

 NASHVILLE
BALLET
NICK MULLIKIN, Artistic Director

FAMILY
DAY

• AT THE BALLET •



FEATURING

CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS

March 23, 2024

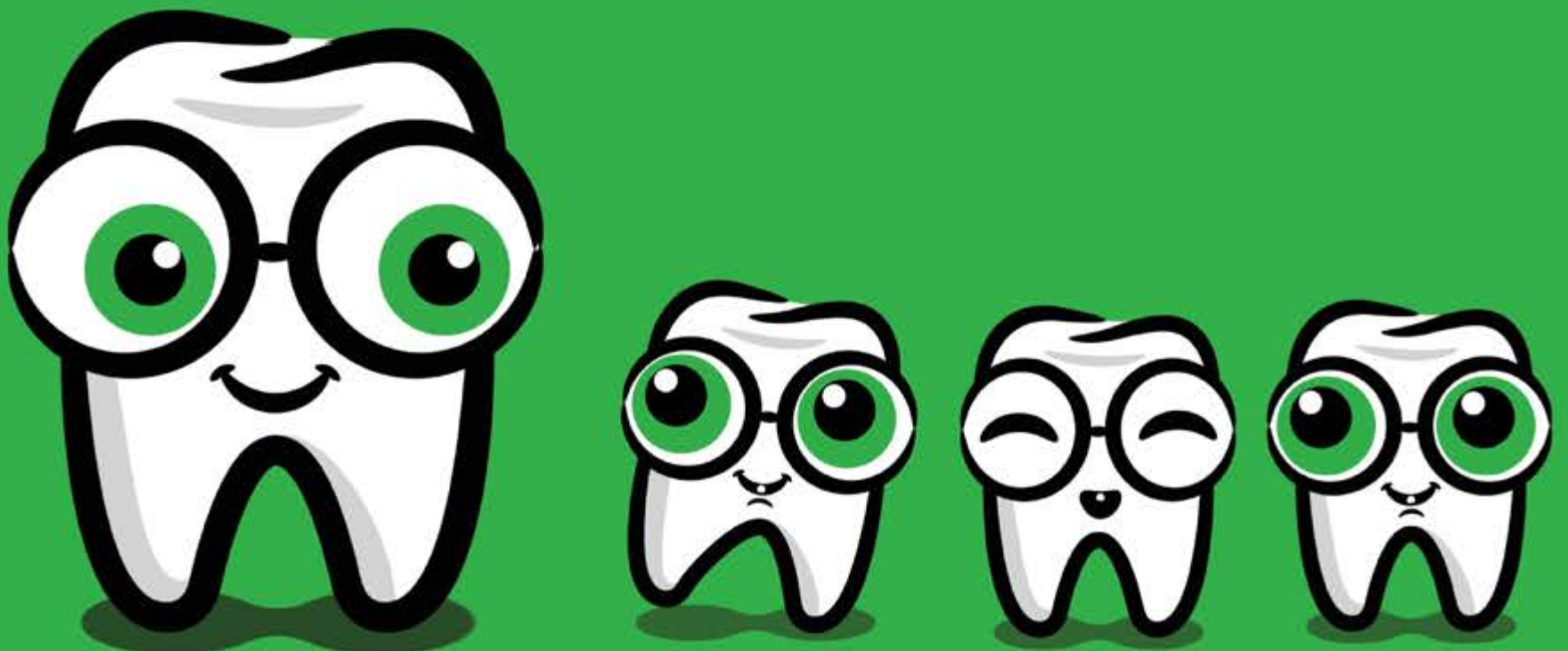
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NICK MULLIKIN, CEO and Artistic Director

CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS

Choreography by **Paul Vasterling**

Composer **Camille Saint-Saëns**

Original Narrative **Brian Hull**

Costume Design by **Aubrey Hyde**

Staged by **Kate Kastelnik**

Stage Manager **Noah Miller**

Pianist **Robert Marler**

Narrator **Sarah Youngblood Ochoa**

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Carnival of the Animals

CAST

Narrator Lion Sam Mayer ◇
Zach Brickson *

Narrator Seagull Greer Gage ◇
Asia Parham *

Green Boy Alexander Castro ◇
Wade Mesecar *

Blue Girl Mackenzie Kenyon ◇
Veronica Jaspers*

Yellow Girl Chloe Larouche ◇
Bethany Montalvo *

Orange Girl Katrina Chen

Cuckoo Pas Wade Mesecar

Red Girl Sarah Van Breemen ◇
Gwyneth Smith *

◇ PERFORMING AT 12:30 AND 1:30 P.M.

* PERFORMING AT 2:30 AND 3:30 P.M.

Synopsis

Nashville Ballet's *Carnival of the Animals* was inspired by the music of French composer Camille Saint-Saëns, with an original narrative written by Brian Hull of Nashville Public Library. The ballet begins with the Lion, King of the Beasts, not understanding why everyone isn't exactly like him. If he's the King, he must be the best, so of course all the other animals should change! A wise and patient Bird teaches the arrogant Lion to appreciate the beauty in each animal's unique qualities.

The audience follows the Lion as he journeys through this wild jungle full of whimsical characters. It's a joyous celebration when the Lion learns that we are basically all the same on the inside, but it's our differences that make life interesting.

Welcome to Nashville Ballet!

OUR MISSION:

We create, perform, teach, and promote dance as an essential and inspiring element of our community

FAMILY DAY ACTIVITIES:

Obstacle Course: Studio G

With School of Nashville Ballet Faculty

Improv Jam: Studio F

With School of Nashville Ballet Faculty

Movement Activities: Studio E

With School of Nashville Ballet Faculty

Musical Petting Zoo: Studio D

With the Country Music Hall of Fame

Carnival of the Animals: Studio A

With Artists of NB2

Sleeping Beauty Story Time: Studio C

Arts & Crafts: Family Lobby

Popcorn and cotton candy by Bounce It Off

Inflatables: Main Lobby

Delta Dental Photo Booth: Family Lobby



Half-Day Summer Camps

AGES 4-10



Animal Adventures

May 20-24 and June 10-14

Fairytale Fun

Tues. May 28-Sat. June 1

A Chorus Line

June 3-7 and July 22-26

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Benefits of Dance

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Curious about what your child is learning? Here are some fun facts about the benefits of dance.

Health

DANCE IMPROVES...

Coordination

Endurance

Flexibility

Posture

Stamina

Strength

Social

DANCE...

Improves

communication skills

Promotes collaboration

Encourages new relationships

Encourages acceptance and an appreciation of differences in others

Teaches one how to view the world and situations from different perspectives

Educational

DANCE..

Requires practice, discipline, and focus

Encourages analytical thinking

Develops problem-solving skills

Improves academic performance

Encourages creative thinking

Self-Esteem

DANCE...

Improves confidence

Fosters more positive image of self

Encourages self-expression

Improves stage presence

Romeo & Juliet

April 20-21

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NASHVILLE
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NICK MULLIKIN, Artistic Director

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NICK MULLIKIN, CEO and Artistic Director

Nick Mullikin joined Nashville Ballet in 2015, was promoted to Associate Artistic Director in 2018, and was named Artistic Director and CEO in 2023. Passionate about supporting the creation of new works, Mullikin has been integral to the expansion of repertoire performed by Nashville Ballet's professional company and has commissioned over 20 new works for NB2, Nashville Ballet's official second company. Under his leadership, School of Nashville Ballet and NB2 have flourished, with a stronger connection between the School and professional opportunities. Mullikin was the producer and assistant to the director on the regional Emmy award-winning broadcast of *Nashville's Nutcracker* in 2020, as well as *Black Lucy and The Bard*, which aired on PBS's *Great Performances* series in 2022.

In his performing career, Mullikin danced with the Houston Ballet and Ballet West, performing works by William Forsythe, George Balanchine, Anthony Tudor, and many more. He toured nationally and internationally, including at the Edinburgh International Festival in 2004.

Mullikin is a highly sought-after guest teacher and teaches regularly at summer programs, festivals, and schools across the United States. He is a judge on the international panel for the Youth America Grand Prix finals, coaches students for multiple ballet

competitions, and acts as a consultant for schools and festivals across the country.

Mullikin is a University of Texas at Austin graduate in Government with a Communications minor and McCombs Business Foundations Program Certificate.

PAUL VASTERLING, Artistic Director Emeritus

Paul Vasterling's artistic career began at age 10 when he started studying piano, then expanded at age 16 when he started dancing. His path led him to Nashville Ballet, where he evolved into a company dancer, teacher, ballet master, and prolific choreographer. He stepped into the role of Artistic Director of Nashville Ballet in 1998, ten years after he began his association with the organization, and held the position for 25 years until his retirement in 2023.

Vasterling's choreographic prowess encompasses over 40 creations, spanning classical full-length story ballets to contemporary one-acts. His deep musical affinity and commitment to Nashville's artistry and heritage fostered collaborations with esteemed musicians and institutions, including The Bluebird Cafe, Ben Folds, Rhiannon Giddens, and more. Nashville Ballet has commissioned 22 original scores for brand-new ballets under his direction. Vasterling is also a gifted storyteller with a penchant for creating vivid narratives such as *Peter Pan*, *Layla and the Majnun*, *Lizzie Borden*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*,



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and Nashville's favorite holiday tradition, *Nashville's Nutcracker*. Vasterling's choreographic credits extend beyond ballet to the recent Nashville Children's Theatre production *Dragons Love Tacos*.

He has expanded the company's repertoire to include works by celebrated choreographers such as Salvatore Aiello, George Balanchine, James Canfield, Lew Christensen, Jiří Kylián, Twyla Tharp, and Christopher Wheeldon, among many others. He also updated classic productions like *Giselle*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and *Swan Lake*. His artistic vision propelled Nashville Ballet's growth from 12 to 25 professional dancers. Nashville Ballet has toured nationally and internationally under his leadership, including performances at the Kennedy Center and the Chautauqua Institution. Vasterling's original works have also been staged worldwide.

Vasterling graduated Magna Cum Laude from Loyola University and has received prestigious fellowships, including a Fulbright Scholarship and a Virginia Center for the Creative Arts Fellowship. Vasterling was also a Fellow at The Center for Ballet and the Arts at New York University.

KATIE VASILOPOULOS, Director of Artistic Operations and Strategy

Katie Vasilopoulos joined NB2 in 2008 and progressed to the main company during the 2012 season. During



PAUL VASTERLING, Artistic Director

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her 13-year career, she originated several roles in Paul Vasterling's choreography, including one of the Three Witches in *Something Wicked*, Tiger Lily in *Peter Pan*, and the Mother Figure in *Appalachian Spring*. Other highlights include the Swan in *Carmina Burana*, Snow Queen and the Sugar Plum Fairy in *Nashville's Nutcracker*, the 4th Movement lead in George Balanchine's *Western Symphony*, Lilac Fairy in *The Sleeping Beauty*, and The Fairy Godmother in *Cinderella*.

While still dancing, Vasilopoulos graduated Summa Cum Laude from Belmont University with a degree in Business Administration through the ongoing Nashville Ballet/Belmont partnership. She received the Kathleen B. Horrell Scholarship award at graduation for being the undergraduate with the highest scholastic record.

Following her retirement from the stage in 2021, Vasilopoulos joined the administrative team at Nashville Ballet as the Events Coordinator. She managed vendors, volunteers, and funders in a yearlong effort culminating in Ballet Ball 2022, which yielded a record-breaking \$486,000, before rejoining the Artistic Team as Company and Artist Relations Manager. Now, as the Director of Artistic Relations and Strategy, Vasilopoulos is responsible for executing the artistic vision of Nashville Ballet through day-to-day and forward-thinking strategic operations.

MARIA A. KONRAD, Director of NB2

Maria A. Konrad, a dynamic choreographer and educator, graduated from A.W. Dreyfoos High School of the Arts and holds a BFA in Performing Arts from The University of the Arts in Philadelphia. Her exceptional work has been showcased worldwide and commissioned for prestigious events. Notably, her piece *Maestro* was commissioned for the Mariinsky Ballet under Yuri Fateev's direction, and created works for the International Nervi Festival in Italy featuring ABT Studio Company and Adjani Cissoko (LINES) with music by Karen LeFrak.

Her choreography has graced the stages by artists from NB2, Nashville Ballet's official second company, Oklahoma City Ballet 2, and Kansas City Ballet. Some of her highlights with Philadelphia Ballet include *Dear Charlie*, *PHrentetic* in collaboration with Mural Arts Society and local musicians, and *Behind the Stage Door* with The Big Picture Society. Her choreography gained national exposure at festivals and centers, including Spoleto Festival, The Fringe Festival, Miami Dade Cultural Center, and more. Her collaborations span Palm Beach Symphony, Palm Beach Pops, and Oklahoma Philharmonic, with choreography for opera productions such as *Les Pêcheurs de Perles* and *Aida*.

Maria received the International Choreographic Award from Youth America Grand Prix and recognition from the ADCIBC Finals. She has a unique Contemporary Ballet syllabus that she is thrilled to bring to Nashville.

She has shared her expertise as a guest teacher at esteemed institutions like Colorado Ballet School, Tulsa Ballet, The Joffrey, and more. As a resident choreographer with The Next Generation Ballet and guest instructor for Venus Williams' Eleven fitness line, Konrad's influence is far-reaching. Her YouTube series Barre Talk showcases insightful conversations with renowned dance personalities.

KATE CREWS-LINSLEY, Rehearsal Director

Kate Crews Linsley's illustrious dance career encompassed a decade as a soloist with Ballet West and a stint at Kansas City Ballet. She has performed as a guest artist with NOW-ID Dance Company and AVA Ballet Theater, taking on principal roles in ballets such as *Swan Lake*, *Cinderella*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and *The Nutcracker*. Linsley trained at Kansas City Ballet School under Todd Bolender and The Pacific Northwest Ballet School. Her time at Ballet West included performances in prestigious dance festivals and tours such as the Edinburgh International Dance Festival, Dance Across America, and Fall for Dance in New York City. Some of her most memorable roles include dancing the Principal Pas de Deux in Balanchine's *Agon*, the Pas de Deux couple in Ulysses Dove's *Red Angels*, Myrthe in *Giselle*, The Siren in Balanchine's *Prodigal Son*, and Lilac Fairy in *The Sleeping Beauty*.

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NICK MULLIKIN, Artistic Director

May 17–23, 2024

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Following her retirement from professional dance in 2010, Linsley assumed the roles of Dance Department Chair at The Waterford School and Director of The Waterford Dance Academy in Utah. There, she restaged ballets such as *The Nutcracker*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Swan Lake*, *Cinderella*, and *Carnival of Animals*. Her impact extended to Ballet West Academy, YAGP, Creative Arts Academy Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company, Salt Lake Ballet, AVA Ballet Theater, Utah Regional Ballet, and The University of Utah.

Linsley's move to Nashville in 2017 saw her become School of Nashville Ballet Academy Principal, overseeing artistic aspects and training dancers across divisions. While at Nashville Ballet, Linsley staged and coached works for the Academy and NB2, collaborating with Paul Vasterling and Nick Mullikin. She also worked with guest choreographers, including Charlotte Boye-Christenson, Michael Bearden, and Gina Patterson. In 2021, Linsley was promoted to Rehearsal Director for Nashville Ballet's main company.

TRAVIS BRADLEY, Rehearsal Director

Travis Bradley has danced for Ballet Memphis, Houston Ballet, Richmond Ballet, and Julia Adam Dance. He has also been the rehearsal assistant for Ballet Memphis, Julia Adam Dance, and for NB2, Nashville Ballet's official second company. He has

performed many memorable roles and originated multiple works with choreographers from around the globe, such as Trey McIntyre, Stanton Welch, Ben Stevenson, Mark Godden, Matthew Neenan, Julia Adam, and many others. His performing opportunities allowed him to reach audiences across North America. Travis has created numerous classical and contemporary ballets, including a full-length *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Ugly Duckling* for Ballet Memphis. He and his husband, Jordan Nichols, have co-directed and co-choreographed over 20 musicals together performed at Playhouse On The Square, Serenbe Playhouse, Theatre Memphis, Rhodes College, and Desoto Family Theatre. Travis has created numerous works for Project Motion, Lost in Found Memphis, and choreographed Opera Memphis' *Pirates of Penzance*. He has received numerous Ostrander Awards and Allie Awards and received the Michael Wasmund award in Houston for his love and dedication to dance.

BRIAN HULL, Original Narrative

Emmy Award-winner Brian Hull is renowned for bringing compelling original ideas with arresting visual style to fruition. With 40 years' experience in entertainment, Hull is known for implementing high standards of quality and creativity into literally hundreds of successful productions. He also has international experience and has visited and been

inspired by the puppet markets of Europe. During the early 1990s, he developed and was Professor U.B. Sharp of the Professor's Backyard for Opryland USA in Nashville. In recent years, he has appeared as the Ghost of Christmas Present in Dolly Parton's *Smoky Mountain Christmas Carol* at the Boston Emerson Colonial Theater. Hull has been the head of Wishing Chair Productions Puppet Theater at the Nashville Public Library for more than two decades, where he is also the Artistic Director of their International Puppet Festivals—and was a former board member and President of PUPPETEERS OF AMERICA. Currently in his 17th season writing and directing shows at Dollywood Theme Park, Hull has worked in the theme park industry for three decades. Significantly, for Dollywood: the writing, directing, and development for The Little Engine Playhouse with numerous original mini-musicals and shows—adapted from books and associated with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. Hull is an illustrator, storyboard artist, and animator. He has worked on numerous projects with companies such as Sony/BMG as well as with BigFott Studios.

AUBREY HYDE, Costume Designer

Always a creative child, Aubrey Hyde began her creative career at Otis College of Art & Design in her hometown of Los Angeles. Majoring in fashion design, she followed her passion for custom couture

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Coppélia

May 17–23, 2024

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clothing and went to work at a fast-paced Hollywood costume shop following graduation. It was here that her passion for hard work, designer details, and fine craftsmanship flourished. After a move to Nashville in 2001, Hyde soon ran the Nashville Ballet's costume shop and became its resident designer. It was here that she grew her love for hand dyeing. She also opened up an online shop where she sold hand-dyed accessories and fulfilled wholesale orders from retailers such as Free People. Later, by luck, she met a wardrobe stylist who had just taken on a soon-to-be very busy Nashville entertainer. Hyde spent the next three years running around the globe non-stop working on world tours and red carpets. After her busy career took a halt with the birth of her son, she refocused on her creative passions—designing, sewing, and hand dyeing. All of her products are dyed and sewn by Hyde in her East Nashville studios. She also enjoys her freelance work as a seamstress and wardrobe consultant for the music industry in Nashville.

KATE KASTELNIK, Stager

After retiring from a ten-year performance career with Nashville Ballet in 2009, Kate Kastelnik taught and choreographed at Franklin School of Performing Arts, Middle Tennessee State University and Classic Steps in Clarksville, Tenn. before returning to Nashville Ballet as a faculty member in 2015. She received early

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training with Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, where she still frequents as a guest teacher, before pursuing a bachelor's degree from Point Park University's Conservatory of Performing Arts. Kastelnik studied and performed with Laura Alonso's Centro Pro Danza in Havana, Cuba in 1996 and joined Nashville Ballet in 1999 after completing her college degree. Throughout her career, Kastelnik was featured as a soloist in many classical and neoclassical roles including notable works by George Balanchine and Frederick Ashton. Additionally, she performed in over two dozen ballets by Nashville Ballet's Artistic Director Emeritus Paul Vasterling, many of which Kastelnik was a part of the original choreographic process and cast. As a result, one of her greatest passions is having the privilege to pass on choreography to the next generation preserving it for years to come as a stager and coach for Professional Division, NB2 and *Nashville's Nutcracker* youth cast performances. Among her favorite memories as a school faculty member, Kastelnik especially enjoyed staging *Swan Lake Act II* for NB2's Future Artist Showcase in 2017. She grew up in a family of musicians, so her love of and connection to music serve as a driving force in her career, too. As a certified Pilates instructor, Kastelnik also incorporates this practice into her ballet teaching. She encourages students to learn and grow each day, and enjoys the challenge of finding creative ways to help each student reach their goals and potential.

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NASHVILLE BALLET 2023-2024 NB2 MEMBERS

NB2: Nashville Ballet's Official Second Company



2023-2024 NB2 Members

Back Row: Shaiya Donohue, Graham Barnes, Wade Mesecar, Zach Brickson, Sam Mayer, Emiliano Dael

Front Row: Cassie Thoms, Mia Lachman, Mackenzie Kenyon, Greer Gage, Asia Parham, Sofia Williams

Not pictured: Alex Castro



2023-2024 NB2 Trainees

Back row: Chloe Larouche, Sarah Galinski, Summer Montenegro, Sarah Van Breemen, Gwyneth Smith

Front row: Tanner Thurn, Summer Brown, Katrina Chen, Bethany Montalvo, Anna Funakura

Not pictured: Veronica Jaspers

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Travis Bradley, Rehearsal Director

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Ballet is for Everyone

Nashville Ballet is invested in creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community. We believe we can best achieve our mission by creating a climate of respect that is supportive of all voices, celebrating diverse stories, increasing arts access, and sparking communal discussion about our community and our world through our art form and artistic programming. When considering the diversity of the Nashville Ballet community, we look at all aspects, including: race, gender, age, socioeconomic status, disability status, geographic (rural/urban), and sexual orientation. However, Nashville Ballet recognizes the racial inequalities that have plagued the dance world for far too long and is deeply committed to educating our constituencies on systemic racism, engaging in antiracist work in every branch of our organization, and doing our part to abolish racial inequalities in ballet.

Land Acknowledgement

As we share this space today, let us acknowledge the history and wisdom that the ground beneath our feet holds. We recognize that the land that is holding us is the ancestral and traditional Land of the Eastern Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Shawnee peoples, who today have nation boundaries in Oklahoma, after the Indian Removal Act of 1830 led to the forced removal of southern tribes west of the Mississippi River via the Trail of Tears, which weaves throughout this region. We also recognize the Yuchi tribal nation. As residents and culture bearers here now, we are connected to the Indigenous communities of this place through the land. We must honor the people and their history.

The foundation of this land acknowledgment was developed in collaboration with the 2021 Racial Equity in Arts Leadership cohort.



We create, perform, teach, and promote dance as an essential and inspiring element of our community.