

RIVER DANCE FESTIVAL 2023 ARTISTS AND COMPANIES

Sephyra Clerc

Sephyra is a performing artist, teacher & choreographer residing in Lambertville, NJ, since 2016. Since her childhood in Switzerland, her homeland, she has always been passionate about dance & movement, and dancers' ability to bring out the strongest & most powerful emotions in the human soul, to express them to an audience. Sephyra trained with several schools in Switzerland including the Studio Flay Ballet, the Geneva School of Classical Dance with Genevieve Chaussat & Francois Chevalley, and in the US with the Legacy Dance Theatre directed by Ms Gillian Johnson, as well as the Mill Ballet School, then located in Lambertville, NJ. As a choreographer she has created pieces for Roxey Ballet's first annual River Dance Festival as well as its Teen Arts Festival; she has also created a group piece for the Prallsville Mills art exhibit Save Mother Earth 2020 in Stockton, NJ, with six university dance graduates. Sephyra is part of the teaching faculty at the Emily Rose Dance Creations studio in Newtown Square, PA and choreographs recital pieces for their students this year. Her long-term project is to create danced versions of operas such as the Ring Cycle.

Seyong Kim

Seyong Kim is an Associate Professor of Dance at Western Michigan University (Kalamazoo, MI), holds an MA in Dance Education from NYU Steinhardt and an MA in Dance from Sung-Kyun-Kwan University (Seoul, South Korea). He is a CMA (Certified Movement Analyst) from Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies, a RSDE (Registered Somatic Dance Educator), and a PBT (Progressing Ballet Technique) Certified Teacher. Seyong is an ABT® Certified Teacher, who has successfully completed the ABT® Teacher Training Intensive in Primary through Level 7 of the American Ballet Theatre's National Training Curriculum. Furthermore, he earned the Diversity and Inclusion Certificate from Cornell University. Seyong has taught for Rutgers University, Kent State University, The University of Georgia, Randolph College, Palm Beach Atlantic University, Peridance, Steps On Broadway, Texas A&M International University, Libera University in Italy, World Dance Alliance-America (WDAA), American College Dance Association (ACDA), Cecchetti Council of America, Eisenhower Dance Detroit, Michigan Youth Arts Festival (MYAF), Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, National High School Dance Festival, Alabama Dance Festival, Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company, Dance Now! Miami, West Hawaii Dance Theatre, Chicago Repertory Ballet, Ballet 5:8, Charlottesville Ballet, Grand Rapids Ballet, and Ballet Preljocaj. As a professional dancer, Seyong has danced with the Metropolitan Opera at Lincoln Center, Albania National Ballet Theatre, Baltimore Ballet, Traverse City Dance Project, Neglia Ballet, TAKE Dance, Oakland Ballet Company, and Roxey Contemporary Ballet. In addition, his choreographic works have been internationally invited at Landestheater Coburg in Germany, Florence Dance on Screen Festival in Italy, International Contemporary Dance Festival of Mexico City, Taiwan JueDai Taipei International Dance Festival, ProArteDanza in Canada, Seoul International Dance Festival in TANK, Lebanon International Dance Festival, Battery Dance Festival, Palm Desert Choreography Festival, American Dance Guild Festival, Lindenwood University,

Cleveland Dance Festival, Richmond Dance Festival, Midwest Regional Alternative Dance Festival, Chicago International Dance Forum, Detroit Dance City Festival, Boston Contemporary Dance Festival, Orlando Contemporary Dance Choreography Festival, Oklahoma International Dance Festival, Breaking Ground Contemporary Dance Festival, CrossCurrent Asian-American Dance Festival, and Movement Research at the Judson Church.

Alanna Huling

Alanna Huling is a dance artist from Franklin, Massachusetts currently based in New York. She recently graduated from Hofstra University with Bachelors degrees in Dance and Psychology. At Hofstra, she studied ballet, contemporary, choreography, and modern, with experience in Graham, Horton, and Taylor techniques. She has taken part in Gibney's Winter Study, EMIA, JumpStart by Cloude NYC, Alonzo King's LifeLINES intensive, and other training programs. Alanna has choreographed and performed in several showcases. Her most noted work, *ExCommune*, was showcased at ACDA's Northeast Regional Conference in 2023. She has been teaching dance to children of all ages for several years in dance studios in Massachusetts and New York, as well as teaching adult dance fitness classes. For her honors thesis, Alanna researched how people living with Alzheimer's could improve their neurological function by taking dance classes. She has also made it a point to be an advocate for social justice in the dance community, connecting with artists like Amy Miller to encourage social/artistic activism.

Maureen Glennon Clayton - moe-tion dance theater

Established in 2007, moe-tion dance theater is a contemporary modern dance theater company based in NJ. Under the direction of Maureen Glennon Clayton, the company has performed at numerous festivals, showcases and venues throughout the tri-state area, including DUMBO Dance Festival, Cool NY Dance Festival, Mason Gross Summer Series, SWEAT Outdoors Festival, Outlet Dance Project at Grounds for Sculpture, NJ Arts Collaborative at George Street Playhouse, Jersey City Arts Extravaganza at Canco Lofts, Dance New Jersey's Show Up & Dance at Rutgers University, Centenary University and Two Rivers Theater, Hatch Series at Jennifer Muller The Works Studio/NYC, Garden State Dance Festival, Silk City Arts Festival; the Merce Cunningham studio in NYC. The company performed "Comical Twins...ACTIVATE!!" a collaborative dance evening Maureen created with Pascal Rekoert and his company, Flexicurve at the Gershwin Hotel in NYC.

Arisa Tanihata

Arisa hails from Kyoto, Japan. She studied at Kyoto Ballet Academy with the guest teachers & dancers from Paris Opera Ballet and while still a student performed with Kyoto Ballet Company along side of dancers from Paris Opera.

In 2011 Arisa moved to France, where she studied at Goubé European Dance Center with Jennifer Goubé, ex Soloist at Paris Opera and from 2012 to 2016, trained with Sonia Zur-Rolquin, ex Dancer at Nancy Opera Ballet with Pierre Lacotte as artistic director. She received a Gold Medal with Distinction at Concours de danse classique de Toulon in France, 3rd place (1st and 2nd place were not awarded) at International Hellas Youth Ballet Competition in Athens Greece, and Silver medal at International Dance Competition "Livorno in Danza" in Italy. In Europe she worked with JSLN Dance Company in 2017 in Augsburg, Germany and performed in "Giselle" in 2018 at Royal Opera House Valletta, Malta with guest dancers from Royal Ballet & Royal Swedish Ballet. In 2019 Arisa moved to NYC, and in the US she has worked with Connecticut Ballet, Chevalier Ballet, American Liberty Ballet, City Dance NY. As well as Pacific Ballet Dance Theatre Los Angeles as Soloist, debuted as Red Girl in Ashton's "Les Patineurs", and for TV show "LA County Holiday Celebration" at Dorothy Chandler Pavilion.

Shiyu Wang

Shiyu Wang is a dancer, choreographer and teacher from China. Shiyu graduated with her BFA in Dance from Minzu University of China in 2019. Before coming to Philadelphia, Shiyu taught Chinese classical dance and Folk dance in China. She also participated in the exchange activity of the African Dance Troupe at the MUC in 2019 and was a part of CCTV's recording of the column show of "Dance World" in 2018.

Shiyu won 3rd Prize in the 9th Modern Dance Competition among 5 provinces of North China in 2019. Right now, she is pursuing her MFA in dance at Temple University. Her work was selected for the ACDA in 2021, and her graduation work was awarded a project grant from Temple University in 2022. Shiyu joined Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers as an apprentice in 2021. Following the dance company to participate in all performances of the 2021-2022 season, Shiyu confirmed her love for the stage.

Shiyu believes that the body is the dancer's home and the body is the stage for us to perceive the world, so dance is always a dialogue. A dialogue between our bodies and the space, the audience and the people we are dancing with.

Grace Marguerite Sellinger

Grace Marguerite Sellinger graduated from Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania with a Bachelor of Arts in Dance and International Studies in May of 2023. She has studied and danced in the United Kingdom and Seoul, South Korea. Sellinger has choreographed for projects including: Muhlenberg College's *Dance Works 2019*, *Move*, *Diverge*, *Advance 2022*, and *Dance Emerge 2023*; original screendance *Nowhere* presented at the 2023 American College Dance Association Northeast Regional Conference; Axelrod Contemporary Ballet Theater's 2021 Summer Showcase and 2022 Summer Showcase; Sarah Bui's *Between the Dreams 2021* dance film; Somerset County Vocational & Technical High School's *Beyond*. Sellinger has performed in recent dance shows such as: Muhlenberg College's *Dance Gallery 2019*, *Master Choreographers 2020*, *Reset: New Dances 2022*, and *In Motion 2023*; Axelrod Contemporary Ballet Theater's *The Jungle Book*, *Alice in Wonderland*, Summer Showcase 2021, *Three's A Crowd*, and *The Lost Princess of Oz*; Sarah Bui's *Between the Dreams 2021* dance film; Somerset County Vocational & Technical High School's *Beyond 2019*.

Fiorella Armando

Fiorella is a dancer, choreographer and dance teacher from Uruguay. She started practicing dance at the age of four, learning Latin Rhythms with a focus on Samba. As a child, she studied Classical Ballet, Jazz Dance and Bellydance at her hometown school "BU Dance Academy". Later on she trained professionally in ballet at the "Cuban Ballet School of Montevideo" and "Ballet Avant" Academy, and in contemporary dance at the "National School of Dance SODRE". While in Uruguay she performed as a member of "La Octava Posición" dance group and worked as a choreographer and teacher. After moving to NYC, she trained at "Vassiliev Academy of Classical Ballet" and "Ballet Arts Center for Dance". She has performed with "SunProject", "Ollom Art" and "Pure Samba" companies and as a freelance dancer in the NY/NYC area. She is a soloist with "American Liberty Ballet" Company.

Lynn Needle - Art Of Motion Dance Theatre

Lynn Needle/RYT 500 Founder/Artistic Director of Art of Motion, Inc. a non-profit conservatory and home to the Art of Motion Dance Theatre, toured to 6 out of 7 continents and more than 40 United States as a soloist with the Nikolais Dance Theatre. Needle is the recipient of numerous grants including: A Coastal Art Project grant; The Poseidon Project, funded by NOAA. DEP & NJCSA, an international Andrew W. Mellon Cultural Exchange Fund grant for a teaching residency in Mexico, the ACDFA National Dance Magazine Award for Choreography, The Harkness Foundation,

Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs, and the Northern New Jersey Community Foundation. Her work, presented internationally has been featured at the global TEDMED Conference at the Kennedy Center, Jacob's Pillow, Art Festivals, Galas, Smithsonian Museums, Consulates, Zoos and sand dunes and recognized by foundations, universities and press including Vanity Fair, The New York Times, Women's Wear Daily, Washington Post, WSJ, Daily News, Dance Magazine and the Village Voice. Lynn, an Adjunct Professor of Modern Dance is a recipient of Lifetime Achievement Awards from the Ridgewood Arts Foundation, Dance in the Desert Festival and has been featured on PBS, podcasts, and VR film.

A prolific choreographer, Needle has created more than 100 works celebrating collaboration, mixing movement vocabularies and incorporating multi-media.

Josh Handler - Arts Access Program Matheny

Josh has been creating work since the Arts Access Program's beginning in 1993. He tries to make his visual art "unique and interesting. "Some people think I'm mysterious," he says, "because my art is unique for what I do." In 2014, Josh expanded his talents into the world of dance, choreographing a dance piece to the music of Debbie Gibson's "Lost in Your Eyes". It was performed in 2019 at the Arts Access Full Circle celebration by three female dancers, one of whom was in a wheelchair. According to Heather Williams, Arts Access Performing Arts Coordinator, Josh "uses big sweeping patterns and intricate arm movements. He is very musical.

Since 1993, the Matheny Arts Access Program has been empowering artists with disabilities to create art without limits. A groundbreaking fine arts program, Arts Access utilizes innovative communication systems and techniques to empower artists to create in the visual, literary, and performing arts. Arts Access provides the traditional tools and materials needed to create art, along with one unique additional tool: a human being. Not just any human being, but a professional artist facilitator who is trained to be the arms and legs of the participating artist. Every choice comes from the participant, from paint color and brush stroke, to dance movement and theatrical staging, to each written word. On a daily basis, Arts Access fosters an environment of artistic freedom among its artists, and works to change perceptions about the capabilities and talents of people with disabilities.

Berks Ballet Theater

Berks Ballet Theatre Conservatory of Dance is a premier dance institution dedicated to providing the highest quality training to its students. Our commitment to excellence has resulted in numerous achievements, with our students consistently joining Professional Trainee and Studio Companies, earning top honors at YAGP multiple times, and securing scholarships to prestigious professional company training programs. The Conservatory's mission is to nurture each student's potential inside and outside the dance studio. Ensuring well-rounded, age-appropriate training that caters to their physical and mental needs. Located within the state-of-the-art GoggleWorks Center for the Arts, our Conservatory boasts three stunning studios flooded with natural light and exposed brick. BBTCD's unwavering dedication to training ensures that aspiring dancers have the opportunity to pursue professional careers in dance with confidence and skill.

Lisa Botalico

Lisa is currently Assistant Director/Principal Dancer/Choreographer of Alborada Spanish Dance Theatre. Lisa toured the USA as Artistic Director/Principal Dancer of La Compañía Folklórica Latina for the National Theatre of the Performing Arts. She is the featured dancer on Images/Imágenes' Emmy Award winning program, The Spanish Guitar featured on NJN. Her photo appeared in the exhibit 100 Years of Flamenco in NYC at the Library for the Performing Arts Lincoln Center. New Jersey performances include: NJPAC, New Brunswick PAC, Morristown Community Theatre, SOPAC, Crossroads Theatre and George Street Playhouse.

Choreography collaborations include: Roxey Ballet's Carmen Ballet; Nrithyanjali Institute of Dance's Journey through Genre, Directed by Ramya Ramnarayan at Crossroads Theater and Outlet Dance at Grounds for Sculpture. In 1999 she founded the Arts Council of Princeton's Adult and Children's Flamenco Dance Programs and was their 2014 Artist in Residence. In 2019 Lisa was nominated for a Best Choreographer Perry Award by the New Jersey Association of Community Theaters for her choreography in PinnWorth Production's North East premier of Zorro, the Musical at the Kelsey Theater. Al Ritmos de las Piedras was recently performed at the Morven Moves Choreography Showcase, Morven Museum, Princeton.

Nerissa Tunnessen

Nerissa Tunnessen (they/them) is a transmasculine Jewish dyke and dancer/choreographer/educator from Washington, DC currently residing in Philadelphia, PA. They are passionate about connecting historical research and art to work in a space of understanding communal emotion and the human experience. Their recent work has explored topics of historical and present-day women's spirituality, gender identity, sexuality, mourning, community building, and the complexities of empowerment.

Gina Palumbo

Gina Palumbo is a dance artist and yoga teacher living in Philadelphia. She received her BA in Dance from DeSales University in 2016, and her masters in Archival Studies in 2023. Her independent choreography has premiered in Philadelphia and Bucks County, and she is a member of Commuovere Dance Company in Bucks County. She has written for the Philadelphia Dance Journal and worked on the research team for the Chicago Dance History Project. She works in a university library and archives and teaches yoga.

Commuovere Dance

Commuovere Dance is a performing arts company dedicated to sharing the passion and power of dance through collaboration, education and performance. They are comprised of a diverse group of dancers and choreographers who share the vision that movement is a powerful medium which can and should be available to individuals of any gender, age, social status or ability. Through exploration and the creation of movement experiences/pieces of work, it is this company's hope to inspire others to think outside the box in terms of what and who dance is for, while also generating interest, awareness and contribution towards local/national charities and issues of importance.

Tuula Cox - Capricious Dance Company of Narnia

Capricious Dance Company of Narnia focuses on positive social impact through dance. The company mixes different dance styles from classical dance to house dance and animation. Company's founder, dancer, and visual artist Tuula Cox started with ballet and contemporary dance training as a child and found her way into the street dance world in her 20s. CDCN frequently collaborates with Kapybara the art collective by making short dance films.

Jainil Mehta

Originally from Mumbai, India, Jainil Mehta, a 24 year old dancer & choreographer began his dance journey at the age of five, performing in his living room. He is a former company dancer with Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company & is currently freelance teaching, creating and performing across the United States, predominantly New York City. He was recently selected as a choreographer at the Playdate Residency, funded by the National Endowment of the Arts. He has choreographed and designed 4 dance productions - Ctrl Alt Delete in 2023, DECODED in 2018, Alankar in 2017 & Chimera in 2015.

Before moving to Los Angeles for college, he trained at Shiamak Davar International in Mumbai, India for thirteen years. Jainil graduated Summa Cum Laude and received his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance from the USC Glorya Kaufman School of Dance with a Discovery Scholars Distinction, and has acquired a variety of skills including budgeting, accounting, entrepreneurship, stage lighting, tools for digital design, sound editing, motion picture cinematography and video editing, to name a few. He has learned and performed works by esteemed choreographers like William Forsythe, Jiří Kylián, Jodie Gates, Barak Marshall, Alejandro Cerrudo, Dwight Rhoden and Matthew Neenan.

Jainil Mehta has a current following of more than 295k on Instagram, trending on #Meniskirts which breaks the barriers of gender categorizations. He has been featured on various national newspapers & pages like BBC News, Good morning America, India times, Brut India, Elle India, Hindustan Times, Official Humans of Bombay and Quint to name a few for his confidence and courage to break gender stereotypes, especially within the Indian community. Jainil has choreographed for Big Wild's music video "6's to 9's" and Falguni Pathak's "Jode Rahejo Raaj." While also being a social media influencer, he has taught many dance classes online and in person across India as well as Pakistan, China, Singapore, United Kingdom, Europe, Australia and the United States to over 1000+ students. Jainil wants to create the first-ever accredited higher education dance program in India through global exchange, interdisciplinary learning and partnerships. His goal is to give dancers, dance-makers and creators a chance to develop their own artistic choices and artmaking process, hence helping them create a unique identity and career for themselves. Jainil continues to grow and constantly pushes the bar of excellence with his strong focus and unparalleled passion.

Pinja Sinisalo - Roxey Ballet Company

Pinja was born in Vantaa, Finland. She started her dance studies at the Helsinki Dance Institute at the age of four and was later accepted to the Institute's Professional Training Program from 2005-2012. Pinja continued her studies with the Finnish National Ballet School, completing the Vocational Qualification in Dance. At the age of 16 she was accepted to the Hungarian Dance Academy in Budapest, under the direction of Szakály György. Pinja trained in classical ballet and contemporary dance and graduated in 2017, completing the Bachelor Degree in Arts specializing in classical ballet.

Pinja began her professional career with the Ballet of Sorbisches National Ensemble, under the direction of Mia Facchinelli in Bautzen, Germany. Pinja performed a versatile repertoire of different styles - ballet, folk dance, contemporary and dance theatre touring with the company in Europe. Pinja joined Roxey Ballet in 2019 and has since then danced leading roles in various productions, including *"Sugar Plum"* in The Nutcracker, *"Cinderella"* in Cinderella and *"Pigtail Girl"* in Graduation Ball. This is Pinja's fifth season with Roxey Ballet Company. She also teaches at the Mill Ballet School and serves as the Social Media/Presenter Coordinator for Roxey Ballet's administrative team.

Kaito Kurokawa - Roxey Ballet Company

Kaito was born in Shonan, Japan. He trained at Pas de Trois Shonan Ballet School in Japan, Kharkov Choreographic School in Ukraine and Tallinn Ballet School in Estonia. From there he moved to Belgium to study at the Brussels International Ballet School and he got the opportunity to perform Mats Ek's "Aluminium". He was a finalist at the Tallinn International Ballet Competition and he also attended the International Ballet Summer of Dresden where he performed another piece by Mats Ek "Sleeping Beauty" (scholarship by Royal Swedish Ballet School).

Kaito started his professional career at the Columbia Classical Ballet in 2019 and danced there for two seasons performing soloist roles including "Gravity" by Manuel Vignouille and "Robin Hood Pas de Deux" by Simone Cuttino. After that Kaito danced with Arts Ballet Theater of Florida performing in multiple productions by Vladimir Issaev. Since joining Roxey Ballet in 2022 Kaito has already danced principal and soloist roles with the company including *"Cavalier"* from The Nutcracker and *"Jonathon"* from Dracula. He also got the chance to choreograph two pieces *"Billie Jean"* inspired by Michael Jackson and *"Footloose"* for The Journey Back To The 80's production. Kaito is also part of Mill Ballet School's teaching faculty.

Giovanni Ravelo - Roxey Ballet Company

A native of Colombia, Giovanni Ravelo began his ballet training at Anna Pavlova School in Bogotá. He studied at the School of the National Ballet of Cuba and in the professional division of the Rock School for Dance Education. Giovanni was a member of National Ballet of Colombia, one of the most important folklore companies in the world. Invited to perform the role of Romeo by Ballet Theatre of Scranton in 2003, he later moved to the US as a member of The Roxey Ballet Company, Inc, with whom he performed works created for him such as *Times Square Goodbye*, *Lago in Othello*, and in *Wheels and Bodies in Motion* at the Joyce Theater, NYC. Giovanni has also choreographed several pieces for The Roxey Ballet Company, Inc, including *Frida Kahlo*, *Narcisa*, *Bread for Your Heart*, and *In the Orchard*. He has been a guest artist with Northeast Youth Ballet, Contrast Dance Theater, and Les Ballets Grandiva, and performs with Les Ballets Trockadero de Montecarlo. Giovanni is currently the rehearsal assistant and ballet master of Roxey Ballet Company.

Caitlyn Kresky - Roxey Ballet Company

Caitlyn was born and raised in New Jersey where she began her training at Triplett Dance Academy, studying classical ballet, contemporary, jazz, and tap. At the age of 16, she continued her pre-professional training, focusing more on ballet and contemporary at The Rock School for Dance Education. Upon graduation, she joined Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre's Graduate Program at which she performed roles in classical ballets, rehearsed *Serenade* with Jerry Kumery from the Balanchine Trust, and was selected for a contemporary work by Staycee Pearl. Caitlyn began her professional career with Columbia Classical Ballet under the direction of Brooklyn Mack where she performed in classical and neoclassical ballets such as *La Bayadere*, *Bolero*, and *The Nutcracker*, as well as original works by Simone Cuttino and Terrence Henderson. She also had the opportunity to perform as a guest artist with The Charleston Ballet in *Dracula*. Caitlyn is also a Pilates instructor. She received her training through Balanced Body in both Mat and Reformer Pilates. Additionally, she is furthering her education at Penn State University's World Campus majoring in Marketing. Caitlyn is starting her second season with Roxey Ballet Company and is also part of Mill Ballet School's teaching faculty.

Christina Holl - Roxey Ballet Company

Christina D'Astoli began her dance training under the direction of former Broadway actress Alison Gertner-Mann at the Center for Music, Theatre, and Dance in Jackson, New Jersey. Christina graduated with honors from Montclair State University (MSU) in 2017 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance. At MSU, she studied ballet, pointe, and various modern techniques such as O'Donnell, Limón, Horton, and contemporary. She has performed in choreographic works by Larry Keigwin, Christian von Howard, Fredrick Earl Mosley, Antony Tudor, Nancy Lushington, and others. Christina also trained at the Princeton Ballet School Summer Intensive and attended the Tuscan Summer Dance Intensive in Livorno, Italy. She danced as a company member with Roxey Ballet from 2017-2021 and has since then worked as the Administrative and Production Manager. In addition she is a faculty member of the Mill Ballet School and enjoys teaching and inspiring the younger generation of dancers

Julia Genovay - Mill Ballet School

Julia is an alumni of Mill Ballet School and has danced in multiple productions with Roxey Ballet Company since her childhood including "The Nutcracker", "Cinderella", "Carnival of The Animals" and "Pied Piper of Hamelin". This Summer, Julia taught her choreography to the Choreographic Workshop students, working with them as a team to create this performance for the River Dance Festival. Julia is preparing to start a new chapter in her life by joining Boston University to study Psychology and Dance. Her choreographic debut was made during Roxey Ballet's Journey Back to the 80s production, and she wishes to continue to choreograph throughout her dancing career.

