

# dance

INTERNATIONAL

SPRING 2016 | \$7.50

## Beautiful Ballet BC

The Angel  
Corella Effect

Dresden's  
Magnificent  
Semperoper

Running Away  
to the Circus



STORIES OF ENCOUNTER + TWYLA THARP, PARIS OPERA  
BALLET AND LIAM SCARLETT IN OUR GLOBAL REPORTS



# canadianstage

## betroffenheit

A KIDD PIVOT & ELECTRIC COMPANY THEATRE PRODUCTION  
WRITTEN BY Jonathon Young      CHOREOGRAPHED AND DIRECTED BY Crystal Pite

★★★★★ (OUT OF 4)  
"Stunning, rare, staggering"  
- THE GLOBE AND MAIL

"One of the most talented and intriguing choreographers working today"  
- NEW YORK TIMES

**FEB 18 - 21**



Wendy D



# torobaka

CREATED AND PERFORMED BY  
Akram Khan  
AND Israel Galván

DANCE PROGRAMMING SUPPORTER:  
HAL JACKMAN FOUNDATION

★★★★★ (OUT OF 5)

"two superb dancers combine their kathak and flamenco styles with ferocious intensity"  
- THE GUARDIAN

**MAR 9 - 12**

BLUMA APPEL THEATRE, TORONTO  
**416.368.3110**  
canadianstage.com

Jean Louis Fernandez

# dance INTERNATIONAL

CLASSICAL AND CONTEMPORARY DANCE IN CANADA AND ABROAD

SPRING 2016 | VOL. 44 No. 1

**Publisher** Vancouver Ballet Society

**Editor** Kaija Pepper

**Art Direction** Brenda Finamore

**Copy Editor** Margaret Jetelina

**Fulfillment** The Oyster Group

**Printing** Horseshoe Press Inc.

**Mailing** Mail-O-Matic

**Advertising** Jorssen Marketing

**Web Administrator & Social Media Manager** Deanna Peters

DANCE INTERNATIONAL is published quarterly by the **Vancouver Ballet Society** (vbs@telus.net), a not-for-profit organization established in 1946 to support dance.

Opinions expressed within are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of DANCE INTERNATIONAL magazine, the Vancouver Ballet Society, its directors or editors. The editors reserve the right to make changes in materials selected for publication to meet editorial standards and requirements. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without written permission.

Subscription & Advertising enquiries:

**subscriptions@danceinternational.org**

**advertising@danceinternational.org**

DANCE INTERNATIONAL  
Scotiabank Dance Centre  
677 Davie Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 2G6  
Tel: (604) 681-1525 • Fax: (604) 681-7732  
info@danceinternational.org  
www.danceinternational.org

Distributed in Canada by Magazines Canada

Distributed in the USA by Coast to Coast

*We acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, which last year invested \$153 million to bring the arts to Canadians throughout the country.*

*Nous remercions le Conseil des arts du Canada de son soutien. L'an dernier, le Conseil a investi 153 millions de dollars pour mettre de l'art dans la vie des Canadiennes et des Canadiens de tout le pays.*



*We acknowledge the financial assistance of the Province of British Columbia.*

ISSN 1189-9816  
Federal Tax Exemption No. 0308353-22-27  
Public Mail Agreement No. 40050848



Our publisher, the Vancouver Ballet Society, works hard behind the scenes taking care of the business side of *Dance International*. In this issue, we're bringing them forward in our Galleryspace on page 62, to give you a peek inside their archives as the organization reaches a milestone 70th anniversary.

Since 1946, the Vancouver Ballet Society has been involved in many initiatives; one from the 1960s was spearheading a local production of *Coppélia*, at the Playhouse theatre, when I was a little girl. I still have the program, autographed by 16-year-old Reid Anderson, the evening's Franz. Reid Anderson left Vancouver and went on to dance with and eventually to direct Stuttgart Ballet, from where, I hear, he is soon to retire. But I still think of him as dashing young Franz.

In celebratory spirit, the Vancouver Ballet Society is giving readers the opportunity to gift an annual subscription to *Dance International* at a special rate (starting at \$15 for Canadian subscriptions, a savings of more than 40%). For details, go to [vancouverballetsociety.ca/danceint/di-gift-sub/](http://vancouverballetsociety.ca/danceint/di-gift-sub/), phone us at 604.681.1525 or email [vbs@telus.net](mailto:vbs@telus.net). The offer — a great way to introduce a friend, colleague or student to the magazine — ends on April 30, 2016.

We're grateful to our publishers for this generous offer because, especially as newsstands close and downsize, subscribers are our lifeblood — we need you! **And while nothing beats going out to the theatre, it's nice to have some dance in handy magazine format to ponder over breakfast or an afternoon cup of tea.**

A handwritten signature of Kaija Pepper in black ink.

Kaija Pepper  
[editor@danceinternational.org](mailto:editor@danceinternational.org)

Christoph von Riedemann of Ballet BC in Emily Molnar's *RITE*  
Photo: Chris Randle



[www.danceinternational.org](http://www.danceinternational.org)



Dance International



DIMagazine



## FEATURES

**6** **The Master Gardener** **by Maggie Foyer**  
Aaron Watkin at Dresden Semperoper

### COVER STORIES

**10** **The Curiosity of Emily Molnar** **by Kaija Pepper**  
Ballet BC's artistic director probes the inner workings of dance  
Close-ups on dancers Emily Chessa and Gilbert Small **by Tessa Perkins**

**14** **From Doubt to Dance** **by Hilary Maxwell**  
Cayetano Soto's creative process  
Ballet BC resident choreographer

**18** **Running Away to Join the Circus** **by Robin J. Miller**  
Three stories: Robbie Curtis, Jeff Hall and Lisa Natoli

**26** **The Angel Effect** **by Lewis Whittington**  
Angel Corella takes on Pennsylvania Ballet

**29** **Stories of Encounter**  
Creative connections in the world of dance, part II

## 22 DANCE NOTES

**Michael Crabb's**  
**25** **NOTEBOOK**

**34** **QUOTABLE**  
Excerpt from *When Ballet  
Became French*  
**by Ilyana Karthas**

**32** **MEDIAWATCH**  
Book and DVD reviews  
**by Heather Bray, Henry Daniel  
and Kaija Pepper**

**36** **DIRECTORY**

**38** **INSIDE ED**  
It Takes a Village  
**by Arlene Minkhorst**

## GLOBAL REPORTS

- 39 Vancouver**  
by Kaija Pepper
- 40 Montreal**  
by Linde Howe-Beck
- 41 Winnipeg**  
by Holly Harris
- 42 Toronto**  
by Michael Crabb
- 44 San Francisco**  
by Allan Ulrich
- 45 New York**  
by Robert Greskovic
- 46 Paris**  
by François Fargue
- 49 London**  
by Sanjoy Roy
- 50 Brescia**  
by Silvia Poletti
- 51 Copenhagen**  
by Anne-Marie Elmby
- 52 Oslo**  
by Fredrik Rütter
- 53 Singapore**  
by Malcolm Tay
- 54 Auckland, Brisbane & Sydney**  
by Deborah Jones



## REVIEWS

- 56 Cas Public**  
Hélène Blackburn / *Symphonie dramatique*  
by Steve Sucato
- 57 Huajin Dance Drama Ensemble**  
Wang Jinghua, Pik-Wah Li, Xing Shimiao / *Opera Warriors*  
by Kaija Pepper
- 58 Hofesh Shechter Company**  
Hofesh Shechter / *barbarians*  
by Kaija Pepper
- 59 Limón Dance Company**  
José Limón International Dance Festival  
by Pia Lo
- 60 IN THE STUDIO AND ONSTAGE**  
**Silicon Valley Ballet**  
Alicia Alonso / *Giselle*  
by Toba Singer

- 62 GALLERYSPACE**  
**German Dance Cards**  
"Der künstlerische Tanz"

FLOORING MADE EASY

**STAGESTEP**  
Flooring Solutions

You have questions

We have answers



"We are proud to have Stagestep as the official provider of flooring to the DanceLife Retreat Center, as well as the DanceLife Teacher Conference.

Our friends at Stagestep have always been there when we need a flooring solution, and our attendees truly appreciate the quality of their products."

*Rhee Gold, Founder, DanceLife Retreat Center and*

*DanceLife Teacher Conference Publisher, Dance Studio Life magazine*

For samples, pricing and a no obligation quote:

**CALL 800-523-0960**

(Toll free in the U.S. & Canada)

or VISIT **STAGESTEP.COM**  
EASY SHIPPING TO CANADA

# The Master Gardener

Aaron Watkin

at Dresden Semperoper



| by Maggie Foyer

“I need artists who have a strong classical base, but can let go. This is evolution.”  
— Aaron Watkin



Dresden, on the eastern border of Germany, has been called Venice on the Elbe. It's well-deserving of the title as it boasts a distinguished cultural history. Caspar David Friedrich was one of the many painters who made their career there and the city abounds in fine art. Dresden was also a champion for new dance: both Mary Wigman and Gret Palucca opened dance schools here in the 1920s teaching the new expressionist movement. Opera tradition is particularly strong. Richard Strauss' *Salome* and *Der Rosenkavalier* were premiered at Semperoper, as were many of Richard Wagner's operas, including *Rienzi* and *The Flying Dutchman*. The resident Staatskapelle Orchestra is considered among the finest in the world and now Semperoper Ballett, under the direction of Canadian-born Aaron S. Watkin, is making waves.

Watkin, who has created a company with a distinctive profile delivering a broad repertoire, took up the post in 2006 and now, with his contract extended to 2020, has the luxury of long-term planning. He describes his vision as being “resolute from the beginning: to break down the barriers that traditionally exist between different styles of dance, and to embrace all styles — classical, neoclassical and modern — with the same respect and integrity. I would love us to just be a dance company — not ballet and not tanz. Defining it in a certain way only makes the person defining it feel more comfortable!”

Under Watkin's direction, Semperoper Ballett continues to broaden its international reputation with upcoming tours to New York, Paris, Barcelona, Antwerp, Belgium, and St. Pölten, Austria. The dancers form an impressive ensemble: a quality line-up of dedicated individuals, and Watkin has forged close collaboration with major choreographers, including William Forsythe, Mats Ek and David Dawson. The opera house enjoys comfortable funding from the German government and keen public support, while the ballet has particularly strong interest from younger adults.

Watkin graduated from the National Ballet School of Canada in 1988 and earned the Erik Bruhn prize awarded annually to the most promising student. His training included summer sessions at the School of American Ballet and he has studied most of the important styles of classical ballet. He also benefitted from personal coaching with such luminaries as Stanley Williams, Erik Bruhn and Irina Kolpakova. His diverse performing career laid the groundwork for his move into a directorship. “I think I always wanted to be a director, even when I was at school. I wanted to set ballets and rehearse them, I liked that side of it.”

He danced with major classical companies, including the National Ballet of Canada, English National Ballet and Dutch National Ballet. His career took a major turn when, in 1998, he joined Forsythe's avant-garde Ballett Frankfurt as a principal dancer.



Photo: Matthias Creutziger

**Semperoper, a magnificent example of Dresden Baroque style built in 1841, derives its name from the architect Gottfried Semper. The house has twice burned to the ground — first in 1869, then in 1945 during the Second World War — and the current building, completed in 1985, leaves the original design intact, but has state-of-the-art technology and a modern annex housing rehearsal rooms and administration. Despite the very formal aspects of the performing space, the classical proportions frame both traditional and modern performances to maximum advantage.**

“Until I found Forsythe, I never felt physically at home in dance. Dancing the classical rep, I never felt I could achieve what I was trained to do. I was too much of a perfectionist so there was never any enjoyment onstage. But Forsythe’s style felt so natural, like the clothes I wore on my body; it was just perfect for me.”

Watkin’s desire to experience new choreographic styles also led him to join Nacho Duato’s company in Spain and to work with Ohad Naharin in Tel Aviv. In June 2002, he was appointed associate artistic director with Victor Ullate Ballet in Madrid, where he gained valuable administrative experience. “The company was very reputable, but the organization was pretty basic, so I had to really set down the system. I found I actually enjoyed the administrative side, which I didn’t think I would.” Now, he says, as artistic director of Semperoper Ballett, “it’s a nice balance when I leave my office and go back into the studio. I feel I can breathe again.”

His impact in Dresden was evident from the start when he introduced new faces, including several prominent Mariinsky dancers searching for fresh challenges, and new repertoire. Semperoper’s relationship with Forsythe has become a defining feature. “Bill said coming here is such a pleasure — it’s like family. He doesn’t have to teach the dancers the foundation, he can just add icing on the cake.” The company has many of his major works in their repertoire, and Forsythe even reworked some of his earlier pas de deux to create *Neue Suite* for them. Last season, the company added the evening-length *Impressing the Czar* to its repertoire. “Bill was here for three weeks and he changed all the first act for our dancers. If he would venture to write a new piece in his ‘past’ style, it would be here,” says Watkin.

Sweden’s Ek has also built a strong relationship with Dresden Semperoper, and he asked the company to perform in the January 2016 program in Paris marking his farewell as a choreographer. Semperoper Ballett performed Ek’s *She was Black*, a work presented by the company with great success over the last few years.



Elena Sheshina, Olga Melnikova, István Simon (as Benno), Julia Carnicer and Svetlana Gileva of Semperoper Ballett in Aaron Watkin’s *Swan Lake*  
Photo: Costin Radu





Semperoper's relationship with Forsythe has become a defining feature. "Bill said coming here is such a pleasure — it's like family. He doesn't have to teach the dancers the foundation, he can just add icing on the cake."

home in Prague. "I go there every weekend as it's only an hour-and-a-half to drive. It is a good break in mind and spirit and a fabulous place."

In both the dancers Watkin selects and in their daily training, a strong classical base is a prerequisite. Also, he explains, "What I am most interested to see in a dancer is their ability to process corrections. You get dancers that look fantastic on a DVD, but some are only trained to perform a variation and not to dance beyond that. I need co-ordination and they must be musical. When the body and the brain connect, it's amazing."

He believes in treating dancers like adults. "The idea of the eternal student stops dancers from thinking. Dancers need to have ideas and personalities, and schools sometimes train that out of them. I strive to find dancers who can do the full rep, from a world-class *Swan Lake* to pieces by David [Dawson], where the movement is even more intricate, more developed. I need artists who have a strong classical base, but can let go. This is evolution."

Still a powerhouse of energy, Watkin has settled comfortably into the artistic director role. "This is the fun time. I have planted this massive garden, and fed and watered it, and now it's doing its own thing. I feel like I am the gardener who puts the fairy dust on once in a while. We have a lot of public interest in the company now, and it is rewarding and inspiring to see your investments come to life."

Dancers who helped Watkin create his vision are now moving on. The scintillating Yumiko Takeshima has hung up her pointe shoes, but continues her successful dancewear business. She designed costumes for all of Dawson's ballets, many Forsythe works and the dancewear in the film, *Black Swan*.

Jiri Bubeníček, a powerful presence in both classical and modern works, has already created several works for Semperoper Ballett and now makes choreography his career. Raphaël Coumes-Marquet, who created many leading roles (including Albrecht in Dawson's *Giselle*), is now ballet master and répétiteur with the company.

Semperoper Ballett under Watkin's direction has built a reputation for the best in contemporary ballet. Dresden has become the place to see Forsythe and Dawson danced with passion to an impeccable standard. It is also the place to see Balanchine delivered with speed and precision; *Jewels*, for instance, has an unrivalled setting beneath the high proscenium arch of the opera house. Moments where ballet, opera and orchestra join forces are a special treat. Stijn Celis' *Les Noces* was one such occasion. The orchestra and singers, partially shielded by an effective slatted screen, backgrounded the dancers to create a true Diaghilev moment of art. <sup>o</sup>

Prior to arriving in Dresden, Watkin set Dawson's *Reverence* on the Mariinsky Ballet and it was a boost to his new post that he could appoint the British artist as resident choreographer. In 2008, Dawson created his *Giselle* for Semperoper Ballett and over the years many of his works have been absorbed into the repertoire. Although no longer resident today, Dawson continues to create works in Dresden, including his second full-length narrative ballet *F Tristan and Isolde*, which premiered in 2015.

The company also has a solid core of major classical works, including productions by Watkin of *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake* and *La Bayadère*. His production of *The Nutcracker*, choreographed with fellow Canadian Jason Beechey, rector of the Palucca School in Dresden, joined the repertoire in 2011. Imaginatively designed by Roberta Guidi di Bagno, it pays homage to Dresden Baroque style, adding a local flavour, and has become a perennial favourite.

When I asked Watkin what made a good company, his answer was immediate: "Creating an internal company culture. I did this subconsciously, without realizing how important it was, starting from square one and building internally a work ethic, a generosity," he says. "Generosity is a big word, but it's something I see coming more and more from the company in what they are giving to the public and to each other, and is also evident in the dynamics from the ballet masters and the whole house."

He was thrilled to announce that a recent Semperoper survey showed audience satisfaction ratings were highest for the ballet, with a majority rating the ballet performances best for emotional experience, and 93 percent box office sales. "The whole house — technicians, orchestra, chorus — is proud of our company. The board appoints you, then they watch and wait, and when you get success, they climb on board, too."

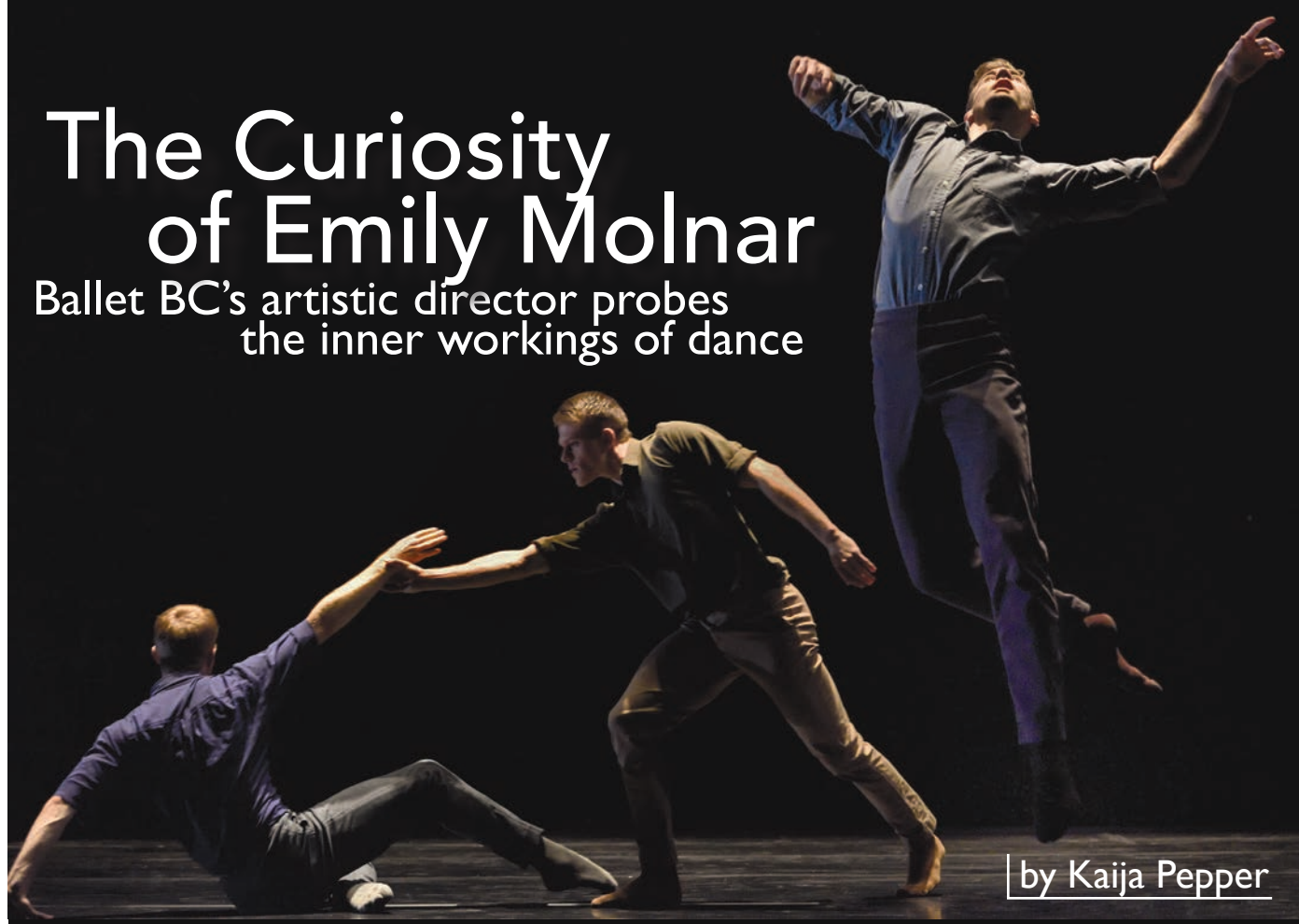
Watkin says his mother, "who worked her way up from secretary to vice-president of the Canadian Automobile Association," gave him lots of pointers, such as the need to delegate. "She said you will inspire people by giving them responsibility."

Personal feedback is also important. "When I see real talent," he says, "I can be even tougher on the dancers because I want them to get it together. But screaming and yelling doesn't work, it brings down the respect level."

He talks about the need to take some space for himself, which allows him to work more effectively. For instance, Watkin has a

# The Curiosity of Emily Molnar

Ballet BC's artistic director probes the inner workings of dance



by Kaija Pepper

Ballet BC's studio at Scotiabank Dance Centre is large and bright, with a sprung floor and big windows. That's where artistic director Emily Molnar is rehearsing her dancers in *Twenty Eight Thousand Waves* by Cayetano Soto. Despite the demands the choreography makes for power, precision and speed, Molnar's approach is not to whip up easy enthusiasm, but rather to quietly examine even the biggest, most forceful movements. Her curiosity creates a thoughtful atmosphere that encourages the dancers to explore their ideas and intentions as they work to perfect the physical moves.

On more than one occasion, Molnar has said she wants her dancers to be thinking individuals who bring curiosity to the shared enterprise of putting ballet onto the stage, and the present incarnation of the group (14 company members and three apprentices) seems to be doing exactly that. Of course, she also wants virtuosic technique and that too is something Ballet BC have fine tuned since she came on board as director in 2009.

Molnar's way of pushing the dancers is to constantly tease out the actual performance quality and inner spirit each one brings to every moment. "I want to hear from you," she says, demanding dialogue in the studio. "I want to understand how we can make this into something."

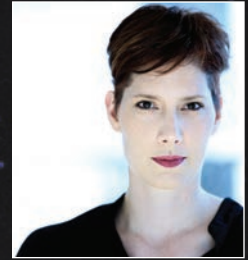
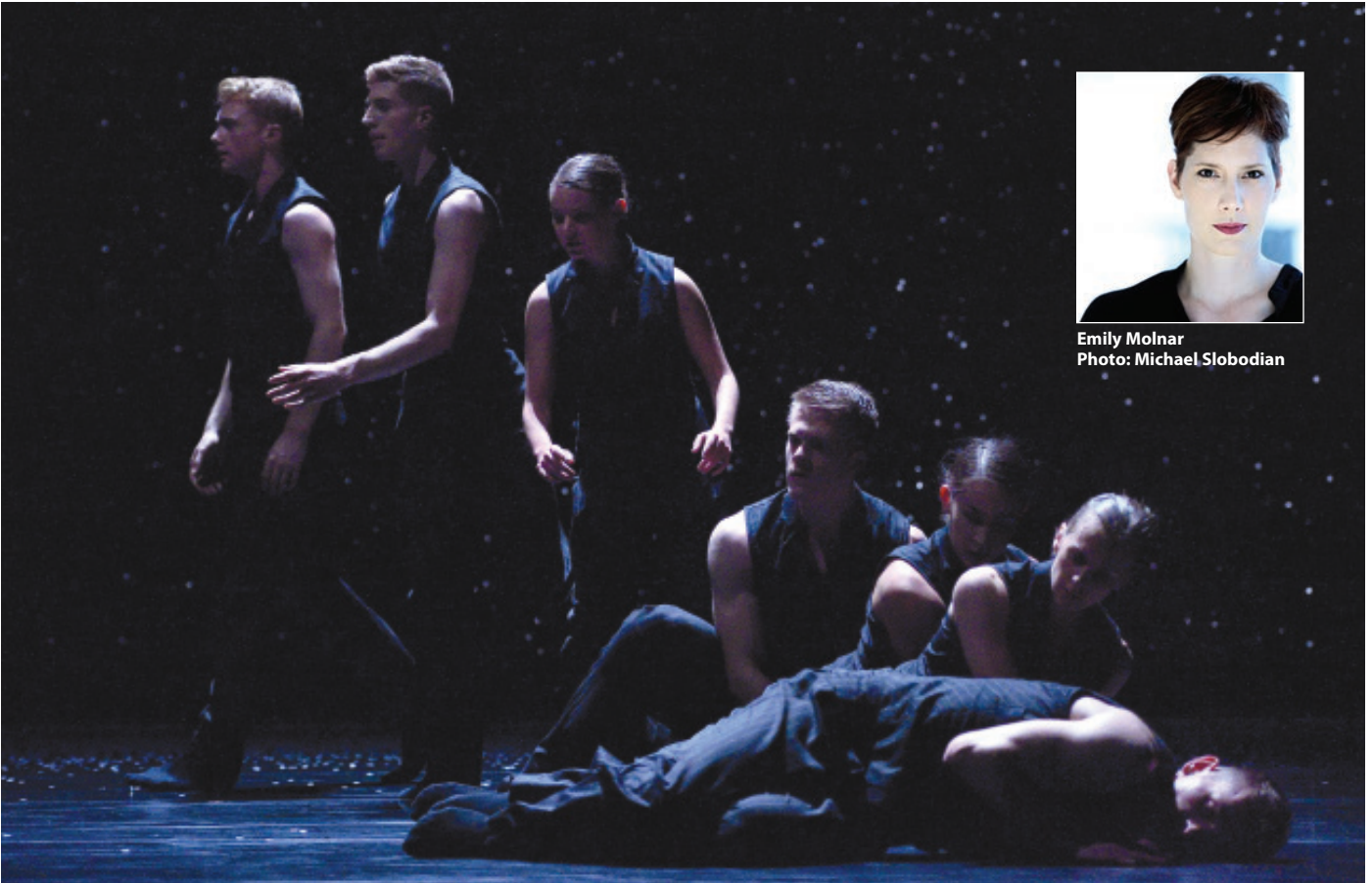
She works first with a trio of men, coaxing nuances out of powerful movement she suggests should be "more about an inflation of energy than aggression," and then on an intimate male-female duet studded with fine, ferocious lines. There is a hum of activity around the room as the others tackle whatever is necessary for them to achieve the soul as well as the mechanics of the piece.

It's such a pleasure to be there watching this talented group of individuals up close. There isn't one who wouldn't reward close study, and last November's show on the large stage at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, where they have their home season, was danced with conviction. As far as contemporary ballet bills go, it was a tribute to Molnar's programming and also a testament to the company's ability to attract high-profile choreographers.

The evening offered the first sighting in Vancouver of work by Belgian Stijn Celis, one of more than 30 premieres Molnar has commissioned for the company from Canadian and international choreographers. Celis' *Ave*, for 12 dancers, begins with the high spiritual drama of the onstage choir's *De Profundis*, which almost overwhelms the small round bodies moving quietly in the dark. *Ave* slowly builds power until the end, when the dancers flicker upward in the gloom like stars twinkling in a night sky.

Crystal Pite was on board, too, remounting her masterful *Solo Echo*, created in 2012 for Nederlands Dans Theater. Here, in an atmosphere of epic loneliness, seven dancers constantly come together and break apart, while the warm romance of the Brahms' music sounds like it's coming from another world or time.

Finally, in the remount of Soto's *Twenty Eight Thousand Waves*, the company seems to have an ideal high-energy calling card. The work features exaggerated, hard-etched poses — spiky fingers, hips pushing way out — with bare-chested men in flippy skirts and a sense of suspension throughout, as if something big is about to happen and the men and women onstage are poised on the edge waiting for it. It will be interesting to see how Soto



Emily Molnar  
Photo: Michael Slobodian

follows this popular work in his role as resident choreographer (read more on Soto starting on page 14).

The program was a thrilling ushering in of Ballet BC's 30th anniversary season. This longevity is a real achievement in Vancouver, where ballet has become such a hard sell in recent decades that few companies dare tour here, which makes Ballet BC all the more important to west coast dancegoers: the company's home season, with its range of international choreographers, and their occasional presenting (the annual Alberta Ballet *Nutcracker*, Miami City Ballet last year) is a lifeline connecting us to the world.

When Molnar and I spoke in the boardroom outside their sixth floor offices, she praised 30 as an age "when you're not at the beginning, but you're also not dealing with an enormous amount of legacy." She is grateful Ballet BC survived bankruptcy proceedings in 2008, just before her arrival, and looks back at those dark times with equanimity. "It awakened us to the vulnerability of the organization. You wouldn't wish such a traumatic experience on anyone, but when you go through it and come out the other side, it matures you."

In half a dozen years, Molnar has made Ballet BC more than just a player in the local scene; it's now a popular force across Canada and increasingly in the United States. They received warm press after their return to Jacob's Pillow in Massachusetts last summer, and in November they returned to Portland, Oregon's White Bird festival. Ballet BC is now set to make inroads into Europe with a tour to the Birmingham Hippodrome in May, presenting a mixed bill that will include Molnar's,

*16 + a room*, a 2013 piece for 16 dancers that features impressive vigour and sweep.

Molnar was establishing herself as an independent choreographer when she was offered the directorship of Ballet BC. She had recently made *Six Fold Illuminate* for Christopher Wheeldon's Morphoses company; Judith Mackrell wrote in the *Guardian* that it showed an "architectural instinct for structure" and that Molnar had an "intriguing gift for shifting the quality of her movement from states of high tension to shivery, sensuous release."

After her appointment to Ballet BC, her choreographic ambitions went on the back burner; she now choreographs about one new piece a year for the company, most recently the Stravinsky-less *RITE* for 18 dancers. In that dream-like ballet, Molnar integrated evocative historical references to Nijinsky's choreography within a fluid, dramatic vocabulary.

Like most artistic directors and choreographers, Molnar started out as a dancer. The Regina, Saskatchewan-born artist began her professional career performing with the National Ballet of Canada, then joined William Forsythe's innovative Ballett Frankfurt. As a member of Ballet BC from 1998 to 2003, she often took on lead roles in then artistic director John Alleyne's work. A highlight was the surprise casting of Molnar — a tall, naturally regal woman — as Puck in his *Faerie Queen* (based on Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*), which featured a solemn, twisting solo that provided the poignant conclusion.

Though she hasn't performed since throwing herself into the director's job, Molnar still takes daily class alongside the



company. “It keeps me grounded,” she says, “and it keeps me moving. I put myself in there with my dancers, which makes for an equal conversation between us.” Then Molnar surprises me, as she quietly adds, almost as if talking to herself: “I might try dancing again. I might do a bit more performing before I hang up my shoes.” There are no specifics to announce, no firm commitments, just a kind of longing to dance again that, the 42-year-old says, “should probably happen sooner than later.”

There is another significant facet to Molnar’s professional profile: in 2014, she was appointed as the first artistic director of dance at Alberta’s prestigious Banff Centre, where she is involved in revisioning the dance program. Molnar talks enthusiastically about thematic residencies and interdisciplinary platforms for creation, and how the new model is less about fitting participants into the usual ballet or contemporary boxes, and more about following their unique needs and interests. “It’s about the artists who are doing the work now and their points of view,” she says, referring to the broad-based, multi-faceted influences and styles of today’s professional dance scene. She’s proud of the advisory group she assembled, which is made up of professionals who understand dance from a range of perspectives, from presenting to choreographing to running companies to training.

The post involves regular visits up to Alberta’s Rocky Mountains where the Banff Centre is situated, and it’s hard to imagine how Molnar has the time to fit this additional responsibility in. Yet it’s also clear she is the right person to find new models of creation and collaboration to refresh the longstanding dance program. The position provides an opportunity to connect with other committed professional artists over issues of training and creation, and can only enrich Molnar’s own creative capital, helping her answer the questions she is driven to ask about the inner workings of dance.

Emily Molnar is now a key figure at the Banff Centre as well as the popular leader of Ballet BC. And still, it seems, driven to dance herself, to explore the art form from the intimate perspective of her own body, alongside her dancers in class or when leading rehearsals, and maybe once more onstage. <sup>20</sup>

**Scott Fowler and Emily Chessa in rehearsal at Ballet BC’s studio with Emily Molnar**  
Photo: Michael Slobodian



**Emily Chessa**  
Photo: Michael Slobodian

## Emily Chessa

During a recent rehearsal, Emily Chessa perfects a lift with partner Gilbert Small with focus and attention to detail. Chessa has been described as a “diminutive firecracker” and her small stature pairs well with Small’s grounded, steady form. Now in her third season with Ballet BC, 23-year-old Chessa says, “I love dancing with Gilbert. We both have the same understanding of what we want to achieve, and we get along very well; we think similarly.”

Chessa grew up in Richmond, British Columbia, just outside Vancouver, and began her professional training at 15 at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School. She then danced in the graduate program at Arts Umbrella in Vancouver under the guidance of Artemis Gordon, where she had the opportunity to work with major choreographers like James Kudelka and Aszure Barton, and local innovator Wen Wei Wang.

In 2012, she saw Ballet BC perform Johan Inger’s *Walking Mad* and, she says, “I just fell in love with it. That’s why I really wanted to dance here.” During her first season as a company member, the company remounted the quirky, character-driven piece, which features a huge moveable wall that the

dancers manoeuvre and climb. “To see it, get inspired and then be able to perform it — that’s pretty special,” Chessa says.

Having begun as an apprentice, Chessa enjoys mentoring the new additions who have placements with the company each season. “I give them tips on what I learned — what worked, what didn’t.”

Chessa, who has a reputation as the resident music lover, was the first to be featured on the company’s blog for their *Dancer’s Playlist* series; her top picks included songs by Youth Lagoon, the National and Jesse Woods.

Discussing the variety of styles she has to tackle at Ballet BC, Chessa says, “I can use my classical training along with the contemporary movement and combine them to create new possibilities.” About new creation, she adds, “We get to investigate the work in a very intimate and deep way.”

The atmosphere in rehearsal is described by Chessa as both open and mindful. “I feel very privileged to be in that room with everyone because we all want the same thing. We all work very hard.”

— TESSA PERKINS

## Gilbert Small

It’s lunch break at Ballet BC, and Gilbert Small is eating homemade curry and a piece of company dancer Tara Williamson’s birthday cake. The cake was left over from a recent Ballet BC weekend retreat, where the dancers were encouraged to think big about the art form, both as individuals and as members of Ballet BC. Twenty-eight-year-old Small, inspired by the retreat, says he believes a good performance requires both humility and passion, and he hopes his performances make audience members question what they want from life.

Born in Baltimore, Maryland, Small always knew he wanted to be a dancer. He began serious ballet

training at the Baltimore School for the Arts at age 10, and went on to study at the Dance Theatre of Harlem School, the Springboard Danse Montréal project and the Hogeschool voor Muziek en Dans in Rotterdam, Netherlands, among other places. He is also the proud holder of a bachelor of fine arts degree from the Conservatory of Dance at Purchase College in the United States.

Joining Ballet BC from Sidra Bell Dance in New York City, Small was the first hire after Emily Molnar became artistic director in 2009. Now in his seventh season, he reflected on how things have changed for him since moving to Vancouver. “I felt quite alone for a long time here, and I’m just starting to find my way,” he says.

Small has now settled in the historic downtown neighbourhood called Gastown, known for its varied demographics. “I need diversity in that extreme way — the old and the new, the rich and the poor — I think it’s the closest to New York I’m going to get.”

Every morning Small leaves behind his 90-pound King Doberman and two-pound Teacup Yorkie and rides his bike to rehearsal. “I’m obsessed with my bike,” says Small. “It’s not even a crazy nice bike; it’s just the fact that I can go anywhere I want, whenever I want.”

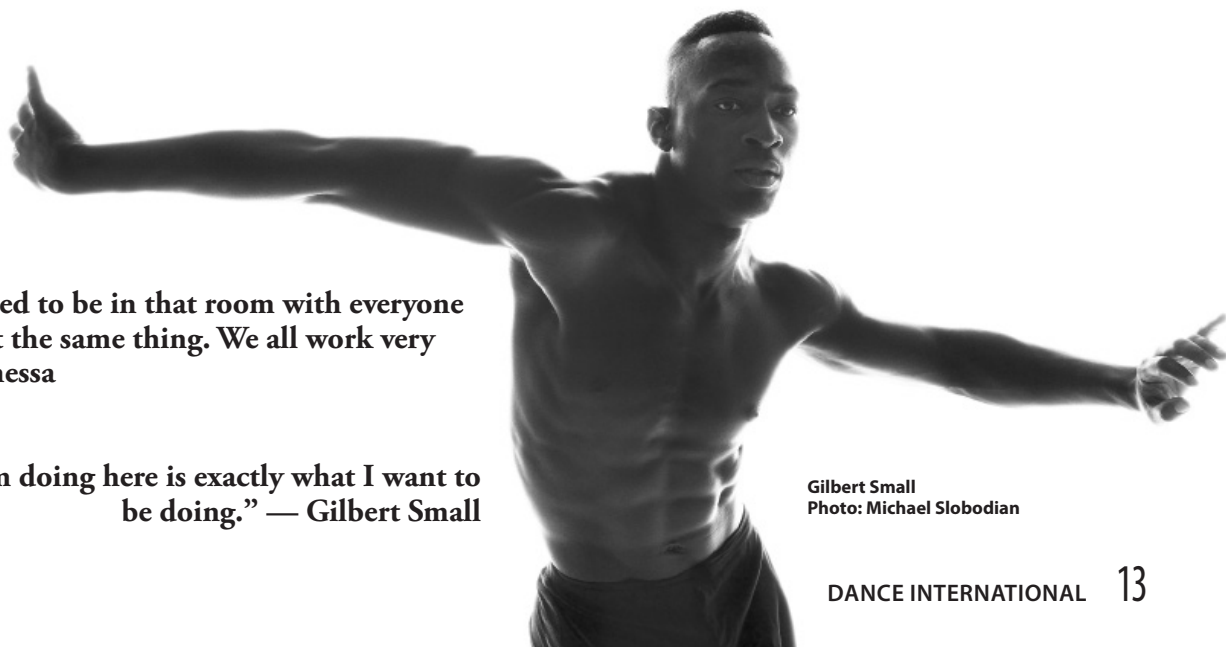
At Ballet BC, Small has worked with many choreographers in the creation process, which he believes allows dancers to actively add to the art form beyond being bodies in space. He is a perfectionist, describing his goal to always improve upon past performances and to delve deeper into each work. The second time he performed in Johan Inger’s *Walking Mad*, he enjoyed it even more. “I was able to pick up where I left off; I was able to dive deeper.”

Growing up, Small loved *Don Quixote* and *Sleeping Beauty*, but he is happy to be with a contemporary company and does not miss classical ballet. “What I’m doing here is exactly what I want to be doing,” he says.

— TESSA PERKINS

“I feel very privileged to be in that room with everyone because we all want the same thing. We all work very hard.” — Emily Chessa

“What I’m doing here is exactly what I want to be doing.” — Gilbert Small



Gilbert Small  
Photo: Michael Slobodian



From Doubt to Dance  
Cayetano Soto's  
creative process  
| by Hilary Maxwell

Racheal Prince and Brett Perry of Ballet BC in  
Cayetano Soto's *Twenty Eight Thousand Waves*  
Photo: Michael Slobodian

Seven men stand in a line at the ready. The music is cued, and from his chair at the front of the studio, choreographer Cayetano Soto leans in and directs his gaze toward the dancers. The energy shifts swiftly from focused stillness to an exhilarating surge of power as the men launch in unison into a sequence of sculptural movements with sharp changes of direction, their limbs and torsos carving through the space. It's a week into Ballet BC's rehearsals for the remount of the Spanish choreographer's *Twenty Eight Thousand Waves*. Originally a commission for Ballet BC in 2014, this piece marks the beginning of Soto's relationship with the Vancouver-based company. In 2015, he was invited to take on the role of resident choreographer for a three-year commitment.

Creating ballets was always the plan for Soto. "I never wanted to be a dancer. I wanted to be a choreographer my whole life. I only wanted to learn to dance to know how to use my tool, my body," he says, referring to his very physical involvement in his own choreographic process.

Soto began his formal dance education at the Institut del Teatre in his hometown of Barcelona, and went on to study at the Royal Conservatoire of The Haag, in Netherlands. He danced for one season at IT Dansa in Barcelona and then joined Ballet Theatre Munich, where he stayed from 1998 to 2005. It was here that Soto created his first ballet, *Plenilunio*, as part of a workshop performance that showcased pieces created by company dancers. Philip Taylor, who was the artistic director at the time, added *Plenilunio* into the company's repertoire, and each year until Soto left he commissioned a new ballet from him.

After three years of balancing his roles as dancer and choreographer, Soto retired from the stage and turned his focus solely toward a career as a freelance choreographer. Today, the 41-year-old is considered a driving force in the contemporary ballet world. His works are in the repertoires of major companies in Europe and North and South America, including Stuttgart Ballet, Royal Ballet of Flanders, Nederlands Dans Theater, Balé da Cidade de São Paulo, Northwest Pacific Dance Project, Aspen Sante Fe Ballet, Les Ballet Jazz de Montréal and Ballet BC.

When sourcing inspiration for a new work, Soto doesn't have to look far. "I don't get inspired anymore by a painting or a piece of music," he asserts. "It comes from some internal point of doubt. Some people go to the psychologist. I go to the studio. It's where I psychoanalyze myself."

The ideas for his choreographies emerge from personal reflection, struggle and questions he has about life at that moment. Ballet is his vehicle to confront these musings. While his work draws from his private thoughts and "internal life," he believes they address universal issues that are relatable to everyone on one level or another. When one ballet ends, it leads him directly to the next, conceptually and physically, in a continual linking pattern.



Chuck Jones and Imre van Opstal of  
Nederlands Dans Theater in  
Cayetano Soto's *Silver Bullet*  
Photo: Joris-Jan Bos

Before beginning *Twenty Eight Thousand Waves*, Soto had just finished *Silver Bullet*, an ensemble piece set on Nederlands Dans Theater 2, the junior division of the main company. Choreographing *Silver Bullet* was Soto's way of facing emotional demons that had haunted him for many years. "I was carrying a lot of skeletons in my closet with many Cayetanos inside," he says. The title *Silver Bullet* came to him because in mythology it is considered a weapon that can effectively kill demons or monsters.

During the transition between the two ballets came a lot of emotion. "You have to be very strong to close one door and open a new one," says Soto. He uses the image of an oilrig in the middle of the ocean being hit over and over by waves as a way to illustrate how he felt during this transitional process, and to emphasize the strength required to not succumb to the influences that pull at us. From that image the heart of *Twenty Eight Thousand Waves* started to form.

During the process of creation, Ballet BC's artistic director Emily Molnar felt there was a unique connection forming between Soto and her company. The synergy between Soto and the dancers in the studio, with the production team and then with the audience, she says, all play into why she saw him as an ideal partner. She hopes that audiences will feel "a certain kind of pride" watching the company and Soto evolve together over three years and feel part of the process.

As a freelancer, teaming up with one company in a long-term engagement is a serious commitment, and Ballet BC is a relatively small group on Canada's West Coast. "I always say there are no big or small companies. There are companies with ambition and companies without," Soto says.

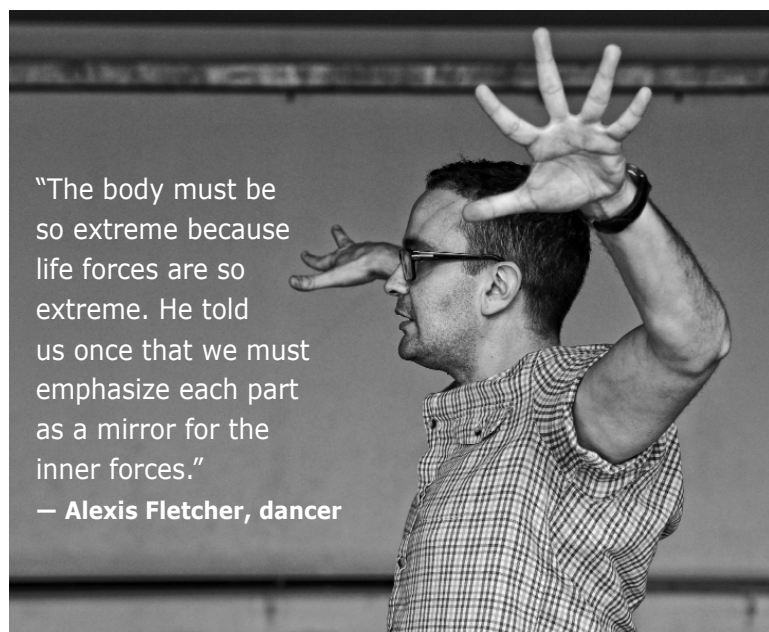
And Molnar has big ambition with a bold and innovative direction that appeals to him. Also, he has been given *carte blanche* in terms of artistic freedom, a gift for any creator. An ongoing role also means that as Soto gets to know the dancers, he can go deeper into the process with them and build on a creative exchange of ideas.

At the start of any creation, Soto has many parts of the piece already mapped out in his mind, including the structure, specific moments and images, costumes and lighting design, all with the music in place. He works very photographically in this way. But once he's inside the studio, Soto choreographs from a place of "raw instinct."

He develops movement first by drawing on vocabulary from the previous ballet he made and then, working closely with the dancers, improvises on the movement to expand on and create a new physical language. He attributes intuition as one of the greatest strengths in this process, believing that "when you work from intuition, it takes away from doubt. It's like this in my work and life."

When he's choreographing in the studio, Soto develops material and makes movement choices quickly, responding to an inner impulse informed by this gut feeling. It's not until afterward, once he's left rehearsal, that his analytical side kicks in. At night he reflects on the day's work with a critical lens, trying to uncover the hidden moments or missing pieces within the ballet. Working day and night, Soto hardly sleeps when he's in the midst of creation.

Both subtle and assertive, Soto's choreographies require technical aptitude, imagination and abandon. His dance vocabulary is distinct, comprised of nuanced detail and



"The body must be so extreme because life forces are so extreme. He told us once that we must emphasize each part as a mirror for the inner forces."

— Alexis Fletcher, dancer

grotesque adaptations of traditional movements. Expressive hands and fingers, and complex, acrobatic duets, are characteristic. In rehearsal, Soto could almost be mistaken as a member of the company, reaching, spiralling and pitching his body through space as he demonstrates the energy and precision he's after. While the dancers rehearse, he instructs them to "Keep it contained!" referring to the explosive energy his movement embodies, which balances on the edge of combustion. He uses descriptive language, imagery and metaphor to provide entry points into the artistic layers of the choreography.

Rarely does Soto set counts to the movement because, he says, "my emotions do not have numbers." Instead, he expresses his internal rhythm by vocalizing a medley of sounds and uses his breath to help the dancers access the dynamics and qualities of the phrasing he wants. Sometimes, he will even have the dancers sing the rhythms of the choreography with him.

Alexis Fletcher, who is in her 11th season with Ballet BC, comments on how Soto stresses the importance of finding the energetic and emotional range of the movement. "The body must be so extreme because life forces are so extreme. He told us once that we must emphasize each part as a mirror for the inner forces," she says.

The next few years for Soto are busy. In addition to his residency with Ballet BC, he has several commissions and mounts for companies in the United States, South America and Europe, including a full-evening work with Augsburg Ballet set to premiere in Germany this May. Wrapping up the season in June, Soto returns to Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, opening the event with a brand-new work commissioned by Aspen Sante Fe Ballet.

Undoubtedly, through his future projects, we will continue to see Soto's inner dialogue transform onstage in artistic extremes. To the same degree, Soto hopes his work will elicit extreme emotional responses from his audiences. "I want people to love it or hate it — to have a reaction. I want them to feel moved." ❦



IT'S AMAZING WHAT GOES INTO  
MAKING SOMETHING EFFORTLESS.



  
GAYNOR MINDEN®  
NEW YORK

The National Ballet of Canada's Principal Dancer JURGITA DRONINA as Aurora in *Sleeping Beauty*.  
Jurgita has been wearing *Gaynor Minden* pointe shoes since 2005.

DANCER.COM

**Running Away  
to Join**

# the Circus



**by Robin J. Miller**



**Three stories: Robbie Curtis, Jeff Hall and Lisa Natoli**

The dance world is a fluid place these days, with hip-hop seeping into contemporary, contemporary into ballet, and hints of what looks very much like circus beginning to permeate them all.

It goes the other way, too. Circus used to exist as a world unto itself, a series of novelty acts thrown at the audience one after the other as pure entertainment, without any pretence of being art. Today, however, circus is a very different place, in part because of the many highly trained dancers who have, by choice or by chance, found themselves a satisfying new place in that world.

As a boy, Robbie Curtis remembers being “absolutely hungry for physical stuff. I was always juggling, I took tap dancing, acrobatics, anything with movement.” Then he fell hard for dance, majoring in classical and contemporary at New Zealand School of Dance and later spending a year with Footnote Dance Company in Wellington, New Zealand, followed by freelancing back in his native Australia with the Australian Ballet and Shaun Parker & Company, among others.

“I was really interested in how to use the body to tell stories,” he says, “but I discovered there was a limit to the physical vocabulary in dance. I think I struggled a little bit when I was dancing. I wanted to push the boundaries of physicality, and a lot of choreographers were not open to that. Some were excited about bringing in new movement, but others said ‘no tricks, no tricks.’ But a trick *can* be a pure experience. A handstand can add deep meaning. It’s all in how you place it.”

Today, 27-year-old Curtis is primarily a base (an incredibly strong acrobat who anchors one or more flyers on hands, arms, shoulders, back, knees, feet), although he tumbles and juggles, too, with Circa, one of the busiest contemporary circus companies in the world, based in Brisbane, Australia. In one six-month period alone, from July to December 2015, Circa premiered three new pieces, including one based on Monteverdi’s Baroque opera *Il Ritorno*, and had multiple casts each performing different full-evening works in the United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada.

“For me, it’s all about how you can push the physicality of it,” says Curtis. “It’s about how far you can fly, how you can get your body to go to the next level. But it’s the mix I find really interesting, the physicality of circus along with the ability to express something with your body.” He does acknowledge, however, that circus is “playing a bit of catch up” with dance, especially with such revelatory artists as the late Pina Bausch, “who went to a very different place, emotionally and conceptually.”

“Circus started with clowns, tents and animals, as well as acts with spectacular tricks and skills,” he says. “But it’s going through a renaissance and it won’t be long until circus as an industry is exploring how to be deeper and more conceptual — pushing away from just skills toward humanness, human stories. Circus can move the heart and soul.”

Curtis also finds touring as a circus performer more satisfying than the touring he did as a dancer. “Touring life is difficult, no matter what,” he says. “But the traditional circus was based on the family, on family acts that toured together, and that carries through today. Love is encouraged within touring life. The circus



Lisa Natoli  
Photo: Andrew T. Foster

world is a bit grungier than the dance world — some of the venues are a bit raw, and you don’t just put on your makeup and go onstage or leave right after (with Circa, we pull the rigging down and bump out) — but the bonds you have with other ensemble members are incredibly strong.”

To some degree, those tight bonds also come from knowing that your life is literally in your fellow performers’ hands. “I like the adrenaline,” says Curtis. “There’s so much more risk, so much more danger in circus, and I guess I am attracted to that, too.”

While greater risk and danger were not in Lisa Natoli’s mind when she transitioned from dance to circus, greater artistic satisfaction definitely was. Natoli had always considered her body her canvas and dance her meaning for life, but years in New York City working as a freelance contemporary dancer with a variety of choreographers finally left her “completely heartbroken.”

“I was working at a day job 40 hours a week and dancing 40 hours a week,” she says, barely scraping together a living as so many dancers do. But the trouble was also on the artistic side. “You work and work for a whole year for one show,” Natoli says, “which was just not artistically fulfilling. I wanted to constantly make new work, and at the same time I felt limited by always doing other people’s work. I felt empty. And it was not making me a better dancer.”



Left: Robbie Curtis in Circa's *Immunity*  
Photo: Vince Valitutti

Below: Simon-Xavier Lefebvre, Nadine Louis and Charles-Éric Bouchard in Jeff Hall's *Ruelle*  
Photo: Michael Slobodian



A friend suggested Natoli try working with aerial silks — long, flowing cloth suspended up to 12 metres above the (net-less) ground that allows flyers to do dramatic and often elegant holds and wraps as well as heart-thumping drops. She became hooked. “There are tighter parameters when you are working with an apparatus,” she says. “There are only so many things you can do. But by limiting the choices you can make, it feels like you gain more freedom.” She likens it to technique in classical ballet; it’s strict, but once you have mastered it, “it frees you up to create within it.”

Since 2009, Natoli has been artistic director of her own company, Lisa’s Bright Ideas, and has presented solo and ensemble pieces using silks, ropes and hoops in both traditional and non-traditional venues in and around New York and beyond. “The money is better,” she says. “There is more work for me as an aerialist because of the cabaret scene in most big cities. It’s an act that can be done virtually anywhere.” She also feels she has “a stronger voice as an aerialist. I think I was always more of a choreographer than a dancer and now, even if a piece fails, it feels like I am working toward something.”

At age 42, while her body requires more maintenance to keep up with the physical strength and endurance required to be an aerial artist, she also feels she will have a longer career than she would have had in dance. “Circus has traditionally been a family business,” she says. “There have always been generations of performers, including those in their 50s and older. I think circus is more forgiving or accepting of age, and certainly of body type.”

Natoli’s dance training (including the Alvin Ailey certificate program and a dance degree from the University of Iowa) and years of dance performance do still come back occasionally to haunt her. “I miss the way dancers think,” she says, a yearning that Cirque du Soleil choreographer and director Jeff Hall knows well.

Raised in Montreal, Hall had an ulterior motive in first taking up dance — he wanted to improve his frisbee playing (he was the Canadian Freestyle Frisbee Champion of 1989 and 1990). The frisbee also led him, in 2005, to his first job with Cirque du Soleil, staging a 45-second flying frisbee sequence for one of the company’s permanent Las Vegas shows, *The Beatles LOVE*. The sequence was ultimately cut, but a new circus career was born.

“This is my second life,” says 57-year-old Hall, whose first life as a fiercely physical dancer for such cutting-edge companies as Quebec’s Carbone 14 and PPS Danse was brought to an abrupt end by a fall that broke his back in 2002. [Read about PPS Danse’s remount of Hall’s co-created *Bagne* in Montreal report on

page 40.] Over the past 10 years, he has choreographed Cirque du Soleil’s big touring show *Totem*, directed by Robert Lepage, as well as the acrobatic sequences in *ZAiA*, which ran for four years in Macau, China. He has also written, choreographed and directed his own circus shows in Chile and Canada, most recently *Ruelle* (alley or backstreet) for Montreal’s Complètement Cirque Festival in July 2015.

“The traditional circus is based on individual acts that are intended to ‘wow’ the audience,” he says. “That’s still a strong tradition I try to work against. My job, as I see it, is to bring my dance training and sensibility to circus performers, to help train them to be artists, not just acrobats. I am a person in love with dance and the movement of dancers. When you work with dancers, you realize they are hungry to get it right in their bodies, they push themselves to get it right, internally, emotionally, physically, and they are incredibly hard working. But I also understand and love the language of circus and the way acrobats work. They work and work on a skill for years until they master it. It’s mind-boggling what they do.”

But it does have limits. After mastering a trick or skill, some circus artists think that’s it, they’re done. Hall wants them to reach for more. He works to take their tremendous physicality and add to it the elements that will help make their work exceptional. “The concept of stretching a movement to the ends of their fingers and toes is hard to get across to a circus artist,” Hall says. “Musicality, too, is a foreign concept to most of them. Maybe one in 10 circus performers get it, but that one will eat it up. There’s something about seeing them grow onstage so quickly that is magical. Many are undernourished as artists; they are starved for something else. Dance helps nourish them.” <sup>or</sup>

THE RICHMOND ACADEMY OF DANCE

29 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

dance

# THE RICHMOND ACADEMY OF DANCE

Recognized for training young Canadians whose graduates are now Canada's newest exciting professionals!

## HALF-DAY BALLET/MODERN/CONTEMPORARY PROGRAM

Technique, Pointe, Repertoire, Variations, Modern, Contemporary, Pilates, Guest Artists, Several Annual Performances. Encompassing the best of classical, modern and musical theatre training the results from this specialized curriculum are unique across Canada.

## PROFESSIONAL AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Specially designed for the serious and talented dancer. All dance disciplines.

## MUSICAL THEATRE PROGRAM

Voice, acting and dance for stage supplements classical training to produce the most well rounded dancers.

BOYS CLASSICAL TRAINING - Scholarships available  
Unique Course: EXPERIENTIAL ANATOMY FOR DANCERS

## MODERN PROGRAM

Strong technique classes and repertoire staged by Canada's most successful choreographers.

## CHILDREN'S DIVISION

Carefully structured programs in ballet, jazz, tap, lyrical, modern, musical theatre and hip hop in a nurturing and fun environment.

## PILATES STUDIO

On-site body conditioning provides the most up to date training built into the classical training schedule.



## THE RICHMOND ACADEMY OF DANCE - PROUD RECIPIENTS OF:

- RICHMOND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD FINALIST - 2013
- RICHMOND ARTS AWARD FOR ARTS EDUCATION FINALIST - 2009 / 2012
- ETHEL TIBBITS WOMEN OF DISTINCTION AWARD IN THE ARTS - 2013
- PACIFIC WEST AWARD FOR THE DANCE STUDIO 2009 / 2010 / 2013
- MOST POSITIVE ATTITUDE
- PEER ENCOURAGEMENT
- INTERCULTURAL RESPECT



# Dance**notes**



Photo: Courtesy of Dance Collection Danse

## Drawn to Dance

The Dance Collection Danse exhibit, *Drawn to Dance*, featuring works by visual artists York Wilson, John Martin Alfsen and Grant Macdonald, runs in Toronto until March 24, 2016. The drawings and paintings, from the early to mid-20th century, were created during a seminal moment in the development of ballet in Canada, as the art form transitioned from an amateur pursuit to a professional scene that reflected Canada's growing cultural nationalism. Shown here is an oil painting by Wilson, *Ballerina at Mirror*, circa 1950s.

## Balanchine Archives

Karin von Aroldingen, former principal dancer with New York City Ballet, coached her created roles in *Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3* and *Who Cares?* for the George Balanchine Foundation's Interpreters Archive. The aim of this video series is to document the insights of dancers who worked closely with Balanchine on some of his greatest ballets.

Von Aroldingen worked on the opening movement of *Suite No. 3*, *Elégie*, with Sara Mearns and Ask la Cour, both New York City Ballet principals. She also coached her *Who Cares?* solo, *I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise*, with Teresa Reichlen, and the ballet's title pas de deux with Reichlen and Robert Fairchild, also NYCB principals. Anna Kisselgoff, former *New York Times* chief dance critic, interviewed von Aroldingen at the conclusion of the session. *Who Cares?* and *Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3* are strikingly dissimilar compositions, seemingly from different centuries, yet Balanchine choreographed both in 1970. Von Aroldingen coached *Davidsbündlertänze* for the Balanchine Foundation Video Archives in 2000.



Charles Askegard, former New York City Ballet principal, coached by Karin von Aroldingen in Balanchine's *Davidsbündlertänze*, 2000  
Photo: Brian Rushton

# A Dancer's Jubilee

Character dancer Poul-Erik Hesselkilde celebrated his 50-year jubilee at the Royal Danish Ballet's performance of George Balanchine's *The Nutcracker* on December 13, 2015 at Copenhagen's Royal Theatre. In the role of Drosselmeier, Hesselkilde once again proved his ability to flavour his roles with personal details. At the end of the show, the curtain stayed open and artistic director Nikolaj Hübbe presented him with a laurel wreath, and the audience, including Queen Margrethe of Denmark, gave him a standing ovation. Hesselkilde became an apprentice with the company in 1965, and two years later joined the corps de ballet, becoming a character dancer in 1993.



Poul-Erik Hesselkilde in the Royal Danish Ballet's *The Nutcracker*  
Photo: Henrik Stenberg

Frances Chung and Carlos Quenedit  
in Goh Ballet's *The Nutcracker*  
Photo: Paul Lee

## FRANCES CHUNG'S SUGAR PLUM FAIRY

The highlight of *The Nutcracker*, in holiday performances around the world, are the Sugar Plum Fairy's Act II variations — especially when danced by ballerinas like Frances Chung of San Francisco Ballet. Her warm presence and delicate strength seemed to stop time, musically speaking, in her guest appearance in Vancouver for Goh Ballet's delectable production, choreographed by Anna-Marie Holmes. It was a homecoming for Chung, who trained at Goh Ballet Academy before joining, in 2001, the San Francisco company, where she is now a principal.



Ginette Laurin  
Photo: Julie Artacho

## O Vertigo's New Mission



Stéphanie Tremblay Abubo of O Vertigo  
in Ginette Laurin's *Soif*  
Photo: Sylvie-Ann Paré

After 30 years of creation, Ginette Laurin is altering the mission of her Montreal company O Vertigo. Beginning in the 2016-2017 season, the Centre de Création O Vertigo, under newly appointed executive director Paul Caskey, will be open to major choreographic projects, providing financial resources and organizational support for invited artists to carry out all phases of a large-scale, high-quality work over a three-year period. Every two years, a work cycle will begin with a new artist. Laurin has set up an artistic committee (Mélanie Demers, Catherine Gaudet and Caroline Laurin-Beaucage), which will be renewed every three years. For the next two seasons, all activities linked to Laurin's projects will be maintained, after which the choreographer plans to leave the company to devote herself to personal projects.

# thewashingtonschoolofballet

Official School of The Washington Ballet

Septime Webre/artistic director Mary Day/founder Kee Juan Han/school director

Upper Division Intensive  
June 20–July 22, 2016

Lower Division Intensive  
June 20–July 15, 2016

Two-Week Intensive  
July 25–August 5, 2016

## 2016 SUMMER INTENSIVE

Faculty includes **Kee Juan Han, Kristina Windom, Vladimir Djouloukhadze, Kim Sonderegger, Stephanie Walz** and TWB artistic staff—Septime Webre, Elaine Kudo and Luis R. Torres



Theo Kosenas | med4artists

Los Angeles, CA; Denver, CO; Princeton, NJ; Chicago, IL; Detroit, MI; Fort Worth, TX; Irvine, CA; San Diego, CA; Pittsburgh, PA;  
San Francisco, CA; Houston, TX; Salt Lake City, UT; Richmond, VA; St. Louis, MO; Columbus, OH; Portland, OR;  
Vancouver, B.C., Canada; Boston, MA; Philadelphia, PA; New York, NY; Tampa, FL; Minneapolis, MN; Kansas City, MO;  
Oklahoma City, OK; Tulsa, OK; Washington, DC; Phoenix, AZ; Alpharetta, GA; Nashville, TN; Norfolk, VA

202.362.3606 | [washingtonballet.org](http://washingtonballet.org)



# Michael Crabb's Notebook

Hearing loss, so audiologists inform us, is an almost inevitable companion of advancing years, but, if that's the case, I must be in some form of age regression. Increasingly, I find myself assaulted at dance concerts by sound levels that risk rousing the dead. I'm confident this is not a case of hyperacusis. Rather, it's that amplification levels, not just for dance concerts but most performing arts events today, have been needlessly cranked up to the point they present a serious health hazard.

In the United States, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that some 17 percent of people in the 20 to 69 age range have had their hearing permanently damaged because of exposure to excessive sound levels. We're talking about levels of 85 decibels or more. Your alarm clock can generate that much noise. A chain saw is in the 100-decibel plus range. There's a reason they sell sound-blocking earmuffs at DIY stores.

Loud noise at dance events is not entirely new. There are moments during a live performance of *The Rite of Spring* when the Stravinsky score is almost overwhelming — but thrillingly so. (Less for the musicians themselves, among whom hearing loss is now a recognized hazard.) Anyone who has watched the elegant movements of Japan's Kodo as they lay into massive taiko drums will recall the visceral impact of the ensuing vibrations. These moments are generally short-lived and, being acoustic, not amplified, at least natural.

Modern technology makes possible levels of decibel generation unimaginable in the days when I attended Pink Floyd concerts. Is this a ploy to attract younger audiences who seem to thrive on anything that gives them a buzz? Could it be a way to distract attention from the fact that not much of interest is happening onstage?

I used to think I was alone in my reaction, somehow over-sensitized to the amplitude of sound waves. The occasional presenter I complained to would laugh it off, as if I were joking. These prodigal decibel peddlers might reconsider if more people complained. And more and more audience members are restive.

At a dance event at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa last fall, many in the audience were observed pressing hands to ears in self-defence against the immense sound. At the first blast, I dug into the bag of notepads, pens, candy and Kleenex that accompanies me to most performances and extracted the neat little plastic holder containing spongy earplugs, originally purchased for airplane travel. In this case, however, even earplugs were not enough to reduce the sonic onslaught to a tolerable level. I am now more alert to the shared reactions of what generally prove to be older audience members and realize I am not alone in my suffering.

Warnings about hearing loss caused by excessive amplification came with the first Walkman almost 40 years ago. As more people listened to music through headphones and ear buds, clinical studies began alerting the public to how easily hearing could be permanently impaired.

The ear is a hypersensitive organ, biologically programmed for natural sounds. In the desolate silence of a northern wilderness winter, you can hear your own heartbeat — or should be able to. To an extent, our hearing can adjust to low levels of stimulation, much in the way eyesight responds to a cloudless night sky by revealing more and more stars. Attend a harpsichord concert and at first you'll be leaning in to hear. By the end, this lovely instrument can sound thunderous. There's a reason the most effective public speakers, amplified or not, adopt a conversational tone, rather than bellow like Charlton Heston in *The Ten Commandments*. Using the voice naturally draws people in, compelling them to listen closely.

There is absolutely no need for the dangerous levels of amplification we now accept with apparently supine resignation. In fact, they militate against the intimacy that should be at the core of any performance.

Whenever I go on one of my dotage-charged rants, I invariably get supportive feedback. "We're so glad you wrote that. We feel the same way." Well, I have a suggestion. If you are deafened by excessive volume levels, register your discontent with the perpetrators. For starters, even if the effort seems futile, I recommend bellowing during the performance, "Turn the sound down!" You might get booted from the theatre, but you'll feel so much better for it. *DC*



**Your Dance Career Begins Here**

Professional dancers around the world began their careers at The School of Dance. You can too. Find out more about our 3-year Contemporary Dance Diploma Programme. [theschoolofdance.ca](http://theschoolofdance.ca)

**Merrilee Hodgins A.R.A.D.** | **Sylvie Desrosiers B.A.V., C. Ed.**  
Artistic Director | Director of Contemporary Dance

**Ottawa**  ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL  
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO  
du Québec en collaboration avec  
le ministère de la Culture et des Communications de l'Ontario

**The School of Dance**

Photos: Sarah Schorlemmer, Gilles Vézina

# The Angel Effect

Angel Corella takes on Pennsylvania Ballet

In 2014, Pennsylvania Ballet was nearing the end of its 50th anniversary season when longtime artistic director Roy Kaiser made the surprise announcement he would be stepping down. There had been rumours of behind-the-scenes problems and hints that all was not well within the organization; key dancers were leaving and, in the studio, morale was low. A few months later, the company's board of directors announced that Angel Corella had been chosen as the new director. Then, just before the dancers returned from summer break, Kaiser's artistic team was also let go — and a whole new era was underway.



by Lewis Whittington



Angel Corella in rehearsal  
Photo: Alexander Iziliaev

Corella's first order of business was to drop Ricky Weiss' full-length ballet, *Beethoven: Symphony No. 9*, citing complicated staging requirements that couldn't be adequately handled while the company was shifting personnel. In its place, Corella whipped up a mixed bill called Press Play to open the season. After a flurry of press attention, Corella stood on the stage of the Academy of Music and introduced himself before the evening's performance of works by Alexei Ratmansky, Christopher Wheeldon, Jerome Robbins and George Balanchine. By every indication, the audience seemed to embrace the changing of the guard with enthusiasm.

Corella was able to capitalize on the rest of the season that Kaiser had programmed, with audiences picking up on a fresher attack and more polish in the dancing, especially among the men, in predictable revivals of Balanchine's *Prodigal Son* and Wheeldon's *Swan Lake*. Corella's stamp was most apparent in the season-ender bill of works by Larry Keigwin, William Forsythe and, especially, Nicolo Fonte's electrifying premiere, *Grace Action*. Fonte tapped into the momentum of the new focus and drive shown by the dancers by making the piece only when he was with them in the three weeks leading up to the performances.

At the last minute, Corella added a preview of a central pas de deux from *Don Quixote* to the bill, danced by newcomers Mayara Pineiro and Arián Molina Soca, whose textbook classicism, wedded with smoldering deportment, left the

audience panting for more. Pineiro was the first dancer Corella brought in, as a corps de ballet member, but who danced lead roles immediately. Trained at the Cuban National Ballet School under the direction of Ramona de Saa, she has a maturity and technical clarity that ignites the stage. Soca, also from Cuba, is a fine character dancer with understated, yet glittering technique, and is on board as principal guest artist.

At the company's offices in centre city Philadelphia, Corella said he was "especially proud" of how the dancers handled the change in leadership. "I had expected the transition would be slower, but, from day one, boom, the dancers just lit up and understood the vision I have for the company."

In effect, Corella had been grooming himself for a job as director for several years. While still a principal dancer at American Ballet Theatre, he was jetting back and forth to his native Spain in order to run Barcelona Ballet, which he established in 2007. He retired from American Ballet Theatre in 2012, at 37, and the following year he dissolved the Barcelona company when significant underwriting by the government evaporated, despite the group's artistic success.

Right from the beginning, Corella seemed to put his stamp on Pennsylvania Ballet, a company of about 40 dancers, from every angle. Uptown at their North Broad Street studios, the director moved his office to a new location directly across the hall from the main rehearsal space, keen to work one-on-one with the

"The way you feel fulfilled as a director is from the mutual trust that should develop between you and your dancers; when that happens, it's the best situation."

— Angel Corella

dancers, wanting to relate to them closely, dancer to dancer. Corella often hangs in the hallways and fosters open dialogue. Meanwhile, he is all business, having beefed up rehearsal and class regimens, and also enlisting a battalion of New York colleagues — coaches, teachers and staggers. These changes didn't go without backstage complaints among some of the dancers, but most ended up being happy with the results. Corella is realistic about the departure of a few who were "not fully on board."

Corella wants to strengthen the dancers' technical range in both balletic and contemporary styles, but most of all he wants to showcase their unique artistry. At first, he detected a certain reserve and so he pushed them to "go for it, even if you fall on your ass," as he put it. "One of the main things we are trying to do together is to ensure that every step is so fluid they don't have to think about it on-stage."

Pennsylvania Ballet's established stars Lauren Fadeley, Amy Aldridge, Ian Hussey, James Ihde, Lillian Di Piazza, Jermel Johnson and Brooke Moore seem to be flourishing under Corella, taking on unexpected roles and partners. Corella worked with soloist (now principal dancer) Alexander Peters on character refinements in Balanchine's *Prodigal Son*, which resulted in Peters getting across-the-board stellar reviews, including a rave write-up from Alastair Macaulay in the *New York Times*. As well, some corps dancers have been given lead roles.

Things continued to shift with Corella's artistic staff, but without any apparent holdup to the director's immediate goals. Former Pennsylvania Ballet principals



Mayara Pineiro and Arián Molina Soca in *Don Quixote*  
Photo: Alexander Iziliaev

Artists of Pennsylvania Ballet in William Forsythe's  
*The Second Detail*  
Photo: Alexander Iziliaev

Zachary Hench and Julie Diana took on ballet master duties last year, then announced they were leaving to run a dance school in Juneau, Alaska. Those spots have been filled by former New York City Ballet principal Kyra Nichols and American Ballet Theatre's Charles Askegard.

As much as Corella wants to develop a "ballet forward" brand for Pennsylvania Ballet, he wants to preserve the Balanchine legacy of founder Barbara Weisberger, a Balanchine disciple, who established the company and its original school in the early 1960s. In 2016, Corella will mount company classics *Concerto Barocco*, *Serenade* and *The Four Temperaments* along with the annual run of Balanchine's *Nutcracker*.

Otherwise, his programming is packed with works by in-demand choreographers — programming that might seem conservative by international standards, but is new to local audiences. The variety points to the broader choreographic edge Corella wants to build, and Pennsylvania Ballet's resident choreographer Matt Neenan fits in with this goal well. Neenan, a former principal with the company, has created a dozen ballets, including the hugely successful *11:11* set to songs by Rufus Wainwright and a new production of *Carmina Burana*. He is co-founder and choreographer for BalletX and has created work for many other companies, including Colorado Ballet, Ballet Memphis, Sacramento Ballet, Washington Ballet, Tulsa Ballet and Juilliard Dance.

"When the curtain goes up, the energy should blow right into the heart and soul of every audience member, so they are part of what you are doing and are sitting on the edge of their seats."

Even though most of the new ballets are just company premieres, most of the choreographers will be in Philly throughout the year to work directly with the dancers. "They want to be here and see what the new era of PB will be. They have expressed how impressed they are by what these dancers are giving," Corella says.

A much anticipated work by choreographer Trisha Brown, *O zlozony / O composita*, set to music by Laurie Anderson and originally choreographed for the Paris Opera Ballet in 2004, will run in June 2016 (programmed under Kaiser). "I was so happy with this. I've seen Trisha Brown's work in Europe and it's completely different to anything else. This ballet hasn't been done by any American ballet company," Corella notes.

Another season highlight was October's company premiere of Wayne McGregor's *Chroma*, which Corella says has a unique dynamic: "It's almost like you're fighting against your own body and yet it seems so organic, mysterious and beautiful."

Corella's new production of *Don Quixote* in March will be the centerpiece of his first full round of programming. "If we're talking creating a new look for the company, this couldn't be better, it's right out of Pennsylvania Ballet's expected repertoire," he says. He is attending to every aspect of his production, including shopping for costumes. "I was in Barcelona this

summer and found this shop with traditional Spanish clothes." He is also working with conductor Beatrice Jona Affron to lace in Spanish guitar and flamenco singing with the orchestra. "I've done Baryshnikov's version, and Kevin McKenzie's, and Nureyev's with the Royal Ballet; I know the score inside out," Corella assures me.

As a dancer, Corella distinguished himself in a gallery of character roles and he has been working with the lead dancers on the demanding partnering sections in *Don Q*, which mix classicism and traditional Spanish dance. He is relieved to be back in the studio as just a director, admitting he felt pulled in too many directions when he was dancing with American Ballet Theatre and running Barcelona Ballet at the same time.

"The way you feel fulfilled as a director is from the mutual trust that should develop between you and your dancers; when that happens, it's the best situation." As he did with Barcelona Ballet, Corella envisions building a company of principal dancers. "I always tell them, you have to dance to the maximum of your possibility, at all times. The audience always knows when you're not giving your all. When the curtain goes up, the energy should blow right into the heart and soul of every audience member, so they are part of what you are doing and are sitting on the edge of their seats." <sup>DI</sup>

# STORIES OF ENCOUNTER

Creative connections in the world of dance

## PART II

**After our first collection of creative encounters was published in Spring 2015, many readers passed on their enjoyment of these mini-narratives. A year later, we are happy to bring you part two, which showcases the same lively range of stories.**

Colin Peasley took his first classical ballet class when he was 21 and, after working as a commercial dancer, was nearly 28 when he became a founding member of the Australian Ballet in 1962, appearing in *Swan Lake* as part of the corps de ballet. During my career as a critic, I've had many occasions on which to speak with Colin, who once described his early dancing to me as: "Dreadful. No, dreadful. Honestly. Dreadful." But male ballet dancers weren't thick on the ground in Australia in the early 1960s, and Colin had something. "I could get away with it because I could act. That's what I used to do — I used to act dancing." As the years went by he could be relied on to bring depth and humanity to a slightly foolish old gent with a young wife; a rich, ridiculous fop; an old witch; a clog-dancing widow.

Just before his retirement in 2012, which coincided with Australian Ballet's 50th anniversary, he talked to me about his appearance in Stephen Baynes' *Swan Lake*. "It's really just a walk across the stage, but it rounds the whole thing up," he said. "It closes the circle. Start with *Swan Lake*, finish with *Swan Lake*. I don't care that it's just walking around. That's OK."

Retirement has proved to be merely another stage in Colin's career. When Australian Ballet went to California in 2014, he was on hand to grace the Royal entourage in, yes, *Swan Lake* (the Graeme Murphy version), turning 80 while on tour. You know what they say — there are no small parts, only small actors.

I've enjoyed watching Colin onstage for more than a quarter century; his career will never be replicated. As he told me, boys of 14 these days can do "double every bloody thing." He added rather poignantly: "When I talk to the guys I'm always amazed they have been allowed to dance from such an early age." It's because of the path created by men like him that they can.

— DEBORAH JONES, WRITER



Colin Peasley as the Lord Admiral in Graeme Murphy's *Swan Lake*  
Photo: Lisa Tomasetti

When Rudolf Nureyev came to Place des Arts with the National Ballet of Canada in *Sleeping Beauty*, I splurged on a lower balcony ticket, despite being an impoverished university student. He was electrifying, though I know now the critics considered him in decline. The famously charismatic Russian was always falling onstage, and it's true he stumbled landing from a jump the night I saw him in Montreal. But I didn't care.

Waiting for the bus the next day, I spotted Nureyev walking toward me on Sherbrooke Street. You couldn't miss him, his big fur coat flapping open so it framed his body as he strutted along in tight pants, legs and feet turned out in tall leather boots. I hurried up to him as he approached, and said I'd seen him last night and that it was a wonderful performance. I spoke fervently, the way fans do, while he stared at me, head tilted back, lips pursed. Those lips were the only part of his body that looked soft and lazy, too lazy to speak; he just listened and stared.

"It didn't matter at all that you nearly fell," I blurted, at which Nureyev nodded curtly and strode off, nostrils flaring.

It seems ridiculous now — my enthusiasm, his arrogance, both of us so in love with the exciting moments of his dance, both of us believing absolutely in their utter importance. I didn't mind his strutting off: he looked splendid, just like he did onstage.

— KAIJA PEPPER, WRITER/EDITOR

A few years back, searching for ways to connect with something deeper than technical precision in my dance, I attended a summer intensive in Manchester, England. This is where I met Priyadarsini Govind, one of the instructors whom I had long admired from afar. Currently the director of Kalakshetra Dance School in Chennai, India, Priya akka, as she is fondly referred to (akka means elder sister), was then one of the busiest Bharatanatyam artists performing around the world.

“Do you teach, akka?” I summoned the courage to ask, and pat came the reply, “No.” Not even a moment’s hesitation. I resolved to change her answer and pushed every limit during the workshop to get her to notice the rawness in me that I believed would benefit from her guidance. By the end of the week, she had relented.

The rare moments I have spent with Priyadarsini Govind in Chennai since then have been extraordinary. Even on the busiest of days when she might be performing or travelling, if she promised to see me, she did, giving 200 percent. The classes were short, anywhere from 15 to 45 minutes, but their impact was deep.

Once she asked, “Sujit, why do you dance?” “Akka, it centres me,” I replied. “Then feel that now!” she said. “I want you to touch that space every time you practise. Feel every pose, every extension, from that centre within. If you don’t feel it, your dance will remain movement in a vacuum, soul-less.”

Her words taught me to seize every moment, to always give my 200 percent.

— SUJIT VAIDYA, DANCER

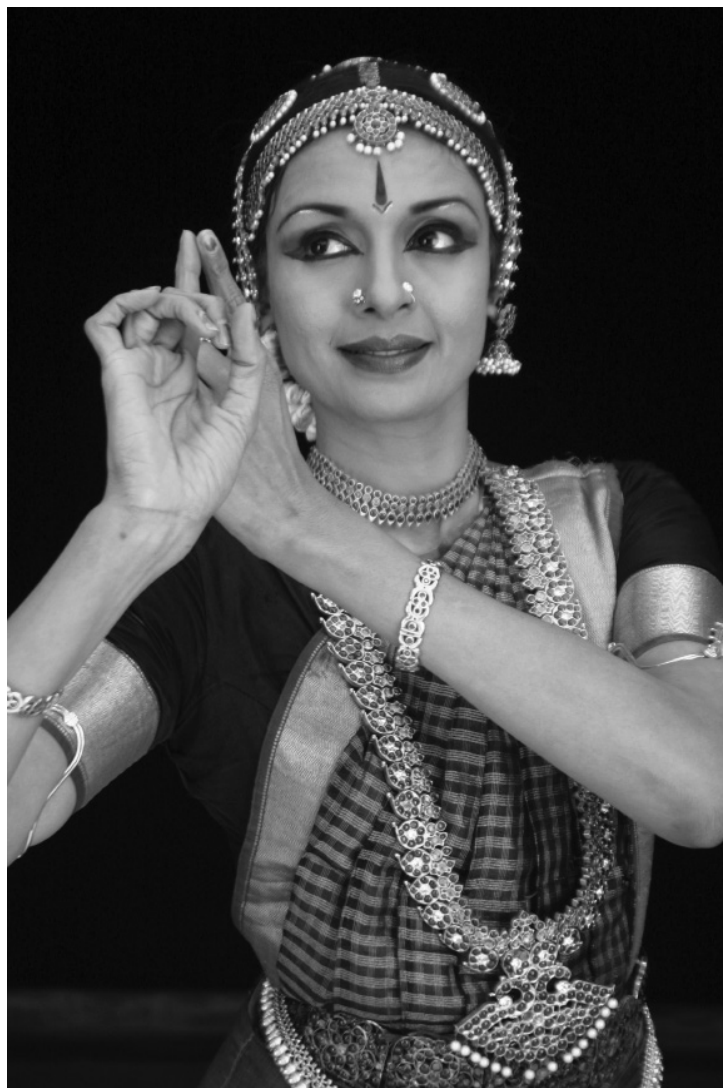
I was artist in residence at Earthdance, a centre for the art and spirit of improvisation in Western Massachusetts, at the same time Keith Hennessy was there teaching a weeklong intensive called the Improvising Citizen. When I read the workshop description, I remember the words political, provocateur, queer and activist appeared in some combination. These are not my usual catchwords, but when a friend said, “You *need* to take this workshop,” I signed up.

Keith, a San Francisco-based choreographer and activist, is originally from Ontario, the same province I am from. We are both of Irish extraction, too. During our first improvisation together, we linked arms and pretended to skate around the floor, sharing a sense of mischief and glee: the Irish Canadians sliding freely through New England.

Most of the workshops I had taken dealt with abstract dance forms or heightened theatrical scenarios. Here, Keith connected somatic experience to a sense of politics, identity and place through a hyper-local, super-now kind of aesthetic. Working with Keith ignited a new way of thinking about performance in relation to the broader world.

The Improvising Citizen was my call to action.

— MEAGAN O’SHEA, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR,  
STAND UP DANCE



Priyadarsini Govind  
Photo: V. Ganesan

**A**ged 20, I was dancing with New Jersey Ballet, and teaching in their three schools, when the company was laid off. The income enabled me to go up to New York City, a short bus ride away, every day during lay-offs for classes with some great teachers.

I adored Patricia Wilde, Melissa Hayden and David Howard — leading dancers who taught open classes in the city — but the classes that really motivated me were given at American Ballet Theatre by Valentina Pereyaslavceva. Madame Pereyaslavceva was a tiny, almost spherical Russian lady, but her small stature belied the force of her personality, which was simply terrifying! She inspired me to work harder than I thought possible; at the end of each exercise I would be standing in a pool of sweat.

Madame Pereyaslavceva's *modus operandi* was to place each person in the centre after the barre; you had to stand exactly where she put you. She often put me centre front, which could be embarrassing when there were dancers from ABT in class, but it meant I couldn't get away with anything, and my technique improved by leaps and bounds. The classes were extremely rigorous; proper Russian Vaganova system enchainements, which left you exhausted but were a joy to dance, helped develop expressive ports de bras and upper body alongside the bravura footwork and high extensions Madame Pereyaslavceva insisted on.

Fierce in the classroom, Madame Pereyaslavceva was sweet outside it. She encouraged and motivated me; when immigration problems forced me to return home to England, the strength and determination she had helped me develop kept me going through difficult times while I was establishing a career in London. Some of her indomitable spirit was passed on to me, and I'll always be grateful for it.

— **AMANDA JENNINGS, WRITER AND FORMER DANCER**

**I**n the spring of 1980, New York City Ballet's Melissa Hayden came to the West Coast to teach the Vancouver Ballet Society's weeklong spring seminar. She was a formidable teacher whose critiques left little room for misinterpretation. She was also the first ballet teacher I'd had who was as invested in a dancer's character as in their artistry and technical ability. Ms. Hayden simply didn't have the patience for anyone who was apathetic or unwilling to "seize the moment."

I learned this the hard way.

One afternoon, she asked me to demonstrate an *échappé* exercise on pointe for the entire senior class. And for whatever reason, I remember basting in self-doubt and feeling a bit put out that I had been called upon. Instead of recognizing the opportunity to perform for a ballerina of her stature and experience, I slunk into position, cranked out the mechanical requirements of the exercise and, according to Ms. Hayden, "unforgivably wasted everyone's time."

Ms. Hayden blasted my emotionless technical display with a stream of smarting assertions that went on for several minutes. She called me lazy, selfish and disrespectful, not only to her, but also to myself, my audience and to dance. When she was almost done calling me out in front of the entire class, she roared, "You have to be the one to take the initiative. How dare you waste an opportunity to perform?"

In the wake of that deserved tough love tempest, I grew to understand that Melissa Hayden's fervency was a testament to her love for dance and dancers whom she knew had the responsibility to push beyond what was comfortable.

— **JACQUELINE STEUART, WRITER AND FORMER DANCER**



Deborah Hay  
Photo: Rino Pizzi

**M**y first encounter with Deborah Hay was in 2006 in New York. Deborah was premiering a group work, *O,O*, at Danspace in the beautiful St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery, and I had run into a writer friend who suggested I might enjoy it.

It was opening night, so I was lucky to get a ticket. The dancers were Miguel Gutierrez, Vicky Shick, Juliette Mapp, Jeanine Durning and Neil Greenberg, five stars of the downtown scene, and lighting was by the legendary Jennifer Tipton. Deborah was in attendance, wearing one of her extraordinary hats.

The performance began, and I quietly felt my world shift. I could tell that something complex was unfolding with rigour and contained virtuosity. I felt the poetry, but its meaning eluded me, always one step ahead of my thoughts. The dancers were fully alive, listening to each other with rare attention, watching for signals and possibilities, while the landscape shifted from apparent chaos to breathtaking specificity in the blink of an eye. I found the performance deeply moving yet light, even irreverent.

I can honestly say that this was the first time in probably 30 years as a choreographer that I had been fully engaged by a performance while having absolutely no idea how it had been made.

I spoke to Deborah afterward (in her words, "pounced on her") and told her how I felt. She let me know about her Solo Performance Commissioning Project being held in Findhorn, Scotland, that August and suggested I apply. There was no question in my mind that I would do so. The 10 days I spent in Findhorn were some of the most challenging and exhilarating of my career, leading me to re-examine most — and break free of many — of my assumptions as an artist.

Working with Deborah that year, and over the next eight years in various locations, has brought me back to performing, enriched my skills as a director and changed my view of the world. A chance encounter in New York led me, at the age of 52, to a major new influence and beloved mentor in my experience as a human being.

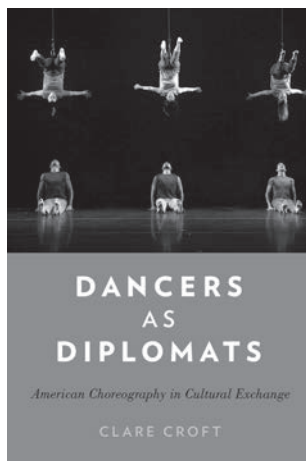
— **CHRISTOPHER HOUSE, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR,  
TORONTO DANCE THEATRE**

# Mediawatch

Performers are frequently called upon to play a variety of roles in the service of their art and in the different communities in which they practise that art. Clare Croft's *Dancers as Diplomats: American Choreography in Cultural Exchange* presents us with the more complex situation of dance, dancers and the works they perform being utilized in the service of American international politics. She examines the U.S. State Department's use of dance to promote cultural exchange and mutual understanding with countries that are often hostile to American politics and the so-called American way of life.

Croft makes a detailed examination of some of the personalities, dance companies and choreographic works that the State Department promoted abroad from as far back as John F. Kennedy's tenure in the White House between 1961 and 1963 — amidst the Cold War and the Cuban Missile Crisis — to the incumbent Barack Obama and the ongoing War on Terror he inherited from the George W. Bush administration. The changing approaches to notions of cultural exchange adopted by these administrations, the foreign policy they practised and the combined effects these policies had on dance and dancers — from funding strategies to personal politics — grounds the main theme of the book.

Croft argues that the very idea of American dance amplifies what she calls "the paradoxical entanglement of dominant narratives of 'America'" with the many artistic and personal re-imaginings of those who live there and see themselves as Americans. This complex notion of an American identity both assists and obstructs the message Washington wants to disseminate abroad. For example, Croft cites the tours made by the primarily white New York City Ballet — led by Russian émigré George Balanchine — to Russia, a country with a dance aesthetic Balanchine abandoned for a new land and a movement vocabulary that he reimagined as uniquely American.



**DANCERS AS DIPLOMATS:  
AMERICAN CHOREOGRAPHY  
IN CULTURAL EXCHANGE**  
By Clare Croft  
Oxford University Press, 2015  
[global.oup.com](http://global.oup.com)

When welcomed "home" as Russian, Balanchine promptly claimed he was Georgian, while at other times he conveniently switched to being American. The dancers themselves identified the neoclassical ballet that was the foundation of their work in the United States as having clear roots in the classes they observed at the Imperial Theatre School in Leningrad and the Bolshoi School in Moscow.

Even as war between the United States and Russia over Cuba seemed imminent, New York City Ballet thrilled Soviet audiences with Balanchine's reimagining of traditional classical ballet in works such as *Theme and Variations* (1947), as well as giving them a taste of black culture's influence on ballet through the modified jazz styles visible in works such as *Agon* (1957).

We are also told that Arthur Mitchell did not realize the stress of his own position as the only African American in an all-white company representing the United States in the Soviet Union until he got back home and realized he had lost much of his hair.

The issue of sexuality and gender relations came up repeatedly in the planning as well as in the course of these tours. Apparently, there were many anxious debates at the State

Department regarding how the highly sexualized nature of Martha Graham's female title character in *Phaedra* (1962) would be received in some of the Far East countries, among them Vietnam and Japan. Or over how the personal behaviour of gay dancers in countries that forbade such relationships, at least openly, would be perceived. While Alvin Ailey's perhaps most famous work, *Revelations* (1960), spoke volumes about the black experience in the United States to his international audiences, it was ironic that State Department officials took it upon themselves to warn him about his potentially damaging behaviour abroad as a gay man representing America.

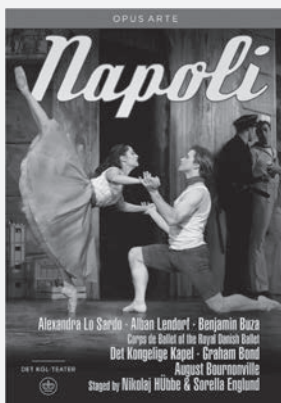
More recently, Trey McIntyre's collaborative work *The Unkindness of Ravens* (2012) with the Korea National Contemporary Dance Company represents a changed attitude by the State Department, which seems to want to foster more meaningful personal and cultural exchange. Croft claims that although this introduced its own set of issues, the more collaborative approach that the Bush and Obama administrations adopted in the 21st century appears to be better suited to an agenda of mutual understanding.

— HENRY DANIEL



**Exhibition on Screen: Matisse from MoMA and Tate Modern**  
**Francine Stock interviewing Zenaida Yanowsky and Will Tuckett**  
**in front of *The Dance*, 1938, Henri Matisse,**  
**from the Pearl Collection**

Photo: Courtesy of Seventh Art Productions  
 and Alexey Moskvina



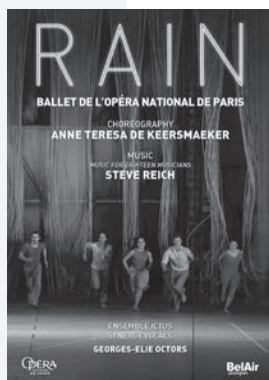
**NAPOLI**  
**Royal Danish Ballet**  
**105 minutes**  
**www.opusarte.com**

The Royal Danish Ballet has succeeded, perhaps more than any other major company in our globalized dance world, in maintaining its distinctive company style, developed by the great August Bournonville in the 19th century. This DVD provides a great opportunity to see the company in performance, in a ballet regarded as a cornerstone of its repertoire.

*Napoli*, which premiered in 1842, tells the story of the fisherman Gennaro and his quest to win his beloved Teresina against the opposition of her mother. It follows him rescuing Teresina from the clutches of the sea spirit Golfo after an accident at sea, before true love prevails and the happy couple is united in a high-spirited finale. Nikolaj Hübbe and Sorella Englund's 2009 version, which was filmed in 2015, moves the action forward to 1950s Naples and pays tribute to early Fellini movies, with attractive designs and some witty touches.

The highlight is undoubtedly the dancers performing in the famed Danish style, with buoyant light jumps, fluttering beats and graceful arms, all made to look completely relaxed and effortless; the musicality and detailed acting combine with a general sense of joie de vivre, so that everyone onstage looks like they are having a ball. Leading an impeccable cast, Alban Lendorf is a positively swoonworthy Gennaro, ably matched by Alexandra Lo Sardo's perky Teresina.

— **HEATHER BRAY**



**RAIN**  
**By Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker**  
**Paris Opera Ballet, 74 minutes**  
**www.belairclassiques.com**

The elegant dancers of Paris Opera Ballet may not be the obvious choice to interpret the frank energy and powerful ebb and flow of *Rain*, created by iconic Belgian choreographer Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker for her own company in 2001, but it's truly exciting to watch them give it their best. Set to American minimalist composer Steve Reich's pulsing *Music for 18 Musicians*, played live, *Rain* is performed by 10 barefoot dancers (seven women and three men). Within a mostly pink-lit space defined by Jan Versweyeld's upstage sculpture — a shimmering semi-circle of ropes, like a curtain of falling rain — they jog and scurry to place, where they rapidly draw vivid lines and curves with arms, legs and whole bodies.

*Rain* was brought to Paris Opera Ballet in 2011 by previous artistic director Brigitte Lefèvre, apparently part of an attempt to modernize the repertoire. Filmed at Palais Garnier in 2014 under the direction of Louise Narboni, the relentless pace of the movement and flashes of camaraderie between dancers are beautifully presented in a well-timed, well-framed range of distant and close shots, including high angles that render the colourful lines of floor tape into a key part of the set design. I found the exciting propulsion of music and dance, lightened by the dancers' engaged, often smiling faces, joyously hypnotic.

— **KAJIA PEPPER**

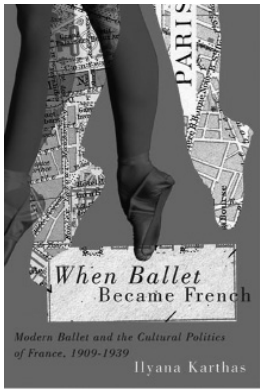
**MATISSE FROM MOMA AND TATE MODERN**  
**97 minutes**  
**www.exhibitiononscreen.com**

This behind-the-scenes documentary examines the blockbuster Matisse exhibition created by MoMA and Tate Modern in 2014, which focused on the cut-outs produced by the artist during the final decade of his career. Despite Matisse's age and ill health at the time, the cut-outs are full of energy and innovation, exploring colour, line and form with exuberance.

Matisse is known in the dance world as one of the artistic giants who worked with Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, and his fundamental understanding of movement was clearly expressed in his art. Hence the inclusion of a small dance gem in the documentary, choreographed by Will Tuckett and featuring Royal Ballet principal Zenaida Yanowsky: it's a playful and affectionate homage to the cut-outs, with multiple images of Yanowsky dancing in an assortment of brightly coloured bodysuits to music by Shostakovich.

With contributions from historians and the exhibit's curators, archival footage of the artist at work and a virtual tour of the exhibition itself, the film is a comprehensive and inspiring account of Matisse's life and impact.


— **HEATHER BRAY**




**Excerpt from *When Ballet Became French*  
by Ilyana Karthas  
McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015  
[www.mqup.ca](http://www.mqup.ca)**

# Quotable

“At the turn of the nineteenth century, French symbolist poets articulated their own aesthetics of ballet by attempting to locate philosophical expression in dance movement ... According to Stéphane Mallarmé, ballet was the visualization of a metaphysical world, and poetry was its ideal language. In the aspiration to transcend form, he regarded each step as a ‘metaphor,’ ‘symbolic,’ and ‘a poem freed of all the apparatus of writing.’ In fact, he boldly asserted: ‘The theatre is a higher spirit ... the ballet is the supreme theatrical form of poetry.’ Mallarmé implied that ballet movement embodies poetic value (rather than just pantomime), yet he never went quite so far as to locate it within the choreographic beauty or the formal elements of ballet technique. Mallarmé envisioned the dancer as an ideal being who could transcend human nature and who could become the ‘element she incarnates.’ He perceived the dancer as a symbol, never an artist or creator. Thus her virtuosity was to be found in the purity of her expression not her technical (i.e., physical) abilities.”



**PRO ARTE CENTRE**  
#3 - 1225 E Keith Road, North Vancouver  
604-984-2783  
[www.proartecentre.com](http://www.proartecentre.com) / [info@proarte.ca](mailto:info@proarte.ca)



**Professional Training Programs:**  
Full Day Academic and Dance Program  
CatchingART Aspirant Company  
Half Day Dance Program

**Pre-Professional Training Programs:**  
After School for ages 6 -12

**On-Site Academics Grades 6-12**  
**On-Site Physiotherapy & Pilates**

**Spring Break Intensives 2016:**  
March 14–18: Junior and Pre-Inter Intensives  
March 21–24: Stage Intensive

**Summer Programs 2016:**  
RAD Bootcamp: June 30, July 1–9  
3 weeks July 11– 29  
3 weeks August 8– 26

**Performances:**  
Pre-Professional/Professional  
Program Showcase  
March 12, 2016  
Professional Program Gala  
May 28, 2016

Dancer: Ashley Klockow, Full Day Dance/Academic Student  
Photographer: Leighton Matthews

**2016**  
INTERNATIONAL  
AUDITIONS

Vancouver  
Toronto  
Montreal  
New York

Auditions begin  
January 2016

More information at  
[artsumbrella.com/dance](http://artsumbrella.com/dance)







**ARTS UMBRELLA**



ARTS UMBRELLA

DANCE

CANADIAN CONTEMPORARY DANCE THEATRE



# SunDance

*...dancing into your future* **twenty16**  
artistic director, Deborah Lundmark

Join us for the complete dance experience in our 19th year with the Royal Academy of Dance as we present the only summer intensive in the world to combine RAD ballet and Limón modern

## July 04 - 22

Designed for dancers age 8 to 20 | Accommodations available  
International faculty | State of the art dance facility

[www.ccdt.org](http://www.ccdt.org) / 416-924-5657 / [sundance@ccdt.org](mailto:sundance@ccdt.org)

*I saw a school and performing company bursting with talent, young dancers being given specialized training in Limón technique, ballet and improvisation and at the same time given the freedom to develop themselves, and a company of young artists, challenged artistically*

*to their maximum, who understood and demonstrated the highest standards of professionalism... I was overwhelmed by what I saw and experienced.* - Carla Maxwell, Artistic Director, Limón Dance Company



toronto ] canada

photo by David Hoen of CCDT dancers, Nicholas Ruscia and Frances Simson in *The Worker in the Room* by Colin Connor



PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE TRAINING

# SUMMER INTENSIVE 2016

AUGUST 8TH TO SEPTEMBER 1ST

[ledq.qc.ca](http://ledq.qc.ca) | 418 649-4715  
[pro@ledq.qc.ca](mailto:pro@ledq.qc.ca)



Québec



Photo: Productions 16Neuf

## ARTS UMBRELLA

Artistic Director: Artemis Gordon, L.I.S.T.D. (C.S.B.)

Arts Umbrella's Dance Program is internationally recognized for producing highly employable graduates who are dancing in companies around the world. The program features innovative, professional dance education that develops the whole dancer, stressing technical strength and artistic development in Vancouver, BC.

- International guest teachers and choreographers and professional faculty.
- Programs for dancers age 2 to 22, both professional and recreational.
- International Summer Dance Intensive.
- By audition: International Summer Dance Intensive, Post-Secondary Dance Diploma Program with Vancouver Community College, Professional Training Program (half-day Secondary academics), and Arts Umbrella Dance Company.
- Class include: Ballet with pointe, partnering and mens' work, Contemporary, and Repertoire, with performance opportunities.

604.681.5268 | [www.artsumbrella.com/dance](http://www.artsumbrella.com/dance)

## BALLET BLOCH CANADA

Artistic Director: Tracy-Lea Bloch (L.I.S.T.D. & Gyrotonic®)

*Pure classical ballet - inspired training for aspiring dancers*

### Agers 4 yrs to 17 yrs:

- Budding Ballerinas
- Foundation & Professional Training Programs
- Gyrotonic® Expansion System Training
- ISTD IMPERIAL Classical Ballet Examinations
- Summer School Intensives (July & August)
- Annual Performances and Provincial and International Competitions

Studio 203 #106 West 1st Street, North Vancouver, BC

[www.balletbloch.com](http://www.balletbloch.com) | [info@balletbloch.com](mailto:info@balletbloch.com)

## CAMERON ACADEMY OF CLASSICAL DANCE

Principal: Deborah Cameron A.R.A.D. R.T.S. D.I.P. Lifetime member Kelly Bennis R.T.S.

**ANNOUNCING OUR GRAND OPENING OF OUR NEW STUDIO "CAMERON DANCE ACADEMY" in 2015 at 2015 - 62 Ave Langley**

*"Teaching a love of dance that lasts a Lifetime" through inspiration, encouragement and knowledgeable training our dedicated staff mentor students to achieve success professionally or simply for recreational enjoyment.*

**Specializing in Royal Academy of Dance Ballet -All Syllabi Contemporary/Modern & "New studio now offering all Genres"**

Programs for Pre-school ages, Children, Adults and Professionals Examinations, Performances, Competitions, Summer Intensives & Children's Theme Dance Camps

[www.cameronacademy.ca](http://www.cameronacademy.ca) | [www.cameronacademy.ca](http://www.cameronacademy.ca) & fb Email: [cameronacademy@yahoo.ca](mailto:cameronacademy@yahoo.ca) | Phone: 604.530.2106

## CANADA'S NATIONAL BALLET SCHOOL

Mavis Staines, C.M., DHumL, Artistic Director & CEO

400 Jarvis St., Toronto, ON M4Y 2G6

T: 416.964.3780 | F: 416.964.5133

[registrar@nbs-enb.ca](mailto:registrar@nbs-enb.ca) | [www.nbs-enb.ca](http://www.nbs-enb.ca)

Established in 1959, **Canada's National Ballet School** is a world leader in the training of professional ballet dancers and teachers. Dedicated to excellence, NBS staff are an international group of talented instructors who adhere to the highest standards in training and development of the students' abilities.

### Professional Ballet Program:

- Full-time dance training, academic education and residential care for students in Grades 6 through 12
- Full-time dance training for post-secondary students
- Designed to take students from the earliest stage of intensive training through to the brink of a full-time career in dance

### Teacher Training Program:

- Recognized as a hallmark of excellence
- Prepares students for a successful dance teaching career
- Various programs available: one year certificate, three year diploma, two year diploma or one year certificate for professional dancers, five year joint diploma/degree with either Simon Fraser University or York University
- 100% of graduates employed upon completion of the program
- Opportunity to obtain Registered Teacher Status with the RAD; Associate teaching qualification with ISTD and/or Cecchetti Society

### Also Available:

- Associates Program: after school and weekend classes for children ages six to 17 years
- Adult ballet
- Professional Development for practising teachers
- Annual Teachers' Ideas Exchange opportunity in July

NBS graduates are always in demand and can be found as dancers, choreographers, artistic directors and teachers in over 80 dance companies and schools around the globe.

Admission for Professional Programs by audition.

Visit [www.nbs-enb.ca](http://www.nbs-enb.ca) for more details.

## CANADA'S ROYAL WINNIPEG

### BALLET SCHOOL

Founded in 1970, Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet School Professional Division has become one of the most respected training institutions worldwide for talented students aspiring to professional careers in dance. The Professional Division is made up of three full-time programs: the seven-level **Ballet Academic Program** for students in academic grades 6 through 12; the post-secondary **Aspirant Program**; and the post-secondary **Teacher Training Program**. Over 70% of the dancers in RWB Company are graduates of the Professional Division and Teacher Training Program graduates enjoy 100% employment success within a variety of professional settings.

The RWB School is recognized as a National Training Institute by the Government of Canada, funded by Canadian Heritage.

Website: [rwb.org/school](http://rwb.org/school) | Phone: 204.957.3467

email: [school@rwb.org](mailto:school@rwb.org)

## CAULFIELD SCHOOL OF DANCE

Internationally renowned performer, choreographer, and master teacher, **Cori Caulfield**, leads an expert and dedicated faculty.

- Ballet: R.A.D. Exam Preparation to Solo Seal
- Jazz/Lyrical • Tap • Modern/Contemporary
- Hip Hop • Acrobatics
- Musical Theatre • Singing • Acting
- Choreography and Pedagogy

Home of **B.C. Provincial Title Holders** in

**Dance:** Ballet; Contemporary/Modern; Tap, Jazz & Stage;

**Voice:** Musical Theatre; and Classical Standard and Professional® Training Divisions and Performance Companies\*

**Summer:** Intensives and Maintenance Classes in Ballet (3 levels), Pointe and Jazz.

Many performing opportunities. This is a great place to grow up.

\* By audition and interview only. Half-day training optional.

2813 Spring Street, Port Moody, BC V3H 4C6

Phone: 604.469.9366 | email: [admin@caulfield.bc.ca](mailto:admin@caulfield.bc.ca)

## DANCE CO

Director: Marlowe Windsor

Vancouver, BC

[danceco.com](http://danceco.com) | 604.736.3394 | [info@danceco.com](mailto:info@danceco.com)

### Raising the barre with unparalleled training for dancers.

Ballet, Jazz, Tap, Contemporary, Hip Hop, Breakdance, Acro & Musical Theatre. Cecchetti Classical Ballet Examinations.

**Recreational Programs** We have classes for all ages and levels. Instilling a love of dance and joy of movement.

**Demi-Competitive and Competitive** For dancers looking to take their training to the next level. Students develop their technical skills while enjoying performance opportunities.

**Intensive & Company Levels** Programs for the more serious dancers. Students grow artistically and technically with intensive training and performances both regionally and provincially.

**Professional Half-Day Program** Training geared for gifted young dancers with professional goals. Mentored by inspiring faculty, our professional division dancers master a breadth of styles and are known as diverse and impeccably trained dancers.

## ENPOINTE ENTERPRISES

Dance equipment is our business. We have been supplying ballet schools and dance studios across North America for over fifteen years! Enpointe is a leading manufacturer and distributor of professional dance equipment including:

Ballet Barres

Our barres are available in three different styles: free-standing StudioBarre, PortaBarre (portable barre with carrying case) and wall-mount barres with brackets. All barres are available in different lengths, colors and options. Supporting you is our business!

Dance Flooring

EnPointe is manufacturer of the EnPointe Sprung Dance Flooring System. We are a distributor of vinyl flooring for StageStep, Rosco, and EFS.

Glassless Mirrors

EnPointe knows mirrors are important to dancers, and dancer safety is equally important to us. Our mirrors will never shatter, eliminating injuries and liabilities caused by broken glass.

[www.en-pointe.com](http://www.en-pointe.com)

1.866.491.9019

[info@en-pointe.com](mailto:info@en-pointe.com)

[twitter.com/danceproducts](http://twitter.com/danceproducts)

[facebook.com/danceproducts](http://facebook.com/danceproducts)

# DIRECTORY

## FLORA PIGEAU DANCE ACADEMY

Home of B.C. Provincial Representatives since 1987  
Tyra Sergeant, R. T. S.

Celebrating 40 years of Excellence in Dance

### Professional Training from Pre-School to Adult

We specialize in Royal Academy of Dance

- Classes offered in R.A.D. Ballet, Pointe & Variation, Modern/Contemporary, Lyrical, Jazz and Conditioning
- Examinations, Festivals, Performances, and Summer Training

#631-7789 134th Street, Surrey, BC V3W 9E9

Phone: 604.594.2132

email: [info@florapigeaudance.com](mailto:info@florapigeaudance.com)

Web: [www.florapigeaudance.com](http://www.florapigeaudance.com)

## GOH BALLET ACADEMY CANADA

Be Inspired by Excellence and Unveil Your True Potential

Celebrating over 35 years as a premier dance academy in Canada and recognized internationally, the Goh Ballet provides extraordinary opportunities for young dancers to reach their full potential. From the earlier years to after-school training and advancing onto dedicated professional programs, students are prepared for a bright career. The Goh Ballet's well-rounded curriculum builds on enjoyment and nourishes passions to make the impossible possible. Integrated programs with progressive methodology in Vagonova and R.A.D. syllabi, international guest instructors, innovative variety of choreographic styles and repertoire.

- **Goh Ballet Youth Company Canada**, Post-Graduate studies to bridge student to professional
- **Senior Professional / Combined Academic**
- **Short Term, Goal Oriented Programmes**
- **Junior School, Afterschool Programmes**
- **International Summer Intensives / July and August**

### Student Achievements Include:

- 1st Prize: Prix de Lausanne, Switzerland
- Gold Medals: Genée International Ballet Competition, England, Tanzolymp Festival, Germany, Wien Welt Wettbewerb, Austria.
- Alumni Careers: American Ballet Theatre, English National Ballet, National Ballet of Canada, San Francisco Ballet, among others

### Admission by Assessment & Audition. Contact us for details.

2345 Main Street, Vancouver, BC, Canada V5T 3C9

604.872.4014 | [info@gohballet.com](mailto:info@gohballet.com) | [www.gohballet.com](http://www.gohballet.com)

Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram @GohBallet

## HARBOUR DANCE CENTRE

Vancouver's Premier Dance Facility for over 30 years

Drop In Classes, Progressive Workshops and Intensive Training Program  
Teens and Adults all levels

### INTENSIVE TRAINING PROGRAM Age 17 +

**Directors: Moe Brody and Pamela Rosa**

**Programme runs from Sept - June**

25 hours per week, individual mentoring  
Intensive Dance Training, with some Singing and Acting  
Performance experience and technical training  
For Intermediate+ dancers, by audition only

### SUMMER INTENSIVE:

Classes in: Ballet, Contemporary, Street Styles, Singing, Broadway and More.

5 Beautiful Sprung floor studios; Rentals; Private functions;

World Class teachers, over 110 classes per week

CORPORATE EVENT ENTERTAINMENT/AUDITIONS/WORKSHOPS

**Directors: Pamela Rosa, Moe Brody, Sabine Clifford**

927 Granville Street, Vancouver, BC V6Z 1L3 | 604.684.9542

[www.harbourdance.com](http://www.harbourdance.com) | [info@harbourdance.com](mailto:info@harbourdance.com)

## L.A. RUSSIAN SCHOOL OF BALLET

Ballet - Vaganova, Cecchetti, Character  
Pre-School to Adults  
Small Classes  
Quality Programmes  
Performances, Festivals  
Summer school in July  
Director: Lucienne Ancykowski  
Coquitlam | Phone: 604.931.3196

## L'ÉCOLE DE DANSE DE QUÉBEC

### Professional training in contemporary dance

Admission by audition

- Dance-Performance Program in partnership with the Cégep de Sainte-Foy (DEC technique)
- Contemporary Dance Program (AEC)
- PPMN (professional training upgrading program)
- Dance-Studies, specific art project (Grades 7 to 11)
- Concentration in Dance (Grades 5 and 6)

L'EDQ offers also a recreative program for children and adults.

418.649.4715 poste 223 / pro@ledq.qc.ca / www.ledq.qc.ca

## L'ÉCOLE SUPÉRIEURE DE BALLET DU QUÉBEC

Anik Bissonnette, O.C., C.Q., Artistic Director

Only francophone institution in North America to provide a professional ballet program

- Professional ballet training and academic program for students from Grade Five to third year junior college. Graduates receive a college diploma in classical dance and performance, which also leads to university.
- L'École supérieure is featured in the Cambridge University Students' Union 2015 Guide to Excellence alongside its high school academic partner, the Pensionnat du Saint-Nom-de-Marie.
- L'École supérieure has received the Outstanding School Award from the Youth America Grand Prix.

L'École supérieure offers also a Preparatory Program and a Recreational Program for children and adults.

4816, rue Rivard, Montréal, QC H2J 2N6  
T. 514 849-4929 F. 514 849-6107  
www.esbq.ca | info@esbq.ca

## PRO ARTÉ CENTRE

"The Centre of Opportunity for Tomorrow's Professionals"

Professional 16 thousand square foot facility with 6 Dance Studios, 4 Academic Classrooms, Pilates Studio, Student Lounges and onsite Physio/Rehab Room  
On-site academics Grade 6 & up  
Full Day & Half-Day Programmes  
• Classical Ballet • Contemporary Ballet • Contemporary Jazz  
Also After School Pre-Professional Programmes  
ISTD & RAD Examinations, International Competitions, Career Guidance, Holistic Training  
Home of "CatchingART Contemporary Ballet Theatre" aspirant company experience  
3 - 1225 E. Keith Rd, North Vancouver, BC V7J 1J3  
Phone: 604.984.2783  
web: www.proartecentre.com | www.catchingart.ca  
email: info@proarte.ca

## QUINTE BALLET SCHOOL OF CANADA

Artistic Director, Catherine Taylor

Quinte Ballet School of Canada (Belleville, Ontario) provides an innovative, versatile dance curriculum grounded in classical ballet technique. Our faculty are dedicated to providing an inspiring, challenging and supportive environment that nurtures talented young people towards a career in the dance industry.

### Full-time Professional Training Program (by audition)

Hastings & Prince Edward District School Board (academic grades 6 - 12) affiliation Homestay Families Available (Summer Dance residency at Albert College) Summer Dance Professional Intensive Training - audition required

Summer Dance Intensive Open Program - no audition required

### Recreation Division

Wide variety of dance instruction for ages 3 to adult;

R.A.D. Program available  
www.quinteballetschool.com | info@quinteballetschool.com  
613.962.9274 | toll-free 866.962.9274

## SHIAMAK DAVAR INTERNATIONAL(CANADA) INC.

Canada's Premier Bollywood Dance Company

Artistic Director: Shiamak Davar

Programs conducted by SHIAMAK dance instructors:

**SHIAMAK Bollywood Jazz:** The spice of Bollywood combined with the energy of Jazz

**Shiamak's Style:** Indo contemporary and modern movement with influences of Indian classical and folk dance

**SHIAMAK Bollywood Workout:** High energy Bollywood moves to Bollywood grooves

**SHIAMAK's Yoga- Inner Dance Movement:** A unique synthesis of breathing techniques, Yoga and Indo Jazz movement.

**Personal Training Program:** One on one training for special occasions like weddings, birthdays or competitions

Dance Classes for all ages. Join our 3 month programs and perform on stage thrice a year.

**Vancouver:** 604.924.9104 | email: vancouver@shiamak.com

**Toronto:** 416.744.2625 | email: toronto@shiamak.com

www.shiamak.com

## THE PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM OF THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPORARY DANCERS

Co-directors: Odette Heyn and Faye Thomson

- Professional post-secondary contemporary dance performance programme
- Nationally renowned faculty and guest choreographers and teachers
- Graduates performing professionally across Canada and internationally
- Affiliation with the University of Winnipeg: BA (Hons) in Dance available
- For more information

website: www.schoolofcontemporarydancers.ca

address: suite 104-211 Bannatyne Avenue,

Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 3P2

telephone: 204.452.1239

e-mail: info@schoolofcontemporarydancers.ca

• The School gratefully acknowledges the support of:

The Government of Canada - Canadian Heritage

The Manitoba Arts Council, The Winnipeg Arts Council

## THE RICHMOND ACADEMY OF DANCE

— 28 YEARS —

### Producing Canada's Most Exciting Young Professionals

- Home to B.C. Provincial Winners in Ballet and Musical Theatre since 1989.
- R.A.D. Solo Seal, London Genée Award, Prix de Lausanne finalists and graduates dancing with world-renowned companies including the National Ballet of Canada, Alberta Ballet, Batsheva Dance Co. Isreal and many others
- Complete Recreational and Internationally Recognized Junior-Senior Professional Programs.
- Ballet, Jazz, Tap, Modern, Lyrical, Hip Hop, Musical Theatre - Voice, Acting - ALL LEVELS
- Vaganova Technique, all R.A.D. Examinations
- Professional Half-Day Dance/Academic plus Full Evening & Graduate Programs
- Pilates Studio, Body Conditioning, Experiential Anatomy
- Year Round Performance Experiences
- 10,000 square feet of professional facilities
- Train with Fully Registered, highly qualified teachers whose performance careers span the world's leading companies.

7860 River Road, Richmond, BC V6X 1X7

Phone: 604.278.7816 | web: www.richmondacademyofdance.com

email: dance@richmondacademyofdance.com

## THE SCHOOL OF ALBERTA BALLET

Led by Artistic Director Edmund Stripe, the School of Alberta Ballet is the official training centre of Alberta Ballet, providing students with exclusive mentoring and performance opportunities.

Professional Division

- Full-time dance and academic training for students in grades 7-12 (Residence available)
- Dance only option for grades 5-6
- Dedicated Contemporary Dance Stream for grades 11-12
- Financial assistance and scholarships

Post-Secondary Programs

- Professional Graduate Program: A one-year, full-time program for post-secondary students requiring an additional year of training before joining Alberta Ballet II.
- Alberta Ballet II: Bridging the gap between school and a professional career, ABII is a one to two-year, full-time, tuition-free program offering exclusive performance opportunities with Alberta Ballet.

Also Offered

- Open Division: intensive and recreational programming for ages 3-adult
  - Summer Camps and Intensives
- Schoolofalbertaballet.com | 403.245.2274

## THE SCHOOL OF DANCE

Artistic Director: Merrilee Hodgins A.R.A.D.

The School of Dance has an international reputation as a centre for excellence in arts education. Founded in 1978 by Merrilee Hodgins and Joyce Shietze, The School offers professional classes in ballet and contemporary dance, professional development activities for teachers, as well as leisure and recreational programmes for adults and children. Graduates of The School are performing with companies world-wide. The School of Dance is registered as a private career college under the *Private Career Colleges Act, 2005*.

### Professional Ballet Programme:

Director of Ballet Studies: Mary Ross, Fellow and Examiner, CSC-CICB

Eight-year study programme for students 8 to 16 years of age

Internationally renowned teaching faculty

Performance opportunities in National Theatres

Cecchetti Exam preparation

Summer Intensive

### Professional Contemporary Dance Programme:

Director of Contemporary Dance Studies: Sylvie Desrosiers BAV

Three-year post-secondary diploma programme, approved as a vocational training program under the *Private Career Colleges Act, 2005*, for intermediate and advanced dancers

Strong and versatile training with professional teachers, including Peter Boneham CM

Work with prominent Canadian guest choreographers and teachers

Performance opportunities in National Theatres

Admission to Professional Programmes by audition.

Admission to Professional Programmes by audition.

### Other Programmes:

Children and Teen classes

Adult classes

Boys Only classes

DragonFly, for learners with Down Syndrome

Summer programmes

Visit www.thechoolofdance for more information.

## THE SCHOOL OF TORONTO DANCE THEATRE

Artistic Director: Patricia Fraser

The School is passionately committed to training and education in the art of contemporary dance. Spend your day dancing with us!

### Summer School in Contemporary Dance

- Contemporary and Graham techniques, repertory/new creation
- ages 16 and older

### Professional Training Program

- Three year, full-time, post-secondary program
- Conservatory-style education with concentration on studio work
- Expert faculty, celebrated guest artists, extensive performing experience
- Joint program with York University can lead to B.F.A. in dance

Auditions January 31st, 2016 & July 16th, 2016

80 Winchester Street, Toronto ON

416.967.6887 ext. 22 | info@schooloftd.org

www.schooloftd.org

INTERNATIONAL  
MAGAZINE

Your liveliest source for  
global dance coverage

www.danceinternational.org

## THE WASHINGTON SCHOOL OF BALLET

Kee Juan Han, School Director

Co-founded in 1944 by the late Mary Day and Lisa Gardiner, The Washington School of Ballet (TWSB) is recognized nationally and internationally for its classical training and dedication to excellence in dance and dance education.

The Washington School of Ballet curriculum includes pre-ballet, boys' classes, and a graded program for children through young adulthood, many of whom wish to pursue dance as a career. Students catch glimpses of The Washington Ballet rehearsals and can earn the opportunity to perform in company productions. The school offers a **Professional Training Program** that brings together especially talented students from around the world for intensive training. The school also offers a **Trainee Program** that provides beneficial training upon entering the professional field and many performing opportunities with the Company.

For more information about school auditions or summer intensive programs, please visit: [www.washingtonballet.org](http://www.washingtonballet.org)

## VANCOUVER BALLET SOCIETY

Operating out of Scotiabank Dance Centre in Vancouver, British Columbia, we offer 3-6 Master Classes each year with dance artists from visiting companies. We also offer an annual Spring Seminar Week Intensive, taught by internationally known dance artists/teachers, to students aged 10-18, selected via audition.

Our not-for-profit Society, which turns 70 in 2016, also maintains an archives and library open to the public.

[vbs@telus.net](mailto:vbs@telus.net) | [www.vancouverballetsociety.ca](http://www.vancouverballetsociety.ca) | 604.681.1525

## VICTORIA ACADEMY OF BALLET

Bleiddyn Bellis FCSC-CICB, Enrico Cecc Final Diploma

### PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

An intensive dance training program committed to helping students reach their fullest personal potential.

- Students are nurtured in an encouraging atmosphere with a dedication to excellence.
- Ballet, Pointe, Repertoire, Pas de Deux, Contemporary, Jazz
- Summer Intensive
- Personal attention and guidance

### BRIDGE PROGRAM (post secondary)

A 2 year, PCTIA registered, post-graduate Diploma program preparing dancers to pursue a career in professional dance. Students are encouraged to explore different aspects of professional dance life through the extensive program curriculum in a professional atmosphere.

- Ballet, Pointe, Repertoire, Pas de Deux, Contemporary, Jazz
  - Guest Teachers, Choreographers
  - Anatomy, Ballet History, Choreography, Career Exploration, Nutrition
- Individual advising, career preparation and assistance from experienced Academy faculty connect students to avenues in the professional field.

[www.victoriaacademyofballet.ca](http://www.victoriaacademyofballet.ca) | 250.590.6752

[admin@victoriaacademyofballet.ca](mailto:admin@victoriaacademyofballet.ca)



# INSIDE ED

It Takes a Village  
by Arlene Minkhorst

**A**s a young dancer, I was fortunate to have had three truly gifted teachers. Pat Bradshaw, former director of Burlington Dance Academy and my “local dance teacher,” encouraged me to audition for the National Ballet School in Toronto when I was 14, helping me take my first major step into the professional dance world. During my final year at the school, an academic teacher there, Beverley Miller, supported me in researching other training programs, which led me to audition for the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School. In Winnipeg, David Moroni became my teacher and mentor for the next 25 years until his retirement in 2003. Today, David is only a phone call away whenever I feel the need for support.

All three recognized my passion for the art form, and looked for the best ways and best places to cultivate my developing talents. They taught me with time, energy, commitment and love, yet understood the need to allow other teachers and other situations to enter into my life as a blossoming artist.

An educator myself now, I know firsthand how easy it can be to want to hold on to students as we work closely together and get to know them so well. Those students who really absorb our direction and instruction allow us to see the results of our work, which can validate our own abilities and sometimes even bring personal recognition. Why would we want to send such precious talent on? But our work must never be focused on our needs, and as teachers we must ensure our guidance honours the young person's talent and nurtures their potential. We cannot be selfish in the process, and sometimes that means letting go.

Typically, I teach young people between the ages of 12 and 16 for one or two years. Sometimes, I confess, it

is exceedingly difficult to pass them on to the next teacher. I never feel I have given as much as I could and often become very attached to the group in front of me. However, I know these students will achieve significantly more if I allow them the opportunity to work with the many other teachers on our team — each with special gifts and all committed to working together. Once they are actually in the profession, dancers need to be receptive and adaptable to many different kinds of choreographers and directors; each has their own movement style, artistic values and methods of achieving their vision. Working with different teachers helps to prepare young artists for the diversity they will encounter as professionals.

Teachers, too, often have particular skillsets; for instance, some are more connected to the psychology and pedagogy of teaching young dancers, and some have the ability to better understand what is required to connect with and teach older students. Their own experience as dancers and their background in training to become teachers also contributes to their individual skills and strengths in teaching. There are so few who can teach all things to all students. A team approach offers students a much richer experience than any one person alone could provide.

There's another side to letting go, which involves what happens to students after they leave. It can be disappointing to see young people develop as dancers for several years, to be excited by their talent, and then learn they have found jobs internationally. It means the teacher may never get to see, on the professional stage, the results of their work or experience the joy of seeing beloved students grow into mature artists.

However, students and dancers must develop their talents in the environment that works best for them. Ultimately, our teaching is not about us — it is about the dancer and the dance. *DI*

*Arlene Minkhorst has been the director of Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet School since 2003.*

## Classified ads

and Directory information:  
[advertising@danceinternational.org](mailto:advertising@danceinternational.org)

[www.danceinternational.org](http://www.danceinternational.org)

604.681.1525

Photo: Courtesy of Canada's  
Royal Winnipeg Ballet School  
Professional Division

# Global REPORTS



## Vancouver by Kaija Pepper

There is room for humour in contemporary dance, as one of Vancouver's wittiest dancemakers, Joe Laughlin, proved in his recent quartet *4OUR*. Take the scene in which a Chambermaid (Heather Dotto) in a frilly apron and a Bellhop (Laughlin) in a small cap prance about in herky-jerky silent-film fashion, a scene that ends with her standing behind him, a finger planted firmly on the top of his head as he turns like a mechanical wind-up toy. What is this vaudevillian skit doing in a piece that is said to be about "the evolution of life's journey" and "the power of memory"? That I can't say, but its brisk rhythm and light touch were welcome in an otherwise tastefully restrained contemporary dance of weaving, waving bodies, presented at Scotiabank Dance Centre. I find myself wondering what would have happened if *4OUR* had been built from this sweet and funny duet? Laughlin often flirts with comedy, as in the unforgettable *Left*, an elegantly absurd solo made more than 10 years ago, in which he danced with a teacup balanced on his head.

Neo-burlesque artist Burgundy Brixx and modern dance choreographer Judith Garay went all out for humour in their contribution to the mixed bill

making up the 32nd edition of *Dances for a Small Stage*. Brixx and Garay mounted a brazenly entertaining duet, *Ohhhh...*, a black-lit glow-in-the-dark spookfest of disembodied legs, arms and heads that finally came together over a witch's brew. Given it was the week before Halloween, the theme was entirely justified, and played well in the relaxed atmosphere of the Anza Club, with the audience free to sip wine or beer.

The laughs in *A Simple Space*, a circus piece built on acrobatic thrills, were less unexpected than the ones from the world of dance — it's the circus, after all, a kid-and clown-friendly arena. The six men and two women of Australian company Gravity and Other Myths roared through a series of handstands, flips, balances and splits, presenting each new trick as a game of skill with inherent risks that were not always avoided. If a tricky dive from the top of a stack of bodies into the arms of colleagues below didn't work the first two times, it did the third — and the art was in the way the failure was presented. The point of *A Simple Space* — the thing it is "about" — seems to be the inherent joy of trying. In the small York Theatre, with some of the audience seated onstage, the thrills were considerable — including a

Moonwalk done while in a headstand and a human skipping rope routine — but so was the more thoughtful backstory, the one about trying and trying and trying again, not with a ferocious will to succeed, but with eagerness and joy.

Another visitor was khon master Pichet Klunchun, who arrived from Bangkok to collaborate with contemporary dance artist Alvin Erasca Tolentino. In *Unwrapping Culture*, a performance art piece at Scotiabank Dance Centre, the two men begin in the personas of heckling street vendors, enjoy some party dancing to a Thai pop song and later get the audience to throw rings on a row of cheap tourist figurines. At some point, for a few precious minutes, Klunchun enters into the utter precision and power of the traditional dance form he knows intimately, and the integrity of his smooth, grounded movements takes the breath away: this was the golden oasis in the otherwise frantic piece. At the time, Klunchun does have a plastic dinosaur taped onto his head; the absurd image of the traditional dancer costumed with a plastic toy seemed to sum up the duo's quest to confront Thai culture today.

At the end of November in the same black-box theatre, Raven Spirit Dance presented *Earth Song*, a trio of vignettes whose strength was in creating atmosphere, focused on the individual in intimate relationship with the land. In artistic director Michelle Olsen's duet, *Northern Journey*, Jeanette Kotowich and Brian Solomon reached powerful arms toward each other as if across a long distance, while Olson in her solo, *Frost Exploding Trees Moon*, is stoic and still after tying a few sticks together to create a fragile home.

In the only premiere among the three pieces, Starr Muranko's *Spine of the Mother* (performed by Tasha Faye Evans and, from Peru, Andrea Patriau), a small pile of rocks was a key prop that evoked strong emotion from the performer when clutched and fondled, but it was when they were placed in a simple diagonal path across the stage that they carried their own magnificent charge and resonated theatrically. Equally resonant were Sammy Chien's projections, a soft wash of shapes and colours suggesting the textures and enormity of the earth. When Patriau stepped in front of the beams of light, that vastness was projected onto her body in a way that was both concrete and ethereal, creating a song about the earth and the technology we all swim in today. *DI*

**R**ites, the third in a series of intensely personal solos by choreographer/dancer José Navas, is the darkest and most physical yet. About loss and struggle, it is performed by its creator, now 50, who looks at his past with acceptance and toward his future with a fierce determination to battle his inevitable demise.

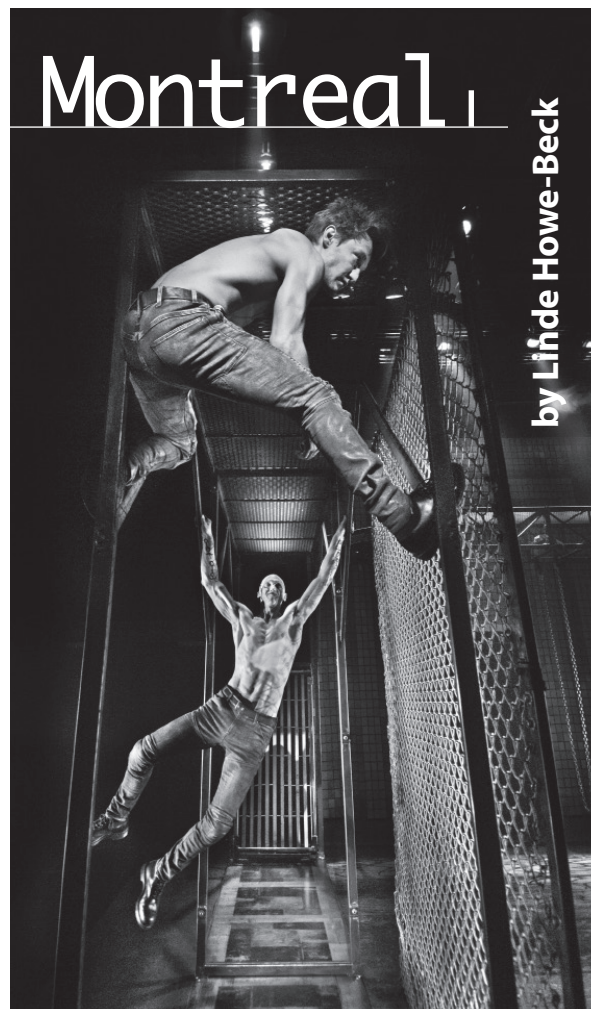
Inspired by music and memory, the four-part *Rites* begins as the dancer, youthful in white shirt, bare legs and glittering oxfords, establishes his charismatic dominion over dance to the fulsome voice of Nina Simone. Next come two searching pieces to symphonic Dvorak and Schubert lieder. Then, with barely a pause, the dancer plunges into the bowels of Stravinsky's full orchestral version of *The Rite of Spring*.

Navas is a sensual performer of impeccably clean execution. Each gesture is refined to its essence. There is no flab on any movement; all moves are pure and powerful. With every whirl, open chest, arms rising to tangle briefly overhead, weight on one leg, the other flashing in a split-second kick, moments dissolve faster than they can imprint on the mind. Elusive as heartbeats, their messages nonetheless burrow into the heart.

With *Rite of Spring*, the gesture and impact ramps up. This is a fight to the finish, a heroic human battle with aging. Though he knows his cause is hopeless, Navas engages in unimaginable struggle. Then, having given all he's got, he shows us the majesty of defeat. Because of his power to suspend time, to draw the mesmerized viewer in, Navas' journey becomes universal.

*Sun*, a magnificent epic by U.K.-based Hofesh Shechter, is quite the opposite, blaming humankind for all the woes of the world. *Sun* mirrors raw and reckless human behaviour with satire, irony, humour and violence, casting the image of the sun as a sort of dependable benevolence that is nonetheless vulnerable. In this frequently upside-down world where truth and lies are interchangeable, music from old movies and even Wagnerian opera adds to the raucous confusion caused by a troupe of galumphing humans.

Both *Sun* and *Rites* were shown at Place des Arts in November. At the same venue a month earlier, the National Ballet of Canada made a rare Montreal



appearance with a program of three contemporary works. The company showed William Forsythe's cheeky, always relevant *the second detail*; the sleek *Chroma*, by Forsythe admirer Wayne McGregor; and Marco Goecke's vapid exercise in robotics, the re-imagined *Spectre de la Rose*. It was an odd program, chosen perhaps to appeal to Montreal audiences' well-known preference for contemporary ballets. Ah, but not all contemporary ballets marry well, and there was little respite from the overabundance of angles, especially elbows, in each choreography. As well, *Chroma's* effect was diminished by its proximity to *the second detail*, and despite the red-hot petalled pantaloons of the *Rose*, only shock value comes to mind to explain the inclusion of *Spectre*. Apart from the deliciously illuminating dancing, a National Ballet trademark, this was a welcome chance to see the Forsythe.

Cruel, violent and difficult to watch, *Bagne Re-création* was PPS Danse's choice to mark its 25th anniversary in October, also at Place des Arts. It was a

perfect decision. Like another iconic dance work, Jean-Pierre Perreault's *Joe* (1984), the original *Bagne* was — as is its re-creation — in a class by itself. Its premiere in 1993 made Canadian dance history with the vision of two prisoners driven to destroy each other by their inability to adjust to being caged in a single barred cell. Choreographer-performers Pierre-Paul Savoie and Jeff Hall fused dance, theatre and acrobatics into a shocker of bruised flesh and clanging steel that kept tension cranked to an unbearable height.

A restaging in 1998 was also difficult to watch but *Bagne Re-création* feels even tougher. Details have been tweaked to reveal the perils of not only physical but also psychological isolation. This *Bagne* is multi-layered, address-

ing the myriad ways enforced proximity can destroy. Performers Lael Stellick and Milan Panet-Gigon were tragically believable as prisoners.

Traditionally, dance has struggled in Atlantic Canada. So it was a pleasure to see the area's only professional ballet company, Atlantic Ballet Theatre of Canada, in early November when it toured to Quebec at Théâtre Outremont. The Moncton, New Brunswick-based company presented a tribute to French singing sensation Edith Piaf by founder-choreographer Igor Dobrovolskiy. *Piaf* traces the legendary singer's life chronologically from street to stardom, driven by recordings of her vibrant voice along with music by classical composers. It was performed by the small company of well-trained dancers with Russian-style open chests and wide extensions. The men were particularly outstanding. However, the cramped stage was dominated by a large multi-surfaced set that might have worked better in a larger venue; in this one it succeeded only in constricting the dance. <sup>01</sup>



The Royal Winnipeg Ballet's latest incarnation of *Giselle* told not just the ethereal tale of the ill-fated peasant girl who dies for love, but also proved to be an equally compelling story of two beloved ballerinas returning to their Prairie roots. Both Jo-Ann Sundermeier, a former principal dancer who left the company in 2013 to dance with San Francisco's Smuin Ballet, and prima ballerina assoluta Evelyn Hart marked their triumphant return to Winnipeg's Centennial Concert Hall stage, much to the elation of local balletomanes.

Last presented by the company in March 2012, the haunting ballet blanc staged by Desmond Kelly features choreography by Britain's Peter Wright, after Jules Perrot, Jean Coralli and Marius Petipa. The traditional production included rustic sets and historical period costumes by Peter Farmer, and Royal Winnipeg Ballet music director Tadeusz Biernacki led the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra through Adolphe Adam's romantic score with his customary finesse.

Sundermeier, who appeared in the title role in 2012, has clearly ripened artistically over the years, evident as she morphed from coltish peasant girl to transcendent spirit. Her every step was carefully placed, her every gesture filled with meaning, having been meticulously coached by Hart (whose portrayal of Giselle during the production's Royal Winnipeg Ballet premiere in 1982 helped to establish her legendary career).

Hart — who performed with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet from 1976 to 2005 before leaving to pursue an independent career in Toronto — appeared with the company last year in James Kudelka's *The Four Seasons*. The spontaneous applause that greeted the ballerina's first appearance as Berthe, Giselle's mother, spoke to the affection the Winnipeg audience continues to hold for her. Although she no longer rises on pointe, Hart, 59, still mesmerizes with her chameleonic ability to flesh out her character with subtle detail, and her harrowing scenes with Sundermeier were more chilling than the hell-bent Wilis' mist-enveloped scenes.

Now in his third season with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, principal dancer Liang Xing has also matured dramatically. His emotional trajectory began as the playful Loys, who spars with forester Hilarion (second soloist Egor Zdor); in the final scene, as the anguished count, he collapses

with grief after Giselle's spirit melts into the breaking dawn. His solid partnering of Sundermeier during the Act II Grand Pas de Deux included effortless, sky-high lifts grounded by their mutual, palpable trust.

Principal dancer Sophia Lee as Queen Myrtha commanded her razor-sharp corps of Wilis — as well as the stage — with every steely, icy stare bearing witness to her dramatic characterization. She also exuded authority during the exposed solo that opens Act II, projecting power and purpose fuelled by her technical precision and flawless musicality.

The Act I Peasant Pas de Six showcased the corps' strength as well as their renowned cultural diversity. A multitude of RWB School Professional Division students filling the stage during the grape-harvest celebrations infused the show with youthful energy.

Arguably, *Giselle* is not exactly cutting-edge fare in which to open a season. Compare it, for example, to last year's profoundly moving *Going Home Star: Truth and Reconciliation* by Mark Godden, or the previous season's *The Handmaid's Tale* by Lila York, which resonated with contemporary relevance. However, this latest production that summoned spirits of the past — and present — spoke to the continuity of generations that has always been a hallmark of this venerable 76-year-old company.

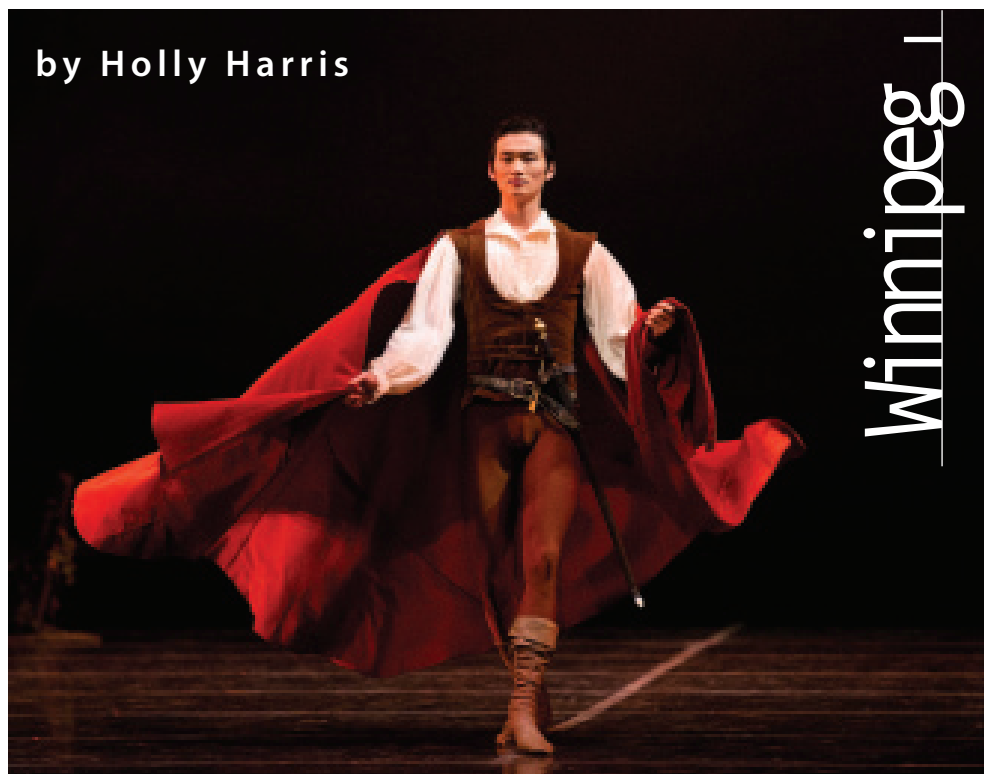
Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers (WCD) opened its 51st season in

October, at the Rachel Browne Theatre, with *Gorge*, a feast of five premieres included as part of the annual touring production Prairie Dance Circuit. *Gorge* showcased works from three Prairie artists, WCD artistic director Brent Lott, WCD dancer Johanna Riley and Calgary's Helen Husak.

The highlights included Husak's *Mise en Abyme*, inspired by Eastern European martyrshka nesting dolls, as well as the eye-popping art of M.C. Escher. As Edmonton-based dancer Kate Stashko peels away layers of clothing, her raw self becomes increasingly exposed as a deconstruction of identity, with Husak's intriguing choreography laced with fleeting shards of folkloric dance. Another was *Fearful*, the evocative duet by Lott, which featured Jasmine Allard and Brianna Ferguson entwining their bodies around each other, the molten choreography speaking to the bonds of inter-connected relationship.

A third piece, Johanna Riley's *(De)face Me*, is a multi-dimensional work in which Warren McClelland and Sam Penner take turns "scribbling" on each other's bodies, courtesy of effective overhead projections. More choreographic variety would have been welcomed, and at times the dancers were upstaged by the live drawing. Still, seeing their movement mirroring the horizontal and vertical strokes of the projected pen created a fascinating juxtaposition of live performance with abstract graphic art. <sup>DT</sup>

by Holly Harris



Liang Xing in the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's *Giselle*  
Photo: Stanislav Balyaevsky

# Toronto

by Michael Crabb

It was a big gamble and it paid off better than anyone was brave enough to predict — except for the driving force behind it, ever-optimistic impresario/artistic director Ilter Ibrahimof. Fall for Dance North, a new Canadian version of the pocketbook-friendly, dance-awareness-boosting program originally devised in 2004, and still presented by New York City Center, effectively sold out three early autumn nights in Toronto's 3,200-seat Sony Centre.

Following the basic New York formula of packaging many different companies and styles in mixed programs of shorter works, Fall for Dance North comprised 11 troupes and 12 works distributed between two programs. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater was the only company featured in both, but with different choreography.

New York City Center has increased the one-price-fits-all ticket from \$10 to \$15, but Fall for Dance North launched at the lower figure. This doubtlessly helped attract the refreshingly diverse and youthful audiences that clamorously voiced their appreciation of everything from traditional First Nations hoop dance, to various contemporary dance expressions, to ancient Indian classical dance.

The scope was international — in addition to Ailey, there was Atlanta Ballet, Dance Brazil, New York's Dorrance Dance and India's Nrityagram Dance Ensemble — but left plenty of room for Canadian companies to shine.

With the National Ballet away on tour to Montreal, the country's largest troupe was for practical reasons represented by a pas de deux, *No. 24*, by Guillaume Côté. This allowed Toronto Dance Theatre (TDT) and Ballet BC

to make a bigger splash than they might have if the National Ballet had been able to field a large ensemble work. TDT was on Program 1, given only once. Ballet BC was a widely acknowledged highlight of Program 2, performed twice. One wonders if either company has ever danced better.

TDT performed artistic director Christopher House's *Vena Cava*, a 1999 work that has its large cast burning the stage with full-out dancing to a powerful Robert Moran score. Given that House's current choreographic aesthetic has taken a more introverted, even minimal turn, TDT's dancers embraced the opportunity to break out and really move. They looked as if they were having a ball, and the audience loved every minute.

Ballet BC made a similarly strong impression in its first Toronto appearance of the 21st century. Cayetano Soto's *Twenty Eight Thousand Waves* was an ideal showcase for the extraordinary clarity and precision of this fine contemporary troupe.

Not everything was big and bold. Peggy Baker, now in her 60s, is no longer the prodigally extravagant mover she was in her days with Lar Lubovitch. Still, her extraordinary presence and ability to imbue the simplest movement with power and emotion held the audience spellbound in her new work,

*fractured black*, performed with violinist Sarah Neufeld of Arcade Fire and Bell Orchestre fame.

Everyone who experienced Fall for Dance North is eager to see it become an annual event. Whether Ibrahimof and his supporters can again raise the necessary \$650,000 or more will be the deciding factor. The public appetite is assured.

For the second time, the National Ballet of Canada has partnered with Britain's Royal Ballet to co-produce a new work by Christopher Wheeldon. The first, in 2011, was the wildly popular, family-friendly *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Wheeldon's first major Shakespeare ballet, *The Winter's Tale*, with jealousy-fueled spousal abuse as its dramatic pivot, is hardly family fare, but made for a surprisingly compelling evening.

Wheeldon does quite a bit of trimming and adjusting to render what most consider an inherently problematic play so that it is suitable for dance. He compresses the crucial storytelling into a long Act I, switches in Act II to the buoyant Bohemian scenes with a cascade of folk-inspired choreography and resolves the plot in a movingly un-Shakespearean way. *The Winter's Tale* is never going to be a runaway hit in the way Wheeldon's *Alice* was, but it's a tremendous dramatic challenge for the



company's dancers and a rewarding experience for ballet-lovers.

Both these co-produced Wheeldon works originated at Covent Garden. The National Ballet of Canada acquired an exclusive, time-limited North American licence to perform them, using the British sets and costumes, in return for its financial investment. If there's another Royal/National co-production in the pipeline, it would be nice if the well-head were in Toronto.

Last December marked the 20th anniversary — and 21st consecutive annual season — of the idiosyncratic but delightfully inventive *Nutcracker* that James Kudelka choreographed for the National Ballet of Canada in 1995. Happily, it shows no sign of ageing and is still fulfilling its primary objective of selling more tickets than any other ballet in the company's repertoire. *The Nutcracker* accounts for about a third of the company's entire annual box office takings and for roughly 10 percent of its \$33 million annual operating budget. The production cost the equivalent


of almost \$5 million in today's money, and it was worth every penny. The more than one million people who've seen it have to date shelled out well in excess of \$50 million for the privilege.

Kudelka's *Nutcracker* does much more to justify its existence than sell tickets. It's going a bit far to dub it "the best *Nutcracker* on the planet," as one hyperbole-addicted critic, oft quoted by the National Ballet, once did. Still, Kudelka's must surely rank among the most sumptuously dressed and least saccharine. Santo Loquasto's sets and costumes — for both human and animal characters — are magnificent. He sets it in 19th-century Russia, which is entirely apt and gives him leave to dress the show in rich brocades, mostly red.

While it retains enough fantasy to delight the many children for whom *The Nutcracker* is probably the only ballet they'll ever see, Kudelka's spin on the E.T.A. Hoffmann source story has a dual coming-of-age spin to it, and even some adult content. In this version, the traditional cavalier who partners the

Sugar Plum Fairy is a through character, Peter, whom we first meet as a stable boy in the marvellously active opening party scene. He is a strapping lad, a feature that does not go unnoticed by the party's hostess, who flirts with him shamelessly. Peter is a big-brother figure to the juvenile leads, named Marie and Misha in this Russianized version. Peter doesn't just partner the ballerina lead in Act II: he falls in love with her, a major step in his own emotional development. Meanwhile, Marie and Misha, dysfunctional offspring of cold and haughty parents, squabble their way through the ballet, but appear to be on the brink of adolescent reconciliation by the final curtain.

With all the tender loving care lavished on the production through the years by the wardrobe and scenic departments, the National Ballet's *Nutcracker* looks as fresh as it did at its premiere. ▫



**VICTORIA  
ACADEMY  
of BALLET**

Bleiddyn Bellis, Artistic Director  
Fellow & Examiner CSC-CICB  
Enrico Cecchetti Final Diploma



Post Secondary Bridge Professional  
Training Program in Classical Ballet

2 Year, Fully Accredited Diploma Program

General Program Intensive:  
August 1 – 19, 2016

Professional Training & Post-Secondary  
Summer Intensive (by audition only):  
August 1 – 26, 2016

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**  
admin@VictoriaAcademyOfBallet.ca  
250.590.6752 | VictoriaAcademyOfBallet.ca

## dance INTERNATIONAL

### HELP US GROW

*Dance International* has been published quarterly by the not-for-profit Vancouver Ballet Society since 1977. As we approach our 40th birthday in 2017, please consider supporting our world-renowned magazine by making a tax-deductible donation.

### Great dance, great writing, great supporters

Together we can give dance the sustained presence it deserves: after the lights go out onstage, dance continues to live here, on the page. Our writers' passion and ideas create conversations around the art form we love.

### EVERY CONTRIBUTION MATTERS

To donate today, mail a cheque to:  
Dance International  
Scotiabank Dance Centre  
677 Davie Street, Vancouver, BC  
V6B 2G6, Canada

Or phone 604-681-1525  
to provide credit card details

Contact the Vancouver Ballet Society at  
vbs@telus.net for more information.  
Thank you for your support.

by Allan Ulrich

# San Francisco |

Autumn was a season of career reconsiderations on both local and international scenes. It was, of course, sheer chance that saw Twyla Tharp return to the Bay Area, as part of her 50th anniversary tour, two months before one of the community's most celebrated dance icons, Sara Shelton Mann, observed her 30th year of making work.

On October 16, Tharp and her 13 superb handpicked dancers swept into Berkeley's Zellerbach Hall, where she has toured since the mid-1970s. The two new works being presented served neither as a retrospective of a half-century's dancemaking nor as a harbinger of the future. Rather, we must consider them confirmations of an extraordinary talent, an artist who can still find gold embedded in a well-trod path.

*Preludes and Fugues* explores Bach's music in a more extended manner than Tharp had done in her classic *The Fugue* and the American Ballet Theatre commission *Bach Partita*. *Yowzie* explores early American jazz. Each work was preceded by a brassy new fanfare by John Zorn.

Tharp has said that the first piece is about the world as it is and the second represents the world as it should be. But it is far more productive to see both dances as sharing the same qualities. The Bach, for all its structure and spirituality, includes an occasional jape (like kicking a supine dancer in the ribs), while in *Yowzie* the eye detects evidence of a rigorous structure.

Tharp set *Preludes and Fugues* to 20 movements of *The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 1*, repeating the C major prelude at the end. It starts with a courtly, almost waltzing duet for Savannah Lowery and Tharp veteran John Selya. It ends, 45 minutes later, with the dancers holding hands in a circle. This is the first time we see the entire complement together onstage, and despite the obviousness of the movement, it summons a feeling of finality.

In between, Tharp explores structural issues, like the canonic trajectory of two couples who end the sequence in dramatic lifts. A mirror duet later for Selya and Ron Todorowski reflects Bach's contrapuntal genius. Later, a woman is tossed between guys during fugal material, but that moment is less successful.

Still, despite a few inert sections, the sheer energy carries you along. Tharp mingles ballet and modern vocabulary as she desires, and it is not surprising to see an excellent dancer like Matthew Dibble scrunched on the floor in one section and launching a perfect arabesque in another. Other episodes, like Selya's prancing boxer moves, seem like inspirations of the moment.

*Yowzie*, of course, descends from *Eight Jelly Rolls* and the jazz dances that followed. Tharp revolutionized classic American pop dances, allowing upper bodies the freedom such infectious music evokes. This is how most of us respond instinctively to the sound of Jelly Roll Morton and "Fats" Waller, and

Tharp imported it all to the stage. The choreographer plunges her dancers into a classy vaudeville, in which they slip and side, arch their backs and hunt for mates. And it is simply irresistible.

Here, veteran Rika Okamoto comes into her own; she is downright hilarious, slinking, slouching and scratching her bare midriff. Garbed like a Roman centurion, Daniel Carter struts around the stage. Selya becomes a carnival barker. No one walks when they can flounce and the results suggest that this music has released the anarchic spirit in all of them, and us, too.

Despite the similarities with earlier dances, in her anniversary show Tharp refused to look back artistically. Not so Sarah Shelton Mann, who, on December 4 in San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Forum, reflected on her working history through a five-hour collage of movement, monologue, skit and music. *Erasing Time* was a come-and-go affair staged in the round that enlisted more than 40 dancers and musicians who, in some way, have collaborated with Mann over the decades.

It was a lively affair. Mann mostly presided at a desk in a corner, while typists pecked away at something in another corner. Vintage Mann collaborator, composer Norman Rutherford, headed a band. Mann soliloquized and was interviewed by former colleague Jess Curtis, only to be upstaged by a tot crawling over the floor. Another colleague, Keith Hennessy, donned a skirt and ranted about wretched housing for artists. We saw reconstructions and films of Mann dances and it all summoned a curious nostalgia.

After Anna Halprin, Mann is the local doyenne of what is now called body-based art. In 1979, she formed the Contraband collective, and over its 17-year run the troupe generated its own kind of performance art. Movement, text, visuals and music co-existed, all fused by Mann's singular vision. From that era, I recall a levitating refrigerator and a piece staged in a parking lot involving three men and a car with a mind of its own. Maybe you had to be there. But Mann earned her niche in local dance history and this sometimes brilliant and sometimes infuriating marathon told you why. ▫

Back in 1980, writing in *The New Yorker*, the redoubtable Arlene Croce, whose work has been an inspiration to me, assessed the latest effort from Twyla Tharp, a dancer and choreographer she'd been following with interest for a good 10 years at that point. The work in question was *When We Were Very Young*, a semi-narrative and somewhat dramatic concoction that struck Croce, as well as me, as an inchoate effort at danced musical theatre.

Still, coming as it did 15 years into Tharp's then evolving career, which began with brainy and sometimes zany experimentalist creations, the 1980s production, made for a Broadway theatre stage, was a brave attempt. Croce's final lines of assessment were: "No, this isn't the Judson Church [the experimental dance venue framing the era in which Tharp's dancemaking was born], it's [Broadway's] Winter Garden," followed by the capper that's stayed with me: "And this is the Tharp of 1980, swimming with the tide and willing to go under, all over again."

Thoughts of the irrepressible Tharp's willingness "to go under, all over again" surfaced this year as the still eager-beaver choreographer created and toured two brand-new, 12-dancer-strong works to mark her 50th anniversary on the boards. No retrospective of greatest hits, of which there'd be a fair number from which to pick, for the still active Tharp.

Before looking over her two most recent creations, numbers 158 and 159 in her canon by her own count, some reflection on my part feels warranted. From the first look I got of her dancing and dances in 1972 — starting with *The Bix Pieces*, a showcase underpinned by a lecture/demonstration, to a text composed by Tharp and to accompaniment from Bix Beiderbecke and Joseph Haydn — highlights have abounded. Space doesn't permit a comprehensive retrospective rundown, but, taking in Tharp's anniversary bill in New York City, the last stop of the fall tour, I couldn't help but look back on such memorable experiences as those offered by the likes of *Eight Jelly Rolls*, *Deuce Coupe*, *Sue's Leg*, *Push Comes to Shove*, *Baker's Dozen*, *Nine Sinatra Songs*, *Bach Partita*, *Brief Fling*, *Brahms/Handel* (with Jerome Robbins), *Sweet Fields* and, last but not least, *Movin' Out*, another Broadway effort and my choice for her most impressive masterwork to date.

Some of these works were made for companies other than Tharp's own group, which ceased as an ongoing venture in 1988. For her 2015 creations, Tharp assembled a temporary group of 13 dancers, six women and six men, with a seventh man as a kind of understudy. In one of the diary articles she wrote for the *New York Times* as part of a series about her preparations over the year and a half leading up to the tour, Tharp noted the sense of an actual company that arose as she honed the

pick-up group during the working process.

The group includes performers from ballet, modern dance and musical theatre backgrounds. Their efforts generously enlivened the challenges she set out in *Preludes and Fugues*, her 50-minute suite-like display of variously daring, lyrical and even seemingly off-hand dancing to selections of Johann Sebastian Bach's rigorous finger exercises for keyboard. Likewise, their expertise and energy fortified *Yowzie*, a 35-minute excursion to seven selections of American jazz. (All the music was recorded.) In her typically succinct program notes, these paired dances were said to suggest "the world as it ought to be" and "as it is," respectively. Each was preceded by an introductory piece of music and choreography leading into the dances themselves in the form of two brassy John Zorn compositions presented as First Fanfare and Second Fanfare.

Tharp's longtime design collaborator, Santo Loquasto, provided the visual elements for both. *Preludes* involved only costuming, in neutral tones for the men's shirts and pants and in solid hues for the women's chiton-like tunics. A shadowy scrim (for Second Fanfare) and a billboard-like expanse of patterning decorated the stage of *Yowzie* to frame the dancers in their layered costuming made from a profusion of prints in a rainbow range of loud colours. James F. Ingalls' distinct and harmonious lighting individually enhanced it all.

In the end, in their suite forms, both works spread out more than they built as they gathered little momentum along the way. Where the sly asides in the Bach dance added sometimes random piquancy to the proceedings, the more pronounced ones in the jazz work showed its men and woman as irrepressible cut-ups, stepping forward from recognizable dancing to act out, here as a duo of mincing men (John Selya and Ron Todorowski), there as a shambling, inebriated woman (Rika Okamoto). At times, references to some of her previous works appeared in the choreographic mix; from my viewpoint, the work being recalled had coherence these newer arrangements lacked.

Essentially, Tharp's anniversary offerings felt more broadly ambitious than satisfyingly artful; more pieces than of a piece. By "going under" yet again in these latest works, however, the dancemaker could well be taking herself to new depths that will lead to future triumphs. <sup>or</sup>



NEW YORK I

by Robert Greskovic

Matthew Dibble and Rika Okamoto in Twyla Tharp's *Yowzie*  
Photo: Ruven Afanador

# Paris



by François Fargue

The very first season with Benjamin Millepied as director of the Paris Opera Ballet started at the Palais Garnier in September with a lacklustre tribute to his masters, Balanchine and Robbins, and a sensational declaration: “I want to teach the Paris dancers to dare to be themselves.” This statement is laudable yet schizophrenic when you consider that this 150-strong company is surely constitutionally encouraged to conform, in shape and style, to the standards of French dance and to the constraints necessary to any corps de ballet. Most of its dancers will not get a chance to make it to the higher ranks or be given that many opportunities to shine individually. This was most cleverly exemplified in 2004 in Jérôme Bel’s *Véronique Doisneau*, created for the corps dancer after which the piece was titled.

Two years ago, Mathilde Froustey, one of the most promising, if (as rumours suggest), wilful, Paris Opera dancers, decided to leave as she was humiliatingly stuck in the sujet rank despite giving brilliant performances during the yearly promotion exam,

Le Concours. The company also famously let one of its rarest gems, Sylvie Guillem, run off, who could hardly be blamed for wanting to be herself. So it’s excellent news if Millepied feels inclined to let more personalities blossom. With spectacular dancers such as Aurélie Dupond and Agnès Gillot now gone or on the way out, Paris Opera étoiledom does not shine so brightly in a dance galaxy where international superstars, rarely seen in Paris, steal most of the thunder.

If anything, Millepied’s creation for the opening program had the vibrancy of a warrior’s cry. His *Clear, Loud, Bright, Forward* came squished between *Opus 19/The Dreamer* by Robbins and Balanchine’s *Theme and Variations*. Unfamiliar to the French audience, *The Dreamer* came across as dated and was danced with scant inspiration by two étoiles, Mathieu Ganio and young Amandine Albiisson. *Theme and Variations* fared little better. While pleasing the eye of audiences with a taste for ballet meringue, *Theme* is also reputedly one of the trickiest pieces by Balanchine. Leading the ballet, new étoile Laura Hecquet was on top of the technical

pitfalls, yet somehow failed to reach the glittering pace and rhythm required.

There was no shortage of pace and rhythm in Millepied’s *Clear, Loud, Bright, Forward*, overtly informed by his masters, Balanchine and Robbins, with a bit of Forsythe thrown in. The piece was also boosted by an array of young dancers deliberately picked from the lower ranks, which shows Millepied keeping his promise to break the hierarchy.

A minor if not totally convincing innovation was the change in score for the traditional beginning of the season défilé (the parade of the corps de ballet) from Berlioz to Wagner, which apparently was the original music. A défilé that was, incidentally, to be seen only by the happy few with enough money to splash out on an exclusive gala night.

A much more interesting initiative of Millepied’s was his commission from non-dance choreographer Boris Charmatz. Titled *20 dancers for the 20th century*, this oddity brought together 20 dancers from the company who, for some two hours, performed extracts

from famous pieces that marked the previous century. They stood in casual clothes in public spaces, including the grand foyer, grand staircase and balcony, under the intrigued and generally gleeful gaze of perambulating dancers. It was a nifty idea that turned the vast, ornate spaces we hang around in during intervals into a living museum of dance.

In October, an evening dedicated to Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker showed three emblematic pieces of three different periods, starting with *Quatuor n°4* to some arduous Bartók and marked with the light yet obsessively impish moves of four girls dressed in sassy school uniform costumes.

*Die Grosse Fuge* to music by Beethoven focused more on male raw energy. To a romantically dramatic score by Schoenberg, not usually a prime choice of music with De Keersmaeker, *Transfigured Night* won everyone over. A beautiful evening for sure, reaffirming De Keersmaeker's status as one of the few leading choreographers of the last and present century, while showing the dancers at their very best

in a style they have had the opportunity to grapple with before.

Meanwhile, controversy still rages on at the Paris Opera regarding new general director Stéphane Lissner's decision to have the partitions between boxes at the Palais Garnier removed to create more space and visibility. Despite numerous petitions and outcries, the damage, it seems, is about to be done.

The much-awaited and yet somewhat sad event at the beginning of the season was, of course, *A Life in Progress* at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées — Sylvie Guillem's farewell evening. The most stunning element of the soirée was seeing 50-year-old Guillem as lithe and vigorous as ever, and her six o'clock arabesques as high. She can still jump with strength and altitude and radiated the same spontaneous joy at curtain call.

The show itself, however, seemed a little bleak. All four pieces were dimly lit and of unequal quality, starting with *Techné* by Akram Khan, in which

Guillem swirls around a wire-meshed tree to languorous oriental music. A repetitive and frankly not exalting first 20 minutes or so. *Duo* by Forsythe followed, performed by two of his outstanding dancers, Brigel Gjoka and Riley Watts, before Guillem returned in Russell Maliphant's *Here and After* alongside Emanuela Montanari from La Scala. Moving fast or slow, the duo was compelling and matched the Forsythe duet in beautiful intensity. Last came *Bye*, a solo choreographed for Guillem in 2011 by Mats Ek, which will remain as her swan song.

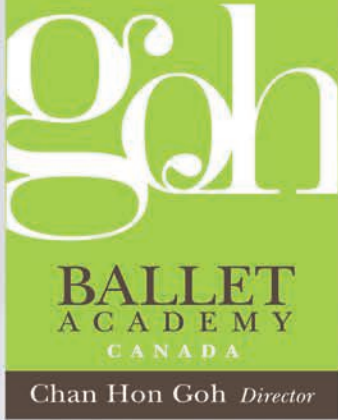
It is an odd solo, enhancing her still vibrant stamina and technique, yet showing her as nervous, kind of kooky and frumpy. Hardly the glamorous last dance for someone who should be remembered as the most inspirational ballerina of the second half of the last century. But this was obviously what she wanted to show of herself. A last hint of folly. <sup>o</sup>



Left: Benjamin Pech of the Paris Opera Ballet in Boris Charmatz's *20 dancers for the 20th century*

Above: Myriam Kamionka of the Paris Opera Ballet in Boris Charmatz's *20 dancers for the 20th century*

Photos: Agathe Poupéney



# International Summer Intensive | 2016

Progressive Programs for  
Dedicated Students and  
Aspiring Professionals

**July 4 –  
August 6, 2016**

Comprehensive and Full-Time  
Senior & Junior Programmes



**EXPLORE  
PERFORM  
ACHIEVE**

## FEATURED GUEST INSTRUCTORS:

### MAINA GIELGUD A.O.

Former Artistic Director – Australian Ballet  
Former Director – Royal Danish Ballet  
Former Artistic Associate – Houston Ballet

### KARL CONDON

Former Principal Dancer, Boston Ballet,  
Chair of the Dance Department  
of the NOCCA Institute

### TERRY EDLEFSEN

Former Principal Dancer, Stuttgart Ballet,  
Director of the Reif Dance Academy

### MARGO SAPPINGTON

International Choreographer & Master Teacher

*Elevate aspirations and build confidence. Our intensives will propel results.*

**Scholarships Available | [WWW.GOHBALLET.COM](http://WWW.GOHBALLET.COM)**

2345 Main St, Vancouver BC V5T 3C9 | 604.872.4014 | [info@gohballet.com](mailto:info@gohballet.com)



There have been many collaborations between choreographers and fashion designers, but *Gravity Fatigue* must be the first time the project has been led by the designer rather than the choreographer. Not just any designer would dare imagine such an undertaking, but Hussein Chalayan — a conceptual supremo who has worked with choreographers before (Michael Clark, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui), and whose own work sashays freely between fashion, art and performance — is not just any designer. His choreographer, Damien Jalet — who has worked both independently and collaboratively (most notably with Cherkaoui) — is no stranger to arty fashion either, and once even made a dance film for Paris Menswear Week.

The brokering of unusual creative partnerships is something that commissioning theatre Sadler's Wells has become known for, especially when the non-dance artist comes with big-name recognition (it does wonders for press and publicity). Of course, there's no telling if a great idea — or indeed great people — will produce a great piece.

So how did *Gravity Fatigue* turn out? As stimulating, as stylish, as ephemeral and as forgettable as fashion itself. Full of theatrical imagery, curiously lacking in theatre. Take, for example, a scene with the stage bisected by a wall to demarcate two dressing rooms. On one side, a woman in white; on the other, a man in black. They can't see each other, yet as they disrobe they mirror each other's moves exactly. The setup is terrific: they look great, they act oh-so-natural, and the scene is both stylized and spooky, each performer acting as the other's uncanny double. But nothing is followed through, and it's over in minutes.

Rather than develop ideas, the piece scrolls through 18 short, self-contained scenes, like a shuffled playlist. All are visually arresting, many are visually thrilling. Some are paper-thin, such as the one with paper dressmaker's patterns that unfold into wearable dresses before they float up and away, like the lightest of aerograms. There are captivating optical illusions: the women whose trailing gowns seem to move independently over the floor, as if being tugged by invisible mice; the creepy effect of a wire moving inside a woman's bodice like some unnameable inner parasite (think *Alien*

reimagined for *Vogue*). The women in full black burqas having a ball in a play pit full of bouncy balls are no more explored, either as characters or images, than the anonymous women cloaked in sheets, their needle-sharp stilettos their sole distinguishing feature. My favourites were a scene with pairs of dancers caught within stretchy costumes, so that every lean and tug was rendered directly in the rubber like an exact visualization of emotional tension; and a set with dervish dancers encased them in drab businesslike coats or unfurled into sequined petals as they spun.

*Gravity Fatigue* wears its theatricality on its sleeve. It has some marvellous visual and choreographic ideas, but they are all incipient, no sooner presented than

De Frutos' *Anatomy of a Passing Cloud* is set to a collage of Pacific sounds from sweet hula hymns to island drums and indigenous speech, and costumed in gorgeous floral prints. In the group composition, there is both a sense of ritual — in the circular format, in the sequences of partnering and solos — and of vivid personality — in the jostle and conviviality, the self-conscious showing off and the free-wheeling abandon. The physicality of both feeling and form make this a genuine joy.

Less successful are two First World War ballets. Andrew Simmons' moon-eyed *Dear Horizon* portrays doomed young men in battle and mournful women as angels of fate, or remembrance, or whatever. Such romanticized portrayals of war in ballet inevitably trivialize their subject, and are hard to stomach when horrific images of



discarded, each scene making the last feel so five minutes ago. Even without the overload of musical disco-tech, this becomes wearing. Fatigue is apt, but gravity — as in force, as in gravitas? — not so much.

At the Linbury Theatre, the fresh-faced Royal New Zealand Ballet made a welcome visit with a program of four works. London-based Javier de Frutos already has a reputation in the U.K. for various naughtiness of varying seriousness — nudity, violence, blasphemy and the like — which blind too many people to the craftsmanship in the choreography. Not the Royal New Zealand Ballet, which has commissioned its third (non-naughty) piece from him.

war and death are broadcast daily into our lives. In taking an abstract approach, Neil Jeremia's short *Passchendaele* mostly avoids that problem. Rather than portray war, it invokes warlike qualities: the blind brutality of mobs, the desperation of force and the force of desperation; the disorder, the arbitrariness.

The program ends with *Selon Désir* by Greek choreographer Andonis Foniadakis, a Dionysian frenzy of back-arching ecstasies, doubled-over agonies and distended emotions accompanied by over-amplified versions of Bach's *St Matthew* and *St John's Passions* that come across like soundtracks for *The Omen*. Sometimes you like a piece not because it's good, but because it's wrong. <sup>vi</sup>



In 2012, a large group of Italian artistic directors, theatre managers and so on gathered together to push the National Department of Performing Arts to create a national dance platform — a way to promote the best in Italian dance and showcase it to international organizers and reporters. The idea was to have editions of this New Italian Dance Platform (NID) in different regions, put on by regional governments. But how to conceive the showcases? Should they be a general overview of Italian dance, from classical ballet to work by conceptual artists? Or opportunities for independent companies and choreographers?

To solve this question, the organizers decided to form an artistic committee (one committee for each edition) to assess current international dance trends. Four members would be Italian, three would be non-Italian, who together would choose 17 companies from a national call.

Obviously, the different artistic committees influenced their editions with their own style and perspective. The first one, in November 2012, in sunny southern Puglia, welcomed companies that included San Carlo Opera Ballet and independent groups, in an edition that, in some way, seemed to be a declaration of purpose for this new project for Italian dance.

The second one, in Pisa, Tuscany, in 2014, was ideological and radical, choosing to propose the latest choreographic trends (with a taste for conceptual art above all) and what we usually define as “no dance” pieces, and an ideological attitude against pure lines and dynamic movements.

The 2015 edition, in lovely Brescia, a northern town close to Milan, found a good balance in the works chosen, not too far on either end of the choreographic spectrum. The seven members of the artistic committee agreed to present the widest range of styles, trends and artistic generations currently performing in Italy. Indeed, on the three stages of the Platform (the beautiful Teatro Grande, the art deco Teatro Sociale and the new Santa Chiara) were shown the creations of three generations of Italian contemporary dancemakers, from the older ones (already in their mid-50s, but still on the creative move), to the youngest ones who have just appeared on the Italian scene. There was a variety of ages, but also of styles, from contemporary ballet (lines and pointe shoes are back again, luckily) to theatre-dance to hip-hop (a new genre in the national platform programs) to physical theatre.

In spite of artistic differences, there were many common points — or better to say, faults — in the shows. First, the pieces were mostly too long, losing focus and diluting the structure of the choreography and the meaning behind it. There was a general sensation that there was no true necessity in the creation of the works. Sometimes you felt you were watching an exercise in composition; other times, you thought the dancemaker was superficially following current stylistic trends. Worst of all was when a choreographer showed such naivety in staging and theatrical ideas that it was like attending a school show.

The youngest choreographers' shows in Brescia seemed weakest despite the sudden attention some of them have been receiving from Italian and foreign organizers who are in search of the latest phenomenon in dance. This was the case for Alessandro Sciarroni, who began choreographing without any dance training, but rather with a background as an actor in physical theatre companies, or the younger Francesca Pennini, leader of *Collettivo Cinetico*.

Immediately acclaimed by theatre critics (dance writers were more cautious), both Sciarroni and Pennini approach choreography conceptually. They start from a postulate and then develop the dance following inner rules, in a postmodern way whose originality is found in irony and chance, such as when the spectators are used to develop the piece during each performance by having them press some buttons which cue certain decisions by the performers (Pennini). Or testing the spectator's patience so that I wondered who would leave first — the audience members who are looking at a never-ending routine or the performer (Sciarroni) endlessly repeating it?

In Brescia, Pennini has been one of the most followed and promoted dancers by Italian artistic directors and programmers, who are delighted by the humorous *Miniballetto n.1*, where a drone flew about above the stage, making a mound of feathers whirl and dance in the air. The international directors seemed much less impressed by the new Italian conceptual choreography. Indeed, the first choreographer who received some attention from them, by the director of the Théâtre de Chaillot in Paris, was 50-year-old Michele Di Stefano, thanks to his dazzling exploration of dynamics in time and space in *Robinson*, which was performed by a good company of seven dancers. Pure constructed movements were strictly executed with drive and panache, making for a sparkling architecture in time and space. Just to remember what we talk about when we talk about dance. ▫

The autumn season of the Royal Danish Ballet offered a triple bill of new creations for the company. The opening work, Natalia Horecna's *The Death that Best Preserves*, was dedicated to Kevin Haigen, principal ballet master with Hamburg Ballet, for his humane and loving outlook on life. This mindset permeated her ballet about a 94-year-old woman, who, as death is approaching, remembers her life with its sad and happy moments. As the old woman, Kizzy Matiakis had a role through which she could show her splendid acting skills, and as Death personified, Marcin Kupinski was both her caring companion and elegant partner.

The sensual body sculptures formed by a "naked" couple led to the birth of a sprightly girl. At times, Matiakis joined in the exhilarated dancing of her young alter ego, while at other times she was wheeled around in a pram as she observed herself in the past meeting and losing love in wartime. Death, with his three male helpers, four male-female couples and a few props, delineated a credible life story accompanied by a varied range of music. After a bubbly dance that was a celebration of life, Kupinski finally cradled Matiakis' weary body in his arms and sent her flying off into the air. A buzzing wasp opened and closed the ballet for a bit of comic relief.

Israeli choreographer Idan Sharabi, who danced with Nederlands Dans Theater and Batsheva Dance Company before he founded his own group in 2012, presented his work *Know*. Springing from improvisations, and with much rolling on the floor, it clearly challenged the classical dancers. Still, their individuality stood out in the interplay of movement sequences that were also danced backward, which was mirrored in the soundtrack of Maurice Ravel's piano music and the dancers' spoken words, which were played in reverse.

*Short Time Together* was Sol León and Paul Lightfoot's first work for the Danish company. On a video backdrop, a thoughtful, elderly man watched from a doorway while a younger and an older man, together with a woman, seemed to dance his memories of a past love triangle. The expressive choreography was underscored by Max Richter's moody music until there was a sudden break in style and tone, when the fiery fourth movement of Beethoven's 7th Symphony drove three male dancers into a show of virtuoso feats.

A different kind of feat was on display at the Royal Theatre studios during *Bella Speranza*. Started in 2012 by former Royal Danish Ballet dancers Sorella Englund and Charlotte Khader, together with composer Kim Helweg, the project introduces chronically ill children to the world of ballet. Every child takes an active part in the dance according to their abilities, and each season closes with a performance in costume for relatives and friends. In December, a moving, two-part television program followed the autumn season, focusing on three of the children and the life-changing experience it became for them.

Danish choreographer Camilla Stage and viola da gamba player Mogens

in Copenhagen opened the exhibition *William Forsythe – In the Company of Others*, presenting five of the renowned dance-maker's choreographic objects. On opening night in a talk with curator Mathias Kryger, Forsythe said he distinguishes between dance and choreography, explaining that his installations belong to the latter category, and are intended to involve visitors physically or emotionally.

One of the "objects," *Nowhere and Everywhere at the Same Time* involved hundreds of pendulums hanging from the ceiling on transparent strings in a large white space. The public was invited to move between them, but to avoid touching the strings in order to create awareness



by Anne-Marie Elmbj

COPENHAGEN I

Rasmussen formed a partnership that resulted in *Suite of Touch*, in which the audience was placed in a circle around seven dancers dressed in white, creating an intimate space that suited both the live Baroque music and the modern dance. The music by Marin Marais, M. de Sainte-Colombe and other composers for gamba, theorbo (a long-necked lute) and harpsichord has improvisational elements in common with the dance, and invites ornamentation, which also corresponded well with the dance. Stage explored various qualities of what she called in her program note "skin-hunger," the need to touch and be touched.

In November, Kunsthall Charlottenborg

of themselves and their surroundings. In another, *Towards the Diagnostic Gaze*, the words engraved on a stone base ask the viewer to hold an ostrich feather duster absolutely still — an impossible task that makes one's heartbeat apparent.

A third object, the video *Stellenstellen*, features two very flexible dancers, Ander Zabala and Amancio Gonzalez, who in intervals of about a minute took turns moving one limb each, thereby forming a live and shifting, corporeal-knot sculpture. Also exhibited were two more videos, *The Defenders Part 3*, featuring political platitudes on a teleprompter, and *Suspense*, in which Forsythe restrains his own body by a long length of hanging rope. <sup>vi</sup>

# Oslo

by Fredrik Rütter



**D**ansens hus (the House of Dance) recently received a lot of media attention when it presented Mia Habib, a young Norwegian choreographer.

For her piece *A song to...*, she brought onstage 46 people, 16 of whom were dancers, the rest extras, all naked. It is not the first time nudity has been seen onstage in Norway, but not in that number. It does not take long before the shock value wears off and one can see she has worked very precisely with the bodies.

Habib explains in the program that she found some of her inspiration for this work in two Norwegian artist brothers, Emanuel Vigeland and Gustav Vigeland. Gustav, especially, has put his mark on the city of Oslo, where an enormous park has more than 200 of his large granite sculptures, all nudes. The connection to the Vigelands is clear, with youngsters playing and fighting, the old ones carrying the burdens of the world, and bodies expressing a long life of hard work. Habib, who studied conflict resolution and negotiation at university in Tel Aviv, works a lot with groups, showing in this piece that we are much stronger together than alone.

Sweden's Cullberg Ballet, once one of the leading modern companies in Europe, was also presented at Dansens

hus. Today, it seems like they are struggling to find a new identity after the successful years with founder Birgit Cullberg and then her son Mats Ek in charge. The company, led since 2014 by Gabriel Smeets, came with a program titled *Highlights*, but there were not many of those to be seen. The American Trajal Harrell, with his *The Return to the Modern Dance*, and the Hungarian-born Eszter Salamon, with her *Reproduction*, were responsible for the choreography, or lack thereof. It's hard to have a serious opinion on the quality of the dancing, since there was very little of it going on, but the dancers themselves had good stage presence.

Oslo Dance Ensemble presented a triple bill, opening with a new piece by Jo Strømgren. That man has now surpassed his 100th creation so he knows how to sew a piece together, but *Gone* lacks freshness; one gets the feeling the structure has been seen before.

In Swedish-born Fredrik "Benke" Rydman's *Salto*, the second piece, the dancers brought onstage four big trestles normally used in gymnasiums, which they kept raising and lowering by dismantling and then reassembling. The eight dancers wore old-fashioned gymnastic clothing and moved like gymnasts. Rydman gave a very humorous touch to the whole thing.

The last piece, *Biperson*, by a rather

fresh Norwegian choreographer, Ole Martin Meland, was just the opposite. With extremely loud bass music and repetitive rough movements that went on forever, he really tried his audience's patience.

The National Ballet of Norway presented Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon*, which has never been done in Norway before, and it is the first time the trust that looks after his ballets has not insisted on the original costume and set designs from 1974 being used. Two Norwegian artists created new designs — Ingrid Nylander, costumes and Jon-Kristian Alsaker, scenography — and both did a fantastic job. The Opera House has a new machine, apparently the only one in Europe, which can print colourful patterns in high quality on material, and that was used for all it was worth.

Eugenie Skilnand gave a lovely effort in the title role. Her strength is her acting ability; you really believe in her character. Douwe Dekkers, as Des Grieux, looked just as young and innocent as he should. There are a lot of solos and pas de deux, which the two of them did really beautifully together. The rest of the company followed with great acting and dancing, and Lucas Lima as Lescaut and Grete Sofie Borud Nybakken as his mistress gave convincing performances, she being just as greedy as one could expect.

Also at the Oslo Opera House was a triple bill with the title *Back to the Future*. Alan Lucien Øyen's *Timelaps*, a premiere, was said to have a lot of references to the film of the same name, but they were not easy to detect. Lucien Øyen, one of two house choreographers with the National Ballet of Norway, uses a narrator through *Timelaps*, but it was hard to see the connection between the text and the dancing, which seemed to present two completely different worlds. It was difficult to decide what to focus on, though the dancing was more compelling.

Also on the bill was William Forsythe's *One Flat Thing, reproduced*, new to Oslo, and his *Steptext*, now 30 years old, which was the best choreography of the evening. Yolanda Correa, Gakuro Matsui, Philip Curell and Aarne Kristian Ruutu performed with great surplus energy and timing, giving the choreography their very best. <sup>21</sup>

The da:ns festival in October brought noted touring acts to the city, including *Life in Progress* — French ballerina Sylvie Guillem's retirement show, a subdued epilogue to her performing career — and *Torobaka*, British kathak-contemporary dancer Akram Khan's percussive face-off with Spanish flamenco stylist Israel Galván. To mark its first decade, the festival also commissioned several new works from local artists; one of them, *Impulse*, premiered in an area hitherto closed to the public.

In *Impulse*, made for T.H.E Dance Company by its resident choreographer Kim Jae Duk, the audience had a rare, if controlled, tour of the spaces behind and beneath the stages of the Esplanade — Theatres on the Bay arts centre. Each site sparked a different response from the company dancers; they sprinted up steps and bounced off walls at a loading bay, and angled their bodies within the borders of a beeping cargo lift. A balletic solo in a vast, high-ceilinged workshop segued into a duet of one-upmanship. When all eight dancers were finally united in a storage basement, the metal fences surrounding them seemed to barely contain the full force of their aggression.

The nine-day festival also presented Asia Pacific Dance Bridge — part of the 2015 World Dance Alliance conference program — which showcased performers from six countries in the region. Representing Singapore were Aymeric Bichon and Christina Chan, members of local group Frontier Danceland, in their *Midlight*, a swirling stream of counterbalances and lifts.

A similar duet bookended Chan's contribution to Frontier Danceland's closing season in November, which also featured choreography by artistic director Low Mei Yoke. While the production was billed as an evening-length show inspired by the notion of heritage, set to Ho Wen Yang's original score (played live by Ding Yi Music Company), Chan's and Low's parts could well have been two separate works. In *Flux of Time*, Chan addressed the topic in abstract, shifting patterns, mingling collective loose-limbed movement with smaller forays and eccentric games: time as a grab bag of moments slipping through one's fingers.

Low, however, created a wistful tale about the majie, women hailing from the southern Chinese county of Shunde who worked in Singapore as domestic helpers in the early to mid-20th century. Unlike other household servants of the period, the majie stayed unmarried and they considered one another kin. Low wove their vow of celibacy during a hair-combing ritual, their sisterhood and their largely forgotten place in history into her *Fade*, which evoked the dance-dramas and cross-cultural experiments she has made for the company in the past.

*Fade* began with pedestrians snaking past an old lady, played by guest artist Jalyn Han, who ambled to a stage-left table and unpacked her meal from a tiffin carrier (an old style of lunch box that was once quite common in Singapore). As if summoned by her memories, Adele Goh and Joy Wang appeared as young majie in their trademark white blouses and black pants, their solos and gradual pairing tinged with the gestural grace of traditional Chinese dance. Together they fought life's obstacles in the inauspicious form of four dark-clad dancers rolling across the floor, while Han's calm, constant presence kept this retrospective piece from spilling into bathos.

October also saw a weekend of kabuki as admirers of the Japanese theatre tradition welcomed the return of Ebizo

Ichikawa XI. The actor, a descendant of the Ichikawa kabuki clan that was founded in the 17th century, first visited Singapore in 2014 with a small troupe to present two lion-themed noh and kabuki plays. On this second visit, he brought a double bill that sampled the lighter side of kabuki, including a new work that he had made just for this run at the Marina Bay Sands' Grand Theatre. In *Mimasu Kuruwa no Kasauri*, he played a righteous thief (one who robs from the rich to give to the poor) in disguise as an umbrella seller in an Edo-era pleasure district. When thugs tried to catch him, he avoided their attacks effortlessly and conjured up an endless array of umbrellas large and small to confuse them.

Ichikawa also premiered a restaging of *Uwanari*, a lost play in the Ichikawa family canon. Though much of its humour lay in its script, character was also clearly defined through movement: the stamping feet of Ichikawa's witless two-timer, the tight mincing steps of his middle-aged wife, the gentle fold and flow of his young mistress' long sleeves. But what got viewers clapping was an uncredited curtain-raiser with Ichikawa as a dragon-slaying god blessed by fire. Striking a triumphant pose, he conveyed pomp and swagger with a fierce, cross-eyed glare — a signature of the Ichikawa style. *α*



by Malcolm Tay

Adele Goh, Joy Wang and Jalyn Han  
of Frontier Danceland in Low Mei Yoke's *Fade*  
Photo: Bernie Ng

# Auckland Brisbane & Sydney |



by Deborah Jones

You can imagine Queensland Ballet artistic director Li Cunxin's delight when he got the call from Ethan Stiefel, then leading Royal New Zealand Ballet. Stiefel had secured Liam Scarlett to make a new full-length work and wanted to know if Li would like to come on board as co-commissioner? Indeed he would.

Dividing the cost of new productions between companies makes sense under any circumstances. Getting a share of Scarlett's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was quite a bonus. Scarlett, artist in residence with England's Royal Ballet, is one of a small handful of young choreographers whose work is sought-after at the highest levels — think New York City Ballet, Paris Opera Ballet and San Francisco Ballet.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* opened in Wellington, the New Zealand capital, in mid-2015 and its reception made Li realize he needed to schedule more performances in Brisbane than originally

planned for April 2016. He upped the number to 15.

Scarlett's *Dream* is in two acts. Like Frederick Ashton's one-act *The Dream*, it uses Mendelssohn's *Incidental Music* written for the play, but more was needed. Conductor Nigel Gaynor, then music director with Royal New Zealand Ballet and now in the same role for Queensland Ballet, selected, arranged and orchestrated additional Mendelssohn pieces to make a delectable full-length score.

Much of Scarlett's work so far has had dark subject matter or implications — his full-length Royal Ballet *Frankenstein* opens in May — but we can now see he has a gift for comedy, too. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which I saw in Auckland, sparkled with mischief, high spirits and romance. Scarlett keeps the familiar arc of the story — Oberon, imperious king of the magical realm, is having issues with his queen, Titania, while young people blunder about in the dark, intent on excitement — but there's a happy

little twist. As the ballet's designer Tracy Grant Lord told me in an interview, Hermia, Helena, Demetrius and Lysander are on “a fairy safari.” This explains the little row of tents, flashlights, nets and the accompanying retinue of bumbling Rustics.

The mortals of course can't see the fairies, who dash thither and yon, adorable in fluffy, richly coloured tutus and super-sized wings. They dart behind glowing flowers or are glimpsed up in the tree canopy, watching the fun unfold as the keen-to-please Puck pops out of a hiding place high above the forest floor to busy himself on Oberon's behalf.

Scarlett's choreography is deliciously light and fleet, wittily carrying the story forward at a good pace. His luscious use of the upper body adds a significant element of sensuality, most particularly in the great pas de deux between Oberon and Titania, sumptuously embodied by MacLean Hopper and Tonia Looker, that concludes the ballet.

In Brisbane, Queensland Ballet's big coup in 2015 was to secure Alina Cojocar for *The Sleeping Beauty* in October. The company performed Greg Horsman's version, created in 2011 for Royal New Zealand Ballet when he was ballet master there; he currently holds that position with Queensland Ballet. Horsman gives *Sleeping Beauty* human scale without sacrificing its fairy tale nature. The broad strokes of the legend are there, filled out with original, felicitous details. The production isn't hugely grand, but it beguiles with its unfailingly clear narrative.

Horsman makes a virtue of transforming the ballet for medium-sized forces. He excises and conflates characters stylishly, gracefully interweaves the fairies from the Prologue throughout the action, builds up Carabosse's role and keeps pomp to a minimum. One could argue with a couple of his choices (the majestic apotheosis music at the end is missed), but the world he creates is satisfyingly coherent. It might seem odd to describe *The Sleeping Beauty* — the ultimate achievement in Russian Imperial-era ballet — as an intimate experience, but that's how it felt.

Cojocar is widely considered to be the Aurora of her generation. She radiated light and joy from a tiny body that gave the impression of not only being buoyed by the music, but indivisible from it. Most potent of all was her warm generosity, seen in abundant, openhearted gestures and an intense gaze that encompassed the entire theatre. She is an extraordinary artist.

At another performance, Queensland Ballet's glamorous Cuban-born principal artist Yanela Piñera danced Aurora with a similar engagement with the audience, a quality Li Cunxin seems to be developing right through the ranks. It was striking how fresh and individual everyone was, in particular the lively women dancing the fairies who bestow gifts on Aurora at her christening.

Birmingham Royal Ballet's Chi Cao — he played Li in the film based on Li's autobiography *Mao's Last Dancer* — partnered Cojocar elegantly. Dancing with Piñera, Queensland Ballet principal Hao Bin was a more ardent Prince Désiré and made more of the awakening kiss, which was given pride of place — far from always being the case — in Gary Harris' extremely effective storybook set.

In Sydney, the annual Australian Dance Artists performance was again highly ambitious in scope and memorable in execution. The group was founded years ago by veteran choreographer and educator Norman Hall, who collaborates creatively with sculptor Ken Unsworth and the four current company dancers: Anca Frankenhäuser and Patrick Harding-Irmer (former London Contemporary Dance Theatre artists) and Susan Barling and Ross Philip (both Sydney Dance Company alumni). Their collective experience is immense (all are well over 50) and they are exceptionally potent performers.

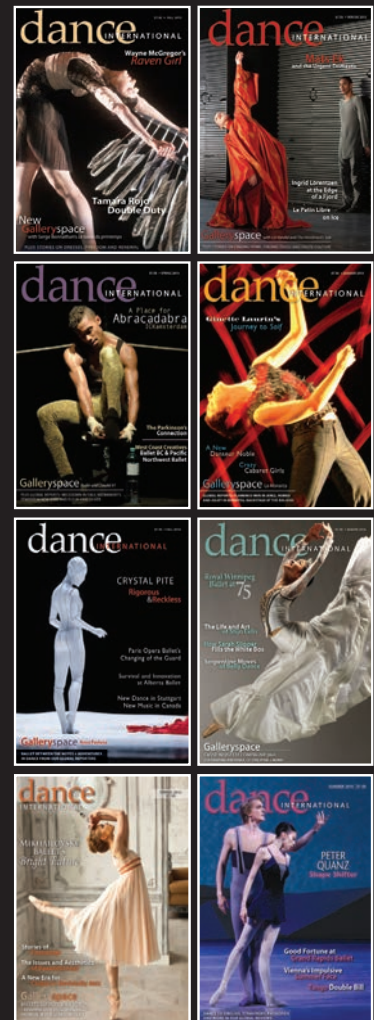
In recent years, Australian Dance Artists has performed in Unsworth's studio in works that are a mix of kinetic sculpture, music, dance and performance art. The most recent, *Departures*, ruminated on space, time, love and death on a large scale. Unsworth commissioned composer Jonathan Cooper (as he has done before) to write a score, played live by members of the Australian Piano Quartet, augmented with harp and another violin. The performance also featured two singers and a set containing many sculptural wonders, including two huge structures, one with a central double-helix moving staircase that the dancers navigated elegantly. *Departures* also had a startling coup de théâtre that involved Unsworth painting on a big paper screen, and began with moving spheres that evoked the skies and the passing of the ages.

The surreal was never far away. At one point, Frankenhäuser delicately traversed a vertiginous slope while others popped their heads through little doors, and imagine, if you will, a man singing for what seemed like five minutes or more while suspended upside down (Unsworth was the librettist for a long and very lovely song). The piece started with the dancers pummelling and manhandling Unsworth — the artist is well into his 80s; he really doesn't spare himself — in an emphatic image of the artist as outsider. But the final image was, typically, one of transcendence as dancers climbed heavenwards. ▯

**Left: Hayley Dennison of Royal New Zealand Ballet in Liam Scarlett's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*  
Photo: Stephen A'Court**

# dance

## INTERNATIONAL



**Savour the  
dance you love  
online at kobo.com**

**available in print at  
www.danceinternational.org**

**subscriptions@  
danceinternational.org**



## Hélène Blackburn / *Symphonie dramatique*

Few tales are as universally known and beloved as Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Countless dance versions have been created, approaching the story of two star-crossed lovers from numerous angles. For choreographer Hélène Blackburn and her Montreal-based company Cas Public, *Romeo and Juliet* took on a broader meaning. In Blackburn's *Symphonie dramatique*, the main characters are representative of needs found in all of us for love, acceptance and happiness.

Founded in 1989 by Blackburn, Cas Public has built a reputation in Canada and abroad as a forward-thinking contemporary dance company. That way forward took a slight detour in 2001 when Blackburn turned the company's focus toward creating dance works suitable for young audiences. *Symphonie dramatique*, premiered in 2014 and titled after Hector Berlioz's score based on *Romeo and Juliet*, is one of those works. The U.S. premiere at Pittsburgh's Hillman Center for Performing Arts this past November was indeed suitable for young audiences, but perhaps more in the sense that a Dali or Picasso painting might be to a young mind — wondrous, but needing some explanation to fully grasp. The hour-long multimedia production, dense with beautifully crafted movement performed with deft skill by Cas Public's eight dancers, spoke to

both novice and seasoned dancegoers.

Set to an original soundscape by Martin Tétreault that sampled music from Prokofiev, Tchaikovsky, Gounod and others, the abstract contemporary dance-theatre work opened on a barely lit stage devoid of side curtains with eight microphones on stands lined up horizontally across it. Looming over them was a large chandelier made from clear plastic goblets.

One of many uses of symbolism in the work, the dancers approached the microphones as a means to introduce Shakespeare's story to the audience. But only dancer Marc-André Poliquin, the works de facto narrator, spoke. Poliquin's thick French-Canadian accent lent an edge to his impassioned recitation of Shakespeare's words, which were also projected on a screen at the rear of the stage. Although the narration and text projections were helpful in the setting of several of *Symphonie dramatique's* scenes, prior knowledge of *Romeo and Juliet* seemed presumed to make sense of the work.

Blackburn's choreography (in collaboration with the dancers) was a mix of contemporary dance and hip-hop styles. Articulated hand and arm movements, torso isolations and various gestures by the dancers to Tétreault's surreal-sounding music, along with Poliquin's poetic interjections, created an overall mood for each scene rather than precisely following Shakespeare's narrative.

The recurring theme of the Romeo and Juliet characters as representative ideas was driven home in the way that Romeo, Juliet and other characters were seen in multiples, sometimes even costumed in T-shirts with "Romeo" or "Juliet" inscribed on the back of them. Like echoes, a central pair of dancers portraying the two lovers in a scene would be joined by one or two other pairs mimicking their movements.

Of the work's many bright spots, the most technically challenging and captivating to watch were several rapid-fire, turn-on-a-dime, male/female pas de deux à la Édouard Lock of La La La Human Steps fame. Cas Public's stellar trio of female dancers, Roxane Duschene-Roy, Daphnée Laurendeau and IsaBelle Paquette, were spun on pointe like tops, legs a whirl of taut muscles and elegant lines, by their partners. Of particular note was a pas de deux by Alexandre Carlos and Paquette in which the statuesque Paquette was folded over, twisted, turned and lifted, spellbinding the audience with her grace and power.

Other memorable moments included: a humorous fit in which Poliquin rolled on the floor, screeching like a velociraptor; a lively section entitled Interlude: Folk Dance, in which the dancers in a cluster punched at the air in front of them, then waved their hands violently at the sides of their heads and gyrated like go-go dancers; and a scene depicting the death of Mercutio at the hands of Tybalt, where Poliquin, in the midst of an intense soliloquy, repeatedly lifted up a lifeless Mercutio (Cai Glover) and bounced him off the floor like a basketball.

In one scene, a trio of Juliets and Roméos pretended to make out. Seated on benches, they moved through hunched embraces, rocking head motions and lustful entanglements. *Symphonie dramatique* concluded with the cast falling to the stage floor as the overhead chandelier came crashing down with a roar.

A far cry from conventional *Romeo and Juliet* ballets, *Symphonie dramatique* was a triumph. The work's blend of avant-garde theatricality, top-notch choreography and solid dancing was most satisfying and elicited a well-deserved standing ovation from the Hillman Center audience.

— STEVE SUCATO



## Wang Jinghua, Pik-Wah Li, Xing Shimiao / *Opera Warriors*

The action is drawn in clear, bold strokes: *Opera Warriors* is presented in a series of scenes and micro-scenes like panels in a graphic novel, telling a sprawling, five-act tale set in the world of Beijing Opera. Choreographer Xing Shimiao calls on more than 40 dancers from Huajin Dance Drama Ensemble of Shanxi Academy of Arts to muster their considerable skills in his highly theatrical mix of martial arts, acrobatics and traditional Chinese dance, with several balletic pas de deux used to convey romantic entanglements.

The Huajin ensemble was established in Taiyuan, the capital of Shanxi province, in 2005, as a cultural envoy from China. *Opera Warriors*, directed by

(Lv Jianfei), discovering his strength in a new style of martial arts, called Monkey King, inspired by watching his pet monkey playing with a group of wild ones.

Costumed in gold armour, with long peacock feathers on top of his monkey-styled wig, Lv's martial arts mid-air twists and turns with a long sword were powerful and precise, beautifully intertwined with the humorous cavorting of monkey moves. His character's awakening to who he is in relation to his art and his life provided a satisfying finale to the epic drama.

*Opera Warriors'* bigger-than-life aesthetic can be overdone — seemingly everyone had reason to do several six-o'clock stretches, foot to ear, even in intimate pas de deux. Intense facial expressions often telegraph a character's state of mind, as do posture and gesture (a body bowed in sorrow, thumbs up to show approval). While I appreciate this

sword choreography, and the men who dance with four triangular flags on poles worn on their backs to indicate their imposing status as generals. The ensemble of men with red beards was apparently unusual in that in Beijing Opera beards are usually black (to indicate youth or middle age) or white (for old age). A beard's movement patterns can show a character's mood and personality, but even without that expert knowledge, there was delight in their colour and motion.

"Walking on stilts" involves male actors wearing tiny pointed wooden shoes, on which they stand on only two toes, in order to portray female roles. There was one line of slender men with cropped hair who danced on a fence, and a solo that took place on a u-shaped chair back. The gender of the petite soloist was not certain until the final bows, when he removed his ornate, feminine



Wang Jinghua, is their second grand-scale dance drama (the first was *Forbidden Fruit Under the Great Wall*). Hong Kong's Pik-Wah Li (who wrote the screenplay for the film *Farewell My Concubine*) was brought in as playwright for *Opera Warriors*, which was inspired by the memoir of Beijing Opera star Gai Jiatian (1888-1971), known for his martial male or wusheng roles.

With plot summaries projected on large screens on either side of Vancouver's Queen Elizabeth Theatre stage before each act, the story of three talented wusheng actors was reasonably easy to follow. It begins in northern China in the early 1900s, with the trio training in their respective styles of wusheng: the long armour general on horseback, the warrior on foot and the clownish tumbler. It ends, after many plot developments, with the youngest, the tumbler

is a deliberate choice, dramatic subtleties would surely enrich the pas de deux, in which it was clear that the dancers were projecting to the audience and not really communicating with each other. The duets between Lv and Yang Xuan — who played the perky Yan'er in red pants and soft shoes, with her hair in braids — were wonderful displays of acrobatic delight as she wrapped around him with her delicate razor-sharp legs and shapely, red-slippered feet; a soupçon of actorly realism would season the showcasing of their huge emotions with something less insistent, something each audience member could intuit for themselves. Also, the score by Fang Ming sounded too much like a generic soundtrack, Asian-styled, for a movie epic.

Many of *Opera Warriors'* highlights are traditional elements, such as the women's long sleeve dance, inspired by

wig to huge applause. Both routines were a tour de force of balance, strength and style, as when the dancers slowly lowered themselves on one leg to the ground, the other extended in front, and then rose back up again, elegantly.

*Opera Warriors*, which premiered in Shanxi in 2011, has been performed more than 150 times in China and abroad (including Paris, Cannes, Singapore and Sydney). With massive sets by Gao Guangjian (including a moveable stage built onto the actual stage to create the theatre where the characters perform) and opulent costumes by Wang Qiuping (the Rich Ladies with their 1920s-styled dresses and shoes were gorgeous), production values are high in this unusual window into the world of Beijing Opera.

— KAIJA PEPPER

## Hofesh Shechter / *barbarians*

Hofesh Shechter's *barbarians* starts with an all-out assault of bright flashing lights and rock-concert level sound. In the opening minutes at the Vancouver Playhouse in November, it was as if Shechter, the choreographer, was a general launching an attack, with the audience his target, all of us sitting ducks in our seats. The ensuing battle was in three parts, each of which had premiered separately in Europe, but were brought together as a trilogy in July 2015 at Berliner Festspiele and shown as part of the month-long London festival of Shechter's work, #HOFEST, in fall 2015.

If the battle imagery sounds like an exaggeration, apparently the reverberations from the mega-sound set off the Playhouse theatre's alarm system twice, bringing the fire department each time. In the auditorium, pummeled by the music (some of us wore earplugs handed out by ushers), we didn't hear the kerfuffle going on out in the lobby.

The soundscape devised by Shechter was often a dominant, driving force, and when it quieted down a bit, there were evocative layers of Baroque music, light jazz, electronic noise and voice-overs from Shechter and a female robot. Similarly, the defining force in the choreography was its multi-layers, a mash

of ballet, folk, court, disco, street, rave and modern, which played out in delirious quick changes; watching the dancers move was like going through decades and genres on quick dial. One second you glimpse a few Grahamesque prances (so precious, you can almost see the stirrup tights) and the next a more contemporary Gaga-styled fulsomeness.

U.K.-based, Israeli-born Shechter was a dancer with Ohad Naharin's Batsheva Dance Company, where Naharin's Gaga technique is taught, and which had early connections to Martha Graham's repertoire: influences and history, as well as contemporary life, all play out in the wild everything-including-the-kitchen-sink ride that is a Shechter choreography.

In the evening's first part, "the barbarians in love," Shechter confesses in voice-over: "I'm a 40-year-old man looking for a thrill." He wonders if there is a shrink in the audience, as if a psychiatrist could interpret the desperate bodies — four men and two women in white — as they splatter themselves like paint in Shechter's choreographic frenzy. At the end, the performers stand downstage, naked, breathing hard, parts of their bodies lost, other parts revealed, in the extreme shadow and light.

Parts two and three followed without a break. In "tHE bAD," five dancers are encased in garish bodysuits; in the program notes, Shechter explains their genesis: "... I thought, 'What are the elements that I would NEVER work with?

Gold bodysuits!' So that's what we went for." He also says "tHE bAD" was "an attempt to try and make a piece without thinking," which is exactly how it comes across. This is a rough draft in which two women and three men run and shake and fall and hop, sweet and innocent one minute, down and dirty the next, in a vocabulary of movement clichés that are rendered ironic through the dizzying juxtapositions that continually undercut what went before. The mindlessness — such as the dancer making funny noises into the one of the lights, then crawling monkey-like across the stage — wore on me.

In the third part, "two completely different angles of the same fucking thing," plaintive statements on the soundtrack, including "Why did you do it, Hofesh?" and "I want you to see what I see, feel what I feel," encouraged sympathy. So does the concentration of Winifred Burnet-Smith (in white shirt and grey pants) and Bruno Guillore (inexplicably in lederhosen) as they do a simple step-touch routine; they look slightly demented, like they're lost inside their heads and just managing to move through the real world. The duo are a little older than the others, and given the "Be free, son" heard on the soundscape, could be seen as parental figures, which adds juice to any possible interpretations of this section, Freudian or otherwise. Later, of course, Shechter pumps up the action, with Burnet-Smith gyrating like a stripper and three gold-bodysuit dancers and three white-clad ones rushing onstage to join the action.

There is something cultish and insular about Shechter's choreographed groups, and certainly with the ensembles in *barbarians*. Yet his enthusiastic egalitarian approach to movement makes his work lively and even refreshing to experience — so many cultural references can be stimulating. This evening, with its trio of not obviously related works, feels like it was conceived a little carelessly (not the performance itself, though; the dancers tirelessly embodied everything to seeming perfection). Shechter's process seems to have been to keep throwing around sound, light and movement to see what it adds up to, rather haphazardly building 95 minutes of theatre that pushes art to brutal, shall we say, barbaric, expressive extremes.

— KAIJA PEPPER



# Limón Dance Company



## José Limón International Dance Festival

The José Limón International Dance Festival celebrated choreographer José Limón with a presentation of 14 of his works at the Joyce Theater in New York City in mid-October. Most were performed by the Limón Dance Company. The company is celebrating its 70th season, having persisted well past Limón's death in 1972, and led since 1978 by former principal dancer Carla Maxwell. A formative contributor to American modern dance, Limón's aesthetic is characterized by fall and recovery, describing the body's yield to gravity and momentum, yet with a specificity in the posture of the back and torso.

Each of the five works in the first two programs, spanning four decades of Limón's career, presented specific themes. *The Moor's Pavane* (1949), Limón's most celebrated work, tells, with unembellished clarity, a dramatic narrative loosely based on Shakespeare's *Othello*. It incorporates the style of pavane dances, a court dance of the late Renaissance and early Baroque periods, and was performed by the most senior members of the company, indicating the mastery necessary to fulfill its four roles.

Francisco Ruvalcaba played the Moor, and Durell Comedy, his foil, named His Friend. The Moor's Wife and His Friend's Wife were danced by Kathryn Alter and Logan Frances Kruger, respectively, in the first program, and by

Kristen Foote and Roxane D'Orléans Juste (a company member since 1983 and also associate artistic director) in the second.

Every gesture in Limón's thoughtful choreography contributed to the narrative. The opening scene established the four characters' acquaintance, as they danced hand-in-hand in a circle exchanging smiles and courtesies. The moments of devotion, deception, tragedy and remorse that followed were brought forth by the dancers' clear characterizations. They captured a complex duality of outer expression and inner intent — a confident stride with shifting gaze, a sympathetic pause before a forceful grasp — in ways that could be described as both dance and dance theatre, but certainly not mime.

A strings-based composition by Baroque composer Henry Purcell complemented the story's arc, yet remained subtly in the background. With no set or lighting effects, the only embellishment was Renaissance-period costumes in solid colours, with the Moor's Wife in white.

It may have been because of Limón's own experience as a child fleeing the Mexican Revolution that he sympathized with the people of Poland. It was apparently on a visit there in 1957 that Limón first observed the tragic aftermath of war. Seeing people celebrating mass in a town still in ruins inspired *Missa Brevis* (1958), meaning "a brief mass," performed here by members of the company, guest dancers and graduates of the professional

studies program of the Limón Institute.

Choral music accompanied by an organ (composed by Zoltán Kodály) provided a religious setting, though *Missa Brevis* is more generally about a community's resilience against adversity. The women wore long-sleeved dresses, and the men wore shirts and pants, likely in reference to the street clothes Limón observed in Poland. Huddled together, looking upward and bent in deep plié, they expressed the figurative weight of their oppressive environment. Their communal spirit was demonstrated in formations circling protectively around the few, and their fortitude in hoisting individuals above their shoulders or standing with arms up in a defiant V. Repeated gestures of outstretched palms, even while hunched, conveyed an inalienable freedom of spirit.

*Mazurkas* (1958), which also celebrates the human spirit, was similarly inspired by that visit to Poland. To piano compositions by Chopin (played live by Michael Cherry), the men, in white shirts and black pants, and the women, in beige dresses with flowing skirts, waltzed and skipped to the playful notes. Much of the choreography is devoted to expressing an unfettered, almost idealistic joy. When Comedy suspended his leg in tendu, he showed there was no need to rush, and he slapped his thighs playfully in rhythm. Four women glided through patterned phrases with beautifully rounded arms that framed the face and upper body.

The gestures in *The Unsung* (1970), an all-male ensemble piece, were inspired by Native American traditions, with successive solos that exhibited each dancer's physical prowess and individual artistry. The discipline in Limón's aesthetic becomes apparent in the comparison of company members to the three guest dancers in this piece — Charles Andersen, Gregory Dean and Gábor Bau-noch — from the Royal Danish Ballet. Though their interpretations were formidable, they were not as grounded in their presence and seemed to be resisting ornamental embellishment in their limbs.

*The Winged*, a fluttering whimsy for the ensemble, was inspired by winged creatures and was a delightful conclusion to the second program. It showed Limón's capacity to capture the fanciful as poignantly as the profound.

— PIA LO

# IN THE STUDIO AND ONSTAGE



## Alicia Alonso / *Giselle*

After a 60-year hiatus imposed by the United States, what began as prisoner exchange talks with Cuba in 2015 resulted in renewed diplomatic relations between the two nations. By coincidence, at the same time, Silicon Valley Ballet's artistic director José Manuel Carreño was busy convincing Cuban National Ballet's founder and prima ballerina assoluta Alicia Alonso to award rights for his California company to perform her storied *Giselle*.

Until the October 2015 performances by Silicon Valley Ballet (formerly Ballet San Jose) at San Jose Center for the Performing Arts, Alonso's 1948 version had never been danced by any company but the Cuban National Ballet. To underscore the significance of this historic first, Carreño invited Loipa Araújo, one of the legendary "Four Jewels" from the Cuban National Ballet and now English National Ballet associate artistic director, and Svetlana Ballester, a ballet mistress with Cuban National Ballet, to join him in coaching.

Silicon Valley Ballet, one-fourth the size of the Havana company, presented a pared-down version. As well, the San Jose company dancers have almost no connection to the Cuban training system, built over more than half a century by Fernando Alonso, general director of the Cuban National Ballet from 1948 to 1975 (and former husband to Alicia). His scrupulous insistence on clean diagonals, attention to details of hands, head and épaulement, and that each dancer find a story for his or her character, imparted the particularity that distinguishes the Cuban version.

Carreño has danced the role of Albrecht in American Ballet Theatre's production more

often than in Alonso's, so why didn't he choose their version? "*Giselle* is Alicia's masterpiece, better in its conservation of the classical style than any other. Act I makes all others pale by comparison. Instead of one couple in a Peasant Pas de Deux, in Alicia's Pas de Dix you see a stage full of peasants, more faithful to folkloric dance."

Rehearsals introduced Cuban "givens." Some dancers had to adjust their placement to bring their weight forward for the transitions from Alonso's famous one-foot hops on pointe to spitfire chaîné or emboîté turns, or drop a raised arm from high fifth to a lower position to achieve a more sheltering pose.

In the studio, Araújo modeled the confident composure that distinguishes her coaching. "The dancers must find their own characters," she tells me.

Alonso, who slowly went blind early on in her career, had to start delegating the staging, says Araújo, and changes have crept in. "Evolution is good, but I do miss some things I did as Bathilde, and so I tell José, 'We did it that way, so you decide.'"

The ballet's theme of irreconcilable conflict between social classes is an ever-present rehearsal focus. Carreño, who belongs to a family of virtuosic Cuban dancers (the Cuban National Ballet School recruited the first Carreño generation from a remote part of the island via a cha-cha contest), reminds a dancer, "Albrecht doesn't fight in the same way as Hilarion does. Hilarion fights with his fists; Albrecht shies away from using his hands, accustomed to the sword."

The morning of the opening performance, the United States embassy denied Norwegian National Ballet's Yoel Carreño (José Manuel Carreño's brother), who was slated to perform as Albrecht, a visa to enter the country.

Longtime Silicon Valley Ballet principal Alexandra Meijer, as *Giselle*, was now partnered with Brett Bauer, who joined the company as principal this season. In a radio interview, Meijer had declared she "would find her own *Giselle*." The *Giselle* she found was a sly coquette in the first act, and in the second, an indignant Wili. With only one full rehearsal together, Bauer's pure pacing kindled chemistry with Meijer.

In the next day's matinee, Junna Ige was a playful, musical *Giselle* in Act I, and mesmerizing in her mastery of the dramatic beats in Act II. Rudy Candia's Albrecht brought Ige into his plan with a smoldering edginess foreshadowing his betrayal. Ommi Pipit-Suksun, partnered by Bauer in the evening performance, was a humble *Giselle*, who, petal by petal, threw caution to the wind in the first act and danced with rapturous candour in the second.

In all performances, the Wilis, under Ballester's hand, conquered the perfectly spaced diagonals and ethereal quality of Act II. On task yet otherworldly in their billowy costumes by David Guthrie, they focused on their voyagé and diagonals as their steps charted a path for *Giselle*, Hilarion and Albrecht. Amy Marie Briones, as Myrtha, Queen of the Wilis, has danced the role in Dennis Nahat's version for then Ballet San Jose, but effortlessly folded the Cuban characteristics into what she already knew.

José Manuel Carreño reprised Hilarion. Although Carreño is now in his late 40s and retired as a dancer, he brought an immediacy and electrifying energy to the role that goes missing in nearly every other interpretation.

With no live music, a crystal-clear recording by the Cuban National Ballet orchestra offered the dancers exactly the tempo to which the ballet was originally set. While not a beat-by-beat replica of the layered Cuban version, this tour-version *Giselle* is a watershed for Silicon Valley Ballet. It marks a transition to a growing ensemble sensibility, without which they couldn't have met the high expectations shared by both Alonso and Carreño.

Carreño sees the project as a celebration not only of Silicon Valley Ballet's recent victories over financial hardship and leadership instability, but of an evolving relationship between the United States and Cuba. "The *Giselle* Project," he says, "is the company's first step in cultural exchange."

— TOBA SINGER

Alexandra Meijer, Karen Gabay and Silicon Valley Ballet dancers in Alicia Alonso's *Giselle*  
Photo: Alejandro Gomez



# EN AVANT DANCE | TEACHER CONFERENCE

August 20 - 23, 2016 • Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel

Presented by the Royal Academy of Dance

ALL DANCE TEACHERS,  
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS  
&  
STUDIO OWNERS  
WELCOME!

[www.radcanada.org](http://www.radcanada.org)  
email [enavantdte@radcanada.org](mailto:enavantdte@radcanada.org)

## Join Us At This Exciting Multi-Day Conference & Prepare To Be Moved!

### Conference Highlights Include:

- Variety of distinguished International and Canadian presenters
- Movement, Business, and Educational Workshops
- Networking opportunities
- Special events including Cocktail Reception, Fashion Show, and Gala Dinner
- Exhibitor Hall
- And much more...

## Online Registration Now Open!

Book your hotel reservations online  
<https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/RH04AA>  
Code: RH04AA

OR

Call toll-free 1.888.627.7175 and state that you are  
a part of the En Avant Dance Teacher Conference

**\$695**

**'All Access Pass'**

Special Pricing Available  
to RAD Members!



# German Dance Cards | “Der künstlerische Tanz”



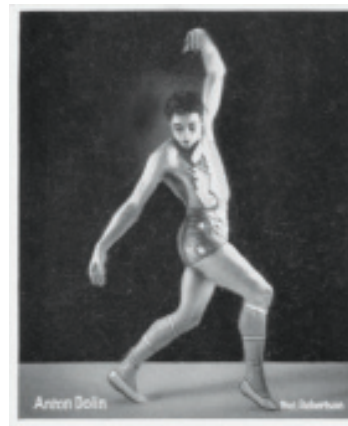
Eugenie Edwards  
Phot. [unreadable]



Josephine Baker  
Phot. [unreadable]



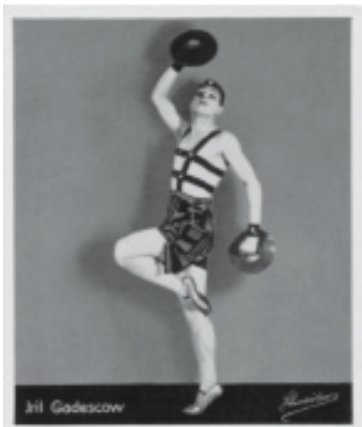
Gymnastische Schule  
Medea  
Phot. [unreadable]



Annet Dolin  
Phot. [unreadable]



Paul Harkon  
Phot. [unreadable]



Irit Godescov  
Phot. [unreadable]



V. Nijinsky  
Phot. [unreadable]



Alice Nikitina  
Phot. [unreadable]



Max Terpis  
Phot. [unreadable]



Yoko Umemoto  
Phot. [unreadable]



Anna Pawlows  
Phot. [unreadable]



Olga Spessiva  
Phot. [unreadable]

In the 1930s, the Dresden cigarette factory Eckstein-Halpaus inserted cards with photographs of dancers into boxes of its cigarettes. The cards — 320 in total, each measuring two by two-and-a-half inches — were categorized in groups, including Famous Dancers, Exotic Dancers, Free German Art Dance and Artistic Dance.

The examples here are from the archives of the Vancouver Ballet Society, a not-for-profit organization founded in 1946 to support local dance artists. Today, the society maintains a library and archives, and is a key presenter of master classes and seminars, a generous sponsor of dancer scholarships and the publisher of *Dance International* magazine.

In 2016, the Vancouver Ballet Society celebrates 70 years of supporting dance and dancers. Visit [vancouverballetsociety.ca](http://vancouverballetsociety.ca).

— MAUREEN ALLEN, LIBRARIAN  
VANCOUVER BALLET SOCIETY ARCHIVES

Galleryspace



# ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN AT A MAGAZINE STAND

BUY A CANADIAN MAGAZINE &  
**DISCOVER** *your* **NEW LOVE**



STARRING  
**AMY FORCE**

STARRING  
**JEFF SINASAC**

DIRECTED BY  
**JAMIE WAY**

PRODUCED BY  
**BRUCE SEFTON**

SCREENPLAY BY  
**SUSAN ELSLEY**

ART DIRECTION AND DESIGN BY  
**K9 STRATEGY+DESIGN**

DISTRIBUTION ARRANGEMENTS BY  
**KENANDIGOR.COM**

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY  
**RYAN HAAS**

EDITED BY  
**CHRIS DI STAULO**



**WATCH THEIR MAGAZINE STORY UNFOLD:**  
[CANADASMAGAZINESTORE.CA/ANYTHINGCANHAPPEN](http://CANADASMAGAZINESTORE.CA/ANYTHINGCANHAPPEN)

**"Harlequin Floors**  
*have proven to*  
*be the ultimate*  
*professional*  
*standard and*  
*our choice as*  
*we expand"...*



"25 years ago Bentley Roton, Kevin McKenzie, Martine van Hamel and I founded *Kaatsbaan International Dance Center* in Tivoli, NY. On 153 bucolic acres we dreamed of a creative residence, and a rehearsal and performance center for all professional dance artists.

As we celebrate our 25th Anniversary, we reflect on our hard work and the vigorous determination of thousands of dancers, choreographers and companies who have graced the beautiful **Harlequin Floors** we installed 16 years ago. Harlequin's devotion and reputation for quality motivated us to choose our **Harlequin Activity™** and **Harlequin Cascade®** floors for our studios and large black box theatre. Harlequin have proven to be the ultimate professional standard and our choice as we expand into Phase 2. As Co-founders we may look a little grey, but like our Harlequin floors we are hard-wearing, spirited, resilient and ready for the next 25 years."

**HARLEQUIN**

The world dances on Harlequin floors®



**HARLEQUIN FLOORS**  
 American Harlequin Corporation

1531 Glen Avenue  
 Moorestown, NJ 08057

800-642-6440  
 contact@harlequinfloors.com  
 www.harlequinfloors.com

PHILADELPHIA  
 FORT WORTH  
 LOS ANGELES  
 LONDON  
 PARIS  
 BERLIN  
 LUXEMBOURG  
 MADRID  
 SYDNEY  
 HONG KONG



**Gregory Cary**  
 Co-founder/Artistic Director  
 Kaatsbaan International  
 Dance Center, Inc.  
 Tivoli, New York



**CALL 800-642-6440 or VISIT [www.harlequinfloors.com](http://www.harlequinfloors.com)**  
**For samples or information on Harlequin Floors**  
**complete range of vinyl and sprung floors.**