

LOS ANGELES BALLET

Thordal Christensen & Colleen Neary *Artistic Directors*

LOS ANGELES BALLET ANNOUNCES 2021/2022 SEASON AND RETURN TO THEATERS

In-Person Performances Include Popular Original Production of *The Nutcracker*, Los Angeles Premieres by Choreographers Christopher Wheeldon and Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, a George Balanchine Masterwork, and an Exquisite Production of *The Sleeping Beauty*

Los Angeles - Thursday, September 9, 2021 - Los Angeles Ballet Co-Artistic Directors Thordal Christensen and Colleen Neary announce LAB's return to theaters and live, in-person performances. After the devastating cancellation of Season 15 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Los Angeles Ballet presents a remarkable 16th Season, offering legendary story ballets and contemporary masterworks including ***The Nutcracker***, ***The Sleeping Beauty*** and works by Balanchine, Lopez Ochoa and Wheeldon.

Full season and Choose-2 subscriptions as well as all standard tickets are on sale now. Early Bird pricing for subscriptions ends on September 30. Tickets may be purchased at [losangelesballet.org](https://www.losangelesballet.org) or by calling the Los Angeles Ballet box office at (310) 998-7782, Tuesday through Friday, 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., PST.

Colleen Neary, Los Angeles Ballet's Co-Artistic Director said, "We are so thrilled to announce our return to theatres. We have missed our subscribers and supporters as much as they have missed seeing us on stage. To celebrate, we are presenting a season filled with themes of joy, hope and love." Co-Artistic Director Thordal Christensen shared what it means for LAB's dancers to return to performing. "A dancer's life becomes meaningful and fulfilled when you perform live on stage and our dancers are overjoyed to be able to share that experience with audiences once again.

"This season reflects Los Angeles Ballet's resilience, dedication and commitment to continue to bring the beauty of live ballet performances to LA audiences," said Los Angeles Ballet board member Lori Milken. "I am looking forward to enjoying performances with family and friends again, and to continue to watch LAB thrive and grow."



Photo Credits: Petra Conti & Eris Nezha in *The Nutcracker*, *Bloom*, Photo by Heather Thorne, Courtesy of Nashville Ballet; Kenta Shimizu & Allyssa Bross in *The Sleeping Beauty*; LAB Photos: Reed Hutchinson

The **2021/2022 Season** opens with Los Angeles' Holiday tradition LAB's ***The Nutcracker***, set in 1913 California in a classic Spanish style home with Mexican, Spanish, and European influences. The story unfolds with a warm and inviting sense of being inside a children's book and follows Clara and her beloved Nutcracker as they travel to the Land of Snow and the Palace of the Dolls. The Dolby Theatre performances will feature the **LAB Orchestra**, with renowned ballet conductor, **Andrea Quinn**.

Los Angeles Ballet begins the holiday season November 20 and 21 with the **Nutcracker Tea!**, a much-loved and delightful family experience. Chaired by Bari Milken-Bernstein and co-chaired by Jennifer Lustig Gardner and Brooke Lande, the event features a preview performance of excerpts from *The Nutcracker*, and opportunities for children to interact with LAB dancers and costumed characters from the production. Along with sumptuous treats and refreshments, the event includes an elegant holiday boutique, Nutcracker-themed craft activities, and a keepsake photo opportunity.

Tickets for the 2021 Nutcracker Tea! are available now as add-ons to season subscriptions with priority seating, or as single tickets with general seating. Details of the event are available at losangelesballet.org.

In April 2022, **BLOOM** offers *Ghosts*, *Apollo* and *Bloom*, three works performed exclusively at The Broad Stage in Santa Monica. Master contemporary choreographer **Christopher Wheeldon** makes his stage ethereal and substantial for *Ghosts* (LA Premiere), presenting a realm where ghosts manifest in a dark watery playground. *Apollo*, one of **George Balanchine's** most iconic and best-loved works, depicts the young god of music visited and instructed by three Muses. The second LA Premiere is *Bloom* by Belgian-Colombian choreographer **Annabelle Lopez Ochoa**. The dance is inspired by Puja; a worship ritual from Hinduism where flower offerings are laid out at the doorstep 3 times each day.

The Sleeping Beauty, after Marius Petipa's work, one of the most treasured story ballets of all time, will be presented in June 2022. The epitome of classical ballet, *The Sleeping Beauty* is considered to be the most authentic of Petipa's work, and Thordal Christensen and Colleen Neary's production is not only true to the tradition but presents the story with drama, excitement, and beauty. This cherished fairy tale tells the story of an enchanted sleep, and the love between a beautiful princess and a handsome prince. Arrested by a powerful evil, inner beauty lies dormant, to be awakened after one hundred years through the power of pure love.

Los Angeles Ballet will resume its **Power of Performance! (POP!)** outreach program committed to providing a minimum of 10% of tickets to every performance, free of charge, to Los Angeles County's underserved communities. LAB partners with 50 social service agencies from all five Supervisorial Districts including those supporting children with special needs, domestic violence survivors, active-duty military and veterans, senior centers, and youth in the county probation system. Many participants in the program will have the opportunity to attend a ballet performance for the first time in their lives.

During the closure due to COVID-19, Los Angeles Ballet adapted its **A Chance to Dance (ACTD)** program to a virtual experience to continue to provide free monthly dance class via live sessions on Instagram. LAB's professional dancers teach a variety of dance classes, give informal performances and coordinate wellness lectures. ACTD promotes knowledge of dance, a healthy lifestyle, confidence and joy. Participants from schools, arts organizations, social service agencies and the general public participate. Registration is open to all, with classes offered to a variety of age groups. A schedule of upcoming classes can be found at losangelesballet.org/a-chance-to-dance.

About Los Angeles Ballet

Founded in 2004 by Artistic Directors Thordal Christensen and Colleen Neary, and former Executive Director Julie Whittaker, Los Angeles Ballet is known for its superb stagings of the Balanchine repertory, stylistically meticulous classical ballets, and its commitment to new works. LAB has become recognized as a world-class ballet company, presenting 21 productions encompassing 43 works, including 13 commissioned world premieres. Los Angeles Ballet 'tours' throughout LA County, regularly appearing at five venues. Since its inception in 2006, LAB's *Power of Performance (POP!)* program has provided thousands of free tickets to underserved or disadvantaged children, seniors, veterans, and their families. LAB's *A Chance to Dance Community Days* outreach program was launched in October 2012.

About Colleen Neary

With stellar credentials in performing, teaching, and staging ballets, Colleen Neary brought a wealth of professional experience and expertise when she and her husband, Thordal Christensen, co-founded Los Angeles Ballet in 2004. Born in Miami, Florida, Neary trained in New York at the School of American Ballet and at Harkness House for Ballet Arts. She danced as a soloist with New York City Ballet from 1969 to 1979. George Balanchine personally selected her to stage his ballets for other companies as Répétiteur for The George Balanchine Trust, which is the official guardian of the choreographer's style and celebrated choreography.

Neary's career path led her to Europe in 1979, where she was Rehearsal Director and Choreographic Assistant with Zurich Ballet. She also performed internationally as a Guest Artist and staged Rudolf Nureyev's full-length *Don Quixote* and *Manfred* throughout Europe. In 1984, Maurice Béjart recruited her as Guest Principal Artist and Company Teacher for his Ballet du Deuxième Siècle. Neary returned to the U.S. in 1986, joining Pacific Northwest Ballet as Principal Dancer. In 1992, she began a decade with The Royal Danish Ballet as Rehearsal Director, Company Teacher and First Instructor in charge of productions.

In 2002, Neary and Christensen moved to Los Angeles and responded to the need for a resident professional ballet company. Since the company's 2006 debut, Neary and Christensen have co-choreographed an original *Nutcracker* production set in 1912 Los Angeles, as well as other full-length classics. They have commissioned new contemporary choreography, and presented ballets by 20th century masters, including more than 20 of Balanchine's ballets. As a Répétiteur, Neary remains in demand, continuing to stage Balanchine ballets for major U.S. and international ballet companies. Her commitment to ballet education also resulted in co-founding Los Angeles Ballet School and Los Angeles Ballet's many community outreach programs.

About Thordal Christensen

Born in Copenhagen, Denmark, Thordal Christensen trained at The Royal Danish Ballet School and at the School of American Ballet in New York. He had a successful performing career with three of the world's major ballet companies in Europe and in the U.S. and eventually established his credentials as a choreographer. Christensen served as artistic director of The Royal Danish Ballet and The Royal Danish Ballet School, where he was praised for artistic leadership, developing new choreography, cultivating young talent, and his commitment to dance education.

After moving to Los Angeles in 2002, Christensen noticed the city's lack of a professional resident ballet company, and in 2004, he drew on his extensive experience to co-found Los Angeles Ballet with his wife Colleen Neary. The company debuted in 2006 with its original production of *The Nutcracker*, which was set in 1912 Los Angeles. It was presented in five theaters throughout the Los Angeles metropolitan area. As Co-Artistic Directors, Christensen and Neary have steered the company through 15 seasons,

establishing multiple home venues and building a repertoire of full-length classics, including *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Giselle*, and *Don Quixote* (also choreographed by Christensen and Neary).

Christensen and Neary have led Los Angeles Ballet by commissioning new choreography, presenting 20th century masterpieces by Lar Lubovitch, Jiri Kylián and George Balanchine, and offering free educational outreach programs for the community. Concurrently, the couple founded Los Angeles Ballet School, which has offered training to a new generation of dancers.

Calendar Listing for Los Angeles Ballet 2021/2022 Season

The Nutcracker Tea!

Waldorf Astoria Beverly Hills

Sat, Nov. 20, 10:00 a.m., 1:30 p.m. & 5:00 p.m.

Sun, Nov. 21, 10:00 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.

The Nutcracker

The Alex Theater

Sat, Dec. 4, 6 p.m.

Sun, Dec. 5, 2 p.m.

Redondo Beach Performing Arts Center

Sat, Dec. 11, 1 p.m. & 5 p.m.

Sun, Dec. 12, 12 p.m.

UCLA Royce Hall

Fri, Dec. 17, 8 p.m.

Sat, Dec. 18, 12 p.m. & 5 p.m.

Sun, Dec. 19, 12 p.m. & 5 p.m.

Dolby Theatre

with Live Orchestra

Thurs, Dec. 23, 8 p.m.

Sat, Dec. 24, 12 p.m.

Sun, Dec. 26, 11 a.m. & 4 p.m.

BLOOM

The Broad Stage

Thurs, April 21, 7:30 p.m.

Fri, April 22, 7:30 p.m.

Sat, April 23, 5 p.m. (LAB Annual Gala Night)

The Sleeping Beauty

Redondo Beach Performing Arts Center

Sat, May 28, 7:30 p.m.

Royce Hall, UCLA

Fri, June 3, 7:30 p.m.

Sat, June 4, 2 p.m.

Alex Theater

Sat, June 11, 7:30 p.m.

Tickets range from \$34.00 - \$131.00. Discounts are available for students, children, seniors and active-duty military.

Los Angeles Ballet Box Office: 310-998-7782, Tuesday through Friday, 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 pm.

Online tickets and subscriptions: losangelesballet.org

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