

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

BRBT PERFORMERS, ADDITIONAL CAST, DIRECTORS AND PRODUCTION STAFF BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Guest Artists

Alyssa Bourque is a performing artist from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She received her early dance training at Dancers' Workshop where she performed as a company member with Baton Rouge Ballet Theatre. Bourque holds a BFA in dance from Belhaven University where she was the recipient of the Bezalel Award for Outstanding Artistic Achievement. During her time at Belhaven, Bourque trained with, and performed works by choreographers including: Bill Wade, Steve Rooks, Whitney Dufrene, Vincent Hardy, Randall Flinn, Gabriel Speiller and Julianna Slager. In most recent years, Bourque has performed with Of Moving Colors Productions under the direction of Garland Wilson, and performed works by choreographers John Allen, and Paulo Zustiak. She has also performed in CCT Baton Rouge's productions of *Godspell*, and *Newsies*. Bourque choreographed works for both Of Moving Colors and CYT Baton Rouge. She currently teaches at Dancers' Workshop and CYT Baton Rouge, and is excited to return to the BRBT stage for Alice in Wonderland!

Jenny Heroman Koenig studied voice with Ninfa Caruso and dance with Tari's School of Dance for most of her life and her theatrical credits include several local productions for the BRBT, Playmakers, ACT, TBR, the Cabaret Theatre, and Episcopal Theatre. Jenny has a B.A. in Mass Communication from LSU and worked in the TV industry for 12 years, but recently became a certified teacher through the Teach Ascension Academy. She's now teaching religion in the Lower School at Episcopal. She also sang with the Something Blue Band for 10 years.

Patrick Jefferson is native of Plaquemine, Louisiana. He began his Ballet training in 2015 with Baton Rouge Ballet Theater under the direction of Sharon Matthews and Molly Buchmann, and has been a part of productions such as *The Nutcracker: A Tale from the Bayou*, *Cinderella*, *Rapunzel*, and *Coppelia*. A graduate of The University of Louisiana at Lafayette under faculty Kristi Carr and Marie Broussard, Patrick continued his dance training in Ballet and Modern Dance, and performed in concerts such as State of La Danse and An Evening of Dance. During his time at the university, Patrick has worked with choreographers such as Taylor Mitchell, Whitney Dufrene, and Eric Rivera. Patrick has also been featured as the Nutcracker Prince in *The Creole Nutcracker* produced by Leigha Porter and Jasmine Jones. In 2022, Patrick moved to Dallas, Texas, to dance as a company member of Ballet North Texas for their 2022-2023 season. Under the direction of Nicolina Lawson, Patrick has performed in their version of *The Nutcracker* as Snow King and Arabian. He has also performed leading roles in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Elizabeth Mathews has been a part of Baton Rouge Ballet Theatre's *Nutcracker* since 1988 where she has performed the roles of party girl, Clara, Snow, Flowers, Chinese, Doll, Party Parent, Mrs. Stahlbaum, and Mother Ginger. She has a B.A. Theatre and M.S. Leadership and Workforce Development from Louisiana State University. Elizabeth studied exclusively at the Dancers' Workshop and was a soloist with the Baton Rouge Ballet Theatre. She has performed locally with Theatre Baton Rouge, Swine Palace, LSU Theatre, Playmakers, Red Magnolia, and LSU theatre. Her roles include Laurey, *Oklahoma*; Cinderella, *Into the Woods*; Cinderella, *Cinderella*; M'Lynn, *Steel Magnolias*. She worked on Broadway and across the country with many shows including *Beauty and the Beast*, *Chicago*, *Curtains*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *Carousel*, *Steel Magnolias*, and *Shrek the Musical*. She has performed, choreographed, and done wigs/make-up around the country. She is a classically trained singer, pianist, and violinist. Elizabeth currently teaches Talented Theatre at Baton Rouge Magnet High School and ballet at Dancers' Workshop.

BRBT Performers

Elizabeth Acosta is a sophomore at University High School where she maintains a 4.2 GPA, and is a member of the dance team, Beta Club, Key Club, Student Council and Fellowship of Christian Athletes. She is also a member of National Charity League and The Baton Rouge Cotillion. Lizzie has attended the Nashville Ballet summer program, Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet 5-week summer program, and Regional Dance America Choreography intensive on scholarship. She appeared as the Fairy of Love in BRBT's *Cinderella*, Chinese and Clara in the *Nutcracker*.

Kaila Anthony (Trainee) is a Junior Honor student at Baton Rouge Magnet High School. She has been dancing for 13 years. She danced at En Pointe Dance Studio prior to transferring to Dancers' Workshop. Kaila has participated in *The Nutcracker* for the last 3 years. She has toured with the Youth Ballet and participated in multiple summer dance classes with the Dancers' Workshop for the last 2 years. Kaila intends to continue to train and audition to participate in upcoming Summer Intensives.

Gabrielle Bautista has danced with Dancers' Workshop for 8 years and toured with Youth Ballet for 3 years. Gabriela is a freshman honor roll student at University High School with a 4.0 GPA, a member of Student Council and FCA, and speaks fluent Spanish. She placed in the top three in physical science for the 2024 District Rally, and she made it to State Rally. Gabriela's dance training includes her attendance at Sarasota Ballet's 2024 Summer Intensive.

Eliza Bodin has studied at the Dancer's Workshop for 12 years. This is Eliza's first year in the Baton Rouge Ballet Theatre Company, having served as Apprentice last year and as a member of the Youth Ballet for 5 years. She is a graduate of Sacred Heart of Jesus School and currently attends St. Joseph's Academy, where she is an honors student with a 4.3 GPA and is involved in

the French Club and the Cooking and Crafts Club. Eliza has attended Summer Intensives at the Nashville Ballet, the Philadelphia Ballet, and most recently, the Miami City Ballet.

Olivia Boudreaux has studied dance for 12 years. She is a sophomore at Baton Rouge Magnet High School with a GPA of 4.0. She has been a member of BETA for 4 years along with various other school clubs. She toured with Youth Ballet for 3 years, attended RDA Southwest Festival in 2023, and competed in YAGP 2024. She also choreographs for Baton Rouge Magnet High School dance performances and has appeared in many performances with BRBT.

Ty’Juan Bovie currently studies dance at the Dancers’ Workshop after previous studies at River Ridge Dance School, LSU Dance Department and Legacy Dance. He has danced several roles in BRBT’s *Nutcracker*, is now performing in Ballet for Every Body and is employed at Home Depot.

Elliana Chaney has studied dance for 12 years at Dance Center, Defrances Academy of Dance and Dancers’ Workshop. She has toured with BRBT’s outreach programs Youth Ballet and Ballet for Every Body. This year, she is performing the role of The Bird with BFEB’s *Peter and the Wolf*. She has attended the Vaganova Ballet intensive in Boston, Massachusetts. She is a Junior in high school and attends Berean Co-op. Elliana has also attended and performed at RDA Southwest Festivals. Previous roles in the *Nutcracker* include Clara, Flowers, Chinese and Marzipan.

Kelley Comeaux (Trainee) trains at Dancers’ Workshop after beginning his training at age five at Powell Moise where he studied three to four years. He has performed in the last six *Nutcrackers* and for two consecutive years with BRBT’s Youth Ballet.

Claire England has trained for 13 years with Dancers’ Workshop and attends Baton Rouge Magnet High. She is an AP Honors student with a GPA of 4.5. She is cofounder and president of Baton Rouge High’s Children’s Care Club. She also has leadership roles in HOSA, book club, dance club, and has over 200 volunteer hours in Key club. She received a full scholarship for the NCI summer program 2023 and won 1st place in the DeBose Arts Competition for her choreography. She has appeared in many BRBT productions, most remarkably Fairy of Hope in *Cinderella*, Marzipan, Clara, and Chinese in *Nutcracker*.

Melanie Epuri has been training in classical ballet since the age of 11. She danced with Hammond Ballet Company and South Mississippi Ballet Theatre. She competed in International Ballet Competition, Youth America Grand Prix and Universal Ballet Competition, where she placed first place in her solo division. She has also danced classical repertoire from The *Nutcracker*, *Paquita*, *Grand Pas Classique*, *Coppelia*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Raymonda*. One of her favorite roles was the role of Sugarplum Fairy in South Mississippi Ballet Theatre’s *Nutcracker*. Melanie has trained with various ballet companies across the United States that include American Ballet Theatre, Next Generation Ballet, St. Lucie Ballet, Orlando Ballet, and Elite Classical Coaching. Something she is most passionate about is passing on her wealth of

ballet knowledge by coaching young, aspiring ballerinas. When she is not at the studio, she enjoys her time as a wife and mother.

Abigail Foret (Trainee) has been a student at Dancers' Workshop for nine years and has participated in Youth Ballet for four years. This year she is a Baton Rouge Ballet Company Trainee. She is currently an eighth-grade honors student at Sherwood Middle Academic Magnet. In addition to dance, Abigail enjoys singing in her school choir.

Asher France is a student at Baton Rouge Magnet High School and has studied for 7 years at Dancers' Workshop with additional training at Powell-Moise School of Dance and BRBT and Nashville and Baton Rouge Ballet Theater Summer Intensives. He has toured with the Youth Ballet and has participated in Ballet for Every Body. At school, he is an officer for the Cloud-watching Club and Japanese Student Association, and is also a member of the ASL Club and Breakdancing Club.

London Griffin is a passionate dancer with five years of experience in ballet at Dancers' Workshop. She has toured with Youth Ballet and attended Nashville Ballet and Joffrey Ballet summer intensive programs. London is a freshman at St. Joseph's Academy.

Megan Guo has trained for 14 years and is a junior at Baton Rouge Magnet High School. She is an AP Honors student with a GPA of 4.5. She is a co-founder of Children's Care Club and an officer of Chinese Student Association Club. She is also a member of BETA Club, STEM Club, and HOSA Club. She placed Top 12 at YAGP in the classical category and is also a YAGP solo Finalist. Megan has attended the Houston Ballet and Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet 5-week summer programs and has been accepted with scholarships to Next Generation and Cary Ballet. She choreographs for BRMHS and appeared as the Winter fairy in BRBT's *Cinderella*.

Kate Harris has studied ballet at Dancers' Workshop for 15 years and has been in BRBT's company for the past four years. Kate has performed in numerous *Nutcracker* performances with BRBT, in addition to spring shows such as *Rapunzel*, *Cinderella*, and *Dimensions in Dance*. Kate is a freshman at LSU, majoring in Applied Coastal Environmental Science. Kate also has a part time job at her church and at a local restaurant. She also attends a college ministry at LSU where she volunteers.

Torrie Hedges has trained at Dancers' Workshop for 7 years. During that time, she performed with Youth Ballet and with the Company in many spring concerts, RDA Festivals and *Nutcrackers*. She has attended summer intensives with Louisville Ballet, Next Generation Ballet, and BRBT. As well as performing in this year's *Nutcracker*, she also works behind the scenes as a Rehearsal Assistant. She currently attends Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University and will be graduating from their physical therapist assistant program this spring. She plans to pursue becoming a physical therapist in the future.

Hadley Jackson (Trainee) has studied dance at Dancers' Workshop for 9 years. Hadley has toured with Youth Ballet for 4 years and has performed in numerous BRBT productions including 6 years of *Nutcracker*. Hadley is an 8th grade honor student at St. George Catholic School with a 4.0 GPA. She is a member of the St. George Dance Team, Student Ambassador, a lector for school masses, and was selected for UDA All-American in the summer of 2024.

Lucy Khemmanyong (Trainee) has studied ballet for seven years at Dance Center School of Performing Arts, Dancers' Workshop and Rave Performing Arts. She has also studied jazz, contemporary and hip hop at Rave as well as tap at Dance Center and Rave. She performs with the Central Middle School dance team and competed in UDA Nationals in 2022 and 2023. She performed in the Russian *Nutcracker* for three years as a snowflake, a little Chinese and a little French.

Samantha LeBlanc is a 12th Grade Honor Student at Parkview Baptist School who has attended Nashville Ballet Summer Intensive and performed in many BRBT productions and Youth Ballet Tours. This is her 13th year of training at Dancers' Workshop.

Isabelle Lieux is a senior honor student at St. Joseph's Academy with a 4.7 GPA. Isabelle has 15 years of dance experience. Growing up as a devoted Dancers' Workshop student and Youth Ballet performer, she has rigorously worked her way up the ranks to demi-soloist roles with the Company. She has attended and performed at RDA Southwest Festivals and many Spring Concerts and *Nutcrackers*. Isabelle was the student co-chair for the Clara's Closet program this year. At St. Joseph's Academy, she is a Student Ambassador, Key Club Treasurer, and Commended National Merit Scholar.

Rachel Magee (Trainee) is a student at Baton Rouge Magnet High School where she has a 4.0 GPA. She is a member of The Dance Club, ASL Club, and Children's Care Club. Rachel has trained at Dancers' Workshop for 4 years, and has toured with the Youth Ballet program. Previous roles include Bon Bon and Clara. She is also part of the Ballet for Every Body dance education program and performs the role of The Duck in *Peter and the Wolf*.

Juliana Martin is a sophomore at University High School where she has a GPA of 4.1. She is a member of the dance team, Key Club, Student Council and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. She has danced with Dancers' Workshop for 12 years and has been in the *Nutcracker* for 9 years. She has also been in other performances including *Rapunzel*, *Coppelia*, *Cinderella* and *Paquita*.

Sophia Robison (Apprentice) is a student at Baton Rouge Magnet High School, and is a member of the ASL Club, Dance Club, and Key Club. She has been training at The Dancers' Workshop since 2019 and is a member of the Youth Ballet. This summer, she attended the Sarasota Ballet Summer Intensive. She has also attended the RDA Festival in Midland and performed the role of Clara in 2023.

Elizabeth Talbot has a chemical engineering degree from Louisiana Tech University and is now working as a production engineer with BASF. She began dancing at the age of three and continued with BRBT through high school and with Twin City Ballet in Monroe during college. She appeared last year as the Spring Fairy in *Cinderella* and has performed in many *Nutcrackers*. Elizabeth also volunteers at her church.

Allison Welch has trained for 10 years with Dancers' Workshop. She has toured with Ballet for Every Body and Youth Ballet and appeared in numerous season productions. She is in the 11th grade at Sequitur Classical Academy. She has attended the Vaganova Ballet Intensive in Boston, Massachusetts.

Berklee Zanders has trained with Dancers' Workshop for 8 years and has been a member of Youth Ballet since 2020. In addition, she attended New Orleans Ballet Theatre's summer intensive in 2023. Berklee is a freshman at Baton Rouge Magnet High School with a 4.0+ GPA. An AP and honors student, she also participates in several clubs, including the Beta Club and the Computer Science Honor Society. Beyond dance and school, Berklee is classically trained in piano, placing in the top 3 in the state competition since she was 7 years old.

Directors and Production Staff

Rebecca Mathews Acosta (Artistic Director) is director of dance at Baton Rouge Magnet High School where she also choreographs for the theater department and orchestra productions. She is the director of the BRBT Youth Ballet and teaches intermediate and advanced ballet at The Dancers' Workshop. An LSU graduate, she also earned a nursing degree from our Lady of the Lake College. She has appeared in numerous principal roles with BRBT including Azalea Fairy in *The Nutcracker*, the Fairy Godmother in *Cinderella*, the Lilac Fairy in *Sleeping Beauty*, Myrtha in *Giselle*, the Mother in "Family Secrets" and Mother in "Women of Acts". Rebecca studied on full scholarship at the Joffrey Ballet, New York, and on scholarship with the Eglevsky Ballet, where she appeared as a demi-soloist in *Swan Lake* and a soloist in *Paquita*. She also appeared in several LSU opera and theater productions and in *West Side Story* with Theatre Baton Rouge. As an ABT Certified Teacher, she successfully completed the ABT Teacher Training Institute in Primary through Level 7 and Partnering of the ABT National Training Curriculum with ABT New York. She is the 2017 LAAHPERD Dance Teacher of the Year and southern district Dance Teacher of the Year.

Jonna Cox (Artistic Director) began her ballet training in her hometown of Corpus Christi, Texas, under Larry and Bettye Roquemore and later with Christina Munro. She holds a BFA in Ballet from Texas Christian University where she was a Nordan Fine Arts Scholarship recipient. She also spent summers as a student at Summer Dance Intensives with Houston Ballet, Boston Ballet (on scholarship), and NYU. She danced professionally with the Dayton Ballet under the direction of James Clouser and enjoyed performing lead roles in *Pas de Quatre*, *Swan Lake*, and Clouser's *Carmina Burana* and *Surprise Symphony*. After moving to Baton Rouge in 1996, she joined BRBT and proved herself a proficient dancer in both the classical and contemporary styles.

of dance. She has performed various works by Molly Buchmann, Susan Perlis, and Edgar Anido. She has danced the roles of Spanish and Azalea Fairy in BRBT's *Nutcracker*, and the Sylph Queen in Winthrop Corrie's *Snow White*. A teacher at the Dancers' Workshop, Jonna was awarded a scholarship to attend the Regional Dance America Craft of Choreography Conference as an Emerging Choreographer for her piece *Butterflies*. Since then, she has choreographed works for BRBT that include *Obrigado Brasil*, *Solstice*, and *Red Hill*. Jonna choreographs for BR's Christian Youth Theatre (CYT) where she choreographed *The Legend of Pocahontas*, *Rapunzel*, *Mary Poppins*, and was both director and choreographer for *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*.

Christine Perkins (Associate Artistic Director) began her dance career in New Orleans, studying with Joseph Giacobbe, Ceyhun Ozsoy, and Mary Munro and later moving to the stage with Delta Festival Ballet. While receiving her master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology, she taught and performed in Shreveport with Louisiana Dance Theatre, performing lead roles in pieces by Dianne Maroney and others. After moving to Baton Rouge, Christine soon joined BRBT where she performed numerous roles in *The Nutcracker* and pas de deux roles in both *Les Sylphides* and *Sleeping Beauty's* Bluebird. She is now an Associate Director creating and directing its newest community engagement, Ballet for Every Body.

Adriane Bennett (Production Stage Manager/Set Designer) has been working in theatre/film industry since 1995. Graduate of LSU and MFA from UNC School of the Arts, she has worked all over the country, working in theatre, film/tv, and dance communities. She is an IATSE Local 540 and 478 member, and currently works as the Training Coordinator for Local 478 (Studio Mechanics) and Field Representative for Local 798 (Hair & Make-Up Artists). When she isn't working to make the Behind the Scenes community better, she is working with the non-profit, Krewe de Pink, raising money for Breast Cancer Research. Her first time working the show was in 2000 as the Sound Board Operator. Since moving back to Louisiana, she has been Prop Master and now Production Stage Manager.

Michael Burton (Lighting Designer) has worked in the theater, film, and television industry since 2002 and has been a theatrical lighting designer based in Baton Rouge, Louisiana for over twenty years, working in dance, opera, musical theater, concerts, and live productions of all kinds. He is a proud member of IATSE local 540 and has designed for the Baton Rouge Ballet Theater, Opera Louisiane, the Turner-Fischer Center for Opera at LSU, the Cohen New Works Festival of Austin, the Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra, and many others.