



PALM DESERT choreography festival 2023

SATURDAY 7 PM **NOVEMBER 11** / SUNDAY 4 PM **NOVEMBER 12**



SATURDAY FINALISTS

Choreographer photos can be found on the front cover - just match up the number

CARLY TOPAZIO, originally from Millis, MA, trained at Boston Ballet and Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet. She joined the Alabama Ballet in 2011, City Ballet of San Diego from 2014-2020, Golden State Ballet from 2021-2022, and guested with various companies in New York City, performing soloist and principal roles by many notable choreographers. Internationally, she's trained and performed in Mexico, Spain, Prague, and Austria, and can be seen as a dancer in Disney's *The Game Plan*. In 2018, Topazio founded The Rosin Box Project, San Diego's premier contemporary ballet company, where she has commissioned and created over 35 new works.

MATÉ SZENTES is originally from Budapest, Hungary and studied at the Hungarian Dance Academy while attending summer programs at North Carolina Dance Theater. Szentes has danced with the Hungarian National Ballet, Sacramento Ballet and Richmond Ballet. He currently resides in Huntington Beach, CA and is a freelance artist and a permanent guest artist with American Contemporary Ballet. Since 2016 he has choreographed for Richmond Ballet, Los Angeles Ballet, Ballet Project OC and other independent projects around the country. He was a finalist in last year's Palm Desert Choreography Festival and was invited to present his work at North Coast Dance Festival and Balletfest.

JOSHUA MANCULICH founded WhirlWind Dance, a professional contemporary dance company based in Columbus, Ohio in Summer 2021. Several recognitions and opportunities have shaped Joshua's career including: Princess Grace Award - Choreography (2015), Whim W'His Choreographic ShinDig, BalletX Choreographic Incubator program, Artistic Achievement Award - Chicago National Associations of Dance Masters, and Susan Huntington Dean's Distinguished University Fellowship. His choreographic adventures include longstanding relationships with organizations such as Ballet Austin II, The Big Muddy Dance Company, Collage Dance Collective, DanceWorks Chicago, Eisenhower Dance, Houston Contemporary, and Santa Barbara Dance Theater.

CHRISTINA GHIARDI, originally from Morgantown, West Virginia, received her pre-professional training from the Joffrey Ballet School Trainee Program and the School of American Ballet. Christina has danced professionally with Boston Ballet II, Pennsylvania Ballet and has been a company artist with Nevada Ballet Theatre since 2014. As a choreographer, Christina has created works for Nevada Ballet Theatre, Ballet West II, the School of American Ballet, Boston Ballet School, Ballet Project OC and Dallas Ballet Company. In 2022, she was a choreographic fellow for the University of Utah's Choreographic Institute and a finalist at McCallum Theatre's Palm Desert Choreography Festival.

FRANCO NIETO, Princess Grace Award Winner, was born and raised in the Pacific Northwest. He made the unconventional switch from football to ballet in his teenage years and has now taught and danced internationally. Nieto was a principal dancer with NW Dance Project in Portland, Oregon, where he toured the world and worked with leading minds to create countless original works. His early training came from the Vancouver School of Arts & Academics, Columbia Dance, and mentor, Tracey Durbin. He graduated from Point Park University with a BFA in Jazz. Nieto founded and is now Artistic Director of Open Space Dance.

JOY BOLLINGER is a distinguished choreographer and Artistic Director of Bruce Wood Dance. *Dance Magazine* listed her as "Women Who Make Dallas Great," citing her work as "highly cerebral and intuitive...one of the most evocative and lyrical choreographers on our scene." Bollinger has created numerous critically acclaimed works, including *Carved In Stone*—called the "single best dance in 2016...deeply emotional and striking in its stillness"—Mark Lowry/*Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, and "a dance for the ages"—Margaret Putnam/*TheaterJones*. Her commissions include the Dallas Museum of Art, TITAS/DANCE UNBOUND, Dallas Black Dance Theatre, Texas Christian University, Southern Methodist University, and Bucknell University.

NICOLE HASKINS, is a choreographer, coach, and mentor residing in the Bay Area. She enjoyed a two-decade career as a professional ballet dancer, while building a thriving choreographic career. Her creations have been performed at ballet companies across the country, including Sacramento Ballet's current production of *The Nutcracker*. After retiring, Nicole was recruited to develop and lead Ballet Idaho's Trainee Program where she helped aspiring dancers successfully achieve their dreams. She is also the founder of Keep Dancers Dancing which provides dancers with the tools, knowledge, and support necessary to thrive within any professional ballet company. www.NicoleHaskins.com

JESSICA LIU AND ALBERT GALINDO are a creative duo based in Germany. From Salt Lake City, Utah, and Barcelona, Spain, respectively, they began collaborating at the Nationaltheater Mannheim under the direction of Stephan Thoss. Prior to crossing paths, Jessica performed with BODYTRAFFIC, Oakland Ballet Company, and SALT Contemporary Dance and graduated cum laude from the University of Utah with a BFA in Ballet and BS in Exercise Physiology. Albert performed with Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company, Of Curious Nature, and Ballet BC following the completion of the Arts Umbrella Graduate Program. Palm Desert Choreography Festival marks their choreographic partnership's international debut.

ARTHUR BERNARD-BAZIN & CANDELARIA ANTELO started their collaboration in 2010 and their creations have since received numerous awards in Spain, France, Germany, and Cuba with performances on five continents. Born in 2013, HURyCAN is a performing arts project that claims the communicative necessity of movement, exploring its limits, its personal and emotional dimensions. Their work – imaginative and humorous – expresses both a playful innocence and darker undertones. Today, the company is operating as a platform where both choreographers develop their own work in addition to their collaborative efforts.

ALLEN CHUNHUI XING is a dancer, choreographer based in Maryland and holds a MFA in Dance from University of Maryland. Currently the Artistic Director of Xing Dance Theater, his work has been presented nationally including at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Battery Dance Festival, and Dance Gallery Festival. Internationally his work has been seen in China, Japan, South Korea, Finland, Mexico, Singapore, and Russia. In 2020, Xing was awarded the Maryland State Independent Artist First Place Award. Other recognitions include the 2021/2022 Baker Artist Award, the 2021 Baltimore Artist Relief Grant First Place Award, and the Singapore International Dance Festival Choreography Gold Award in 2021.

WELCOME!



Welcome to the 26th Palm Desert Choreography Festival! This year we offer an exciting line-up of diverse dances with quite a bit of ballet in the mix which is exciting considering our Lifetime Achievement Award recipient.

We are happy to have the opportunity to honor Helgi Tomasson, a true luminary of the dance world who made the journey from paramount ballet performer to visionary artistic director. And it is for his vision, transforming San Francisco Ballet into a prestigious company of international standing via forward-thinking collaborations with contemporary choreographers and ongoing support of emerging choreographers, in addition to his own artistic merit as a choreographer, that we consider Helgi a great match for this award.

Palm Desert Choreography Festival is open to all dance genres. Choreographers vie for finalist placement through a rigorous screening process. Our current finalists were selected from over one hundred submissions with the majority of submissions falling into the category of contemporary, reflecting artists who draw from multiple genres including modern, ballet, jazz, and hip hop. Recently, there has been a raised awareness for more equality and diversity in creating new dance work, specifically in the ballet world. As a Festival, we consider ourselves a part of that conversation and a platform where new work can be experienced. Our goal has always been to create opportunities for dancemakers who have taken on the challenging journey to create in the art form of dance.

In our mission to support choreographers, the Festival also assumes certain risks as the complexities of this event are astounding with many variables in play. Each year, I feel appreciation and gratitude for the whole process as it unfolds knowing there are many hurdles to overcome both for individual choreographers and dancers, but also for us who produce the Festival.

We are blessed to gather accomplished choreographers from abroad and across the continental U.S. for this year's event. Saturday's lineup features dances by choreographers working with professional dancers of seasoned artistry and fully mature technique while Sunday offers work by choreographers whose dancers are from aspiring and emerging companies, colleges, academies, and studios.

On Sunday we also welcome the dancers in the East Valley Dance Project. This powerful outreach project offers our East Valley youth an opportunity to explore dance as an art form from audition, to rehearsal to performance and is open to students at all levels. We are deeply grateful for our longstanding partnership with the facilitator of East Valley Dance Project, Jennifer Backhaus of Backhausdance, whose participation in our 2003 Festival led to a decades long collaboration.

As always, I am deeply grateful to those who help facilitate this event in support of choreographers, dancers, and ultimately the art form of dance. To all of our generous donors, our McCallum team, and you, the audience – we could not do this without you.

Thank you and enjoy!

Shea New

FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Please take our audience survey



OUR SINCERE THANKS!

We wish to thank the following individuals and organizations for their generosity in making this event possible.

CELEBRATING THE ARTISTS OF TODAY, NURTURING THE ARTISTS OF TOMORROW!

PRESENTING

City of Palm Desert

FEATURED

Anonymous

Carol Pavlick

COLLABORATIVE

Olga Morales & Allen Burstiner

PARTNERING

Robert Archer & Charles Hilliar

The Coeta & Donald Barker Foundation

Diane J. Dykema

Susan & Warren Gelman

High Tech Mailing Services, Mario & Refika Jerkic

Suz Hunt

Suellen Richmond

Linda & Manny Rider

CONTRIBUTING

Ms. Cardriner Bowden

Roger Bredahl & Marvin Meyers

Jean C. Carrus

Evelyn L. Hall

Twanna & Tim Rogers

Kim Smith

SUPPORTING

Tom & Karen Ackland

Jane Emison & Michael Tierney

Frank & Alvera Gaeta

Donald Kasper & James Bochinski

Jeff Larson

Wanda Martin & Barry Garlock

Mike & Terri Neuman

Carolyn & Rob Richard

Dick & Nancy Robinson

Karen R. Speros

Char Whitaker

MEDIA

KESQ – Gulf California Broadcasting

Performing Arts Live

**Special thanks to College of the Desert
for providing Festival workshop space.**



PALM DESERT

THE CITY OF PALM DESERT CONGRATULATES
LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT

HELGI TOMASSON



And a hearty
"Thank You!" to
the Palm Desert
Choreography Festival
for elevating
the art of dance
for 26 transformational
years!

We are truly fortunate to witness exceptional dance and choreography right here in the heart of the Desert.

- Carol Pavlick

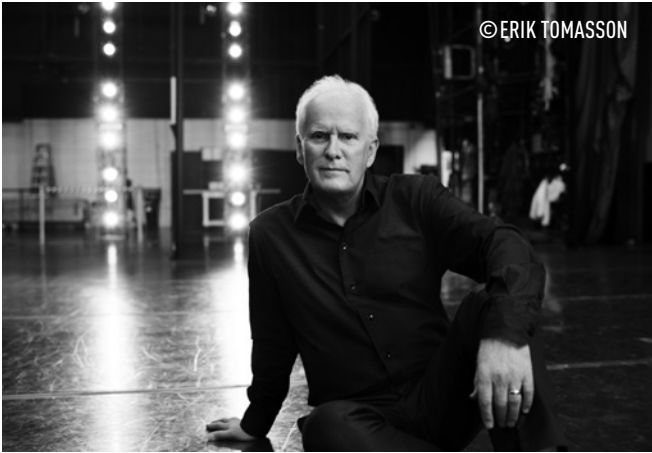
EAST VALLEY DANCE PROJECT



An important outreach project of Palm Desert Choreography Festival, **East Valley Dance Project** has served students in Thermal for the past 16 years. Originally a partnership with Desert Mirage High and Toro Canyon Middle Schools, the Project now also includes students from Coachella Valley High School. East Valley Dance Project engages youth in dancemaking under the artistic direction of multiple Festival award-winner Jennifer Backhaus. It includes residencies by professional dancers in high school dance classes, an audition workshop and six intense rehearsals. The culmination is a performance of an original piece of choreography at the close of the Sunday performance of Palm Desert Choreography Festival. While participating in the process of crafting a dance, students develop an understanding of its potential as a form of expression, develop life skills, and gain access to McCallum Theatre. This Project continued during the pandemic with dances created for alternate spaces. *Reverie*, a dance for the screen created in 2020-21 and *GROW* created for the outdoors at The Gardens on El Paseo in 2021-22 can be viewed on McCallum's YouTube. In fall of 2022, the Project returned to the McCallum stage.

2023 LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

HELGI TOMASSON



Helgi Tomasson, San Francisco Ballet's previous Artistic Director and Principal Choreographer, led the trailblazing Company from 1985 to 2022. Under his leadership, San Francisco Ballet became one of the world's leading ballet companies, recognized for its innovative focus on new and contemporary choreography, ongoing support of emerging choreographers and the next generation of dancers, and deeply held dedication to the classics.

Tomasson choreographed more than 50 ballets during his tenure, including full-length productions of *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Don Quixote*, *Romeo & Juliet* (taped for *Lincoln Center at the Movies' Great American Dance*), and *Nutcracker* (taped for PBS's *Great Performances*). He has collaborated with and commissioned renowned choreographers such as William Forsythe, Christopher

Wheeldon, Alexei Ratmansky, Trey McIntyre, Cathy Marston, Mark Morris, Justin Peck, and Dwight Rhoden, among others. He also conceptualized several festivals for San Francisco Ballet, including the 1995 UNited We Dance festival, in which the Ballet hosted 12 international companies; the 2008 New Works Festival, which included 10 world premieres; Unbound: A Festival of New Works in 2018, featuring 12 world premieres by 12 international choreographers; and the next@90 festival celebrating SF Ballet's 90th anniversary season in 2023.

Born in Reykjavik, Iceland, Tomasson began his career dancing with Harkness Ballet, The Joffrey Ballet, and New York City Ballet, becoming a celebrated principal dancer and one of the foremost interpreters of George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins. Balanchine encouraged him to choreograph, and in 1982, Tomasson choreographed his first ballet for the School of American Ballet Workshop. Tomasson's own exceptional artistry as a dancer of technical purity, musicality, and intelligence made him a natural choreographer and leader, inspiring excellence in the Company and encouraging its dancers to excel in many different styles of ballet and classical dance.

As a teacher and coach, Tomasson's support of emerging talent has been at the core of his work, frequently choreographing ballets that showcase the unique qualities of individual dancers and cultivating choreographic talent within the Company, including with San Francisco Ballet principal dancer Yuri Possokhov and soloist Myles Thatcher, who have gone on to create works worldwide. Tomasson was also artistic director of the San Francisco Ballet School, alongside School Director Patrick Armand.

Tomasson established San Francisco Ballet as one of the premier companies in the international cultural community. He has led major co-commissions with cultural institutions across the globe including American Ballet Theatre, The Royal Ballet, and Dutch National Ballet, and has toured the company internationally to China, Copenhagen, London, Moscow, and other cultural capitals.

Tomasson's achievements have been honored with Iceland's Grand Cross Star of the Order of the Falcon, the country's highest honor, three Isadora Duncan Awards, the Lew Christensen Medal, and honorary doctorates from Dominican College of San Rafael and the Juilliard School. In 2021, he received the San Francisco Arts Medallion, created by the Museum of Performance + Design to recognize individuals whose leadership, action, and generosity have benefited the cultural life of the San Francisco Bay Area.

presents

PALM DESERT CHOREOGRAPHY FESTIVAL

SATURDAY **NOVEMBER 11, 2023**

\$10,000 **Grand Prize**
\$5,000 **Second Place**
\$2,500 **Ensemble Awards**
\$2,000 **Small Group Awards**
\$1,500 **Duet Awards**
\$1,000 **Solo Awards**

Opening Remarks by **Kajsa Thuresson-Frary** FESTIVAL PRODUCER

ACT ONE

SE(QUELL)

Choreographer **CARLY TOPAZIO**
Company **The Rosin Box Project**
Music ***Time, Sin and Avalanche*** by Travis Lake
Lighting Design **Ginger Chody**
Costume Design **Tiffany Smith**
Dancers **Marian Faustino, Elizabeth Fittro, Bethany Green, Chelsea Kuhn, Rony Lenis, Katie Spagnoletti, Jeremy Zapanta**

CONFETTI HEAD

Choreographer **FRANCO NIETO**
Company **Open Space Dance**
Music ***I'm sorry*** by Travis Lake, ***Flower Duet*** by Leo Delibes, ***Learn your Lesson (Photay Remix)*** by Madison McFerrin, ***El Pescador*** by Dos Santos, ***Mind Killa*** by Gang Gang Dance
Lighting Design **Allison Knight-Blaine**
Costume Design **Heather Treadway**
Dancers **Elise Gonsalves & Audrey Wells**

CHRONOS

Choreographer **CHRISTINA GHIARDI**
Music ***Trio 1 in D*** by Michigan 7 and ***Trio 2 in D*** by Kirill Richter
Lighting Design **Christina Ghiardi**
Costume Design **Betsy Lucas**
Dancers **Anthony Cannarella, *Betsy Lucas, Cleo Taneja, Isabella Velasquez**

**courtesy of Nevada Ballet Theatre*

THE RATE IN WHICH I AM

Choreographer **JOSHUA MANCULICH**
Company **WhirlWind Dance**
Music ***We Move Lightly*** by Dustin O'Halloran
Lighting Design **Joshua Manculich**
Costume Design **Sophie Tiede**
Dancers **Zachary Bussert, Reagan Crandall, Justin Curry, Abby Schafer, Austin Shaffer, Evan Warner**

GROUNDLESS SHIFT

Choreographer **NICOLE HASKINS**
Music ***Appalachia Waltz*** by Mark O'Connor
Lighting Design **Trad Burns**
Costume Design **Cassandra Carpenter**
Dancers ***Terez Dean Orr and John Speed Orr**

**courtesy of Smuin Contemporary Ballet*

IN MY YOUR HEAD

Choreographers **JOY BOLLINGER**
Company **Bruce Wood Dance**
Music ***Idioteque and Paranoid Android*** by Radiohead
Lighting Design **Tony Tucci**
Costume Design **John Ahrens**
Dancers **Jaime Borkan, Alex Brown, Kevyn Butler, Sofia Downing Ortega, Lauren Hibbard, Ali Marshall, Weaver Rhodes, Jillyn Shatley, Megan Storey, Elliott Trahan, Cole Vernon, Seth York**

INTERMISSION

ACT TWO

AFTER THE PRESENT

Choreographers **JESSICA LIU & ALBERT GALINDO**

Music *Strangers in the Night* by Combo Alfredo, *Song on the Beach* by Arcade Fire and Owen Pallett, *Girl from the North Country* by Bob Dylan and Johnny Cash; arrangement by Albert Galindo

Lighting Design **Wolfgang Schüle**

Costume Design **Jessica Liu and Albert Galindo**

Dancers *Jessica Liu and *Albert Galindo

**courtesy of Nationaltheater Mannheim*

DUPLICITY

Choreographer **ALLEN CHUNHUI XING**

Company **Xing Dance Theater**

Music *Duplicity* by Svyatoslav Melik

Lighting/Costume Design **Allen Chunhui Xing**

Dancers **Alison Bartels, Facundo Eduardo Idio, Jovannie Aranzamendi Nieves, Allen Chunhui Xing, Olivia Xia**

TE ODIERO

Choreographers **CANDELARIA ANTELO & ARTHUR BERNARD-BAZIN**

Company **HURyCAN**

Music *Basin Street Blues* by Louis Armstrong, *The Fear Theme* by Kenji Eno/Cinematic Orchestra, *Basin Street Blues* by Kid Koala

Lighting/Costume Design **Candelaria Antelo and Arthur Bernard-Bazin**

Dancers **Arthur Bernard-Bazin and Loredana Gargano**

wolfGANG

Choreographer **MATÉ SZENTES**

Music *Symphony No. 25 in G Minor, Allegro Die Zauberflöte and Allegro Requiem in D Minor* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Lighting Design **Monique L'Heureux**

Costume Design **Maté Szentes**

Dancers **Anthony Cannarella, *Sara-Ashley Chicola, *Poppy Coleman, *Hannah Keene, *Julianne Kinasiewicz, *Lilly Leech, *Santiago Paniagua, *Cesar Ramirez, *Cleo Taneja**

**courtesy of Los Angeles Ballet*

2023

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD presentation

HELGI TOMASSON

Presented by **Vitor Luiz**

Statue – *Standing Lovers* by Colin Webster Watson

AWARD PRESENTATION

FINALIST PLACEMENT AWARDS

SECOND PLACE AWARD

GRAND PRIZE AWARD

Presented by **Kajsa Thuresson-Frary, Festival Producer; Shea New, Festival Founder/Artistic Director; and Kathleen Kelly, Mayor, City of Palm Desert**

JUDGES

Daniel Ezralow

Arturo Fernandez

Bonnie Oda Homsey

Vitor Luiz

Molly Lynch

Alyssa Renard



Donald McKayle, 2005 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient presenting the Lifetime Achievement Award to Carmen de Lavallade in 2004.

presents

PALM DESERT CHOREOGRAPHY FESTIVAL

SUNDAY **NOVEMBER 12, 2023**

- \$3,000 **Grand Prize**
- \$1,500 **Second Place**
- \$1,250 **Ensemble Awards**
- \$1,000 **Small Group Awards**
- \$750 **Duet Awards**
- \$500 **Solo Awards**

Opening Remarks by **Kajsa Thuresson-Frary** FESTIVAL PRODUCER

ACT ONE

simonesaidit

Choreographer **SIMONE GADLIN**
Company **Simone Knowelle Dance Project**
Music *Di Che Colore È Il Vento and Image in the Shadow* by Francisco
De Masi, Love by Ron Trent
Lighting Design **Lex Birts**
Dancers **Lex Birts, Dara Broadnax, Faith Brown, Simone Gadlin,**
Francis Soane, Jasmine Stanton, Rhapsody Taylor

LADIES WHO LUNCH

Choreographer **CRISTINA MCKEEVER-CHANEY**
Company **Palm Springs Dance Academy**
Music *The Lady is A Tramp* (Live 1963) by Sammy Davis Jr.
Lighting Design **Nick Wass**
Costume Design **Cristina McKeever-Chaney**
Dancers **Jacqueline Beaty, Sage Bowman, Lila Despras,**
Amaya D'Souza, Vincenza Gist, Hejira Hadley, Riley Hart,
Skye Penny, Victoria Thomas, Elle Walker, Sydney Young

FAMILY PORTRAIT

Choreographer **GUNTA LIEPINA-MILLER**
Company **Premier Youth Dance Company**
Music *Je crois entendre encore* by Georges Bizet
Costume Design **Zane Sture**
Dancers **Aimee Ernt, Riley Ernt, Chihiro Fuke, Arabella Kim,**
Nina Le Coz, Harmony Lim, Devynn Smark, Emma Won

WALK BESIDE YOU

Choreographer **ROCHELLE MAPES**
Company **Mater Dei Dance Conservatory**
Music *Quartets: Two: I. Sequence (Four)* by Peter Gregson
Lighting Design **Shawn Fidler**
Costume Design **Rochelle Mapes**
Dancers **Michelle Ascani, Noel Bernal, Ava Biagiotti, Jasmine Chua,**
Kelly Delaney, Savannah Fregoso, Gabriella Gomez, Vanessa Jensen,
Lydia Lea, Delaney Miner, Avery Ross-Ryan, Hannah Tidus

THE CHOSEN

Choreographer **MJ**
Company **Innovate Dance Company**
Music *Selah* by Kanye West
Guitarist **Ryan Streeter**
Lighting Design **Andre Campbell**
Dancers **Perris Amento, Emmerson Cauthren, Gussie Kean, Gabby**
Keeler, Jenna Monohan, Ava Otto, Kaitie Richman, Hunter Tayman,
Catherine Parsons

CLAIRE DE LUNE

Choreographer **MARK CARLSON**
Company **International Ballet School**
Music *Clair de Lune* by Claude Debussy
Lighting Design **Zachary Jovanovich**
Dancers **Owen Osterbrook & Vivienne Shields**

WHITE LIES

Choreographer **LAUREN BLAIR SMITH**

Company **Lauren Blair Smith Dance Company**

Music *Thunders and Lightnings* by Ezio Bosso

Lighting Design **Amanda Fisk**

Costume Design **Lauren Blair Smith**

Dancers **Brenan Gonzalez, Shea Hancock, Lindsay Lykins, Sadie Grace Shelburne, Malachi Stevens, Summer Vu**

Lauren Blair Smith Dance Company is proudly sponsored by World Dance Alliance Singapore. www.wdasg.com

MY HEALING

Choreographer **JACOB GUTIÉRREZ-MONTOYA**

Company **Hawkins School of Performing Arts**

Music *My Healing* by Sophia Spallino

Lighting/Costume Design **Jacob Gutiérrez-Montoya**

Dancers **Emerson Blanton, Ava Cadden, Yesenia Cervantes, Landon Coady, Tatum Frey, Gracie Gamez, Isabelle Gerondakis, Kate Gross, Guenevere Hamler, Haley LaGreca, Audrey Lewin, Brenna Mulligan, Emily Na, Bailey Perdue, Alexis Powell, Sophia Simonelli, Ashlynn Skulick, Smaran Sreenivasan, Jenna Tarry, Ana Karina Zeller-Marquez**

INTERMISSION

ACT TWO

THE WAITING ROOM

Choreographer **YE LI**

Company **Oregon International Ballet Academy**

Music *Sweet* by Njo Kong Kie

Lighting/Costume Design **Ye Li**

Dancers **Sophia Alicata, Emily Hao, Emerson Lewis, Molly McCoy, Audrey Perkins, Annabelle Schlicke, Emily Song, Elsa Tolman-Foote, Inari Watkins, Elise Yu, Fiona Zhang, Lily Zheng**

This piece was first developed at the National Choreographers Initiative, Irvine Barclay Theatre

DEEP NIGHT

Choreographer **MIA SELENO**

Music *Deep Night* by Rudy Vallee and Charles Henderson

Costume Design **Mia Seleno**

Dancers **Ava LeBel and Jessica Wicke**

THE MOMENT OF REACHING

Choreographer **MARY ANN MAYER**

Company **Ocean State Ballet**

Music *Nuvole Bianche* by Ludovico Einaudi

Lighting Design **Ian Evans**

Costume Design **Mary Ann Mayer and Sylvie Mayer**

Dancers **Eloise Beaudoin, Grace Ellis, Ainsley Pavlakis**

KINDLING

Choreographer **CHARLOTTE GRIFFIN**

Company **MILKLEAF**

Music *Earring* by Julia Wolfe

Lighting Design **Monique L'Heureux**

Costume Design **Kaylynn Sutton**

Dancer **Katherine Lingle**

Music licensed by Boosey & Hawkes, Inc., o/b/o G. Ricordi & Co. Bühnen- und Musikverlag GmbH

MY WAY

Choreographer **KEITHAN HAVER**

Company **Broadway Dance Theatre**

Music *My Way* by Frank Sinatra

Lighting Design **Lorinda Haver**

Costume Design **Keithan Haver**

Dancers **Gabi Antonellis, Athena Bernaz, Sofia Glynos, Marissa Lazovick, Samantha Lazovick, Reese Madden, Amanda Mattiassi, Charlotte Melina, Olivia Napolitano, Sophie Poller, Hope Walsh**

FESTIVAL OUTREACH PRESENTATION

EAST VALLEY DANCE PROJECT

UNDER ONE SKY

Artistic Director **JENNIFER BACKHAUS**

Choreography **CHIHIRO SANO, ADRIEN PADILLA
& MORGAN GOODFELLOW**

Company **East Valley Dance Project**

Music *Portrait Gallery* by Luke Howard and *Duet* by Steve Reich,
performed by Daniel Hope, Simos Papanas and Kammerorchester Basel

Media Design/Editing **Adrien Padilla**

Dancers

Coachella Valley High School

**Layla Bautista, Christopher Bravo, Damaris De Lara, Nevina Espinoza,
Kimberly Garcia, Samara Garcia, Kain Gil, Itaty Haro, Dulce Hernandez,
Fernando Hernandez, Susan Hernandez, Dayzie Lopez, Isabella Lopez,
Julissa Luna, Delaila Nuñez, Dayanara Saabedra, Christian Torres,
Miranda Torres**

Desert Mirage High School

**Jennifer Aguilar, Emma Cabusora, Vanessa Angel Castorena, Emely
Delgado, Briannada Esqueda, Alondra Felix, Jessica Gonzalez,
Alina Guzman, Lilia Mendoza-Ramirez, Guadalupe Mora, Valeria Ordaz,
Perla Rafael-Diaz, Lizbeth Rodriguez, America Torres, Natalia Vargas**

AWARD PRESENTATION

FINALIST PLACEMENT AWARDS

SECOND PLACE AWARD

GRAND PRIZE AWARD

Presented by **Kajsa Thuresson-Frery, Festival Producer; Shea New,
Festival Founder/Artistic Director; and Kathleen Kelly, Mayor,
City of Palm Desert**

JUDGES

Jennifer Backhaus

Daniel Ezralow

Brian Gendecé

Lula Washington

Renae Williams Niles

Over the past 26 years
the Festival has...

- > presented the works of **754** choreographers
- > presented **761** pieces of choreography
- > awarded **\$802,675** to deserving choreographers
- > served **19,983** workshop/residency participants
- > honored **24** Lifetime Achievement Award recipients
- > served **43,802** audience members

CONGRATULATIONS!

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS

1998 Marc Breaux
1999 Grover Dale
2000 Lula Washington
2001 Joe Tremaine
2002 George Chakiris
2003 Dee Dee Wood
2004 Carmen de Lavallade
2005 Donald McKayle
2006 Rudy Perez
2007 Glen Tetley
2008 Alan Johnson
2009 Nigel Lythgoe
2010 Eugene Loring
2011 Julie McDonald
2012 Colleen Neary
Thordal Christensen
2013 Jacques d'Amboise
2014 Suzanne Farrell
2015 Daniel Ezralow
2016 Lois Greenfield
2017 Savion Glover
2018 Glorja Kaufman
2019 Rennie Harris
2022 Toni Basil
2023 Helgi Tomasson

GRAND PRIZE WINNERS (SATURDAY)

1998 *Mambo Mania* – Javier Velasco/San Diego Ballet & *Samuel Loves Lilith* – Brian Fretté/Hit & Run Productions
1999 *Bulb* – Bubba Carr/Subliminal Movements • **2000** *Common Ground* – Carley Conder/Scottsdale CC
2001 *Subway* – Frit and Frat Fuller/Kin Dance • **2002** *Le Coeur Illuminé* – Marie de la Palme
2003 *Sliding Down* – Garrett Ammon/Ballet Memphis • **2004** *Flicker and Shift* – Laura Gorenstein Miller/Helios Dance Theater
2005 *Duet* – Viktor Kabanjaev • **2006** *Their Song* – Greg Sample/CDA Las Vegas
2007 *Falling Petals* – Ting-Ting Chang/Dream Dance Contemporary Arts • **2008** *A Ritual Dynamic* – Jon Lehrer/LehrerDance
2009 *Forces* – Jamel Gaines/Creative Outlet Dance Theatre of Brooklyn • **2010** *Fragments* – Olivier Wevers/Whim W'Him
2011 *Monster* – Olivier Wevers/Whim W'Him • **2012** *Two Against One* – Lauren Edson/Boise Dance Co-op
2013 *Sally Meets Stu* – Danielle Agami/Ate9 Dance Company • **2014** *Mouth to Mouth* – Danielle Agami/Ate9 Dance Company
2015 *Critics of the Morning Song* – Joshua L. Peugh/Dark Circles Contemporary Dance
2016 *Persistence of Memory* – Ting-Ting Chang/T.T.C Dance & *Mine* – Laura Karlin/Invertigo Dance Theatre
2017 *Black & White* – Manuel Vignoulle/M/motions • **2018** *Earth* – Manuel Vignoulle/M/motions
2019 *hi are you like me* – Dolly Sfeir • **2022** *Los Perros Del Barrio Colosal* – Omar Roman De Jesus/Boca Tuya

GRAND PRIZE WINNERS (SUNDAY)

1998 *Toccata Fugue in D Minor* – Penny & Candice Huffor/Renee Fox • **1999** *Eternal Scream* – Sharon Collins-Heads
2000 *MisBehavin'* – Melissa Strom & Charles Brown • **2001** *Chris' Dance* – Marie Hoffman
2002 *Shouldn't Be Here* – Terry Schulke/Mandy Rogers • **2003** *Angels of Auschwitz* – Amy Bates Nakamura
2004 *Toccata and Fugue* – Olga Ioda • **2005** *Fire* – Jen Hechtle Bradford • **2006** *The Race* – Bret Easterling
2007 *Bach Street Prelude* – Conny Mathot • **2008** *Table for Two* – Marie Hoffman
2009 *Amongst the Hedges* – Will Johnston/Jenna Otter • **2010** *Nevermore* – Amy Bates Nakamura
2011 *Framed* – Elke Calvert • **2012** *Les Adieux* – Conny Mathot • **2013** *Concentric Harmonies* – Francisco Gella
2014 *The Wolves* – Dana Metz • **2015** *Juliet* – Jacob Gutiérrez-Montoya & *Lesson #35* – Terry Schulke/Mandy Rogers
2016 *Heroes* – Crystal & David Zibalese • **2017** *Glory* – Jacob Gutiérrez-Montoya
2018 *As The Smoke Seeps In* – McKell Lemon
2019 *When The Dark Moves* – Jacob Gutierrez Montoya/Hawkins School of Performing Arts
2022 *Unravel* – Jacob Gutierrez Montoya/Hawkins School of Performing Arts

JUDGES

JENNIFER BACKHAUS, founder, and artistic director of Backhausdance, has been the energetic and creative force spearheading the development and growth of Orange County's critically-acclaimed contemporary dance company and also serves on the dance faculty at Chapman University. A life-long learner, she holds a BFA in Communications and Dance from Chapman University, and received her MFA in Choreography from Hollins University. From the inception of the company, Jennifer has been committed to choreographing and producing the fine art of contemporary concert dance with a professional company while simultaneously designing and implementing an extensive dance education and performance program for all ages. Featuring deeply human and emotional creations that are infused with a sense of humor, athleticism and theatricality, Backhausdance has received numerous awards and honors, including Outstanding Arts Organization by Arts Orange County in 2012, and recognized by Chapman University with the 2017 Distinguished Alumni Award as well as Alumni of the Year in 2007 for her artistic leadership of Backhausdance. This is her sixteenth year creating work for local dancers in McCallum's Choreography Festival via East Valley Dance Project.

DANIEL EZRALOW'S expansive and award-winning career as a director, choreographer, writer and performer, has masterfully traversed the mediums of theater, film, music and television, from modest venues to the world's greatest stages. *The Huffington Post* called his recent production of *PEARL* at Lincoln Center "a stunning collaborative spectacle of dance, theater, film, music, multi-media and history." Mr. Ezralow has created works for the Opening of La Scala season 2021, Cirque du Soleil's 15-year-old hit *LOVE*, the opening ceremony of the Sochi Olympics, The Paris Opera and Batsheva Dance Company of Israel. He has choreographed Julie Taymor's *The Green Bird* and *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark* on Broadway and the seminal musical film *Across the Universe*. He collaborates and creates spectacles with artists from the legendary designer Issey Miyake to the musical icon Katy Perry. The Los Angeles native is the founder and Artistic Director of Ezralow Dance, a movement-based ensemble known internationally for its explosive physicality, originitive thought and playful humor. Mr. Ezralow recently stage directed and choreographed the opening and closing of the World Expo Dubai 2020 which has been nominated for an LA Choreography award. Mr. Ezralow is the recipient of McCallum Theatre's Choreography Festival 2015 Lifetime Achievement Award.

ARTURO FERNANDEZ, Ballet Master Emeritus at Alonzo King's LINES Ballet, has set Alonzo's choreography worldwide for companies including the Royal Swedish Ballet, NYU Tisch School of the Arts and Washington University. He has taught master classes to Lyon Opera Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Paul Taylor Dance, Robert Moses' Kin, Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, Westside Ballet Academy, and Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal among other schools and institutions. He assisted Alonzo King in the creation of a new ballet for San Francisco Ballet which premiered in 2018. Earlier in his career, Fernandez taught dance at Cal State University Long Beach and San Francisco State University, and was a dancer with San Diego Ballet, California Ballet, Arizona Ballet, New Jersey Ballet, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, Oakland Ballet and Berkeley Ballet Theatre. He resides in Cathedral City with his husband and their dog Eddie. An active member of the Palm Springs AIDS Memorial Sculpture Task Force, Arturo helps raise funds for the creation and installation of the sculpture which will have its home in the new City of Palm Springs Downtown Park.

BRIAN GENDECE is a Film Producer and former Talent Manager having represented such world-renowned director/choreographers as Tina Landon, Liz Imperio, Jeri Slaughter, Cris Judd, Lee Martino, Tyler Hanes, and Mia Michaels (creators of world tours, music videos and television appearances for such artists as Jennifer Lopez, Rihanna, Janet Jackson, Christina Aguilera, Shakira and Ricky Martin, to name only a few). Brian negotiated principal contracts for Broadway, film and television stars, and was formerly VP of Creative Affairs for Cannon Films, Executive Director of Bobby Ball Talent Agency's Dance, Choreography & Equity Divisions, Event Producer for The American Choreography Awards and a Co-Creator of The Bob Fosse Adopt-A-Dancer Scholarship Program. Brian was the on-stage Talent Producer for NBC's *Shall We Dance On Ice* featuring Broadway dancers alongside Olympic ice skating pairs. Brian is relocating to Palm Springs and enjoys producing and directing documentaries, giving behind-the-scenes enrichment talks on the world of choreography and dance, and has served on the Board of Directors for The Los Angeles Dance Foundation and The Academy of Dance on Film.

BONNIE ODA HOMSEY, founding Director of Los Angeles Dance Foundation, serves on the Western Council of Entertainment Community Fund (formerly The Actors Fund) where she launched "HAC & ME," an endowment fund to provide free youth programming at its Hollywood Arts Collective. She is a board member and co-chair of Programming for Gold Standard Arts Foundation, a national resource service for AAPI creative. For 20 years, she served as Chair of Dance for The Princess Grace Foundation USA and also panelist for National Endowment for the Arts, New England Foundation for the Arts, United States Artists, and California Arts Council. A member of the Martha Graham Co. directed by Ms. Graham, she toured internationally and performed works with Rudolph Nureyev and Dame Margot Fonteyn. An alum of The Juilliard School, Bonnie established an endowed scholarship for AAPI dancers, and a dance scholarship at Mid-Pacific Institute in Honolulu, Hawaii. She received a MFA in Dance as the Chancellor's Fellowship recipient from UC, Irvine, and recently retired from USC Kaufman School of Dance and California Institute for the Arts.

VITOR LUIZ is an international dancer, educator, and choreographer. He is a former principal dancer with San Francisco Ballet, Ballet of Municipal Theater of Rio de Janeiro, and English National Ballet. In 2019, he joined the University of California, Irvine-Claire Trevor School of The Arts as an assistant professor of dance. Vitor was born in Brazil and studied with masters Pedro Kraszczuk, Dalal Achcar, Stella de Mello, and Victor Navarro before joining the Royal Ballet School in London. He started his career in the UK at 17 after receiving a contract from Birmingham Royal Ballet's director, David Bentley. In 2009, he joined San Francisco Ballet as a principal dancer under the artistic direction of Helgi Tomasson. Vitor has also performed as a guest artist with various esteemed companies and galas worldwide, showcasing his versatile style, dancing, and partnering skills. Vitor's recent choreographic work, *The White Feather*, a Persian Ballet Tale (Luiz-Ghassemieh), has gained recognition from the public and critics as it tours nationwide.

MOLLY LYNCH is an award-winning choreographer and artistic director, with over 35 years of experience creating, producing, and presenting dance. She is currently a Professor in the Dance Department at the Claire Trevor School of the Arts at UC Irvine. Ms. Lynch is the Founder and Artistic Director of the National Choreographers Initiative. She was the Artistic Director of Ballet Pacifica from 1988-2003. During her tenure, she established Ballet Pacifica as Orange County's leading professional dance company and one of the area's top arts organizations. She has choreographed ballets for Sacramento Ballet, Ballet Pacifica, Festival Ballet Theatre, Nashville Ballet, BalletMet (Columbus, OH), Dance Collage (Hermosillo, Mexico), Academies of Ballet in Philippines (Manila), Singapore Dance Theatre. Ms. Lynch was the recipient of the 2001 Choo San Goh Award for Choreography, 2007 Outstanding Arts Organization Award for her National Choreographers Initiative from Arts Orange County, and she was honored with the Irvine Barclay Theatre's prestigious Jade Award for her extraordinary leadership and creativity in 2008. In 2009 and 2014, she received the CTSA Dean's Award for Teaching Excellence from the Division of Undergraduate Education. In 2017, she received the Lifetime Achievement Award for Arts Visionary from Arts Orange County and in October received the 2023 Distinguished Alumni Award for the Claire Trevor School of the Arts at UC Irvine.

ALYSSA RENARD, agent in the Creative Department of McDonald Selznick Associates (MSA Talent Agency) in Los Angeles, represents top choreographers and creatives in the arts and entertainment industry. She discovered her passion for the performing arts at an early age. Dance training started at The Performing Arts Center in Los Angeles at 2 1/2 years of age and Alyssa studied there in the Upper Division Program until she was 18. After completing The Professional Scholarship Program at PAC, she danced professionally in and around Los Angeles. In 2019 after an injury, Alyssa pivoted to artist representation and joined McDonald Selznick Associates. Established in 2000 as the first agency dedicated to represent dancers and choreographers exclusively, MSA became and remains a trend setter in the industry.

LULA WASHINGTON is the founder and artistic director of Lula Washington Dance Theatre, celebrating its 44th anniversary in January 2024. She is the predominant choreographer for the company with her work being performed across the United States as well as abroad in China, Russia, Brazil, Israel, Mexico, Italy, Germany, and Spain. Lula choreographed the hit movie *Avatar* and Disney's original movie *The Little Mermaid*. She holds a MFA in Dance from UCLA and has served on the dance faculties at Cal State Los Angeles, Cal State Dominguez Hills, Long Beach City College and as a guest artist at numerous other institutions. Lula won the National Dance Education Organization's Educator of the Year Award and received the prestigious Minerva Award for her record of teaching and inspiring young artists. Under her leadership, the Lula Washington Dance Theatre has augmented Lula's choreography with works by Donald McKayle, Rennie Harris, Christopher Huggins and Katherine Dunham. Lula and her company have performed in the Desert at both McCallum Theatre and Annenberg Theater.

RENAE WILLIAMS NILES has worked within the nonprofit sector for three decades in many capacities including executive director of an education foundation, chief operating officer/diversity liaison for a university dance school, touring dance company manager, grantmaker for Los Angeles County, vice president of programming/dance presenter, chief content and engagement officer, adjunct professor for graduate program, and as a consultant/curator and moderator. Her career has allowed her to work

with/present/commission new work by over 100 different dance companies, choreographers, directors as well as touring artists. Renae serves as a panelist/advisor for national grant-makers and regularly mentors artists and dance companies. She served on multiple local and national boards, including 13 years on the Western Arts Alliance (WAA) board, and currently is board chair of the national Association of Performing Arts Professionals and on the board of councilors for University of Southern California Kaufman School of Dance. She also served on the Dance/USA Board of Trustees, the board of American Dance Movement and was a three-year advisor for the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project. Renae received the 2017 WAA Service to the Field Award and in 2021, was recognized as an Unsung Hero by the State of California Legislative Black Caucus.

SUBMISSIONS SCREENING PANEL

Stephen Agisilaou, Barbara Arms, Sylvia Boaz, Aaliyah Cota-Griffin, Eric David, Gail DeZon, John Ferrare, Joe Istre, Olga Morales, Shea New, April Rhodes, Sue Roginski, Kajsa Thuresson-Frary



Lifetime Achievement Award recipients Nigel Lythgoe (2009), Glorya Kaufman (2018), Savion Glover (2017) and Festival judge, Jodie Gates celebrating the 20th Anniversary of Palm Desert Choreography Festival in 2017.

PROGRAM DESIGN Mark Duebner Design

INTRODUCTORY SLIDES VanSant Studios

PHOTOGRAPHY Jingzi Zhao

Please take our audience survey



ARTS, INQUIRY, IMAGINATION!

Since its launch in 1997, **McCallum Theatre Education** has served nearly one million students with performances and arts education experiences. In close partnership with local education agencies, McCallum makes the arts available and accessible to youth in the area through its dynamic education programs. In addition, *Palm Desert Choreography Festival* and *Open Call Talent Project* serve as powerful vehicles for developing artists and present exciting and affordable performances open to the general public.

The Aesthetic Education Program



A powerful inquiry-driven approach to teaching and learning, The Aesthetic Education Program encourages students and teachers to be curious, ask questions and rigorously explore works of art to awaken imaginative learning. Designed to develop literacy in the arts, nurture social and emotional learning, and cultivate perceptual abilities and higher order thinking skills, this program was offered virtually during the pandemic, and went in-person in 2022-23 with performances touring to schools. This year, performances are offered at McCallum with a few touring options in traditional style. Currently, 28 schools across the Valley partner with McCallum under the umbrella of this Program, and approximately 1,800 experiential workshops facilitated by McCallum's brilliant teaching artists will take place in partnership classrooms this school year. Over 6,000 will have the opportunity to deeply and meaningfully engage with performances and exhibits selected for study as part of their curriculum.

The Field Trip Series

This Series provides free attendance to music, dance and theater performances at the McCallum for students from the Coachella Valley, High Desert, and beyond each school year. Many students do not have access to the arts in their daily lives and engaging with McCallum provides an opportunity to befriend the performing arts, make powerful connections with the core curriculum, nurture curiosity, build creative and critical thinking skills, and have fun. Pre-performance materials for students are available to access online to help make the experience as meaningful as possible. The Field Trip Series was offered virtually engaging close to 50,000 students during the pandemic. Last year, performances were back at McCallum with the option to watch via live stream in the classroom. This year's series kicked off in October and once again, students can attend at the Theatre or from the classroom.



Open Call Talent Project



Celebrating Local Artists and Nurturing the Spirit of Community!

The Valley's most popular and longest-running talent project for aspiring local artists returned to the McCallum stage in April 2022 after a two-year pandemic pause. In 2023, a cast of 62 community members, ages 10-84, worked alongside McCallum Theatre's artistic and production team in a weeklong rehearsal process that resulted in three energetic and engaging performances shared with supportive audiences. The 2022 and 2023 performances, including the full-cast finale numbers, can be viewed on McCallum Theatre's YouTube channel. The deadline to enter this year's Open Call is January 5, 2024. We plan to be back to four jubilant shows on April 20-21, and tickets go on sale March 4, 2024.

Visit mccallumtheatre.org or call (760) 776-6195 for more information.

To support a specific education program or make a general contribution in support of McCallum Theatre, please contact Tom Head, Associate VP of Development, at thead@mccallum-theatre.org or (760) 776-6164.

McCALLUM THEATRE EDUCATION PRESENTS

PALM DESERT choreography festival 2023

WORKSHOPS WITH FESTIVAL FINALISTS



SATURDAY
NOV 11
11AM - 12:30PM



SUNDAY
NOV 12
12:15 - 1:45PM

After the Present with Jessica Liu & Albert Galindo

Germany-based creative duo **Jessica Liu and Albert Galindo** used to dance with BODYTRAFFIC and Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company respectively among other stellar companies before they began collaborating at Nationaltheater Mannheim under the direction of Stephan Thoss. Join them for a fun and gentle workshop that includes weightsharing, partnering and play with isolation and fragmentation of the body to understand initiations and explore its communicative potential. Dancers learn an excerpt of *After the Present*, a featured choreography in the Festival's Saturday performance.



Confetti Heads with Franco Nieto



Princess Grace Award-winner **Franco Nieto** made the unconventional switch from football to ballet in his teenage years and has since taught and danced in over 10 different countries and performed with Lady Gaga and Sir Elton John. For 10 years, he was principal dancer with NW Dance Project in Portland, Oregon. Franco brings his big heart to every dance workshop and in this one, he'll fuse jazz and contemporary techniques in an environment centered around exploration and self-compassion. Designed to help improve fluidity, with special attention to how the pelvis helps drive movement, this workshop invites participants to fully explore space. Dancers learn a short section of Franco's choreography *Confetti Heads*, featured in Saturday's performance.

To learn more about Jessica, Albert & Franco, visit <https://bit.ly/479HkUo>

Open to advanced dancers of all styles, ages 12 & up
Space is limited. Reservations required. Offered at no cost
thanks to support from our generous Festival donors.

REGISTER



WHERE

College of the Desert, KINE 104
43500 Monterey Avenue, Palm Desert

MORE INFORMATION

Joanna Fookes, Education Program Manager
jfookes@mccallum-theatre.org

FESTIVAL TICKETS STARTING AT \$20!

BY PHONE 760.340.2787

ONLINE mccallumtheatre.org



PALM DESERT



THE DESERT'S NEWS LEADER



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McCALLUM THEATRE

MISSION STATEMENT

The McCallum Theatre's mission is to educate and entertain the public by offering a variety of performing arts experiences that reflects the diversity of people, interests and tastes of the communities and constituents served by the Theatre.

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For ticket information

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The McCallum Theatre is proud to use
JBL professional sound systems, including
JBL loudspeakers and Soundcraft mixing consoles.

SUNDAY FINALISTS

Choreographer photos can be found on the front cover - just match up the number

CRISTINA MCKEEVER-CHANEY is a performer, choreographer and educator from Palm Springs, CA. Her love for choreography was cultivated at Chapman University, where she earned her BFA in Dance Performance. Upon graduation, Cristina moved to Los Angeles where she worked as a performer, educator and choreographer. Her choreography credits include: Moonchild's *The List*, Disney's *Minnie's Bowtoons*, Palm Springs International Dance Festival and Modernism Week. Cristina works as an educator and guest artist with Nickerson-Rossi Dance and as Director of Dance for Aztec Arts Academy at Palm Desert High School, a multi-disciplinary program offering Career Technical Education to high school students interested in pursuing dance.

KEITHAN HAVER is a New Jersey based dancer and choreographer who has been blessed with the opportunity to perform at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and Symphony Space in New York City – all before his 13th birthday. As his career developed, he realized that his true passion lies in choreography, bringing musicality and intensity to the forefront. Keithan works closely with the dancers from Broadway Dance Theatre to bring his visions to life. He is honored to be selected for Palm Desert Choreography Festival, which will mark the west coast debut of his work.

YE LI received the Palm Desert Choreography Festival 2nd Place Award in 2019 and 2022 and his piece *You Will Return* made its international debut at The Achievement Exhibition of the 12th TaoLi Cup National Dancing Education Performance of China in 2019. A multi award-winning performer and previously a soloist with Oregon Ballet Theatre, Guangzhou Ballet, and company member of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, Ye is now Executive Director and Choreographer for the Oregon International Ballet Academy (OIBA) which he co-founded in 2015 with his wife Xuan Cheng, the Rehearsal Director of OBT2, Oregon Ballet Theatre's Junior company (2021-2023) and an international guest Ballet teacher at Oregon Ballet Theatre, Hong Kong Ballet and Guangzhou Ballet.

JACOB GUTIÉRREZ-MONTOYA is a choreographer and dance educator in Folsom, CA. He is the Artistic Director of Hawkins Contemporary Jazz Company and Sacramento Contemporary Dance Theatre. Jacob's work has been featured at New York Musical Theatre Festival, Broadway Sacramento, the inauguration for the Governor of California, Sanremo, Italy and was most recently featured at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland and Habitat for Humanity Gala. Jacob recently completed his Artist-in-Residence at UC Davis, where he worked with PhD composer students to explore the relationship between dance and music.

LAUREN SMITH holds a BFA from UNCSA, and is founder and Artistic Director of Lauren Blair Smith Dance Company in Singapore. She is a Kenan Fellow at Lincoln Center, ABT Certified Teacher, and Vice-President of World Dance Alliance Singapore. She performed Hofesh Shechter's work in the Broadway

National Tour of *Fiddler on the Roof* across the U.S. and Canada. Lauren's choreography received recognition from several festivals including SHAPE, IODC, Palm Springs International Dance Festival, DUMBO Dance Festival, Palm Desert Choreography Festival, Washington International Dance Festival, Doug Varone's *Devices*, Journey Dance Awards, and Young Choreographer's Festival. Her choreography was featured in Singapore, Indonesia, Taiwan and Australia.

GUNTA LIEPINA-MILLER is a Latvian dance artist, Fulbright scholar and the Artistic Director of the Premier Youth Dance Company. She got her MFA in Dance at UC Irvine and studied dance in Jazeps Vitols Latvian Academy of Music and CODARTS in The Netherlands. Gunta's works have been showcased in the United States, Latvia, Lithuania, Thailand, China, Russia, Italy, Bulgaria and Israel. Gunta was one of the choreographers for a reimagined *Nutcracker* ballet which was nominated for the Latvian Dance Awards and received the audience choice award. Her choreography and dancers were featured on the TV show *Dance Revolution* in Lithuania. She recently received the YAGP Outstanding Choreographer Award.

MJ is a guest faculty member for The Juilliard School, Loyola Marymount University, Complexions Contemporary Ballet, Joffrey School, Adrenaline and Revive Dance Conventions and trains dancers from NDT, Martha Graham, Ballet Jazz De Montreal, National Ballet, ABT and San Francisco Ballet. Her students have attained contracts with Nederlands Dans Theater, BODYTRAFFIC, Ballet BC, Complexions, Rockettes, Ballet Nuremberg, Ballet Jazz De Montreal and Dance Theatre of Harlem. As a dancer she was a member of Sonya Tayeh Dance Company and has worked with Beyoncé. She has created work for The Joyce Theater, Los Angeles Contemporary Dance Company, Edinburgh Festival in Scotland, *So You Think You Can Dance*, Tessandra Chavez Unity shows and Edge PAC.

CHARLOTTE GRIFFIN, raised in Durham, NC, is a dance-maker exploring the vulnerability and power of the human form through multidisciplinary collaborations. She has choreographed for the Cambrians, the American Dance Festival, BJM Danse, ArcDanz, Springboard Danse Montreal, The Yard, Bates Dance Festival and others. In 2020, she founded milkleaf to contribute to the vitality of dance across a broad aesthetic and technological field. As a dedicated educator, she devises nourishing artistic praxis for the next generation of dancers at UC Irvine. Charlotte holds a BFA in Dance from The Juilliard School and an MFA from UT Austin.

MIA SELENO, born in Orange County, CA, just recently returned home from training at the CLI Conservatory under the direction of Teddy Forance. During her time there she created several works ranging from solos to group pieces. Learning under artists such as Lucy Vallety, Riley Watts, and Ethan Colangelou, she prepared to launch herself into the world of professional dance. While training, she had

the opportunity to assist as well as direct her very own class on the CLI Studios website. Additionally, she has had the joy of performing at events including *World of Dance* and *The Carnival: Choreographer's Ball*.

MARY ANN MAYER, Assistant Professor, Ann Lacy School of Dance and Entertainment, Oklahoma City University. Originally from Rhode Island, she is affiliated with Ocean State Ballet and served as Ballet Rhode Island's School Director from 2004-2018. Mayer's choreographic collaborations include Ocean State Ballet, Ballet Rhode Island, Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra, University of Hartford, Brooklyn Ballet, and Performing Arts School of Worcester. While pursuing an MFA at the University of Oklahoma she presented original works in the School of Dance and the School of Music. At Oklahoma City University her choreography has been featured in the School of Music's *Hansel & Gretel* and *Sweeney Todd*.

ROCHELLE MAPES' diverse choreography has been presented on the professional concert stage, in festivals, college dance departments, studios, and extensively with competitive high school dance teams. As a performer, Rochelle danced for BARE Dance Company under the direction of Mike Esperanza, RhetOracle Dance Company with Nate Hodges, musical artist Gladys Knight, and the FX television show *Nip/Tuck*. Rochelle earned a BFA and an MA in Dance from Cal State University, Long Beach and is an established dance educator. Teaching credits include Orange County School of the Arts and the American Ballet Theatre Gillespie School. Currently, Rochelle is the Director of Dance at Mater Dei High School.

SIMONE GADLIN is a Southern California native who studied dance throughout the Inland Empire and spent summers training at Dallas Black Dance Theater Summer Intensives. She is a recipient of the International Association of Blacks in Dance (IABD) Scholarship, and in 2019 moved to Philadelphia to dance with Philadanco's second company D/2. Simone performed many lead roles and choreographed in their Spring Fling and Danco on Danco concerts. In November 2022, Simone founded her company Simone Knowelle Dance Project to create a safe space for dancers to grow and explore their craft. The company's work has been presented in the Contemporary Dance Choreography Festival of Orlando, The Detroit Dance City Festival, The Koreshe Showcase, and Kun-Yang Lin Inhale concert in Philadelphia.

MARK CARLSON danced professionally for over twenty years performing solo and leading roles in Europe. In 1997, Carlson founded the International Ballet School in Colorado and his students have received scholarships and contracts in the USA and Europe. He has had four finalists at the Prix de Lausanne in Switzerland, eight finalists at the USAIBC in Jackson and three finalists in The Beijing International Ballet Competition in China. At the Youth American Grand Prix he has been recognized with Outstanding Teacher, Outstanding Choreographer, and Outstanding School Awards seventeen times.



WHY?

- > Ensure support and attention to dance in the Coachella Valley
- > Create venues for dance companies and choreographers
- > Educate young dancers to the potential of dance as a career by providing opportunities for learning, performing and networking with professionals and by exposing them to a variety of dance styles
- > Encourage and ensure new dance audiences by bringing dance to the general public

OMAR ROMÁN DE JESÚS/BOCA TUYA
LOS PERROS DEL BARRIO COLOSAL
GRAND PRIZE 2022



HISTORY

The Festival, founded by choreographer Shea New in 1998, has grown tremendously in size, respect and support, in part due to the stellar talent that it has attracted. It began as a joint effort between the College of the Desert and the City of Palm Desert, with McCallum Theatre Education lending its support in the second year. The idea of the Festival grew out of the need to provide emerging choreographers with support and opportunities to showcase their art. In 2002, the Festival was fully incorporated as a McCallum Theatre Education program and has since expanded its reach with a number of dynamic community projects.

WHAT?

- > A choreography competition
- > Dance projects, workshops, master classes and special presentations
- > Public acknowledgement and recognition for choreographers via honorary and financial awards including a lifetime achievement award for outstanding contributions to dance



YE LI
THE DAYLIGHT WITHIN
2ND PLACE 2022

PHOTOS: JINGZI ZHAO

McCallum Theatre Education seeks to enhance the role of the arts in our lives and community by inspiring greater awareness of their educational, cognitive, emotional and spiritual power. By encouraging an active and experiential study of the arts, McCallum Theatre Education advances the belief that all human beings are inherently creative. The programs developed by McCallum are designed to build on that creativity by equipping individuals with the skills necessary for an enduring engagement with the arts and an understanding of their essential contribution to enlightened citizenship.

Palm Desert Choreography Festival is dedicated to the advancement of dance as an art form, specifically through the support and promotion of quality choreography.



PALM DESERT



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McCallum Theatre is a 501(c)(3)
non-profit performing arts center.