Fall 2024

The HARID *Conservatory*

Orlando Ballet guests

Colorado Ballet guests

Joffrey Ballet guests

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HARID's 35th Anniversary Spring Performances a Resounding Success!

Over Memorial Day weekend, HARID's extended family gathered in Boca Raton for a 35th Anniversary celebration that was, by all accounts, extraordinary. The highlight of the weekend, however, was the Spring Performances, which featured the students dancing alongside numerous alumni guest artists.

The Greek Dance from Le Corsaire

The high caliber of dancing for which HARID has become renowned was on full display throughout the performances (held at the Countess de Hoernle Theatre on Saturday, May 25, and Sunday, May 26). The program opened with *Excerpts from Le Corsaire*, staged by ballet-faculty members Alexey Kulpin, Svetlana Osiyeva, Meelis Pakri, and Victoria Schneider. *Le Corsaire's* choreography is demanding, even for seasoned professionals. Nonetheless, HARID's young dancers accomplished the technical elements admirably and successfully embodied the characters they represented within this famous story ballet.

There were four distinctly different yet equally enjoyable duets on the program—all danced by HARID alumni. The first, the Pas d'Esclave pas de deux, was presented as part of the *Le Corsaire* suite. It was danced with aplomb by John Abenanty (Class of 2013) and his wife, Sofia Abenanty, both of whom are senior members of the Orlando Ballet.

Texas Ballet Theater principals Paige Nyman (Class of 2009) and Andre Silva (2001–2002) were up next. They presented the whimsical and sparkling Grand Pas de Deux from Ben Stevenson's *Esmeralda*. Silva's playful character and Nyman's coquettish glances made the technically brilliant piece even more eye catching and enjoyable.

Alumni guest artists from Texas Ballet Theater in Esmeralda Pas de Deux

A succession of baffling and sometimes alarming developments, *by Mark Godden*

Next on the program was a duet performed by two HARID alumni and choreographed by a third. *A Simple Rearrangement* was danced by Catherine McGregor (Class of 2018) and Liam Hogan (Class of 2017), and choreographed by Sean Omandam (Class of 2004). All three artists are currently dancing with the Colorado Ballet. Omandam's appealing work gave the performers an opportunity to showcase their impressive movement qualities and communicate the shades of emotion that exist within a close relationship.

The final alumni duet was the Italy Pas de Deux from Yuri Possokhov's *Anna Karenina*. Joffrey Ballet dancers Amanda Assucena (Class of 2012) and Alberto Velazquez (2006–2007) gave virtuosic performances of this sublime and beautifully structured piece.

It was fitting to have HARID's resident choreographer, Mark Godden, create a world premiere for the special anniversary program. The ballet, *A succession of baffling and sometimes alarming developments*, was inspired by the arch writings and illustrations of Edward Gorey (specifically "The Alphabet" and "The Doubtful Guest"). Much of the music was drawn from the motion picture *American Beauty*. As Godden's works often do, the piece evoked a wide range of reactions from the audience—from laughter to shock to sheer joy. The dancers performed brilliantly and, for those of us who cherish Godden's creativity, musicality, and wit, the piece served as a fitting way to close HARID's celebratory, thirty-fifth season.

Alumni guest artists together back stage

Backstage with HARID's alumni and dancers

Reunion Attended by More than 50 HARID Alumni!

In conjunction with the 35th Anniversary Spring Performances, HARID hosted an alumni reunion. More than fifty former students (and, in many cases, their family members) attended the weekend of festivities.

A welcoming reception at the school kicked things off on Friday evening. The next morning, a campus "open house" allowed everyone to visit their old dorm rooms, enjoy the many photos on display, and mingle with one another. The highlight of Saturday morning was a ballet class given for the alumni by faculty member Victoria Schneider. The class participants varied between those who are still dancing professionally and those who had not been in ballet slippers for years! Nonetheless, everyone danced, laughed, and applauded their way through the various exercises.

Following HARID's afternoon performance (for which the alumni received complimentary tickets), the alumni were invited to join the students back stage. Many wonderful photo opportunities presented themselves (along with a surprise blanketing of snow dropped from the fly gallery). That evening, an alumni dinner was held at Mizner Park's Villagio restaurant. Much good food, laughter, storytelling, and reminiscing filled the evening. Everyone had so much fun that they finally had to be asked to leave when the restaurant needed to close for the night.

To wind up the reunion, HARID's food-service provider, Daidone Dining Services, treated the alumni to a delicious Sunday brunch in the school's dining hall.

Alumni dinner at Mizner Park

2024-25 School Year

This year's students hail from fourteen U.S. states and seven countries. These include Arizona, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Brazil, Japan, Peru, Romania, South Korea, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom. Everyday at HARID is International Dance Day!

Significant Employment Milestones

HARID is pleased to acknowledge and thank several faculty members for their long-time commitments to the school:

- 15 years: Dance History instructor Christine O'Shea and percussionist David Schanzer
- 20 years: Spanish Dance instructor Rosa Mercedes
- 25 years: Pilates instructor John Mahoney
- 35 years: Character Dance instructor Bertha Valentin

Character Dance instructor Bertha Valentin

Ruth Nelson Kraft Award

Ruth Kraft, a long-time Boca Raton resident, concert pianist, and committed friend of the arts, passed away in October, 2002. In accordance with her wishes, funds from her estate were used to establish the Ruth Nelson Kraft Foundation. HARID is a fortunate recipient of support from the Foundation and, as a result, offers several awards annually to promising students.

This fall, three dancers were selected to receive Ruth Nelson Kraft Awards:

- Greysen Hutchinson is a sophomore from Crystal Lake, Illinois. He is beginning his first year of study at HARID, having attended our summer intensive in June and July.
- Izadora Soares is a junior in her second year of study at HARID. She is from Santa Catarina, Brazil.
- Ethan Tryon is also a junior and is in his second year of study at HARID. Ethan is from Irmo, South Carolina.

HARID remains grateful to Ruth Nelson Kraft and is pleased to acknowledge and thank the Foundation for its continued support of our students.

The Class of 2024

During HARID's Commencement & Awards Dinner on May 28, two seniors received their high-school diplomas:

- Evelyn Hruby is from Lexington, Kentucky. She has elected to pursue additional training in New York City this year, before auditioning for dance companies.
- Sayaka Iwase, from Kumamoto in Japan, has joined Atlanta Ballet's second company.

Graduates Sayaka Iwase and Evelyn Hruby

Congratulations and best wishes to HARID's small-but-talented Class of 2024!

Two students received special acknowledgement during Commencement. Sayaka Iwase received the Fred Lieberman Award for Excellence, which recognizes the top, over-all achieving student in the areas of academics, dance, and citizenship. Harrison Cornellier was given the Jeannot B. Cerrone Award in recognition of his outstanding technique and personable stage presence.

Sayaka Iwase, recipient of the Fred Lieberman Award for Excellence

Harrison Cornellier received the Jeannot B. Cerrone Award

Rudolf Nureyev Award

Kantaro Takishima in HARID's 2023 production of La Bayadére

Through a generous endowment gift received from the Rudolf Nureyev Dance Foundation, HARID presents an annual student-assistance grant, called the Rudolf Nureyev Award. Recipients are selected by the faculty and director.

Past recipients of the Award include Amanda Green (former principal, Royal Winnipeg Ballet); Matthew Adamczyk (a former leading Joffrey Ballet dancer); Megan Kaftira (a former soloist, Dutch National Ballet); Cavan Conley (soloist, San Francisco Ballet); Vanessa Lai (coryphée, Hong Kong Ballet), Henry Grey (former soloist, Finnish National Ballet), Cy Doherty (American Ballet Theatre), Bela Erlandson (Dutch National Ballet), Alexis Valdes (San Francisco Ballet), Nathaniel Lillington (Sibiu Ballet Theatre in Romania), and Harrison Cornellier (Class of 2027).

Recently, we were pleased to present the 2024 Rudolf Nureyev Award to Kantaro Takishima, a senior from Tokyo, Japan.

Avoiding Hurricane Milton

In response to Hurricane Milton's potential threat, HARID made the timely decision to evacuate the students to Atlanta, Georgia. Along with the residence staff, they boarded a coach bus on Monday morning and made the long trek north, ahead of the heavy traffic anticipated the next day. Late the same evening, everyone checked into a Hampton Inn & Suites Hotel (free breakfasts!).

For the remainder of the week, the dancers continued working on their academic courses (provided online by Florida Virtual School), took daily ballet classes at the Atlanta Ballet, and enjoyed numerous exciting field trips, including a visit to the Georgia Aquarium, and a hike up Stone Mountain. The dancers returned home the following weekend in time to rest up for the resumption of classes.

HARID is grateful to Sharon Story, Dean of the Centre for Dance Education at Atlanta Ballet, for inviting the students to participate in ballet classes while away from "home."

Field trip to the Georgia Aquarium

Ready for a class at Atlanta Ballet

With new friends at Atlanta Ballet

Atop Stone Mountain in Atlanta

Alumni Updates

- The Orlando Ballet recently presented the full-length ballet, *Romeo & Juliet*, choreographed by Grand Rapids Ballet artistic director and HARID alumnus James Sofranko (Class of 1997). Other HARID alumni John Abenanty (2013) and Amir Dodarkhojayev (2020) alternated in the principal role of Romeo, while Jaysan Stinnett (2019) performed the soloist role of Benvolio.
- Morgan Barton (2022) has been made an apprentice with Pacific Northwest Ballet in Seattle.
- Raven Loan (2022) has been promoted from Milwaukee Ballet II into the main company.
- Mayu Nakayama (2022) has been promoted from Atlanta Ballet 2 into the main company.
- Charlize Villacorta (2022) has joined the Washington Ballet's studio company.
- Julian Gan (2020) is now dancing with Grand Rapids Ballet.
- Hidetora Tabe (2020) is dancing with the Estonian National Ballet.

Auditions for HARID's 2025 Summer Intensive

In January, the faculty and director will conduct auditions in sixteen cities across the United States. In addition, video applications will be accepted from students who are unable to attend an audition. Summer Intensive scholarships will also be awarded at various ballet competitions during the winter and spring months. Information about HARID's upcoming auditions is available at harid.edu/auditions.

Winter Performances: December 14 and 15!

HARID's Winter Performances are fast approaching and we hope you look forward to another entertaining program of dance. Our holiday tradition, *Divertissements from The Nutcracker, Act II*, will be featured, along with the pas de deux from *The Flames of Paris*, the Hungarian Czardas from *Coppélia*, and a new jazz-dance piece created by adjunct-faculty member Dennis Lue.

The performances will be held at the Countess de Hoernle Theatre (5100 Jog Road in Boca Raton) on Saturday, December 14, and Sunday, December 15, both at 3:00 p.m.

Tickets for the Winter Performances are $40 and $35 and may be purchased online at www.harid.edu/performances. They are also available by phone at 561-998-8038, or in person at HARID's ticket office (2285 Potomac Road, Boca Raton 33431), Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

We look forward to welcoming you to this year's Holiday Performances!

The Arabian Dance from HARID's The Nutcracker, Act II

Support Our Ongoing Efforts to Assist the Dancers

HARID's annual-fund campaign provides the financial assistance many students require in order to attend the school. (While HARID remains tuition-free, fees must be charged for room and board.) Please help replenish our financial-aid fund so we can ensure that all the students can continue their studies with us. Your gift will be greatly valued and appreciated.

To make a contribution, you may use the envelope provided, visit www.harid.edu/contribute, or scan the QR code.

Scan to Donate

We hope you have enjoyed reading our Fall Newsletter. The next issue will be published in March.

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Preferred shoes of The HARID Conservatory

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