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Media Contact

Hannah Cook

Manager – Marketing and Communications

Direct: (414) 902-2110 | Cell: (262) 599-2507

hcook@milwaukeeballet.org

**MILWAUKEE
BALLET**

MICHAEL PINK, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

MILWAUKEE BALLET ANNOUNCES 2023/24 DANCER ROSTER

- Company promotes two longtime artists and welcomes six new dancers -

MILWAUKEE – August 8, 2023 – Milwaukee Ballet Artistic Director Michael Pink has announced the Company roster for the upcoming 2023/24 Season. Fan-favorite dancers Alana Griffith and Lizzie Tripp have been promoted to Leading Artists, and six new dancers join the ranks as Company Artists.

Griffith and Tripp have been Artists with Milwaukee Ballet since 2014 and 2016, respectively. Both have garnered critical acclaim and attracted significant audience following for their performances in classical and contemporary works, including several Michael Pink ballets. Last season, both performed the lead roles of Odette in *Swan Lake* and Wendy in *Peter Pan*.

“Alana and Lizzie are stellar artists who have demonstrated impeccable artistry and skill in their time here,” says Pink. “I enjoy working with them immensely and am confident that they will continue to shine in their well-deserved new positions.”

Five of the six new Artists join Milwaukee Ballet from the organization’s Second Company, Milwaukee Ballet II (MBII). Alexander Koulos, Raven Loan, Amanda Lewis, Flynn Stelfox, and Jacqueline Sugianto spent the 2022/23 Season training with world-class faculty, performing in MBII and Company productions, and serving as ambassadors in various community engagement programs.

“Milwaukee Ballet II is a gift to our organization and a fantastic opportunity for emerging dancers,” says Pink. “The talents we develop in the program are phenomenal, and I’m delighted to promote Alexander, Raven, Amanda, Flynn, and Jacqueline, all of whom showed great promise while in MBII.”

Currently, over half of the Company’s Artists are graduates of MBII. Several (including Tripp) also trained at Milwaukee Ballet School & Academy before joining MBII and the Company, demonstrating Milwaukee Ballet’s dedication to cultivating and retaining world-class ballet talent in its home city.

The final new face audiences will see on stage with the Company this fall is Ben Zusi, who joins Milwaukee Ballet from Kansas City Ballet’s Second Company.

The Company will return to the studio in mid-September to begin rehearsal for their first production, Michael Pink’s *Dracula*, which runs October 26-29 at Marcus Performing Arts Center.

The remainder of the season includes the world premiere of *The Nutcracker: Drosselmeyer's Imaginarium* December 8-26, the choreographic competition *Genesis* February 8-11, the family-friendly *Cinderella* April 4-7, and the contemporary collection *MKE MIX* May 16-19.

2023/24 Season Roster

Leading Artists: Parker Brassler Vos, Randy Crespo, Marize Fumero, Alana Griffith, Davit Hovhannisyan, Barry Molina, Lizzie Tripp, Lahna Vanderbush

Artists: Josiah Cook, Eric Figueredo, Craig Freigang, Garrett Glassman, Elizabeth Harrison, Marie Harrison-Collins, Itzel Hernandez, Alexander Koulos, Amanda Lewis, Raven Loan, Daniela Maarroui, Kristen Marshall, Marko Micov, Alyssa Schilke, Flynn Stelfox, Jacqueline Sugianto, Ransom Wilkes-Davis, Ben Zusi

New Leading Artists

Alana Griffith began her training at the Los Angeles Ballet Academy. At age 17, she moved to London to train at the English National Ballet School. Griffith joined Milwaukee Ballet II in the 2012/2013 season and was promoted to the Company the following season. Griffith's career highlights include dancing the title role in Septime Webre's *ALICE (in wonderland)*, Effie in *La Sylphide*, and Helena in Bruce Wells' *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She has been featured in many of Michael Pink's ballets, including Clara and Marie in *The Nutcracker*, Spring Fairy in *Cinderella*, Rapunzel in the world premiere of *Beauty and the Beast* and as Belle in the 2022 reprise of the production, the leading role in *Aubade*, the Prayer in *Coppélia*, Odette in *Swan Lake*, and Wendy in *Peter Pan*. Griffith has also danced in contemporary works, appearing as Romola in Timothy O'Donnell's *Rite of Spring* as well as the final Pas De Deux in Alessandro Cerrudo's *Extremely Close*. She has also worked with celebrated choreographers Matthew Tusa, Trey McIntyre, George Williamson, Kenneth Tindall, Val Caniparoli, Mauro de Candia, Dani Rowe, and Aleix Mañé.

Lizzie Tripp trained at Milwaukee Ballet School & Academy and attended summer intensives at American Ballet Theatre and Houston Ballet. As a student, Lizzie performed lead roles in many ballets choreographed by Rolando Yanes and danced alongside Milwaukee Ballet's corps in Michael Pink's *Swan Lake*. She joined Milwaukee Ballet II in 2014, dancing in Pink's *Don Quixote*, *The Nutcracker*, *Cinderella*, and *Dracula*, and performing in contemporary works by Timothy O'Donnell, Nadia Thompson, Lee-Wei Chao, Ilya Kozadayevev, and Petr Zahradníček. After being promoted to the Company, Lizzie danced as the Snow Queen in *The Nutcracker*, originated the role of the Enchantress in the world premiere of Pink's *Beauty and the Beast*, and performed the title role in Nicole Teague-Howell's *The Firebird*. She has also been featured in numerous contemporary works, most notably by

Timothy O'Donnell, Price Suddarth, Enrico Morelli, Aleix Mañé, Dani Rowe, and Cass Mortimer Eipper. In 2020, Tripp was chosen for *Dance Magazine's* "25 to Watch." Recently, Tripp has been featured in several of Pink's ballets, including as Odette in *Swan Lake*, Fleur-de-Lys in *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and Wendy Darling in *Peter Pan*.

New Company Dancers

Alexander Koulos received his training at the McDonald College of Performing Arts in Australia. He reached the finals of the Youth America Grand Prix competition in 2017, where he accepted offers to attend short-term and summer intensive programs with leading ballet schools, including Houston Ballet Academy and Joffrey Ballet Academy. He joined Milwaukee Ballet II in 2021, completing two seasons before being promoted to Milwaukee Ballet Company. He has performed in several Michael Pink productions, including *Swan Lake*, *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and *Peter Pan*.

Amanda Lewis is a native of Akron, Ohio, and trained at Natalya's Turning Pointe until age 15. Lewis continued her training with Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre under the direction of Marjorie Grundvig, Dennis Marshal, and Janet Popeleski. As a student there, she performed soloist and corps roles in *Paquita*, *Napoli*, *The Nutcracker*, and *Serenade*. She has also attended several summer intensives, including those at American Ballet Theatre, the School of American Ballet, and Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre. In the fall of 2020, Lewis joined the Rolando Yanes Pre-Professional Program at Milwaukee Ballet and joined Milwaukee Ballet II in 2021, during which time she performed in several Michael Pink productions, including *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and was featured as Nana in *Peter Pan*.

Raven Loan, originally from Adelaide, South Australia, began her dance training at Terry Simpson Studios. She has attended Summer Intensive programs at Ballet Summer Estonia, The Washington School of Ballet, and the School of American Ballet. Loan studied at the HARID Conservatory's year-round training program, where she received Dance Study awards and the Certificate of Scholarship. Loan has also received the Jeannot B. Cerrone Award for excellence in performance. She joined Milwaukee Ballet II Second Company in 2022 and performed alongside the Company in several works by Michael Pink, including *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and as a Lost Boy in *Peter Pan*.

Flynn Stelfox, a native of Melbourne in Victoria, Australia, trained at the Ringwood Ballet Group before joining the Australian Ballet School's full-time training program. While there, Stelfox received numerous dance-related awards, including the Excellence Award for three consecutive years, the Berezowsky-Howard Character Award, Graeme Murphy AO Contemporary Dance Award, and the Areti

Boyaci Spanish Dance Award. He trained in the MBII Program this past season and performed in Michael Pink's *The Nutcracker*, *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and as one of the Lost Boys in *Peter Pan*,

Jacqueline Sugianto trained with Canada's National Ballet School, Evelyn Hart Conservatory, and Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School. She danced the role of Marie in the National Ballet of Canada's *The Nutcracker* twice and was selected to dance in the opening Ceremony of the 2015 Pan American Games. During her time in Milwaukee Ballet II, she performed in Michael Pink's *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and as one of the Lost Boys in *Peter Pan*.

Ben Zusi, a native of South Bend, Indiana, trained at the Southold Dance Theater under Călin Radelscu and Erica Fischbach. While training, he attended various summer programs at the School of American Ballet, Houston Ballet, and Boston Ballet. In his senior year, he received first at the Youth America Grand Prix (YAGP) regionals and was a finalist at the YAGP Finals. Zusi spent two years in Kansas City Ballet II, the second company of Kansas City Ballet. During this time, he performed roles in multiple Company productions, including *Petite Mort*, Lead Russian in *The Nutcracker*, Toto in *The Wizard of Oz*, and various other corps roles.

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About Milwaukee Ballet

Milwaukee Ballet was founded in 1970. Led by Artistic Director Michael Pink, Milwaukee Ballet creates a rich and diverse community through its inspiring dance performance, education, and outreach. Milwaukee Ballet hosts an international Company of dancers and maintains its own orchestra. Milwaukee Ballet School & Academy is the only professional dance school in the Midwest accredited by the National Association of Schools of Dance, teaching beginner through pre-professional levels in three locations: Third Ward, Fox Point, and Brookfield. Milwaukee Ballet's award-winning Community Engagement department serves thousands of people in Southeastern Wisconsin each year through original, interactive programs. Milwaukee Ballet is a proud cornerstone member of United Performing Arts Fund and holds a four-star rating from Charity Navigator.

Note to Editors: Interviews with Milwaukee Ballet Artistic Director Michael Pink and high-resolution images are available upon request.