

THE BIG MUDDY DANCE COMPANY

Artistic Director Kirven Douthit-Boyd

AWAKENING

FALL CONCERT



November 2-5, 2023

Catherine B. Berges Theatre

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For more information about
The Big Muddy Dance Company, visit
thebigmuddydanceco.org

Company Photo credits: Pratt & Kreidich
Space provided by the Pulitzer Arts Foundation.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ERIN WARNER PRANGE



Erin Warner Prange (St. Louis, MO) holds her B.A. in Dance and Spanish from Colorado State University and her Masters of Fine Arts in Arts Management and Leadership from Webster University. Erin gained experience in teaching for the Boston public school district through the Topf Center for Dance Education, Dance Center of Kirkwood, and as the outreach program coordinator for aTrek Dance Collective. She has danced with Fusionworks II (Providence, RI) and the Slaughter Project (St. Louis, MO).

After 7 seasons as a company dancer for The Big Muddy Dance Company, Erin transitioned full-time into her role as Executive Director for the organization, a position of which she has been honored to serve since 2013. Erin is a published author, speaker, and consultant in nonprofit administration. She holds a certificate in Courageous Communication, and has served many community organizations such as Variety the Children's Charity, St. Louis Forum, Rise Society, Sign of the Arrow, among others. Erin was recognized on the Marquis Who's Who in America List 2021.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR KIRVEN DOUTHIT-BOYD



Kirven Douthit-Boyd (Boston, MA) began his formal dance training at the Boston Arts Academy in 1999 and as a member of Boston Youth Moves under the artistic direction of Jeannette Neil and Jim Viera. Mr. Douthit-Boyd studied as a fellowship student at The Ailey School and on scholarship at the Boston Conservatory. He is a graduate of Hollins University where he earned an MFA in dance.

He began his professional career as a member of Ailey II from 2002–2004 and performed at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival as a member of Battleworks Dance Company in 2003. In June 2004, Mr. Douthit-Boyd joined the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater performing both nationally and internationally for 11 years. During his tenure with the company, he performed leading roles in works choreographed by Alvin Ailey, Judith Jamison, Robert Battle, Ron K. Brown, Geoffrey Holder, Jiri Kylian, David Parsons, Camille A. Brown, Ulysses Dove, Christopher Wheeldon, Hofesh Shecter, Twyla Tharp, Wayne McGregor and Ohad Naharin. He joined COCA-Center of Creative Arts in 2015 as Co-Artistic Director of Dance with his husband Antonio Douthit-Boyd. In 2016, Mr. Douthit-Boyd joined Ron K. Brown/Evidence, A Dance Company as a guest artist.

In 2010, Douthit-Boyd performed at the White House tribute to Judith Jamison hosted by then first lady Michelle Obama. He has also appeared as a guest artist in ballet and contemporary dance galas in Argentina, Mexico and Canada. He is the 2014 recipient of the "Black Theater Alliance Award" for his performance in Wayne McGregor's "Chroma," the 2015 recipient of the "Next Generation in Leadership Award" from the Freedom House in Boston, the 2016 recipient of the Boston Arts Academy's "Apollo Award" the 2021 recipient of the "Excellence in the Arts Award" from the Arts and Education Council in St. Louis, and the 2022 recipient of the Dance Teacher Magazine Award.

Douthit-Boyd has choreographed workshops for The Ailey School, The Juilliard School, Webster University, Boston Arts Academy, Boston Youth Moves and COCA. He has also choreographed works for Dallas Black Dance Theater and Ailey II. He is an ABT® Certified Teacher, who has successfully completed the ABT® Teacher Training Intensive in Pre-Primary through Level 5 of the ABT® National Training Curriculum and has completed Lester Horton Pedagogy studies under Ana Marie Forsythe in New York and St. Louis. He has served as Distinguished Performing Artist at Washington University in St. Louis, where he taught modern dance in the collaborative MFA program between the University and COCA.

REHEARSAL DIRECTOR LEONIDES ARPON

Leonides D. Arpon (Filipino-American born in Israel) started dancing in 1987 under the direction of Rose Kassel at the Bat-Dor Dance School in Israel. He later joined their company in 1998 under the direction of Jeannette Ordman and worked with choreographers such as Luciano Cannitto, Igal Perry, Tamir Ginz and Randy Duncan. He holds a Master of Fine Arts Degree in Dance from Hollins University in partnership with the former Forsythe Company in Frankfurt, Germany, is a recipient of the Princess Grace Award for Modern Dance and the America-Israel Cultural Foundation Scholarships. Upon moving to NYC in 1999 Mr. Arpon was a principal dancer with Armitage Gone! Dance, Earl Mosley's Diversity of Dance, Kevin Wynn, Johannes Wieland, Sean Curran and Avila-Weeks.



From 2016-2022 he worked in Japan coaching students, professional dancers and celebrities as well as choreographed, danced and acted in TV shows and commercials for companies such as NHK, Panasonic, Toshiba, Mitsubishi and Gucci. Mr. Arpon explores creating dance for camera and shares his artistic experiences through community outreach. He has completed the Pre-Primary through Level 3 of the ABT® National Training Curriculum and the Beginner Horton Teacher Workshop with Ana Marie Forsythe.

He assists the Earl Mosley's Institute of the Arts' workshops in NYC and has taught around the world in schools such as the Ailey School, Princeton University, and the Peridance Capezio Dance Center in the U.S. In Israel at the Bat-Dor Dance School, Thelma Yellin School of the Arts and Bikurey Ha'itim. In Japan at the Tokyo and Osaka Schools of Music, Broadway Dance Center Tokyo, Hinton Battle Dance Academy, AVEC Grace Ballet and in the Philippines at Ballet Philippines, Philippine High School for the Arts and the University of the Philippines. Mr. Arpon is thrilled to serve as Rehearsal Director and work alongside Kirven Douthit-Boyd, Erin Prange and the dancers of The Big Muddy Dance Company.

GUEST CHOREOGRAPHERS



ELIZABETH CORBETT

Elizabeth Corbett received her early dance training in Rochester New York, and graduated from the National Academy of Arts in Champaign, Illinois. Elizabeth Corbett danced with the Joffrey Ballet and the Milwaukee Ballet before she moved to Europe. There, she became a soloist with William Forsythe's Frankfurt Ballet and danced for over a decade in works including *Love Songs*, *Artifact*, *In the Middle Somewhat Elevated*, *Enemy in the Figure*, *Steptext*, *Behind the China Dogs* and other Forsythe works. Ms. Corbett now teaches ballet, improvisation technologies, and Forsythe repertory internationally. She was Dance Coordinator for Anne Teresa

DeKeesmaeker's school of contemporary dance, PARTS, in Brussels from 1999 - 2005 and danced in a work created for her by Ms. DeKeesmaeker in a Rosas/Impulstanz production called *With/For/By*. She has been choreographic assistant to William Forsythe, Ms. De Keersmaeker and for Robert Wilson in productions for the Paris Opera and Rosas. Ms. Corbett has taught classes and workshops for dance companies, festivals and schools around the world including PARTS/Rosas, Impulstanz Vienna, Cullberg Ballet, Paris Opera Ballet, University of the Arts Philadelphia, Movement Research, Dance Platform Istanbul, Hong Kong Academy for the Performing Arts and Beijing Dance Academy where she received an honorary degree. She is a recent MFA graduate from Hollins University and was awarded a Rosenberg Distinguished Artist grant from Towson University, and a Hollins University fellowship. Ms. Corbett choreographs internationally, most recently for the National Academy of Arts in Oslo, Norway. Corbett premiered two new works in 2022, one for New Ballet Ensemble in Memphis, TN, and most recently for St. Louis' COCA Dance. Her choreographic process builds on the dancers' strengths, balanced by an invitation to dialogue, and artistic collaboration. *Photo by Weiss*

THANG DAO

Thang Dao resides between Los Angeles and New York City where he works as a freelance choreographer, educator, and coach. He is a graduate of Hollins University (MFA' 21) and New York University (MA' 09). Dao received his formal dance education from the Juilliard School and Boston Conservatory (BFA' 01).

Dao has choreographed for Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Ballet Austin, Ballet Austin II, Ailey II, Ballet X, Philadanco, Taiwan National University of the Arts, Jacob's Pillow Contemporary Program, Missouri Contemporary Ballet, Kennesaw State University, Troy University, Michigan State University, and the Boston Conservatory along with many universities and performing arts schools nationally and internationally.

His works have toured throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia with acclaimed reviews. His ballet *Stepping Ground*, choreographed for Ballet Austin for the 1st Biannual New American Dance Talent, received the Audience Choice Award all four nights. Dao was the recipient of the 2008 Princess Grace Choreography Fellowship, the 2009 Special Project Grant, and the 2012 Vilcek finalist for Creative Promise in choreography. In 2012, his work *Waiting Women* was featured at NYCDAF Gala: *Destiny Rising* at the Joyce Theater in New York. Dao was part of the creative team for the James Brown Project: *Get On The Good Foot* commissioned and produced by the Apollo Theater in collaboration with Philadanco under the artistic direction of Otis Salid. In 2017, Dao garnered 1st Prize for his choreography at the DAP Festival in Pietrasanta, Italy.

Dao was the recipient of the 2022 #launchPAD residency, an initiative of Works & Process at the Guggenheim.



MARCUS JARRELL WILLIS

Marcus Jarrell Willis has performed with RIOULT, Dominic Walsh Dance Theater, Tania Pérez- Salas Compañía de Danza and Ailey II. Willis performed with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater from 2008-2016, traveling around the world performing, teaching numerous masterclasses and participating through Outreach in various communities, both locally and abroad. As a teaching artist, he has engaged with Rambert Dance Professional Program, Tring Park Performing Arts School, Kings International Ballet Academy, ND-CWales Associates Programme, TU Dance, Joffrey Southwest Dallas, Centre Chorégraphique James Carles, Amsterdam Dance Centre and various training programs, universities and conservatoires, globally. Willis is a YoungArts Level 1 award recipient and Presidential Scholar Nominee.

Willis has presented choreographic work in the 2009 TDDC Contemporary Dance Festival in NYC, The Ailey Dancer's Resource Fund performances, The Dance Gallery Festival, The Moving Beauty Series and Gdąnsk Festival Tańca in Poland. Commissions, residencies and film creations include works for Ailey II, TU Dance, NY Choreographic Institute, with dancers of New York City Ballet, Company Danzante, Ballet Cymru, The Juilliard School, SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Dance, The Ailey School, University of Minnesota, Lucia Marthas Institute for the Performing Arts, Rubicon Dance, COCA, Satellite Collective, The Dance Gallery Festival Level Up Commission in 2013 and The 92nd Y Dance Introduction Series, among others. He was named Best Choreographer for TU Dance creation, Sensible Existence in City Pages 2018 Best of the Twin Cities. The evening length expansion of Sensible Existence was commissioned as a TU Dance Project in spring 2022.

Willis was the 2018/19 Leverhulme Choreography Fellow at Rambert Dance in London, during which time he completed the evening length solo creation POM/POM, Portrait of Man/ Pieces of Me and created work with selected dancers of Rambert 2. In 2021, he was appointed the role of Resident Choreographer for Ballet Cymru in Newport, Wales UK, where he created his work, Isolated Pulses, with the company for stage and film, created Echoes with Ballet Cymru 2 (Pre-Professional Programme) and worked with Wales Summer Dance (Wales International Ballet School) during his inaugural season. He recently launched the choreography initiative in partnership with Ballet Cymru, WIP (Works In Progress), which aims to bridge gaps between mid-career choreographers and venues in Wales. Synchronously, Willis is continuing the journey of building choreographic works for his independent dance performance project, MJ Willis Project-Inc, and he joined Phoenix Dance Theatre as the company's ninth artistic director in October 2023.

Willis, inspired by the breadth and depth of the human experience, remains focused on uniting people through the art of dance.



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CHOREOGRAPHERS continued...

JESSICA LANG

A celebrated choreographer of her generation, Jessica Lang has created over 100 original works on companies worldwide including American Ballet Theatre, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Sarasota Ballet and her eponymous company Jessica Lang Dance. Additional commissions include The Kennedy Center, The Harris Theater & Chicago Architecture Biennial, and the Dallas Museum of Art. For opera, Lang directed Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* at Glimmerglass that was presented at Lincoln Center's White Light Festival, 2017. She choreographed Francesca Zambello's production of *Aida* premiered by San Francisco Opera, revived at Washington National Opera, Seattle Opera, LA Opera, and in 2024 Lyric Opera of Chicago.



Lang was Artistic Director of Jessica Lang Dance from 2011-2019. The company performed in over 85 cities presented by venues including Lincoln Center, LA Music Center, The Kennedy Center, NYC Center, Tel Aviv Opera, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, BAM Fisher and Helikon Opera.

She is the recipient of a Bessie Award, Arison award, Martha Hill Mid-Career Award, fellowships at NY City Center and NYU's Center for Ballet and the Arts, and named a Caroline Hearst Choreographer-in-Residence at Princeton University.

Lang, a graduate from The Juilliard School, is a former member of Twyla Tharp's company, THARP!
www.jessicalangchoreographer.com, *Photo by Rosalie O'Connor*



BRADLEY SHELVER

Bradley Shelver (South Africa) is a Dancer, Teacher, Choreographer and Author. He has danced with Ailey 2, Elisa Monte Dance, Complexions Contemporary Ballet, Ballet Hispanico, The Francesca Harper Project, Limón Dance Company, Phoenix Dance Theater (UK) and in projects with Bill T. Jones /Arnie Zane, Lar Lubovich Dance, The Universal Ballet, Radio City Music Hall and in productions with the Mark Morris Dance Group and is in his 14th season with The Metropolitan Opera Ballet. He has created works for; Graham2, Joffrey Ballet Concert Group, Ailey 2, Richmond Ballet, Ballet Austin, Lustig Dance Theater, Compania Rio Danca, Cape Dance Company, Cedar Lake 2, Dance Lab New York, as well as creating works for the Royal Danish, Central Ballet School, Royal Swedish Ballet Schools, Joffrey Ballet School, The Ailey School, Boston Conservatory and Long Island University.

From 2013-2016, Shelver was the Artistic Director of the STEPS Repertory Ensemble. He is currently the Artistic Director of The Joffrey Concert Group in NYC. He is on faculty for many prestigious dance conservatories worldwide including The Ailey School, Joffrey Ballet School, STEPS on Broadway to name a few. He is an Adjunct Ballet Professor at Montclair State University and has taught the companies of Matthew Bourne's, "Adventures in Motion Pictures", The Lion King on Broadway, The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and Elisa Monte Dance (Emerge 125). As an author, his book, "Performance Through the Dance Technique of Lester Horton", is available worldwide.

BECOMING

23/24 SEASON

Artistic Director Kirven Douthit-Boyd

Photo by Kelly Pratt. Space provided by the Pulitzer Arts Foundation



AWAKENING NOV 2-5
EVOLUTION JAN 11-14
IDENTITY MAY 16-19



THE SHUBERT FOUNDATION INC.

REGIONAL ARTS COMMISSION OF ST. LOUIS

thebigmuddydanceco.org

AWAKENING

PROGRAM A: Thursday, 11/2 and Friday, 11/3

IN THE CEDARS

Premiered in May 2023

Directed by: Elizabeth Corbett

Choreography by Elizabeth Corbett in collaboration with the dancers

Costume Design: Shevaré Perry

Lighting Design: Zak Metalsky

Music: "Rhapsody No. 1" by Jessie Montgomery, "What A Day" by Ben Howard, "Gabriel's Oboe" and "The Falls" by Ennio Morricone, "Opening" by Philip Glass

Musical Assistant and Artistic Collaborator: Chanda Murphy

Dancers: Full Company

This work began through my invitation to the dancers to respond to the question « what moves you? » The Big Muddy's dancers responded to this writing prompt with spoken word, poetry, prose, and movement. Each of the dancers' spoken contributions and movement phrases are woven into the soundscape of the dance piece. Fragmented residual memories from the epic story «Gilgamesh» add to the collage. This work spotlights the unique group of storytellers who make up Big Muddy Dance Company.

-- 10 MINUTE INTERMISSION --

VANITY FARE

Premiered in May 2023

Choreography: Marcus Jarrell Willis

Costume Design: Shevaré Perry

Lighting Design: Zak Metalsky

Music: "Sinfonia" (Arr. by Pluhar from Alcina, HWV 34) and "Lascia ch'io pianga (Arr. by Pluhar from Rinaldo, HWV 7) by George Frideric Handel - Christina Pluhar and L'Arpeggiata; "Saman" and "Ekki Hugsá" by Olafur Arnalds, "Everybody's Free (To Wear Sunscreen)" by Baz Luhrmann, "A Case of You" by James Blake, Tomos O'Sullivan

Dancers:

Thursday Performance: Will Brighton, Sergio Camacho, Brandon Fink, DaJuan Johnson, Jorrell Lawyer-Jefferson, Molly Rapp, Carly Vanderheyden

Friday Performance: Maggie Batterman, Lily Cong, Keenan Fletcher, Megan Rancour, Randi Reinert, Carly Vanderheyden, Jessie Yero

Vanity Fare, much like Vanity Fair but with a twist. When you think of Vanity Fair, your mind is transported to ideals of beauty, fashion, and current affairs. The words fair and fare provoked an intriguing quest within my research of this choreographic idea because of their meanings and how they affect an existence according to societal expectations. A fair can be defined as a traveling show, while fare deals with cost. Human beings strive for daily acceptance based on the current state of society. But how much does it cost and what price are we willing to pay to be accepted into the circus? My goal for this creation is to give both the performers and the audiences a visual awakening as to how we regard ourselves and our worth, as humans.

-- 10 MINUTE INTERMISSION --

SOMETHING ABOUT A DREAM

World Premiere

Choreography: Kirven Douthit-Boyd

Costume Design: Shevaré Perry

Lighting Design: Zak Metalsky

Music:

"It's a Lonesome Old Town When You're Not Around" by Duke Ellington

"Blues for Trumpet" by Parry Music,

"Diabolus" by Buddy Rich Big Band,

"Jazz Trumpet" by Parry Music,

"It's a Blue World" by Buddy Rich, Lionel Hampton & His Just Jazz All Stars,

"Kilimanjaro Cookout" by Buddy Rich & Maynard Ferguson

Dancers:

Full Company

"Hold fast to dreams, for if they die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly."
-Langston Hughes

Something About a Dream is a blend of robust sound with exciting contemporary movement that pays tribute to the Jazz roots of the company while honoring the vision for the future.

FREEFORM



TRAINEE SHOWCASE

11.17.23 at COCA Tickets at thebigmuddydanceco.org

AWAKENING

PROGRAM B: Sunday, 11/5 at 2:00pm and 7:30pm

SOMETHING ABOUT A DREAM

World Premiere

Choreography: Kirven Douthit-Boyd

Costume Design: Shevaré Perry

Lighting Design: Zak Metalsky

Music: "It's a Lonesome Old Town When You're Not Around" by Duke Ellington

"Blues for Trumpet" by Parry Music,

"Diabolus" by Buddy Rich Big Band,

"Jazz Trumpet" by Parry Music,

"It's a Blue World" by Buddy Rich, Lionel Hampton & His Just Jazz All Stars,

"Kilimanjaro Cookout" by Buddy Rich & Maynard Ferguson

Dancers: Full Company

"Hold fast to dreams, for if they die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly."

-Langston Hughes

Something About a Dream is a blend of robust sound with exciting contemporary movement that pays tribute to the Jazz roots of the company while honoring the vision for the future.

-- 10 MINUTE INTERMISSION --

ALCHEMIC US

Premiered in October 2022

Choreography: Thang Dao, in collaboration with the company

Lighting: Zak Metalsky

Costumes: Shevaré Perry

Music: Original Composition by James Lindsay

Dancers: Maggie Batterman, DaJuan Johnson,

Jorrell Lawyer-Jefferson, Carly Vanderheyden

Alchemic Us explores the textures of joy, melancholy, anger, and desire in relationships crescendoing in passion.

-- PAUSE --

THE CALLING

Company Premiere

Choreography: Jessica Lang

Costume Design: Elena Comendador

Lighting Design: Nicole Pearce

Music: "Song Title: O Maria, Stella Maris" by Trio Mediaeval

Dancer, 2:00pm Performance: Molly Rapp

Dancer, 7:30pm Performance: Keenan Fletcher

The Calling was originally created on Kanji Segawa in 2005, and acquired into the Ailey II repertory in 2006 under the Artistic Direction of Sylvia Waters.

-- PAUSE --

VANITY FARE

Premiered in May 2023

Choreography: Marcus Jarrell Willis

Costume Design: Shevaré Perry

Lighting Design: Zak Metalsky

Music: "Sinfonia" (Arr. by Pluhar from Alcina, HWV 34) and "Lascia ch'io pianga (Arr. by Pluhar from Rinaldo, HWV 7) by George Frideric Handel - Christina Pluhar and L'Arpeggiata; "Saman" and "Ekki Hugsá" by Olafur Arnalds, "Everybody's Free (To Wear Sunscreen)" by Baz Luhrmann, "A Case of You" by James Blake, Tomos O'Sullivan

2:00pm Performance: Eibhlin Arvizu, Maggie Batterman, Keenan Fletcher, AJ Joehl, Nyna Moore, Megan Rancour, Randi Reinert

7:30pm: Will Brighton, Sergio Camacho, Brandon Fink, DaJuan Johnson, Jorrell Lawyer-Jefferson, Molly Rapp, Carly Vanderheyden

Vanity Fare, much like Vanity Fair but with a twist. When you think of Vanity Fair, your mind is transported to ideals of beauty, fashion, and current affairs. The words fair and fare provoked an intriguing quest within my research of this choreographic idea because of their meanings and how they affect an existence according to societal expectations. A fair can be defined as a traveling show, while fare deals with cost. Human beings strive for daily acceptance based on the current state of society. But how much does it cost and what price are we willing to pay to be accepted into the circus? My goal for this creation is to give both the performers and the audiences a visual awakening as to how we regard ourselves and our worth, as humans.

-- 10 MINUTE INTERMISSION --

PLAYFOLK

World Premiere

Choreography: Bradley Shlever


Lighting: Zak Metalsky

Costumes: Shevaré Perry

Music: "Latino" by Boban Markovic Orkestar, "Meboli" by Balkan Beat Box, "I Thought of You Last Night" by Jeri Southern, "The Love Me or Die" by C.W. Stoneking, "Bulgarian Chicks" by Balkan Beat Box

Dancers: Full Company

PlayFolk is a celebration of humanity. It is a showcase for all the multiple facets and depths of how we play in and with life. It's fun, it's a little dark, it's goofy and it's a little tragic. It is the sum total of our experiences.



MEET THE COMPANY

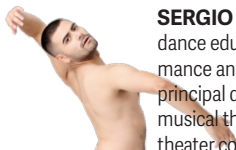
DANCERS



MAGGIE BATTERMAN (they/them, Madison, WI) developed a love of dance as a member of JoJean Retrum's Dance Wisconsin, and continued their dance education in Chicago at the Joffrey Academy from 2016-2018. After a year in the scholarship program at Hubbard Street's Lou Conte Dance Studio, they joined the Alonzo King LINES Ballet Training Program, from which they graduated in 2021. Throughout their dance training, they have performed works by Alice Klock, Jiří Kylián, Crystal Pite, Sidra Bell, Erik Wagner, and Gregory Dawson. Maggie joined the Big Muddy in 2021, and enjoys teaching and working creatively in the St. Louis community.



WILL BRIGHTON (He/Him, Ann Arbor, MI) graduated summa cum laude from Western Michigan University in 2020 with a B.F.A. in Dance and a B.A. in English. While at WMU, Will had the privilege of performing in concerts alongside Taylor 2 and Peridance Contemporary Dance Company, as well as performing in works by Yin Yue, Christian Denice, BAIRA, George Balanchine, Paul Taylor, Antony Tudor, and many others. After graduating, Will moved to Saint Louis, MO to join The Big Muddy Dance Company. He has also performed with Saint Louis Ballet as a guest artist in their 2021 production of Alice in Wonderland by Brian Enos. In 2020, Will was selected as the winner of Young Dancers Initiative's Emerging Choreographer Project, and in 2021 was selected as an Emerging Choreographer for Eisenhower Dance Detroit's NewDANCEfest.



SERGIO CAMACHO (He/Him, Hemet CA) formally started dance training in 2016 and continued his dance education at the University of California, Irvine. He graduated in 2022 with a BFA in Dance Performance and BA in Philosophy. Sergio has performed works by Juilliard choreographer, Charlotte Griffin, principal dancer with the San Francisco Ballet, Vitor Luiz, and Lar Lubovitch. Some of his professional musical theater credits include: Newsies, West Side Story, and White Christmas with Southern California theater company, Theater Royale.



LILY CONG (She/Her, Yuma, AZ) began her training under the mentorship of Jon and Kathleen Cristofori at Yuma Ballet Academy. She then attended the University of Arizona, receiving her BFA in Dance and two minors in Mathematics and Global Education in the spring of 2023. Some of her notable performances during university include works by Paul Taylor, Gerald Arpino, Hayley Meier, and Tamara Dyke-Compton. Lily also had the opportunity to participate in programs with the Limón Dance Company, Countertechnique, DanceWorks Chicago, Donald Byrd Workshop, and Oklahoma City Ballet, amongst others. This is her first season with The Big Muddy Dance Company!



KEENAN FLETCHER (He/Him, Kingston, Jamaica) began his formal dance education at the Vickers Dance Studio based in Kingston, Jamaica. He was then awarded a scholarship to train the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) Modern Ballet programme in partnership with Scottish Ballet based in Glasgow, Scotland from 2016-2018. In his final year, he performed on tour with Scottish Ballet in Peter Darrell's The Nutcracker before landing a coveted spot in the highly acclaimed Matthew Bourne's "Swan Lake". Choreographed by Sir Matthew Bourne OBE, "Swan Lake" toured multiple theatres throughout the U.K. including a run at the Sadler's Wells theatre for 2 months. The production then toured internationally China, Japan and South Korea and the U.S. becoming the cover Prince. In 2021-2022, he performed with Matthew Bourne's Nutcracker! on their U.K. tour. Keenan also performed at Plie for the Arts Jamaica International Dance Festival Gala in July 2023.



AJ JOEHL (she/her, Dallas, TX) trained, competed, and performed as a company member at Dance Industry Performing Arts Center. AJ recently graduated with a BFA in Dance from the USC Glorja Kaufman School of Dance. During her time there, she had the opportunity to explore movement ideas with William Forsythe, Jermaine Spivey, and Barak Marshall, as well as the ability to perform repertoire from choreographers such as Jiří Kylián, Ohad Naharin, and Kyle Abraham. Along with her collegiate training, AJ has also attended various intensives such as Orsolina28 and Chuthis Movement Intensive, where she was exposed to works by renowned artists Marco Geocke and Peter Chu. This is AJ's first year with the Big Muddy Dance Company, and she is honored to be a part of the Becoming season.

DAJUAN JOHNSON (He/Him, Saint Louis, MO) DaJuan started his training at Best Dance and Talent Center. He attended Central Visual and Performing Arts High School and Alexandra Ballet. In 2017 DaJuan received his BFA with a Dual emphasis in Modern and Ballet performance techniques from the UMKC Dance Conservatory Program. DaJuan graduated from the Alonzo King LINES Training Program in San Francisco in 2019, and was then offered the opportunity to join the TU dance company in Minnesota. In collaboration with TU, DaJuan performed alongside Bon Iver, the indie pop star, for the production of Come Through traveling throughout the U.S. DaJuan has performed works by Michale Utoff, Ray Mercer, Sabrina Madison Cannon, Deanna Hiett, Gary Abbott, Kevin Iega Jeff, Sidra Bell, Maurya Kerr, Gregory Dawson, Gregory Dolbashian, Arturo Fernandez, Uri Sands, and Bridget Moore.



JORRELL LAWYER-JEFFERSON (He/Him, Copperas Cove, TX) holds both his B.A. in Music and his M.F.A. in Dance from Sam Houston State University. He has performed works by Joshua Peugh, Shen Wei, Gabrielle Lamb, Joshua Manculich, Thang Dao, Elizabeth Corbett, Marcus Jarrell Willis and Kirven Douthit-Boyd among others. After debuting as a featured dancer in Houston Grand Opera's 2019 production of *Florencia en el Amazonas*, Jorrell has gone on to work with powerhouse directors Eric Sean Fogel, Francesca Zambello, Rob Ashford, Robert Wilson and Phelim McDermott. Most recently, he was invited to the Glimmerglass Festival's 2023 season to collaborate with contemporary opera director Louisa Proske on her new production of *Rinaldo* in which Jorrell served as associate director and as the festival's first Young Artist Choreographer. This will be Jorrell's second season with The Big Muddy.



NYNA MOORE (She/Her, Denver, CO) began her training at the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Academy as a part of the youth ensemble under the direction of Bashir Page-Sanders. In 2022, she graduated Summa Cum Laude with her BFA in Dance from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, under the direction of Donna Faye Burchfield. While at Uarts, Nyna worked with many notable artists, including Tommie-Waheed Evans, Kim Bears-Bailey, Michael Sheridan, Symone Holliday, Sidra Bell, Alfred Dove, Andrea Weber, and Mark Caserta. She is very excited to begin her first season as a member of The Big Muddy and continue to use dance to inspire others just as many have done for her.



MEGAN RANCOUR (She/Her, Saint Charles, IL) spent most of her life in the Chicagoland area training at Ambition Dance & Performing Arts, the Lou Conte Dance Studio, and Visceral Dance Center. She went on to graduate with a BFA in Dance from Western Michigan University in 2017 and moved to St. Louis shortly after to take part in The Big Muddy Dance Company's Trainee Program. Megan joined the main company in 2019 and has performed notable works by Norbert De La Cruz III, Joshua Peugh, Marcus Willis, Elizabeth Corbett, and Geoffrey Alexander, among others. She also serves as the company's Studio Manager. Megan was ecstatic to take part in her first Musical Theatre production as a Featured Dancer in the Center of Creative Arts' (COCA) 2023 summer musical, *Pippin*. Outside of dancing, Megan has earned her Full Certification through STOTT PILATES and teaches Pilates throughout the St. Louis area.



MOLLY RAPP (She/Her, St. Louis, MO) began her dance training at Lucille Rapp Dance Studio, Inc. and continued her dance education at Webster University, where she graduated summa cum laude in 2017 earning a BFA in Dance; emphasis in Ballet and a BA in Business Management. While attending Webster University, Molly performed works by Jose Limon, Monica Newsam, Neja Yatkina, Alicia Graf-Mack, and Michael Uthoff. In 2015, she was invited to perform with Kansas City Ballet, in Artistic Director, Devon Carney's, "Waltz of the Flowers." She worked to develop Newsam Aerial Dance from 2017-19; assisting in the creation of codified aerial curriculum and implementation into local studios. Molly joined The Big Muddy Dance Company's Trainee Program for the 2017-18 Season, where she also worked as the company's Development Intern. She joined the company in 2018 and has performed works by Shannon Alvis, Elizabeth Corbett, Norbert De La Cruz III, Marcus Jarrell Willis, Dexandro Montalvo, and Joshua L. Peugh. Molly also serves as the company's Director of Operations and is a proud mom to her son, Rusty.



RANDI REINERT (she/her, Halstead, KS) attended Wichita State University and received a Bachelor's Degree of Fine Arts in Dance Performance in 2020. Through Wichita State University, she has had many opportunities to perform works by guest artists Charolette Boye-Christensen, Jammie Walker, and performed multiple featured roles in works by Darrell Grand Moultrie. While at Wichita State University, Randi also had the opportunity to travel and perform with Wichita Contemporary Dance Theatre to Veracruz, Mexico. Following graduation, Randi joined the Big Muddy Dance Company's trainee program and later joined The Big Muddy Dance Company. While at The Big Muddy Dance Company, Randi has performed works by Norbert De La Cruz, Thang Dao, Marcus Jarrell Willis, and Kirven Douthit-Boyd. She is honored to be returning for her third season with The Big Muddy Dance Company.



COMPANY DANCERS continued...



CARLY VANDERHEYDEN (She/Her, Green Bay, WI) graduated from the University of Iowa with honors, earning a BFA in Dance, BA in Health and Human Physiology, and Certificate in Arts Entrepreneurship. In 2017, Carly was featured in Martha Graham's "Helios: Acts of Light" restaged by Jesse Factor at The Martha Graham Dance Company's University Partners Showcase at The Joyce Theatre. Carly has trained in intensive programs including Orsolina28, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, DanceWorks Chicago, Martha Graham School, American Dance Festival, and Kirov Academy of Ballet. Carly is an ABT National Training Curriculum certified ballet teacher and 200-hr Registered Yoga Teacher. Carly relocated to St. Louis in 2017 for The Big Muddy's Trainee Program before joining the company in 2018. She has been featured in collaborations with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, St. Louis Shakespeare Festival, and Jazz St. Louis. Carly is a freelance photographer, teaching artist, and rehearsal director at the Center of Creative Arts (COCA) and St. Louis Academy of Dance.

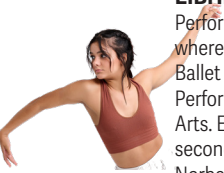


JESSIE YERO (She/Her, Chicago, IL) began her formal dance training with Salt Creek Ballet before attending the dance program at Butler University. While at Butler, Jessie performed corps, soloist and principal roles in main stage productions of the classics as well as numerous world premiers of contemporary works. During the summers, Jessie toured with Butler Ballet through Eastern Europe as well as participated in summer intensives at Alonzo King Lines Ballet, NorthWest Dance Project, and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. After graduating with honors and a BA in Dance Pedagogy, she joined the Big Muddy Dance Company's Convergence Trainee Program before joining the company's ranks the following season. Jessie is thrilled to be returning to the company this season.

GUEST PERFORMERS

BRANDON FINK (He/Him, Oklahoma City, OK) received his BFA in Dance Performance from the University of Central Oklahoma and later attended the ADF School as well as the River North Dance Chicago apprentice program. Brandon has performed with the Modern American Dance Company (2011-2016), the MUNY (2016), Variety Theatre (2017-2018), Opera Theatre of St. Louis (2018), and St. Louis Shakespeare Festival (2019). He was a company member at The Big Muddy Dance Company (2016-2023) and is currently an active member of AEA and AGMA. Brandon's choreography has been presented at the Big Muddy Dance Company, the University of Missouri St. Louis, The University of Central Oklahoma, Florida Atlantic University, the Oklahoma Contemporary Dance Festival, the St. Louis Arts Alliance, the American Dance Troupe, The Big Muddy Dance Company Trainee Program, and MADCO. Brandon currently serves as the Founder and Artistic Director for La Voûte Performance Ensemble and the Director of Education at The Big Muddy Dance Company.

EIBHLIN ARVIZU (She/Her, Springfield, MO) began her formal dance training at Dance Canvas Performing Arts Center in her hometown at the age of fourteen. Soon after, she moved to Lancaster, PA where she trained at Willow Street Dance Steps, Morton's Dance Center, Viktor Yeliohin International Ballet Academy, and the Alvin Ailey Summer Intensive. Her senior year, she also trained at Center for Performing and Fine Arts with a distinction of membership in the National Honors Society for Dance Arts. Eibhlin has performed with Les Etoiles Dance Company, Catalyst Dance Company, and is now a second year trainee with The Big Muddy Dance Company. She has performed works most notably by Norbert De La Cruz III, Joshua Peugh, John Michael Fiumara, Kirven Douthit-Boyd, and Elijah Morton. Eibhlin now works as a teacher and choreographer at Joyful Arts Movement and DK Dance Productions.



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Mar 16–17

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Stéphane Denève, conductor

The Big Muddy Dance Company

Kirven Douthit-Boyd, choreographer

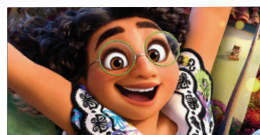
Adam Schoenberg *Picture Studies*
Sergei Prokofiev *Romeo and Juliet Suite*

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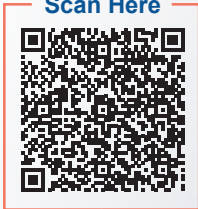
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