

SAN ANTONIO
DANCE
FESTIVAL 2024



GRAND PERFORMANCE
CARVER COMMUNITY CULTURAL CENTER
APRIL 20, 2024 7:30 PM

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ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

Ernesto Quenedit

Catalina Garza



ERNESTO QUENEDIT is a native of Havana, Cuba where he graduated in 1984 from the National School of Ballet as both a dancer and teacher having trained under the direction of Alicia Alonso. He then became a member of the National Ballet of Cuba, where he was promoted to principal dancer in 1990. Mr. Quenedit toured Latin America, Europe, and Asia with the National Ballet of Cuba and later traveled to Mexico where he danced with both the Ballet of Monterrey and The National Company of Dance.

In 1996, Mr. Quenedit joined the Joffrey Ballet of Chicago under the direction of Gerald Arpino. He also performed as a principal dancer with Arizona Ballet, and it was the Don Quixote Pas de Deux that introduced him to audiences of Ballet Met in Columbus, OH. He later danced for three seasons with the Chicago Lyric Opera. Mr. Quenedit has danced extensively in the United States as a guest artist and has been a guest teacher with Ballet of Monterrey in Mexico under the direction of Robert Hill as well as teaching throughout the Chicago area where he choreographed the full length Giselle for the students at Dance West Ballet in Naperville, IL.

Mr. Quenedit moved to San Antonio, TX in 2010 and co-founded Quenedit Ballet School with his wife, Catalina Garza, and in 2014 became co-founder of Quenedit Dance Theatre. As Directors of QDT, Mr. Quenedit and Ms. Garza have staged The Nutcracker Ballet, Les Sylphides, Paquita Grand Pas, The Pharaoh's Daughter, The Fairy Doll as well as numerous original contemporary works.

ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

Ernesto Quenedit

Catalina Garza



CATALINA GARZA, a native of Monterrey, Mexico, trained professionally and graduated from the Escuela Superior de Musica y Danza de Monterrey which is part of Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura. Following graduation, she joined Ballet of Monterrey performing a long list of roles in major ballets. In 1995, she joined the National Company of Dance in Mexico City and later traveled to the United States to dance with The Joffrey Ballet of Chicago under the artistic direction of Gerald Arpino and has also performed for Ballet Met in Columbus, OH and The Lyric Opera of Chicago. Ms. Garza has toured internationally and danced in such countries as Mexico, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic and Israel.

Ms. Garza has had teaching experience both in Mexico and the United States and has staged, directed, and choreographed many projects. She moved to San Antonio, TX in 2010 and co-founded Quenedit Ballet School with her husband, Ernesto Quenedit. Since the school's inception, the students have had the opportunity to perform a vast repertoire of works in many dance genres.

In 2014, Ms. Garza became co-founder and artistic director of Quenedit Dance Theatre's non-profit pre-professional dance company. QDT's premier performance was The Nutcracker Ballet in December 2014 featuring over 100 young dancers. As the company grew, a spring season was added to include the multi-day San Antonio Dance Festival drawing international and national dancers of all ages.

2024 GRAND PERFORMANCE COORDINATOR



VIOLETA DE LEON DAVILA is a versatile artist in contemporary dance, known for her innovative approach to choreography. Her recent project, "Vision Fugitives," presented at the International Arts Festival of the University of the Incarnate Word, exemplifies this innovative spirit. Commissioned by the Department of Music at UIW, the collaboration seamlessly merged contemporary dance with live music, bringing Prokofiev's captivating composition to life through the acclaimed pianist, Dr. Ara Koh, and under the guidance of Kevin Salfen, Professor of Music at UIW.

Her immersive contemporary dance piece, "Wander Dance: Beyond the Race," enchanted audiences at Hemisfair's "Art in the Park" programming. Collaborative works like "Welcome to Plant Dance" and "Final Destination: Atacama Desert" further attest to her commitment to artistic excellence.

Violeta was honored as one of 20 artists for the 4th edition of "Jornada de Artistas 2023," an IME initiative recognizing Mexican women worldwide. Her dance film, "They Taught You Wrong: Metanoia—A Transformative Change," has garnered accolades for its poignant exploration of femicide and domestic violence.

A passionate educator, Violeta has shaped the dance journeys of numerous students, with some achieving recognition at esteemed platforms like the Youth America Grand Prix (YAGP). As a choreographer, she boasts a portfolio of over 20 original pieces, spanning modern, jazz, lyrical, and musical theater genres.

Beyond her creative endeavors, Violeta champions the arts through her involvement with organizations like San Antonio Dance. She serves as a board member and is part of the coordinating team for the 'San Antonio Dance Festival', which showcases the talents of dancers from diverse backgrounds.

Hailing from Monterrey, Mexico, Violeta earned her Bachelor's Degree in Contemporary Dance from the 'Escuela Superior de Música y Danza de Monterrey' and a Bachelor's in International Relations from the Autonomous University of Nuevo León. With an eye on holistic arts management, she is pursuing a Master's Degree in Arts and Culture Administration, balancing her artistic pursuits with her roles as a dedicated partner and mother of two.

THE ETHER SERIES



The Ether Series is a real and imagined dreamspace; serious embodied play; a rehearsal of possible cyborg realities. Rooted in cyborg and queer theories, performers engage in a movement practice that challenges them to attune to multiple planes of time, their un/conscious desires, the permeability of one another, and the spontaneous beauty of becoming a hybrid creature with fluid boundaries. Audience members are also invited to interact with the Ether in a full-bodied exploration too often relegated to the unselfconsciousness of childhood.

CREDITS:

DIRECTORS| ARCOS: Erica “EG” Gionfriddo & Eliot Gray Fisher

DANCERS: Felicia McBride Guerra, Celeste Camfield, Aída Hernandez-Reyes

MEDIA/MUSIC: Eliot Gray Fisher and Ben Randall



ARCOS experiments with dance and other everyday technologies as an invitation for people to collectively imagine potential new futures. ARCOS works may merge dancing bodies with moving images live streamed from smartphones, or cultivate tactile interaction between performers and audience via wireless earbuds, or encourage participants to contribute to the experience using their own devices. ARCOS’ internationally award-winning hybrid art is accessible, relevant, and engaging to audiences in a broad range of settings, recognized for its "kaleidoscopic artistry" (Austin American-Statesman) that is "fierce and weird and wonderful" (Austin Chronicle) and "thinks squarely outside the box" (Scotsman).



“Funded in part by the Texas Commission on the Arts”

FEATH3RED RHAPSODY



"Feath3red Rhapsody" is a captivating dance production featuring three mesmerizing segments choreographed by acclaimed artists Pedro Vega, Juan Ángel Bojórquez López, and Violeta De Leon Davila. From the enchanting movements inspired by avian dance to the dynamic exploration of human-bird connections, each segment offers a unique perspective on the beauty and wonder of the natural world. In the third segment, audiences are treated to a dynamic fusion of contemporary movement, accompanied by an original composition created specifically for the piece by the renowned local artist Federico Chávez-Blanco.

CREDITS

CONCEPT, COORDINATION, AND DIRECTION: Violeta De Leon Davila under the Artistic Direction of Ernesto Quenedit and Catalina Garza

CHOREOGRAPHY: Segment 1: Pedro Vega Segment 2: Juan Ángel Bojórquez López Segment 3: Violeta De Leon Davila

DANCERS:

SA Dance Company: - Irem Aktunc, Mailen Alvarez, Abcde Bannister, Azriel Bannister, Kandra Barolia, Penny Gibbs, Sofia Gomez, Tatiana Moreno

Quenedit Ballet School Dancers - Serena Manabat, Olivia Negron, Leinell Ombaba, Natalie Pomares Fox, Katharina Presper, Tabitha Walker

Guest Artists: Abigail Davis, Aiden Moss*, Jay Markov* — *Ballet San Antonio

MUSIC:

Segment 1: Excerpt of Blackbird (Mono; Single Edit; 2017 Remaster) Nina Simone "Ecomúsica Harpia" Fábio Caramuru, Ezio Bosso "Thunders and Lightnings"

Segment 2: Nina Simone - Black Bird (Jose Marquez Remix) and RUCCULA

Segment 3: Federico Chávez-Blanco, Acapella segment: Cecilia Chavez-Torres

LIGHTING DESIGN: Alejandro Jaén López Peña

COSTUME FITTING: Tamara Bannister

PROJECTIONS: **Malakita Productions LLC** A dynamic agency blending art, culture, and visual communication.



SAN ANTONIO DANCE COMPANY

San Antonio Dance (formerly Quenedit Dance Theatre) has been a beacon of artistic excellence in San Antonio since its establishment in 2014. Under the guidance of Artistic Directors Catalina Garza and Ernesto Quenedit, our mission is to ignite a passion for dance and enrich the cultural fabric of our city. We embrace diversity and heritage, champion inclusivity, and actively engage with the community through accessible performances and collaborative ventures.

Our hallmark events, such as the annual Nutcracker Ballet production and the San Antonio Dance Festival, exemplify our dedication to cultural enrichment and artistic innovation. With a diverse audience and a range of programs, we continue to expand our impact, providing opportunities for professional dancers and nurturing a deeper appreciation for dance in San Antonio. We are committed to elevating movement and empowering communities and invite you to join us on this inspiring journey.

FEATH3RED RHAPSODY CHOREOGRAPHERS

Juan Ángel Borjórquez is a talented young contemporary-neoclassical choreographer from Mexico, currently studying at the Escuela Superior de Música y Danza de Monterrey. He has received scholarships for prestigious international dance programs such as Alonzo King Lines Ballet, New York Dance Project, and Complexions Contemporary Ballet. Just one year ago, Juan Ángel premiered as a choreographer at Escuela Superior, creating a variety of pieces, including pas de deux, contemporary solos, and ensembles. His works, including "Si mañana me muero," "Aprender a llorar," "Perdidos," "Sin querer irme," "Humanos," and "Intro," have premiered at Escuela Superior performances. Last year, he created "Aprender a Llorar," a contemporary solo for Quetzalcoatl Flores for the Prix de Lausanne auditions, and his ensemble piece "Ecos" was selected as one of the finalists for the Youth America Grand Prix in New York in 2024.

Violeta De Leon Davila is a dynamic contemporary dance choreographer known for her innovative works. Her choreography, including immersive experiences like "Wander Dance: Beyond the Race" and powerful pieces such as "Final Destination: Atacama Desert," captivates audiences at events like the San Antonio Dance Festival. Violeta's choreographic talent extends to youth matinees like "Welcome to Plant Dance" and thought-provoking video dance projects like "They Taught You Wrong: Metanoia—A Transformative Change," which have garnered recognition at film festivals. Recognized for her contributions, Violeta was selected for the IME's "Jornada de Artistas 2023" and received grants from the Department of Arts and Culture of San Antonio. With a decade-long career, Violeta has earned acclaim for her contributions and continues to push boundaries and inspire through her choreographic ingenuity.

Pedro Vega started his dance career at the National School of Art in Havana, Cuba, graduating as a Dancer-Teacher from the renowned Cuban Ballet School. After joining the Laura Alonso Ballet Company in 2007, he flourished under the artistic guidance of Fernando Alonso. In 2010, he ascended to the position of first soloist at the National Ballet of Ecuador, later becoming a First Dancer in 2011. Throughout his career, Pedro has assumed leading roles in classical, neoclassical, and contemporary productions. Pedro Vega's dedication extends beyond the stage. He has received training from international luminaries such as Laura Alonso, Frank Andersen (Royal Danish Ballet), and Jose Manuel Carreño. As a teacher, Pedro has shared his expertise with the professional casts of the National Ballet of Ecuador and the College of Arts, overseeing assembly and graduation for five consecutive years (2018-2022). Additionally, he has conducted workshops on dance-related topics, including the National Curriculum and Dance Curriculum, planning and evaluation of learning, physical preparation for dancers, and musical education.

ALARIPU



The Alaripu (a-laa-ri-pu) is the first dance in the traditional Bharatanatyam repertoire. It is performed in three stages - standing, in aramandi (the half-seated position), and in poornamandi (the fully seated position). It is also done in three speeds - slow, medium paced and fast paced. It is a pure dance piece and is accompanied by vocal syllables. Sumangala will perform an Alaripu set to the seven-beat cycle, called Mishra chaapu.

CREDITS

CHOREOGRAPHY: Bharatanatyam repertoire

DANCER: Sumangala Vijaykumar Varun

MUSIC: Performed to recorded music, the accompanying artists are as follows:

Guru Sheela Chnadrashekhhar on the cymbals and vocals

Mr. Vinay Nagaraj on the percussion

Mr. Narasimha Murthy on the flute

Music recording courtesy - Temple Sounds

Sumangala Vijaykumar Varun has been a disciple of Guru Rekha Dinesh for the last fifteen years.

She holds a master's degree in Bharatanatyam from Jain University, Bangalore, and has completed the Nriya Visharad degree from the Gandharva University India and Senior grade from the Karnataka Board, India. Sumangala is a graded artist with Doordarshan, the Indian government's broadcast channel. She has completed her full-length solo debut under Guru Rekha. She is a Registered Yoga Teacher with the Yoga Alliance USA. She has attended workshops conducted by senior dancers.

Sumangala's solo performances in India and abroad include the San Pedro Dance festival Los Angeles, temples at Austin, Guruvayoorappan Temple in Houston, Krishnashtami at ISKCON Zurich. In India, she has performed at the Natyanjalis, Tanusree Nriyotsav, Pollachi Tamil Sangam's dance festival, Kalpavriksha Mahotsav, Sai Nriyotsava, Articulate Festival, Tarakeshwara Foundation, India International Dance Festival, Pravachana Vahini series, and Vasanthotsavam Festival among others.

Sumangala frequently writes about art and culture at leading Indian publications. She also trains students in Bharatanatyam.

WHISPERED PAGES



In this dynamic and thought-provoking dance piece, contemporary choreography intertwines effortlessly with structured improvisation to explore the profound impact of knowledge transfer on humanity. Dancers move with fluidity, symbolizing the liberation of learning, while moments of improvisation reflect the spontaneity of understanding. Through dynamic sequences, the dance celebrates the transformative power of shared wisdom and the potential for positive change, embodying the essence of a revolution.

CREDITS

CHOREOGRAPHY: Tanesha Payne and Dancers

DANCERS: Rhea Patterson, Felicia McBride Guerra, Coral Howard, Tanesha Payne

MUSIC: "Carrot Revolution" Composed by: Gabriella Smith Performed by: Aizuri Quartet



Founded, and under the direction of Tanesha Sumerset Payne, **sumRset Movement** is a professional contemporary dance company focused on increasing visibility, accessibility, and appreciation for movement as performance art in San Antonio and abroad.

CARMEN PAS DE DEUX



Carmen is a character created by the pen of Prósper Mérimée in 1845. Maestro Robert Hill created this pas de deux in 2005 for Ballet de Monterrey, inspired by Bizet's opera, using musical arrangements of the same work.

CREDITS

CHOREOGRAPHY: Maestro Robert Hill

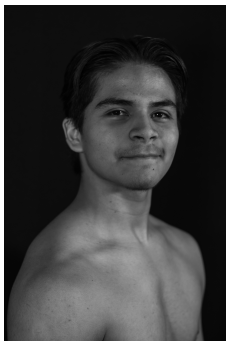
DANCERS: Carmen: Andrea de León. Escamillo: Gael Ventura

MUSIC: Bizet-Schredin



Andrea De Leon. born in Monterrey, N.L., Mexico, studied classical dance at the Escuela Superior de Música y Danza de Monterrey graduating with honorable mention. Upon graduation, she joined the Joffrey Ballet in Chicago, IL as a trainee. After leaving Joffrey Ballet, Ms. De Leon joined the ballet corps of Ballet de Monterrey where she was later promoted to soloist.

Among her repertoire is found: La Fille Mal Gardée, Swan Lake, Don Quixote, The Nutcracker, Le Corsaire, Peter Pan, among others. She has worked with prominent personalities such as Raymond Rodríguez, José Manuel Carreño, Marcelo Gómez, Thiago Soares and Septime Webre, and Ms. De Leon has been a guest dancer in national galas as well as touring internationally with Ballet de Monterrey.



Gael Ventura Cepeda, born in Monterrey Nuevo León, began his dance studies at the age of 9, developing in various techniques. At the age of 11, he began his studies of classical dance under directed by Maestro Luis Serrano and at the age of 14 he entered as a classical dance student at the Escuela Superior de Música y Danza de Monterrey. At age 17, he entered the Ballet de Monterrey company as an apprentice, in May 2022, he is promoted to corps de ballet under the direction of Thiago Soares and finally in February 2023 he is promoted to solo dancer by the same director.

As a dancer he has played important roles within the company Monterrey Ballet such as Beno in the Swan Lake pas de trois, Conrad in El corsario, The sugar gentleman in the Nutcracker, Lucien in the Paquita ballet and a few more. Currently, he continues to be part of Ballet de Monterrey with the role of soloist and continues to play leading roles.

Ballet de Monterrey was founded in 1990, in the city of Monterrey, Nuevo León, thanks to the valuable vision and initiative of a group of altruistic people committed to culture and the national development of artistic expressions. The company's cultural offering capitalizes on extensive experience and professional growth that allows it to offer a wide repertoire of classical, neoclassical and contemporary pieces, thus satisfying the demanding tastes of the general public.

Ballet de Monterrey, a Mexican Classical and Contemporary Dance Company with its own identity in the creation of new proposals, has stood out internationally for its Latin American identity, technique and versatility.

With this vibrant and energetic personality, Ballet de Monterrey is today an ambassador of Mexican dance throughout the world.

EXCERPTS FROM “VISION FUGITIVES”



Following its successful premiere at the International Arts Festival of the University of the Incarnate Word, "Vision Fugitives" returns with select excerpts, offering a condensed yet powerful glimpse into this interdisciplinary project. Commissioned by the Department of Music at UIW, this innovative collaboration seamlessly merges contemporary dance with live music, spotlighting the mesmerizing compositions of Prokofiev and featuring the renowned pianist, Dr. Ara Koh.

Inspired by Remedios Varo's surreal artwork, choreographer Violeta De Leon explores themes of escape and imagination. Varo's pieces, which combine narrative and fantastical modes of transportation, convey a powerful vision of escape to freedom. Finding liberation through imagination, Varo's themes resonate deeply with "Vision Fugitives," adding another layer to its multi-dimensional experience.

In these excerpts, the artistic synergy between dance and music remains at the forefront, inviting audiences to experience the dynamic interplay between movement and sound.

CREDITS

PRODUCER: Kevin Salfen

CHOREOGRAPHER: Violeta De Leon Davila

CONTEMPORARY DANCERS: Felicia McBride Guerra, Aiden Moss, Sarah Starkweather & Krysteen Villarreal in collaboration with the SA Dance Company Dancers - Abcde Bannister and Azriel Bannister, and Quenedit Ballet School Dancer: Leinell Ombaba

COSTUME DESIGN: Ashleigh Poteat

LIGHTING DESIGN: Alejandro Jaén López Peña

PIANO SET PROP "STAR ENERGY": Aza Gonzalez

PHOTOGRAPHY: Nain Leon

Special thanks to Quenedit Ballet School for the use of their facility and to San Antonio Dance Company

The International Arts Festival 2024 is an initiative of the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences at the University of the Incarnate Word. Supported by "Haciendo Caminos," a grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc., the Office of the President at UIW, the Bennack Music Fund, the Jack Stone Composition Competition, the Composers Alliance of San Antonio, and the Ettling Center for the Civic Leadership and Sustainability.

CHOREOGRAPHER STATEMENT: As the choreographer for "Vision Fugitives," I am thrilled to collaborate with the Department of Music at the University of the Incarnate Word. This project merges contemporary dance with Prokofiev's music, featuring pianist Dr. Ara Koh and coordinated by Kevin Salfen. "Vision Fugitives" explores the dynamic between dance and music, pushing artistic boundaries and celebrating interdisciplinary collaboration. My aim is to create a multi-dimensional experience that highlights the contributions of female artists in choreography, music, and performance. Together, we invite audiences to witness the transformative power of artistic synergy.

WHO'S GOING TO GET THE BALL FROM BEHIND THE GARDEN WALL TODAY?



“Who's going to get the ball from behind the garden wall today?” is a reflection on the nature of contemporary society, exploring themes such as alignment, human connection and the search for identity in a modern world.

CREDITS

DIRECTION: Iván Freeman and Rolando Ramírez

CHOREOGRAPHY: Iván Freeman

MUSIC: Bachar Mar-Khalife

LIGHTING DESIGN: Iván Freeman

COSTUME DESIGN: Rolando Ramírez

DANCERS: Valeria Vázquez, Vanessa Ortiz, Grecia Meza, Raquel Valdes, Emily Rodríguez

Hybrido-FDT Dance Company aims to showcase Mexican talent, both dancers and choreographers, within the diverse landscape of contemporary dance trends. Directed by Iván Freeman and Rolando Ramírez, the company strives to foster identification through its unique stage proposals and dance programs, representing individuals and societal entities alike. With a mission to contribute to the evolution of art, Hybrido-FDT emerges not only as a culmination of artistic ideas but also as a catalyst for new creative processes and broader audience engagement. Recognizing dance as a vital expression of our living culture, the company seeks to enrich societal cultural education through artistic expression, intelligence, and discipline, reaching audiences of all backgrounds.

DON QUIXOTE PAS DE DEUX

Dancers: Katherine Ochoa, Rafael Quenedit

Choreographer: Marius Petipa
Music: Ludwig Minkus



Katherine Ochoa began training in 2009 at the National School of Ballet in Cuba where she learned a vast repertoire of variations and won both gold and silver medals in the Havana International Ballet competition. She later joined the Cuban National Ballet and in 2019 had the opportunity to participate in the semifinals of YAGP in Chicago and won the Grand Prix Award. She moved on to participate in the semifinals of YAGP in New York where she placed in the top 12. As a member of the Corps de Ballet in Cuba she performed in *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, *Cinderella*, *Don Quixote*, and *Umbral* and she was quickly promoted to First Soloist. This is Ochoa's second season with Cincinnati Ballet. She was promoted to Soloist in 2023.



Rafael Quenedit, principal dancer with Cincinnati Ballet, began his training in 2006 in Cuba at Escuela Elemental de Ballet Alejo Carpentier where he trained for five years. He then spent eight years training with the National Ballet School of Cuba. He graduated in 2014 and joined the National Ballet of Cuba as a corps de ballet dancer, and was quickly cast in soloist and principal roles before being named principal dancer at the prestigious, international company.

Quenedit has also worked with internationally-renowned choreographers including Alicia Alonso, Alexei Ratmansky, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Giuliano Pepparini, Alberto Mendez, among others. Sharing his art with dance lovers around the world has been one of his passions. He has performed lead roles in the United States, Italy, Spain, France, Canada, Mexico and several others. Competitions awards include: Bronze medal at the International Ballet competition in Havana, Cuba; Junior division. Gold medal at the International Ballet competition in Cape Town, South Africa; Junior division. Gold medal at the XX International Ballet competition in Havana, Cuba. Also awarded best Artistic Performance; Senior division. Winner at Amici Word Dance competition in Italy. Principal roles with the National Ballet of Cuba: *Swan Lake*; *Don Quixote*; *Giselle*; *La Fille Mal Gardée*; *The Nutcracker*; *Romeo & Juliet*; *Carmen*; *La Bayadere*; *Cinderella*, *Theme & Variations*.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

We extend our sincere appreciation to all our donors for their invaluable support during the San Antonio Dance 2023/24 Season. Their generosity has been instrumental in creating a season filled with captivating performances, enriching the lives of both our dancers and our devoted audience members. We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to the following donors for their unwavering commitment to the arts and their tireless efforts in promoting the magic of dance.

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Choreographer - \$1000+

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Annie & Michale Walker

The San Antonio Dance 2023/24 Season is presented in part by The San Antonio Department of Arts & Culture



**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
DEPARTMENT OF
ARTS & CULTURE**