

board of directors:

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

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Mobile phone (not for publication): (541) 206.8977

Direct email (not for publication): balletfantastique@gmail.com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—MAY 15, 2009

Night at the Café Terrace: Art Rich as the Night is Brought Alive by Ballet Fantastique

EUGENE, Ore- May 15, 2009—Vincent Van Gogh is known for his colorful, passionate, and dramatic paintings. Ballet Fantastique presents a unique ode to his work through the performance *Night at the Café Terrace*: an experience sure to impress long after the dancers and live musicians bring this artist's famous painting to life on the Soreng stage this October.

Night at the Café Terrace continues Ballet Fantastique's reputation for producing innovative, high-caliber collaborations that blend a number of mediums. Ballet Fantastique will premiere new choreography to Eugene composer Jeremy Schropp's original musical score, which dramatizes Van Gogh's painting. This will be the first-ever performance of Schropp's full ballet with dancers. Musicians and theatre students from the University of Oregon and the greater community will also appear on stage in this collaborative world premiere. A Eugene artist will be commissioned to render a mural of Van Gogh's *Night at the Café Terrace*, visually setting the scene for Van Gogh's "characters" in the painting to dance a fun, playful story for audiences.

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," 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."

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

"As a dancer, it's just so much more exciting to be working with live music, interacting with world-class musicians right there on stage. We are privileged to get to perform with a number of groups. But this added element of creating and performing *Night at the Café Terrace*, a unique, brand-new ballet inspired by a painting that we all know and love, will make that dynamic partnership even more compelling," dancer Alonzo Moore, who will perform the lead role of Renaldo, said.

Since the organization's launch in 2003, Ballet Fantastique has balanced artistry, energy, and intimacy to offer performance experiences that truly connect the audience with the dancers. The dance ensemble views collaboration with artists of all forms as a way to breathe life into classical ballet, keeping it relevant for fans of all ages.

In the past, Ballet Fantastique has teamed with the Eugene Symphony, the Trio Voronezh (of international fame) and the Oregon Mozart Players to produce extraordinary and original performances with a Northwest focus. Ballet Fantastique continues to think outside-the-box and create performance themes and partnerships that demonstrate the richness of talent in the region. *Night at the Café Terrace* is one of the most anticipated performances of the company's season, and will likely become part of the standard repertoire that the company tours to other Northwest locations and festivals.

Artistic Director Donna Marisa Bontrager says: "The finished ballet will be 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 Café Terrace* repertoire perfectly aligns with the dance company's Northwest-focused mission.

"This fresh concept of bringing dance inside to 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 the opening production of Ballet Fantastique's 2009-2010 season, currently scheduled for both October 10, 2009 at 7:30 PM and October 11, 2009 at 4 PM at the Hult Center in Eugene.

For further information about Ballet Fantastique and the *Night at the Café Terrace* 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.

###