



West
Michigan
**YOUTH
BALLET**
Enrich. Inspire. Grow.



the Nutcracker



DECEMBER 2-3, 2023
1:00 & 4:30 PM ★ FOREST HILLS FINE ARTS CENTER

DECEMBER 9, 2023
3:00 PM ★ FRAUENTHAL CENTER, MUSKEGON

Save the Date!



New Original Ballet
Created by the Artistic Team of
West Michigan Youth Ballet

the Wizard of OZ

WORLD PREMIERE
April 27
1:00 & 4:30pm

April 28
1:00pm
Forest Hills Fine Arts Center

Original Artwork "No Place Like Home" by Grand Rapids artist Mary-Catheryn Baker, coppercornersart.com

Dear Patrons and Families,
I am honored to have been given the opportunity to lead these talented dancers through this production of *The Nutcracker*. The eager, youthful, and hard-working cast has grown throughout this season. Teaching the spacing, lines, and steps, and bringing out the best in each dancer's performance has been a wonderful experience. I find great joy in developing these young artists and look forward to seeing them shine on stage.

As artists, we strive for excellence. We create truth, beauty, and goodness in our chosen medium. The tedious work of learning the steps, waiting patiently for your turn, staying focused, and being present during the rehearsals, gives way to a phase of developing character, building friendships, establishing bonds, and creating respect amongst the cast. I am looking forward to watching each dancer perform their role they have been developing.

As we focus on our mission to "Enrich. Inspire. Grow.," we have made wonderful progress. I can't help but feel a sense of newness as we step out onto the stage. "Toi toi toi" to all of the amazing dancers! I wish to personally thank all the families that provide amazing support to the program and give the gift of their time, talents, and treasure each season to make this performance great.

Your Director,
Stephen Sanford



STEPHEN SANFORD - ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Stephen started his training at Southhold Dance Theater 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 a strong performing career with the Grand Rapids Ballet Company. He joined in 2001 and has been the lead man in many productions. As principal dancer, he has had the opportunity to work with famous choreographers from all over the world such as Mario Radacovsky, Kirk Peterson, and Olivier Wevers to name a few. Stephen has performed as a guest artist for New York Theater Ballet, Tulsa Ballet, St. Louis Ballet, Ballet Chicago, Geiger Ballet, Southhold Dance Theater, and Ohio Theatre Ballet. He has been teaching ballet since 2000. He was a professor at Grand Valley State University and also taught at Grand Rapids Ballet School. He currently teaches at Ada Dance Academy, where he is part owner. Stephen is a family man with five children, Julia, Andrew, Elaina, Nathan, and Lucy with his wife, Jennifer.

WHO IS WEST MICHIGAN YOUTH BALLET

West Michigan Youth Ballet (WMyB), founded in 2007 in Ada, Michigan, is committed to developing young people in their pursuit and passion for artistic expression through dance.

Company members, ranging in age from 8 to 18, with varied backgrounds and experience across the full spectrum of dance, come together for weekly rehearsals. Their common goal is the desire to be part of a performing company built on a solid foundation of classical ballet.

Our winter seasonal offering is *The Nutcracker* with traditional choreography set to Tchaikovsky's original score. The spring production ranges in time-honored masterpieces like *Sleeping Beauty*, *Cinderella* and *Coppélia*. Our young artists shine in their performances, gaining athletic and artistic skills, as well as collaborative and memorable experiences. Personal growth, both as individuals and as part of a whole, is evident in every dancer.

OUR MISSION

The West Michigan Youth Ballet provides our community opportunities for lifelong confidence, discipline, and belonging that result from participating in the physical, social art of ballet.

OUR VISION

We are committed to providing access to the art of ballet, transcending age and socioeconomic boundaries to cultivate enduring connections to performing arts and inspiring future careers.

WMyB BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Marlene Kenneway, *Chairperson/Co-Founder* Brigitte Nelson, *Co-Founder*

Patricia Diaz-Lawton, <i>President</i>	Carolyn Evans	Harlee Scholten
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Judy Sulka	Gregory Sanial	
Amy Feather	Carola Gulick	

ADVISORY BOARD

Maria DeVos	Mary Anne Rosely
Marlene Kenneway	Laura Berman
Melissa Meldrum-Aaberg, M.D.	

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

West Michigan Youth Ballet would like to extend heartfelt appreciation for the continued generosity and support of Doug and Maria DeVos. We also acknowledge and thank the Michigan Arts & Culture Council and the National Endowment for the Arts for their support of our organization.



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Your donation will directly support the professional level experience for our young artists in our community. All and any donations are greatly appreciated!

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West Michigan Youth Ballet is a 501 (c) (3) Michigan non-profit corporation. PO Box 725 Ada, MI 49301

GUEST PERFORMERS



DARRELL HAGGARD is originally from Oakhurst, California, where he found his love for dance at Velocity Dance Studio at the age of 9. At age 17, he began training on scholarship at the Los Angeles Ballet Academy with Ms. Andrea Paris. Darrell performed lead roles in *Coppélia*, *Alice in Wonderland*, and *A Season's Suite*; as a guest Cavalier in *The Nutcracker*; and with the Alvin Ailey American Dancer Theater performing *Memoria*. Darrell has also trained with Kee Juan Han at Washington Ballet School and performed in LABA's award winning ensembles at the YAGP ballet competition in New York. As a company member with the Grand Rapids Ballet, Darrell performed in Gerald Arpinos' *light Rain* and George Balanchine's *Who Care's and Rubies*. He has also had original works choreographed on him, including Olivier Weavers' *The Sofa* and Annabelle Lopez-Ocha's *Dangerous Liaisons*, as well as many more. Currently freelancing in Grand Rapids, Darrell looks forward to continuing his career and is excited for new works.



DAVE NAQUIN trained at Ballet Spartanburg in South Carolina and at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. From there, he joined Grand Rapids Ballet, where he performed leading roles such as Siegfried in Mario Radacovsky's *Black and White* and Tybalt in Radacovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*. Naquin's repertoire also includes Ulysses Dove's *Red Angels*, Kirk Petersen's Amazed in *Burning Dreams*, Brian Enos' *Cold Winters Waiting*, Paul Taylor's *Company B*, as well as George Balanchine's *The Four Temperaments*, *Serenade*, *Who Cares?*, and *Rubies*. Since joining Oklahoma City Ballet in 2016, Naquin has performed in Agnes De Mille's *Rodeo*, Septime Webre's *ALICE (in wonderland)*, August Bournonville's *La Sylphide*, Sarah Tallman's *If These Walls Could Talk*, as well as Robert Mills' *Our Private Rooms*, *The Means to Fly*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake*, and *The Nutcracker*. In 2022, Dave has joined Eugene Ballet and has been enjoying his second season with them for the 2023/24 season. Dave is happy to be back and is so proud of everyone at West Michigan Youth Ballet.



EDNIS GOMEZ was born in the Dominican Republic and began his training at Expresiones y Danza Soraya Gallardo at the age of 16. He studied choreography and interpretive dance in the Alicia Alonso Institute at King Juan Carlos University, Madrid, Spain. Ednis has been a company member at Grand Rapids Ballet since 2014 and has been teaching for The Academy of Dance Arts since 2017. Ednis contributed to the Arabian choreography for this year's performance of *The Nutcracker*.

GUEST PERFORMERS



WILLIAM SCHUTTE is so excited to be joining West Michigan Youth Ballet for *The Nutcracker!* He has performed both nationally and internationally in several musicals. Since moving to Grand Rapids, he has choreographed for both Circle Theatre and Grand Rapids Civic Theatre. William has been most recently seen in *The Music of Moulin Rouge* at Circle Theatre Grand Rapids. He is the owner of Kicks Dancewear, and a proud sponsor of West Michigan Youth Ballet.



WOLFGANG GOLUSKA started his dance journey at Elizabeth Williams School of Dance at age 8, where he focused on ballet while also studying tap and jazz. Wolfgang was eventually invited to guest dance with Children's Ballet Theater, which led to him to join their company for their 2018-2019 season. He has also attended summer intensives at Grand Rapids Ballet, Northeast Academy of Dance, Cincinnati Ballet, and New York Dance Project. At Grand Valley State University, Wolfgang studied ballet and modern dance technique along with dance history, dance costuming, dance on camera, choreography, urban dance, and dance pedagogy. While at GVSU, Wolfgang continued to perform as a guest dancer with various companies, including HIS Dance, Greater Lansing Ballet Company, and WMYB. In 2023, he graduated with a B.A. in Dance. Currently, Wolfgang is dancing with CPR Dance: Inhale Movement for their sophomore season, as well as guest dancing with various groups around Michigan.



DAMION POWERS graduated from the Greenville High School in 2020. His dance training started in his adolescence with Flat River Dance Company. Mr. Powers is now an instructor and professional guest artist for the school. Some of his most recent featured roles include Snow King and Cavalier in *The Nutcracker* and the Prince in *Snow White*. He is very skilled in partnering work and is thrilled to be a back at his home dance school.



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR MOTHER GINGERS!

Debra Perry, Abby Wiseman, Brandon Greer,
Tommy Fitzgerald, Christine Butler

WMYB BIOGRAPHIES



LAURA SCHWENK-BERMAN - CHOREOGRAPHER

Laura Schwenk-Berman has been performing, teaching, choreographing, and staging works for over 45 years. She began her professional career dancing principal roles for the Garden State Ballet and subsequently danced with Chicago Ballet, Boston Ballet, and for seven years with the Pacific Northwest Ballet. There she performed as a soloist with Gelsey Kirkland and Mikhail Baryshnikov and danced in *Nutcracker: The Motion Picture*. She has toured as a guest artist throughout

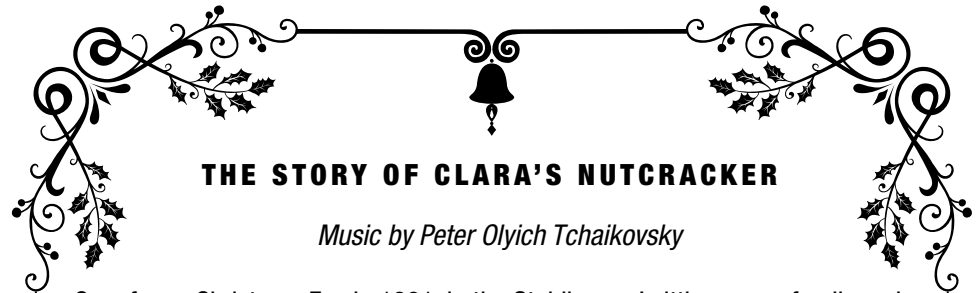
the United States, Europe, and Asia. Ms. Berman served as the Ballet Mistress, Interim Artistic Director, Associate Artistic Director, and Director of the School of the Grand Rapids Ballet Company from 1992-2010. She conducted two capital campaigns, one to renovate the old North Star Bus Terminal into four beautiful studios and administrative offices; the second, to build the company's Peter Martin Wege Theatre and costume shop. At that time, GRB received the Governor's Arts Award for excellence and toured the Midwest and Canada, reaching an audience of over 500,000. As Director of the School of the Grand Rapids Ballet Company, she established the school's curriculum, syllabus, faculty, and performances, while placing students in ballet companies around the world. Ms. Berman has a Masters degree in Theatre from Northwestern University where she graduated with honors. Currently she works as a freelance artist, choreographing original works and staging full-length ballets, and as a guest master instructor and private coach. She also serves on the Advisory Board of the WMYB.



HEATHER CASSADY - COSTUME DESIGNER, COSTUMER

Heather graduated from Michigan State University with a BA in Clothing and Textile Design with an emphasis in Fashion Design. She then began an 11-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*, *Beauty and the*

Beast, *The Jungle Book*, and several U.S. tours and conventions. Heather would like to thank her husband, John, and their children John, Katie, Joshua, and Katrina for all their love and support.



THE STORY OF CLARA'S NUTCRACKER

Music by Peter Olyich Tchaikovsky

On a foggy Christmas Eve in 1891, in the Stahlbaums' sitting room, family and friends merrily trimmed the tree. Clara, Fritz, and their friends play with new Christmas toys and Mr. Stahlbaum invites the guests to dance. Drosselmeyer warmly greets the family and entertains everyone with magic. The children are delighted by a toy soldier and a beautiful pair of life-sized harlequin dolls.

Drosselmeyer then presents a magical nutcracker to Clara. Captivated, she dances with the magical doll. Fritz is envious. He mischievously pulls the nutcracker from his sister's hands, breaking it. Drosselmeyer carefully bandages the doll and returns it to Clara, who plays with it gently. The grandparents begin their annual holiday dance and all join in.

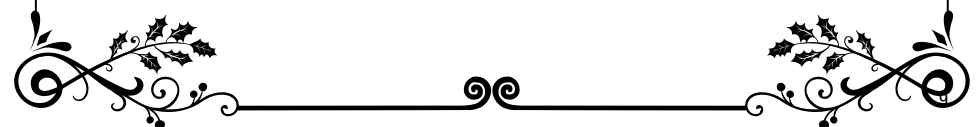
As the hour grows late, guests drift home and the Stahlbaums go upstairs to bed. Too excited to sleep, Clara returns to the darkened sitting room in search of her nutcracker doll. As the clock strikes midnight, she falls asleep on the sofa.

In her dreams, Clara relives memories of the evening. As she awakens into her dream, her house begins to expand around her and the Christmas tree grows wondrously large over tiny Clara. Giant mice appear, frightening Clara. The nutcracker doll comes to life to defend her. He summons an army of toy soldiers and a fierce battle ensues.

The Mouse Empress challenges the Nutcracker to a duel. Clara's quick thinking helps the Nutcracker defeat her. The Nutcracker, now Prince, thanks Clara for saving him and together they embark on an enchanting journey through the Land of Snow. As snow falls, snowflakes begin to dance. The King and Queen of Snow send Clara and the Prince off to their next adventure in a beautiful sleigh.

In the Land of Sweets, the Sugar Plum Fairy welcomes Clara and the Prince and asks them to tell her about the adventure that brought them to her world. Clara recounts the tale of war with the Mouse Empress. The Sugar Plum Fairy commands a festival filled with dancing to honor her guests. The celebration begins with Spanish flair, followed by an alluring Arabian genie, whirling performers from China, and flirtatious French dancers with fluttery ribbons. Russian dancers fly through the air with joy and verve. Dew Drop waltzes with her court of Flowers, dazzling Clara and the Prince. As the festivities draw to a close, the Sugar Plum Fairy and Cavalier dance for Clara and the Prince.

Clara awakens, still smiling from her joyous dream. It is Christmas morning, and the nutcracker doll is safe in her arms.



CAST	Saturday 1:00	Saturday 4:30
<i>Maids</i>	Abigail Carlisle, Emilyn Conn, Lynnlee Ashton	
<i>Clara</i>	Vanessa Ward	Stella Gulick
<i>Fritz</i>	Nate Sanford	Scarlett Noriega
<i>Party Boys</i>	Ellery Gaver, Felix Carlgren, Ella DeWildt, Scarlett Noriega, Nate Sanford, Charley Sanial, Emily Faulkner, Olivia Wisser, Emily McGlinchey, Allisun Lancaster, Annabelle Clark	
<i>Party Girls</i>	Autumn Everett, Adalyn Tollas, Ava Stauffer, Livia Burnson, Charlotte Biersack, Harper Kohn, Charlotte Watson, Lexie White, Samantha Weaver	
<i>Clara's Mom</i>	Carli Mais	Carli Mais
<i>Clara's Dad</i>	Wolfgang Goluska	Wolfgang Goluska
<i>Party Parents 1</i>	Cooper Strait Cassie Hovinga	Cooper Strait Cassie Hovinga
<i>Party Parents 2</i>	Mayko Noriega Dallas Everett	Mayko Noriega Dallas Everett
<i>Party Parents 3</i>	Ednis Gomez Evelyn Uzarski	Ednis Gomez Evelyn Uzarski
<i>Party Parents 4</i>	Damion Powers Madelyne Frang	Damion Powers Madelyne Frang
<i>Grandpa</i>	Dan Arganbright	
<i>Grandma</i>	Stasia Arganbright	
<i>Drosselmeyer</i>	William Schutte	
<i>Nephew/Nutcracker</i>	Carter Endres	Mars Maiden
<i>Harlequin Dolls</i>	Ella Yenchar Elliot Schulz	Ella Yenchar Elliot Schulz
<i>Soldier Doll</i>	Berkleigh Carol	
<i>Pointe Soldiers</i>	Lydia Boucher, Sydney Byrne, Aila Ellis, Katherine Wisser, Shay Duffy, Aubrey Doyle, Claire Herpolsheimer, Sophie Gietzen, Mikayla Ismail, Leah Selleck, Stella Gulick, Caylee Miller	
<i>Little Mice</i>	Clara Schultz, Colin Gietzen, Annabelle Tollas, Audrey Biersack, Lorelai Feeny, Ella Rottman, Sarah Faulkner, Lydia Rottman Lauren Finn, Allison Greer, Rosie Ellis	
<i>Mouse Empress</i>	Emma Strait	Emma Strait

Sunday 1:00	Sunday 4:30	Frauenthal
Abigail Carlisle, Emilyn Conn, Lynnlee Ashton		
Elaina Sanford	Katya Kval	Aubrey Doyle
Olivia Wisser	Emily McGlinchey	Nate Sanford
Ellery Gaver, Felix Carlgren, Ella DeWildt, Scarlett Noriega, Nate Sanford, Charley Sanial, Emily Faulkner, Olivia Wisser, Emily McGlinchey, Allisun Lancaster, Annabelle Clark		
Autumn Everett, Adalyn Tollas, Ava Stauffer, Livia Burnson, Charlotte Biersack, Harper Kohn, Charlotte Watson, Lexie White, Samantha Weaver		
Emma Strait	Emma Strait	Emma Strait
Wolfgang Goluska	Wolfgang Goluska	Wolfgang Goluska
Elliot Schulz Cassie Hovinga	Elliot Schulz Cassie Hovinga	Cooper Strait Cassie Hovinga
Matt White Dallas Everett	Matt White Dallas Everett	Dallas Everett
Ednis Gomez Carli Mais	Ednis Gomez Carli Mais	Ednis Gomez Carli Mais
Damion Powers Madelyne Frang Dan Arganbright	Damion Powers Madelyne Frang Dan Arganbright	Damion Powers Madelyne Frang Dan Arganbright
Stasia Arganbright	Stasia Arganbright	Stasia Arganbright
William Schutte	William Schutte	William Schutte
Cooper Strait	Cooper Strait	Mars Maiden
Sophia Bergsma Mars Maiden	Ella Yenchar Mars Maiden	Sophia Bergsma Elliot Schulz
Mileah Ismail	Mileah Ismail	Katya Kval
Lydia Boucher, Sydney Byrne, Aila Ellis, Katherine Wisser, Shay Duffy, Aubrey Doyle, Claire Herpolsheimer, Sophie Gietzen, Mikayla Ismail, Leah Selleck, Stella Gulick, Caylee Miller		
Clara Schultz, Colin Gietzen, Annabelle Tollas, Audrey Biersack, Lorelai Feeny, Ella Rottman, Sarah Faulkner, Lydia Rottman Lauren Finn, Allison Greer, Rosie Ellis		
Evelyn Uzarski	Evelyn Uzarski	Evelyn Uzarski

CAST	Saturday 1:00	Saturday 4:30
Battle Soldiers	Lauren Hendricks, Lucy Langejans, Lily Hoy, Anna Hatch, Madeleine Stauffer, Olivia Velicevic, Mina Jacobs, Amelia Dennis	
Lieutenants	Mars Maiden Mikena Ismail	Carter Endres Mikena Ismail
Snow Queen	Sophia Bergsma	Sara Primeau
Snow King	Dave Naquin	Darrell Haggard
Snow Quartet	Emma Diaz-Lawton Josie Sulka Elaina Sanford Berkleigh Carol	Sophia Erbenraut Josie Sulka Elaina Sanford Vanessa Ward
Snow Ensemble	Sydney Byrne, Meagan Conn, Katherine Wisser, Anna Gray, Jennifer Behrenwald, Cassie Hovinga, Rylin Mais, Carli Mais, Elaina Sanford, Katya Kval, Berkleigh Carol, Vanessa Ward, Mikena Ismail, Madelyne Frang, Mileah Ismail, Sara Primeau, Ella Yenchar, Sophia Bergsma, Hadley Breit, Cate Afman	
Reindeer	Clara Schultz, Annabelle Tollas, Audrey Biersack, Lorelai Feeny, Ella Rottman, Sarah Faulkner, Lydia Rottman, Lauren Finn, Allison Greer, Rosie Ellis	
Guardian Angel	Anna Gray	Jennifer Behrenwald
Little Angels	Annabelle Tollas, Audrey Biersack, Lorelai Feeny, Ella Rottman, Sarah Faulkner, Lydia Rottman, Lauren Finn, Allison Greer, Rosie Ellis, Clara Schultz	
Pointe Angels	Lydia Boucher, Sydney Byrne, Aila Ellis, Katherine Wisser, Shay Duffy, Sophie Gietzen, Mikayla Ismail, Claire Herpolsheimer, Leah Selleck, Rylin Mais, Aubrey Doyle, Stella Gulick, Caylee Miller	
Spanish Lead	Elliot Schulz	Elliot Schulz
Spanish Corp	Cassie Hovinga, Emma Strait, Dallas Everett, Lydia Boucher, Shay Duffy, Emily Conn	
Arabian Lead	Sara Primeau Ednis Gomez	Ella Yenchar Ednis Gomez
Arabian Corp	Mileah Ismail Katya Kval Elaina Sanford	Hadley Breit Katya Kval Mileah Ismail

Sunday 1:00	Sunday 4:30	Frauenthal
Lauren Hendricks, Lucy Langejans, Lily Hoy, Anna Hatch, Madeleine Stauffer, Olivia Velicevic, Mina Jacobs, Amelia Dennis		
Carter Endres Mikena Ismail	Carter Endres Mikena Ismail	Carter Endres Mikena Ismail
Ella Yenchar	Sophia Bergsma	Hadley Breit
Dave Naquin	Darrell Haggard	Dave Naquin
Emma Diaz-Lawton Josie Sulka Vanessa Ward Berkleigh Carol	Emma Diaz-Lawton Sophia Erbenraut Carli Mais Vanessa Ward	Emma Diaz-Lawton Josie Sulka Carli Mais Berkleigh Carol
Sydney Byrne, Meagan Conn, Katherine Wisser, Anna Gray, Jennifer Behrenwald, Cassie Hovinga, Rylin Mais, Carli Mais, Elaina Sanford, Katya Kval, Berkleigh Carol, Vanessa Ward, Mikena Ismail, Madelyne Frang, Mileah Ismail, Sara Primeau, Ella Yenchar, Sophia Bergsma, Hadley Breit, Cate Afman		
Clara Schultz, Annabelle Tollas, Audrey Biersack, Lorelai Feeny, Ella Rottman, Sarah Faulkner, Lydia Rottman, Lauren Finn, Allison Greer, Rosie Ellis		
Anna Gray	Jennifer Behrenwald	Anna Gray
Annabelle Tollas, Audrey Biersack, Lorelai Feeny, Ella Rottman, Sarah Faulkner, Lydia Rottman, Lauren Finn, Allison Greer, Rosie Ellis, Clara Schultz		
Lydia Boucher, Sydney Byrne, Aila Ellis, Katherine Wisser, Shay Duffy, Sophie Gietzen, Mikayla Ismail, Claire Herpolsheimer, Leah Selleck, Rylin Mais, Aubrey Doyle, Stella Gulick, Caylee Miller		
Elliot Schulz	Elliot Schulz	Elliot Schulz
Cassie Hovinga, Emma Strait, Dallas Everett, Lydia Boucher, Shay Duffy, Emily Conn		
Sara Primeau Ednis Gomez	Ella Yenchar Ednis Gomez	Sara Primeau Ednis Gomez
Hadley Breit Katya Kval Mikena Ismail	Hadley Breit Mikena Ismail Mileah Ismail	Elaina Sanford Katya Kval Mileah Ismail

CAST	Saturday 1:00	Saturday 4:30
Chinese Lead	Stella Gulick	Aubrey Doyle
Chinese Corp	Abigail Carlisle, Adalyn Tollas, Annabelle Clark, Emily Faulkner, Livia Burnson, Charlotte Biersack, Ella DeWildt, Ellery Gaver, Harper Kohn, Allisun Lancaster, Scarlett Noriega	
Chinese Lions	Autumn Everett Samantha Weaver	Autumn Everett Lynnlee Ashton
Lion Drummer	Lynnlee Ashton	Samantha Weaver
Reed Flute Lead	Emma Diaz-Lawton	Josie Sulka
Reed Flute Corp	Hadley Breit Sophia Bergsma Ella Yenchar Berkleigh Carol	Sophia Bergsma Vanessa Ward Sara Primeau Elaina Sanford
Russians	Carter Endres, Mars Maiden, Felix Carlgren, Nate Sanford, Cooper Strait, Colin Gietzen, Ava Stauffer, Olivia Wisser	
Mother Ginger	Debra Perry	Abby Wiseman
Clowns	Rylin Mais Claire Herpolsheimer	Rylin Mais Claire Herpolsheimer
Bon Bons	Lily Hoy, Mina Jacobs, Lauren Hendricks, Anna Hatch, Madeleine Stauffer, Lucy Langejans, Olivia Velicevic, Amelia Dennis	
Dew Drop	Josie Sulka	Sophia Erbentraut
Flowers	Sydney Byrne, Meagan Conn, Aila Ellis, Katherine Wisser, Anna Gray, Jennifer Behrenwald, Evelyn Uzarski, Cate Afman, Carli Mais, Mikena Ismail, Berkleigh Carol, Vanessa Ward, Madelyne Frang, Sophia Bergsma	
Butterflies	Charlotte Watson, Lexie White, Emily McGlinchey, Charley Sanial	
Sugar Plum	Sophia Erbentraut	Emma Diaz-Lawton
Cavalier	Darrell Haggard	Dave Naquin



Sunday 1:00	Sunday 4:30	Frauenthal
Stella Gulick	Aubrey Doyle	Stella Gulick
Abigail Carlisle, Adalyn Tollas, Annabelle Clark, Emily Faulkner, Livia Burnson, Charlotte Biersack, Ella DeWildt, Ellery Gaver, Harper Kohn, Allisun Lancaster, Scarlett Noriega		
Autumn Everett Samantha Weaver	Autumn Everett Lynnlee Ashton	Autumn Everett Samantha Weaver
Lynnlee Ashton	Samantha Weaver	Lynnlee Ashton
Josie Sulka	Emma Diaz-Lawton	Emma Diaz-Lawton
Sophia Bergsma Mileah Ismail Ella Yenchar Vanessa Ward	Sara Primeau Sophia Bergsma Berkleigh Carol Elaina Sanford	Berkleigh Carol Ella Yenchar Vanessa Ward Hadley Breit
Carter Endres, Mars Maiden, Felix Carlgren, Nate Sanford, Cooper Strait, Colin Gietzen, Ava Stauffer, Olivia Wisser		
Brandon Greer	Tommy Fitzgerald	Christine Butler
Leah Selleck Mikayla Ismail	Rylin Mais Claire Herpolsheimer	Leah Selleck Mikayla Ismail
Lily Hoy, Mina Jacobs, Lauren Hendricks, Anna Hatch, Madeleine Stauffer, Lucy Langejans, Olivia Velicevic, Amelia Dennis		
Emma Diaz-Lawton	Sophia Erbentraut	Josie Sulka
Sydney Byrne, Meagan Conn, Aila Ellis, Katherine Wisser, Anna Gray, Jennifer Behrenwald, Evelyn Uzarski, Cate Afman, Carli Mais, Mikena Ismail, Berkleigh Carol, Vanessa Ward, Madelyne Frang, Sophia Bergsma		
Charlotte Watson, Lexie White, Emily McGlinchey, Charley Sanial		
Sophia Erbentraut	Josie Sulka	Sophia Erbentraut
Darrell Haggard	Dave Naquin	Darrell Haggard



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WMYB IN THE COMMUNITY

WMYB is working hard to open the world of ballet to our community. We believe that everyone, young or old, should have the opportunity to enjoy this art form in one way or the other. These are some of the things that we have most recently been doing in our community. If you are interested in offering your support of these programs, please email us at outreach@wmyb.org.

TrueNorth community services  WMYB is partnering with True North for the first time this season as part of their Project Focus. Project FOCUS (For Our Children's Ultimate Success) provides individualized academic support to students while engaging participants in enrichment activities and field trips. True North partners with local West Michigan school districts serving youth Kindergarten through 8th grade. The programs enhance resiliency and strengthen young people through creative, community-based, and diverse educational experiences during non-school hours, building life-shaping character, fostering healthy relationships, and nurturing socially responsible civic behavior.

GRPS  WMYB is partnering with Grand Rapids Public Schools' Coit Arts Academy to introduce ballet to students in Kindergarten through 5th grade. Scholars had the opportunity to visit WMYB's studios, learn about backstage production, and attend a dress rehearsal. Additional exciting partnership opportunities are underway as we collaborate on the newly developed *Wizard of Oz* performance in Spring 2023.

 WMYB continues to offer in person and live stream options to all of our surrounding Senior Living Facilities.



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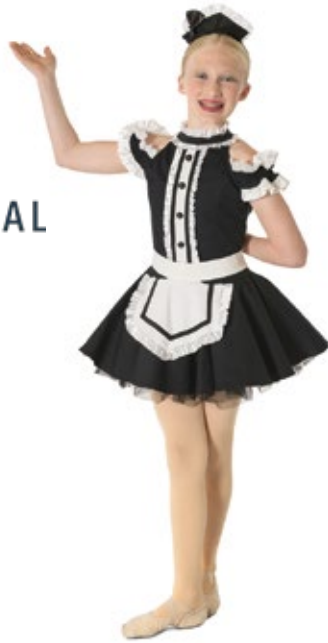
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**Congratulations Lucy
and all the
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***Congratulations on your upcoming
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on stage ... wishing you all the best!***



***With Love,
Maya, Dad, Mom, Nana, Grandpa,
Grandma G, and Grandpa G***

Everyone at NAI Wisinski of West Michigan is proud of the entire cast of the West Michigan Youth Ballet for their performance of The Nutcracker!



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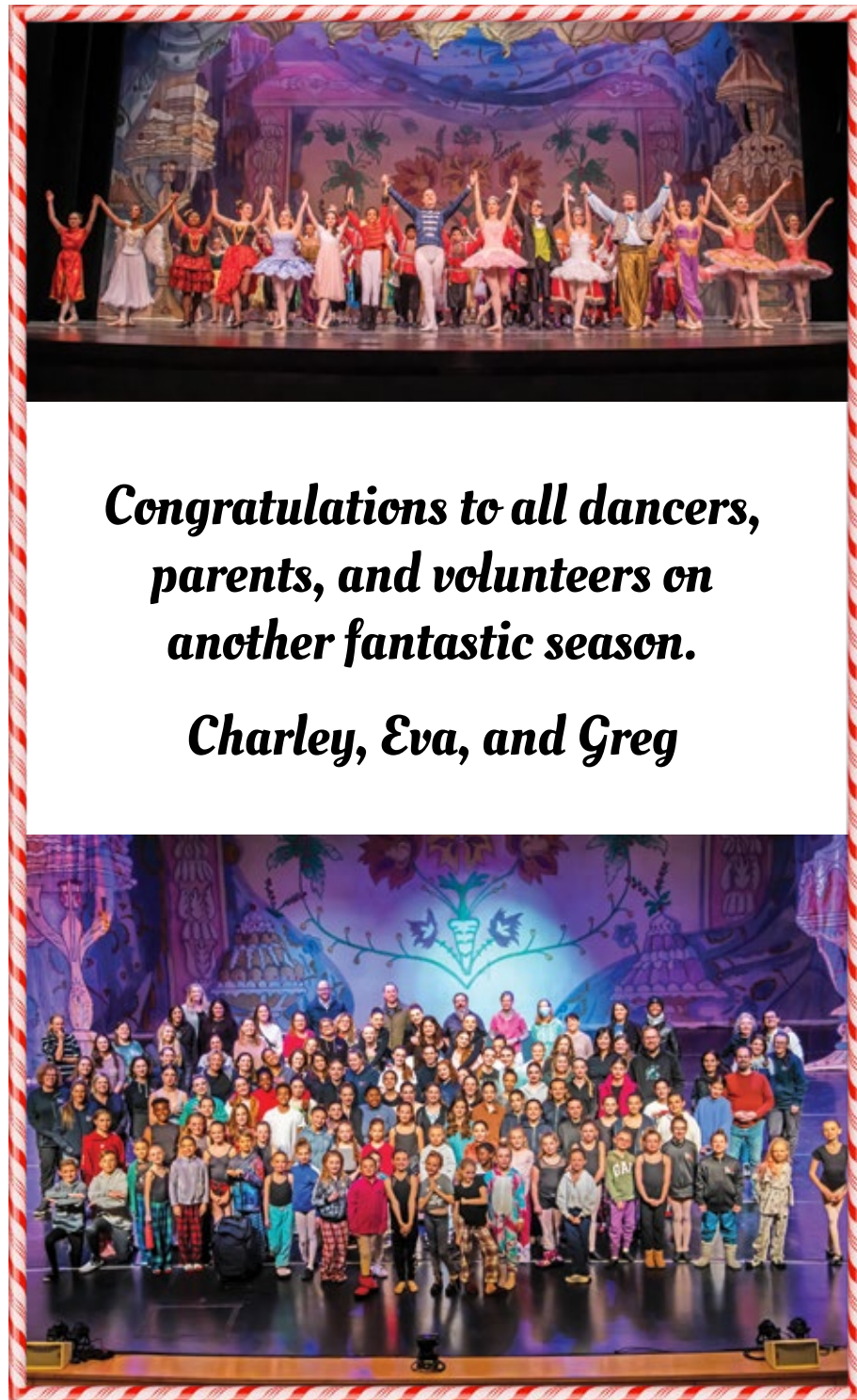
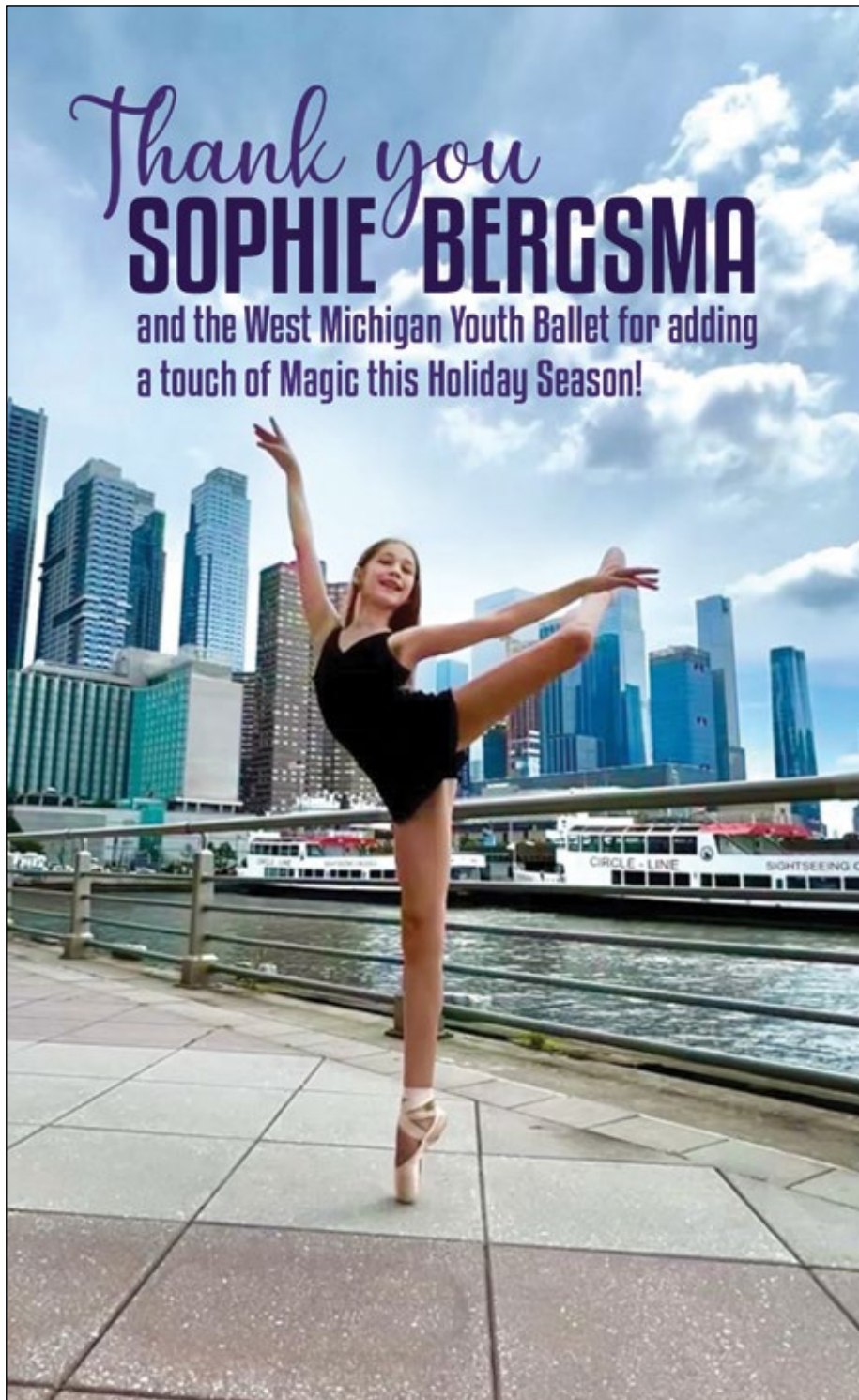
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*Congrats
Audrey
on your first
Nutcracker!*

*... and congrats
Charlotte
and all the
WMYB dancers!*

Love, Mom, Dad & Wyatt





*Congratulations Lexie!
We love you!*

Love, Grandpa Keith & Grandma Shelly

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**Congratulations
to all the
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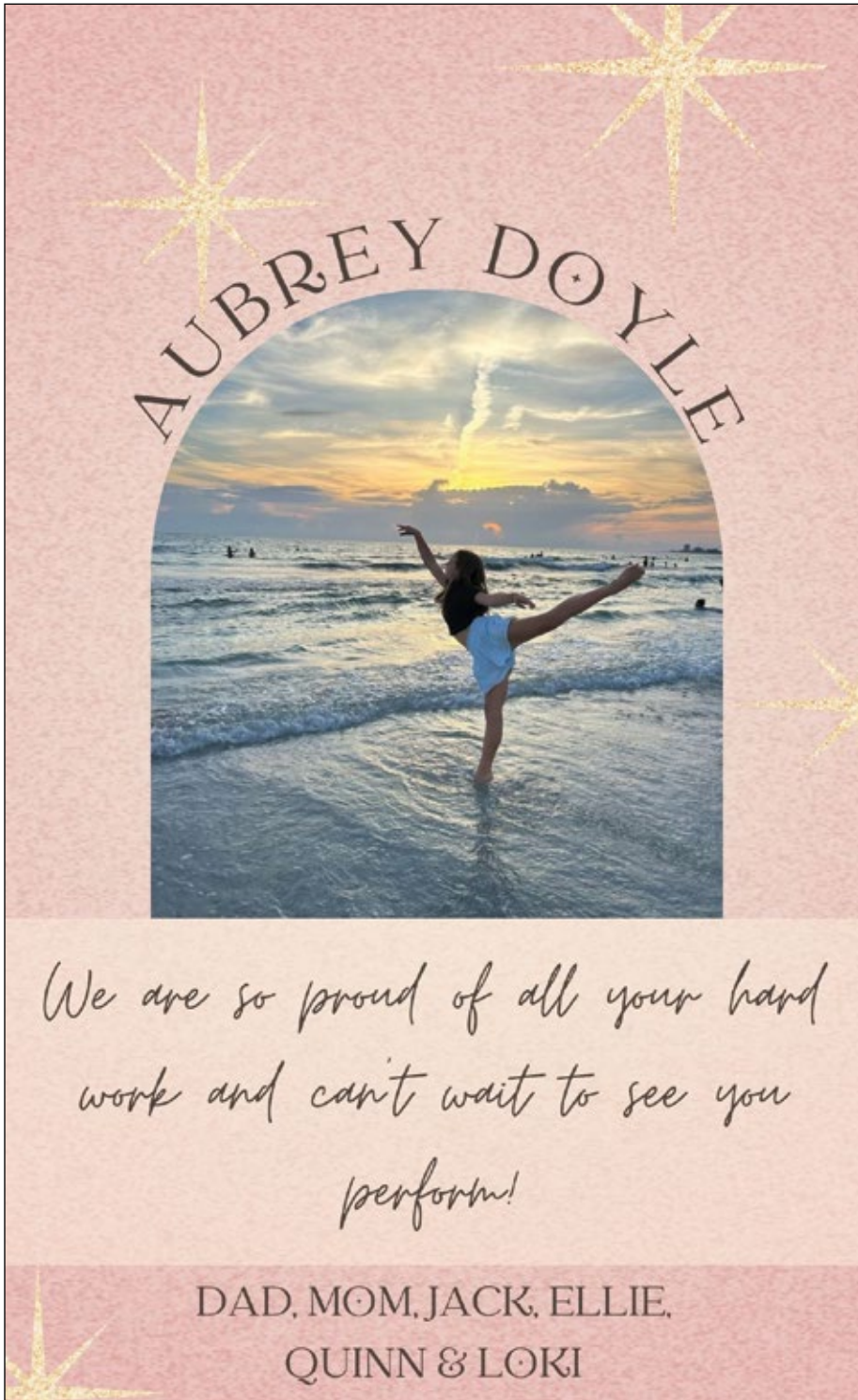
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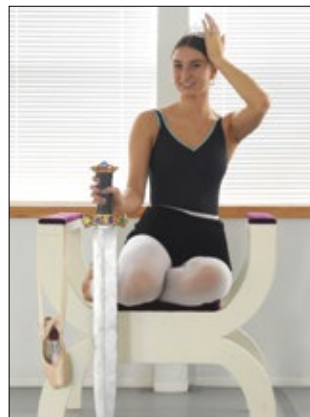
**Love,
Mom & Dad**

CONGRATS TO OUR WMYB SENIOR!



SOPHIE ERBENTRAUT

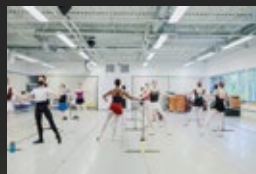
This is my 10th and final *Nutcracker* with WMYB. I've been in every WMYB production since the age of eight. I've learned and grown so much through this company, it makes me sad thinking about taking my last bow on stage. This is my third year of being the Student Representative of WMYB, and working on the active board. This is my fourth year on the FHC varsity dance team. I also dance at Ada Dance Academy, where I started dancing when I was three years old and then started on the competition team at the age of seven. Currently, I



compete on the Imprint Dance Company's competition team. I'm so grateful for all the studios and teachers I have danced with for getting me to where I am now. Dance has been the biggest part of my life. I plan to go to college, but I'm undecided where and what I want to major in. I hope in college I can find a way to further my dance career. I'm so sad to leave my family at WMYB, but incredibly excited to bring what I've learned from them into my life after high school.

Save The Date!

WMYB will again be offering a World-Class Ballet Intensive for 2 weeks in June 2024. More details coming January 2024 @ wmyb.org.



WMYB DANCERS



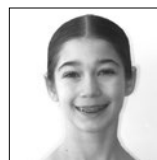
CATE AFMAN is 13 years old and in 8th grade at Forest Hills Central Middle. She has danced since age 3. When not taking classes at Ada Dance Academy, she loves exploring nature or researching animals and their habitats, and relaxing at Lake Michigan with her three brothers in the summer. She is grateful to be in another WMYB performance!



LYNNLEE ASHTON is 11 years old and in 6th grade at Northern Trails. She has been dancing for eight years at Academy of Dance Arts. This is Lynnlee's second performance with WMYB and she is so excited to be a part of *The Nutcracker*. She would like to thank her teachers, family and friends for all their support.



JENNIFER BEHRENWALD is a junior at Lakewood High School. She has been dancing since age 3 at Center Stage Dance Academy. She is very honored to be a part of WMYB's *Nutcracker* for two years now. Jennifer wants to give a special thank you to Miss Kelly and Miss Tracy for pushing her to be the best version of herself.



SOPHIA BERGSMA is 14 years old and a freshman at Lowell. She has danced at Ada Dance Academy for the past 11 years and this is her seventh year with WMYB. Sophia attended the School of American Ballet's summer program last summer. She thanks her family, friends, and dance teachers for their guidance and support.



AUDREY BIERSACK is a 3rd grader at Pine Ridge Elementary. Audrey dances at Ada Dance Academy and is super excited for her first year with WMYB and *The Nutcracker*. She loves playing soccer, dancing, and basketball. She also enjoys baking and playing with her dog Dakota.



CHARLOTTE BIERSACK is a 5th grader at Goodwillie Environmental School and is excited to be performing for the second time with WMYB in *The Nutcracker*. She has been dancing at Ada Dance Academy for the last four years. Charlotte also enjoys playing with her dog, soccer, skiing, drawing, and baking sweet treats.



LYDIA BOUCHER is 14 years old and an 8th grader at Lakewood Middle School. She has been dancing at Center Stage Dance Academy since she was 4. This is her second *Nutcracker* season with the West Michigan Youth Ballet. She would like to thank her dance teachers and family for supporting her passion for dance.

WMYB DANCERS



HADLEY BREIT is 15 years old and in 10th grade at Byron Center High School. She has been dancing for eight years at Ada Dance Academy and six years with WMYB. She is super excited for this year's *Nutcracker* production and would like to thank her teachers, family, friends, and God for helping her get to where she is today.



LIVIA BURNSON is a 6th grader at Forest Hills Central Woodlands. This is her fourth year being a part of the West Michigan Youth Ballet and she has been dancing at Ada Dance Academy since she was 4 years old. When Livia is not in the studio, she is either on the basketball court or hanging out with family and friends.



SYDNEY BYRNE is in 8th grade at Northern Hills Middle. She has been dancing for seven years, the majority with Ada Dance. When not dancing, she enjoys spending time with her family and friends, painting, and reading. She would like to give a special thanks to all of her family and friends that have supported her throughout her years of dancing.



FELIX CARLGREN is a 5th grader at Knapp Forest Elementary. He has been dancing for five years and this is his second time dancing with West Michigan Youth Ballet. Felix likes to create art and explore the world.



ABIGAIL CARLISLE is 10 years old and in 5th grade. When not on a dance floor, she can be found in a kitchen baking, or camping with her grandparents. She would like to thank her Heavenly Father for her gift of ballet, Ms. Kristi and Ms. Margie for their patience and wisdom, and her family for their love and support!



BERKLEIGH CAROL is a freshman at St. Mary School in Lake Leelanau. Dancing since age 3, she is currently with Ballet Etc. and Embodied Arts Collective in Traverse City. This is Berkleigh's third year with WMYB. Berkleigh thanks God for her talents, her parents for support, her dance teachers for guidance, and WMYB for this opportunity to perform.



ANNABELLE CLARK is a 3rd grader and the happiest little dancer in the world! Annabelle loves dance and anything to do with dance as it truly makes her happy. She has been dancing for years at numerous dance schools. She also loves to ski, golf, and play with her friends and family.

WMYB DANCERS



EMILYN CONN is a 7th grader at Forest Hills Eastern Middle. This is her fourth year doing *The Nutcracker*. She's been dancing for 11 years and on Imprint Dance Company's competition team since age 6. When not dancing, she enjoys spending time with friends and her church youth group. She thanks her family, friends, and teachers for their support.



MEAGAN CONN is a sophomore at Forest Hills Eastern. Dancing for 14 years, this is her sixth year in *The Nutcracker*. She dances at Imprint Dance Company is on the FHNE Varsity dance team. She enjoys dance modeling and meeting other dancers from around the state, as well as reading and crocheting.



AMELIA DENNIS is 11 years old and in 5th grade at Knapp Forest. This is her first show with WMYB. She has been dancing since she was 3 and calls Imprint Dance Company home. When not dancing, you can find her playing with friends, doing crafts or baking. Amelia thanks her family and dance teachers for supporting her and her love of dance.



ELLA DEWILDT is in 5th grade at Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School. She has danced for the past six years at Ada Dance Academy. When not dancing, Ella loves being outside, playing sports, and being with her friends and family. This is her third show with WMYB, and she's so thankful for all the fun experiences and wonderful people.



EMMA DIAZ-LAWTON is 14 years old and a freshman at Northern High School. She has been dancing with Ada Dance Academy for the past 11 years and with WMYB for the past seven. Emma has attended summer programs with both Boston Ballet and Houston Ballet. She would like to thank her family and her teachers for all of their love and support.



AUBREY DOYLE is in 6th grade at Eastern Middle School. She has been dancing since she was 3. This is her sixth performance with WMYB. She is on the Ada Dance Academy competition team. Aubrey is thrilled to be dancing the part of Clara at Frauenthal Theater this year. She thanks her teachers, family, and friends for their love and support.



SHAY DUFFY is an 8th grader at Forest Hills Middle. A long-time dancer at Ada Dance, she is very thankful that her parents had her start taking lessons at the age of 4! She thanks God, her family, and her teachers for the amazing opportunity to be in *The Nutcracker*. Shay really enjoys performing and is thankful for all the memories she's made.

WMYB DANCERS



AILA ELLIS is 14 years old and a homeschooler in 8th grade. She dances at HIS Dance Academy and has been dancing for eight years. Aila also loves reading, skiing, traveling, and being with family and friends. She is excited for her fourth performance with WMYB!



ROSIE ELLIS is 8 years old and a 3rd grader at Collins Elementary. She started dance when she was 4. Rosie also loves gymnastics, music, swimming, her dog Mabel, and being with her friends and family. She is so excited to be in her first *Nutcracker*!



CARTER ENDRES is an 8th grader at Lowell Middle School. He is in his fourth year of dance. When not in the studio, you can find Carter always being his unique self, bringing light to any room, and hanging with his friends.



SOPHIA ERBENTRAUT is a senior at Forest Hills Central High School. She's been dancing with West Michigan Youth Ballet for 10 years. Sophia also dances on her school's varsity dance team, Imprint competition team, and at Ada Dance Academy. She has two cats, a dog, and a chinchilla, and also loves to ride horses.



AUTUMN EVERETT is 10 years old and a 5th grader at Lakewood Middle. She has been dancing at Center Stage Dance Academy for the last eight years. This is her first year with WMYB. When not dancing, she enjoys camping and hanging out with her friends. A big thanks to her family, dance teachers, and friends for their love and support.



DALLAS EVERETT is 13 years old and a 7th grader at Lakewood Middle. She has been dancing at Center Stage Dance Academy for the last eight years. This is her second year with WMYB. She also enjoys hanging out with friends and family. She thanks her family for love and support and her dance teachers for helping her grow as a dancer!



EMILY FAULKNER is in 6th grade at Central Woodlands. She started dancing at Imprint Dance Company when she was 2 years old. She has been on the competition team for the last seven years.

WMYB DANCERS



SARAH FAULKNER is 8 years old and in 3rd grade at Pine Ridge Elementary. This is her first *Nutcracker* performance. She started dancing at age 2 at Imprint Dance Company and is in her fifth year on the competition dance team. When Sarah is not dancing, she participates on a summer swim team and also loves to sing.



LORELAI FEENY is 8 years old and a 3rd grader at Wealthy Elementary. Dancing since age 3, ballet and jazz are her favorites. Her home studio is Hearts in Motion Dance and this is her first time performing with WMYB. When not dancing, she enjoys drawing, reading, and playing piano. She thanks her family for their support.



LAUREN FINN is 9 years old and a 4th grader at Thornapple Elementary. She danced for two years, on a competition team and doing recitals. This is her first year doing *Nutcracker* and she is really excited to be a mouse. Besides dancing, she likes basketball, volleyball, and horse back riding. She hopes you like the show!



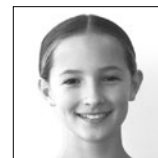
MADELYNE FRANG is 14 years old and in 8th grade at Reeths-Puffer Middle. Mady has been dancing for 10 years and dances for Releve Dance Studio in Whitehall. This is her third *Nutcracker* performance with WMYB. She would like to thank all of her teachers, friends, and family for all of their love and support inside and outside of dancing.



ELLERY GAVER is in 5th grade at Ross Park. Dancing for nine years, she wants to be a music teacher or a musical director. She enjoys dancing, singing, acting, playing video games, and hanging out with friends. She thanks Mrs. Kristi and Mrs. Anna for inspiring and helping her, her parents for supporting her passions, and all of you for coming today.



COLIN GIETZEN is 8 years old and in 2nd grade at Thornapple Elementary. He has danced at Hearts In Motion since he was 5. This is his first year performing with WMYB. Outside of dance, he plays soccer, basketball, golf, tennis, and swims. He thanks his family for their support, especially his big sister Sophie, and his teachers.



SOPHIE GIETZEN is 12 and in 6th grade at Central Woodlands. She has danced since age 3 and dances at Ada Dance Academy. This is her fourth season with WMYB. She also enjoys basketball, golf, and swimming. She is excited to dance with her little brother, Colin, this year. She thanks her instructors, friends, and family for their support.

WMYB DANCERS



ANNA GRAY is 16 years old and a junior at Grand Haven High School. This is her second year with West Michigan Youth Ballet and 11th year dancing at her home studio, Spotlight Dance Academy. She is thankful for her family, Stephen Sanford, Laura Berman, and WMYB staff for the endless support and making this possible.



ALLISON GREER is 8 years old and has been dancing for five years at Ada Dance Academy. This is her first time performing with the West Michigan Youth Ballet. Allie is in 3rd grade at Pine Ridge Elementary in Forest Hills. She dedicates her performance to her family and her dog, Flynn.



STELLA GULICK is a 6th grader at Northern Trails 5/6 school. This is her seventh show. She has also competed with the YAGP and UBC teams for the last three seasons. Her favorite part of *The Nutcracker* is performing with her best friends. She thanks her parents, sister Maya, and dedicated coaches for always supporting her dance career.



ANNA HATCH is a 6th grader at Central Woodlands. Dancing since she was 5, she has danced competitively with Imprint Dance Company for the last four years. She is excited to perform with WMYB for the first time! When not dancing, she enjoys listening to Taylor Swift and baking. She thanks her family for their love and support.



LAUREN HENDRICKS is 10 years old and in 5th grade at Alto Elementary. Her home studio is Fine Arts School of Dance and Ada Dance Academy. When she's not dancing (which is rare) you can find her with her dogs and crafting. A special thanks to the family making the trip to support her and her love for dance.



CLAIRE HERPOLSHEIMER is a 7th grader at Forest Hills Middle. Claire has been dancing and performing since she was very little. She is a wonderful and hardworking student. When not dancing, she enjoys playing tennis, going shopping, and being with friends and family. She is so grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this performance!



CASSIE HOVINGA is a freshman at Forest Hills Central. This is her first year with WMYB and she is excited to be a part of this show. She has been dancing for 10 years. She also participates in competitive dance at Imprint Dance Company, and is on the Varsity Dance team.

WMYB DANCERS



LILY HOY is 11 years old and a 6th grader at Central Woodlands. She has been dancing since she was 3. She's a member of the Imprint Dance Company. When she's not dancing, you can find her snow skiing and reading. She would like to thank her family and dance teachers for their love and support.



MIKAYLA ISMAIL is 12 years old and in 7th grade at Lowell Middle School. She dances at Ada Dance Academy. Mikayla enjoys studying social studies at school, dancing multiple styles of dance, and listening to music. She would like to thank God, her dance instructors, family, and friends for supporting her dream of dance.



MIKENA ISMAIL is 14 years old and a freshman at Lowell High School. She dances at Ada Dance Academy. She enjoys dancing, running cross country, and painting. She would like to thank God, her dance instructors, family, and friends for supporting her dream of dance.



MILEAH ISMAIL is 15 years old and a sophomore at Lowell High School. She enjoys dancing with Ada Dance Academy. She also enjoys spending time with her friends, caring for her family's 12 pets, and dancing multiple styles of dance. Mileah thanks God, her dance instructors, family, and friends for supporting her passion of dancing.



MINA JACOBS is a 4th grader at Baldwin Heights. She is excited for her first *Nutcracker* with WMYB. Dancing for four years, she enjoys dancing competitively at Hearts in Motion. Mina loves performing with HCAT, reading books, and exploring nature. Thank you to WMYB, her HMD teachers, family, and friends for their continued love and support.



HARPER KOHN is a 7th grader at St. Thomas the Apostle. She began as a dancer at age 3 in Chicago. She first saw *The Nutcracker* at age 5, and this is her first time performing in it. For the last three years, she has danced for Studio Dance in Grand Rapids. In that time, she has won multiple awards in local and regional dance competitions.



KATYA KVAL is an 8th grader at St. Mary's in Spring Lake. Katya is currently training and performing with Grand Rapids Ballet School Junior Company. She is grateful to WMYB for their work in providing performance opportunities. She thanks her teachers, parents, family, and friends who are supporting her to make her dance dreams a reality.

WMYB DANCERS



ALLISUN LANCASTER is a 5th grader at Murray Lake Elementary. She loves dancing, singing, and performing. She also enjoys spending time with her friends at SkyZone and the mall, playing Minecraft and Roblox, and hanging out with her kittens. Her family is very proud of her hard work and are grateful to her teachers and the Youth Ballet.



LUCY LANGEJANS is a 6th grade student at Forest Hills Eastern Middle School. She is excited to be in first show with WMYB. She has danced with Rhythm Dance Center since age 3 and is now on their competitive team. She would like to thank her dance instructors and family for everything they have done to support her love of dance.



MARS MAIDEN is 13 and an 8th grader at Great Lakes Learning Academy. This is his third year in *The Nutcracker*. Mars's home studio is Imprint Dance Company, where he is on the competition team. When not on stage, Mars enjoys hanging out with friends and online gaming. He thanks his family, instructors, and fellow dancers.



CARLI MAIS is 15 years old, and a sophomore at Forest Hills Eastern High School. She has been dancing for 11 years, and is a student at Ada Dance Academy. Carli is also on the FHNE Varsity dance team, and this is her seventh year with WMYB. Carli would like to thank her teachers, family, and friends for their love and support.



RYLIN MAIS is 13 years old and in 7th grade at Forest Hills Eastern Middle School. She has been dancing 10 years, and is a student at Ada Dance Academy. This is her fifth year with WMYB. Rylin also enjoys basketball, volleyball, lacrosse, and spending time with her family and friends.



EMILY McGLINCHEY is in 6th grade at Forest Hills Northern Trails. She started dance at age 9 and has been dancing for three years. This is her second season with WMYB. When not dancing, she enjoys hanging out with friends and family, and camping. She would like to thank her Ada Dance Academy instructors for helping her grow as a dancer.



CAYLEE MILLER is a 7th grader at Ionia Middle. She has been dancing at Center Stage Dance Academy in Lake Odessa since age 3. This is her second year with WMYB. When not dancing, she enjoys camping, hanging out with friends, family time, and Starbucks. She would like to thank everyone for their support and helping her to pursue her dreams.

WMYB DANCERS



SCARLETT NORIEGA is thrilled for her second year in *The Nutcracker*. She is a 4th grader at Thornapple Elementary and weighing future careers of becoming the President or opening a dance studio. Along with dance, Scarlett enjoys playing with her baby sister, art, and traveling. She gives a very special thanks to Ms. Margie for support and guidance.



SARA PRIMEAU is a junior at Traverse City Saint Francis. A dancer for 15 years, this is her third year with WMYB. Sara thanks Ms. Laura, Mr. Stephen, and Ms. Heather for their commitment to this wonderful company, and all the parents who work tirelessly to put on a great production. Love to her family for their support and encouragement.



ELLA ROTTMAN is in 3rd grade at Collins Elementary. She has danced since age 2 at Hearts in Motion and is excited for her second WMYB performance. Ella enjoys spending time with friends and family, gymnastics, skiing, swimming, and playing with her dog Teddy. Thanks to WMYB, HMD, friends, and family for your continued love and support.



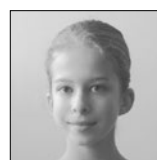
LYDIA ROTTMAN is in 3rd grade at Pine Island Elementary. She has danced since she was 3 years old at Hearts in Motion and is excited for her first WMYB show! Lydia also enjoys cheerleading, horseback riding, skiing and camping. She thanks God, her dance teachers, family, and friends for supporting her every day!



ELAINA SANFORD is an 8th grader at Holy Spirit Catholic School. She started dancing at age 2 and enjoys dancing with her friends and family. She is the middle child of four siblings. She thanks Mr. Stephen (her dad), her Ada Dance instructors, friends, and family for encouraging her throughout her dance education. This is her sixth season with WMYB.



NATE SANFORD is a 3rd grader at Holy Spirit Catholic School. He has three sisters, one brother, and a dog, Roxie. This is his second year with WMYB and he has enjoyed being with all his dance friends. He thanks Mr. Stephen, Ms. Margie, and Ms. Erica from Ada Dance Academy for their instruction and preparing him to be ready to perform his roles on stage.



CHARLEY SANIAL is 11 and a 6th grader at GRCMS. She has danced several styles at Ada Dance Academy for many years. This is her third season with WMYB. In addition, she reads books, builds LEGOs, plays violin, and is part of a VEX robotics team. She would like to thank the volunteers, including her mom, and her dance teachers.

WMYB DANCERS



CLARA SCHULTZ is a 3rd grader at Lowell. This is her first year with WMYB, and second year dancing. Her home studio is LoMI Studios, in Lowell, where she dances for their Company, and is very excited for her first solo in the spring. Her favorite things to do are dance, create art, and be with her family and animals.



ELLIOT SCHULZ is 15 and a 10th grader at East Grand Rapids. He loves dancing and being able to express himself on stage. He would like to thank both his parents and all his teachers for always being so supportive. He's so excited that he got this opportunity to perform with WMYB, and looks forward to all future opportunities.



LEAH SELLECK is in 6th grade at Forest Hills Northern. This is her eighth year dancing and sixth WMYB show. Her favorite part in *Nutcracker* this year is being a Clown. Leah attends Ada Dance where her favorite class is jazz. She thanks her friends for making it fun, the parent volunteers, Ms. Laura, and Mr. Stephen for their hard work.



AVA STAUFFER is 11 and in 6th grade at Northern Trails 5/6. She is in her eighth year at Hearts in Motion Dance and fourth season with WMYB. When not dancing, Ava enjoys reading, drawing, playing trombone, and spending time with her family, friends, and dog Finn. Special thanks to her HMD teachers for encouraging her love of dance.



MADELEINE STAUFFER is 9 and in 4th grade at Meadow Brook. She is in her eighth year at Hearts in Motion Dance and second season with WMYB. When not dancing, she enjoys reading, cheerleading, playing violin, and spending time with family, friends, and dog Finn. Special thanks to her HMD teachers for their support and encouragement.

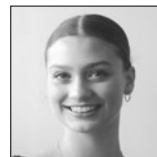


COOPER STRAIT is a 14-year old 9th grader, who is currently being unschooled. He takes tap, jazz, and ballet. He has been dancing for four years, and his favorite style is tap. He would like to thank his big sister for always having his back, and his dog, for always being there.



EMMA STRAIT is a 17-year old junior, currently being unschooled. She takes tap, jazz, musical theater, ballet, and contemporary. She has been dancing for 14 years, and her favorite style is musical theatre. She would like to thank her mom for driving her all the time, and her dog for always giving the best hugs.

WMYB DANCERS



JOSIE SULKA is a 10th grader at Forest Hills Northern. She dances at Ada Dance Academy. This is her seventh year with WMYB. She has done intensives at Philadelphia Ballet, Boston Ballet, Nashville Ballet, and Utah's Ballet West, and is competing at YAGP and UBC this year. She thanks her dance teachers, friends, and family for their love and support.



ADALYN TOLLAS is a 6th grader at Central Woodlands. She has been dancing since she was 3 years old. She dances competitively with Imprint Dance Company. This is Adalyn's first *Nutcracker* performance with WMYB. She would like to thank her mom, dad, and Nana for getting her to all the rehearsals on time.



ANNABELLE TOLLAS is a 3rd grader at Thornapple Elementary. She dances competitively with Imprint Dance Company. This is her fifth year of taking dance classes and her first *Nutcracker* performance with WMYB. She would like to thank her mom, dad, and Nana for getting her to dance rehearsals on time.



EVELYN UZARSKI is a freshman at Lowell. A dancer for 10 years, her vibrant personality and infectious smile comes out when she is on stage. Determined to be her best, she encourages her fellow dancers to have fun while maintaining a high level of expectations. Evelyn is also active in theatre and Girl Scouts, excels in school and loves to be outdoors.



OLIVIA VELICEVIC is 9 years old and a 4th grader at Pine Ridge Elementary. She dances competitively at Studio Dance in multiple styles. She has danced for seven years. This is her second year at WMYB.



VANESSA WARD is a 9th grade homeschooler. She has been dancing for over six years in all styles. She mainly does ballet and has been on pointe for three years.



CHARLOTTE WATSON is a 5th grader at Central Woodlands. She has danced since age 3 and is honored to be part of WMYB. When not dancing, she enjoys playing with her friends and family, reading, and drawing. She thanks all of her amazing dance teachers at Ada Dance, her wonderful dance friends, and her family for all their support.

WMYB DANCERS



SAMANTHA WEAVER is 11 years old and in sixth grade at White Pines Intermediate. She has been dancing at Dance Revolutions for nine years and one year en pointe. Outside of dance, she enjoys to read, bike, and hang out with friends. She is thankful for God, dance teachers, friends, and family for supporting her throughout the season.



LEXIE WHITE is in 5th grade at Northpointe Christian and attends Ada Dance Academy. She is excited to be in her fifth show with WMYB. She loves swimming, gardening, and traveling with her family. She thanks God for her talent, her wonderful dance teachers for their diligent instruction, and family for supporting her dreams of classical ballet.



KATHERINE WISSER is 14 years old and a freshman at City High Middle School. She dances at Ada Dance Academy and this is her seventh year with WMYB. She has been dancing since she was 6. She would like to thank her dance teachers for their guidance and her parents for their love and support.



OLIVIA WISSER is 10 years old and a 5th grader at CA Frost Environmental Science Academy. When not dancing, Olivia likes playing soccer and pickleball. Olivia dances at Body Language Dance Company and would like to thank her teachers and family for their support.



ELLA YENCHAR is 15 years old, and a freshman at Ionia High School. She has been dancing at Ada Dance Academy for nine years, and at WMYB for seven years. She enjoys competing at YAGP and UBC. She would like to thank her teachers and family for their constant support.

We are so grateful to the following studios for sharing their talented students with the West Michigan Youth Ballet.

Ada Dance Academy	Releve Dance Studio	Studio Dance
Center Stage Dance Academy	Hearts in Motion	Grand Rapids Ballet
Dance Revolutions	Academy of Dance Arts	Rhythm Dance Studio
Ballet Etc.	HMD Boutique	Lo Mi Dance Studio
Imprint Dance Company	Spotlight Dance Academy	Grand Rapids School of Dance
HIS Dance	Fine Arts School of Dance	

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Thank You to ...

The Board of Directors and Advisory Board Members for all your support and vision.

Marlene Kenneway and Brigitte Nelson for creating the West Michigan Youth Ballet and trusting my vision for the organization.

Our Board President and Vice President, Patti Diaz-Lawton and Carrie Everhart, for your sacrifice of time, talent, and treasure that is felt throughout our organization, and for your leadership in board matters and assistance with day-to-day operations.

All of the participating dance schools and teachers for all your love and care in training these dancers.

All choreographers and staggers that helped us to prepare these dancers for their performance, particularly to Laura Berman, much love and respect for your continued support and dedication to these young artists.

WMYB's favorite costume designer, Heather Cassady, and her talented team of Carrie Everhart, Kristin Throop, Judy Sulka, Eva Sanial, Melissa Ismail, and all our parent volunteers who help bring Heather's vision into reality! Everyday I see Heather designing and making costumes that transform dancers into the best versions of their characters. Your attention to detail is appreciated by all who experience your costumes.

Carola Gulick for your organizing of the props, sets, storage, trailer, and our backstage crew. Every day, you are building or organizing, setting the stage for the betterment of our WMYB performances.

Dan Arganbright, our stage manager, helping crews pull ropes, set up and tear down floors, backdrops and big set pieces.

Amy Feather and Christina Herpolsheimer for anticipating the needs of the boutique collection with a creative eye and artistic style.

Tanya Kval and Samantha Hendricks for organizing and creating a wonderful environment for our guests at Clara's Tea Party.

Christina Stauffer for organizing the beautiful flowers for our dancers.

Liz Henry for the WMYB communications which helps to lead the dancers in a clear professional manner.

Patti Diaz-Lawton for her organization with the WMYB operations committee.

Rachel Yenchar for keeping all of our parent volunteers organized and informed.

Jane Pierangeli for all your time in creating the promotional pieces and a beautiful playbill that adds life into our vision for the show.

Annie Everhart for her time and talent in photographing our dancers for the playbill and taking pictures of everyone for their bios.

Humberto Decanini and Raynard Jackson for photographing the dancers in their performance and providing them with a memorable keepsake of their experience.

Nicole Bergsma for the responsibility of the WMYB treasury, we appreciate all your efforts.

Judy Sulka on the Nominating committee, for helping us grow our Board of Directors that leads us to the place where we want to be.

Jennifer Sanford, Carrie Everhart, Samantha Hendricks, and Jen Byrne, along with their crew of volunteers on the marketing team, with the help of Reagan Marketing, to put our show out front on our social media platforms and bring our supporters into the theater.

Caren Kerprich, Kristen Frang, Nicole Bergsma, and Carola Gulick for keeping our non-profit legitimate, sound, and working through grants and budgets. Thank you for your dedication to WMYB.

Carola Gulick for her marvelous ideas and efforts in fund development through connections in our community.

Kevin Stauffer for his leadership in bringing WMYB to an excellent technological status. Thank you for your help in keeping us organized.

Mary Jo Kuhlman, as chairman of outreach working alongside Carolyn Evans, Brigitte Nelson, Mary Anne Rosely, Rachal Yenchar, and Dana Doyle in spearheading WMYB partnerships with GRPS Coit Elementary and into our local Retirement communities, enabling all ages an opportunity to experience ballet.

Jeremy Cox and Jane Bunting from the Forest Hills Fine Arts Center, for being a dream to work with at an amazing facility.

The creative team at the Frauenthal Theater, for their dedication in bringing in our show and putting it all together in a spectacular theater setting.

Harlee Scholten and Claire Pomeroy, our dancer alumni on our board of directors, who provide insight to our organization.

Sophia Erbenraut, Carli Mais, and Josie Sulka for being our WMYB student representatives. Your work and leadership give the dancers a voice.

All our parent volunteers who understand the importance of participation with their children's interests at heart.

And lastly, to my supportive family: wife, Jennifer and kids Julia, Andrew, Elaina, Nate, and Lucy who stand with me in supporting the West Michigan Youth Ballet and the work that we do in the dance community.

Sincerely, Stephen Sanford

WMYB Artistic Director

WMYB BOARD OF DIRECTORS THANKS ...

West Michigan Youth Ballet Board of Directors would like to add a special thank you to Laura Berman and Stephen Sanford. The two of you have spent countless hours along with your team to deliver a beautiful production. Your leadership, support, and love for the dancers is what makes West Michigan Youth Ballet such a wonderful experience for all. Thank you for taking time away from your families to help grow ours! We appreciate you both and look forward to what the future holds.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Kari Erbentraut will forever remain in our hearts as an inspiration to answer the call for volunteering. She gave wholeheartedly of her time, talent, and support to the families of West Michigan Youth Ballet. We will always be grateful.

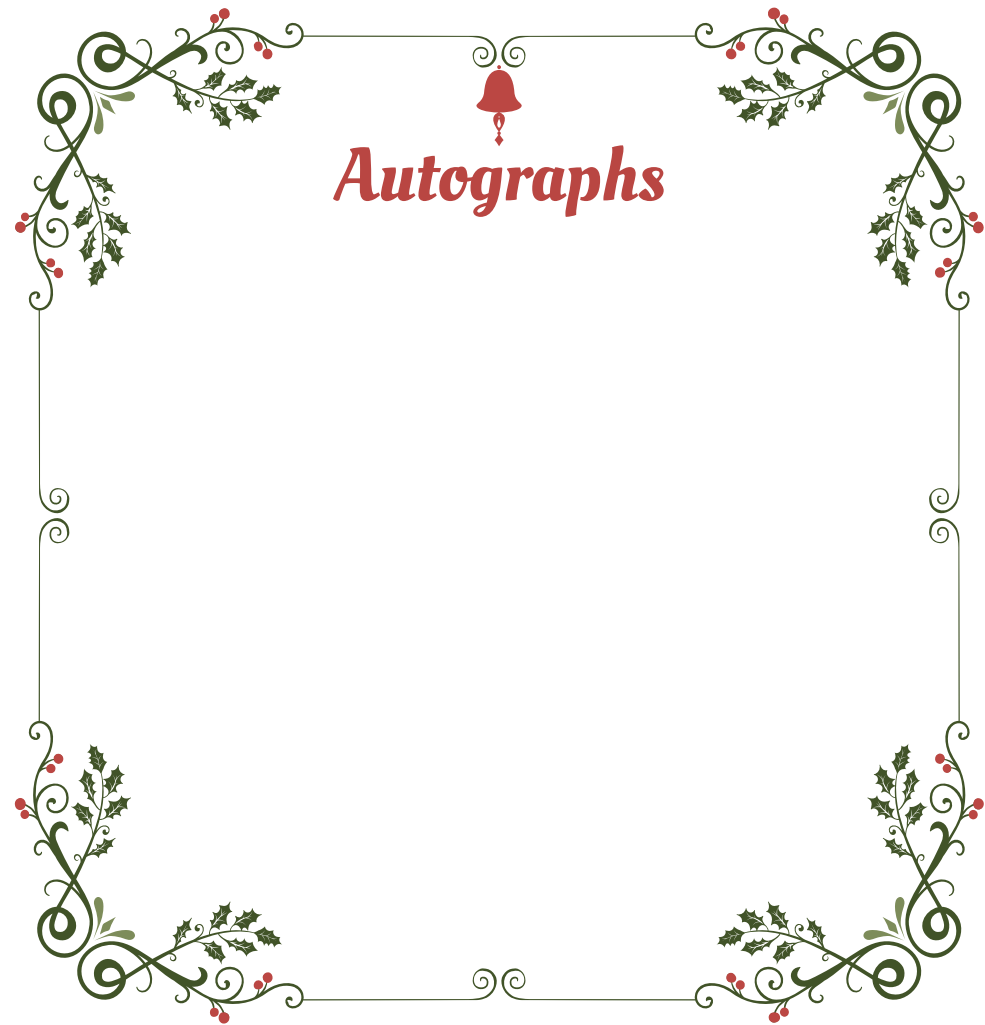


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