

ORLANDO BALLET

JORDEN MORRIS | ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR'S CHOICE

PAQUITA

RESTAGED BY PHILLIP BROOMHEAD & YAN CHEN
ORIGINAL CHOREOGRAPHY BY JOSEPH MAZILIER

BREAKTHROUGH*

BY NATREA BLAKE

THE NEXT BIG THING

BY HEATH GILL

MARCH 23-26, 2023 | HARRIETT'S ORLANDO BALLET CENTRE

PATRONS GUIDE



* The presentation of new work by Natreia Blake in Orlando Ballet's 2022-2023 season is made possible, in part, with support from Dance/USA in partnership with Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation.

About Orlando Ballet

Founded in 1974, Orlando Ballet is Central Florida's only fully residential professional ballet company. Orlando Ballet produces year-round main stage productions at the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts and Harriett's Orlando Ballet Centre, featuring timeless masterpieces and innovative contemporary world premieres, achieving the highest level of professionalism and artistic excellence. Orlando Ballet promotes dance education through community enrichment programs, performance lecture demonstrations, the renowned Orlando Ballet School, and Orlando Ballet Second Company, a second pre-professional company to train and support dancers as they approach the start of their dance careers. For information about Orlando Ballet, please visit our website at OrlandoBallet.org.

Did You Know?

All OBII dancers are selected by the Orlando Ballet School Director and the Artistic Director through an audition process. They train, rehearse and perform with the professional company on a regular basis.

OBII dancers present new and classical works to underprivileged youth and senior citizens at free and affordable costs. OBII performs for over 50,000 individuals annually in local festivals, schools, nursing homes, and at Orlando's premium theatres. It is an opportunity for young dancers to expand their resumes while still continuing intensive ballet study.

OBII is the top level of the Orlando Ballet School and serves as the pre-professional bridge between the Trainee Program and the professional Company. Currently, two-thirds of the professional company are graduates of the OBII program. Participants in the OBII program receive a full tuition scholarship which includes all of their training as well as a scholarship to support other training-related expenses. In addition to a rigorous training schedule, they have numerous performance opportunities.

*OBII = Orlando Ballet Second Company



Dancers: Kate Gardinier & Charlie Mellor | Photo: Zavesco Photography

Preparing to See the Ballet

What is a mixed rep?

When many of our audience members think about ballet, they think about big story ballets such as *The Nutcracker*, *Giselle* or *The Sleeping Beauty*. However, a majority of companies will have what is called a “mixed-bill” or “mixed repertoire” within their season - shorter works, often 20-30 minutes, that will be performed alongside two or three other pieces in a program.

This kind of mixed rep programming dates back to the origins of ballet, when, in the court of Louis XIV, short, often abstract, ballets would appear in tandem with longer narrative dances or pantomimes. This tradition, modified, continued into the 19th century, when it was common to perform an excerpt from an opera or a short ballet before a full-length ballet on the same program.

Today, mixed rep performances often showcase works from both emerging and well-known choreographers which can showcase world-premieres or world-renowned pieces.

What pieces are included in *Director's Choice*?

Our first piece will be from the classical ballet *Paquita*. While *Paquita* is typically performed as a full-length story ballet, for *Director's Choice*, our second company will be featured in certain pieces pulled from the original production. You can learn more about the history of *Paquita*, along with the story on page 6.

Our second piece will be “Breakthrough” choreographed by Natreia Blake. The version our audiences will have the opportunity to enjoy is the fully finished version of her piece which won Dance Accelerator 2, a virtual competition done in 2021 with Orlando Ballet Company Dancers.

Lastly, our audience members may recognize the name Heath Gill, Orlando Ballet's new Rehearsal Director from his incredible piece “Confronting Genius” which premiered in Orlando as part of *The Premiere Collection* in 2021, another mixed-bill! “The Next Big Thing” will be his new world-premiere featuring Orlando Ballet's Second Company.

About the Choreographer | *Natrea Blake*



Natrea Blake
Choreographer

Natrea Blake was born and raised in New York City. She received her B.F.A in dance from The Juilliard School and graduated from the world famous High School for the Performing Arts (The Fame School). She also trained at Bernice Johnson, The Ailey School, Ballet Hispanico, and Peridance. Natrea's diverse background has given her the opportunity to work with many different choreographers such as Paul Taylor, Lar Lubovitch, Darrell Grand Moultrie, Hans Van Manen, David Parsons, Savion Glover and Marguerite Derricks. Natrea is currently an instructor at NYU and has also taught Contemporary, Modern, and Jazz at many arts institutions such as Touro College, Rutgers University, Broadway Dance Center (NYC), The Ailey School, Earl Mosley Institute for the Arts, Harbor Conservatory for the Performing Arts, Dance Cavise, Tulsa Ballet, and The Broadway Experience (NYC). Natrea was commissioned to choreograph a new work for Tulsa Ballet's second company summer of 2013.

Natrea is also an accomplished commercial and Hip Hop dancer who assisted Darrell Grand Moultrie on Beyonce's Mrs. Carter Tour 2013. Other credits include: Broadway's Shuffle Along (LAB), Fashion Rocks Live! at Radio City Music Hall (CBS), Law & Order (Trial by Jury), Don't Bother me I Can't Cope (LAB), Beyonce (Staples Center), Stars of Ballet and Broadway (Detroit Music Hall), The Elan Awards (NYC), and Milwaukee Repertory Theater "The Color Purple" (Assistant Choreographer). Natrea has had the pleasure of assisting the work of choreographer Darrell Grand Moultrie for over 20 years at major institutions including: Atlanta Ballet, The Juilliard School, The COCA School (St. Louis), The Ailey School, Perry Mansfield, Milwaukee Ballet, and also traveled to South Africa to teach and choreograph dance.

About the Choreographer | *Heath Gill*



Heath Gill
Orlando Ballet
Rehearsal Director

Heath Gill began his ballet career with a bang – literally. At age three, while waiting in the studio lobby for his older sister to complete her gymnastics class, the energetic tot began turning cartwheels. He miscalculated and crashed into the studio door causing the instructor to come out. Impressed by his athleticism she invited him to join the class. By age 11, the Indiana boy had advanced from gymnastics, tap and jazz, to ballet training. Gill ultimately joined The Children’s Center for Dance Education and began touring throughout the Midwest. “There is no better way to grow your comfort on stage and love for performance than to have the opportunity to do it a lot – and that we absolutely did,” Gill recalls.

As Rehearsal Director and Choreographer, Gill joins Orlando Ballet’s Artistic Director Jorden Morris and Associate Artistic Director Lisa Thorn Vinzant. In his new role, he will assist with choreography, and teach class. Gill's journey to stage Morris's latest production began over a decade ago when the young dancer caught Morris's eye at Atlanta Ballet's performance of *Moulin Rouge® The Ballet*. He would go on to join Orlando Ballet by assisting with bringing Morris's romantic homage to 19th-century Paris to life. With Gill's expertise, the highly anticipated *Moulin Rouge* production took the stage in February 2023 to rave reviews. “It feels incredibly fitting timing to be joining Orlando as they start to put together *Moulin Rouge*; I can’t think of a more poetic work to start with,” Gill said.

Gill received acclaim in Orlando last season when his own production entitled, “Confronting Genius”, was performed by Orlando Ballet as part of *The Premiere Collection*. He returns this season with “The Next Big Thing”, which will debut as part of *Director’s Choice* in March 2023. Like many professional dancers, over time Gill embraced a variety of dance styles. During his time in Atlanta he joined four principal dancers and co-created Terminus Modern Ballet Theatre which celebrates new and creative productions that incorporate classical and contemporary dance forms.

Through his many created works for Atlanta Ballet’s Wabi Sabi and as Resident Choreographer for Terminus Modern Ballet Theatre, he has also become a prominent choreographer in Atlanta. Notable works for TMBT include; *LORE*, *Horizons*, *In the Fallout*, and *Marley Was Dead, To Begin With*. Behind the scenes, he also served as TMBT’s Production Director helping facilitate the bringing to life of each new Terminus performance or idea.

About the Stagers



Phillip Broomhead
Orlando Ballet School Director

Phillip Broomhead was born in London, England and received his ballet training at the Royal Ballet School where he joined the company in 1981. He was promoted to soloist in 1983 and to principal dancer in 1986.

Phillip joined the Houston Ballet as a principal dancer in January 1991. In 2003 Mr. Broomhead was also appointed to the position of Ballet Master for the Houston Ballet in addition to his performance responsibilities as a principal dancer. In 2004 he retired from the stage and assumed his position of Ballet Master for the Houston Ballet on a full-time basis.

In March 1991, while on vacation in Washington D.C., Mr. Broomhead attended a Royal Ballet performance of Anthony Dowell's *Swan Lake*. The Royal Ballet's principal dancer sustained an injury during Act I and he finished the performance partnering Darcey Bussell as his Swan Queen. This performance won him worldwide critical acclaim. Mr. Broomhead has appeared as a guest artist with some of the world's leading companies including the Royal Swedish Ballet, the Scottish Ballet, and the Yugoslav Ballet. He has also appeared as a guest artist with many regional ballet companies in the United States.



Yan Chen
Principal Company & Academy Teacher

Yan Chen was trained at Shanghai Dance School, China and San Francisco Ballet School. In 1987, She was awarded the Paris Foundation of Dance Award at the Prix de Lausanne in Switzerland. She then joined The Washington Ballet under the artistic director Mary Day. In the fall of 1993, Ms. Chen joined the American Ballet Theatre®, and six months later, she was promoted to soloist.

As one of American Ballet Theatre's most lyrical and versatile dancers, she has performed many leading roles including Juliet in *Romeo & Juliet*, title role in *Cinderella*, Princess Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*, the Sylphide in *La Sylphide*, Swanilda in *Coppelia*, Gulnar in *Le Corsaire*, Desdemona in *Othello*, and Giselle in *Giselle*.

Ms. Chen always had a passion for teaching. Since 1994, she has served as guest teacher with the Orlando Ballet School and the company (then the Southern Ballet Theater). In 2009 she became the Ballet Master with Orlando Ballet. She is currently a faculty member and adjudicator for American Ballet Theatre's Summer Intensive program and Guest Ballet Master for the American Ballet Theatre studio company.

About the Ballet | *Paquita*

History

The original production

Paquita was originally created and staged for the Paris Opera Ballet by French Ballet Master, Joseph Mazilier to the music of the French composer, Édouard Deldevez. A relatively unknown name in ballet history, Deldevez was born in Paris and started out as a violinist at the Paris Opéra, progressing to conductor. The earliest ballet he is known to have worked on was Mazilier's *Lady Henriette* (1844), which was created for Adèle Dumilâtre, who is most famous for originating the role of Myrtha, Queen of the Wilis in *Giselle*. Deldevez was one of three composers who were commissioned to compose the music for a single act; he was given the third act, while Friedrich Burgmüller (composer of Jean Coralli's *La Péri*) composed the second act. Deldevez's music was a success in its own right and he would go on to compose three of his own full-length ballets for the Opéra: *Eucharis*, *Paquita* and *Vert-Vert*.

Synopsis

The ballet takes place during Napoleon's occupation in Spain and tells the tale of Paquita, the heroine. She was abducted by Romani people however is actually of noble birth. Early in the story, she saves a French officer's (Lucien) life from the Spanish government, who had sent an assassin, Iñigo, to kill him. Naturally, they fall in love although their social ranks keep them from being together. Through a series of dramatic events, Paquita comes to learn of her true identity and ultimately is able to marry Lucien, who, it turns out, is her cousin.



Photos courtesy of the Petipa Society

About the Repertoire | "The Next Big Thing" & "Breakthrough"

"The Next Big Thing" by Heath Gill

Following the success of last season's highly acclaimed "Confronting Genius" performed during *The Premiere Collection*, choreographer Heath Gill has literally created his next big thing -- a dynamic contemporary production that will leave audiences awe-inspired and eager to talk about what they've just seen.

"My inspirations for this stem from themes of anticipation and desire," Gill explained. "This premiere is revealing itself to be a whimsical and ironic contemporary piece that is energetic, rooted in rhythm and lives in a slightly twisted gameshow-esqueworld."

"Breakthrough" by Natreia Blake

The title speaks volumes about its creator Natreia Blake and her impact as a young choreographer. After winning Orlando Ballet's 2021 Dance Accelerator 2 national choreography competition, New York-based Blake was named one of five choreographers to receive the prestigious Dance/USA Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) grant for its Female Choreographers in Ballet Initiative. The initiative is supported by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation. Nominated by Orlando Ballet, Blake will premiere her long-awaited work as part of *Director's Choice*.

"We couldn't be more thrilled to premiere Natreia's work; she has made quite an impression on us all," said Orlando Ballet Executive Director Cheryl Collins. "We have a very active community engagement initiative designed to expand access to ballet for all, which aligns with Natreia's creative interests."



Hitomi Nakamura & John Abenanty in Gill's "Confronting Genius" | Photo: Michael Cairns

Glossary of Ballet Terms



ballet – 1. an artistic dance that usually tells a story or expresses a mood, performed by either a soloist or a group of dancers in a theatre, concert hall, etc. 2. a dramatic or representational style of dancing to music 3. a particular piece or performance of ballet.

ballerina – a female ballet dancer. Male ballet dancers are simply called “male dancers”.

choreography – the art of inventing and composing dances. A choreographer is the person who sets the dance and often teaches it to the dancers.

coda – The concluding segment of a performance or suite of dances.

pas de deux – a dance for a couple.

repertoire – a collection of pieces that a company or dancer knows or is prepared to perform.

révérence – a bow, curtsy, or grand gesture of respect to acknowledge the teacher and the pianist after class or the audience and orchestra after a performance. After a classical ballet, a bow or choreographed *révérence* may be performed in character



Photo: Zavesco Photography

Five Performances Only!
March 23-26, 2023
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