

BALLET *Fantastique*

DONNA MARISA BONTRAGER, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
60 E. 10th AVE., EUGENE, OREGON 97401 – 541.342.4611
www.balletfantastique.org

board of directors:

donna bontrager, hannah bontrager, margie van dorn, emily tormey, dianna campbell-bressler, christy desermeaux

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Kaleigh Young
Ballet Fantastique
(541)660-2956
bfanpublicity@gmail.com
www.balletfantastique.org

Ballet Fantastique Announces 2008-2009 Season and Welcomes new Assistant Artistic Director Constanza Blankenship

EUGENE, ORE – August 14, 2008 – Ballet Fantastique, under the artistic direction of Donna Marisa Bontrager, is proud to announce its 2008-2009 performance season and to welcome new assistant artistic director and resident choreographer Constanza Blankenship.

Following the season's unofficial theme of "collaboration," every production will include Ballet Fantastique's roster of six professional dancers in creative partnership with renowned Pacific Northwest groups and artists.

"We are really thrilled about this exciting season of growth for Ballet Fantastique," says Bontrager. "With new company dancers joining us, new and repeat collaborations on the calendar, and Constanza's tremendous skills to add to our roster, it's going to be a great year."

"It is great to know that I have a group of talented and motivated dancers to work with, and that I will be able to present my works to such a receptive, artistic community," says Blankenship. "I really feel that I will be able to push everyone's boundaries, most especially my own, to create some really spectacular shows."

In addition to Blankenship, who will also dance with the company, Ballet Fantastique also welcomes two new dancers for the 2008-2009 performance season. Ya Xi Fu is a former student of the Shanghai Ballet School and former member of the prestigious Shanghai Ballet Company. Amelia Unsicker is a former student of the School of Oregon Ballet Theater and a biochemistry major at the University of Oregon.

CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS WITH EUGENE SYMPHONY

The season will open on October 14–15 with a new ballet rendition of *Carnival of the Animals*, commissioned by the Eugene Symphony as part of their Youth Concert Series. French Romantic-era composer Camille Saint-Saens's 1886 musical suite is well-known and loved by arts audiences, but rarely choreographed to for ballet.

"We are very excited about our collaboration with Ballet Fantastique for our upcoming Youth and Tots to Ten Concerts," says Chris Collins, director of education and outreach for the Symphony. "We appreciate Ballet Fantastique's artistic integrity and flexibility. It can be

difficult to find a dance company with a complete choreography of *Carnival of the Animals* that is catered towards a younger audience; Ballet Fantastique has developed a beautiful program that both teachers and students alike are sure to enjoy.”

Blankenship, who brings extensive experience as both a dancer and choreographer from Utah Ballet (University of Utah) to Ballet Fantastique, will work with Bontrager to create new choreography to Saint-Saens’s evocative, playful music. A “carnival” of Ballet Fantastique company dancers, in roles ranging from the Lion to the Swan, will perform with Eugene Symphony musicians on the Hult Center’s Silva stage. The ballet will be repeated again on the Soreng stage with Symphony musicians on February 21. Additional information about the concert will be available at www.eugenesymphony.org.

THE NUTCRACKER & BALLET IN THE PARK WITH BALLET ROGUE

In December, Ballet Fantastique will partner with Southern Oregon’s Ballet Rogue for their production of the timeless holiday classic *The Nutcracker*. Ballet Fantastique company dancers will travel to Medford to perform in soloist roles for the production. Additional information will be available at www.balletrogue.com. In July, the season will come to a close with another collaboration with Ballet Rogue for a free night of beauty and enchantment with *Ballet in the Park*.

DANSE ROGUE: VARIATIONS IN RED WITH THE TRIO VORONEZH

Then, just in time for Valentine’s Day, Ballet Fantastique will have its audience thinking in red with the February 6–7 *Danse Rouge: Variations in Red*. This mixed-repertory concert will feature Ballet Fantastique and Northwest musicians and artists at their best. The pieces explore a range of emotions and themes inspired by the color, from excerpts from the fiery Spanish ballet *Don Quixote*, to new tango and bossa nova pieces, to Blankenship’s much-anticipated premiere of a ballet set to John Corigliano’s Oscar-winning score for the *Red Violin*.

On-stage collaborations include an encore performance of tango pieces played by the internationally-lauded Trio Voronezh and new choreography to the Spanish guitar of Eugene’s John Jarvies. Art by Northwest visual artists will be projected behind the dancers on stage. Tickets will be available November 15 from the Hult Center Box Office: 682-5000 or www.hultcenter.org.

BALLET FANTASTIQUE MISSION/VISION

Ballet Fantastique is a nonprofit organization that is dedicated to keeping classical ballet vibrantly alive in our city through community-centered, world-class training, educational and performance experiences for young artists, audiences and professionals.

For further information about Ballet Fantastique and the 2008-2009 performance season, visit Ballet Fantastique’s website at www.balletfantastique.org or call (541) 206-8977.

###