



# Peabody @Home 2020-21 concert season

Thursday, June 10 • 7:00 pm  
Virtual Broadcast Hall

## PEABODY PREPARATORY DANCE SPRING SHOWCASE: PORTRAITS

### **public figures**

Nathaniel Hunt, choreographer  
Franki Graham, rehearsal director

#### **Ben Frost (b. 1980)**

*Through the Roof of Your Mouth* from *By the Throat*

#### **John Debney (b. 1956)**

*Simon Is Dismissed* from *The Passion of the Christ*

#### **Senking (Jens Massel b. 1969)**

*Great Day* from *List*

#### **Origamibiro (Thomas Hill, Andy Tytherleigh, and The Joy of Box)**

*Brother of Dusk & Umber* from *Shakkei*

#### **Exist Strategy (Anthony Baird)**

*What Was Left Unsaid* from *Lie Still and Fade*

Words written and spoken by Michelle Obama  
from the 2016 Democratic National Convention

Courtesy of PBS NewsHour

Nathaniel Hunt, Sound Editing

**Natalie Fox (understudy), Jaron Givens, Hannah Havrilla,  
Julia Mammen, Kate Nemoy, Emma Rifat, Rita Tsapatsis,  
Alina Tucker (understudy), and Lizzie Wiggin, dancers**

*“How we insist that the hateful language they hear from public figures on TV does not represent the true spirit of this country. How we explain that when someone is cruel or acts like a bully you don’t stoop to their level. No, our motto is, ‘when they go low we go high.’”*

— Michelle Obama

Special thanks to original cast members Declan Casey, Nora Redgrave, and Beatrice McAleer

Funded by the generosity of the Levi Family Distinguished Visiting Artists Fund for Preparatory Dance

### **Pandemic Portraits Interlude**

### **PANDEMIC PORTRAITS: SHORT DANCE INTERLUDES**

#### **Bookworm**

Natalie Fox, choreographer/dancer

##### **Joe Hisaishi**

*One Summer’s Day* from *Spirited Away*

#### **Out for a Walk**

Hannah Havrilla, choreographer/dancer

##### **Randy Newman**

*Monster, Inc.* from *Monsters, Inc.*

#### **Coffee**

Julia Mammen, choreographer/dancer

##### **Agnes Obel**

*September Song*

#### **Work Day**

Emma Rifat, choreographer/dancer

##### **Walter Wanderley**

*Meditation*

#### **Mowing**

Rita Tsapatsis, choreographer/dancer

##### **René Aubry**

*Replay*

#### **Rose Garden**

Evelyn Stins, choreographer/dancer

##### **Alexis Ffrench**

*Bluebird*

#### **Throwback**

Alina Tucker, choreographer/dancer

##### **Haddaway**

*What Is Love 7” Mix*

#### **Lapse**

Lizzie Wiggin, choreographer/dancer

##### **Michael Wall**

*Spiral*

## **Glimpse**

(Adapted excerpt from original; premiered 2018)

Franki Graham, choreographer

**Michael Wall**

*Hope from Music for Solo Piano*

**Salma Hassanien, Nathan Harris, Hannah Kehoe (understudy), Nyla Ratajczak-Dickson, Sophie Scherz, Ellis Thompson, Alkinoey Tsapatsis, Camille Valdez, Sloane Wehman, and Madison Wesson, dancers**

*The changing seasons represent the inevitability of progressing time. As each season turns into the next we reminisce for the past, express hope for the future, and eventually recognize that all we have is the present moment.*

## **Pandemic Portraits Interlude**

### **Variations in G**

Durante Verzola, choreographer

**Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges (1745–1799)**

*Air and Variations in G Major, G. 175*

**Helia Hung, Caitlyn Messenger, Nyla Ratajczak-Dickson (understudy), Emma Rifat, Rita Tsapatsis, Sloane Wehman (understudy), and Lizzie Wiggin, dancers**

*Durante Verzola's new work is set to the music of Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges. The composer's Aria and Variations in G Major serves as the backbone of a ballet that allows five dancers to utilize their individual qualities and gifts to express the shifting dynamics and feelings heard within the music. Each variation is distinct, giving the dancers the freedom to paint their own "portrait" using non-narrative neoclassical ballet language. Though each has a different temperament, each variation relates back to the original theme introduced at the beginning of the work. This serves as an abstract reminder that although people come from many different circumstances and ways of life, there are universal qualities that make them all human. Additionally, Verzola wanted to highlight the music of Chevalier de Saint-Georges, an 18th century Black composer whose work deserves to be more widely known for its range and innovation within classical music.*

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## **Pandemic Portraits Interlude**

### **Beneath the Surface**

Franki Graham, choreographer

**Michael Wall**

*5115 from Mix 2*

**Natalie Fox, Jaron Givens, Hannah Havrilla, Julia Mammen, Emma Rifat, Rita Tsapatsis, Alina Tucker, Lizzie Wiggin, dancers**

*A single grain of sand can blend into the uniformity of the beach but a microscope can reveal its remarkably unique qualities. Pushed and pulled by the ebb and flow of the tide, these inanimate objects can teach us to look closely, challenge assumptions, and celebrate the attributes that make us special.*

## **Variations from *Swan Lake*, Act II**

Choreography after Lev Ivanov and Marius Petipa  
Melissa Stafford and Lan Zheng, staging  
Debra Robinson Deckelbaum, rehearsal assistant

**Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)**

*Swan Lake*, Op. 20 (arr. Riccardo Drigo and Modest Tchaikovsky)

**Natalie Fox, Hannah Havrilla, Julia Mammen, Caitlyn Messenger, Emma Rifat, Evelynne Stins, Rita Tsapatsis, Alina Tucker, dancers**

## **Pandemic Portraits Interlude**

### ***Unwritten***

(Graduating Senior Piece 2021)

Franki Graham, choreographer

**Natasha Bedingfield, Danielle Brisebois, and Wayne Rodrigues**

*Unwritten* (performed by Boyce Avenue and Diamond White)

**Jaron Givens, Hannah Havrilla, Kate Nemoy, Emma Rifat, Caitlin Saylor-Kraft, Evelynne Stins, Rita Tsapatsis, Alina Tucker, dancers**

## **Congratulations to all our graduating seniors:**

*Alejandro Barrera, Jaron Givens, Hannah Havrilla, Serenity Holmes, Darius Kaiser, Kate Nemoy, Charlie Niccolini, Emma Rifat, Caitlin Saylor-Kraft, Evelynne Stins, Rita Tsapatsis, and Alina Tucker*

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

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**DEBRA ROBINSON DECKELBAUM** holds her BA in Dance/Performance/Choreography from Goucher College. Deckelbaum began studying dance in Baltimore with Ellen Gniazdowski and Wally Saunders. She studied at the Joffrey Ballet School and at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center. Returning to Baltimore, she danced with the Maryland Ballet and attended Goucher College. Upon graduation, Deckelbaum began to study with and teach alongside Wendy Robinson at the Baltimore Ballet and the Peabody Preparatory. She has been on the faculty at the Baltimore School for the Arts since 1988. Deckelbaum is an ABT® Certified Teacher, who has successfully completed the ABT® Teacher Training Intensive in Primary through Level 7 and Partnering of the ABT® National Training Curriculum.

**FRANKI GRAHAM** (she/her) is a Baltimore-based dancer, choreographer, and educator who believes in the transformative power of movement. Graham has danced locally, regionally, and internationally in many traditional and non-traditional spaces, with various artists and companies including a European tour with Transitions Dance Company. Graham's creative practice is rooted in the company she co-founded and directs, LucidBeings Dance, which has been described as "... straddling the line between sensible and visceral" (*BMore Art*, 2018). Her work has been presented widely across the DMV and has been commissioned for professional and student companies. As a dance educator, Graham has worked within the public school system, as well as in private institutions and in higher education. Her certification as a Functional Awareness Movement Educator informs her teaching practice. Graham holds a Masters in Dance Performance from the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London, England, funded as a Leverhulme Scholar, and a Bachelors in Dance with an Education Certificate from the University of Maryland Baltimore County, funded as a Linehan Artist Scholar. Graham is currently Adjunct Faculty at the University of Maryland Baltimore County, and the Artistic Coordinator for Contemporary Dance at the Peabody Preparatory of the Johns Hopkins University.

**NATHANIEL "NATE" HUNT** (he/him/his) is a dancer, educator, choreographer, model, and creative director. He graduated summa cum laude with a BFA in Dance from Long Island University - Brooklyn under the direction of Dana Hash-Campbell. While achieving his undergraduate degree, Hunt furthered his training with Joffrey Ballet, Cedarlake Contemporary Ballet, Jacob's Pillow, and Earl Mosley's Institute of the Arts all with partial or full scholarship.

Hunt has been a member of the Metropolitan Opera Ballet, Ailey II, Ballet Hispanico, Company XIV, Zvi Dance, Diversity of Dance, and Adaptations Dance Theater, and has had the honor to perform alongside the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Tony Award Winner Derek Hough, and the world-renown singer/songwriter Stevie Wonder. He was the first Black Nutcracker Prince in Company XIV's infamous winter production of *Nutcracker Rouge*, and in 2016, he performed Alvin Ailey's masterpiece *Revelations for President Barack Obama* in the opening ceremony of the Hannover Messe in Germany. He has performed works by notorious choreographers Alvin Ailey, Dwight Rhoden, Ronald K. Brown, Lorin Latarro, Alexei Ratmansky, Alexandra Damiani, Matthew Rushing, and Annabelle Lopez Ochoa. Hunt is represented by McDonald Selznick Associates talent agency and is featured in LEXXE's music video "Drink Me" as well as Cold Arizona's music video "Open Highway Head Start." He can be seen as the villainous Macavity in the *Cats On Tour 2020* TV Commercial.

Hunt's choreographic and teaching highlights include Ailey II, Bucknell University, Adaptations Dance Theater, Long Island University, FLOCK, and Santa Fe College among many others. As an undergrad, Hunt's choreography was selected to be performed at the Kennedy Center at the National College Dance Festival in 2012. His choreography has been showcased at the Manhattan Movement & Arts Center, STEPS on Broadway, Brooklyn Music School, and the Maui Arts & Cultural Center.

In 2020, Hunt co-founded the NOIR 20/20 Experience with Azure Antoinette, an initiative fighting for racial equality centered on Black experience, Black movement, and Black revolution through art, poetry, and action.

**MELISSA STAFFORD**, director and department chair, studied ballet with Marcia Dale Weary and the faculty at the Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet. She began student teaching at CPYB under Weary's guidance and later taught for their Five-Week Summer Ballet Program. After earning a BA in psychology from Houghton College, Stafford joined Peabody Dance in 2001 under the leadership of Carol Bartlett and Barbara Weisberger. In 2006, Peter Stark invited her to become ballet principal for the Patel Conservatory Youth Ballet in Tampa, Fla. During her six years at that school, Stafford also served as manager of the dance programs at the Patel Conservatory. She returned to Peabody Preparatory in 2012 as dance department chair. Additionally, Stafford has been on the adjunct faculties of Peabody Conservatory and Goucher College and has taught for summer intensives with Orlando Ballet School and Next Generation Ballet.

Stafford's students have danced professionally with American Ballet Theatre, Contemporary West Dance Theatre, Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company, Royal Swedish Opera Ballet, Sarasota Ballet, Ailey II, Ballet Austin II, Boston Ballet II, and Orlando Ballet II. Many of her students continue their studies in pre-professional training programs, magnet arts high schools, and university dance programs.

In 1999, Stafford received the Regional Dance America/Northeast Region Monticello Award for Emerging Female Choreographers. She has also served as rehearsal coach for Next Generation Ballet and for children's roles in Orlando Ballet's production of *The Nutcracker*. Stafford is the recipient of the 2017 Peabody Preparatory Excellence in Teaching Award.

**DURANTE VERZOLA** has choreographed works for Miami City Ballet, Joffrey Studio Company, Pennsylvania Ballet II, Ballet Dallas, Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, Miami City Ballet School, Columbia Ballet Collaborative, Goucher College, School of Pennsylvania Ballet, Peabody Dance, and more.

His work has been described as “sharp and witty ... so vibrant it is almost like a celebration of classicism and vitality with non-derivative balletic language ... he continues to present classical ballet vocabulary in unfussy, thrilling ways,” by Philadelphia Dance. *The Philadelphia Dance Journal* praised him as “a choreographer on the rise, with a gift for designing space and succeeds at directing moving bodies [with] a sophisticated blend of theatrical flair and carefully crafted movements,” and Explore Dance wrote, “for a 20-something choreographer, Verzola startled with his inventiveness via straightforward balletics.”

Verzola is from Lansing, Kansas. He began his training with Marisa Paull and continued at the Kansas City Ballet School and Kansas School of Classical Ballet.

At 16, he left home to train with the Miami City Ballet School and attended summer courses at School of American Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet School, and Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet. He danced with Pennsylvania Ballet II and The Suzanne Farrell Ballet in works by Balanchine, Robbins, Wheeldon, Keigwin, and Petipa.

**LAN ZHENG** was born in China and started dancing at the age of 9. At age 10, she was one of only 15 girls in all of China selected by the Beijing Dance Academy for its prestigious pre-professional ballet program. She trained there for seven years under the guidance of Shu Xiang Wang and Sin Ron Cao, studying classical ballet technique as well as Chinese Folk Dance, Russian and Spanish Character Dance, and modern dance. Upon her graduation in 1999, Zheng was hired by Shanghai Ballet Company, one of the five national professional ballet companies in China. She rose through the ranks in the Shanghai Ballet Company and became a Soloist Dancer in 2004. During her 13-year tenure at the Shanghai Ballet Company, Zheng performed in productions directed by Jose Martinez and Pierre Lacotte of the Opéra National de Paris, Derek Deane of the English National Ballet, Ben Huys of the New York City Ballet, and Bertrand d’At of the Opéra National du Rhin. As a result, although trained under the Vaganova style, Zheng has been influenced by the French and English styles as well. She performed internationally in Australia (2002), Spain (*Coppelia*, 2003), Japan (*Swan Lake*, 2006), United States (*Coppelia*, 2007), Thailand (*Romeo and Juliet*, 2009), and Finland (2010). In 2011, she was recognized as a “Master” dancer by the Chinese government.

Zheng began her teaching career in 2007 at the Xiao Ying Xing Dance School in Shanghai, China, where she taught ballet for young children. In 2012, she moved to New York City and joined the Ballet des Amériques as a Company Dancer and Teacher. There, she taught advanced ballet technique to the School’s students enrolled in the pre-professional program. She relocated to Baltimore in 2013.