



newsletter

April/May 2019

SINCE OUR LAST newsletter we have had one meeting, as well as our Annual Dinner. At our April meeting we were delighted to welcome Royal Ballet Principal, Marianela Nuñez, who is now in her 21st season with the Company. Always a favourite with our members, it is amazingly seven years since she last spoke to the Association. Marianela started by talking about her return to dancing in Argentina, including the invitation from Ronald Hynde to dance in his *The Merry Widow*. She then spoke about the variety of guesting she has done in recent years, especially in Italy, and the variety of dancers who have partnered her. Marianela then moved on to talk about the various choreographers whose works she had performed, with particular reference to Ashton and Balanchine, as well as the inspiration from working with Natalia Makarova. Enthusiastic about her 21 years in the Company, Marianela spoke of *Month in the Country* fulfilling her wish list of roles. Members were privileged to experience a very enjoyable meeting and we look forward to the next 21 years of her career.

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. We are pleased to announce that reports on our two meetings with Sir Peter Wright in 2014 and 2016 will soon be online. We are very grateful to Jeanetta Laurence, who worked with Sir Peter to edit them.

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

Prior to our meeting on Friday 10 May, we will celebrate the Centenary of Dame Margot Fonteyn's birth with a display of photographs and a painting, which are part of the extensive collection of Margot

Fonteyn memorabilia collected by our member Jennie Bissett. We are grateful to Jennie for agreeing to share some of her collection with us. The exhibition will be available from 6.45pm. At our meeting, following this, we are very pleased to welcome Royal Ballet First Soloist Claire Calvert as our guest. Born in Bath, Claire trained at The Royal Ballet School where in her graduation year she danced lead roles in *Raymonda Act III* and *Jabala*. Claire joined the Company in 2007 and was promoted to First Soloist in 2016. She made her principal role debut as the Lilac Fairy in 2009 while still an Artist. More recently her roles have included Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, Sugar Plum Fairy, Gamzatti, Gypsy Girl in *Two Pigeons*, Mitzi Caspar and Lescaut's Mistress, and Mercedes in *Don Quixote*. In the season's last programme, Claire dances the Tsarevna in *The Firebird*. Like Marianela, Claire last spoke to the Association seven years ago. With our exhibition and Claire's talk, we can expect a very interesting evening.

At our second meeting of the month, on Friday 24 May, we are delighted to welcome Ballet Master Ricardo Cervera as our guest. Ricardo leaves the Royal Ballet at the end of the season to join the Royal Ballet Upper School as a teacher. We hope that Royal Ballet Principal Laura Morera will join us as a second guest, but at the time of writing Laura's plans following her leave of absence to perform Kenneth MacMillan's *Seven Deadly Sins* for the Viviana Durante Company, are not confirmed. If Laura is unable to attend, she will come to a meeting early next season instead. Ricardo and Laura need no introduction to members. Both are Spanish and trained at The Royal Ballet School.

Ricardo joined The Royal Ballet in 1993 and was promoted to First Soloist in 2002. He was appointed Assistant Ballet Master in 2014, retired from dancing at the end of 2015 and a few months later was made Ballet Master. Ricardo trained as a répétiteur on the Frederick Ashton Foundation's mentoring scheme and has worked as an assistant choreographer with Liam Scarlett.

Laura graduated into The Royal Ballet in 1995, also became a First Soloist in 2002 and then a Principal in 2007. Both have performed roles across the Company's repertoire, and Laura won the Critics' Circle National

Dance Award for her performances as Lise in 2015. We can expect an entertaining evening independent of whether it is both of them or just Ricardo that we welcome.

As next season's programme is not being announced until mid-May, provisional dates for meetings the rest of this season and next will be in the next newsletter. Meetings begin at 7.30pm 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.

Open Rehearsal, The Royal Ballet

Wednesday 12 June, 12.00-13.30

We are delighted to announce that The Royal Ballet would like, once again, to welcome Ballet Association members to attend a studio rehearsal. It is a great privilege to be invited to watch a rehearsal during the Company's normal working day. Since Kevin O'Hare became Director, we have watched rehearsals in the Clore Studio of *The Dream*, Jerome Robbins' *In the Night* and *Afternoon of a Faun* and *The Invitation*. During the two years when access to the studio was restricted, we watched a Stage Call of Christopher Wheeldon's *After the Rain* and, last year, a class on stage.

This year, we are invited to attend a rehearsal on Wednesday 12 June from 12pm. Please arrive in good time as late-comers may not be admitted. The Company will be rehearsing one of the ballets for their summer tours to Japan and Los Angeles. It is too early to say which ballet.

If you would like to attend, please apply to our Chairman, David Bain, 23 Capstan Square, Stewart Street, London E14 3EU, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for return of your ticket. There is no charge for this event. However, you will remember that at the start of each season we ask all members to make a donation to the Association so that we can sponsor a Royal Ballet production every other season. For the 2017-18 season we donated towards Twyla Tharp's *An Illustrated 'Farewell'* and, for the 2015-16 season, towards the revival of the sets and costumes for *Rhapsody*.

For the 2019-20 season, we will be donating towards a new programme in the Linbury Theatre. As next season has yet to be announced, Kevin was unable to go into detail about the programme when accepting a cheque for £5,000 from our Chairman at our Annual Dinner. However, he indicated that it would include one piece new to The Royal Ballet by

a renowned choreographer, one piece by Frederick Ashton and one new work. A programme that should include something for us all. Therefore, we would ask you to enclose a donation with your application for this event, making the cheque payable to The Ballet Association.

News

About 30 members attended the rehearsal of Ivan Putrov's *Against the Stream* at the London Coliseum on Sunday 7 April. Unfortunately, due to short notice of the invitation, we were only able to extend the invitation to those members who receive their newsletter by email. We are very grateful to Ivan for this invitation and were delighted to welcome him and his mother to our Annual Dinner.

Nominees for *Benois de la Danse 2019* have been announced and include The Royal Ballet's Vadim Muntagirov in the dancer section, Juanho Arques amongst the choreographers for his *Ignite* for BRB, composer Kate Wheatley for *Flame* for BRB and artist John MacFarlane for the designs for The Royal Ballet's *Swan Lake*.

Over many years, the Association has made a donation towards *Draft Works/New Works* programmes. This season, our donation went towards *International Dance Works*, which included choreography by The Royal Ballet's Joshua Junker and Hannah Grennell, and former Royal Ballet dancer Gemma Bond.

Annual Dinner

8th April 2019, The Chesterfield, Mayfair

Once again, we had an extremely successful Annual Dinner for the second year at The Chesterfield Hotel, Mayfair. Our final guest list was: Kevin O'Hare, Patron of the BA and Director of The Royal Ballet; Dame Monica Mason, President of the BA and former Director of The Royal Ballet; Sir Peter Wright, Director Laureate of Birmingham Royal Ballet; David Bintley, Director of Birmingham Royal Ballet, and his wife Jennifer Mills, Rehabilitation & Performance Coach, BRB & formerly Senior Soloist SWRB; Jeanetta Laurence, Trustee of The Frederick Ashton Foundation & former Associate Director of The Royal Ballet; Samira Saidi, Head of Intensive Courses & International Relations, The Royal Ballet School & former Principal, SWRB & BRB; Alain Dubreuil, Guest Teacher, former Ballet Master at BRB & Principal, London Festival Ballet; Ivan Putrov, Producer and former Principal, The Royal Ballet; Katherine Hudson, Head of Membership & Fundraising Campaigns, The Royal Opera House; Ricardo Cervera Ballet Master and former First Soloist, The Royal Ballet; Andrej Uspenski, Photographer & former First Artist, The Royal Ballet; Matthew Ball, Laura Morera, Akane

Takada, Principals, The Royal Ballet; Kristen McNally, Principal Character Artist, The Royal Ballet; Cesar Corrales, Tierney Heap, Mayara Magri, First Soloists, The Royal Ballet; Nicol Edmonds, Benjamin Ella, Soloists, The Royal Ballet; Téó Dubreuil, Hannah Grennell, Nathalie Harrison, First Artists, The Royal Ballet; Sophie Allnatt, Joonhyuk Jun, Stanislaw Węgrzyn, Artists, The Royal Ballet.

During the evening, we presented small gifts to David Bintley and Ricardo Cervera, who leave their respective posts at the end of the season. We had sent a more substantial present to Ricardo when he retired from dancing, which he used to purchase equipment he needed in his role as Ballet Master. We had also sent a gift to David with his invitation to the Annual Dinner. In replying, David wrote:

And finally, a huge thank you for your generous gift on my stepping down as head of BRB. I am wanting to buy a picture or sculpture as a permanent reminder of my time as Director and have 'feelers' out at the moment. It might take some time but I will be sure to tell you as soon as I have made the purchase. With my thanks and very best wishes, David.

Andrej Uspenski took photos of the event. Some of these will be available on our website.

Visit to the Royal Ballet Upper School

10th May at 9am-3.45pm

Once again, we have arranged a visit to the Upper School in Floral Street to watch three classes. This is a joint visit for the Ballet Association and London Ballet Circle. There are still a few places left for this visit. If you would like to attend, please send your name, address and contact details (preferably an e-mail address) to David Bain, Chairman, The Ballet Association, 23 Capstan Square, Stewart Street, London E14 3EU. The cost of the visit is £15 for members and £20 for guests. Please enclose a cheque made payable to The Ballet Association. Please note, late applicants will be notified of their ticket number on Wednesday 8 May, so if you haven't got an e-mail address please provide a telephone number.

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INALA

As members will know, former Royal Ballet dancer Pietra Mello-Pittman is one of the producers of Sisters Grimm, whose production *Inala* is being performed at the Peacock Theatre from 30 April. Pietra has arranged for Ballet Association members to book tickets at a 20% discount. There is a special Sisters Grimm 20% discount code* of FRIENDS20

Click to book online: <https://secure.sadlerswells.com/production/49503>

Use the promo code*: FRIENDS20

Or call the Ticket Office on 020 7863 8222, and quote the promo code*: FRIENDS20

*This ticket offer is valid on Band A tickets only for performances Tue 30 April - Sun 5 May (excluding Sat 4 May). Subject to allocation availability. Not available retrospectively or in conjunction with any other offer. £3 transaction fee applies for phone and online bookings. No charge in person at Ticket Office