



CHOREOGRAPHERS

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Neoclassical choreographer **George Balanchine** (1904–83) (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Program 04; *Jewels*, Program 05) is one of the 20th century's most influential and innovative artists. Born in St. Petersburg, he trained at the Imperial Ballet School and joined the Mariinsky Ballet. He left Russia in 1924 and became ballet master for Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in Paris. Balanchine choreographed several ballets, including *Prodigal Son* and *Apollon Musagète* (later renamed *Apollo*) for the Ballets Russes. After Diaghilev's death, Balanchine worked in Europe until arts patron Lincoln Kirstein invited him to come to the United States to start a company. "But first a school," was Balanchine's famous reply, and he founded the School of American Ballet in 1934. In 1946, he and Kirstein started Ballet Society, which later became New York City Ballet. Balanchine served as ballet master and principal choreographer of New York City Ballet until his death in 1983. He created more than 400 dance works, many of which are in the repertory of San Francisco Ballet.

David Dawson (*Anima Animus*, Program 02) is an associate artist at Dutch National Ballet and a prolific dancemaker. A former resident choreographer at Dutch National Ballet, Semperoper

Ballet, and Royal Ballet of Flanders, Dawson's work is in the repertoires of such companies as Boston Ballet, English National Ballet, Finnish National Ballet, Mariinsky Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Pennsylvania Ballet, The Royal Ballet, Royal New Zealand Ballet, Royal Swedish Ballet, Scottish Ballet, Hungarian National Ballet, Staatsballett Berlin, Bayerische Staatsballett, and Vienna State Opera Ballet. Among his works are full-length productions of *Tristan + Isolde*, *Swan Lake*, and *Giselle*. Other significant works include *A Million Kisses to My Skin*, *Empire Noir*, *The Human Seasons*, *The Third Light*, *Morning Ground*, *Citizen Nowhere*, *The Disappeared*, *A Sweet Spell of Oblivion*, *Faun(e)*, *The World According to Us*, *Styx*, *dancingmadlybackwards*, and *timelapse/(Mnemosyne)*. For his ballet *The Grey Area*, Dawson received the Prix Benois de la Danse Award and was nominated for the UK Critics' Circle National Dance Award. As the first British choreographer to choreograph for Mariinsky Ballet, he created the Golden Mark Award-winning *Reverence*. He received the Choo-San Goh Award for *The Gentle Chapters* and Golden Swan Award nominations for *Overture* and *00:00*. *Anima Animus* is his first work for SF Ballet.

Cathy Marston (Mrs. Robinson, Program 03) is a choreographer, artistic director, and Clore Cultural Leadership Fellow. Born in Newcastle, she studied in Cambridge and at The Royal Ballet School before launching an international career as a choreographer. She has created more than 50 works that have been performed in 10 countries. As an associate artist at The Royal Opera House (2002–06), Marston created a critically acclaimed interpretation of Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts*, among other works. As director of Bern Ballett (2007–13), she developed a hybrid signature style, blending classical and contemporary dance vocabularies with a unique approach to storytelling, visible in her history-inspired *Witch-hunt* and her literature-based *ein Winternachtstraum*, *Juliet and Romeo*, and *Wuthering Heights*. Working now with many of the best companies worldwide, she brings new perspectives to old narratives in works such as *Jane Eyre* (Northern Ballet/American Ballet Theatre/Joffrey Ballet) and *Dangerous Liaisons* (Royal Danish Ballet) as well as in biographical ballets, such as her work inspired by Jacqueline du Pre—*The Cellist* (The Royal Ballet) and *Victoria* (Northern Ballet/National Ballet of Canada). Marston's first work for SF Ballet was *Snowblind*, which was created for Unbound: A Festival of New Works in 2018.

Mark Morris (world premiere, Program 02) has been hailed as "the most successful and influential choreographer alive, and indisputably the most musical" (*New York Times*). In addition to creating over 150 works for the Mark Morris Dance Group, he conducts orchestras, directs opera, and choreographs for ballet companies worldwide. Morris' work is acclaimed for its ingenuity, musicality, wit, and humanity. Named a Fellow of the MacArthur Foundation in 1991,

he has received eleven honorary doctorates to date, and a multitude of awards, including the Samuel H. Scripps/American Dance Festival Award for Lifetime Achievement, the Leonard Bernstein Lifetime Achievement Award for the Elevation of Music in Society, the Benjamin Franklin Laureate Prize for Creativity, the Cal Performances Award of Distinction in the Performing Arts, the Orchestra of St. Luke's Gift of Music Award, and the 2016 Doris Duke Artist Award. In 2015, Morris was inducted into the National Museum of Dance in Saratoga Springs, New York. Morris' memoir, *Out Loud*, co-written with Wesley Stace, was published by Penguin Press in 2019.

Known for his thoughtful and wide-ranging choreography, beautiful dancing, and strong partnering skills, Russian-born **Yuri Possokhov (*Swimmer*, Program 01)** is choreographer in residence for San Francisco Ballet. After training at the Bolshoi Ballet Academy, he danced for ten years with the Bolshoi Ballet and two years with Royal Danish Ballet before moving to the US and joining SF Ballet as a principal dancer in 1994. Over the next 12 years, he performed leading roles while also beginning to choreograph and set up short tours with colleagues. When Possokhov retired from the stage, he was named SF Ballet's choreographer in residence. He has created 14 ballets for SF Ballet, including *Magritomania*, which won an Isadora Duncan Dance Award for outstanding choreography; *RAkU*; and *Swimmer*. His full-length ballet *A Hero of Our Time* debuted at the Bolshoi Ballet in 2015 and was awarded a Benois de la Danse for choreography. Possokhov's new *Nutcracker* for Atlanta Ballet premiered in December 2018. His most recent full-length production, *Anna Karenina*, was commissioned by Chicago's Joffrey Ballet and premiered in February 2019.

Alexei Ratmansky (*The Seasons*, Program 03), artist in residence at American Ballet Theatre, is an internationally acclaimed Russian choreographer who has revitalized narrative ballet through his thoughtful remounting of classics and his shorter, more abstract works. Born in St. Petersburg, he trained at the Bolshoi Ballet School and performed as a principal dancer with Ukrainian National Ballet, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, and Royal Danish Ballet. An invitation to create a work for the Bolshoi Ballet led him to become artistic director of that company in 2004. As artistic director, Ratmansky remounted several Soviet-era ballets, most notably *The Bright Stream* (UK Critics' Circle National Dance Award). Bolshoi Ballet was also named "Best Foreign Company" by The Critics' Circle twice under his direction. San Francisco Ballet commissioned Ratmansky's first American premiere, *Le Carnaval des Animaux*, in 2003 and has since acquired seven additional works in the repertory. He has also choreographed ballets for the Mariinsky Ballet, Paris Opera Ballet, Dutch National Ballet, New York City Ballet, The Australian Ballet, and many others.

Named a 2013 MacArthur Foundation Fellow, Ratmansky has also served as a choreographic mentor to SF Ballet Soloist Myles Thatcher through the Rolex Mentor & Protégé Arts Initiative. In 2014 and 2020 respectively, Ratmansky won his second Benois de la Danse Award and his second Critics' Circle National Dance Award for *Shostakovich Trilogy*. Ratmansky's *The Seasons*, co-commissioned by SF Ballet and American Ballet Theatre, makes its West Coast premiere in SF Ballet's 2021 season.

Dwight Rhoden (*LET'S BEGIN AT THE END*, Program 03) is founding artistic director and resident choreographer of Complexions Contemporary Ballet. Born in Dayton, Ohio, he performed with Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal and as a principal dancer with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. He has choreographed for New York City Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, BalletMet, Colorado Ballet, Dance Theatre of Harlem Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, The Joffrey Ballet, Miami City Ballet, Pennsylvania Ballet, Philadanco, Pittsburgh Ballet Theater, The Washington Ballet, Ballet Nice Mediterranean, Rome Opera Ballet, and Tulsa Ballet, among others. Rhoden has directed and choreographed for television, film, and theater, including *So You Think You Can Dance*, *Cirque du Soleil*, world tours for Prince and Lenny Kravitz, and the feature film *One Last Dance*. Rhoden was nominated for a Benois de la Danse Award for his *The Great Gatsby* for the Mariinsky Ballet. He's been artist in residence at USC Kaufman, Boston Conservatory, The Juilliard School, New York University, and Southern Methodist University. Honors include a New York Foundation for the Arts award, induction into the NYFA Hall of Fame, the Choo-San Goh Award for Choreography, and an Honorary Doctorate from Boston Conservatory. *LET'S BEGIN AT THE END* is his first work for SF Ballet.

Danielle Rowe (world premiere, Program 06) was born in Shepparton, Australia and trained at the Australian Ballet School. Rowe has created works for San Francisco Ballet, Nederlands Dans Theater's SWITCH program, Royal New Zealand Ballet, Co.Lab Dance (featuring dancers from American Ballet Theater), Ballet Idaho, Grand Rapids Ballet, SFDanceworks, Diablo Ballet, Oakland Ballet and Berkeley Ballet Theater. She also choreographed for the award-winning dance film *Sirens Tango* (featuring SF Ballet principal dancers Sasha de Sola and Luke Ingham), and the cross-disciplinary immersive theater productions of *FURY* (a collaboration between SF Ballet, Alonzo King LINES Ballet, and indie-pop band YASSOU) and *Before You Had A Name* (a collaboration between Barak Ballet, SF Ballet principal dancer Sarah Van Patten, violinist Heather Powell, and multi-media artist, Alisa Lapidus). Rowe has been dubbed a "choreographic storyteller" (*Culture Vulture*) and her work "merits much praise" (*SF Chronicle*). Her choreographic

style has been described as “using a myriad of intricate hand and arm gestures that built on each other like the blocks in a Jenga game, along with a rich, flowing, contemporary ballet movement aesthetic” (*culturedGR*) and “impressing with the clarity of its intentions and the easy use of a multi-lingual vocabulary” (*danceviewtimes*). Rowe’s world premiere on Program 06 is her first work for SF Ballet’s Repertory Season.

Myles Thatcher (world premiere, Program 01) is a dancer with San Francisco Ballet and a choreographer. After training at The Harid Conservatory, Ellison Ballet, and San Francisco Ballet School, he joined SF Ballet in 2010. As a dancer, he has performed principal or featured roles in many classical and contemporary ballets, including Lensky in *Onegin*, and Paris in the 2015 film of Tomasson’s *Romeo & Juliet* for Lincoln Center at the Movies’ *Great American Dance*. Thatcher began choreographing while a Trainee at SF Ballet School and has created five works for the School. His *In the Passerine’s Clutch* premiered at SF Ballet’s 2013 Repertory Season Gala, followed by *Manifesto*, which premiered as part of the 2015 Repertory Season; *Ghost in the Machine*, which premiered as part of the 2017 Repertory Season; and *Otherness*, which premiered as part of the 2018 Unbound Festival of New Works. In 2015, Thatcher also created *Passengers* for The Joffrey Ballet, *Polaris* for New York City Ballet, and *Body of Your Dreams* for the Rolex Arts Weekend in Mexico City. Thatcher was selected by Alexei Ratmansky to participate in the 2014–15 Rolex Mentor & Protégé Arts Initiative. He has been nominated for Isadora Duncan Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Choreography for *Manifesto* and *Ghost in the Machine*.

Helgi Tomasson (7 for Eight, Program 02; *Swan Lake*, Program 06; *Romeo & Juliet*, Program 07), one of the supreme classical dancers of his generation, has led San Francisco Ballet for 35 years and is the longest-serving sole artistic director of a major ballet company in North America. Born in Iceland, he danced with Harkness Ballet, The Joffrey Ballet, and New York City Ballet, where he distinguished himself as a dancer of technical purity, musicality, and intelligence. Tomasson assumed leadership of SF Ballet in 1985. Under his direction, SF Ballet has developed into a Company widely recognized as one of the finest in the world. Tomasson has balanced devotion to the classics with an emphasis on new work, cultivating frequent collaborations and commissions with renowned choreographers such as William Forsythe, Christopher Wheeldon, Alexei Ratmansky, Trey McIntyre, Cathy Marston, and Mark Morris, among many others. He has choreographed more than 50 works for the Company, including full-length productions of *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Romeo & Juliet* (taped for Lincoln Center at the Movies’ *Great American Dance*), *Giselle*, and *Nutcracker* (taped for PBS’s *Great Performances*). He conceptualized the 1995 UNited We Dance festival, in which SF Ballet hosted 12 international

companies; the 2008 New Works Festival, which included 10 world premieres by 10 acclaimed choreographers; and the 2018 Unbound: A Festival of New Works. Tomasson has also connected SF Ballet to the world, through co-commissions with American Ballet Theatre, The Royal Ballet, and Dutch National Ballet; and major tours to Paris, London, New York City, China, and his native Iceland.

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