



newsletter

January 2010

WE WISH ALL our members a very happy New Year. Our last two meetings of 2009 were very entertaining. In November, after our AGM, our President, **Jonathan Cope**, spoke about his role as Répétiteur and his triumphant return to the stage last summer in Havana. There was also a very interesting discussion about Royal Ballet style, dancing Balanchine, coaching and new choreography. As always, it was difficult to prise Jonny away from a group of admiring members at the end of the meeting.

At our December meeting, we were delighted to welcome our Patron and Director of The Royal Ballet, **Dame Monica Mason**. We are very grateful to Monica for finding time in our very busy schedule to talk to us. She spoke extensively about Sir Kenneth MacMillan, both working with him and planning this anniversary season, before talking about many other aspects of the Company's work. This included new choreography and young choreographers, plans for this and future seasons, the role of a music director and collaborating with designers. Monica concluded by praising the work of the Association.

Future meetings

We are delighted to announce that our first guest of 2010 on Friday 22 January will be First Soloist **Yohei Sasaki**. Yohei was born in Japan and, after training there, he joined The Royal Ballet School. He won a prize at the Prix de Lausanne in 1991 and in 1993 danced the Red Knight in the School's performance of Checkmate before joining The Royal Ballet later that year. He was promoted to First Soloist in 2001. His repertoire is extensive. He is married to ex-Royal Ballet dancer Maria Pietra. Yohei has announced his retirement from the Company and will dance his final performance in *Sleeping Beauty* the day after our meeting. We will be giving Yohei a present to mark his time in the Company at the end of the meeting.

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.

Provisional dates for the rest of the season are 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 24 June. Some dates may change depending on commitments of speakers. Please note Thursday 17 June has been removed from list as is the date of our trip to Elmhurst.

Membership

If you haven't already returned the renewal form to our membership secretary, Joan Seaman, please do so as soon as possible. This will be the last newsletter you receive if you do not renew. If you have lost the form please download one from the website or e-mail the Chairman. Please note, you cannot apply for the Annual Dinner until you have rejoined.

Annual General Meeting

At this meeting we elected the Association's Honorary Officers and Committee Members. David Bain (Organising Secretary), Joan Seaman (Membership Secretary), Melanie Shipton (Treasurer), Liz Bouttell (Reporting Secretary), Sylvia Tyler, Rachel Holland, Geoffrey Griffiths, Belinda Taylor, Chris Scott and Brian Don were re-elected and Nathalie Dantès and Annette Fraser were co-opted to the committee. The Chairman and Deputy-Chairman will be elected at the first committee meeting. At the AGM it was announced that our Membership Secretary Joan Seaman will be standing down at the end of this current season.

Exits, etc.

Vanessa Palmer, who retired at the end of last season, writes:

'I said I would write and let you know when I spent my voucher (Gift from BA) and I've finally spent it. LIGHTS!! I have the prettiest lights for my lounge. Quite appropriate as I spent twenty years in lights! Thank you so much they make a lovely memory. Best wishes Vanessa. X.'

Richard Ramsey, who left in October, has added our

gift to him to that from the Company to buy some jewellery.

As announced earlier in this newsletter, **Yohei Sasaki** retires from the Company on 23 January. His gift will be presented at the January meeting. Also leaving are **Xander Parish** on 8 January and **Cindy Jourdain** on 23 January. Xander is joining the Maryinsky and Cindy is going freelance.

Birmingham Royal Ballet has announced the appointment of **Koen Kessels** as its new Music Director. Soloist **Christopher Larsen** and First Soloist **Kosuke Yamamoto** left BRB after Nutcracker returning to Canada and Japan respectively. Congratulations to former BRB dancers **Silvia Jiminez** and **Iain Mackay** on the birth of their son Oscar.

Sadly we have to announce the death of our member **Neil Evans**. Neil was a regular at performances, meetings and dinners and will be missed by those who knew him.

We are delighted to announce that we have made **Elizabeth Blair** a Life Member of the Association. At 95 Elizabeth can no longer attend meetings. In writing to thank us, she reminded us that she was 'the oldest old Elm,' she thinks, 'having attended Elmhurst from 1925-28 and was one of four who were the very first to take a grade!'

Twitter

John Mallinson, who looks after our website, has also set us up on Twitter (<http://twitter.com/BalletAssoc>), which we hope will bring us to the notice of younger members of the audience. Members are reminded, however, that they should not quote what dancers say

at meetings on Twitter or any websites. We are very fortunate that dancers feel able to talk freely at meetings. We do not wish this to be compromised by unofficial reporting of meetings.

Annual Dinner 2010

We are now able to confirm that our Annual Dinner will be on Monday 17th May. Once again, it will take place at the Rubens Hotel in Buckingham Palace Road. Dinner is at 8 p.m. A private bar is available from 7 p.m. We have kept the meal at the same price as last year, £35.

Given the popularity of our dinners and our growing membership, we expect a very heavy demand for tickets, so early application is advised. Consequently, as in recent years, the dinner will be open to members only. If there are still vacancies at the end of April, we will open it up to members' guests at this stage. There will be about 145 places for members and 35 for an exciting array of dancers of all ranks, Company management, etc. We will not be announcing the guest list until the March or April newsletters. You will then have an opportunity to let us know which dancers you would like to sit near.

Please complete the attached form and send it with your cheque and a stamped addressed envelope to Melanie Shipton, The Ballet Association, 7 Dutch Gardens, Kingston, Surrey, KT2 7TT.

Please note, if you fail to send a stamped addressed envelope you may lose your place if we are over-subscribed.

David Bain (Chairman)

Mara Galeazzi – Gala for Africa, February 28, 2010

ROYAL BALLET PRINCIPAL Mara Galeazzi's Gala For Africa 2010 is part of a unique initiative, 'Dancing For The Children.' Through the universal language of dance, 'Dancing For The Children' pursues humanitarian aims, encouraging far-reaching understanding of the arts, as it provides relief and assistance to victims of illness, disease and disability. Gala For Africa 2010 hopes to raise funds that will allow a group of dancers to return to South Africa in 2011 and continue the work and financial assistance that was so appreciated in 2007.

With a star-studded line-up that includes Royal Ballet stars Gary Avis, Ricardo Cervera, Yuhui Choe, Sarah Lamb, Steven McRae, Laura Morera, Marianela Nunez, Sergei Polunin, Thiago Soares, Eric Underwood and Edward Watson, along with piano soloist Kate Shipway, actor Jude Law and groups such as the Ballet

Boyz, 4 Poofs & a Piano, Ella Kenion, Nigel Cliffe, and Ensemble WC2E. The event promises to be an unforgettable celebration of the power of dance and entertainment to change lives and to communicate across geographical, cultural and social borders.

Gala For Africa 2010 will be presented by Nicky Henson and Samantha Bond. Choreography is by Craig Revel Horwood, Kenneth MacMillan, Wayne McGregor, Steven McRae and Marius Petipa, with world premieres by Alastair Marriott, Kristen McNally, Liam Scarlett and Vanessa Fenton. (Programme is subject to change.)

For more information about Mara Galeazzi and the project, please go to Mara's website www.maragaleazzi.com. Booking is via the Sadler's Wells website www.sadlers-wells.com or the box office on 0844 412 4300.

theballetassociation

The Ballet Association Annual Dinner 2010

I would like to attend the Ballet Association Dinner on Monday 17th May at 8 p.m. at the Rubens Hotel, Buckingham Palace Road, London. (Bar available from 7 p.m.)

Name of member(s) applying for tickets:

I enclose a cheque for £_____ (£35 per ticket) made payable to *The Ballet Association*

I would like:

Please tick one starter, one main course and one dessert. N.B. if two of you are applying on the same form, please make clear who wants what.

Starter

- Roast Figs Wrapped in Parma Ham with Pear and Walnut Dressing
- or* Watercress and Potato Soup with Wild Garlic Leaves

Main course

- Pan Roasted Breast of Free Range Chicken, Leeks, Cream Cheese, St George's Mushroom and Mustard Grain Sauce
- or* Butternut Squash and Pumpkin Risotto with Parmesan and Rocket Leaves

Dessert

- Strawberry and Blueberry Shortbread with Cassis and Sloe Gin
- or* Warm Chocolate Fondant with Seville Orange Marmalade Ice Cream

Starbucks Coffee and Petit Fours

I would like to sit on the same table as:

Please list any members you wish to sit with, up to a maximum of four.

Please send your cheque, a stamped addressed envelope and this form to:

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N.B. Failure to send s.a.e. may result in losing your place if we are over-subscribed.