

"Aspen Santa Fe Ballet has brought joy and creative abandon to a holiday classic."

—*Santa Fe New Mexican*

The Soraya Presents the Los Angeles Premiere of Aspen Santa Fe Ballet's Production of *The Nutcracker*

**Three Performances only—Saturday, December 7 at 3pm & 8pm;
Sunday, December 8 at 3pm**

**Saturday night performance to feature Joffrey Ballet company members
Jeraldine Mendoza & Dylan Gutierrez**

(Los Angeles, CA) November 1, 2019 – Aspen Santa Fe Ballet returns to The Soraya this holiday season with three performances of the classic ballet, *The Nutcracker*, on December 7 & 8. With Tchaikovsky's original music, this storybook production, choreographed by ASFB executive director Jean-Phillippe Malaty and artistic director Tom Mossbrucker, is set in the Victorian era, beginning with the resplendent party and concluding with the fantastical scenes in the second act centered around a bright and colorful carousel.

Aspen Santa Fe Ballet's exquisite dancers perform the leading roles, showing off their classical training. Over 70 children from Los Angeles Youth Ballet and students from USC Glorya Kaufman School of Dance will round out the cast. Adding to the excitement, the traditional Russian, Spanish, and Chinese pieces will feature performers from around the globe who bring their traditional and authentic dances. Almost 100 performers are on stage for this production.

The Saturday night performance will feature Joffrey Ballet company members Jeraldine Mendoza and Dylan Gutierrez, a Los Angeles native.

Tickets start at \$49 for all performances of *The Nutcracker* and are currently on sale at The Soraya, (818) 677-3000 and at TheSoraya.org.

"Our partnership with Aspen Santa Fe Ballet over the last five years has been extraordinary," says The Soraya's Executive Director, Thor Steingraber. "From performances with renowned pianist Joyce Yang to pieces from some of the world's most exciting choreographers like Jorma Elo and Jiří Kylián – Aspen Santa Fe Ballet has an incredible repertoire. Their production of *The Nutcracker* has been a staple in Aspen and Santa Fe for 23 years and we are so lucky to have its Los Angeles premiere at The Soraya."

ASFB's dancers are unmatched in their athleticism and technique, thanks to a rigorous, year-round schedule of training and touring, including engagements at the Joyce Theater, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, and the Kennedy Center. Their production of *The Nutcracker* is a signature piece, now in its 23rd season, coming to Los Angeles for the first time in December.

About *The Nutcracker*

Based on the story by E.T.A. Hoffmann

Music: Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Choreography: Jean-Philippe Malaty and Tom Mossbrucker

Set Design: Roger LaVoie

Lighting Design: Seah Johnson

Sound Design: Sam Chittenden

Costumes: Nete Joseph

About Aspen Santa Fe Ballet

Ballet's dynamic story in the American West

In 1996, Aspen Santa Fe Ballet Founder Bebe Schweppe invited Tom Mossbrucker and Jean-Philippe Malaty to create a ballet company in Aspen. A unique, multidimensional arts organization developed rapidly from the ballet school Schweppe had established in the Rocky Mountains. "Bebe's vision for Aspen to have its own ballet company was the project of a lifetime," says Malaty, ASFB's Executive Director. "We embarked together on a serendipitous adventure. More than twenty years later, the connection between the dancers and our two communities is deep and inextricable."

Forging a new frontier

The company began modestly with seven dancers. Growth was organic. Friends in the field—Gerald Arpino, Trey McIntyre, Septime Webre, Dwight Rhoden—offered start-up repertoire. Moses Pendleton's popular *Noir Blanc* was a seminal event for the young ASFB. It launched a tradition of commissioning new works. An open, exploratory style emerged as Mossbrucker and Malaty tapped the creative scene in Europe where classical ballet was breaking from its boundaries. The athletic and adventurous American dancers found themselves at a crossroads of dance history. The divide between ballet and modern dance was dissolving.

Innovative business model

In 2000, the Aspen, Colorado-based ballet company forged a dual-city relationship with Santa Fe, New Mexico, broadening its scope and lending crucial revenue diversification. Under this hybrid business model, a roster of arts activities flourishes year-round in both cities. Performance, education, presentation, and community outreach all join in the mix. In 2014, ASFB shared resources with a local troupe, Juan Siddi Flamenco Santa Fe (JSFSF). This entrepreneurial project led to artistic heights at Jacob's Pillow and New York's Joyce Theater. Fortified with new experience and relationships, JSFSF continues to thrive in its own right.

New commissions

ASFB's mission places highest priority on developing new dance works and nurturing relationships with emerging choreographers. The company fostered the early careers of now in-demand global dance makers like Nicolo Fonte (nine commissioned Fonte works in the ASFB repertoire), Jorma Elo (three commissioned Elo works), Edwaard Liang, Jacopo Godani, Helen Pickett, Cayetano Soto, Alejandro Cerrudo, and others. Works by late 20th century masters—William Forsythe, Jiří Kylián, Twyla Tharp—round out the repertoire.

"We value building relationships with choreographers who become integral to the company. The natural beauty of our surroundings has a profound impact on creativity. Our choreographers find it inspiring to create here," says Mossbrucker, ASFB's Artistic Director.

Renowned in the U.S. & abroad

Based in the American West, ASFB occupies the vanguard of its field, brandishing a strong national reputation. Repeat engagements at the American Dance Festival, Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Joyce Theater, The Kennedy Center, Saratoga Performing Arts Center, and Wolf Trap testify to the company's popularity and ability to please audiences. The company has toured overseas as well, with prestigious invitations and bookings in Brazil, Canada, France, Greece, Guatemala, Israel, Italy, and Russia. Premier funders—National Endowment for the Arts, New England Foundation for the Arts / National Dance Project, Joyce Foundation, Shubert Foundation, Wolf Trap Foundation, Jerome Robbins Foundation, and Princess Grace Foundation—have supported ASFB's growth.

Into a bright future

Since its founding in 1996, ASFB has carved a reputation as a dance-lover's dance company. It has genuinely reshaped the field, introducing new choreographic talent to national stages, fostering a new breed of exceptional dancer, and stimulating audiences with high-caliber performances. Fueled by an annual budget of over \$4 million and an endowment nearly twice that size, the company's strong artistic vision is supported by solid financial footing.

Bebe Schweppe, Founder, grew up in Augusta, Georgia, and started dancing at the Georgia Dance Theatre, under Frankie Levy at the age of seven. She was invited by Robert Joffrey to study at his school in New York on a full scholarship at age eleven. Bebe moved to Aspen in 1975 and fifteen years later founded the Aspen Ballet School. Her presence was a catalyst in the region. In 1996, she invited Jean-Philippe Malaty and Tom Mossbrucker to develop a small professional company in Aspen. Through their combined energies, the Aspen Ballet Company was born a year later. Shortly after, new performing opportunities beckoned in Santa Fe, upon which the company was renamed Aspen Santa Fe Ballet. Bebe speaks with pride when she considers the changes that have occurred over the years to her "baby." "The Company has evolved to having earned a name of its own - ASFB. What a treat! It is recognized by other artists and respected by all. This is of course due in large part to Jean-Philippe and Tom." She cites that "their strength has been in their unique ability to perceive and design a repertoire that entertains all parts, whether it's the audience or the dancer." Tom and Jean-Philippe have "greatly succeeded" in realizing her dreams for the company, she says. "I am thankful that I had the dream and was lucky and persistent enough to convince JP and Tom to relocate from New York City. Never did I imagine that one day the company would be performing nationally and internationally and never did I imagine that one day they would be performing works by internationally famous choreographers. Although I had the dream, I never imagined so much. I feel very lucky."

Jean-Philippe Malaty, Executive Director, was born in the Basque region of France. After receiving his baccalaureate in dance, he accepted scholarships to study at Mudra, Maurice Béjart's school in Brussels, and at John Cranko's ballet academy in Stuttgart. Invited by acclaimed instructor David Howard to study in New York, Jean-Philippe traveled to America under Howard's tutelage. Jean-Philippe's performance career began with Joffrey II. He also danced as a guest artist with Los Angeles Classical Ballet, Ballet Hispanico, and the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Jean-Philippe segued from the stage to an administrator role while still in his twenties. A key member of Aspen Santa Fe Ballet's start-up team, Jean-Philippe has been central to developing the company's unique dual-city-based hybrid business model. He directs operations in two locations, overseeing a \$4 million budget that he allocates to the company, two schools, an esteemed presenting series, and an award-winning folkloric outreach program. Jean-Philippe's first love is teaching and when his schedule permits, he conducts master classes at schools and universities. In 2013, Jean-Philippe shared an honor with Artistic Director Tom Mossbrucker when the Santa Fe Community Foundation bestowed its Piñon Award on the company. In 2012, the Denver Bonfils-Stanton Foundation granted Jean-Philippe a Livingston Fellowship in recognition of his significant leadership role in Colorado's non-profit sector. In 2010, in recognition of ASFB's contribution to the field of dance, Jean-Philippe and Tom were honored with the Joyce Theater Foundation Award. A naturalized U.S. citizen, Jean-Philippe is proud to have forged a company alive with American energy, invention, and eclecticism.

Tom Mossbrucker, Artistic Director, has been artistic director of Aspen Santa Fe Ballet since 1996. Over the course of his career Tom has built a prestigious arts organization sharing two homes in Aspen and Santa Fe. In his role as artistic director, Tom cultivates highly sophisticated and challenging works of contemporary ballet. His shining achievement is ASFB's roster of 27 ballets created on commission by leading global choreographers. Tom began to dance at age four, studying tap in his hometown of Tacoma, Washington. He pursued classical ballet training at the School of American Ballet and the Joffrey Ballet School. His twenty years as a principal dancer with the Joffrey Ballet, performing in over 70 ballets under the direct coaching of founders Robert Joffrey and Gerald Arpino, coincided with a period of high artistic achievement for the company. Tom danced in ballets by great twentieth century choreographers: Fredrick Ashton, George Balanchine, Laura Dean, William Forsythe, Jiri Kylián, Mark Morris, Paul Taylor and Twyla Tharp. Signature roles included Iago in Jose Limon's *The Moor's Pavane*; Champion Roper in Agnes DeMille's *Rodeo*; Billy Eugene Loring's *Billy the Kid*; and Romeo in John Cranko's *Romeo and Juliet*. This rich dance background Tom brings to coaching dancers today. In 2013, Tom shared an honor with Executive Director Jean-Philippe Malaty when the Santa Fe Community Foundation bestowed its Piñon Award on the company. In 2010, in recognition of ASFB's contribution to the field of dance, Tom and Jean-Philippe Malaty were honored with the Joyce Theater Foundation Award. A former board member of Dance USA, Tom currently serves on the board of The Gerald Arpino and Robert Joffrey Foundation.

Calendar Listing for Aspen Santa Fe Ballet's *The Nutcracker*

Date: Saturday, December 7 at 3:00pm & 8:00pm
Sunday, December 8 at 3:00pm

Venue: Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts (The Soraya)
18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA 91330

Tickets:

Prices: Starting at \$49. Prices subject to change.

By Phone: (818) 677-3000

Online: TheSoraya.org

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Twitter: [@TheSorayaStage](https://twitter.com/TheSorayaStage)

Instagram: [@TheSorayaStage](https://www.instagram.com/TheSorayaStage)

About Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts (The Soraya)

The 2019-20 Season marks the ninth year for the award-winning Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts which has quickly become one of the cultural jewels of the greater Los Angeles region. Under the leadership of Executive Director Thor Steingraber, The Soraya continues to expand its programming and outstanding multidisciplinary performances. The Soraya presents a wide variety of performances that not only include new and original work from the Los Angeles region but also work from around the world appealing to all of LA's rich and diverse communities.

Located on the campus of California State University, Northridge, The Soraya's season offers a vibrant performance program of nearly 50 classical and popular music, dance, theater, family, and international events that have served to establish The Soraya as the intellectual and cultural heart of the San Fernando Valley, and further establish itself as one of the top arts companies in Southern California. The award-winning, 1,700-seat theatre was designed by HGA Architects and Engineers and was recently cited by the Los Angeles Times as "a growing hub for live music, dance, drama and other cultural events."