

Gainesville Ballet
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LE CORSAIRE, ACT III IS FOURTH DEBUT IN GAINESVILLE BALLET REPERTORY



Gainesville Ballet at the Hylton Performing Arts Center
A traditional *Nutcracker* story – November 2013
Snowflakes, Act I with international guest stars
Nour Eldesouki (*Nutcracker Prince*) and Carolina Boscan (*Clara Princess*)

GAINESVILLE, Va. – Gainesville Ballet is pleased to perform *Le Corsaire, Act III* and a Spring Recital at the elegant opera house of the 1,123-seat Merchant Hall at the [Hylton Performing Arts Center](#) on Saturday, June 7, 2014 at 6:30 PM. The production will feature international faculty and students of the award-winning arts organization. On the very same 100-foot stage, Gainesville Ballet was recognized by the Prince William County Arts Council as *Outstanding Arts Organization* during the 2012 Seefeldt Awards for Arts Excellence.

For the third consecutive spring season, Gainesville Ballet will proactively build its dance repertory. In addition to annual *Nutcracker* performances, the school brought an inaugural spring production to the performing arts community with *Coppélia* in 2012; *Swan Lake, Act II* in 2013; and *Le Corsaire, Act III* in 2014. Gainesville Ballet will now present *Le Corsaire, Act III*

for the first time, as the Company and School build a strong repertory of four classical ballets: *Nutcracker*, *Coppélia*, *Swan Lake* and *Le Corsaire*. Even though *Le Corsaire* is new to the formal body of artistic works at Gainesville Ballet, the faculty and students already bring a wide range of role experiences and formal recognition to the stage. By the time a student aspires to the highest levels of training, the performer begins to approach the achievements of a professional along a *continuum of talent*. Two youth dancers performed in *Le Corsaire* with American Ballet Theatre (ABT) at the Kennedy Center in April 2013 – Abigail Mumma and Sara Massei. This is the second time for each ballerina to perform on-stage at the Kennedy Center, and reflects the rapidly-growing reputation and proficiency of the dancers at Gainesville Ballet. Abigail Mumma, who has been studying and performing with the school since 2006, performed in Washington, D.C. with the world-renowned Kirov Ballet of Saint Petersburg, Russia. In 2010, she danced in *Sleeping Beauty* at the Kennedy Center as part of the touring Kirov, known today as the Mariinsky Ballet. Sara Massei performed in 2008 as Clara's best friend in *The Nutcracker* at the Kennedy Center with the Pennsylvania Ballet. By 2011, as a sixth grader, she attended the Kirov Academy of Ballet in Washington, D.C. for an intensive three-week summer program. To participate in this elite training, children are selected through competitive auditions held around the globe. In 2014, as an eighth grader, Sara received high scores at the Youth America Grand Prix Competition, and was invited to the New York City Intensive at the Finals. Sara Massei and Isabella Reilly have both been selected for 2014 summer intensives at American Ballet Theater and the Kirov Academy of Ballet.

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The Hylton building structure stands majestically on the Prince William campus of George Mason University as a cultural center for the arts in Northern Virginia. The [location](#) for the upcoming performance is 10960 George Mason Circle in Manassas, Virginia. The facility is rapidly becoming a destination venue for international arts organizations of every theatrical genre. Tickets for *Le Corsaire, Act III* and a Spring Recital are \$25 for orchestra seats, with discounts for seniors, military, and children under age 12. Balcony seats range from \$10 to \$15. Guests have the option to purchase from the box office at the Hylton Performing Arts Center, online under *Gainesville Ballet* at www.tickets.com or by calling (888) 945-2468.



Gainesville Ballet

*A traditional Nutcracker story – November 2013
Waltz of the Flowers, Act II*

The music for the production is the original composition by Léo Delibes and Ludwig Minkus for the featured scene from Act III of *Le Corsaire*, known as *Le Jardin Animé*. The plot is based upon an epic tale entitled *The Corsair* (1814) by Lord Byron, a semi-autobiographical story that later gave rise to an opera, an overture, and a ballet. Four decades later, the première for the ballet was first enjoyed at the Paris Opera in Paris, France on



Gainesville Ballet – November 2013
Arabian, Act II: Sara Massei (center)
Emma Dryden and Jessica Shalvey (back L to R)
Gabrielle Reilly and Rebecca Morneau (front L to R)

January 23, 1856. The title of *Le Corsaire* is derived from the French word for *pirate*, and gracefully recounts the romantic and tumultuous journey of a pirate (Conrad), a pasha (Seyd), a palace, and an entrancing young girl (Medora) who longs for love and freedom from the bounds of servitude for all in her circle. In the end, the pirate ship is overtaken by storm, but the mast of affection proves strongest when Conrad and Medora endure the tempestuous seas, clinging together to a rock by the peaceful light of the moon. More than a century later in 1989, the ballet was first performed in the United States by the Kirov Ballet at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, and opened the stage door to productions by many other companies.

Two hundred years from the first publication of the Bryon verse in 1814, the dances inspired by the poet's words will travel to the stages of Hylton Performing Arts Center in Manassas, Virginia with Gainesville Ballet in 2014. Under the mentorship

of Artistic Director [Rafik Hegab](#), the Level 4 and Level 5 students comprise the “body of the ballet” known as *corps de ballet*. The excerpts from *Le Corsaire* will include a rich combination of choreography from the Marius Petipa revivals of the mid to late 19th century in Europe, and new choreography created by Mr. Hegab for the troupe of dancers in Virginia. Five students from Level 5 will also dance solo variations in the garden scene: Sara Massei, Chloe Banachoski, Isabella Reilly, Monica Tirado, and Caroline Beard. As a welcomed sign of spring in Northern Virginia, twenty-five dancers in classical white tutus with light pink flower accents will carry beautiful garlands through the movements to represent the enchanted garden.

The spring performance will also showcase talent from across Northern Virginia with a student recital featuring dance and music. The theatrical production will spotlight many genres in the performing arts to include ballet, modern, jazz, character, hip hop, piano and voice, in addition to the excerpts from *Le Corsaire*. This format is the next evolutionary step in the building of arts-infused programs, with plans for the future to integrate the varying forms of art in creative works on the stage.

In late February of 2013, the arrival of [Elysabeth Muscat](#), the Managing Director for Gainesville Ballet, also marked the birth of a music program at the school. This signified the beginning of a cross-disciplinary approach to the arts in Gainesville, Virginia, with the natural intersection of dance and music emerging for students in the classroom and on the stage. Students of all abilities are able to study voice under the tutelage of Ms. Muscat, as well as beginning piano. Her own career began on international stages as a professional opera singer, and in subsequent years, she devoted her energy to the field of the arts as a pioneering leader in both education and administration. Ms. Muscat has won numerous awards for voice, taught Master Classes and served as a judge for many vocal competitions. Her students have been accepted to all of the top conservatories including Juilliard and Manhattan School of Music with scholarships, and many are now singing professionally. Since the founding of the music program at Gainesville Ballet, voice student Casey McMahon was



Gainesville Ballet – November 2013
Shady Aly Mohamed as Drosselmeyer with students

accepted to the prestigious Interlochen Center for the Arts in the summer camp for voice. Burke Romans-Murray won first place in the Maryland-D.C. competition for the [National Association of Teachers of Singing](#) (NATS) in both *classical* and *musical theater* categories for high school men. He also scored high enough to compete at the regional competition in Greensboro, North Carolina in April of 2014. Voice student Walker Phillips won first place at both the state and mid-Atlantic regional competition for NATS, and qualified to compete in the national vocal competition.



Gainesville Ballet – November 2013
Chinese, Act II

*Shady Aly Mohamed (center - sauté en l'air) with students:
Phoebe Judkins and Tansy Huang (back L to R)
Elle Park and Gabrielle Jeong (front L to R)*

Gainesville Ballet will also enjoy a third opportunity to present this season at the Hylton Performing Arts Center in Merchant Hall as the opening act for **Arts Alive! 2014** to be held in Manassas, Virginia on Saturday, May 3, 2014 from 10 AM. The fourth annual arts festival brings an all-day celebration free

to the community through four stages of performing arts, a multitude of forums for the visual and literary arts, along with interactive programs and demonstrations that engage audiences of all ages. Student dancers with the highest level of training at Gainesville Ballet School – Level 4 and Level 5 – will perform with five professional dancers. Three guest artists at the professional level – Melissa Zoebisch, Rachel Malmstone, and Amber Eyler – will join with two professional members of the Gainesville Ballet Company and faculty – Shady Aly Mohamed and Onica Patalive Hobbs.

For the first time, the Gainesville Ballet Company and School will première a contemporary work for nine student dancers in Level 5 and a contemporary *pas de deux* with Shady Aly Mohamed and Rachel Malmstone at the arts festival, choreographed by Artistic Director Rafik Hegab. The music for the contemporary piece follows the garden theme this spring, with movements from the movie soundtrack of *The Secret Garden*, composed by Zbigniew Preisner. Originally from Egypt, Hegab joined the Cairo Opera Ballet Company in 1999, won first place in the Egyptian National Ballet Competition in 2000, rose the ranks to Soloist and Principal Dancer, and embarked on international tours with the company in China, Lebanon, the Czech Republic, Jordan, Turkey, Germany, Italy, Austria, Spain, India, Greece, and Russia. This international experience has helped draw talent to the stages of Virginia. Aly-Mohamed is an internationally-acclaimed artist and faculty member of Gainesville Ballet. He performed as Soloist with the Cairo Opera Ballet Company from 2005 to July 2013. He has danced leading roles in both classical and contemporary works such as *Don Quixote*, *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, *Spartacus*, *The Rite*



Gainesville Ballet – November 2013
*Grand Pas de Deux, Act II with international guest stars
 Nour Eldesouki (Nutcracker Prince) and Carolina Boscan (Clara Princess)*

of Spring, *Zorba*, and more. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Dance from the Academy of Arts in Cairo in 2008, and won first prize in the Egyptian National Ballet Competition in 2010.

With the founding of Gainesville Ballet in 2005, the upcoming 2014-15 season marks the 10th anniversary of the arts institution in Northern Virginia. This important milestone reflects many major achievements in its first decade. It also sets the stage for the future. The professional ballet company was officially formed in April of 2013, and is currently in-process for federal non-profit status. With the new season, the permanent company will have grown to seven dancers, and continued expansion is planned. Professional performers Shady Aly Mohamed, Kathryn Anderson, Stephanie Parkinson, Onica Patalive Hobbs, Tiffani

Thomas, and Mallory Miller will come together in Gainesville, Virginia under the leadership of Artistic Director and Principal Dancer, Rafik Hegab, and Managing Director, Elysabeth Muscat. These members will form the core upon which the new season is built with three mainstage productions, multiple outreach performances, adaptive dance programs, in-house demonstrations, and possible collaborations with other choreographers and live musicians. Professional guest artists will enrich the strong foundation of talent, with a growing circle of dancers to include Carolina Boscan, Nour Eldesouki, Alexandru Glusacov, Evgenia Singur, and Melissa Zoebisch. To learn more about Gainesville Ballet, upcoming performances and ongoing programs, visit www.gainesvilleballetcompany.org.

Media Notes: *Flash photography/illuminated videography is permitted at rehearsals when coordinated with Gainesville Ballet, but prohibited during performances. Interviews with Elysabeth Muscat and performing artists are available upon request. As a theatrical production, cast assignments are subject to change. Additional photographic images will be released through an [online gallery](#) in advance of the performance and following the event. Photos are also available in a variety of compositions upon request, along with biographical data.*