

ABT II

ABT II, under the direction of Wes Chapman, is a classical company of 14 dancers of outstanding potential. In its fourteenth season, ABT II prepares young dancers to enter American Ballet Theatre as well as other professional ballet companies. It also provides opportunities for the development of emerging choreographers and composers, and brings the excitement of close contact with a professional company to communities across the country through public performances and educational outreach programs.

The dancers (ages 16-19) are handpicked from around the world. ABT II dancers train in the program before joining American Ballet Theatre's main company or other leading national and international professional companies.

Participation in outreach programs for children and other selected groups is an important part of the ABT II mission. ABT II dancers perform in schools around the New York City area and throughout the United States. The outreach program also extends to colleges and universities where dance students experience the rare opportunity of collaborating with the company during various residencies and master classes.

Wes Chapman, Artistic Director, ABT II

A native of Union Springs, Alabama, Chapman joined American Ballet Theatre in 1984 as a member of the corps de ballet. He was promoted to Soloist in 1987 and to Principal Dancer in 1989. With ABT, Chapman performed all the leading roles in the ballet repertoire and in works by many of the twentieth century's master choreographers, including George Balanchine, Agnes de Mille, Twyla Tharp and Antony Tudor. He also created leading roles in Clark Tippet's *Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1* and Twyla Tharp's *The Elements*. In 1993, he joined the Bavarian National Ballet as a principal dancer before returning to ABT in 1995. In 1996, Chapman was named Artistic Director of Alabama Ballet. During his leadership, the company grew from 16 to 44 professional and apprentice dancers. He also founded the Alabama Ballet School, the apprentice pre-professional training program and the Alabama Ballet Summer Program. Mr. Chapman returned to ABT as ballet master in 2006 before being named Artistic Director of ABT II in 2007. He also serves as a national spokesperson for Regional Dance America and as dance advisor for Angelina Ballerina.

Performance Opportunities

American Ballet Theatre's ABT II is available to perform in venues across the country. The Company's varied repertoire mirrors the traditions of American Ballet Theatre, and, while it is firmly rooted in classical ballet, it often features contemporary choreography. Evening performances are generally two hours long and often showcase premieres by new and established choreographers, as well as previously existing works from the Company's repertory.; ABT II performs annually in New York City, and is available to tour from October through April. The company has recently appeared at engagements in California, Florida, Alaska, Bermuda and Spain. *The New York Times* calls ABT II dancers "Well-trained and willing. They perform with an appealing blend of freshness and individual presence," while *The Star Ledger* says, "ABT II delights audiences with its youthful vigor and panache. These dancers are firecrackers!"