

PEORIA BALLET

Summer Intensive 2020— Guest Master Instructors



Igor Burlak

Igor studied at The School of American Ballet, and during that time appeared with New York City Ballet. He then performed with Miami City Ballet, Kansas City Ballet, and was a soloist with Atlantic Southeast Ballet. He became a principal with Minnesota Ballet, where he danced for six seasons. He appeared in the films *Center Stage*, George Balanchine's *Nutcracker*, and the documentary *The Waiting*. From 2003-2011, Burlak was the program coordinator and faculty member at the New York State Summer School of the Arts. During the 2010-2011 season, he was the Company Manager, Ballet Master, and Director's Assistant at the Novosibirsk Ballet in Russia. In 2008 and 2009, he received the Fellowship Initiative Grant from the New York Choreographic Institute (affiliate of New York City Ballet). Since joining Boston Ballet School in 2011, Burlak has developed curriculum for all levels of male students.



Ian Thatcher

Ian is a graduate of The National Ballet School of Canada where he danced as an apprentice with the National Ballet of Canada. He went on to dance with the San Francisco Ballet, Ballet de Monte Carlo and Pacific Northwest Ballet where he danced soloist and principal roles as well as performing major works by George Balanchine, Jerome Robbins, William Forsythe, Nacho Duato, Glen Tetley, Dave Bintny, James Kudelka, and Mark Morris. Since arriving in New York, Ian has danced with Ballet New York and with the Metropolitan Opera. Since retiring, Ian is a permanent faculty member of The Lynch School of Ballet in Huntington, NY, and The Ballet Class in Rye, NY. Ian teaches Ballet Technique, Pointe, Modern, Character and Pas de Deux class. Ian has performed as Herr Drosselmeyer in Peoria Ballet's *The Nutcracker*, and has also been a guest teacher for four summers at Peoria Ballet's Summer Intensives.



Mia Li

Mia Li, a native of Taiwan, was educated at The Boston Conservatory on full scholarship double majoring in ballet and modern. While there, she performed works by masters including Martha Graham and José Limón. Ms. Li danced with Ballet Hispanico from 2007-2015, and her debut performance in 2007 was featured in the NY Times. She was featured in *Ballet-Dance Magazine* in 2009, on the cover of *Dance Magazine* in 2010, and again in a personal interview in 2012. Outside of the company, Ms. Li has been focusing her attention on teaching. Since 2003, she has been appointed guest faculty for the Chinese Folk Art Workshop in Boston, as well as teaching at the Ballet Hispanico's school, and other local studios in New York. She has taught throughout the world including, Barbados, Japan, and Taiwan. Her students include a variety of levels ranging from beginner to professionals. Ms. Li currently is performing at The Metropolitan Opera.



Victoria Fornelli

Victoria began her ballet training at the Von Heidecke School of Ballet. Continuing her studies with Artistic Director Wes Chapman and Roger Van Fleteren with The Alabama Ballet, Victoria was a semi-finalist at the 1998 International Ballet Competition in Jackson, Mississippi. In 1998, she accepted an invitation from Kevin McKenzie to join American Ballet Theater. Victoria later danced on Broadway in *The Phantom of the Opera*, and portrayed the role of Emily in the film *Center Stage*. She has been teaching in the Chicago area since 2004. In 2014, Victoria accepted an invitation from Alexei Kremnev and Anna Reznik to join the faculty of the Joffrey Academy where she spent three years in the pre-professional division. Victoria taught on faculty at A&A Ballet from 2017-2020. Victoria has set selections from *Don Quixote*, *Paquita*, *Grand Pas Classique*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Coppelia*, and *The Nutcracker* as well as the Balanchine works *Agon*, *Union Jack*, *Who Cares* and *Tchaikovsky Pas De Deux*.



Natalia Bar

Natalia Bar started ballet lessons at Odessa Ukraine Choreographic Academy with Alla Ryndina, a former student of Agrippina Vaganova. Natalia was invited to dance with Odessa State Theater of Opera and Ballet, where she became a soloist, performing classical and contemporary ballets on stages of Bolshoi, Kremlin Palace and toured in USSR and abroad. In the USA, Natalia started teaching in New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia at The Rock School of Pennsylvania Ballet where she was a teacher, choreographer and International Competition Coach. Natalia coached the winners of IBC in Jackson, Mississippi, Moscow, Greece, Paris, and Youth America Grand Prix where she received the 2018 Outstanding Teacher Award. Many of Natalia's former students dance with companies including American Ballet Theater, Ballet Trocadero De Monte Carlo, New York City Ballet, where Natalia's daughter and pupil Ellen Bar danced as a soloist. Natalia was featured in the MTV series *Made* and in the film *NY Export: Opus Jazz*, on PBS' 2010 Great Performances series.



Kara Davis

Kara Davis, Co-Artistic Director of project agora, danced for Atlanta Ballet, Ohio Ballet, and Ballet Jörgen in Toronto. She is a founding member of KUNST-STOFF and Janice Garrett & Dancers both of whom she danced for ten years. She has performed choreography by Margaret Jenkins, Alex Ketley, Amy Raymond (Ballett Frankfurt), Pearl Ubungen, Val Caniparoli (ACT), and Robert Moses. She has received multiple Isadora Duncan awards and nominations. Her choreography has been presented at the Bates Dance Festival, Edinburgh Fringe Festival ACDA Nationals at the Kennedy Center, ODC Theater, YBCA, SF MOMA and Headlands Center For The Arts. She has taught and choreographed at LINES Dominican University and Training Program since 2005. She earned her MFA from Hollins University in 2013.

Summer Guest Faculty



Melissa Becraft

Melissa began training at Peoria Ballet at age five. She studied under Erich Yetter and later Servy Gallardo. She has attended numerous summer intensives including Houston Ballet, Orlando Ballet, Peoria Ballet, Indiana University, Atlanta Ballet, and Nashville Ballet. After graduating high school as valedictorian, Melissa continued her training at the University of Utah for a year. She went on to join Atlanta Ballet's Conservatory, and later danced with Atlanta Ballet 2. While at Atlanta Ballet, Melissa worked closely with Artistic Director John McFall as well as Sharon Story, Dale Shields, and Rosemary Miles and she performed in *Snow White*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*. She also taught classes in the Student Division of Atlanta Ballet Centre for Dance Education. Melissa went on to dance with Fort Wayne Ballet (2017-2018) and Ballet Evolution (2018-2019) in Charleston, North Carolina. Melissa is currently a student at the University of Illinois majoring in psychology.