

newsletter

October 2016

AT OUR FIRST meeting in September it was a delight to welcome former Royal Ballet Principal Viviana Durante, who returned to the Company a few days later to coach the Principals in Kenneth MacMillan's *Anastasia*. We covered the many different aspects of her career, from joining The Royal Ballet School at White Lodge aged ten, graduating into the Company when just 17, and dancing her first Odette/Odile when she took over part way through Act III despite not having learnt the role. Viviana spoke about working with Kenneth, who she now realises worked in a way used by many theatre directors to develop roles, but through using steps rather than words. She briefly spoke about her varied career once she left the Royal Ballet and graduating recently from the Royal Ballet School teachers' course. Viviana gave us a very entertaining evening.

At our second meeting of the month a packed audience heard Royal Ballet Principal Vadim Muntagirov speak about his family, his training in Perm and at The Royal Ballet School and his career at English National Ballet, The Royal Ballet and guest appearances worldwide. He spoke about the recent masterclass for The Ashton Foundation where Sir Anthony Dowell coached him in *Dance of the Blessed Spirits (Dance in the Elysian Fields)* and other recent Ashton roles including Colas in *Fille mal gardée* and the Young Man in *The Two Pigeons*. He also spoke about his partnership with Daria Klimentova, now a teacher at The Royal Ballet School, and his partners since joining The Royal Ballet.

A summary report is available on our website once the report has been checked by the guest speaker/s. If you do not have access to the internet and would like a copy of a report, please send an A5 stamped, addressed envelope to Roger Handley, 12 Pinewood, Willow Grove, Chislehurst, Kent, BR7 5BT. Members are reminded that interviews should not be recorded or filmed and that photographs should only be taken at the end of the meeting. We welcome dancers speaking freely when they come to meetings. Sometimes they say things they do not wish to see in print and edit this out of the official reports. Therefore, please do not post your own reports of meetings on social media.

Future meetings

On Wednesday 12 October we have the enormous pleasure of welcoming back the Director Laureate of Birmingham Royal Ballet, choreographer and former Director Sir Peter Wright. He last spoke to the Association in October 2014, talking about the early years of his career, including working with John Cranko in Stuttgart. By the end of the evening we had reached 1964, so we look forward to hearing about the next stages of his career. He joined The Royal Ballet in 1969 as Associate to the Directors, later Associate Director and was appointed Director of Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet in 1977. He has recently published his autobiography *Wrights & Wrongs: My Life in Dance*. We can expect a very entertaining evening a few weeks before Peter celebrates his 90th birthday.

Our meeting on Thursday 3 November has been cancelled.

Following our AGM on Thursday 24 November we are delighted to welcome as our guest former First Artist Leanne Cope. Leanne retired from The Royal Ballet at the end of last season following two sabbatical years where she created the role of Lise Dassin in Christopher Wheeldon's *An American in Paris* for Théâtre Châtelet and on Broadway, where she nominated for a Tony Award. The musical opens in London in 2017, so we are very fortunate to have Leanne talk to us after she finishes on Broadway. Leanne joined The Royal Ballet in 2003 after training at The Royal Ballet School and was promoted to First Artist in 2009. As well as dancing Clara, Princess Louise, the White Cat, Red Riding Hood and Mustard Seed, Leanne created many roles, especially in Liam Scarlett's ballets. These included Emily Dimmock and Annie E Crook in *Sweet Violets* and Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*, as well as dancing in *Asphodel Meadows*. She also created roles in Christopher Wheeldon's *DGV: Danse à grande vitesse* and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Jonathan Watkins' *As One* and Will Tuckett's *Time Code*, as well as many pieces in Draft Works. We can expect a very entertaining evening from Britain's newest Broadway star.

Provisional dates for meetings this season are: Wed 7 December, Thurs 19 January, Wed 25 January, Wed 1 February, Fri 17 February, Thurs 2 March, Wed 22

March, Wed 5 April, Thurs 13 April, Thurs 27 April, Wed 10 May, Wed 17 May, Fri 26 May, Thurs 1 June, Fri 9 June (not Tuesday 6th as originally stated). Please note that the meeting for Wednesday 14 December has been cancelled.

Meetings 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, walk up Endell Street, cross over Shaftesbury Avenue and walk past the opticians. Doors open at 6.45 p.m. unless otherwise stated. Entrance is £4 for members, £3 for concessions, £8 for guests.

Annual General Meeting

The meeting on Thursday 24 November will be preceded by our AGM. Consequently the evening's proceedings will commence at 6.45pm and doors will open at 6.15pm. It will be held at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church. The AGM will be followed at 7.30pm by our meeting with Leanne Cope.

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of previous AGM
3. Matters Arising
4. Chairman's Report
5. Financial Report
6. Election of Committee
7. Any Other Business

At this meeting we shall be electing Honorary Officers and Committee Members. The Committee for 2015-16 season was David Bain (Chairman and Organising Secretary), Liz Atkins (Membership Secretary), Melanie Shipton (Treasurer), Liz Bouttell (Reporting Secretary), Rachel Holland, Chris Scott, Annette Fraser, Chiara Gorodesky, Roger Handley, Ann Dawson and Jacqui Sporle. Ann and Jacqui were co-opted after the last AGM. Sadly, Annette Fraser is stepping down from the committee at the AGM as she now has demands on her time that no longer allow her to give the committee the attention that is required. We are very grateful to Annette for the work she has done on the committee, particularly the arranging of visits to exhibitions in the Opera House and at museums.

Association members wishing to nominate candidates for election or wishing to join the committee themselves should write to the Chairman, David Bain, by Monday 21 November. No nomination can be received at the AGM. Candidates for election must be proposed and seconded, in writing, by members of the Association. Anyone interested in joining the committee should contact David to discuss what it

entails. Please do not contact him about this before 12th November. Prospective committee members ideally should be able to write reports on meetings, a job shared by the committee when Liz Bouttell is unavailable. The Organising Secretary, Reporting Secretary, Membership Secretary, Treasurer and committee members will be elected at the meeting. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman are appointed by the Committee at their first meeting after the AGM.

Birmingham Royal Ballet Director's Appeal

As in previous years we have made donations towards the Director's Appeal, which this year is supporting Birmingham Royal Ballet's *The Tempest*. In total, we will have donated £1000, part of which was our "Thank you" donation following the Annual Visit. As a thank you for our support, we receive a couple of invitations to attend working rehearsals in the Birmingham Hippodrome.

For this season these are:

The Nutcracker – Thurs 24th November 2016, 7pm

Cinderella – Tues 14th February 2017, 7pm

Coppélia – Mon 12th June 2017, 7pm

Baiser triple bill – Tues 20th June 2017, 7pm

If you would like to use the Association's Gold Barre ticket for any of these rehearsals please let our Chairman know. We will hold a ballot for the tickets where necessary.

Membership

Thank you to all of you who have renewed your membership already and especially to the many of you who have made generous donations towards our next support to a work by The Royal Ballet. If you haven't already done so, please return the attached renewal form to Liz Atkins, Membership Secretary, as soon as possible, but not later than the end of October. If you joined the Association, as a new member, after the start of April 2016, your membership covers this coming season. Your membership card will have indicated this. If you have an email address, please consider receiving the newsletter by email in future. If you would prefer to pay by electronic transfer, please indicate on the form and Liz will get in touch with you with our bank details, but please still send a copy of the form to her by post.

To save on costs your committee has decided to only issue membership cards to new members. So please keep your previous card and cross out the date. If you have lost your card please indicate this on your form, enclose a stamped addressed envelope and Liz will send you a new one. If you have a friend who you think might be interested in joining the Association,

please give them a copy of the form.

As most of you will be aware, the Association donated £5000 towards the revival of the original sets and costumes, with some minor alterations, for the Royal Ballet's production of Frederick Ashton's *Rhapsody*. We presented the cheque to our Patron Kevin O'Hare at our Annual Dinner in 2015. We hope that this will be the first of what will become a regular donation to the Company, possibly every two years. To enable us to do this, we ask that all members consider adding a donation to their renewal fee. Those of you who have attended the Open Rehearsals over the last three years have experienced a wonderful opportunity to observe the Company at work. Making a donation to the Association enables members to contribute in a small way towards future revivals, etc. We are very grateful to those members who have made donations over the last year.

Ashton Rediscovered

Many members attended the first of The Frederick Ashton Foundation masterclasses where our Founder Patron Sir Anthony Dowell coached Reece Clarke and Vadim Muntagirov in *Dance of the Blessed Spirits (Dance in the Elysian Fields)* (1978) and *The Sleeping Beauty*, Prince Florimund's Variation, Act II, (1968). A booking form was attached to the last newsletter or can be found on our website if you would like to attend either of the next two masterclasses. Tickets £60 per masterclass. All proceeds to benefit the Frederick Ashton Foundation (reg. charity no 1143433).

Sunday 13 November 2016 with Merle Park. *The Walk to the Paradise Garden* (1972): Akane Takada and Ryoichi Hirano.

Sunday 19 February 2017 with Donald MacLeary and Darcey Bussell. *Raymonda pas de deux* (1962): Marianela Nuñez and tba.

The Royal Ballet School

We received the following letter from The Royal Ballet School:

On behalf of all of us at The Royal Ballet School, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Ballet Association for their generous support of Yuki Sugiura, Gabrielle Beach and Joshua Junker during the 2015-16 academic year. Please know that your generosity is truly appreciated.

Yuki has an exemplary work ethic, she is constantly pushing herself and has made great progress both technically and artistically this

year. For the summer performances, Yuki danced in Frederick Ashton's *Les Patineurs* as one of the brown couples, *Soirées Musicales* by Kenneth MacMillan and *Candere* a new piece specially choreographed by Charlotte Edmonds for Opera Holland Park.

In May, Gabrielle was chosen to dance a lead role in a specially commissioned choreography by former ABT Principal Ethan Stiefel, *See the Youth Advance!* for a showcase performance of our ongoing exchange programme with American Ballet Theatre Studio Company. Gabrielle was heavily involved in the Summer Performances, she danced in Stijn Celis' *Vertigo Maze*, David Bintley's new choreography *SpringTime* and Kenneth MacMillan's *Soirées Musicales*. Gabrielle is delighted to have secured a contract with Boston Ballet II.

Joshua has made significant improvement in all aspects of his work. He is a versatile performer with great ability to dance in both contemporary and classical styles. In the Summer Performances, Joshua danced in Frederick Ashton's *Les Patineurs* and Charlotte Edmonds' *Candere*. His Ursula Moreton Choreographic Award winning piece, *Jangala* was also performed at Opera Holland Park.

We are most grateful for the Ballet Association's prizes awarded at the School's End of Year Assembly to Julia Conway (1st Year), Harrison Lee (1st Year) and Feng Haoliang (2nd Year) and hope you will enjoy following their progress next year.

With kind regards,

The Royal Ballet School

You will wish to pencil in your diaries that provisionally the joint Ballet Association and London Ballet Circle trip to The Royal Ballet School this season will be on Wednesday 3 May 2017. Times are to be confirmed, as the School has made alterations to its timetable.

James Wilkie

When James retired from The Royal Ballet last season, as announced previously, we sent him a present from the Association. He has recently written to us. We are delighted to announce that James will be our guest at our meeting on 7 December where he will talk about his career and the transition to helping mount

Kenneth Macmillan's ballets worldwide. More details will be given in the next newsletter.

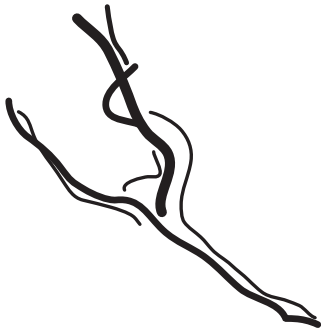
Dear David,

I am so sorry for a delay to get in contact! I wanted you to be able to tell the Association what I bought! I was in France in a village sale and I found a statue of Pavlova and I had to have it! I enclose a photo! I look at my statue every day and think of all the support your members have given me and the company. I am truly grateful!

Best James.

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theballetassociation

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RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP – 2016-2017 SEASON

Please renew my membership of The Ballet Association for the 2016-17 season as...

an ordinary member (£15) *joint members (£22.50) **a concessionary member (£10)

Previous membership no(s)

Title(s) First name(s)

Surname(s)

Address

.....

Phone Home Work Mobile

Email (please write clearly and indicate if this is a change of address.)

I/we would like to receive the newsletter by email post (please use email if at all possible)

I enclose my cheque / P.O. for £ including £ optional donation

made payable to *The Ballet Association*

or... I would like to pay by electronic transfer *** (if paying by electronic transfer please still complete this renewal form and send it to the Membership Secretary to ensure you continue to receive newsletters.)

Please return this form to:

Liz Atkins, Membership Secretary, The Ballet Association, 3 Batchwood Drive, St Albans, Herts AL3 5RZ.

If you require a new membership card please enclose a stamped and addressed envelope. Please note that all renewal applications should be received by the end of October. Please give a copy of this form to any friend who you feel may be interested in joining the Association.

*two ordinary members living at the same address

**please indicate your concession below

under 16 over 60 student registered unemployed registered disabled

*** the Membership Secretary will get in touch with you with bank details.

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