

FALL 2019



EN POINTE



DEAR ALUMNI, FAMILIES AND FRIENDS,

I am excited for another great season and to celebrate our forty-fourth season here at Ballet Excel Ohio. We are busy participating in community events and collaborations with Cuyahoga Valley Art Center, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, the Tree Festival at the Knight Center, in-school performances, educational library performances and more events to be announced.

Our annual Akron Civic Theatre performances on March 14 and 15, 2020 will feature a world premiere of Tom Gold's "The Snow Queen" and a reprise of Tom Evert's "I ♥ Shapes". "The Snow Queen" is the Hans Christian Andersen story that became a big hit with the movie "Frozen". If you or family members are a fan, you won't want to miss this creative ballet. Tom Gold's choreography is innovative and magical for audience members of all ages.

For 21 years Reach Out And Dance® is the only dance outreach program in schools that invests in bringing serious classical ballet training to those who otherwise might not have the opportunity. Through hard work, dedication and life lessons these dancers are integrated into Ballet Excel Ohio and get to enjoy the same experiences many of you were able to cherish all the way through their high school graduation through scholarships. One-third of Ballet Excel Ohio is now underserved dancers. We can proudly say this is the largest investment of dance training for underserved children in Northeast Ohio.

In recent years we have been hit hard with the loss of support due to a change in many of our community foundations vision. We are in a time of real need of support from people like you, alumni, families and friends. Please know that 90% of each dollar donated goes directly to programming. We list our supporters on our programs, Facebook, Instagram and website at www.balletexcelohio.org. Being able to continue the vision of my mother, Founding Artistic Director Nan Klinger, is important for our dancers and our community. Please consider helping to keep this organization and the arts alive in our area.



Sincerely,
Mia Klinger



IGNITE THE NIGHT!

BALLET EXCEL OHIO'S **FIRE & ICE** ANNUAL GALA & AUCTION

Our **"Fire and Ice"** themed Gala, held at Lake Forest Country Club on November 16, 2019, was a remarkable success this year! A genuine and wholehearted thank you to everyone that donated time, resources, or talent to make this spectacular event come together so beautifully!

This year's event was well attended with 112 guests arriving in style to enjoy the evening, and the night was also financially successful with 11 corporate and individual sponsorships, combined with proceeds of the silent and live auction which utilized the electronic bidding program, BIDPAL, we successfully raised in excess of \$28,000!

Throughout the evening, we recognized the importance of the Cuyahoga Valley Youth Ballet Endowment Fund. The "Cuyahoga Valley Youth Ballet Fund" was established in 1989 and is managed by the Akron Community Foundation. Akron Community Foundation embraces and enhances the work of charitable people who make a permanent commitment to the good of the community. Ballet Excel Ohio using earnings distributed from the endowment for operations, which include but is not limited to, scholarships for dancers from surrounding communities that are underserved in terms of arts education. A special "paddle raise" was conducted to raise monies for this important programming.

Several of our dancers greeted guests dressed as A Soldier Boy, Sugarplum Fairy and Mirliton dancers. These adorable greeters, in conjunction with fantastic decorations created by Ballet Excel parents, Theresa Arnold and Jackie Zorich, provided the perfect atmosphere for guests to feel as though they arrived in a magical wonderland of

"Fire and Ice". And, everyone enjoyed our BXO president, Mr. Kevin Coughlin, who gave an exciting welcome to the attendees. The hard work of BXO parents and the incredible effort of the Gala's Co-Chairs, Rorie Boland and Brandy Olefir, made this event not only successful but also extremely enjoyable for all in attendance.

The theme of "Fire and Ice" was chosen this year for our Gala because Ballet Excel Ohio's main production this year will be "The Snow Queen". "The Snow Queen" is a magical story based on the Hans Christian

Anderson fairytale that inspired the hit Disney movie Frozen. It is a brand-new ballet choreographed by renowned NYC choreographer Tom Gold. This ballet will be performed at the Akron Civic Theatre on **March 14th and 15th**. Please save the dates as this will be a wonderful family-friendly show!

One of the climaxes at our Gala included a lovely performance by Ballet Excel dancers Maggie Stone, Elizabeth Coughlin, Savannah Wyatt, Jonathan McCray and Jade Blankenship who danced selections from the Nutcracker.

Undoubtedly, it is because of our community's generous support and participation in our fundraisers that we have been able to provide arts education in Northeast Ohio for so many years. The money raised by this year's Gala will help Ballet Excel Ohio continue its mission of bringing original ballets to local schools and community venues in northeast Ohio. Education in the arts is such a critical component to the overall academic success of our young people. Ballet Excel is proud to use our programs, such as ROAD®, as well as our other programs, Ballet Excel on Tour, Community Ticketing, and Scouting for the Arts to educate and inspire local children and their families.

The money raised through this year's event will allow Ballet Excel Ohio to continue to be a leader in our community when it comes to youth performing arts!



LETTER FROM BOARD PRESIDENT, KEVIN COUGHLIN

Ballet Excel Ohio has kicked off its 44th season!

The company has begun work on our signature production- "The Snow Queen." This original ballet, choreographed by Tom Gold, is visually stunning and sure to delight our audiences. Our dancers will also present another original production called I ❤️ Shapes, choreographed by Tom Evert. This contemporary piece stretches the skills of our dancers and will give our audiences a memorable experience.



Our dancers, choreographers, and staff are center stage. But our families are at the heart of Ballet Excel Ohio. Their time, treasure, and talents help make BXO the premier youth dance experience in the region. Thanks to their behind-the-scenes support and help, BXO is able to bring you professional productions year in and year out.

From the annual Gala, to studio monitoring, coordinating costumes, sets and production, and everything in between our families make BXO a special organization. Thank you.

Last season's presentation of Peter Pan brought good crowds to the Akron Civic Theatre. The Snow Queen will be another big draw, so let's work together to fill those seats. Buy tickets early, get your friends and families to come, and promote, promote, promote!

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Board President. If there is anything you would like to talk about, I am more than happy to hear from you at president@balletexcelohio.org.



WELCOME APPRENTICES

Isabel Banig	4th Grade	Monroe Elementary School
Toney Kight	9th Grade	Lake Center Christian School
Anastasia Moirano	4th Grade	Saint Joseph School
Layla Motley	5th Grade	Case Elementary School
Uniqke Tavanello	9th Grade	Firestone High School
Savannah Wyatt	9th Grader	Homeschooled
Kyla Hayashi	6th Grader	United Elementary



ROAD® is an arts education organization dedicated to enriching the lives of children through the art of dance. For over 20 years ROAD® has been dedicated to serving students who otherwise would not have the opportunity to experience dance and positively changing the trajectory of their lives. This year's ROAD® is working at, Case CLC, Findley CLC, Harris Jackson CLC, McBright CLC, Seiberling CLC, and will be in more area schools in the Spring of 2020. In addition to outreach and performances at area schools 15

scholarships were awarded in 2019 enabling students to attend pre-professional training at Nan Klinger Excellence in Dance

We are so grateful to everyone who has helped keep the vision of ROAD® vibrant for over 20 years and investing in the lives of these dancers!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 16	Annual Gala- Fire & Ice: Ignite the Night
November 30	Tree Festival at 12:00pm
January 11	Library Performance Cuyahoga Falls
January 18	Akron Main Library
January 25	Library Performance Fairlawn-Bath Branch
February 1	Library Performance Kent Free Library
February 20th	In-School Performance: Akron Public Schools-Seiberling and David Hill CLC
February 22	Library Performance Hudson Library and Historical Society
February 12	In-School Performance: Our Lady of the Elms
March 3	In-School Performance of the Snow Queen: Wooster
March 14 & 15	CIVIC Performances: The Snow Queen and I ❤️ SHAPES

2019 SUMMER STUDY

Our dancers were busy this summer! The end of the school year means opportunities for our dancers to travel near and far to gain valuable dance experiences. Listed below is how Ballet Excel dancers spent their summer studies:

Rebecca Banig	Estudio de Danza Cecelia Teran	Jonathan McCray	Houston Ballet Academy
Jade Blankenship	Raña-Bolivia, South America	Madeline Pierce	Chautauqua Institution
Elizabeth Coughlin	Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet	Emma Simms	Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet
Ellie Ferry	Pacific Northwest Ballet	Maggie Stone	Charlotte Ballet, EID
Vivian Gray	Chautauqua Institution	Adalyn Zorich	Chautauqua Institution, EID
	Miami City Ballet	Lex Zorich	Charlotte Ballet

BALLET EXCEL OHIO SUMMER SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

KATE LIEBERTH LYTTON SCHOLARSHIP

Jade Blankenship

NAN KLINGER SCHOLARSHIP

Vivian Gray

GAYLE NOBLE SCHOLARSHIPS

Lilyann Arnold	Jenna Harris
Elizabeth Coughlin	Maggie Stone
Ellie Ferry	Lex Zorich

DONATE AND JOIN OUR MOVEMENT!

Even with talented dancers, involved alumni, an innovative artistic staff and outstanding volunteers, Ballet Excel Ohio relies on the support of community members like you. Your donations provide everything from shoes to full scholarships to children in need. Gifts can be made online at <https://balletexcelohio.org/index.php/support/donate> by calling 330-376-8522, or emailing development@balletexcelohio.org

During this holiday season follow us on social media to take advantage of several opportunities to increase the impact of your donation with funds matching up to \$2000 from a generous alumni, Giving Tuesday, and Amazon Smile.

Thank you so much for supporting this important cause!

OUR FUNDING

Thank you to these incredible organizations that make Ballet Excel Ohio, and its outreach programs, accessible to the youth of our community.

The Clara Faber Foundation



Ernie and Mary Kay PouttuFoundation



The Noble Foundation

Welty Family Foundation

Read Family Foundation

Sisler McFawn Foundation

Maynard Family Foundation



The Muna and Basem Hismeh Foundation Inc.

The Lloyd L. & Louise K. Smith Foundation

The Charles E. & Mabel Ritchie Memorial Foundation

The Mary & Dr. George L. Demetros Charitable Trust

The Cantine-Nora Family Fund

Alumni Spotlight

MISS KATIE DETTLING

An exclusive interview of BXO Alumna dancer Katie Dettling (CVYB'96) conducted by current BXO Dancer Jade Blakenship (13y.o.). Miss Dettling performed in over 100 professional dance works subsequent to her time as a BXO dancer, successfully taught and managed at multiple companies, and co-founded her own business with her husband, Fit-Arts, in New York City. They now live back in Akron. Here is a recounting of their inspiring conversation...



When did you start dancing in the company and what did you like most about it?

I came to the company a little later, from a more recreational school. I first attended summer classes at CVYB and realized it was a whole other league of training. I was in 6th grade and I think I was 12 years old. My favorite thing about the company was the whole process of performing: the original choreography, the rehearsals, the creativity involved. It's not something you get in other schools.



What do you do for a living now?

I currently teach Pilates. I transitioned out of dance about 5 years ago. My husband and I managed Dances Patrelle for a few years but decided arts management wasn't for the rest of our lives (those who support and fundraise for non-profits are VERY special people). It was a great experience, especially helpful in learning how to manage a business. After loving movement and doing Pilates for over 20 years, teacher training became a natural focus. I had a fabulous mentor and fell in love with it. I did extensive training in the Merrithew brand of Pilates.

How did your experience of being in the company help you to get to where you are now and are there any specific skills or strengths you gained from being in the company?

I ended up having a good 20 years as a professional dancer. At CVYB I learned the process of choreography. I became known for picking things up quickly. Also for acting. I had to work hard to make my body work for ballet, so these skills were a great benefit. The most important things I learned were the discipline and perseverance it takes to be successful in dance, or anything. Also that love for movement and a comfortability with my own body. We're not using our bodies enough these days, and that's so important for our health.

What was your favorite ballet, and did you have a favorite choreographer?

The spirit of the Cuyahoga by James Sewell was my first ballet. I really loved that ballet. It's so unique! Also, Francis Patrelle's USO show. I've always loved doing things that aren't so classical. He was so fun to work with. Obviously I ended up connecting with him later in my career and he was a great mentor to me.



What is your most memorable time as a CVYB company member?

That's a tough one. There are so many. For sure Civic weeks. It was huge. Almost like what Homecoming is for high school kids. The Civic was the big thing you look forward to every year and it created memories I hold onto.

How were you able to balance schoolwork with all your classes?

That was always a struggle and that is where all the discipline comes in. I was fortunate to have a lot of support from my family which helped. At times we had to negotiate with school. There were less alternative education opportunities than there are now. More than anything it was just a lot of hard work. Part of the reason I loved ballet was that it made me feel better. It helped me focus and I found I could get better results in school when I actually moved my body and cleared my head. It was a lot to fit in, but it ultimately made me more productive.

Was there any specific teacher, dance mom, or classmate that you looked up to as a role model?

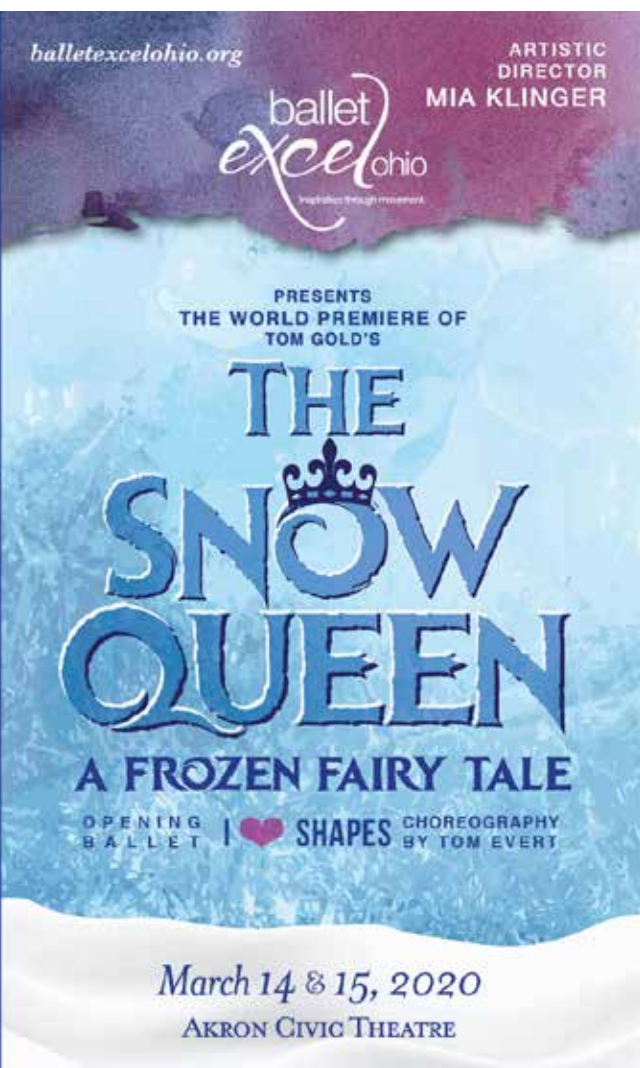
Well, obviously Miss Nan was a huge one. I know she gave my mom a lot of great advice. As I came to the school a little later than some of the others, I was behind in my age group. My body wasn't perfect. There was a lot of nurturing and hard lessons. Miss Nan wasn't one to coddle anyone. She told it like it was. One of the things my Mom always remembers was Miss Nan saying "to let the world let her know if she should try." Lori Klinger was also a big influence. She taught summer classes. I later spent time in New York with her and she became a mentor as well. The older dancers were also wonderful examples. That's another great thing about this environment, young people to look up to.

Lastly, what advice can you give to us young dancers?

You know, I think that I've seen a lot of dance students go through their lives, regardless of whether they become professionals, do great things and become very successful. It was amazing at the last anniversary the company had, my husband came, and he noted that literally every single one of these people were doing something interesting and wonderful. I'd say keep valuing the perseverance. There is a lot of beauty but also a lot of disappointment in something like ballet. The bar is so high. And the hard things are the things you learn the most from. Also never stop moving!



Artistic Director Mia Klinger
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2019-2020 Ballet Excel Ohio Dancers



A BXO FIRST!

Consistent with BXO's mission to bring the art of dance to all audiences BXO is proud to offer its first **sensory friendly performance** on Friday March 13th at the Akron Civic Theatre. This performance of "The Snow Queen" is offered freely and designed to create a welcoming environment for children and adults with autism spectrum disorder, sensory sensitivities or other special needs. For more information, please check our website: balletexcelohio.org or email questions to communications@balletexcelohio.org.