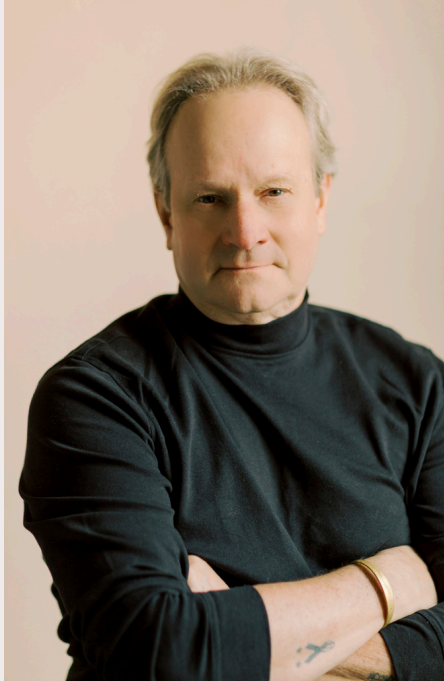


MEET OUR FACULTY



Stephen Jackson

Stephen Jackson, a native of Rome, New York began his dance and theater training with John Hayes O'Neill, a former Denishawn Dancer. Since his first appearance on stage at the age of three,

Mr. Jackson has appeared in hundreds of ballet productions, musicals, revues, operas and operettas. He began studying tap dancing with Mr. O'Neill at age three and began his formal ballet training at the age of ten.

In 1975 Mr. Jackson attended The Royal Academy of Dance in London England studying with Dame Ninette de Valois D.B.E., John Field and Louise Brown. Upon returning to the United States Mr. Jackson attended the State University of New York at Purchase as a dance major studying with Jonathan Watts, Royes Fernandez, and Ann Parsons. Mr. Jackson was a member of the Purchase Repertory Dance Company. He spent an intensive course of study with master teacher Paul Mejia and Suzanne Farrell of The New York City Ballet. Following this, a scholarship led Mr. Jackson to The School of American Ballet in New York City. There he studied with world famous teachers Stanley Williams, Andre Kramerovsky of The Bolshoi Ballet and Richard Rapp of the New York City Ballet. Upon completion of his studies at The School of American Ballet Mr. Jackson accepted a contract with The Chicago Lyric Opera Ballet under the direction of Maria Tallchief. Mr. Jackson performed as a soloist with The Stars of American Ballet under the direction of Paul Mejia while touring extensively throughout the United States.

Mr. Jackson has danced with the Zurich Ballet in Switzerland working with Rudolf Nureyev and George Balanchine. In Germany Mr. Jackson has danced with the Hanover State Ballet, the National Theater of Mannheim, the Stadt Theater of Mainz and the Stadt Theater of Bielefeld. Mr. Jackson has taught at the High School of Performing Arts in Frankfurt and also in Mannheim, Germany. Mr. Jackson has been a faculty member of The National Dance Institute in New York City under the direction of Jaques d'Amboise and has appeared in concerts and performed works by Jaques d'Amboise. He has also been a guest teacher at Hamilton College in Clinton, New York.

Mr. Jackson has performed most of the Classical Repertoire including Swan Lake, The Nutcracker, Giselle and Romeo & Juliet as well as many contemporary and modern works from numerous international choreographers. Mr. Jackson has choreographed many musicals and Operettas and has been resident choreographer and teacher for the Capitol Theatre's Summer Stage Series in Rome, New York. Today, Mr. Jackson continues to teach, choreograph, produce and co-direct at the John Hayes O'Neill Studio of Dance alongside his wife and co-Director, Canan, his son, Sean and his daughter and Associate Director, Leyla Hojnacki.

Canan Jackson

Canan was born in Ankara, Turkey where she began her dance training at age three. At seven years of age, she auditioned for the prestigious Ankara National Conservatory for the Performing Arts and was accepted first out of hundreds of candidates. Her course of study at the Ankara National Conservatory lasted for ten years.

Mrs. Jackson graduated from the conservatory with honors and obtained her teaching certification. During her course of study while at the conservatory Mrs. Jackson's early training was with noted teachers Dame Ninette de Valois, Beatrice Fenmen, Molly Lake and Travis Kemp from the Royal Ballet in London. Changes in the National Conservatory led to a long association with teachers and choreographers from the Bolshoi Ballet in Russia. Further training for Mrs. Jackson was in the Vaganova Method. Mrs. Jackson was accepted at age seventeen into the Ankara National Ballet of Turkey as a soloist. Madame Sulamith Messerer, Alexander Prokofiev, Yuri Papko, and Nikolai Horotonova were some of the fine teachers she studied with. She danced for eight years with the company in Ankara under the direction of Turkish Ballerina Evinc Sunal and her husband Principal Dancer Husnu Sunal.

Mrs. Jackson continued to train under the tutelage of noted Turkish teachers Sait Sokmen, Oytun Turfanda, Meric Sumen and Duygu Aykal. Mrs. Jackson performed most of the Classical Repertoire including Juliet, in Romeo and Juliet, the Sugar Plum Fairy in the Nutcracker, Giselle, Swan Lake, Les Sylphides, Don Quixote, La Bayadere, Le Corsaire, La Fille Mal Gardee, Coppelia, Paquita and others. Mrs. Jackson also performed in numerous ballets from Yuri Grigorovich director of the Bolshoi Ballet and Yuri Papko noted Russian Choreographer.

In 1980, Mrs. Jackson performed at the prestigious Varna Ballet Competition in Bulgaria. Also, in 1980, she was invited to dance in West Germany as guest artist. Mrs. Jackson remained in Europe, primarily in West Germany for seven years as a principal dancer with the National Theatre of Mannheim. Mrs. Jackson continued to dance the classical repertoire as well as working with many noted international choreographers.

Mrs. Jackson has performed as guest artist throughout Europe, and has taught extensively in Europe and Asia.

While dancing at the National Theatre of Mannheim, she met her husband Stephen Jackson, where they danced together for two years. In 1987, they came to Rome, NY. In 1988 they re-established John Hayes O'Neill Studio of Dance, where they have been teaching, choreographing, producing and directing for over 30 years.



MEET OUR FACULTY



Leyla Hojnacki

Leyla was born in Rome, New York and began her dance training age the of three at the John Hayes O'Neill Studio of Dance under the direction of her parents, Stephen and Canan Jackson. She attended American Ballet Theatre's Summer Intensive in New York City from 2006 through 2010. Hojnacki studied at the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School at American Ballet Theatre from 2008 to 2010 under the tutelage of Franco DeVita and Raymond Lukens. As a student, she had the opportunity to perform at the Company's annual Spring Gala at the Metropolitan Opera House.

In 2011, she furthered her training at the Joffrey Ballet School and began working with renowned faculty members Davis Robertson, Francesca Corkle and Era Jouralev. Leyla has also studied with Ceyhun Ozsoy, Stacy Caddell, Lupe Serrano, Maria Kowroski, Dwight Rhoden, Desmond Richardson, Misty Copeland and Ann-Marie Holmes. Her repertory includes Odette in Swan Lake Act II, the Sugar Plum Fairy in The Nutcracker, Cinderella in Cinderella and Malificent in The Sleeping Beauty, Solstice by Davis Robertson, Here and Beyond by Africa Guzman, Viva Vivaldi by Gerald Arpino.

In September 2012, she received a full merit scholarship from the Joffrey Ballet School of New York. Leyla also became a member of the Joffrey Ballet Concert Group in New York City. In December of 2014, Leyla became a member of the Istanbul State Ballet in Istanbul Turkey for the 2015-2016 season. Her repertory included roles in the full-length ballets Sylvia, Giselle and a new work by Christopher d'Amboise titled Just One of Those Things.

For the past 5 years, Leyla has instructed and provided choreography for the ballet repertoire at various dance studios in central New York. In Fall 2021, Leyla was named the Associate Director at John Hayes O'Neill Studio of Dance. As the Associate Director, Leyla hopes to bring new classical ballet repertoire to the studio while staying true to the traditions created by Stephen and Canan Jackson. Outside of the studio, Leyla provides instruction for ballet, yoga, and pilates. All these practices have provided her a sound background to work on patients as a newly Licensed Massage Therapist.

Nicole Cotton

Nicole began dancing at age four under Sandie Fukes and Wende Warne at the United Academy of the Performing Arts in Oneida, NY. At United, she studied and competed in ballet, tap, jazz, acrobatics, pointe, and musical theater.

In High School she also attended Cazenovia School of Ballet to receive further training in modern and ballet. After graduation from Bishop Grimes Jr/Sr High School, East Syracuse, she attended the University at Buffalo as a dance major. At UB, Nicole studied ballet, tap, jazz, modern/contemporary, ballroom, musical theater dance, teaching methods, dance history, music theater history, and acting. Nicole was a member of both companies at the school: Zodiaque Studio Dance Ensemble (2001) and Zodiaque Dance Company (2002-2004). In addition to Young Choreographer's Showcase (2002-2004), Dancer's Workshop (2001-2004), Dance and Percussion Ensemble (2004). She was honored to represent the college at both the 2003 and 2004 America College Dance Festivals. She graduated Magna Cum Laude with a B.F.A. in dance in 2004. Immediately following graduation, she boarded a Carnival Cruise Ship out of New Orleans, LA performing in the production shows and teaching Cha Cha, Swing, and Country Line dancing. Since then, Nicole has taught and choreographed all over the area. She began teaching for John Hayes O'Neill Studio of Dance in January 2005 and has been teaching there ever since!

Nicole's teaching and choreography credits include: John Hayes O'Neil School of Dance (Rome, NY), Center of Ballet and Dance Arts (Syracuse, NY), United Academy of the Performing Arts (Oneida, NY), Empire Center of Dance (Marcy, NY), CNY Academy of Dance (East Syracuse, NY), University at Buffalo (Buffalo, NY), Morrisville State College (Morrisville, NY), Hamilton College (Hamilton, NY), The Turning Stone and Casino and Resort (Verona, NY), and Youth American Grand Prix (NYC, NY).



MEET OUR FACULTY



Sean Jackson

Sean Jackson began his dance training with his parents and artistic directors of John Hayes O'Neill Studio of Dance, Stephen and Canan Jackson. He has worked with numerous tap dance choreographers, including Michela Marino-Lerman, Ayodele Casel, Sarah Savelli, Lisa LaTouche, Michelle Dorrance and Nicholas Van Young.

In 2012, Sean began working on his own solo project, where he explored improvisational percussive dancing and soundscape electronic music, that he composed himself. Sean presented his solo shows here in Rome, NY, at the American Tap Dance Foundation in New York City as an Artist in Residence, and in Toronto, Canada as part of Lisa LaTouche's Tap Phonics. In 2014, Sean was nominated for a Bessie award in the "Outstanding Performer" category for his solo performances in American Tap Dance Foundation's Rhythm in Motion. Sean Jackson has performed at the Inside/Out Stage at Jacob's Pillow with Nicholas Van Young's Sound Movement, Joe's Pub in NYC, Symphony Space, Aaron Davis Hall and The State Theatre at Playhouse Square in Cleveland, Ohio. Sean has been guest faculty in New York City at Broadway Dance Center and Steps on Broadway. He has also been on faculty for Sarah Reich's Tap Music Project in 2015. Sean has taught tap dance for several dance studios throughout Central New York, where he taught year-round and choreographed.

As well as a tap soloist and performer, Sean has been apart of his parent's productions throughout his whole life. Most recently, Sean has portrayed the Prince in The Nutcracker, for John Hayes O'Neill Studio of Dance's productions in 2021.

Sean Jackson studied under the mentorship and guidance of John DeMinico, a world renowned yoga and Pilates teacher, as well as a trainer for ISMA (International Sports Medicine Association). With John, Sean studied various yoga methods and practices and became certified through John at ISMA. Sean taught at John DeMinico's yoga studio here in Rome, NY for two years. Over the last 10 years, Sean has also studied the work of David R. Hawkins MD., Phd. which has deeply influenced his training and teachings.

In 2012, Sean launched Clarity of Movement Training, which offers holistic personal training techniques here at John Hayes O'Neill Studio of Dance.

SPECIAL GUEST FACULTY

Tyler Galster



Tyler Galster, born in 1989 and raised in upstate New York. He was introduced to performing at the age of seven, where he pursued acting and singing. Tyler later began taking dance classes to further nourish his love for performing at John Hayes O'Neill Studio of Dance in Rome, New York. Movement soon quickly took to the forefront and brought him to The Nutmeg Conservatory for the Arts in Connecticut. Soon after, he was accepted into American Ballet Theatre's Jacqueline Kennedy's Onassis School in New York City. Tyler finished his studies at ABT and graduated in 2007. Starting as an apprentice with ABT in 2006, he continued his professional career from 2007 to 2010 with Pennsylvania Ballet. Looking to further his repertoire and to discover different cultures, Tyler moved to Germany where he joined Leipzig Ballet in 2010. He was nominated dancer of the year in "Tanz Magazine Das Jahrbuch 2013". In 2015, Tyler then moved to France to join Lyon Opera Ballet. After seven seasons in Lyon, Tyler decided to pursue other endeavors and is currently working as a freelance artist and teacher in Paris. Tyler holds a French State Diploma from Le Centre National de la Danse Lyon as a Professor of Classical Dance. He is a fully certified teacher with American Ballet Theatre's National Training Curriculum and is also a certified trainer in The GYROTONIC EXPANSION SYSTEM®®.

SPECIAL GUEST FACULTY

Robert Gardner



Robert Gardner began his training with Kay Harmon, former dancer with the Washington Ballet, in his hometown of Roanoke, Virginia. He furthered his training under scholarship at the North Carolina School of the Arts and at the School of American Ballet. Robert began his professional career in New York with the Eglevsky Ballet, the Joffrey II Dancers and performed with the Joffrey Ballet where he danced in the works of Frederick Ashton, Anthony Tudor, Ruthanna Boris, and Choo San Goh, throughout the United States, as well as internationally. His career moved him west, where with the San Jose/Cleveland Ballet he danced principal and soloist roles in works by George Balanchine, Agnes De Mille, Lar Lubovitch, Jose' Limon and many others. He appeared as a guest artist with the Houston Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, and Glimmerglass Opera in Cooperstown, New York. His world dance experience has enriched his vision, choreography, and teaching. He served as the Artistic Director of the Minnesota Ballet for 12 years, where he choreographed over 40 works, including his original versions of "Sleeping Beauty," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "Dracula," "Firebird, and "SwanLake," described as a "lush dance epic." His work has been hailed as having a "meticulous use of contrasting imagery, emotions and energy that make each dance moment exquisitely unique," and has been presented to acclaim nationally and internationally. He has choreographed for opera and orchestra, as well as musical theater, including "The Pirates of Penzance," "Into the Woods," and "Les Misérables." His national connections have enabled him to bring masterworks by George Balanchine, Twyla Tharp, Agnes DeMille, Anthony Tudor, and Salvatore Aiello to the companies he has led, as well as promoting emerging regional and national choreographers, composers, and designers. His teaching career is wide ranging, from master classes at universities such as Yale and Park Point, to dance schools and academies throughout the United States. Robert has received an Excellence in the Arts & Sciences Award from the Saint Louis County Board of Commissioners and the Lifetime Artist Award from the Depot Foundation. He received an American Composers Forum Award to create an original work with original score and has served as a grant panelist for the MN State Arts Board. Robert most recently was the Artistic Director of the Rochester City Ballet, where he successfully lead the company through the challenges of the pandemic, creating virtual performances, presenting programming such as his "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in outdoor arenas and creating virtual educational outreach programming, while building the artistic excellence of the company through his original choreography, promoting diversity through commissions of emerging artist and introducing masterworks by Balanchine, Aiello, and others into the repertoire.

SPECIAL GUEST FACULTY

Fallon Gannon



Fallon Gannon, originally from Rome, NY began her training with Stephen and Canan Jackson at John Hayes O'Neill Studio and Delia Foley at Ballet Arts. Fallon was a member of the Mohawk Valley Ballet where she had the opportunity to perform many full-length ballets. She supplemented her training with summer intensives at: Boston Ballet, Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, North Carolina Dance Theatre (now Charlotte Ballet), Orlando Ballet, and Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre. Fallon furthered her training at the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre School's Pre-Professional Year-Round program directed by Marjorie Grundvig and Dennis Marshall.

Fallon attended The University of the Arts with a Presidential Scholarship where she graduated with a BFA in Ballet Performance with Honors. During her time at UArts, she studied under renowned faculty, including: Andrew Pap, Eva Szabo, Zane Booker, Kim Bears-Bailey, Brian Sanders, and Jennifer Binford Johnson. At UArts, she studied and performed Forsythe work restaged by Douglas Becker. Fallon received her certification in Gyrokinesis® Level 1 under Master Trainer, Miriam Barbosa.

Upon graduating, Fallon has danced with: Ballet Fleming, originating many roles in Christopher Fleming's Rock Ballets, Arch Contemporary Ballet, performing at the off-Broadway Davenport Theatre, Albany Berkshire Ballet in their Nutcracker tours, Dance Del Bello, Wilmington Ballet, and many dance festivals in Philly and NYC. Some of her favorite roles include: Swanhilda (Coppelia), Sugarplum Fairy (The Nutcracker), Pas de Trois (Swan Lake), and Ghost of Christmas Future (A Christmas Carol by David Kloss).

Fallon enjoys sharing her love of dance through teaching and taught in Philadelphia for 10+ years on faculty at: Philadelphia Dance Academy, The Creative and Performing Arts High School of Philadelphia (CAPA) as the Ballet Mistress, University of Pennsylvania, and The Rock School's outreach program in Philly public schools. Fallon has recently returned to the CNY area, and is thrilled to impart her dance knowledge to students in the same region where she received her training.