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## Kansas City Ballet Proud to Announce Kansas City Guest Artists for *The Great Gatsby*

**Kansas City Beloved Artists Lonnie McFadden, Eboni Fondren, and Tanner Rose  
Will Help Bring the Jazz Age to the Kauffman Center May 8-17**

KANSAS CITY, MO (Feb. 17, 2026) — Artistic Director **Devon Carney** today announced three exciting guest artists who will help re-create the Roaring Twenties in Kansas City Ballet's upcoming production of Septime Webre's *The Great Gatsby* from May 8-17 at the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. Joining Kansas City Ballet on the stage will be world-renowned, Kansas City-based entertainer, musician and tap dancer **Lonnie McFadden**, nationally recognized Kansas City jazz vocalist and entertainer **Eboni Fondren**, and esteemed Kansas City-based actor **Tanner Rose**, who will narrate the dynamic and dramatic new production.



In addition to these three guest artists, the noted jazz ensemble out of Boston, **Billy Novick's Blues Syncopators**, will also join the production. The Blue Syncopators is a seven-piece group created in 2009 specifically to perform the score Billy Novick created for Septime Webre's *The Great Gatsby* ballet. The group is comprised of some of the finest traditional jazz musicians in America, including some rising

stars in New York and Boston's vibrant 1920's jazz scene.

Carney said: "The glamorous world of the Roaring Twenties will come to life on the Kauffman Center stage for Septime Webre's new ballet *The Great Gatsby*, thanks in part to the profound contributions of our guest artists: Lonnie McFadden, Eboni Fondren and Tanner Rose. These guest artists, alongside the amazing Blue Syncopators, will help immerse our audience in the spirit of the Jazz Age and the vibrant energy of 1920s New York, making this Kansas City premiere an unparalleled theatrical experience. Don't miss it!"



## ***The Great Gatsby***

May 8-17, 2026

Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

Choreography: Septime Webre

Music: Billy Novick

Tap Dancer: Lonnie McFadden

Vocalist: Eboni Fondren

Narrator: Tanner Rose

Kansas City Ballet Introduces Dynamic Guest Artists for *The Great Gatsby*, May 8 – 17, 2026, at the Kauffman Center

Step into the glamorous world of the Roaring Twenties with Kansas City Ballet's stunning new production of *The Great Gatsby*. Experience the luxury, drama, and tragic romance of F. Scott Fitzgerald's iconic novel, brought to life on stage. Set in Jay Gatsby's lavish Long Island mansion, where the champagne flows and the elite gather for extravagant parties, this production unveils a world of glamour, jealousy, and hidden secrets. *The Great Gatsby* immerses you in the spirit of the Jazz Age and the vibrant energy of 1920s New York, making this an unparalleled theatrical experience. It's the party to end all parties!

### About the Guest Artists



**LONNIE McFADDEN** is an American entertainer, singer, songwriter, tap dancer, and musician known for his joyful, emotionally rich performances and smooth, unmistakable voice. He has toured extensively throughout the U.S., Europe, and Japan, including a 2004 USO tour with Wayne Newton. Now based in Kansas City, McFadden performs weekly at the upscale jazz supper club bearing his name, Lonnie's Reno Club, and was the producer and featured artist for the

2018 citywide Charlie Parker Festival.

For more than 15 years, McFadden became a Kansas City icon through performances at venues such as The Phoenix, Black Dolphin, Kauffman Center, Starlight Theatre, and Sprint Center. He has shared the stage with legendary artists including Wayne Newton, Sammy Davis Jr., Tony Orlando, Ben Vereen, Herb Alpert, and the Count Basie Orchestra. His performances have also drawn sold-out crowds at Jazz Texas, Feinstein's, Parker's Jazz Club, and Blue Strawberry.

McFadden has received numerous honors, including Lifetime Achievement Awards from the Jazz Museum (2016) and Tapology (2017), and was repeatedly named Kansas City's Best Entertainer by local publications. In 2022, McFadden and his brother Ronald were inducted into the Jazz Walk of Fame in Kansas City's Historic Jazz District.



**EBONI FONDREN** is a nationally recognized jazz vocalist, bandleader, actress, and creative executive, making her Kansas City Ballet debut in *The Great Gatsby*. A veteran of Kansas City stages, her career spans jazz, theatre, voiceover, and arts leadership.

In January 2026, Fondren was selected as an artist-in-residence at the Escape to Create Residency in Seaside, Florida, and in March 2026 she will present a two-week run of her acclaimed full-

length theatrical concert *Jazz: The Women Who Shaped Me* at Quality Hill Playhouse.

In addition to her performance work, Fondren is a successful professional voiceover artist, with clients including AMC Theatres, the Kansas City Royals, and Wendy’s. She currently serves as president of the Kansas City Jazz Ambassadors and as vice president of artist management at Jukeboxx Media, where she is also a featured bandleader with Lost Wax. Wearing many hats, Fondren remains first and foremost a performer and entertainer, deeply committed to giving back to the community that has nurtured her artistry in every facet.



**TANNER ROSE’s** acting credits include Off-Broadway: *Bells are Ringing* (The Lion Theatre, NYC). International: *Vi Lieb Msikaler* (Oslo National Academy of the Arts, Norway). Local: *A Christmas Carol, Peter Pan and Wendy, Smoke* (KCRep); *The Inheritance* (Unicorn Theatre); *Cabaret, Godspell* (Music Theatre Heritage); *Justice at War, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (The Coterie); *Grand Horizons* (Kansas City Actors Theatre). Regional: *Pryor*

*Rendering* (Oklahoma City Repertory Theatre); *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Broadway Rose Theatre Company, Portland, OR); *La Cage aux Folles, The Rocky Horror Show* (Weitzenhoffer Theatre); *The Beth Leaval Christmas Show*, (Oklahoma City Philharmonic). Television: *The Deuce*, (HBO – streaming now). Rose is an animal care specialist at the Kansas City Zoo, caring for the city’s eight African Elephants. This is his debut performance both at the Kauffman Center and with Kansas City Ballet.

## Sponsors

This production is presented by Kansas City Ballet Guild and supported by Richard J. Stern Foundation for the Arts and Neighborhood Tourist Development Fund (NTDF).

Additional support provided by the Muriel McBrien Kauffman Family Foundation, the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, help make Kansas City Ballet's 2025-2026 season possible.

## Ticket Information

### Purchase single tickets:

- Online at [kcballet.org](http://kcballet.org) with the Select Your Own Seat capability.
- Call Kansas City Ballet Ticket Office at 816.931.8993, Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- At the Kauffman Center Ticket Office and website, [kauffmancenter.org](http://kauffmancenter.org)

Kansas City Ballet's website is mobile and ticket-purchase friendly. Ticket prices start at only \$34. There is a \$9.50 facility and order processing fee per ticket. Prices are subject to change.

Student Rush discount tickets are available approximately one month prior to production, for \$24 plus a \$5 fee (with valid student ID, one ticket per ID). Purchase online here: [kcballet.org/student-rush-tickets](http://kcballet.org/student-rush-tickets) or 90-minutes prior to curtain at all performances based on availability. Seniors aged 62 or older and educators who present valid ID at the Kauffman Center Ticket Office 90 minutes prior to all performances (except *The Nutcracker*) can purchase available rush tickets for as much as 40% off single ticket prices.

### Subscribe & Save 25%

Kansas City Ballet's 2-show season package includes *Stars and Stripes* and *The Great Gatsby* and ranges from \$54 to \$238—a savings of 20% compared with single-ticket prices. Plus, subscribers get the best seats and save 25% on all regular single tickets. The 2025-2026 mini-subscriptions are available online at [kcballet.org](http://kcballet.org) or by calling the Kansas City Ballet Ticket Office.

### Parking and Downtown Maps

The Arts District Garage is the primary parking garage for Kansas City Ballet patrons. The garage is directly attached to the Kauffman Center just south of the building with multiple access points to surrounding streets. Purchasing event parking in advance is highly recommended as it often will sell out. Event parking is \$16 in advance or \$20 at the gate per car for the garage or valet may be purchased in advance for \$25 or for \$27 upon arrival (if available). To pre-purchase parking and find frequently asked questions about your experience, visit [kcballet.org/faqs](http://kcballet.org/faqs). Make a night of it! [Reserve your room](#) at The Westin Kansas City at Crown Center, partner hotel of Kansas City Ballet.

### Accessibility

Kansas City Ballet is committed to providing assistance to those with disabilities. Direct questions and requests to Patron Services, 816.931.8993. Callers who are hearing impaired or hard of hearing can get help with telephone access by using the free relay service — 711.

### Pre-Curtain Talks

Artistic Director Devon Carney and guest artists offer audience members views on the choreography, history, design elements and music prior to each performance. These informal discussions — known as

Belger Footnotes — are free for all ticket holders and are held at the theater **one hour prior to curtain** for Kansas City Ballet repertory shows.

### **Media**

Visit [kcballet.org/media-center](http://kcballet.org/media-center) or [kauffmancenter.org](http://kauffmancenter.org) for a downloadable media kit about Kansas City Ballet and the Kauffman Center. High-res rehearsal and past production photos and more can be found [here](#).

### **Social Media**

Kansas City Ballet’s website is mobile and ticket-purchase friendly. Join the KC Ballet [Facebook page](#), follow us at [@kc.ballet on Instagram](#), [LinkedIn at @kansas-city-ballet](#), and [TikTok at @kansascityballet](#). Watch videos at [youtube.com/kansascityballet](http://youtube.com/kansascityballet). Be sure to check out our blog at [kcballet.org/blog](http://kcballet.org/blog).

### **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 direction of Artistic Director Devon Carney and Executive Director David Gray. Kansas City Ballet is a resident company at the world-class Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, and each season features an eclectic repertory including traditional classics and exciting contemporary dances. Our professional company, the second company (comprised of KCB II and Trainees), professional dance school, and partnership programs, seek to nurture and develop our artists, audiences, and students in the values inherent in the creativity, diversity, and joy of dance.

Kansas City Ballet reaches more than 20,000 students and adults each year through our many community partnerships and education programs for all ages. The Kansas City Ballet School offers professional dance training for the career-minded student as well as for those simply seeking a healthy lifestyle for over 2,000 students each year in two locations: the Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity in downtown and our South Campus at Meadowbrook in Prairie Village, KS.

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**Direct all media inquiries to Ellen McDonald, 816.213.4355 or [publicity@kcballet.org](mailto:publicity@kcballet.org).**

Photo credit on page 2:

Kansas City Ballet Dancers Amanda DeVenuta and Andrew Vecseri. Photography by Kenny Johnson.