

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR TERRENCE S. ORR
PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE

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Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre Announces Updates to its 2020-2021 Season & the Promotion of Three Dancers

PBT's updated 2020-2021 Season will include performances rescheduled due to the coronavirus.



Cooper Verona and Marisa Grywalski. Photo by Duane Rieder.

PITTSBURGH, PA (April 22, 2020) – Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre (PBT) has announced updates to its upcoming 2020-2021 Season in response to programs rescheduled due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis that forced the closure of non-essential businesses, including PBT and the Cultural Trust venues in which the company performs.

In March, PBT announced the postponement of BNY Mellon presents “Here + Now,” a mixed-repertory production featuring works by Pittsburgh-native Kyle Abraham, longtime PBT collaborator Dwight Rhoden, renowned Spanish choreographer Nacho Duato and the

world-premier of an original piece by PBT Artist in Residence Staycee Pearl, sponsored by AE&E Fund. Shortly thereafter, the company also postponed its performances of “Balanchine + Tchaikovsky” with the PBT Orchestra, a program featuring choreography by George Balanchine set to the music of P.I. Tchaikovsky.

Both BNY Mellon presents “Here + Now” and “Balanchine + Tchaikovsky” have been incorporated into PBT’s upcoming 2020-2021 Season. The season will now feature a total of six programs, beginning with “Balanchine + Tchaikovsky” with the PBT Orchestra in October. “Cinderella” with the PBT Orchestra, originally scheduled as the season opener, has been rescheduled for February, replacing “The Merry Widow.” BNY Mellon presents “Here + Now” will be featured at the August Wilson African American Cultural Center in April, alongside the “Modern Masters” program.

Ticket holders for the two rescheduled programs will be contacted by PBT via email and by phone to discuss options for attending these performances. Patrons who have already subscribed to PBT’s 2020-2021 Season will also be contacted by PBT to discuss options to add the sixth program to their package.

Single tickets to PBT’s 2020-2021 start at \$28 and will be available this August at www.pbt.org or 412-456-6666. Subscription packages start at \$81 at www.pbt.org or 412-454-9107 and offer 20 percent savings over single tickets and a variety of subscriber benefits. **Complete show descriptions and run dates can be found below.**

Company Promotions

Artistic Director Terrence S. Orr has also announced the promotion of three corps de ballet dancers to the rank of soloist for Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre’s 2020-2021 Season.

Dancers Tommie Kesten of Pittsburgh; Lucius Kirst of Los Angeles; and Jessica McCann of Los Angeles will begin their first mainstage season as soloists this fall with “Cinderella,” with the PBT Orchestra on stage Oct. 23-25 at the Benedum Center.

About PBT’s Newest Soloists

Tommie Lin Kesten



Pittsburgh native Tommie Lin Kesten joined Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre in 2018 from PBT’s Graduate Program, where she trained for a year. Tommie was named one of Pointe Magazine’s “Stars of the Corps” in 2019 and Dance Magazine’s “25 to Watch” in 2020. She received her early training from The Ballet Academy of Pittsburgh and Miami City Ballet School, and completed summer intensives at the School of American Ballet, Miami City Ballet and PBT School. Tommie has performed Sugar Plum Fairy in PBT’s “The Nutcracker,” Bluebird Pas de Deux in “The Sleeping Beauty,” and

Peasant Pas de Deux in "Giselle." Her repertoire also includes George Balanchine's "Walpurgisnacht," "Valse Fantaisie," "Western Symphony," "Divertimento No. 15" and Tall Girl in "Rubies," as well as Jerome Robbins' "Glass Pieces."

Lucius Kirst



A native of Los Angeles, Lucius Kirst joined Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre in 2014. Kirst previously performed with Ballet San Jose as a member of the corps de ballet and was also a member of the Studio Company at American Ballet Theatre. Kirst trained on full scholarship at The Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School at American Ballet Theatre in New York City, and received his early training at City Ballet School in San Francisco and Marin Ballet in California. He has participated in summer intensive programs at American Ballet Theatre and San Francisco Ballet.

Jessica McCann



Jessica McCann, of Los Angeles, joined Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre in 2015. Her past training includes a year with Alonzo King's LINES Ballet in San Francisco and American Ballet Theatre in New York, before joining PBT's Pre-Professional Program in 2013. Since joining the company, McCann was chosen for Pointe Magazine's top 10 "Stars of the Corps" in 2016. She has performed many featured roles at PBT, including Principal Couple in George Balanchine's "Rubies;" the lead in William Forsythe's "In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated;" Blue Bird Pas de Deux, Diamond Variation, the Fairy of Abundance and Canary Fairy in Terrence S. Orr's "The Sleeping Beauty;" Pas de Trois and Cygnets in Orr's "Swan Lake;" Peasant Pas de Deux and Zulma demi soloist in Orr's "Giselle;" Anita in "West Side Story Suite" and the First Girl in "Fancy Free" by Jerome Robbins; Dwight Rhoden's "Ava Maria;" and the Sugar Plum Fairy, Marie, Arabian and Snow Queen in Orr's "The Nutcracker."

Other memorable performances include Jiří Kylián's "Petite Mort," "Sechs Tänze" and "Sinfonietta;" the Pas de Deux in Nacho Duato's "Duende;" the soloist in Kyle Abraham's "The Quiet Dance;" Spring Waters Pas de Deux; the Cook in Derek Deane's "Alice in Wonderland;" a Harlot in Derek Deane's "Romeo and Juliet;" and an Odalisque in "Le Corsaire." McCann has also performed in George Balanchine's "Allegro Brillante," "Divertimento No.15" and "Western Symphony;" Antony Tudor's "Jardin Aux Lilas;" Mark Morris' "Sandpaper Ballet;" Ben Stevenson's "Dracula;" as well as PBT's "La Bayadère," and Lew Christensen's "Beauty and The Beast. For its 2017-2018 main-stage season, PBT commissioned McCann to choreograph a new work, "the silver line," which made its world premiere in March 2018. She has also created "Amoeba," a new work for Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School's Graduate Program that premiered at the School's end-of-year showcase in 2019.

McCann has done guest performance outside of the U.S. in Japan and Bermuda, where she has both danced and choreographed. She was also asked to judge the World Dream Ballet Competition in Osaka, Japan in 2018.

PBT's 2020-2021 Season

“Balanchine + Tchaikovsky” with the PBT Orchestra

Oct. 23-25, 2020 — Benedum Center

Choreography: George Balanchine | **Music:** P.I. Tchaikovsky

Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre's storied history with Balanchine and Tchaikovsky is revived in this mixed-repertory production celebrating two of ballet's greatest contributors. The music of P.I. Tchaikovsky has provided the backbone for many of George Balanchine's most exquisite ballets, including the invigorating “Theme and Variations,” the expansive “Allegro Brillante” and the consummate “Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux,” set to the classic music of “Swan Lake.” This program event also features “Diamonds,” the brilliant third movement of Balanchine's “Jewels.”

“The Nutcracker”

Dec. 4-27, 2020 — Benedum Center

Choreography & Concept: Terrence S. Orr | **Music:** P.I. Tchaikovsky

The magic of the holiday season fills the Benedum Center stage in *The Nutcracker*. PBT's Pittsburgh-inspired production captures the excitement of the original story through five fanciful scenes, over 150 unique costumes and Tchaikovsky's timeless score. With a rotating cast of dozens of dancers, each performance provides a fresh experience to audiences and artists alike.

“Cinderella” with the PBT Orchestra

Feb. 12-14, 2021 — Benedum Center

Choreography: Kent Stowell | **Music:** Sergei Prokofiev

A classic fairy tale is renewed with romance at its core in the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre premier of Kent Stowell's *Cinderella*. Attend the royal ball with Cinderella, her wicked step sisters and her prince as the familiar tale of true love unfolds through grand theatrical scenery, glittering costumes and Prokofiev's splendid score.

BNY Mellon presents “Here + Now” ft. Kyle Abraham, Dwight Rhoden, Nacho Duato and PBT Artist in Residence Staycee Pearl, sponsored by AE&E Fund

April 8-11, 2021 — August Wilson African American Cultural Center

In partnership with the August Wilson African American Cultural Center

Choreography & Music: Mixed Repertory

This mixed-repertory production brings together celebrated choreographers to create stunning dance for the here and now in the August Wilson African American Cultural Center. “The Quiet Dance,” from Pittsburgh native Kyle Abraham, captures the feelings of frustration and isolation through sweeping movement, beginning in silence and then carried by the gentleness of Bill Evans’ arrangement of Bernstein’s “Some Other Time.” The beloved popular music of Paul Simon sets the stage for Dwight Rhoden’s physical and visceral “Simon Said.” Finally, local choreographer Staycee Pearl presents the world premier of “Skin + Saltwater,” a visionary piece created for the PBT Company.

“Modern Masters” ft. Mark Morris, Nacho Duato and More

April 15-18, 2021 — August Wilson African American Cultural Center

In partnership with the August Wilson African American Cultural Center

Choreography & Music: Mixed Repertory

Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre returns to the August Wilson African American Cultural Center with a mixed-repertory program featuring Mark Morris’ exultant *Maelstrom*, set to Beethoven’s *Ghost Trio*. Nacho Duato puts the music of Claude Debussy at the center of his enchanting *Duende*, fluidly melding the human form and the shape of sound to create a magical landscape. The final piece of the performance will be chosen by PBT’s incoming artistic director, Susan Jaffe.

“Alice in Wonderland”

May 7-16, 2021 — Benedum Center

Choreography: Derek Deane | **Music:** P.I. Tchaikovsky, additional music by Carl Davis

Step into a surreal world of outlandish illusion, dreamlike scenery and your favorite Lewis Carroll characters in Derek Deane’s “Alice in Wonderland.” A whimsical medley of Tchaikovsky’s music provides the perfect backdrop to the madness of deranged tea parties, unhinged games of croquet and extraordinary dance. Don’t miss the madcap ballet the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette calls an “old-fashioned romp through [the] British classic, ripe with an over-the-top music hall flavor.”