

## **Karina Sturdevant Levy**

A native Iowan, her professional performing career began in Des Moines with Ballet Iowa, under the direction of the late Kennet Oberly (Stuttgart Ballet) and from there she went on to danced with Milwaukee Ballet, Lexington Ballet, and Ballet Arkansas, where she was also the company's Ballet Mistress for nearly a decade. Along the way Karina danced corps, soloist, and principal roles from the Classics; yet she also explored her talents for the contemporary side of dance – performing with modern/contemporary companies in Milwaukee, Cincinnati, New York City, and overseas in Denmark, where she danced with Oure Danse Kompagni. She retired from performing with the birth of her daughter, and began choreographing, and teaching full-time. She developed the training program for Ballet Arkansas' school, and staged several performance series in Little Rock before taking her leave from Ballet Arkansas to return to Iowa, to pursue the advancement of her academic education, and care for her father, who passed of Alzheimer's Disease in 2010. In 2011, she graduated Summa Cum Laude from Iowa State University with two Bachelor of Science Degrees, one in History and the other in Religious studies. Then, continued furthering her education at the Iowa College of Natural Health/ISB by becoming a Licensed Massage Therapist. In 2013, her choreography and coaching successfully assisted a young dancer to enter the Prix de Lausanne, where that dancer was awarded a full scholarship to train at the John Cranko-Schule in Stuttgart, Germany – and now dances professionally with the Stuttgart Ballet. Karina and Jonathon were married in 2014.



## **Jonathon Levy**

Originally from Chicago, attended junior high and high school in West Virginia and began his 22-year professional career with Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre II, then returned to Chicago to train at Ruth Page Foundation and Hubbard Street Dance Company, before dancing in the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary season of the Chicago Lyric Opera Ballet featuring Luciano Pavarotti. He then joined the Milwaukee Ballet; and shortly thereafter was invited to join Vilella & Dancers in New York City; and when Edward Vilella became Artistic Director of Ballet Oklahoma, Levy was made a soloist. He moved to the West Coast and performed with California Ballet, Ballet Arizona, and was Principal Dancer in Dallas, Texas for four seasons. A preliminary-participant at the 4<sup>th</sup> International Ballet Competition in Jackson, MS., he was a guest artist with over twenty-five regional and professional performing arts organizations across the US, and performed internationally at Cultural Arts Festivals in Baja Norte, Mexico; and in Israel. He was a background dancer in the movie “Flashdance,” and appeared on PBS, in both the children's program “Mister Roger's Neighborhood,” and as a soloist in the documentary series “The Dance with Edward Vilella.” He began his retirement from performing, just before the birth of his son after working with Fernando Bujones, who encouraged him to teach. Since then, Levy has taught at University programs, private studios, professional schools, and at prodigy-sports athletic-training programs for gymnastics, figure-skating, football, ice-hockey, soccer and professional golf. He was a Ballet Master for Gus Giordano's Jazz Dance Chicago company & school during Mr. Giordano's retirement season, while directing the School of Performing Arts in Naperville, IL. for over four years; and was appointed the associate artistic director for two festival seasons at the Reno Ballet before serving as the Ballet Master for the National Contemporary Ballet of Israel – the Bat Dor Dance Company, which was the sister company of Bat Sheva Dance in Tel Aviv. He founded a performing arts school in Aurora, IL. that received a MetLife Arts Initiative Grant for After-School Programing, and operated a pre-professional ballet training studio in Reno, NV. Levy was invited to be a member of Unesco's International Dance Council in 2013, and recently established the Raccoon Valley Centre for the Arts in Iowa. He is a Chef with culinary-training from The International Culinary School at the Illinois Art Institute of Chicago, and a self-published author of a children's book. He danced with Karina during guest performances in Illinois, and reconnected with her in 2013 during a teaching engagement; they were married in December 2014, and regularly seek opportunities to teach together for schools and at summer programs.

