

BALLET *Fantastique*

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Ballet Fantastique launches their 2011–2012 11th Anniversary Season: **DARING**

QUICK FACTS:

- Incendio**: Saturday, October 22nd at 7:30 and Sunday, October 23rd at 2:30
- Arabian Nights**: Saturday, January 28th at 7:30
- Cinderella**: Saturday, May 12th at 7:30 and Sunday, May 13th at 2:30
- Tickets on sale now at the Hult Center Box Office, 541-682-5000 or www.hultcenter.org. Evening series season subscriptions start at \$75 for all three performances
- Discounts for students, A List (22-32), seniors, and groups

Ballet Fantastique, the Eugene chamber ballet company with a flair for innovation, announces their 2011-2012 season, *DARING*. Wrought with tales of exotic worlds brought to life through original choreography and live music, the series promises to enchant audiences more than ever before.

Since its inception 11 years ago, Ballet Fantastique has provided the area with richly textured performances. Last season included vibrant spins on traditional folk dance set to a survey of international music, along with the first-ever ballet adaptation of Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (Ballet Fantastique's version also gave the story a wild west spin). Co-directors and mother-daughter team Donna and Hannah Bontrager continue to revolutionize ballet while showcasing the company's talents in the upcoming 2011–2012 season, which will also include tours to Italy and the Caribbean in summer 2012.

Artistic Director Donna Marisa Bontrager says of the season: "I'm really excited about BFan's upcoming season. Working with contemporary live musicians Incendio and Shelley and Cal James will be such an inspiration for new choreography. And I've always wanted to do something with an ancient Far East theme like our *Arabian Nights*. So I'll have plenty on my artistic plate to keep me creating around the clock!"

Incendio: October 22-23, 2011

The new season launches on October 22nd and 23rd with *Incendio*, titled after the Latin-jazz fusion guitar trio of the same name. Joining Ballet Fantastique from L.A., Incendio weaves Latin, Middle Eastern and flamenco influences into a brilliant display of virtuosity. The band tours extensively across the U.S., and has been to Oregon before, though never at the Hult Center. In their first-ever collaboration with ballet, Incendio promises dramatic, virtuosic live music to complement all-original Ballet Fantastique choreography.

Incendio's music is rooted in myriad sources: Bass guitarist Liza Carbé's flamenco and classical guitar training as well as her Sicilian ancestry, Jean-Pierre Durand's Peruvian heritage, Jim Stubblefield's European travels and musical collaborations with Kuwaiti oud maestro Waleed Hamad, not to mention Durand's penchant for rock-style dramatics and Stubblefield's lightning-fingered jazz-fusion mastery.

"We heard Incendio play last year," says dancer and co-producer Hannah Bontrager. "We knew that we just *had* to get them on stage with us. The experience of hearing them live is just electric. Liza, Jim, and JP were open to trying something new in a collaboration with a ballet company—we are so honored and excited to bring this group on stage with us!"

Ballet Fantastique will open the concert with an incredibly varied set of virtuosic favorites from its original repertoire.

"The first act is comprised of BFan's top audience favorites including 'Daphnis and Chloe,' 'Tango Forte,' and 'Orion'—pieces that our audience members keep begging us to perform again," said company dancer Leanne Mizzone in anticipation of the two-show season opener.

In Act II, Ballet Fantastique's critically-acclaimed company dancers will set the stage on fire with all-original choreography by Donna and Hannah Bontrager to Incendio pieces, including "Tango Para Abel," "Misterioso," "Magie Noir," and "Viheula," to name just a few.

"The show is varied, but the common thread is this fiery virtuosity," says co-producer and choreographer Donna Marisa Bontrager. "Our goal is always that our audience members are talking about the performance for days after, and this show will be no exception."

Note: Band members Jean-Pierre Durand and Liza Carbé will be available for comment. More information about Incendio is available on their website, www.incendiband.com.

Arabian Nights: January 28, 2012

Ballet Fantastique's winter concert, *Arabian Nights* continues the daring thread of this all-original season. Inspired by the ancient treasury *1,001 Arabian Nights*, Scheherazade will "tell" her stories—through all-original dance choreography, lavish costumes, and an exotic set that will be a feast for the eyes.

The literary work *1,001 Arabian Nights* is a collection of Middle Eastern and South Asian stories and folk tales compiled in Arabic during the Islamic Golden Age. The work as we have it was collected over many centuries by various authors, translators and scholars across the Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa.

Ballet Fantastique's performance will weave together a handful of these tales of adventure, fantastic imagination, justice and intrigue and tell them through all-original choreography by Donna and Hannah Bontrager.

"This ballet is going to be absolutely mesmerizing," says Hannah Bontrager. "Our set designers are already starting to build the columns and to select the silks for the pavilion tents. And the dancers are excited for the challenge of some very technical choreography and of embodying their characters."

Guest artists will join Ballet Fantastique for *Arabian Nights*, which also includes a youth education outreach

matinee on January 26 for area middle and high schoolers.

Cinderella: A Rock Opera Ballet: May 12-13, 2012

The season closes on May 12th and 13th with *Cinderella: A Rock Opera Ballet*, a groovy take on the classic fairy tale. The year is 1966, with “Cindy’s” story told through energetic dance and toe-tapping '60s hits.

Satin Love lead singers Shelley and Cal James and their band (complete with backup singers) rock live on stage with the nostalgic sounds of The Supremes, The Ronettes, The Temptations, The Beatles, and more. Shelley James thinks the show's unique twist promises something for everyone to enjoy.

"We think that the audience is going to be inspired by our re-imagined arrangements of these favorite '60s songs. This is the decade that we were born in. Now 45 years later, we have the musical joy of revisiting this music with fresh ears and performing it through our interpretations along with Ballet Fantastique's brilliant art direction. Our *Cinderella: A Rock Opera Ballet* will no doubt bring big smiles to the audience's faces."

Ballet Fantastique's company dancers will energize the stage with this light-hearted, fun rock opera ballet.

The Season Also Includes

Open Barre, Ballet Fantastique's unique Wednesday night open rehearsal series at the City Center for Dance (960 Oak, downtown Eugene), is back by popular demand. For a suggested donation of \$5-15, guests can enjoy a tasting of local wine from Pyrenees Vineyards and Wine Cellars (wine is also available for purchase by the glass), hors d'oeuvres, and a one-hour open rehearsal with Donna Marisa Bontrager and the dancers. (Musicians also participate in some Open Barre rehearsals; check the Ballet Fantastique website for details.)

- *Incendio* Open Barre: Wednesday, October 12, 2011 from 6:30-8 pm
- *Arabian Nights* Open Barre: Wednesday, January 18, 2012 from 6:30-8 pm
- *Cinderella: A Rock Opera Ballet* Open Barre: Wednesday, May 2, 2012 from 6:30-8 pm