

SOUTHWEST
VIRGINIA
Ballet

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
PEDRO SZALAY

presents

Romeo & Juliet



In loving
MEMORY OF



FATHER JOSEPH LEHMAN

THIS PERFORMANCE IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED TO
FATHER JOE AND HIS FAMILY, WITH GREAT
ADMIRATION FOR HIS PASSION IN THE ARTS.



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 *Romeo & Juliet*:

Ardell Stone School of Dancing
Dance Español with RCPS
Dance Tech
Floyd Ward School of Dance
Linda Watkins School of Dance

Little Leapers Dance Studio - Blacksburg
Roanoke Ballet Theatre
Star City School of Ballet
Studio 45
U Can Dance LLC



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

Special thanks to

**The Helen S. and Charles G. Patterson, Jr. Charitable Foundation
for supporting SVB's school outreach performance of *Romeo & Juliet*.**



A Note of Gratitude From the Artistic Director

The Trilogy of Destinations Season has been an adventurous and busy one for our patrons and dancers; starting with Symphony Under the Stars with Roanoke Symphony Orchestra, onward to the Historic Grandin Theatre with Répertoire, then a collaboration with the Taubman Museum of Art in the Swoon opening party. Our journey continued with the annual Stocked Market by the Junior League of Roanoke, Dickens of Christmas, Carilion Hospital performances, along with the Old Parlor Southwest Neighborhood tour. Next came The Nutcracker including live music from the Orchestra of Virginia's Blue Ridge, Botetourt Music Academy, and not to forget, a dog from Angels of Assisi. In February, we performed in Winter Romance with the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra; in March, Roanoke Arts Pops, and finally, another beautiful partnership with Roanoke City Public School in the Dance Español Program for which I am eternally grateful.

We are so glad you are here with us for our next destination, Verona, Italy, in an incredible tale, written by William Shakespeare between 1591 and 1595. The score for the ballet Romeo & Juliet was composed in 1935, for a Soviet premiere in early 1940. The Prokofiev score will absolutely transport your emotions in every undulation of the dramatic story line. Southwest Virginia Ballet's premiere of Romeo & Juliet hit the stage in 2013, with original choreography by me; and staged here at the Berglund Center. We are so fortunate to bring it back once again, especially during the 460th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth!

This year's performance is dedicated to the memory of Father Joseph Lehman who played the role of Friar Lawrence in both of our previous productions of Romeo & Juliet. He truly was my inspiration for the role, and as a leader in our community and world. Father Joe (as everyone called the easy to love man) was so supportive of the arts in our region. For me, he's still one of us in the SVB family. In this production, Father William Buckley has agreed to play Friar Lawrence; thank you Fr. William, for following his lead.

This season will continue with performances: Hansel & Gretel with Young Artist Program of Opera Roanoke; Local Colors; Festival In The Park. Also, check out our social media and website for more information about us and our next season, INNOVATION 2024/2025.

If you are interested, talented, and inspired to become a dancer with SVB's incredibly dedicated dancers, you are welcome to audition on April 27, 2024. Or contact us to become a volunteer; our doors are open for everyone.

I would like to share an inspirational quote with you all;

"Success is not final; failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts." Winston S. Churchill

I look forward to seeing you at upcoming performances in all of our art events, please continue supporting the arts. It is truly what continues to make our city better.

Peace and blessings,

Pedro

Southwest Virginia Ballet

presents

Romeo & Juliet

Music

Sergei Prokofiev

Choreography

Pedro Szalay

**Rehearsal Assistant
Assistants**

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

Costume Design

**A. Christina Giannini
Expresionarte by Karina Martinez**

Lighting Design

Stacie Johnson-Leske

Stage Manager

Elizabeth Francis

Technical Director

Andres Marton Szalay

Costume Supervisor

Laura Moats

Set Design:

Mina Albergo

Set Recreated

Armando Zullo

Romeo & Juliet

Synopsis of Scenes

Two Households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
from ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life...

by William Shakespeare

ACT I

Scene I: A square in Verona, around the year 1400. Daybreak. Romeo is greeted by his friends who try to rid him of his melancholy mood. Tybalt, upon seeing Romeo, picks a quarrel with him, rekindling the feud between the houses of Capulet and Montague.

Scene II: At the Capulet house. The house is in preparation for a ball. Lady and Lord Capulet introduce Juliet to Paris, who wants her for his wife. Juliet is teasing her nurse, who is trying to tell her that she is no longer a child.

Scene III: At the gate to the Capulet House. The guests arrive at the ball held in honor of Juliet's engagement to Paris. Romeo, Mercutio and Benvolio decide to disguise themselves and enter the ball.

Scene IV: The ball at the Capulet House. Among the multitude of guests, Romeo spies Juliet and is enraptured by her beauty. Mercutio notices that Romeo is entranced by her and diverts the attention of the guests. Tybalt, recognizing his enemy Romeo, confronts and unmasks him. Lord Capulet, fearing the festivities will be ruined, comes between them.

Scene V: The garden at the Capulet house. Deep in thought, Juliet lingers at her balcony. She discovers Romeo who awaits her, hidden in the shadows of the garden. They both feel love for each other, pure and strong enough to face any daggers.

ACT II

Scene I: The square, late afternoon. The people are having a carnival in celebration of Saint's Day. When Romeo appears, Mercutio and Benvolio are disappointed at this distant mood. The nurse delivers a letter to Romeo in which Juliet agrees to marry him secretly at the chapel of her confessional priest, Friar Lawrence.

Scene II: The Chapel. Romeo asks Friar Lawrence to wed him to Juliet. After the marriage ceremony, Juliet must return to her parent's home without Romeo.

Scene III: The square, evening. The merrymaking of the townspeople reaches a climax. Romeo, who is now a kinsman of Tybalt, tries to stop the fight. Tybalt, however, kills Mercutio. Mad with fury at the loss of his friend, Romeo kills Tybalt.

Scene IV: Juliet's bedroom. Romeo, banned from Verona for killing Tybalt, has spent the wedding night with Juliet. At dawn, he flees the town. Juliet's parents have decided to marry Juliet to Paris as soon as possible. Juliet desperately tries to change their minds. At night, she leaves the house to beg Friar Lawrence for advice and help.

Scene V: The Chapel. Friar Lawrence gives Juliet a potion that will make her appear to be dead. Friar John, who is bringing the letter of explanation from Friar Lawrence, arrives too late to tell Romeo of the plan.

Scene VI: Juliet's bedroom. Coming home, Juliet pretends to agree to the marriage with Paris. When she is left alone, she swallows the potion and falls, as if lifeless, on her bed. Later, in the midst of the wedding preparations, Juliet is found seemingly dead.

Scene VII: The tomb of the Capulets. Juliet is laid to rest. Romeo enters the tomb and finding Paris grieving by Juliet's body, kills him. Believing Juliet to be dead, Romeo takes poison. Juliet awakens to find Romeo dead and stabs herself.

**For never was a story of more woe
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.**

William Shakespeare



At The House of Capulet

Juliet <i>Understudy</i>	Erin Schallon <i>Erin Potter</i>
Lady Capulet (Juliet's Mother)	Grace Frank Rempel
Lord Capulet (Juliet's Father)	Mark Shepheard
Tybalt (Lady Capulet's Nephew)	Tyrique Bowles
Paris (Suitor to Juliet)	Jake Gomez
Juliet's Nurse	Tess Post
Juliet's Friends	Charlotte Firestone, Vivian Fernandez, Mikaela Marton, Alexis Potter, Erin Potter, Abigail Hewitt, Dara Kerman, Sophia Walker, Anna Stadnyk

At The House of Montague

Romeo	Lachlan Robrecht
Lady Montague	Alexis Potter
Lord Montague	Richard Butler
Mercutio	Kevin Perry
Benvolio	Will Vaughn
Rosaline	Margaret Kauffman
Rosaline's Friends	Lillian Bordens, Lauren Cox, Clarissa Gill, Natalie Routt, Katie Jane Vass



Other Characters

Friar Lawrence
Friar John

Father William Buckley
Will Vaughn

Harlots

Franziska Borneff, Maggie Jarrett,
Evalyn Williams

Townspeople and
Ballroom Guests

Charlotte Bain, Robert Borneff, John Bouldin,
Jayla Bowles, Charlotte Brock, Forrest Buehler,
Julianne Edwards, Billy Ferguson, Randall Husted,
Kenn Klick, Kevin Martin, Julian Marton,
Alta Merzvinkas, Sephira Metheney, Arya
Metheney, Genevieve Nault, Garima Patel, Maren
Pauley, Kadence Rivers, Bentley Robertson, Evelyn
Soucie, Thomas Stadnyk,
Emma Staley, Justine Thomas, Aliyah Vorst, Kyle
Vorst, Sanskrit Vorst, Lucia Walker, Lisa Warren

Troubadours

Forrest Buehler, Emma Staley, Lucia Walker

Death

Lisa Warren



PEDRO SZALAY 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 almost 20 years, enhanced the lives of many 4th graders through his instruction of the Minds In Motion and Dance Español programs in Richmond, Charlottesville, Martinsville, Salem & Roanoke City Schools.

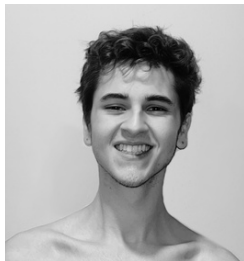
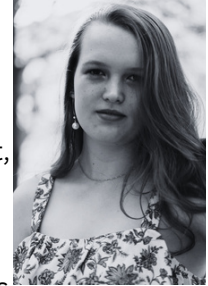
Beginning in 2012, Szalay developed a Spanish language, choreographed movement program called Dance Español for 4th graders in public schools. In 2013, he created a Ballet program for Middle Schools in Roanoke City Public Schools. January 2007, Szalay became Artistic Director of Southwest Virginia Ballet 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 has been a Resident Artist for Carilion Clinic Healing Art Program since 2013.

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. In 2023 Szalay was presented with a resolution from the City of Roanoke as part of the Hispanic Heritage Month for leadership in the City



FR. WILLIAM BUCKELY - GUEST ARTIST, is a native of Long Island, NY, where he grew up. After graduating high school, he attended the University of Richmond, where he studied piano performance. Following his graduation from University of Richmond, he worked for three years as a church musician and choir director, most especially at Saint Bridget Catholic Church in Richmond. While working at Saint Bridget, he began to discern a vocation to the Catholic Priesthood. In 2017, he entered seminary formation for the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, studying at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. His time in seminary brought him to serve in the Roanoke area for the first time: during the summer of 2019 at St. Andrew Catholic Church and 2020-2021 at Our Lady of Nazareth Catholic Church. Fr. William was ordained a priest on June 3, 2023 and subsequently began to serve as parochial vicar at the Basilica of Saint Andrew and chaplain at Roanoke Catholic School. Fr. William is excited to have this unique opportunity to be a part of this production of Romeo and Juliet!

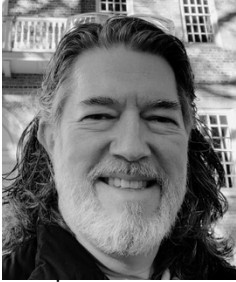
GRACE FRANK-REMPERL - GUEST ARTIST, has been dancing for 19 years. She started at Roanoke Ballet Theatre and moved to The Dance Centre of Southwest Virginia in 2011. While dancing as a company member, performed roles such as Spanish, Marzipan, Snow Queen and Arabian. She also has performed in ballets such as Cinderella, Romeo and Juliet, and Coppelia. She was honored to spend several summers training at Bossov Ballet, Gelsey Kirkland Academy of Ballet, Summer Dance Company and Point Park University. She also enjoyed the opportunity to represent SVB in Prague, Czech Republic, at the New Prague Dance Festival in 2015. After more than ten Nutcrackers with SVB and eight years in the company, Grace graduated in 2018 from Christa McAuliffe School of Arts & Sciences and graduated from Point Park University in 2021. Grace is currently in graduate school at St. John's College pursuing a masters in Eastern Classical Literature.



JAKE GOMEZ - GUEST ARTIST, is currently a Freshman at Virginia Commonwealth University. He started his journey in dance as a party boy in the Nutcracker at age seven, for Southwest Virginia Ballet. He then began taking classes at The Dance Center of Southwest Virginia (now Star City School of Ballet) and in 2014 joined the junior company. During his time with the Junior Company, he performed in Cinderella, TIES and Dance Español up until 2016. Jake then rejoined the SVB family in the spring of 2022 when he once again performed TIES, Cinderella and the Nutcracker. Since graduation from Hidden Valley High School in 2023, he has been able to dance with the Stavna Ballet, playing the Nutcracker Prince and the Prince in Snow White. Jake would like to thank the company members for their friendship and wonderful memories during his time with SVB, as well as Mr. Pedro, Ellie Moser and Brooke Norman for their constant love and support. Finally, he would like to thank his mother, sister and grandmother "Bubs", for being alongside him every step of the way and helping him pursue his dreams. Jake plans to transfer to Radford University in the fall of 2024, to double major in Dance and Business Administration and is hopeful for what the future has in store.

TESS POST - GUEST ARTIST, Originally from Norfolk, Va., Tess has literally been dancing all her life! In 1986 she opened the Post School of Ballet in Salem for serious students of Classical Ballet. Mrs. Post continues to do what she loves, teaching classical Ballet at Star City School of Ballet. As the Founding Artistic Director of Southwest Virginia Ballet, she raised the level of SVB to performing Company in Regional Dance America. She provided local audiences with a rich and diverse repertoire of performances and established the Nutcracker in Roanoke as an annual family favorite. She is thankful to Pedro Szalay, that everything she began so long ago has grown and continued to flourish!





MARK SHEPHEARD - 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 Romeo and Juliet and is looking forward to reprising his role again this year!

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.



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!

STACIE JOHNSON-LESKE - Lighting Designer, has over 30 years of professional experience as a lighting designer and stage manager for dance and theater. After spending her early years, training to become a ballerina, she found that she had a talent for designing lighting for the stage. She studied at the Interlochen Arts Academy, and obtained a BFA in theatrical lighting design from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts.

She has been the lighting designer for several regional theater companies including the Horse Cave Theater, the Cumberland County Playhouse, and the New Mexico Repertory Theater. However, her real passion is for dance. She was lighting designer/lighting supervisor for the Martha Graham Dance Company, resident lighting designer/stage manager for the Richmond Ballet, and is currently the resident lighting designer/stage manager for The Ballet Theatre of Maryland. She also does freelance lighting design for various professional, academic and community organizations.

When she is not in the theater, she enjoys making fine art pottery which she sells at her studio/gallery, Your Fired Pottery, in Ridgway, PA and through various galleries, gift shops and seasonal juried art festivals.



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

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

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.



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 UNCOSA for guiding her to be the dancer she is.

Romeo and Juliet, Op. 64 Ballet

Composed by Sergei Prokofiev

Libretto by Sergei Radlov, Adrian Piotrovsky, Leonid Lavrovsky and Sergei Prokofiev

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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

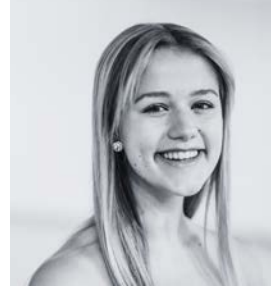
Junior Company - Charlotte Bain, Jayla Bowles, Charlotte Brock, Forrest Buehler, Julianne Edwards, Alta Merzvinckas, Genevieve Nault, Garima Patel, Maren Pauley, Evelyn Soucie, Emma Staley, Aaliyah Vorst, Lucia Walker, Lisa Warren

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.
Be who you pretend to be when you dance tonight!
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 in Southwest Virginia Ballet's company for 7 years and is very excited to perform the role of Rosaline in Romeo and Juliet. Her favorite role was performing Clara in The Nutcracker her junior year. She has also enjoyed performing in Cinderella, Coppelia, and Ties. 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. For her senior year, 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.



Company photo and senior headshots by Jenny Marie's Photography
Romeo & Juliet photos by Dan McDilda Photography

SVB Board of Directors

Pedro Szalay, Artistic Director
Syreeta Combs, Executive Director
Nancy Kelderhouse, President
Beth Kelley, Vice President
Lauren Maxwell, Treasurer
Megan Potter, Secretary

John Bouldin, Frances Gaeta, Jessica Mather, Shaeen Mehmood,
Matt Schallon, Lori Strauss, Will Trinkle, Kyle Vorst, Paula Wolftiech
Margaret Kauffman - Company Representative

SVB Operations

Company Manager	Megan Potter
Backstage Production Coordinator	Ana Elisa Martinez
Costume Supervisor	Laura Moats
Volunteer Coordinator	Polly Pauley
SVB Company Communications	Polly Pauley and Megan Potter
School Outreach	Julia Bouldin and Megan Potter
SVB Boutique & Flowers	Jane Edwards and Junco Warren
Website Designer	Carrie Cousins
Tech Support	Michael Ewan

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.



HISTORY

Southwest Virginia Ballet (SVB) has been a part of the community for more than thirty years & serves over 10,000 children & adults annually. SVB began in 1990 by Founding Artistic Director Tess (Terri) Post along with Associate Director 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 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 100 SVB Company & community members, both children & adults and has been recognized as the "Best Arts Performance" annually since 2018. Since 2006 SVB have partnered with the Piedmont Arts Association in Martinsville VA to bring arts education and performances to the area. 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 & continues to collaborate with the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra, Opera Roanoke, the Taubman Museum of Art and other non-profit organization throughout the valley. In the fall of 2020, in the middle of the Pandemic, SVB collaborated with Blue Ridge PBS to film and broadcast our original production of the *Nutcracker*. This broadcast was seen by countless families worldwide, giving SVB the opportunity to spread the love of art and classical ballet beyond the Roanoke Valley. In the summer of 2020 SVB was honored to be featured in the first episode of *Buzz 4 Good* broadcast on Blue Ridge PBS. Through this episode, SVB has received opportunities to develop new marketing strategies and new branding. SVB has continued to be featured in several follow episodes and podcasts over the last four years.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Southwest Virginia Ballet (SVB) has served the community for more than thirty 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 33-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 which ran from 2005-2011, and Dance Español which has been going strong since 2012, created and instructed by Mr. Szalay, have brought dance and inspiration to youth in our schools. These programs have had an unmeasurable impact reaching over 200 Roanoke City 4th graders and over 250 Martinsville City and Henry County School students of all ages annually. Community outreach and collaborative endeavors have expanded to include performances at Dickens of a Christmas, Parks and Arts, Local Colors Festival, Virginia Science Festival, O. Winston Link Museum, History Museum of Western Virginia, Science Museum of Western Virginia, and Taubman Museum of Art among others. Company dancers continue to participate in readings at local public libraries and schools, as well as visits to Carilion Clinic to perform and bring cheer to pediatric patients.

Southwest Virginia Ballet has awarded scholarships through the Vaszary Scholarship Fund annually since 2009. As part of the program, "Southwest Virginia Ballet Gives Back", SVB has provides free tickets each year to clients of area human services organizations allowing them to attend The Nutcracker & spring productions.

RECOGNITION

The company, has not only received regional recognition but has also received international recognition at the New Prague Dance Festival winning first place in classical dance & first place in costuming in 2011. That same year, two SVB dancers were also recognized for individual talent. In 2013, SVB returned to the New Prague Dance Festival and received the Grishko Award , 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 once again returned to the New Prague Dance Festival in 2017 and was once again awarded 2nd place for Classical Dance and 3rd place for Pedagogy of Dance. In 2019, SVB was awarded 3rd place for Classical Dance. Since 2019, SVB has not been able to return to the New Prague Dance Festival due to the Pandemic and world conflicts, however, we look forward to representing Southwest Virginia again someday soon! 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. SVB has also been honored to received the Best Arts Performance award consecutively since 2018, most recently we received the Platinum award in 2023. Additionally, SVB 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 December 2021, at our Nutcracker performance the City of Roanoke read a proclamation declaring Southwest Virginia Ballet day in Roanoke VA, in recognition of our efforts to honor first responders and local heroes during the Pandemic. 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.

Thank You



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