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Three Dancers Promoted to Soloist for 2018-2019 Ballet Season

Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre Announces Company Promotions & Departures

PITTSBURGH, PA (March 15, 2018) – Artistic Director Terrence S. Orr has promoted three corps de ballet dancers to the rank of soloist for Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre’s 2018-2019 Season, which runs from October 2018 to May 2019.

Dancers Masahiro Haneji, of Hokkaido, Japan, William Moore of Ipswich, England, and JoAnna Schmidt of Eustis, Florida, will begin their first mainstage season as soloists this fall with PBT’s 2018-2019 Season opener “Mozart in Motion,” on stage Oct. 26-28 at the Benedum Center.

“These dancers have all shown great talent and maturity as they’ve taken on an increasing number of featured roles,” said Artistic Director Terrence S. Orr. “I look forward to spotlighting them in many new opportunities next season.”

In addition to dancing roles, both Moore and Schmidt will premiere original choreography this week in the “PBT: New Works” program on stage March 16-25, at the August Wilson Center.

In other roster changes, two longtime PBT dancers will close their careers with PBT. Soloist Alexandre Silva, a 12-year company member, has announced that he will retire following PBT’s May 4-6, 2017-2018 Season finale, “UPMC Presents West Side Story Suite + In the Night + Fancy Free.” Principal Julia Erickson, a 17-year company member, will close her career with PBT following the company’s October 2018-2019 Season opener “Mozart in Motion,” which features works by George Balanchine and Jiří Kylián.

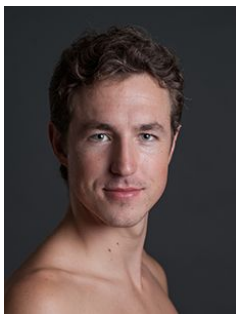
Corps de Ballet dancers Olivia Kelly and Daniela Moya also will depart the company following PBT’s May 2017-2018 Season finale.

About PBT’s Newest Soloists



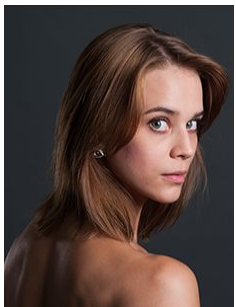
Masahiro Haneji

A native of Hokkaido, Japan, Haneji joined the company in 2014 from the PBT School Graduate Program. Haneji trained with Houston Ballet II before joining PBT School in 2012. Haneji has earned honors in a number of international ballet competitions, advancing to the semi-final round of the 2011 Prix de Lausanne competition and earning the bronze medal in the 2014 World Ballet Competition's pas de deux category. With PBT, Haneji's repertory includes "The Nutcracker," "The Sleeping Beauty," "Swan Lake," "La Bayadère," Jerome Robbins' "The Concert" and Jiří Kylián's "Petite Mort."



William Moore

Moore, of Ipswich, England, joined PBT in 2013 from the Estonian National Ballet, where he danced as a member of the corps de ballet. William graduated with honors from The Royal Ballet School in London, where he performed with The Royal Ballet company in a number of productions. Moore has danced featured roles in PBT productions, including "The Nutcracker," "Giselle" and "Le Corsaire." His repertoire also includes Derek Deane's "Romeo and Juliet," Jerome Robbins' "The Concert" and Jiří Kylián's "Petite Mort." He has been commissioned to choreograph a new ballet, "Weighted Affair," as part of the March 16-25, "PBT: New Works" program at the August Wilson Center. He has previously choreographed for PBT performances at Seton Hill University and Hartwood Acres and on the pre-professional dancers of PBT School.



JoAnna Schmidt

Schmidt was born in Eustis, Florida, and joined Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre in 2012. She received her training from Vasile Petrutiu, Vladimir Bykov and Heather Fryxell at the Central Florida Ballet Academy. She later trained for two years in the PBT School Graduate Program before she was hired into the company. She also trained in summer intensives at Miami City Ballet, Bolshoi Ballet Academy and Jacob's Pillow. Since joining PBT, Schmidt has performed featured roles, such as Cupid in *Don Quixote*, Princess Florine in "The Sleeping Beauty," Tinker Bell in "Peter Pan," the Sugar Plum Fairy in "The Nutcracker" and one of the four Cygnets in "Swan Lake." Schmidt was commissioned to create her first choreography for the company, "Lightworks," as part of the March 16-25, "PBT: New Works" program at the August Wilson Center.