

FOOTNOTES

sponsored by

**FASTRAC
MAIL SERVICE**

MAR 2008

#23

Royal Winnipeg Ballet's *The Sleeping Beauty*

ROYAL THEATRE

Tue March 4 • 8:00 pm
Wed March 5 • 1:00 pm
Wed March 5 • 8:00 pm

Running time (incl. intermission):
2 hours 10 minutes

SEASON SPONSOR





THE HISTORY OF BEAUTY

The origins of the fairy tale *The Sleeping Beauty* can be traced back to European folklore. The earliest published version of the tale appeared in Naples in 1674 as part of a collection of stories written by Giambattista Basile, a poet and soldier.

The next significant version of the tale was penned by French writer Charles Perrault (1628 – 1703). Perrault’s story (titled *La Belle au bois dormant*) includes illicit, non-consensual sex between the Prince and the Sleeping Beauty, and the character of a vengeful Queen (mother of the Prince), who demands the Prince and the beauty’s two children be cooked and served to the Prince for dinner. The cook substitutes goat and lamb and the children are spared but after a few more plot twists, the story ends very badly, with the Queen falling into a cauldron to be devoured alive by terrifying creatures.

Enter Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, just over 100 years later. The German brothers were actually linguists, interested in recording the intonation of various dialects and the evolution of word pronunciation. But beginning in 1807, they also started to record folktales. It was the height of the great Romantic period and there was a keen interest in German folklore. The Grimms invited people to their home and asked them to tell the stories they had heard as children so they could transcribe them. Most often these invited “storytellers” were members of the aristocracy repeating the folk tales they had heard from servants. In their lifetime, the Grimm brothers would publish more than 85 tales and today world-wide sales of their fairy tales are third, behind the Bible and the works of William Shakespeare.

It is the Grimm version that most closely resembles the story of the ballet we know today. In 1888, Ivan Vsevolozhsky, Director of the Imperial Theatres in Russia, commissioned composer Pytor Tchaikovsky to create the score for a new ballet called *The Sleeping Beauty*. Vsevolozhsky himself wrote the libretto for the ballet and designed all the costumes. Audiences had been declining at the Imperial Theatres in the 1880s, and Vsevolozhsky was considering the dismissal of legendary choreographer Marius Petipa, but instead decided to give him one more chance. Thus the “team” for *The Sleeping Beauty* was established.

The work premiered in January, 1890. It was instantly successful and is still considered to be one of the most lavish productions in the history of ballet. Vsevolozhsky used his influence to procure extra production money that he poured into sets and costumes. In the first act of the ballet, the “fairies” or wise women are invited to the castle to celebrate the birth of the princess, and endow her with gifts of beauty, grace, generosity, etc. The fifth fairy (Violante) offers the gift of temperament. Petipa, fascinated with the recent invention of electricity, choreographed this section to demonstrate its sparkling power and darting nature.

Tchaikovsky was paid 3,000 rubles for the score and was provided a bonus of 2,000 rubles because the score was considered to be a masterpiece. In 2008, the 5,000 ruble fee would be equal to about \$72,000.

The role of Aurora (Sleeping Beauty) is considered one of the most challenging for a ballerina as it requires great athletic ability in combination with pure, classical technique. Royal Winnipeg Ballet’s version of *Beauty* premiered in 2002. It is based on the choreography of Petipa and was restaged by Ekaterina Chtchelkanova. **FN**

Photo: Gregg Elgin

DANCE VICTORIA

Presenting Excellence in Dance

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

Bill Hamar

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

- President** Colleen Gibson
- Vice President** Diane Dakers
- Treasurer** Nancy Glerup
- Secretary** Jane Tice
- Directors**

- Jennifer Charlesworth
- Heather Frost
- Carlos MacDonald
- John Shields
- Kimberly Tuson

If you would like to be involved with the Dance Victoria, call: (250) 595-1829 or email: producer@dancevictoria.com. Address: 2236 Hampshire Tce., Victoria, BC V8S 3G9

Footnotes is written by Stephen White (unless otherwise noted) and proofed by Anne Moon.



DANCE VICTORIA
Presenting Excellence in Dance

SPONSORED BY
Il Terrazzo
RESTAURANTE

FREE YOUTH PASS
VALID ONLY WITH SCHOOL ID - DATES: APRIL 20 - JUL 2008

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY / PROV / PC _____

SCHOOL _____

PHONE _____

Youth Pass

Sponsored by Il Terrazzo Ristorante

www.DanceVictoria.com

Marie Chouinard Named Officer of the Order of Canada

It was a great day for contemporary art when just a month ago, the Order of Canada was bestowed on choreographer Marie Chouinard. I say it was a great day because Chouinard has always been provocative, never mainstream. And yet her company has toured extensively in Europe and Asia. I applaud the Governor General (and her advisors) for having the courage to honour an important, innovative Canadian artist who has been moving the art form forward by pushing at its edges.

Chouinard's company is here for one night only at the Royal Theatre on April 29.

2008/09 Series Timetable

We're just in the process of finalizing all of the details in our subscription brochure but to give you a heads up, we expect to be on sale for Ensemble subscribers on March 10, other subscribers on April 14 and for the general public on May 1.

You'll receive your subscription brochure and order form in the mail.

Salon Series

I'm still working on the details but I am playing with the idea of creating a "salon series" next season: a lecture demonstration with a choreographer; a discussion, and an invited rehearsal (or something like that). We have been doing things like this already, but I want to pull them together and formalize them.

At the end of this season, on April 29, we will experiment with one of these salons. Immediately following the Compagnie Marie Chouinard performance, I will moderate a conversation between the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria's Curator of Contemporary Art, Lisa Baldissera; Aventa Ensemble Artistic Director, Bill Linwood; and University of Victoria Dance Historian, Dr. Allana Lindgren. We will be talking about Chouinard's work in the context of contemporary art practice.

Dance Current

Tucked into the envelope with this newsletter is a small flyer advertising Canada's national dance magazine, *Dance Current*. I encourage you to consider subscribing to this publication. I've been a subscriber for several years and find it's an excellent way to stay in touch with our national community. The magazine features interviews with up-and-coming dance practitioners — many of whom you'll see in Victoria at one point or another. As well, the longer in-depth articles focus on issues in our small national community. There are always excellent writers and Publisher/Editor Megan Andrews is smart, open and insightful. She's also a dancer. I think one of the things I admire most about the publication is that it is one of those rare Toronto-based magazines that truly does cover the country.

Wen Wei Dance wins the Alcan Award

The Alcan Award is a \$60,000 prize bestowed annually on a BC artist by the Vancouver East Cultural Centre. One year the award is given to a dance company, the next year to a music ensemble and in the third year, a theatre company is recognized. The prize is intended to support the development of a new work.

Wen Wei Wang, whose work *Unbound* (with the tiny red Chinese shoes) was partially developed during a residency in Victoria in 2006 and later played the McPherson Playhouse to packed houses, is the recipient of the 2009 award. He will create a new piece for five men and one woman inspired by his experiences in boarding school as a young dancer in Maoist China. **FN**

Master Class with RWB's Mark Biocca

Wednesday, March 5 • 10 am – 11:15 am
Ballet Victoria Studio, 1201 Fort (Truth Centre)
\$15 general - \$10 for Dance Victoria Youth Pass and Dance Card members

Mark Biocca was born in Rome and received his dance training at Centro Danza La Sylphide in Rome and the Royal Ballet Upper School in London. While training at the Royal Ballet School, he received awards for his choreography. As a student he danced with the Royal Ballet and the Birmingham Royal Ballet.

Biocca made his professional debut in 2004 with Northern Ballet Theatre in Leeds. In addition to ballet, he has performed in various musical theatre productions, concerts and plays in Italy. Biocca is new to the RWB this season.

In the Master Class Mark will emphasize using one's body to its fullest potential, with special focus given to the clear use of footwork, music and port de bras to facilitate one's dancing. The class will also include lots of work on traveling and stage presence.

Register on-line at www.DanceVictoria.com

Pre-Show Chats

SPONSORED BY  BIRKS®

Tuesday March 4 & Wednesday March 5
7:20 pm
Royal Theatre, West Lobby

Join us in the lobby at the Royal Theatre at 7:20 pm on performance evenings for an informal pre-show chat. Royal Winnipeg Ballet's Artistic Director André Lewis will bring a company member with him to the chats for *The Sleeping Beauty*. Artistic Director Louis Robitaille will be on hand prior to both evening performances of Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal.

PLEASE NOTE: There will be no pre-show chat prior to the 1 pm matinee performance of *The Sleeping Beauty* on March 5.

ACROSS CONTINENTS: Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal

It's late January as I write this and impossible to make contact with Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal (*bjm_danse*) because they are on an extensive tour of Italy and France and don't return home until mid-February. I had constructed some wonderful questions for one of the dancers, thinking we could do an e-mail interview, but his access to the internet is fleeting and understandably, no one wants to sit in a dingy café for an hour while they're touring France. This in spite of the fact I promised to print his photo.

So I began looking more closely at the work the company is bringing to Victoria and the more I probed the more it became clear that the real story about *bjm* these days is their new "international cachet". Truth is they have been touring to Europe off and on for a number of years now (the company was founded in 1972) but this new cachet is different. It extends beyond the company's tour dates and is actually at the core of the work we'll see in Victoria. Increasingly, *bjm*'s Artistic Director, Louis Robitaille has been drawing international choreographers to create new work for his 13 astounding dancers.

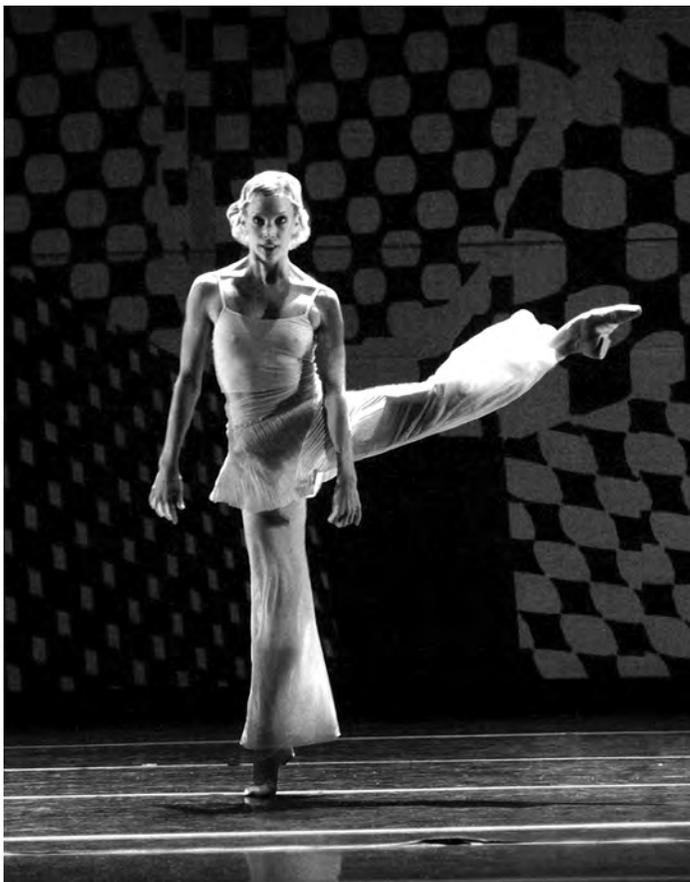
For example, the program we will see in Victoria includes a work by Brazilian choreographer Rodrigo Pederneiras followed in the second half by a work that was created by Canadian-born, New York-based Azure Barton. And while both choreographers

are very interested in the "dancer" their approaches to making new work are quite different.

Pederneiras is resident choreographer of Brazil's internationally renowned contemporary dance company Grupo Corpo. Pederneiras wanted to be a dancer from the time he was a young boy. As a young adult in the mid-70s he studied with an Argentinean choreographer in Buenos Aires. That experience convinced him that choreography was actually his calling and in 1978 he became the resident choreographer for the company.

The company itself was founded in 1975 in Belo Horizonte (Brazil's third largest urban centre) by the six Pederneiras brothers and their friends. In the beginning, Rodrigo's parents gave up most of their house so that the company would have a place to create and rehearse. Grupo Corpo remains a family enterprise with many of the founding members continuing to play a central role in the administration and development of the company.

Pederneiras creates dances through music. He finds that music first and then choreographs dances that respond to it. For me, the most striking aspect of the finished work is its composition. His strength is stage picture or moving dancers on the stage. A group will form and dance in unison only to splinter into a smaller group while the first group reorganizes in a new way —



from left: Sharon Booth; Lourdes Greco & Robert Knowles in Rodrigo Pederneiras' *MAFA*; Photo: Nicole Rivett

and so it goes, intriguing cascading patterns creating the sense of a never-ending dynamic. In terms of the movement, Pederneiras starts with ballet shapes but allows them to be influenced by Brazilian forms like samba, bossa nova, carnival and capoeira. One of the questions I intended for the dancer interview was how Canadian dancers work to get these influences into their bodies. For the dancers of Grupo Corpo this movement is innate, it's part of their culture. But for a Canadian in chilly Montréal all that languid sensuality might be tougher to access.

Aszure Barton's work is the second half of the Victoria program. Barton is relatively young but, much like Crystal Pite, is already enjoying quite a bit of success as a choreographer. She is resident choreographer at bjm. She is currently developing a second piece to complement *Les Chambres des Jacques* (the production we'll see here). When it's finished the two pieces will make a full evening program that will premiere at the Canada Dance Festival in Ottawa (June 2008).

Barton works in a unique way. She likes to create a safe, supportive environment in the studio. She invites the dancers to reveal their personal stories, their aspirations, and their anxiety. The dancers write out their dreams, talk openly about ideas and circumstances specific to them. This becomes the raw material for the

dance. Through her own special alchemy, she is able to pull these elements together into a whole giving physicality to ideas. It sounds like artspeak — but it's the only way I can express it. The result is a very dynamic work with lots of partnering and some highlighted solo work that for me is sensual, textured, idiosyncratic (at times) and very intimate. The music she selects runs the gamut from classical to klezmer. I think you'll enjoy the "density" or layers — and it is after-all, bjm so the dancing is true and strong.

Having watched the development of bjm over the past few years, I am impressed with the new stamps on its passport. Robitaille is to be commended for opening his dancers to so many different experiences and bringing exceptional international choreography to his public. **FN**

Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal

MAPA and Les Chambres des Jacques
Royal Theatre

8 pm • Friday, March 14 and Saturday, March 15

RUNNING TIME (INCLUDING INTERMISSION): APPROX. 1 HOUR 40 MINUTES



DEAD MAN DANCING

I've always been a little wooden. My shoulders are stiff, my mannerisms a little mechanical. Fifteen years ago a theatre critic reviewing my portrayal of an onstage character in a play commented "Stephen White was wooden in the role of..." I asked my partner Bill if this was true and he said "Yah, pretty much."

I remember the first time I became aware of my tendency to stiffness — it's funny how we never really see ourselves the way that others do. I was in my second year of intensive actor training. Maybe I was 20 years old. One of our acting teachers gave our small class an interesting acting exercise. We were to select someone from our class and observe them closely over a period of a few weeks. She wanted us to then construct a short scene in which we portrayed the person that we had observed and then bring it to class.

She very specifically directed us to get under the skin of our selected classmate. Our objective was not to "play" the person we had observed but to actually "become them". And the scene we were to present was to be a slice of real life — someone making breakfast, or talking on the phone — nothing with a dramatic arc.

The day came when we were to present our short scenes to each other in class. It's funny how I can no longer recall which person it was that I shadowed, but I remember distinctly the fellow who shadowed me. His name was Danny Bedard. He was quite an outrageous, flamboyant young man, known for his propensity to be over-the-top on stage and in real life. Danny was also my partner in fencing class. I'll always remember his fencing technique — he would close his eyes tight and fearlessly charge at me with full force, flailing his foil like a madman. It was danger-

ous and scary! I had no alternative but to run for cover.

So I watched as Danny portrayed me. I admit to being a little nervous but also fascinated. He chose to set his scene in my apartment and among other things, he captured me watering plants and clearing books off a table. As the scene unfolded and Danny began his impersonation I thought to myself, "This is unbelievably poor. He's moving like a wooden mannequin — like that puppet Howdy Doody. This must be a parody, a joke." When he had finished, the class was silent for a moment and then they broke into thunderous applause. Danny's portrayal of me was hailed as "the best thing you've ever done, Danny." Even the teacher, not known for flattery, was practically effusive in her praise. "Good work, fine observation and excellent manifestation." And they went on — "When you picked up the watering can and stretched to water the hanging plant, I thought I was watching Stephen himself!" The blood was pounding in my ears. This is what I moved like? How could anyone love me?

I still shudder when I think about it.

So now what have I done? I've signed up to compete in *Stars on Stage* (keep reading for ticket information). Yep — I swallowed hard and figured life after 50 is all about facing your biggest fears. On April 18, at the McPherson Playhouse, I'll be dancing a beautifully fluid waltz with dance instructor extraordinaire Wanda Kivitt. I wonder if she knows what she's taken on?

I'll be writing a blog on our website (www.DanceVictoria.com) which you'll locate on our *Stars on Stage* page. I invite you to read about my experience learning to loosen up. **FN**

Belfry
Theatre

08
FESTIVAL 08
FEBRUARY – APRIL 2008

FEBRUARY 26 – MARCH 1
ANY NIGHT
DANIEL ARNOLD & MEDINA HAHN

FEBRUARY 28 – MARCH 15
THE JOSEPHINE KNOT
MEG BRAEM

MARCH 4 – 8
"A SMALL JEWEL" TORONTO STAR
LÉO
ROSA LABORDE

MARCH 11 – 15
THE SHOES
LEE COOKSON

MARCH 26 – APRIL 5
MY CHERNOBYL
AARON BUSHKOWSKY

TICKETS 385-6815 from \$18 – \$21
Student discounts available
1291 Gladstone at Fernwood
Visit www.BELFRY.BC.CA
for full FESTIVAL 08 details

SUPPORTED BY

PrintSmith
group

THRIFTY
FOODS

RBC
Foundation

M.D. CHARLTON CO. LTD.
Law Enforcement Equipment & Sporting Goods Distributors

Zone 91
SPORTS TRUCK

vancouver
foundation

Canadian
Heritage

Patrimoine
canadien

Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts
du Canada

BRITISH COLUMBIA
ARTS COUNCIL

BRITISH
COLUMBIA

CRD
Making a difference... together

DANCE SEEN



Photo: Helene Cyr

Back in November, I headed down to San Francisco to see the work of a company I'd been introduced to last spring in Montpellier, Alonzo King's *LINES* Ballet. They were dancing a new program to launch their 25th anniversary season in San Francisco and I was encouraged to attend because the company wanted to bring this new program to Victoria for the 2008/09 season.

The evening premiered two new works commissioned for the occasion — a 40-minute work called *Irregular Pearl* accompanied by a Baroque chamber orchestra, and a piece set to an original tabla composition called *Rasa*. (The tabla is a small hand drum of Northern India). King has a small, racially diverse company of eight extraordinary dancers. I got a real feeling that this was a company that cared very much about getting it right, but in the most generous and authentic way. They are interested in mastering their craft. Certainly, the sold-out performance I attended in San Francisco's Yerba Buena Centre was warm and open. The audience clearly loves this company. And when the lights came up on stage I knew why right away.

The first work, danced en pointe, was exquisite. All the members of this company have a natural musicality and an ease that in some ways belies their mastery of complex footwork and partnering. King's composition was gorgeous and of course the live music (harpsichord and strings — which, by the way, we are bringing to Victoria) added a beautiful resonance. At intermission I leaned over to my partner Bill and said, "Well that was pretty much perfect as far as I'm concerned."

The second half allowed the dancers to show off. It was fast and dynamic. Danced to the tabla composition, the dancers pushed themselves to their physical limits and the result was impressive. When it was all over, the audience gave *LINES* Ballet and its genius choreographer, Alonzo King, a sustained standing ova-



Chang Jun (top), Brett Conway (bottom) in *LINES* Ballet's *Irregular Pearl*. Photo: Mary Sahl

tion. I'm really excited about bringing this company to Victoria but frankly, I'm also a little nervous because they are not known here and, as always I have some box office targets to make. I really hope the Victoria audience will trust me on this one. I know you won't be disappointed.

Another smaller work I saw by dance/theatre artist Tara Cheyenne Friedenberg last November will also be on our 2008/09 season. Vancouver-based Friedenberg has been building a national reputation for her solo "character-based" works. She was last seen in Victoria when Intrepid Theatre presented her piece about an outcast 16-year-old-boy totally absorbed in heavy metal music and war games. In *Nick and Juanita: Livin' in My Dreams* Friedenberg is one part actor, one part stand-up comic and all parts dancer. She has an amazing ability to use dance as subtext, often contradicting the spoken text. And her physical ability is breath-taking.

Nick is a lothario — a gift to women (in his own mind) — a cheesy talk show host who takes his celebrity very seriously. Juanita is a party-girl who always falls for the wrong guy — and, you guessed it, she falls, for Nick. Friedenberg's ability to embody these two characters is uncanny. The night I saw this piece in Vancouver, people were practically rolling in the aisles. How often does dance do this? **FN**

Dance Victoria is grateful to the following sponsors and funding partners for investing in our 2007/08 Season:

SEASON SPONSOR	Victoria BMW/MINI Victoria
PRESENTING SPONSORS	
<i>Nutcracker</i>	Mayfair Shopping Centre
<i>The Sleeping Beauty</i>	Illuminations Lighting Solutions
<i>Les Ballets jazz de Montréal</i>	Derma Spa
RESIDENCY PROGRAM	Jawl & Bundon, Barristers & Solicitors
PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE	Horne Coupar, Barristers & Solicitors
YOUTH PASS	Il Terrazzo Ristorante
PRE-SHOW CHATS	Birks
NEWSLETTER	Fastrac Mail Service
NUTCRACKER STORY TIME	Canada West Skating Ltd.
LOCAL NUTCRACKER ENSEMBLE	West Coast Academy of Performing Arts
MEDIA	Times Colonist & 98.5 The Ocean
ACCOMMODATION	Magnolia Hotel & Spa
TRANSPORTATION	Helijet Airways International
VENUE AND BOX OFFICE	Royal & McPherson Theatres
PUBLIC SECTOR AND FOUNDATION FUNDING	Department of Canadian Heritage
	Canada Council for the Arts
	BC Arts Council
	CRD Arts Development
	Vancouver Foundation
	Victoria Foundation

***Stars on Stage:* Community Dance Challenge**

NOW ON SALE!

McPherson Playhouse

Friday, April 18 • 8 pm

Doors 7 pm

Tickets: \$60 & \$40 • After Party: \$20

Box Office: 386-6121

Last year we had so much fun with our dance challenge *Stars on Stage* that we decided to produce it one more time. We've rounded off some of the rough edges and lowered ticket prices to bring you an affordable great evening of entertainment whose proceeds benefit Dance Victoria's Dance Futures program.

In 2007, the ushers at the McPherson Playhouse had never heard anything like it. When the lights went down for *Stars on Stage*, they thought they'd made a mistake. The audience was cheering so loudly, they were certain they were working a rock concert. That's what happens when you put eight local personalities together with eight professional dance instructors, give them three months to work up a routine and then set them loose to compete for the big prize. The excitement is contagious.

This year Dance Victoria went further afield and asked a number of community leaders if they were up to a dance challenge. *Stars on Stage* 2008 welcomes back co-host Michael Forbes (98.5 The Ocean) and Diane Dakers (Royal BC Museum). Our celebrity commentators in 2008 are Kim Breiland (Stages Dance), Sherry Black (BroadStreet Dance), Paul Destrooper (Ballet Victoria) and Lynda Raino (Lynda Raino Dance). On Friday, April 18, the audience will vote for its favourite duo. Featured dances include Hip Hop, Flamenco, Salsa, Swing, Ballroom, Tango, Latin and the Waltz.

Stars on Stage starts early with a strut up the red carpet to live dance demonstrations and a killer silent auction in the lobby beginning at 7 pm. And when the competition is over, join us for a champagne party complete with dance floor and DJ, delectable catering and all the stars you've just admired on stage.

Tickets are now on sale – phone the McPherson at 386-6121 or check out the event and buy tickets online at www.DanceVictoria.com

2008 Competitive Partners

- Victoria Police Constable Andy Dunstan and Nicole Steeves (Hip Hop)
- Victoria Firefighter Kaj Fulton and Monique Salez (Flamenco)
- Lawyer Michael O'Connor and Christina Morrison (Salsa)
- Journalist Sarah Petrescu and Kevin Savage (Swing)
- Writer/Poet Linda Rogers and John de Pfyffer (Ballroom)
- Radio personality Joelle St. Clair and Robert Creese (Tango)
- Victoria City Councillor Charlayne Thornton-Joe and Ramon Yue (Latin)
- Dance Victoria Producer Stephen White and Wanda Kivitt (Waltz)

STILL TO COME

Rubberbandance Group

Elastic Perspectives

April 4 & 5 • 8 pm

McPherson Playhouse

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

Stars on Stage: Community Dance Challenge

April 18 • 8 pm

Red Carpet, dance demos and more at 7 pm

McPherson Playhouse

Cast your vote for your favourite dancing duo at Dance Victoria's annual fundraiser. An excellent evening of entertainment.

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



*Love!
Laugh!
Play!*

Clothing & accessories for women who like to have fun...

Maresa Boutique

2227 Oak Bay Ave.
Victoria 592-1412