



17th Annual  
**Celebrity  
Dance  
Challenge**

Fregeau Auditorium  
Marshall School  
October 6, 2023

**LUCE**

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# 2023 CELEBRITY DANCE CHALLENGE

EMCEES Jeff Anderson & Jason Vincent

JUDGES Linda Carrillo, Alex Loch & Don Ness

ChaQuana McEntyre & Taylor Phillips

*Disco* Choreographer: Isaac Sharratt

Brandon VanWaeyenberghe & Juliana DeBellis

*Paso Doble* Choreographer: Brandon  
VanWaeyenberghe

Mitchell Zimmermann & Brooke Bero

*Hip Hop/Jazz Fusion* Choreographer: Brooke Bero

Kim Chick & Victor Smith

*Jazz* Choreographer: Victor Smith

Traci Marciniak & Matthew Frezzell w/

Isabella Blindauer/Luke Umphlett

*Musical Theater/Jazz* Choreographer: Matthew  
Frezzell

Sarah Herrick-Smisek & Brian Guerrero

*Contemporary* Choreographer: Rae Lyons &  
Benjamin Welch



# 2023 CELEBRITY DANCE CHALLENGE

Jon Otis & Jessica Lopes

*Punk Jazz* Choreographer: Amber Burns

Matt Piede & Ximena Azurmendi

*Michael Jackson/Cha Cha* Choreographer: Rae Lyons & Kit Smart

Christina Stroup & Anthony Cefalu

*Musical Theater* Choreographer: Anthony Cefalu

Mary Tennis & Luke Umphlett, Libby Bocht

*Jazz Fosse* Choreographer/Dancer: Eleanor Darling-Vross

Chad Ronchetti & Kyra Olson

*Swing/Jazz* Choreographer: Juliana DeBellis

Maureen Sullivan & Sean M. Sullivan

*Disco/Cha Cha* Choreographer: Sean M. Sullivan

Shaun Floerke & Brianna Crockett

*Contemporary* Choreographer: Amber Burns



# 2023 CELEBRITY DANCE CHALLENGE

## **INTERMISSION & VOTING**

Please put your ballot into one of the ballot boxes in the lobby.  
And please buy a raffle ticket!

## **DRAWING OF RAFFLE PRIZES MINNESOTA BALLET MINI PERFORMANCE**

'The Pit and the Pendu(um

Choreography: Karl von Rabenau Composers: Dmitri  
Shostakovich and Karl von Rabenau

The Accused: Matthew Frezzell

Death: Kyra Olson

Judges: Brooke Bero, Anthony Cefalu Eleanor Darling-Vross,  
Julianna DeBellis

Brian Guerrero, Sean Michael Sullivan, Luke Umphlett

## **AWARDS**

Naming of Judges' Awards

Announcement of Celebrity Dance Challenge Winning Couple

## **VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO**

Our Generous Celebrities, Judges, and Emcees Jake Pulkrabek,  
Sound Board Operator

## **CHOREOGRAPHERS**

Brooke Bero, Amber Burns, Anthony Cefalu, Juliana DeBellis  
Isaac Sharratt, Sean M. Sullivan, Eleanor Darling-Vross Brandon  
VanWaeyenberghe, Benjamin Welch

## **WONDERFUL SUPPORTERS**

Advantage Emblem, The Boat Club, Bent Paddle George's  
Liquor, Pickwick Restaurant & Pub Security Jewelers, Touch of  
Plasch

*Join us for an after-party at The Boat Club Restaurant & Bar.  
Cash bar and complimentary appetizers*



# ABOUT THE BALLET

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The Minnesota Ballet is the premier classical ballet company in the Northland region, and has been providing high-quality performances, pre-professional ballet training, and lively outreach programs for over 55 years.

Whether from their permanent home in Duluth, Minnesota, or on their annual Midwest tours, the Minnesota Ballet offers audiences vibrant new versions of classic works, faithful interpretations of masterpieces by legendary artists, and new commissions from established and emerging choreographers in a range of dance styles.

With a mission to inspire appreciation of the art of dance through performance and education, they also offer a robust set of classes and masterclasses for dancers of all ages and experience levels through the School of the Minnesota Ballet. In all its endeavors the Minnesota Ballet advances and celebrates diversity, inclusion, and equity, which richly nourish the art of dance.





# POE

## The Ballet

**October 20-29, 2023**

**Studio Four**

This hair-raising world premiere ballet by Minnesota Ballet Artistic Director Karl von Rabenau will retell selected works by America's preeminent author of mystery and the macabre, Edgar Allan Poe.

## 2023 - 2024 SEASON PERFORMANCES

[tickets at minnesotaballet.org](https://minnesotaballet.org/tickets)

**December 8-10, 2023**

**DECC Symphony  
Hall**

Join young Clara as her enchanting dream - and her prized Nutcracker - come to vibrant life in this annual holiday classic with a local Duluth twist.





**February 15-18, 2024**

**Studio Four**

Rise is a mixed  
repertory  
performance  
features  
contemporary  
works crafted by  
Minnesota Ballet  
artists and guest  
choreographer  
Jayson Douglas.

## **2023 - 2024 SEASON PERFORMANCES**

[tickets at minnesotaballet.org](https://minnesotaballet.org/tickets)

**March 29-30, 2024**

**DECC Symphony  
Hall**

In this ballet  
version of the  
classic fairy tale  
Snow White,  
audiences will  
enjoy following the  
kindhearted  
princess and her  
seven pint-sized  
rescuers as they  
outwit the  
scheming Evil  
Queen.



# MINNESOTA BALLET

## STAFF

<u>Karl von Rabenau</u>	Artistic Director
<u>Jennifer Miller</u>	Ballet Master
Maude Dornfeld	Executive Director
Lila Coates White	Principal Teacher
Ashley Carter	Office Manager
Katie Kampfhenkel	Production Manager
Heather Boudreau	Wardrobe Manager
Kaily McLellan, MD*+	Company Physician
Alex Loch, DPT*	Company Physical Therapist
Devin Soul, ATC*	Company Athletic Trainer
Mike Gogolin, ATC*	Company Athletic Trainer

\* provided by Essentia Health  
+ official Physician of the Minnesota Ballet





Artistic Director  
**Karl von Rabenau**

As a youth **Karl von Rabenau** studied at Minnesota Ballet Academy, then danced with the Ballet as an apprentice.

He further studied at Minnesota Dance Theatre, San Francisco Ballet, and Boston Ballet. He danced with Boston Ballet II, Boston Ballet as apprentice, Omaha Ballet, Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, and finished his performing career as soloist for ten years with the Milwaukee Ballet. Mr. von Rabenau danced in such works as George Balanchine's Serenade and Four Temperaments; Michael Smuin's The Tempest; José Limón's Moor's Pavane; Choo San Goh's In the Glow of the Night; and Bruce Wells' Romeo and Juliet. Mr. von Rabenau's choreography has been performed by Milwaukee Ballet and in Regional Dance America festivals. With his wife, Jennifer Miller, he co-founded and served as Co-Director of Lake Arts Project in Milwaukee, an arts collaboration bringing dance and other art forms together for the benefit of both participants and observers. For the Minnesota Ballet, his Nutcracker: A Duluth Tale won the praise, "Minnesota Ballet's 'Nutcracker' Delivers New Take on Christmas Classic."



Ballet Master  
**Jennifer Miller**

**Jennifer Miller** brings 30 years of professional experience to her position as Ballet Master. She enjoys working closely with Artistic Director Karl von Rabenau, assisting in teaching and coaching for performances. She is also Coordinator for Minnesota Ballet Academy. Ms. Miller received formal training from the Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet under the tutorage of Marcia Dale Weary, then at the Joffrey Ballet and San Francisco Ballet. At the Milwaukee Ballet she rose to Principal Artist, dancing in featured roles in such ballets as Swan Lake, The Nutcracker, Romeo and Juliet, Hunchback of Notre Dame; and works by Trey McIntyre, Choo San Goh, David Parsons, Antony Tudor, Lila York, Margo Sappington, Alvin Ailey, Bruce Wells, and Michael Pink. After retiring from the stage, she served on the faculty at the Milwaukee Ballet School & Academy. She also taught for Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet for more than 25 years. As choreographer, Ms. Miller has created works for the Milwaukee Ballet, Milwaukee Ballet II, Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, Point Park University's International Summer Dance, Dance Arts Center and Erie Dance Conservatory.



# *The* **ACADEMY**

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Minnesota Ballet Academy is the premier ballet school for professional training in the Northland

We provide ballet and other dance classes for children and young people, ages 3 and up, as well as adults. Our professional faculty focuses on providing an inclusive, safe, nurturing atmosphere where we emphasize training with a positive approach.

The training we provide is based on traditional Vaganova technique. Our original syllabus specializes in the breaking down of and proper clarity in teaching ballet steps that lead to a solid

foundation of dance in any discipline.

Our goal is to nurture young people, allowing them to develop into thriving, self-empowered young adults, as well as passionate artists and art lovers.

Events and features of our training include annual school performances, community appearances, educational outreach. And opportunities to appear in professional performances with Minnesota Ballet.

Want to learn more?

[Visit \[mlnnesotaballet.com/education\]\(http://mlnnesotaballet.com/education\)](http://mlnnesotaballet.com/education)



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## DONATIONS

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As a non-profit with over 55 years of history in this community, we're committed to providing access to high-quality, professional dance performances to all.

Whether through discounted or donated tickets or our extensive outreach programming, we want to ensure anyone and everyone has the chance to fall in love with our art form. Your support helps guarantee the Midwest's premier classical ballet company will be able to continue those efforts for another 55 years – and beyond.

*Interested in supporting our mission?*

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# 2023-2024

# MINNESOTA BALLET

# COMPANY

Ximena Azurmendi

Brooke Bero

Brianna Crockett

Matthew Frezzell

Brian Guerrero

Jessica Lopes

Kyra Olson

Isaac Sharratt

Victor Smith

Sean M. Sullivan

## **Apprentices**

Taylor Phillips *Sr. Apprentice*

Isabella Blindauer

Libby Bocht

Anthony Cefalu

Eleanor Darling-Vross

Juliana DeBellis

Kira Klinkhardt

Ansley Pierce

Luke Umphlett





Company Dancer

**Ximena Azurmendi**

sponsored by

Morgana and Leroy Kolenda

**Ximena Azurmendi**, born and raised in El Paso, Texas, began training with the El Paso Ballet Theater, where she performed with the company in The Nutcracker, Swan Lake, Don Quixote, Cinderella, and Giselle. In 2015 she relocated to Florida to begin pre-professional training with Magaly Suarez at The Art of Classical Ballet and at Alexander W. Dreyfoos School of the Arts, where she graduated in 2016 as a Dance Major. She joined the second company at Orlando Ballet under the direction of Robert Hill, performing with the company in productions such as Robert Hill's Carmina Burana, Bolero, The Nutcracker, Arcadian Broad's "Seasons", and Victoria Morgan's Cinderella. Ximena joined Minnesota Ballet in 2020 and was featured as Dew Drop in Karl von Rabenau's The Nutcracker: A Duluth Tale, in Paul Taylor's Dream Solo from "Company B," and as Katrina Van Tassel in the Karl von Rabenau's Sleepy Hollow.



Company Dancer

**Brooke Bero**

sponsored by

Jonathan Reznick

**Brooke Bero**, originally from Pewaukee, Wisconsin, began training with Milwaukee Ballet under the direction of Rolando Yanes and Michael Pink. There she performed in Michael Pink's original works including Peter Pan, The Nutcracker, and Cinderella. She then earned her B.A. in Dance from Point Park University under the direction of Susan Stowe. There she performed works including George Balanchine's Serenade and Nicolas Petrov's Romeo and Juliet. Her professional career began at Eugene Ballet under the direction of Toni Pimble, where she was a part of newly created works including Toni's Great Gatsby and The Snow Queen. She's also spent seasons dancing with Charlottesville Ballet, Ballet Fantastique and as a freelance artist in Portland, Oregon, and Melbourne, Australia. Brooke is thrilled to be returning to Minnesota Ballet for her second season.



Company Dancer

**Brianna Crocketts**

sponsored by

Claudia von Wilpert

**Brianna Crockett** began training at International Ballet School in Littleton, Colorado. She graduated from the Ellison Ballet Professional Training Program in New York City. Summer intensives included Joffrey Ballet, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Kaatsbaan Extreme Ballet, Ellison Ballet, and the School at Jacob's Pillow. Brianna danced for the Colorado Ballet's Studio Company in corps de ballet in Swan Lake, The Nutcracker, and Serenade. She also danced in Michael Pink's Dracula and Derek Deane's Romeo and Juliet. Brianna is in her fifth season with the Minnesota Ballet performing roles such as Chosen One in Robert Gardner's Rite of Spring; grown-up Clara, Ice Fairy, Dew Drop Fairy in Allen Fields' The Nutcracker; as Katrina Van Tassel in Karl von Rabenau's Sleepy Hollow and Clara in his The Nutcracker: A Duluth Tale.





Company Dancer

**Matthew Frezzell**

sponsored by

Story North Productions

**Matthew Frezzell** began his ballet training in Norfolk, Virginia at Ballet Virginia International. In 2014, after attending the summer intensive program at Orlando Ballet, he joined the Orlando Ballet School Academy under the direction of Dierdre Miles Burger. Matthew then joined Orlando Ballet II the next year in 2017 under direction of Robert Hill. While dancing at Orlando Ballet Matthew had the opportunity to dance in original works by artistic director Robert Hill. From 2020-22 Matthew danced as a company dancer with Columbia City Ballet under direction of William Starrett. For the 2022-23 season Matthew had the opportunity to dance with Ballet San Antonio under the direction of Sofiane Sylve as a corps de ballet dancer. A few highlights include the King of Hearts in Brian Enos' "Alice in Wonderland" and a member of the corps for Houston Thomas's "Pauline Project". This will be Matthew's first season with Minnesota Ballet.



Company Dancer

**Brian Guerrero**

sponsored by

Patricia Salo Downs

**Brian Guerrero** began his training at the Sarasota Cuban Ballet School in 2012 and graduated in 2020. During his time there he performed roles such as Cavalier in The Nutcracker and the lead in Grand Pas Classique. While there he also participated in Young America Grand Prix and was awarded 3rd place in classical and 1st place in pas de deux. Since then Brian has performed in numerous dance festivals in Cuba, the Festival Internacional de Ballet de Costa Rica, and performed with the Youth Ballet Company Panama. Brian is returning to the Minnesota Ballet for his second season as a company member.



Company Dancer

**Jessica Lopes**

sponsored by

Jack and Cindy Seiler

**Jessica Lopes**, Brazilian-born, began her ballet training in 2014 at Escola de Dança Alice Arja, then graduated from Miami City Ballet's Pre-Professional Program. Returning to Brazil, she joined Cia de Ballet do Rio de Janeiro as a Corps de Ballet member. Jessica returned to the States to join the Milwaukee Ballet 2 Program, where she spent two seasons training and performing alongside the company. She was featured in Corps de Ballet roles and received soloist casting in Milwaukee Ballet's Genesis Choreographic Competition. She danced with American Midwest Ballet for two seasons and a digital series during the pandemic. She has worked with many choreographers including Aleix Mane and Ann Reinking. This is Jessica's second season with Minnesota Ballet and her first season as a full company dancer. While with Minnesota ballet Mrs. Lopes has been featured as Princess Florine from Sleeping Beauty.



Company Dancer

**Kyra Olson**

sponsored by

Ed Schumacher

**Kyra Olson** is originally from Wolcott, Connecticut where she began her training at Studio One and Triple Threat Dance Company. After graduating high school in 2016, she attended Nutmeg Conservatory for the Arts and graduated from their two year post-grad program. In 2018, she joined the Ruth Page Training Company and had the opportunity to perform as Aurora, American Beauty Rose from the Nutcracker, Raymonda, Swan Lake Pas de Trois, Giselle Peasant Pas, Esmeralda Pas de Deux, Meetings Along the Edge by Venetia Stifler and Pasaje del Tiempo by Victor Alexander. She attended Ballet Summer Workshop in Estonia where she performed in their Gala and was featured in works by Viki Bromberg Psihoyos, Konstantin Keykhel, Triinu Upkin and Cristiano Principato. While with Minnesota Ballet she performed in Karl von Rabenau's Sleepy Hollow and The Nutcracker as well as contemporary works by Jennifer Miller and Karl von Rabenau. She is excited for her fourth season with Minnesota Ballet!



Company Dancer  
**Isaac Sharratt**  
sponsored by  
Betsy Holcomb

**Isaac Sharratt** began ballet training in Tucson, Arizona, first at Tucson Regional Ballet and then Ballet Tucson. He attended several summer intensive programs including San Francisco Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Houston Ballet, and Milwaukee Ballet. He rose from Ballet Tucson's academy into the company at the age of 16, where he performed the lead in Anthony Tudor's *Little Improvisations*, as well as performing Tudor's *Continuo*. In ten years with Milwaukee Ballet, Isaac was cast in several ballets by Michael Pink, lead roles in many and the title role in Michael Pink's *Beauty and the Beast*. At Milwaukee Ballet Isaac worked with choreographers such as Trey McIntyre, Val Caniparoli, and Ann Reinking. Most recently he danced with American Midwest Ballet. Isaac is also an aspiring choreographer, having set many pieces on Milwaukee Ballet's second company and main company, as well as having choreographed on Ballet Minnesota in 2017.



Company Dancer

**Victor Smith**

sponsored by

Pamela and Ryan Arola

**Victor Smith** was born in Hong Kong and received his early ballet training at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts. After moving to Australia at a young age, he continued his training at the Queensland Conservatoire of Ballet in Brisbane completing his Diploma of Dance. He then went on to Sydney at Alegria Dance Studios under the direction of Hilary Kaplan and Archibald McKenzie, with whom he performed at the Sydney Opera House. Victor then went on to extended his dance education in the United States with the Boston Ballet School as Trainee, Ellison Ballet, Gelsey Kirkland Academy and the Joffrey Ballet School. Former companies include Joffrey Concert Group, Baltimore Ballet, Charlottesville Ballet, Ballet Theatre of Maryland, Wilmington Ballet and most recently the American Midwest Ballet. Victor is excited to be joining Minnesota Ballet for its 2023 - 2024 season!





Company Dancer

**Sean M. Sullivan**

sponsored by

Mary and Joe Gummerson

**Sean M. Sullivan**, originally from Dade City, Florida, began dancing at age seven as a traditional Irish dancer. At age 16, he began ballet training at North Carolina Dance Theatre, under the direction of Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux and Patricia McBride, then at University of North Carolina School of the Arts, under the direction of Susan Jaffe. There, he performed the role of Snow King in Ethan Stiefel's *The Nutcracker*, in Sir Frederick Ashton's *Birthday Offering*, and in Susan Jaffe's *Polovtsian Dances* and *Metallurgy*. He then studied at the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre Graduate Program performing in works such as George Balanchine's *Serenade* and *Western Symphony*. With the Lexington Ballet Company, he performed many principal roles. Since joining Minnesota Ballet, he has had the great pleasure of premiering the role of Brom 'Bones' Van Brunt in Karl von Rabenau's *Sleepy Hollow* and performing as Oberon in Bruce Wells' *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This is Sean's fifth season at Minnesota Ballet.



Senior Apprentice

**Taylor Phillips**

sponsored by

Pamela and Ryan Arola

**Taylor Phillips**, originally from Grand Rapids, Michigan, began his dance training at the age of nine at the Letha Fulton's School of Dance. Letha truly fostered his love of dancing. He later danced at various studios in Grand Rapids including the West Michigan Youth Ballet, where he performed his first Nutcracker. At 16, he moved to Florida to train at the Sarasota Cuban Ballet School under the tutelage of Ariel Serrano and Wilmian Hernandez. In the fall 2022 season he started with the Minnesota Ballet. He will be going onto his second season with the Minnesota Ballet.



Apprentice

**Isabella Blindauer**

sponsored by

Pamela Nelson

**Isabella Blindauer**, born and raised in Duluth, has been dancing at Minnesota Ballet Academy since 2014. She is currently in her senior year of high school and working towards her Associate degree. Most notable roles include Clara and Madeline in Allen Fields' Manhattan Nutcracker and the Columbine doll in Karl von Rabenau's The Nutcracker: A Duluth Tale. She is looking forward to dancing in her second season with the company.

**Libby Bocht** began at Stacey's Studio of Dance Education, where she danced competitively for over five years. She was introduced to the style of ballet by her first teacher, Amanda Abrahamson Roseth, former Minnesota Ballet company dancer. Libby joined the Minnesota Ballet year-round after the 2019 summer intensive. She has been in Karl von Rabenau's Sleepy Hollow and The Nutcracker: A Duluth Tale. She is thrilled to be joining the Minnesota Ballet for her second season and is thankful for her family's support.



Apprentice

**Libby Bocht**

sponsored by

Betsy Holcomb



Apprentice

**Anthony Cefalu**

sponsored by

Patricia Salo Downs

**Anthony Cefalu**, born in Lafayette, Indiana, began studying ballet at several small studios in Waukesha, Wisconsin, and Norwalk, Ohio. He then trained at Saint Louis Ballet and then at the Milwaukee Ballet Academy and performed in Ascend and 'Twas the Night Before Christmas. In 2020 he joined the Louisville Ballet Studio Company under the direction of Robert Curran and Mikelle Bruzina. There he performed in Robert Curran's Swan Lake, The Nutcracker, and Sleeping Beauty. He is excited to return for his second season with Minnesota Ballet.

**Eleanor Darling-Vross** Eleanor began their training at Northern Michigan Dance Academy until she eventually transitioned to the Milwaukee Ballet. At 14, Eleanor began their schooling at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. After graduating in 2021, she attended both Milwaukee Ballet and Colorado Ballet's Pre-Professional Programs, respectively. In Colorado, they danced under the direction of Erica Fischbach and Domenico Luciano. Now, she's starting her first season as an Apprentice with the Minnesota Ballet and could not be more excited!



Apprentice

**Eleanor Darling-Vross**

sponsored by

Penny Darling



Apprentice

**Juliana DeBellis**

sponsored by

Shawn and Rachel Cefalu

**Juliana DeBellis**, originally from Carlsbad, California, grew up training at San Elijo Dance and Music Academy. Juliana also attended intensives at Kansas City Ballet, Princeton Ballet, and Ballet Austin before joining Texas Christian University's School for Classical and Contemporary Dance. There she performed in such works as Gabrielle Lamb's "Waveform," Francesca Harper's "Angela, Gloria, and Io" and August Bournonville's "Konservatoriat." She graduated summa cum laude with a BFA in Ballet and a minor in Arts Leadership and Entrepreneurship. Juliana is excited for her second season with the Minnesota Ballet.

**Kira Klinkhardt** began her ballet training in her hometown of Brookfield Wisconsin. Kira was a part of Milwaukee Ballet's pre-professional program where she was able to perform many different ballets such as Le Corsaire, Paquita, Raymonda, and Sleeping Beauty. Along with studying classical ballet, Kira has also had the opportunity to perform many contemporary works in Milwaukee's Fringe Fest, Chicago's Elpis Festival, and with the contemporary company Dance Circus. She is excited to work with Minnesota Ballet this season and continue to learn and grow as a dancer.



Apprentice

**Kira Klinkhardt**

sponsored by

Eric Huie





Apprentice

**Ansley Pierce**

sponsored by

Jayme Hartman

**Ansley Pierce** began her training at Hinsdale Dance Academy, then attended UMKC. After two years at UMKC, Ansley transferred to Northern Illinois University School of Theatre and Dance. Ansley has performed many soloist and principal roles as well as numerous works by student choreographers. Through her variety of performance experiences and varied coursework, Ansley discovered a love for choreography. Notably in her first year at NIU, she was the first-ever recipient of the Jerry Tulk Choreography Award and Scholarship. Ansley is now in her first season with the Minnesota Ballet as an apprentice.

**Luke Umphlett** is from Columbus, North Carolina, and has been dancing ballet for 10 years! He has performed roles such as The Nutcracker Prince, The Rat King, The Sugar Plum Cavalier, and so much more! He just finished his training with The Washington School of Ballet, and is very excited to be joining Minnesota Ballet for his first season!



Apprentice

**Luke Umphlett**

sponsored by

Jayme Hartman



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# THE CELEBRITIES





## **Kim Chick**

Membership & Marketing Director, Kitchi Gammi Club and Duluth East High School  
Dance Coach

By day **Kim Chick** is the Membership & Marketing Director at The Kitchi Gammi Club where she gets to fuse her love of history and hospitality at the oldest private club in Minnesota. By night she is entering her 17th season as the head coach of the Duluth East High School Dance Team (Go Steppers!). She is a former Top 20 Under 40 Award Winner and Former Young Professional of the Year Award Winner. Additionally, Kim serves on the Downtown Duluth Board of Directors. She is married to her husband Kevin and they have a 12-year-old son Cooper. When Kim is not working she loves traveling, shopping and UMD Hockey. She is also a fan of all things Disney, 90's Music, Friends the TV Show and Caribou Coffee!



## Shaun Floerke

President & CEO, Duluth Superior Area  
Community Foundation

**Shaun Floerke** is the President and CEO of the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation. He came to the Community Foundation after serving as a district court judge in Duluth Minnesota for nearly seventeen years. During his time as a judge he was an innovator and national leader. He started a Safe Babies Court; a nationally recognized Domestic Violence Restorative Court; and founded and led a DWI Court that became one of four national academy courts for the National Association of Drug Court Professionals. He and his team won the National Association of Drug Court Professionals Leadership Award in 2018. He was a member of the National Judicial Opioid Task Force. Judge Floerke was awarded a judicial leadership award by Minnesota Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) in 2011 and again in 2017 for his work to effectively address impaired driving. He has been honored with the Harold E. Hughes Exceptional Rural Professional Award and the 2020 Gary P. Olson Visionary Award for his work supporting people in treatment and recovery. Shaun retired from the bench on January 8, 2021, took a weekend off, and started as President and CEO of the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation. His purpose in this work is to move together upstream to implement solutions. The Foundation is a faithful partner in community leadership pursuing transformational work in the areas of opportunity, belonging and community resilience.



## Sarah Herrick-Smisek

Owner, DLH Clothing

**Sarah Herrick-Smisek** is the co-owner of DLH Clothing and Communications + Marketing Consultant for Safe Haven Resource Center & Shelter. She sits on the Board of the Directors for the YWCA Duluth, recently taking over as Committee Chair for the Gender Equity Summit. Her leadership and community-minded spirit earned her a 20 Under 40 Award in 2022. Sarah is a Duluth native and loves to explore the city with her two children and sneaks away to catch live shows with her husband whenever possible. When she has a little free time, you can catch her on a yoga mat, drinking a cup of black tea, or cuddled up with a good book.



## **Traci Marciniak**

President, Miller-Dwan Foundation

**Traci Marciniak** has more than 25 years of experience in the philanthropic and foundation sector in a variety of positions, most recently as President of Miller-Dwan Foundation, a position she has held since 2013. Traci's personal passion for ensuring the highest-quality health care is available to people in the Twin Ports, has positioned the Miller-Dwan Foundation as the leading healthcare foundation in Northeastern Minnesota and Northwestern Wisconsin. Traci earned her BA in Business Management from the College of St. Scholastica and her MBA from Rasmussen University. She holds the Certified Fund-Raising Professional Certification (CFRE) and is a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP). When not at work, Traci enjoys reading, cooking, exercising, traveling, and spending time with her family. Traci currently resides in Esko with her husband and three cats.





## ChaQuana McEntyre

President, Miller-Dwan Foundation

**ChaQuana McEntyre** is the CEO of Family Rise Together, a nonprofit that provides safe environments for fathers to develop, contribute, invest and actively participate in the well-being of their children, family, and community. ChaQuana has extensive work experience serving fathers and families with Child Protection Service involvement, struggles with homelessness, mental health, and substance use/abuse or dependency. ChaQuana also has experience in real estate and housing development, recently designing a Long-Term Housing (LTH) program in South-St. Louis County serving men and fathers who have previously been incarcerated and are possibly struggling with mental health and substance use/abuse or and who strive to reintegrate back into their children lives whenever safely possible for the children, mother, or current guardians of the child (ren). Family Rise Together has purchased one property and is currently in the predevelopment stage of the Willa's House project in Duluth, MN Lincoln Park Community.





## Jonathan Otis

Deputy Chief of Life Safety, Duluth Fire  
Department

**Jonathan Otis** has been a member of the Duluth Fire Department for 23 years and currently serves as Deputy Chief of Life Safety. He graduated from The University of Minnesota-Duluth with a BA in recreation and environmental education. He earned his MBA in leadership and change management and his MA in public administration at the College of Saint Scholastica. He is a husband, father, and passionate advocate for making Duluth a better place to live. Jon enjoys live music, traveling, and watching soccer. In high school, he stole a car to attend the ballet.



## Matt Piede

Chief Development Officer, Essentia Health  
Foundation

**Matt Piede** recently relocated to Duluth from Houston, Texas to take the role of Chief Development Officer at Essentia Health, serving the entire health system. As CDO Matt has found a way to continue to use his leadership and expertise to impact a great community healthcare organization that is so important for our region. Matt has held key leadership positions for 3 major, and very different, healthcare systems, each going through transformational shifts that were partially made possible through philanthropy. In each case he was able to positively impact the community through raising critical funds to improve needs that included capital, programs, people and technology. His campaigns have ranged from \$60 million to \$1 billion. He is passionate about his work because it has the potential to change healthcare for our community. He credits his grandfather for planting the seed to find a way to do something good for his part of the world....at Essentia, he is able to do that every day. Matt holds a M.B.A. from the Simon School of Business at the University of Rochester (NY) and has his Certified Fundraising Executive (CFRE) since 2016. His professional experience has spanned the not for profit world, as well as the for profit world. He is the proud father of Bella and Sophia, who are in the front row tonight with his wife Jen. Outside of the office, Matt enjoys spending time with his family. He loves to travel (especially to Italy), ride his motorcycle and will always be up to watch a baseball game. Go Mets!



## Chad Ronchetti

Planning and Economic Development  
Director, City of Duluth

**Chad Ronchetti** is the new Director of Planning and Economic Development. Chad has 10 years of business and economic development experience across the fields of architecture, engineering, permitting, construction, and municipal government. In 2012, Chad began his career in Environmental Permitting for Burns & McDonnell Engineering as a Geographic Information Systems Specialist calculating potential, environmental impacts for infrastructure projects such as transmission lines, power plants, and pipelines in support of local, state, and federal permits. Chad opened a Duluth satellite office for Burns & McDonnell in 2014. As the sole representative in Duluth, Chad's expanded role included business development for market expansion and client service. Inspired by community service, Chad took a position as an Economic Developer for the City of Duluth in 2018, which provided years of critical experience in municipal government attracting investment and encouraging tax base growth. In 2021, Chad became the Director of Project Planning and Development for Kraus-Anderson Construction where he combined his expertise in business development and economic development through project origination, entitlements, policy navigation, and strategic market growth. Chad's community involvement has included service on a Duluth City Council-appointed Earned Sick and Safe Time taskforce, Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Duluth Chamber's Leadership Duluth Steering Committee, Hermantown Economic Development Authority, and President of the Board for Lincoln Park-based Ecolibrium3. Chad currently sits on the STARBASE MN Advisory Board and the Advisory Board.



## Christina Stroup

Musical Theater Actress and  
Manager/Server, Boat Club Restaurant

**Christina Stroup** is thrilled to be a part of the Celebrity Dance Challenge! She has been a professional actress for 15 years. She has performed locally as well as all over the United States including New York. She just returned from New York where she played Alice in The Addams Family Musical and closed her one woman cabaret, "The Diva In Me". Boat Club Productions Credits: Always... Patsy Cline (Patsy Cline), Tell Me On A Sunday (Girl), A Don't Hug Me Christmas Carol (Bernice). Duluth Playhouse Credits: (Mother) Ragtime, Annie (Miss Hannigan), Spamalot (Lady of the Lake), Footloose (Vi Moore), I Love You You're Perfect Now Change, The Wizard of Oz (Wicked Witch), Smokey Joe's Cafe, Grease (Rizzo), Government Inspector (Anna), Don't Dress For Dinner (Jacqueline), The Full Monty (Vicki). Renegade Theater: Bright Star (Alice), Fun Home (Helen). Regional Credits: Mamma Mia (Donna), Annie (Miss Hannigan), The Little Mermaid (Ursula), Into The Woods (The Witch), The Marvelous Wonderettes: Dream On (Betty Jean; Original Cast Album), Sweet Potato Queens (Floozy Tammy, Original Cast), The Light in the Piazza (Franca), Company (Marta), Smokey Joe's Cafe, The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas (Mona), Chicago (Mama Morton), and many more. Christina does English Dub voice over work for Anime and has appeared in series on Netflix and Cartoon Network. She currently works at the Boat Club Restaurant as a manager and a server. [www.christinastroup.com](http://www.christinastroup.com)



## Maureen Sullivan

Chief Proprietor, Parsonage Farm

**Maureen Sullivan** is the chief proprietor of Parsonage Farm, a 12-acre homestead in northwestern North Carolina that she and her husband started in 2018. She spends most of her days cultivating heritage foods, from blackberries and cantaloupe to patty pan squash and okra, using ancestral methods, as well as preserving those foods to create a self-sufficient lifestyle. Maureen is thrilled to be dancing at CDC with her son, Sean! In her free time, she enjoys sewing practical garments, as well as making costumes for theatre and dance--including those you see her and Sean wearing tonight.



## Mary Tennis

Director, St. Louis County Depot and  
Extension

**Mary Tennis** (MBA) is the Director of St. Louis County Depot and Extension Services. She is committed to our region's creative community and making connections between culture and curiosity. She is also a writer and a cook, and a co-author of the upcoming University of Minnesota Press's *Smoke on the Waterfront Cookbook*. Mary hasn't danced on a public stage since 1988, winning a much-lauded town-wide talent show at Little Norway Hall in Petersburg, Alaska, by lip-synching to George Micheal's "Faith."



## Brandon VanWaeyenberghe

Executive Director, Duluth Superior  
Symphony Orchestra

**Brandon VanWaeyenberghe** is currently the executive director of the Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra (DSSO), where he oversees all administrative, fundraising, and fiscal aspects of the organization. Prior to joining the DSSO, he served as the director of finance at the Charlotte Symphony and nearly ten years at the Houston Symphony in four different roles in fundraising and business intelligence. He is a graduate of the League of American Orchestras Orchestra Management Fellowship program, a nationally recognized program in arts leadership. VanWaeyenberghe holds a BS in music management from the University of Evansville (Evansville, IN) in addition to a MA in arts administration and an MBA from the University of Cincinnati. His research regarding the supply and demand of orchestra musicians has been published and quoted in several publications. Brandon moved to Duluth in September 2019 with his dog Barley and they enjoy hiking along the Superior Hiking Trail.





## Mitchell Zimmermann

Multimedia Journalist, Northern News Now

**Mitchell Zimmermann** is a morning multimedia journalist for Northern News Now Today, the CBS and NBC affiliate in Duluth! Originally from Phoenix, Arizona, he WAY overcompensated for living in the heat his whole life. Mitchell moved up to Northland after graduating from Arizona State University in June of 2022, and has covered everything from breaking news, hunting, winter storms, and fun events happening all around Northern Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan. He used to watch the Today Show every day and knew he wanted to be a reporter from a young age. He was also a big fan of Dancing with the Stars, and is ready to break out his dancing shoes!

# THE JUDGES





**Linda Carillo** grew up in Rapid City, South Dakota where she began her dance training. Linda is a certified ballet and pilates instructor. Linda has choreographed ballet, tap, jazz, and musicals. She enjoys teaching at Personal Best Pilates, walking her dogs, and spending time with her husband of 34 years, 5 children and spouses, and grandchildren.



**Alex Loch** is a local dancer and choreographer who loves the MN Ballet. He's very familiar with this event having earned the top title of the Celebrity Dance Challenge 6 different years. When not dancing, Alex is the owner of motivPT, an online physical therapy studio that helps dancers and audience members recover from injury and stay active and healthy.



**Don Ness** is Executive Director of the Ordean Foundation, an organization focused on addressing issues related to poverty in Duluth. Don has been active in the community for many years including serving as director of Homegrown Music Festival, chairing the Duluth Central Alumni Association board, serving as mayor, and many years as a youth basketball coach.

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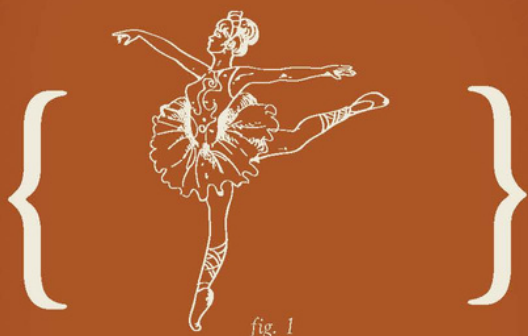
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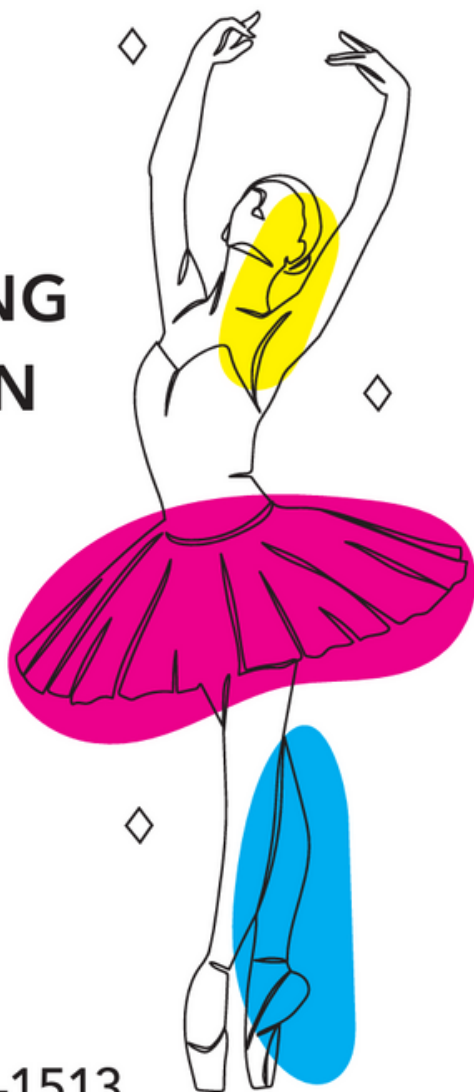
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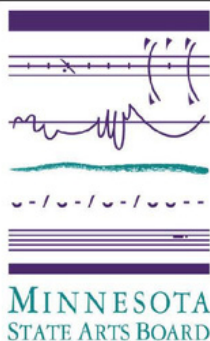
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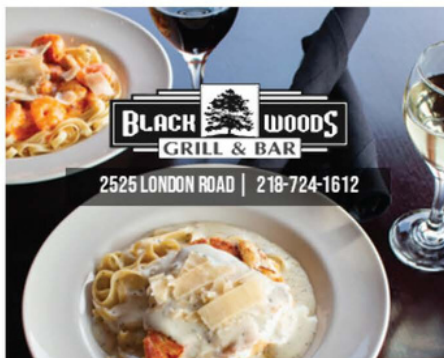


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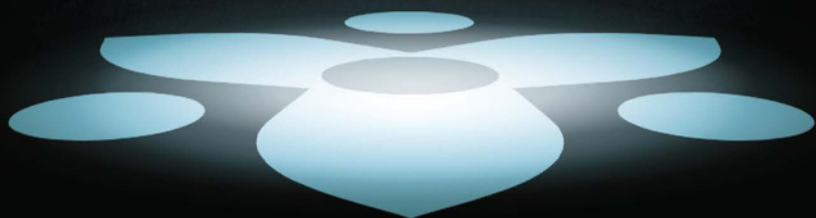
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