

**For Immediate Release**

**CONTACT FOR PUBLICATION:**

PNB Box Office  
206.441.2424 / [www.PNB.org](http://www.PNB.org)

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Gary Tucker  
206.441.2426 / [GTucker@PNB.org](mailto:GTucker@PNB.org)

## **Six Degrees of Promotion: Pacific Northwest Ballet Announces New Principals and Soloists**

**November 7, 2025 – Seattle, WA** – Following the opening night world premiere performance of *AfterTime* in Pacific Northwest Ballet's current mixed rep program, PNB Artistic Director Peter Boal announced the promotion of four corps de ballet dancers to the rank of soloist, and two soloists being elevated to principal dancers: **Mark Cuddihee**, **Ashton Edwards**, **Juliet Prine**, and **Yuki Takahashi** are now soloists, and **Christopher D'Ariano** and **Clara Ruf Maldonado** are PNB's newest principal dancers.

PNB's newly-promoted dancers are all performing in **IN THE UPPER ROOM**, the current triple bill running through November 16, and featuring the premiere of D'Ariano and Amanda Morgan's *AfterTime*, Dani Rowe's *The Window*, and Twyla Tharp's *In the Upper Room*. For casting information, visit [PNB.org/season/in-the-upper-room](http://PNB.org/season/in-the-upper-room). For tickets and additional info, contact the PNB Box Office at 206.441.2424, in person at 301 Mercer Street, or online 24/7 at [PNB.org](http://PNB.org).

In front of McCaw Hall's red curtain, Mr. Boal brought out each dancer one at a time to announce and congratulate their promotions. (Full dancer bios are hyperlinked.) He started the evening's celebration by inviting Mark Cuddihee to the stage.

"Originally from Greenville, SC, [Mark Cuddihee](#) came to our school in the summer of 2017 and joined the company in 2019," began Mr. Boal. "Mark's clarity of line and crisp technique were on display in George Balanchine's *Square Dance* opposite Sarah-Gabrielle Ryan. His unique ability to sail through the air and devour space was notable in Balanchine's *Rubies*. He demonstrated skilled partnering and an endearing devotion to his Aurora, Ashton Edwards, in *The Sleeping Beauty*. Mark's winsome irreverence in Marco Goecke's *Mopey* showed another side, and left us wondering where his talents will take him next. Please join me in congratulating Mark on his promotion to soloist."

Mr. Boal then welcomed [Ashton Edwards](#) to the stage. "From Flint, Michigan, Ashton came to us in the summer of 2019 and joined PNB as an apprentice in 2021. I can still picture the radiant joy on their face at the Chicago audition. Ashton stepped into the limelight with that trademark joy and go-for-broke dancing in Justin Peck's *The Times Are Racing*. Ashton has a way of leaping over the footlights as evidenced in their meddlesome Puck in George Balanchine's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and as the high-kicking, gravity-defying principal in *Rubies*. Their thoughtful work on the character of Aurora cemented the uncanny abilities of this extraordinary artist. Join me in applauding Ashton on their promotion to soloist."

Mr. Boal then called out [Juliet Prine](#). "Originally from Minneapolis, Minnesota, Juliet came to PNB School's summer course in 2014 and joined the company in 2019. She has been an absolute leader in the corps de ballet while frequently stepping into soloist and principal roles. Her performance of *Rubies* was electrified. She was a crystalline Princess Florine dancing with the Bluebird in *The Sleeping Beauty*, and offered sheer comedic genius as the nurse in Jean-Christophe Maillot's *Roméo et Juliette*. Every year Juliet shines in *The Nutcracker* as the Sugar Plum Fairy, Dewdrop, and about a dozen other roles and characters. Congratulations to Juliet on her well-deserved promotion to soloist."

"Let us next welcome [Yuki Takahashi](#) to the stage," Mr. Boal continued. "Originally from Tokyo, Japan, Yuki came to us in the summer of 2016 and joined the company in 2019. Like Juliet, she has been a quiet

force in the corps, guiding the ensemble to achieve a shared approach to every ballet. Yuki has a natural affinity for the works of George Balanchine evidenced in spectacular performances of Sugar Plum opposite Dylan Calahan. Other triumphs in the Balanchine repertoire include nuanced performances in *Emeralds* and a bravura turn in *Square Dance*. Yuki is as at home in many choreographers' works but deserves special mention for performances in Alejandro Cerrudo's *Black on Black on Black* and *One Thousand Pieces*."

Mr. Boal then turned his attention to PNB's two newest principal dancers, first bringing [Christopher D'Ariano](#) out, noting that he has a busy night ahead of him: In addition to the premiere of his and Amanda Morgan's new work *AfterTime*, Christopher is dancing in both *The Window* and *In the Upper Room*. "Originally from the Bronx, NY, Christopher first came to PNB in the summer of 2015 and joined the company in 2017. His reverence for the works of George Balanchine was on clear display opposite Clara Ruf Maldonado in *Duo Concertante*. He too inhabits the choreography of Alejandro Cerrudo with a winning combination of fluidity and precision. He offered standout performances opposite James Kirby Rogers in Ulysses Dove's *Dancing on the Front Porch of Heaven* and reached a new plateau in his career with his debut as Prince Desiree in *The Sleeping Beauty*. A choreographer of note, a dancer of tremendous talent and integrity, please join me in congratulating Christopher D'Ariano on his promotion to principal."

And last but not least, Mr. Boal welcomed [Clara Ruf Maldonado](#) to the stage. "Originally from New York, New York, Clara came to PNB School's summer course in 2011, joining the company in 2018. Before coming to PNB, Clara trained at the School of American Ballet in New York and appeared as Clara in New York City Ballet's *The Nutcracker*. Her innate ability to shine in ballets by Balanchine was evident in everything from *Agon* to *Duo Concertante* to *The Nutcracker*. This past season Clara debuted and triumphed in roles that are considered defining benchmarks of a ballerina – Princess Aurora and Juliette. Clara's ability to embody a character, or music, or a choreographer's vision, extends far beyond story ballets. In Crystal Pite's *The Seasons' Canon* she captured the choreographer's own awe in the presence of natural surroundings in a way that represented all of humanity. Let us applaud Clara Ruf Maldonado on her well-deserved promotion to principal!"

Prior to opening night, Mr. Boal also announced that PNB will be hiring **Luke Gutierrez**, **LeeAnaca Moore**, and **Mckenzie Wilson** from the ranks of the PNB School's Professional Division, and **Jory Luther** from The Joffrey Ballet's studio company, to join the company as apprentices.

PNB congratulates all of our newly promoted and hired dancers!

# # #

The world premiere of *AfterTime* is sponsored by Glenn Kawasaki, Braiden Rex-Johnson & Spencer Johnson, Judy Ness\*, Connie & Tom\* Walsh, and Barbara Lewis. PNB's 2023 world premiere of Dani Rowe's *The Window* was generously supported by Leslie Yamada and others. The 2007 Pacific Northwest Ballet premiere of Twyla Tharp's *In the Upper Room* was generously underwritten by Glenn Kawasaki. [\*Deceased]

Pacific Northwest Ballet's 2025-26 season is proudly sponsored by 4Culture, ArtsFund, Microsoft, and The Shubert Foundation. PNB's digital season is made possible by Katherine Graubard and William Calvin. PNB media sponsorship provided by *The Seattle Times*.

**Publicity Contact**

**Gary Tucker, Director of Communications**

M/T 206.328.TUCK (8825) / GTucker@PNB.org / PNB.org/press

*Everything is subject to change. For further information, please visit PNB.org.*

**PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET**

**301 Mercer Street • Seattle, WA 98109 • 206.441.2424 • [www.PNB.org](http://www.PNB.org)**