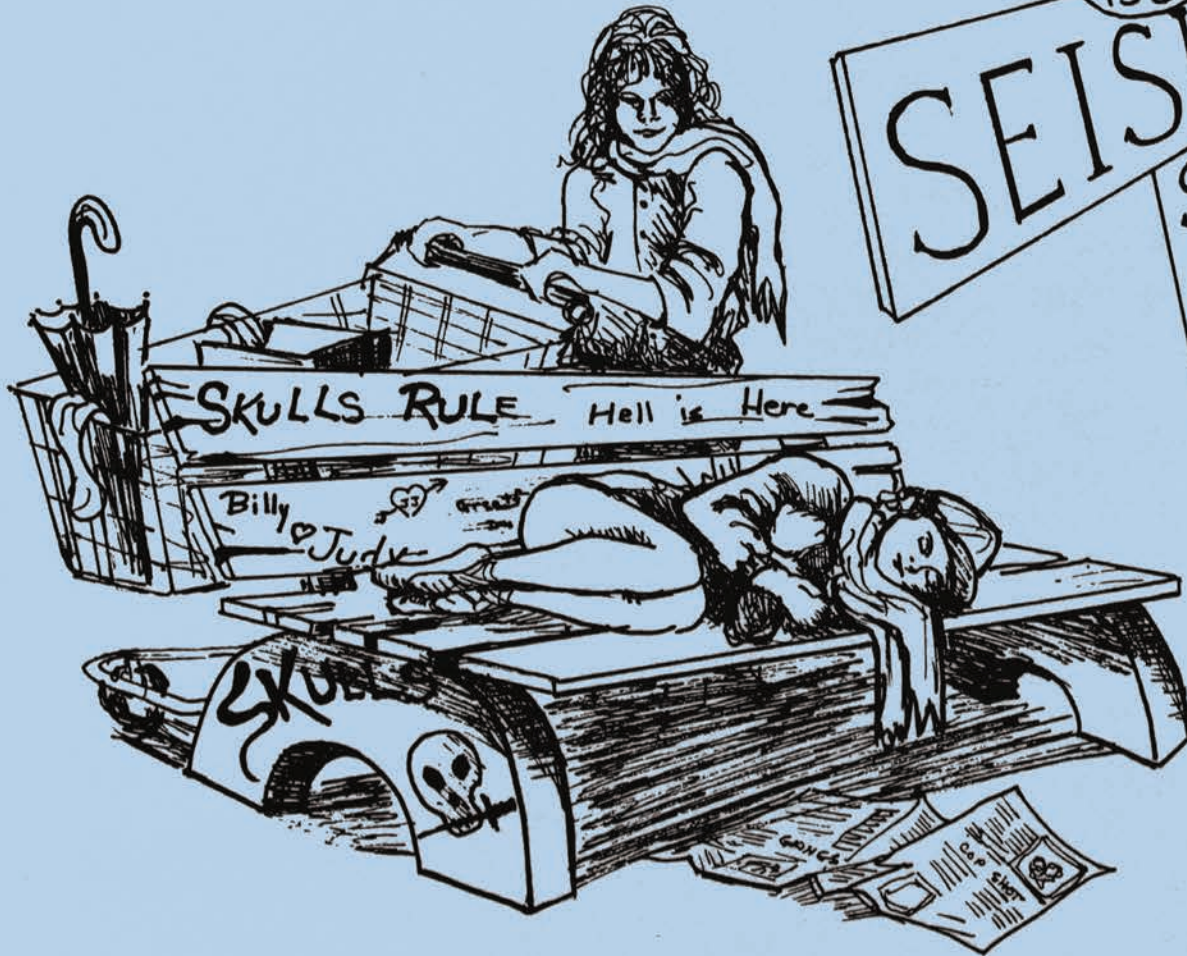


BESFI 2022

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Benefit Performance

The COVID-19 Lament

The unprecedented stress caused by the COVID-19 epidemic and attendant precautionary measures will reverberate throughout the Arts Community for the next several years. The artistic penalty suffered by dancers' inability to dance, rehearse and perform, the physical loss in the talent pool from those who walked away, and the crushing financial losses from curtailed event revenue and charitable support have created myriads of issues. COVID-forced seclusion in itself took a heavy toll on youngsters' psyche as did the resultant de-socialization of mask wearing, closed schools and public gathering facilities and isolation from family and friends. As we slowly become resolved as a nation that we must live with COVID and similar scourges, we must adjust accordingly. Things will never be quite the same, particularly our level of expectations.

It is a testament to the resiliency of human beings that an innate sense of hope springs eternal. Although two years plus of their youth have been stolen, these performers are determined to match and exceed the achievements of previous generations. BESFI salutes the brave of heart. As we look back over the past forty plus years of BESFI at the Staller Center (1980-2022), a plethora of stars have graced the Staller stage and careers have been launched. We hope to continue this tradition into the future.

No salute would be complete without acknowledging those who have steadfastly supported BESFI through these lean times. With no journals available in 2020 and 2021, recognition has been utterly lacking. A brief summary follows:

ANGEL ~ SERGEY BUTKEVICH

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THIS WEEKEND

Kari Kaczmarek's 1986 cover artwork for **Street People** has been brought back to life this year as a tribute to past contributions and a reminder that the classics stand the test of time. Dancing the lead roles in this year's rendition are guest artist José Rojas as the *Policeman*, principal dancer Maya Butkevich as the *Policewoman* and featured soloist Michaela Lettiere as the *Street Urchin*. In another show high point, the *Le Corsaire Pas de Deux* features Mr. Rojas on two successive performances opposite principals Lara Caraianni and Kyra Allgaier. Guest artists Diana Atoian, Brianna Jimenez and Jenna Lee will regale us with solo performances. Spirited character dances complete the 2022 BESFI offering.

BESFI PERFORMANCE 2019 ~ IN REVIEW

Seiskaya Ballet's BESFI 2019

Takes a Modern Approach with Classical Standards

By: Christina Pandolfi

Dancing ballet and *watching* ballet are two very different things. But if the dancing is executed at a high-enough caliber, the *watching* becomes a sport itself. It requires active participation and attention, because the energy is pulsing, vibrant, and ALIVE. This is exactly the experience of watching Seiskaya Ballet's annual Ballet Education and Scholarship Fund Inc. performance this past spring. The dancers, all whom have taken the Staller Center stage many times, took their rightful places under the spotlight, and put their own twist on classical ballet standards.

Up first was a personal favorite, one that I danced back in my days at Seiskaya Ballet, called *Flower Festival in Genzano Pas de Deux*. Danced by Julia Virnelli and Guest Artist Daniel Wagner, I was impressed at the pair's clean execution and sweet on-stage chemistry. It was a delightful way to kick off the show. The premiere of *Altalena* followed, which showcased the Corps de Ballet's striking harmony, as they danced together as one unit to create stunning shapes across the stage. Sgouramani's choreography is both lyrical and athletic, which made for an exciting piece to behold.

The evening continued to deliver with the timeless classic *La Esmeralda Pas de Deux*, danced by Brianna Jimenez and Guest Artist Alvin Tovstogray. A Seiskaya Ballet veteran, Jimenez unsurprisingly



The La Bayadère Divertissement corps provided several stunning moments.

delivered strong technique and panache, but it was her confidence that set the stage on fire—and Tovstogray matched her with ease. Punctuated by the delightful Kazachok that gave the Junior Corps de Ballet a chance to shine, Act I closed with the terrific, yet less-performed classical standard: *Grand Pas Classique*. Graciela Carrero-Sagona and Daniel Wagner danced with stylistic finesse. Carrero-Sagona’s natural facilities are boundless—sky-high extensions, precise pirouettes, ease of movement—and you can truly feel the passion she has for ballet. But what was more impressive was the synchronicity between her and Wagner, because it felt natural and spontaneous.

For Act II, Seiskaya Ballet strayed from their traditional BESFI format in favor of a full-length ballet in the form of *La Bayadère Divertissement*, adapted by Kikna’s unique perspective on Petipa’s choreography. A timeless love story fraught with intense betrayal and satisfying redemption, it was so exciting to see the company commit to an entire ballet that demanded an incredible amount of resilience and power.

As Gamzatti, Diana Atoian was expectedly striking. A dancer whose confidence and bravura precedes her, Atoian demands the audience watch her—and only her—and that’s just something you can’t teach. Similarly, but in different ways, Jenna Lee as Nikiya brought her own blend of dynamics to the mix. Lee has continued to evolve into an incredibly thoughtful dancer, one whose every arabesque and pique turn has meaning. The two are so different, but complemented each other beautifully. *La Bayadère Divertissement* was also special to watch, because it gave more dancers the opportunity to stand out. Notable examples include the Pas de Quatre and the Jump Dance.

With each passing year, I’m reminded more and more how privileged I am to witness this company continue to grow and evolve. As a former dancer of ballet, it’s now an honor to be a watcher.

Christina Pandolfi is an Associate Creative Director and frequent contributor to Broadway World. She’s also an accomplished dancer who attended NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts.

ABOUT BESFI

The Ballet Education and Scholarship Fund, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization incorporated in the State of New York with the primary purpose of promoting ballet education in Suffolk County. By providing grants and scholarships and offering workshops to local dancers, BESFI enables young artists to participate in ballet programs that are not readily available to them or which are beyond their financial resources. By providing professionally staged dance performances, BESFI is able to promote the arts by catering to the need for young artists to perform and the community's desire for quality entertainment. To everyone's benefit, BESFI has had unparalleled success in bringing noted guest artists and teachers to Long Island.

This year, BESFI owes a great debt to several volunteers who gave selflessly of their time. In particular, we are proud to recognize Karin Engel, Yan Yu, Erik Muller, Danielle Lettiere, Yizhi Meng, Sergey Butkevich, Lisa Lee, Pam Donnelly and Kevin Urso.

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BESFI SUMMER PROGRAM

Returning instructors for 2022 include Mary Carpenter, Amy Ruggiero, Eric Otto and Laura Feig. Also joining us this season are: Ruslan Sprague, Ramona Kelley and Eva Trapp. Both the Advanced and Intermediate levels continue to feature three daily classes with a solid mix of class offerings. The Summer Program will run from July 11th through August 19th. The 2022 brochure will be available online after June 1, 2022 at www.besfi.com. For information telephone: (631) 584-0192.

BESFI SCHOLARSHIPS

Due to the financial impact of COVID-19 restrictions and closures (2020 & 2021) and stay-at-home-orders, the cumulative effect contributed student malaise and reduced participation. BESFI was unable to award scholarship fund money for the 2021 Summer Program because of depleted resources. Preliminarily, early receipts indicate that the 2022 program may suffer the same financial fate. Increased costs at the Staller Center and sharply rising inflation rates have hampered efforts in 2022 to attract additional ad revenues. Any restricted contributions collected in 2021 & 2022 will be rolled into the scholarship pool for 2023. For updated information, contact: BESFI SCHOLARSHIPS, P.O. Box 2146, St. James, NY 11780, call (631) 584-0192, or email us at info@besfi.com.

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VALIA SEISKAYA



Russian-born Valia Seiskaya took her first ballet lessons in Greece at the age of six. Her teacher was Adam Morianoff, also a Russian *émigré*. (Valia was experiencing difficulty learning Greek; thus, it was natural for her mother to seek out a fellow countryman.) At nine she became a scholarship student, showing prodigious technique—for example, *entrechat huit*, eight beats, in centre—by age ten. *Pointe* work also started at ten, character ballet at twelve. Thereafter, Mme. Seiskaya rapidly developed the combination of strong technique and high elevation which would become her hallmark as a

professional.

At fifteen, Valia continued her training under Sonia Morianova, the niece of Adam Morianoff, who had recently retired from the National Opera of Greece. She became a member of the National Opera at seventeen, soon attaining the rank of featured soloist, and touring Europe and Russia with the company. At the National Theater her preparation continued under resident ballet masters and choreographers, including the Bolshoi's Asaf Messerer, Boris Kniazev, Nina Kyrzanova and Olympia Yelodari (former judge at the *International Ballet Competitions* held in Varna, Bulgaria and Moscow).

In Greece, as in most European countries, ballet students wishing to become professionals must pass comprehensive national level examinations and obtain a license. Mme. Seiskaya fulfilled all of her requirements and was granted both a diploma and a license.

The Seiskaya Ballet School was founded in 1974, one year after Mme. Seiskaya retired from the National Opera of Greece. At that time she taught all fifteen class sections. In 1976 Studio A was doubled in size to its present 2,500 square feet, and in 1981 Studio B was opened, adding another 1,500 square feet to the dance facility. That year also saw the establishment of the Seiskaya Ballet Academy.

The Academy was designed as a professional training program for serious dancers who display the determination, physical attributes and musicality of the career-oriented dancer. Admission to the Academy is by audition only. Since the inception of the Seiskaya Ballet programs, eighty students have opted for professional careers. The OPEN program was developed in 2006 to complement the Academy and accommodate requests for more scheduling flexibility.

All Academy students are encouraged to participate in the guest teacher seminars and summer workshop programs offered by the Ballet Education and Scholarship Fund, Inc. (BESFI). As part of their professional preparation, Academy students' participation in auditions for company schools, summer workshops, internships and major dance companies is routinely encouraged.

Seiskaya students have compiled an outstanding record of achievement.

4 Through the years, full scholarships have been awarded by every major institution

for which they have auditioned, including schools affiliated with American Ballet Theatre (ABT), New York City Ballet, and the San Francisco, Houston, Joffrey, Pacific Northwest, Pittsburgh, Eliot Feld, and Boston Ballets. Some of the many dance companies Seiskaya students have joined: ABT (5), Atlanta Ballet (2), Boston (2), Ballet West, Fort Worth, Hartford, Pacific Northwest, Pittsburgh, Royal Swedish, State Ballet of Missouri, Ballet Arizona, Tennessee, Milwaukee (3), New Jersey, Alabama, Washington, Louisville, Austin, Tulsa Ballets and Momix.

In 1994 Seiskaya student Michael Cusumano captured a bronze medal and Special Commendation at the *International Ballet Competition (IBC)* in Varna, Bulgaria and a coveted Jury Award (a gold medal-level award) at the *Prix de Danse*, Paris, France. Valia Seiskaya was nominated that year as the Best Teacher and Coach at Varna, one of the few Americans ever to be so honored.

In 1996 Kirov student Rasta Thomas, coached by Valia Seiskaya, reached the pinnacle: a gold medal in the Men's Junior Division at the *17th IBC*, Varna, Bulgaria. Incredibly, he was the first American male dancer ever to win a Junior Division gold and the youngest male dancer ever to do so. In addition, his triumph ended a sixteen-year stretch in which no gold medal was awarded in the Junior Men's Division.

In 1998 Seiskaya student Elizabeth McGrath represented the U.S. in the *18th IBC* in Varna, Bulgaria. In late '98 she was a top finalist in the *8th Concours International de Danse de Paris*, France. Among the numerous awards earned during the current decade: Anna Craddock earned 2nd prize in the 2008 American Ballet Competition, Miami, Fl. and in 2009, the grand prize in the 9th International Dance Competition - Hellas (Greece). Seiskaya alum Cory Stearns (ABT principal) won the vaunted 2008 Erik Bruhn Prize in Toronto, Canada. Karissa Kralik captured 2nd place honors in the 2010, Senior Division, American Ballet Competition. In 2012, Danielle Lovetro earned 2nd place in the regional Youth American Grand Prix while Anna Craddock swept to a 1st place finish at the American Ballet Competition in Houston, Texas and a 1st place finish in the senior division at the 2013 YAGP regional. Seiskaya students have captured more than twenty national/regional awards, including those from the National Arts and Letters Competition; National Arts Recognition and Talent Competition (Presidential Scholar in the Arts); Saraband, Ltd; and the Amilita Hoffman Memorial Ballet Competition.

During her seventeen-year professional career with the National Opera of Greece, Mme. Seiskaya gained an affinity for the grand sweep of story-line ballets and operas staged by the company. Her own choreographic works, such as **Street People**, **Las Damiselas**, **Forest**, **MASK**, and the **Nutcracker**, reflect that interest. Fresh interpretations of classical favorites **La Boutique Fantasque**, **Walpurgis Night** and **A Night on Bald Mountain** complement her signature ensemble works **Grand Waltz**, **Seasons** and **Dance of the Hours**.

Valia Seiskaya is listed in *Who's Who Among Outstanding Americans* and was *The Village Times* 1985 Woman of the Year in the Arts. Thrice, she has been awarded Teacher of the Year by YAGP. She has received commendations from, among others, President Reagan, Governor Pataki and Congressman Forbes. In 2011, Mme. Seiskaya was elected to the Long Island Volunteer Hall of Fame for her work nurturing young talented dancers. Valia Seiskaya is Long Island's grande dame of ballet.

VALIA SEISKAYA, LFB
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



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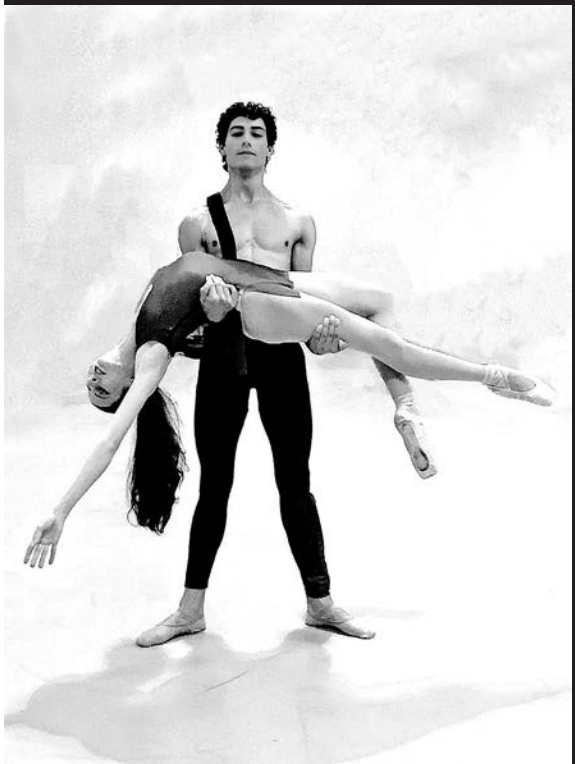
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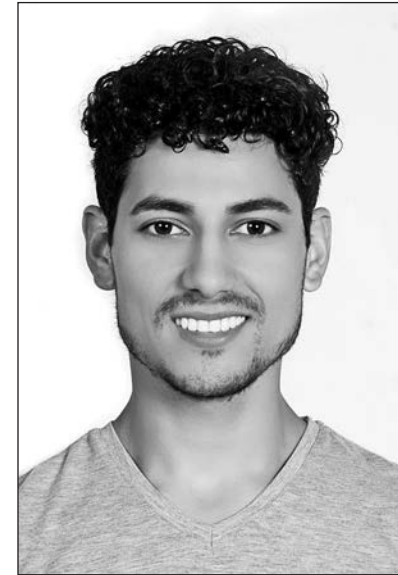
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Guest Artist



JOSÉ ROJAS

A dancer is the sum total of his training and environment. José Rojas' eclectic dance training features a plethora of character, classical ballet and contemporary training and dance roles. A full scholarship student at the Joffrey Ballet School, his early training was primarily in Argentina with several noted instructors. Steeped in the Latin American folkloric traditions of Argentina, Venezuela and Mexico, an extended professional affiliation was born with the Calpulli Mexican Dance Company. Their repertoire tells stories using the languages of dance, music and the Hispanic ethnos to connect on universal messages of love and hope. Classics such as the **Nutcracker** were given an ethnic twist. *José Rojas brings that same energy, verve and flair to classical ballet. He has danced the pas from Nutcracker, Sleeping Beauty, Le Corsaire, Spartacus, Spring Waters and La Bayadère. Performing with the Connecticut Ballet and other ensembles, he performed in original and adaptations of: Legends of the Forest, Dracula and Other Classic Tales, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Don Quixote, Giselle, La Fille mal gardée and Puebla: The Story of Cinco de Mayo.* Physical prowess and a pleasing aesthetic are God-given, however heart and warmth are life-nurtured. Enjoy the melding of these two facets as Mr. Rojas dances the *Le Corsaire Pas* and the *Policeman* in **Street People**.



Richard Goelz

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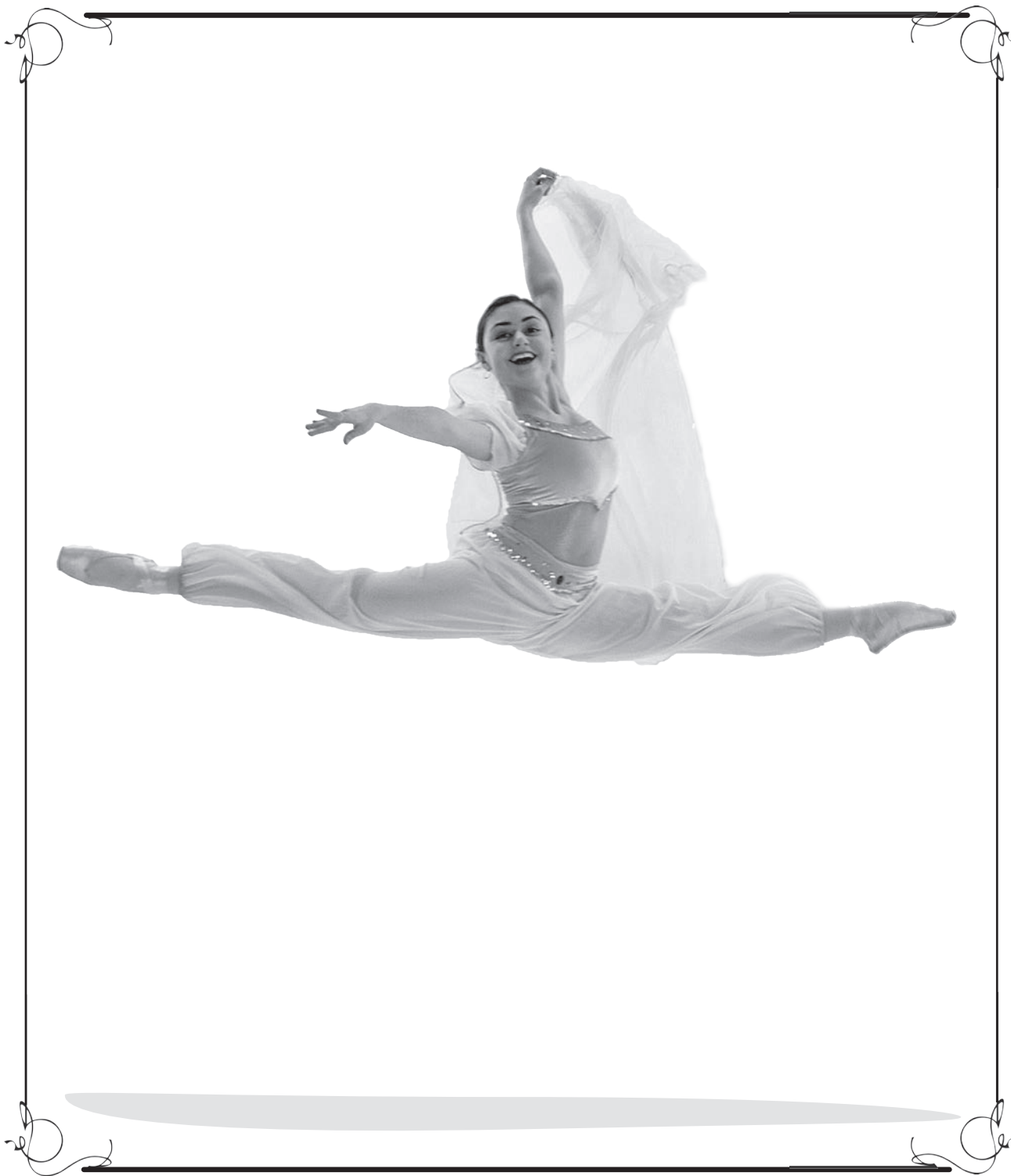
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Guest Artist



DIANA ATOIAN

With strikingly expressive features and the perfect blend of ethereal grace and technical exactitude, this former Principal Dancer will once again enchant audiences during this weekend's BESFI performances. Diana returns to the stage in one of her favorite roles, *Nikiya*, to perform the variation *Nikiya's Death Scene* from **La Bayadère**. Following her 2019 BESFI performance as *Nikiya's* nemesis, *Gamzatti*, she received the rave review, "Diana Atoian was expectedly striking. A dancer whose confidence and bravura precedes her, Atoian demands the audience watch her—and only her—and that's just something you can't teach." Diana portrayed *Kitri* from **Don Quixote** in BESFI 2018 dancing opposite Alvin Tovstogray in the ballet's pas de deux. She again garnered praise from the *Smithtown Messenger*. "A calm and collected dancer with confidence to spare, Atoian brings her truest self to every ballet she dances..." During her tenure at Seiskaya, Diana was a top finisher in each of her six years in the BESFI competition. In 2016, she competed on the international stage, winning 3rd place in the Hellas International Competition in Athens, Greece. She is currently attending Stony Brook University and pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Economics. Diana has been a member of the Stony Brook Dance Team for three consecutive years.



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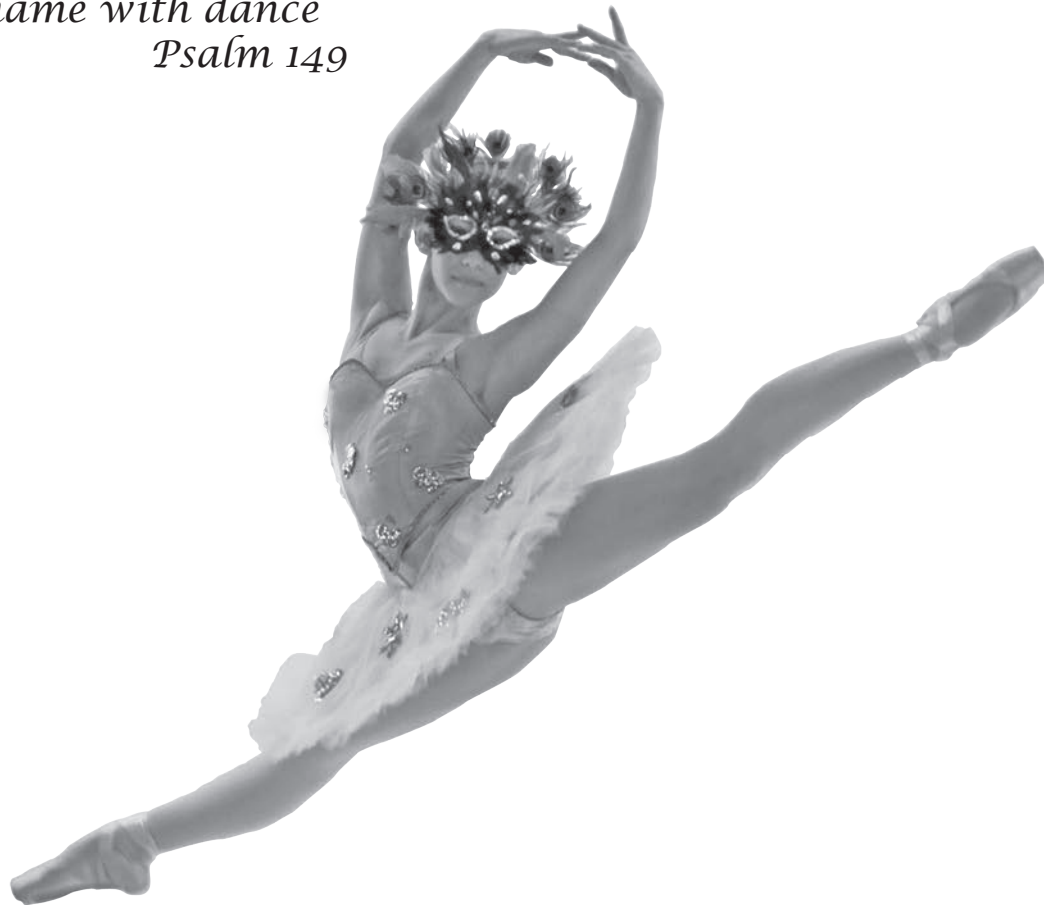
Guest Artist



BRIANNA JIMENEZ

Brianna has an exceptional talent born of focus and passion for her craft. A dance major at Fordham University, this former Principal Dancer epitomizes the rare combination of clean lines, flawless technique and sublime grace. During her stint at Seiskaya, Brianna accomplished what most can only dream of—mastering the demanding choreography of *Sugar Plum* whilst transporting the audience to an ethereal world with her poignant interpretation of the role. Her performances as an effervescent *Dew Drop* and a captivating *Clara* were equally mesmerizing, and her rendition of *Chocolate Soldier* was precisely executed and no less memorable. Brianna's **2019 Nutcracker** performance garnered the rave review of Christina Pandolfi from the *Smithtown Messenger*: “Yet it was Brianna Jimenez as the Sugar Plum who stole the show.” About her 2019 BESFI performance of the timeless *Esmeralda Pas de Deux*, the *Smithtown Messenger* quipped, “A Seiskaya Ballet veteran, Jimenez unsurprisingly delivered strong technique and panache, but it was her confidence that set the stage on fire...” Brianna's recent return to the stage in **Nutcracker 2021** as a “serene” *Arabian* was “very welcome”, noted the *Nutcracker Herald*. This BESFI weekend, we are thrilled that she will be showcasing a contemporary dance, one of her most beloved art forms.

*“Let them praise
His name with dance”
Psalm 149*



*Congratulations Brianna Jimenez
and all the Seiskaya Ballet dancers
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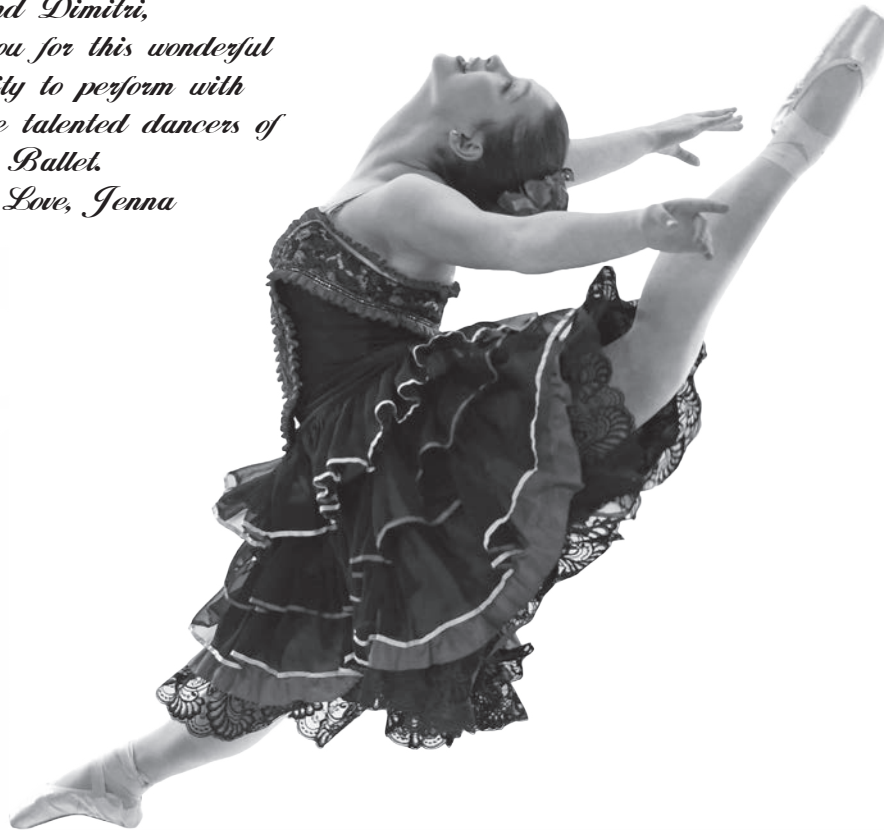
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*Valia and Dimitri,
Thank you for this wonderful
opportunity to perform with
all of the talented dancers of
Seiskaya Ballet.
Love, Jenna*



*Jenna,
No have fun! Take it all in and enjoy every minute. We are elated at
the chance to see you shine on the Staller Center stage one more time!
Love, Mom and Dad*



Guest Artist



JENNA LEE

A former Seiskaya Principal Dancer, Jenna will perform two powerhouse variations this weekend. Each of these dynamic roles showcases her artistry, musicality and charm. First, Jenna takes the stage as *Laurencia*, the main character that shares the name with the ballet. Her effortless strength abounds with each and every fouetté and jump. Later, Jenna will storm the stage in the riveting, fast paced **La Fille mal gardée** variation in the role of *Lise*. She will again astound the audience with crisp, clean technique, magnificent leaps and turns. Fearless in her roles, a trait signifying her Seiskaya career, Jenna portrayed the role of the temptress *Nikiya* in BESFI 2019's **La Bayadère**. Following her performance *Smithtown Messenger* opined "...Jenna Lee as *Nikiya* brought her own blend of dynamics to the mix. Lee has continued to evolve into an incredibly thoughtful dancer, one whose every arabesque and piqué turn has meaning..." During **Nutcracker 2021** she returned to Seiskaya and performed her favorite Nutcracker role, the *Chocolate Soldier*. With each sweeping Baryshnikov turn, churned with pin point accuracy, the crowd clapped along as she then concluded this daunting role to thunderous applause. Fresh off completing her third year at Sacred Heart University, Jenna is a Biology major and member of the Sacred Heart University Dance Company.

Le Corsaire Pas de Deux

Based on a poem by Byron, the ballet's plot involves a pirate (*Corsaire*) and a beautiful girl, *Medora*, sold to a rich pasha by her guardian. In this interlude, the slave *Ali* pledges his devotion to *Medora* after rescuing her from the evil pasha. After many adventures, she is reunited with her first love, the pirate. Margot Fontaine and Rudolf Nureyev were the first to dance the pas de deux with the Royal Ballet.

Character Dance Minatures

A testament to Mme. Guzikova's ingenuity, *Persian*, *Siberian* and *Carmen* dances are a blend of energetic synchronized choreographic patterns, vibrant colored costumes with enchanting folk rhythms that yield toe-tapping and finger-snapping excitement. The Character Ballet Teacher for several years at ABT, she often collaborated on BESFI projects.

Laurencia

Based on a play by the 17th century Spanish dramatist Lope de Vega, **Laurencia** was choreographed by Vakhtang Chabukiani, a Georgian dancer from the Soviet era. The story unfolds as the tyrannical ruler Don Fernan becomes obsessed with *Laurencia*, a beautiful peasant girl who rejects his advances. Furious, Don Fernan sabotages her wedding to fiancé Frondoso and imprisons them both. The feisty *Laurencia* manages to escape and incites the villagers to rise up against the wicked Don. Together, they storm the castle, capture the evil ruler and set Frondoso free. **Laurencia** was premiered at the Kirov Theater in 1939, with Natalia Dudinskaya dancing as *Laurencia* and Chabuiakni himself dancing as Frondoso.

La Bayadère

The iconic 19th-century Russian ballet, **La Bayadère** was first performed at the Bolshoi Theatre in St Petersburg in 1877. The enduring tale of love, betrayal, and redemption is considered one of the best-loved classical ballets of all time. *Nikiya*, a temple dancer, is in love with the warrior *Solor*. The High Brahmin also desires *Nikiya*, and when she rejects him, he plans to take revenge on *Solor*. When the High Brahmin tells the Rajah about *Solor's* secret love, the Rajah decides that *Nikiya*, not *Solor*, should be killed. *Princess Gamzatti* is to be married to *Solor*. She overhears and tries to bribe *Nikiya* to give up *Solor*, but *Nikiya*

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2022 Benefit Performance
Saturday, May 14th, 7PM & Sunday, May 15th, 2PM
Staller Center for the Arts

COMPOSER/CHOREOGRAPHER

PERFORMERS

LE CORSAIRE PAS DE DEUX

Drigo/Petipa

Lara Caraiiani (Sat.), Kyra Allgaier (Sun.)
José Rojas

PERSIAN - CHARACTER DANCE MINIATURE

Folk Dance/Guzikova

I. Caston, G. Chen, L. Doran, A. Huang, S. Ishida (Sat.),
E. Li (Sun.), W. Li, A. Perez-Canoa, Ar. Savino, O. Spataro, A. Xu

LAURENCIA

Krein/Chabukiani

Jenna Lee

NIKIYA'S DEATH SCENE VARIATION FROM LA BAYADÈRE

Minkus/Petipa

Diana Atoian

PYRE

Son Lux/Jimenez

Brianna Jimenez

SIBERIAN - CHARACTER DANCE MINIATURE

Bizet/Guzikova

A. Carter, L. Doran, A. Franco, V. Franco,
S. Liu, A. Perez-Canoa, J. Rabbitt, Ar. Savino,
Av. Savino, Ja. Wei, Jo. Wei, Na. Zhang

LA FILLE MAL GARDEE

Hertel/Seiskaya after Nijinska

Jenna Lee

CARMEN - CHARACTER DANCE MINIATURE

Bizet/Guzikova

K. Allgaier, M. Butkevich, L. Caraianni, S. Carter, A. Chandler,
M. Coleman, C. Diakou, A. Leiva, S. Li (Sun.), M. Martufi, I. Morlas, C. Muller (Sun.),
J. Rabbitt, C. Tullio, K. Urso, D. Vaisman, Vc. Ye, Vv. Ye (Sun.), A. Zhang, Ni. Zhang



TWENTY MINUTE INTERMISSION



STREET PEOPLE

Premiered March 22, 1986

Choreography: Valia Seiskaya

Set Design: Bill Morrison, Janet Rogiensi

Costumes: Sue DiFiore, Lillian Melillo

Composer: Saint-Saëns

Lighting Design: Liz Silver

Stage Manager: Liz Silver

Rehearsal Mistress: Johanna Hsu

<i>Street Urchin</i>	Michaela Lettiere
<i>Bag Lady</i>	Catherine Diakou
<i>Schoolgirls</i>	Sterling Carter, Antonella Franco (Sat.), Vincenza Franco (Sat.), Sara Li (Sun.), Isabella Morlas (Sat.), Jillian Rabbitt, Averi Savino (Sun.), Cecelia Tullio, Angelina Zhang (Sun.)
<i>Model</i>	Madison Coleman (Sat.), Nina Zhang (Sun.)
<i>Skull Gang Leader</i>	Kaede Urso
<i>Gang Members</i>	Autumn Chandler, Alexandra Leiva, Isabella Morlas (Sun.), Clara Muller (Sun.), Vicky Ye (Sat.), Angelina Zhang (Sat.)
<i>Policeman</i>	José Rojas
<i>Librarian</i>	Nina Zhang (Sat.), Vivian Ye (Sun.)
<i>Governess</i>	Lara Caraianni (Sat.), Madison Coleman (Sun.)
<i>Two Rich Brats</i>	Antonella Franco (Sun.), Vincenza Franco, Averi Savino (Sat.)
<i>Policewoman</i>	Maya Butkevich
<i>Street Hawkers</i>	Madeleine Martufi, Daphne Vaisman

refuses. The Rajah and *Gamzatti* arrange for *Nikiya* to be killed by a snake bite during the engagement festivities. Despondent, *Solor* is filled with remorse and haunted by visions of *Nikiya*. In the afterlife, *Solor* and *Nikiya* are finally united.

La Fille Mal Gardée

The excerpted pas de deux from the comic ballet, **La Fille Mal Gardée**, portrays the lovers, *Lisette* and *Colin*, attempting to deal with her arranged betrothal to another man.

Street People

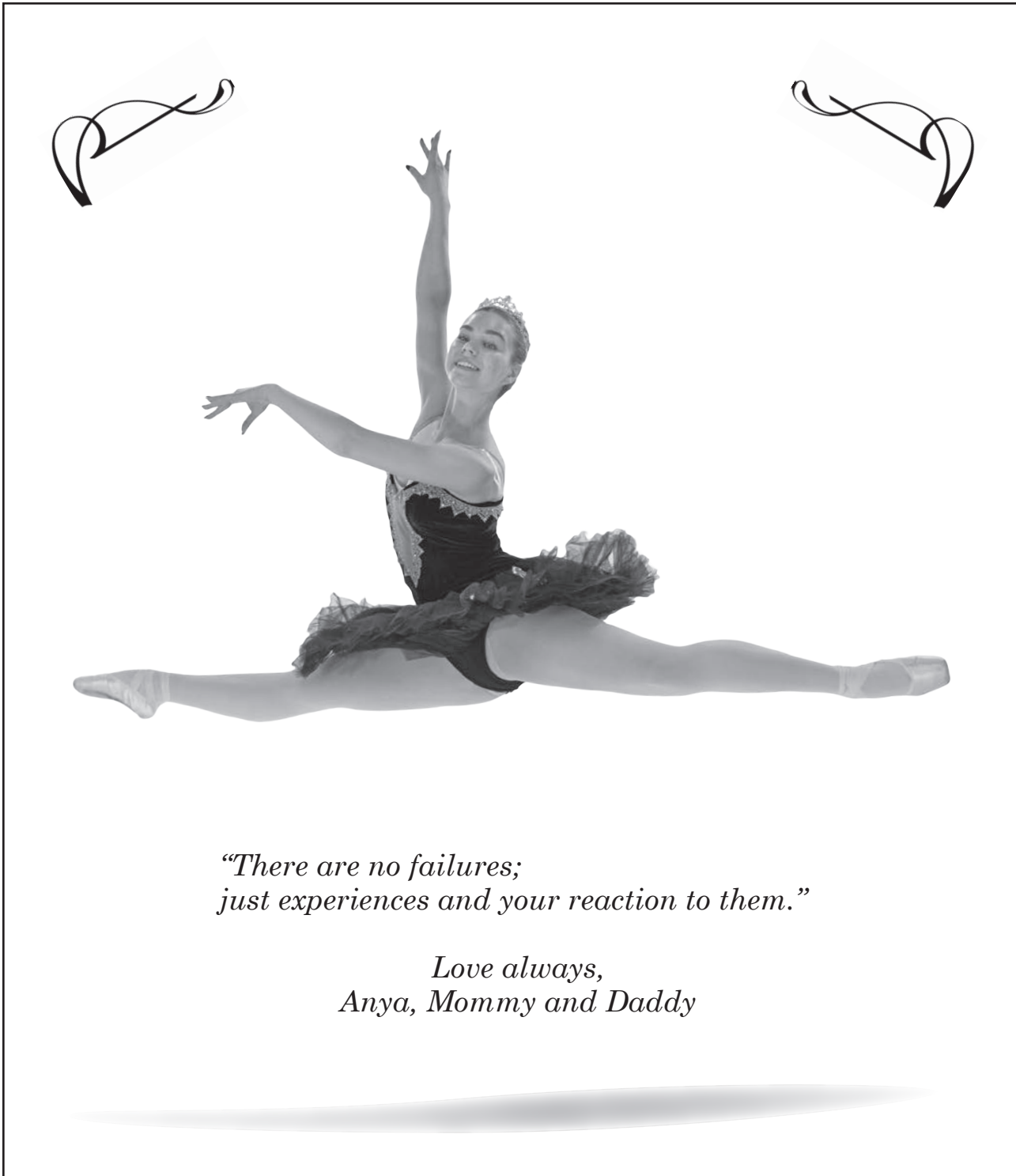
Set in contemporary American working class neighborhood in transition, the ballet depicts life on a city block which is a buffer between a large private school and a low income housing project. The central character is a young, homeless girl who has become street smart and street tough. Cautious but lonely, she befriends a bag lady and the local beat cop. In the opening scene, the bag lady, as a friendly gesture, gives the street urchin the gift of a scarf to which the youngster becomes very attached. The urchin witnesses the wrong-doings of the "Skulls" street gang, but the code of the streets keeps her silent until one of the gang members maliciously steals her beloved scarf.

Area residents want the police to apprehend the elusive "Skulls" gang members for harassing the neighborhood, while merchants pressure the precinct to cope with shabby-looking bag ladies attracted to the area by the St. Agnes clothing drop. Meanwhile, an invasion of unlicensed street peddlers hawking their wares in front of the established shops further angers the local merchants.

The neighborhood patrolman cannot resist flirting with the pretty local school librarian. Observed by his undercover policewoman fiancé, he lands in hot water.

Pressure to apprehend the "Skulls" mounts when the governess of an influential family has her jewelry stolen in broad daylight while she is tending her wards, and a well known cover girl, home for a visit, is mugged. Utilizing a tip from the street urchin, crafty police work finally puts the "Skulls" out of business. By now our homeless orphan has become very attached to her police friends and begins hoping fate is about to deal her a new hand. As her expectations rise, hopes are suddenly dashed ...or are they?





*“There are no failures;
just experiences and your reaction to them.”*

*Love always,
Anya, Mommy and Daddy*

Principal Dancer



LARA SOPHIE CARAIANI – Age 18
The Stony Brook School
Twelfth Grade

Lara, an exquisite dancer with beautiful long lines and effortless grace, will light up the stage this weekend as she performs the *Le Corsaire Pas de Deux* opposite Guest Artist, José Rojas. This multifaceted ballerina will also delight the audience as a Spanish dancer in *Carmen* and the *Governess* in **Street People**. Lara’s eloquent interpretation of the *Sugar Plum Fairy* opposite Guest Artist, Blake Krapels, was breathtaking to behold and quite a crowd pleaser in Seiskaya’s **2021 Nutcracker**. *Nutcracker Herald* reviewer, Christina Pandolfi, opined “...During the long-awaited [pas de deux] Caraianni’s legato approach to technique offset Krapels’ dynamism; it was an exciting yin and yang to watch....” Lara also earned plaudits for reprising her roles as the inquisitive *Clara* and the resplendent *Dew Drop*. She danced with aplomb, executing explosive jumps and demonstrating her outstanding classical technique during BESFI 2019. Her captivating performance of the *Raymonda Pas de Deux* opposite Oklahoma City Ballet’s Alvin Tovstogray drew thunderous applause. During her tenure at Seiskaya Ballet, Lara has been the recipient of multiple BESFI scholarships.



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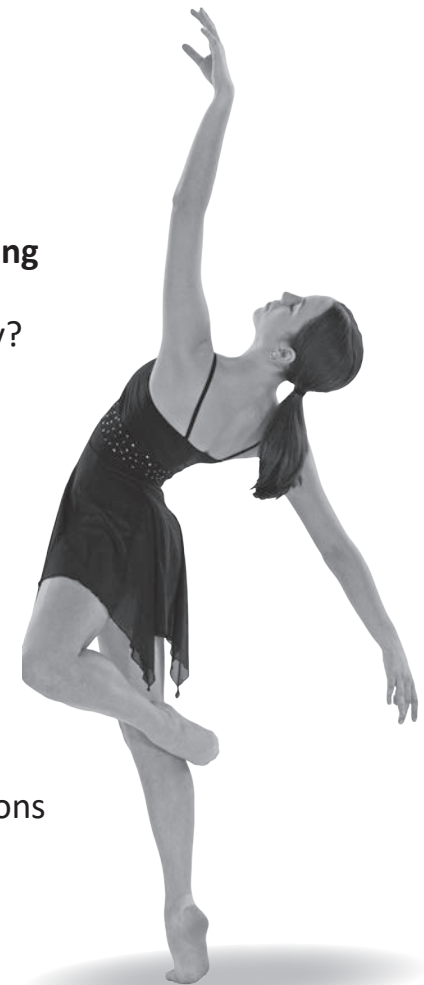
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*“We should consider every day lost on which
we have not danced at least once.”
–Friedrich Nietzsche*



Kyra,

Congratulations on all that you have accomplished this year. Watching you dance brings us incredible joy and happiness. We are so very proud of the amazing ballerina you have become. You are beautiful!

Your loving family

Principal Dancer



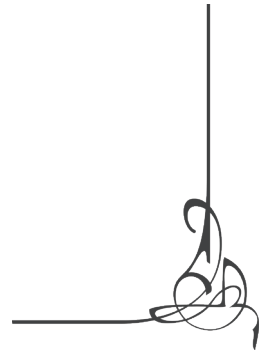
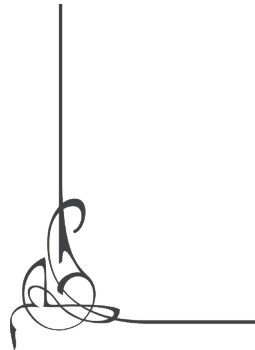
KYRA ALLGAIER – Age 16
Comsewogue High School
Eleventh Grade

A diligent student with a passion for ballet, classical extensions, flawless lines and technical proficiency, Kyra has achieved her goal of promotion to Principal Dancer. Countless hours in the studio paired with steadfast determination were evident when she captivated the audience with her eloquent debut performance of *Sugar Plum* opposite Guest Artist, Blake Krapels, in **Nutcracker 2021**. Adding to her spectacular **Nutcracker** performances, Kyra perfectly executed precision a la seconde turns in *Chinese* and portrayed an elegant *Snow Queen* and statuesque *Doll* in her inaugural roles. Displaying sophistication and grace, she will enchant the audience this BESFI weekend with her performance of the *Le Corsaire Pas de Deux* opposite Guest Artist, José Rojas. Showing her technical range as a dancer, Kyra will also perform the lively and entertaining Spanish character dance, *Carmen*. In BESFI 2019, she lit up the stage with her spirited performances in the *Pas de Trois II*, *Scarf Dance* and *Parrot Dance* in **La Bayadère Divertissement**. Kyra's determination and commitment have been rewarded with multiple BESFI scholarships. A hardworking student, she was inducted into both the National Honor Society and the Italian Honor Society in June 2020.



*All the ills of mankind, all the tragic misfortunes that fill the history books,
all the political blunders, all the failures of the great leaders have arisen
merely from a lack of skill in dancing.*

—Molière. "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme"



It may be possible to do without dancing entirely. Instances have been known of young people passing many, many months successively, without being at any ball of any description and no material injury accrue to either body or mind; - but when a beginning is made - when the felicities of rapid motion have once been, though slightly, felt - it must be a very heavy set that does not ask for more.

Jane Austen "Emma"



Principal Dancer



MAYA BUTKEVICH – Age 16
The Stony Brook School
Eleventh Grade

A rising star at Seiskaya, Maya soared to celestial heights during **Nutcracker 2021** when she debuted as a resplendent *Sugar Plum* opposite Guest Artist, Blake Krapels. Showing her depth as a dancer, Maya reprised the roles of *Clara*, *Dew Drop* and *Chocolate Soldier*. This BESFI weekend, Maya will be placed at the forefront of the shows as a *Policewoman* in **Street People** and a dancer in *Carmen*. Maya's controlled and elegant turns will be sure to capture the hearts of the audience. A veteran of the BESFI summer program, Maya has attended since she was five years old. She also attended The Bolshoi Ballet Academy Summer Intensive (BBASI) from 2015-2020 and received a partial scholarship. Multitalented, Maya was recently nominated for all-state SCMEA for voice. She is a member of the Science Olympiad team and the award-winning First Tech Challenge team, 4137 Islandbots. She will be attending a summer program at Shoals Marine Laboratory, a renowned research station on the coast of Maine. Maya has an intense interest in protecting the environment and plans to pursue dual degrees in Psychology and Environmental Sciences after she graduates from high school. In her free time, Maya likes to draw, design clothes, and hang out with her friends.



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Dear Valia and Dimitri

Thank you for all the love and endless support. I am truly grateful for all the opportunities you have given me throughout my years with the Seiskaya Ballet.

With so much love,

Rachel



*Best of Luck
to the cast of the
Seiskaya Ballet **BESFI 2022!**
We Love You All!*

Principal Dancer



RACHEL MAE BLAND - Age 17
St. John the Baptist Diocesan High School
Twelfth Grade

The great Vince Lombardi once said: "Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence." No one embodies this sentiment more than Rachel, whose years of hard work and dedication culminated in her promotion to Principal Dancer and her debut performance of *Sugar Plum* in Seiskaya's **2021 Nutcracker**. A gifted dancer who strikes a unique balance between strength and flexibility, Rachel reprised the role of *Snow Queen* and, in the words of *Nutcracker Herald* writer Christina Pandolfi, "...danced with control and understated elegance...." Her fluid movements contrasted beautifully with the whimsical choreography of *Doll*, another one of her standout roles. An extremely versatile performer, Rachel has delighted audiences with her effortless leaps as *Chocolate Soldier*, elegant turns as *Flower Soloist* and lovely extensions as *Arabian*. Perpetually surrounded by artists since her birth, Rachel has always been fascinated by the fine arts and would like to pursue a career in Fashion Design and Art History. Her creative soul is further nourished by spending her free time animating and drawing. She also enjoys surfing and traveling with her family. Rachel hopes to continue to grow as a dancer and perfect her technique as she expands her horizons.



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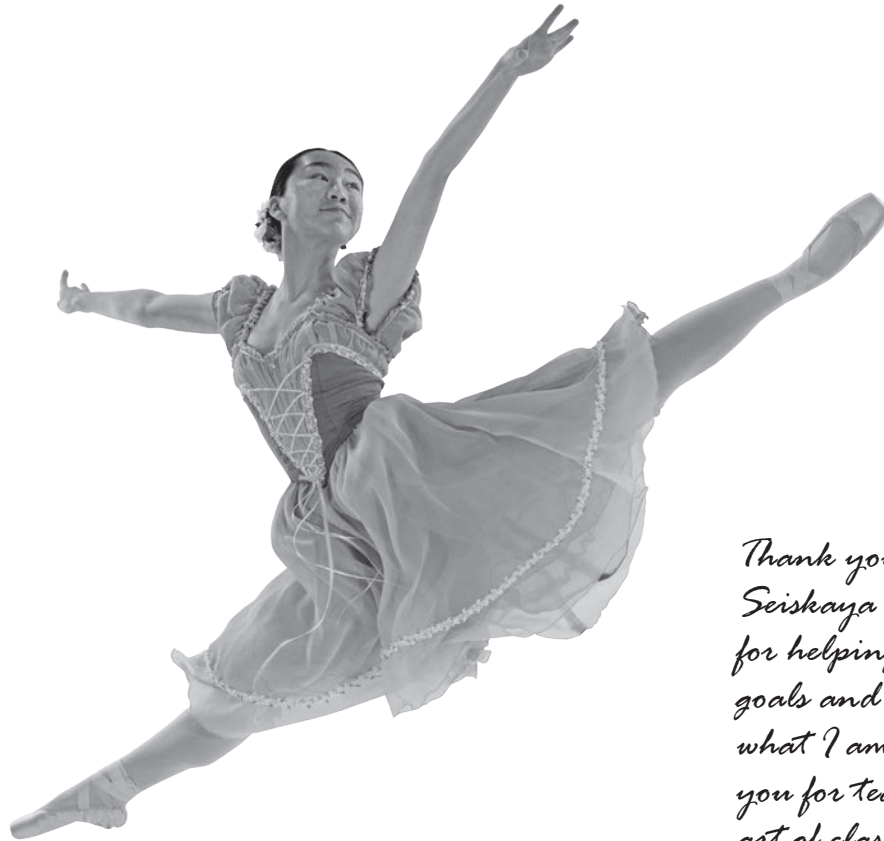
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*Some succeed because they are destined to; most succeed
because they are determined to.*
By Anatole France (French Author)



*Thank you to all the
Seiskaya staff and faculty
for helping me achieve my
goals and make me become
what I am today. Thank
you for teaching me the
art of classical ballet.*

— Vivian



First Soloist



VIVIAN ZIJIA YE – Age 15
Ward Melville High School
Tenth Grade

What happens when you infuse hard work and dedication into natural talent? Look for the answer no further than Vivian as she performs this weekend as the *Librarian* in **Street People** and a Spanish dancer in *Carmen*. Vivian delivered a breathtaking performance in her inaugural roles of the charismatic *Clara* and sparkling *Dew Drop* in Seiskaya's **Nutcracker 2021**. She also portrayed an exquisite *Flower Soloist*, dignified *Arabian Soloist*, animated *Friend of Clara* and elegant *Snowflake*. Quiet and determined with razor-sharp focus, Vivian is a veteran of the BESFI summer program and has trained at Bolshoi Ballet. In addition to honing her craft as a ballerina, Vivian studied traditional Chinese dance for many years and performed at the 2019 Holiday Inn Chinese New Year Celebration, 2019 Ward Melville Heritage Center Chinese New Year Celebration, and 2018 Port Jefferson Dragon Boat Race Festival. A well-rounded individual with a keen interest in numerous endeavors, Vivian enjoys playing the cello in Chamber Ensemble and is a member of the Science Olympiad team. She is also a high honor student and a member of the National Honor Society. In her spare time, she loves to draw, read and spend time with friends.



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First Soloist



NINA LEMONG ZHANG – Age 15
Ward Melville High School
Tenth Grade

Blessed with natural flexibility and elegant extensions, Nina consistently improves her technique and has grown into a strong, versatile dancer. In the 2019 BESFI performance of **La Bayadère**, Nina enthralled audiences in the *Scarf Dance* with her intricate footwork and musicality. In **Nutcracker 2021** she debuted as the regal *Snow Queen* and showcased her perfectly executed chaîné turns and grand jetés. Nina also performed flawlessly as a whimsical *Doll*, a demure *Bo Peep*, an enchanting *Flower Soloist* and an alluring *Arabian Soloist*. This weekend, she will add to her solo repertoire in the roles of a reticent *Librarian* and an ostentatious *Model* in **Street People** and will entertain as a spirited dancer in *Carmen*. Nina is a regular attendee of the BESFI summer workshops and an alumna of the 2018 Bolshoi Summer Intensive. This young lady sees ballet as a constant in her life that keeps her grounded and disciplined. She is also a member of the Science Olympiad team and recently placed third in the Dynamic Planet event at the Eastern Long Island Regional Tournament. Nina is a ravenous reader and likes to meditate and bake as well. She aspires to study medicine and become a doctor.

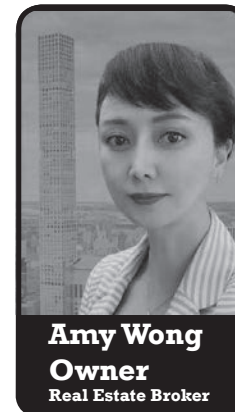


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Congratulations Kaede

* * *

Love

Grandma & Grandpa



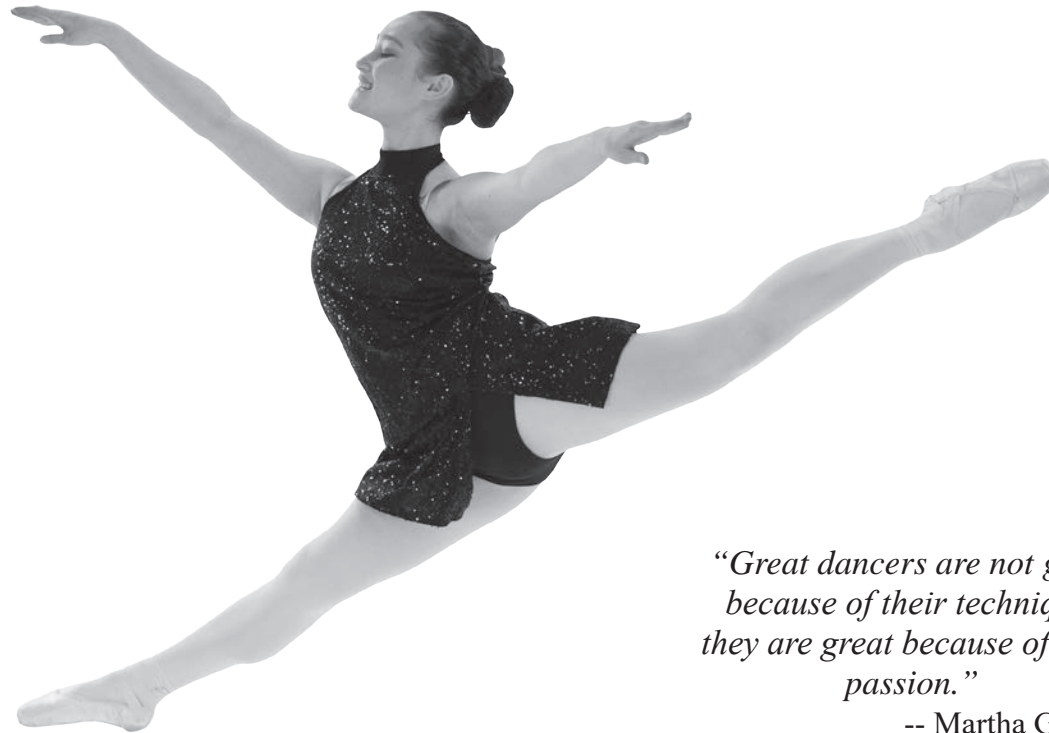
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*Congratulations Kaede on
your BESFI performance!*



*“Great dancers are not great
because of their technique,
they are great because of their
passion.”*

-- Martha Graham



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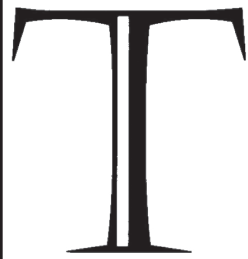
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First Soloist



KAEDE MARIE URSO – Age 13
P. J. Gelinas Junior High School
Eighth Grade

A dynamic ballerina with a sparkling stage presence, Kaede showcased her natural athleticism in her spectacular debut performance as *Chocolate Soldier* in Seiskaya's **Nutcracker 2021**. An adaptable and talented dancer, she also debuted as a playful *Fritz*, exotic *Chinese* dancer and majestic *Flower Soloist* and reprised the role of an ephemeral *Snowflake*. This weekend she will delight the audience as the rambunctious *Skull Gang Leader* in **Street People** and an ebullient Spanish dancer in *Carmen*. Outside of ballet, Kaede is very active in Girl Scouts and is a member of Student Connections and Student Government. She plays the violin and enjoys a variety of sports. Kaede is the recipient of the Silver Presidential Volunteer Award and Girl Scouts Bronze Award and received a Certificate of Merit from the National Piano Guild. Never far from a stage, she loves the theater and has performed in school musicals and with the Three Village Music Theater Company. Kaede enjoys reading, traveling, seeing Broadway and ballet performances, and spending time with friends. She hopes to continue dancing through college and perhaps grace the stage on Broadway one day.



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Thank you Valia, Dimitri, and the Seiskaya
Ballet teachers for your support, encouragement,
and the wonderful opportunities you have given
me.

Love, Madeleine



First Soloist



MADELEINE MARTUFI – Age 13
Commack Middle School
Eighth Grade

An exquisite dancer with instinctual musicality, Madeleine never ceases to amaze us with her steadfast determination. For her inaugural performance as the dazzling *Dew Drop* in Seiskaya's **2021 Nutcracker**, Madeleine worked diligently to perfect those demanding fouetté turns. She enchanted the audience as a sensitive yet resolute *Clara* in her other debut role of the **2021 Nutcracker**. Ever the versatile dancer, Madeleine also danced as *Friend of Clara*, *Flower Soloist*, *Arabian Soloist*, *Snowflake* and *Mouse*. This weekend she will portray a savvy *Street Hawker* in **Street People** and a lively Spanish dancer in *Carmen*. She was a BESFI scholarship recipient in 2019 and received the PTA Reflections Award for dance. Madeleine is musically gifted and is a Level 5 NYSSMA violinist; she recently received a perfect score of 100. She has been affiliated with the Long Island String Festival Association and SCMEA since fifth grade and is a member of the Tri-M Music Honor Society, National Junior Honor Society and Student Government. A true artist at heart, Madeleine aspires to be a professional ballerina so she can express her creativity through dance and music.



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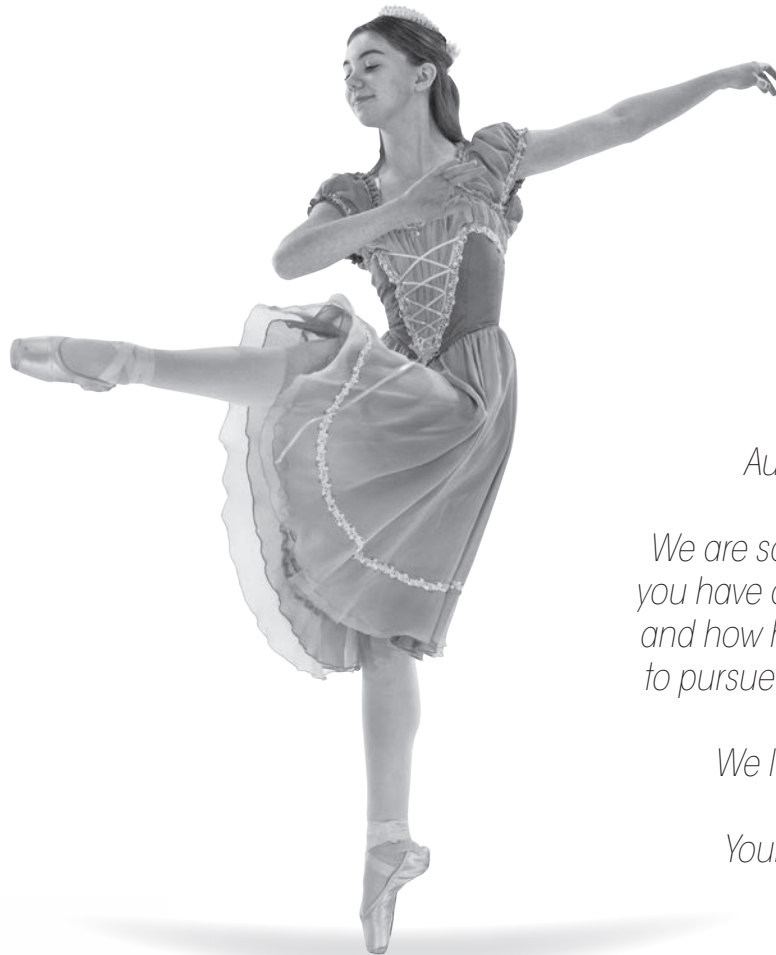
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*"Dancers are the athletes of
God."*

-Albert Einstein



Autumn,

*We are so proud of all
you have accomplished
and how hard you work
to pursue your dreams.*

We love you,

Your Family

Featured Soloist



AUTUMN JOY CHANDLER – AGE 12 Nesaquake Middle School Seventh Grade

A long time devotee of ballet, Autumn will brighten the stage this 2022 BESFI season as a *Gang Member* in **Street People** and a vibrant ensemble dancer in the *Carmen Character Dance Miniature*. Autumn rose to the demanding challenge of quickly mastering a multitude of roles in Seiskaya's **2021 Nutcracker**. She demonstrated her crisp technique and expressive stage presence as a *Friend of Fritz* and a *Friend of Clara*, a high-spirited *Trepak*, a delicate *Flower* and *Snowflake*, a fiery *Spanish* dancer and an exuberant *Polichinelle Boy*. An extremely talented young lady with many artistic interests, Autumn is a Level 4 NYSSMA musician in piccolo, flute and voice. She also diligently maintains first chair in flute and piccolo. Autumn was recently selected to join the Suffolk County Music Educators' Association (SCMEA). With boundless energy and a voracious appetite for the arts, she has performed in several school musicals and was recently cast as a *Wickersham Brother* in **Seussical the Musical** and as the indefatigable *Mary Poppins*. Autumn will return to the BESFI workshops this summer for her ninth consecutive year in hopes of further advancing her skills as a dancer.

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*Congratulations to
Madison Coleman and
all the Seiskaya Ballet
dancers on your 2022
BESFI performance!*

Featured Soloist



MADISON COLEMAN – Age 16
The Knox School
Eleventh Grade

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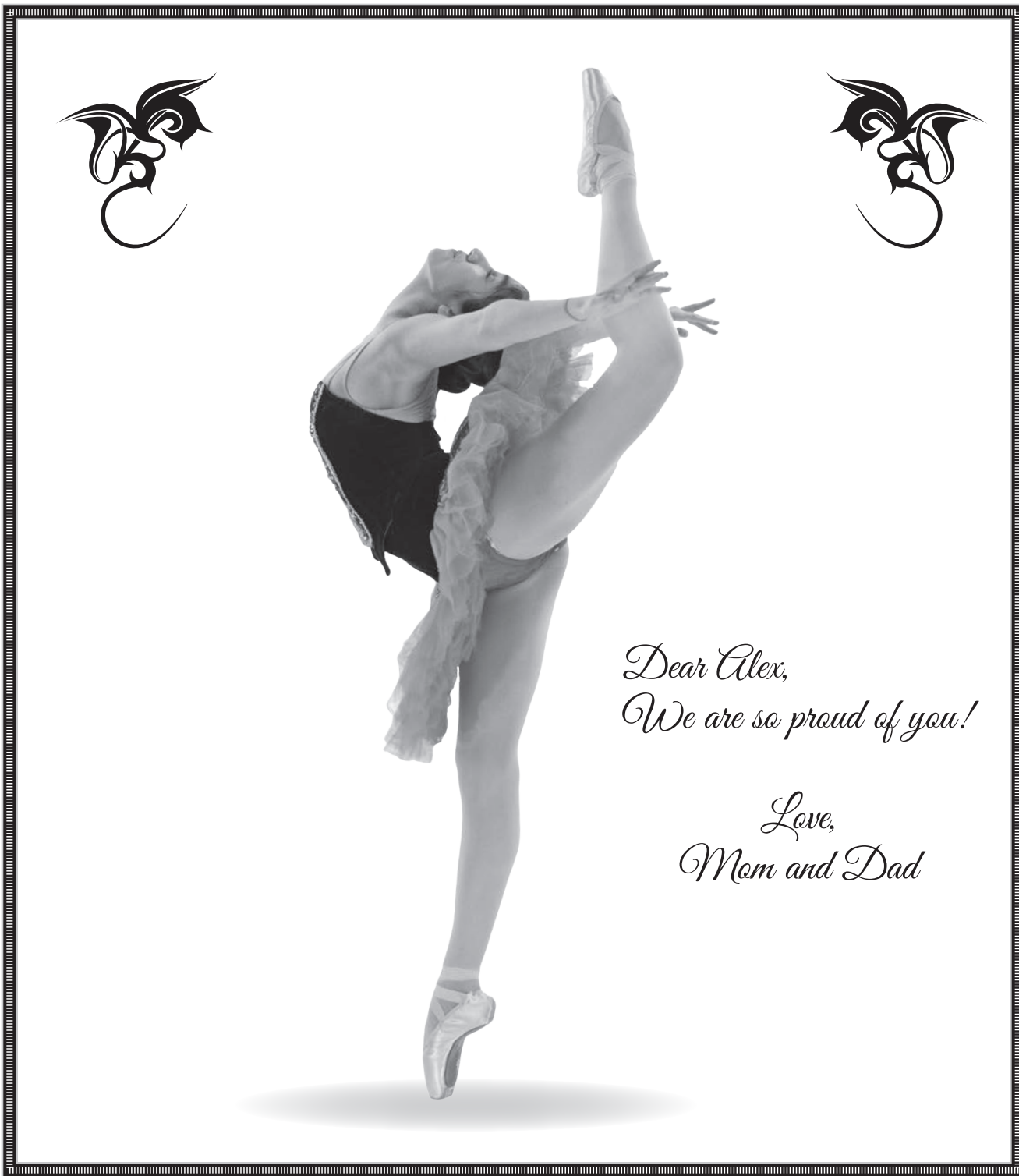
Do not be fooled by the gentle and sweet demeanor of this newcomer, for beneath Madison's calm countenance lies a fiery determination that is deeply rooted in her impressive work ethic. Gracefully statuesque with beautiful extensions, Madison displayed her range as a performer in the roles of *Friend of Clara*, *Snowflake*, *Flower*, *Arabian Soloist* and *Bo Peep* in her first ever Seiskaya **Nutcracker** in 2021. This BESFI weekend, she will showcase her pristine pirouettes in her role of a haughty *Model* and immaculate footwork as a nurturing *Governess* in **Street People**. Showcasing her charismatic stage presence, she will also perform in the spirited character dance, *Carmen*. A lover of the sciences as well as the arts, Madison aspires to pursue a career in the STEM field. She is currently a member of the STEM Club and student ambassador for the STEM department participating in various outreach efforts. She is also a member of the National Art Honor Society. Outside of ballet and science, Madison enjoys spending time with friends and family.



~ *Best of Luck* ~

Congratulations

*Michael Grundfast
and
Law Office Staff*



Featured Soloist



ALEXANDRA LEIVA – Age 15
Centereach High School
Tenth Grade

Blessed with long, exquisite lines, Alexandra charmed the audience with her precisely executed turns in her inaugural role as *Bo Peep* in Seiskaya's **Nutcracker 2021**. She also displayed her versatility as a dancer in her portrayal of *Snowflake*, *Flower*, *Friend of Fritz* and *Arabian*. This weekend, she will take to the stage as a feisty *Gang Member* in **Street People**. She will also perform in the spirited character dance, *Carmen*. Alexandra is a devoted voice student and has received numerous awards for her choral performances. She was recently invited to attend summer workshops at several universities. A kind and compassionate soul, Alexandra plans to pursue graduate studies in psychiatry with a focus on clinical mental health consulting. She is particularly interested in understanding the effects of childhood events on mental development. Alexandra is a member of the fencing team, art club, women's history club, and newspaper club and is involved in DECA, a non-profit student organization. In her spare time, Alexandra enjoys reading, drawing, writing, and hanging out with friends.



*My Dear Mic,
I am beyond incredibly proud of everything you do, all your hard work, and how far you
have come. You continue to amaze me every day! All my love, Mama*



*Congratulations to all the
Seiskaya Ballet dancers
on your
BESFI 2022 performance!*



*Dear Valia and Dimitri,
Thank you for your endless support and
encouragement and always pushing me
to be better. I am forever grateful!
Love, Mic*

*Dear All My Teachers,
Thank you for all you have
and continue to do for me.
Love, Mic*

*“Ability is what you are capable of doing,
motivation determines what you do,
attitude determines how well you do it...”*

— Lou Holtz



J.D.I.

Featured Soloist



MICHAELA D. LETTIERE – Age 11
Middle School
Sixth Grade

If you want to know where to find Michaela, you don't have to look farther than the Seiskaya studios. Taking full advantage of any and every learning opportunity, she spent most of the summer and fall of 2021 vigorously working on her craft. This effervescent dancer's diligence paid off when Christina Pandolfi regaled Michaela as "...petite but mighty..." following her performance as *Fritz* in the **2021 Seiskaya Nutcracker**. With a radiant stage presence and robust technique, Michaela also delighted audiences with her portrayal of a *Sheep* and *Soldier*. As the youngest Seiskaya dancer to ever grace the stage as the central character, the *Street Urchin*, in this weekend's **Street People**, she will be showcasing her powerful turns and strong jumps. She is nicknamed the "Swiss Army Knife Smurf" for her innate ability to quickly learn and memorize choreography, her adept musicality and her small stature. A high honors recipient for her scholastic achievements, Michaela has performed in Mandarin at the Chinese Consulate as a student ambassador since 2017. She will be attending the BESFI Summer Intensive for the sixth year. Michaela also enjoys art as well as piano and flute, participating in NYSSMA.



*We dance for laughter,
We dance for tears,
We dance for madness,
We dance for fears,
We dance for hopes,
We dance for screams,
We are the dancers,
We create the dreams.*

-Albert Einstein



Congratulations, Clara! We are very proud of you!

*Love,
Mom and Dad*



Featured Soloist



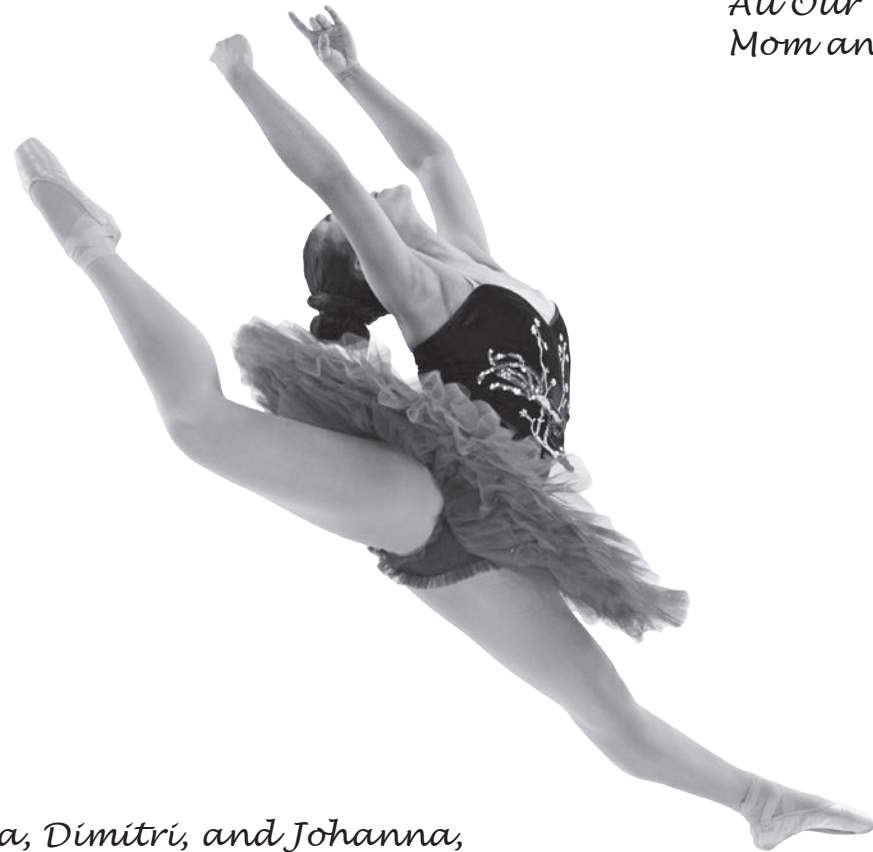
CLARA JIANE MULLER – Age 13
R. C. Murphy Junior High School
Eighth Grade

An intuitive dancer with fluid movements, Clara will illuminate the stage this 2022 BESFI season as a mischievous *Gang Member* in **Street People** and as a Spanish dancer in *Carmen*. She is a poised, strong dancer with explosive ballon jumps and executes à la seconde turns with pin point accuracy. A well rounded performer, she was showcased in the 2019 BESFI performances as a demi-soloist in *Drum Dance* and *Pas de Trois I* in **La Bayadère Divertissement**. Clara has a naturally elegant stage presence and effortlessly commits complex choreography to memory. Her versatility was utilized as *Fritz*, *Friend of Clara*, *Mouse*, *Snowflake*, *Arabian* and *Flower* in Seiskaya's **2021 Nutcracker**. Clara has attended the BESFI summer workshops since 2016 and has plans to attend again this summer to build upon her technique and creativity as a dancer. Her musicality adds a deeper dimension to her dancing as she plays the alto saxophone in her school band and wind ensemble. In her free time, Clara enjoys drawing, painting, and creating digital animation; some of her work was showcased last spring in an online art show hosted by Three Village Central School District. She hopes to one day become a graphics designer.



*Dear Angelina,
We are so proud of all you have accomplished
this year. Continue to reach for the Stars and
may all your dreams come true!*

*All Our Love,
Mom and Dad*

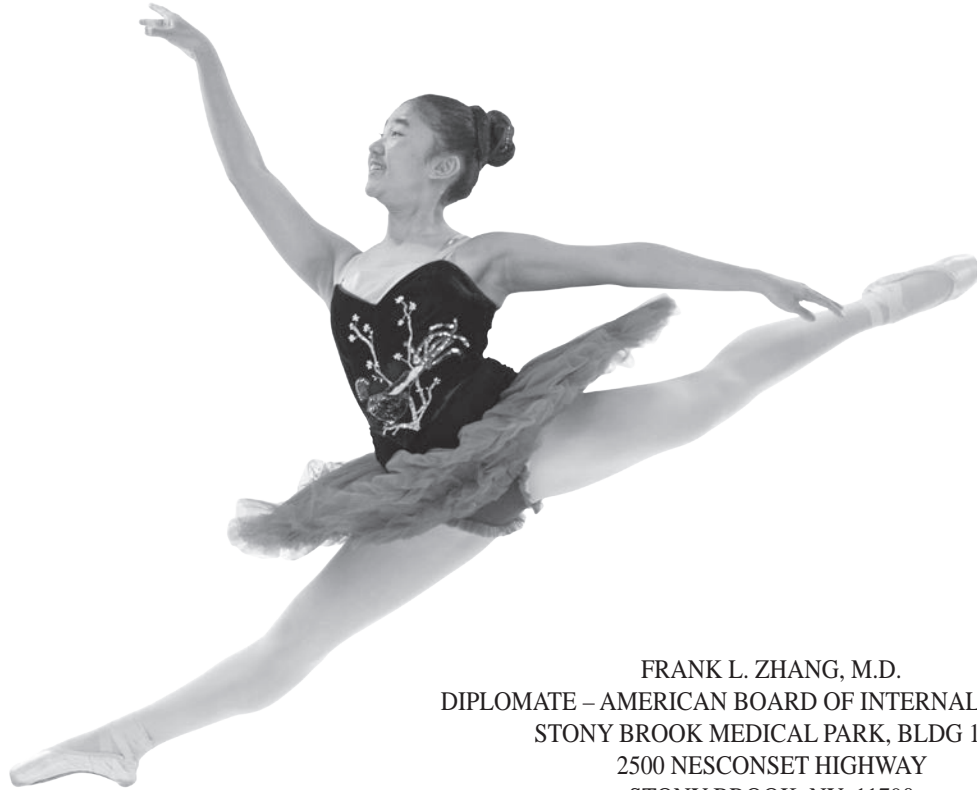


*To Valia, Dimitri, and Johanna,
Thank you for your continued support and
guidance. I am very grateful for the trust and
opportunities you have given me. I'll continue
working hard.*

-Angelina

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**CONGRATULATIONS TO ANGELINA
AND ALL THE SEISKAYA DANCERS
ON YOUR 2022 BESFI PERFORMANCE!**

Featured Soloist



ANGELINA M. ZHANG – Age 13
P. J. Gelinas Jr. High School
Eighth Grade

This 2022 BESFI season, Angelina will display her range as a boisterous *Gang Member* and a carefree *Schoolgirl* in **Street People**. She will also liven the stage as a corps dancer in the Spanish character dance miniature, *Carmen*. Angelina is a strong dancer with energetic jumps, and her impeccable à la seconde fouetté turns were showcased when she took to the stage as *Fritz* in Seiskaya's **2021 Nutcracker**. She also demonstrated her versatility as *Friend of Clara*, *Arabian Soloist*, *Flower*, *Snowflake*, *Trepak*, *Mouse* and *Polichinelle Boy*. When she is not in the ballet studio, Angelina closely follows international politics and hopes one day to become a career diplomat representing the U.S.A. in the United Nations. She also plays the violin in the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra and is a pianist and cantor for her church. Angelina has been the proud recipient of the Presidential Volunteer Service Award for the past three years. Recently, she was featured as a dancer in her school's revival of the Broadway musical, **Matilda**. In her spare time, Angelina enjoys watching gymnastics and Russian ballets. She has attended the BESFI Summer Intensive since 2019.



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To all my teachers at Seiskaya,
Thank you so much for
inspiring me to continue to do
what I love.

~ Daphne



Congratulations Daphne and all
the Seiskaya dancers on your
2022 performances!

The Vaisman Family

Soloist



DAPHNE VAISMAN – Age 13
Ralph Reed Middle School
Eighth Grade

With distinguished stage presence and expressive musicality, Daphne is one to watch this BESFI season! Performing in the character ensemble *Carmen*, she will show off her impeccable footwork and passionate artistry. Daphne will then showcase her beautiful lines, crisp turns and versatility as a *Street Hawker* in *Street People*. She was featured in the **2021 Nutcracker** as a mesmerizing *Arabian Soloist*, a graceful *Flower*, a dignified *Snowflake* and a dynamic *Trepak*. In BESFI 2019, she was featured in the *Pas de Trois I* and *Drum Dance*. A dancer with many interests, Daphne hopes to continue to be involved in the arts and would love to study abroad after high school. An honor student and active member of National Honor Society, she shows her desire for excellence both in and out of the Seiskaya studio. An artist in many aspects, Daphne is an accomplished vocalist and was a part of the 2022 SCMEA choir. This summer she plans to return to the BESFI Summer Intensive.



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*Sometimes a picture is
worth a thousand words.*



Soloist



VICTORIA JINGRAN YE – Age 12
P. J. Gelinas Junior High School
Seventh Grade

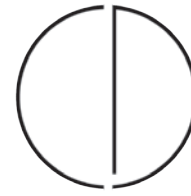
Armed with energetic jumps and a delightful stage presence, Victoria will captivate the audience in the Spanish piece *Carmen* and later demonstrate her strong petit allegro as a *Skull Gang Member* in **Street People**. In the **2021 Nutcracker**, Victoria's ambition and technique were apparent as she showed her sophistication and grace as a *Flower* and *Snowflake*. She further enchanted the audience as a playful *Sheep*. Victoria has been attending the BESFI Summer Intensive since 2015 and plans to return this summer to build upon her strength and grand allegro. Victoria aspires to continue her academic success while studying ballet and would like to inspire others one day by becoming a chef. Outside of ballet, Victoria is a multitasking musician, playing both piano and trumpet. She is also an avid golfer, displaying her athleticism both in and out of ballet. In her free time, Victoria likes to play video games and spend time with her friends and family.

Choryphee



STERLING CARTER – Age 13
Harbor Country Day School
Seventh Grade

Sterling will dazzle the audience this weekend with her graceful jumps and delightful stage presence in *Carmen* and as a *Schoolgirl* in *Street People*. *Nutcracker 2021* showcased her as *Polichinelle*, *Mouse* and *Flower*. A featured model in the Fashion Magazine, *Hooligans*, and an accomplished writer, Sterling's pieces have been published in her school newspaper.



CARTER DESIGN



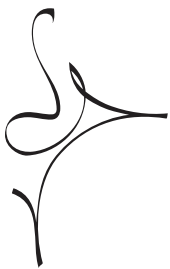
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AND ARE SO PROUD OF STERLING AND ADAIR CARTER

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*Congratulations Catherine
on your first **BESFI** performance!*

*Mom, PaPa, Eraklis,
Anna & Constantino*



Choryphee



CATHERINE DIAKOU – Age 17
Smithtown High School West
Eleventh Grade

Catherine takes to the stage this weekend as *Bag Lady* in **Street People** and a dancer in *Carmen*. In her **Nutcracker** debut she charmed audiences as *Cossack* and *Spanish* in 2021. She has performed in numerous musical productions and was recently cast in **A Christmas Carol** as well as **Heathers: The Musical**. Catherine attends the Long Island High School for the Arts.



Choryphee



VINCENZA JOAN FRANCO – Age 11
Sts. Philip & James Academy
Sixth Grade

Vincenza will showcase her fluid lines and radiant smile as a *Rich Brat* and *Schoolgirl* in **Street People** and in *Siberian*. She captivated the audience in **Nutcracker 2021**, debuting as a *Sheep* and reprising her roles as a *Soldier* and *Child at Party*. An accomplished student, Vincenza made High Honors and won first place in the Christ is Alive 2021 national essay contest.



*"Your sister is both your mirror – and your opposite."
- Elizabeth Fishel*

*Congratulations to
Vincenza & Antonella Franco
We are always proud of you!*



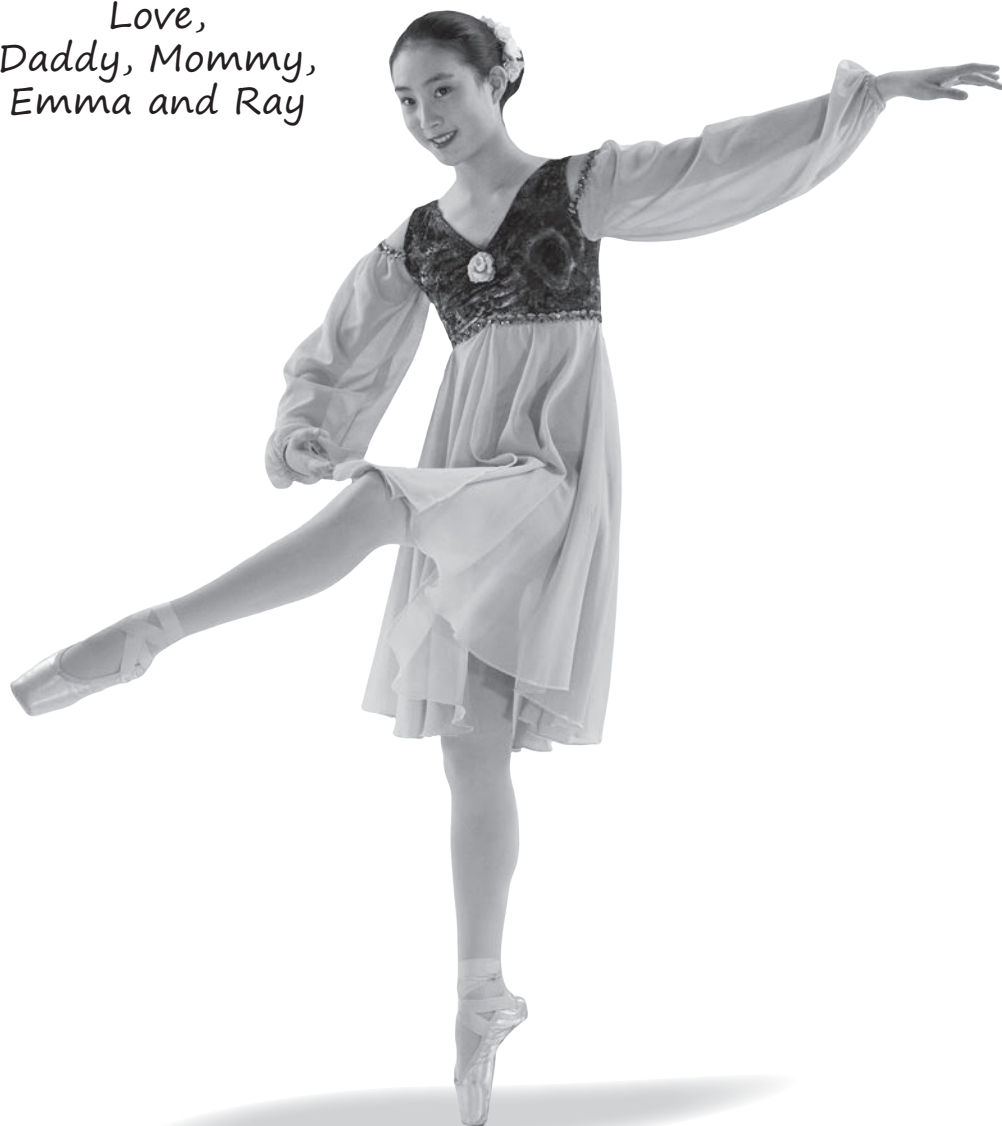
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Dear Sara,
Congratulations on another
wonderful year of dancing.

Love,
Daddy, Mommy,
Emma and Ray



Choryphee



SARA LI – Age 14
R. C. Murphy Jr. High School
Ninth Grade

With astounding flexibility and grace, Sara will delight the audience this weekend in *Carmen* and as a *Schoolgirl* in *Street People*. Her powerful jumps and elegant port de bras were showcased in her roles as a *Friend of Fritz*, *Flower*, *Snowflake*, *Trepak* and *Arabian* in **Nutcracker 2021**. Multitalented, Sara plays the flute in her school's marching band and wind ensemble.



Choryphee



ISABELLA MORLAS – Age 14
Nesaquake Middle School
Eighth Grade

Isabella will illuminate the stage in the character ensemble *Carmen* then as a *Skull Gang Member* and as a *Schoolgirl* in **Street People**. Isabella captivated the audience with her exquisite turns and impressive arabesques as *Snowflake*, *Flower*, *Cossack* and *Arabian* in **Nutcracker 2021**. In BESFI 2019's **La Bayadère**, she performed in *Kazachok* and as a demi-soloist in *Drum Dance*.



“If it doesn’t challenge you, it won’t change you.”



*Congratulations Isabella
We are so proud of
you.
Love Always,
Mom and Dad &
Andrew*



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"...you have to believe in your dreams..." ~ L. Frank Baum



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Keep reaching for the stars.

Brava Jillian!

Love,

Mom, Dad, Abigail & Ryan



Choryphee



JILLIAN ROSE RABBITT – Age 12
Samoset Middle School
Sixth Grade

An expressive dancer with powerful jumps, Jillian is making her BESFI debut in *Carmen* and *Siberian* and as a *Schoolgirl* in *Street People*. In Seiskaya's 2021 *Nutcracker* she made her debut as *Mouse Soloist*, *Sheep* and *Trepak*. An honor student and the concertmaster of Sachem's All-District Music Festival in 2021, Jillian is a member of Samoset's Select Orchestra.



Choryphee



CECELIA TULLIO – Age 13
Hauppauge Middle school
Seventh Grade

This weekend, this dynamic dancer with an acumen for character dancing will perform in the Spanish ensemble *Carmen* as well as in the roles of *Schoolgirl* and *Gang Member* in **Street People**. Cecelia commanded the stage with her beautiful long lines and sheer elegance in her various roles of *Flower*, *Soldier*, *Mouse*, *Arabian* and *Polichinelle* in Seiskaya's **2021 Nutcracker**.



*We hope everyone delights in
BESFI'S beautiful performances.*



*We look forward to seeing the progress all
these vibrant dancers have made.*

Cecelia and Yan

**Our best wishes to
VALIA AND THE ENTIRE BESFI CAST**



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Corps



**ADAIR MADELEINE CARTER – Age 9
Harbor Country Day School
Third Grade**

Adair lit up the stage as a playful *Polichinelle Girl*, endearing *Child at Party* and brave *Soldier* in *Nutcracker 2021*. Adair's charming performance this weekend in *Siberian* is one not to be missed. When Adair is not dancing, she is horseback riding, modeling and playing tennis. She also excels at pretend games, with hopes of becoming an actress.

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Corps



ANTONELLA LUCIA FRANCO – Age 10
Sts. Phillip & James School
Fourth Grade

Antonella is a charismatic dancer with jumps and flexibility envied by all. She will grace the BESFI stage in the lively *Siberian*, as well as in **Street People** as a *Rich Brat* and a *Schoolgirl*. In Seiskaya's **Nutcracker 2021**, she captivated the audience as an effervescent *Polichinelle* and dedicated *Soldier*. Kind and compassionate, she was also named an Apostle of Hope at her school.



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Corps



SABRINA LIU – Age 9
Nassakeag Elementary School
Fourth Grade

During **Nutcracker 2021** Sabrina portrayed a playful *Polichinelle*, a lithe *Angel* and a valiant *Soldier*. A strong yet delicate dancer, she is sure to delight the audience in *Siberian* this BESFI. When she is not dancing, she enjoys playing the violin and piano. She hopes one day to become a doctor, utilizing the knowledge she gains in ballet to better understand the human body.



Corps



AVERI LYNN SAVINO – Age 10
St. Patrick School
Fifth Grade

A promising ballerina with a passion for ballet, Averil is happiest when dancing. As a *Sheep* in **2021 Nutcracker**, Averil showed poise and maturity beyond her years. This weekend she will be light on her feet in *Siberian* and as a *Rich Brat* and *Schoolgirl* in **Street People**. With hopes of becoming a doctor or a ballet teacher one day, Averil excels in her studies as well.



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Keep on dancing!

With love,

Nana & GBob



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Jasmine,

We are amazed by your energetic style of learning. What wonderful progress you have made. We are so proud of you.

Dad and Mom



Corps



JASMINE WEI – Age 9
Harbor Country Day School
Fourth Grade

Jasmine's graceful lines and her love of ballet truly shine in this weekend's *Siberian*. She lit up the stage in **Nutcracker 2021** with her portrayal of a floating *Angel*, a valiant *Soldier* and a playful *Polichinelle*. When not in the studio, Jasmine loves playing the flute and conquering the game of chess. A fine student, Jasmine recently won first place in her school's science competition.



Corps



JOSEPHINE WEI – Age 9
Harbor Country Day School
Fourth Grade

An elegant and poised performer, Josephine brought a playful touch to the **2021 Nutcracker's** party scene, action to the fight scene as a *Soldier*, grace as an *Angel*, and fun as a *Polichinelle*. Look for her in this weekend's *Siberian*. Josephine is a fine young scholar who enjoys chess and soccer. In her free time, she loves creating art and Lego masterpieces with her sister Jasmine.



Josephine,

We appreciate your way of systematic learning.

What excellent progress you have made.

We are so proud of you.

Dad and Mom



"You dance love, and you dance joy, and you dance dreams."

— Gene Kelly

*Congratulations Lilah on your first
BESFI performance!*

*All our love,
Mom, Dad,
Charlotte, Gabe,
Grandma and Pa,
Oma and Opa*



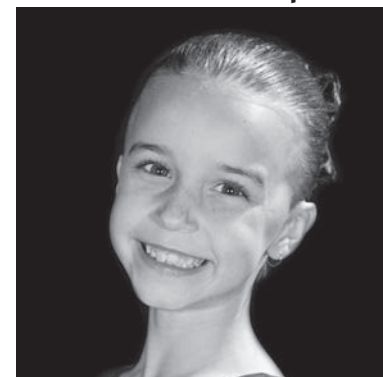
Junior Corps



GRACE CHEN – Age 7
Homeschooled
Second Grade

Grace will perform the *Persian* dance at the 2022 BESFI showcase. She is a talented and disciplined young performer who works hard to perfect her technique and skills. Possessing many diverse interests and talents in addition to dance, Grace studies the piano and Chinese and sings with her church choir. She enjoys drawing and taking care of her two pet Guinea pigs.

Junior Corps



LILAH EVE DORAN – Age 7
St. Patrick's School
Second Grade

Following outstanding performances as an *Angel* and *Soldier* in Seiskaya's **2021 Nutcracker**, Lilah will perform the *Persian* and *Siberian* dances this BESFI season. A talented and confident young dancer, Lilah excels at battements and learns new choreography with ease. When she is not in the studio, Lilah enjoys reading, spending time with her family and playing Scrabble.

Junior Corps



ALICE HUANG – Age 7
W. S. Mount Elementary
Second Grade

Alice charmed audiences as a graceful *Angel* and *Child at Party* in Seiskaya's 2021 production of **The Nutcracker**. A conscientious and dedicated student, Alice is excited to perform the spirited *Persian* dance in her BESFI debut. She hopes to be a dancer and a teacher one day as she enjoys performing. Alice loves ballet because of the beauty it brings to her life.

Junior Corps



EMMA LI – Age 8
Wood Park Primary School
Second Grade

A charming young dancer, Emma will perform the *Persian* dance at the BESFI 2022 showcase. She enjoys studying ballet, perfecting her graceful posture, and executing pas de bourrées with ease. Emma was in the Long Island Dance Academy's performance, "Under the Sea." She hopes to become a teacher one day. When she's not dancing, Emma enjoys reading.

Congratulations, Alice!
We are so proud of you!
Enjoy your first BESFI
performance!
Love,
Mom and Dad



Emma, when you get the
chance to sit it out or
dance, we hope you dance.
Love,
Dad & Mom





Dear Grace,

*We are so proud and grateful
for all you've accomplished.
Enjoy your first BESFI
performance!*

*Love,
Mommy, Daddy, Daniel, Joshua,
Grandma & Grandpa*

Junior Corps



ALICIA PEREZ-CANOA – Age 10
Minnesauke Elementary School
Fourth Grade

Alicia danced multiple roles in Seiskaya's **2021 Nutcracker** delighting audiences as a *Child at Party*, *Angel* and *Soldier* with grace, precision, and enthusiasm. An excellent character dancer, this BESFI she will delight audiences in both the *Persian* and *Siberian* dances. This multitalented young lady studies the violin and performs in chorus and theater productions.



*We love you both so much and
are so proud of your dedication
and hard work!*

*Love always,
Mom & Dad*



Junior Corps



ARIANNA LEE SAVINO – Age 7
St. Patrick School of Smithtown
Second Grade

A quick learner with beautiful feet, Arianna is a young ballerina to watch. In Seiskaya's **2021 Nutcracker**, she performed as a charming *Polichinelle*, an ethereal *Angel* and an energetic *Soldier*. This BESFI she looks forward to dancing in both *Persian* and *Siberian*. Arianna cannot imagine her life without dance and eagerly awaits the day when she can go en pointe.

Junior Corps



NATALIE SAILIN ZHANG – Age 9
Nassakeag Elementary School
Fourth Grade

Natalie performed numerous roles in Seiskaya's **2021 Nutcracker**, including *Lamb Chop*, *Child at Party*, *Soldier*, *Angel* and *Polichinelle*. With excellent turns, she looks forward to performing the *Siberian* dance for the 2022 BESFI showcase. Looking to continue to develop her technique, strength and turns, Natalie will again attend this summer's BESFI program.



Natalie,
We are proud of
you kindness, hard
work and courage to
challenge yourself.

- Mommy, Daddy
and Marcus



Trainee



ISLA ROSE CASTON – Age 7
Homeschooled
First Grade

Isla charmed audiences as a playful *Lamb Chop* and *Child at Party* during the **2021 Nutcracker**. A young dancer rich with enthusiasm and work ethic, she is excited to delight audiences in the character piece *Persian*. In addition to loving ballet, she enjoys cooking and baking with her family and swimming. She hopes to one day be a ballerina.



*"Let them praise
His name
with dancing."
Psalm 149:3*

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Olivia,

Congratulations on your first BESFI performance!

We are so proud of all your accomplishments.



Love,
Mom & Dad

Dearest Sayuri:
We are so very proud of you!



*Congratulations to the wonderful dancers of
the Seiskaya Ballet Academy.*

*Thank you, dear teachers,
for all that you do!*

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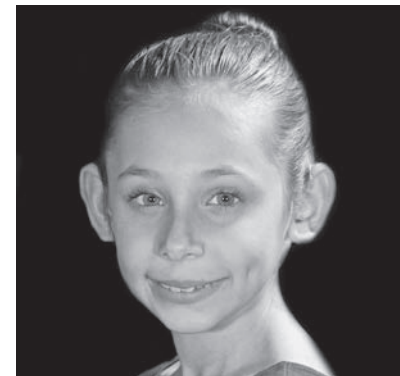
Trainee



SAYURI CRISTINA ISHIDA – Age 7
Homeschooled
First Grade

Sayuri captured audiences as *Lamb Chop* and *Child at Party* in the **2021 Nutcracker**. In her BESFI debut, this gifted performer will shine in *Persian*. Sayuri plays piano, violin and taiko drums. She has performed at Adelphi and Tribeca PACs and will grace Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall stage this June. Sayuri won an Award of Merit from NYS for music composition.

Trainee



OLIVIA CLAIRE SPATARO – Age 9
R. J. O. Intermediate School
Fourth Grade

In her **2021 Nutcracker** debut, Olivia captured hearts with her heartwarming performance as *Angel* and *Child at Party*. This weekend she will grace the stage in *Persian*. In addition to ballet, Olivia plays the piano, viola and ukulele. She performed in the 2021 Northport Community Theater's production of *Annie*. She enjoys helping others and would love to be a teacher.

Trainee



WENDI LI – Age 8
Nassakeag Elementary School
Third Grade

Wendi returns to the stage after her lovable performance in the **2021 Nutcracker** as *Child at Party* and *Lamb Chop*. For this, her first BESFI performance, she will charm audiences in *Persian*. Wendi also enjoys studying mathematics, reading and writing fiction, painting and drawing. In 2021 she won first prize in a public speaking contest in Chinese class.

Trainee



AURORA XU – Age 5
Nassakeag Elementary School
Third Grade

A charming young dancer, Aurora brightened the stage in the **2021 Nutcracker** as a *Child at Party* and *Angel*. She is thrilled to be taking the stage to perform in the spirited character dance *Persian*. Multitalented, Aurora plays the violin and piano and enjoys figure skating. Aurora loves doing step jumps in class and aspires to one day be a professional dancer.



Enjoy your BESFI performance!
We love you.

Mom, Dad and Racheal



Dear all my teachers at Seiskaya,
I can't tell you how much gratitude I
have for you. You've taught me numerous
things and helped me tremendously to the
level I am today. Seiskaya is truly the
best ballet ever.

Love,
Wendi



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Love,

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