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MILWAUKEE BALLET

MICHAEL PINK, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

MILWAUKEE BALLET PRESENTS BIENNIAL *GENESIS CHOREOGRAPHIC COMPETITION*

- *Three Choreographers compete, presenting new works at The Pabst Theater March 13-15* -

Milwaukee, WI – February 12, 2026 – Milwaukee Ballet’s highly anticipated *Genesis International Choreographic Competition* returns to The Pabst Theater on March 13 through 15. The biennial competition features three up-and-coming choreographers who are challenged to develop an original, boundary-pushing new work. The winner will earn a contract to create a second work with Milwaukee Ballet in a future season, while audiences will decide on the piece to be crowned “Audience Favorite.”

“This is our eleventh *Genesis Competition*, and I could not be prouder of the exceptional roster of choreographers we have welcomed over the past 20+ years,” says Artistic Director Michael Pink. “The artists we have seen compete have gone on to do truly amazing work, and I cannot wait to see what is brought to the stage in March.”

This year’s choreographers are **Julia Feldman** (United States), a current Company Artist with Sacramento Ballet and co-founder of Capital Dance Project; **Lauren Flower** (United States), a choreographer, dancer, and teacher who is a current Company Artist with Oregon Ballet Theatre; and **Loughlan Prior** (New Zealand), the co-founder and Artistic Director of the project company, Lo|Co Arts.

The competing choreographers were selected by Pink and his Artistic team from a pool of 89 applicants representing 16 different countries. Upon arrival in Milwaukee, they will be given a cast of eight randomly selected Company Artists—four women and four men each—whom they will utilize in their new work. Each original 20-minute piece will come together in just three weeks over 90 rehearsal hours, before being performed at The Pabst Theater.

“This biennial production truly personifies our commitment to creating and presenting innovative, new work right here in Milwaukee,” says Pink. “The caliber of choreographic work and artistic talents of our Company Artists, are truly world-class.”

An esteemed panel of experts will join Pink in determining the 2026 *Genesis* winner. This year’s guest judges are Artistic Directors from around the United States: Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre’s Adam W. McKinney, Oregon Ballet Theatre’s Dani Rowe, and BalletMet’s Remi Wörtmeyer.

Audiences will also have the opportunity to get in on the action by voting for their favorite of the three pieces. The “Audience Favorite” will be announced following the final performance, with the winner receiving a cash prize.

Previous *Genesis* winners have gone on to establish themselves as celebrated professionals, choreographing both nationally and internationally. Many have returned to Milwaukee Ballet over the years, and the Company has proudly commissioned new works and restaged past favorites from the competition.

The Choreographers

Julia Feldman is a Company Artist with Sacramento Ballet, where she began her professional career in 2011 and first discovered her passion for choreography through the company's annual "Beer and Ballet" program. Since then, she has been selected for major choreographic platforms including the *National Choreographer's Initiative* and the New York Choreographic Institute, and she co-created Sacramento Ballet's 2021 *Nutcracker*. She has since premiered several works for Sacramento Ballet and most recently for Smuin Contemporary Ballet. Feldman is also the co-founder of Capital Dance Project, where she has created ten works and plays a key role in shaping the company's artistic vision.

Lauren Flower is a choreographer, dancer, and teacher known for their innovative and impactful work. Flower is currently a Company Artist with Oregon Ballet Theatre (OBT), where they have performed a wide range of classical and contemporary roles by choreographers such as Dani Rowe, Trey McIntyre, and Ben Stevenson. A sought-after creator, Flower has developed multiple works for OBT's main company repertoire and for OBT2, the pre-professional program of Oregon Ballet Theatre. Their dual experience as both dancer and choreographer shapes a collaborative process that encourages curiosity, exploration, and inventive movement.

Loughlan Prior is an acclaimed New Zealand choreographer known for visually striking, narrative-rich work across stage and film. A former Soloist with the Royal New Zealand Ballet, he was appointed as the company's Choreographer in Residence in 2018 and has since created major works including *Cinderella*, *Hansel & Gretel*, *The Firebird*, *Women of Words*, and *Ultra Violet*. His choreography has been commissioned by companies around the world, and his dance films have screened internationally, including at the *Cannes Film Festival's Short Film Corner* and the *San Francisco Dance Film Festival*. Prior is the co-founder and Artistic Director of Lo|Co Arts and was named one of Dance Magazine's "25 to Watch" in 2025.

Performance Information

Genesis runs March 13 through March 15 at The Pabst Theater. Tickets may be purchased online at www.milwaukeeballet.org or through the Milwaukee Ballet Box Office at 414.902.2103.

The performance schedule is as follows:

- Friday, March 13, 2026 – 7:30 PM
- Saturday, March 14, 2026 – 2:00 PM
- Saturday, March 14, 2026 – 7:30 PM
- Sunday, March 15, 2026 – 2:00 PM

The *Genesis International Choreographic Competition* is presented by William & Margaret Raasch, with support from Principal Sponsor Geralyn Cannon, and Media Partner Radio Milwaukee.

Milwaukee Ballet's 2025/26 Season is presented by Donald & Donna Baumgartner and the United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF), with support from Wisconsin Arts Board, CAMPAC, Milwaukee Arts Board, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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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 nearly 20,000 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.