you can do a ‘Swan Lake’ and do it well, it puts you on the map and keeps you the map,” he said. “These great classics like this, they really define a company and its dancers.”

“The Nutcracker,” on the other hand, defines the holidays for many in Kansas City.

“It’s a family tradition,” Carney said. “It’s very heartwarming how many generations have come to see ‘Nutcracker.’ Grandmother, mother and daughter, as an example. There are people who have been coming for a very long time. It’s like decorating the Christmas tree or singing carols around the fire on Christmas Eve. I like that there’s so much wrapped around ‘Nutcracker’ beyond ‘Nutcracker.’”

This “Gatsby,” like the musical that will play March 17-22, 2026, at the Music Hall as part of the [PNC Broadway in Kansas City series](#), is based on F. Scott Fitzgerald’s 1925 novel. It will close the 2025-26 season with “a new concept” for KC Ballet, Carney said.

“It’s not a big symphony work; it’s a seven-piece jazz band that’s playing,” he said. “And we have a singer that will be singing at different sections of it.”

Webre’s ballet premiered in 2010.

“It’s new but old,” Carney said. “What’s cool about that is it doesn’t feel old, because it’s a very interesting staging of it. Very theatrical.”

“Stars and Stripes” also fuses new and old, combining works featuring the music of John Philip Sousa and Aaron Copland with a world premiere piece still in development by innovative choreographer Caili Quan. She has done works for major companies around the nation, including the New York City Ballet.

"I'm really happy to finally get a work commissioned that is specifically going to be created for our dancers," Carney said.

## Kansas City Ballet 2025-26 season

**Tickets:** The three-show season package of "Swan Lake," "Stars and Stripes" and "The Great Gatsby" is now available. Tickets for "The Nutcracker" will go on sale Aug. 4; single tickets for the other shows will go on sale Aug. 11. The KC Ballet will offer discounted tickets to "The Nutcracker" during its annual one-day sale in mid-



**Where:** Full-scale performances will be in Muriel Kauffman Theatre at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts.

**Information:** [kcballet.org](http://kcballet.org)

### 'Swan Lake'

**When:** Oct. 17-26

**What:** Tchaikovsky's romantic tragedy is perhaps the most beloved ballet of all time, but the KC Ballet hadn't presented a full-length staging of it until 2016.

### 'The Nutcracker'

**When:** Nov. 29-Dec. 24

**What:** This Kansas City holiday tradition dating to 1972 is the KC Ballet's signature production and one that it performed at the Kennedy Center in 2017 and 2022.

### 'Stars and Stripes'

**When:** March 20-29, 2026

**What:** The ballet will pay tribute to the nation's 250th anniversary with three works: George Balanchine's "Stars and Stripes" (music by John Philip Sousa), Agnes de Mille's "Rodeo" (music by Aaron Copland) and a world premiere by Caili Quan.

### 'The Great Gatsby'

**When:** May 8-17, 2026

**What:** A seven-piece jazz band will perform the music to accompany this production drawn from F. Scott Fitzgerald's classic Jazz Age story of luxury, drama and romance.

### Also

**"New Moves":** Jan. 29-Feb. 1, 2026, Todd Bolender Center. This annual event will showcase the next generation of choreographers in the 180-seat Frost Studio Theater.

**"Snow White"**: Feb. 27-March 1, 2026, Folly Theater. The second installment of the KC Ballet's Family Series will feature an hourlong, narrated version of "Snow White" performed by the ballet's Second Company.

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**Dan Kelly**  
The Kansas City Star



Dan Kelly has been covering entertainment and arts news at The Star since 2009. He previously worked at the Columbia Daily Tribune, The Miami Herald and The Louisville Courier-Journal. He also was on the University of Missouri School of Journalism faculty for six years, and he has written two books, most recently "The Girl with the Agate Eyes: The Untold Story of Mattie Howard, Kansas City's Queen of the Underworld."

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