# HUNTERDON HILLS BALLET
### ELAINE MATTHEWS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

## Faculty:

**Elaine Matthews, Director**: Elaine Matthews was an original member of The Pennsylvania Ballet II and after six months was asked to join The Pennsylvania Ballet, under the direction of Roy Kaiser, where she performed roles both in the corps and as a soloist. During her time there she was featured in the world premier of Christopher Wheeldon's *Swan Lake*, performed as a soloist in the world premier of Matthew Neenanan's *Le Travail,* for which she was recognized by The New York Times, and was featured in Peter Martins' *Fearful Symmetries,* Paul Taylor's *Company B*, Ben Stevenson's *Cinderella*, and several works by George Balanchine, amongst others. She then went on to join The *Phantom of the Opera* Broadway National Tour where she performed in every major city in the U.S. In addition to several other regional credits, she appeared as Marilyn Monroe for the 2012 *Broadway Easter Bonnet*, performed at the Minskoff Theater on Broadway. She began her training at the Academy of Dance Arts in Red Bank, NJ, and went on to study at The School of American Ballet, American Ballet Theater Summer Intensive, Chautauqua, Exploring Ballet with Suzanne Farrell, The Rock School,The Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, The Atlantic Theater School, and NYU's Tisch School of the Arts Dance Program. After the birth of her first son in 2013, Elaine traded in her performing career and has come full circle to teaching dance. She is a faculty member at Princeton University and was previously a member of the judges panel for *Starbound National Talent Competition*. She has taught master classes through *The Broadway Connection* in over ten major cities in the United States, including Los Angeles and New York City. Her students have gone on to train on scholarship at The School of American Ballet, ABT's JKO School, Ellison Ballet, Boston Ballet, The Rock School, Pace University Musical Theater and Commercial Dance Program, The Boston Conservatory, Marymount College, University of Richmond and DeSales University. Her students have also received awards at The Youth America Grand Prix, The Dance Awards and NYCDA, amongst others. Elaine is married and often collaborates on projects with her husband, Broadway veteran, Sean MacLaughlin.

**Christen Tassin** booked her first Broadway role at the age of ten, as the original Baby June in *Gypsy,* starring Tyne Daly.  She also played the role of Young Cosette (Gavroche u/s) in *Les Miserables,* originated the role of Laura in the off-Broadway play *Trophies*, and was featured in

the *Radio City Christmas Spectacular* for two seasons. She has done numerous commercials and voiceovers, and has sung live on national television, at the Grand Olde Opry, and for President George Bush. She holds a BFA in Acting, and has taught dance and acting in schools and studios around New Jersey to students of all ages.

**Michelle Quiner** is a member of The American Repertory Ballet. She has been featured in Dance Spirit magazine as a Cover Model Search Finalist and as the You Should Know Dancer. She has danced as Clara for the Radio City Christmas Spectacular. She is a YAGP New York finalist, a final round participant at the World Ballet Competition and a bronze medalist at the Valentina Kozlova IBC Contemporary Competition. She has won 5 National Titles and top scholarships at various dance workshops. She has received full scholarships to Washington Ballet, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Orlando Ballet, Joffrey New York, and Valentina Kozlova's summer programs.

**Jillian Quiner** began dancing at the age of 4 and grew up training primarily at the Art of Dance under Valerie Harman and the North Jersey School of Dance Arts under Christine Taylor Schmelz and Luba Gulyaeva, where she also performed with the New Jersey Civic Youth Ballet. During the 2017-18 season she had the opportunity to train in New York City as a scholarship student with the contemporary company Jennifer Muller/The Works. Jillian has attended numerous dance competitions and conventions, winning national titles at Turn It Up Dance Challenge and Onstage New York and receiving scholarships from the New York City Dance Alliance, JUMP Dance Convention, NUVO Dance Convention, and other mainstream dance events. In 2016 she was featured as a dancer in *Mira*, a graduate film produced by New York University, Tisch School of the Arts. Jillian also had the opportunity in 2017 to perform in *De Novo*, a benefit for well-known teacher and choreographer Kevin "TOKYO" Inouye produced by Little by Little. She has served on faculty at the North Jersey School of Dance Arts and the Art of Dance, and is currently a freelance writer for the magazine *Inside Dance*. Jillian looks forward to sharing her love and knowledge of dance with her students at Hunterdon Hills Ballet!

**Stephanie Urbina** grew up in Manasquan, NJ where she studied ballet under Diane Fay and modern dance with Lauren Blake. She furthered her studies in high school at the Joffrey Ballet School, Alvin Ailey School and being selected one out of 12 dancers in the state of NJ to attend The Governor's School of the Arts. In 2007, she received her BFA in Modern Dance Performance from the University of the Arts. Throughout her career, Stephanie has had the privilege to work with and perform works by Milton Myers, Momix(Sputnik), Lynn Barr, Elisa Monte and Roni Koresh. Stephanie has also been a Barre Instructor for over 12 years and holds a Women's Fitness Specialist and Nutrition Coach certificate. She is thrilled to be a part of the Hunterdon Hills Ballet Family!

**Jessica Sims** is so excited to be teaching again this year at HHB! Prior to becoming a mom of two girls, Jessica performed professionally in many shows including the National tour of Trevor Nunn's Broadway Revival of *Oklahoma!* as Laurey, choreographed by Susan Stroman, Atlanta Theatre of the Stars (*Oklahoma!*), Walnut Street Theater (*Carousel*), Fulton Theater (Belle, *A Christmas Carol), (Oliver!),* Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival (Antonia, *Man of La Mancha*), (Ella, *Charley's Aunt)*, PA Shakespeare WillPower tour (Bianca, *Taming of the Shrew),* Circa '21 Playhouse. She studied acting at Boston University School of the Arts, DeSales University (Irene Ryan Nominations for roles in *Steel Magnolias* and *Diary of Anne Frank*), Art of Acting, Peoples Improv Theatre, and NJ's Governor's School of the Arts for Acting. She is also a member of Actor's Equity. Jessica studied dance at Broadway Dance Center, Rock School of Dance, and New Jersey Ballet where she performed several years in the *Nutcracker* at Paper Mill Playhouse and performed in excerpts on NBC's morning show. Jessica also currently teaches music at Acorn Montessori School and drama at Madison Montessori School.

**Miranda Taylor** attended the Academy of Dance Arts, Red Bank from 1985-1997. During those years she was taught by Jennifer James Church (RAD, AISTD), Charles Nicoll (Cleveland Ballet), Yvonne Scudiery (director of education at Count Basie Theater), Victoria Hall (New York City Ballet), and Bridget Denise (Alvin Ailey.) She danced in productions of the Nutcracker, A Midsummer Nights' Dream, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Celebrate Dance, and Beatrix Potter and Other Tails with the Garden State Ballet and the Company of Dance Arts. She attended Mason Gross School of the Arts from 1997-2001 and graduated with a BFA in Dance and after graduating performed and choreographed several shows with her own company, Miranda Taylor Dance. Alongside choreographing, Miranda has been teaching at Perna Dance Center and the Academy of Dance arts for the past 20 years. Recently, she has joined "In Good Company," a local dance collective whose aim is to produce the works of local choreographers, providing performance opportunities for local dancers.

**Jenny Hanson** began dancing at the age of six in North Dakota. Over the next fifteen years, she took class in ballet, tap, lyrical, jazz, and pointe. Jenny attended the Tremaine and NYCDA dance conventions and had the opportunity to take master classes with Thommie Walsh from the original cast of A Chorus Line.

Jenny has taught dance for over fifteen years with her specialty being preschool dance instruction. She has attended the Dance Teacher's Summit in NYC and will be a volunteer dance teacher at Groove With Me, a non-profit dance organization in Harlem.