



NEOS – νέος, Greek for young, youthful, fresh, new and unexpected

[neosdancetheatre.org](http://neosdancetheatre.org)

Neos Dance Theatre  
and  
Neos Center for Dance  
39 S. Main Street  
Oberlin, Ohio 44074 (440) 574-0115

Neos Dance Theatre  
c/o E.J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall  
198 Hill Street  
Akron OH 44325

Business Address:  
Neos Dance Theatre  
1117 Township Road 753  
Ashland, Ohio 44805

**Robert Wesner ~ [robert.wesner@neosdancetheatre.org](mailto:robert.wesner@neosdancetheatre.org)**  
**Phone: (330) 595-4650**

## **Company**

**Artistic/Executive Director, Robert Wesner**  
**Co-Founder, Brooke Wesner**  
**Lighting Designer, Dennis Dugan**  
**Stage Manager, Christopher J. Ha**  
**Director of Education and Outreach, DeMarcus Akeem Suggs**  
**Administrative Assistant, Gwendolyn L. Feldman**  
**Special Effects, Andy Gardner**  
**Graphic Design and Marketing, Kathy Hilton**  
**Set Construction, Kirsten Williams**  
**Costume Design and Construction, Janet Bolick**

## **Dancers**

**Juliana Freude, Kassandra Lee, Kaleb Reilly, Matthew Roberts,**  
**Carson Sandiford, Katherine Tackett, Anna Trumbo, Brooke Wesner**  
**Apprentices: Rebekah Grey,**  
**Trainee: Ali LeBay**

## **Company History**

With a highly valued performance and education presence throughout Northeast Ohio — especially in Ashland, Cuyahoga, Hancock, Lorain, Richland and Summit counties — Neos has achieved a growing reputation for artistic excellence, adventurous programming, and passionate community collaborations.

Founded in 2012 by Bobby and Brooke Wesner, Neos seeks to:

1. advance dance-related education by student training, intensive summer study, and master classes;
2. raise awareness of the dance arts; and 3. culturally enrich Northern Ohio through performance of high quality dance by obtaining and presenting the widest range of repertoire possible.

### **Blending classical and contemporary**

Energized by classical and contemporary choreography, Neos has showcased works by Hubbard Street Dance Chicago's resident choreographer Alejandro Cerrudo, Heinz Poll, George Balanchine, and Penny Saunders.

Further, Neos director and co-founder Bobby Wesner is an active choreographer. To date he has choreographed over 20 repertoire pieces & four evening-length ballets for Neos Dance Theatre and served as producer for an additional ballet by former resident choreographer Mary-Elizabeth Fenn.

### **Popular collaborator**

Neos is sought-after as a performer and partner. In February 2018, for example, the company joined forces with the Akron Symphony Orchestra and The University of Akron's Dance Institute and E.J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall for a new full-length ballet — Petrushka — that received rave reviews.

In December 2017, Neos presented collaborative performances of A 1940s Nutcracker in multiple venues: at the Renaissance Theatre in Mansfield with the Mansfield Symphony Orchestra; at the Marathon Performing Arts Center in Findlay in collaboration with the Findlay Academy of Ballet; and at the Stocker Arts Center in Elyria with students from the new Neos Center for Dance in Oberlin and surrounding schools.

Neos has and/or is collaborating with the Akron Art Museum (November 2016), Akron Symphony (2017 and 2018), City of Akron's Heinz Poll Summer Dance Festival (annually), Akron Civic Theatre, Ashland's Guy C. Meyers Bandshell, Ashland Regional Ballet, Ashland Symphony, Ashland University, Belhaven University in Mississippi, Cain Park, Cleveland's Playhouse Square, Cleveland

Pops Orchestra, Dance Institute and Dance Program at The University of Akron, Dancing Wheels, Downtown Akron Partnership, Findlay Academy of Ballet, Lakeside Chautauqua, Mansfield Symphony, Oberlin College, The Ohio State University, Verb Ballets, and many more.

### **Showcasing NE Ohio by crossing state lines**

Neos has toured to 10 states, including Georgia where it performed along the coast in 2016 & 2018.

### **Growing strategically**

Founded in 2012, Neos is strategically growth-oriented. Within the past 18 months, Neos has:

- Opened the Neos Center for Dance (NCD), a new pre-professional and community school at the Oberlin Center for the Arts in downtown Oberlin. o In addition to strengthening Neos' presence in

Lorain County, NCD tuition is generating revenue for the company. o Support from the Nord Foundation helped Neos launch NCD.

- Piloted M.A.D.E. in Ashland in March 2017, which brought together artists to highlight Music, Art, Dance and Education during a weeklong residency that culminated in a performance at Archer Auditorium.

- o This successful educational program is now expanding to serve more students throughout Ashland County.

- Hired DeMarcus Akeem Suggs as its first director of education and outreach.

- o Previously holding similar leadership position with the Victoria Theatre Association and Victory Project in Dayton, as well dancing professionally with the Dayton Ballet, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company and others, Suggs helps to oversee daily operations of the Neos Center for Dance.

- Produced its first Lose Your Marbles, a dance-centric fringe festival in non-traditional venues throughout downtown Akron.

- o Presented in June 2017 with funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation as part of its Knight Arts Challenge, the festival was a fun and informative opportunity for the community to binge-watch performing and visual artists. o Audience members were able to use social media to share their opinions about what they'd seen and vote for the best-of-show performance that then received a final showcase at the end of the festival. o The festival — which will continue in 2019 — takes its name from Akron's legacy as the birthplace of toy marbles. o Lose Your Marbles is the second consecutive and highly competitive arts challenge grant that Neos has received from Knight Foundation. With Knight's support, dance.r.evolution and Lose Your Marbles are expanding and engaging audiences by bringing together classically trained choreographers with local urban dancers, graffiti artists and urban/pop musicians to learn from each other and present new ideas.

## **Dancers:**

**Bobby Wesner, Artistic Director,** Bobby began his career as a professional dancer with Ballet Arizona, under the direction of Michael Uthoff (now Ib Anderson). During his stay in Phoenix, he had the honor of working with American Classics such as Fredrick Franklin, Daniel Ezralow, Moses Pendleton of Momix, the Artistic Directors of Pilobolus, Kevin O'Day, Jowali Willa Jo Zolar of Urban Bush Woman, and his wife Brooke Wesner. Other great masterpieces that Wesner has performed are the "Profiteer" in *The Green Table* by Kurt Josse; "Iago" in *The Moore's Pavone* by Jose Limon; "Tico" in *Company B* by Paul Taylor, (also in Taylor's *Esplanade*); three works of Anthony Tudor: *Lilac Garden*, *Leaves are Fading* and *Continuo*; and *The Jester* in Earnst Uthoff's *Carmina Burana*. Independently, Wesner has traveled and performed with various companies all over the northeast region of the US and in Italy. As Director and Co-Founder Bobby has choreographed four evening length ballets for Neos Dance Theatre and produced an additional ballet by resident choreographer Mary-Elizabeth Fenn. Neos also performs many of Wesner's repertory works including *Spinning Plates*, *Various Principals*, *Norm and Cleo*, and more. Bobby and Brooke live in Ashland, Ohio where they raise their four beautiful daughters, Genevieve, Ella, Mekah, and Arowyn.

**Brooke Wesner, Co-Founder**, started dance at age five under Hellie Schussler for her pre-professional training. Her presence on stage has been said to offer "lyrical melodrama" and "a most prominent...elegance"(The Arizona Republic and the Arizona Daily Star). After studying with master teachers such as Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux, Patricia McBride, and Basil Thompson, Brooke started her professional career with the Milwaukee Ballet. With Ballet Arizona she performed the "Snow Queen" and "Arabian" in Ib Anderson's *Nutcracker*, "Dark Angel" in Balanchine's *Serenade*, Paul Taylor's *Company B*; and "Desdemona" in Jose Limon's *The Moore's Pavon*. Brooke also performed as a soloist in *Giselle*; *the Greentable* by Kurt Josse; *Lady Lost Found* by Danny Ezralow; the original "Bird" in Moses Pendelton's *Opus Cactus*; HELLBLONDEGROOVE by Kevin O'Day; a "Saloon Girl" in Billy the Kid (while six months pregnant); and *Apollo*, *The Four Temperaments*, *Agon*, *Rubies*, and *Serenade* by George Balanchine. She performed with Momix in an international tour where she danced for the President of Italy and shared the stage with James Taylor. Brooke has appeared many times with the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra as a guest artist and with the Arizona Opera in *Aida*. Her performance quality and technical stamina has intensified now that she is a mother of four. Brooke is the co-founder of Neos Dance Theatre with her husband, Bobby, and they are the parents of four beautiful daughters, Genevieve, Ella, Mekah, and Arowyn.

**Juliana Freude** is a native of Akron, Ohio and trained for twelve years at The University of Akron Dance Institute where she performed as the soloist in *The Snow Maiden* and received the Gena Carroll Scholarship. Juliana has appeared with The University of Akron Repertory Dance Company in many roles including a soloist in *Onda 9* by Ana Lobe, and *Letting Go* by Travis Gallin. Juliana performed with Nashville Ballet as a trainee in the *Nutcracker* and was also an apprentice with the Charleston Ballet Theatre. While dancing with the Charleston Ballet she has performed original works such as *Rite of Spring*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Great Gatsby* choreographed by Jill Eathorne Bahr. She has worked with Ohio Dance Theatre performing in ballets such as *Swan Lake*, *Fairy Forest*, and has danced with Dancing Wheels performing the leading role of *Helen Keller*, *A Tribute to her Teacher* choreographed by Christopher Fleming, and *Alice in Wonderland* by Bobby Wesner.

**Kassandra Lee** began her training at SODT under the instruction of Nancy Brenstuhl and Denise Gula. Kassandra spent many years as a pre-professional dancing alongside Ohio Dance Theatre in annual productions of the *Nutcracker*. She also performed in many story ballet's including *Snow White and Peter & the Wolf*. Kassandra took her studies to New York City to the Joffery Jazz and Contemporary summer intensive. Since joining Neos Dance Theatre Kassandra has performed in *Count...the Legend of Dracula*, *A 1940's Nutcracker*, and *Illustrious Disillusion* choreographed by Robert Wesner; works by resident choreographer Mary-Elizabeth Fenn are *Nothing In Particular* and *Nowhere*; and guest choreographers work *Flight* by Penny Saunders.

**Kaleb Reilly** started dancing at age 14 in Milford, MI, before moving to Jackson, MS, to continue his dance studies at Belhaven University. At Belhaven, Reilly received extensive training and performed choreography by Caleb Mitchell (Houston Ballet), Ravenna Tucker Wagnon (Royal Ballet), Stephen Rooks (Martha Graham Company), Durell Comedy (José Limón Company, Mark Morris Dance Group), and Vincent Hardy (Complexions Contemporary Ballet), among others. Reilly toured to South Korea twice as a part of the Bal Malhada dance ensemble (2014-2015) to perform in outreach and performance venues across the country. In Korea, Bal Malhada had the privilege of premiering two works by Sung Yong Kim. In 2015, Reilly made his debut with Neos Dance Theatre during their summer concert series in northeast Ohio, after which he returned to Belhaven to complete his BFA in dance performance, graduating magna cum laude in 2016. Since then, Reilly was a part of Launch: 11 with Northwest Dance

Project in Portland, OR, performed as a company artist with Vivid Ballet (Hartford, CT) for the company's inaugural season, and has now returned to Ohio for his first full season with Neos Dance Theatre.

**Matthew Roberts** is an Ohioan who, at the age of 10, discovered he was bilingual and his real native language was dance. After studying at the Dance Institute and University of Akron, he moved to New York looking to become more fluent and graduated from Marymount Manhattan College in 2013 with a BFA in Dance and concentration in Choreography. There he performed works by Lar Lubovitch, Robert Battle, Jessica Lang, Shen Wei and after graduating performed with Lustig Dance Theatre, Oakland Ballet Company, and Awakening Movement. He loves creating dances of his own to share with others and hopes to have a company of his own one day. After returning from New York he started working with Neos Dance Theatre and has been utilizing his skills as a dancer, teacher, and choreographer.

**Carson Sandiford-Hoxie** started dancing at the age of 13 at Monona Academy of Dance in Wisconsin. Soon after he attended Nutmeg Conservatory, where he graduated after attending for two years. After attending the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School at American Ballet Theatre Carson studied at the Sarasota Cuban Ballet School. To start his professional career Carson returned to New York as a member of the Joffrey Ballet's Concert Group. He performed works by Gerald Arpino's such as "Suite Saint Saens", "Birthday Variations", and "Light Rain", with additional works by Dwight Rhoden ("And So It Was"), and George Balanchine's Valse Fantasie. Carson travelled with these works around the United States, Canada, and Italy. He most recently performed in various repertoire and "A Midsummer Nights Dream" as a resident guest artist for the Cleveland Ballet.

**Katherine Tackett** is from Akron, Ohio where she trained at the Dance Institute with the University of Akron for 12 years. While at Dance Institute, Katherine trained under Christina Foise, Ana Lobe, Kay Eichman, Andrew Carroll and MaryAnn Black. She had the opportunity to perform in the Snow Maiden for many years, at the Heinz Poll Summer Dance Festival and with the University of Akron Dance Company. After high school Katherine continued her training at the University of Cincinnati's College Conservatory of Music under Jiang Qi, Michael Tevlin, and Deirdre Carberry. She spent summers training at the School of American Ballet, Dance Institute and the Cincinnati Ballet. While at a summer intensive at the Cincinnati Ballet, Katherine was asked to join the company as a trainee. She stayed for a year and had the opportunity to perform in their Nutcracker and various performances with the Cincinnati Ballet Second Company. This is Katherine's second season with Neos.

**Anna Trumbo** originally from Seattle, Washington, trained at Cornish Preparatory Dance and with Stephanie Saland before continuing her training at the Joffrey Ballet School in New York City. Her most noted performance while at Joffrey was as "Cowgirl" in Agnes De Mille's "Rodeo," of which The New York Times referenced her performance saying, it was "danced with verve, with [Anna] as an appealingly wistful Cowgirl..." Other performances during her study in New York included Septime Weber's "D-Construction," Kathryn Posin's "San Cubano" and "Piano Concerto," and Gerald Arpino's "Viva Vivaldi," and the pas de trois from "Italian Suite." After receiving her BFA from the New School University, Anna moved to San Francisco to dance with the Oakland Ballet. During her time at Oakland Ballet she performed Ron Guidi's "Nutcracker," Robert Garland's "Joplin Dances," Carlos Carvajal's "Crystal Slipper," and Michael Lowe's "Double Happiness." Since joining Neos Dance Theatre in 2011 she has performed pieces by director Bobby Wesner including, "Spinning Plates", "Homage", "Searching for the

Find", "Karelia Suite", and Appalachian Spring, as well as "A 1940's Nutcracker" and "Count...the Legend of Dracula", roles Heinz Poll's "Eight by Benny Goodman", and in "Flight", by Penny Saunders. During the centennial year of Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring", Anna performed as a guest with GroundWorks Dance Theater in the premier of David Shimotakahara's Rite of Spring with the Akron Symphony Orchestra.

### Apprentice:

**Rebekah Gray Mayfield** began training with Ihde Rather Be Dancing and then in high school she continued her training with the University of Akron Dance Institute. While at the Dance Institute, Rebekah performed as the lead soloist in the 2015 performance of The Snow Maiden. During her four years with the Institute, Rebekah trained under Christina Foisie, Kara Stewart, Kay Eichman, and Frank Kosik. Along with her training at the Dance Institute, Rebekah attended the dance program at Firestone High School under the direction of Kelly Berick. Upon high school graduation, Rebekah stayed in her home town to pursue a BA in Dance with a minor in Business from the University of Akron. Rebekah has also had the privilege of performing works by choreographers such as Robert Wesner, Stephanie Martinez, Penny Saunders, Hernando Cortez, Joseph Morrissey, and David Shimotakahara. Rebekah has performed with Neos Dance Theatre throughout her tenure at The University of Akron.

### Trainee:

**Alexandria (Ali) LeBay** began dancing at a young age with Jete Dance Center, and then Christine Jones Meneer School of Dance. She became a company member with Ballet Theatre of Ohio in 2009 and was promoted to the professional division in 2011. She has performed with the company in numerous ballets such as *The Nutcracker*, *Cinderella*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Sleeping Beauty*. She graduated from Western Reserve Academy in 2013, and has since returned numerous times to set works on the high school dance students there. She has recently returned from a semester abroad in London where she had the opportunity to dance extensively with studios throughout Europe, as well as perform with CoDa Dance Company and Third Row Dance Company in London. Ali is currently a senior at The University of Akron studying English Language Arts Education and Dance.

### Coming Events

Lose Your Marbles,  
[www.loseyourmarbles.org](http://www.loseyourmarbles.org) ,  
March 1, 2019,  
8 p.m.,  
Ticket prices are \$23 reserved & \$18 General.

Akron Civic,  
182 South Main Street Akron, Ohio 44308,  
Ticket Office: (330) 253-2488,

**LOSE YOUR MARBLES, A DANCE-CENTRIC FRINGE FESTIVAL** This year's one day festival will feature Groundworks Dance Theatre, Inlet Dance Theatre, Neos and Verb Ballets. Don't miss the best our region boasts in contemporary ballet and dance!  
[info@neosdancetheatre.org](mailto:info@neosdancetheatre.org)

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M.A.D.E. in Ashland, 2019

Saturday, April 6, 2019

7:30 PM – 9:30 PM

<https://www.neosdancetheatre.org/madeinashland>

Ticket prices are \$18 - \$10 General. General 18, Senior 15, student 10

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/made-in-ashland-2019-tickets-54329624369>

Archer Auditorium

1440 King Road, Ashland, Ohio 44805

Neos and the incredible talents of the community in a multimedia performance highlighting Music, Art, Dance, and Education. Featured guest artist singer Kelly Knowlton, jazz pianist Chip Stephens, textile artist Barbara Morejon, and the Neos dancers.

[info@neosdancetheatre.org](mailto:info@neosdancetheatre.org)

### **OBERLIN DANCE INTENSIVE - Summer 2019**

**July 7-13, Oberlin, OH**

**ODI** summer workshop welcomes dancers ages 13 -18 to join current students and faculty in the Oberlin College Dance Studios. Introductory, intermediate, and advanced classes are offered in a wide variety of styles.

<https://www.neosdancetheatre.org/oberlindanceintensive>

For more information contact:

Gwen L. Feldman

(440) 252-2779