

Dawnell Dryja Black

Dawnell Dryja Black retired from dancing after 16 seasons on stage with Grand Rapids Ballet. Previously dancing with Cincinnati Ballet, Tulsa Ballet, Dayton Ballet and Metropolitan Ballet Theatre of Detroit, Ms. Dryja enjoyed a long, rewarding career with a repertoire spanning the classics to contemporary masterpieces, including Swan Lake, Giselle, Coppelia, Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, Paquita, Dracula, Peter Pan, Aladdin, Firebird, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Jack The Ripper, Red Angels, Fingerprints, Black and White, Sync, Jewels, Allegro Brillante, Who Cares, Serenade, Four Temperaments, Divertimento No. 15, Slaughter on Tenth Avenue, Concerto Barocco, Nine Sinatra Songs, Where the Wild Things Are, Celts, Rapture, Il Distratto, Con Amore, The Sofa, This Is Not A Raincoat and The Gift of the Magi, among others. Having the opportunity to work with esteemed choreographers and teachers from around the world such as Lila York, Nils Christie, Fredrick Franklin, Suzanne Farrell, Kirk Peterson, Val Caniporoli, Peter Boal, Septime Webre, Raymond Lukens, Mario Radakovsky and Stanton Welch helped shape her artistry. Having new roles crafted for her and mastering the classics were Ms. Dryja's happy place as a dancer. Performing live in concert with Bela Fleck and the Flecktones and the John Jorgenson Quintet were outstanding stage experiences.

Ms. Dryja is currently the Artistic Coordinator and Ballet Master at Grand Rapids Ballet where she has the privilege of working with and staging works for many of the incredible choreographers of our time including Alejandro Cerrudo, Trey McIntyre, Penny Saunders, Val Caniporoli, Christopher Stowell, Danielle Rowe, Adam Houglund, Amy Seiwert, Nicolas Blanc, Edwaard Liang, Katarzyna Skarpetowska to name a few.

Additionally, Ms. Dryja took over as the owner and Artistic Director of Academy of Dance Arts in Comstock Park, Michigan nine years ago and enjoys fostering an environment where students can grow in all the different disciplines of dance, as well as staging and creating new works. Ms Dryja is a member of Great Lakes Regional Dance Masters Chapter 46 and the Cecchetti Council of America. She is an ABT® Certified Teacher, who has successfully completed the ABT® Teacher Training Intensive in Pre-Primary through Level 7 of the ABT® National Training Curriculum and is a certified Progressing Ballet Technique teacher. Holding the title of Junior Miss Dance of America at the age of 15 was a highlight of her young dance career.