

# THE PORTLAND

NANCY DAVIS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

# BALLET

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## MEDIA RELEASE

### Aspiring dancers gain technical skills and life skills at The Portland Ballet

#### Meet Two Exceptional Student Dancers



**Photos: Blaine Truitt Covert**

**April 18, 2024 — PORTLAND, OR.** The Portland Ballet is a quiet gem in the dance community as it champions a unique blend of rigorous technical training and life skills enrichment amongst its students. Through a curriculum designed to nurture creativity, confidence, collaboration, and self-discipline, students at TPB develop into well-rounded individuals poised to thrive in any pursuit they choose.

"TPB is more than just a dance school; it's a place where young dancers discover their passion, build their confidence, and develop the skills they need to succeed in life," said Artistic Director,

Nancy Davis. "We create growth opportunities for students that allow them to become not only exceptional dancers but also exceptional human beings."

Two students in particular stand out as they prepare to take lead roles in TPB's upcoming production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The show will play at PSU's Lincoln Hall on May 11.

**Søren Gillette**, a senior at Grant High School, will play Theseus, one of the ballet's central characters. He began his training at the Oregon Ballet Theatre School; has been a guest artist at Columbia Dance Center in Vancouver, Washington; and has been with TPB for the last six years. He is a member of TPB's Youth Company.

"I originally transferred to TPB because I felt insufficiently challenged at my old studio and wanted to change that — which TPB certainly did," said Gillette. "TPB allowed me to connect to other older male dancers, both as teachers and peers, who helped guide me forward time and time again. [TPB] helped me realize what dance meant to me and my place in its world."

"Watching Soren grow and mature into an accomplished dancer and artist is one of the reasons I do what I do," said Davis. "He now feels a sense of achievement and pride that will serve him well as he leaves the TPB nest and embarks on the next exciting chapter of his life at Duke University in the fall."

**Maya Barmada** is a junior and International Baccalaureate student at Lincoln High School, where she attends half-time to participate in both The Portland Ballet's Career Track program and Youth Company. She will dance the role of Titania. Maya began taking classes at TPB when she was five years old and joined the pre-professional track last year in preparation for a dance career.

"TPB has helped me grow not only as a dancer but also as an artist and a person," said Barmada. "Having trained here since I was young, I've learned grace, manners, and etiquette in addition to the amazing technique and artistry taught by all the teachers. I have known many of the faculty members almost my whole life, and they have fostered my love for dance and really shaped me into the dancer and person I am."

“I have enjoyed teaching and mentoring Maya Barmada since she joined The Portland Ballet at age five in our Creative Ballet classes,” said Davis. “Now, 12 years later, she has become a brilliant dancer performing lead roles in all of our company productions. Her perseverance and incredible work ethic will serve her well in life.”

### ***A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM TICKET AND PERFORMANCE INFORMATION***

**When:** May 11, 2024 at 1 and 5 p.m.

**Where:** Lincoln Performance Hall at Portland State University, 1620 SW Park at Market, Portland, OR.

**To Purchase Regular Tickets:** Prices are \$16-\$40. Tickets will go on sale on April 10 and may be purchased at [theportlandballet.org/performance/current-classic](https://theportlandballet.org/performance/current-classic), by emailing [tickets@theportlandballet.org](mailto:tickets@theportlandballet.org), or by calling 503-452-8448.

**Ticket Specials:** Discounts are available for Groups of 10+ and Arts for All tickets.

Student Tickets: \$10–\$18.

Family Package: When purchasing two adult and two or more youth tickets, all youth tickets will be discounted – \$7 off in Tier 1, \$6 off in Tier 2, and \$5 off in Tier 3.

**Please Note:** The show is for all ages.

### **THE PORTLAND BALLET**

The Portland Ballet, a world-class dance academy in Portland, Oregon, is committed to fostering the future of ballet by building the next generation of dancers and audiences. Founded in 2001, TPB is shaped by the vision, artistic experience, and family-centered sensibility of the founding directors. Artistic Director Nancy Davis and Executive Director Jim Lane trained at the School of American Ballet and enjoyed distinguished professional careers in companies throughout the U.S. After retiring as principal dancers of the Los Angeles Ballet – where their partnership onstage led to marriage and family off the stage – they moved to Portland, Oregon, and founded The Portland Ballet. Graduates have carried TPB’s reputation for excellence into major professional companies and conservatory programs throughout the U.S. and abroad.

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