THOMAS ARMOUR YOUTH BALLET’S ALUMNI UPDATE 2019
• Over 1,000 studied dance at one of five sites this year. Over half of our students were on full scholarship, receiving dance instruction, shoes, clothing and audition coaching free of charge.

• TAYB completed its 5th year of expanded after school programming offering dance, homework assistance, and reading classes at all four satellite locations.

• This summer, TAYB helped 15 advanced students participate in summer dance intensives in prestigious schools throughout the country, including Dance Theatre of Harlem Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Joffrey Ballet, Martha Graham Dance Company, American Ballet Theatre, and School of American Ballet. Locally, students participated in daily summer camp and dance intensives at each of TAYB’s five locations.

• Over 8,000 attended TAYB’s 2018 production of the Nutcracker, including an inclusive, sensory-friendly performances geared toward families with children that have Autism Spectrum Disorders.

• TAYB’s school and outreach programs have been nationally accredited by The Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools (ACCPAS), meeting rigorous standards of excellence defined by professionals in the field.

• TAYB launched a new collaboration with the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Students who participate in the Center’s Ailey Camp during the summer are now able to continue their dance training on scholarship with TAYB throughout the year.

• This year 25 TAYB middle school students were accepted into competitive high school magnet programs including New World School of the Arts and Coral Reef Senior High School.
Each year we proudly celebrate the accomplishments of TAYB students past and present. This “Alumni Update” is organized by the year the participant graduated from High School or College.

2019

Fernanda Alvarez will begin attending New World School of the Arts College this fall, after participating in Dance Theatre of Harlem’s intensive program this summer.

April Chinea graduated Cum Laude from New World School of the Arts, earning the Superintendent’s Diploma of Distinction, The Dean of Dance’s Award, Dance Choreography Award, Superintendent Recognition for Perfect Attendance (13 years of perfect attendance) and selected for the NWSA Principal’s Hall of Fame. April is attending Florida State University in pursuit of her BFA in dance/choreography with a minor in education and/or sports management.

Yumarlis De Jesus graduated from New World School of the Arts where she was the National English Honor Society secretary. She will be studying journalism and communications at Florida State University.

Destiny Delancy began dancing at the age of five at TAYB’s Morningside neighborhood site. She is a founding member of TAYB’s Tap Team, and has participated in summer intensives with Dance Theatre of Harlem and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre. She graduated Cum Laude from New World School of the Arts with the Superintendent’s Diploma of Distinction. She will be a freshman as a Dean’s Scholar at New York University this fall.

Christina De Filipe graduated from Miami Killian High School and is now studying at New College in Sarasota. During High School she traveled as part of the school’s acting troupe and received the Cambridge Merit Diploma. She taught ballet, math and writing in Thomas Armour Youth Ballet’s outreach centers, and plans to continue taking ballet classes while in college.

Romina Erminy graduated from Miami Design and Architecture Senior High School, where she was a member of several National Honor Societies, including Spanish, Science, Math and Art. She earned two Silver Key/Scholastics Art and Writing Awards in 2019. She attended Oklahoma City Ballet’s intensive program this summer before starting at Miami-Dade College this fall.

Peterson Exais graduated from New World School of the Arts High School, and will start college there this fall.
Frances Hernandez graduated from New World School of the Arts, and is studying neonatology nursing at Florida International University.

Sonia Naranjo graduated from New World School of the Arts, where she was a member of the National Honor Society for Dance Arts. She received an academic achievement scholarship to attend LIM College in New York City, where she will pursue a degree in fashion marketing.

Sawyer O’Keefe graduated from Coral Reef High School, where she was in the drama magnet program. She was captain of the lacrosse team for three years, as well as a member of Best Buddies and multiple academic honor societies. She won the Barnard book award in 2018 and was a Silver Knight award nominee for drama this year. She will be studying at Duke University this fall.

Dymon Smith graduated from New World School of the Arts, where she was on the Principal’s Honor Roll. She earned a Dean’s Scholars Scholarship to attend New York University in the fall.

Hanna Sotolongo-Miranda graduated Cum Laude from Coral Reef High School’s International Baccalaureate Program. She will be studying marine science/marine biology at Florida International University’s Honors College this fall.

Harmony Vides graduated from Coral Reef High School and is now attending Florida State University.

Adda Gudjonsdottir graduated from Unidad Educativa Bilingue Delta High School, with the award of the International Baccalaureate Diploma. She completed her junior and senior year abroad in Guayaquil, Ecuador. She plans to study international relations with a focus on international law and politics.

Herne Jean-Baptiste graduated from New World School of the Arts where he was a Silver Knight Award nominee. He will be attending New York University this fall.

Jaysan Stinnett graduated from The Harid Conservatory and is considering scholarships and contract offers from several ballet companies.

Mia Tellechia-Choi graduated from Ransom Everglades High School where she was a member of several National Honor Societies, including French, Spanish and Mu Alpha Theta. She was the recipient of a Dan Leslie Bowden Fellowship in the Humanities, through which she traveled to Mexico to study and provide musical instruments and instruction to children affected by poverty and violence. She will be attending Florida State University to study marketing.

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Scarlett Quinto graduated from New World School of the Arts High School and will begin her junior year in the College BFA program there this fall. She worked this summer at the Ailey Camp at Miami’s Arsht Center. She’s excited about continuing her dance training in different styles with different choreographers and teachers.

Beth Rodriguez graduated from New World School of the Arts High School and is attending Florida International University.

Monica Delgado was an apprentice at Arts Ballet Theatre of Miami for one season and is currently in her second year of study at Miami-Dade College. She plans to transfer to Florida International University next year and major in business.

Lynn Laplante graduated from Miami Arts Charter, and studies business at Boston College while working as a model.

Eva Johnson graduated from New World School of the Arts, is enrolled at Florida International University, and plans to become a nurse. She has been a student at TAYB since she was in third grade.

Olivia Graham graduated from Design & Architecture Senior High School and is attending University of Michigan.

Scarlett Quinto graduated from New World School of the Arts High School, and will begin her junior year in the College BFA program there this fall. She worked this summer at the Aliley Camp at Miami’s Arst Center. She’s excited about continuing her dance training in different styles with different choreographers and teachers.

Lakeria Robinson graduated in the top five of her class, was a member of the National Honor Society and the student government association at Miami Arts and Minds High School. She is now pursing her BFA in Dance at New World School of the Arts. She participated in the Dance Theatre of Harlem’s intensive program this summer.

Evana Lefebre D’Ar genie graduated Cum Laude from Gulliver Prep and will be attending George Washington University’s Elliot School of International Affairs. In High School, she was in the National, French, Math and Da Vinci Honor Societies, and was awarded an International Baccalaureate Bilingual Diploma. She also received an Advanced Placement Scholars Award.

Beth Rodriguez graduated from New World School of the Arts High school and is attending Florida International University.

Annie Wright was in the Miami City Ballet’s Pre-Professional II Program for two years. She was recently promoted from apprentice to corps de ballet at the Carolina Ballet for the 2019-20 season.
Leslie Benaudis graduated from Gulliver Preparatory Academy and is attending the University of Miami. She is studying business with a major in marketing and a minor in finance.

Dahlia Despradel graduated from New World School of the Arts and is now at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She is a Pre-med health professors major, in hopes of becoming a sports/dance medicine doctor.

Victoria Jackson graduated from Miami Arts Charter, and is studying literature at Florida International University.

Seidy Ortiz graduated from Michael Krop High School and is attending Miami-Dade College. She plans to study accounting at Florida International University.

TAYB was definitely the best dance school that helped me grow as a dancer. I especially want to thank Mrs. Ruth for always supporting me and giving me the opportunity to become part of this amazing experience. - Seidy Ortiz

Mya Wright graduated from Ransom Everglades School, is beginning her third year at Mount Holyoke College and is a double major in Psychology and Statistics. This past summer she was a Research Assistant at FIU’s Summer Treatment Program, an eight-week treatment program and summer camp for children who have ADHD, misconduct disorder, or are on the autism spectrum.

Sophie Corugedo graduated from New World School of the Arts, and is entering her third year at the University of Florida. She is simultaneously pursuing a BS in Sustainability and the Built Environment and an MA in Urban and Regional Planning. She is interning with the City of Gainseville Planning and Zoning Department. She plans to become a teacher and to work in government, either as an employee or elected official, to advance climate change education. She continues to take dance classes on campus and choreographs for UF dancers.

Isabel Jarmel is attending Florida State University.

Victoria Smith graduated from Riviera Preparatory School and is a junior pursuing a psychology major with a dance minor at Florida International University’s Honors College. She also continues her love of performing by getting involved in the theatre department at FIU and continuing to dance with the TAYB Tap Team.

Tarina Touret is beginning her junior year at Georgetown University where she majors in Culture and Politics with a focus on governance and liberty in the digital world. This summer she was a production intern at CNN Espanol, where she worked on a daily live show called Director USA. She is studying abroad, in Hong Kong, this semester.
Joshua Noel graduated from New World School of the Arts High School and is starting his senior year at SUNY Purchase as a dance major. He is looking forward to presenting his senior project on the history and origin of ‘rep style.’ He spent this summer taking as many open classes as possible in Graham, ballet and contemporary dance.

Anastasia Padrón graduated Summa Cum Laude from Miami Senior High in the top 2% of her class. She is in her senior year at the University of North Carolina, pursuing a BFA in dance.

Aidan Neal is now entering his senior year in the BFA music theatre program at Florida State University. He has maintained extensive classical ballet training within the School of Dance at FSU. This summer he worked as a dance teacher at the Sitka Fine Arts camp in Alaska, then spent a month in New York City training at Steps on Broadway, Broadway Dance Center, Zvi Dance and Gibney Dance Center.

Raina Levin graduated from Coral Reef High School’s International Baccalaureate program. She received a full tuition scholarship from Northeastern University in Boston, where she is studying psychology. She will be spending this fall semester working in Milan.

Aliane Douyon graduated from New World School of the Arts High School. She was awarded a Posse Scholarship, and is attending Hamilton College in Clinton, New York, majoring in pre-med/public policy.

Ashley Newsholme graduated from New World School of the Arts, and is attending the University of Florida.

Maria Isabel Soñé graduated Cum Laude with Phi Theta Kappa Honors with her associates of art from Heartland Community College in Normal, IL. She will be attending Southern Illinois University Edwardsville this fall, pursuing a BA in dance with a minor in studio arts.

Mia Pennekamp is a senior at Mount Holyoke College, majoring in English and minoring in gender studies. She worked at a consulting firm in New York City this summer. She continues to write and hopes to find more time to take more ballet classes this year.
Puma Del Monte Bradbury earned his BFA in Dance from New World School of the Arts College, and was a member of Garth Fagan Dance for one season. He currently lives in South Africa, where he has a contract with a large African modeling agency.

Arike Babalola studied nursing and biology at Miami-Dade College, and began the Licensed Practical Nursing program at Robert Morgan Educational Center this year. She is looking forward to graduating in June 2020.

Michelle Anduiza graduated from the University of South Florida with a BFA in dance. She works for Miami City Ballet in the Community Engagement Department as a Teaching Artist for the Emplore Dance Program. This summer she was a faculty member of the Miami Bity Ballet Palm Beach Summer Dance Camp. She is pursuing an MFA at Florida State University, with a focus in Choreography, and will be working as a Teaching Assistant Professional there.

The love and support of TAYB has followed me every step of my journey through life and I am so grateful to be a part of this community. - Michelle Anduiza

Alexandra Caffrey graduated from Harvard with a degree in Government and Global Health. She recently returned to Miami, where she works for Mayor Andrew Gillum’s “Forward Florida” project. Alexandra directed the Harvard Ballet Company in their 2017 season, and she danced with the Harvard Dance Project.

Julia Martorell graduated from Boston University this year with a degree in anthropology. She is a trained doula and hopes to become a midwife.

Marcus McCray graduated from New World School of the Arts College in 2015. This year he appeared in the Dance Theatre of Harlem’s performances of “Dougla” at the South Miami Dade Cultural Arts Center, as part of the Peter London Global Dance ensemble.

Zoey Needham graduated from Georgetown University this year. Her next endeavor leads her to New York City, working with Creative Artists Agency, connecting the nation’s leading sports and entertainment talent to nonprofit organizations through the CAA Foundation. She hopes to use the knowledge gained to inform her career in entertainment law after law school within the next five years.

Marcel Mejia graduated from George Mason University this year, where he was recognized for Excellence in Performance for the School of Dance. He recently moved to Montreal to join Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal as a full-time artist for the 2019-20 season.
**2010 - 2014**

**Bianca Allanic** graduated from Indiana University with a bachelor of science in ballet. She was on tour with Quixotic Cirque Nouveau last year.

**Aminah Angrand** graduated from Miami-Dade College and is pursuing her BFA in dance from Colombia College Chicago. She is also pursuing a certification or degree in dance therapy, and considering a minor in graphic design.

**Ashley Anduiza** graduated with Honors from Florida State University in 2013 with a BFA in dance. She danced professionally with the Nashville Ballet and with Ballet Hispanico. She was a Membership Director at Crunch Fitness. After returning to Miami to be closer to family, she began as a Sales Executive with the front office of the Miami Marlins and currently enjoys servicing fans and businesses with utilizing Marlins Park as an entertainment venue.

**Javier Aranzales** - graduated from Harvard University, and worked for Microsoft Education in 2017-18, where he led the “laptops for K-12 classrooms” presence at education conferences in Austin, Chicago, Las Vegas and London. In October 2018 he moved to Nairobi, Kenya to teach ballet in the slum cities of Nairobi and to become fluent in Swahili. He now trains with a contemporary ballet there while also co-directing, producing and choreographing a contemporary ballet based on the iconic Kenyan novel “A River Between,” which will premiere in October 2019. He has worked with the United Nations Refugee Agency in Rwanda, teaching dance to youth in refugee camps there through MindLeaps, a “dance for at-risk youth” organization.

**Clara Auguste** graduated from CUNY Hunter College with a BA in dance. She is the founder of Aeternus Dance Company and joined KaNu Dance Theater as a company member, performing both in and outside of New York City. She was recently accepted into UCLA’s MFA Dance Program through the World Arts and Cultures/Dance Department and received a Graduate Opportunity Fellowship. In addition, she has launched a blog dedicated to sharing the stories of artists all across the world: Inheru.com.

**Yolomar Armas** graduated from NWSA High School and attended the London School of Design.

**Isaura Echeveste** graduated from Coral Reef High School and attended Florida International University. She is finishing her masters of social work degree, and is doing Crossfit.

**Victoria Bradford** graduated from New York University with a BA in politics. She was heavily involved in NYU’s Model United Nation’s club, and was the Under-Secretary General of Operations for Media and Public Relations for the 7th NYU’s Model United Nation Conference (NYUMUNC).

**Caitlyn Elie** graduated last year with a BFA from the University of South Florida and is now teaching at two studios in the Tampa area. She is performing with a Tampa dance company, and continues to choreograph and make new work. Her goal is to pursue an MFA in the coming years.
**Stephanie Fuentes** graduated from Thomas Armour Youth Ballet, teaching at the Miami Gardens Outreach Center. She has also introduced a modern dance curriculum at other TAYB sites.

**Alexis George** graduated from the University of Central Florida, and is now employed there in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. She begins graduate school in the fall, studying management entrepreneurship.

**Harper Garcia** is a theatrical performer, working professionally at various theaters throughout the United States. Her non-profit, PenArts, sponsored Pensacola’s SWAN (Support Women Artists Now) Day, which is an international event held in various cities across the globe, on the same day, to celebrate women artists.

**Georgette Fogle** graduated from Florida State University with a BS in anthropology. She is now in Dallas working as a 911 call taker and dispatcher. She is pursuing a masters degree in biomedical sciences from Liberty University and plans to graduate in December 2019.

**Diana Figueroa** graduated from Point Park University in Pittsburgh with a BFA in dance, and danced one season with Roxey Ballet. She returned to Miami as a company member of Dimensions Dance, where she is beginning her third season.

**Jean Floradin** graduated from Carnegie Mellon University with a BFA in acting/music theater. He completed work on an album of original music, and has appeared in a mini-series and a movie. He was also in the Chicago company of “Hamilton.”

**Addyson Fonte** lives in Miami and is the Marketing Director for Thomas Armour Youth Ballet. She also does freelance social media consulting.

**Caroline Friedhoff** graduated from Carleton College in the spring of 2016, having studied philosophy and cognitive science. She is completing her masters degree in bioethics at Harvard Medical School.

**Victoria Gilbert** graduated from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX in 2016 with a degree in marketing. She is working as a finance analyst in Dallas. She continues to take ballet and yoga classes.

**Rachel Ginsberg** is living in New York City and working for Barnard College as the Special Assistant to the Vice President of Development and Alumnae Relations. She is starting a masters degree program at Teachers College, Columbia University, focusing on higher ed administration. She is a dedicated yogi and NYC power-walker.

"I am now the President of PenArts, Inc, a nonprofit arts organization, which brings the arts to underserved youth. I hope we can expand and create a program as successful as TAYB. I am always in awe at how much they have achieved and how many kids’ lives they have helped, including my own. TAYB has created such a positive impact in the world, and we hope to be able to do the same." - Harper Garcia
Nicholas Losada is beginning his second season with the Gauthier Dance Company in Stuttgart. He was a soloist with the Bavarian State Ballet in Munich (Bayerisches Staatballet) for four years, after two years with their second company.

I am eternally grateful for the excellent training I received from the Thomas Armour Youth Ballet and for their encouragement and nourishment of my potential as a young boy. - Nicholas Losada

Diana Lopez graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in May of 2018 with a Bachelor of Science in Biology, a Bachelor of Arts in Hispanic Literature and Cultures, and a minor in Neuroscience. After being accepted into 11 medical schools, she selected Cleveland Clinic Lerner School of Medicine, where she plans to earn her MD and a Masters in Science in Biomedical Investigation. She has been awarded a full-tuition scholarship and a merit-based living stipend through the Cleveland Clinic and is also a Keybank Minority Medical Student Scholarship recipient.

Priscilla Martinez is working at Jackson Memorial Hospital as a medical technologist. She is currently on a dance tour with the MC HAMMER five month tour. She was a Miami Heat dancer, and has performed on film, television, and on stage at events.

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Annellyse Munroe graduated from Columbia University with an MS in nonprofit management and is a New York Knicks City Dancer. She performed for two seasons with Alvin Ailey II, and was featured on the cover of Dance Spirit Magazine in 2015.

Francesca Martoccio graduated in 2016 from SUNY Purchase where she received her bachelor of fine arts in dance with a ballet concentration. After graduating, she joined Colorado Ballet’s Studio Company in 2016, was promoted into the company as an Apprentice in 2017, and now to the Corps de Ballet for the 2019-2020 season.

Angela Martoccio is a music journalist. She is currently a writer at Rolling Stone Magazine. She resides in Brooklyn with her cat, Zuma.

Jeremy Neal is an actor and model who is recently engaged. He and his fiancé are moving to Kyoto, Japan to teach English for one year, then to London to return to their acting and modeling careers.
Emily Rivera graduated from Hamilton College with a BA in Government and Chinese. Last year, she completed a graduate certificate program at the Johns Hopkins SAIS Nanjing campus in China. She currently works as an International Trade Special Assistant at a law firm in DC.

Ebony Smith graduated from Dartmouth College with a bachelor of arts in 2018 and a bachelor of engineering in 2019. She is an engineer with a concentration in Biomedicine. As an undergraduate, she worked at a biotech company named Adimab, which specializes in antibody discovery. This year she relocated to Cambridge, Massachusetts and is working at Novartis Institutes for Biomedical Research (NIBR).

Smita Sen is a multimedia visual artist and UX/UI designer. With her background in UX/UI, 3D CAD modeling, and advanced manufacturing (esp. 3D printing), she creates digital products as well as hybrid physical-digital experiences. She graduated from Columbia University in 2016 with a degree in the Visual Arts. She has worked at Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Discovery Communications, and the Urban Design Lab. She is the Creative Director of Into the Shell, the first project from Sen Studio, a multimedia studio collaborative of artists and engineers. In the fall, she will be joining the faculty of Choate Rosemary Hall, where she will be teaching emerging media.

Melanie Ramos graduated Magna Cum Laude with a BFA in Dance from SUNY Purchase in 2018. She is pursuing a career in dance and choreography in New York City, where she had three works staged this year. She was chosen for the Ann & Weston Hicks Choreography Fellows Program at Jacobs Pillow this summer.

Merina Seidel graduated from Emerson College with a film and television production major. She has worked on several film and television projects, including last year’s Golden Globes and on the HBO series “Sharp Objects” and “Westworld.” She has completed several feature and short films as a script supervisor, and plans to join the union.

Jay Reimers is beginning his sixth season with BalletMet in Ohio. He is looking forward to collaborating with Karen Wing to choreograph on the company in its New Voices concert this season.

Thryn Saxon graduated from Florida State University, and danced with the Kate Weare Company. She is currently appearing in “Sleep No More” in New York City and is recently engaged.

Jayce Pruitt graduated from Tisch School of the Arts at New York University and danced for two seasons as a member of Ailey II. He is entering his second season with both The Met Opera and Company XIV in New York City.
**Imranda Ward** graduated from New World School of the Arts High School in 2014. She earned her AA degree in physical therapy from Miami-Dade College, and her BFA in dance from Florida State University. As part of her work at FSU, she researched and analyzed the cultural and folkloric dances that exist in the island of St. Kitts and Nevis.

**Jasmine Ward** graduated in 2016 with a BFA in dance performance with a minor in strategic communication from Butler University. She has danced with the New York Theatre Ballet and Ballet Next in New York City. She appeared in rap artist Future’s music video of “Crushed Up,” which she performed live on the “Ellen Show” this year. A highlight of last year was her performance as Pecola Breedlove in Toni Morrison’s “The Bluest Eye” at the Arden Theatre Company in Philadelphia PA.

**Chiara Tejidor** graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance with Ballet Emphasis from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music in 2018. She joined Oklahoma City Ballet as a Trainee for their 2018-2019 season, and is now auditioning with other companies and exploring new artistic opportunities.

**Kristina Zaidner** continues to perform with fellow NWSA and TAYB alumni Christopher Rudd for RuddR Dance’s season both nationally in the US and most recently in Guayaquil, Ecuador! She also performs regularly with ArchDance directed by Jennifer Archibald in NYC. She continues to teach in both the junior and professional divisions of The Ailey School as well as a guest in other dance schools in the USA and Europe. This year Kristina will join the ballet company of The Metropolitan Opera once again for their 2019-2020 season and will continue to perform as a freelance artist for various choreographers throughout NYC.

**Dara Tannenbaum** graduated from the Florida International University School of Architecture with a Bachelors in Interior Design. Since 2013 she has worked as Project Designer for an Italian furniture company in the Miami Design District where she specializes in high-end kitchen and closet design. She currently resides in Coconut Grove.
Chelsey Alvarez graduated from Florida International University with a bachelor’s degree in hospitality management. She continues to dance, and currently teaches several dance forms at Prestige Dance Academy, where she also leads the competition/performing team. She has won awards for her choreography at various dance competitions.

Brittany Oliver Arquart received her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from University of Miami, and is working as a physical therapist for Nicklaus Children’s Hospital in Miami. She completed her residency, becoming a Board Certified Pediatric Specialist last year and recently received her national board certification in Pediatrics. She and her husband have a two-year-old son.

Caroline Betancourt graduated from the University of Cincinnati’s College Conservatory of Music in 2010. She has danced professionally with the Louisville Ballet for three years; Ballet du Capitole in Toulouse, France as a demi-solist for two years; and the Royal Danish Ballet in Copenhagen, Denmark for four years. She is now a freelance artist living in Toronto, Canada. She performed in TAYB’s Nutcracker as a guest star Sugar Plum Fairy in 2012 and will be back to perform in this year’s 2019 production with her fiancé and dance partner, Evgeni Dokoukine.

Debra Bazile Elonne graduated from NWSA College in 2008, and danced for four years in Texas with Dallas Black Dance Theatre 2. She is beginning her seventh year as an elementary school teacher in Miami Dade County Public Schools, and received her master’s in reading from Florida International University in 2018. She was a professional development instructor this summer for the school system, teaching 100 educators about higher order thinking strategies. She also has a blog and You Tube channel: www.talkcurlytome.com

Masha Ciampittiello graduated from FSU with a BA in art history in 2012. She graduated from University of Miami School of Law in 2016, and is now working as a litigation attorney in Orlando.

Brittany Oliver Arquart received her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from University of Miami, and is working as a physical therapist for Nicklaus Children’s Hospital in Miami. She completed her residency, becoming a Board Certified Pediatric Specialist last year and recently received her national board certification in Pediatrics. She and her husband have a two-year-old son.

Lauren Delgado Hardegree is currently in her last year of Radiology residency in Memphis, TN and plans to return to Miami for 1 year to complete a fellowship in Pediatric Radiology at Nicklaus Children’s Hospital. She continues to travel almost every other week to see her husband, now a coach with the NY Jets, and apprehensively plans to take up hip hop classes during her time off. She is also nervous to set foot in a dance studio again after being out of one for 14 years, especially one that doesn’t involve leotards and tights!

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Hassan Ingraham is a professional dancer, instructor, and choreographer currently living in Minneapolis, MN. He earned a BFA degree in dance from The Juilliard School in 2011, and has worked with many prominent artists. He is currently on faculty at the Minnesota Dance Theatre as a contemporary ballet teacher, and passionately serves his community through hosting dance workshops and master classes. He has choreographed for numerous dance schools and programs across the country, most recently creating two works for The North Ballet Academy in Otsego, MN. Hassan invites you to follow his Facebook page to learn more about any upcoming performances, classes, and/or events.

Liony Garcia has been commissioned to develop a new piece entitled “Corporeal Decorum,” an expansion of a work he debuted at Miami Light Project’s Here & Now Festival in 2019. As a dancer, he will appear this year with Brigid Baker & Whole Project” at Miami-Dade County Auditorium. He choreographed and performed in a site specific work called “Plaza” as part of the Pioneer Winter Collective’s “Grass Stains” project in 2018.

Gentry George founded Zest Collective, the premiere dance company of New York City’s Inwood/Washington Heights neighborhood, in 2013. He graduated from the Juilliard School in 2012, and was a dancer with the Dance Theatre of Harlem, Ailey II, and Lustig Dance Theatre. He currently teaches at American Musical and Dramatic Academy (AMDA), Randolph College, and the Dance Project of Washington Heights where he also serves as Artistic Director of the Youth Dance Ensemble. visit: www.zestcollective.org

Julia Sebago Headly graduated from the Juilliard School. This will be her seventh season with Ballet National Theater Mannheim. She also launched her own line of accessories called Sebaga Creations, and is expecting the arrival of her first child this fall.

Benicka Grant studied dance at Southern Methodist University, and is beginning her fifth season with Dance Now! Miami. She performs with Cirque Dreams, as well as various film projects.

Camila Gil holds a master’s degree of global governance and public affairs from Florida International University, and a bachelor’s degree in international studies and political science from the University of Miami. She is currently the Director of Arts Education and Outreach at Thomas Armour Youth Ballet. She became a licensed real estate agent this year. She is working towards becoming licensed in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction to improve the social emotional learning component of TAYB’s outreach programming. She was married in 2016.

Nadege Green is a journalist who covers social justice issues for WLRN, South Florida’s NPR affiliate. For her, journalism is about seeking out the voices we don’t hear from and telling those stories. In 2016 she was recognized by the National Association of Black Journalists with three first place awards for investigative reporting, long form and short form radio reporting on policing in Miami-Dade’s black communities. The Florida AP Broadcaster Awards and the National Edward R. Murrow Awards have also honored her work.
Erin Jester graduated from the University of Florida in December 2012 with a journalism degree and a minor in dance. After spending three years working as a newspaper reporter, she joined the staff of the Hippodrome State Theatre as a costume shop apprentice. In August 2017 she began an MFA program in costume design and technology at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Rashad Ingraham was featured on the Starz Network series “Magic City.” He danced with Miami Contemporary Dance and was the dance master at Armando Danz Studio. He was also a dance coach with the Girl Power after school program. TAYB’S 2018 performances of The Nutcracker were dedicated to Rashad to commemorate his passing earlier that year.

Mindy Joo graduated from Duke University in 2009. Since graduating, she has been living in NYC. She currently works in business development for PGIM Investments. She has been a volunteer with the NYC Ballet since 2010 and is also an applicant interviewer for Duke University. She is also a member of the Women’s Bond Club, PGIM Investments’ Junior Women’s Advisory Council, and iMentor.

Rony Lenis is beginning his fourth season with City Ballet of San Diego. He previously spent three years in the Joffrey Ballet Trainee Program in New York City, and two seasons with the Colorado Ballet Studio Company in Denver. He is pursuing a certification as a comprehensive Pilates instructor through Balanced Body.

Giselle Lopez-McAllister earned her bachelor’s degree in social work from Barry University and her master’s of social work at Gallaudet University in Washington, DC. She now lives in Maryland and takes care of her family.

Alexandria Love graduated with a BFA in dance, with a minor in theology, from Fordham University in 2008. She is an entertainer, host, model and professional dancer. She has been the emcee and host of the Brooklyn Nets Basketball games, and is the founder of SpreadsomLove.com, a non-profit organization that acts as a financial aggregator for fundraising initiatives. She teaches a nationally broadcast spin class for Peloton. She is represented by Wilhelmina Modeling Agency for Fashion and Fitness, and has appeared in numerous ad campaigns. She is a Certified Health Coach from the Institute of Integrative Nutrition. You are invited to enjoy her blog at aLovesquad.com, and to visit AllyLove.com

Charity Metzger graduated Magna Cum Laude from Howard University in 2008. She danced three seasons with The Philadelphia Dance Company D/2, 2008-2011, and three seasons with Garth Fagan Dance Company, 2011-2014. She married her husband, Robert, in 2012 and they moved to Maryland in 2014. Charity is currently a dance education artist for District of Columbia Public Schools where she teaches dance as an integrative tool in academics. With Charity, students are introduced to ballet, tap, modern and dance forms of the African Diaspora. Charity also began a free after school dance program specifically geared toward ballet and modern dance techniques in preparation for high school dance auditions for Duke Ellington School of the Arts. Charity and Robert welcomed their first child in 2017 and their second in 2019.

Behroz Nowrojee-Redhead graduated with honors and awards from the University of Florida with a master’s in special education, bachelor’s in elementary education, and a minor in dance. She is an elementary school teacher living in Tampa with her husband and young family.
Andrea Murillo graduated from New World School of the Arts College in 2009, and immediately joined the Martha Graham Dance Company, where she danced as a company member for several years. She performed in “Sleep No More” in New York City, performed in theatrical and dance collaborations around the world, and created numerous theatrical events. She has created two dance films, “Conduit for a Dream,” and “Waves.”

Nathaly Prieto studied dance at New World School of the Arts College and with the Joffrey Ballet trainee program, both on full scholarship. She begins her eighth season with the Dayton Ballet this year. She was a guest artist at the 2016 TAYB Spring Concert.

Vee Rene attended St. Thomas University, and joined the United States Army. She completed training and earned her wings as an aviation operation specialist. She is stationed in Savannah, Georgia and is scheduled for a European deployment this year.

Lourdes Rodriguez performed five years as a member of the Dance Theatre of Harlem, and then was a member of Armitage Gone! Dance and the Connecticut Ballet. She is pursuing a career in physical therapy, and is in her second clinical rotation at Lenox Hill Hospital. She is is also in training to become a Gyrotonics instructor.

Colleen O’Malley graduated with a BS from George Washington University School of Nursing. She worked as a pediatric nurse at Children’s National Medical Center in Washington D.C., and has recently moved to Charlotte, North Carolina where she works part time as an RN. She and her husband welcomed their first baby girl last year.

Florenca Pradere-Guerrier earned a BFA in dance from Marygrove College, and a masters of education in educational leadership from Concordia University. She was the Dance Department Chair for the Longleaf Performing Arts School in Raleigh, NC., and is now the lead magnet dance teacher at Norland Middle School. She is the Director of AileyCamp Miami and a principal dancer of Live in Color Dance Collective. She lives in Fort Lauderdale with her husband and two children.

Catalina Rey completed her PhD in behavior analysis at Florida Institute of Technology and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Kennedy Krieger Institute, performing research and working with children with severe problem behavior. She is currently a postdoctoral research fellow working with Dr. Sarah Heil at the University of Vermont to increase the use of contraception, to decrease unintended pregnancy, in opiod-maintained women.

Michelle Russell graduated from Florida State University with an honors degree in dance and minor in business. After graduating she moved to New York City, where she has worked with Urban Bush Women, Forces of Nature Dance Theatre, and Dance Lab New York. She has performed at Arrow Rock Lyceum, the Metropolitan Opera, and Virginia Repertory Theatre. She will be making her Broadway debut this fall in a revival of West Side Story.
Dayme Sanchez graduated from Harvard Law School in 2015, and is practicing at Holland and Knight, San Francisco, in litigation and international arbitration.

Leslie St. Jour graduated from New York University with a double major in dance and African studies, and earned her MA in applied physiology at Teachers College Columbia University. She works at Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, and was a Teaching Artist at Arts For All in New York City. She continues to teach dance and fitness in New York City.

Yara Travieso is a Latinx Brooklyn based writer, director, filmmaker, and choreographer. She is a 2019 United States Artist Fellow, a Creative Capital recipient, and a winner of The National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures Grant via The Ford Foundation. Travieso co-founded the Borscht Film Festival in 2005 and received a BFA from The Juilliard School in 2009. Her live productions have been featured in NYC’s Park Avenue Armory, Lincoln Center, Performance Space NY, The Public Theater, The High Line, and Vizcaya Museum among others. Her film works have been featured at Film Society of Lincoln Center, Miami Film Festival, SXSW, Museum of The Moving Image and commissioned by Hermes of Paris, GQ, and Glamour among others. VICE describes La Medea, Travieso’s touring immersive musical film, as “A modern-day Medea is mythology’s ‘Nasty Woman’.” You are invited to visit www.yaratravieso.com

Josh Winzeler received his BFA in Dance from New World School of the Arts in 2011. He danced with Ballet Hispanico for six years, where he also taught in their school of dance. He is now the Rehearsal Director for Ballet Hispanico’s second company, BHdos. He is also Artistic Associate for the School of Dance and a member of the ballet faculty in the Professional Studies Program.

Shadae Ringo Smith graduated from Fordham University with a BFA in theater in 2008. He earned his MFA in film directing from UCLA. He directs music videos for The Black Eyed Peas and will.i.am, and has also worked with hip hop artists Lady Leshur, Ms. Banks and Lioness. He also works on music and fashion videos for the brand Pretty Little Things. He is currently writing two feature films.

Cedric Walker worked for several years in public relations with St. John Knits in New York City. He got married in 2016, and completed an internship with Details magazine. He is currently a stylist for WSJ Magazine.

Ayla Weisz moved from Miami in 2009, and has continued to study movement in academic and professional settings at The Boston Conservatory, Nederlands Dans Theatre, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, The Peridance Capezio Center, and Carolina Ballet. Her love of movement and strong community values instilled at TAYB led her to explore the circus arts and the cyr wheel, which is her primary apparatus. She performs all over NYC and the country with ABCirque, Only Child Aerial Theater, The Box, Phoenix Entertainment, Imagine Aerial, and Atlas Circus Company. She also teaches at The Muse Brooklyn.

She has also developed a passion for producing. She started with stop-motion video production at Visual Country where she was the Lead Creative Producer for over a year. She has been the stage manager and producer for multiple companies throughout Brooklyn, most recently for nightlife performer Medea under the name Speakeasy Circus.

Aylinie Sanchez

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Taylor Barker graduated from New World School of the Arts with a BFA in Dance. She has performed with Florida Grand Opera, Virginia Opera, and Still Point Productions. She currently choreographs musical theater productions for Westminster Christian School. Taylor lives with her husband and five-year-old daughter in Portsmouth, VA, where they are stationed with the US Navy. They currently own and operate Penelope’s Closet: a handmade product and holistic wellness business, as well as Taylor Michele Portraiture.

Diego Blanco and partner Ana Padron received their BFA (Honors) from New World School of the Arts. Ana was in Graham II and Diego choreographed and danced with Jennifer Muller. As Artistic Directors of their company Tango For All (TFA) in NYC, their works have been presented by Brooklyn Academy of Music, Aksra Theater King Power, Thailand, Teatro Tapia, PR, Off-Broadway and National Symphony Orchestra. With over a decade of experience in Argentine Tango, they have collaborated on productions with Latin Grammy Winners Pedro Giraudo, Hector Del Curto and Battle Creek Symphony. In 2015, Diego & Ana restructured TFA into a 501(c)3 non-profit, expanding Argentine tango’s access via education and performance outreach programs to youth, persons with Parkinson’s and oncology units around NYC. They were awarded the Soka Gakkai Malaysia award and Dream Dancer award for their dedication to dance. After 15 years Diego and Ana are currently relocating. Diego will be moving to Amsterdam and Ana will be returning home to Miami. Photo Credit: Eduardo Goytia.

Jacqueline Búñes received a BFA (Honors) from New World School of the Arts. Jacqueline was a Soloist with the Martha Graham Dance Company and the Jose Limón Dance Company in New York. She is the lead actress in the Italian film “Proserpina”, directed by Federico Tocchella – which will be released in January 2020. She has also worked extensively in Europe as choreographer & teacher, having directed productions for Torino Fringe Festival (Italy), Teatro Asti Festival (Italy), In Teatro Festival (Italy), ‘Mistero della Mente’ Festival (Italy) and Cupar Arts Festival (Scotland). She performed this year in the Merce Cunningham Bicentennial Celebration at BAM’s Opera House in Brooklyn, NY. Her newest work as choreographer is a quartet titled “The Gravity Between,” which premiered in Denmark and is scheduled to tour Europe this year. She will be pursuing a Masters degree in Arts Management & Entrepreneurship at The New School University in New York while continuing to work professionally as both choreographer and master teacher throughout Europe.

Gina Tiffany Alemán lives in Orlando. She completed her master’s degree program in instructional design and diversity education at Nova Southeastern University in 2010, and has started a statewide event planning business, Array Event Design. She and her husband have a five-year-old son, and a one-year-old baby girl.

Rachel Carroll is a freelance dancer and fine art/photography model in Miami. She has been dancing with Jenny Larsson’s Wild Beast Collective since 2014, has been a member of the interactive performance group, CircX, since 2006, and is gearing up for the 5th production of Crystal Peattie’s “The Haunted Ballet.” She recently joined the TAYB faculty and began teaching this August. She is grateful for the opportunity to return to her roots and give back to the community.
Stacey Clark has spent the last 14 years in education, teaching dance and academics as she works with innovative supplemental programming. She is also the proud owner of Stacey’s Styling, a personal wardrobe styling company that encourages people to dress courageously, based on their unique personalities. She recently finished ministry school and plans to complete her state teaching license this coming year.

Eduard Forehand has danced as a company member with the Richmond Ballet, August Ballet and Dayton Ballet. He danced for eight seasons with the Louisville Ballet in Kentucky. He graduated from the University of Iowa with an MFA in choreography, and hopes to find a professorship with a University.

Selina Terpischore Hall is the Director of Academics for Yes Prep Public Schools in Houston, Texas. She provides instructional coaching to teachers to increase academic achievement in low socio-economic neighborhoods. She is in her 10th season with Houston City Dance, and is engaged to be married in October 2019.

“I am forever grateful to the Thomas Armour Youth Ballet and the role it played in shaping me into the woman I am today. Thanks again for doing this every year!” - Selena Hall

Ebony Haswell Frazier danced for several years with the Dance Theater of Harlem, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and Complexions. She also taught at the Debbie Allen Dance Academy, and is the mother of a little boy.

Ty Hodges is working as an actor and film director in Los Angeles. He has written and directed four feature films. He is currently developing projects for his production company, Art Farm Entertainment. He also collaborated with fellow alum Chris Rudd on a dance project called “Witness” that debuted in 2018. He directed a film about Bobbi Kristina, the daughter of Whitney Houston and Bobby Brown, which aired on TV One in 2017.

Jessica Dandridge Davis received a bachelors degree from Florida A & M University with a double major in Spanish and education. She lives in Tallahassee with her three children, and was very excited to open her own dance studio, the Tallahassee Academy of the Dancing Arts, or T.A.D.A., in 2017.

Ronald Duncan graduated from DePaul University in 2002. He danced with Hubbard Street Dance in Chicago, and was in the Las Vegas cast of “Mamma Mia!.” He was in the national touring company of “Dreamgirls,” and appeared on television in “Smash.” He recently received his BA in Creative Writing & Production for Theatre Arts at DePaul University, and planned to pursue a Master of Arts in Publishing & Writing at Emerson College in Boston.

Alexis Graber is the owner of Trixie Minx Productions, which produces burlesque entertainment shows in New Orleans. Beyond producing & performing throughout the world, she also works as an advocate for affordable performer healthcare with the New Orleans Musicians Clinic.

Chevon Haswell Rariy is a Harvard trained, board certified Internal Medicine and Endocrinology physician, researcher, educator, and healthcare advocate with over 10 years medical experience. She is the founder and president of Specialty Telemedicine Physicians, PLLC which focuses on utilizing endocrine telemedicine to provide access to quality sub-speciality healthcare to those living in under-served areas, often associated with rural communities or urban ethnic and racial populations nationally and internationally. She currently lives in Melbourne, Australia with her husband and their two boys.

Zach Law Ingram danced four seasons with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, two years with Dallas Black Dance Theatre, and in the Las Vegas production of “The Lion King.” He currently teaches at the Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing Arts and at the Joffrey Ballet School in Dallas, Texas. He is also the founder of 6 o’Clock Dance Theatre, and invites you to visit www.6oClockdancetheatre.com
Paunika RhoShawn Jones is a former Principal Dancer with Dance Theatre of Harlem and Complexions Dance Company. She is now the Director of Paunikau Jones Dance Company, performs as a freelance artist and ballerina, and is a Gyrokinesis and yoga instructor. She lives in New York City. Photo Credit: Bryon Malik Photo

Sparkle Malone earned her PhD in Biology from the University of Alabama. She had previously earned her master’s in forest biometrics from the University of Florida in 2010. She is now Professor of Ecology at Florida International University. Her research evaluates how climate and disturbance regimes influence natural ecosystems.

Lloyd Knight was inducted into the Miami-Dade College Hall of Fame in 2017, and is beginning his fourteenth year as a member of the Martha Graham Company, where he is a Principal Dancer. This past year he performed for a week at the Palais Opéra Garnier with The Martha Graham Dance Co. as well as touring internationally and around the United States. He was a dancer for Rashid Johnson’s film “The Hikers” which premiered at the Aspen Art Museum this July. This summer he appeared with the Graham Company in Vail and Jacob’s Pillow, and he looks forward to being a guest artist for The Royal Ballet of Flanders in November 2019.

Matthew Leddy currently lives in Los Angeles, CA and works in TV and film production. At LATV (Latino Alternative Television), he works in the Technical Operations Center as a master control operator. At Underscore Films, he collaborates on various productions, including a recent commercial spot for Wiz Khalifa’s “Weed Farm” app. Additionally, he has managed some recent market research projects for A-list brands. These experiences have shaped Matthew’s vision for his media company, Leddy Set Go Productions (LeddySetGo.tv), aiming to empower artists and innovators to tell their stories in a green, sustainable world. Matthew says, “My vision is worldwide but I will remain 305 ’til I die! Yes, I still have a 305 number. Much love and gratitude to the Thomas Armour family.”

Anya Knoblock received her BFA in dance from NWSA College in 2007, and a master’s in international administration from the University of Miami in 2008. She worked at the Democratic National Committee in Washington D.C., followed by tenures at a public affairs firm, the Russian American Foundation and the Hillary for America Presidential Campaign. Currently, Anya volunteers for local arts and political organizations in Queens, where she resides with her husband and new baby boy.

Riolama Lorenzo became a member of New York City Ballet in 1995, dancing in countless works in that company’s repertoire. Ms. Lorenzo joined the Pennsylvania Ballet in 2002, becoming a Principal Dancer with that company in 2005. She returned three times to dance the role of Sugar Plum Fairy for TAYB’s production of “The Nutcracker.” Since retiring from the stage she has concentrated on the role of mother and teacher, and is currently an adjunct professor at the University of Houston.

Sarah Lozoff is an intimacy director, movement director, education coordinator for Intimacy Directors International, Gyrotonic method trainer, and a guest teaching artist for professional dance and theater companies across the U.S. She danced professionally with Ballet Rosario Suarez, while teaching for Thomas Armour Youth Ballet, until 2005. For twenty years, Sarah has taught ballet for professional companies, conservatories, public schools, and outreach programs. Over the last seven years, she’s choreographed and provided movement and intimacy direction for theatre productions at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Guthrie Theater, and Mixed Blood Theatre. She currently travels for freelance work, while teaching weekly gyrotonic, ballet, and conditioning classes in Ashland, Oregon, where she lives with her husband and two children.
Mariya Dashkina-Maddux created the outdoor, free and open-to-the-public Wake Forest Dance Festival, which just completed its third year. She danced with the Martha Graham Company for nine years. She participated in the NYC Dance Project in 2015, and her photograph was selected for the cover of the photography book resulting from that project. She will also appear in their upcoming book, “The Style of Movement,” and was on the cover of Dior Magazine this year. She and her husband welcomed their second son to their family this year.

Michelle Mendez received a BA in psychology in 2005 from Florida State University. She lived in Asheville, North Carolina, where she launched the city’s first eating disorder treatment clinic. She now lives in Jupiter, Florida with her husband and two sons, and is a consultant for treatment centers, coach, and trainer for the prevention of eating disorders in youth and adults.

Miguel Quiñones was a company member of David Parsons Dance for six years, and was recognized as outstanding alumnus of New World School of the Arts in 2010. He started his own company, “Open Category Dance Co.,” in Philadelphia in 2015 with fellow Parsons dancer Steven Vaughn, with whom he has made several guest appearances with TAYB. Their newest piece, “Match,” premiered at the 2018 TAYB Spring Concert. He is the Ballet Master at Mid Atlantic Ballet, a school in Newark, Delaware.

Tarell Alvin McCraney is an acclaimed writer. His script IN MOONLIGHT BLACK BOYS LOOK BLUE is the basis for the Oscar-winning film MOONLIGHT directed by Barry Jenkins, for which McCraney and Jenkins won an Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay. He wrote the film HIGH FLYING BIRD which premiered on Netflix directed by Steven Soderbergh. McCraney’s plays include MS. BLAKK FOR PRESIDENT (co-written with Tina Landau), THE BROTHER/SISTER PLAYS trilogy, HEAD OF PASSES, WIG OUT!, and CHOIR BOY which was nominated for four Tony Awards. He is the recipient of a MacArthur “Genius” Grant, the Whiting Award, Steinberg Playwright Award, the Evening Standard Award, the New York Times Outstanding Playwright Award, the Paula Vogel Playwriting Award, the Windham Campbell Award, and a USA Artist Award. He is currently Chair of Playwriting at Yale School of Drama; an ensemble member at Steppenwolf Theatre Chicago; and a member of Teo Castellanos/D-Projects. McCraney is currently working on an original scripted TV series, DAVID MAKES MAN, for Oprah Winfrey’s OWN Network, produced by Michael B Jordan and Page Fright Productions.

Farewell and thank you for your contributions to the dance world! We are excited by all of your work and accomplishments. Many continued wishes of success and joy to you all!- Masha Dashkina-Maddux

Quashone Perry is a law clerk at the Dabdoub Law Firm in Miami. He has been a member of the TAYB Board of Directors since 2003, and plans to begin teaching a dance class for boys at a South Miami community center. He was featured in a TIME Magazine profile in 2005.

Tyrell Rolle is currently living in Las Vegas and teaching dance full-time. He founded the Rolle Project, a non-profit dance company and arts programming organization. He created R.A.G.E, “Reaching Above Greater Expectations,” a dance program for children at the Little Haiti Cultural Complex this summer, which was featured on the local CBS 4 News.
Karell Williams graduated from the Juilliard School, and danced for six seasons with Les Grands Ballet Canadiens de Montreal. He currently has a career in television, starring in the STARZ drama “Flesh and Bone,” and appearing in “Jennifer Jones,” “The Detour,” and several national and international commercials.

Yusha Sorzano performs with Camille A. Brown & Dancers, is the Artistic Director of the Joffrey Ballet School’s Southwest Dallas Summer Intensive, and the Associate Director of Program Development for Francisco Gella Dance Works. She was a member of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for three years, and was part of its 2019 New Directions Choreography Lab. She was also the recipient of a National YoungArts Foundation Residency this fall in Miami.

“Thank you for all that you do for aspiring young artists. You truly impacted my journey - I will always be abundantly grateful for you!” - Yusha Sorzano

Natalie Wright is the owner and Director of Ballet Conservatory West (BCW) in Los Angeles, California. Students learn modern dance, tap and classical ballet utilizing the same syllabus as the Thomas Armour Youth Ballet, continuing in its tradition.

Randolph Ward returned to Miami in 2017 after dancing for six seasons as a member of the contemporary ballet Donion Dance Company/Saarlandisches Staatstheater in Saarbrucken, Germany. Retiring after fifteen years as a professional dancer, he produced and choreographed “Vogue Extravaganza,” an evening of dance at the Little Haiti Cultural Center, and his work was featured at the Dimensions Dance Theatre salon for new works in 2019. He is currently working on a new production entitled “Boys Will Be Boys.”

Kevin Whitaker can be seen in numerous music videos and commercials, and is currently editing music videos, including those of Jennifer Lopez.

Chris Rudd founded his own company, RuddRDance, in 2015. His choreography has been seen in Canada, France, Trinidad & Tobago, Burkina Faso and throughout the United States. He is currently preparing for RuddR Dance Empowers the Americas, a five-country tour across the Americas. In addition to being the first recipient of The New World School of the Arts Alumni Foundation’s Inspiration Grant, Mr. Rudd has earned grants from New Music USA, American Dance Abroad, Career Transition For Dancers, Harlem Stage’s Fund for New Work, World Learning Global Development & Exchanged, U.S. Embassy Burkina Faso, and Arts Envoy - a program supported by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs.

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Leo Javier Alvarez has spent the last six months teaching and choreographing in China. He danced with Rutaruo Ballet and Southern Ballet Theater, as well as for the Disney Company in Tokyo and Orlando. He has been a faculty member at TAYB, and appeared as Drosselmeyer in TAYB’s 2017 and 2018 productions of the Nutcracker.

Robert Battle is the Artistic Director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. He is a graduate of the New World School of the Arts and holds a BFA in dance from The Juilliard School. He was a member of the Parsons Dance Company from 1994 to 2001, where he began setting his work in 1998. He founded Battleworks Dance Company in 2001.

Dierdre Carberry is a professor at the University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music Dance Division. She enjoyed a long, spectacular career as a Principal Dancer with American Ballet Theater, appearing on television and stages worldwide with Mikhail Baryshnikov. She has since been in demand as a teacher, and adjudicator of dance competitions.

Jessica Shults-Figueroa danced for 10 years with the Miami City Ballet. After leaving the company she joined Miami Contemporary Dance Company where she was a dancer until 2015. Jessica taught at Thomas Armour Youth Ballet from 2007 until the end of the 2019 school year, leaving to pursue a full-time position in commercial sales and leasing at Keyes Commercial. She is married and the mother of three lovely children.

Erika Johnson is a freelance dancer, actor and teacher in Miami. She coaches competitive ice skaters at the Kendall Ice Arena as their ballet/dance instructor (in off-ice training) and works as Dr. Mary Posa at Nicklaus Children’s Hospital with the Healthy Humor Clown Care unit (formerly Big Apple Circus). She and her husband, David Solomon (head carpenter at Dade County Auditorium), recently welcomed their daughter, Kara Felicity, into the world.

Lara Murphy graduated from NWSA High School, and holds a BA from New York University and an MA from the University of Miami. She is currently a professor and choreographer at NWSA. She has performed with several professional companies, most recently with Maximum Dance Company and Miami Contemporary Dance Company. She is the Co-Artistic Director of TAYB’s annual production of “The Nutcracker.” Her work was presented at the 2015 Dance USA national conference.

Sally Ann Kennedy was a founding company member of Miami City Ballet, and rose to the rank of Principal Dancer during her career with that company. She then performed with Cirque du Soleil, Maximum Dance Company and Ballet Gamonet. She is currently a Ballet Mistress with Miami Youth Ballet, and is married with one son.

Heather Fryxell was a Principal Dancer with the Orlando Ballet for several years, and then danced with Ballet West. She is now on the principal faculty at Ballet West Academy, where they recently adopted her Adaptive Movement Mentor program. She is now taking that program around the United States, most recently in Scarsdale, New York.

Ivonne Labrada-Leichtling danced professionally with The Dance Theatre of Harlem and holds a BA from the University of Miami. Following her dance career, she became a public relations executive specializing in the entertainment, hospitality and restaurant industries. Currently, she is married and a full time mother of two daughters.
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The Thomas Armour Youth Ballet, Inc. is funded in part by The Children’s Trust of Miami-Dade County. The Children’s Trust is a dedicated source of revenue established by voter referendum to improve the lives of children and families in Miami-Dade County. We are also funded in part by Miami-Dade County Dept. Of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners.
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