

# Footnotes

Dance Victoria's  
subscriber-only newsletter

ISSUE 38 • NOVEMBER 2011 • **Alberta Ballet** + **Alonzo King LINES Ballet** + **Dance Days III** + more

## Alberta Ballet + Victoria Symphony *The Nutcracker*

**December 2 + 3** • Fri + Sat • 7:30 pm

**December 3 + 4** • Sat + Sun • 2:00 pm

Royal Theatre

Running time (including intermission): 2 hours

Videos,  
photos +  
more info  
on the web





**DANCE** 15 YEARS  
**VICTORIA**

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:

<b>President</b>	Colleen Gibson
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<b>Producer</b>	Stephen White
<b>Associate Producer</b>	Elise Wren
<b>Administrator</b>	Bill Hamar
<b>Development Manager</b>	Tony Cheong
<b>Production Manager</b>	George Scott

**Dance Victoria Studios:**

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Victoria, BC V8T 4E8  
250-595-1829  
DanceVictoria.com

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

# The Nutcracker Chronicles

In November 2010, *New York Times* chief dance critic, Alistair Macaulay, set off across the U.S. to see as many productions of *The Nutcracker* as he could. In all, he saw more than 20 — everything from puppet performances to fully amateur productions mixing a variety of dance styles, to an R-rated *Nutcracker*. Macaulay, British by birth, came to the *NY Times* in 2007. He had not “grown up on *Nutcracker*” like many North Americans. In fact, he didn’t see his first production until he was 21. For him the tradition of *Nutcracker* at Christmas is an American phenomenon substantiated by the fact that more than 50% of *Nutcracker* productions worldwide are staged in the U.S.

The first full-length *Nutcracker* in America was created by San Francisco Ballet’s William Christensen in 1944 and was based on conversations Christensen had with the great choreographer George Balanchine and Russian ballerina Alexandra Danilova. The story goes that Danilova would get up to demonstrate steps from her memory of dancing it in Russia, but Balanchine insisted she sit down. He wanted Christensen to create his own choreography. That 1944 version still exists but no longer at SF Ballet. In 1951 Christensen moved to Salt Lake City where he founded Ballet West, which continues to present his version every year.

Macaulay’s gruelling schedule of flights and back-to-back performances across the U.S. was predicated on his attempt to understand the phenomenon of *Nutcracker* in America and to discern what this annual return to a holiday favourite says about American culture in general. What he found was a diverse mix of grand productions at companies like Houston Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Ballet West and of course New York City Ballet as well as enthusiastic amateur productions. Some were danced to Duke Ellington’s jazz re-mix of the famous Tchaikovsky score: others featured hip hop, jazz, tap and ballet. Most were exuberant, featured many children, and solicited enthusiastic response from the audience.

Of course the appeal of *Nutcracker* is tied with the comfort of tradition — in a changing and dynamic world it is one thing to be counted on year after year. Macaulay maintains that its success results from its being the only major ballet that focuses on children and the power of the imagination. *Nutcracker* offers a whimsical retreat from the everyday and is typically a family experience. In fact, the story of the ballet starts and ends with family.

The Alberta Ballet production, which premiered here in Victoria four years ago, is very traditional — a return to the roots of the first production. It is set in Tsarist Russia where Tchaikovsky’s masterpiece premiered in the 1890s and really is *The Nutcracker* you dream about, with opulent costumes and sets, gorgeous white foxes, menacing mice and of course, lots of snow (it is Alberta after all). **FN**



(Top) Alberta Ballet Company Artist Noelle Congaud in *The Nutcracker*. (Bottom) Alberta Ballet Company Artist Anika Homma in *The Nutcracker*. Photo by Darren Makowichuk

## Nutcracker Story Time

It has become a tradition in itself. For several years now, Dance Victoria has offered Nutcracker Story Time. Forty-five minutes before the start of each performance (6:45 pm for the evening performances and 1:15 for the matinees) professional storyteller **Jim Leard** recounts the story of the *Nutcracker* for young and old, so that your young ones know what to expect when they enter the theatre. Jim is a talented and animated raconteur and we're confident he will enhance your experience.

## Nutcracker Ensemble

Sponsored by Toes 'n' Taps Dance Shoppe

As unusual as Christmas in July, Dance Victoria put out the call last June and auditioned the kids you'll see in *Nutcracker* this season at that time. Then we crossed our fingers and hoped none of them had a growth spurt over the summer because if they did, they would not be able to fit into their costumes!

Bev Bagg, Ballet Mistress at Alberta Ballet, came to Victoria for the auditions. We selected the early audition date because the company expected to be out of the country on a tour of China this fall. There was no way we could delay until they were safely back in North America in mid-October. There wouldn't be enough time to train all the kids.

We are fortunate that there are a lot of kids every year who want to

perform in *Nutcracker*. We had a great response. Working with local repetiteur Wendy Vernon, Bagg was able to cast the locals from nine different studios in the region. Vernon has been assisted by young dancer Natalie Shaw in the studio since early September. Dance Victoria's Elise Wren has been instrumental in organizing volunteers and working backstage to make this a magical experience for all the kids. For many, it's a dream come true to be on stage at the Royal, the orchestra in the pit, the stage lights and costumes.... Who knows, the next Karen Kain may be among this year's ensemble.

## Nutcracker Kids

Supported by The Royal and McPherson Theatres

Each year we ask our community to help us make tickets for *The Nutcracker* available to the less fortunate kids in our region. Dance Victoria matches every \$50 donated and provides two free tickets for distribution by Big Brothers Big Sisters. This year we are also pleased to be hosting kids from the James Bay Community Centre Youth Get-away Program. On opening night (Friday, December 2) the kids will come to the Royal Theatre and, in addition to enjoying the performances, afterwards they are invited on to the stage to meet the dancers and get a closer look at the sets and costumes.

There is still time to contribute to this year's "Nutcracker Kids" program. You can donate online at [DanceVictoria.com](http://DanceVictoria.com) or call our office at 250-595-1829. **FN**



Photos by Elise Wren

## 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](mailto:administrator@dancevictoria.com)

Did you buy tickets on behalf of a group of friends who should be receiving the newsletter? [administrator@dancevictoria.com](mailto: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.

# Dance Seen

## We Take Berlin

By Stephen White



The e-mail came in late July. “Call me. I have something that may interest you.” It was from uber-arts consultant Judy Harquail. Harquail lives in Toronto but her sandbox is Canada. You don’t mess with Judy. When she has something on the go, she’s like a dog with a bone. Her fingerprints are on pretty much everything to do with the development of dance in this country. She oversees a software programming tool used by most presenters in Ontario to identify those artists and companies for whom there is multiple interest and when there are three presenters in accord, she swoops in and puts together a provincial tour. She facilitates a special group of eight or ten presenters who are part of a five-year project to increase their knowledge and understanding of dance. She leads workshops for independent dance artists. She’s constantly at a roundtable somewhere. Left alone for two minutes, Judy has checked her e-mail on her laptop, deleted ten, sent two text messages from her smart phone and is calling a dance presenter with whom she must have a conversation now. She is definitely a force in our milieu. And she doesn’t take no.

I phoned her. She phoned back. And so it went for a few days. A couple of brief e-mails between phone calls (Judy doesn’t do comprehensive correspondence — her e-mails are more like scratches on concrete, there’s never time to spell-check). A picture began to emerge. Judy wanted me to join two other Canadian presenters and go to Berlin for an intense week of meetings and performances. We were to be hosted by Gabriele Naumann-Maerten, a cultural attaché at the Canadian Embassy in Berlin. We were part of a five year project that hadn’t really been developed yet, but “Never mind — we’ll talk about the strategy later.” And then, “You owe me, you realize. For the next five years you’ll be my emissary and you’ll be expected to make presentations at conference events.” Judy is no older than I, in fact she’s probably a couple of years younger, but as I agreed to the proposal I felt like a kid.

Berlin. Oh my. My partner Bill and I had been to Berlin the previous year so, luckily for me (but not true of my two presenter companions) I felt no tug towards the Brandenburg Gate or the Berliner Dom or the Jewish Museum. I was focused.

Our tour leader, Gabriele, is a remarkable woman. At one time she ran a major festival in Hamburg, but for the past ten years she has been working at the Embassy. She constructed a dense eight-day schedule of meetings. The purpose of the trip was to immerse ourselves in the whole of the dance scene in Berlin — a scene by the way that is crackling with vitality. We met major players like the former Producer of the €60 million Salzburg Festival, now in Berlin to take on the production of 12 major annual festivals under one roof of the

Berliner Festspiele. We also talked with independent dance artists hungry for their next small grant to kick start a project. We buzzed around the city in taxis and toured newly-developed facilities. And in the evening we attended performances at the world famous Tanz im August (Dance in August) festival. It was a whirlwind, but it was rich, full of smart, in-depth conversations about how policies and programs shape or feed a culture.

And the facilities! Uferstudios is a collection of 11 dance studios in what were once bus barns in East Berlin. There is another gorgeous 500-seat facility with studios in a former pump house. In Hamburg, Kampnagel, built in a former warehouse and factory, has multiple performance venues, dance studios and its own choreographic centre. There was a facility in Potsdam, a suburb of Berlin, built in the former headquarters of the secret police. Renowned for the residences it offers dance companies, this centre has lodging for 12, a huge kitchen, studios, a performance space and, best of all, is situated on a lake. On those hot summer days, when they have been working at choreography all day the dancers burst out of the studios, toss off their clothes and jump into the lake for a swim.

For me, what I took away from the experience (aside from the embarrassment I suffered when meeting our Ambassador, not knowing who he was, and saying “Hey, how’s it goin’, Peter? Nice to meet ya.”) was the commitment, the energy, the excitement in a sector where money is a huge issue, but despite the challenges there is a belief in possibility. Berlin is reputed to have a thousand or more practicing independent dance artists. That’s not counting the ballet companies at the big opera houses.

I returned to Victoria filled with new ideas about how Dance Victoria can best serve our local and national dance community. The experience was timely indeed as we get ready to build a performance lab in Studio Two here at Dance Victoria Studios.

And Judy? The cryptic e-mails have started again. Last weekend she had me sit on a panel at a national conference in Calgary. Who knows where she’ll put me next. But there’s something very special about our Judy Harquail. She has incredible instincts. Knowing Dance Victoria was planning to invest more comprehensively in the development of new work, she made sure I went to Berlin so that I could be inspired. Thank you, Judy.

## Travel to New York with Producer Stephen White and Travel Coordinator Bill Hamar

May 10 – 15, 2012

There are still a few spots on this exciting tour. Five nights in the city that doesn’t sleep. This tour includes your return air, accommodation, full American breakfast daily, walking tours in Harlem and Greenwich Village, a performance at NY City Ballet, and the opening night of the American Ballet Theater Spring Season at the Metropolitan Opera House (Lincoln Center). \$2595 pp (double occupancy). Complete tour details online at [DanceVictoria.com](http://DanceVictoria.com) (Click the See Learn Do tab) or call Bill at 250-595-1829.



## LINES Around San Francisco

Last year when I worked with two other colleagues in BC (Vancouver International Dance Festival and Vernon Performing Arts Centre) to develop a tour for San Francisco's LINES Ballet, what we knew for certain was that we each loved this company. In 2008, we had brought LINES to BC for its first Canadian tour and we were really looking forward to having them back.



What we weren't certain about was what repertoire they would perform on that tour. Alonzo King, co-founder and Artistic Director of the company, creates pieces that are 35 or 40 minutes long and a typical program includes two of his works. LINES management gave us a few options. All three of the BC presenters responded strongly to *Scheherazade* created in 2009 with a new score by tabla master Zakir Hussain. Hussain re-interprets the

original music by Rimsky-Korsakov, incorporating traditional Persian as well as Western instruments. Commissioned by the Monaco Dance Forum to inaugurate the Centenary of the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo, this piece was created to honour Serge Diaghilev's spirit of artistic collaboration. In my opinion King successfully creates a richly textured world.

We had trouble deciding what the second piece should be so the LINES folks suggested we come down to San Francisco in October to see the premiere of Alonzo King's newest piece, *Resin*. My goodness. It was beautiful. The LINES dancers continue to amaze me with the way they fill each musical note, each beat. Their commitment to the dance and their freedom within the form is palpable. Speaking to one of the dancers (David Harvey) at the post-show reception in Yerba Buena Center, I asked if "freedom within form" was part of an ongoing conversation the company had. He told me it certainly was and that for him, he found if he relaxed in the moment he was able to perform the steps at the breakneck speed King's choreography sometimes demands.

There is something very special about this company and I am very excited to have them back in Victoria next March.

## CANDANCE Meets at The FLUID Festival in Calgary

The CanDance Network is the name of our national association — "our" meaning specialized dance presenters from across the country. We are now 38 member organizations strong, which represents a big increase in recent years. The Network's members present dance in a range of venues — the smallest being 75 seats and the largest, the National Arts Centre. Dance Victoria is one of the bigger venues and is fortunate to have one of the largest audiences in the country.

I enjoy my colleagues. I have been sitting at the table with them for 12 years now and was President of the organization for two years quite recently. Each year the members join forces to commission new works, we talk to each other about artists we're interested in and we often work out tours for companies we want to present. But we're also a group of Type A personalities. Often sparks fly, things are said through gritted teeth — it all makes for good theatre. What struck me at these recent meetings was the incredible responsibility we have both as "taste makers" in our communities and in the impact we have on the future of artists and companies. It's a little overwhelming when you think about it but something we all take seriously.

I was pleased that Dance Victoria's Associate Producer, Elise Wren, was with me — her introduction to the national milieu. We both enjoyed the performances and showcases we saw under the umbrella of The Fluid Movement Arts Festival celebrating six years in Calgary, curated by the very savvy Nicole Mion. **FN**

# Developing Stories

## Dance Victoria Donors Make a Difference

By Tony Cheong

Three years ago Betty Wilkinson and Bob Milne bid on some dance classes (donated by Stages Performing Arts School) at our Stars on Stage silent auction and unknowingly fulfilled a little girl's dreams. Sarah H., a participant in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Victoria program, was the lucky recipient of the classes. When contacted, Toes 'N' Taps Dance Shoppe provided Sarah with a full new dance outfit and shoes. The family watched her blossom. Sarah's mom Ruth mentioned that Sarah had always dreamed of dancing, ballet in particular, but the family had never been able to afford it. In a thank you, Ruth notes:



Sarah's dream of being a ballerina. I thank you for helping to fill an 11 year old girl with self-esteem."

That was the first year. With continuing support provided by Stages Performing Arts School, Toes 'N' Taps, the Big Brothers and Big Sisters Jump Start program, and contributions from Dance Victoria's Annual Donor Campaign, we can happily say Sarah is still continuing to learn and have fun in her ballet classes. If you'd like to help us extend these benefits to another child in the region please donate by calling me (Tony) at 250-595-1829 or online at DanceVictoria.com

## Our Sally Fields Moment

We at Dance Victoria all had a Sally Fields moment on September 27. Remember her famous exclamation at the Academy Awards a number of years ago when accepting her Best Actress Oscar — "You like me. You really, really like me!"?

It was a bit the same at our Gala. The warm glow of the Palm Court at the Fairmont Empress Hotel; the impeccable service of the hotel staff; the delicious food; Jan Stirling at the piano with her lively jazz trio; all of these things combined with 125 of our dearest friends and our own new cocktail, the DV 15 (recipe below), made for a great evening. Of course Karen Kain and members of the National Ballet of

Canada were present. A special highlight of the evening was Bob Milne's (former President of Dance Victoria) tribute to Douglas Durand, who had flown from Vancouver for the event. Durand is the founder 15 years ago of the Victoria Dance Series (now Dance Victoria). Milne applauded the ingenuity and tenacity of Durand who really created a whole new model for how dance could be presented. And of course we are indebted to Doug as well. But we didn't just dwell on the past and our accomplishments that evening; we also looked to our future, which was best captured in a short contemporary dance performance by two members of Elev8 Youth Dance Project, Tessa Charlesworth and Brooke DeArmond. Tessa and Brooke shone.

As always there are a number of people and local companies who made our Gala a success:

Fairmont Empress Hotel, LA Limousines, Capital City Tuxedos and Luz Bridal Boutique. Our very generous Gala sponsors were Linda Geddes Boyle and John Boyle of MacDonald Realty. Our Gala Committee included Anne Bowen of DermaSpa, Sally Chan of the Empress Hotel, Lorna Harris (creator of the DV 15 cocktail), Helen McAllister (Board Member, Dance Victoria) and Jane Tice of the Horticultural Centre of the Pacific.

Move over Sally Fields, for one night, we were the most loved in town!



Enjoy  
the DV15  
Cocktail

1 ½ oz. Oaken Gin  
8 drops of Peychaud's Bitters  
½ oz. of fresh lime juice  
½ oz. of sugar syrup

Shake well in a cocktail shaker filled with ice.

Pour into a champagne flute.  
Top with 1 ½ oz of sparkling wine.  
Garnish with a twist of lime.

## A Capital Idea

By now, you will have received information in the mail detailing our plans to turn Dance Victoria Studios into one of Canada's premiere dance creation centres. Our *Dedicated to Dance* Capital Campaign to support our plans is well under way and we're pleased to announce that we have raised \$55,000 to date. With a goal of \$100,000, there is still a way to go. We ask that you consider supporting our campaign — any amount is greatly appreciated and will truly help. If you are interested in seeing what we're up to, arrange a studio tour by calling Tony at 250-595-1829. **FN**

# Our First Dance Partner Dances on Her Own

We're feeling a little verklempt. Our first Dance Partner has spread her tutu (can you spread a tutu) and danced away.

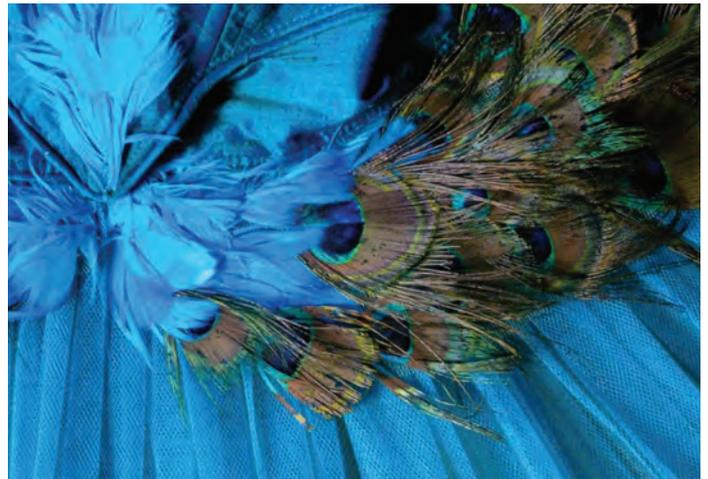
This season, at Dance Victoria Studios we launched our "Dance Partner" program for local dance artists who are creating new works. For just \$50 a Dance Partner receives 35 hours of free studio time. Additional hours are charged at \$10 off the regular rate. We also offer marketing and production advice.

Our first Dance Partner was local dancer/choreographer Capri Aspé and her new company of dancers called ZarYevka Ballet. They recently performed *Peter and the Wolf* at the Metro Studio. Aspé's

first venture on her own was so successful she had to add an extra show. All three performances sold out, which means the company is now considering their next move. Their brand of high quality, family friendly ballet has hit a chord — and we're thrilled about that because it means (most likely), that they'll be back in our studios soon.

One of the wonderful things about this production was the beautifully crafted tutus created by Pamela Martin of Matryoshka Rehearsal Tutus picture here.

We're happy that our Dance Partner program helped make this first venture a success. **FN**



## Pack Your Bags: Dance Victoria's Travel Raffle Returns!

Dance Victoria's popular travel raffle is back! Tickets go on sale at *The Nutcracker* performances. This year's prizes include:

- **Chicago: five nights in May 2013. Includes return air, accommodation, daily breakfasts.**  
Highlights include a day long tour of Frank Lloyd Wright's neighbourhood in Oak Park; an architectural boat tour on the Chicago River; tickets to the Joffrey Ballet; entry to the Art Institute of Chicago and more.
- **Vancouver Getaway: Fly Helijet to Vancouver and enjoy an overnight at the Rosedale on Robson and tickets to a fantastic dance performance from our friends at Dance House.**
- **Comox Valley Getaway: Two nights in a deluxe studio room at The Old House Village Hotel and Spa including a one hour massage for two and a \$50 dinner voucher.**

Tickets are \$10 each or a book of five for \$40. New this year — buy your raffle tickets on-line starting December 5! Or call us at 250-595-1829 and order over the phone.

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## Dance Days III

Sponsored by YAM Magazine

Coordinator Elise Wren is busy putting together the Dance Days 2012 schedule of free classes, workshops, demos and performances. We've had a strong response from the studios in our region eager to participate once again. Dance Victoria acts as an umbrella for this event each year, raising the profile of dance in our community by inviting folks to participate in a wide range of classes that include Bollywood and Hip Hop, adult Jazz and Flamenco. The diversity in sampler classes available is the event's strength.

New this year, our brochure for Dance Days will be printed by Black Press and will be featured as a pull-out tabloid in the January 19, 2012, issue of *Monday Magazine*. Dates for this year's events are January 27 through February 5.

One thing we're looking forward to is The LOLA Projects (3rd Annual), Metro Studio (Quadra at Johnson), Sunday, February 5. Produced in association with The Dance Centre in Vancouver, this year's LOLAs include two Victoria dance artists, Robert Halley and Treena Stubel, who are will develop solos in response to two existing solos created by Vancouver artists Anne Cooper and Iris Wing-chi Lau. Cooper and Lau were selected from a call for proposals in Vancouver. Their solos were uploaded to a video site and Victoria dance artists were invited to look at the solos and contemplate how they might respond to them with their own choreography. At the presentation on February 5, Dance Victoria will bring the Vancouver artists to Victoria where they will perform back to back with the Victoria responses. In March the show will be repeated in Vancouver.

Of course, The LOLA Projects are only one night of ten days and nights, packed with activity. If you'd like to be involved as a volunteer ambassador or you're a dance teacher who wants to offer a class, contact Elise Wren ([community@dancevictoria.com](mailto:community@dancevictoria.com)). **FN**

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**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.



### BALLET NACIONAL DE CUBA

**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** • *Scheherazade and Resin*

Two stunning works by the master of contemporary ballet, small carefully crafted gems. Each is finely honed and polished, danced with power, commitment and precision by 13 gifted dancers.

"There is genius evident in the choreography of Alonzo King." – *Times Colonist*



### ROYAL WINNIPEG BALLET

**April 26, 27 + 28, 2012** • *Svengali*

This original story ballet, choreographed by Mark Godden (*Dracula*, *Magic Flute*), is based on the 19th century novel, *Trilby*, and was strongly reviewed at its recent premiere in Winnipeg.

"Mesmerizing...Enthralling" – *Winnipeg Free Press*