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Ballet Fantastique Takes Their Talent and Innovation to Ashland for 2009 Oregon Shakespeare Festival

EUGENE, Ore- May 15, 2009— Eugene's only chamber-ballet company, Ballet Fantastique, will soon take their artistry and enthusiasm to Ashland, Oregon. The Oregon Shakespeare Festival has invited the ballet troupe to perform *Don Quixote* and other selections from the *Danse en Rouge: Variations in Red* on June 13, 2009 for the opening night of the *Don Quixote* theatrical production run. The small group of dancers, accompanied by Spanish guitarist John Jarvie, will set the night's mood with sophisticated, elegant choreography that's sure to please everyone in attendance.

The saucy, imaginative performance aligns with Ballet Fantastique's mission of keeping classical ballet exciting and relevant. Innovative concepts, such as this, allow Ballet Fantastique to attract and inspire new generations of art audiences.

The *Danse en Rouge* performance set displays the romantic, sensuous side of the ballet company. It begins with *Don Quixote*, an energetic suite full of Spanish bravura that brings the energetic Kitri and the flirtatious Basilio to life. Ballet Fantastique dancers then show off their technical abilities in sparkling, virtuosic variations from the Spanish ballet *Paquita*. The set concludes with beautiful new choreography in collaboration with classical guitarist John Jarvie, who strolls across the stage throughout the set with performances of Spanish composer Francisco Tárrega's hauntingly romantic compositions (with dancer Amelia Unsicker).

"I love the flair and vibrancy of the choreography. Some pieces are sassy and fun, while others are more refined and mysterious. I'm really excited to be able to perform my solos with John Jarvie again. It's always wonderful to be able to work with live musicians," Unsicker said regarding the upcoming festival performance.

As the festival opening draws closer, Ballet Fantastique artistic director, Donna Marisa Bontrager, looks forward to the opportunity to display her dancers' expertise with a wider audience.

"This fun, romantic program—in partnership with one of our favorite musicians, John Jarvie—features Ballet Fantastique at its best, and will be a perfect opener for the Shakespeare Festival's production of *Don Quixote*. The dancers are proud to have been invited to share their artistry, and ready to show a broader Northwest audience what Ballet Fantastique is known for," Donna Bontrager said.

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Eugene guitarist John Jarvie, who partners with Ballet Fantastique a second time for the OSF performance, has been performing for over 30 years. Jarvie believes that the connection one has with a performance is enhanced when art mediums intersect—for a member of the audience as well as the performers.

“Collaboration gives us the opportunity to have a deeper experience of our own art when we see it reflected in another medium,” Jarvie said. He particularly enjoys working with this dance company because “Ballet Fantastique dancers are accomplished professionals, with a special combination of grace and vitality. The joy of their dancing is infectious.”

The Oregon Shakespeare Festival began in 1935 and continues to seek inspiration from the original works of William Shakespeare. The OSF is one of the oldest and largest professional non-profit theaters in the United States and has honorably received an Antoinette Perry (“Tony”) Award in recognition of outstanding achievement in regional theater. During its eight-and-a-half month season, the festival produces eleven plays as well as diverse, complementary performances in other artistic mediums.

Ballet Fantastique executive director and dancer Hannah Bontrager feels fortunate that the dance company has the chance to work with such a distinguished festival.

“We are so excited to expand our touring portfolio with this performance appearance at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival!” Hannah Bontrager said, “Sharing our wonderful dancers with the OSF’s enthusiastic audiences will absolutely be the capstone of a great performance season.”

For further information about Ballet Fantastique and the *Danse en Rouge: Don Quixote and Other Variations in Red* performance, visit Ballet Fantastique’s website at www.balletfantastique.org or call the studio (541) 342-4611. Hannah Bontrager may be reached for further comment on her cell phone at (541) 206-8977 (not for publication, please).