

PORTLAND  
BALLET

in collaboration with

Colby | PERFORMANCE,  
THEATER, AND  
DANCE



# Uncommon Accord

**Choreographer & Dancer Biographies**



### **Nell Shipman — Artistic and Executive Director**

Nell Shipman began her training in Massachusetts and continued her studies in Indianapolis, Indiana with Marek Cholewa and Rosanna Ruffo. She holds a B.F.A. in Dance Performance with High Honors from Butler University and has performed and shown choreography throughout the United States and abroad. Ms. Shipman joined Portland Ballet as a dancer in 2004 before assuming the role of Artistic Director in 2015 and Director of Portland School of Ballet in 2016. With Portland Ballet she performed many leading roles, including the title role in *Giselle* and the lead in Andrei Bossov's *Carmina Burana*. She has also appeared as guest artist with Portland Symphony Orchestra, Good Theater, Best of Broadway and Opera Maine. Ms. Shipman's evening length choreography includes a *Victorian Nutcracker*, *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace*, *Tales By Poe*, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, *Firebird*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Jack the Ripper*. Her contemporary works include *Four Seasons*, *Impetus*, *First Principles of Hope and Enjoyment*, *PushMePullYou*, *Somebody and Spoke of the Wheel* to name a few. As an innovative and educational initiative, she created the *Building Ballets Series* for Portland School of Ballet, which has presented versions of well known classics *Sleeping Beauty*, *Coppelia*, *Don Quixote* and *La Esmeralda*. Ms. Shipman is currently a Visiting Instructor at Colby College and has created works in collaboration with many local and national arts organizations.



### **Jennifer Jones — Ballet Mistress**

Jennifer Jones came to Portland after four seasons as a Principal Dancer with The Northwest Florida Ballet. Previous to dancing in Florida, she danced as a Soloist with Montgomery Ballet, and an Apprentice with Dance Connecticut. Her repertoire includes lead roles in *Don Quixote*, the *Nutcracker*, *Coppelia*, and Balanchine's *Concerto Barocco*. Jennifer guested in Tennessee and Georgia and danced in Jean Grand-Maitre's *Uroboros*, Oskar Antunez's *Gatsby*, and Antunez's *Alice in Wonderland*. Her Portland Ballet credits include *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, *By Request*, *A Victorian Nutcracker*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the title role in *Giselle*. Jennifer danced with Portland Ballet from 2010-2020 and now serves as the company's Ballet Mistress.





## **Annie Kloppenberg**

Annie Kloppenberg is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Performance, Theater and Dance at Colby College. Called “a choreographer of nuances” by the Boston Globe, and “a fierce, yet coy force of energy—contained or unleashed” by THINKing Dance, her work as a teacher, performer, and choreographer has been presented nationally and internationally. Her creative and scholarly research are braided practices that hinge on collaboration and improvisation. *Imperfect Unity* and *Productive Frictions: Ethics and Aesthetics of Play in Dance Improvisation*, for example, included in a



transdisciplinary volume on the aesthetics of imperfection proposes a relationship between ethical and aesthetic dimensions of group improvisational practice in dance. For more than ten years, her improvisational trio, *Like You Mean It*, gave workshops, master classes, and performances at conferences, universities, and professional venues across the country; more recently her collaborative research platform *Foreword/Afterword* has generated conference presentations, workshops, and performances in a variety of contexts at home and abroad, from Philadelphia, and Miami to Istanbul and Vienna.

Choreographic commissions and residencies include The Portland Ballet, The Bates Dance Festival, The Boston Dance Alliance Fellowship at Mass MoCA, Summer Stages Dance at Concord Academy & ICA Boston, The Boston Center for the Arts, Dance Theater Workshop's Outer/Space, Dublin Arts Council with OhioDance and The Ohio State University, and the Taft School. Annie has performed in works by Lisa Race, Bebe Miller, Headlong Dance Theater, Kathleen Hermsdorf, Rachel Boggia, Sara Pearson & Patrik Widrig, Shani Collins, Rebecca Rice, Penny Campbell, Prometheus Dance, Cathy Young, Heidi Henderson (Colby '83), and Ashley Thorndike, among others.

Annie co-founded and curated the professional training program *Moving Target* Boston, is a past board member of *Now and Next Dance Mentoring Project* (Washington DC) and *Green Street Studios* (Cambridge, MA). She currently serves on the Board of the American College Dance Association, and as a faculty representative to the Colby Museum of Art Board of Governors and the Colby College Board of Trustees.



### **Kimberly Fletcher-Stibal**

Kimberly Fletcher-Stibal graduated from The University of the Arts in Philadelphia, PA. with a BFA in jazz dance performance. While there, she received several scholarships and was selected as the outstanding senior artist and outstanding in jazz performance. Kim began her 20 year professional career with several dance companies. She has toured nationally and internationally with Black Box Theatre, Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO), Dance Chicago Touring Company ("The Stars of Dance Chicago), Dance for Life, LehrerDance, Koresh Dance



Company, Philadanco II, and Giordano Dance Chicago. At Giordano's Kim served as Assistant Associate Director and principal dancer for 12 years. Kim also danced for 6 years in the Radio City Christmas Spectacular as a Radio City Rockette. In her dance career Kim has had the opportunity to work with many renowned choreographers including Randy Duncan, Roni Koresh, Mia Michaels, Milton Myers, Davis Robertson, and the father of American jazz dance Gus Giordano. Ms. Fletcher-Stibal's was also the Artistic Director of Forum Dance Theatre (pre-professional youth dance company) for 8 years. While there, she was a member of Regional Dance America where her choreography won several awards. Her teaching and choreography has taken her all over the world as she has taught in several universities and festivals in North America, Asia, South America, and Europe. Some of her choreography can be seen on Giordano Dance Chicago (Chicago), Dancing in the Parks (Chicago) Extensions Dance Company (Chicago) and Ekaterinburg Contemporary Dance (Russia).



### **Albert Mathias**

Musical Visionary, Artist, Movement Accompanist, Percussionist, Composer, International Recording Artist, Producer, Innovator, Empath, Healer, Addict and Eternal Student. I have been Blessed with a lifetime of SuperHuman Friends/Relations and Extraordinary Teachers/Mentors/Collaborators. Be Living Proof. Be Bold. Be Brave. Forever Listen to your Heart!





Photo by Lissy Thomas

## Company Dancers

**Heather Baxter** joined Portland Ballet in 2019. While at Portland Ballet her roles have included Olivia in *A Victorian Nutcracker*, Young Girl in Jen Jones' *Surprised by Joy*, and a Princess in *The Firebird*. Before returning to Maine she danced for two years with Roanoke Ballet Theater. She attended Point Park University where she received her Bachelor of Arts with a concentration in Ballet. She received her early training as a part of Portland Ballet's CORPS program. During her summers she has had the opportunity to train at many nationally renowned summer intensives including The Washington Ballet, Oklahoma City Ballet, and Dance Italia.

**Erica Diesl** received her early training at Acton School of Ballet under the direction of Kathryn Anderson and Walter Morris. After high school, she continued her education at the University of Utah and the San Francisco Conservatory of Dance, where she learned works by Jiri Kylian and Ohad Naharin, among others. After graduating from the University of Utah, Erica worked with Ballet Rox in Anthony Williams' *Urban Nutcracker*, and spent two seasons dancing with the Ballet Theatre of Maryland. With Portland Ballet, Erica has danced featured roles in *The Armed Man*, *Firebird*, *Napoli*, *Tales by Poe*, *Persephone & Hades*, and *A Victorian Nutcracker*.

**Elliott Evans** was born in Phnom Penh, Cambodia and has studied ballet since the age of nine with American Ballet Theatre Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School under the tutelage of Franco De Vita. He then trained privately with Fabrice Herrault in NYC, The National Ballet School of Canada training under Sergiu Stefanschi and Raymond Smith. He then continued as a trainee with the Washington School of Ballet under the direction of Xiomara Reyes, Rinat Imaev and Mimmo Miccolis, where he danced in several productions with the Washington Ballet under artistic director Julie Kent. He has attended summer intensives at American Ballet Theatre and Fabrice Herrault both in NYC, English National Ballet in London, Canada's National Ballet School in Toronto, Sarasota Ballet, and Arts Umbrella in Vancouver. Arts Umbrella included repertoire by Crystal Pite, Ohad Naharin,



Jiří Kylián, Lukáš Timulak and Tom Weinberger. Elliott was awarded first place in both the professional classical and contemporary ballet category at the Washington Grand Prix 2021.

**Jackson Gormley** was born and raised on Long Island, New York where he began to dance at the age of 11, pursuing ballet more seriously at the Eglevsky Ballet where he trained under Laszlo Berdo and then Maurice Brandon Curry. Jackson went on to train at Ballet Academy East under the direction of Darla Hoover, while also studying contemporary dance under his teacher, Catherine Murphy. Jackson continued to pursue his dream of dance by attending Point Park University under the direction of Garfield Lemonius. Performing works by distinguished Jessica Lange, Jae Man Jo, Christopher Wheeldon, Adam Houghland, and Tyce Diorio. In 2021, Jackson joined Portland Ballet as a Company Dancer and has performed roles such as Helios in Shipman's *Persephone & Hades*, Cavalier and Nutcracker in *A Victorian Nutcracker*, and Firebird in Shipman's *Firebird*.

**Kaitlyn Hayes** began her dance training on Cape Cod, MA with Virginia Zango. She attended North Carolina School of the Arts for her final three years of high school, then went to SUNY Purchase College to earn her BFA in dance. Ms. Hayes joined Portland Ballet in 2013 and has performed many roles, including Olivia in *A Victorian Nutcracker*, the Detective in *Tell Tale Heart* in Shipman's *Tales by Poe*, and the title role of Alice in Roberto Forleo's *Alice* with the Portland Symphony Orchestra. This is Ms. Hayes' ninth season with Portland Ballet.

**Grace Koury** joined Portland Ballet during the 2019/2020 season. Since joining the company, she has had the opportunity to dance featured roles such as Persephone in Nell Shipman's *Persephone and Hades*, Dew Drop and Arabian in *A Victorian Nutcracker*, and The Woman in Jen Jones' *Surprised by Joy*. Grace is also a faculty member of the Portland School of Ballet's Young Dancer Program and Senior Division. Previously, she danced professionally with Georgia Dance Theater and Rochester City Ballet. She graduated from Indiana University Jacobs School of Music on The Dean's Scholarship in 2016.

**Eugene Mesheryakov** was Born in Moscow Russia, and began his training in Las Vegas, Nevada under the Vaganova method of Ballet. He then Furthered his training by joining the second company of Oklahoma City Ballet in 2019, and performed in works such as Michael Pinks *Dracula* and Robert Mills *Romeo and Juliet*. In 2021 Eugene had the pleasure of dancing with Ballet 120 as an apprentice as well as performing with Las Vegas Dance academy as the "Cavalier" in the *Nutcracker*. He is ecstatic to start his journey with the Portland Ballet and share his passion for the art!

**Eliana Trenam** trained at Marin Dance Theatre in the San Francisco Bay Area under Margaret Swarthout and Lynn Cox. She earned a Bachelor of Arts with honors in Dance from the University of Iowa where she was a member of the touring company. Prior to joining Portland Ballet in 2013, she was a trainee with American Repertory Ballet and a guest dancer with Baltimore Ballet. Her Portland Ballet credits include Little Swan in *Swan Lake*, Berenice in *Three Tales by Poe*, the Sugar Plum Fairy in *A Victorian Nutcracker*, and the title role in *Firebird*.



**Christiana Youngquist** began her training at Ballet Tech of Ohio, continued her studies with the Cincinnati Ballet Academy, subsequently joining Nashville Ballet as a Trainee, then Cleveland Ballet, before returning to Nashville Ballet as a member of their Second Company. She joined Portland Ballet as an Apprentice for their 21/22 season. Some career highlights include performing Victoria Morgan's *Bolero*, Septime Weber's *Peter Pan*, Ramon Diaz's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Paul Vasterling's *Swan Lake*, Paul Vasterling's *Romeo and Juliet*, Gina Patterson's *72 Steps*, and Ribbon Candy in *A Victorian Nutcracker*. She is excited to return as a Company Dancer this season!



## Apprentices

**Allison Ansinn** began her training at Ballet Arts of Bucks County in Pennsylvania before moving on to train with the Rock School for Dance Education, and Cary Ballet Conservatory's Professional Training Program. During this time, she attended summers at Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, Carolina Ballet, Miami City Ballet, and San Francisco Ballet School. Allison went on to attend the University of Oklahoma where she had the honor of receiving the Juli Busken Memorial Scholarship at the OU School of Dance. In May of 2022, she graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Ballet Performance with special distinction.

**Caroline Credle** was raised in Raleigh, North Carolina, and began her dance training at the age of three. In 2016, she auditioned and was accepted into the University of North Carolina School of the Arts' high school program with a concentration in ballet. Upon graduation, Caroline decided to continue her education at UNCSA, where she received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in May of 2022. Her repertoire has included roles in George Balanchine's *Symphonie Concertante*, the *Swan Lake Pas de Trois*, Ethan Stiefel's *The Nutcracker*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Don Quixote*, and other productions. Caroline is excited for her first season with the Portland Ballet!



**Ellie Dickson** began dancing at Elizabeth Drucker's Ballet School in Topsham, Maine at the age of four and continued her training with Ms. Drucker through high school. After graduating high school, Ellie continued pursuing dance in college and obtained a B.F.A in Dance in the spring of 2022. While at Point Park, Ellie trained with Susan Stowe, Julia Erickson, Pearlann Porter, Anna Thompson, and Taylor Knight. During her time in college, she had the opportunity to perform various works including Act 2 of *Swan Lake* staged by Susan Stowe, Pearlann Porter's (*in effect*), and George Balanchine's *Serenade*.

**Alexandra Huffman** began her early training at the Carmel Academy of Performing Arts, under the instruction of Philip Pegler and Sandra Burnham. She then went on to graduate from the Kirov Academy of Ballet in Washington D.C. During her summers, she was fortunate enough to train on scholarship with the Paris Opera Ballet School. Over the last few years, she's been a trainee with Ballet de Catalunya in Spain and the Sarasota Ballet. Alexandra is very much looking forward to this season as an apprentice with the Portland Ballet.

**Eva Walden** began her ballet training with Metropolitan Ballet Academy in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania under the training of Lisa Collins Vidnovic. She then moved to Pittsfield, Maine to study under Natalya Getman at Bossov Ballet Theatre. In 2019 she joined Charlotte Ballet as a trainee where she had the honor of training under Patricia McBride, Laszlo Berdo, and Kati Hanlon Mayo. During her time at Charlotte Ballet Eva performed a variety of repertoire including George Balanchine Ballets such as *Who Cares?*, *Donizetti Variations*, and *Raymonda Variations*. Eva is delighted to return to Maine to join Portland Ballet this season.

**Lydia Wirth** is from Pittsburgh, PA where she trained at West Point Ballet with Cynthia Castillo and Damien M. Coro. She went on to graduate Magna Cum Laude from Butler University with a BFA in Dance-Performance and minor in Strategic Communication. She's also attended summer programs at Washington Ballet and Cincinnati Ballet. During her time with Butler Ballet, Lydia had the opportunity to perform soloist and corps roles in full-scale productions of *The Nutcracker*, *Cinderella*, and *Sleeping Beauty*, as well as in various classical and contemporary new works. She's thrilled to begin her first season with Portland Ballet!

**Victoria Young** was born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, where she began dancing at the age of two. She began her formal ballet training at Pennsylvania Youth Ballet and continued in other pre-professional programs across three states until the completion of high school. She decided to further her dance education in college and graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of South Carolina with a B.A. in Dance Performance and Choreography in May 2022. Her senior year of college, Victoria decided to complete her degree remotely to partake in Charlotte Ballet's Trainee Program. She is now excited to begin her professional dance career as an apprentice with Portland Ballet.





## Trainees

**Camille Alipalo** moved to Maine from her home in the Philippines, where she began her ballet training. Camille started as a trainee with Portland Ballet in January 2022 after graduating a semester early from Sanford High School. Camille trained in Portland Ballet's Pre-Professional Division and in Portland Ballet's syllabus levels. She has enjoyed performing roles in Portland School of Ballet's Building Ballet Series in *Coppelia*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Don Quixote*. Camille has also loved performing in Portland Ballet's *A Victorian Nutcracker* as a Snowflake, Lead Angel, Party Parent, Spanish Dancer, and a Flower in *Waltz of the Flowers*.

**Mary Elsener** joined Portland Ballet as a trainee for the 2022/2023 season. She was accepted to Yale University where she plans to pursue electrical engineering and dance-but has decided to take some time to dance professionally. Mary pursued classical ballet training in the pre-professional division at The Joffrey Ballet Chicago and later under Valentina Kozlova in Connecticut. Mary won three medals in the Valentina Kozlova International Ballet Competition between the 2021 and 2022 competitions. She also won first prize in the 2021 Seoul International Dance Competition. Additionally, Mary has danced principal roles in two Catskill Mountain Foundation productions.

**Rebekah Sparks** began her training in Bangor, Maine. She spent her high school years working under the instruction of Ivy Forrest. After graduating high school, Rebekah continued to study ballet with Maine State Ballet, and Bossov Ballet Theater. During the summers, she attended intensives at Portland Ballet, Boston Ballet, and the Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet. Rebekah will be joining Portland Ballet this year as a trainee. She is very excited to be able to continue her ballet studies with Portland Ballet!

**Anna Winslette** received her early training under Deborah Grammatic (an alumni of PCB.) Her training continued and expanded to include modern and jazz at Sole City Dance under Deborah Grammatic and Jacqui Young, studying ABT Curriculum. Anna has performed in multiple full length ballets including *The Nutcracker*; Assaf Benchetrit's *Cinderella*; and, Deborah Grammatic's *Treasure Island*, in which she held the lead role, created for her. Anna has performed multiple featured roles including Fairy Godmother in *Cinderella*, Spanish Lead, Shepherdess, Dew Drop Fairy, and her latest role as *The Nutcracker's* Sugar Plum Fairy, partnering with professional artist George Sanders. Anna is also a faculty member for Sole City Dance teaching ballet, jazz, and young children's. This is Anna's first year with Portland Ballet as a Trainee.



## Guest Artists



**Matthew Cumbie** (he/him/his) is a collaborative dancemaker, writer, and artist educator. His artistic research cultivates processes and experiences that are participatory and intergenerational, moving through known and unknown, and bring a poetic lens to a specifically queer experience. His choreography- considered “a blend of risk-taking with reliability, [and] a combination of uncertainty and wisdom,”- weaves together a physical vocabulary of momentum and clarity, revelatory moments, and a belief in a body’s capacity to meet every moment.

He has danced in the companies of Christian von Howard, Keith Thompson|danceTactics Performance Group, jill sigman|thinkdance, Paloma McGregor|Angela’s Pulse, and Dance Exchange- an intergenerational dance organization founded by Liz Lerman- where he eventually became an Associate Artistic Director and the Director of Programs and Communications. Currently, he creates work with Annie Kloppenberg, Betsy Miller, and Tom Truss, and as a company member with Christopher K. Morgan & Artists. Matthew is also a Visiting Assistant Professor at Colby College, and is a certified practitioner of Liz Lerman’s Critical Response Process. His work has been commissioned and supported by places like Dance Place, the Kennedy Center, and Harvard University, and by the National Endowment for the Arts, the DC Commission for the Arts and Humanities, the Arcus Foundation, and the New England Foundation for the Arts. Originally from Houston, Texas, Matthew holds undergraduate degrees from Texas Lutheran University and Texas State University and an MFA in dance from Texas Woman’s University.



**Tristan Koepke** (he/him/his) is a dancer, educator, choreographer, and Rolfer®. He is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at Bates College, and is Associate Director of the Young Dancers Intensive at the Bates Dance Festival. He has performed in contemporary and experimental dance works by Chris Schlichting, Vanessa Anspaugh, Luciana Achugar, Cally Spooner, Doug Varone, Kendra Portier, Heidi Henderson, and was a member of Zenon Dance Company from 2011-2019. His choreographic and scholarly research interests include improvisation in experimental dance performance, hauntology, nostalgia, camp, and phenomenologies of race and gender. He holds an M.F.A. in Dance from the University of Maryland, College Park.



## Guest Artists



**Halle Puchalski** is a freshman at Colby College, planning to major in Biology with a minor in Dance. She trained at Evjen Academy of Performing Arts along with the dance program at Miss Porter's School. At Colby, she participates in both the dance team and the academic dance department, performing in a range of student and faculty choreographed works.



**Gabby Vogel** is a freshman at Colby College, planning to major in Educational Studies and minor in Dance. She grew up dancing at All That Jazz Dance Studio in Newton, MA and choreographed multiple shows in her high school theater program. In her first semester at Colby she performed in work by faculty and students. She also works at Happy Days Childcare and Learning Center at Colby.

# New Works

**Saturday, March 18th at 7:30pm**  
Westbrook Performing Arts Center

**PORTLAND  
BALLET**



Photo by Lisa Padden

New Works will spotlight the voices of our dancers as they step into the role of choreographer and share what they have to say as creators of movement.  
**Join us, March 18 at Westbrook Performing Arts Center! [PortlandBallet.org/New-Works](http://PortlandBallet.org/New-Works)**