



VAIL DANCE FESTIVAL
BALLETX
IN
SUNSET, 0639 HOURS

MONDAY, AUGUST 2
GERALD R. FORD AMPHITHEATER

PERFORMANCE GRACIOUSLY UNDERWRITTEN BY PRISCILLA BREWSTER

BALLETX

2021 Company-In-Residence

CHRISTINE COX

Co-Founder and Artistic & Executive Director

TARA KEATING

Associate Artistic Director

MEGAN O'DONNELL

Associate Director of Operations

CHRISTINA DUNNINGTON

Development & Communications Manager

KERENI SANCHEZ

Production Coordinator

JASON PIZZI

Production & Facilities Manager

JAMES IHDE

Development Manager

ANNE WHITE

Education & Community Manager

EMILY BERNARD

Administrative Coordinator

The Company

Shawn Cusseaux, Jonah Delgado, Francesca Forcella, Savannah Green, Zachary Kapeluck, Blake Krapels,
Skylar Lubin, Ashley Simpson, Richard Villaverde, Andrea Yorita, Pete Leo Walker

The Musicians

Alexandra Day, Joshua Machiz, Tara Middleton, Isaac Stanford

ABOUT *SUNSET, 0639 HOURS*

On January 2, 1938, American pilot Captain Edwin Musick embarked on a long-forgotten historical flight – the inaugural airmail service from New Zealand to the United States.

Piloting the *Samoan Clipper*, one of Pan America's Sikorsky S-42B flying boats, he and six crew members traversed 4,000 miles of open ocean. From Auckland they stopped in Pago Pago in American Samoa and again at Kingman Reef, then on to Honolulu, where a connecting flight completed the mail run to San Francisco.

On June 11, 1938, Captain Musick and his crew departed again for New Zealand, carrying mail from the United States. However, shortly after taking off from Pago Pago, the last point before New Zealand, the *Samoan Clipper* tragically exploded mid-air in a blast that could be heard for miles. The ocean was littered with oil, burnt mail and plane wreckage. The bodies of the captain and his crew were never recovered, and the airmail service was suspended until July 1940.

Sunset, 0639 Hours brings to life this forgotten story in a reimagined narrative that follows each leg of Musick's journey. It is a story of fearlessness, island paradise, isolation, loss and longing set in the pre-WWII cabaret days of New Zealand, Samoa and Hawaii. It celebrates the daring accomplishments of an early aviation hero and his crew who risked their lives in order to connect the people of two distant lands.

TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

SUNSET, 0639 HOURS

BalletX World Premiere, 2014

Choreographer: Matthew Neenan

Composer, Lyrics, and Co-Creator: Rosie Langabeer

Composition and Lyrics: Andrew Mars

Composition and Musician: Isaac Stanford

Composition and Musician: Joshua Machiz

Musician: Alexandra Day

Musician: Tara Middleton

Set Designer: Maiko Matsushima

Lighting Designer: Drew Billiau

Sound Designer: Nick Kourtides

Costume Designer: Christine Darch

Instrument Inventor: Neil Feather

Archival recordings provided by Sound Archives NGA Taonga Korero

SCENES

- i. Dec 26, 1937: The Samoan Clipper Flies into Auckland
- ii. Prime Minister of New Zealand Welcomes the Captain and Crew
- iii. Letter from Francis Elizabeth in San Francisco to William in Auckland
- iv. Dec 31, 1937: New Year's Eve
- v. People > Birds > Planes
- vi. Jan 2, 1938: The Inaugural Airmail Flight Departs to Samoa
- vii. Letter from The Native Land Titles Administration in New Zealand to Mrs. Ele'ele Hinatea Huihana Tuitama in Samoa
- viii. Jan 2, 1938: Landing in Samoa

INTERMISSION

- ix. Jan 3, 1938: Crew Refuel in Samoa
- x. Jan 4, 1938: Flight to Honolulu
- xi. Jan 5, 1938: Week Off in Hawaii
- xii. The Captain Yearns for His Wife
- xiii. Letter from George in Honolulu to Shirley in New Zealand
- xiv. Jan 11, 1938: Captain Musick's Final Flight
- xv. The Ocean of Ghosts

MATTHEW NEENAN (Co-Creater and Choreographer)

Matthew Neenan began his dance training at the Boston Ballet, and later attended the LaGuardia High School of Performing Arts and the School of American Ballet in New York. From 1994-2007, Matthew danced with the Pennsylvania Ballet, where he danced numerous Principal roles in the classical, contemporary, and Balanchine repertoire. In October 2007, Matthew was named Choreographer in Residence at the Pennsylvania Ballet.

Matthew's choreography has been featured and performed by the Pennsylvania Ballet, BalletX, The Washington Ballet, Ballet West, Colorado Ballet, Ballet Memphis, Milwaukee Ballet, Oregon Ballet Theatre, Tulsa Ballet and Juilliard Dance, among many others. He has received numerous awards and grants for his choreography from the National Endowment of the Arts, Dance Advance funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, and the Choo San Goh Foundation. He received the New York City Ballet's Choreographic Institute's Fellowship Initiative Award in 2006, and was also the first recipient of the Jerome Robbins NEW Program Fellowship. In 2005, Matthew co-founded BalletX with Christine Cox. BalletX has toured and performed Neenan's choreography, most notably at the Vail Dance Festival, The Joyce Theater, Laguna Dance Festival, Spring to Dance Festival and internationally in Cali, Colombia, and Seoul, South Korea.

BALLETX

BalletX, Philadelphia's premier contemporary ballet, whose dancers were named "among America's best" by *The New York Times*, commissions choreographers from around the world to create dance that is "fresh, inclusive, and connects to what people want" (*Philadelphia Citizen*) while "positioning Philadelphia on the cutting edge of contemporary ballet" (*The Dance Journal*). Founded in 2005 by Christine Cox and Matthew Neenan, BalletX is led by Cox, whose tenure as Artistic & Executive Director has produced over 100 world premiere ballets by nearly 60 choreographers, a record "few companies can match," according to *The New York Times*. Under Cox's leadership, BalletX has been hailed as an "epicenter of

creation” (*Dance Magazine*) and “place of choreographic innovation” (*The New Yorker*), putting Philadelphia on the map as an international destination for contemporary ballet. Learn more at www.BalletX.org.

OUR 2021 MARQUEE & SEASON PRESENTERS

The Vail Valley Foundation extends its sincere gratitude to the season presenters whose dedication has made it possible for the 2021 Festival to achieve an extraordinary level of success.

MARQUEE PRESENTER

Jody & John Arnhold

SEASON PRESENTERS

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& the Oscar Tang Family

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MaurerMarcia & Thomas McCaldenDavid Paige Deborah Simmons

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Linda & Robert Kirscht Tiffany & Joshua Lemos Judy Lynn & Joel Levy Shani Magosky Rachelle
McBride Mary Meyer Robert Miller Caroline Rapalyea & Sam Miller Mark Moore Helen Moxcey
Bill Nelson Yoshiki Obayashi Judy & Denny O'Brien Ruth Malman & Michael Opatowski Mauri
Pioppo Funger Jennifer Prom Mary Reinersten Judy & Kenneth Robins Stephanie Samander
Valerie Schweyer Stacy Stoutenberg Susan & William Tracy Rosanna D'Orazio & Kent Wagner
Tiffany Walker Barbara & Stanley Weinstein Joel Weinthal Jane & Ben West Joy Yorita

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