



*East by North  
Dance Theatre*

MALIQUE PYE



AC DEMARCO

*Jon Lehrer Dance Company*



*Kilowatt Dance Company*

# JOIN THE Dance Revolution

*With returning audience favorites and plenty of new talent, the Amelia Island Dance Festival returns for its biggest season yet in early September at Amelia Community Theatre.*

BY KAREN MILLER • PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE AMELIA ISLAND DANCE FESTIVAL

The Amelia Island Dance Festival was founded in 2019 by Susan Dodge, a dance graduate of Douglas Anderson School of the Arts and Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. Dodge, a professional dancer with the acclaimed Paul Taylor Modern Dance Company, established the festival with the goal of preserving classical dance and its history, while also working to fortify dance educational programs on Amelia Island for the next generation.

Despite the challenges posed by the Covid pandemic, the Amelia Island Dance Festival was able to adapt and continue its operations. In its second year, the festival pivoted to live stream its performances across the United States and Europe, allowing it to reach a wider audience. The following year, the festival safely resumed in-person performances, featuring artists from

across the country, including up-and-coming talents such as East by North Dance Theatre, John Manzari, Carlos Garland, Moving On Dance, and Jacksonville Dance Theater.

In addition to the performances, the Amelia Island Dance Festival also held educational workshops that reached over 300 participants. Leveraging the natural beauty of Amelia Island, the festival also featured site-specific works that celebrated and honored the local environment and culture.

The AIDF presents scholarship money to support a student who plans to pursue an education or career related to dance after graduation. Their goal is to award and recognize a student with exemplary skill or interest in dance. The yearly scholarship is open to Nassau County high school students from 9th to 12th grade who have experience in dance.



*The Florida Ballet of Jacksonville*

## RETURNING FAVORITES GRACE THE 2024 FESTIVAL STAGE

The Amelia Island Dance Festival is raising the bar this year, delivering seven extraordinary performances and thirty workshops for four days, September 5 through 8. “We are thrilled to welcome both returning and new performers to our sixth season,” says Dodge, artistic director of the Amelia Island Dance Festival. “This year’s festival promises to be a captivating celebration of the art of dance, showcasing the incredible talent and diversity within our community and beyond, with a rich variety of dance styles and performers.”

Returning to the stage are some of the festival’s most beloved guest artists, including dance virtuoso John Manzari, the mesmerizing East by North Dance Theatre, the impeccably talented Carlos Garland, the dynamic Moving On Dance company, the explosive Rhythm Theory Tap Ensemble, and the versatile Marco Tacandong.

Kilowatt Dance Theatre, renowned for their innovative and electrifying performances, will showcase their boundary-pushing choreography. Also joining the lineup is the highly esteemed James L. Boyd III, and the exquisite performers from The Florida Ballet and Jacksonville Dance Theatre. These artists have captivated audiences with their exceptional artistry and unique styles, and they are set to deliver awe-inspiring performances once again.

*Below and bottom: Dance workshop with Roberto Forleo with music by Mal Stein*



## NEW STARS AND EXCITING WORKSHOPS FOR 2024

In addition to the returning stars, the Amelia Island Dance Festival is proud to welcome new talents to its stage, including the Jon Lehrer Dance Company. Jon’s unique choreography embodies his definitive style; his extensive background in both the modern and jazz dance idioms fosters choreography that is organic, athletic, and artistic.

But that’s not all. The festival offers an array of workshops designed to inspire and educate dancers of all levels. Participants can choose from an exciting variety of styles, including Flagging, Hula Dance, Salsa Dance, Ballet, Modern, Jazz, Partnering, Fusion, Tap, Hip Hop, and Improv. Led by industry experts and renowned instructors, these workshops provide a unique opportunity for dancers to expand their skills, explore new techniques, and unleash their creativity. All performances are to be held at Amelia Community Theatre, located at 207 Cedar Street.





*Island Aerial Danceworks*



*Carlos and Marisa Garland with Dancelook LLC*

On Thursday, September 5 at 7:30 p.m., AIDF presents *A Look Back: 5 Years of Dance*. Embark on a captivating journey through the past five years of the Amelia Island Dance Festival, as they celebrate the vibrant and diverse tapestry of dance performances that have graced their stage. This special retrospective program invites guests to witness the exceptional artistry of local artists, professional dancers, showcasing a curated selection of the most mesmerizing and acclaimed pieces from the festival's first five years.

On Friday, September 6 at 7:30 p.m., AIDF presents *Guest Artists*, and patrons will be treated to a diverse and captivating dance showcase presented by renowned guest artists as well as introducing exciting new artists. The performance will feature a wide range of styles, from the rhythmic percussiveness of tap dancing to the graceful elegance of classical ballet.

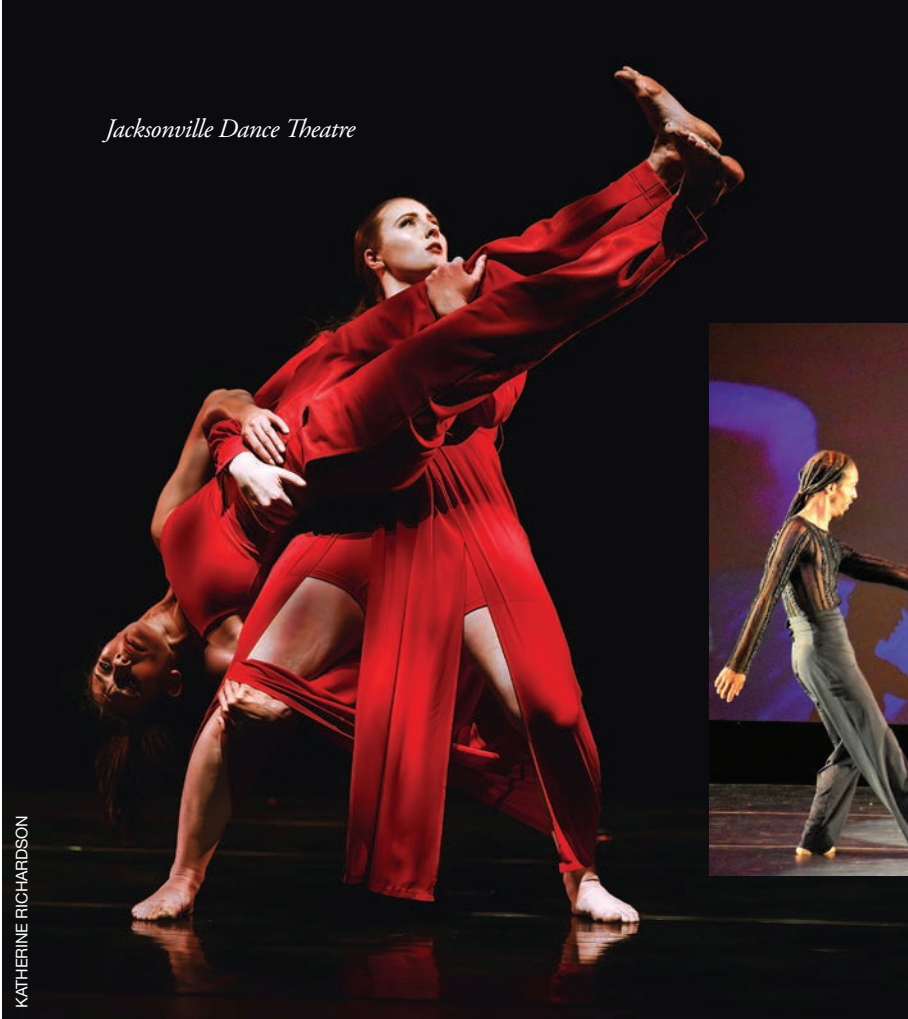
Contemporary dance works will also be on display, blending innovative movements with emotive storytelling. The lively energy of swing dancing is sure to get toes tapping, while popular crowd-pleasing favorites are certain to delight. This not-to-be-missed evening promises to treat the senses and ignite the imagination through the remarkable talents of these visiting dance professionals.

#### A CELEBRATION OF CREATIVITY AND COMMUNITY

"The Amelia Island Dance Festival is a celebration of creativity and community. The warmth and enthusiasm of the audience makes every performance memorable," says Jon Eden and Sarah Nachbauer, co-directors of East by North Dance Theatre. "Performing at the festival is a deeply rewarding experience. The connection with the audience is palpable, and it is an honor to share the stage with such diverse and talented artists."

The AIDF presents *Youth Dance Program* on Saturday, September 7 at 2 p.m., featuring its captivating Youth Program. Guests will be mesmerized by a diverse array of talented young dancers showcasing their exceptional skills. The Youth Program is a celebration of the future of the dance world, where aspiring artists come together to inspire and uplift the community. These dancers have worked tirelessly to hone their craft, and now is your chance to witness their dedication and passion firsthand.

Later that same afternoon at 4 p.m., brace yourselves for an exhilarating experience at the Amelia Island Dance Festival's *Emerging Artists and Local Program*. This captivating showcase is set to ignite the stage, introducing you to the rising stars of



Atlanta Dance Connection

events, held throughout the year, draw together preeminent dance professionals, choreographers, and educators committed to celebrating and preserving dance as an art form in all its profound complexity and transcendent beauty. At AIDF, we believe that everyone has a place on the stage.”

“We’re so grateful to be a part of AIDF from the very beginning,” says Rebecca Levy of Jacksonville Dance Theatre. “Susan Dodge is a gift to the region, and it’s meaningful to work with her year after year. Participating in this festival has been a truly enriching experience. The energy from the audience and the synergy among the performers have been nothing short of magical. It’s been an honor to share our art and be part of such a dynamic event.”

As Alvin Ailey, the visionary creator of modern American dance, once said, “Dance came from the people and should

always be delivered back to the people.” With a mission to bring movement and dance to everyone, the festival is not just about performances, but also community engagement. It will expand its Saturday offerings, offering free workshops for the public, including vendors and food trucks in Central Park, creating a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere. This exciting addition will provide a festive and community-driven atmosphere.

From 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on September 7, attendees can explore the art of dance while enjoying delicious local cuisine and browsing unique vendor offerings. Additional workshops will take place at the Amelia Community Theatre. For more information on the festival’s schedule, ticket sales, and other details, including ticket prices starting at \$25 to \$50, please visit the official website at [www.ameliainlanddancefestival.org](http://www.ameliainlanddancefestival.org).

### *About the Amelia Island Dance Festival*

*The Amelia Island Dance Festival is an annual event that takes place on Amelia Island, Florida. It is a dance festival that features a variety of dance styles including ballet, contemporary, and jazz. The festival typically includes performances by professional dancers, master classes and workshops, and opportunities for amateur dancers to perform. The festival also offers educational opportunities for students and teachers to learn more about dance and its history.*

*The festival is held in September and is open to the public and includes performances at the Amelia Community Theatre. The festival attracts dancers, choreographers, and dance enthusiasts from around the world. The AIDF would like to thank their generous sponsors: Amelia Island Tourist Development Council, Nassau County Board of County Commissioners, Nyla J. Ideker, Calavan Kia, Drenda L. Vijuk. And Keri Werder Duffy Realtor.*