

VIRGINIA'S  
BLUE RIDGE®  
HOLIDAY TRADITION

SOUTHWEST  
VIRGINIA  
*Ballet*

presents



# The Nutcracker

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR PEDRO SZALAY

FEATURING THE ORCHESTRA OF

VIRGINIA'S  
BLUE RIDGE

CONDUCTED BY  
DR. WAYNE GALLOPS

PERFORMING LIVE AT THE

BERGLUND  
PERFORMING  
ARTS THEATRE

DECEMBER 9, 2023  
2 P.M. & 7 P.M.

DECEMBER 10, 2023  
3 P.M.







Visit our website for  
season schedule and tickets  
[www.svballet.org](http://www.svballet.org)

# Romeo & Juliet



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
PEDRO SZALAY

Saturday, April 13 • 7:00 pm  
Sunday, April 14 • 3:00 pm

*performing live at the*  
**BERGLUND PERFORMING  
ARTS THEATRE**





## **A Message From the Artistic Director**

Thank you for being here to celebrate 32 years of our Virginia Blue Ridge's tradition!!! With great love, I dedicate these performances to all of you who give continuous support and belief in our organization. Also, a joyous welcome to all of you who are new to the holiday tradition of the Nutcracker. I am especially thrilled that we have been able to add live music for our Nutcracker this season! Thank you, Dr. Gallops for believing in my vision, and the inclusive mission of the Southwest Virginia Ballet board.

Many complain about how early Holiday decorations and such populate ads and stores: however, our Holiday Season actually began long before December 9th. In August, we held auditions for dancers and musicians. Yet, the holiday feeling for me happens every time a student, fellow dancer, or former artistic director reaches out to me with memories of former performances and ideas toward future performances. They are defining what it means to give and receive; it is my fortune this year to receive them all!

I couldn't do my daily work without the encouragement of dancers, inspiring me in every second of instruction. I work with young dancers in the Roanoke City Public Schools' Dance Español, my classes at Star City School of Ballet, and every Saturday at Southwest Virginia Ballet's rehearsals. Also, thank you to our Executive Director and Board of Directors for fostering my enthusiastic artistic direction: allowing a great reach into our community through collaborations, bringing the art of dance with joy and expression through movement.

What better a season, than Nutcracker-season, to gush about all that fills my heart. I celebrate former dancers, who've gone into the professional world as pharmacists, architects, etc., and professional dancers. They reach back through social media, graduation announcements, wedding invitations, save the dates, attendance of our performances, words of gratitude, or for no reason other than how we touched one another's lives and finally, seeing the lasting friendships with their dance peers. They fill our world with work, which started at Southwest Virginia Ballet: I couldn't be more blessed.

One final, HUGE thank you to the host of volunteers and donors who make all of Southwest Virginia Ballet productions possible.

As Martha Graham said,

"Great dancers are not great because of their technique, they are great because of their passion."

Peace, Love, and Happiness,

Pedro Szalay



## VISION

Southwest Virginia Ballet strives to bring quality pre-professional dance through artistic, instructional, & performance excellence providing opportunities to our youth & community & achieving regional, national, & international recognition.

## MISSION

Our mission is to make the performing arts experience available to all ages from all walks of life through full-length productions of varied repertoire including classical ballet, contemporary, & new works. Southwest Virginia Ballet provides, free of charge, the highest quality of pre-professional training possible to young dancers & promotes cultural enrichment & awareness of the art of dance. SVB is committed to offering outreach opportunities for under-served & at-risk children & adults from across Southwest Virginia.

Southwest Virginia Ballet would like to extend a special "**Thank You**" to the following area dance schools whose students are participating in our production of The Nutcracker:

Ardell Stone School of Dancing  
Art in Motion  
Dance Espanol with RCPS  
Elite School of Dance and  
Performing Arts  
Floyd Ward School of Dance  
Linda Watkins School of Dance  
Little Leapers Dance Studio  
Mish Moves Dance Company

Roanoke Ballet Theater  
Roanoke City Public School Middle  
School Ballet Program  
Star City School of Ballet  
U Can Dance LLC



**This performance is made possible in part by a grant from the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.**



# Southwest Virginia Ballet

presents

## *The Nutcracker*

**Music**

**Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**

**Choreography**

**Pedro Szalay after Tess Post and  
Elie Lazar**

**Rehearsal Assistant  
Assistants**

**Alexis Potter  
Mikaela Marton, Erin Potter,  
Sophia Walker, Evalyn Williams**

**Costume Design**

**Elizabeth Newton-Long**

**Lighting Design**

**Alexandra Vasquez Dheming**

**Stage Manager**

**Elizabeth Francis**

**Technical Director**

**Andres Marton Szalay**

**Costume Supervisor**

**Laura Moats**

**Scenery and Props**

**Tess Post  
Joey Neighbors  
Rob Bessolo  
Michael Hage, Inc  
Mark Shephard  
Richmond Ballet**

**Scenic Designs:**

**Snow Scenery  
Land of Sweets  
Christmas Tree**

**Daniel Nyiri  
Matthew Allar  
Matthew Allar**

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Photos may be purchased at [www.mcdildaphotography.com](http://www.mcdildaphotography.com)

# Act I

It is the night before Christmas, a night filled with the dreams and wishes of children. And for a girl named Clara, it will be a night in which her dreams come true. Clara's parents, Judge and Frau Silberhaus, are hosting a holiday party. The adults dress the tree while the children wait eagerly outside the drawing room doors. As the guests make their Christmas toast, Clara slips into the room to peek at the tree. An angel, strangely resembling the one her godfather, Herr Drosselmeyer, sent them for the top of their tree, appears to her and foretells the magic that will soon come to pass. At this point, the children can no longer be contained and they burst into the room to see the magnificent tree. The party gets underway with much merriment and dancing. The Silberhauses present each child with a special gift. The festivities are interrupted by the arrival of a mysterious stranger who frightens everyone by his odd appearance. Clara, who recognizes her beloved godfather Drosselmeyer, rushes over to hug him. He is both surprised and delighted to see what a beautiful young woman she has become. He then entertains everyone with his life-size mechanical dolls, for which he is famous. Drosselmeyer then presents Clara with a wooden nutcracker. Clara is enchanted with the gift and dances happily until her jealous little brother, Fritz, grabs the nutcracker and breaks it. Her godfather bandages the wounded nutcracker and dries Clara's tears. The evening draws to a close and the guests depart. A sleepy Clara and Fritz go up to their beds.

Drosselmeyer enters after the guests have gone and transforms the house with magic. The Christmas tree begins to grow before Clara's eyes, and the Nutcracker becomes life-size. An army of mice assembles and the Nutcracker summons his soldiers to battle them. The Nutcracker and the Mouse Queen fight a duel, and the cunning mouse is almost victorious when Clara bravely distracts her with her shoe, enabling the Nutcracker to win the battle. Clara's selfless act has broken the spell and the once grotesque wooden soldier transforms into a handsome Prince. Clara's house vanishes before her eyes and she and the Prince suddenly find themselves in the Kingdom of Snow, where the Snow Queen welcomes them to her land.

# ACT II

Clara and the Prince arrive in the Land of the Sweets, where the Sugar Plum Fairy is Queen. Clara is greeted by an array of angels. The Prince describes their battle with the army of mice. Clara is praised for her bravery in saving the Nutcracker, and the Sugar Plum Fairy invites her to sit on the throne and preside over the festivities. Wonderful confections from many lands dance for Clara. The Sugar Plum Fairy, herself, dances with the Cavalier and everyone joins in the final waltz.

Suddenly, Drosselmeyer appears and Clara finds herself becoming drowsy. Her newfound friends seem to be melting away like ice with each wave of her Godfather's hand. Having said goodbye to her Nutcracker Prince, she falls asleep— or has she really been asleep all the while? No matter, for Clara will always remember this magical night when all her dreams came true.

# *The Nutcracker*

## ACT I, SCENE I: A Christmas Party

Frau Silberhaus	Alexandra Thacker
Judge Silberhaus	John Bouldin
Housekeeper	Katie Jane Vass
Butler	Thomas Stadnyk
Maids	Clarissa Gill, Natalie Routt
Grandmother	Cindy Petersen*, Janine Willis**
Grandfather	Robert Borneff*, Rick Butler**
Mothers	Danielle Allen**, Elizabeth Allen*, Jacqueline Biscardi**, Leah Bouldin**, Leanne Carico**, Suzanne de Rooy*, Kinsey Johnson, Lisa McDilda*, Pamela Nelson*, Kiesha Preston**, Tammi Sas*, Natalie Soucie, Destiny Xia**
Fathers	David Daigle, Kevin Lewis, Gene Marrano, Paul Soucie, Craig Stinson, Kyle Vorst, Chris Woodrum
<b>Clara</b>	<b>Franziska Borneff*, Maggie Jarrett**</b>
Fritz	Nate Scott
Party Children	Charlotte Bain, Jayla Bowles, Charlotte Brock, Ethan Burton, Liam Burton, Julianne Edwards, Brayden Heasley, Stuart Heasley, Garima Patel, Bentley Robertson, Evelyn Soucie, Sanskrit Vorst, Lisa Warren
Tree Angel	Franziska Borneff**, Maggie Jarrett*
<b>Drosselmeyer</b>	<b>Mark Shephard</b>
Columbine	Margaret Kauffman**, Sophia Walker*
Harlequin	Kevin Perry
Toy Soldier	Lachaln Robrecht
Sugar Plum Doll	Erin Potter**, Erin Schallon*

\*\* Friday/ Saturday Matinee Performance

\*Saturday Evening/ Sunday Matinee Performance



## SCENE 2 THE TRANSFORMATION AND BATTLE

Mouse Queen	Kallie Niday**, Abigail Wescott*
Mouse Princess	London Miller
Mice	Charlotte Bain, Arya Metheney, Sephira Metheney, Genevieve Nault, Addison Soper
Nurse Doll	Alta Merzinskas
Spanish Doll	Lucia Walker
Chinese Doll	Lisa Warren
French Doll	Maren Pauley
Teddy Bear	Charlotte Brock
Arabian Doll	Julianne Edwards
Russian Doll	Emma Staley
Gingerbread Doll	Jayla Bowles
Guard Soldier	Caroline Dick
Rabbit Soldier	Abigail Orr
Soldiers	Violet Burns, Clara Curro, Olivia Davis, Lilia Dushkin, Bill Grogan-Rodriguez, Sophie Grogan-Rodriguez, Olive Laughinghouse, Gia Ornelas, Stella Pritchard, Nylah-Jade Slay
Nutcracker	Tyrique Bowles

## SCENE 3 THE LAND OF SNOW

<b>Nutcracker Prince</b>	<b>Tyrique Bowles</b>
Snow Queen	Margaret Kauffman*, Alexis Potter**
Snow Princesses	Vivian Fernandez, Charlotte Firestone, Sophia Walker, Evalyn Williams
Snowflakes	Lillian Bordens**, Franziska Borneff**, Lauren Cox**, Clarissa Gill*, Abigail Hewitt*, Maggie Jarrett*, Dara Kerman, Mikaela Marton, Kallie Niday*, Erin Potter*, Natalie Routt**, Erin Schallon**, Abigail Wescott
Ice Crystals	Charlotte Brock, Forrest Buehler, Garima Patel*, Maren Pauley, Evalyn Soucie**, Emma Staley, Aaliyah Vorst, Lucia Walker, Lisa Warren,
Reindeer	Molly Bennett, Owen Burton, Sophie Kerman, Evelyn Kozlowski, Clara Preston, Beatrice Riggs

\*\* Friday/ Saturday Matinee Performance

\*Saturday Evening/ Sunday Matinee Performance

## ACT II THE LAND OF THE SWEETS

Little Angels	Sammy Bjorklund, Sarah Bremner, Hanna Brenner, Pierce Brenner, Faith Campbell, Joy Knox, Meara Knox, Eden Groth, Emory Groth, Alice Miner
Big Angles	Abby Bjorklund, Moriah Bremner, Henry Brenner, Eva Campbell, Joel Campbell, Nehemiah Campbell, Evie Hune, Aildih Knox, Ellie Laughridge, Elena Preston
Pages	Liam Burton, Brayden Heasley, Stuart Heasley, Bentley Robertson
<b>Sugar Plum Fairy Cavalier</b>	<b>Erin Potter**, Erin Schallon* Lachlan Robrecht</b>
Confectioners	Mya Kilburn, Kadence Rivers, Nate Scott, Gillian Soper
Chocolate	Tyrique Bowles, Kallie Niday*, Alexis Potter*, Abigail Wescott**, Evalyn Williams**
Coffee	Alexis Potter**, Evalyn Williams*
Handmaidens	Lauren Cox, Clarissa Gill, Abigail Hewitt, Natalie Routt
Tea	Forrest Buehler, Dara Kerman, Lucia Walker
Marzipan	Franziska Borneff*, Vivian Fernandez, Charlotte Firestone, Maggie Jarrett**
Licorice	Charlotte Bain, Arya Metheney, Sephira Metheney, London Miller, Genevieve Nault, Kevin Perry, Addison Soper
Mother Ginger	John Bouldin
Gingerbread	Anna Belle Beck, Jayla Bowles, Ethan Burton, Brielle Davis, Alta Merzviniskas, Natalie Penney, Nate Scott, Etta Stultz
<b>WALTZ OF THE FLOWERS</b>	
Hummingbird	Franziska Borneff**, Margaret Kauffman*, Kallie Niday**, Sophia Walker*
Leaves	Charlotte Brock, Julianne Edwards, Garima Patel, Maren Pauley, Evelyn Soucie, Emma Staley, Aaliyah Vorst, Lisa Warren
Sugared Violets	Maggie Jarrett*, Margaret Kauffman**, Mikaela Marton, Erin Potter*, Erin Schallon**, Sophia Walker*, Abigail Wescott*
Candied Roses	Lillian Bordens, Lauren Cox, Vivian Fernandez, Charlotte Firestone, Clarissa Gill, Abigail Hewitt, Dara Kerman, Natalie Routt, Katie Jane Vass
<b>Grand Pas de Deux</b>	<b>Erin Potter**, Lachlan Robrecht, Erin Schallon*</b>
Finale and Apotheosis	Ensemble

\*\* Friday/ Saturday Matinee Performance

\*Saturday Evening/ Sunday Matinee Performance

# *The Orchestra of Virginia's Blue Ridge*

Conducted by Dr. Wayne Gallops

## **VIOLIN**

Kevin Matheson,  
*Concertmaster*

Vladimir Kromin, *Principal*

*Second Violin*

Lowell Inhorn

Fawn Kesselring

Joshua Miao

Shaleen Powell

Finn Smith

## **BASS**

Evan Musgrave, *Principal*

## **FLUTE**

Julee Hickox, *Principal*

*Gabby Bryson*

Trenton Walker

## **TRUMPET**

Jeff Kresge, *Principal*

John Ouimette

## **TROMBONE**

Stefan Castro, *Principal*

Michael Mangrum

## **OBOE**

Meredith McCree, *Principal*

Maggie Rahmoeller

## **PERCUSSION**

Sage Abueznaid, *Principal*

Sylar Nichols

## **VIOLA**

Brian Matheson, *Principal*

Diane Conant

Irene Ours

## **CLARINET**

Michelle Smith Johnson,

*Principal*

Abraham Richard

## **KEYBOARD**

Ashley Cundiff

## **CELLO**

Lee Richey, *Principal*

Candice Amick

John Crawford

## **BASSOON**

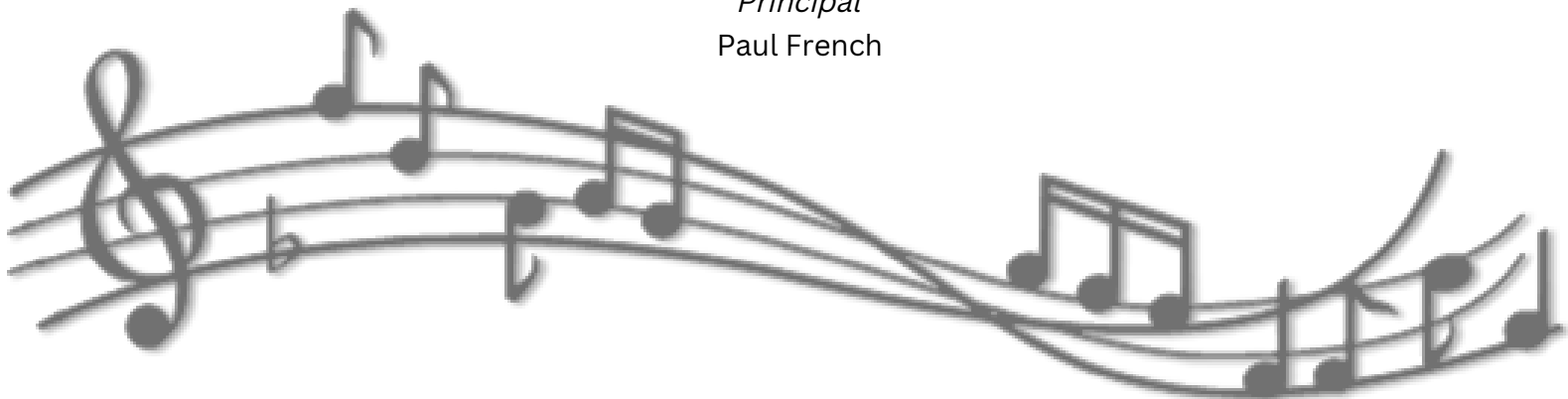
Valanda Nelson

## **HORN**

Rachel Morgan Abbott,

*Principal*

Paul French







**PEDRO SZALAY, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR** was born to Hungarian parents and is a native of La Guaira, Venezuela where he started dancing in local school by Ms. Machado. He received a scholarship at Ballet Nacional of Caracas, coached by Vladimir Isayev and many other national and international teachers. There he danced many of Nebrada's choreographed pieces. Later he traveled to New York City to be coached by Madame Darvash & performed with New York Dance Theatre directed by Frank Ohman. After New York, Szalay became a company dancer with Richmond Ballet from 1996 to 2006 where he was an inspiration for many choreographers & danced pieces from Balanchine, Burn, Canaporoli, Lang, Soleau, Stevenson, Orff, Wainrot, Winslett & many others. He was also a guest performer & choreographer with the Latin Ballet of Virginia. He has guest taught in South Carolina, Philadelphia, Virginia School of the Arts, Washington & Lee University & St. Paul's Ballet Company. Szalay served as a coach, choreographer for the School of Richmond Ballet & other Richmond dance schools. He served as Artistic Advisor for Chesterfield Ballet School. Szalay coached the Wheel Chair Miss Richmond. He currently teaches at Star City School of Ballet. In the summer of 2016, he was invited to be a guest teacher in Murcia, Spain at Robles Ballet School. Szalay, for the past 14 years, enhanced the lives of many 4th graders through his instruction of the Minds In Motion program in Richmond, Charlottesville, Martinsville, Salem & Roanoke City Schools.

Beginning in 2012, Szalay developed a Spanish language, choreographed movement program called Dance Español for 4th graders in public schools. In 2013, he created a Ballet program for Middle Schools in Roanoke City Public Schools. January 2007, Szalay became Artistic Director of Southwest Virginia Ballet in the Roanoke Valley. He has since then strived for SVB to be recognized locally, regionally, nationally & internationally. In 2009, he was awarded the Perry F. Kendig Award for Outstanding Performing Artist & in 2010 named the best Local Celebrity for Charity Events by the Roanoker Magazine. In 2017, he received the Bransow Award in recognition of exceptional dedication & service to the Virginia Museum Community. Szalay is a Resident Artist for Carilion Clinic Healing Art Program. He is a board member of Thursday Morning Music Club as Dance Chairman of Footnotes & Roanoke City Public School Education Foundation, Inc..

Szalay's choreography credits include: The Long Christmas Ride Home, for Flournoy Playwright Festival, Ties: A Railroad Ballet, Cinderella, Coppelia, Romeo and Juliet, Miss Richmond Pageant (2002-2003), the Miss Virginia Pageant(2009-2012), Like Winter Waiting (2012- 2014), Sewing Seeds with Ann Waldrop, Dominos for Charlottesville Ballet, Holidays Pops, Peter & The Wolf, Carmina Burana with Roanoke Symphony Orchestra, Excerpts of Act II of The Nutcracker, Firebird & Under the Tent with Roanoke Youth Symphony, Nick Cave, Norman Rockwell & many others for Taubman Museum of Art, La Traviata and South Pacific for Opera Roanoke. In 2017, he choreographed an original score in remembrance of the Virginia Tech tragedy. In 2019, he collaborated with Scott Williamson with a new project "Collective Euphonia" at Temple Emanuel, Roanoke, VA.

**Dr. Wayne Gallops CONDUCTOR ORCHESTRA OF VIRGINIA'S BLUE**

**RIDGE**, Educator, Composer-Arranger and Recording Artist

Dr. R. Wayne Gallops is conductor for The Orchestra of Virginia's Blue Ridge and our SWVA Ballet Theater production of The Nutcracker.

Throughout his forty year career as a conductor and keyboard artist, Wayne conducted, performed, and recorded with classical & jazz orchestras and artists worldwide including; The Florida Lyric Opera, The Florida Orchestra, Coronation Pops Orchestra, The Florida Gulf Coast Orchestra, The Tallahassee Symphony, The Roanoke Symphony, Disney Studios, Busch Gardens, The Vosbien-Magee Big Band, The Jazz Cellar Orchestra, Radford University and Southwest Virginia



Ballet Theater productions of The Nutcracker, The Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin, The Broadway Theater Project, and other professional, collegiate, community, and school bands and orchestras throughout the United States, Canada, and Japan. Some artists Wayne performed with include jazz and pop greats Chic Corea, Jennifer Holiday, Bernadette Peters, Ann Reinking, Ronan Tyner and the Irish Tenors, Julie Andrews, Frank Wildhorn, Barry Manilow, Englebert Humperdink, Frankie Valli, The Funk Brothers of Motown, The Association, The Four Seasons, Eddie Arnold, Dianne Carroll, Eric Darius, The Bill Norman Group, Tito Puente, Pete Fountain, Nat Adderly and Al Hurt. Wayne's 2008 solo CD release 'Jazzicale' received international critical acclaim and his classical pipe organ recordings have been featured on NPR syndicated programs "Pipe Dreams" and "With Good Reason." In 2004, Dr. Gallops joined the faculty at Radford University where he serves as Chair of the Department of Music and conductor of the Radford University Community Symphony. In years past, Wayne served the university as Executive Director of the Virginia Governor's School for Visual & Performing Arts and Humanities, Director of Music Education, and Director of Bands. Prior to his appointment at RU, Dr. Gallops served on the faculties of The University of Tampa, The University of South Florida, Hillsborough Community College and the Hillsborough County Public Schools (Tampa, FL). Dr. Gallops has published and presented papers, clinics, lectures, and performances for numerous regional, national and international music organizations. Wayne also served on the Virginia Music Educators Association Executive Board, the United Arts Council of Greater Greensboro Grant Boards, and is honored through membership in Kappa Delta Pi, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, Who's Who Among American Teachers, Outstanding Young Men of America, and Citations of Excellence from the National Band Association. Dr. Gallops holds music degrees from The University of Tampa (B.A.), Florida State University (M.M.) and The University of South Florida (Ph.D.). Wayne lives in Roanoke (Virginia) and happily collaborates with regional arts organizations and our Southwest Virginia Ballet Theater productions!



**Mark Shephard - GUEST ARTIST**, is a native of Roanoke. He graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree. Mark is a painter and hairstylist, and enjoys writing fiction. He has been curling Clara's and other party scene girl' corkscrew curls for the Southwest Virginia ballet's Nutcracker for over ten years. This is his twelfth year performing in the Nutcracker, his fifth year performing as Drosselmeyer. Shephard also performed the role of Lord Capulet in SVB's 2017 production of Romeo and Juliet and is looking forward to reprising his role again this spring!

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**Alex Vásquez Dheming - SVB's LIGHTING DESIGNER**, is a Lighting Designer from San Salvador, El Salvador based in NYC. Collaborators include Big Dance Theater (Annie-B Parson), Nélide Tirado, Calpulli Mexican Dance, Miguel Gutierrez, SLM Dances, New York Theatre Ballet, Ashwini Ramaswamy Les Ballets Trockadero, and Works and Process. Her multidisciplinary work has been seen nationally (Lincoln Center, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Park Avenue Armory, Guggenheim Museum, Baryshnikov Arts Center, Center for Performance Research, Performance Space New York, the Highline, BAM, Rattlesticks Theater, Skirball, Kaufman Music Center, New York Live Arts, Museo del Barrio, New England Conservatory of Music, Theatreworks, Festival Flamenco Albuquerque, LA Public Libraries, Savannah Stopover Festival, etc), and internationally (Spain (Museo Guggenheim Bilbao), France (Cannes Film Festival), across the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas (Oceania Cruises). Concert lighting includes Gilberto Santa Rosa, the Westermies, the Owls, and BTS. Alex holds a BFA from Savannah College of Art and Design, and is a Wingspace and Stagecraft Institute of Las Vegas (SILV) alumna; recipient of The Playwright Realm's International Theatermakers Award (2021); featured designer in San Diego Rep's Latinx New Play Festival 2020. Alex was a commissioned artist for the Park Avenue Armory Sound & Color: The Future of Race in Design Symposium (2023)  
More info: [alexvasquezdheming.com](http://alexvasquezdheming.com) @alxvsquezdhming



**ELIZABETH FRANCIS, SVB's STAGE MANAGER**, is grateful for the opportunity to join the Southwest Virginia Ballet Company as the stage manager again for the 2023-2024 season. While working with SVB, she has stage managed productions such as TIES, Repertoire, Cinderella and of course, The Nutcracker. Prior to joining Southwest Virginia Ballet, she has stage managed for Logos Theatricus Productions, Inc. (Song of Mark; The Feast of Life), choreographed for Showtimers \ (Rent), and performed in Cabaret (Showtimers), Goodnight Moon (Hollins Theatre), and 42nd Street (Mill Mountain Theatre). Elizabeth currently teaches jazz, tap, and musical theatre for Star City School of Ballet and works full time at Virginia Title Center. She would like to thank her family, friends and coworkers for their love and support. Enjoy the show!

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**LAURA MOATS, SVB'S Costume Supervisor**, earned her B.A. in Art History from Roanoke College in 2018. She has a deep love for both performance and visual arts that has included work as Costume Shop Assistant for Theatre Roanoke College 2014-2018; Assistant Costumer for Opera Roanoke's 2015 production of South Pacific; 2018 Season Costume Assistant Roles for Opera in the Ozarks including: Costume Design of Johann Strauss Jr.'s Die Fledermaus, Hair & Makeup Lead for Douglas Moore's The Ballad of Baby Doe, and Wardrobe Lead for Rossini's Il barbiere di Siviglia,. Laura has worked for the Taubman Museum of Art for over 5 years and is currently the Visitor Services & Volunteer Manager. She is delighted and grateful to join the SVB team for the 2023 season.

**ANDRES MARTON SZALAY, SVB's Technical Director**, is happy to volunteer backstage with Southwest Virginia Ballet for this year's production of the Nutcracker. He has helped backstage with Cinderella and Repertoire as well.

Andres is thankful to everyone who supports the ballet and hopes you enjoy the show!



**ASHLEY CUNDIFF, SVB's Company Pianist**, holds a bachelor of Arts degree in music and French from Hollins University. She is an active solo pianist, accompanist, music instructor, & director of ensembles. Cundiff currently is Director of Music Ministries at Redwood United Methodist Church & an adjunct instructor of music at Ferrum College, in addition to working with SVB providing live Piano accompaniment for company rehearsals. Ashley lives in Rocky Mount with her husband, daughter and twins, and enjoys reading, writing and dabbling in home economics in her spare time.

**ALEXIS POTTER, SVB's Rehearsal Assistant**, is currently a junior at Roanoke Catholic School. She began dancing with Floyd Ward School of Dance at the age of three and moved to The Dance Centre of Southwest Virginia (now Star City School of Ballet), where she discovered her true love of ballet, at the age of seven. She has been a member of SVB's company since the 2017-2018 season. Since then, Alexis has had the opportunity to perform in several ballets with SVB including The Nutcracker, Coppellia, TIES and Cinderella! Alexis has been privileged to perform several original works as well as attend the University of North Carolina School of the Arts' Summer Intensive. Alexis would like to thank her parents and grandparents for being her biggest supporters and always being there for her. She would also like to thank Mr. Pedro and the staff at Star City School of Ballet and at UNCSEA for guiding her to be the dancer she is and for helping her find her love of dance again. Alexis further would like to thank Amelia Ball, Ana Maria Barrios, Tony D'Alelio, Erin Schallon and Erin Potter for being her biggest fans and always being there for her.



# Southwest Virginia Ballet Junior and Senior Company 2023-2024



Senior Company - Lillian Bordens, Franziska Borneff, Tyrique Bowles, Lauren Cox, Vivian Fernandez, Charlotte Firestone, Clarissa Gill, Abigail Hewitt, Maggie Jarrett, Margaret Kauffman, Dara Kerman, Mikaela Marton, Alexis Potter, Erin Potter, Lachlan Robrecht, Natalie Routt, Erin Schallon, Katie Jane Vass, Sophia Waler, Evalyn Williams

Junior Company - Charlotte Bain, Jayla Bowles, Forrest Buehler, Julianne Edwards, Alta Merzvinskas, Genevieve Nault, Garima Patel, Maren Pauley, Evelyn Soucie, Emma Staley, Aaliyah Vorst, Lucia Walker, Lisa Warren

*Jenny Marie's Photographie*  
 Photographer | Roanoke, VA  
 Portrait | Product | Food | Wedding  
 @itsmissjenny

Star City  
School of Ballet

It's been a great year: and the best is yet to come.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR STUDENTS DANCING TONIGHT.

1005 INDUSTRY AVENUE SE # 7A  
 WWW.STARCITYSCHOOLOFBALLET.COM  
 information@starcityschoolofballet.com



# SVB Graduating Seniors

**FRANZISKA BORNEFF** is a senior at Hidden Valley High School and is excited to spend her final year dancing with Southwest Virginia Ballet. She has been a company member since 6th grade and a part of SVB's Nutcracker since the age of seven when she performed as a reindeer. During the week, she trains with Star City School of Ballet. Franziska's most cherished spring performances have been Cinderella and Coppelia. She is grateful to be part of a loving and encouraging dance community and hopes to continue dancing in college alongside her studies. She thanks Pedro Szalay, her dance teachers throughout the years, and her family for their loving support.



**MARGARET KAUFFMAN** is a senior at Governor's School and Patrick Henry High School. She has danced with Southwest Virginia Ballet's company for 7 years and is very excited for what this dance season has in store. Her favorite role was performing Clara in Nutcracker her junior year. Outside of dance, she enjoys the outdoors, volunteering in the NICU at Carilion hospital, and working with children. Because of her passion for medicine and infant care, she plans on eventually working in neonatology. Lastly, she would like to thank her parents for always supporting her in dance and her career goals!

**ERIN SCHALLON** is a senior at Cave Spring High School and is looking forward to seeing what her final year at Southwest Virginia Ballet entails. Erin joined Southwest Virginia Ballet's company in the 6th grade and has had the opportunity to perform in numerous roles including the Sugar Plum Fairy and Clara in The Nutcracker and the Summer Fairy in Cinderella. She also has been blessed to have the opportunity to be in Coppelia, excerpts from Swan Lake, and Ties. She has been a member of the Star City School of Ballet for 12 years. As her senior year begins she is excited to perform in The Nutcracker and this year's spring production of Romeo and Juliet. Erin is looking to further her ballet career through college or trainee opportunities. She would like to thank Pedro Szalay and the other Star City School of Ballet's instructors, her parents, family, and friends for all of their love and support throughout the years.



## *Dancer Dedications*

*Clarissa Gill*

We are so proud of you and cannot wait to see you shine on stage when you perform.

We love you so very much!

XOXO

*Mom and Dad*

*Charlotte Anne Bain*

We are so proud of you & cannot wait to see where your beautiful dancing spirit takes you!

We love you, sweet girl!

*Mommy, Daddy, Liza, Charlie, and Mille*

*Franziska Borneff*

We see the reflection of your beautiful soul, hard work, perseverance, and the incredible spirit you carry within you. Both on and off the stage you sparkle. May dance continue to be a source of joy and fulfillment in your life. We are so proud of you. Viel Spass! With all our love and support,

*Mom, Dad, Sabrina, Matthias, Oma, Opa, Uncle Mark and family*

*Charlotte Firestone*

Charlotte, you are an amazing young woman and we are proud of you each and every day. We respect and appreciate what you do. Your kindness and dedication warms our hearts. Continue to live by your motto "Work Hard, Dream Big, Never Quit"

*Love always, Mom and Mike*

*Alta Merzvinskas*

Alta you are amazing and I am so proud of you.

*Dad*

*London Miller*

London we are so proud of you. Your courage to try something new, and dance with such elegance, beauty, and grace is amazing. Keep shining. We love you!

*Sylvia, Christian, and Dallas*

*Julianne Edwards*

Julianne, we are so proud of you! You have grown so much as a dancer and as a person over this past year, and we are continuously inspired by you. Keep working hard, and never stop believing that your dreams will come true. We love you to the moon and back!

Love,

*Mommy and David*

# *Dancer Dedications*

*Alexis Potter*

Alexis, we are so proud of your hard work and dedication! You have become such an amazing ballerina and we love seeing you on stage. From your very first Nutcracker as a Soldier to Snow Queen and Arabian, we have loved every moment! We can't wait to see what your future holds! We love you!

*Mom and Dad*

*Erin Potter*

Erin, we are so proud of how hard you work for your art! It seems like yesterday that you were dancing as a Little Angel in your first Nutcracker. From that Little Angel to the Sugarplum Fairy, you have grown into an amazing ballerina! We can't wait to see what your future holds!

We love you!

*Mom and Dad*

*Erin Schallon*

We are incredibly proud of you Erin! Congratulations on achieving your goals. This world is lucky to have an intelligent, beautiful, talented, remarkable and hardworking young woman! You have an amazing talent for dance. We are here supporting and praying for your journey. We love you very much!

*Mom, Dad, Sarah, Isaac and Hannah*

*Elena and Clara*

Congratulations, to our beautiful Angel and Reindeer! We love watching you have fun on stage. <3

*Dad, Nani, Nathan, and Liam*

*Botetourt Music Academy*

You all were so wonderful this year at the Nutcracker!

We are so proud of your lovely singing and excellent dancing!

*The BMA Team*



## *Dancer Dedications*

*Alexis and Erin Potter*

We are so proud of your hard work and dedication. May you always reach the goals you set for yourselves. We love you.

*Nauna and Gramps*

*Molly Bennett*

We are so excited to watch you as the cutest reindeer ever pulling the sleigh! You are one performance closer to being what you want to be when you grow up - Sugar Plum Fairy! We love you to the moon and back!!

*Granny and Poppy*

*Abigail Orr*

We are so proud of you and love you sooooo much!  
You will do amazing cause you always do!

*Mom & Campbell*

*Charlotte Firestone*

You never cease to amaze me! Your motivation and dedication is limitless! You are a true inspiration with the brightest of futures!

*Love, Aunt Nancy*

## **Thank you to our countless supporters**

It's truly heartwarming to hear about the unwavering dedication of Southwest Virginia Ballet's volunteers and donors. Their selfless contributions, from stitching costumes late into the night to providing meals for the cast and crew, are the lifeblood of the company, enabling us to bring captivating ballet performances to life. The collaborative spirit and generosity of the community are what make Southwest Virginia Ballet a true gem, fostering a vibrant artistic environment that enriches the lives of all who experience it.

***We are so grateful for you all.***



## SVB Board of Directors

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Website Designer	Carrie Cousins
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## HISTORY

Southwest Virginia Ballet (SVB) has been a part of the community for 25 years & serves over 10,000 children & adults annually. SVB began in 1990 by Founding Artistic Director Tess (Terri) Post. The Associate Director role was filled by Sandra Smeltzer. Ms. Post's vision was for Southwest Virginia to produce and support a regional ballet company that would provide pre-professional quality performances of varied repertoire including classical ballet, contemporary, and modern works.

The new company quickly became a part of the community experience and in its first year performed at Festival in the Park, with Opera Roanoke in *Die Fledermaus*, and had its premier Company performance at Virginia Western Community College. This was quickly followed up in 1991 by a production of *The Nutcracker* at Olin Hall, Roanoke College, with the first locally produced full-length production of *The Nutcracker* in many years. By 1993, SVB was performing *The Nutcracker* at the Roanoke Civic Center accompanied by the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra and continued to perform at Festival in the Park, *Affair in the Square*, as guests with the Rockbridge Ballet, and with Opera Roanoke in *The Merry Widow* and *Rigoletto*. SVB also performed two full-length productions annually. In order to expand training and performance opportunities for company dancers, in 1993 SVB applied for admission to the Southeast Regional Dance Association (SERBA), a division of Regional Dance America. SVB hosted the annual SERBA Festival in 2003.

In 2006, Pedro Szalay joined SVB as instructor, co-artistic director, and choreographer. In 2007, Mr. Szalay became the full-time Artistic Director when Ms. Post relocated to New York. Under Szalay's direction, SVB company membership has doubled in size & has gained regional, national, & international acclaim. Under the artistic leadership of Mr. Szalay, the annual production of *The Nutcracker* routinely brings together as many as 180 SVB Company & community members, both children & adults. In 2009, Mr. Szalay created his first original full-length ballet, *TIES*, in collaboration with musician David Austin, the O. Winston Link Museum, & the Virginia Museum of Transportation to bring the history of the railroad in Southwest Virginia to life on stage. He has also created full-length productions of *Cinderella* & *Romeo & Juliet*. Additional productions include *Coppelia*, *The Firebird*, & *Reencuentro* (which included alumni), as well as original works by many innovative choreographers. In addition to full-length productions, SVB performs throughout the year at area festivals & events & has collaborated with the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra & Opera Roanoke.

An advertisement for George's Flowers. On the left, a hand with a tattoo holds a vibrant bouquet of yellow, orange, and pink roses in a decorative green vase. The background is a white brick wall. On the right, the text reads: "KEEP IT LOCAL" in large pink letters, followed by "SAME DAY AND RUSH DELIVERY", "100% GUARANTEE ON ALL FLOWERS", "SEE WHAT YOU SEND", and "ALL OCCASIONS | WEDDINGS | LIVE PLANTS". Below this is the "George's" logo in green script with a flower icon, and "A REAL LOCAL FLORIST" in smaller green letters. At the bottom, it lists "georgesflowers.com (540) 981-0900" and "1953 Franklin Road | Roanoke".

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Southwest Virginia Ballet (SVB) has served the community for 25 years & serves over 10,000 children & adults annually. SVB continues to serve as a training ground for regional dancers possibly seeking a career in dance or dance related fields. In its 25-year history, SVB's distinguishing characteristics continue to include professional instruction, free membership, free costumes, & regional participation, in that, many dance schools are represented in company membership.

SVB's programs Minds and Motion (6 years) and Dance Español (4 years), created and instructed by Mr. Szalay, have brought dance and inspiration to youth in our schools. These programs have had a large impact reaching over 200 Roanoke City 4th graders each year and over 340 Martinsville City School students of all ages in Henry County. Community outreach and collaborative endeavors have expanded to include performances at Dickens of a Christmas, Parks and Arts, Virginia Science Festival, O. Winston Link Museum, History Museum of Western Virginia, Science Museum of Western Virginia, and Taubman Museum of Art. Company dancers participate in readings at Barnes and Noble Bookstore in addition to local schools, and visit Carilion Clinic to perform and bring cheer to pediatric patients.

Southwest Virginia Ballet has awarded \$8,000 through the Vaszary Scholarship Fund since 2009. An endowment fund, established in 2011, now exceeds \$140,000. As part of the program, "Southwest Virginia Ballet Gives Back", SVB has provided free tickets to over 1600 clients of area human services organizations to attend The Nutcracker & spring productions.

## **RECOGNITION**

The company, now with 56 members, has received regional recognition & in July 2011 received international recognition at the New Prague Dance Festival winning first place in classical dance & first place in costuming. Two SVB dancers were also recognized for individual talent at the New Prague Dance Festival in 2011. In 2013, SVB received the Grishko Award at the New Prague Dance Festival, the equivalent of second place in the overall festival. At the New Prague Dance Festival 2015, SVB was awarded Second Place in Classical Dance, Second Place in Pedagogy of Dance (Pedro Szalay, Artistic Director), the Grishko Award, a Talent in Dance Award & a Special Participant Award, which is voted by peers. SVB was first voted Roanoke's Best Ballet Organization in 2003 & Roanoke's Best Performing Arts Group in 2012 by the readers of Roanoke's City Magazine. For the past several years, SVB has received the Best Arts Performance award several years running. SVB also received recognition as the City of Salem Best Performing Arts Group in 2008 & was the first organization to receive the Art Venture Award from the Taubman Museum of Art for extraordinary educational & collaborative programming in 2014. In 2015, SVB was awarded the prestigious Perry F. Kendig Arts & Cultural Organization Award.

In its 25 year history, SVB's distinguishing characteristics continue to include professional instruction, free membership, free costumes, & open participation with many of the regions dance schools represented in company membership. Many SVB Alumni continue to dance, choreograph, and teach around the world. Others are leaders in areas of arts, science, engineering, and business. This program for young dancers instills the discipline, teamwork, and dedication necessary to be successful in all aspects of life and fields of study and work.

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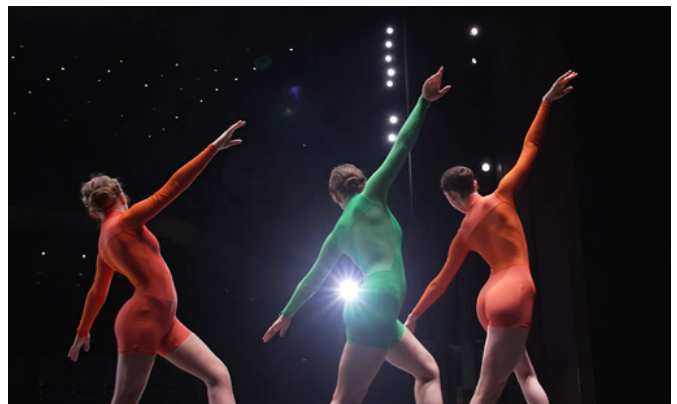
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Hey Neighbor, you're  
looking great onstage!

Whether you're a dancer onstage or one of the many hard workers behind the scenes making this production of *The Nutcracker* possible, we applaud you.

Our work to create a more connected, more beautiful and more prosperous home for all of us starts with efforts just like this. With each performance, with every new artwork (like Thiago Valdi's 2023 Campbell Avenue mural above), with each new artistic dream we bring to life, we're creating a stronger community, together.

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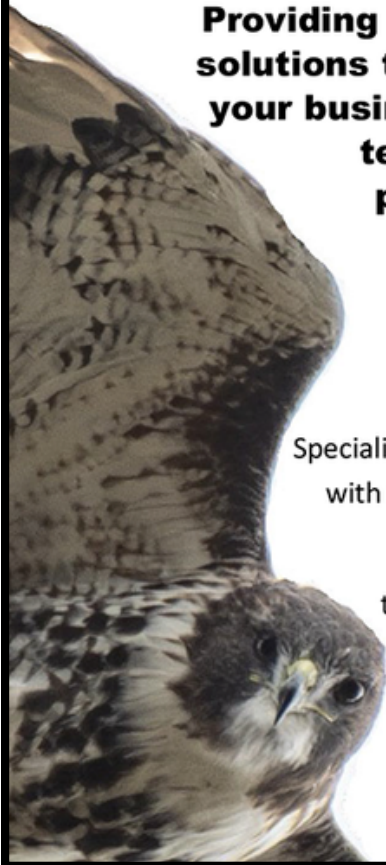
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