



newsletter

September/October 2018

SINCE OUR LAST newsletter we have had two good meetings. At our August meeting, it was a pleasure to welcome two of the younger members of The Royal Ballet, Artists Charlotte Tonkinson and Francisco Serrano as our guests. They spoke in detail about their training, both at The Royal Ballet Upper School and before in Yorkshire and Sarasota respectively, before going on to talk about their experiences as Apprentices and as Artists. They then briefly spoke about their experiences on tours. Members always welcome the opportunity to welcome dancers early in their careers and experienced an entertaining evening.

At our first meeting in September, we welcomed former Royal Ballet School Ballet Association Award winner and Royal Ballet Soloist Reece Clarke as our guest. Reece was scheduled to talk to the Association during his graduate year, but joined the Royal early in the year. At the beginning of his second year in the Company he came to talk with Annette Buvoli as two of the Company's young dancers. Since then, in the last four years, he has danced many principal roles, including the male lead in *Symphonic Variations*, the Prince in *Nutcracker* and *Sleeping Beauty*, Aminta, Des Grieux and Polixenes and Antigonus in *The Winter's Tale*. He is scheduled to dance The Young Man in *The Two Pigeons* and is covering Solor in *La Bayadère*. As well as talking about his training, Reece spoke about the challenges of being a tall dancer and how his experiences at the Royal Ballet School had helped him with these. Reece gave us an interesting evening.

This newsletter is being written before our meeting with Natalia Makarova though will probably not reach you until after the talk, so feedback will be in the next newsletter.

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**

At our second meeting of the month, on Wednesday 26 September we are very privileged to have former Royal Ballet Guest Artist Natalia Makarova as our guest. Natasha is in London to oversee her production of *La Bayadère* which makes a welcome return to the repertoire. As well as interviewing Natasha about her career, we will show a short film about her that was shown at the Lincoln Center Dance Film Festival in 2016. Natasha feels the film, which includes excerpts showing some of her favourite roles, could be a reintroduction of her life and career, as her final full-length performance in London was in 1989 in *Romeo and Juliet* with Julio Bocca at the Royal Opera House. Natasha graduated into the Kirov Ballet in 1959 and stayed in the West after their tour to London in 1970, then joined ABT soon after. In 1983 she made her Broadway debut in *On Your Toes*. Recognised as one of the finest ballerinas of her generation, we know members will be keen to welcome her back to London.

Unfortunately, we have had to cancel our meeting on Wednesday October 3.

At our meeting on Wednesday 7th November we are delighted to welcome Royal Ballet Principal Character Artist Alastair Marriott and Ballet Master and Character Artist Jonathan Howells as our guests. English choreographer, Alastair celebrated 29 years with the Royal Ballet this Summer. He has created many works for them, including *Tanglewood*, *Children of Adam*, *Sensorium* and, most recently, *Connectome*, as well as choreography for The Royal Opera's *The Tsarina's Slippers*. His new work, *The Unknown Soldier*, premieres later in November to celebrate the centenary of the end of the First World War. As a Principal Character Artist, he has performed across the Company's repertoire and starts the season as Emperor Franz Joseph. Jonathan graduated into the Company in 1991 and retired from dancing in 2016 when he became a Ballet Master, though he continues to perform character roles. He has been assistant to Alastair with his choreography and designed the

costumes for many of his works. Jonathan's repertoire with the Company has been extensive and has included many new creations. As well as discussing Alastair's new work, we are delighted to have the opportunity to discuss with Jonathan his transition from dancer to Ballet Master.

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. At the time of writing none are scheduled for September, but this may change.

Please note, our AGM will be on Wednesday 5 December. There is no concert that day and the AGM will start at 6.45pm.

Provisional dates for meetings the season are: Wed 5 December, Wed 16 January, Wed 23 January, Wed 30 January, Mon 11 February, Wed 6 March, Wed 13 March, Wed 27 March, Tues 9 April, Wed 17 April, Wed 24 April, Tues 30 April, Fri 3 May, Mon 20 May, Wed 29 May, Mon 3 June, Wed 5 June. Obviously, we will cancel some of these dates where they clash with Insight events, etc. Please note, that meetings scheduled for 6 and 20 Feb have been cancelled, because they coincide with performances.

Meetings begin at 7.30 p.m. at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church which is at the eastern end of Shaftesbury Avenue, opposite the Shaftesbury Theatre. From Covent Garden, go up Endell Street, cross 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.

## News

Since our last newsletter, we are delighted to announce the marriage of First Artist Leticia Stock, who is currently on leave of absence with Joffrey Ballet, to Dom Piz on 8 August in Miami. We have sent our congratulations electronically.

Members may be interested to know that Soloist Fernando Montaña, who is also on a leave of absence, will be dancing at the 26th International Ballet Festival of Havana, where he will be partnering Italian ballerina Petra Conti. Fernando trained at the National Ballet School in Havana and will be joining many former Ballet School students and Company members in gala performances from 28 October-6 November.

Our former member, Alastair Macaulay, has announced his decision to retire as dance critic for the New York Times at the end of 2018, a post he has held for 11 years. He will continue to write some articles for them during the first six months of 2019.

Tickets are now available from the Coliseum for former Royal Ballet Principal Ivan Putrov's *Against*

*the Stream* on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April, featuring works by Balanchine, Robbins, Ashton, MacMillan, Lifar and Jacobson. Dancers include The Royal's Matthew Ball who is currently dancing *The Swan* in Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake*. Sadler's Wells has announced his performances over Christmas and New Year, including 26, 28, 29, 30 December and 1, 2, 4, 6 January. Other performances will be announced later.

Members will be saddened to hear that former New York City Ballet Principal and founder of Dance Theatre of Harlem Arthur Mitchell passed away on September 19<sup>th</sup> at the age of 84.

## Royal Ballet School

As announced in our last newsletter, our 2018 RBS Ballet Association Awards were presented to three second year students, Ginevra Zambon from Italy, and Jordan Martinez and William Boswell from the USA. Since the last newsletter, we received the following emails:

I am so sorry for the late response. Ginevra, Liam and I wrote the email below weeks ago, and I just realised that I did not send it to you. Thank you for your patience, Jordan Martinez. Dear Mr Bain, On behalf of Ginevra Zambon, William Boswell, and myself, I would like to take this opportunity to offer our sincere gratitude for bestowing the Ballet Association awards upon us. Your generous support and that of the members of the Ballet Association will greatly assist with the expenses we will incur preparing for the upcoming audition season. Would you kindly pass along our thanks to the other members of the Association. We look forward to seeing you in the near future and keeping you apprised of our career developments. Respectfully, Jordan Martinez, Ginevra Zambon, and William Boswell.

## 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.

*Fire & Fury Mixed Programme*, Tues 2th October 2018, 7pm

*Fire & Fury Mixed Programme* at Sadler's Wells Theatre, Tues 30th October 2018, 2pm

*The Nutcracker*, Thurs 22nd November 2018, 7pm

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

*(Un)leashed Mixed Programme*, Tues 11th June 2019, 7pm

*Hobson's Choice*, Tues 18th June 2019, 7pm

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

## Events

Tickets have been sent out for the Backstage Tour on 12 October and for Thurrock on 9 November. The October tour was over-subscribed, so we hope to arrange another backstage tour on a Friday in January when the ROH release next years' tours. It is likely to be either the 11th or 18th.

The Freed Factory visit has been arranged for Wednesday 6 March. Details and booking form will be in the next newsletter.

## 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 the 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.

Association 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. Please do not contact him about this before 12th October. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman are appointed by the Committee at their first meeting after the AGM.

## Membership

Thank you to those of you who have already renewed your membership. If you haven't done so yet, we remind you that it is due by the end of October. A [renewal form](#) was attached to the last newsletter. Please contact us if you need another copy. Please try to encourage friends and those you meet at performances to join. Our membership has fallen over the last couple of years, partly because we have been unable to advertise within the Opera House. We hope this will once again be possible now most of the building work is complete.

As you will be aware, 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 made a similar donation towards Twyla Tharp's *The Illustrated Farewell*, a new ballet which expanded on her *As Time Goes By*.

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 and class over the last five 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.

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.

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