

Stuttgart, February 28<sup>th</sup> 2025

## Personnel changes at the John Cranko School

After more than 27 years, Tadeusz Matacz will step down as Director of the John Cranko School at the end of 2025. Under his leadership, the school has greatly expanded its international reputation; it is now one of the world's leading professional academies for classical ballet dancers. Starting in January 2026, Elisa Carrillo Cabrera will assume the position as Director of the John Cranko School, supported by Mikhail Kaniskin as Associate Director.

When Stuttgart Ballet founder John Cranko came to Stuttgart from London in 1961, he envisioned a ballet school that would be directly linked to the company. The first ballet classes began in September 1971 under the direction of Anne Woolliams, with the official inauguration taking place on December 1, 1971. In 1976, Heinz Clauss assumed management of the school, followed by Alex Ursuliak in 1990. Since December 1, 1998, Tadeusz Matacz has directed of the John Cranko School. Under his direction, many dancers have moved on from the school to become part of the world's leading companies. Approximately 70% of the Stuttgart Ballet's current dancers are graduates of the John Cranko School, many of whom have risen to the rank of Principal Dancer, including Rocio Aleman, Anna Osadcenko, Agnes Su, Henrik Erikson, Gabriel Figueredo, Martí Paixà, and Adhonay Soares da Silva. Many successful choreographers, such as Fabio Adoriso, Alessandro Giaquinto, Katarzyna Kozielska, Louis Stiens, Christian Spuck, Xenia Wiest, and Demis Volpi are also graduates of the John Cranko School.

"I would like to thank Tadeusz Matacz, who has played a crucial role in training young dancers for 27 years as Director of the John Cranko School. He has been part of the school for half of its history, since its founding. He has helped the John Cranko School gain international recognition and has helped many young talents make the leap into leading companies. I am deeply grateful for the tireless work and dedication with which Tadeusz Matacz has led our school over many years and thank him for his service! I am delighted that we have found an excellent successor in Elisa Carrillo Cabrera and look forward to working with her in the future," says Artistic Director Tamas Detrich.

Elisa Carrillo Cabrera is a former Soloist with the Stuttgart Ballet and a former Principal dancer with the Staatsballett Berlin. She was born in Mexico and completed her ballet training from 1990 to 1997 at the Escuela Nacional de Danza Clásica in Mexico. She then received a scholarship to study at the English National Ballet School in London, where she graduated in 1999. After completing her training, she joined the Stuttgart Ballet as an apprentice, where she joined the corps de ballet in the 2000/2001 season. At the beginning of the 2004/2005 season, Elisa Carrillo Cabrera was promoted to Demi-soloist, followed by her appointment as Soloist in 2006/2007. In the 2007/2008 season, she was engaged by

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Vladimir Malakhov to join the Staatsballett Berlin, where she was appointed Principal Dancer in 2011. She retired from the Staatsballett Berlin at the end of the 2023/24 season. In 2003, she completed a two-year teacher training program at the John Cranko School, funded by the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Science, Research and Arts. In 2019, Elisa Carrillo Cabrera was awarded the Prix Benois de la Danse for her role as Juliet in Nacho Duato's *Romeo and Juliet*. In addition to her career as a dancer, she has taken part in numerous "Stars of Ballet Galas" in over 30 countries and has also taught ballet classes in Mexico, the USA, Germany and Canada.

Together with Mikhail Kaniskin, Elisa Carrillo Cabrera is strongly committed to promoting culture worldwide and broadening its accessibility, especially in Mexico, with the Elisa Carrillo Cabrera Foundation. In 2010, she was appointed as an ambassador of Mexican culture, and in 2012, the government of the state of Mexico created the "Elisa Carrillo Cabrera Grant," providing financial support for young dancers' training. She also currently serves as Co-Artistic Director of the Compañía Nacional de Danza, Mexico and is a member of UNESCO's International Dance Council (CID). Along with Mikhail Kaniskin, she has organized the recurring gala "Elisa and Friends" since 2012 and the international dance festival "Danzatlan" since 2018, which present world-class repertoire and dancers to the public free of charge. In 2024, she gave a public ballet class for over 5,000 people in Mexico City's Zócalo, which attracted worldwide attention.

Mikhail Kaniskin is a former Principal Dancer with the Stuttgart Ballet and the Staatsballett Berlin. He was born in Moscow and initially studied at the Bolshoi Ballet Academy before completing his training at the John Cranko School in Stuttgart under Petr Pestov. After graduating in 1997, he joined the corps de ballet of the Stuttgart Ballet. During the 2001/2002 season he was promoted to Demi-soloist, and one season later to Soloist. At the beginning of the 2004/05 season, Mikhail Kaniskin became Principal Dancer of the Stuttgart Ballet. From 2007 to 2020, Mikhail Kaniskin was Principal Dancer of Staatsballett Berlin. In 2001, he successfully completed the two-year advanced training course to become a ballet teacher at the John Cranko School, which was funded by the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Science, Research and Arts. In addition, he is a member of the International Dance Council (CID) of UNESCO and is Artistic Director of the Sir Anton Dolin Foundation and the Elisa Carrillo Cabrera Foundation. From 2018 to February 2025, he also worked as an artistic advisor and ballet teacher at the National Dance Company in Mexico.

Tadeusz Matacz, born in Warsaw, Poland, completed his ballet training at the State Ballet School in Warsaw, where he also completed his pedagogical training with Leonid Zhdanov. In 1977, he accepted his first engagement as a dancer at the Grand Theater in Warsaw; at the same time, he worked as a teacher at the ballet school in Warsaw. From 1979 to 1984, Tadeusz Matacz was Principal Dancer at the Grand Theater in Warsaw. From 1984 to 1992, he was a Soloist at the Badisches Staatstheater in Karlsruhe, where he also took on a teaching role starting in 1988. From 1992 to 1998, he served as training director, ballet master and choreographer at the Badisches Staatstheater in Karlsruhe. From 1990 to

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1998, Tadeusz Matacz was also a guest teacher at the Frankfurt Ballet, Le Ballet de l'Opéra national du Capitole in Toulouse, the Grand Theater in Warsaw and, from 1997 to 1998, at the Stuttgart Ballet. He was appointed Director of the John Cranko School in 1998.

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