Great Performances Presents the U.S. Broadcast Premiere of Black Lucy and The Bard from Nashville Ballet Friday, September 16 on PBS

Features an original score by GRAMMY winner Rhiannon Giddens based on the poetry of Caroline Randall Williams exploring the muses of Shakespeare’s sonnets

A cross-disciplinary tour de force performed by Nashville Ballet, Great Performances: Black Lucy and The Bard explores the love life of William Shakespeare and his muses, the “Dark Lady” and the “Fair Youth,” presenting the idea that these subjects and inspirations in his love sonnets were a Black woman and a young man. Mixing present-day and historical characters, the ballet is set to an original score by GRAMMY-winning musician Rhiannon Giddens and co-composer Francesco Turrisi. Author and performer Caroline Randall Williams narrates the ballet with her own spoken word poetry from the 2015 book on which the show was based, “Lucy Negro, Redux.” Great Performances: Black Lucy and The Bard premieres Friday, September 16 at 9 p.m. ET on PBS (check local listings), pbs.org/gperf and the PBS Video app as part of Great Performances’ 50th anniversary season.

Exploring themes of love, otherness, equality and beauty, the cast includes an ensemble of Nashville Ballet dancers. Claudia Monja leads the cast as Lucy along with Owen Thorne as Shakespeare and Nicolas Scheuer as Fair Youth. Choreographed and directed by Nashville Ballet’s artistic director Paul Vasterling, the ballet was recorded in March 2022. Playing onstage alongside the dancers in front of a minimalist set, musicians Rhiannon Giddens and Francesco Turrisi play several instruments including violin, banjo, mandolin and piano.
Throughout its 50-year history on PBS, **Great Performances** has provided an unparalleled showcase of the best in all genres of the performing arts, serving as America's most prestigious and enduring broadcaster of cultural programming. Showcasing a diverse range of artists from around the world, the series has earned 67 Emmy Awards and six Peabody Awards. The **Great Performances** website hosts exclusive videos, interviews, photos, full episodes and more. The series is produced by The WNET Group.

**Great Performances** is available for streaming concurrent with broadcast on [PBS.org](http://pbs.org/gperf) and the [PBS Video App](http://app.pbs.org), available on iOS, Android, Roku streaming devices, Apple TV, Android TV, Amazon Fire TV, Samsung Smart TV, Chromecast and VIZIO.

A production of The WNET Group in association with Nashville Ballet, **Great Performances: Black Lucy and The Bard** was conceived and adapted as a ballet by Paul Vasterling based on the book by Caroline Randall Williams. Music is by Rhiannon Giddens and Francesco Turrisi. Direction and choreography by Paul Vasterling, and directed for television by Matthew Diamond. For **Great Performances**, Mitch Owgang is producer, Julie Leonard is coordinating producer, Bill O'Donnell is series producer and David Horn is executive producer.

Series funding for **Great Performances** is provided by The Joseph & Robert Cornell Memorial Foundation, the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Arts Fund, the LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust, Jody and John Arnhold, The Philip and Janice Levin Foundation, the Kate W. Cassidy Foundation, the Thea Petschek Iervolino Foundation, Rosalind P. Walter, The Starr Foundation, the Seton Melvin Charitable Trust, the Estate of Worthington Mayo-Smith and Ellen and James S. Marcus. Funding for **Great Performances: Black Lucy and The Bard** was provided by the Sandra Schatten Foundation, Heather and Curt Thorne, Brad and Laura Currie, James and Leah Sohr, Karen and Sylvain Lapointe, Robert and Margaret Beck, Patricia and James Munro, Charlyn Jarrells, Mimi Oka and Jun Makihara, Sue and Edgar Wachenheim III, The Lewis “Sonny” Turner Fund for Dance, the Jack Lawrence Trust and Carl and Susan Becker.


#GreatPerformancesPBS

**About Nashville Ballet**

Nashville Ballet is the largest professional ballet company in Tennessee. Nashville Ballet presents a varied repertoire of classical ballet and contemporary works by noted choreographers, including original works by artistic director Paul Vasterling. Nashville Ballet and the second company, NB2 (a pre-professional training company), provide more than 55,000 arts experiences to adults and children annually through virtual and in-person season performances and its Community Engagement programming. Curriculum-based Community Engagement programs bring hybrid learning dance education to community centers, colleges, public libraries, and public elementary, middle, and high schools across the state. School of Nashville Ballet brings world-class dance instruction to students ages 2 and up. To learn more about Nashville Ballet, please visit [nashvilleballet.com](http://nashvilleballet.com).
Nashville Ballet receives public funding from Metro Arts, Tennessee Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts. Contributions from local, regional and national institutional funders and community partners, as well as hundreds of generous individuals, provide ongoing support of Nashville Ballet’s mission-critical programs.

About The WNET Group

The WNET Group creates inspiring media content and meaningful experiences for diverse audiences nationwide. It is the community-supported home of New York’s THIRTEEN—America’s flagship PBS station—WLIW21, THIRTEEN PBSKids, WLIW World and Create; NJ PBS, New Jersey’s statewide public television network; Long Island’s only NPR station WLIW-FM; ALL ARTS, the arts and culture media provider; and newsroom NJ Spotlight News. Through these channels and streaming platforms, The WNET Group brings arts, culture, education, news, documentary, entertainment and DIY programming to more than five million viewers each month. The WNET Group’s award-winning productions include signature PBS series Nature, Great Performances, American Masters, PBS NewsHour Weekend and Amanpour and Company and trusted local news programs MetroFocus and NJ Spotlight News with Briana Vannozzi. Inspiring curiosity and nurturing dreams, The WNET Group’s award-winning Kids’ Media and Education team produces the PBS KIDS series Cyberchase, interactive Mission US history games, and resources for families, teachers and caregivers. A leading nonprofit public media producer for nearly 60 years, The WNET Group presents and distributes content that fosters lifelong learning, including multiplatform initiatives addressing poverty, jobs, economic opportunity, social justice, understanding and the environment. Through Passport, station members can stream new and archival programming anytime, anywhere. The WNET Group represents the best in public media. Join us.

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