

Verb Ballets

Company History

One of Northeast Ohio's most respected dance companies, Verb Ballets has gained a reputation for artistic excellence and exemplary community engagement since its founding as The Cleveland Repertory Project in 1987. Under the current leadership of Dr. Margaret Carlson, former principal dancer for Cleveland Ballet, Verb is recognized for performing dance works of the highest caliber and as a catalyst to promote learning, nurture wellness, and encourage dialogue about the dance art form. 2017 marked Verb Ballets' 30th Anniversary Season.

As a contemporary ballet company, works by choreographers such as Adam Houghland, Antonio Brown, Tommie Waheed Evans, Charles Anderson and company dancer Michael Escovedo work regularly with the company. In addition, Verb houses 10 of the 13 Heinz Poll works allowed to survive him. He was the founder of the former Ohio Ballet. Each year, company dancers are given opportunities to grow their choreographic skills in performances at the Cleveland Public Theatre. In 2017, Verb formed an alliance with the Cuban ballet company Prodanza and through the cultural exchange process, Verb dancers are learning and performing ballets from the Cuban repertoire.

In 2018, Verb completed the buildout of its new 6,000 square foot home located in Shaker Hts on the border of the Lee-Harvard neighborhood. Planning is underway for the further development of educational activities to benefit the community.

To insure our work is accessible to all we produce free performances in public spaces, at community events and gatherings, and provide dance experiences and participatory activities for families, children and the elderly in schools, libraries, community centers, museums and senior living centers, including our Moving Connections senior movement program, popular WiggleWords literacy program for young children, school matinees of children's ballets, technique workshops for teens with professional ambitions, and now classes in our home studio where community members, rekindle or discover their love of dance. Our activities reach almost 25,000 individuals each year.

Critic reviews of Verb Ballets performance

"classical ballet with a dash of American modern dance" -International dance critics review

"dancers- move with great athleticism and complexity" - The Plain Dealer

"Dashes preconceptions ...with keen dramatic power." - The Plain Dealer

"Verb Ballets had a robust, ambitious program of dances" -Akron Beacon Journal

"The audience - love the work - got to their feet for the dancers' curtain calls" - Knight Arts

"the dancers displayed sheer talent and bravura" - review of Verb Ballets' performance

Any points of interest (people, places, stories, special talents) that might intrigue novice dance audiences.

Verb Ballets Producing Artistic Director, Dr. Margaret Carlson, was an original member of the Cleveland Ballet, serving as a Principal dancer from 1972-1983.

Richard Dickinson, MFA is Verb Ballets' Associate Artistic Director. He was a former dancer for many years with Ohio Ballet and later went on to become ballet master and director of company touring.

Verb Ballets Directors

Dr. Margaret Carlson (Producing Artistic Director) has worked nationally and internationally as a performer, teacher, choreographer, and arts administrator. Dr. Carlson was an original member of the Cleveland Ballet, serving as a Principal dancer from 1972-1983. Also a member of Actors Equity, she performed in numerous musical theatre tours throughout the 1970's, including *Sweet Charity*, *Ballroom*, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, *Brigadoon*, *Mame*, *Hello Dolly!* and *The Merry Widow*. For many years, she choreographed for the Cleveland Opera. Dr. Carlson served as Director of the School of Dance at the University of Akron from 1985-1993. In 1993, she became Dean of the School of Dance at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, until she returned to Cleveland in 1999. She then served as the Development and Education Director for the Cleveland San Jose Ballet. She consulted both nationally and locally through her company, Carlson Consulting Group, Inc., with groups that have included The American Dance Guild, Chinese Performing Artists of America, Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, Ohio Ballet, Dancing Wheels, Ohio Youth Ballet, Ohio Conservatory of Dance, Tom and Susana Evert Dance Theatre, and White Cloud Studios. Dr. Carlson founded the American Alliance of Dance Artists and served as its first President. She has served as a Board member and officer for DANCECleveland, the Cleveland Ballet Council, the American Dance Guild, the Council of Dance Administrators, the Hong Kong Ballet, the Hong Kong Dance Company and The Hong Kong Jockey Club Music and Dance Fund. She served as the secretary of the International Organization for Transition for Professional Dancers, a sub-committee of UNESCO, based in Switzerland from 1998-2006, and was Treasurer and Board member of the American Dance Guild in NYC and was its vice-president for 10 years. Dr. Carlson currently serves on the board of trustees of Cleveland Dance Movement, Cleveland Chamber Symphony and Fairmount Center for the Arts. She is known for her work as the regisseur for the works of Ian (Ernie) Horvath and is currently involved in the film about his life, called *No Dominion*. She received her doctorate from Durham University in the United Kingdom.

Richard Dickinson, MFA (Associate Artistic Director) A former dancer with Ohio Ballet Dickinson's association with that company began in 1988. He later became ballet master and director of company touring. Dickinson was also a soloist with Boston Ballet for eight years. At age fifteen, he joined the Pasadena Dance Theatre and was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts Emerging Choreographer Award for a work premiered by the same company. He performed in the PBS television production of "Frankie and Johnny" with the Chicago Ballet. and danced principal roles in Asian, European and American tours with Rudolf Nureyev and the Boston Ballet. In addition to his professional work, Dickinson had an extensive dance career including principal and soloist roles at Chicago Ballet, Honolulu City Ballet and various regional companies. Previously, he served as Artistic Associate for Hubbard Street Dance Chicago and the Artistic Director of Ballet Western Reserve, Great Lakes Festival Ballet, Chamber Dance Theatre. He has also directed Boston Ballet II and has a Master of Fine Arts degree in Contemporary Dance from Case Western Reserve University.

Verb Ballets Performances

March 8, 2019 12:00PM

Studio Showing with Laura Alonso
Verb Ballets Studio 3558 Lee Rd. Shaker Heights, OH 44120

March 15, 2019 7:00PM

Cleveland Havana Ballet
Verb Ballets Studio 3558 Lee Rd. Shaker Heights, OH 44120

March 17, 2019 2:00PM

Cleveland Havana Ballet
Akron Public Library 60 South High Street, Akron, OH 44326

April 7, 2019 8:00PM

NeoSonicFest with Cleveland Chamber Symphony
Milton and Tamar Maltz Performing Arts Center 1855 Ansel Rd, Cleveland, OH 44106

April 16-17, 2019

Children's Concert Society Premiere of *Mogwi's Jungle Adventures*
Akron Civic Theatre 182 S Main St, Akron, OH 44308

April 28, 2019 2:00PM

Wiggle Words
Akron Public Library 60 South High Street, Akron, OH 44326

May 16-18, 2019 7:30PM

DanceWorks 2019
Cleveland Public Theatre 6415 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44102

*All programs are subject to change. * Tentative Date*

Verb Ballets 2018-19 Company Dancers

Daniel Cho

Daniel Cho is from San Francisco, California, and holds a BA special major in Dance and Education from Swarthmore College. He received his training from Point Park Conservatory, the Laban Conservatoire in London, the Ballet X Summer Intensive, the San Francisco Conservatory of Dance and the Coastal City Ballet in Vancouver, British Columbia. Daniel is a recent graduate of the Alonzo King LINES Ballet Training Program, where he had the pleasure of performing works by Alonzo King, Angela Dice Nguyen, Sidra Bell, Shannon Gillen, Alex Ketley, Gioconda Barbuto, Maurya Kerr, and Gregory Dawson. He is thrilled to be joining Verb Ballets for the 2018-19 season.

Emily Dietz

Emily Dietz grew up in Mountain View, California, receiving most of her training at Western Ballet under Alexi Zubiria. She attended summer programs with ABT, Gelsey Kirkland Academy of Classical Ballet, Colorado Ballet, and American Repertory Ballet. She continued her dance education at Butler University, graduating with a BS in Dance Arts Administration in 2016. During her time at Butler, she performed in ballets such as *Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake* and toured with Butler Ballet to Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Following graduation, she has danced professionally with City Ballet of San Diego and American Contemporary Ballet, where she danced in repertoire such as Betsey Wistrich's *Raymonda*, Balanchine's *La Source*, and Geoff Gonzalez's *Four Seasons*. Emily joined Verb Ballets in 2018.

Michael Escovedo

Michael Escovedo was born and raised in the small town of Broomfield, Colorado and started competitive gymnastics when he was 5. After three years of strict training and competitive successes within the USAG gymnastics program Michael decided to start ballet in order to improve his gymnastics routines. It took one class for Michael to decide to quit gymnastics and attend ballet class full time at Ballet Nouveau Colorado (BNC). At the age of 15, after seven years of training and performing at BNC, Michael moved to New York City to train with The School of American Ballet. Michael has also choreographed two company works for Verb Ballets. After his graduation in 2014, Michael joined Verb Ballets and has been featured in works such as *Tarantella* and *Ne Me Quitte Pas*.

Kelly Korfhage

Kelly Korfhage, a native of Cleveland, began her training at age 10 under Joanne H. Morscher and Ana Lobe. She attended summer intensives at ABT Detroit, Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, BalletMet, Cincinnati Ballet, and North Carolina Dance Theatre. She furthered her dance education at the University of Cincinnati-College

Conservatory of Music as a Corbett Award scholarship recipient, and graduated cum laude with a BFA in ballet performance. Following graduation, Kelly became a member of Kansas City Ballet's second company, KCB2, for two seasons where she had the opportunity to perform with the company in repertoire such as Septime Webre's *Alice (In Wonderland)* and Adam Hougland's *Rite of Spring*. Kelly joined Verb Ballets in 2016 and has been featured in works such as *Andante Sostenuto* and *Schubert Waltzes*.

Christina Lindhout

Christina Lindhout, from Mansfield, Ohio, started training in dance at the age of five at Opus II Dance Studio under the direction of Hellie Schussler. She became a member of Opus II's pre-professional company, Ashland Regional Ballet, in middle school and remained with them through high school. She spent summers training at the Orlando Ballet School, Magnus Midwest, American Ballet Theatre, and BalletMet Columbus. Upon graduating magna cum laude from high school, Christina accepted a traineeship at BalletMet under the direction of Edward Liang. While at BalletMet, she had the opportunity to perform in many professional works with the company, including *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, *Symphony in C*, and *Carousel*. Christina joined Verb Ballets in 2014 and has been featured in works such as *Bolero* and *Laura's Women*.

Lieneke Matte

Lieneke Matte grew up in the Bronx and received her early training at Ballet Tech and the School of American Ballet. She then attended Fiorello H. La Guardia High School for the Performing Arts in New York. Lieneke studied for a semester at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts and graduated summa cum laude with a B.F.A in dance from SUNY Purchase College in May of 2013. There she also received the President's Award for the dance conservatory. She has performed in works by George Balanchine, Paul Taylor, Lar Lubovitch, Merce Cunningham, Martha Graham, Nicolo Fonte, Nicholas Villeneuve and Xiao-Xiong Zhang. Lieneke also was a dancer in the documentary *No Dominion: The Ian Horvath Story* which included re-stagings featuring dancers from Verb Ballets, Pacific Northwest Ballet, The Joffrey Ballet, Boston Ballet and Ballet Tucson. Lieneke joined Verb Ballets in 2013 and has been featured in works such as *Duet* and *Laura's Women*.

Antonio Morillo

Antonio Morillo is from Orlando, Florida. He received his Associate of Arts in Dance Performance from Valencia College and his BFA in Dance Performance from the University of South Florida. Antonio has performed with the Patel Conservatory's Next Generation Ballet as well as Tampa City Ballet. He has performed works by Jon Lehrer, José Limón, Alonzo King LINES Ballet, Robert Moses' Kin, and Maurice Causey. Antonio joined Verb Ballets in 2016 and has been featured in such works as *Andante Sostenuto* and *Aposiopesis*.

Benjamin Shepard

Benjamin Shepard began dancing in Annapolis, Maryland and trained with Ballet Theater of Maryland, as well as attending summer programs at The Washington School of Ballet, The Kirov Academy, and Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet. He then continued his training and education on a full tuition scholarship at Butler University where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Arts Administration and Dance. He had the privilege of performing as a guest artist during his time at Butler with Ballet Theater of Indiana; he performed the role of Gurn in *La Sylphide* as well as Dr. Seward in *Dracula*. While performing with Butler Ballet, his favorite roles he performed were Rothbart in *Swan Lake*, The Flower Cavalier in the *Nutcracker*, a soloist in *Viva Vivaldi* by Gerald Arpino, and the Second Movement Soloist in George Balanchine's *The Four Temperaments*. Benjamin joined Verb Ballets in 2018.

Kate Webb

Kate Webb grew up in Richmond, Virginia where she danced both as a student and as a trainee with Richmond Ballet. She trained around the country at numerous intensive programs such as Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, Boston Ballet, and Complexions Contemporary Ballet. Upon graduating from Appomattox Regional Governor's School for the Arts, she attended Butler University on both dance and academic scholarships. While dancing with Butler Ballet, she performed in Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. After fulfilling her degree in three years, she graduated cum laude in May of 2015 with a BS in Dance-Arts Administration and high departmental honors. Kate joined Verb Ballets in 2015 and has been featured in works such as *Peter Pan* and *Aposiopesis*.

Choreography: Adam Houghland
Stager: Jill Marlow Krutzkamp
Music: Mozart
Lighting Design: Trad A Burns
Costume Design: Janet Bolick

Ben Shepard & Kate Webb
Antonio Morillo & Kelly Korfhage
Michael Escovedo & Lieneke Matte

Choreographer bio

Adam Houghland - Adam grew up in Dallas, Texas and studied visual arts and acting from an early age. At 14 he began his dance training at the Dallas Conservatory of Ballet and the Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts. In 1999 he received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Dance from The Juilliard School and then went on to perform with The Limon Dance Company, Toronto Dance Theatre and The Lar Lubovitch Dance Company. While at Juilliard Adam choreographed his first group dance, *Beyond*, which won the Hector Zaraspe Prize for Choreography. This piece set his choreographic career in motion and was quickly taken into the repertoires of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal, Cincinnati Ballet, Ballet Met Columbus and The Louisville Ballet. Adam has gone on to create original works for Morphoses/The Wheeldon Company, The American Ballet Theatre Studio Company, Introdans in the Netherlands, The Limon Dance Company, Cedar Lake Ensemble, The Washington Ballet, Ballet Memphis, Ballet X and The New York Choreographic Institute at New York City Ballet. He has created works for internationally recognized dancers such as Sofiane Sylve (San Francisco Ballet), Marcelo Gomes (American Ballet Theater) and Wendy Whelan. In 2006 he created a world premiere for Juilliard's Centennial Celebration that toured to Chicago and Los Angeles and was broadcast on the PBS 'Live from Lincoln Center' series. He has won The Princess Grace Award for Choreography, The Choo-San Goh Award for Choreography, was one of Pointe Magazine's 10 VIP's of 2006 and one Dance Magazine's 25 to watch for 2011. Adam is the Principle Choreographer for The Louisville Ballet and has created nine critically acclaimed original works for the company including *Petrouchka* and *Rite of Spring* with special guest artist Wendy Whelan. He is Resident Choreographer for Cincinnati Ballet where he has created an evening-length Mozart's *Requiem* and *The Firebird*. Adam lives in Bristol, England with his husband Ashley and their dog Liza.

Description of the Piece

Choreographer Adam Houghland is known for his melding of modern and classical movement form. *K281* was created on Cincinnati Ballet in 2007. While filling the space with vibrant, intricate choreography, the dance showcases a quirky sense of humor set to the well-known score of Mozart's Piano Sonata No. 3 in B-flat major, K. 281.

Critic reviews of Verb Ballets performance of the piece

"three couples created unexpected flourishes" - review of Verb Ballets' performance

Video Link

<https://youtu.be/n3MrL3yNv3o>