



January 17th, 2026 Opening Night Party!

Program:

Step of Two

Performance by Andrew Powell, Kay Speidel,
and Ben Zusi

A Token of One's Affection

Performance by Dawn Springer

There is A Time

Performance by Marielle Allschwang

Something Familiar (Excerpts)

Performance by Sejain Bastidas, Natalie Dellutri,
Janel Meindersee, and Sophia Roth

Film of *Something Familiar* by Rachel Malehorn

Special thanks to Stage Manager Mary Brennan
Christy Seibers and the Milwaukee Ballet Costume Shop
Sorella

Real Tinsel Gallery

And especially Tina Schinabeck and

ONE-OFF EXHIBITIONS for always saying yes, and . . .

Artist Biographies:



Sejain Bastidas is a former professional ballet dancer who has performed as a soloist with several National Ballet companies across Venezuela, Ecuador, and Peru, as well as with The Metropolitan Ballet in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Her career is marked by notable international appearances, including the opening gala of the 2019 Pan-American Games and a finalist at the World Ballet Competition in Orlando, Florida. In recognition of her contributions to the field, she has been featured in dance history books in her native Venezuela.

Beyond the stage, Sejain is a powerful advocate for the arts. She collaborated with the United Nations on a social media campaign regarding arts and immigration in Latin America, and her journey as an immigrant artist was the subject of a dedicated mini-documentary. In 2024, her impact on the community was recognized with a nomination for Teaching Artist of the Year by the City of Milwaukee.

Currently, Sejain is a collaborator with the Dawn Springer Dance Project and serves as a ballet lead faculty member at the Milwaukee Ballet School & Academy and a teaching artist at Danceworks. She also leads her own initiative dedicated to making ballet accessible to adult students throughout the Milwaukee area.



Natalie Dellutri, a Milwaukee native, trained at the Milwaukee Ballet School & Academy from ages six to eighteen. Subsequently, she pursued higher education at the University of Utah, receiving a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Ballet and Bachelor of Science in Psychology. Returning to the Midwest in May 2019, Dellutri began freelancing and subsequently joined both Banks Performance Project and

Kaley Pruitt Dance companies as a leading artist, participating as a company member across multiple seasons. Her work extended to guest appearances with several dance companies and organizations, effectively establishing her presence within the vibrant freelance dance communities of Milwaukee and Chicago. Throughout the course of her career, Natalie has had the privilege of collaborating with and learning from a diverse spectrum of esteemed artists and choreographers. She has had the opportunity to perform works by Michael Pink, Alonzo King, Jules Perrot, Alejandro Cerrudo, Ohad Naharin, Nacho Duato, Mats Ek, and Crystal Pite. Dellutri has mainly gained recognition, however, for her work with Roderick George, Anouk van Dijk, and Dawn Springer. She has also become an established choreographer and director herself, with eight staged works and two screen dances.

In November of 2022, Dellutri joined Milwaukee Ballet School as a Part-Time Faculty Member. Now, she serves as Milwaukee Ballet's School Operations Coordinator while continuing her involvement as a Full-Time Faculty Member, and pursuing personal choreography and performance projects within the Milwaukee dance community.



Janel Meindersee's career in classical ballet includes over a decade of performance with companies including Oregon Ballet Theatre, Nevada Ballet Theatre, and Milwaukee Ballet. During her tenure dancing with resident ballet companies, Janel performed classical, contemporary, and world premier works by local and international choreographers. She cultivated a love for dance as an expressive art form and a passion for impacting communities through dance.

In 2018, Janel began studying full-time at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. While pursuing her education, Janel continued to dance as a freelance artist. She performed leading roles with Madison Ballet, appeared in new works by local choreographers, presented her own choreographic works at art showcases, and developed dance program opportunities for people with disabilities.

Janel earned her bachelor's degree in 2021 and master's degree in 2022 from UW-Madison. She now enjoys coordinating programs for a local nonprofit, leading dance classes and workshops for people with disabilities, and raising her two young sons, Everett and Robin.



Andrew Powell began his dance journey at the age of 7 and delved into ballet at the age of 10, training at various schools in San Antonio. Notably, he honed his skill at Decruz Ballet under the guidance of Directors Lindsi Dec and Karel Cruz before venturing to his first summer intensive out of town in 2021 at the esteemed San Francisco Ballet School, led by Director Patrick Armand. He then continued his education at San Francisco Ballet School until his recent graduation in 2024.

Andrew currently dances in Milwaukee Ballet's second company, MBII.



Sophia Marie Roth began her formal dance training at the age of eleven, studying a wide range of dance styles and developing a strong technical foundation. She began her theatrical training at an even earlier age, cultivating a deep appreciation for performance and storytelling. Through years of dedicated study and practical experience, she discovered a profound passion for the performing arts, which ultimately led her to pursue formal training at the collegiate level.

Sophia graduated from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee in 2025 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre and a minor in Dance. During her time at the university, she received comprehensive training in acting, voice, movement, and dance, allowing her to grow as a versatile and disciplined performer. Her academic and artistic experiences have shaped her into a well-rounded artist with a strong commitment to excellence, collaboration, and continued artistic development.

She was in the original cast of *Something Familiar*, and is excited to be back; this piece holds a very special place in her heart.



A native of South Bend, Indiana, **Ben Zusi** trained at Southold Dance Theater under Calin Radulescu and, formerly, Erica Fischbach. While training, he attended various summer programs at the School of American Ballet, Houston Ballet, and Boston Ballet. In his senior year, he received first at the Youth America Grand Prix (YAGP) regionals and was a finalist at YAGP finals.

Zusi spent two years in Kansas City Ballet II, the second company of Kansas City Ballet. During this time, he performed roles in multiple Company productions, including *Petite Mort*, Lead Russian in *The Nutcracker*, Toto in *The Wizard of Oz*, and various other corps roles.

Zusi joined Milwaukee Ballet in 2023, and has since performed in Michael Pink's *The Nutcracker: Drosselmeyer's Imaginarium*, as Jack in *Cinderella*, and Puss in Boots in *Sleeping Beauty*. He has also performed in Kenneth Tindall's *Casanova*, Mark Godden's *Carmen*, and in contemporary works by Amanda Lewis, Nelly van Bommel, and Tsai Hsi Hung.



Dawn Springer's choreography has been described as "mesmerizing" (Spin Magazine), "terrific" (Milwaukee's Shepherd Express), "surging and lush" (Philadelphia Inquirer), "subtle yet striking" (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel), and "beautiful composition" (Milwaukee Magazine). Her first evening length contemporary ballet, *Sylph*, was called "a stellar example in both music and choreography" (Shepherd Express).

As a dancer, Springer had a rich performance career for 10 years in New York City and has worked with award-winning choreographers Helen Simoneau, Camille A. Brown, Sara Hook, Sarah Skaggs, Jeff Slayton, Dahlia Nayar, and Aynsley Vandenbroucke, among others. She was a performing member of Brian Roger's Theater Et al at The Chocolate Factory in Long Island City, Queens. Her performance career has taken her to renowned venues and international festivals, including Lincoln Center, The Kennedy Center, The Venice Biennale Danza, The American Dance Festival, The New York Historical Society, and New York Live Arts. She has also performed at the Baryshnikov Arts Center, The Brooklyn Museum of Art, Dance Place (Washington, DC), the United States Botanic Garden, and The Banff Centre.

Her collaborative projects with composer and percussionist Jon Mueller were produced twice by the Eaux Claires Music and Arts Festival. She has choreographed for The Collection of Colonies of Bees in their sold-out performance at the Bradley Center with Grammy Award-winning Bon Iver, as well as for tour appearances with Grammy-nominated Sylvan Esso. Springer has toured nationally as an adjudicator for the

American Dance Festival, held a residency for consecutive summers with Alverno Presents, and was Artist-in-Residence in Dance for two years at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland. Her teaching engagements include universities across the country, such as The Ailey School, University of the Arts, MIT, Dickinson College, Lawrence University, and Beloit College.

She trained on scholarship at the North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA), graduating high school with a concentration in ballet and completing her BFA in Contemporary Dance. She earned her MFA in the inaugural class of the Hollins University/American Dance Festival Program, where her thesis performance was called “a standout” (Durham Indy Weekly). Springer studied choreography intensively with Donna Faye Burchfield (recipient of the Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts from the French Ministry of Culture) and dance history and theory with Thomas DeFrantz (consultant for the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture).

Springer is on faculty at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee’s Peck School of the Arts and with Milwaukee Ballet’s second company, MBII, and in the Pre-Professional Program with the Milwaukee Ballet School. Her writing is published in *Perspectives on American Dance*, an anthology from the University Press of Florida.

She and her husband have two children.