

Casting Process Information

Here are some thoughts about our process for determining casting decisions. We want this written to make sure everyone is aware of the many things we work hard to consider and what our heart is behind it each time. If you have any questions about the role that was given to you, please email us so that we can then work on a time to talk.

First, this is one of the hardest decisions we make for the organization several times each year. So many things are taken into account and we know (because we have experienced the exact same thing throughout our own careers) what the casting decisions can often mean to each dancer.

We do not want to disappoint anyone, we would love for everyone to be thrilled with their roles. We love celebrating with the dancers in their excitement. However, we also know that there can be disappointments (again, from much experience). These low moments can happen at every stage of a dancer's experience dancing, whether it is 5 years of dancing or 25 years of dancing.

Things we consider:

1. The Ballet Story and its Roles: we consider the ballet as a whole, where everyone fits in together, not just individually. Meaning, how each dancer can be placed in roles where we believe altogether the ballet will be its strongest, which each dancer in a position that suits them best.
2. Beyond the Ballet: we consider the whole semester and whether we have seen that the dancer is prepared to commit to and achieve ALL of the responsibilities they carry in each of the shows or events they are in, beyond the casting of any one particular program.
3. Class and Rehearsal Interaction: it will not work for someone to be in a demanding role if they are unable to take and apply correction, have self-motivation and diligence, or be able to work with their fellow dancers as well as the choreographers and directors.
4. Age: older dancers tend to be more mature in their ability to portray, however, an older age does not necessarily mean a soloist or lead role. We like to highlight everyone's strengths, particularly the older ones who are dancing at high levels.
5. Dancer Strengths and Weaknesses: roles have different physical, mental and emotional demands. A dancer's strengths in their technique for choreography execution, their mental ability to deal with the level of stress and expectations that will be on them, and their ability to portray and act in that role in a way that would carry the story.
 1. Too much strain on a dancer, whether physical, mental or emotional, could increase the risk of injury first and foremost. In addition, they may not be able to execute consistently on stage what they had been rehearsing in the studio, potentially injuring others (this is ESPECIALLY TRUE in roles that require partnering).
 2. If there is partnering, guests will likely be hired for roles in which case a dancer's height must be considered for roles depending on the height of the guest. Too much difference in height could result in injury, but also could not allow for the choreography to be executed or for consistency to be achieved.
 3. Various roles require various specific movement styles and the dancer's strength and consistency en pointe and in their core is paramount.
 4. Mental acuity to be flexible with: other dancers on stage, mistakes made by those around them, mistakes made in technical elements, tight choreographic timelines, last minute changes in choreography or staging, working with various co-dancers of different levels.