

SACRAMENTO BALLET

VISIONS



MARCH
21-23

beer & ballet



MAY 29-
JUNE 1

SACRAMENTO
70 YEARS
BALLET
ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION
2024/25 SEASON
ARTISTIC/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: ANTHONY KRUTZKAMP

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A Final Bow

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BALLET



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Cover: *Visions* - Wen Na Robertson & Enrico Hipolito;
Beer & Ballet - Isabella Velasquez. This page: Wen Na Robertson.
Page 10: Enrico Hipolito. Page 26: Juan Negreira.
Page 28: Hailey Rozzano-Keefe. All photos by Tony Nguyen.

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(ahn 'fahss) Position of the body in which the dancer is facing directly towards the audience.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT SACRAMENTO BALLET DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT THOMAS MCLAUGHLIN AT TMCLAUGHLIN@SACBALLET.ORG

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LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Hello Everyone,

Welcome to *Visions* and *Beer & Ballet*. These two productions represent the pinnacle of creativity, boldly pushing the boundaries of the arts. *Visions* showcases diverse and thought-provoking choreography by Thang Dao, Julia Feldman, and Amy Hall Garner. This performance reaffirms Sacramento Ballet's role as a leader in innovative and exploratory works, and I am thrilled that, in our 70th season, we have the privilege of presenting three world premieres. I chose the name *Visions* for this part of the season because I see each choreographer as a true visionary in our field. Thank you for your continued support, which allows us to cultivate the future of dance.

For the first time, we are performing *Beer & Ballet* at The Sofia Theater. I selected this venue in celebration of our anniversary and to honor Kaori Higashiyama and Ava Chatterson as they retire from the stage. Both have dedicated their artistic lives to Sacramento Ballet and our community, leaving a lasting impact. Kaori and Ava, you will be deeply missed, but I know you'll remain a part of the Ballet in many ways.

Your patronage plays a vital role in keeping our artists dancing and propelling our Company toward a future of artistic excellence. Please take a moment to support our dancers, staff, and productions. Ticket sales cover only a portion of each show's cost—we need your help to launch us into the future.

Please enjoy your evening.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony Krutzkamp', written in a fluid, cursive style.

ANTHONY KRUTZKAMP

Artistic/Executive Director

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Photo by David Hoffmann

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LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT



WELCOME PATRONS, SUBSCRIBERS, DONORS, AND SPONSORS!

I love our *Visions* and *Beer & Ballet* series because they showcase ballet's continual evolution, bringing our audiences new, innovative works grounded in rigorous classical ballet training and technique. It got me thinking about how ballet has evolved since I danced for Sacramento Ballet . . . many years ago.

While I have often worried about the effects of social media, especially as a mother, posts from SacBallet make me feel otherwise—students answering fun questions, company class reels showcasing incredible talents, or insights from gifted visiting choreographers and conductors. I'm in awe of the extraordinary talent within SacBallet, including our own dancer and choreographer Julia Feldman, whose works are presented on our main stage. These glimpses make me so proud of how far we've come in 70 years and of our ability to share this caliber of artistry with the people of Sacramento and beyond.

Sharing SacBallet's talent online has, in many ways, expanded what's possible in ballet. Just as the four-minute mile once seemed unattainable, I now see our dancers executing turns, lifts, and jumps beyond anything we imagined in my generation.

And yet, what I love most about ballet is the celebration of individuality. Even as these technical feats evolve and grow, artistry remains at ballet's core. Amazing achievements are impressive, but they fall flat if not infused with each dancer's musicality, grace, and power. SacBallet dancers possess such beautiful, unique qualities that captivate us individually while coming together as a stunning whole.

That's why I find programs like *Visions* and *Beer & Ballet* so special—they not only highlight the evolution and individuality of our dancers but also offer audiences a rare opportunity to experience fresh, original works up close.

With all this in mind, you can have confidence in following us on social media. What we see in our SacBallet reels accurately reflects the joy, energy, and talent I witness in person—in our school or at rehearsals and shows. Sharing this gift with the greater art world can inspire and expand what is possible, as well as add a new facet to everyone's enjoyment of life.

Thank you Genevieve Szaly, our Director of Outreach and Social Media Manager, and Colby Damon, our Marketing Director, for your beautiful posts!

Our work would not be possible without our loyal patrons and friends, as well as our incredibly generous sponsors and donors. Your support means everything to us! On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you SO much!


Enjoy the performance!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Paoletti".

ALYSSA PAOLETTI

President, Sacramento Ballet Board of Directors

@sacballet @schoolofsacballet

Click a dancer's
image to read bio 

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TRAINEE PROJECT



Front Row (left to right): Jade Janikula, Yumeno Takechi, Abby Burnette, Kayla Soto, Jacey Harris, Chloe Boyd, Luna Quaglia

Middle Row (left to right): Fiona Galvin, Ming Diller, Logan Betts, Brooke Fallon, Christopher McGowan, Dariah Strickland, Ana Smith, Jocelyn Hylton, Emilina Jarvis, Isabella Morales

Back Row (left to right): Ellie Carlson, Camille Anderson, Tayten DeGarmo, Abigail McPheeters, Ashby Wilson (Not Pictured), Murphy Brazzell

ABOUT SACRAMENTO BALLET

Since 1954, Sacramento Ballet has been a beacon of artistic excellence in the California Capital Region, delivering world-class dance performances, education, and community outreach programs. A cornerstone of Sacramento's cultural community, its mission is to enhance the human condition through dance and to make it accessible to everyone.

As the region's only dance company to maintain a roster of professional dance artists, Sacramento Ballet captivates thousands of patrons each year with its enthralling performances and community outreach events. Unique among local arts organizations, Sacramento Ballet welcomes internationally renowned dancers and choreographers to live and create groundbreaking artistic works right here in our beautiful city, and serves as a representative of California's thriving cultural scene on national and international stages.

Sacramento Ballet is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, funded by ticket sales and individual donations, as well as contributions from corporate, foundation, and government entities. This vital support enables the company to present unparalleled, world-class programming that inspires and uplifts, while expanding the reach of the artform through educational and outreach initiatives. ■



Victor Maguad & Isabella Velasquez.
Photo by Marissa Gearhart

VISIONS

A male and a female dancer in white leotards are captured in a dynamic pose against a deep purple background. The female dancer is in the foreground, with her arms extended horizontally to the sides and her legs in a wide, crouched position. The male dancer is positioned behind her, also in a similar pose, looking directly at the camera. The overall mood is artistic and dramatic.

SACRAMENTO
70 YEARS
Ballet
ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION

2024 / 25 SEASON

ARTISTIC/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: ANTHONY KRUTZKAMP

**MARCH
21-23**

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Dance is an art form in constant motion—not only in the physical sense but in its evolution. From its classical origins to the contemporary stage, ballet has always thrived on reinvention. Choreographers and dancers alike push its boundaries, exploring new avenues of movement and reimagining its traditions. The pursuit of innovation is not just an artistic endeavor; it is essential to the survival of the craft. Without new works, ballet would become a relic rather than a living, breathing art.

This philosophy is at the heart of Sacramento Ballet's *Visions*, a program dedicated to the presentation of innovative dance works. Featuring three world premieres by Amy Hall Garner, Thang Dao, and Julia Feldman, this year's presentation of *Visions* is a platform for bold exploration—an evening where ballet is not merely performed but redefined.

The program brings together choreographers whose work embodies the evolution of movement and the expansion of ballet technique. Amy Hall Garner, one of today's most sought-after voices in contemporary ballet, seamlessly blends athleticism and theatricality, crafting works that pulse with energy and musicality. Her choreography, seen in renowned companies such as New York City Ballet and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, reflects a deep understanding of both classical form and modern expression.

Thang Dao, whose poetic choreographic style is rooted in both the rigor of classical ballet and the fluidity of contemporary movement, brings a distinctive voice to *Visions*. With a repertoire that spans national stages, Dao's work often explores transformation and human connection—two themes that align seamlessly with the essence of innovation in dance.

Completing the program is Sacramento Ballet's own Julia Feldman, whose work is characterized by its intricate musicality and forward-thinking approach to movement. Feldman's choreography captures the intersection of tradition and progress, a hallmark of Sacramento Ballet's commitment to artistic growth.

As Sacramento Ballet celebrates its 70th anniversary, *Visions* underscores the company's commitment to artistic evolution. For seven decades, Sacramento Ballet has honored its classical roots while championing new voices in dance. This milestone season is not just a reflection of the company's history, but a declaration of its future—one that continues to embrace the cutting edge of choreography, ensuring that ballet remains vital and forward-thinking for generations to come. ■



SCAN HERE FOR CASTING AND PROGRAM INFORMATION

CHOREOGRAPHERS



THANG DAO

Choreographer

Thang Dao is an acclaimed choreographer and educator based between Los Angeles and New York City. He earned his MFA from Hollins University ('21) and an MA from New York University ('09), with formal dance training at The Juilliard School and Boston Conservatory (BFA '01).

Dao has crafted original works for leading companies, including Sacramento Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Ballet Austin, BalletX, Ailey II, PHILADANCO!, Saint Louis Dance Theatre, and ballet22. His choreography has been featured at renowned institutions such as Jacob's Pillow and Taiwan National University of the Arts, and presented at universities across the U.S., including the University of Arizona and Boston Conservatory. His works have been performed internationally across the U.S., Europe, and Asia, and have received widespread critical acclaim.

A dedicated educator, Dao has taught masterclasses for dance departments worldwide. His teaching portfolio includes The Juilliard School, Boston Conservatory, University of Arizona, Barnard College, UC Los Angeles, UC Irvine, Oklahoma University, University of Texas at Austin, COCA, Taiwan National University of the Arts, Tsoying High School for the Arts, Orange County High School for the Arts, and Los Angeles County High School for the Arts.

He is recognized for his distinctive style and thought-provoking works, with notable accolades such as the Audience Choice Award for *Stepping Ground* at Ballet Austin's 1st Biannual New American Dance Talent competition, where it won four consecutive nights. Dao is also a recipient of the 2008 Princess Grace Choreography Fellowship, the 2009 Special Project Grant, and a 2012 Vilcek Prize finalist for Creative Promise in Choreography. His work *Waiting Women* was highlighted at the NYCDAF Gala: *Destiny Rising* at the Joyce Theater, and he was a key creative contributor to the *James Brown Project: Get on the Good Foot* at the Apollo Theater. In 2017, he secured 1st Prize for his choreography at the DAP Festival in Pietrasanta, Italy.

Most recently, Dao was honored with the 2022 #launchPAD residency from Works & Process at the Guggenheim, where he developed movement research for his commission with Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. He is thrilled to be working with Sacramento Ballet. Follow him on Instagram @tawndu.



Photo by Rachel Seva

JULIA FELDMAN

Choreographer

Originally from Davis, CA, Julia Feldman received her training under Pamela Hayes of Pamela Hayes Classical Ballet. She began her professional career as a dancer with Sacramento Ballet in 2011 and is currently a Company Artist. Feldman developed her passion for choreography through Sacramento Ballet's annual *Beer & Ballet* showcase, creating new works for the program every year since 2012.

In 2015, she co-founded Capital Dance Project (CDP), a collective of professional dancers based in Sacramento that fosters collaboration between choreographers, musicians, and artists. In 2019, she was one of four choreographers selected for the National Choreographer's Initiative in Irvine, CA, under the direction of Molly Lynch.

Feldman was commissioned in 2021 to co-create a new *Nutcracker* for Sacramento Ballet under the direction of Anthony Krutzkamp. The following year, she was honored to be selected for the New York Choreographic Institute's *Spring Session*, directed by Adrian Danchig-Waring. Her first choreographic commission for Sacramento Ballet, *Hearts*, premiered in April 2022. She is thrilled to be presenting her second work, *Pockets of Light*, for the company's 70th anniversary season.

CHOREOGRAPHERS



Photo by Luis Alberto Rodriguez

AMY HALL GARNER

Choreographer

Amy Hall Garner is an internationally known choreographer based in New York City creating works in the ballet, modern, and theatrical genres. She is a native of Huntsville, Alabama, and a graduate of The Juilliard School.

Her work has been commissioned by numerous dance companies and organizations including New York City Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Miami City Ballet, Paul Taylor Dance Company, Joffrey Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, BalletX, Ailey II, ABT Studio Company, Collage Dance Collective, Works & Process at the Guggenheim Museum, and The

Juilliard School, to name a few. Also, she created a new children's ballet titled *Rita Finds Home* for The Joffrey Ballet Academy and reimagined Baltimore School for the Arts' new production of *The Nutcracker: A Magical Tale in Mount Vernon*. Currently, Garner is the resident choreographer at Carolina Ballet.

She personally coached Grammy Award winner Beyoncé, providing additional choreography for *The Mrs. Carter Show World Tour*. Her theatrical choreography credits include *The Color Purple* (Milwaukee Repertory Theater), *Choir Boy* (Yale Repertory Theatre), *Dreamgirls* (Paramount Theatre) and *Il trovatore* (Houston Grand Opera). Her numerous awards and fellowships include participating in Alvin Ailey's New Directions Choreography Lab supported by the Ford Foundation, and being one of the first recipients of the Joffrey Ballet's Choreography of Color Award (now titled Winning Works), a Virginia B. Toulmin Fellow through the Center for Ballet and the Arts-National Sawdust Partnership, and a Hearst Choreographer-in-Residence at Princeton University. As a teaching artist, Garner is an adjunct professor at New York University's New School on Broadway at Tisch School of the Arts.

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PROGRAM INFORMATION

BEER & BALLET: A SACRAMENTO TRADITION THAT CONTINUES TO INSPIRE

In the ever-evolving landscape of dance, few performance series have had as lasting an impact as Sacramento Ballet's *Beer & Ballet*. First conceived by former Artistic Director Ron Cunningham, this beloved Sacramento tradition has since spread to ballet companies across the United States, becoming a fixture in the contemporary dance world. What began as a bold experiment—pairing the city's thriving craft beer and wine scene with cutting-edge choreography—has become a dynamic incubator for new artistic voices, offering both dancers and audiences a fresh perspective on ballet's boundless possibilities.

Beer & Ballet is more than an evening of performance; it is an opportunity for Sacramento Ballet's company dancers to step to the front of the room, take creative risks, and explore the complexities of choreography and leadership. For many, it is the first time they have the chance to craft original movement, direct their fellow artists, and develop a unique choreographic voice. This series has served as the launching pad for many company dancers who have gone on to receive choreographic commissions from a number of prestigious companies and festivals, including Richmond Ballet, BalletX, and The New York Choreographic Institute, among others. The informal, experimental nature of *Beer & Ballet* fosters an environment where creativity can flourish, unbound by the constraints of traditional productions.

Beyond its impact on artists, *Beer & Ballet* has played a crucial role in broadening the reach of ballet itself. By embracing a relaxed atmosphere—where audiences can enjoy locally crafted beer and wine, generously donated by our sponsors Bike Dog Brewing and Old Sugar Mill Wineries—Sacramento Ballet has welcomed in new patrons who might not have otherwise attended a ballet performance. The shared love of fine libations and live performance creates a space where art feels immediate, accessible, and profoundly engaging. In this way, *Beer & Ballet* has become a true community event, bringing together longtime ballet lovers and first-time attendees alike.

As Sacramento Ballet celebrates its 70th anniversary, *Beer & Ballet* stands as a testament to the company's enduring commitment to innovation and artistic excellence. It reflects the company's rich history while continuously pushing the boundaries of what ballet can be. This season's *Beer & Ballet* promises to continue that tradition, providing a platform for the next generation of choreographers while inviting audiences to share in the excitement of dance as it is being created, refined, and redefined.

In an art form that thrives on reinvention, *Beer & Ballet* is not just an event—it is a movement, an evolution, and a celebration of the creative spirit that defines Sacramento Ballet. ■



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PROGRAM INFORMATION

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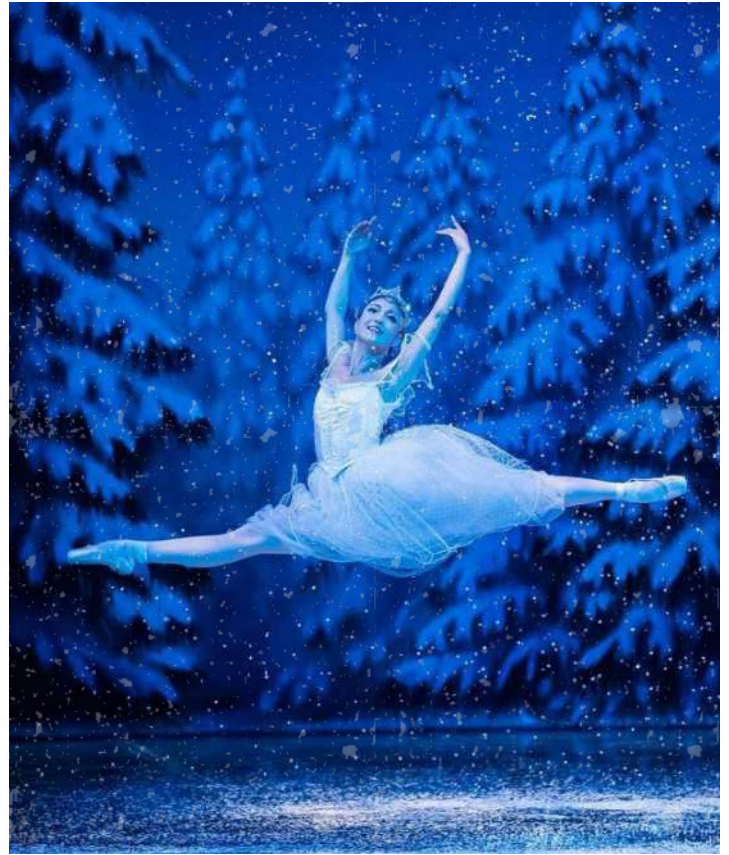
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A FINAL BOW

AVA CHATTERSON and KAORI HIGASHIYAMA
Retire from Sacramento Ballet

In the world of ballet, every movement tells a story, every performance marks a moment, and every dancer leaves behind a legacy of artistry, dedication, and passion. This season, Sacramento Ballet bids a fond and heartfelt farewell to two of its most distinguished artists, Ava Chatterson and Kaori Higashiyama, as they take their final bows and step into the next chapter of their lives.

A FINAL BOW

AVA CHATTERSON

A LEGACY OF STRENGTH AND GRACE

For 14 years, Ava Chatterson has graced the stages of Sacramento Ballet with a presence that is both powerful and poetic. Originally from Flint, Michigan, Ava's journey began at the Flint School of Performing Arts before she earned her Bachelor of Science in Ballet and Legal Studies from Indiana University. Her career has spanned an impressive range of classical and contemporary works, from commanding performances as Myrtha in *Giselle* to striking portrayals in Balanchine's *Rubies*, *Serenade*, *The Four Temperaments*, and *Who Cares?*.

Reflecting on her time with Sacramento Ballet, Ava fondly recalls the 2014 triple bill that featured *Wunderland* by Edwaard Liang, *Wild Sweet Love* by Trey McIntyre, and *Acceptance*, a newly created work by Ma Cong. "I was lucky enough to be featured in all three pieces, and I remember just loving everything I got to dance on that program," she shares. The collaborations and creative challenges she faced during these years shaped her into the artist she is today.

Yet, a dancer's journey is never without obstacles. Standing as the tallest woman in the company came with both limitations and opportunities. "There are still lots of stereotypes in ballet about height," Ava explains. "There are roles I knew I'd probably never do, but on the other hand, there are roles specifically made for tall women that have been amazing to dance. I've learned to enjoy the parts I am given and to let go of things I can't change."

Ava's decision to retire was a thoughtful one, balancing the physical demands of a professional career with the desire for new experiences. "Dancing professionally is very mentally and emotionally taxing, and prioritizing my health (in the future) was something I'd been thinking about." Though she will step away from the stage, she will continue sharing her artistry through teaching, while also exploring new creative pursuits. "I have a lot of artists in my family, and I've noticed that even if you're not making art professionally, your creativity still informs the way you live your life."

KAORI HIGASHIYAMA

A JOURNEY OF PASSION AND PERSEVERANCE

Kaori Higashiyama's journey in ballet began at the age of three in Shiga, Japan, and took her to The Royal Ballet School in England before she embarked on a professional career that ultimately led her to Sacramento Ballet in 2012. Over the years, she has brought depth, elegance, and sincerity to the stage, particularly in works like *Carmina Burana*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Who Cares?*, and *Serenade*. Her performances in contemporary works by Darrell Grand Moultrie, Gabrielle Lamb, and Ma Cong further showcased her artistic range.

Among her most treasured memories is her performance in *Carmina Burana*, where she embodied the "Beige Girl" role, draped in a flowing silk cape. "It always felt so special being on stage, especially during the solo with the female singer. My movements felt completely in sync with her voice—it was truly a beautiful and memorable moment for me."

Kaori has also grown beyond performing, delving into choreography and costume design for productions both within and outside of Sacramento Ballet. "These experiences have helped me grow a lot as an artist," she notes, highlighting how the company provided her with invaluable opportunities.


Her decision to retire is filled with gratitude rather than sorrow. "I'm so thankful to have all the great memories to carry with me into my future. I would also like to thank myself—for accomplishing a long ballet career, for my body allowing me to perform for the audience and the people I love, and for my commitment and dedication to ballet for over 35 years."

While she prepares for life beyond the professional stage, Kaori will have one last special performance: a duet with her mother this summer. "She took me to ballet class when I was three, and I naturally just wanted to keep dancing after that. She still takes ballet class at 63, and she inspires me to this day. We used to perform together every year until I left home, so this will be such a special moment for me."

A LASTING IMPRESSION

As Ava and Kaori step into new roles beyond the stage, their contributions to Sacramento Ballet will remain indelible. Both dancers have left a legacy not only through their unforgettable performances but also through their mentorship, camaraderie, and artistry that have shaped the company's culture.

To young dancers who aspire to follow in their footsteps, Ava offers this wisdom: "Take your work seriously, but don't take yourself too seriously. Cultivating a positive mindset and being nicer to yourself will help so much in the long run." And Kaori reminds us of the importance of trust: "Believe in yourself, even when fear and self-doubt creep in. Enjoy being present in the moment."

With gratitude, the Sacramento Ballet community celebrates these extraordinary artists, thanking them for the years of dedication, inspiration, and sheer beauty they have brought to the stage. As they take their final bows, they do so with the knowledge that their influence will continue to resonate within the ballet world and beyond. Bravo, Ava and Kaori! 

Photos opposite L-R: Ava Chatterson with Christopher Nachtrab; Kaori Higashiyama. Photos by Marissa Gearhart.

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SACRAMENTO BALLET



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-JAMES HARGROVE
ÉTOILE EXCLUSIVES MEMBER

A photograph of James Hargrove, an older man with white hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and blue jeans. He is standing in a ballet studio, leaning his right hand on a wooden ballet barre. The background is a plain white wall.

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Spring

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