

Friday, February 9, 2018, 8pm  
Saturday, February 10, 2018, 2pm and 8pm  
Metro Operahouse, Oakland

## Spectrum Dance Theater

Donald Byrd, *executive artistic director*

### *A Rap on Race*

Premiere: May 5, 2016 at The Leo K. Theatre at Seattle Repertory Theatre, Seattle, WA

#### CO-CREATORS

Donald Byrd & Anna Deavere Smith

#### CHOREOGRAPHY & DIRECTION

Donald Byrd

#### LIGHTING & SCENIC DESIGN

Jack Mehler

#### COSTUME DESIGN

Doris Black

#### LIGHTING DIRECTION

Nathan W. Scheuer

#### STAGE MANAGER

Sara Torres

#### TEXT

*A Rap on Race*

by James Baldwin and Margaret Mead

#### MUSIC

*The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady*

composed by Charles Mingus

*This performance will last approximately 85 minutes and be performed without an intermission.*

*A Rap on Race used by kind permission of*

*The Estate of James Baldwin and Dr. Mary Catherine Bateson.*

*The creation of A Rap on Race was supported by 4Culture, ArtsFund,*

*the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, the National Endowment for the Arts, MapFund,*

*Tricia Stromberg Professional Dancers Fund, Nesholm Family Foundation, and Laird Patterson.*

*The presentation of Spectrum Dance Theater was made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.*

*Cal Performances presentations in Oakland are generously underwritten by Signature Development Group.*

*Cal Performances' 2017–18 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.*



# Anna Deavere Smith and Donald Byrd

## Talk *A Rap on Race*

**Donald Byrd:** So the first question... and I don't want to do the interview, I think, as somebody who is not vested in it in some way, because that's kind of impossible...

**Anna Deavere Smith:** Yes, and not true.

**DB:** In your usual process you do the fieldwork of interviewing the subjects. You have met them and have a real sense of them beyond the interview. Because this was a pre-existing recording, how are the challenges different, in shaping the script and, in this particular case, it not being devised as a solo performance?

**ADS:** I have been learning and studying this material since the early 1980s, when I found it in the bookstore of the American Museum of Natural History in New York, where Margaret Mead worked in the Department of Anthropology from the 1920s until her death. I have taught it for years in my acting classes, having students play parts and switch sides to learn

about persona and language. I then learned and performed the edit that you have as a one-person piece for the opening of Zankel Theater at Carnegie Hall. I then directed actors in it in 2014. The recording and book are compelling to me as a drama. Race is the topic of discussion, but the drama is actually more complex. It is a drama about two people who have met their match intellectually, but who substantively see the world differently, in part because of their histories and their experiences, but also because one of them, Baldwin, thinks and talks in metaphor and the other collects and absorbs what she calls "facts." The fire in the conversation is about two inevitably different ways of seeing and connoting the world.

**DB:** Can you tell me what it is about this material—the recordings—that attracted you in the first place?

**ADS:** The musicality of it, and also their willingness to talk with one another and their desire

## PROGRAM NOTES

---

to pick up the pieces of the 1960s and to make sense of them. And so the vigor of the inquiry on both sides is very interesting to me.

DB: This thing you said about the musicality of it... when you and I were working together, you said, “Listen to the tapes and try to capture the musicality of it...”

ADS: Yeah.

DB: I’ve found the same thing happens when doing it, performing it, is that they—Mead and Baldwin—start to make sense, literally just in the abstraction of the musicality of how they speak to each other. Do you think that that’s where the truth of it really is, in how they are playing *their* music together? That there is something about *that*, their music, as much as in what they are actually saying, their interplay, in the counterpart of the musicality of their conversation?

ADS: I think that’s part of it. But I do think that there is also just the heft, the intellectual heft, that even if we had never heard them and we just saw this on the page, you can feel the intellectual energy there and the bulk of knowledge. You know, these are true public intellectuals. So I would say that both are true, that both count in this case.

DB: One of the things I find really interesting is that, in the beginning of the conversation with her, he seems to let her speak. He acquiesces in some way or—what’s the word I’m looking for?—he is “gracious” in his letting her tell him all about her northern background and her northern good and all of that stuff, that progressive liberal kind of way of thinking, and that

he is doing it in a way that is not meant to set her up, but just to allow her to revel in some ways in who she is and what her background is.

ADS: Yeah, I mean I don’t know if he had a motive. I know from watching audiences watch it, they assume certain things—they laugh because they think that it’s this white woman, you know, talking so much.

DB: Yeah.

ADS: But I actually think that any good writer, any good artist, any good thinker spends a good deal of time listening or reading or watching. And so I think that he’s truly—my choice if I were performing him—is that he’s truly interested.

DB: Right.

ADS: He doesn’t know her.

DB: Yeah.

ADS: As you know they met specifically for this and he doesn’t know the terms of the conversation yet. So I think it would be wise for any of us in that same situation to listen before we speak.

DB: I agree. I find that he just—they don’t know each other—he just listens. And then the other thing... I mean, one other question is about the role of alcohol in loosening them up. As the conversation progresses, would they have been able to have a conversation like this if they had not been so sloshed?

ADS: Well I don’t know. We don’t know if they were drinking because we didn’t see it. You

## Berkeley **RADICAL** – JOINING GENERATIONS

These performances are part of the 2017/18 Berkeley **RADICAL** *Joining Generations* programming strand, which explores the work of four generations of African-American choreographers who have expanded the terrain of contemporary dance, each speaking profoundly, deliberately, and uniquely to issues of identity. *Joining Generations* concludes later this season with the annual visit by the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (Apr 10–15). For more information, please visit [calperformances.org](http://calperformances.org).



Tino Tran

know what I'm saying? Maybe that slurred speech is that they're tired. I mean at one point, he says "these last 48 hours" or whatever.

**DB:** Right.

**ADS:** So that's a long time. So we don't know for sure. I think we have to say that. We don't know if they were drinking. It seems that they were. And do I think that they could have had the same conversation? Absolutely. Absolutely. I have no doubt about that. Because you and I are both old enough to know how those quote-unquote "conversations" about race went quote-unquote "back in the day," when we weren't so careful about talking about white privilege or this or that or the other. I think that people were in a vigorous seeking, asking how can we find our way together after, you know, more than 100 years—or 200 years depending on when you landed on American soil—all these years of a very peculiar relationship that was guarded and where people didn't have a chance to have their full humanity expressed. So I think many of us dove into that when we had a chance to

do so, and I think without alcohol it would be just as open and just as fiery.

**DB:** Right. I wonder if... I mean, I think... one of the things I've said to people and wonder if you agree with this or if there is something you want to add to it... I kind of look at this, their conversation as a model. That if we ... that the value of bringing it up, the Mead/Baldwin conversation, and kind of putting it in front of people is in some ways... they are a model for how we might... the degree of honesty and openness that we might have... and the kind of messiness and sloppiness of having a conversation about race. My hope is that in some ways their conversation is a model and might give us permission to have deep uninhibited conversations around race.

**ADS:** Well I think, yes, I think it's a model, very hard to find now. But I also think that we again can't underestimate that this isn't just like a truth-telling session. These are two people who are extremely accomplished researchers in their own way, thinkers and writers.

**Spectrum Dance Theater**

Under Donald Byrd's artistic leadership since 2002, Spectrum Dance Theater has become the foremost contemporary modern dance organization in the Pacific Northwest, gaining recognition nationally and abroad. For over 30 years, Spectrum Dance Theater has brought dance of the highest merit to a diverse community, working to make dance accessible to all through contemporary dance performances and high-quality dance training in a variety of dance styles. Three components comprise the organization: the professional company, the school, and the outreach programs. With Donald Byrd's visionary artistic leadership, the organization has embarked on an exhilarating transformation that has attracted world-class dancers, produced some of the most avant-garde works in contemporary dance, and generated local and national praise. For more, please visit [spectrumdance.org](http://spectrumdance.org).

**DONALD BYRD**  
(*executive artistic director, co-creator, choreographer, and director, James Baldwin*)

Donald Byrd, the Tony-nominated and Bessie Award-winning choreographer, is the executive artistic director of Spectrum Dance Theater, and formerly artistic director of Donald Byrd/The Group. He is credited with over 100 dance works for his own groups, as well as for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Dayton Contemporary, Philadanco, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, and Dance Theater of Harlem, among others. He has worked with the New

York Shakespeare Festival/Public Theater, La Jolla Playhouse, San Francisco Opera, Seattle Opera, and New York City Opera. Honors include the Masters of Choreography Award (Kennedy Center), Fellow of the American Academy of Jerusalem, James Baldwin Fellow of US Artists, and Fellow at the Institute on the Arts and Civic Dialogue. Byrd was a NEA and Princess Grace Awards panelist and served as a cultural envoy for the US State Department. He currently serves on the SDC Diversity Task

Force and SDC Journal Editorial Board, and recently completed his term on the Tony nominating committee.

**ANNA DEAVERE SMITH** (*co-creator*)  
Anna Deavere Smith has performed in film, television, and on stage. She currently appears in the role of Attorney General Mary Campbell on *Madame Secretary* and as Alicia on *Blackish*. She also played Mrs. Akalitis on *Nurse Jackie*; Nancy McNally, the National Security Advisor, on *The West Wing*, and was featured in the series *Presidio Med*. Smith has been fea-

tured in several films, including *Rachel Getting Married*, *The American President*, *The Human Stain*, *Dave*, and *Rent*. As a writer and a humanist, she has received numerous awards for her work, including the prestigious 2013 Gish Prize for achievement in the arts; the 2012 National Humanities Medal, presented to her by President Obama; and the 1996 MacArthur "Genius" Award. In 2015 she was named the Jefferson Lecturer, the federal government's highest honor in the humanities.

**THE CAST**

JAMES BALDWIN  
Donald Byrd

MARGARET MEAD  
Kathryn Van Meter\*

SPECTRUM COMPANY ARTISTS  
Blair Jolly Elliot, Marco Farroni,  
Paul Giarratano, Marte Osiris Madera,  
Nia-Amina Minor, Robert Moore,  
Madison Oliver, Alexander Pham,  
Emily Pihlaja, Andrew Pontius,  
Fausto Rivera, Mary Sigward,  
Jaclyn Wheatley

\* *The Actor appears through the courtesy of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*

**DORIS BLACK** (*costume design*)

Doris Black has been designing costumes for theater, film, and dance for 19 years. In six seasons with Spectrum, she has designed for *Love, Carmina Burana, The Minstrel Show Revisited, A Rap on Race, and Autopsy of Love*, among others. She designs for many theaters in the Puget Sound area, including Seattle Shakespeare Company, The Seagull Project, Book-It Repertory Theatre, and Intiman, and has taught at and designed productions for the University of Puget Sound. Black has been the company costume designer for the Seattle Men's Chorus and Seattle Women's Chorus since 2004. Her film work includes *The Dark Horse, Cthulhu, Police Beat, Deadline, A Water Tale, and Shut Eye*. Black received her MFA in costume design from the University of Washington and her BFA from Washington University in St. Louis.

**JACK MEHLER** (*lighting and scenic design*)

Based in New York for 25 years, Jack Mehler designs for a wide variety of musicals, dance, plays, and corporate projects. He received the 2013 Korean Musical Theatre Award (the Korean Tony Award) for his lighting of *Rebecca* and the 2012 award for *Elisabeth*. He also received IRNE (Boston Critics' Award) nominations for *A Christmas Carol, Nine, and Camelot*, all at North Shore Music Theatre.

Mehler has designed scores of projects with Donald Byrd, including *A Rap on Race* (scenery) and *Dance, Dance, Dance* (lighting) for Spectrum Dance Theater. Other highlights include *Theatre of Needless Talents* for Spectrum; *Motown Suite & To Know Her* for the Joffrey Ballet; *Burlesque* and *Fin de Siècle* for Alvin Ailey; and *Jazz Train* and *Harlem Nutcracker* for Donald Byrd/The Group.

Other dance projects include Joffrey Ballet works by Nic Blanc, Donald Byrd, Edwaard Liang, Lar Lubovitch, Yuri Possokhov, Stanton Welch, and, for nine years, Robert Joffrey's *Nutcracker*. Other dance designs include Ballet Memphis, BalletMet, Buglisi Dance Theatre, Hubbard Street, José Limón, Lar Lubovitch, and San Francisco Ballet, among others.

**NATHAN W. SCHEUER** (*lighting direction*)

New York City design credits include *A Taste of Things to Come* (York Theatre), *Shoes and Baggage* (the cell), *Lord Tom* (York Theatre), *La Plage* (Tom Gold Dance), and associate designer for *Manilow on Broadway*. Regional credits include *The Sleeping Beauty, Cipher, Beneath One's Dignity* (Los Angeles Ballet); *After the Curtain, That's Where I'll Be Waiting, Come Together* (Shaping Sound); *Aida, Mamma Mia, Beauty and the Beast, Buddy, Grease, Addams Family, Les Miserables, Shrek, Thoroughly Modern Millie* (The Munny); *Spamalot* (Arkansas Rep); *Masha's Seagull* (Berkshire Theatre Festival); and *Around the World in 80 Days, Good People, and Next to Normal* (TheatreSquared). Scheuer has worked with the New York City Ballet, Paris Opera Ballet, and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. He was also the lighting designer for Selena Gomez's *Stars Dance* tour, scenic designer for Alice Cooper's *Raise the Dead* tour, and production designer for Toby Keith's *Hammer Down* tour. He is a proud member of United Scenic Artists, Local 829.

**SARA TORRES** (*stage manager*)

Sara Torres is a native of the Pacific Northwest who began studying technical theater and the performing arts in her early teens and went on to earn a BFA in performance production from Cornish College of the Arts in 2008. Her eclectic skill set has kept her active in many circles of the Seattle arts community. Torres is perhaps best known in the Seattle dance scene for her 10-year tenure as technical director for Beyond The Threshold: Seattle International Dance Festival. She has designed lighting and stage managed for local choreographers Cyrus Khambatta, Wade Madsen, Karin Stevens, Alex Crozier, Coleman Pester, and many others. Torres also designs lighting for theater and special events including the Fremont Oktoberfest. She served as stage manager for Spectrum Dance Theater's productions of *Rambunctious 2.0* and *A Rap On Race* in 2016 before joining the company full-time. This is Torres' second full season with Spectrum Dance Theater.

THE TEXT & MUSIC

JAMES BALDWIN

(August 2, 1924 – December 1, 1987)

James Arthur Baldwin, the grandson of a slave, was born August 2, 1924 in New York City and was the eldest of nine children. He was raised in Harlem, growing up in and surrounded by poverty. During his teen years, Baldwin was active as a preacher in a small revivalist church, an experience that later served to inspire his semi-autobiographical first novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953).

Baldwin spent the years following his graduation from high school in Greenwich Village, working low-paying jobs while beginning his career as a writer, finally attracting the attention of established novelist Richard Wright. Wright would eventually assist Baldwin in securing a grant that allowed him to devote himself full-time to writing.

In 1948, at the age of 24, Baldwin left New York City for Paris, where he would spend the next eight years studying American society from a distance. “Once you find yourself in another civilization, you’re forced to examine your own,” Baldwin said.

After time spent in Paris and Istanbul, Baldwin returned to the United States, motivated in part by a desire to participate in the Civil Rights Movement. Baldwin’s experiences traveling throughout the South brought forth his work *The Fire Next Time* (1963), focused on black identity and racial struggle, which became a bestseller and landed Baldwin on the cover of *Time* magazine.

Baldwin would eventually return to France, settling in St. Paul de Vence, following the assassinations of his friends Medgar Evers, Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X. During the last 10 years of his life, Baldwin began teaching as a means of connecting with a new generation, while continuing to produce socially relevant fiction, nonfiction, and poetry.

James Baldwin died in St. Paul de Vence in 1987 at the age of 63.

MARGARET MEAD

(December 16, 1901 – November 15, 1978)

Margaret Mead was born in Philadelphia on December 16, 1901 into a family of social scientists. Her mother, Emily Fogg Mead, was a sociologist and early supporter of women’s rights, while her father, Edward Sherwood Mead, was a professor at the Wharton School. Mead’s grandmother, Martha Ramsay Mead, was a child psychologist and encouraged Margaret to observe the behavior of younger children as a means of understanding their actions.

Mead’s early education was highly unorthodox, as she attended school for only one year of fourth grade and six years of high school. This education was heavily supplemented by that offered by Mead’s family. Mead would go on to study psychology at DePauw University before transferring to Barnard College, where she graduated in 1923. That same year Mead began graduate school at Columbia University, studying anthropology with Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict and earning her MA in 1924 and a PhD in 1929.

It was during her time at Columbia University that Mead embarked upon the first of many trips to the South Seas. She conducted field research in American Samoa and Papua New Guinea, collecting material that would form the foundation for the first of her 23 books, *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928). In this text Mead’s characteristic reliance on observation, rather than statistics, was already apparent.

Mead would later serve for many years with the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, first as assistant and then associate curator, before being named Curator of Ethnology.

The wide-range of topics covered in Mead’s work is notable: women’s rights, child rearing, sexual morality, nuclear proliferation, race relations, world hunger, and the cultural conditioning of sexual behavior and natural character.

Mead was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the United States’ highest civilian honor, in recognition of her contributions to science.

**CHARLES MINGUS**

(April 22, 1922 – January 5, 1979)

Born on a military base in Nogales, Arizona in 1922 and raised in Watts, California, Charles Mingus' earliest musical influences came from the church choir and group singing, and from hearing Duke Ellington over the radio when he was eight years old. He formally studied double bass and composition, while absorbing vernacular music from the great jazz masters, firsthand. His early professional experience, in the 1940s, found him touring with the bands of Louis Armstrong, Kid Ory, and Lionel Hampton.

Eventually Mingus settled in New York, where he played and recorded with the leading musicians of the 1950s, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Bud Powell, Art Tatum, and Duke Ellington. By the mid-1950s he had formed his own publishing and recording companies to protect and document his growing repertoire of original music. He also founded the Jazz Workshop, a group that enabled young composers to have their new works performed in concert and on recordings.

Mingus soon found himself at the forefront of the avant garde. His recordings bear witness to the extraordinarily creative body of work that followed and include *Pithecanthropus Erectus*, *The Clown*, *Tijuana Moods*, *Mingus Dynasty*, *Mingus Ah Um*, and *The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady*. His music was also performed frequently by ballet companies, and Alvin Ailey choreographed an hour-long program called *The Mingus Dances* during a 1972 collaboration with the Joffrey Ballet.

In 1977 Mingus was diagnosed as having a rare nerve disease, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. He was confined to a wheelchair, and although he was no longer able to write music on paper or compose at the piano, his last works were sung into a tape recorder.

At a memorial following Mingus' death in 1979, Steve Schlessinger of the Guggenheim Foundation commented, "I look forward to the day when we can transcend labels like jazz and acknowledge Charles Mingus as the major American composer that he is."

**THE COMPANY**

**Blair Jolly Elliot**, born in Los Angeles, started dancing at the age of 11. She summited Mt. Kilimanjaro via the Western Breach (age 11), sailed in the Flanders Youth Regatta in Nieuwpoort, Belgium on the US National Team (age 12), and competed in the Junior Olympics for swimming (100 m butterfly, age 8). Elliot studied dance at the Pinellas County Center for the Arts at Gibbs High School (St. Petersburg, FL) with Suzanne Pomerantzeff and Patricia Paige-Parks. She received her BFA from the University of the Arts. During her college years, she was an intern with Koresh Dance Company and trained extensively with Ronen Koresh and Melissa Rector. In 2016 Elliot earned her personal training certification from the National Academy of Sports Medicine. This is her fourth season with Spectrum Dance Theater.

**Marco Farroni**, born in the Dominican Republic, attended New Jersey Performing Art Center's young artist program, where he was introduced to modern dance and ballet. He received a BFA in dance from the University of the Arts under the direction of Donna Faye Burchfield, where he trained in ballet, modern, jazz, and improvisation. Farroni has performed works by Sidra Bell, Earl Mosley, Kevin Wynn, Keelan Whitmore, Katie Swords, Jesse Zaritt, Ronald K. Brown, Tommie Waheed-Evans, Douglas Becker, Mark Haim, Mark Caserta, and Jillian Peña, among others. He has participated in the American Dance Festival six-week school, Alonzo King LINES Ballet summer intensive, Alonzo King LINES Ballet professional workshop, and the Earl Mosley Institute of the Arts summer intensive. This is Farroni's first season dancing with Spectrum Dance Theater. He loves dance.

**Paul Giarratano** was born and raised in Long Island, New York. He began his dance training at age 10 at Vic D'Amore's American Studio of Performing Arts. Giarratano later attended SUNY Purchase College, where graduated *sum-*

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

---

*ma cum laude* in 2016 with a BFA in dance and a minor in arts management. While at SUNY Purchase, he had the opportunity to perform works by Doug Varone, Larry Keigwin, Loni Landon, Gregory Dolbashian, and Brian Enos, and he also studied a semester abroad at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts. Professionally, Giarratano has performed with Oui Danse under the direction of Brice Mousset and RudduR Dance under the direction of Christopher Rudd. This is his second season with Spectrum Dance Theater.

**Marte Osiris Madera** was born in Guadalajara, Mexico. He has been a company member with Dance Kaleidoscope of Indianapolis, and worked in the San Francisco Bay Area and California with Oakland Ballet, Menlowe Ballet, Margaret Wingrove Dance, Man Dance Company, sjDANCEco, and Central West Ballet. Madera has also worked on the East Coast with Lustig Dance Theater of New Jersey. He has guested for various dance companies in California, including for Robert Moses Kin, and has worked for various choreographers, including Donald McKayle, Stephanie Martinez, and Melissa Fenley. He has a BFA in dance from San Jose State University, where he graduated *cum laude*. This is his first season with Spectrum Dance Theater.

**Nia-Amina Minor** is a performer, teaching artist, and screen dance filmmaker from South Los Angeles. She began dancing at the Debbie Allen Dance Academy and received her BA in communications with a minor in film and media studies from Stanford University. She then earned her MFA in dance at the University of California. In addition to performing at RedCat and Jacob's Pillow, Minor was a faculty member at Saddleback Community College and Cypress College and a former arts administrator with San Francisco Ballet, Alonzo King LINES Ballet, and Heidi Duckler Dance Theatre. She is also the co-founder of a movement-based collective called No)one Art House based in South Los Angeles. This is her second season with Spectrum Dance Theater.

**Robert Moore**, from Hamden, Connecticut, began dancing at New England Ballet and continued at Dee Dee's Dance Center and New Haven Ballet. He is an alumnus of Earl Mosley's Institute of the Arts, the Ailey Summer Intensive, the Cunningham Trust Workshop, Jacob's Pillow's Commercial Dance Program, and the Complexions Intensive. Moore went to Mexico with JUNTOS Collective, and taught with Notes in Motion, Arthur Aviles Typical Theatre, and JD/dansfolk. He has performed works by Fredrick Earl Mosley, Ronald K. Brown, Ray Mercer, Jessica Lang, Marcus Willis, Norbert De La Cruz III, Rena Butler, Germaul Barnes, Matthew Rushing, Jeffrey Page, Francesca Harper, Jacquelyn Buglisi, Sidra Bell, Bradley Shelver, Lar Lubovitch, William Forsythe, Donald McKayle, and Alvin Ailey. Moore graduated *magna cum laude* from the Ailey/Fordham BFA program and has danced with Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre, The Steps Repertory Ensemble, and AATMA Performing Arts. He joined Spectrum Dance Theater as an apprentice last season, becoming a full company member in the fall of 2017, the start of his second season with the company.

**Madison Oliver** was born in Mesa, Arizona, and raised in Orange, California. She studied at Tracy Dee Academy of Dance, where she had the opportunity to be coached by various artists from around the world. Throughout her training she worked with artists from Houston Ballet, Ballet West, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, New York City Ballet, and Alonzo King LINES Ballet. In 2009 and 2010 Oliver competed, placed in the top 12, and traveled to New York for the Youth America Grand Prix. At age 15 she moved to Las Vegas to join Nevada Ballet Theater, where she spent two years dancing under the direction of James Canfield. During those years she performed in *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Giselle*, *Coppelia*, George Balanchine's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and various choreographic showcases. Oliver is now in her third season as a company dancer with Spectrum Dance Theater.

**Alexander Pham**, born and raised in Rosemount, Minnesota, received his BFA in dance and BS in human resource development from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, with dual honors. Pham has had the privilege of performing works by artists such as Roy Assaf, Gregory Dolbashian, Martha Graham, Bill T. Jones, Larry Keigwin, Stephen Petronio, Uri Sands, Zoe Scofield, and Yin Yue, among others. He also trained through Springboard Danse Montreal, Keigwin + Company, Visceral Dance Chicago, and Velocity Dance Center. After dancing for two seasons as a company artist with Contempo Physical Dance in Minneapolis, Pham has since performed with Seattle-based companies and choreographers zoe | juniper, Anna Conner +CO, Kim Lusk, and, most recently, with LED, based out of Boise. He presented his own choreography at CHOP SHOP Contemporary Dance Festival in 2016. Pham is grateful to be in his third season with Spectrum Dance Theater.

**Emily Pihlaja** is from New Canaan, Connecticut, and received her early dance training from the New England Academy of Dance. She attended the Kirov Academy of Ballet in Washington, DC, where she graduated in 2009. She then moved to Portland where she performed for four seasons with Oregon Ballet Theatre. Pihlaja was featured in ballets such as George Balanchine's *Serenade*, *Divertimento No. 15*, *Emeralds*, *The Four Temperaments*, *Swan Lake*, *Coppelia*, *Giselle*, and *The Nutcracker*. She also performed in New York with Thomas/Ortiz Dance. Her performances with Spectrum Dance Theater include 5th Avenue Theatre's *Carousel* and Donald Byrd's *Carmina Burana*, *Rambunctious* (1, 2 and 3), *Drastic Cuts*, *Jazz 1*, and *Love*. This marks Pihlaja's fourth season with Spectrum Dance Theater.

**Andrew Pontius**, originally from Bremerton, Washington, started studying ballet at the age of 11 with Pacific Northwest Ballet. At age 15 he left for Washington, DC, and he graduated from the Kirov Academy of Ballet in 2010. He began his professional career with the Dresden

SemperOper Ballet in Germany, where he danced for two seasons, before moving to Madrid to dance for the Victor Ullate Ballet. He is happy to be home, dancing in the Pacific Northwest in his fourth season with Donald Byrd at Spectrum Dance Theater.

**Fausto Rivera** is a Chicano dance artist from the Pacific Northwest. He graduated with a BA in dance and a minor in anthropology from the University of Washington, where he was awarded the Evelyn H. Green Endowed Scholarship for artistic merit and promise. Rivera grew up training in Mexican folk dance, and trained in ballet and modern dance in college. While at the UW, he danced with the Chamber Dance Company, performing work by Lar Lubovitch, Danny Shapiro/Joanie Smith, Bill T. Jones, and Doug Varone. He also trained at the San Francisco Conservatory of Dance, Northwest Dance Project's Launch: 10, and, for a semester, at the University of Guadalajara in Jalisco, Mexico. Rivera is a founding member of Seattle's Au Collective, a group of dance artists highlighting the work of artists from marginalized communities. He has been a company member of Spectrum Dance Theater since January 2015.

**Mary Sigward** was born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio. She began dancing at the age of five at the Connie Ferguson School of Dance, and continued her formal training with Meredith Benson and Mario de la Nuez at De La Arts. In 2015 she graduated *magna cum laude* from the University of South Carolina with a BA in dance performance, where she was awarded the Outstanding Senior Award for artistic achievement. Under the direction of Susan Anderson and Stacey Calvert, Sigward had the honor of performing works by George Balanchine, Twyla Tharp, Tanya Wideman-Davis, Thaddeus Davis, Helen Pickett, Lynne Taylor-Corbett, and Paul Taylor. She has attended summer and winter workshops at Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Spectrum Dance Theater, Complexions Contemporary Ballet, Lemon Sponge Cake Contemporary Ballet,

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

---

Visceral Dance Chicago, and Company E. She became a certified Pilates instructor in April 2017. This is Sigward's third season with Spectrum Dance Theater and her first season as the academy coordinator for the School of Spectrum Dance Theater.

**Kathryn Van Meter** (Margaret Mead) is a multidisciplinary theater artist based in Seattle. Previous roles include: Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* and Chorus Leader in *Medea* (Seattle Shakespeare Company); Myrtle in *The Great Gatsby* (Seattle Rep); Gwen in *Rapture Blister Burn* (ACT); Texas in *Cabaret*, Shirley Markowitz in *The Producers*, and Shelby in *Steel Magnolias* (Village Theatre); and Vibrata in *A Funny Thing Happened* (5th Avenue). Also a director and choreographer, Van Meter most recently directed *Into the Woods* for Village Theatre and choreographed a flamenco-based *Man of La Mancha* for Arizona Theatre Company, *The Magic Flute* for the Seattle Opera, and the Netflix original series *13 Reasons Why*. She is a proud member of SDC and AEA. Van Meter is honored to join Spectrum Dance Theater and the visionary Donald Byrd in this groundbreaking work.

**Jaclyn Wheatley**, originally from Vancouver, BC, received her early dance training under the tutelage of Kathryn Long, Rachael Poirier, and Li Yaming. Other training includes American Ballet Theatre, Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, Dance New York International (Paris, France), and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. An alumna of the Alvin Ailey/Fordham University BFA program, Wheatley graduated *summa cum laude* with a major in dance and a minor in business administration. A member of the JUNTOS Collective, she has travelled to Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Nicaragua to participate in dance outreach activities. Wheatley has performed the works of Alvin Ailey, Jennifer Archibald, Joshua Beamish, Ronald K. Brown, and Arch Contemporary Ballet. Since her move to Seattle, she has performed in many of Donald Byrd's productions, including *Drastic Cuts*, *Love*, *Carmina Burana*, *Shot*, and *(Im)pulse*, as well as works presented by Alex

Crozier, Vincent Michael Lopez, and The Cabiri. This is her fourth season with Spectrum Dance Theater.

### SPECTRUM MANAGING STAFF

Donald Byrd, *executive artistic director*

Alexander Pham, *interim marketing and media associate*

Hayley Shannon, *outreach coordinator*

Susan Daggett, Bob Gribas, and Mary Brown, *front desk*

### SPECTRUM PRODUCTION STAFF

Lizzy Melton, *company manager*

Michael Sterkowicz, *technical director*

Sara Torres, *production stage manager*

Abby I. Gordon, *DPT*

### THE SCHOOL OF

#### SPECTRUM DANCE THEATER

Joshua Crouch, *school principal*

Donald Byrd, *contemporary and modern head*

Christopher Grant-Montoya, *ballet head*

Mary Sigward, *academy coordinator*

### SPECTRUM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Russ Stromberg, *president and board chair*

Josh LaBelle, *vice chair*

Joanna Lau, *secretary*

Moriah Levy, *treasurer*

Sun McElderry

Samantha Nyham

Shirley Wong

Tricia Stromberg, *emeritus*

For more information about booking Spectrum Dance Theater for touring, please contact:

David Lieberman Artists' Representatives

info@dlartists.com

Tel: (714) 979-4700

DLArtists.com

For more about sponsoring or contributing to Spectrum Dance Theater, please contact:

Meghan Villanueva

meghan@spectrumdance.org

Tel: (206) 325-4161