

# PENNSYLVANIA BALLET

ANGEL CORELLA, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR 2015–2016 SEASON

## For Immediate Release

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## Pennsylvania Ballet Welcomes New Artistic Staff and Dancers for the 2015-2016 Season

*Internationally renowned dancer, Charles Askegard, joins the Company as Ballet Master, Kyra Nichols' role is expanded, and five new dancers will join the Company.*

**Philadelphia, PA (September 15, 2015)** – [Pennsylvania Ballet](#) and Artistic Director [Angel Corella](#) are pleased to announce that Charles Askegard, former Principal Dancer at New York City Ballet and American Ballet Theater, will be joining the Company as Ballet Master. Kyra Nichols, former New York City Ballet Principal Dancer, will also expand her role by becoming a Ballet Master and five new dancers have joined the Company for the 2015-2016 Season.

“I’m pleased to have Charles Askegard bring his wealth of knowledge and perspective to our artistic team,” said Angel Corella, Pennsylvania Ballet Artistic Director. “As I work to diversify the programs while honoring the Balanchine tradition of the Company, Charles is the perfect fit. He has danced a variety of styles in his career, from modern to the Company’s beloved Balanchine works.”

**Charles Askegard** brings a wealth of knowledge from his distinguished career. In 1987, Mr. Askegard joined American Ballet Theatre (ABT) under the direction of Mikhail Baryshnikov. He performed with ABT for ten years, performing many lead roles in both full-length and repertory ballets including *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *La Bayadere*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, and working with legendary choreographers Agnes de Mille, Twyla Tharp, Natalia Makarova, Lar Lubovitch, and Glen Tetley.

In 1997 he joined the New York City Ballet where he performed for fourteen years as a Principal Dancer. His repertoire at NYCB included many Balanchine ballets including *Diamonds* from Balanchine’s full length *Jewels*, *Stars and Stripes*, *Theme and Variations*, and *Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux*. In addition, he has had the honor of working with Jerome Robbins, Peter Martins, Eliot Feld, Christopher Wheeldon, and Helgi Tommason.

After leaving the New York City Ballet, he co-founded “Ballet Next,” a company for which he choreographed, performed and directed until 2013. Before becoming Ballet Master for Pennsylvania Ballet, he taught at Ballet Academy East as well as the American Ballet Theatre Summer Intensive, has been a guest teacher across the nation, and is a frequent judge for the Youth America Grand Prix.

“I’m very excited to start working with Angel Corella and the Company,” said Askegard. “My expertise and experience aligns well with the future of the Company and I look forward to making an imprint on Pennsylvania Ballet and its’ dancers.”

**Kyra Nichols** began her professional career performing with Alan Howard’s San Francisco based Pacific Ballet before moving to New York where she became an apprentice at NYCB in 1974 and quickly became a member of the corps de ballet.

In 1979, George Balanchine promoted her to the rank of Principal Dancer. Her early years in the Company were enlivened by the presence of George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins, both of whom were choreographing on the Company. Kyra Nichols danced numerous leading roles in the Company repertory, ranging from pyrotechnic displays of bravura skill in ballets such as Tchaikovsky *Piano Concerto Number 2* and *Stars and Stripes* to more lyrical and dramatic roles such those in *Liebeslieder Walzer* and Robert Schumann’s *Dauidsbundlertanze*.

Ms. Nichols also worked with an extensive list of choreographers including, William Forsythe, Susan Stroman, Christopher Wheeldon, Peter Martins, Jacques D’Amboise, Robert La Fosse and Robert Garland.

Kyra retired from New York City Ballet in June of 2007, after 33 years with the company. Since then Ms. Nichols has been teaching and setting ballets across the nation.

### **Dancers**

Nicolai Gorodiskii will join the company as a Soloist, Ana Calderon will become a member of the Corps de Ballet, and Aaron Anker, Marjorie Feiring and Kathryn Manger join as apprentices. The dancers will bring their diverse backgrounds and talent to Pennsylvania Ballet’s ever-growing repertoire.

“I’m excited to see what our new dancers will bring to the Company,” said Angel Corella, Pennsylvania Ballet Artistic Director. “Both Nicolai Gorodiskii and Ana Calderon have impressive professional international dance experience that will further diversify the culture, style and technique of the Company.”

**Nicolai Gorodiskii** was born in the Ukraine and grew up in Buenos Aires, which is where he began his ballet training in 2007 at The Superior Art Institute of the Colón Theater and completed his training in 2013 on scholarship at The Ballet Academy at the Vienna State Opera. Throughout his dance education, Mr. Gorodiskii formed part of the famous Viennese concert Opernball, and earned several honors at the 2009 DanzaAmerica competition including the gold medal and the Revelation Prize for Classical and Modern Dance. He was also the gold medalist at the Prague International Ballet Competition in the Czech Republic in 2012, and winner of the Grand Prix at the Levante Danza festival in Italy in 2013, among others.

In November of 2013, Mr. Gorodiskii joined the National Theatre of Croatia as a soloist and in 2014 joined Ballet Estable del Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. In April of 2014, the Director of the National Theatre in Salzburg, Austria invited him to perform at the company's annual gala.

Mr. Gorodiskii's repertoire includes the role of Nutcracker Doll and Mirlitons from *The Nutcracker*, Spanish Dance from *Swan Lake*, Friends in *Coppélia* and The Joker in *Alice in Wonderland* as well as Moon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the soloist role "Paysan Pas de Deux" in Paloma Herrera's cast of *Giselle*, among others.

**Ana Calderon** of Santander, Spain received her training from the Royal Conservatory of Professional Dance in Madrid. In 2004, she was awarded the Grand Prize from the Princess Grace Foundation of Monaco before starting her career at Zurich Ballet in Switzerland.

In 2007, Ms. Calderon began dancing with "Angel Corella and Friends," and then joined Angel Corella's Barcelona Ballet, where she was promoted to Soloist in 2010. In 2013, Ms. Calderon joined Houston Ballet as a member of the Corps de Ballet under the direction of Stanton Welch.

Some of Ms. Calderon's repertoire includes *Don Quixote*, *Swan Lake*, *Coppélia*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Les Indes Galantes*, George Balanchine's *Who Cares?* and *Ballo della Regina*, Twyla Tharp's *In the Upper Room*, Nacho Duato's *Jardi Tancat*, Christopher Wheeldon's *DGV, VIII*, and *Polyphonia*, and Clark Tippet's *Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1*.

Newly appointed apprentice **Aaron Anker** was born in Portland, Oregon and began his formal ballet training at age 10 in Fredericksburg, Virginia. He studied with ballet masters Suzanne Farrell, Violette Verdy, Patricia McBride, and Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux.

In the fall of 2012, Mr. Anker began pursuing a Bachelor of Art in Ballet and Bachelor of Science in Biology at Indiana University. During his time with Indiana University Ballet Theater, Mr. Anker was featured in principal roles in George Balanchine's *Rubies*, *Emeralds*, *Donizetti Variations*, and *The Four Temperaments*, Merce Cunningham's *Duets*, and was chosen for the role of Amore, a character created by director Tom Diamond for the Indiana University Opera Theater production of *Xerxes*, among others.

**Marjorie Feiring** raised in Rumson, New Jersey, started dancing at the age of three. She received the majority of her training from the Academy of Dance Arts, under the direction of Jennifer James Church, and later, Shane and Nick Mishoe. Ms. Feiring went on to train with the Miami City Ballet School with Carter Alexander and Geta Constantinescu for two years and then at The School of Pennsylvania Ballet during its inaugural year under Arantxa Ochoa. She also attended summer intensives at Miami City Ballet School, School of American Ballet, Exploring Ballet with Suzanne Farrell, Ellison Ballet, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, and was a student apprentice at The Chautauqua Institution under full merit scholarship.

In 2013, Ms. Feiring joined Pennsylvania Ballet II and performed in numerous ballets with the Company including *Giselle*, *Coppelia*, Twyla Tharp's *Push Comes to Shove*, Christopher Wheeldon's *Swan Lake* and *Carnival of the Animals*, Jerome Robbins' *The Concert*, and George

Balanchine's *The Nutcracker*<sup>™</sup>, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Four Temperaments* and *Jewels*. Ms. Feiring also joined the company on their tours to Ottawa, Canada, The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and to the 2014 Vail International Dance Festival in Colorado.

**Kathryn Manger** born in Hartford, Connecticut, began her ballet training with the Hartt School Dance Department, formerly the School of the Hartford Ballet. After graduating in 2013, Ms. Manger joined Milwaukee Ballet II, and in 2014, was invited to join the Minnesota Ballet for their 2014-2015 Season.

Ms. Manger has performed in galas including the "Hartt's Got Talent" in 2012 as well as the Connecticut Dance Alliance Award Ceremony in 2011 and 2012. In 2009, Ms. Manger was honored with the Francine Goldfarb Scholarship Award, and was also awarded the gold medal in the Connecticut Classic Competition for both senior female in 2011 and 2012 and the pas de deux category in 2013. She was also one of the top 12 finalists of the semifinals of Youth American Grand Prix in 2012. Throughout her career she has performed in many ballets including George Balanchine's *Who Cares?*, *Coppélia* (Swanhilda), *The Nutcracker* (Sugar Plum Fairy) and *Don Quixote* (Kitri).

#### **About Pennsylvania Ballet**

Founded in 1963 by Balanchine student and protégée Barbara Weisberger, Pennsylvania Ballet is one of the nation's leading ballet companies. Headquartered in Philadelphia, the Company's annual local season features six programs of classic favorites and new works, including the Philadelphia holiday tradition, *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*<sup>™</sup>. For more information and new works, visit [www.paballet.org](http://www.paballet.org), call 215.551.7000 or connect with us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#) to go behind the scenes at any time.

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