



*Educating, Elevating, and Enriching
St. Louis through the Magic of Dance!*

Alexandra Ballet Names CiCi Houston as Co-Artistic Director

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Alexandra Ballet Board of Directors proudly announces CiCi Houston as Co-Artistic Director of the company, effective July 1, 2014. Ms. Houston joins founder and current Artistic Director Alexandra Zaharias to continue the grand tradition that has become synonymous with Alexandra Ballet.

Ms. Houston has a rich background in dance and the arts, having studied at the Virginia School of the Arts under such ballet greats as Petrus Bosman (Royal Ballet), David Keener (Ballet Met), Keith Lee (Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater), and received early mentoring from Theresa Crawford (faculty of Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet). In addition to working with numerous professional ballet companies, she has performed as an international guest artist. Since 2003, Ms. Houston has been on the faculty of Alexandra School of Ballet and has served as the Associate Director of the Company since 2011.

Alexandra Ballet, whose affiliated ballet school is one of the oldest in the Midwest, has long been recognized as a company committed to the classical tradition while shaping dancers who are the future of the art form. Miss Zaharias believes this is a pivotal time to establish ongoing leadership for the company. "It is not an appointment, it is a gift to share all of the responsibilities of running Alexandra Ballet Company with me, and CiCi is ready to assume full Directorship in the future. I'm confident the Company will be in good hands with CiCi, and I feel blessed to have such a qualified person capable of taking over the reins when the time comes. I know she will always follow the traditions I have honored over the past 65 years, as well as bring innovative ideas to forge a path in new directions."

As an award-winning, pre-professional dance company, Alexandra Ballet regularly performs on the national stage. In 2010 an Alexandra Ballet dancer won the Youth American Grand Prix dancing Houston's choreography. Most recently, *Heliotrope Bouquet*, set to the music of Scott Joplin, was chosen for the Gala Performance at the 2014 Regional Dance America MidStates Festival in Chicago, establishing national acclaim for her choreographic talents.

Ms. Houston states, "I am honored to be selected to carry on such a wonderful legacy. After retiring from my on-stage career as a professional dancer, Miss Zaharias and I have been working side by side for eleven years. Our philosophies combine to create a comprehensive experience for both the dancers and the community at large."

This December, Alexandra Ballet's *The Nutcracker* returns, followed in February by the company's production of *Giselle*. Under the combined directorship of Zaharias and Houston, Alexandra Ballet will continue to Educate, Elevate, and Enrich the St. Louis community for generations to come.

Contact:

Rebecca Malinski
alexandraballet@msn.com
314.469.6222

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