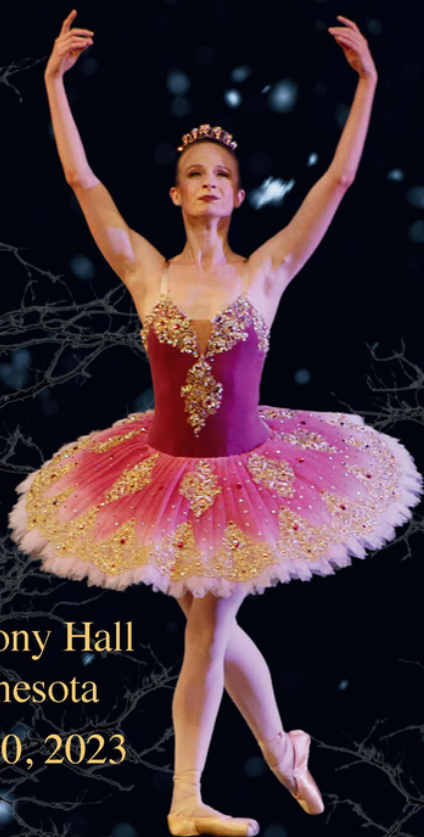


MINNESOTA BALLET

*The*  
**NUTCRACKER**  
A DULUTH TALE



DECC Symphony Hall  
Duluth, Minnesota  
December 8–10, 2023



**Essentia Health**



A TOUCH OF  
PLASCH



MINNESOTA  
BALLET

# 2023-24 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, *Senior Apprentice*  
Isabella Blindauer Libby Bocht Anthony Cefalu  
Juliana DeBellis Luke Umphlett Ansley Pierce  
Kira Klinkhardt Eleanor Darling-Vross

## MINNESOTA BALLET STAFF

Karl von Rabenau..... *Artistic Director*  
Maude Dornfeld..... *Executive Director*  
Jennifer Miller..... *Ballet Master*  
Ashley Carter..... *Office Manager*  
LilaAnn Coates White..... *Principal Teacher*  
Katie Kampfenkel..... *Production Manager*  
Heather Boudreau..... *Wardrobe Manager*  
Kaily McLellan, M.D.†\* ..... *Company Physician*  
Alex Loch, DPT\*..... *Company Physical Therapist*  
Devin Soul, ATC\* & Mike Gogolin, ATC\* ... *Company Athletic Trainers*  
†Official Physician of the Minnesota Ballet \*Provided by Essentia Health

## THE NUTCRACKER: A DULUTH TALE

**Choreography & Libretto**—Karl von Rabenau  
**Ballet Master**—Jennifer Miller **Music**—Pyotr Tchaikovsky  
**Scenic Design**—Curtis Phillips  
**Fabrication**—Jeff Brown: BrownKnows Design  
**Costume Design & Wardrobe Management**  
Sandra Ehle, Heather Boudreau  
**Costume Assistant**—Brenda Nicholson Martin  
**Lighting Design**—Jeff Brown  
**Production/Stage Manager**—Katie Kampfenkel  
**Sound Engineer**—Jake Larson

**Presenting Sponsors:** Mid Coast Catering & A Touch of Plasch

**The production build  
made possible in part by:**  
Jane S. Smith Memorial Fund,  
Duluth Superior Community Fnd.  
John & Betsy Holcomb



For more info  
about the  
creators and  
performers

# THE MINNESOTA BALLET ORCHESTRA\*

Minnesota Ballet Orchestra Conductor—Mark Whitlock

## First Violin

Steve Highland,  
*Concertmaster*

Nairi Stack  
Kristin Sande  
Joan Halquist  
Olga Chernyshev  
Daniel Radosevich

## Second Violin

Jean Leibfried  
Amy Eichers  
Jenna Mattson  
Clare Chopp

## Viola

Kevin Hoeschen  
Ronald Kari

## Cello

Bryon Klimek  
Andrew Roemhildt

## Bass

Vincent Osborn

## Flute

Melanie Sever

## Flute/Piccolo

Sondra Mowers

## Oboe

Zachary Fevold

## Oboe/English Horn

Madeline Miller

## Clarinet

Andrew Mahonen

## Clarinet/Bass Clarinet

Alexandra Hecker

## Bassoon

Karl Kubiak

## French Horn

Deborah Rausch  
Megan Marshall Leslie

## Trumpet

Earl Salemink  
Charles Leibfried

## Trombone

James Erickson

## Timpani/Percussion

Marc Hill  
Austin Orth

## Harp

Janell Lemire

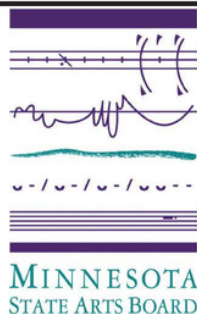
## Celesta

Alexander Sandor

Minnesota Ballet Orchestra Coordinator—Ronald Kari

\*The musicians of the Minnesota Ballet Orchestra are members of Local 18, American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada.

*Thank you to the DSSO for their support  
through the donation of performance equipment.*



This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support grant, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

Minnesota Ballet operating is also funded by the McKnight Foundation and the Wildey Mitchell Family Foundation.

## MINNESOTA BALLET BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*President:* Nick Campanario; *1st Vice President:* Ed Schumacher

*2nd Vice President:* Harvey Plasch; *Treasurer:* Ryan Irlbeck

*Secretary:* Betsy Holcomb

Pamela Arola, Jennifer Boyle, Tiffany Darling, Jayme Hartman

Rachel Inselman, Jonathan Reznick, Amber Whitney

*Advisors:* Morgana Kolenda, Mary Jo White, Mel Winkler



# *The Nutcracker: A Duluth Tale — The Story*

## **ACT 1, Scene 1**

**As the story begins**, in the beginning of the 20th century, Clara is travelling for the holidays with her mother and brother, Fritz. Their train makes a stopover at the Duluth Union Depot. As they disembark from the train they encounter a bustling station with lots of people and adventures. There are newsboys, chestnut vendors, a flower vendor, and a candy seller: Mother Ginger. Most intriguing of all is the arrival of a magician, Drosselmeyer. He entertains the children and other passengers with his tricks and his amazing dancing dolls. He notices how much Clara enjoys the dolls and decides to give her a very special gift, a Nutcracker.

## **ACT 1, Scene 2**

**Clara has forgotten her Nutcracker** and runs outside with her brother to find it right where she left it, on the stairs of the magician Drosselmeyer's train car. As Clara begins to return to the Depot, Fritz has other ideas. With a handful of Drosselmeyer's magic dust, the Harlequin doll escapes. When Drosselmeyer realizes his Harlequin doll is missing, he uses his magic to bring his Nutcracker and Columbine dolls to life to protect Clara and the other passenger children from the mischievous Harlequin and his band of newsboys. A snowball fight ensues with the Nutcracker needing Clara's help to vanquish the Harlequin doll. As Clara begins to feel the chill of the night coming on, her mother comes out from the Depot with her coat. Snow begins to fall into a beautiful pas de deux and swirling snowflakes.

## **ACT 2**

**A choir is singing**, and the passengers come into the Great Hall of the Depot. Clara is tired from the excitement earlier and soon falls asleep in her Mother's arms. She dreams of the passengers on her train ride dancing little vignettes and duets. She dreams that she dances with the Magician Drosselmeyer. He brings her Nutcracker to life, who now looks very similar to the dancing doll from early in the day. The dream continues with dancing flowers and gingerbread cookies. Lastly, Clara finds herself dancing the grand pas de deux with her Nutcracker.

**As Clara begins to wake** from her dream, she finds all of the passengers preparing to board the train to continue on their journey. One that Clara will never forget!



# THE NUTCRACKER: A DULUTH TALE

## ACT I, Scene 1—The Train Depot

<b>Clara</b> ....	Brianna Crockett (Fri), Ximena Azurmendi (Sat), Kyra Olson (Sun)
<b>Fritz*</b> .....	Madison Slygh (Fri/Sun), Natalie Carter (Sat)
<b>Their Mother</b> .....	Kira Klinkhardt (Fri/Sun), Ansley Pierce (Sat)
<b>Nutcracker Doll</b> .....	Isaac Sharratt (Fri) Sean M. Sullivan (Sat), Brian Guerrero (Sun)
<b>Magician Drosselmeyer</b> .....	Sean M. Sullivan (Fri) Isaac Sharratt (Sat), Anthony Cefalu (Sun)
<b>Mother Ginger</b> .....	Brooke Bero (Fri/Sat), Juliana DeBellis (Sun)
<b>Flower Vendor</b> .....	Ximena Azurmendi (Fri), Jessica Lopes (Sat) Brooke Bero (Sun)
<b>Porter</b> .....	Anthony Cefalu (Fri), Victor Smith (Sat), Luke Umphlett (Sun)
<b>Traveling Sisters</b> .....	Isabella Blindauer (Fri/Sun), Libby Bocht (Sat) Ansley Pierce (Fri/Sun), Eleanor Darling-Vross (Sat)
<b>Sailor</b> .....	Matthew Frezzell (Fri), Taylor Phillips (Sat), Victor Smith (Sun)
<b>Sweetheart</b> .....	Jessica Lopes (Fri/Sun), Kyra Olson (Sat)
<b>Farmers</b> .....	Eleanor Darling-Vross (Fri/Sun), Isabella Blindauer (Sat) Juliana DeBellis (Fri/Sat), Ximena Azurmendi (Sun)
<b>Lumberjacks</b> .....	(Fri) Taylor Phillips, Victor Smith, Luke Umphlett (Sat) Anthony Cefalu, Luke Umphlett, Brian Guerrero (Sun) Taylor Phillips, Matthew Frezzell, Sean M. Sullivan
<b>Weary Mother</b> .....	Libby Bocht (Fri/Sun), Kira Klinkhardt (Sat)
<b>Harlequin Doll*</b> .....	Martha Kliewer (Fri/Sun), Piper Linn (Sat)
<b>Columbine Doll*</b> .....	Adelaide von Rabenau (Fri/Sun), Kylin Hahn (Sat)
<b>Newsboys*</b> .....	Natalie Carter, (Fri/Sun), May Garcia, Kylin Hahn (Fri/Sun) Martha Kliewer, (Sat), Piper Linn (Sat), Ava Mershart, Madison Slygh (Sat) Adelaide von Rabenau (Sat), Kadence von Rabenau
<b>Travelers*</b> .....	Olivia Anderson, Ruby Donaldson, Sofia Eastvold Sigourney Hunter, Ariadne Kesti, Zinnia Kraker, Carolena Latour Magdalene Lyons, Genevieve Mattevi, Martin Pfeil Naomi Ratajek, Brynn Smith, Joy Tang
<b>Chestnut Vendors*</b> .....	Mindy Bolgrien, Tanis Halverson

## ACT I, Scene 2—Outside in the Snow

<b>Snow Queen &amp; Snow King</b> .....	(Fri) Kyra Olson & Brian Guererro (Sat) Brooke Bero & Matthew Frezzell (Sun) Brianna Crockett & Taylor Phillips
<b>Snowflakes</b> .....	Ximena Azurmendi, Brooke Bero, Isabella Blindauer Libby Bocht, Brianna Crockett, Juliana DeBellis, Kira Klinkhardt Jessica Lopes, Kyra Olson, Ansley Pierce, Eleanor Darling-Vross

## 15-MINUTE INTERMISSION

### ACT II—The Train Depot

**Carolers\***.....Henry Arola (FRI/SUN), Henry Beaver (SAT), Marit Benziger  
Kaelynn Cajacob (SAT), Brighton Chafee (SAT), Eostre Dommer (SAT)  
Charlotte Holstrom (FRI/SUN), Delaney Kesti (FRI/SUN), Adrienne Kolenda  
Isla Kolenda, Elsie Lewis (FRI/SUN), Vera Maki (SAT), Penelope Martus  
Adriana Serrano McFarland, Katerina Pfeil (FRI/SUN), Julia Rubin (FRI/SUN)  
Charlie Tschann (FRI/SUN), Emi Vega (SAT), Kenzie Vega (SAT)

#### Porter and the Traveling Sisters

**Porter**.....Anthony Cefalu (FRI), Victor Smith (SAT), Luke Umphlett (SUN)  
**Traveling Sisters**.....Isabella Blindauer (FRI/SUN), Libby Bocht (SAT)  
Ansley Pierce (FRI/SUN), Eleanor Darling-Vross (SAT)

#### Sailor and His Sweetheart

**Sailor**.....Matthew Frezzell (FRI), Taylor Phillips (SAT), Victor Smith (SUN)  
**Sweetheart**.....Jessica Lopes (FRI/SUN), Kyra Olson (SAT)

#### Farmers and Berry Pickers

**Farmers**.....Eleanor Darling-Vross (FRI/SUN), Isabella Blindauer (SAT)  
Juliana Debellis (FRI/SUN), Ximena Azurmendi (SAT)  
**Berry Pickers\***.....(FRI/SUN) Brighton Chafee, Henry Beaver  
(SAT) Julia Rubin, Henry Arola

#### Lumberjacks

**Lumberjacks**.....(FRI)Taylor Phillips, Victor Smith, Luke Umphlett  
(SAT) Anthony Cefalu, Luke Umphlett, Brian Guerrero  
(SUN) Taylor Phillips, Matthew Frezzell, Sean M. Sullivan

#### Mother Ginger and the Gingerbreads

**Mother Ginger**.....Brooke Bero (FRI/SAT), Juliana DeBellis (SUN)  
**Gingerbreads\***.....Alison Carter, Ariadne Kesti, Brooklyn Nelson (FRI/SUN)  
Arianna Shahmammadli, Brynn Smith, Joy Tang, Charlie Tschann (SAT)

#### Waltz of the Flowers

**Dewdrop Fairy**.....Ximena Azurmendi (FRI), Jessica Lopes (SAT)  
Brooke Bero (SUN)  
**Flowers**.....Ximena Azurmendi, Isabella Blindauer, Libby Bocht  
Brianna Crockett, Juliana DeBellis, Kira Klinkhardt, Kyra Olson  
Ansley Pierce, Eleanor Darling-Vross

#### Grand Pas de Deux

**Clara**.... Brianna Crockett (FRI), Ximena Azurmendi (SAT), Kyra Olson (SUN)  
**Nutcracker Prince**.....Isaac Sharratt (FRI)  
Sean M. Sullivan (SAT), Brian Guerrero (SUN)

#### Finale—The Cast

\*Courtesy of the Minnesota Ballet Academy  
*Casting subject to changes.*

"The Nutcracker:  
A Duluth Tale"  
Production Staff





### **Katie Kampfhenkel—Minnesota Ballet Production Manager**

Katie is originally from Katy, Texas, and moved to Duluth to pursue a BFA in Stage Management and minors in Marketing and Communications from the University of Minnesota Duluth. She has spent the past five years stage managing and working on productions at UMD, Duluth Playhouse, and Renegade Theater. She has also spent summers working at the Santa Fe Opera House. She is excited for another season with the Minnesota Ballet. Katie would like to thank her mom, dad, and boyfriend for their constant support throughout the years.

### **Patrick M. Mulcahy Jr.—Lighting Designer**

Patrick is a freelance theatrical designer who has lit numerous stages throughout the Twin Ports area. Outside of theatre, Patrick is the president of 3D Robotics Duluth, a 501(c)(3) community-wide robotics organization, where he also coaches three of the eleven teams. Patrick plays the euphonium in the Twin Ports Wind Orchestra and sails on Lake Superior during the weekly sailboat races. From October through the New Year, Patrick is known as the Gingerbread Man. Hundreds of his gingerbread structures (both big and small) can be seen throughout Duluth during the Holiday season.

### **Heather Boudreau—Minnesota Ballet Costume Manager**

Heather's work captivated audiences last season with *The Nutcracker*; *A Duluth Tale*, *Forward*, and *Sleeping Beauty*, in addition the hauntingly delightful costumes for *The Addams Family* at the Duluth Playhouse. Heather holds a BFA in Costume Design from Sam Houston State University. Her dedication to preserving the artistry of ballet through remarkable costume design helps ensure that each performance is a truly unforgettable experience.



## **Mark Whitlock—Conductor, Minnesota Ballet Orchestra**

Mark Whitlock, Director of Bands in the Department of Music at the University of Minnesota Duluth, received his Bachelor of Music Education from Iowa State University, Master of Music in Trombone Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Iowa, and Doctor of Musical Arts in Wind Conducting, also from the University of Iowa. Prior to his appointment at UMD, Mark was Assistant Director of Bands and Assistant Professor of Trombone at Eastern Kentucky University, a position he held since 1986 until his start at UMD. A frequent clinician, he has conducted honors bands and clinics in Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, West Virginia and California. He has also guest conducted and given clinics in Brazil, South Africa, Argentina, Spain and Turkey, and guest conducted at the Indiana Summer Music Clinic and the International Music Camp. He conducts the Twin Ports Wind Orchestra, has conducted the Duluth-Superior Symphony Orchestra for several concerts, and founded and directs the North Shore Summer Music Experience at UMD. He is married to Mary Whitlock; they have three daughters, Macaulley, Meredith and Mayson.

## **Jeff Brown—Nutcracker Fabricator/Lighting Designer**

Jeff began his career with twelve years in educational theater, serving as scenic designer, lighting designer, and/or technical director for nearly 150 shows and events. For seven years after that, as Production Manager for the Duluth Playhouse in Duluth, he led the design teams and coordinated all production aspects for another 100+ productions while also creating freelance designs for other local and regional theater companies. He spent a year consulting on, designing, and fabricating the learning environment and exhibits of the Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota (Mankato, MN); grand opening was May 2015). That same year he formed BrownKnows Design, a design and fabrication studio in Duluth. His exhibit design and fabrication portfolio has expanded to include projects with Duluth Children's Museum, Children's Discovery Museum (Grand Rapids, MN), Minnesota Discovery Center (Chisholm, MN), Red River Zoo (Fargo, ND), Otter Cove Children's Museum (Fergus Falls, MN), Hjemkomst Center (Moorhead, MN), and Adams Homestead & Nature Preserve (N. Sioux City, SD), among others.



# 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.





# 2023–2024 Upcoming Performances

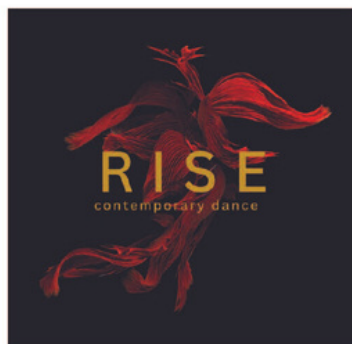


**December 8-10, 2023**  
**DECC Symphony Hall**

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 15-17, 2024**  
**Studio Four, The Depot**

An evening of dance featuring contemporary works by Minnesota Ballet artists, and guest choreographer Jayson Douglas. Performed in Studio Four, an intimate theater for experiencing cutting-edge dance.



**March 29-30, 2024**  
**DECC Symphony Hall**

In the ballet telling of the beloved fairytale, a kindhearted princess and her seven pint-sized rescuers outwit the scheming Evil Queen. This magnificent production is perfect for children and adults alike.

Tickets: [minnesotaballet.org](https://minnesotaballet.org) • 218-733-7570

# Minnesota Ballet Staff





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.



Photographer: Brett Groehlert

Principal Teacher  
**LilaAnn Coates White**

**LilaAnn Coates White** has been a part of Minnesota Ballet since she was twenty years old, as a company mem-

ber, Principal Teacher of Minnesota Ballet Academy, choreographer and rehearsal assistant for both the company and school, and Artistic Associate. Lila has worked under five artistic directors and has staged and rehearsed portions of *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, *Coppélia*, and *Giselle*. She has taught all levels of ballet and pointe as well as character, men's class, dance history, repertoire, and choreography workshops. To celebrate her 25th anniversary as Principal Teacher, Lila created a Grand Défilé for the Student performance and a Tribute to the Academy for the Ballet's 50th Anniversary Gala. Lila has choreographed numerous pieces for the Minnesota Ballet including "Precarious" and "Appassionato" and "Scenes from a Supper Club". Lila is an Assistant Professor of Dance at the University of Minnesota Duluth and holds a B.A. in Health Sciences and an M.A. in Physical Therapy. She has choreographed for UMD productions, American College Dance Association, Dances on the Lake-walk, Lyric Opera of the North, and Arrowhead Chorale.

# Minnesota Ballet Company Dancers







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 extend 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**

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**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

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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



# A Special Tribute to Retiring Dancer Sarah White



After seven wonderful years with Minnesota Ballet, Sarah White retired in 2023. Here's a look back at Sarah's performances from 2016-2023:

### **The Celebrity Dance Challenge**

2017: Hustle with Jeffrey Nelson, Essentia St. Mary's hospitalist

2018: Jazz Funk with Jason Vincent, The Boat Club Co-owner

2019: Swing with Jimmy Lovrien, Duluth News Tribune reporter

2020: Disco with Jordy Sargent, Real Estate Investor

2021: Tap with Josh Miller, Station Master of the North Shore Railroad

2022: CDC All-Star Fundraiser



Sarah White

## **2016-2017**

Moving Beyond: “Complex Deceptions”

Dracula: Mina Harker

Nutcracker: Ice Fairy, Party Guest

Firebird: Anastasia

## **2017–18**

Clowns and Others: “Here We Go” (Sharratt),

“Clowns” (Aiello)

Nutcracker: Grown up Clara, Ice Fairy

Swan Lake (Gardner): Little Swan, Princess Luciana of Spain, Odette



Sarah White

## **2018–2019**

Rite of Spring: “Curl, Uncurl And...” (Goodman),  
Senza Fretta (Aiello), Elder in Rite of Spring (Gardner)  
Nutcracker: Grown up Clara , Ice Fairy, Sugar Plum Fairy  
Coppélia: Swanilda, Friend

## **2019–2020**

Carnival of the Animals: Swan in “Carnival of the  
Animals”(Gardner), Mother in “Scenes from a Supper  
Club” (Lila), Mendelssohn Piano Trio No. 1 (Fields)  
Nutcracker: Clara, Ice Fairy, Sugar Plum Fairy

## **2020–2021**

The Nutcracker: A Duluth Tale (von Rabenau): Snow  
Queen  
Billy’s Dancing Dairy Farm: Narrator



**Sarah White**

## **2021-2022**

Sleepy Hollow: townspeople

The Nutcracker: A Duluth Tale: Clara, Snow Queen

Inspire: In “Endless” (LeeWei Chao)

## **2022-2023**

A Midsummer Night’s Dream: Titania

The Nutcracker: A Duluth Tale: Clara, corps

Sleeping Beauty (Petipa/Miller/von Rabenau: Lilac Fairy

Anna Pavlova’s solo Dragonfly [Butterfly] in opening of

Adam Swanson’s pollinator mural



Sarah White



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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.

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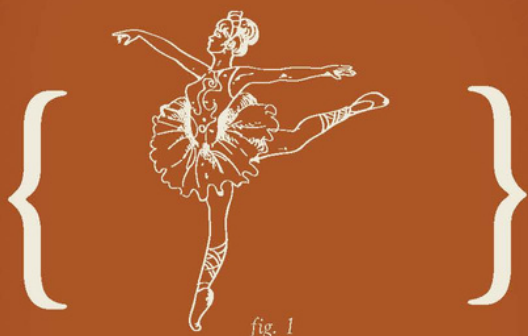
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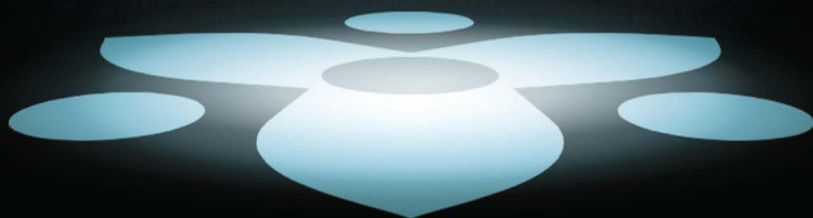
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