

IT'S AMAZING WHAT GOES INTO MAKING SOMETHING EFFORTLESS.



## GAYNOR MINDEN

NEW YORK

AMY WATSON, PRINCIPAL DANCER AT THE ROYAL DANISH BALLET, SEEN HERE IN BALANCHINE'S Symphony in Three Movements, HAS BEEN WEARING Gaynor Minden POINTE SHOES SINCE 2011.

DANCER.COM

## BOSTONBALLET SCHOOL

Summer Dance Program 2014 | European Auditions

Paris, France
October 19

Académie Américaine de Danse de Paris Madrid, Spain October 20

Teatros del Canal



Ages 15–19 • Video auditions accepted until February 14

Audition pre-registration: www.bostonballet.org/sdp

## CLASSICAL AND CONTEMPORARY DANCE IN CANADA AND ABROAD

## WINTER 2013 | VOL. XLI No. 4

**Publisher** Vancouver Ballet Society

Editor Kaija Pepper

Copy Editor Margaret Jetelina

Web Administrator & Gabriele Walkow Social Media Manager

uia Manager

Web Design Spry

Art Direction, Design Brenda Finamore

& Production

Fulfillment The Oyster Group

Printing Horseshoe Press Inc.

Mailing Mail-O-Matic

Advertising Kelsey Jorssen

DANCE INTERNATIONAL is published quarterly by the **Vancouver Ballet Society** and is available by membership in the society or by subscription.

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 www.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 and Internationally by Coast to Coast

DANCE INTERNATIONAL is published, in part, with the assistance of the Province of British Columbia through the British Columbia Arts Council and through the Direct Access Program, and the Government of Canada through the Canada Council and Human Resources Development Canada.



Canada Council for the Arts

Conseil des Arts du Canada

We acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts which last year invested \$24.3 million in writing and publishing throughout Canada.

Nous remercions de son soutien le Conseil des Arts du Canada, qui a investi 24.3 millions de dollars l'an dernier dans les lettres et l'édition à travers le Canada.



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



They're passionate about ballet in its many guises and want to be part of ... well, everything! That, at least, was my impression after recent conversations with several dancers from across Canada. Even the most classically trained found the challenge of mastering ballet's expanding vocabulary exciting. Demands to improvise, intense spine undulations: new skills, new sensations. It was curiously touching to hear how keen these top professionals were to enter into the kaleidoscope of innovation, while still holding allegiance for

the classics in which they excel.

It's exactly this range that Dutch National Ballet presented its dancers with when they performed — all in one evening — Fokine's Romantic-era *Les Sylphides*, Hans van Manen's *Corps* from the 1980s, and Emio Greco and Pieter C. Scholten's post-millennial *The body of the national ballet*. Check out our review section to see how the mix worked for writer Judith Delmé.

Mats Ek, the subject of our lead feature, has long been at the forefront of new vocabulary, and his *Juliet and Romeo* for the Royal Swedish Ballet is another of his contemporary masterworks. Norwegian National Ballet's director, Ingrid Lorentzen, also a feature subject, is encouraging new synergies by installing two resident choreographers who run their own contemporary companies. Victor Swoboda's profile of Jérémy Galdeano puts us inside the dancer's point of view: Galdeano has tackled a range of innovative works during his decade-plus at Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal.

Nor is it just ballet that's growing vocabulary: Scheherazaad Cooper writes about reconciling tradition with individuality in classical Odissi Indian dance. Alexandre Hamel shares his drive to uncover a fresh aesthetic in ice dancing, yet he stays connected with skating's most familiar move: the glide.

## It's tricky, balancing past and present. And future, too, because the art world is always eager for the next wave.

Dance International continues moving into its own future with a change in physical dimensions: we've shaved a few inches off the top! We wanted the magazine to be more portable, so it can be carried with you, kept handy for the next long bus ride or flight. ▼



Kaija Pepper editor@danceinternational.org

Daria Ivanova and Anthony Lomuljo in Mats Ek's Juliet and Romeo Photo: Gert Weigelt

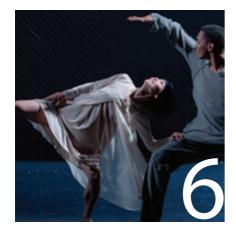


## www.danceinternational.org



Dance International











## **FEATURES**

**6** The Urgent Domestic Mats Ek chats after premiering Juliet and Romeo by Rebecka Bülow

**10** At the Edge of a Fjord Ingrid Lorentzen heats up Norwegian National Ballet by Gerard Davis

**14** A Dancer in the World Today Jérémy Galdeano finds home with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens by Victor Swoboda

**18** Staging Haute Couture Vivienne Westwood and Valentino designs meet dance by Karen Barr

28 The Essence of Ice Le Patin Libre's Alexandre Hamel on artistic skating's identity crisis by Lys Stevens

**30** Finding Odissi Indian classical dance beyond borders by Scheherazaad Cooper



## **DANCE NOTES 22**

24 Dancing in the Third Age

25 Competitive Dancers

Michael Crabb's NOTEBOOK 27 **REVIEWS 56** 

MEDIAWATCH 32

38 Vancouver by Kaija Pepper

**39** Winnipeg by Holly Harris

**40** Toronto by Michael Crabb

**41** Montreal by Linde Howe-Beck

**42** San Francisco by Allan Ulrich

**44** New York by Robert Greskovic

**46** Britain by Kathrine Sorley Walker

## 48 France by François Fargue

49 Spain by Justine Bayod Espoz

**50** Italy by Silvia Poletti

**52** Denmark by Anne-Marie Elmby

**53** Norway by Fredrik Rütter

**54** Australia by Jordan Beth Vincent

Special 55 Bolshoi Update by Gerard Davis



## The Urge

Mats Ek chats after premiering Juliet and Romeo

## Domesti

here is an almost electric anticipation in the air at the Royal Opera House in Stockholm. In just a few minutes, the crowd waiting in the Golden Foyer will put their champagne glasses away, locate their seats and watch the premiere of Mats Ek's Juliet and Romeo, danced by the Royal Swedish Ballet.

The classical love story is the first full-evening ballet Ek has made since *Sleeping Beauty* in 1996 for Hamburg Ballet. Since then he has been travelling around the world showing his work: *Appartement, Aluminum, Daikon* and *Place* are just a few successful creations from the last two decades; Cuba, Seoul, Moscow, Hamburg and Paris just a selection of places where he has been.

Tonight, Mariko Kida, Ana Laguna and Niklas Ek — familiar faces for the fans of Mats Ek — are dancing. Together with the rest of the ensemble they have been working hard with the tall, nowadays white-haired choreographer (he was born in 1945 in Malmö), who is known for being calm, friendly and disciplined during rehearsals. With Anna Laguna and Niklas Ek he has been sharing more than just work: Laguna is his wife and Niklas is his older brother (and was for many years a premier danseur at the Royal Swedish Ballet).

Mats Ek has always been surrounded by dance and theatre. His mother, Birgit Cullberg, who founded Cullberg Ballet in 1967 when she was one of the world's leading choreographers, was a pioneer in fusing modern and classical dance in psychological, political or comic dramatic works. She had been trained in the 1930s by Kurt Jooss, inspired by Martha Graham and invented her own vocabulary of movements.





His father, Anders Ek, was an actor at the Royal Dramatic Theatre as Mats' twin sister, Malin, and her daughter, Elin Klinga, still are. The great director Ingmar Bergman frequently used all the Ek actors, both in film and onstage.

Though Mats had taken childhood ballet classes and started studying in 1963 with Donya Feuer, an American modern dance choreographer living in Stockholm, he said in a conversation a few days after *Juliet and Romeo* premiered in May that he had doubts about becoming a choreographer. He did not want to do something just because his mother did it.

"It was the other way around — my background was why I started choreographing so late. That's a common misunder-standing," he says.

In the 1960s, Ek's main direction was theatre, not dance. He started at Mariebergs Folkhögskola, a theatre school in Norkopping, in 1963. From 1968 he spent several years at the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm working as Bergman's assistant and also staging plays on his own.

Feuer also found her way to the Royal Dramatic Theatre, where she got in touch with Ek (and with Bergman, with whom she collaborated frequently for the next 30 years). Ek worked with theatre, but was consistently close to dance, leading to a change of direction, and in 1973 he was engaged as a dancer by Cullberg Ballet. Three years later, he started to choreograph for the company, and in 1985 took over his mother's role as artistic director.

Ek finds it difficult to summarize his time at Cullberg Ballet.

"The only thing you can do is to look at the different works we did. It is hard to say something general," he comments on the choreographies he made for the company. However, there are some common themes found in the majority of his works, from his first ones with Cullberg Ballet to those that came later. Most of his ballets explore social structures, both on a lager scale and in private relationships.

Soweto (1977) criticized the apartheid system and *The House of Bernarda* (1978) brought up the oppression of the Franco regime. Ek found Shakespeare's story about star-crossed lovers to be topical again when the Tunisian street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi lit himself on fire and the Arab Spring began.

"Romeo and Juliet became relevant as it is about the small spark that puts everything on fire. The spark is the love that happens only because of its own necessity in a hierarchical power structure," Ek says. "Then there is another story within that story, the one about a daughter and a forced marriage."

The choreographer reflects much over how he portrays gender. "It's not like men and women need different types of choreog-

raphy, but the power structure within the family and between genders are strong themes in *Juliet and Romeo*."

After his parents divorced in 1949, Cullberg supported the family economically. For many years she was one of Sweden's most prominent artists at the same time as she took care of three young children. Ek says that to him, "each woman is an independent power." In turning the order of the names in the title of *Juliet and Romeo*, he turns the focus to Juliet.

Gender roles are questioned and experimented with in several of his choreographies, for example in *Swan Lake* (1987), where the swans are unisex. His adaptation of the classical Tchaikovsky ballet was one of Cullberg Ballet's greatest successes, along with Ek's version of *Giselle* (1982). These choreographies are shaped in a language very typical for him: flexed feet, stiffened and shaking bodies, splashing hands and the weight in the lower part of the body. Ek lets the dancers move in a way that is strongly influenced by the types of movements people make every day — putting on shoes, walking, sinking down in a sofa. Classical ballet is an important foundation, and he states: "You just can't ignore that tradition"; however, he moves far beyond the classical scale of movements.

Ek emphasizes his resistance against using mime for narrative purposes, as in *Juliet and Romeo*.

"There are things you can't tell with dance. You can't say: if you drink this poison you'll wake up in four hours. The dance only has a present, not a future or past."

When you can only tell the present, he explains, it is necessary to think in terms of situations and expressions rather than characters and storyline.

"I don't necessarily think of two characters when I see Juliet and Romeo, more the situations they're in. For example, how Juliet has a predetermined future, first without knowing it, but then reacting to this fact more and more strongly."

Cullberg Ballet was always on the move, both artistically and geographically. Resigning from the group in 1993 made it possible for Ek to stay in Stockholm for longer periods of time. It was also a way to get back to the theatre and "theatredance," as Ek calls his style. His background in both theatre and dance has been an advantage, as the two genres grew closer during the 20th century. *Tulips* (1993), his first production after separating from the Cullberg Ballet, was created for both dancers and actors.

"It's important that the actors are musical, but I don't think that any formal training is needed. Actors have personal memories and experiences in their bodies that makes even a simple choreography dense with messages." He stresses that dance is an international form of art. "It can have its roots in the local, but is then supposed to move across borders." Ek surely has been moving across borders, making an effort to have his works and different adaptations of it reach a diversity of cultures. One example is *Appartement*, a ballet originally made for the Paris Opera Ballet in 1999, then danced in numerous other places. In Havana, Ek combined *Appartement* with *Fluke* and called it *Casi-Casa* (*Almost Home*).

Appartement includes a dance with vacuum cleaners, and delicately investigates love, sexuality, habits and human relationships. Lovers' or families' domestic lives, with all their social and existential complexity, is a theme Ek repeats in almost each of his projects. He works with subtle emotional tones in a way that is reminiscent of Bergman's films. The theme is universal and may explain why people in such diverse places as Moscow and Seoul find his work relevant and touching. Connected to this theme is another domestic prop — the table — that represents family life, habits and home, and frequently appears in his works.

Essential musicians for recent pieces are Estonian minimalist composer Arvo Pärt; Fleshquartet, a group of Swedish musicians who play electric string instruments and percussion; and Henryk Górecki, a Polish composer of contemporary classical music.

When Ek starts with a new project, it often springs from music. For *Juliet and Romeo*, he chose not to use the traditional Prokofiev score.

"I've danced three versions of *Romeo and Juliet* and have also seen Birgit's version, all to the music of Prokofiev."

Ek found Tchaikovsky suited him better and put together favourite pieces from Tchaikovsky's repertoire to fit the story. What would the composer have said about that?

"I've talked to him and he said it was OK," Ek says with a laugh. "I think he wanted to write a *Romeo and Juliet* ballet. Tchaikovsky



wrote an overture named *Romeo and Juliet*. So I don't think he would be displeased."

An important collaborative partner is Ana Laguna, who takes part in the whole creative process, giving ideas and inspiration. When celebrating anniversaries of Cullberg Ballet, the couple often dance together, as in the rarely performed *Ickea*, created for three dancers: the Ek brothers and Laguna. When real-life family members join onstage, one more layer is added to the work's complex family and love theme.

The title *Ickea* is presumably wordplay with the name of the Swedish furniture supplier IKEA and "icke," meaning "not" in Swedish. The dance is about two lovers wanting to create a home. Anna Ångström describes in the Swedish newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* how the choreography starts with just the husband, danced by Mats Ek onstage. "Then, Ana Laguna appears as by magic and reunites with the husband. He touches the sole of her foot, lifts a knee. They weave their bodies past each other with a tenderness that is interrupted by Niklas Ek's pushy child/devil and the need to want, a result of a consumption-based society." *Ickea* develops into a tragic parody of the materialism that commercials say will create our happiness. In the end, a black dollhouse is pushed down over the couple.

The quote comes from a review written after *Ickea* was performed in 2009 at Dansens Hus in Stockholm. The same night, Mikhail Baryshnikov danced with Laguna in *Place* and in *The Other* with Niklas Ek. The very positive response from media included comments about the ages of the dancers (all close to or over 60 years old). Ångström wrote about *Place*. "In [Baryshnikov's] meeting with Ana Laguna, pain and thirst for life walks hand in hand, beautiful and melancholy."

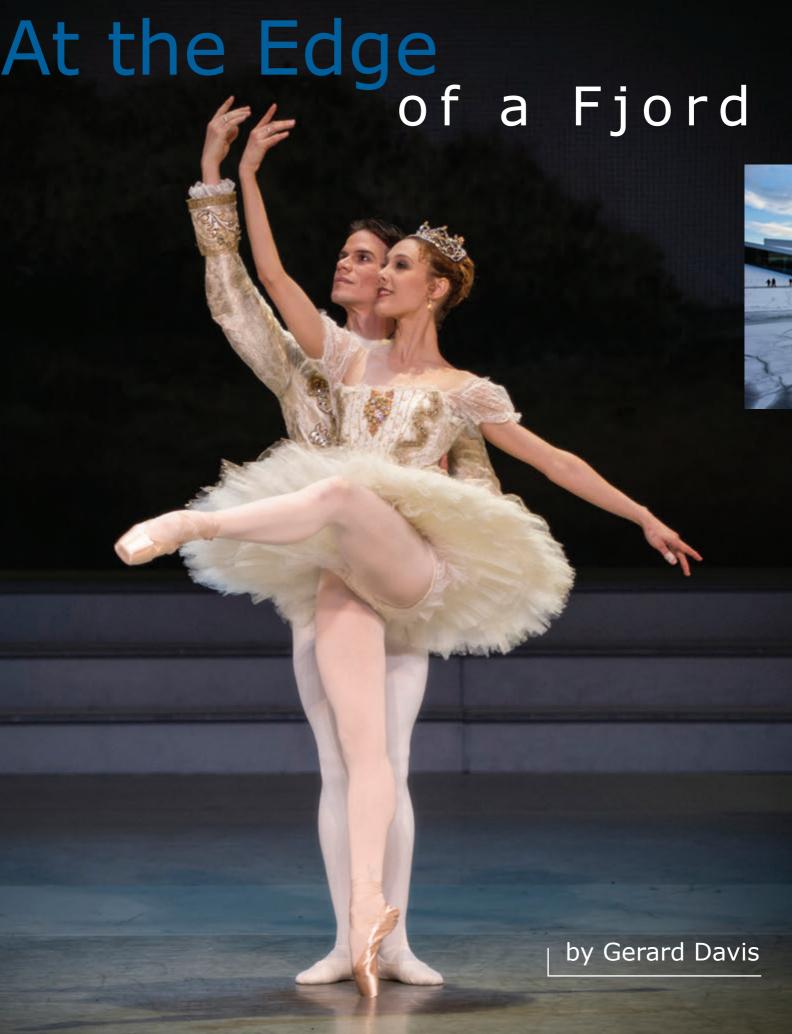
Laguna, who was born in Zaragoza in Spain, studied dance in Madrid and, at 19 years old, was offered a place in the ensemble of Cullberg Ballet. Almost 40 years later, she danced the role of Juliet's nurse in *Juliet and Romeo*. In a behind-the-scenes film about the production, she said:

"I like the fact that Mats has involved different generations. It gives another dimension to the ballet, it gives another dimension to dance itself — there's no assumption that you can't move after you've turned 40. Also, it's good for us, the older ones, to meet the younger and exchange knowledge."

At the Royal Opera House on that opening night in May, Laguna's duet with Juliet, danced by Mariko Kida, who is 28 years younger, expresses trust, tenderness and curiosity between the old and the young. Kida's Juliet is strong yet vulnerable because of her exposed position in the social hierarchy. Her pas de deux with Romeo (Anthony Lomuljo) just before the end of the first act is Mats Ek at his best: urgent and strikingly human. He has them move playfully and easily, both lying on the floor and flying in the air. Sometimes the choreography explodes into larger movements, expressing the enormous emotions that have overwhelmed the young lovers. Juliet does not wait passively for Romeo — their dance is a play between two equally vibrating powers.

Ek wants to continue creating with the same quality.

"I don't have a plan for how to develop, I don't think that way. I see every new project as an opportunity to create something urgent." ▼



## Ingrid Lorentzen heats up Norwegian National Ballet





**Photo: Erik Berg** 

t's not every day that you get to sit by the edge of a fjord interviewing the artistic director of a major European dance company. I'm with Ingrid Lorentzen, who heads Norwegian National Ballet, in the openair café of the Oslo Opera House, and we're sipping ice-cold drinks while gulls fly overhead and ships

Norwegian National Ballet has been based at Oslo Opera House, Norway's first purpose-built opera house, since it opened in 2008 to the tune of €500 million. The building is a modern architectural masterpiece of white marble that peers over the water's edge like an albino kingfisher waiting for lunch. It is accessibility personified with a low, angular roof that welcomes people to walk, sit and play on it. With the atmosphere of a rather smart park, the opera house is the central focus of a brand-new cultural quarter currently being built in downtown Oslo, which, by 2018, will also include a new museum dedicated to the artist Edvard Munch.

Inside is no less attractive, with a foyer and an auditorium of gently curved oak, and a café and restaurant open all hours to the general public. Apart from the main house that seats 1,364, there's also a second stage for more experimental work that holds 400 and a black box theatre that fits 200. Behind the scenes are five state-of-the-art ballet studios, rehearsal rooms for the opera and orchestra, and plenty of space for the backstage and technical departments. In total, the opera house employs more than 600 people, 59 of which are dancers.

Although Den Norske Opera and Ballett — as the organization is officially known — was founded in 1957 and had legendary Norwegian soprano Kirsten Flagstad as its first director of opera, it wasn't always as glamorous or user-friendly as it is now, Lorentzen explains.

"The opera and ballet used to be hidden in an old cinema," she laughs. "It was horrible. Not even the taxi drivers knew where the opera was. Now, because of this building, everyone knows."

Lorentzen took on the direction of the ballet a year ago, after an unorthodox dancing career. Born in Trondheim in 1972, Lorentzen trained at the Norwegian National Ballet School, moved on to the Royal Swedish Ballet School at 16, returned to Norway to become part of Norwegian National Ballet and discovered she was too tall (at five-foot-nine) to land the major roles.

She became a freelance dancer, then joined a Swedish contemporary dance company, worked as an actress in theatre and film (including a star turn as a psychopathic mother in a hugely popular 2003 horror film by Hilde Heier called Lille frk Norge, or The Beast of Beauty), travelled the world, returned to Norwegian National Ballet at the ripe old age of 25 and danced Odette/Odile for the first time at age 31. Lorentzen was asked to apply for the role of artistic director while still a principal dancer with the company — something she wasn't prepared for.

"I said no!" she recalls. "I was still dancing with the company, had recently had a child and was very happy with life. But after much thought I realized I would regret it if I didn't at least try."



She took charge in the summer of 2012 and her first year has proved a steep learning curve getting used to balancing a job that demands constant attention while still performing character roles with the company and also being a mother. The 2013-2014 season is the first she's programmed and, never one to do things by half-measures, Lorentzen is opening with a bill featuring no less than five brand-new works: *Firebird* by the Royal Ballet's artist-in-residence Liam Scarlett, an adaptation of *The Dying Swan* by company dancer Daniel Proietto and pieces from Norwegians Ingun Bjørnsgaard, Ina Christel Johannessen and Alan Lucien Øyen.

"We've done new creations before, of course, but I'm putting more of them onto the main stage to give them added weight. I really want to create a body of work that you can't see anywhere else — we haven't had a signature piece since Glen Tetley's *The Tempest* in 1980, and it's important we keep building on the repertory introduced by Espen Giljane [artistic director from 2002-2012] and Dinna Bjørn [1990-2001].

"We have a great audience here for mixed bills as well as full-length classics. We fill the seats pretty well, but we can't take

that for granted — we have to work harder now because this building opened five years ago and at first people came because they were curious. We're the only classical company in Norway and, through things like touring nationally, I want us to be embraced by the whole country."

Lorentzen is also keen for the company to start touring internationally again; two tours are already planned for this season. They're performing at the Mikhailovsky Theatre in St. Petersburg in December and they've also been chosen by master Czech choreographer Jirí Kylián to present a whole evening of his work at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées in Paris in 2014.

"We have 17 of Kylián's works in our rep, but we've never been allowed to perform them outside of Norway before. It's a great honour for the company. I'm so grateful for the trust Jirí's put in us."

Lorentzen has a host of other ideas she's putting into action, including a collaboration with the Norwegian National Theatre, a joint production of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* with Norwegian National Opera, a large film project to be displayed in the opera house's foyer and a new adaptation of a story by Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen where, in an attempt to construct an alternative form of dance narrative, she's putting a theatre director in charge of the production, ahead of the choreographer.

Earlier in the year, Lorentzen installed two Norwegian inhouse choreographers, Jo Strømgren and Øyen. They already run their own contemporary dance companies (the Jo Strømgren Kompani and Winter Guests respectively) and the arrangement is not just that they create for Norwegian National Ballet, but that they also get involved in co-productions with the opera house and guest there with their own companies. For Lorentzen, innovation and collaboration are key ingredients in defining the company's future.

"The biggest joy I've had so far as director is to see the creative teams I've invited suddenly be here and working — it's a huge kick. I want this to be a place where the most interesting artists want to work and I want us to be a company that strong, versatile, creative dancers want to come to, dancers that have an interest in combining classical with contemporary."

An area of concern for the company for many years has been the lack of integration with the state ballet school. Students up to the age of 15 are based at the opera house, but between the ages of 16-18 they complete their studies at the Norwegian College of Art, which is in a completely different part of town.

"It's no secret that the company's always recruited a lot from abroad so it's very important for me to have a closer relationship with the school. I've managed to negotiate with the unions so



that the students can perform in our shows — something completely natural everywhere else in the world, but previously impossible here. I've taken three of the students as apprentices for the new season and that's a record for the company!"

Norway is an oil-rich country with a population of five million. It's remained relatively untouched by the recession that's affected so much of the world, but, perversely, that's brought other problems for an opera house that gets 75 percent of its funding from the state.

"Our funding has actually gone up. However, with the standard of living in Norway being so high, the company has had issues with the enormous increase in interest it pays on pensions. So much so that we've had to cut some administrative posts to make up the shortfall."

The ballet and opera companies (which together form the country's largest cultural enterprise) enjoy a harmonious relationship, sharing resources and facilities.

"It's stated in our constitution that we're equal art forms. I have a very good relationship with Per Boye Hansen [director of opera]. We were appointed at the same time and while I'm sure we won't have the same taste on everything, so far we've been pretty much on the same track."

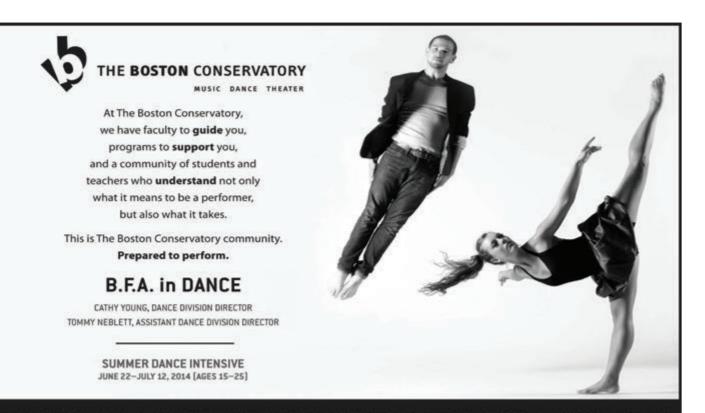
Norwegian National Ballet is in a strong position artistically. Alongside 19th-century classics and the company's enviable list of Kylián pieces, the repertory includes contemporary works from Swedish dancemakers Mats Ek and Alexander Ekman and creations from Nederlands Dans Theater's choreographic team of Paul Lightfoot and Sol León.

They also have a tremendous set of dancers that include the Cubans Yolanda Correa and Osiel Gouneo, who have each won the prestigious Positano Prize for Dance in the last two years, and Paulo Arrais who recently enjoyed success with Boston Ballet on their London tour.

Understandably, Lorentzen's happy in her new role.

"I didn't have long to prepare myself for the job as artistic director so most of it I learn as I go. What's wonderful is that I'm now in a position to make dreams happen. You see projects develop in front of your eyes — those moments are fantastic."

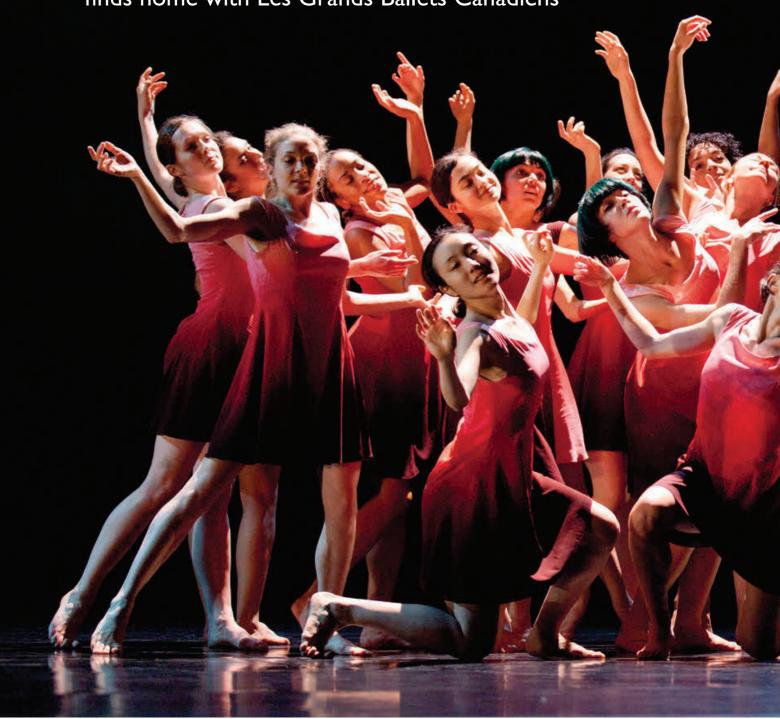
A charismatic individual, Lorentzen is a popular figure around the opera house and with the wider public — just the evening before our interview, in the company's production of Sleeping Beauty, she proved herself a show-stealing Carabosse, flinging jetés about like there was no tomorrow. Delightfully unconventional but equally determined and clear-headed (she was the first ever dancer to sit on the Norwegian Arts Council), Lorentzen's tenure should ensure a period of creative growth for Norwegian National Ballet. •



APPLY BY DECEMBER 1 ∣ ADMISSIONS@BOSTONCONSERVATORY.EDU ∣ WWW.BOSTONCONSERVATORY.EDU/APPLY

## And Ceridinal Control of the World Coday

finds home with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens



or young dancers, an unexpected twist in the road can abruptly put them on a career path they had never dreamed of. Such a detour led French-born Jérémy Galdeano to Montreal. Now 32, he has risen over the course of 12 years with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal from corps member to soloist. His story is the tale of the modern dancer in the world today.

Galdeano was not thinking of Montreal when he began studying jazz dance at the age of 10 in the southern French city of Nîmes, whose ancient Roman amphitheatre, aqueduct and temple are big tourist draws. Young Galdeano was drawn to dance not by a live performance, but by Patrick Swayze's sexy smoldering in the 1987 movie Dirty Dancing. As a summer camp instructor, Swayze showed how classical training could be used not only Photo: John Hall for performing prince roles, but for burning up the floor to rousing pop tunes.



From 1991 to 1997, Galdeano studied at what he calls "a good private school," École de danse Michelle Lucibello. Considered the "grande dame" of Nîmes dance, Lucibello founded her school in 1959. In 1967, she formed Le Jeune Ballet du Languedoc, a troupe that gave students a chance to perform standard classical works and new creations. Through Lucibello's connections with dancers of the Paris Opera Ballet, her school tapped into the grand tradition of ballet stretching to the 17th century. She soon offered advice to her young jazz student.

"She said that sooner or later I had to do classical ballet training because that's the basis of dance," recalls Galdeano in his somewhat reticent manner.





Eventually, Galdeano joined Le Jeune Ballet du Languedoc, where "we did a lot of shows."

Nîmes was big enough to attract major dance productions that enriched Galdeano's artistic education — the Ballet de Monte Carlo, the Paris Opera Ballet, Merce Cunningham. Students confronting famous companies often dream of stardom, but not Galdeano.

"I never wanted to be a big star. I just wanted to dance for the pleasure of it. Of course, when I was studying classical ballet, I looked up to the Paris Opera Ballet's big stars, like Manuel Legris."

At 16, Galdeano felt the need for a change.

"My school mainly had girls. There were only two boys. I wanted to do a boys' class."

Galdeano was accepted at the École Nationale Supérieure de Danse de Marseille, linked to the Ballet National de Marseille. Five years earlier, the company and its school had moved into spacious new quarters with nine rehearsal studios and a 300-seat theatre. At the head of both company and school was a former Paris Opera Ballet étoile, Marie-Claude Pietragalla, who succeeded the company's eminent founder, Roland Petit.

"I did one year in the senior class for boys and then two more years as a sessional student, participating in company shows. I worked a bit with Pietragalla in big ballets."

The larger school opened wider possibilities. In 1999, he went on a school tour of Shanghai, Hong Kong and Macao, a taste of touring life.

At 20, Galdeano auditioned for the Marseille company, but, despite his track record, was not hired. "I was a bit miffed," he admits. "I had nothing planned for the following year. They offered me another professional training session."

The same year, another school tour abroad changed his life.

"We came to Montreal to do a joint show with the École supérieure de ballet du Québec. I took class with Les Grands Ballets and auditioned for the company." The timing was fortuitous. The previous year, 2000, Les Grands Ballets had hired its new artistic director, Gradimir Pankov, who was looking not for stars but for dancers who could function smoothly together. A prospect like Galdeano, fresh out of school but with some performance experience, was promising.

Galdeano was hired for the corps de ballet.

"I called my mother to say I had two weeks to get my stuff together and move to Montreal."

Galdeano was soon sharing an apartment with a dancer already in the company. All was new — lodgings, company, country. What was familiar and comforting was the dancer's routine — class, rehearsal, performance.

In his first year, Galdeano had a small role in a big production, Kim Brandstrup's *Queen of Spades*, as well as the Prince role in Fernand Nault's *The Nutcracker*, a slight step up from the *Nutcracker* corps role he'd performed in Marseille.

In 2002, Ohad Naharin's *Minus One* — the kind of work that can take a young dancer's interpretive skills to the next level — opened Galdeano to another world altogether. The opener with the entire cast seated in a semi-circle was a powerhouse. Subsequent sections were at times humorous, outrageous, solemn or freewheeling, especially a number in which audience members were invited to dance onstage with the company to Dean Martin's popular tune, *Sway*.

"I adore *Minus One.* We worked about two months on it. Everyone had to learn it. I didn't have trouble adapting to Ohad's style, but I remember having physical pain at the end of the season. I wasn't used to working as physically in Marseille."

As well as handling *Minus One's* corps roles, Galdeano performed in a duet, *Passomezzo*, and in a section in which dancers' recorded confessions played as each of them performed a solo. As a second-cast member, Galdeano danced to the voice of a first-cast dancer who made funny comments about his own body, concluding that "I think I'm a little sexy." But it was *Passomezzo* that marked Galdeano.

## "I never wanted to be a big star. I just wanted to dance for the pleasure of it."

"It's eight minutes of being physically in touch. I did it again several times. It taught me a lot," he says.

One of the early large creations in which Galdeano was first cast was Noces, a masterpiece by Stijn Celis that, like Minus One, has had great success on international tour.

"It was also physically challenging. Through the whole work, we're always onstage. Stijn liked to work details, make them clear with precise positions."

Celis has returned to Les Grands several times to create new works. Indeed, our interview for this article came after a rehearsal of Celis' latest creation, Transfigured Night.

"I liked Stijn's Cinderella, but we didn't do it often enough. I found the role of the comic father who's also serious to be interesting. I love Stijn's world. Whatever we did of his, I enjoyed."

Whereas some dancers only like performing, Galdeano also enjoys rehearsals, even daily classes.

"It depends on how the body is working and on the exercises. I like batterie work, complicated figures. Pirouettes are not my strong point, but that's OK. I like working at the barre. I do some weight training, but you don't really need big muscles to do lifts. It's more important to lift intelligently and have good timing."

Les Grands' contemporary repertory often demands dancers put their personality into their roles to make them work. Whatever the role, Galdeano doesn't try to analyze or intellectualize. "I work instinctively. I go a lot with what seems natural to me."

Under Pankov's leadership, Les Grands has undertaken major

tours, often passing spring in Europe, but also travelling to exotic destinations like Israel, Egypt, China and, in 2012, Oman. The company gained a high profile in France in 2008 at the Petit Palais in Paris.

"It was great for me because my whole family came for three weeks,' says Galdeano. "I found China tough, maybe because of the food and the rhythm of the trip. We wanted to visit everything. The toughest part was adapting to the jet lag and the heat. Oman was tough because it was a hard program by Stijn — Noces and Sacre and the trio, Anima."

The trio, a lyrical story of two men (Galdeano and Karell Williams in the original cast) and a woman (Bryna Pascoe), showed Galdeano's qualities as a mature artist. Movements were economical, sculpted, relaxed. Partnering was elegantly done, especially in lifts.

"The trio is more classical than Stijn's normal work. The great music [a classical mix featuring Chopin] motivated me," he says. "All three of us launched into Stijn's thinking. We didn't expect it to be so classical: the first lift was like wow."

Galdeano has been with the same company for more than a decade, an unusually long time in an era where dancers often move on after four or five years.

"I'm not by nature an adventurer. If I'm in one place and it's working, it's good. I get opportunities here. The time goes by fast. But occasionally I think of leaving. It's tough to see close friends leave, but c'est la vie. [In August, nine dancers left Les Grands.] I stay because I like the programs, the tours are interesting, I have friends. If Gradimir goes, then I'd likely return to Europe, join a smaller group or find a choreographer's troupe like Crystal Pite's."

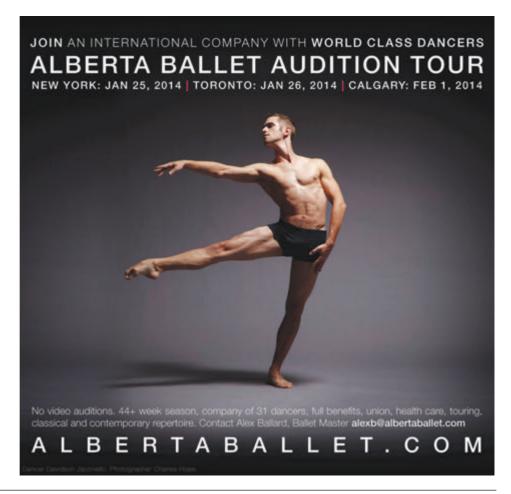
Except for Jeremy Raia, Galdeano is currently the company's longest-serving male dancer. Perhaps he's survived because of what the business world calls people skills.

"If I'm not at ease with someone in rehearsal for a day or two, I can't continue. I have to discuss it outside the studio to air out the negative and [encourage a more] positive energy."

Looking beyond his performing career, Galdeano has slowly begun exploring choreography, presenting works in recent years at two of Les Grands' workshops. His latest piece, a duet for him and Emily Durville, took place in Montreal's Quartiers Danses series in fall 2013, his first freelance choreographic venture.

"I'm unsure about being a choreographer. I still have a long way to go."

His advice to young dancers starting out: "Follow your instincts, be honest, work hard, be yourself and be generous." ▼







Above: Marize Fumero of **English National Ballet** 

Left: Jennie Harrington, Sayako Tomiyoshi, Daniel Kraus, Stina Quagebeur, Ksenia Ovsyanick and Laurent Liotardo of **English National Ballet** 

**Photos: Guy Farrow** 

When English National Ballet launched its creative brand campaign in 2013, the company partnered with iconic British fashion designer Vivienne Westwood. Tamara Rojo, the London-based company's artistic director, said in a media statement: "Her designs capture the creativity and ambition of our dancers who, in turn, add drama and movement to the clothes."

New York City Ballet, based in the heart of the American fashion industry, commissioned three young designers to create costumes for their 2013 Fall Gala (Olivier Theyskens, Prabal Gurung and Iris van Herpen). Last year, Italian couturier Valentino, who has dressed Hollywood icons and royalty, was featured, an event intended to honour the master designer.

## Vivienne Westwood and Valentino designs meet dance

What happens when high fashion and high art interact?

The English National Ballet campaign featured a full-scale fashion shoot with company dancers as models, all wearing pieces from Vivienne Westwood's Spring 2013 collection or the designer's vast archives. Westwood, with more than 40 years in the business, is recognized as one of the most influential designers of the late 20th century. In the 1960s, her designs followed punk rock, including safety pins. By the 1990s, she had reinvented her look to pure haute couture with a strong British bend that often features wools, tartans and tweeds. The pieces chosen for the campaign are classic, but hardly conventional.

The tableaux created at the shoot were in typical faux-serious fashion mode. One witty photo features younger members of the company — four women in gowns and three men in Westwood's MAN label suits — in a lush dining room, where an elaborate crystal chandelier and bits of silver tableware suggests a luxurious past. Yet the walls are dilapidated, the ceiling reveals gaping holes and the guests are in disarray.

Laurent Liotardo lays sprawled on the floor reaching for the telephone that has fallen off its hook, while Ksenia Ovsyanick in a silver Cocotte dress featuring sequin embroidered lace on silk satin — digs her three-inch heel into his side. Nearby, reclining in a dining chair, Jennie Harrington wears the same Cocotte gown in sparkling gold. With one golden-shoed foot on the table, she ignores both the food and social protocol. Sayako Tomiyoshi, in a pearl-blue sleeveless gown in a thick silk duchesse fabric, grasps the vest of Daniel Kraus, who leans back, one arm in a graceful arc that evokes ballet's bras bas position.

In the centre, capturing the viewer's attention, Stina Quagebeur wears an aqua dress with custom-printed fans and silver sequins, covered by a wide-sleeved silk cape. Ribbed and glossy, the cape catches the light and shifts colour in iridescent pink and gold. Quagebeur, the only one looking directly at the camera, breaks the fantasy of the fourth wall by seemingly confronting the viewer.

The caption — "Like humans, but more graceful." — is perhaps a cheeky way of saying we all have our problems, but dancers solve them with more grace than the rest of us. It is interesting there is not a ballet shoe in sight.

In the solo shots it could easily be assumed that the women are dancers. In "Pretty. Intense." Marize Fumero is on pointe in a bare room with water pipes running down the wall. She's decked out in a finely patterned, black silk dress, the short length perfect for highlighting the white tulle skirt underneath. It's an appropriate choice from Westwood's 2009-2010 collection, with the tulle underskirt so like a ballet tutu, and the outfit topped here with a froth of tulle on her head, an improbable hat for real-life wear, but not for a fashion model or a dancer.

In another solo shot, Kerry Birkett reclines on a daybed. Her ballet slippers lie scattered on the floor. Her dress dazzles with gold hammered sequins, embroidered with gold metallic thread on stiff organza tulle, in an abstract baroque pattern. The dress, inspired by 17th-century English royalty, is pure haute couture, but the caption — "Looks like a doll. Dances like a Demon." — reminds the viewer that the model is actually a highly skilled dancer. So does the fact that the gold-clad Birkett resting on her golden daybed is surrounded by such mundane backstage working objects as ropes, lights and a fire extinguisher, clearly revealing the artifice of

As with all the Westwood photos, the image is clever and eyecatching. Companies are eager to attract a new audience while keeping their current audience engaged, and these photographs, which appeared on street billboards as well as in fashion magazines, should help them do just that.

Unlike Westwood's fashions, which were used only for a photo shoot, Valentino's for New York City Ballet had to be danceable. Ballet costumes must move with the dancer, while making a visual impact on the audience, often from a distance. In fashion magazines, photos feature close-ups of single pieces, and at runway shows the audience sits close to the stage. As it turned out, Valentino's ballet costumes featured gowns and tutus with matching pointe shoes, all in vivid colours that would read at a

Valentino has a feel for dance, perhaps because he studied classical ballet for two years when he was 19 and working for a Parisian fashion house. A big supporter of New York City Ballet, he attends its performances and has publicly declared it the







company to watch. He is also friends with Peter Martins, the New York City Ballet head who choreographed the gala's three pieces costumed by the designer. (Other works were by Balanchine and Christopher Wheeldon.)

Valentino, of course, has his own supporters, some of whom arrived for the gala dressed in one of his creations. He's built a reputation over several decades, starting in 1963, when Vogue published a photograph of one of his dresses. A year later, Jacqueline Kennedy bought six black and white pieces, and she chose Valentino to design her wedding gown when she married Aristotle Onassis in 1968. Pictures of the bride were splashed across magazine covers around the world and Valentino's reputation was secured.

The gala opened with a rarely performed Martins' piece from 1988, Sophisticated Lady, to the music of Duke Ellington, and with new costume design by Valentino. Sixteen tuxedo-clad men dance with one woman — for the gala, Maria Kowroski, dressed in a sleeveless, floor-length gown in Valentino red, a bright poppy red that is a signature colour for the designer. A large ruffled organza flower decorates the right shoulder and several ruffles run down the length of the skirt, with large chiffon rosettes blooming at the hem.

Not My Girl, also from 1988 and freshly costumed by Valentino, is a pas de deux to music sung and composed by Fred Astaire. Again, the man is in a tuxedo, a foil to the woman — Tiler Peck — in a Harlequin-style tutu in red, fuchsia and cotton-candy pink. The palette continues right to Peck's feet, with pointe shoes in mauve satin.

The gala ended with Martins' world premiere, Bal de Couture, to Tchaikovsky, for 20 dancers. The men were dressed in classic suits, constructed from black barathea wool that has a weave resembling chain armour, and ties. Graphic black and white evening gowns, with a pop of red beneath, were a main theme for the women. All were unique. A lovely one-shoulder gown has a bodice in black and white appliquéd re-embroidered lace. It's surely a perfect dress for dancing romance, with rows of ruffled black and white lace on the skirt, and a petticoat made of several layers of black and red tulle.

Peck wore yet another fantastical tutu, a bold statement in Valentino red. The voluminous short tutu balloons out, supported by boning and wire, its bodice a shiny stretch charmeuse satin.

Bal de Couture — worth a look for Peck's one-of-a-kind balloon tutu alone — is onstage again in February in New York.

Ballets create a spectacular world for the audience, made up of music, movement, sets and, of course, costumes. When those costumes are haute couture, the effect can be exquisite. Campaigns and performances that capitalize on haute couture's striking appeal certainly help create a buzz around the art of ballet. ▼

Above right: Charles Askegard and

Maria Kowroski in Martins

Sophisticated Ladv



## 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

## 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.

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

CONTACT & AUDITIONS 604.278.7816 | dance@richmondacademyofdance.com | www.richmondacademyofdance.com | 7860 River Road Richmond BC



## 800-523-0960 (Toll free in the U.S. & Canada)

EASY SHIPPING TO CANADA. PAY IN CANADIAN DOLLARS.



"Having a high quality dance floor is the most important resource investment any dance studio has to make. We chose Stagestep for three reasons. One, it has a proven pedigree - it is used by major companies across the US; two,

Stagestep as a company was with us all the way through the process and supported us from day one; and, three, cost. Despite its high quality, it is considerably more cost effective than its nearest competitor. I, and my incredibly demanding dance staff, are delighted with the floors."

## Giles Auckland-Lewis

Principal and CEO Institute of the Arts Barcelona

For samples, pricing and a no obligation quote:

CALL 800-523-0960 or VISIT STAGESTEP.COM

Our new 2013-2014 flooring guide is now available in print and online.

# 3 dish Genonton Saskatchewan Ontario Outbre Gurier Saskatchewan Outbre Gurier Saskatchewan Ontario Outbre Gurier Saskatchewan Ontario Outbre Gurier Saskatchewan Outbre Gurier Sas

Illustration: Marlene Alt

## Stand-up Comedy, Sit-down Dance

Celeste Snowber premiered her humorous dance-theatre piece, Woman Giving Birth to a Red Pepper, in Vancouver in September. Accompanied by bassist Jodi Proznick, Snowber — a dancer, writer and Simon Fraser University professor in arts education — riffs on life after 50, with its serious bras, online dating BC (Beyond Cougar) and the need to dance while seated on a chair in order to be kind to her knees.



The Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council launched an interactive searchable map of dance in Canada at dancemap.canadacouncil.ca, part of the Canada Dance Mapping Study. The map represents 900+ dance-related organizations in genres including Asian, African, Aboriginal, European, Latin, classical, folk, contemporary and urban. It includes a national selection of companies, dance schools, festivals, presenters and funders. On November 4, a nation-wide online survey of dancers, dancemakers and teachers called Yes I Dance launched, to further populate the map.

## **SAME-SEX TANGO**

The sexy dance of tango isn't just for traditional male-female couples. At the 11th annual world championship in Buenos Aires, Argentina, same-sex couples were on the competition floor for the first time.

## **GRANT FOR STORY BALLETS**

The Joffrey Ballet has been awarded a \$500,000 challenge grant from the Rudolf Nureyev Dance Foundation for a new endowment that will fund the creation, production and performance of full-length story ballets. This is the first endowment in the Joffrey's history.

The new Rudolf Nureyev Fund at the Joffrey Ballet, as it will be known, represents one of the largest awarded to a single cultural institution in the foundation's history. The Joffrey Ballet will be responsible for raising an additional \$1 million to complete the fund.

"When I was a young dancer with the Royal Ballet and London Festival Ballet, Rudolf Nureyev became a mentor and a friend," says Joffrey's artistic director Ashley Wheater. "As a dancer and as a creator, Rudolf had a passion for full-length narrative ballets. Story ballets serve as a great entry point for new audiences to discover dance and for dancers to discover their art. With this grant and the support of matching donors, we have the opportunity to explore what it means to tell a story through dance in the 21st century."

Founded in 1992, the Rudolf Nureyev Dance Foundation has contributed more than \$4 million in grants to benefit dance in the United States.





## LECAVALIER'S MASSINE AWARD

Louise Lecavalier has won the 2013 Léonide Massine dance prize in the category Most Outstanding Female Dancer of the Year on the Contemporary Scene.

The Positano Premia La Danza — Léonide Massine awards, now in their 41st edition, are dedicated to Rudolf Nurevev this year on the 20th anniversary of his death.

Lecavalier is now touring with her latest creation, So Blue, which was presented this summer at Festival TransAmériques in Montreal and at ImPulsTanz in Vienna. It tours to Ferrara, Italy, in November.



premiered HYPER in Winnipeg in September. The solo explores cultural uncertainty and questioning in an era where the distinction between the real and the fake has become increasingly obliterated. Descartes' "Cogito, ergo sum" ("I think, therefore I am") has become "Dubito, ergo sum" ("I doubt, therefore I am"). Olafson's previous work, AVATAR, took as its mantra, "I post, therefore I am."

Video still from Freya Björg Olafson's HYPER\_

## Prix Jardin d'Europe

Amanda Apetrea and Halla Ólafsdóttir in Beauty and the Beast Photo: @ Märta Thisner

The Prix Jardin d'Europe was awarded at ImPulsTanz Vienna International Dance Festival 2013 to Amanda Apetrea and Halla Ólafsdóttir for the production Beauty and the Beast. Calling it "refreshing and clever," the jury awarded the young choreographers €10,000 and a two-week artistic residency.

The Prix Jardin d'Europe was launched in 2008 and, for the next five years, it will be awarded at ImPulsTanz in the context of the festival's [8:tension] Young Choreographers' Series.

## New Latino Ballet in San Antonio



Mayra Worthen, founder and former artistic director of Ballet San Antonio, has started a new professional ballet company. Ballet Latino de San Antonio was

created to ignite interest by presenting classically trained dancers in Latin rhythms and flavours.

To kick things off this August, Worthen choreographed two numbers for the 12-member (six men, six women) company: Sabor Hispano, to the music of the Gipsy Kings and Ottmar Liebert, and Pasion Latina, danced to the famed tango song La Cumparsita.

Among the dancers is former Ballet San Antonio member Danae Quevedo, who is originally from Venezuela. Worthen recruited Peruvian-born choreographer Jimmy Gamonet de Los Heros as artistic adviser and guest choreographer, and Cuban-born Giselle Fox as ballet mistress.

Under its umbrella is San Antonio Youth Ballet, where young people are inspired to explore the beauty of dance through education, competitions and performance opportunities.



## In Brief

Nancy Reynolds, director of research for the George Balanchine Foundation, received the 2013 Bessie Award for Outstanding Service to the Field of Dance. Reynolds danced with New York City Ballet for five years and then began a new career as an editor and author.

Mavis Staines, in her 25th year as artistic director of Canada's National Ballet School, has taken on a new combined role of artistic director/chief executive officer, reporting directly to the board of directors.

Australian dancer Remi Wörtmeyer is the winner of the Alexandra Radius Prize 2013. Wörtmeyer, principal with the Dutch National Ballet, was presented with a prize of €2,500 and an artwork.

The 2014 USA International Ballet Competition runs June 14-29, 2014. A new online application is available at www.usaibc.com. The competition is introducing a contemporary dance repertoire requirement.

Israeli choreographer Emanuel Gat has chosen an unexpected source for his latest work, *The Goldlandbergs*. Based on *The Quiet in the Land*, Glenn Gould's 1977 experimental CBC Radio program about Manitoba's Mennonite community, the piece is set primarily to Gould's mash-up of speech, music and ambient noise.

**Dance Collection Danse's** new headquarters on the third floor of 149 Church Street in downtown Toronto is already welcoming researchers and visitors. The official opening is on December 11.

Henry Holth, former managing director of Houston Ballet Foundation, died of a heart attack on August 15, 2013, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where he was president and general director of the Ballet Pro Musica Festival. He was 86.

A memorial celebration was held for dancer/producer/impresario **Paul Szilard** on October 31 at New York's Joyce Theater. Hungarian-born Szilard died peacefully at home last July at the age of 100.

## Dancing in the Third Act

At the moment of the Company of Angels' debut performance in Randy Glynn's Dancing in the Third Act, they were already Canada's oldest dance troupe. Indeed, the youngest member is a youthful 60; the eldest 76. This is clearly not a conventional contemporary dance ensemble, a fact that was startlingly evident the moment the company appeared onstage in September at the King's Theatre (where the stage door opens onto the ocean) in Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia. These are not professional dancers with remarkably tuned bodies and training that allow them to morph into any role, but distinct and distinctive individuals with a posture, stance, movement patterns and visage developed over many decades of inhabiting this mortal coil. The cast of 12 includes paramedics, politicians, ceramists, visual artists, journalists, photographers, engineers and social workers.

Modelled after Pina Bausch's dance-theatre piece *Kontak-thof*, which was choreographed for her company in 1978 and set on a cast of non-professionals over the age of 65 in 2000, *Dancing in the Third Act* starts from some of the same premises, but blazes a trail of its own, moving from humour to poignancy, abstract to narrative, lyrical to stark.

Glynn's career began 36 years ago with the freshly minted Halifax Dance Co-op Company and continued in Toronto with Danny Grossman Dance and, later, his own Randy Glynn Dance Project. There's not a false note in the hour-long work, a tribute to the maturity of Glynn's vision. And also to the tenacity of both Glynn and his partner, Pam Grundy, who served as assistant director, in bringing to the fore the many qualities of this cast of performers — untrained in movement though they may be — over a 12-week rehearsal period.

When so much of dance is a young person's game, there are few opportunities to see or deliver the depth of performance that a lifetime of real-world experience can bring to the stage. *Dancing in the Third Act* achieves this in spades. Future dates are in the offing.

— CHRISTOPHER MAJKA

# Miko Fogarty Photo: © Liz Voll

## Miko Fogarty wins gold in Moscow

by Regina Zarhina

iko Fogarty, a thoughtful heroine in the recent documentary about the Youth America Grand Prix, First Position, won the gold medal at the Moscow International Ballet Competition in June. She is only 16 years old, but her performances in Moscow were mature beyond her years. She was assured without being flashy, with her technique and quality of dancing no longer merely promising, but decisively feminine and lovely.

As she delivered some of the most difficult variations in classical repertoire from Giselle, Paquita, Esmeralda and Swan Lake — the most astonishing change between the Fogarty from the film and the dancer in Moscow was in the artistic integrity with which she treated her diverging roles. In the span of a brief variation, Fogarty summarized her astute interpretation of each one. Her Esmeralda is exuberant; her Odile, self-absorbed; her Giselle, singular and earthy.

Fogarty has been groomed to be a competition dancer, an increasingly frequent occurrence in the growing competitive ballet world. Foregoing methodical education by a single teacher or even a single school, Fogarty's training has been more goal-

## **COMPETITIVE DANCERS**

oriented than holistic. According to her mother, Satoko, their choice for teachers - among whom were Galina Alexandrova of City Ballet School and Victor Kabanyaev, both in San Francisco — has been dictated by "opportunities."

Most likely, Fogarty lives, and learns, in a constant pursuit for the next best thing. A troika of teachers with the finest Russian pedigrees had prepared her for the competition: Indianapolis-based Alexei Moskalenko, Tatiana Pali and Alyona Yakovleva. Fogarty also credits Kaoru Jinushi, her teacher in Osaka, Japan, with helping her technique.

Before she tries for a job, Fogarty will continue her training for another year, alternating between Indianapolis and Osaka, although her family resides in northern California. While Fogarty likes ballet culture in Europe, she also mentioned a couple of favourite American companies. Although she claims to like contemporary dance, she's had little exposure to works outside the classical repertoire, and is aware the transition from being a solo dancer to performing with a company will likely be challenging.

Until the age of 12, Fogarty was a serious student of violin. She loves to go hiking with her father, and enjoys drawing and knitting. After appearing in First Position and following her spectacular performances in Moscow, she admits to being inundated with friendship requests on Facebook.

Well proportioned and of average height, Fogarty doesn't possess the extraordinary lines and excessively arched feet of today's ballet divas. So what sets her apart from the thousands of eager, hard-working and dedicated teenagers who want to become dancers? Competitions have given her opportunities to perform alongside the world's most talented and determined dancers, and to take classes with leading dance educators.

According to Fogarty: "I think it's good to have experience outside of the ballet studio. I am lucky to have the opportunity to have been to so many places and I can relate all these [travel] experiences to ballet. Also," she adds hurriedly, "my parents are very supportive and they push me." ▼

## **Chan Hon Goh attends** three ballet competitions

by Richard Forzley



Chan Hon Goh and Ruheng Zhao Photo: Courtesy of Beijing International **Ballet Competition** 

lite level ballet competitions are witnessing more virtuosity than ever before. Jumps soar higher. Pirouettes routinely come in fours or more. Audiences respond with excitement and gasps, urging the dancers on.

Competitions are one way to discover exciting new dancers, but they do generate controversy. At the heart of the debate is the fact that competitions emphasize perfecting excerpts from the classical repertoire without necessarily giving young dancers well-rounded training and the ability to sustain an entire performance. By divorcing steps from the character or the work's meaning, are young dancers being encouraged to sacrifice artistry for technical

Chan Hon Goh, director of Vancouver's Goh Ballet Academy and a former principal dancer with the National Ballet of Canada, is herself a competition winner, as are several of her students. This past summer, Goh attended three major competitions. At the first in June, she was an invited observer at the 12th International Ballet Competition and Contest of Chaoreographers held in Moscow at the Bolshoi Theatre.

"This competition has introduced so many stars to the ballet world and I was expecting most of the dancing to be of a very high level," Goh says. "The male dancers demonstrated virtuoso steps in their variations, some of them impossible to name since they aren't part of ballet's traditional vocabulary. They were extraordinary, with extremely clean batterie work and high jumps that seemed to stay suspended in the air. The female dancers had impressive extensions and highly developed interpretations."

With such top-level performers, how do judges distinguish one dancer from another, especially if they choose the same repertoire? "A judge would have to compare them step by step and find truth in their interpretations. It may be more challenging to the competitors," says Goh. "Competitions where everyone is required to dance the same repertoire are, in my opinion, harder. It's possible the chosen work doesn't show off the dancer at their best. Just think of how casting works in a professional company."

Later that month, Goh was one of seven judges in Seoul for the Korea In-

ternational Ballet Competition. "Technical ability was good and execution was clean, but I would have liked to see more accents and better musical phrasing. This usually comes as a dancer matures. I think in a ballet competition where the dancers, not the choreography, are being judged, the work should show off the dancer's best traits and abilities without losing the sense of artistic integrity. In Korea, the contemporary round was really uneven and many good dancers did not present works that proved them to be complete and versatile performers.

"The most obvious difference between the Russian and Korean competitions was that most of the competitors were from within the home countries. In terms of scale, the Moscow competition had live orchestral accompaniment for the final round, allowing the judges to see more spontaneity and musicality from the dancers. Adding to the challenge for the dancers in Russia is the Bolshoi's raked stage."

The expressed goal of the 2nd Beijing International Ballet and Choreogra-

phy Competition, which Goh attended in July, is to discover promising ballet dancers and excellent choreographers, and to promote international exchanges. "This allowed me to see many young talents representing state-run academies within China as well as competitors from internationally distinguished dance institutes or companies.

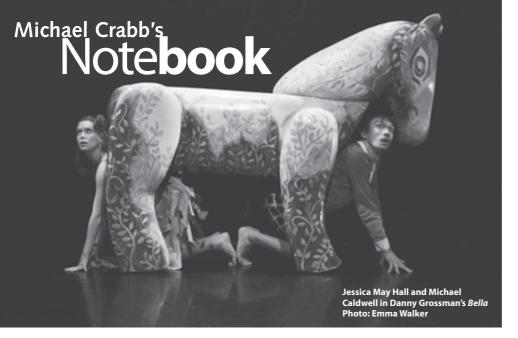
"Dancers from the state-run schools showed very clean technical execution, but with an academic feel to their performances. With participants from the English National Ballet and the National Ballet of China, the technical bar was very high. The Japanese contestants were also strong in overall presentation."

Ultimately the future of the dancers who enter competitions isn't simply based on their pirouettes or jumps. There must be that immeasurable quality that comes from a great artist who commands our attention with the measured subtlety of their work. This isn't to diminish the value of technique. As Goh points out, "Generally a dancer with exceptionally clean technique and the ability to do things that other dancers can't earns the judges' notice. But, as a judge, this is what I look for: Who is Giselle? Who is Aurora? I want to see an individual interpret the character and be true to the integrity of the historical period of the ballet they are dancing. You find this only rarely and that's what makes a dancer really stand out."

There are, in fact, many positive things to say about ballet competitions. They present themselves as a bridge between student and professional, and allow young dancers the opportunity to display their abilities and potential to a diverse panel of judges. They can teach young dancers the value of commitment and camaraderie as well as increase a performer's confidence and selfesteem. The process of rehearsal and coaching, and working hard to improve technique and artistic development, represents the best aspects of competition. But judging dance is essentially subjective, based on an individual's own background, experience, culture and personal biases.

"Competitions are not meant for everyone," Goh states, "and are certainly not the only way to produce an accomplished dancer." ▼





oronto Heritage Dance has drawn a line in the sand, one that allows audiences to compare the profound aesthetic divide between the tradition of modern dance and the complex, often highly conceptualized post-modern forms confusingly wrapped within the banner of "contemporary dance."

The organization, established in 2002 by Toronto Dance Theatre co-founder Patricia Beatty and Australian-born dancer/choreographer/producer Nenagh Leigh, aims to uphold a tradition they believe has been recklessly jettisoned by a new generation of dancemakers.

"It's adolescent to reject the past," asserts Beatty. "You can't throw it out. It's part of a thread."

Beatty contends that "classic" modern dance, the kind she and her Toronto Dance Theatre co-founder colleagues David Earle and Peter Randazzo studied in New York half a century ago, still deserves a voice. Once disparaged as "barefoot ballet," modern dance evolved to exert a strong influence on succeeding generations of choreographers, some even in the ballet world. It's a tradition that values form and technique and espouses human values, that acknowledges that the body in motion is a potent communicator of timeless truths. But, as Earle points out, how can the tradition be valued if it is no longer visible?

The ballet world cherishes its heritage. The notion of continuity and evolution is taken for granted. It is not uncommon for ballet companies to

present programs comprising new and historic works. Every great choreographer has stood on others' shoulders, even when those shoulders have been used as a take-off pad into the unknown. Ballet's classic roots are still visible in the work of many of today's most progressive choreographers because they know about what went before.

By contrast, argues Earle, today's contemporary dance choreographers are cut off from their past or, worse still, persuaded that it is irrelevant. Earle scoffs at the contemporary obsession with so-called innovation and originality. "All art forms," he argues, "begin with imitation then move toward originality. To know what is new, you have to know what has been." Earle points to other art forms where a foundation in tradition is considered an essential part of a young artist's formation.

Toronto Heritage Dance operated very much off the radar until the fall of 2011 when, with Leigh and former York University dance professor Mary Jane Warner as co-directors and Beatty as an advisor and project director, it presented An Evening of Chamber Dance at Toronto Dance Theatre's 120seat Winchester Street Theatre.

Sceptics scoffed that it would be no more than an oldies-but-goldies evening of nostalgia for geriatric audiences, the kind that still relish what they call "real dancing" — to music that actually sounds like music. Yet, although the program contained its share of revivals, arguably the strongest works were brand new, including a powerful solo from Beatty called The High Heart and a profoundly moving duet, Cut, from another veteran, Danny Grossman.

Much to the delight of its organizers, the five-performance run came close to selling out. So, naturally, they began planning for their next presentation, which took place at the same theatre last September. Again, the program mixed old and new.

Grossman, whose subject matter has ranged from the horrors of war to the inhumanity of rampant capitalism, was represented by his charming 1977 love duet, Bella, co-choreographed and initially performed by Grossman and the late Judy Jarvis.

Other revivals included Beatty's joyous Skyling from 1980 with music by late Canadian composer Michael J. Baker and Earle's J.S. Bach-driven Mirrors, first performed as part of Toronto Dance Theatre's inaugural performance in 1968. Earle also had other much more recent works on the program, including a new solo.

Given the appetite Toronto Heritage Dance has whetted for dance choreographed within the modernist tradition, the organization could certainly draw audiences to annual performances, but Warner says that for the moment she and Leigh prefer a biennial model. "Frankly," Warner explains, "it's just

so much work and we'd rather make sure that when we do it we do it really well." Warner says plans are already afoot for a 2015 season with a possible move to a larger venue and a tiein to the Toronto-hosted Pan American Games.

The larger issue, of course, is whether the efforts of Toronto Heritage Dance will actually reshape the aesthetic landscape or simply exist as an occasional reminder of an abandoned tradition.

Earle says it's ironic that conservatories still equip students to use their bodies as expressive instruments, to understand how to converse at a deep level with music, yet once they move into today's contemporary dance scene there are few opportunities for them to exercise these skills. Ever the idealist, Earle wishes there were a national touring company for young professionals with a repertoire of Canadian modern-dance classics. With that grounding, Earle contends they would be better equipped to move the art forward. ▼

## The Essence Le Patin Libre's Alexandre Hamel on of Ice

## artistic skating's identity crisis

lexandre Hamel feels there is a movement afoot in Canadian artistic skating, and he is at its forefront. His group, Le Patin Libre (The Free Skate), is set on putting into motion a vision of contemporary ice dancing devoid of the glitz and clichés of competitive ice dancing and ice dance spectaculars.

Last spring, in a skating arena a few streets east of Montreal's Mile End, Le Patin Libre presented Patineurs Anonymes competition and elimination TV series.

Hamel founded the collective in 2005 as a way to gather like-minded competition (and ex-competition) figure skaters around him in order to experiment, take risks and reject ice dancing stereotypes. His critique of traditional figure skating is firm. "Ice dancing was always a pastiche of ballet," he states. And because of constant superficial borrowing, he adds, it "never achieved modernity and its own maturity." In his estimation, the only skater who was truly

Hamel. "But we are moving away from the acrobatics and what can be borrowed from circus."

Indeed older stuff (available on Le Patin Libre's YouTube channel) looks a bit more punk rock — perhaps more spectacular, using fire and elbow glides, but also a bit more celebratory. While Patineurs Anonymes uses humour and spectacular jumps, it also delves into more contemplative spaces, sourcing more personal and narrative material to build its dramatic arc. Also,

## Ironically, in a country that proudly considers ice skating part of its national identity, tradition has probably been at the source of the slow development of this "new" form.

(Skaters Anonymous), a masculine exploration of the angst of rejecting figure skating — and the compulsion to rediscover it. The rink offered an approximation of a theatre, but the vast stage area was disproportionate to the size of the audience, a hundred or so people seated on hard concrete risers in the cold, dry air of a skating

The simple lighting design set the stage for the formidable three ice dancers: Hamel (from Quebec), Taylor Dilley (from British Columbia) and Samory Ba (from France), who fully occupied the ice and engaged the audience through a 75-minute choreographic work created over several years both in Montreal and Burgundy, France.

Months later, when I caught up with Hamel at the 1000 La Gauchetière rink in downtown Montreal, he offered a pointed analysis of ice dancing. At its essence, "it is not a sport," asserts Hamel, expressing his dissatisfaction with how the form has been constructed and oriented toward competition. "Figure skating is successful as a reality TV show," he acutely observes, referring to the fact that televised skating competitions come complete with the narratives and drama of today's numerous reality

original was Canadian Gary Beacom, who Hamel calls "the Isadora Duncan of skating." Beacom rose to fame as the Canadian silver medallist in 1983 and 1984, finishing 11th at the 1984 Winter Olympics. "Go check out his videos on YouTube," he urges. Le Patin Libre takes this as its challenge — to bring ice dancing into its own.

In 2006, Le Patin Libre began presenting short works on frozen canals and lakes in small-town Quebec as part of winter festivals. By his own admission, the work at that time was "very naïve," but Hamel enjoyed the "no fourth wall" aspect to these performances. The collective used dance and slapstick to play on folkloric Quebec tales in order to make ice dancing accessible to an audience beyond the typical middle-aged moms and their young girls keen on figure skating. He remembers the early times as a great moment of freedom, of rebellion, though it took awhile to unlearn everything that 15 years of traditional figure skating had taught them.

The Patin Libre logo features two figures in an upside down breakdance freeze that highlights skate blades. "I wanted [to portray skaters in a position that had nothing to do with what was in the collective imagination of traditional ice skating," says

says Hamel, "We are now looking into the essence of skating: the glide."

Ironically, in a country that proudly considers ice skating part of its national identity, tradition has probably been at the source of the slow development of this "new" form. Hamel and his group have had to cross the Atlantic multiple times to benefit from the support they find in France and other European countries, where ice rinks, although less numerous, are not as strictly controlled by ice hockey and competitive ice dancing schedules. There, rinks act as community recreation centres, where kids go to have fun, noodle around, impress each other. This provides an opportunity for a nascent artistic expression. In Canada, according to Hamel, "free rink" times are not so free — there are regulations against doing any sort of trick or spin. Renting ice time is pricey: upwards of \$175 per hour. In France, they found they could work late at night in exchange for demonstrations and workshops. In Europe, the rinks are managed by cultural administrators, rather than by ex-coaches. The Montreal presentation of Patineurs Anonymes took intensive negotiation in order to be granted permission to put on a show in a rink.



European recognition for Le Patin Libre is impressive: apart from several French residencies — including two creation residencies through Compagnie Cyberglace in a small rink outside Auxerre, Burgundy it recently announced a residency this fall at the Jerwood Studio of Sadler's Wells in London as an off-site creation project at the Alexandra Palace rink in North London. The folks at Sadler's Wells Theatre took notice when Le Patin Libre self-presented a work-in-progress version of Patineurs Anonymes (then called *The Rule of 3*) at this public rink in January 2012.

This past summer, Le Patin Libre was seducing Berlin in preparation for its performance/ice party event in August and September. Hamel hopes their partner organization, eiskunst-werkstatt (ice-art workshop), will become a launch pad for contemporary ice dancing in Germany, just as Cyberglace has been in France, which now runs festival and artist residencies in the Burgundy ice rink. After Berlin and London, Le Patin Libre looks forward to more dates of Patineurs Anonymes in Montreal, another residency in France and possibly a European tour.

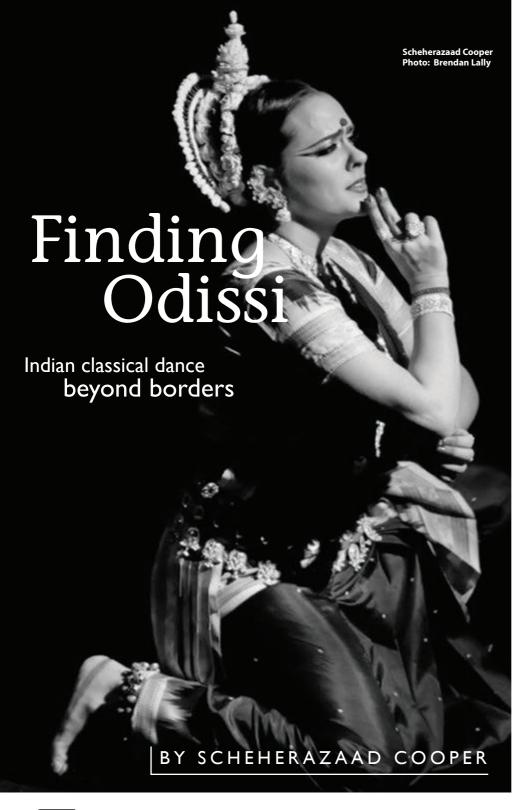
Another thing Europe has given them: extreme skating. The kids in French ice rinks have developed a kind of ice skating reminiscent of youth street dance culture, imitating snowboard or skateboard jumps. "They don't use music, they don't build choreography," states Hamel, "but the more 'dance' ones call themselves 'freestyle." This freestyle skating is an influence on their work, as is Montreal's contemporary dance and circus scenes. The composer for Patineurs Anonymes, Jasmin Boivin, drawing from experiences in hockey skating, and house and swing dancing, demonstrated this freestyle in an improvised moment during bows at the end of that show.

Where does Hamel's love of skating come from? "This," he answers, using his fingers to demonstrate the glide. "And because skating is close to the people, because we can use skating to draw people into art, because of skating's popular appeal. We moved away from this to create real theatre shows, and now we're moving back to it."

The group is searching for a balance between being ambulatory entertainers at festivals, and offering participatory experiences through outdoor ice rink "occupations" or mini-flash mobs during winter, and being "serious" artists, hoping to retain artistic integrity while also engaging with larger audiences.

Post-Patineurs Anonymes and pre-European tours, the group skated together almost every day. "We don't have anything to rehearse so it's just playing," says Hamel. Our interview took place at the rink where Hamel was scheduled to work with Boivin and Pascale Jodoin, another member of the collective, workshopping moves together.

After the interview, Hamel and I took to the ice, joining Boivin and Jodoin. Hamel and Jodoin began working out some partnering issues in the centre of the ice while Boivin noodled around practising his freestyle. I skated around the edge of the rink enjoying the serenity of the glide, a movement, as Hamel has pointed out, that is unique to skating, offering an incredible somatic sensation, like floating. ▼



he lyrical and sculpturesque dance form of classical Odissi grew out of the temple dance and street performance of the city of Puri, in the province of Orissa, India. As a dance form, Odissi can be identified by the counterbalancing S-curve of the body, the strong rhythmic footwork and the flowing upper body. As a tradition, Odissi is rooted in the geography of Orissa, in its architecture, history and culture.

The growth of Odissi following its reconstitution in the 1950s took it outside the geographic borders of India, inspiring interest and training in other countries. Today, Odissi is taught and performed all over the world and the form as we know it now is not entirely ancient, but rather one that has emerged from a fragmented history.

Odissi dancers who are born and raised outside India often find that holistic training includes travelling there regularly. Training in Orissa is not just about learning new choreography or being around a concentrated group of dancers, but also about living, for a time, with the benefit of a locality that is steeped in the art form — as the history, temples, culture and the places to acquire Odissi's distinctive costumes, headpieces and jewelry are all right there.

The "locality" of my own career as an Odissi Indian classical dancer has always been somewhat stretched. I was born, raised and trained in Canada, most recently on the West Coast; my main teacher lived across the border in Washington State. As I advanced in skill and technique, I began travelling regularly to Orissa to acquire new choreographies, to train with other teachers, and to observe the variations and developing trends of Odissi dance.

Odissi is inextricably linked to Orissa, and the mannerisms and even the architectural spaces found there are intrinsic to the dance. In an article published in *Odissi* 3, commemorating the third International Odissi Festival in 2006, U.S.-based guru Ratna Roy discusses this in relation to the style of Guru Pankaj Charan Das, which she describes as being "distinguished by a lyrical grace ... that is very local and hence emanates out of the movements and lifestyle of the inhabitants of the Puri environs. It parallels the movement of the water as it washes the beaches of Puri that is waters on a sandy shore rather than breakers against cliffs."

But what of the Odissi practitioner who was not born near this sandy beach and did not grow up in the lilt of the tide? As Odissi practice continues to stretch out of the geographic space of Orissa, becoming available not only to diverse audiences, but also diverse practitioners, how is this local embodiment maintained?

While training in Orissa, I recall spending many hours with my guru practising and focusing on these very local idiosyncrasies. My teacher would often emphasize what she called the "sweetness" of the chin and neck, called "greba" in Indian classical vocabulary. She would often say that much communication happens with the particular semi-circular movement of the chin, which could state "come here," could convey coyness or shyness, and when reversed (moving the chin from

close to the neck pushing outward) could become petulant or even convey direction.

I was often reprimanded for my "arrogant" chin that held firm and fast when it should have been loose and lilting. This correction, which I struggled with for years, was one of my first practical experiences with cultural alienation within my dance form. I did not possess any cultural paradigm that accounted for this kind of chin movement and, therefore, had to find a way to interpret it as part of the aesthetic structure of Odissi and not as a given idiosyncrasy of my natural movement.

Years later, I realized that, technically, the repositioning of the neck within Odissi serves as the counterbalance of particular movements and, based on this discovery, was able to work with it as an element of the choreography as opposed to a failing on my part. I have also observed this kind of chin movement in the daily, pedestrian movements of dancers in Orissa and, therefore, perhaps this movement became part of Odissi vocabulary in a more organic way for these dancers than for myself.

There are also more practical implications for an international relationship to the art form. These include the financial strains of travel, accommodation and training fees, which are often scaled higher for international students, as well as the time taken from other employment in order to spend time in India.

A few institutions outside of India have presented an alternative. Kadam (U.K.), Milapfest (U.K.) and Sampradaya Dance Creations (Canada) all curate summer camps that bring established choreographers and gurus to local spaces for concentrated training in an immersive way. Granted, these programs allow very little time for one-on-one sessions or bespoke choreography, as one might get in India. However, what they are doing is allowing for an interim step in the international training setup. In fact, some students establish personal connections with gurus at these camps, which instigates travel to India for further training, and some of the camps even provide minor bursaries precisely for this.

The camps themselves still require a hefty fee, although some provide subsidies by application. Also, certain camps tend to favour particular choreographers, which can mean that from year to year there is little change in the teaching lineup. For some dancers, this establishes a continuity

of work; for others, it becomes a deterrent as they wish to expand their training opportunities.

The most important element that is strengthened by these camps, whether intentionally or not, is the international community of practice. My generation of Indian classical dancers has had the unique opportunity to establish a peer learning community that is truly international. My immediate group of peers and friends includes dancers from Canada, the United States, England, France, Japan, Malaysia, Australia and India. We find ourselves convening in certain spaces, sometimes in India, perhaps at a festival, training and performing together. We create classical, experimental and contemporary work. We watch and critique each other's performances, maintain dancebased social networks and support each other's ventures.

Through its deep and rooted ties to Orissa, Odissi practitioners might always be seen as representatives of the culture, to some extent. Indian classical dancers of all origins understand early in their careers that their training is physical as well as intellectual, and that they will often have to describe, explain or defend their particular choices. Odissi is a culturally specific art form; it is derived from ancient principles and traditions. It is also an aesthetic dance practice with a series of specific postures, gestures and movements that require physical training.

It becomes problematic when these two understandings of Odissi are separated; Odissi is simultaneously culturally and aesthetically specific. There is an aesthetic reason for the movement of the chin found in the counterbalance of the body and also a cultural impetus found in pedestrian interactions in Orissa; neither one nor the other, it is rather a complex combination of the two.

When these kinds of layered understandings are available, international performers are free to pursue their own careers, developing upon a cultural history and being accountable for individual artistic choices. They are also able to contribute to the contemporary framing of their art form and the growth of their audiences, allowing Odissi to be a living and breathing dance form. ▼



## Meciawatti

## From the journal of Margalit Ornstein, Tel Aviv, circa 1935



## Excerpt from And How Does a Camel Dance?

by Gaby Aldor, published in Hebrew by Resling, Israel, www.resling.co.il; quote translated by author for Dance International. German edition, Wie tanzt nun ein Kamel?, Mandelbaum Verlag, 2012, www.mandelbaum.at

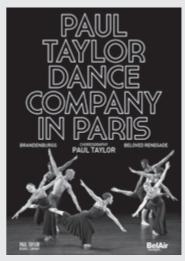
## QUOTABLE

We don't speak much but there is a great understanding tween Jacques and myself. I think about the buildings that he builds as though they were dancing, and the structure of my dances is like a modern building, with a foundation, and balance, and air, and rhythm, and without adornments. When I look at the dances of my studio, the structure is so clear — there is tension and there is harmony, there is contrast, both in the form and in the content.

You can 'dance' the Recanati House at the end of Mazeh Street ...

What rhythm these verandas have, like a spherical motion with arms held in a circle, advancing one after another as in a round that you sing, or a solo dance. The rhythm goes on and stops and proceeds to advance, and the square balconies at the southern front of the building stand solid against this storm of approaching verandas, offering a horizontal support, like a strong back.

... My dear Jacques, sometimes when we walk together to the seashore and I see his physique, the powerful legs and arms, I understand that he stands inside my dances like a support column, and my strength comes from him.



**Paul Taylor Dance Company in Paris** 66 minutes, \$29.99 Cdn., www.belairclassiques.com

Paul Taylor's long and prolific career encompasses more than 130 works over some 50 years, and capturing an overview of his large and diverse output is a considerable challenge. This well-produced DVD of two of his most acclaimed ballets — recorded at the Théâtre National de Chaillot at Les Étés de la Danse 2012 — provides a glimpse of his extraordinary range.

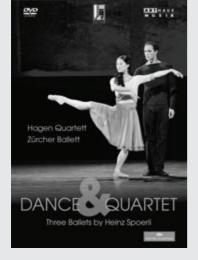
Brandenburgs (1988), set to two of Bach's Brandenburg concertos, shows Taylor at his most classical and exuberant. Six men and three women speed joyfully through a dizzying series of ebullient leaps and turns, fleet footwork and sculpted shapes. The sunny mood is briefly interrupted when the male soloist (the wonderfully poised Michael Trusnovec) dances with all three women — ballet fans will instantly note the visual reference to Balanchine's *Apollo* — and the air suddenly crackles with sexual tension.

Beloved Renegade premiered 20 years later in 2008. Danced to Poulenc's luminous Gloria, the work takes us immediately into darker and more emotional territory with the Walt Whitman quotation that opens the piece (at least on video, where it's superimposed on the screen): "I sound my barbaric yawp over the rooftops of the world."

Beloved Renegade features a central figure observing a series of episodes and characters, perhaps from his own life: boisterous children, infatuated young lovers, suffering men. Death is never far away; he is finally guided to his own death by a dark angel figure danced by the elegant Laura Halzack.

The short bonus film offers interesting insights from Taylor and his excellent dancers about the works, the creative process and their interpretations.

## — HEATHER BRAY



## **Dance & Quartet: Three Ballets by Heinz Spoerli**

94 minutes, Blu-ray \$41 Cdn., DVD \$31 Cdn., www.arthaus-musik.com

Switzerland's Heinz Spoerli has established himself as one of the foremost European choreographers of the last 40 vears, but his work is less well known in North America. This DVD features three recent ballets performed by Ballet Zurich, the company he directed until recently, at the 2012 Salzburg Festival and demonstrate Spoerli's longstanding interest in the relationship between dance and mu-

Each is set to an iconic work from the string quartet repertoire: Intimate Letters, to Janacek's string quartet of the same name; In Spillville, to Dvorak's American Quartet, and Death and the Maiden, to Schubert's string quartet of the same name. All are magnificantly performed by the Hagen Quartet.

Spoerli's choreography is well-crafted and classically based with a strong focus on the pas de deux, and the ballets all respond very directly to the music. Sometimes too much so — I found Death and the Maiden too literal in its approach — but elsewhere the choreography's response to the music was seductive. The uniformly strong dancers produced some wonderful highlights: Arsen Mehrabyan, guesting from the Royal Swedish Ballet, delivered a performance of great intensity as the man separated from his beloved in Intimate Letters, while Tigran Mikayelyan and the long-legged Sarah-Jane Brodbeck danced the duet from In Spillville in a kind of radiant daze. In Death and the Maiden, Yen Han as the Maiden danced with affecting emotional clarity, moving from carefree joy to distrust, fear, submission and emptiness.

— HEATHER BRAY

## **arts**UMBRELLA dance Tradition. Innovation. Excellence. Arts Umbrella Dance teaches excellence in technical skills, artistic expression and lifestyle balance to aspiring professional dancers, offering beginner to career-level training. Live auditions for the 2014/15 Professional Program take place in Vancouver: Sunday, January 26, 2014 Sunday, April 6, 2014 Program Supporters Include: BRITISH COLUMBIA ARTS COUNCIL



Team TELUS Employee Charitable Giving Program, Friends of A

Umbrella Dance Company, West 4th Physiotherapy Clinic Inc.

## AUDITION TOUR FALL/WINTER 2013-14

artsumbrella.com/dance

Vancouver | Coquitlam | Victoria | Nanaimo Courtenay | Prince George | Fort St John Edmonton | Saskatoon | Japan | Mexico

For dates & locations visit: victoriaacademyofballet.ca

Developing dancers with outstanding technique, artistry, and confidence in an atmosphere that fosters creativity and builds life long skills.

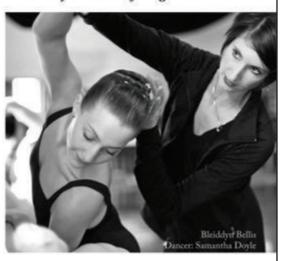
Professional Training Bridge Program for Post Secondary students

Half Day Academic Programs for Professional Training Program Students

> Quality Host Family Accommodation



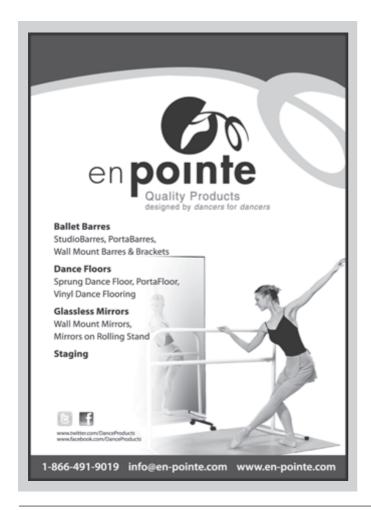
Artistic Director: Bleiddyn Bellis, F.C.S.C. - C.I.C.B.



VictoriaAcademyOfBallet.ca 1.250.590.6752 admin@VictoriaAcademyofBallet.ca

## Mediawatch



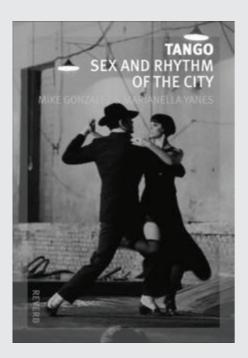


No Clean Glasses
Dancer: Alex Wong

## Photo from Dancers Among Us: A Celebration of Joy in the Everyday

by Jordan Matter, © 2012, used by permission of Workman Publishing Co., Inc., New York, All Rights Reserved, 229 pages, \$22.95 Cdn.





**Tango: Sex and Rhythm of the City** by Mike Gonzalez and Marianella Yanes, University of Chicago Press for Reaktion Books, 2013, \$25 US.



Tango, the ubiquitous and visceral element of Buenos Aires culture, has had a colourful history that could almost seem fictionalized. Indeed some Argentine historians dismiss the commonly held notion that tango was born of the brothels of 19th-century Buenos Aires. Late in the century, the population of men vastly outnumbered that of women, but I've come across various accounts over just how much, ranging from 12 to one, to 50 to one. And of the claim that the men of tango's early days danced with each other, I once overheard a Buenos Aires tanguero make the distinction: "They *practised* — not danced."

On these accounts and more, Mike Gonzalez and Marianella Yanes set the record straight in their book *Tango: Sex and Rhythm of the City.* Captivating and insightful, the book tracks tango's evolution while elucidating ambiguous tango lore that has re-circulated through web sites and performance programs since the 1980s.

After mapping out the pattern of immigration and urban development which led to tango's early proliferation, Gonzalez and Yanes describe the political and social climates that produced four major eras in tango music: Guardia Vieja (Old Guard), Guardia Nueva (New Guard), The Golden Age and Tango Nuevo (New Tango). Argentina's ongoing political struggle between populist and elitist movements presents a recurring theme of how repressive regimes affected tango's popularity, culminating in its "lean years at home" in the 1970s when "tango seemed to come from a world that had been murdered by the 'Dirty War." Several eras have tango becoming a darling of society abroad before regaining legitimacy at home, with Paris repeatedly opening its arms to tango's exotic lure.

Though many significant figures in tango's history are included, from Carlos Gardel to Evita Perón and Astor Piazzolla, the only Argentine dancers mentioned are El Cachafaz and Casimiro Aín, in very brief citations. Gonzalez and Yanes' tango history traces the 1930s to the 1970s mostly by the period's music rather than dance. And, disappointingly, the dance boom of recent decades is summarized into only several pages. Missing is any mention of tango's recent presence in TV shows such as *Dancing with the Stars* and dance films such as Sally Potter's *The Tango Lesson* (1997), whose nuevo tango dance style caused much controversy amongst traditionalists, some of whom would eventually redefine themselves in light of its innovations in dance and pedagogy.

Personal accounts, tango lyrics and delightful trivia engagingly support the more historical sections of the writing. At times the language used by the authors seems veiled in mystery and innuendo, comparing tango's movements to a knife fight and metaphorizing it as a theatre of life with its colourful

cast of characters: the pimp, the prostitute, the confidence trickster. But soon enough Gonzalez and Yanes provide the historical markers and facts to back it all up.

The book delivers a beautifully depicted and well-informed history, chronicling the diverse characters and ingredients that have formed tango then and now. Suitable for the uninitiated and the tango afficionado alike, *Tango: Sex and Rhythm of the City* is time deliciously spent.

— SUSANA DOMINGUES

## **Bolshoi in Cinemas**

The Bolshoi Ballet can be seen direct from Moscow, filmed in high definition with 10 cameras, in cinemas around the world.

The Sleeping Beauty
December 22, 2013 (recorded)

Jewels

January 19, 2014 (live)

Lost Illusions February 2 (live)

The Golden Age March 30 (live)

Visit www.pathelive.com and click on Bolshoi Worldwide to find links for screenings in your area.

## Teachers' Directory

## **CANADA'S NATIONAL BALLET SCHOOL** Mavis Staines, C.M., DHumL, Artistic Director & Co-CEO

400 Jarvis St., Toronto, ON M4Y 2G6 T: (416) 964-3780 • F: (416) 964-5133 registrar@nbs-enb.ca • 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: three year diploma, two year diploma or one year certificate for professional dancers, five year joint diploma/degree with two Canadian universities

## Also Available:

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

NBS graduates are always in demand and can be found as dancers, choreographers, artistic directors, teachers and administrators in over 65 dance companies world-wide and even more schools around the globe.

Admission for Professional Programmes by audition. Visit www.nbs-enb.ca for more details.

## **CAULFIELD SCHOOL OF DANCE**

Internationally renowned performer, choreographer, and master teacher, Cori Caulfield, leads a faculty of dedicated and expert instructors offering the highest quality training for all levels, ages preschool to adult in:

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

Home of B.C. Provincial Title Holders: Dance: Ballet, Modern/Contemporary, and Tap, Jazz and Stage

Voice: Musical Theatre and Classical

Many performing opportunities including competitions and our annual Spring production

Standard and Professional\* Training Divisions and Performance Companies.\*

Summer Maintenance Classes and Intensives.

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

2813 Spring Street, Port Moody, B.C. V3H 4C6 Phone: (604) 469-9366 • email: admin@caulfield.bc.ca

Classified ads and Teachers' **Directory information can** be obtained at (604) 681-1525 advertising@danceinternational.org www.danceinternational.org

## **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 become dance professionals.

## **Ballet Academic Programme**

- · Full-time, seven-level programme designed to develop a versatile young artist with strong technique and the ability to be internationally competitive
- · Numerous performance opportunities, including with the worldrenowned RWB Company
- Integrated academic education at respected institutions providing graduates with university entrance requirements
- · Affordable, on-site residence facilities

## **Aspirant Programme**

- · Full-time, post-secondary intensive training programme designed specifically for advanced level classical ballet dancers making the transition from student to professional artist
- Prepares dancers for upcoming auditions and provides them with performance opportunities
- Frequent interaction with the RWB Company, including attending Company classes, working with guest teachers and choreographers, and the possibility of being cast in Company productions
- · 70-85% of the RWB Company are graduates of the Ballet Academic Programme and/or Aspirant Programme

Phone: (204) 957-3467 • Fax: (204) 943-1994 email: school@rwb.org · Web: www.rwb.org

## **ARTS UMBRELLA - School of Dance**

Artemis Gordon, L.I.S.T.D. (C.S.B.) Artistic Director Innovative, professional dance training that develops the whole dancer, stressing technical strength and artistic development.

- · International guest teachers and choreographers and professional faculty.
- Beginner through advanced levels. Ballet, Modern, Jazz, Cecchetti Exam Preparation. Performance opportunities.
- Professional Training Program and Dance Company by audition only. Partnership with half-day academic programme
- Summer Dance Intensive
- Post-secondary diploma offered jointly with Vancouver Community College

1286 Cartwright Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6H 3R8 Phone: (604) 681-5268 • web: www.artsumbrella.com Arts Umbrella is dedicated to inspiring kids for life through the arts throughout Metro Vancouver

## **EnPOINTE ENTERPRISES**

EnPointe Enterprises is committed to the design and manufacture of high-quality products that are designed by dancers for dancers and incorporate strength with portability. We manufacture the lightweight PortaBarre™ and StudioBarre™, wall-mounted barres, brackets and sprung dance flooring in BC. We also distribute glassless mirrors, vinyl flooring and staging. For more information check out our website at www.en-pointe.com or call 1-866-491-9019.

## L'ÉCOLE SUPÉRIEURE DE BALLET DU OUÉBEC

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

Only institution in North America to provide a professional ballet program entirely taught in French, L'École supérieure de ballet du Québec is renowned for a superior level of dance perfection, research, and creation.

- · 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 2013 Guide to Excellence alongside its high school academic partner, the Pensionnat du Saint-Nom-de
- · L'École supérieure has received the Outstanding School Award from the Youth America Grand Prix.

L'École supérieure also offers a Preparatory Program and a Recreational Program for children and adults. 4816, rue Rivard, Montréal, OC H212N6 T. 514 849-4929 F. 514 849-6107 www.esbq.ca | info@esbq.ca

## CANADA'S ROYAL WINNIPEG BALLET SCHOOL: **TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM**

Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet School Professional Division's Teacher Training Program is a full-time, post-secondary intensive dance training programme designed to enrich knowledge and provide the skills required for a career as a dance teacher.

- Successful completion of the Teacher Training Program (TTP) leads to a Certificate of Graduation from the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School - graduates enjoy 100% employment success within a variety of professional settings depending upon previous experience and training
- Opportunities for examinations may lead to an Associate designation in the ISTD (Cecchetti branch)
- The University of Winnipeg, Faculty of Education will recognize the work completed by graduates of the TTP allowing them to designate dance as a teachable minor within a B. ED from the University of Winnipea

The RWB School is recognized as a federal training centre and eligible with Canada Student Loans for those attending post-secondary programmes.

Phone: (204) 957-3467 • Fax: (204) 943-1994 email: school@rwb.org • Web: www.rwb.org

## PRO ARTÉ CENTRE

The Centre of Opportunity for Tomorrow's Professionals 6 studios, 3 academic classrooms, 4 music rooms, fitness gym

## On-site academics Grade 5 & up **Pre-Professional Half-Day Programmes**

- · Classical Ballet · Contemporary Ballet
- Contemporary Jazz

After Traditional School Pre-Professional Programmes ISTD & RAD Examinations, International Competitions,

Home of "Catching ART 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

## **CAMERON ACADEMY OF** CLASSICAL DANCE

Principal: Deborah Cameron A.R.A.D.

Faculty: Registered with R.A.D.

"Teaching a Love of dance that lasts a Lifetime" Home of B.C. Provincial Winners

Ballet: Pre-school to Solo Seal also Adult classes -Examinations - Festivals - Performances

(June-Full production at Surrey Arts Theatre)

Contemporary/Modern supports Ballet training Summer Schools Aug 18-24, 2014

Pre-Professional and Children's Levels

Phone: (604) 530-2106

www.cameronacademv.ca

20295 - 73 A Ave., Langley, B.C. V2Y 1T9

## THE PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM OF THE SCHOOL OF CONTEMPORARY DANCERS

Co-directors: Odette Heyn-Penner and Faye Thomson

- Professional post-secondary contemporary dance performance programme
- Nationally renowned faculty and guest choreographers and
- 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

#### FLORA PIGEAU DANCE ACADEMY

Home of B.C. Provincial Representatives since 1987

#### **Professional Training from Pre-School to Adult**

We specialize in Royal Academy of Dance

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

#631-7789 134th Street Surrey, B.C. V3W 9E9 Phone: (604) 594-2132

Email: info@florapigeaudance.com Web: www.florapigeaudance.com

#### HARBOUR DANCE CENTRE

Vancouver's Premier Dance Facility for over 28 years.

Located in Downtown Vancouver

Drop In Classes for Teens and Adults all levels Progressive Workshops for Beginners

#### INTENSIVE TRAINING PROGRAMME for 17 and older Directors: Moe Brody, Laura Bartlett and Pam Rosa

This programme runs from Sept - June 25 hours per week, individual mentoring Performance experience and technical training For intermediate+ dancers

#### Next audition July 14 at 4:30 pm

#### SUMMER INTENSIVE

July 1-19 for ages 16 and up • July 15-26 for ages 10-16 3 separate weeks of classes • Minimum 2-5 classes per day

Classes in: Ballet, Jazz, Contemporary, Modern, Tap, Hip Hop, Street Jazz, Broadway Jazz, Grooving, Singing, Musical Theatre, Cabaret, Salsa and Swing, and more 5 Beautiful Studios, Rentals Available for rehearsals

Workshops for Schools and Private Groups • World Class Teachers **Event Production:** Stagettes and Corporate Classes/Events Directors: Pamela Rosa, Moe Brody and Sabine Clifford

927 Granville Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6Z 1L3 Phone: (604) 684-9542 email: info@harbourdance.com www.harbourdance.com

#### THE RICHMOND ACADEMY OF DANCE - 26 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 - ALL LEVELS
- · Vaganova Technique, all R.A.D. Examinations
- Professional Half-Day Dance/Academic plus Full Evening & **Graduate Programs**
- · Pilates Studio, Body Conditioning
- · Year Round Performance Experiences
- Experiential Anatomy for Dancers
- 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, B.C. V6X 1X7

Phone: (604) 278-7816

web: www.richmondacademvofdance.com email: dance@richmondacademyofdance.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 Coguitlam • Phone: (604) 931-3196

#### **QUINTE BALLET SCHOOL OF CANADA**

#### Catherine Taylor, Artistic Director

The Quinte Ballet School of Canada (QBSC) established in 1972, provides an innovative and versatile dance curriculum which is grounded in classical ballet technique. QBSC is dedicated ro providing an inspiring, challenging and supportive environment that nurtures talented young people to become world-class professional dancers. Our Recreational Division provides a wide variety of dance instruction taught by professional teachers in our purpose-built dance studio complex.

- Full-Time Professional Training Programme for Youth, grades 6-12 (by audition)
- Recreational Division offering after-school, evening and week end dance and movement classes for ages 3 through adult
- Summer Dance Professional Intensive Training (2nd phase for admittance to full-time programme; by audition)
- Summer Dance Open Programme (no audition required) web: www.quinteballetschool.com · e-mail: info@qbsc.ca Phone: (613) 962-9274 or toll-free: 1-866-962-9274 Fax: (613) 962-9275 • 196 Palmer Road, Belleville, ON K8P 4E1

#### ANNA WYMAN SCHOOL OF DANCE ARTS (ESTABLISHED 1970)

#### Anna Wyman, Artistic Director

- Ballet: Classical Ballet Technique
- Junior and Senior Professional Training Programmes: (By audition only - Training includes Classical Ballet, Repertoire and Pointe, Choreography/Improvisation, Contemporary, Jazz & Flamenco)
- General Classes: Contemporary, Jazz, Tap, Hip Hop, Ballet and Musical Theatre
- Adult/Teen Ballet: Tap, Jazz & Flamenco
- Boys Only class Summer Dance Intensives

1457 Marine Drive, West Vancouver, B.C., V7T 1B8 Phone: (604) 926-6535 • Fax: (604) 926-6912

web: www.annawyman.com · email: info@annawyman.com

#### THE SCHOOL OF DANCE

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

Professional Programme in Ballet.

An 8-year training course with internationally renowned teaching staff.

Professional Performance Training in Modern Dance directed by Sylvie Desrosiers BAV.

A three-year, full-time post-secondary programme for intermediate and advanced level dancers. Teacher Training Programme. Acceptance into professional programmes is by audition only. Summer School programmes available.

Leisure programmes for all ages.

200 Crichton Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1M 1W2 Phone: (613) 238-7838 • Fax: (613) 238-7839 e-mail: admin@theschoolofdance.ca

web: www.theschoolofdance.ca

#### **GOH BALLET ACADEMY CANADA**

Chan Hon Goh, Director

#### Be Inspired by Excellence and Unveil Your True Potential

Celebrating 35 years as a premier dance academy in Canada, the Goh Ballet's international and award winning faculty generously impart technical confidence and artistic expression through their training. Our well balanced curriculum, world class facilities, extensive performance opportunities, exposure to a variety of choreographic styles, repertoire, and partnering skills nurture students at every level. Dedicated boy's and men's classes. Scholarships available.

- · Junior School Programme ages 4+
- Pre-Professional Training Programme
- Senior Professional Programme
- Goh Ballet Youth Company ages 16+

#### **Student Achievements Include:**

- 1st Prize: Prix de Lausanne
- Gold: Genée International Ballet Competition
- · 1st Canadian Gold Medal: Tanzolymp Festival, Berlin
- Careers: American Ballet Theatre, English National Ballet, National Ballet of Canada, San Francisco Ballet and Dutch National Ballet, among others

2345 Main Street, Vancouver, BC V5T 3C9 P: 604.872.4014 E: admin@gohballet.com, info@gohballet.com

www.gohballet.com

#### L'ÉCOLE DE DANSE DE QUÉBEC

#### Professional programs:

- Professional performance training in contemporary dance three year, full-time post-secondary programs
- · PPMN Upgrading program, including contemporary and ballet focusing on applied functional anatomy, full-time
- High school ballet and contemporary programs, grades 7 to 12
- · Admission by auditions March and May 2014
- Summer intensive Open to serious dance students Includes international quest teachers - August
- · Recognized by Québec's ministère de L'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport and ministère de la Culture et des Communications

Contact: Lyne Binette Director - Professional programs

pro@ledq.qc.ca

#### Recreational school:

- · Creative dance, Ballet, Jazz Simonson, Contemporary, Hip Hop, Urban, Tap, Pilates, Stretch & Strength
- Classes for ages 3 and over introductory, beginner to advanced levels
- Children's and teen's summer day camp, ages 5 to 17-July
- Recognized by the Ville de Québec-Arrondissement de La Cité-Limoilou and by Québec's ministère de la Culture et des Communications

Contact: Joëlle Turcotte

Director - Recreational programs

info@ledg.gc.ca

310, boul. Langelier, suite 214, Québec QC G1K 5N3 Phone: (418) 649-4715 Fax: (418) 649-4702 Web site: www.ledg.gc.ca

#### **JOY OF MOVEMENT STUDIO**

ALL AGES - ALL LEVELS - ALL DISCIPLINES

Creator/Director Susie Green - Recipient of two - 2002, 2011 -Global Arts Awards, Los Angeles, for outstanding contributions to global arts performance and arts education internationally.

#### **VISIONS DANCE COMPANY (by audition)**

CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL YOUTH COMPANY has performed to 3/4 of a million students worldwide. Four world fairs and United Nations Conference in Beijing, China - Global platform of youth

issues, peace, human rights and the environment.

Auditioning young artists for local single performances. Please call or txt Susie Green (604) 836-6768 to arrange audition time. Limited spaces available.

Workshops focus on choreography, Remembrance Day shows, Christmas assemblies, etc., and the step by step process for creative and technical learning - k-7, secondary school, university and professional

Call or txt Susie Green (604) 836-6768.

2789 McBride Ave., Crescent Beach, Surrey, B.C. V4A 3G3 Phone: (604) 836-6768 • Fax: (604) 535-8075 e-mail: visionsco@aol.com

#### THE SCHOOL OF TORONTO DANCE THEATRE

#### **Artistic Director: Patricia Fraser**

The program provides a broad curriculum, physical and intellectual instruction in contemporary dance, and an environment for learning that prepares students for a professional career.

A conservatory-style education with a concentration on studio work you spend your day dancing.

#### **Professional Training Program**

- Three year, full-time, post-secondary program
- Expert faculty and celebrated guest artists
- · Extensive performing experience
- · Graduates perform with respected artists and companies across Canada and around the world
- Joint program with York University leading to B.F.A. in dance

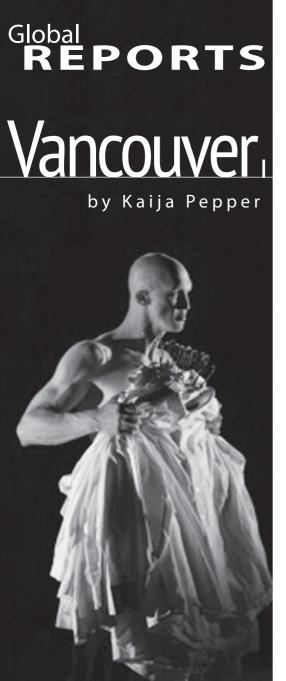
#### Auditions: February 3 & July 13, 2013 Summer School in Contemporary Dance

- · Ages 16 and older
- · Contemporary technique, Graham technique, and repertory/new creation
- July 1 26, 2013

Contact Andrea Roberts, Artistic Coordinator

– Professional Programs

80 Winchester Street, Toronto ON • 416-967-6887 ext. 22 info@ schooloftdt.org • www.schooloftdt.org



emoir is a driving force in much contemporary dance, as seen in a few of the pieces presented at the 25th annual Dancing on the Edge Festival. In *Made in China* — a work-in-progress at the Firehall Arts Centre, the festival's home base — everybody talks onstage about their past: choreographers and dancers Wen Wei Wang and Gao Yanjinzi, new media artist Sammy Chien and musician Qiu Xia He.

At the start, these four accomplished artists tell us a little about their early lives in Asia, with everybody chipping

in to help translate Yanjinzi's story; she is the only one who doesn't speak English and is not based in Vancouver like the others, but in China, where she heads Beijing Modern Dance Company. This friendly opening engages the audience before letting the dance, music and projections speak for themselves.

Lara Kramer, the Montreal choreographer who opened the Edge, revealed the autobiographical inspiration for *of good moral character* in a program note. The full-length duet certainly looks and feels like domestic confession, with close rapport between performers Maria Simone and Lael Stellick, as if they've known each other a long time. The main set piece is an item of bathroom furniture — a claw-foot tub; the main prop, a dozen white shirts.

Even when Stellick lifts Simone high into the air, or when she cartwheels through his arms, there is a sense of ease — and, later, unease — between this couple. Kramer was a bit miserly with the choreographic element of the work, which was built from a series of every-day scenarios — arranging the shirts, draining the bathtub (yes, a little water empties onto the stage), the couple fighting in the most general physical language (Simone keeps throwing herself at Stellick).

But, in the last scene, when Simone is in the tub, shifting restlessly and spreading her body with outstretched arms across its hard porcelain surface, Kramer beautifully combines choreographic and visual art values.

Five nights of mixed bills arrived in town at the end of July via a World Dance Alliance Americas conference at Scotiabank Dance Centre. Most of the choreographers were connected to universities, which meant many of the performers were teachers, students or recent graduates. Ruth Levin, an MFA student from Toronto's York University, performed a muscular solo titled Core, which was about the weight of bones and flesh; Bageshree Vaze, a kathak dancer with a master's degree from York, presented almost its opposite in Tarana, a lightly classical solo featuring a series of lightning turns around the stage, the gold border of her dress flashing.

Vancouver's Simon Fraser University was represented by two dance faculty professors. One, Henry Daniel, showed a documentary on *Here be Dragons* —

Non Plus Ultra, his performance project about West and East and Christopher Columbus. The other, Rob Kitsos, performed with ex-SFU student Kim Stevenson. Kitsos and Stevenson's Casual Conversations is just that: a casual (and comic) statement about the need for immigrants learning English to master the mysterious ums and ahs, gottas and gonnas of everyday language, heard on a recorded voice-over, while the duo motor through smooth, equally mysterious, contemporary dance moves.

Most pieces on the World Dance Alliance bills proved the short form to be alive and well in dance. Two "short stories" to note came from the United States, the first from Melissa Rolnick, on faculty at Minnesota's Gustavus Adolphus College. In Rolnick's *Paradox*, Heather Klopchin vividly combines physical and dramatic power: her muscles stretch like elastic steel in longlegged, long-armed poses, while she thoughtfully watches us (perhaps like we watch her).

Peggy Choy, on faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, performed her *Wigioei Bada/Endangered Sea*, in which a whirl of texture and colour slowly reveals itself to be female, or at least human, face hidden by a carved black mask. The title points to the environmental issues behind the solo, which is set to ocean sounds. To end, the creature takes a triumphant bow.

In late August, Josh Beamish was back from Jacob's Pillow, where he was one of four contemporary choreographers commissioned by Wendy Whelan for her Restless Creature project (reviewed separately on page 60). The 20-something Beamish — whose MOVE: the company was founded in Vancouver in 2005 — certainly made his mark in the east by working with New York City Ballet's high-profile Whelan. He had returned to premiere Pierced, featuring a pick-up team of elite dancers, most of whom were members of major North American companies (the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, the National Ballet of Canada and Pacific Northwest Ballet). I was out of town for the September 7-8 performances of Pierced, but did see an earlier run-through. What can I say? It was a treat to watch these artists working together in the same room, focused and dedicated to bringing Beamish's emerging dance to life. ▼

n the blink of an eye, each year's dance season ends and summer festivals begin. Winnipeg boasts two popular summer events that feature dance: Folklorama and the Winnipeg Fringe Festival.

Held the first two weeks each August, Folklorama celebrates cultural diversity with more than 40 distinct pavilions offering traditional music, dance and food. The award-winning festival attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors from across the province and the United States, as well as points beyond including Japan and Australia. Created originally as a onetime event to celebrate Manitoba's Centennial in 1970, Folklorama has become one of the largest and oldest multicultural festivals in the world, a showcase of community-based and participatory dance, roughly organized into "authentic," "elaborated" and "stylized" categories.

"Stylized" dance is inspired by traditional folklore, but adds a creative twist with costumes, dances and music designed for contemporary audiences. One example is the world-renowned Sarah Sommer Chai Folk Ensemble that performs at the Israel Pavilion-Shalom Square. Founded in 1964 by the late Sarah Sommer, the 40-member troupe, including live band and singers, fuses traditional and contemporary Jewish folk dance as well as influences from Yemen,

Morocco, Spain, Greece, Russia, Poland, Brazil and Africa, among others.

This year's program included perennial favourite Heyaw, inspired by villages in Morocco and Yemen, with the barefoot ensemble wearing gauzy, earthen-coloured tunics and turbans. Their percussive movements, including elbows beating rhythmically against their sides, are contrasted with sudden bursts of spinning in place suggestive of whirling dervishes. By contrast, Kol Ha'Olam Kuló/Yerushalaim Habnuyah/Kol Ha Kavod (The world is a narrow bridge), choreographed by the Chai's former, late artistic director, Nenad Lhotka, and Rachel Cooper begins simply. The dancers' lyrical sweeps across the stage gradually increase both in tempo and dynamic

force, including high kicks and lifts, until the well-paced pastiche work explodes as a joyous celebration of life.

An "authentic" group reconstructs regional folk dances as they have been passed down through the generations. The DOTC (Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council) First Nations Pavilion featured the Walking Wolf Singers and Dancers in traditional powwow dances. Akin to a lecture-demonstration, hosted by local Cree/Ojibway musician Ray "CoCo" Stevenson, the show provided a fascinating glimpse into authentic indigenous culture.

"Elaborated" dance adapts certain elements of authentic music, dance and costumes purely for entertainment purposes while taking into account contemporary modes of expression. L'Ensemble folklorique de la Rivière-Rouge presented a lively program of traditional step dances, or "gigues," at the Pavillon Canadien-Français accompanied by live fiddle band and vocalists, as well as an original choreography representing the cultures of Acadia, Quebec and Manitoba. Christine Lamontagne's Jours de Plaines/Days in the Prairies featured a modern dancer, Marina Lamontagne, integrated within a trio of jiggers, an intriguing combustion of old

Winnipeg also hosts the second largest Fringe Festival in North America, founded in 1988. This year there were six dance

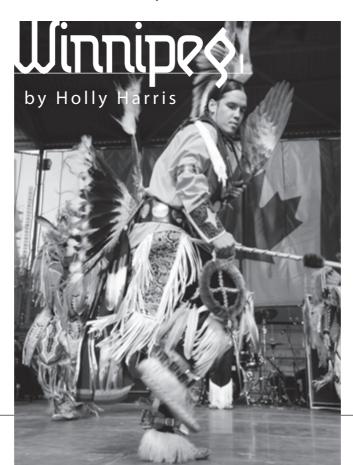
productions. One of the most satisfying was Drive Dance's Timeless. Co-founded in 2010 by Arlo Reva, Kathleen Hiley and Robyn Thomson Kacki, the local troupe performs contemporary works gifted to them by Winnipeg's Stephanie Ballard and Gaile Petursson-Hiley. The program included Petursson-Hiley's gorgeous Cherry Blossom Pink, with its final vision of fluttering rose petals, and the magical The Beating of Wings, where angels are born right before our eyes. Ballard's three solos — Feathers, excerpted from her 2010 fulllength production Homeagain, Twilight and Mini — provided dramatic intensity with each imagistic work showcasing the strengths of its three respective dancers.

The Fringe also included a remount of Nina Patel's poetic JURN-E from 2011 produced by her company the Lime Project. Five women — including Patel — wearing filmy white dresses take turns supporting each other as they share their personal stories depicted as a series of distinctive solos.

Nova Dance Collective created striking stage pictures in And Other Stories featuring eight solos and ensembles choreographed/performed by the seven cofounding members. In of dystopia, Sarah Helmer's head completely swaddled in a red gauzy hood accented her angular, thrusting limbs. Janelle Hacault is cocooned and suspended womb-like in silks

> during Lament. Alexandra Scarola staggers about the stage in a paint-spattered party dress in

The festival also provides opportunities to see touring companies on the Fringe circuit. Edmonton's Good Women Dance Collective (Ainsley Hillyard, Alida Nyquist-Schultz, Alison Kause and Kate Stashko) performed two works. The first Pod, begins with Nyquist-Schultz and Hillyard punching their way out a billowing plastic sheet covering the stage like a lunar landscape. In Shatterscape, Hillyard, Stashko and Kause take turns presenting their perspective of a prior event, thus deconstructing collective memory and the idea of a "universal truth." Both pieces created mesmerizing eye candy not seen often enough in this fair city. ▼



ines that get better with age always start off with a good crop of grapes. So it is with dance. The three women, now "of a certain age," who came together under the banner Cloud 9/7e

Ciel for an enthralling program at Toronto's Young Centre in late June were always fine dancers: Sylvie Bouchard, Karen Kaeja and Claudia Moore. Middle age has enhanced rather than diminished their capacity to deliver physically powerful and emotionally rich dancing.

Cloud 9/7e Ciel's mandate is frankly opportunistic: to provide a framework within which senior dancers can continue to practise their art beyond the conventional dancer "sell by" date. And why not, when these artists have so much to offer?

Bouchard, Kaeja and Moore are still wonderful movers, but it's what they invest For this, the three women are joined by suitably experienced male dancers Michael Sean Marye and Ron Stewart. The gender imbalance establishes dramatic tension and a ripple of jealousy among the women. Only dancers with lives fully lived can pull off this kind of work successfully.

Later in the summer, Bouchard was back onstage reprising with Brendan Wyatt a duet choreographed by Denise Fujiwara, *Unquiet Winds*, from an evening-length work called *Histoire d'amour* (2012). To be exact, the pair performed the minimalist, butoh-inflected duet with its theme of forbidden love in twilight on bare grass in a Toronto park as part of the long-running summer Dusk Dances series Bouchard founded and still directs.

Dusk Dances has become a huge success, drawing peak crowds per night of close to 1,000 people of all ages for a program designed to be accessible and entertaining. At

Torontol
by Michael Crabb

of themselves in that movement that really counts. They dance from the inside out, making their bodies' articulations fully expressive of inner motivation.

The program's two works were ideally suited to such nuanced artistry. Susie Burpee's 20-minute *This Time Past*, set to J.S. Bach's Suite for Cello No. 2 in D Minor, explores the frayed but constant bonds that link a trio of women. Bouchard, Kaeja and Moore might be sisters, briefly reliving ancient rivalries and shifting allegiances, yet still able to draw from a deep well of affection.

Similarly, Tedd Robinson's *Disconcertante* is strongly suggestive of past histories and complex emotional entanglements. A selection of Chopin piano pieces supports a mini-drama set at an elegant evening party.

the entertaining if choreographically light-weight end of the scale was 1981FM from Toronto's physical theatre troupe, Throwdown Collective. The troupe's three members, Zhenya Cerneacov, Mairéad Filgate and Brodie Stevenson, pull up in a genuine 1981 Chevy Chevette and, when it breaks down, turn on the radio and dance in acrobatic fashion to a medley of period tunes.

Another Dusk Dances performer, Yvonne Ng, did double duty during the summer, dancing a comical mock boxing match in Susie Burpee's *Bare-Knuckle Round* with Robert Glumbek while putting the finishing touches to the latest edition of d:mic (Dance: Made in/Fait Au Canada), held in mid-August.

Highlights of the mainstage included the

long overdue Toronto premiere, albeit in condensed form, of Benjamin Kamino's explosively visceral and controversial 2011 solo, *Nudity. Desire.* Whether it fulfills its promise in terms of its stated philosophical underpinnings will continue to be argued. Certainly in length and intensity it's not a dance for the faint-hearted. As a tour de force performance, however, the work is a personal triumph for Kamino. No wonder he won the crowd-funded, people's choice award Ng launched this year — almost \$650.

Sharing the bill, but in its studied, hightech theatricality starkly different, was choreographer-dancer William Yong's ambitious new work, *Steer* — well, an excerpt from a longer work that should be unveiled next year.

Steer falls into a genre of dance that has a long history, namely incorporating dance within a technological framework that, ideally, creates a new kind of theatrical experience. Yong's interest appears to lie in how advanced digital/computer technology is radically changing the way we experience ourselves and the world around us.

For the 25-minute solo, Yong, in a dark, close-fitting latex suit, had wireless acceler-ometers attached to his body outputting real-time information about his movements, as did impact-reading piezoelectric sensors on the floor. Meanwhile, an infrared camera at the stage's front edge registered temperature changes in Yong's body.

This information was then submitted to real-time computer processing by Yong's team of Montreal-based collaborators: visual/interactive artist Jérôme Delapierre and sonic alchemist Navid Navab, known for his experiments in interactive sound design.

The visual effects were spectacular, but too often the humanity of Yong as a dancer seemed overwhelmed, though perhaps this was the intended message.

Contrast this with some of the more traditional offerings on the other two d:mic mainstage programs, notably a much prehyped duet called ... et meme après, choreographed by Louis Laberge-Côté and performed by him and real-life partner Michael Caldwell. Apparently, the emotionally overwrought duet was fed by the couple's actual experience of separation, when Laberge-Côté left his spouse behind to dance for two seasons in Germany. It was doubtless a difficult time for both of them, but the suitcase-andall dance that grew from it never rose beyond the mundane. After all, these kinds of separations are hardly rare, anymore than married life is smooth or uncomplicated. ▼

resplendent and invigorated Ballet BC opened the annual Festival des Arts de Saint-Sauveur July 25-26 with a four-part program. It was the company's first visit to the 22-year-old festival's big tent theatre, which is an hour's drive north of Montreal. It was also its first appearance in Quebec under artistic director Emily Molnar.

What welcome changes Molnar has made! This happy celebration of the future showed off dancers' personalities, diversity and technique in a well-chosen program of mixed styles danced with verve and appeal.

Inspired by saxophonist John Zorn's *Book of Angels*, Molnar's quixotic *Aniel* began the evening, flooding the stage in hot paint-box colours and cool intrigue. This unabashedly feel-good ballet was a spirited workout with heaps of pizzazz, acrobatics and quicksilver moves. Each a soloist as well as a team player, the dancers matched the Cracow Klezmer Band's pumped sound with speedy goofiness delivered with crisp angularity and broad sweeps of limbs. For all its lightness, *Aniel* made huge demands on the willing group.

Makaila Wallace and Gilbert Small's pas de deux from *Herman Schmerman* by William Forsythe (for whom Molnar once danced at Frankfurt Ballet) played out like an off-kilter and off-beat endurance competition with Thom Willems' discordant music exaggerating the deconstructed movements. Forsythe is particularly tough to dance with stop-start directional changes, suppressed preparations and tippy-looking balances. This couple not only mastered the technique, but found plenty of time to project subtle characterization and fun into their performance.

Muse, by former Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal dancer, American Nicolo Fonte, was a portrait of sinew and relationship for two men. Full of flowing physicality, ruptured balances and arch control performed along the lip of the stage, it further demonstrated the eclecticism and skill of this company. Last came Petite Cérémonie, a dance-theatre piece created for 16 in black evening dress by French choreographer Medhi Walerski. Inspired by the idea of life in a box — a premise that never became quite clear to me — this work seemed to be about gaining control over one another.

Ballet BC's opening night was dedicated to the memory of Nathalie Buisson, a former member of Les Grands Ballets Cana-



diens and Nacho Duato's Compañia Nacional de Danza in Madrid. Beloved by the dance community for her generosity and courage, Buisson was diagnosed with incurable brain cancer in 2004. Despite that death sentence, she bravely continued to work for dance. Her biggest ventures came in 2006 and 2009 when she organized and performed in two dance galas, Coeur en tête, raising \$250,000 for oncology research at the Centre hospitalier universitaire de Sherbrooke where she was treated. On July 25, 2013, Buisson died of complications of her illness at the age of 47. She is survived by her husband, two young children and her mother.

After 12 years, the versatile three-week workshop known as Springboard Danse Montréal has settled in as one of this city's most illuminating fixtures. Where else do numerous established dance companies mentor handpicked elite performers trained by outstanding, mainly North American schools?

Springboard's initial focus was specifically on talented students on the verge of careers by providing intensive work experience with established ballet and contemporary dance companies. The project has grown to include slightly older dancers wishing to expand their vision and their professional lives, as well as a separate program for emerging choreographers.

Springboard's 2013 edition followed its tried and true formula: 83 young dancers and seven choreographers each spent 26 intensive hours with eight companies and choreographers. The dancers — there were 15 Canadians; all the others were from the United States — and young choreographers were chosen by audition by artistic director Alexandra Wells, a teacher at New

York's Juilliard School. Mentoring companies for the June 9-28 session included Montreal's Rubberbandance Group, BJM-Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal and Sylvain Émard Danse; Vancouver's Kidd Pivot; New York's Aszure Barton & Artists; Germany's Forsythe Company and Johannes Wieland; and Springboard graduate Stephan Laks, rehearsal director of Sweden's Göteborg and Royal Swedish ballets.

Springboard's menu is always stimulating, diverse and demanding. At every stage of their learning, dancers are watched closely by international talent scouts. Since its inception in 2002, more than 100 Springboard participants have signed new contracts as a result of their experiences.

The final evening is always a simply staged show of the results of all this work. This year, the long, fast-paced evening was held at Usine C, a primary Montreal dance venue. Unlike other years, it focused less on the formidable technique of dancers at the peak of their powers and more on their emotional interpretation of their subject matter. While the former is always thrilling to watch, the latter requires artistry that generally develops with maturity and experience

In the main, the dancers met the challenges, especially in lighter, more accessible works like an extract of BJM's *Harry*. Sometimes they struggled — Springboard is a learning experience, remember. I found they looked uncomfortable in Rubberbandance's *Gravity of Centre*, a complex fusion of urban dance and contemporary ballet with panther-like movement and stark switches of styles and energies underlined with suggestions of narrative.

Nevertheless, Springboard is always exciting. I look forward to 2014. ▼



lmost every other choreographer created an homage to *The* Rite of Spring in its centennial season, so why shouldn't Mark Morris have tried his hand at commemorating Stravinsky's pioneering masterpiece of musical modernism? Perhaps the year's most unusual tribute to the score, Morris' Spring, Spring, Spring received its world premiere June 12, the first of two performances that brought the full, 15-member Mark Morris Dance Group to the University of California's Hertz Hall, part of the third annual Ojai North, an extension of the Ojai Music Festival.

The festival has been a tradition in Southern California for seven decades; it's a unique institution in so much as its music directorship and the choice of repertory and performers changes every year, as does the thrust of the four-day celebration. What started in 2011 as a Bay Area appendix to a venerable institution has developed a character and following of its own. It should be no surprise that Morris was appointed Ojai North's music director; he remains the most musical of choreographers, and much of his repertoire here added up to a survey of maverick and neglected American repertoire (some

of which he has previously translated into movement). In the face of all this, *The Rite of Spring* stood alone, and it was doubtless the fact that Morris considers the Berkeley campus as his artistic home away from home that vouchsafed us the delectable premiere.

Great dancemakers understandably seem humbled by the Stravinsky original. Three decades ago, Paul Taylor avoided the orchestral version and opted for the four-hand piano rehearsal version in *The Rehearsal*. Morris departed even more radically, choosing to set a jazz trio version of the score by Ethan Iverson, his company's former music director and founder of the Bad Plus trio (piano, bass, percussion).

Morris went to pains to inform the press that he wasn't at all interested in Nicholas Roerich's original libretto about ritual sacrifice in pagan Russia that Nijinsky followed. It was the music's dazzling metrical variety and the patterned rhythmic fragments that captivated Morris, a quality made almost palpable in Iverson's arrangement. In fact, the musical performance started in the dark with bits of ancient recordings before Iverson's keyboard deputized for Stravinsky's iconic bassoon solo. Some of us regretted the absence of Stravinsky's orchestral textures. Ultimate-

ly, there were compensations. What mattered most was Morris' response to the score.

Hertz Hall is really a concert hall with a platform, but without wing space. Still, Morris, who is used to working in similar conditions at Tanglewood's Seiji Ozawa Hall, accommodated himself to this venue. Try as he might, however, he could not eliminate all suggestion of narrative in *Spring, Spring, Spring*. Costume designer Elizabeth Kurtzman dressed the women in flowing, filmy white dresses in a manner that recalled Isadora Duncan. The men went topless, but sported vibrantly coloured tights. Right there, in the costumes, one found a significant contrast with the original ballet.

There was a feeling here of topping Roerich. *Spring, Spring, Spring* is a joyfully crafted romp in which the revelers at the end collapse from mere overindulgence (I do believe that Morris expects us to retain images of Nijinsky's grim finale). What matters most here is Morris' response to Iverson's transcription and he succumbs to its rhythmic vitality with a string of merry, ebullient numbers. When his women gather in a circle, they look like one of those ancient magazine ads extolling the virtues of physical culture.

Interrupting these festivities were four hunky men (Aaron Loux, Dallas McMurray, Brian Lawson, Brandon Randolph), who linked arms and pranced across the stage like satyrs in training.

The dance exudes a feeling of spontaneity rare even for Morris; he's not so much confronting a musical classic as he is exploring it without probing its cultural baggage. You don't ask why, near the end of the first part of the work, Amber Star Merkens erupts in an austere arabesque, or why, at the start of the second, Lauren Grant, like a besotted firefly, launches a series of spins for the women. Throughout, we're presented with parallel male and female societies, who seem to meet and merge almost by accident. When the couples repeatedly tumble over each

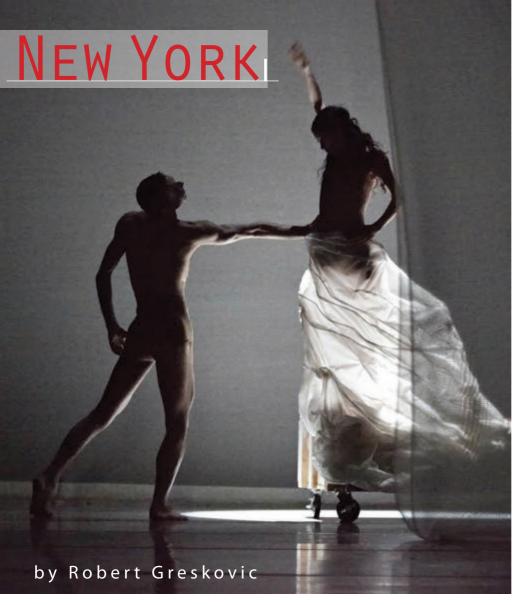
other's backs, you feel they are responding to some biological imperative.

Morris responds to Stravinsky-Iverson both at the phrase level and to larger units with his customary flair, and sometimes he thrills us with the rightness of a choreographic solution. Not since the dinosaurs in Walt Disney's Fantasia have I encountered a setting of "Spring Rounds" that captured the weighty gait of the music so eloquently. The men seem to pull the women through a muddy landscape; then, they pause and (in deference to gender equality) they switch roles. Morris, one suspects, reruns Fantasia in his dreams. Any doubts that Spring, Spring, Spring concerns the renewal of the earth were eradicated by the sight of Merkens' blessedly pregnant state.

One of the composers honoured by Morris was the avant-garde musician and pedagogue Henry Cowell. Two of his string quartets (performed by the American String Quartet) inspired Morris' *Mosaic and United*, which opened the evening. Although the work is exactly 20 years old, its return suggested the presence of a minor masterpiece. The group forays range from phalanxes of jabbing arms to goosestepping to coy Ganymede poses for the boys. The veteran cast made it all look artfully artless.

Morris saves many of his major projects for Berkeley's Cal Performances. Next: a staged production of Handel's pastoral *Acis and Galatea*, scheduled for April 2014. Lucky us. ▼





o close its 2012-2013 season, New York City's Joyce Theater presented a two-week run oddly called Ballet v6.0. Described in promotional material as a "festival designed to recognize dancers and choreographers who are creating work outside the traditional large company setting and are forming their own small companies," the programming offered six small-scale groups from around the United States, with each performing a two-night stand.

Once all was said and done, the title might have more aptly used the current, nebulous designation "contemporary dance" rather than ballet. With its dancing featuring bare legs, sock-shod feet and very few pointe shoes, the festival's ballet claims remained slight, to put it politely. Even the dancemaker arguably

most responsible for this phenomenon, the much acclaimed, American-born, European-situated William Forsythe, has stopped using ballet in his troupe's name. To be sure, soft ballet slippers replaced athletic socks as foot coverings with much regularity during the run, but these ballet-class shoes supported more workaday dance moves than finely bred ones.

Historically, the sock option seems to have been the solution chosen in 1953 by the ever-wily and then young Paul Taylor as he auditioned for New York's Juilliard School's dance department, owing to the fact that he needed an inbetween option once he learned that individuals interested in ballet chose ballet slippers and that modern-dance-directed ones auditioned barefoot. As history has shown, Taylor became a committed modern dance practitioner, one often

decidedly anti-ballet, while late 20thcentury ballet revealed itself as an art where the work of women on pointe remained a pervasive and distinguishing feature.

And here comes Ballet v6.0 with a shapelessness all its own. There were a number of exceptions to the would-be "contemporary dance" aspect of the run, but not all of these were positive. Dominic Walsh Dance Theater out of Houston, Texas, included the only barefoot number, which proved to be one of the festival's high points. Called *Swan Lake* (Duet, 1995), it showed a duet from Matthew Bourne's most personal and theatrically effective take on one of ballet's most iconic, Tchaikovsky-inspired works.

Performed by Walsh as the Prince and the riveting Domenico Luciano as the Swan, the non-traditional duet should rightly have been billed as *Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake* to forestall any expectations at a "ballet" festival for some traditional, Petipa-Ivanov related rendering. Regardless, the duet remained not only the most familiar entry during this run of 19 different offerings, but also the most memorable. With Luciano making an especially notable and indelible impression, this male duet was hardly a ballet offering, but a theatrically effective example of dance theatre.

The least said about Walsh's own contributions to his program, the better, especially his *Camille Claudel*, an all but inept and prolix would-be biographical staging of the tragic life and career of the sculptor as set to a mish-mash of recorded and live music.

Balletcollective, a pick-up company assembled and directed by New York City Ballet dancer Troy Schumacher, proved to be the one entry where ballet's craft and art, complete with keenly schooled women on pointe (all the dancers have current or recent connections to New York City Ballet), looked both contemporary and classically keyed.

Having made its debut previously as Satellite Ballet, Schumacher's troupe — in which he doesn't dance, but is resident choreographer — has a fresh voice if not a distinct one right now. *The Impulse Wants Company*, a seven-dancer work to an original score by Ellis Ludwig-Leone, which had echoes of Aaron Copland, was smartly costumed by

Aritzia, and proceeded as a delicately episodic affair, in which a brooding Taylor Stanley made a dramatic but inconclusive effect. Both here, and in a second, similarly effective and also inconclusive work, Epistasis, Balletcollective left New York with a calling card that made a reliable case for further visits.

Ballet X, co-directed by choreographer Matthew Neenan and Christine Cox, had lows — dire ones with socks that seemed to almost brutally cut off the dancers' legs at the feet in Annabelle Lopez Ochoa's grim, meaninglessly titled Still@Life — and one rewarding high, in the form of The Last Glass (2010), Neenan's spirited and accomplished 10-dancer foray fed by "inspiration from the wild street-parade sound of American indie-rock band Beirut." In addition it featured fresh and fine dancing for two of its petite women on effectively expert pointes.

Company C, Contemporary Ballet, led by Charles Anderson out of San Francisco, and Whim W'him, directed by Olivier Wevers, from Seattle, proved to be unmemorable. The former was blander, though Yuri Zhukov's Railroad Joint showed off the fine leg- and footwork from its agreeable cast of seven. The latter was less lightweight, but also more predictable and cliché-ridden. Social awareness of a dim order (Monster), a re-thought 19th-century classic in a cloyingly cute rehash (Flower Festival) and a pointlessly extended romp around a settee as a prop (The Sofa), provided insufficient reason for keeping this group on New York's stages.

Jessica Lang Dance offered four works, all by Lang, whose modern dancesteeped choreography has, for some reason, endeared her to sundry ballet companies. These efforts, performed here by a nine-dancer strong ensemble (including, notably, ex-Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's Clifton Brown) took shape as dim imitations of creations from dancemakers who've already made memorable marks on the dance world. To be sure, none of these inspirations, Paul Taylor being but one, were especially ballet-believing in the first place. Lang's 2011 I.N.K., which didn't echo any particular previous dancemaker's achievement, took off on its own with visual effects in the form of ink-splash video projections by Shinichi Maruyama. ▼







ach summer in Britain the creativity of the major dance companies is at pause. The last appearance of English National Ballet, for example, at the London Coliseum in July, was when Alfa-Bank, whose commitment is to strengthen cultural links between Russia and the U.K., sponsored A Tribute to Nureyev to mark the 75th anniversary of his birth. Any attempt to help new young audiences to grasp the importance of Nureyev's unique worldwide career is welcome.

Those of us who saw him, and his many productions, over the years obviously have individual ideas about the composition of any program in his memory, but the company gave well-rehearsed accounts of the selected three — Fokine's *Petrushka*, Béjart's *Song of a Wayfarer* and Petipa's *Raymonda Act III*.

Fabian Reimair in the title role, a neat and precise Nancy Osbaldeston as the Ballerina, and an excellent Moor by Shevelle Dynott carried the drama admirably. The *Raymonda* act was led by the scintillating and sympathetic partnership of Daria Klimentova and Vadim Muntagirov, but the evening's high point was undoubtedly Muntagirov and Esteban Berlanga in the eloquent and wonderfully constructed *Song of a Wayfarer* created for Béjart's own company in 1971 for Nureyev and Paolo Bortoluzzi.

Annual performances by the major vocational schools are always a chance to assess talent and potential in their students. At Covent Garden, the Royal Ballet School's matinee, dedicated to its principal Gailene Stock, opened with *Youth Concerto*, devised by Antonio Castilla and Diane van Schoor

to music by Kabalevsky, which moved from dancing by the smallest (and always engaging) boys and girls to the advanced level of the graduates of 2013.

The most exhilarating of the other works was *Canon in D Major — Le Souffle de l'Esprit*, choreographed by Jirí Bubenícek. This was danced with immense vigour and versatility by three young men, Esteban Hernandez, Takahiro Tamagawa and Joan Zamora.

Earlier, at the Linbury Theatre, a larger list of works included some folk dances as well as the winner of the school's Ursula Moreton Choreographic Award — *The Fraudulent Smile*, an ensemble for seven male dancers choreographed by Ross McCaw to music by Kroke. Contracts have been made for graduates and seven are to join the Covent Garden company — nationali-

ties are mixed and only one, Matthew Ball, is British. Three, none British, are going to the Birmingham Royal Ballet.

At one time the school used to stage full works by de Valois, Ashton or MacMillan from the company repertoire, and because of de Valois' belief in the vital importance of folk and national dance training for classical dancers, there was always a full display of such dances instead of the current sadly sketchy presentations.

English National Ballet School, now directed by Samira Saidi (formerly a principal with Birmingham Royal Ballet) staged an ambitious program at New Wimbledon Theatre. It began with Balanchine's Allegro Brillante, led by Giulia Neri and Matthew Koon, and ended with MacMillan's Soirées Musicales, a largely forgotten, upbeat and over-exuberant work created in 1988 for Dame Ninette de Valois' 90th birthday, and set to "a suite from Rossini arranged by Benjamin Britten." Principal dancers were Isabelle Brouwers and Connor Barlow.

A trio of choreographic pieces by students could be termed "school of Forsythe and McGregor" rather than classically inspired, and Daniela Oddi and Mlindi Kulashe danced a new version of the Ballroom pas de deux from *Cinderella*, composed by English National Ballet's new associate artist choreographer, George Williamson.

Ross McKim's excellently run Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance is especially good at encouraging international students to be creative and interpretative, as well as proficient in both contemporary and classical techniques. Its 2013 program contained a very personal, and enjoyable, reaction to Stravinsky's Rite of Spring choreographed by Rambert Dance Company's artistic director, Mark Baldwin; the internationally mixed students danced it with great purpose and ability. A number of short student choreographic works were given, and the evening ended with a revival of Robert North's delectable and tremendously witty Troy Game for eight men, originally created for London Contemporary Dance Theatre.

There are, of course, many other schools around Britain providing excellent training for hopeful young dancers.

Probably the most innovative new British venture is Crystal Ballet, which, instead of aiming at stage performances, is creating dance for the digital public, to be downloaded to personal portable devices for a fee of £15. With Mark Handford as managing director and Henry St. Clair as artistic director, it has a stellar group of choreographers and dancers. The first work, *Genesis*, directed by Kim Brandstrup and Bennet Gartside, was launched in October.

Among the overseas visitors, the first London season by the Shanghai Ballet was at the Coliseum in August, and they chose to present their full-evening *Jane Eyre* (no doubt as a compliment to England!). Choreographed by Patrick de Bana to an arrangement of music by many composers, it was theatrically too diffuse and confused, but it certainly proved the dancers (led by Xiang Jieyan, Fan Xiaofeng and Wu Husheng) to be technically fluent, musically sensitive and dramatically powerful.  $\blacksquare$ 





n Cinderella, the shoe famously maketh the princess, and black stilettos are the seminal image of Thierry Malandain's contemporary version of Perrault's tale—all 300 of them hanging around the stage in artsy symmetry. A striking first vision especially as seen from the gold and blue auditorium of the Versailles Royal Opera, the first venue on the Malandain Ballet tour after the work's premiere in San Sebastian, Spain.

It seems Malandain had been toying with the idea for a while but bided his time before coming up with a vision all his own. This is possibly his most ambitious endeavour to date and, as a result, one that posed a couple of problems for the Biarritz-based company of just 20 dancers or so.

Malandain has always been the master of minimal yet straight-to-the-point props, and he would probably not relinquish his nude-coloured leotards and tights even if given millions. Malandain is into sense and sobriety. The ball scene, for instance, was cleverly augmented by the addition of clothed dummies on wheels.

His most surprising casting was having men perform the roles of the stepmother and daughters. Giuseppe Chiavaro, as the tall, gaunt and bald stepmother on crutches, carried with him a touch of the macabre. An idea that could have been taken even further if Malandain had abandoned the notion that the stepmother and her equally bald daughters must also bring comic relief, achieved here with an excess of buffoonery.

But, as always with Malandain, the very substance of the piece lies in his fluid, vivacious and down-to-earth choreography. As Cinderella, Miyuki Kanei was a perfect Malandain dancer. Her skimpy white dress was a little wonder courtesy of Jorge Gallardo. With sleek black hair combed back à la Valentino, the very handsome and athletic Daniel Vizcayo almost stole Kanei's thunder. But all of the dancers inspired fantastic joy and energy.

The live Euskadi Symphony Orchestra, on the other hand, lacked a little octane. And the repetition of the Cinderella Waltz, however beautiful, sometimes numbs the soul. That's the only caveat about an otherwise successful new piece by one of our greatest French choreographers.

In June and July, Les Étés de la Danse festival at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris invited Manuel Legris' Vienna National Ballet for a three-part bill whose first two programs, a tribute to Nureyev and a potpourri of excerpts, served to showcase the quality of the dancers, but proved to be drawn-out appetizers to the pièce de résistance, the Nureyev Paris Opera version of *Don Q*. It was performed with dazzling dynamics by a high-wattage corps de ballet, dominated by the star couple: Maria Yakovleva, a grand ballerina, and highpowered Denys Cherevychko, whose raw energy and gigantic jumps enthralled the audience.

In September, the season kicked off as always with Les Étoiles du 20ème siècle gala dedicated to ballet classics, and also a few contemporary snippets. It was dominated again by box-office draw Daniil Simkin, now with American Ballet Theatre, who surpassed himself this year in a solo created for him by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa in which he demonstrated — besides his unique aerial prowess and Swiss clockwork technique — an emotional sensibility I hadn't seem him achieve before.

For the start of the season, the Paris Opera Ballet coughed up, pun intended, the story of consumption-ridden Marguerite Gautier in Neumeier's ballet *La Dame aux Camélias*. An undeniably

clever ballet with fine construction, perfect staging, fantastic everchanging costumes and extremely chic sets by Jürgen Rose, the piece also magnifies the frivolous lives of 19th-century Parisian courtesans, trotting out waltzes 13 to the dozen that may just put you off your Chopin.

Stylish étoile Agnès Letestu, 42 this year, cleverly chose La Dame as her retirement piece. She looks the epitome of class in it while showing dignified amorous distress when the choreography allows. Pale and dark-haired étoile Stéphane Bullion could not have been a better choice for the role of unwitting victim Armand. He is the romantic hero incarnate and a fine, sensitive and stylish dancer.

Simultaneously, Brigitte Lefèvre and half the company were in Moscow proffering a much jollier repertoire piece, Pierre Lacotte's Paquita.

Benjamin Millepied, who is to take over the reins next season, has not as yet clearly defined his plans for the future, aside from announcing the creation of a choreographic workshop at the Paris Opera and declaring that there are not enough "dancers of colour" in the company - which earned him some mixed

As it stands, it is already a year of transition for the Paris Opera with three of the most popular étoiles leaving this season, including Letestu, Isabelle Ciaravola and Nicolas Le Riche, who had actually run for the position of artistic director and will leave with a bang in June following a Soirée exceptionnelle. His wife, étoile Claire-Marie Osta, left last year and incidentally now heads the Paris Conservatory of Dance in Pantin.

Aurélie Dupond, one of the company's favourites, will also retire next season. It now remains to be seen what Lefevre — who never hid the fact that she would have preferred a home-grown dancer to take over, notably ex-étoile Laurent Hilaire, presently ballet master — will do about filling those empty star slots. Consult Millepied or stick to her own guns? Time will soon tell. ▼

by Justine Bayod Espoz

am a relatively avid reader of the New York Times. I find it a good source of cultural and international information, and I enjoy reading its articles on Spain, which although sometimes heavily romanticized, seem to be relatively even-keeled. Recently, while reviewing the newspaper's coverage of the Spanish economic crisis, I came across an article from March 2013 by Raphael Minder that addressed both the crisis and flamenco. Although the article's title – Flamenco's Foreign Saviors — gave good indication of the story's thematic slant, I was still not prepared for such an overwhelmingly one-sided article.

Readers of this column will know that Spain's cultural sector has been brought to its knees by the current economic climate, but to suggest "foreign saviours" is the answer is like treating a gaping wound with an arrogant and outdated bandage. Yet Minder and the editorial staff at the New York Times seem to believe that foreign flamenco students are key to resuscitating an apparently moribund flamenco industry.

The article centres around Alicia Márquez's dance studio in Seville, where of the 10 dancers in her class, only one is Spanish. It explains that flamenco depends more and more on foreigners who come to Spain to study flamenco, seeming to ignore the fact that there is a difference between flamenco — the art form — and flamenco academies.

As flamenco's popularity abroad grows, so does the number of potential foreign students, which has created a very different market. The increase in foreign students has led to the establishment of more dance studios and workshops — many catering almost exclusively to foreigners — and has provided more work for flamenco teachers. Should this influx of foreign students suddenly come to a halt, some studios would certainly close (less demand, less supply), but those with the best reputations would continue to function with local students. This standard supply-and-demand scenario does not indicate a dependence on "foreign aid." Studios are a business, not an art form. While a studio might rely on foreign students to keep its doors open, flamenco does not rely on them to continue existing.

The article also explains that many Spanish students can no longer afford tuition because of their unemployment or low-wage jobs. An understandable side effect of the economic circumstances is forgoing non-essential expenses, and if dance is simply a hobby, classes are obviously a luxury to be sacrificed. However, the segment of students addressed in the article does not seem to include flamenco dancers on the professional track, many of whom abandon private academies around the age of 15 or 16 to study at one of Spain's many respected conservatories, where there is no shortage of applicants. By the time these dancers reach 20, they are working in any number of the country's professional companies, unlike the 20- and 30-somethingyear-old students in Márquez's advanced

Minder quotes the one Spaniard in the class as saying, "I used to consider flamenco to be purely Andalusian, but I have come to realize that an Australian or a Japanese can show more enthusiasm for flamenco than most people here." Could not a similar realization be reached upon meeting Russians who prefer breakdancing to ballet? Or of Chinese musicians who prefer performing Baroque symphonies to Peking Opera? Are all Spaniards supposed to love and study flamenco out of national pride?

Tourism is Spain's largest industry, which means the country relies on a constant influx of foreign funds to have a functional economy. So why are foreigners credited with saving flamenco, but not for saving Spain itself? Maybe because political and economic appropriation is frowned upon as imperialism, while cultural appropriation is somehow a less threatening concept that can be confused with cultural appreciation. Saying that an art form born of Spanish culture needs rescuing, and that the rescuers are people foreign to the country and culture, is not only erroneous, but offensive. Flamenco is such a vibrant and continuously evolving art form that there is no threat to its continued existence.

Flamenco should be enjoyed and practised by anyone and everyone, and it warms my heart to know that something so quintessentially Spanish can be so widely appreciated because that speaks volumes of Spain, its culture, its people, its artists and their creativity. But, in its short history, flamenco has survived a monarchy, a civil war, a dictatorship, censorship, poverty and repression, and with or without foreigners, it will survive much, much more. ▼

hat a summer of deep contrasts for Italian dance. Glorious events and serious crises came in succession, once again confirming both the difficulties in Italy's cultural politics and the performing arts community's truly heroic will, with its touch of utopian Don Q spir-

On one hand, the presence on our stages of two of the greatest stars of their generation, the still outstanding Sylvie Guillem and Alessandra Ferri (happily back in the theatre after her official retirement in 2007), brought audiences from all over Italy to catch their exceptional performances.

it that may be the secret of the arts survival.

On the other hand, the announcement of the imminent closure of an important opera house ballet company like Florence MaggioDanza — with whom Guillem was appearing — made us all wonder about the destiny of ballet inside Italian opera houses.

The Foundation Maggio Musicale Fiorentino has been in trouble for years, due to daredevil management and financial cuts from the National Performing Arts Ministry. It was announced that the ballet company, which is part of the foundation, would be closed, together with the legendary scenographic laboratory. While not out of the blue, the news of the closure arrived during the first days of the celebrated Maggio Musicale Festival — which included Guillem's performances with MaggioDanza — instantly causing a reaction among the Italian dance and music community. Teatro alla Scala director Makhar Vaziev and the remaining Italian opera house ballet companies pleaded to avoid the closure, as did the unions, which organized flash mobs and sit-ins in front of the Maggio Musicale's theatre in Florence (whose mayor, Matteo Renzi, is president of Maggio Musicale board). Rome's Ministry of Culture also protested the closure. Strikes fol-

One of these, just a few minutes before the curtain call, almost cancelled the premiere of the evening with Guillem in one of her signature choreographies: William Forsythe's *Steptext*. It was a regrettable incident that confirmed the notion that one of theatre management's main problems — generally of all the opera houses — is the unions' blind arrogance in defending the privileges of a few.

Behind the curtain, tension was so high that MaggioDanza director Francesco Ventriglia, after an exhausting negotiation



to keep the performance from being cancelled, had a big argument with the union representative. Two days later, Ventriglia resigned. A pity, as under his passionate leadership the Florence company had reached a high standard and was revealing improvement among its young dancers. As of the end of September, the company is still at work, but there are now only 17 dancers, reduced from 40.

In addition to *Steptext*, the MaggioDanza program included a very accurate performance of Balanchine's *Four Temperaments*; Jirí Kylián's *Six Dances*, performed with wit and perfect dramatic tempos; and Andonis Foniadakis' powerful creation for the company, *Les Noces*.

Steptext was, of course, the diamond in the crown. Here Guillem, in a red leotard, gave a lectio magistralis about being a ballerina assoluta: to have a clever theatrical sense and still have a total mastery of her body, which she can chisel in classic lines of dazzling purity, flash in contemporary darts, raise to breathless balances. It was a joy to see how the three young dancers performing with her — Alessandro Riga, Michele Satriano and Massimo Margaria — also showed great dynamics.

Ferri's return was less fraught. At Spoleto Two World Festival, for which she is the artistic consultant for dance, Ferri opened with the debut of *The piano upstairs*. A piece about the end of a conjugal love written by the celebrated Broadway dramaturg John Weidman, Ferri performed her choreography with the Tony award-winner Boyd Gaines. *The piano upstairs* blends reality

and memories, dialogue and dance, revealing the inner progress that drives the man to understand why the woman left him.

Ferri's absence from the stage seems to have been for just a few minutes rather than years; she is still intense, elegant, quivering and charismatic. She looks so essential, almost minimalist in the way she concentrates dramatic intentions in gesture, and her tiny, unique silhouette seems to reverberate light all around. The risky danceand-drama texture of The piano upstairs was very well received by audiences and critics alike, and it is a very good start for Ferri's upcoming projects: Martha Clarke's production of Colette's novel Chéri, which will premiere in New York in December 2013, and a new creation by John Neumeier, which will take Ferri back to La Scala, in December 2014.

Spoleto Festival offered also the Mark Morris Dance Group and the Italian debut of Benjamin Millepied's L.A. Project, which disappointed with his manneristic choreographies. Indeed the final sensation of the season was thanks to another mature star: Mikhail Baryshnikov, who together with movie star Willem Dafoe performed in Robert Wilson's bizarre vaudeville staging of The Old Woman, a surrealistic novel by Soviet writer Daniil Kharms. Truly a tour de force in singing, dancing, acting with all the virtuosic changes of rhythm, mood and tempo quintessential to Wilson's vision — it was a wonderful example of control, comprehension and commitment, which Baryshnikov shows at any new challenge of his prodigious artistic research. ▼



# World Class Training in a World Class City

#### INTERNATIONAL SUMMER INTENSIVE

Coh Ballet Academy Canada | HILV 7 AUCUST 9





t has become a recurring summer event that Danish Johan Kobborg and Romanian prima ballerina Alina Cojocaru tour Denmark and invite a varying group of international soloists to join them. This year the invited dancers all had links to London's Royal Ballet. Under the name of Verdensballetten (World Ballet), they visited several manor houses in the countryside, which provided spectacular outdoor settings. A string of solos and pas de deux alternated with musical items with Danish opera singers and the English-Norwegian violin virtuoso Charlie Siem, accompanied by Swedish pianist Mats Knutsson (who accompanied several of the dances, too).

Brazilian Roberta Marquez was a sophisticated Black Swan stylishly partnered by Australian Steven McRae. He also demonstrated tipsy nonchalance in Van Cauwenbergh's solo to Jacques Brel's chanson *Les Bourgeois*, and proved an expert tap dancer to Gershwin's *I Got Rhythm*.

In a duet from Christopher Wheeldon's stringent choreography *Polyphonia* to György Ligeti's pounding piano rhythm, English dancer Thomas Whitehead manipulated Australian Leanne Benjamin's supple limbs into novel lifts. He also showed powerful physicality as a potent, male swan in a solo excerpt from Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake*.

With elegiac grace, Benjamin offered her heartfelt interpretation of the serene soprano solo *Pie Jesu* from Kenneth MacMillan's *Requiem*, titled after the Fauré music to which it is set. Kobborg remained the gallant partner for Marquez in a pas de deux from *La Bayadère*, and with understandable delight played the captivated prince to Cojocaru's sparkling Cinderella in a

white, diamond-studded tutu. They shone together in the final pas de deux from *Le Corsaire*.

The Bellevue Summer Ballet had a fine return visit to Copenhagen from Czech twins Jirí and Otto Bubenícek, dancing in their ballet from 2011, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, based on Oscar Wilde's novel. Dorian Gray enters a pact that allows him to stay young and handsome, while his portrait gradually distorts, evidence of his inner corruption, as shown in a portrait projected on the backdrop. Keith Jarrett's piano improvisations suited this version of the story, and for the "pure love" duet Bruno Moretti lent his music from the ballet *Caravaggio*.

The sensitive Raquél Martinéz portrayed the devoted woman in Gray's life, who he eventually mistreats. At times the twins seemed to represent Gray's inner struggle between his good and bad sides; at other times one personified Gray, while the other portrayed characters around him. The twins have danced together in several duets since they won the Prix de Lausanne in 1992, and it was fascinating to witness how they were able to benefit from their similar appearance while still maintaining integrity as expressive and dramatically individual artists.

The second work of the evening was Cathy Marston's significant new ballet *The Elephant Man*, inspired by the true story of Joseph Carey Merrick (1862-1890). It brought the return of Alexander Kølpin to the stage as Merrick and Nikolaj Hübbe as his benefactor Dr. Treves.

Kølpin, a former principal of the Royal Danish Ballet, is the artistic director of Bellevue Summer Ballet, but it has been several years since he performed. As artistic director of the Royal Danish Ballet, Hübbe has been on the Royal stage in a couple of character roles since his official farewell performances in 2008. Years of artistic understanding endowed their performances with physical and dramatic lucidity.

Wearing a padded vest that transfigured his carriage and walk, Kølpin embodied a heartfelt portrait of Merrick, at first hiding under a blanket from the humiliation of being treated as a wild animal. Convincingly, he gradually moved from insecurity to gratitude toward Dr. Treves when the doctor, discovering the sensitive personality within the deformed body, treats him as a fellow human being. In a moving duet, Hübbe dressed Kølpin in a suit and supported his unsteady steps. At one point, Kølpin suddenly moved and jumped without restraint, which seemed to suggest that Merrick's mind had been set free. Royal Danish Ballet character dancer Mette Bødtcher was beautiful as the actress Mrs. Kendal, who becomes Merrick's friend. In a scene where she has invited him to the theatre, she danced in a shining red gown in a sensual way that captivated both the pretend audience on the stage and the real one in the auditorium.

Louise Alenius created an ideal sound-scape combining various instruments that underscored the contrast between Merrick's gentle character and the scorn of the outside world, using both melancholic melodies and sneering, growling sounds. She rediscovered the marxophone, a zitherlike instrument used by buskers about 100 years ago, which underlined the market atmosphere in the first part. In a clever way, she also used a xylophone, which Kølpin played imprecisely to illustrate Merrick's unarticulated "speech" and later, when his life took a positive turn, the xylophone was in harmony with the soundscape score. ightharpoonup

M

ost dancers in Norway who are trying to survive through their profession are freelancing. Those with a steady job on full-

time contract are few and far between, and companies are top-heavy with dancers from outside the country. There are 870 members in the Norwegian dancers' union in what is clearly a tough market.

To give the dancers a chance to keep up their quality, the dancers' union started a professional training program called Proda 25 years ago. The classes, funded by the government, are free for professional dancers. During the week it is possible to participate in classical, jazz and modern techniques. Since nearly all dancers are gathered in Oslo, it is there you will find the best opportunities, but Proda also organizes classes in five other cities. When dancers from abroad visit, they are very welcome to take part in the training for free.

The Norwegian National Ballet has 68 dancers on its full roster, with only 17 Norwegians, all of whom have to master both the classical and modern repertoire. This year, the company has contracted Jo Strømgren and Alan Lucien Øyen, as resident choreographers. It will be interesting to see the results, considering both of them work just as much with theatrical productions as with pure dance.

The Norwegian National Ballet started their season with a guest performance by Jo Strømgren Kompani, The Society, on the small stage. The Society is one of many shows Strømgren has created where he mixes everyday movement, dance and language. Here, three men meet daily to enjoy their coffee, a serious matter where the process of making the coffee is just as important as drinking it. Eighty-four cups are on a shelf waiting to be used, but one day there is a tea bag in one of the cups. Disaster is close and the Day of Judgment even closer. The way Strømgren builds his story reminds me of the tale where the kid asks his mother where the holes in the cheese come from. That also ends up with a war looming.

The three dancer/actors are just great. Bartek Kaminski, John F. Brungot and Trond Fausa Aurvåg each have strong, though very different, personalities. When they have to move in unison, they become one person, and are capable of bringing Strømgren's humour out to the audience.

Strømgren and his company have visited more than 50 countries over the last few years, and when The Society finished its run in Oslo, they toured to Philadelphia. So much touring has been possible because Strømgren does good choreography, but also because the company has analyzed very thoroughly how to create performances that cost the least to travel with. That means the number of dancers is never more than three or four. Costumes and decor have to be able to be packed in a reasonably sized box that can be shipped by air. Some critical voices are finding Strømgren's focus on how to build his performances for touring too commercial, others see it as a stroke of genius.

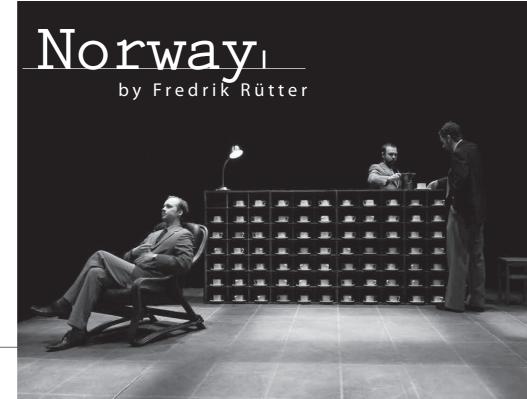
High up north in what is called the Barents region, the activity on the dance front is quite high. The Barents Dance Council works for collaboration between artists living in the northern parts of Sweden, Finland, Russia and Norway. That means Stellaris DansTeater, situated in Hammerfest, Norway, performs just as much in Russia, Sweden or Finland as in Norway. When they use the spoken word, they even create Norwegian and Russian versions. At the moment they are performing as part of a school program called the Cultural Rucksack, presenting *Dunon-*

gen og Tempusegget, which tells the story of a baby seagull who would rather play around than let his mother teach him to fly. ("Dunongen" is baby seagull in Norwegian, while "Tempusegget" is a mix of Norwegian and Latin, meaning the egg of tempus, or time.)

The Cultural Rucksack contracts professional dance artists to perform in schools, with funding from the surplus of Norsk Tipping, the state-owned gaming company. The pupils are given a chance to be acquainted with all forms of the art. There are many smaller dance groups in Norway who have been given the possibility to survive because of this organization.

The House of Dance started up the new season at the end of August with a one-woman performance by Tunisian artist Héla Fattoumi, part of a celebration to mark the 100-year anniversary of women's right to vote in Norway. In *Manta*, she chose to dress in a complete niqab. There were moments where the light shone from the back of the stage, making it possible for the audience to see through the fabric that covered her like a tent and discover Fattoumi's body as a shadow. Otherwise, only when she made her movement very big did the choreography show through.

In other news, the modern dance company Carte Blanche has started the hunt for a new director. Bruno Heynderickx will have had the position for six years when he leaves in June 2014. ▼





t has typically been swans, rather than fairy godmothers, that the Australian Ballet has shown to the world in recent years. In fact, over the past two years, the company has performed no less than three versions of *Swan Lake*, ranging from the traditional (Stephen Baynes) to the reconstructed (Graeme Murphy) to the deconstructed (Gideon Obarzanek). However, *Cinderella* is still a big fish in the world of classical ballet, and the Australian Ballet can now boast three versions of this classic in its repertoire.

Stanton Welch created a full-length version in 2007, but it has not been revived since. Most famous is the version from 1972, when the Australian Ballet performed Frederick Ashton's *Cinderella*, with Ashton himself featuring as one of the Ugly Stepsisters with Robert Helpmann. This Ashton acquisition joined an era of repertoire that featured works by Glen Tetley, Kenneth MacMillan and Helpmann himself; new, modern and often cutting-edge ballets sitting side-by-side with traditional classical and Romantic works.

The Australian Ballet has once again embraced this approach of combining new with old, having just wrapped up productions of *Paquita* and *La Sylphide*. However, almost all of the interest in the 2013 season has revolved around the new: Alexei Ratmansky's *Cinderella*. Ratmansky is a hot property at the moment, and Australian audiences were thrilled at

the prospect of a world premiere to add to one other Ratmansky work in Australian Ballet's repertoire. In 2009, his *Scuola di ballo* was performed as part of a triple bill, bracketed between Nacho Duato's *Por vos muero* and Wayne McGregor's *Dyad 1929*. In that context, *Scuola di ballo* settled in like a 19th-century throwback, readily dismissed as comedic filler. Nevertheless, the choreographer's star has risen since 2009.

Ratmansky, significantly, is not a novice with *Cinderella*. In 2002, he created a full-length version for the Mariinsky Ballet, a work that continues to tour. Ratmansky himself has expressed some surprise at the longevity of that *Cinderella*, and it may be a lingering sense of disappointment with it that encouraged him to make a new version on Australian Ballet. Although the dancers were asked to do more than reconstruct the Mariinsky version and to develop a new ballet, Daniel Gaudiello, principal dancer and Cinderella's Prince, admitted to watching clips of the other *Cinderella* on YouTube.

The Australian Ballet's *Cinderella* has been an enormous success, buoyed by an outlandish and layered design by French artist Jérôme Kaplan, sublimely gorgeous choreography by Ratmansky and insightful casting for the ballet's main characters. Leanne Stojmenov and Gaudiello were selected to perform the lead roles on opening night, with Amy Harris, Ingrid Gow and Halaina Hills cast as the unholy trio of Stepmother and Stepsisters. Wearing

bubble skirts and beehives, the Stepsisters vamp and ham their way across the stage, coaxed and coerced into different movement by their determined mother.

It is the relationship between her family, as much as with her prince, that defines Cinderella. In this case, the obsequious and ambitious peacock of a Stepmother is contrasted with a portrait of Cinderella's real mother that slides onstage. Cinderella weeps at the side of the oversized frame; later, it is the Fairy Godmother's magic in bringing that very image to life that wins Cinderella's trust and devotion. A drunken father makes an appearance as well, and it is he, rather than her stepfamily, that Cinderella forgives at the end.

This Fairy Godmother is beaky and unassuming. She is dressed in a bowler hat and spectacles, looking somewhat like Magritte's *The Son of Man* — everyman and yet, ultimately, unidentifiable. Later, when she is flanked by a company of identical figures in grey overcoats, each bearing the numbers of the clock, the sense of the Fairy Godmother as an omnipresent force comes to the fore.

The reference to Magritte and surrealism is apt, as designer Kaplan has clearly been inspired by both. At the palace, garden topiaries come to life, spinning around to transform into ticking metronomes decorated with an all-seeing eye. Thanks to Wendall K. Harrington's projections, a full moon transforms first into a clock and then melts down into the countryside: Dali's vision come to life as Cinderella's world falls apart. Even a sofa in the shape of pink puckered lips, which brightens up the shabby home of Cinderella and her family, is a replica of the sofa Dali created for Mae West. Later, the lips go digital, floating into the air - a nod now to Man Ray — and the world takes on a golden glow as Cinderella fantasizes about a different life.

Perhaps the strangest design choices come with the appearance of the solar system. Cinderella is transported up to the heavens to watch the planets, stars, moon and sun dance. Textured and layered tutus resemble beach balls orbiting the dancers' hips, rather like planets that have sprouted limbs.

Throughout, Kaplan's designs, enhanced with Harrington's projections, are layered and complex. Paired with Ratmansky's poetic choreography, the effect is almost overwhelming, but also quite magical. ▼

or its summer 2013 London tour, the 200-strong Bolshoi Ballet needed a dozen 40-foot sea containers to get everything across to the U.K., but the logistical problems paled beside their recent backstage dramas.

On January 17, 2013, artistic director Sergei Filin had acid thrown in his face. Bolshoi soloist Pavel Dmitrichenko was filmed confessing he'd persuaded an ex-convict named Yuri Zarutsky to carry out the attack, but that he'd only meant to "rough him up" and hadn't sanctioned the use of acid. He'd been angry that his girlfriend Anzhelina Vorontsova, another company dancer, was not being given enough major roles. Dmitrichenko remains in detention awaiting trial, and Vorontsova has resigned from the company. Meanwhile, a public letter of support for him was signed by more than 300 members of the Bolshoi and then, at a pre-trial hearing in August, Dmitrichenko denied instigating the attack and insisted Zarutsky was acting alone. Dmitrichenko faces up to 12 years in jail if found guilty.

Alongside this, principal dancer Nikolai Tsiskaridze was creating another stir. Hugely popular in Russia as a result of TV appearances on chat shows and as a judge on Dancing with the Stars, rumours abound of his prominent role in the factional in-fighting that squeezed out former artistic director Alexei Ratmansky in 2008. There's also been speculation he was involved in the online posting of homosexual pornographic pictures of Gennady Yanin, which saw the then deputy director lose his job in 2011. Tsiskaridze has been critical of Filin and made no secret of his desire to take the top job himself.

When Tsiskaridze questioned the extent of Filin's injuries after the acid attack, the Bolshoi's director-general Anatoly Iksanov took the opportunity in June not to renew his contract. However, early in July, just a few weeks before the start of the London tour, Iksanov himself was fired following a government investigation into corruption, particularly regarding Iksanov's handling of the refurbishment of the Bolshoi Theatre (which took six years and ever-spiralling costs that reached £500 million). Vladimir Urin, former director of the Stanislavsky and NemirovichDanchenko Moscow Music Theatre replaced him and the company left for

If the dancers were demoralized by all these events they certainly didn't show it in their Covent Garden performances. Widely praised by the London critics for their technical prowess (if not for what was seen as unadventurous planning of only bringing bums-onseats classics), they also looked relaxed and happy offstage. The entire threeweek run of 21 performances sold out and rising star Olga Smirnova stole the hearts of just about everyone.

tendon that struck Maria Alexandrova during the opening night of La Bayadère.

Back in Moscow, the 2013-2014 season was announced, including a new production by Pierre Lacotte of the 19th-century ballet Marco Spada, a company premiere of John Neumeier's The Lady of the Camelias and a new ballet by Jean-Christophe Maillot based on Shakespeare's Taming of the Shrew. It remains to be seen whether the London tour and the new season will be the start of the rehabilitation of the company or just a short, happy blip in their current woes.



Filin (who has now had more than 22 operations and remains blind in one eye with only 10 percent vision in the other) was led onstage by Smirnova and Semyon Chudin to a standing ovation at the end of the August 12 performance of *Iewels* — the first time he'd left the German clinic where he has been receiving treatment. To top everything off, Ivan Vasiliev and Natalia Osipova gave virtuosic performances in The Flames of Paris and the company left London with their onstage reputation intact. The only obvious mishap was the ruptured Achilles

There are rumours Tsiskaridze may return to the company now that Iksanov has gone, and Dmitrichenko's pre-trial re-opens on October 18. Further tough times lie ahead in resolving the inherent in-fighting and corruption Urin has already removed creative director Mikhail Fikhtengolts and announced plans to restructure both the ballet and the opera companies — but if any company can maintain their high artistic and technical standards during such trying times, it is, as they've proved time and again, the Bolshoi. ▼



## Stuttgart Ballet / Made in Germany

Made in Germany, an eclectic program that premiered in the newly renovated Schauspiel Stuttgart theatre in October, provided a tantalizing look at the face of contemporary German choreography. The cunningly devised evening also offered an illuminating look at the young dance stars of Stuttgart Ballet. There was hardly a false step in the programming, with several brilliant solos and stunning pas de deux that took dance away from traditional boundaries.

The solo extracted from Romanian choreographer Edward Clug's Ssss... was a startling opener, with muscular Marijn Rademaker burning a patch off the

stage. This is white heat cast against the elegance of Chopin piano music. Erotic and powerful, the solo is all about athletic, feral attack. Classical motifs and less elegant moves turn ballet upside down and tug it inside out. Even cut adrift from the complete ballet, Clug's choreography fixes desperation on the retina of the imagination. Rademaker danced with intensity, finding meaning between steps and making the stage an arena for personal exploration.

When he returned later with Marco Goeke's Affi (Little Monkey), it was with the eccentric, fluttering hand motions and physical lunges that define Goeke's work. Created for Rademaker, this piece is a perfect union of dancer, choreographer and musical inspiration. Johnny Cash has been used by several dance-

makers, but no one has wed the pain and angst of his life with the melting soul of his music as Goeke has. When Rademaker physically placed himself inside the lyric of *We'll Meet Again*, an unusual Cash recording to say the least, a wedge of pain is shot from the stage.

Another star was inspiration for Goeke's *Fancy Goods*, a solo for the expressive Friedemann Vogel, with the assistance of five fan-waving chorus boys. Anyone who saw Zizi Jeanmaire at the Casino de Paris in the 1960s will recognize this homage to her dazzling *Mon truc en plumes* number. Set to the voice of the divine Sarah Vaughan, it is an incredible link of jazz, ballet and star turn. Vogel is brilliant at this sort of erotic tease. His lithe body tugged against the music, providing a sense of playful spirit and the witty sophistication Jeanmaire and Vaughan were noted for.

Demis Volpi, the South Americanborn, Canadian-trained and Stuttgart-refined young choreographer, was represented with *Little Monsters*, his award-winning piece from the 2011 Eric Bruhn Prize Competition in Toronto. Set to a trio of Elvis Presley songs, this unusual work is both ferocious and fascinating. Danced by the young stars Elisa Badenes and Daniel Camargo, it's a slow, melodic burn of sexual tension and desire.

I Want You, I Need You, I Love You, croons Presley and the dancers' bodies ignite. There is an undertow of sadness as well and we feel loneliness and desperation beyond the intense malefemale physical attraction. Volpi's penetrating piece is a contemporary look at youth longing to connect, but always missing the truth of the moment.

Volpi's second work, *Allure*, to music by jazz giant Nina Simone, was a luxurious solo for Hyo-Jung Kang, a young Stuttgart ballerina who can act, dance and suggest dangerous physicality.

There is little doubt that Katarzyna Kozielska is one of the up-and-coming choreographers of Stuttgart Ballet. With *Symph* (a truncation of Symphony), Kozielska has used Beethoven and Vivaldi to create a work that contrasts exquisite lyricism with more contracted physical propulsion. Eight dancers found passion, humour and a touch of the abstract that is Kozielska's secret weapon. The lifts, plunges into space and slightly odd juxtapositions were exciting.

Alicia Amatriain and Jason Reilly found all the humour in Christian Spuck's *Le Grand Pas de Deux*. Each is a first-rate clown, as well as a daring dancer, catching the haughty allure of a premier danseur and a prima past her prime. Proof of their range was offered by Itzik Galili's *Mona Lisa*, a pas de passion that has Amatriain and Reilly stalking each other like hungry cats.

The evening was filled out with Douglas Lee's Fanfare LX, a pas de deux from Mauro Bigonzetti's Kazimir's Colours and Roman Novitzky's comic pas de trois Are You As Big As Me? The only misstep was Finale Aus das Siebte Blau by Spuck, which looked a tad tackedon, designed to give the night a splashy climax.

All in all, Made in Germany is a brand name well worth keeping.

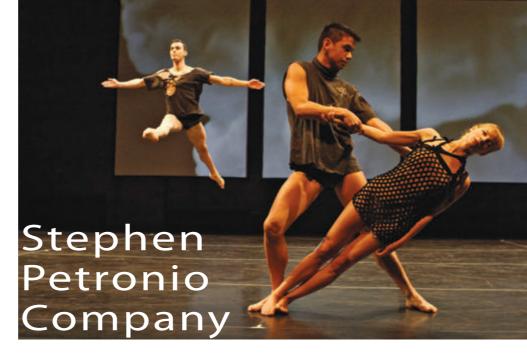
— GARY SMITH

#### Stephen Petronio/ Underland

The Stephen Petronio Company brought energy and virtuosity to the Vancouver Playhouse stage for the DanceHouse series season launch on September 27. The company's six men and four women appeared in Stephen Petronio's *Underland*, created a decade ago for Sydney Dance Company in Australia. The work premiered at Petronio's home base, New York City, in 2011, and is now touring. This major hour-long collection of dances set to Australian balladeer Nick Cave (of Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds) was my introduction to the American choreographer's work.

Choreographically, Underland is built on tension between the formality of the trained body and the informality of the natural one (in his program biography, Petronio cites both ballet superstar Rudolf Nureyev and contact improvisation guru Steve Paxton as influences). The legs — which were usually bare, the calf muscles in high relief — whip out in arabesques, often while turning, or scissor open in a series or two or three quick tight jetés. The arms also whip out in straight, semaphore-style lines. Then all of a sudden, the formal, held torso collapses forward, and for a moment the movement is about curves and release.

It plays out a bit schizophrenically on-



stage, although disparate styles of all sorts sit next to each other quite comfortably these days. Perhaps it's because Petronio doesn't blur the boundaries, but features first one, then the other, in rapid, distinct succession.

Video and music are equal partners to the dance. A large triptych screen featured disturbing images of planes, soldiers and explosions right at the top, and later a nuclear mushroom cloud blossomed. Video artist Mike Daly mostly set an apocalyptic tone that didn't seem particularly related to the work's main inspiration, which was the music.

Both Underland's glory and its limitation is that it's set to Nick Cave's delicious growl, which is pure underworld all on its own. The music often features a low, boozy beat, next to which the dance seems a little too neat and tidy. During Cave's *The Carny*, with its everything's-gone-wrong delirium featuring a dead horse, Petronio has the men lift the women like they're marionettes, stiff and helpless without someone to pull their strings. Dance showing the manipulation of helpless women is hardly light stuff, but it was tamely done, in a faux-balletic mode that didn't seem to get near the heart of the darkness in the rain-drenched carnival song.

Tara Subkoff's costumes for the women were suitably off-key and eye-catching in this scene: bras and red tutus. The men, in white turtlenecks and shorts, were mysteriously clad; perhaps the pure clean white was meant ironically.

The costumes changed for each song,

adding to the evening's episodic feel. There are torn cargo-styled pants and tops for the very touching *The Weeping Song*, when the dancers march steadily about the stage. Forming a circle, they turn and dip, or drop their heads, their simple movements a graceful response to the music's quietly relentless beat.

In the romantic *The Ship Song*, Sub-koff seemed out of step with her mishmash of costumes: the women wear dresses (one is a puffy full-length gown) and one man wears a shiny black raincoat, the other a shirt.

Daly's video shone here, with close shots of a body lying on its side, the natural curves of the torso lifting and falling with each breath. Then there are two, then three and finally four bodies, creating an intimate rolling ocean of flesh.

Onstage, two men (Gino Grenek and Joshua Tuason) and two women (Davalois Fearon and Jaqlin Medlock) connect and disconnect, in couples or all together, a lovely flow of embraces that at times read as actual relationships — between a man and a woman, or between the women or the men — and at other times as a gentle abstraction of the impulses that bring bodies together.

If in the end *Underland* was primarily a showcase for the songs, I've certainly become a fan of Nick Cave. And it's about time we caught up with the New Jersey-born Petronio — whose decadeslong career has taken him internationally — here in Vancouver.

— KAIJA PEPPER

## Fokine, van Manen, and Greco and Scholten / corps

Three ballets spanning a period of 100 years made up the program, corps, which opened Dutch National Ballet's autumn season in September at Amsterdam's Musictheater. Mikhail Fokine's Les Sylphides was first performed for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in 1909 and Hans van Manen's Corps premiered in 1985 for Stuttgart Ballet, while choreographic duo Emio Greco and Pieter C. Scholten's Het lichaam van het nationale ballet (The body of the national ballet) was created for Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo just two years ago (under the title Le Corps DU BALLET). One can only say "hats off" to artistic director Ted Brandsen for successfully accomplishing that most difficult of tasks: putting together an emotionally satisfying and thought-provoking mixed bill.

The three ballets, each daringly new for their time, centered around the "corps," that group of dancers who form the heart of any ballet company. Each choreographer shone a light on the group's strength, diversity and physicality from a different perspective.

When Fokine created *Les Sylphides*, he changed ballet history forever, eschewing narrative and the strict formality of Petipa's choreography in favour of the abstraction of fluid, free ensemble patterns. The opening picture can still draw gasps of appreciation. In this version, the white-costumed ensemble is poised under the arch of Toer van Schayk's bare silver trees. No ruined church, only the enormous stark branches illuminated by a soft glowing light. This paring down of the decor is wonderfully effective, so much so that I wished the designer could have taken it further and done the same for the costumes.

The notion of a poetic youth infatuated with beauty doesn't date, thanks to the glory of Fokine's choreography, which spills out in waves over the stage, a total expression of Chopin's music. Under Rachel Beaujean's coaching, the corps danced impeccably with softly rounded arms, a Romantic tilt to the upper body and soundless pointe work. William Golding's fine technique and musical phrasing made something special out of the rather thankless mazurka solo. Later, Golding and Jurgita Dronina gave the pas de deux a melting softness. I wasn't as taken with Victoria Ananyan's mazurka; although she

has a glorious elevation, it was spoiled by her rather brittle manner. Maia Makhateli, on the other hand, was joy and lightness personified in the waltz variation.

If Les Sylphides showed the body of women off to perfection, van Manen's Corps was all about the virility of the men. Again, the opening tells it all; as the first haunting notes of Alban Berg's Violin Concerto (finely played by soloist Liza Ferschtman and the Holland Symfonia) fill the auditorium, 12 men clad in brief gladiator-like tunics are seen silhouetted onstage. One by one, they jump heavily into second position, as if in initiation of a familiar ritual. They lift their arms, with a sudden bend of the

wrist, and take formal ballet poses (evoking Balanchine's *Serenade*). The group closes ranks and a woman appears — the first of three. With each entrance, a different man is enticed away, leaving the others uncertain and wary. The three duets the couples perform express various emotions, ranging from tender and playful through to anguished and distraught.

Van Manen's use of clear geometric lines, his familiar wing-like arms and jazz-style lunges tell a dramatic story shot through with an underlying sexuality; *Corps* disturbs, provokes and moves us. It is a masterly work by this major choreographer and it fits Dutch National Ballet like the proverbial glove.

Strangely enough, it is in the final work that this company really comes into its own. Strange because it is so contemporary in style, so different from anything it has danced before. Come to that, I imagine different from anything seen by a majority of the audience.

Greco and Scholten are the co-founders of ICKamsterdam, a choreographic centre that forms an umbrella for a myriad of modern dance-related activities. Primarily though, they are concerned with creating and presenting cutting-edge dance. The work is not a fusion of contemporary and modern styles, but more an enrichment of one through collaboration with the other.



The body of the national ballet opens on a lone dancer (a superlative Edo Wijnen). Clad in a blue grass skirt, he goes through a series of intricate, mutated ballet steps. To an acoustical background of chugs, whistles and grinds, and an insistent underlying heartbeat, the corps of 30 men and women appear. Faceless and clad in softly draped, flesh-coloured body stockings, they join him. The pace builds; in their movements we recognize swan arms here, multiple turns into a Black Swan attitude there, but there is subtle friction — poses are held interminably, and the dancers' long, sharp cries disturb the orderliness. The music fades but the dance goes on, carried by the intensity of the group, including Wijnen, with only the sounds of exhaled breath to pace them. They pause and, as if from a distance, the soft strains of Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker can be heard. A woman (Sasha Mukhamedov) rises on pointe and gently bourreés back, lightly marking the familiar steps and slowly pulling the group to her.

The body of the national ballet is not about conventional movement, it is about the essence, magnetic power and exhilaration of the dance. It is also about the power of one individual to unify and inspire a group.

— JUDITH DELMÉ

#### Scottish Ballet / **Dance Odysseys**

Jonathan Mills, director of the Edinburgh International Festival, explained in a written statement that he'd "wanted for some time to offer Festival audiences the chance to explore dance on a more intimate scale." In 2013, Mills teamed up with Scottish Ballet's artistic director Christopher Hampson to present Dance Odysseys, which featured Main Theatre and On Stage Studio events, with the latter attempting to bring festival audiences closer to dance as per Mills' vision.

However, I would not call the onstage performance space a studio or intimate. It was created by setting raked riser seating against the back wall of the Festival Theatre's stage that ran all the way down to the front, where the dancers performed, with the stage curtain acting as the backdrop. Those perched atop the highest rows were not likely to feel closer to dance or the dancers.

The On Stage Studio lineup was comprised of New Voices, four short pieces choreographers up-and-coming James Cousins, Helen Pickett, Henri

Oguike and Martin Lawrence; Duets, by Scottish Ballet's first artistic director Peter Darrell, Cousins, Sophie Laplane and Pickett; and Contemporary Classics, with pieces by the legendary Christopher Bruce, Twyla Tharp and Jirí Kylián, as well as one film, Kylián's Silent Cries. The film, from the eighties, outshone the live shows thanks to Sabine Kupferberg's expressive performance, and Kylián's memorable choreography involving a glass wall.

Scottish Dance Theatre's SisGO, with everyone standing onstage and the dancers involving members of the public in both improvised and choreographed routines, was the most engaging of the studio pieces. As the audience wandered about, barefoot dancers in neon, print spandex and tracksuits began weaving amongst them. Upstage, a nearly nude dancer writhed on the floor insisting everyone lay hands on him. Many were happy to oblige and soon many others were rolling around with him. Then a flash mob erupted. Although taking some people out of their comfort zone, it was a once-in-alifetime dance experience.

The last piece of each of the On Stage Studio mixed bills took place in the bar area of the Festival Theatre, where audience members had to find seats on the stairs or floor, or stand beside the banisters while the dancers awkwardly stood in position. Despite its location and lack of audience-artist barriers, there wasn't much of a connection between the two parties.

Kristen McNally's Foibles, commissioned specifically for this non-traditional space, incorporated the theatre's bar to create what seemed to be a club scene. Each of the dancers portrayed their own storyline as they stomped around like conceited club kids, a cigarette firmly in hand. The music, a hodgepodge of film soundtracks, set a contemporary scene, but was overdone, as was each dancer's performance, with more strutting and posing than actual

Dance Odysseys' crowning gems were performed within the Main Theatre events in the traditional manner, with the audience seated in the auditorium and the dancers onstage. The program included Scottish Ballet in a double bill of Kenneth MacMillan's Sea of Troubles and Hampson's Silhouette (both lastminute additions when Édouard Lock cancelled his premiere reportedly due to a family illness). It also featured Glen Tetley's stunning Pierrot Lunaire and Hampson's well-rehearsed The Rite of

Hampson's Silhouette, choreographed in 2010 for the New Zealand Ballet and set to Poulenc's Concert champêtre, plays with light and dark, male and female, yin and yang, mainly through the clever use of sliding panes that magically transform a principal ballerina into a principal male dancer, and a male corps into a female corps. Silhouette is not devoid of charm, but poor timing and missed marks made the piece look clumsy.

A recreation of German dancer and choreographer Gerhard Bohner's 1989

> Im (Goldenen) Schnitt I, performed by Barcelona-based Gelabert Azzopardi Companyia de Dansa, was Dance Odysseys' final piece. Due to its scale, this solo would have worked better as part of the On Stage Studio lineup. The minimalist dance was performed by a trench coat-clad Cesc Gelabert, who almost ritualistically performed repetitive and oddly quotidian motions back and forth across the stage. Despite sculptor Vera Röhm's elegantly subdued golden wood and plexiglass pillars, there is very little that is eye-catching about the work. A substantial amount of the audience didn't stick around to see what the movement was leading to, and the slap of theatre seats retracting as people walked out became as much a part of the soundtrack as Bach's beautiful

- JUSTINE BAYOD ESPOZ



#### Wendy Whelan / Restless Creature

Wendy Whelan, the New York City Ballet principal dancer, premiered **Restless Creature** at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in a week-long run (August 14-18, 2013) at the Ted Shawn Theatre. The evening's four duets each paired Whelan with the choreographer from whom she commissioned the work. While there are some details still to be smoothed out, Restless Creature showed a serious commitment to choreography that didn't simply showcase Whelan's celebrity status. Kyle Abraham,

first foray into commissioning the dance she will appear in.

Ego Et Tu by Madrid-born Alejandro Cerrudo, now resident choreographer at Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, opened. Cerrudo's background in European contemporary dance drives the duet, combining balletic stretch with modern dance's weightedness and sense of momentum. Slippery and silky, Ego Et Tu begins with a solo for Cerrudo followed by a solo for Whelan, introducing them as individuals before we see them as a pair. When they dance together, the points of contact are subtle at first, head to sternum, a light touch to the back of the arm. Then they

move more fully, swirling low lifts that aren't about elevation but hover at the edge of gravity. The lifts unexpected, without the customary balletic preparation. Also, Whelan is an acparticipant in the partnering, lifting herself on his body, rather than being displayed.

While one might wish for a clearer musical idea with the dance (performed to Max Richter, Philip Glass, Ólafur Arnalds and Gavin Byars), this piece, already lovely, has poten-

tial to become something quite beautiful as Whelan relaxes into the motion.

The first act closes with *Waltz Epoca* by Joshua Beamish, the artistic director of MOVE: The Company in Vancouver. Whelan starts with a solo, presenting an image of a powerful woman, not a romantic fantasy. Beamish observes her from the dark upstage and begins to shadow her, with variations. For example, his arms mirror the path of her legs, making unison in lines through space. Their limbs slash and carve the space with precision and confidence, the mathematics of their subtle differences bringing to mind both the ballet world and Merce Cunningham.

While *Waltz Epoca* is linked by music by Slovenian composer Borut Krzisnik, after the initial idea Beamish introduces several subsequent motifs in need of prioritizing and editing (pedestrian walks on the diagonal by Whelan, the appearance of a red ball gown, first carried then worn, a speedy solo by Beamish to a ticking metronome, the cumbersome appearance of a giant swinging lighting instrument). The final image of the pair waltzing, with heads dipping and circling to a secondary sense of momentum, is a satisfying image to take into intermission.

The second act opens with Kyle Abraham's The Serpent and the Snake. Abraham, the artistic director of New York company Abraham.In.Motion, is known for his exquisite suppleness and speed, and Whelan matches him in stealth and sensuality. Their chemistry works. The strength of the piece lies in Abraham's respect for the differences between them. He does not try to make her dance like he dances. Rather, he figured out a way for her to enter his world and still remain herself. The electronic score by Hauschka and Hildur Gudnadóttir, and dramatic lighting by Joe Levasseur, contribute to the heightened intensity of the dance.

Finally, Brian Brooks' First Fall was the evening's most polished piece, which is not surprising as it was the only one that was not a premiere (they debuted it at Vail International Dance Festival in 2012). Brooks is artistic director of Brian Brooks Moving Company (also New York-based) and a former dancer with Elizabeth Streb.

The work feels like two dances, the first a duet for the arms and upper bodies, their limbs twining together in minute variation and repetition. The second part of the dance is introduced by a lighting change more than a choreographic transition. Whelan, in a yellow slip, is supported, propelled and lifted in a variety of manners by Brooks, dressed in dark tank top and trousers, who fades into the background. They explore simple questions of physics: lean, lift, drop, catch, fall. We watch her float, and it doesn't matter that we know how it's happening — it's a little bit of magic.

Of the four choreographers, Abraham has brought Whelan furthest from her home. Her concentrated engagement with the material in *The Serpent and the Snake* makes it very clear that Restless Creature is an artistic venture and not a vanity project.

– MAURA KÉEFE



Joshua Beamish, Brian Brooks and Alejandro Cerrudo all worked with Whelan's talent and curiosity, without depending on the familiar world of the ballet pas de deux. The dancing will only get better once the newness of the choreography and the partnerships settle in.

At New York City Ballet, not only does Whelan dance in the repertory of extraordinary choreographers including George Balanchine, Jerome Robbins and William Forsythe, she has originated roles in dances by Alexei Ratmansky, Wayne McGregor, Jorma Elo and, notably, in seven out of 10 ballets made for the company by Christopher Wheeldon. Restless Creature is her

# Mauro Bigonzetti / Almost Blue and other works

Italy's premier contemporary dance company, Aterballetto, had not performed in Canada for more than 20 years when the troupe arrived in Quebec for two performances at the Festival des Arts de Saint-Sauveur in August. Only 10 of the company's 18 dancers came on tour, but there was still ample chance to judge their artistry in five works by Mauro Bigonzetti, the company's former artistic director who catapulted Aterballetto to prominence in Europe.

All of the pieces were excerpts from larger works with the exception of *Almost Blue*, a duet from 2009 performed with languorous seductiveness by Ivana Mastroviti, partnered earnestly by Daniele Ardillo, to the haunting trumpet of Elvis Costello's bluesy jazz. This was an unhurried exploration of extending limbs, the kind of piece that could quicken the pulse of young couples in the audience (or couples still young at heart).

Also created in 2009, Come un respiro breathed a different air altogether — lighter, quicker and with dashes of humour that suited Handel's accompanying music played briskly on the piano. The opening chorus line of dancers swayed and undulated like sirens luring sailors to the rocks. Solos by Ardillo, Noemi Arcangeli and Lucia Vergnano, and subsequent duets, were enlivened by sly comic touches that lightly jabbed at the classical ballet tradition. At one point, as a female dancer proudly sat on the floor in a wide split, a passing male dancer calmly took her by the arm and, to her surprise, spun her in the opposite direction.

Bigonzetti's 2006 version of *Romeo and Juliet* to Prokofiev's score was distinguished by his decision to present several couples in the title roles. The idea was to show Romeo and Juliet not as individuals but as representative of different aspects of passionate love. How successfully this intriguing idea worked in the full-length version was difficult to judge at Saint-Sauveur just from seeing the balcony scene duets.

Bigonzetti, though, is a master of the intricate pas de deux, and there was a compelling number for each of the four couples. Dancers' limbs intertwined in surprising fashion, yet rarely did the

interaction seem awkward or forced, a tribute as much to the dancers' timing as to the choreographer's skill.

Is there another choreographer who sees the body in such three-dimensional depth? Bigonzetti's movements stemmed from every part and angle of the body. A foot reached for a partner's head. The back of a hand caught another dancer's ankle. Where a movement might begin or end was a constant delightful surprise.

Certain gestures returned throughout

the evening, almost like a Several signature. times, for example, females were held upside-down, a pose wide open to interpretation. And the evening as a whole turned into a tribute to archly curving backs. Aterballetto's dancers seemed to have the spinal flexibility of contortionists. With their impressive plasticity, they put a bit more sensual twist into their interpretations than those seen in Bigonzetti's works performed by Canadian troupes Les Grands Ballets Canadiens and Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal.

At the end of *Romeo and Juliet*, as the light dimmed on the final couple (Valerio Longo and Serena Vinzio), they curved their backs toward each other and touched fingertips, a splendid pose but more importantly an expression of their awkward tragic union.

Performing under the festival's large collapsible tent has its risks. On Aterballetto's first night, the second half began with the booming accompaniment of a country-rock band performing nearby. The noise seriously marred the first of three excerpts from *Rossini Cards*, which began with a nearly nude Johanna Hwang rolling slowly in front of Ardillo. Any sense of erotic intimacy vanished in the face of the boom-boom background.

To their credit, the dancers soldiered on, but one could not blame Mastroviti for looking uncomfortable during the following trio with Philippe Kratz and Hektor Budlla. The highlight of *Rossini Cards* was the male duet performed by Kratz and Giulio Pighini, which was restrained and thoughtful, with beautifully sculpted lines.

As many times as I have watched *Cantata* danced by Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, I look forward to seeing this cel-

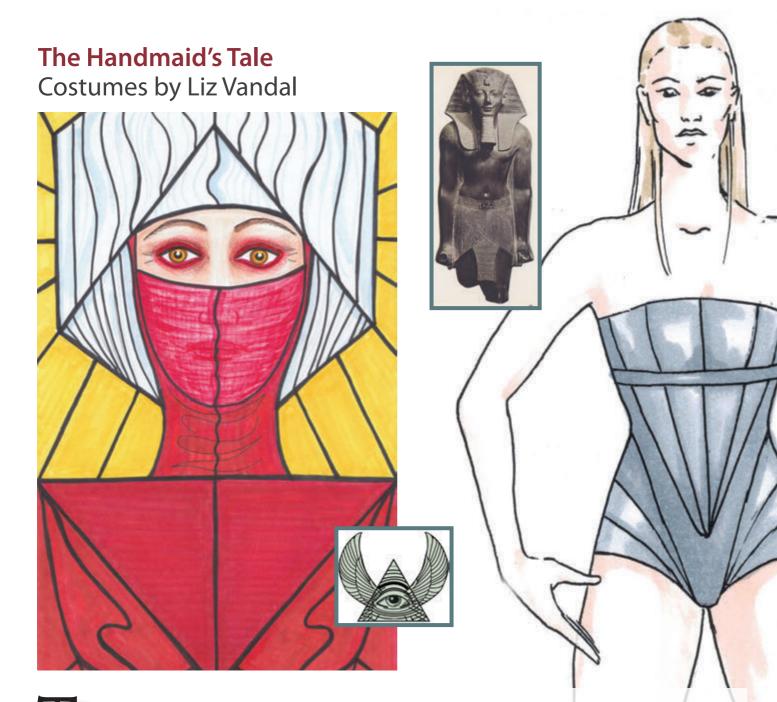
ebration of Italian folk song and peasant life again. Aterballetto performed it with a smaller cast, on a small stage, and without the live accompaniment of the ebullient singers of Gruppo Musicale Assurd (who were still vibrant heard on a recording). The diminished forces couldn't match the overall powerful impact of Les Grands, but Aterballetto's dancers seemed more genuinely earthy. Bigonzetti's audaciously original dialogue dealing with body odour had real Italian speakers who were comical



if a trifle long-winded. The upbeat finale predictably got the audience to its feet.

Last year, Bigonzetti severed all connection with Aterballetto, apparently not on amicable terms. The company's rights to his works expire in three years. When next Aterballetto comes to North America, Bigonzetti regrettably might not be on the bill.

— VICTOR SWOBODA



he "stained-glass" image of Offred, the handmaid of the title, which I drew in February 2013 during the week my father died, set my design aesthetic: graphic and pure lines. My next design — the logo of the oppressive regime under which Offred lives — was a large eye in a triangle with wings. The pyramid shape led me to ancient Egypt, also a strict, hierarchical society. In Egyptian clothing I found the solar pleating, featuring fabric that flowed due to its lightness, but with a rigid aspect because of the permanent pleating. This fluidity in rigidity inspired the panels evoking Offred's and the other handmaids' habits, constructed in a light but rigid fabric. Underneath is the basic leotard. Graphic and minimal, it, too, is both rigid and soft, like the paradox of a totalitarian state into which human beings must fit.

— LIZ VANDAL

Liz Vandal designs costumes for dance, cinema and circus. She recently designed furniture inspired by the Monarch butterfly for the Montreal Insectarium's Papillons en Liberté exhibit. Visit www.lizvandal.com.

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet's *The Handmaid's Tale*, choreographed by Lila York and based on the Margaret Atwood novel, premiered in October 2013.

Galleryspace

L'ÉCOLE SUPÉRIEURE DE

### $\mathsf{BAL}^\mathsf{L}\mathsf{ET}$

DU QUÉBEC

Artistic Direction ANIK BISSONNETTE

Developing Excellence, Creating Emotion

# Auditions

 Sudbury
 Oct 20, 2013

 Sherbrooke
 Oct 20, 2013

 London
 Nov 03, 2013

 Moncton
 Nov 10, 2013

 Vancouver
 Dec 1st, 2013

 Gatineau
 Jan 26, 2014

 Québec
 Feb 09, 2014

 Saguenay
 Feb 15, 2014

 Montréal
 Feb 23, 2014

Register Online www.esbq.ca

Culture
at Communications



Patrimoine canadien Canadian Heritage



merican Ballet Theatre, America's National Ballet Company<sup>®</sup>, is recognized as one of the great dance companies in the world. ABT's repertoire is unmatched and its artists are world-renowned.

James Whitehill Production Director American Ballet Theatre New York, NY



ABT's name has become synonymous with a standard of excellence in ballet, which audiences have come to expect. Harlequin provides that same standard of excellence in flooring.

Flooring is a major consideration as we support the dancers in their quest for that standard. ABT looks exclusively to Harlequin for all of our flooring needs. When the dancers are comfortable, we all breathe a little easier.

From the studio to the stage, everyone performs their best on Harlequin flooring."

For free samples, information or assistance call toll free today 800-642-6440







American Harlequin Corporation 1531 Glen Avenue, Moorestown, NJ 08057 Toll Free 800-642-6440 or 856-234-5505 - Fax 856-231-4403 dance@harlequinfloors.com - www.harlequinfloors.com