

newsletter

*November/December 2018*

SINCE OUR LAST newsletter we have had two excellent meetings. At our second meeting in September, we were privileged to have **Natalia Makarova** as our guest. Natasha was in London for rehearsals of her production of *La Bayadère*, and members were very grateful that she gave up a free evening to come to talk to the Association. The evening began with a film using material from Natasha's personal archives, which spanned her career in all its many facets. After the film, Natasha was welcomed into the room with prolonged applause. She then spoke about *La Bayadère*, both as a dancer, which at first was "A disaster!", and as a choreographer/producer. Her first production was in 1980 for ABT, with the Royal's production dating from 1989. Natasha then spoke of many aspects of her career: her defection from Russia and the invitation to join ABT, her guest appearances with the Royal Ballet, her work with many different choreographers and the transition into musical and straight theatre. Natasha provided us with a fascinating and entertaining evening.

Our November guests were **Alastair Marriott** and **Jonathan Howells**, who had last spoken to The Association in 2008. They gave us behind the scenes insights into the creation of Alastair's new work, *The Unknown Soldier*, which has its premiere in November, the initial concept of which began in 2013. Alastair spoke about his collaboration, not only with Jonathan, but also with the designer (Es Devlin) and the composer (Dario Marinelli) in developing his multi-media work, the extent to which the dancers had helped to shape the choreography, and recent cast changes. The technical rehearsal was imminent with full calls on the stage the following week. Concurrently, Jonathan was acting as Ballet Master for *La Bayadère*, working with the Fakirs and the Bronze Idols. He shared some detail about what this and his usual coaching responsibilities entailed. Both our guests are now Character Artists, sometimes taking the same roles, so that, and their transition from their earlier Soloist opportunities, was another fascinating area of discussion to conclude an extremely interesting evening.

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**

Following our AGM on **Wednesday 5 December** we are delighted to welcome Principal **Thiago Soares** as our guest. Thiago joined the Municipal Theatre Ballet in Rio de Janeiro in 1998 and The Royal Ballet as a First Artist in 2002. He was promoted to Principal four years later. Recognised for his partnering skills and characterisation in dramatic roles, Thiago has danced most roles across the classical and heritage repertoire, as well as roles in a number of new works. Later in December, he will dance Vershinin in *Winter Dreams* and will be seen as Orion in *Sylvia* in the Cinema Festival in the Linbury Theatre. The film, *Primeiro Bailarino*, featuring Thiago is being shown in the Linbury Theatre on Monday 21st of January. It is just over five years since Thiago last spoke to the Association. Always a popular speaker, we can expect him to give us a lively and entertaining evening.

Advance notice: Our guests on 30th January will be former First Soloist Valeri Hristov and the 2018 Ballet Association Royal Ballet School Award winners. The guest for 23rd of January has yet to be confirmed.

Provisional dates for meetings the rest of this season are: Wednesday 23 January, Wednesday 30 January, Monday 11 February, Wednesday 6 March, Wednesday 13 March, Wednesday 27 March, Tuesday 9 April, Wednesday 17 April, Wednesday 24 April, Tuesday 30 April, Friday 3 May, Monday 20 May, Wednesday 29 May, Monday 3 June, Wednesday 5 June. Obviously, we will cancel some of these dates where they clash with Insight events, etc. The meeting scheduled for 16 January has been cancelled as it clashes with the opening night of ENB's *Manon*.

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 6.45pm unless otherwise stated. Entrance is £5 for members, £4 for concessions, £9 for guests. Please note that some Wednesday meetings will be preceded by a free concert at 6pm organised by the Church. Members are welcome to attend these concerts. Concert dates can be found on the Church website.

## News

Members will be saddened to hear that former Association committee member **Geoffrey Griffiths** died last month after a short stay in hospital. There will be a memorial service for him at St. Paul's, Covent Garden, on Monday 26th of November at 12pm.

Some members have expressed surprise at the reception given to First Soloist **Hikaru Kobayashi** after her final performance as Countess Larisch in *Mayerling* on the 30th October. This was to mark Hikaru's retirement from the Company after 15 years. We will be sending her a present from the Association and apologise that we were unable to announce this in advance. Her husband, **Federico Bonelli**, has gained a place on the Clore Leadership Programme and will be absent from the Company for most of this season. He performed in *Mayerling* and will do so in *Frankenstein*, and will then return to the Company next season.

Members may have seen in the press that Principals **Francesca Hayward** and **Steven McRae** and Soloist **Olivia Cowley** have taken leave of absence from The Royal Ballet to join the cast for the filming of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats*, alongside Idris Elba, Rebel Wilson, Ian McKellen and Judi Dench. The film is to be directed by Tom Hooper, with Frankie as Victoria and Steven as Skimbleshanks.

Our more northerly members may be interested to hear that Principal **Natalia Osipova** will be performing in Arthur Pita's *The Mother* at the Pentland Theatre, Edinburgh on the 21st and 22nd of December.

## BRB Director's Appeal 2018/2019

As usual, the Association has supported Birmingham Royal Ballet through the Director's Appeal Gold Barre. Since the Director's Appeal was launched by David Bintley over 10 years ago nearly £1 million has been raised towards new work. This season our membership will support new works by choreographers Juanjo Arqués and Didy Veldman.

As a Gold Barre member, the Association is entitled to two seats in a reserved seating area for each of the following rehearsals, as well as some refreshments before the performance. If you would like to use one or

both of the Association's seats for any of the following rehearsals, please contact our Chairman, David Bain. Rehearsals are at the Birmingham Hippodrome unless otherwise stated.

**Beauty and the Beast** on Tuesday February 19, 2019 at 2pm

**(Un)leashed Mixed Programme** on Tuesday June 11, 2019 at 7pm

**Hobson's Choice** on Tuesday June 18, 2019 at 7pm

**(Un)leashed Mixed Programme** at Sadler's Wells Theatre on Friday June 28, 2019 at 2pm

## Annual General Meeting

The meeting on Wednesday 5 December will be preceded by our AGM. Consequently, the evening's proceedings will commence at 6.45pm and doors will open at 6.15pm.

### 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 2017-18 season was David Bain (Chairman and Organising Secretary), Liz Atkins (Membership Secretary and Joint Deputy Chairman), Ann Dawson (Joint Deputy Chairman), Melanie Shipton (Treasurer), Liz Bouttell (Reporting Secretary), Ann MacLennan (Events Secretary), Rachel Holland, Chris Scott, Chiara Gorodesky, Roger Handley, Jacqui Sporle and Ann MacLennan. Linda Gainsbury was seconded to the committee after the last AGM. Chiara is currently in New York and looks after our Facebook page. At the end of last season Chris Scott resigned from the committee as he is no longer based in the south-east of England.

We are very keen to recruit a couple of new committee members. Members wishing to nominate candidates for election or wishing to join the committee themselves should write to the Chairman, David Bain, by Friday 30 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. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman are appointed by the Committee at their first meeting after the AGM.

## Dates for your diary

Annual Dinner on Monday April 8

Annual visit to Royal Ballet Upper School on Friday May 10

Annual visit to BRB and Elmhurst Ballet School – Thursday & Friday June 20 & 21

## ROH Backstage Tour, October 11

There was a full complement of members for this tour. Our guide Ruth infused us with her animated enthusiasm and it was possible to imagine her bursting into song any minute (She did tell us she was a singer but not an actor). We were treated to watching Steven McRae and Yasmine Naghdi rehearsing in the studio for *La Bayadère* under the watchful eye of Lesley Collier. We also saw another Principal exiting the lift with her sandwiches. These tours can be full of surprises.

## ROH Thurrock Tour, 9 November

A smaller group took up the challenge of getting to Purfleet and enjoyed a fascinating tour round the Bob and Tamar Manoukian Production Workshop and the B&TM Costume Centre at High House Production Park. High House refers to the original farmhouse built in the 1500s. HHPP as well as being the name of the 14 acre site, is also the name of the charitable body running it. It is a fascinating mix of restored barns and other buildings (the original bread oven still exists) and new builds all part of a massive regeneration of this area. The ROH is a part of the whole.

This time we saw the scenery unfolding for the BRB's production of *The Nutcracker* at the Albert Hall. We saw how the scenery is broken down into manageable sizes and linked with a cunning code to ensure the jigsaw fits together (currently names of chocolate bars). Finally, we spent sometime with Amanda the head of the costume department. Last time we were here the finishing touches were being made to a prototype of the *Swan Lake* tutu costume ready for a meeting with John McFarlane that evening. This time we were able to photograph it. The wraps most definitely off.

## Future Outings

1. **ROH Backstage Tour**, Friday January 11 at 2.30 (£15)

These backstage tours are proving very popular with members so another guided tour exclusive to us has been arranged. Those who unsuccessfully applied for the October tour have been given priority but there are still a few places left. Please email (preferred) Ann MacLennan at [ba.events.sec@gmail.com](mailto:ba.events.sec@gmail.com) or phone 020 8941 1607 first to check there is still space. The tour

lasts about an hour.

2. **Visit to the Monica Collingwood Archive** at the University of Roehampton's Department of Dance, Roehampton Lane, SW15 5PJ, Wednesday February 6 at 2.30 (£10)

We have been invited by Dr Geraldine Morris to view this archive. The collection's main content dates from 1930s to 1960s and concentrates on the Sadler's Wells Company 1935-54 and within that a particular focus on Margot Fonteyn. The 1948 film *Red Shoes* has good coverage. The collection has been arranged thematically into three sections: ballet scrapbooks; photograph albums and performance programmes 1921-1991. The latter including opera and musicals as well as theatre.

(Kathleen) Monica Collingwood, although born in Burma, spent most of her life in Coulsdon, Surrey. From the age of 7 she developed a life-long interest in ballet. There is more information about Monica and the archive here. <https://roehamptondance.com/dance-archives-at-roehampton/monica-collingwood-collection/>

Geraldine Morris danced with the Royal Ballet during the 1960s joining the same year that Frederick Ashton became director. She is the author of *Frederick Ashton's Ballets: Style, Performance and Choreography* (2012). She is a part time Reader in Dance at the University. Geraldine will be there together with Kornelia Cepok the archivist. They are not making any charge but we are asking for £10 to go to BA funds to support young dancers.

3. **Freed Factory Visit**, 62 Well Street, E9 7PX, Wednesday March 6 at 10.15 (£12.50)

Freed of London has a long-established tradition and is the world's leading designer and manufacturer of professional dance shoes. Two thirds of all Freed's classic pointe shoes are made to dancers' specific requirements and as Freed supplies most major ballet companies worldwide they are worn by Prima Ballerinas the world over.

As the factory is an old building it does not meet modern accessibility requirements and there are about ten steps up to the front door and once inside a flight of stairs down to the toilets. However, the welcome will be warm and refreshments will be provided. Although Freed do not make a charge themselves we would ask for a donation of £12.50 to go to the BA's funds for supporting young dancers.

The tour will begin in the Maker's Room where we will be introduced to the individual makers and told how long they have been with the company and how many shoes they make in a day. We will see the individual processes of making a pointe shoe with a demonstration by one of the makers. We will

then go into the Binding Room where the shoes are finished and finally to the Rough Room where all the components are cut ready for the makers to begin using. The tour is expected to take an hour to an hour and a half. Spaces are very limited.

A **booking form** for these three outings is appended to this newsletter. Please remember to enclose a SAE and if booking for more than one event please send a separate cheque and SAE for each event. Please send any queries, suggestions for future outings to Ann Maclennan at [ba.events.sec@gmail.com](mailto:ba.events.sec@gmail.com)

### **Membership**

Thank you to those of you who have already renewed your membership. If you haven't done so yet, you are late! This newsletter is the last you will receive if you haven't renewed. A renewal form was attached to the July/August newsletter. Please contact us if you need another copy. Please try to encourage friends and those you meet at performances to join and please include a donation, if possible.

We have made slight alterations to our renewal form to comply with General Data Protection Regulations. We will only use your personal data to provide you with newsletters and information relating to dance and will not disclose your data to a third party without your explicit permission. You can change your mind at any time about whether to receive information from us by writing to the Membership Secretary.

**CHAIRMAN:** David Bain, 23 Capstan Square, Stewart Street, London E14 3EU

Tel: 020 7515 1254

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Email: [baindavid23@talktalk.net](mailto:baindavid23@talktalk.net) *or*

[baindavid@rocketmail.com](mailto:baindavid@rocketmail.com)

## BALLET ASSOCIATION EVENTS BOOKING FORM, 2019

**ROYAL OPERA HOUSE BACKSTAGE TOUR**, Bow Street, on Friday January 11, 2019 at 2.30 pm

Name.....


Address.....

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Email.....

Phone.....

Please send a cheque made payable to The Ballet Association for £15 and a stamped addressed envelope to Ann Maclennan, BA Events, 18 Wensleydale Road, Hampton TW12 2LW

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**MONICA COLLINGWOOD ARCHIVE at ROEHAMPTON SCHOOL OF DANCE**, Roehampton Lane, London SW15 5PJ on Wednesday February 6, 2019 at 2.30 pm

Name.....


Address.....

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Email.....

Phone.....

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

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**FREED FACTORY**, 62-64 Well Street, London E9 7PX, on Wednesday March 6, 2019 at 10.15 am

Name.....

Address.....

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Email.....

Phone.....

Please send a cheque made payable to The Ballet Association for £12.50 and a stamped addressed envelope to Ann Maclennan, BA Events, 18 Wensleydale Road, Hampton TW12 2LW

**Please send separate cheques for each event.**