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Media Contact

Hannah Cook

Manager – Marketing and Communications

Direct: (414) 902-2110

hcook@milwaukeeballet.org

**MILWAUKEE
BALLET**

MICHAEL PINK, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

MILWAUKEE BALLET ANNOUNCES 2024/25 DANCER ROSTER

- *Company promotes longtime artist and welcomes three new dancers.* -

MILWAUKEE – August 13, 2024 – Milwaukee Ballet Artistic Director Michael Pink has announced the Company roster for the upcoming 2024/25 Season. Prominent dancer Marie Harrison-Collins has been promoted to Leading Artist, and three new dancers join the ranks as Company Artists.

Harrison-Collins has been with Milwaukee Ballet since 2016. She quickly attracted critical and audience attention following her performances in classical and contemporary works, including several Michael Pink ballets. During the 2023/24 Season, she performed the titular role in *Cinderella* and leading roles as Lucy in *Dracula* and Marie in *The Nutcracker*.

“Marie is an accomplished artist who has a notable gift for the technical elements of classical ballet,” says Pink. “She has contributed a great deal to the Company these past eight seasons, and I am certain she will continue to perform at the highest caliber in this well-deserved new position.”

One of three new Artists joins Milwaukee Ballet from the organization’s Second Company, Milwaukee Ballet II (MBII). Nanaho Nakajima spent the 2022/23 and 2023/24 Seasons as a trainee learning from world-class faculty, performing in MBII and Company productions, and serving as an ambassador in various community engagement programs.

“Milwaukee Ballet II consistently nourishes a fantastic roster of talent,” says Pink. “I’m delighted to promote Nanaho, who demonstrated great potential as an MBII dancer.”

Currently, over half of the Company’s Artists are graduates of MBII. Several 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.

Two other new faces that audiences will see on stage with the Company this fall are Joey Dlearo and Troy Santulli. Dlearo joins the Company after three seasons with Ballet Memphis, while Santulli danced the past two seasons with Texas Ballet Theater.

The Company will return to the studio in mid-September to begin rehearsal for their first production, Kenneth Tindall’s *Casanova*, which runs November 1-3 at Marcus Performing Arts Center. This will mark only the second time this ballet has been performed in the United States and the first it has been performed in Milwaukee.

The remainder of the season includes the return of Michael Pink's *The Nutcracker: Drosselmeyer's Imaginarium* December 7-24, the contemporary collection *MKE MIX* February 7-16, the family-friendly *Sleeping Beauty* April 11-13, and the Milwaukee debut of Mark Godden's *Carmen* May 16-18.

2024/25 Season Roster

Leading Artists: Parker Brassler Vos, Randy Crespo, Marize Fumero, Alana Griffith, Marie Harrison-Collins, Barry Molina, Lizzie Tripp-Molina, Lahna Vanderbush

Artists: Josiah Cook, Joey Dlearo, Eric Figueredo, Garrett Glassman, Alexander Koulos, Raven Loan, Daniela Maarraoui, Kristen Marshall, Marko Micov, Nanaho Nakajima, Troy Santulli, Alyssa Schilke, Flynn Stelfox, Jacqueline Sugianto, Ben Zusi

New Leading Artists

Marie Harrison-Collins attended Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, where she performed with Hong Kong Ballet, including its tour of *Swan Lake* throughout China. Harrison-Collins won the Hong Kong Open Dance Competition (Ballet) in 2007 and 2009, among other awards. She earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in dance performance at Butler University in Indiana, where she danced as Dew Drop and Snow Queen in *The Nutcracker*, Princess Florine in *The Sleeping Beauty*, and Odile in *Swan Lake*. She also appeared in George Balanchine's *Valse Fantasie* and Gerald Arpino's *Viva Vivaldi*. In addition, she danced in a special performance of Marek Cholewa's *Displacements* in Bratislava, Slovakia. Since joining Milwaukee Ballet in 2016, she has danced in Michael Pink's *Mirror Mirror, Beauty and the Beast*, and *La Bohème*. Notable roles include Odile in *Swan Lake*, several principal roles in *The Nutcracker*, Lucy in *Dracula*, Cinderella in *Cinderella*, and the *Esmeralda* Pas de Deux.

New Company Dancers

Joey Dlearo hails from Loganville, GA, where he started his dance training under his mother, Keri Beth Dlearo. He began his formal ballet training at Lilburn School of Ballet with Jennifer Gordon in 2013. He then trained under Orlando Molina for a year before joining the Richmond Ballet trainee program for two years, where he received the Malcolm Burn Award. Joey spent three years as a company member at Ballet Memphis, dancing in works such as Mariana Oliveira's *Pagliacci*, Gabrielle Lamb's *Elapse*, and Garrett Ammon's *Short Trip Home*. He also performed classical roles, including The Prince in *The Nutcracker* and The Writer in Mark Godden's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. During his time at Ballet Memphis Joey originated leading roles in new works, notably Marcus Jarrel Willis' *T&Cs Apply* and Artistic Director Steven McMahon's *A Rare and Gentle Thing*.

Nanaho Nakajima is originally from Suita City, in Osaka, Japan, and began her training at the Kawakami Keiko Ballet School. She has attended several Summer Intensive programs over the course of her training, including those at the Bolshoi Ballet Academy and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Nakajima has received several awards for exemplary performance, including top honors at Osaka Prix National Classic Ballet Competition (2017, 2022), World Ballet Art Competition Grand Prix Live Stream Final, Ballet Grand Prix Vienna, and Surrey Festival of Dance. Nakajima continued her training at the year-round HARID Conservatory and accepted a position with the Goh Ballet Academy Youth Company after graduation. She joined Milwaukee Ballet's Second Company in the fall of 2022, in which she danced for two seasons before being promoted to the Company.

Troy Santulli began dancing at the age of 4 with Boston Ballet School, where he was directed by Peter Stark and Margaret Tracey. During his training, he performed in Mikko Nissinen's *The Nutcracker* for 11 seasons and Mikko Nissinen's *Swan Lake* and *Giselle*. In 2020, Troy joined Kansas City Ballet as a member of KCB II. While there, Troy performed a wide range of works with both the main and second company; some of his favorites included roles in Lila York's *Celts*, Michael Pink's *Dracula*, and Tomm Ruud's *Mobile*. Joining Texas Ballet Theater as an Apprentice in 2022, Troy enjoyed dancing in some of Ben Stevenson's most iconic works, including *Dracula*, *Bartok*, and *Alice in Wonderland*. Throughout the years, Troy has attended Jacob's Pillow, Finnish National Ballet, American Ballet Theater, Pacific Northwest Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Boston Ballet, and The School of American Ballet for their summer intensive programs.

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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.