

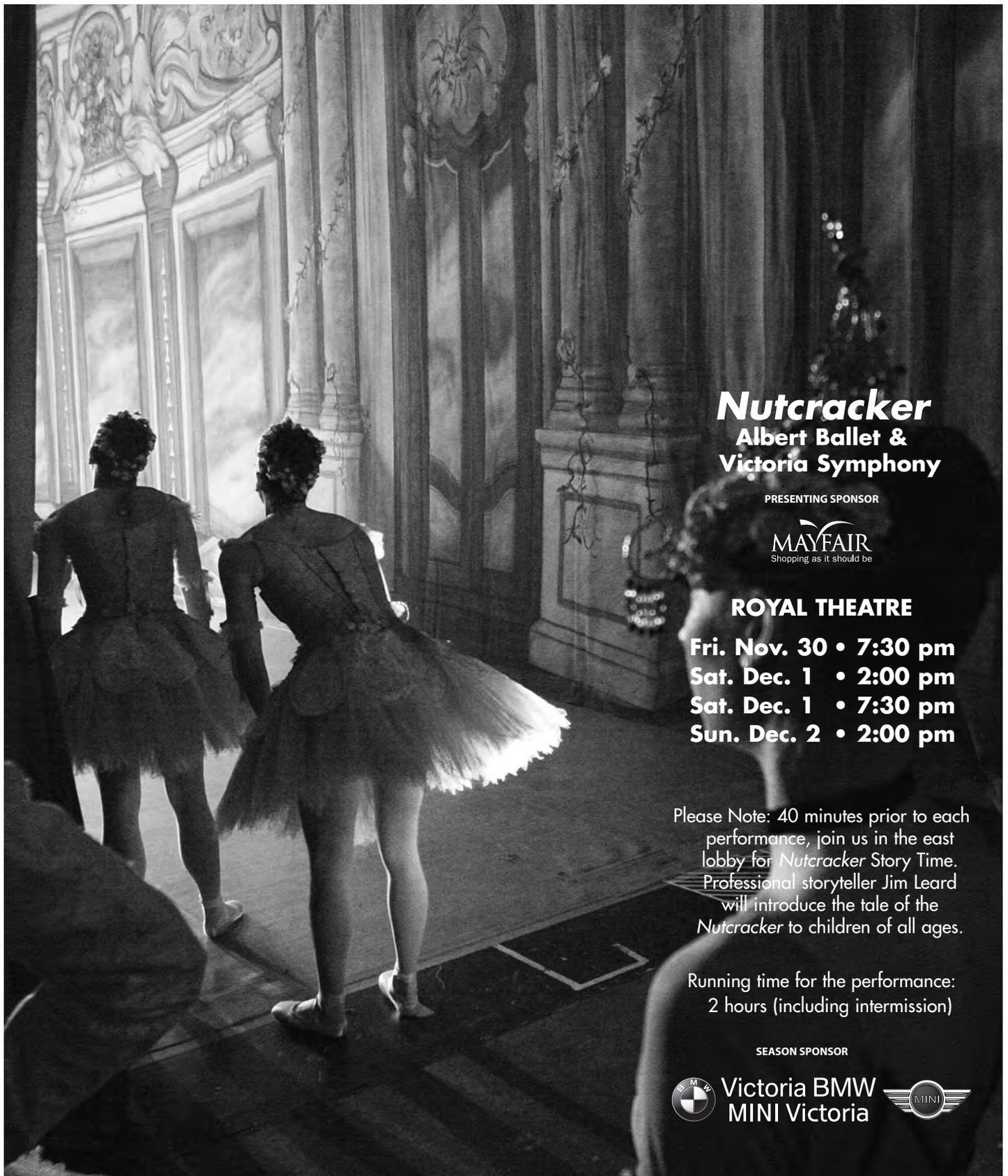
# FOOTNOTES

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#22



## **Nutcracker** Albert Ballet & Victoria Symphony

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**Fri. Nov. 30 • 7:30 pm**  
**Sat. Dec. 1 • 2:00 pm**  
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Please Note: 40 minutes prior to each performance, join us in the east lobby for *Nutcracker* Story Time. Professional storyteller Jim Leard will introduce the tale of the *Nutcracker* to children of all ages.

Running time for the performance:  
2 hours (including intermission)

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Dance Victoria Society is a non-profit, charitable organization dedicated to dance presentation and education.

**Our Mission:** to enhance the appreciation of dance in the Capital Region by presenting and developing professional dance and engaging the community in outreach programs.

**Executive Producer**

Stephen White

**Director of Development and Producer, Special Events**

Yolanda Meijer

**Administrative Assistant**

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Dance Victoria is governed by a **Board of Directors** that includes:

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If you would like to be involved with the Dance Victoria, call: (250) 595-1829 or email: [producer@dancevictoria.com](mailto:producer@dancevictoria.com)

Footnotes is prepared by Stephen White and proofed by Anne Moon.

# NUTCRACKER ENDURES

The story of the *Nutcracker* Ballet and its place in the world of dance is really quite remarkable. Most people know that when the dance first premiered in 1891 at the Imperial Theatres in St. Petersburg the critics were not kind. Even the composer Tchaikovsky did not have much confidence in the work. He was more concerned with an opera he had composed called *Iolanthe*, which was opening on the same night.

Early critics faulted a thin story-line and little character growth. The frame for the story is simple. A Christmas party in a family mansion, an extraordinary toy from a mysterious “uncle”-like figure and then a dream after the young girl of the household (Clara) falls asleep. Toys spring to life, a battle between the Rat King and the Nutcracker Prince ensues and when young Clara saves the day — she is whisked off to a magical Land of the Sweets where a number of dances are performed in celebration. Order is restored when Clara awakens from her sleep.

But something in that simple story has caused it to endure. It has become a holiday tradition. Versions of *Nutcracker* are performed in pretty much every small town or large city in North America. Some ballet companies tour the work for two months playing small centres across the continent. Other communities stage their own *Nutcracker* with community players and dancers from local studios.

George Balanchine, the legendary Russian-American choreographer at the New York City Ballet (NYCB), is credited with introducing the idea of *Nutcracker* as an annual seasonal production. Balanchine’s version has been performed by the company every year since its premiere in 1952. A quick glimpse at the NYCB’s website reveals they will perform *Nutcracker* 45 times this season. Premium tickets are \$120. Moscow’s Bolshoi Ballet performs *Nutcracker* only seven times in December but their ticket prices range from \$144 – \$662 per person.

In the top ten list of the world’s most popular ballets, *Nutcracker* is unrivalled as number one. And I think it has become a family favourite because the ballet opens us to the world of the child’s imagination. That thin plot-line actually makes it accessible to children and adults alike. It’s comforting, it’s tradition, and it’s nostalgic — reminding us all of a simpler time. While the adults can appreciate the dancer’s technique, the kids love the costumes, the snow and the lively, exotic dances in the Land of the Sweets.

Finally, however, the real heart of this work and what keeps us returning is the music. We’re fortunate in Victoria that the Victoria Symphony is in the pit for all performances, because Tchaikovsky’s music must be heard live. At our Annual General Meeting in late October, Dr. Allana Lindgren, a Victoria-based dance historian, talked about how Tchaikovsky wrote the score imagining the ballet as a “coming of age” story for young Clara. In fact, there are (as Dr. Lindgren said) “threads of darker strains” in the music that today are unrealized because the original choreographer glossed over them. The original E.T.A. Hoffman tale (1816) on which the *Nutcracker* is based was actually a grisly tale full of evil spells, intended as a comment on the ills of society.

This season, I’ll be listening more closely to those darker notes and imagining a darker *Nutcracker*. My hunch is, however, that had that original choreographer picked up Tchaikovsky’s intention, *Nutcracker* wouldn’t be the seasonal family favourite it is today. **FN**

*If you’re a subscriber and you haven’t purchased tickets for Nutcracker yet, remember you can call the Box Office and ask for the “Friend of Subscriber Discount” and receive up to 25% off the regular price.*



## LOCAL NUTCRACKER CAST

Sponsored by **WEST COAST BALLET**  
Westcoast Academy of Performing Arts

Well respected Ballet teacher Gina Sinclair-Davis has been hard at work for weeks already, teaching Victoria's young cast, all the steps to Nutcracker so that when Alberta Ballet arrives in town at the end of the month, these kids can slip seamlessly into the performances. The cast for this year's Nutcracker includes:

- Clara: Lindsay Solmer
- Fritz: Julia Rego
- Party Boys: Brooke De Armond, Samantha Ferguson, Emma Gibbs, Cameron Rice-Gural, Robyn Scheidl
- Party Girls: Katie Carter-Desbiens, Rachel Corwin, Camille Janicki, Courtenay Pearce, Jamie van Gessel
- Mice: Jenna Buhrmannn, Jaime Crozier, Lianna Merz, Katherine Filmer, Jessie Foster, Ashley Gawiuk, Lauren Lawson, Alexa McMillan, Justine Nakazawa, Camille Yearwood
- Rabbit: Madeleine Corwin
- Soldiers: Taylor Archer, Jordan Archer, Alison Bell, Clara Buttemer, Justine Ethier, Gabrielle Martin, Marissa Monette, Taylor Snider, Leah Varga, Sarah Vowles
- Angels: Amanda Abelenda, Aliya Conrad, Carmen Gans, Chanel Ghesquiere, Aimee Jones, Jaelyn Lentz, Giuliana Mansueti, Natassja Marc, Megan Maundrell, Alisa Oji, Sayaka Pomeroy, Julianna Wong. **FN**

**Nutcracker Story Time**  
IS SPONSORED BY  CANADA WEST SKATING LTD.

**Moscow Ballet's Swan Lake**  
Please Note: Moscow Ballet was not a presentation of Dance Victoria but was offered as a "bonus show" for Dance Victoria subscribers. The producer is Calgary-based Recovery Acres Society. Should you wish to contact someone about Moscow Ballet, please forward your comments to:  
John O'Reilly oreilly@recoveryacres.org  
Sorry for any confusion.

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## DANCE SEEN

### Mike Holmes, Will You Have the Next Dance?



For the past two years I've been Chair of the CanDance Network, an association of 30 dance presenters across the country. And I am just back from the annual CanDance Network meeting, which this year was in Halifax.

I love our Network meetings. They are always fraught with subtext and friction — some disputes are ignited by a conversation we're having at that moment, others

arise from tensions people have had with each other for years. We are a very diverse group of presenters from large and small communities across this sprawling country. One member presents dance in a tiny 75-seat venue, while the person sitting beside him is the dance producer at the National Arts Centre. As I said, it's diverse.

We do, however, have important things in common. For starters, everyone of us is a Type A, with personalities forged from many years in the fire. And that means we are driven to make dance presentation vital in our communities, and driven to motivating our boards and inspiring our audience. Above all, we are truly passionate about the art form (even if we seldom agree on the new work we see and the artists we believe in!).

At this year's meeting, something extraordinary happened. On the first day we threw open our doors and shared a day of programming with the Canadian Dance Alliance, a national organization with broad membership across the sector — from independent dance artists to companies like the National Ballet of Canada as well as presenters like Dance Victoria. The morning was spent in a room with 85 people discussing an environmental scan CanDance had commissioned about the financial relationship between presenters and dance artists. CanDance is in the process of developing fee standards for dance artists, to be completed within the next two years. We want to make the negotiation between artists and presenters more transparent. Sounds nice, doesn't it? Judging from our first forum, it's going to be a bumpy ride.

Let me backtrack just a bit. In a pre-meeting the day before, we agreed that our very talented facilitator, Judy Harquil, needed to keep the discussion on track. I remember saying "Our conversation has a very narrow focus — it's about the financial relationship between presenters and dance artists. It's not about the state of dance in Canada." The day of the forum, I watched Judy pull off an astounding feat (even as she was battling a mean head cold). She adroitly kept the reins on a passionate, sometimes stormy conversation that covered many perspectives. The dominant element in the room was a concern for the state of dance in Canada: it was a feeling that bubbled just under the sur-

face and soon came to a boil. This concern about the health and status of dance was what everyone really wanted to talk about. It is a feeling that I get every time I talk to an artist or a company. In fact every time there is a presenter and some dance artists in a room, that feeling is there. The artists carry dreams and aspirations with them; the presenter is their opportunity to get their work seen. And because there are a limited number of performance dates available in this country, the presenter inevitably has a profound impact on any dancer's career. Add to that equation the dancer's short performance life and you begin to understand, for example, how delaying a presentation by a year or two has potent consequences.

The general conversation about dance in the past few years in Canada has been about "over supply." Too many dance artists are creating too much work — and not all of it is good. There is some truth to that. But there is also a lot of dance that is excellent, dance that deserves a wide audience but never gets seen. Why? Because in general terms, the audience for dance is small.

We dance presenters are passionate about what we do. But these days we feel increasingly challenged. In Victoria, I could easily program two seasons each year with work I believe in and still have 10 pieces left over to put into a festival. As a result of that over-abundance I sometimes brood in my office, or stare into the distance at dinner, or put down my book at bedtime and think: *If I present A, that'll be my challenging work that season, one I'll lose money on. Which means I need to present B so that I can recoup the financial loss. But, does B advance the art form?* Trust me, the conversations in my head go round and round endlessly — it's a puzzle built on a three-legged table. The season needs to be excellent artistically. It has to work within a strict budget, and must be dynamic enough to sell to a wide public. As presenters, we sell excitement by offering a unique experience. And, boy, are the stakes ever high: one programming failure and you can lose the confidence of the audience. Then you spend the next three seasons re-building. It's terrifying.

What to do? I told a few people at the meetings in Halifax that the dance community in Canada needs Mike Holmes, the great Canadian handyman. Over the years we have built our "house." We've plastered over bits and renovated others, stuff has been added on, and we've outgrown the rooms. We need Mike to come in, pull the walls down, and get the house back to its foundations so we can rebuild. Or is it always going to be this way — with a presenter mediating between a dancer with dreams and an audience with expectations? How much longer can we have a model for dance presentation that is half art and half sales? Either way, I think the time is ripe to have a conversation about the state of the art before the lid blows off and the pot boils over. The desire was there in Halifax, but it's so big we're all a little afraid of it. **FN**

Stephen White

# SARAH MURPHY DYSON HITS THE BIG CITY

Sometime this summer, I received an e-mail that Sarah had sent out to most of her address list, telling us all that she and husband Johnny Wright had auditioned and had been picked up to be in the North American premiere of the stage musical *Dirty Dancing*.

For those of you who don't know, Sarah is a Victoria native who for several years was a principal dancer at Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Her husband Johnny Wright was also a principal at RWB.

When I was putting together this newsletter, I asked Sarah to give me an update. And after reading her e-mail, I decided not to edit it in any way because you can feel the excitement in every sentence. Here's what she has to say about her experience:

*"Moved here (Toronto) end of August, have been rehearsing 6 days a week, 8 hours a day since then and yet we are EXCITED to go to "work" every day. We have been in the Royal Alexandra Theatre for the last three weeks and we have an audience in a week. Previews begin Oct 31 and the show officially opens Nov 15th (and my parents are coming!) [Bill and Maureen Murphy Dyson]. I am very featured in the ensemble, I dance so much it is unbelievable. I have an incredible partner, Christopher Tierney, who has danced with Hubbard Street (Chicago), les Ballets Jazz de Montréal, toured with (Twyla Tharp's) Movin Out, was in Across the Universe... he is fantastic. I don't know when I will go on as Penny, but I will keep you posted.*

*Johnny is a swing so he has SO much work to do, to learn the men's tracks, but he is also working his butt off as Johnny Castle and is ready and waiting for when he will go on as Johnny. Hopefully it will be together, but at this point anything can happen.*

[Sarah and Johnny are both understudying the leads.]

*The entire cast is stunningly beautiful, talented beyond belief (acting, dancing and singing) AND... some of the most caring, loving, genuine people we've ever met. Doesn't that sound like an oxymoron? Neither of us has EVER been so ridiculously happy in any job, the fact that we are both in this show is nothing short of a miracle, and the energy and camaraderie and the excitement to perform this show is magical. It*

*really truly is. I am absolutely bubbling over, I can't even do it justice in words. It is the same about the cast and it is the same about the show. I cannot wait for people to see it, because it is not just like the movie, it is MORE than the movie... it allows you to understand all the characters more and to really feel like you are at the Kellermans. I have no doubt that it is going to be a phenomenal show.*

*And the dancing... We have learned almost every kind of social dancing (foxtrot, mambo, merengue, etc) and the "dirty dancing"... it is SO HOT. For me it is so different than classical ballet, it has allowed me this incredible freedom that I have never experienced before. One of the girls paid me the ultimate compliment by telling me that in those scenes you can't even tell I was ever a ballet dancer... I swear that's a good thing! :)*

*And then the music... live and FANTASTIC.*

*What else can I say, I am in heaven, here. I pinch myself every morning. We have a great place here, our neighbours are wonderful, our area is full of beautiful little shops and restaurants... every one has dogs so our dog Ralph loves it. We miss everyone in Winnipeg, but we are definitely where we are meant to be. Get out here soon! (:” FN*



## WHAT A TRIP(S)!

We still have space available (but it's going fast) on our dance tours in spring 2008. Both are hosted by me (Stephen White) and Bill Hamar.

### Big Apple Dance Tour May 15 - 20, 2008

Enjoy five fabulous nights in New York. Trip includes: return flights from Victoria; five nights accommodation at the Milford Plaza (one block from Times Square); five full American breakfasts; and, three lunches including a Picnic Lunch and Carnegie Deli

Guided tours including: Hop-on Hop-off Grayline City Tour; NY City Library; Food Tour of East Village; Radio City Music Hall; and, Alvin Ailey Dance School

Tickets for Opening Night Gala of American Ballet Theatre at the Metropolitan Opera House and Momix Dance at the Joyce Theatre. Optional Broadway Shows and Dining experiences. \$2,195 per person (double occupancy)

### Second City Dance & Architectural Tour May 22 - 28, 2008

Enjoy six sensational nights in Chicago.

Trip includes: return Flights from Victoria; six nights accommodation at Marriott Chicago on the Magnificent Mile; and, five full American breakfasts plus Sunday brunch.

Guided tours including: Riverboat Architectural Tour; and, architectural tour of Frank Lloyd Wright neighbourhood in Oak Park.

Entrance to: Art Institute of Chicago and Field Museum

Attend: Joffrey Ballet performance, Second City Comedy Club

Dine out at Lou Malnati's Deep Dish Pizza and enjoy a cooking class at The Chopping Block. Optional performances and a night out at a blues club available. \$2,195 per person (double occupancy)

For more information: contact Bill Hamar, Bill@BlaneysTravel.com, 477-3550

Ask Bill about combining both tours for \$3,575.

### Victoria's Ten Year Dance

Recently, a small group of Victoria's dance community gathered around my kitchen table to have what would be an animated conversation about Victoria ten years from now. What did we imagine and what could Dance Victoria do to help get the community there? Truth is, it's pretty much impossible to be a dancer in Victoria and make a living from it — there just aren't enough opportunities. Although with Ballet Victoria and now Canadian Pacific Ballet, there is a commitment from two local companies to building a professional core of dancers.

Most of the people in my kitchen that day were mature artists, interested in creating work and looking for ways to do it with the very meagre resources available to them. There was talk of a "dance centre" with studios and offices. The conversation also focused on the need for an administrator — one individual who could do a little work for everyone — some publicity here, a grant proposal there. And of course presentation — somehow, a way for the community to showcase the work that they are doing once a year.

We didn't make any hard and fast plans, but the conversation has started.

### Annual General Meeting

Thanks to all those who attended our meeting on October 21. We had a good meeting, celebrating the very real accomplishments of Dance Victoria in our 10th Anniversary Season (2006/07). Highlights included the establishment of an Endowment Fund at the Victoria Foundation, an anniversary gala and other receptions through the year, a growth in audience of more than 2,000, contracting a Director of Development and a surplus of just over \$20,000 to add to the Society's working capital.

As mentioned in the Nutcracker story in this newsletter, Dr. Allana Lindgren spoke to us about the "social relevance" of Dance Victoria's current season, introducing ideas intended to make us think and debate what we are seeing on stage. In all a very pleasant evening among friends. (P.S.: The cheese plate from Charelli's was out of this world, as always).

## STRANGERS IN OUR MIDST

We do it every year — invite a dance company to come to Victoria for three weeks so they can start or continue working on a new dance work that will eventually come back to Victoria when it's on tour. We call it a creation residency. This year our residency features a collection of international artists and it will happen over three weeks in December. Lee Su-Feh of Vancouver's battery opera is working with Benoît Lachambre, a Montreal dancer/choreographer, in the development of a new work called *Body, Scan and Influence*. They have contracted with dance artists from Vancouver and Europe. In total there will be five dancers here.

The work has already benefited from some studio time in Belgium and Montréal. Su-Feh describes the work: "Body, Scan and Influence explores the human body that, in its porousness, is a conduit through which our personal and collective history, memory and desires pass — and how touch can transmit and transform this habitus. The project asks if we can inhabit this body, with all its imperfections and injuries, fully and honestly in the presence of the Other without loss of structural, emotional and political integrity."

While they are here, the company will show some of the work at a lecture demonstration to an invited audience, and offer daily class to ten local dancers. On December 14, ten dance presenters from across Canada will come to Victoria. That day they will visit four studios to see new work in

development by Vancouver dancers Day Helesic and Chengxin Wei, Noam Gagnon and Victoria dance artist Stacey Horton, as well as the resident company.

This annual residency is one way in which Dance Victoria supports the development of new work while also offering opportunities for the local dance community to benefit from having the company here. **FN**

*This year the creation residency is sponsored by Jawl & Bundon, Barristers and Solicitors.*

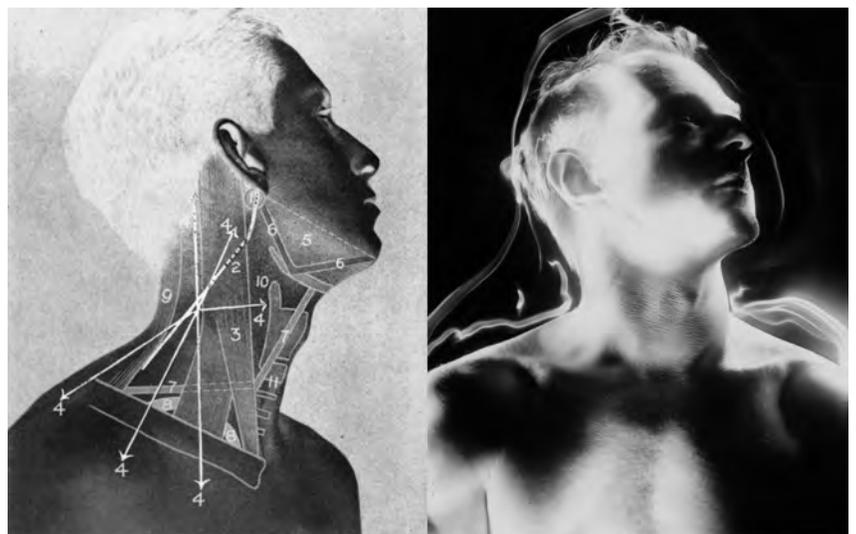


Photo: Robert Flynn

# RECENT DONORS

A heart-felt THANKYOU to all of our donors to date this season. (Donations from July 1 – October 25 are listed here)

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# THE MEIJER'S OFFICE



**By Yolanda Meijer,  
Director of Development**

## Support of Individuals Makes Impact

On behalf of Stephen, myself and our board of directors, I want to thank all of you who responded so generously to our recent request for support. You may be surprised

to learn that Dance Victoria receives only a very small amount of funding from government sources (just 15% of our almost \$1 million budget).

This means that your contributions — through the purchase of tickets to our shows and your generous donations— are, quite simply, the only reason that Dance Victoria is here and growing.

Last year we started our Endowment Fund. Each year, we need to raise at least \$10,000 to qualify for the government matching programs. I am very pleased to let you know that we have achieved that objective again this year. Although only modest in size now, the Endowment Fund, as it continues to grow in the coming years, will play a significant role in the long-term sustainability of dance presentation in our community.

As the Director of Development, I am always looking for new ways to expand our fundraising activities. Last year, we held the inaugural Stars On Stage – Celebrity Dance Challenge to great applause and we are currently enticing new participants for the April 18, 2008, event. Not only is Stars On Stage an important fundraising event for Dance Victoria, it is also an outrageously good time. Rarely have I experienced such energy in a theatre. Please be sure to join us for the next event. Tickets will be available late January.

If you have questions about any of our development activities, please call me at 386-3844 or send me an email at [development@dancevictoria.com](mailto:development@dancevictoria.com). **FN**

## Dancing on the Island

An assortment of upcoming dance performances on Vancouver Island

### **MOVE: The Company** **Trap Door Party** **Metro Studio**

**Nov 25 • 8pm**

**Featuring: Scott**

**Augustine, Amber Funk-Barton, Josh Beamish, Heather Dotto, Brenna McLeod and Peter Starr**

Vancouver's MOVE presents *Trap Door Party*, a new full-length contemporary dance creation for six dancers by Artistic Director Josh Beamish. *Trap Door Party* takes a look at the ideal of a utopia, through the rise, fall and eventual destruction of the *Trap Door Party*, a place where six strangers are given the chance to leave behind everything they know and start anew.

Tickets at [www.ticketweb.ca](http://www.ticketweb.ca) or the door. All tickets \$20.

### **Canadian Pacific Ballet**

#### **La Flute Magique**

**Nov 15: Port Alberni (Alberni District Secondary School) • 7:30pm**

**Nov 16: Parksville (Chrysler Theatre) • 8pm**

First produced at the McPherson Playhouse in Victoria in May 2007 this enchanting full-length ballet by Riccardo Drigo is now on tour. *La Flute Magique* follows the story of Luc and Lise, the magic of young love, a mysterious gift and the transcendent power of a random act of kindness.

#### **Winter Gala**

**Dec 28 • 8pm**

#### **Alix Golden Hall**

Celebrate the joy of the season with Canadian Pacific Ballet and special guest stars, performing together in the first annual fundraising gala.

Tickets 380-2522.

### **Gaite Parisienne** **With Rutland Square and Capriccio**

**Feb 14 - 16 • 2pm & 8pm**  
**McPherson Playhouse**

*Gaite Parisienne* is a Ballet Russe classic that transports us to fin de siècle Paris and its street café culture. Following the intermingled loves and lives of a flower-seller, a Peruvian, a Baron, an actress, a soldier, and glove-seller, the audience experiences a street café resplendent with pick-pocketing coquettes and Can-Can dancers. Canadian premiere.

Ticket information: Canadian Pacific Ballet 1-877-335-2522

### **triPOD dance collective**

#### **CURVE**

**Metro Studio Theatre**  
**Nov 22 • 8pm**

triPOD dance collective presents *CURVE*, an evening of innovative and inspiring contemporary dance that includes an integrated duet titled *Wingspan Three*, performed and choreographed by Geoff McMurchy and Lori Hamar with additional choreography by Shannon McMurchy. Additionally, a program of improvisational exploration, including a collaboration with special guest artists Continuum Consort! Also, a sneak peek at work in progress by Shelly Tognazzini. Performance followed by a talkback session with the artists.

In support of the Metro Studio capital campaign.

Reserve tickets at 388-0600. Also available at Lyle's Place.

## COMING SOON

Remember, as a subscriber you can buy additional tickets to any performance throughout the year and receive the subscriber discount. Just call the McPherson Box Office at 386-6121 and ask for the "Friend of Subscriber" price.

### SPRING SEASON

#### **Royal Winnipeg Ballet** **The Sleeping Beauty**

March 4 & 5 • 8 pm

Royal Theatre

Tchaikovsky's brilliant score and Canada's most successful touring ballet company, with live music.

#### **Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal**

#### **MAPA & Les Chambres des Jacques**

March 14 & 15 • 8 pm

Royal Theatre

Two new works from one of Canada's most dynamic companies.

#### **Rubberbandance Group**

#### **Elastic Perspectives**

April 4 & 5 • 8 pm

McPherson Playhouse

Hip hop meets ballet in an extraordinary fusion of poise and posture.

#### **Compagnie Marie Chouinard**

#### **bODY\_rEMIX/gOLDBERG\_vARIATIONS**

April 29 • 8 pm ONE NIGHT ONLY!

Royal Theatre

Iconoclast Marie Chouinard is breaking all the rules of ballet. Wild and imaginative. Not suitable for children

#### **White Space Dance**

#### **Cinderella, Another Story**

**Nov. 30 • 8pm**

**Dec 1 • 1pm + 8pm**

A fun-filled romp set in the 1920s around the House d'Rella, a fashion house and speak-easy hellbent on ignoring prohibition. No tutus, no

princes with way too much attitude, White Space Dance is a small Victoria-based company committed to getting ballet out of its box, letting it loose to tangle with other dance forms.

Call 385-2622 for information [www.AcademyofBallet.ca](http://www.AcademyofBallet.ca)



## Youth Pass

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