

# Ballet

N E B R A S K A

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 9, 2013

Contact: Erika Overturff, (402) 541-6946

[Download print-quality photos here](#)

### BEYOND HEIGH-HO: THE STORY COMES FIRST FOR BALLET NEBRASKA'S 'SNOW WHITE'

OMAHA -- Wicked queen, check. Poison apple, check. Adorable dwarves, present and accounted for.

Those familiar elements, and more, will be in place when Ballet Nebraska opens its Season 4 with guest choreographer Winthrop Corey's *Snow White*, September 28 and 29 at the Rose Theater.

But the ballet tells its tale its own way – a way, Corey said, that is guided by the story and the relationships among its characters.

"When I'm creating a new ballet, I first of all 'write the book,'" Corey said. "And what I mean by that is that I have to write the story from beginning to end. That's my starting-off point. The *pas de deux* (dance for a couple) elements in my ballets are crucial -- they're pivotal as to what happens to a character, what it feels about another character. But first I write the book."

Corey – the artistic director of Alabama's Mobile Ballet and a former principal dancer for the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and the National Ballet of Canada – opens his "book" in a garden, where Snow White and her friends celebrate her sixteenth birthday. A visiting prince arrives with an unexpected gift: a hand mirror, something Snow White has never seen before. Her stepmother, the Queen, has banned mirrors to keep Snow White from becoming aware of her own beauty.

"And when the Queen finds out that this has happened," Corey said, "that starts the drama of her dilemma." She commands a huntsman to take Snow White into the forest and see that she never returns. Her plans eventually fail, of course, thanks to a key facet of Snow White's character that Corey reveals through dance: her ability to inspire affection in those around her.

"This is a romantic ballet," he said. "Yes, there is the evilness of the Queen. But when you look at the ballet, everyone wants to take care of Snow White – including the huntsman, who was supposed to kill her. Her friends take care of her and give her flowers; nymphs take care of her in the forest and send her to the cottage; the dwarves take care of her; the Prince of course takes care of her. It's romantic. It's a big romance, and that's what I wanted. That's who I am."

Ballet Nebraska will perform *Snow White* at 7:30 pm Saturday, September 28, and 2 pm Sunday, September 29, at the Rose Theater, 2001 Farnam St. in Omaha. Tickets are available through the Rose Theater box office, 402-345-4849.

*Snow White* is presented with the support of the Iowa West Foundation, the Nebraska Arts Council, and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment. General operating support for Ballet Nebraska is provided through generous grants from the Peter Kiewit Foundation, the Union Pacific Foundation, and the Sherwood Foundation. More information is available from the company's website at [balletnebraska.org](http://balletnebraska.org).

# Ballet

N E B R A S K A

## **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

September 9, 2013

Contact: Erika Overturff, (402) 541-6946

## **PLOT SYNOPSIS: SNOW WHITE**

*by Winthrop Corey, Choreographer*

### **ACT I, SCENE I: THE CASTLE GARDEN**

It is early morning and Snow White's stepmother, the Queen, is strolling in the garden. She climbs to her balcony, where the Magic Mirror awaits her. She asks the Magic Mirror, "Mirror, Mirror, on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?" Each time the Mirror replies, "You are." Satisfied that her beauty is still the fairest in the land, the Queen departs.

As the sun rises, friends of Snow White enter the garden to celebrate her 16th birthday. Snow White sees them from the balcony and runs to greet them. They all dance and celebrate with baskets of flowers the friends have brought to Snow White.

Suddenly a Prince arrives bringing Snow White a special birthday gift, a hand mirror. Having never seen her own reflection before, Snow White is quite taken with this gift and is enamored by the Prince.

The Queen has been watching from the balcony and is furious that Snow White has now seen her own beauty. The queen asks everyone to leave and takes the hand mirror from Snow White. Returning to the balcony, the Queen asks the Magic Mirror again, "Who is the fairest of them all?" This time the reflection in the Magic Mirror is that of Snow White.

The Queen calls the Huntsman and instructs him to take Snow White into the forest and see that she never returns, bringing back proof of the deed to the Queen in a special box. The Huntsman follows the Queen's orders, but he is unable to harm Snow White. He tells Snow White to run away and never come back.

### **ACT I, SCENE II; THE FOREST**

Snow White runs through the forest until she is exhausted. She lies down by a tree and falls fast asleep. The forest wood nymphs appear and dance through the trees. The Queen of the Nymphs arrives and awakens Snow White, then guides her to a small cabin deep in the woods. Finding the cabin empty, Snow White enters and sees everything is in disarray. She begins to straighten up and clean, hoping that the ones that live here will let her stay. Tired by all her work, she falls fast asleep on the bed.

## **INTERMISSION**

### **ACT II, SCENE I; THE CABIN**

The dwarfs return home from the mine where they have been working all day. When they enter their cabin, they see that everything is in order and wonder how this could have happened. They eventually find Snow White sleeping in their bed and ask her who she is and why she is here. Snow White tells them how the Queen wanted her dead. After a brief conference, the dwarfs ask Snow White to stay with them.

The next day the dwarfs return to the mine for a full day of work, leaving Snow White alone in the cabin.

# *Ballet*

N E B R A S K A

## **ACT II, SCENE II; THE FOREST**

The Queen anxiously awaits the return of the Huntsman with the proof that Snow White is dead. After receiving the special box, she returns to her balcony and discovers that she has been deceived. She formulates a plan to disguise herself as a beggar woman and take a poison apple to Snow White.

When the Queen arrives in disguise at the cabin, she finds Snow White alone. Snow White sees how frail the beggar woman is and asks her to sit, offering her a drink of water. Grateful, the beggar woman offers Snow White the poison apple. Taking the fateful bite, snow White falls to the bed and appears to be dead. Thinking she is triumphant, the Queen flees the cabin, running through the woods back to the castle, feeling assured that she is once again the fairest in the land.

The dwarfs arrive home and find Snow White lifeless on the bed. Heartbroken, the dwarfs surround the bed with flowers.

The Prince appears in the forest and the dwarfs lead him to Snow White, where he declares his love and kisses her farewell. Slowly Snow White awakens as the Prince's kiss has broken the evil spell.

## **ACT II, SCENE III; THE PRINCE'S BALLROOM**

The Prince and Snow White celebrate their wedding and live happily ever after.

##

# Ballet

N E B R A S K A

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

September 9, 2013

Contact: Erika Overturff, (402) 541-6946

## BALLET NEBRASKA'S SEASON 4 COMPANY ARTISTS

### Erika Overturff

*Founder and Artistic Director*



Erika Overturff is the founder and artistic director of Ballet Nebraska, the state's professional ballet company. Under her leadership, Ballet Nebraska enriches the region through an exciting array of professional dance performances and a strong commitment to cultural education and community outreach programming.

Erika began her training in Iowa at the Academy of Ballet, continuing her studies at summer programs including North Carolina School of the Arts, American Ballet Theatre, Pittsburgh Ballet Theater, and the Kirov Academy. Erika earned her B.F.A. in ballet performance and teaching from the University of Utah, which she attended on a full scholarship. She graduated *cum laude* in just three years and was chosen outstanding senior by the ballet department faculty.

Erika went on to dance with Montgomery Ballet, Alabama Ballet, and Omaha Theater Ballet. She has performed principal and soloist roles in a wide range of classical and contemporary repertoire. Erika has also been a faculty member and guest teacher for schools throughout the United States.

As a choreographer, Erika has received critical praise for her work. She served as *répétitrice* for Montgomery Ballet and resident choreographer for Omaha Theater Ballet. She has worked on several collaborations with Opera Omaha and regularly creates new works for Ballet Nebraska. As part of the company's ongoing collaboration with Joslyn Art Museum for Momentum, Erika has choreographed original ballets inspired by museum artwork or exhibitions, including *Connemara* and *Cleopatra*. She also created Ballet Nebraska's lively and entertaining new version of the holiday favorite *The Nutcracker*, which has premiered to enthusiastic audiences both at home and on tour.

# Ballet

N E B R A S K A

## Matthew Carter

*Ballet Master*



Matthew Carter began his training in Pennsylvania with Sharon Filone at the Lake Erie Ballet School and Sandra Barnett at Little's Dance Studio. He went on to study on full scholarship at North Carolina School of the Arts, Miami City Ballet School, and the Chautauqua Festival Dancers. Matthew has danced professionally with Ohio Ballet, Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, Lake Erie Ballet, and Omaha Theater Ballet. He has performed numerous leading roles within the classical repertoire, including Prince Desire in *The Sleeping Beauty*, Franz in *Coppélia*, and Mercutio in *Romeo & Juliet*, as well as in works by George Balanchine, Merce Cunningham, Donald Byrd, Heinz Poll, Laura Dean, Luis Montero, and many others. He has also performed as a Guest Artist with Hawaii Ballet Theatre, Neglia Ballet Artists, and Ballet Tucson. Omaha audiences have enjoyed Matthew in roles such as The Asp in Erika Overturff's *Cleopatra*, The White Rabbit in Kennet Oberly's *Alice In Wonderland*, and Puck in Oscar Antunez's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Also a choreographer, he has premiered works with numerous schools and professional companies, including *Bacchanale Variations*, *Signs of Life*, and *Sadako* for Ballet Nebraska. Matthew is the co-director of Motion41 Dance in Omaha and continues to serve as a guest teacher for schools throughout the country. Matthew returns for his fourth season as ballet master.

## Erin Alarcón

*Company Dancer*



A native of New Jersey, Erin Alarcón received her dance training under Christine Taylor and Luba Gulyaeva of New Jersey Civic Youth Ballet. Erin earned her B.A. in dance performance at Mercyhurst College under the direction of Tauna Hunter. During summers she studied with Eglevsky Ballet and Joffrey Ballet. She has worked with a number of guest artists including Laura Alonso, Bruce Marks, Vivi Flindt, and Bill Evans. Erin has studied abroad with Valerie Valentine of the Dutch National Ballet, danced professionally with SoMar Dance Works and Ballet Concert, and has appeared as a guest artist with Iowa Dance Theater. She has performed the title roles in *Giselle*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and *Cinderella*. With Ballet Nebraska, she has been featured in Mikhail Fokine's *The Dying Swan*, as Fee in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and in lead roles in *The Nutcracker* and *Alice in Wonderland*. This is Erin's fourth season with the company.

# Ballet

N E B R A S K A

## Ryan Christopher

*Company Dancer*



Ryan Christopher grew up in Colorado playing baseball and football through high school. He received his classical ballet training at International Youth Ballet on a full scholarship under the tutelage of Mark Carlson and German Zamuel. Ryan also trained during summers at The Performing Arts Conservatory of Texas directed by H. Christopher Fairbank. Ryan previously danced with Denver's Ballet Ariel and Boulder Ballet where he performed soloist roles in classical repertory including *Le Corsaire*, *Les Sylphides*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Cinderella*, *The Nutcracker*, *Peter Pan*, *Giselle*, *Napoli*, *Beauty & the Beast*, *Les Patineurs*, and many neoclassical and modern works. Ryan has appeared as a guest artist throughout Colorado and around the United States. This is Ryan's first season with the company.

## Vivi DiMarco

*Company Dancer*



Hailing from the Chicago suburbs, Vivi DiMarco trained in ballet, modern, and Vaganova character dance at the School of DanceWest Ballet under the direction of Ricardo and Regina Moyano. While attending college, she continued to train at Hubbard Street's Lou Conte Dance Studio and the Ruth Page Center for the Arts. She also directed and choreographed for University Ballet, where she danced lead roles in student productions of *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, and *The Sleeping Beauty*. Vivi was a trainee at Joffrey Ballet, performing in trainee productions of *Paquita* and Gerald Arpino's *Birthday Variations*. She graduated with honors from the University of Chicago with a B.S. in chemistry. At Ballet Nebraska, Vivi has danced Spanish lead in *The Nutcracker*, Tweedledum in *Alice in Wonderland* and several pieces in *Momentum*. Vivi returns for her second season at Ballet Nebraska.

# Ballet

N E B R A S K A

## **Claire Goodwillie**

*Company Dancer*



Claire Goodwillie began her ballet training at Omaha Theater Ballet School of Dance. She spent summers training with the renowned Pacific Northwest Ballet and Ballet Austin. She also trained in Banff, Canada. Claire appeared in numerous Omaha Theater Ballet productions as both a student and apprentice, including *The Sleeping Beauty*, *The Firebird*, and *Coppélia*. With Ballet Nebraska, her featured roles include Rat Queen and Dew Drop Fairy in Erika Overturff's *The Nutcracker*, Red Queen in Kennet Oberly's *Alice in Wonderland*, Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, vampire bride in Winthrop Corey's *Dracula*, and geisha in Matthew Carter's *Sadako*. She has performed several times with Opera Omaha and Omaha Symphony. Claire returns for her fourth season with the company.

## **Natasha Grimm Gregory**

*Company Dancer*



Iowa native and Ballet Nebraska founding member Natasha Grimm Gregory has performed many leading roles including Sugar Plum Fairy, Snow Queen and Dew Drop Fairy in Erika Overturff's *The Nutcracker*, Titania in Oskar Antunez' *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Mina in Winthrop Corey's *Dracula*, the title role in Overturff's *Cleopatra* and featured roles in *Momentum* and *Alice in Wonderland*. She made her choreographic debut with *Cycles* in Ballet Nebraska's spring 2012 production of *Momentum*. Natasha studied during summers on scholarship with Kansas City Ballet and Manhattan Dance. Natasha has previously danced professionally with Omaha Theater Ballet and performed with Opera Omaha and Omaha Symphony. She is also a dance instructor in a variety of genres. Natasha returns for her fourth season with the company.

# Ballet

N E B R A S K A

## **Alberto Liberatoscioli**

*Company Dancer*



Originally from Italy, Alberto Liberatoscioli received his ballet training in the Vaganova and Balanchine styles while also studying modern dance. He was a member of Ballet of the National Theater in Brno, Czech Republic and Slovak National Ballet where he performed in classical repertory including *Le Corsaire*, *La Bayadère* and *Swan Lake*, as well as notable neoclassical works and operas. Alberto was also a company member at Columbia Classical Ballet in South Carolina and Omaha Theater Ballet. He was guest artist at Boulder Ballet, Ballet Fantastique, Lincoln Midwest Ballet and Iowa Dance Theater, dancing lead roles in *The Nutcracker*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *As You Like It* and *Cinderella*. Alberto is the creator and organizer of Midsummer Ballet Festival which brings U.S. ballet companies to his home city of San Benedetto del Tronto, Italy. Certified by American Ballet Theater of New York City, he is an active ballet instructor both locally and abroad. Alberto holds a law degree and a masters in Human Resources. He is the recipient of an Una Manciatà di Lettere literary award for his book *Ombre alla Ribalta*. Alberto has danced many featured roles in Ballet Nebraska productions including Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Russian Lead and Drosselmeyer in *The Nutcracker*, and Mad Hatter in *Alice in Wonderland*. Alberto returns for his fourth season with the company.

## **Bret Samson**

*Company Dancer*



Bret Samson began her dance training at Lake Shore Dance with Amy Aichele and Gwen Agee in Saukville, Wisconsin, and later with Melissa Anderson and Rafael Delgado in Milwaukee. Bret continued her training at Steps on Broadway in New York City. She has previously performed with Milwaukee Ballet II, Madison Ballet and Omaha Theater Ballet. Bret has performed in works by noted choreographers Harrison McEldowney, Oskar Antunez, Winthrop Corey, Kennet Oberly, and Jean-Paul Commélin. A founding member of Ballet Nebraska, Bret has danced as White Queen in *Alice in Wonderland*, Arabian and Chinese leads in *The Nutcracker* and featured roles in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Momentum* including Mikhail Fokine's *The Dying Swan* and *Sadako*. She has also danced in Opera Omaha productions. This is Bret's fourth season with the company.



# Ballet

N E B R A S K A

## **Kelsey Schwenker**

*Company Dancer*



Boulder native Kelsey Schwenker began her classical ballet training with Ballet Nouveau of Colorado, where she was a five-year member of its student company directed by Julia Wilkinson Manley. She trained during summers with Kansas City Ballet, Burklyn Ballet Theatre, Boulder Jazz Dance Workshop and Paul Taylor Dance Company. Kelsey received her B.F.A. in ballet performance, graduating *summa cum laude* from the University of Oklahoma, where she trained with Mary Margaret Holt, Donn Edwards, Steve Brule and Jeremy Lindberg. Kelsey has performed in notable works including *Rodeo*, *Divertimento No. 5*, *The Firebird*, *Afternoon of a Faun* and *Les Biches*. With Ballet Nebraska, she has performed as Alice in *Alice in Wonderland* and featured roles in *Swing, Swing, Swing!*, *The Nutcracker*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Dracula* and *Momentum* – including Matthew Carter's *Bacchanale Variations* and *Sadako*. She is rehearsal director for Repertory Ensemble, the company's youth performance group. Kelsey returns for her fourth season with the company.

## **Katie van der Mars**

*Company Dancer*



Katie van der Mars is a graduate of the University of Utah, where she received her B.F.A. in ballet performance. She began her training in classical ballet at Corvallis Academy of Ballet in Corvallis, Oregon. Katie trained during summers with Atlanta Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, and Ballet West. During her time in Salt Lake City, she performed as a 3-year member of the university's resident company, Utah Ballet, where she danced in *Giselle*, *La Bayadere*, *Paquita*, the *pas de deux* from *Scheherazade*, *The Nutcracker*, *les Odalisques pas de trois* from *Le Corsaire*, *The Firebird*, Fokine's *Ruslan & Ludmilla*, and many contemporary works. At Ballet Nebraska, Katie has danced featured roles in Kennet Oberly's *Alice in Wonderland*, Erika Overturff's *The Nutcracker* and Ballet Nebraska's mixed-repertory production *Momentum*. Katie returns for her second season at Ballet Nebraska.

# Ballet

N E B R A S K A

## **Sasha York**

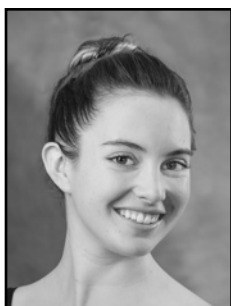
*Company Dancer*



Originally from Chelyabinsk, Russia, Sasha York trained at Paavola School of Dance in Flint, Michigan. He later returned to Russia, where he trained with Urey Urivich. Sasha was accepted into the pre-professional program at Pittsburgh Ballet Theater, where he performed in company productions of *Don Quixote*, *The Nutcracker*, *Peter Pan*, and *Alice in Wonderland*. He has worked with many well-known choreographers such as Harrison McEldowney, Viktor Plotnikov and Septime Webre. With Ballet Nebraska, Sasha has performed as Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Marc Antony in *Cleopatra*, the title role in *Dracula*, Claude in *Swing, Swing, Swing!*, Cavalier and Snow King in *The Nutcracker*, and White Knight in *Alice in Wonderland*. He previously danced for two seasons at Omaha Theater Ballet. Sasha returns for his fourth season with the company.

## **Apprentices**

### **Bridget Carpenter**



Bridget graduated from Purchase College Conservatory of Dance at State University of New York with a B.F.A. in dance performance. She danced George Balanchine's *Serenade* at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and Nacho Duato's works while in Madrid, Spain. She also performed at Association of Performing Arts Presenters dance festival in New York City. Originally from Oak Park, California, Bridget trained at California Dance Theatre where she performed several leading roles with Pacific Festival Ballet. Bridget continued her studies at notable summer dance programs including San Francisco Ballet, Miami City Ballet, North Carolina School of the Arts, State Street Ballet and Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance. She performed corps de ballet roles as a Ballet Nebraska trainee in *The Nutcracker*, *Momentum*, and *Alice in Wonderland*. Bridget returns to the company this season as a first-year apprentice.

# Ballet

N E B R A S K A

## Jessica Mariner



Jessica is a graduate of University of Utah where she earned a B.F.A. from the department of ballet. Jessica began her classical ballet training in Chicago. She was a member of studio companies at Salt Creek Ballet and Ballet Chicago. Jessica was also a member of Utah Ballet, the resident performing company of the University of Utah. Jessica has performed in numerous classical ballets including *Giselle*, *La Bayadere*, *Paquita*, and George Balanchine's *Serenade*. At Ballet Nebraska, she has performed in *The Nutcracker*, *Alice in Wonderland* and several works featured in *Momentum*. Jessica returns to the company as a second-year apprentice this season.

## Danielle Pite



Danielle began her classical ballet training at Boulder Ballet School. She graduated with honors from Smith College in Northampton, MA with a double major in dance and chemistry. Danielle trained during summers through Arts Umbrella at Ballet British Columbia, Alonzo King's LINES Ballet, American Repertory Ballet, Kansas City Ballet and Briansky Ballet. She performed leading roles in a variety of works with Five Colleges Dance Department, including Rodger Blum's *Sonnets of the Broken Hearted*, Merce Cunningham's *MinEvents*, Mark Morris's *Gloria*, and Megan McCool's *Interplay in G Minor*. Danielle choreographed and performed for three years with Celebrations Dance Company, the student dance company at Smith College. She performed as a trainee in Ballet Nebraska's *Momentum*, *The Nutcracker*, and was featured in Kennet Oberly's *Alice in Wonderland* as the March Hare. Danielle returns this season as a first-year apprentice.

## Emma Raker

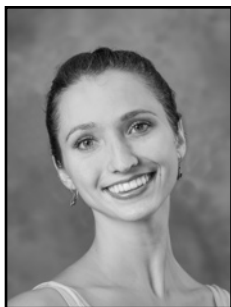


Originally from Santa Fe, Emma trained in classical ballet at the School of Performing Arts at the National Dance Institute of New Mexico where she performed several leading roles created by Jefferson Baum and Russell Baker. Emma previously studied at the Moving People School, Celtic de Santa Fe Irish Dance School and McTeggart School. Emma spent summers training at Saratoga Summer Dance Intensive, LINES Ballet and Hubbard Street Dance. She continued her studies in San Francisco at Alonzo King LINES Ballet Training Program with renowned teachers Alonzo King, Arturo Fernandez, Maurya Kerr, Duncan Cooper, Sidra Bell and Karah Abiog. Emma also choreographed for her peers while studying at LINES. She has performed in Erika Overtuff's *The Nutcracker*, Kennet Oberly's *Alice in Wonderland* and Ballet Nebraska's mixed-repertory production, *Momentum*. Emma is a second-year apprentice at Ballet Nebraska.

# Ballet

N E B R A S K A

## **Anna Swenson**



Anna began her classical ballet training at Theater Ballet of Spokane, Washington, where she performed in original works by choreographers Charles Askegard, Dodie Askegard and Deidre A. Kellogg among others. She studied during summers at Walnut Hill School for the Arts, Joffrey Ballet's Jazz and Contemporary program, and School of Alberta Ballet in Calgary, Canada. Anna has appeared in local productions of touring company shows including Moscow Ballet's *The Sleeping Beauty* and Ballet Memphis' *The Nutcracker*. She joined the trainee program at School of Alberta Ballet in 2012, performing in Aram Manukyan's *The Nutcracker* and in Yukichi Hattori's *Numbers*. This is Anna's first season as an apprentice with Ballet Nebraska.

## ***Trainee***

## **Chloe Watson**



Purchase College, State University of New York – B.F.A. in Dance Performance  
Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, Dallas, TX  
Dallas Ballet Center, Dallas, TX.