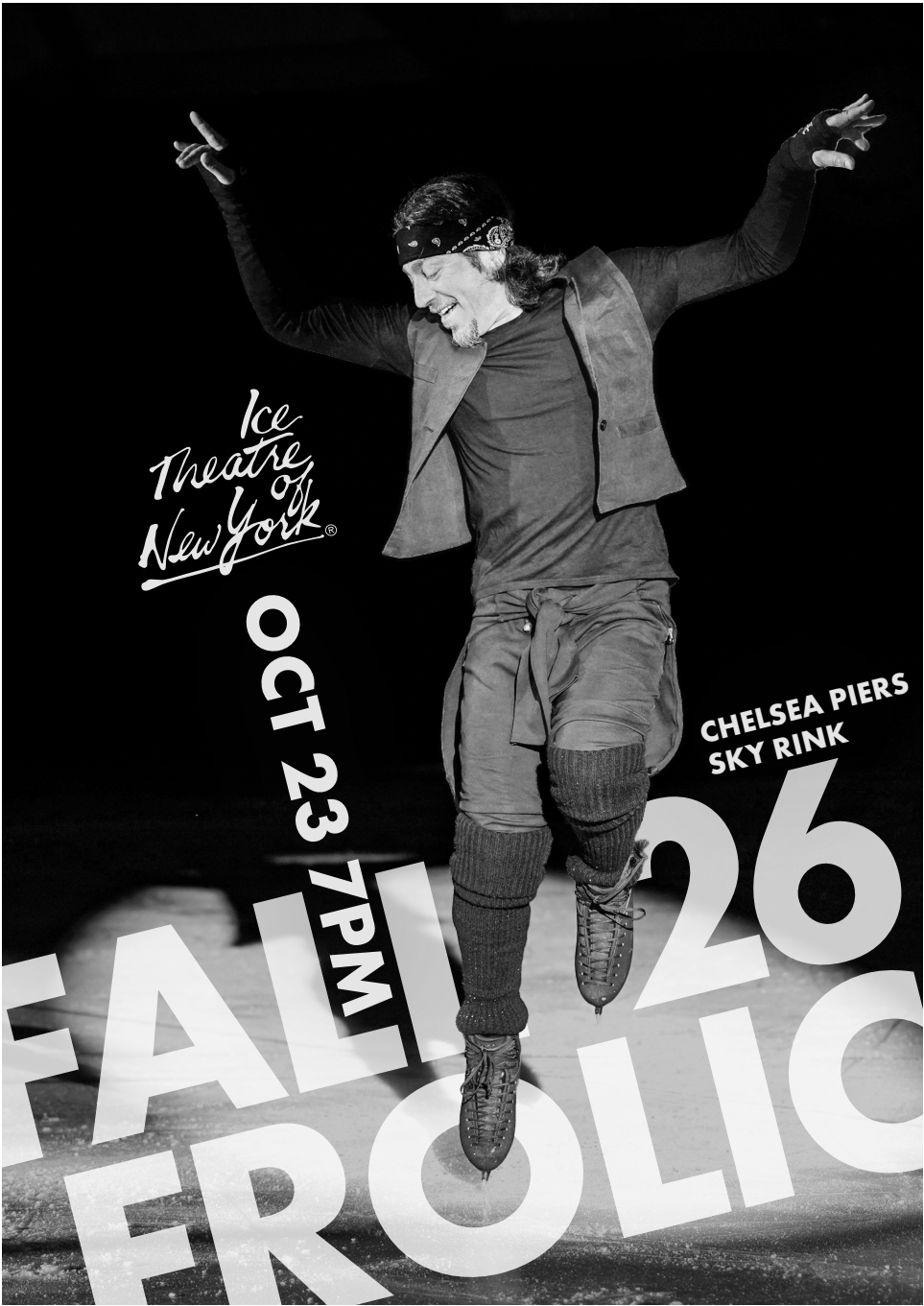




*Ice
Theatre
of
New York®*

OCT 23
7PM

CHELSEA PIERS
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FALL 26
FROLIC

icetheatre.org    



NO ONE RISES ALONE AWARD

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ICE THEATRE OF NEW YORK

Presented by **Toller International** in 2026, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of Toller Cranston's 1976 Olympic bronze, this award honours the builders, mentors, and champions who impacted his journey, and those who continue to inspire emerging talent.

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ABOUT THE COMPANY

Ice Theatre of New York® (ITNY) creates and advances dance on ice as an ensemble performing art and to provide education and public performances to people of all ages. Founded by Moira North in 1984, ITNY created the first not-for-profit professional ice dance company in the United States and was the first to receive funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

ITNY achieves its public arts and education mission by:

- Commissioning and performing new pieces created by recognized and emerging dance and ice skating choreographers. The company has created exclusive works by choreographers as varied as well-known skating choreographers Elisa Angeli, Lorna Brown, and Joel Dear, modern dance choreographers Jacquelyn Buglisi, Kolton Krouse, Elisa Monte, David Parsons, and Jody Sperling, performance artist Ann Carlson, McKnight Choreographer Fellow Deneane Richburg, and ballet great Edward Villella. We have just begun preparations for our first commissioned work with new media artist and creative technologist LaJunié McMillian.
- Making performances accessible to diverse audiences and presenting dozens of free City Skate Concerts, featuring our current repertory throughout New York City.
- Offering arts education programs on ice dancing and figure skating for school-aged children in Brooklyn, Queens, Chelsea, Harlem, and Central Park, annually serving 1,000 NYC school students.
- Training company skaters and guest skating artists in our weekly Master Edge Classes at Chelsea Piers Sky Rink, as well as offering training programs for aspiring ice dance artists, including our Junior Ensemble.
- Collaborating with choreographers, producers, presenters, administrators, and advocates from the dance and skating worlds and beyond while exploring creatively exciting relationships with artists from theatre, music, and new media disciplines.

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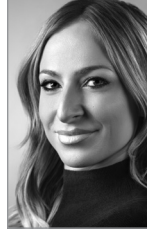
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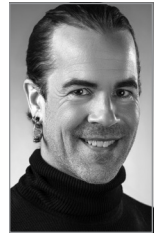
Janine
Rho



Liz
Yoshiko
Schmidt



Aaron
Singletary



Matt
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Lara Shelton
& Neill Shelton

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Georgina Blackwell, Mariko Heimbach, Isaac Lindy,
Valerie Levine, Vakhtang Murvanidze, Janine Rho,
Liz Yoshiko Schmidt, Aaron Singletary, Matt Thomas

PERFORMING INTERN

Elisabeth Ehrhardt



CELEBRATING THE JOY
OF DANCING ON ICE

FALL FROLIC PERFORMANCE

OCTOBER 23, 2026

LARK ASCENDING

Choreography by Rob McBrien

Re-Staged by Madeline Stammen

Music: Vaughan Williams

Performed by Sarah Baetge, Jacqueline Benson, Georgina Blackwell,
Elisabeth Ehrhardt, Mariko Heimbach, Isaac Lindy, Janine Rho, Liz Yoshiko Schmidt,
Aaron Singletary, Matt Thomas

Understudy: Valerie Levine

"The simplest movements in skating can be the most beautiful and most meaningful ones. I think that the actual act of skating, which we call stroking, is one of the most refined and well-defined movements the human being can make.

To some skaters this is only a means of transportation across the ice and a way of gaining speed and the momentum necessary to perform a jump. To me it has more meaning than that; to me it is infinitely more beautiful than running; and much more beautiful than dancing can ever be."

— John Curry

LANGUAGE OF THE SOUL

Choreography by Lorna Brown

Music: Benedictus, Karl Jenkins

Performed by Danil Berdnikov

A purity of movement, where expression flows beyond words. Through the language of the body, energy and frequency become a living connection between the skater and the audience. Every movement carries a feeling, creating a moment of beauty that can be felt deep within the soul. It is a reminder that movement, in its purest form, has the power to touch us, connect us, and speak directly to our innermost being.

MIO CRISTO DIAMANTI

Choreography by Lucinda Ruh and Kaitlyn Weaver

Performed by Liz Yoshiko Schmidt

INNER EYE

Choreography by Jim May

Music: Caccini

Performed by Sarah Baetge, Georgina Blackwell, Elisabeth Ehrhardt,

Valerie Levine, Janine Rho

Understudy: Mariko Heimbach

IN A NUTSHELL

Choreography by Rob McBrien

Music: W.A. Mozart

Performed by Matt Thomas

WHEELS OF A DREAM

Choreography by Kaitlyn Weaver

Music: Ragtime

Performed by Liz Yoshiko Schmidt and Aaron Singletary

Imagining a future built on dignity, stability, and possibility. It holds a distinctly American tension between promise and reality, always in forward motion.

HAPPY FEET

Choreographed and Performed by Vakhtang Murvanidze

Music: Legaldude/Mamaflex

Costume: George Shaghashvili

HER JOY WAS COMPLETE

Choreography by Beth-Ann Duxbury

Music: Sleeping at Last

Performed by Lara Shelton and Neill Shelton

"Put your heart, mind and soul into even your smallest acts. This is the secret of success."

FINALE

WHO'S WHO

SARAH BAETGE (Performer) is an Asian American artist from Los Angeles, who has 20 years of experience in competitive figure skating. She has performed for ITNY several times, as a performing apprentice, including performances in Billingham, UK for the tribute show "The Creative Spirit of John Curry." Sarah's skating showcases a blend of strength and fluidity, symbolizing the duality of life — wild and tame. Her movements on ice serve as a canvas for deeper human connections, fostering empathy, understanding, and the power of healing through the medium of skating. Sarah joined the ITNY Ensemble in 2024.

JACQUELINE BENSON (Performer) (she/her) is a professional skater, choreographer, coach, and dancer based in New York City. This is her second year performing with ITNY and she is thrilled to return for this year's Home Season. Her current professional engagements include touring with Montreal-based contemporary skating company, Le Patin Libre. She has also worked with American Ice Theatre, the Contemporary Skating Alliance, and the Figure Skating Diversity & Inclusion Alliance. Jacqueline is a US Figure Skating triple gold medalist in Freestyle, Moves in the Field / Skating Skills, and Solo Free Dance. She is a Professional Skaters Association Master-Rated coach & choreographer, and has choreographed programs across all disciplines for skaters ranging from National Development Team athletes to showcase skaters to Excel competitors. She is trained in multiple styles of dance and has performed with several contemporary dance companies in her hometown of Phoenix, Arizona. Jacqueline graduated summa cum laude from Arizona State University and also has experience in marketing, communications, and nonprofit advocacy work.

DANIL BERDNIKOV (Performer) joined ITNY in 2021. Originally from Samara, Russia, he competed as part of the junior national team and across his home country throughout high school. He later moved to Moscow to further his education and joined Stage Entertainment Russia, where he began performing professionally as a skater. Performing for live audiences gave Danil a renewed passion for skating, leading to an international career spanning eight years. He has performed with Willy Bietak Productions and Wheeler Productions in the US, Stageworks Worldwide Productions in the UK, and Holiday on Ice and Dynamic Shows Entertainment throughout the EU. Since 2025, he has been a cast member of Art on Ice in Switzerland - the most famous ice show in the world, where he performs alongside world-class skaters and international music stars. Danil is deeply grateful to his parents, coaches, choreographers, and fellow skaters for their unwavering support.

GEORGINA BLACKWELL (Performer) has been skating for 20 years and competes at the Gold and International Solo Dance level. She is a two-time USFS Gold Medalist, National Solo Dance Final competitor, and former British Figure Skating Championships competitor. Outside of skating, Georgina is a recent graduate of Columbia University with a degree in Art History. She has been performing with ITNY since 2019.

LORNA BROWN (Choreographer), a British and World Professional Champion, and World and Olympic coach, has been a principal performer in numerous ice shows across the globe, including John Curry's Ice Dancing on Broadway and Theatre of Skating at the London Palladium. She has appeared in TV specials, touring galas, and commercials worldwide, and has studied contemporary dance, working with some of the world's leading choreographers. She has coached and choreographed for over 50 national champions, including two world professional champions. Lorna

most recently choreographed for Emanuel Sandhu (three-time Canadian Champion), Kevin Van Der Perren (Belgium Champion, two-time European medalist, and 2011 silver medalist in Bratislava and Skate America), and Jenna McCorkell (10-time British Champion). Lorna has given workshops on all aspects of figure skating at national and international seminars for both skaters and coaches. She has produced and directed her international skating school in the UK called Skate of the Art with the world-famous Rafael Arutunian. She specializes in the latest physics and aerodynamics in skating techniques, focuses a great deal on expression and style in her choreography, and has written several articles for skating magazines on these subjects. Lorna moved to the USA several years ago. She been awarded the PSA Level 7 ranking, and holds a bachelor's in sports science.

ELISABETH EHRHARDT (Performing Intern) began performing with ITNY in 2025. She is a former synchronized skater from Chemnitz, Germany. She competed nationally and internationally with the German team Skating Graces and the Polish team IceFire. While skating for the Polish national team, she competed in two World Synchronized Skating Championships (Lake Placid in 2023 and Helsinki in 2025) and the Shanghai Trophy in 2024. She has always loved the artistry of ice skating and left competitive skating to focus on ice skating as a performing art and to develop as a skater. Besides ice skating, she studies sensors and cognitive psychology.

MARIKO HEIMBACH (Performer) is a former Professional Figure Skater for Disney On Ice and toured with the show for over a decade. She grew up in Tokyo, Japan and began skating at the age of seven. She trained at the Shinyokohama Figure Skating Club in Japan alongside Olympians Shizuka Arakawa and Fumie Suguri. Mariko continued her competitive career in Japan and was an All Japan National Championship competitor. At the age of 17, her career took flight as she began her dream job with Disney On Ice. Since then, she has been to 55 different countries, performed for millions of people as both an ensemble and principal performer, and has met some of the most talented entertainers in the world. She portrayed the roles of Mulan, Pocahontas, Princess Jasmine, Mrs. Incredible, Dory, and many more! Mariko first performed with ITNY in 2023.

VALERIE LEVINE (Performer) has collaborated on ITNY events for the past two decades and has been rollerskating as well as dancing tap, jazz, and ballet since the age of four. She started training in figure skating at 11, going on to compete and test until graduating high school, when she turned down Disney On Ice to pursue her bachelor's degree at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT). At 19, she earned her gold level in Senior Ladies Moves and pre-golds in ice dance before skating professionally. While earning her BS in Product Management Textiles from FIT, she minored in dance and trained at Broadway Dance Center in many dance styles, leading to an off-ice career as a professional belly dancer, ballroom dancer, and samba dancer. She currently teaches and performs these styles worldwide, while managing her own entertainment company Valerina Dance, which can be followed at ValerieLevine.com or on Instagram @Valerielevine.

ISAAC LINDY (Performer) is a NYC-based performing artist working across figure skating, dance, and musical theatre. Professional skating: The Gig (Williamstown Theatre Festival); Le Patin Libre's Murmuration (Théâtre de la Ville de Paris, Venice Biennale); Holiday on Ice (Line Captain, Ensemble); International Ice Stars (Principal, Royal Opera House of Muscat); IceLab Leipzig. Theatre/Opera: Bottle Dancer, Fiddler on the Roof (Alliance Theatre/Atlanta Opera); Solo Dancer, The Daughter of the Regiment (Lyric Opera of Chicago); Principal Dancer Understudy, OSCAR, La Traviata (Opera Philadelphia). Isaac holds a BA with Honors in Urban Studies from Vassar College

and is a proud member of the American Guild of Musical Artists. Isaac has performed with ITNY since 2025. isaac-alan-lindy.com

JIM MAY (Choreographer) has been a dancer on the New York scene for over 50 years. His aim as Artistic Director of the Sokolow Theatre Dance Ensemble is to expand the art of dance to include the other arts (music, theatre, painting, literature), working toward a progressive new style of Theatre/Dance. He is excited to bring these ideas to ITNY. Jim was a devoted disciple of Anna Sokolow for 35 years and danced with the Jose Limon Company from the early 1960's and continues to embrace these two dance styles. He is the recipient of a 1999 Bessie Award for lifetime achievement, has received three Fulbright scholarships, and The Marcus Award for Teaching Excellence, has been on the faculties of SUNY Purchase, Juilliard, and Princeton University, and teaches regularly at Peridance. His choreography has been in the repertory of Dance Conduit of Philadelphia, Dance Forum Taipei, and Le Concert Impromptu of Paris, and he remains resident choreographer of Sokolow Theatre Dance. He recreates Anna Sokolow's repertory worldwide as a recognized authority on her works.

ROB MCBRIEN (Choreographer) In the spring of 1986, ITNY secured the talents of Rob McBrien, former ensemble director for the John Curry Skaters. Under Rob's direction, ITNY focused on strong ensemble style, innovative choreography, and design concepts. In addition to helping create and curate artistic projects for performance, Rob was dedicated to the implementation of ITNY workshops (plié power edge class). Created by John Curry for his professional ice dancers, Rob helped ITNY develop this format for competitive, test, and recreational skaters, as well as our company performers. Over the 10 years that Rob was with ITNY, he choreographed a number of pieces that remain in our repertory, including "Lark Ascending" based on the plié power edge class.

VAKHTANG MURVANIDZE (Performer) is a former competitive figure skater from Georgia and he represented his country twice at the Olympics. As a choreographer and skating skills teacher, Vakhtang has worked with Alexei Mishin as his assistant and now coaches at the Ice House in Hackensack, New Jersey. As a professional skater, he has performed in many international and touring shows. He has performed with ITNY (off and on) since 2003, when he participated in our proscenium stage performance at the Eisenhower Hall at West Point.

MOIRA NORTH (Founder/Artistic Director) has been named one of the 25 Most Influential Names in Figure Skating by International Figure Skating Magazine, as a driving force in the development of figure skating as a performing art. Since founding ITNY in 1984, she has commissioned renowned dance choreographers to make new works for the company while nurturing and developing choreographers from the world of ice. She has also been a catalyst in the development of other artistic ice dance companies in both Canada and the US. Moira and partner Patrick Dean skated ITNY's first work, a collaboration with Belgian dance choreographer Marc Bogaerts, which won them first place in the Free Dance at the Professional Championships in Jaca, Spain. In her subsequent work as ITNY Director, Moira has continued to integrate contemporary dance into the repertory of ice choreography. Some of Moira's collaborations include productions with opera singer Alicia Hall Moran, singer/composer Theo Bleckmann, the piece "Of Water and Ice" with Jody Sperling and DJ Spooky, and the project The Unseen, a real-time motion capture performance on ice showcasing, celebrating, and honoring Black figure skaters of the past and present, with multidisciplinary artist Laluné McMillian.

JANINE RHO (Performer) joined the ITNY ensemble in 2025. Previously, she trained as a competitive ice dancer in Montreal, Quebec, under world-renowned coaches, and has podiumed on a national stage. With a foundation in ballroom dance, ballet, and gymnastics, Janine uses her athletic and artistic merits to bring grace and fluidity to the ice. Her explorations of movement are deeply influenced by her passion for music, which she pursues through a multi-instrumental skillset and academic study. She is pursuing a bachelor's degree in Cognitive Science and Music at Columbia University.

JIRINA RIBBENS (Executive Director) joined the ITNY staff in December 2004, after serving on the board since the company's founding. Over the past 20+ years, Jirina has overseen ITNY's growth, including expanding its outreach programming for public school children, adding ongoing edge classes for ice artists, and entering into new media. Before her work with ITNY, Jirina worked in a variety of positions in the entertainment and sports industries, where, at Candid Productions/SFX/Clear Channel, she produced and managed events with two-time Olympic Champion Dick Button. She also worked as an Olympic sports consultant and producer for television networks at nine Olympic Games, winning a 2002 Sports Emmy for Outstanding Live Sports Special as Associate Producer for the Salt Lake City Olympic Winter Games with NBC. A native of Antwerp, Belgium, she is a former competitive artistic roller skater. Jirina has an MA in Translation Dutch-English-Russian from the Rijks Universiteit Antwerpen in Belgium and a post-graduate degree in coaching ice and roller skating from the Trainerakademie in Cologne, West Germany. She is fluent in five languages and has a working knowledge of two more. Jirina and her husband reside in Harlem. She is proud to celebrate 20 years as Executive Director with ITNY in 2025, when the company celebrated its 40th anniversary.

LIZ YOSHIKO SCHMIDT (Performer) has been skating with ITNY since 2017. Luscious edges, artistic movement, and ice dance inform her skating and professional career, which began in 2013 at the age of 18. She has performed across Europe, Egypt, and the US, most recently in Switzerland with Art on Ice. A Japanese and German American skater who hails from Chicago, IL, Schmidt approaches the ice as an artist. She holds a BFA in Painting from the San Francisco Art Institute and is the founder of Dansu Wear, an ice fashion line extending her practice into form and design.

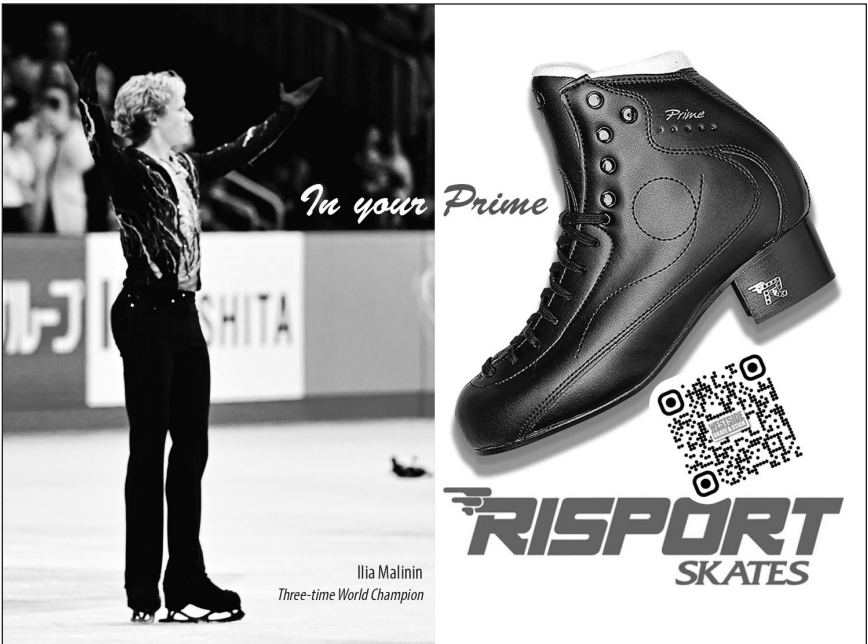
Lara Shelton & Neill Shelton (Guest Artists) are a brother-sister professional figure skating duo known for their unique blend of technical precision and artistic grace. Rooted in a strong ballet background, Lara and Neill achieved a ten year competitive career at the national level and are triple USFS Gold Medalists. Since embarking on their professional careers in 2009, the Sheltons have toured globally, performing with premier international ice shows including Holiday on Ice, Willy Bietak Productions, Ice Dance International, Stageworks Worldwide Entertainment, Illusion on Ice, Woodstock Ice Productions, and will soon be delivering Christmas magic at Radio City Music Hall. Beyond their performing careers, they are certified Pilates instructors and figure skating coaches, dedicated to helping the next generation of skaters develop positive growth, resilience, and a love for skating. Lara and Neill are forever grateful for the unwavering love and support of their family throughout their skating journey. Tonight's performance marks the duet's first engagement with ITNY.

AARON SINGLETARY (Performer) grew up in Pennsylvania skating for the Penguin Figure Skating Club and started his national competitive career training at the Ice House in Hackensack, NJ.

Aaron earned gold in Moves in the Field as well as singles Freestyle. Aaron now coaches primarily at City Ice Pavilion in New York City. Over the years, Aaron has had many internationally revered coaches. Each left a prominent mark on his approach to skating and singling out one or two would be a disservice to the others. He aims to further his knowledge so that one day he too may be an internationally recognized performer and coach. The 2019 Home Season marked his debut with ITNY.

MATT THOMAS (Performer) remembers seeing ITNY perform at Rockefeller Center as a young boy and feels privileged to have become a member of the educational outreach and performance groups of ITNY, passing on that dream over the last decade. Introduced to skating through the Learn to Skate Program in Syracuse, NY, he went on to train as a figure skating competitor, earning the title of Eastern Sectional Champion in 1998. Today, Matt remains deeply active on the ice as a competitive short track speed skater, a skating coach, and a proud member of the ITNY community — a testament to a lifelong love of skating that began close to four decades ago. Off the ice, Matt is an accomplished saxophonist holding a bachelor's in Music from SUNY Buffalo. A versatile performer, he regularly plays with multiple NYC bands spanning salsa, jazz, boogaloo, and beyond, and has graced the stage at Lincoln Center, music festivals across the country, and venues internationally — bringing the same joy and dedication to his music that he brings to everything he does on the ice.

KAITLYN WEAVER (Choreographer) has earned no end of impressive accolades over the course of her career. She has medaled three times at the World Figure Skating Championships, taken home the gold at prestigious events like Four Continents and the Grand Prix Final, and competed at the Olympics twice. Now gaining a following for her choreographic talents, this marks the second time that her work has been profiled at an ITNY event.



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Three-time World Champion

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