Madison Ballet Fact Sheet  
March 20, 2022

- Madison Ballet this week presents “Turning Pointe” at the Overture Center for the Arts from March 25 through April 3 and announced a new artistic director from the East Coast.

- Ja’ Malik, a renowned dancer and choreographer of color based in New York City, will start as Artistic Director July 1. He will choreograph part of “Turning Pointe” this week.

- “Turning Pointe” celebrates the 40th anniversary of Madison Ballet and offers inspiration for the Madison community as it heals from the pandemic and gathers energy for the challenges of racial equality and economic recovery.

- The combined announcement and performance represent a renewed commitment by Madison Ballet for transformation to a blend of traditional and modern ballet with an emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion. For more information go to madisonballet.org.

- In-person interviews, audio and video and photo opportunities with Ja’ Malik and Jonathan Solari, Madison Ballet CEO, are available the week of March 20 at the Madison Ballet headquarters on Odana Road.

- Performance Program for “Turning Pointe”:
  - Birthday Variations, Choreography Gerald Arpino, Staged by Kim Sagami, Courtesy of the Arpino Foundation
  - Guitar Concerto, Choreography Ja’ Malik, Premiere
  - Ethos of Force, Choreography Kia Smith, Premiere, which depicts the pandemic through the lens of a young artist of color.
  - Rubies Pas de Deux, Choreography George Balanchine, Staged by Nilas Martins, Courtesy of the Balanchine Trust
  - Eight by Benny Goodman, Choreography Heinz Poll, Courtesy of and Staged by Richard Dickinson

- Performance Dates and Times:
  - Friday, March 25 – 7 p.m.
  - Saturday, March 26 – 2 p.m. & 7 p.m.
  - Sunday, March 27 – 2 p.m.
Friday, April 1 – 7 p.m.
Saturday, April 2 – 2 p.m. & 7 p.m.
Sunday, April 3 – 2 p.m.

• Ticket Information
  - Tickets can be purchased online at [Madison Ballet](#) or by contacting [The Overture Center Box Office](#) at [608.258.4141](#).
  - Standard: $32
  - Child/Senior: $18

Madison Ballet History:
  - The Madison Ballet was founded in 1981.
  - It performs for more than 13,000 supporters at the well-known Overture Center for the Arts in downtown Madison, Wi.
  - School of Madison Ballet, open since 2005 and led by Jacob Ashley, a veteran Chicago dancer, offers ballet classes in various divisions, including three levels of children's classes, five levels in the school division, a pre-professional level designed for dancers on the cusp of a career in ballet. Ballet 101, a new four-week program, teaches the history and fundamentals of ballet. The school offers youth and adult drop-in classes.
  - School of Madison Ballet practices ballet without boundaries by empowering students of all ages, races, gender orientations, economic backgrounds, and skill levels.
  - Madison Ballet’s outreach programming, presented in partnership with dozens of local school and community groups, annually reaches thousands of young people.
  - Madison Ballet offers full-scale productions of inspiring traditional ballets, innovative contemporary performances, and the timeless holiday tradition of “The Nutcracker.”
  - “Turning Pointe” would not have been possible without the generous support of the Madison Community Foundation.

Quote from Jonathan Solari, CEO of Madison Ballet
  - “As an arts organization, Madison Ballet helps define beauty through the art we present on this community’s stages. We take that role seriously and recognize our obligation to challenge what ballet is and who it is for. Ja’ Malik’s clear and energizing vision will honor our 40-year history while bringing progress to this organization, this city, and this art form. It is apt that he is making his debut during ‘Turning Pointe’.”

Quote from Ja’ Malik, Artistic Director Here
“Madison Ballet offers a national platform for me to share my vision to create a company that reflects the diverse world we live in.”

**Ja’ Malik Bio**

Ja’ Malik joins the Madison Ballet as artistic director in July. He is an in-demand choreographer previously based in New York City’s Harlem neighborhood who was named “Choreographer to Watch” by Roslyn Sulcas of The New York Times. After graduating from the first class of the Joffrey Ballet School and the New School University’s BFA program, Ja’ Malik founded and now directs the all-male Ballet Boy Productions. He has worked with many productions and artists including Tony-nominated Camille A. Brown on The Public Theater's 2019 production of Ntozake Shange’s, "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When The Rainbow is Enuf." He is former member of Cleveland Ballet, Oakland Ballet, North Carolina Dance Theatre, Nathan Trice Rituals, City Dance Ensemble, Ballet Hispanico, and Ballet X.

**Jonathan Solari Bio**

Jonathan Solari is CEO of Madison Ballet and has worked with some of the greatest artists of his time. He has staged works for Lincoln Center, Maestro Lorin Maazel's Castleton Festival, and Belarus Free Theatre. At 27, Jonathan founded New Brooklyn Theatre to restore a historic theatre in the Bed-Stuy neighborhood of New York City. Under his leadership, the company was heralded as the "flash point for the fusion of theatre and politics," according to the The New York Times. The theatre partnered with Harvard University to perform Chekhov in Turkish farmlands and presented Ibsen on a stage floating outside of the state capital in West Virginia. His production of Edward Albee’s “The Death of Bessie Smith” is credited with saving Brooklyn’s Interfaith Medical Center from closure in what The Wall Street Journal called the "most dramatic blend of theater and health policy in nearly 30 years." Since moving to Madison with his wife, Courtney Nelson, he has worked to build a culture of philanthropy with organizations including Community Shares of Wisconsin, Planned Parenthood, Working Capital for Community Needs, United Way of Dane County and as an at-large member of the City of Madison's Sister City Collaboration Committee. Jonathan holds degrees from New York University and Boston University.