

Spotlight 2025 Preliminary Ballet Judges

James Ady** is a former member of American Ballet Theatre and principal dancer with Pennsylvania Ballet. Soloist and Principal roles include: John Cranko's *Romeo and Juliet*, Albrecht in *Giselle*, Prince Siegfried in *Swan Lake*, *La Fille Mal Gardée*, Jerome Robbins' *Fancy Free*, as well as George Balanchine's ballets including *Agon*, *The Four Temperaments*, *Slaughter on 10th Avenue*, *Serenade* and more. During his time with ABT, he worked with Lar Lubovitch, Natalia Makarova, Stanton Welch, James Kudelka, Georgina Parkinson, and David Parsons. After retiring, he graduated magna cum laude from Boise State University. In 2013, Mr. Ady accepted an offer to become Ballet Master with Ballet Memphis. In 2015, he became an assistant professor and lecturer at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City.

Jukka Aromaa** is a former principal dancer with New York City Ballet, Finnish National Ballet, and Deutsche Oper am Rhein Düsseldorf. He was a guest principal dancer with Deutsche Oper Berlin and English National Ballet. He won First Prize at the Prix de Lausanne Competition in 1980 and at the Helsinki International Ballet Competition in 1984. Honors during Mr. Aromaa's long 25-year dancing career include the Benoit de la Dance Award received at the Bolshoi Theatre in 1995. He served as Artistic Director of the Finnish National Ballet School from 2003 to 2006. Currently, Aromaa teaches internationally and serves as a judge, lecturer, and répétiteur for both the classical and Balanchine repertory.

Molly Bogunovic is a former ballerina with Pennsylvania Ballet and Los Angeles Ballet. Her repertoire includes soloist roles in *The Four Temperaments* (Balanchine), *The Nutcracker*, Ben Stevenson's *Cinderella*, *Five Tangos*, Peter Martin's *Fearful Symmetries*, *Giselle*, *Raymonda Variations*, *Serenade*, and others. While with Pennsylvania Ballet, she had the honor of going on tour to the Kennedy Center and the New York City Center. Additionally, she had principal roles created on her by Christopher Stowell and Stacey Tookey (from *So You Think You Can Dance*). Currently, she is a lecturer in ballet at USC Gloria Kaufman School of Dance and a guest lecturer at UC Santa Barbara, and she teaches internationally.

Melissa Bowman* joined the Corps de Ballet of American Ballet Theatre at age 15 where she danced for several years. She then founded her own ballet company, the Emerson Dance Theatre, and later joined the Bern Ballet in Switzerland and the Zurich Ballet with Uwe Scholz. Following Scholz to Leipzig, Germany, Bowman danced soloist and principal roles and became his associate director. She was an advisor for ABT's National Training Curriculum Committee, the Assistant Principal of the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School at ABT, and the Artistic Director of the ABT Summer Intensives. She joined Houston Ballet in 2016 and served as both the Academy Director and the Director of Curriculum for the Houston Ballet Academy. Mrs. Bowman is currently the Academy Director for Montana Ballet Company.

Leslie Carothers-Aromaa** is a former principal dancer with the Joffrey Ballet and Pennsylvania Ballet. She has danced principal roles in works by George Balanchine, Sir Frederick Ashton, Jiri Kylian, Twyla Tharp, Anthony Tudor, John Cranko, and Mark Morris, amongst others, and danced the leads in full-length classical ballets, including *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *Coppelia*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Sleeping Beauty*. During her career, leading roles were created for her by Robert Joffrey, William Forsythe, Gerald Arpino, Dwight Rhoden, and others. Ms. Carothers-Aromaa has served as Dance Institute Director, Artistic Director, Ballet Chair, and dance faculty at The Colburn School of Performing Arts. Currently, she teaches both ballet and Zena Rommett Floor-Barre® nationally and internationally and serves as a Mentor and Managing Board Member of the Zena Rommett Floor-Barre® Foundation.

Marie-France Lévesque* is a former ballerina with American Ballet Theatre. She previously danced with the Les Grands Ballets Canadiens where she performed several principal roles in *Concerto Barocco*, *Jewels* (Balanchine), *The Nutcracker*, and *Carmina Burana*, among others. She was recruited by Mikhail Baryshnikov to join ABT, where she danced for eleven years, performed several soloist and principal roles, and received an Artist of Exceptional Achievement status. Ms. Lévesque has been choreographing and teaching at universities and dance studios in the greater Los Angeles County and Orange County areas since 1996. She also established The Los Angeles Dance Company (www.TheLADC.com), of which she is the Founder and Artistic & Executive Director.

* Preliminary 1 only

** Preliminary 2 only