

Fantastique Movements

BY HAILEY CHAMBERLAIN



Photo credit: Jared Mills, Woden Photography

Ballet Fantastique continues to amaze audiences with creative takes on old favorites, like the Wild West version of *As You Like It*, or the dramatization of Van Gogh’s “Cafe Terrace at Night,” but the thriving mother-daughter-powered dance company doesn’t sacrifice skill for novelty. The core of every production is classical ballet and highly trained dancers.

Ultimately, what allows Ballet Fantastique to be such a successful and imaginative force is having a small, close-knit company of seven strong performers. This allows for an intimate and almost intuitive collaboration within the troupe. The dancers and choreographers work closely to perfect their vibrant performances, and in the process create long-lasting bonds between everyone in the company.

Cinderella: A Rock Opera takes the classic tale of *Cinderella* on a wild ride by setting it in the time period of the ‘60s. Fred Davis, Prince Charming in the upcoming Ballet Fantastique production, looks at his role as a means of broadening his abilities

as an artist. Davis prepared for his part by immersing himself in the ‘60s era to understand what life then was like, scouring reading material and mining the memories of his older family members. This, paired with Davis’ past experience of playing Prince Charming in more traditional productions, made it easy for him to convey what he feels is the message behind Ballet Fantastique’s version of *Cinderella*: “If you’re not with someone you love the most, your life will never be complete, because love is the most powerful thing there is,” Davis says.

The exciting dynamic between the mother-daughter team that directs and choreographs Ballet Fantastique is another prominent factor in the success of the company. Donna and Hannah Bontrager are the artistic and executive directors, while Hannah is also a dancer

alongside her sister Ashley. It might seem difficult for a mother and her daughters to work so closely, but Donna says that the company was something she always wanted them to do together, and she raised them to love dance as much as she does.

“I think we’ve worked really well together,” Donna says. “Our goal is so similar: we want to create beautiful dance for people.”

Cinderella: A Rock Opera Ballet runs May 12-13 at the Hult; Prices vary.