

FOOTNOTES

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ProArteDanza

MCPHERSON PLAYHOUSE

Tuesday March 10 • 8 pm

Wednesday March 11 • 8 pm

Running time (incl. intermission): 1 hour 40 minutes
Curbside: 9:40 pm

SEASON SPONSOR



Victoria BMW
MINI Victoria





DANCE VICTORIA *Presenting Excellence in Dance*

Dance Victoria 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 excellent professional dance and engaging the community.

Producer Stephen White

Development Manager Tony Cheong

Administrator Bill Hamar

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

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If you would like to be involved in 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.

ProArteDanza

Repertoire:

Unfinished 32: Choreography by Roberto Campanella & Robert Glumbek

Dis/Locate: Choreography by Robert Campanella & Robert Glumbek

Concerto No. 1: Choreography by Shawn Hounsell

Still: Choreography by Robert Glumbek

We Will...: Choreography by Kevin O'Day

Soudain L'Hiver Dernier: Choreography by James Kudleka

ProArteDanza has created a bit of a sensation in its home city, Toronto regularly selling out performances over the past four years. Its first two or three seasons were offered at the small Betty Oliphant Theatre (on the campus of the National Ballet School) and then in 2007/08, when it could no longer accommodate its growing audience, the company moved to the Fleck Dance Theatre at Harbourfront (400 seats), played shows for three or four nights and sold out again.

Artistic Director, Roberto Campanella had a career as a dancer in Italy before coming to Canada in the mid-1990s and dancing with the National Ballet of Canada. While he was at the National he completed his professional teacher training and he began to play a little with choreography. His earliest works were "co-choreographed" with ProArte's Artistic Associate, Robert Glumbek, a Polish Canadian who immigrated to Canada in 1987. Glumbek had trained in Warsaw and danced with the theatre/ballet company there.

There is a theory that if a city is to foster a dynamic, healthy dance culture, it needs first to support a big classical ballet company and school. The idea is that the classical school/company will train and give experience to generations of dancers who then strike out on their own to create personal works. Sometimes this independent work is a reaction against the classical formalism that has been drilled into them in the studio and at other times, it embraces the form and extends it.

In the case of ProArteDanza, the latter is the reality. There is only one degree of separation between ProArteDanza and the National Ballet of Canada. Campanella founded his company in 2004 "to showcase the best choreographers and dancers from both ballet and modern dance backgrounds." Campanella maintains that "the fusion of two such diverse disciplines celebrates the vibrant potency of both and demonstrates that choreography can bridge the common divide between each art form."

In the first years, ProArteDanza contracted mostly National Ballet dancers. The dancers spent all day at the National taking class and learning repertoire only to give their evenings to ProArte. (Ah to be young!) Now that Campanella's company is touring, there's less moonlighting but in those formative years, the contribution of these well-trained dancers was enormous.

ProArteDanza's work is still rooted in that classical training. When you watch the dancers you can see their line, the extension and flexibility, and their comfort with the sometimes complex choreography they're interpreting.

The Victoria program comprises shorter 10 to 18 minute works that show a wide range of styles. One piece, *Concerto No. 1*, choreographed by Shawn Hounsell (former RWB, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens dancer), is en pointe, but the rest of the works are danced barefoot and are equal parts modern and ballet. There is some gorgeous partnering and inventive lifts throughout.

There are a few standout pieces for me in the evening's program. One called *We Will...* is danced by the formidable Emily Molnar and the other, *Soudain L'Hiver Dernier* is choreographed by James Kudleka. Molnar's strength and grace are matched by her partner Glumbek in a piece that begins in silence some time before the music creeps in. Molnar gives any work she dances real substance. Her dance style is rooted, it's in the floor and while her technique is pitch perfect this is not a woman you'd put in a tutu.

There is real honesty and heart in the Kudleka work danced by Glumbek and Campanella—a poignancy in the relationship of the two male dancers that accumulates as the music phrase repeats and repeats. When I first saw this work a few years ago I felt I was watching a lifelong friendship... remembered. It's a thing of beauty.

I think after seeing this evening of mixed repertoire you'll understand why ProArte has developed such a strong audience for its work in Toronto. **FN**

Photo: Michael Slobodian



Emily Molnar

Many of you will recall Emily from her days with Ballet BC—the tall beautiful dancer who is able to access a wide range of movement. Her last appearance with the company in Victoria was when she danced Puck in John Alleyne's *The Faerie Queen* (2001). Personally I remember her solo that ended that piece and how she so poignantly embodied the loneliness and remorse of the trickster whose deviousness has played out

and who is no longer the centre of the story. It was powerful.

So what has Emily been up to since then? A lot.

Emily is now a successful independent choreographer, based in Vancouver, who has created works for Ballet Augsburg (Germany), Cedar Lake Contemporary Dance (New York), Alberta Ballet, Ballet Mannheim and others. And of course she's still dancing.

We're in for a double Emily treat this spring. First we'll see her dance with ProArteDanza (and you'll immediately recall why you loved her when she was with Ballet BC) and then she returns to Victoria for a week in April to offer a choreographic workshop to three Victoria dancers, Treena Stubel, Stacey Horton and Annemarie Cabri.

Dance Victoria FREE Dance Salons

Sundays, March 1, April 5 and April 26

1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

Dance Victoria's office (2750 Quadra Street – north entrance)

We're very excited to announce a series of free conversations about dance in Canada led by dance historian Dr. Allana Lindgren. Each of these three sessions will focus on a different aspect of current dance practice. Dr. Lindgren will introduce each topic and then invite questions and comments from the group.

Tea/coffee and light pastries served

Attendance limited: 250-595-1829 to reserve your place

Hosted by Dance Victoria volunteer Elise Walker

Sunday, March 1: What is contemporary dance? What are the different ways to view and enjoy contemporary dance? And contemporary ballet—what is it? Are companies like the National Ballet of Canada or other classically-oriented companies feeling the pressure to push the boundaries of ballet and where does this pressure come from?

Save the dates Sunday, April 5 and Sunday, April 26. We'll have more information about the topics for these salons in the next newsletter. We're certain these will be thought-provoking and stimulating sessions. Call us to reserve your spot.



Photo: Christopher Stern

Dance Victoria's Really Big Ginormous Opulent Spectacular Raffle New York, Diamonds and Helicopters

Turn on the TV and there's another ad about another spectacular house raffle worth \$3.2 million—tickets \$100 each. But those glorious homes (imagine cleaning all those vaulted ceilings and 30 foot windows) can't top Dance Victoria's biggest best raffle ever. In March 2009, we will be launching a fundraising raffle that features three prizes:

- A \$4,000, one-carat diamond pendant from Birks Jewellers
- A five-day trip to New York including return airfare, accommodation, tickets to the Spring Gala Opening of the American Ballet Theater (plus walking tours, lunches, museum entrances etc)
- A trip for two to Vancouver aboard Helijet, two nights accommodation at the Rosedale on Robson and admissions to a dance performance at the Vancouver Playhouse.

Raffle tickets are only \$10 each or \$40 for a book of 5. PLEASE NOTE: there are only a limited number of discounted (books of five) tickets available, so if you want 5 tickets for \$40 call us now at 250-595-1829!

All proceeds from the sale of the raffle tickets will help Dance Victoria support its Dance Futures program of audience and professional development. We'll be selling in the lobby of the theatre on performance evenings or you can simply call us at the office (250-595-1829) to make arrangements to buy yours.

Pre-Show Chats

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Join us 45 minutes before curtain time at the McPherson Playhouse (ProArteDanza) and Royal Theatre (Royal Winnipeg Ballet) for a free pre-show chat with visiting company members. These informal conversations will focus on the evening's program. They designed to help inform and illuminate the dancer/choreographer's process.

PLEASE NOTE: There will be no pre-show chat prior to the Thursday, March 26, matinee performance of *Peter Pan*.

Dancer's Diary

RWB's Emily Grizzell Shares her Tour Journal

When RWB embarked on its prairie tour of *Peter Pan* last September, soloist Emily Grizzell agreed to keep a journal of her experiences to share with readers when she returned home to Winnipeg. The tour took the company to Calgary, Edmonton, Regina and Saskatoon, playing to about 16,000 people.

September 16, 2008 – Last Day Before the Tour

This morning we made few last minute changes to *Peter Pan*. It seems no matter what, the casting always does some shifting around right before we head out on tour.

I'm excited about *Peter Pan*, and looking forward to revisiting the role of 'Wendy'. It is the first role I have ever had created for me, so it has a special place in my heart. It's always nice to come back to a role after having a little break from it. As well, I find that I often discover things about the character or the ballet that I didn't see before, or feel differently because I have had new experiences in my own life.

We finish the rehearsal day with a little *Carmina Burana* since we will be performing it shortly after we return from tour. Also, for the first time this season, we have a *Nutcracker* rehearsal which we will perform in Ottawa this December. It seems odd to hear music that I so strongly associate with Christmas-time in early September when the leaves have just barely started turning. The nature of our schedule, with its time constraints, means that we are often rehearsing bits and pieces of works that we won't be performing for months.

September 18, 2008

Opening night in Calgary! I get up early this morning to be picked up in the hotel lobby for a TV interview. I'm pretty shy when it comes to interviews, I feel like I always freeze up and panic, but I always say 'yes' when asked to do them because I'm hoping that someday I'll get over that. Today's interview is a walk in the park, so maybe I've cured myself by forcing the issue. Hope so. In fact, I feel oddly at ease this morning as I jot down a few lines before heading off to the theatre for the afternoon run-through before tonight's show. A couple of years ago, a choreographer named Itzik Galili (he created *Hikarizatto*, which we will revisit at the end of the season) told me that I 'needed the panic' which I thought very strange, until I realized he was right. I



think I reached the upper threshold of panic last year when I was preparing for the role of 'Princess Aurora' (notoriously unforgiving and difficult to pull off) in *The Sleeping Beauty*. I found some ways to cope though, (self-hypnosis MP3s really work!) and ended up really enjoying myself on stage. I have my iPod loaded up and charged, just in case I have an attack of butterflies tonight.

September 19, 2008

The show went well last night! It marked (dancer) Yosuke Mino's return to the stage after his Achilles tendon tear last winter. What a return it was! I'm pretty sure the role of 'Peter Pan' was the one he was born to dance, and I feel privileged to be dancing with him. My favourite thing about performing is sharing the experience with the person (or people) I am dancing with. There is something really magical about looking that person in the eyes and knowing that you are both experiencing the same thing and it makes the dancing all the more honest and real.

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September 21, 2008 – Bus Day

Our travel days are like a well-oiled machine, honed from literally decades of bus tours.

A few guidelines for seamless bus travel:

- Luggage load 15 minutes prior to departure
- A seating plan is laid out according to rank with principals at the front end and apprentices at the back (we all started out at the back of the bus)
- First two hours are quiet for those who need to rest up for the evening show, or those who didn't get enough rest the night before
- We take votes on which movies we watch, very democratic
- Everyone settles into their space, flanked by books, magazines, newspapers, iPods, Nintendo DS, laptops and knitting, depending on your travel style

September 22, 2008 – Rehearsal Day

We don't often get a chance to rehearse while we are on the road,

because tours are usually planned with the maximum number of shows. However, *Peter Pan* is a big show requiring a lot of set-up. We work in the theatre's rehearsal room while the show is assembled for tomorrow.

This is a day that closely resembles the way we work at home in Winnipeg. After morning class, there is a quick run of *Concerto Barocco*, which will be performed on a U.S. tour in November, followed by a *Peter Pan* run-through for the third cast, followed by a couple hours of *Seventh Symphony* in the evening.

September 25, 2008

Yesterday was Robert Pleschke's (a dancer) birthday. At the beginning of the season, we all draw names and make each other birthday cakes. I think it's a great tradition, and an example of how we make family for ourselves in the Company, as almost none of us have family in Winnipeg. In any case, sometimes a birthday hits while we are on the road, and the person responsible for making the cake has to get creative. It's amazing how a treat like that lifts everyone's mood; dancers are easy to please when it comes to food.

September 29, 2008

Yesterday we had only a matinee, which meant the whole evening off in Regina. What to do on a Sunday night in Regina! Clearly there is only one answer... 10 pin bowling.

Dancers make pretty hilarious bowlers, but we do have a certain style about us. There were exceptions, Amanda Green and Bob Pleschke seemed to knock a lot of pins down, and Bernie the bus driver showed us a thing or two.

By 9:30 pm we were all bowled out, but still fired up. After all, we'd still have an hour to go if it were a show night. We made a bee line for the only other form of entertainment available on a Sunday night in

Royal Winnipeg Ballet *Peter Pan*

Royal Theatre

March 25	7:30 pm
March 26	7:30 pm
March 26	2 pm

RUNNING TIME: 2 HOURS AND 20 MINUTES (INCLUDING INTERMISSION)

CURBSIDE: 9:50 PM (EVENING) & 4:20 PM (MATINEE)

Regina, the casino. Luckily some of us make better gamblers than bowlers. (Not me, but thankfully, I know when to quit.) Tomorrow we're off to Saskatoon—last stop before home!

October 2, 2008 – Trip Home!

Lucky us! This time we get to fly home to Winnipeg from Saskatoon, instead of the usual all day bus trip back. I can't wait to get home to my own bed and furry cats. One of the things I miss most when I'm on tour is making dinner; it gets hard to eat out every meal for weeks on end. After a while, you open up a menu and there isn't a single thing on it that you want to eat. Tonight we'll be back in plenty of time to go to the grocery store, so I am already making a list in my head.

Going on tour isn't usually very glamorous, but it can be a lot of fun, and it's a great way to explore roles and ballets by getting a chance to repeat them a few times, hopefully growing with each new attempt. I'm grateful that in this Company we get to share our art form with so many people in Canada and beyond. Its part of what makes the Royal Winnipeg Ballet special. **FN**

News from the Nursery *Peter Pan* Facts

Peter Pan, which premiered in Winnipeg during the Christmas season of 2006, is choreographed by Jorden Morris. Morris is the Associate Artistic Director of the RWB's Professional School program and a former principal dancer with the company. He began choreographing in 1999—mostly smaller works for the school and works for a couple of other ballet companies. *Peter Pan*

was his first major full-length piece.

Morris has remained faithful to the original J.M. Barrie story, setting this classically inspired ballet firmly in the Edwardian era. To reinforce its place in time he uses a score that includes music by Britten, Coates and Elgar.

In his 2006 version of *Peter Pan*, Morris did not include the character of 'Nana', the beloved Darling family dog, because another RWB ballet that season, *A Cinderella Story*, had a dog character that figured prominently. But when preparations for the

2008/09 season began, Morris had the opportunity to return to *Peter Pan* and add the dog, re-choreographing sections of the piece to accommodate this new character. Costume designer Anne Armit constructed the dog costume using fur manufactured by National Fiber Technology, best known for its work in constructing hair, wigs and fur for film. RWB had some past experience with National Fiber, having used their product to construct the wolf costume in their hit production of *Dracula*.

CENTRE STAGE: BETTY WILKINSON

By Tony Cheong
Dance Victoria Development Manager

As I get to know everyone associated with Dance Victoria, I'm beginning to realize it's a big family—even bigger than mine! As my short biography was in this year's House Program, I thought having profiles of some of our donors, sponsors and supporters would be a good way for all of us to get to know each other. So this Geomorphologist turned Development Manager is now attempting journalism. I would like to introduce you to Betty Wilkinson.

Betty and her husband Peter moved to Victoria in 1984. She originally worked for Kaleidoscope Theatre where she first met Stephen White. She was asked to serve on the Board of DanceWorks Association which led to her involvement in dance in the city. She became president of the organization just as Doug Durand started the Victoria Dance Series (now Dance Victoria) and DanceWorks became very involved. The rest is history. She's still involved.

Betty is a strong supporter of the arts in our community, from Dance Victoria to Ballet Victoria and Pacific Opera. Her dedication to



the development of artists led her to establish the Betty Wilkinson Scholarship at the Canadian College of Performing Arts.

TC: What was your most memorable Dance Victoria experience?

BW: When I was invited to see a rehearsal by the Wen Wei Dance group in a local studio. It completely mesmerized me. Unfortunately I was ill at the time of their performances a year later, but I will never forget that rehearsal.

TC: What is your favourite dance genre?

BW: I would have to say the classical repertoire, but since Stephen has been involved, just about everything. He has educated me to "the world" of dance. I actually have been involved in dance all my life. My father always thought that to enjoy the arts you had to know first hand about them. Consequently, I learned to dance, sing and act as a child (but could never put brush nor pastel to paper!). I was always taken to the theatre and am still steeped in all forms of it. It's my life. **FN**

Photo: Tony Cheong



YES!

I'd like to support the work of Dance Victoria.

Please clip and mail in today!

Name/Organization: _____

Address: _____

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Enclosed is my donation of:

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Thank you to our recent donors

(as at February 10, 2009)

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Stars on Stage UNPLUGGED!

That's right—*Stars on Stage*, our annual fundraiser which pairs eight local "personalities" with professional dance instructors and gives them three months to learn a dance before putting them under the scrutiny of a discerning, voting audience, is back! Saturday, June 6, 2009 is the date and this year we've moved the party out of the McPherson Playhouse and into Victoria Dance Connection (2750 Quadra Street – north entrance), home of our new offices. We're limiting ticket sales to 250 people. The competition will be presented "Ballroom Style" under a glittering disco ball, audience seated around the edge of the giant dance floor in the middle. Once the competition is over, the voting and the party begins. Your ticket price includes the After Party with catering and no-host bar, and of course a chance to cut the rug with your date on that huge dance floor. When the votes are tabulated, we'll bring the dancers centre stage, announce the winners and the party will continue.

This year's dancers are:

- Heather Robinson (CBC TV News)
- Cosmo Meens (Chef/Owner, Mo:Lé Restaurant)
- Kelly Cruickshank (Skate Canada Technical Judge)
- Lana Denoni (Director of Tourism and Travel, Oak Bay Marine Group)
- Michael Shamata (Artistic Director, Belfry Theatre)
- Murray Churnyk (Victoria Firefighter)
- Heather Leary (Mark My Word, Marketing and Public Relations)
- Frank Stanford (CFAX 1070, News Reporter)

One of our hosts is Diane Dakers (Communications & Media Relations Mgr., Royal BC Museum). The other is Danny Vales, Sales Manager of the Hotel Grand Pacific and the "Intern" on KOOL FM's morning show.

Tickets: \$70 at the McPherson Box Office (250-386-6121) ON SALE NOW. Includes show and after party. Tax receipt for \$35 included.

Funds raised support Dance Victoria's extensive Dance Futures program, which provides professional development opportunities to the local community and youth access to dance performance and training.

Volunteers

Tony (our Development Manager), Bill (our Administrator) and I are all feeling a little overwhelmed by the sheer number of events, performances, fundraisers and other tasks ahead of us in the coming weeks. If you are interested in any of our volunteer opportunities, please contact Tony at 250-595-1829 or development@dancevictoria.com. Specifically we're looking for volunteers for:

Stars on Stage

Organizational: help us put together the various elements of this event, liaise with our "celebrities" and their dance partners, be part of the overall team. Commitment 3 or 4 hours a week over the next three months. Skills: ability to take on the management of certain aspects of the event, solid communication skills, a sense of fun and good humour. **Day of:** We'll need a small army of ushers, people to help with set up and décor, arranging the silent auction. Commitment one or two planning meetings (total about 5 hours) and day of the event (8 hours).

Subscriber Party

Help with the set-up and hosting on Saturday, April 4. Commitment – one organizational meeting (3 hours). On-site: Saturday, April 4 (5 hours).

Administration

We have a desk and a laptop, a dog-friendly office and some database management work that needs to be done. If you have an afternoon (or morning) each week that you can give us, we'll find a range of interesting things for you to do. Required skills: Word processing, experience with Excel spreadsheets. Commitment: 3 or 4 hours a week.

Special Skills

Are you great with a digital camera? We are looking for someone who can spend a few hours about once a month taking and editing photos.

2009/10 A Season of Extraordinary Performances

The planning is complete. The brochure is at the printer. We've been proof-reading the text, selecting the images until our "I's" are crossed and the "T's" are dotted... wait a minute.

Next season is a big year for us with a solid mix of classical and contemporary work—a range of dance that will provoke and delight. I'm proud of what we've crafted. The season includes:

National Ballet of Canada with the National Ballet Orchestra Nureyev's *The Sleeping Beauty*

Royal Theatre • September 26
Big, beautiful classical ballet. This production catapulted the National and Karen Kain onto the international stage when it premiered in the 1972/73 season.

Decidedly Jazz Danceworks *wowandflutter*

McPherson Playhouse • October 23 + 24, 2009
Pure dance choreographed by company member Kimberly Cooper to electronic music by Amon Tobin.

Alberta Ballet with the Victoria Symphony

The Nutcracker

Royal Theatre • November 27 – 29, 2009
The triumphant return of Alberta Ballet's opulent new Nutcracker. "Magnificent from start to finish" – TIMES COLONIST

Alberta Ballet

The Fiddle and the Drum

Royal Theatre • January 27 + 28, 2010
Set to Joni Mitchell's music, this critically acclaimed work has toured the continent.

Kidd Pivot/Crystal Pite

New Work

Royal Theatre • January 30, 2010
Dance Victoria teamed with Ottawa's National Arts Centre to commission this theatrical new work by red-hot (Victoria-raised) Canadian choreographer, Crystal Pite.

Royal Winnipeg Ballet

Moulin Rouge

Royal Theatre • February 9 – 11, 2010
A sexy new production set in Paris of the 1890s....

Compagnie Marie Chouinard

New Work

Royal Theatre • March 16 + 17, 2010
Chouinard's Body Remix was selected by the Times Colonist as one of the top ten performances of 2008. The company will once again stretch the definitions of dance.

Wen Wei Dance

Cock-Pit

Royal Theatre • May 1, 2010
Choreographer Wen Wei Wang digs deep into his personal history as a young dancer in Mao's China and creates an arresting, sexy, dark and mysterious work.

On Sale Dates: Your Brochure and Order Form will be mailed to you directly. Please notify us if you have moved recently.

ENSEMBLE SUBSCRIBERS: Renew your subscription and keep or upgrade your current seats beginning Monday, March 16. You must renew by Saturday, March 28 in order to retain your seats.

CURRENT SUBSCRIBERS (Build-Your-Own, Ballet Plus, Contemporary): Phone/Box Office Renewals begin Monday, April 6

NEW THIS YEAR: Subscriber Party: Saturday April 4: 2 to 4 pm

Jump to the front of the line at Dance Victoria's offices (2750 Quadra Street). We'll have information about all of the 2009/10 season

as well as coffee, tea and cookies. Ask us about the shows and buy your subscription on the spot. The McPherson Box Office will be on hand at the party to process your order and give you the best seats available before they go on sale April 6.

NEW SUBSCRIBERS: Subscriptions on sale to the general public beginning May 4.

Dance Victoria Hosted Tours: Cuba, Fall 2009

Bill Hamar (Blaney's Travel and Dance Victoria's half-time Administrator) is currently putting together a tour to Cuba for late October/early November 2009. The itinerary will include days in old Havana, guided cultural tours, an evening at the Tropicana, a performance by the Ballet Nacional de Cuba in the Gran Teatro, a visit to a modern dance company, museums, day trips to the surrounding area and a three-day stop in Santiago de Cuba (birthplace of the Revolucion).

Cuba teems with music, culture and history—relieved only with the occasional mojito on a rooftop terrace. If you're interested in joining us, let Bill know. You can reach him at 250-477-3550 most mornings or email administrator@dancevictoria.com anytime. The plans are evolving so he doesn't have a fix on the price, but he'll keep you in the loop as things get more definite. You can also tell Bill if you'd be interested in adding a beach holiday before or after the tour.



Photo: Vally H.L.

DANCE SEEN



Photo: Hélène Cyr

In this column I usually write about dance I've seen. But recently, I've been preoccupied.

The GFC. Last September, as the news of impending economic doom was crashing around us, I got tired of inserting "global financial crisis" into almost every second sentence so I developed the acronym, the GFC. It made it easier. When you say GFC it removes the sting and allows for a less emotional conversation about the global meltdown taking place.

I spent a good portion of this past fall in a state of panic—how was this snowballing crisis going to hit us at Dance Victoria—an organization that is so reliant on ticket sales to make things work? My "what if" scenario was, you guessed it—what if people just stop buying tickets. The panic in my eyes and the new stress lines around my mouth betrayed me. I had reassurances from colleagues and supporters with the major theme being "People need entertainment more than ever when times are tough—it'll be ok". There were articles in journals and on the web that supported this idea and they were passed among those of us working in the live-performance sector. But some-

how all this reassurance wasn't good enough for me. I needed something more solid, I needed evidence.

Then came Alberta Ballet's brilliant shiny new *Nutcracker*. And it sold. It did better than sold, it practically sold out. At 95% capacity over four performances it exceeded our expectations. It became the top grossing presentation in Dance Victoria's 12-year history. But aside from the numbers, it also thrilled the kids and the adults who came to see it. It was magical. The costumes were stunning. And for a few weeks after, I felt reassured. I thought, all those pundits are correct—people want to go to the theatre, escape the gloom on the business pages—they want to lose themselves in something that is beyond their daily experience and come out better able to cope knowing there's still beauty in the world. And there are still breathtaking dancers doing things that grab you, surprise you, move you. There are ideas and feelings and experiences that words can't capture, that can only be expressed through dance. And there's music.

So I'm going with that.

As I face the spring season, I have a few butterflies in my stomach (will we make our targets?). And when I think about next season, the extraordinary dances, the range of work—I'm really very excited to share these artists and their remarkable dances with Victoria. Tired of talking about the GFC? Come to the theatre. Remember what it's like to connect with something extraordinary, something authentic. **FN**



Photo: Gerard Yunker

Alberta Ballet Company Artists in the 2008 production of *The Nutcracker*.



SPARKFESTIVAL MARCH 2009

Tickets \$20
Students discounts available
250-385-6815
www.belfry.bc.ca

**Belfry
Theatre**

BASH'd: A GAY RAP OPERA

March 10 – 15

Written and performed by
Chris Craddock
and Nathan Cuckow
Music by Aaron Macri

RADIO :30

March 11 – 15
Performed by
Chris Earle and Paul Constable

HAIRCUTS BY CHILDREN

March 14 & 15

Conceived and Directed by
Darren O'Donnell
Featuring students from
George Jay Elementary School
A co-presentation with
Free Event Theatre SKAM

RAGE

March 18 – 22
by Michelle Riml
Performed by David Beazley
and Leslie Jones

MOVING ALONG

March 17 – 21
Written and performed
by Chris Craddock

BELFRY 101 LIVE

March 22
Featuring students from
Reynolds, S.I.D.E.S., Claremont,
Vic High, Spectrum, Esquimalt, Stelly's,
Parkland, and Lambrick Park

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Chunky Move

I Want to Dance Better at Parties

April 7 + 8 • 8 pm

McPherson Playhouse

Direct from Australia! "astute, funny and touching" – VILLAGE VOICE

Hubbard Street Dance Chicago

April 29 + 30 • 8 pm

Royal Theatre

"fiendish speed and energy... laugh-out-loud humor and powerhouse grace." – CHICAGO SUN TIMES

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