

# HOPE DANCES

## PRESS RELEASE

### HOPE DANCES

A film by Writer/Director Andrew Dillon and Director of Photography Christophe Ivins of Harry Potter, Avatar and Titanic

Writer and Director Andrew Dillon brings to a new generation of parents a retelling of the classic coming of age film, Hope Dances. Dillon, father of 3 daughters ages 17, 11 and 1, presents an indie-style feature-length family film with a lead character named Hope (the real-life daughter of Dillon). "Today's kids have amazing opportunities to engage in multiple activities, but there's a downside in overloaded schedules and a strain on social life," says the Director. The film explores these issues and more as it follows the everyday realities of a girl bouncing between multiple activities who gets caught between the expectations and agendas of parents, coaches and instructors. The girl's journey ultimately leads to a coming of age in terms of personal choice, discovering "self", and finding one's pathway in life.

Hope Dances is about an 11-year-old girl named Hope, who is torn between her aspirations for both ballet and girls softball. She must choose between satisfying her parents' and coaches' wishes versus finding her own true path in life. When Hope excels at both and is driving to win competitions and make All Star Teams, she is abruptly sidetracked by the tragedy of her best friend and dance partner who is in a car accident. Hope is forced to make a decision:

stay committed to her friend in need, versus meeting the expectations of parents and coaches. In the end, with the help from a mentor, a prima ballerina in a major dance company, Hope is able to stay loyal to her friend and at the same time, achieve her life's dream. As the story unfolds, the film becomes a story about "hope", a kind of hope that can be activated. The film ultimately is not about winning, or being the best, but about the journey we all take to find out who we are, and what our individual dream is – a theme that spans all audiences.

Filled with beautiful ballet dancing, exciting ball game moments, as well as dramatic settings against the northern California coast, the film is beautifully shot and has been trusted into the hands of the Director of Photography Christophe Ivins who is known for his contributions to films including Titanic (1997), Avatar (2009) and Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2 (2011). Ivins, a former dancer with a love for ballet, has been an invaluable addition to the crew. He lends a sensibility to capturing the visual story, and understands how to integrate the movement of dancers and even ball players.

Director Dillon takes the viewer deep inside the life of an 11-year-old, and the life of an everyday family, presenting both in a humorous and touching way, from the perspective of both the child and the parents. As a result, the film has a very natural feeling, with the family and the lead girl depicted in a non-sensationalized fashion. Unlike other films with a single story objective, the film shows the main character caught in two trajectories, and you don't know which way it will go until the end.



## CAST & CREW



ANDREW DILLON

**Director**

A Screenplay Writer, who has shot and directed documentaries as well as shorts.



SUNNY DOENCH

**Tina Douglas (mother)**

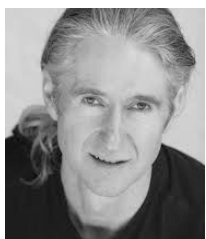
[See IMDb](#)



SASHA DEL SOLA

**Natasha (prima ballerina)**

[See SF Ballet web site](#)



CHRISTOPHE IVINS

**Director of Photography**

Over 20 years experience in cinematography, steadicam, and VFX design and composing. Credits include: Titanic, Avatar, Harry Potter and more.



ASTRID MCWILLIAMS

**Gigi (grandmother)**

Amateur, several shorts...



GIANNA GULARTI

**Kayla (friend)**

First time actor



FEDRICO VERARDI

**Lighting Director**

Has over 15 years of advanced lighting experience for film and television.



AVAROSE DILLON

**Hope**

First time actress, Clara in the 2015 Santa Cruz Ballet Theater production of the Nutcracker.



ELAINA GREENAWALT

**Dani (friend)**

[See SF casting](#)



MICHAEL COTTER

**Jay Douglas (father)**

[See IMDb](#)



KAREN KAHN

**Vivi (dance instructor)**

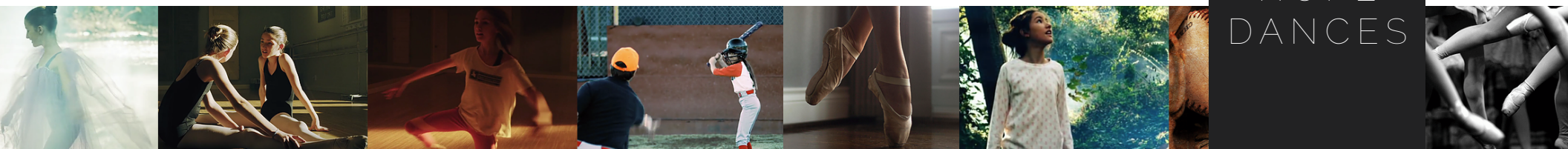
[See IMDb](#)



MITCH COSTANZA

**Coach Mason (ball coach)**

[See IMDb](#)

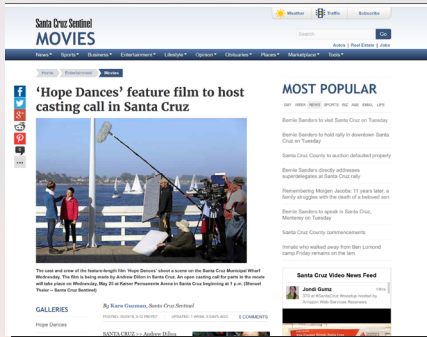


HOPE  
DANCES



# HOPE DANCES

## PUBLICITY



SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL

May 20th 2016

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## SYNOPSIS

When an 11-year old girl comes of an age where she needs to choose between two activities she loves, ballet and softball, Hope (Avarose Dillon) desperately wants to satisfy parents and coaches, and it seems the only way to do so is to keep trying to do both. If only she could find 48 hours in the day! Fortunately, she befriends a prima ballerina and a star softball player, who, with great patience, teach Hope that she needs to look inside for her true path in life, launching Hope into the mission of her life – to find her dream.

## REVIEW

"Hope Dances" was a great dancing and softball film. The family was a believable everyday family embroiled in a conflict over 11-year old Hope Douglas' focus on activities. Dad thinks she could be a softball star, make the Olympics or get a college scholarship. Mom thinks she could be a top ballerina. Hope, she just wants to enjoy both, and her friendships. But when competition ruins one friendship and another is shattered by a car accident, Hope must choose loyalty to friends versus striving to get to the top. This is a solid family film, that is

both dramatic in places but delivers a feel-good ending. "Hope Dances" follows a young 11-year old girl who rushes back and forth between ballet class and softball practice. Her parents, and her coaches, driver her one way and then the other, making it hard for Hope to know what to think. A new girl moves to town and shows up at her ballet studio, but as soon as they become great friends, they are thrust into competition, putting their friendship at risk. Nonetheless, Hope makes a decision to go all out, even training at night in both dance and softball in energetic, inspiring moments. But when her long time BFF, who was slated to be her competition dance partner is thrust into the hospital, Hope loses momentum. There are realistic moments where Hope is reaching out for support, but only getting the standard parental lectures. The film entertained and delivered surprising moments, and showed the realistic challenges young children have in making life decisions for themselves, such as dance versus sports. I recommend you take a seat and watch this with children ages eight and above, as it spans a wide age range, and actually has something for parents to enjoy. The content chart below shows that it really is watchable for all ages, yet is will not bore older audiences. Honestly, I really encourage parents, grandparents, teachers and coaches to check out this film, as it delivers a great message.

## CONTENT DESCRIPTION

**Sex:** Mom and Dad give peck on the lips  
**Language:** Jeez  
**Violence:** Instructor speaks with slight anger at student  
**Drugs:** none  
**Nudity:** boys and girls in ballet leotards  
**Other:** Some light ridicule by classmates; parents argue about whose to blame

## INFO

**Reviewer:** Mom and Dad give peck on the lips  
**Source:** Online View  
**Company:**  
**Writer:** Andrew Dillon  
**Director:** Andrew Dillon  
**Producer:** Bright River Productions, LLC.  
**Genre:** Children/Family  
**Runtime:** 105 min.  
**Rating:** PG  
**Starring:** Michael Cotter, Sunny Doench, Karen Kahn, Avarose Dillon