

BALLET ARKANSAS

ROBINSON
CENTER
THEATRE

Little Rock

DEC 12-14, 2025

NUTCRACKER SPECTACULAR

SEASON
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BALLET ARKANSAS

One of America's Top 75 Ballet Companies

A/MFA Arkansas Museum
of Fine Arts

ROBINSON
CENTER

Little Rock



4



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DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

Dear Friends,

Welcome to Ballet Arkansas's Nutcracker Spectacular — the largest holiday production in the state and a treasured tradition that has touched nearly half a million Arkansans. It is a true joy to share this magical experience with you. For 46 years, our enduring collaboration with the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra has brought Tchaikovsky's iconic score to life, and our expanding partnership with the Robinson Center has given this beloved production a magnificent home.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our generous sponsors, whose support makes this production possible, and to our dedicated community cast members, whose passion, hard work, and artistry bring vibrancy to the stage.

As we celebrate the season together, I'm delighted to invite you into a thrilling year ahead: the world premiere of *Cinderella* returning to the Robinson Center in February; the Arkansas premiere of *Giselle*; ICONS of American Dance at the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts; and Origins: A New Works Celebration this January in our new black box theater on Main Street, presented in partnership with Cranford Co. We have an extraordinary lineup in store — truly something for every taste.

The holidays also offer a meaningful moment to consider Ballet Arkansas in your year-end giving. Ticket sales cover only a fraction of the cost required to present productions of this scale, and your generosity ensures that transformative arts experiences, like this one, continue to flourish across our community.

May today's performance fill your heart with wonder and holiday joy.

Warmest wishes,

Michael Fothergill

Executive & Artistic Director, Ballet Arkansas



FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we embark on the 47th season, we extend heartfelt thanks for your unwavering support. Your generosity has been instrumental in advancing our mission to bring ballet to our community. Thanks to your contributions, we have presented captivating performances, delivered exceptional educational programs, and established ourselves as one of the nation's top 75 dance companies and a premier dance school in the state.

None of this would be possible without your steadfast commitment. Your dedication to the arts and our organization is truly commendable, and we are deeply grateful for your support. As we look forward to many more inspiring performances together, your ongoing involvement is vital to our success and sustainability. Thank you for being an integral part of the fabric of Ballet Arkansas within our community.

Ann Patel

*President, Board of Directors,
Ballet Arkansas*

25|26 DONORS

Donations received from July 1, 2024 - November 21, 2025

NUTCRACKER SPONSORS



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www.balletarkansas.org/donors

We make every effort to properly acknowledge our donors. Please contact Ballet Arkansas at info@balletarkansas.org or (501) 223-5150, to update your donor acknowledgement.

BALLET ARKANSAS CARE TEAM is a team of physicians, therapists, and organizations who graciously support Ballet Arkansas, providing our dancers with top notch health care all season. Ballet Arkansas thanks you for your dedication and support to keep our artists dancing their best!

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BALLET ARKANSAS

The Nutcracker Spectacular

December 12-14, 2025

Robinson Center

with the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra

Conducted by Maestro Geoffrey Robson

Music by

Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky

Choreography by

Michael Fothergill after Marius Petipa

Stage Crew

Stage Manager

Alan Malcolm

Lighting Designer

Josh Anderson

Little Rock Stage Group Inc.

Community Cast Ballet Masters

Sage Feldges

Ben Piner

Meredith Loy

Aldrin Vendt

Liev Ewart

Lauren Yordanich

Special Guest Appearance

Mount St. Mary Academy Choirs

directed by Marcia McConkie

Ballet Arkansas is proud to have more than 290 local children and adults as a part of our production. Twenty-nine dance schools from across the state are represented. We would like to thank the cast for their hard work and dedication, and the dance schools for providing them with exceptional training. Ballet Arkansas would also like to thank Jana Beard, Allison Wilson and Shuffles and Ballet II for their generous support of Ballet Arkansas and the Nutcracker Spectacular.

For the safety of our dancers and better enjoyment of the performance, Ballet Arkansas asks that you please turn off all electronic devices and refrain from the taking of photographs or videos of the production.

THE NUTCRACKER STORY

ACT I – PARTY SCENE

The overture begins on a snowy Christmas Eve as guests arrive for the Stahlbaum family's annual holiday party. Excitement looms in the air. The Stahlbaums and their children, Clara and Fritz, welcome their guests and as the hours pass on, the party grows festive with music and dance. Herr Drosselmeyer, Clara and Fritz's mysterious godfather, arrives late to the surprise of all in attendance. He gathers the children and tells them a story of the enchanted Nutcracker, Mouse King, and Sugar Plum Fairy, using three life-sized dolls that soon become the delight of the party. Thereafter, Herr Drosselmeyer presents Clara with a wooden replica of the Nutcracker which draws envious eyes from all the guests.

As Clara dances with the Nutcracker, a jealous Fritz attempts to steal the doll for himself and accidentally destroys it. Clara is heartbroken, though Herr Drosselmeyer mends the Nutcracker with a handkerchief. To Clara's excitement, he informs her that magic will return the Nutcracker to its original condition at the stroke of midnight. After a final dance, the guests and their weary children depart, and the Stahlbaum household goes to sleep.

ACT I – BATTLE AND SNOW SCENE

As the clock strikes midnight, strange noises are heard from the Stahlbaum parlor. Clara emerges in the moonlight seeking her beloved Nutcracker and soon after falls asleep with the doll in her embrace. Strange and mysterious things begin to happen. The Christmas tree grows to a massive height and enormous mice fill the room, taunting the frightened Clara. She runs from the mice, only to discover the Nutcracker has become life-sized just as told in Herr Drosselmeyer's story. A ghastly Mouse King rages a great battle and just as it appears victory is lost, the Nutcracker defeats him with Clara's help. Ever grateful for her act of bravery, the Nutcracker leads Clara on a journey to the Land of the Sweets.

ACT 2 – LAND OF THE SWEETS

Clara and the Nutcracker arrive safely and are met by the radiant Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier. When told of the battle and Clara's heroism, the Sugar Plum Fairy awards the two with delightful sweets from around the world. As the magical evening fades, Clara suddenly awakens in the Stahlbaum parlor to the sight of the Nutcracker in its doll form. Christmas morning has come and Clara ponders if the extraordinary events of the evening were all a dream. Only Herr Drosselmeyer knows for sure.



PROUDLY SUPPORTS BALLET ARKANSAS



MATTHEW SEWELL
PHOTOGRAPHY

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The Nutcracker Spectacular

Friday, December 12, 2025 | 7:30 pm • Sunday, December 14, 2025 | 2:30 pm

ACT 1 PARTY SCENE

Clara	Ryann Renfro
Herr Drosselmeyer	William Heide
Fritz	Milo Smith
Party Children	Rhett Eichhorn, Annabelle Rash, Savanna Smith, Cheslee Oxner, Nora Johnson, Ivy Ward, Allie Umeda, Kavya Prasad, Bailey Claire Hitchcock
Governess	Erin Geohegan
Frau and Dr. Stahlbaum	Rachelle Maass and Edgar Hall
Maid	Chelsea Whelpley
Grandparents	Jeanne Anson, David Ratliff
Party Parents	Jim Wise, Naomi Crume, Robert Herring, Jenny Johnston, Ashay Patel, Lisa Mundy, Danny Wood, Sara Shalin
Ballerina Doll	Lauren Yordanich
Nutcracker Doll	Ben Piner (FR), Allen Sizemore (SU)
Rat King Doll	Liev Ewart

ACT 1 BATTLE SCENE

Rat King	Liev Ewart
Rats	Addison Wolfe, Molly Stuckey, Ann Marie Carter, Emily Vaughn, Lauren Garber, Azalea Farrell
Mice	Brooklyn Aday, Violet Andrews, Ariana Brown, Ella Cockerell, Cecily Fraser, Olivia Griffith, Frannie Harper, Hollis Hays, Isabella Hurst, Jenna Johnson, Olivia Jones, Locke Keller, Blaire Li, Virginia Marshall, Violet Smith, Hannah Umeda, Lauren Walsh
Fainting Mouse	Josie Mansfield
Lieutenants	Rayna Philip, Addie McCorvy, Flora Abraham, Holly Whiddon, Olivia Edmondson, Elizabeth Umeda
Infantry	Josie Claire Seelinger, Allie Dunavant, Chloe Bowman, Kylier Jackson, Madalyn Landers, Anna Li, Sarah Kent Robinson, Gracie Trentacosta, Bridget Price, Julia Hodge
Commandants	Evie Selig, Caroline Hudson, Clara Burks, Willa Dalvi, Olive Chunn, Finley Moore, Emma Kate Harris, Veronica Grigorian, Josie McKay
Artillery	Henleigh Chunn, Anne Frances Glancy, Vivian Henley, Kennedy Hill
Brigade	Lila Ayccock, Tali Clayton, Julia Mears, Carlie Catlett, Barrett Robinson

COMPANY MEMBERS SHOWN IN **BOLD**

KEY: FR Friday | SAM Saturday Matinee | SAE Saturday Evening | SU Sunday

Casting is subject to change

ACT 1 SNOW SCENE

Snow Queen and Snow King **Murray McCormack, Allen Sizemore** (FR),
Brittany Dowdy, Ben Piner (SU)
Snowflakes **Kerridwyn Schanck, Brittany Dowdy** (FR), **Leah Norwine,**
Meredith Loy, McKenna Ulbrick (SU) with Annalise Patel, Chloe Timpa,
Ella Liu, Audrey Johnson, Chloe Chance, Ella Edwards, Ava Lawson,
Emma McGraw, Matilda Ann Louvring, Randi Renfro, Lucy Busfield,
Anna Russell Brantley, Luca Peek, Berkeley Brown

— 15 MINUTE INTERMISSION —

ACT 2 PROLOGUE

Sugarplum Fairy and Her Cavalier **Lauren Yordanich and Aldrin Vendt**
Cherubs Eden Clock, Millie Castaldi, McCall Carter, Kennedy Harris, Addison Hawkins,
Mary Tate Hoskyn, Elise Burks, Annesley Keller, Kerrington Keller,
Charlotte St. Amour, Aida Murphy, Avery Mobley, Libby Wallace
Seraphs Alexandra Johnson, Emmy Kate Trimble, Rose Lovenstein
Trumpeter Kiran Patel
Archangels Casey Cochran, Rebecca Burn, Samantha Thompson, Alice Clock

ACT 2 LAND OF THE SWEETS

Nutcracker Prince **Ben Piner** (FR), **Allen Sizemore** (SU)
Spanish Hot Chocolate **Layla Terrell, Keith Newman** with Mara Baxter,
Abigail Craft, Charis Bowman, Addyson Huffstutlar
Arabian Coffee **McKenna Ulbrick, William Heide** with Lulu Wallace, Savannah Bowman,
Benlee Richards, Josie Wells, Izabella McCallum
Chinese Tea **Claire Churchill** with Audrey Barber, Claudia Lasley, Addie McCorvy,
Olivia Edmondson, Deena Watson, Mary Helen Faulkner,
Ava Claire McGraw, Olivia Yu
Russian Candy Cane **Liev Ewart** with Eden Harris, Cynthia Hildesheim, Sara Dalvi,
Helen Wierciak, Rosanna Louvring, Genevieve Baeder
French Marzipan and Her Shepherdesses **Meredith Loy with Murray McCormack, Sage Feldges**
Mother Ginger Tommie Tinker
Bon Bons Emma Uting, Audrey Burton, Halo Harris, Skylar Washington,
Montgomery Mansfield , Margaret Grobmyer, Lillie-Jade Williams,
Addison Thompson, Elliott Frazee, Jordyn Johnson
Dew Drop Fairy **Deanna Stanton**
Flowers **Brittany Dowdy, McKenna Ulbrick, Leah Norwine,**
Kerridwyn Schanck with Ava Lawson, Luca Peek, Lucy Busfield, Randi Renfro,
Matilda Ann Louvring, Emma McGraw

COMPANY MEMBERS SHOWN IN **BOLD**

KEY: FR Friday | SAM Saturday Matinee | SAE Saturday Evening | SU Sunday

Casting is subject to change

The Nutcracker Spectacular

Saturday, December 13, 2025 | 2:30 pm 7:30 pm

ACT 1 PARTY SCENE

Clara	Emory Compton
Herr Drosselmeyer	Aldrin Vendt (SAM), William Heide (SAE)
Fritz	Sawyer Beight
Party Children	Rhett Eichhorn, Lydia Hanley, Hallie Young, Madeleine Ogle, Naomi Pruiksmas, Savannah DiCarlo, Ella Boeder, Aimee Shellabarger, Emerald Looney
Governess	Linda Young
Frau and Dr. Stahlbaum	Rachelle Maass and Edgar Hall
Maid	Somerset Sea
Grandparents	Lou Ann Ratliff, David Ratliff
Party Parents	Jim Wise, Naomi Crume, Robert Herring, Jenny Johnston, Alex Hall, Lisa Mundy, Danny Wood, Katlyn Dicklaw
Ballerina Doll	Meredith Loy (SAM), Sage Feldges (SAE)
Nutcracker Doll	Allen Sizemore (SAM), Keith Newman (SAE)
Rat King Doll	Keith Newman (SAM), Ben Piner (SAE)

ACT 1 BATTLE SCENE

Rat King	Keith Newman (SAM), Ben Piner (SAE)
Rats	Natilya Carroll, Maddox Sowell, Connor McKenzie, Patterson Rae Hester, Anna Claire Beaton, Abigail Wildhirt
Mice	Ana Best, Elise Byram, Harmani Carroll, Avery Childs, Lydia Dimitrova, Arlow Harris, Keith "KJ" Johnson, Virginia Jones, Abigail Loudermilk, Charlotte Mabry, Isabel Nichols, Lakyn Ollison, Addie Pulido, Elizabeth Rozzell, Ava Jane Smith, Payton Stipsky, Stella Strobel, Anna Kate Williamson
Fainting Mouse	Caroline Rickels
Lieutenants	Martha Galdamez, Alaina James, Flora Abraham, Holly Whiddon, Lexie Rose Smith, Elizabeth Umeda
Infantry	Betty Hughes, Teagan Emison, Elisa Morgan, Evelyn Ann Hester, Coraline Chambers, Macie Melton, Brooklynne Hochstetler, Vivian Squires, Maddie Marshall, Maria Best
Commandants	Elizabeth (Ellie) Moore, Eva Gutierrez, Aurora Campbell, Caroline Rabenhorst, Sadie Pulido, Martha Ann Adams, Carys Deshotel, McKinnley Carroll, Caroline Kilgroe
Artillery	Breaker Evans, Bree Gundolf, Lawsynn Swanner, Kennedy Hill
Brigade	Anne Winthrop Rockefeller, Gabriella Beight, Verity Wyse, Braelyn Boatman, Savannah Beight

COMPANY MEMBERS SHOWN IN **BOLD**

KEY: FR Friday | SAM Saturday Matinee | SAE Saturday Evening | SU Sunday

Casting is subject to change

ACT 1 SNOW SCENE

Snow Queen and Snow King **Brittany Dowdy, Ben Piner** (SAM),
Murray McCormack, Allen Sizemore (SAE)
Snowflakes **Deanna Stanton** (SAM), **Murray McCormack** (SAM), **Lauren Yordanich** (SAM),
Sage Feldges (SAM), **Claire Churchill** (SAE), **Leah Norwine** (SAE), **Layla Terrell** (SAE),
McKenna Ulbrich (SAE) with Olivia Sherbet, Chloe Timpa, Alisa Menyaeva, Tamara Davis,
Chloe Chance, Olivia Tabor, Eden Beck, Haighlee Dorris, Shelby Fullington, Anna Beth Bagley,
Ellie Jennings, Olivia Owsley, Anabel Flores, Mary Caroline Boyette

— 15 MINUTE INTERMISSION —

ACT 2 PROLOGUE

Sugarplum Fairy and Her Cavalier **Meredith Loy and William Heide** (SAM),
Sage Feldges and Aldrin Vendt (SAE)
Cherubs Aubrey Cate Beaton, Ellanor Diemer, Ella Hanley, Audrey Dorsey,
Sallie Garrison, Aveline Cote, Willa Buchanan, Avery Leis,
Daphne Sims, Evelyn Richmond, Lyra Pullen, Virginia Metrailler
Seraphs Parker Kees, Poppy Copeland, Kate Machen
Trumpeter Boden Marshall
Archangels Sadie Pendergist, Olivia Marks, Lydia Fuller, Norah Davis
Nutcracker Prince **Allen Sizemore** (SAM), **Keith Newman** (SAE)

ACT 2 LAND OF THE SWEETS

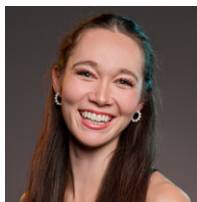
Spanish Hot Chocolate **Claire Churchill, Liev Ewart** (SAM), **Lauren Yordanich, Ben Piner** (SAE)
with Nora Buchanan, Lily Cruse, Zoey Rippetto, Maggie Wippo
Arabian Coffee **Sage Feldges, Aldrin Vendt** (SAM), **Deanna Stanton, Allen Sizemore** (SAE)
with Carolina White, Raegan Livingston, Allison Sadowski,
Claire Cullum, Marlee Hammock
Chinese Tea **Leah Norwine** (SAM), **Kerridwyn Schanck** (SAE)
with Jasen Brown, Lynn Johnson, Addie Grace Smith, Eliza Russ,
Deena Watson, Miriam Meek, Layla Chatham, Olivia Sherbet
Russian Candy Cane **Keith Newman** (SAM), **Liev Ewart** (SAE)
with Anna Buzbee, Avery Short, Nayah Banks,
Heléna Bock, Stella Pounders, Beckett Beene
French Marzipan and Her Shepherdesses **McKenna Ulbrich with Brittany Dowdy,**
Lauren Yordanich (SAM) **and Leah Norwine with**
Murray McCormack, Meredith Loy (SAE)
Mother Ginger Tommie Tinker
Bon Bons Lillian Senclair, Jane Bright, Charlotte “Lottie” Miller, Emma Long,
Darina Dementyeva, Mari Bess Pulla, Jane Pulla,
Sophia Molnar, Molly Turner, Ginny Sandvall
Dew Drop Fairy **Kerridwyn Schanck** (SAM), **Brittany Dowdy** (SAE)
Flowers **Claire Churchill, Deanna Stanton, Layla Terrell, Murray McCormack** (SAM),
Kerridwyn Schanck (SAE), with Eden Beck, Anabel Flores, Anna Beth Bagley,
Ellie Jennings, Shelby Fullington, Haighlee Dorris

COMPANY MEMBERS SHOWN IN **BOLD**

KEY: FR Friday | SAM Saturday Matinee | SAE Saturday Evening | SU Sunday

Casting is subject to change

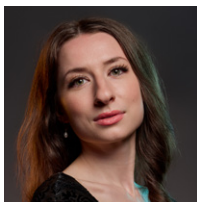
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Brittany Dowdy

Fifth Season

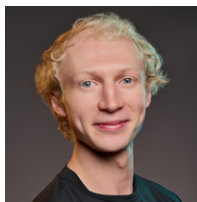
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Sage Feldges

Fourth Season

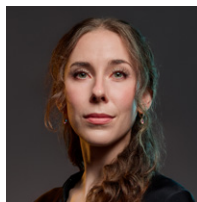
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William Heide

Second Season

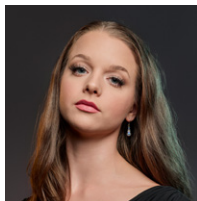
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Meredith Loy

Eleventh Season

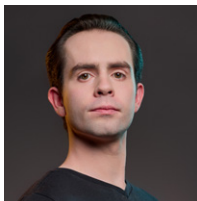
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Murray McCormack

Third Season

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Keith Newman

Fourth Season

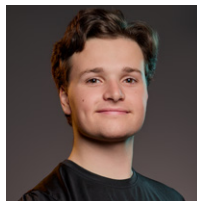
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Leah Norwine

Seventh Season

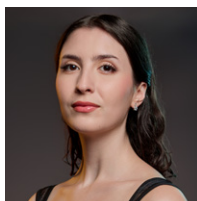
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Benjamin Piner

Second Season

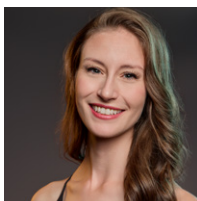
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Kerridwyn Schanck

Fourth Season

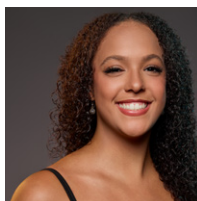
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Deanna Stanton

Thirteenth Season

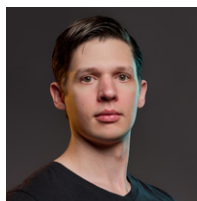
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Layla Terrell

Fourth Season

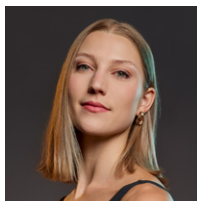
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Aldrin Vendt

Seventh Season

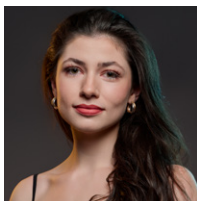
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Lauren Yordanich

Seventh Season

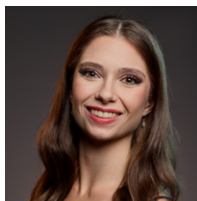
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McKenna Ulbrick

First Season

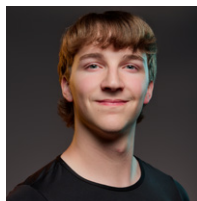
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Claire Churchill

First Season

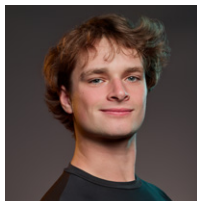
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Allen Sizemore

First Season

Sponsor: Dr. Julie Robinson



Liev Ewart

First Season

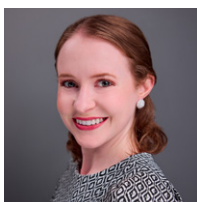
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Michael Fothergill
Executive and Artistic Director



Catherine Garratt Fothergill
Associate Artistic Director



Colin J. Neel
Director of Production



Mary Keck
Director of Engagement



Stephanie Ong
Director of Costumes



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Associate Artistic Director
Catherine Garratt Fothergill

Director of Production
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Geoffrey Robson, conductor

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Kiril Laskarov
Concertmaster
Dora Paley Ronnel
Concertmaster's Chair

Andrew Irvin
Concertmaster

Katherine Williamson
Assistant Concertmaster

†*Meredith Maddox Hicks
Principal Second Violin
Eric M. Hayward
Memorial Chair

‡Linnaea Brophy

Leanne Day-Simpson

‡Trisha McGovern Freeney

Kristen Kunkel

Sandra McDonald

Tom McDonald

Lauren Pokorzynski

Magdalena Ryszkowski

VIOLA

‡Katherine Reynolds
Principal
Dr. Howard & Celia
Barnhard Chair

Tatiana Kotcherquina

†Timothy MacDuff

Julian Pranata

CELLO

David Gerstein
Principal
Linda Garner Riggs Chair

Casey Buck

†Travis Scharer

‡Jacob Wunsch

BASS

Sara Neilson

Kevin Fink

FLUTE

Carolyn Brown
Principal

Mara Goree

PICCOLO

Mara Goree

OBOE

Leanna Renfro
Principal
Rachel Fuller
Memorial Chair

Lorraine Duso Kitts

ENGLISH HORN

Lorraine Duso Kitts

CLARINET

Marianne Shifrin
Principal

Karla Fournier

BASS CLARINET

Karla Fournier

BASSOON

Susan Bell León

Tom Dempster

HORN

David Renfro
Principal

Robin Dauer

TRUMPET

Andrew Stadler

Carl Mason
George Worthen
Memorial Chair

TROMBONE

Austin Motley
William "Bill" Vickery, Jr.
Memorial Chair

TUBA

Ed Owen
Principal
Greer & Barnett Grace
Chair in memory
of Gov. Frank White

TIMPANI

Rick Dimond
Principal
Arkansas Symphony
Orchestra Guild Chair

PERCUSSION

Erick Saoud

Ryan Lewis

HARP

Alisa Bekebrede
Principal

CELESTE

Carl Anthony
Principal
Guy & Brigita Gardner Chair



GEOFFREY ROBSON, *Conductor*

Winner of the 2017 Respighi Prize in Conducting, Geoffrey Robson has emerged as a force of artistic leadership throughout the USA and the state of Arkansas.

In 2023, the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra named Maestro Robson as its eighth Music Director after a four-year nationwide search. Prior to his appointment, his tenure as the ASO's Artistic Director and Principal Conductor was a significant success. He played an integral role in the planning, development, and design of the new ASO Stella Boyle Smith Music Center, which opened in September 2024. His influential leadership helped secure funding and community support for the orchestra's 11.75-million-dollar project. This unique music center

serves as headquarters for the orchestra and serves as an anchor in the community for artistic innovation, excellence, and education.

Robson continues to conduct critically acclaimed and sold-out masterworks, pops, chamber, and educational concerts. His innovative programming has welcomed new audiences into the hall and has inspired and energized the orchestra.

Robson regularly conducts opera and ballet, as well as symphonic and chamber music. His conducting teachers have included David Hayes, John Farrer, and Larry Rachleff. He loves to collaborate with creative individuals, and to make music outside of the 'classical' genre, especially improvised music.



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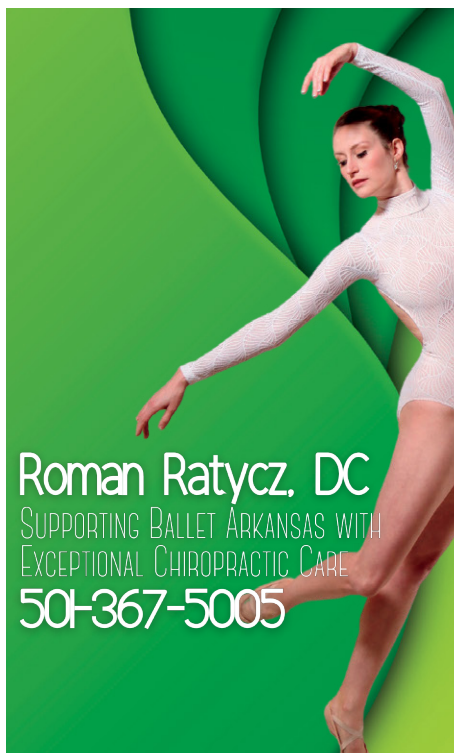
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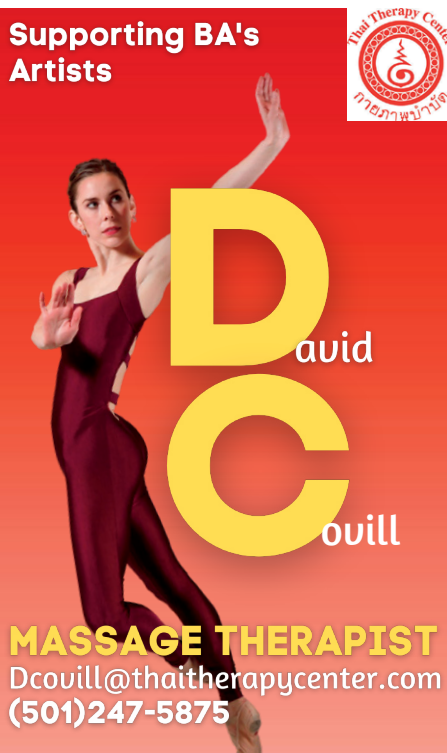
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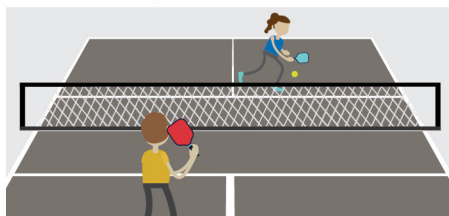
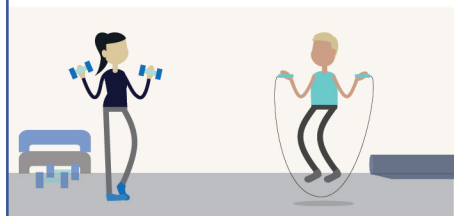
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