

BALLET BC



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BALLET BC

Artistic Director
Medhi Walerski

Managing Director
Kathy MacKenzie

PROGRAM

SWAY

choreography
Medhi Walerski

intermission

LILA

choreography
Sofia Nappi

intermission

BOLERO X

choreography
Shahar Binyamini



ABOUT BALLET BC

Led by Artistic Director Medhi Walerski, Ballet BC is Canada's preeminent contemporary dance company. Founded in 1986 by David Y. H. Lui, Jean Orr and Sheila Begg, with Annette av Paul as founding Artistic Director, Ballet BC has been at the forefront of the creation, production, and education of contemporary dance in Canada and around the world for almost 40 years.

Ballet BC aims to create dance at its most essential: visceral, thought-provoking, and transformative. Attracting top international talent, its twenty dancers are a group of open-minded and curious artists, each unique for their dynamic movement while sharing an intuitive passion for their art form.

The company is deeply committed to creation and collaboration and presents a diverse repertoire that seeks to push the

art form forward. Choreographers include William Forsythe, Sharon Eyal and Gai Behar, Medhi Walerski, Crystal Pite, Johan Inger, Imre and Marne van Opstal, Adi Salant, Jiří Kylian, Micaela Taylor, Bobbi Jene Smith and Or Schraiber, and Out Innerspace.

Through its bold and distinctive style and approach, Ballet BC has made a unique contribution to the awareness and development of dance in Canada and around the world. The company performs throughout each season at Vancouver's Queen Elizabeth Theatre, and on tour at the world's most renowned stages. Beyond its performances, the company is a leader and resource in the community through a wide range of education and professional development initiatives, which aim to share the power of dance with the widest audience possible.



SWAY

World Premiere - November 1 2019, NDT 2, The Hague

Ballet BC Premiere - May 9, 2024

Choreography **Medhi Walerski**

Rehearsal Director **Emily Chessa**

Lighting Design **Lisette van der Linden & Pierre Pontvianne**

Costume Design **Medhi Walerski**

Set Design **Medhi Walerski**

Music Composition **Adrien Cronet**

Nun komm der Heiden Heiland, Chorale Prelude BWV 659

by Johann Sebastian Bach

Transcribed by Ferruccio Busoni

Performed by Víkingur Ólafsson

Courtesy of Deutsche Grammophon GmbH under license from Universal Music Canada Inc.

Performers

Emanuel Dostine, Imani Frazier, Michael Garcia, Orlando Harbutt,

Kelsey Lewis, Kylie Miller, Vivian Ruiz

To me, *SWAY* embodies the essence of hope, capturing its delicate yet resilient nature. Inspired by the poetry of Emily Dickinson, the creation marked my first collaboration with Belgian composer Adrien Cronet. The piece is intimate, mysterious, and even elusive. It demands a great deal of attention from the dancers as they move through a fluid movement and repetition journey that echoes the spirit of collective optimism.

— Medhi Walerski

LILA

Choreography **Sofia Nappi**
Rehearsal Director **Emily Chessa**
Lighting Design **Matthew Piton**
Costume Design **Adriano Popolo Rubbio**
Associate Costume Design **Kate Burrows**

Music

Music Compositions
Ciaran Morahan

Staumauer
Performed by Kangding Ray
Written by David Letellier

I Would Like
Performed by Deru
Written by Benjamin Wynn

Sofrimento
from the Waldemar Bastos album
“Pretaluz,” courtesy of Luaka Bop

***Bach: Adagio (After Violin
Concerto No. 2, BWV 1042)***
Performed by Gabriela Montero
Written by Johann Sebastian Bach

Un Mundo Raro
Performed by Chavela Vargas
Written by Jose Alfredo Jimenez

Heavens Dust 2
Performed and written by Michael Wall
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Performers

**Luca Afflitto, Sidney Chuckas, Emanuel Dostine, Imani Frazier,
Michael Garcia, Joziah German, Orlando Harbutt, Eduardo Jiménez
Cabrera, Kiana Jung, Pei Lun Lai, Kelsey Lewis, Kylie Miller, Benjamin
Peralta, Vivian Ruiz, Kaylin Sturtevant, Jacalyn Tatro**

In Sanskrit, LILA means play—the “divine play” of the universe, the unfolding of creation itself. It also carries the resonance of night (laila in Hebrew and Arabic) and lilac, a flower of peace and sensitivity.

It’s so precious as a maker to maintain the world of LILA as delicate and intuitive—as the process was—encouraging to allow the pure experience of it. The main themes that move the work are vulnerability and openness to the unknown, a willingness to stay with not-knowing, which becomes fertile, inclusive, and transformative. As the Italian poet Chandra Livia Candiani writes in “Questo immenso non sapere (‘This Immense Not-Knowing’)”:

A good practice before any other is the practice of wonder. Practice not-knowing and marveling. [...] Animals and trees teach us not to know, to inhabit the world without the obsession to understand. Their lack of control doesn’t make their world smaller, but vast, mysterious. They know how to surrender, and they teach us a primal and radical trust.

LILA is not a path to answers, but a surrender to the immensity of not-knowing, where vulnerability becomes strength and encounter becomes creation. In this space, the self dissolves into something larger. Transformation arises naturally, playful yet profound, a gesture of peace in fractured times.

— Sofia Nappi

BOLERO X

World Premiere - November 2, 2023, Ballet BC

Choreography **Shahar Binyamini**

Rehearsal Director **Emily Chessa**

Lighting Design **Shahar Binyamini**

Associate Lighting Design **Matthew Piton**

Costume Design **Shahar Binyamini**

Associate Costume Design **Kate Burrows**

Music

Boléro M. 81,

by Maurice Ravel

Performed by Berlin Philharmoniker and Pierre Boulez

Courtesy of Deutsche Grammophon GmbH under license from Universal Music Canada Inc.

Performers

Company Artists | Luca Afflito, Sidney Chuckas, Emanuel Dostine, Imani Frazier, Michael Garcia, Joziah German, Orlando Harbutt, Eduardo Jiménez Cabrera, Kiana Jung, Pei Lun Lai, Kelsey Lewis, Kylie Miller, Benjamin Peralta, Vivian Ruiz, Kaylin Sturtevant, Jacalyn Tatro

Emerging Artists | Nathan Bear, Emma Kuusela, Stan Tonin, Kailey Worontsoff

Shahar Binyamini's *BOLERO X* is a thrilling display of strength and precision. Set to Ravel's 1928 masterpiece, the work is a bold exploration of unity, individuality, and power—culminating in a breathtaking crescendo of sound and movement.

The creation of *BOLERO X* was made possible through the generous support of The Azrieli Foundation, Josh Pekarsky and Marla Guralnick in honour of Arlene Gladstone; Karen James; Trudy and Dan Pekarsky; Arlene James; The Oasis Foundation; Shirley Barnett; Roberta Beiser; and Jeanie Wexler.



CHOREOGRAPHERS

Medhi Walerski

Raised in France, Walerski initially trained in Normandy with Laurie Bokobza and Christine Caroly before joining the Conservatoire Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris. He danced at the Paris Opera Ballet and the Ballet du Rhin before joining the Nederlands Dans Theater in 2001. For more than a decade, he was an integral part of the company, contributing to the creative, innovative style that NDT is famed for. Walerski was awarded the prestigious Dutch dance prize VSCD Zwaan in 2013. Walerski has worked closely with many renowned choreographers, creating alongside and performing works by Jiří Kylián, William Forsythe, Ohad Naharin, George Balanchine, Rudolf Nureyev, Paul Lightfoot and Sol Leon, Crystal Pite, Johan Inger, and Wayne McGregor among others.

Walerski's choreographic debut was in 2008 for NDT 2. Since then, he has created numerous acclaimed works for NDT and Ballet BC including *Petite Cérémonie* (2011), *Chamber* (2012), *GARDEN* (2016), *Silent Tides* (2021), *just BEFORE right AFTER* (2022), *Pieces of Tomorrow* (2024), and *Last light* (2025), as well as works for Bern Ballet, Göteborg Ballet, the Ballet State of Georgia, StaatBallet Hannover, Staatstheater Wiesbaden and Charlotte Ballet.

Walerski was appointed Artistic Director of Ballet BC in July 2020. His leadership tenure has been highlighted by an artist-centred approach and deep commitment to creation and innovation, an expanded global touring program, increased dancer compensation and equity, a world-renowned brand identity, and unprecedented audience growth.

As an educator, he is regularly invited to lecture and give workshops at dance conservatories, intensives, and festivals around the world.



Sofia Nappi

Sofia Nappi is choreographer, founder and artistic director of KOMOCO, a contemporary dance company based in Italy and active internationally. Her works are presented in Italy and internationally, with tours across Europe as well as Mexico, Canada, and Serbia, hosted by international institutions and festivals such as: La Biennale di Venezia, The Albania Meeting Dance Festival, RomaEuropa Festival and MASDANZA. Nappi graduated from the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre in New York and her training has been strongly influenced by close contact with the Hofesh Shechter Dance Company and her study of Gaga, the movement language developed by renowned choreographer Ohad Naharin.

As an independent choreographer, Nappi creates new works for internationally renowned dance companies and theaters. In 2021, she re-staged *Holelah* with the National Theatre Mannheim, originally created for the 2019 Venice Biennale; in 2023, *Tagadà* at Staatsoper Hannover, *Moving Cloud* for Scottish Dance Theatre, premiered as part of Celtic Connections 2023, and the inclusive project *Kemet*



commissioned by the Dutch company Introdans as part of the HubClub'23 project. In 2024, she choreographed the stage movements for the opera *Platée* at Göteborg Opera and presented the creation *Hara* for NDT 2 as part of the Up & Coming Choreographers project. In 2025, she created *DUENDE* for Leipziger Ballett as well as world premieres for Gauthier Dance//Dance Company Theaterhaus Stuttgart in addition to Ballet BC.

Shahar Binyamini

Shahar Binyamini is an internationally acclaimed choreographer, dancer, and director whose work merges the worlds of dance, science, and design. His artistic voice transcends traditional boundaries, offering a multidimensional experience that engages both body and mind.

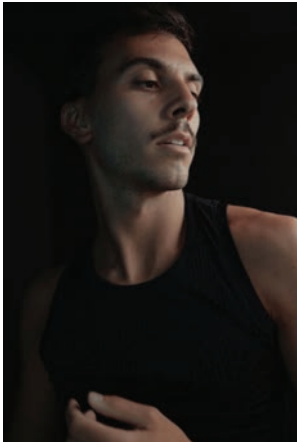
His tenure with the Batsheva Dance Company (2006– 2013) showcased his interpretative prowess with choreographers Ohad Naharin and Sharon Eyal. Shahar's impact extends globally, leaving an indelible mark on prestigious dance companies including Ballet of Teatro alla

Scala, Opera Ballet Flanders, Bordeaux National Ballet, Gauthier Dance Company, Norrdans, Ballet du Rhin, São Paulo Dance Company, Slovak National Ballet and Armenian National Ballet, and Ballet BC. His creations have graced iconic stages worldwide, including Lincoln Center in New York, Teatro Alla Scala in Milan, Teatro Colón in Argentina and Bunkamura Hall in Tokyo.

Acknowledging his outstanding contributions, Shahar Binyamini received the Israeli Minister of Culture Award for Promising Choreographer in 2021. In 2022, his choreographic work was commissioned to open Shanghai Fashion Week as well as for the music video for SZA's chart-topping song "SNOOZE".

Shahar's work extends into academia. In 2013, alongside Prof. Atan Gross from the Weizmann Institute for Science, Shahar founded TNUDA — a pioneering research group at the confluence of dance, science, and choreography. He has also been a guest professor at UCLA, leaving his mark with LUNG, a creation for the opera and dance department.

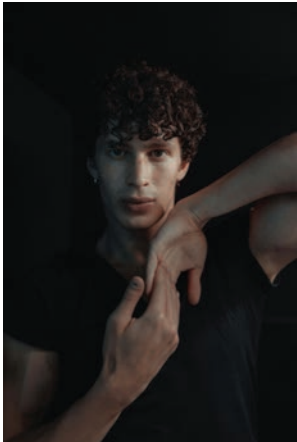
COMPANY ARTISTS



NAME: **Luca Afflitto**
HOMETOWN: Genoa, Italy
TRAINING: Academie de Danse Princesse Grace, Monte Carlo
PREVIOUSLY DANCED WITH: Ballett Zürich
JOINED BALLETT BC: 2022



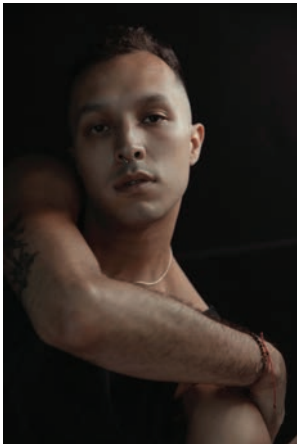
NAME: **Sidney Chuckas**
HOMETOWN: Evanston, Illinois, USA
TRAINING: USC Glorya Kaufman School of Dance
JOINED BALLETT BC: 2021



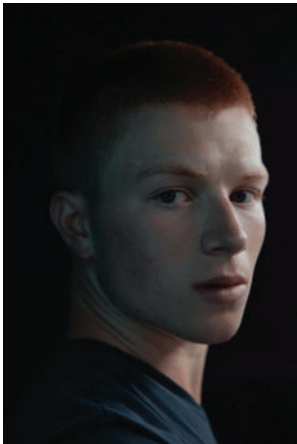
NAME: **Emanuel Dostine**
HOMETOWN: Detroit, Michigan, USA
TRAINING: Arts Umbrella
JOINED BALLETT BC: 2022



NAME: **Imani Frazier**
HOMETOWN: Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA
TRAINING: NYU Tisch School of the Arts
JOINED BALLETT BC: 2024

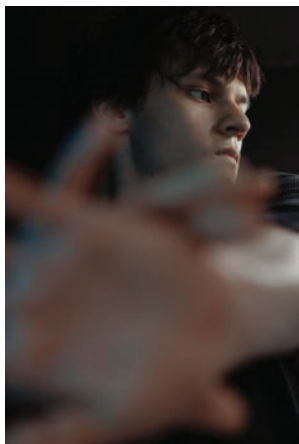


NAME: **Michael Garcia**
HOMETOWN: McAllen, Texas, USA
TRAINING: The Juilliard School
PREVIOUSLY DANCED WITH: Hubbard Street Dance Chicago
JOINED BALLETT BC: 2022



NAME: **Joziah German**
HOMETOWN: Frisco, Texas, USA
TRAINING: The Juilliard School
JOINED BALLETT BC: 2024

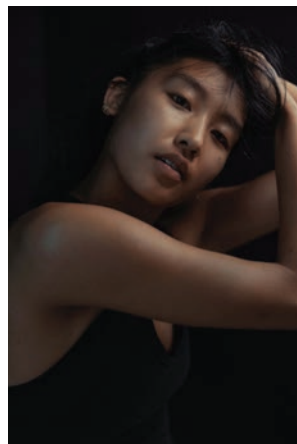
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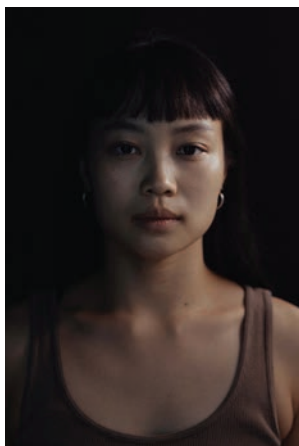
NAME: Orlando Harbutt
HOMETOWN: Hudson,
 New York, USA
TRAINING: Manhattan
 Youth Ballet, The Juilliard
 School, Arts Umbrella
JOINED BALLET BC: 2022



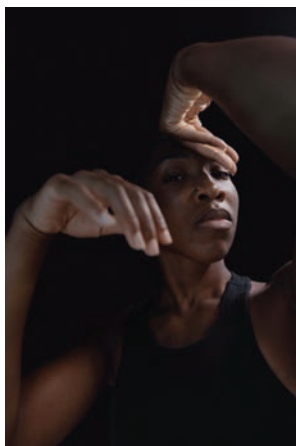
**NAME: Eduardo Jiménez
 Cabrera**
HOMETOWN: Cartago,
 Costa Rica
TRAINING: The University
 of the Arts, Philadelphia,
 Pennsylvania
JOINED BALLET BC: 2023



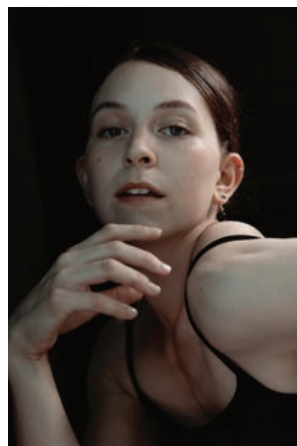
NAME: Kiana Jung
HOMETOWN: Vancouver,
 British Columbia, Canada
TRAINING: Arts Umbrella
JOINED BALLET BC: 2019



NAME: Pei Lun Lai
HOMETOWN:
 Kaohsiung, Taiwan
TRAINING: Taipei National
 University Of The Arts
JOINED BALLET BC: 2023



NAME: Kelsey Lewis
HOMETOWN: New York,
 New York, USA
TRAINING: The Juilliard
 School
JOINED BALLET BC: 2024



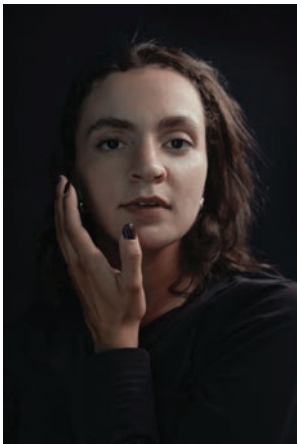
NAME: Kylie Miller
HOMETOWN: Vancouver,
 BC, Canada
TRAINING: The Batsheva
 Ensemble, Modus Operandi
JOINED BALLET BC: 2025

DANCER PORTRAITS BY MARCUS ERIKSSON.

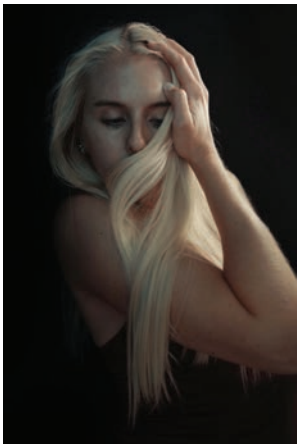
COMPANY ARTISTS



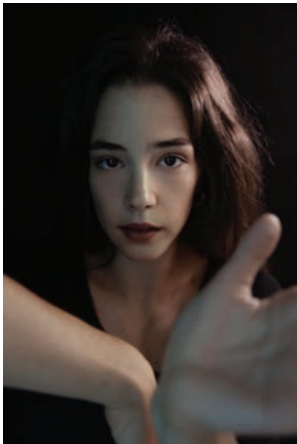
NAME: Benjamin Peralta
HOMETOWN: Jacksonville, Florida, USA
TRAINING: Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, USC Glorya Kaufman School of Dance
JOINED BALLET BC: 2022



NAME: Vivian Ruiz
HOMETOWN: Miami, Florida, USA
TRAINING: Arts Umbrella
PREVIOUSLY DANCED WITH: Kidd Pivot
JOINED BALLET BC: 2022



NAME: Kaylin Sturtevant
HOMETOWN: Plano, Texas, USA
TRAINING: USC Glorya Kaufman School of Dance
PREVIOUSLY DANCED WITH: The DASH Ensemble
JOINED BALLET BC: 2021



NAME: Jacalyn Tatro
HOMETOWN: Naperville, Illinois, USA
TRAINING: The Juilliard School
JOINED BALLET BC: 2022

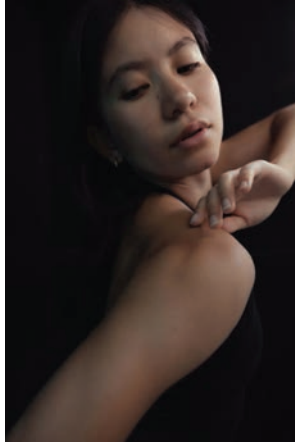


DANCER PORTRAITS BY MARCUS ERIKSSON.

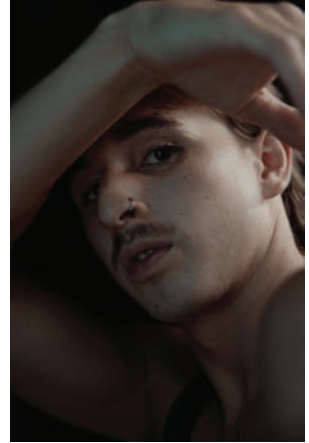
EMERGING ARTISTS



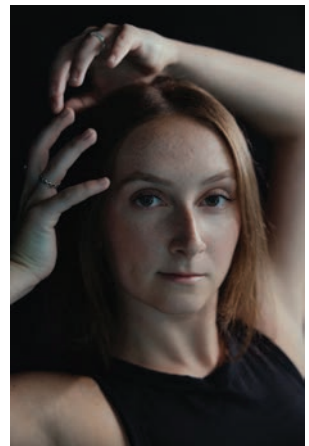
NAME: **Nathan Bear**
 HOMETOWN: Langley,
 British Columbia, Canada
 TRAINING: Arts Umbrella
 JOINED BALLET BC: 2024



NAME: **Emma Kuusela**
 HOMETOWN: Vancouver,
 British Columbia, Canada
 TRAINING: Arts Umbrella
 JOINED BALLET BC: 2024



NAME: **Stan Tonin**
 HOMETOWN: Halifax,
 Nova Scotia, Canada
 TRAINING: Arts Umbrella
 JOINED BALLET BC: 2025



NAME: **Kailey Worontsoff**
 HOMETOWN: Long Island,
 New York, USA
 TRAINING: The Juilliard
 School
 JOINED BALLET BC: 2025

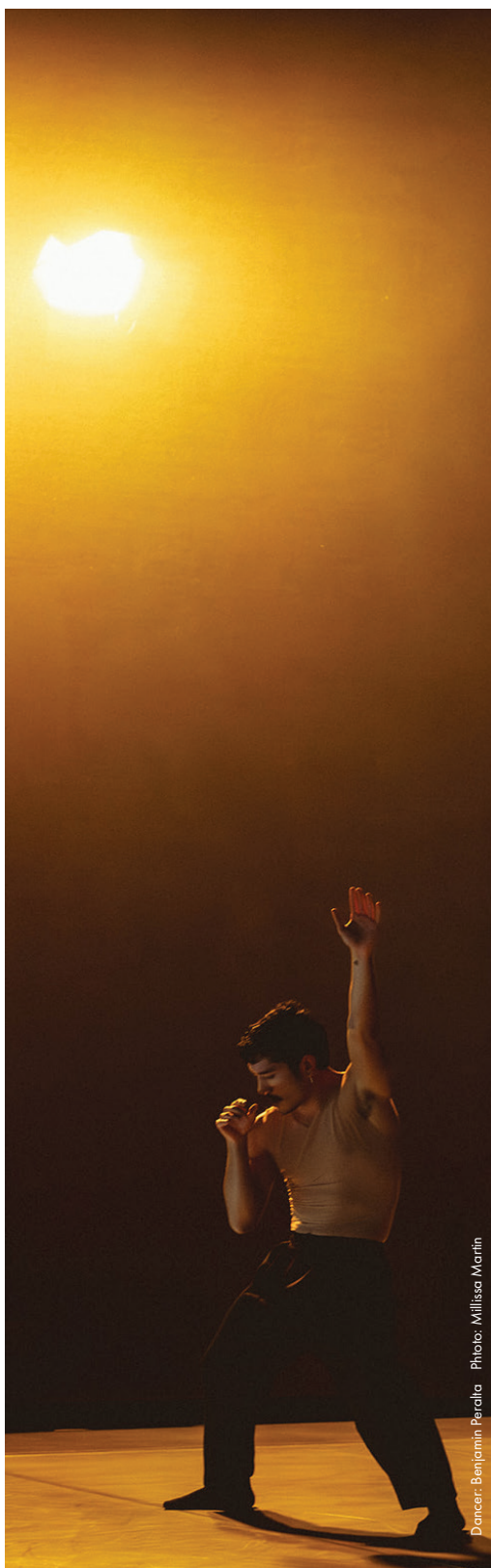
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Lucas Hall, *Production Stage Carpenter*
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Daria Valujeva, *Facilities Manager*
Linzi Voth, *Stage Manager*

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Dancer: Benjamin Peralta Photo: Melissa Martin

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