



AMERICAN FRIENDS
PARIS OPERA & BALLET

AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE PARIS OPERA & BALLET 2020 - YOUNG ARTISTS RELIEF FUND



DISCOVER THE 24 GRANTEES WHO NEED YOUR HELP

FROM BOSTON BALLET SCHOOL | MIAMI CITY BALLET SCHOOL | PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET SCHOOL |
PARIS OPERA BALLET SCHOOL | SCHOOL OF AMERICAN BALLET | SAN FRANCISCO BALLET SCHOOL | PARIS OPERA ACADEMY



AMERICAN FRIENDS
PARIS OPERA & BALLET

2020 - YOUNG ARTISTS RELIEF FUND

BOSTON BALLET SCHOOL – 4 GRANTEES

EDDIE KIDD

American – Massachusetts, 18



I cannot begin to describe how honored I feel to have been selected for this grant. I would like to express my gratitude to your organization for this amazing gift, and for all of the other good work you do. It comes at a time when I am less than a week away from moving out of my parents' house and setting out on the next chapter of my dance career. When I first read your email I was completely blown away by your generosity. The money will go a long way in supporting me as I begin my professional career, and I cannot thank you enough for this amazing opportunity.

Attached is a document with my dance journey and my thoughts on how the pandemic has effected me and the art form as a whole, as well as some pictures and videos of how I have adjusted to dancing during quarantine.



Essay from Eddie Kidd to AFPOB [here](#)



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BOSTON BALLET SCHOOL – 4 GRANTEES

FRANCOIS LEBLANC

French, 19

First of all, let me thank you and the American Friends of the Paris Opera & Ballet for this amazing gift. I can't express how much I'm grateful and honored. This grant will help me a lot.



Let me now talk a bit about my path. Like you may know, I was a student at the Paris Opera Ballet school. I spent 5 years with incredible teachers and I loved every second of it. It was of course difficult and hard for such young kids but it was worth it and the school helped me become the dancer I am today. While I was in Paris, I also had the chance to meet incredible and inspirational people such as Gregory Gaillard, Gil Isoart and Elisabeth Maurin. These persons helped me a lot to grow and progress as a dancer and artist. And for this I'm grateful to them, I'm still in touch with them today. After graduating from the school, I went to the Boston Ballet school summer Intensive. I met there Margaret Tracey the director of the school. She then kindly offered me a place in the Trainee Program. My year at the Boston Ballet school was very interesting. I learnt a lot thanks to my teachers. The dance in America and in France are quite different, at the Boston Ballet school we dance in the Balanchine's style. A thing we don't do in Paris. So it was very interesting and challenging to face this new technique. I also discovered a new city, met new friends and experienced a new way of life. I have known the school in Paris for « all my life » and leaving Paris and arriving in Boston was very helpful to mature and grow up. It made me broaden my horizons and this is very important. The people I met, the travels I did, the roles I danced, the masterclasses I did are unique and gave me another perspective of what dance is. My only regret is that we didn't get the chance to perform the annual show at the Boston Opera House.

The Covid-19 pandemic came in the US and forced me to go back in Paris to my family. This quarantine period was strange but it gave me time to do things I normally don't do. I worked a lot so that I would stay in shape and even progress. I put a barre and a piece of marley in my room and I was following Boston Ballet's class and also Paris Opera Ballet's. I was also taking some online classes from several dancers around the world on social media. I also worked on gaining muscle strength. I was taking this time to read some books, watch some movies and try to stay connected with family and friends.

And finally I just want to thank your incredible organization. We are very appreciative of what you are doing. You are keeping the performing arts alive.

Grant generously provided by
a donor



Video available [here](#)



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BOSTON BALLET SCHOOL – 4 GRANTEES

ANNA MURRAY

American, 17



My name is Anna Murray and I am a student in Boston Ballet School's Pre-Professional Program. This is my third year at BBS, and I am so thankful for the amazing faculty, the friendships I've made, and the incredible experiences I've had on-stage and off. While this year didn't end the way we had hoped, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been very inspiring to stay connected with teachers and classmates through the use of technology. Taking ballet classes via "Zoom" and following pre-recorded ballet barres has been instrumental in allowing us to stay together even while we are apart. I have found that dancing has become an essential outlet now more than ever. In the midst of all this, I often remind myself to keep dancing!

Thank you so much for this incredible opportunity. This was such a wonderful way to start the week! The grant will be an immense help to my family in helping me pursue ballet, especially in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. I feel so grateful to have been recognized by such an amazing community of artists and dancers.

Thank you to the American Friends of the Paris Opera & Ballet for your generous support during this time!



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BOSTON BALLET SCHOOL – 4 GRANTEES

DAVID WEST

American, 18



Thank you so much. I am honored to receive a grant during this rough period that we are all enduring. I did not expect to be dancing in my living room for such an extended period of time, but I have grown accustomed to it.

▶ Video available [here](#)





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MIAMI CITY BALLET SCHOOL – 3 GRANTEES



SARAH ASHLEY CHICOLA

American, 17



A message from Sarah Ashley Chicola [here](#)

For myself, as well as many other dancers and artists my age, this pandemic has been particularly stressful. Constantly worrying about the future, if there will be a place for you in the ballet world after this is over, and the daily struggle of trying to keep your technique. I also had to worry about my parents and my little brother. They were essentially homeless during this time, because beforehand they were moving around cheap motels after the bank took our house. After the lockdown started and the hotels closed, they moved around staying with friends. Staying positive was a daily battle. I am thankful to have had my friends who are also dancers beside me, to remind each other that we are not alone. To remind each other that each day is different, and to not be so hard on ourselves when there seems to be no hope. Remembering why we love to dance, and that this situation is only temporary. This Young Artists Relief Fund has been a huge beacon of hope for me, and I am indescribably grateful.



Video available [here](#)





AMERICAN FRIENDS
PARIS OPERA & BALLET

2020 - YOUNG ARTISTS RELIEF FUND

MIAMI CITY BALLET SCHOOL – 3 GRANTEES

LING MINUCCI

Asian American, 17

My name is Ling Minucci. I am 17 years old and I was adopted from China. My family owns a small restaurant, by working there I learned time management, teamwork, and work hard, which helped tremendously in dance. I grew up in upstate New York and studied ballet at a local dance studio for 7 years. In the spring of 2017, I went to Miami City Ballet's Spring Break workshop, and the following school year I stayed. I have been at the school for 3 years now. Throughout my time at MCBS, I got the opportunity to work with Miami City Ballet in George Balanchine's The Nutcracker and Firebird. I also participated in MCBS Community Engagement performances, where we go around South Florida and perform for families to inspire an interest in the arts. I have attended summer programs at The School of American Ballet and the Pacific Northwest Ballet School. My goal is to become a professional dancer, and to be able to continue to share the wonders of ballet through the movement of this art form.

In my family's restaurant, my dad tends the bar, while my mom does all the cooking. They don't have other jobs or have other income. On March 17th the restaurant and bar had to close due to Covid-19, except for takeout dinners. It will be difficult for them to make money for a long time because even when restaurants are allowed to reopen, whenever this happens, the rules and regulations about how many people can be served safely will make it hard to make enough money to stay in business. They are trying to be creative and solve these problems but could use some financial help with dance expenses.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, it's been tough, but I have learned to take it one day at a time. As dancers we work indoors and are always busy, so it has been nice to spend more time on other aspects of my life, such as hiking and just enjoying being outdoors. It has also helped to stay in touch with my friends from dance, but often times we tend to talk about other things besides ballet, to take our minds off all the uncertainty in the ballet world we will return to. Especially now, it's more important to work even harder in our virtual ballet classes because that is all we have. With other jobs you can work from home, but in dance you have to be in a studio to be able to improve to your fullest potential. We have to just persevere through this time. I have learned how to work with what I have and take nothing for granted. Thinking too far into the future can be a bit unnerving at times, but I do know if we keep working hard we can get to the other side of this!





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2020 - YOUNG ARTISTS RELIEF FUND

MIAMI CITY BALLET SCHOOL – 3 GRANTEES



TREY PUCKETT

Asian American, 19

I grew up in a family of 14, 10 of the children were adopted. My father is very hardworking but, with such a large family, it has been tough for them financially. I am grateful for their support and that I've been able to make it this far.

I started ballet when I was 10 and fell in love with it. I have worked so hard and I hope to further myself in my ballet career.

*Considering our current circumstances, I'm not sure how the next few months are going to work out. **Ballet Arizona** is a possibility for studio company but ideally, I would love to somehow be able to continue my training at MCB.*

My family is trying to help me to get back to Miami (they are also in the process of trying to move)

I may have a job at Madewell on Lincoln Road, so the sooner I could get back to Miami and start working I can start saving a little before the school year starts.

I know that it is going to be a lot of hard work but I'm really determined to make this happen.



Video available [here](#)





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PARIS OPERA & BALLET

2020 - YOUNG ARTISTS RELIEF FUND

PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET SCHOOL – 4 GRANTEES



ASHTON EDWARDS

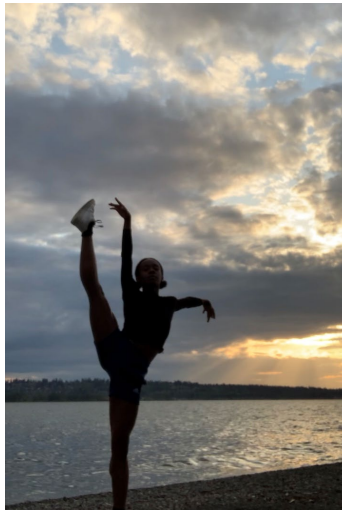
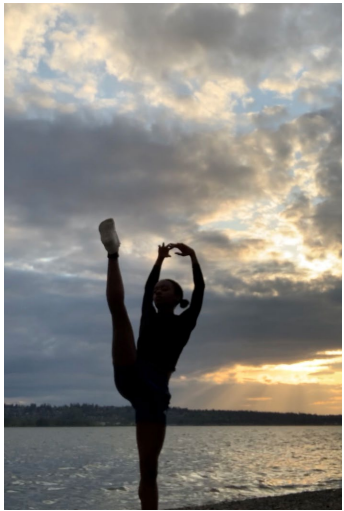
American- Michigan, 17

Hello there! My name is Ashton Edwards, a Professional Division student at Pacific Northwest Ballet. I am seventeen years old and from Flint, Michigan. I am currently quarantining in Seattle, Washington with my very gracious host family.

As I think we can all attest to, quarantine has most certainly been a bumpy ride, a rollercoaster of emotions every day. I know here in America it seems everyday things get a little worse. While I was following strict stay home orders, cases of COVID were still rising and performing became more and more of a distance dream. Then there was a very necessary uprising of protesters demanding equality and change for our historically oppressive nation. As a black teenager in America it felt as if life was happening to me, taking away my control and power. I feared the forces standing against me. Then, with the help of strong voices around me I realized, not only do I have power but a responsibility to my community and the people who look like me. It is no secret that ballet can sometimes ostracize the people who do not “look the part”. We are taught in our training that there are certain molds we must fit to be successful. And while ballet has made some major improvements and statements in its time there is still much to be done to change the narrative.

Now, my goal is to be a more active voice and advocate for my peers and students behind me in this critique time of our training. I want to change the narrative that dancers are to be seen and not heard. By doing so I believe we can create a healthier more enriching environment and give our “dying art” life.

With your support I can take class in my living room with intention and a purpose. Intention to better the art form and inspire other to do the same.



Grant generously provided by
Elizabeth A.R. and Ralph S. Brown, Jr.



Video available [here](#)



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PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET SCHOOL – 4 GRANTEES



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ELIZABETH (LIZ) DEVANNEY

American - Maryland, 19

Since returning to my hometown of Bel Air, Maryland from Seattle, March 15, it has definitely been a challenging time. This is the largest block of time I've spent with my family since I left home in 2015 to attend high school at UNCSA! My older brother's college closed due to COVID and he came home two days after I did. The silver lining has been being able to spend this time with my family, but I'm anxious for the world to return to "normal."

Prior to the quarantine in Maryland, I was able to take several private lessons from one of my old teachers. After things became more restricted, I've been taking class daily with PNB via Zoom and have been fortunate enough to be able to get into a real studio (by myself) a few times each week. I have a small set-up at my house with marley flooring, mirrors and a barre, which has come in handy, too.

Before COVID-19 changed the world, I was very excited about my plans for this summer. I was planning to attend two different summer intensives – the first with John Gardner and Amanda McKerrow in Colorado and the second at Pennsylvania Ballet in Philadelphia. Each of these has since been cancelled or moved to a "virtual" experience. Also, I had been selected by PNB to participate as an exchange student with the Royal Danish Ballet in Copenhagen in August. I was looking forward to this the most! I have never traveled to Europe and was very excited about this opportunity, but this too has been cancelled. I was so honored to be able to represent PNB and learn in that environment! I'm keeping my fingers crossed that I may get a second chance to study with the RDB at some point in the future! I plan to return to PNB to continue my training in the fall.

And of course, if I ever had the opportunity to dance with Paris Opera Ballet, it would be an incredible honor. One day, I hope! Receiving your email has definitely been one of the brightest spots of my summer!

Thank you again for the generous award. I look forward to continuing my path to a career as a professional ballerina!



Video link to some performances at UNCSA [here](#)



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PARIS OPERA & BALLET

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PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET SCHOOL – 4 GRANTEES

NICOLE TOWNSEND

American-California, 19



I cannot put into words how thankful I am to have been chosen to receive this grant. With all that is going on it is a welcome change to receive some positive news! I am working hard to remain positive and upbeat both in dealing with the quarantine as well as the explosive political situation surrounding the social injustices here in the US. I truly hope this marks a turning point in our country and some of these issues can truly be addressed once and for all. It does not seem like it should be that difficult to treat each other with love and respect. Thankfully, I have my very supportive family here with me! They have moved heaven and Earth to make changes to our house to create a dance studio for me. I am also really happy to have access to all the online content and live sessions presented by other dancers around the world and by PNB instructors! They are helping me stay in shape and prepare for whenever we can return to classes! I'm also in touch with a few close friends from past ballet schools I have attended. We try to uplift and encourage one another and keep each other on track to fulfilling our dreams. I am grateful that a couple of the PNB company dancers and staff have reached out to me in this crazy time. It means a great deal to know they care. Likewise I am grateful to PNB and POB for having chosen me for the summer exchange program and am further honored to have been chosen to receive this grant. I cannot thank you enough.

▶ Two videos available [here](#) and [here](#)

Grant generously provided by
Donna and Michael Corbat



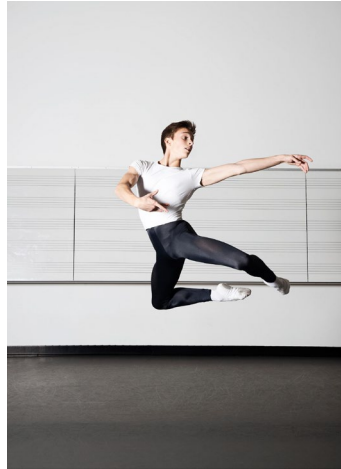
AMERICAN FRIENDS
PARIS OPERA & BALLET

2020 - YOUNG ARTISTS RELIEF FUND

PACIFIC NORTHWEST BALLET SCHOOL – 4 GRANTEES

GABRIEL WRIGHT

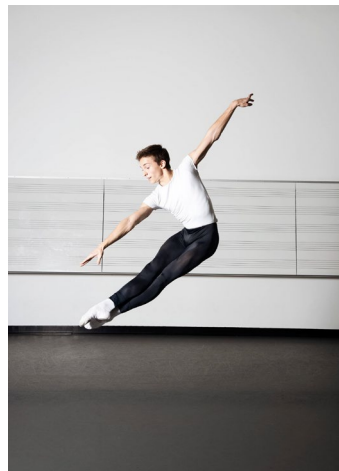
American - Oregon, 19



Like most of my fellow dancers, the last months have been a challenge for me. The disappointment of losing the shows and performances, the time with friends, and the love of dance that my friends and I share while in the studio, has been extremely difficult to come to terms with.

When we were initially sent home, I was under the impression we would be back in about two months. This gave me a light at the end of the tunnel and a date to work towards. I am a very scheduled person. When I was told that classes were canceled for the rest of the year, I was turned upside down. Initially, I started taking zoom classes in my house, like every dancer I know. One of my teachers set up daily classes and a zoom schedule. Some time went by and I realized that through the busy schedule before covid, I had been ignoring the pain I had been in. When you are in your living room using a couch as a barre it's much more difficult to ignore the pain in your ankle. I decided that if there is a good time to rest and to heal, quarantine would be the best time. I took two weeks off and was feeling better just from a couple weeks of the rest. I decided to take class but the pain in my ankle came back quickly. Struggling to keep my spirits up during zoom classes and not being able to dance without pain, I decided to take a longer period of time off. Not having ballet to fill my time I decided to earn some money working and explore the things I enjoy doing outside of ballet. Working a job gave me a routine and helped me to not feel as if my time had been wasted. When I wasn't working, I was exploring my other passions and working out to stay in shape without ballet.

Although during this time I have faced many disappointments, it has also been a learning experience. I learned what it's like to work a job that isn't your passion and how different it is than my life in ballet. I learned that I can find joy and happiness in even the worst situations. Most importantly I learned how much I love ballet and the energy of a class with other dancers. I miss dancing everyday and I'm itching to start moving and dancing again!



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AMERICAN FRIENDS
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2020 - YOUNG ARTISTS RELIEF FUND

PARIS OPERA BALLET SCHOOL – 4 GRANTEES

ENZO CARDIX

French, 18

I would like to thank you for your generosity, and the precious help you offer me. This is the opportunity for me to keep developing the artist I am. I can conquer my future thanks to your generous support and practice my passion, getting the experience of my art. I feel very honored, lucky, and grateful. Thank you very much. This generous help is definitely a doorway for my career goals.

To this end, you will find a link of a solo I performed last year on the stage of the Palais Garnier in the silence.

I thank you and the community of the American Friends from the bottom of my heart.

▶ Video (2019) link available [here](#)





AMERICAN FRIENDS
PARIS OPERA & BALLET

2020 - YOUNG ARTISTS RELIEF FUND


PARIS OPERA BALLET SCHOOL – 4 GRANTEES

THEO GHILBERT

French, 16

First of all, I would like to thank you for your generous gift. It will help me a lot to pursue my career as a dancer. It will allow me to develop myself in this amazing field that is dance. I feel honored, touched and incredibly lucky to have received this tremendously precious help. I'm thanking you from the bottom of my heart.

Regarding the quarantine time, this period helped me to really focus on my work and I try to make the best out of it. I was forced to work alone, to correct myself alone and to know what I was supposed to work on in order to stay in shape. However we had some online classes on Zoom with our teacher Wilfried Romoli (sometimes just the two of us and sometimes the whole class). This really motivated us to stay mentally focus on our dance and also helped us a lot to work in our home. I was doing some barre work and some center exercices, but when we were supposed to jump and I would rather not because my home wasn't a ballet studio and I didn't want to injure myself. After all, I do believe the quarantine helped me to grow up and mature. I'm definitely not the same dancer I was before this. But I'm very happy to go back to school and wish to return on stage as soon as possible !

 Video link available [here](#)



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Grant generously provided by
Angel Shine Foundation / Allyson Tang
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AMERICAN FRIENDS
PARIS OPERA & BALLET

2020 - YOUNG ARTISTS RELIEF FUND

PARIS OPERA BALLET SCHOOL – 4 GRANTEES

MAILENE KATOCH

French, 18

I would like to thank you for awarding me such an important grant. I will probably never be able to thank you enough for your help. I am beyond thankful to know that it will help me pursue my passion and career goals. My passion for ballet grows every day a little bit more and I am now relieved to get the opportunity to go back in a studio in order to train intensively again.

The quarantine due to the Covid-19, allowed me to recover. I had a stress fracture to my right shinbone that is now healed. During those last three months I was dancing in my living room and I started by doing some exercises at the barre and then I followed several Zoom classes. Each week, I had either private classes or group classes with my teacher. Then, we had a gym class every Wednesday to stay in shape. And finally, I had the opportunity to participate in a contemporary project, choreographed by Didy Veldman, with all my classmates and other prestigious ballet schools. This experience was extremely enriching and my days became much more enjoyable. I also had the chance to be surrounded and supported by my family to get through that tough time.

Thank you again for your precious and generous help, it means a lot to me. I will do my best to honor this bountiful grant while achieving my career goals.



©Chris Dève/OnP

Grant generously provided by
Denise Littlefield Sobel



Video (2019) link available [here](#)



AMERICAN FRIENDS
PARIS OPERA & BALLET

2020 - YOUNG ARTISTS RELIEF FUND

PARIS OPERA BALLET SCHOOL – 4 GRANTEES

TANGUI TREVINAL


French, 18



I'm at the end of my second first division here at the paris opera ballet school. I wasn't mentally prepared last year to handle the stress of the audition. I've been in this school for 6 years now this school also constructed who I am as a dancer, as an artist but also as a human being. Through the hard work I accumulated the french technique that I should have shown on stage this year. First we had the strikes that prevented us holding the demonstrations. And then the Covid 19 just before the annual school show where I was doing the leading role in Coppelia. I also lost the opportunity to go to Toronto in the International Assembly where I could have learned and earned a lot of experience. Hopefully I went to Montreux to participate to the Choreographic Project with Partner School of the Prix de Lausanne. You can see me in my entrance duo at the end of the video I shared. This was a wonderful experience where I discovered a lot of things about the creation of piece and gained and opened a lot my artistic vision. As The concours to the Corps de Ballet is reported it gives me the chance to accumulate and develop myself as a dancer that means as an athlete but also as an artist. I have to be prepared to be a professional dancer you can count on.

I'm so honored and grateful to be part of the Young Artists Relief Fund of the American Friends of the Paris Opera & Ballet.

As a young artist this gift will really help me in my dance evolution and affirmation.

 Video (2019) link available [here](#)



AMERICAN FRIENDS
PARIS OPERA & BALLET

2020 - YOUNG ARTISTS RELIEF FUND

SCHOOL OF AMERICAN BALLET – 2 GRANTEES

BEN SCHWARZ


American - California, 19

I am 19 years old and a triplet from San Francisco, California. I started my ballet training under Marcia Dale Weary on the two year men's scholarship program at Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet (CPYB). I attended CPYB not only for the world class training but because the men's scholarship included a stipend for living expenses. Without this subsidization I wouldn't have been able to attend. Sadly, my father has Epilepsy and has had 3 unsuccessful brain surgeries and in recent years has lost the ability to work, is on disability, and is only getting a fraction of his original salary. As you can only imagine, this has made things tough with four children in college. My mother was diagnosed with breast cancer twice and thyroid cancer and this has also greatly impacted her ability to work. Throughout all my training I've had to be resourceful, but now more than ever it's become more difficult. Having graduated from my formal ballet school training at SAB (with nearly a full scholarship), I'm going into a second company position with Pennsylvania Ballet. With these unprecedented and uncertain times, the company is unsure if the season will start. With this nerve-racking news I still am planning on moving to Philadelphia in July to continue my training as I don't have a place to live. If I was awarded a grant I would put it toward my rent and/or a studio to train at until PA Ballet starts up again. Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Given the Covid-19 pandemic, we are in unprecedented times. Especially young emerging artists, making the first and often the most important steps of our careers. Making these crucial decisions in the midst of uncertainty feels a bit like taking the Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux leap of faith without a partner. I would always take comfort in watching the graduating classes before me get jobs and opportunities. However, when it was my turn, my peers and I were finding out the hard way that these opportunities are scarce. Being from a school such as SAB, I was very fortunate to receive audition resources and guidance.

SABs capstone program guided me and many of my friends and peers toward a career in professional dance but getting the job is only half of the battle. Said opportunity being fiscally realistic is the other half of the battle. Without the generosity of the friends of the Paris Opera & Ballet, I would have had a very difficult time pursuing my passion. With this Grant I will be able to continue my training this summer prior to the start of the Pennsylvania Ballet season, which may be delayed due to Covid. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart for helping me live my dream.

Grant generously provided by
a donor

 Video link [here](#)



©Trey McIntyre



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PARIS OPERA & BALLET

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SCHOOL OF AMERICAN BALLET – 2 GRANTEES

EMMA BRINTON

American, 18



Thank you so much for awarding me this grant! It really means a lot and it will really help me and my family with college expenses. As for my response to Covid-19 and not being able to dance in the beautiful studios at SAB, I am doing the best that I can with the situation at hand. With the limited space in my home, I have been doing barre and pointe work, as that is all I have space for. I have also been cross training and doing workouts unrelated to ballet to build up another level of strength that will help my dancing. My studio back at my home town is opening up, and I am super grateful that I will now have a space to dance to give myself classes and take classes from faculty at my studio. Talking with all my peers at SAB throughout this has made all of us realize how grateful we are to just have studios to dance in back in New York. Now, with most of us being without them, it shows me that I really can't take anything for granted, not even something as simple as a studio to dance in everyday. The dance community is so loving and supportive that I feel like even away from everyone, I still feel connected, which is something very important to me during this time. Thank you again for awarding me this grant and helping me further my training and education.



Link to a video here: [Emma Brinton](#)



AMERICAN FRIENDS
PARIS OPERA & BALLET

2020 - YOUNG ARTISTS RELIEF FUND

SAN FRANCISCO BALLET SCHOOL – 4 GRANTEES

SUJANYA DHILLON

Canadian, 17

Since childhood, I have cultivated a love for ballet. This love has brought me many opportunities throughout my life and has shaped me into the person I am today.

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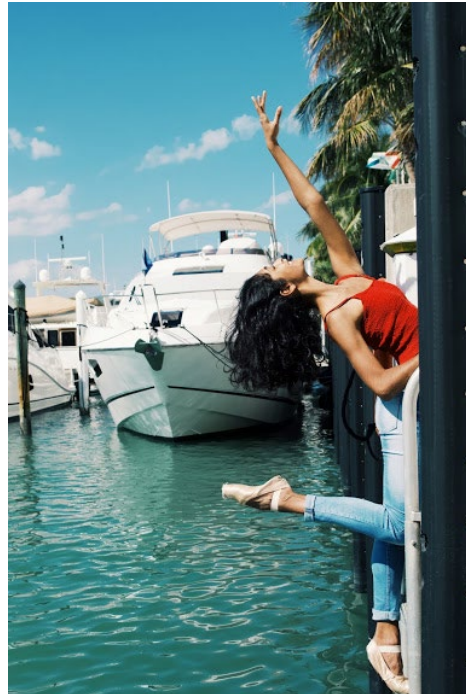
I studied for many years in my hometown, Vancouver, at Goh Ballet Academy. But when I was 14, I decided to take my training more seriously. I auditioned for and was accepted into the Miami City Ballet School year-round program in 2017. On my own and responsible for my own food, laundry, and apartment, I thrived in Miami and also managed to work hard in my academics. A full year later, I auditioned for and was accepted into the San Francisco Ballet School, where I am currently going into my third year.

However, my training did not come without hardship. During my first year at San Francisco Ballet School, I had to go home for ankle reconstruction surgery. I was not able to dance for almost four months, but I made a full recovery and learned important lessons along the way. It taught me how to persevere in the face of a challenge and that patience and confidence are necessary for success.

My biggest goal in life, of course, is to have a long-lasting dance career. But after I achieve this, my mission is to do outreach work in the South Asian community through ballet. I want children who have never seen this form of dance, to feel what I felt and experience what I have experienced.

I am so grateful to the American Friends of the Paris Opera & Ballet for providing me with the ability to continue my training during these challenging times. It really means the world to me.

Grant generously provided by
Denise Littlefield Sobel





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SAN FRANCISCO BALLET SCHOOL – 4 GRANTEES

JOHNATHON HART

American-Chicago, 20



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I am Johnathon Hart, a 20-year-old Chicago native. I have always had a passion for the art of dance; in fact, Hip hop is what helped me realize my passion for dance. When I was younger, I would use YouTube as a resource to help me learn more about the style of hip hop. I also looked up to the greats such as Michael Jackson, and Chris Brown. At 15 years old I knew dance was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life, so I auditioned for The Chicago High School for the Arts (Chi-arts) without any experience as a technically trained dancer. Chi-arts exposed me to various techniques such as Ballet, Horton, Graham, and many other styles. Starting late and not seeing many people of color that I could look up to in my career path, made me push even harder to break stereotypes. At the age of 16, I decided to audition for the San Francisco Ballet School's summer intensive. When I received news that I was accepted with a full scholarship to the program, I believed that I was capable of making ballet a career. However, I knew that I needed to further my training, so I began training at more dance institutions; such as, Ballet Chicago, Hyde Park school of dance and Joffrey Ballet! After graduating from Chi-arts, I was offered a spot at the prestigious San Francisco Ballet School. After 2 years of attending the school, I was unable to finish my last year off due to covid-19. However, I was fortunate enough to receive a spot in Ballet Met's 2020-2021 season to continue my dream of being a professional dancer!

During the Covid-19 pandemic, life has been extremely hard for everyone. People are losing their lives and jobs! This has been a very frightening period of time, but we are all in this together. The pandemic has a lot of downs but the good thing about this is I get to spend a lot of time with my family. Trying to stay in "shape" has been a journey itself. I take as many classes as I can. I try to keep a consistent schedule, as if I was training in school. My schedule consists of Pilates every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 10am. Cardio training everyday, and after Pilates class on M,W,F. Then I take a ballet class after cardio. Other than that, I love learning hip hop combinations via Instagram. Not having a studio has made it difficult to stay in shape, but I know everyone is going through this together. My friends and I send dance videos to each other and give corrections to one another. We talk all the time about ways we can make the most out of staying home. Without them I don't know how I would make it through this pandemic.



AMERICAN FRIENDS
PARIS OPERA & BALLET

2020 - YOUNG ARTISTS RELIEF FUND

SAN FRANCISCO BALLET SCHOOL – 4 GRANTEES

GREGORY MOLNAR

Canadian-American, 19



I don't even know where to start. I am truly surprised and incredibly honored to receive this award. There are no words to describe how grateful and thankful I am.

My name is Grégory, I am Canadian, born in Montreal in the province of Quebec and I am 20 years old. I was introduced to ballet thanks to my grandmother who was a great ballerina. I studied at the National Ballet School of Canada, the National Ballet School of Cuba, the Miami City Ballet School and the San Francisco Ballet School.

I will begin my first season as a professional dancer – Apprentice- with the San Francisco Ballet. I am extremely honored to have been chosen to join the company. With COVID-19, our season has been suspended so I'm home in quarantine. I try to stay fit, stay motivated and also, I take this opportunity to be able to enjoy the little things that life offers us.

Grant generously provided by
Yurie Pascarella



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2020 - YOUNG ARTISTS RELIEF FUND

SAN FRANCISCO BALLET SCHOOL – 4 GRANTEES

ANA PAULA MONTERO

Mexican, 18



I started ballet when I was 5 years old in a small ballet academy in Mexico until 11 years old but I only practiced it as a hobby. Honestly, I was not a huge fan of ballet, but my parents were so they did not let me quit. To date I thank them for not letting me because ballet is my life when I turned twelve, I auditioned for a professional school in Mexico The national school of classical and contemporary dance where I danced until the age of 16. practicing in a professional way changed completely my perspective of ballet and it help me discover that I want to do it for living as a professional career and Become a great ballet dancer In my last year I trained for some ballet competitions the most important one for me was the dance festival youth American Grand Prix Mexico where many American and European schools go to give a scholarships to children for the summer intensive or even for the whole school year In that competition my experience on stage was not the best I ever had I was to nervous and my performance did not go that well I thought I did not have any chance to win a scholarship but the last day when they announced them they said my name I was awarded a scholarship for the summer intensive in San Francisco (San Francisco ballet school) and for the orlando ballet. I chose to go to the summer of San Francisco while being there in the summer the Director Patrick Armand invited me to stay for the whole school year I accepted it and I was dying to go but at the same time I was a little scared since I had to go alone without my family to live in a totally different country and just a month before I left my mom was diagnosed with breast cancer which made leaving ten thousand times difficult. The first year was good but not the best I learned a lot and got used to living there, I met wonderful people, my training was spectacular thanks to many teachers who helped me out a lot, but being away from my mom when She was going through a very difficult process made it very hard compared to the first year the second year in San Francisco was very different since I was used to it, my mom was recovering from cancer and they had the opportunity to come visit me on Christmas I had improved and grew a lot as a person and dancer but unfortunately I could not finish the year because the pandemic Covid-19 I had auditions for companies that were canceled and I had to return to Mexico. I came back and sadly my mom's cancer return much stronger since it spread in many parts of her body. She is currently going through a rough and painful process I appreciate being here right now for her because I can help her out and see how she will get better and hopefully recover. For the next school year I really hope I can be able to return to San Francisco and finish my studies with the pandemic going on the scholarships were affected and for my family it would be impossible to pay everything since I have two older brothers attending university and my mother needs the money for some treatments and medicines I believe everything happens for a reason and at the end everything will go they way it has to go I have some amazing friends and the best classmates I could ask for we support each other always no matter where we are hopefully I can see them sooner than later and I'm really happy for those who leave because they would leave to live their dreams in different parts of the world and I know I will run into them again on stage or somewhere else.

I will keep working as hard as I can to make my dream come true and I am looking forward to come back and keep learning and growing as a person and dancer.

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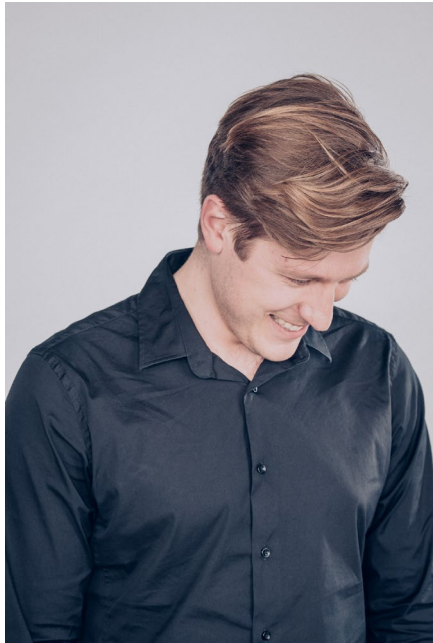
AMERICAN FRIENDS
PARIS OPERA & BALLET

2020 - YOUNG ARTISTS RELIEF FUND

PARIS OPERA ACADEMY— 3 GRANTEES

ALEXANDER YORK | BARITONE

American - Chicago, 26



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Born in Chicago, Alexander York is a graduate of Lawrence University (Wisconsin). He won numerous scholarships such as those of the Hanns Seidel Foundation, the arte-musica Foundation and the Fulbright Zscholar Program, which allowed him to continue his education in Europe. He obtained a master's degree at the Munich Musikhochschule under the direction of Lars Woldt, Rudi Spring, and Donald Sulzen. He performed the following roles at the Augsburg Theater: Angelotti and Sciarrone in *Tosca*, the Captain in *Simplicius Simplicissimus* by Karl Amadeus Hartmann, Weickmann and Fuhrmann in *Kaspar Hauser* by Hans Thomalla, the herald in Verdi's *Otello* and Belcore in the *L'Elisir d'amore* by Donizetti. In 2016, he participated in Renée Fleming's master classes at the Aspen Music Festival and School. He created the role of James Ramsey at the world premiere of *To the Lighthouse* by Zesses Seglias in August 2017 at the Bregenz Festival. He gave a recital at the Muziekgebouw in Amsterdam and also performed in Munich with the Munich Radio Symphony. He played the role of Bedienter in *Der zerbrochene Krug* by Viktor Ulmann. For his first season at the Paris Opera Academy, the baritone sang Dr. Falke in Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* at the MC93 in Bobigny and then on tour. In January 2020, he is l'Horloge and le Chat in *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* by Ravel on the stage of the Palais Garnier. He received the John Moriarty Award as a young artist in residence at the Central City Opera of Denver in 2015 for his participation in the company's productions. The Bel Canto Society of Chicago gave him an honorary award and he received the second prize in the Mélodie and Oratorio category of the American Prize. He joined the Paris Opera Academy in September 2018. He will continue his training for the 20/21 season.

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PARIS OPERA ACADEMY— 3 GRANTEES

ILANAH LOBEL-TORRES | SOPRANO

American- New York, 24



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From New-York City, Ilanah Lobel-Torres began her musical education with the Brooklyn Youth Chorus (singing and piano). After graduating, she joined Carole Haber's class at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. She then attended Arthur Levy's classes at the Mannes School of Music where she obtained her master's degree. She sang the first witch in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, and Zerlina in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. In 2018, at the National Opera Center (OPERA America) in New York, she sang Gretel in *Hänsel and Gretel* and Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*. In 2019, she was Rose Maurant in *Street Scene*.

Ilanah Lobel-Torres joined the Paris Opera Academy in September 2019 and made her stage debuts as the Bat and the Shepherdess in *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* by Ravel.



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PARIS OPERA & BALLET

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PARIS OPERA ACADEMY— 3 GRANTEES

AARON PENDLETON | BASS

American -North Carolina, 27



Born in North Carolina, Aaron Pendleton received his musical training at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Aaron also holds degrees from Johnson C. Smith University and Arizona State University.

Aaron has been the recipient of numerous Vocal awards, such as the 2019 Winner of the Arizona District of the Metropolitan Opera competition and in Denver Colorado Regional Finalist award winner of the Metropolitan Opera competition.

In the West coast premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon's *27* with Opera Las Vegas he portrayed all of the bass-baritone roles. Aaron has portrayed the role of Leaf in UNLV Opera Theatre's World premiere productions of *State of Grace* composed by Dr. Linda Lister. Following this production, he premiered the role of Sky's father in *No Guarantees* Written Dr. Cynthia Wong, and portrayed Marquis de la Force in Poulenc's *Dialogue of the Carmelites*, all with UNLV Opera Theatre. He will portray Olin Blitch in Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He will join the Academy in September 2020.

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AMERICAN FRIENDS
PARIS OPERA & BALLET

AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE PARIS OPERA & BALLET 2020 - YOUNG ARTISTS RELIEF FUND

During this extremely challenging period, many young artists are suffering, as they can no longer train or audition, and are likely to be struggling financially. To address this great need, AFPOB has created a special emergency Fund to provide support for the future generation of dancers and singers during this unprecedented crisis and help them maintain hope as they pursue their aspirations and career goals.

In the first round of funding, we are awarding 24 dancers and singers with a grant of \$2,500 each. **We are in the process of funding these grants, so please consider contributing to AFPOB's emergency Young Artist Relief Fund and help one or more dancers and singers as generously as you can.**

To achieve this goal, a crowdfunding campaign is launched on [GoFundMe platform](#) to expand our community and accept gifts of any size. Together, we will be impactful.

PLEASE WE NEED YOUR HELP



AMERICAN FRIENDS
PARIS OPERA & BALLET

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU

to the following generous donors to our Young Artists Relief Fund:

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Angel Shine Foundation / Allyson Tang & Thomas Widmann

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