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**SAVANNAH BALLET THEATRE LAUNCHES ‘SAVANNAH YOUTH BALLET’**

**SAVANNAH, GA – August 6, 2020 –**The Savannah Ballet Theatre (SBT) launches a new organization, The Savannah Youth Ballet (SYB), to provide young dancers from the Southeastern USA the opportunity to become a vital part of a professional ballet company. This pre-professional program is open to students of all dance levels from ages 9-18, and auditions, which will be socially distanced, will take place at the studio on Whitemarsh Island, 115 Charlotte Road, from 1-2 p.m. on Sunday, August 23 for ages 9-13 and from 2-3 p.m. for ages 14-18.

SYB’s mission is to build and nurture the talent of the next generation of artists, and the launch of this sister organization to SBT, will help young dancers develop by offering one-of-a-kind experiences to dance alongside company professionals in full-length ballet productions throughout the season such as *The Nutcracker*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Lion, The Witch, & The Wardrobe*, and *The Little Mermaid* and more. This new initiative offers young dancers in our region the opportunity to train at the highest level with a laser focus on discipline, classical technique, and traditional ballet. Dancers will be able to continue training with their current studio, but joining SYB will enable them to expand their dance education and experience.

“We are extremely excited to launch this new initiative as it demonstrates SBT’s commitment to excellence and inclusion, and serves our mission and the community simultaneously by giving dancers from across the region access to participation in professional level productions,” said Artistic Program Coordinator Rebecca Dugal. “We encourage young dancers to come out and audition to have the wonderful opportunity to further curate their talents. We put the safety of dancers and staff above all else, so we have ensured that the studio, which is large enough for social distancing, will be sanitized regularly.”

SBT was established in 1998 under the artistic direction of Suzanne Braddy. Recognized as the premiere dance company in Southeast Georgia, SBT is best known locally for its annual production of the perennial holiday favorite, *The Nutcracker*. SBT presents a full season of classical and contemporary dance every year, and is aiming to continue bringing the art form of dance to the community safely amidst the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic.

SBT is Savannah and southeast Georgia’s only professional dance company. It is their mission to develop and showcase the talent of dedicated Savannah dancers alongside top professional dancers who train in the studio, and to engage in educational outreach and promotion of the art of dance within the community.

Auditions are $10; and additional information about joining SYB will be available on audition day.

For more information about SBT or SYB, please visit [www.savannahballettheatre.org](http://www.savannahballettheatre.org) or e-mail contact@savannahballettheatre.org.

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