

January, 17-19, 2025

Kaatsbaan Cultural Park Announces 2025 Kaatsbaan Ballet Intensive Guest Artists and Auditions

Company: Kaatsbaan Cultural Park

Venue: Various Locations

Location: New York, NY

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Kaatsbaan Cultural Park is pleased to announce auditions and Guest Artists for the Kaatsbaan Ballet Intensive (KBI), from June 23 - August 16, 2025. For more information and to register to audition, visit <https://kaatsbaan.org/about-kaatsbaan-ballet-intensive>.

KBI is a great opportunity to train with a specially curated group of accomplished international dance artists in group ballet classes. Along with KBI Artistic Director Paloma Herrera, faculty and guest teachers include Kaatsbaan co-founders Martine van Hamel, Kevin McKenzie, along with Beth Ferrell, Luciana Paris, and Adrienne Schulte, as well as returning KBI teacher Lorin Mathis and choreographers Maria Konrad, Gemma Bond, Calvin Hilpert, and Jessica Lang. Training will include daily ballet technique classes, and opportunities to fine-tune classical solos and corps de ballet repertoire.

The students will have the fortunate opportunity to be taught by these internationally recognized stars and additionally, will be given the chance to be coached and inspired by four Guest Artists over the span of two days during each session. This year's Guest Artists include: Stella Abrera (Session 1), Leanne Benjamin (Session 2), Lauren Anderson (Session 3), and Megan Fairchild (Session 4).

This unique training program is designed for young dancers between the ages of 13 and 18 (who have at least two years of pointe work) to develop exceptional technical skills, artistic refinement, and a sophisticated approach to repertoire, with the ultimate goal of preparing attendees for a career in the arts.

There are two options for how to audition:

In-Person

January 17 & 18, 2025 in New York City

Baryshnikov Arts Center (450 W 37th Street, NY, NY 10018)

Three in-person audition sessions led by Kaatsbaan Ballet Intensives' Artistic Director Paloma Herrera, with Kevin McKenzie and Martine van Hamel in attendance.

January 19, 2025 at Kaatsbaan in Tivoli

Kaatsbaan Cultural Park (120 Broadway, Tivoli, NY 12583)

Two in-person audition sessions led by Kaatsbaan Ballet Intensives' Artistic Director Paloma Herrera, with Kevin McKenzie and Martine van Hamel in attendance.

Video Submission

Accepted December 1, 2024 through March 8, 2025.

Dancers have the choice of attending one or up to four two-week sessions, either as a residential student in onsite boarding or as a day student, in the beautiful Hudson Valley in Upstate New York. KBI has a no refund policy. Insurance may be purchased upon registration.

Session I (2 weeks)

June 23-July 5, 2025

Session II (2 weeks)

July 7-19, 2025

Session III (2 weeks)

July 21-August 2, 2025

Session IV (2 weeks)

August 4-16, 2025

Tuition Includes:

Daily classes with world-renowned faculty, 6 days per week

All-star faculty

Pianists collaborating with dancers throughout the program

End of session showcase, featuring classical repertoire and KBI dancer material developed under the guidance of Choreography Guest Artist.

A limited-edition leotard or pair of shorts from the Chameleon by April Giangeruso Kaatsbaan collection

Housing and Meal Plan Includes:

Housing at Kaatsbaan Cultural Park's Dancer's Inn, fully supervised

Full meal plan (includes breakfast, lunch, and dinner)

Activities, including on and off-site trips

Laundry & incidentals

Email balletintensive@kaatsbaan.org for all questions.

Stella Abrera has been serving as the Artistic Director of the American Ballet Theatre Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School since 2022. Abrera grew up in South Pasadena, California, and began her ballet studies at the age of five. In 1996, after winning the gold medal at the Adeline Genée Awards, she joined American Ballet Theatre's corps de ballet. She was promoted to Soloist in 2001 and Principal Dancer in 2015. Over the course of her 24 years as a ballerina with ABT, Abrera's repertoire included leading roles such as Princess Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*, Tatiana in *Onegin*, and the title roles in *Cinderella*, *Giselle*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, as well as works by Frederick Ashton, George Balanchine, Agnes de Mille, William Forsythe, Martha Graham, Jiří Kylián, Jessica Lang, Kenneth MacMillan, Lar Lubovitch, Cathy Marston, Benjamin Millepied, Jerome Robbins, Antony Tudor, and Christopher Wheeldon. She created several original roles in ballets by choreographers such as Mark Morris, Alexei Ratmansky, Twyla Tharp, and Paul Taylor. Beyond ABT, Abrera danced as a guest principal in companies around the world, and made notable appearances at the TED2012 conference and at the 40th Annual Kennedy Center Honors in 2017.

In June 2020, Abrera retired as a performer with ABT and was appointed Artistic Director of Kaatsbaan Cultural Park where she cultivated a rigorous and fulfilling intensive program for all students of varying ages. Aside from teaching regularly with both ABT and ABT Studio Company, Abrera is a trusted répétiteur of Alexei Ratmansky's work – having staged ballets for the Mariinsky Ballet in St. Petersburg, Russia, American Ballet Theatre, and ABT Studio Company. Additionally, she was part of the visionary team that launched the annual Kaatsbaan Summer Festival and spearheaded the "bubble residency" model, providing scores of artists a safe location in which to continue working throughout the pandemic.

After a dancing career that took her to the very top, Leanne Benjamin now uses her wealth of experience to nurture a new generation of dancers. She was a principal of the Royal Ballet for 21 years, before retiring in 2013. She then began to coach for her former company and at major companies around the world including American Ballet Theatre, Houston Ballet and Australian Ballet. She has also established the Leanne Benjamin Awards to support pre-professional Australian and New Zealand dancers wishing to study in the UK and in 2023 launched All England Dance's UK Young Dancer competition with theatre director and choreographer Dame Arlene Phillips.

Benjamin was born in Rockhampton, Australia before joining the Royal Ballet School at the age of 16. The following year, she won the Prix de Lausanne and made Principal ballerina of the Royal Ballet touring company at the age of 22, before joining first English National Ballet and then the Deutsche Oper Ballet in Berlin, also as principal dancer. There she met the renowned choreographer Kenneth MacMillan; he invited her back to the Royal Ballet where she stayed until her retirement at the age of 49. Benjamin was Vice Chair of the governors of the Royal

Ballet Companies, overseeing the Royal Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet and the Royal Ballet School. She was awarded the OBE in 2005 and made a member of the order of Australia in 2015. Among the many accolades she received during her career are the De Valois Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dance, and the Critics Circle Best Female dancer award, and represented Australia at the Coronation of King Charles III. In 2021, she published her autobiography, *Built for Ballet*, and marking a significant milestone in Leanne's career, in 2024, she served as Queensland Ballet's first female, Artistic Director.

Native Houstonian Lauren Anderson danced with Houston Ballet from 1983 to 2006, performing leading roles in all the great classical ballets, appearing across the world to critical acclaim, and in the process, becoming one of Houston Ballet's most beloved stars. She trained exclusively at Houston Ballet's Ben Stevenson Academy from the age of seven. She joined Houston Ballet in 1983 as a Corps de Ballet, 1987 was promoted to Soloist and in 1990 became the first African-American to be promoted to principal dancer at Houston Ballet – and one of the few African-American ballerinas at the head of a major ballet company anywhere in the world.

She has performed across the globe as a guest artist. She created the title role in Ben Stevenson's *Cleopatra*, and her performance as *Cleopatra* received accolades from international critics. Anna Kisselgoff, dance critic for *The New York Times* compared her to the great Italian actress Eleanora Duse, and Christine Temin of *The Boston Globe* pronounced her "a powerhouse in interpreting the role that Stevenson created on her." In January 2007, Ms. Anderson transitioned into Houston Ballet's education department where she conducts master classes, and lectures to students on dance and her historic career as one of America's most distinguished African-American ballerinas. In the spring of 2016, the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture awarded her with a permanent exhibit. In fall of 2021 was inducted into the Texas Women's Hall of Fame. Most recently, a production chronicling her life, *Plumshuga: The Rise of Lauren Anderson* premiered at Stages Theater.

Megan Fairchild is a principal dancer with the New York City Ballet. She was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, and began her dance training at the age of four, at Dance Concepts in Sandy, Utah, and at the Ballet West Conservatory in Salt Lake City. She moved to New York City to train at the School of American Ballet, the official school of the New York City Ballet, in 2000, and was hired as an apprentice with NYCB the following year. Ms. Fairchild was promoted to the rank of soloist in 2004, and to principal in 2005. Ms. Fairchild's expansive repertoire with New York City Ballet includes principal roles in classical full-length ballets such as *Swan Lake*, *Coppelia*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *La Sylphide*, as well as principal roles in ballets choreographed by George Balanchine, Jerome Robbins, Peter Martins, and Alexei Ratmansky. She was featured as the Sugar Plum Fairy in the 2011 telecast of George Balanchine's *The Nutcracker* streamed in movie theaters worldwide. From 2014-2015 she performed on Broadway as Miss Turnstiles in the revival of *On the Town*, for which she was nominated for an Outer Critics Circle Award and received a Theatre World Award for Outstanding Broadway debut. In addition to performing full time with the New York City Ballet, Ms. Fairchild is currently on the faculty at the School of American Ballet and has completed her MBA with NYU's Stern School of Business. Her first book came out December 2021 titled, *The Ballerina Mindset*, published by Penguin, with universal advice for dancers and non-dancers alike on how to take care of your mental health while striving towards excellence. She is the proud mother of three beautiful girls.

Paloma Herrera was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and began her training at the age of seven. In January 1991, having just turned 15 years old, she moved to New York and continued her studies at the School of American Ballet. After only six months, she joined the American Ballet Theatre and, in 1995, became the youngest Principal Dancer in American Ballet Theatre history at age 19. She has appeared in ballets ranging from *Don Quixote*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Swan Lake*, to *Apollo*, *The Prodigal Son*, and *Stepping Stones*. She has appeared as Guest Artist with great ballet companies around the world, including New York City Ballet, Kirov Ballet, Bolshoi Ballet, Tokyo Ballet, Teatro Colon, and National Ballet of Cuba, to name a few. She retired from American Ballet Theatre at the end of November 2015, right before turning 40. After that, she moved back to her home, Buenos Aires, Argentina, and continued to teach all over the world.

In 2016, she wrote her autobiography that was presented at *Feria del Libro* in 2017. That same year, she also launched her own perfume *Paloma Herrera*, in 2019 her second fragrance *Paloma Herrera Passion*, and in 2022 her third fragrance *Paloma Herrera Fantasy*. In Argentina she received the award: *Konex de Platino*, *Maria Ruanova* and distinctions by the Honorable Camara de Diputados de La Nación, *Medalla del Bicentenario* by the government of the Buenos Aires city, among many others, and since 2012 she is a member of the gallery of popular idols of the Argentine Government House. In 2017, she became the artistic director of Ballet Estable del Teatro Colon, where the company has grown immensely since she arrived. She resigned in 2022.

About Kaatsbaan Cultural Park

Kaatsbaan Cultural Park continues to deepen its mission to provide an extraordinary environment for cultural innovation and excellence with two annual outdoor festivals, year-round education programs, and creative residencies for artists at all stages of their professional careers. As both an incubator for creativity and presenter for diverse world-class artists in dance, theater, music, film, poetry, culinary, media, and visual arts, Kaatsbaan provides artists with state-of-the-art dance studios, accommodations, an indoor theater, and two outdoor stages. Sitting on 153 Hudson River-adjacent acres, Kaatsbaan is free of urban facilities' space and time constraints, allowing for exciting levels of artistic exploration, creative action, and achievement – just two hours north of New York City. Kaatsbaan Cultural Park is committed to the advancement of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the arts as it aims to present, promote, and embrace programming that accurately reflects its society. We encourage a broadly diverse group of individuals to participate in our programs and join our Board and Staff and insist on being inclusive of all peoples regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, socio-economic background, physical or mental ability. For more information, please visit www.kaatsbaan.org.

Kaatsbaan Cultural Park
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<https://kaatsbaan.org/>

Schedule
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