



BOSWELL

BY **MARIE KOHLER**

DIRECTED BY **LAURA GORDON**



Cody Estle
Artistic Director

Libby Amato
Managing Director

Presents

BOSWELL

by Marie Kohler

Directed by
Laura Gordon*

Scenic/Properties Design
Jody Sekas

Costume Design
Misti Bradford*

Sound Design
Josh Schmidt*

Choreographer
Maria Soledad Gillespie

Lighting Design
Noele Stollmack*

Wig Design
Dana Rochester

Dialect Coach
Eva Breneman

Stage Manager
Nat Goeller^

+



The Director is a Member of the
**STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS
SOCIETY**, a national theatrical labor union.



*Member of United Scenic Artists Local 829

^Member of Actors' Equity Association

November 19 – December 14, 2025

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Next Act Theatre's 2025-26 Season is supported in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts.



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THE CAST



<i>Madeline Calais-King*</i>	Joan
<i>Josh Krause*</i>	James Boswell
<i>Brian Mani*</i>	Samuel Johnson/Father/Doctor
<i>Sarah Zapiain</i>	Joshua Reynolds/Louisa/Serving Woman/Gardyloo Woman/Margaret Boswell/Hebrides Tavern Woman
<i>David Cecsarini*</i>	Oliver Goldsmith/Professor/David Hume/Taxi Driver
<i>Heidi Armbruster*</i>	David Garrick/Mrs. Thrale/The Lady

Understudies

Joan – Anya Palmer; James Boswell – A.J. Magoon; Samuel Johnson, et. al. – Michael Pocaro;
Joshua Reynolds, et. al. – Jackey Boelkow; Oliver Goldsmith, et. al. – Matt Specht; David
Garrick, et. al. – Libby Amato

*Understudy will not substitute for listed player unless a specific
announcement is made at the time of the performance.*

*Member of Actors' Equity Association



PLACE AND TIME:
Scotland and Chicago, 1950s.
London, 1760s.
Scotland, 1770s.

The play will be performed without intermission.

ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION STAFF

<i>Production and Facility Manager</i>	Katie Anderson
<i>Assistant Stage Manager</i>	Beck Trumbull
<i>Technical Director</i>	Tony Lyons
<i>Wardrobe Manager</i>	Shelby Kaishian
<i>Scenic Charge</i>	Carri Dahl
<i>Scenic Painter</i>	Maggie Jay
<i>Light Board Operator</i>	Isaac "Izzy" Brust
<i>Lighting Technicians</i>	Savana Andershock, Star Howard, Beck Trumbull
<i>Scenic Carpenters</i>	Tim Linn, Bradley Rochford

ADDITIONAL NEXT ACT THEATRE STAFF

<i>Administrative Volunteer</i>	Thomas Darrow
<i>Artistic Associate</i>	Elyse Edelman
<i>Marketing Director</i>	A.J. Magoon
<i>Patron Services Manager</i>	Wyatt Meyer
<i>Administrative and Artistic Manager</i>	Caroline Norton
<i>Development Manager</i>	Tawnie Thompson
<i>Volunteer Art Coordinator</i>	Jim Toth
<i>Ticket Office Staff</i>	Jennifer Averitt-Zweber, Audwin Short, Christine Yündem
<i>House Management Staff</i>	Kaylene Howard, Ariana Manghera, Audwin Short, Barbara Slagter, Elisebeth Sparks, Matthew Torkilsen

PHOTO POLICY



Please note: photography and video recording are strictly prohibited during the performance. Photos of the stage are not permitted if an actor is present.

Next Act Theatre welcomes you to take photos in the theatre **before and after** the performance! Feel free to capture and share your experience. However, if you are sharing images to social media, in addition to tagging Next Act Theatre, we ask you to please credit the production designers below:

Jody Sekas
Scenic/Properties Design

Noele Stollmack
Lighting Design

SPECIAL THANKS

59E59 Theaters
American Players Theatre
Brandy Kline
Margaret Lund
Tony Lyons
Judy Martel
Frodo McDaniel & Rhymes with Purple
Rebecca Moder
Cindy Moran
Renaissance Theaterworks
Norma Saldivar – Nevada Conservatory Theatre
University of Edinburgh
UW Milwaukee
UW Parkside
Stephanie Wagner
Yale University – Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

WITH YOUR HELP, 2026 WILL BE SMOOTH SAILING

Our 2025-26 Season is halfway over, and we're speeding towards another year of impactful storytelling in 2026.

At this time of giving, please consider a gift to our annual holiday campaign to help us start the new year off strong! Your donation supports the entertaining, thought-provoking work that Next Act does all year.

Give us the push we need for a new year!

Donate at nextact.org/donate or call (414) 278-0765.



SCAN WITH YOUR PHONE TO DONATE NOW



I began my journey with Marie Kohler's play *BOSWELL* in 2019 when we traveled to Scotland to perform in the Edinburgh Fringe Festival for a month. We then took it to 59E59 in New York for an Off-Broadway run in 2022. And now we find ourselves at home sharing this gift of a play with Milwaukee audiences this holiday season.

Returning to a play offers the opportunity to experience it with fresh eyes. Time has passed. Babies have been born. Children have gotten married. Partners have left us. I'm living in a very changed world right now, and I'm so grateful to spend time with this play about friendship, travel and trust that reminds us to make the most of every day and challenges us to not take a single moment for granted.

Laura Gordon
for Jonathan Smoots



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A Staged Reading of **Trayf**



By
Lindsay Joelle

Directed By
Elyse Edelman

Monday, December 15, 2025
7:30 p.m.

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T-Coil Listeners: Simply set your hearing device to the Loop setting and enjoy the show.

Conventional Listeners: Check out a receiver and headphone set at the Concessions Counter. The House Manager can instruct you on its use, but here are some simple instructions.

Like a transistor radio, the small box has an off-on and volume knob; turn on and adjust for your comfort level. You will need to be in the seats to receive the Loop signal.

The box works directionally; that is, it matters which way it is pointing.

- **In most of our seating,** the box works best when held up straight, with the volume knob on top, and the flat back pointing toward the stage.
- **In the front rows,** you will get the strongest signal with the box laying flat on your leg, with the flat back pointing straight to the floor.

Please ask the House Manager for assistance, if needed. We hope you enjoy the show.

Our Induction Loop listening system was a gift from longtime supporter Milan Racic, honoring his beloved late wife Gordana. Special thanks are also due to Nancy Einhorn for her advocacy and support of this project.

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MARIE KOHLER (Playwright)

Marie Kohler is a Milwaukee-based playwright, director, writer and producer. Her plays have earned nominations for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, the Harold and Mimi Steinberg/American Theatre Critics Association New Play Award and Citations, the Abingdon Theatre Reading Series (finalist), the Todd McNerney Playwriting Award (finalist), Playwrights First Best New Play Award (semi-finalist) and the Playwrights' Center PlayLabs Festival (semi-finalist). Her play *BOSWELL* captured four-star reviews at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and went on to a sold-out off-Broadway run at 59E59 Theaters (2022). *MIDNIGHT AND MOLL FLANDERS*, among her other plays, earned "Best of the Year" reviews. Marie's published plays include *A GIRL OF THE LIMBERLOST*, *BOSWELL* and *MIDNIGHT AND MOLL FLANDERS*. She has also written *THE DIG* and *THE WITCH'S HOUSE*. Kohler co-founded Renaissance Theaterworks and proudly served as co-artistic director and resident playwright there for 20 years. (In 2005, Renaissance produced an earlier version of this play: *BOSWELL'S DREAMS*.) The Milwaukee Arts Board named her both "Artist of the Year" and "Friend of the Arts." Marie earned her bachelor's degree at Harvard University and her master's degree at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She has served on the Wisconsin Humanities Council and the University of Wisconsin-Parkside Arts and Humanities Board. She and her husband Brian Mani—for whom she wrote the role of Samuel Johnson in *BOSWELL*—happily share three daughters and eight grandchildren. So much gratitude to Next Act Theatre for producing this play!


LAURA GORDON (Director)

A freelance actor and director, Laura's previous directing work at Next Act includes *SCARECROW*, *THE REVOLUTIONISTS*

and *MOTHERHOOD OUT LOUD*. Her

work has been seen at American Players Theatre, the Cleveland Playhouse, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Indiana Rep, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks, Forward Theater, Nevada Conservatory Theatre, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Santa Cruz Shakespeare and the Milwaukee Rep, where she was a long-time member of its resident acting company. Recent directing projects include *SWITZERLAND* at Renaissance Theaterworks; *SUMMER, 1976* at Forward Theater and *RING ROUND THE MOON* at APT.


MADELINE CALAIS-KING (Joan)

Madeline is a New York-based actor and is honored to make her New Act debut this holiday season! TV credits include: *LAW*

& *ORDER*; *SVU*. Theatre credits include: *THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR* (Idaho/Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival), *MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN* and *AMADEUS* (Cleveland Play House), *DRACULA: A FEMINIST REVENGE FANTASY*, *REALLY* (Virginia Stage Company), *HAMLET 50/50* (Shakespeare at Notre Dame), *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING* and *KING LEAR* (Illinois Shakespeare Festival) and *ROMEO & JULIET* (Red Bull Theater).


JOSH KRAUSE (James Boswell)

Josh is grateful to return to Next Act and to *BOSWELL*. Josh performed Off-Broadway in *BOSWELL* (Boswell) at 59E59 in 2022.

Previously, for Next Act: *THE MOUSETRAP* (Giles Ralston). Recent regional favorites include *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* (Demetrius), *THE WINTER'S TALE* (Clown), *THE BARBER AND THE UNNAMED PRINCE* (Ricky) for APT; *A CASE FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD*

(Ryan) with Forward Theater; A DOLL'S HOUSE (Torvald) with Milwaukee Chamber. He is a member of the Core Company at APT and the Advisory Company at Forward Theater. Josh sends love and smooches to his wife, Rachel, and son, Vincent.



BRIAN MANI (Samuel Johnson, *et. al.*)

Brian is glad to be back at Next Act Theatre, where he appeared last season in THE CHILDREN. Brian is a Core Company member of American

Players Theatre, where he's performed in over 70 plays. International & Regional: Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Off-Broadway 59E59 Theaters, Folger Theatre, Clarence Brown Theatre, Nevada Conservatory Theatre. Wisconsin appearances include Milwaukee Rep: JUNK, A CHRISTMAS CAROL; Forward Theater: LIFE SUCKS, MARJORIE PRIME; Milwaukee Chamber Theatre: ART, A LESSON FROM ALOES, SKYLIGHT; Renaissance Theaterworks: HONOUR, BLACKBIRD, THE DIG, BOSWELL'S DREAMS, MIDNIGHT AND MOLL FLANDERS, COUNTING DAYS. Thank you for supporting the arts!



SARAH ZAPIAIN (Joshua Reynolds, *et. al.*)

Sarah is humbled and honored to be making her Next Act debut alongside such talented artists. She has appeared

at First Stage (EMILY SONG AND THE QUEEN OF THE NIGHT), Summit Players Theatre (LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST, A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM), Skylight Music Theatre (SUPERYOU, EVITA u/s, NOISES OFF u/s), Forte Theatre Company (THE SECRET GARDEN, THE SOUND OF MUSIC, LITTLE WOMEN THE MUSICAL) and The Constructivists (IN THE CANYON). Currently, Sarah works as the Arts Education Manager at the Zoological Society of Milwaukee. Thank you for supporting local theatre!



DAVID CECSARINI (Oliver Goldsmith, *et. al.*)

David's professional debut was played out on The Guthrie Theatre stage in Minneapolis as a journeyman actor in

1978. From 1980-86, he worked his formative years as an original company member of American Players Theatre in Spring Green, WI. During his thirty-eight year Milwaukee residency, he has acted with many of its professional companies including Chamber Theatre, Skylight, the Milwaukee Rep and of course, Next Act. David proudly served as Producing Artistic Director for Next Act Theatre for 30 years and is heartened to see the company thriving today.



HEIDI ARMBRUSTER (David Garrick, *et. al.*)

New York premieres: TIME STANDS STILL (Broadway), DISGRACED (Lincoln Center), LEWISTON/ CLARKSTON

(Rattlestick), MAN FROM NEBRASKA (Second Stage), POOR BEHAVIOR (Primary Stages), BOY (Keen Company), DOV AND ALI (Playwrights Realm), THE FIFTH COLUMN (The Mint) and SEA OF TRANQUILITY (The Atlantic). Drama League Nomination for TEA AND SYMPATHY (Keen Company). World premieres: WIFE OF A SALESMAN (Milwaukee Rep), QUEENS FOR A YEAR (Hartford Stage), AT THE OLD PLACE (The Old Globe) and THE GREAT GATSBY (The Guthrie). Numerous Film and TV credits including EVIL, DAREDEVIL, POSE, DEAD RINGERS, RAY DONOVAN, Michelle on YOUNGER, Karen on PARTNER TRACK and Noelle on MANIFEST.

NAT GOELLER (Stage Manager)

Nat (they/them) is incredibly proud to be a Milwaukee-based stage manager. Their commitment to the bit has granted them

the opportunity to wear many hats, but their favorite hat will always be a storyteller. Select previous credits at Next Act include SANCTUARY CITY (SM), CIRCLE MIRROR TRANSFORMATION (SM), THE CHILDREN (SM) and THE ELABORATE ENTRANCE OF CHAD DEITY (SM). Other worlds Nat has worked with include Door Shakespeare, Renaissance Theaterworks, Black Arts MKE, She/Her Productions, Summit Players Theatre, Kohl's Wild Theater, Waukesha Civic Theatre, Princeton University Festival and Carroll University. They would like to recognize Celeste, Francisco and Emilio for keeping the good times rolling.

JODY SEKAS (Scenic/Properties Designer)

Jody is a production/scenic designer for theatre and film who has worked for such venues as the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, First Stage, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks, Door Shakespeare, American Players Theatre, Dell'Arte International, Rochester Civic Theatre, and on the films WHAT HAPPENED TO DOROTHY BELL, THE MUSIC INSIDE, BIGFOOT: THE LOST COAST TAPES, FLEA and THE WINE OF SUMMER. He taught Scenography for Theatre, Film and Dance at Humboldt State University in northern California, Scenic/Lighting Design and Technology at UW-Eau Claire and is in his thirteenth year at UW-Parkside. See examples of his works at www.d4production.com.

NOELE STOLLMACK (Lighting Designer)

Noele's lighting has appeared onstage at The Brooklyn Academy of Music, Sydney Opera House, Carnegie Hall, Verizon Hall, The Library of Congress Theatre, as well as the opera companies of Santa Fe, Ontario, Houston, Portland, Vancouver, New Orleans, Nashville, Madison and Milwaukee. Regional design for the theatre includes Jeff Daniels Purple Rose Theatre, Baltimore Center Stage, Houston's Alley Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park; Wisconsin's Peninsula Players, Milwaukee Rep, American Players Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks, First Stage and

Forward Theater Company. As Lighting Director for Houston Grand Opera, she supervised the lighting and special effects for over 50 productions. Her AIA award-winning architectural and public space lighting is installed throughout the Midwest. Member United Scenic Artists Local 829.

MISTI BRADFORD (Costume Designer)

Misti is a professional Costume Designer, Professor and Department Chair at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. Currently, she serves as the National Chair of Design, Technology and Management for the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. Selected credits: BOSWELL Off-Broadway, 59E59 Theatres and Edinburgh Fringe; and designs at Hope Summer Rep, Renaissance Theaterworks, Milwaukee Rep, Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Merrimack Repertory Theatre, Door Shakespeare, Children's Theater of Madison, First Stage, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre and Utah Festival Opera and Musical Theatre. Misti produced five seasons as Resident Costume Designer and three as Costume Crafts Supervisor and Wig Stylist with PCPA Theaterfest (Santa Maria, CA), and has worked several seasons as a Costume Crafts Artisan for American Players Theatre.

JOSH SCHMIDT (Sound Designer)

Josh is excited to return to Next Act Theatre after previously designing CIRCLE MIRROR TRANSFORMATION, THE CHILDREN, THE TREASURER and THE MOUSETRAP, among others. Select Wisconsin credits: TRIBES, MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM (American Players Theatre); THE COAST STARLIGHT, THE CHOSEN, MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING (Milwaukee Rep); SWITZERLAND, THE MOORS, WITCH (Renaissance Theaterworks); CLYDE'S, A MOON FOR THE MISBEGOTTEN, MISERY (Milwaukee Chamber Theatre). Broadway: BUG (Manhattan Theatre Club - upcoming), THERESE RAQUIN (Roundabout/ Studio 54), HOUSE OF BLUE LEAVES (Walter Kerr), BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS (Nederlander). Film: songs, orchestration and score (with



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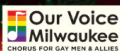
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EVA BRENEMAN (Dialect Coach)

Eva is a text coach and director in Chicago. Text/Dialect: THE CHILDREN (Next Act). Other Wisconsin: ROMEO AND JULIET, DIAL M FOR MURDER, MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING (Milwaukee Rep); ROMEO AND JULIET (Theatre Lila). Chicago: BILLIE JEAN (Chicago Shakespeare); AS YOU LIKE IT, TRANSLATIONS (Writers Theatre); PRIMARY TRUST (Goodman); DEAR ELIZABETH (Remy Bumppo); BECKY NURSE OF SALEM (Shattered Globe). Broadway: AIRLINE HIGHWAY (Samuel Friedman Theatre). Off-Broadway: BOSWELL (59E59). Regional: THE CHINESE LADY (Denver Center); LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST (Actor's Theatre of Louisville), ten seasons at American Repertory Theatre. Director: AS YOU LIKE IT, THE WINTER'S TALE (Montana Shakespeare in the Parks).

MARIA SOLEDAD GILLESPIE (Choreographer)

Maria is a choreographer, performer, and Laban Bartenieff Movement Analyst with an MFA in choreography from UCLA. She directs interdisciplinary improvisation performance group Hyperlocal MKE. Her local interdisciplinary collaborations include Present Music, Danceworks MKE, Renaissance Theaterworks, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Laura Gordon and Marie Kohler, and visual artists Leslie Vansen, Nirmal Raja, Lois Bielefeld, Portia Cobb and Sonja Thomsen. She performs and teaches nationally and internationally including Mexico City, Tokyo, Beijing and Guangzhou. She is a Professor at UWM Department of Dance where she directs the Dance graduate program. Gillespie's next work, WILD TONGUE, premieres in LA in 2026.



CODY ESTLE (Artistic Director)

Cody Estle became the Artistic Director at Next Act Theatre in December 2022. Previously, he served as the Artistic Director

at Raven Theatre in Chicago. His directing credits include CIRCLE MIRROR TRANSFORMATION and THE TREASURER at Next Act Theatre; EVERY BRILLIANT THING at The Weidner; THE LUCKIEST (2022 Jeff Award nominee for Best Production and Best Director), SUNDOWN, YELLOW MOON, HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE (named by Windy City Times as the best of Chicago theatre in 2019), THE GENTLEMAN CALLER (2019 Jeff Award winning new play by Philip Dawkins), THE ASSEMBLED PARTIES, A LOSS OF ROSES (named by Chicago Tribune honorable mention as one of the year's best in 2016), DIVIDING THE ESTATE, VIEUX CARRÉ (named by Chicago Tribune as one of the year's best in 2014), GOOD BOYS AND TRUE, BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS, BOY GETS GIRL and DATING WALTER DANTE at Raven Theatre; THE GARBOLOGISTS and BY THE WATER (named by Chicago Sun-Times honorable mention as one of the top theatre productions of 2017) at Northlight Theatre; DAMASCUS at Strawdog Theatre; FIVE MILE LAKE at Shattered Globe Theatre; AMERICAN HERO at First Floor Theatre; SCARCITY at Redtwist Theatre; THE SEAGULL and WATCH ON THE RHINE at The Artistic Home; DON'T GO GENTLE at Haven Theatre; UNCLE BOB at Mary-Arrchie Theatre and HOSPITALITY SUITE at Citadel Theatre. In 2026, he will direct the Wisconsin Premiere of SWING STATE at Next Act. Cody has been named a "Person to Watch" by American Theatre Magazine and a "Notable Leader in Arts and Entertainment" by BizTimes Milwaukee. He is a member of SDC and an alumnus of Columbia College Chicago.



LIBBY AMATO
(Managing Director;
Understudy for David
Garrick, *et. al.*)

Libby Amato joined
Next Act Theatre
in 2004 as a House
Manager and has worked

continually for the company in a variety of roles, including Ticket Office Attendant, Actor, Deck Manager, Administrative Coordinator and Business Manager, before being promoted to Managing Director in 2023. Libby has worked extensively in the Milwaukee theatre community, including as Development Associate for Skylight Music Theatre from 2016 to 2018 and as Co-Founder and Company Director of Umbrella Group Theatre, a small non-profit theatre company, from 2014 to 2017. Over the years, she has worked with many local theatre companies in areas including acting, stage managing, directing and teaching. These companies include First Stage, Renaissance Theaterworks, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Forward Theater, In Tandem Theatre, All In Productions and Milwaukee Irish Arts, among others. She also made a brief foray outside of the arts world to work with Independence First, a local non-profit organization serving people with disabilities. In addition, Libby owns and operates Abbondanza Soap Co., a natural soap and body product company. She is a graduate of Carroll University.

ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION
(“Equity”)

Equity, founded in 1913, is the U.S. labor union that represents more than 51,000 professional Actors and Stage Managers. Equity fosters the art of live theatre as an essential component of society and advances the careers of its members by negotiating wages, improving working conditions and providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. Actors' Equity is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions.

Equity is governed by its own members through an elected Council, representing principal actors, chorus actors and stage managers living in three regions: Eastern, Central and Western. Members-at-large participate in Equity's governance through a system of regional Boards and Committees. Equity has 28 designated area liaison cities with over 100 members each.



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Next Act Theatre engages the hearts and minds of audiences with intimate, compelling productions intended to stimulate thought, foster the exchange of ideas and promote the development of new perspectives and understanding.

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The Charles D. Kakuk Legacy Society, named for the late Charles D. Kakuk, long-time Next Act Theatre Managing Director, recognizes individuals who have made a lasting impact on Next Act Theatre through their generous planned gift. To learn more about including Next Act Theatre in your estate planning, please call Tawnie Thompson, Development Manager, at 414-278-7780 x7 or email tawnie@nextact.org.

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LATECOMER POLICY – Latecomers will not be seated until an appropriate time. **Seating will not be permitted 30 minutes after the start of a performance. If you are running late, please call the Ticket Office at 414-278-0765.**

TICKET EXCHANGES – Subscribers may exchange their tickets, without fee, up to 48 hours prior to the performance (price adjustments may apply). Single ticket buyers may exchange their tickets for a fee of \$5 per ticket up to 48 hours prior.

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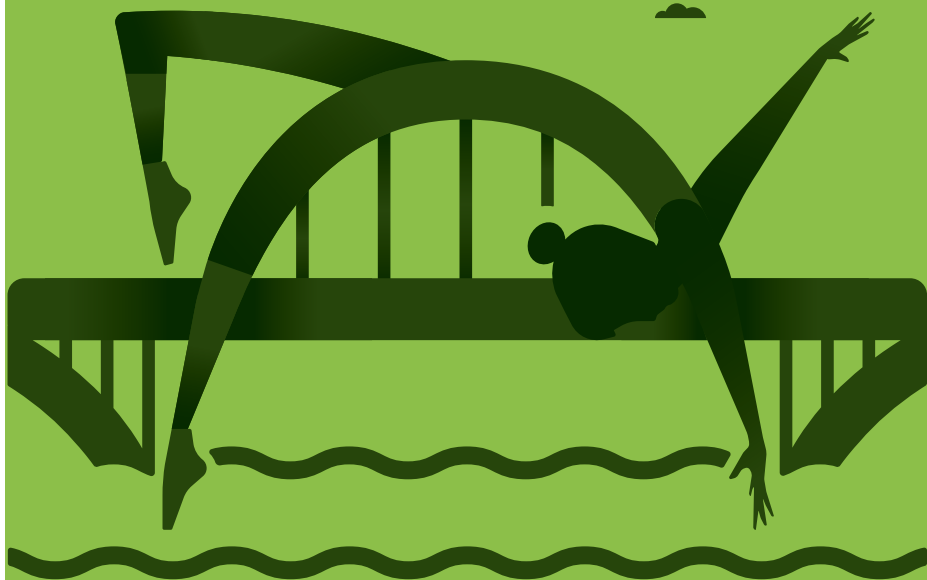
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