

ADAM COOPER – SONG AND DANCE MAN

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Editorial @



ith the approach of

Christmas, there are some seasonal treats in the latest issue of *Dancing Times*. That much-

loved dancer Adam Cooper returns to the UK stage this month to appear in Matthew Bourne's *The Red Shoes* at Sadler's Wells, and we find out what he has been up to since he was last here in an interview with Gerald Dowler. We also hear from the stage designer Dick Bird, who so brilliantly reimagined Birmingham Royal Ballet's lovely production of *The Nutcracker* for its performances at the Royal Albert Hall, and who is now working on a new piece for David Bintley and Sarasota Ballet next spring.

Also this month, we come to the end of Fátima Nollén's series on dance in Latin America. It has given us a fascinating insight into a dance scene not often reported on here, and, to mark the "series finale", we also catch up with Thiago Soares and Iñaki Urlezaga, two South American dancers familiar to us from their performances with The Royal Ballet. In addition, Lee Knights introduces us to bachata, a popular Latin dance originating from the Dominican Republic. Which leaves me just to wish all our readers a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

JONATHAN GRAY

Contributors

Kristyna Kashvili

transitioned from dance to photography with the same passion and eye for detail. She has collaborated with Thiago Soares on *DUELO* in Lisbon, and the *Thiago Soares e Amigos* tour of Brazil. Other commissions include Moscow City Ballet and the *Brendon Cole Live and Unjudged* UK tour.

Gavin McCaig

is a Scottish dancer who performs with Northern Ballet. He trained at English National Ballet School and, prior to this, The Dance School of Scotland. He has written several articles for *Dancing Times*.

Fátima Nollén

is a television and radio journalist who also writes about dance. Her career has taken her from Argentina to Brazil, New York, Miami and London, covering current affairs, politics and the arts, specifically ballet. A qualified ballet teacher, she won a Fondo Nacional de las Artes scholarship in Argentina. She has written for *Revista Ballet, Magazine Danza y Ballet, Danza Hoy en Español* and, for the past 20 years, *Balletin Dance.* Fátima won three Emmy awards whilst working at Telemundo-NBC, and has also acted as a jury member for a number of dance competitions.

Natasha Rogai

is a member of a Russian émigré family of dancers, dance critics and balletomanes. Originally from London, she worked in Paris for many years and has lived in Hong Kong since 1997. She is dance critic of Hong Kong's leading English language daily newspaper, the *South China Morning Post*.

Simon Selmon

has choreographed and performed for stage, film and television and is the author of two books. He is UK and US dance champion and founded the London Swing Dance Society in 1986.

Leigh Witchel

lives in New York, and his involvement in dance has led him from dancing to choreography to writing. He was the dance writer for *The New York Post* and associate editor for danceviewtimes. com, and he also founded dancelog.nyc. He writes regularly for many other publications, including *Dance Review, Dancing Times, Dance Now, Dance View* and *Pointe Magazine*.

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The Royal Ballet's Yasmine Naghdi as Princess Aurora in Act I of *The Sleeping Beauty.*

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English National Ballet at 70



AS PART OF ITS 70TH

anniversary season, English National Ballet (ENB) celebrates its history with three specially curated gala performances at the London Coliseum on January 17 and 18, 2020. The anniversary comes as ENB marks a new chapter in its history with its move to a new home in east London, where rehearsals have commenced.

Showcasing the worldclass talent of the entire company, alongside the future stars of the ballet world from English National Ballet School, with Sergio Bernal joining the company as a guest artist to dance Farruca (*Three-Cornered Hat*), these performances include some of the most groundbreaking works that make up ENB's diverse repertoire.

The galas will begin with a blend of film and performance. Using archive footage of ENB, Dominic Best, who directed the BBC documentaries *Good Swan*, *Bad Swan: Dancing Swan Lake* and *Giselle: Belle of the Ballet*, will create a special film which will merge with live performance on stage, with extracts from George Balanchine's *Apollo* and *Who Cares*?, August English National Ballet in *Etudes*.

Bournonville's La Sylphide, Christopher Bruce's Swansong, Derek Deane's Strictly Gershwin, William Forsythe' s *Playlist* (*Track* 2), Ronald Hynd's Coppélia, Akram Khan's Dust and Giselle, Kenneth MacMillan's The Sleeping Beauty, Rudolf Nureyev's Romeo and Juliet, Roland Petit's Carmen, Ben Stevenson's Three Preludes and Annabelle Lopez Ochoa's Broken Wings. ENBYouthCo will also perform a short

The Box of Delights

CELEBRATING ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY in style with a unique festive event, 2Faced Dance Company presents *The Box of Delights*, an evening of mystery, imagination, dining and performance, at the Green Dragon Hotel in Hereford from December 17 to 23.

The Box of Delights is an adaptation of the 1935 classic children's fantasy tale by John Masefield. The show is co-directed by Tamsin Fitzgerald, artistic director of 2FacedDance, and Tim Evans, artistic director of Powerhouse, a Herefordshire company that develops local creative talent, who adapted the book for this production.

Fitzgerald says: "The Box of Delights is a completely new project for us combining

piece choreographed by its creative director, Richard Bermange. The gala concludes with a nod to ENB's early years, with a performance of one of its signature pieces, *Etudes* by Harald Lander, first performed by the company in 1955.

Tamara Rojo, artistic director of ENB, said: "Our 70th Anniversary Gala performances are a rare opportunity to showcase in one place a huge variety of brilliant work from our extraordinarily rich history. This will be a gala that celebrates the sheer love of dance, both on and off the stage, that has been part of our vision from the beginning."

Throughout its 70th Anniversary Season, ENB is giving away 70 free tickets during each run in every UK city it visits. Working with its partner venues, tickets have been shared with individuals making a positive impact in their community, including staff and volunteers from Lifeshare, who support homeless and vulnerable people in Greater Manchester; Talbot House, who support parents and carers of people who have learning disabilities; the NHS Young Oncology Unit at Christie's Hospital; and Scratch who work to combat poverty in the Southampton area.

For its gala performances, ENB is inviting fans to help them identify inspiring individuals who are making an impact. With "ENB 70 Words", the public can nominate, using 70 words, people whom they'd like to recognise as offering a positive contribution to their communities; 35 individuals will then be selected as recipients of a pair of tickets to one of the gala performances. In addition, ENB is giving a Golden Ticket surprise to one audience member per performance throughout the season. For further details or to book tickets, go to ballet.org.uk.

performance and dining and I'm absolutely delighted to be in partnership with the amazing team at the Green Dragon Hotel in Hereford to make it happen... The show promises to be magical and entertaining, as well as delicious, and will bring together some of the very best culture and cuisine that our wonderful county has to offer."

The audience will begin their journey at a secret location where they will be met by members of 2Faced Dance and led to the nearby Green Dragon Hotel where a three-course feast, created by executive chef Simon Bolsover and his team, will be waiting for them. Throughout the evening 2Faced Dance will present highly skilled dance, circus and theatre around the diners, weaving a tale of mystery and imagination. To book tickets, go to box-of-delights.com.

Scottish Ballet: 2020–2021



SCOTTISH BALLET'S 2020-2021 JAM-PACKED

programme sees the company perform on local, national and international stages, with highlights including a reimagined production of Kenneth MacMillan's *Mayerling* – *The Scandal at Mayerling* – the first time MacMillan's historical masterpiece will be produced in the UK outside of London.

Reimagined and adapted for Scottish Ballet by Gary Harris and Christopher Hampson, The Scandal at Mayerling will feature bold new designs from Elin Steele and a new orchestration from Martin Yates. This new production will open at Festival Theatre in Edinburgh on September 17, 2020. True to the original, the work is set in Vienna in 1889 and tells a story of obsession and mortality, with a backdrop of sumptuous set and costumes brought to

life by the music of Franz Liszt, performed live by the Scottish Ballet Orchestra.

In the US, Helen Pickett's award-winning *The Crucible*, which premiered at *Edinburgh International Festival* in 2019, will travel to the Kennedy Center in Washington DC from May 13 to 17 and *Spoleto Festival USA* from May 22 to 24.

Closer to home, the company makes its Linbury Theatre, Royal Opera House, debut with *This is My Body*, from March 31 to April 3, a contemporary double bill of work that celebrates and tests the power and versatility of dancers' bodies, *This is My Body* includes *MC 14/22*, choreographed by Angelin Preljocaj and *Sibilo*, choreographed by Sophie Laplane.

Alongside work in London and New York, spring will also see the company present its contemporary Campaign image for *The Scandal at Mayerling*.

take on the ballet world's most popular title, as it tours Scotland, following a soldout debut in 2016. Opening on April 9, 2020, *Swan Lake*, choreographed by David Dawson, is a production retold for a new generation.

Swan Lake will be shown in Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Inverness and Glasgow. Rounding off the 2020–2021 season, The Nutcracker returns to open at the Festival Theatre, Edinburgh, on December 5, 2020. The firm family favourite, which places Peter Darrell's choreography centre-stage as dancers perform to Tchaikovsky's score, will also tour to Aberdeen, Inverness, Glasgow, Newcastle and Belfast. For more information about Scottish Ballet's 2020-2021 season and to book tickets, visit scottishballet.co.uk.

News in brief

★ Brighton Festival, the biggest annual multiarts festival in England, returns next year from May 2/to 24, 2020, with a world première by Hotesh Shechter Company, Double Murder. The double bill consists of New Creation, an antidote and partner piece to the murderous, poisonous anarchy of Shechter's Clowns For full programme details, keep an eye on brightonfestival.org.

* Whoopi Goldberg will reprise her starring role as Deloris Van Cartier for the first time on stage with Jennifer Saunders as Mother Superior in a newly adapted production of the musical *Sister Act* at London's Eventim Apollo from July 29 to August 30, 2020. Tickets on sale now from sisteractthemusical.co.uk.

 \star Moulin Rouge! The Musical, based on the film by Baz Luhrmann, will open at the Piccadilly Theatre in London in March 2021. Directed by Alex Timbers, Moulin Rouge! The Musical has a book by John Logan, choreography by Sonya Tayéh, and music supervision, orchestrations and arrangements by Justin Levine. The musical, which features a lavish, immersive set, follows aspiring writer Christian and dancer Satine as they fall in love and, as in the film, celebrates some of the greatest popular music of the last 50 years. Register at moulinrougemusical.com.

National Dance Awards

IN THE YEAR OF its 20th anniversary, the dance section of the Critics' Circle has announced the shortlisted nominations for the National Dance Awards, covering performances in the UK between September 1, 2018 and August 31, 2019.

The list is taken from nominations made by the members of the dance section of the Critics' Circle, over 30 of whom participated in the judging process this year. In total there were 418 companies, choreographers, performers and other creative artists nominated (up from 396 in 2018). The nominees are: Dancing Times Award for Best Male Dancer -Alexander Campbell (The Royal Ballet), Jeffrey Cirio (English National Ballet), Israel Galván (Compañia Israel Galván), Vadim Muntagirov (The Royal Ballet), Marcelino Sambé (The Royal Ballet); Best Female Dancer – Sara Baras (Ballet Flamenco Sara Baras/ Flamenco Festival), Francesca Hayward (The Royal Ballet), Katja Khaniukova (English National Ballet), Laura Morera (The Royal Ballet), Marianela Nuñez (The Royal Ballet); Stef Stefanou Award for Outstanding Company - Mark Morris Dance Group, Northern Ballet, The Royal Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Scottish Ballet; Best Independent Company - Ballet Black, James Cousins Company, National Dance Company Wales, Shobana Jeyasingh Dance, Yorke Dance Project; **Best Classical Choreography** - Patricia Guerrero for Catedral (Flamenco Festival), Cathy Marston for Victoria (Northern Ballet), Helen

Pickett for *The Crucible* (Scottish Ballet), Stina Quagebeur for *Nora* (English National Ballet), Alexei Ratmansky for *Shostakovich Trilogy* (San Francisco Ballet); **Best Modern Choreography**

- Matthew Bourne for Romeo and Juliet (New Adventures), William Forsythe for A Quiet Evening of Dance (William Forsythe/Sadler's Wells), Shobana Jeyasingh for Contagion (Shobana Jeyasingh Dance), Arthur Pita for The Mother (Alexandra Markvo/ Bird and Carrot), Pam Tanowitz for Four Quartets (Pam Tanowitz Dance); Emerging Artist Award -Jemima Brown (Tom Dale Company and James Cousins Company), Salomé Pressac (Rambert), Mthuthuzeli November (Ballet Black), Stina Quagebeur (English National Ballet), Joseph Sissens (The Royal Ballet); **Outstanding Female** Modern Performance -Avatâra Ayuso in No Woman's Land (AVA Dance Company), Cordelia Braithwaite as Juliet in Romeo and Juliet (New Adventures), Jemima

Brown in Epilogues (James Cousins Company), Natalia Osipova in the title role of The Mother (Alexandra Markvo/Bird and Carrot), Solène Weinachter as Juliet in *Juliet and Romeo* (Lost Dog); **Outstanding Male Modern** Performance – Mathew Ball as the Swan/Stranger in Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake (New Adventures), Jonathan Goddard in The Mother (Alexandra Markvo/Bird and Carrot). Liam Mower as the Prince in Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake (New Adventures), Joseph Sissens in Night of 100 Solos (Merce Cunningham Trust/The Barbican), Saburo Teshigawara in The Idiot (Saburo Teshigawara/The Print Room at the Coronet); **Outstanding Female** Classical Performance -Sara Baras in Sombras (Ballet Flamenco Sara Baras/ Flamenco Festival), Francesca Hayward as Juliet in Romeo and Juliet (The Royal Ballet), Katja Khaniukova as Frida in Broken Wings (English National Ballet), Pippa Moore as Princess Beatrice in Victoria (Northern Ballet), Anna Rose O'Sullivan as Juliet in Romeo and Juliet (The Royal Ballet); Outstanding **Male Classical Performance** - Gary Avis as Kulygin in Winter Dreams (The Royal

Ballet), Cesar Corrales as Romeo in *Romeo and Juliet* (The Royal Ballet), Nehemiah Kish as the Husband in *The Concert* (The Royal Ballet), Marcelino Sambé as the Blue Boy in *Les Patineurs* (The Royal Ballet), Nicholas Shoesmith as John Proctor in *The Crucible* (Scottish Ballet); **Outstanding Creative Contribution** – Koen Kessels, Nadine Meisner, Dimitris Papaioannou, Peter Salem, Gavin Sutherland.

The winners will be announced at a lunchtime ceremony to be held in central London on February 19, 2020. The event will also host the **De Valois Award for Outstanding Achievement** for which there are no prior nominations.

Chairman of the dance section, Graham Watts, said: "Once again, the short-listed represent the remarkable diversity of dance in the UK with considerably more than half of the UKbased nominees originally coming from overseas. It is also pleasing that 11 of the short-listed nominees were from visiting companies, more than double last year, including four from the world of flamenco, three from the US and Saburo Teshigawara from Japan."

Modanse at the Coliseum

SVETLANA ZAKHAROVA RETURNS TO the London Coliseum from December 3 to 5 with *Modanse*, a new double bill produced by MuzArts, including the works *Come Un Respiro (Like A Breath)* and *Gabrielle Chanel*. The latter is a collaboration between choreographer Yuri Possokhov and composer Ilya Demutsky, with Zakharova performing the title role and more than 80 costumes designed exclusively for the ballet by CHANEL Creative Studio headed by Virginie Viard. For more information and to book tickets, go to londoncoliseum.org.



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"When it comes to Nutcrackers, there is simply nothing to beat it." *** The Times

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ABT's 80th anniversary

AMERICAN BALLET

THEATRE (ABT) will celebrate its 80th anniversary during the 2020 Spring season at the Metropolitan Opera House with the New York premiere of Alexei Ratmansky's Of Love and Rage, an opening week devoted to both new and historic works from the company's repertory, and the 40th anniversary performances of Natalia Makarova's production of La Bayadère.

The Spring season will open on May 11 with a week of repertory programmes representing the company's heritage and its most recent commissions. Four performances of ABT Then will comprise works premiered by Ballet Theatre in the 1940s, including George Balanchine's Theme and Variations (1947), Antony Tudor's Jardin aux Lilas (1940) and Jerome Robbins's Fancy Free (1944). Four performances of ABT Now, beginning on May 12, will present works premiered by ABT over the past year. They include Jessica Lang's *Garden Blue*, Twyla Tharp's A



Gathering of Ghosts and Alexei Ratmansky's *The Seasons*.

The company will also celebrate with the ABTomorrow Spring Gala on May 18, a special evening celebrating eight decades of artistry, including a showcase of student talent representing ABT's artistic future. The gala will highlight the company's past and future with anniversary video tributes, excerpts from classics including Swan Lake, Romeo and Juliet and La Bayadère, a preview of Of Love and Rage and a special performance by students of the ABT

The Garland Dance from Alexei Ratmansky's *The Sleeping Beauty*.

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School. A gala dinner-dance on the Promenade of the David H Koch Theater will follow the performance.

La Bayadère will begin on May 19 with Isabella Boylston (Nikiya), Herman Cornejo (Solor) and Cassandra Trenary (Gamzatti) leading the opening-night cast. The performance on the evening of May 21 will honour choreographer and legendary ballerina Natalia Makarova on the occasion of ABT's 40th anniversary of the ballet. Guest artists

Olga Smirnova and Kimin Kim, along with ABT principal dancer Gillian Murphy, will lead the cast for the anniversary evening.

Based on the firstcentury historical romance novel *Callirhoe* by Chariton, Ratmansky's *Of Love and Rage* tells the story of star-crossed lovers Callirhoe and Chaereas in ancient Greece. The ballet will be set to music by Aram Khachaturian, arranged by Philip Feeney, and will

feature sets and costumes by Jean-Marc Puissant and lighting by Duane Schuler. Ratmansky's 17th work for American Ballet Theatre, *Of Love and Rage* will have its world premiere on March 5, 2020 at Segerstrom Center for the Arts in Costa Mesa, California. The ballet will be given seven performances at the Metropolitan Opera House from June 2 to 6.

Full-length ballets for the Spring season will also include Kenneth MacMillan's *Romeo and Juliet, Giselle, The Sleeping Beauty, Jane Eyre* and *Swan Lake*. For further details or to book, go to abt.org.

One Dance UK Awards

THE SECOND ONE DANCE UK AWARDS ceremony took place in Manchester on November 9, celebrating the outstanding contribution of people working in dance across the UK.

One Dance UK hosted the annual event at the Imperial War Museum North. A panel of expert judges, drawn from the dance sector, reviewed thousands of nominations to arrive at a shortlist of nominees for each category. Hosted by MC, dancer and director Jonzi D, the awards went to a wide range of individuals, organisations and companies such as the Physical Support Team at London Contemporary Dance School, Magpie Dance, Scottish Ballet – and even Tesco for their fundraising campaign DanceBeats.

A standing ovation was given to Dance Personality of the Year recipient, Andrew Self (selected by public vote), who went viral earlier this year following his appearance on the BBC's *Greatest Dancer*. The prestigious Jane Attenborough Award for Lifetime Achievement in Dance was awarded to Dr Roger Wolman, for his life-changing work in the field of dance health, where he has helped hundreds of dancers after injury.

Andrew Hurst, chief executive, said: "We are delighted to recognise the hard work and talent of people making a difference to the dance sector. These awards acknowledge some of the many areas of work that professionals and practitioners are involved in. We are proud to shine a light on this incredible work."

For further information and winners, go to onedanceuk.org.





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PATRONS Anya Sainsbury CBE, Sir Anthony Dowell CBE, Kevin O'Hare CBE, Michael Nunn OBE, William Trevitt OBE



Central Moves to South Bank

Central will make the much-anticipated move to the South Bank arts community in London in the spring term 2020. The bespoke new premises at the corner of Paris Garden and Hatfield SE1 will be the hub for a dynamic dance community. Excellence in dance training for those aiming for a professional career will run alongside a programme of classes and opportunities to see performances for the local Southwark community.

centralschoolofballet.co.uk

Director: Heidi Hall and Artistic Director: Christopher Marney Central School of Ballet, 10 Herbal Hill, Clerkenwell Road, London, EC1R 5EG Reg. Charity No. 285398 Co. No. 1657717. VAT Reg. No. 305 6274 18 Image by Paul Hackett





Dance archives

Dear Editor — It was heartwarming to read, in Moira Goff's article "Dancing in the archives" published in the September issue of Dancing *Times*, that our key theatres and museums hold records from our dance history of the past centuries, of professional dancers and of the national dance companies. However, I'm concerned about the lack of reference to the work in the community and the dance practitioners who brought professional dance performance and engagement to cities and towns and to those more rural areas. There is a danger that an extraordinary period of dance history is to become invisible and be erased from the story. We need to ensure all archive material relating to the history and development of dance is made accessible.

Starting in 1979, The Arts Council began to create posts for dance animateurs. The numbers grew to 40 or so, and supported an enormous number of regional dance projects during the 1980s and 1990s. National touring projects for the top UK dance companies during that time included setting up dance residencies in the communities and school projects until the funding was seriously curtailed. Their aim was to promote interest and opportunities in the arts outside of London. This clearly paved the way for a demand for dance engagement and for performances outside of the capital which continues today.

I recently completed a short film titled *Made in Suffolk*, which is about the growth of the amazing and

prolific dance culture in East Anglia from the 1980s to the 1990s and beyond. It premiered at DanceEast's Jerwood Dancehouse in Ipswich as part of the tenth year celebrations of the building. For my film research, I was able to engage in useful discussions at the home of Scilla Dyke founder and artistic director of Suffolk Dance/DanceEast, who was one of the first dance animateurs appointed in 1982. DanceEast kindly opened up their archive room to my research colleague, Pamela Harling-Challis, and me. The archives consisted of many photographs, somewhat randomly marked video tapes, papers and programmes. Fortunately, as we ourselves were involved as dance practitioners during that period, we were able to identify the projects and key practitioners we needed to include. I also managed to obtain valuable personal contributions from some of those who went on from Suffolk and now have successful careers in dance.

Whilst researching for the film it became clear predigital archives are hard to access, either because they are stored in back rooms in boxes or because those who hold the memories are not able to be heard. My concern is that we should go farther than archiving the history of dance performance to find and collate information on how we built our wealth of dance participation and engagement in the UK, about building an informed and interested dance audience and about supporting those amazing independent dance companies that did so much to challenge the

boundaries of the art form. This history should be accessible and, if presented to students, might help us to rebuild those national dance networks when the crucial value of dancing becomes rightly recognised again.

The article pointed out the many sites for accessing a range of histories of dance, but I suspect there are numerous other back rooms at the regional dance hubs that hold visual records of wonderful dance experiences that happened and affected people's lives and future interest in dance. People Dancing is developing an interesting research project, The Museum of Us, which will create an online resource, and I believe Chisenhale Dance Space are looking to sort their archives into an accessible form by offering an opening for a PhD study.

There are many valuable resources for dance archives, but I suggest it would be useful and really important for future documenting of our shared dance history to compile a list of UK dance archive sites and encourage students to find ways to bring these into our visible history. — Yours sincerely,

> Mel Horwood Middlesex University

British Dance Council

Dear Editor — It was interesting to read in "Last Dance" in the November issue of *Dancing Times* a letter you had printed 40 years ago from Kit Hallewell regarding a book review I had written. How time has flown since 1973 when I first started to write competition reports, and book, CD and video reviews and a few technical articles for what was then the Ballroom Dancing Times.

Since taking office as president of the British Dance Council (BDC) 11 years ago, I have necessarily been somewhat restricted but I must congratulate Dancing Times on continuing to produce an excellent magazine, full of interesting items each month. It was a pleasure for me that the magazine was able to send a representative to the 90th anniversary celebration of the foundation of the BDC attended by Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cornwall (see page 84 of the October issue).

It was Philip Richardson, founding editor of Dancing Times, who was responsible for the creation of what became the BDC in 1929, bringing good order and stability to dancing in the UK. He went on to do something similar in 1950, establishing the world dance body, the International Council of Ballroom Dancing, now the World Dance Council with over 70 member countries. The dance world has a great debt to Dancing Times that I fully and gratefully acknowledge. - Yours sincerely,

> Bryan Allen British Dance Council

Post correspondence to The Editor, Dancing Times, 36 Battersea Square, London, SW 11 3RA, or email letters@ dancing-times.co.uk Letters must be accompanied by a full name and address although this may be withheld on request. Letters may be edited. Anonymous letters can never be considered.

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Taking Point Views on the world of dance

B allet has come a long way since its genesis in the 15th century. Like every human pursuit with longevity, ballet's ability to adapt, develop and preserve its heritage, has allowed it constancy in western culture. As an art form that has historically – in the main – served the upper classes for generations, it's a hugely exciting time to see ballet beginning to embrace our great screen age.

As a society, we are spending more time on our devices than ever before. On average, adults are online for a total of 24 hours a week, double the time spent a decade ago. Digital culture is now omnipresent in our lives. From Netflix to Facebook and YouTube, the sociocultural context in which we consume and digest media and information has changed. Recently, there has been a seismic shift towards the digitisation of our cultural sector, with serious uptake in entertainment being consumed online.

What an opportunity this presents for ballet. I'm delighted that dance professionals are responding with diligence and, in some cases, audacity. Nationwide, companies are developing work specifically for screen, as well as presenting full-length stage

Gavin McCaig thinks we should get excited about digital dance

productions recorded for online consumption.

The potential of digital work to wow audiences is huge. The right choices by those commissioning it, paired with well-funded production, has the potential to bring to the fore prescient and engaging content. Companies can capitalise on their current online following to explore topics not often approached on stage due to the risk involved. It's also a perfect way to reach a more diverse demographic.

major factor that excites Amany with a passion for dance on screen is the way the camera engages with the action itself. Camera lenses can enter the performers' space and achieve an intimacy usually unattainable in live performance. There is real beauty in removing that distance between audience and performer, which is why many of my generation are excited about The Royal Ballet's new Romeo and Juliet film, coming to cinemas on December 16 (see page 99).

Described by the producers as "not ballet or theatre as audiences know it, but a film in its own right", it promises the audience total immersion in a stirring interpretation

"A major factor that excites many with a passion for dance on screen is the way the camera engages with the action itself. Camera lenses can enter the performers' space and achieve an intimacy usually unattainable in live performance" of Kenneth MacMillan's classic. Cinema tickets are normally cheaper than those for the theatre, which is great news for students; whilst watching in cinemas mitigates any potential taboo around attending a theatre. What better way to show this classic than to reimagine it for screen and shoot it on location?

This initiative has already been displayed by other UK companies. The work Scottish Ballet produced for its digital season was impressive, with particular ingenuity shown by Jessica Wright and Morgann Runacre-Temple in their short film Tremble. "The dancers' 100 per cent commitment made it possible to be so ambitious with this project," Runacre-Temple explained to me. "The reach of digital work has the ability to effortlessly cross the boundaries of traditional theatre or dance audiences," she added. Tony Currie, who heads up Scottish Ballet's digital output, agrees and thinks that "embracing digital culture is more than important, it's now a necessity".

At Northern Ballet, digital work is being submitted and nominated for awards in film festivals worldwide. Meanwhile, the company's bitesized ballets for children, which tour nationally, have also graced cinema screens and are shown on the home of children's television, CBeebies.

"We want to create a space where people can dip in and out of quality

original content – a dance Netflix essentially," explains Kenneth Tindall, artistic director of Northern Ballet's digital platform, which launched this year. "I have 100 ideas a minute for this platform and, in terms of what we can produce, we are only limited by our own imaginations. Digital work allows us to bring in a fresh network of artists to the company and continue to grow our collaborative pool."

ooking ahead, there is tremendous scope to develop even further, and the dance profession should be enthused about watching digital dance continue to evolve. An avant-garde response will only bolster companies live performance work and allow them to continue to thrive. Nothing compares to the atmosphere and experience of attending a live performance in the theatre, but digital is the next best thing. Could digital be the way the art form stays relevant for all and bridges the socio-economic gap between younger audiences and ballet? Only time and investment will tell.

HAVE YOUR SAY: We

should very much like to hear your views on the subjects discussed here, on any of our other articles or reviews, or indeed on anything else dance-related that you feel strongly about. Please email letters@dancing-times.co.uk or post your letters to the address on page 4. Please note: the opinions expressed in this column are the author's own and are not necessarily shared by Dancing Times. GD: Why have you chosen now to work with Matthew Bourne again? AC: The short answer is that I was asked! Matt and I have tried over the years to find projects we could do together, but nothing quite worked out mainly because of conflicting dates. I came in to coach The Swan in *Swan Lake* last year, which I hadn't done for about 20 years, and it was lovely to be back in that environment and pass on my knowledge to the young dancers.

Matt and I had lunch one day and I observed I really wanted to do more performing because over the past four years, I have been doing an awful lot of choreography and direction in Germany, in particular, and I haven't performed in London since 2013 in *Singin' in the Rain*. A few months later, I got a call asking me if I wanted to do Lermontov in *The Red Shoes*, which

reminded me that when I first saw the piece I had said to myself it would be a great role to tackle. I felt it would be such a complex and rewarding character to explore at this stage of my career, so I didn't need to think twice about accepting the offer.

GD: How are you finding working on a character that Anton Walbrook portrayed so memorably in the Powell and Pressburger film?

AC: It is tricky. On film, there are those fantastic close-ups of his face with those amazing looks of his, which, of course, in a theatre would go for nothing. The challenge is to find that steely element, those moments of doubt, jealousy and anger in a physical and theatrical way without them becoming over the top. Playing him the same all the way through would also be the most boring thing, so in rehearsing each scene I'm playing around with the characterisation to start to put together his journey throughout the show, to know how much to give, how much to keep back. It's challenging.

GD: Do you still find Matthew Bourne's idiom a comfortable fit?

AC: Absolutely. I love that it is always about the drama and that movement and dance are the means

to tell that story, which is my personal default in performance. I have always treated any idiom I'm working in, be it classical, musical theatre, contemporary even, as based on the motivations for the movement; and that is how I work as a choreographer.

I feel really comfortable returning to the particular environment of New Adventures – it's just that now I feel a bit like the old bloke in the corner whereas I was once one of the youngsters! It is a really lovely company, and there are enough people around who I have known and performed with not to feel totally alone.

GD: How was the experience of coaching your created role of The Swan?

AC: It's incredible how a role like that stays within you – it was also

Adam Cooper, creator of Matthew Bourne's famous swan, ex-Royal Ballet principal, dancer, choreographer and director, returns to the stage this Christmas as Lermontov, the Diaghilev-inspired impresario, in the first London revival of Bourne's *The Red Shoes*. In a break in rehearsals he spoke to **Gerald Dowler** about working with the choreographer again, the pleasures of performing and his own work as a creator of dance and theatre.

Photographs by Johan Persson

at a pivotal moment for me in my career and, as a role, it was the one I performed the most over eight years. It's so inside me dramatically and in terms of the movement, but, not having been involved with it since 2013, I saw that it had evolved into something very different by the time I came in last year to coach, both musically and choreographically. It made it quite tricky for me.

I therefore tried to concentrate on the reasons behind the way, say, The Swan moves in the way he does, or why he behaves in a certain way, more than on the details that may have changed. I wanted to inform them, to help them shape the role of The Swan and the Stranger; I really enjoyed that whole process and to come back to it.

GD: Was it difficult to work on something that had moved away from your own experience of it?

AC: As a role, it changed during the time I danced it, but in musical and choreographic terms, not very much; we used to tinker with it here and there, but it was pretty much what it was in 1995. Since then, there have been more fundamental changes, so when it came to coaching it, I had to put some things to one side and focus on helping the boys get into the drama of the role and understand the arc throughout the show.

GD: What makes it such an attractive role?

AC: The physicality is a big part of that, but it's a killer to dance, hence after the initial run, when I did all the performances, it was clear the role had

to be split – you wouldn't ask a ballerina to do eight Odette-Odiles a week! For me, the attraction was having a man portraying that character and what he can bring to it. There are not many roles that are so satisfying – the final scene is as heart-wrenching to play as it is to watch. All of those things kept bringing me back to it, plus a sense of ownership, given I had created it.

GD: As a choreographer and director yourself, is it difficult to receive corrections and notes as a performer?

AC: I quite like it. You can be a bit more selfish as a performer and focus on yourself and those you have to partner, but, as a producer, you have to think and worry about everybody else; you have to be a father figure for your company, which can be physically and mentally draining. It's a good feeling to put your trust in others to get the best out of you as a performer too.

I never mix the two; I don't ever go up to Matt and suggest how he might do something – that's certainly not my place. Also, it's lovely to be on stage. I have been performing in Japan in *Singin' in the Rain* over the past three years, and will return in 2020, and I recently did the role of Death in *The Merry Widow* in Munich, >>





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T:0161 237 1406 E:enquiries@northernballetschool.co.uk www.northernballetschool.co.uk but there is something special about being at home, being a family man and still getting to go on stage.

GD: You will return to Sadler's Wells next summer in *Singin' in the Rain...*

AC: Since 2013, the show has kept going – it has been to Russia, Australia, Japan and South Africa. It's a lovely show, and a great role but very demanding, so it's great to be doing *The Red Shoes* now, which will help me build up to it.

When I'm in it [Singin' in the Rain], I have to be very careful because as both a choreographer and a performer you never get an "outside" view of the show - I tried it a couple of times, and I think the show lacked slightly because of it - and secondly, it is so much work. When I created Les Liaisons Dangereuses in 2005, I wrote the scenario, choreographed it, produced it and was in it, and, amazing as it was to do, that was simply too much. It's also difficult for the company to have a fellow performer also making the steps and directing the show - they don't know which hat you are wearing when you speak to them.

GD: With the rise of social media, use of technology, and talk of shorter attention spans and reduced empathy, have the dancers you work with changed?

AC: I don't think so. Dance companies are tight groups of people, and this company, New Adventures, has the same feel it had 20-plus years ago – they are committed to create great work together. I think that comes down to the head of the company: Matt is so inclusive and clear about what he wants. That's something I have taken on when I am the director: like he does here, I have to set the tone. It's important everyone understands the ethos with which everyone has to work. Sure, young dancers have all these added distractions I didn't at their age, but it never interrupts the work. The standard of dancing seems to get higher and higher each year, but the atmosphere is the same as it was. It allows someone like me to come in to a dance company and to feel comfortable in it after so much time in opera and operetta.



Previous page and this: Adam Cooper as Boris Lermontov, with (above) Ashley Shaw as Vicky Page in Matthew Bourne's *The Red Shoes*.

GD: Have audiences changed?

AC: It differs in each country. In Germany, the audience is very diverse because theatre in all its forms is still central to the social fabric. In the UK, the face of dance has changed a lot – Matt's work brings in such a hybrid audience from dance fans to people who have never seen any.

The changes have largely been for the better, except that in commercial

Song and dance man

theatre, audiences can be terribly behaved – eating, chatting, moving about – at least they are going to the theatre, I suppose! That has to do with shrinking attention spans, which make it more and more difficult for people to invest in what they are watching. That is what we expect from our audience; to invest in it rather than be a passive spectator. We are losing that a little, but that may provoke a change of approach from the artists.

> GD: With all the social and artistic changes happening, a lot of dance seems nostalgic, *The Red Shoes, Singin' in the Rain,* for example...

AC: There's always an audience for that because it is escapism from the modern world – that's why I love to see those shows. They remind you of what seem like better times and allow you simply to enjoy yourself with no strings attached.

Of course, there is an audience for pushing the boundaries and Serge Diaghilev, who I have been reading about for Lermontov, was constantly doing that, but even he returned to the past with Giselle and The Sleeping Beauty. I think if you keep pushing people with the new, there will come a point when they have had enough, so I think there is always room for both in some form of balance.

GD: What upcoming projects do you have?

AC: I'm directing and choreographing *Candide* in Munich and then Bernstein's *Mass* before returning to London to appear in *Singin' in the Rain*. My aim is to create new things, so I'm always looking for those opportunities to challenge myself and to keep the performing going alongside the creating.

Matthew Bourne's *The Red Shoes* runs at Sadler's Wells from December 3 until January 19. See Calendar for booking details.



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ALL HAIL, JOHANNES!

Nicola Rayner celebrates the runaway popularity of *Strictly* professional Johannes Radebe and his same-sex dance with Graziano Di Prima

Johannes Radebe

It would be enough for most dancers to feature in one of the most talked about moments on this year's Strictly *Come Dancing*, but Johannes Radebe has starred in two. First, he stole the show with a fabulously fierce performance in a red-carpet pro dance in vertiginous heels and brandishing a "Pose" fan. It was a moment that sparked a response of such joy and enthusiasm that he tweeted the next day: "Just opened Twitter! My poor heart. I cannot deal! Thanks a million ... Oh what a time to be alive!" (One tweeter summed it up: "Why are we bothering with the rest of the series when Johannes just won it?")

Then, in case one groundbreaking dance wasn't enough, he went on to perform this series' highly anticipated same-sex duet with fellow professional Graziano Di Prima, gorgeously danced to the live music of Emeli Sandé. It was, again, received with great warmth by the UK public: a sure sign, should the producers need it, that we are more than ready for a "full-time" same-sex partnership on the show now that *Dancing on Ice* has led the way, with the partnership of Steps singer Ian "H" Watkins and professional skater Matt Evers confirmed for next year.

As for whether *Strictly* is ready for regular same-sex partnerships, Radebe told *Gay Times* last month: "We are ready and we've always been ready, and when I say that, I'm talking about my community. The question is: are people ready?"

The new pro joined the show last year but was paired with a celebrity, actress Catherine Tyldesley, for the first time this series. Theirs came across as a genuine, touching friendship, with their hot-pink Charleston offering another highlight of the series – and always worth revisiting for a smile. Radebe's sheer exuberance as a dancer calls to mind Hal Prince's assessment of Susan Stroman – "She puts joy on the stage because it's in her nature." Radebe's dancing brims with warmth and ebullience just as his personality does.

"Johannes Radebe was the true highlight of this series, thanks to his innovative choreography ("Single Ladies" Charleston!), lovely partnership with Catherine, and absolute determination to be himself," agrees Marianka Swain, who writes *Dancing Times*' hit blog, *Strictly* Speaking. "*Strictly* still has a long way to go in terms of wider representation, so the sight of Johannes bossing a group number in high heels and a giant fan was not just a delightful one, but important too.

"Ditto his much-hyped same-sex performance with Graziano, which I'm sure won over viewers still unsure about same-sex pairings, and illustrated – beautifully – that dance is for everyone. Exactly what *Strictly* should be saying in 2019, and Johannes is hopefully in the vanguard of progress."

"It's wonderful that Johannes and Graziano have been able to dance together on primetime television in this way," says Jonathan Gray, editor of this magazine. "*Dancing Times* has been reporting on same-sex dance for years now, and it's about time the *Strictly* producers and the BBC moved with the times, got up to date, stopped talking about it being a 'family' show – as if gay people don't have families anyway – and embraced the diverse world we live in. The cynic in me thinks their dance happened purely because of the news about *Dancing on*





Ice; now the BBC must put words into action, and get some same-sex couples actually competing on *Strictly.*"

Radebe's journey onto the BBC show has not been an easy one. "I grew up in a country where homosexuality was frowned upon," he recently told *The Sun*, detailing a horrific incident in which he was attacked at school by another pupil with a baseball bat. "The society around me pointed to me and said, 'There's something wrong with you,' but *Strictly* has helped me be a better person and accepting of myself. When I got to the UK it was beautiful – for the first time in my life I felt liberated."

When I spoke to him last year, he explained: "A lot of my friends who danced were criticised by their families for it and told it was a hobby for 'moffies', which in South Africa is a word for gay. It was sad, but I'm thankful I had a mother who encouraged me. She could not afford to see me dance at competitions but she made me get out there with the little she had."

Radebe comes from a township called Zamdela, near Johannesburg, "where there was nothing much for youngsters to do", he said. "The only popular sport in the community was soccer. One day I

All hail, Johannes!



came back from school and asked where my friends were and was told they were at the recreation hall, where there was a dance school opening – and I ran!

"I got there and the ballroom couple who were hosting the audition were dressed up with their make-up and hair done and everything. For me, as a black boy growing up in a township, I was attracted by the beauty and the elegance of it. The sequins were shining; I was in heaven. I didn't understand it at the time but I knew it was something I really wanted to do. I got back home and was so excited. I told my mum, who thank god was not like some of my friends' parents who stopped their children doing it."

With the support of his mother, Radebe worked his way up the Latin ranks. "There was a school in Johannesburg – the Ennerdale Academy of Dance – run by a lady by the name of Patricia Paleman who contacted my coach at the time and said, 'I'd like to train this boy further, let me contact his mother; I can offer him a scholarship and he can live under my roof.""

At that stage, Radebe was a Junior Pre-Championship dancer. "I knew that if I Above and opposite: Johannes Radebe dancing with Graziano Di Prima. Also pictured; *Strictly* professionals Luba Mushtuk and Aljaž Skorjanec.

was going to continue to dance, I would have to leave my township as there was not much for me there to further my skill, so I went to Johannesburg. What was amazing about this academy was that it accepted all disadvantaged children and you found that people would travel for hours to make practice, so I was very fortunate to be living under their roof."

It was hard work for Radebe and the other children, who had to fundraise for lessons. "To an extent, the person who was training us was Patricia's husband, Elvis, who had no dance experience, by the way," he said. "However, because they'd been running a dance school where they brought the dance teachers in, he just went with what he saw. He taught us discipline: we had to be at practice on time, we had to fundraise, we had to wash cars to get money to go to competitions, we would sit down and watch DVDs together to learn. To some extent, I would say we were self-sufficient, self-taught."

In order for Radebe, as the best dancer in the school, to have a lesson, "everyone would fundraise for me, so a team of 60 kids would wash cars so that I could have a lesson with one of the renowned ballroom or Latin teachers and I would pass that information down."

His hard work saw him triumph three times as the national Amateur Latin champion in South Africa, but he was then drawn to more theatrical work and auditioned successfully for the Afro Arimba company, which performs on cruise ships.

"On the ships you do everything, so I had to train in other styles of dance," he said – which explains his skill at commercial and street styles. "It covered everything from African dance to ballet to Latin to jazz, all styles. That company, those shows, really, really helped me. It was the best experience for me to learn and establish myself as a performer. My mother was very proud," he smiled. "I saw the world and I came back home after seven years and said to her, 'I would love to get back to my Latin and to be part of that show *Strictly Come Dancing*."

After training for 14-hour days and returning to the competitive circuit, Radebe won the Professional South African Latin Championship twice and, not long afterwards, received the call he'd been waiting for from *Strictly Come Dancing* in South Africa. "They said, we're looking for a male dancer," he laughed. "Somebody tall. I did it for two years... I'm really grateful for how everything has conspired in my favour."

From there, via *Burn the Floor*, he ended up on *Strictly* here in the UK. "Joining *Strictly Come Dancing* is one of the greatest achievements of my dancing career," he said. "It is such an honour to be chosen to be a part of an incredible cast and be part of one of the biggest shows that is celebrated worldwide."

This achievement – not least his huge success on the show this year – has come down to his own talent, commitment and courage. "I'm a small township boy who has loved movement all his life," he concluded. "Me being on *Strictly* means so much to people where I come from. It says to them: we can do it."

You can find Strictly Speaking, Dancing Times' hit Strictly blog, at dancing-times.co.uk.

Here when you need

Clemmie Cowl, executive director of the Dance Professionals Fund, outlines how it can help

sometimes wonder what would have happened if Cinderella, instead of having the opportunity to meet with her Fairy Godmother, had turned to a benevolent fund to help her sort her life out instead?

Cinderella is a woman living in greatly compromised circumstances, and looking for a new home and chance in life. In the ballet, the circumstances are transformative, as she moves from a place of misfortune to a considerably better proposal (literally). The Cinderella story, interestingly enough, isn't the often misinterpreted tale of rags to riches, but rather one of riches to rags and then back again – in reality, a more likely scenario when dealing with the ups and downs of a life in dance. In the story, an unexpected and unfortunate set of circumstances occur, through no fault of her own, and this can and does happen at any time to anyone. What is the case, in both fairy tales and reality, is that to change a situation external intervention can be helpful.

Assuming none of us actually has a Fairy Godmother or a Lilac Fairy to hand, a benevolent fund, like the Dance Professionals Fund, is probably the next best thing. We don't appear in a sparkle of fairy dust (if only), but we are aware that in many circumstances life can, and does, throw up events that one often has little or no control over. An example could be a serious injury. There is nothing mystical about accessing our help either – far from it. Our aim is to make clear that how we operate, what help is available and how help can be accessed is clear and straightforward. A lot of this information is available online; our website also has advice on benefits entitlements and debt management.

WHAT TO EXPECT IF YOU CONTACT US

Sm

The unfortunate reality is that individuals who need our help are sometimes at a point of being very low in confidence, and so asking for support can seem particularly hard. The facility for individuals to talk through a situation, in confidence, that is causing them concern is an important part of what we do. This is the case whether they choose to go on and apply or not. Many find this helpful, and often they find a new perspective as a result. People can call in whenever they want, but calls can be scheduled for a convenient time for them. We remember, always, that we are here to listen, encourage and provide as much helpful information as we can. We believe, for instance, in not ending the conversation, even if someone says "Oh, you must be busy," if we sense they want to go on talking. The most important thing is that we want people to feel better, and that they have done exactly the right thing in asking for help. We don't want them to have a feeling that "Oh, I had to make that call that I really didn't want to."

A WISHLIST OF THINGS CAN BE HELPFUL

There is an application process, but the Dance Professionals Fund prefers to think of the system as being one of "asking for help". "Application process" suggests you may or may not get help, with an unpredictable outcome. The overarching fact is that, if you need support, for instance with moving house, then we will help based on that alone, assuming you meet the eligibility criteria. Knowing what would really help you is essential for us, and so a form is the best way for collecting this information. It's possible now to apply directly online, which some people also prefer. It's also important to know how to make general enquiries on behalf of someone else who may go on to apply to us. Bear in mind that Data Protection regulations would require you to provide confirmation of their consent for us to get in contact with them though, if they wanted to talk to us themselves.

HOW MUCH HELP WILL YOU GET?

There isn't a "one size fits all" type of application. Of course, we have guidelines but these are to help guide people when filling in their forms, not to be inflexible. Guidelines also exist to help dispel any myths about who is eligible. For instance, some enquirers believe they need to be in extreme hardship to be able to ask for assistance. Our work is guided by something called the Minimum Income Standards (MIS), which sets down recommended levels of expenditure that enable people to "live, not exist". The process of asking for help can also be useful to see where your priorities lie. For instance, someone might value their pet's welfare even over their own, and so ask for help with vet's bills but not help for themselves. In this instance, we would normally encourage them to think a bit more holistically, as they have needs too! Grants range in size, which makes it hard to give an actual figure, but it's important for applicants to know our processes are set up to ensure



we give exactly the right amount of support depending on circumstances.

Dance professionals can apply at any age, assuming they have worked in dance for a few years, so the age range of applicants is wide. Another misconception can be that in all cases there has to be some sort of extenuating circumstance, such as a serious illness, to be eligible for support. Again, this isn't the case but it is true we do provide considerable support when ill health is involved. We can also support in cases where this isn't so, and there has been the opportunity to do some forward planning, such as with our bursary schemes.

TELLING OUR STORY

If I were to say what our "elevator pitch" was, how would I describe the fund in a very short space of time? If I was only going up one floor, I think I would say, "Someone who can listen, and also offer practical support." If I had longer, I think I would say the Dance Professionals Fund is here to help all dance professionals of any age, whether working or in retirement. Dancers, dance teachers and choreographers are all welcome to apply and we have a range of grants and other bursaries available.

GET IN TOUCH

The Dance Professionals Fund is here to help, whatever your wish list is. You can call us, email us, send in an application form by completing it online, or download a PDF. We can post one to you, too, if that's easier. Please get in touch, as we can only help you if we know that you need us. ■

For more information about the work of the Dance Professionals Fund, see page 26 or visit dancefund.org.uk.

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JOURNEY'S END?

Fátima Nollén concludes her series on dance in Latin America

hen I began this series about dance in Latin America with an article about the Ballet Estable del Teatro Colón, based in my home country, Argentina, back in February 2018, I didn't know how far, how long, or how much I was going to learn. Old contacts I had made in places I lived or visited came in very useful for covering the 12 countries and 50 institutions I eventually wrote about. That meant hundreds of interviews with dancers, directors, choreographers and fellow writers.

In a way, it was like a game of joining dots that seemed loose and isolated. Research showed dance in Latin America had many common points; invisible lines connecting companies and countries in a network of exchanges and mutual nourishment, moved by the need to perform and a love of dance.

Taking an imaginary aerial view, the dots make constellations if you follow on a map the trails left by historic European companies and today's dance makers. Layers of genealogy and legacy can also be established between generations. Imagine, too, the jumps to and from Europe and the US, and a timeline can be created to complete the picture with life events for dance in each location.

As an illustration of this idea, take Colombian dancer José Manuel Ghiso. He graduated from Incolballet in Cali, and is now a principal with the Ballet de Santiago in Chile, where he



Above: Ballet de Santiago's José Manuel Ghiso in Marcia Haydée's *Carmen*. Below: Uruguay's Ballet Nacional del Sodre in Blanca Li's *El Quijote del Plata*.

works with Brazilian director and Stuttgart Ballet legend Marcia Haydée. He also makes guest appearances in Peru and back home in Colombia.

Take also Argentine choreographer Mauricio Wainrot, the former director of Teatro San Martín's Ballet Contemporáneo. He trained at the Colón school in Buenos Aires with its Russian heritage, absorbed things from the heirs of German Expressionism and learned from the modern dancers of the US who had settled in Argentina. His works are performed by 35 companies worldwide, including the Ballet Nacional del Sodre in Uruguay. In fact, his *A Streetcar Named Desire* opens Sodre's 2020 season. In turn, Sodre's artistic director, Spanish-



Photographs: Top PATRICIO MELO. Bottom SANTIAGO BARREIRO.

born Igor Yebra, danced in Wainrot's *Carmina burana* when he was with the Opéra National de Bordeaux.

Yebra is betting on successful local productions for Sodre, such as *El Quijote del Plata* choreographed by Blanca Li, director of Teatros del Canal in Spain. Sodre's retiring principal, Maria Riccetto, will take on the role of coordinator of Sodre's ballet school, thus retaining invaluable talent and experience. The company, whose dancers come from a region in South America known as Cuenca del Plata (covering Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil), will conclude the 2019 season this month with Kenneth MacMillan's *Manon*, performed there for the first time.

Another constellation follows the steps of Chilean choreographer Jaime Pinto Riveros. It travels north along the Andes on the Pacific Coast from Chile, where he choreographs and stages large-scale classics for the Ballet de Santiago, on to Peru and Ecuador before turning into the heartlands with Paraguay's Ballet Clásico y Moderno Municipal de Asunción. His historical dramas set there during the time of independence from Spain are little known outside of these countries.

Chilean Hector Sanzana's trail has passed through Lima's Ballet Municipal as a dancer and gone on to the ballet company in Venezuela's Teatro Teresa Carreño, where he was artistic director and choreographer. He also choreographs for Ballet Nacional de Ecuador, directed by Ruben Guarderas, a former dancer with the Ballet Nacional de Chile. Calling himself a "highaltitude artist" because Quito, capital of Ecuador, is situated 2,850 metres above the sea, Sanzana says sadly: "It's very difficult to make art with minimum resources in our countries, and our work has little recognition."

It's an interesting fact that, in many of these countries, audiences are conservative, preferring the classics and famous names, making it hard for directors to programme new works created by local talent. Ironically, this is what rescues many companies if their budgets are cut. The challenge shifts to attracting an audience.

t's difficult to write a conclusion to a subject in such constant evolution, especially with so many serious political events happening on the continent. In Chile, known for its stable economy, an unexpected crisis hit the Teatro Municipal, home of the Ballet de Santiago, when staff complained about working conditions, although they rejected the street violence seen recently on the television news. Related to this or not, a new director was announced Carmen Gloria Larenas, a former dancer and the theatre's first female general director. She comes with hope for better understanding of the needs of the artists, as well as a decade of success leading the Teatro del Lago in Patagonia. Ballet de Santiago will be performing The Nutcracker this month, and January sees a revival of The House of the Spirits (see Dancing Times, November 2019); the 2020 season formally commences in March with Haydée's version of Carmen.

Meanwhile in Argentina, where Paloma Herrera enters her fourth year as director of the Ballet Estable del Teatro Colón, an unusual international audition for 24 places in the Colón's corps de ballet took place, for which The Royal Ballet's artistic director, Kevin O'Hare, and Manuel Legris, director of the Vienna State Ballet, were consultants. The audition was undertaken to help stabilise dancer's contracts by making them permanent staff of the theatre, which is funded by the city of Buenos Aires. Herrera said: "I invited people [to sit on the audition panel] with whom I have never had a personal relationship, so that the audition was transparent, open and a fair call." This month, the company

performs Mario Galizzi's version of *Swan Lake* in new sets and costumes. In addition, Teatro San Martín's Ballet Contemporáneo won the prestigious Konex Platinum Award for its avantgarde work over the past decade.

One phenomenon in Argentina worth mentioning is that this year the Municipal Dance School of San Martín, a neighbourhood in the suburbs of Buenos Aires city, attracted an outstanding 1,228 students; a few years ago it had just 70. For five years, usually during August, The Royal Ballet's Marianela Núñez has been performing in charity galas in San Martín, her hometown. "The most important impact of the galas, and the factor closest to my heart, is how the number of students at the Dance School has increased," Nuñez says. "It needed a second building in one of the most deprived areas of the neighbourhood. Interest in ballet and culture has grown since we started in 2012, and I realised I can help those in need doing what I love the most." With guests artists coming from the contemporary, folk and classical corners of dance, the 2019 gala included a new work created on Nuñez by Julio Lopez based on Ibsen's A Doll's House. "I invite different companies trying to unite dance, pay a tribute to it. Everyone should experience dance because it heals and nourishes the soul. We are already working for 2020 and I hope we can continue, because we see people going back home with their hearts beating with emotion. We need dance as a balm in the world we live today," she concludes.

This month Nuñez will be appearing in *Don Quixote* with a principal dancer from Sodre, the Brazilian Gustavo Carvalho, for the official reopening of the Teatro Nacional in Panama City, along with the Ballet Nacional and young dancers from local academies and from Costa Rica and San Salvador. José Manuel Carreño, the Cuban-born former principal with American Ballet Theatre, will restage Mikhail Baryshnikov's version of the ballet on the company.

Another charitable initiative is *Danzar por la Paz* (Dance for Peace), an idea originating from the Argentine choreographer Leonardo Reale, which began life in Buenos Aires and slowly spread to other provinces before reaching Chile, Brazil and Miami. Each gala benefits UNICEF.

I also need to mention here that the death of Alicia Alonso had repercussions felt all over Latin America, particularly because she often toured the continent with Cuba's Ballet Nacional. Alonso invited dancers to perform at the *Havana Ballet Festival*, and spread the Cuban method of ballet through a diaspora of teachers. Her success also inspired the idea that art, dance and its education should be free to all, especially for those less privileged.

A few weeks before her death, Carlos Acosta told me: "Alicia Alonso is the mother of Cuban ballet. With her husband, Fernando, they created the basis for everything that exists today in the world of ballet in Cuba; the company and the ballet school distributed throughout the country. She faced many difficulties and overcame them. Her dimension as an artist is an example for all of us who were formed under her shadow. She is our National Artist, which defines the greatness of her art and legacy." One can see that legacy all over Latin America, too.

The Cuban formula, of course, isn't perfect. It's well known, but rarely written, that many dancers only grew as far as Alicia Alonso wanted them to, as Cuban dance critic Orlando Taquechel wrote in Alonso's obituary published in Miami's *El Nuevo Herald*.



Journey's end?



manager, Víctor Rodríguez, has become director. With a bigger budget allocated to it, in October the company premiered *Bienvenidos al Jardín del Pantanal* by Spanish choreographer Ramón Oller, who has become its ballet master and resident choreographer. "He [Oller] will allow us to use his pieces free of charge while working here during our season," Rodríguez told me.

Peru's Ballet Nacional, led by choreographer Jimmy Gamonet de los Heros, gives the premiere of his *A Midsummer Night's Dream* this month. Danced to music by Mendelssohn, the company will be joined by the National Sinfonia.

f Latin American ballet and dance companies have similar histories, they also have similar problems related to the fact that, as funded by the state, they are at the mercy of politicians, changes in government and economic upheaval. Cuts always hit the arts first, so, in many cases, planning a season often works better in the short term. My impression is that the dance community in Latin America does much more than just their job description.

Sadly, Rio de Janeiro's Ballet del Theatro Municipal, where activity has almost ceased, saw director Cecilia Kerche resign during a recent run of *Coppélia*, the first full-length ballet the company has performed in years. Kerche denounced an internal plot to oust her. No news is known about her replacement.

Similarly, Ballet Teatro Argentino de La Plata, based in Buenos Aires, saw all performances cancelled this year – there were no pointe shoes for a company that has a derelict theatre to perform in, no place to rehearse, and no alternative provisions. "The sad thing for me," says principal dancer Julieta Paul, who is also a teacher, "is that it has severed the careers of promising young talent." At least they received their pay cheques.

There is nothing similar to an organisation like The Arts Council in any of the countries I covered for the series. A handful of companies offer healthcare and pensions schemes, but even fewer are based in countries with laws encouraging private sponsorship.

In Mexico, Compañia Nacional de Danza is now being co-directed by former director Cuhautémoc Nájera and Elisa Carrillo, a principal with



Staatsballett Berlin. After only two years in the job, José Manuel Carreño left Ballet de Monterrey due to lack of funds, leaving advisor Luis Serrano in charge. Despite the success of Isaac Hernandez's *Despertares*, it was no longer financially viable to continue the initiative. The project was born in 2012 and was the first contact with ballet for thousands of people; last month it won the prestigious Luna de Auditorio Nacional Award.

In Colombia, expectations were high for the arrival in May of Oscar Chacón, the new artistic director of the Incolballet companies and school in Cali. A graduate of the school, Chacón was a principal with Béjart Ballet Lausanne for 15 years; he wants to make Incolballet "more international by polishing and nurturing the dancers".

The contemporary Ballet Nacional del Paraguay has confirmed its

Left: Ballet Estable del Teatro Colón in *Cinderella*. Top: Ballet Nacional de Paraguay in *Bienvenidos al Jardin del Pantanal*. Above: Marianela Núñez and Alejandro Parente in Julio Lopez's *Nora*.

inally, I would like to say that I think of this series on dance in Latin America as a panorama, a twoyear time-lapse snapshot at a particular moment in the 21st century. It has been a scarily ambitious undertaking, and also one that is rather humbling. All the interviewees were equally surprised and grateful Dancing Times was looking their way. New friends were made while trying to approach both ends of this bridge between Latin America and the readers. Hopefully the series is just the beginning of a wonderful journey of discovery for Latin American dance. It continues to move on.







Thiago and friends

Photographer **Kristyna Kashvili** joined Thiago Soares on a tour of his homeland



Top left: Thiago Soares and Mayara Magri rehearsing Kenneth MacMillan's *Romeo and Juliet*. Bottom left: A portrait study of Soares. Above: Magri and Soares in the pas de deux from Marius Petipa's *Le Corsaire*.

through masterclasses, auditions and rehearsals that culminated in a gala held in each city.

Covering a huge geographical area, with dates in Campo Grande, Recife, Curitiba and Cuiabá, Soares was joined on the tour by a series of exciting Brazilian dancers from different disciplines, including Ingrid Silva (Dance Theatre of Harlem), Mayara Magri (The Royal Ballet), Danilo D'Alma (contemporary dancer and choreographer), Renata Tubarao (Ballet Municipal do Rio de Janeiro) and Giovanna Hellu (Ballet Paula Castro). In Recife, where I joined him, Mayara Magri starred with Soares in the pas de deux from *Le Corsaire*, as well as the balcony duet from MacMillan's *Romeo and Juliet*.

The theme of the tour was "IMAGINE" – imagine being on stage with Soares and friends. As the dancers shared this unique experience, they moved through "Impact" to "Achievement", bringing with them enthusiasm, dedication and Brazilian energy. They were hungry to learn.

Thiago Soares



Masterclasses and auditions (where new talent was revealed), and a fast, concentrated rehearsal period, saw the programme being structured. It brought together a wide mixture of dancers and styles including jazz, folk, hip hop, contemporary and classical. The opening and closing sections, choreographed by Soares himself, demonstrated this creative process. Particularly touching was the finale where all the dancers circled in a Farandole style until, tightly grouped and looking heavenwards,

Clockwise from top left: Mayara Magri with Thiago Soares in rehearsal for *Le Corsaire*. A collage showing Soares in rehearsal with the dancers. Soares leading a Studio Ballet Gonzalez masterclass. Mayara Magri with Soares in rehearsal for *Romeo and Juliet*. A collage featuring Roger Willyam Costa, Companhia de Frevo do Recife, Renata Soares, Ballet Gonzalez. Magri and Soares bow to the company at the Teatro Guararapes.

Thiago and friends



their choreography returned back to the idea of "imagine".

A t the Teatro Guararapes gala in Recife, the dancers were received by an enthusiastic audience. It was a slick, high-level performance with some nine different solo and group artists participating, including Ballet Gonzalez and Companhia de Frevo do Recife. Amongst them was Roger Willyam Costa, a street and hip hop dancer and teacher, who decribed performing with Soares as "a unique experience and an unforgettable opportunity". Renata Soares (no relation), who has worked with Ballet Municipal do Rio de Janeiro, told me the masterclass was: "Beautiful. The way he [Soares] explained the exercises and the feelings. I learned a lot. I'm grateful for the opportunity." It was amazing to see how quickly Soares pulled the dancers together and "lifted the bar". As he said in an interview: "I have a real interest in discovering and working with new talents, getting to know how they dance".

Looking back, it was a journey of

great inspiration and solid, hard and concentrated work. Whilst retaining the elegance and drama that have made him an internationally admired primeiro bailarino, Thiago Soares is also moving into choreography, teaching, directing, and linking dance with other art forms.

Thiago Soares will give his farewell performance with The Royal Ballet in the title role of John Cranko's *Onegin* on February 29, 2020. Visit roh.org.uk for more information.

or Spades

f one were to read that an Argentine choreographer was creating a ballet based on Alexander Pushkin's *The Queen of Spades*, using music from Tchaikovsky's opera, for a company based in St Petersburg celebrating the 220th anniversary of the birth of the Russian writer, one might think there was some kind of mistake. This is, however, exactly what Iñaki Urlezaga, a former principal dancer with The Royal Ballet, Dutch National Ballet and the Ballet Estable del Teatro Colón, is doing. In addition, Tchaikovsky's music is being arranged to the choreographer's requirements by another Argentinian, the musical director and composer Andrés Risso.

Urlezaga didn't take the request from the Yacobson Ballet Theatre lightly. In fact he actually refused it many times, and suggested the company find a Russian choreographer before finally accepting the commission. His full-length ballet is in three acts and seven scenes, and will have sets and costumes designed by the Italian husband and wife team, Ezio Frigerio and Franca Squarciapino, both of whom worked with Rudolf Nureyev on a number of occasions. The lighting will be by Vinichio Chelli.

The former dancer made a stopover in London to give an interview for this magazine. He was on his way from Argentina to St Petersburg, two months before opening night, as he still had to complete the last act of the ballet. At his request we met at Maison Assouline on Piccadilly, as Urlezaga wanted to avoid Covent Garden and go somewhere new. He exuded a calm self-confidence, and one could tell he was used to being centre stage, as his slender yet commanding figure glided past the tables and bookshelves turning some heads. Not looking his 42 years, he generously engaged in a long interview in which he was frank and reflective, and not at all nervous of the task ahead of him.

"It's great to be back in London, an old love of mine," he says, enjoying the arty surroundings. Does he like St Petersburg, I ask. "It's fabulous, a city built by European artists – very beautiful and so different from Moscow. Pushkin's story takes place there too, which adds to my inspiration. It's wonderful to work with the Yacobson Ballet Theatre; Fátima Nollén meets Iñaki Urlezaga, the Argentinian choreographer who is bringing Pushkin to St Petersburg

they are very organised, and I have lots of time to research and create."

The company was set up in 1966 and in Russia is considered a gem; it now bears the name of its founder choreographer, Leonid Yacobson, but was previously known as the Choreographic Miniatures. It has a repertoire of classics - Swan Lake in the same version as the Maryinsky Ballet - plus numerous ballets created by Yacobson during the 20th century, as well as modern works. Igor Stupnikov often writes about the company in his Letter From St Petersburg. Alongside Urlezaga's Queen of Spades, the company is staging John Cranko's *Onegin* next year, with the same team that produced it at the Bolshoi. The two ballets will be the highlights of the Yacobson Ballet Theatre's 51st season.

First, I ask Urlezaga how the invitation from the Yacobson Ballet Theatre came about. "Andrian
Ace of Spades

story, the opera and the music, and, above all, a guarantee of total freedom to choose my own creative team."

The most important thing for Urlezaga is to have freedom, and to be trusted as an artist. This allows him to "pour out what I have inside into something tangible on stage. Even if it's a mistake, the work is genuine". The only condition made on him by the company was that he respected the period in which Pushkin wrote the story.

I wondered why he chose Frigerio and Squaciarpino as designers? "Frigerio has great sensitivity. I like his humanity on stage, and his aesthetic, which can be modernist. With Franca, the pair are both so incredibly cultured. I went to meet them in January at their home in Milan to explain my ideas, what I needed in terms of theatrical functionality, like stairs or a window; the details that spoke of the whole concept, but also a state of mind."



Fadeev, the artistic director, saw my version of *La traviata*, a full-length ballet I did in Argentina ten years ago for my Ballet Concierto company, and he liked what he saw. He said he admired the way I had narrated the story, but, just imagine, an Argentine taking on nothing less than Pushkin and Tchaikovsky in a work for a Russian company – I said no! One would have to have no conscience or a high degree of arrogance, I thought at first," and he laughs. "I only agreed to do it after much discussion, a close study of the

The choreographer decided to make the ballet a clearer version of *The Queen of Spades* than is seen in Tchaikovsky's opera. Although he follows the musical lines of the score, Urlezaga considers that, "Tchaikovsky's works have a lot of theatrical psychology that is descriptive and emotional. When creating the opera he changed the story for theatrical reasons, but the magnitude of his score is absolutely beautiful."

That brings us to the musical arrangement. "I never told Andrés Risso this was going to be a project Left: Iñaki Urlezaga rehearsing the Yacobson Ballet Theatre in *The Queen of Spades*. Below: Urlezaga in *Romeo and Juliet* at the Teatro Colón.

for Russia. He would never have accepted; but I needed him because he knows me very well – since I was born. He knows what I need, and we have worked together many times," he confesses with a cheeky smile.

Urlezaga says he does not define his choreographic style, because everything can co-exist, but the words "romantic expressionism" came to his mind, adding, "that needs to be seen by the audience".

I'm intrigued by what people will see on stage. "This Queen of Spades has all the action and the dance concentrated into the main characters, including the love story between Herman and Liza, which in Pushkin seems a bit open, if not dreamlike. The other key characters are the Prince, the Countess, and eight soloists. There will be a ball scene, of course, and scenes set in the streets of St Petersburg. I wanted to introduce some folk elements into the third act, set in a gaming house, because the music has folk tones to it. I asked the male dancers if they knew the type of work done by Moiseyev Folk Dance Ensemble; 'We know nothing about it,' they answered [he smiles]; I'm sure I'll get what I plan because it's in the dancers' DNA.

"The work has the structure of a classical ballet, but without the unnecessary succession of dances not connected to the plot that lead up to the main pas de deux." The ballet will also retain elements of human avarice and the supernatural included in Pushkin's story.

ew people outside Argentina know Urlezaga has been choreographing, something he started whilst still dancing, often without taking any credit for it. "I thought it was a bit egotistical to dance and say something was my own work, too, until it felt right to put my name behind *Floralis*, which I created in 2004," he confessed. He says he prefers to tell stories, and started helping other choreographers from 1999 onwards.

He staged *The Nutcracker* for Ballet Teatro Argentino de La Plata in 2007, and completed ten full-length and oneact works for Ballet Naacional Danza and his Ballet Concierto, which he founded in 2000 whilst still dancing with >>

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Ace of Spades

The Royal Ballet (which he left in 2005). At the request of Argentina's Ministry of Culture, he later worked on shaping and directing Ballet Nacional Danza, which was founded in 2013 but ceased to exist in December 2017 due to lack of funds.

Urlezaga finally retired from dancing last year following a grand tour of his homeland that saw him perform Kenneth MacMillan's *Romeo and Juliet* with The Royal Ballet's Lauren Cuthbertson at the Teatro Colón. He says he would set up a ballet company in Argentina again if he ever had the





opportunity, but in the meantime, continues to teach at home and abroad, making sure he passes on what he learnt at the Colón school, and particularly from Stanley Williams during his 16-month scholarship at the School of American Ballet. "In hindsight, I think it was through working with Stanley that I learned how to be a teacher. He was magnificent. I can say the same about Anthony Dowell's influence during my years at The Royal Ballet. His demand for artistic quality stays with me."

It must be challenging to work with the Yacobson Ballet Theatre, especially as the language and culture are so different. How did the company receive Urlezaga? "They were fantastic," he replies. "Very Russian in the sense they are all cut in the same Vaganova mould. They could seem cold, but they are warm, emotional people. I arrived with an open mind because I didn't know them. As a country, Russia has changed since the fall of the Iron Curtain, and they look up to Europe, as they are still in relative isolation. I believe they are trying to catch up with everything that happened when they were still behind that wall.

"The company has been incredibly receptive to my work. The funny thing is, I felt it necessary to apologise before starting each scene," he says incredulously, "because it felt pedantic when I had to explain Pushkin and Tchaikovsky to them in my own way. I speak English to them, and one of the dancers acts as translator, but the language of ballet is universal. I'm also a young choreographer; I could be dancing with them, so it's easier to demonstrate, too. In turn, they ask a lot, and question me about things, which is good.

"They are spontaneous, sensitive and hardworking, and we have established a great rapport. I'm not sure what they think of me, because in my time all my choreographers were either old or dead. We do laugh a lot, though. I think it's great to have this relationship between dancers and choreographer, because that is how the roles come alive."

Urlezaga reveals he doesn't write his choreographic ideas down. "I keep them all in here," he admits, pointing to his head. "I arrive in the studio with everything ready to go, and I video rehearsals to keep the work as I intended for the next time."

Still. I'm curious about the Yacobson Ballet Theatre's decision to commission Urlezaga, and contact Andrian Fadeev, who says he's pleased with his choice of choreographer for The Queen of Spades, a "very Petersburg title" that demands the choreographer "understand his responsibilities completely, since the story is also performed in St Petersburg. Iñaki is a person who can work dramatically; he understands the laws of the theatre, and is extremely musical. Everything is important to him, and he allows the dancers to 'speak' on stage, not only dance. I'm sure the time he spent in the UK has influenced his style because the UK is famous for its theatre. This point is very important when reproducing the legacy of the poet considered one of the main symbols of Russian culture."

Fadeev adds that the dancers are very happy working with Urlezaga."They like being on stage with him, like what he's doing, and they watch his every movement with respect for his experience and way of working."

The Yacobson Ballet Theatre has licensed *The Queen of Spades* for three years, and there are plans to take it on tour, and even perform it at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre. The curtain goes up on December 5. ■

The Yacobson Ballet's production of *The Queen of Spades* opens at the Tovstonogov Bolshoi Drama Theatre in St Petersburg. Go to yacobsonballet. ru/en for further information.

Top: Ezio Frigerio's set design for Act I Scene II of *The Queen of Spades*. Bottom: Iñaki Urlezaga acknowleging the applause of the Ballet Nacional Danza audience.

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want a plant pot and a spade." Not choreographer David Bintley's Christmas wish list but the unusual specification he gave to designer Dick Bird for his ballet, *The Spider's Feast*. Bird is no stranger to the unconventional. With only an O Level in art as a relevant qualification, Bird's path to a career in stage design is anything but orthodox. Nor were his instructions about finding his studio: "The front garden has a slightly drug dealerish sort of look, but don't be put off..."

Equipped with said O Level, Bird left his "stiff grammar school" intent on becoming a theatre director: "The Attractive Bargain Bucket Theatre Company was small. I was its megalomaniac, staging prematch entertainment at Millwall football club." A directing course at Goldsmiths, University of London, eventually followed, enabling him to study abroad: "That gave me a whole different perspective. People in lab coats talking about theatre as a science, Tadeusz Kantor from Poland particularly. He was fascinating for his use of puppets and mannequin doubles as actors. It was the opposite of theatre as I knew it, where actors were the most important element and scenery was something quiet in the background."

Bird's graduation show was the unlikely collision of Emile Zola's *L'Assommoir*, Primo Levi's *The Drowned and the Saved* and Théodore Géricault's painting *The Raft of Medusa*, with music by The Band of Holy Joy, mashed together in a church under the Hammersmith flyover in west London. Bird says: "It all made sense at the time, a rather good, if bizarre, experience. It was the end – and beginning – of something."

So began a period building kitchens, bedrooms and beach huts. "I was a good carpenter. To earn money, I set up a workshop making small

Designer **Dick Bird** talks to Paul Arrowsmith

theatre sets and props for television and film companies. When Primitive Science lost its designer for the show *Vagabondage* at the Young Vic, I made – and designed – the set. That was my apprenticeship," admits Bird. *The Independent* gave him a review that established designers would envy: "For most of the piece, visual imagery supplants words. It brings new meaning to the phrase 'set text'."

Opera has occupied Bird for much of this year; in Copenhagen with John Adams' *Nixon in China*, which comes to Scottish Opera in February. In Vienna, Bird was reunited with Adrian Noble, a former artistic director of the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), on Giuseppe Verdi's *Otello*. The RSC is – so >

Dick Bird

far – missing from Bird's eclectic CV. He has worked with Noble before, on Kate Bush's *Before the Dawn* tour, her first live performances in 35 years. Bird admits: "That was an extraordinary experience. Not conventional."

With his interest in physical theatre, Bird designed for Complicité and Frantic Assembly. Dance was a logical next step, with The Banquet choreographed by Bettina Strickler and Luca Silvestrini for Protein Dance. Bird's debut in ballet was The Canterville Ghost by Will Tuckett for English National Ballet in 2006: "Will and I came to the framework of setting the story in an old theatre quite easily, but having completed the design, I missed being part of the rehearsal period [compared to a play]. Ballet is an intriguing art form, dealing with something that is passed down through bodies not just from a text. I remember being in a ballet rehearsal room for the first time, thinking how corporeal it was."

With *Aladdin*, created by David Bintley for the National Ballet of Japan and subsequently staged by Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB) and Houston Ballet, Bird says: "I was much more involved in the process. David enjoys working with scenery and props, creating different spaces to work in. He would say at times, 'I need more space here.' It was very collaborative, particularly when we looked at the budget and had to find other ways to be inventive. Hopefully it is still full of magic, moments where I hope the audience gasp a little."

Doug Nicholson, BRB's head of scenic presentation, observes: "In



Japan, Aladdin was designed for a big stage. We needed something that toured and would fit all venues – a challenge because of all the effects needed. Dick is a master at keeping true to David's concept and still telling the story." Bird notes: "David was very clear that his inspiration was the Arabian Nights stories and the world imagined by such 19th-century painters as Alma-Tadema." For Nicholson: "The most important thing for a designer is to create the design first and then make it work on stage, having discussions with the makers and technical staff involved. Dick is always willing to listen to other opinions."

The Nutcracker – something inevitably conventional for this time of year – is currently keeping Bird



busy: "We're in the third year of this production and we're still working on it. Some ideas, such as the flying goose, get jettisoned due to cost but we are putting more in each time, developing and improving it."

The production in question is Bintley's staging, with Marion Tait, for the Royal Albert Hall (RAH), drawn from the lynchpin of BRB's repertoire created by its founding father, Peter Wright. "David wanted to put Nutcracker into the Albert Hall to make money to keep BRB going after funding cuts by Birmingham City Council. The company hadn't had a great experience with it at The O2 in Greenwich [in 2011]. John Macfarlane [the production's original designer] didn't want anything to do with the Albert Hall. Peter was cautious. His loyalty to the company made him want to be up for it. For me it was a poisoned chalice, like being given a Rolls-Royce and asked to drive over an impossible terrain with not enough petrol in the tank. John is one of our greatest designers, absolutely. With Nutcracker he created something beautiful, an act of choreography in itself.

"What I loved most about the BRB production was how the tree grew, with branches bursting out of the wall until the whole space is filled with them. With that we feel the miniaturisation of Clara. I wanted to give Albert Hall audiences that same experience of scale," says Bird. He prefers to work



in three dimensions, making his own set models, to understand the space he is designing for. "In Nutcracker we started with a conventional ballroom and moved to two-and-a-half metre wide baubles suspended from the ceiling. To create the sense of being inside a massive Christmas tree led us to think about animations and massively projected pine needles [created by 59 Productions]." For Bird, the RAH was: "Incredibly daunting, full of obstacles, but I think the result shows off the choreography in a splendid way. There's a fresh interaction between the performers, the audience and the space."

Bird has designed The Nutcracker before, for Minoru Suzuki's Star Dancers Ballet in Japan. "Minoru had the idea of setting the first act at a German outdoor Christmas market," Bird recalls. "There's a stall selling nutcracker toys and Drosselmeyer arrives with a travelling puppet theatre. Clara finds her way inside it and so she experiences the rest of the ballet from an unusual perspective, from amid a world of dolls. At the end, Clara leaves her new doll friends to rediscover her family searching for her at the market. Minoru's ideas all help make the narrative work beautifully."

Japan is a frequent destination for Bird where, in more conventional balletic mode, he designed a handsome, full-length *La Bayadère* for Testsuya Kumakawa's K-Ballet. Less Previous page: The set for Birmingham Royal Ballet's *The Nutcracker* at the Royal Albert Hall. Below opposite: Set model for *The Nutcracker*. Above opposite: A portrait of Dick Bird. Inset: Costume design for *The Spider's Feast*. Above: Set model for *The Spider's Feast*.

conventional was a new production of *Dragon Quest* for Star Dancers Ballet in 2017. "It's based on a computer game, part of Minoru's way of widening the ballet-going public. The beginning looks something like a ballet and develops into more of a video game, moving from a land of purity to the world of the Black King who steals the White Princess. There is a quest set amid a world of disembodied eye balls. It is actually quite a lovely piece. Minoru is very inventive: it was a really fun thing to do."

"Dragon Quest was performed in Paris last July at Japan Expo and made some sensation," says Suzuki. "The ballets I created with Dick were born in Japan but because of Dick's designs they have attracted international attention."

Bird's association with Suzuki also includes *The Lost Caterpillar*, a satiric one-act ballet with beetles, butterflies and ants. Bird's costume designs are drawn by his wife, Belinda Clisham, in order, he says: "To give wardrobe departments a better chance of understanding them! The costumes were hard to dance in but they looked great. It's always fun to do insects." Which brings us to *The Spider's Feast*. With a score by Albert Roussel, it dates from the same Paris spring of 1913 as Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du printemps*. Although Serge Diaghilev apparently considered Roussel as much a part of his future Ballets Russes as Prokofiev, Debussy, Ravel, "even Strauss," he never commissioned him. Bintley has said in these pages that he thinks Roussel's score is "wonderful." He first choreographed it for The Royal Ballet School 20-plus years ago and next April is restaging it for Sarasota Ballet.

Bird previously worked with the company, producing what he calls a "serviceable" redesign of Peter Wright's *Summertide* but one the choreographer thought improved on the original. Bird is setting *The Spider's Feast* on the shelf of a potting shed. Besides the plant pot and a trowel, in place of the spade stipulated by Bintley: "There's a cobwebby window, the moon and a packet of insecticide. It's witty and cruel." Perhaps when Bird adds, "it's enjoyable watching death on stage," he is influenced by other works in progress. In Montpellier this month Bird is imagining the sadistic world of Poil de carotte, a musical tale by Reinhardt Wagner directed by Zabou Breitman with choreography by Gladys Gambie, about the maltreatment of a red-headed kid. A year from now Greek National Opera will stage Bird's view of Mozart's Don Giovanni, complete with the Commendatore's body hidden on a rack of animal carcasses.

Looking further ahead, Bird says: "I have seven or eight projects bubbling around, at different stages. It's good to have the cross-fertilisation between different productions." He hints too at two further, fulllength, projects in development with Bintley, saying: "David has so many ideas and new energy. I imagine it is good for him to be liberated to be able to get on with work."

In Suzuki's experience: "What Dick brings to the table is always above my expectations. His imagination and inquisitive mind really impress me, as does his exciting energy. He is the best partner with whom to share the joy of creating a production. As a choreographer, I get inspiration from him. In addition, we enjoy Japanese sake together, and we both love cats above anything, so what more can I ask?"

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Dance Scene Performances reviewed from around the world

Yasmine Naghdi and Gary Avis in Act I of The Royal Ballet's production of *The Sleeping Beauty*.



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Dance Umbrella 2019

Various Venues, London – October 8 to 26, 2019

IT IS INDEED AN umbrella. Founded 41 years ago and still unfolding every autumn, the Dance Umbrella festival covers a wide area both of contemporary dance and of London venues. This year I caught only some of the more standard proscenium shows, but festival watchers should note that the season, as usual, encompassed a much broader range of formats and platforms, including "takeovers" of Shoreditch Town Hall (a vogueing ball - very Pose) and Croydon's newly refurbished Fairfield Halls (a mixed bill of Bharata Natyam, hip hop, parkour and dance-theatre), as well as a scattering of talks, screenings and workshops.

Opening the festival was Gisèle Vienne's Crowd at Sadler's Wells (which was also part of the concurrently running France Dance festival), a disorienting meld of fast beats and slow action. As with an open-air rave, from which the piece takes its imagery, it takes a while to get into, but once you're there it keeps you there for longer than you'd think possible. On an earth-covered stage strewn with debris – cans, bags, rags - a woman enters in cut-off shorts, trainers, a thrown-on top. Her pace is almost painfully slow, as if on a visual track that's been sequenced at an entirely different rate to its audio track of quickening pulses and metallic harmonics. Gradually, others join her – a shirtless guy, sinewy as Iggy Pop; a woman in boots, jeans and halter top; a motley assortment of people sporting trackies, backpacks and caps - until they pool into a (noticeably all-white) posse of indie youth and grungy types.

Their movement is more like documentary than dance: people drink and bop, they kiss, have altercations, take breaks, they cluster and disperse and wave and watch. Yet the spacey slow-motion turns it into highly stylised choreography: everything is framed and paced, executed so that we see the workings of a simulated fall or punch, even the muscles of the face as they form a grin or a gasp. It's naturalism, denatured.

Above: Vuyani Dance Theatre in Gregory Maqoma's *Cion: Requiem of Ravel's Bolero*

At first the whole group moves smoothly; later, they're jolted by the soundtrack into spikes of synchronicity, like a kind of freeze-frame; later still, it's more like stop-motion. The effect is cumulative and trippy, and it's that persistent disjunction between time and space that lends the piece its uncanny, ecstatic fascination. You stop noticing the people and start noticing the patterns, the performers becoming less a ragtag bunch of individuals than a kind of social body or meta-organism, their bodies serving as neural conduits for ripples of energy that shape the crowd into ever-shifting formations. Now that's a trip.

Cion: Requiem of Ravel's Bolero at the Barbican is a trip of a different kind. Choreographer Gregory Maqoma takes his inspiration from the figure of Toloki, a professional mourner in the novels of writer Zakes Mda. With eight great dancers from his **Vuyani Dance Theatre** and four outstanding vocalists, this is a journey in the shadow of death – not a death of release or repose, but of violence, grief and pain; fleetingly, of honour or fortitude.

Strewn with crosses, the stage feels like an enclosed chamber, set for rituals that bind passion to procedure: flailing arms match strict steps, chests shudder even as the dancers maintain their formations. Magoma is the eye of this storm, variously sorcerer, soothsayer, avenger and victim, as the scenes suggest marauding dogs, military raids, torture - but sometimes also communion. There's warmth here as well as fire and lightning.

Rhythm courses through the choreography like pulses and heartbeats, sometimes accented by the palatal snaps of an African click language, and often accompanied by the insistent rhythm of Ravel's *Bolero*, played first on a drum and later sung in a rising acapella. Indeed, for all the drama in the dancing, it's the music that grips most, the four sublime singers transporting us into realms of spirit and empathy.

Georgia Vardarou was selected by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker for Dance Umbrella's Four by Four programme at the Lilian Baylis Studio, whereby four senior choreographers propose a young "choreographer of the future". It's a wonderful scheme, but it also shows that an endorsement of great talent does not guarantee a great piece. Vardarou's solo, Why should it be more desirable for green fire balls to *exist than not?* is as baffling as its title is cumbersome. It's consummately staged, with projections of rocks, a house on a Greek coast; golden cloth is crumpled into miniature mountains on a tastefully lit stage.

United Kingdom

Vardarou is a beautiful, articulate mover, but the piece itself seems to happen largely inside her head, with all this staging, motion and imagery as its delectable but frankly meagre remnants.

Merce Cunningham was once a choreographer of the future; indeed his company's first UK visit in 1964 elicited a review that declared: "the future bursts in". Now of course, Cunningham is historic, yet in this centenary year of his birth, festival director Emma Gladstone felt that Cunningham could still speak to past, present and future, and duly named the festival's closing programme "The Future Bursts In". Its finale is CCN-Ballet de Lorraine in Cunningham's 1975 Sounddance. Like many "historic" dance works, this is worth seeing again not only through the lens of history but with a sense of the here and now. For the inimitable Cunningham

style, with its motoric choreographic procedures, its divided attention (like watching split screens in three dimensions), its emergent phrases and chance encounters, carries a bracing double vision: we recognise the piece as dated, not of our time, yet that itself also brings a jolt of freshness, a sense of something new, perhaps even radical. We might even say: the past bursts in.

Of course, that blast-fromthe-past effect works best if the dancers appear to embody rather than re-enact the style, and, at the Linbury Theatre, the CCN-Ballet de Lorraine performers don't quite manage it. Perhaps that's one reason why the preceding piece, For Four Walls, didn't quite hit the mark. Set to a 1944 piano score by John Cage (bearing the influence of Erik Satie in its stately chords and bare-faced non-sequiturs), this new work by Petter

Jacobsson and Thomas Caley marshals the massed effects of a large cast, multiplied by mirrors and rendered enigmatic by the solemn presence of pianist Vanessa Wagner, but it feels like a wonderful exercise in style without the heft of substance.

In contrast, Amala Dianor's programme opener Somewhere in the Middle of Infinity has a real sense of something happening now, and maybe next. It's a quiet but beautifully crafted trio for three men - Dianor, Pansum Kin and Souleyman Ladji Koné, each imprinted with a sense of place (including France, Senegal, Korea and Burkina Faso) and style (including hip hop, African dance, contemporary and classical) but none making statements about them. Instead, to Anwir Leon's low-key electronic score, they find unforced ways of being and moving together, whether by forming loose components of a larger whole (a willowy image of trunk and branch is a repeated motif) or fluidly giving and taking space to and from each other.

If that's the future bursting in, we're fine, but Dance Umbrella pointedly and laudably ended its festival on a different note: a talk with environmental activists Extinction Rebellion. Without soapboxing, the talk raised the issue of the ecological impacts of our existence. For whether we see ourselves as individuals, as groups, or as practitioners (artists, producers, programmers, technicians) within the field of dance, in environmental terms the future has been already been bursting in for decades. We cannot keep looking at the stage while looking away from this. **SANJOY ROY**

Below: Dancers of CCN-Ballet de Lorraine in Petter Jacobsson and Thomas Caley's *For Four Walls*.



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Dracula

Triple Bill

The Kingdom of Back, Mamela..., The Shape of Sound

Northern Ballet, Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury and Linbury Theatre, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London – October 12; November 6, 2019

AS NORTHERN BALLET MOVES

into its 50th year, I don't think the company has ever looked as good as it does right now. The dancers especially the men - are simply wonderful, and it's very clear standards have risen considerably under the artistic direction of David Nixon. I caught two programmes by the company on tour during the run-up to the special anniversary gala it will be holding at the Grand Theatre in Leeds on January 4, an occasion to look forward to.

Nixon's Dracula has been out of the repertoire for a number of years, but it returned this autumn with some new choreography and some new costumes. The ballet tells the story clearly (if that is really possible with Bram Stoker's purple prose), and is highly effective in depicting the more creepy and macabre moments in the novel, especially Jonathan Harker's arrival at the castle in Transylvania. Gone is the opening scene where Dracula rose stark naked from his coffin (which was popular with hen parties I was told), replaced now by a scene showing an ancient Nosferatu figure skulking about the stage who later transforms into a rejuvenated version of the vampire. It's all good, old-fashioned melodrama and, in a stroke of genuis, the company presented



the work – led by premier dancer Javier Torres – in a live cinema relay across the UK on Halloween.

The performance I saw at Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre on the afternoon of October 12 was dominated by the male dancers, especially Riku Ito as a lithe, mysterious and dangerous Dracula who was also a sexually magnetic draw to the hapless Lucy (Sarah Chun) and Mina (Ayami Miyata). He was pitted against Kevin Poeung as Harker, Jonathan Hanks as Holmwood, Gavin McCaig as Dr Seward and Matthew Topliss as Professor Van Helsing, all of whom were excellent in the characterisation of their roles, and impressive when bounding about the stage in a sequence of exciting jumps and turns whilst in pusuit of Dracula.

The triple bill the company brought to the Linbury Theatre in London on November 6 was the same reviewed by David Mead in the November 2018 issue of *Dancing Times*, and I largely agree with what he wrote then. Morgann Runacre-Temple's *The* *Kingdom of Back*, based on the life of Mozart's sister, Nannerl, is pleasant and amusing enough, but would be forgettable without the charming performances of Mlindi Kulashe as Wolfgang, Antoinette Brooks-Daw as Nannerl, and Torres as their stern yet loving father.

Kulashe's Mamela... (the Xhosa word for "listen") showed some influence from current choreographers such as Wayne McGregor, but included a lot of fascinating ideas and movements of his own, especially in the almost mechanistic dances for the ensemble, who pace around the stage anxiously, tap their wrists or hold the palms of their hands together as if reading a book. Of greatest interest was a teetering solo for Sean Bates, who lifted his limbs so high you feared he may lose balance, and which ended with him clenching his fists at his sides and shaking his head in suppressed anger.

My only gripe with Kenneth Tindall's *The Shape* of *Sound* is that the music he chose for his ballet was Max Richter's far too familiar version of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, a piece I find intensely irritating, but one Above: Dancers of Northern Ballet in *The Shape of Sound*.

that seems to be on every choreographer's playlist at the moment. Despite this drawback. Tindall has created an exciting, largescale company work full of striking movements and, especially, unusual lifts in a number of the duets. Facing away from the audience at the beginning, the cast seem to be warming their limbs at the approach of Spring before eventually breaking out in larger and bolder dancing. It builds and builds with complete confience, but Tindall's dance imagery is also witty – I loved the way some of the women appeared halfway out of the wings as if they were swimming underwater - and he also provides dazzlingly exciting feats for the dancers such as the explosive solo full of leaps for Kevin Poeung. In quieter moments, Joseph Taylor was an exemplary and wonderfully strong partner to the women he was paired with. A marvellous end to an impressive evening of dancing. JONATHAN GRAY

Manon

Triple Bill

Concerto, Enigma Variations, Raymonda Act III

The Sleeping Beauty

The Royal Ballet, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London – October 17,19,22-23,26,28; November 7,9, 2019

Giselle

Birmingham Royal Ballet, Sadler's Wells, London – November 2, 2019

THE OPENING WEEKS OF

The Royal Ballet's 2019-20 season at Covent Garden were dominated by repertoire, starting with Kenneth MacMillan's Manon and followed by a triple bill of MacMillan's Concerto, Frederick Ashton's Enigma Variations and Rudolf Nureyev's staging of the third act of Marius Petipa's Raymonda. Then, last but not least, was the return of The Sleeping Beauty, the company's signature work in a version based on Ninette de Valois' classic production dating from 1946. There were lots of performances,

and lots of debuts, too, and although it sometimes felt that, as a dance critic, I was participating in a dance marathon, there was also much to enjoy.

As reported last month, Manon was looking very good indeed, and the three further performances I saw of the ballet on October 17, 19 and 23 showed the company on top form, the dancers relishing the variety of dramatic roles MacMillan had created for the work. New to the role of Des Grieux this season was Matthew Ball, whom I saw with the luscious Manon of Lauren Cuthbertson on October 17. Ball is at his best when he has a character to portray, and as Des Grieux he came into his own, playing him as a quiet, sensitive and dignified young man; his dancing, especially in the first solo, was gorgeous and musical, and his long, long penchée arabesques easily sustained. Des Grieux can sometimes seem like a wet blanket, but in this performance Ball invested him with such nobility it gave his character an added strength and determination to save Manon at all costs.

It was the turn of Laura Morera and Federico Bonelli to perform Manon and Des Grieux on October 23. Both mature artists, the couple gave MacMillan's choreography full value, playing their roles very much as innocents caught up in a world of decadence and corruption. Theatrically sure, and in total command of their means of expression, what made their performances such a pleasure to behold was the entirely musical way Morera and Bonelli phrased their duets and solos. Joining them that evening was Luca Acri as a fleetfooted, slightly lightweight Lescaut, and Meaghan Grace Hinkis as a very appealing Lescaut's Mistress.

The cast to catch, however, was the one I saw at the matinée on October 19 led by Francesca Hayward as Manon and Alexander Campbell as Des Grieux, with Cesar Corrales making his debut as Lescaut. Corrales was dark and charismatic, his dancing razor sharp, but he also showed Lescaut to be a man living on his wits, thinking through solutions to problems, and angry in the knowledge he could lose everything at any moment. That's why he slaps his mistress (the gorgeous

Mayara Magri) across the face when she deviates from his scheme, just hard enough to bring her back to her senses. This Lescaut plays up to the aristocrats he meets, happily pimping his mistress and his sister to them, but he is also clever enough to be friendly with the beggars in the inn courtyard, knowing they can be used to his advantage as well. Scintillating, yet cunning and saturnine, Corrales also brought out more comedy in the "drunk" duet with his mistress than I have seen in years – I consider him to already be one of the finest exponents of the role.

Although not cut from quite the same cloth as her brother, Hayward's Manon understands the path she must follow in life, but she is also a young woman in love, and responds to Des Grieux's courtship of her with rapture. Hayward's dancing is beautifully light and fresh, and she uses her body with an alluring sense of ecstasy, her torso bending

Below left: Francesca Hayward and Alexander Campbell as Manon and Des Grieux in Act I of *Manon*. Below right: Cesar Corrales and Mayara Magri as Lescaut and Lescaut's Mistress in Act II of *Manon*.



and twisting with erotic pleasure that is entirely enticing to Campbell's vulnerable, gentlemanly Des Grieux. Both she and Campbell make clear they are a young couple, inexperienced in life, yet obviously sexually attracted to each other - the first Bedroom duet took on an excitement and urgency that was breathtaking. Moreover Campbell, like Hayward, is such a brilliant actor you simply believe in everything he does on stage - there is no doubt that here is a man driven to desperation in his love for Manon, and you readily accept he could murder another man in order to protect her.

IF PERFORMANCES OF

MANON were marvellous, things were not quite so convincing in the triple bill, at least during the early part of the run (there are more this month), where each ballet tended to look under-rehearsed. MacMillan's *Concerto*, made in 1966, still presents huge technical hurdles for dancers and, with a few notable exceptions, many of today's Royal Ballet looked as if they were trying

hard to catch up with the choreographer's spry, pacy steps. In the first movement on October 22 and 26, Anna Rose O'Sullivan (replacing an injured Akane Takada) and Marcelino Sambé were sometimes not quite on top of what they were dancing, and neither was Fumi Kaneko in the third movement, although Lauren Cuthbertson, partnered strongly by Reece Clarke, was lovely in the second.

Things were more settled with some changes of cast on October 28, when O'Sullivan, this time dancing with James Hay, was bright, stylish and crisp, and Yasmine Naghdi was entirely ravishing in the pas de deux. Best of all, however, was Mayara Magri, who brought wonderful Above: Sarah Lamb and Vadim Muntagirov in *Raymonda Act III*. Below: The Royal Ballet in the final pose from *Enigma Variations*.

energy and propulsion to the third movement.

Magri was the outstanding performer, too, in Raymonda Act III on both October 22 and 26, dancing the fourth variation with such panache, authority and vitality you wondered why she had not been cast in the ballerina role herself. It's always wonderful to see this divertissement from Petipa's last great ballet back at Covent Garden, especially in Barry Kay's glorious designs, but the dancers should be more sure, and less tentative, than they are at the moment - they should follow Magri's example, and relish the challenge of their solos and ensembles, rather than look a bit scared of them.

Sarah Lamb was the Raymonda at the first two performances, although it is not a role really suited to her talents, so it was good to >>



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see Natalia Osipova in the ballet on October 28. She has the grandeur, personality and sense of expansiveness absolutely essential for the role, especially in Raymonda's stunning hand-clap variation, and Osipova brought out a great deal of musical nuance, so that the solo regained its beguiling and mysterious qualities once again. Both ballerinas were paired with Vadim Muntagirov, who is such a perfect classical prince you begin to take his exemplary dancing and partnering for granted.

It was Enigma Variations, however, that seemed the least prepared of all the ballets on the programme, and I worried that the spirit of Ashton's most quintessentially "British" ballet had finally departed. It's a difficult work to bring off, and the first cast, although not putting a foot wrong, failed to bring it to life. Christopher Saunders, as Edward Elgar, tended simply to walk around looking puzzled, and, being so tall, was not well matched with the gracious, but much smaller Lady Elgar of Laura Morera. Francesca Hayward as Dorabella and Matthew Ball as Troyte tackled their solos admirably, without

adding to the overall impression of the ballet.

On balance, the second cast, which I saw on October 26, was more convincing. Bennet Gartside and Kristen McNally made much of Ashton's loving choreography for Elgar and his wife, Alexander Campbell was brusquely brilliant as Troyte, and Anna Rose O'Sullivan suggested an eroticism to Dorabella that brought a new perspective to that character. In addition, Magri, Annette Buvoli and Lara Turk danced with a real understanding of Ashton style as Isabel Fitton, Winifred Norbury and Lady Mary Lygon, and Gary Avis was quietly dignified as Jaegar.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

RETURNED to Covent Garden on November 7, immaculately rehearsed and immaculately danced, and looking more like The Royal Ballet's signature work than it has for quite a while. Whilst there are things in the production that still need strengthening - the role of Carabosse, for example, as well as the Awakening Scene – it was great to see the company looking so at home in the ballet again, and great also to see such an

Above: Francesca Hayward as Princess Florine and Marcelino Sambé as The Blue Bird in Act III of *The Sleeping Beauty*.

array of fine soloist dancing. Opening night was led by Yasmine Naghdi as Princess Aurora. She was exquisite in every way, from a thrilling Rose Adagio in Act I, right through to a glorious Wedding pas de deux in Act III, and was partnered by the splendid Matthew Ball as Prince Florimund, who also managed to suggest the prince was a man of steely strength beneath his good manners. Outstanding, too, were James Hay, Mayara Magri and Anna Rose O'Sullivan as Florestan and His Sisters, and Francesca Hayward and Marcelino Sambé were perfect in the "Blue Bird" pas de deux, their dancing musical and beautifully phrased.

There was a new Aurora at the matinée on November 9, and Fumi Kaneko certainly has the strength and technique to dance the role – she didn't seem at all fazed by any of the demands of the choreography. Polished and secure, this was an accomplished debut from the young dancer, although I'd like to see more musical variety in her dancing, and a greater sense of drama. Kaneko was lucky to have such a strong and handsome Prince in Reece Clarke, who was attentive to her every need in the duets, and cut a dashing figure in the Hunting scene.

There was a new Lilac Fairy and Carabosse at this performance, too, with Itziar Mendizabal a venomous, angry and frightening bad fairy, and Magri a warm, grand and radiant good fairy, and one, moreover, who can actually dance the difficult solo in the Prologue. Also new was Joseph Sissens as the Blue Bird, his crisp, cleanly beaten jumps light, high, airy, confident and elegant.

AS A POSTSCRIPT, I would also like to mention the fine performance of Giselle given by Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB), The Royal Ballet's sister company, at Sadler's Wells on the evening of November 2. Delia Mathews, taller than most Giselles, danced the title role as a young, simple and carefree girl who is terribly wronged by her betrayal by Tyrone Singleton's slightly haughty Albrecht. The pair danced with beautiful lucidity, every step precisely delineated, and their love for each other was projected with absolute clarity; they were at their best during Act II, where Singleton's sensitive partnering convinced you that the spirit of Giselle really could take off into the air at any moment. As in Birmingham (see Dancing Times, November 2019), the company gave a tremendous ensemble performance, with strong dancing from Yaoqian Shang and Lachlan Monaghan in the Act I "Harvest" duet, and Yijing Zhang's Myrtha leading a superb corps de ballet of Wilis in Act II.

JONATHAN GRAY

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Silent Lines

Russell Maliphant Company, Sadler's Wells, London – October 18, 2019

RUSSELL MALIPHANT'S

EAGERLY ANTICIPATED Silent Lines received enthusiastic applause at its London premiere at Sadler's Wells. For those of us familiar with his distinctive, fluid style of choreography, his infinitely silken flow of movement does not, in this piece, stray very far from what we have come to admire and expect.

Maliphant has had an ongoing fascination with the inner workings and physical make-up of the human body. He studied anatomy, physiology and biomechanics and is a qualified practitioner of the Rolf Method of Structural Integration. Unsurprisingly, this interest has moved deeper inside the body to discover connective tissues. Here we are, looking at movement from a perspective beneath the epidermis. Not so strange, then, that his dancers have acquired the appearance of having left their bones hanging over the back of their chairs in the dressing

room, presenting us with endless, mellifluous phrases of unhurried, yet still purposeful choreography.

As the curtain rose on five interlinked dancers, rippling and curling in gentle motion, one could easily have been persuaded they were on a revolving stage. Not so, but a combination of fascinating lighting (in collaboration with Maliphant) and video projection design by Panagiotis Tomaras, as well as atmospheric sound design by Dana Fouras, made a curiously impactful start. The dancers' bodies were bathed in what looked like shimmering, moonlit pools of water, framing their limbs and giving the impression they were dissolving before our eyes. It was akin to looking at bodies as if they had suddenly become translucent, the silent lines of the title perhaps.

From here on, the dance followed an ever-changing palette of solos, duets and ensemble work and, after each brief section, the dancer or dancers melted seamlessly off the stage into the darkness, while a shaft of light introduced us to the next episode. The cast (four of whom are new to the Maliphant company), Alethia Antonia, Edd Arnold, Grace Jabbari, Moronfoluwa Odimayo and Will Thompson, each projecting a highly individual presence and movement style, command the stage with subtle strength. As the music segued from the soft to rhythmic to globular bubbling, and even Chopin, so the movement reflected its changing moods. Even the execution morphed into different textures, with Arnold's b-boying background coming to the fore, leaping through the air as if the slow motion button had been pressed.

Much of Maliphant's vocabulary is difficult to pigeon hole – there aren't steps as such, but a kind of movement evolution. His ever-swirling, earthy revolutions are reminiscent of *Afterlight*, his magnificent, award-winning homage to Vaslav Nijinsky during which Daniel Proietto spun to the point of making the audience giddy.

Maliphant's almost obsessive preoccupation with relentless flow means that turns while standing Above: Dancers of Russell Maliphant Company in *Silent Lines*.

mutate into turns on the knees, which must surely require a specifically learned technique, all the while, never interrupted by any unwanted punctuation. At times the effect of this continuity is soporific, though not unpleasant – when suddenly one is jerked out of the calm and surprised by a change in direction.

Maliphant established his company 23 years ago in order to create works with his own ensemble of dancers. It's clear that even if the dancers have changed, he continues to grow, develop and inspire with his own unique voice. While there are moments of repetition in many of his works, they are always visually beautiful. Silent Lines is like an art installation; the movement embellishes the artwork; the music envelops the bodies; the light transforms the shapes. There was a feeling of completeness as the cast came together at the end, and a sense these rippling creatures would continue to undulate long after curtain down.

DEBORAH WEISS



Staging Schiele

Shobana Jeyasingh Dance, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southbank Centre, London – November 5, 2019

FOR HER LATEST CREATION,

which was performed during a short UK tour that ended at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall on November 5, choreographer Shobana Jeyasingh drew inspiration from the works of the Austrian artist Egon Schiele, who died more than 100 years ago, but whose drawings and paintings remain controversial to this day. Schiele, a protégé of the Viennese artist Gustav Klimt, was active during the time of the Austrian Secession Movement at the start of the 20th century, and made a series of works focusing on the naked human body - often his own, as well as women such as the artists' model Wally Neuzil, whom Jeyasingh states in her programme note was also Schiele's mistress. His

art was expressionistic in style, and his figures – emaciated and sometimes executed in lurid, sickly colours – were depicted in extreme and explicit poses that at the time were considered pornographic.

In Staging Schiele, Jeyasingh evokes these images brilliantly, and with remarkable clarity and accuracy. Although her dancers are not naked, they are nearly so, and Jeyasingh splays and twists their torsos and limbs into such extraordinary shapes they immediately make you think Schiele's drawings have sprung to life.

The production opens with Dane Hurst taking up a series of poses whilst simultaneously looking into a small hand mirror. He depicts the artist, almost as if Schiele is trying to decide on the composition of his next drawing, or, perhaps, narcissistically admiring his own reflected image. Hurst's body movements are distorted, elongated and etiolated, often slanting backwards, but there is also something about the way he moved that was reminiscent of Vaslav Nijinsky's Faun, as if this character was not quite human.

Hurst appears with three women, Catarina Carvalho, Sunbee Han and Estela Merlos, and there is the suggestion they represent the artist's mother, wife and lover. All four are only partially clothed, but at each intimate encounter with Hurst, the women make virtually no eye contact with him, their grimacing faces turned to the audience as if seeking another's gaze, even whilst they entwine their limbs around him, or thrust out their crotches. Clothing is peeled back to reveal bare skin, and at one moment, the dancers roll up their tops and stuff them into their mouths. The choreography is raw, bleak and unsettling, with Jeyasingh placing the bodies of the cast into overtly sexual positions that are not at all erotic.

Above: Dane Hurst and Estela Merlos in Shobana Jeyasingh's Staging Schiele.

In terms of the dance alone, Staging Schiele was entirely persuasive, but I was less convinced by Orlando Gough's new score, and by Ben Cullen Williams' set design. With it's plinky-plonk piano and whispering vocals, for me Gough's music conjured up the world of Kurt Weill and the cabarets of Berlin in the 1920s and 1930s, by which time Schiele was already dead. Likewise, with its scaffolding, strip lighting, and dark, smoky atmosphere, the set also resembled a cabaret rather than the forensically bright backgrounds Schiele chose to place his figures against. COTTWEILER's costumes, however, were entirely right, and added significantly to both the production and to the superb performances by the entire cast.

JONATHAN GRAY

United Kingdom

Rambert Event

Rambert, Sadler's Wells, London – November 8, 2019

MERCE CUNNINGHAM'S

"EVENT" PERFORMANCES were originally designed for non-theatrical spaces. The first was held in Vienna's Museum der 20 Jahrhunderts in 1964; later *Events* were performed in locations from New York's Grand Central Station to the Piazza San Marco in Venice. Cunningham would restage sections from existing works, in a new and sometimes overlapping order, with new music and designs.

Rambert has already staged its own tribute *Event*, with luscious performances around the company's new London studios. For Cunningham's centenary, the company performed *Event* in the more conventional setting of Sadler's Wells, but still found ways to make it unpredictable.

Installations and performances were dotted around the foyers. In *Counterpart*, a dancer performed solos that were picked up and amplified by a digital art installation created by long-term Cunningham collaborators Paul Kaiser and Marc Downie. Movement is translated as you watch, the human dancer echoed and stylised in zigzags of light.

Elsewhere, dancers dart through the crowd, breaking into solos and duets sometimes right in among the drinks queue. This is a world that blurs the boundary between life and art: they are both just things that happen. Watching, you become part of it. Not watching is part of it, too, as when someone accidentally backs into a dancer's space. (Performers do have their own limits: dancers who will look you right in the eye, from just a foot away, are slightly bashful when the solo is over.)

On stage, Rambert's fine dancers seem to lose themselves in Cunningham's choreography, responding both to its rigour and its richness. It's as if dancing could somehow be more than usually three-dimensional: there's a sculptural clarity to the poses, but then the bodies pull in surprising directions, limbs and torsos dipping and twisting. Movement flows across the stage like cloud shadows across a valley, revealing unexpected dips in the landscape.

There's a mercurial quality to other elements of the performance, too. The music is composed by Philip Selway (of the band Radiohead), Ouinta and Adem Ilhan. Performed live by Quinta and Selway with Adrian Utley (of the band Portishead), it sounds as though there should be more than just three people in the orchestra pit. The score morphs from chattering patter syllables to sci-fi electronica, before developing into a shimmering wash of sound. The designs are by artist Gerhard Richter. Dappled, thick-textured paintings are reproduced on set panels and body tights, glowing under Jack Ryan's lighting.

In a reminder of Rambert's long history with Cunningham, this *Event* draws from ten works already in the company's repertoire, from the 1953 Septet to 1998's Pond Way (those gorgeous froggy jumps are unmistakable). Arranged and staged by former Cunningham dancer Jeannie Steele, Rambert's latest Event has both variety and momentum.

In one marvellous duet, a woman hops up to her partner, holds still as he moves on, then follows him. At last, they hop off together. It's all danced with a kind of objectivity: there's nothing flirtatious about it, no selfconscious quirkiness. The hops are perfectly poised and steady, but never flashy. They look as natural, and as odd, as long-legged wading birds, going about their business on some imaginary shore. It wasn't until I checked the programme that I realised this duet was from Beach Birds (1991). A new context reveals different things about Cunningham choreography, but also shows just how distinctive it is. **ZOË ANDERSON**

Below: Miguel Altunaga in Rambert's *Event*.



International

Coppélia

Bavarian State Ballet, National Theatre, Munich – October 20 and 22, 2019

ON OCTOBER 22, THE

Bavarian State Ballet not only presented the company premiere of Roland Petit's 1975 version of *Coppélia*, but also two of its new dancers, Virna Toppi and Denis Vieira, who joined this season. In an exuberant performance, the couple brought the house down, as did the second cast, Laurretta Summerscales and Yonah Acosta.

Petit's *Coppélia* tells the story of the eccentric toymaker, Dr Coppélius, in a slightly different way; he is a lonely figure for whom there is no place in Swanilda and Franz's world of lighthearted and flirtatious merriment, and who at the end is bereft at the loss of all his dreams and illusions.

The set, by Ezio Frigerio, is a garrison town in Galicia at the end of the 19th century. Soldiers dance and flirt with young women whilst Swanilda tries to catch the attention of her fiancé, Franz, who only has eyes for a mysterious woman, Coppélia, sitting in Dr Coppélius' window. Coppélius has created the doll in the image of Swanilda, with whom he is in love. In a moving duet he tries to tell her of his feelings, but she is oblivious to his advances.

When Swanilda and her friends enter Dr Coppélius' house, they do not find an array of mechanical dolls, as in other versions, but only Coppélia. When they are surprised by Coppélius' return, the friends flee but Swanilda hides and witnesses a touching scene where Coppélius brings the doll to the dining table, lights candles, toasts her with champagne and swings her through a sweeping waltz, her pointe shoes attached to his feet.

Franz interrupts the tryst, gets drugged and then Coppélius thinks he can bring the doll to life, not noticing Swanilda has slipped into her black tutu. When Coppélius declares his love, Swanilda reveals his delusion by showing him the wooden figure of the doll, before fleeing the house with Franz.

In the wedding scene at the end, in other versions, Dr Coppélius is reimbursed for the damage to his doll with a bag of money, which he happily accepts. After Swanilda and Franz's wedding festivities, however, Petit has Coppélius stand alone on stage, holding the remains of his doll, which, without warning, disintegrates in his arms.





Coppélius was performed by Luigi Bonino, who had also staged the ballet. Bonino joined Petit's Ballet National de Marseille in 1975 and was his assistant from 1984 until the choreographer's death in 2011. He now mounts Petit's ballets world-wide. Bonino played Coppélius brilliantly as a lonely, nerdy control-freak, a prisoner to his own dreams, without empathy for other human beings, but a man with a deep craving for love.

Dressed in a tail-coat, Coppélius appears like a black speckle amidst the flurry of pink tutus worn by Swanilda and her friends, and the rustling of the corps de ballet's costumes in pink and blue. Apart from the waltz, Coppelius' role is almost exclusively mime, literally setting him apart from the other dancers who move in classical ballet steps mixed with the fluttering hands, wagging bottoms, whirling can-cans, and the angular movements of mechanical dolls.

Although Toppi and Vieira were dancing together for the first time, their The Bavarian State Ballet's production of Roland Petit's *Coppélia* with (above) Luigi Bonino as Dr Coppélius and Virna Toppi as Swanilda, and (below) Toppi with Denis Vieira as Franz.

relationship sparkled. Toppi was unruly, with a flutter of fast footwork, whilst Vieira had high jumps and a stately demeanour. Summerscales and Acosta were no less enchanting on October 22. With her clear lines and great musicality, Summerscales was a calmer Swanilda to Acosta's flamboyant Franz. The corps were at their best and looked as if they were having a lot of fun. Léo Delibes' music, played by the Bavarian State Orchestra, was conducted with gusto by Anton Grishanin, who seemed to sweep the dancers off the floor.

In his fourth season as director of the Bavarian State Ballet, Igor Zelensky finally seems to have got together a group of young dancers with a homogenous style. They not only possess technical prowess, but have the ability to bring story ballets to life.

JEANNETTE ANDERSEN

Double Bill

Suite en blanc, Les Mirages Ballet du Capitole, Théâtre du Capitole, Toulouse – October 23, 2019

IT MAY BE UNUSUAL to

begin a dance review with the music, but such was the glory of the playing of the Orchestre National du Capitole, under the impassioned baton of Philippe Béran, that equally glorious dancing seemed to be the only response. This is one of France's finest musical ensembles, preserving much of what used to be recognised as the French orchestral sound, so it was a privilege also to hear them play music by their compatriots Édouard Lalo and Henri Sauguet, alas little-known outside the country.

Kader Belarbi, director of Ballet du Capitole, continues to cherish the French tradition in dance, and Toulouse is perhaps now the only place in the country to see works that used to define the national style. His decision to acquire Serge Lifar's Suite en blanc and set it as a pendant to his Les Mirages (danced by the company since 2014) is proof of his ongoing commitment to the heritage repertoire and made for a glorious evening.

Since its creation in 1943 Suite en blanc (originally *Noir et blanc*) has come to represent something of a blueprint for French classical dance, much in the way Frederick Ashton's near contemporaneous Symphonic Variations did and does for the UK's national style. To dance it is to dance à la Française and it is characterised by a subtle balance between bravura and chic, show-off and elegance, of haughty disdain and utter charm. Stretched to the limit with 36 dancers

on stage and the same number in the permanent company, the ensemble rose magnificently to the multiple challenges of this stirring work. Expertly set by former Paris Opéra étoiles Monique Loudières and Charles Jude, from the striking opening tableau of the entire cast, to the final moments, it was as artfully patterned on the stage as precious stones in a jeweller's setting. What happens between is a cascade of variations and ensembles, designed to show off every aspect of the dancers' technique, and Ballet du Capitole performed it with brio and not a little style, careful in their respect of Lifar's choreographic trademark arm positions (the wonderful "S" shape formed with curved arms are everywhere apparent).

Particular highlights came from the homogenous male quartet, who executed more entrechats, doubles tours and brisés volés than they have probably ever danced before; Natalia de Froberville and Rouslan Savdenov in a perfectly controlled Adage; a particularly farouche Mazurka from Ramiro Gómez Samón; and Alexandra Surodeeva coruscating in the technical demands of the Thème varié (Pas de Trois).

Contrasting with the neo-classical abstraction of Suite en blanc, Les Mirages is now a charming periodpiece redolent of the fashion for the fantastical and the symbolic that characterised the immediate post-war period in French culture. It is a féerie choréographique to a libretto by the artist A M Cassandre concerning a Young Man entering the Palace of the Moon and experiencing various visions and temptations in an existential allegory not a million miles from the Prodigal Son story. (Lifar had created the title role of that ballet for George Balanchine and Serge Diaghilev in 1929.) Cassandre also designed the handsome palace setting and striking costumes, some of which, such as those for the Angels of Death, strive to out-Erté Erté.

The entertaining episodes and generous choreography notwithstanding, the glory of the ballet today resides in the two central characters of the Young Man and his shadow, L'Ombre, who acts as his conscience, protector, goader, critic and constant companion. The senior male principal Davit Galtsyan fully inhabits the role of the former, bringing a lively and characterful presence to the stage, huge stamina to partner extensively and to launch into exhausting solos and detail to his complicated relationship with L'Ombre. Reigning ballerina Julie Charlet is nothing short of exceptional as the latter, looking sensational in Cassandre's costume of blacks and greys and a severe, centrallyparted black hairstyle. She has the most interesting choreography, exploring almost expressionist movement, especially in her long solo, delivered with both technical assurance and a formidable stage presence; she stretches her line as required and exults in Lifar's novel and meaningful use of hands and arms.

An important pair of revivals, then, of which Belarbi and his doughty company can be justifiably proud. Impeccably and stylishly staged, as here, Lifar's works can continue to demand and enjoy both our respect and affection. GERALD DOWLER

Below: Ballet du Capitole's Davit Galtsyan and Julie Charlet in *Les Mirages and Suite en blanc.*



Dance Scene

Napoli

Ballet Arizona, Symphony Hall, Phoenix – October 24, 2019

SELLING NAPOLI TO AN

audience in the US is risky: people don't know the story and might assume it was a prequel to *The Sopranos*. Ib Andersen's staging of August Bournonville's masterpiece succeeded the riskiest way: by letting the ballet do the talking. As with the ballet's hero, Andersen's faith paid off.

The production, from 2015, stuck to Bournonville's libretto and his setting of Naples recalled from his travels. It put over the busy tapestry of the opening act through high energy. One of the bit players was a street singer with an aria done in mime. Alberto Morales Perez modernised the idea slightly, playing the singer like a teen idol rock star, including signalling the drummer with the pump of a clenched fist.

The dancing, from the opening ballabile to the final tarantella, had the company on the move. All the corps de ballet work had energy and sharpness, but perhaps the difference between the Arizonans and the Danes was that the Phoenix dancers sacrificed some bounce for precision. We saw every step, every landing, every slice into coupé, every phrase punctuated at the end. At the same time, the Gennaro and Teresina from 2015, Alejandro Mendez and Arianni Martin, grew more subtle and connected in their phrasing.

Andersen's subtlety came through in his depiction of the storm at the end of Act I. A devoted painter, he made a genre painting come to life, depicting the weather with a series of runs across the stage, the townsfolk shielding themselves with billowing shawls and umbrellas.

There is no such thing as a pure, unadulterated version of Napoli: the choreography for Act II, where Teresina is captured by a sea demon and rescued by Gennaro, has been lost. Andersen's recreated second act owed to several sources: his knowledge of Bournonville, of other romantic ballets, but also his years as a principal dancer at New York City Ballet. His version is very leggy, studded with quick pointe work. It uses a *Giselle*-sized corps: 16 naiads and demi-soloists.

Andersen walked a careful line between 19th-century morality and 21st-century psychology. A source Andersen intersected with, whether intentionally or not, was *Dracula*. The parallels were numerous: Teresina was transported to a supernatural grotto where Golfo, a powerful, charismatic demon wanted to add her to his harem. He was defeated with the help of faith.

Playing Golfo, Luis Corrales constantly leaned in with a Bela Lugosi stance. Even though she was stripped of her memory, Teresina still knew something was wrong and kept pushing Golfo away. His two female lieutenants took Teresina offstage when Golfo seemed close to going too far.

When Gennaro found the grotto, the naiads entered to meet him from both sides in a quote from the corps' entry in Act II of *La Sylphide*. Small details made a difference. Golfo always approached Teresina with the flat of his palm; even from a distance he seemed to want to caress her. When he found her but she did not recognise him, Gennaro touched Teresina with the back of his hand. It spoke volumes how each made contact with a woman who wasn't certain of him.

Teresina regained her memory from a religious medallion; the reaction of the naiads was straight out of Dracula; they shielded their eyes and turned away. That's why you can't cut religion from Napoli any more than you can take the cross out of the story of the vampire. Religion isn't just symbolism, it's a narrative device. Golfo offered the couple freedom and treasure; but couldn't resist trying for Teresina one last time as she bowed to thank him. Gennaro hurried her away. Even with the subtext there

to parse if you wanted, the production stayed subtle. Corrales played Golfo with magnetism that balanced allure and threat, and made it work.

As always, the Act III divertissements were the big payoff. Though this cast wasn't as consistent as in 2015, still there were some real highs. Martin danced her variation with lovely wit: she hit all her balances and stayed just long enough to let you know she could have stayed longer. Mendez brought the emotion of Gennaro's adventures into his dancing. In featured roles, Serafin Castro led off both the variations and the tarantella with gorgeous elevation and beats. In the pas de six, your eve was drawn to Alberto Penalver's beautiful lines.

With the Royal Danish Ballet inserting Fellini into *Napoli* and an extraneous gay subtext into *La Sylphide*, Andersen's attitude towards Bournonville, to advocate for him rather than be a reluctant beneficiary, isn't as commonplace as you'd hope. A *Napoli* that believes in its material, however, is a joy to watch. **LEIGH WITCHEL**

Below: Ballet Arizona in Act III of Ib Andersen's production of *Napoli*.





Triple Bill Les Noces, Agon, The Rite of Spring

The Rite of Spring Royal Swedish Ballet, Royal Opera House, Stockholm – October 25, 2019

NICHOLAS LE RICHE IS

certainly making his mark in Stockholm in his second season as director of the Royal Swedish Ballet. He has stated very clearly that he leads a classical ensemble and has set about refocusing the repertoire to that end, wheeling it away from the contemporary slant it took under Johannes Öhman (now joint director of Staatsballett Berlin).

Not, however, that there was a tutu in sight for this new Stravinsky triple bill bringing Angelin Preljocaj, George Balanchine and Maurice Béjart to *Les Noces, Agon* and *The Rite of Spring*. A mammoth musical undertaking, even before considering its demands in dance terms, it confirmed Le Riche's artistic credo, his uncompromisingly high standards and his vision for the company.

Unfortunately the less-than-funny joker in this particular pack was Preljocaj's 1989 take on

Les Noces, which opened the programme and was guaranteed to turn a fair part of the audience off this brilliant music with selfregarding choreography of the worst kind. He cannot have considered the sung text (so well performed by opera soloists and chorus alike) as he set five pairs of contemporarily-dressed dancers off into a farrago of modern dance clichés floppy mannequins in bridal outfits (Les Noces means The Wedding, you see), screaming, twitching, shimmy-shimmyshaking and general stage mayhem. No wedding, no bride, no groom, no sense of a community, just ten poor dancers manically executing nonsense to the seemingly unconnected sounds of Stravinsky.

Time and time again, Preljocaj's cloth ear ignored what was happening in the music, which was not quite enough for him as the movement continued in silence after it had come to its end – the ultimate insult and arrogance. The choreographer himself was on hand to ensure utter faithfulness to his vision of what he terms "consented rape". Above: Dancers of the Royal Swedish Ballet in George Balanchine's *Agon*.

Agon followed the muchneeded interval and both taste and talent were restored to the stage. The orchestra under Stefan Solyom relished Stravinsky's extravagant angularities and the dancers worked hard to live up to the demands of Balanchine's genius in full flow. This was a fully satisfying performance, with the wit and playfulness inherent in the choreography shining through, not least in the finely-judged and cucumbercool pas de deux in which Dawid Kupinski expertly partnered Haruka Sassa, a wry smile at times flickering across her lips, pin sharp in her movement, musicality spot on. Elsewhere, Daria Ivanova impressed with her striking physicality, even if she lacked the final degree of zip needed, and, indeed, the whole cast showed a fine understanding of Balanchine's paredback dance idiom, clearly enjoying themselves in the master's lunges and hipthrusts which, despite dating from 1957, were part of the freshest and most up-to-date choreography of the evening.

Applause at the end of a performance of The Rite of Spring is, one feels, always as much for Stravinsky's score and the musicians in the pit for having got through it as for the dancers. Conductor Solvom theatrically wiped the proverbial sweat from his brow at his curtain call, having led a superbly visceral rendition by the orchestra. The cheers were also fully deserved by the large ensemble of dancers who threw themselves into Béjart's splayed-fingered arms thrown open-wide, explosive leaping and falling vocabulary with total commitment.

International

Created in 1959 this Rite does now possess a dated quality (the dull-pastel unitards confirm this) and the "narrative" of a community of men descending upon one of women may not pass muster in today's cultural and societal climate, but it has undeniable power and is a magnificent vehicle to forge a tight-knit ensemble who know and understand each other. The male "lead" is chosen because he falls during horseplay and competition. Dmitri Zagrebin clearly brought out the wounded masculinity inherent in the role, and also his unreliable strength in the face of an onslaught from his peers. Emily Slawski was a mesmeric "chosen" woman, here much more a priestess of sorts, the focus and the catalyst for her sisters in her movement of extraordinary control and stillness. Stravinsky's "difficult" music was far from being so for her, as she inhabited it fully through her dancing. Their coming together in a final explosion of physical union was characterised by a powerful inevitability and brought the evening to a potent climax. **GERALD DOWLER**



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Balanchine's Ballets Russes

Le Chant du Rossignol, Apollo, Prodigal Son Ballet West, Janet Quinney Lawson Capitol Theatre, Salt Lake City – October 25 and 26, 2019

A TRIPLE BILL WITH

choreography by George Balanchine, scores by Igor Stravinsky and Serge Prokofiev, and designs by Henri Matisse and Georges Rouault promises a lot. So when Ballet West paired *Apollo* and *Prodigal Son* with a revival of Balanchine's first work for the Ballets Russes, 1925's *Le Chant du Rossignol (The Song of the Nightingale),* it delivered a lot of historical insight, as well as a few questions.

Serge Diaghilev asked Balanchine to create a new version of the production, originally made by Léonide Massine. The story, derived from Hans Christian Andersen's fable, was told in broad strokes: an emperor in ancient China became enchanted with the voice of a nightingale brought to court to sing for him. However, a magician arrived with a mechanical nightingale that fascinated the emperor, and the real nightingale left. Illness struck the emperor and Death stalked him. The Nightingale returned to save him, but at the cost of her own life.

After helping to retrieve the Nightingale's solo from Alicia Markova in 1995, the whole ballet was reconstructed in 1999 by Millicent Hodson and Kenneth Archer for Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo. The curtain rose on a frontcloth of palace dogs and spirits that encapsulated Matisse's designs: traditional sources with a modern streamlining.

The work depended less on dance vocabulary and more on spectacle. Two of the emperor's assistants burst across the stage, the frontcloth lifted and the court – a swarm of women in silk tunics – was revealed. Four men in yellow robes brought the nightingale on stage in a cage; later on, she was tossed overhead by two of them into the others' arms. The emperor's entrance was supported on the backs of his chamberlains so that his feet never touched the ground.

Seeing three of Balanchine's major works from the 1920s on the same stage, it was immediately striking how similar they were. It seemed as if *Chant* was the missing link, and gymnastics the connection. After arriving, the emperor's assistants grabbed one another back to back, the first of many echoes of Prodigal Son. Red-faced warriors arrived cartwheeling in, and formed the same human wheel the Prodigal's Drinking Companions made.

The Nightingale relied on more expressive poses as well. Closed off, wild but shy, the signature position in her variation was a crouch that was almost a contraction. From there she extended off to the side, and jumped on pointe on two feet like a bird hopping. Made for a 14-yearold baby ballerina, the steps weren't virtuoso, but they were tricky: turns in attitude and single pirouettes. The mechanical nightingale, with its stiff red feathers, looked more like a chicken, its dancing was also stiff before it almost struck the emperor and was carried off sideways.

The stage darkened and Stravinsky's mournful score recalled another birdsong: The Firebird's "Berceuse." Death – a woman wearing a necklace of skulls - entered unnoticed by warriors guarding the emperor. She extended her leg at his platform as if sizing up her prey. The Nightingale acted as a decoy to lure Death away, but Death entrapped her with her lethal necklace. Yet the Nightingale managed to wrap the necklace round Death's legs. Realising she was caught, Death arched back in frustration and limped off. Exhausted, the Nightingale also exited, and the ballet assumed we knew her fate.

The emperor recovered to give the money shot of the ballet: his gown thrown open to reveal its rich embroidery tumbling down the stage. The effect was stunning, but tricky. It required attendants to make sure it opened smoothly and on time.

Unlike *Prodigal* (which had a breakout performance

by soloist Hadriel Diniz, as well as a career-capping one for retiring first soloist Christopher Sellars), or Apollo (which boasted both a strong Apollonian performance by Chase O'Connell and a Dionysian one by Adrian Fry), Chant wasn't vet a dancer's ballet. Both Jenna Rae Herrera and Sayaka Ohtaki were just beginning to discover the lead role. It's always easier to play villains; both Kaitlyn Addison and Allison DeBona got mileage out of Death, with DeBona's look importing in a touch of The Wicked Witch of the West.

I did wonder, though, what was real and what was reproduction? Apart from Markova's solo, the choreography had little first-hand sources. The production, as with Hodson and Archer's work on The *Rite of Spring*, was based on research, interviews and some informed guesswork. Maybe this is the missing link to Balanchine in the 1920s. but were the similarities in Chant brought forward into Prodigal and Apollo - or back by the reconstruction? It was hard to tell.

LEIGH WITCHEL

Below: Ballet West in *Le Chant du Rossignol.*





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International



Swan Lake

International Gala

Hong Kong Ballet, Hong Kong Cultural Centre – October 26,31, 2019

THESE ARE TROUBLED TIMES

in Hong Kong and even Swan Lake isn't exempt. On October 26, Hong Kong Ballet had to shorten the evening performance to ensure that audience and performers would be able to get home after it was announced the subway would close at 10pm. The next day the matinée had to be stopped halfway through and the evening show cancelled due to clashes between protesters and police outside the theatre. "Is that mist on the lake?" "No, dear, that would be tear gas..." May you live in interesting times, as the ancient Chinese curse says.

To the credit of all concerned, the company produced a solid performance that night despite the stressful circumstances. I enjoyed Luis Cabrera and Nana Sakai's sparkling Neapolitan, Jessica Burrows did a fine job of leading the swans and it was good to see Jonathan Spigner back from injury in fine form in the Act I pas de quatre and Act III Spanish Dance. That said, having seen this *Swan Lake* numerous times since its premiere in 2007, I felt that overall the evening fell a little short compared with earlier runs, with new dancers still feeling their way.

Standout of the night was regular guest artist Matthew Golding's Prince Siegfried. In addition to his consistently impeccable partnering and strong acting, this time Golding showed a new level of virtuosity, bringing the house down with his spectacular solos (soaring jumps, thrilling turns, immaculate finishing) in the Black Swan pas de deux.

His Swan Queen, Chen Zhiyao, made a much praised debut as Odette in 2016 just a year after graduating and this time around tackled Odile as well. While there's no doubt about Chen's talent, this is an interpretation still in the making – although impressive in the Black Swan adagio, she struggled with the difficult turns in the solos and her Odette, while technically sound, never quite came to life.

The company celebrated its 40th anniversary in style at the 2019 *International*

Above: Dorothée Gilbert and Marcelo Gomes in Hong Kong Ballet's production of *Swan Lake* Act II.

Gala of Stars, with dancers and staff from the past four decades invited to attend. This was a welcome recognition of the troupe's history and achievements, and seeing so many faces from the past brought back a lot of memories.

The high point of the programme was Swan Lake Act II, which was illuminated by the artistry of guests Marcelo Gomes and the Paris Opéra Ballet's Dorothée Gilbert. I must admit to being somewhat jaded with a surfeit of White Swan adagios, but it was a joy to have the magic of Lev Ivanov's choreography renewed by these outstanding dancers. The glorious power and fluidity of Gilbert's arms and back made you believe in a creature half-swan, half-human, while the sensitivity, detail and nuance of Gomes' Siegfried were a masterclass in partnering.

Golding again made a strong impression in *Yixi*, a new solo choreographed for him by Hong Kong Ballet's Yuh Egami. Set to Bob Dylan's version of Jerry Jeff Walker's "Mr Bojangles", this little gem demonstrated the exceptional ability of both dancer and choreographer to tell a story and generate emotion with the simplest of means.

In *Diana and Actaeon,* Osiel Gouneo of the Bavarian State Ballet produced turns that had to be seen to be believed (so fast they looked like figure skating spins), although his partner, Australian Ballet's Ako Kondo, didn't have the star power this old Soviet chestnut calls for.

Highlights from the home team included a strongly danced suite of dances from *The Great Gatsby* led by Ye Fei-fei, Chen and Shen Jie; Shen and Li Lin showing off their bravura technique in an extract from the *Swan Lake* Act I pas de quatre and an hilarious account of Christian Spuck's Le *Grand Pas De Deux* from Chen and Wei Wei.

By contrast, a dance from Between the Emotion and the Response, an upcoming piece by resident choreographer Ricky Hu Song-wei, wasn't the right choice for a gala. Dark, stark and modern, it left the audience bemused and I will wait until the complete work premieres to review it.

A rousing finale brought all the dancers on in a live version of the company's cutting-edge anniversary video (which can be seen on YouTube) and, in a touching moment, the four generations of their predecessors joined them for the curtain call. In a fitting ending to a joyous night, artistic director Septime Webre promoted a charmingly overwhelmed Chen to principal on stage as glitter cannons went off and balloons rained down on the audience. NATASHA ROGAI

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Variety Lights

Falsettos

n 1979, William Finn wrote the book, music and lyrics for a oneact musical about a New Yorker with a wife and child who suspects he's gay. Two years later, in collaboration with James Lapine, Finn expanded his original book into two further one-acts that merged into a single show about the same people. When Falsettos reached Broadway in 1992, the subjects it addresses with sympathy and wit were hot topics.

Marvin leaves his family to live with a man, Whizzer. His wife, Trina, marries the psychiatrist who had been counselling them about their marriage. Finn needed no more than those four, plus Trina and Marvin's son, Jason, and a lesbian couple to dissect the joys and sorrows of personal commitment, family relationships, gender identity, adolescence, urban Jewish culture, and the scourge of AIDS, which eventually kills Whizzer.

Through-composed without stand-alone dialogue, the show tugs the heartstrings relentlessly, pouring wisecracks and romance onto tears, jealousy and lust in a torrent of Above: The cast of *Falsettos*.

conflict. Today, however, our perspective on its once shocking subjects has shifted considerably; gay marriage is legal in many places, AIDS still kills but less often and less visibly.

Sharp if not exactly cutting-edge in 1992, the material now plays like an animated series of *New Yorker* cartoons, archly documenting behaviour and attitudes so familiar they've become clichés, from the Jewish kid clumsily playing baseball to the irritable sniping of the male lovers, who admit: "Of all the passions, we like fighting best."

The Jewish references may be lost here (do you know about bar mitzvahs or what "dreck" means?), and only Whizzer's death carries convincing emotional weight. While Laura Pitt-Pulford turned Trina's solo, "I'm Breaking Down," into a showstopper of maniacal hysteria, most of the score strains so hard to imitate Stephen Sondheim's sound that it evaporates inside its cleverness.

Nevertheless, the small cast and snappy pace of the recent revival fit the

Orpheus and Eurydice

tight space of The Other Palace comfortably, and Tara Overfield-Wilkinson's direction kept the neurotic tangle of soul-searching from strangling on its own self-doubt, though her choreography didn't help. The action doesn't call for much of it, and the production's ironic tone even infected the movement; the opening "Four Jews in a Room Bitching" looked like an overwrought vaudeville, and the campy "March of the Falsettos" signalled "gay" with banal limp wrists. In the end, I laughed all evening at the characters' perpetual anxiety, but I didn't believe a word of it.

nglish National Opera's (ENO) new production of Gluck's Orpheus and Eurydice completely reversed that result. Clearly of its time, Falsettos seems dated now, while the myth of Orpheus, whatever its realisation, is timeless. Finn's score for Falsettos, a gloss on Sondheim's sardonic melodies and rhythms, leaves no trace. Gluck's music for Orpheus and Eurydice resonates in your mind long after the story ends.

Directing and choreographing simultaneously, Wayne McGregor served the singers well, drawing the subtleties of the tragic narrative from their voices, faces and body language. The three of them, all women, in the title roles and as Love, might have been overwhelmed by the vast empty space with only projections of lapping water or racing smears of light behind them. In fact, they held the stage with absolute authority, unlike the 14 dancers of McGregor's company, who occupied it frequently to no dramatic effect.

By Barbara Newman

During the long orchestral passages, he deployed them as mourners in black and white news-printed outfits; as Furies in the underworld, scribbled with Day-glo paint that emerged in black light; and as Blessed Spirits, tricked out in multicoloured garments patched with hearts.

It's easier to recall the costumes, designed by Louise Gray, than the dances, which recycled McGregor's preferred vocabulary - snaky curving backs, angular poses, simple pirouettes and sudden extensions - in its usual unfocused assortment. Except for a neat circle of Spirits, who brought order and lyricism, briefly, into the hectic activity, the dancers proved more distracting than expressive, so their exits came as a welcome relief.

Well-known to the dance public, McGregor's style may have failed to enlighten the opera audience. Having booked all four operas that explored this ancient myth in ENO's imaginative Orpheus Series, a musician friend declared herself "shocked and appalled" by this one, and I can understand why.

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FRANCE/dance

By Laura Cappelle

orth American choreographers have dominated the dance agenda this autumn in Paris. While long-heralded giants, Merce Cunningham and William Forsythe, returned to a city where their talent was hailed early on, others made a play for similar recognition.

The Festival d'Automne à Paris paid its respects to Cunningham in his centenary year with a full programme of performances and events. There are more to come, but ballet companies have so far played a prominent role, and at the Théâtre de Chaillot, the Paris Opéra Ballet (POB), The Royal Ballet and Royal Ballet Flanders joined forces for a triple bill that reinforced how porous the boundaries between genres have become.

There is a side to Cunningham's technique that, as time has passed, is looking increasingly Apollonian: the contained stillness of many poses; the subsuming of ego in the pursuit of an elusive physical ideal. Classically trained dancers instinctively understand this; not all companies are made equals, however, and the Flanders cast provided more wobbly checks than serene balances in Pond Way.

Meanwhile, L A Dance Project revived interest in a friend and contemporary of Cunningham's who has been somewhat forgotten: Bella Lewitzky. For decades until her death in 2004, Lewitzky was a pioneer of the modern dance movement in Los Angeles, yet her work has slipped off the radar.

Millepied's company brought a new production of her Kinaesonata to the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées to show that this fate is unjust. The stark geometry of this short piece is meticulously attuned to Alberto Ginastera's Piano Sonata No 1, and you sense Lewitzky's sure hand throughout, from ensemble scenes to a central solo. Her style (originally honed with Lester Horton) may not come naturally to these dancers, but they were clearly keen to do it justice: she deserves to be better known.

Thile the Paris premiere of A Quiet Evening of Dance brought Forsythe back to the renovated Théâtre du Châtelet, a former dancer of his presented a high-profile world premiere at the Palais Garnier. The critical and commercial success of The Seasons' Canon in 2016 led the POB to extend a second invitation to Crystal Pite, this time for a new three-act ballet, the uneven Body and Soul.

Perhaps expectations are now overly high for Pite, who has become one of her generation's most in-demand choreographers. There is much in *Body and Soul* that is miles better than most recent POB creations. The first act, set to a text describing an encounter between two anonymous individuals, brings to mind her theatreoriented works for her own company, and beautifully expands on the many ways that encounter might be understood – at times with a large ensemble standing in for one of the characters.

The second act doesn't quite harness the power of Chopin's 24 Preludes in the way choreographers like Jerome Robbins have in the past, however, and the third casts the dancers as insects in faceless fullbody suits. The happygo-lucky finale goes for something resembling the wacky energy of Forsythe's "Bongo Bongo Nageela" conclusion to *Impressing the* Czar, but doesn't achieve the level of craft Pite is otherwise capable of.

Still, she makes the POB's dancers look mostly terrific, and many carried that energy over to the annual concours de promotion. The five men

Below: The Paris Opéra Ballet in Crystal Pite's *Body and Soul*.



competing for positions as premiers danseurs not only all managed one of Rudolf Nureyev's most difficult variations from his Nutcracker, but some went back for more: Axel Magliano returned ten minutes later with perfect double assemblées in Solor's Act III variation, and Francesco Mura combined bravura and flamboyance in another Bayadère excerpt, from Act II. Mura was promoted alongside Pablo Legasa, who wasn't at his best physically but rightfully got the nod after shining in a few leading roles.

The women were saddled with two unknown solos from Lifar's *Variations*, but Korean talent Hohyun Kang and Célia Drouy both displayed a finesse far above their quadrille positions and became coryphées. While the young Lucie Devignes didn't, her free variation (Lifar's "Flute" from *Suite en blanc*) was astonishingly good, full of legato and tension – a rare feat for someone who only joined the company in 2018.

The women's results have a tendency to make less and less sense as the dancers move up the ranks, and this year was no exception. Silvia Saint-Martin was promoted to première danseuse. She is a very fine technician who lost years of her career to injury, and will no doubt make a competent soloist. Nonetheless, she has nowhere near the captivating stage presence of Eléonore Guérineau, passed over again this year after a leave of absence last season to dance with Zurich Ballet. Plus ça change...





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By Igor Stupnikov

he premiere of La Bayadère at the Mikhailovsky Theatre took place on October 4, with posters announcing the production would be by Nacho Duato. It's not the first time the Spanish choreographer has created his own version of a Russian classic, as his *The Sleeping* Beauty and The Nutcracker are already in the repertoire of the Mikhailovsky Ballet. Now, St Petersburg audiences are presented with his reading of the famous ballet that is "after" Marius Petipa.

The first scene of Act I is completely reconstructed. The High Brahmin (Adrian Mitchell) is a handsome young man full of energy and yearning. Duato has created choreography for him consisting of jumps, leaps and turns. He approaches Nikiya with several jetés, the folds of his costume flying like wings round his body. His gestures at the holy fire are reserved, but his eyes are riveted on Nikiya.

The role of Fakir Magadaveya (Andrei Yakhniuk), however, has been unnecessarily enlarged. He is given a variation and is constantly brought centre stage, conspiring with Solor or with Nikiya, but pushed aside by the High Brahmin as if he considers him a possible traitor. Nikiya's entrance and variation are permeated with classical Indian dance movements.

So far – so good. The second scene, however, makes the audience suspect Duato's imagination is slowly ebbing: the D'jampe dance is a replica of Petipa's. In the wedding ceremony in Act II, many episodes also belong to Petipa: the dance with the fans, the dance of the four small bayadères, Gamzatti and Solor's variations, Nikiya's monologue - all were created by Petipa, not Duato. In addition, the fact that the Bronze Idol solo was created by Nikolai Zubkovsky in the 1940s is not mentioned here. Nikita Chetverikov was excellent in the role, bringing blazing,





The Mikhailovsky Ballet's new La Bayadère with (above) Adrian Mitchell and Anastasia Soboleva, and (below) Viktor Lebedev.

full-blooded attack to his incredible jumps and turns.

Duato's role in Act II was reduced to cutting Petipa's ensembles: the Grand Pas was shortened, and the Manu dance eliminated, as was Nikiya's variation with the flower basket. Sometimes Duato inserts his own numbers, such as an Indian dance performed by the male corps de ballet, all clad in black, together with a female soloist who was lost in the crowd of men rushing around the stage. Who are they, what do they have to do at the wedding ceremony? Fortunately, the "Kingdom of the Shades" scene remained untouched.

The production was partly saved by the company soloists. Anastasia Soboleva was a charming Nikiya dancing with confidence and precision, as well as musical feeling and acting with immense passion and conviction. I was swept up by her technique, exquisite poise and tremendous style. Andrea Lashakova as Gamzatti danced with a concentration of feeling – a clear prism through which the dance shone. With her strong technique she was excellent in the wedding scene, moving generously through space and performing tricky steps and jumps with vigour.

Viktor Lebedev performed with clarity and technical polish as Solor, and he brought forth an exciting degree of force. The young dancer was totally immersed in his character and danced with verve and dramatic power. With his lithe physique and airy elevation, he flew through his solos with admirable self-assurance.

So, two acts out of the three belong to Marius Petipa. It's hardly possible to say this new version of *La Bayadère* is Duato's creation. Wouldn't it be more honest to change the lettering on the enormous poster covering the façade of the Mikhailovsky Theatre and write instead: "Marius Petipa – *La Bayadère* – with some insertions by Nacho Duato"? ■

Photograph: STAS LEVSHIN.



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S everal recent dance productions resembled assemblages of spirits. One even referred to such a gathering in its title. The most impressive of these works came to the Joyce Theater: *The Day*, a two-part mixed-media collaboration involving Maya Beiser (creative producer and cellist), David Lang (words and music), Lucinda Childs (choreographer), and Wendy Whelan (solo dancer).

The first section of Lang's score included, at six-second intervals above the music, spoken phrases beginning "I remember the day," the memories including both ordinary and devastating events (a source for the piece was the World Trade Center catastrophe of September 11, 2001); the second section was wordless; both halves were melancholic. Childs' choreography was always dignified and ceremonial, and Whelan, manipulating poles and fabrics, moved with the impressive gravity that had characterised many of her performances as a ballerina with New York City Ballet (NYCB), of which she is now associate artistic director.

The Day became a journey out of this mortal world into an eternal realm. Originally, its two parts were to have been divided by an interval, but at the Joyce they were separated by the briefest of pauses: a fullscale interval would have shattered the work's power, and Whelan was able to maintain the concentration *The Day* required.

The work with "ghosts" in its title was Twyla Tharp's *A Gathering of* *Ghosts*, one of the premieres American Ballet Theatre (ABT) offered during its autumn Lincoln Center season, and the most ambitious, although not necessarily the most successful, among them. Tharp envisioned a party that brought together both actual historical personages, including Louis XIV, Marie Antoinette, and Marcel Proust, and figures with fanciful names ("North Wind," "Greased Lightning") and set them whirling around in glittery costumes by Norma Kamali, to Brahms' String Quartet, Opus 111. Whirl they did, under the eye of a mercurial host, played by Herman Cornejo. The dinner guests danced admirably; Cornejo, now in his 20th year with the company, was absolutely spectacular. Tharp's choreography, however, was not. It simply lacked point; why she brought these beings together was never clear, and her historical figures were remarkably devoid of personality.

If Tharp's ghosts were pretentious, other ABT novelties were insubstantial in their own ways, involving little more than just running in and out. Catherine Hurlin and Aran Bell, who grows increasingly more impressive on stage with each new season, did so to recorded songs by Tony Bennett in Jessica Lang's two-character love affair, Let Me Sing Forevermore, and Gemma Bond had a large cast move antiseptically through A Time There Was, to Benjamin Britten arrangements of folk songs.

At first, it seemed as if James Whiteside's *New American Romance* would

Below: American Ballet Theatre's Cassandra Trenary and Herman Cornejo in Twyla Tharp's *A Gathering of Ghosts.*



be equally flimsy, for there appeared to be little that was particularly new or specifically American in concept about the pretty steps and poses in this work for seven dancers to Debussy's *Suite Bergamesque*. Yet if Whiteside's suite offered no real innovations, it was always pleasant to watch and more choreographically solid and emotionally rooted than it first appeared.

ust before ABT moved into Lincoln Center, NYCB concluded its own autumn season there, including a revival of Merce Cunningham's Summerspace, which Cunningham created for his own company in 1958, and NYCB first danced in 1966. Now it is back after a long absence, and its calms are once again a pleasure to behold, especially at this time when so many stages are tempest-tossed. Although the choreography can be lively as well as serene, events never look frantic, and NYCB's dancers know how to take their time.

I caught up with this revival as part of a triple bill that also included two familiar George Balanchine masterpieces. Shapes form and dissolve in his Serenade as unpredictably as they would do in Cunningham's Summerspace, and NYCB made the images of both ballets beautiful. Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No 2, with Sara Mearns and Russell Janzen in the leading roles, had the requisite dignity, yet looked rather staid. Nevertheless, Janzen demonstrated that he knew how to stand still and hold attention, a genuine accomplishment for a young dancer.

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TORDY

74 - A year of change Nicola Rayner reports from the International 78 - Romancing the roots Lee Knights on bachata 80 - Tips on technique James Whitehead looks at the standing leg in samba 86 - Somewhere in time Jack Reavely remembers his friend Frank Alback

A YEAR OF CHANGE

Nicola Rayner reports from the International Championships. Photographs by

Fredric Frennessen

his year's grand finals of the International Championships at the Royal Albert Hall on October 10 will linger in the memory. Always one of the biggest nights of the ballroom year, the International concludes on a Thursday evening in early October, the final chapter of the three-day dance festival, which brings together the great and the good of the ballroom world, the *Strictly* glitterati – and friends, family, fans and followers of both.

It's a glamorous night, superbly organised by Dance News Ltd, with its own unique traditions, such as the celebratory Carnival Interlude in which social dancers take to the floor in party hats to the muchloved tunes of bandleader Ross Mitchell, His Band and Singers.

After the best part of a decade dominated by a ruling pair of champions in Professional Ballroom and Professional Latin, this year rang in the changes. In the Professional Ballroom, the US' Arunas Bizokas and Katusha Demidova, who triumphed in this championship from 2009 until 2018 (with the exception of 2016) and retired at Blackpool, left a vacancy in the top spot, while Latin stars Riccardo Cocchi and Yulia Zagoruychenko, also from the US, after winning on the night for the sixth time, announced, in an emotional letter, their intention to retire after the World Championships in Miami at the end of October: this would be their last International.

If this weren't enough, England's Ferdinando Iannaccone and Yulia Musikhina, who won the Amateur Latin for the third year in a row, shared the news of their decision to turn professional. Next year Right: Amateur Ballroom winners Fedor Isaev and Anna Zudilina

promises all-new Latin champions.

My prediction for the Amateur Latin, and I'm sure I'm not alone, are runners-up Klemen Prasnikar and Alexandra Averkieva, from Slovenia. Clean, effortless-looking dancers with a cha cha cha, in particular, I've always admired, they looked strikingly stylish on the night. In third place, Petar Daskalov and Zia James, from England, have been dancing with increasing attack in recent years and always get a special cheer on home turf.

Fourth, Damir Haluzan and Anna Mashchyts, from Slovenia, perform with fabulous attitude, particularly in their cha cha cha, while Viktoria Kharchenko, who dances with Salvo Sinardi, from Italy, brings a slinky feline quality to her movement. Alexander Chernositov and Arina Grishanina, from the US, were overjoyed newcomers to this final and celebrated with a fabulously exuberant samba – just how this party dance should be performed.

n the Amateur Ballroom Championship, Ukraine's Igor Reznik and Mariia Polishchuk were on dazzling form. This young pair have always danced with an effortlessly neat, nimble style, particularly in their outstanding quickstep, but their performance also grows every time I see them. This year, I couldn't take my eyes off them and my companion felt the same – although they came third, they look like world champions in the making. Winners this year, for a second time, were Fedor Isaev and Anna Zudilina, from Russia. The pair dance with a wonderfully controlled, unflustered style and their tango was fabulous. England's Kyle Taylor and Izabela Skierska, a charismatic pair who are going from strength to strength, came second with Si Cheng Li and Liis End, from China, fourth and Artem Kuklin and Alika Dika, from Ukraine, fifth. In sixth place, Michal Le and Sandra Jablonska, from Poland, are a stylish pair with his velvet jacket and her old-school glamour.

In the Professional Ballroom, the crowning of new champions Andrea Ghigiarelli and Sara Andracchio would not have surprised the ballroom faithful. Since the retirement of Arunas and Katusha, the Italians have been stepping into their shoes in all the major championships, including the Worlds, the UK Open and at Blackpool. Andrea and Sara's dancing oozes effortless quality,



with gorgeous shaping and power, while barely breaking into a sweat. They were deserved winners.

Interestingly, with the withdrawal of Victor Fung and Anastasia Muravyeva, from the US, and previous finalists Alexander Zhiratkov and Irina Novozhilova, from Russia, there were other spaces in the Professional Ballroom final and more movement in the placings in this prestigious championship than you might usually see. In second place, Domen Krapez and Natascha Karabey, from Germany, moved up from fifth last year. Domen and Natascha have long been locked in close (though, I imagine, friendly) rivalry with Domen's former partner Monica Nigro and Valerio Colantoni, from Italy, swapping placings with regularity. Their styles are different - while Domen and Natascha are smooth, strong dancers, I adore Monica's expressiveness and detail - particularly her gorgeous headwork in the tango. On this night, \succ

Above: Amateur Latin winners Ferdinando Iannaccone and Yulia Musikhina. Left: Professional Ballroom winners Andrea Ghigiarelli and Sara Andracchio.







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She was his...

She was perfect...

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NICOLA RAYNER

THE

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the judges didn't agree with me.

In fourth place, up from eighth

last year, Russia's Stanislav Zelianin and Irina Cherepanova looked stunning, with Irina in old-fashioned

Ginger Rogers feathers, and danced beautifully too, while Poland's Sergiu and Dorota Rusu, in fifth place, were up from seventh year. Concluding this prestigious final, in sixth place, Stas Portanenko and Nataliya Kolyada, from Ukraine, are an effervescent couple on the floor and extremely popular with the audience.

It is difficult to imagine what Professional Latin will be like without Riccardo Cocchi and Yulia Zagoruychenko, who have long dominated this category - first with their close rivalry with Michael Malitowski and Joanna Leunis and later, after the latter pair's retirement, as undisputed champions. They are a small couple, but so fit, so slick, so flexible - and remarkable for being at the very top of their game for so many years. They will be much missed.

Known as Mr Personality, Stefano Di Filippo is a popular charismatic dancer, whose partnership with Daria Chesnokova (the pair dance for the US) looks as if it will be the one to take him right to the top. Di Filippo always seems to come to life in the jive - never more so than in this final here.

Troels Bager and Ina Ivanova Jeliazkova, from the US, are another stellar pair, who know how to use light and shade in their dancing. Jeliazkova has long been my favourite follower in this event - she has a strength and style all of her own. I always admire her beautiful arms, but this year also marvelled at the flexibility of her spine in gorgeous back bends.

Dorin Frecautanu and Marina Sergeeva, from Moldova, came fourth, their serious approach lending itself well to a great paso doble, while Kirill Belorukov and Polina Teleshova, from Russia, came fifth, with wonderful body action. Italians Nino Langella and Andra Vaidilaite completed this final in sixth place. Vaidilaite is such a talented dancer with exquisite musicality. It will be interesting to see how the placings in the Professional Latin change with the retirement of the champions. The emotion of the faces of Cocchi and

Right: Professional Latin winners Riccardo Cocchi and Yulia Zagoruychenko.



Zagoruychenko was clear to see as they bade farewell to the Royal Albert Hall with a retirement letter, noting: "All dancers move, but great dancers move others." With their enormous following, Riccardo and Yulia have

touched a great many lives: she looked as if she was fighting back tears as they said their goodbyes and, after the letter was read out, Riccardo kissed his hand and touched that famous dance floor – and, with that, they were gone.

Lee Knights explores the history of bachata

he origins of bachata – the most popular dance and music to come out of the Dominican Republic – are practically a cliché. Today, the dance, with its distinctive sultry hip sway, is feted across the globe but it has a notorious past as a dance of the brothel and the music of the island's drugs scene.

Romancing the roots

Bachata – it means party – bubbled up from the first half of the 20th century in the island's melting pot of indigenous, Afro-Caribbean, Mediterranean (and more) cultures. Bachata music – driven by syncopated guitar lines and insistent, repetitive percussive beats – grew out of the Caribbean island's countryside as naturally as rice and sugar cane.

Among the people of rural shantytowns, it was "the music of bitterness", with songs about everyday life, stories of hardship, heartbreak and trouble. Bachata mixed with the wrong crowd, belonging not only to the poor but to the island's criminal underworld, danced in brothels by prostitutes and their clients and played over drugs deals in dingy backstreet bars.

Bachata's unsavoury reputation did nothing to endear it to polite society. It was considered crude, low class, vulgar and sensual, was shunned by respectable folk and even banned for a while. It was years before bachata shed its shady past and earned a place at the heart of the island's cultural and social life.

Now, bachata is danced around the world, and is hugely popular in the UK. It first found its feet on the UK salsa scene, with dancers welcoming a change of pace and rhythm from often hectic salsa tunes. Later on, bachata established itself in its own right, moving into bars, pubs, nightspots, school and church halls. Outside its island setting, it continued to develop, spawning an array of different styles including urban, moderna, sensual, fusion and bachatango.

While there is a rich diversity of styles on offer, the hardest to find is authentic street-style Dominican bachata. For this reason, when I heard Dominican-born Miguel Fermin Baez (aka Miguel tu Bachatu) was starting dance classes and a club in London, I was keen to get along. Launch night was at cocktail bar Loves Company – Reborn, right next to Old Street tube, on November 3. It was a penetratingly damp, wet, dark evening but the lure of discovering more about bachata's tropical roots was too strong to resist.

I arrived ridiculously early and Fermin and his team were still setting up, but he still made time to welcome and talk to me. "I learned bachata from my mother's belly," he says matter-of-factly. Fermin and his parents are from the north, El Cibao, the birthplace of the national dance and music, merengue and the island's cultural heart. "We Cibaeňos are proud of our regional identity."

Running through the blood of every Dominican, Fermin continues, is the güira (pronounced gear-ah). A percussion instrument that looks like an oversized grater, this provides the common rhythmic key to both merengue and bachata music. "All Dominicans are aficionados of the instrument," Fermin declares with pride.

join an enthusiastic group of dancers in the club's atmospheric basement bar. From the outset, it's clear that island street styles and their offspring share family traits. Across all versions, bachata is a couple dance, performed in both closed and open holds. Another common feature is a swaying hip accent, much like salsa's Cuban motion. In all versions, followers execute a stronger undulating hip movement

Romancing the roots



than leaders. The music is in 4/4 timing, and all styles incorporate a three-step pattern, followed by a tap, although execution varies.

Marked differences are quick to surface though. Later styles favour learning choreography, sequences and figures that can be re-ordered for freestyle dancing. While there is a great variation in island styles, these invariably accent rhythm and musicality.

"Traditional bachata is not academic; it's not learned in ballrooms. It's a street dance," says Fermin. "We have the music around all the time and we learn to dance as children. It's a social dance, for fun and enjoyment not learned choreography."

Musicality and rhythm are king in the traditional style. This means what the couple does matches the music. For example, there is special footwork pattern to mark the bongo rhythm, while there is another set pattern to marry up with the bass.

Traditional bachata is body rather than arm-led. For Fermin, island street style is best described as a 50-50 lead, with both partners exerting a comfortable and equal resistance to each other. This allows both greater freedom than is typical of other maleled Latin dances. This technique is empowering for followers, allowing them to disconnect from mirroring their partners and break off into their own independent, liberating, fast and funky footwork. It's up followers to choose what footwork they want to do, while leaders similarly do their own thing.

The compact feel of the dance frame in the traditional approach feels very different from later styles. There is a more upholstered feeling, with a kind of micro-bouncing that totally matches the syncopated music.

As Fermin demonstrates, this allows the leader to signal leads to their partner subtly and gently. For example, lead signals can be expressed through a stronger incline of the torso or a slight lift through the torso and arm. Unique to traditional style is the use of a suggestive, small shoulder drop as a lead signal. According to Fermin, this has been converted into the body rolls that have become signatures of later styles.

Fermin is well aware that mastery of the traditional style is challenging, even for dancers of other types of bachata. "It takes time to develop an understanding of footwork patterns and the music and how to interpret this in an improvised dance." Sounds good to me. Let me at it.

Miguel Fermin Baez's next event at Loves Company – Reborn on 104-122 City Road, London, will take place on December 15 from 7.30pm. Email urbanlatinnights@gmail.com or find Miguel tu Bachatu on Facebook.

Tips on technique

Doing the legwork

James Whitehead looks at the standing leg in samba

hen we teach beginners samba, as with most dances, we focus on where the feet are placed next, and in which direction. As experience grows, it becomes increasingly important to understand and master what happens between the steps in order to take the dance to that next level. It's probably fair to say we hear more about the standing leg in teaching the ballroom dances than the Latin, but the principles are the same and vital in order to achieve the key body actions in samba.

On a very simple level, we use the standing leg to help us time our movement - when and how it will help transfer our centre from one foot to the other. In contrast with rumba, we use the standing leg to push our body from foot to foot. Consider the whisk, for example. If we divide the two beats of our bar of music for the whisk into quarters, we have eight divisions of equal duration in which to realise what happens with our legs with greater precision than if we just referred to our "one-a-two" timing.

With the use of the standing leg, the first side step should take the first three divisions, one, two and three. If we want to dance the fullest possible action, then the weight transfer continues over those three counts, not just the first count and then nothing for the next two. Possibly with a style interpretation we might choose to pass the feet through natural collection (either directly or with a more flamboyant forward arc of the foot) on, or very close to, the third of those divisions, just prior to the Latin cross of our whisk.

Remember as well to be clear in the flexing and

straightening of the knees during that first step of the whisk. Always revert back to basic understanding of the bounce to check that; on our eight count of quarter-beats, we use two to flex and two to straighten. In the correct order, we start compressing on one, continue through two, start to straighten on three and continue on four, similarly for counts five, six, seven and eight in a wonderfully fluid cycle.

For our whisk, therefore, we aim to compress through one and two, then on three we are beginning to straighten, whilst still on the same standing leg. In simple terms the first step of our whisk should flex and begin to straighten before the cross

Stefano Di Filippo and Dasha demonstrate beautiful legwork in the samba.



of the whisk. This allows for the true bounce timing to be different (1and) from the foot timing (1a) of our whisk.

For beginners, it's all too easy to see the compression take place over three counts, then the straightening occurs over half the time it should take with the Latin cross foot placement. Then we are in real trouble with the bounce and how we use the body. To reinforce that during your practice I know several coaching colleagues who encourage dancers to train a straight leg on count three of eight when dancing slowly, the effect with the faster music being this leg will probably not quite straighten, but will therefore be correct at full speed. Just keep in mind with that method that there is still supposed to be straightening on four, not all on three or it will appear too staccato in the bounce action. Check your foot and bounce timings slowly to ensure they haven't had an inadvertent merger, rather an abundantly clear separate foot and bounce timing.

he support from the standing leg is vitally important because, without good support, all of the constructive body actions in the world cannot generate any quality of movement in this travelling dance. Through the strong use of the standing leg we can generate a hip action before our foot placement in steps, for example, as step one to two in a bota fogo where we should feel the standing leg start to straighten, supporting another twist in the body and preparing the hip shape for the fast "a" part of the rhythm as we dance the part weight point of the next step. On that note, try to feel as you take the first step that your

foot is not overly turned out. You should be able to feel the pressure to the inside edge and big toe on the floor, allowing the knees to straighten and flex along that line of the foot, rather than to the outside edge.

Similarly, as for the standing leg, the receiving leg also begins to work hard often in order to slow down the actions. For example, in a volta, we see couples plonk into the floor on the cross without enough control. Instead, try to feel as you cross the feet that the crossing leg resists the flexing, through the ball of foot, ankle, knee and hip, and that those joints flex slowly to absorb and fill out the entire time allowed.

Without wishing to digress from our discussion about the standing leg too much, these "absorbing" actions work in combination with the body action that wonderful ticking contraction through the centre that is our true bounce. The absorbing body action, coupled with the flexing of the legs, creates the wonderful pulsing bounce that all the top dancers train so hard to ooze at every opportunity.

Clearly there is also the use of the standing leg as we rotate around the leg, often in opposition to a rotation in the upper body. For example, in a very simple case of completing step one of a left whisk, the side step, with a collection first under the body by rotating around the standing leg to bring the right hip forward and an opposing twist in the body. The resistance in the twist then allows a fast release to dance the crossing action. Without the torsion using the standing leg and body, not only is the initial step never truly brought under

+echnique clinic

This month, **Phil Meacham**, our Dance Doctor, considers viscosity

was sitting on a plane recently heading overseas thinking about how the varying degrees of ankle and leg tension can be achieved in both Latin American and ballroom dancing to better effect. As teachers, we're always asking, guiding and sometimes begging students to "use their ankles" more, and often use various phrases imploring for "more earthiness" or for dancers to "be more grounded" or "power down into the floor" and so on.

The problem is that these phrases, which to us, as dancers, make complete sense, don't always accurately transfer the image to the frustrated recipient desperately trying to understand the message. It can be frustrating for both parties.

For me, I tell people stories of things I have experienced to get the message across. Sometimes it works – sometimes it does not. Luckily, it seems to do the job more often than not. My bank, Santander, always seem delighted about the occasional success I have in this matter, and I measure this by the lack of red letters about overdrafts.

The difficulty is words: there just are not enough of them to do the job. Maybe that's why dancers impart information through strange noises and sounds that seem to underpin my long-held belief that, to the outside world, we're genuinely the oddest group of individuals anyone could wish to view. No wonder people pay their hard-earned cash to come and witness the phenomenon we justify by calling it "teaching". Maybe they just come and pay for the pure entertainment factor.

So, back to those ankle actions! We need to understand the physics of tension, and when and how to apply it. Maybe the answer to explaining what we need is already out there, and the key to imparting the picture lies in the world of physics. Let me explain. As a boy of the late 1970s and early 1980s, I remember with great affection my first car - a Ford Cortina Estate (Mark Three) in Modena green. Anyway, it boasted a "viscous fan". Now, stay with me, even if technical stuff is just not your thing. The cooling fan on this car was designed to run slower when the car first started, but then gradually increased speed as the engine got hotter by use of an oil to generate viscosity. (I did say stay with me!) The oil in the fan unit was gloopy when cold, which meant the fan could not spin freely, but as the oil heated up and became thinner, the fan could then spin much faster. In short, the system was simply and efficiently increasing and decreasing tension as required.

If we apply the same idea to a dancer's ankle, knee and toe joints, we then use our voluntary muscular action to increase tension, so the legs resist the weight of the body and gravity itself to create a stronger action, or as we call it "earthiness".

No longer are the actions just a matter of bending and flexing, but they now can operate at different levels of tension depending on the speed of the movement we're trying to create, the speed of the music and the look we're aiming for.

You could say, then, we're increasing the muscular viscosity around the joints and it obviously requires exercises to get this action fully under control. For example, stand with the feet together, rise slowly high on the toes and hold the position for maybe a full bar of music before gradually lowering down. All the while, keep your heels off the floor as you do and bend the knees, and then hold for another bar before lifting back to a normal standing position.

Such exercises performed regularly will strengthen the muscular viscosity. (I feel sure scientists would say this is not the correct phrase – it's that or "earthiness", so I will take my chances.) Give it a try! It is just as important for ballroom as it is for Latin American dancing. Let me know how it goes. Now, I really must find some photos of that old Ford Cortina!

Email nicola@dancing-times.co.uk if you would like to consult our Dance Doctor

control, but the following action is never produced using the necessary body action for those fast steps on the "a" count of our 1a2. We've only scratched the surface here but hopefully there are a few thoughts for the practice room. Whether it is flexing, straightening, supporting or rotating, never underestimate what using your standing leg properly can help you achieve in your samba movement.

Simon's guide to Swing

Simon Selmon considers lessons we can learn for the festive season on the dance floor

hristmas is coming -the start of the party season! For many, the annual office do is approaching, which means it's time to dust off your dance shoes. Some will be dreading the occasion, knowing that normal colleague relationships will be thrown aside at the free bar; others are fearing embarrassment over their two left feet (or was it two right feet?), but perhaps for many of you Dancing Times readers, you're just anticipating disappointment, thinking about the fact that there will be some great live music, a large dance floor, everyone dressed up, but perhaps no one else who can dance. However, dancing is not just for the Christmas season or watching on *Strictly*, it's about getting out there and doing it.

For the last five years we have gone into a school and taught sixth-formers how to dance. Before we start dancing my first question is, "OK, who has tried partner dancing before?" A single hand went up out of the whole year, which is not unusual. At the start of the session, the boys mostly huddle at one end of the room and the girls at the other (with a few exceptions) – this is also quite common.

After a brief introduction, we get them moving with a short line dance, which acts as the warm-up. This allows them to get over the embarrassment of moving



in what, for most, are very unconventional movements, including the mess-around (rhythmical hip circles) and some peckin' (reminiscent of a chicken's head movement). Soon enough, they begin to feel less self-conscious and we're ready to pair them up.

F or us, the teachers, this can be the make or break moment – they are not used to holding each other so close in this sort of environment. You can see many feeling less than confident, either from the embarrassment of being in front of their classmates and friends, or from trying something new and executing movements that feel alien to most of them. Slowly but surely,

however, confidence grows,

and they start feeling a sense of achievement as they master (relative to their level) the moves, and the novelty and nervousness of holding a partner in their arms wear off. As the class comes to a close, I am pleased to report that many of them show signs of genuine disappointment it's over (others, of course, I think are probably just relieved), but they are all smiling and having fun and will go away knowing how to hold a partner correctly in their arms on the dance floor, with a little history of where the dance comes from and a sense of the discipline, skill and communication required to dance.

They have listened to the music their grandparents (and great-grandparents)

Simon Selmon and Anna Lambrechts in the Clore Ballroom.

would have danced to and translated that into dance movements, first individually, then with their partner but also with the whole group, as they learned the steps together. What the session has really been about is not so much learning to dance, but rather about learning how to interact with each other, how to share a space with both confidence and respect and enjoy being with each other. That's really the essence of the holiday season: communities and families coming together to play and relax, sharing experiences and helping each other. It's a season for joy and merriment that we can take with us into the new year.

Stepping Out The same-sex ballroom and Latin dance scene

Marianka Swain finds out what it takes to compère a same-sex dance competition

ompèring a ballroom competition takes a particular skillset - and that goes double for same-sex events, with their balance of professionalism and warm, supportive atmosphere. Ralf Schiller compères the prestigious Pink Jukebox Trophy; he fell into the role, since "Jacky Logan and I were organising, and she was also dancing - so I had to do it! I'd been to lots of other competitions, so I knew what worked. I just listened to what people wanted and focused on the simple things. You have to keep on time, keep the couples going, and get the audience going – chat to people, to get them relaxed and engaged. I keep it light, so if it's the same people late to the floor, I might say 'He's always asleep' - and everyone has a laugh."

Vernon Kemp has compèred the UK Fun Competition, as well as the same-sex European Championships in Blackpool and numerous medallist events. He was inspired by the "clarity and professionalism of Anne Lingard, Peggy Spencer and Bill Irvine", and, as a frequent chair of adjudicators, appreciates that when organisers plan well, "it makes your job easier". He also believes flexibility and quick reactions create a "human" compère: "After all, you're the only person the audience and dancers have verbal,

as well as visual, contact with." The difference with same-sex competitions is that "there's an enthusiastic audience from early morning". Conversely, "if things don't go well, then the audience lets you know they're not happy".

Pete Meager is comparatively new to compèring, MC-ing the inaugural Norwegian Equality Open and Paris Gay Games dance competition in 2018. As an active competitor, he understands how events run and "the necessity to ad lib whilst the organisation team catch up with scrutineering". He studied the programme beforehand, but also made sure to "adapt on the day. It's like a swan - your legs are working hard beneath the water, but you need to look graceful and calm up top."

Understanding the competitor's point of view helped enormously. "I know the frustrations of going somewhere, not speaking the language and not knowing what's going on, so being a good and entertaining communicator is key. It

Below from left: Ralf Schiller, Pete Meager and Csaba Csetneki. helps knowing who's who, when you need to find a couple or tell someone off – personal relationships and a sense of cheekiness can help you get the message across quickly. You also know just how much effort competitors have put in. They need your support and respect; you can make the experience so very different just by putting them at ease during a stressful time."

saba Csetneki has also gone from competing to compèring, helming events like the Berlin Open and EuroGames Stockholm in 2015, and EuroGames Berlin in 2017. He's grateful that the European Same-Sex Dancing Association's team were so organised that he could just focus on his MC-ing, and he, too, draws on past competing and judging experience like finding time for competitors to "breathe between dances", or ensuring sufficient judging time. He also feels he can be "more authentic and entertaining as a result of knowing these events from different angles", and that "being efficient and funny are strongly connected;

they serve each other". His favourite moment is getting to do a self-deprecating introduction, while the hardest moment still is seeing fellow competitors out on the floor for the ballroom final, "but not actually participating".

Pete was honoured to play a role in the Gay Games, which had "representation from all over the globe, and we were truly all equal - making history, making memories, and together breaking down barriers". He's excited to do more compèring in the future, such as the Nordic Open this New Year's Eve. His advice for anyone thinking of having a go is to "immerse yourself in our community, understand how our competitions operate, and then step up - perhaps co-host initially so you don't have to go it alone."

Ralf suggests you listen to "different compères at various competitions, know what's going on in the same-sex dance world, and try to bring a different approach. However, no one can really prepare you: you mainly learn by doing it." Csaba adds: "Don't be afraid! Make sure you speak clearly, put your personality across and entertain – everyone in the room will be grateful for it." ■







Notes from the floor

The Jim Langton Tribute Day

he road to Leatherhead was hot from the passage of dancers' car tyres when popular promoter Georgina Cairncross presented the Jim Langton Tribute Day at spacious Tylney Ballroom. This event featured, among its many attractions, the "Lady of Dance" trophy in memory of May Martin, which was won by Aileen Carroll-Turner, whose partner, Norberto Santangelo won the "Most Dedicated Ballroom Gentleman" trophy in Leatherhead in April.

The programme of DPA National League, Super National League, and supporting competitions included Champions of Tomorrow heats and was sponsored generously by Sparkle Designs and new sponsors Routetrip USA. Adjudicators for the day were: Amy Booth, Lesley Dodd, Philip Evans (chairman), Kelvin Morgan, and Lea-Samantha Walsh. Julie Cairncross played the music to inspire the dancers, whilst John Cairncross assessed the marks. Support on this occasion was ably provided by Valerie Martin, Ian Sharpe and Victoria Lawrence and raffle proceeds, as always, were dedicated to worthy children's causes.

In the Open Juvenile Ballroom, Alexander Prydderch and Isabella Hills triumphed, presenting a very well prepared set of dances in which precise footwork and a neat outline predominated. The Junior Ballroom winners were Alex Illing and Katelyn Cornish, who drew much applause for a performance where sharp presentation of the fast dances was a feature.

Chris and Anita Horsell won all dances on first place majorities in Senior 3 Ballroom, with a smooth and elegant movement apparent throughout. Runners-up were Steve Ewing and Roz Barber, who came second in all dances and were at their most competitive in foxtrot.

Norberto Santangelo and Aileen Carroll-Turner secured all first-place votes in the Senior 2 Ballroom, with a sparkling quickstep completing a fine overall performance. In second place, Garry and Fenella Hopkins were clear runnersup, with a bright quickstep – a strong finisher for them also. Stephen Peirce and Michelle Hamilton presented an elegant outline and extensive progression throughout, securing a firm third place overall. James Barnes and Georgina Falconer, in fourth place, were notable for a foxtrot of exceptionally smooth execution. Steven Ewing and Roz Barber, who came fifth, were at their most competitive in tango and quickstep.

n Senior 1 Ballroom, David and Lucy Shanks secured all dances and all bar one first-place marks, with a lyrical slow waltz opening an elegant winning final. Second in all dances, Santangelo and Carroll-



Turner again finished on a strongly competitive quickstep. Damian and Louise Devoy completed this lovely final in third place with the four/four dances their strongest suits.

Open Amateur Ballroom winners Cameron May and Emma O'Reilly took all dances without dropping a single first place vote. An immaculate outline and extensive movement were assets throughout. Runners-up in every dance on second place majorities, Alfie Sadowski and Olivia Ng danced, as always, with great panache. An outstanding Viennese waltz led the way in a fine set of test dances. After a moderate start in slow waltz, Maxwell Saban and Carleanne Gill

turned up the pressure, sharing the resulting third places with another couple only in Viennese waltz. Lukasz Zielinski and Bahar Mirshekar Syahkal took a firm grip on overall fourth place, putting pressure on the preceding team in the two waltzes especially. Paulius Zutautas and Ina Zutautiene started strongly with a slow waltz, which spiked two places above their overall finish position. Tango was the strongest of their remaining dances, I thought. Damian and Louise Devoy completed this excellent final, waltz and quickstep being their most competitive dances.

In Open Juvenile Latin, Prydderch and Hills showed their all-round ability with a sound and Opposite: The Amateur Ballroom line-up. Left top: Cameron May and Emma O'Reilly. Left bottom: Alfie Sadowski and Olivia Ng. Above left: Senior Ballroom winners David and Lucy Shanks. Above right: Louise and Damian Devoy.

expressive presentation of the Latin test dances, while in Open Junior Latin Illing and Cornish won every dance except the final jive. Halle Mae Harrison and Bethan Leeson came through to win the closing dance of this final.

Santangelo and Carroll-Turner again collected all first places and all first place marks in the Senior 2 Latin, their rumba being a highlight. Runners-up in all, Stewart and Louise Woskett produced a challenge of quality, which finished on a bright jive.

Richard Knight and Kerry Barker ceded only rumba to the following team in the Senior 1 Latin, their grip on first place marks thereafter being absolute. An expressive paso doble stood out. Santangelo and Carroll-Turner were at their most competitive in the Cuban dances, breaking through to win the slow dance on a first place majority. Stewart and Louise Woskett, who came third in all dances, made their greatest impression for this event in the progressive dances. In the Open Amateur Latin, Alfie Sadowski and Olivia Ng's final was a highlight of the afternoon, drawing much rapt attention to their charismatic performance of the Latin rhythms. TIMOTHY PALMER

Semewhere in time Ballro

Ballroom's golden age

This month, **Jack Reavely** remembers his dear friend Frank Alback

n extremely interesting monthly magazine called Modern Dance and the Dancer was, until 1976, at the forefront of competitive reporting and most eagerly awaited by dancers. It had a reputation for unbiased, fair and expert evaluations of couples who had competed in the run-up to its monthly publication. A leading correspondent in 1956, for example, was a man called Frank Alback, whose shrewd analysis of performances was fascinating.

Frank was a superb technician and was once a brilliant competitor who partnered a lady called Babs Slough. On their very first appearance at Blackpool, in the Amateur Ballroom Championship in the 1930s, they flew into third place. Babs decided she had other things she wanted to concentrate on and retired from competing and Frank, who had been more than satisfied with her as a partner, decided not to compete again as he didn't think he could find another with the same capabilities.

Frank then began to study dance technique with utter fervency, and was intensely interested not only in being able to describe the various nuances, but also to know the most important aspect of all, which is why technique had been recorded that way by our wonderful pioneers of dance.

It wasn't long before readers began to look

forward avidly to Frank's articles, encompassing, as they did, in-depth reporting coupled with well-informed, succulent comments on the performances of the many couples who competed in the mid-1950s.

Frank was simply fearless and if he spotted a fault in a couple, he wouldn't just mention it but he'd also offer expert encouragement to those who had a bad result. I remember vividly when my wife, Anne, and I were walking along a tube station platform on our way to the Star events at Earl's Court, London. A man we didn't know approached us and said, "I assume you two are going to dance in the Star today." We wondered how he knew and he replied, "Well, you both look like dancers and, with your physical presence, you should do well. If not now, in years to come."

ow could we not be pleased with this? Over the years, we became the greatest of friends with Frank, who became a mentor to us and encouraged us always to strive to be better by pointing out our faults from 400 miles away. You see, Frank wrote to us every week for many years and would discuss topics in his letters such as the technique of Viennese waltz and how to phrase it within an eight-bar structure – and how to avoid going across that structure when dancing a contra check, which is

only allowed to be done over one bar of music. Frank also assisted me enormously when it came to turning professional. He would write and explain the whys of technique to me, which made the task of studying for a professional examination so much easier.

E ventually, Frank became the editor of the magazine, and so added to his workload, as he was still a major contributor every month. So well was he thought of that, in the twilight days of his involvement, London dancers actually ran a tribute event for him. All the attendance money was given to him as a thank you from the many couples he had encouraged over the years. What a man of dance.

He was also a keen photographer and when we visited his flat, which was only a few hundred yards from the Royal Albert Hall, he allowed us into a special room in which he kept his photographic collection. It was simply mind-boggling – a goldmine of the history of dance and I so often wonder what happened to them all after his sudden death from a heart attack, while on his way to Blackpool Dance Festival. The entire world of dance was in deep sorrow, because everyone who loved dancing also loved Frank.

Anne and I were able to take lessons from Frank when we visited London each year, after saving up assiduously, in order to budget for the trip, which included an overnight train from Edinburgh at £1.50 each (for a return), where you had to sit up in a crowded carriage, with cigarette smoke all around you, arriving tired but happy at King's Cross. Our insufficient finances also meant carrying our suitcases from the underground to the boarding house, which was nicely positioned for reaching Hammersmith Palais every day for practice and classes.

In Frank's lessons, he always insisted that the use of feet was not just to do with correct footwork: the challenge was to paint pictures on the floor with the use of your feet. We relished his input as if it was a gourmet meal at the Savoy Hotel. To this day, his contribution to the world of dance is appreciated by all who knew him.

"His photographic collection was a goldmine of the history of dance and I so often wonder what happened to them all after his sudden death from a heart attack, while on his way to Blackpool Dance Festival. The entire world of dance was in deep sorrow, because everyone who loved dancing also loved Frank"



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DIRECT

Dancer of the month Interviewed by Margaret Willis

Laura Day



BORN: August 1993

COMPANY: Birmingham Royal Ballet

STUDIED/TRAINED: The Royal Ballet School

MAJOR

PERFORMANCES: Peter in Peter and the Wolf, Clara in The Nutcracker, Vera in A Month in the Country, the Girl in Solitaire

n her career as a ballet dancer, the petite Laura Day, with winning dimple and radiant smile, has been seen in many guises – as a wide-eyed, exuberant young Clara, a sneakerwearing boy named Peter, and even covered in sticky, revolting-looking goo as the sister of a brother who transforms into an insect. She is also very enthusiastic about everything she gets to dance.

Born in Cheltenham on August 3, 1993, Laura has a sister who is three years older and a younger brother, and



Above: Laura Day as Clara in *The Nutcracker*.

it was her sister who – like so many other siblings – inspired Laura to start ballet classes. "I was always very energetic and needed a bit of discipline,"she began, "and so, at four years old, I joined her at the Corraine Collins Dance Studios in Cheltenham. It was a really good school, and I loved the classes. We did the ISTD syllabus and exams, as well as musical theatre, tap, modern and jazz. I especially loved the full-on productions like *Snow White*.

"My sister stayed in the school until she was 13 and

is now a make-up artist. My brother is travelling in New Zealand, where he is a tennis coach – he's also very entrepreneurial.

"Ballet actually wasn't my first love. I preferred modern and musical theatre, and I was 12 when I suddenly realised that classical ballet was for me. I will >

Laura Day

always be grateful to Judith Rowann who nurtured and encouraged me. I owe a lot to her and to Corraine."

aura obviously progressed quickly, as she received both a Janet Cram Award and an ISTD ballet award. "This coming year, I'm going back to adjudicate, which is something very special for me," she added. At 14, she was accepted at The Royal Ballet Lower School (RBS) at White Lodge. "At first I felt I had lost out a lot, since most of the girls in my class had been there since they were 11. They seemed much more refined and I had to catch up, which was sometimes difficult. I really enjoyed being a boarder, though obviously there were hard reminders of home," she added, laughing, "such as having mash on Sundays rather than roast potatoes! Being in the heart of Richmond Park was magical, especially when one year we had three days of deep snow and no one was walking in the park. There was an eerie silence, but oh so beautiful. It was not so great when they were culling the deer though!

"As students, we were allowed on Saturdays to shop in Richmond in pairs, which we thought so grown up! Diane van Schoor was director of White Lodge when I first went there, and she did a lot for me. I enjoyed the fact that I had done ISTD and Cecchetti technique as, combined with RAD and the varied other techniques I had studied, I was set up nicely. You have to be so versatile these days as a dancer and everything I learned has helped me.

"I also enjoyed the academic side in the training – my favourite subjects were maths and French. Even Above: Laura Day as Peter in Ruth Brill's *Peter and the Wolf*.

today at Birmingham Royal Ballet [BRB], I'm continuing to study – this time for a Business Management and Leadership degree with the Open University. It's a six-year course, and I'm now in my second. It started when I had to take time off for an injury, and for a while I helped Caroline Miller [CEO] in the BRB office. I thought the work was really interesting, and it kept me busy during my forced time off.

"Studying also works well for our touring schedule, and it helps me with my dancing. When I'm exhausted I like to focus on something that challenges me mentally. I do online tutorials, and can go to meetings with other students though I am often away on tour when that happens. I also study in the evenings or before performing – even in the intervals if I have time. I think the study has benefited me in many ways – the discipline of a ballet life certainly helps.

"The Upper School was tough, but I really needed it. You have to be really strongminded and know all your strengths and weaknesses."

One of these was being told by Gailene [Stock, director of the RBS from 1999 until 2014] that Laura would find it hard to be selected by a company since she is only just over five foot tall, and so wouldn't fit in with a corps de ballet. "That applied to the school show at the end of our first year, when I was told I was too short to dance the 'Yellow Girls' with my classmates in Concerto. Instead, I was to understudy the principal role which, of course, I was happy about. Then that principal girl was put into another movement and I got to dance the role at the performance," Laura reported, beaming

"Gailene was always frank and honest, and I really appreciated her advice. She also told me I needed people to believe in me when I danced, and to make the most of every opportunity. I'm very grateful to her."

C ontinuing into the second year of her training at the Upper School, Laura must have shown more strengths than weaknesses, and her height has never held her back. She was the first in her class to dance full-time, completing only two years of the three-year course.

Just before the start of what should have been her third year – 2011 – Laura was chosen to create the role of Greta Samsa in Arthur Pita's *The Metamorphosis*. Based on the novel by Franz Kafka, it tells of a young man transformed into an insect, though the work also spotlights Greta's own transformation from child to adult. Created for The Royal Ballet's incredibly supple and talented Edward Watson, this dance theatre work won much acclaim, including an Olivier Award for Watson.

"Arthur approached me about creating the role of Greta, and we started work in the late summer of 2011 for an intensive eight weeks of creating. Looking back, I feel that everything I learned during this time from Arthur - his drama and working with me on my character - has shaped me as a performer. My theatre training in Cheltenham also came in handy – I had to chat, sing and scream a lot in the piece! The work was performed in the Linbury Theatre of the Royal Opera House, and was so intimate with the audience on both sides of the stage. It was also filmed for Sky Arts, and yes, that awful goo that Ed as the Bug was covered in, and which got all over

us, was sticky treacle. I'm reminded of the ballet every time I smell treacle!

"During the autumn, I began working with BRB, which I loved. Having been there as a student, I felt very much at home – I could wear my own leotard and not my uniform one – and I was dancing with people whom I had admired in the school above me," Laura continued.

"I danced in Checkmate, then was cast as Clara in The Nutcracker over the Christmas period. After the holidays, I went back to school expecting to continue my studies, but was called to Gailene's office where she told me BRB wanted me for Beauty and the Beast, adding, 'They've given you a full-time job, so go pack your things. You start tomorrow!' I've been so happy here and have worked really hard, perhaps to compensate for my height! "This year, Ruth Brill

chose me to be a female

Peter in her take on *Peter and the Wolf,* which was great fun. Set among scaffolding and graffiti, I was a very modern young girl who wore trainers instead of pointe shoes! It's a dancer's blessing to be created on – like with *Metamorphosis,* you become the soul of that role. I also loved dancing Vera in *A Month in the Country,* as well as getting many other opportunities. "I also enjoy

choreographing, and I collaborated with Lachlan Monaghan and Kit Holder last season in creating Seasons in our World, based on a poem by David Laing, which required ten dancers. We each did a section – mine was Spring, and was about ten minutes long. The dancers wore earthy, tie-dyed browns and greens, and the music was an original score by awardwinning Cevanne Horricks-Hopayian. It was my first piece on the company.

"At the end of last season we said goodbye to our much loved director, David Bintley. It was a poignant moment for me when I danced Lizzie Hobson in his wonderful ballet Hobson's Choice, and also at our last gala. I have always loved his work and feel it suited the dancer that I am. I shall miss him, but am very excited about new opportunities when the incredible Carlos [Acosta] takes over. I'm so grateful to BRB for all my work."

Now, this Christmas time, sneakers and treacle are long forgotten as Laura dresses up in a dainty Victorian costume again to dance the role of young Clara in Peter Wright's beautiful production of *The Nutcracker*. With eyes sparkling like Clara's on receiving the Nutcracker doll from Drosselmeyer, Laura lit up with happy anticipation as she popped off to rehearse her role.

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People Karen Kain to step down

KAREN KAIN, FORMER

principal dancer, and now artistic director of National Ballet of Canada (NBC), has decided to retire from her position in January 2021. In recognition for being the company's longest-serving director since founder Celia Franca, on her retirement Kain is to be named artistic director emeritus.

Joining NBC in 1969, Kain (pictured right) became a principal dancer in 1971, performing a wide variety of roles and forming memorable dance partnerships with both Frank Augustyn and Rudolf Nureyev. On her retirement from the stage in 1997, Kain took up the position of artist-in-residence with NBC, a role later expanded to artistic associate. She was appointed artistic director in 2005.



"I am so proud of NBC and feel so fortunate to have had this wonderful company as my artistic home for 50 years. The role of artistic director is the most challenging, and the most rewarding, of my career," said Kain in a press statement. "The goals I set when I assumed this position required a huge commitment from our dancers, staff, board and donor community. When I step down in January 2021, I know I leave a financially stable company with the very best dancers in the world, one of the most diverse and coveted repertoires and an international reputation for the highest level of excellence."

In 2019, Kain was the first Canadian to be honoured with the Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Award, the highest honour given by the Royal Academy of Dance.

Governors' Gold Medal



MICHAEL O'HARE, SENIOR ballet master and acting

assistant director with Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB), was the recipient of the Gold Medal, presented annually by The Royal Ballet the Governors to an individual within the organisation in recognition for long service and dedication. O'Hare (pictured left) was presented with the medal at Sadler's Wells by Dame Jenny Abramsky, chair of the Governors, before a performance of BRB's *Giselle* on November 1.

David Bintley, former director of Birmingham Royal Ballet, wrote in a citation: "I am delighted the Governors have chosen to give their Gold Medal to my friend and colleague Michael O'Hare. Awarded, traditionally, to an individual having given outstanding, often unheralded, service to 'The Royal Ballet', this is certainly true of Michael, initially as a dancer and

now senior ballet master, organising the complex weekly schedules and giving of his great experience as a dancer, superb teacher and a wise and compassionate coach. I must put on record that as one of the company's greatest and experienced character artists he is still very much in the visible foreground and a natural first choice for such roles as Dr Coppélius and Widow Simone. Versatility has been the hallmark of Michael's career and he holds the distinction of being the first, of very few, to perform all three principal male roles in Ashton's legendary La Fille mal gardée, all with equal mastery."

In brief

★ THIAGO SOARES was presented with a special Lifetime Achievement Award for his work with The Royal Ballet during a ceremony for the LUKAS Awards, held in London on **November 6. LUKAS** is Europe's Latin **Entertainment Awards**, which celebrates the global impact of Latin American, Spanish and Portuguese music, dance, arts and sport. ★ RAPHAËL COUMES-MARQUET, a former principal with **Dresden's Semperoper** Ballet, left the company as its ballet master on October 25 in order to pursue a freelance career as a choreographer and teacher. Most recently, **Coumes-Marquet** was responsible for Alice – A Journey to Wonderland, presented by the company during the 2018/19 season.

Royal departures

The Royal Ballet's ALASTAIR MARRIOTT, principal character artist, and JONATHAN HOWELLS, character artist and ballet master, have each decided to leave the company with immediate effect. Both men studied at The Royal **Ballet School and joined** The Royal Ballet in 1988 and 1991 respectively, and often collaborated choreographically, most recently on The Unknown Soldier in 2018. Marriott and Howells both said they wished to pursue other career opportunities. English National Ballet

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Obituaries Valerie Adams

alerie Adams, the former dancer and teacher who was also director of The Royal Ballet School's Teachers' Training Course, has died at the age of 84.

Born in Bournemouth in 1935. Adams studied with Elizabeth Collins and Ida Stewart at the Wessex School of Dancing, as well as taking occasional lessons in London with Vera Volkova, Phyllis Bedells and Noreen Bush. At the age of 15, she gained her Royal Academy of Dance Solo Seal, and began attending classes given by Ninette de Valois at the Sadler's Wells (now Royal) Ballet School (RBS). Adams went on to the Upper School, where she also performed small parts with the Sadler's Wells Ballet and

the Covent Garden Opera, before joining the company just before it embarked on a five-month tour of the US and Canada in 1952.

However, Adams soon felt her true vocation was teaching. De Valois at first thought her too young, but then allowed her to observe classes at the RBS and gave her detailed personal tuition whenever she sat in on her own lessons.

In September 1955, at the age of 20, Adams became a junior teacher at the RBS, but within months was unexpectedly asked to help set up the national ballet school at the Conservatoire of Music in The Hague. She spent nearly six years there, becoming founding principal of the Ballet School of the Royal Koninklijk Conservatorium (from 1956 to 1961), before rejoining the RBS in 1962, assisting De Valois on the development and delivery of a new teachers' training course.

It commenced in 1964, and in 1968 Adams became De Valois' assistant on the Craftsman's Course. When it was renamed the Teachers' Training Course (TTC) in 1971, she was made director, a post she held for nearly 30 years. In addition, from 1981, a one-year course for ex-professional dancers was also offered.

The relocation of the Upper School to new premises in Covent Garden necessitated the TTC's closure in 2000, but, by that time, under Adams'

leadership, it had seen 324 graduates, most of whom were presented their diplomas by De Valois herself. This was as much a mark of her pride in the course as it was her affection and gratitude to Adams, whose dedication made a huge contribution to excellence in ballet training. In the years before her death, Adams was interviewed by Helen Whitton Bruce for her planned book on the history of the Yorkshire Ballet Seminars, and also participated in the RBS' conference, Ninette de Valois: Adventurous Traditionalist, in April 2011, where she was filmed coaching and teaching De Valois' work to RBS students.

Valerie Adams, born June 1, 1935; died October 16, 2019.

problem, and at the age of

Alicia Alonso



licia Alonso, the prima ballerina, founder and director of Ballet Nacional de Cuba, and one of the greatest figures in 20th century ballet, has died in Havana at the age of 98.

Born Alicia Ernestina de la Caridad del Cobre Martínez y del Hoyo to wealthy Cuban-Spanish parents in 1920 (her father was an army officer), she became devoted to ballet from the age of nine, when she commenced lessons at the Sociedad Pro-Arte Musical in the Cuban capital. Her teachers included Nikolai Yavorski, and as a teenager she danced Odette/Odile in a condensed version of *Swan Lake*.

She married her fellow student, Fernando Alonso, in 1937, and the couple travelled to New York to

continue their training and find work as professional dancers. Following the birth of her daughter, Laura, Alicia went to the School of American Ballet, where she studied under Anatole Vilzak, Ludmilla Schollar and Antony Tudor, and performed on Broadway, making her stage debut in Great Lady in 1938. A year later she was offered a contract to dance with George Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein's Ballet Caravan.

Alonso remained with that company until she joined Ballet Theater (now American Ballet Theatre) in 1940, dancing in works by Tudor and Eugene Loring, but her poor eyesight increasingly became a

20 she was diagnosed with severe retinal detachment. She underwent three operations on her eyes, during which time she was unable to leave her bed, told she would never regain her peripheral vision and that her sight would progressively deteriorate. Undeterred, Alonso returned to Ballet Theatre in 1943, making a sensational debut as Giselle (pictured left), stepping in at short notice for the injured Alicia Markova. She was helped around the stage by the others dancers, as well as specially placed lights to guide her. The role became one of Alonso's greatest, and one she performed until well into her sixties. \succ

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Obituaries

Although Alonso specialised in romantic roles, such as Mikhail Fokine's Les Sylphides, The Dying Swan and Le Spectre de la rose, and Anton Dolin's recreation of the famous Pas de Ouatre, she also performed in works by Balanchine, including Apollo, as well as creating his Theme and Variations in 1947 alongside Igor Youskevitch, with whom she formed a highly celebrated stage partnership. She also created the role of Lizzie Borden in Agnes de Mille's Fall River Legend, and danced in Tudor's Lilac Garden, Undertow, Gala Performance and Romeo and Juliet.

In 1948, whilst still dancing in New York, Alonso set up her own company in Havana, Ballet Alicia Alonso, but it was not until the Cuban Revolution in 1959, and at the personal invitation of the new communist leader, Fidel Castro, that she was able to form Ballet Nacional de Cuba (in 1957 and 1958 she had been the first western ballerina to perform with the Bolshoi and Kirov Ballets in the Soviet Union, and discovered more about their training methods). Castro offered Alonso a huge state subsidy, with which she was able to maintain the ballet company, and, most important, form the excellent Cuban National Ballet School that would ensure the continuation of the art form for the future.

The company danced all over the island, visiting farms, factories and other work places, building an audience of balletomanes and searching for potential talent for the school. Alonso choreographed and directed many of the productions herself, and oversaw a blossoming of many wonderful dancers who came up through the school, especially men such as Carlos Acosta and Jose Manuel Carreño, who have gone on to become important figures in world ballet in their own right.

The company also undertook extensive international touring, in part to raise funds when the



country was affected by US economic sanctions; Ballet Nacional de Cuba first came to the UK for the *Edinburgh* International Festival in 1979, where Alonso danced Giselle. and then the Dominion Theatre in London in 1984, where Alonso, then aged 64, danced in La Diva (pictured above), a tribute to Maria Callas. However, as it moved into the 21st century, the company appeared stuck in a time warp, a problem Alonso only began to address earlier this year by announcing the appointment of Viengsay Valdés as her successor.

National mourning was observed for Alonso's death, which included her lying in state in Havana. She is survived by her daughter, Laura, and her second husband, Pedro Simón. IONATHAN GRAY

Javier Torres writes: It is hard to say what Alicia Alonso meant to me in only a couple of sentences. She was more than a teacher; she was my mentor, guide and inspiration. She played a crucial role in who I am today, not just as a man and as an artist, but, more important, as a human being. She left us all not only with a dance legacy that will last forever, but a human legacy that showed us how the great use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast, and she did more than that. I wish I'd had the opportunity to say thank you, again, for everything she left us, for everything she shared, for the love and passion she put into the art form, and for educating us to love it as much as she did.

Alicia Alonso, born December 21, 1920; died October 17, 2019.

and interest in, many forms of culture and artistic enterprise, politics and all that makes life so fascinating."

Maria Fay became a British citizen in 1963, and her articles published in Dancing Times were compiled into the book, Mind over Body, published by A&C Black in 1997. Many tributes were paid to Fay on Facebook by her former students, including Josephine Jewkes, who commented: "Mentor, coach, teacher, 'guru', confidante, counsellor and dear friend: Maria was all these things to me – and to many others." ■ IG

Maria Fay, born July 20, 1928; died October 17, 2019.



aria Fay, the Hungarian-born dancer and teacher who had a long association with both the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) and The Royal Ballet School (RBS), and who also contributed numerous articles to this magazine, has died in a nursing home at the age of 91.

Born in Budapest in 1928, Fay studied in Hungary with Ferenc Nadasi, as well as several Russian teachers, including Vasily Vainonen and Igor Moiseyev. She joined the Hungarian State Ballet in 1948, where she subsequently became a principal dancer. Fleeing the country in 1956 with her husband, Peter, Fay came to London, teaching ballet and character dance in her own studio before becoming a member of staff at the RAD in 1958, and then a guest teacher at the RBS.

During the 1960s, Fay created a system of character dancing for the RAD (drawing on her experience with Moiseyev), and was in high demand internationally as a teacher and coach, working with the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas in Paris, the Royal Swedish Ballet, and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. She devised a floor barre used to aid dancers during injury, and also embraced the video age by producing a teaching video with the ballerina Eva Evdokimova in 1980.

In a heartfelt tribute published on the website of The Royal Ballet School, Amanda Maxwell wrote: "It is hard to encapsulate in words Maria Fay's glamour and force of personality. She taught with love, a ferocious eye and great energy, and yet by contrast could captivate the imagination and characterise a movement, be it classical or in any other genre, with the smallest gesture of wrist or angle of head. Her knowledge of music was encyclopaedic, as was her understanding of,



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A NEW FILM VERSION of Kenneth MacMillan's Romeo and Juliet is to be shown in cinemas across the UK for one night only on December 16. Titled Romeo and Juliet: Beyond Words and made by Footwork Films in association with The Royal Ballet, BBC Two, BalletBoyz and Manilla Productions, the film is directed by Michael Nunn and William Trevitt and stars Francesca Hayward, William Bracewell, Marcelino Sambé and Matthew Ball.

Nunn and Trevitt have taken the choreography out of the theatre and placed it in the streets of renaissance Verona, allowing viewers to experience a reimagining of Shakespeare's love story. The film will have an exclusive, one-night only release in Curzon cinemas throughout the UK on December 16, which will also include a post-screening Q&A with directors and cast. Talking about the film

Talking about the film, Nunn and Trevitt said:

"With Romeo and Juliet we're delighted to be working on a piece that has been a part of our lives since our first performances as professional dancers. It's a classic work, but it still allows for reinterpretation and reinvention. This has allowed us to take the celebrated stage production and transform it into a cinematic film, where the audience is no longer removed from the action but is instead able to experience it first hand. Viewers are able to get up close and personal with the archetypal characters and fully immerse themselves in the story without having the magic broken by set changes or the curtain coming down. The final product is not ballet or theatre as audiences know it, but a film in its own right; viewers will be fully swept away by the emotion of the story and come away with an experience like no other. Most important, this exciting project has allowed us to combine the two art forms we cherish most: film and dance." To find out which venues are participating, or to book tickets, visit curzoncinemas.com.

Other releases



★ DVD and Blu-ray discs New from **Opus Arte** is The Frederick Ashton Collection Volume Two, featuring The Royal Ballet in three of Ashton's most popular works – *Sylvia*, starring Darcey Bussell, Roberto Bolle and Thiago Soares; La Fille mal gardée with Marianela Nuñez and Carlos Acosta; and Tales of Beatrix Potter, featuring Laura Morera, Steven McRae and Gary Avis.

Also new on the **CMajor** label is a recording of Gluck's opera *Orpheus and Eurydice*, directed and choreographed by John Neumeier and performed by the Lyric Opera of Chicago and The Joffrey Ballet. It was recorded live in 2018.



New books

IT'S NEARLY CHRISTMAS, THE time of

year new books on dance usually get published. There are some interesting titles just out that might make the present you were thinking of buying someone just that little bit different. From **University Press of Florida** comes Marianne Preger-Simon's *Dancing with Merce Cunningham,* a memoir recounting her experiences performing with the Cunningham company after World War II. Dollie Henry and Paul Ienkins' The Essential Guide to Jazz Dance, published by Crowood Press, is just that - essential for anyone thinking about a career in that style of dance. In My Life with Michael, published by The Book Guild, Gary Lloyd writes about ten years of working on Thriller Live!, the stage musical based on the life of Michael Jackson.



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Sugar Plum lunch bag

This delightful Sugar Plum lunch bag by Capezio is available from Porselli Dancewear at dancewear. co.uk for £11.55.

Diva Costumes

This children's character costume from Diva Costumes comprises a black velvet bodice and attached briefs, with a white sequinned front and a lilac satin bow and trim. The white layered tutu with black sparkly top layer is available in children's sizes from extra-small to extra-large from dtx. divacostumes.co.uk. The headpiece is also included.

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Children's backpack

This children's backpack from Roch Valley (RVBNST) features an adorable dancing bunny. Perfectly proportioned, it measures 25 by 22cm, and has adjustable shoulder straps and a zip fastening, with two external mesh pockets. Ideal for dance class essentials, find it at your local Roch Valley specialist.

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The original Rumpf Dancesneaker (1500) is made of black or white leather with a lightweight, durable polyurethane split sole that allows dancers to turn on any surface. This sneaker provides great lateral stability and support, with excellent shock absorption, boxed toe, padded collar and tongue. Visit rumpf.net.



Photographs: Top left Courtesy of ROCH VALLEY. Bottom left Courtesy of RUMPF. Top right Courtesy of the ROYAL ACADEMY OF DANCE. Bottom right Courtesy of TENDU.

RAD ballet shoe necklace

To commemorate its centenary year, the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) has developed a range of products including this sterling silver ballet shoe pendant coated in 18-carat rose gold and encrusted with cubic zirconia stones. Available from January, this is one of four options to choose from, all delicately presented in the RAD's unique centenary branded gift box. Prices from £50 at radenterprises.co.uk/gifts-accessories/jewellery.



Stability ball and yoga mats Tendu has two new accessories to add to the range for use in Progressing Ballet Technique (PBT) classes. The latest products are the stability ball and yoga mats. Stability balls are available in two sizes – 55 and 65cm. The yoga mat is well padded at 6mm. They can be purchased through your local Tendu stockist – tendu.co.uk – or online at balletpro.co.uk.

Education Auditions, performances, funding, summer schools and awards



Monica Mason appointed vice president of RAD

Dame Monica Mason (pictured above), former director of The Royal Ballet and chair of the Dance Professionals Fund, has been appointed a vice president of the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD). She spoke passionately about its future: "My association with the Royal Academy of Dance goes back to the start of my involvement with dance with once-a-week lessons as a four-year-old in South Africa. I swapped sides, however, when my teacher retired and I continued my studies in the Cecchetti method. This meant there was a great gap in my experience of the RAD method and it was not until I was invited to join the adjudication panel at the Genée International Ballet Competition in Antwerp that my association resumed.

"With subsequent involvement in the competitions in London, and more recently in Toronto, I began to appreciate the enormity of the RAD as an organisation worldwide and how brilliantly it is run.

"Earlier this summer I was invited to become the chair of the Centenary Appeals Committee to help to raise funds for the development of a new site as the headquarters of the RAD. I felt honoured to take this on and when I saw the plans for the building I was reminded of the excitement The Royal Ballet felt when the Royal Opera House was redeveloped, providing the dancers with a new home in Covent Garden. Just as we in The Royal Ballet saw the advantages that greater space and better facilities would offer us, so it will be for everyone at the Academy.

"The new building will meet the need to have greater relevance with the public, to become part of the community and to create a new and real home for dance in London. The RAD already offers "Silver Swans" classes and many and various adult and children's activities, but this new site will be somewhere that local people can come to and find familiar. It will offer them the chance to have contact with dance in an easy and friendly way and it will be a place next door to where they live. With a fresh approach to communication and becoming a part of the community, the RAD can help to break down prejudices and outdated ideas about dance that still remain. In our one life we need to help children develop the talents they have to the best of their abilities. The RAD can shape and enhance lives through dance, offering the opportunity to build confidence and a sense of value as an individual. We now know how much movement and exercise can impact on our wellbeing and providing those opportunities and communicating that message is something that the RAD is committed to.

"There are so many wonderful teachers and support staff who devote their energies to the RAD and who make this extraordinary organisation what it is. They deserve a new home to be able to further their plans and dreams for the future. As a recently appointed vice-president, I want to help in whatever way I can to make this a reality and to help secure their future.

"Fabulous accommodation will not be taken for granted; in the words of Dame Margot Fonteyn, 'It's not the building that matters, it's what happens inside that is important.' This new building will offer the opportunity to many thousands of young people to discover the wonderful world of dance – something about which I am passionate, having spent my life in it."

London College reunion

In 1944 Anita Heyworth, one of the great pioneers of dance education in the UK, founded, along with Grace Cone, what was to become The London College of Dance... and on September 1, 2019, 50 former students and staff from across the decades (pictured below) came to Fairley House School in Lambeth, to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the college.

It was a special, joyous occasion, ably organised

by Patricia Snowdon, the chair of London College of Dance Network (The Old Students' Association of London College of Dance (and Drama)) and assisted by members of the committee, plus staff from the school, family and friends. Miraculously, the sun shone and so everyone was welcomed with a glass of prosecco and had the opportunity to meet and chat in the beautiful Italianate garden of the school. Years melted away as friendships were renewed and memories and stories shared of our broad and innovative training.

After a delicious buffet lunch a group of current students from the Creative Academy, Slough, provided entertainment with a beautiful duet and challenging contemporary dance sequences that are part of its Degree Course Contemporary Dance Module. It was a delight to see young, committed dancers performing for us and acted as a reminder of the high standards that London College set and achieved over the years for both dance and dance teaching.

Jill Henderson then gave an informal talk, "Reminiscences of London





College", where she described her experiences both as student and lecturer. She spoke with humour of the various buildings that housed the college during her career, from the beautiful to the less than salubrious, but most important she gave an insight to the amazing resilience, strength and determination of Anita Heyworth and her courage in masterminding the survival of the college during difficult, uncertain times.

The AGM followed, after which tea and cakes were served, allowing further mingling and chat of shared memories and career experiences.

Although the college ceased to exist in the early 2000s, ex-students and staff are still bound together. This is due to our shared experience of the ethos and spirit of the college which created camaraderie and high aesthetic values, all of which emanated from Anita Heyworth.

The next reunion will be held on September 5, 2020, and if you are a former student or member of staff and would be interested in joining us for this or future reunions, or if you are interested in the association and/or our partnership with the Creative Academy, which helps keep the name and work of London College alive, please contact us at lcdn@ live.com via our Facebook page: London College of Dance (and Drama). We would love to hear from you. ANNE ROONEY

Bintley and bbodance

David Bintley, choreographer and former artistic director of Birmingham Royal Ballet, has become vice president of bbodance, which this year celebrates its 90th anniversary. He agreed to join the organisation after watching bbodance students perform at its biggest annual event, Dance Days. "After that performance, I'm going to have to say yes," he stated. As vice president, he will support the activity and development of bbodance at an international level.

Barbara Sharples Award

The 2019 Barbara Sharples International Choreographic Awards, now in their ninth year, took place at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester on September 26. The awards aim to encourage, showcase and reward choreographers' talents, and they go from strength to strength. Without doubt, the reason for its success lies in the drive of its exceptional leader, Barbara Sharples, who was in attendance as one of the judges, along with IDTA director Phil Winston and David Needham, director of dance at The Hammond School in Chester.

Following 24 excellent performances from the



finalists, the judges retired to deliberate the results whilst the audience watched a cabaret that included Ruby Nuttall in a charming classical piece, Grace Hawksworth, winner of Miss Dance of Great Britain 2019, and Harrison Vaughan, the Theatre Dance Council International's British Modern Champion, in a clown solo.

This year's competition included, for only the second time, an additional Cabaret Award (with a prize of £500), targeted at performances that embrace a more musical theatre expression, which was won by **Georgina Rixon**. The winner of the £1,000 Choreographic Award went to **Rebecca Lynas** for *Tarzan* (pictured bottom of page), with **Emily Charlton** runner up, and third place to **Hollie Sorelle**.

Congratulations to Miss Sharples and her dedicated team on producing another excellent evening. I look forward to the tenth anniversary of the awards, which take place on September 19, 2020. MICHAEL KING

Dance School of the Year 2019



THE RESULTS OF DANCE SCHOOL OF THE YEAR 2019 were announced at a gala dinner and award ceremony held at the Woodbury Park Hotel, deep in the Devon countryside, on October 25, with many of the winners and sponsors in attendance, including Dancing Times editor, Jonathan Gray. Organised by businesswoman Anne Walker, founder of International Dance Supplies and a former dance teacher herself, this year's awards were selected from the entries by judges Sarah Dickinson ARAD, and Sarah Cressall. The winners (pictured above) were as follows: Under 100 Students - Nicky Jenks School of Dance (Gold), Live 4 Dancing (Silver), BrosnaCan Academy (Bronze); 100 to 200 Students - Wendy Sandercock Academy of Dance (Gold), Aimee's Dance Academy (Silver), X-Academy School of Performing Arts (Bronze); 200 to 300 Students - First Position School of Dance (Gold); The Vincent Martin School of Dance and Musical Theatre Ltd (Silver), The Dance Class (Ontario) (Bronze); 300 plus Students - ACS Dance Centre (Gold), Fiona Henderson School of Dance (Silver), Platinum Performing Arts (Bronze). The RAD Project B Award for Innovation in the teaching of Boys Dance was won by Natalie Vinson School of Dance and Drama, and the Award for Innovation went to Abstract Dance and Performing Arts. Finally, the award for the Overall Winner of the Dance School of the Year 2019 was taken by Basingstoke Academy of Dancing. Congratulations to all. The evening concluded with dancing for all to the music of the live band, Limited Company.

Photographs: Top STU BOOTH. Bottom MIKE PARK - WWW.MIKEPARKPHOTOGRAPHY.COM.

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Ballets, battles and bullets

An wa dance, which was gradually All incorporated within their per

weapon training exercises.

Debbie Malina considers some of the many links to be found between dance and the military with the pyrrhike regarded as falling into the former category: "In these dances, which portray fine physiques and noble

hroughout the course of history people have continually fought with one another, and in every part of the world dance has been closely connected with warfare; it would seem the two factors are hardwired into society in equal measure.

Early war dances

War dances have featured in most forms of tribal life, where dancing before a battle was seen as a way of firing up the combatants by provoking a level of ferocity and inspiring a sense of unity. Following a victorious outcome, dancing would have been part of the celebration, playing out the valour and heroism of the warriors involved.

Some of the earliest recorded war dances were those used by the ancient Greeks and in neighbouring countries. Between the 10th and 7th centuries BCE, the pyrrhike and other war dances were well known among people of the Greek world. Soldiers were taught to dance as this provided a level of fitness and flexibility, which was necessary as battles were fought in single combat; agility could make the difference between dodging a spear and finding yourself impaled on it.

Plato regarded dancing as a form of training as he explains in his work *The Laws*, where he describes dances of war and peace, as falling into the former category: "In these dances, which portray fine physiques and noble characters, the correct posture is maintained if the body is kept erect in a state of vigorous tension with limbs extended nearly straight. A posture with the opposite characteristics we reject as not correct."¹

The Spartans adopted the pyrrhike as their national dance. This was embraced by the warrior elite controlling the state, viewing it as a means to help produce soldiers who were physically fit and skilled at handling arms. Very young boys were taught the

Below: Rosie Kay Dance Company rehearsing 5 Soldiers.

As warfare evolved, one-to-one fighting was no longer used; instead of dancing and dodging, battle required lines of heavily armed infantrymen standing firm and pushing the enemy back with their shields. Dance became less relevant in military training, except in Sparta, which maintained its tradition of teaching the pyrrhike, long after the city-state ceased to be a military power. War dances gradually developed into a form of entertainment, with performers staging interpretative dances related to myths surrounding the god Dionysus. Public games staged in Rome during the time of the Empire, often included dancers who had been brought to amuse the crowds as a prelude to the

subsequent, more violent, forms of entertainment.

The Haka

Anyone who has ever watched the New Zealand All Blacks rugby team performing the haka, before the start of a game, will have gained an impression of the power and impact a war dance can project. The team challenges its opponents by a mix of foot-stamping, eye bulging, poking out the tongue and rhythmic body slapping, all accompanied by a sequence of shouted chants.

"Haka" means "dance" or "song accompanied by dance" and is integral to the history and culture of the Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand. When used on the battlefield, its role was to intimidate the enemy and boost the tribe's morale. This was a fierce display of their pride, strength and unity and the words of the haka often describe events in their history.

Performed by women as well as men, the haka \succ



Photograph: Courtesy of ROSIE KAY DANCE COMPANY.

Dance and the military

has always been far more than a war dance; it is used during a range of ceremonies and celebrations to honour guests and show the importance of a particular occasion. Schools in New Zealand perform their own versions of the haka – learning the routine is seen to be an important part of the curriculum for boys and girls.

The tradition of performing the haka at the start of an international game began during a tour of the New Zealand Native football team in the 1888-1889 season, and was used by The Original All Blacks rugby team in 1905 while touring the UK, France and the US. Ka Mate is the haka most often performed by the All Blacks when playing against international teams, and is a ceremonial haka. They added to their repertoire in 2005 when Kapa o Pango was written for them celebrating the team and the importance of the traditional Maori culture. A good haka is thought to lead to a better performance for the players on the pitch.

Highland dancing

Every spring and summer, Highland games are held in Scotland and also around the world – from Australia and the US to various European countries including France and the Netherlands. These gatherings provide an opportunity to watch or participate in sword dancing, caber tossing, hammer throwing and many other traditional activities.

Over many centuries kings and clan chiefs regarded Highland games as a means to select their best men at arms, and sword dancing was an integral part of this. The discipline required for performing the dances



allowed men to demonstrate their skill, agility, strength and stamina.

Sword dancing has a long history, originating with a myth that Ghillie Callum, a Celtic prince who fought against one of Macbeth's chiefs at the Battle of Dunsinar in 1054, crossed his sword over that of the defeated chief and proceeded to dance exultantly over both. In subsequent battles this became a tradition among highland warriors, with clansmen crossing their swords and dancing over and around them. Completing the dance without touching the blades was seen as a good omen and the opposite was equally true if they did.

Interest in Highland sword dancing waned after the Battle of Culloden. The Dress Act of 1746 made it illegal for men to wear kilts or carry swords until its repeal in 1782. It was not until the mid 19th century, when Queen Victoria took an interest in Scotland, that there was a revival of the Highland games. Since then, many of the traditional sword dances have disappeared, and Highland dancing has also moved from being an exclusively male pursuit to one that is predominantly female.

Military pageant

Throughout the month of August the Esplanade of Edinburgh Castle plays host to the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, an event drawing large audiences with its display of almost 1,000 performers involving massed pipes and drums, military bands, dancers and musicians.

Lieutenant Colonel George Malcolm produced the first public Edinburgh military tatoo in 1949. Entitled Something About a *Soldier,* this took place in the Princes Street Garden, and aimed to bring to life the army's contribution to the Edinburgh International Festival. Its popularity today is such that as well as being televised the Tattoo also tours several countries each year. An important element of the production is the Tattoo Dance Company, a Scottish Highland Dance group performing traditional and contemporary styles.

Trooping the Colour is equally impressive, as



a highly choreographed display that requires rehearsing to a level of fine precision. The ceremony is held every June at Horseguards parade to celebrate the Queen's official birthday, comprising 1,400 troops, 400 musicians and 200 horses.

With roots in the Restoration period, the pageant marks the fact that every regiment within the British Army has a unique flag featuring a different colour and design. These "colours" were used during battles so troops could spot their regiment easily and stay close together.

Ballets, battles and bullets

Officers would regularly march in front of the troops waving the flags, enabling the soldiers to recognise individual flags belonging to each regiment – known as "trooping".

Keeping the troops entertained

During the early years of World War II it was recognised that maintaining morale was important for all the troops. This led to Basil Dean, a theatre and film impresario, and Leslie Henson, an actor and comedian, setting up the Entertainments National



Service Association (ENSA), to provide entertainment for the armed forces.

Sadler's Wells Ballet was involved with this work. In 1942 the company alternated between 11-week seasons in London with 11 weeks touring the country as part of the war effort, performing in theatres, munitions factories and garrison towns.

When the company made a tour of Belgium and Paris in early 1945, it was the largest group ENSA had ever sent out and the first to play for civilian audiences as well as military personnel. After the war had ended, it also toured Germany and Poland during the autumn that year.²

When the US entered the War in 1941, songwriter Irving Berlin wanted to become involved with the war effort. He was fortunate in finding Robert Sidney, a soldier who was a dancer and choreographer and had appeared in small parts in Broadway musicals. Berlin worked with Sidney, and in July 1942 opened a show on Broadway This is the Army with a cast of 300 professional show business people gathered from the army's draftees. It proved to be a massive hit, raising \$2 million for the army fund.

Berlin had originally planned for the show to disband after making a tour of the UK. General Eisenhower saw the show in London, however, and decided it could boost the morale of the troops as much as it had done for civilians. During two years the performers toured Italy, North Africa and the Pacific playing for more than one million GIs, who were treated to a Broadway revue with full orchestra, acrobats, vaudeville and comedians.

Changing the stereotype

Trooper Alexander Smith is serving in the army with the Queen's Dragoon Guards, and he is also a trained dancer having studied ballet, tap, jazz and contemporary dance. Now in his early twenties, Alexander took dance lessons from the age of six; he was often the only boy in the class and, faced with little competition, strove to be more flexible than the girls.

Having attended a performing arts school in Cornwall, he was awarded a place at Northern Ballet School in 2015. Halfway through the course, he had



Above: The Edinburgh Military Tattoo. Left and below: Rosie Kay Dance Company rehearsing 5 Soldiers with Trooper Alexander Smith in the centre.

concerns about his work prospects as a dancer, leading him to make the decision to leave, and opted to join the army instead.

At first he decided against mentioning his dance training to the other soldiers, not wanting them to have any preconceived ideas. Then he auditioned for a role in 5 Soldiers -The Body is the Frontline, a contemporary dance production created by choreographer Rosie Kay, looking at aspects of military life such as training, friendships and the stress of conflict. On learning he had been successful Alexander told his fellow soldiers.

"Nothing really changed, because I had already earned the respect of everyone, because I was fit and a good soldier, kept my head down and did what I had to do. Most of them were quite jealous. There has been no teasing." He emphasised the army had been very supportive in giving him time off to take part in rehearsals and production.

Some of his squadron came to watch him perform. "I wanted them to feel as if it was real, as real as it is in camp. It isn't a ballet, it's a piece of dance recreating the life of a soldier in camp and on tour. It isn't about boys jumping around, it is men being men on stage."

He feels that dancers and soldiers have quite a lot in common, with self-discipline an important factor for both, as well as a determination to succeed. They each require high levels of fitness, so he was well prepared for the physical tests he had to undergo. "I think dance carried me through selection and then basic training because I was quite physically fit. I could carry the weight because I was used to lifting girls."

In rehearsals he found himself using muscles he had not used for a while. "I think I'll go back to the army a fitter soldier, to be honest".³

Alexander returned to his regiment in April, when the Rosie Kay Dance Company's production completed its tour around the UK, Denmark and the US.

NOTES

1. *The Laws* by Plato. Translated by Trevor J Saunders, published by Penguin, London, 1970.

2. Royal Opera House archives. Cristina Franchi (former Exhibitions and Heritage Publications manager), October 18, 2012.

3. Lucy Wallis, BBC Stories, February 17, 2019.





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Inclusion of dates is dependent upon information received In addition, we have details of some advance programmes from overseas/UK companies and UK tours. For more details (subject to availability) email as above or call 020 7250 3006.

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DECEMBER 4: ABERYSTWYTH, Arts Centre 7: STOURBRIDGE TOWN HALL

Ballet Theatre UK

www.ballettheatreuk.com UK tour of The Wizard of Oz (ch: Moore). See website for booking details DECEMBER 1: NEWBRIDGE MEMO 4: BASINGSTOKE, The Haymarket 7: MONMOUTH, The Blake Theatre 12: WORKINGTON, Carnegie Theatre 14: LEICESTER, The Y Theatre 15: HINCKLEY, Concordia Theatre 20-22: NEWBURY, Arlington Arts Centre 23-24: WATFORD COLOSSEUM 28-30: BRIGHTON, Dome **IANUARY 2020** 9: ALNWICK PLAYHOUSE 11: HERTFORD THEATRE 12: BILLINGHAM, Forum Theatre 15: WAKEFIELD, Theatre Royal 16: HORSHAM, The Capitol Theatre 17: MIDDLESBROUGH THEATRE 18: **KETTERING**, The Lighthouse Theatre 19: BARROW-IN-FURNESS, The Forum 22: COVENTRY, Warwick Arts Centre 23: EXETER, Barnfield Theatre 25: NEWARK-ON-TRENT, Newark Palace Theatre 26: SOUTH SHIELDS, **Customs House** 29: GRAVESEND, The Woodville 30: BLYTH, Phoenix Theatre 31: LANCASTER, Grand Theatre FEBRUARY 2020 2: MARGATE, Theatre Royal

Birmingham Royal Ballet

www.brb.org.uk UK tour of The Nutcracker (prod: Wright) NOVEMBER 22-Dec 14: BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME Tel: 0844 338 5000 DECEMBER 28-31: LONDON, Royal Albert Hall Tel: 020 7589 8212

Curtains

www.kenwright.com. UK tour of the Kander and Ebb stage musical, directed by Paul Foster and choreographed by Alistair David DECEMBER 3-7: STOKE-ON-TRENT,

Regent Theatre Tel: **0844 871 7649 IANUARY 2020** 14-18: LONDON, New Wimbledon Theatre Tel: 0844 871 7646 21-25: SUNDERLAND EMPIRE Tel: 0844 871 3022 28-Feb 1: LIVERPOOL, Empire Tel: 08448 713 017 Tour continues - we hold details

English National Ballet

www.ballet.org.uk UK tour of The Nutcracker (ch: Eagling) DECEMBER 11-Jan 5: LONDON COLISEUM Tel: 020 7845 9300 Casting: DECEMBER 11,15M,18E,21M,31M: Takahashi, Frola, Martin 12,19E,27M: Khaniukova, Cirio, McCormick 13,20,29M: Kase, Mack, Souza 14M,18M,27E: Oliveira, Forbat, Dowden 14E,17,30E: Khaniukova, Caley, Arrieta 17M,21E,30M: Kanehara, McCormick, Woolhouse 19M.26: Hawes, Arrieta. Carratalá Coloma 20M,28M: Velicu, Saruhashi, Astley 22M,24M,28E: Cojocaru, Hernández, Forbat **JANUARY 2020** 2: Khaniukova, Cirio, McCormick 3M: Cojocaru, Hernández, Forbat 4M: Velicu, Saruhashi, Astley 4E: Takahashi, Frola, Martin 5M: Oliveira, Forbat, Dowden

UK tour of Le Corsaire (prod: Holmes) JANUARY 2020 8-14: LONDON COLISEUM Tel: 020 7845 9300

Mame

UK tour of the stage musical directed and choreographed by Nick Winston JANUARY 2020 7-11: NORTHAMPTON, Royal and Derngate Tel: 01604 624 811 21-25: SALISBURY PLAYHOUSE Tel: 01722 320 333

Mark Bruce Company

www.markbrucecompany.com Tour of Return to Heaven (ch: Bruce). See website for booking details JANUARY 2020 30-Feb 1: FROME, Merlin Theatre FEBRUARY 2020 5-8: BRISTOL, Tobacco Factory 12: POOLE, Lighthouse 28-Mar 14: LONDON. Wilton's Music Hall **MARCH 2020** Tour continues - we hold details

Nativity! The Musical

www.nativitythemusical.com UK tour of the stage musical based on the 2009 film. Choreography by Andrew Wright. See website for booking details

On stage this month

DECEMBER 11-29: LONDON, Eventim **Apollo Hammersmith**

New Adventures

www.new-adventures.net Tour of The Red Shoes (ch: Bourne). See website for booking details DECEMBER 3-Jan 19: LONDON, Sadler's Wells JANUARY 2020 28-Feb 1: MILTON **KEYNES THEATRE** FEBRUARY 2020 4-8: WOKING, New Victoria Theatre 11-15: BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME 18-22: NORWICH, Theatre Royal 25-29: LIVERPOOL EMPIRE Tour continues - we hold details

Northern Ballet

www.northernballet.com UK tour of Cinderella (ch: Nixon) DECEMBER 17-Jan 2: LEEDS, Grand Theatre Tel: 0844 848 2700 Tour continues - we hold details

50th Anniversary Celebration Gala **IANUARY 2020** 4: LEEDS, Grand Theatre Tel: 0844 848 2700

Phantom of the Opera

www.uktour. thephantomoftheopera.com UK tour of the West End musical with choreography by Gillian Lynne. See website for booking details FEBRUARY 2020 24-Mar 21: LEICESTER, Curve Tour continues - we hold details

Protein Dance

www.proteindance.co.uk UK tour of Luca Silvestrini's The Little Prince. See website for booking details DECEMBER 5-7: NEWCASTLE, Dance City 17-24: LONDON, The Place

Rambert

www.rambert.org.uk Aisha and Abhaya (ch: Eyal) JANUARY 2020 21-Feb 9: LONDON, Linbury Studio Theatre, Royal Opera House Tel: 020 7304 4000

The Royal Ballet LONDON | Royal Opera House Tel: 020 7304 4000 | www.roh.org.uk DECEMBER 2: The Sleeping Beauty (prod: Mason and Newton after De Valois) (Osipova, Hallberg) 4: Coppélia (prod: De Valois) (Hayward, Campbell, Avis) 5M: The Sleeping Beauty (O'Sullivan, Hay) 5E: The Sleeping Beauty (Lamb, Hirano) 7M: The Sleeping Beauty 7E: The Sleeping Beauty (Naghdi, Ball) 10: Coppélia (Nuñez,



Muntagirov, Avis) 11: The Sleeping Beauty (as Dec 5E) 12: The Sleeping Beauty (as Dec 5M) 14M: **The Sleeping Beauty** (Cuthbertson, Bonelli) 14E: The Sleeping Beauty (as Dec 5E) 18M: Concerto (ch: MacMillan) (Stix-Brunell, Richardson, Lamb, Edmonds, Heap), Enigma Variations (ch: Ashton) (McNally, Gartside, Hinkis, Bracewell), Raymonda Act III (prod: Nureyev) (Cuthbertson, Bonelli) 18E: Concerto (Takada, Sambé, Naghdi, Hirano, Kaneko), Enigma Variations (Morera, Saunders, O'Sullivan, Ball), Raymonda Act III (Nuñez, Muntagirov) 20M: Concerto (as Dec 18M), Enigma Variations (Arestis, Avis, Naghdi, Campbell), Raymonda Act III (as Dec 18M) 20E: Concerto (as Dec 18E), Enigma Variations (as Dec 18M), Raymonda Act III (as Dec 18E) 23M: Coppélia (Morera, Campbell, Gartside) 23E: Coppélia (Naghdi, Ball, Gartside) 28M: Coppélia (O'Sullivan, Sambé, Mosley) 28E: Coppélia (as Dec 23E) 30M: **Coppélia** (Magri, Corrales, Whitehead) 30E: Coppélia (as Dec 23M) 31M: **Coppélia** (Takada, Bracewell, Whitehead) 31E: Coppélia (Choe, Acri, Mosley) JANUARY 2020 2: Coppélia (prod: De Valois) (Takada, Bracewell, Whitehead) 3: Coppélia (O'Sullivan, Sambé, Mosley) 4M: **Coppélia** (Magri, Corrales, Whitehead) 4E: Coppélia (Hayward, Campbell, Avis) 7: Coppélia (Morera, Campbell, Gartside) 9: The Sleeping Beauty (Nuñez, Muntagirov) 11M: The Sleeping Beauty 11E: The Sleeping Beauty (Cuthbertson, Bonelli) 15: The Sleeping Beauty (as Jan 9) 16: The Sleeping Beauty (as Jan 11E) 18M: Onegin (ch: Cranko) (Cuthbertson, Soares, Hinkis, Donnelly, Mock) 18E: Onegin (Osipova, Muntagirov, Hayward, Ball, Avis) 21: Onegin (Nuñez, Hirano, Takada, Edmonds, Clarke) 24: Onegin (Naghdi, Bonelli, O'Sullivan, Sissens, Gartside) FEBRUARY 2020 7: **Onegin** (Osipova, Muntagirov, Hayward, Ball, Avis) 8: **Onegin** (Nuñez, Hirano, Takada, Edmonds, Clarke) 12: Onegin (as Feb 7) 17: The Cellist (ch: Marston), Dances at a Gathering (ch: Robbins) 18: The Cellist, Dances at a Gathering 21: Onegin (Naghdi, Bonelli, O'Sullivan, Sissens, Gartside) 22: **Onegin** (Cuthbertson, Soares, Hinkis, Donnelly, Mock) 24: Onegin (as Feb 21) 25: The Cellist, Dances at a Gathering 27: Onegin (as Feb 8) 28: The Cellist, Dances at a Gathering

29: Onegin (as Feb 22)

Scottish Ballet

www.scottishballet.co.uk Tour of The Snow Queen (ch: Hampson) DECEMBER 7-29: EDINBURGH. Festival Theatre Tel: 0131 529 6000 JANUARY 2020 3-19: GLASGOW, Theatre Royal Tel: 0800 912 6971 22-26: ABERDEEN. His Majesty's Theatre Tel: 01224 641 122 29-Feb 2: INVERNESS, Eden Court Tel: 01463 234 234 Tour continues - we hold details

CINEMA

Bolshoi Ballet Cinema Season

www.picturehouses.co.uk www.cineworld.co.uk Screenings of live and recorded ballet performances across the UK. See website for venue details DECEMBER 15: The Nutcracker (ch: Grigorovich) JANUARY 2020 26: Giselle (prod: Ratmansky)

BFI Southbank

Belvedere Road, South Bank, London SE1 8XT www.bfi.org.uk | Tel: 020 7928 3232 The BFI is currently hosting *BFI* Musicals! The Greatest Show on Screen, running until January 2020. Check website for programmes

Royal Opera House cinema season 2019/2020

www.roh.org.uk/cinema Screenings of live and recorded performances across the UK from the Royal Opera House DECEMBER 10: Coppélia (prod: De Valois). Live 17: The Nutcracker (prod: Wright) JANUARY 2020 16: The Sleeping Beauty (prod: De Valois). Live

EVENTS

Gresham College

www.gresham.ac.uk. Barnards Inn Hall, Holborn London EC1N 2HH Tel: 020 7831 0575 Marina Frolova-Walker, Gresham professor of Music, delivers free public lectures on the subject of Serge Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes. All lectures commence at 6pm and will also be streamlined live on the Gresham College website. Contact the College for tickets JANUARY 2020 21: The Rite of Spring: A Failure and a Triumph FEBRUARY 2020 18: The Ballets Russes: Playing with the Past We hoild details of further lectures during April and May

MOVE IT 2020

www.moveitdance.co.uk ExCel London March 13-15, 2020 (see page 92)

FESTIVALS

Arts Festivals 2019

More than 100 Arts Festivals are taking place all year, all over

the UK. For more information please contact: British Arts Festivals Association, 5th Floor, 12-14 Mason's Avenue, London, EC2V 5BB Tel: 020 7796 4904 www.artsfestivals.co.uk

VENUES

EASTERN ENGLAND

Jerwood DanceHouse IPSWICH | Tel: 01473 295 230 www.danceeast.co.uk DECEMBER 13-17: Ballo Arthur Pita in Ten Sorry Tales (ch: Pita)

Saffron Hall

SAFFRON WALDEN Tel: 0845 548 7650 www.saffronhall.com DECEMBER 21-22: Désirée Ballantyne in The Nutcracker and I

LONDON

Barbican Centre Silk Street, EC2 Tel: 0845 120 7500 www.barbican.org.uk THE PIT DECEMBER Until Dec 1: Heavy handed, we crush the moment (ch: Johnson-Small)

Lilian Baylis Studio

Sadler's Wells, Rosebery Avenue, EC1 Tel: 020 7863 8000 www.sadlerswells.com DECEMBER 11-29: The Little Match Girl (ch: Pita)

London Coliseum

St Martin's Lane, WC2 Tel: 020 7845 9300 www.eno.org DECEMBER 3-5: Svetlana Zakharova 11-Jan 5: English National Ballet in The Nutcracker (ch: Eagling) JANUARY 2020 8-14: English National Ballet in Le Corsaire (prod: Holmes) 17-18: English National Ballet 70th Anniversary Gala 26: Ballet Icons Gala 2020

Peacock Theatre

Portugal Street, WC2 Tel: 020 7863 8222 www.sadlerswells.com DECEMBER Until Jan 5: The Snowman (ch: North)

The Place

Duke's Road, WC1 Tel: 020 7121 1100 www.theplace.org.uk DECEMBER 17-24: Protein in The Little Prince (ch: Silvestrini)

Royal Opera House

Covent Garden, WC2 Tel: 020 7304 4000 | www.roh.org.uk For Main Stage see The Royal Ballet LINBURY THEATRE JANUARY 2020 21-Feb 9: Rambert in Aisha and Abhaya (ch: Eyal)

Sadler's Wells Rosebery Avenue, EC1

Tel: 020 7863 8000 www.sadlerswells.com DECEMBER 3-Jan 19: New Adventures in The Red Shoes (ch: Bourne)

MIDLANDS

Birmingham Hippodrome BIRMINGHAM | Tel: 0844 338 5000

www.birminghamhippodrome.com DECEMBER Until Dec 14: Birmingham Royal Ballet in The Nutcracker (prod: Wright)

Buxton Opera House BUXTON | Tel: 0845 127 2190 www.buxtonoperahouse.org.uk JANUARY 2020 2-4: Russian State Ballet of Siberia

Royal and Derngate

NORTHAMPTON Tel: 01604 624 811 www.royalandderngate.co.uk JANUARY 2020 24: Anton Du Beke and Erin Boag in Dance Those Magical Movies 27-29: Russian State Ballet of Siberia

NORTH EAST

Dance City Theatre

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE Tel: 0191 261 0505 www.dancecity.co.uk DECEMBER 5-7: Protein in The Little Prince (ch: Silvestrini)

NORTH WEST

Grand Theatre, Blackpool BLACKPOOL | Tel: 01253 290 190

www.blackpoolgrand.co.uk JANUARY 2020 17-19: Russian State Ballet of Siberia

Storeyhouse

CHESTER | Tel: 0844 815 7202 www.storeyhouse.com JANUARY 2020 30-Feb 1: St Petersburg Classic Ballet in Swan Lake

SCOTLAND

Festival Theatre EDINBURGH | Tel: 0131 529 6000 www.edtheatres.com DECEMBER 7-29: Scottish Ballet in

The Snow Queen (ch: Hampson) JANUARY 2020 29: Scottish Dance Theatre in Process Day (ch: Eval, Behar), The Circle (ch: Gat)

SOUTH EAST

The Churchill

BROMLEY | Tel: 0844 871 7620 www.churchilltheatre.co.uk **JANUARY 2020** 22-25: St Petersburg Ballet

Glive

GUILDFORD | Tel: 01483 369 350 www.glive.co.uk DECEMBER 26-28: St Petersburg Classic Ballet

The Hawth

CRAWLEY | Tel: 01293 553 636 www.hawth.co.uk **JANUARY 2020**

Calendar

20-21: St Petersburg Classic Ballet

Watford Colosseum WATFORD | Tel: 0845 075 3993

www.watfordcolosseum.co.uk DECEMBER 23-24: Ballet Theatre UK in The Wizard of Oz (ch: Moore)

SOUTH WEST

The Lighthouse POOLE | Tel: 0844 406 8666 www.lighthousepoole.co.uk JANUARY 2020 15-18: St Petersburg Classic Ballet

Pavilion Dance

BOURNEMOUTH Tel: 01202 203 630 www.paviliondance.org.uk DECEMBER 2020 5-6: Old Kent Road in Oscillate (ch: Rathgeb, Torres) 20-21: Unchenna Dance in Hansel and Gretel (ch: Igbokwe)

WALES

Wales Millennium Centre

CARDIFF | Tel: 0870 040 2000 www.wmc.org.uk DONALD GORDON THEATRE DECEMBER Until Jan 4: Les Misérables JANUARY 2020 8-18: The King and I 21-26: Six

YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE

Leeds Playhouse LEEDS | Tel: 0113 213 7700 www.leedsplayhouse.org.uk DECEMBER Until Jan 25: The Wizard of Oz

Sheffield Lyceum SHEFFIELD | Tel: 0114 249 6000 www.sheffieldtheatres.co.uk JANUARY 2020 7-11: St Petersburg Classic Ballet in The Nutcracker

LONDON MUSICALS

9 to 5: The Musical

www.9to5themusical.co.uk SAVOY THEATRE, London WC2 Tel: 0844 871 7687, Prices: £20 - £99.50 ch: Stevens. Mats Wed & Sat

Amélie The Musical

www.ameliethemusical.com THE OTHER PALACE, London SW1 Tel: 0207 087 7900, Prices: £29.50 - £65 dir: Fentiman. Mats Thu & Sat Limited season until Feb 1

& Iuliet

www.andjulietthemusical.co.uk SHAFTESBURY THEATRE. London WC2 Tel: 020 7379 5399 Prices: £22.50 - £99.50 ch: Weber. Mats Thu & Sat

The Book of Mormon

www.bookofmormonlondon.com PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE, London W1 Tel: 0844 482 5110. Prices: £39.50 - £97 ch: Nicholaw. Mats Wed & Sat

Come From Away

www.comefromawaylondon.co.uk PHOENIX THEATRE, London WC2 Tel: **0844 871 7615**, Prices: **£25 - £95** dir: Ashley. Mats Wed & Sat

Curtains

www.curtainsmusical.com WYNDHAM'S THEATRE, London WC2 Tel: 0844 482 5120. Prices: From £17.50, ch: David Limited season from Dec 13 to Jan 11

Dear Evan Hansen

www.dearevanhansen.com/london NOËL COWARD THEATRE. London WC2 Tel: 0344 482 5151, Prices: £27.50 - £177.50 dir: Mefford. Mats Wed & Sat

Everybody's Talking

About Jamie www.everybodystalkingabout jamie.co.uk , APOLLO THEATRE, London W1 Tel: 0330 333 4809, Prices: £20 - £95 ch: Prince. Mats Wed & Sat

Hamilton

www.hamiltonthemusical.co.uk VICTORIA PALACE THEATRE, London SW1 Tel: 0844 248 5000, Prices: £37.50 - £200 ch: Blankenbuehler. Mats Thu & Sat

The Lion King

www.thelionking.co.uk LYCEUM THEATRE, London WC2 Tel: 0844 871 3000, Prices: £20 - £52.50 ch: Fagan. Mats Wed, Sat & Sun

Mamma Mia!

www.mamma-mia.com NOVELLO THEATRE, London WC2 Tel: 0844 482 5115, Prices: £20 - £95 ch: Van Laast. Mats Thur & Sat

Mary Poppins

www.delfontmackintosh.co.uk PRINCE EDWARD THEATRE, London W1D Tel: 0844 482 5151, Prices: £27.50 - £127.50 ch: Bourne, Mear. Mats Thur, Sat & Sun

Matilda The Musical

www.matildathemusical.com CAMBRIDGE THEATRE, London WC2 Tel: 0844 412 4652, Prices: £20 - £62.50 ch: Darling. Mats Wed, Sat & Sun

Les Misérables

www.lesmis.com **GIELGUD THEATRE, London W1** Tel: 0844 482 5151, Prices: £15 - £55 Mats Wed & Sat

The Phantom of the Opera

www.thephantomoftheopera.com HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE, London SW1 Tel: 0870 890 1106, Prices: £20 - £55 ch: Lynne. Mats Tue & Sat

School of Rock

www.uk.schoolofrockthemusical.com GILLIAN LYNNE THEATRE. London WC2 Tel: 020 7087 7750, Prices: £15 - £150 ch: Hunter. Mats Thu, Sat & Sun

Thriller Live

www.thrillerlive.co.uk LYRIC THEATRE, London W1 Tel: 0844 482 9674, Prices: £26 - £58 ch: Lloyd. Mats Sat & Sun

Tina: The Musical www.tinathemusical.com ALDWYCH THEATRE. London WC2 Tel: 0845 200 7981, Prices: £10 - £129 ch: Van Laast. Mats Thu & Sat

Waitress

www.waitressthemusical.co.uk ADELPHI THEATRE, London WC2 Tel: 020 7087 7754, Prices: £29.50 - £135 ch: Brock. Mats Wed & Sat

White Christmas

www.whitechristmasthemusical.co.uk DOMINION THEATRE, London W1T Tel: 0345 200 7982, Prices: £25 - £175 ch: Mear. Mats Thu & Sat Limited season until Jan 4

Wicked: The Untold Story

of the Witches of Oz www.wickedthemusical.co.uk APOLLO VICTORIA THEATRE, London SW1 Tel: 0870 400 0889, Prices: £45 - £55 Mats Wed & Sat

OVERSEAS

Resident/Guest performances are listed alphabetically by country, then by company name.

ARGENTINA

Ballet del Teatro Argentino de La Plata

www.gba.gob.ar/teatroargentino/ noticias/temporada LA PLATA, Teatro Argentino La Sala Ginastera See website for booking details DECEMBER 19-22: Raymonda (prod: Miranda)

Ballet Estable del Teatro Colón

www.teatrocolon.org.ar/en **BUENOS AIRES, Teatro Colón** DECEMBER 17-22,26-29: Swan Lake (prod: Galizzi)

AUSTRALIA

The Australian Ballet

www.australianballet.com.au SYDNEY, Joan Sutherland Theatre, Sydney Opera House DECEMBER Until Dec 18: The Nutcracker (prod: Wright)

Queensland Ballet

www.queenslandballet.com.au BRISBANE, Queensland Performing Arts Centre DECEMBER 13-21: The Nutcracker (ch: Stevenson)

AUSTRIA

Vienna State Ballet

www.volksoper.at www.wiener-staatsoper.at VIENNA, Volksoper (VO) and Staatsoper (SO) DECEMBER 2,5,7,9: Jewels (ch: Balanchine) (SO)

6,10,15,27: Coppélia (prod: Lacotte) (VO) 12-15: Vienna State Ballet Academy (SO) 21,26,28-29: Le Corsaire (prod: Legris) (SO) JANUARY 2020 3: Le Corsaire (SO) 7: Coppélia (VO) 8,11,13,17,23,26: Onegin (ch: Cranko) (SO) 22,28: Carmina Burana (ch: Orlic), Afternoon of a Faun(ch: Nebvla). Bolero (ch: Lukács) (VO) 27,29: Jewels (SO)

BELGIUM

Dance at La Monnaie/ De Munt

www.lamonnaie.be or www.demunt.be BRUSSELS, La Monnaie/De Munt DECEMBER 11-14: Rosas in Zeitigung (ch: De Keersmaeker, Van Ho) JANUARY 2020 29-Feb 9: Rosas in Achterland (ch: De Keersmaeker)

Royal Ballet Flanders

www.balletvlaanderen.be ANTWERP, Theater 't Eilandje DECEMBER 14,18-22: Choreolab

ANTWERP, Stadsschouwburg **JANUARY 2020** 25-26,29-31: RASA [after La Bayadère] (ch: Proietto)

CANADA

Danse Danse

www.dansedanse.ca MONTRÉAL, Théâtre Maisonneuve, Place des Arts DECEMBER 4-7: Animals of Distinction 10-14: Caroline Laurin-Beaucage JANUARY 2020 30-Feb 1: Compagnie Marie Chouinard

Le Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal

www.grandsballets.com MONTRÉAL, Place des Arts DECEMBER 12-30: The Nutcracker (ch: Nault)

National Ballet of Canada

www.national.ballet.ca **TORONTO**, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts DECEMBER 12-Jan 4: The Nutcracker (prod: Kudelka)

Royal Winnipeg Ballet

www.rwb.org WINNIPEG, Centennial Concert Hall DECEMBER 19-28: The Nutcracker (ch: Yordanova, Menon)

CHILE

Ballet de Santiago

www.municipal.cl SANTIAGO, Teatro Municipal de Santiago DECEMBER 2: La Sylphide (prod: Campusano) 19,21,23,26: The Nutcracker (ch: Pinto)

CUBA

National Ballet of Cuba

www.balletcuba.cult.cu HAVANA, Gran Teatro DECEMBER 1: Swan Lake (prod: Alonso) 13-15,19-22,26-29: The Nutcracker (prod: Alonso) JANUARY 2020 3-5: The Nutcracker

CZECH REPUBLIC

Czech National Ballet

www.narodni-divadlo.cz PRAGUE, National Theatre (N), Estates Theatre (E), DECEMBER 1,4,5M&E,7M&E,14M&E: Leonce and Lena (ch: Spuck) (E) 10,11M,12,17M&E,19M&E,21M&E,22 25M&E,27M&E,29M&E,31M: The Nutcracker - A Christmas Carol (ch: Vàmos) (N) JANUARY 2020 9: The Nutcracker - A Christmas Carol (N) 14-15,18: Leonce and Lena (E)

DENMARK

Royal Danish Ballet www.kglteater.dk COPENHAGEN, Royal Theatre Old Stage DECEMBER 4-8,11-15,18-22: The Nutcracker (ch: Balanchine) JANUARY 2020 12,15,17: August 2.0. (ch: Bjørn, Hübbe), Ballo della regina (ch: Balanchine), Raymonda Act III (ch: Petipa) 16: Hübberiet 1

ESTONIA

Estonian National Ballet

www.opera.ee TALLINN, National Opera DECEMBER 1M&E,22M: Alice in Wonderland (ch: Schiavoni) 5,6M,8M&E,11M&E,14M&E,20M&E, 28M&E: The Nutcracker (ch: Stevenson) JANUARY 2020 5M&E,12M&E,19,22,26: The Nutcracker 10: Alice in Wonderland 30: A Streetcar Named Desire (ch: Lopez Ochoa)

FINLAND

Finnish National Ballet

www.opera.fi HELSINKI, Opera House DECEMBER 3-5,7M&E,11,13,14M,17,19,21M&E: Pippi Longstocking (ch: Isberg) 10-14,17-20: Finnish National Ballet School in The Nutcracker (ch: Jacobs) JANUARY 2020 18,23,25M,30: La Bayadère (prod: Makarova) 22,24: Finnish National Ballet School

FRANCE

Ballet de l'Opéra National de Bordeaux

www.opera-bordeaux.com BORDEAUX, Opéra National de Bordeaux DECEMBER 10-13,15M,16-20,22M,23M&E,26-27, 28M&E,30,31M: **Cinderella** (ch: Bintley)

Ballet du Capitole

www.theatre-du-capitole.fr TOULOUSE, Théâtre du Capitole DECEMBER 20-21,22M,25M,26-28,29M: The Nutcracker (ch: Belarbi)

Ballet Nice Méditerranée

www.opera-nice.org NICE, Opéra Nice Côte d'Azur DECEMBER 21,22M,24M,27-28,29M,31: En Sol (ch: Robbins), Pas de dieux (ch: Kelly)

Chaillot, Théâtre national de la Danse

www.theatre-chaillot.fr PARIS, Théâtre National de la Danse DECEMBER 5-10: Système Castafiore in Anthologie du cauchemar 13-Jan 11: Company Gilles Jobin and Artanim in VR_I 13-19: Malandain Ballet Biarritz in La Pastorale JANUARY 2020 8-11: Emanuel Gat in WORKS 22-25: Brigitte Seth and Roser Montlló Guberna in Family machine 26-28: David Coria / David Lagos in ;Fandango! 29-30: Ana Morales 30-31: Olga Pericet

Festival d'Automne à Paris 2019

www.festival-automne.com PARIS, Centquatre-Paris (CQP), CND Centre national de la danse (CND), Maison de la musique de Nanterre (MMN), Théâtre du Beauvaisis - Scène nationale (TB), Théâtre Paul Eluard (TPE), La Villette (V) See website for booking details DECEMBER 3-4: CCN - Ballet de Lorraine in RainForest (ch: Cunningham), Cela nous concerne tous (This concerns all of us) (ch: Gutierrez) (TB) 4-7: Rambert in Event (ch: Cunningham) (V) 10-12: Volmir Cordeiro in Trottoir (ch: Cordeiro) (CND) 12: CCN - Ballet de Lorraine in RainForest, Cela nous concerne tous (This concerns all of us) (TPE) 15: CCN - Ballet de Lorraine in RainForest, Cela nous concerne tous (This concerns all of us) (MMN) 18-21: Ballet de l'Opéra de Lyon in Winterbranch (ch: Cunningham), TURNING motion sickness version (ch: Sciarroni) (CQP)

Paris Opéra Ballet

www.operadeparis.fr PARIS, Palais Garnier (PG), Opera Bastille (OB) DECEMBER 2-3,5-6,8M,9-10,12-13,15M,16, 18-19,21M&E,22M,24-25,27-31: Raymonda (prod: Nureyev) (OB) 6,8M,9-12,14-15,17-18,20-24,25M&E, 27,28M&E,29M,30-31: Le Parc (ch: Preljocaj) (PG) JANUARY 2020 18,20-23,26,29: Rosas in L'Après-midi d'un faune (ch: De Keersmaeker), The Paris Opéra in L'Enfant et les Sortilèges (ch: Hosseinpour) (PG) 31: **Giselle** (prod: Bart, Polyakov) **(PG)**

Théâtre des Champs-Élysées

www.theatrechampselysees.fr PARIS, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées DECEMBER 16-18: Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal in Dance Me - Leonard Cohen (ch: Foniadakis, López Ochoa, Rustem) 24-29: Kiev National Ballet in Swan Lake (prod: Kovtun)

Théâtre du Châtelet

www.chatelet.com PARIS, Théâtre du Châtelet DECEMBER Until Jan 1: An American in Paris (ch: Wheeldon)

GERMANY

Aalto Ballet

www.theater-essen.de ESSEN, Aalto Theater DECEMBER 6,8,14: The Sleeping Beauty (prod: Van Cauwenberg) 21-22,26-27: The Nutcracker (ch: Van Cauwenbergh) 30: Rock around Barock (ch: Van Cauwenbergh) JANUARY 2020 1,11: Rock around Barock 4: The Nutcracker 17,19,29: The Sleeping Beauty 26: Onegin (ch: Cranko)

Ballett Am Rhein

www.ballettamrhein.de DUISBERG, Theater Duisberg DECEMBER 6,11,14: Swan Lake (prod: Schläpfer) JANUARY 2020 10,12,19,25: Square Dance (ch: Balanchine), Symphonic Poem (ch: Şucheană), Reformation Symphony (ch: Schläpfer)

DÜSSELDORF,

Opernhaus Düsseldorf DECEMBER 19,28: Forgotten Land (ch: Kylián), Lamentation (ch: Graham), Steps in the Street (ch: Graham), Cello Concerto (ch: Schläpfer) 25: Swan Lake JANUARY 2020 1: Swan Lake 16-17: Forgotten Land, Lamentation, Steps in the Street, Cello Concerto

Bavarian State Ballet

www.staatsballett.de MUNICH, Nationaltheater München DECEMBER 4: Spartacus (ch: Grigorovich) 15,17,18M,20,23,25,29M&E: The Nutcracker (ch: Neumeier) JANUARY 2020 2: The Nutcracker 19,25: Spartacus

Festspiele Ludwigshafen

www.theater-im-pfalzbau.de LUDWIGSHAFEN, Theater im Pfaltzbau DECEMBER 3: Scapino Ballet in Holland, Chat Noir (all ch: Wubbe) 6-7: São Paulo Dance Company 21-22: Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal in Dance me (ch: Foniadakis, Lopez Ochoa, Rustem) JANUARY 2020 17-18: Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater II 24-25: Opus 14 (ch: Attou)

Hamburg Ballet www.hamburgballett.de HAMBURG, Opera House DECEMBER 1,3,5,7,12-13: The Glass Menagerie (ch: Neumeier) 17-18,20,30: The Nutcracker (ch: Neumeier) 23,25,28: Christmas Oratorio I-VI (ch: Neumeier) JANUARY 2020 1,5M&E,12: The Nutcracker 9-10,18,23: Bernstein Dances (ch: Neumeier) 26,30-31: The Glass Menagerie

Leipzig Ballet

www.oper-leipzig.de LEIPZIG, Opera House DECEMBER 1,4,5,15,19: The Sleeping Beauty (prod: Verbruggen) 7,10M,21,23,25,28: The Nutcracker (ch: Dury) JANUARY 2020 1: The Nutcracker 24: The Sleeping Beauty

Semperoper Ballet

www.semperoper.de DRESDEN, Sächsische Staatsoper, Semperoper DECEMBER 5,8,10,12,15: Iphigenie auf Tauris (ch: Bausch) 22M&E,23M&E,25M&E,26M&E: The Nutcracker (ch: Watkin) JANUARY 2020 10,12,17,18M&E,19M&E: The Nutcracker

Staatsballett Berlin

www.staatsballett-berlin.de BERLIN, Deutsche Oper (DO), Komische Oper (KO), Staatsoper (SO), Volksbühne Berlin (V) DECEMBER 4,11,13,17,22M&E,26M&E,30: The Nutcracker (prod: Medvedev, Burlaka) (DO) 8-9,12,18-19: new Ekman work, new Eyal work (KO) 10,27: Plateau Effect (ch: van Dinther) (KO) 17-19: Sunny (ch: Gat) (V) 23,25M,29M: La Bayadère (prod: Ratmansky) (SO) JANUARY 2020 1,3,10: The Nutcracker 3-5: Sunny (V) 5M&E,7,9,11,31: Theme and Variations (ch: Balanchine), The Second Detail (ch: Forsythe), Oval (ch: Siegal) (SO) 24,28,30: Plateau Effect (KO)

Stuttgart Ballet

www.stuttgart-ballet.de STUTTGART, Opera House (OH), Schauspielhaus (S) DECEMBER 3-4.20-21: new Adorisio work, new Heise work, new Novitzky work (S) 7,8E: Hikarizatto (ch: Galili), Out of Breath (ch: Inger), Kaash (ch: Khan) (OH) 8M: Christmas Benefit Matinée with the John Cranko School (OH) 18,22M&E,29M&E,30M: The Sleeping Beauty (prod: Haydée) (OH) JANUARY 2020 3,5M&E,18,24,26M&E,31:

The Sleeping Beauty (OH) 10-11: new Adorisio work, new Heise work, new Novitzky work (S)

Tanzforum

www.forum.ludwigsburg.de/ startseite/kultur/tanzforum.html LUDWIGSBURG, Forum and Schlosspark DECEMBER 13: Richard Siegal / **Ballet of Difference IANUARY 2020** 10: Danser Casa

Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch

www.pina-bausch.de WUPPERTAL, Opera House JANUARY 2020 24-26,28-29,31: Bluebeard (ch: Bausch)

HOLLAND

Dutch National Ballet

www.het-nationale-ballet.nl AMSTERDAM, Het Muziektheater DECEMBER 14-Jan 1: The Nutcracker and the Mouseking (ch: Eagling, Van Schayk)

HONG KONG

Hong Kong Ballet www.hkballet.com HONG KONG, Hong Kong Cultural Centre DECEMBER 20-28: The Nutcracker (ch: Kohler)

HUNGARY

Hungarian National Ballet

www.opera.hu **BUDAPEST**, Erkel Theatre DECEMBER 1M&E,4-6,7M&E,8,11-12,14M, 15M&E,17,19,22M,23M,24M,25M, 26M&E,27M&E,29M&E: The Nutcracker (prod: Eagling, Solymosi) JANUARY 2020 4M,5M: The Nutcracker 18,24,25M&E,26M&E,28-29: Giselle (prod: Lavrovsky)

ITALY

Ballet of Teatro alla Scala

www.teatroallascala.org MILAN, Teatro alla Scala DECEMBER 14,17-18,21,29-30: Sylvia (ch: Legris) JANUARY 2020 3,11,14: Sylvia 24-25,28,31: Adagio Hammerklavier (ch: Van Manen), Kammerballet (ch: Van Manen), Sarcasmen (ch: Van Manen), Les Combat des anges (ch: Petiti), Le Jeune Homme et la Mort (ch: Petit)

Ballet of Teatro di San Carlo

www.teatrosancarlo.it NAPLES. Teatro di San Carlo DECEMBER 21.22.27.28M&E: The Nutcracker (ch: Picone) **JANUARY 2020** 2,3M&E,4M&E,5M: The Nutcracker

Teatro dell'Opera di Roma

www.operaroma.it ROME, Teatro Costanzi DECEMBER 31: Swan Lake (prod: Pech) JANUARY 2020

The National Ballet of Japan www.nntt.jac.go.jp/english TOKYO, New National Theatre DECEMBER 14-22: The Nutcracker and the Mouse King (ch: Eagling)

2-3,4M&E,5M,7-8: Swan Lake

30,31M&E: Glass Pieces,

MFXICO

Ballet Folklórico de México www.balletfolkloricodemexico.com.mx

MEXICO CITY, Palacio de Bellas Artes The company performs on Wednesdays and Sundays every week throughout the year. Check website for details

MONACO

Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo

www.balletsdemontecarlo.com MONTE CARLO, Atelier des Ballets de Monte-Carlo (A); Grimaldi Forum (GF) DECEMBER 4-6: Imprévus 2 (ch: Maillot) (A) 27-Jan 5: **Coppél-i.A** (ch: Maillot) (**GF**)

NEW ZEALAND

Royal New Zealand Ballet

www.nzballet.org.nz Tour of Hansel and Gretel (ch: Prior) DECEMBER 5-7: AUCKLAND, ASB Theatre, Aotea Centre 13-14: AUCKLAND, **Bruce Mason Theatre**

NORWAY

Norwegian National Ballet

www.operaen.no OSLO, Opera House DECEMBER 2-4,6M&E,9-11,14M&E,16, 18M&E,20,21M&E: The Nutcracker (ch: Boyadjiev) 6-7,10-13: Jingle Horse! A Christmas special (ch: Øyen) JANUARY 2020 16-17,19,24,26: Ibsen's Ghosts (ch: Espejord) 25,28,31: Hedda Gabler (ch: Aune) 30-31: Jo Strømgren Kompani in The Breakdown (ch: Strømgren)

OMAN

Royal Opera House

www.rohmuscat.org.om MUSCAT, Royal Opera House DECEMBER 27-28: Sukhishvili Georgian National Ballet **IANUARY 2020** 23-25: The Bolshoi Ballet in Onegin (ch: Cranko)

PERU

Gran Teatro Nacional

www.granteatronacional.pe LIMA, Gran Teatro Nacional DECEMBER 5-15: National Ballet of Peru in A Midsummer Night's Dream (ch: Gamonet)

RUSSIA

Bolshoi Ballet www.bolshoi.ru

MOSCOW, Bolshoi Theatre DECEMBER 4,6,7M&E: La Bayadère (prod: Grigorovich) 10,11-12: Coppélia (prod: Vikharev) 13-15: Carmen Suite (ch: Alonso), Etudes (ch: Lander) 18-19: Petrushka (ch: Clug), Artifact Suite (ch: Forsythe) 21M&E: Symphony in C (ch: Balanchine), Gaîté Parisienne (ch: Béjart) 27,28M&E,29M&E,30M&E,31M: The Nutcracker (ch: Grigorovich)

Diaghilev PS: International Festival of Arts St Petersburg

www.diaghilev-ps.ru Festival celebrating Diaghilev's Ballets Russes through ballet, opera, music, exhibitions and publishing, with a focus on new work ST PETERSBURG, Boris Eifman Dance Theatre DECEMBER 1: Mats Ek and Ana Laguna in Memory (ch: Ek)

Maryinsky Ballet www.mariinsky.ru

ST PETERSBURG, Maryinsky Theatre 1M: The Nutcracker (ch: Simonov) (Lukina, Konovalov) 1E: The Nutcracker (Martvnvuk, Caixeta) 4: The Nutcracker (Martynyuk, Sergeev) 5: Giselle (ch: Perrot, Coralli, Petipa) (Novikova, Kim) 6: The Nutcracker (ch: Vainonen) (Somova, Shklyarov) 7: The Nutcracker (Skorik, Stepin) 8M: Romeo and Juliet (ch: Lavrovsky) (Batoeva, Zverev) 8E: Romeo and Juliet (Kondaurova, Belyakov) 9: The Nutcracker (Nagahisa, Parish) 11: Ballet No 2, Pavlovsk, Le Divertissement du roi (all ch: Petrov) 12,22M,29M: Vaganova Ballet Academy in The Nutcracker 14: Sylvia (ch: Ashton) (Somova, Stepin) 15M: Sylvia (Batoeva, Askerov) 15E: Sylvia (Tereshkina, Kim) 17: Raymonda (prod: K Sergeyev) (Kondaurova, Yermakov) 18: Raymonda (Khoreva, Parish) 19: Swan Lake (prod: K Sergeyev) (Novikova, Shklyarov) 20: La Sylphide (ch: Bournonville) (Osmolkina, Caixeta) 21M: **Cinderella** (ch: Ratmansky) (Yevseyeva, Yermakov) 21E: Cinderella (Shirinkina, Stepin) 22E: The Nutcracker (Matvienko, Parish) 23: Le Corsaire (ch: after Petipa) (Khoreva, Yermakov, Caixeta) 24: The Nutcracker (Osmolkina, Sergeev) 26: The Nutcracker (Yevseyeva, Zaleyev) 27: The Nutcracker (Shirinkina, Caixeta) 28M: The Little Humpbacked Horse (ch: Ratmansky) (Timofeyev, Martynyuk) 28E: The Little Humpbacked Horse (Sergeev, Matvienko) 29E: The Nutcracker (Osmolkina) 30: Swan Lake (Kondaurova,

Askerov)

31M: The Nutcracker (Nagahisa, Stepin) 31E: The Nutcracker (Khoreva, Kim)

Mikhailovsky Ballet

www.mikhailovsky.ru ST PETERSBURG Mikhailovsky Theatre DECEMBER 3: Le Corsaire (prod: Ruzimatov) (Vasiliev) 4,15M&E: Le Corsaire 6,7M&E,18-19: La Bayadère (prod: Duato) 10: Spartacus (ch: Kovtun) 11: Spartacus (Vasiliev) 13,14M&E: Cinderella (ch: Zakharov) 20,21M&E,22M&E,24-27,28M&E, 29M&E.30M&E: The Nutracker (ch: Duato)

Stanislavsky Ballet

www.stanmus.com MOSCOW, Stanislavsky Theatre DECEMBER 8-9: Swan Lake (prod: Bourmeister) 13,28M&E,29M&E,30M&E,31M&E: The Nutcracker (ch: Vainonen) 18-19: Don Quixote (prod: Nureyev) 22-23: The Snow Maiden (ch: Bourmeister) **JANUARY 2020** 2M&E,3M&E,4M&E: The Nutcracker 6M&E: The Snow Maiden 19-20: Giselle (prod: Hilaire) 24-25: La Esmeralda (ch: Bourmeister) 30-31: Manon (ch: MacMillan)

SINGAPORE

Singapore Dance Theatre www.singaporedancetheatre.com SINGAPORE, Esplanade Theatre DECEMBER 5-8: Swan Lake (ch: Schergen)

SPAIN

Teatro Real

www.teatro-real.com MADRID, Teatro Real The theatre presents a season of visiting dance companies each season DECEMBER 2: Igor Moiseyev Dance Company 28-30: Ballet Nacional de España in Electra (ch: Najarro)

SWEDEN

Royal Swedish Ballet

www.operan.se STOCKHOLM, Royal Opera House DECEMBER 6,7M&E,10-11,14M&E,16,19-20,30: The Nutcracker (ch: Isberg) **JANUARY 2020** 3,4M&E,6M,11M&E,17,18M&E,22,24: The Nutcracker

SWITZERLAND

Zürich Ballet

www.zuercherballett.ch ZÜRICH, Opera House DECEMBER 1,7,11,14,22,29: Messa da Requiem (ch: Spuck) JANUARY 2020 11,17,26M,30-31: Approximate Sonata 2016, One Flat Thing (all ch: Forsythe)

USA

Alvin Ailey American Dance Théatre www.alvinailey.org



NEW YORK, City Center, 131 West 55th St, New York, NY 10019 DECEMBER 4: Opening Night Gala 5: Divining (ch: Jamison), Cry (ch: Ailey), The Call (ch: Brown), Revelations (ch: Ailey) 6: Night Creature (ch: Ailey), Ella (ch: Battle), Greenwood (ch: Byrd), Revelations 7M: Divining, Ella, Ounce of Faith (ch: Moultrie), Revelations 7E: The Call, In/Side (ch: Battle), Greenwood, Revelations 8M: Ounce of Faith, Greenwood, Revelations 8E,15E,26: Lazarus (ch: Harris), Revelations 10: Memoria (ch: Ailey), Ode (ch: Roberts), Revelations 11: Divining, Ella, Lazarus 12,14M: Night Creature, Cry, Memoria, Revelations 13: The Call, BUSK (ch: Barton), Revelations 14E: BUSK, Ode, Ounce of Faith 15M: The Call, Ella, Ounce of Faith, Revelations 17: City of Rain (ch: Brown), Mass (ch: Battle), Ella, Revelations 18: Divining, Cry, Fandango (ch: Lubovitch), Revelations 19,22M,28M: Highlights of Ailey Classics, Revelations 20,28E: Greenwood, Fandango, City of Rain, BUSK 21M,24: Mass, In/Side (ch: Battle), A Case of You (ch: Jamison), Divining, Revelations 21E,27: BUSK, A Case of You, City of Rain, EN (ch: Lang) 22E: Special Tribute to Masazumi Chaya, Revelations 25: Ounce of Faith, EN, Revelations 29M: Ounce of Faith, Ode, Revelations 29E: EN, The Call, In/Side, Revelations 31: Ounce of Faith, Greenwood, Revelations JANUARY 2020 1: Ode, Fandango, City of Rain, BUSK 2: Ode, Fandango, Mass, Revelations 3: Highlights of Ailey Classics, Revelations (ch: Ailey) 4M: Mass, In/Side, A Case of You, Divining, Revelations 4E: Divining, Fandango, Greenwood, Ode 5M: BUSK, A Case of You, City of Rain, EN

American Ballet Theatre

5E: Season Highlights

www.abt.org SEGERSTROM CENTER FOR THE ARTS, Costa Mesa, California DECEMBER 13,14M&E,15M&E,18-20,21M&E, 22M&E: The Nutcracker (ch: Ratmansky)

Atlanta Ballet

www.atlantaballet.com ATLANTA, The Fox Theater DECEMBER 7-24: The Nutcracker (ch: Possokhov)

Ballet Arizona

www.balletaz.org PHOENIX, Symphony Hall DECEMBER 13-24: The Nutcracker (ch: Andersen)

Ballet West

www.balletwest.org SALT LAKE CITY, Janet Quinney Lawson Capitol Theatre DECEMBER 7-24: The Nutcracker (ch: Christensen)

Boston Ballet

www.bostonballet.org BOSTON OPERA HOUSE DECEMBER Until Dec 29: The Nutcracker (ch: Nissinen)

BAM Brooklyn Academy of Music

www.bam.org BROOKLYN, 30 Lafayette Ave, NY 11217 DECEMBER 4-7: A.D, Colored (ch: Marshall)

Charlotte Ballet

www.charlotteballet.org CHARLOTTE, North Carolina Belk Theater DECEMBER 6-23: The Nutcracker (ch: Bonnefoux)

Dorrance Dance

www.dorrancedance.com Tour of ETM: Double Down (ch: Dorrance). See website for booking details JANUARY 2020 31: AUBURN, Auburn University, Woltosz Theatre

Houston Ballet

www.houstonballet.org HOUSTON, Wortham Theater Center DECEMBER Until Dec 29: The Nutcracker (ch: Welch) 6: Margaret Alkek Williams Jubilee of Dance 50th Anniversary

Joffrey Ballet

www.joffrey.org CHICAGO, Auditorium Theatre DECEMBER Until Dec 29: The Nutcracker (ch: Wheeldon)

John F Kennedy Center

for the Performing Arts www.kennedy-center.org WASHINGTÓN, DC, 2700 F Street NW Washington, DC 20566 Eisenhower Theater (ET), Opera House (OH) DECEMBER 6-7: Maya Beiser, Wendy Whelan, Lucinda Childs and David Lang in The Day (ch: Childs) (ET) JANUARY 2020 21-26: New Adventures in Swan Lake (ch: Bourne) (OH) 24-25: Vuyani Dance Theatre in Cion: Requiem of Ravel's Boléro (ch: Maqoma) (ET) 28-29: National Ballet of Canada in The Vertiginous Thrill of Exactitude (ch: Forsythe), Petite Mort (ch: Kylián), Piano Concerto #1 (ch: Ratmansky) (OH) 30-Feb 2: National Ballet of Canada in The Sleeping Beauty (prod: Nureyev) (OH)

Joyce Theater

www.joyce.org NEW YORK, 175 Eighth Avenue at 19th Street, New York, NY 1001 DECEMBER 3-8: And Still You Must Swing (ch: Dormeshia) 10-15: Pam Tanowitz Dance in New Work for Goldberg Variations (ch: Tanowitz) 17-Jan 5: Dorrance Dance in Nutcracker Suite, All Good Things Come to an End (all ch: Dorrance) JANUARY 2020 7-12: American Dance Platform, with performances by Rennie Harris Puremovement, Urban Bush Women, Limón Dance Company, Bruce Wood Dance, Embodiment Project, Rosie Herrera Dance Theater, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, and ODC/Dance 15-18: Cion: Requiem of Ravel's Boléro (ch: Maqoma) 21-Feb 2: Complexions Contemporary Ballet

Juilliard School

www.juilliard.edu NEW YORK, 155 West 65th St DECEMBER 11-13: New Dances: new works by Amy Hall Garner, Jamar Roberts, Andrea Miller and Stephen Petronio

Mark Morris Dance Group

www.markmorrisdancegroup.org NEW YORK, Mark Morris Dance Center, 3 Lafayette Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11217 Tour of The Hard Nut (ch: Morris). See website fro booking details DECEMBER 6-15: SEATTLE, Paramount Theater

Tour of **Pepperland** (ch: Morris). See website for booking details **JANUARY 2020** 25: MINNEAPOLIS, Carlson Family Stage 30-31: HOUSTON, Cullen Theater

Miami City Ballet

www.miamicityballet.org MIAMI, Adrienne Arsht Center (AC), FORT LAUDERDALE, Broward Center (BC), WEST PALM **BEACH, Kravis Center (KC)** DECEMBER 13-22: The Nutcracker (ch: Balanchine) (AC) 27-29: The Nutcracker (KC) JANUARY 2020 10-12: I'm Old Fashioned (ch: Robbins), This Bitter Earth (ch: Wheeldon), Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux (ch: Balanchine), Symphonic Dances (ch: Ratmansky) (AC) 17-19: I'm Old Fashioned, This Bitter Earth, Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux, Symphonic Dances (KC) 25-26: I'm Old Fashioned, This Bitter Earth, Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux, Symphonic Dances (BC)

New York City Ballet

www.nycballet.com NEW YORK, David H Koch Theater DECEMBER Until Jan 5: The Nutcracker (ch: Balanchine) JANUARY 2020 21,23,26: Danses concertantes, Monumentum Pro Gesualdo, Movements for Piano and Orchestra, Stravinsky Violin Concerto (all ch: Balanchine) 22,24,25M&E,28-29: Allegro Brillante (ch: Balanchine), La Source (ch: Balanchine), Firebird (ch: Balanchine, Robbins) 30-31: **Bright** (ch: Peck), **Polyphonia** (ch: Wheeldon), **new Ratmansky work**

New York City Center

www.nycitycenter.org NEW YORK, 131 W 55th St DECEMBER 4-Jan 5: Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater JANUARY 2020 30-Feb 9: New Adventures in Swan Lake (ch: Bourne)

Oregon Ballet Theatre

www.obt.org PORTLAND, Keller Auditorium DECEMBER 7-26: The Nutcracker (ch: Balanchine)

Orlando Ballet

www.orlandoballet.org ORLANDO, Dr Phillips Center for the Performing Arts DECEMBER 13-15,20-23: The Nutcracker (ch: Hill)

Pacific Northwest Ballet

www.pnb.org SEATTLE, Marion Oliver McCaw Hall DECEMBER Until Dec 28: The Nutcracker (ch: Balanchine) JANUARY 2020 31-Feb 9: Cinderella (ch: Stowell)

Pennsylvania Ballet

www.paballet.org PHILADELPHIA, Academy of Music DECEMBER 6-31: The Nutcracker (ch: Balanchine)

San Francisco Ballet

www.sfballet.org SAN FRANCISCO, War Memorial Opera House DECEMBER 11-29: The Nutcracker (ch: Tomasson) JANUARY 2020 21-Feb 2: Cinderella (ch: Wheeldon)

Sarasota Ballet

www.sarasotaballet.org SARASOTA, Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall (VW), FSU Center for the Performing Arts (FSU) DECEMBER 20-21: John Ringling's Circus Nutcracker (ch: Hart) (VW) JANUARY 2020 31-Feb 3: Les Rendezvous (ch: Ashton), Brandenburgs (ch: Taylor), I Napoletani (ch: Walsh) (FSU)

Tulsa Ballet

www.tulsaballet.com TULSA, Performing Arts Center DECEMBER 7-8,13-14,21-22: The Nutcracker (ch: Angelini)

The Washington Ballet

www.washingtonballet.org WASHINGTON DC, Warner Theatre DECEMBER Until Dec 29: The Nutcracker (ch: Webre)

URUGUAY

Ballet Nacional Sodre

www.bns.gub.uy MONTEVIDEO, Auditorio Nacional del Sodre DECEMBER 12-28: Manon (ch: MacMillan)

Listings



Dance schools and classes are listed by region. We have concentrated on schools offering ballroom/Latin or social dance forms. Please contact the school directly for more details, and contact us on **editorial@ dancing-times.co.uk** if you would like your school to be included here. Whilst every care has been taken in compiling these listings, *Dancing Times* cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions.

EASTERN ENGLAND

Cambridge

Joanna Navarre Dance: Cambridge, [t] 07964 586 120. AT, B&L, SW

Essex

Anthony Clifford Dance Studios: Romford, [t] 01708 783 576. B&L, H, J, O Athene School of Dancing, The Dancentre: Chelmsford, [t] 01245 475 288. AT, B&L, SE Billericay Dancing Club: Buttsbury Infant School, Billericay, [t] 01277 654 768. AT, B&L, SE Chelmsford Dance Centre: Chelmsford, [t] 01245 473 355. AT, B&L, H Diamante Dance Academy: Chelmsford, [t] 07505 003 078. B&L

Emma's Dance Academy: Ongar and Waltham Abbey, [t] 07956 116 827. B&L Jenny's Jems: Warley, [t] 01268 762 626. B&L, SE Julia Spencer School of Dancing: Clacton-on-Sea, [t] 07720 844 619. B&L, H, SE Kings Palais of Dance: Grays, [t] 01375 375 810. AT, B&L, H, O, S Phillips Dancing: Witham, [t] 01245 258 510. B&L, O Simply-the-West: Brentwood, Chelmsford and Great Dunmow. [t] 01621 850 195. B&L Southend Dance Centre: Southend, [t] 01268 743 116. B&L , H, O Steps Ahead School of Dancing: Collier: Collier Row and Romford, [t] 07789 552 846. B&L Time4Dance: North Weald, Blackmore

& Highwood

[t] 07872 427 946. B&L United Dance Studios: Stanford Le Hope, [t] 01375 672 864. B&L

Norfolk

Ballroom and Latin Classes: Wymondham, [t] 01953 607 474. B&L Hemsby Sequence Dance Club: Hemsby Village Hall, [t] 01603 270 709. SE Larinda and Nigel Smith School of Dance: Great Yarmouth, [t] 01493 789 918. B&L, SE Simply Dance: Spooner Row/Watton, [t] 01953 455 500. AT, B&L, SE, SW Tempo School of Dancing: Great Yarmouth, [t] 01493 665 558. B&L, SE

Norwich

Miller Dance: Norwich, [t] 01603 488 249. AT, B&L Old Time Dance: Norwich, [t] 01760 441 055.

Suffolk

Academy of Ballroom Dancing: Felixstowe / Newmarket, [t] 01394 282 285. B&L, SE Ballroom Experience Co: Stowmarket / Bury St Edmunds / West Suffolk, [t] 0845 053 7475. AC, AT, B&L, S Lait Dance Club: St Matthews Hall, Ipswich, [t] 01473 743 079. AC, B&L, H, O, S

EAST MIDLANDS

Derbyshire Déda: Derby, [t] 01332 370 911.

Schools, classes & dances

AT, B, C, B&L, O, SW Three Stars Dancing: Derby, [t] 07831 663 857. AT, B&L, S

Leicestershire

118 Dance Studio: Leicester, [t] 0116 251 7073 / 0116 289 2518. B&L, H, O ABC Ballroom: Leicester, [t] 0116 253 0463. AT, B&L, O, SE, SW Burbage Dance Studio: Hinckley, [t] 01455 616 146. B&L, SW

Lincolnshire

Ballroom Blitz, The Mitchell School of Dance: Barton-upon-Humber and Kirton-in-Lindsey, [t] 01652 649 164. B&L, O, SW, S Clarke's Dance Studio: Boston and Spalding, [t] 01775 840 049. B&L, SE, SW Cliftons Dance Academy: Grimsby, New Waltham, Cleethorpes, Old Clee, Stallingborough and Immingham, [t] 01472 822 270. B&L, H, O, SE, SW Go Dance Studios: Lincoln and Sleaford, [t] 01529 300 930. B, B&L, H, J, MT, O, T Karen Chevalier School of Dance: Grantham, [t] 01476 578 999. AT, B&L, SE The Lincoln Dancentre: Lincoln, [t] 01522 688 676. B&L, O, SE Mayfair School of Dancing: Grimsby, [t] 01472 870 704. AT, B&L, H, O, S Premiere Dance Centre: Lincoln. [t] 01522 510 080. B&L, H, O, SE

Nottinghamshire

Ann Culley School of Dance: Papplewick, Nottinghamshire, [t] 0115 963 3428. B&L, SA, SE,O, H, SW Expressions, Mansfield, [t] 01623 647 337. B, B&L, H, J, MT, S Regency Dance Centre: Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottingham, [t] 01623 552 737. B&L, B, S, SE

THE NORTH/ NORTH EAST

Yorkshire Butterfly Dance Studios: Goole, [t] 01405 780 626. B, B&L, H, MT, T City-Limits Dancentre: Sheffield, [t] 0114 234 4866. AT, B, B&L, H, MT, S, SW, T Drapers Dance Centre: Sheffield, [t] 0114 269 5703. B&L, S, SW, O En Pointe Dance School: York. B, C, J, MT, O, T Finders Dance Studio: Huddersfield, [t] 01484 607 158. B. SE, SW The Hatton Academy of Dance and Arts: South Shields, [t] 0191 454 2889. B&L, S, SE, O Helen Neill School of Dance: Penistone, Sheffield, [t] 01226 763 322. B&L, BS, SA, SE, SW Hype Dance Company: Sheffield, [t] 0114 2470 6757. B, C, H, J, T Jo's Dance Centre: Todmorden, [t] 01706 815 260. B&L, BS H, J, O, S, SE, SW Julie Roper School of Dancing: Hull, [t] 01482 572 883. B&L, SE Lacey School of Dancing: Brough, [t] 01482 666 863. B&L, O, SE, SW Laura Martin Dance: Yorkshire and

Humberside, [t] 07835 037 253. B&L, O Laws Page Dance Centre: Whitby, [t] 01947 604 516. B&L, O, S, SE, SW Rhythm and Dreams Dancing Centre: The First Floor, 833-839 Hessle High Road, Hull, [t] 01482 448 347. B&L, BS, O, S, SW Shandaw School of Dance: Leeds/ Bradford, [t] 01132 390 391. B&L, H, O, S, SE, SW Smith and Jaques Dance Club:

Smith and Jaques Dance Club: Billingham, [t] 01642 560 068. B&L, O Yorkshire Rose Academy of Dance: York, [t] 07891 004 850. B, C, H, J, MT, O, T

NORTH WEST

Cheshire

Bruce's School of Dance: Chester, [t] 01244 881 316. B&L, SW Charlesway School of Dance: Deeside, [t] 01244 520 534. B&L, SE DanceBasics: nr Crewe, [t] 01270 669 084. B&L, H, S, SE, SW Dance Fever: Wilmslow, [t] 07973 921 714. B&L, H, S, O DanceWorks: Altrincham. [t] 0161 291 1295. H, J, O Glenda Harding Theatre School: Macclesfield, [t] 01625 263 055. MT, O Hartland School of Dance: Cheshire, [t] 07712 069 627. B&L, O, SE Ian Rowe: Crewe, [t] 01270 253 121. B&L, BS, O, S, SE JanNik Dance: Altrincham, [t] 07896 230 945. O Northwich Dance Company: Northwich, [t] 01606 49050. F, H, O, S Pyramid and Parr Hall: Warrington, [t] 01925 442 345. B&L, FL, H, O, S Stockport Dance Centre: Stockport, [t] 0161 429 9507. B&L, F, O, S, SW Whitby Sports and Social Club: Ellesmere Port, [t] 0151 355 4661. B&L Willsher School of Dancing: Ellesmere Port, [t] 0151 339 4362. B&L, S

Cumbria

Wilde Dance School: Kirkby Lonsdale/Kendal, [t] 01524 276 455. B&L, SE, SW

Isle of Man

Killey Academy of Dancing: Onchan, [t] 01624 623 414. B&L, SE

Lancashire

ILC Dance Ltd: Blackpool, [t] 01253 693 350. AT, B&L, O, S, SE, SW Dancers Studio: Preston, [t] 01772 254 161 / 07970 752 341. B&L, F. H. I. O. S. SE, SW Danceworks: Clitheroe, [t] 01200 443 791. B&L, O, S [t] 01260 112 11 Blackburn, [t] 01254 699 221. F, H, J, L, O, S Dawn Chapman School of Dance: Todmorden, [t] 01706 839 113. B&L, BS, H, J, O, S, SE, SW Fever Dance Studio: Preston, [t] 01772 703 704. B&L, BS, F, H, J, O, S, SE, SW Helen Green Academy of Dance: Trawden, [t] 07967 831 661. H, L, O Judy Clegg Dancentre: Rossendale, [t] 01706 227 564. B&L, H, J, S, SE, SW Morecambe Bay Ballroom and Latin Dance Group: Sedbergh, [t] 01539 620 536. B&L, SE, SW



Reeders Dance Studio: Preston, [t] 01772 704 651. B&L, H, O, S, SE, SW Rossendale Dance and Drama Centre: Rossendale, [t] 01706 211 161. B&L, F, H, I, J, S, SE, SW Sanderson Dance and Fitness: Nelson, [t] 01282 617 722. B&L, H, J, O, S, SE, SW

Merseyside

Ballroom Blitz, [t] 07799 701 815. B&L. AT. S The Bullen School of Dancing: Southport, [t] 01704 544 675. B&L, S, SE, O June Hopfield School of Dancing: Thorton, [t] 0151 476 0109/07789 855 408. B, O The Hipshaw School of Dance: Formby, [t] 01704 576 137. B&L, S, SE, O M S Dance: Wallasey, [t] 0151 639 9901. B&L, SE Martin's Dance Centre: Liverpool, [t] 0151 228 4586. B&L, O, S, SE, SW Merrall's Academy: Gayton, [t] 0151 342 7462. B&L, O, S, SW Margaret Redmond: Crosby, [t] 0776 811 3078. B&L, SE Wirral Dance Club: Bromborough, [t] 0151 339 7116. B&L

Greater Manchester

Atherton Dance Centre: Atherton, [t] 01942 888 711. B&L, H, O, S Lorraine C Eckersley Dance School: Prestwich/Whitefield, [t] 01706 872 556. B&L, O, S, SE PB Dance Studio: Davyhulme, [t] 0161 746 7786. B&L, F, O, S, SE, SW Sandham's Dance Studio: Bolton, [t] 01204 795 130. B&L, H, J, O, S Steppin' Out Dance Centre: Stretford, [t] 0161 865 1443. B&L, O, S

SCOTLAND

Aberdeen

2 Left Feet Dance School: Stonehaven, [t] 01569 764 130. B,&L, F, SE Hay Memorial Hall: Banff, [t] 01466 751 273. SE Irene Taylor Dance School: Portlethen, [t] 01224 780 186. F

Edinburgh

Woolmet Dance Studio: Edinburgh, [t] 0131 258 1251 / 07810 545 839. H, J, L, O, S, SW

Glasgow

Dance Factory Dance Studios: Glasgow, [t] 0141 423 9430. FL, J, H, O The Dance House: Maryhill Community Education Centre, [t] 0141 332 1490. FL, H, L, O, SW

Moray Caroline Coomber Dance: Elgin, [t] 01343 541 983. B&L

SOUTH EAST

Bedfordshire/ Buckinghamshire Adrian Marsh School of Dance: Various locations in Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire, [t] 01908 393 315. B&L, O, SW Castle Street Dance Studios: High Wycombe, Bucks, [t] 07594 475 277. B&L, H, O Dallas Dance Club: Luton, [t] 01296 482 280. B&L, H, O, S, SE, SW Dancesport Academy: Various locations in Bedfordshire, [t] 0845 388 9307. B&L

GB Dance: Aylesbury, [t] 07582 551 178. B&L, SE, SW Katsteps Ballroom Dancing: Chesham, Bucks, [t] 01494 580 327. B&L Strictly Salsa: Around Bucks, [t] 07984 149 971. S

Berkshire

Barbara and David Stewart: Maidenhead, [t] 01628 629 563. B&L, SE Eva's Dancing Studio: Slough, [t] 01753 647 230. B&L, O, SW Haymill Centre: Slough, [t] 01753 544 323. B&L, SE LearnToDance: Burnham Park Hall, Windsor Lane, Burnham [t] 01753 360 121. B&L, SE, S, SW Line and Latin American Dance: Wexham Court Primary School, Slough, [t] 01753 595 781. B&L, O Lynn's School of Dancing: Burnham, [t] 01628 661 472. B&L, O, SW Raymond Miles School of Dancing: Reading, [t] 0118 947 8874. B&L, O, S, SE

East Sussex

Brighton Jive Promotions: Brighton, [t] 01273 560 480. SW Hampden Park Old Time Dance Club: Summerheath Hall, Hailsham, [t] 01323 847 506. SE Modern Sequence Dancing: Rox School of Dance: Brighton, [t] 01273 772 462. B&L, S, SW Star Dance School: East Sussex [t] 01273 719 500. B&L

Central and

Greater London ACW Dance Studio: Wimbledon, [t] 020 8871 0890. B&L, S, SE, SW Age Concern Beginners Samba: Peel Centre, Percy Circus, WC1, [t] 020 7439 3405. BS Alpha Dancing Club: Eltham, London, [t] 07850 178 869. B&L Ann Langley School of Dancing: Shepperton, [t] 020 8751 2177. B&L, O, S, SE, SW The Basement: Kentish Town, [t] 020 7700 7722. H, J, O, S Central London Dance Vernon Kemp: London W1, [t] 020 7224 6004. B&L, S, SE, SW Ceroc Dance: Brent Town Hall, Wembley, [t] 020 8937 6204. O Curry's Dance Music: Fulham Town Hall, SW6, [t] 01895 633 960. B&L, SE Dance Addiction: Enfield Highway Community Centre, Enfield EN3, [t] 020 8363 3636. B&L, F Dance Attic Studios: Fulham, [t] 020 7610 2055. B&L, FL, H, O, S, SW Dance Wise: New Eltham, [t] 020 8294 1576. B&L, H, J, O, S, SW Danceworks: Mavfair. [t] 020 7629 6183. B&L, BS, FL, H, O, S Dancing Club LA: Barnet, [t] 020 8207 2323. B&L, S Daphne Harris School of Dancing: Kentish Town, [t] 020 7439 3405. B&L, SE East London Dance: Stratford, [t] 020 8279 1050. H, O, S Expressions Studios: Kentish Town, [t] 020 7813 1580. AT, H, S, O The Factory: Hornsey, [t] 020 7272 1122. B&L, H, J, O, S Fairhall Dancing: Catford, [t] 020 8699 5262. B&L, O, SE Firefly Blues Dance Club: City Firefly Bar EC4, [t] 01895 613 703. O, SW Greenwich Dance Agency: London, [t] 020 8293 9741. S, O

Hill Dance Academy: Hackney and Streatham, [t] 0777 2199 103. B&L, BS, O, SW Hutson School of Dancing: South Woodford, [t] 020 8590 3442. B&L, SW Independent Dance School: London W1, [t] 07451 532 5420. B&L, BS, O, S, SE, SW Inspiration 2 Dance: Kensington and Holland Park, [t] 07711 652 875 . B&L, S, O JB's Dance Studio: London E12, [t] 020 8478 6055. B&L, F, H, O, S, SE, SW J&B Dance: N3, [t] 020 8444 0280. B&L Jive Salsa: London W9, [t] 07956 392 555. B&L, O, SW Karen Hardy Studios: Imperial Wharf, London, SW6, [t] 0871 218 2341. B&L, O Kensington Dance Studio: London W14, [t] 020 7823 9949. B&L, O, S, SW London Swing Dance Society: London WC1, [t] 01895 613 703. SW, O Michael's Dance Studio: Chingford, [t] 020 8529 8396. B&L, O, S, SE, SW Modern Jive: 400 venues across the UK, [t] 01233 625 362. JI Morley College: London SE1, [t] 020 7450 1832. B&L, F, FL, H, J, O, S, SW Oak Hall: Southbourne Gardens, Eastcote, HA4, [t] 020 8954 3363. SE Old Time: Leighton Crescent, Kentish Town, [t] 020 7439 3405. SE Paul Killick's Dancesport: London SW1, [t] 020 7589 3071. B&L, O, S, SW Penge Lindy Hop Club: London SE2, [t] 01895 613 703. O, SW POSK: Hammersmith,

[t] 01895 422 776. B&L Practice Makes Perfect Dance Workshops: Thursdays, Belmont SM2, [t] 07950 070 559 [e] practice2perfect@btinternet.com B&L Rivoli Ballroom Dance Club: Crofton Park, [t] 020 8692 5130. B&L, SW Shaw School of Dancing: Ealing, [t] 020 8998 5138. B&L, S, SW Soniya's Academy of Eastern Dance Collier Row, Wanstead, [t] 07759 076 443. O, SA The Suzi Q Saturday Club: Royston Club, SE2, [t] 01895 613 703. O, SW Sydenham Dancentre: Sydenham, [t] 07790 361 277. B&L, F, S, SE, SW Trinity Hall: Hermon Hill, Woodford, [t] 020 8508 5748. O Wright Rhythm Dancing School: Chingford, [t] 07801 414959/ 07918 068 485. B&L, O, S, SE, SW

Tango only

Afro-Tango. Kizomba at Studio Afro-Latino: The Space Performing Arts, Falkirk Street, N1, [t] 07956 345 120. Carablanca: The Conway Hall, WC1 [t] 020 7720 7608. Corrientes Tango Club: WC1, [t] 020 7738 4404. El Once Club de Tango: The Crypt, EC1, [t] 020 7582 0910. La Practica: Museum Wine Bar, WC1, [t] 020 7613 0422. Las Estrellas: London W2. [t] 020 7221 5038. Learning Tango: St Paul's Church Hall, London NW7, [t] 07767 784 238. West Wimbledon Tango: West Wimbledon Society Hall, Wimbledon, [t] 07506 259 769. Milonga: The Lecture Hall, Wimbledon Village, [t] 020 8672 3944.

All things Swing

DECEMBER

December 8 Jingle Bell Jive at the National Army Museum Venue: National Army Museum, Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea Details: Jive back in time learning vintage dances with SwingdanceUK and live music by South London Jazz Orchestra. Tickets: Advance tickets from £18 www.swingdanceuk.com

December 15

Swing Out at Bishopsgate: the Christmas Edition! Venue: Bishopsgate Institute, London Details: A Christmas special with live music from the Palace Avenue Trio and vintage DJs on the night. Tickets: £12 in advance £17 on the door www.swingpatrol.co.uk

December 21

The Snow Ball Venue: Upper Norwood Library Hub, London Details: With live music by local band Palace Avenue Swing. Tickets: Advance tickets from £15 www.swingpatrol.co.uk

December 24

Christmas Eve Swing Dance Venue: Southbank Centre, London Details: Jump and jive at a free festive swing dance class and party to start your holiday in style, with Five Go Jiving and SwingdanceUK, from noon. Tickets: Free www.swingdanceuk.com

JANUARY

January 10–12

Oxford Swing Festival Venue: Oxford Town Hall Details: Three nights of social dancing, tasters, live music, late night Lindy and even later night blues - all in a spectacular venue. Tickets: £120 for a weekend pass www.oxfordswingfestival.com

January 18 Swing Dance with the Swing Commanders Venue: Westlands Ballroom, Yeovil Details: Wonderful live music for swing dancers in a superb large ballroom. Tickets: £16 or £150 for table of 10 www.westlandsyeovil.co.uk

January 24–26

DJam Swing Dance Festival Venue: Various, Durham Details: A packed weekend of Lindy hop. Tickets: From £170 for the weekend www.dance-at-djam.co.uk

Listings

Tango Argentino: St. Mary's Parish Hall, Finchley, [t] 020 8346 4024. Tango in the City: The Union Tavern, WC1, [t] 020 8520 2726. Tango Federico: Chiswick Town Hall, [t] 020 8291 4977. Tango London: The Factory, N19, [t] 020 7272 1122. Total Tango: Museum Wine Bar, WC1, [t] 020 7837 9720. Zero Hour: Boston Arms Pub, N19, [t] 020 7263 0665.

Hampshire

Argentine Tango: Archers Road Social Club, Southampton, [t] 07889 288 368. T DM Dance Centre (Diment Macdonald): Southampton, [t] 023 8055 4192. B&L, H, O, S, SE, SW Dance Connection of Gosport: Gosport, [t] 01329 314 061/ 07986 687 463. B&L, O, S, SE, SW Dance Factory: Aldershot, [t] 01252 338 019. B&L, O, S, SW David Smith Dance: Basingstoke, [t] 07791 749 163 B&L, BS, O, S, SE, SW Fiesta Dance School: Basingstoke, [t] 01983 721 654. B&L, H, O, SW La Rueda: Hedge End, Southampton, [t] 07889 288 368. S Luci's Dance Studio: Totton, [t] 023 8087 1921. B&L, FL, O, S Povey Ronald: Southampton, [t] 023 8022 4163. B&L, S, SW Sally Adams Danceworks: Ringwood, [t] 01425 474 072/ 07790 228 502. B&L, H, O, S, SW Tango's Dance Club: Lee-on-theSolent, [t] 023 9255 3201. B&L Tony School of Dancing: Lymington, [t] 01590 674 211 B&L O SW Tracie's Latin Club: Southampton. [t] 07889 288 368. AT, S, SW Victory School of Dance: Portsmouth, [t] 023 9235 8235/ 07986 895 583. B&L, O, S, SE

Hertfordshire

Alter Ego Dance Studio: Welwyn Garden City, [t] 01707 550 200. H Apton Dance Studio: Bishop's Stortford, [t] 01279 465 381. B&L, O, SW Barbara's Ballroom and Latin Dance Classes: Hemel Hempstead, [t] 01442 384 535 / 07930 992 368. B&L Bojangles Modern Jive: Welwyn Garden City, [t] 01438 718 906. SW Culture Dance Club: Hatfield, [t] 01707 887 128. B&L, SE De Havilland Ballroom and Latin American Group: Hatfield, [t] 01707 262 750. B&L De Havilland Sports and Social Club: Hatfield, [t] 01707 262 665. SW, SE Doric Dance Centre: Cheshunt, [t] 01992 624 228. B&L, S, SE, SW GB Dance: Berkhamsted, [t] 07582 551 178. B&L, SE, SW "Hiel" and Toe Scottish Country and Highland Dance Club: Harpenden, [t] 01582 769 607. F, O JiveSwing.Com: Classes in Welwyn, Brentwood, Watford, Hertford, Hatfield, Chelmsford, St Albans, Letchworth and Southend [t] 07946 396 777. SW Learning Tango: Berkhamsted,

LatinQuarter

DECEMBER

December 13-16 Xmas Fiesta

Venue: Queens Hotel, Blackpool Details: A winter dance extravaganza featuring top dance instructors, performers, DJs, a live band and lots of parties and fun. Tickets: From £70 per day www.afrocubansalsafiesta.com

December 14

Salsa Under the Palms Venue: Sefton Park Palm House, Liverpool Details: Join the Salsa Liverpool team to experience 400 dancers strutting their stuff under one beautiful glass roof. Tickets: £11 online www.ticketquarter.co.uk

December 20

Salsa Mish Christmas Party Venue: Greenwood Park, St Albans Details: Salsa and bachata in the main hall with additional kizomba and chill-out rooms, plus complimentary tea and coffee. Tickets: £12 www.salsamish.co.uk

December 26

BIG Boxing Day Fiesta Venue: Hilton Liverpool City Centre Details: Dance off those Christmas dinner calories in style at this nine-hour Boxing Day bash.

Tickets: £18 in advance, £20 on the night www.facebook.com

December 31

Una Noche Mas Venue: Salsa! Soho, London Details: A New Year's Eve party in the capital in true carnival style, with live band and dance performances. Tickets: From £10 www.designmynight.com

JANUARY

January 3–6 Newcastle Salsa Congress Venue: Holiday Inn Newcastle – Gosforth Park Details: Known as one of the friendliest congresses out there, this event offers the chance to learn, dance and party in a warm, welcoming, inclusive environment, Tickets: Full event pass from £99 www.newcastlesalsacongress.co.uk

January 17-20

Scottish Salsa Congress Venue: Edinburgh Grosvenor Hotel **Details:** Twice winner of "best dance festival of the year", the Scottish Salsa Congress boasts world-class teachers, professional performances and "the biggest and best salsa party the UK has ever seen" Tickets: Full pass from £120, plus £5 booking fee www.scottishsalsacongress.co.uk

[t] 07767 784 238. AT Lesnick School of Ballet and Theatre Arts: Hitchin and Letchworth. [t] 07956 525 659. B, C, J, O, T Melody School of Dancing: Welwyn Garden City, [t] 01707 891 350. B&L The Two Roberts: Borehamwood and Watford, [t] 01923 221 185. B&L, SE

Isle of Wight

Pegasus: Newport, [t] 01983 861 488/ 07817 087 914. AT, B&L, H, O, S, SW

Kent

Beginners' Salsa Class: Beckenham, [t] 01689 856 763 / 020 8302 4111. S Dance Expressions: Orpington, [t] 01689 833 156. B&L, H, O, Dancing Feet Dance Centre: Rochester, [t] 01634 714 147. AT, B&L, H, S, SW GDC School of Dancing: Lenham, [t] 01622 850 800. B&L, O Goodman Dance Centre: Dartford, [t] 01322 222 508. B&L Grover Dance Centre: Azelia Hall, Beckenham, [t] 01689 856 763 / 020 8302 4111. B&L Hotsteps School of Dance: Orpington, [t] 01689 822 702. B&L, O International Dance Studios: Tunbridge Wells, [t] 01892 458 025. AT, B&L, O JB's Dance Studio: Folkestone, [t] 01303 252 706. AT, B&L, FL, J, O, S, SE JJ Dance Studios: Beckenham, [t] 07979 752 215. AT, B&L, H, O, S Medway School of Dancing: Tonbridge, [t] 01732 358 355. AT, B&L, H, S, SE, SW Miss Sylvia Walker: Hayes, [t] 01293 776 668. B&L, SE Que Pasa (Bar Cafe Ole): Tunbridge Wells and various surrounding locations, [t] 01322 385 795. S Salsa in Bromley: The Civic Centre, Bromley, [t] 07958 519 595. S Shirley Cox School of Dancing: Biggin Hill, [t] 01959 700 654. AT, B&L, H, J, O, S Social Dance: The Grand Burstin Hotel, Folkestone,

[t] 01233 712 323. O, S Star Dance Club: Gillingham, [t] 07733 262 387. AT, B&L, O, S, SE, SW Warmlake Dance Academy: Maidstone, [t] 01622 840 054. B&L, H, O

Oxfordshire

Dance Rhythms: Cowley, [t] 01865 875 800. AT, B&L, H, O, S, SE, SW

Surrey

Barbara Srour School of Dance: Camberley, [t] 01276 685 699. AT, B&L, O, S, SE, SW Dance Club: Chertsey, [t] 01483 473 363. B&L Dance Options: Cheam, [t] 07732 983 069. B&L, O Foskett School of Dancing: Dorking, [t] 01306 883 808. AT, B&L, H, S, SW Holiday and Dance: Addlestone Community Centre (social dance on first Saturday of each month), [t] 01895 632 143. B&L Kingston Dance: Kingston Dance Studio, [t] 020 8394 1610. AT LeRoc Surrey Modern Jive: Dorking, [t] 01883 740 559/07944 971 195. AT, B&L, BS, O, S, SW Rob and Wendy's Dance Club: Cheam, [t] 020 8287 0518. AT, B&L, O Swingin' at Salfords: Redhill,

[t] 01895 613 703. O, SW Time to Dance: Caterham, [t] 07967 440 587. AT, B&L, O, SE, SW

West Sussex

Crawley Dance Academy: Crawley, [t] 01293 612 538. B&L Elite Stage and Dance School: Crawley, [t] 01293 565 264. AT, B&L, H, J, SW Keenes Dance Studio: Worthing, [t] 01903 213 740. AT, B&L, F, O, S, SE, Partners Dancing: east and Wes, [t] 01903 203 192, S Star Dance School: West Sussex, [t] 01273 719 500. B&L

SOUTH WEST

Avon

Avon Dancers' Club: Somerset Hall, The Precinct, Portishead, [t] 0117 971 0871. AT, B&L, SE

Cornwall

Blue Lagoon Dance Club: Newquay, [t] 01637 873 789. B&L, O idodance: Truro, [t] 01209 861 327. AT, B&L, O, SE, SW Kernow Dance Centre: St Columb, [t] 01726 860 387. AT, B&L, O, S, SE, SW

Devon

Ballroom with Dancing Duo: Stowford Centre, Sidmouth, [t] 01803 325 905. B&L, SE Ballroom with Dancing Duo: Chard Guildhall, [t] 01803 325 905. B&L, SE Ballroom with Dancing Duo: Livermead House Hotel, Torquay, [t] 01803 325 905. B&L, SE Ballroom with Dancing Duo: Plymouth City College, [t] 01803 325 905. B&L, SE Club Rainbow: Torquay, [t] 01803 613 580. O, SW Dance Matrix: Harewood House, Plympton. [t] 01752 898 604. B&L Danceworks Devon: Newton Abbot, [t] 01626 365 112. B&L, H, O, S, SE Lansdowne Dance Centre: Torquay, [t] 01803 613 580. B&L, S The Music Mill: Newton Abbot, [t] 01626 361 999. H, J, O Plymouth Dance Academy: Various locations in the Plymouth area, [t] 01752 766 785. AT, B&L, BS, J, O ProjectDance: Devon area, [t] 07795 201 249. B&L, H, O, S Puttin' on The Ritz: Various locations in the Plymouth area, [t] 01752 335 030. AT, B&L, H, O, SE, SW

Dorset

Anglo Dance Studios: Bournemouth, [t] 01202 514 551. AT, B&L, F, J, O, S, SW Dance Crazy: Bournemouth. [t] 01202 527 403. AT, B&L, H, O, S, SW Dance Majic: Poole, [t] 01202 668 722. B&L, F, O, S, SW Nice 'n' Easy Dance Studio: Bournemouth, [t] 01202 394 017. B&L, O, S Salsa Caliente: Weymouth, [t] 01305 816 202. AT, S, O

Gloucestershire

Dance at 8: Bredon Village Hall, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, [t] 01386 556 665. AT, B&L, BS, O, S, W Finesteps: Cheltenham, [t] 07852 960 974. AT, B&L, O, S, SE Hilary Saxby School of

Listings

Dancing: Cheltenham, [t] 01242 251 206. B, J, MT, T Packard Dance Centre: Yate, [t] 01454 273 067. B&L, H, O, S, SE

Somerset

Bath Uni Ballroom and Latin Club, [e] bds-committee@bath. ac.uk. B&L. SW Bredon Village Hall: Tewkesbury, [t] 01386 556 665. Beginners B&L Burroughs School of Dancing: Weston-Super-Mare, [t] 01934 621 281. AT, B&L, H, S, SE, SW J&B Dance: Bridgwater, [t] 01278 428 742. B&L, SE The Market House Dance Studio: Castle Carey, [t] 01963 351 503. AT, B&L, O, SE, SW Riviera LeRoc Modern Jive, Taunton, [t] 07887 995 849. SW

Wiltshire

Dancers of Chippenham: Chippenham, [t] 01249 661 131. B&L, O

WALES

Aberaeron Dance Club: Aberaeron, [t] 01570 480 464. AT, B&L, BS, O, S, SE, SW Cowbridge Dance: Mid Glamorgan, [t] 01443 238 867. B&L, SE CSJ Dance: Newport, [t] 01633 769 232. O Dance World: Newport, [t] 01633 252 625. AT, B&L, H, O, S, SE, SW Edwards Dance Studios: Cardiff. [t] 02920 616 400, AT, B&L, O, S, SE, SW New Cottage Dance Centre: Hengoed, [t] 01443 815 909. B&L. O. S. SW Richards School of Dance: Rhonnda-Cynon-Taff, [t] 01443 437 074. AT, B&L, O, SE, SW Saturn Dance: Cardiff, [t] 02920 191 786. B&L Strictly Dance Ltd: Llantrisant and Porthcawl, [t] 01656 771 713. AT, B&L, S, SE

WEST MIDLANDS

Broadway Dance Centre: Birmingham, [t] 0121 356 4663.

AT, B&L, H, J, O, S, SW

DanceXchange: Birmingham Hippodrome, [t] 0121 667 6730. FL, H, I, O Dawn Parker: Wednesbury, [t] 0121 526 6204. AT, B&L, H, O, SE, SW Fiona Bennett L.I.D.T.A: Dudley, [t] 01384 243 451. B&L, SE Jean Johnson School of Dancing: Solihull, [t] 0121 705 2501. B&L, O, SE Philip Jackson and Janet Harrison: Birmingham, [t] 0121 422 3032. AT. B&L. O. S. SE. SW Rhythmics Dance Centre: Cradley Heath, [t] 01385 413 725. AT, B&L, H, O, SW Simply The Best School of Dancing: Kingswinford, West Midlands, [t] 01384 866 097. B&L, SE Stan and Yvonne Dancing: Coventry, [t] 02476 469 316. AT, B&L, SE, SW Tony and Christine Hunnisett: Solihull, [t] 01564 779 267. B&L, SE The Whiteman Academy: Birmingham, [t] 07721 579 174. H, J, O

Herefordshire

All Seasons Dance and Leisure: Friar Street, Hereford, [t] 01432 353 756 / 07889 053 464. B&L, O, S, SE, SW

Staffordshire

Eric Rowland and Mandy Heath School of Dancing: Walsall Wood, [t] 01543 370 549. AT, B&L, H, O, S, SE, SW K.Dee.K Danceworks: 1st Floor, 98-102 Church Street, Stoke-on-Trent, [t] 01782 878 888. B&L, H, J, O, S, SA Martina School of Dance: Tamworth, [t] 01872 330 525. AT, B&L, O, S, SE, SW Style Academy of Dance and Fitness: Rugely, [t] 01889 577 539. AT, B&L, O, S, SW

Warwickshire Excel Dance Club: Learnington Spa, [t] 07974 148 117. B&L, SW

Worcestershire Dance at 8: Worcester, Pershore, Malvern Tewkesbury, [t] 01386 556 665. B, O, SA, SW, T Hilary Saxby School of Dancing: Evesham, [t] 01242 251 206. B, J, MT, T

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Competitions

DECEMBER

December 1

Horsham Competition Day Venue: Drill Hall, Horsham Organiser: Horsham Dancers Club www.horshamdance.co.uk

December 1

South Wales Gold Cup Award Venue: Dance Crazy Studios, Pontypridd Organiser: Dance Crazy www.dancecrazywales.uk

December 1

Christmas Dance Awards Venue: Quick Quick Slow Dance Studio, Stoke-on-Trent Organiser: Duncan and Hannah Trever www.dhtdancepromotions.com

December 8

The Suffolk Championships Venue: Ipswich Academy Organiser: Lait Dance Club www.laitdanceclub.co.uk

December 14

SSD Christmas Dance Super League Trophy Award Venue: BCSA Burghfield, Berkshire Organiser: SSD Ltd www.strictlyschooldancing.co.uk

December 29

City of Birmingham New Year Trophy Day Venue: Bournville College Organiser: Richard Rose www.richardzdance.com

December 29 The English National Championships plus the UK Masters Venue: The Winter Gardens Ballroom, Weston-super-Mare. Organiser: Robert and Denise Barley www.silhouettedanceclub chepstow.co.uk

SEQUENCE AND INVENTIVE DANCE DATES

December 1 United Kingdom Alliance Venue: Marine Hall, The Esplanade, Fleetwood Tickets: Contact Sue Burroughs for entry forms and tickets on 01934 621 281.

January 12

Northern Counties Dance Teachers Association Venue: Wallsend Memorial Hall Tickets: Cora Ann Leonard on 0191 268 2372 for tickets and to enter dance names Closing date is December 16.

For more up-to-date information on sequence events, go to msdworld.co.uk.

JANUARY

January 2–5 Champions of Tomorrow Venue: Empress Ballroom, Winter Gardens, Blackpool Organiser: ProAm Champions www.proamchampions.co.uk

January 12

East Yorkshire Super League Titles Venue: St Mary's College, Hull Organiser: Amy and Fabio D'Angelo www.amyandfabio.wixsite. com/danceschoolhull

January 15

The Star Ball Venue: The Oaks Hall, Epsom Downs Racecourse Organiser: The Ballroom Dancers' Federation www.ballroomdancersfederation.com

January 19

Lancashire Gold Cup Venue: Hazel Grove High School, Stockport Organiser: Damien Hay Email: damien.hey@gmail.com

January 19

The West European Super League Day Venue: Caldicot Leisure Centre, South Wales Organiser: Robert and Denise Barley www.silhouettedanceclub chepstow.co.uk

January 21–23

The UK Open Championships Venue: Bournemouth International Centre Organiser: Dance News Ltd www.dance-news.co.uk

January 26

Midlands School Invitation Competition Venue: Bournville College, Birmingham Organiser: Richard Rose www.richardzdance.com

FEBRUARY

February 2

Central Open Venue: Cheslyn Hay Sports Centre, Staffordshire Organiser: David and Helen Trueman www.dancetastic.academy

February 8-9

All England Open Venue: Blackpool Tower Ballroom Organiser: Unity Dance Promotions www.unitydancepromotions.co.uk

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From the archives

The Most International Yet

By Bryan Allen

THE 27TH INTERNATIONAL

WAS an event that expanded again into an even bigger success. The reorganised two sessions produced the usual sold out notices for the evening some months ago, and the daytime programme from 9am to 5.30pm has only a little way to go to find demand exceeding supply of the Royal Albert Hall seating.

Elsa Wells and Bobby Short deserve the highest praise for organising such a mammoth festival with no apparent problems at all. The decision to allow competitors to dance in the event only contributed to the feasibility of such a oneday festival, although as a principle I cannot support the deliberate exclusion of some of the most talented who may wish to dance in both Latin and ballroom championships. This policy may or may not become a permanent feature, but the greatly increasing participation of overseas couples to be added to the support of all the leading dancers from the UK will put even more pressure on the organisers. Bobby Short will be very aware of this, and although he and Elsa Wells are undoubtedly pleased that the evening

session for 1980 is almost fully booked already, I feel sure he is planning ahead to relieve the strain which too great an entry would create. They have built up an organisational team which is without equal – and for such a festival it has to be!

Four orchestras were used, all of whom were excellent in the music they provided; however, some of the tempos were above those laid down by the Official Board, but this was quickly put right. Ross Mitchell and Tommy Hawkins took the day period and old friends of the International, Andy Ross and Victor Silvester Jnr, the evening. The Victor

Victor Silvester Jnr receiving his golden disc from Elsa Wells.



Silvester Orchestra has sold over 75 million records, and Bobby Short arranged for Elsa Wells to make a presentation of a gold disc on behalf of Pve Records for the sale of half a million LPs. DECEMBER 1979

Dancers on

By Michael Bayston

THE MAGIC OF DANCE, NOVEMBER 5, BBC 2

If anyone can convert the "don't knows", "never seen its" and "don't understand its" to ballet, it must be Dame Margot Fonteyn, whose long-awaited series of programmes on the dance opened on November 5, heralded by fireworks celebrating another occasion. Two years in the making, the series began with Fonteyn's return to Shanghai where her dancing career started, and moved from China to the US, Scandinavia, and Russia, to Greece and

England. The programmes are not intended to be either historical or biographical, but rather Dame Margot's reflections on the dance, aimed at people who do not know a great deal about it and pointing out that in dance there is something for everybody. Each programme has a theme and the first one, "The Scene Changes", referred to the dominance of the ballerina in the 1930s and 1940s yielding place to the male superstars of the 1960s and 1970s, a phenomenon sparked off by the arrival of Rudolf Nureyev in the West, which led to his famous partnership with

Fonteyn and the raising of standards of male dancing.

There were two magical influences at work in the programme: the first was Fonteyn herself, who stepped down from her assoluta position, yet retaining her poise, and took the viewers with her as she

interviewed Fred Astaire, Sammy Davis Jnr and Rudolf Nureyev, and talked to them and us in a charming easygoing manner. The second magical element was the selection of dance excerpts used to illustrate the theme of the changing scene. DECEMBER 1979

Phillida goes dancing

bare, bejewelled arms of the Queen of



DECEMBER 1923



