

Footnotes

Dance Victoria's
subscriber-only newsletter

ISSUE 37 • SEPTEMBER 2011 • **The National Ballet of Canada + Wayne McGregor | Random Dance** + more

The National Ballet of Canada

September 27 + 28 • Tue + Wed • 7:30 pm

Royal Theatre

Mixed repertoire

Running time (including 2 intermissions): 1 hour and 52 minutes

Videos,
photos +
more info
on the web

Wayne McGregor | Random Dance

November 4 + 5 • Fri + Sat • 7:30 pm

Royal Theatre

Entity

Running time: 60 minutes (no intermission)





DANCE VICTORIA 15 YEARS

Known primarily for the mid-to-large scale classical and contemporary dance it brings to Victoria each season, Dance Victoria is also very active in its community as producer of Dance Days each January and by offering bursaries, scholarships, workshops and the annual Chrystal Dance Prize from its headquarters at the distinctive Dance Victoria Studios.

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

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Dance Victoria Studios:

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DanceVictoria.com

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

A Little Forsythe in Pite

The real stars of the National Ballet of Canada's performances in Victoria are not the dancers (although the company has never danced better) but two of the choreographers on the program. One is the iconic **William Forsythe**, often cited as one of the most important choreographers of the late 20th century and today. The other is Victoria's own **Crystal Pite**, currently at the height of her creative power. These two are linked by careers that have overlapped.

Forsythe is an American who first trained in Florida and then at the Joffrey School in New York. Since 1976 he has been based in Germany. He was a company member at the Stuttgart Ballet for five years (1976–1981) where he started getting attention for works he created in the company's annual choreographic workshops. In 1981 he left the company to pursue a career as a freelancer. During that time he developed pieces for several European companies. In 1983, he was commissioned to create a new piece by the Frankfurt State Theatre. The work was titled *Gänge: A piece about ballet* and despite the controversial response at its premiere, the theatre invited him to become artistic director of its ballet company the following season. For 20 years (1984–2004) Forsythe was at the helm of Ballet Frankfurt and it was during his tenure that many of his great works emerged. The company toured extensively to major festivals and prestigious dance series around the world. He is known for re-orienting ballet from the classical and neo-classical repertoire toward a dynamic 21st century style. Dancing his works is demanding, requiring extreme flexibility and strength.

The Forsythe work we'll see on this program, *the second detail*, was created for The National Ballet in 1992 and only recently brought back into performance. Many dance scholars believe that detail is a response to, or at least acknowledgement of, Balanchine's *Serenade* (1934). *Serenade*



THE

was the first ballet Balanchine created in America. It was developed for his students and he freely used the experiences of the class in the development of the piece. One day a student fell in rehearsal and this became incorporated into the final work. Another day a student arrived late to class, so there is a late entrance in the work.

Forsythe's *the second detail* has a similar "classroom" feel: a certain informality with all 11 dancers on stage throughout, several seated on chairs or standing at the back of the stage while a duet or solo is danced downstage. The movement itself is vigorous, danced en pointe with the dancers stretching and twisting in unconventional ways.

The second star choreographer, Crystal Pite, has in recent years continued to add to her acclaim with works she's created for major companies in Europe and North America. There are some very interesting intersections between Pite's life and career with that of Forsythe. When she left Ballet BC in 1996 at age 25, Pite went to dance in Forsythe's company where she remained for five years. In addition to performing Forsythe's work while literally touring the world, she also honed her choreographic skills in annual company workshops. There's no doubt that Forsythe had a strong influence on Pite's development. *New York Times* critic Claudia del Rocco noted that influence in a recent review of Pite's work when she wrote "That lineage [Forsythe to Pite] is immediately apparent in Ms Pite's buckling, rippling phrases in which movement impulses begin at any point in the body."



Christopher Staber with Artists of the Ballet in *Emergence*. Photo by Bruce Zinger

Emergence is the title given to the piece Pite created for The National Ballet in 2009. It is one of the (if not the) largest of her works to date with 38 dancers; typically she has worked with smaller groups of dancers. In *Emergence*, she is interested in the instinct we carry for creating social forms through movement. She uses the corps de ballet as a group that scurries and swarms, creating a dark and menacing group around the individual. The dance is supported by an original score by her long-time collaborator, Owen Belton.

Other works in the program include **James Kudelka's** *The Man in Black*, for four dancers, set to six Johnny Cash covers, and **Jerome Robbins'** *Other Dances*. The latter piece may or may not be performed, based on dancer availability.

In all, it's a rich program developed to show the range of both the company and its dancers. No doubt all of us will be watching to see if we can find the links between Forsythe and Pite. FN

Welcome to Dance Victoria

Welcome back! Here's a little reminder on how to make this season even more enjoyable.

Have we spelled your name properly and is your address correct? If not, contact us at administrator@dancevictoria.com

Did you buy tickets on behalf of a group of friends who should be receiving the newsletter? administrator@dancevictoria.com and we'll add them to the list.

Tickets

Truth is, the Royal and McPherson box offices handle sales for all kinds of events in the city and have blanket policies like "All sales final. No exchanges. Etc." If you are in a situation where you need special attention, always call the Dance Victoria office 250-595-1829 and we'll take care of you.

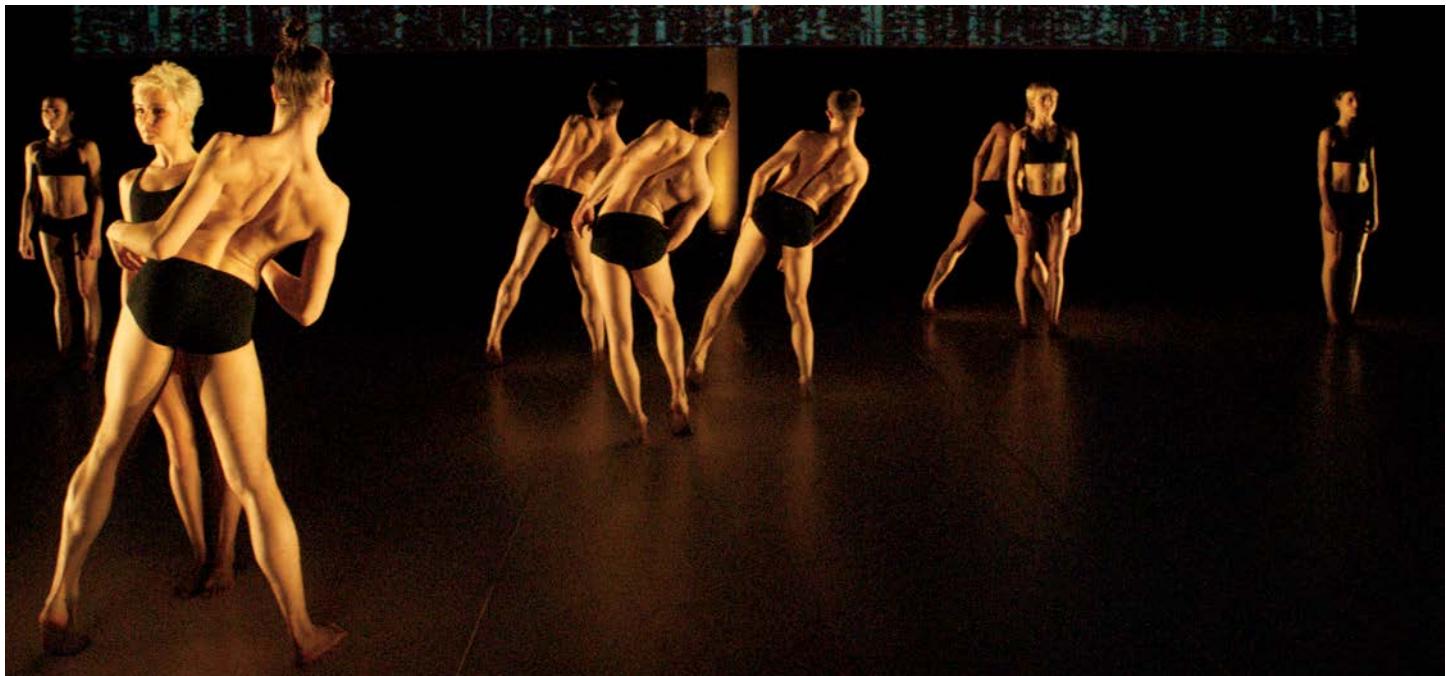
You can buy additional tickets throughout the season and receive the subscriber discount (20%). When you phone the McPherson Box Office at 250-386-6121, tell them you are a Dance Victoria subscriber and you want the **Friend of Subscriber** discount. (Phone or in-person orders only)

Show Information

All performances start at 7:30 pm and are at the Royal Theatre.

There is a free pre-show chat from 6:50 – 7:15 prior to every performance in the west lobby of the theatre. The chat features a member of the dance company who will talk about their experience with the work you are about to see. There's always time for questions.

We look forward to having you join us this season.



Wayne McGregor Dance World's Science Nerd

MBorn in 1970 in Stockport, near Manchester, England, McGregor started playing with computers when he was seven years old, about the same time he started getting interested in dance, so it's really not shocking that in his later life he would combine these two fascinations to create a new kind of dance work integrating new technologies that has excited audiences across Europe and now North America.

McGregor completed his early dance training at the University of Leeds, Bretton Hall, and advanced studies at the José Limón School in New York. In 1992 he founded Random Dance, which was one of many small companies that emerged in England during the 1990s. What distinguished McGregor's work was his unique movement vocabulary and the way he used computer imaging and digital environments in his works. His dancers' movements reflected his own. McGregor possesses a lanky, lean, supple physique that has the capacity to register sharpness and speed.

To say that McGregor incorporated new technologies into his work would be understating the depth of his investigation and the research he has done with collaborators. Primarily he has been interested in the relationship between the dancer's brain and body. He has been a research fellow in neuroscience at Cambridge University and has been actively working with heart imaging specialists.

From the beginning, McGregor considered Random Dance his place for experimentation, where he could push himself and his dancers and play with ideas that were emerging from his research. In the late 1990s and early part of this century he was already in demand, creating new works for contemporary and ballet companies around

the world. In 2006 he was appointed resident choreographer for The Royal Ballet (London). He has also directed operas for La Scala (Milan) and the English National Opera, choreographed for West End shows (London) and worked as the movement director on the blockbuster film, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. Along the way he was awarded a Companion of the Order of the British Empire. Remarkably, he is still in his early forties.

When the casting call went out for *Entity*, Random Dance received 800 resumes and auditioned 300 dancers, evidence of just how highly McGregor is revered in his own milieu. One of his dancers, Jessica Wright, described his choreography for *Entity* as "very particular, very precise, technically challenging...mentally and physically tiring. I've never experienced any other choreography like this," she said.

The central theme for the work is captured in the film that plays in the opening moments of the performance — a svelte greyhound running at high speed, with an agility and economy of movement: the miraculous design of the animal body. But then McGregor breaks it apart, pushes the movement so that it is no longer beautiful and graceful. Instead it becomes all "angles, curves, startling incongruities and achingly graceful lines." (Judith Mackrell, *The Guardian*).

In *Entity*, you will see McGregor's parallel interests in science and dance side by side. It's in the architecture of the set, the film segments, the piercing light and reflection of the floor. He has created a world not unlike our own yet different in its sterility. There is a poignancy in the dancers' constant reaching towards each other, their arms and legs intertwining, lifting and falling together yet in some profound way, never touching. **FN**

15th Anniversary Gala

Tuesday, September 27

Immediately before and after the performance

Royal Theatre lobby; Palm Court at the Fairmont Empress Hotel

Tickets: \$70. Formal dress

Purchase: 250-595-1829 or DanceVictoria.com

More info: dancevictoria.com/seelearndo/15th-anniversary-gala

It's important to mark success with friends.

In 1997, Dance Victoria began as a small project that invited touring dance companies to contribute financially to the creation of a subscription series for dance in Victoria. The Belfry Theatre, Pacific Opera and the Symphony were thriving — a dance series was the missing piece in the performing arts season. From that simple idea, generated by Dance Victoria's founder, Douglas Durand, the series has grown into Canada's largest independent dance series west of the National Arts Centre (Ottawa).

On Opening Night this season join Dance Victoria's friends and supporters and The National Ballet of Canada's Artistic Director Karen Kain, principal dancers and first soloists for a very special evening. The celebration begins with a champagne reception in the lobby prior to the performance. After the show, make your way to the Palm Court at the Fairmont Empress Hotel. Enjoy a signature cocktail (The DV15, created especially for this celebration), and a menu including crab cakes, samosas, prawns, cheese tarts, French pastries and more, plus live jazz and a few surprises.

Tickets \$70 — phone Dance Victoria at 250-595-1829 or purchase online at DanceVictoria.com.

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New York Gala

Bill Hamar and I have been taking folks to New York each year for the better part of a decade. Our tour always culminates with tickets to the American Ballet Theater's Gala performance at the Metropolitan Opera House (Lincoln Center). It is one of New York's most exciting society events each season. We always make sure our group arrives early to see the performance in the plaza outside as people arrive at the opera house.

Our favourite spot is on the outside balcony at the Met, which affords a spectacular view on the proceedings below. Dressed in our tuxes, champagne in hand, we watch as celebrities and New York society arrive and strut the red carpet surrounded by paparazzi. The hairstyles and dresses have just walked out of the pages of *Vogue* magazine and you can tell from the look of the women as they ascend the grand sweeping staircase inside the opera house that they have started the day at the spa, graduating to the salon before heading home to wiggle into the dress and add the final touches.

Our season sponsor is, of course, Derma Spa and wouldn't you know it, they have put together a fabulous three-hour spa day for only \$100 in tribute to the New York Gala. It includes a facial, arm and neck massage, manicure and spa refreshments. The special runs from September 20 through 27. You can learn more at dermaspa.com or 250-598-6968. Quote booking code DV0001.

With Dance Victoria's Gala, Derma Spa is bringing you a little bit of New York City in Victoria.



President's Circle Events

Donors at the President's Circle and Patron levels, as well as our Sponsors, are invited to a number of events and receptions through the year. They get to meet dancers from the visiting companies while being treated with champagne and hors d'oeuvres. Make sure to mark your calendars for this year's events:

- Nutcracker Tea: December 2
- Ballet Nacional de Cuba Reception: Stay tuned for the date!
- Lines Ballet Reception: March 9
- Royal Winnipeg Ballet Reception: April 26
- Supporter Thank You Party: May. Stay tuned for the date!

To learn more about our supporter events, please call Tony at 250-595-1829. FN

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At the Studios

Classes are just newly underway at Dance Victoria Studios as the last of the Fringe Festival posters have been taken down and recycled (DV Studios was a Fringe Festival Venue this year). It was a quiet summer for the most part, so it is exciting to have the kids back, running up the stairs to their tap or jazz or hip hop class every day at 4 pm. The fall always holds so much promise — the time when all of the plans and resolutions you made in the spring and summer come to fruition.

The LOLA Projects

One of the things we're looking forward to this fall at the Studios is The LOLA Projects. We have partnered with The Dance Centre in Vancouver for this year's program. Through a proposal call we invited Vancouver dance artists who have an existing 10 or 15 minute solo to submit their work for consideration. Our program "mentor", Vancouver choreographer Joe Laughlin, will select two solos. Next he will select two Victoria dance artists to create solos that respond specifically to the Vancouver works. On February 5, 2012, we will present all four solos (the two Vancouver + the two Victoria solos) at the Metro Studio. It will be exciting to see the original solo followed by the Victoria response.



Dance Victoria Welcomes the Prodigy Group

Dance Victoria Studios was a happening location on April 9th — a stop on the Prodigy Group's fundraiser, The Amazing Race. The Prodigy Group are young and up-and-coming professionals from the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce. For our first time hosting a stop, Kiera Shaw and Miranda Meijer of the elev8 Youth Dance Project choreographed a short modern dance piece with movements inspired by Wayne McGregor's Random Dance and music from Coldplay and then taught it to the Amazing Race teams who performed it in record time. The resulting team performances were awesome and very entertaining. After a quick snack, the teams were racing to their next stop. We are definitely hoping for a repeat in 2012.

On September 8th, Dance Victoria Studios hosted the monthly Prodigy Group Mingle. While networking and socializing are always on the agenda at mingles, members also had a chance to tour Victoria's premier dance creation centre. Finally, on November 4th the

Prodigy Group is invited to see Random Dance followed by a private champagne reception hosted by a Dance Victoria supporter. We hope they learn to love dance as much as we do!

Jung-ah Chung Wins Inaugural Chrystal Prize

In January 2011, Dance Victoria announced its inaugural Chrystal Dance Prize and invited applications from emerging and mid-career dance artists from across western Canada with a closing date of March 30, 2011.*



Of all the applicants, Victoria-based dance artist Jung-ah Chung was selected by an independent panel. Chung's project took her to Seoul, South Korea, this summer where renowned choreographer Kyung Eun Lee began developing a new choreography for Chung and herself. Dance Victoria will show an excerpt of the work-in-progress at its annual showcase of new works, The LOLA Projects, on Sunday, February 5 during 2012 Dance Days.

Chung is well known to the local dance community as a dancer and choreographer in her own right. She has worked with Wen Wei Dance, Ballet Victoria, Constance Cooke, TriPOD Dance Collective, Out of the Box Productions, Suddenly Dance Theatre, and battery opera. This prize, with a value of \$11,500, was provided to Chung to enable her to work with Kyung Eun Lee. Lee is artistic director of Lee K Dance in Korea, founded in 2001, and has won many awards at festivals and competitions in Asia and Europe.

Information and guidelines about the 2012 Chrystal Dance Prize (value \$14,000) will be available online at DanceVictoria.com in January 2012.

*The Chrystal Dance Fund is held as a designated fund at The Victoria Foundation and was established with a bequest from Dr. Chrystal Kleiman in 2009.

Pite's Pillow

Earlier this summer, Victoria's Crystal Pite was awarded the prestigious Jacob's Pillow Dance Award that "honours outstanding visionary artists and supports them in achieving and enhancing their artistry" with \$25,000. Pite received her award at a special Gala produced at the Jacob's Pillow festival. Past winners of the award include Alonzo King whose company, LINES Ballet, will be in Victoria in March 2012.

On a side note, Pite's 2009 piece, *Dark Matters*, which was commissioned by Dance Victoria in association with the National Arts Centre and Montreal's L'Agora de la Danse, continues to tour extensively. In the coming season it will be presented in St. Etienne (France), Bruges (Belgium), Budapest (Hungary), Portland (Oregon), and Toronto. FN

Dance Seen

What I Did on My Summer Holidays

A good friend once told me that a great producer is someone who is well connected — that he owes it to the public in his home town to know the right people in the industry and to see as much as he can. I thought about this, and in the end, I came to the conclusion that my good friend is right (it's a little disconcerting how the obvious usually escapes me).



Well, this summer I took my commitment to a higher level and saw thrice my fair share of dance — plus some. In May, on our annual hosted tour, Bill and I took 40 people to New York, London and Paris. It wasn't all dance: we did see other things. In New York we saw the triple threat, tap-dancing, It-Girl, phenom, Sutton Foster in *Anything Goes!* Wow! And in London we took in the National Theatre's production of *War Horse*, which was remarkable —

large-as-life horse puppets, each with a distinct character. There wasn't a dry eye in our group — including the big steely guy who thought no one saw him crying behind his hand.

But the dance... In New York: American Ballet Theater, New York City Ballet, Danza Contemporanea de Cuba; in London, the Royal Ballet, of course, The Northern Ballet; in Paris, the Paris Opera Ballet.

A week later, in June, Bill and I were in Spain (scouting for the tour we've organized for May 2012) where we were treated to some riveting flamenco performances. Shortly after I returned to Victoria, Elise Wren (Dance Victoria's Associate Producer) and I headed over to Vancouver for a few days of the Dancing on the Edge Festival, where we saw smaller contemporary dance works. As I write this, I am en-route to Berlin and another dance festival where I'll be able to catch up on the latest trends in European dance.

It looks like I'm taking my good friend very seriously.

In seeing all this work, as I am wont to do, I look for connections. What are the underlying ideas preoccupying our creative artists these days? To get at that question, one has to start by separating the work the ballet companies are doing from the contemporary dance work because it really is apples and oranges. The contemporary dances at the Edge in Vancouver were created by small project-based companies, whereas the ballet companies with their large number of dancers, long lists of repertoire and army of front office staff are quite a different beast.

From what I have seen in recent years, the ballet companies are working very hard to remain relevant. The era when the story ballet was dominant is fading fast. Now the *Swan Lakes* and *Sleeping Beauties* are more likely to be included in a season as "special presentations." Most of today's audience watch them as we view artefacts in a museum — marvel at the dancers' technique, the partnering and of course, most often we enjoy the music.

But the greatest asset these ballet companies have is the 50 or 95 dancers training in their studios every day, at the ready to work with a

new choreographer. There is an energy in each of these companies, and while at times I feel some of the contemporary work they are performing looks a little odd on a ballet body (like an opera singer belting out an Amy Winehouse tune) I think on the whole what's happening in ballet is exciting. There are a number of doom and gloom balletomanes who see only darkness and the end of the art form. They lament the lack of a modern day Balanchine, but I'm of a different opinion. Not all the new work the ballet companies are doing is successful but a lot of it is.

It's the contemporary scene that worries me more. This is a generalization, but honestly, there is such a lack of rigour in a lot of what I see in Canada. Take a piece I saw recently where the choreographer sent four talented dancers, one by one, onto the stage, each with a new roll of masking tape — and we watched for ten minutes as these beautiful movers laid out lines of tape, indiscriminately on the floor. Then they moved to four microphones where they made burping, gulping sounds, danced for three minutes and then, yup, you guessed it, they pulled up the masking tape and left the stage before the lights went down. Oh come on! Honestly. I turned to Elise, who was watching this with me (Elise is much younger than me and is new to the business of "producing"), and I said "See what we do for our audiences, we're their filter. We see this junk so they don't have to."

Of course this is just one example but it sums up a lot of what I have seen coming from our contemporary choreographers. It makes me want to scream. With funding so scarce, making new work is a privilege.

That was my summer — saving you from seeing what shouldn't be witnessed. Like a lifeguard — you can call me a Dance Guard.

On the Road Again

Dance Victoria will be packing its bags again next spring for its annual trip to New York in mid-May, followed by a 14-night trip to southern Spain. Itineraries and pricing for both are contained in this envelope. FN

Subscribe and Save!

This year a world of dance is coming to Victoria with performances by exciting companies from the UK, the US, Cuba and Canada. All performances at the Royal Theatre.

Subscribe and save 20% on regular priced tickets. Choose between:

- **The Ensemble Package** (all five presentations)
- **Design Your Own series** by selecting three or more performances.

For more information about the Dance Victoria 2011/12 season, including photos, videos and links to the dance companies, visit DanceVictoria.com.



Carole Sabiston Meets the Tutu

To mark its 60th year, The National Ballet of Canada launched The Tutu Project this year, inviting dance organizations, community groups and artists across the country to create a tutu that will be one of 60 on display during the company's spring season (June 2012) at the Four Seasons Centre in Toronto. The display will include tutus from the company's own wardrobe shop, too.

Dance Victoria board member Helen McAllister recently invited local textile artist Carole Sabiston to create a tutu on behalf of Dance Victoria and she very generously agreed. Her tutu will be on display in the lobby at the presentation of The National Ballet on September 27 and 28.

Many Victoria residents know Sabiston's work displayed at McPherson Playhouse, Saanich Municipal Hall, Victoria Public Library, Royal Bank, Munro's Books and other local venues. Her

large commissions number over 40 and are variously located in North America, Great Britain and Europe.

She is represented in Canada Council Art Bank, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Province of BC and Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Among her honours and awards are the Saidye Bronfman Award, Order of BC, Honorary Doctorate (Fine Art, UVic), the Queen's Jubilee Medal and membership in the Royal Canadian Academy. Recent commissions are for Government House and Christ Church Cathedral. Dance Victoria is very honoured to have Carole involved in this project.



Next

Subscribers can buy additional tickets at any time during the year and receive the subscriber discount. Call the Box Office at 250-386-6121 and ask for the Friend of Subscriber rate. All performances at the Royal Theatre.



ALBERTA BALLET + VICTORIA SYMPHONY THE NUTCRACKER

December 2 + 3, 2011 • 7:30 pm • December 3 + 4, 2011 • 2:00 pm

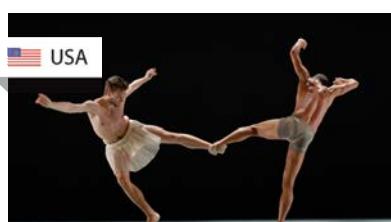
The triumphant return of Alberta Ballet's opulent production set in Tsarist Russia with costumes by Emmy Award-winner Zack Brown. *New this year! Children 12 and under: \$35*
"Magnificent from start to finish!" – *Times Colonist*



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February 3 + 4, 2012 • Highlights from the Classical Repertoire

25 principal dancers and soloists perform excerpts from *Don Quixote*, *Swan Lake* and more.
"Technical fireworks with brilliant charm and awesome ease." – *Daily Telegraph*
Please note: On sale to Dance Victoria Subscribers only, before December 1, 2011.



ALONZO KING LINES BALLET

March 9 + 10, 2012 • New Works

King is a master of contemporary ballet, crafting small gems with exciting collaborators. Each piece is finely honed and polished.
"There is genius evident in the choreography of Alonzo King." – *Times Colonist*



ROYAL WINNIPEG BALLET

April 26, 27 + 28, 2012 • Svenegali

An original story ballet, choreographed by Mark Godden (*Dracula*), based on the 19th century novel, *Trilby*.