

The Washington Ballet Announces Promotions to Company Roster

Andrea Allmon Rafael Bejarano Nicholas Cowden

Audrey Malek Isaac "Rench" Soriano

Four of five promoted artists came up through The Washington School of Ballet program

Washington, D.C. (June 1, 2022) – The Washington Ballet today announced that five members of its Studio Company have been promoted into the Company. The dancers are: Andrea Allmon; Rafael Bejarano; Nicholas Cowden; Audrey Malek; and Isaac "Rench" Soriano.

"We are thrilled to add these talents onto our Company roster," remarked **TWB Artistic Director Julie Kent**. "Each of these dynamic artists adds to the rich diversity of background and of talent that is the Washington Ballet."

"This is the first time that we have been able to promote several dancers who have come up through our school, so this moment feels particularly special - it speaks to the quality of in-house talent developed by our own Xiomara Reyes and the entire team at The Washington School of Ballet," continued Ms. Kent. "From the youngest students through our professional training division and through to our Company, we have built a ballet company of distinction."

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Artist Biographies

Andrea Allmon was born in Miami, Florida and is completing her sixth season at The Washington Ballet. She began her training with Marielena Mencia and Yanis Pikieris at Miami Youth Ballet. She came to The Washington Ballet for the 2016-2017 season as a trainee, and has since performed with the company in several productions such as *The Nutcracker*, *Giselle*, *Serenade*, John Cranko's *Romeo and Juliet*, *Les Sylphides*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, George Balanchine's *Allegro Brillante*, excerpts from *Fives* by Choo San Goh, *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue*, Paul Taylor's *Company B* and John Heginbotham's *RACECAR*. In 2017, Allmon returned to perform with the Miami Youth Ballet in *The Sleeping Beauty* as Aurora. She is also pursuing a degree in Computer Science from the University of Florida.

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Rafael Bejarano Vidal, from Guadalajara, Mexico, began dance training at the age of 11 at the Royal Academy of Dance in Mexico. At the YAGP semi-finals in Mexico, he received a scholarship to TWSB Summer Intensive in 2014 and subsequently was awarded a full, three-year scholarship to the school's Professional Training Program (PTP). Bejarano has danced in TWB's production of *Giselle* and performed in excerpts from *Raymonda*, *Paquita*, *Swan Lake*, *Le Corsaire*, *Tchaikovsky's Pas de Deux*, *Harlequinade*, *Kermess in Bruges*, and *Burnonville*. Upon joining The Washington Ballet Studio Company, he performed in George Balanchine's *The Prodigal Son* and *Serenade*, *The Nutcracker*, John Cranko's *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Concert*, *Les Sylphides*, and *Giselle*. He has also performed in Merce Cunningham's *Duets*, Julie Kent and Victor Barbée's *The Sleeping Beauty*, and works by Helga Paris Morales and Mimmo Miccolis for TWB's Dance For All program.

Born in Burbank, California, **Nicholas Cowden** began his ballet training at the age of nine at Virginia Ballet Company under the direction of Tish Cordova. In 2014, after attending the American Ballet Theatre's New York Summer Intensive, Cowden was accepted into the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis (JKO) School at American Ballet Theatre, where he studied under Julie Kent (among others). In 2016 Cowden joined The Washington Ballet Trainee Program under the continued tutelage of Artistic Director Julie Kent, and was promoted to The Washington Ballet Studio Company for the 2018-2019 season. Cowden has performed in numerous ballets with the Company including, Fredrick Ashton's *Birthday Offering*, George Balanchine's *Allegro Brillante*, and Merce Cunningham's *Duets*. Cowden is certified by the American Ballet Theatre National Training Curriculum to teach Pre-Ballet through Level 3.

Audrey Malek, from Gilmanston, New Hampshire, began her training with the New Hampshire School of Ballet at six years old. Before attending The Washington School of Ballet's summer intensive on full scholarship, she went to Dance Theatre of Harlem, Ellison Ballet, and ABT's NYC intensives. Malek competed at the YAGP Boston semifinal in 2016, where she placed in the Top 12 Senior Classical division and at the Connecticut Classic that same year, where she made the Top 10. She joined The Washington School of Ballet's Professional Training Program on a full scholarship for the 2016-2017 season, and was then accepted into the Trainee program the following year. Malek's repertoire with the company includes Julie Kent's staging of *Giselle* and *The Sleeping Beauty*, Fokine's *Les Sylphides*, Cranko's *Romeo and Juliet*, Balanchine's *Serenade*, *Allegro Brillante*, and *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue*, Paul Taylor's *Company B*, John Heginbotham's *RACECAR*, and Septime Webre's *The Nutcracker*.

Isaac "Rench" Soriano recently graduated from The New Zealand School of Dance and he joined The Washington Ballet Studio Company in December 2019.

Press Contact

Michelle Pendoley // Pen Communications for The Washington Ballet
michelle@pencomms.com

High-resolution images are available upon request.