



En Avant

Monthly Newsletter for America's Ballet School

September 2011

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Welcome to the 2011/2012 Year!!

Dear Parents and Students,

I am so happy to be at the start of a new year, our 9th season. This year promises to be another great year, full of classes, master classes, workshops, and performances. ABS students bring such great energy and enthusiasm to the classroom that it is a joy to work with each and every one of you.

This past year, DanzAmerica's Project gave its first Gala performance. This performance, CounterPointe, brought together contemporary and classical choreography on one stage. The dancers for the Gala came from ABS, National Ballet of Cuba, National Ballet of Canada, and Paul Taylor 2. We are thankful to have been able to give the Tampa Bay area this quality of performance.

The 2010/2011 year included many highlights. America's Ballet School's number of students grew throughout all of the levels, from the Pre-Ballet classes on Saturday s to the Adult Ballet classes. We were awarded "Outstanding" School at the Youth America Grand Prix semi-finals as well as our students receiving recognition as soloists and as an ensemble, going on to compete in the NYC Finals this past March. DanzAmerica's Project's production of *The Nutcracker* proved to be a favorite once again as ABS students and others across the county performed together the holiday classic. At the American Dance Competition, our students and school were once again recognized as being among the best with our very own Kate-Lynn Robichaux winning the Grand Prize. And then, in June, the performance of *The Magical Toy Shoppe* was a sold-out show!

Thank you for sharing your lives with us. Through attending ABS, students will develop self-discipline, confidence, self-esteem, and enthusiasm for the art form. We welcome your participation, input, and enthusiasm as we continue to grow and develop our programs and curriculum.

Paula Nunez

Artistic Director of America's Ballet School & DanzAmerica's Project, Inc.

2011 Nutcracker Production

The Nutcracker is a great performance that DanzAmerica's Project produces each year. This year the production has expanded to two weekends at two different venues!!

The Nutcracker Parent Meeting that was scheduled on the 17th has been moved to September 24th at 1pm

Now for those of you unfamiliar with the story of the Nutcracker, here is the plot summary for this ballet.

Act I

(Drosselmeyer, a magician and maker of mechanical dolls, once invented a mouse trap that killed off half of the mice that lived in the Imperial Palace. In order to get revenge, the Queen of the Mice transformed his nephew, a prince, into an ugly nutcracker doll. Only by killing the Mouse King, and being loved by a young girl, could he be released from the spell. Drosselmeyer, invited to the Stahlbaums' party, takes the Nutcracker as a gift for his god-daughter, Clara.)

The curtain opens to reveal the Stahlbaums' home, where a Christmas Eve party is underway. Clara, her little brother Fritz, and their mother and father are celebrating with friends and family, when Clara's mysterious godfather, Drosselmeyer enters. He quickly produces a large bag of gifts for all the children. All of the children are very happy, except for Clara, who has yet to be presented a gift. Drosselmeyer, then, reveals life-sized dolls he has brought. Each doll comes to life and dances to the entertainment of the party guests. When the dances are done, Clara approaches Drosselmeyer, asking for her gift. Drosselmeyer, then, produces a toy Nutcracker, in the traditional shape of a soldier in full parade uniform. Clara likes the gift better than anything else she has received, but her little brother Fritz is jealous, and breaks the Nutcracker. Clara is disconsolate. Drosselmeyer tries to comfort her and repairs the Nutcracker. By then, the time has come for the party to end. As the guests begin to leave, Clara and Fritz are told to go to bed.

Later that night, Clara decides to return to the parlor to look at the Nutcracker doll again. She is very tired and goes to sleep on the couch with the Nutcracker cradled in her arms. When the clock strikes midnight, Clara wakes up. Drosselmeyer is waiting for her. Clara hears the sound of mice. She tries to run away, but the mice stop her. The Christmas tree grows large and wondrous. The Nutcracker comes to life, and he and his band of soldiers rise to defend Clara. The Mouse King arrives and leads his mice into battle. A conflict

ensues, and when Clara helps the Nutcracker by throwing her shoe at the Mouse King, the Nutcracker seizes his opportunity and stabs him. The Mouse King dies, and the mice retreat, taking their dead leader with them. The Nutcracker is, then, released from the spell and transformed into the Prince.

The Snow King and Snow Queen arrive and welcome Clara and the Prince. As snow continues to fall, snowflakes begin to dance. The King and Queen invite Clara and the Prince to go to the Land of the Sweets.

Act II

The scene opens in the Palace of the Kingdom of Sweets where the Sugar Plum Fairy welcomes Clara and the Prince and asks them to tell her about their adventure that brought them to her land. The Prince recounts his tale of war with the Mouse King and describes Clara's bravery. The Sugar Plum Fairy arranges a festival, filled with dancing, to honor her guests.

The celebration begins with lovely Reed Flute dancers. Sharing in the festivities are the famous Polichinelles and dancers with Spanish Chocolate flair. Russian Trepak entertainers Exotic Arabians, and whirling dancers from China perform for the guests. The court of flowers dances a glorious waltz, dazzling Clara and the Prince. In the final celebratory dance, the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier dance a pas de deux.

After the festivities, Clara wakes up back in her dark living room with the Nutcracker toy in her arms. Thinking it was all a dream, Clara hugs the Nutcracker close to her chest. Drosselmeyer emerges from the shadows, and shows her that the dream was real as his nephew, the Prince, appears.



You Tube Clips

Check out these links to famous renderings of the holiday classic!

The Royal Ballet of England
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OO6KhLDKYRk>

The History of The Nutcracker Ballet
http://youtu.be/rGkWczs4_Ic

The Nutcracker Grand Pas de Deux
<http://youtu.be/9gz9PG3Fu0g>

Don't Forget!!

2011 Nutcracker Parent Meeting

Sept. 24th at 1pm





Importance of Performance in a Dancer's Training

We are often asked why every registered ABS dancer is required to participate in the performances that ABS and DanzAmerica's Project offer each year.

A performance gives your dancer a goal for the semester. It gives your dancer the opportunity to show everyone what she/he has achieved. By participating in performances from the beginning, the dancers never have to face stage fright. This self-confidence then bleeds over into other areas of their lives like presenting projects in front a class or auditorium.

Also, dance is a performance-based art form. You can train and practice, but growth truly occurs through being on stage. There all the rehearsal time is put to the test. Many discoveries are made on stage and it is there that the dancer is transformed into an artist.

Because America's Ballet School is a serious and professional ballet school (the only one in the area that exclusively teaches the art of Classical Ballet), the performances are at the professional level. This means that the performance favors the quality of the dancing versus the quantity of pieces each dancer is in. America's Ballet School's performance standards are on par with the School of Royal Ballet of London, the Paris Opera Ballet School, the Cuban National Ballet School, and the Russian Kirov and Bolshoi academies.

We hope this gives you insight into why performances are an integral part of a dancer's training.

Updates on ABS Alumni

Kate-Lynn Robichaux is becoming a fast favorite over at Orlando Ballet. She has been selected by Orlando Ballet's artistic director, Robert Hill, to learn a new pas de deux that is being choreographed for this season! Here she is talking about the Orlando Ballet Summer Intensive: http://www.myfoxorlando.com/dpp/good_day/072211-orlando-ballet-school-visits-fox-35

Stephanie Carpio, one of the first dancers to walk through the doors of America's Ballet School, is beginning a new adventure in the Big Apple. Stephanie was accepted into the prestigious New York University and its dance department. She plans on majoring in both dance and pre-med as well as getting a minor or two. We wish you all the best Ms. Stephanie!

Asia Bui began her studies at ABS and continued to study at the Harid Conservatory in Sarasota, FL. Now she is the youngest member of the Houston Ballet II, the second company of Houston Ballet. Congratulations!

Victoria Edwards is continuing her dance career through a Fellowship with Alvin Ailey Dance Company. Victoria studied at America's Ballet School before continuing her education in the Alonzo King's LINES BFA program in San Francisco.

Casey Dolson is continuing at Sarasota Ballet for another season as a full member of the company!

ABS and DanzAmerica's Project are honored to have had these dancers last June in the **CounterPointe** gala right before they are making big strides in their dance careers!

If you have an alumni update, please email Sadie Lehmker at americasballet@gmail.com



DanzAmerica's Project Corner

Summer 2011!

The 2011 International Summer Intensive was a great success!! Thank you all for coming out to support the dancers at the Final Showing. This celebration of dance was a **FREE** event for the community and over 75 people attended! The program highlighted the dancers' technical bravado, as well as the engaging choreography from the professional faculty of DanzAmerica's Project. The faculty for the International Summer Intensive worked with over twenty dancers for three weeks, teaching both classical and contemporary technique classes, partnering, and repertory. For the showing, Iliana Lopez and Franklin Gamero, former principal dancers with the Miami City Ballet, created a new work that includes all of the dancers. This energetic piece is set to music by Bach and gives a contemporary edge to the classical ballet vocabulary. Modern dance faculty Sadie Lehmker and Elsa Valbuena have worked to open the dancers to new ideas and vocabulary as the dancers learned set choreography as well as given tools to discover their own movement creativity. DanzAmerica's Project aimed to give all dancers the opportunity to attend this International Summer Intensive regardless of their background. In this effort, 12 full and partial tuition scholarships were awarded to the dancers in excess of \$10,000.

This final showing was an event to remember!

September Student of the Month

Lina Dimitrova

This fall, Lina is a junior at the International Bachelorette Program, King High School. She has consistently received the High Honor Roll at school with report cards containing straight A's. She was also recognized academically by the state through the 7th grade Talent Search for Mathematically and Verbally Talented Students, conducted by the Duke University Talent Identification Program.

Lina began taking ballet classes at America's Ballet School in 2004. She started with ice-skating at 2 years old while traveling the country as her parents performed professionally with Disney on Ice. She also attended pre-school in Sophia, Bulgaria and Kiev, Ukraine. In 2001, the Dimitrova family moved to Tampa where she tried gymnastics for a while.

Once Lina began dancing, the other activities were put aside as she focused on strengthening her technique and artistry. To complement her ballet training, in 2010 she began studying the piano. Her hard work in the studio has been awarded over the years. Lina has placed in the Top 12 of the Youth America Grand Prix and Top 10 at the American Dance Competition. She also has participated in the ABS award-winning ensembles.

This summer Lina was able to go train and study at the North Carolina Dance Theatre Summer Intensive. She grew through this experience and we can't wait to see the growth continue this year at ABS!

Lina is thankful for the opportunities that ABS has given her through the years, and ABS can't wait to see what the future holds for Lina.

Faculty News

The faculty and staff of America's Ballet School are always looking for new ways to teach and encourage learning in the ballet studio. To that end, ABS is proud to announce the newest addition to its faculty: Ms. Jennie Petuch.



Jennifer Petuch trained in her home town of West Palm Beach, Florida, on scholarship, at the Academy of Ballet Florida for fourteen years. With thorough training in techniques of Ballet, Pointe, Pas de deux, Modern, Jazz, Tap, Flamenco, and Character dancing, she was able to perform in professional ballet's with the Company of Ballet Florida in pieces such as *Marie Hales' The Nutcracker, Cinderella, Romeo and Juliet, and Sleeping Beauty*. With an emphasis of strong technical background in Ballet, the Graham and Ailey modern techniques were also prominent in her professional training. She graduated magna cum laude, from the University of South Florida achieving a Bachelor's in Dance Studies with a focus in Modern Dance, film, photography, and choreography. At the University of South Florida, she danced in several faculty and student concerts including Gretchen Warrens', *Les Sylphides*, and worked with guest Modern choreographers such as Doug Varone. Jennifer participated in the USF Dance in Paris Program in the summer of 2010 working with a well respected Modern choreographer from Mexico, Claudia Lavista. She also is a pre-professional photographer specializing in incorporating the beauty of nature and the art of dance into many successful compositions.

In her own words, this is Ms. Jennie's style of teaching:

"Before I walk into the studio, I am always prepared with positive energy, material to teach, and specific corrections I will hone in on for my students to focus on for that week. Being rarely absent, I create variety in my classes by changing the music and combinations to keep them interested and inspired. While I am aware of each student's level, I am sure to include challenges utilizing polyrhythmic movement and an advanced anatomical vocabulary. I set the tone through my own respectful attitude, and from my example, I expect my students to be focused and respectful in class. While I encourage the class to strive to work to their maximum ability, my students' safety is most important. The main mission of my teaching is for the participants to exercise their mind and body by creating kinesthetic connections, maintaining a good energy in the studio space, and to provide them ample opportunities to develop their individual creative expression."

In other Faculty News:



Paula Nunez, our wonderful artistic director and owner, is a Visiting Faculty Member in the Dance Department at the University of South Florida for the third year in a row. The college-age dancers love her classes from the Fundamental Level up to the top dancers in Level Four. Congratulations, Ms. Paula!

For the first time, **Osmany Montano** is teaching at the collegiate level. Mr. Osmany accepted an adjunct faculty position within the Dance Department at the University of South Florida for the 2011-2012 academic year. Congratulations!



Le Petit Salon de Danse

News and Updates for Our Littlest Dancers

Our Saturday morning classes keep growing! We are excited to begin the new school year with new faculty and new curriculum for our littlest dancers.

Joining Ms. Audrey Richter on Saturday mornings is Ms. Jennie Petuch (read more about Ms. Jennie in Faculty News). The two teachers with Ms. Paula have developed a new curriculum for the Pre-Ballet to Level 1 dancers. The classes introduce the students to more and more of the ballet movement vocabulary while also creating variety in each class by changing the music and combinations to keep the dancers engaged and learning. The differences between body-half and whole body, right side to left side, shapes, and numbers in different languages will be explored. The individual dancer's creativity will fly throughout the room as the teachers guide the dancers through the ballet classes. A floor stretching routine has also been created, one that the dancers can safely practice at home during the long week in between classes!

Upcoming Events

2011 Nutcracker Production Parent/Student Meeting

Friday, September 24th at 1pm

The cast list for the Nutcracker will be posted on Tuesday, September 20, 2011. This parent/student meeting will discuss any questions and concerns you might have as well as reviewing the rehearsal schedule and commitment fees.

DanzEnsemble Rehearsals

Every Friday and Saturday

DanzEnsemble is the America's Ballet School performing group that competes at YAGP and performs throughout the community. Thank you for all the dancers Level 3B and above that auditioned. Check your emails for up-to-date rehearsal dates and times!

Soloist Competition

Friday, September 30th

Those that have an interest in competing as a soloist must confirm their interest via email by Friday, September 30th.

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