

# Behind the scenes

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Hi, I'm Andrea

I have been a member of the National Committee for four years now. For many years I belonged to the Wellington Branch Committee but for the past two years I have lived in Auckland. I have a great passion for dance and am delighted that I can continue to support our national company in this way.

My interest in dance began several years ago, when like many young girls I started to learn ballet. Since then I have been fortunate enough to see many of the company's performances, initially with my mother and in the latter years with my own daughters. I have thoroughly enjoyed watching the company grow and develop over the years and am constantly astounded by the high standard of their performances.

Being part of the committee has been a great way to make new friends and work with some wonderful people. I hope I can continue to help keep the dancers on their toes!

Andrea Watson  
National Committee Member



Friends of the Ballet partnered dancer Rowan Cann took on a new role during the Saltarello tour when he assisted Louise Fielder, the newly appointed RNZB Dance Education Officer, as she visited secondary schools around New Zealand.

Louise was presenting a series of one hour creative dance workshops in conjunction with the new dance curriculum. Students were able to learn about the performance and the choreographers, before being given the opportunity to see a performance of Saltarello at a special price. Rowan's role was to demonstrate steps and movement phrases from the production, as well as giving the students a first hand glimpse of the demanding life of a dancer.

## National Raffle 2004

### Helping the Friends to keep the dancers on their toes!

**A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR FRIENDS WHO HAVE HELPED BY BUYING AND SELLING OUR RAFFLE TICKETS, AND ESPECIALLY TO THOSE WHO HAVE ASKED FOR MORE BOOKS.**

**Please ensure you have returned all raffle ticket stubs ASAP. Due date was 25<sup>th</sup> April and late returns may not count in the prize draw if not returned immediately!**

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# Royal New Zealand Ballet Treads the Hallowed Boards at Sadler's Wells

**Young dancers the world over dream of dancing at Sadler's Wells and when the curtain goes up at Sadler's Wells Theatre on 27 April this dream will come true for the dancers of the Royal New Zealand Ballet.**

The theatre has been a place of entertainment for over 300 years, ever since Mr Dick Sadler opened his 'musick house' in Islington in the 1680s.

Soon afterwards an ancient medicinal well was discovered in the grounds and the spa soon became a fashionable attraction at the musick house, hence the name Sadler's Wells.

During the next 200 years jugglers, tumblers, ropedancers, wrestlers, dancing dogs and even a singing duck trod the boards there.

Eventually Sadler's Wells went into decline and the theatre was converted into a roller skating rink and later a prize fight area.

At the end of the nineteenth century Sadler's Wells became a cinema, one of only 3 places in London where the new cinematography could be seen. But the theatre became so run down it was eventually closed in 1915.

Everything changed when Lilian Baylis arrived at Sadler's Wells in 1925. She engaged Ninette de Valois, under whose inspired direction classical ballet was developed and went from strength to strength. Baylis enabled the creation of the Royal Ballet, as well as the renowned Royal Ballet School.

The present theatre is the latest of 6 theatres on the same site and opened in the late 1990s.



Deep underground, in a sub-basement beneath the new Sadler's Wells theatre, a metal pipe rises from the floor. The pipe plunges six hundred feet to the chalk basin underlying the capital. It brings up pure, naturally filtered water that fell on the Chilterns and the North Downs years ago. It cools the theatre and saves it a packet on electricity and water rates. And, of course, it is bottled and sold.

*Sadler's Wells Theatre today*

Sadler's Wells, the site of medicinal springs and assorted waterworks since Roman times, has a working well again, to accompany the defunct and now-revealed well discovered by Thomas Sadler, music-room proprietor, in the 17th century.

For up to date news and reviews of the UK tour visit the Royal New Zealand Ballet website at [www.nzballet.org.nz](http://www.nzballet.org.nz)

## Differing roles Friends Branches vs. National Committee

We know some of you are unsure of the difference between branch committees and the National Committee, so in this first issue, we would like to clarify their different roles.

Firstly and most importantly there are you, the Friends, living from one end of New Zealand to the other, and in eight centres (soon to be nine, we hope) some of you have formed a branch committee.

### Branch Committees

These committees may meet monthly or less frequently, will hold an AGM to elect office bearers, and are responsible for such things as making the company welcome when they come to town, helping to grow the audience, and promoting an awareness of, and a love for dance in their community. They also initiate vital fundraising activities, the proceeds of which go directly to support the Royal New Zealand Ballet.

### National Committee

The National Committee is elected at the national AGM, to which each branch may, according to our constitution, send 2 voting delegates and as many observers as they wish. Nominations for the National Committee come through the branches. The President is elected for a 3-year term with a right of renewal.

These AGMs are held in Wellington at the RNZB offices above the St James Theatre, allowing us to watch a performance if possible or company class or rehearsal, and to meet with the RNZB staff members and dancers.

The National Committee represents all Friends and branch committees, employs an administrator who works out of the RNZB offices dealing with all financial matters and helps liaise between Friends and the company. Your National Committee also works on such issues as the recent formation of Young Friends, our wonderful new page in the RNZB programme, and nationwide fundraising projects. You may have noticed that this year we are all very proud to be helping to fund the dancers' shoes, and it is your National Committee who can represent you working with the company on initiatives such as this.

# Wellington Friends

## Upcoming Events:

### A. G. M.

#### Notice of the 2004 Annual General Meeting

6:30pm, Wednesday 7 July 2004 at RNZB Green Room

Become involved, contribute, help out with the friends ... We need willing **NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS** for planning and organising.

#### On Tour ....

The company will be **on tour** in the UK from the 21<sup>st</sup> April to 29<sup>th</sup> May. They will be performing:- Romeo & Juliet, Peter Pan, and the Triple bill (Saltarello, Milagros, FrENzy). Keep a look out for news and reviews from the other side of the world.

They will be performing at the following places:  
Manchester: Lowry Theatre, Salford, 21-24 April

London: **Sadler's Wells**, 27 April - 1 May

Glasgow: **Theatre Royal**, 4-8 May

Edinburgh: **Festival Theatre**, 11-15 May

High Wycombe: **Wycombe Swan**, 18-21 May

Bath: **Theatre Royal**, 25-29 May

**Advance notice!!!!** Mark your diaries now! (More details in the next newsletter)

Saturday 17 July – **Junior Masterclass**

Thursday 22 July – **Full Technical Dress rehearsal for Madame Butterfly**

Saturday 24 July – **Senior Masterclass**

Saturday 24 July – **Madame Butterfly Forum**

Saturday 31 July to Sunday 1 August  
**National Annual General Meeting**

Saturday 18 August – **D A N Z Open day at the RNZB**

**Request!! Please keep your old tubes from paper towels, cling wrap, etc for use in making postal tubes for the next Young Friends poster mail out.**

**They can be given to any committee member.**

## Saltarello Forum

The Saltarello forum was very well attended with about 40 people enjoying the experience of inside information from Gary Harris, the Artistic Director, Nicholas Giles-Palmer, the Music Co-ordinator, and two of the Dancers - Rowan Cann and Alice Topp.

Gary explained the background of the three quite different pieces and how each one has a very different aspect since they were created by different choreographers:

- ❖ Saltarello, choreographed by Christopher Hampson (who recently choreographed the new version of Romeo & Juliet to critical acclaim) contained many of the familiar classical lines along with striking new contemporary moves.
- ❖ Abhisheka, choreographed by expat Adrian Burnett, has an edgy quality with different contemporary styles blended together.
- ❖ The Celebrated Soubrette, choreographed by Javier De Frutos, has very interesting dynamics of determining just who and where the audience is, sometimes we are the audience and sometimes we are observers watching the performance from the rear of the stage. Are they dancing for us or for some unseen 'other' audience? The costumes are dramatic and the moves somehow feel familiar.



Photo: Peter Cowley

Gary then introduced Rowan Cann (The Friends sponsored dancer) and Alice Topp and asked them to talk briefly about how they came to be in this production.

- ❖ Alice said that she has just recently joined the RNZB for the Peter Pan season, having been working in Australia, and being lucky enough to be able to join the company. She said how much she enjoyed the challenges of the very different works and the moves they require.
- ❖ Rowan talked about the teaching outreach he is involved with that takes Ballet and dance to the schools and how much the children seem to really enjoy being involved in dance and movement performance.

## Saltarello Forum ... continued

Gary and Alice both had company class and left to warm up and Gary then introduced Nicholas Giles-Palmer, who is the Music coordinator for the company.

Nick talked about the music of Saltarello, which was written around 1350. He showed us pictures of some of



Photo: Peter Cowley

the original instruments from that period and told us that true replicas were used in making the music for this piece, that we would be hearing the music on authentic

instruments as it would have sounded when composed. Saltere is Latin for 'To Dance'

The Saltarello is a dance of love, which Nick said he perceives to mean a love of dance.

There is no particular time signature needed to perform this dance. The waltz is in triple time. The gavotte is in duple or quadruple... This is so steps can be carried out according to the rhythm and style. The waltz step, or the gavotte step or the minuet step, as we know it all have steps named after the dance itself. There is no one particular step I know of that can be classified as the Saltarello step.

Recorded musicians play instruments such as: flute, bagpipe, hurdy gurdy, drum, and string instruments like viol, guitar, and voice.



Hurdy Gurdy – Photo: Alden Hackman - <http://www.hurdygurdy.com/hg/photos.html>

Ground bass is employed as an accompaniment for instrumentalists to layer melody.

Saltarello is also referred to as the Italian Alta Danza-or high dance from the courts of Italy. - Peter Cowley

(see [www.wn-friends.dns2go.com](http://www.wn-friends.dns2go.com) for more photos!!)

## News from NZ and around the world

### English National Ballet forced to drop lavish show

Ticket sales for the English National Ballet have fallen

The English National Ballet has been forced to cancel a lavish production of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* over financial concerns and falling ticket sales.



Photo:BBC News

A shortfall in revenue from its vital Christmas season is being blamed.

December's takings from a production of *The Nutcracker* at London's Hammersmith Apollo fell £500,000 short of what it could have been at the company's home.

The Coliseum in the West End has been closed to allow a refurbishment worth £41m to take place.

The brand new full-length production was due to premiere at Southampton's Mayflower on 19 October.

Repertory productions of Nuryev's *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Nutcracker* will now take its place.

### Read the full article on-line at:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/arts/3461723.stm>

### Creative New Zealand applauds new dance qualification

A new postgraduate diploma in dance studies, offered by Massey University and the New Zealand School of Dance, has been applauded by Creative New Zealand.

The new course, which is still open for applications, is aimed at mid-career dancers, dance teachers, arts administrators and event managers seeking to enhance their entrepreneurial and academic skills. It was launched in response to Creative New Zealand's professional contemporary dance strategy, *Moving to the Future: Ngā Whakanekeneke atu ki te Ao o Apōpō*, which identified the need for dance practitioners to develop skills in marketing, arts administration and business.

Murray Shaw, Chair of Creative New Zealand's Arts Board congratulated Massey University and the New Zealand School of Dance on taking the initiative and responding to one of the recommendations in the strategy.

"The strategy involved extensive consultation with the dance sector," he says. "It's pleasing that two tertiary institutions are working together to provide this much-needed qualification."

Garry Trinder, Director of the New Zealand School of Dance says, "This unique qualification offers dance practitioners a pathway into the next phase of their career. It is targeted to provide leadership in education and arts administration."