



Vancouver Ballet Society

SUPPORTING DANCERS SINCE 1946

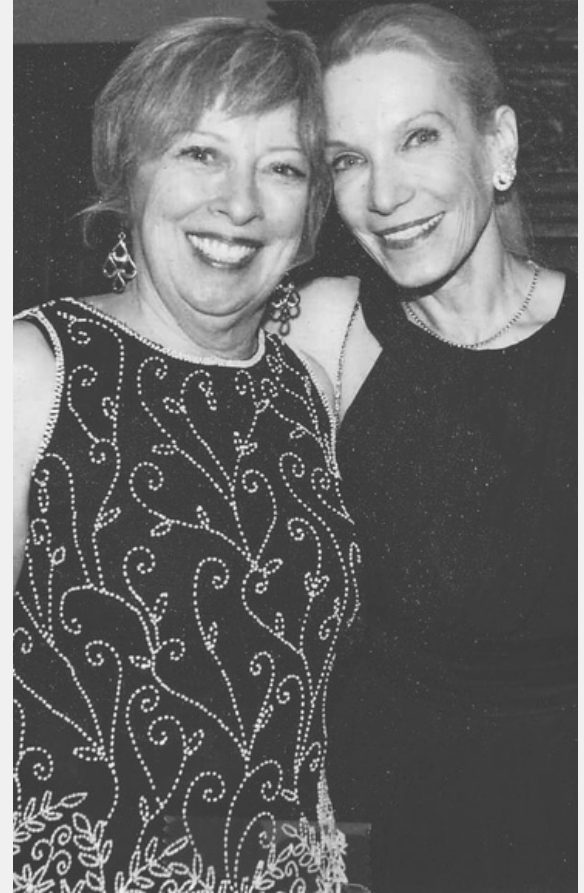


A Message From The President...

"As President of the Vancouver Ballet Society for the past 12 years, I have been privileged to be a part of this longstanding organization, which celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2021. It has been a challenging, stimulating and often inspiring time, building on the Society's traditions while navigating the changes so necessary to keep up with a rapidly evolving world. VBS board members—past and present—have given constant support, and together we have worked to implement innovative ideas to keep our programming current.

"Our unique non-profit organization looks forward to many more years of supporting dance in British Columbia. In the following pages you will see some of our accomplishments, and photographs of a few of the young dancers we have supported with training initiatives and scholarships. Many went on to illustrious careers in dance, and we are proud to have offered early recognition of their talent."

Maureen Allen, President





Lynn Wallis Master Class, 1987

Our Mission

This dance Society was founded in Vancouver, British Columbia in 1946 by a group of dedicated dance aficionados “for the purpose of furthering the interest of the public in the art of dance and supporting young dancers in their efforts to excel in their chosen profession.” The mission has remained the same over the last 75 years.

The VBS aims to inform the public about dance in our world through *Dance International Online* (a digital outgrowth of the former print magazine) which contains monthly articles, reports and reviews, and through an extensive physical archive collection (with pieces dating back to 1912).

The VBS offers a week-long intensive Spring Seminar to dancers from many different BC dance studios, at the end of which selected participants receive scholarships. Throughout the year the VBS also hosts Master Classes taught by prominent Canadian and international artists.

"The Vancouver Ballet Society gave me the opportunity to serve on the board for 20 years and the privilege to be president for 10 of those years. The board is composed of generous people who ardently believe in helping aspiring young dance students further their training through Master Classes and Spring Seminars."

Betty Kovacs, Former VBS President



VBS scholarship winners, 1981

Timeline

1946



A unique non-profit organization is founded. In 1947, it is incorporated as the Vancouver Civic Ballet Society.

1952



Margot Fonteyn becomes the first Honorary President.

1954



The first Showcase is held, with students from one local ballet studio. Showcases become an integral part of the Society for dance students.

1957



Renamed the Vancouver Ballet Society (VBS).

1960



VBS sponsors a Ballet Gala with The Royal Ballet's Lynn Seymour.

1975



Spring Seminar is introduced: a week-long dance intensive with world-renowned teachers.

1946-2021

1977



VANDANCE magazine begins with its first editor, Ruth McLoughlin. In 1993 it is renamed *Dance International*.

2004



VBS hosts 4 Gala evenings with Evelyn Hart, Rex Harrington, Simone Orlando, Edmond Kirkpatrick, Margie Gillis, and Wen Wei Wang.

2009



The Barre Facts monthly e-newsletter is created for members.

2011



Celebrating the Inspiration Gala is held at the Hycroft Manor to celebrate VBS's 65th anniversary.

2020



Dance International ceases print publication in 2019 and becomes *Dance International Online* in 2020.

PRESENT



VBS proudly celebrates its 75th anniversary.

Spring Seminar

1975 - Present

The Spring Seminar is an annual Vancouver dance intensive, open to all dance students in British Columbia between 11-18 years of age. The Seminar offers students (selected by audition) training in both classical and contemporary styles, with internationally renowned teachers. All classes are accompanied by live music and occur during the March spring break for schools.

In addition to dance classes, lunch-hour sessions provide information, advice and wisdom on dance related subjects such as injury prevention, nutrition, and dance history.

The Seminar concludes with a free public demonstration of the dancers' classwork and the presentation of scholarships. Scholarship recipients are selected by the teachers based on the participants' work during the week. Funds are provided through generous private donors and VBS fundraising events.

Frank Bourman, 1975



Duncan Noble, 1981

David Adams, 1979



Celia Franca, 1977

Evelyn Hart, 2011



Elena Glurjidze, Sheila Smith, and Colleen Thomas, 2017



Jason Beechey, 2001



"The Spring Seminar provides a unique opportunity to bring dancers together from different schools throughout BC, resulting in the formation of new friendships and great shared experiences."

"I am always delighted to learn how many of our former Seminar participants and scholarship recipients have gone on to rewarding careers in dance. We are incredibly fortunate here in Vancouver to have such an impressive Spring Seminar alumni! It is my hope that this unique tradition will continue for many more years."

"My role as Chair over the last 12 years has provided such joy as I see the dancers grow and develop in this dance intensive and come back year after year!"

Sheila Smith, Chair of Spring Seminar

Reid Anderson, 1987



Lynn Seymour, 1986



Hilary Cartwright, 1977



Veronica Tennant, 1997



Janet Sassoon, 1978





Karen Kain, 2002

Master Classes

1974 - Present

In 1974, the VBS began hosting Master Classes featuring dance artists from around the world, who were performing in Vancouver. The program grew over the years with the VBS delivering from 2 to 9 Master Classes annually. Evelyn Hart, Karen Kain, Reid Anderson, Crystal Pite, Gelsey Kirkland, Rex Harrington, Simone Orlando, and Andre Lewis were some of the renowned teachers who inspired our local dance students. In the beginning, logistics were difficult and involved finding suitable studio space. VBS had to transport a rolled-up Marley floor and sometimes ballet barres to various studios. For the past 20 years, the VBS has been able to hold the Master Classes in the professional studios of the Scotiabank Dance Centre—our home.

"Master Classes are a crucial part of what the Vancouver Ballet Society offers to local dance students. They are an important opportunity for these students to have exposure to different techniques, nuances and the interpretations provided by the international dancers and teachers. Such artists as Céline Gittens (Birmingham Royal Ballet), Heather Ogden (National Ballet of Canada) and Frances Chung (San Francisco Ballet) have not only benefitted from participating in Master Classes, but have returned to teach them."

Jean Orr, Chair of Master Classes

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1954 - Present

One of the first events offered by the Vancouver Ballet Society was a Showcase in February 1954, with students from one local well-known ballet studio. In 1960, the Society received permission from The Royal Ballet allowing Lynn Seymour, a former VBS scholarship winner, and Christopher Gable, to dance in a Gala in Vancouver. Since then, the VBS has continued the tradition of presenting a showcase/gala as a fundraiser, giving an opportunity for members to gather and watch performances by scholarship winners.



VBS showcase directed by Joy Camden, 1963

In 2004, the VBS held 4 Gala evenings with Evelyn Hart, Rex Harrington, Simone Orlando, Edmond Kirkpatrick, Margie Gillis, and Wen Wei Wang. The proceeds from the event went to Vancouver HIV/AIDS groups, The Vancouver Ballet Society, Ballet BC, and The Dance Centre.

In September 2011, the VBS held a *Celebrating the Inspiration* Gala to celebrate the Society's 65th anniversary. It was held at the Hycroft Manor with 132 guests in attendance. The annual fundraising gala was officially named *For the Love of Dance* in 2018.

Dance International

1977 - Present

Dance International (DI) was launched in 1977 as a quarterly magazine published by the Vancouver Ballet Society. Back then, it was called *Vandance*, but as the readership grew, the name evolved, as did the magazine itself—into a glossy, award-winning 64 pages. As of January 2020, DI Online became a web-only platform, increasing its accessibility. It remains the go-to source for stories on dance of all kinds from all over the globe.

"Working with local, national and international writers, and positioning British Columbian dance within the global arena, is a great pleasure and privilege. Dance International's long history is a testament to the tenacity of its publisher, the Vancouver Ballet Society."

Kaija Pepper, Editor

www.danceinternational.org





VBS workshop, 1963



VBS Open House, 1989 - Susan Beechey, BG Pennyway



THEN

Benjamin Harkavy, 1984



Diane Farris, 1980s



Joy Camden, 1965



Heather Ogden, 2003



Martine van Hamel and Theo Duff-Grant, 2009



Céline Gittens, 2006

NOW



Annette av Paul, 2003



Spring Seminar, 2009

To Our Members...

The Vancouver Ballet Society's longevity would not be possible without the support of our members over the last 75 years. Thank you to our *Friend of VBS* members for your generous donations and to the dedicated volunteers who helped us during special events.

Thank you to our current board members—Maureen Allen, Jo-Ann Gordon, Jean Orr, Sheila Smith, Jane Wace, Jane Welsh, BG Pennyway, Erin Duncan, and Deborah Morgan. Thank you to all former board members who have contributed to the success of the Society.

We would also like to thank the Province of BC, the British Columbia Arts Council, Canadian Heritage, and the Vancouver Foundation for their generous funding. We also appreciate Rosedale on Robson, The Dance Centre, Ballet BC, Ballet Kelowna, Dance Victoria, Harbour Dance Centre, Dance Box, AinslieWear, and The Dance Shop for their longstanding support of the VBS.

A special thank you to Susan Beechey who has taken so many wonderful photographs of VBS events over the years, and to Taylor Ball, VBS Administrator, who orchestrated this archival booklet.



Betty Kovacs and Eva von Gency, 2003



Jean Orr and Heather Ogden, 2003

"The Vancouver Ballet Society will always have a special place in my heart for helping me develop as a ballerina and blossom in the culture of performing arts. I am so blessed to have received VBS support from such an early age and am grateful that many young dancers have access to such a lovely organization to prepare them for their future in dance."

Ashley Coupal, VBS Scholarship Winner

Prix de Lausanne Winner 2021

"The VBS Spring Seminar intensives were incredibly helpful by introducing me to different styles and teachers, often from other countries. It was a wonderful opportunity to learn and dance with dancers from other schools and the scholarships helped me further my training. Thank you VBS!"

Alex Wong, VBS Scholarship Winner

Freelance Dancer and Choreographer, Stage and Screen

"Growing up in Vancouver and participating in every VBS Master Class and Spring Seminar remains a true highlight of my young dance education, as it opened so many doors and gave me insight into different and diverse ways of training and working directly with legendary artists. Being invited to teach the Seminar myself, with Aaron S. Watkin, was a great honour and I can only applaud the VBS wholeheartedly on the occasion of their 75th Anniversary, for doing such incredible work and all the best for the future!"

Jason Beechey, VBS Spring Seminar Teacher

Rector of Die Palucca Hochschule für Tanz Dresden

"Vancouver Ballet Society created some of my most cherished memories as a young dancer growing up in Vancouver. Spring Seminar brings together talent from around the city, which gave me the chance to train and learn with, and from, dancers from other schools, as well as being star-struck by the guest teachers who came to teach us. I always left full of inspiration as well as having made friends and connections for life."

Crystal Costa, VBS Scholarship Winner

Soloist with English National Ballet (retired)

Vancouver Ballet Society

www.vancouverballetsociety.com

The Vancouver Ballet Society is a non-profit organization that was founded by a group of dance aficionados 75 years ago. Since then, the VBS has held many successful annual events including Spring Seminars, Master Classes, and fundraising Galas. The VBS is also the proud publisher of *Dance International Online*, where features, reviews, and city reports from all over the world, are highlighted in articles each month. The VBS is grateful to its loyal members, donors, and board members who have worked tirelessly to ensure the Society's purpose continues to be met.

The Vancouver Ballet Society Library and Archives is a read-in library. It houses an extensive collection of books from Broadway to ballet, biographies, programmes, magazines, and dance articles. The Library and Archives is open to all members of the community interested in dance and dance history. The focus of the VBS collection is paper records, including material related to dance workshops from the late 1950s to the present.
