

The Studio & Santa Cruz Ballet Theatre | partners in excellence | serving Santa Cruz County for forty years
Diane Cypher, Artistic Director | Pamela Martin, Music Director | Sandy Nelson, Academy Registrar

2023-2024 Season Wrap-Up

The 2023-2024 Season was the 40th of Santa Cruz Ballet Theatre, and the 48th of The Studio. Strong progress was made in the academy, and SCBT had one of the best artistic seasons ever. The Senior Company dancers were busy all year long, and Petite Company was also engaged for many events throughout the season. A picture tells a thousand words, so here is a summary of the season in photos, and in chronological order.

December 2023: The Nutcracker



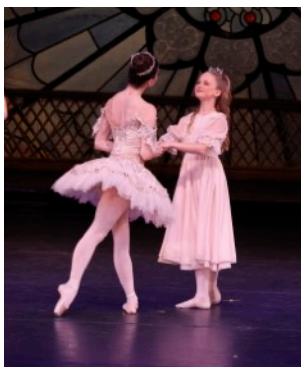
What can be said about our annual Nutcracker production, except that it was spectacular! Music Director Pamela Martin once again led her charges of 52 professional musicians, bringing Tchaikovsky's score to life and as beautiful as ever. The cast featured so many of our beautiful students, as well as guest stars and alumni Melody Mennite and Lucien Postlewaite, and guest dancers from New Ballet Tango Fujito-Gomez and Jack Concordia, who partnered our leading females.

A new version of the Chinese tea divertissement was created to honor the rich heritage of Chinese settlers – such as George Ow – who helped make Santa Cruz what it is today.

Choreographed by Riley Butler, this Chinese Dragon dance was performed brilliantly by our young dancers. SCBT

welcomed additional students from other studios who auditioned and participated in our favorite holiday tradition.

In addition to local dancers from all across the county, so many of our fabulous Party Scene character artists returned to add to the festivities: Rod and Kelly Caborn, Tony Bennett, Jeremy Chatwin,



Fall 2023: Season Kick-Off Event



2023 Petite Company dancers

The 2023 Petite Company performed at the annual Season Kick-Off Event, held once again at Hope Church in Soquel. Even though Sarah had been promoted to Senior Company apprentice for the season, she performed with her former peers. Academy faculty member Jenny Bennett choreographed a delightful dance for this group, which was rehearsed in tandem with *The Nutcracker*. The Senior Company helped serve and clean up, and the Guild Co-Chairwomen along with the SCBT board presented and managed the event.



Ciara Harraher, Robin Riviello and Jerry Lucha, Holly and Joel Rudnick, Riley Butler, Jenny and Danny Bennett, Andrew Graziani, joined this year by Stephanie Graziani and Lauren Hood... collectively, their presence adds so much to the production!

Top: Chinese divertissement. Above: the cast and musicians enjoy the applause. Left: Melody Mennite as the Sugar Plum Fairy greets Clara.

Throughout the season: SPECTRA Lecture Demonstrations



Senior Company dancers presented four lecture demonstrations: two in the fall and two in the spring. They shared their talents with two elementary and one middle school in Watsonville, and also with the lower elementary students at the main Montessori campus in Aptos. What a great experience for our dancers as well as the audience members. Thank you for sharing your passion with the youth in our community!



Winter 2024: Santa Cruz Symphony Children's and Family Concerts



Senior Company dancers learned two new pieces created for them by alumna Flora Chatwin right after *The Nutcracker*, that were presented with the Santa Cruz Symphony under the direction of Maestro Daniel Stewart. Like the lecture demonstrations, our dancers enjoy bringing their craft to young audience members who may have never experienced ballet before.

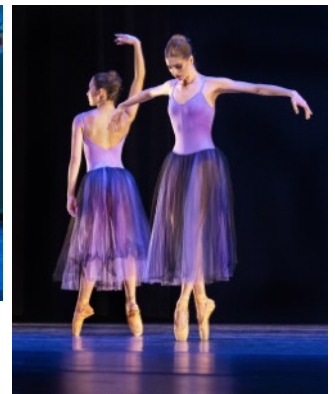


Spring 2024: SCBT In Concert at the Crocker Theater



A new Petite Company was chosen for 2024, and these lovely young dancers were cast in Debra Pearse Rogo's charming *Ballet de Seuss*. The concert also included her

beautiful *La Volonta* and Jeffrey Gribler's *Wiener Blut*. Performances by guest dancers from the Tannery World Dance and Cultural Center rounded out the program.



The 2024 Petite Company, top. The Sneetches above. *La Volonta* at right.

February 2024: The Ballet Alliance Evaluation with Festival Artistic Director Donald Dadey

The Senior Company, pictured at right with Festival Artistic Director Donald Dadey (center) and accompanist Carlos Fagundo (at right).



Mr. Dadey taught an incredibly challenging 2-hour master class, with the centre en pointe. Then the dancers ran through and rehearsed Jeffrey Gribler's *Wiener Blut* and Lauren Hood's *Resurgence* with Mr. Dadey adding his expertise all through the process.

In the second consultation with Mr. Dadey, he offered his advice to our dancers in regard to closing this chapter of their training and continuing on with enthusiasm, self-discipline and commitment to their futures. We all thank Mr. Dadey for his generosity and inspiration!

May 2024: The Ballet Alliance Festival in Spokane



Ten Petite Company dancers and their parents traveled to Spokane Washington with the Senior Company for the annual Festival. The participants enjoyed three full days of classes and seminars, plus performances and an opening night concert and Dancers' Party.

SCBT performed *Wiener Blut* and Lauren Hood's emerging piece *Resurgence* was awarded second place in choreographic excellence. The dancers worked hard and bonded further over the 4 days. Everyone present learned a great deal in the master classes taught by phenomenal instructors, and returned home invigorated. Dancer Quinn Cracolice earned our artistic director's prize for the most corrections received through the event. New friendships were forged and reinforced with dancers from other companies that our dancers had met at summer programs and previous Festivals.

Top right: our Petite Company dancers enjoyed Jazz class with FMBallet Artistic Director Matt Gasper. Middle: Eva Stone's Choreography class got on a roll and continued out in the hallway before finishing. Right: SCBT dancers with the amazing Festival Artistic Directors we have worked with these past 3 years of The Ballet Alliance Evaluation process and Festivals: Alan Hineline, Donald Dadey and Susan Brooker. The three leading dancers in performance of "Wiener Blut."



May 2024: The Studio Student Demonstration and Emerging Choreography Showcase



All of our students shined in the end of the season demonstration! his performance showcases the technical achievement of each class. From Pre-Ballet through Boys and the graded professional training program, the dancers impressed with their hard work and diligence. Progress from a whole year is impressive! Level IIIb made their first stage appearance en pointe.

SCBT Company dancers Lauren Hood and Olivia Carrillo presented original works on the program. The first pose from Lauren's piece is now an iconic and beautifully creative image, captured in rehearsal, at right.



Spring 2024: Cabrillo College Dance Day

Our Senior Company participated in an all-day dance day hosted by the Cabrillo College Dance Department. The dancers took four classes: Salsa, Improvisation, Modern and Hip Hop, which was taught by SCBT alumnus Joseph Almadariz. Our company then presented 2 movements of "La Volonta," offering the only classical ballet on the program.