

VALERIE AMISS
Instructor

Hometown: Mullica Hill, NJ

Valerie Amiss began her training at age eight under Sue Millington at the Regency Ballet. She continued her instruction with Victor Moreno and Alexei Yudenich, and at age 12 joined the Pennsylvania Ballet School. At age 15, Ms. Amiss spent a summer studying in Saratoga Springs, NY with members of New York City Ballet, including Peter Martins, Heather Watts, and Jock Soto. She was nominated for the prestigious Princess Grace Award in 1994, and in 1995 performed at the Algur H. Meadows Award Ceremony to honor choreographer Paul Taylor. In the summer of that same year, she also performed with the Chautauqua Ballet Company, directed by Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux and Patricia McBride, and, in 1997, she was asked by Gloria Govrin and Sandra Jennings to perform at the St. Bart's Music Festival on the island of St Bart's.

Ms. Amiss joined Pennsylvania Ballet as an apprentice in 1992 under the direction of Christopher d'Amboise.. She became a member of the corps de ballet in 1993 and was promoted to soloist in 1999 with director Roy Kaiser. In the summer of that year, she also represented the company at the Sintra Festival in Portugal. And in 2005, Ms. Amiss not only performed at the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland, where she danced featured roles in Christopher Wheeldon's *Swan Lake*, but also performed Matthew Neenan's *11:11* and *Carmina Burana* at New York City Center. Additionally, she had the honor of performing twice at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. as well as with Susan Jaffe and Nicole Hlinka for a Rock School benefit.

Ms. Amiss has performed numerous principal roles in George Balanchine's ballets, including Titania and Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Odette in *Swan Lake* Act II, and the Sugarplum Fairy and Dew Drop in *The Nutcracker*. As well, she danced featured roles in such works as *Giselle*, Paul Taylor's *Company B*, Twyla Tharp's *In the Upper Room*, Christopher Wheeldon's *Continuum* and *Swan Lake*, Janek Schergen's *The Sleeping Beauty*, Alvin Ailey's *The River*, Jerome Robbins' *In the Night* and *The Concert*, and George Balanchine's *Rubies*, *The Four Temperaments*, *Western Symphony*, *Agon*, *Scotch Symphony*, *Bugaku*, and *Serenade*, among others.

Ms. Amiss has taught ballet and pointe classes at summer intensives for The Rock School of the Pennsylvania Ballet. As well, she has been a guest instructor at schools throughout Pennsylvania and New Jersey. For seven years after her retirement from the stage, she was co-ballet mistress for the Academy of Ballet NJ in West Berlin, NJ. Ms. Amiss had the pleasure of teaching ballet to aspiring figure skaters in Aston, Pennsylvania. She was a senior lecturer at the University of the Arts, where she taught several ballet classes, and a guest lecturer at Drexel University where she was asked to speak about Balanchine repertoire for the Philadelphia Museum Of Dance at the Barnes Museum., Ms. Amiss has been a faculty member of The School of Pennsylvania Ballet where she taught all levels including beginner ballet through trainee program.. She has also taught for the Princeton Ballet School in both the Cranbury and Princeton locations.

In 2018, Ms. Amiss was asked by The Pennsylvania Ballet outreach program to teach classes for children with Down syndrome. She has taught several ballet classes for children with special needs at St. Katherine Day School in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania. Where she collaborated with the school staff and students to create a fully inclusive Nutcracker for the community to experience the joy of The Nutcracker. Valerie also developed Audrey's class for children of all abilities at the Princeton Ballet School inspired by a student named Audrey who loved ballet and classical music. Valerie enjoys teaching children of all abilities and ages pre ballet through pre professional levels, Adult ballet and private coaching. Valerie truly believes an arts education can enrich and change lives.

Ms. Amiss retired from Pennsylvania Ballet in June 2007. She resides in Marmora, NJ with her husband, former Pennsylvania Ballet Soloist Edward Cieslak, and their son Adam and daughter Lily.