



CHAMBER COMPANY  
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### **Ballet Fantastique launches their 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season**

1. **Soreng Concert 1: String Theory:** November 20 at 7:30 pm and November 21 at 2:30 pm
2. **Soreng Concert 2: Bossa Brasil:** January 29 at 7:30 pm and January 30 at 2:30 pm
3. **Soreng Concert 3: William Shakespeare's As You Like It:** April 16 at 2:30 and 7:30 pm
4. **Open Barre Series** (open rehearsals and Northwest wine, microbrew, or coffee tasting): Ballet Fantastique's new City Center for Dance (dates and details at [www.balletfantastique.org](http://www.balletfantastique.org))

EUGENE, Ore- August 21, 2010—Ballet Fantastique announces their 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season, a concert series larger in scope and more nuanced in range than ever before. With three spectacular performances in the works, all with live musicians onstage and all featuring new pieces by Ballet Fantastique resident composer Jeremy DeKyle Schropp—as well as two new dancers on its roster—the professional ballet chamber company plans to celebrate their 10th year with a showcase of their best talents.

Mother-daughter director team Donna and Hannah Bontrager created this three-part season to show off Ballet Fantastique's artistic virtuosity and range via their trademark "chamber ballets"—classically-based but innovative performance concepts, presented in a setting that appeals to audiences who want to enjoy a more intimate relationship with the dancers and musicians.

"We feel the upcoming season capitalizes on what makes Ballet Fantastique unique: classical dance with a modern twist. The performances are sophisticated and fun, creative and colorful. We'll be showing off the personalities of each dancer and the musicians. This season is about Ballet Fantastique doing what we're passionate about, doing what we love to do," said Artistic Director Donna Marisa Bontrager.

### **STRING THEORY: NOV 20–21**

The new season launches on November 20th and 21st with *String Theory*, a mixed-repertory program that displays the sophistication and versatility of the company's dancers with works set to cello, violin, piano, saxophone and more. *String Theory* includes something to tease the palette of every lover of string music. On the program: Tongue-in-cheek folk dance set to traditional Irish and Celtic ballads; haunting Gypsy scenes from *The Red Violin*; Luigi Boccherini's warm and resonant "Musica Notturna del Strade di Madrid"; darkly flirtatious Niccolò Paganini for guitar and violin; the flamenco guitar of LA-based Incendio (with whom Ballet Fantastique will be collaborating in 2011–2012); composer Jeremy DeKyle Schropp's virtuosic and playful Bulgarian Dance Suite for piano and saxophone; and even an orchestral version of Metallica's

powerful “Orion,” with exquisite art shots of the constellation subtly lighting the background behind the dancers.

Guest dancers Maria Valerievna Strelchenko and Yuriy Alexandrovich, and choreographer Lyudmila Lvovna Tsvetkova from Irkutsk Music Theater in Eugene’s Russian sister city will join Ballet Fantastique on stage. *String Theory* promises to be a full and wonderfully memorable evening that complements the company’s multifaceted personality and classical Russian roots (the Bontragers’ background is in the Russian Vaganova style, which is highly evident in the dancers’ artistry and technique).

### **BOSSA BRASIL: JAN 29–30**

Following on January 29th and 30th, 2011 is *Bossa Brasil*, a vibrant, colorful and sensual mixed repertory performance. Veteran Ballet Fantastique dancer Amelia Unsicker thinks the show will be a perfect respite from the winter elements.

"I'm really looking forward to performing in *Bossa Brasil* and adding some spice to the viewers' winter season. With the rainy, cold weather of January, everyone could use some fun and fiery flare—and this will definitely be it!" said Unsicker.

The delightful, passionate concert includes jazzy bossa nova, as well as exploring Brazil's American Indian, Portuguese, and African roots. *Bossa Brasil* also shares the brilliant talents of a young Brazilian piano prodigy, Priscilla Dantas, who moved to Eugene in August to train under Dr. Alexandre Dossin at the University of Oregon. Seventeen-year old Dantas will share pieces from her native Brazil while the Ballet Fantastique company brings them visually alive. The performance includes a bossa nova piece set on Ballet Fantastique by Brazilian guest choreographer Valeria Ball—as well as other Brazilian-inspired work created for and set on the company by Donna and Hannah. In this danced tribute to the swaying rhythm, intoxicating color, and vibrant mythologies of Brazilian culture, Ballet Fantastique shows off its artistic virtuosity and range.

### **SHAKESPEARE’S AS YOU LIKE IT: APRIL 16**

The season closes after the much-anticipated Ballet Fantastique spin on one of Shakespeare’s most beloved romantic comedies, *As You Like It*, premiering on April 16th, 2011. A collaboration with celebrated Northwest composer Jeremy DeKyle Schropp, *As You Like It* brings the story of Rosalind and Celia’s adventure to life—in the wild west.

Ballet Fantastique’s seven dancers show off their dramatic prowess in choreography that teases with folk and line dance elements, while Schropp’s score for chamber orchestra (on stage with the dancers) sets toes to tapping with harmonica and banjo. Portland-based folk actor-musician Adam Goldthwaite narrates the play’s central moments to weave the story’s sweet narrative arc.

A Portland-based folk actor-musician, Adam Goldthwaite, will introduce each scene and narrate the play’s central lines to cement the narrative arc—and literally give voice to the story.

“Even with the expressivity of dance, you simply can’t cut a line like ‘all the world’s a stage,’” said Hannah. “So...we chose to integrate it and make this a more multimedia arts experience, with music, theater, and

dance—again calling on our network of Northwest artists to help us accomplish this. This will absolutely be a stunning finale to our season.”

Ballet Fantastique’s resident composer Jeremy DeKyle Schropp looks forward to the unveiling of this innovative performance.

“Working with the dancers of Ballet Fantastique continues to be a pleasure and an honor. Our upcoming collaboration, recasting Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* in the wild west, will combine folk and bluegrass elements with traditional instrumental forces to create a truly unique and playful work that is sure to entertain people of all ages,” said Schropp.

This sweet, playful finale to Ballet Fantastique’s 10th anniversary season will have audiences of all ages charmed and transported to the wild west with Shakespearean style and wit—and pointe shoes!

## **GENERAL SEASON INFO**

All performances will be presented in the intimate Soreng Theater at Eugene’s Hult Center for the Performing Arts. Season tickets are on sale now through the Hult Center Box Office, with discounts for youth, seniors, and young professionals (under 30). Please visit [www.hultcenter.org](http://www.hultcenter.org) or call 541-682-5000 for performance details and ticketing information.

For a unique, behind-the-scenes look at Ballet Fantastique’s productions join the dancers, choreographers and musicians for “Open Barre” sessions at their new downtown City Center for Dance on 960 Oak Street in Eugene (opening September 2010). On select Wednesdays and Thursdays, the artists invite the community to preview the new performances in progress. Each event will feature a local coffee, microbrew or wine for tasting. For dates and admission fees see the Ballet Fantastique website, <http://www.balletfantastique.org>.

“‘Open Barre’ is Ballet Fantastique’s way of breaking down some traditional barriers between the audience and the artistic process, getting them into the work space and having fun! We really hope to attract young professionals especially, give them something artsy and “big-city” to do during the workweek—a reason to dress up a little, mingle and fall in love with ballet, and Ballet Fantastique,” said Hannah.

Also this season, Ballet Fantastique welcomes two new additions to the professional dance troupe: Krislyn Ann Wessel and Jordyn Richter. Wessel grew up in Idaho Falls, Idaho. She studied dance at The Ballet Society and Brigham Young University before moving to New York City to train and perform with Ajkun Ballet Theater.

“I am so excited for my new Oregon adventures and the opportunity to dance with such an innovative and inspiring company. It is definitely going to be a good year,” said Wessel.

Richter joins the company from Columbus, Ohio where she most recently danced with BalletMet Columbus, and also performs regularly with the prestigious Suzanne Farrell Ballet at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC.

For further information about Ballet Fantastique and their 10th Anniversary season events, please visit the Ballet Fantastique website at [www.balletfantastique.org](http://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](mailto:balletfantastique@gmail.com) (not for publication, please).

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