

Virginia National Ballet
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VIRGINIA NATIONAL BALLET PRESENTS “SNOW WHITE”

Mirror, mirror, on the wall! Virginia National Ballet is excited to present the premiere of Artistic Director Rafik Hegab’s new “SNOW WHITE” on Friday, May 5th, 2017, 7 pm, at the Hylton Performing Arts Center in Manassas. One night only!



Snow White is the final ballet of the 2016-17 season, which also featured the world premieres of *La Boheme*, the tragic love story based on the opera by Puccini, accompanied by the Old Bridge Chamber Orchestra; *Bohemian Rhapsody*, a hard rock contemporary ballet to the music of Queen, and *The Nutcracker*.

Snow white is a charming, family friendly neo-classical ballet with hilarious appearances by the Seven Dwarfs, thrilling, bravura dancing from the Evil Queen, and gorgeous dancing by Snow White and the Prince, supported by students of Gainesville Ballet School as the adorable forest animals. Managing Director Elysabeth Muscat Hegab says that this will be Virginia National Ballet's first "Fairy Tale" ballet with slapstick comedy, and the first time the company is including younger dancers in a performance. This production is perfect for all age groups, as the story is very easy to follow, the dancing and choreography are brilliant, and the gorgeous sets and costumes include four different scenic backdrops, original sets, and colorful costumes, on stage at the Hylton Performing Arts Center.



Saaya Pikula, Principal Dancer, will be dancing the title role of Snow White. Sakura Oka, Principal, will be dancing the Evil Queen. Emanuel Tavares Filho is the Prince, Luiz Gustavo Madubuike is the Huntsman and one of the dwarfs, and the other company members will be dancing the parts of dwarfs and shades.

Two of the most senior dancers from Gainesville Ballet School will be dancing with the professional company, as Shades: Zeli Frantz and Isabella Reilly. Zeli is an 11th grader at Patriot High School, and Isabella is an 11th grader at Battlefield High School. Zeli joined Gainesville Ballet this year after moving from Wisconsin. Isabella has been a student at the school for 8 years and has danced in dozens of school recitals, Nutcrackers, and company productions.

Virginia National Ballet (formerly named Gainesville Ballet) is only three years young, yet is quickly establishing its reputation as an important, growing dance company in the Mid-Atlantic Region that presents new, exciting repertoire with talented, award winning international dancers from around the globe. The company is honored to have been chosen by the **Virginia Commission for the Arts** to be part of the Touring Directory for 2017-18. Presenters who wish to engage Virginia National Ballet to perform at their venues can receive a grant from the Commission to help cover the cost. This program encourages artistic collaborations throughout the State of Virginia.



With its outstanding, creative Artistic Director Rafik Hegab, the fresh company continues to lead the region with unique repertoire never seen before. Hegab debuted his choreographic skills with *Carmina Burana* in March 2014 which received standing ovations and rave reviews from audience members, and followed up with the ballets *Carmen* (based on the opera) and *Collection* in 2015. *Carmina Burana* was a contemporary ballet with a

cast of 25 dancers; *Carmen* was a neoclassical ballet in a totally original version which included one scene taken from the Bizet opera with live singing, also with cast of 25, and *Collection* was a group of short dances infusing various styles of music and dance.

Virginia National Ballet's company dancers are thoroughly enjoying working with their Artistic Director, Rafik Hegab. They love the intelligent and unique choices of repertoire, his original choreography, and the wonderful work atmosphere he creates in the studio. The international group includes ten dancers (seven women and four men) from the USA, Japan, and Brazil: Saaya Pikula (Japan/Poland), Sakura Oka (Japan), Emily Hashiguchi (Japan/USA), Luiz Gustavo Madubuike (Brazil), Emanuel Tavares Filho (Brazil), and all from the USA: Savanna Alfanos, Esmæ Gold, Rebecca Morneau, Madeline Sosna, and Matthew Waters.

Other students from Gainesville Ballet School had the opportunity to audition for the forest animals. Level 5 students Zoe Frantz, Camila Griggs, Laura Rosendale, Jade Condrell, Maria Mantalvanos, and Level 4 students Leila Beale, Isabella Brown, Annabelle Farrell, Anjali Jammulamadaka, Paula Lemus, Sophia Rebholz, Heidi Shoemaker, and Sophia Velez-Ferrer, and are all thrilled to have been selected for this production.

Enjoy gorgeous dancers, great music, and original choreography. The performance is on Friday, May 5th, at 7 pm. Tickets range from \$17 - \$35 and can be purchased at the Hylton Box Office or online at <http://hyltoncenter.org/calendar/936/>.

Additionally, audience members can purchase a Raffle ticket for \$5 with the chance to win the prize of: a \$10 gift card to *Milkberry*, a \$35 gift certificate to *Cork and Fork*, a free Family Photo Shoot with *Mort Goldstrom, Photographer* (value \$150), and a free Pilates class at the *Pilates Studio of Gainesville*, value of \$25, for a total in-kind value of \$220.

Get your photo with Snow White! Children can also take a lovely photo with Snow White on stage at the Hylton with a scenic backdrop after the performance for only \$5. Photos will be emailed the next day. There will be a sign-up sheet during Intermission in the lobby.

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Media Notes: *Flash photography/illuminated videography is permitted at rehearsals when coordinated with Gainesville Ballet, but prohibited during performances. Interviews with Elysabeth Muscat and participating dancers are available on 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.*

Biographical information of the students:

Level 5 students:

Isabella Reilly, age 16, an eleventh grader from [Battlefield High School](#)

Jade Condrell, age 12, a seventh grader from [Highland School](#)

Camila Griggs, age 12, a seventh grader from [Bull Run Middle School](#)

Laura Rosendale, age 13, an eighth grader from [Gainesville Middle School for the Arts and Sciences](#)

Zeli Frantz, age 16, an eleventh grader from [Patriot High School](#)

Zoe Frantz, age 12, a seventh grader from [Marsteller Middle School](#)

Maria Mantalvanos, 13, an eighth grader from [Mercer Middle School](#)

Level 4 students:

Heidi Shoemaker, age 10, a 5th grader at [Mayfield Intermediate School](#)

Isabella Brown, age 10, a 4th grader at [All Saints Catholic School](#)

Sophia A. Velez-Ferrer, age 10, a 5th grader at [T. Clay Wood Elementary School](#)

Sophia Rebholz, age 9, a 4th grader at [All Saints Catholic School](#)

Anjali Jammulamadaka, age 11, a 6th grader at [Ronald Reagan Middle School](#)

Annabelle Farrell, age 9, a 4th grader at [Mountain View Elementary School](#)

Paula Lemus, age 11, a 5th grader at [Bonnie Brae Elementary School](#)

Leila Beale, age 9, a 4th grader from [Bristow Run Elementary School](#)