



Barbara Pontecorvo, Artistic Director

# Winter Repertory 2021

Pas de Quatre

Undine's Solo

Sonder

Epochal Event

Fairyland from  
Thumbelina

February 12-14, 2021

Live Streamed from  
Stuart Sebastian Performance Space

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AND many thanks to all who generously bid on and purchased desserts at the  
Awsome Dessert Auction Picnic in September!

Thank you also to Burt and Alice Saidel for their generous legacy gift in support of  
Gem City Ballet.

Gem City Ballet relies on donations from corporations and patrons like you for over  
half of its operating budget. Gem City Ballet is recognized as a 501(c)(3) not-for-  
profit corporation and all donations are tax-deductible. For more information, call  
937.550-9245 or visit [www.gemcityballet.org](http://www.gemcityballet.org)

## Gem City Ballet

(Incorporated as Ballet de Jeunesse, Inc.)

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# From the Director



Dear Friends,

Welcome to our 2021 Winter Series! (Do you sometimes get the feeling that 2020 is operating under one of those 16 month calendars?) We are thrilled to show you these ballets, a senior premiere, two premieres for Gem City Ballet and two company favorites.

*Pas de Quatre*, as staged by Laura Alonso, is pure classical comedy. These very famous ballerinas of the 1860's come together for a single night of 'unity' but can't resist making their feelings about each other

known. Every moment of the ballet is a chance to slight their peers.

*Undine's Solo* is about a young water sprite's quest to try to explain herself to her earth bound fiancé's family and friends. Her emotions and demeanor change as does the water she comes from. This six minute solo is a unique opportunity for a dancer to test her acting prowess, technique, stamina and ability to hold focus for what seems like a moment and forever.

*Sonder* is Peter Merz's sixth ballet for GCB. *Sonder* means the realization that each random passerby is living a life as vivid and complex as your own. Enjoy this beautiful work.

Annie Burns shows us that current events are affecting our children every bit as much as it is affecting adults. *Epochal Event* gives us a glimpse into our children's wishes, desires and fears.

*Fairyland* is the final act of Jonathan Tabbert's full length ballet, *Thumbelina*. We rejoice with the fairies at the news of Thumbelina's happiness over her wedding and that she gets her fairy wings!

I am proud of my dancers in their consistency, strength, (both physical and mental), imagination, and devotion. Even while I am yelling at them to a) stay in line and b) pull your mask up!, I remember that they are making their own history about this time period and will not let it stand in their way. I hope we can all do that.

*Barbara*

**Many Thanks** to Cindy Kaney and Lisa Darnell for their help iwth costumes!

# About Gem City Ballet

Gem City Ballet was formed on January 8, 1992. There were eight women and one man present at that first rehearsal. GCB has produced over 25 professional dancers since that time and is busy producing more. Dancers are admitted by audition only, and auditions are open to all serious dance students in the Miami Valley area.

GCB was formed for three main purposes: (1) to educate young dancers in the joys and rigors of ballet performance, (2) to make quality ballet performances available to a wider audience and (3) to provide both new and experienced choreographers an opportunity to create new works.

Gem City Ballet is a non-profit and completely volunteer company and requires outside financial help to continue its excellent work. You can help by donating funds that will be used for commissioning new and existing choreography and costumes.

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## Company Members

Christiana Allen	Lucy Arnold	Naomi Baldwin
Adrianna Brownfield	Abbie Burns	Annie Burns
Josie Buten	Caron Cleveland	Carly Darnell
Lian Detweiler	Ryese Diercks	Ava Evans
Hannah Geelhood	Amelia Johnson	Isabella Konya
Hannah McGuffey	Samantha Minneman	Hollie Montgomery
Elizabeth Nassmacher	Mira Seppi	Madelyn Stankas
Zoe Sweere		Ashley Zimmer

## Staff

<i>Artistic Director</i>	. . . . .	Barbara Pontecorvo
<i>Production Manager</i>	. . . . .	David Shough
<i>Seamstress</i>	. . . . .	Muberra Farrow
<i>Videographer</i>	. . . . .	Phil Detweiler

# Program

## Pas de Quatre

*GCB premiere - April 30, 2005*

*Choreography. . . . .* Alicia Alonso

*Set on Gem City Ballet by. . . . .* Laura Alonso

*Music. . . . .* Cesare Pugni

*Costumes. . . . .* Barbara Pontecorvo

*Lucille Grahn*

Lian Detweiler (Fri. & Sat.) Ava Evans (Sun.)

*Carlotta Grisi*

Zoe Sweere (Fri. & Sat.) Carly Darnell (Sun.)

*Fanny Cerrito*

Abbie Burns (Fri. & Sat.) Ryese Diercks (Sun.)

*Marie Taglioni*

Annie Burns (Fri. & Sat.) Lucy Arnold (Sun.)

## Undine's Solo

*Premiere - April 8, 2006*

*Choreography. . . . .* Stuart Sebastian

*Music. . . . .* Claude Debussy

*Costumes. . . . .* Peggy Borchers

*. . . . .* Barbara Pontecorvo

Annie Burns (Fri.)

Carly Darnell (Sat.)

Ava Evans (Sun.)

## Sonder

*GCB Premiere*

*Choreography. . . . .* Peter Merz

*Music. . . . .* Franz Schubert

*Costumes. . . . .* Barbara Pontecorvo

*Friday:*

Christiana Allen, Naomi Baldwin, Abbie Burns, Annie Burns, Lian Detweiler,  
Hannah McGuffey, Madelyn Stankas, Zoe Sweere, Ashley Zimmer

*Saturday, Sunday:*

Lucy Arnold, Carly Darnell, Ryese Diercks, Ava Evans, Hannah Geelhood,  
Amelia Johnson, Hollie Montgomery, Elizabeth Nassmacher, Mira Seppi

*Intermission*

# Epochal Event

*Premiere*

*Choreography.* . . . . Annie Burns

*Music.* . . . . Ezio Bosso

*Costumes.* . . . . Barbara Pontecorvo

*Friday, Saturday:*

Christiana Allen, Naomi Baldwin, Abbie Burns, Lian Detweiler,  
Hannah McGuffey, Madelyn Stankas

*Sunday:*

Lucy Arnold, Carly Darnell, Ryese Diercks, Ava Evans,  
Elizabeth Nassmacher, Zoe Sweere

## Fairyland from Thumbelina

*GCB Premiere*

*Choreography.* . . . . Jonathan Tabbert

*Music.* . . . . Franz von Suppé

. . . . . Franz Schubert

. . . . . Robert Schumann

*Costumes.* . . . . Barbara Pontecorvo

*Friday:*

Lian Detweiler, Zoe Sweere, Annie Burns, Hannah McGuffey  
with

Christiana Allen, Naomi Baldwin, Abbie Burns, Josie Buten,  
Caron Cleveland, Hollie Montgomery, Madelyn Stankas, Ashley Zimmer

*Saturday, Sunday:*

Lucy Arnold, Ava Evans, Carly Darnell, Ryese Diercks  
with

Andrianna Brownfield, Josie Buten (Sat.), Caron Cleveland (Sat.),  
Hannah Geelhood (Sun.), Amelia Johnson, Isabella Konya,  
Hollie Montgomery, Elizabeth Nassmacher, Mira Seppi (Sun.),  
Madelyn Stankas (Sun.), Ashley Zimmer (Sat.)

# Choreographers

**Annie Burns** (*Epochal Event*) has been dancing since she was four years old. In 2011, she transferred studios, and has been dancing at Pontecorvo Ballet Studios ever since. She plans to become an early childhood education teacher, but minoring in dance. She might become a dance teacher in the future though. She would just like to thank Barbara and everyone for giving her the chance to create a piece that means a lot to her. She is absolutely thrilled to have been given this wonderful opportunity to choreograph her own ballet, and it is a pleasure to see her visions come to life from beautiful dancers.

**Peter LeBreton Merz** (*Sonder*) is known as a master teacher for his enthusiastic and encouraging approach to ballet training. He has choreographed over 40 original ballets across the USA and internationally. His award-winning choreography relies heavily on his background in classical ballet, but is informed by his passion for contemporary dance forms. As a performer he worked with the Dayton Ballet, the Louisville Ballet and the Cincinnati Ballet. In 2002, he served as the Artistic Administrator for the USA International Ballet Competition in Jackson, MS. In 2004, he joined the faculty of Point Park, where he was an associate professor of dance and Head of Ballet. He was the director of Ballet West Academy from 2015-2020, overseeing that Academy's growth to four campuses and over 800 students. He has served as a judge and Master Teacher for Youth America Grand Prix, the American Dance Competition, the American Ballet Competition, and many other organizations. He has twice been named Outstanding Choreographer by the Youth America Grand Prix, and was also honored to be named Outstanding Teacher by that organization in 2014. He holds a BFA in Theater Design and Production from the University of Cincinnati's College Conservatory of Music, and an MBA in Sports, Arts, and Entertainment Management from Point Park University.

**Stuart Sebastian** (*Undine's Solo*), a native Daytonian, began his career as a dancer, but "retired" at age 23 to concentrate his creative energies on choreography. In the 1970s, he received commissions for works from, among others, Robert Joffrey, Hartford Ballet, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, and the Metropolitan Opera, where he choreographed ballets for the operas *Faust* and *Le Prophete*. In 1980, Sebastian returned to Dayton to become Artistic Director of Dayton Ballet, and for ten years enchanted audiences with ballets such as *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake*, *The Littlest Angel*, and *Dracula*. He also pursued international commissions, creating works for Chile's Santiago Ballet and the Royal Ballet of Flanders. Stuart Sebastian died in 1991.

**Jonathan Tabbert** (*Shostakovich Dances*) began his dance training at the Dayton Ballet School and then received a scholarship to study at The Harid Conservatory, where he was awarded a number of dance honors. In 1999 Jonathan completed his training at the School of the Hartford Ballet with supplemental training from the Houston Ballet Academy and American Ballet Theatre.

Jonathan had an illustrious performance career as a principal dancer with the Charleston Ballet Theatre as well as being a guest artist for Ballet Spartanburg, North Carolina State Ballet and the Greenville Ballet. After twelve years of being a valued staff member of the Charleston Ballet School he founded and directed their youth

company. He also held the title of company teacher and guest choreographer. His choreography became a staple in the repertoire as well as receiving a performance grant from the Harkness Foundation for his ballet *Jubilee*. Other credits include Guest Teacher and/or Choreographer for the Gem City Ballet, Victoria Ballet Theatre, Burklyn Ballet Theatre and The Charleston County School of the Arts. During his time as resident choreographer for Palmetto City Ballet he has created numerous original repertory works and new classics including *Little Match Girl*, *Creation*, *French Twist*, *Thumbelina*, *The Snow Queen* and *Cinderella*. Jonathan is also currently the Co-Founder/Director of the Palmetto City Ballet School and Palmetto City Youth Ballet.

**Alicia Alonso** (*Pas de Quatre*) is a Cuban prima ballerina assoluta and choreographer whose company became the Ballet Nacional de Cuba in 1955. She is best-known for her portrayals of Giselle and the ballet version of *Carmen*. From the age of nineteen, Alonso was afflicted with an eye condition and became partially blind. Her partners always had to be in the exact place she expected them to be, and she used lights in different parts of the stage to guide herself.

**Laura Alonso** (staging - *Pas de Quatre*), the daughter of world famous ballerina Alicia Alonso and famous teacher and coach Fernando Alonso, is herself known as a teacher, coach, and expert at staging the renowned classics. Although born in the United States, Alonso is a resident of Havana where she has an international dance school, Centro Pro Danza, which welcomes 1,500 students, and a professional performing company, The Ballet Classic of Havana. A teacher of world-class experience, Ms. Alonso has taught for the Cuban National Ballet, the Royal Danish Ballet, the Australian Ballet, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, the Cleveland and San Jose Ballet, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, the Tokyo Ballet, the Toronto Ballet, the Alberta Ballet and others.

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## **Gem City Ballet - 2020-21 Season**

October 17-18, 2020

Fall Repertory

December 13, 2020

Holiday Concert with Miami Valley Symphony Orchestra

February 12-14, 2021

Winter Repertory

April 16-18, 2021

Spring Repertory

Follow Gem City Ballet on Facebook or at [gemcityballet.org](http://gemcityballet.org) for updated and ticket information.























