

AMERICAN
MIDWEST
Ballet

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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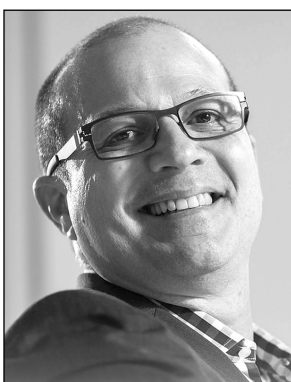
AMB dancer Kelanie Murphy (left) films Bob Fosse's Trumpet Solo from 'Sing, Sing, Sing', one of the works to be featured in Going Solo: The Guest Series. Fosse created the solo on legendary performer Ann Reinking (right), who passed it down to Kelanie.

**NATIONAL-CALIBER CHOREOGRAPHERS ON BOARD FOR
GOING SOLO: THE GUEST SERIES**

OMAHA — *Going Solo*, American Midwest Ballet's innovative series of original dance films, has caught the interest of choreographers across the country – and as a result, five guest-created works will premiere beginning next week in *Going Solo: The Guest Series*, AMB founder and artistic director Erika Overtuff said.

"The pandemic has been challenging for everyone, but it also has created opportunities," Overtuff said. "With many live performances cancelled, choreographers were excited to join us in creating new works. Because we had to work remotely anyway for safety reasons, it actually allowed us to work with an amazing roster of choreographers from all over the United States."

Overtuff said *Going Solo: The Guest Series* will include these **creators** and works:



Frank Chaves, former artistic director of River North Dance Chicago, is familiar to AMB audiences through works including last season's colorful and powerful *Habaneras, the Music of Cuba*. For *Going Solo*, he worked with AMB dancers Isaac Sharratt and Jessica Lopes (a married couple who could rehearse together without social-distancing restrictions) to create *If Only...* – a piece inspired by the yearning for human contact.

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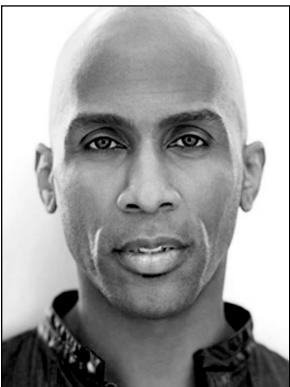
When Overturff contacted Robert Garland, resident choreographer and former principal dancer of Dance Theater of Harlem, for choreographer suggestions, he had a ready answer: **Edgar L. Page**, a past member of the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble and now director of his own Denver-based company. Page's *A Slow Drag*, danced by AMB's Claire Goodwillie, uses filming in multiple locations as a metaphor for the strange way time seems to pass under lockdown.

Photo: Sydney S. Noble



Omaha-born and Omaha-trained ballerina **Sandra Organ Solis** was the Houston Ballet's first African American dancer to attain the rank of soloist, and later founded her own company, Earthen Vessels. One of her dancers there was AMB's Amaris Sharratt, whose uncanny resemblance to the model for Johannes Vermeer's painting *Girl with a Pearl Earring* inspired Solis' work *Pearl*. The film depicts a young woman who seems to revel in the possession of a precious jewel.

Photo: Andis Applewhite



In a theater, the "ghost light" (a bare bulb mounted on a movable stand) is left burning whenever the stage is dark and unused. Pragmatically, it serves as a safety device – and by tradition, it is said to keep the ghosts who haunt old theaters from feeling lonely. **Ray Mercer**, resident choreographer at New York's Ailey School and an artist-in-residence for Omaha Performing Arts, draws on this tradition in *Ghost Light*, his solo for AMB's Katerina Schweitzer, evoking the restless spirits idled by our currently dark theaters.



Bob Fosse's brassy and exuberant *Trumpet Solo* from "*Sing, Sing, Sing*" caps the guest series. It's a joyous but poignant finale, Overturff said, because of the role played by Broadway legend **Ann Reinking**, who died unexpectedly in December. Reinking worked with **Dylis Croman** (whose recent Broadway credits include Roxie Hart in *Chicago*) to stage the work for AMB's Kelanie Murphy. "Annie was the most amazing and inspiring person," Overturff said. "We miss her dearly and will always treasure the time we had with her."



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Choreographer Ray Mercer (on screen) rehearses AMB dancer Katerina Schweitzer in his new work Ghost Light, which will premiere as part of the guest series.

After the guest series, Overturff said, *Going Solo* will resume its premieres of original dance films created by AMB company artists. She said she already is at work on choreography for the program's finale: a collaboration with Joslyn Art Museum, titled *The Bee's Knees*.

Filmed on location at the museum, the work will celebrate both the 90th anniversary of Joslyn's Memorial Hall and its summer featured exhibition, *American Art Deco: Designing for the People, 1918-1939*.

"It's a dance that's stylish and fun," Overturff said. "My goal is to capture the fresh spirit of the 1920s, of heading out with your friends to do something exciting and new – something we're all hoping to be able to do again soon!"

For more information about *Going Solo* and other AMB programs, visit [**amballet.org**](https://amballet.org).

American Midwest Ballet is the region's resident professional dance company, bringing work beyond words to audiences in Nebraska, Iowa, and beyond. Performing at home and on tour, its mission is to provide cultural enrichment through dance programs of the highest quality: breathtaking performances, inspiring education, and uplifting community engagement.

AMB's programming is presented with the generous support of Premier Benefactors the Holland Foundation, the Iowa West Foundation, the Fred and Eve Simon Charitable Foundation, and Douglas County; Season Sponsors Omaha Steaks, the Peter Kiewit Foundation, and the Heider Family Foundation; major support from the Nebraska Arts Council, the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, the Sherwood Foundation, and Herb and Carole Dewey; as well as additional support from individual sponsors and donors.