



HILLSDALE COLLEGE

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Hillsdale College Hosts Screening of ‘Raffaella Ballet’

The event featured remarks by choreographer Claire Kretzschmar.

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Hillsdale College hosted a screening of the “Raffaella Ballet” on April 10 featuring remarks from choreographer Claire Kretzschmar.

The new fairytale ballet is inspired by and in memory of Raffaella Stroik, the daughter of Christ Chapel architect Duncan Stroik and his wife, Ruth, who both attended the screening. The ballet aims to encapsulate Raffaella’s motto, “Beauty will save the world.”

“What makes this ballet special, I think, is that it is inspired by the life of a real young woman and a young ballerina. In the classical ballet tradition, we have these narrative ballets like ‘Swan Lake,’ but none of them share a story that’s inspired by a ballerina,” Kretzschmar said. “But in ‘Raffaella,’ the ballet, we see a young woman grow up and grow up to love and share her passion for and her talent for ballet.”

The ballet tells the story of a gifted girl born in the lakeside village of San Michele, Italy, where she is welcomed by a mysterious holy man and a transcendent prince. She grows in grace and artistic talent, studying under the Emerald Queen in Rome, and faces both external threats and internal trials — including a false prince, jealous rivals, and the pull of worldly acclaim.

The ballet’s original score was performed by the South Bend Symphony. Set design was led by Gabrielle Johnson, Raffaella’s sister.

Kretzschmar, a former soloist with the New York City Ballet and an emerging voice in contemporary choreography, developed the ballet in collaboration with the Stroiks and composer

Michael Kurek. Kurek's neo-romantic compositions have been performed around the world and praised for their emotional resonance and classical elegance.

The event began with hors d'oeuvres and cocktails and concluded with a dessert reception.

The ballet can be watched in its entirety [here](#). For official photos of the ballet, click [here](#). For photos of Hillsdale College, click [here](#). For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click [here](#).

About Hillsdale College

Hillsdale College is an independent, nonsectarian, Christian liberal arts college located in southern Michigan. Founded in 1844, the College has built a national reputation through its classical liberal arts core curriculum and its principled refusal to accept federal or state taxpayer subsidies, even indirectly in the form of student grants or loans. It also conducts an outreach effort promoting civil and religious liberty, including a free monthly speech digest, *Imprimis*, with a circulation of more than 6.8 million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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