



TRIN

jumpstart

THU **MAY 12**
7:00PM

FRI **MAY 13**
7:00PM

SAT **MAY 14**
3:00PM &
7:00PM

SUN **MAY 15**
1:00PM &
5:00PM

CENTER OF CREATIVE ARTS
cocastl.org



Artistic Directors' Note

Dear COCA Community,

Welcome to the 2021–2022 COCApresents Season. After a year of challenge and transition, art has persevered and led the way. Art has guided us to a re-emergence that centers our commitment to developing new talent while elevating the work of the artistic professionals who call COCA home. This season you will find a carefully curated selection of thought-provoking work for the St. Louis community. Through a showcase of partnerships, national artists, and student-work, this season brings us back with a combination of traditional audience favorites and innovative new work for theatre and dance lovers across the region. We invite you to re-emerge with us and celebrate what makes our artistic community unique and vital to our region.

Sincerely,



Kirven Douthit-Boyd
Co-Artistic Director
of Dance



Antonio Douthit-Boyd
Co-Artistic Director
of Dance



Jennifer Wintzer
Artistic Director
of Theatre

Thank you to our sponsors!

TRLumphant has a runtime of 2 hours and is for all ages.

Thank you to Lee Bohm, our Presenting Sponsor.

COCAPRESENTS SEASON IS MADE POSSIBLE BY



HEARST *foundations*

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& ETTIE A. JORDAN
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

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LEE BOHM



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This project has been supported by the Missouri Department of Economic Development's Neighborhood Assistance Program.

Creative Team

Ballet Eclectica Artistic Director

Antonio Douthit-Boyd

Ballet Eclectica Choreographers

Elizabeth Corbett

Mason Cummings

Lauren Anderson

Ballet Eclectica Second Company Choreographers

Ashley Hamann

Carrie Fernandez

Hip-Hop Crew Artistic Director and Choreographer

Anthony "Redd" Williams

Hip-Hop Crew Choreographer

Jared Jenkins

Hip-Hop Crew Second Company Choreographer

Jasmine Spencer

COCAdance Artistic Director and Choreographer

Kirven Douthit-Boyd

COCAdance Choreographers

Amy Hall Garner

Tommie-Waheed Evans

Mason Cummings

COCAdance Second Company Choreographers

Sam Gaitsch

C. Anthony Cole

Lighting Designer

Jayson Lawshee

Costume Designer

Shevaré Perry

Artistic Team

Co-Artistic Director of Dance

Antonio Douthit-Boyd

Co-Artistic Director of Dance

Kirven Douthit-Boyd

Artistic Director of Hip-Hop Crew

Anthony "Redd" Williams

Artistic Director of Theatre

Jennifer Wintzer

Artistic Producer

Delaney Piggins

Technical Director

Jayson Lawshee

Pre-Professional Division and Dance Program Manager

Sam Gaitsch

Costume Manager

Shevaré Perry

Production Manager

Carolyn Carter

Support Services Coordinator

Alisa Cooper

Costume Fellow

Cody Floyd

COCA Artistic Faculty

Rehearsal Assistant Hip-Hop Crew

Jasmine Spencer

Rehearsal Assistant Ballet Eclectica

Jennifer Welch Cudnik

Rehearsal Assistant Ballet Eclectica

Carrie Fernandez

Rehearsal Assistant Ballet Eclectica

Ashley Hamann

Rehearsal Assistant COCAdance

Sam Gaitsch

Rehearsal Assistant COCAdance

Mariko Kumanomido

Rehearsal Assistant *TRLumphant*

Hallie Stein

Co-Directors of Vocal Company

Alicia Revé Like

Colin Healy

Director of Improv Troupe

Ed Reggi

Production Team

Technical Director

Jayson Lawshee

**Production Manager and
Stage Manager**

Carolyn Carter

Assistant Stage Manager

Sophie Devincenti

Production Assistant

Julia Nelson*

Costume Manager

Shevaré Perry

Wardrobe and Costume Fellow

Cody Floyd

Sound Technician

Justin Foster

COVID Safety Support

Michael Tran

*COCA Design-Tech Student



Thursday Program

Fast Forward Scheherazade

Choreographer: Elizabeth Corbett
Ballet Eclectica First and
Apprentice Company
"Scheherazade"
by Rimsky-Korsakov

CAST

JiaLi Deck
Ashlee Holloway
Anna Kaestner
Sasha Kaslow
Sasha Keller
Lauren Renner
Eliana Wade
Sophie Yoshino
Jada Folarin-Hines
Isabelle Gerardo
Michelle Jing
Alexa (Lexie) Kummant
Tallulah Lyons-Jahn
Sofia Shah
Jaida Smith

Senior Solo

Sasha Keller

Think Twice

Choreographer: Amy Hall Garner
COCAdance First and
Apprentice Company
"Think Twice"
by The Detroit Experiment

CAST

Malik Ashe
Ashlee Holloway
Diana Tschomakoff
Michelle Jing
Sofia Shah
Dekylah Epps
Eliana Wade
Noelle Malone
Thomas Woodrow
JiaLi Deck

Senior Solo

Zoe Clark

Available

Choreographer:
Anthony "Redd" Williams
Hip-Hop Crew First and
Apprentice Company
"Available"
by Patoranking

CAST

Pathra (Somo) Dedkhad
Nicholas Gavril
Taylor Hall
Kara Munz
Lexington Suttle
Ashley Taylor
Alexx Whittier
Mikayla Williams
MaKailah Blockton
Zak Brown
Joshua Bruton

Thursday Program

DeKylah Epps
Khloe Hunter
Emmett Loyd
London Montgomery
Ella Munz
Jael Rogers
Kimyra Stapleton
Fiona Van Allen

Senior Solo

Noelle Malone

Coppélia

Ballet by: Arthur Saint-Léon

Choreographer: Ben Stevenson

Staged by: Lauren Anderson

Ballet Eclectica First and
Apprentice Company

Music: Léo Delibes

CAST

Ashlee Holloway
Anna Kaestner
Sasha Kaslow
Sasha Keller
Lauren Renner
Eliana Wade
Sophie Yoshino
Michelle Jing
Jaida Smith
JiaLi Deck

Untitled 14: The Audience

Choreographer: Mason Cummings

COCAdance First and
Apprentice Company

"The Walking"

by Christof Littmann

CAST

Malik Ashe
Naomi Bentley
Zoe Clark
Ashlee Holloway
Noelle Malone
Nadia Rawlins
Diana Tschomakoff
Joshua Bruton
JiaLi Deck
DeKylah Epps
Michelle Jing
Anna Kaestner
Adelaide Pollock
Sofia Shah
Eliana Wade
Thomas Woodrow

Senior Solo

Sophie Yoshino

The Sample

Choreographer: Jared Jenkins

Hip-Hop Crew First and
Apprentice Company

"She's a Bad Mama Jama"

Thursday Program

"Mo Money Mo Problems"

"Undercover"

"Poison"

"Vibrant Thing"

"Poke it Out"

"Can't Touch This"

"Get Busy"

"No Letting Go"

"One In a Million"

"Wild Side"

Music: Carl Carlton, Notorious B.I.G.,
Teyana Taylor, Bel Biv DeVoe, Q-Tip,
Wale, BIA, Sean Paul, Wayne Wonder,
Aaliyah, and Normani

CAST

Pathra (Somo) Dedkhad

Nicholas Gavril

Taylor Hall

Kara Munz

Lexington Suttle

Ashley Taylor

Alexx Whittier

Mikayla Williams

MaKailah Blockton

Zak Brown

Joshua Bruton

DeKylah Epps

Khloe Hunter

Emmett Loyd

London Montgomery

Ella Munz

Jael Rogers

Kimyra Stapleton

Fiona Van Allen

Senior Solo

Diana Tschomakoff

Untitled 15: The Chicken Dance

Choreographer: Mason Cummings

Ballet Eclectica First and

Apprentice Company

"Soul Train/The Chicken (Live)"

by Jaco Pastorius

CAST

JiaLi Deck

Ashlee Holloway

Anna Kaestner

Sasha Kaslow

Sasha Keller

Lauren Renner

Eliana Wade

Sophie Yoshino

Jada Folarin-Hines

Isabelle Gerardo

Michelle Jing

Alexa (Lexie) Kummant

Tallulah Lyons-Jahn

Sofia Shah

Jaida Smith

Senior Solo

Kara Munz

Thursday Program

Caught Up in the Rapture

Choreographer:

Tommie-Waheed Evans
COCA dance First and
Apprentice Company
"Untitled"
by Greg Smith

CAST

Malik Ashe
Zoe Clark
Ashlee Holloway
Nadia Rawlins
Diana Tschomakoff
Joshua Bruton
JiaLi Deck
DeKylah Epps
Michelle Jing
Adelaide Pollock
Thomas Woodrow

Senior Solo

Naomi Bentley

Party Time

Choreographer:

Anthony "Redd" Williams
Hip-Hop Crew First, Apprentice &
Second Company
"Party Time"
"Y'all Get Back"

Music: Missy Elliot and Big Freedia

CAST

Pathra (Somo) Dedkhad
Nicholas Gavrill
Taylor Hall
Kara Munz
Lexington Suttle
Ashley Taylor
Alexx Whittier
Mikayla Williams
MaKailah Blockton
Zak Brown
Joshua Bruton
DeKylah Epps
Khloe Hunter
Emmett Loyd
London Montgomery
Ella Munz
Jael Rogers
Kimyra Stapleton
Fiona Van Allen
Georgia Bland
Amara Blumenfeld
Mollie Goldberg
Shaylin Johnson
Kamayah Jones
Giuliana Kelley
Emani Stone
Abbie Weignart

Friday Program

Fast Forward Scheherazade

Choreographer: Elizabeth Corbett
Ballet Eclectica First and
Apprentice Company
"Scheherazade"
by Rimsky-Korsakov

CAST

JiaLi Deck
Ashlee Holloway
Anna Kaestner
Sasha Kaslow
Sasha Keller
Lauren Renner
Eliana Wade
Sophie Yoshino
Jada Folarin-Hines
Isabelle Gerardo
Michelle Jing
Alexa (Lexie) Kummant
Tallulah Lyons-Jahn
Sofia Shah
Jaida Smith

Senior Solo

Pathra 'Somo' Dedkhad

Think Twice

Choreographer: Amy Hall Garner
COCAdance First and
Apprentice Company
"Think Twice"
by The Detroit Experiment

CAST

Naomi Bentley
Nadia Rawlins
Anna Kaestner
Michelle Jing
Joshua Bruton
Adelaide Pollock
Eliana Wade
Noelle Malone
Thomas Woodrow
Diana Tschomakoff

Senior Solo

Sasha Keller

Available

Choreographer:

Anthony "Redd" Williams
Hip-Hop Crew First and
Apprentice Company
"Available"
by Patoranking

CAST

Pathra (Somo) Dedkhad
Nicholas Gavrill
Taylor Hall
Kara Munz
Lexington Suttle
Ashley Taylor
Alexx Whittier
Mikayla Williams
MaKailah Blockton
Zak Brown

Friday Program

Joshua Bruton
DeKylah Epps
Khloe Hunter
Emmett Loyd
London Montgomery
Ella Munz
Jael Rogers
Kimyra Stapleton
Fiona Van Allen

Senior Solo

Naomi Bentley

Coppélia

Ballet by: Arthur Saint-Léon

Choreographer: Ben Stevenson

Staged by: Lauren Anderson

Ballet Eclectica First and
Apprentice Company

Music: Léo Delibes

CAST

Ashlee Holloway
Anna Kaestner
Sasha Kaslow
Sasha Keller
Lauren Renner
Eliana Wade
Sophie Yoshino
Michelle Jing
Jaida Smith
JiaLi Deck

Untitled 14: The Audience

Choreographer: Mason Cummings

COCAdance First and
Apprentice Company

"The Walking"

by Chirstof Littmann

CAST

Malik Ashe
Naomi Bentley
Zoe Clark
Ashlee Holloway
Noelle Malone
Nadia Rawlins
Diana Tschomakoff
Joshua Bruton
JiaLi Deck
DeKylah Epps
Michelle Jing
Anna Kaestner
Adelaide Pollock
Sofia Shah
Eliana Wade
Thomas Woodrow

Senior Solo

Sasha Kaslow

The Sample

Choreographer: Jared Jenkins

Hip-Hop Crew First and
Apprentice Company

"She's a Bad Mama Jama"

Friday Program

"Mo Money Mo Problems"

"Undercover"

"Poison"

"Vibrant Thing"

"Poke it Out"

"Can't Touch This"

"Get Busy"

"No Letting Go"

"One In a Million"

"Wild Side"

Music: Carl Carlton, Notorious B.I.G.,
Teyana Taylor, Bel Biv DeVoe, Q-Tip,
Wale, BIA, Sean Paul, Wayne Wonder,
Aaliyah, and Normani

CAST

Pathra (Somo) Dedkhad

Nicholas Gavril

Taylor Hall

Kara Munz

Lexington Suttle

Ashley Taylor

Alexx Whittier

Mikayla Williams

MaKailah Blockton

Zak Brown

Joshua Bruton

DeKylah Epps

Khloe Hunter

Emmett Loyd

London Montgomery

Ella Munz

Jael Rogers

Kimyra Stapleton

Fiona Van Allen

Senior Solo

Nadia Rawlins

Untitled 15: The Chicken Dance

Choreographer: Mason Cummings

Ballet Eclectica First and

Apprentice Company

"Soul Train/The Chicken (Live)"

by Jaco Pastorious

CAST

JiaLi Deck

Ashlee Holloway

Anna Kaestner

Sasha Kaslow

Sasha Keller

Lauren Renner

Eliana Wade

Sophie Yoshino

Jada Folarin-Hines

Isabelle Gerardo

Michelle Jing

Alexa (Lexie) Kummant

Tallulah Lyons-Jahn

Sofia Shah

Jaida Smith

Senior Solo

Kimyra Stapleton

Friday Program

Caught Up in the Rapture

Choreographer:

Tommie-Waheed Evans
COCA dance First and
Apprentice Company
"Untitled"

by Greg Smith

CAST

Malik Ashe
Naomi Bentley
Ashlee Holloway
Nadia Rawlins
Diana Tschomakoff
Joshua Bruton
JiaLi Deck
DeKylah Epps
Michelle Jing
Adelaide Pollock
Thomas Woodrow

Senior Solo

Lauren Renner

Party Time

Choreographer:

Anthony "Redd" Williams
Hip-Hop Crew First, Apprentice &
Second Company
"Party Time"
"Y'all Get Back"

Music: Missy Elliot and Big Freedia

CAST

Pathra (Somo) Dedkhad
Nicholas Gavrill
Taylor Hall
Kara Munz
Lexington Suttle
Ashley Taylor
Alexx Whittier
Mikayla Williams
MaKailah Blockton
Zak Brown
Joshua Bruton
DeKylah Epps
Khloe Hunter
Emmett Loyd
London Montgomery
Ella Munz
Jael Rogers
Kimyra Stapleton
Fiona Van Allen
Georgia Bland
Amara Blumenfeld
Mollie Goldberg
Shaylin Johnson
Kamayah Jones
Giuliana Kelley
Emani Stone
Abbie Weignart

Saturday Program

Caught Up in the Rapture

Choreographer:

Tommie-Waheed Evans
COCAdance First and
Apprentice Company

"Untitled"

by Greg Smith

CAST 3PM

Malik Ashe
Zoe Clark
Ashlee Holloway
Nadia Rawlins
Diana Tschomakoff
Joshua Bruton
JiaLi Deck
DeKylah Epps
Eliana Wade
Adelaide Pollock
Thomas Woodrow

CAST 7PM

Malik Ashe
Naomi Bentley
Ashlee Holloway
Nadia Rawlins
Diana Tschomakoff
Joshua Bruton
JiaLi Deck
DeKylah Epps
Michelle Jing
Adelaide Pollock
Thomas Woodrow

Summertime

Choreographer: C. Anthony Cole

COCAdance Second Company

"Summertime" &

"Summertime"

Music: Fantasia and MFSB

CAST

Riley Adams
AJ Bentley
Harper Clark
Kamiyah Jones
Alexa (Lexie) Kummant
Tallulah Lyons-Jahn
Sanara Maasera
Brooklyn Mercer
Declan Ryan
Brie Shelley-Piccinini
Fiona Van Allen

Frescoes

Choreographer: Arthur Saint-Leon &

Marius Petipa

Ballet Eclectica First and

Apprentice Company

"Cesare Pugni"

Orchestration by: Ramona Pansegrau

Staged by: Vladimir Djouloukhadze

Costume Designer: Galina Solovyeva

CAST 3PM

Anna Kaestner
Eliana Wade
Sasha Keller
Sophie Yoshino

Saturday Program

CAST 7PM

JiaLi Deck
Ashlee Holloway
Sasha Kaslow
Lauren Renner

Paganini in the Park

Choreographer: Carrie Fernandez
Ballet Eclectica Second Company

Music: Violin Concerto No 2 in B minor
"La Campanella"

Composer: Niccoló Paganini

Artist: The Netherlands Symphony
Orchestra

CAST

Riley Adams
AJ Bentley
Elsa Cudnik
Dwight Erdmann
Maria Pesce
Declan Ryan
Brie Shelley-Piccinini
Zarah Vaughn
Isabelle Williams

Like A Boy

Choreographer: Anthony "Redd"
Williams

Hip-Hop Crew First and
Apprentice Company
"Like a Boy"

Music: Ciara

CAST

Pathra (Somo) Dedkhad
Nicholas Gavril
Taylor Hall
Kara Munz
Lexington Suttle
Ashley Taylor
Alexx Whittier
Mikayla Williams
MaKailah Blockton
Zak Brown
Joshua Bruton
DeKylah Epps
Khloe Hunter
Emmett Loyd
London Montgomery
Ella Munz
Jael Rogers
Kimyra Stapleton
Fiona Van Allen

Untitled 14: The Audience

Choreographer: Mason Cummings
COCAdance First and
Apprentice Company
"The Walking"

Music: Chirstof Littmann

CAST 3PM

Malik Ashe
Naomi Bentley
Zoe Clark
Ashlee Holloway

Saturday Program

Noelle Malone
Nadia Rawlins
Diana Tschomakoff
Joshua Bruton
JiaLi Deck
DeKylah Epps
Anna Kaestner
Adelaide Pollock
Sofia Shah
Eliana Wade
Thomas Woodrow

CAST 7PM

Malik Ashe
Naomi Bentley
Zoe Clark
Ashlee Holloway
Noelle Malone
Nadia Rawlins
Diana Tschomakoff
Joshua Bruton
JiaLi Deck
DeKylah Epps
Michelle Jing
Anna Kaestner
Adelaide Pollock
Sofia Shah
Eliana Wade
Thomas Woodrow

BANJI

Choreographer: Jasmine Spencer
Hip-Hop Crew Second Company
"BANJI"
Music: Sharaya J

CAST

Georgia Bland
Amara Blumenfeld
Mollie Goldberg
Shaylin Johnson
Kamayah Jones
Giuliana Kelley
Emani Stone
Abbie Weignart

Coppélia

Ballet by: Arthur Saint-Léon
Choreographer: Ben Stevenson
Staged by: Lauren Anderson
Ballet Eclectica First and
Apprentice Company
Music: Léo Delibes

CAST 3PM

Ashlee Holloway
Anna Kaestner
Sasha Kaslow
Sofia Shah
Jada Folarin-Hines
Eliana Wade
Sophie Yoshino
Alexa (Lexie) Kummant
Tallulah Lyons-Jahn
Isabelle Gerardo

CAST 7PM

Ashlee Holloway
Anna Kaestner
Sasha Kaslow
Sasha Keller
Lauren Renner
Eliana Wade
Sophie Yoshino

Saturday Program

Michelle Jing
Jaida Smith
JiaLi Deck

Available

Choreographer: Anthony "Redd"
Williams

Hip-Hop Crew First and
Apprentice Company
Available

Music: Patoranking

CAST

Pathra (Somo) Dedkhad
Nicholas Gavril
Taylor Hall
Kara Munz
Lexington Suttle
Ashley Taylor
Alexx Whittier
Mikayla Williams
MaKailah Blockton
Zak Brown
Joshua Bruton
DeKylah Epps
Khloe Hunter
Emmett Loyd
London Montgomery
Ella Munz
Jael Rogers
Kimyra Stapleton
Fiona Van Allen

Sunday Program

Like A Boy

Choreographer: Anthony "Redd"

Williams

Hip-Hop Crew First and
Apprentice Company

"Like a Boy"

Music: Ciara

CAST

Pathra (Somo) Dedkhad

Nicholas Gavril

Taylor Hall

Kara Munz

Lexington Suttle

Ashley Taylor

Alexx Whittier

Mikayla Williams

MaKailah Blockton

Zak Brown

Joshua Bruton

DeKylah Epps

Khloe Hunter

Emmett Loyd

London Montgomery

Ella Munz

Jael Rogers

Kimyra Stapleton

Fiona Van Allen

Waltz of the Carousel

Choreographer: Ashley Hamann

Ballet Eclectica First and

Apprentice Company

"Voices of Spring"

Music: Strauss

CAST

Riley Adams

AJ Bentley

Elsa Cudnik

Dwight Erdmann

Maria Pesce

Declan Ryan

Brie Shelley-Piccinini

Zarah Vaughn

Isabelle Williams

Coppélia

Ballet by: Arthur Saint-Léon

Choreographer: Ben Stevenson

Staged by: Lauren Anderson

Ballet Eclectica First and

Apprentice Company

Music: Léo Delibes

CAST 1PM

Ashlee Holloway

Anna Kaestner

Sasha Kaslow

Sofia Shah

Jada Folarin-Hines

Eliana Wade

Sophie Yoshino

Michelle Jing

Isabelle Gerardo

Jaida Smith

CAST 5PM

Ashlee Holloway

Anna Kaestner

Sasha Kaslow

Sunday Program

Sasha Keller
Lauren Renner
Eliana Wade
Sophie Yoshino
Michelle Jing
JiaLi Deck
Jaida Smith

Embrace the Awkward

Choreographer: Sam Gaitsch
COCAdance Second Company
"Lite Spots"

Music: Kaytranada

CAST

Riley Adams
AJ Bentley
Kamayah Jones
Harper Clark
Alexa (Lexie) Kummant
Tallulah Lyons-Jahn
Sanara Maasera
Brooklyn Mercer
Declan Ryan
Brie Shelley-Piccinini
Fiona Van Allen

Think Twice

Choreographer: Amy Hall Garner
COCAdance First and
Apprentice Company

Music: Think Twice

Artist: The Detroit Experiment

CAST 1PM

Naomi Bentley
Nadia Rawlins
Anna Kaestner
Michelle Jing
Joshua Bruton
Adelaide Pollock
Eliana Wade
Noelle Malone
Thomas Woodrow
Diana Tschomakoff

CAST 5PM

Malik Ashe
Ashlee Holloway
Diana Tschomakoff
Michelle Jing
Sofia Shah
DeKylah Epps
Eliana Wade
Noelle Malone
Thomas Woodrow
JiaLi Deck
Harper Clark

Amend

Choreographer: Kirven-Douthit Boyd
COCAdance First and
Apprentice Company
"Untitled Artists"

Music: Avi Amon and Lamar Harris

CAST

Malik Ashe
Naomi Bentley

Sunday Program

Ashlee Holloway
Noelle Malone
Nadia Rawlins
Diana Tschomakoff
Joshua Bruton
JiaLi Deck
DeKylah Epps
Michelle Jing
Anna Kaestner
Adelaide Pollock
Sofia Shah
Eliana Wade
Thomas Woodrow

UP

Choreographer: Jasmine Spencer
Hip-Hop Crew Second Company
"Up"

Music: Cardi B, Beyonce, Lil Mama

CAST

Georgia Bland
Amara Blumenfeld
Mollie Goldberg
Shaylin Johnson
Kamayah Jones
Giuliana Kelley
Emani Stone
Abbie Weignart

Untitled 15:

The Chicken Dance

Choreographer: Mason Cummings

Ballet Eclectica First and
Apprentice Company
"Soul Train/The Chicken (Live)"
Jaco Pastorious

CAST

JiaLi Deck
Ashlee Holloway
Anna Kaestner
Sasha Kaslow
Sasha Keller
Lauren Renner
Eliana Wade
Sophie Yoshino
Jada Folarin-Hines
Isabelle Gerardo
Michelle Jing
Alexa (Lexie) Kummant
Tallulah Lyons-Jahn
Sofia Shah
Jaida Smith

The Sample

Choreographer: Jared Jenkins
Hip-Hop Crew First and
Apprentice Company
"She's a Bad Mama Jama"
"Mo Money Mo Problems"
"Undercover"
"Poison"
"Vibrant Thing"
"Poke it Out"
"Can't Touch This"
"Get Busy"
"No Letting Go"

Sunday Program

"One In a Million"

"Wild Side"

Music: Carl Carlton, Notorious B.I.G,
Teyana Taylor, Bel Biv DeVoe, Q-Tip,
Wale, BIA, Sean Paul, Wayne Wonder,
Aaliyah, and Normani

CAST

Pathra (Somo) Dedkhad

Nicholas Gavril

Taylor Hall

Kara Munz

Lexington Suttle

Ashley Taylor

Alexx Whittier

Mikayla Williams

MaKailah Blockton

Zak Brown

Joshua Bruton

DeKylah Epps

Khloe Hunter

Emmett Loyd

London Montgomery

Ella Munz

Jael Rogers

Kimyra Stapleton

Fiona Van Allen

Land Acknowledgement

Land acknowledgements help us honor a place's Indigenous people—past and present—and recognize the history that brought us to where we are today and the fact that our communities are in stolen lands. Here is COCA's Land Acknowledgement:

In alignment with our mission to enrich lives and build community through the arts, COCA chooses to learn about, come to terms with, and share the truth of Westward Expansion. COCA acknowledges its community spaces, studios, and theatre rest on the traditional lands of Native People, including the Illini Confederacy, Osage Nation and Missouri tribe. We acknowledge this land is stolen land and acquired through a history of violence. We honor these tribes now and the other tribes who made their homes in St. Louis before us. We encourage you to learn more about native communities and land where you live.

Support Organizations that work with Native American Communities in STL:

Missouri Humanities Native American Program
mohumanities.org/programs/native-american

Kansas City Indian Center
kcindiancenter.org

Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies
sites.wustl.edu/budercenter/overview

Senior Statements



Naomi Bentley – It's all I've known. Dance is life, my art, my air, my oxygen, my H₂O, my love, my best friend, and my enemy. It makes me fight for justice, makes me laugh, makes me cry, makes me mad, and makes me better. What I can't say in words, my art creates, and I dance. Dance is my dance. It's how I communicate with God. Dance has been everything, and then not enough. And when it's not enough, I dig deeper, and I dance. I dance to bring life back into the things that have lost its beauty. I improvise to speak what people are afraid to speak. I don't know who I'd be without dance. My mom says she

knew I was made for the arts when I was a baby because I would match her pitch when she sang scales. After my first dance performance, that singer took a seat, and the dancer came forth. From that day on, I danced, spun, and leaped everywhere...barefoot, on concrete, in the aisle of stores, and bus stops. I begged my parents to take dance classes. Soon, I began at Stages St. Louis, where I grew as a triple threat. But it wasn't enough. And then COCA became home. While I have faced challenges, I am blessed to be able to take the level of classes offered here. But most of all, it's being in COCA dance that has shaped, pushed, and pulled the gift of improv found in me. I have to thank my teachers and my experiences here at COCA for helping develop into the dancer I am becoming.



Zoe Clark – It's not about the product, it's about the process. COCA has helped me transform into the aspiring artist I am today. Through my time at COCA, I have had the privilege to work in a professional setting, to train with inspirational teachers such as Antonio and Kirven, to participate in master classes and intense residencies, and to learn what it means to use my passion to develop and fuel my performance. Life is not easy, and during Freshman year, I faced a major adversity which caused a setback in my life. However, by using my love for dance and COCA's support, I became a stronger, more

determined, and more resilient person. As we all face adversity in our lifetimes, we can use these significant changes to become stronger, more empathetic, and more understanding people. We can replace the pain by finding joy and gratitude in our lives. Dance has taught me what it means to truly live in the moment, to let go of what you cannot control, to take risks, and to be vulnerable. When working with Shamel Pitts in a COCA dance residency, he highlighted the importance of living your own fantasy. As I continue my development as an artist, I know that this is an extremely difficult career path to go down; but I want to embrace every moment and every second of it. I want to live life to the fullest by doing what I love. I want to dream, create, and give all I've got to give. I want to inspire others to follow their passions and instigate change in a world where change is needed, where stories are told, where people's voices need to be heard. So for COCA students, I encourage you all to embrace every second of your time here; it flies by. Take advantage of the moment, the opportunities you are given, and the ability to create. Growing as an artist is not only for your personal growth but also for the growth and strength of the community, the community you create, the community of artists that are set out to tell people's stories and change how society operates. As I aspire to incorporate artistry into my career, I have learned how essential it is to never let go of the joy, passion, and hope that drives my excitement for the work I do. COCA has taught me how to push past my limits and achieve the impossible through hard work, grit, determination, and incorporating my joy into my work ethic. I'm excited to announce my commitment to Point Park next year with a BFA in Theatre Arts. I would not be where I am today without the help from Antonio, Kirven, Kam Saunders, Gina Bon-Perez, Kathleen, and many other wonderful teachers. Most importantly, I would not be where I am today without the loving and ever abundant support from my mom and sister. You both have given me everything I could ever ask for in life, so thank you. You have all inspired me to be the person and artist I am today, and for that, I am eternally grateful.

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Pathra "Somo" Dedkhad – I always knew I loved to dance, but never thought where it could lead me to. I started off as a little girl dancing to Missy Elliot music videos and playing Just Dance and eventually going to my first dance studio. These past 5 years at COCA has been one of the best experiences of not only my dance journey, but my life. I've been able to learn from amazing teachers and made friends who became my lifelong family. Thank you, Anthony "Redd" Williams, for seeing my potential and giving me so many opportunities that I couldn't have done without you. Thank you, Jasmine

Spencer, for making me realize my worth as a creative and being an amazing inspiration as a young girl. Thank you, Ms. Lauren Cram, for being the person to push my fashion design path and showing support throughout my life. Thank you to my family for supporting and encouraging me at my shows and all my passions. Thank you to my mom for taking the time out of your life to support my dreams physically, mentally, and financially. I will forever be thankful for you being at all my shows, staying for long rehearsals and shoots, making sure I have meals, and taking me to dance and jobs whenever you can. Thank you to my dad for being the first person to introduce me to the dance world. Without him I don't think the past 9 years of my life would've been the same. Thank you to COCA faculty for the hard work that you put into our shows and taking care of us. This fall I will major in fashion studies at Columbia College Chicago while continuing my dance training in the city. ขอบพระคุณ (Thank You)



Sasha Keller – I've been dancing at COCA since I was 2 years old, almost 16 years now. Dance has been the most constant thing in my life. The influence it has had on me is never ending. I've learned how essential it is to respect your teachers, to make strong connections with my peers, and the importance of mental discipline. From hours in the studio to company rehearsals and practicing at home, dance really is always on my mind. I will forever cherish everything I've learned about myself and dance during my time at COCA. I want to thank my teachers, Mr. Antonio, Ms. Jen, and Mr. Kirven. Mr. Kirven,

your youthful presence and encouragement will continue to motivate me and influence me in the future. Ms. Jen, your artistry continues to inspire me, and I only hope to embody some of the love you show for dance in your classes and choreography. You've taught me everything I know about ballet, and I am so grateful for how much you've impacted me and my life. Antonio, it makes me so emotional to think that I will not see you every day next year. You've single handedly helped me understand who I am as a dancer and have shown so much care for my individuality. You push me in ways that no one has before, and your uplifting energy consistently reintroduces me to my love for dance. You have no idea how much you mean to me. And I want to thank my best friend, Sasha Kaslow, you've been by my side for this entire journey, and I truly couldn't have done it without you. You've always cheered me on and have been a constant source of comfort during all the stressful hours. You will always be my favorite dance partner. Next year, I will be attending Hamilton College in New York on the pre-med track. I will take what I've learned at COCA everywhere I go, and while I am unsure how dance will fit into my future, I am confident that it will always be a part of my identity.

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Noelle Malone – I took my first class at COCA in the sixth grade. It was the polar opposite of any dance studio I had ever experienced in my life. The big studios and artistic directors with the name Alvin Ailey on their resume were intimidating, to say the least. I was so nervous that for the first 5 months I didn't speak to anyone. Not to my teachers or any other students. My fear almost made me miss out on an experience that helped me learn and grow in ways. The following year, I joined COCA's Pre-Professional company. It was through daily classes, rehearsals, and residencies that I could open up to all

that COCA had to offer. It unleashed a passion for creativity and artistry that I didn't know I was capable of. I met new people and made friendships I will cherish forever. In dance, I learned that my greatest strength when I walk into a room is my confidence and assurance in my capabilities. I will never truly be fearless, that is simply not in my nature, but I will forever remember COCA as the place I learned to embrace my fears and never let them control me. I am excited to share that I will continue my artistic journey at Columbia College Chicago as a dance major in their BFA program and a member of their honors program. I want to thank everyone who has been a part of my journey so far; my parents, sister, teachers, and friends who supported me. I appreciate you all so much!



Kara Munz – My name is Kara Munz and I have danced at COCA for 13 years. I have taken every class from modern with Ms. Mariko, ballet with Ms. Carrie, to jazz with Kam Saunders. At 12, I had 9 dance classes a week which, in addition to increased time management skills, taught me how to be dedicated to the process of learning through practice and determination. Today, I have roots in all styles but my passion for dance and the reason I could never stop were found in the wooden tap studio and the old black box. I found freedom within tap and hip-hop because of their attention to rhythm with accents, texture,

and syncopated beats. Thank you, Ms. Kelly, for teaching me how to relax and have confidence. You taught me that dance, and especially tap is about dancing together—and not just with steps but by being present and having fun with people around you. Your contagious love for tap has rubbed off on all your students. I will forever miss jamming across the floor with you. Redd Williams: the most creatively inclined, passionately driven, and caring person I have met so far in my life. Thank you for seeing my potential and embracing me under your wing. You not only taught me to dance but how to be a good person—to be humble, always give 100%, and never stop learning. I know, as it is my last year at COCA it is yours as well. I've never been more excited to see what bigger than imaginable things the future holds for anybody more than you. Hey mom, thanks for being there for it all, even in class. Not a lot of people can say that they have danced between their two sisters and their mom. You've taught me to never stop doing what you love. mUNsters for life. Thanks, dad, for making the runs and teaching me how to drive. I am proud of you for learning how to clap on beat. You really can keep up. In the fall, I will be attending Belmont University to major in Arts, Entertainment and Media Management.

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Nadia Rawlins – My first day at COCA feels like yesterday, it's truly hard to believe that it was 5 years ago. I remember being super nervous sitting in the theatre for the first rehearsal for *The Lion King, Jr.* because I didn't know anyone, but I was welcomed with open arms. That fall, I started COCA dance, Vocal Company, and the fall musical *The Wiz*. I never knew that the decision to spend my free time at COCA would shape who I am and what I love today. In my time in COCA's Pre-Professional programs I've learned so much. I've learned new styles of dance and vocal technique, how to work with different

choreographers and directors, but most importantly I've learned what it feels like when friends can become family. I love you all, and I will miss every single one of you next year. This summer, I will be a part of the onstage collective and perform in New York. I will also be a part of *The Muny Teens* and perform in *Mary Poppins* and *Joseph and the Technicolor Dream Coat*. In the fall, I will be attending Western Michigan University with a major in musical theatre and a minor in dance. I want to thank all my teachers for pushing me to be better, my friends and family for encouraging me along the way, and especially my mom. Thank you for putting me in my first dance class and always believing in me. It's hard to believe my time at COCA has come to an end, but I'm eternally grateful for the experiences and knowledge I've gained. I'll always remember, once a COCA kid always a COCA kid!



Lauren Renner – In the four years I've been at COCA, I've gotten stronger and grown to be more confident in my movements. I'm so grateful that I got to take class every day in COCA's beautiful studios with such amazing teachers. I have Ms. Jen, Antonio, and Ms. Ellen to thank for helping me get to the level that I am at. This summer, I will be going to Kansas City Ballet summer intensive on a full scholarship and dancing as a trainee year-round with Sarasota Ballet Company in Florida. Most of all, I want to thank my mom for her unconditional support—without her I wouldn't be able to follow my passion.



Kimyra Stapleton – When I started my journey at COCA, I didn't know what to expect. One thing that I quickly realized about COCA was that everyone here is unique in their own way. COCA has allowed me to express myself through dance during times where I needed it most. COCA isn't just about dance, it's also about family. During my time at COCA, I gained several friendships with amazing people that I'll always cherish. This summer, I'll continue to train and spend lots of time with my friends and family before I leave. Furthermore, I'm proud to say that I'll be attending Spelman University in Atlanta, Georgia, this

fall. I will be majoring in pre-med biology to become a reconstructive plastic surgeon. I will continue my journey with dance as a Mahogany-N-Motion dancer for Spelman. First and foremost, I would like to thank my parents Kimberly and Demetrius Stapleton for supporting me financially and encouraging everything that I do, nothing would be possible without you two. I would also like to thank all of my siblings and my boyfriend who has supported me along the way. I'd like to thank Redd Williams for always seeing in me what I always couldn't see in myself. You opened so many doors for me and gave me so many opportunities that I'll never forget. I'll take all your catch phrases with me as well. Such as, "Did y'all catch that tea?," "This isn't a soup kitchen," and many more! I would also like to thank Jasmine Spencer for always pushing me past my limits since my first class with her. Jas, you've taught me so many things that are not only useful for dance but useful in the real world, too. I'd like to thank all my teachers at COCA and the entire COCA staff for everything that you guys do. Toodles!

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Diana Tschomakoff – Coming to COCA over 10 years ago is one of the best decisions I've ever made. Immersing myself in such a supportive, creative, and motivating community has changed me in ways that I'll never forget and will cherish as I move forward. Being surrounded by students and teachers who are extremely talented and dedicated to dance has been so inspiring and one of the many factors that pushed me to continue. Ever since I hit the eligible age to join, my mom urged me each year to audition for one of COCA's Pre-Professional companies, but I would always say no because I thought that I

wouldn't be good enough. To me, dance was just a hobby, something that I loved but didn't take as seriously. I finally mustered up the courage to audition the summer before my sophomore year, and I could not be more grateful to have been accepted into COCA dance. Being in this company has exposed me to incredible opportunities and helped me improve, rediscover myself, and further develop my passion. I have learned so much and gained confidence to where I feel prepared to take on any obstacle that gets thrown my way. Starting in the fall of 2022, I will be attending Southern Illinois University Edwardsville where I will major in Art & Design. Thank you so much to Sam, Ms. Mariko, Ms. Jen, Ms. Ellen, Kirven, and Antonio for pushing me past my comfort zone and constantly challenging me to become a better dancer. Thank you, mom, for believing in me and supporting my journey at COCA for so many years. Finally, to all my friends in company and class, thank you for creating a space where I could be myself and be vulnerable without judgment. I will miss you guys and everyone at COCA so much.



Sophie Yoshino – I came to COCA when I was just four years old, and fourteen years later, I still remember my first class. I remember struggling to put on my little leather ballet shoes, clutching to my mom, and timidly waiting until the last minute to enter the studio. But my teacher's warm voice and the sight of pink tutus welcomed me in. The set of steps and strict technique of ballet allowed me to start as an observer and slowly develop more expansive movements that gave me the opportunity to channel my artistic expression.

When my first big performance as a munchkin in *The Wizard of Oz* came, I found a love for performing. The next year, I was old enough to join Ballet Eclectica, but self-doubt and shyness prevented me from auditioning. However, thanks to the encouragement of Antonio, a year later I was able to join Ballet Eclectica's junior apprentice company where I have grown so much as a dancer and artist. I would also like to thank Ms. Carrie for sparking my joy of dancing in my formative years, Ms. Jen and Ms. Ellen for pushing me to expand beyond what I thought I could do, Kirven for making me smile, and my parents, especially my mom for fueling my interest by showing me DVDs of the Rite of Spring and Swan Lake in her office. Although I still cannot match the speed of Tiler Peck's chaîné turns or the height of Natalia Osipova's jumps, I have acquired an outlook on life that is tinted with the rosy hue of pointe shoes, seamed tights, and flowing tutus. One that weaves my different interests together, ignites discovery, and connects me with my community. Next fall, I will attend WashU where I will most likely major in the University's philosophy-neuroscience-psychology program and continue my love of ballet by minoring in dance.

Creative Team Biographies

Ballet Eclectica Artistic Director and Choreographer – Antonio Douthit-Boyd

Antonio Douthit-Boyd is Co-Artistic Director of Dance at COCA, where he began his dance training at the age of sixteen under Lee Nolting's dance direction.

He has trained at Alexandra School of Ballet, North Carolina School of the Arts, Joffrey Ballet School, San Francisco Ballet School, and Arthur Mitchell's Dance Theatre of Harlem School. Antonio joined Dance Theatre of Harlem Company in 2000 under the direction of Arthur Mitchell and appeared in featured roles choreographed by George Balanchine: *The Four Temperaments*, *Agon*, and *Serenade*. He became a Soloist with the company in 2003.

Antonio joined the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 2004, where he danced as a principal artist for twelve years. He has worked with world-renowned choreographers such as Alvin Ailey, Judith Jamison, Robert Battle, Wayne MacGregor, Jiri Kylian, and Paul Taylor. Featured roles include: Alvin Ailey's "I Wanna Be Ready" (a solo from *Revelation*); "Polish Pieces" by Hans van Manen; "Firebird" by Maurice Bejart; and "Episodes," "Bad Blood," and "Urban Folk Dance" by Ulysses Dove. He has performed for President and First Lady Barack and Michelle Obama, Queen Elizabeth II, Michael Jackson, and a list of high-profile patrons of the arts.

Antonio is an ABT® Certified Teacher who has completed the ABT® Teacher Training Program for Pre-Primary–6/7 and Partnering through the ABT® National Training Curriculum. He teaches ballet as a Distinguished Performing Artist at Washington University in St. Louis in the collaborative MFA program between the University and COCA. In 2021, Antonio and his husband Kirven Douthit-Boyd received the Excellence in the Arts Award from the Arts and Education Council in St. Louis. Antonio is a practicing candidate for his Master of Fine Arts Degree from Hollins University.

COCAdance Artistic Director and Choreographer – Kirven Douthit-Boyd

Kirven Douthit-Boyd is Co-Artistic Director of Dance at COCA. He began his formal dance training at the Boston Arts Academy and as a member of Boston Youth Moves. Kirven studied as a fellowship student at The Ailey School and at the Boston Conservatory. He earned a Master of Fine Arts in dance from Hollins University.

He began his professional career as a member of Ailey II from 2002–2004 and also performed at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival as a member of Battleworks Dance Company in 2003. In 2004, Kirven joined the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater performing nationally and internationally for 11 years. 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 Shechter, Twyla Tharp, Wayne McGregor, and Ohad Naharin. In 2016, Kirven joined Ron K. Brown/Evidence, A Dance Company as a guest artist.

In 2010, Kirven performed at the White House tribute to Judith Jamison hosted by Michelle Obama. He 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, and the 2016 recipient of Boston Arts Academy's Apollo Award.

Kirven has choreographed for The Ailey School, The Juilliard School, Webster University, Boston Arts Academy, Boston Youth Moves, and COCA. He has also choreographed for Dallas Black Dance Theater, The Big Muddy Dance Company, The Black Repertory Theater, The Repertory Theater of St. Louis, 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.

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Hip-Hop Crew Artistic Director and Choreographer – Anthony “Redd” Williams

Anthony “Redd” Williams is COCA Hip-Hop Crew Artistic Director and the driving force behind COCA’s dynamic Hip-Hop program. A St. Louis native, Redd has traveled the world teaching thousands of students while bringing innovative movement and choreography to the world of Commercial Hip-Hop dance. He has performed and choreographed production tours, music videos, live stage and national television shows, and commercials. He has worked with the likes of Lady Gaga, Beyonce, JLO, Mariah Carey, SZA, Flo Rida, P Diddy, and Nelly, just to name a few. His television credentials include The Teen Choice Awards, Pepsi, Starbucks Coffee, and The Disney Channel. Redd’s choreography also has been performed on the legendary Showtime at the Apollo. In addition to Kode Redd, his independent Hip-Hop company, Redd prides himself on being an exceptional leader, teacher, and mentor while leading the next generation of professional Commercial Hip-Hop dancers down the path to success.

Ballet Eclectica Choreographer – Elizabeth Corbett

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 DeKeersmaeker’s school of contemporary dance, PARTS, in Brussels from 1999 – 2005 and danced in a work created for her by Ms. DeKeersmaeker 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 professorship. Elizabeth contributes Forsythe classes to outreach programs in Memphis and was recently awarded a Chairman’s Award locally for her fund-raising work providing meals at schools in Kenya. She choreographs yearly for Memphis’ New Ballet Ensemble and has been an American Dance Festival faculty member since 2006.

Ballet Eclectica Rehearsal Assistant – Jennifer Welch Cudnik

A native of St. Louis and an educator for over twenty years, Jennifer holds a Master of Fine Arts in Dance from Hollins University. She is an adjunct faculty member at Webster University, a faculty member and rehearsal director at COCA as well as the director and co-founder of the nonprofit, Ballet Initiative. Jennifer is an ABT Certified Teacher who has taught at universities, festivals and renowned dance schools. Jennifer is a commissioned choreographer, a career consultant for aspiring professional ballet dancers and an adjudicator for dance and choreography competitions. She is a grant recipient of Career Transition for Dancers as well as a fellowship recipient of Hollins University.

As a child, Jennifer studied in St. Louis with Berkeley Evans, Alexandra Zaharias and Nathalie LeVine and in Kansas City with Todd Bolender and Una Kai at the State Ballet of Missouri. At age 15, Jennifer moved to New York City to study on full scholarship at the School of American Ballet.

While at the School, she trained under master teachers Elise Reiman, Helene Dudin, Suki Schorer, Kay Mazzo, Susie Pilarre, Richard Rapp and Stanley Williams, performed in ballets by George Balanchine and August Bournonville, and originated roles in works by Christopher Wheeldon and Damian Woetzel. Jennifer also trained with David Howard, Wilhelm Burmann and Nancy Bielski while living in

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New York City. She spent summers training at Pacific Northwest Ballet School with Truman Finney and Victoria Pulkkinen. Upon graduation from SAB, Jennifer became a professional ballerina for a decade as a member of the Pennsylvania Ballet and as a principal with Saint Louis Ballet. She performed leading roles in George Balanchine's *Serenade*, *Allegro Brillante*, *Valse Fantaisie*, *Divertimento No. 15*, and *Who Cares?*, in works by Dennis Nahat, Francis Patrelle, Gen Horiuchi and numerous roles in *The Nutcracker*, the title role in *Giselle*, and as *Aurora* in *The Sleeping Beauty*. Jennifer has been a guest artist with Stamford City Ballet, Montana Ballet and the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra. Her dance studies have also taken her to Frankfurt and Berlin, Germany.

Jennifer is committed to teaching dance and growing the support of the arts in the St. Louis area. As an educator who teaches future generations of dance advocates, Jennifer cultivates with compassion and empathy, ensuring technique and artistry are instilled and achieved with pride and prowess. Her entire teaching career and MFA education is focused on equity, diversity and inclusivity being of paramount importance.

Ballet Eclectica and COCAdance Choreographer – Mason Cummings

Mason Cummings is a bicoastal interdisciplinary based choreographer, dancer, and writer. He has studied at dance programs such as COCA (Center of Creative Arts), The Ailey School, and Professional Performing Arts High School. Most recently, he has graduated from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts with a major in Dance and minor in Pre-law. In his training, he has studied various dance forms including Neo-Classical Ballet, Modern-based Horton, and Improvisation. Additionally, he has performed the works of Shamel Pitts, Jennifer Archibald, Chuck Wilt/UNA Productions, and Patricia Hoffbauer.

As far as choreographing, Mason has presented work at the Jack Crystal Theater, Spoke the Hub's "Solo Fancy," and numerous independent film projects. He has progressed into a person who pushes boundaries, asks questions, and continues to define the "human experience." When encountering his work, you will be put into a headspace that makes you become more curious about movement, music, and identity. Overall, his objective is to help shape, educate, and impact the world one creative step at a time.

Ballet Eclectica Choreographer – Lauren Anderson

Native Houstonian Lauren Anderson danced with Houston Ballet from 1983 to 2006, performing leading roles in all the great classical ballets, appearing across the world to critical acclaim, and in the process, becoming one of Houston Ballet's most beloved stars. In January 2007, Anderson assumed her new role in Houston Ballet's education department where she teaches ballet classes at Houston Ballet's Ben Stevenson Academy, conducts master classes at area schools, and lectures to students on dance and her historic career as one of America's most distinguished African-American ballerinas.

She trained exclusively at Houston Ballet's Ben Stevenson Academy from the age of seven. She joined Houston Ballet in 1983 and in 1990 became the first African-American to be promoted to principal dancer at Houston Ballet — and one of the few African-American ballerinas at the head of a major ballet company anywhere in the world. In addition, Anderson received the Special Jury Award at the 1990 International Ballet Competition as well as the International Critics Award in Chile. Ms. Anderson has performed across the globe as a guest artist.

Anderson danced leading roles in all of the classical ballets. Her contemporary repertoire included works by George Balanchine, Sir Kenneth MacMillan, Christopher Bruce, James Kudelka, Trey McIntyre, and Stanton Welch AM. Anderson created the title role in Ben Stevenson's *Cleopatra*, and her performance as *Cleopatra* received accolades from international critics. Anna Kisselgoff of *The New York Times* compared her to the great Italian actress Eleanora Duse, and Christine Temin of *The*

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Boston Globe pronounced her “a powerhouse in interpreting the role that Stevenson created on her.”

In April 1999, Anderson was featured on the cover of Dance Magazine. She has also been featured in the People and Pointe Magazine; as well as on the television programs “A&E Breakfast With the Arts,” “CBS News Sunday Morning,” and the game show, “To Tell the Truth.”

Ms. Anderson has been honored by various organizations and received numerous awards. In 2017, she received the Texas Medal of Arts Award for her contribution to the dance world. Ms. Anderson received the Barbara Jordan, Breaking Barriers award from the Harris County Democratic Party. She is an honorary member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and the proud parent of Lawrence Turner.

Ballet Eclectica Second Company Choreographer – Ashley Hamann

Ashley began her dance training with the Orlando Ballet School under the direction of Fernando Bujones and Peter Stark. Her training continued at the Hair Conservatory and Boston Ballet School. Ashley has performed with the Orlando Ballet, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Ballet Quad Cities, Missouri Ballet Theatre, and Ballet314. She has performed works by Geroge Balanchine, Lauri Stallings, Deanna Carter, Terrence. S. Orr, and Fernando Bujones, among others. Ashley has been a ballet faculty member at COCA for the last six seasons and is currently a Ballet Eclectica Second Company Rehearsal Assistant. In addition, she currently teaches the professional company dancers of the Big Muddy Dance Company and Ballet314. Ashley earned a B.S. in Health Education and is certified to teach the American Ballet Theatre National Training Curriculum and the Progressing Ballet Technique Conditioning program. She also is a certified personal trainer through the National Academy of Sports Medicine.

Ballet Eclectica Second Company Choreographer – Carrie Fernandez

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 repertoire internationally. She was Dance Coordinator for Anne Teresa DeKeersmaeker'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 New Ballet Ensemble and School, The ADF, 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 professorship. Ms. Corbett received her MFA from Hollins University in 2019 and currently choreographs and teaches internationally.

COCAdance Choreographer – Tommie-Waheed Evans

2021 Guggenheim Fellow Tommie-Waheed Evans is a queer black dance maker, born and raised in Los Angeles, California, amidst racial divide, gang warfare, and earthquakes. His work explores blackness, spirituality, queerness and liberation. He began his formal training with Karen McDonald before earning a fellowship at the Ailey School, and a Master of Fine Arts in Choreography from Jacksonville University. He has toured and performed nationally and internationally as a company member of Lula Washington Dance Theater, Complexions Contemporary Ballet and Philadanco. Since 2004, he has created more than 50 original dance works that range widely in scope, length, tone

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and subject matter. waheedworks, his Philadelphia based dance company, is the primary vehicle for his creative research. The company's mission is to create a radically collaborative body of work that speaks to the human condition. His work brings together urban street dance styles and contemporary dance vocabulary through bold and raw movements propelled by gospel music and polyrhythmic sounds. He has also been commissioned to create works for BalletX, Dallas Black Dance Theatre, PHILADANCO, Verb Ballets, Ballet Memphis, The University of the Arts, Boston Conservatory at Berklee, Lula Washington Dance Theatre, Louisville Ballet, among others. He has received accolades and honors including 2020 Center of Ballet and Arts resident fellow, 2019 Princess Grace Honoraria Award in Choreography, New Music Project Grant, Howard Gilman Foundation Fellowship, Joffrey Ballet Winning Works 2019, and Ballet Memphis New American Dance Residency 2019.

COCAdance Choreographer – Amy Hall Garner

Amy Hall Garner is an internationally known choreographer based in New York City creating works in the ballet, modern, and theatrical genres. A native of Huntsville, Alabama, and a graduate of The Juilliard School her work has been commissioned by numerous schools and companies including Ailey II, Collage Dance Collective, The Juilliard School, The Ailey School, Barnard College, The University of the Arts, and Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet. She has also created works for Columbia Ballet Collaborative, and personally coached Grammy Award winner Beyoncé, providing additional choreography for The Mrs. Carter Show World Tour. Her theatrical choreography credits include The Color Purple for the Milwaukee Repertory Theater and served as the associate choreographer for the Off-Broadway musical Invisible Thread, directed by Tony Award winner Diane Paulas. In 2018, she was selected to participate in Alvin Ailey's New Directions Choreography Lab supported by the Ford Foundation. Garner was one of the first recipients of the Joffrey Ballet's Choreography of Color Award (now titled Winning Works). As a leading educator, she has taught at both American Ballet Theatre and Joffrey Ballet School summer intensives, along with numerous residencies and master classes across the country. Currently, Garner is an adjunct professor at New York University's New Studio on Broadway at Tisch School of the Arts.

COCAdance Second Company Choreographer – Sam Gaitsch

Sam Gaitsch earned her M.F.A. in Dance from Washington University in St. Louis in 2018. She earned her B.A. in Psychology and Dance, with a minor in Visual Art, magna cum laude from WashU in 2015. At COCA, she has been a member of the dance faculty and a rehearsal director/choreographer for the COCAdance Second Company for several years. She is thrilled to be the new Pre-Professional Division and Dance Program Manager. She has performed, taught and choreographed for various universities, dance and theatre companies around St. Louis. Her choreography bridges the gap between professional concert dance and theatre, often using humor as a tool for social commentary. When she's not in the studio, she continues to pursue her passions for visual art, cooking, and gardening!

COCAdance Second Company Choreographer – C. Anthony Cole

C. Anthony Cole has been a dance artist and arts educator since attending the San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts and the Boston Conservatory of Music, Dance, and Theater. C. Anthony has produced and directed Collaborations Dance concerts and has been a Guest Choreographer and Teacher at SDSCPA from 1993–2012. He has created work for local theater companies Common Ground Theater, Black Storytellers of San Diego, and the Ira Aldridge Repertory Players. C. Anthony was also the Co-Director and Choreographer of the Gospel Messiah, 2006–2009.

Creative Team Biographies

Currently, he serves on the faculty at COCA. He also held a position as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Bloomsburg University. Additionally, he choreographed, directed, and produced *Three for Daniel*, a dance film, which documents the creation of three original works for Daniel Marshall, a former member of Dayton Contemporary Dance Company. He has worked as a consultant for start-up dance companies and has produced, stage managed, and directed for Unity Dance Ensemble, LaDiego Dance Theater, The Garage Project, and the Foster-King Dance Collection. C. Anthony has had the privilege of training dancers who have gone on to attend University of the Arts, Ailey-Fordham, and University of California, Irvine. He is pleased to be a new faculty member at Stages. C. Anthony earned his M.F.A. in Interdisciplinary Arts from Goddard College and a B.S. in Human Services from the University of Phoenix.

Hip-Hop Crew Choreographer – Jared Jenkins

Jared Jenkins is originally from Philadelphia, PA, but now resides in Los Angeles, CA. After graduating from Georgetown University with a degree in Finance, Jared decided to explore dance and take his first dance class. Since then, Jared has had the opportunity to train, travel and work with some of the top choreographers in the world. Currently, Jared is a faculty member at Broadway Dance Center in New York City and Millennium Dance Complex in Los Angeles. His current credits include Jennifer Lopez, Natalie La Rose, Justine Skye, iHeartMemphis, Icona Pop, Jazmine Sullivan, Nigel Lythgoe's "Every Single Step," Cirque du Soleil, BET'S Black Girls Rock, Soul Train Awards, Wendy Williams, Good Morning America, Verizon, Touchstone Picture's *Step Up 2: The Streets*, NYC Fashion Week, The Pulse, Monsters of Hip-Hop and World of Dance.

Hip-Hop Crew Second Company Choreographer – Jasmine Spencer

Jasmine Spencer is a St. Louis native, dancer, and choreographer. She has been dancing since the age of 14, where she studied various styles of dance and specializes in Hip-Hop. She also attended Missouri State University where she studied dance. She is currently an instructor/assistant artistic director at COCA (Center of Creative Arts, as well as Kode Redd Dance Company. Jasmine has danced for artist such as Lil Kim, Rick Ross, Da Baby, Lil Duval, and Mai Lee. She has also been seen on the BET Hip-Hop Awards, and Netflix series *Insatiable* Seasons 1 & 2.

Costume Designer and Manager – Shevaré Perry

Shevaré is an artist, storyteller, poet, and fashion educator. She explores creative expression through the overlap of visual art, theater, and fashion. In 2021 Shevaré debuted, *She Is Her, I Am She*, as the inaugural artist for Saks Fifth Avenue Gallery and collaborated with St. Jude Children's Research Hospital for their Saints Gala fundraiser. Over the last few years, her art has been featured at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, and galleries in Chicago, New York, and London. She lives her life passion focused; a true example of, "Love what you do, do what you love." Shevaré earned a B.S. Fashion Design from Philadelphia University and attended graduate school in London, England. She has also completed the Community Artist Training and Teaching Artist Institute programs at the Regional Arts Commission.

Lighting Designer and Technical Director – Jayson Lawshee

Jayson M. Lawshee is a St. Louis-based Production Director and Designer whose experiences includes Musical Theater, Opera, New Work, and Dance. He currently serves as the Technical Director at COCA Center of Creative Arts in St. Louis, MO. An alumni of The Sargent Conservatory of Theater Arts at Webster University, Jayson earned a B.F.A. in Lighting Design. Jayson has designed for Metro Theater Company and COCA-Center for Creative Arts, as well as Shakespeare Festival Saint Louis.

Creative Team Biographies

Some lighting design credits include *Billy Elliot*, *wUNDERland*, *Four Little Girls* (COCA); *Last Stop on Market Street* and *Ghost* (Metro); and *Love at the River's Edge* (SFSTL). He has additionally served as the Assistant Lighting Designer on the Repertory Theater of Saint Louis' production of *Pride and Prejudice*. He was the Lighting Programmer for Shakespeare Festival Saint Louis' production *King Lear*. He was the first Electrics Intern at Wolf Trap Opera in Washington, D.C., and served as Assistant Master Electrician at Opera Theater Saint Louis. Jayson often refers to the tech table as his "home" and is passionate about making theatre in all forms accessible to all people.

Production Manager and Stage Manager – Carolyn Carter

Carolyn is overjoyed to be joining the staff here at COCA as the new Production Manager. She is so grateful to join this community and to be a part of the incredible work and teaching that happens here. She graduated with a B.F.A. in Stage Management from The Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University. Some of her favorite credits include Assistant Stage Manager for *The Gradient* and Stage Manager for the Imaginary Theatre Company season at the Repertory Theatre St Louis, Stage Manager for *A Vengeance and Love at the Rivers Edge* at Shakespeare in The Streets, Stage Manager for *I Now Pronounce* at the New Jewish, and Production Coordinator for The Conservatory's 50th Anniversary.



About COCA

COCA's mission is to enrich lives and build community through the arts. With a commitment to equity and access, COCA serves as a regional hub for learning in and through the arts for all ages from all backgrounds. One of the most diverse cultural institutions in St. Louis, COCA serves over 50,000 students, audience members, artists, and families from over 220 zip codes across the St. Louis region every year. The fourth largest multi-disciplinary arts organization in the country, COCA is committed to supporting the vitality and creativity of over 200 artists at the heart of its work in schools, community centers, local business, cultural organizations, and on-site at its campus in University City.

The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is **strictly prohibited**.

Stay in Touch!



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COCA Health & Safety Procedures

Face masks are strongly recommended at COCA, not required. We highly encourage all patrons wear face masks, especially those who are unvaccinated and those who remain vulnerable to COVID-19. We continually monitor current COVID-19 conditions in our region, and protocols are subject to change, as necessary, to address the conditions.

MindsEye's mission is to build a more inclusive community by translating vision into audio for individuals who are blind or visually impaired in the Greater St. Louis Region. COCA has partnered with MindsEye to provide audio description for the 7:00PM Friday, May 13 show of *TRlumphant*.

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Roald Dahl's

Matilda

THE MUSICAL

JUL 22–24 | Ages 6+ | Tickets at cocoatl.org

Matilda Wormwood, a young girl with extraordinary powers, uses her love of reading and storytelling as an escape from her life with her neglectful and abusive parents. Matilda is sent off to school where she struggles under the reign of the school's cruel headmistress, Miss Trunchbull, who punishes children for not abiding by her strict rules. Matilda befriends her kind teacher, Miss Honey, who realizes Matilda's talents and encourages her to embrace her uniqueness. Matilda learns how to stand up to the adults in her life and discovers her own remarkable powers.

Presented by Mary Strauss

Improv Troupe Spring Performance



May 20, 2022 | ALL AGES | Tickets at cocaatl.org

Capping off their season, COCA's Improv Troupe takes sketch and comedy to the next level in this final performance. After a year of honing their comedic chops under the direction of Ed Reggi, the Improv Troupe is sure to bring out all of the smiles and laughs. Enjoy an evening of fun with the whole family.

COCA's Vocal Company performs Rodgers and Hammerstein classics in the style of Ariana Grande, Phoebe Bridgers, Jazmine Sullivan, and more! Special guests help to shape these works and craft an exciting look into the up-and-coming generation of theatre artists. Students are coached and directed throughout the year by professional theatre artists. The COCA Vocal Company is under the direction of Colin Healy, with Alicia Revé Like. This Spring Song-Cycle of Rodgers and Hammerstein is modernized with a book written by Artistic Producer Delaney Piggins.



Find your place in the arts

2022–2023 class registration for members begins July 8
Visit cocastl.org for more information.



Pre-Professional Auditions

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COCAdance Auditions
MAY 22

Ballet Eclectica
Auditions
MAY 23

COCA Hip-Hop
Crew Auditions
MAY 22

Theatre & Voice
Pre-Professional
Division Auditions
MAY 23–24

Summer Teen Intensives at COCA



Participants work with professional teaching artists, and meet and collaborate with other talented teens while building and refining skills.

Teen summer intensives are offered in:

Ballet & Contemporary

(Ages 14–21)

Ballet Studio, Jr.

(Ages 9–13)

Circus

(Ages 12–18)

Leadership

(Ages 14–18)

Tap

(Ages 11–18)

Theatre Design

(Ages 14–18)

Voice

(Ages 12–18)

Visit cocastl.org for more information.



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