

BALLETS JAZZ MONTRÉAL

DANCE ME – THE MUSIC OF LEONARD COHEN

EXECUTIVE AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR Alexandra Damiani
REHEARSAL DIRECTOR AND ARTISTIC COORDINATOR Stéphanie Dalphond

PRINCIPAL ARTIST Yosmell Calderon Mejias
ARTISTS Zoey Anderson, Troy Atamanuk, Gustavo Barros, Millie Brinck-Dubuc, Kyle Davis, Jasmine Heart Cruz, Shanna Irwin Calderon, Zack Preece, Willem Sadler, Madeleine Salhany, Silje Vereide
INTERN Rhapsody Stiggers
GUEST ARTISTS Marcel Cavaliere, Ryan Sherk

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR Marco Vargas Navarro
HEAD CARPENTER Chantel Deguise
HEAD OF SOUND Maxime Lambert
HEAD OF LIGHTING Claude Plante
HEAD OF VIDEO Roderic Dyon

DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS Catherine Cardinal
ASSISTANT TO THE ARTISTIC AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Camille Fabre
TOUR MANAGER Louis Morisset
BOOKING REPRESENTATION Margaret Selby, Selby Artists Management

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Zellerbach Theatre

Friday, October 23 @ 7:30 PM
Saturday, October 24 @ 2 PM
Saturday, October 24 @ 7:30 PM

There will be no intermission.

INSIGHTS Join us after the Friday evening performance for a conversation with the artists, moderated by Miriam Giguere, the Department Head for Performing Arts at Drexel University.

The 26/27 season dance series is co-sponsored by Arthur Kaplan, C'67 and Duane Perry alongside Lynn Jerath, W'95 and Kunal Jerath.

PROGRAM

MUSIC BY Leonard Cohen
IDEATION Louis Robitaille
STAGE DIRECTION Eric Jean
CHOREOGRAPHY Andonis Foniadakis, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Ihsan Rustem
MUSIC DIRECTION Martin Léon
SOUND DESIGN Alexis Dumais
SET AND PROP DESIGN Pierre-Etienne Locas
SET TECHNICAL DIRECTION Alexandre Brunet
LIGHTING DESIGN AND PRODUCTION Cédric Delorme-Bouchard, Simon Beetschen
VIDEO DESIGN HUB Studio - Gonzalo Soldi, Thomas Payette, Jeremy Fassio
COSTUME DESIGN Philippe Dubuc
COSTUME PRODUCTION Anne-Marie Veevaete
ASSISTANCE STAGE DIRECTION Elsa Posnic
SOUND ENGINEER Guy Fortin
HEAD CARPENTER Daniel Ranger

VOCALIST FOR "SO LONG, MARIANNE" Zoey Anderson
VOCALISTS FOR "HALLELUJAH" Ryan Sherk, Zoey Anderson

"Here It Is" (2001)
"Lover, Lover, Lover" (1974)
"Dance Me to the End of Love" (Live in London, 2009)
"Boogie Street" (Live in London, 2009)
"Steer Your Way" (2016)
"Everybody Knows" (2001)
"Tower of Song" (1988)
"So Long, Marianne" (1967)
"A Thousand Kisses Deep" (poem)
"Suzanne" (1967)
"Famous Blue Raincoat" (1971)
"Nevermind" (2014)
"First We Take Manhattan" (1988)
"It Seemed the Better Way" (2016)
"Hallelujah" (1984)
"String Reprise / Treaty" (2016)

Ballets Jazz Montréal would like to thank the Marjorie and Gerald Bronfman Foundation for the support given to the creation of the show.

Dance Me was supported by the CCOV - Centre de Création O Vertigo.

PROGRAM NOTE

Dance Me – The Music of Leonard Cohen is an exclusive creation inspired by the rich and profound work of Montréal-based poet, artist and songwriter, Leonard Cohen.

Approved by Cohen during his lifetime, this riveting homage to the famed artist evokes the grand cycles of existence, as described in Cohen's deeply reflective music and poems.

Three internationally renowned choreographers were entrusted with putting movement to Cohen's legendary songs: Andonis Foniadakis, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa and Ihsan Rustem. Their powerful and profound choreographic world, reflective of Cohen's singular work, is brought to life by Ballets Jazz Montréal's artists and the strong, bold staging of Eric Jean.

Surrounded by a team of celebrated designers, *Dance Me* combines scenic, visual, musical, dramaturgical and choreographic writing to pay tribute to Montréal's greatest ambassador. Dance, music, lighting, scenography and videography all come together in this unforgettable show.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Ballets Jazz Montréal
Founded in 1972 by Geneviève Salbaing, Eva Von Gencsy and Eddy Toussaint, Ballets Jazz Montréal is a contemporary dance repertory company, which, under the general and artistic direction of Alexandra Damiani, creates, produces and performs on local, national and international stages.

Among the artistic directors of the company who have greatly marked its evolution, company founder Geneviève Salbaing, driven by her visceral love of dance, led Ballets Jazz Montréal with passion and determination for over 20 years. Upon his appointment as artistic director in 1998, Louis Robitaille reoriented the company towards an audience curious to discover new choreographic forms. In 2021, Alexandra Damiani took over the artistic direction of Ballets Jazz Montréal and will carry out the company's mission and vision into the future.

The company recruits internationally renowned choreographers to develop their own research in line with its identity and generates a repertoire that is both exclusive to the company and accessible to all audiences. The company's impressive roster of talented and influential choreographers includes Crystal Pite, Aszure Barton, Mauro Bigonzetti, Andonis Foniadakis, Itzik Galili, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Barak Marshall, Benjamin Millepied, Ihsan Rustem, Anne Plamondon and Juliano Nunes, to name a few. As an ambassador of Quebec dance to the world, Ballets Jazz Montréal offers an artistic product that is explosive, original, accessible and noted for its excellence.

All of the company's work brings an element of humanity, fearlessness and emotion in addition to the highly technical skill that each dance requires. Additionally, each piece is nuanced, multilayered and often multidisciplinary, combining other artistic disciplines such as theatre, video and music. With accessibility and quality as key values, the company successfully integrates pleasure and humanity into their strong, expressive and demanding pieces. Moreover, the distinct personalities and high caliber of its performers further add to the quality that is expected from the company and play a key role in maintaining the company's reputation and influence in the dance world.

Through its productions, performances and educational activities, Ballets Jazz Montréal encourages discovery, stimulates imagination and shares its passion for this discipline to all its audiences, both local and abroad. With more than 3,250 performances in 60 countries and

an audience of nearly 3 million, Ballets Jazz Montréal is considered one of the world's leading ambassadors of Quebec dance and artistic vitality.

In 2016, the Prix Rideau Hommage was awarded to the company and its artistic director at the time, Louis Robitaille, in recognition of its impact and continued presence on Quebec stages. In 2020, the company received the Prix de la danse de Montréal for the category of international dissemination presented by CINARS.

In 2022, the company celebrated 50 years of creating, exploring and connecting with its audiences.

Alexandra Damiani (Executive and Artistic Director)
Appointed Artistic Director of Ballets Jazz Montréal the spring of 2021, then Executive and Artistic Director in 2025, Damiani has been a major player in the dance community for over two decades. During her 10 years with New York's Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet (2005-2015), first as Ballet Mistress and then as Artistic Director, Damiani had the opportunity to work with and present a wide selection of contemporary dance choreographic languages by such internationally renowned choreographers as Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Crystal Pite and Hofesh Schecter. She also showcased the company in major cities and international festivals, including at the Lyon Biennale in France and Sadler's Wells in London.

Originally from France, Damiani is a multidisciplinary artist who has been lending her expertise to the world of film, television and advertising for many years. Her credits include playing the ballet mistress in Darren Aronofsky's cult film *Black Swan* and working alongside Tanisha Scott on Cardi B's performance for the 2019 BET Awards. She is also passionate about training the young dancers of tomorrow and has excellent connections with highly regarded institutions like Jacob's Pillow and The Juilliard School.

Damiani trained in classical dance at the Geneva Dance Center and later in the French capital with teachers from the Paris Opera Ballet. After winning the Bayonne competition in France, she received a scholarship to the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. She began her career as a dancer-performer in New York as a soloist with Donald Byrd/The Group and with the company COMPLEXIONS Contemporary Ballet, directed by Dwight Rhoden and Desmond Richardson. Her career continued in Montréal with the RUBBERBAND Dance Company and later with Ballets Jazz Montréal, under the direction of Louis Robitaille (2002-2005).

Stéphanie Dalphond (Rehearsal Director & Artistic Coordinator)
Born in Montréal, Dalphond trained at École Supérieure de Danse du Québec and at the Paris Opera School. At the age of 16, she joined Les Grands Ballets Canadiens. She danced with the company for six years before becoming a ballet mistress for a year. Yearning to dance again, Dalphond went to Europe to pursue her career where she danced with Kevin O'Day in Mannheim and Serge Campardon with Compagnie Nomades. She finished her career of 20 years with world-renowned Nacho Duato's Compañia Nacional de Danza. She is a certified ballet teacher and has been teaching at various professional institutions such as École Supérieure de Ballet du Québec, Cas Public and Ballets Jazz Montréal. She joined the company as rehearsal director for the 2024-2025 season, before also taking on the role of Artistic Coordinator for the 2025-2026 season.

Eric Jean (Stage Director)
Jean is a stage director and creator recognized for his distinctive artistic approach, which he describes as "living writing"—a collaborative creative process grounded in improvisation, close work with playwrights and exploration of the scenic environment. His work is marked by a sustained commitment to contemporary dramaturgy, emerging artists and cross-disciplinary dialogue.

In 2004, Jean was appointed Artistic and General Director of Théâtre de Quat'Sous, where he led the institution through a period of significant success and artistic vitality. His tenure

is noted for its strong focus on artistic emergence and diversity, as well as for establishing a major programming platform presenting works by other companies and artists from dance, music and poetry. He also contributed to the reconstruction of the theatre in collaboration with architect firm FABG.

After stepping down from Quat'Sous in 2016 to devote more time to creation, he developed an acclaimed practice in both theatre and dance, including large-scale productions such as *Dance Me* for Ballets Jazz Montréal and *Vanishing Mélodies*, both of which were widely presented.

From 2021 to 2025, Jean served as Director of Programming (theatre, dance, circus and youth programming) and Artistic Director at Théâtre de la Ville in Longueuil. In parallel, he was appointed Artistic Director and Co-General Director of the company Les 2 Mondes in 2023. Since 2025, he has continued his collaboration with Théâtre de la Ville as Theatre Commissioner and Artistic Development lead while maintaining an active career as a stage director and creator.

Andonis Foniadakis (Choreographer)
Foniadakis grew up in city of Ierapetra, in the south part of the island of Crete, in Greece. He began his dance training with Niki Papadaki at the local dance school. He studied at the State Dance School of Athens, and before his graduation, he received the prestigious Maria Callas scholarship to continue his studies in Rudra Bejart Lausanne, Switzerland.

As a dancer, Foniadakis has collaborated with Bejart Ballet Lausanne, Lyon Opera Ballet and Saburo Teshigawara / Karas Co., as well as with his own dance company, Apotosoma-Andonis Foniadakis. As a freelance choreographer, he has collaborated with The Royal New Zealand Ballet, Geneva Ballet, Lyon Opera Ballet, Bern Ballet, Ballet de Lorraine, Luzern Ballet, Gauthier Dance Company, Martha Graham Dance Company, Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet, Aterballetto, Ballet du Rhin, Sydney Dance Company, Florence Ballet, National Dance Company of Wales, Dansgroep Amsterdam, Cia Sociedade Masculina Brazil Bale da Cidade of Sao Paulo, Helsinki Dance Company, National Ballet of Greece, National Theater of Northern Greece, Greek National Theater, Codarts, Benjamin Millepied Dance Company, Washington Ballet, Bejart Ballet Lausanne, Ballet Junior Geneva, Hellenic Dance Company, CNSMD Lyon and Copenhagen International Dance Festival.

He was director of the Greek National Ballet for the 2016-2017 season and programmed the 2016-17 and 2017-18 seasons. He is currently the resident choreographer of the Greek National Ballet. Foniadakis was commissioned to choreograph three operas: *Castor et Pollux* at The Theatre des Champs Elysees, *Les boreades* by Rameau GRAME at Opera National du Rhin and *Il canto della pelle* by Claudio Ambrosini in Lyon.

Foniadakis has collaborated as moving coordinator for the film *NOAH* by Darren Aronofsky. In 2012, he received the Danza and Danza Award for the Best Choreographer of 2012 in Italy for the creation of *Les Noces* for MaggioDanza. Foniadakis collaborated with Palais de Tokyo as Choreographic Curator for the exhibition, *Prec(ar)ious Collectives,* which took place in Athens, Greece as a parallel event of the Documenta 14 exhibition in 2017. In addition to creating and performing, Foniadakis teaches seminars, including in the State Dance School of Greece, DAN.C.CE studios and Baile de Barrio in Athens, DOCK11 in Berlin, CND and CNSMD in Lyon, Dansgroep, as well as at Henny Jurriens in Amsterdam.

Annabelle Lopez Ochoa (Choreographer)
Colombian-Belgian Ochoa completed her dance education at the Royal Ballet School of Flanders in Belgium. In 2003, after a 12-year dance career where she danced as a soloist with the Scapino Ballet, she decided to focus her energy solely on choreography. That same year, she was hailed as "rising star of the Dutch dance scene" (*NRC Newspaper*) and only seven years later, the *Temecula Performing Arts Examiner* wrote, "Ochoa is truly a masterful choreographer with an edge for what dance can and should be in this constantly changing industry."

Ochoa is an award-winning and sought-after choreographer who has created works for more than 40 companies around the world, such as the Scapino Ballet Rotterdam, Dutch National Ballet, Djazzex, Ballet de Genève, Royal Ballet of Flanders, Gothenburg Ballet, Philadelphia Ballet, BalletX, Ballets Jazz Montréal, Luna Negra Dance Theater, Ballet National de Marseille, Saarbrucken Ballet, Jacoby & Pronk, Chemnitzer Ballet, Ballet Hispanico, Morphoses Wheeldon Company, Whim W'Him, IncolBallet de Colombia, Finnish National Ballet, Compania Nacional de Danza Madrid, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Scottish Ballet, The Washington Ballet, Ballet Nacional Dominicano, Ballet Saarbrucken, Augsburg Ballet, Ballet Austin, Atlanta Ballet, Grand Rapids Ballet, Ballet Moscow, Ballet Nacional de Cuba, West Australian Ballet, Danza Contemporanea de Cuba, Ballet Nacional Chileno, Ballet Staatstheater am Gartnerplatz Munchen, Ballet Manila, Daniil Simkin Intensio Project, Cincinnati Ballet, Silicon Valley Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, English National Ballet, Ballet Black and New York City Ballet.

Ochoa is a versatile choreographer who also creates for theatre, opera and fashion events, such as the celebrated Dutch fashion designers Viktor & Rolf's project in the Van Gogh Museum. She belongs to the theatre-dance collective De Fantasten for whom she successfully co-directed five full-length productions that have been performed in numerous theatres and festivals throughout the Netherlands.

In 2009, she created *Zip Zap Zoom* for Ballets Jazz Montréal, which was included in the "10 best dance moments of the year" by the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, *The Boston Globe* and the *Montréal Gazette*, and was cited as one of the 10 best dance highlights of the year in San Diego and Chicago.

Ochoa's work has received numerous awards. In 2016, *Broken Wings*, created for the English National Ballet, was nominated for a National UK Dance Award in the category of Best Classical Premiere. In 2015, *Sombrerisimo*, created for Ballet Hispánico, was given the Villanueva Award in Cuba. In 2012, *A Streetcar Named Desire* was nominated for the prestigious Olivier Award (UK), named Best Classical Choreography by the Circle of Critics of the National Dance Award (UK) and awarded Best Dance Production 2012 by the South-Bank Sky Arts Awards. In 2007, Ochoa was elected to participate in the New York City Ballet Choreographic Institute. In 2002, *Replay* received first prize and the audience prize at the Borne Choreographers Competition, and in 2001, *Clair/Obscur* received third prize at the Hannover Choreographic Competition.

Ihsan Rustem (Choreographer)
British-Swiss choreographer Rustem was born in London, where he trained at the Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance. Ihsan is the Artistic Director of the Swiss dance company Cie. La Ronde, founded in 2020 with choreographer Cathy Marston, and the Resident Choreographer of the NW Dance Project in Portland, Oregon, where he has created 12 works to date.

Rustem's other collaborations include Nederlands Dans Theater 2, Ballets Jazz Montréal, São Paulo City Ballet, Chilean National Ballet, Moscow Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago 2, Istanbul State Ballet MDT, Tanz Luzerner Theater, Bern Ballet, Konzert Theater St. Gallen, Whim W'Him Seattle, Ballare Carmel, Ballett Augsburg, Thüringer Staatsballett, Staatstheater

Braunschweig, Tanztheater, Kazan State Opera and Ballet, Koblenz Ballet, Ballet Regensburg, Würzburg Ballet, Siberian State Ballet, Salt Contemporary Dance USA, Arts Umbrella Dance Company Vancouver, Moving Arts Cincinnati, National Youth Dance Company, Palucca Hochschule Dresden, Codarts, ZHdK, Tanzwerk101, Taipei National University of the Arts and the Rambert School. He is also one of the featured choreographers on the popular Russian television show *The Bolshoi Ballet*.

The Nederlands Dans Theater included Rustem in its "Choreographers of Tomorrow" program for the 2018-2019 season. His work for the NW Dance Project has received numerous awards. *State of Matter* won the Sadler's Wells Global Dance Contest in 2012, as well as the Audience Award at the 25th International Choreographic Competition in Hanover, and *Carmen* received the 2017 *Dance Magazine* Readers' Choice Award for Best Collaboration. Rustem was also the 2014 recipient of the Hubbard Street Dance Chicago International Commissioning Project.

Rustem is the former director of the Ballettschule Luzern and, in 2021, joined the jury of the prestigious Prix de Lausanne. From 2000 to 2014, Rustem danced with Ballet Theater Munich, Introdans, Bern Ballet, Tanz Luzerner Theater and Adventures in Motion Pictures. He performed roles in creations by Wayne McGregor, Hofesh Shechter, Alexander Ekman, Matthew Bourne, Stijn Celis, Patrick Delcroix, Cayetano Soto, Felix Landerer and Cathy Marston. He has also worked with choreographers such as Mats Ek, Jiri Kylián, Paul Lightfoot & Sol Leon, Hans van Manen and William Forsythe, among others. He currently lives in Zurich, Switzerland.

Leonard Cohen
Leonard Norman Cohen, poet, novelist, singer and songwriter, is one of the most iconic Canadian artists of the 20th century. A sage, mystic, bohemian and romantic, he built an acclaimed body of literary work and a revered career in pop music. In his poetry, novels and music, he constantly probed the human condition, exploring themes of love, loss, death and his commitment to his art. As a poetic and unlikely pop star, his narrow-ranged, gruff voice, which deepened and darkened with age, and his reliance on simple, singsong melodies were complimented by the intense imagery and depth of his lyrics. A Companion of the Order of Canada, he was inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame, the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame, the U.S. Songwriters Hall of Fame, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the Folk Music Walk of Fame. He also received the Glenn Gould Prize, the Prince of Asturias Award for Literature, eight Juno Awards, a Grammy® Lifetime Achievement Award and numerous other honors.

Zoey Anderson (Artist)
Originally from Utah, Anderson trained at Center Stage Studio before graduating cum laude with a BFA from Marymount Manhattan College. After her studies, she danced with Parsons Dance, touring the world and performing for over 10 years in iconic works such as *Caught* and *Balance of Power* by David Parsons and *Takedeme* by Robert Battle. She was a soloist at the Titas Gala, Stars of American Ballet in Santa Fe and the Berliner Bar Gala in Germany. Anderson appeared in the Academy Award-winning film *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* and in web episodes of *Dancing with the Stars*. She has graced the cover and been featured multiple times in *Dance Spirit* and *Dance Magazine*. Anderson was nominated for the 2018 Bessie Award in the Outstanding Performer category and received the prestigious Clive Barnes Dance Artist Award in 2019. She was a guest artist with Ballets Jazz Montréal for the 2025-2026 season and is very excited to start her second season with the company for the 2026-2027 season.

Troy Atamanuk (Artist)
Atamanuk began his dance training in Markham, ON, where he danced competitively before joining Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre in 2021. In 2022, he moved to Vancouver to attend Arts Umbrella's Post-Secondary Graduate Program under the direction of Artemis Gordon. During his time there, he performed works by Crystal Pite, Aszure Barton, Marco Goecke, William Forsythe, Mats Ek, Roy Assaf, Fernando Hernando Magadan, among others. While at Arts Umbrella, Atamanuk had the opportunity to choreograph in the Young Choreographers Mentorship Project directed by Crystal Pite. Atamanuk also had the opportunity to perform alongside Ballet BC as a guest in Shahar Binyamini's *Bolero X* in various cities, including Vancouver, Ottawa and Montreal. Atamanuk is very excited and grateful to be dancing with Ballets Jazz Montréal this year.

Gustavo Barros (Artist)
Born in Brazil, Barros began his professional path as a dancer in his hometown, Goiânia. He then joined some of the best contemporary dance companies in the country such as Deborah Colker cia and Balé da Cidade de São Paulo. He continued his career in Germany, where he danced for Ballethagen and Staatstheater Augsburg. Over the course of his career, Barros has performed the work of many renowned choreographers including Alexander Ekman, Mauro Bigonzzetti, Crystal Pite, Cayetano Soto, Marco Goecke and Peter Chu. He joined Ballets Jazz Montréal in 2020.

Millie Brinck-Dubuc (Artist)
Brinck-Dubuc is a movement artist from Montreal, Canada. She began her journey in a competitive dance studio, where she trained in jazz, tap, ballet and contemporary. At the age of 12, Brinck-Dubuc joined l'École Supérieure de Ballet du Québec, where she graduated in 2022 from the professional program in classical and contemporary dance. After graduation, she took part in the 10th edition of the Big Bang program and worked with various choreographers through summer intensives such as Propulsion, TransFormation, RUBBERBAND, Arts-Umbrella and Orsolina28. Brinck-Dubuc is excited to start her third season with Ballets Jazz Montréal.

Marcel Cavaliere (Guest Artist)
Cavaliere was born and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana where he danced competitively and trained in various styles at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA). He continued his studies at the USC Glorya Kaufman School of Dance, obtaining a BFA in dance with a concentration in choreography for the stage and cinematic arts. Throughout his training, Cavaliere had the privilege to perform works by Jiří Kylián, Hope Boykin, Bret Easterling, Paul Taylor, Dwight Rhoden and Justin Peck. He has also collaborated and performed with renowned companies such as A.I.M. by Kyle Abraham and Doug Varone and Dancers. Cavaliere joined Ballets Jazz Montréal in August 2024.

Kyle Davis (Artist)
Davis, a Chicago native, began his training at the Sammy Dyer School of Theater before continuing at Pacific Northwest Ballet. He began his professional career as a corps artist with Ballet West, where he performed soloist roles and was nominated for The Princess Grace Award in 2019. He joined The Saarländisches Staatstheater in Saarbrücken, Germany as a solo dancer in 2021. Davis has performed principal roles in works by Jiří Kylián, David Dawson, Marco Goecke, Nacho Duato, Mauro Bigozetti and George Balanchine. He was the recipient of the Deutschland 2023 Sponsorship Club Prize for his outstanding performance in the role of "Death" in Kurt Jooss' *The Green Table.* Davis joined Ballets Jazz Montréal in August 2024.

Jasmine Heart Cruz (Artist)
Born and raised in San Francisco, California, Cruz began her competitive dance training at the Westlake School for the Performing Arts. She has received numerous awards at the regional and international level from organizations such as ADCIBC, NYCDA, Tanzolymp and the Youth America Grand Prix. After being accepted into the Glorya Kaufman School of Dance, she completed one year of study at the University of Southern California before moving to New York to begin her professional career, dancing three seasons with Complexions Contemporary Ballet. As an independent artist in New York, Cruz has collaborated with choreographers such as Roderick George, Rena Butler, Loughlan Prior and Houston Thomas. She also trains closely with Preston Miller and Jacqueline Green Miller at The Dance Artist Prep in Chicago. Additionally, Cruz is regularly invited to teach and choreograph at various schools in the Philippines. She was then a guest artist with Ballets Jazz Montréal for the 2025-2026 season and is excited to start her second season with the company for the 2026-2027 season.

Shanna Irwin Calderon (Artist)
Calderon grew up in New Jersey, where she began training as a competitive dancer. She later switched her focus to ballet when she was accepted into The New Jersey Dance Theatre Ensemble under the direction of Nancy Turano. Calderon went on to continue her studies at Marymount Manhattan College and began touring with Complexions Contemporary Ballet during her senior year. She graduated with a BFA in dance in May 2014. Calderon completed five seasons with COMPLEXIONS Contemporary Ballet and joined Ballets Jazz Montréal in 2019. Her career has led her to perform in opera houses across five continents, where she has danced the works of Crystal Pite, Dwight Rhoden, Aszure Barton, Itzik Galili, Andonis Foniadakis and Juliano Nunes, among others. This is her eighth season with Ballets Jazz Montréal.

Zack Preece (Artist)
Preece was born in Vancouver, British Columbia. He did most of his training at Arts Umbrella under the direction of Artemis Gordon, where he had the opportunity to work with various world-renowned choreographers. He has performed works by Crystal Pite, Mats Ek, Sharon Eyal, Medhi Walerski and many more. Preece graduated from the Arts Umbrella Post Secondary program in 2021. He then joined Ballet BC as an emerging artist for the 2021-2022 season, under the direction of Medhi Walerski. Following that, Preece joined Cas Public Productions for one season. He was then a guest artist with Ballets Jazz Montréal for the 2023 season and is very excited to start his third full season with the company.

Willem Sadler (Artist)
Sadler, born and raised in Toronto, Canada, began his artistic journey in street styles, working as a young dancer in Toronto's commercial industry. At 17, he joined the youth company Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre, where he transitioned into contemporary dance. Since then, he has performed and collaborated with Toronto's top companies such as ProArteDanza, Zata Omm Dance Projects, Dusk Dances and Côté Danse. Throughout his career, he has performed on internationally renowned stages for prestigious festivals including Fall for Dance (NYC), Battery Dance Festival (NYC), Colours International Dance Festival (GER), Festival des Arts de Saint-Sauveur (CAN) and the Baku International Dance Festival (AZE). He has performed choreography by Guillaume Côté, Robert Lepage, William Yong, Colin Connor, Roderick George and Jennifer Archibald, while collaborating with major institutions like the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and Mirvish. Sadler looks forward to this new chapter of his career in Montréal with Ballets Jazz Montréal, and he is grateful to have joined the company for the 2026-2027 season.

Ryan Sherk (Guest Artist)
Born and raised in St. Catharines, Ontario, Sherk began dancing at the age of five. He is currently a student at The Juilliard School in New York City, under the direction of Melissa Toogood, as part of the BFA Dance Program, class of 2027. During his time at Juilliard, he has performed in works by William Forsythe, Alvin Ailey, Lauren Lovette, Jamar Roberts, My'kal Stromile and Jenn Freeman. Sherk has trained in prestigious programs with Ballet BC, Ballets Jazz Montréal and Orsolina 28 in Italy, where he has studied the repertoire of Crystal Pite and Marco Goecke, in addition to working closely with Johan Inger and Medhi Walerski. Sherk is a New York City Dance Alliance Foundation Scholar, led by Joe Lanteri, and performed in the organization's Destiny Rising Concert at the Joyce Theater. Other performance credits include Buglisi Dance Theatre's (Project 9/11) Memorial Performance in Lincoln Center Plaza and the FIFA World Cup Opening Ceremony 2026. Sherk is grateful and excited to be joining the company as a guest artist this fall, while continuing his studies at The Juilliard School through its Curricular Practical Training program.

Madeleine Salhany (Artist)
Salhany, born and raised in Ottawa, Canada, received her BFA in dance at the Conservatory of Dance at SUNY Purchase (New York). While there, she has had the pleasure of performing works by Sidra Bell, Ana Maria Lucaciu, Ohad Naharin and Loni Landon. She went on to begin her dance career as an apprentice with Ballets Jazz Montréal, danced in Germany at Stadttheater Gießen, under the direction of Tarek Assam and is currently with Ballett Theater Trier, under the direction of Roberto Scafati. Salhany has performed works by Fernando Melo, Gustavo Remírez Sansano, Andonis Foniadakis, Mauro Astolfi, Georg Reischl, Itzik Galili, Liam Francis and Vittoria Girelli, among others. She has also attended the NDT Summer Intensive, Arts Umbrella's International Summer Dance Intensive and has performed at several dance festivals/galas across Europe. Salhany rejoined Ballets Jazz Montréal in August 2024.

Rhapsody Stiggers (Intern)
Born and raised in Minnesota, Stiggers began her dance journey at the Minnesota Dance Theater and continued studying at TU Dance Center under the direction of Toni Pierce Sands. She received her BFA in contemporary dance from The Boston Conservatory at Berklee. Over the years, Stiggers had the opportunity of performing works by Ronald K. Brown, Juliano Nunes, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Doug Varone, Gregory Dawson and more. Additionally, she has expanded her dance knowledge through various intensive programs and workshops including Ballet Nacional de Cuba, Alonzo King LINES Ballet and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Since graduating from The Boston Conservatory, Stiggers has been a guest artist in Tony Williams' Urban Nutcracker and performed on stages in The Netherlands and South Africa with Anderson Carvalho Dance and Choreography. The 2026-2027 season will mark her first season with the company.

Silje Vereide (Artist)
Born in Texas and raised in Norway, Vereide began dancing at the age of three. She initially focused on gymnastics before deciding to dedicate herself to a career in dance. She pursued professional studies at Oslo National Academy of the Arts, earning a BFA in jazz dance. After graduation, Vereide joined Valencia Dancing Forward, performing in works by Gustavo Ramirez Sansano, Philip Taylor, Alba Castillo, Bryan Arias and Jose Carlos Blanco. As a freelance artist, she has collaborated with companies such as the Norwegian National Ballet, Company Snorkel Rabbit, Show de Vida, Dans5, Oslo Jazzdans Festival and På Tå Hev. In 2023, she joined Ballet Ireland for its spring season and later performed in the Electric Picnic Festival with that company. Vereide has had the honor of working with and performing pieces by renowned choreographers like Aszure Barton, Ohad Naharin, Jo Strømgren, Samantha Lynch, Douwe Dekkers, Brandon Collwes, Simone Charete Grøtte, Paul Blackman, Knut Arild Flatner, Karl-Erik Nedregaard, Christopher Arouni, Masja Abrahamsen, Tine E. Aspaas, Christer Tornell and Inés Belli, among others. Vereide joined Ballets Jazz Montréal in August 2024.

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