



[www.balletfantastique.org](http://www.balletfantastique.org)  
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Artistic Director Donna Marisa Bontrager

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### **Be Inspired! Ballet Fantastique Debuts the 2009–2010 Season**

EUGENE, Ore- August 24, 2009—Ballet Fantastique, Eugene's chamber ballet company with a roster of six professional dancers and a reputation for intimate, innovative concerts that truly connect audience members with the art form, announces its 2009–2010 season.

The nonprofit organization, co-directed by mother-daughter team Donna and Hannah Bontrager, strives to make arts experiences that are inspiring, innovative and also accessible. 2008–2009 included collaborations and appearances in partnership with the Eugene Symphony, Trio Voronezh, Karin Clarke Gallery, classical guitarist John Jarvie and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, as well as in-school outreach programs at low-income schools and classes at the Academy of Ballet Fantastique (winner of the US Local Business Association's Best of Eugene Award in Dance Instruction for 2008 and 2009).

Ballet Fantastique's 2009–2010 season includes an opening gala at the critically-acclaimed new Café 440, two Hult Center concerts (including the October premiere of composer Jeremy Schropp's Van Gogh tribute, *Night at the Café Terrace*, with live orchestra and Ballet Fantastique's all-new *Tales of Beatrix Potter* ballet this April) and a host of free community concerts across Eugene as part of Ballet Fantastique's Preview Performance Series.

"We've created a season with something to reach and inspire everyone in our city. We love what we do and are so excited to be sharing it with audiences in our city in new, diverse ways!" said Hannah Bontrager, also a dancer with the company.

Season tickets to Ballet Fantastique's two Hult concerts (including post-concert receptions with the artists) are available. Email [info@balletfantastique.org](mailto:info@balletfantastique.org) for details. Individual performance tickets for the Hult concert series only are available through the Hult Center. For more information on all concerts, visit [www.balletfantastique.org/company/events](http://www.balletfantastique.org/company/events).

#### **Debut Fantastique Season-Opener Gala**

**Sunday, Sept. 27, 2009 (5 pm) — Café 440 (440 Coburg Rd, Eugene)**

**Tickets \$40/individual and \$70/couple (VIP tickets start at \$250/couple)**

**Available now at [www.balletfantastique.org/company/events](http://www.balletfantastique.org/company/events) or (541) 342-4611**

Dine on an exclusive menu of hors d'oeuvres from the critically-acclaimed new Café 440 and desserts by the all-new Caramel French Patisserie. Sip wine from Montinore Estate and Giradeet and Eola Hills wineries. Listen to live jazz performed by local musicians David Heyer and Ali Losik. And take in season preview vignettes by Ballet Fantastique dancers while contributing to a local non-profit arts organization that reinvests every donated dollar back into the community through scholarships, performances and education.

Artistic Director Donna Marisa Bontrager looks forward to increasing the network of support for the nonprofit dance organization she founded in 2001.

“Debut Fantastique is an exciting step for us and the Ballet Fantastique board of directors and I are proud to offer this special opportunity for our community to support the ambitious work Ballet Fantastique does on behalf of young artists, audiences and professional dancers. It’s an incredible evening for an important cause,” said Bontrager.

At the gala, guests can increase their contribution by bidding on a themed silent auction basket (deemed *paniers* in the French spirit of the evening), or treat themselves to valet parking. All funds raised will support dancer scholarships for young artists in need, dancer sponsorships for professional dancers, free community concerts, innovative Hult concerts with affordable ticket prices and in-school outreach residencies.

“Fall 2009 is our eighth anniversary and we’re opening it with a splash. We feel so honored that Café 440 is willing to share visions with us—supporting dance scholarships for young people in our city while creating an absolutely unforgettable experience for attendees. The night is going to be just magical,” said Bontrager.

***Visions d’Amour: 10 Ballets in Paris***

**Fri–Sat, Oct. 9–10, 2009 (7:30 pm) — Soreng Theater (Hult Center, Eugene)**

**Tickets \$25–30 (\$14 students; discounts for groups of six or more)**

**Available now at [www.hultcenter.org](http://www.hultcenter.org) or (541) 682-5000**

The Hult performance season will launch with *Visions d’Amour: 10 Ballets in Paris*. This dramatic taste of Paris in ten short ballets is a don’t-miss tour en Francais, from operatic drama to the flair of the Moulin Rouge cabaret.

The most anticipated new ballet of the production is a creative interpretation of Vincent Van Gogh’s *Café Terrace*, bringing the legendary painting alive in the premiere of Eugene composer Jeremy Schropp’s “Night at the Café Terrace” ballet. With original choreography by Donna and Hannah Bontrager, the work will bring together area musicians, dancers, costume designers and artist Rob Adams.

Schropp and Ballet Fantastique director-choreographers Donna and Hannah Bontrager will work 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 23-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," 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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."

The professional dancers at Ballet Fantastique are also looking forward to the special performance partnership.

"'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!"

Other "visions of love" will carry audiences from hauntingly beautiful operatic stories by Jules Massenet, Gabriel Faure and Georges Bizet, to the playful "Papillon" (with guest pianist John Jantzi and choreography by renowned DC-area choreographer Dina Fadayeva) and back to rosy Parisian romances with the music of French chanteuses Edith Piaf and Carla Bruni.

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."

Audience members are invited to meet the dancers, musicians, Ballet Fantastique directors, Schropp and Adams at the Oct. 11 post-concert "Starry Night" reception (additional ticket required—see [www.balletfantastique.org](http://www.balletfantastique.org) for details).

*Visions d'Amour* is sponsored by Comcast.

***Tales of Beatrix Potter (A Ballet)—And Other Childhood Classics***  
**April 2010 — Soreng Theater (Hult Center, Eugene)**  
**Tickets \$20–30 (\$14 students; discounts for groups of six or more)**  
**Available now at [www.hultcenter.org](http://www.hultcenter.org) or (541) 682-5000**

Fancy footwork, colorful costumes, and Ballet Fantastique's contagious energy tell the stories of the mischievous Peter Rabbit, prim Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle, determined Jemima Puddle-Duck (and the Fox who wants to make her into soup!), exuberant Jeremy Fisher (a frog who doesn't like to get wet), silly Squirrel Nutkin, and more. Ballet Fantastique's *Tales of Beatrix Potter (A Ballet)* will be a magical fantasy of a

performance with all new choreography by Donna and Hannah Bontrager—created just for family and youth audiences.

Dancer Amelia Unsicker, who will perform the part of Jemima Puddleduck, says “Beatrix Potter is a fun show that incorporates quirky humor—sure to entertain both children and children at heart.”

All of the choreography features the unique touch of Artistic Director Donna Marisa Bontrager, who brings her architectural background to her work with the dancers. Bontrager’s commissioned work includes critically-acclaimed collaborations with the Oregon Mozart Players (*A Novel Experience*, 2008) and Eugene Symphony (*Carnival of the Animals*, 2008).

*Tales of Beatrix Potter* tickets are \$20–30 for reserved seating, with discounts for students and groups. For information about the concert and to purchase tickets (available January 31), visit [www.hultcenter.org](http://www.hultcenter.org).

Audience members are invited to meet the dancers, learn more through interactive activities and enjoy a light picnic at the post-concert "Peter Rabbit Tea Party" (additional ticket required—see [www.balletfantastique.org](http://www.balletfantastique.org) for details).

*Tales of Beatrix Potter (A Ballet)* and its associated free student matinee (for participating schools during the schoolday) is sponsored by Lane Arts Council, with support from the City of Eugene Cultural Services Division.

### **Preview Performance Series throughout the season brings dance to the community**

Watch for Ballet Fantastique’s professional company dancers all over the community with special appearances at:

- Eugene Celebration (Sunday, Sept. 6 from 3–5 pm)—Ballet Fantastique presents a free educational day of dance with Traduza Dance Company. Sneak peeks at upcoming season repertoire, free mini dance lessons for youth, demonstrations and questions and answers with the dancers and directors. Park Blocks at 8<sup>th</sup> and Oak—Eugene Celebration Community Causeway. Free
- Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art (Saturday, Dec. 5, 2:30–3:15 pm)—Ballet Fantastique dancers sparkle with youth-oriented holiday repertoire and a mini-dance lesson for youth. Free
- Tales of Beatrix Potter at SHOCASE (Thursday, Mar. 18 @ 11:15 am)—Whimsical characters leap off the page into the Hult Center lobby. Free

### **Touring activity**

Stay posted as Ballet Fantastique tours across the Northwest, including appearances with Ballet Rogue (Medford, OR) and as featured performers in Everett, WA (Artist and Lecture Series).

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### **P2D: Passport to Dance**

If you find that you can’t use your Ballet Fantastique tickets, donate them! Let us know that you won’t be able to attend and we’ll be sure that your seats are given to the clients of one of our partner charities, such as United Way or Committed Partners for Youth. Or, purchase Ballet Fantastique P2D tickets and we’ll match your gift. Contact us at [info@balletfantastique.org](mailto:info@balletfantastique.org) for more information.