

The Studio & Santa Cruz Ballet Theatre | partners in excellence serving Santa Cruz County for over 30 years
Diane Cypher, Artistic Director | Pamela Martin, Music Director | Sandy Nelson, Administrative Director

A message from our Artistic Director

CONGRATULATIONS DANCERS!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PERFORMANCES AND PARTICIPATION IN OUR NUTCRACKER FILM

Think back, way back to mid-March. We had no idea that the pandemic would change our lives so substantially and for so long. We figured out how to teach and take ballet class over the internet. We outfitted The Studio with 140-foot ethernet cables and big-screen TVs. We improvised and built home studios with portable barres and flooring. We uploaded the Zoom app and purchased accounts. The Studio received a PPP loan, enabling me to retain instructors and staff. We did our best to maintain normalcy and consistency through the summer. However ... quickly it became clear that assembling an audience in 2020 was probably not going to happen. Now what?

What followed felt like a whirlwind. I enlisted the help and talents of our alumni Dream Team: Georgina Wilson, Alicia Houser and Flora Chatwin. We decided not to open Nutcracker auditions to the public and only offer the opportunity to our own students. We auditioned dancers 2 at a time, over the course of 4 days. We rehearsed in small groups and in the parking lot of Hope Church and even over Zoom. We filmed the entire production in 5 days mid-October. What normally takes the entire fall was condensed into a few short weeks. The project kept our dancers learning new choreography, practicing their skills, and in the filming process, it kept them literally on their toes and able to improvise within unusual conditions. Our dancers' performances were uniformly incredible. They danced on all manner of surfaces, socially-distanced at the film sites and changed into costumes like surfers with towels. In the editing process, much of the footage was left on the cutting room floor to keep continuity in the story. But ALL of our dancers performed beautifully and each and every one of you is integral to the success of the project. The movie kept our dancers focused, learning, growing, motivated, empowered, striving, and doing something most of us have never done before.

Your hard work and individual growth during a new process are what are most important. I hope you enjoyed the journey and I congratulate you on your contributions through resilience and commitment. I am very proud of each and every one of you!



Top: Flora rehearsing Clara and the Little Mice in the Hope Church parking lot. Middle: Georgina had a sore throat and got a Covid test right before she was supposed to direct the weekend shoots. Before her test came back negative, Alicia stepped in and directed the whole weekend without hesitation: true talent and confidence in action! Bottom: It was cloudy on West Cliff during filming, but sunglasses might have been nice.



SCBT REACHES OUT TO LOCAL SHELTERS AND SENIOR RESIDENCES WITH CLARA'S DREAM

Assistant Registrar Wendy Butler was able to connect with the following social services and shelters and offered them a free stream of "Clara's Dream" for their residents. We are pleased we could share our holiday joy with the following organizations: Housing Matters, Dominican Oaks, Sunshine Villa, Pajaro Valley Shelter Services, CASA of Santa Cruz County, Shared Adventures, Aegis Living and Kinship/Seneca Services. Thank you to Wendy for doing the legwork, contacting and visiting these organizations in person.

BALLET ALLIANCE EVENTS AND EMERGING CHOREOGRAPHIES

In January The Ballet Alliance will provide a webinar about Dancer Mental Health led by counselors Josh Spell and Rachel Coats, both former ballet dancers. We appreciate the opportunity to learn about this important subject.

Next up on The Ballet Alliance series of events is company Adjudications, which will be virtual for SCBT. A professional from the field will watch a company class – at home on zoom or in the studio, however things progress — and will give feedback/encouragement on our training methods. Normally this event would include presentation of pieces, but with our companies all in different stages of Covid protocol, TBA decided not to include that aspect of the evaluation.

Meanwhile, our seven emerging choreographers are hard at work creating new pieces with their peers. These pieces will be filmed and shown to our expert panel: Linda Lock, Nicole Comella (AD of State Street Ballet Young Dancers) and either Debra Rogo or David Arce (AD and Associate AD of Mid-Columbia Ballet, respectively). The panel will offer feedback, and from there the strongest pieces will be presented to The Ballet Alliance panel, who will give awards and scholarships. The Ballet Alliance will present an Emerging Choreographers' Showcase this spring.

TBA will provide master classes to our dancers as the final installment of Festival Mosaic this season.

JUNIOR COMPANY

MID-SEASON AUDITIONS

SATURDAY, JANUARY 30

Audition spots available at 12 noon and 1 pm

45 minutes per pair of dancers

Secure your appointment by Jan 23: sandy@scbt.org

Dancers must be en pointe and at a solid intermediate level of technique

\$30 audition fee per dancer

Junior Company dancers will have the opportunity to learn excerpts from "Giselle." Rehearsals will be scheduled for Saturday afternoons, beginning in February (start date TBA).

Performance opportunities are unknown at this time, however we will figure something out within Covid protocol and safety mandates as they progress. Junior Company dancers will be challenged and will gain technical and artistic skill through professionally-guided exposure to one of the greatest romantic ballets of all time.

Participation fee for the Spring Season \$250

PETITE COMPANY

SCBT will hold auditions for Petite Company dancers this spring, TBA, and after we see how Covid protocol progresses in our county. For now, keep working hard in your classes!

STUDENT OLIVIA POTES IN THE NEWS

Congratulations to Olivia Potes for being mentioned in the Santa Cruz Sentinel as a member of the Girl Scout Troop 15012. The troop has raised money and donated toys to several non-profits including the Santa Cops Program, the Santa Cruz Animal Shelter, Meals on Wheels and victims of the recent fires in our area. Olivia's mother Alicia is co-troop leader. How inspiring that you have worked hard to care for others who are less fortunate or in need!

SUMMER STUDY

So, here we are ... waiting to see how things will develop with the pandemic. We cannot predict when we will be able to all be back in the studio together. Will summer programs happen virtually or in-person? No one knows. Many major schools are advertising in-person study, but if they have to change to virtual, will refunds be given? No one is saying. The Studio hopes we will be open for in-person classes this summer — of course! — but we cannot guarantee anything at this time. We will offer Summer Programs as we always do, but whether training can be offered in person remains to be seen. Unfortunately we can't predict the future. We will keep you updated as best we can. Like you, we are doing our best to keep a positive outlook on the future. For now, stay healthy and safe.