

HOUSTON BALLET FOUNDATION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES
Monday, February 23, 2026

Call to order: The Houston Ballet Meeting of the Board of Trustees was held in the Margaret Alkek Williams Dance Lab on Monday, September 29, 2025, in Houston, Texas. Mrs. Stephanie Tsuru called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m.

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Mrs. Kristy J. Bradshaw, Mr. James Cowan, Ms. Gay Currie, Mignon Gill, Mr. Jesse H. Jones II, Mrs. Jennifer Laporte, Chad Libertus, Mr. Daniel M. McClure, Ms. Andrea Medina, Mrs. Cabrina Owsley, Mrs. Amy Pincu, Mrs. Carroll Robertson Ray, Mr. Kent A. Schaffer, Ms. S. Shawn Stephens, Mrs. Allison Thacker, Stephanie Tsuru, Mrs. Phoebe Tudor, Mrs. Christine M. Underwood, Ms. Leslie Alston, Dr. Julia D. Andrieni, Mrs. Kyle Baker, Mr. Nicholas Baran, Ms. Ann C. Bean, Mrs. Susan Binney, Mrs. Leslie Blanton, Mrs. Lenni Burke, Ms. Zoe Cadore, Mr. Michael Collins, Ms. Sasha Davis, Mahalia Doughty, Mrs. Pamela D. Earthman, Mrs. Kate Dearing Fowler, Mrs. Jo Furr, Mrs. Marianne Geagea, Mrs. Twana Griffith-Faykus, Victoria Gutierrez, Ms. Michelle Iversen Jeffery, Mr. James M. Jordan, Ms. Amy LeBlanc, Mr. Mark Loveland, Mrs. Kelley S. Lubanko, Ms. Michelle Maresh, Mrs. Jean E. May, Mrs. Kris McGee, Ms. Beth Muecke, Mrs. Patti Murphy, Mrs. James Shaffer, Dannika E. Simpson, Mrs. Leigh M. Smith, Mrs. Ileana Treviño, Mrs. Elizabeth R. Zdeblick.

STAFF PRESENT: Brittany Broussard, Kelli Gilson, Lindsey Hurst, Julie Kent, Rachel Koenig, Sonja Kostich, Kristi Roberts, Adama Sall, Jennifer Sommers, Simon Thew, Stanton Welch, Alexandra Yates

GUESTS PRESENT: Tyler Donatelli, Samuel Rodriguez

Mrs. Stephanie Tsuru welcomed everyone and with a quorum present, the minutes from the September 29, 2026 meeting were approved.

SPECIAL EVENTS REPORT

Mrs. Tsuru congratulated Ballet Ball Chairmen Christine and David Underwood and honorees Richard Flowers and Houston First on an exceptionally successful 2026 Houston Ballet Ball. She reported that Ballet Ball raised \$1.6 million, inclusive of auction proceeds and in-kind support, and thanked all who contributed to the event's success.

Ms. Tsuru noted that a limited number of auction items remain available for purchase and encouraged interested trustees to contact the Development team for additional information.

Looking ahead, Ms. Tsuru provided an update on the upcoming Nutcracker Market Spring, scheduled for April 17–19 at NRG Center and noted that ticket sales are underway and encouraged trustees to support and promote the event.

She also highlighted Raising the Barre, taking place on April 26, describing it as one of Houston Ballet's signature spring fundraising events. She acknowledged the event Chairs and noted strong early interest, encouraging table and ticket commitments.

Mrs. Tsuru then invited Ms. Sonja Kostich to give the Executive Director's report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Kostich began her report by noting the success of the Houston Ballet Ball, congratulating the Chairs and Honorees and recognizing the event's strong impact and overall success.

Ms. Kostich then reviewed the January month-end financials, reporting that the organization is tracking in line with prior years and seasonal expectations.

Ms. Kostich provided an update on senior leadership, noting that Adama Sall officially began on January 26 as Houston Ballet's first Chief Marketing Officer. She stated that the role represents a strategic investment in brand development, audience engagement, and long-term growth. She further reported that the search for a Chief Philanthropy Officer has formally launched, with the position description finalized and posted.

Ms. Kostich announced that Houston Ballet will host the Youth America Grand Prix (YAGP) Finals for the first time in May 2026. She noted that this international event will bring leading young dancers, educators, and artistic directors from nearly 50 countries to Houston and will generate significant visibility, cultural impact, and economic activity for the city and Theater District.

In closing, Ms. Kostich reported that the Endowment continues to track strongly and acknowledged recent legacy gifts, including contributions from the estates of Anne Graubart, Mary S. Dix, and Carol E. Tag.

Ms. Kostich then invited Mrs. Julie Kent and Mr. Stanton Welch to begin the Artistic Director's report.

ARTISTIC DIRECTORS' REPORT

Mrs. Kent and Mr. Welch opened the Artistic Directors' report by providing an overview of the 2026–2027 Season.

The season will open in September 2026 with a mixed repertory program featuring George Balanchine's *Symphonie Concertante*, Lar Lubovitch's *Meadow*—marking the Company's first presentation of Mr. Lubovitch's work—and Stanton Welch's *Pecos Bill*.

Manon by Sir Kenneth MacMillan will return in late September, continuing Houston Ballet's longstanding relationship with this major narrative ballet.

Season add-ons will include *The Nutcracker* from November 27 through December 28 and the Margaret Alkek Williams Jubilee of Dance on December 4. The Artistic Directors confirmed that *The Nutcracker* will include 40 performances, marking an expanded run and a significant milestone for the Company.

In February 2027, the Company will premiere *Where's Alice?*, a new full-length ballet by Mr. Welch that re-envision's Carroll's iconic tale. Designed as an immersive theatrical experience, the production will incorporate integrated audio and visual elements to create an innovative experience at the Wortham theater.

Madame Butterfly will follow in March, continuing the Company's tradition of presenting emotionally rich story ballets set to iconic musical scores.

The late spring mixed repertory program will include Justin Peck's *Reflections*, a world premiere by Jacquelyn Long, and Mr. Welch's staging of *The Rite of Spring*.

The season will conclude with an extended engagement of *Swan Lake* in June 2027, providing an expanded run of one of the Company's most celebrated full-length classical productions.

Mrs. Kent and Mr. Welch then introduced the Academy performance of an excerpt from Stanton Welch's *Fingerprints*, performed by dancers of Houston Ballet Academy.

Mrs. Stephanie Tsuru thanked the students for their performance and invited everyone to the reception following the meeting. She then welcomed any old or new business, and with none, the meeting was adjourned.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.