



PALM DESERT choreography festival 2024

SATURDAY 7 PM NOVEMBER 9 | SUNDAY 4 PM NOVEMBER 10



SATURDAY FINALISTS

Choreographer photos can be found on the front cover - just match up the number!

CHRISTINA GHIARDI, originally from Morgantown, West Virginia, received her pre-professional training at the School of American Ballet. She has danced professionally with Boston Ballet II, Pennsylvania Ballet, and just completed her 10th season with Nevada Ballet Theatre. As a choreographer, Christina has created over ten works for Nevada Ballet Theatre, Ballet West II, the School of American Ballet, Boston Ballet School, Ballet Project OC, and Dallas Ballet Company. In 2022, she was a choreographic fellow for the University of Utah's Choreographic Institute and was a finalist in Palm Desert Choreography Festival in 2022 and 2023.

SEAN AARON CARMON danced with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for nearly a decade. He has performed as a guest artist across the continent and has been featured on numerous television shows and in major publications such as *The New York Times*, *Dance Magazine*, and *Huffington Post*. Sean has been a featured performer on Broadway (*La Cage aux Folles*, *Phantom*), in regional theater (*Kinky Boots*, *Ragtime*), and on national tour (*The Lion King*) across America. He is a YAGP Outstanding Choreographer, a Joffrey Ballet Winning Works awardee, and an NCI selected choreographer. Sean is currently a choreographer and rehearsal director for Dance Kaleidoscope in Indianapolis.

RUBÉN GRACIANI is an educator and choreographer who has performed with renowned groups such as the Mark Morris Dance Group, CityDance Ensemble, Brian Brooks Moving Company, the Kevin Wynn Collection, the Joe Goode Performance Group, and Company Stefanie Batten Bland. His company, RG Dance Projects, has received acclaim both nationally and internationally. Ruben won the Audience Favorite Award at the Joe's Pub DanceNow Festival. Recent high-level commissions and collaborations include DanceWorks Chicago, Reina Sofia Museum, and an upcoming Carnegie Hall debut. He currently serves as the Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts at James Madison University.

MADISON HICKS holds a BFA in Dance from The Juilliard School and an MFA in Choreography from California Institute of the Arts. She has received choreographic residencies at Orsolina28, Jacob's Pillow, DanceLabNY, 14thStreetY, and Chez Bushwick. Madison has been commissioned by companies and universities including Vitacca Ballet, The Juilliard School, Ballet Arkansas, Avant Chamber Ballet, Water Street Dance Milwaukee, Loyola Marymount, The Fordham Ailey BFA program, Peabody University, and others. She was associate choreographer for *Children of Eden* at Lincoln Center and is the director and founder of Moving Forward, as well as a faculty member at 24Seven Dance Convention.

JA COLLECTIVE is a dynamic dance duo from Los Angeles, formed by USC graduates Jordan Johnson and Aidan Carberry. Their unique blend of hip-hop, contemporary dance, and theater has led to successful collaborations with artists like half•alive, Future, and Frank Ocean. They've toured internationally, created music videos, and appeared on television. JA Collective continues to push boundaries, collaborating with renowned choreographers like William Forsythe and presenting their own original works.

MEGAN LAWSON, JILLIAN MEYERS, AND DANA WILSON are professional choreographers and dancers who have worked alongside iconic performers such as Justin Timberlake, Janet Jackson, and Madonna. As The Seaweed Sisters, they explore self-discovery, their surroundings, and the world at large through their unique blend of intuitive improvisation and precise choreography. They use humor and imagination to connect with their experiences and their audience, celebrating the unusual and the joy of play. In addition to their annual short film productions, The Seaweed sisters have appeared live at Dance Camera West, Congress LA, Heidi Duckler Dance, Newport Folk Festival, and have toured nationally as the opening act for musical super duo, Lucius.

JAIME CARABETTA began choreographing at age 5 to her dad's Shirley Bassey records. She earned her MFA in Dance from University of California, Irvine in 2000. As a musical theater dancer she toured the U.S. and Japan. Jaime has received grants from the NEA, NYFA, NYSCA, National Museum of Dance, CUNY Dance Initiative, California Arts Council, Los Angeles County Arts Commission, and more. Her choreography has been commissioned by over ten colleges and performed across the United States and in Japan. A bicoastal choreographer, she has received residencies from MODarts, CUNY Dance Initiative, and Vineyard Arts. Her dance films have been screened nationally and internationally and most recently *No Man is an Island* was featured in ADF's Movies by Movers.

JENNIFER HART has been commissioned by Ballet Austin, James Sewell Ballet, Wonderbound, Minnesota Dance Theatre, The Walker Art Center, The McKnight Fellowship for Dancers, University of Massachusetts, and the National Choreographers Initiative, among others. She has received a New York City Ballet Fellowship and has placed in several competitions, including the Saint-Sauveur International Choreography Competition. Her work was also selected for the National College Dance Festival at the Kennedy Center. In 2014, she co-founded Performa/Dance with Ballet Austin dancer Edward Carr and has received four Austin Critic's Table awards for Best Short Work, Best Choreographer, and Best Dance Concert.

CARLY TOPAZIO originally from Millis, MA, trained at Boston Ballet and Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet. She joined the Alabama Ballet in 2011, City Ballet of San Diego from 2014-2020, and guested with various companies in San Diego and New York City, performing soloist and principal roles by many notable choreographers. Internationally, she has trained and performed in Mexico, Spain, Prague, and Austria, and appeared as a dancer in Disney's *The Game Plan*. In 2018, Carly founded The Rosin Box Project, San Diego's premier contemporary ballet company, where she has commissioned over 44 new works.

HD THEATRE is a contemporary dance company and choreographic duo founded by Haley Heckethorn and Joe Davis in 2019. The company is dedicated to presenting high-caliber performances featuring original works by Haley and Joe, as well as commissioned work. HD Theatre has performed at LA Dance Festival, JAMS Performing Arts Center, Laguna Dance Festival, and Korzo Theatre Den Haag, and has commissioned work by Justin Rapaport, Gregory Lau, and Paxton Ricketts. Haley and Joe have created and set works at CalArts, Redcat, Arts Umbrella, and numerous youth dance programs nationwide.

NATASHA ADORLEE is an Emmy Award-winning choreographer, filmmaker, composer, and educator. She began choreographing in 2016, following a distinguished dance career with companies such as ODC/Dance and Kate Weare Company. Her short film, *Take Your Time*, won over ten international awards in 2018, establishing her as a sought-after creator. Natasha founded Concept o4 to expand access to the arts and has received numerous accolades, including an NEA Grant, the Isadora Duncan Award, and a Jacob's Pillow Fellowship. She has created works for Winnings Works at Joffrey Ballet, Pixar, BalletX, Kansas City Ballet, and more.

WELCOME!



For 27 years, Palm Desert Choreography Festival has celebrated the creativity and brilliance of choreographers. Over this time, nearly 800 choreographers have showcased their works at our festival. This year, we are thrilled to present a new slate of finalists, representing the best of this year's submissions.

As usual, Saturday's performance will feature choreographers collaborating with seasoned dance artists, while Sunday's performance will highlight those working with pre-professional dancers — technically skilled individuals who are emerging as artists at the start of their careers. This year's line-up should be especially rewarding!

Ranging from contemporary ballet to commercial styles, 15 choreographers will compete on Saturday for the \$10,000 grand prize, while 10 choreographers will vie for the \$5,000 grand prize on Sunday. We believe all our finalists are winners! Please read about them on the front and back cover of the program.

The Festival aims to do more than just recognize exemplary work. One of our cherished objectives is to offer dance as an art form to students who might not otherwise have the opportunity to experience this form of self-expression. This goal is embodied by East Valley Dance Project, overseen by award-winning choreographer Jenny Backhaus. Students participate in a series of workshops and rehearsals, culminating in a Sunday performance where they showcase an original dance created with and for them.

Another objective is to provide professional development opportunities for local youth aspiring to pursue dance as a career. We proudly present two workshops where participants will learn some of the choreography featured this weekend, along with valuable insights into the choreographers' movement styles. Read more on page 15.

Recognizing those who inspire through dance is also an objective of our festival. This year, we honor Nappytabs with the Lifetime Achievement Award for their significant contributions to breakdance, an art form often underappreciated, and to the larger world of dance. With breakdance debuting at the Paris Olympics, we celebrate this historic moment, acknowledging breakdance as a bona fide genre and dancers as athletes. Although breakdance will not be included in the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics, we seized the moment this year to recognize Nappytabs for their artistry and creation of a new genre, lyrical hip hop. Read more about their accomplishments on page 5.

Finally, we extend our gratitude to all who make this event possible. Enjoy!

Shea New

FOUNDER AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Please take our audience survey



THANK YOU

McCallum Theatre extends its sincere thanks and appreciation to the following individuals and organizations for their generosity in making this event possible.

CITY OF PALM DESERT FESTIVAL PRESENTING SPONSOR

McCallum Dance Visionaries

support the Palm Desert Choreography Festival and ensure that world-class dance performances are a key component of each McCallum season.

CHOREOGRAPHER

Pamla Vale Abramson
Irene W. and Guy L. Anderson Children's Foundation
Barbara Arnstein
Pamela and Dennis Beck
Diane J. Dykema
Maudella and Harold Green
Tamara and Michael Groat
Mary Ann McLaughlin
Jaishri and Raju Mehta
DeAnn Mix
Carol Pavlick
Suellen Richmond and Jeffrey Bush
Tower Energy Group – Twanna and Tim Rogers

COMPOSER

Anonymous
Robert Archer and Chuck Hilliar
Laura Fly Bellows and Wayne Bellows
Nancy and Tom Cunningham
Noel Gordon and Hilary Beard

DANCER

Suz Hunt
Olga Morales and Allen Burstiner
Linda and Manny Rider

Festival Donors

make possible an extraordinary weekend of dance which showcases the work of choreographers and dancers who are pushing artistic boundaries.

COLLABORATOR

The Coeta and Donald Barker Foundation
Lynn and Richard Buckley
Susan and Warren Gelman
Debbie Ohanian
Wendy Willson

PARTNER

Ms. Cardriner Bowden
Roger Bredahl and Marvin Meyers
Kim Peterson
Dr. Morton and Susan La Pittus
Kim Smith

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Media Sponsor: KESQ – Gulf California Broadcasting

*Special thanks to College of the Desert
for providing Festival workshop space.*

THE CITY OF PALM DESERT CONGRATULATES
LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT

NAPPYTABS



www.discoverpalmdesert.com

Heartfelt thanks to the Palm Desert Choreography
Festival and all the incredible finalists. For 27
transformative years, you've elevated the art of dance,
inspiring us all with your passion and creativity.
Join us in celebrating this extraordinary journey!

EAST VALLEY DANCE PROJECT



An important outreach project of Palm Desert Choreography Festival, East Valley Dance Project has served students in Thermal for the past 18 years. Originally a partnership with Desert Mirage High and Toro Canyon Middle Schools, the Project now also includes students from Coachella Valley High School. East Valley Dance Project engages youth in dancemaking under the artistic direction of multiple Festival award-winner Jennifer Backhaus. It includes residencies by professional dancers in high school dance classes, an audition workshop and eight intense rehearsals. The culmination is a performance of an original piece of choreography to close the Sunday performance of Palm Desert Choreography Festival. While participating in the process of crafting a dance, students develop an understanding of its potential as a form of expression, develop life skills, and gain access to McCallum Theatre.

Special thanks to Irene W. & Guy L. Anderson Children's Foundation for helping to make this outreach project a reality.

EAST VALLEY
DANCE
PROJECT

“ Participating in East Valley Dance Project was very memorable. I learned a new way to dance, a different way to socialize and got to learn more about performing on stage. I gained communication skills and discovered new aspects of myself. The EVDP artistic team was fantastic. This experience has greatly impacted my social skills and my view of dance. ”

– Guadalupe Mora, 12th Grade, Desert Mirage High School

2024 LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

NAPPY TABS



Tabitha and Napoleon grew up on opposite coasts and met as students at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. In 2008, they gained mainstream recognition as innovative choreographers on Fox's *So You Think You Can Dance*, where they created a new dance style known as "Lyrical Hip Hop," earning four Emmy nominations and two wins for Outstanding Choreography.

Over the past two decades, Napoleon and Tabitha have worn many hats in the entertainment industry, contributing their talents as producers, directors, and creatives to numerous television and live events. Most recently, they received two Emmy nominations for Outstanding Variety Special as part of the producing team for the 2022 and 2024 GRAMMY® Awards.

Throughout their careers, they have passionately supported the dance community, serving as Supervising Choreographers and Co-Executive Producers for some of television's biggest dance shows, including MTV's *America's Best Dance Crew*, NBC's *World of Dance* and *Dancing with Myself*, and Fox's *Mobbed*.

As Creative Directors, they have crafted memorable performances for a variety of A-list artists on some of television's biggest stages, including the Super Bowl, VMAs, GRAMMYS, Billboard Awards, American Music Awards, and the Oscars. Their impressive artist roster includes Jennifer Lopez, Mary J. Blige, Camila Cabello, J Balvin, Ed Sheeran, Beyoncé, Ariana Grande, Madonna, Lainey Wilson, Jessie J, Calvin Harris, Carrie Underwood, Celine Dion, Keith Urban, Halsey, 50 Cent, Ricky Martin, Pitbull, Avril Lavigne, Dolly Parton, Miley Cyrus, BTS, Harry Styles and Mariah Carey, among others.

Please take our audience survey



PALM DESERT CHOREOGRAPHY FESTIVAL

SATURDAY **NOVEMBER 9, 2024**

\$10,000 **Grand Prize**
\$5,000 **Second Place**
\$2,500 **Ensemble Awards**
\$2,000 **Small Group Awards**
\$1,500 **Duet Awards**
\$1,000 **Solo Awards**

Opening Remarks by
KAJSA THURESSON-FRARY VICE PRESIDENT-EDUCATION

ACT ONE

PURIGADO

Choreographer **RUBÉN GRACIANI**
Company **RG Dance Projects**
Music *Eso Concerto* by Ezio Bosso
Lighting Design **Philip Schroll and Sarah Lackner**
Costume Design **Yo Ma Ma**
Dancers **Claire Binguít, Isaiah Cavallero, Nick Kearns, Ella Kim, Hannah Mu, Mia Philippon**
Dancers courtesy of DanceWorks Chicago

GROUND RULES

Choreographers **JOE DAVIS AND HALEY HECKETHORN**
Company **HD Theatre**
Music *The Dining Table* by Svarte Greiner, *Solfeggio* by Arvo Pärt
Costume Design **HD Theatre**
Dancers **Joe Davis, Haley Heckethorn**

ROULETTE

Choreographer **SEAN AARON CARMON**
Company **Vitacca Ballet**
Music *Ole* by John Coltrane
Lighting Design **Laura E. Glover**
Costume Design **Rachel Murray**
Dancers **Annika Dalbratt, Nikolas Darrough, Ava Dempster, Jordan Hooks, Khen Kurulkar, Maddie Medina, Melody Mennite, Joshua Ponton, Coltin Snyder, Aidan Wolf**

MAY I? YOU MAY.

Choreographer **MADISON HICKS**
Company **The Moving Forward Collective**
Music **Original composition by Ben Waters**
Lighting Design **Natasha Rotondaro**
Costume Design **Rosely Polanco**
Dancers **Nicole Hagen, Lindsey Matheis**

ASYMPTOTE

Choreographer **CARLY TOPAZIO**
Company **The Rosin Box Project**
Music *Fang and Oscillating Replica* by Travis Lake,
Software Bugs by Dan Wool
Lighting Design **Ginger Chody**
Costume Design **Uros**
Dancers **Chelsea Fenner, Bethany Green, Sona Jaeger, Rony Lenis, Katie Spagnoletti, Jeremy Zapanta**

AWOOGA

Choreographers **MEGAN LAWSON, JILLIAN MEYERS, DANA WILSON**
Company **The Seaweed Sisters**
Music *Back Bay Shuffle* by Perez Prado + His Orchestra,
Rather Important by Lucius, *Awooga* by Five Alarm Funk
Lighting/Costume Design **The Seaweed Sisters**
Dancers **Megan Lawson, Jillian Meyers, Dana Wilson**

INTERMISSION

ACT TWO

LA MESA (THE TABLE)

Choreographer **JAIME CARABETTA**

Company **Pony Box Dance Theatre**

Music **Original Composition** by Doug Hammond

Lighting Design **Conor Mulligan**

Costume Design **Gabby Grywalski**

Dancers **Xavier Alexander, Jonathan Colafrancesco,**

Carl Ponce Cubero, AJ Guevara, Paulo Gutierrez,

Nelson "Nellie" Enrique Mejia

DREAM SONG

Choreographer **JENNIFER HART**

Company **Performa/Dance**

Music **Her Dreams** by Luca D'Alberto

Lighting Design **Erin Earle Fleming**

Costume Design **Susan Branch Towne**

Dancers **Grace Morton, Morgan Stillman**

WHY MY DAD LEFT THE LIGHT ON

Choreographers **AIDAN CARBERRY AND
JORDAN JOHNSON**

Company **JA Collective**

Music **Original Score** by Daniel Mangiaracino

Lighting/Costume Design **Aidan Carberry**

Dancers **Davon Farmer, Casey Murray, Christian Smith,
Emma Sutherland**

BLOOMING FLOWERS AND THE FULL MOON

Choreographer **NATASHA ADORLEE**

Company **Concept o4**

Music **The Middle of the World** by Nicholas Britell,

First Time Ever I Saw Your Face by Roberta Flack

Lighting Design **Thomas Bowersox**

Costume Design **Alysia Chang**

Dancers **Erik DeBono, Kelsey McFalls**

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Choreographer **CHRISTINA GHIARDI**

Music **Experience** by Ludovico Einaudi

Lighting Design **Christina Ghiardi**

Dancers **Jaime DeRocker, Madeline Diehl, Robert Fulton,**

Isabella Guinevere, Rebecca Haftl, Camille Kellems, Paityn Lauzon,

Mackenna Pieper, Shelby Rambo, Carmen Rossi, Mikayla Small,

Mallory Sweeney

Dancers courtesy of Nevada Ballet Theatre

2024

**LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT
AWARD presentation**

NAPPYTABS

Tabitha and Napoleon D'umo

Presented by **Kyle Hanagami**

Statue – *Standing Lovers* by Colin Webster Watson

AWARD PRESENTATION

FINALIST PLACEMENT AWARDS

SECOND PLACE AWARD

GRAND PRIZE AWARD

Presented by **Kajsa Thuresson-Frary, Vice President - Education;**

Shea New, Festival Founder/Artistic Director; and Jan Harnik,

Mayor Pro Tem, City of Palm Desert

JUDGES

Joseph Carman

Daniel Ezralow

Brian Gendece

Bonnie Oda Homsey

Vitor Luiz

Molly Lynch

PALM DESERT CHOREOGRAPHY FESTIVAL

Sunday

SUNDAY **NOVEMBER 10, 2024**

\$3,000 **Grand Prize**

\$1,500 **Second Place**

\$1,250 **Ensemble Awards**

\$1,000 **Small Group Awards**

\$750 **Duet Awards**

\$500 **Solo Awards**

Today's performance does not include an intermission.

Opening Remarks by

KAJSA THURESSON-FRARY VICE PRESIDENT-EDUCATION

THE NEVER ENDING CHASE

Choreographer **GUNTA LIEPINA-MILLER**

Company **The Premier Youth Dance Company**

Music *Clouds and The Mind of the (Re)Wind* by Ezio Bosso

Lighting Design **Martha Carter**

Costume Design **Gunta Liepina-Miller**

Dancers **Addison Elia, Aimee Ernt, Riley Ernt, Chihiro Fuke, Guinevere Gale, Carissa Hsu, Arabella Kim, Yesoul Kim, Harmony Lim, Camilla Park, Devynn Smark, Emma Won**

BREAKING POINT

Choreographer **ADAM HARTLEY**

Company **Steps PDX**

Music *Float Dance (ThimK Remix)* by Gabriel Prokofiev, Peter Gregson, and ThimK

Lighting Design **Michael Mazzola**

Dancer **Lilah Havner**

IT NEVER HAPPENED

Choreographer **MICHELLE SHEAR**

Company **Mt. SAC Repertory Dance Company**

Music *Run* by Ludovico Einaudi

Lighting Design **Nolan Catingub**

Costume Design **Michelle Shear**

Set Design **Ethan Shear**

Dancers **Manny Cardenas, Caitlin Larsen, Roberto Morales, Dylan Tillman, Bri Tomas (understudy), Ashlyn Yoshikawa, Maddie Youmans**

WE'RE ONLY AS SICK AS OUR SECRETS

Choreographer **ZACHARY GROENEWOLD**

Company **Orange Coast College**

Music *Bass Drop Music (EDM Festival Remix)* by Bass Boosted HD

Lighting Design **Brock Cilley**

Dancers **Isabella Hernandez, Emma Manzanares, Miyabi Matsushita, Ageha Nagatomo, Yun Yu Naing, Billy Nguyen, Sydney Tanji**

LOVE

Choreographer **NICOLE BERGER**

Company **Orange County School of the Arts**

Music *Lighthouse* by Patrick Watson

Lighting Design **Blake Huntly**

Dancers **Sloane Adams, Sofia Azurin, Lyla Briggs, Kameron Couch, Katie Couch, Guinevere Gale, Victoria Garcia, Richie Granese, Jonah Guzman, Joleane Jewell, Isabella Kouznetsov, Eevee Lee, Maya Loureiro, Emma Marc, Merce Meynardie, Taylor Roscoe, Piper Rovsek, Rylee Young**

soLOW

Choreographer **GIANNA BURRIGHT**

Music **Original Composition by Sio Tepper**

Lighting/ Costume Design **Gianna Burright**

Dancer **Ariel Clarke**

SCIMENZA

Choreographers **MARCO LAUDANI AND
CLAUDIO SCALIA**

Company **The Premier Youth Dance Company**

Music **Aranea by Paolo Buonvino**

Lighting Design **Martha Carter**

Costume Design **Marco Laudani**

Dancers **Addison Elia, Aimee Ernt, Riley Ernt, Chihiro Fuke, Carissa Hsu,
Arabella Kim, Yesoul Kim, Harmony Lim, Paige Minton, Camilla Park,
Devynn Smark, Emma Won**

FALLING FROM A GREATER HEIGHT

Choreographer **ROCHELLE MAPES**

Company **Mater Dei Dance Conservatory**

Music **Refugees (Frieder Nagel Rework) by Laura Masotto and Roger Goula**

Lighting Design **Shawn Fidler**

Costume Design **Rochelle Mapes**

Dancers **Audrey Aquino, Ava Biagiotti, Noel Bernal, Jasmine Chua,
Savannah Fregoso, Gabriella Gomez, Vanessa Jensen, Lydia Lea,
Morgan McCormick, Delaney Miner, Genesis Quietie, Avery Ross-Ryan,
Courtney Stoneman, Lily Turk, Alexsa Wilde**

PENUMBRA

Choreographer **STELLA SING YIUN NG**

Company **Stellar Dance**

Music **Penumbra by Adrian Foy**

Pianist **Adrian Foy**

Dancers **Marin Asaro, Samantha Bell, Kelsey Dorr, Anna Hirko,
Madelynn Hampton, Natasha Radar, Amanda Rene,
Samantha Schmidt, Celyna Tran**

FESTIVAL OUTREACH PRESENTATION

EAST VALLEY DANCE PROJECT

DAYDREAM REPEAT

Artistic Director **JENNIFER BACKHAUS**

Choreography **CHIIRO SANO, ADRIEN PADILLA
& MORGAN GOODFELLOW**

Company **East Valley Dance Project**

Music **Daydream Repeat by Four Tet**

Media Design/Editing **Adrien Padilla**

DANCERS

Coachella Valley High School

**Jay Arreola, Layla Bautista, Christopher Contreras,
Nevina Espinoza, Kayla Garcia, Kimberly Garcia, Kain Gil,
Itaty Haro, Dulce Hernandez, Fernando Hernandez, Nicole Linares,
Isabella Lopez, Carmen Lopez Ventura, Julissa Luna,
Giada Maggioni, Prisila Navarro, Delaila Nuñez, Arlyn Ponce,
Michelle Ramirez, Stephanie Rodriguez, Dayanara Saabedra,
Anabel Sanchez, Clarissa Sanchez, Emily Torres, Kianna Vargas,
Leilene Vargas, Luz Velasquez**

Desert Mirage High School

**Jennifer Aguilar, Emily Amezcua-Jaravito, Emma Cabusora,
Perla Mojica Chavez, Emely Delgado, Jaqueline Derueda-Felix,
Sandra Hernandez, Channel Hernandez Torres, Elizabeth Jimenez,
Arelly Lara, Fatima Mejia Resendiz, Guadalupe Mora, Yunnuen Orozco,
Arelly Perex, Perla Rafael, Paulina Suarez, Lizbeth Valenzuela,
Nathalie Zavala**

AWARD PRESENTATION

FINALIST PLACEMENT AWARDS

SECOND PLACE AWARD

GRAND PRIZE AWARD

Presented by **Kajsa Thuresson-Frary, Vice President - Education;
Shea New, Festival Founder/Artistic Director; and Jan Harnik,
Mayor Pro Tem, City of Palm Desert**

JUDGES

Jamie Azpeitia-Sachs

Jennifer Backhaus

Joseph Carman

Daniel Ezralow

Julianne O'Brien Pedersen



Manuel Vignoulle, Festival Grand Prize Award winner in 2017 and 2018, and three-time finalist.



Rennie Harris, 2019 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient with presenter Brenda Dixon-Gottschild.



Glorya Kaufman, 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient (center); Daniel Ezralow, 2015 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient and Festival judge, and Rachel Cohen, Festival judge.

Over the past 27 years the Festival has...

- > presented the works of **779** choreographers
- > presented **781** pieces of choreography
- > awarded **\$854,425** to deserving choreographers
- > served **20,190** workshop/residency participants
- > honored **25** Lifetime Achievement Award recipients
- > served **45,652** audience members



Shea New, Festival Founder/Artistic Director (left) with Marc Breau, 1998 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, and Festival dancer Tina Kay Bohnstedt.

CONGRATULATIONS!

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS

1998 Marc Breaux
1999 Grover Dale
2000 Lula Washington
2001 Joe Tremaine
2002 George Chakiris
2003 Dee Dee Wood
2004 Carmen de Lavallade
2005 Donald McKayle
2006 Rudy Perez
2007 Glen Tetley
2008 Alan Johnson
2009 Nigel Lythgoe
2010 Eugene Loring
2011 Julie McDonald
2012 Colleen Neary
Thordal Christensen
2013 Jacques d'Amboise
2014 Suzanne Farrell
2015 Daniel Ezralow
2016 Lois Greenfield
2017 Savion Glover
2018 Glorya Kaufman
2019 Rennie Harris
2022 Toni Basil
2023 Helgi Tomasson
2024 Nappytabs

GRAND PRIZE WINNERS (SATURDAY)

1998 *Mambo Mania* – Javier Velasco/San Diego Ballet & *Samuel Loves Lilith* – Brian Fretté/Hit & Run Productions
1999 *Bulb* – Bubba Carr/Subliminal Movements • **2000** *Common Ground* – Carley Conder/Scottsdale CC
2001 *Subway* – Frit and Frat Fuller/Kin Dance • **2002** *Le Coeur Illuminé* – Marie de la Palme
2003 *Sliding Down* – Garrett Ammon/Ballet Memphis • **2004** *Flicker and Shift* – Laura Gorenstein Miller/Helios Dance Theater
2005 *Duet* – Viktor Kabanjaev • **2006** *Their Song* – Greg Sample/CDA Las Vegas
2007 *Falling Petals* – Ting-Ting Chang/Dream Dance Contemporary Arts • **2008** *A Ritual Dynamic* – Jon Lehrer/LehrerDance
2009 *Forces* – Jamel Gaines/Creative Outlet Dance Theatre of Brooklyn • **2010** *Fragments* – Olivier Wevers/Whim W'Him
2011 *Monster* – Olivier Wevers/Whim W'Him • **2012** *Two Against One* – Lauren Edson/Boise Dance Co-op
2013 *Sally Meets Stu* – Danielle Agami/Ate9 Dance Company • **2014** *Mouth to Mouth* – Danielle Agami/Ate9 Dance Company
2015 *Critics of the Morning Song* – Joshua L. Peugh/Dark Circles Contemporary Dance
2016 *Persistence of Memory* – Ting-Ting Chang/T.T.C Dance & *Mine* – Laura Karlin/Invertigo Dance Theatre
2017 *Black & White* – Manuel Vignoulle/M/motions • **2018** *Earth* – Manuel Vignoulle/M/motions
2019 *hi are you like me* – Dolly Sfeir • **2022** *Los Perros Del Barrio Colosal* – Omar Roman De Jesus/Boca Tuya
2023 *Te odiero* – Candelaria Antelo & Arthur Bernard-Bazin/HURyCAN

GRAND PRIZE WINNERS (SUNDAY)

1998 *Toccata Fugue in D Minor* – Penny & Candice Huffor/Renee Fox • **1999** *Eternal Scream* – Sharon Collins-Heads
2000 *MisBehavin'* – Melissa Strom & Charles Brown • **2001** *Chris' Dance* – Marie Hoffman
2002 *Shouldn't Be Here* – Terry Schulke/Mandy Rogers • **2003** *Angels of Auschwitz* – Amy Bates Nakamura
2004 *Toccata and Fugue* – Olga Ioda • **2005** *Fire* – Jen Hechtle Bradford • **2006** *The Race* – Bret Easterling
2007 *Bach Street Prelude* – Conny Mathot • **2008** *Table for Two* – Marie Hoffman
2009 *Amongst the Hedges* – Will Johnston/Jenna Otter • **2010** *Nevermore* – Amy Bates Nakamura
2011 *Framed* – Elke Calvert • **2012** *Les Adieux* – Conny Mathot • **2013** *Concentric Harmonies* – Francisco Gella
2014 *The Wolves* – Dana Metz • **2015** *Juliet* – Jacob Gutiérrez-Montoya & *Lesson #35* – Terry Schulke/Mandy Rogers
2016 *Heroes* – Crystal & David Zibalese • **2017** *Glory* – Jacob Gutiérrez-Montoya
2018 *As The Smoke Seeps In* – McKell Lemon
2019 *When The Dark Moves* – Jacob Gutiérrez-Montoya/Hawkins School of Performing Arts
2022 *Unravel* – Jacob Gutiérrez-Montoya/Hawkins School of Performing Arts
2023 *My Way* – Keithan Haver/Broadway Dance Theatre

JUDGES

JAMIE AZPEITIA-SACHS is an award-winning choreographer, producer, and director with an extensive background in the performing arts. She is the Director for the IE Dance Center, Inland Empire Contemporary Ballet and Founder of the Inland Empire Dance Festival; a two-day celebration for dance artists recently voted and awarded one of Riverside's best arts events. Jamie serves on the boards of multiple nonprofits and holds elected office in Riverside County. She is the Chair for the Arts and Culture Committee for Riverside Woman's Club. For over 20 years, she has earned numerous awards and accolades for her philanthropic work across the Inland Empire, including the prestigious Unforgettable Hearts Award from the California State Assembly. In addition to directing, Jamie danced professionally in many dance companies locally and nationally. Jamie is dedicated to dance education and holds a California VAPA credential. She loves seeing the next generation of performers and assisting in their artistic journey.

JENNIFER BACKHAUS is the Founder and Artistic Director of Backhausdance, a critically acclaimed contemporary dance company based in Orange County. She is also a dedicated member of the dance faculty at Chapman University. A lifelong learner, Jennifer holds a BFA in Communications and Dance from Chapman University and an MFA in Choreography from Hollins University. Since the inception of Backhausdance, Jennifer has been committed to choreographing and producing contemporary concert dance. She has also designed and implemented an extensive dance education and performance program for all ages. Her choreography is infused with humor, athleticism, and theatricality. Under her artistic leadership, Backhausdance has received numerous awards and honors, including being named Outstanding Arts Organization by Arts Orange County in 2012. Jennifer was recognized by Chapman University with the Distinguished Alumni Award in 2017 and Alumni of the Year in 2007. This year marks her eighteenth year creating work for local dancers in McCallum's Palm Desert Choreography Festival through the East Valley Dance Project.

JOSEPH CARMAN is a former soloist with the Joffrey Ballet, Dutch National Ballet, and American Ballet Theatre where he danced ballets by George Balanchine, Jerome Robbins, Antony Tudor, Twyla Tharp, Gerald Arpino, Robert Joffrey, Glen Tetley, Hans van Manen, Kurt Jooss, and many others. A graduate of the New School University with a degree in journalism, he has been a contributing editor for *Dance Magazine* for 20 years. He has also written on dance and the performing arts for numerous publications, including *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Playbill*, *The Village Voice*, *The Advocate*, *Pointe*, *Dance Studio Life*, *Stagebill*, and *The Forward*. Additionally, he has written program notes for New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Houston Ballet, the Nantucket Atheneum Dance Festival, and Segerstrom Center for the Arts. In 2004, his book *Round About the Ballet* was published. He has served as a member of the Dance Magazine Award committee and now lives permanently in Palm Springs.

DANIEL EZRALOW is an award-winning director, choreographer, writer, and performer whose illustrious career spans theater, film, music, and television. *The Huffington Post* praised his production of PEARL at Lincoln Center as "a stunning collaborative spectacle." He has created works for Teatro alla Scala, Cirque du Soleil's *LOVE*, the Sochi Olympics, The Paris Opera, and Batsheva Dance Company. On Broadway, he choreographed *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*, and in film *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*, *Across the Universe*, and Francis Ford Coppola's recent *Megalopolis*. Ezralow has collaborated with artists Issey Miyake, Josh Graban, Andrea Bocelli, and Katy Perry, to name a few. He is the Founder and Artistic Director of Ezralow Dance, known for its explosive physicality and playful humor. He stage directed and choreographed the opening and closing of World Expo Dubai 2020, earning an LA Choreography Award nomination. In 2015, Ezralow received Palm Desert Choreography Festival's Lifetime Achievement Award.

BRIAN GENDECE is a film producer and former talent manager who has represented renowned director/choreographers like Tina Landon, Liz Imperio, Jeri Slaughter, Cris Judd, Lee Martino, Tyler Hanes, and Mia Michaels. These artists have created world tours, music videos, and TV appearances for stars such as Jennifer Lopez, Rihanna, Janet Jackson, Christina Aguilera, Shakira, and Ricky Martin. Brian has negotiated principal contracts for Broadway, film, and TV stars. He was VP of Creative Affairs for Cannon Films, Executive Director of Bobby Ball Talent Agency's Dance, Choreography & Equity Divisions, Event Producer for The American Choreography Awards, and Co-Creator of The Bob Fosse Adopt-A-Dancer Scholarship Program. He also served as the on-stage talent producer for NBC's *Shall We Dance On Ice*. Now a resident of Palm Springs, Brian enjoys producing and directing documentaries, giving behind-the-scenes talks on choreography and dance, and has served on the Board of Directors for The Los Angeles Dance Foundation and The Academy of Dance on Film.

BONNIE ODA HOMSEY, founding Director of Los Angeles Dance Foundation, serves on the Western Council of Entertainment Community Fund (formerly The Actors Fund) where she launched "HAC & ME," an endowment fund to provide free youth programming at its Hollywood Arts Collective. She is a board member and Co-Chair of Programming for Gold Standard Arts Foundation, a national resource service for AAPI creative. For 20 years, she served as Chair of Dance for The Princess Grace Foundation USA and also as a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts, New England Foundation for the Arts, United States Artists, and California Arts Council. A member of the Martha Graham Co. directed by Ms. Graham, she toured internationally and performed works with Rudolph Nureyev and Dame Margot Fonteyn. An alum of The Juilliard School, Bonnie established an endowed scholarship for AAPI dancers, and a dance scholarship at Mid-Pacific Institute in Honolulu, Hawaii. She received an MFA in Dance as the Chancellor's Fellowship recipient from UC Irvine, and recently retired from USC Kaufman School of Dance and California Institute for the Arts.

VITOR LUIZ is an international dancer, educator, and choreographer. He is a former principal dancer with San Francisco Ballet, Ballet of Municipal Theater of Rio de Janeiro, and English National Ballet. In 2019, he joined the University of California, Irvine-Claire Trevor School of The Arts as an assistant professor of dance. Vitor was born in Brazil and studied with masters Pedro Kraszczuk, Dalal Achcar, Stella de Mello, and Victor Navarro before joining the Royal Ballet School in London. He started his career in the UK at 17 after receiving a contract from Birmingham Royal Ballet's director, David Bentley. In 2009, he joined San Francisco Ballet as a principal dancer under the artistic direction of Helgi Tomasson. Vitor has also performed as a guest artist with various esteemed companies and galas worldwide, showcasing his versatile style, dancing, and partnering skills. Vitor's recent choreographic work, *The White Feather*, a Persian Ballet Tale (Luiz-Ghassemieh), has gained recognition from the public and critics as it tours nationwide.

MOLLY LYNCH is an award-winning choreographer and artistic director with over 35 years of experience in dance. She is a professor in the Dance Department at UC Irvine's Claire Trevor School of the Arts and the Founder and Artistic Director of the National Choreographers Initiative. From 1988-2003, she was the Artistic Director of Ballet Pacifica, establishing it as Orange County's leading professional dance company. Lynch has choreographed for Sacramento Ballet, Ballet Pacifica, Festival Ballet Theatre, Nashville Ballet, BalletMet, Dance Collage (Mexico), Academies of Ballet in the Philippines, and Singapore Dance Theatre. She received the 2001 Choo San Goh Award for Choreography, the 2007 Outstanding Arts Organization Award from Arts Orange County, and the Irvine Barclay Theatre's Jade Award in 2008. Additionally, she earned the CTSA Dean's Award for Teaching Excellence in 2009 and 2014, the Lifetime Achievement Award for Arts Visionary in 2017, and the 2023 Distinguished Alumni Award from UC Irvine's Claire Trevor School of the Arts.

SUBMISSIONS SCREENING PANEL

Stephen Agisilaou
Sylvia Boaz
Aaliyah Cota-Griffin
Gail DeZon
John Ferrare
Olga Morales
Shea New
April Rhodes
Heaven Rodriguez
Sue Roginski
Kajsa Thuresson-Frary

JULIANNE O'BRIEN PEDERSEN is a seasoned dance professional with extensive experience as a performer, choreographer, academic leader, and educator. She holds a BA from Connecticut College, an MFA from Ohio State University, and certifications as a yoga instructor and Laban/Bartenieff Movement Analyst. At Chapman University, she served as chair of the dance department for nine years and is currently the Interim Associate Dean of the College of Performing Arts. Before joining Chapman University, she was Dean of the School of Dance at Dean College and a program director at Eastern Michigan University. Julianne has performed with the Peter Sparling Dance Company, William (Bill) Evans, and in Isadora Duncan repertory. She has choreographed over sixty works showcased across the country and in El Salvador, receiving accolades including funding from the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador. Her dedication to K-12 movement integration has led to numerous grants and partnerships. Julianne has presented at various conferences, including the Somatic Dance Conference, the National Dance Education Conference, and the Dance and the Child International Conference.



Jacques d'Amboise, 2013 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient with Festival award-winning choreographer, Marie de la Palme.

Please take our audience survey

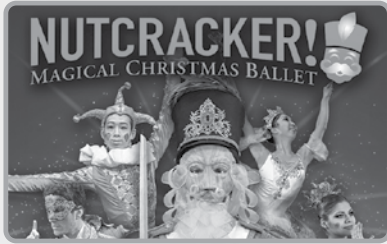


PROGRAM DESIGN Mark Duebner Design

INTRODUCTORY SLIDES VanSant Studios

PHOTOGRAPHY Jingzi Zhao

McCALLUM THEATRE



Nutcracker! **Magical Christmas Ballet** **THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19 • 7PM**

Be transported by the magic of jaw dropping acrobatics, larger-than-life puppets, and stunning hand-crafted sets and costumes.

Sponsored by Maudella and Harold Green



Twyla Tharp Dance **Diamond Jubilee** **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18 • 7PM**

This groundbreaking evening is not one to be missed and is sure to dazzle audiences with its stellar dancing and phenomenal musicianship.

Sponsored by Barbara Arnstein



Rhythm India: **Bollywood & Beyond** **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25 • 7PM**

Created by World Choreography Award nominee Joya Kazi, this performance features the talented dancers of Joya Kazi Unlimited, seen on screens from Bollywood to Hollywood.

Sponsored by Jaishri and Raju Mehta, El Paseo Jewelers



Velocity Irish Dance **Featuring David Geaney** **THURSDAY, MARCH 13 • 7PM**

An electrifying fast-paced performance that redefines Irish tap, led by five-time World Champion David Geaney and Guinness World Record Holder Tyler Schwartz.

Sponsored by Mary Ann McLaughlin



Ballet Hispánico **MONDAY, MARCH 17 • 7PM**

For 50 years, Ballet Hispánico is the nation's renowned Latino dance organization and one of America's Cultural Treasures.

Sponsored by Pamela and Dennis Beck



US Premiere **The Problem With Pink** **WEDNESDAY, MAY 7 • 7PM**

Four brilliant performers blend dance, theater, and striking visuals to explore themes of friendship, identity, and belonging in this exhilarating dance drama.

Support for the 2024/2025 Season of Dance has been provided by the McCallum Dance Visionaries.

**2024
2025
season**

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McCALLUM THEATRE PRESENTS

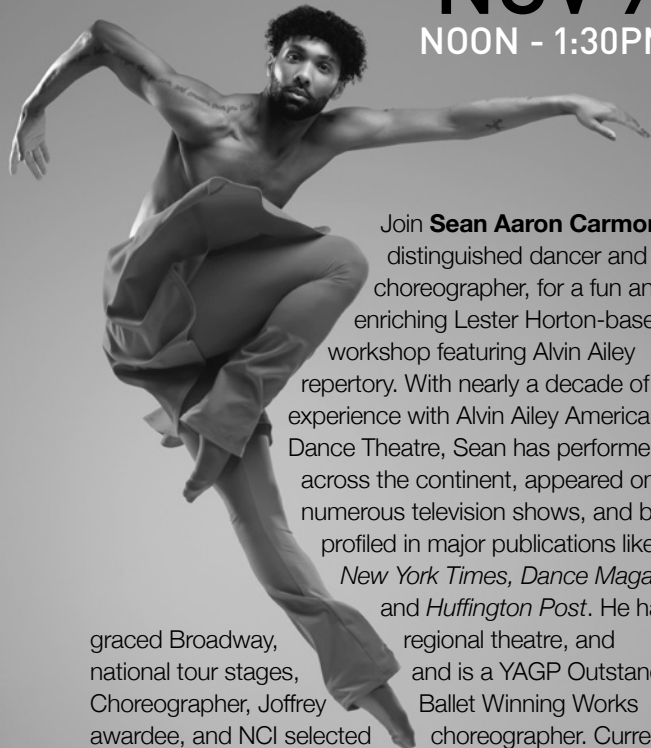
PALM DESERT choreography festival 2024



WORKSHOPS WITH FESTIVAL FINALISTS

FREE!

SATURDAY
NOV 9
NOON - 1:30PM



Join **Sean Aaron Carmon**, distinguished dancer and choreographer, for a fun and enriching Lester Horton-based workshop featuring Alvin Ailey repertory. With nearly a decade of experience with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, Sean has performed across the continent, appeared on numerous television shows, and been profiled in major publications like *The New York Times*, *Dance Magazine*, and *Huffington Post*. He has

graced Broadway, national tour stages, regional theatre, and is a YAGP Outstanding Choreographer, Joffrey Ballet Winning Works awardee, and NCI selected choreographer. Currently, he serves as a choreographer and rehearsal director for Dance Kaleidoscope in Indianapolis. At this workshop, dancers will learn fundamentals of Lester Horton technique, designed to fortify the body's musculature, improve stability, and encourage dramatic expression.

SUNDAY
NOV 10
12:15 - 1:45PM



Join Emmy Award-winning choreographer, filmmaker, composer, and educator **Natasha Adorlee** for a high-energy contemporary dance class. Natasha began choreographing in 2016 after a distinguished dance career with companies like ODC/Dance and Kate Weare Company. Her short film *Take Your Time* won over ten international awards in 2018, establishing her as a sought-after creator. She founded Concept o4 to expand access to the arts and has received numerous accolades, including an Isadora Duncan Award, NEA grant and Jacob's Pillow Fellowship. Natasha has created works for Winnings Works at Joffrey Ballet, Pixar, BalletX, Kansas City Ballet, and others. Blending ballet and modern dance forms with street dance influences, this dynamic class challenges students to refine their technique while embracing contemporary movement rooted in athletic and dynamic physicality, with a strong focus on functional movement.

Open to advanced dancers of all styles, ages 12 & up
Space is limited. Reservations required. Offered at no cost
thanks to support from our generous Festival donors.

REGISTER



WHERE

College of the Desert Gym
43500 Monterey Avenue, Palm Desert

MORE INFORMATION

Joanna Fookes, Manager - Education Programs
jfookes@mccallum-theatre.org

FESTIVAL TICKETS STARTING AT \$20!

BY PHONE 760.340.2787

ONLINE [McCallumTheatre.org](https://mccallumtheatre.org)



PALM DESERT



THE DESERT'S NEWS LEADER



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McCALLUM THEATRE MISSION STATEMENT

The McCallum Theatre's mission is to educate and entertain the public by offering a variety of performing arts experiences that reflects the diversity of people, interests and tastes of the communities and constituents served by the Theatre.

McCALLUM THEATRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

73000 Fred Waring Drive
Palm Desert, CA 92260

For ticket information
(760) 340-ARTS (2787)

www.mccallumtheatre.org

The McCallum Theatre is proud to use
JBL professional sound systems, including
JBL loudspeakers and Soundcraft mixing consoles.

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Don Harmon, Cynthia Hart, Steve Isen, Donna Kish,
Andi Mallen, Liliana Pardo-Posse, Marianne Ray,
Margo Schwab

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Christopher Camu, Maura Fisher, Charline Price,
Thomas Miller

Bartenders

Barry Bieda, Kia Garza, Robert Gilbert, Gunther,
Steve Henderson, Kyle Irwin, Mikey Knapik,
Rick Le Blanc, Carolina Lopez, Roberto Perez,
Charles Price, Scott Raymond, Toni Raymond,
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Back Stage Reception

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Maintenance Assistant

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Nathan Luoto

Stage Crew II

Dennis Gutierrez, Alvaro Rivas, Allen Strother

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Joanna Fookes

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Manager - Education Programs

Shea New

Artistic Director, Palm Desert Choreography Festival

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Karen Rae Kraut, Calvin Larson, Anna Lynch,
Tony Mosca, Holly O'Farrell, April Rhodes,
Sue Roginski, Kudra Wagner

SUNDAY FINALISTS

Choreographer photos can be found on the front cover - just match up the number!

ADAM HARTLEY, originally from Orange, California, trained under the direction of Victor and Tatiana Kasatsky. He also spent time at the Bolshoi Academy in Moscow. In 2009, he joined Oregon Ballet Theatre as an apprentice and was promoted to company artist in 2011. During his tenure, he had the opportunity to perform works by George Balanchine, William Forsythe, Alvin Ailey, Nacho Duato, Twyla Tharp, Nicolo Fonte, and others. Since retiring in 2020, Adam has been teaching and choreographing at Steps PDX in Portland, Oregon.

MICHELLE SHEAR is the Dance Department Chair at Mt. San Antonio College in Walnut, California. She received her BA in Dance from California State University Fullerton and an MFA in Dance from Mills College in Oakland, California. Michelle has been a professor for over 20 years. In addition to teaching, she enjoys working on special projects and collaborations, and is currently writing a children's book on dance. This is her first year presenting work at Palm Desert Choreography Festival, and she thanks the organization for providing a platform to showcase dance artists.

ROCHELLE MAPES' diverse choreography has been presented on professional concert stages, in festivals, college dance departments, studios, and extensively with competitive high school dance teams. As a performer, Rochelle danced for BARE Dance Company under Mike Esperanza, RhetOracle Dance Company with Nate Hodges, musical artist Gladys Knight, and the FX television show *Nip/Tuck*. She earned a BFA and an MA in Dance from Cal State University, Long Beach, and is an established dance educator. Her teaching credits include Orange County School of the Arts and the American Ballet Theatre Gillespie School. Currently, Rochelle is the Director of Dance at Mater Dei High School.

GUNTA LIEPINA-MILLER is a Latvian dance artist, Fulbright scholar, and Artistic Director of Premier Youth Dance Company. She earned her MFA in Dance at UC Irvine and studied dance in Jazeps Vitols Latvian Academy of Music and at CODARTS in the Netherlands. Gunta's works have been showcased in the US, Latvia, Lithuania, Thailand, China, Russia, Italy, Bulgaria, and Israel. She co-choreographed a reimagined *Nutcracker* ballet, nominated for the Latvian Dance Awards and received the audience choice award. Her choreography and dancers were featured on *Dance Revolution* in Lithuania. She has previously won the Second Place award at Palm Desert Choreography Festival and the YAGP Outstanding Choreographer Award.

MARCO LAUDANI AND CLAUDIO SCALIA are the Artistic Directors of Ocrum Dance Movement, supported by Scenario Publico, a Sicilian Art Center. Marco has worked at prestigious institutions like the John Cranko Ballet School, Youth Grand Prix Japan, and Copenhagen Contemporary Dance School. Claudio is the artistic director for the training project Evergreen. Together they have presented their choreographies in Germany, Hungary, Spain, Portugal, Slovenia, Turkey, Greece, Mexico, Bulgaria, and France at various festivals including Festival SzóloDuó, Solo Tanz Theater Stuttgart, Certamen Coreografico Compostela, and the Istanbul Fringe Festival.

NICOLE BERGER, an award-winning director for film and stage, began her career as a dancer in well-known films, television shows, and international stage productions. She is known for her choreographic work on *The Good Place*, *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, *Parks and Recreation*, and more. Nicole has collaborated with many dance and art innovators including Julie Taymor, Daniel Ezralow, and Mark Dendy. While living in New York, she held residency as a member of the Metropolitan Opera Ballet and choreographed for the Radio City Rockettes. Currently, she choreographs for television and directs the Commercial Dance Conservatory at the Orange County School of the Arts.

STELLA SING YIUN NG, Artistic Director of Stellar Dance, holds an MFA in Dance from UC Irvine. She is currently a faculty member at Cypress College and Long Beach City College. She began her career with the Anaheim Ballet Company and Festival Ballet Theatre. She has been invited to teach at the ABT William Gillespie School. In 2023, Stella was a guest teacher for the Canaan Dance International Ballet Competition in Malaysia, Singapore, and Beijing, China. She was also invited to Elmhurst Ballet School in Birmingham, England. Stella is certified with the Bolshoi Ballet-Vaganova teaching method and the ABT National Curriculum.

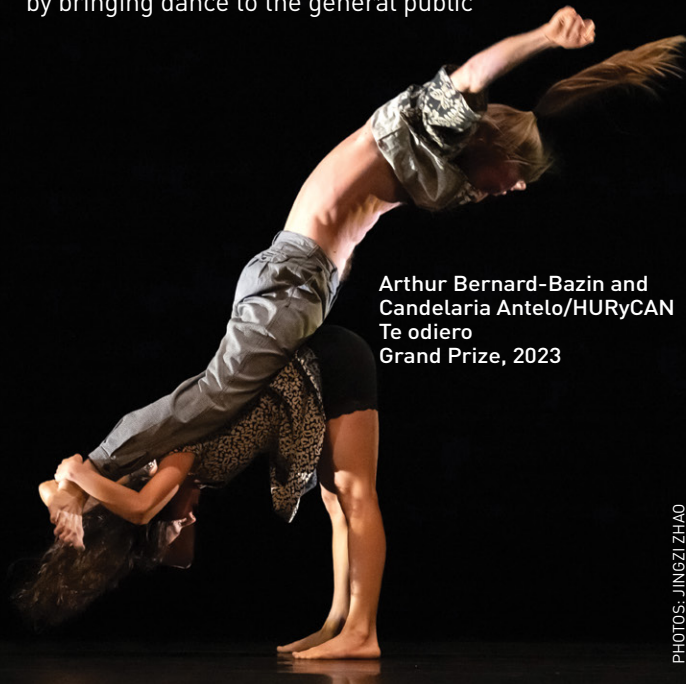
GIANNA BURRIGHT is a dance artist based in Ojai, California. A self-proclaimed late bloomer, she was awarded a 2024 Baryshnikov Arts Center Fall Artist Residency, was a guest artist choreographer for Hubbard Street Dance Chicago's 2024 summer Create Intensive, held a 2023 Carmel Dance Festival Choreography Fellowship, a 2022 Jacob's Pillow Choreography Fellowship, and was the 2022 Dance Gallery Festival choreographer in residence. Gianna has presented choreographic work in fifteen countries, including at iconic venues such as Jacob's Pillow, The Bonnie Byrd Theatre, The Place, The Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and LA Dance Project. She holds a BFA in Dance from UCSB and an MFA in Choreography from Trinity Laban.

ZACHARY GROENWOLD is a dance educator and choreographer based in Southern California. He is currently a faculty member at Orange Coast College, Chapman University, Cal Poly Pomona, and Mt. San Antonio College. Zachary obtained his Master's degree in Dance Education from the University of Northern Colorado. As a performer, he has danced for Team Millennia (and served on their artistic board from 2012-2014), Axiom Dance Collective, and Kings & Queens. In 2018, his choreographic work *Focus* received high praise from the American College Dance Association and was selected for national performance at the Kennedy Center.



WHY?

- > Ensure support and attention to dance in the Coachella Valley
- > Create venues for dance companies and choreographers
- > Educate young dancers to the potential of dance as a career by providing opportunities for learning, performing and networking with professionals and by exposing them to a variety of dance styles
- > Encourage and ensure new dance audiences by bringing dance to the general public



Arthur Bernard-Bazin and
Candelaria Antelo/HURyCAN
Te odiero
Grand Prize, 2023

PHOTOS: JINGZI ZHAO

WHAT?

- > A choreography competition
- > Dance projects, workshops, master classes and special presentations
- > Public acknowledgement and recognition for choreographers via honorary and financial awards including a lifetime achievement award for outstanding contributions to dance

Joshua Manculich/WhirlWind Dance
The Rate In Which I Am
2nd Place, 2023



“It has been enormously emotional to travel from Spain to this unknown place, and be able to connect deeply with such a warm audience. Winning the Grand Prize award at such a prestigious event is a strong validation for the commitment we made. We are grateful to Palm Desert Choreography Festival for trusting and supporting us.”

– Arthur Bernard-Bazin/HURyCAN
Grand Prize, 2023

HISTORY

The Festival, founded by choreographer Shea New in 1998, has grown tremendously in size, respect and support, in part due to the stellar talent that it has attracted. It began as a joint effort between the College of the Desert and the City of Palm Desert, with McCallum Theatre's Education Department lending its support in the second year. The idea grew out of the need to provide emerging choreographers with support and opportunities to showcase their art. In 2002, the Festival was fully incorporated as a McCallum Theatre program and has since expanded its reach with a number of dynamic community projects.



73000 Fred Waring Drive
Palm Desert, CA 92260

McCallumTheatre.org

McCallum Theatre is a 501(c)(3)
non-profit performing arts center.