



SINCE OUR LAST newsletter we have been privileged to have two very special guests. At our October meeting we were delighted to welcome **Dame Beryl Grey** who had celebrated her 90th birthday earlier in the year. It was a particular pleasure to see her fully recovered from an operation for cancer a few months ago and feel very honoured that we were one of her first engagements since her operation. A few days earlier she had attended a reunion of London Festival Ballet, which she had directed, and a few days later went to the Palace to become a Member of the Order of Companions of Honour, which she had been awarded in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. She received the Honour from the Princess Royal. Dame Beryl spoke about many aspects of her career and the many people with whom she had had the privilege to work. After the talk, she signed copies of her recent autobiography, *For the Love of Dance*, which members had the opportunity to purchase at a discounted rate from representatives of the publisher, Oberon Books.

After our AGM, at our first meeting in November, we were delighted to welcome renowned American choreographer **Twyla Tharp** as our guest. We felt particularly privileged that Twyla had agreed to talk to us the evening before the General Rehearsal of her new work for The Royal Ballet, *The Illustrated 'Farewell'*. Twyla has choreographed a pas de deux for Sarah Lamb and Steven McRae, which acts as a prequel to her 1973 classic *As Time Goes By* using the first two movements of Haydn's 45th Symphony. The Association has made a donation of £5,000 towards the mounting of this new work. Twyla spoke about all aspects of her career, including the development of her own company, works for other companies, musicals, films, her books and current university programme, as well as speaking about her new ballet. It was a fascinating evening.

A summary report is available on our website, www.balletassociation.co.uk, 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

At our second meeting of the month on **Wednesday 15 November** we are delighted to welcome two of the newer members of the Company, Artists **Leticia Dias** and **Leo Dixon**. Brazilian Leticia was born in Rio de Janeiro and trained locally at the Petite Danse School of Dance before joining the Royal Ballet School in 2013, after winning a scholarship at the Prix de Lausanne. While at the School her performances included a principal role in Liam Scarlett's *Classical Symphony* and a soloist role in Christopher Wheeldon's *Rush*. After Graduation in 2015 she joined Birmingham Royal Ballet, before joining The Royal Ballet as an Artist in 2016. Leo was born in Bristol and brought up in Plymouth, where he trained locally and was a Royal Ballet Junior Associate. He trained at Elmhurst School for Dance from age 11 and joined The Royal Ballet Upper School aged 16. At school he danced with the Company in *Alice*, *Swan Lake* and *Don Quixote*, and performed Kenneth MacMillan's *Solitaire* pas de deux at Gailene Stock's memorial service. In 2015 he graduated into the Aud Jepsen Young Dancers' Programme and joined the Company as an Artist in 2016. The meetings with young dancers are always very entertaining and we would encourage all members to come and hear them talk.

Please note, that this meeting on 15 November will be held in the Church's Forum Hall, which is on the fourth floor. Turn left when you enter the foyer and take the lift. The Forum Hall is a large room. Though it seats less than the church, we think it may have a better acoustic, which we hope may help those of you with hearing difficulties. Please give us feedback at the end of the meeting.

This will be our last meeting of 2017 as we have decided to cancel the meeting scheduled for Friday 8 December given the busy work and social agendas of dancers and members leading up to Christmas.

At our first meeting of 2018 on **Thursday 4 January** we have the pleasure of welcoming recently promoted

Principal Character Artist **Kristen McNally** as our guest. It is seven years since Kristen last spoke to us, during which she has developed into a very successful character artist and choreographer, whilst still dancing roles across the repertoire. Born in Liverpool, she trained locally before joining the Royal Ballet Upper School and graduated into the Company in 2002. Kristen has an extremely broad repertoire which has included recently, the Empress Elizabeth, Carabosse, *Les Enfants Terribles*, Tsarina and the Cook in *Alice*. She has created many roles in new works and regularly choreographed pieces for Draft Works, as well as for other companies and the 'Tiny Dancer' television advert for John Lewis. She also regularly works with the Royal Opera House's Learning and Participation Department, including choreographing for Chance to Dance and co-presenting Royal Ballet Live. We can expect a very lively and entertaining evening.

Provisional dates for meetings next season are: Thursday 18 January, Thursday 25 January, Wednesday 14 February, Thursday 22 February, Thursday 8 March, Thursday 22 March, Thursday 12 April, Friday 20 April, Thursday 10 May, Thursday 24 May, Thursday 7 June. Please note that the meetings scheduled for Thursday 22 February, Thursday 8 March have been cancelled as they clash with Royal Ballet Insights.

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 Shaftesbury Avenue and walk past the opticians. Doors open at 6.45 p.m. unless otherwise stated. Entry is £4 for members, £3 for concessions, £8 for guests.

Annual General Meeting

At our AGM, which preceded our meeting with Twyla Tharp, the current committee were re-elected: David Bain (Organising Secretary), Liz Atkins (Membership Secretary), Melanie Shipton (Treasurer), Liz Bouttell (Reporting Secretary), Ann Maclennan (Events Secretary), Rachel Holland, Chris Scott, Chiara Gorodesky, Roger Handley, Ann Dawson and Jacqui Sporle. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman will be appointed at the next committee meeting.

As Chiara is still in New York and Chris is going to mostly be in Northumbria and Russia, we are looking for one or two volunteers to join the committee. If you are interested, please contact our Chairman. We are also looking for volunteers to help serve tea and coffee at meetings, as Rachel has stepped down from this after fulfilling the role for 15 years. We marked this by presenting her with flowers.

News

Members will have been delighted to hear that

former Royal Ballet Principal **Alina Cojocaru** gave birth to daughter Thalia Chulpan at the beginning of October. We send our best wishes to her and Johan Kobborg, who is currently mounting *Don Quixote* in St Petersburg.

Members may have heard on Radio 4 that **Edward Watson** is being painted by artist Fiona Graham-Mackay.

The **Viviana Durante Company**, which includes Royal Ballet Principals **Lauren Cuthbertson**, **Laura Morera** and **Edward Watson** presents a programme *Steps Back in Time* in the Barbican Pit on 18-21 April. The programme includes pas de deux from Kenneth MacMillan's *House of Birds* and *Danses Concertantes*, and the whole of his *Laidrette*.

Members will have been saddened to hear of the death recently at the age of 93 of ballet historian **David Vaughan**. Whilst he spent the last 40 years in the USA he will be remembered here for his book, *Frederick Ashton and his Ballets*.

Birmingham Royal Ballet in association with Sadler's Wells announces the first commissions as part of Ballet Now with choreographers **George Williamson**, **Juanjo Arqués** and **Didy Veldman**. George's piece will be performed in the In the Upper Room programme in June.

Freed Factory Visit

The October visit was postponed and will be re-arranged for Spring 2018 – date to be advised.

ROH Backstage Tours

Tuesday 21 November & Tuesday 23 January

The November visit was oversubscribed and a second visit has been arranged for 14.30 on 23 January. All the people who applied for the November tour and failed to get a place have been offered one on the January tour. There are still a handful of places left (see the booking form at the end of the newsletter). If you would like to join this visit please email or ring Ann Maclennan (ba.events.sec@gmail.com / 020 8941 1607) to confirm a place is available before sending off your cheque and booking form.

ROH Thurrock Tour

Friday 12 January 2018

There are still a couple of places available. Please see the booking form at the end of the newsletter and email or phone Ann to confirm your place before sending off your cheque etc.

Dates for your diary

- Our annual joint visit with LBC to The Royal Ballet Upper School will be on Wednesday 2 May.

- Our annual visit to Birmingham Royal Ballet and Elmhurst Ballet School will be on Thursday 21 and Friday 22 June.
- Our Annual Dinner will be on either Tuesday 10 or Tuesday 24 April.
- Details for these three events will be in the next newsletter.

BRB Director's Appeal Gold Barre

The Association has renewed its Gold Barre membership of Birmingham Royal Ballet's Director's Appeal. As in previous years this entitles us to two reserved seats at each rehearsal, with some refreshments before. If you would like to attend any of the rehearsals please write to our Chairman, indicating if you need one or two tickets. If necessary, we will hold a ballot. Doors open one hour in advance. The rehearsals are:

- *The Sleeping Beauty* – Monday 12th Feb 2018, 7pm
- *In The Upper Room* mixed programme – Tuesday 19th June, 7pm
- *Romeo and Juliet* – Monday 25th June, 7pm.

Membership

Thank you to all of you who have renewed your membership. If you haven't done so already please do so quickly. This is the last newsletter that you will receive if you don't renew. The renewal form was attached to the July/August newsletter. Please return it to Liz Atkins, Membership Secretary.

As mentioned previously, the Association has made a second donation to the Royal Ballet towards a partial revival. For the 2015-16 season, we donated £5,000 towards the revival of the original sets and costumes, with some minor alterations, for the Company's production of *Rhapsody*. For the 2017-18 season, we have made a similar donation towards Twyla Tharp's *The Illustrated 'Farewell'*, a new ballet which expands her classic *As Time Goes By*. We presented the cheque to our Patron Kevin O'Hare at our Annual Dinner in March. We hope that this 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 small donation to their renewal fee. Those of you who have attended the Open Rehearsals over the last four 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 and new work. We are very grateful to those members who have made donations over the last year.

Men in Motion rehearsal

London Coliseum, 22nd November 13.15-16.15.

We are delighted to announce that former Royal

Ballet Principal Ivan Putrov has invited Association members to attend a rehearsal of Men in Motion at the London Coliseum on the afternoon of 22 November. The rehearsal will start at 13.15 and last about three hours. If you would like to attend, please send a cheque payable to Ivan Putrov for £15 to our Chairman at the address at the bottom of this newsletter or give David the cash when you come to the next meeting. The names of those attending will be passed on to Ivan and there will be a list in the foyer for your names to be checked off when you arrive.

Ivan has provided the following information for this newsletter:

Some of the best male dancers on one stage for two performances only!! Ivan Putrov's thrilling celebration of the male dancer returns to the London Coliseum starring Matthew Ball, Daniel Proietto, Irek Mukhamedov, Timofej Andrijashenko, Mathieu Ganio, Marian Walter and the outstanding British ballerina, Francesca Hayward.

International ballet star Ivan Putrov has assembled a cast of award-winning dancers for his latest Men in Motion programme exploring the changing role of the male dancer. Spanning 100 years in 100 minutes, Men in Motion pays homage to great dancers and choreographers of the past and showcases some of the most exciting artists of the present.

Cathy Marston and Ballet Nacional de Cuba

On leaving the Royal Ballet School, choreographer Cathy Marston was an Associate Artist with the Royal Opera House for five years, where she choreographed her critically acclaimed interpretation of Ibsen's *Ghosts* before becoming Director of Bern Ballet. Our Chairman, David Bain, is also Chair of the British Friends of Ballet Nacional de Cuba. The British Friends have commissioned Cathy to choreograph a new ballet for Ballet Nacional, which will receive its premiere at the 26th International Ballet Festival in Havana from 28th October to 6th November. The British Friends will be taking a group to the Festival. As at previous festivals, this group will have unique access to rehearsals and excellent tickets for performances. If you are interested in attending the Festival or helping support the commission in any way, please contact Janet Radenkovic, Secretary of BFBNC at Radenks@aol.com or our Chairman David Bain.

CHAIRMAN: David Bain

23 Capstan Square, Stewart Street, London E14 3EU

Tel: 020 7515 1254 Mobile: 07855 823921

Email: baindavid23@talktalk.net

or baindavid@rocketmail.com

Thurrock Production Workshop Tour at 1.30 Friday 12 January 2018

Name.....

Address.....

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Email.....

Phone.....

Please send a cheque made payable to Ballet Association for £10 and a stamped addressed envelope to Ann MacLennan, BA Events, 18 Wensleydale Road, Hampton TW12 2LW



Royal Opera House Backstage Tour, Bow Street at 14.30 Tuesday 23 January 2018

Name.....

Address.....

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Email.....

Phone.....

Please send a cheque made payable to Ballet Association for £10.50 and a stamped addressed envelope to Ann MacLennan, BA Events, 18 Wensleydale Road, Hampton TW12 2LW