



VITACCA BALLET

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VITACCA BALLET ANNOUNCES 2023/2024 SEASON CHOREOGRAPHERS

HOUSTON, TEXAS [August 26, 2023]: Vitacca Ballet Artistic Director [Kelly Ann Vitacca](#) announces six internationally renowned Choreographers who will be working with the company during the 2023/2024 season. The choreographers include [Garrett Smith](#), [Hélène Simoneau](#), [Ethan Colangelo](#), [Tina Kay Bohnstedt](#), [Sean Aaron Carmon](#), and [Robyn Mineko-Williams](#).

“The choreographic talent Vitacca Ballet’s 2023/24 season brings to Houston is truly unique and diverse,” comments Ms. Vitacca. “From returning audience favorites to new choreographers bringing their distinctive perspective to the stage, this season is shaping up to be one of the most transformational since Vitacca Ballet’s inception in 2020. We pride ourselves on offering a space of incubation for choreographers to collaborate with our dancers as the creation takes form. This allows for an enriching process and unencumbered dance on stage.”

Founded in 2020 Vitacca Ballet (VB) is a creation-based repertoire company in the Houston area. As the pandemic brought artists home to Houston, Ms. Vitacca strived to keep artists employed, and the Houston arts scene alive with project-based work. This experience laid the framework for the launch of VB in 2021, which now works diligently to operate a 31-week season and employ local, national, and international artists.

VB has had the honor to work with regional and international choreographers including Tina Kay Bohnstedt, Sean Aaron Carmon, Andrea Dawn Shelley, Garrett Smith, Autumn Eckman and Madison Hicks. VB has been seen on stage within performance and outreach community events such as *The Nutcracker*, *Night at the Ballet*, Contemporary Dance Choreography Festival in Florida, Versatility Dance Festival in Utah, Bailindo Dance Festival, *ANDIOMO* presented by Charles Bender Performing Arts Center, Trees of Hope Gala as 2022 Entertainment Sponsor, *LAUNCH* at MATCH Houston, Ventana/VB Austin collaboration, and Red Rock Dance Festival in Utah.

The 2023/24 season choreographers will work with company artists Maddie Medina, Coltin Snyder, Fiona Dorr, Jordan Hooks, Joshua Ponton, Elissa Fonesca, International Guest Khen Kurulkar and new company artists Megumi Nishimori, Aidan Wolf, Nikolas Darrough, Elena Damiani, Ava Dempster, Zephaniah Casey, and Carrington Moser.



VITACCA BALLET

VB is a proud recipient of the Dance Source Houston Groundwork Grant and is proud to be a fiscally sponsored project through [Fractured Atlas](#). This allows tax-deductible donations to be made toward VB's vision and artistic growth.

For more information about Vitacca Ballet, visit www.VitaccaBallet.org.

Learn more about VB's 2023/24 season choreographers:

Garrett Smith was born in Salt Lake City, Utah where he began training with the Utah Regional Ballet. Garrett was named a Presidential Scholar in the Arts and was honored to meet George W. Bush at the White House where he was presented with an award by Mikhail Baryshnikov. He later studied at the Houston Ballet Academy and created five works for Houston Ballet II's repertoire. Garrett joined Houston Ballet and danced works by Stanton Welch, Jorma Elo, Nicolo Fonte, Christopher Bruce, Christopher Wheeldon, and Ben Stevenson. Garrett choreographed his first work on Houston Ballet as an apprentice, through an award presented by Peter Martins from the New York Choreographic Institute Fellowship. Mr. Smith later joined Norwegian National Ballet where he worked personally with choreographers Jiří Kylián, Nacho Duato, Alexander Ekman, and danced other works by William Forsythe and John Cranko. Garrett was commissioned by Houston Ballet to create new works in the 2013, and 2015 seasons. Other recent commissions include The Mariinsky Ballet, Les Grands Ballets De Montreal, Bolshoi Ballet (Faces Project), Norwegian National Ballet, Ballet West, Pennsylvania Ballet, Ballet National de Bordeaux, Tulsa Ballet, Cincinnati Ballet, Milwaukee Ballet, Texas Ballet Theater, and Salt Contemporary Dance. Mr. Smith was a selected choreographer to make a new work for the National Choreographers Initiative 2014. His choreography "Mortal Form" took 1st place at the 2015 Genesis International Choreographic Competition. Smith's choreography "Solace" was recently seen in a new premiere in Deauville, France as part of the Festival de L'Art Russe, as well as a U.S. premiere of his work "Imitations" with Norwegian National Ballet, for the 2018 Dance Salad Festival. Garrett co-choreographed a new Swan Lake production on ice at the Dynamo Stadium in Moscow, combining figure skaters, acrobats, and ballet dancers, with Olympic Gold Medalist, Evgeni Plushenko and prima ballerina Olga Smirnova. You can see Garrett's choreography on Netflix for the original new series "Tiny Pretty Things."

Robyn Mineko Williams is a director, interdisciplinary artist, dancer and producer. She works and creates within the lanes and intersections of performance, design, culture, and place. In 2015, Mineko Williams founded Robyn Mineko Williams and Artists (RMW&A) with the mission to collaborate with a roster of dynamic artists and create a body of theatrical dance works, prioritizing public, immersive and malleable forms of presentation. RMW&A strives to find newness by intertwining mediums, ideas, spaces, and people. Collaborations include projects with Manual Cinema, Califone, Finom, Lululemon, Verger, Jt Williams, Kyle Vegter, the Second City, Mike Gibisser, Brian Case, Alex Grelle, Alicia Walter, and Aitis Band. Mineko Williams's work has been presented at the Kennedy



VITACCA BALLET

Center, Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Thalia Hall, Jacob's Pillow, the Joyce Theater, MCA Chicago and more. Commissions include Pacific Northwest Ballet, Royal New Zealand Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, and Malpas Dance Company among others. She has been in residence at Baryshnikov Arts Center and is a 2023 Artist-in-Residence at the Chicago Cultural Center. Mineko Williams is a 2023 Dysart Award winner and Princess Grace Foundation-USA Fellowship grant recipient and was named one of "25 to Watch" by *Dance Magazine* in 2014. In tandem with her creations for the stage, Mineko Williams works as a creative director and movement consultant on an array of projects including immersive experiences, film, installation, pop-up performances and music videos. Mineko Williams is currently on faculty at the Chicago Academy for the Arts and has taught and set work at Springboard Danse Montreal, Point Park University, UNCSA, USC, The Juilliard School, University of Iowa, University of Chicago, Western Michigan University and UCLA Long Beach.

Ethan Colangelo was born and raised in Toronto, Canada where he began his initial training at Canada's National Ballet School and Elite Danceworx. He is now an alumnus of The Juilliard School where he received the Hector Zaraspe Prize for Choreographic Promise. He has performed repertoire by Crystal Pite, Ohad Naharin, Stijn Celis, Jose Limon, Mark Morris and has been in new creations by Roy Assaf, Stephan Laks, Loni Landon, Miceala Taylor, and Jasmine Ellils, along with other creative artists. Colangelo has danced professionally for BODYTRAFFIC in Los Angeles where he toured with the company across America. As a choreographer he has presented his work at the Baryshnikov Arts Center, Festival des Arts de Saint-Sauveur, Juilliard's Choreographic Honours Showcases, APAP 2018, Alice Tully Hall in Lincoln Center, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Colangelo was also one of 10 choreographers selected internationally for the Copenhagen International Choreography Competition in 2018 and 2021. During the competition in 2021, Colangelo's work *Recurrence* was awarded the Audience Choice Award, the DAF Production Award, and an invitation for a residency at Hessisches Staatsballett in Germany. Recently he has created work for the BODYTRAFFIC summer intensive, was selected as an Emerging Choreographer for Springboard Danse Montreal 2020, had a choreographic partnership with the 92Y in New York, created a new work for Arts Umbrella Dance Company in Vancouver, Canada and crafted a dance film consisting of 70 dancers from around the world. Furthermore, he self-produced and choreographed an original work featuring former Ballet BC emerging artists Rae Srivastava and Stefanie Noll. Colangelo is looking forward to a new creation with Whim W'Him Contemporary Dance in Seattle and MOVE NYC coming up this fall along with setting his duet '*Recurrence*' on BODYTRAFFIC this September.

Hélène Simoneau is a choreographer who has been commissioned by The Juilliard School, Oregon Ballet Theatre, PARA.MAR Dance Theatre, Ailey School, BalletX, Charlotte Ballet, Dimensions Dance Theatre, American Dance Festival, among other organizations throughout the US and Canada. She was recently a Choreography Fellow at New York City Center and received a 2021 Guggenheim Fellowship. She has also



VITACCA BALLET

been a resident artist at Baryshnikov Arts Center, NYU/Tisch, NCCAkron, and a fellow of The NYU Center for Ballet and the Arts, Ailey's New Directions Choreography Lab, Bogliasco Foundation, and Swiss International Coaching Project for Choreographers (SiWiC) in Zurich. Simoneau was awarded first place for Choreography at the 13th Internationales Solo-Tanz-Theater Festival in Stuttgart, Germany, for her solo *the gentleness was in her hands*. Originally from Luceville, a small village near Rimouski, in Eastern Québec, Simoneau divides her time between New York City and Montréal.

Tina Kay Bohnstedt began her intense dance training at the Heinz-Bosl Stiftung Ballet Academy in Munich and received her diploma in 1989. During this time, she was awarded the Junior Gold Medal at the German Ballet Competition as well as fourth place finalist in the Moscow International Ballet Competition. Thereafter, Bohnstedt was appointed Principal with the Bavarian State Ballet in Munich. In 1992 her artistry was recognized with the Bavarian Cultural Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Arts. She performed a wide range of classical and contemporary roles, including Juliet in John Cranko's *Romeo and Juliet*, Kitri in Ray Barra's *Don Quixote*, Aurora in Peter Wright's *Sleeping Beauty*, Mary in John Neumeier's *Nutcracker*, Olga in Cranko's *Oniegin* and Bianca in Cranko's *Taming of the Shrew*. In addition, Bohnstedt performed lead roles choreographed by Balanchine including *Serenade*, *Symphony in C*, *Four Temperaments*, *Apollo*, *Who Cares* as well as works by Hans van Manen, Jiri Kylian, Ohad Naharin, Angelin Preljocaj, Ulysses Dove, Gerhard Bohner and many others. She has toured internationally in China, Italy, Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Colombia, Peru, Poland, Belarus, Spain, Switzerland, and the United States. After moving to San Francisco in 1998 Bohnstedt became a guest dancer with the Lawrence Pech Dance Company. She joined Bay Area professional company, Diablo Ballet as a Principal in 1999 and was featured in many works created for her by the company and guest choreographers such as KT Nelson, Val Caniparoli, Julia Adam, Nikolai Kabaniaev and Viktor Kabaniaev. In 2007 Bohnstedt choreographed her first piece for Diablo Ballet, the critically acclaimed *The Mirror*. Her additional choreographic works include: *A Tribute to Lena Horne*, a piece choreographed in honor of her late mother. Bohnstedt has also choreographed pieces for Diablo Ballet Apprentice Program, Kirov Ballet Academy, Northern California Dance Conservatory, Metropolitan Ballet Academy, Colorado Conservatory of Dance, Contra Costa Ballet, Houston Ballet II, Houston Ballet, Uptown Dance Company, Space Coast Ballet Academy and Atlanta Ballet 2. She has also choreographed many solos for awarded YAGP and WBC competitors. In 2005 Bohnstedt became Director of the Diablo Ballet Apprentice Program and in 2007 she began serving as a Ballet Mistress for the Diablo Ballet Company. During this time, she served as guest artist and guest teacher for several companies in the San Francisco Bay Area including Smuin Ballet Company, Berkeley Ballet and Contra Costa Ballet. Bohnstedt has served on faculty at City Ballet San Francisco and was appointed Houston Ballet, Ballet Master in 2011. Bohnstedt has taught for many other ballet schools and companies including Kirov Ballet Academy, Bavarian State Ballet, Houston Ballet's Academy, Space Coast Ballet Academy, Northern California Dance Conservatory, Metropolitan Ballet Academy, Panama Ballet, Dominic



VITACCA BALLET

Walsh Dance Theatre, Colorado Conservatory of Dance, Atlanta Ballet, and Atlanta Ballet II. From 2015–2017 Bohnstedt was founded and directed TKB Center for Ballet & Dance in Houston. During her time as Director, she choreographed and produced several performances for TKB's Company including her twist on holiday favorite, *The Nutcracker*. In 2018, Bohnstedt was appointed Ballet Mistress of Vitacca Vocational School for Dance, Houston.

Sean Aaron Carmon joined the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 2011 and has performed major solo roles including Mikhail Baryshnikov's original role in Alvin Ailey's *Pas de Duke* and featured roles in ballets by other notable choreographers such as Wayne McGregor, Robert Battle, Aszure Barton, Johan Inger, Gustavo Ramirez Sansano and Christopher L. Huggins, to name only a few. In addition, he has been featured on *Conan*, the national TBS television talk show, *Lincoln Center at the Movies*, broadcast nationally on PBS and he was profiled in the Huffington Post. As a musical theater performer, Carmon has performed on Broadway in *La Cage aux Folles*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Disney's The Lion King*, and *Kinky Boots*. Carmon's own choreographies have been performed across the country and internationally and have been lauded as "everything and then some..." and "powerful" and "seriously flawless" by major national print and online publications such as The New York Times, Newsweek, Jet Magazine, Broadway Black, Dance Spirit and Dance Magazine. Carmon won The Joffrey Ballet's 2017 Winning Works award and created *Suite Hearts* for 18 of The Joffrey Ballet's Studio Company member and The Joffrey Academy's advanced trainees. Also in 2017, his work *longstoryshort* was commissioned by the Dance Gallery Festival NYC and was selected as the Audience Choice Award Winner out of 30 pieces created for the festival. He has also created works on the AAADT for multiple Ailey Dancers' Resource Fund benefit performances. He has created original and lauded works for Houston Contemporary Dance Company, Vitacca Ballet and other professional companies across America. Carmon currently teaches master classes and choreographs for festivals, companies, studios, and universities across the country and internationally.

2023/24 Season: SOWN / WOVEN / ONE

SOWN from October 20-21, 2023 at 7:30pm

MATCH, Matchbox 2 (3400 Main St, Houston, TX 77002)

***The Nutcracker* from November 24-26, 2023**

The Woodlands Resort (2301 N Millbend Dr, The Woodlands, TX 77380)

November 24, 2023 at 7pm

November 25, 2023 at 1pm and 6pm

November 26, 2023 at 1pm and 6pm



VITACCA BALLET

WOVEN on February 24, 2024 at 7:00pm

Charles Bender Performing Arts Center (611 Higgins Street Humble, TX 77338)

ONE on April 5-7, 2024 at 7:30pm

Venue to be announced

NEW 2023/24 Season: up/CLOSE Series

\$25 suggested donation at the door: a give what you can event!

Location: Vitacca Ballet, 2311 Dunlavy, Houston, TX 77002

Event Schedule: 7-8:30pm Rehearsal & Casual Q&A; 8:30-9:30pm Mix & Mingle

up/CLOSE with Choreographer Garrett Smith September 15, 2023

up/CLOSE with Choreographer Ethan Colangelo January 21, 2024

up/CLOSE with Choreographer Sean Aaron Carmon March 22, 2024

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