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[Press Room](#)



Images of The Joffrey Ballet are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#).

**CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS
THE JOFFREY BALLET
IN THE BAY AREA PREMIERE OF *BEYOND THE SHORE*,
A CAL PERFORMANCES CO-COMMISSIONED WORK BY NICOLAS BLANC**

**PLUS THE WEST COAST PREMIERE OF
JUSTIN PECK'S *THE TIMES ARE RACING*,
CALIFORNIA PREMIERE OF STEPHANIE MARTINEZ'S *BLISS!*
AND BAY AREA PREMIERE OF CHRISTOPHER WHEELDON'S *COMMEDIA*
FRIDAY–SUNDAY, MARCH 6–8**

**The company's UC Berkeley residency includes three related events with Blanc—
a Community Dance Class, a Lecture/Demonstration, and a Pre-performance Talk—
and an Open Company Class and Dress Rehearsal with Joffrey artistic director
Ashley Wheater for UC Berkeley students**

Berkeley, February 10, 2020 — Cal Performances at UC Berkeley welcomes back the renowned **Joffrey Ballet** for its second campus residency as part of an ongoing six-year collaboration, Friday–

Saturday, March 6–7 at 8pm, and Sunday, March 8 at 3pm in Zellerbach Hall. The campus visit features the Bay Area premiere of **Nicolas Blanc**'s *Beyond the Shore*, which was co-commissioned by Cal Performances and developed, in part, during an extended campus residency during the 2017–18 season.

Beyond the Shore has several Bay Area resonances. It is danced to a score by composer **Mason Bates**, a UC Berkeley alumnus, which was commissioned and recorded by the San Francisco Symphony. The program also includes the West Coast premiere of **Justin Peck**'s *The Times Are Racing*, the California premiere of **Stephanie Martinez**' *Bliss!*, and the Bay Area premiere of **Christopher Wheeldon**'s *Commedia*. Additionally, the company is under the direction of Ashley Wheater MBE, who came to the Joffrey in 2007 after 18 years with San Francisco Ballet.

The Joffrey Ballet was founded 64 years ago and has earned an international reputation for innovation, eclecticism, and excellence. The company's three planned extended visits over six years (beginning in 2017–18) are designed to connect the company's Chicago home base with the creative and academic life of the UC Berkeley campus. Each residency features choreographers participating in public programs and academic encounters, offering audiences and students insights into the creative process of internationally renowned dancers and choreographers. The project is focused on both new commissions and the process of creating new dance works, and continues a longstanding relationship between Cal Performances and the Joffrey, which visited the campus each summer in the 1970s in a project that resulted in the Berkeley Ballets, a series of dances still in the Joffrey's repertoire.

“Cal Performances is privileged to have deep relationships with many internationally renowned ensembles, bringing them back to Berkeley decade after decade, as with the Joffrey Ballet,” said Cal Performances executive and artistic director Jeremy Geffen. “Focusing on robust activities ranging from master classes to open sessions, the creation of new work - including public observation of the creative process - the six-year Joffrey residency is a prime example of the rare opportunities the UC Berkeley community enjoys through Cal Performances.”

Nicolas Blanc's *Beyond the Shore* takes on themes of exploration and self-discovery. Set on 20 dancers—10 male and 10 female—the dance has six sections: a prologue, for which Bates created a new ambient electronic soundscape to preface his existing orchestra score, titled *B-sides*;

“Netherworld,” which, in the choreographer’s words, “suggests being underwater or blowing like grass in the wind”; “Broom of the System,” which evokes a “mechanical clock of the future, or the programmed patterns of bees”; “Aerosol Melody (Hanalei),” a duet inspired by Bates’ trip to Hawaii, in which the richness of the score suggests a sensual and lazy dance between two aquatic creatures at the bottom of the ocean; “Gemini in the Solar Wind,” a duet inspired by a re-imagining of the first American spacewalk, which uses actual communication samples from the 1965 NASA Gemini IV voyage; “Temescal Noir,” a section inspired by the Oakland neighborhood referenced in the title, a jazzy quartet with a 1950s feeling; and the energetic finale, “Warehouse Medicine,” which invokes the sensory overload of a techno rave party. The Joffrey’s fall 2017 campus residency included three days of open choreographic workshops, during which the public was invited to observe Blanc’s creative process as he set this work on Joffrey dancers.

Justin Peck’s *The Times Are Racing* (2017) is a “sneaker ballet” (referring to the footwear worn by the company) for 20 dancers, with music by Baltimore electronic music composer Dan Deacon and streetwear designed by Opening Ceremony. The fast-paced, urban-inspired choreography channels youthful energy, the power of protest, and the process for creating change. The Joffrey is only the second company to perform the work, and is the first to perform it in the US outside of New York City. Peck is one of the most in-demand choreographers of his generation and won a 2018 Tony Award for Best Choreography for his work on Broadway’s *Carousel*.

Christopher Wheeldon’s *Commedia* (2008) is a bittersweet harlequinade set to Stravinsky’s *Pulcinella* score. An elegant piece for eight dancers, it glancingly references other commedia dell’arte ballets, although its real subject is ballet itself. Stravinsky’s suite is in 13 sections: some sections play with notions of classical form while other sections are abstract. The performances of *Commedia* replace Liam Scarlett’s *Vespertine* originally planned for this engagement.

And award-winning Chicago-based choreographer Stephanie Martinez’ *Bliss!* (2019) is set to Stravinsky’s *Dumbarton Oaks* Concerto. It is her first creation for the Joffrey main company and was commissioned as part of a collaboration with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, which selected the music. Stravinsky’s *Dumbarton Oaks* Concerto in E-flat major was commissioned by American benefactors Robert Woods Bliss and Mildred Barnes Bliss—and Martinez’ title references both the

couple's last name and the exuberance of the concerto's first movement. The work is set on six male and two female dancers.

Several related activities featuring choreographer Nicolas Blanc and artistic director Ashley Wheater are planned in conjunction with the company's campus residency. Blanc and Joffrey artists Christine Rocas and Evan Boersma will demonstrate a *pas de deux* from Blanc's *Beyond the Shore* and talk about the work's creation process in a **Lecture/Demonstration** on Thursday, March 5 at 12:10pm in the Hearst Gym, Room 230. The program is free and open to the public ([RSVP requested](#)). On Friday, March 6, Wheater will lead a **Company Class and Dress Rehearsal**, free and open to UC Berkeley students. Blanc also leads a **Community Dance Class** on Joffrey technique and choreography on Saturday, March 7 at 11am in the Bancroft Studio. The class is open to all ages and abilities, and participation is \$10 ([advance registration](#) requested). In addition, Blanc will participate in a **Pre-performance Talk** in advance of the Friday evening program, at 7pm in Zellerbach Hall. The talk is free to ticketholders.

Ticket Information

Tickets for *The Joffrey Ballet* on Friday–Saturday, March 6–7 at 8pm, and Sunday, March 8 at 3pm in Zellerbach Hall range from \$42–\$148 (prices subject to change). Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at (510) 642-9988, at calperformances.org, and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to calperformances.org/discounts.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Friday, March 6, 8pm
Saturday, March 7, 8pm
Sunday, March 8, 3pm

Zellerbach Hall
Bancroft Way at Dana Street
UC Berkeley campus

Dance
The Joffrey Ballet

Program:

Christopher Wheeldon / *Commedia* (Bay Area Premiere; music: Stravinsky)

Stephanie Martinez / *Bliss!* (California Premiere; music: Stravinsky)

Nicolas Blanc / *Beyond the Shore* (Bay Area Premiere; Cal Performances Co-commission; music: Mason Bates)

Justin Peck / *The Times Are Racing* (West Coast Premiere; music: Dan Deacon)

Tickets: \$42–\$148 (prices subject to change)

Residency Activities

Lecture/Demonstration

Thursday, March 5, 12:10pm

Hearst Gym, Room 230

Choreographer Nicolas Blanc and Joffrey artists Christine Rocas and Evan Boersma will demonstrate a *pas de deux* from Blanc's *Beyond the Shore* and talk about the work's creation process, which began two years ago during the company's most recent campus residency. Free and open to the public, [RSVP requested](#).

Company Class and Dress Rehearsal (UC Berkeley students only)

Friday, March 6, 11am–12:30pm; 1–4pm

Zellerbach Hall

Company class led by Joffrey artistic director Ashley Wheater, followed by an open dress rehearsal and conversation with the artists. Event free and open to UC Berkeley students with student ID.

Pre-performance Talk

Friday, March 6, 7pm

Zellerbach Hall

A conversation with choreographer Nicolas Blanc. Free to ticketholders.

Community Dance Class

Saturday, March 7, 11am

Bancroft Studio

Choreographer Nicolas Blanc leads a ballet class on Joffrey technique and choreography. Open to all ages and abilities; \$10 ([advance registration](#)).