

Behind the scenes

Volume 2, Issue 1

2004

From the National Vice-President



Hi Everyone

I am Vice-President of the National Committee of Friends of the Royal New Zealand Ballet. My love of ballet dates back to early childhood when my mother took me to see the (then) New Zealand Ballet Company perform The Nutcracker in Wellington.

My involvement with the Friends of the Ballet began 11 years ago when I replied to a flyer placed in the Masterton Library asking interested people to consider forming a branch in the Wairarapa. At that inaugural meeting I was elected President of the newly-formed branch and served 4 years in that capacity before joining the National Committee (I am now the longest-serving member).

I work full-time as a primary school teacher and have two teenaged children, one of whom dances.

This involvement with young people sparked my interest in forming Young Friends as an educative adjunct to the main organisation – one of my greatest pleasures in recent times has been introducing the children I teach to ballet via schools performances. For some, it is a total revelation. “Hoo – flash t-shirt!” being one of the more memorable comments I have heard (of the Prince in Cinderella).

If you can get involved at a committee level in your area, do consider it – the rewards can be considerable, no matter how busy your life may already seem to be.

Debbie Tangen, National Vice-President

Inside this issue

- 1 From the Vice President
- 1 National Raffle
- 2 Saltarello Opens in Palmerston North
- 2 Congratulations
- 2 Spotlight on The Meridian Season of Saltarello
- 2 Nadine Tyson – A Dancer to Watch
- 3 Wellington Friends local news and events

National Raffle 2004

Help us keep the dancers on their toes!

Each year the Royal New Zealand Ballet buys over a thousand pairs of pointe shoes. The proceeds from our raffle this year will help to foot the bill for these shoes.

WIN A WEEKEND FOR TWO AT THE MONTANA WORLD OF WEARABLEART IN SUNNY NELSON!

1st Prize

A travel, accommodation, and premium ticket package for two to the 2004 Montana World of WearableArt in Nelson on 17 & 18 September 2004.

Value \$1800



2nd Prize

An Olympus Camedia C-250 Zoom Digital Camera.

Donated by Konica Copy and Photo, Timaru.

Value \$699

3rd Prize

Lladro Figurine: The Lady and the Rose.

Donated by Stewart Dawsons, Wellington.

Value \$475

Tickets will be selling at \$2 each, or \$10 for a book of 5 and we hope that our members will support us by helping to sell the tickets that will be sent to them in March.



Regent on Broadway Scores Opening Night and NZ Premiere

Palmerston North will buzz on Wednesday 25 February with the Royal New Zealand Ballet's opening night of The Meridian Energy Season of Saltarello. Featuring 'ballet for the 21st century' this should be a night to remember.

The new work 'Abhisheka' by Adrian Burnett will be launched to the world in our very own magnificent Regent on Broadway.

Under threat of demolition in the 1980's the Regent Theatre became the focus of community support through the 'Save the Regent' campaign. Thanks to the foresight of the then City Council the Regent was purchased to become the city's civic auditorium and premiere performance venue. Fully restored to its former glory and upgraded to world class standards, the people of Palmerston North contributed \$25 per man, woman and child towards the cost of this refurbishment.

Regarded as Palmerston North's 'jewel in the crown', the Regent on Broadway has become one of the most vibrant provincial theatres in the country and a 'second home to the ballet company' (*John Page former General Manager of the Royal New Zealand Ballet*).

Contributed by Susan McConachy, Manawatu/Wanganui Branch



Congratulations are in Order

Congratulations to General Manager **Sue Paterson** who was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the New Year Honours list in recognition of her service over 25 years to dance in this country.

More congratulations to **Larissa Wright & Graham Fletcher** on the birth of Thom Morton Fletcher in Australia on 8 February 2004.

In the Pink! – a group of RNZB dancers took the prize for best dressed table in the Dulux Fashion Village at the Trentham races in January – the girls were delicious in shades of pink and carnations galore and stole the show as they walked the catwalk to claim their prize. Friends' sponsored dancer **Rowan Cann** received the key to the door as he celebrated his 21st birthday in February.

The Meridian Energy Season of Saltarello

"This is ballet for the 21st century. We are grabbing classical ballet by the scruff of its neck and hauling it into the here and now."

-Artistic Director Gary Harris

Saltarello

CHOREOGRAPHED BY CHRISTOPHER HAMPSON

"The music is a melting pot of tribal sounds – there are African, European, and Pacific flavours," says Gary Harris, the work's designer. In creating the costumes Harris drew on a range of reference points: Mad Max, gladiators, even club wear influenced the design.

Abhisheka

CHOREOGRAPHED BY ADRIAN BURNETT

Adrian Burnett writes about Abhisheka, which means "Initiation" in Sanskrit.

As soon as I heard these two pieces of music by John Psathas I felt a strong impulse to create a new ballet. The music immediately evoked rich visual images: initiation and the sense of offering within a sacred space.

The Celebrated Soubrette

CHOREOGRAPHED BY JAVIER DE FRUTOS

Here is a beginner's guide to The Celebrated Soubrette.

Overall impression: a very up-beat work – entertaining, quirky and fun with a degree of pathos. Style of choreography: a combination of balletic movements, showgirl dancing, idiosyncratic and comic movements inspired by Liberace's over-the-top style. Although a modern 'classical' work, it is very rhythmic and appealing with four glitteringly named movements – Rhinestone Kickstep, How Do I Love Thee?, Sequin Music and Candelabra Rhumba Design.



Photo: Bill Cooper

With a swivel of the wrist here, a hip thrust there, and a high high kick, Nadine Tyson's vampish performance in The Celebrated Soubrette is a revelation.

Wellington Friends

www.wn-friends.dns2go.com

Upcoming Events:

See separate program for all the events we are aware of until the next newsletter.

Young Friends Easter Dress-up party

Date: 28 March 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.



Where: St Marks Church School Hall
(opposite the Basin Reserve, by Government House)

Do you know any youngsters (7 – 16) who are interested in ballet and would like to join in the fun as well as enjoying all the benefits being a Young Friend brings?

See included flyer for all the party details.

Please RSVP by 12 March on the attached form

Saltarello Triple Bill Forum

Gary Harris will be talking about the Saltarello Triple Bill, what is involved in bringing three shorter works together along. Gary will also have some company dancers with him, Alice and Rowan, to demonstrate some of the points he will be making. This is another great opportunity to get to see the dancers from a close-up perspective. Gary will also be showing a short film of snippets of choreography and Nick Giles-Palmer will be talking about the music.

Along with the forum, you will be able to view the company in class. Watch the dancers in their own environment – this is not an opportunity offered to everyone.

Join us for the Forum at 11:45 followed by a light lunch at 12:30pm, followed by company class at 1:00. The afternoon will be completed by 2:00.

Venue: **St James Theatre** (meet at the lift next to Ticketek)

Date: 20th March
Start time: 11:45 ** See included form **
Cost: \$5.00 per person.



Friends Discount Tickets and Ticketek

Following a wee problem last year with Ticketek saying the Friends Membership card had to be shown before the discount can be given, Ticketek have been advised by the RNZB to accept the request over the phone. If anyone continues to have problems please let a member of the committee know.

DANISH QUEEN REWARDS KIWI DANCER

3 December 2003

Martin James should be a household name in New Zealand! After an already illustrious career, since 1994 he has been Principal Dancer with the Royal Danish Ballet.

The outstanding contribution Martin James has made to the arts in Denmark has just been acknowledged. Her Majesty, the Queen of Denmark has recently conferred him with an honour for excellent services as a principal dancer at Royal Danish Ballet over a 10 year span, and for his contributions to the theatre scene in Denmark. The decoration is called the "Dannebrogordenen"



"I am very moved and honoured indeed for this decoration, especially being all the way from New Zealand. My country will be very proud of me as I am of my country!", said James. "In January I will formally, in formal attire plus white gloves etc, go to personally thank the Queen or another of the Royal Family."

Dancer, tutor, composer and graphic artist Martin James was born in Christchurch, New Zealand, in 1961. He attended the New Zealand School of Dance. During his time training there, multi-talented James also had a volume of piano music he had composed published, and a public exhibition of his art works.

In 1981, Martin became a dancer with the Royal New Zealand Ballet. The following year he was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council Grant to study in the United States.

In 1985, he married Hawkes Bay born Adrienne Matheson, and has a daughter, Rachael, and a son, Marcus. Shortly after his marriage in 1985, Martin joined the English National Ballet, becoming a principal dancer from 1987 until 1990. He has since joined the Deutsche Opera Ballet (1990 - 94) and the Royal Danish Ballet (1994 to present).

James has danced with the world's top ballerinas and a huge array of leading roles. (refer: <http://www.hub-uk.com/chefsbios/martinjames.htm> for biography)

He has returned to New Zealand to teach at the New Zealand School of Dance and performed James in La Sylphide with Royal New Zealand Ballet.

"I have just retired from the rigors of stage performances I have undergone and loved over my long career as a principal dancer," said James as he just finished his performing career in the difficult title role as "Odysseus". Hanging up his shoes at the age of 42, means only a change of focus - that of teaching the company and coaching, mainly the principals, in their various roles. His first task was doing this for the Royal Danish Ballet's large Christmas production of "Nutcracker".

Obituary – Ray Powell

**Ray Powell, dancer, choreographer, ballet master
b. Hertfordshire, 20 March 1925
d. Melbourne, 7 October, 2003**

Ray Powell had a long and successful career in ballet initially training at Sadler's Wells School and then as a member of Sadler's Wells Ballet from 1941. After military service he rejoined the company in 1947 and danced with them, creating and performing a number of signature roles, until 1962 when he was invited by artistic director Peggy van Praagh to work for a brief time with The Australian Ballet.

The brief time was not brief however, and Powell performed as guest artist (renowned for character and comic roles - Widow Simone in La Fille Mal Gardée, Ugly Sister in Cinderella and the likes) and also taught and choreographed through the following four decades.



It was The New Zealand Ballet's good fortune to have Powell produce his witty little one act work, One in Five, for them. In it, five clowns cavort to the music of Strauss and then reveal a gender surprise in the final bar. One of the most loved photographs of the Company's history, taken by John Ashton in 1964, has Leon Draper, Robin Rickey, Terence James, Jon Trimmer and Georgene Walker locked into each other's limbs in a human ladder of tomfoolery.

Others of his works in the Company's repertoire include Just for Fun, Circus and Cinderella. But perhaps the most poignant was Charade created in 1967 to the dramatic strengths of Sherril Cooper, Gillian Francis and Jon Trimmer. A mysterious atmosphere shrouded the work and it should by every rule have stayed a classic in the repertoire but unfortunately it slipped away without trace, save for the striking costumes by Kristian Fredrikson (his first design work for The N.Z. Ballet)

and John Ashton's photographs.

Powell continued to teach mime, repertoire and stagecraft until the last months of his life. His inseparable companions were two elegant little dogs, a miniature white poodle named Bowie and a bichon frise, Chloe. They attended his classes, sat on cushions watching and trotted out with him when class was over. Powell is remembered as a warm, engaging, friendly personality, a master of his theatre craft who was "ready to perform at the shine of a torch beam".

By Jennifer Shennan

Source: Nadine Meisner, RNZB Archives

DANZ Open Day

DANZ run an Open Day at the RNZB and this year it is on Saturday 18 September 2004. They had about 300 people through last time. They will have tours through the building and will watch a part of class/rehearsal on a half hour rotation.

DANZ also have a web site at <http://www.danz.org.nz/> and produce two newsletters a year.

Web Watch

Interesting items found on the web



When a dance 'speaks' to us, does the choreographer always know what it's trying to say?

<http://www.villagevoice.com/issues/0353/jowitt.php>

A Balanchine tribute - from the Guardian (UK)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/g2/story/0,3604,1118431,00.html>

Bring on the tutus and acrobatic sex (guardian UK)

<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,6903,1136141,00.html>

Secrets Of The Dashing Danes: - Seeing Things

(AJBlogs) 01/11/04

<http://artsjournal.com/dance/redir/20040111-36756.html>

Seeing Things TOBI TOBIAS on dance et al...

<http://www.artsjournal.com/tobias/archives20040101.shtml#66240>

Frankfurt to chip in for Forsythe ensemble - Nordhoff supports city funding for ballet

<http://artsjournal.com/dance/redir/20040126-37874.html>

NZ NBR article - [Businessmen take punt on arts channel](#)

http://www.nbr.co.nz/home/column_article.asp?id=8173&cid=6&cname=Arts

Scrambled Legs Dance Theatre Co

6 Performers tell the story of 7



Christchurch's leading dance theatre company Scrambled Legs is set to return to Wellington to premiere their latest work 7 at the 2004 Fringe festival.

Director and choreographer Fleur de Their and film artist Rick Harvie have worked in collaboration with recent dance and drama graduates from Wellington's Toi Whakaari and Auckland's UNITEC School of Performing and Screen Arts to create 7- a live performance which explores the interplay between contemporary dance and film.

This is the story of six characters that share the loss of a common thread, and are exposed for their vices and attributes, Intrigue, Lament, Lust and Humour.

7 premieres at the 2004 **Wellington Fringe festival** at :
BATS Theatre
February 26th – 28th at 8pm
Bookings – (04) 802-4175

The above is just one dance company presenting at the **Wellington Fringe Festival**. There are many others...

Crows Feet Dance Collective – Dear God, Degas!
Wellington Performing Arts Centre, March 5, 6, 7
Desde Sevilla Flamenco Dance Company –
Flamenco Mosaic
Wellington Performing Arts Centre, Feb 14 & 15
Footnote Dance - Perforum Footnote Dance Studios
Feb 26 & March 3
Fern Dance Theatre – Hopgrassers Gryphon Theatre
March 12-14
Punga Legs – Kohu Paramount Theatre, Mar 3 – 10
Flame Fire Productions – Mahuika's Fire, Frank Kitts
Park Amphitheatre, Feb 20 - 22
Guy Ryan/Malla Johnston - Terrin:A boutique pas de
deux Adam art Gallery, February 27 – 29 (limited to 14)

Ballet Nacional de Espana

Spanish National ballet company



Famed worldwide for its outstanding flamenco dancing, the award-winning Ballet Nacional de Espana displays a spectacular variety of classical and contemporary Spanish dance in a heart-stopping show which is guaranteed to astonish and delight Festival-goers.

Formed in 1978 under the artistic direction of Antonio Gades, one of the greatest flamenco choreographers and dancers of last century, the Company now works under the inspired vision of Elvira Andrés. Joyfully stamping their feet in fierce unison, this beautifully fluent and blazingly communicative dance group present a vibrant feast of colour and energy in a passionate and stylish production.

Westpac Theatre, Feb 27 –29, Mar 1 – 2

The above is just one of the many attractions at the **NZ International Arts Festival**. There are many others:

Black Grace – New Zealand, Opera House, Mar 11 – 14

Foi (Faith) – les Ballets C de la B – Belgium, Opera House, March 5 – 7

Toi Mana – New Zealand, Town Hall, Mar 20 & workshops

Membership renewal

Membership renewal is **due now**, if you have not renewed through the subscription series this year, a membership form is enclosed. Please help **keep the dancers on their feet!**

Calendar of Events

2004 Events

Date	Time	Event
Friday 20 Feb - Sunday 22 Feb	see Fringe Booklet	Flame Fire Productions – Mahuika's Fire, Venue: Frank Kitts Park Amphitheatre
Sat 21 February	1.00pm and 2.15pm	"I always wanted to be a ballerina" - Carolyn McKeefry conducts a ballet workshop for adult beginners Venue: National Library
Sat 21 February	8:00pm	Magpie Music Dance Company Venue: Te Whaea
Tue 24 February	7:30pm	Technical Dress Rehearsal -Palmerston Nth
Thu 26 Feb & Wed 3 March	see Fringe Booklet	Footnote Dance – Perforum Venue: Footnote Dance Studios
25 February - 21 March	7:30pm	<u>Saltarello</u> Opens in Palmerston North
26 - 28 February	8:00pm	Scrambled Legs Dance Company Presents: 7 Venue: Bats Theatre
Fri 27 Feb - Sunday 29 Feb	see Fringe Booklet	Guy Ryan/Malla Johnston - Terrin: A boutique pas de deux Venue: Adam art Gallery , (limited to an audience of only 14)
Fri 27 Feb - Mon 2 March	<u>see arts festival booklet</u>	Ballet Nacional de Spania Venue: Westpac Theatre
Wed 3 March -Friday 12 March	see Fringe Booklet	Punga Legs – Kohu Venue: Paramount Theatre
Thu 4 March	12:10pm	Guided tour of TUTU by Sir Jon Trimmer and Lucy Alcock, exhibition curator Venue: National Library
Fri 5 March - Sunday 7 March	<u>see arts festival booklet</u>	Foi (Faith) – les Ballets C de la B – Belgium, Venue: Opera House
Fri 5 March - Sunday 7 March	see Fringe Booklet	Crows Feet Dance Collective – Dear God, Degas! Venue: Wellington Performing Arts Centre
Fri 12 March - Sunday 14 March	see Fringe Booklet	Fern Dance Theatre – Hopgrassers Venue: Gryphon Theatre
Thu 11 March - Sunday 14 March	<u>see arts festival booklet</u>	Black Grace – New Zealand Venue: Opera House
Thu 18 March	7:30	<u>Saltarello</u> Opens in Wellington
Sat 20 March	10:00	Master Class (Seniors)
Sat 20 March	12:30	Forum
Sat 20 March Sun 21 march (work-shops)	<u>see arts festival booklet</u>	Toi Mana – New Zealand Venue: Town Hall
Sun21 March		Ballet Exhibition at National Library CLOSES
21 April - 29 May		<u>UK Tour - Romeo & Juliet, Peter Pan, and Triple bill (Saltarello, Milagros, FrENZY)</u>