



# Dorothy Gunther Pugh

(CEO & Founding Artistic Director) founded Ballet Memphis in 1986 with two dancers and a budget of \$75,000. Today, the Company has 26 dancers, a budget of more than \$4.4 million, and is building a new multi-million administrative and studio space in the heart of Memphis' arts and theatre district. Under Dorothy's direction, Ballet Memphis has been lauded by the Ford Foundation, the Hearst Foundations, and the Mellon Foundation, among others. Dorothy has appeared on several national dance panels, including PBS NewsHour, the National Endowment for the Arts Dance Panel and the Glass Slipper Ceiling Symposium. A member of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, she has received the Women of Achievement Award for Initiative and the Gordon Holl Outstanding Arts Administrator's Award, and is a recipient of a fellowship from the Center for Social Innovation at Stanford University Graduate School of Business. She is a fellow in the National Arts Strategies'

Chief Executive Program™ and was named a 2012 Legends Award winner from the Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis. In 2013, she received the Briggs' Foundation Community Service Award. She is the current chair of the Artistic Directors' Council for Dance/USA, the nation's largest dance service organization for professional dance companies, and also serves on its panel for diversity and inclusion. Dorothy is a native Memphian who began her ballet training with Edith Royal of Orlando, Florida and later studied with Louise Rooke and Memphis Ballet. After graduating cum laude from Vanderbilt University, she studied with Raymond Clay and Donna Carver, and performed with Dance Concert Theatre. She completed teacher-training courses at the Royal Academy of Dance in London and with New York ballet master David Howard. Dorothy appeared in many roles with Ballet Memphis before leaving the stage.

“Dorothy Gunther Pugh is an idealist who's determined to do more than pay lip service to diversity. What's the result of this deliberate diversification? An eclectic company bursting with energy.”

– Jennifer Stahl, *Dance magazine*



“The climate that Ballet Memphis brings to the stage is unorthodox, peculiar, fresh and large-spirited. The mood blowing through all of these dances is generous, imaginatively breaking rules.”

– Alastair Macaulay, *The New York Times*

# Ballet Memphis

is now in its 30th season and is recognized for its close ties to the region’s rich musical and literary heritage through dance, production and training, including its lauded Memphis Project works and its River Project series. Ballet Memphis has staff and facilities of the highest caliber, and partners with artists from around the globe for collaborative and original works. The Ford Foundation lauded Ballet Memphis as a “national treasure.” The Company has received grants and high praise from other foundations and national media alike, including the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the National

Dance Project, the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *The Huffington Post*, *Fast Company*, *Dance* magazine, *Pointe* magazine and others. It has performed to excellent reviews at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., at the Joyce Theater and the Sylvia and Danny Kaye Playhouse in New York City, at Houston’s Dance Salad, at the Festival des Arts de Saint-Saveur (Canada), and Spring to Dance Festival in St. Louis, among others.

# Recent Media Reviews and News:

“If there is a ballet company in the United States that takes racial integration more seriously than this one, I’d love to know about it.”

– **Mindy Aloff, *Dance Enthusiast***

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“...energy both lively and quizzical.” – **Alastair Macaulay, *The New York Times***

For full article [click here](#).

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“Water of the Flowery Mill, the Arshile Gorky-inspired work choreographed by itinerant rising star Matthew Neenan (both the title and the abstract painting of the costumes refer to a Gorky painting at the Metropolitan Museum of Art) aspires with especially intense energy.” – **Mindy Aloff, *Dance Enthusiast***

“The women and men [of Ballet Memphis] are physically strong and athletically adept, and they’re well-schooled, or well-drilled, in their ballet, with at least one of the men performing crystalline gargouillades and another tossing a ballerina into double air pirouettes high off the ground on one musical chord then catching her mid-air on the next, as lightly as if she were a Number 2 pencil.”

– **Mindy Aloff, *Dance Enthusiast***

“The fact that the statements themselves are so clear and focused is ultimately attributable to the genius loci of this 29-year-old company, Dorothy Gunther Pugh—its hands-on CEO and founding artistic director, who, by her own observation at the talkback, collaborates on everything with an iron hand in a velvet glove. Ms. Pugh, whose searching intellect evidently enjoys much more than a passing acquaintance with the Great Books of the Western World and the history of theatrical dancing, as well as with current events, wants it all: a meritocracy and fairness to her dancers (thus the Merce Cunningham-like use of large casts deployed as individuals), musicality at least of choreographic phrasing (thus the intricate weave of musical excerpts from various sources for a given score), relevance to the front page as well as to the arts page, and High Art.” – **Mindy Aloff, *Dance Enthusiast***

For full article [click here](#).

“Dorothy Gunther-Pugh is an idealist who’s determined to do more than pay lip service to diversity. What’s the result of this deliberate diversification? An eclectic company bursting with energy.” – **Jennifer Stahl, *Dance magazine***

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and quizzical.”

– Alastair Macaulay, *The New York Times*

“By fearlessly taking risks on less-established artists, Pugh is championing examples that can be inspirations for future dancers and choreographers. What’s more, she’s creating something different from the same-old same-old you find on so many ballet stages.” – **Jennifer Stahl, *Dance magazine***

For full article [click here](#).

“The run, from October 27th to November 1st, marked the first time Ballet Memphis has graced the Joyce stage since 2007. I hope we won’t have to wait another eight years before this fine company comes back to remind us that diversity in ballet has long been alive and well outside of New York City.”

– **Sondra Forsyth, *Broadway World***

“The most polished and pleasing piece of the evening was Matthew Neenan’s 2011 ‘Water of the Flowery Mill,’ a fluid little masterpiece that brings to life the painting with the same title by the Armenian-born 20th century abstract impressionist Arshile Gorky. The costumes designed by Bruce Bui reflect the arresting splashes of color and random shapes of Gorky’s 1942 work that was inspired by a mill near his Connecticut home, which purportedly awakened his longing for the garden of his childhood.”

– **Sondra Forsyth, *Broadway World***

“The theme of ‘Politics’ is a confrontation between the two groups that is resolved at the end when everybody takes off suit coats and shoes in order to blend together as a harmonious ensemble. That’s a welcome message of hope in this era when racial tensions as well as divisive political partisanship so often dominate the news.” – **Sondra Forsyth, *Broadway World***

For full article [click here](#).

## More previews and news:

NY Times preview, “The Week of the Woman,”  
Alastair Macaulay

[click here](#)

Huntington Post preview, Curtis M. Wong

[click here](#)

The New Yorker preview

[click here](#)

OUT Magazine preview, Brian Schaefer

[click here](#)

Village Voice preview, Elizabeth Zimmer

[click here](#)



# Carnival of the Animals

Choreographer: Steven McMahon

Premiere: 2008

Costume Designer: Bruce Bui

Lighting Designer: Lisa Pinkham

Cast: 7 men, 11 women

Run Time: 24:30 minutes

To request high-resolution images and video, please [email](#) us.

Music: "Carnival of the Animals" by Camille Saint-Saëns

Choreographer's Note: Associate Artistic Director Steven McMahon tells a story of human longing, delight and foible through his observation of animal behavior.

Exclusive representation by Elsie Management. Laura Colby, Director.



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# Cinderella

Choreographer: Steven McMahon

Premiere: 2009

Costume Designer: Original costumes by John Stevenson and Johan Engles; additional costumes by Bruce Bui and David Heuvel

Lighting Designer: Greg MacPherson

Cast: Up to 29 dancers with 2 local children

Run Time: 2 hours w/ 2 fifteen minute intermissions

To request high-resolution images and video, please [email](#) us.

Music: "Cinderella" by Sergei Prokofiev recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Andre Previn. EMI Classics, rights pending.

Choreographer's Note: The beautiful and inspiring tale of a lonely but loving girl transformed into a princess, *Cinderella* is Steven McMahon's interpretation of the Charles Perrault fairy tale danced to the famous Sergei Prokofiev score.

Exclusive representation by Elsie Management. Laura Colby, Director.





# Confluence

Choreographer: Steven McMahon

Premiere: 2012 as part of the *River Project* series

Costume Designer: Bruce Bui

Lighting Designer: Jack Mehler

Cast: 4 men, 5 women

Run Time: 16 minutes

To request high-resolution images and video, please [email](#) us.

Music: Symphony No. 9 in E Minor, "New World: Largo(excerpt)" by Antonin Dvorak, recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra and Don Jackson from *Dream Suite II*, Silverline 2001, rights pending; "In the Upper Room," by Mahalia Jackson from *The Essential Mahalia Jackson*, originally released prior to 1972 Couch and Madison Partners, originally recorded 1963, released 2004 BBC Worldwide, rights pending; "Don't Knock," by Roebuck Staples, performed by Mavis Staples, from *You Are Not Alone*, published by Conrad Music, Anti Inc. 2010, rights pending.

**Choreographer's Note:** My thoughts for this piece are about making a home somewhere, the journey toward that and the building of community that results from that. In many ways, we find parallels exist between this journey that we make and the river that moves alongside us.

Exclusive representation by Elsie Management. Laura Colby, Director.



# The Darting Eyes

Choreographer: Matthew Neenan

Premiere: 2014 as part of the *River Project* series

Costume Designer: Christine Darch

Lighting Designer: Andrew Meyers

Cast: 5 men, 5 women

Run Time: 28 minutes

To request high-resolution images and video, please [email](#) us.

Music: "Down to the River to Pray" by Alison Krauss from *O Brother Where Art Thou?*; "Baptist Shout" by Frank Jenkins and "Go Wash In The Beautiful Stream" by Southern Wonders Quartet from *Take Me To The Water: Immersion Baptism in Vintage Music and Photography 1890-1950*; "Saul, HWV 53:42 Envy! Eldestborn of Hell" by George Frideric Handel, performed by Gabrieli Players and Paul McCreesh; "Christian Zeal and Activity" by John Adams from *The Chairman Dances*, San Francisco Symphony; "Baptism and Lonely Cactus" by Matthew Pierce.

**Choreographer's Note:** This work is inspired by the beautifully haunting images I've seen of Mississippi River baptisms, from all eras of history. The movement in the dance will reflect one's spiritual and physical journey in a lifetime; some of the Seven Deadly Sins and Virtues will serve as jumping-off points for the dancers' characters.

Exclusive representation by Elsie Management. Laura Colby, Director.





# Devil's Fruit

Choreographer: Julia Adam

Premiere: 2013 as part of the *River Project* series

Costume Designer: Christine Darch

Lighting Designer: Christopher S. Chambers

Visual Artist: Stephanie Cosby

Cast: 3 men, 3 women

Run Time: 22 minutes

To request high-resolution images and video, please [email](#) us.

Music: "Vivaldi, The Four Seasons: Spring 1 & Spring 2 & Summer 2" by Max Richter from *Recomposed by Max Richter: Vivaldi, The Four Seasons*, "Islands" by Philip Glass from *Glassworks-Expanded Edition*, "The Four Seasons Concerto in F Minor, RV 297 Winter: Il Largo" by Red Priest from *The Four Seasons*.

**Choreographer's Note:** I approached this work as a tripartite positioning of the mushroom: the science, the pagan mythology and the mind-altering power of the mushroom to initiate one into the mysteries of the divine. I am overwhelmed and amazed by the beauty and power of the fungi kingdom.

Exclusive representation by Elsie Management. Laura Colby, Director.



# Flyway

Choreographer: Steven McMahon

Premiere: 2014 as part of the *River Project* series

Costume Designer: Bruce Bui

Lighting Designer: Andrew Meyers

Scenery: Erin Harmon

Scenery Construction: KEDTECH

Cast: 4 men, 4 women

Run Time: 17 minutes 30 seconds

To request high-resolution images and video, please [email](#) us.

Music: "Seoul and Sexfaldur" by Amina from *Kurr* and "Silent Flight, Sleeping Dawn" by MONO from *Hymn to the Immortal Wind*

**Choreographer's Note:** The Mississippi Flyway is a major thoroughfare for many North American birds. It provides these birds with unobstructed passage and an important respite on their twice-a-year migration. I am interested in the many peculiarities, behaviors and patterns that birds exhibit in this setting, and desired to reimagine them through my own choreographic lens. Visual artist Erin Harmon has given these birds a vivid, fantastical home on the stage, inspired by the natural beauty of the Mississippi and the inherent beauty of the birds themselves.

Exclusive representation by Elsie Management. Laura Colby, Director.





# I Am

Choreographer: **Steven McMahon**

Premiere: 2015 as part of the *I AM* project

Costume Designer: **Bruce Bui**

Lighting Designer: **Helena Kuukka**

Cast: **3 men, 3 women**

Run Time: **18 minutes**

To request high-resolution images and video, please [email](#) us.

**Music:** "Fantasia on a Theme" by Thomas Tallis, performed by Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields and Sir Neville Marriner (rights pending); "White Winter Hymnal" by Fleet Foxes, courtesy of Sub Pop Records; "Everyday People" by the Staple Singers; "Lament by Balmorhea" and "You'll Never Walk Alone (Live)" by Mahalia Jackson.

**Choreographer's Note:** I am because we are. Through our interactions with other people, we are able to experience the deepest parts of our own humanity. Together we get to see the best parts of ourselves reflected back at us.

Exclusive representation by Elsie Management. Laura Colby, Director.



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# I Am A Child

Choreographer: Julia Adam

Premiere: 2015 as part of the *I AM* project

Costume Designer: Christine Darch

Lighting Designer: Helena Kuukka

Cast: 2 men, 2 women, 1 child

Run Time: 14:30 minutes

To request high-resolution images and video, please [email](#) us.

Music: "Congo Lullaby" by Paul Robeson; "When They Ring Them Golden Bells" by Natalie Merchant (rights pending)

**Choreographer's Note:** Initially inspired by Cornelia Parker's 2005 sculpture "AntiMass" which is constructed of wire-suspended charcoal fragments from an African-American Southern Baptist church that was destroyed by arsonists, Adam thought on the feelings the sculpture triggered about loss, love, darkness and light to create this new work.

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# I Am A Man: Grace and Dignity

Choreographer: Reggie Wilson

Premiere: 2015 as part of the /AM project

Costume Designer: Naoko Nagata

Lighting Designer: Helena Kuukka

Cast: 7 men, 5 women

Run Time: 21 minutes

To request high-resolution images and video, please [email](#) us.

Music: "ASCO" by Ali Farka Touré and Niafunké; "Blow Gabriel Blow" by John Davis, Bessie Jones and the St. Simon's Island Singers; "Death, Have Mercy" by Vera Hall; "Chevrolet" by Lonnie Young, Ed Young and Lonnie Young Jr.; "Hawa Dolo" by Ali Farka Touré and Toumani Diabaté; "I Want Jesus to Walk With Me" by James Shorty and Mississippi Fred McDowell (rights pending)

**Choreographer's Note:** The varied images and ideas I wrestled with were: the statement as "a declaration of civil rights as a declaration of independence against oppression"; the Wedgwood-designed anti-slavery medallion "Am I Not a Man And a Brother"; my personal family history in the second wave of the great migration moving out of the crucible of the Deep South; the historical suppression and compression of life and liberty in the U.S. for African Americans; as well as Ponca chief Standing Bear and the Native Americans' 1879 fight for habeas corpus.

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# I Am A Woman: Moulting

Choreographer: Gabrielle Lamb, Princess Grace Foundation-USA Fellowship Winner, 2014-2015

Premiere: 2015 as part of the *I AM* project

Costume Designer: Christine Darch

Lighting Designer: Helena Kuukka

Cast: 3 men, 7 women

Run Time: 21:30 minutes

To request high-resolution images and video, please [email](#) us.

Music: “#320” by Hauschka and Hildur Gudnadottir from *Pan Tone*; “Krakow” and “Draw a Map” by Hauschka and Hilary Hahn from *Silfra*; “Ping” by Hauschka from *Salon Des Amateurs*, rights pending; and “Satisfaction” and “Salty Dog” by Cat Power from *The Covers Record*.

**Choreographer’s Note:** This work, which received a 2014-15 Princess Grace Foundation – USA fellowship for choreography, was originally created as part of an evening-length program entitled *I Am*. The piece explores female body image and women’s relationship to the clothing they wear. Finding inspiration in the idea of insects shedding their exoskeletons, I approached this serious subject matter with a gentle touch of humor.

Exclusive representation by Elsie Management. Laura Colby, Director.





# In Dreams

Choreographer: Trey McIntyre

Premiere: 2007 as part of the *Memphis Project* series

Costume Designer: Bruce Bui

Lighting Designer: Travis Richardson

Cast: 2 men, 3 women

Run Time: 15:30 minutes

To request high-resolution images and video, please [email](#) us.

**Music:** All songs performed by Roy Orbison. "Dream Baby" by Cindy Walker, "You Tell Me" by Sam Phillips, "The Crowd" by Roy Orbison and Joe Melson, "I Never Knew" by Sam Phillips, "In Dreams" by Roy Orbison. Interview with Roy Orbison: Being Remembered from *Roy Orbison: Hits! Hits! Hits!*, "Crying" by Orbison/Melson

**Choreographer's Note:** Performed to the expressive voice of Roy Orbison, *In Dreams* is a sometimes dark, always passionate, journey through six of the legendary artist's most popular songs.

Exclusive representation by Elsie Management. Laura Colby, Director.



# The Little Prince

Choreographer: Julia Adam

Premiere: 2011

Costume Designer: Christine Darch

Lighting Designer: John Carpenter

Cast: 3 men, 8 women, 1 child

Run Time: 40 minutes

To request high-resolution images and video, please [email](#) us.

Music: Original Music Composed and Performed by Matthew Pierce

Choreographer's Note: In 2002, I became a mother to the most beautiful little girl I have ever seen and three years later, repeated the experience to meet my very own little prince. Not unlike the Pilot, I too was awakened by my children to remember that "One sees clearly only with the heart. Anything essential is invisible to the eyes."

In this piece based on Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's classic *The Little Prince*, I tell the story with vivid sights and sounds, joined by friends and long-time collaborators. This story reminds all of us to be honest and true to ourselves without losing the bigger picture by remembering what is essential.

Exclusive representation by Elsie Management. Laura Colby, Director.





# Midsummer Night's Dream

Choreographer: Mark Godden

Premiere: 2007

Costume Designer: Anne Armit

Lighting Designer: Greg MacPherson

Scenic Designer: Andrew Beck

Cast: 6 men, 11 women

Run Time: 1 hour

To request high-resolution images and video, please [email](#) us.

Music: *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Incidental Music, Op. 61* by Felix Mendelssohn, EMI Classics.

Description: Shakespeare's beloved tale of love, fairies, mistaken identity and mirth.

Exclusive representation by Elsie Management. Laura Colby, Director.





# Nutcracker

Choreographer: Steven McMahon, Joseph Jefferies, and Janet Parke

Premiere: 2015

Scenery and Costume Designer: David Walker

Lighting Designer: Jack Mehler

Cast: Up to 25 dancers, 2 local adults and 75 local children

Run Time: 2 hours w/ 2 fifteen minute intermissions

To request high-resolution images and video, please [email](#) us.

Music: Nutcracker score by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Description: A perennial favorite, the story of Clara and her Nutcracker Prince brings to life the magic and wonder of the holiday season.

Exclusive representation by Elsie Management. Laura Colby, Director.



# Politics

Choreographer: Rafael Ferreras

Premiere: 2015 as part of the *Memphis Project* series

Costume Designer: Bruce Bui

Lighting Designer: Jack Mehler

Cast: 4 female ballet dancers, 4 female jookers

Vocalists: 7

Run Time: 16:30 minutes

To request high-resolution images and video, please [email](#) us.

**Music:** "Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor, BMV 582: Passacaglia" and "Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 in G, BMV 1048: III. Allegro" by Johann Sebastian Bach; "Elijah Rock" composed by Moses Hogan and performed by vocalists from Hattiloo Theatre in Memphis.

**Choreographer's Note:** When creating *Politics*, I considered how people relate to each other, and I found how they approach each other very interesting. In this office setting, there are rules and politics in motion, in particular the footwear and footwork. Sometimes the rules become barriers to how you relate to one another, and that particular tension is what this work is about.

Exclusive representation by Elsie Management. Laura Colby, Director.





# Water of the Flowery Mill

Choreographer: **Matthew Neenan**

Premiere: **2011**

Costume Designer: **Bruce Bui**

Lighting Designer: **Jack Mehler**

Cast: **6 men, 4 women**

Run Time: **17 minutes**

To request high-resolution images and video, please [email](#) us.

Music: "Souvenir d'un Lieu Cher, Op. 42 III Melodie," "Valse Sentimentale, Op. 51, No. 6," "Valse-scherzo, Op. 34" by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky.

Choreographer's Note: This piece was inspired by the émigré painter Arshile Gorky. Gorky's colorful work is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

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# Wizard of Oz

Choreographer: **Steven McMahon**

Premiere: **2007**

Costume Designer: **Bruce Bui**

Lighting Designer: **Andrew Meyers**

Cast: **Up to 18 dancers plus 10 local children**

Run Time: **1 hour 30 minutes w/ 15 minute intermission**

To request high-resolution images and video, please [email](#) us.

**Music:** "Chant," "Weiner Walzer," "March," "Introduction and Theme" from *Variations on a Theme* of Frank Bridge; "Playful Pizzicato" from *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*; "Sunday Morning" and "The Storm" from *Peter Grimes* by *Benjamin Britten*; "Muzette" and "Prelude" from *Suite for Viola and Orchestra*; "Serenade to Music" and "Pavane of the Sons of the Morning" by *Ralph Vaughan Williams*; "St. Paul's Suite, Op. 29 No. 2," "Danse Rustique" and "Valse" from *Suite de Ballet* by *Gustav Holst*.

**Choreographer's Note:** Join Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Cowardly Lion on their memorable journey from the Land of Oz to the place that's like no other: Home.

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