

2020 Spotlight Ballet Semifinal Panel

Jukka Aromaa is a former principal dancer with New York City Ballet, Finnish National Ballet and Deutsche Oper am Rhein Dusseldorf. He was a guest principal dancer with Deutsche Oper Berlin and English National Ballet. In 1980 he won First Prize at the Prix de Lausanne Competition and 1984 in Helsinki International Ballet Competition. Honors during Mr. Aromaa's long 25 year dancing career include the Benoit de la Dance award received in Bolshoi Theatre 1995. He served as Artistic Director of Finnish National Ballet School from 2003 to 2006. Currently, Aromaa teaches internationally and serves as a judge, lecturer and répétiteur for both the classical and Balanchine repertory.

Leslie Carothers-Aromaa is a former principal dancer with the Joffrey Ballet and Pennsylvania Ballet. She was featured on television in *Dance in America's A Night at The Joffrey*, televised on PBS. She has danced principal roles in works by George Balanchine, Sir Frederick Ashton, Jiri Kylian, Twyla Tharp, Anthony Tudor, John Cranko, and Mark Morris, amongst many others, and danced the leads in many of the full-length classical ballets, including *Swan Lake*, *Giselle*, *Coppelia*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Sleeping Beauty*. During her career, leading roles were created for her by Robert Joffrey, William Forsythe, Gerald Arpino, Dwight Rhoden, and others. Carothers-Aromaa has served as Dance Institute Director, Artistic Director, Ballet Chair, and dance faculty at The Colburn School of Performing Arts. Currently, she teaches both ballet and Zena Rommett Floor-Barre® nationally and internationally, and serves as a Mentor and Managing Board Member of the Zena Rommett Floor-Barre Foundation.

Ellen Bauer danced professionally as a member of the National Ballet of Canada, Pacific Northwest Ballet and Los Angeles Ballet. Her principal roles have included many of Balanchine's master works: *Allegro Brillante*; *Rubies*, from the ballet, *Jewels*; *Concerto Barocco*, *Raymonda Variations* (after Petipa), *Scotch Symphony*, *Square Dance*, *Swan Lake Act II*, *Valse Fantaisie*, and *Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux*. Other repertoire includes leading roles in *Coppelia*, *Don Quixote*, *Le Corsaire*, *The Nutcracker*, *Flower Festival Pas de Deux*, among other ballets.

Lisa Johnson is a Lecturer CSULB Dance, where she teaches ballet for dance and non-dance majors, Body Placement, and Pilates. Ms. Johnson studied classical ballet under scholarship at the Marin Ballet, Cleveland Ballet, School of American Ballet and the National Ballet School, Toronto. She was awarded first place in the Marguerite A. Hoffman competition at UCLA and was a semi-finalist in the Prix de Lausanne, Switzerland, as part of the six-member American team. She danced professionally with the Los Angeles Classical Ballet, National Ballet of Canada, Feld Ballets/NY, Ballet Chicago and Hamburg Ballet in Germany, where she created new works with artistic director John Neumeier and choreographer Mats Ek. She was principal guest artist with the Santa Barbara Ballet, Ballet Pacifica and Francisco Martinez Dance theatre. Ms. Johnson has taught at The Orange County School of Arts; California State Fullerton; The Wooden Floor; Long Beach Ballet Arts Center; Southland Ballet Academy; Ballet Pacifica Academy; the Maple Conservatory of Dance, and at the prestigious Joffrey Ballet's young dancer summer program.

Lorin Johnson performed with the San Francisco Ballet before joining the American Ballet Theatre under the directorship of Mikhail Baryshnikov. At ABT, he worked with choreographers such as Agnes DeMille, Ulysses Dove, Kenneth Macmillan, Jerome Robbins, Glen Tetley, Twyla Tharp, and Clark Tippet. Johnson's choreography has been presented at such venues as the Garage Museum in Moscow, the Fabbrica Europa Dance Festival in Florence, and with the Pacific Symphony at Segerstrom Concert Hall. Mr. Johnson has given master classes in the U.S. and abroad, including at the St. Petersburg State Conservatory in Russia, and served on the faculty of American Ballet Theatre's summer intensive program since 2004. Mr. Johnson is currently a Professor in the Dance Department at California State University, Long Beach.

Jackie Kopcsak is Assistant Professor of Practice at USC Glorya Kaufman School of Dance. She received her dance training through Pacific Northwest Ballet and has performed as a principal dancer with Ballet Bellevue and Wade Walthall's Evergreen City Ballet. In addition to performing a wide range of contemporary and classical roles, Ms. Kopcsak has worked extensively in the theater, appearing onstage in musicals such as *Oklahoma!*, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* and *Phantom*. She graduated with her MFA in Dance from the UC Irvine, where she was the recipient of a Graduate Fellowship, as well as the Elftmann Leadership Scholarship. Prior to joining USC, Ms. Kopcsak was a Lecturer in Ballet and Dance History at UC Irvine.