

# Ballet

## NEBRASKA

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 27, 2012

Contact: Erika Overturff, (402) 541-6946

### IT'S A SEASON OF THREES FOR BALLET NEBRASKA'S SEASON 3

OMAHA -- The dancers of Ballet Nebraska, the region's only professional dance company, will start work Tuesday on what artistic director Erika Overturff is calling "our season of threes": the company's third performance season, featuring three different programs in three different venues, plus a new collaboration with Opera Omaha that will see Ballet Nebraska dancers featured in all three opera productions.

"It's a challenging schedule, but dancers love challenges!" Overturff said. "We're really excited about being able to bring such a wide spectrum of ballet to so many audiences."

The season will open October 19 and 21 at Joslyn Art Museum's Witherspoon Concert Hall with *Momentum*, Ballet Nebraska's annual "mixed-repertory" program consisting of short ballets in a diverse range of styles. This season's *Momentum* program, Overturff said, consists entirely of contemporary works: dances created by currently active present-day choreographers. The all-contemporary program gives the audience a chance to see the wide range of styles that make up today's ballet vocabulary, Overturff said, and also ties in with Joslyn's exhibit *Under Pressure: Contemporary Prints from the Collections of Jordan D. Schnitzer and His Family Foundation*, which will be on view October 6, 2012, through January 6, 2013.

Other mainstage productions on the season will be:

- *The Nutcracker*, November 30 at the IWCC Arts Center in Council Bluffs, and December 2 at the Omaha Music Hall
- *Alice in Wonderland*, choreographed by Kennet Oberly, April 26 and 27 at the IWCC Arts Center

Overturff said that for the first time in the company's history, Ballet Nebraska dancers also will participate in all three of Opera Omaha's productions: *La Traviata* (October 5 and 7); *The Magic Flute* (February 22 and 24) and *Bluebeard's Castle* (April 19 and 21.)

Another first for the season is Ballet Nebraska's inclusion on the artist roster of the Nebraska Arts Council's Nebraska Touring Program (NTP), which offers grant support for Nebraska schools and nonprofit organizations that sponsor arts performances, Overturff said. *Momentum* will be this year's Ballet Nebraska offering for NTP sponsors, she said. Also on the touring front, Ballet Nebraska already has been booked to perform *The Nutcracker* December 14 and 15 at the Sami Bedell Center in Spirit Lake, Iowa, where the production premiered two years ago to record-breaking crowds, she said.

Information about Ballet Nebraska and the 2012-13 season is available at [balletnebraska.org](http://balletnebraska.org)

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**Note:** Please contact Erika directly if you are interested in arranging for feature stories, photo/video coverage, or interviews with dancers and choreographers.

## Ballet Nebraska 2012-13 Productions

### **Momentum**

Friday, October 19, 8 pm, and Sunday, October 21, 2 pm

Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha

This year's mixed repertory program will include an all-new lineup of choreographers and a diverse mix of contemporary ballets, including:

- Brazilian choreographer Armando Duarte's **Sanfona de Boca**.
- Matthew Carter's **Sadako**, a ballet inspired by the true story of Sadako Sasaki, a Japanese atomic bomb survivor whose life became a symbol of the innocent victims of war. Carter learned of Sadako during his many tours to Japan as a ballet performer.
- Erika Overturff's **Tropico**, an exuberant ballet set to Caribbean rhythms.

*Momentum* is a part of Ballet Nebraska's ongoing partnership with Joslyn Art Museum. The current collaboration explores contemporary art from the viewpoint of the visual artist and of the choreographer. As its part of the collaborative partnership, Joslyn will be hosting the exhibition *Under Pressure: Contemporary Prints from the Collections of Jordan D. Schnitzer* (October 6, 2012 – January 6, 2013).

### **The Nutcracker**

Friday, November 30, 7:30 pm - IWCC Arts Center, Council Bluffs

Sunday, December 2, 2 pm - Omaha Music Hall

Ballet Nebraska's lively and entertaining production of *The Nutcracker* will feature new scenes and characters for 2012. In addition to the Ballet Nebraska professional company, the production will showcase more than 160 child and community performers and the North Wind Chorus, an ensemble of young singers directed by Opera Omaha's J. Gawf.

### **Alice in Wonderland**

Friday, April 26, 7:30 pm, and Saturday, April 27, 2 pm

IWCC Arts Center, Council Bluffs

Ballet Nebraska has commissioned guest choreographer Kennet Oberly, a master of ballet storytelling, to create this imaginative production that combines favorite characters and situations from both of Lewis Carroll's *Alice* books: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*.

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**Note to Editors:** The following photos are available as fully-captioned high-resolution downloads from:  
[http://www.smugmug.com/gallery/24966913\\_rLdM9M](http://www.smugmug.com/gallery/24966913_rLdM9M)



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## BALLET NEBRASKA 2012-13 COMPANY BIOS

### Erika Overturff

Artistic Director & Founder



Erika Overturff is the founder and artistic director of Ballet Nebraska, the state's professional ballet company. Under her leadership, Ballet Nebraska enriches the region through an exciting array of professional dance performances and a strong commitment to cultural education and community outreach programming.

Erika began her training in Iowa at the Academy of Ballet, continuing her studies at summer programs including North Carolina School of the Arts, American Ballet Theatre, Pittsburgh Ballet Theater, and the Kirov Academy. Erika earned her B.F.A. in ballet performance and teaching from the University of Utah, which she attended on a full scholarship. She graduated *cum laude* in just three years and was chosen outstanding senior by the ballet department faculty.

Erika went on to dance with Montgomery Ballet, Alabama Ballet, and Omaha Theater Ballet. She has performed principal and soloist roles in a wide range of classical and contemporary repertoire. Erika has also been a faculty member and guest teacher for schools throughout the United States.

As a choreographer, Erika has received critical praise for her work. She served as répétitrice for Montgomery Ballet and resident choreographer for Omaha Theater Ballet. She is currently working on several collaborations with Opera Omaha and regularly creates new works for Ballet Nebraska. As part of the company's ongoing collaboration with Joslyn Art Museum for *Momentum*, Erika has choreographed original ballets inspired by museum artwork or exhibitions, including *Connemara* and *Cleopatra*. She also created Ballet Nebraska's lively and entertaining version of the holiday favorite *The Nutcracker*, which has drawn enthusiastic audiences both at home and on tour.

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### Matthew Carter

Ballet Master



Matthew Carter began his training with Sharon Filone at the Lake Erie Ballet School and Sandra Barnett at Little's Dance Studio. He went on to study on scholarship at North Carolina School of the Arts, Miami City Ballet School, and the Chautauqua Festival Dancers. Matthew has danced professionally with Ohio Ballet, Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, Lake Erie Ballet, and Omaha Theater Ballet. He has also performed as a Guest Artist with Hawaii Ballet Theatre, Neglia Ballet Artists, and Ballet Tucson. Matthew has been choreographing since the age of 16 and has premiered works with numerous schools, professional companies, and theaters. He is the co-director of Motion41 Dance in Omaha and continues to serve as a guest teacher for schools throughout the country. Matthew returns for his third season as Ballet Nebraska's ballet master.

### Erin Alarcón

Company Dancer



A native of New Jersey, Erin Alarcón received her dance training under Christine Taylor and Luba Gulyaeva of New Jersey Civic Youth Ballet, where she performed a number of classic roles and contemporary works. Erin earned her B.A. in dance performance at Mercyhurst College under the direction of Tauna Hunter. During the summers, she studied with Eglevsky Ballet and The Joffrey Ballet. She has worked with a number of guest artists including Laura Alonso, Bruce Marks, Vivi Flindt, and Bill Evans. Erin has also studied abroad with Valerie Valentine of the Dutch National Ballet. Erin has danced professionally with SoMar Dance Works and Ballet Concert, and has appeared as a guest artist with Iowa Dance Theater. She has performed leading roles in *Giselle*, *Cinderella* and *The Sleeping Beauty*, as well as many soloist roles with Ballet Nebraska including Mikhail Fokine's *The Dying Swan*, Fee in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Dew Drop Fairy in *The Nutcracker*. This is Erin's third season with Ballet Nebraska.

### Claire Goodwillie

Company Dancer



Claire Goodwillie began her ballet training at Omaha Theater Ballet School of Dance. She spent summers training with the renowned Pacific Northwest Ballet and Ballet Austin. She has also trained in Banff, Canada. Claire appeared in numerous Omaha Theater Ballet productions as both a student and apprentice, including *The Sleeping Beauty*, *The Firebird* and *Coppélia*. Her favorite roles include young Clara in *The Orpheum Nutcracker*, Evil Rat Queen in Erika Overturff's *The Nutcracker*, Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and a vampire bride in *Dracula*. She has also performed with Opera Omaha and Omaha Symphony. Claire returns for her third season with Ballet Nebraska.



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### Natasha Grimm

Company Dancer



A founding member of Ballet Nebraska, Natasha Grimm has performed leading roles including Sugar Plum Fairy in Erika Overturff's *The Nutcracker*, Titania in Oskar Antunez' *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Mina in Winthrop Corey's *Dracula*, and the title role in Overturff's *Cleopatra*. Natasha began her ballet training at Omaha Theater Ballet School of Dance. She also received a scholarship to Kansas City Ballet, and toured with Manhattan Dance. Additionally, Natasha danced in productions with Omaha Symphony and Opera Omaha. Natasha began her professional career at Omaha Theater Ballet where she danced first as an apprentice, and later as a company member. Natasha returns for her third season with Ballet Nebraska.

### Alberto Liberatoscioli

Company Dancer



Originally from Italy, Alberto Liberatoscioli received his ballet training in the Vaganova and Balanchine styles while also studying modern dance. He was a member of National Theater in Brno, Czech Republic and Slovak National Ballet where he performed in classical repertory including *Le Corsaire*, *La Bayadère* and *Swan Lake*, as well as neoclassical works and operas. Alberto also danced with Columbia Classical Ballet in South Carolina, and later Omaha Theater Ballet. He appeared as a guest artist at Boulder Ballet, Ballet Fantastique, Lincoln Midwest Ballet and Iowa Dance Theater, dancing lead roles in *The Nutcracker*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *As You Like It* and *Cinderella*. Alberto received his teaching certification from American Ballet Theater in New York City and has taught master classes in Rome. He also teaches students in Omaha and Lincoln. Alberto holds a law degree and a masters in Human Resources. He is the recipient of an Una Manciatà di Lettere literary award for his book *Ombre alla Ribalta*. With Ballet Nebraska, Alberto has been featured in many roles including Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the Russian lead in *The Nutcracker*. Alberto is returning for his third season with the company.

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### **Bret Samson**

Company Dancer



Bret Samson began her dance training at Lake Shore Dance with Amy Aichele and Gwen Agee in Saukville, Wisconsin. She continued training with Melissa Anderson and Rafael Delgado in Milwaukee, where she later became a founding member of their performance group. Bret continued her training at Steps on Broadway in New York City. She has previously performed with Milwaukee Ballet II, Madison Ballet and Omaha Theater Ballet. Bret has enjoyed performing in works by a variety of choreographers, including Harrison McEldowney, Oskar Antunez, Winthrop Corey, Kennet Oberly, and Jean-Paul Commélin. She was recently featured as a soloist in Mikhail Fokine's classic *The Dying Swan* during Ballet Nebraska's *Momentum*. Bret is also the rehearsal director for Repertory Ensemble, Ballet Nebraska's youth performance group. A founding member of Ballet Nebraska, Bret is in her third season with the company.

### **Kelsey Schwenker**

Company Dancer



Boulder, Colorado native Kelsey Schwenker began her classical ballet training with Ballet Nouveau Colorado, where she was a five-year member of its student company directed by Julia Wilkinson Manley. She trained summers with Kansas City Ballet, Brooklyn Ballet Theatre, Boulder Jazz Dance Workshop and Paul Taylor Dance Company. Kelsey received her BFA in ballet performance, graduating summa cum laude from the University of Oklahoma, where she trained with Mary Margaret Holt, Donn Edwards, Steve Brule and Jeremy Lindberg. Kelsey has performed in notable works including *Rodeo*, *Divertimento No. 5*, *The Firebird*, *Afternoon of a Faun* and *Les Biches*. She has performed featured roles in Ballet Nebraska's productions of *Swing*, *Swing, Swing!*, *The Nutcracker*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Dracula* and *Momentum* - including Matthew Carter's classical work *Bacchanale Variations*. Kelsey returns for her third season with Ballet Nebraska.

### **Denis Vezetiu**

Company Dancer



Born in Moldova in Eastern Europe, Denis Vezetiu received his professional training at the Academy of Ballet of Moldova. He went on to dance with a number of prestigious companies. He has performed as a soloist with the National Opera of Bucharest and the National Theatre of Moldova. As a dancer with Chisinau National Theatre, Denis toured extensively in Europe and the United States. Denis also performed as a principal dancer with Manassas Ballet in Virginia. His varied repertoire includes *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Coppélia*, *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, *Le Corsaire* and *La Bayadère*. At Ballet Nebraska, Denis has performed as Cavalier in Erika Overturff's *The Nutcracker* and the soloist in Jeff Satinoff's *Perpetuum Mobile* in *Momentum*. Denis returns for his second season with Ballet Nebraska.

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### Sasha York

Company Dancer



Originally from Chelyabinsk, Russia, Sasha York trained at Paavola School of Dance in Flint, Michigan. He later returned to Russia, where he trained with Urey Urivich. Sasha was accepted into the pre-professional program at Pittsburgh Ballet Theater, where he performed in company productions of *Don Quixote*, *The Nutcracker*, *Peter Pan*, and *Alice in Wonderland*. He has worked with many well-known choreographers such as Harrison McEldowney, Viktor Plotnikov and Septime Webre. With Ballet Nebraska, Sasha has performed as Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Marc Antony in *Cleopatra*, the title role in *Dracula*, Claude in *Swing, Swing, Swing!*, and Snow King in *The Nutcracker*. He previously danced for two seasons at Omaha Theater Ballet. Sasha returns to Ballet Nebraska for his third season.

### Apprentices

#### Teresa Coulter



Teresa began her dance training at Mary Lorraine's Dance Center in Omaha. She also trained at Omaha Academy of Ballet and Motion 41 Dance. Teresa spent summers training with Kansas City Ballet, the prestigious North Carolina School of the Arts, and Kaatsbaan International Dance in Tivoli, New York. Teresa was a founding member of Ballet Nebraska II in the company's debut season. She has performed in *The Nutcracker*, *Momentum*, *Swing, Swing, Swing!*, and was featured in Matthew Carter's *Bacchanale Variations* and Erika Overturff's *Americano*. Teresa returns for her second season as an apprentice with Ballet Nebraska.

#### Genevieve DiMarco



Vivi recently graduated with honors from University of Chicago with a BS in chemistry. She danced as a trainee with Joffrey Ballet under artistic director Ashley Wheater and former Bolshoi Ballet dancers Alexei Kremnev and Anna Reznik. Vivi began her training in classical ballet, modern and Vaganova character dance at the School of DanceWest Ballet where she danced lead roles in *Paquita* and *The Nutcracker*. During college, she trained at Hubbard Street's Lou Conte Dance Studio and Ruth Page Center for the Arts with Birute Barodicaite and Dolores Long. Vivi danced lead roles with University Ballet of Chicago in *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, and as Lilac Fairy in *The Sleeping Beauty*. She choreographed original productions for the student company and served as head of teaching and director of the group. This is Vivi's first season as an apprentice with Ballet Nebraska.



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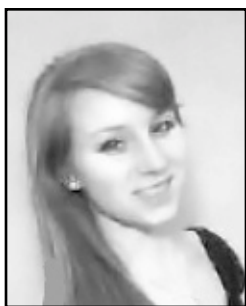
## NEBRASKA

### Brittane Hughes



Brittane is a native of Champlin, Minnesota where she began dancing at Northland School of Dance. She later trained at Minnesota Dance Theatre and The Dance Institute under Lise Houlton and Gloria Govrin. A recent graduate with a BFA from the University of Utah's Department of Ballet, Brittane trained with Regina Zarhina, Maureen Laird, and Calvin Kitten. Brittane was a member of Utah Ballet, the University's regional ballet company. She performed in *The Nutcracker*, *La Vivandiere*, *La Bayadere*, *Firebird*, *Giselle* and several pieces from the University's repertoire including a selection from Val Caniparoli's ballet *Lambarena*. As a member of the university's Character Dance Ensemble, Brittane has traveled to Athens, Greece, to perform and train. This is Brittane's first season as an apprentice with Ballet Nebraska.

### Jessica Mariner



Jessica is a recent graduate of the University of Utah where she earned a BFA from the Department of Ballet. Jessica began her classical ballet training in Chicago. She has been a member of several studio companies including those of Salt Creek Ballet and Ballet Chicago. Jessica was also a member of Utah Ballet, the resident performing company of the University of Utah. Jessica has performed in numerous classical ballets including *Giselle*, *La Bayadere*, *Paquita*, and George Balanchine's *Serenade*. Jessica joins Ballet Nebraska this season as a first-year apprentice.

### Andrea Mason



A Chesterfield, Missouri native, Andrea received her classical ballet training at St. Louis Ballet School with Gen Horiuchi and Ellen Costanza. She performed as a student apprentice in numerous roles in *Swan Lake* and *The Nutcracker* with St. Louis Ballet. Andrea received her BFA in dance, with a dual emphasis in ballet and modern, from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance in May 2011. Andrea appeared in Anthony Tudor's *Dark Elegies*, Bernard Gaddis's *Deitas* as a principal, as well as *Les Petits Riens* by Gen Horiuchi, *Shostakovich Jazz Suite* by Ron Tice, and *Untitled* by Thaddeus Davis. During summers, she studied with Nashville Ballet, Carolina Ballet, Kansas City Ballet, Ballet Chicago and St. Louis Ballet. Andrea has performed as guest artist for Dimensions Dance Theater as Sugar Plum Fairy in *The Nutcracker*. Andrea also taught advanced classical ballet for two years at Creative Arts Academy. She has performed in Ballet Nebraska's productions of *The Nutcracker*, *Dracula*, and *Momentum*. Andrea returns for her second season as an apprentice with Ballet Nebraska.

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### Taylor Ohman



Taylor recently completed ballet and modern dance studies at University of Missouri-Kansas City, where she performed a wide range of repertory including the pas de trois from Bournonville's *La Ventana* and Anthony Tudor's *Dark Elegies*. She also performed in Todd Bolendar's *The Nutcracker* with Kansas City Ballet. Taylor trained at Classical Ballet School and Ballet North School and Company in Kansas City where she performed in Laura Rinschmidt's stagings of *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Coppélia* and *Paquita*. She spent summers training at Regional Dance America, Kansas City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre and American College Dance Festival. Taylor joins Ballet Nebraska this season as a first year apprentice.

### Emma Raker



Originally from Santa Fe, New Mexico, Emma trained in classical ballet at the School of Performing Arts at the National Dance Institute of New Mexico, where she performed several leading roles created by Jefferson Baum and Russell Baker. Emma previously studied at Moving People School, Celtic de Santa Fe Irish Dance School and McTeggart School. Emma continued her studies in San Francisco at Alonzo King LINES Ballet Training Program with world renowned teachers Alonzo King, Arturo Fernandez, Maurya Kerr, Duncan Cooper, Sidra Bell and Karah Abiog. Emma has also choreographed for her peers while studying at LINES. She spent previous summers training at Saratoga Summer Dance Intensive, LINES Ballet and Hubbard Street Dance. Emma joins Ballet Nebraska for her first season as an apprentice with the company.

### Katie van der Mars



Katie is a recent graduate of the University of Utah where she received her B.F.A. in ballet performance. She began her training in classical ballet at Corvallis Academy of Ballet in Corvallis, Oregon. Katie trained during summers with Atlanta Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, and Ballet West. During her time in Salt Lake City, she performed as a 3-year member of the university's resident company, Utah Ballet, where she danced in *Giselle*, *La Bayadere*, *Paquita*, the pas de deux from *Scheherazade*, *The Nutcracker*, les Odalisques from *Le Corsaire*, *The Firebird*, Fokine's *Ruslan & Ludmilla*, and many contemporary works. Katie joins Ballet Nebraska this season as a first-year apprentice.

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## Trainees

### Bridget Carpenter



Purchase College, State University of New York (SUNY Purchase), BFA in dance  
Pacific Festival Ballet, Agoura Hills, CA .

### Danielle Pite



Smith College, Northampton, MA - double major in dance and chemistry  
Boulder Ballet School of Dance, Boulder, CO

### Craigie-Lorae Wallace



Patel Conservatory under the direction of Peter Stark, Tampa, FL  
The Dance Center, Brandon, FL  
Firethorne School of Dance, Tampa, FL

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