

AMERICAN MIDWEST *Ballet*

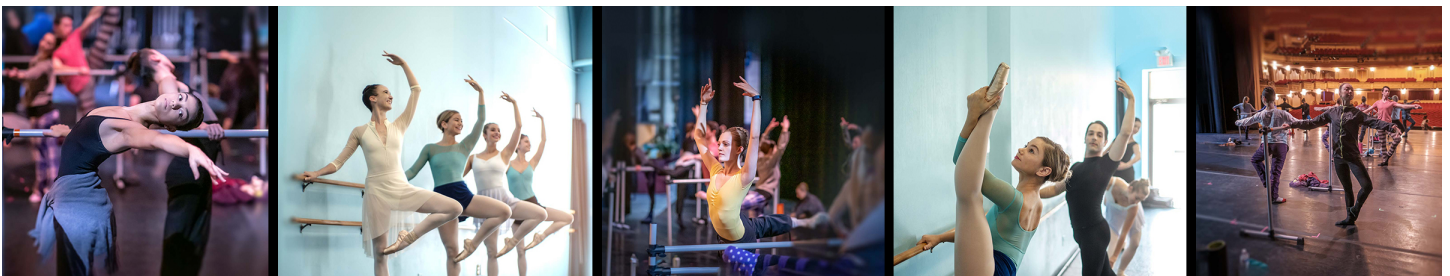
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AMERICAN MIDWEST BALLET ANNOUNCES OFFICIAL SCHOOL

OMAHA -- American Midwest Ballet, the region's resident professional dance company, has announced plans to add a school featuring dance classes for all ages and levels, leaders announced Saturday.

The new program, American Midwest Ballet School, will open registrations April 15, with classes beginning July 15, artistic director Erika Overturff said.

Motion 41 Dance, the west Omaha dance studio that has served as American Midwest Ballet's rehearsal space since the company's founding ten years ago, will be the initial site of the new school, Overturff said.

In the long term, Motion 41 will phase out its operations, with co-owner Susan Chowning joining the American Midwest Ballet staff as school director, she said. Matthew Lovegood, Motion 41's other principal, already holds the post of ballet master with American Midwest Ballet.

"When the time comes, we'll consolidate our company and school operations in our future home, the Hoff Family Arts and Culture Center in Council Bluffs," Overturff said. The new \$27 million, 95,000-square-foot facility, now under construction, will offer exciting opportunities both for the professional company and the school's students, she said.

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"People will be immersed in creativity from the moment they walk through the door," Overturff said. "The fact that our company and school will be housed in the middle of a performing arts center – brimming with everything from music lessons to art exhibits, from pottery making to cooking classes – will make it an amazing experience."

Chowning said the American Midwest Ballet School will include a community division, offering a wide range of classes for children, teens and adults, and an academy division, for students focused on developing a high level of technical skill.

Classical ballet training will be at the heart of the program, she said, while also offering classes in other styles including jazz, tap, and contemporary dance.

Faculty members will include current American Midwest Ballet professional dancers as well as former professionals with extensive teaching experience, she said.

"A great dance teacher can have a huge positive influence on a young person's life and development," Overturff said. "We can't wait to begin encouraging and inspiring the next generation of young dancers."

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American Midwest Ballet, formerly Ballet Nebraska, brings the beauty, athleticism, and energy of professional ballet to audiences in the Midwest and beyond. Performing at home and on tour, its mission is to provide enrichment through programs of the highest quality: professional dance performances, educational programs, and community outreach.

The Hoff Family Arts and Culture Center, scheduled to open in 2020, is a project of Pottawattamie Arts, Culture and Entertainment (PACE), a nonprofit organization dedicated to forging a robust cultural environment by creating a new comprehensive arts center and forming alliances with performance partners.