

 carolinecalouche  
& CO. 



STARGAZER



# STARGAZER

**PRESENTED BY**



Founder & Artistic Director **Caroline Calouche**

Booth Playhouse at the Blumenthal Performing Arts Center

May 4, 7pm

May 5, 7pm

May 6, 3pm and 7pm

# STARGAZER

## CAST (in order of appearance)

Stella..... Lydia Schmidt  
Moon..... Cyara Hotopp\*  
Comet..... Jenna Ciotta\*  
Sun..... Aaron Atkins, Caroline Calouche,  
Javier Gonzalez, Cyara Hotopp, Shaun Wilson and Shay Yara  
Mercury..... Matt Sanchez\*  
Venus..... Edie Pryll  
Mars..... Aaron Atkins, Ellen Waylonis\*, Jenna Ciotta,  
Kiana Pieters, Savannah Wilson, Shaun Wilson and Shay Yara  
Jupiter..... Kiana Pieters\*, Edie Pryll\*, Savannah Wilson\* and Shay Yara\*  
Saturn..... Cyara Hotopp, Javier Gonzalez, Edie Pryll,  
Matt Sanchez, Savannah Wilson, Shaun Wilson and Shay Yara  
Uranus..... Shaun Wilson  
Neptune..... Aaron Atkins, Caroline Calouche, Kiana Pieters,  
Ellen Waylonis, Savannah Wilson, Shaun Wilson and Shay Yara

### Production

Lighting and Projection Designer: John P. Woody

Original Lighting and Set Design by Jennifer O'Kelly

Costume Designers: Caroline Calouche and Tricia Camacho

Costume Constructors: Caroline Calouche, Tricia Camacho, Shaun Wilson, Wendy Bailey

Stage Manager: Valerie Wheeler

Production Manager: Shaun Wilson      Technical Manager: Stacy Fernandez

\*Choreography in collaboration with the performer.

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# About Us

We are a nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring people of diverse backgrounds to explore beyond their boundaries through performance and education.

Our vision is to create educational opportunities for people to experience the world from a unique and artistic perspective, which will enrich their lives and the lives of those around them.

We are proud to be a resident company of the Blumenthal Performing Arts Center.

The Charlotte Cirque & Dance Center is the school for Caroline Calouche & Co., where we have classes for ages 4 to adult in contemporary dance, jazz, ballet, acrobatics, partner acrobatics, aerial silks, trapeze, aerial hoop/lyra, German Wheel and much more.

## School Staff

School Director.....	Caroline Calouche
Program Director .....	Kristin Bridges
Student Company Director.....	Nicole Muse-Dennis
Production Manager.....	Shaun Wilson
Education Coordinator.....	Stephanie Moore
Front Desk.....	Tovi Martin and Jessica Himes

## Faculty

Pauline Biahun, Kristin Bridges, Caroline Calouche, Carlos Alexis Cruz, Jessica Himes, Nicole Muse-Dennis, Phillip McRorie, Kiana Pieters, Edie Pryll, Matt Sanchez, Sarah Small, Savannah Wilson, Shaun Wilson and Shay Yara

## Board Members

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[CC&Co. Website](#)

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# STARGAZER

## Who's Who

### **Caroline Calouche, Artistic Director**

Caroline's dancing roots began in the small town of Gastonia, North Carolina (12 miles outside Charlotte) and branched out to Texas Christian University for two BFA degrees in Ballet and Modern Dance. From there she studied in Europe in Rome, Brussels and then completed a postgraduate program in choreography at the Salzburg Experimental Academy of Dance.



Finally home sick, Caroline returned to her hometown and saw that Charlotte had a stronger arts scene than when she left for college. So she founded the contemporary dance and aerial company Caroline Calouche & Co. in 2006. She is known for blending contemporary dance with aerial arts as well as merging ballet, partner acrobatics and contact improvisation to create her own style in floor partnering.

She has created over 70 choreographic works for the professional stage. Notable works are 'Carmina Burana', 'Lingua', 'Star Gazer' and 'Clara's Trip'. This Summer, Caroline will premiere a new work at the world renowned American Dance Festival. She continues to push herself physically as a performer and mentally as a choreographer.

Many people have inspired her along the way in the dance and circus field. Some influential teachers are Li-Chou Cheng, Elizabeth Gillaspay, Mary Cochran, Susan Douglas Roberts, Kerry Kreiman, Susan Quinn, Joao da Silva, Andrew Harwood, Libby Farr, Keren Levi, Elsie and Serenity Smith, Molly Graves, Susan Murphy, Nancy Smith, Nicole Merman, Christine van Loo, Aimee Hancock, Amanda Lynch, Rodleigh Stevens and Tanya Burka.

Caroline is the founder of the Charlotte Dance Festival, which is now an event under the new [Dance Artist Alliance CLT](#) that she serves as a board member. On June 17, Caroline will premiere a new work at the American Dance Festival (Durham, NC) on the Made in NC program.

## **Aaron Atkins**

Aaron Atkins is originally from Lancaster, South Carolina and gained notoriety at an early age as a contemporary ballet dancer before attending the prestigious Greenville South Carolina's South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities.

As a contemporary ballet dancer, Mr. Atkins debuted at the young age of 17 with Classical Contemporary Ballet Theatre and Ballet Savannah as a principal dancer in 2007. Mr. Atkins also performed with South Carolina's Columbia City Ballet; and York County Ballet that same year. Additionally, he worked as a choreographer, co-director, and make-up artist for the Lancaster Community Playhouse and received The Director's Choice Award and Best Make-up Artistry in 2006 for his work in the stage play version of Oliver. Mr. Atkins relocated to New York in 2010 to continue his artistic and performance endeavors. He worked with Ballet Hispanico and was a founding company member of BH Dos the second company of Ballet Hispanico.

In 2012 Mr. Atkins Founded Ballet Inc. Since Ballet Inc.'s founding by Mr. Atkins, his artistic vision and choreography has led Ballet Inc. to commendable, international credibility and groundbreaking success. Most Recently, Ballet Inc. has opened Ballet Inc. Studios, located in the heart of Rock hill South Carolina, near the home town of Mr. Atkins. It has been his life mission to bring Ballet Inc.'s Mission back to his hometown.

## **Cyara Hotopp**

Cyara Hotopp is a lover of circles, mom of two, and recovered attorney based out of Columbus, Ohio. She specializes in aerial hoop, sling, and skating on both ice and on wheels. Growing up, Cyara trained hard as a competitive figure skater and is a US Figure Skating Association triple gold medalist.

Cyara began taking aerial classes as a way stay in shape and to channel her creative energy, and she fell in love with the art form! She now keeps busy as a professional performer and aerial instructor, and has had some wonderful opportunities for which she is eternally grateful.

Most notably, she has worked with Shade Productions as an aerialist at Six Flags Great America, and she has appeared on stage in front of thousands alongside Greensky Bluegrass and Dark Star Orchestra. She is very excited to continue growing and making a name for herself in this industry!



### **Edie Pryll**

Edie Pryll is a circus arts performer specializing in contortion, stilt-walking, trapeze, and partner acrobatics. She began taking aerial and dance classes at Charlotte Cirque & Dance Center in 2016 and ever since she has fallen in love with every circus discipline she can get her hands on. Edie appreciates theater and dance and often watches live performances in her free time. She has been a faculty member of CC&DC since 2021. Edie enjoys performing on stage with CC&DC and Caroline Calouche & Co. She was a member of the Scarowinds Terror Team in October 2022 where she was awarded for stilt walking. Edie will graduate Myers Park High School this spring and looks forward to attending the New England Center for Circus Arts' (NECCA) ProTrack in the fall of 2023.



### **Ellen Waylonis**

Ellen Waylonis is a Boston-based multi-disciplinary circus artist, educator, choreographer, and producer. She is a founding member and frequent performer with the Boston Circus Guild, and has toured nationally with Cirque Productions, Nimble Arts, and her own company, Off the Ground Circus. She was a 2021 Boston Foundation LAB grantee with her contemporary circus troupe, Circus 617, which she co-founded in 2020.



In addition to her work on stage, Ellen co-founded Esh Circus Arts in Somerville, MA in 2010. In 2017 she was part of the founding team for Commonwealth Circus Center in Boston, MA. Ellen now splits her time between performing, teaching, and keeping the circus in business at Esh. She also recently began training to become an Intimacy Director with IDC.

### **Javier Gonzalez**

Javier has performed Clara's Trip the past six years in a variety of roles including Beau and Candycane. He began his career in dance in 2008 studying hip-hop and various Latin Style Dances. In 2009 He became a company member of Ballet Folclórico de las Americas and LeColours Latino Dance.



He was the principal dancer for the modern department at CPCC Dance Theater from 2010 to 2015. He has also danced with ECHO Contemporary Dance Company and the Moving Poets of Charlotte as well as a guest dancer for Carnaval Carolina, Charlotte's largest Latin festival.

He has been a backup dancer for Latin artist including Las Fenix, Jorge Celedon and former Miss Universe Alicia Machado. On the side Javier enjoys teaching dance to Latin girls preparing them for their quinceañeras celebrations. He currently is a manager at Brix Pizza in Fort Mill, SC.



### **Jenna Ciotta**

Born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona, Jenna's early years were spent developing a love of dance, theatre, and dry heat. She found circus arts after completing a BA in Gender Studies and an MA in Human Rights. Circus offered a new and exciting creative outlet for personal expression. Her mixed background in academia, activism, and movement draws her into spaces where performance arts and politics intersect.

She is a member of the 2019 inaugural graduate class of the 3 year Pro-Track Program at the New England Center for Circus Arts. She is a member of the Boston Circus Guild, and currently lives in Northampton, MA.



### **Kiana Pieters**

Kiana is an emerging artist athlete, currently based out of Charlotte NC, but with roots all around the world. She draws inspiration from her Mexican, Dutch-Indonesian, Canadian, and US roots, and aspires to share joy and awe through storytelling with cirque, dance, and creating music.

Her first love and specialty are aerial silks, but she also trains in German wheel, Lyra, Contemporary dance, hand balancing, partner acro, and most recently has fallen in love with Cyr wheel. She started training at Charlotte Cirque & Dance Center (CC&DC) and Bloom Movement Artistry in 2021, teaches beginner aerial classes at CC&DC, and performed in Caroline Calouche & Co's Clara's Trip, various festivals and showcases, and will perform as Glinda in CC&DC's Oz (May 2023). She's excited to continue growing, performing, and sharing inspiration and life with the world.



### **Lydia Schmidt**

Lydia has been dancing since age two, training in Ballet, Tap, Jazz, Acro, and Contemporary. She discovered cirque training at age six and loved how it combined Dance, Acro, and climbing like a monkey. Lydia has performed with Elite Academy of Dance and Imagine Youth Theater in Pinehurst, NC. She appeared in the 2021 production of Clara's Trip. She has enjoyed performing in Charlotte festivals such as Festival in the Park and Fall for Matthews. Lydia hopes to someday learn flying trapeze and teeterboard. She is a fifth grader at Beverly Woods Elementary. When she is not doing cirque, Lydia likes to do crafts and play with friends.





### **Matthew Sanchez**

Matthew Sanchez is a Bboy from the Bronx NY who now resides in Charlotte NC. His classes are made to get you moving, build confidence, pass history, and give students a new form of expression. He's been breaking since 2009 when he found his first community of dancers. He had rocked the floor before but it wasn't until he met his first mentor that he learned the culture behind the dance. As he got older, he went on to compete, perform, and share the floor with amazing dancers across the country and even across the globe. In his journey, he found that sharing his love for the dance was just as exciting as the days when he first learned. So now his goal is to share that same feeling with the future bboys and bgirls of the world.



### **Savanah Wilson**

Savanah is currently a senior at Ardrey Kell High School. They found their love for dance early on and joined the circus world not long after that. They grew up taking tap, jazz, ballet, and contemporary and then began the circus program at Charlotte Cirque and Dance Center. By the age of 13, they were certain that a circus-based career was the right path for them. Savanah has studied a variety of circus skills including aerial silks, lyra, trapeze, duo trap, partner acro, and loops. Recently they have added fire eating/manipulation to their repertoire!



Over the years, Savanah has performed in many different productions. They played Scrooge in The Christmas Carol, Glinda in The Wizard of Oz, and many more, including Caroline Calouche & Co. Christmas show, Clara's Trip, in 2021 and 2022!

### **Shaun Wilson**

Coming all the way from sunny Melbourne, Florida (where NASA is located), Shaun Wilson now lives in Charlotte, NC and is a cheerleader gone dancer gone aerialist. With over 12 years of performance experience under his belt, he has trained in ballroom, jazz, hip-hop, gymnastics, and aerial arts. With a passion for teaching and sharing, Shaun has coached dance and tumbling at various dance centers, with students ranging from kindergartners to adults.

In his free time, Shaun enjoys all types of outdoor activities, including skating, swimming, hiking, and kayaking. When he is not outside, he is either playing Mariokart or binge-watching Netflix dramas.



## **Shay Yara**

Shay Yara is a circus artist with specialties in dance trapeze, hand-balancing, stilt walking, and acrobatics. Shay started in competitive gymnastics competing up until he was 14. He retired from USAG competition and switched to circus arts at CC&DC in 2020. He fell in love with Circus and hasn't stopped training since. When Shay was a gymnast, he spent free time in the off-season performing dance and musical theater. Circus happens to be the perfect mix of all his passions. Shay has always loved teaching, and loves being a part of the faculty at CC&DC. Shay was a member of the Terror Team at Scarowinds during their 2022 season as a stilt-walker and loved interacting with guests in character every night. Shay also performs with the CC&DC student company in various shows around Charlotte, and with Caroline Calouche & Co. in their winter show Clara's Trip. Shay will be graduating from Charlotte Teaching Early College as a Junior this spring to attend the New England Center for Circus Arts (NECCA) as a Dance Trapeze Major in their pro-track program in the fall of 2023. He is beyond proud and thankful for the opportunity to be a part of this show and is so excited to share the stage with so many amazing artists.



## **PRODUCTION**

### **John P. Woodey, Lighting Designer**

John has designed for numerous companies including the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, Olney Theatre Center, Imagination Stage, Shaker Mountain Opera, Theatre Charlotte, Gallery Players(Off Broadway), Access Theatre(Off Broadway), Chautauqua Opera and Charlotte Ballet. John has also designed lighting for broadcast including Netflix's Fortune Feimster's Sweet and Salty and the ACC Football Honors Program. John spent time in London designing for the Central St. Martins School of Art where he designed lights for "The Birds Project." Other lighting credits include assisting at Baltimore's Centerstage, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Cleveland Play House, Geva Theater and the Alley Theatre. John was faculty and designer at DeSales, Catholic and Johnson C. Smith Universities. He is the Assistant Professor of Theatre at Winthrop University specializing in technical direction and design. He completed his graduate work at Ohio University where he received the regional Peggy Ezekiel Award of Outstanding Achievement in Design. He is a member and Vice President of the IATSE Local 322 in Charlotte, NC. [www.johnpwoodey.com](http://www.johnpwoodey.com)

### **Valerie Wheeler, Stage Manager**

Valerie Wheeler has served as a Production Stage Manager at opera companies and festivals across the US, including New York City Opera, Portland Opera, Opera Carolina, Toledo Opera, Opera Grand Rapids, Wichita Grand Opera, Wolf Trap Opera Company, Opera Cleveland, University of Southern California/Thornton Opera, Opera Santa Barbara and Chautauqua Opera. With over 25 years of experience in the field, among her additional roles and credits, she served as Production Manager for the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival from 2010-2017.

### **Shaun Wilson, Production Manager**

### **Stacy Fernandez, Technical Manager**

Stacy is a New Jersey native and recent Theatre Graduate from The University of North Carolina at Charlotte. In undergrad, she performed in "Migrant X" and "These Shining Lives". She decided to take a chance in production and served as the Assistant Stage Manager for "Jump" and "Pippin" as well as Stage Manager for "Single Black Female". She worked on the World Premiere of "Succession" at the National Black Theatre Festival, served as a Stage Manager for the Charlotte Dance Festival, and was recently Venue Manager for BOOM Charlotte.

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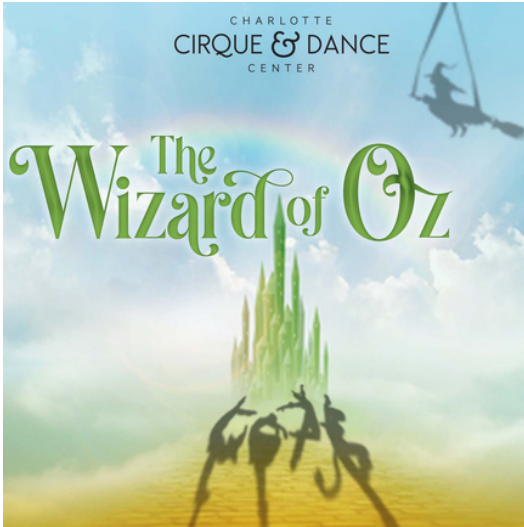
Special thanks to Children's Theatre of Charlotte and Opera Carolina for in-kind support for the sets

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# Upcoming Events



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