

FOOTNOTES

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MAR 2010
#32

Compagnie Marie Chouinard
***Prelude to the
Afternoon of a Faun
The Rite of Spring***

ROYAL THEATRE

March 16 • 7:30 pm

Running Time: 1 hour 10 minutes
Warning: Partial Nudity

Wen Wei Dance
Cock-Pit

ROYAL THEATRE

May 1 • 7:30 pm

Running Time: 1 hour 10 minutes

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Classic Chouinard

Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun

“Faun” is the name the Romans gave to the Greek Satyr — a woodland creature with the legs of a goat and torso of a man, its head crowned with horns: a mischievous, licentious disciple of Bacchus (Dionysus). Composer Claude Debussy’s *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* (composed in 1894) was inspired by a poem by Stéphane Mallarmé (1867) and famously choreographed and danced by the Russian Vaslav, Nijinsky. It was Nijinsky’s first choreography and it was presented by Les Ballets Russes at Le Chatelet in Paris as part of its spring program in May, 1912. The first performance of *Faun* brought many boos and hisses at the curtain call. A fiery debate erupted in the press the next day with Gaston Calmette, editor of the Paris newspaper *Le Figaro*, arguing that *Faun* was indecent and immoral. On the other side, the sculptor Auguste Rodin (among others) sent letters to the paper defending Nijinsky’s new work as a masterpiece.

The story on which the 12-minute ballet is based is simple. A faun in repose, sunning himself

DANCE VICTORIA

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.

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

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If you’d like to volunteer for Dance Victoria, call 250-595-1829.

Office Location: Suite 111 – 2750 Quadra Street, 10 am to 4 pm daily

Mailing Address: 2236 Hampshire Tce., Victoria, BC V8S 3G9

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



Dominique Perre in *Le Sacre du printemps* / The Rite of Spring. Photo: Marie Chouinard. (top) Marie Chouinard in *L'Après-midi d'un faune*. Photo: Benny Chou.

on a rock, is surprised by a group of young nymphs who arrive to bathe in the river below. When he moves closer to the nymphs he scares them. The tallest nymph leaves a veil behind in her rush to scurry away. The faun retrieves the veil and takes it back to the rock where he is clearly aroused. He clutches the veil close to his body and then spreads it on the rock, and slowly lowers his body over it. Most of the controversy focused on the final “masturbatory” gesture that concludes the dance, but to be fair, it was also Nijinsky’s bold modernist dance vocabulary that was shocking to the first audiences. The dance was constructed to resemble a frieze on a Grecian vase. The dancers move back and forth in straight lines on a very narrow band of the stage platform. Their arms are either extended with elbows locked or broken at the elbow, the forearm perpendicular to the upper arm. The fingers are held firmly together to create a flat plane with the thumb extended in opposition. The dancers were barefoot, leading with the heel. The steps are closer to walking than dancing. There is no lyricism in the movement. There is no “musicality.” There is no pointe work — the dance has no depth of dimension — it is purposely flat.

To the Ballets Russes audience, familiar by this time with large-scale classical and neo-classical repertoire, ornate costumes and opulent sets, Nijinsky’s short work was entirely new. It was an abrupt departure with the past.

Marie Chouinard’s interpretation makes more than a nod to the Nijinsky original. The movement is very similar. There is a charged eroticism. And the end of the piece definitely references Nijinsky’s work. There are two interesting differences, however. First, it is a solo and second, it is performed by a woman. Chouinard herself performed it when she first created it in 1987. Rather than work from the

notation of Nijinsky’s original choreography, Chouinard studied photos of the work. She also felt that Debussy’s music didn’t fit with her original concept for the piece so she worked with a sound engineer to build sensors into her costume which she could activate to create a unique sound environment while she was dancing. In 1994, Chouinard revisited the work and returned to Debussy’s score. Standing in for the nymphs are strong columns of light that appear and disappear. Dancer Carol Prieur, who has been with Chouinard since 1995, will dance the role in Victoria.

Rite of Spring

The second work on the Chouinard program was also a Nijinsky choreography that was as controversial to the Ballets Russes audience in 1913 as *Faun* had been the year before. A longer (45 minute) work set to Stravinsky’s new composition, *Rite* depicts a pagan ritual, the cast replete with elders and groupings of men and women, wherein a young virgin is chosen to be sacrificed and dances herself to death before being carried offstage by the crowd.

Stravinsky’s music was challenging to that first audience. In his talk about the score many years later, American composer Leonard Bernstein said, “That page is sixty years old, but it’s never been topped for sophisticated handling of primitive rhythms... it’s also got the best dissonances anyone ever thought up, and the best asymmetries and polytonalities and polyrhythms and whatever else you care to name.” When it was performed for the first time, the audience’s catcalls and hisses drowned out the orchestra. Fistfights broke out in the aisles of the theatre and the police had to be called in at intermission.

Chouinard took a new approach to *Rite*. The only common ground between Nijinsky’s work and hers is the score. Chouinard used the music to build a whole new work. “There is no story in my *Rite*” she explains, “no development, no cause and effect. Only synchronicity. It is as if I were dealing with the very moment after the instant life first appeared. The performance is the unfolding of the moment. I have the feeling that before that moment there was an extraordinary burst of light, a flash of lightning.” **FN**

Dance Salon

facilitated by Dr. Allana Lindgren

Sunday, April 11, 2010 • 1:30 – 3 pm

Studio 3, 2750 Quadra St. (north entrance - Victoria Dance Connection)

FREE

Our Dance Salons, facilitated by dance historian Dr. Allana Lindgren, are lively, provocative, informal conversations about dance. For this salon we will be talking about “Audience as voyeur.” Are we unwitting participants in a voyeuristic game? When does sensuality become sexuality in performance

Free coffee, tea and pastries. Space is limited. Please RSVP to 250-595-1829.

Dr. Allana Lindgren is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Theatre at the University of Victoria. Her research is motivated by an interest in how the performing arts — particularly dance and theatre — intersected with shifting social attitudes and values in North America during the twentieth century.

Pre-Show Chats

Prior to both Compagnie Marie Chouinard and Wen Wei Dance

Royal Theatre Lobby • 6:50 pm • FREE to ticket holders

Join us in the lobby prior to both Compagnie Marie Chouinard (March 16) and Wen Wei Dance (May 1) for an informative 25-minute conversation with a company member about the work you’re about to see. There is always time for your questions.

Representing Compagnie Marie Chouinard:

Pamela Newell – Rehearsal Director

Representing Wen Wei Dance:

Wen Wei Wang – Artistic Director/Choreographer

The Return of Wen Wei

The Genesis of *Cock-Pit*

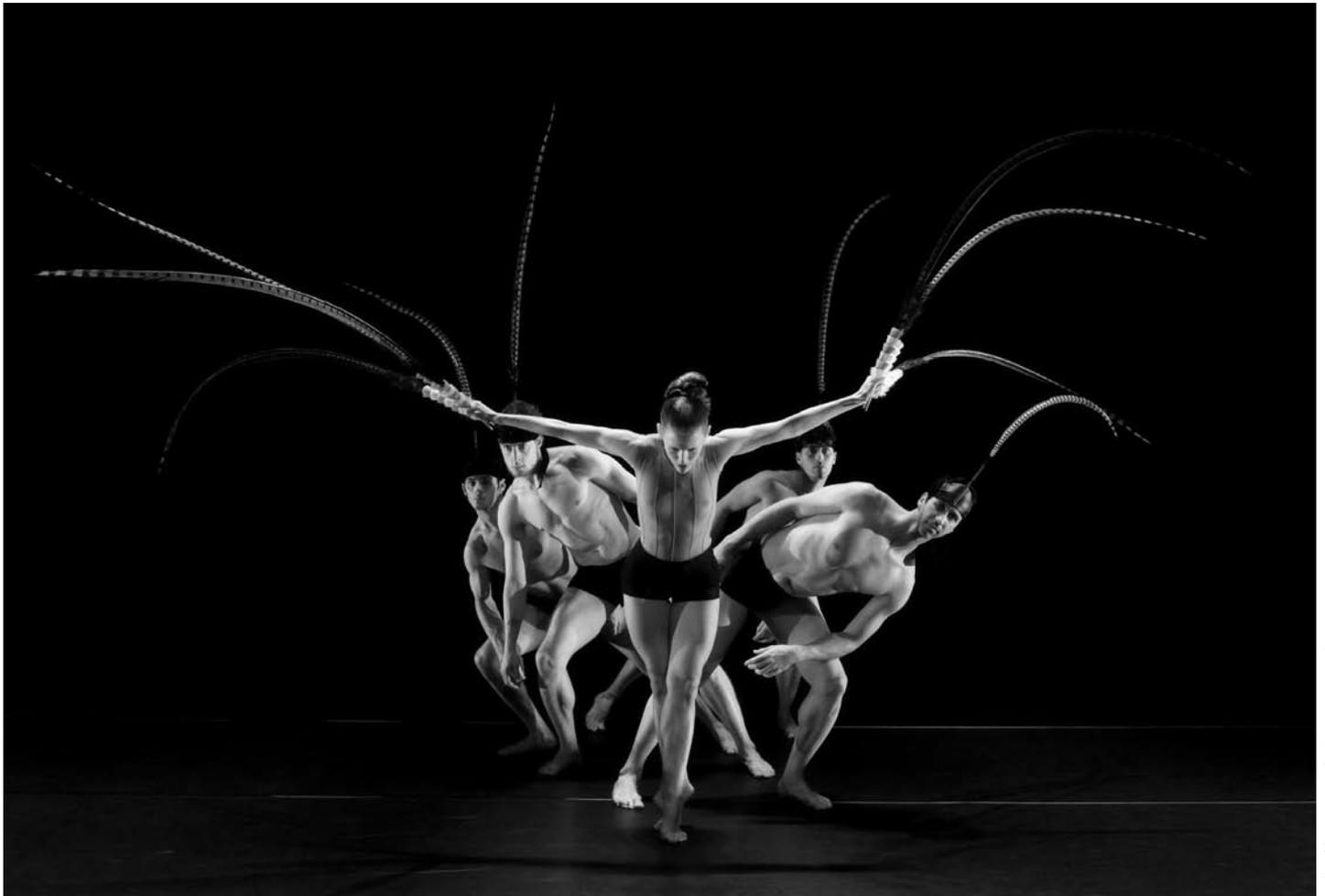
*"The ideas for my new work are somewhat a reflection of my own experiences as a student at my dance school in China. I was one of five boys who shared a small room for more than five years. Sometimes we liked each other and at other times we did not, and at other times we liked some of the boys but not the others. We were at an age when we became concerned about sexuality without having any advice from our parents or any of our elders. We were not allowed to have girlfriends, so we only thought of them in our dreams and imaginations. As we were all far away from home, we talked a lot about our mothers. These memories contribute subconsciously to my scenario for *Cock-Pit*."*

– Wen Wei Wang



For his new creation, Wang assembled a creative team that was familiar. Giorgio Magnanensi composed the music and James Proudfoot designed the lighting. These three have worked together on the last five or six WWD productions, full partners in the development of the work. Proudfoot's dramatic lighting is another character on the stage and of course the musical score is part impetus and part response to the movement Wang has created.

Premiered in 2008, *Cock-Pit* has already toured fairly extensively. The presentation in Victoria will be one of the last performances before the piece is put away so that Wang can give all of his attention to his newest work — a collaboration with the Beijing Modern Dance Company that will premiere at the Canada



Members of the Company in *Cock-Pit*. (Top) Wen Wei Wang. Photos: Steven Lemay

Dance

Dance Festival in Ottawa this June. He also recently worked as choreographer on Vancouver Opera's *Nixon in China* opening in mid-March.

Born in 1965, Wang studied dance in his native China and began his career performing with the Langzhou Regional Dance Company. During a 1986 cultural exchange with Canada, Wang taught dance in Vancouver and performed with the Lorita Leung Chinese Dance Company. In 1991 he moved to Canada where he danced with Judith Marcuse before joining Ballet BC from 1993 to 1995. He left for a year to dance with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens but returned to Ballet BC, where he stayed until 2000.

While working as a dancer, Wang was also building his skills as a choreographer. His Asian-influenced work caused a sensation and in the early days was presented by Vancouver-based dance schools and Ballet BC's Mentor Program. In 2000, he won the Clifford E. Lee Award to create *Snow*, a work for 14 dancers at the Banff Centre. After the premiere of *Snow*, the magazine *Dance International* wrote:

"Most of the audience sat frozen, stunned by the beauty of the ethereal, elegant, exquisite movement throughout the piece, as more dancers cohesively enriched the dreamlike aura."

Over the next decade, Wang established his own company and began building a repertoire of new works that include *Unbound*, presented by Dance Victoria in the fall of 2006.

Recently, Wang reached another milestone. In 2009, with his company of dancers, WWD made a small tour of China performing *Unbound* in Shanghai and Beijing. Since first arriving in Canada 18 years ago, Wang had dreamed of taking his own work back to China.

We'll see more of Wang in Victoria over the coming season. He will be a mentor for Victoria-based dance artists working on small group pieces and will thus travel to Victoria two or three times to work with these groups. Additionally, this fall, Ballet BC will spend two weeks in residence in Victoria while Wen Wei creates a new piece for them. **FN**



The Chrystal Dance Awards

At a special dinner on February 5 that included dance artists from Toronto Dance Theatre, dance presenters from Halifax, Montréal, Ottawa, Regina, Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, Salt Spring Island, Whitehorse and Nanaimo, and members of the local dance community, Dance Victoria presented its first annual Chrystal Dance Awards. These awards recognize Victoria-based dance artists and organizations that have made a significant contribution to the development of a dance culture in our region.

Named in honour of Dr. Betty “Chrystal” Kleiman, who made a sig-

nificant bequest to Dance Victoria in 2008 (held at the Victoria Foundation), these awards are meant to bring profile to the outstanding accomplishments of our community in the dance arena. Kleiman was a well-respected pediatrician who practiced for more than 30 years in Victoria. She had interests that spanned across the artistic disciplines and included ocean-kayaking. One of her proudest accomplishments was being arrested at Clayoquot Sound for protesting the logging of the pristine forest. She passed away on July 15, 2008.

Dance Victoria presented the following awards:

Best New Dance Initiative: Treena Stubel (BOUNCE)

Treena is a Victoria-based dancer, actor, vocalist and choreographer. Her work has appeared in Canada and Europe at numerous festivals, and she has performed new work in Switzerland, Germany, Holland, Ireland, and the UK. In February 2009, she founded the Bounce Dance Cabaret, an initiative to support original creation by dance and physical theatre artists. The cabaret has given exposure to many dancers, physical performers and local musicians. Every two months, on a Sunday evening, these performers present small works on a tiny stage at the Victoria Event Centre. Bounce has added dimension to Victoria’s dance scene, offering a platform for dancers to try new ideas in an informal setting.



Outstanding Leadership in Independent Dance: Suddenly Dance Theatre

Founded 18 years ago by David Ferguson, Lori Hamar and Miles Lowry, SDT has made a significant contribution to dance both in the production of its own work and in the development of opportunities for contemporary dance practitioners. Producers of the annual ROMP! Festival of Independent Dance (12 festivals) and the newer UNODanz Performance Award Program, SDT presents emerging and established

suddenly dance theatre
www.suddenlydance.ca



independent dance artists from across the country, in a variety of traditional and non-traditional venues in Victoria. Ferguson and Lowry have had some recent successes with their own work including: BRAVO! television productions *Opium* and *Aisling*; Film Festivals (New York, New Delhi); residencies (Ireland); as well as works toured to such diverse places as Seoul, Kim Hae and Busan (South Korea), Santa Barbara (USA), Hornby Island, Vancouver and Nanaimo.



Lifetime Achievement: Lynda Raino

Well known and well loved in Victoria, Raino is a pioneer in the world of modern dance. Her studio on Yates Street has been a refuge and centre of creativity for adult dancers of all sizes and skill levels for 30 years. At 61, Raino says she “is still living her life-long dream of a career in dance.” She is known as a teacher, a choreographer, and a performer in a life work that started 43 years ago. Her two sons, Paolo and Sorell, are “the real loves of her life.” Raino recalls such highlights as performing live with Bobby McFerrin, having her dance drama about AIDS performed at the 5th International Conference on AIDS while simultaneously performing her comedy about children at the Just For Laughs



Festival in Montreal, creating a work for the men of the Bolshoi Ballet on their first Canadian tour, touring Japan with a children's theatre project and starting Big Dance (1993), her groundbreaking work with fat people that became a small phenomenon! (*Good Morning America*, *Elle Magazine*). Two big injuries have tried to trip her up along the way. She didn't realize that her retirement piece in 2004 commissioned by Dance Victoria, which she co-created and performed with Crystal Pite, was a wee bit premature. Since then, she has done film and theatre work and fallen in love with Argentine tango. But she seems to not want to quit and has asked her closest people to make sure they bring out the hook when it is really time to get off the stage. **FN**

Treena Stubel photo by Barbara Pedrick. Photos of David Ferguson and Miles Lowry by Vince Klusjen. Photo of Lynda Raino courtesy of Lynda Raino.

MY FOLLY WITH BOLLY: STARS ON STAGE 2010



By **Tony Cheong**

When Stephen asked if I wanted to dance in Stars on Stage this year, it seemed like a good idea at the time and a fun thing to do. I wanted something different so I chose Bollywood. May 29th was eons away and there was tons of time to rehearse. Dance Days brought me crashing to reality. I took the level 1 Flamenco class at Lynda Raino's Studio to get myself in a dancing mindset. Monique Salez, a former Stars on Stage instructor, was a FABULOUS teacher. She had a great teaching style that included some singing, drumming and humour. I quickly learned I had to give up trying to do the arm movements and focus on my feet. Slowly, I realized that maybe I should give up on my feet and just have fun — which is exactly what I did. Monique, as great as she was, could not overcome my lack of coordination in one hour. I left thinking "I sure hope Bollywood is easier!"

I know my Bollywood instructor, Raji Basi, will make it fun. However, there's some hesitation with partnering with her. You see, Raji is my former badminton partner. The last time we played together I ended up in Emergency, getting surgery to repair my achilles and spending months in a cast. We have a Fire Fighter and a Police Officer participating in Stars on Stage this year. Looking back, I'm thinking it would have been a good idea to also get a Paramedic and Doctor — you know, just in case.

Stars on Stage 2010 will be held May 29 in the Victoria Arts Connection ballroom (2750 Quadra). On March 1, tickets will go on sale through the McPherson Box Office. I may not end up being the best

dancer to grace the dance floor on May 29th, but I'll be the one with the biggest smile!

This year's Stars on Stage Participants:

- **Andrea Boyes** (*News Reporter, CFAX*) dancing Swing
- **Zeke Cabelle** (*Personal Trainer, Compton Sports*) dancing Disco
- **Sally Chan** (*Director of Tour and Travel, Fairmont Empress*) dancing Waltz
- **Aaron Charlton** (*Fire Fighter, Saanich Fire Dept*) dancing Musical Theatre
- **Tony Cheong** (*Development Manager, Dance Victoria*) dancing Bollywood
- **Mira Laurence** (*Sports Anchor, A Channel*) dancing Salsa
- **Tess Van Straaten** (*Anchor, CHEK TV*) dancing Rhumba
- **Chantal Ziegler** (*Constable, Victoria Police Dept*) dancing Charleston

Our Emcees **Heather Robinson** (Political Reporter, CBC TV), and **Danny Vales** (Sales Manager, Hotel Grand Pacific), are joined by our commentator panel: **Lynda Raino** (Lynda Raino Dance) and **David Lennam** (Freelance Writer, Arts Anchor - Shaw Cable, The Daily).

Dance Victoria is proud to announce that **Arthur Murray Dance Studios** is a presenting partner in this year's Stars on Stage. **FN**

Jump The Queue!

Saturday, March 27 • 2 pm to 5 pm
Dance Victoria Office
Suite 111 – 2750 Quadra Street (north entrance)

Buy your tickets for our 2010/11 season before they go on sale at the Box Office (Monday, March 29) and get the best seats in the house!

Only Ensemble Subscribers — those people who buy the five performance Ensemble package — retain their seats from year to year. All other subscribers must renew each year. And the earlier they renew, the better their seats. On March 27, you can jump the queue and subscribe in person. This year we will have two Box Office staffers to process your orders. Dance Victoria staff can answer all your questions about the upcoming season and we'll have free refreshments and snacks on hand.

**Clothing for the
dance of life**

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DANCE SEEN

Photo: Benjamin Moore Photography



The phone rings Monday morning, three days before the show.

I answer. "Dance Victoria?"
 "Hey Steve — is that you, buddy?"
 "Yes"
 "How're you doin'?"
 "G-good"
 "It's Hudson Mack calling."
 "Oh hi"

"I'm calling about that show you got coming up. My wife would really like to see it..."

Hudson Mack is the news anchor at one of Victoria's two television stations. He's got a deep manly voice.

"Yah you know how we ran that story on the weekend about your show and how we're always running stories for you..."

Early warning sign... this show has buzz.

Hudson Mack couldn't pick me out of a police line-up. In fact a week or two after this "conversation" we're at a small reception and he looks right through me. When I introduce myself, he's a little embarrassed.

After Hudson calls, the buzz builds. I get another call from an old colleague with whom I haven't spoken for years, "How've you been? I've been thinking about you lately. Boy you're really doing well with this dance thing. Amaazing. Any chance you could get me two tickets for Thursday?"

Bzzzzz. There are emails from acquaintances; "any good seats?" Bzzzzz. An associate in the office across the hall says "How do I get tickets?" I say "Phone the Box Office." Bzzzzz. Another email with "Remember me?" followed by a long explanation about how our paths crossed three years ago. "Any chance you could get me in? I'll pay!"

Bzzzzz. I love it — crave it actually. Truth be told, I'm addicted to it. I do everything I can to create it. I am a facilitator of buzz. It's my heroin — when there's buzz about a Dance Victoria show I feel legit. I am, for that moment in time, the arbiter of cool. When there isn't, well....

In the anticipation business, which is my business, there are sentiments like "I'm looking forward to..." or "I saw her last piece, I was thinking I might like this one..." These are nice sentiments, but they're not buzz. Buzz is a completely different thing. It crackles — it's like an electrical storm.

There's nothing like the Royal Theatre filled with buzz. All that energy contained in four walls. 1,400 excited patrons; the tiny lobby reverberating with high-pitched chatter, nervous laughter, wide-eyes flitting, exaggerated salutations across a crowd of people. "Sue, Sue — over here!" Or "You look stunning!" They hustle to their seats. The house lights dim, there's a hush, a collective intake of breath. And then the curtain rises. The dancers are phenomenal. At the end: the explosive ovation. You know the one — where people literally spring to their feet like they've been pulled up by their pearls. I get excited just writing about it.

If the Inuit can have so many words for snow, producers should have at least a dozen for the different qualities of buzz. Instead we tend to quantify buzz. "There's a bit of buzz on this one" or "a lot of buzz", "some buzz" or, the dreaded "There's no buzz. None whatsoever."

It's so ephemeral. There's no way of knowing in advance if a presentation will tip over from solid interest to buzz. But when it does, it's magical.

We've been pretty lucky this season. There's been a lot of buzz.

Thank you. **FN**

Dance Victoria is very pleased to welcome a number of returning sponsors to our 2009/10 season as well as a couple of brand new companies:

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(as of February 22, 2010)

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DANCE DAYS WRAP

It started with an idea 18 months ago. We looked at our schedule of performances in January/February 2010 and thought “whoops — what do we do with that?” Three main stage performances all within days of each other. A couple of restless nights at home and then one day in the office — the concept of Dance Days was born.

Other things happened during the protracted planning period that followed, but chief among them was that we decided to hire the brilliant Elise Wren to coordinate our activities. Elise dove in last September and put together the massive program of free classes, and open rehearsals and workshops. We found our lead sponsor — YAM Magazine. We rented the Metro Studio for a week and added performances of local works that we had mentored and supported in the past year and a half. We brought Toronto Dance Theatre here and had them in residence — and we had parties and receptions to try to contain for 15 days, all the excitement and all the bottled up creativity in Victoria’s burgeoning dance community.

Peter Bingham and Chris Allen. Photo by Chris Bandler.



Here are some interesting facts about Dance Days:

- **Total attendance at performances: 8,240**
- **Total participation in classes/workshops: 1,759**

Thank you for supporting Dance Days, Victoria. See you at Dance Days 2011! **FN**

Festival 2010 Performance

*Contemporary • Tap • Ballet
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*Young dancers show their best
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April 6 - 12
Charlie White Theatre
Drop in for a half or full day \$6 / \$10

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May 2
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6:30 awards presentation
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Featuring outstanding performances
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Tickets \$18.50
Available at the Royal and McPherson Box Offices
www.victoriadanceworks.ca

2010/11 SEASON — BIG. BOLD. BEAUTIFUL.

Dance Victoria's 14th Season will be on sale to Ensemble Subscribers beginning March 8 and to all other subscribers on March 29.

You will receive a season brochure in the mail. Here's what you can look forward to:

Pacific Northwest Ballet (Seattle)

October 15 + 16, 2010

An exciting evening of dance featuring 15 principal dancers and soloists performing the choreography of 20th century masters.

Daniel Léveillé Danse (Montréal)

November 5 + 6, 2010

Léveillé has been at the forefront of contemporary dance for 20 years. This raw essential work is performed in the nude by six dancers.

Goh Ballet (Vancouver) and Special Guests with the Victoria Symphony

November 26 – 28, 2010

The Nutcracker

Premiered in 2009 to great acclaim, this entertaining version of the family favourite is set in Victorian England.

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal

January 28 + 29, 2011

Four Seasons & Cantata

Thirty plus dancers in a dynamic new dance set to Vivaldi's

masterpiece. The second half of the program, *Cantata*, features four Italian female singers.

Toronto Dance Theatre

February 25 + 26, 2011

Pteros Tactics

Inspired by and created in collaboration with Toronto Dance Theatre's ten extraordinary dancers, this is a vibrant, playful work that examines the space of desire between the lover and the beloved.

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Royal Winnipeg Ballet

Mar 31, Apr 1 + 2, 2011

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