



www.balletfantastique.org
60 E. 10th Ave., Eugene, OR 97401
(541) 342 - 4611

Artistic Director Donna Marisa Bontrager

Contact Information:
Hannah Bontrager
Ballet Fantastique, Executive Director
Mobile phone (not for publication): (541) 206.8977
Direct email (not for publication): balletfantastique@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—September 7, 2009

Be transported by Ballet Fantastique's latest performance—Visions d'Amour: 10 Ballets in Paris

EUGENE, Ore- September 7, 2009— In keeping with their reputation for creating truly inspirational concerts, Ballet Fantastique opens the 2009-2010 season with a Parisian themed performance sure to move audience members of all ages. The show features 10 short ballets with all-new choreography, ranging from 2 minutes to the 30-minute world-premiere of "Night at the Cafe Terrace", a dramatization of Van Gogh's famous painting that features the work of many Eugene artists.

The idea for this show, co-directors Donna and Hannah Bontrager said, came from the 2006 film *Paris, Je T'aime*.

"This performance, with the range of each of the ten ballets, offers something for everyone. It's truly an ode to the nuance and passion and diversity of French and Parisian style!" said Hannah Bontrager.

The performance opens with four ballets on the theme of love. Ballet Fantastique dancers will show off their talent to music by Edith Piaf, Carla Bruni and Makali, a French band from Provence. The ballets are light, playful, and theatrical, with choreography by Donna and Hannah Bontrager, and sets and background photographs that take the audience from the Eiffel tower to a 20's Parisian boudoir.

After a brief intermission, the dancers return with a suite of four serious ballets to great operatic composers. In the fourth, guest pianist John Jantzi provides the music as Ballet Fantastique dancer Leanne Mizzoni debuts choreography by renowned DC-area choreographer Dina Fadayeveva. The dance articulates the dynamics of fascination and fixation as Mizzoni chases a butterfly to Chopin's cascading "Minute Waltz."

"Ms. Fadayeveva's choreography is perhaps some of the most difficult I've ever danced—and some of the most intricate and incredible," says Mizzoni, who recently relocated from the east coast to dance with the Ballet Fantastique company. "It's requiring me to do additional conditioning, but I'm so excited for the challenge! I also can't wait to work with a live pianist of Mr. Jantzi's caliber."

Act three presents the much anticipated performance of "Night at the Café Terrace." This unique ballet combines the work of many talented Eugene artists. Ballet Fantastique will premiere new choreography to Eugene composer Jeremy Schropp's original musical score, which brings to life Van Gogh's painting. The

stage will be lit by painter Rob Adams' *Café Terrace*, a commissioned fresh interpretation of Van Gogh's *Cafe de Nuit*. Ballet Fantastique professional dancers will be joined by Eugene jazz singer Ali Losik.

Schropp and Ballet Fantastique director-choreographers Donna and Hannah Bontrager have worked together closely to tell the story that Schropp has "written" through his music. "Night at the Café Terrace" characters include the playful and flirtatious Renaldo and Lola, and four other café patrons. The dancers are joined on stage by a 25-piece orchestra, performing as the "street band," with the conductor functioning as the "maitre d."

"Ballet Fantastique's vision is all about collaborating across art forms to produce vibrant Northwest art that intrigues and inspires. This artistic partnership with Jeremy [Schropp] to produce a truly 'Eugene'-based world premiere of a new ballet is so exciting for us," Executive Director and dancer Hannah Bontrager said.

Schropp, who initially proposed the performance concept, was inspired by intermingling art forms of the painting. He has united traditional and popular music, a complement and allusion to Van Gogh's period of modern movement within a traditional society.

"The music is based upon popular dance forms of the 20th century including rumba, tango, ragtime, foxtrot and waltz, with a slightly more adventurous melodic, harmonic and timbral approach," Schropp said. With Ballet Fantastique on board, and the production in progress, Schropp eagerly awaits its premiere: "Ballet Fantastique is truly a 'local' company and I feel honored to have this opportunity with a group that is intimately tied to our community and that legitimately expresses their vision via a purely Eugenic voice."

Artistic Director Donna Marisa Bontrager says: "The finished ballet is a wonderful fusion of our artistic contributions, as the dancers and musicians bring this fun, flirtatious homage to Van Gogh to life."

Ballet Fantastique leadership is thrilled with the organization's growing reputation for creating outstanding collaborations. President of the Board of Directors, Christine Desermeaux, believes the new "Night at the Café Terrace" repertoire perfectly aligns with the dance company's Northwest-focused mission.

"This fresh concept of bringing dance inside a painting is a dazzling example of Ballet Fantastique's commitment to bring world class arts to Eugene," Desermeaux said. "In this ballet, they again use Eugene's resources to *create* new world-class art for our city!"

"'Night at the Café Terrace' is a unique, brand-new ballet inspired by a painting that we all know and love," dancer Alonzo Moore, who will perform the lead role of Renaldo, said. "We're bringing the painting alive through our movement. It's truly a challenging, rewarding, and unique process!"

Dancer Leanne Mizzoni, joining Ballet Fantastique this year from the Washington, DC metropolitan area, says that *Visions d'Amour* exemplifies her incentive for moving to Oregon to dance with the small company: "It's new pieces that share recurring themes. There's this playful interaction with the audience that Ballet Fantastique builds into its concerts—*Visions* will absolutely transport you to a different time and place."

Visions d'Amour: 10 Ballets in Paris opens at the Hult Center in Eugene at October 9, 2009 at 7:30 PM with an encore performance on October 10, 2009 also at 7:30 PM. Tickets are on sale now for \$25–30 (\$14

students), with discounts for groups of six or more. Tickets and can be purchased at the Hult Center Box Office (541-682-5000) or online at www.hultcenter.org.

Audience members are invited to meet the dancers, musicians, Ballet Fantastique directors, Schropp and Adams at the Oct. 11 post-concert "Starry Night" reception at Davis's Bar & Restaurant (additional ticket required—\$20 or \$10 with Hult ticket stub from either performance—see www.balletfantastique.org for details).

Visions d'Amour is sponsored by Comcast and Pacific Northwest Publishing.

For further information about Ballet Fantastique and the *Visions d'Amour* production, please visit the Ballet Fantastique website at www.balletfantastique.org or call the studio (541) 342-4611. Executive Director Hannah Bontrager may be reached directly for comment at (541) 206-8977 or balletfantastique@gmail.com.

###