The Joffrey Ballet

Saturday–Sunday, March 7–8, 2015
Space Place Theater
Hancher
University of Iowa
Hancher dedicates these performances to the memory of John Strauss, a passionate supporter of Hancher and The Joffrey, who passed away in July 2014.
Patrons are requested to turn off pagers, cellular phones, and signal watches during performances. The taking of photographs and the use of recording devices are not allowed.

Program and artists subject to change.

Cover: Victoria Jaiani and Fabrice Calmels in After The Rain. Photo by Herbert Migdoll.
SON OF CHAMBER SYMPHONY
(Excerpts)

Choreography by STANTON WELCH
Music by JOHN ADAMS
Costume Design by TRAVIS HALSEY
Lighting Design by JACK MEHLER, recreated by JESSICA VIDDEN

First Movement
Anastacia Holden and Rory Hohenstein
Derrick Agnoletti, Yoshihisa Arai, Ogulcan Borova, John Mark Giragosian

Second Movement
April Daly and Dylan Gutierrez

By arrangement with Hendon Music, Inc., a Boosey & Hawkes company, publisher and copyright owner.

BELLS
(Pas de deux)

Choreography by YURI POSSOKHOV
Music by SERGEI RACHMANINOV
Costumes by SANDRA WOODALL
Lighting Design by JACK MEHLER, recreated by JESSICA VIDDEN

Victoria Jaiani and Temur Suluashvili

Commissioned for The Joffrey Ballet by Bruce Sagan and Bette Cerf Hill in appreciation for many years of pleasure and joy.

INTERMISSION

MANINYAS
(Second Movement)

Choreography by STANTON WELCH
Music by ROSS EDWARDS
Staged by LOUISE LESTER
Scenic and Costume Design by STANTON WELCH
Lighting by LISA J. PINKHAM, recreated by JESSICA VIDDEN

Anastacia Holden, Victoria Jaiani, Miguel Angel Blanco

These performances of Maninyas by Ross Edwards are given by permission of Hal Leonard Australia Pty Ltd.
THE MAN IN BLACK

Choreography by JAMES KUDELKA
Music by JOHNNY CASH
Staged by GERARD CHARLES
Costume Design by JIM SEARLE, HOAX COUTURE
Lighting by TRAD A. BURNS, recreated by JESSICA VIDDEN

Ogulcan Borova, John Mark Giragosian, Rory Hohenstein, Amber Neumann

For Jim, Further On Up The Road

AFTER THE RAIN

(Pas de deux)

After the Rain © by CHRISTOPHER WHEELDON
Music by ARVO PÄRT
Staged by JASON FOWLER
Costume Design by HOLLY HYNES
Lighting by MARK STANLEY, recreated by JESSICA VIDDEN

Victoria Jaiani and Fabrice Calmels

When it came to selecting music for his new work for The Joffrey Ballet, Stanton Welch began by looking for a variety of music to offer to Ashley Wheater. During that process there was one piece that really caught his imagination, Son of Chamber Symphony by John Adams. Mr. Welch thought that Mr. Adams’s deconstruction of the music was like looking at the inner workings of a clock. He found the music inspired him to move in both expected and unexpected ways.

While listening to the music Mr. Welch already began to see the structure of his future ballet. As a choreographer, he likes to strip away the layers and to show the dancers, at the edge of their ability, riding the top of their physical wave. Just as the composer took a classical musical structure and deconstructed it, so does the choreographer take standard ballet traditions and opens them out to discover new interpretations and greater awareness. Throughout the ballet there are references—more of an inspiration than direct quotes—to many classical works, turned inside out and evolved. Mr. Welch wants the audience to feel familiar with what they are seeing, but it is not important for them to know exactly why.

Mr. Welch says that “so much of ballet is about hiding the difficulties and seeking to attain seamless movement. Here I want to show the seams.” The costuming underscores this too. Recognizable forms are literally turned inside out, and show the inner construction marks and understructure of the garments. The women wear recognizable, but stylized tutus, the geometric shape of which forms an integral part of the movement and choreographic structure. Mr. Welch says that there is no correct response that an audience member should have to his work, but he hopes that they will be left with a feeling. Son of Chamber Symphony is a dance work that can be enjoyed on many levels. The dance can be enjoyed as a visual enhancement of the score (being married so well to the music), or for the pure physical achievements of the dancers, or, for those with a greater familiarity with the classical repertoire, it can be fun to spot the short quotes or allusions to familiar works within the piece.

Today, we excerpt two sections from the complete Son of Chamber Symphony; the opening movement and the second movement, pas de deux.

STANTON WELCH, CHOREOGRAPHER

In July 2003 the acclaimed Australian choreographer Stanton Welch assumed leadership of Houston Ballet, America’s fourth largest classical ballet company. Mr. Welch is one of the most sought after choreographers of his generation,
having created works for such prestigious international companies as Houston Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, the Australian Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet, and Royal Danish Ballet.

Mr. Welch was born in Melbourne to Marilyn Jones, O.B.E., and Garth Welch, A.M., two of Australia’s most gifted dancers of the 1960s and 1970s. In 1986, he began his training at the late age of 17, quickly winning a scholarship to San Francisco Ballet School. In 1989, he was engaged as a dancer with the Australian Ballet, where he rose to the rank of leading soloist, performing such principal roles as Des Grieux in Sir Kenneth MacMillan’s Manon, Lensky in John Cranko’s Eugene Onegin, Camille in Ronald Hynd’s The Merry Widow, and Alan Strang in Equus. He has also worked with internationally acclaimed choreographers such as Jiří Kylián, Nacho Duato, and Maurice Béjart.

Mr. Welch’s choreographic career developed during his time with the Australian Ballet. In 1990, he received his first choreographic commission from the company, marking the beginning of a series of commissioned works over the next 14 years and developing his diverse choreographic style. For the Australian Ballet he has created The Three of Us (1990); Of Blessed Memory (1991), for which he was voted best new choreographer in 1992 by readers of the British magazine Dance & Dancers; Divergence (1994), which has been performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. and City Center in New York; full-length productions of Madame Butterfly (1995) and Cinderella (1997); Red Earth (1996); X (1999); Velocity (2003). He has created a new The Sleeping Beauty for the Australian Ballet which premiered in September 2005. Madame Butterfly has become a signature work for Mr. Welch internationally, and is in the repertoires of Houston Ballet, National Ballet of Canada, Atlanta Ballet, Singapore Dance Theatre, Boston Ballet, Pittsburgh Ballet Theater, and the Royal New Zealand Ballet. In 1995, Mr. Welch was named resident choreographer of the Australian Ballet. That same year, he was commissioned to create Corroboree for the Australian Ballet to perform at “United We Dance,” a dance festival in San Francisco celebrating the 50th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter and featuring major companies from across the world, premiering new works.

BELLS
(Pas de deux)

Choreography by YURI POSSOKHOV
Music by SERGEI RACHMANINOV
Costumes by SANDRA WOODALL
Lighting Design by JACK MEHLER, recreated by JESSICA VIDDEN

Commissioned for The Joffrey Ballet by Bruce Sagan and Bette Cerf Hill in appreciation for many years of pleasure and joy.

World Premiere: The Joffrey Ballet, May 4, 2011, Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, Chicago, IL.

This pas de deux is drawn from Bells, Yuri Possokhov’s first choreographed work for The Joffrey Ballet. Bells “mixes classic form with seething intensity... Possokhov embraces an often exhilarating tradition only to tease and tickle it whenever the mood strikes” (Chicago Tribune).

When Ashley Wheater commissioned the ballet, he requested a work that would give the Joffrey dancers a chance to use their ballet-school technique with all its muscle and soul. Possokhov responded with a work that he describes thus: “My choreography is physically hard, and the music is romantic but with a twist—’with strength inside,’ as a Russian expression puts it.”

Although, as Possokhov says, “There is no scenario for the ballet, just pictures, memories, feelings,“ there is a wealth of allusion to enjoy with this work. The pas de deux evokes Possokhov’s Russian roots, but also is informed by the passage of his life. It is an inspired blend of the Russian traditions, of his formative training at the Bolshoi and the innovations to which he was exposed as part of his later American career.

Contrasts abound in this ballet: soft weeping arms and stronger, more aggressive gestures; melancholy and wit; recognizable images, such as a kiss that leave the spectator with a sense of meaning.

Possokhov offers this quote from W.H. Auden: “Each lover has a theory of his own, about the difference between the ache of being with his love and being alone.”

YURI POSSOKHOV, CHOREOGRAPHER

After receiving his dance training at the Moscow Ballet School, Yuri Possokhov danced with the Bolshoi Ballet for ten years, working primarily with Ballet Master Yuri Grigorovich. During this decade, he was promoted through the ranks to principal dancer. In 1992, he joined the Royal Danish Ballet as a principal dancer, at the invitation of Ballet Master Frank Andersen. The following December, Mr. Possokhov was cast as Prince Desiré in Helgi Tomasson’s The Sleeping Beauty and after being invited to perform in San Francisco Ballet’s opening night gala, he moved west. In 1994, he joined San Francisco Ballet as a principal dancer. In 1999, he organized and performed in a Russian tour entitled, Ballet Beyond Borders. Sixteen dancers from San Francisco Ballet performed on the tour, which traveled to cities throughout Russia.

Following his retirement as a principal dancer from the company, Mr. Possokhov
was named choreographer in residence in May 2006. His final engagement with the company as a principal dancer was on tour to New York’s Lincoln Center Festival in summer 2006. As a choreographer, his credits include Songs of Spain, choreographed in 1997 for dancer Muriel Maffre; A Duet for Two, created the same year for Joanna Berman; and Impromptu Scriabin, for Felipe Diaz. In 2000, he completed a new work for a dancer at the Mariinsky Ballet, as well as 5 Mazurkas for the Marin Dance Theatre.

Mr. Possokhov’s Magrittomania was commissioned for San Francisco Ballet’s Discovery Program in 2000, and in April 2001 he received an Isadora Duncan Dance Award for outstanding choreography for the work. In 2001, he choreographed for ice skaters Renée Roca and Gorsha Sur. Works for the San Francisco Ballet include Damned (2002), Study in Motion (2004), Reflections, La Valse (2005); Ballet Mori (2006), Firebird (2007), Fusion (2008), Diving into the Lilacs (2009), and The Rite of Spring (2012). In 2004, Possokhov’s Firebird premiered at Oregon Ballet Theatre and the following year he created another work for the company. In February 2006, the Bolshoi Ballet premiered his Cinderella. In February 2008, the Georgia State Ballet gave the American premiere of Mr. Possokhov’s one-act work, Sagalobeli. For the Joffrey, Yuri has choreographed Bells and Don Quixote.

**MANINYAS**

(Second Movement)

Choreography by STANTON WELCH
Music by ROSS EDWARDS
Staged by LOUISE LESTER
Scenic and Costume Design by STANTON WELCH
Lighting by LISA J. PINKHAM, recreated by JESSICA VIDDEN

A mix of classical and contemporary ballet, Maninyas is a small abstract work, a series of pas de deux and pas de trois. Set to Maninyas Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, a work by Australian composer Ross Edwards, the piece features five couples who move in and out of a series of shimmering curtains or veils. “This piece is a process of unveiling,” explained choreographer Stanton Welch. “It’s about falling in love. It examines how in relationships you gradually unlayer yourself and how scary, dark and open it is to reveal yourself to another without protection. The dancers are undressing themselves spiritually, as well as physically.”

Originally created for San Francisco Ballet in 1996, Maninyas was Mr. Welch’s first commission outside his home company, the Australian Ballet, and his first American exposure, which led to commissions with other companies. He considers Maninyas one of the turning points for his career and one of his most successful ballets. “It’s a very connected piece, very much a part of what made me a choreographer.”
THE MAN IN BLACK

Choreography by JAMES KUDELKA
Music by JOHNNY CASH
Staged by GERARD CHARLES
Costume Design by JIM SEARLE, HOAX COUTURE
Lighting by TRAD A. BURNS, recreated by JESSICA VIDDEN

Originally commissioned by BalletMet, Columbus.

World Premiere: April 24, 2010, Capitol Theatre, Columbus, OH

The Man in Black is a celebration of American working-class grit and of the man whose gravelly voice embodied it so movingly, Johnny Cash. Six Cash songs—all covers from the later part of his career—are given visual resonance in a suite of dances for an ensemble of three men and a woman, all in cowboy boots. The choreography riffs off several popular American country-western dance styles—line, square, swing, step dancing—retaining their vernacular, almost colloquial character, yet generating imagery that complements the songs’ varying moods and emotional undercurrents. The “Damn your eyes” defiance of the traditional folk song Sam Hall contrasts with the aching melancholy of Trent Reznor’s (Nine Inch Nails) Hurt and heartache of Gordon Lightfoot’s If You Could Read My Mind. Dance chains unravel and reassemble in surprising ways. Formations stomp decisively or glide across the stage as if wafted by a desert breeze. The fluid partnering and sculptural groupings generate a stream of arrestingly poetic images. Rather than portray defined characters, the dancers project a naturalistic immediacy that connects at a visceral level with the spirit of the music. The choreography, like the songs that inspire it, is an ode to the human spirit, socially congenial, yet proudly independent; vulnerable, yet resilient.

“Only such a master of his craft as Kudelka could draw from the vernacular of American country-western dance styles to create a work so inventive, so alert to the music and their lyrics, and so deeply moving.” (Toronto Star)

JAMES KUDELKA, CHOREOGRAPHER, is widely acknowledged as one of North America’s most innovative choreographers. His mastery of both classical ballet and modern/contemporary dance has earned him commissions from companies—some 20 in all—as stylistically diverse as American Ballet Theatre, Chicago’s Hubbard Street Dance and Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal.

Even as a student at Canada’s National Ballet School, Kudelka demonstrated a choreographic interest in exploring innovative approaches. While adept in the classical ballet vocabulary, he infuses it with a contemporary sensibility acquired from his intense interest in modern movement idioms.

Kudelka’s work covers an impressive range, from virtuoso pas de deux, through large-scale and always arresting adaptations of such classics as Swan Lake, The Nutcracker, and Cinderella, to boldly innovative creative collaborations with dancers, designers, and musicians.

Kudelka has never been afraid to tackle psychologically challenging subject matter in his story ballets—he views dance as a primary medium of artistic discourse—and, through his gift for movement metaphor, he infuses poetic, emotional meaning into his many non-narrative works.
After nine distinguished years as artistic director of the National Ballet of Canada (1996–2005) Mr. Kudelka continues to undertake collaborative projects that engage and challenge him as a choreographer.

**AFTER THE RAIN**
(Pas de deux)

After the Rain © by CHRISTOPHER WHEELDON  
Music by ARVO PÄRT  
Staged by JASON FOWLER  
Costume Design by HOLLY HYNES  
Lighting by MARK STANLEY, recreated by JESSICA VIDDEN

World Premiere: January 22, 2005, New York City Ballet, New York State Theater, New York, NY  
Joffrey Ballet Premiere: October 13, 2010, Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, Chicago, IL

Christopher Wheeldon’s pas de deux from *After the Rain* is the second half of a two-part work, the first featuring three couples. The pas de deux is set to Arvo Pärt’s spare and tender duet for piano and violin, *Spiegel im Spiegel*. In a series of unfolding partnering moves, the dancers explore the shifting emotions of their relationship. At times they are close and tender with one another, while at other times they inhabit the same space but are separated and searching for one another.

**CHRISTOPHER WHEELDON,** DIRECTOR AND CHOREOGRAPHER, joined New York City Ballet (NYCB) in 1993 and was promoted to Soloist in 1998. He served as NYCB’s first-ever Artist-in-Residence in 2000–2001 and was named NYCB’s first Resident Choreographer in July 2001. Since then, he has choreographed at least one ballet a year for NYCB. Outside the ballet world, he choreographed *Dance of the Hours* for the Metropolitan Opera’s production of Ponchielli’s *La Gioconda* (2006), as well as ballet sequences for the feature film *Center Stage* (2000), and *Sweet Smell of Success* on Broadway (2002). In 2007, Wheeldon founded Morphoses/The Wheeldon Company. In 2009, Wheeldon worked with Richard Eyre on a production of the opera *Carmen* at the Metropolitan Opera House, and in 2010 his new version of *The Sleeping Beauty* had its premiere with the Royal Danish Ballet. His new full-length ballet, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, was created for the Royal Ballet and given its premiere at the Royal Opera House on February 28, 2011. *Thirteen Diversions* (created for American Ballet Theatre in 2011) and *Les Carrillons*’ world premier formed an all-Wheeldon evening at the NYCB in January 2012. In 2014, Wheeldon created a full-length version of *A Winter’s Tale* for The Royal Ballet and directed and choreographed a musical version of *An American In Paris* which premiered at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris.

His awards include the Martin E. Segal Award from Lincoln Center, the American Choreography Award, a *Dance Magazine* Award, and the London Critic’s Circle Award for Best New Ballet for *Polyphonia*. In 2013, his production of *Cinderella* won the Benois de la Danse. He also won for *Aeternum* the 2013 Olivier Award for Best New Dance Production, and for *A Winter’s Tale* the 2014 Leonard Massine Prize for Choreography.
This year, **THE JOFFREY BALLET** celebrates its 20th anniversary of being in Chicago. Known as the “Johnny Appleseed” of American dance, it is fitting that it calls this intrinsically American city home.

Joffrey Ballet has been hailed as “America’s Company of Firsts.” The Joffrey Ballet’s long list of “firsts” includes being the first dance company to perform at the White House at Jacqueline Kennedy’s invitation, the first to appear on television, the first classical dance company to go multi-media, the first to commission a rock ‘n’ roll ballet, the first and only dance company to appear on the cover of *Time* magazine, the first company to have had a major motion picture based on it, Robert Altman’s *The Company*, and the first U.S. ballet company to livestream video of a rehearsal on YouTube.

For more than a half-century, The Joffrey Ballet’s commitment to taking world-class, artistically vibrant work to a broad and varied audience has created a solid foundation that continues to support the company’s unprecedented capacity for achieving important “firsts.” Today, the Joffrey, which has been hugely successful in its former residences in New York and Los Angeles, lives permanently in its brilliant new facility, Joffrey Tower, in the heart of America, Chicago, Illinois. The company’s commitment to accessibility is met through an extensive touring schedule, an innovative and highly effective education program including the much lauded Academy of Dance, Official School of The Joffrey Ballet, Community Engagement programs, and collaborations with myriad other visual and performing arts organizations.

Classically trained to the highest standards, The Joffrey Ballet expresses a unique, inclusive perspective on dance, proudly reflecting the diversity of America with its company and audiences and repertoire which includes major story ballets, reconstructions of masterpieces, and contemporary works.

Founded by visionary teacher Robert Joffrey in 1956, guided by celebrated choreographer Gerald Arpino from 1988 until 2007, The Joffrey Ballet continues to thrive under internationally renowned Artistic Director Ashley Wheater and Executive Director Greg Cameron. The Joffrey Ballet has become one of the most revered and recognizable arts organizations in America and one of the top dance companies in the world.

To learn more about The Joffrey Ballet, please visit joffrey.org.
ASHLEY WHEATER, artistic director of The Joffrey Ballet, has dedicated his life to dance. He was born in Scotland and trained at the Royal Ballet School in England. While at the school, he worked with Frederick Ashton in Benjamin Britten’s Death in Venice and performed at Covent Garden in numerous productions, including Swan Lake, The Sleeping Beauty, Giselle, and The Dream. Having graduated to the upper school of the Royal Ballet, Mr. Wheater danced in many full-length productions and performed with Rudolph Nureyev in Nureyev and Friends at the London Coliseum.

After leaving the Royal Ballet, Mr. Wheater joined the London Festival Ballet where he continued to work with Nureyev in his Romeo and Juliet and The Sleeping Beauty and Glen Tetley in Sphinx and Greening, along with a huge repertoire of classics and new creations. Under the artistic direction of John Field, he was promoted to principal dancer at the age of 21. In 1981, he joined the Australian Ballet where he continued dancing principal roles in both classical and contemporary work, especially in the John Cranko full-lengths.

Mr. Wheater joined The Joffrey Ballet in 1985 at the invitation of Gerald Arpino. For the next five years, he performed various works by American choreographers including William Forsythe, Gerald Arpino, Mark Morris, Paul Taylor, and Laura Dean, as well as repertoire by Ashton and Cranko.

Joining the San Francisco Ballet in 1989, he continued to cultivate his creative career while working with choreographers Helgi Tomasson, James Kudelka, David Bintley, and many more. In 1997, he became Ballet Master at the San Francisco Ballet, and in 2002, assistant to the artistic director.

Since his appointment in 2007 as artistic director of The Joffrey Ballet, Mr. Wheater has built upon the vibrant legacy of founders Robert Joffrey and Gerald Arpino. True to Joffrey’s vision for the company, he honors ballet masterpieces and seeks to preserve them, he is constantly in search of new creative voices, and he presents work relevant to our community and our times. Under his direction, world-class choreographers are creating new work for the company. He has introduced choreography by Val Caniparoli, Alexander Ekman, William Forsythe, James Kudelka, Jessica Lang, Edwaard Liang, Lar Lubovitch, Wayne McGregor, Yuri Possokhov, Stanton Welch, and Christopher Wheeldon. Mr. Wheater has added new full-length works, including Lar Lubovitch’s groundbreaking Othello, Ronald Hynd’s The Merry Widow, the world premiere of Yuri Possokhov’s Don Quixote, Krzysztof Pastor’s Romeo and Juliet, Stanton Welch’s La Bayadere: The Temple Dancer, and Christopher Wheeldon’s Swan Lake.

In 2008 Mr. Wheater was the recipient of the Boeing Game-Changer Award in recognition of his commitment to community engagement in Chicago and to the celebration of diversity through dance. In 2010, Mr. Wheater, representing The Joffrey Ballet, was named Lincoln Academy Laureate, the highest honor presented by the State of Illinois. The Chicago Tribune selected Mr. Wheater as 2013 “Chicagoan of the Year” for his contributions to dance.
As part of Hancher’s ongoing efforts to place artists at the center of academic life, papermaker Drew Cameron was on campus for a week-long residency in February, working with a number of UI classes. He led a variety of papermaking workshops and discussions with students in studio arts, English literature, history, and the Center for the Book. He connected with the UI Veterans Association and did a public talk at the Iowa City Public Library.

Drew is best known for his work with the Combat Paper Project, where he takes military uniforms and turns them into paper. He’s really interested in the people behind the uniforms and telling their stories, especially in workshops.

Drew’s residency was tied to the Kronos Quartet’s performance of Beyond Zero: 1914-1918, since Drew was a creative consultant for the piece.

In addition to Drew’s residency, Kronos members David Harrington and Sunny Yang worked with UI new music ensembles on Saturday morning before their public performance at The Englert Theatre on Saturday, February 7.

All photos (except for Drew Cameron print detail) by Miriam Alarcón Avila
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