

Gala

ARTISTIC AWARDS 2024
Laura Alonso & Vladimir Malakhov


 Dance Open
AMERICA



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4 APRIL 27 8:00 PM

 cincinnati
BALLET

Katherine Ochoa & Rafael Quenedit

Dance Open

AMERICA



2024 GRAND PRIX 
20 APR 25-28
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A Warm Welcome from the Founder

Welcome to the Dance Open América Miami Grand Prix Finals 2024. Being here with all of you today fills us with so many emotions. Let us especially thank all the dancers, teachers and school directors who have shown interest and supported our event. We are excited to have you joined us in this incredible experience!

Dance Open America helps reveal the talent of new generations of dancers. We are a platform to unite people of all cultures and ethnicities. Our mission is to facilitate dancers to become skilled innovators and reach their full potential. We offer you the opportunity to work with other dancers, choreographers, teachers and directors of international prestige. Furthermore, our goal is to highlight the legacy of dance as Art; preserve and develop the heritage of dance in its free expression.

We welcome dancers from around the world, including: Ecuador, Italy, Spain, Puerto Rico, Portugal, Canada, Mexico, Scotland, and the United States. Additionally, in less than four years, Dance Open America has expanded internationally, raising \$830,000 in scholarship awards, which have been presented to our participating dancers. We admire the generosity of these organizations that have helped us grow and expand the opportunities available for the new generation of dancers. Without you, we would not be able to fully achieve our mission.

We are delighted to welcome you to the The Artistic Award Gala 2024 in honor of the legendary Laura Alonso Lifetime Achievement Award 2024 founder of the Cuban Ballet School with her father Fernando Alonso and her mom Alicia Alonso. She is the current director of Centre ProDanza of Cuba Vladimir Malakhov Artistic Award for Excellence and Extraordinary Carrier 2024

The exciting participation of the exuberant dancers Katherine Ochoa and Rafael Quennedit representing Cincinnati Ballet under the Artistic Director Cervilio Amador, will be our guests artists to close our acclaimed Gala this season

We are honored to be able to present our award-winning artists for this season. The "2024 Artistic Excellence and Extraordinary Career Award" is given to Vladimir Malakhov, who was the artistic director of the Staatsballett Berlin (Berlin State Ballet) from its founding in 2004 until 2014. He is a former principal dancer with American Ballet Theatre and Vienna State Opera Ballet. We are also honored to present the 2024 Lifetime Achievement Award to the legendary Laura Alonso, renowned teacher and founder of the Cuban Ballet School Fernando Alonso and is now the current director of Centre ProDanza in Habana, Cuba.

We have invited a jury from diverse cultures and with extensive professional experience: Li Anlin, Assistant Director of Texas Ballet Theatre; Daryl Gray, International Acclaimed Choreographer; Orlando Salgado, International Acclaimed Master Teacher; Paul Seaquist, Ballet Entrepreneur, Manager Vladimir Malakhov; Cervilio Amador, Artistic Director of Cincinnati Ballet; Cameron Basden, Managing Director Miami City Ballet School; Etienne Bechard, International Acclaimed Choreographer.

To conclude, we thank the Dennis C. Moss Cultural Arts Center, along with all the staff, partners, and supporters, for the incredible opportunity to work together. Without you, this event would not have been possible!

SINCERELY

Deborah Marquez



We Honor:
Laura Alonso

Lifetime Achievement Award 2024

Laura Alonso, born in New York and is the daughter of world famous ballerina Alicia Alonso and renowned teacher and founder of the Cuban Ballet School Fernando Alonso. She herself is known as a teacher, coach and an expert at staging the well-known classics. For several years she served as the personal coach and teacher for international prima ballerina assoluta, Alicia Alonso. *Dance Theatre of Harlem* artistic director, former prima ballerina and former editor of *Pointe* magazine, Virginia Johnson, calls her an "international master teacher extraordinaire."

Ms. Alonso was honored with an award as the best coach at the Jackson International Ballet Competition in 1990. Her student, Jose Manuel Carreno, won the *Grand Prix de Ville*, the highest award possible. Ms. Alonso has served as coach, jury member and teacher at the Jackson IBC and as jury member of the *Concours International de Danse de Paris, France*, the *Alicia Alonso International Ballet Competition* and other competitions around the world. A teacher of world class experience, Ms. Alonso has taught for professional ballet companies all over the world.

Ms. Alonso's 25 year performing career with *Ballet National de Cuba* included soloist work in all of the traditional classics. Today she travels around the world teaching and staging the classics for pre-professional as well as professional companies such as London's *Royal Ballet School* and *The Royal Danish Ballet*.

Ms. Alonso has been guest teacher and artistic advisor of *Canton Ballet* since 1990 and has helped train many of our dancers through her frequent visits. Ms. Alonso founded *CUBALLET Summer Intensive* in 1984. She founded and is now the current director of *Centre ProDanza* in *Habana, Cuba*.



We Honor:

Vladimir Malakhov

Artistic Award for Excellence and Extraordinary Career 2024

I was born in 1925, the son of a Ranching Family, Vera and Jim Barnett, in Okanogan, a small town in the north central part of Washington State.

I had studied Tap Dancing, as a youngster, into my High School days and at my arrival in Japan I auditioned for a Liaison Unit, which was part of the Army in Tokyo, Japan, using all GI's to perform Broadway Shows, at the Ernie Pyle Theater. I was fortunate to work with an accomplished choreographer, who took an interest in me and encouraged me to find a teacher of ballet and seek a career in dance. I couldn't wait to follow that advice. Arriving home to visit my family for a couple of weeks after mustering out of service, I was off to California, to find that teacher, as all I knew of Dance was Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers and dancing in the movies. I was lucky as the first teacher I found was according to Fredrick Ashton, the Director of the British Royal Ballet, the University of the Dance, he told me when I worked with him several years later.

He recognized my training, which was still with me. That was Bronislava Nijinska. I was guided to her by luck and my studies were paid for by the GI Bill. I took twelve classes a week with her and after a year and eight months was invited to join the Original Ballet Russe by David Lachine, which was performing in Barcelona, Spain, performing with the company until its demise.

I traveled to Paris thinking that a film of Lachine's "Graduation Ball" was to be filmed and I was to be in it, however it never happened, but I studied with Lubov, Igorova, until I knew I had to have enough of my money for my fare back to New York City and then left for home. I had a friend in the City I was able to stay with while I auditioned for another job. I was able to make that happen, until I could realize the dream job for me, which was to work for George Balanchine, that opportunity happened in December of 1949, they were looking for one boy for their second season.

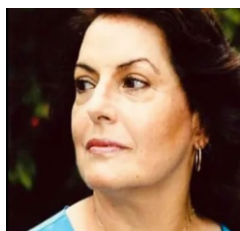
I went, but didn't have much faith in the idea that I would get that one place. Making up my mind that if there was ever a time when I had to be aggressive, this was it and that I was. However, nothing was said to anyone after the audition, so I went to the dressing room and was preparing to get dressed and leave, when I walked Jerome Robbins, who said to me "where are you going, you have a rehearsal", besides wanting to faint I redressed into practice clothes and went for a rehearsal, at which time they did a run through of a ballet I had never seen, being dragged about by a wonderful dancer, Barbara Walczak, who stayed and taught me the ballet, after everyone left the studio. I was on stage two days later dancing in "The Guests", Jerome Robbins ballet and "Symphony In C", George Balanchine. In seventh heaven, even after almost having a heart attack.

Ballet and headed for a new adventure. Ms. Dorothy due to bad health retired from the company in 1961 and I was designated by her to be the next Artistic Director taking the company from non-professional to professional status, changing the name by dropping the Civic to only Atlanta Ballet. I remained as the director, until 1994 when I resigned. I continued as a freelance person, with the staging of Mr. Balanchine's ballets for the Balanchine Trust and working with Nancy Reynolds, the head of the Balanchine Foundation, retrieving parts of Choreography he did for me, or works that I had the pleasure of dancing, done for other dancers. I also have continued to teach and give back to young dancers seeking their own careers in dance, one of my greatest pleasures. I am now a proud grandfather Dear Pal, as they call me to the oldest Aaron, son of David and Jackie and Ryan and Austin, sons of Elizabeth and Robert Jr. My life in dance, with dance and dancers has been a joy and continues to be. I would do it all again, the same way, with all the same family and people that have crossed my path during these wonderful years. There are many and all very loved and I'm so grateful for their journey with me.

Dance Open

AMERICA

Our Judges



Laura Alonso

Artistic Director
Centro Pro-Danza de Cuba



Anlin Li

Texas Ballet Theater
Assistant Artistic Director



Camaron Basden

Managing Director Miami City Ballet School



Cervilio Amador

Cincinnati Artistic Director



Etienne Bechard

International Acclaim Choreographer



Paul Seagquist

Entrepreneur, Manager Vladimir Malakhov



Daryl Gray

International Acclaim Choreographer



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Katherine Ochoa

Katherine Ochoa began training in 2009 at the National School of Ballet in Cuba where she learned a vast repertoire of variations and won both gold and silver medals in the Havana International Ballet competition. She later joined the Cuban National Ballet and in 2019 had the opportunity to participate in the semifinals of YAGP in Chicago and won the Grand Prix Award. She moved on to participate in the semifinals of YAGP in New York where she placed in the top 12. As a member of the Corps de Ballet in Cuba she performed in Giselle, Swan Lake, Cinderella, Don Quixote, and Umbral and she was quickly promoted to First Soloist. This is Ochoa's second season with Cincinnati Ballet. She was promoted to Soloist in 2023.



Rafael Quenedit

Quenedit comes to Cincinnati from the National Ballet of Cuba, where he quickly ascended to the role of principal dancer. He began his training in 2006 in Cuba at Escuela Elemental de Ballet Alejo Carpentier where he trained for five years. He then spent eight years training with the National Ballet School of Cuba. He graduated in 2014 and joined the National Ballet of Cuba as a corps de ballet dancer. Quenedit Castro was quickly cast in soloist and principal roles, before being named principal dancer at the prestigious, international company. He has also worked with internationally-renowned choreographers including Alicia Alonso, Alexei Ratmansky, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Giuliano Peparini, Alberto Mendez, among others. Sharing his art with dance lovers around the world has been one of his passions. He has performed lead roles in the United States, Italy, Spain, France, Canada, Mexico and several others. Competitions awards include: Bronze medal at the International Ballet competition in Havana, Cuba; Junior division. Gold medal at the International Ballet competition in Cape Town, South Africa; Junior division. Gold medal at the XX International Ballet competition in Havana, Cuba. Also awarded best Artistic Performance; Senior division. Winner at Amici Word Dance competition in Italy. Principal roles with the National Ballet of Cuba: Sawn Lake; Don Quixote; Giselle; La Fille Mal Gardée; The Nutcracker; Romeo & Juliet; Carmen; La Bayadere; Cinderella, Theme & Variations.



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ARTISTIC AWARDS 2024
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Artistic Award Ceremony

Overture with All Participants of Grand Prix Dance Open America Finals Miami 2024
Choreography by **Etienne Bechard**
Compositor: **Max Richter**

Dance Open America has the honor to present highlights selected during our Grand Prix Miami Finals Competition 2024.

The Grand Pas de Don Quixote

Choreography by **Marius Petipa**
Compositor: **Ludwig Minkus**
Dancers: **Katherine Ochoa and Rafael Quenedit**
Guest Artists: **Cincinnati Ballet**



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