

**JOO WON AHN, ARAN BELL, SKYLAR BRANDT, THOMAS FORSTER,  
CALVIN ROYAL III AND CASSANDRA TRENARY PROMOTED TO  
PRINCIPAL DANCER AT AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE**

**GABE STONE SHAYER PROMOTED TO SOLOIST**

**Joo Won Ahn, Aran Bell, Skylar Brandt, Thomas Forster, Calvin Royal III and Cassandra Trenary** have been appointed to the rank of Principal Dancer with American Ballet Theatre. **Gabe Stone Shayer** has been promoted to the rank of Soloist. The promotions, announced today by ABT Artistic Director Kevin McKenzie, are effective immediately.

**Joo Won Ahn** is originally from Wonju, Korea and began his formal training in 2006 at Y.J. Ballet People Academy and Sun Hwa Art School. In 2012, he became a student at Korea National University of Arts in Seoul. He won the Silver Medal at the Korean International Ballet Competition and 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize at the 2012 Varna International Ballet Competition in Bulgaria. Ahn was invited to join ABT Studio Company in 2013 after winning the Gold Medal at Youth America Grand Prix in New York City. He joined American Ballet Theatre as an apprentice in January 2014 and became a member of the corps de ballet in June 2014. He was promoted to Soloist in September 2019. Ahn's repertoire with ABT includes the title role in *Apollo*, Solor in *La Bayadère*, Ali and Lankendem in *Le Corsaire*, Albrecht in *Giselle*, the Nutcracker Prince in Alexei Ratmansky's *The Nutcracker*, Dionysius in *Of Love and Rage*, Winter in *The Seasons*, Bluebird in Ratmansky's *The Sleeping Beauty*, Neapolitan Dance in *Swan Lake*, leading roles in *AFTERITE*, *The Brahms-Haydn Variations*, *Garden Blue*, *Serenade after Plato's Symposium*, *Theme and Variations* and *Thirteen Diversions*, and featured roles in *AfterEffect*, *Bach Partita* and *In the Upper Room*. He created Murasaki in *A Gathering of Ghosts* and roles in *After You*, *New American Romance* and *Songs of Bukovina*.

**Aran Bell** was born in Bethesda, Maryland and began studying ballet at age four. He received his early training at Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet and with Denys Ganio in Rome, Italy. He continued his training with Fabrice Herrault and Magaly Suarez and at The Royal Ballet School in London and American Ballet Theatre's Summer Intensive. Bell's awards include the Hope Award at the Youth America Grand Prix Finals in New York City in 2009 and 2010 and the Junior Grand Prix (2011), Grand Prix at the Milan International Ballet Competition (2010), the Premio Positano (2011), the Premio Amalfi Young Talent Award (2012), Gold Medal at Tanzolymp Berlin (2012), Gold Medal and Audience Choice Award at Rieti International Ballet Competition (2012), the Premio Roma Jia Ruskaja (2012) and the Premio Capri Danza International Award (2014). Bell was featured in the 2011 film *First Position: A Ballet Documentary*. He joined ABT Studio Company in September 2014, the main Company as an apprentice in May 2016 and the corps de ballet in March 2017. He was promoted to Soloist with ABT in September 2019. His repertoire includes Lankendem in *Le Corsaire*, Albrecht in *Giselle*, St. John Rivers in *Jane Eyre*, the Nutcracker Prince in Ratmansky's *The Nutcracker*, Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet*, Prince Désiré in Ratmansky's *The Sleeping Beauty*, Prince Siegfried and von Rothbart in *Swan Lake* and featured roles in *Garden Blue*, *Thirteen Diversions*, *AfterEffect*, *Deuce Coupe*, *In the Upper Room* and *Songs of Bukovina*. He created Mme. de Staël in *A Gathering of Ghosts*, Chaereas in *Of Love and Rage*, Winter in *The Seasons* and leading roles in *AFTERITE*, *Let Me Sing Forevermore* and *New American Romance*.

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**Skylar Brandt** was born in Purchase, New York and began her training at age six with teachers Diana White and Christian Claessens at Scarsdale Ballet Studio. She also studied with Valentina Kozlova, Fabrice Herrault, Susan Jaffe, Irina Dvorovento and Maxim Beloserkovsky. She attended the ABT Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School from 2005–2009 under the direction of Franco De Vita and spent five summers at ABT’s New York Summer Intensive. From 2006–2009, Brandt was a National Training Scholar and also received the Bender Foundation Scholarship in 2009. She was a silver medalist at Youth America Grand Prix in 2004 and 2008. Brandt joined ABT II (now ABT Studio Company) in 2009 and became an apprentice with the main Company in November 2010. She joined the corps de ballet in June 2011 and was appointed Soloist in August 2015. Her roles with the Company include Polyhymnia in *Apollo*, Gamzatti in *La Bayadère*, Medora in *Le Corsaire*, Lycenion in *Daphnis and Chloe*, Amour in *Don Quixote*, The Maiden in *Firebird*, Lead Can Can in *Gaîté Parisienne*, Giselle and the peasant pas de deux in *Giselle*, the title role in *The Golden Cockerel*, Columbine in *Harlequinade*, Young Jane in *Jane Eyre*, Olga in *Onegin*, Younger Sister in *Pillar of Fire*, Princess Florine in Ratmansky’s *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Some Assembly Required*, the pas de trois in *Swan Lake*, Princess Praline in *Whipped Cream*, leading roles in *AFTERITE*, *The Brahms-Haydn Variations*, *Garden Blue*, *Piano Concerto #1*, *Symphonic Variations* and *Thirteen Diversions* and featured roles in *Bach Partita*, *Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes*, *Gong*, *In the Upper Room*, *Raymonda Divertissements* and *Sinfonietta*. She created a Consort in *A Gathering of Ghosts*, the Swallow in *The Seasons*, the Fairy Canari qui chante (Canary) in Ratmansky’s *The Sleeping Beauty*, a leading role in *Her Notes* and featured roles in *AfterEffect*, *After You* and *Praedicere*. Brandt was awarded a 2013 Princess Grace Foundation-USA Dance Fellowship. That same year, she was featured in the film *Ballet’s Greatest Hits*. In 2018, Brandt was the recipient of an unprecedented Special Jury Award for her performances on the Russian television show “Big Ballet.”

**Thomas Forster** was born in South East London, England and began his ballet training with June Lowdell. At age eight, he joined The Royal Ballet School Associate Programme. At age 11, he commenced full-time dance training at the Elmhurst School of Dance. At age 16, he joined The Royal Ballet’s Upper School and graduated with Honors in 2005. As a student, Forster performed with The Royal Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet and English National Ballet. He joined American Ballet Theatre Studio Company in May 2006, the main Company as an apprentice in January 2007 and the corps de ballet in December 2007. He was appointed Soloist in September 2015. His repertoire with ABT includes the High Brahmin in *La Bayadère*, a Step-Sister in *Cinderella*, Espada and Lorenzo in *Don Quixote*, the second sailor in *Fancy Free*, Thomas in *La Fille mal gardée*, Ivan in *Firebird*, the Duke in *Gaîté Parisienne*, Albrecht and Hilarion in *Giselle*, Edward Rochester in *Jane Eyre*, Her Lover in *Jardin aux Lilas*, Jailer in *Manon*, the Nutcracker Prince in Alexei Ratmansky’s *The Nutcracker*, Chaereas in *Of Love and Rage*, Sergei in *On the Dnieper*, Prince Gremin in *Onegin*, Tybalt, Paris and Lord Montague in *Romeo and Juliet*, Zephyr in *The Seasons*, a Fairy Cavalier and Prince Fortune in Ratmansky’s *The Sleeping Beauty*, von Rothbart (Lakeside and Ballroom) and the Spanish Dance in *Swan Lake*, The Poet in *Les Sylphides*, Apollo in *Sylvia*, Alonso in *The Tempest*, Prince Coffee, Prince Cocoa and Boris Wutki in *Whipped Cream*, leading roles in *AFTERITE*, *Bach Partita*, *Blue Pas de Deux*, *Her Notes*, *Souvenir d’un lieu cher*, *Monotones II*, *Serenade after Plato’s Symposium*, *Symphonie Concertante*, *Symphony in C*, *Thirteen Diversions*, *Troika* and *With a Chance of Rain*, and featured roles in *AfterEffect*, *After You*, *Baker’s Dozen*, *Company B*, *Deuce Coupe*, *Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes*, *Duets*, *Gong*, *In the Upper Room*, *One of Three*, *Overgrown Path*, *Private Light*, *Raymonda Divertissements* and *Sinfonietta*. He created Pierrot in Ratmansky’s *Harlequinade*, the Mouse King in Ratmansky’s *The Nutcracker*, the English Prince in Ratmansky’s *The Sleeping Beauty* and leading roles in *Garden Blue* and *A Time There Was*, and featured roles in *Aftereffect* (2013), *Dumbarton*, *Everything Doesn’t Happen at Once* and *From Here On Out*. Forster is an ABT Certified Teacher in the ABT National Training Curriculum and a certified personal trainer with NASM.

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**Calvin Royal III** began his formal dance training under the direction of Suzanne Pomerantzeff and Patricia L. Paige at the Pinellas County Center for the Arts at Gibbs High School in St. Petersburg, Florida. He was a finalist at the Youth America Grand Prix Scholarship Competition in New York City in April 2006 and joined the ABT Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School in September 2006. He joined ABT II (now ABT Studio Company) in December 2007, the main Company as an apprentice in October 2010 and the corps de ballet in April 2011. Royal was appointed a Soloist in September 2017. His repertoire with the Company includes the title role in *Apollo*, a Cavalier in *Cinderella*, Espada in *Don Quixote*, the third sailor in *Fancy Free*, Pierrot in Ratmansky's *Harlequinade*, Reverend Brocklehurst in *Jane Eyre*, Lescaut in *Manon*, the Recruit in Ratmansky's *The Nutcracker*, a Carnival Dancer in *Othello*, Benvolio in *Romeo and Juliet*, the Spanish Prince and Prince Fortune in *The Sleeping Beauty*, von Rothbart and Benno in *Swan Lake*, Prince Coffee and Prince Cocoa in *Whipped Cream*, leading roles in *Bach Partita*, *The Brahms-Haydn Variations*, *Her Notes*, *Piano Concerto #1*, *Seven Sonatas*, *Symphonic Variations* and *Thirteen Diversions* and featured roles in *AfterEffect*, *Black Tuesday*, *Clear*, *Company B*, *Deuce Coupe*, *Duets*, *In the Upper Room*, and *Sinfonietta*. He created the North Wind in *A Gathering of Ghosts*, Bacchus in *The Seasons*, a Fairy Cavalier in Ratmansky's *The Sleeping Beauty*, leading roles in *AFTERITE*, *Serenade after Plato's Symposium* and *Songs of Bukovina* and featured roles in *After You*, *AfterEffect*, *Dream within a Dream (deferred)*, *New American Romance* and *Praedicere*. Royal was a finalist at the 2013 Clive Barnes Awards and, in 2014, was awarded the Leonore Annenberg Fellowship Fund grant. Royal has been featured in global campaigns for GAP, Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein, Target, Ralph Lauren and Canali. He was featured in the 2019 Pirelli Calendar alongside Misty Copeland, photographed by famed Scottish fashion, celebrity, and art photographer Albert Watson. Royal was named the 2020-2021 Artist-in-Residence for the Vail Dance Festival in Vail, Colorado.

**Cassandra Trenary**, a native of Georgia, began her dance training at Lawrenceville School of Ballet. In 2006, she joined the school's company, Southern Ballet Theatre, under the direction of Phyllis Allen and received additional training at Southeast Regional Ballet Association conventions and Brookwood High School's Dance department. Trenary trained at American Ballet Theatre's Summer Intensive programs as a National Training Scholar and joined the ABT Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School in 2009. In 2011, she joined ABT II (now ABT Studio Company), the main Company as an apprentice in April of that year and the corps de ballet in November. She was promoted to Soloist in August 2015. Trenary was named a 2011 National YoungArts Foundation Winner and became a 2011 U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts nominee. She is also the recipient of a 2015 Princess Grace Dance Honorarium. In 2017, Trenary received the Annenberg Fellowship for Dance. Her repertoire with ABT includes Calliope in *Apollo*, Gamzatti in *La Bayadère*, an Odalisque in *Le Corsaire*, the Dryad Queen and Amour in *Don Quixote*, The Maiden in *Firebird*, the peasant pas de deux in *Giselle*, the title role in *The Golden Cockerel*, Columbine in *Harlequinade*, Mrs. Fairfax and Bertha Mason in *Jane Eyre*, Lescaut's Mistress in *Manon*, Columbine in Ratmansky's *The Nutcracker*, Olga in *Onegin*, a Carnival Dancer in *Othello*, the Youngest Sister in *Pillar of Fire*, a Harlot in *Romeo and Juliet*, The Rose in *The Seasons*, Princess Aurora, the Diamond Fairy and the Fairy Canari qui chante (Canary) in *The Sleeping Beauty*, the Young Girl in *Le Spectre de la Rose*, the pas de trois in *Swan Lake*, Ceres in *Sylvia*, Princess Praline in *Whipped Cream*, leading roles in *Chamber Symphony*, *I Feel The Earth Move*, *Souvenir d'un lieu cher* and *Symphonic Variations* and featured roles in *After You*, *Bach Partita*, *Deuce Coupe*, *Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes*, *In the Upper Room*, *Private Light*, *Raymonda Divertissements* and *Sinfonietta*. She created the roles of a Consort in *A Gathering of Ghosts*, Bacchante in *The Seasons*, Princess Florine in Ratmansky's *The Sleeping Beauty*, leading roles in *AFTERITE*, *Her Notes* and *A Time There Was* and a featured role in *Dream within a Dream (deferred)*.

**Gabe Stone Shayer** was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He began his formal training at age 11 with Alexei Boltov and Natalia Cherov. At age 14, Shayer began training at The Rock School for Dance. In 2009, he attended the Bolshoi Ballet Academy Program in Moscow and won First Place for Best Male Dancer. Shayer won the Grand Prix Award at the 2010 Youth America Grand Prix and was a finalist in the New York International Competition. He received numerous scholarships, most notably to the John Cranko School in Stuttgart, Germany and the Princess Grace Academy in Monaco. He continued his studies at the Bolshoi Ballet Academy in Moscow under the tutelage of Ilya Kuznetsov. Shayer is the first African American male to graduate from the Bolshoi Ballet Academy in its nearly 250-year history. He joined American Ballet Theatre Studio Company in September 2011, the main Company as an apprentice in April 2012 and the corps de ballet in November 2012. His repertoire with ABT includes the Bronze Idol in *La Bayadère*, Jester and Napoleon in *Cinderella*, Lankendem and Birbanto in *Le Corsaire*, the Lead Gypsy in *Don Quixote*, the peasant pas de deux in *Giselle*, Harlequin in *Harlequinade*, Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*, The Faun and a Satyr in *The Seasons*, Bluebird and Puss-in-Boots in Ratmansky's *The Sleeping Beauty*, Neapolitan Dance in *Swan Lake*, Eros and Pluto in *Sylvia*, Ariel in *The Tempest*, The Boy in *Whipped Cream*, leading roles in *AFTERITE*, *The Brahms-Haydn Variations*, *Her Notes*, *Piano Concerto #1* and *Songs of Bukovina*, and featured roles in *After You*, *Bach Partita*, *Company B*, *Raymonda Divertissements* and *Sinfonietta*. Shayer created a Fairy Cavalier in Ratmansky's *The Sleeping Beauty*, a leading role in *Serenade after Plato's Symposium* and a featured role in *A Time There Was*. In 2016, Shayer received the Clive Barnes Award for Dance.

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