

THE HISTORY OF

LAKE ERIE BALLET

Company

● 1957 THE BEGINNING

The Lake Erie Ballet Company (LEBC) was founded in 1957 by Statia Sublette as the *Erie Civic Ballet*. During the 13 years of Ms. Sublette's directorship, this small, civic ballet group presented over 50 works at the *Chautauqua Institute*, accompanied by several orchestras and opera companies, and established itself as the premier school for classical ballet training in Erie and ballet performance in the region.

● 1958 ESTABLISHING AN ERIE TRADITION

From its inception, LEBC operated as a not-for-profit organization, collaborating with **Erie County schools** and **regional arts organizations** to broaden its educational impact. One of LEBC's most enduring traditions is its annual production of *The Nutcracker*, first performed at the historic *Warner Theatre* in 1958. The company has also partnered with the *Erie Philharmonic* and with *Mercyhurst College's Dance Department* to present *the Nutcracker* with a professional orchestra and dance majors performing lead roles over the years.

● 1987 EMBRACING A NEW IDENTITY

The Erie Civic Ballet changed its name to **Lake Erie Ballet** and under the direction of Artistic Directors Robert Steele, Jeff Satinoff, and Robert Vickrey, the tradition of excellence begun by Ms. Sublette continued and established Lake Erie Ballet as a full-fledged **professional ballet company** in the tri-state area comprised of northwestern Pennsylvania, northeastern Ohio, and western New York.

● 1996 EXPANDING LEBC'S REACH

After dancing with the company for seven seasons, **Christina Maria** was appointed as head of the organization. Under her direction, Lake Erie Ballet was able to combine its rich history in classical ballet with cutting edge new work. Repertoire included classics such as *The Nutcracker*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Cinderella* as well as contemporary masterpieces by George Balanchine, Bruce Wells, and Donlin Foreman. Christina Maria was also instrumental in organizing the first **Erie Festival of Dance**, fostering collaboration among local dance groups.

● 2019 REFINING THE COMPANY'S NAME

After leaving the company to raise her family and establish her own ballet school, Christina Maria returned to Lake Erie Ballet as Artistic Director and the organization underwent its final name change to become the **Lake Erie Ballet Company**. No longer a professional ballet company or school, LEBC's mission has been focused on producing a community-based *Nutcracker* since then, where dancers from any studio in Erie County could audition for a part.

● 2021 REIMAGINING ERIE'S OWN NUTCRACKER

A twist on the traditional ballet, In 2021 *Erie's Nutcracker Reimagined* premiered in Erie and featured historical characters from the Battle of Lake Erie and scenic projections from around Erie and Presque Isle, recreating a uniquely Erie version of the *Nutcracker* story.

● 2026 WELCOMING IN A NEW ERA

We are excited to usher in a new era for LEBC with the appointment of Marquis Wallace as our Executive Director. Marquis brings visionary leadership, a strong passion for the arts, and extensive training from the Rod Rogers Dance Company in New York City. His dedication to innovation and community engagement will help elevate the company and inspire both dancers and audiences alike.

www.lakeerieballetcompany.org

