

# FOOTNOTES

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#24

Rubberbandance Group  
*Elastic Perspective*

MCPHERSON PLAYHOUSE

Fri April 4 • 8:00 pm

Sat April 5 • 8:00 pm

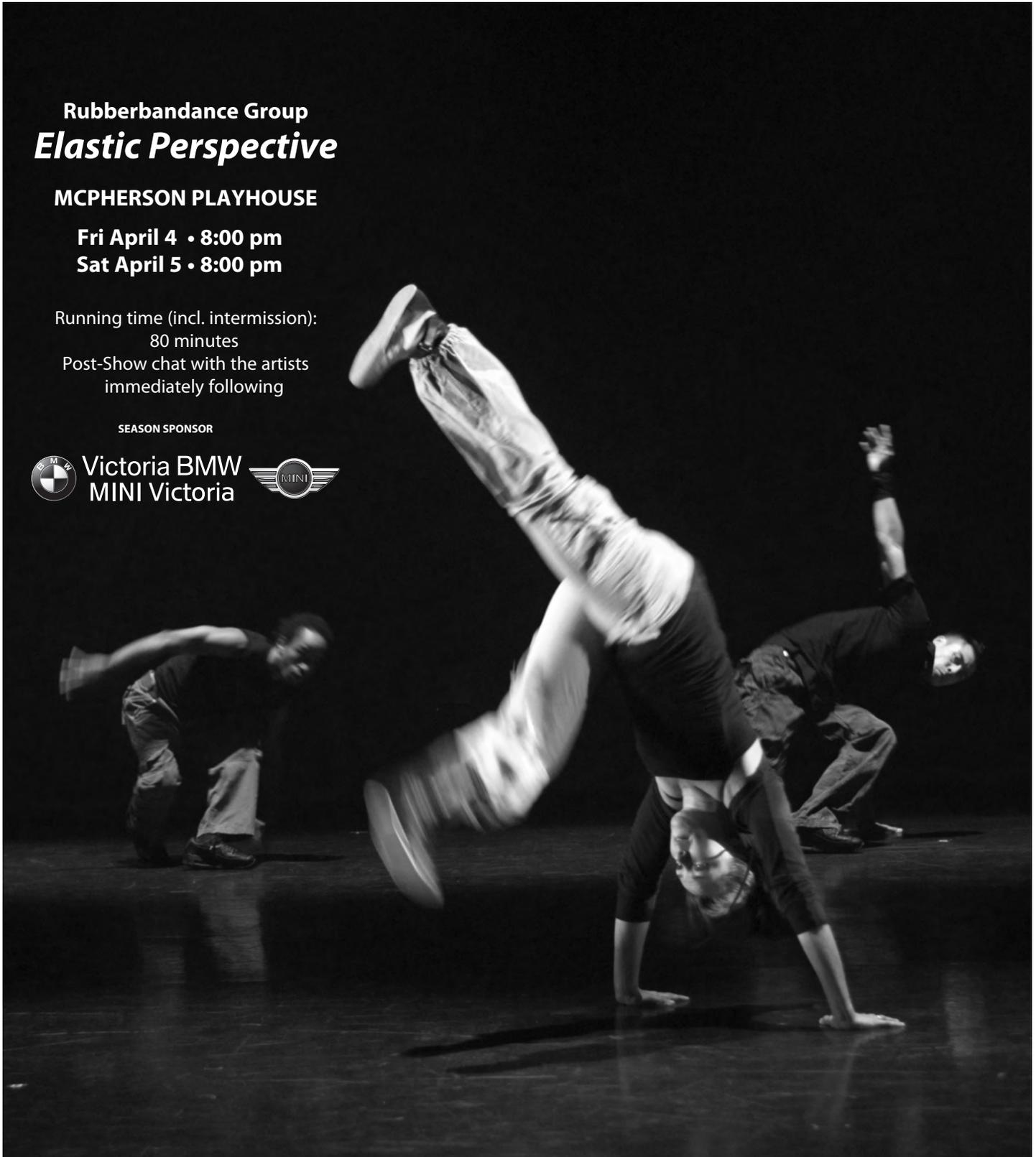
Running time (incl. intermission):  
80 minutes

Post-Show chat with the artists  
immediately following

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Joe Danny/Avellien, Julia Gunk, Victor Ouljads in *Elastic Perspective*. Photo: Christophe Duggan



# IN CONVERSATION WITH RUBBERBANDANCE: Victor Quijada & Anne Plamondon

**STEPHEN WHITE:** RBDG has been touring pretty steadily for the past two years, nationally and internationally. How has the show we'll see in Victoria, *Elastic Perspective*, evolved during that time period — have you fallen in and out of love with some of it?

**VICTOR QUIJADA:** Of course, when we began touring *Elastic Perspective*, it was a collection of our earliest works, dating from 2002/03. In the summer of 2007, we began presenting *Elastic Perspective Redux*, where we replaced one of the older 30-minute pieces (*Hasta La Proxima*) with *sHip sHop Shape Shifting* and *Reflections on Movement Particles*. This was to help broaden the scope of the work we had created.

**ANNE PLAMONDON:** Yes, I have I fallen in and out and in love again with these works. Being part of these pieces from the creation and seeing myself develop since we originally premiered them, I felt that it was crucial that these pieces would have a long life — particularly because of the physical nature of the work that was so foreign to me. From when we first performed it, it took time for me to become ready to do this work, mostly on the technical aspect of executing the dance and not the interpretive part, referring to the physical reality of the floorwork, and being upside down. I saw myself getting better at doing the work and presenting the work, which also had an overall general effect on the work. Even though the choreography has not changed, it seemed the work as a whole has evolved and developed, and it seems that *Elastic Perspective* is not the same show that we presented three years ago, the pieces are not the same as when we premiered them; and seeing other dancers getting into my parts and sharing some of my roles was inspiring, formative and allowed me to step back and to see the work, and ultimately fall back in love with it all.

**SW:** Anne, you are listed as Co-Artistic Director. What happens when you and Victor are in the studio — do you both shape the choreography?

**ANNE:** Well, first of all I should say, no I do not choreograph the work, I originally started working with Victor as a dancer, as the project was developing, I naturally found myself involved and participating in the overall planning and strategizing and organizing the future activities of RBDG. We discovered that together we completed each other in a way that it became obvious to Victor and I that it would benefit the company tremendously, and so I became the co-artistic director. It is a bit funny because it just kind of fell into my lap, it was never my goal to be a director or anything like that, I just wanted to dance, and specifically I wanted to see Victor's intention come alive because I believed in it so much. But the project just



Victor Quijada and Anne Plamondon in *Elastic Perspective*. Photos: Christopher Duggan

## 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.

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

*Footnotes* is written by Stephen White (unless otherwise noted) and proofed by Robert Moyes.

needed so much care; if I wanted this instrument to facilitate my development as a dancer, then I would need to help its growth. I needed to help it to help my own growth.

**SW: What would you say is the core of the work that you're doing?**

**VQ:** In 1998 I had the idea to take the things that had affected me most in my life — the power of art, and the power of hip hop — and to let them affect each other in order to bring forth a new language of movement theatre. I had no idea how I was going to do it, but I knew I would build RBDG in order to discover a way. In 2002, we embarked on that path.

**SW: What dance that you see do you find the most compelling?**

**VQ:** Hard to say...

**AP:** I like dance that keeps it a dance, and that keeps pushing the possibilities of dance: not necessarily by taking the dance out of the performance to make dance more interesting, but rather by pushing the boundaries of movement, style, or improvisation and questioning where dance hasn't been yet. I love to see people

move, and even though we are in a time where we are all mixing the different disciplines — and that is so rich and I think this is great — I still really want to see dance. I still want to see people onstage moving in a way that has never been seen: strong bodies that are technically agile and versatile; that are artistically mature and profound. In general I would say I am still hoping to be impressed with dance — above and beyond all the tools that we are exploring out there — without neglecting what dance still has to offer. Where else can it go?

**SW: What do you want the audience in Victoria to take away from your performance?**

**VQ:** I hope for them to be invigorated; I hope for them to feel powerful and inspired after watching *EP*. I want them to feel like anything is possible.

**AP:** Specifically with this show (*EP*) I want them to be happy and touched and surprised, and thrilled at the discovery they just made. I want to inspire them and keep alive the hope that dance is going somewhere. **FN**



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# WHAT “INSPIRES” ME IS BREATHING:

## A Conversation between Marie Chouinard and writer Rosita Boisseau

**ROSITA BOISSEAU:** What gives you an appetite, artistically speaking?

**MARIE CHOUINARD:** Eros and the gloominess of the surrounding culture.

**RB:** What are your roots, real or imaginary?

**MC:** My roots growing down: the force of gravity. My roots growing up: light. My roots growing sideways: wonder and curiosity.

**RB:** What was the first “scene” that really influenced you?

**MC:** Fish that I saw in a documentary. During copulation, they literally shred themselves to bits and die, floating in ecstasy among the tatters of their scattered flesh.

**RB:** Are your childhood heroes still your heroes today?

**MC:** I didn't have any childhood heroes. But there were characters in stories that touched me so much that, once I became an adult, I couldn't read those stories to my son without crying: *The Little Match Girl*, *The Little Prince* and *Mr. Séguin's Goat*. Three of those rare tales in which the main (and solitary) character dies at the end.

**RB:** What landscape did you find the most striking?

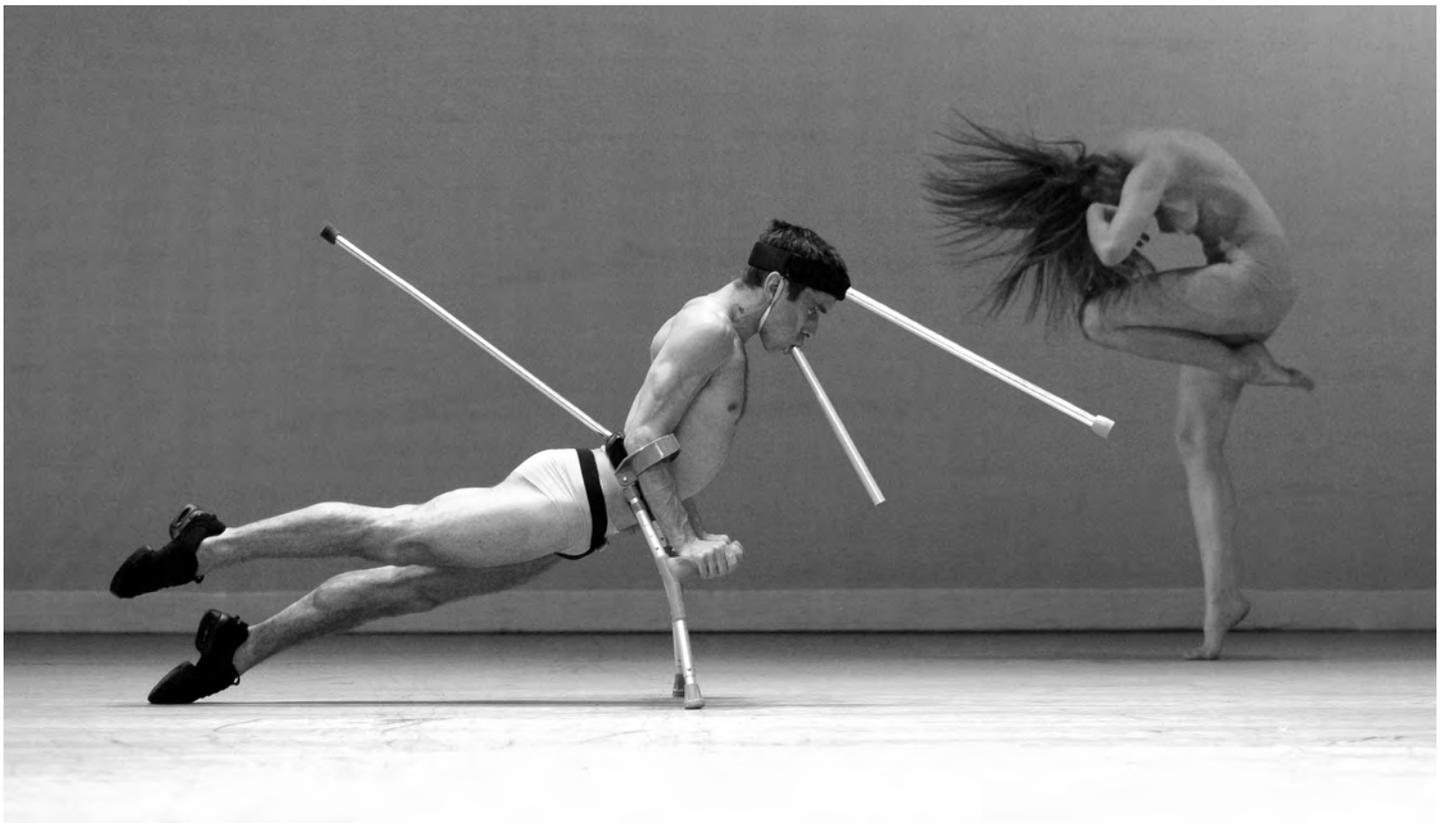
**MC:** The Percé Rock in Gaspé. Every summer we traveled there as a family. That event was like a pilgrimage to me. As an adolescent, I returned there alone, and I spent two months of summer sitting in meditation on the shore. That holy monolith, lying in the sea, accessible at low tide, welcoming colonies of birds on its crest, remains to this day one of the pillars of my being. Another pillar is the mountain at the heart of Montréal, Mount Royal, that I have been able to see from the windows of my studio for more than 25 years.

**RB:** What would be the absolute movement?

**MC:** That of the principle of life. And I don't believe that the appearance of life was the first evidence of the principle of life. It was already there, in the stars and the atoms which form and split and speak to us of desires and transformations: life!

**RB:** Which part of your body inspires you the most and dances first?

**MC:** What dances first is my breath. What inspires me is not found in others. Besides, the word itself describes it: what “inspires” me, is breathing (inspiration). Other than that, what I find in others which fills me with a sense of richness and surprise is their own richness and freedom.



David Bancourt and Lucie Mengrain in *Compañie Marie Chouinard's BODY\_VARIATIONS*. GOLDBERG. Photo: Marie Chouinard

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**RB: According to you, what is your Achilles heel?**

MC: According to me...it's that I'm mortal. According to my detractors...ditto!

**RB: What is your main obsession in your work?**

MC: I'm not obsessive; I'm an irrepressible enthusiast!

**RB: What form of "choreographic correctness" irritates you the most?**

MC: "Choreographic correctness" doesn't irritate me, it leaves me indifferent.

**RB: What sound inspires you?**

MC: The cries, laughter, tears, babbling of tiny children.

**RB: What light inspires you?**

MC: The aura of the dancer.

**RB: What element of nature inspires you?**

MC: The phallus.

**RB: What is the ultimate taboo in a show?**

MC: Taboo is always linked to culture. A few centuries ago, in the arenas, people were thrown to the beasts...

**RB: What place does the personal occupy in your work?**

MC: That notion doesn't exist in the work of creation, where everything is a universal concern.

**RB: What meaning do you give to your activity?**

MC: The practice of freedom and intelligence, the blaze of living, and just beneath the surface, celebration, offering. **FN**

– Translated by Jen Fielding

**Compagnie Marie Chouinard**

**bODY\_rEMIX/gOLDBERG\_vARIATIONS**  
**Royal Theatre**  
**8 pm • Tuesday, April 29**  
**Post-show chat in the lobby immediately following the performance**

**RUNNING TIME (INCLUDING INTERMISSION): APPROX. 2 HOURS**  
**WARNING: NOT SUITABLE FOR CHILDREN**

# THE MEIJER'S OFFICE



Photo: Julie B. Adherson

**By Yolanda Meijer,  
Director of Development**

It's hard to believe that we are nearing the end of another Dance Victoria season.

But before we see our last show this season, we'll get to enjoy the second presentation of Dance Victoria's fundraising event, *Stars On Stage — Community Dance Challenge*. I am very happy to announce that Investors Group,

the Times Colonist, CFAX 1070 and Cook's Day Off have all agreed to sponsor *Stars On Stage 2008*.

Eight brave members of our community have agreed to risk it all and show off their dance moves this April 18th. This year's roster includes a firefighter, police officer, city councillor, local poet, lawyer, newspaper journalist, radio personality, and DV's producer, Stephen White (who is not and never has been a dancer!).

When we conceived of this event last year, we were sure that it

would be fun and entertaining ... but what surprised us was the outstanding effort that our stars put into perfecting their dances and how that resulted in such a high-energy, crowd-pleasing show. We were also very gratified to see how it enabled Dance Victoria to expand its reach into the local dance community while at the same time it introduced many people to our programming. Last season, our eight contestants were mostly members of the media so it was an additional bonus that through their experience they gained a healthy appreciation for the dancer's craft.

It's magical when something comes together that we can all enjoy. So many people are a part of making an arts organization thrive and so, as we approach the end of our 11th season, I'd like to say BRAVO to our many corporate investors, our subscribers and generous donors, and all the volunteers, suppliers, staff and dancers and the many more who help make Dance Victoria one of the best dance series in the country! **FN**

See you at the show,  
Yolanda Meijer (pronounced mayor)

Presented by **Investors Group**

**April 18**

8 dances, 1 winner  
you decide

- HIP HOP – Officer Andy Dunstan & Nicole Steeves
- FLAMENCO FUNK – Firefighter Kaj Fulton & Monique Salez
- AMERICAN TANGO – Poet Linda Rogers & John de Pfyffer
- SWING – Reporter Sarah Petrescu & Kevin Savage
- WALTZ – Producer Stephen White & Wanda Kivitt
- SALSA – Lawyer Michael O'Connor & Christina Morrison
- ARGENTINEAN TANGO – Announcer Joelle St.Clair & Robert Creese
- CHA CHA – Councillor Charlayne Thornton-Joe & Roman Yue



**McPherson Playhouse at 8 pm | Free dance demos at 7 pm**  
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## DANCE SEEN



Photo: Helene Cyr

Last month I tempted you with a brief description of two performances (San Francisco's *LINES* Ballet and Tara Cheyenne's *Nick & Juanita*) that are included in the 2008/09 season. And now I am spilling the beans on the rest of the program.

If you are an Ensemble Subscriber you will have already received your copy of next year's brochure in the mail. The rest of

our subscribers will get theirs before April 14, which is the day that general subscriptions go on sale at the McPherson Box Office.

In 2008/09 Dance Victoria will host the World Premier performances of Alberta Ballet's brand new *Nutcracker*, choreographed by Edmund Stripe. I saw the set and costume drawings when I was in Calgary six weeks ago and had a chance to talk to Edmund about what we can expect. Stripe has set his version in Imperial Russia in the 1890s (which is close to when it premiered). The sets are very grand and the costumes are elegant and detailed — true to period and place. Alberta Ballet is promoting this *Nutcracker* as the most opulent (read: expensive) production in their history. Despite the sophisticated look and some interesting new twists on the story, Stripe is really most interested in the dance and he promises strong, traditional and disciplined dances. Of course Yolanda and I are already planning receptions and other enhancements because, quite frankly, how many times do we get a World Premiere at Dance Victoria? If you haven't seen *Nutcracker* for a few years, I think you'll be very pleased with this production — and keep in mind that Alberta Ballet is dancing stronger than ever these days.

Our spring 2009 season includes Royal Winnipeg Ballet's *Peter Pan*, which played to sold-out houses and critical acclaim when it premiered in Winnipeg in 2006. This *Peter Pan* (and Wendy) really flies, so it will no doubt be a hit with the kids.

I am very excited to introduce ProArteDanza to Victoria in March. This Toronto-based, contemporary ballet company founded by Roberto Campanella — a former principal dancer with the National Ballet of Canada — has found its home audience. Over the past three years they've played to sold-out performances at the Betty Oliphant Theatre (National Ballet School) and most recently Premiere Dance Theatre at Harbourfront. They are only now heading out on the road and Victoria will have the Western Canada premiere. Campanella is passionate about contemporary ballet and the work I've seen is very well rehearsed, precise and charged with muscular energy. In Victoria it will play at the McPherson so there will be a lovely intimacy about the performance.

Australia's Chunky Move Dance Company will bring *I Want to Dance Better at Parties* to the McPherson in April 2009. In 2004, Melbourne choreographer Gideon Obarzanek videotaped five men as they talked about their experiences with dance. The men — a recent widower, a retired engineer, a young clubber, a Rain-

bow Clogger, and a composer — revealed themselves in surprising ways. The resulting piece gets up close and personal with these five men, as Obarzanek cleverly integrates the original video interviews with crisp choreography in a revealing, intimate work that is dynamic and compelling.

Finally, we end the season with Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. HSDC has a rich history, founded in 1977 by American jazz dancer/choreographer Lou Conte, the company is now under the artistic leadership of Jim Vincent (since 2000) and has been acquiring new works by some of the world's leading choreographers like Jirí Kylián, Nacho Duato, Ohad Naharin, and William Forsythe. In the 1990s, when Conte was still Artistic Director, the company established a strong relationship with Twyla Tharp and acquired six of her classic works. As I write this, we are still in the process of selecting what repertoire will be on stage in Victoria; but whatever it is, I'm sure the company's ballet-trained dancers will amaze like they always do.

I'm very proud of this season. I think it has a lot of new experiences and the calibre of the work is really world class. If you're having trouble deciding what you want to see, please feel free to contact me at 595-1829 — or even better (as I am often out of the office) by email: [Producer@DanceVictoria.com](mailto:Producer@DanceVictoria.com).

Thanks for joining us this year. I look forward to welcoming you back to the Royal and McPherson in 2008/09. **FN**

### Post-Show Chats

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There will be no Pre-Show chats for Rubberbandance Group (April 4 & 5) and Compagnie Marie Chouinard (April 29). Instead, we're trying something different with our last two performances of the season. Rather than arrive early for a pre-show chat in the lobby, we're going to ask you stay a little later.

For Rubberbandance Group, immediately following the show, we'll ask those members of the audience who are interested to stay in their seats, or move closer to the stage and I will moderate a conversation with the company members and the audience.

For Compagnie Marie Chouinard, we'll ask those people that are interested to join us in the lobby immediately following the show where I will moderate a conversation between Dr. Allana Lindgren (Dance/Theatre Historian), Lisa Baldiserra (Curator of Contemporary Art, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria), and Bill Linwood (Artistic Director, Aventa New Music Ensemble). Together we will discuss where Marie Chouinard's work fits in contemporary art practice.

## Mystic Beach Butoh

A couple years ago, Kokoro Dance Theatre caused a sensation when Dance Victoria presented *Sunyata*. The near-naked company descended into a vat of bubbling mud and then writhed on the stage. Some people remember it as the worst thing they ever saw. Others found it extraordinarily powerful. I recently had coffee with two young UVic students who said in all seriousness, “When I saw Kokoro Dance’s *Sunyata*, it changed my life.” And there were many emails and even letters after the performance from people who thanked me profusely for bringing the company to Victoria. To say it was controversial would be downplaying the response.

Well, guess what — they’re back! But this time they aren’t performing on our mainstage series, they are offering a two-week intensive workshop from July 7 through 20 at Lynda Raino’s Dance studio that culminates in a performance on Mystic Beach (outside Jordan River). The company has offered a similar workshop and performance annually on Vancouver’s Wreck Beach for the past twelve years. You guessed it — it’s naked, and the classes are very challenging but they are open to anyone who wants to move—no dance experience necessary. Cost is \$500 for two weeks of intensive daily training. It is transformative work. If you want more information you can go to [DanceVictoria.com](http://DanceVictoria.com) and click on workshops or call me at 595-1829.

## McPherson Leaps into the 21st Century

The really big news for Victoria is that this summer the McPherson Playhouse is pulling out all of the seats in the theatre (they are a bit like sitting on a folded magazine) and installing wider, plusher replacements. I sat in one and man-oh-man it was comfortable. It’s already such a charming theatre but with the new seats it’s going to be a beautiful, intimate venue for dance. In the process we lose about 50 seats, reducing the overall capacity from 800 to 750.

And if you haven’t visited the Royal and McPherson website to purchase tickets I encourage you to do so. In fact, even though you’re not able to buy subscription tickets online right now, it’s worth your while to go to the website just to check out their newest high-tech feature. When you are choosing among the seating that is available, if you click on the camera icon it shows you what your view of the stage will be from any particular seat. It’s a fantastic tool.

See for yourself by going to [www.rmts.bc.ca](http://www.rmts.bc.ca). Click on “Tickets” and then click on any show at the Royal and/or the Mac. Once you’ve selected a seating area you can click on the Photo Preview option. It’s pretty straightforward from there.

## Festival Time with Victoria DanceWorks

Since 1994, a volunteer group has put together one of the province’s most dynamic festivals and competitions for young dancers. Over 12 days, pre-professional dancers between the age



of 12 and 21 descend on Victoria and participate in a variety of competitive and non-competitive events. This year, 30 dance studios and a large number of independent entrants will participate in the festival that will welcome more than 1,500 kids. The competitive events take place at the Charlie White Theatre in Sidney this year — during the week of April 9 to 12. A donation of \$5 means you can drop in any afternoon or evening during the week to watch the competition. On Sunday, April 13 at 1 pm DanceWorks will present a performance that showcases the winners of the DanceWorks award of distinction. Admission is only \$10, students and seniors \$8 and tickets are available at The Winspear Centre at 656-0275.

The following week, April 13 – 20, the festival continues at the McPherson Playhouse with what is called Dance in Performance. This non-competitive component of the festival offers professional critiques to dancers and dance studios performing jazz, ballet, street, music theatre and other genres. And again the afternoon and evening sessions are open to the public for only \$5. The performance schedule is available at [VictoriaDanceWorks.ca](http://VictoriaDanceWorks.ca). A Gala Performance is scheduled at the Royal Theatre on May 4 at 7:30 pm. Tickets are \$18.50 and available through the McPherson Box Office at 386-6121 or online at [www.rmts.bc.ca](http://www.rmts.bc.ca).

## Dance Futures

In 2008/09, Dance Victoria is investing over \$200,000 in a comprehensive new program called Dance Futures, which supports the professional development of Victoria’s dance community by bringing some of Canada’s leading dance companies to Victoria for extended residencies and investing in the creation of a major new work that is intended to premiere during the Cultural Olympiad in 2010.

While we haven’t worked out all the details (we’re waiting on a couple of grants to come through) we have already started some things that demonstrate our commitment to the local community. Dance Victoria has picked up the studio rent over the next four or five months so that a group of local dance artists (triPOD Collective) can get together every two weeks and develop new work. We’re also paying for local dance artists to be mentored by a Vancouver theatre/dance director.

In July 2008, Dance Victoria is pleased to host Vancouver’s Kokoro Dance for a two-week residency in our city.

Finally, we are honoured to be the major supporter of Victoria native Crystal Pite’s newest creation for the 2010 Olympics. In partnership with the National Arts Centre, we are giving Crystal three months in studio with dancers and designers. Some of her creation time with the dancers will be spent in Victoria and we hope that will offer us a sneak peek at the work in progress. We’ll keep you posted.

Dance Victoria is increasingly interested in being a catalyst for the development of the dance community in Victoria and for making the region a recognized centre for dance creation. **FN**