

En l'Air

News from
MASSACHUSETTS
ACADEMY of
BALLET
Educational Training
Association

FALL
2017



Nutcracker & Sweets 2016. Photo: Charles Flachs

From Rose & Charles

MAB is off to a flying start! It is hard to believe that we are already heading into performances of *Nutcracker* and preparing students for several competitions. MABETA dancers had a wonderful performance at Loomis Senior Center; we brought some lively entertainment to the residents, who as usual were greatly appreciative of the dancing. We have been going to Loomis and other local facilities for many years and it has proven very successful in giving back to the community as well as giving our dancers additional performing opportunities. This particularly astute audience asked questions after the show like, "Why is it important for dancers to smile?"

What a great question! The facial expression that accompanies the body in dancing is really not a separate entity. It is a difficult component to add, especially if a dancer doesn't do it innately. We talk a great deal about the facial expression because it is part of the training of an artist and it is essential

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Important Dates: Mark your calendar!

DECEMBER 15-17
Nutcracker & Sweets

JANUARY 26-28
Youth America Grand Prix
(Worcester, MA)

MARCH 10-11
Connecticut Classic

APRIL 14, 2 PM
Dance to Stop Hunger
*Cash Donations Accepted. Benefits
Providence Ministries, Kate's Kitchen
and MABETA*

MAY 12
Field Trip to Boston Ballet

MAY 26
Spring Performance, Location TBA

Nutcracker & Sweets 2017

The excitement is building for our wonderful seasonal tradition! Once again, MAB dancers will light up the Music Room at the Skinner mansion as we present our annual Nutcracker & Sweets at Wistariahurst Museum. This intimate performance, featuring sumptuous costumes and favorite variations, lasts less than an hour and is perfect for young children as well as adults of all ages. Tickets sell out fast, so avoid disappointment and reserve yours now any time at wistariahurst.org or by calling 413-322-5660, M-F, 10am-2pm.

Performance dates:

Friday, December 15, 4:00 pm
Friday, December 15, 6:30 pm
Saturday, December 16, 11:30 am
Saturday, December 16, 2:00 pm
Saturday, December 16, 4:30 pm
Sunday, December 17, 11:30 am
Sunday, December 17, 2:00 pm
Sunday, December 17, 4:30 pm

The Massachusetts Academy of Ballet

4 Open Square Way, Studio 403•Holyoke, MA 01040•413.536.6200•massacademyofballet.com



Welcome, Mændy!



We are pleased to welcome Mændy MacFarland, our new Pre-Ballet and Tot Teacher!

Mændy is a life-long mover, aerial performer, and instructor from Connecticut. She has a degree in Dance and performed professionally with the modern dance companies Clark Dance Theatre and Soma Dance Company.

Also a competitive aerialist and pole dancer, Mændy won gold and silver medals in her divisions at the 2015 Northeast PSO Championships, and competed as a finalist in the Novice Artistic Division for the 2017 USPFD Championships.

Mændy is a Web and Graphic Designer and leads as Artistic Director of a circus performance troupe called Cirque To Go. In addition to teaching ballet and modern dance for youth, Mændy teaches movement and flexibility classes for adults in CT and MA. She is very excited to share her love of dance and movement with everyone.

From Massachusetts to Moldova

by Aiden Moriarty



Sanda as the Dying Swan at the Loomis Community with MAB, November 12

Sanda Lungu is a new and exciting addition to the MAB family. She is taking classes here as well as teaching Level 3A, 3B and Level 4 classes. Sanda came to the United States from Moldova around three years ago with her mother, father and brother to start a new life with new achievements and adventures.

Sanda has been dancing for as long as she can remember, and began dancing as a professional at the age of eleven for the Professional Ballet Academy from Chisinau, Moldova. After moving to the United States, she lived in Boston for three months and then traveled on tour with Crown of Russia Ballet Company for another few months. She then moved to West Springfield and began looking for local ballet companies. Unable to find one, she turned to the internet for local ballet academies. Looking at the descriptions and pictures on the websites, Sanda determined that "MAB is the right place to go and it was good luck for me to meet Rose and Charles Flachs—amazing teachers and beautiful people."

Training at MAB is a little bit different from Russian, but very similar, and closer to what she experienced in Russia than the training she experienced in Boston. Sanda reports that she "feels very good and happy with these classes." Although she didn't plan on teaching so early, Sanda said, "I am really thankful for this opportunity; it's one of the best experiences in my life."

When asked about favorite dancers, roles and ballets, Sanda admits that choosing a favorite ballet dancer is too difficult. "I have been dancing with and watching so many

beautiful and individual dancers that I am not able to make this impossible choice!" An easier choice was *Romeo and Juliet* as her favorite ballet. "Because I am a dramatic person and Sergie Prokofiev's musical creation makes me live in this dramatic story. I saw many versions of the choreography of this ballet, and they have all attracted me."

Because I have seen Sanda perform the *Dying Swan*, I was not surprised to hear that this is her favorite role to dance. "I have been dancing many roles and all of them I interpreted with all my heart, but since I was a child, I dreamed to dance the *Dying Swan*. This is my favorite, the most dramatic and full of feelings variation. I gave myself a promise that I won't stop dancing until I interpret it. And even after so many times of dancing this variation, I am not going to stop dancing!"

For a second season, Sanda will be traveling and performing this December with a National Tour of the State Ballet of Russia.



MABETA Dancers to Compete in Youth America Grand Prix

Dancers from MABETA will participate in two group pieces for Youth America Grand Prix, an international scholarship competition, January 26-28 in Worcester, MA. The dancers will perform two pieces choreographed by Charles Flachs: *Mighty Feat* and *Juxtaposition*. They will also participate in master classes and workshops provided for all participants.

Senior Athina Alimonos will compete individually as well, performing a contemporary solo choreographed by Charles Flachs called *Aftermath*, a variation from *Walpurgisnacht*, and the Sugar Plum Fairy variation from *Nutcracker*.

“Growing Up Goblin”

Reprinted from Royal Winnipeg Ballet’s September Company Spotlight with comments from Loran Saito

“**M**assachusetts-born Liam Saito joined the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School’s Professional Division in 2012. After graduating in 2015, Liam danced for 2 years in RWB School’s Aspirant Program and this season, was hired by the RWB Company as an Apprentice for their 2017/18 season.

This September, Liam’s training will come full circle as he dances once again in Twyla Tharp’s *The Princess and The Goblin*. As a student in the Professional Division, Liam danced with the Company 2012, when Twyla Tharp’s *The Princess and The Goblin* made its Canadian debut. This time, Liam will perform as a professional dancer in the role of ensemble goblin.

‘Exciting’ and ‘nostalgic’ are two words Liam uses to describe how he feels about returning to this ballet.

When asked what one of his biggest challenges is when taking on this new role, Liam said ‘finding and developing an individual character quirk to add to the choreography.’ Liam notes that there is a lot of artistic license in the ability to adapt character traits, as opposed to his role in 2012.”



Liam (center) plays a teen leading the village children to freedom.

Comments from Loran (Liam’s mother)

In the spring of 2012, I went to New York with our then 14-year-old son Liam, MAB student and member of MABETA, so that he could compete in YAGP. He performed on the first night of the competition and did not advance, so it came as a life-changing surprise when the Artistic Director of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School offered him a scholarship to the school’s summer intensive. After the summer, the school invited him to return for the academic year program in the

fall. Liam decided that this was an important next step for him, putting in motion major changes to our family’s life.

A few weeks in, Liam mentioned that he had been auditioning for the legendary choreographer Twyla Tharp, who was creating *The Princess and the Goblin*, a new ballet co-commissioned by Royal Winnipeg Ballet and Atlanta Ballet. Twyla cast Liam in the show and gave him a small solo—a lovely and exciting way to launch to his time in Winnipeg.

Fast forward to Fall 2017. Liam



Liam in Grand Pas Classique, Spring 2017. Photo: RWB

has finished his studies and two years in RWB’s Aspirant Program, and has been hired to his first company job as an Apprentice with RWB. In a beautiful symmetry, for his very first show as a member of the company, Liam was cast this fall in the company’s first production of the season... *The Princess and the Goblin!* He danced the awesomely named role of “ensemble goblin!” And although he didn’t have a solo like he did as a 15-year-old, he had fun with his freedom to ham it up as a not-very-bright goblin.

Liam enjoys his new status as a member of the company. As a unionized worker, he typically puts in a 9-5 work day, including class and rehearsals. He makes enough money that he was able to quit his dishwashing job. He is adjusting to the fact that it is now up to him, rather than his teachers, to drive himself to constantly improve, since he is no longer officially a student. He has a contract for one year, renewable for a second year, and then he will either be promoted from Apprentice to Corps member, or he will need to look elsewhere.

As a company member, Liam has several “hiatus” weeks each year

Why smile? Continued from page 1

to be able to express yourself with the whole body, not just the legs and feet. If you think of the theatre or film, you will remember the impact of a raised eyebrow from a character like “Spock” in the Star Trek series. (Please look up Leonard Nimoy if you have not seen Star Trek!)

On a stage, the ability to connect the expression of the face and eyes to the movement is even more important because the audience is usually not so close and expression has to be exaggerated to reach the public. That is not to say that the face must be forced or artificial. It is the challenge of the dancer to genuinely project the joy, sadness, or elation that the role or movement has as its essence in an artistic manner. It must convey the emotion with the body reflecting the music, atmosphere, and style of the work being performed. Complicated? Yes, but in the end paying attention to those details will compliment the technique and result in a more in-depth performance and a much more interesting artist. SMILE!

when he doesn’t work. He used his first hiatus, immediately following the *Princess and the Goblin* performances, to make a rare visit home. While he was here, he took class at MAB (“I always forget how hard Rose’s and Charles’ classes are!”) and finally signed the MAB studio wall as a full-fledged professional. He is (and we are) so proud!






**Spring Concert
2017**


Photos: Charles Flachs







 Massachusetts Academy of Ballet





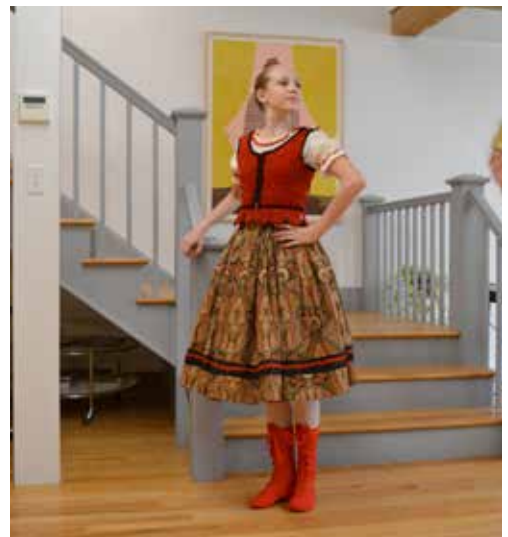
ON/EN POINTE

The Intersection of Dance and Costume

Friday, August 11, 2017 6:15 | 6:45 | 7:15pm
CLICK 9 1/2 Market St, Northampton

Designs by Arlene Kowal | Narration by Charles Flachs
Performance by students of the MABETA
Massachusetts Academy of Ballet Educational Training Association



MAB Summer Intensive 2017: Heritage Park Photo Shoot

Photos: Charles Flachs



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All-school photo after the Spring Performance, 2017



Massachusetts Cultural Council

Dance with the professionals



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