

The London Ballet Circle

*Founding President and First Patron: Dame Ninette de Valois OM, CH, DBE
President and Patron 1981 to 2004: Dame Alicia Markova DBE
Founded in 1946 by Stanley Hawkins*

Patron: Sir Peter Wright CBE

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David Nixon OBE, Darius James and David Bintley CBE

Associate Vice President: Michael Broderick

Chairman: Susan Dalgetty Ezra

Website: www.tlbc.org.uk

May 2016

Dear Members of the London Ballet Circle

Let's celebrate!

On Monday 9 May we will be celebrating our 70th Anniversary. Book your last minute tickets now and join us for a special evening hosted by Dame Monica Mason and Sir Peter Wright, featuring Daria Klimentova, former Prima Ballerina at English National Ballet who is now teaching at the Royal Ballet Upper School, and Gary Avis, Principal Character Artist and Ballet Master, Royal Ballet. Dress to impress as the National Liberal Club has a smart dress code and the event is being photographed for posterity!



In this edition we also have exciting news of events with Javier Torres, Premier Dancer, Northern Ballet, Jonathan Watkins, Choreographer of Northern Ballet's new work *1984*, Dame Monica Mason hosting an evening with Brenda Last, plus lots of opportunities to visit our friends at the Central School, Tring School for the Performing Arts, Danceworks and the New English Ballet Theatre where you can sit in on rehearsals of new works being choreographed for them by the Royal Ballet's rising stars.

As the summer holidays draw closer, three of our members write about their experiences travelling abroad for ballet. And if you are looking for a book to take to your dacha or to the beach this summer, then why not make it Sir Peter Wright's autobiography? If you click across to www.oberonbooks.com by 30 June and enter our special promotional code you can get a 30% discount on your book order. Sir Peter will be in conversation with us about his book on 1 August, so you can get your copy autographed too.

Good news - our website went offline for a short time when the hosting company went out of business but our friends at Ahead4 have rescued our site at www.tlbc.org.uk and it is back working now.

And even more good news - We did it! We have now raised over £1,100 via Easyfundraising! This money has enabled us to send another two student dancers to a summer school – so our thanks to the 30 members who have signed up.

Kind regards

Allison Potts
Newsletter Editor

What's on?

Celebrate LBC's 70th Anniversary

Monday 9 May, 6.30 pm for a 7.00 pm start at

The National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Place, London, SW1A 2HE

Payment in advance, £20 for members and £25 for guests

Dame Monica Mason and Sir Peter Wright welcome you to a celebration of 70 years since the foundation of the London Ballet Circle by Stanley Hawkins, with Dame Ninette de Valois as Founding President and First Patron.

The evening will include a discussion on the past, present and future of ballet led by dance critic Gerald Dowler with panellists Dame Monica, Sir Peter, Gary Avis, Daria Klimentova and Michael Broderick. It is anticipated that this part of the programme will last one hour. This will be followed by an hour-long reception for members and guests.

Tickets for this special celebration are £20 each for members and £25 for guests and include a glass of wine and nibbles. There will be a cash bar for those who want to celebrate a bit more! Please send your cheque to payable to The London Ballet Circle, to Audrey Allen, 8 Goldsmith Road, London, N11 3JP, 020 8361 2872, audrey8allen@gmail.com. Confirmation of your place and acknowledgement of your cheque will be made by email unless you require written confirmation, in which case please enclose a stamped-addressed envelope. Your name will be placed on a list that will be held at the door.

The National Liberal Club has some facilities for LBC members with mobility issues. **PLEASE NOTE THE DOORS WILL NOT BE OPEN UNTIL 6.30 PM. WE HAVE THE USE OF THE LLOYD GEORGE ROOM, THE SMOKING ROOM AND THE CLOAKROOM ONLY AND ARE NOT PERMITTED IN OTHER AREAS OF THIS PRIVATE MEMBERS' CLUB.** A dress code is still enforced: males must wear a jacket and tie at all times, with females maintaining a similar level of formality.

Visit to the Central School of Ballet

Monday 16 May, *2.00 to 4.00 pm

10 Herbal Hill, Clerkenwell Road, London, EC1R 5EG

Donations are requested - a minimum of £12.50 is suggested

We are delighted to have been offered another opportunity to visit the Central School of Ballet to watch the graduate year, formed into the company Ballet Central, rehearse some of the repertoire for their end of year show to be performed at venues throughout the UK.

Our congratulations have been sent to LBC friend Christopher Marney on becoming the Artistic Director of Ballet Central.



Photograph courtesy of Bill Cooper

*Because of limited waiting space we are requested not to arrive before 1.45 pm. The afternoon will end around 4.00 pm with tea in the Library.

The nearest underground station is Farringdon (Circle and Metropolitan lines and London Overground), turn right on leaving the station into Farringdon Road, cross at the traffic lights and turn right until you reach Clerkenwell Road, turn left and Herbal Hill is the first side turning you reach. If you would like to take part in this visit please advise Audrey Allen and if you wish to make a donation please send a cheque, made payable to The London Ballet Circle, to Audrey Allen, 8 Goldsmith Road, London, N11 3JP, 020 8361 2872, audrey8allen@gmail.com. Acknowledgements of your donation and confirmation of places will be made by email where applicable but if you require a written receipt please enclose a stamped addressed envelope. You are reminded that the School does not allow visitors to take photographs of the students.



Javier Torres, Premier Dancer, Northern Ballet, in conversation with Susan Johnson

Monday 23 May, 7.30 pm

The Dining Room, 1st Floor, Civil Service Club

13-15 Great Scotland Yard, London, SW1A 2HJ

Payment at the door, members £5, guests £8

From Cuba, Javier trained at the National School of Ballet, Havana.

In 2000 he joined the Ballet Nacional de Cuba where he was promoted to Premier Dancer in 2009. He performed with the Company in America, Europe and Asia. Javier was a Guest Artist in International Galas in El Escorial, Spain (2006, 2008 & 2012), Carlos Acosta and friends (2007) in London, Teresa Carreño Theatre Gala, Venezuela (2008, 2009 & 2010) and at the International Ballet Festival of Fortaleza "Fendador" in 2012. Javier has performed at each International Ballet Festival of Havana since 2000 and in 2012 he was a guest artist at the International Ballet Festival of Cali Colombia. He was also chosen by John Neumeier to dance the leading Pas de Deux in his *As You Like It* and *Othello*.

Javier joined Northern Ballet in 2010 as Premier Dancer. He has performed leading roles in *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, *Ondine*, *Beauty & the Beast*, *Hamlet*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Cleopatra*, *The Great Gatsby* and Hans van Manen's *Concertante*. His performance as Caesar in *Cleopatra* was voted one of the top hundred favourite performances by the UK dance critics in Dance Europe Magazine for the 2010-2011 season.

In 2012 he received the award "Constructores de la Danza" for his contribution to the Culture of the state of Ceara in Brazil.

Photograph courtesy of Javier Torres, Northern Ballet, Photographers Lisa Stonehouse (above) & Emma Kauldhar (right)



Jonathan Watkins, Choreographer, in conversation with Allison Potts

Monday 6 June, 7.30 pm

The Dining Room, 1st Floor, Civil Service Club

13-15 Great Scotland Yard, London, SW1A 2HJ

Payment at the door, members £5, guests £8

Jonathan began choreographing from an early age and showed clear choreographic talent, winning the Kenneth MacMillan Choreography Competition at the Royal Ballet School, aged just 16 years old. After graduating from The Royal Ballet School to The Royal Ballet Company, he created several pieces for the Clore Studio and Linbury Studio Theatre.

He made his main stage debut as a Choreographer in 2010 with *As One*. Following this, he collaborated on the Royal Opera House's main stage commission, *Metamorphosis: Titian 2012*. The overall production went on to receive a South Bank Award nomination for Dance in 2013. In 2014, Jonathan conceived, choreographed and directed his dance adaptation of *KES* based on the novel 'A Kestrel for a Knave' by Barry Hines. Recently he reimagined George Orwell's modern classic *1984* as a new full-length production for Northern Ballet due to be performed at Sadler's Wells Theatre in May.





Visit to Tring Park School for the Performing Arts
Friday 10 June 10.30 am to 12.15 pm and 1.45 pm to 3.45 pm
Mansion Drive, Tring, Hertfordshire, HP23 5LX
Donations are requested - a minimum of £12.50 is suggested

LBC members are invited to arrive in time for coffee before watching morning class. Then after lunch we are invited to sit in as the School puts the finishing touches to rehearsing and lighting two shows: its Young Dancers show and the Senior Dance show. If you haven't been to Tring Park School before, here is a short film <https://vimeo.com/61973294>

If you would like to take part in this visit please advise Audrey Allen and if you wish to make a donation please send a cheque, made payable to The London Ballet Circle, to Audrey Allen, 8 Goldsmith Road, London, N11 3JP, 020 8361 2872, audrey8allen@gmail.com. Acknowledgements of your donation and confirmation of places will be made by email where applicable but if you require a written receipt please enclose a stamped addressed envelope. Up to 20 places are available. You are reminded that the School does not allow visitors to take photographs of the students.

Travel suggestion: A train departs from Euston at 09.05 and arrives at Tring at 09.49. The School has kindly offered to collect LBC members from Tring Station and transport them by minibus to its premises. More information on how to get to Tring Park School can be found at <http://www.tringpark.com/the-school/about-us/contact>

Danceworks International Ballet Academy Performance Class/Rehearsal

Saturday 25 June 12.30 pm to 2.00 pm

16 Balderton St, London W1K 6TN

Donations are requested - a minimum of £12.50 is suggested

Members need to be aware that there are six steps to be negotiated to reach the studio.

LBC members are invited to watch the young student dancers working on Benjamin Britten's *Young Persons Guide to the Orchestra* and Balanchine piece. Refreshments will be served.

If you would like to take part in this visit please advise Audrey Allen and if you wish to make a donation please send a cheque, made payable to The London Ballet Circle, to Audrey Allen, 8 Goldsmith Road, London, N11 3JP, 020 8361 2872, audrey8allen@gmail.com. Acknowledgements of your donation and confirmation of places will be made by email where applicable but if you require a written receipt please enclose a stamped addressed envelope. You are reminded that the Academy does not allow visitors to take photographs of the students.

Brenda Last, OBE, in conversation with Dame Monica Mason

Monday 4 July, 7.30 pm

The Dining Room, 1st Floor, Civil Service Club

13-15 Great Scotland Yard, London, SW1A 2HJ

Payment at the door, members £5, guests £8

In 1963 Brenda joined the Royal Ballet becoming a principal dancer in 1965, dancing all major roles and appeared in Ashton's film *The Tales Of Beatrix Potter*.

From 1977–1980 she was Artistic Director of the Norwegian National Ballet. She has taught throughout the world for the Royal Academy of Dance and given classes to the English National, Scottish, Royal New Zealand and Australian Ballet companies. She has also been an advisor on the Dance Panel of the Arts Council of Great Britain and the Olivier Awards.

A Vice President of All England Dance, she is currently Artistic Advisor and Fellow of the British Ballet Organisation, Patron of the Louise Browne Yorkshire Scholars, Steelworks, Kate Simmons Dance and Artistic Director of the Molly Lake Award. She is also a Trustee of the Royal Ballet Benevolent Fund. She regularly teaches the Michael Clark Company where many of the dancers are her former students. In December 2012 she received an OBE for Services to Dance.

**Sir Peter Wright, in conversation with Paul Arrowsmith, on
*Wrights and Wrongs: My Life in Dance***

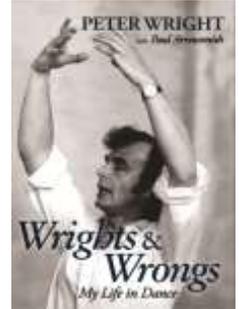
followed by a book signing session

Monday 1 August, 7.30 pm

The Dining Room, 1st Floor, Civil Service Club

13-15 Great Scotland Yard, London, SW1A 2HJ

Payment at the door, members £5, guests £8



Our Patron, Sir Peter Wright, is one of the true pioneers of British dance. *Wrights and Wrongs* is the story of an outspoken and uncompromising man who ran away from his strict Quaker home, in order to follow his dream of becoming a dancer.

Sir Peter forged a reputation as a masterful choreographer and went on to found the Birmingham Royal Ballet from the ashes of the Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet in 1990. His productions of classics such as *The Nutcracker*, *Giselle* and *Sleeping Beauty* have since become cornerstones of the repertoires of major ballet companies around the world. His story is intertwined with some of the towering figures in the history of ballet, including Rudolf Nureyev, Margot Fonteyn, Sir Kenneth MacMillan, and Dame Ninette de Valois.

Book details: Hardback, Pages 520, ISBN: 9781783193462, Full price £25.00 **LBC members can buy the book at a discount of 30% if purchased online before 30 June. Place your order at www.oberonbooks.com and insert promotion code ONPREORDER**

New English Ballet Theatre

Monday 15 August, 2.00 – 5.00 pm

Studio A, Sadler's Wells, Rosebery Avenue, London, EC1R 4TN

Donations are requested - a minimum of £12.50 is suggested

Royal Ballet Soloist Kristen McNally is choreographing a new ballet for NEBT and we are invited to watch as she puts the finishing touches on it. At the end of the rehearsal she will take questions from LBC members.

There are just 15 places available via donation and reservation only on a first come first served basis. If you would like to take part in this visit please advise Audrey Allen and if you wish to make a donation please send a cheque, made payable to The London Ballet Circle, to Audrey Allen, 8 Goldsmith Road, London, N11 3JP, 020 8361 2872, audrey8allen@gmail.com. Acknowledgements of your donation and confirmation of places will be made by email where applicable but if you require a written receipt please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

New English Ballet Theatre

Thursday 22 September, 2.00 – 5.00 pm

TBC either Rambert Studios, 99 Upper Ground, London SE1 9PP or

Lanterns Studio Theatre, 1 William Blake House, The Lanterns, Bridge Lane, Battersea, London SW11 3AD

Donations are requested - a minimum of £12.50 is suggested

Watch the creation of a new ballet with Royal Ballet stars Marcelino Sambe or Valentine Zucchetti (tbc).

Fifteen places are available via donation and reservation only on a first come first served basis. If you would like to take part in this visit please advise Audrey Allen and if you wish to make a donation please send a cheque, made payable to The London Ballet Circle, to Audrey Allen, 8 Goldsmith Road, London, N11 3JP, 020 8361 2872, audrey8allen@gmail.com. Acknowledgements of your donation and confirmation of places will be made by email where applicable but if you require a written receipt please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

New English Ballet Theatre's Taking Chances 2016 Choreography Lab

Friday 14 and Saturday 15 October, 7.00 pm

Rambert Studios, 99 Upper Ground, London SE1 9PP

Donations are requested - a minimum of £12.50 is suggested

NEBT will present the results from this year's Choreography Lab at two special performances, along with exclusive previews of the upcoming programme of new works.

Fifteen places for each performance are available via donation and reservation only on a first come first served basis. If you would like to take part in this visit please advise Audrey Allen and if you wish to make a donation please send a cheque, made payable to The London Ballet Circle, to Audrey Allen, 8 Goldsmith Road, London, N11 3JP, 020 8361 2872, audrey8allen@gmail.com. Acknowledgements of your donation and confirmation of places will be made by email where applicable but if you require a written receipt please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Non-LBC events

Ballet Central 2016 – new tour dates added

If the visit to the Central School of Ballet inspires you to see the graduate year in performance, Ballet Central's tour 2016 features a sparkling programme of ballet, neoclassical, contemporary and narrative dance. The company's young and dynamic dancers will showcase their talent with a diverse performance of newly commissioned works and celebrated revivals. Choreographers for this year's tour include Richard Bermange (Ballet Ireland), Christopher Marney (Matthew Bourne's New Adventures), Sara Matthews (Director, Central School of Ballet) and Sharon Watson (Artistic Director, Phoenix Dance Theatre). Classical ballet fans will relish *Celebration* by company founder Christopher Gable and *Paquita Pas de Trois* staged by Carole Gable. This family-friendly show is ideal for dance enthusiasts as well as those new to ballet. Don't miss this opportunity to see these highly talented and vibrant dancers as they launch their professional careers.

"Ballet Central seems to be on an upward trajectory, looking finer all the time." Dance Europe, July 2015

The Ballet Central 2016 tour continues at:

Newbury – Corn Exchange, Tuesday 10 May newburyspringfestival.org.uk

Chipping Norton – The Theatre, Sunday 5 June chippingnortontheatre.com

Bridport – Bridport Arts Centre, Friday 10 June bridport-arts.com

Eastleigh – The Point, Friday 24 June thepointeastleigh.co.uk

Crawley – The Hawth, Thursday 30 June hawth.co.uk

Margate – Theatre Royal, Friday 8 July theatreroyal margate.com

Wedmore – Wedmore Arts Festival, Friday 15 July wedmoreartsfestival.co.uk

Bristol – Redgrave Theatre, Saturday 16 July redgravetheatre.com

London – Stratford Circus Arts Centre, Saturday 30 July stratford-circus.com

Yorkshire Ballet Summer School

Saturday 16 – Friday 29 July, Askham Bryan College, York, YO23 3FR

The Yorkshire Ballet Summer School, which uses the facilities of Askham Bryan agricultural college, offers dance students aged 9 to 19 and their teachers a chance to attend an annual, two week residential summer school taught by renowned dancers and teachers of national or international acclaim. The 2016 Summer School will teach almost 100 students in each of the two weeks. YBSS has the special goal of giving students the chance to take Master Classes taught by world famous dancers, most recently Donald MacLeary, Belinda Hatley and Edward Watson. As the School's Director, Marguerite Porter, puts it, "Our aim is to encourage, inspire and educate our students in a happy and safe environment. We hope that they leave us with renewed joy of the dance and greater confidence." The YBSS Patrons include: Anya Sainsbury CBE, Sir Anthony Dowell CBE, Kevin O'Hare, Michael Nunn OBE, and William Trevitt OBE.

The London Ballet Circle pays for two of students to attend the Yorkshire Ballet Summer School each year. A small number of observers are allowed to watch daily classes. Donations are requested and a minimum of £45 is suggested. This will enable you to watch classes and is a contribution towards the LBC bursary for two students to attend. Please send your donation cheque, made payable to The London Ballet Circle to Audrey Allen, 8 Goldsmith Road, London, N11 3JP 020 8361 2872, audrey8allen@gmail.com Those who wish to attend will need to make their own arrangements. You are reminded that the School does not allow visitors to take photographs of the students.

How to contact the School:

Yorkshire Ballet Summer School, 24 Shaftesbury Road, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 2TD
020 8332 3080 info@ybss.co.uk

How to contact the Accommodation Manager:

Jennifer Scott, Askham Bryan College, Askham Bryan, York, YO23 3FR
01904 772246 jennifer.scott@askham-bryan.ac.uk

The tariff at Askham Bryan College this year is £35.50 per person per night, room and breakfast, plus 20% VAT, making £42.60 for each day.

Latitude Festival

14-17 July, Henham Park, Southwold, Suffolk

The Latitude Festival is an annual music festival that also features dance. Among many others this year's line up on the Waterfront Stage are the Hofesh Shechter Company, the Richard Alston Dance Company; the winner of the 2015 BBC Young Dancer Award Ivan Blackstock and New English Ballet Theatre. NEBT present two pieces by choreographer Kristen McNally: *Mad Women*, a satirical exploration of the traditional conflict between men and women as seen in the context of the late 1950's housewives, and *Lonesome Gun*, a raunchy, playful piece inspired by American Western movies. NEBT also presents *Wundarra*, a pas-de-deux set to aboriginal music where the choreographer Daniela Cardim explores the juxtaposition of this unusual sound with the classical ballet language. More information from <http://www.latitudefestival.com/line-up#waterfront>

Curtain Up at the Victoria & Albert Museum

10.00 – 5.45 pm (Fridays to 11 pm), until 31 August

Cromwell Rd, London, SW7 2RL - entry is free

Explore the extraordinary story of the world's two greatest theatrical cities, London's West End and New York's Broadway, in a new exhibition. Investigate the What's On and Learn pages for more information. <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/exhibitions/display-curtain-up/>



Matthew Keller

Matthew received one of our scholarships to the Yorkshire Ballet Summer School last year and you might have met him and his mum Carmel when they attended the LBC party in January. We thought you might like to see two updates from Carmel so you can see how Matthew is getting on.

“Thank you for your wonderfully warm welcome to both Matthew and myself at the LBC AGM and for introducing Matthew to Sir Peter Wright whose words Matthew values very much.

I did promise that I would let you know how Matthew gets on at his auditions for Upper Schools. He applied for English National Ballet, Royal Ballet, Central and Elmhurst and has been given a place in Finals at all four institutions... I must say here that we have been so impressed with the quality of ballet teaching at Tring and if Matthew is offered a place elsewhere it will be on the basis of his hard work but also the genuine student-centredness and incredibly encouraging and demanding training of the Tring artistic team; I am sure that Matthew would not be where he is today if it had not been for Tring.

Thank you, also, for your kind offer to support a Tring student at York Ballet Summer School, which gave a very timely boost to Matthew’s confidence. There is no doubt in our minds that this had a tremendous impact both from the initial funding and from the Nicholas Johnson Award that he received there – LBC made this possible and gave him a good platform to perform well.

Please do pass on our gratitude to all members of LBC for the work done. I shall let you know Matthew’s final results as soon as we hear.”

Then, a bit later, some good news arrived ...

“I am delighted to say that Matthew has been offered a place at the Royal Ballet Upper School and we are waiting to hear from ENB, having cancelled the finals at Elmhurst and Central. I must say that the generosity of Tring in supporting Matthew along with their selfless and positive way of teaching have played a significant role in his development. We are saddened to see a number of Matthew’s friends not get a place at US and hurt to see their anxiety as they look for another place. Even sadder is that a few have decided they will no longer dance so they are looking to find a new identity now they are no longer referring to themselves as ‘ballet dancer’ after 8 years of doing so.

On a more up-beat note, Matthew was going to use his Nicholas Johnson cash award for his audition fees but has managed to hold on to it and will be using it as part of his fee if he is successful in applying to York Ballet Summer School – well, if he wants to do that, we had best get an application form filled out this week!

If I haven’t said it before, please do convey our thanks to LBC as the experience you afforded him at YBSS last year was a real turning point in regaining his confidence and believing he had a future. Thank you.”

Isaac Bowry

From Robert Parker, Artistic Director, Elmhurst School

“Thank you very much once again for offering the Sir Peter Wright bursary for one of our graduate students who shows an affinity for performance. I have liaised with the team to identify an appropriate candidate and we have decided on Isaac Bowry. Isaac is an extremely powerful dancer and possesses a captivating stage presence. He is also a tremendous partner...I look forward to seeing you soon and thank you once again.”



Travelling for ballet

The Sleeping Beauty in Budapest by Jane Lambert

Last year our patron, Sir Peter Wright, made it known through the newsletter that he would be delighted if any member of the LBC could join him at the Budapest Opera House on the 17 April 2016 for the premiere of his new production of *The Sleeping Beauty* for the Hungarian National Ballet. About 10 of us accepted his invitation including my guest, Mel Wong, who is a Welsh dancer working and training in Budapest.

The Budapest Opera House is a small but very beautiful theatre that opened in 1884. The auditorium is sumptuously decorated with a magnificent painted ceiling and chandelier. Mel and I sat in the middle of the fifth row of the stalls so had an ideal view of the stage. Glancing round the auditorium I was glad to see a fair number of familiar faces.

We had been told that the production was the same as Birmingham Royal Ballet's. I had last seen that work at The Lowry in Salford on 27 Sept 2013 with Elisha Willis as Aurora, Jamie Bond as Florimund, Samara Downs as Carabosse and Delia Matthews as the good fairy. The sets, costumes, orchestration and choreography were familiar but the performance was, of course different, as was to be expected.



Aurora was danced by Aliya Tanpayeva who had trained in Almaty and had danced for the Almaty State Ballet, the Imperial Russian Ballet Company (which despite its name appears to be based in New Zealand), the Vienna State Ballet and the Zurich Ballet before coming to Hungary. Florimund was danced by Dimitry Timofeev who had trained at the Vaganova Academy and danced in Israel and Croatia before joining the Hungarian National Ballet. Both danced well

if somewhat differently from Willis and Bond. Tanpayeva was charming but her strength lay in her virtuosity rather than her acting. Timofeev was impressive, particularly in his jumps.

As for the other major roles, the Lilac Fairy was danced by Zsuzsanna Papp, Carabosse by Karina Sarkissova and Bluebird by Maksym Kovtun who also doubled as Puss in Boots. In that latter role he was partnered by the young Canadian dancer Danielle Gould who danced the white cat. It is not an easy character role particularly with a heavy cat mask. She has to be both human and feline: flirtatiousness at one moment, they playful slapping her partner at the next. It is one of my favourite *divertissements* of any ballet and she danced it well winning the hearts of the audience.

The audience loved the show and applauded enthusiastically. Sarkissova invited the conductor, István Dénes, to join the cast on stage and he in turn invited the director, Tamás Solymosi and Sir Peter on stage. Sir Peter was magnificent first taking a bow with the cast and creative team and then applauding them. I could not help rising to my feet for him.

Sir Peter had arranged for us to meet the director and cast on stage after the show and we arrived to find a party in progress to which we were all invited. It was a great end to a splendid evening.

Gala for Alessia

On 28 June dancers from the Dutch National Ballet, the Ballet of La Scala, the Vienna State Ballet and the Jas Art Ballet will perform a gala at Trecate in Northern Italy to raise funds for Casa Alessia to carry out reconstruction work in Burundi. The performance will include works by the talented young Italian dancer and choreographer Cristiano Principato, extracts from *Swan Lake*, *Coppelia*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Pharaoh's Daughter* and finish with *Embers* which has been choreographed by our good friend Ernst Meisner. Admission is free but a collection will be taken after the show. Further details in *Terpsichore* (<http://jelterps.blogspot.co.uk/>). If you would like to attend please contact Jane Lambert on 07966 373922 or janelambert3@gmail.com and she will arrange for Cristiano to reserve a ticket for you.



Visit to Copenhagen by Naomi Cockshutt



The Royal Danish Ballet in August Bournonville's romantic *La Sylphide* juxtaposed with George Balanchine's dazzling *Theme and Variations* was superb and the evening at the Royal Danish Theatre culminated with Artistic Director Nikolaj Hübbe promoting American-born soloist Holly Jean Dorger to prima ballerina in front of a standing ovation.

Before I returned to London, I had organised a visit to watch the apprentice level class at the Royal Danish Ballet School. The three-year apprentice programme trains students aged 15-18 and combines academic schooling with twenty hours of ballet training per week.

Established in 1771, the school is located at the Royal Danish Theatre, home to the internationally renowned and third oldest company in the world, the Royal Danish Ballet. Centrally positioned in Kongens Nytorv; a public square just off Copenhagen's busy pedestrianised shopping area, the gracious architecture of the theatre is hard to miss.

I had arranged to meet with Nanna Højholt, Head of the Apprentice Programme, but unfortunately she was unwell so was met by one of her apprentices at the stage door or 'Sceneindgang' in Danish. As I walked through the building, company members were milling around in full costume getting ready to rehearse for their upcoming production of John Neumeier's *Romeo and Juliet*.

Cuban-born Taina Morales, who happens to be ENB Junior Soloist Cesar Corrales' mother, led the classical class. Starting with a warm-up facing the barre, the pliés were then followed by a series of highly extended and vigorous battement en cloche. I was not sure if this swinging of the leg at such height so early on in the class was the Danish or Cuban influence! The barre then continued in the usual fashion before coming into the centre for adage.

The students' range of physical facility was not as uniform as I have seen in other vocational schools. Some students had less turnout or flexibility in the feet and ankles, seen as they held their arabesque line or 'promenaded' in attitude. Taina Morales's fiery persona and Latino passion shone through as she clapped her hands and shouted 'si' as the students darted fearlessly across the large airy studio in a series piqué turns and chaînés.

Next came the petit allegro where the students' musicality coupled with their precise and speedy lower leg and foot articulation was incandescent and reverberating of Bournonville's style. Their échappé sautés really did 'escape' in a flash of lightning and my eyes were drawn to the technical

clarity in their sideways beating action required for batterie. It would have been interesting to see how the younger students train for such precision.

The 1¾-hour class finished with a selection of pointe work enchaînements, another display of their fast footwork and ability to travel effortlessly at speed, something that reminded me of the Paris Opera Ballet School.

Havana – the Home of Ballet Nacional de Cuba by Susan Johnson

Every two years the Ballet Nacional de Cuba hosts an international Festival of ballet over nine days with at least two performances to choose from each day. Ballet is seen as a way out of the economic hardships that are faced in Cuba. Many of the dancers, particularly the young men, leave to join companies in the US, the UK or elsewhere as soon as they are able to do so.



As a result the company's corps de ballet is comprised mainly of very young dancers with experienced soloists and premier dancers, all with strong classical technique. Without access to gym or Pilates they have a physical quality reminiscent of the dancers of 30 years ago. They work extremely hard and they give performances of great vitality. Dancers from around the world join them. It is exciting to see dancers from companies in South America such as Sodre, the ballet company run by Julio Bocca in Uruguay, from Europe including France, Germany and Switzerland and from the US including Brooklyn Mack in 2014 who appeared with ENB earlier in the year to great acclaim.

Besides attending the performances daily there is much to see and do in Havana. The old town – Vieja – is beautiful. It has a very European feel to it with many buildings remaining from the colonial era. These sit beside art deco buildings such as the Bacardi building. The cathedral is flooded with natural light and traditional music can be heard and salsa seen in many of the bars. I had fun several mornings taking salsa lessons that I booked online from London.

I have been twice to the Festival and each time I have spent a little of my spare time gazing down on to Parque Central from the window of my hotel room at the historic American cars which draw up in front of the hotel. It is like being a bystander on a 1950's film set. It is possible to take a ride in one and tour round Havana. It is only by doing this that it becomes clear why Havana was such an important city in the Caribbean, fought over by the French, Spanish and English in the 16th – 18th centuries. The sheltered deep water harbour, now home to the Cruise ship terminal, was once where the Spanish mustered their fleet of ships laden with treasures from their empire in South America before setting out on the hazardous journey to their home country. Apparently the Chinese have, in more recent years, offered to dredge the harbour at no cost provided they could retain all the treasure they found, but the authorities had turned this down. It is also here that Lt Arthur Phillip helped secure Havana for the British in 1762 (they swapped it a few months later for Florida!). In 1788 he was to lead the First Fleet to establish the penal colony in Sydney, Australia.

This vantage point provided stunning views across Vieja to the Capitolio, ironically giving echoes of Washington. From this distance it was easy to forget the sad state of the buildings in this jewel of a city and the financial poverty of its people.

On the same side of the harbour entrance as Vieja is the Malecon, a stretch of road running for several miles along the sea front where many locals gather to fish and chat. The Plaza de la Revolucion with the Memorial to Jose Marti at its centre is a rather forbidding place with its brutalist soviet architecture, lightened by the steel frieze of Che Guevara.

Away from the bustle of Vieja and Centro it is possible to see another side of Havana, the tranquil residential area around the Rio Almendares, leafy, cool and very pretty with well-kept properties. Vedado, the location of the HQ for Ballet Nacional de Cuba, is another area with wonderful large colonial properties although not so well kept.

My memories of Havana are of hot and sunny days and ballet performances full of vitality by night – what more can one ask for?

Susan Johnson is an officer of The British Friends Of Ballet Nacional De Cuba, a registered charity. If you would like to find out more about this group have a chat with Susan after one of her LBC talks.

If you fancy visiting Cuba but feel a bit daunted about organizing it yourself, in October In Style Travel has arranged a tour to Cuba during the biennial Havana Ballet Festival October 27 – November 3. More information at

http://www.instyletravel.co.uk/limited_editions/77-2016-Havana-Ballet-Festival.html

If you have any questions Andrew Blair, Managing Partner, and his team would be pleased to help. They can be contacted at Netherleigh House, 10A Hornsey Lane, London N6 5LZ

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For the avoidance of doubt, LBC members pay all their own travelling expenses and receive no gifts. No fees are paid by any of the organisations featured in this Newsletter. Visits involving an overnight stay are open to all and everyone must make their own arrangements.

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EASYFUNDRAISING EARNS £1,100 FOR LBC

We made it! We have raised over £1,100 via Easyfundraising! This money has enabled us to send another two student dancers to a summer school – so our thanks to the members who have signed up.

Why not help us raise even more? Amazon, Boots, Expedia, John Lewis, Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury and Tesco are among over 2000 stores that have teamed up with **EasyFundRaising.org.uk** so that every time you shop online the stores donate money to your favourite charity – and it costs you nothing! Register quickly and free of charge by:

1. Clicking on www.easyfundraising.org.uk
2. Selecting 'Register as a user'
3. Clicking London Ballet Circle as the charity you wish to support, then each time you shop online log on to www.easyfundraising.org.uk and go from there in the usual way and up to 15% of what is spent will be donated by the retailer to The London Ballet Circle.

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