



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SUMMER STUDY AT BALLET TENNESSEE BREAKS DOWN BARRIERS WHILE OFFERING LIFE LESSONS AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

Each summer, aspiring young dancers in Chattanooga get an opportunity usually reserved for much larger cities—the opportunity to work with high caliber professional dancers, instructors, and choreographers from across the US. Students train intensively for three weeks in Ballet Tennessee's Summer Intensive and for two weeks in Dance Alive/Dance Elite for children ages 8-12. The goal is to propel participants to the next level of artistic and technical achievement.

The two programs bring community together. Children, volunteers, and supporters from diverse areas and backgrounds build friendships while sharing a common goal of learning about dance. They interact with professional artists, from Tennessee and beyond, in a variety of formal and informal situations.

Directors Anna Baker-VanCura and Barry VanCura, both nationally recognized artists and master teachers, take great care in designing the summer programs and choosing guest artists who share the same hands-on, nurturing philosophy of teaching quality dance. 'It is about developing the whole dancer as a person as well as an artist. We want to encourage behaviors and choices that will benefit the student no matter what they choose to do in life but will also prepare them for professional dance,' says Barry VanCura.

This year's roster of guest artists is impressive. Gretchen Ward Warren is a best selling author and former Professor of Dance at University of South Florida. Anne Burton Avery is former ballerina of Atlanta Ballet. Elie Lazar, currently Artistic Director of Montgomery Ballet, founded and directed the Joffrey Ballet Ensemble, the performance group associated with the Joffrey Ballet School in New York City. Sean Hilton is an independent dancer/choreographer and former member of River North Chicago Dance Company. Thomas Shoemaker currently teaches and choreographs for the Vanderbilt Dance Program in Nashville, Tennessee. Marcus Alford, Artistic Director of Dancentre South, worked for ten years with the legendary Gus Giordano Jazz Dance in Chicago. Jennia Shanley is instructor and choreographer with Baylor School and has taught master classes at Ballet Tennessee. 'Their expertise and willingness to share with the dancers creates a rich learning environment,' says Anna Baker-VanCura.

Dance Alive is a partnership with Chattanooga Parks and Recreation that engages youth in learning the basic techniques of dance. Dance Elite, the second level of Dance Alive, serves as a bridge for young dancers who are beyond the introductory training of Dance Alive but not yet ready for the summer intensive. Summer Intensive participants spend 6-8 hours daily in technique classes, learn choreography, and participate in seminars covering topics such as career options, dance history, composition, and more.

The free, public performance is part of the educational experience and demonstrates the power of high quality dance education to engage minds, bodies, & artistry. The public is invited to attend this free performance, which will take place on July 24, 2009 at 6:00 PM in the Hayes Concert Hall at UTC, and encouraged to stop by the Dance Alive Donation Station. All donations will directly benefit the Dance Alive and Talent Identification Program.

Ballet Tennessee is a funded agency of Allied Arts of Greater Chattanooga and receives support from the Tennessee Arts Commission. Contributors include George R. Johnson Charitable Trust, First Tennessee Bank, Target, Coca-Cola Bottling Company, and Chatten.



UPCOMING SUMMER EVENTS

Motown Dance Party at Ballet Tennessee, Friday July 17, 2009 from 6:30-8:30 PM

Music, dancing, refreshments and fun in a family friendly atmosphere! Michael Ryder, ballroom dance instructor, will be available to teach basic Motown dance steps. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$2 per child. All proceeds benefit Ballet Tennessee programs.

Free performance at Hayes Concert Hall in UTC Fine Arts Center, Friday July 24, 2009 at 6:00 PM

Dance Alive/Dance Elite and Ballet Tennessee Summer Intensive dancers perform a wide variety of dance styles. The performance is free and open to the public. Donations welcome.

Gear Up for Fall Classes, August 10-27, 2009

This three week session is an introduction to VanCura Ballet Conservatory, official school of Ballet Tennessee, for new students and a great way for returning students to gear up for the Fall Semester. A variety of classes are offered for children and adults.

Youth Ensemble Audition, August 18, 2009 6:30-8:00 PM

This audition is geared for dance students ages 9-15. Dancers must have a minimum of 2 consecutive years of classical ballet training. Season includes 'Nutcracker' and other performances throughout the year.

Ballet Tennessee Company Audition, August 20, 2009 6:30-8:00 PM

This audition is geared for intermediate- and advanced-level male and female dancers. Audition includes pointe for females. Season includes 'Nutcracker' and other performances throughout the year.

Registration for the 2009-2010 Classes at VanCura Ballet Tennessee Conservatory

August 29, 2009 10:00 AM-2:00 PM and August 30, 2009 2:00-5:30 PM

Classes begin August 31, 2009.

For more information regarding these events, contact: Ballet Tennessee
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