

March 24, 2018

West Michigan
Youth Ballet
Presents

SWAN LAKE



DeVos Center for
Arts and Worship

Maria Kowroski



Summer Workshop Event: June 9-10th, 2018

The West Michigan Youth Ballet is honored to welcome back world renowned ballerina, Maria Kowroski, principle dancer with the New York City Ballet.

Ms. Kowroski will be teaching two master classes of ballet technique and ballet pointe at our pre-summer intensive event. Dancers must be 13 or older with two years on pointe.

Register online at wmyb.org early, this event will sell out quickly!



West Michigan Youth Ballet

SUMMER INTENSIVE

June 11-13, 2018

DESIGNED FOR BALLET STUDENTS AGES 8 AND UP
FEATURING CLASSES IN BALLET, POINTE, JAZZ, AND MODERN
— AMAZING GUEST TEACHERS! —

Dan Duell, Artistic Director, Ballet Chicago, Master Teacher, Principle Dancer, New York City Ballet under George Balanchine (adv ballet technique and pointe/variations)

Patricia Blair, Master Teacher, Danced Under Edward Villella (ballet technique and pointe/variations)

Stephanie Martinez, World Renowned Choreographer (contemporary dance and dance movement exploration)

Andrew Amos, Associate Director West Michigan Youth Ballet and Teacher (modern)

Go to **WMYB.org** for all information and **online registration**.



Welcome

to West Michigan Youth Ballet's performance of The Nutcracker! We are thrilled that you are here to celebrate the efforts and accomplishments of our young dancers from West Michigan. WMYB has been successful through the love, passion, hard work, and vision of the artistic staff, professional choreographers, dancers, and their families. We would like to thank them and also thank you for your support and presence here today.

Please enjoy our performance!

ADVISORY BOARD

Maria DeVos
Melissa Meldrum-Aaberg, M.D.
Samantha Shelton, M.F.A.

Stephen Sanford, **Artistic Director**
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WMYB is very appreciative of the businesses that support us through their advertisements. Please patronize those businesses in this program who have so generously given back to their local youth.
Thank you.

West Michigan Youth Ballet

Our Mission

To provide young people with the opportunity to prepare and present to the public full length ballets under the direction of professional choreographers.

To enhance the skills that these young people have received through the study of ballet at their respective academies by learning all that is involved in the preparation of a ballet performance.

To encourage young people to consider a career in dance and assist them in progress toward this goal, either with a professional goal or by studying dance at the university level.

HELP US CONTINUE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Your donation will directly support the professional level experience for our young artists in our community.

All and any donations are greatly appreciated!

Become a Sponsor!

Grand Jete	\$5,000 +
Piroutte	\$2,500 - \$4,999
Glissade	\$1000 - \$2,499
Bourree	\$500 - \$999
Chaine	\$100 - \$499
Pique	\$20 - \$99



West Michigan Youth Ballet is a 501 (c) (3) Michigan non-profit corporation.

PO Box 725 Ada, MI 49301

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

West Michigan Youth Ballet would like to extend heartfelt appreciation for the continued generosity and support of Doug and Maria DeVos.

We are blessed with our rehearsal facility which enables us to carry out the mission that we are committed to accomplish for the students of WMYB.

OUR PATRONS

Grand Jeté (\$5000 and up)

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Rick and Amy Ackerman
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West Michigan Youth Ballet
would like to thank the
Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs
and the
National Endowment for the Arts
for their support of our organization.



WEST MICHIGAN YOUTH BALLET

Thanks You.

On behalf of the WMYB Board we wish to express our sincere appreciation for the many hours of volunteer work generously given to the young dancers at WMYB.

We especially wish to recognize the chairpersons of the committees that help make these performances possible today.

Communication: Liz Henry

Volunteer Guild: Kari Erbenraut & Renae Stritzinger

Tickets: Katharine Judge

Boutique: Amy Feather

Anniversary Reception: Renae Stritzinger, Kari Erbenraut & Emily Thomas

Concessions: Rick Ackerman

Costuming: Heather Cassady

Props Mistress: Jodie Alexiev

Stage Hands: Norm Mathewson & Thayne Dunahee

Media: Missie Endres, Dee Lenters

Playbill & Marketing: Mary Jo Pomeroy

Ushers: Mike DeHaan

Thank you to the following volunteers for creating the sets and props for Swan Lake:

Tim Martin, Dan Arganbright, Jodie Alexiev, Stefan Alexiev, Mike McAlpine, Thayne Dunahee, Rick Ackerman, Norman Mathewson

A special thanks to Humberto Decanini for photography.

Thank you to Becky Afendoulis Trierweiler for her special appearance as “Queen.”

WMYB would also like to extend our gratitude to the following:

Rick Hardenberg and Chris Cook, Technical Stage Coordinators

Julie Zandstra, Box Office/Events

John Bischoff, Video Recording Services

The Story of Swan Lake

Act I

Long ago, in a forgotten kingdom, a beautiful princess was captured by the wicked sorcerer, Von Rothbart. As long as she remained under his spell, the Princess Odette was cursed to take the form of a swan and could only become human by the light of the moon.

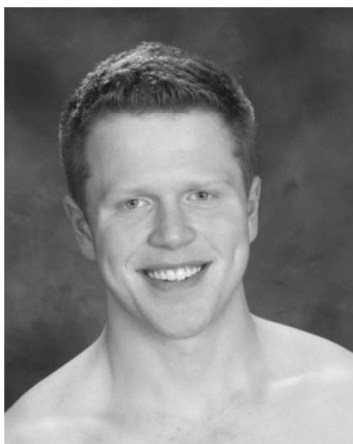
Many years later, as Prince Siegfried celebrates his birthday, the Queen Mother reminds him that before he becomes king, he must end his care-free bachelor days and find a bride. As she presents him with a crossbow, he reluctantly accepts his duty and goes off alone to hunt.

At the lakeside, Siegfried spots a swan landing on the water and draws his bow, but as he aims, the swan magically transforms into the Princess Odette. She tells the prince of her curse; a fate that can only be broken if her true love vows eternal fidelity to her. For if the Sorcerer is killed, or her love's vow is broken, she is doomed to remain a swan for eternity. As dawn arrives, the Prince gives his promise that he will break the spell, but Von Rothbart swears to keep his power over her and conspires to bewitch the Prince.

Act II

At the Prince's castle, a royal ball is held so that he may choose a bride. The royal families from the neighboring kingdoms dance and present their Princesses. The Prince, remembering his vow to Odette, cannot choose. Suddenly, Von Rothbart enters in a human disguise to introduce his daughter, Odile. Odile seduces the Prince, tricking him into promising his love to her. The Prince realizes too late that he has been fooled and has broken his vow to Odette, condemning her to remain a swan for all time. He rushes to the lake to beg her forgiveness, but it is too late. Odette, in her sadness, tells Prince Siegfried that the only way the curse can be broken now, is in their next life. Prince Siegfried, vows to fulfill the promise he has broken and journey to the next life with her. Von Rothbart appears to stop them, but as he threatens to tear the two away from each other, they throw themselves into the lake, sealing their bond and vanquishing the power of Von Rothbart: their final act of love joining them for eternity.

GUEST DANCERS



JAKOB PRINGLE grew up in Carmel, Indiana, and studied at the Central Indiana Academy of Dance. He placed 2nd in the Semi-Finals of YAGP in 2012 and competed in the Finals in New York City where he performed in the Grand Défilé for the YAGP Closing Night Gala at Lincoln Center. Jakob has been honored to be a guest artist with North Star Ballet in Fairbanks, Alaska, New American Youth Ballet in Fort Wayne, Indiana, Queen City Ballet in Helena, Montana, and St. George Ballet Company in St. George, Utah for their productions of The

Nutcracker. He performed the role of Waltz Boy, set on him by Zippora Karz, in Utah Ballet's production of Serenade. He has performed with Ballet West in their productions of Aladdin, Cinderella, The Little Mermaid, Giselle and The Sleeping Beauty. In 2015, Jakob had the honor of performing the role of Death in Edward Stierle's Lacrymosa with Fort Wayne Ballet. This production was set on the company by Kim Sagami of the Arpino Joffrey Foundation. His training includes studying under Jeff Rogers and Peter Christie as a trainee with Ballet West in Salt Lake City, Utah, and numerous summer intensives across the US including Cincinnati Ballet, The Rock School of Dance, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School and Ballet West.



EDEN WEINSTEIN began his training at the Portland Ballet School in Portland, Maine. His ambition brought him to the Boston Ballet School when he was 12 years old and studied there for two years. He then transitioned to the intensive training of the Bossov Ballet for a year and returned to the Portland Ballet having greatly improved. Then, Eden studied at the Nutmeg Conservatory for the Arts for one year until he was accepted to the Joffrey Ballet of New York Apprentice Program under full scholarship. Eden has attended and been accepted to programs at the

Walnut Hill School, The ABT School, The Kirov Academy of Washington D.C., The San Francisco Ballet, and the School of American Ballet.

SWAN LAKE CAST

	Saturday 1:00 pm	Saturday 4:30 pm
ACT 1		
Odette (White Swan)	Rebecca Shull	Claire Pomeroy
Odile (Black Swan)	Lexi Erbentraut	Jessica Henry
Prince Siegfried	Jakob Pringle	Jakob Pringle
Von Rothbart	Eden Weinstein	Eden Weinstein
Queen	Becky Afendoulis Trierweiler	Becky Afendoulis Trierweiler
Wolfgang	Andrew Amos	Andrew Amos
Pas De Trois	Taylor Phillips, Kimi Burgoyne, Olivia Throop	Taylor Phillips, Kennedy Targosz, Katrina Cassady
Men's Dance	Jenner Willard, Alex Alexiev, William Dunahee, Taylor Phillips	Jenner Willard, Alex Alexiev, William Dunahee, Taylor Phillips
Pas De Quatre	Kennedy Targosz, Kimi Burgoyne, Parker Nanzer, Abby Stritzinger	Kimi Burgoyne, Harlee Scholten, Emily Slywka, Cakki Mehney
Big Swans	Avery Gawel, Hailey Sands, Emily Slywka, Katrina Cassady	Madison Rogers, Riegan Judge, Kate DeHaan, Lindsey Lunt
Swan Corp	Chloe Doerr, Harlee Scholten, Madison Rogers, Shelby Zahl, Eliana Tucker, Kennedy Pfeiffle, Brittany Rosely, Ellie Everhart, Riegan Judge, Olivia Ogilvie, Maggie Styf, Sophia Ness, Cakki Mehney, Kate DeHaan, Ashley Barkel, Lindsey Lunt	Emma Kapteyn, Chloe Doerr, Avery Gawel, Shelby Zahl, Eliana Tucker, Kennedy Pfeiffle, Brittany Rosely, Ellie Everhart, Hailey Sands, Olivia Ogilvie, Maggie Styf, Sophia Ness, Abby Stritzinger, Parker Nanzer, Ashley Barkel, Olivia Throop

SWAN LAKE CAST

	Saturday 1:00 pm	Saturday 4:30 pm
ACT 1		
Waltz/May Pole	Claire Pomeroy, Jessica Henry, Stasia Arganbright, Chloe Feather, Katie Basher, Aisling Hillman, Nessa Galvin, Elliott McAlpine, Sophia Erbentraut, Katelyn Lenters, Maddy Stritzinger, Taya Moore, Ashley Wolfe, Ava Ackerman, Eleanor Martin, Joleen Fisher, Kamryn Koetsier, Annika Kapteyn, Emma Kapteyn, Abigail Hoekzema	Rebecca Shull, Lexi Erbentraut, Stasia Arganbright, Chloe Feather, Katie Basher, Aisling Hillman, Nessa Galvin, Elliott McAlpine, Sophia Erbentraut, Katelyn Lenters, Maddy Stritzinger, Taya Moore, Ashley Wolfe, Ava Ackerman, Eleanor Martin, Joleen Fisher, Kamryn Koetsier, Annika Kapteyn, Chloe Doerr, Abigail Hoekzema
Polonaise	Jenner Willard, Taylor Phillips, Alex Alexiev, William Dunahee, Emma Diaz-Lawton, Gabby Lockwood, Josephine Sulka, Jan Kyra Valeros, Ella Yenchar, Aaliyah Robinson, Maggie Sandoval, Caitlyn Pair, Annika Kapteyn, Abigail Hoekzema	Jenner Willard, Taylor Phillips, Alex Alexiev, William Dunahee, Emma Diaz-Lawton, Gabby Lockwood, Josephine Sulka, Jan Kyra Valeros, Ella Yenchar, Aaliyah Robinson, Maggie Sandoval, Caitlyn Pair, Annika Kapteyn, Abigail Hoekzema
	Saturday 1:00 pm	Saturday 4:30 pm
ACT 2		
Odette (White Swan)	Rebecca Shull	Claire Pomeroy
Odile (Black Swan)	Lexi Erbentraut	Jessica Henry
Prince Siegfried	Jakob Pringle	Jakob Pringle
Von Rothbart	Eden Weinstein	Eden Weinstein
Pas De Quatre	Kennedy Targosz, Kimi Burgoyne, Parker Nanzer, Abby Stritzinger	Kimi Burgoyne, Harlee Scholten, Emily Slywka, Cakki Mehney

SWAN LAKE CAST

	Saturday 1:00 pm	Saturday 4:30 pm
ACT 2		
Big Swans	Hailey Sands, Emily Slywka, Katrina Cassady	Riegan Judge, Kate DeHaan, Lindsey Lunt
Czardas	Kate DeHaan, Lindsey Lunt, Stasia Arganbright, Emma Kapteyn, Taylor Phillips, Jenner Willard, Alex Alexiev, William Dunahee, Olivia Throop, Jessica Henry, Claire Pomeroy, Aisling Hillman	Kate DeHaan, Lindsey Lunt, Stasia Arganbright, Chloe Doerr, Taylor Phillips, Jenner Willard, Alex Alexiev, William Dunahee, Olivia Throop, Lexi Erbentraut, Rebecca Shull, Aisling Hillman
Spanish	Elliott McAlpine, Sophia Erbentraut, Katelyn Lenters, Maddy Stritzinger, Taya Moore, Ashley Wolfe, Ava Ackerman, Eleanor Martin, Kennedy Targosz, Katrina Cassady, Nessa Galvin, Kimi Burgoyne	Elliott McAlpine, Sophia Erbentraut, Katelyn Lenters, Maddy Stritzinger, Taya Moore, Ashley Wolfe, Ava Ackerman, Eleanor Martin, Kennedy Targosz, Katrina Cassady, Nessa Galvin, Kimi Burgoyne
Neapolitan	Emma Diaz-Lawton, Gabby Lockwood, Josephine Sulka, Jan Kyra Valeros, Ella Yenchar, Aaliyah Robinson, Maggie Sandoval, Katie Basher, Chloe Feather, Joleen Fisher, Abigail Hoekzema, Annika Kapteyn, Kamryn Koetsier, Caitlyn Pair	Emma Diaz-Lawton, Gabby Lockwood, Josephine Sulka, Jan Kyra Valeros, Ella Yenchar, Aaliyah Robinson, Maggie Sandoval, Katie Basher, Chloe Feather, Joleen Fisher, Abigail Hoekzema, Annika Kapteyn, Kamryn Koetsier, Caitlyn Pair
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BIOGRAPHY



STEPHEN SANFORD- *Artistic Director*

Stephen started his training at Southold School in South Bend, Indiana. He then went on to North Carolina School of the Arts where he trained under Melissa Hayden, Duncan Noble, and Warren Conover. He later went to Ballet Chicago Studio Company and was mentored by Dan Duell and Patricia Blair. Stephen has attended numerous summer courses including School of American Ballet, Houston Ballet, and Hartford Ballet. Stephen has had the opportunity to work with esteemed choreographers and teachers such as Kirk Peterson, Val Caniporoli, Suzanne Farrell, Daniel Duell, and Mario Radacovsky during his 14 seasons performing as a principle dancer with Grand Rapids Ballet Company. Stephen has performed as a guest artist for New York Theater Ballet, Toledo Ballet, Tulsa Ballet, St. Louis Ballet, Ballet Chicago, Geiger Ballet, and Southold Dance Theater. Alongside his performing career he taught classical technique classes at Grand Rapids Ballet School for 14 years and he has been teaching master classes throughout the Midwest. He currently is teaching classical technique classes at Grand Valley State University and Ada Dance Academy. Stephen and his wife Jennifer have three daughters Julia, Elaina, Lucy and two sons Andrew and Nathan. This is Stephen's 3rd year leading the Artistic Direction for the West Michigan Youth Ballet.

CHOREOGRAPHY

Swan Lake was restaged and choreographed by:

Stephen Sanford
Samantha Shelton
Laura Berman

The West Michigan Youth Ballet would like to express appreciation for their creativity and expertise.

BIOGRAPHIES



SAMANTHA SHELTON-*Choreographer* SAMANTHA SHELTON received her professional training from the Joffrey Ballet in New York and in Michigan with Rose Marie Floyd. She also studied in London with Anita Young (Royal Ballet) and at the Cecchetti International program in England. For the past eighteen years, she has been on the ballet faculty for American Ballet Theatre Summer Intensive, currently directed by Kate Lydon, setting ABT repertoire and choreographing new ballets for the final performances. Currently, she is on faculty for the ABT Summer Intensives at the University of Texas,

Austin, under the direction of Wes Chapman, former ABT principal and also travels the country as an adjudicator for the ABT National Audition Tour, selecting dancers for training programs in New York, Texas, California and Alabama. Samantha has also taught at the ABT program at the University of Alabama, directed by Carla Stallings and the Detroit Opera House/Wayne State University, directed by Alaine Haubert. She has choreographed and taught for the professional ballet programs at the Walnut Hill School in Boston, directed by former ABT principal, Michael Owen, Ballet Tennessee, Missouri Contemporary Ballet, and Interlochen Arts Academy. She has performed extensively in both classical and contemporary ballets, including the Grand Pas from Nutcracker, Sleeping Beauty, Don Quixote, also principal roles in Giselle and Raymonda. In her guest artist performances, she has partnered with Craig Salstein (of ABT), Arch Higgins (New York City Ballet) and Christopher Stowell (San Francisco Ballet) among many others. Samantha holds an M.F.A in Dance from the University of Michigan, where she was awarded a Rackham Thesis grant, and a B.A. in Political Science also from the University of Michigan. She has also done graduate work at New York University in Performing Arts Administration with internships in development, PR and marketing at Carnegie Hall and the Orchestra of St. Luke's. For six years, she served on the University of Michigan's School of Music, Theatre & Dance Alumni Society Board of Governors and in May 2012 spent three weeks in Taiwan, teaching and presenting a piece of choreography for Tainan University. She is certified through the American Ballet Theatre National Curriculum Training Program and in August of 2014, co-taught the ABT NTC with Harriet Clark, at the Detroit Opera House. Currently, she is a Professor of Ballet at Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, MI.

BIOGRAPHIES



LAURA SCHWENK-BERMAN is an Artistic Associate of RPM Productions in Chicago and has been performing, teaching, choreographing, staging and rehearsing works for over 40 years. She began her performing career dancing principal roles with the Garden State Ballet, the Chicago Ballet, the Boston Repertory Ballet, and for seven years with the Pacific Northwest Ballet in Seattle. While with Pacific Northwest Ballet, Ms. Berman performed as a soloist with Gelsey Kirkland in *Swan Lake* and with Mikhail Baryshnikov as part of the Pacific Northwest

Ballet/Baryshnikov tour. She danced in the film: “*Nutcracker: The Motion Picture*” directed by Carol Ballard, designed by Maurice Sendak. She has toured extensively throughout the United States, Europe and Asia as a guest artist.

Ms. Berman served as the Ballet Mistress (1992–97), Interim Artistic Director (1997-98) and Associate Artistic Director of the Grand Rapids Ballet Company (1998-2010). During that time she conducted two capital campaigns to build beautiful new studios, offices and rehearsal space, as well as a state-of-the-art LEED certified 300-seat theatre of the company’s own. She also served as Director of the School of the Grand Rapids Ballet Company from 1998 –2010, establishing the school’s curriculum, syllabus, faculty, staff and performances, placing students in major ballet companies around the world including New York City Ballet, San Francisco Ballet and Royal Danish Ballet.

Ms. Berman has choreographed works for Momenta! Performing Arts Company, Chicago Repertory Dance Ensemble, Northwestern University Dance Ensemble, the Cecchetti Council of America, the Evanston Dance Ensemble, the Grand Rapids Ballet Junior and Senior Companies and the West Michigan Youth Ballet. In addition, she regularly stages full-length classical ballets and is a private instructor and coach.

Ms. Berman has taught dance at a wide array of institutions including the University of Washington, Northwestern University, Columbia College, Hope College, Loretta Heights College, Hubbard Street Dance Company, Chicago Academy for the Performing Arts, Oak Park Academy of Movement and Music, the Cecchetti Council of America, Evanston Dance Center, the Grand Rapids Ballet Company, and Ada Dance Academy.

Ms. Berman has a Bachelor of Science degree from Skidmore College and a Masters degree in Theatre from Northwestern University where she graduated with honors.

BIOGRAPHIES



MARLENE KENNEWAY-*Chair and Co-Founder of the non-profit West Michigan Youth Ballet Company*
Marlene has studied with the Boston Ballet and Rosella Hightower in Cannes, France. She has taught at Cullman College, Erie Civic Ballet, Decatur Civic Ballet in Alabama, and is the owner and founder of Ada Dance Academy in Ada, Michigan. Mrs. Kenneway has served on the Steering Committee for the American Ballet Theatre summer seminar, and is the past advisor and board member for the Grand Rapids Ballet. She is the past President of the Ada Council for the Arts and a member of the Mary Free

Bed Guild. Marlene has taught students who have gone on to perform with the Boston Ballet, Cleveland Ballet, Cologne Ballet of German and Tucson in Arizona, a professional company which was founded by a former student of Mrs. Kenneway, two Rockettes and a former student who danced in the film "Valentino" with Rudolf Nureyev and a former student who was in "Cabaret" with Joel Gray.



ANDREW AMOS- *Assistant Artistic Director*
Andrew Amos was born and raised in Monterey, California where he started dancing at age 17. Within a year, he had received a full scholarship to the dance program at Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, where he attained his BFA in Dance. After college, Andrew worked with companies including Mordine + Company Dance Theater, Indiana Ballet Theater NW., Ballet Fantasque, Children's Ballet Theater, Ann Arbor Ballet Theater, Antares Danza Contemporanea, West Michigan Youth Ballet, San

Angelo Civic Ballet, Happendance, and others. He has taught master classes in Ballet, Jazz, Modern, and Pas de Deux from Midwest to the west coast and Mexico, and performed leading roles in The Nutcracker, Coppellia, Easter Oratoria, Acts of Light, Sleeping Beauty, Swan Lake, Cinderella, and other independent productions. His choreography has been performed by students, amateurs, and professionals across the nation on stages big and small, as well as at prestigious festivals including RDA and ACDFA. Currently, Andrew lives in Grand Rapids with his wife Heidi and daughter Sophia and teaches, dances, and choreographs throughout the area.

BIOGRAPHY



HEATHER CASSADY-*Costume Designer, Costumer, and Seamstress*

Heather graduated from Michigan State University with a BA in Clothing and Textile Design with an emphasis in Fashion Design. Heather then began an eleven year career as a Costumer with the Walt Disney Company. She was the Costumer for a variety of parades and stage shows in all four of the Walt Disney World Parks and many of their Resort Properties. Some of her shows included the

Remember the Magic Parade, SpectroMagic, Around the World with Mickey and Minnie, The Jungle Book, several U.S. Tours and assisted in costuming two Super Bowl Halftime Shows. This is her sixth production with WMYB. Heather also works as a Wardrobe Stylist for private clients.

Costuming Thank You...

I wish to extend my heart felt appreciation to all of the wonderful volunteers who assisted with the building of more than 200 new costume pieces, 50 headpieces, costume fittings, and the daunting amount of alterations for this production. Thank you to my incredibly talented team that continues to work seemingly endless hours to make this ballet so beautiful. Especially Carrie, Margie, Kristin, Kari, Sally, Liz, Renae, Mary Jo, Nancy, and Kathy Gill. I am so thankful that our little costume shop has so much love and talent!

Thanks Mom for teaching me to love to sew, not to waste fabric, to always be creative and that "good enough" isn't good enough. Thank you to my husband, John, and our children, John, Josh, and Katrina, for all of their love and encouragement. Thank you Stephen for your continued support and confidence in me. I am humbled by the amount of love and support the ballet family continues to give me. I cannot thank you all enough!

Heather Cassady

WMYB SENIORS

Rebecca Shull

I am filled with emotion and gratitude as I complete my final year with WMYB. My appreciation for Marlene Kenneway and the opportunity that she has given me is impossible to put into words. The dedication and kindness of Stephen Sanford and Andrew Amos as they teach us every Sunday is amazing. Jacob Pringle is the best partner a White Swan could ask for. The beautiful costumes created by Heather Cassady and her mom-assistants have been a thrill to wear. There will always be a special place in my heart for my first pointe teacher, Margie Vizzuraga. Thank you to Laura Berman for giving me an example of beauty and elegance to strive for as a dancer and in life. I give a very special thank you to David Braciak, for his expertise in ballet technique and vision, and teen counseling. He's contributed to my growth as a dancer and as a person. I've made many friends and had many unforgettable experiences, and cherish them both. When WMYB becomes a memory, I will definitely look back with a smile on my face and love in my heart.



Anastasia Arganbright

I am so blessed to have been part of the WMYB family these past years. The opportunities here and throughout the greater dance community have helped inspire and develop me into the person I am today and give me strong a foundation, hard work ethic, confidence, and belief in myself to be successful in life. I would like to thank my family and friends and teachers who have supported me all these years. I'd particularly like to thank Steven Sanford, Andrew Amos, Mindy & Attila Mosolygo, Brian and Meg McSween and Melissa Williams for their loving support and guidance.

WMYB SENIORS

Jessica Henry

Throughout the 10 years I have spent with the West Michigan Youth Ballet, I have made more priceless memories and experienced more joy than I could have ever imagined. It has been an honor to work with such a talented and caring group of people. I would like to thank my family and friends for always supporting my passion for ballet and performing. I would also like to thank the many instructors who have encouraged and guided me in ballet and life, especially Laura Berman, Stephen Sanford, and David Braciak. I will be sad to leave next year; however, the WMYB family will always remain in my heart.



Kate DeHaan

It is still hard to believe this will be my last Nutcracker. I wouldn't trade the friends and experiences I've had for anything. I would like to thank my family for supporting me through the sore muscles, inflamed tendons, and blisters the size of golf balls. I would also love to thank my teachers, Ms. Marlene, Ms. Margie, Ms. Laura, Mr. Stephen, and especially Mr. David, for always believing in me. Dance has given me a powerful work ethic and drive that will benefit me for the rest of my life. Thanks to my friends, family, and teachers. It's been a wonderful experience performing, and I hope you enjoy our show.

WMYB SENIORS



Aisling Hillman

It has been an honor to be a part of the West Michigan Youth Ballet for so long. I have loved watching the company grow over the years. Thank you to all of my teachers, the directors, and my parents for supporting. Dancing and being a part of the WMYB has taught me many things, and not just dancing. I strongly believe that I have grown as person because of it. Thank you, and I will miss you all!



Shelby Zahl

Thank you to everyone for the warm welcome these last two years. Getting to perform with the West Michigan Youth Ballet has been an great experience. It has been so much fun to meet all the people I wouldn't have had the chance to meet without this organization.

WMYB COMPANY



Ava Ackerman Ava is 12 years old and a 6th grader at FH Central Woodlands. This is Ava's second year performing in the Nutcracker for WMYB. She has also performed in their spring shows Coppelia and Sleeping Beauty. Ava dances for Ada Dance Academy. She competes on their Diamonds Team. Ava still enjoys taking classes to further her growth as a dancer!



Alexander Alexiev I am a junior at Northview High School where I play my trombone in the marching and jazz bands. I have been studying ballet for nine years, during which time I have enjoyed participating in many West Michigan Youth Ballet performances. In addition to focusing in music and dance, I have a great interest in cars and would like to be a journalist for an automotive magazine.



Anastasia Arganbright I am so blessed to have been part of the WMYB family these past years. I would like to thank my family, friends and teachers who have supported me. I'd particularly like to thank Steven Sanford, Andrew Amos, Mindy & Attila Mosolygo, Brian and Meg McSween and Melissa Williams for their loving support and guidance.



Ashley Barkel Ashley is pleased to perform as part of the West Michigan Youth Ballet. Ashley attends eighth grade at Northern Hills Middle School. Ashley began dancing for Ada Dance Academy at five years old. She attended her first summer intensive this past year at the California Workshop for the School of American Ballet. Her other interests include painting, writing and traveling. Ashley would like to thank her family, friends and dance instructors for their love and support.



Katie Basher Katie is in 10th grade at Forest Hills Central. She has loved ballet from an early age and began lessons at the YMCA at age 5 and now dances at Ada Dance. This is her seventh year with WMYB. She'd like to thank all her teachers for all their training through the years and her family for their love and support.



Kimimae Burgoyne Kimi is a Junior at FHC and has been dancing with Ada Dance Academy for 12 years. Kimi competes in contemporary and classical ballet at the Youth America Grand Prix. Kimi has attended several summer intensives including Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet and Pacific Northwest Ballet. Kimi would like to thank her teachers for inspiring and pushing her and her family for supporting her throughout the years.



Katrina Cassady Katrina has been dancing for ten years, and this is her eighth production with WMYB. Katrina also competes at Youth America Grand Prix, and attended the Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet Summer Intensive. Besides ballet, she also participates in the FHC Varsity Dance Team. Katrina would like to thank David Braciak, Laura Berman, Christen Snyder, Margie Vizuraga, and Stephen Sanford for their continuous support and encouragement.



Kate DeHaan I am senior at Grand Rapids Christian High, and have been dancing for fifteen years. I am captain of our schools improv team, and love being on stage. I am planning on going to Calvin College, and plan on majoring in engineering. I am so thankful for all that dance has taught me, and I hope you enjoy the show.



Emma Diaz-Lawton I am 8 years old and attend the third grade at Ada Vista. This is my first year with WMYB and I love it! I have danced since the age of 3. In my free time I enjoy piano and gymnastics. I would like to thank my family for their support and my dance teachers for bringing me this far.



Chloe Doerr Hi my names is Chloe Doerr. I am a junior at Hudsonville High school. I currently dance at HIS dance Academy, and have been dancing for about 13 years. In my little free time I love to hangout with friends and watch movies. This is my first year with West Michigan Youth Ballet and I'm looking forward to performing with all of these lovely people! I'd also like to thank all of my teachers along the way who have pushed me to be where I am at right now.



Liam Dunahee Liam, age 14, is from Comstock Park. He attends a STEM school called The Open Doors Learning Center. He has been dancing at Academy of Dance Arts since he was 3 years old. He enjoys all styles of dance, especially Ballet and Contemporary. He also loves music and plays several instruments.



Lexi Erbentraut Lexi Erbentraut is a freshman at Forest Hills Central High School. She has been performing with the WMYB since she was 6 years old. Lexi has attended summer ballet intensives at Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet and The School of American Ballet in New York City. Besides dancing, Lexi loves to fish, spend time with friends and travel.



Sophia Erbentraut Sophia Erbentraut is a 6th grader at Forest Hills Central Woodlands School. This is her 4th year performing with the WMYB. In addition to dancing for the West Michigan Youth Ballet, Sophia competes on a dance team for Ada Dance Academy.



Ellie Everhart Ellie Everhart is very excited to be a part of the WMYB again this year. Ellie lives in Ada and is a 8th grader at Eastern Middle School. Ellie has been dancing at Ada Dance Academy since she was 4 and has been dancing competitively since she was 8. Ellie also enjoys music, traveling, drawing and crafting. Ellie is appreciative for all the care and support she has received from her instructors, friends and family.



Chloe Feather Chloe is passionate about the Arts and enjoys dancing on stage for her friends and family. Chloe is a 7th Grade student at Byron Center Middle School where she participates in Choir and plans to be in the school musical this spring. Chloe would like to thank all of the volunteers who donated their time to put the show together this season and support of her family and friends as well as the encouragement from her teachers.



Joleen Fisher I am 15 years old and I have been dancing for 12 years. I am very thankful for my dance teachers that have helped me become the dancer I am today. I am also thankful for my parents and how they have supported and helped me through my journey.



Nessa Galvin Nessa has had the love for dancing since she was 3 years old. She is a Freshman at Rockford High School and dances at Hearts in Step Dance Studio. This will be her first year dancing with the WMYB.



Avery Gawel Avery is 16 years old and a junior at Forest Hills Eastern High School. She is on her school's dance team and this is her tenth year dancing with West Michigan Youth Ballet. Avery would like to thank her friends, family, and dance teachers for their constant support and always being there for her performances.



Jessica Henry Jessica is a senior at Forest Hills Central. She has been with WMYB since the beginning and would like to thank Stephen, Andrew and the many volunteers who make WMYB the wonderful company that it is! Jessica has been dancing at Ada Dance Academy since age 3. She would like to thank Miss Marlene, David, Laura, Margie, and Jen for everything they have done for her through the years. When she is not dancing she enjoys volunteering at the American Cancer Society, hiking and camping.



Aisling Hillman I am a senior at Forest Hills Northern High School and I have been dancing with Ada Dance Academy since I was four. I am part of the school's marching band as well as the drum line. Next year, I hope to attend Clemson University and major in International Health, with the ultimate goal in being a bilingual physician. West Michigan Youth Ballet has made me a better dancer and a better person.



Abigail Hoekzema I am in 7th grade at Ada Christian School. I have been dancing at Ada Dance Academy for 4 years. When I am not dancing I also enjoy Art and Track and Field. I love to spend time on the beach of Lake Michigan.



Riegan Judge Riegan is a Sophomore at Forest Hills Eastern. She has been dancing with Ada Dance Academy for 12 years and the West Michigan Youth Ballet for 7 years. While she continues to be a part of Ada Dance's competition team, she also continues to compete at the Youth American Grand Prix. She has attended several summer dance intensives, including Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet and Miami City Ballet. Riegan also enjoys reading and spending time with family and friends.



Annika Kapteyn Annika is a 7th grader at Spring Lake Middle School. She loves to dance, perform, sing and spend time with her friends, family, and pets. She started dancing when she was four and would like to thank her dance teachers and parents for their teaching and support over the years.



Emma Kapteyn I am a junior at Spring Lake High School. I have been dancing for about 5 years, and I take classes at both Dance Revolutions and Grand Rapids Ballet. I would like to thank my parents for letting me dance as much as I do, and to all of my teachers for teaching me what I know.



Kamryn Koetsier "Kami" is in 7th grade at FHCM. She has been dancing for 9 years. This is her 7th production with the WMYB. She also enjoys dance competition. Besides dance she loves time with her friends and dogs Dixie and Bear. Love to see your smile on stage! We are all so proud of you!!!



Katelyn Lenters I am a 7th grader at Ada Christian School. I have been performing with WMYB since I was nine. In my free time (when I am not dancing) I enjoy baking, shopping, spending time with friends, and playing with my dog, Sadie.



Gabby Lockwood I've been performing with the WMYB for 3 years and have studied dance at Ada Dance Academy for 8 years. I'm in the 5th grade Spanish Immersion at Northern Trails. I'd like to thank all my teachers for helping me grow! When I'm not dancing, I hang out with my dog Jewell, play games, and have fun with friends.



Lindsey Lunt My name is Lindsey Lunt and I am a junior at FHC. Participating in WMYB has become a part of who I am as a person and as a dancer. I am thankful for my dance instructors' energy and expertise at Ada Dance Academy and WMYB. I also would like to thank my family and grandparents for their love and support through my journey in dance and life!



Eleanor Martin Eleanor is a sixth grade Spanish immersion student at Northern Trails. She has been dancing since the age of two and has been dancing under the direction of Melanie Brossiet at Balletmore since 2011. Eleanor loves classical ballet as well as contemporary dance. She is excited to be in her first performance with WMYB. She would like to thank her family and teachers for their support!



Elliott McAlpine Elliott B. McAlpine is in the 6th grade at Knapp Forest Elementary. She has been dancing for eight years and currently takes classes at Ada Dance. This is Elliott's 7th WMYB performance and she is thrilled to be a part of this year's Nutcracker performance. In addition to dancing, Elliott is a competitive swimmer and enjoys playing LAX, reading and hanging out with her family and friends.



Cakki Mehney Cakki Mehney is 15 years old and is a sophomore at Forest Hills Central High School. She has been dancing for 10 years at Ada Dance Academy. Outside of dancing she enjoys hanging out with friends and family.



Taya Moore Taya is a 5th grader who started dancing at age 3 and began formal ballet training with Michigan Ballet Academy at age 5. She has also trained with Grand Rapids Ballet School and balletmore. When she is not in the studio she can be found reading a good book, practicing piano, and having fun with her brother. Taya wishes to thank her family, teachers, and friends for their unwavering love and support.



Parker Nanzer Hi my name is Parker Nanzer. I am a junior at Caledonia High School. This is my first year dancing with West Michigan Youth Ballet. I am so excited to be in this show! When I'm not dancing, I love to hang out with my friends, go shopping, and hang out with my dog, Moose. I would like to thank my parents for bringing me to rehearsals each week and always supporting me.



Sophie Ness Sophie Ness is an eighth grader at Forest Hills Eastern. She dances at Ada Dance Academy and is very thankful to be apart of the West Michigan Youth Ballet. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family and friends. She is especially thankful for her supportive dance teachers and her ballet family.



Olivia Ogilvie Olivia is in 11th grade at Forest Hills Central High School. Her passion for dancing began at age 3, when she joined the Dance Place, Inc. in Massachusetts. This is her first year with WMYB. She dances at Ada Dance Academy and recently joined their competition team. When she isn't dancing, Liv enjoys skiing, volleyball, reading, math, and biology. She would like to thank the many teachers and mentors who have shared their excellence and have helped her along the way!



Caitlyn Pair I am 10 years old and live in Greenville. I am in the fourth grade learning Chinese. I have been dancing for 8 years. In my free time, I like playing with my cats, playing the guitar, and playing disc golf. I would like to thank my parents for all of their support.



Kennedy Pfeifle Kennedy is a Junior at Forest Hills Eastern and has been dancing for as long as she can remember. She is the oldest of six siblings, five girls and a boy, whom she loves to dance and have fun with. Her hope is to become the best dancer she can be and continue to use the discipline taught by the sport throughout her life.



Taylor Phillips Taylor is 15 and this is his second year with WMYB. He dances at Ada Dance Academy and Academy of Dance Arts. In his free time he enjoys working on his classic car that his grandpa bought for him. He would also like to thank all his dance instructors for the time and attention they give, fostering his love of dance.



Claire Pomeroy This is Claire's 12th year of dance at Ada Dance Academy, and 9th with WMYB. She competes in classical and contemporary ballet, including the Youth America Grand Prix competition. Last summer she attended the Sarasota Cuban Ballet Intensive. She would like to thank her teachers Margie Vizuraga, Christen Snyder, Stephen Sanford, David Braciak, and Laura Berman for their support and inspiration.



Aaliyah Robinson I am in 4th grade Spanish Immersion at NorthPointe Christian School. I dance at Integrity and NorthPointe Ballet. I have loved dance since age 2. I love art and being outside. I am thankful to my parents, grandparents and dance teachers for all their support over the years.



Madison Rogers I'm a freshman at FHC and I've been dancing for 9 years. This is my 3rd year with the WMYB and I'm so excited for this years performance! Besides dancing, I love art and photography. I also enjoy traveling to Hawaii & New York City. I would like to dedicate this performance to my Dad & Grandma.



Brittany Rosely I am a freshman at Forest Hills Eastern High School. I have been performing with the WMYB for 9 years. I take dance classes at Ada Dance Academy. When not dancing, I enjoy baking, traveling, and spending time with my friends and family. I would like to thank my family for their love and support.



Maggie Sandoval My name is Maggie and I'm in the 6th grade at Northview Highlands. I love dancing, especially ballet, and have been doing it for about 4 years. I also love softball, basketball and snowboarding. I would like to thank my parents for allowing me to do so many things that I love! Thanks Mom and Dad!



Hailey Sands Born in Ann Arbor, Hailey is fifteen and a sophomore at FH Eastern. She started dancing when she was four with Ada Dance Academy, joining WMYB at age seven. Hailey spent her summer attending The Sarasota Cuban Ballet's 2017 Summer Intensive. She has competed in YAGP and two national dance competitions. Hailey also competes with Eastern's Golf and Varsity Dance teams.



Harlee Scholten I have been dancing since I was two, and this is my seventh year with West Michigan Youth Ballet. I am a freshmen at Wellspring Preparatory, and I dance at Hearts in Step. When not dancing I enjoy being outside and traveling with my family. I'd like to thank my parents and my dance teachers that have helped me improve.



Rebecca Shull I am a senior at Forest Hills Central. I have been fortunate to study ballet at Ada Dance Academy and to have been accepted at Summer Intensive Programs at The Joffrey Ballet, Miami City Ballet and Ballet West. My roles with West Michigan Youth Ballet have ranged from a battle soldier to Sugar Plum.



Emily Slywka Emily is a junior at Forest Hills Eastern High School. This is her fourth season with West Michigan Youth Ballet. She would like to thank her family for their love and support. She also wants to thank all her teachers from Ada Dance and Ms. Melanie and Ms. Judith for their constant encouragement.



Abigail Stritzinger My name is Abigail Stritzinger. I go to Forest Hills Central High School, and I'm in 11th grade. I have been dancing for thirteen years now. Outside of the studio, I enjoy spending time with my friends and writing. I also enjoy biking and being outdoors. I've performed in the nutcracker a total of five years.



Maddy Stritzinger Maddy has been dancing with Ada Dance Academy since she was two years old. While she enjoys most genres of dance, her true love is tap. Besides dancing, Maddy keeps herself busy with playing her ukelele and singing and would love to see herself as a social media influencer.



Maggie Styf I am a dancer at West Michigan Youth Ballet and Ada Dance Academy. I have been dancing since I was 5 years old. I am a freshman at Grand Rapids Christian High School. Some of my hobbies outside of dance are baking, crafting, and bugging my brothers.



Josephine Sulka Josie Sulka is in 4th grade at Collins Elementary School. She enjoys dancing, reading, biking, and playing with friends. Prior to moving to Michigan in July 2017, she danced at the Indiana Ballet Theater for 5 years and now dances at Ada Dance Academy. Josie would like to thank her family and dance instructors at WMYB, Ada Dance Academy, and IBT!



Kennedy Targosz I am in the 8th grade. I have attended The School of American Ballet's program for the past three summers. In my spare time, I like to be with my friends and family. I'd like to thank my dance teacher's for helping me achieve my goals as a dancer. Thank you also, to my family for their love and support!



Olivia Throop Olivia is 15 years old and attends Forest Hills Central High School as a sophomore. She has been dancing for 12 years and has done many performances with WMYB. She would like to thank her teachers at Ada Dance Academy and at WMYB for pushing her to become the best dancer she can be and her amazingly supportive family.



Eliana Tucker My name is Eliana and I am in the seventh grade. I take ballet and tap at Ada Dance Academy. When I am not dancing, I enjoy reading and spending time with friends. I am excited to be a part of this performance.



Kyra Valeros Jan Kyra S. Valeros is a 4th grader at Knapp Forest Elementary. She is a competitive dancer from Dance Dimensions. She loves to dance, sing, act and play the piano. She does tap, lyrical, hip hop and jazz dances but enjoys ballet the most. She first found out she loves dancing as a hula dancer for benefit shows when she was 3. She thanks all her dance teachers for bringing out the best in her.



Leah VanFossen Leah is a sophomore at East Grand Rapids High School. She dances at Ada Dance Academy and Imprint Dance Company. Leah would like to thank all of her dance teachers for helping her become the dancer that she is today and her parents for their continuous support.



Jenner Willard Jenner Willard, I am 15 and a sophomore at Lowell High School. I love music, dancing, and science. I am on the JV Tennis team, and play Cello in the Lowell High School Symphony Orchestra. I started dancing 2 years ago, and last year I took my first ballet class. I am now taking classes at The Ada Dance Academy. This is my first year performing in WMYB Nutcracker production.



Ashley Wolfe Hi, my name is Ashley Wolfe and this year I am a pointe solider and pointe angel in the Nutcracker. I am in 7th grade at Ada Christian School. I have been dancing since I was 3, and I dance at Ada Dance Academy. I would like to thank my family and dance teachers. Enjoy the show!



Ella Yenchar Ella is 9 years old and attends Rather Elementary School as a 3rd grader. This is Ella's 3rd year dancing at Ada Dance Academy. Along with Ella's love of dance she enjoys reading, spending time with her family and cuddling with her dog Hercules and cat Bill.



Shelby Zahl Shelby is a High School Senior who started dancing when she was three. She currently dances at Heart's In Step Christian Dance Academy. When she isn't dancing she likes to cook, draw, read, or play with her dog Buddy. Shelby would like to thank all the teachers whose influences have made her a strong person.

DANCE STUDIOS

Members of the WMYB Company are representative of several dance studios throughout Michigan.

Thank you to the following studios.

- Ada Dance Academy
- Academy of Dance Arts
- Balletmore
- Dance Creations
- Dance Dimensions
- Dance Revolutions
- Expressions Dance Academy
- Hearts In Step Christian Dance Academy
- Imprint Dance Co.
- Michigan Ballet Academy
- Miss Dee's School of Dance
- Rhythm Dance Center