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Ballet Hawaii has promoted  
dance since 1976.

# Ballet Hawaii: Bringing the Best



THE SMILING CAMERA  
JOE MARQUEZ

For nearly half a century, Ballet Hawaii has inspired and enriched our local community through the transformative power of dance. From winning an

by Stephanie Lopes

Emmy Award to the annual performance of The Nutcracker to dance training for all ages and abilities at its two locations in Honolulu and Waipahu – Hawaii Ballet is

a preeminent dance institution that also teaches its students important life skills.

“Self-confidence, creative thinking, discipline, problem solving, teamwork, physical conditioning, follow through and pas-

sion: all the necessary human characteristics to prepare a student to go out in the world and succeed,” states executive director Richard Vida. “It is Ballet Hawaii’s mission to teach, promote, produce and





*Ballet Hawaii hosts a yearly enrollment of over 500 students, at all levels of ballet, from pre-ballet to ballet level 8.*

present the finest in dance on our islands with a strong commitment to educational outreach, making dance accessible to all in Hawaii."

### **Best-in-class ballet training and beyond**

Ballet Hawaii's premier program is its ballet technique training for children ages three to 18. Offered at both its Honolulu Dole Cannery and Ballet West Waipahu locations, students progress from pre-ballet to ballet level 8, guided by national and international master teachers.

"Students in the intermediate and advanced ballet levels are required to take contemporary dance training to improve

versatility as well as pointe and partnering," expands school director Micki Kolberg.

In addition to youth ballet training, Ballet Hawaii offers much more: contemporary jazz, hula (Waipahu location), character-themed ballet camps, adult open ballet classes, a beginning/intermediate level adult performing group, open yoga and master classes in ballet and other styles of dance.

"Our annual July Summer Intensive also provides a three-week immersive training experience with the top master teachers from the top ballet and Broadway companies in the world," adds artistic Director Pamela Taylor

**"It is Ballet Hawaii's mission to teach, promote, produce and present the finest in dance on our islands."**



**Along with being an outstanding dance teacher, Artistic Director Pamela Taylor Tongg creates “the path and the vision” for the creative venues, ballets and programming for the year.**

Tongg. “Our students also have the opportunity to train for competitions. We also offer private classes.”

During her 38-year career with Ballet Hawaii, Taylor Tongg has received numerous accolades for her leadership in bringing the best in dance to Hawaii. In 2012, she was appointed to the Mayor’s Commission on Culture and the Arts as a dance expert. And in 2015, at the conclusion of Ballet Hawaii’s The Nutcracker, Governor Ige presented Ms. Taylor Tongg with a Commendation from the State of Hawaii.

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#### **Performances in professional-level productions**

“One of Ballet Hawaii’s longtime standout offerings is that it provides students with the unique opportunity of performing in professional-level productions, such as The Nutcracker, side-by-side with internationally renowned guest ballet artists from well-known ballet companies,” states Taylor Tongg.

This holiday season, The Nutcracker will be performed at the Blaisdell Arena on Saturday, December 14, at 7:30 p.m. and





*Save the date! Get your tickets now for  
The Nutcracker at the Blaisdell Arena: December 14-15, 2024.*

Sunday, December 15, at 2:00 pm. The production includes the full Hawaii Symphony Orchestra. Tickets can be purchased at the Blaisdell Box Office, [ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com) or through [www.balleshawaii.org](http://www.balleshawaii.org).

In addition to annual performances of The Nutcracker, Ballet Hawaii productions have included full-length productions of Sleeping Beauty, Romeo and Juliet, Cinderella, Peter Pan and Alice in Wonderland. Commissioned new works that have been presented are Urashima

Taro and several works by Tau Dance Theatre's Peter Espiritu.

Ballet Hawaii's young dancers have

been given the opportunity to perform with guest artists from American Ballet Theatre, Bolshoi Ballet, New York City Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Cincinnati Ballet, Carolina Ballet, Eugene Ballet and many others. Recent and past guest

artists include Robbie Fairchild of Broadway's American in Paris, Sara Mearns of the New York City Ballet,

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Steven Heathcote of the Australian Ballet and Megan Fairchild of Broadway's On the Town and the New York City Ballet.

Ballet Hawaii has also presented many international ballet companies, including Baryshnikov & Co., Les Ballet de Monte-Carlo, Mark Morris Dance Group, Stars of American Ballet Theatre, Washington Ballet, Paul Taylor Dance Theatre, Ballet Stars of Moscow, Alonzo King's LINES Ballet, Complexions and Bad Boys of Dance.

"Ballet Hawaii has established itself as a leader in dance presentation in Hawaii," summarizes Taylor Tongg.

For Ballet Hawaii students in levels six through eight, they have an exciting performance opportunity through the Performing Ensemble, directed by Christine Kaminski.

"Ballet Hawaii's Performing Ensemble, which was launched in 2019, offers a unique, elite opportunity for students within the older levels of exceptional talent and focus," describes Kolberg. "Students are selected dependent on ability and commitment and are given the chance to dance classical and contemporary works. They are given multiple, unique performing opportunities around Oahu to showcase not only their hard work and talent, but to also spread the art of ballet to as many people as possible."

### Breaking down barriers to ballet

"Since 2005, through the generosity of the sponsors and donors of the Angel Program, Ballet Hawaii has brought (thousands of) students from Title I schools to the Blaisdell to attend the magic of our annual performance of The Nutcracker," shares Dawn Mostiler, associate director

of development. "There is an unimaginable presence of joy and wonder that fills the Blaisdell as 2,600 students see the professional guest artists dance, some for the very first time. The students in attendance (also) see keiki their age – that come from their very own schools – on our stage, allowing the dream to build, 'If they can do it, I can do it.'"

**"Art is integral to our survival and to providing the message of hope to all. It carries within it our history, our longing, and our quest to realize the best parts of humanity."**

The idea of arts persevering – even in trying times – is what won Ballet Hawaii an Emmy Award in 2023 for its Arts Beyond Covid Public Service Announcement. With the leadership of Deborah Glazier and Stasia Droze Jost, Ballet Hawaii students and teachers created a beautiful online public service

announcement encouraging others to pursue their art form, dancing for tomorrow.

### Premier ballet school

"Ballet and all forms of art are integral to society in the most meaningful ways, giving human beings an outlet to their own natural creative potential and drive to give something beautiful to this world," describes Kolberg.

"If we were not able to have an outlet for all of the intense emotions that we humans experience, the world would know no joy and no harmony. During these specific times, art is integral to our survival and to providing the message of hope to all. It carries within it our history, our longing, and our quest to realize the best parts of humanity," she continues.

Concludes Vida, "Since 1976, Ballet Hawaii continues to offer programs, productions and presentations that contribute to the enrichment of the cultural climate in the community and provide the very best in dance for Hawaii." 🌈