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At Home: 'Art In Motion'

October 18-20 & 25-27, 2024

| Please silence your devices for the performance

Please silence your devices for the performance

| About the Choreographers



Roger VanFleteren

ALABAMA BALLET ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Roger VanFleteren, Associate Artistic Director, is a native of Michigan where he began his training at the age of twelve with

Charmaine Shick. VanFleteren is a former American Ballet Theater soloist and also performed as a principal dancer with the London City Ballet. VanFleteren has performed in repertoire by Kenneth MacMillan, Twyla Tharp, George Balanchine, and Mikhail Baryshnikov and danced the title role in Agnes De Mille's last ballet, "The Other".

VanFleteren began his career at Alabama Ballet with Wes Chapman in 1996 as Ballet Master and Resident Choreographer. His original choreography for Alabama Ballet includes "Romeo and Juliet", "Dracula", "Swan Lake", "Cinderella", "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" and "Bonnie and Clyde." VanFleteren's original world premieres, "Bach Variations" and "Be Major" are two Panoply award winning works. "Concert Fantasy" premiered in March 2006 and was underwritten by the Alabama State Council on the Arts.

Alabama Public Television's documentary on Alabama Ballet's "Romeo and Juliet" was nominated for a Regional Emmy Award. VanFleteren's innovative choreography and passion for the dancer has been instrumental in the world-class performances by the company. VanFleteren was named an official ambassador for Alabama's 2007 Year of the Arts. VanFleteren worked with John McFall and the Atlanta Ballet in 2007. He was appointed Alabama Ballet Associate Artistic Director in 2008 and served as guest teacher with American Ballet Theatre II. He was commissioned to choreograph for ABT II in the Fall of 2009. Most recently, Roger choreographed the premiere of "Alice in Wonderland" with an original score by Les Filmer performed by the Alabama Symphony Orchestra. Other recent works for the Alabama Ballet include "Death and the Maiden" with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, "Of One Voice", "Bonnie and Clyde", "1 and 5", "Shoo-Pah!" and "Rosen", dedicated in memory of Jason VanFleteren.



Aidan Nettles

GUEST CHOREOGRAPHER

Aidan Nettles is an Assistant Professor of Dance at The University of Alabama. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Dance from The University of Alabama and a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) with Distinction from The University of Roehampton, London, UK.

With a comprehensive background in ballet, contemporary, and jazz, Professor Nettles imparts her knowledge to a diverse range of students, spanning from young children to budding university artists and scholars at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Throughout her career, she has choreographed and scored competitive programs and television performances, establishing a distinguished presence in dance.

Aidan Nettles is an ABT® Certified Teacher, who has successfully completed the ABT® Teacher Training Intensive in Pre-Primary through Level 5 of the ABT® National Training Curriculum. Her extensive contributions to the arts have been acknowledged both on national and international platforms, leading to numerous accolades that recognize her exceptional performance, choreographic expertise, and scholarly contributions.



Kendia Bennett

Kendia Bennett, a native of Niagara Falls, New York, received his early training from Miss Beverly Fletcher before being accepted to the Alabama School of Fine Arts (ASFA) in Birmingham, Alabama. While attending ASFA, Kendia studied under David Keener, Rafael Delgado, Mimi Twyman, Martha Faesi and Jamie Kilgore. Kendia has attended Virginia School of the Arts, Nashville Ballet, and Alabama Ballet summer intensive programs. Kendia participated in Alabama Ballet's Spring 2012 Showcase in which he choreographed "Beauty in Thanatos," choreographing many more pieces that have been performed by students of SUNY Purchase College such as "Off Balance," and "A Taste for Things to Come." He was thrilled to accept the position of apprentice with Alabama Ballet from 2011-2013. After studying dance at SUNY Purchase College for his BFA (2018). Having performed works by George Balanchine (pas de deux in "Four Temperaments"; "Nutcracker"), Taryn Russel, Norbert De La Cruz, and many more, Kendia is excited to be back in Birmingham to dance and give back to his community. After teaching at Alabama Dance Academy, under the direction of Pamela Merkel, Kendia is currently teaching at Ballet Squared in Gadsden, Alabama, and now, joining the Alabama Ballet this year for the first show of the season!

Kendia Bennett



Michael Matthews

GUEST CHOREOGRAPHER & COMPANY DANCER

Michael started his early ballet training at Ballet NJ and then later at The School of Pennsylvania Ballet before joining Pennsylvania Ballet II. Michael then spent two seasons dancing as a company artist at Charlotte Ballet before joining Alabama Ballet. Over his career, Michael has enjoyed performing works by Ohad Naharin, Christopher Wheeldon, Jif Kylián, Dwight Rhoden, and George Balanchine. While with Alabama Ballet Michael's favorite roles include Cavalier and Candy Cane in *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker®*, Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*, and Johnny in *Blue Suede Shoes*.



Juan Rafael Castellanos

GUEST CHOREOGRAPHER & COMPANY DANCER

Juan Rafael Castellanos began his dance training in Dublin, Ireland, where he was born and continued in the U.S. at Metropolitan Ballet Academy in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, under the Direction of Lisa Collins Vidnovic. As a member of their nationally acclaimed Boys' scholarship Program, Juan's 11 years of study there included access to many world-class teachers and the opportunity to perform a variety of principal roles in both classical ballet and contemporary dance working with choreographers including Jessica Lang, Sarah Mettin, Kanji Segawa and Ashley Pabst. After graduation in 2019, Juan then joined the Charlotte Ballet Pre-Professional program under the Direction of Laszlo Berdo, Kati Mayo and Patricia McBride. Over the span of four years with Charlotte Ballet, Juan went through the ranks of the company through Charlotte Ballet II and finishing with the main company. With Charlotte Ballet he had the opportunity to perform pieces from many renowned choreographers including Christopher Stuart, Helen Pickett, Jennifer Archibald, and many others. This is Juan's second season with Alabama Ballet, and he can't wait for all the new works coming to Birmingham for this upcoming season.

| About the Performance

Alabama Ballet presents 'At Home'

Artistic Director | Christopher Stuart
Choreography | Roger VanFleteren, Juan Rafael Castellanos, Michael Matthews,
Kendia Bennett, Aidan Nettles

Piano Concerto No. 1

Choreography by: Roger VanFleteren

MUSIC

Piano Concerto No.1, Op.11 (III. Rondo: Vivace) – Composed by Frédéric Chopin

COSTUMES

Designed and Constructed by Sally Schissler, additional construction by Wendy Gamble

LIGHTING

David Page

NOTE FROM THE CHOREOGRAPHER

I am so grateful to have been inspired by two amazing artists, Hayward Oubre & John Rhoden. A special thanks to Kate Crawford at the Birmingham Museum of Art.

A Night on Cranberry Street

Choreography by: Juan Rafael Castellanos

MUSIC

"Midnight Musings" composed by Patrick Meeks

"You Better Go Now" by Venissa Santi

"Walking Joyfully" composed by Brent Kneipp

COSTUMES

Designed by Wendy Gamble as envisioned by Juan Rafael Castellanos

LIGHTING

David Page

NOTE FROM THE CHOREOGRAPHER

"A Night on Cranberry Street" draws inspiration from the artist John Rhoden. This ballet explores a glimpse of his story through the perspective of his wife, Richanda

Rhoden, highlighting their growth as artists and as a couple. In the second movement, their artwork comes to life, with each dancer embodying a different piece and sharing its narrative. The music holds special significance for me; part of it was composed specifically for this piece by two dear friends, and the song "You Better Go Now" features a band my father played with. Collaborating with my peers was a fulfilling experience, and I'm truly proud of what we've created together.

A Light That Burned My Eyes

Choreography by: Michael Matthews

MUSIC

Featuring "Mine is a Lonely Life ", "You're Not Fun Anymore" and "On the Edge of a Brightness"

Thank you to Will Stewart and Sarah Lee Langford who generously extended permission and usage rights of their musical works for this collaborative performance.

COSTUMES

Designed by Wendy Gamble in collaboration with Michael Matthews
Constructed by Wendy Gamble

LIGHTING

David Page

NOTE FROM THE CHOREOGRAPHER

"Art is long, Life is short."

15 MINUTE INTERMISSION

Negative Space

Choreography by: Kendia Bennett

MUSIC

"Blue Bossa" - Bobby McFerrin

"Sweet in the Morning" - Bobby McFerrin

"Round Midnight" - Bobby McFerrin

Rights for use with performances acquired from ASCAP & BMI

COSTUMES

Designed by Wendy Gamble as envisioned by Kendia Bennett

LIGHTING

David Page

NOTE FROM THE CHOREOGRAPHER

There are so many reasons and ways for a relationship to form. Whether it is with another person or even with yourself; there are spaces within our aura and physical being that we look to occupy.

EQUALIBRIUM

Choreography by: Aidan Nettles

MUSIC

“Celeste” written and composed by Andrew Ferguson and Matthew McBriar, performed by BICEP “Dahlia” written & composed by Andrew Ferguson, Hamilton Rory, and Matthew McBriar, performed by BICEP and HAMMER
Rights for use with performances acquired from ASCAP

COSTUMES

Designed by Wendy Gamble as envisioned with Aidan Nettles
Constructed by Wendy Gamble

LIGHTING

David Page

NOTE FROM THE CHOREOGRAPHER

Hayward Oubre and John Rhoden exemplify the brilliance of Southeastern United States artists. As a choreographer raised in the South, I am proud to present EQUALIBRIUM, a new work inspired by the layered textures of Oubre’s paintings, the structural precision of his wire sculptures, and the unique curvature and obscure forms of Rhoden’s sculptures. Thanks to Christopher Stuart’s vision and leadership, true innovation is flourishing in the performing arts here in Alabama. I am grateful to the Alabama Ballet for providing a space to collaborate with its exceptional dancers while honoring the legacies of Oubre and Rhoden. New York City is not the only place where artists can develop and showcase new work—this vital creativity is thriving right here AT HOME.

| Cast

Piano Concerto No. 1

Choreography by: Roger VanFleteren

Friday October 18th | Sunday October 20th
Tuesday October 22nd | Thursday October 24th | Saturday, October 26th

Patricia Lucky & David Odenwelder
with
Alexandra Zakharchenko & Isabella Renner Cowles

Saturday, October 19th | Wednesday, October 23rd | Friday, October 25th | Sunday,
October 27th

Madison Ryan & Andrés Castillo
with
Asha Gangolli & Claire Hutchinson

A Night on Cranberry Street

Choreography by: Juan Rafael Castellanos

Isabella Bertellotti, Mary Bailey Campbell, Jacy Contreras,
Annabel Fobert, Daniel Hardman, Meredith Hwang,
Caroline Love, Cody Maggiore, John Mingle, IV, Gianna Morette,
Elisabeth Moser, Andrew Przybylowicz, Jenna Renfield

A Light That Burned My Eyes

Choreography by: Michael Matthews

Friday October 18th | Sunday, October 20th
Wednesday, October 23rd | Saturday, October 26th | Sunday, October 27th

Morgan Butler, Katie Drozd, Elizabeth Gamble, Caitlin McAvoy Hardman,
Jessica Nicholson, Elijah Crispen, Horus Hudgins, Kyle Peterson

Saturday, October 19th | Tuesday, October 22nd | Thursday, October 24th | Friday,
October 25th

Carly Darnell, Elizabeth Gamble, Sofia Johnson, Sarah Michelle Pfeiffer,
Sofia Scalisi, Elijah Crispen, Horus Hudgins, Kyle Peterson

Negative Space

Choreography by: Kendia Bennett

Friday October 18th | Saturday, October 19th | Sunday October 20th
Tuesday, October 22nd | Thursday, October 24th

Andrew Przybylowicz, David Odenwelder, Elijah Crispen,
Michael Matthews, Alexandra Zakharchenko, Mary Bailey Campbell,
Carly Darnell, Madison Ryan, Karen Licari, Jacy Contreras, Sofia Scalisi

Wednesday, October 23rd | Friday, October 25th | Saturday, October 26th | Sunday,
October 27th *

Humberto Ramazzina, David Odenwelder, Juan Rafael Castellanos,
Michael Matthews, Meredith Hwang, Isabella Renner Cowles,
Sofia Scalisi, Patricia Lucky, Karen Licari, Elizabeth Gamble, Carly Darnell

*Madison Ryan on for Patricia Lucky

EQUALIBRIUM

Choreography by: Aidan Nettles

Friday, October 18th | Sunday, October 20th | Wednesday, October 23rd
Friday, October 25th | Sunday, October 27th

Mary Bailey Campbell, Juan Rafael Castellanos, Andrés Castillo, Audra Cockrell,
Jacy Contreras, Katie Drozd, Asha Gangolli, Dagny Ingle,
Cody Maggione, Gianna Morette, Sofia Scalisi, Alexandra Zakharchenko

Saturday, October 19th | Tuesday, October 22nd | Thursday, October 24th | Saturday,
October 26th

Carly Darnell, Horus Hudgins, Andrew Pryzbylowicz, Isabella Bertellotti,
Caroline Love, Meredith Hwang, Sophie Waterfall, Morgan Butler,
Kyle Peterson, Elisabeth Moser, Jenna Renfield, Madison Ryan

Meet our Artistic Staff



Christopher Stuart

Artistic Director

ABOUT CHRISTOPHER

Christopher Stuart, originally from Sandy Hook, CT, was first introduced to the Arts by his grandmother, who frequently took him to see performances of all types of ballet and musical theatre. This was where Christopher first fell in love with the stage. He began his formal training with Steve Sirico, Angela D'valda Sirico, Franco De Vita and Raymond Lukens, and now with a child of his own, he understands why the arts are so important to enriching our community, especially its children.

CAREER

In 2002 Christopher graduated from the **University of North Carolina School of the Arts**. Upon graduation he joined Nashville Ballet where he was featured in works by renowned choreographers such as Nashville Ballet's Artistic Director Paul Vasterling, Jiri Kylian, Gina Patterson, Christopher Bruce, Christopher Wheeldon and numerous others. After a 16-year career with Nashville Ballet as a principal dancer, choreographer, and teacher, he was appointed as their Resident Choreographer in 2018, creating over 10 works during his tenure. During this time Christopher concurrently taught and created new works for schools and companies all across America. His passion for teaching is rooted in his conviction to share the techniques and choreography that he has gleaned over his career.

Christopher's vast experience as a dancer and performer helped him articulate his choreographic voice through improvisation and exploration of different forms of movement. Embarking upon his journey as a choreographer has allowed him to further express himself in a free and limitless way. He has created works for Nashville Ballet, Ballet Arkansas, Chattanooga Ballet, National Choreographers Initiative, Charlotte Ballet, various festivals, and commercial work.

In 2014, he created *Under the Lights*, a full-length work to the music of Johnny Cash performed by **Sugar & The Hi-Lows** about which ArtsNash said "Stuart's choreography proved to be a seamless blend of classical, modern and popular dance styles." In 2015, Stuart had the pleasure of choreographing a piece to the music of the world-renowned **Fisk Jubilee Singers**.

Christopher brought music lovers and dance enthusiasts together by collaborating with some of the music industry's best including, **Maren Morris**, **Sheryl Crow**, **Ronnie Dunn** (Brooks & Dunn), **John Oates** (Hall & Oates), **Kellie Pickler**, and **John Carter Cash** (son of Johnny and June Carter Cash).

His artistic achievements won him the 2010 Tennessee Arts Commission Individual Artist Fellowship, one of the highest honors that a Tennessee artist can receive. Christopher was a finalist in Ballet Arkansas' 2014 Visions Choreographic Competition, as well as a finalist in the 17th Annual Choreography Festival which was held at the McCallum Theatre in Palm Desert, California. In 2016 and 2017 he was awarded a Fellowship Initiative Grant from the New York Choreographic Institute, an affiliate of New York City Ballet. In July 2017 he created a new work for the National Choreographer's Initiative in Irvine, California, and in the same year created a new work for Nashville Ballet entitled *The Raven* after Edgar Allan Poe's poem. In 2018, to rave reviews, Christopher created *Seven Deadly Sins* with new music written and sung by **Ten out of Tenn**, and the **Nashville Symphony**.

Christopher created for Charlotte Ballet's *Innovative Works* in 2020, inspired by the Mint Museum's installation of *Immersed in Light* by **studio DRIFT**.

Under the direction of Hope Muir, Christopher was appointed Director Charlotte Ballet II and Rehearsal Director for the main Company in July of 2020. In 2021, he served as

interim artistic director.



Roger VanFleteren

Associate Artistic Director

ABOUT ROGER

Roger VanFleteren, Associate Artistic Director, is a native of Michigan where he began his training at the age of twelve with Charmaine Shick. VanFleteren is a former American Ballet Theater soloist and also performed as a principal dancer with the London City Ballet. VanFleteren has performed in repertoire by Kenneth MacMillan, Twyla Tharp, George Balanchine, and Mikhail Baryshnikov and danced the title role in Agnes De Mille's last ballet, "The Other".

CAREER

VanFleteren began his career at Alabama Ballet with Wes Chapman in 1996 as Ballet Master and Resident Choreographer. His original choreography for Alabama Ballet includes "Romeo and Juliet", "Dracula", "Swan Lake", "Cinderella", "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" and "Bonnie and Clyde." VanFleteren's original world premieres, "Bach Variations" and "Be Major" are two Panoply award winning works. "Concert Fantasy" premiered in March 2006 and was underwritten by the Alabama State Council on the Arts.

HISTORY

Alabama Public Television's documentary on Alabama Ballet's "Romeo and Juliet" was nominated for a Regional Emmy Award. VanFleteren's innovative choreography and passion for the dancer has been instrumental in the world-class performances by the company. VanFleteren was named an official ambassador for Alabama's 2007 Year of the Arts. VanFleteren worked with John McFall and the Atlanta Ballet in 2007. He was appointed Alabama Ballet Associate Artistic Director in 2008 and served as guest teacher with American Ballet Theatre II. He was commissioned to choreograph for ABT II in the Fall of 2009. Most recently, Roger choreographed the premiere of "Alice in Wonderland" with an original score by Les Filmer performed by the Alabama Symphony Orchestra. Other recent works for the Alabama Ballet include "Death and the Maiden" with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, "Of One Voice", "Bonnie and Clyde", "1 and 5", "Shoo-Pah!" and "Rosen", dedicated in memory of Jason VanFleteren.



Jon Upleger

Rehearsal Director

Jon Upleger began his formal training under the direction of Petrus Bosman and David Keener at the Virginia School of the Arts. Upon graduation, he joined Nashville Ballet in 2000.

During his time at Nashville Ballet, Upleger has performed roles from such varied repertoire as Romeo in Romeo & Juliet, Prince Siegfried in Swan Lake, Albrecht in Giselle, Prince Desire in Sleeping Beauty, Prince Charming in Cinderella, the Sugar Plum Cavalier in Nashville's Nutcracker and Dracula in Paul Vasterling's Dracula.

Other leading roles include Stanley Kowalski in Annabelle Lopez Ochoa's American premiere of A Streetcar Named Desire, Christopher Wheeldon's Ghosts, Jiri Kylian's Petite Mort and Sechs Tanze, Twyla Tharp's Sinatra Suite, Salvatore Aiello's Satto, the Protagonist in Vasterling's Firebird, Oberon in A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Christopher Stuart's Under the Lights and 7 Deadly Sins. He has also had the honor of working with Christopher Bruce, Jennifer Archibald, Gina Patterson and Val Caniparoli.

After performing Upleger became a rehearsal director with Nashville ballet.

While teaching at the School of Nashville Ballet Upleger helped create the Young Men's Scholarship Program, which provides tuition-free ballet training for males age 6-18, and served as a Principal Instructor.

In 2021 he opened the Grand Rapids School of Dance. He is happy to be back in his home state bringing the joy of dance to the Grand Rapids Community with his wife, Alexandra, and sons, Hudson and Blake.



Alexandra Upleger

Company Teacher & Coach

ABOUT ALEXANDRA

Alexandra Upleger trained in Ohio under Ana Lobe until 2008 when she joined Nashville Ballet. She danced with the company until 2018, during which time she performed principal roles in Nashville's Nutcracker, Sleeping Beauty, Swan Lake, Dracula, Peter Pan, Cinderella and Western Symphony. She also performed leading roles in ballets by Christopher Bruce and Jiri Kylian and had the pleasure of working with Christopher Wheeldon, Brian Enos, Darrell Moultrie, Gina Patterson, James Sewell and Christopher Stuart.

In 2018 she joined the Grand Rapids Ballet. Performance highlights have included Tatiana and Helena in Christopher Stowell's A Midsummer Night's Dream, Dark Angel

and Russian Girl in Serenade, Jumping Girl in Who Cares and Principal Girl in Balanchine's Allegro Brillante, principal woman in Adam Houghland's Cold Virtues, the ensemble of Trey McIntyre's Wild Sweet Love and the title role in Yuri Possokhov's Firebird. She has been honored to perform world premieres by James Sofranko and Dani Rowe and enjoyed working with Andy Blankenbuehler on his only ballet.

She represented the USA at the 27th International Ballet Competition in Varna and the 2010 USA IBC in Jackson, Mississippi.

Along with teaching for the past 14 years, Alexandra was an Adjunct Professor at Grand Valley University in Grand Rapids, MI. Her full length children's ballet, The Nutcracker, premiered in Madison, Alabama in 2020.

In August Alexandra became a certified 4pointe Level 1 Teacher with Lynne Charles.



Luiza Boaventura

Guest Rehearsal Director

| Meet our Production Staff

David Page

Production Manager

David Page is an award winning Lighting Designer and multi-disciplinary Creative Artist with 20+ years of experience in the theatre and over 80 design credits throughout the course of his career. He holds a Master of Fine Arts from The University of Alabama and currently serves as the Stage Electrics Coordinator for the Department of Theatre at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) as well as the Production Manager for the Alabama Ballet. His extremely versatile experience includes a unique blend of design, programming, and technical expertise that spans across the country, including regional theatre, summerstock, concert venues, arenas, universities, Off-Broadway, and Broadway productions.

Lately David has channeled his experience into the classroom. He has taught workshops, guest lectures, and full courses at The University of Alabama, University of Alabama at Birmingham, and other schools and non-profits on the subjects of Lighting Design, Principles of Design, Stagecraft, Sound Design, Scenic Design, Production Practicum, and Introduction to Automated Lighting and Programming.

David is a member of IATSE Local 78 and also worked regularly with Local 1 before moving to Birmingham, Alabama where he currently lives with his incredible wife of 17 years and their amazing 9 year old son.

Joelle Tucker

Company & Production Stage Manager

Joelle is in her eighteenth season with Alabama Ballet. A Birmingham native, she graduated from the University of Alabama at Birmingham with a degree in theatre. While at UAB, Joelle stage managed and performed in numerous productions, and received awards & recognition from the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival. She also works with the Alabama Dance Festival Showcases and has taught stage management at UAB Department of Theatre. Joelle enjoys all the various aspects of her work with Alabama Ballet, and is grateful for the opportunity to rise to new challenges for such a wonderfully gifted company.

Wendy Gamble

Costume Director

Wendy Gamble is returning to the Alabama Ballet for her eighteenth season as Costume Director. She also spent an additional five years as Costume Assistant training under Betty Smith. Ms. Gamble assisted in the creation of *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker®*, *Donizetti Variations*, *Tarentella* and *Serenade*. She has also worked in the construction of new costumes for *Giselle*, *Paquita* and *Swan Lake*. Design credits for Ms. Gamble include costumes for *Pas de Quatre*, *La Bayadere*; and Roger VanFleteren's *Roson*, *Shoo-Pah*, *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Cinderella*, *Messin' with Mozart*, *Dracula*, *Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs*, *Death and the Maiden*, *Of One Voice*, *1 and 5*, *UnRavelled*; and Alice for *Alice in Wonderland*. She has especially enjoyed the design and construction of the costumes for our productions of Jiri Kylian's *Sechs Tanze*, and Agnes de Mille's *Rodeo*. Wendy has also created costumes for Germaul Barnes' *In the Folds*, Frederick Rocas' *Kali*, Teri Weksler's *Bonhomie*, Nadine Barton's *Watts and Nerves*, JaMorris Rivers' *The Purple Ones* and Michael Fothergill's *Laid to Wrest* and *Chiaroscuro*. Along with her work at the Alabama Ballet, Wendy has enjoyed working with Wes Chapman in assisting to costume the wonderful students at the Alabama School of Fine Arts and collaborating with Opera Birmingham to costume the students for their production of *Hansel and Gretel*.

Meet our Company Dancers



Isabella Bertellotti, First Season

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

Isabella grew up in San Diego, California where she trained under Maxim Tchernychev. During her training, she competed in a number of ballet competitions where she was awarded first place at the Youth America Grand Prix, and was a semifinalist at both the World Ballet Competition and the Music Center's Spotlight Competition. In 2020 Isabella moved to Oklahoma to dance as a trainee with the Tulsa Ballet. In 2021 Isabella joined Charlotte Ballet II. There she performed Val Caniparoli's

Ibsen's House, Matthew Hart's *Sleeping Beauty*, Christopher Stuart's *Under the Lights* and *Peter Pan*, as well as many other classical and contemporary works. Isabella joined Alabama Ballet as an apprentice in 2023, performing in *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*® and Roger Van Fleteren's *Giselle*. Isabella is excited for her first season as a company dancer.

Sponsored by: J. Johnson



Patricia Lucky, Eleventh Season

HELENA, ALABAMA

Patricia began training at Alabama Dance Academy under the direction of Pamela Merkel. She has accepted scholarships to summer intensives with Boston Ballet, Dance Theatre of Harlem, and Alabama Ballet. In her late years of training, Patricia received top twelve in her region at Youth American Grand Prix. Since joining Alabama Ballet in 2012, her favorite repertoire includes Cowgirl in Agnes DeMille's *Rodeo*, Sugar Plum Fairy, Dewdrop, and Lead Marzipan in *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*®, Blue Girl in Sir Frederick Ashton's *Les Patineurs*, Bomb Squad Lady in Twyla Tharp's *In The Upper Room*, Odette and Odile in *Swan Lake*, Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*, Juliet in Roger Vanfleteren's *Romeo and Juliet*, Principal Russian Girl in *George Balanchine's Serenade*, Second Movement Principal in *George Balanchine's Western Symphony*, Kitri in Roger Vanfleteren's *Don Quixote*, Swanhilda in *Coppélia*, Giselle in *Giselle*, and Bonnie in Roger Vanfleteren's *Bonnie and Clyde*. Patricia is in her twelfth season of teaching at the Alabama Ballet School. She joined Alabama Ballet in 2012 and is honored to be returning for her thirteenth season with the company.

Sponsored by: The Vanlandingham Family



Morgan Butler, Seventh Season

THE WOODLANDS, TEXAS

Morgan is a native of The Woodlands, Texas. She received her formal ballet training at Houston Ballet Academy. Upon graduation from the academy, she danced with Colorado Ballet and then received her BFA in Ballet from the University of Utah. Prior to joining Alabama Ballet, she has danced with Ballet West and Nashville Ballet. She is thankful to have had opportunities to perform and compete overseas in China, Greece, Germany, and Romania. Since joining Alabama Ballet some of Morgan's favorite roles include Coffee and Principal Hot Chocolate in *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*®, Fairy of Generosity in *The Sleeping Beauty*, Bossa Nova and Tutti Fruitti in Dennis Nahat's *Blue Suede Shoes*, Mercedes in *Don Quixote* and Harlot in Roger Van Fleteren's *Romeo and Juliet*. In addition, one of her most cherished experiences was working with choreographer Christopher Bruce and she was honored to be chosen for "Blue Girl" in his ballet, *Sergeant Early's Dream*. Morgan is excited to be back onstage this season after welcoming a baby boy, Farrell Sims, with her husband in March of 2024.

Sponsored by: Mallie and Jay Whatley



Juan Rafael Castellanos, Second Season

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Juan Rafael Castellanos began his dance training in Dublin, Ireland, where he was born and continued in the U.S. at Metropolitan Ballet Academy in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, under the Direction of Lisa Collins

Vidnovic. As a member of their nationally acclaimed Boys' scholarship Program, Juan's 11 years of study there included access to many world-class teachers and the opportunity to perform a variety of principal roles in both classical ballet and contemporary dance working with choreographers including Jessica Lang, Sarah Mettin, Kanji Segawa and Ashley Pabst. After graduation in 2019, Juan then joined the Charlotte Ballet Pre-Professional program under the Direction of Laszlo Berdo, Kati Mayo and Patricia McBride. Over the span of four years with Charlotte Ballet, Juan went through the ranks of the company through Charlotte Ballet II and finishing with the main company. With Charlotte Ballet he had the opportunity to perform pieces from many renowned choreographers including Christopher Stuart, Helen Pickett, Jennifer Archibald, and many others. This is Juan's second season with Alabama Ballet, and he can't wait for all the new works coming to Birmingham for this upcoming season.

Sponsored by: Ballet Guild of Birmingham



Andrés Castillo, Seventh Season

CALI, COLUMBIA

Andrés Castillo from Cali, Colombia began his training at INCOLBALLET at the age of 9. After 8 years with the school, he joined the professional company when he was just 17 years old. During his time with the Compañia Colombiana de Ballet he performed all around the world in countries like Spain, Germany, Russia, Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal, Uruguay and others. In 2013 Andres moved to the United States looking for new opportunities and ways to grow as an artist. Since, he has danced in companies like Ballet San Antonio (2015-2018) and currently with the Alabama Ballet (2018-2024). Throughout his 13 years as a professional dancer, Andres has worked with remarkable choreographers and teachers like Annabel Lopez, Gaetano Petrosino, Amy Fote, Dominic Walsh, Amanda Mckerrow, John Gardner, Ben Stevenson, just to name a few. Andrés has also been recognized by the American Guild of Musical Artists as an Artist of Extraordinary Ability.

Sponsored by: Mark and Meryane Murphy



Audra Cockrell, First Season

SARASOTA, FLORIDA

Audra Cockrell began her pre-professional training with Sarasota Ballet, dancing in several company productions including George Balanchine's *Stars and Stripes*. While training at The Royal Ballet School summer intensive in 2016, she received the Certificate of Achievement Award. Miss Cockrell then spent two years training at the Harid Conservatory and Next Generation Ballet before joining Pittsburgh Ballet Theater's graduate program in 2018. While at PBT, Miss Cockrell performed in many company productions, notably Balanchine's *Divertimento No. 15*. The following year she joined Grand Rapids Ballet as an apprentice under the direction of James Sofranko. In 2020, Miss Cockrell joined Alabama Ballet under the direction of Tracey Alvey. In her time with Alabama Ballet, Audra has been featured as the Dark Angel in George Balanchine's *Serenade* and Prayer in *Coppelia*. She has also performed a featured role in Roger VanFleteren's *Shostakovich* and originated a role in Alexsander Swader's *Those Who Change Us*.

Sponsored by: The Woodall Family



Jacy Contreras, First Season

BRIGHTON, MICHIGAN

Jacy Contreras is originally from Brighton, Michigan and began her ballet training at the age of 5 at Brighton School of Ballet. She finished her high school years under Denise Paavola at Young People's Ballet Theatre and joined Cincinnati Ballet as a trainee after graduating high school in 2018.

In 2021, she joined Charlotte Ballet's trainee program and was promoted to second company halfway through the season. After two years with Charlotte Ballet, she became an apprentice with Grand Rapids Ballet from 2023-2024. While with those companies, Jacy's favorite roles include Tinker Bell in Christopher Stuart's *Peter Pan*, Little Red Riding Hood in Devon Carney's *Sleeping Beauty*, Five Girls in George Balanchine's *Who Cares*, and Bluebird in Matthew Hart's *Sleeping Beauty*. She has had the opportunity to work with Patricia McBride, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Christopher Stuart, Alejandro Cerrudo, Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux, Rena Butler, Helen Pickett, Stephanie Powell, and Andrew McNicol. Additionally, she was invited to the Contemporary Ballet Program at Jacob's Pillow where she received the Professional Advancement Award in Dance and was featured in a world premier choreographed by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa.



Isabella Renner Cowles, Fourth Season

KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

Isabella began her classical ballet training through the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) and under the direction of Arlene Larson in Kalamazoo, Michigan. She has taken and earned Distinction on every RAD examination which led to her competing as a semi-finalist in the 2014

Genée International Ballet Competition, held in Antwerp, Belgium. In 2015, she earned her Solo Seal Award in Toronto, Canada, this being the highest recognized award in the RAD community. Since joining the Alabama Ballet in 2016, she has enjoyed dancing roles such as Coffee in *George Balanchine's: The Nutcracker®*, Peasant Pas in *Giselle*, Strangers in the Night from Twyla Tharp's *Nine Sinatra Songs*, Fairy of the Crystal Fountain in *The Sleeping Beauty*, and Summer Fairy in *Cinderella*. Isabella is also a registered Royal Academy of Dance instructor and the Director of Curriculum for the Alabama Ballet School.

Sponsored by: Lisa Mani, M.D.



Elijah Crispen, Thirteenth Season

CULLMAN, ALABAMA

Elijah Crispen is excited to be back with the Alabama Ballet. He began his training with Elaine Willingham before being accepted into the dance program at the Alabama School of Fine Arts before continuing his training with the Alabama Ballet. Most recently, he

has performed as Albrecht and in Peasant Pas in *Giselle*, Clyde in Roger VanFleteren's *Bonnie and Clyde* and in Twyla Tharp's *Nine Sinatra Songs* and *Baker's Dozen*. Elijah has especially enjoyed performing as Rooster Boy in Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, and as Cavalier, Soldier Doll, Tea and Candy Cane in *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker®* as well as *Allegro Brillante*. Other works include Sir Frederick Ashton's *Les Patineurs*, Alain in *La Fille Mal Gardee'*, Pas de trois in *Swan Lake* and as the General in *Graduation Ball*. Other notable works include *La Sylphide*, *Sleeping Beauty* and Michael Fothergill's *Chiaroscuro*. Elijah is grateful for the opportunity to pursue his passion.

Sponsored by: Margaret Wendorf



Annabel Fobert, Second Season

NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK

Annabel began her training in Florida at Theatre Arts and Dance Alliance before moving to New York City to train and graduate pre professionally at Ballet Academy East under the direction of Darla Hoover and Jenna Lavin. She proceeded to train at Miami City Ballet School under Arantxa

Ochoa. Annabel joined Alabama Ballet in 2019. Featured roles she has performed include waltz girl in Balanchine's *Walpurgisnacht*, Pikilio in *Don Quixote*, Dawn in *Coppelia*, Lead Hot Chocolate and Demi Flower in George Balanchine's *The Nutcracker*, along with corps roles in Balanchine's *Serenade*, George Balanchine's *The Nutcracker*, *Cinderella*, *Paquita*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and Balanchine's *Western Symphony*. Annabel graduated Summa Cum Laude with a BS in Health Science from Purdue University and is on the staff at Birmingham Academy of Dance.

Sponsored by: Margie and Tom Fox



Elizabeth Gamble, Fifteenth Season

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

Elizabeth Gamble, a Birmingham native, is happy to return to the Alabama Ballet. Favorite roles include Giselle and Peasant Pas in *Giselle*, Swanhilda in *Coppelia*, Cowgirl in Agnes de Mille's *Rodeo* and as Lusty in *3 Virgins and the Devil*. She has performed in Christopher

Bruce's *Rooster*, in Twyla Tharp's *Nine Sintra Songs*, *Baker's Dozen* and as a Stomper *In The Upper Room*. She has also performed in *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker®* as the Sugarplum Fairy, Lead Marzipan and Dewdrop as well as *Allegro Brillante*. Other notable works include Bonnie in Roger VanFleteren's *Bonnie and Clyde*, Pigtails in *Graduation Ball*, Amore' in *Don Quixote*, in Jiri Kylian's *Sechs Tanza*, Sir Frederick Ashton's *Les Patineurs*, and Anthony Tudor's *Lilac Garden*. Some contemporary works include Michael Fothergill's *Chiaroscuro* and as Woman in Nadine Barton's *Watts*. Elizabeth is on faculty at the Alabama Ballet School and with the Alabama Ballet Tappers. She is thankful for the opportunity to share her love of dance.

Sponsored by: Dr. Pamela Hughes



Asha Gangolli, Eighth Season

EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

Asha Gangolli, a native of Evanston IL, began her dance training locally with Kerry Hubata and Bea Rashid. As a student she trained across the U.S. with Houston Ballet, Boston Ballet, and as a trainee with The Joffrey Ballet under the tutelage of Alexei Kremnev and Anna Reznik. During this

time she worked and performed with the company in Robert Joffrey's *The Nutcracker*, as well as Stanton Welch's *La Bayadere* and Krzysztof Pastor's *Romeo and Juliet*. Asha joined Alabama Ballet in 2014 and was promoted to a company dancer in 2017. Since then she has enjoyed performing principal roles including Sugar Plum Fairy and Coffee in *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker®*, Lilac Fairy in *The Sleeping Beauty*, Fairy Godmother in *Cinderella*, Rancher's Daughter in Agnes De Mille's *Rodeo*, Fourth Movement Principal in George Balanchine's *Western Symphony*, Long Tall Sally in Dennis Nahat's *Blue Suede Shoes*, Barbara Allen in Christopher Bruce's *Sergeant Early's Dream*, and Lady Jane is

Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*. Asha is on faculty at the Alabama Ballet School and also teaches classical Pilates in the Birmingham area.

Sponsored by: Aero Joe Pilates, Alison Page



Caitlin McAvoy Hardman, Seventh Season

OVERLAND PARK, KANSAS

Caitlin began her training at the age of three at Miller Marley School of Dance and Voice in Overland Park, Kansas. She continued her year-round ballet training at Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet under the direction of Marcia Dale Weary. After graduation, Caitlin was accepted into the San Francisco Ballet School where she trained year-round. Prior to joining Alabama Ballet, Caitlin was a trainee at Boston Ballet under the direction of Margaret Tracey, and a member of Nashville Ballet II. Since joining Alabama Ballet, her favorite roles include Coffee in *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker®*, Myrtha in *Giselle*, Lilac Fairy in *The Sleeping Beauty*, Queen of the Dryads and Gypsy Queen in *Don Quixote*, Fairy Godmother in *Cinderella*, and the green girl in Christopher Bruce's *Sergeant Early's Dream*.

Sponsored by: Scott & Cameron Vowell



Daniel Hardman, Sixth Season

SILVER SPRINGS, MARYLAND

Daniel Hardman began his ballet studies at the Maryland Youth Ballet. After his father began a career with the State Department, he had the fortune of training abroad at the Almaty Choreographic School in Kazakhstan, The Kirov Academy in D.C., the La Scala Ballet Academy in Milan, Italy, the Chisinau Choreographic College, and graduated from the Vaganova Ballet Academy in St. Petersburg, Russia. After a year as a trainee with the Joffrey Ballet in Chicago, Daniel joined the Oklahoma City Ballet for five seasons. He is thrilled to be joining the Alabama Ballet for his fifth season.

Sponsored by: Scott & Cameron Vowell



Claire Hutchinson, Sixth Season

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

Originally from Syracuse, NY, Claire Hutchinson joined Alabama Ballet in 2018. While a student at Miami City Ballet School's Pre-Professional division, she performed alongside Miami City Ballet in George Balanchine's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and most memorably in *Bourree Fantasque* while on tour to Lincoln Center. After graduating from high school and completing her training at Miami City Ballet School, Claire joined Charlotte Ballet II where she performed works by Peter Chu, Dwight Rhoden, and Javier de Frutos. Since joining Alabama Ballet, she has been fortunate to perform works by notable choreographers, including Twyla Tharp, George Balanchine, Christopher Bruce, and Agnes de Mille, as well as having roles created for her by up and coming choreographers such as Julia Eisen and Garrett Smith. Some of her favorite roles have been Dewdrop in *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker®*, Myrtha in *Giselle*, Fairy Godmother in *Cinderella*, Queen of the Dryads in *Don Quixote*, and the "Time Keepers" pas de deux from Nadine Barton's *WATTS*. Besides dancing with the company, Claire is also an Alabama Ballet School faculty member.

Sponsored by: Candice and Lee McKinney



Cody Maggiore, Third Season

LOS ALAMOS, NEW MEXICO

Cody began dancing in his hometown of Los Alamos, New Mexico at Dance Arts Los Alamos with Cristin Severini and Jonathan Guise. He completed his final two years of high school at The HARID Conservatory's year-round program, studying primarily with Meelis Pakri and graduated in 2017. He then attended Butler University where he earned a BA in Dance Pedagogy and a minor in Environmental Studies graduating with honors in 2021. While with Butler Ballet, Cody performed principal roles in *The Nutcracker*, and Marek Cholewa's *Facets*, also dancing in Gerald Arpino's *Light Rain*, and the world premiere of Patrick deBana's *Falling Sky*. Throughout his training he spent summers with Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Pacific Northwest Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, and other schools around the country. After graduating, Cody joined the Alabama Ballet as an apprentice for the 21/22 season. Since joining, memorable performances include George Balanchine's *Western Symphony*, Denis Nahat's *Blue Suede Shoes*, and the Waistcoat Boy in Christopher Bruce's *Sergeant Early's Dream*.

Sponsored by: Glenda G. Cochran



Michael Matthews, Sixth Season

MOORESTOWN, NEW JERSEY

Michael started his early ballet training at Ballet NJ and then later at The School of Pennsylvania Ballet before joining Pennsylvania Ballet II. Michael then spent two seasons dancing as a company artist at Charlotte Ballet before joining Alabama Ballet. Over his career, Michael has enjoyed performing works by Ohad Naharin, Christopher Wheeldon, Jii Kylián, Dwight Rhoden, and George Balanchine. While with Alabama Ballet Michael's favorite roles include Cavalier and Candy Cane in *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker®*, Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*, and Johnny in *Blue Suede Shoes*.

Sponsored by: Rebecca Di Piazza & Trey Hamer



John Mingle IV, Tenth Season

CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS

John Mingle, IV is originally from South Texas where he began his ballet training at the age of six with the Corpus Christi Ballet. John later trained on scholarship with the San Francisco Ballet School, Pacific Northwest Ballet School, American Ballet Theatre, Dallas Metropolitan Ballet, and Ballet Frontier of Texas. John earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance Performance from Southern Methodist University where he danced the role of Waltz Man in George Balanchine's *Serenade* at the opening of the renowned Winspear Opera House. Prior to joining Alabama Ballet, he danced professionally with the Cincinnati Ballet and Dayton Ballet. Since joining, John has been seen in principal roles such as Basilio and Espada in *Don Quixote*, Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*, Prince Désiré in *The Sleeping Beauty*, Franz in *Coppelia*, Cavalier in *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker®*, *That's Life* in Twyla Tharp's *Nine Sinatra Songs*, Von

Rothbart in *Swan Lake*, Big Boss Man in *Blue Suede Shoes*, and Allegro in *Western Symphony*. In addition to his dance career, John shares his love of dance by teaching students across the southeast and owns a vintage furniture business befittingly named Mod Mingle.

Sponsored by: Michael and Tamara Sansbury



Jessica Nicholson, Second Season

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Jessica Nicholson received her ballet training at the Akhmedova Ballet Academy in Silver Spring, MD, under the direction of Jaqueline Akhmedova. A few of her accomplishments during her training years include taking first place at the Tanzolymp Dance Competition in

Germany, placing second in the classical category in the Youth America Grand Prix Texas regionals, and performing in the New York City Finals of YAGP each year she attended. Following her graduation in 2017, she danced professionally with a small company in Charleston, SC, under the direction of Alexandre Proia. In 2018 she joined Ballet Magnificat's events company and danced on tour for a year, performing in many different states, as well as an international tour to Cuba and Mexico. After spending one season with Ballet Magnificat, she joined Alabama Ballet in 2019. Her favorite roles thus far include the Sugar Plum Fairy in *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker®*, Green Girl in *George Balanchine's Western Symphony*, and Prayer in Roger Van Fleteren's *Coppelia*.

Sponsored by: George and Shirley Elliot



David Odenwelder, Fifteenth Season

HAVERHILL, MASSACHUSETTS

David Odenwelder is originally from Haverhill, Massachusetts, where he began studying ballet, tap, and jazz at The Dance Works and New England Civic Ballet. He earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Ballet Performance from the University of Cincinnati, where he danced the role

of Principal Male in *George Balanchine's Pas de Dix*, set by Frederic Franklin. Prior to joining Alabama Ballet, he performed and toured with Cincinnati Ballet and Neos Dance Theatre, dancing in works by Victoria Morgan, Penny Saunders, Devon Carney, Alexander Cerrudo, and Heinz Poll.

With Alabama Ballet, David has appeared in principal roles such as the Champion Roper in *Agnes De Mille's Rodeo*, Cavalier in *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker®*, Strangers in the Night from Twyla Tharp's *Nine Sinatra Songs*, Gurn in *La Sylphide*, Painted Black in *Christopher Bruce's Rooster*, Buck Barrow in *Roger Van Fleteren's Bonnie and Clyde*, and Von Rothbart in *Swan Lake*. He has also performed in Twyla Tharp's *In the Upper Room*, Jií Kylián's *Sechs Tänze*, Frederick Ashton's *Les Patineurs*, *George Balanchine's Allegro Brillante*, Peasant Pas de Deux in *Giselle*, and as Bossa Nova in *Dennis Nahat's Blue Suede Shoes*.

David is the Director of the Alabama Ballet Tappers and a faculty member of the Alabama Ballet School and Samford University.

Sponsored by: Alabama Ballet Tappers



Kyle Peterson, Second Season

DES MOINES, IOWA

Kyle Peterson grew up in Des Moines, Iowa where he trained at the School of Classical Ballet and Dance under the direction of Serkan Usta and Lori Grooters. With a focus in ballet and tap, Kyle trained in Iowa for over ten years until he was invited to attend the year-round program at

The Harid Conservatory in Boca Raton, Florida. After spending a year in Florida, he continued his training at the A&A Ballet in Chicago under Alexei Kremnev and Anna Reznik. During the 2022-2023 season, Kyle was a company member at Palmetto City Ballet in Charleston, South Carolina. Some of Kyle's favorite roles include Cavalier in *The Nutcracker*, the Prince in *Firebird*, Lost Pas and Elephant in *Carnival of the Animals*, Sneezzy in *Snow White*, and corps work in *Le Corsaire*. Kyle has performed works by choreographers such as Ma Cong, Mark Godden, and Braeden Barnes as well as the opportunity to perform internationally in Guatemala City in 2022 with the A&A Ballet Youth Company. Kyle is extremely excited to continue his artistic journey throughout his first season with Alabama Ballet.

Sponsored by: Dr. James A. Wallace



Andrew Przybylowicz, First Season

CHELMSFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

Andrew is originally from Chelmsford, Massachusetts, and began his ballet training under Judith Koeckoven. He has participated in summer programs at Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet and the Rock School for Dance Education. While attending the Rock School's summer program,

Andrew was invited to join the year-round program with a full-tuition scholarship. During his time at the Rock School, Andrew received training from esteemed directors Bo and Stephanie Spassoff, as well as a diverse range of ballet masters including Telmo Moriera and Justin Allen. Andrew then furthered his training at Koltun Ballet Boston, where he had the privilege of dancing under the guidance of Alexandra Koltun and Alex Lapshin. While at Koltun Andrew got to perform excerpts from *Paquita*, *Le Corsaire*, *Don Quixote*, and *Raymonda*. Afterwards Andrew joined Ballet Arkansas where he performed as Dracula in *Dracula*, Prince Desire in *Sleeping Beauty*, Von Rothbart in *Swan Lake*, and also performed in *Sir David Bintley's Galantries*, and *Gerland Arpino's Reflections*. Andrew is thrilled to be joining Alabama Ballet this season.



Humberto Ramazzina, First Season

SÃO BERNARDO DO CAMPO, SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL

Humberto started dancing at the age of eight in Brazil. He moved to America in 2014 to attend the Harid Conservatory for her freshman year of high school. In 2016, Humberto graduated and received a contract with Charlotte Ballet II, where he danced for two years before being promoted

to the main company. While in the second company, he performed roles with the main company and participated in outreach performances around the community. During his eight years as a company dancer with Charlotte Ballet, Humberto danced principal roles such as Prince Désiré in *Sleeping Beauty* and Fourth Couple in *Petite Mort*. He also performed works such as George Balanchine's *Raymonda* staged by Patricia McBride, and Pas de Trois in *Swan Lake*. He also performed works by Alonzo King, Jí Kylián, Ohad Naharin, Mthuthuzeli November, Christopher Stuart, Helen Pickett, and Alejandro Cerrudo. Humberto is looking forward to his first season with Alabama Ballet.



Madison Ryan, Fifth Season

HAMMOND, LOUISIANA

Madison Ryan grew up in Louisiana, training at A Touch of Class Performing Arts under the direction of Lori Rayborn. She also trained and performed with the Hammond Ballet and the New Orleans Center of Creative Arts under Nikoloz Makhateli. Madison spent her summers training at Alonzo King's Lines Ballet, and Sarasota Ballet. She joined the Alabama Ballet as an apprentice and was promoted to company member in 2017. She has since performed principal roles including Cowgirl in Agnes De Mille's *Rodeo*, Dew Drop Fairy and Sugarplum Fairy in *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker®*, and Cinderella in Roger VanFleteren's *Cinderella*. Her favorites include Kitri from *Don Quixote* and Russian Girls in George Balanchine's *Serenade*. Madison has had the pleasure of performing as a guest artist, representing Alabama Ballet, at the International Ballet Festival of Miami, Ballet Under the Stars with Kentucky Ballet Theater, and Ballet Eloelle & Friends in New York City.

Sponsored by: Fran Lawlor



Alexandra Zakharchenko, Second Season

MORRIS PLAINS, NEW JERSEY

Alexandra "Sasha" Zakharchenko began her pre-professional training at New Jersey Dance Theatre Ensemble under the direction of Nancy Turano. In addition to studying more traditional styles of dance, she also studied character dance with Riverdance Soloist Andrij Cybyk and rhythmic gymnastics under Russian Master of Sport, Natalia Ejova. In 2019 she was awarded the New Jersey Governor's Award in Arts Education for Artistic Excellence and Leadership in Dance. Prior to coming to Alabama Ballet, Alexandra completed a contract with Mareck Dance (Formerly Missouri Contemporary Ballet). During the summers of 2022 and 2023 she also had the exciting opportunity to collaborate with professionals from all over the U.S., to bring to life the ballet *Vampyre* and *Cleopatra* with Terpsicorps Theatre of Dance. Since joining Alabama Ballet in 2021, her favorite repertoire includes *The Artist* in *Imitations* by Garrett Smith, *Winter Fairy* in *Cinderella*, *Dawn* in *Coppelia* and *Not Fade Away Girl* in Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*. Alexandra is looking forward to an incredible season filled with artistry and passion as she goes into her first season as a company member with Alabama Ballet.

Sponsored by: Grace Goodrich

| Meet our Apprentice Dancers



Mary Bailey Campbell

GAOMING, GUANGDONG, CHINA

Mary Bailey Campbell began her training at age 3 with Alabama Dance Academy. At age 6, she became a student at Alabama Ballet. She spent 12 years in the school under the direction of Roger VanFleteren and Tracey Alvey. At Alabama Ballet, she trained in the Royal Academy of Dance syllabus, where she received the highest mark of "Distinction" multiple times on the annual exam. She has received multiple scholarships, attended numerous summer intensives, and been trained in a variety of different styles. She began performing professional roles as a student with the Alabama Ballet company at age 14. After graduation, she joined the Alabama Ballet as an apprentice. Some of her favorite roles with the Alabama Ballet include Peasant Pas De Deux in *Giselle*, Lady 4

in Twyla Tharp's *Baker's Dozen*, and Drama in Roger VanFleteren's *Messin' with Mozart*.

Sponsored by Dr. and Mrs. Patrick Druhan



Carly Darnell

DAYTON, OHIO

From Dayton, OH, Carly began dancing at the age of three. She received her pre-professional training and mentoring from Barbara Pontecorvo and Gregory Robinson at Pontecorvo Ballet Studios and Gem City Ballet (GCB). There, she performed principal and soloist roles in *The Nutcracker*, *Giselle*, *Don Quixote*, and more. In the summers, Carly has trained with Ballet Chicago, School of American Ballet, and Ballet Austin.

From 2022 to 2024, Carly was a fellow in Ballet Austin's Butler Fellowship Program. There, she performed in Stephen Mills' *The Nutcracker*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and George Balanchine's *Serenade*.



Katie Drozd

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Katie Drozd's passion for dance was sparked at a young age when she began ballet classes at a local dance studio in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She continued her training at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts for their highschool and college program. She worked extensively with Susan Jaffe, Jennet Zerbe, Jared Redick, and Laura Martin before joining the Alabama Ballet. At UNCSA Katie performed *Don*

Quixote (Bridesmaid Soloist), *Sleeping Beauty (White Cat)*, and *Serenade* by George Balanchine. She also participated in Prix de Lausanne's Partner School's Choreographic Project dancing in Didy Veldman's world premiere of *Is To Be*. At Alabama Ballet she originated a role in Alex Swader's contemporary duct *Those who Change Us*, and has performed Lead Marzipan in *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*®. Katie has a Classical Pilates Certification, and currently teaches in Alabama. Her eager curiosity to grow both as an artist and a human propel Katie to keep learning and gaining new experiences in and out of the studio.

Sponsored by Tara's Adult Ballet Class



Horus Hudgins

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Horus Hudgins is from San Antonio, TX. He began his formal ballet training with Quenedit Ballet School under Ernesto Quenedit and Catalina Garza. There he had the opportunity to perform the Snow pas de deux, Mirlitons, and Spanish lead in *The Nutcracker* with San Antonio Dance Company. He received the Aspire Award from Universal Ballet Competition in 2023. Horus then joined Orlando Ballet as a trainee.

While at Orlando Ballet, he performed with the company in Jordan Morris' World Premiere of *The Nutcracker*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and in the U.S. premiere of *Casanova*, a full-length ballet by Kenneth Tindall.



Meredith Hwang

POTOMAC, MARYLAND

Meredith Hwang grew up in Potomac, Maryland, and trained at Metropolitan Ballet Theater and Academy. At age 16, she moved to Boston to train at the Boston Ballet School. She had the opportunity to perform in Mikko Nissinen's *The Nutcracker*, George Balanchine's *Coppelia*, and Sir Frederick Ashton's *Cinderella* with the company. In 2020, she joined Charlotte Ballet II and was promoted to the main company in 2022.

While at Charlotte Ballet, Meredith had the opportunity to perform works by Christopher Stuart, Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux, Helen Pickett, Alejandro Cerrudo, Matthew Hart, and many more. She has attended summer intensives at Nashville Ballet, Carolina Ballet, School of American Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Boston Ballet, and San Francisco Ballet. In 2023, Meredith joined Alabama Ballet and has performed in *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*®, Christopher Stuart's *Under the Lights*, and numerous other ballets.

Sponsored by: Robert Oakley



Dagny Ingle

MACON, GEORGIA

Dagny began her early dance training through the Madison Studio of Dance Education under the direction of Jane Madison in Macon, Georgia. She spent her summers studying at American Ballet Theatre in NYC and San Francisco Ballet. At 15, she was invited to study with the Atlanta Ballet pre-professional program on merit scholarship. While there, she had the opportunity to perform in Yuri Possokhov's *The Nutcracker*, *La Sylphide*

staged by Johan Kobborg, and George Balanchine's *Serenade* staged by Robert Barnett. Prior to joining Alabama Ballet as an apprentice in 2022, Dagny danced professionally with Louisville Ballet as a studio company member, performing soloist roles in ballets by Val Caniparoli, Robert Curran, Adam Hougland, and *Emeralds* by George Balanchine. Since joining Alabama Ballet as an apprentice, her favorite roles include Grandma and Flower in *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*®, Friend of Coppelia and Betrothal Couple in Roger VanFleteren's *Coppelia*, and Berthe and Friend of Giselle in Roger VanFleteren's *Giselle*.

Sponsored by J. Johnson



Sofia Johnson

PALMETTO, FLORIDA

Sofia Johnson was raised in Palmetto, Florida, and began dancing at Diane Partington's Studio of Classical Ballet. After graduating High School, Sofia was accepted into the University of North Carolina School of the Arts under the direction of Susan Jaffe, where she pursued a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in classical ballet. Some of her performance highlights during her time at UNCSA include, Snow Queen and Dewdrop in Ilya

Kozadayev's *The Nutcracker*, and the Waltz Girl in George Balanchine's *Serenade*. She began her professional career with *Alabama Ballet* in 2023 and is excited to return this season.



Karen Licari

WETUMPKA, ALABAMA

Karen began her early dance training at Montgomery Ballet under Priscilla Crommelin-Ball and Elic Lazar, later becoming a company trainee at age sixteen under Darren McIntyre. While completing her B.A. in Communication and Theatre from Auburn University at Montgomery, Karen joined the Alabama Dance Theatre under Kitty Scale.

At ADT, she performed feature roles including Lucy Westenra in Sara Sanford's *Dracula*, Fairy Godmother in Sanford's *Cinderella*, as well as Dew Drop Fairy and Sugar Plum Fairy in *The Nutcracker Suite*. Since joining Alabama Ballet in 2020, Karen has enjoyed performing in *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*®, Roger VanFleteren's *Cinderella*, *Romeo and Juliet*, Agnes de Mille's *Rodeo*, *Don Quixote*, *Coppélia*, *Giselle*, and Balanchine's *Western Symphony*.

Sponsored by The Ballet Guild of Birmingham



Caroline Love

DALLAS, TEXAS

Caroline Love is from Dallas, Texas. She studied at The Dallas Conservatory and Ballet West Academy. Caroline attended summer courses at San Francisco Ballet, The Royal Ballet, International Ballet Masterclasses in Prague, and The Royal Danish Ballet. She completed her training as a trainee at Cincinnati Ballet where she performed the roles of Snow and Flowers in Victoria Morgan's *The Nutcracker* and as a Dryad and Gypsy in

Anne-Marie Holmes's *Don Quixote*. As a student, Caroline had the privilege of performing in many notable George Balanchine ballets such as *Western Symphony*, *Divertimento No 15*, *Raymonda Variations*, and *Walpurgisnacht*, as well as works by William Christensen, David J. Morse, and Pamela R. Harris. Caroline is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in Nutritional Sciences from The University of Arizona. She is thrilled to be in Birmingham and join Alabama Ballet as an Apprentice for the 2024-2025 season!



Gianna Morette

FORT MILL, SOUTH CAROLINA

Gianna Morette grew up in South Carolina, training at Center Stage Dance Academy under the direction of Maegan Kittrell and Rebecca Lee. In 2019, she left competitive dance to pursue ballet full-time. Gianna then trained at the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Kirov Academy of Ballet in Washington, DC. While attending Kirov, she placed first in contemporary at YAGP in NYC under the direction of Adrienne

Canterna. Gianna spent her summers training at Charlotte Ballet, the International City School of Ballet, and Chautauqua Institution. In 2021, Gianna joined Charlotte Ballet as a trainee, studying under the direction of Patricia McBride, Katie Mayo, and Laszlo Berdo. She performed Balanchine works such as *Union Jack*, *Faust*, and *Raymonda*, John Pierre Bonnefoux's *Nutcracker*, Matthew Hart's *Sleeping Beauty*, and Christopher Stuart's *Peter Pan* as well as contemporary works. Growing up as a teacher's assistant, Gianna developed a passion for teaching. Recognizing the anxieties young dancers face in expressing themselves, she created a program offering mentoring and interview coaching to inspire and nurture the next generation of dancers and ensure the longevity of their art. She continues to teach at her home studio in South Carolina virtually as well as teaching at a local Alabama studio.

Sponsored by: Mary & Braxton Goodrich



Elisabeth Moser

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

Elisabeth began her formal training in classical ballet with Maryland Youth Ballet at age eight. While there, she was selected to participate in the Kennedy Center Master Class series, earning the opportunity to take class with artists and directors from American Ballet Theatre, Suzanne Farrell Ballet, New York City Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Mariinsky Ballet, and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre. Throughout her training

Elisabeth also attended summer programs at the School of American Ballet, Houston Ballet, and Orlando Ballet. At the age of sixteen, Elisabeth moved away from home to continue her training at Houston Ballet Academy, where she performed works by Stanton Welch and Ben Stevenson OBE. While at Houston Ballet Academy Elisabeth had the opportunity to perform one of her favorite works, George Balanchine's *Serenade*. She then joined Orlando Ballet's Second Company where she enjoyed the opportunity to perform corps and demi soloist roles in many of Orlando Ballet Company's productions. Some of her favorites include *The Sleeping Beauty*, *The Nutcracker*, *Giselle*, Jordan Morris' *Peter Pan*, and *The Great Gatsby*. Elisabeth then joined Alabama Ballet as an apprentice for the 22-23 season. In 2023 she became a certified personal trainer through the National Academy of Sports Medicine, and hopes to use her certification to help dancers improve technique and prevent injuries through proper cross training. She is very grateful and excited to be a part of Alabama Ballet for another season under the direction of Christopher Stuart.

Sponsored by Donna & Steve Christian



Sarah Michelle Pfeiffer

ORLANDO, FLORIDA

Sarah grew up dancing in Orlando, Florida as a student and then trainee with the Orlando Ballet. Throughout her training, Sarah attended summer courses such as *Pacific Northwest Ballet*, *American Ballet Theater*, *Kibbutz Contemporary Company*, and *Chautauqua*. While at Chautauqua she had the honor of being coached by Patricia McBride in the "Man I Love" *Pas de Deux* and performing in

the Washington Ballet's *Swan Lake*. In 2017 she joined the Pacific Northwest Ballet's Professional Division under the direction of Peter Boal. While at PNB Sarah performed company roles such as Flute in *Fanfare*, Butterfly in *George Balanchine's A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and various roles in *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker*®. After graduating from PNB Sarah earned her bachelor's degree in Ballet and Arts Management at Indiana University under the direction of Sarah Wroth. While dancing at IU Sarah trained under Kyra Nicols, Carla Korbes, and Sasha Janes to perform roles such as Sugar Plum in Michael Vernon's *The Nutcracker*, Russian Girls in *Serenade*, and Anthony Tudor's *Dark Elegies*. She is so excited to join the Alabama Ballet and work with the amazing company.



Jenna Renfield

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

Jenna grew up in San Diego, California, where she trained with Robyn Segel Shifren. At age 16, Jenna moved to Salt Lake City, Utah, to join Ballet West's Professional Training Division. In 2022, Jenna moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, where she danced as a Trainee in Cincinnati Ballet's Professional Training Division. Within both pre-professional programs, she has had the chance to perform in various George Balanchine ballets including *Western Symphony*, *Divertimento No. 15*, *Raymonda Variations*, and *Walpurgisnacht*. While at Cincinnati Ballet, Jenna is grateful to have had opportunities to perform with the corps in Cincinnati Ballet Company productions, including Victoria Morgan's *The Nutcracker*, Septime Weber's *ALICE in Wonderland*, and Anna-Marie Holmes's *Don Quixote*. Aside from ballet Jenna is also currently studying online with the University of Colorado, Denver, working towards her marketing degree. Jenna is excited to join Alabama Ballet as an Apprentice for the 2024-2025 season.



Sofia Scalisi

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

Sofia began her formal training at eight years old with the San Francisco Ballet School under Patrick Armand, where she performed student roles in Helgi Tomasson's *Nutcracker*, as well as George Balanchine's *Coppélia*. In 2017 Sofia joined the Academy of Ballet's pre-professional program, under the direction of Zory Karah. At the Academy Sofia performed soloist roles, her favorite being Kathi in Arthur Saint-Léon's *La Vivandière*. While dancing in San Francisco, Sofia earned her B.A. in fashion design from FIDM, graduating *summa cum laude* at seventeen. Sofia went on to join Tulsa Ballet's trainee program where she was asked to perform in a company production of Ma Cong's *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Sofia spent this past season as a trainee with Ballet Idaho, performing in Joseph Hernandez's *I Lost My Love*, as well as Peter Anastos's *Nutcracker*. Sofia is thrilled to begin her professional career this season with Alabama Ballet.



Sophie Waterfall

HOPKINTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Sophie Waterfall, a Boston area native, began her ballet education with Jessica Wilson at Ballet Workshop New England. Her training continued in Boston with full time study at Integarte under former Boston Ballet principal dancers Erica Cornejo and Carlos Molina. Sophie then relocated to Pennsylvania to study in the Pittsburgh Ballet Theater Graduate Program, enjoying numerous opportunities to perform with the company.

Sophie's summers have been spent at The School of American Ballet in New York City, at Kaatsbaan under Martine van Hamel, with Roberto Muñoz at Saratoga and Vail, and with Pittsburgh Ballet Theater. In addition to her classical ballet training, Sophie has experience with flamenco, salsa, and bachata, as well as Horton, Graham, and contemporary dance. Her repertoire includes Terrence S. Orr's *The Nutcracker*, George Balanchine's *Serenade*, Michael Pink's *Dracula*, Susan Jaffe's *Swan Lake*, George Balanchine's *The Nutcracker*®, Roger VanFleteren's *Bonnie & Clyde*, and *Giselle*, as well as excerpts from *Raymonda*, *La Sylphide*, *Romeo & Juliet*, and *Coppélia*. Sophie is thrilled to be returning for her second year as a company apprentice, and is looking forward to the diverse repertoire that the upcoming season has to offer.

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AB
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CHRISTOPHER S. LUAR /
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

The image shows two dancers in blue lighting, one kneeling and one standing behind her, in a dramatic pose. The background is dark, and the lighting highlights their forms.

GEORGE BALANCHINE'S
THE NUTCRACKER
EXPERIENCE THE MAGIC THIS DEC. 13-23

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The image shows a young girl in a white dress lying on her stomach, looking at a nutcracker figure. The background is dark, and the lighting is soft, creating a magical atmosphere.

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