

newsletter

July/August 2009

WE HOPE YOU are all having a good summer. By the time you receive this newsletter Birmingham Royal Ballet will have returned from their holidays but the Royal Ballet will still be on holiday, having completed a very successful tour of Washington, Grenada and Havana at the end of last season. An article about the Cuban section of the tour appeared in the Observer Magazine on 9 August. There will also be a television programme about the tour, which was filmed by Michael Nunn and William Trevitt. We will hear all about it at our first meeting in October. Whilst many dancers have been having a well deserved rest, others having been appearing in performances around the world, many of the principals in Tokyo during August.

Since our last newsletter we have had two very enjoyable meetings. It was a particular delight in June to welcome back **Wayne Eagling**, Artistic Director of English National Ballet. An enthusiastic supporter of the Association's events in our early days, Wayne had not spoken to us since he left The Royal Ballet in 1991 to become Director of Dutch National Ballet. As might have been expected, Wayne gave us a very detailed and open appraisal of his current and previous roles and of ballet generally today and throughout his career. Whilst sharing with us some of the frustrations of being a director, he also spoke enthusiastically about the highpoints of both his directorships and his dancing career. He kept the audience amused with many funny stories and stayed long after the meeting talking with members.

At our meeting in July we were pleased to welcome the editor and founder of Dance Europe magazine, **Emma Manning**, as our guest. After speaking of her career as a dancer and how she started writing reviews, Emma gave us a fascinating account of how she set up the magazine and the day to day running of it now. She shared with us the background of putting together the current issue, copies of which she brought with her. She also spoke of the role of critics, empathy with dancers and constructive and destructive criticism. From comments afterwards it was clear the members really enjoyed the meeting.

Future meetings

We start the new season with some very exciting meetings. On Thursday 27 August we are delighted to welcome Royal Ballet Principal Federico Bonelli and his wife Hikaru Kobayashi, who was promoted to First Soloist at the end of last season. Federico and Hikaru were married last summer. They joined The Royal Ballet in 2003, Federico as a Principal and Hikaru as a First Artist. Following their training, both joined Zurich Ballet in 1996 and Dutch National Ballet in 1999. They both last spoke to the Association during 2005. Federico has danced most of the Royal's classical repertoire as well as Des Grieux, Romeo, Lensky and many other roles. Last season saw Hikaru make her debut as Gamzatti and this autumn she dances Aurora, a role she performed as a guest artist with Tulsa Ballet in 2006. We can expect a lively meeting.

The following week on Friday 4 September we are extremely pleased to welcome, as our guest, Natasha Oughtred from Birmingham Royal Ballet. Natasha has just been promoted to Principal. Born in Yorkshire, she trained at the Royal Ballet School. She won the 2000 Adeline Genee Award and the same year joined The Royal Ballet. She joined Birmingham Royal Ballet as a soloist in 2007. Since when she has danced many roles including Sugar Plum Fairy, Odette/Odile, Chloe and Juliet. She created the role of the Bride in Michael Corder's *Le Baiser de la fée*. This summer she married her fiancé Simon. We can expect an interesting evening hearing about her experiences in both Royal companies. It is rare to have a dancer who has experienced working in both companies.

At our next meeting on Friday 2 October we have our annual account of The Royal Ballet's summer tour. We are delighted to welcome First Artist's **Nathalie Harrison** and **Lara Turk** as our guests for this meeting. They will talk about their careers in the Company, and in Lara's case previously in South Africa, before giving us a detailed account of the tour to Washington, Grenada and Havana. Both stayed in Havana for a few days after the tour and were seen sampling the city's restaurants before Nathalie returned to London and Lara investigated more of the Caribbean. We know

members always enjoy this opportunity to hear of the experiences of two of the corps. We can expect a very enjoyable evening.

Meetings, unless otherwise stated, begin at 7.30 p.m. and are at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church which is at the eastern end of Shaftesbury Avenue, opposite the Shaftesbury Theatre. From Covent Garden you walk up Endell Street and cross over Shaftesbury Avenue. The church is then on your left, if you face East. (nearest tube Tottenham Court Road). Doors open at 6.30 p.m.

Dates for next season

Provisional dates for next season are Thursday 15 October, Friday 20 November, Tuesday 8 December, Friday 22 January, Tuesday 23 February, Wednesday 3 March, Wednesday 17 March, Wednesday 7 April, Friday 16 April, Thursday 13 May, Thursday 20 May, Thursday 27 May, Thursday 3 June, Thursday 17 June, Thursday 24 June. Most months there will be one meeting, sometimes two, depending on how busy the ballet schedule is. Some dates may change depending on commitments of speakers. (N.B. We have cancelled meetings originally advertised for 10 September, 25 November, 15 December, 7 & 28 January, 5, 11, 18 February for these reasons.)

Exits, entrances, etc.

As announced in an earlier newsletter, **Vanessa Palmer** retired from The Royal Ballet at the end of last season. We gave Vanessa a John Lewis token so that she can choose her gift. She wrote:

Dearest 'Association,' I just wanted to say 'thank you' for your very generous gift and also for your wonderful support during my 19 years with The Royal Ballet. When everything has settled I will go and choose something special that will remind me of you all, and of course I will write again to let you know what I've bought. Thank you for your kindness and thoughtfulness, much love Vanessa X.

Alexandra Ansanelli, who also retired, received an enthusiastic reception to her last performance when she danced Natalia Petrovna in *A Month in the Country* in Havana.

Congratulations to all those who were promoted at the end of last season: **Steven McRae** to Principal, **Helen Crawford**, **Hikaru Kobayashi** and **Sergei Polunin** to First Soloist, **Kristen McNally** to Soloist, **Leanne Cope**, **Olivia Cowley**, **Melissa Hamilton** and **Nathalie Harrison** to First Artist and to **Sian Murphy** who becomes Assistant Ballet Mistress. In addition to **Leticia Stock**, **Tristan Dyer**, **Benjamin Ella** and **Akane**

Takada who it was announced in the last newsletter were joining as Artists, so do **Jacqueline Clark** from Ballet Ireland and **Hayley Forskitt** from Norwegian National Ballet. Both were Royal Ballet School trained and Jacqueline has been dancing with the Company for the last few months. **Rina Nemoto** joins as a Prix de Lausanne Apprentice.

News from BRB

Congratulations to **Jamie Bond**, **Gaylene Cummerfield**, **Carol-Anne Millar** and **Natasha Oughtred** who are promoted to Principal, **Joseph Caley** and **Alexander Campbell** to First Soloist, and **Céline Gittens** and **Tom Rogers** to First Artist. **Dominic Antonucci** has been appointed Ballet Master from September. **Benjamin Soerel** from the Royal Ballet School and **Jade Heusen** from Elmhurst School for Dance join as Artists. As well as **Natasha Oughtred**, as already announced above, **Laura Purkiss** married her fiancé **Chris** and **Arancha Baselga** married Ballet Master **Wolfgang Stollwitzer**. Principal **Chi Cao** will take a three-month leave of absence in the autumn to promote the film *Mao's Last Dancer*, in which he plays the title role. In July, Principal **Ambra Vallo** received an award from Italian Prime Minister, **Silvio Berlusconi**. Soloist **Lei Zhao** will feature in an autumn issue of *Vogue China*. Former Principal **Karen Donovan** and her family have made the decision to return to Australia.

Ballet Association Annual Awards

At the Royal Ballet School Graduation Ceremony, after the school performance in the Royal Opera House, deputy chairman **Sylvia Tyler** presented the Ballet Association's Annual Awards to this year's recipients, **Angela Wood** and **Imogen Chapman**. (The Chairman was away in Havana.) Both students are 17 and enter their graduate year this autumn. Angela is from Colorado and Imogen from Australia. Imogen recently toured with **Carlos Acosta** and both will be travelling to Toronto with the School in November to participate in the 50th anniversary celebrations for Canada's National Ballet School. Our awards of £500 each are made to overseas students to help with their studies. We hope to invite both to meet members at a meeting later in the year. Director **Gailene Stock** wrote in thanking the Association's support of our young dancers: 'I am sure that you will all be very proud of these two young dancers as they progress through their careers.'

Annual Dinner 2009

As usual, we had photographs taken of the guests on each table during the evening. These will be available

for members to purchase at future meeting and some will be placed on our website.

Membership

It is the time of year when we ask you to renew your membership. Please return the attached renewal form to Joan Seaman, as soon as possible, but not later than the end of October. There has been no rise to membership fees this year. Concessionary members should indicate which concession applies. This information will help us in analysing the profile of our membership. If you joined after the start of May, your membership covers this coming season.

If you currently receive your newsletters by post but have an email address, please consider receiving them by email in future. Email has the advantage of ensuring that you are not subject to the vagaries of our postal system and that you receive your newsletters as soon as they have been written. It also helps The Ballet Association save money on postage.



Visit to Elmhurst and Birmingham Royal Ballet

Thank you to all who returned the form in the last newsletter enquiring about your interest in a Ballet Association trip to Birmingham in June 2010. We are delighted that many are keen and as a result committee members Brian Don and Belinda Taylor, organisers of this visit, have researched the opportunity further.

The visit is a long way ahead as these are the dates which suit our Elmhurst host, Ballet Association President Desmond Kelly (Artistic Director, Elmhurst); they also avoid Royal Ballet London performances since the Company will have left for their tour and it gives members good time to plan. We realise members may not be certain whether they definitely want to participate yet. However, we need an indication of possible numbers in order to plan further. So if you are going to, or think you might, join in, please read on. The likely schedule (detail tbc) is:

Wednesday 16 June 2010

- morning train to Birmingham
- check in at hotel
- possible BRB event
- evening: BRB performance - *On Their Toes* (Slaughter on 10th Avenue/Grosse Fuge/Theme and Variations)

Thursday 17 June 2010

- visit Elmhurst (to include welcome from Desmond Kelly, class, tour, lunch, presentation of first Elmhurst Ballet Association Award and either another class or rehearsal of end of year show)

- pm: depart for London

Elmhurst visit only

Those wanting to visit Elmhurst but not attend a BRB show can make a day trip, coming up on the Thursday morning, going direct to the school and returning at the same time as the rest of the party. Please indicate on the form below if this is your preference.

Accommodation

We now need a clear indication of types of room required (single/double) and numbers, in order to get best price. Please note, once we know numbers, to secure rooms we will need a deposit which will be payable in advance and will only be refundable in exceptional circumstances. We have investigated both the Holiday Inn and IBIS hotels. They are about the same for single rooms but the IBIS is cheaper for double or twin bedded rooms. If you have stayed in either and have information we may find useful, please let us know.

Rooms at IBIS Hotel one night, breakfast included, with negotiated discount: Double/ twin £66, Single £60.50

If you will want us to book for you, please fill in the form below and return it to: Belinda Taylor, 12 Richborne Terrace, London SW8 1AU. Forms may also be handed in at Ballet Association meetings or to David Bain.

Tickets

For those who want to go to the performance, we have reserved top price tickets in the front stalls and dress circle at £25 each. (We receive a £5 discount booking as a group. This is cheaper than the concessionary rate) If you would prefer a ticket in rear stalls please indicate. We would be grateful if at this stage you would indicate on the form below which price seat you would prefer.

Travel

It is simplest if people book and pay for their own transport. As soon as details of the schedule are confirmed, we will provide suggested train times so that those wanting to travel together can make arrangements. If you book well ahead it is possible to obtain very good deals, around £7 each way.

David Bain (Chairman)

Ballet Association Birmingham Visit

June 16/17 2010

Name(s):

Address:

Email:

Phone:

I/We will be coming to Elmhurst only Yes / No

I/We will be coming to the performance AND Elmhurst Yes / No

I/We will need accommodation Yes / No

Accommodation required – (Wednesday 16 June)

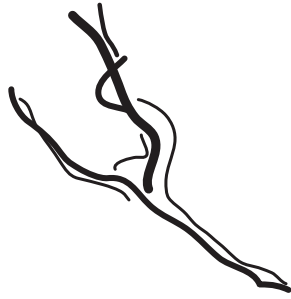
Type of Room	Number required
Single £60.50	
Double/Twin £66	

Tickets for *On Their Toes*, 7.30pm, Wednesday 16 June

Part of House	Number required
Front Stalls £25	
Rear Stalls £18.50	
Front Circle £25	

Please fill in the form and return it to: Belinda Taylor, 12 Richborne Terrace, London SW8 1AU.

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theballetassociation

patron Dame Monica Mason, Director, The Royal Ballet
presidents Jonathan Cope, The Royal Ballet
 Jay Jolley, The Royal Ballet School
 Desmond Kelly, Elmhurst School for Dance
 Christopher Saunders, The Royal Ballet
 Marion Tait, Birmingham Royal Ballet
founder patron Sir Anthony Dowell, The Royal Ballet
founder president David Drew, The Royal Ballet

MEMBERSHIP 2009/2010

I/We would like to join The Ballet Association as

- a full member (£15)
 *joint members (£22.50)
 **a concessionary member (£7)
- new member renewal

Title(s) First name(s)

Surname(s)

Address

Phone Home Work Mobile.....

E-mail

I would like to receive my newsletter by email post

I enclose my cheque/P.O. for £ including £ optional donation
made payable to The Ballet Association.

Please return this form to:

The Membership Secretary, The Ballet Association
56 Turney Road, London SE21 8LU

Please note that membership runs from October 1st to September 30th.

* two ordinary members living at the same address

** please indicate your concession below

- over 60 under 16 registered unemployed student registered disabled