

AMERICAN MIDWEST *Ballet*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 27, 2023

Contact: Jim Williams, Marketing Director

(402) 577-0336 • jim@amballet.org • [Download print-quality photos](#)



On the bill for American Midwest Ballet's fifteenth anniversary edition of *Momentum*, its annual mixed-repertory program: the premieres of Erin Alarcón's *Whipped Cream!* (pictured) and Ray Mercer's *Significant Encounters* plus the Black Swan *pas de deux* from *Swan Lake* and Erika Overturff's jazz-inspired *Feeling Good*. [Click to download photos.](#)

TWO PREMIERES AND TWO FAVORITES IN AMERICAN MIDWEST BALLET'S *MOMENTUM*

American Midwest Ballet [AMB] will launch its 15th anniversary season October 18 through 20 with *Momentum*, a new edition of its annual mixed-repertory program showcasing a range of individual ballets.

Staged at the Hoff Family Arts & Culture Center in Council Bluffs, this season's *Momentum* mixes two premieres with a historical landmark and a past favorite, AMB artistic director Erika Overturff said.

"*Momentum* is always a personal favorite of mine," Overturff said. "It is amazing to see the range of technique and artistry that our dancers possess. Audiences love the variety of music, costumes, and stories they experience through *Momentum*. It is such an energizing show!"

Overturff gave this summary of the four *Momentum* works:

- **Erin Alarcón's "Whipped Cream!"** – Ballet master, dancer, and choreographer Erin Alarcón drew on family recollections and photo albums as inspirations for her latest ballet, which she describes as “a joyous, nostalgic tribute to her family.” Set on a beachfront boardwalk in the 1960s like the ones her Ecuadoran emigré grandparents enjoyed, its eight sections capture summertime vignettes ranging from afternoon tennis matches to late-night dancing in smokey cigar bars. Live music, performed by an onstage band headed by Omaha jazz trumpeter Doyle Tipler, will add to the atmosphere.

Erika's take: “Hearing Erin talk about the connection of celebrating her family while creating something special for her dance family gives me goosebumps. Erin has shared photos and stories about specific people, which makes the piece meaningful for all of us. We are honored to bring this story to life.”

- **Ray Mercer's "Significant Encounters"** – An Omaha native whose dance career has spanned 22 years on Broadway, Mercer also is sought-after choreographer whose signature style emphasizes high energy and daring athleticism. His first two *Momentum* works – “Ghost Light” and “Speed Date” – were audience favorites, and “Significant Encounters” promises to be another hit. In it, three ordinary park benches turn into miniature arenas in which couples form relationships, break apart, and regroup in a constant swirl of action at a relentlessly split-second pace.

Erika's take: “Ray's choreography is an awesome challenge for the dancers. It never stops moving and he always incorporates some fun surprises!”

- **Erika Overturff's "Feeling Good"** – Erika's inspiration for this jazzy and stylish work came from an unusual source: a TV commercial, where she first heard the title song as performed by legendary vocalist Nina Simone [1933-2003]. Further research into Simone's repertory led her to choreograph this six-section work, which in 2010 became among the first ever to be performed by the company.

Erika's take: “Her music really makes you feel something. I just love the different moods that she evokes. That was really the inspiration for the piece.”

- **"Black Swan" *pas de deux* from *Swan Lake*** – Created as part of the 1895 Petipa/Ivanov/Tchaikovsky masterpiece, “Black Swan” often is performed on its own. In the full ballet, a vengeful sorcerer holds women captive through a spell that turns them into swans, allowed to regain their human form only at night. A prince has pledged to break the spell by vowing true love to Odette, the queen of the swans. In the *pas de deux*, the sorcerer's daughter – who has magically transformed herself into a seductive likeness of Odette – uses a combination of innocence and allure to tempt him to break his vow, a betrayal that would imprison the swans forever. Their contest of wills plays out through spectacular feats of ballet technique.

Erika's take: “It's a classic! There are so many satisfying and iconic ballet moments in this work.”

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

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.