Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849) • With his work, he influenced U.S. presidents (including Abraham Lincoln), international movements (including Dostoevsky, the school of psychological realism, the French Symbolists of the late 19th century—and in turn the entire direction of modern literature), and innumerable works of art (including...the entirely new work of dance theater you’re about to see). Upon his death (which occurred under mysterious circumstances), he was effectively smeared as a drug-addicted depressive by his one-time friend and literary executor, R.W. Griswold, whose libelous obituary of Poe was published in the New York Times and picked up by newspapers across the country. It worked: Ask your friends what their first thought is when you say “Poe.” We’re now reclaiming Poe’s stories in dance theater, because we think they’re worth telling. Here are a few reasons why.

What we know: The orphan son of two actors, Edgar Poe was raised by John Allan, a prosperous Richmond exporter who never legally adopted him. He graduated from UVA and West Point, spent time in the Army (while his true life passion was to be a poet), and married his (awfully young) cousin, Virginia, in 1836...she died of tuberculosis in 1847. Poe’s analytical method is practiced and evident both in his work as a creative author and as a critic of the works of his contemporaries. As Ballet Fantastique creatives, Poe’s stories felt like a perfect match. Indeed, Poe’s self-declared intent wasn’t to create literature that was utilitarian: He believed fiercely in artistic idealism, using the chief requisites of pure aestheticism and literary formalism to write something real and new. Poe shows that through the (exquisitely) calculated use of language, one can express—though always imperfectly, he says—subjective vision of truth and the essential condition of human existence.

There’s another way to say this. As Ballet Fantastique dancer (and the Raven in tonight’s ballet) Carolin Koepplin says so well: “Not all ballets should be Swan Lake and the Nutcracker...about princes and princesses, and the expectation that you’ll live happily ever after...Poe writes about a more complex life experience. Sometimes you need someone to sit with you in the dark.” (“Quoth the Raven,” indeed.)

We’ve chosen five of our favorite Poe stories and poems to tell tonight through BFan’s inimitable and #influencer signature mix of dance, theater, and a handpicked score of live music. We hope that you enjoy this new Ballet Fantastique world premiere (or five) as much as we’ve enjoyed bringing it to life—and death—for you.

— Donna & Hannah
MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH (PUBLISHED 1842)
Our audience finds themselves in the midst of the Red Death, which has long devastated our country—with blood as its avatar and its seal. But Prince Prospero is happy and dauntless and sagacious. While his dominions are half depopulated, he summons to his presence his hale and light-hearted friends from among the nobles of his kingdom to his castellated abbeys, where they will lock themselves in and away from the peasants and the Red Death for a ball of unusual magnificence, proceeding through many entertainments and into many colored rooms, one after the next.

Join your fellow revelers in the Red Room.

FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER (PUBLISHED 1839)
Scene 1 // Our narrator has received a letter from his boyhood friend, Roderick Usher. As relayed in the letter, Roderick has been increasingly afflicted by a disease of the mind; he has written to his friend, our narrator, asking for help. It is known by all that year upon year, only one member of the House of Usher survives. Upon his arrival at the House, the narrator is greeted by the keepers, who lead him through the dark rooms of the fallen mansion.

Scene 2 // The narrator meets his friend Roderick suffers from an acuteness of the senses. Roderick, who hasn’t left the House in years, tells the narrator of his consumptive fear that he will die and attributes part of his illness to the fact that his sister, Madeline, suffers from cataphesia—she is consumed with frequent seizures where she appears temporarily immobilized. Roderick and Madeline are twins and share some sort of deep and supernatural, probably extrasensory, bond. Roderick is certain that Madeline will also soon die. The narrator tries to cheer them with the music and literature.

The House of Usher is powerfully sentient. Roderick sees things that the narrator cannot.

Scene 3 // Madeline dances in the parlor and then—as Roderick predicted, and as he now declares, she dies. Roderick asks the narrator to help him entomb her body deep in the walls and catacombs of the mansion.

Scene 4 // A week later, on a dark and stormy night, Edgar and Usher find themselves unable to sleep. They decide to pass away the scary night by reading a book. As the narrator reads the text aloud, all the sounds from the story they read can be heard resounding from below the mansion. Usher becomes increasingly possessed with even more fear—he is convinced that they have buried Madeline alive and that she is coming back.

New for you this season: Hult Center concourse-level bar is open. Decadent handmade confections for season subscribers by Euphoria Chocolate (upstairs) Custom drink special: Raven’s Blood ($8) and William Rose Wines—Demon Bird —drinks welcome in the theater.
Act Two

ANNABEL LEE (PUBLISHED 1849)
“Annabel Lee” is the last complete poem composed by Poe. Like many of Poe’s poems, it explores the theme of the death of a beautiful woman. Debate continues over who, if anyone, was the inspiration for “Annabel Lee.” Though many women have been suggested, Poe’s wife Virginia Eliza Clemm Poe is one of the more credible candidates. Written in 1849, it was not published until shortly after Poe’s death that same year.

THE RAVEN (PUBLISHED 1845)
Poe’s narrative “The Raven” is oft-noted for its musicality, stylized language, and supernatural atmosphere. With complex poetic meter, internal rhyme and alliteration, it tells of a talking Raven’s mysterious visit to a distraught lover, tracing the man’s slow fall into madness. The poem makes use of folk, mythological, religious, and classical references and was beloved by Abraham Lincoln, who carried a worn copy of it in his pocket on speech tours of the U.S. in the final years of the Civil War. Publication of “The Raven” made Poe popular in his lifetime, although it did not bring him much financial success. It remains one of the most famous poems ever written.

THE CASK OF AMONTILADO (PUBLISHED 1846)
SCENE 1 // We imagine the narrator, Montresor, on his deathbed. He confesses to the Contessa, his Lady, an untold story regarding his old friend, Fortunato.

SCENE 2 // Montresor takes us back in time, many years ago in the madness of a Venetian Carnival season—when Fortunato has mortally insulted him and Montresor has vowed vengeance in return. Montresor tells that he maintained an appearance of good will towards Fortunato...and that he decided to exploit Fortunato’s love of fine wines.

SCENE 3 // During the flashback, Montresor finds Fortunato in the streets and invites him to try a sample of sherry, which he has acquired and wishes to confirm as Amontillado. Fortunato is surprised and excited to be asked to help taste the special sherry, and insists on accompanying Montresor to the vaults to test it. Montresor offers a (token) protest, saying that the vaults are full of nitre, but the latter insists. They bid goodbye to the Lady, and Montresor leads Fortunato through the streets.

SCENE 4 // The passageway of the Montresor catacombs is dark and damp, causing Fortunato to cough. Montresor offers him a sip of Medoc wine. Montresor offers to call for someone else to taste the Amontillado. Fortunato insist that they keep going and toasts to the dead. Montresor toasts to Fortunato’s long life. Montresor leads Fortunato to a small, deep crypt, the end of which is lined with human remains. The light from the lantern is dim. Montresor claims the niche to be the location of the Amontillado. Fortunato walks drunkenly inside; then ties Fortunato up. Montresor begins to wall in the niche, with Fortunato inside.

Fortunato revives with a moan from his drunken state, laughing weakly and asking Montresor to end the joke, shouting, “For the love of God, Montresor!” but the latter mocks him, and Fortunato ceases to speak, despite Montresor’s calls. The only thing Montresor can hear as he lays the last brick is the jingling of the bells on Fortunato’s Carnival costume. Montresor’s heart grows sick, which he blames on the damp catacombs. He reconstructs the pile of bones and returns to the party on the street. He tells us that no mortal has disturbed the stones for the last fifty years. In pace requiescat.
Brightly finished" playing and her "elegance and verve," Elizabeth received the Fa
petition. She holds her PhD in music from Stony Brook University. A native of San
the Ross McKee competition, and the California You ng Artist's Beethoven Com-
winner of the San Francisco Symphony Youth orchestra Concerto Competition,
Hochschule für Musik, W alnut Creek's lesher Center for the Arts, San Francisco's
Sarasota, Aspen, to ronto, Icicle Creek, and her live performances have been
-dence at Banff and has also appeared at summer festivals including tanglewood,
- as well as members of the Chamber Music Society of lincoln Center. Elizabeth is
music performances with principal players from the lA and NY Philharmonics,
orchestra and Folsom lake Symphony, solo recitals in W A, CA, and NY, chamber
orchestra, the East Coast Chamber orchestra, and the Seattle Symphony. Nate was
many of America's top orchestras, including the lA Philharmonic, the Philadelphia
chamber music performances with principal players from the LA and NY Philharmonics,
Dale's compositions and arrangements have been played in various venues on the
and East-W est International Project, he collaborates with many internationally
projects in multiple genres. Sergei has been a jury member at international accor-

Sergei Tel eshev — Accordion + Original Arrangements: Classically trained at the Academy of Music in Voronezh, Russia, Sergei has won
many regional and international accordion competitions. As a founding member and accordion player of Trio Voronezh, Classic Klezmer Trio, Valinor Quartet
and East-West International Project, he collaborates with many internationally
recognized artists, ensembles and orchestras. Sergei has performed with renowned
orchestras and performers like the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Doc Severin-
Ballet Fantastique, the Aspen Music Festival, the Olympic Music Festival,
ChemberFest Cleveland, and at the Da Camera Society.

Nathan Farrington — Original Arrangements: Nate is a
LA-based bassist, singer, and composer. He regularly appears in the bass sections of
many of America's top orchestras, including the LA Philharmonic, the Philadelphia
Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony, the New York Philharmonic, the Cleveland
Orchestra, the East Coast Chamber Orchestra, and the Seattle Symphony. Nate was
recently named the Principal Bass of the LA Opera Orchestra, and has appeared at
the Marlboro Music Festival, the Aspen Music Festival, the Olympic Music Festival,
ChemberFest Cleveland, and at the Da Camera Society.

Liz Dorman — Piano: Praised by the San Francisco Chronicle for her "crisp, brightly finished" playing and her "elegance and verve," Elizabeth received the Fa-
ther Merlet Award from Pro Musics and was a finalist in the Leipzig International
Bach Competition. Recent appearances also include those with Leipzig Chamber
Orchestra and Folsom Lake Symphony, solo recitals in WA, CA, and NY, chamber
performances with principal players from the LA and NY Philharmonics, as well as members of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Elizabeth is
a member of New York's Bridge Arts Ensemble. Elizabeth was an Artist in Resi-
dence at Banff and has also appeared at summer festivals including Tanglewood,
Sarasota, Aspen, Toronto, Icicle Creek, and her live performances have been
nationally broadcast on public radio. She has appeared as a soloist with orchestra in
San Francisco's Davies Symphony Hall, Stanford's Bing Concert Hall, Leipzig's
Hochschule für Musik, Walnut Creek's Lesher Center for the Arts, San Francisco's
Herbst Theater, and at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Elizabeth was also
winner of the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra Concerto Competition,
the Ross McKee competition, and the California Young Artist's Beethoven Com-
petition. She holds her PhD in music from Stony Brook University. A native of San
Francisco, Elizabeth began her training at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Dale Bradley — Cello + Original Arrangements: Dales is
a Springfield native and a graduate of the UO School of Music. He is a longtime
member of Eugene Symphony, and a founding member of Oregon Mozart Players.
Dale's compositions and arrangements have been played in various venues on the
West Coast including the LA Philharmonic. He teaches throughout the city, with
multiple CDs as well as a recording studio.

Sergei Tel eshev — Accordion + Original Arrangements: Classically trained at the Academy of Music in Voronezh, Russia, Sergei has won
many regional and international accordion competitions. As a founding member and accordion player of Trio Voronezh, Classic Klezmer Trio, Valinor Quartet
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recognized artists, ensembles and orchestras. Sergei has performed with renowned
orchestras and performers like the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Doc Severin-
sen, Halic Loren, Semmy Stahlhammer and many others. In addition to perform-
ing with them, Sergei also composes and arranges music and works on recording
projects in multiple genres. Sergei has been a jury member at international accor-
dion competitions in Russia, Canada and the USA. Recently, he won the National
V-Accordion Competition. As the U.S. champion, Sergei represented the United
States at the 7th Roland International V-Accordian Festival in Rome, Italy, where
he received a special prize for "Most Online Votes" on the festival's webcast. Sergei
teaches online accordion lessons, master classes and educational school programs
for all ages.