



Artistic Director  
Tara Ghassemieh

# THE WHITE FEATHER

presented by  
INTUITV ARTSHIP  
and  
SANAZ K. SOLTANI

Herbst Theatre 9·9·23

## **Special Artistic Director's Note**

For me, dancing transcends all human barriers.

It is the language of the soul we all have the  
potential to speak, and the right to dance is not  
for the taking.

To dance is our birthright.

To dance is to know joy.

To dance is to know love.

To dance is to be perfectly free.

Tara Ghassemieh



## **A Message from the Producers**

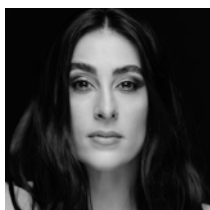
Sanaz K. Soltani and INTUITV ARTSHIP founders Tara Ghassemieh and Vitor Luiz welcome you to this evening and thank you for joining us for an unforgettable experience showcasing our dance for freedom through the art medium of ballet.

The White Feather is a Persian ballet tale that follows the inner child in all of us who yearn to express themselves freely. In tribute to Persian culture and ballet, through the eyes of a child with a shattered dream, we witness the evolution of Iran from its ancient roots to the present day.

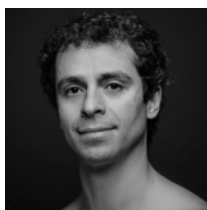
Act I sheds light on the history of Iran's National Ballet and its untimely final curtain call and the unsung heroes of Iran's 1979 revolution- the freedom fighters. In Act II, we behold a child's transformation into adulthood under an oppressive regime, and the fire within that sparked a nation's call to freedom, led by women.

Tonight we give a special thanks to Yuan Yuan Tan, Tiit Helimets and Tamra Rojo, San Francisco Ballet Artistic Director, for their courtesy and respective contributions to tonight's performance.

Follow us on this journey of resilience, hope, and beauty that will leave you feeling inspired and empowered. As our Artistic Director Tara Ghassemieh always says: "Art is the Revolution!"



Tara Ghassemieh



Vitor Luiz



Sanaz K. Soltani

# *Music by Maestro Shahrdad Rohani*

Composer and conductor **Shardad Rohani** was born in Tehran and educated at the Music Academy and Conservatory of Music in Vienna, Austria. Rohani was the musical director and principal conductor of the Tehran Symphony, having served in this position since 2015. The resurrection of the symphony in the early 2000s was instrumental in connecting Tehran to the international arts community, including collaborations with noted conductors such as Riccardo Muti. In addition to his role as director of the Tehran Symphony (2016-20), Rohani wrote and performed the anthem for the Iran National Soccer team's appearance during the World Cup in 2018. He was also commissioned to compose the music for the opening and closing ceremonies of the 13th Asian Olympic Games held in Thailand.

An acclaimed composer and conductor, Rohani has worked with some of the top ensembles in the world, including the London Symphony Orchestra, the Prague Symphony Orchestra, the Vancouver Opera Orchestra, the Austrian Chamber Orchestra, and the London Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra.



Special thank you to the  
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra  
for their contribution to the score  
with Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake

# ***The White Feather***

## ***A Persian Ballet Tale***

***Choreography by Tara Ghassemieh and Vitor Luiz***

***Music by Shahrdad Rohani, with excerpts from***

***Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake recorded by The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra***

***Technical Advisor & Lighting design by Lonnie Rafael Alcaraz***

***Associate lighting design by Avery Reagan***

***Projection design & cinematography by John Crawford***

***Projection content direction by Tara Ghassemieh***

***Associate projection design by Jacob Nguyen***

***Projection content edited by Leandro Glory Demasco Jr.***

***Costume design by Heather Lerma\****

***Production Stage Manager, Lyla Rose Falshman***

***Production Assistant, Amy McMaster***

***Libretto/story by Sanaz K. Soltani & Tara Ghassemieh***

**Characters in order of appearance**

***Young Tahereh*** Ayla Natalia Mohtashami

***Mother*** Sharon Savoy

***Scheherazade & King\**** Tara Ghassemieh & Vitor Luiz

***The Director*** Eduard Sargsyan

***Guards*** Laurence Gonzalez, Lester Gonzalez

***The Dictator*** Chad Michael Hall

***The General/Tahereh's Father*** Vitor Luiz

***Adult Tahereh*** Tara Ghassemieh

***Dancers, all people (in no particular order)*** Rachel Hutsell, Victoria Jenkins,

Silken Kelly, Amy McMaster, Natalie Palmgren, Anna Leong, Mackenzie

Davis, Marshall Whiteley, Megan Wilcox

***"Mother" Voice Over,*** Azadeh Khatibi

*\*Special thank you to Discount Dance Supply for their generous donation of costumes.*

*\*\*Storyteller on the same narrative in the Middle Eastern collection of tales known as "Scheherazade and the One Thousand and One Nights." Special thank you to Canterbury Classics & Printers Row Publishing Group (permission to use The Arabian Nights, Copyright 2011),*

# Synopsis

*There will be one intermission*

## Act I

### Scene 1- Story Time and A Dream

The Mother prepares for bedtime and reads to Tahereh her favorite book, *Scheherazade and the One Thousand and One Nights*. Tahereh exclaims when she grows up, she has a dream of becoming a dancer. As she drifts off, upon dreaming, she envisions herself as the *Queen Scheherazade*, dancing, telling tales, and healing the King's heart from his madness and agony.

### Scene 2- When We Danced

The following day, Tahereh's mom takes her to meet the Director of the Iranian National Ballet during a stage rehearsal of *Swan Lake*. Suddenly, they receive terrible news; an order has been issued to stop dancing immediately. The ballet company is shut down, and dancing becomes prohibited.

### Scene 3- The General and An Untimely Death

Indignant with the brutality of the Dictator, the General decides to fight for freedom by attempting to overthrow the newly installed authoritarian regime to save the kingdom. While the freedom fighters plot the attack, the General opens his notebook and finds a hidden letter from Tahereh, his daughter. Meanwhile, the Dictator realizes he must remove all worthy opponents, signs execution orders and sends off his men for an ambush. The General is captured and faces off against the Dictator in an unfair battle.

## **Act II**

### **Scene 1- 44 Years**

As time passes, the newly implemented authoritarian regime oppresses its people. The Dictator's ominous presence spreads. The lack of freedom, expression, and joy continues to weigh heavily on everyone, particularly women. The current government treats its people like puppets who are visibly there but emotionally bare.

### **Scene 2- Inner Child**

Now Tahereh is a grown woman. All of her childhood dreams have been ripped away and she has been forced to mature overnight. Yet, Tahereh digs deep into her heart and soul and is able to acknowledge and heal from her childhood trauma. It is time for her to encounter and reconcile with her inner child, who breathes life back into Tahereh. This empowers her, and she feels a sudden jolt of courage and duty.

### **Scene 3- Motherland**

The Mother, now older and void of the glow she once had, looks upon herself as she examines the heavy toll of the years and loss. Her body is worn down, her face saddened, and she is far from the exuberant young woman she used to be. Her clothes are colorless. Her hair is now white. She must fight to find that woman she once was.

### **Scene 4- The Swan**

Tahereh finds courage, opens her old treasure box for the first time, and finds unexpected, concealed surprises. Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, Tahereh burns down and emerges as her higher self. She is ready to face anything life has in store for her. She embraces her fate. She is well aware that her powerful movements may have consequences. However, not dancing and remaining quiet is no longer an option.

### **Scene Finale - *Azadi* (Freedom)**

Tahereh is joined by an entire generation of other empowered women in their quest for freedom and humanity that is greater than themselves. They bravely dance in the streets, proudly protesting the oppression forced upon their Motherland. Moved by their pledge, the Dictator's guards and all people awaken and join in and support the women. But, the Dictator decides to strike back as he attempts to stop their dance for freedom...

# Vitor Luiz

INTUITV ARTSHIP Co- Founder

Principal Dancer | Choreographer |

Assistant Professor



Vitor Luiz is a classical ballet dancer from Brazil. At 10 years old he began taking lessons at *Ballet Capell* in the city of Petrópolis, RJ with Catalanian choreographer Victor Navarro and ballet teacher Stella de Mello. In the following years, he completed his study in Rio de Janeiro with the most distinguished ballet teachers at Ballet Dalal Achcar, and joined a selective group who was receiving private lessons with mentor Pedro Kraszczuk. Vitor later received a scholarship for The Royal Ballet School in London.

He began his performing career as an artist with the Birmingham Royal Ballet under Sir David Bintley in the United Kingdom in 2000. Vitor returned to Brazil and joined the Municipal Theater of Rio de Janeiro Ballet (BTM), the nation's leading ballet company, where he rapidly ascended the ranks and performed leading principal roles. Eventually he was named *Primeiro Bailarino* (Principal Dancer) and became an international guest artist performing in various North and South American countries.

In 2009, he joined the world-renowned San Francisco Ballet as a Principal Dancer and performed lead roles with the company for ten years.

Mr. Luiz's productive professional career in Europe and the Americas allowed an exposure to a vast variety of repertory, dancing well over one hundred classical and contemporary ballets. He is frequently featured in galas and has performed as a guest artist worldwide, including with the English National Ballet, Atlanta Ballet, and others. He received many awards, including an Isadora Duncan Dance Award for Best Ensemble Performance in Possokhov's *Classical Symphony* in 2010.

## Choreographer and Educator

In 2019, Vitor Luiz joined as an Assistant Professor the faculty at the University of California, Irvine (UCI) at the Claire Trevor School of the Arts Department of Dance, where he teaches classical ballet, repertory, and partnering. Vitor is enthusiastic about being an artist who is a practitioner-scholar, where he can combine his passions of teaching and dancing.

As an emerging choreographer he combines his classical and contemporary backgrounds influenced by his Brazilian roots. He created new works for UCI's faculty-led performance *Dance Visions* in 2021, 2022 and soon in 2023, for video and stage. Vitor choreographed or co-choreographed, and performed with his wife and partner Tara Ghassemieh, *Sheherazade* and various other collaborations for film and music videos. His most recent work for Atlanta Ballet II premiered on November 26th, 2022, a ballet called *Luna Emotions*.

Vitor Luiz is a member of CID - International Dance Council-Paris, an official partner of UNESCO.



# Tara Ghassemieh

INTUITV Co-founder & CEO |

Principal Dancer | Choreographer | Educator | Actress

Director | Producer



Tara Ghassemieh is a Persian-American artist, dance advocate, educator and entrepreneur. Her work is informed by her Iranian roots and diverse experience in the performing and visual arts. She interlaces her talents in performing, creating dance for film, stage and teaching through INTUITV ARTSHIP, a production company and foundation she co-founded and heads.

Impelled by a belief in dance as a statement of freedom, a birthright, and an essential form of human expression, Ghassemieh tells stories that celebrate Iranian identity and inspire others to dance. The recent release of *Persian Swan* marked her film directorial debut. The short film introduces her upcoming feature film about the untold story of the Iranian National Ballet.

She is the Artistic Director of INTUITV ARTSHIP'S inaugural stage production, *The White Feather: a Persian ballet tale*.

Ghassemieh began her professional ballet career performing in American Ballet Theater's productions of *Le Corsaire*, *Sleeping Beauty* and other productions at the Metropolitan Opera House while studying at the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School of American Ballet. While at SABT, she trained with Franco DeVita, Susan Jaffe, Raymond Lukens, Martine Van Hamel, Jessica Lang, Clinton Luckett, Gelsey Kirkland and others.

Tara is a Principal Dancer with Golden State Ballet (GSB) in San Diego. She created a featured role in the world premiere of *The Gatekeepers* newly choreographed by Andrea Schermoly; performed *Black Swan Pas de Deux*, George Balanchine's *Valse Fantaisie*, and solos in *The Nutcracker*.

Before joining GBS, she performed principal roles in Festival Ballet Theater's *The Nutcracker*, *Le Corsaire*, *White Swan Pas de Deux*, and *The Firebird* as Princess. She co-choreographed a pas de deux, *Scheherazade*, with her partner on and off stage, Vitor Luiz, performing at the Barclay Theater and the Segerstrom Music Hall at the 30th Annual International Gala of the Stars. Tara also performed the roles of Mirtha in *Giselle* alongside Gillian Murphy and Cory Stearns; Lilac Fairy in *Sleeping Beauty* and Mercedes in *Don Quixote* alongside Marcelo Gomes.

Other featured performances and collaborations include lead dancer in Florence and the Machine music video *Spectrum*, directed by David LaChapelle; award-winning British composer Oliver Davis' film *Narcissus and Echo* for his debut album *SOLACE*, and several Off Broadway productions.

Her acting credits include *The Rescuers* by Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Michael King and lead ballet dancer in the Walt Disney film *Step Up* directed by Anne Fletcher. Tara also appeared on broadcast television series' *Law and Order SVU*, *CSI*, and *Gossip Girl*.

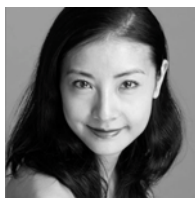
Ghassemieh has been a guest teacher and recurring renowned jury member in dance competitions and conventions in over 30 states over the past 10 years.

As a teen, Mrs. Ghassemieh launched Tata's Dancewear, a brand popular among dancers and sold by major dance supply chains and online retailers for eight years.

Tara Ghassemieh lives in Southern California with her husband and three children.

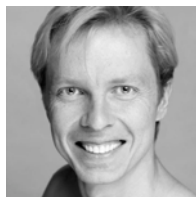
## SPECIAL APPEARANCE

### **Yuan Yuan Tan and Tiit Helimets** performing the beloved White Swan *Pas de deux*



**Yuan Yuan Tan** was born in Shanghai, China, and trained at Shanghai Dancing School and Stuttgart's John Cranko School. She joined San Francisco Ballet as a soloist in 1995 and was promoted to principal dancer in 1997. She has danced lead roles in works such as Tomasson's *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and *Nutcracker*; Tomasson/Possokhov's *Don Quixote*, Morris' *Sylvia*; Lubovitch's *Othello*; and Neumeier's *The Little Mermaid*. She has created roles in Tomasson's *The Fifth Season*, *Chi-Lin*, *Silver Ladders*, and *7 for Eight*; Possokhov's *Magritomania*, *Damned*, *Study in Motion*, *Fusion*, *Diving into the Lilacs*, and *RAKU*; Wheeldon's *Continuum* and *Quaternary*; and Welch's *Tu Tu* and *Naked*. Tan received a gold medal and the Nijinsky Award at the 1st Japan

International Ballet and Modern Dance Competition in 1993 and a gold medal at the 5th International Ballet Competition in Paris in 1992. A frequent guest artist, Tan headlined "Yuan Yuan Tan and Eight Ballet Stars," a gala in Nara, Japan in 2003, and the "Yuan Yuan Tan and Friends" Gala in Shanghai in 2000. Additional honors include an invitation to the White House in 1999 and The Bud magazine City of Heart award in Shanghai in December 2007. She was featured in *Vogue* magazine in April 2003 and was named a "Hero of Asia" in the Asian edition of *Time* magazine in October 2004. Recent guest appearances include a 2006 charity concert in Shanghai and a performance of the full-length ballet *Magpie Bridge*, a benefit promoting harmony between China and Japan. In December 2008, Tan was featured as the Snow Queen in the PBS Great Performances broadcast of Tomasson's *Nutcracker*, co-produced by San Francisco Ballet and KQED Public Television San Francisco, in association with Thirteen/WNET New York. Yuan Yuan Tan is appearing through the courtesy of San Francisco Ballet Artistic Director Tamara Rojo.



**Tiit Helimets** was born in Viljandi, Estonia and trained at Tallinn Ballet School and began his career as a soloist with Estonian National Ballet. At the age of 18, Helimets made history at Estonian National Ballet by being the youngest male dancer ever to perform the role of Siegfried in *Swan Lake*. In 1999, Helimets joined Birmingham Royal Ballet as a principal dancer, before joining San Francisco Ballet in 2005. Helimets has danced nearly every major role in SF Ballet's repertory including Helgi Tomasson's *Giselle* (Albrecht), *Nutcracker* (Grand Pas de Deux Prince), *The Sleeping Beauty* (Prince Desiré), and *Swan Lake* (Prince Siegfried and Von Rothbart); Tomasson/Yuri Possokhov's *Don Quixote* (Basilio); John Cranko's *Onegin* (Gremni); John Neumeier's *The Little Mermaid* (Prince, Poet); Liam Scarlett's *Frankenstein* (Alphonse Frankenstein); and Christopher Wheeldon's *Cinderella* (Prince Guillaume). He originated principal roles in Val Caniparoli's *Doublestop*, *Ibsen's House*, and *Tears*; Alonzo King's *The Collective Agreement*; Edwaard Liang's *The Infinite Ocean*; Possokhov's *Swimmer* (Humbert); and Wheeldon's *Ghosts*. Helimets has received an Isadora Duncan Dance Award for Outstanding Performance for his 2015 performances of *Giselle* and the Award for Outstanding Performance in Estonia for guest appearances in *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Romeo and Juliet*. After 18 years of being a Principal Dancer for SF Ballet, Helimets retired on stage in the role of the Clown in Danielle Rowe's *MADCAP*, a role created for him specifically in mind. Helimets currently serves as the Director of the Men's Program at Bayer Ballet Academy and he joined SF Ballet as a principal character dancer for the 2023–24 Season.



TRIBUTE SONG - The White Feather  
**Rakhshan & Dahlia Foroutan**

with **vocals** by Sarah Parvaneh Bard  
Rakhshan and Dahlia Foroutan, and Simon Sadri

**lyrics** by Sanaz K. Soltani and Dahlia Foroutan

Tribute Video by: Sanaz K. Soltani and Leandro Glory Demasco Jr.

"A song for my grandfather Colonel Rahmat Khalifeh-Soltani,  
the General I never knew  
*and all others who fight for freedom and justice*" - Dahlia (age 11)

## CAST



**Amy McMaster** is from San Diego and has been dancing since the age of three. Her ballet education includes Southern California Ballet, BalletMet, Marin Dance Theatre, Ballet West, and the University of Utah School of Dance. Amy is a two-time member of the Cecchetti USA team at the Cecchetti International Classical Ballet competition. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Ballet Performance from the University of Utah in 2019. Her professional career began with BalletNext in New York City in 2019, and then she returned home to San Diego to dance with California Ballet for the 2019/2020 season, before joining Golden State Ballet in 2021.



**Anna Leong**, originally from Alameda, California, is currently a dancer at the University of California, Irvine's Claire Trevor School of the Arts. She started dancing at the age of three, and she has attended summer programs at San Francisco Ballet School, American Ballet Theatre, Philadelphia Ballet, and Complexions Contemporary Ballet. She has competed in the Youth America Grand Prix and has performed both classical and contemporary repertoire under Vitor Luiz and Tong Wang.



**Ayla Natalia Mohtashami**, is an 11 year old 6th grader, who has been dancing competitively at West Coast School of the Arts since she was only 2 1/2 years old. She has placed in the top 5 overall in some of the nation's most prestigious dance competitions such as: showstoppers, KAR , Nuvo, Mark of Excellence, and Hall of Fame. This is Ayla's first time acting while performing on stage. She is so excited to be part of this incredible production in support of dance for Iran. Her dream is to inspire girls and boys globally to freely express themselves through the art of dance.



**Chad Michael Hall** is choreographer, performer, director, filmmaker and Associate Professor of Dance at the University of California, Irvine. After earning an MFA in Choreography from Ohio State University in 2004, Hall moved to Los Angeles to tour internationally with Diavolo/Architecture in Motion. Since 2006, Hall has worked as an independent choreographer, receiving numerous residencies and commissions from universities, professional dance companies and dance institutes across the U.S. and internationally. Founder of MULTIPLEX DANCE in 2013 and creator of the West Hollywood Dance Festival in 2015, Hall's creative activity often manifests at the intersection of corporeality and virtuality through implementation of digital technology and mobile devices. His fascinations with the dancer/camera relationship, film language and editing techniques increasingly influence his creative work and inspire his trajectory as an artist and educator.



**Eduard Sargsyan** was born and raised in Yerevan, Armenia where he began dancing at age 7. Following his graduation from Yerevan State Choreographic College, he served in the Armenian special military dance ensemble "Sardarabad" as a solo performer for 2 years before beginning his 10 year career as a principal ballet dancer with the Armenian National Opera and Ballet Theatre. He then joined the Israel Ballet Company for 3 years. In 2014, Eduard moved to the United States and began his ballroom dance career at the Fred Astaire Dance Studio. During this time he won several dance competitions in the Ballroom Theatre Arts and Cabaret divisions. In 2017 he became the CEO of LA Imperial Dance Studios, and continues to teach and choreograph. As a freelance artist, Eduard performs with international dance companies such as Shushi Dance Ensemble NY, Ani Hamazgain Ensemble LA and West Coast Ballet Company LA. He has received the Excellence in Dance Arts Award from the City of Torrance and LA County in 2021.



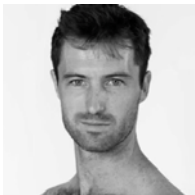
**Laurence Gonzalez** began ballet training at age 9 and graduated from the Cuban National Ballet School at 18. He began his professional career at Laura Alonso Ballet in Havana, Cuba where he danced in full length productions (i.e. *The Nutcracker*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Dracula*, *Swan Lake*, *Le Corsaire*), performing principal and corps de ballet roles. Various pas de deux include *Spartacus*, *Don Quixote*, *Diana and Acteon*, *White Swan* (*Swan Lake*), and others. Laurence has performed as a lead dancer with the San Diego Opera (*Maria de Buenos Aires*, *Carmen*, *Great Scott*). Other international and domestic appearances include: *Rock the Ballet* by Sweetbird Productions, and guest performances with California Ballet.



**Lester Gonzalez** graduated from the National Ballet School of Cuba. Immediately after, he joined the "Ballet Laura Alonso" as a company dancer. Emigrating to the US with his siblings, a desire to expand his professional opportunities. Throughout his career, he has performed diverse roles from the classical and contemporary, including lead roles in Webre's *The Great Gatsby* and *Fluctuating Hemlines*. While dancing with "Ballet San Antonio, he performed as Romeo in Edward Liang's *Romeo and Juliet*. Lester was featured in productions with the San Diego Opera and LA Opera. He was a full-time dancer with the "Dayton Ballet," before transitioning into the freelance world. He is eager to join the White Feather cast.



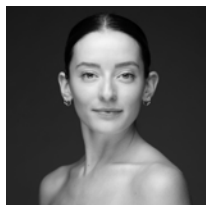
**Mackenzie Davis** grew up in Frederick, Maryland where she began her dance training at age 4. She started her love for dance at 24/7 Dance Studio in Frederick, Maryland. She then trained at City Dance School and Conservatory in Bethesda, Maryland under the direction of Lorraine Audeoud Spiegler and Ballet Master Stanislav Isaev. Mackenzie participated in the Youth America Grand Prix ballet competition where she placed 1st in the contemporary category and Top 12 in the classical category. Mackenzie joined Grand Rapids ballet for the 21/22 season as a Trainee. She performed many roles in Val Caniparoli's *Nutcracker* which include Snow and Flower Corps, Sugar Plum Doll, and Marzipan. She also performed as Waltz Corps in Ben Stevenson's *Cinderella*, Corps Member in George Balanchine's *Serenade*, Fairy Corps in Christopher Stowell's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Corps Member in Isaac Aoki's *Soirée*. Mackenzie became an Apprentice with Grand Rapids Ballet in 2023. She will join Golden State Ballet in San Diego as a Corps de Ballet member for their 23/24 season.



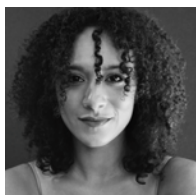
**Marshall Whiteley**, born in Fairbanks, Alaska, and raised in San Diego, California, nationally ranked ice hockey player by the age of 11. At 13, he began formal ballet training at the San Diego Academy of Ballet, under Sylvia and Max Tchernychev, and later continued at the Dmitri Kulev Classical Ballet Academy. At 16, he accepted a scholarship to train under Kee Juan Han at the Washington School of Ballet in D.C., and was quickly promoted to the Washington Ballet Studio Company. While with TWB he performed in *The Nutcracker*, *Dracula* (Michael Pink), *Hemingway: The Sun also Rises & Sleepy Hollow* (both Septime Webre), *Blue until June* (Trey McIntyre), *Green Eggs and Ham* (David Palmer), and much more. At the age of 20 Marshall joined corps de ballet at American Ballet Theater. While with ABT he performed roles in most major classics, such as *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, *Don Quixote*, *Nutcracker*, *Le Corsaire*, *La Fille mal Gardée*, *Firebird*, and also new works such as *Songs of Bukovina*, *Whipped Cream*, *the Seasons*, and more. In 2020 Marshall moved back to the west coast to be closer to his immediate family, and currently works around San Diego under various contracts teaching, creating, and performing.



**Megan Wilcox** began studying at the Long Beach Ballet Academy at age five. She was awarded First Place in the classical & contemporary divisions of the Youth America Grand Prix competition in Los Angeles and competed at the YAGP New York Finals for five years. Accepted to compete at Prix de Lausanne in Switzerland in 2013 and the USA International Ballet Competition in Jackson in 2014. She joined the SemperOper Ballett in Dresden, Germany. Had the honor of performing the sole ballerina role in the opera *Capriccio* and had many opportunities dancing classical and avant-garde works with the SemperOper Ballett and the Palucca Hochschule für Tanze. After performing in Europe, she returned to the U.S. and joined California Ballet in San Diego and then Barak Ballet in Los Angeles. Megan is currently a faculty member and coach at Long Beach Ballet Academy.



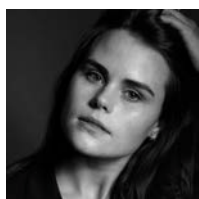
**Natalie Palmgren** was born and raised in Sonoma Valley. She started dancing at the age of four at Sonoma Conservatory of Dance. In 2016, she began attending Marin Dance Theater where she studied under Margaret Swarthout, and Joanna Berman. After several years dancing in Marin, Natalie entered UC Irvine as a dance major. During her time at UCI, she studied with many distinct professors including Lar Lubovitch, Vitor Luiz and Tong Wang. Natalie also performed and choreographed for numerous department shows before graduating in 2022 with two BFA degrees in Dance Performance and Dance Choreography. Natalie is currently a freelance companies including Ballet Red, Oakland Ballet and West Coast Ballet.



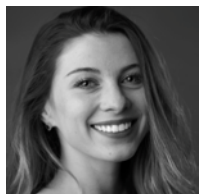
**Rachel Hutsell** was born in Houston Texas, joined New York City Ballet in 2015 where she danced featured roles choreographed by George Balanchine and Justin Peck. In 2018 she was a part of the documentary *Ballet Now*, Directed by Steven Cantor, and in 2019 she was the dance double for “Anita” in Steven Spielberg’s *West Side Story*. She has been highlighted in articles by Women’s Wear Daily and Dance Spirit, as well as the cover feature of Pointe Magazine’s June/July 2018 issue. In 2021 she began performing in Southern California, where she originated principal roles with Ballet Project Orange County.



**Sharon Savoy** trained at the School of American Ballet. She danced with the New Jersey Ballet, Eglevsky Ballet, Princeton Ballet, and the New World Ballet. Her love of pas de deux led her to adagio/exhibition dance. She won her first World Championship at Madison Square Garden. She’s a 4X Exhibition Dance Champion, Blackpool, England—considered the Wimbledon of ballroom dance, a Star Search winner and a 7X U.S. Open Cabaret Champion. Ms. Savoy has performed at the Kennedy Center, the Royal Albert Hall, Sydney Olympics, and in Hollywood movies. In 2013, she won “Best global female dancer” at the Huading Awards in China. She is a published author—her books revolve around the obsession, passion, and price it takes to dance. She teaches at the ABT Gillespie School in Costa Mesa.



**Silken Kelly** began her training at the Academy of Colorado Ballet. She attended summer intensives at the Harid Conservatory and American Ballet Theatre. As a full-scholarship student, she attended the School of American Ballet, Houston Ballet, and Ballet West. She joined the Houston Ballet’s second company and later the main company, touring nationally and internationally. After relocating to New York in 2015, Silken joined Dance Theatre of Harlem for a season; performed with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, Cleveland Ballet, and other project based companies. She also danced with Sweetbird Production’s *Rock the Ballet*, touring Europe. Silken founded Contingent Ballet, through which she created an original dance film and worked with Canon Camera. As an actress, her credits include supporting roles in a Hallmark movie and Hulu mini series.



**Victoria Jenkins** is a San Diego native who began ballet at the age of 5. She studied at California Ballet until she was 15 then received a scholarship to attend the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School in Winnipeg, Canada. She joined the Royal Winnipeg Ballet company at 18 and enjoyed working with many different choreographers and touring the United States and Canada. She relocated back to San Diego at 20 and joined the California Ballet and later Golden State Ballet. Notable roles include Nikiya *La Bayadere*, *White Swan Pas de Deux*, *Kitri Don Quixote*, *Aurora Sleeping Beauty*, and Sugarplum Grand pas from the *Nutcracker*.



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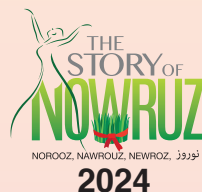
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# INTUITV ARTSHIP

Tara Ghassemieh, Co-founder & CEO

Vitor Luiz, Co-founder

Sanaz K. Soltani, Chairperson

Amanda Paracuellos, Vice-Chair

***The White Feather's mission is to dance for freedom, stage by stage until the day it shines its light at Roudaki Hall in Iran***



Help support this mission by  
donating to

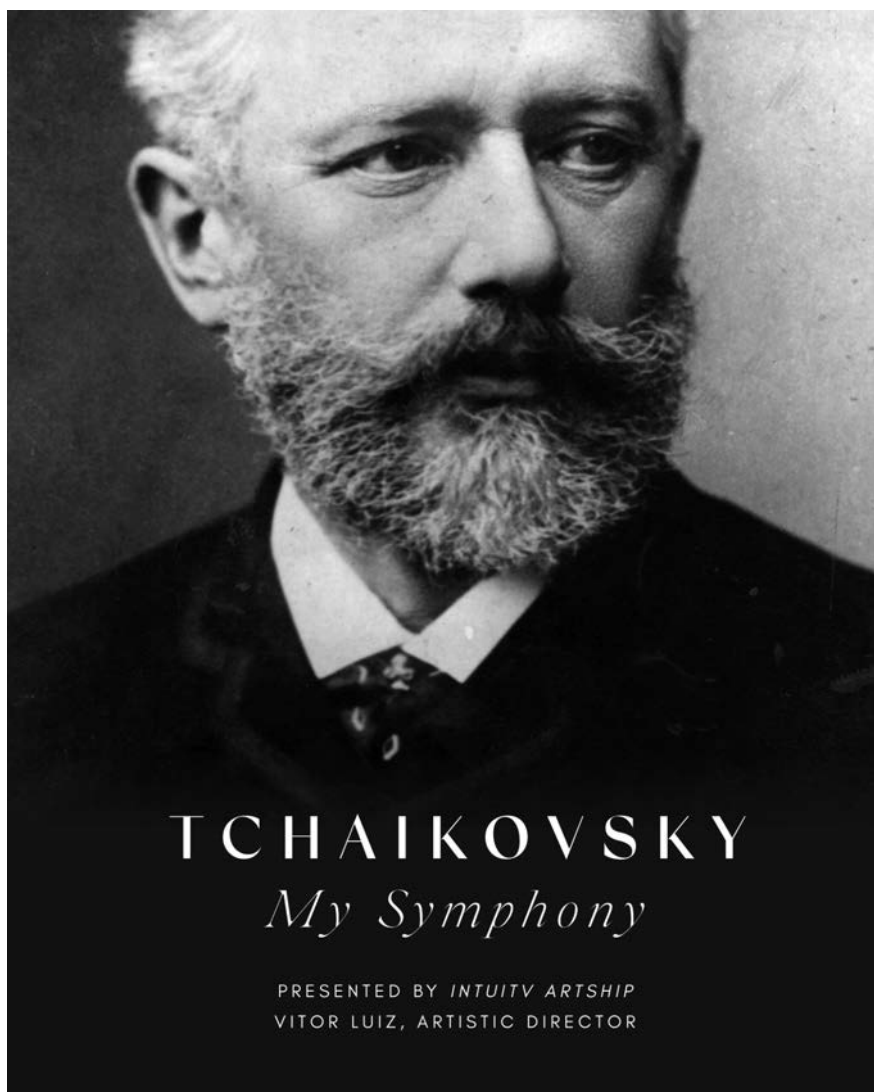
**INTUITV ARTSHIP**



**ART IS THE REVOLUTION**

DEDICATED TO WOMAN, LIFE, FREEDOM





TCHAIKOVSKY

*My Symphony*

PRESENTED BY INTUITV ARTSHIP  
VITOR LUIZ, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

INTUITV ARTSHIP  
Proudly announces it's next production



## *The White Feather*

*From the depths of Rohani's harrowing and haunting melodies to the  
beckoning and pleading strings of Tchaikovsky's violins,  
rises a single white feather.*

*Is the feather the one that penned the father's poetic musings or is it from  
the headpiece of the fallen dancer striving for perfection through  
expression.*

*The white feather seeks the light. Freedom from the shackles of humanity's  
oppression, from the denying of every soul's innate need to have a voice.*

*To be.*

*From the dancer's endless arabesque, which knows no boundaries to the  
dagger reaching toes of a grand jeté leap that cuts through space and defies  
gravity we can see and feel the limitless potential in each of us. To not be  
held back by fear or rules but to live as we were meant to be.*

*Free.*

Written by  
Sharon Savoy

# THE WHITE FEATHER

Featured in  
Arts and Culture section

## Los Angeles Times



Audiences don't want to miss this opportunity to witness the beauty of 'The White Feather' as it captivates audiences across the nation on its 'Dance for Freedom' tour.



[-broadwayworld.com](http://-broadwayworld.com)

**LA Dance  
Chronicle**

“Extraordinary, beautiful, powerful and informative...”

**ALSO FEATURED IN**  
POINTE magazine



CONVERSATIONS  
ON DANCE

Kristin Hakala  
Former Principal dancer, Ballet West

“This ballet got into my heart and soul and into my dreams”

“This ballet is a tale that must be danced”

“this production left me thinking about the state of art, dance and women in the world”

“you need to see it more than once to fully grasp the impact”

*Emotional, Breathtaking. Serves as testament to the compelling force of dance.*

Shally Zomorodi  
FOX 5 News Anchor

**WOMAN.  
LIFE.  
FREEDOM.  
#MahsaAmini**



Thank you  
**Iranian American Women Foundation**  
for being our partner in this important journey.

# a heartfelt thank you

*for their generous support of our mission and contributions to the  
San Francisco performance*

Welcome Host Shally Zomorodi,  
Award winning journalist, Morning News Anchor (FOX 5 San Diego)  
Mahsa Hakimi, San Francisco Arts Commissioner  
Dr. Nikki Iravani, eyeXam  
Laleh Kazemi  
Paracuellos Law Group  
Sharon and David Seto  
Yuan Yuan Tan  
Tiit Helimets  
San Francisco Ballet Artistic Director, Tamara Rojo

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sketch by  
Colonel Rahmat Khalifeh-Soltani, circa 1961

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