

AMERICAN MIDWEST *Ballet*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 15, 2023

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American Midwest Ballet artists for Season 15. Top row: Erika Overturff, artistic director and CEO; Erin Alarcón, ballet master; Marsalis AnderSon-Clausell; Nora Carr; Elena Carter; Ryan Christopher; Kelsey Corder; Claire Goodwillie; Sophie Graham. Second row: Eliza Harden; Alexandra Hoffman; Jack Kadzis; Noah Kargman; Casey Kelley; Leah Kressin; Erica Lohman; Mateusz Lojewski; Cyan Love. Third row: Megan Lynch; Richard Marks; Kelanie Murphy; Kogan Murphy; Katerina Schweitzer; Amaris Sharratt; Anna Swenson; Wyatt Weeces; Whitney Woods.

DANCERS GET MOVING AS AMERICAN MIDWEST BALLET LAUNCHES ITS 15TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

Dancers of American Midwest Ballet [AMB] hit the studios this week to begin work on the company's 15th anniversary season of professional dance. Erika Overturff, AMB's founder and artistic director, said: "Wow, it's incredible to be celebrating 15 years. Time flies when you're having fun!"

"Looking back, it's such an honor that we've been able to share so many beautiful moments with people," she said. "We've got an amazing season ahead, and our dancers are excited to get started."

Audiences will notice one new feature right away, she said: the company has added extra performances to *Momentum*, its annual mixed-repertory program, and to the holiday favorite *The Nutcracker*, to accommodate growing public demand. Dancers appreciate the additions as well, she said: "When you've put so many hours into bringing something to the stage, you want to give as many people as possible the chance to enjoy it."

The company's 27 resident dancers hail from 20 different states around the country, Overturff said, making the Midwest their home to share the art of dance with our community. She noted these dancer updates for Season 15:

- **Sophie Graham**, an apprentice last season, has been promoted to company artist. A native of Connecticut, Sophie has danced previously with Milwaukee Ballet 2, as a Joffrey Ballet Chicago trainee, and at the New England Academy of Dance.
- **Noah Kargman**, a trainee last season, has been promoted to apprentice. The Virginia native previously trained at Roanoke Ballet Theater and the Burton Center for Performing Arts.
- **Cyan Love** of Florida joins AMB as an apprentice. She has trained at the Miami City Ballet School, Paris Ballet and Dance, and Orlando School.
- **Mateusz Lojewski** of Iowa joins the company as a trainee. He has trained with Bossov Ballet Theater, Koltun Ballet Boston, and Ballet Arts Worcester.

Returning along with Overturff for Season 15 are company artists:

Erin Alarcón, ballet master
Marsalis AnderSon-Clausell
Nora Carr
Elena Carter
Ryan Christopher
Claire Goodwillie

Alexandra Hoffman
Jack Kadzis
Casey Kelley
Leah Kressin
Erica Lohman
Richard Marks

Kelanie Murphy
Kogan Murphy
Katerina Schweitzer
Amaris Sharratt
Anna Swenson
Wyatt Weeces
Whitney Woods

Returning as apprentices are:

Kelsey Corder

Eliza Harden

Megan Lynch

AMB will open its season October 18–20 at the Hoff Family Arts & Culture Center in Council Bluffs with *Momentum*, a program of varied works chosen to showcase the expressive range of ballet. Among the selections will be a premiere by AMB ballet master Erin Alarcón: “Whipped Cream!”, which the choreographer describes as a nostalgic, joyous tribute to summer in the Sixties.

Also on the program will be Erika Overturff's “Feeling Good”, an ensemble ballet inspired by the music of jazz vocalist Nina Simone, and a new work by Omaha native and Broadway performer Ray Mercer, creator of the previous *Momentum* works “Ghost Light” and “Speed Date”. The intensely dramatic “Black Swan” *pas de deux* from the 19th-century landmark ballet *Swan Lake* rounds out the program, Overturff said.

The family favorite *The Nutcracker* will follow, on November 23 and 24 at the Hoff Center and December 13 through 15 at Omaha's Orpheum Theater. Marking its fourth year, the November 24 performance will be a special sensory-friendly version presented in cooperation with the Autism Action Partnership to help make the *Nutcracker* experience accessible to more families, Overturff said.

Additional highlights will include taking *The Nutcracker* on tour to Spirit Lake, Iowa, and hosting the company's spectacular Nutcracker Gala at the Hoff Center, she said.

Alice in Wonderland, created by internationally experienced dancer, teacher, and choreographer Kennet Oberly [1957-2016] will close the season April 12 and 13 at the Hoff Center and April 26 and 27 at the Orpheum. First staged for AMB in 2013, Oberly's *Alice* combines favorite characters and scenes from Lewis Carroll's classics *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*. The result, Overturff said, is an inventive and intriguing interpretation that combines lively action, dreamlike wonderment, and whimsical humor.

Tickets for all three productions are on sale now; information is available at <https://amballet.org/tickets/>

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ABOUT AMERICAN MIDWEST BALLET

American Midwest Ballet [AMB] 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, our mission is to inspire people through dance programs of the highest quality: breathtaking performances, enriching education, and uplifting community engagement.

AMB's Season 15 is presented with the generous support of premiere benefactors the Holland Foundation, the Fred and Eve Simon Charitable Foundation, the Iowa West Foundation, Douglas County, and the Heider Family Foundation; season sponsor Omaha Steaks; and major supporters the Nebraska Arts Council, the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, and the Sherwood Foundation.