

weekend

Dancing with the Stars



Daniel Ulbricht's
Stars of American
Ballet in Aspen

MUSIC JAS Academy opens Sunday, bringing in students from around the world B7 • **WHAT'S HAPPENING** B2

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Behind the Stars



STARS OF AMERICAN BALLET/COURTESY PHOTO

Daniel Ulbricht's Stars of American Ballet will perform Saturday at the Aspen District Theatre.

Daniel Ulbricht's Stars of American Ballet returns to Aspen

As a principal dancer for the New York City Ballet, the artistic adviser for Manhattan Youth Ballet and the founding director and leader of Stars of American Ballet, Daniel Ulbricht is a very busy man.

"I have learned to become very disciplined with time management,"

Ulbricht said in a recent phone interview. "I also love everything that I take on. I feel that the passion for these projects creates the fuel to perform them. None of these projects are obligations—they are out of fulfillment."

Aspen Santa Fe Ballet is partnering with Stars of American Ballet for a one-night-only performance at the Aspen District Theatre on Saturday. This is the third time that Ulbricht has brought his company to perform in Aspen, following shows in 2014 and 2017.

"I try to create a menu of dance that satisfies the 'tights and tutu' crowd," he explained, "and at the same time, expands on what dance can be for audiences today."

Stars of American Ballet came into fruition almost 10 years ago.

Ulbricht's mother was ill with uterine cancer and, due to treatment, she wasn't able to travel from Florida to New York City to see her son's performances. So, he thought, why not bring the show to her?

"It was such an exciting challenge," he said. "Luckily, I fell in love with the idea of putting it together and it has been a joy performing it. Though my mother lost her battle with cancer, it really is her legacy at work within me."

The mental aspect of dancing, combined with performance anxiety can sometimes be hard to get past, but Ulbricht believes in the mantra of "only to share, nothing to prove." He encourages every dancer to approach each piece of choreography with this mentality.

"For me, I have to remind myself that the audience is there to support and enjoy — not to judge and score," he said. "As for the difficult steps, it is about time and hard work. Experience really allows you to adapt internally without the audience knowing what happened. The greats stay calm and in control even when things don't go off as planned."

As an educator, Ulbricht works to inspire the next generation of dancers by informing, while also trying to have fun with it.

"You have to learn the rules that



STARS OF AMERICAN BALLET/COURTESY PHOTO

STARS, B6

Daniel Ulbricht's Stars of American Ballet will hold a one-night show Saturday.

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Chapel Gallery seeks valley artists to submit work for juried show

Staff report

The Aspen Chapel Gallery's second 4 Rivers Biennial Exhibition, a juried show, is seeking Roaring Fork Valley artists to submit work for consideration.

The jurors are Dick Carter and Teresa Booth Brown. There will be a \$250 Judges award and a People Choice Award.

To pick up an entry form, go to the Aspen Chapel office weekdays between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. After Aug. 8, you can contact Michael Bonds at studiomb@sopris.net. Submissions deadline is Aug. 23.

The biennial opens Oct. 16 and will be presented in partnership with Response, which provides help for domestic violence and sexual abuse.



STARS OF AMERICAN BALLET/COURTESY PHOTO

Daniel Ulbricht's Stars of American Ballet will perform Saturday at the Aspen District Theatre.

STARS

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make dance an art but the real beauty lies in the accomplishing and moving," he said. "I really try to use imagery while simplifying things so we can break down as many walls as possible."

As far as the choreography goes, Ulbricht must be inspired by the music, or else the process simply doesn't work. He has to enjoy listening to the music or else the choreography doesn't flow.

"There has to be an arc, color, and length that engages the audience," he explained. "I also want to make sure it balances out with the rest of the program."

In addition to the many hats that Ulbricht wears, he also founded Dance Against Cancer — an organization that aims to heal, celebrate and create for those affected by cancer.

"My best friend and I started Dance Against Cancer nine years ago," Ulbricht said. "We both had parents who had been diagnosed with cancer. We both weren't interested in running or cycling — but we knew how to dance."

To date, the organization has featured more than 270 artists, presented over 130 pieces and raised close to \$230 million, according to Ulbricht.

"Though we both have lost loved ones from cancer, we see that so many others are affected," he said. "It is our hope to see a world with less cancer. Hopefully, dance can be a part of that cure."

When asked to give advice to an aspiring ballet dancer, Ulbricht breaks it down in

IF YOU GO ...

What: Stars of American Ballet, presented by Aspen Santa Fe Ballet

Where: Aspen District Theatre

When: Saturday, 8 p.m.

How much: \$36 to \$94

Tickets: Wheeler Opera House box office; aspenshowtix.com

simple terms: "Work hard and know that it takes a lot of heart, time and mental toughness. Take care of yourself and be smart. Be inspired! If and when you get there, please don't forget to have fun. That is the only way you will feel fulfilled."

He cites his father as his biggest influence.

"He wasn't a dancer but he taught me what hard work was — the value and satisfaction of not stopping until the job is done," Ulbricht said. "My mother and father also taught me that what you do onstage is important but the person you are offstage will go with you the rest of your life."

Ulbricht is grateful to be back in Aspen and he hopes to continue the partnership with Aspen Santa Fe Ballet for years to come.

"Aspen Santa Fe Ballet has engaged and educated a community that knows what it is watching," he said. "Their commitment to cultivating and presenting dance for all audiences fits the mission of Stars of American Ballet. ... As I have gotten older, I am wanting to also prioritize my free time. There is nothing like finding time to walk the dog and fish with my fiancé. The balance is important!"

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