



DONNA MARISA BONTRAGER, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
HANNAH BONTRAGER-GWARTNEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
60 E. 10th AVE., EUGENE, OREGON 97401 – 541.342.4611
www.balletfantastique.org

Contact Information:

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Hannah Bontrager, Ballet Fantastique Executive Director

Mobile phone/direct email (not for publication): (541) 206.8977, balletfantastique@gmail.com

CINDERELLA: A ROCK OPERA BALLET SET IN 1964 QUICK FACTS:

- Date:** Saturday May 12 at 7:30 pm and Sunday, May 13 at 2:30 pm
- All-original choreography** by Ballet Fantastique mother-daughter co-directors/producers Donna and Hannah Bontrager
- Collaborators:** Shelley & Cal James and band will join Ballet Fantastique on stage with 14 original arrangements of 60s billboard hits. Guest dancer Frederick Davis from Dance Theater of Harlem in NYC will dance the role of Prince Charming.
- Tickets:** \$27-33, with discounts for students, youth, seniors, and groups of 6 or more. Hult Center Box Office: 541-682-5000 or hultcenter.org
- More info:** www.balletfantastique.org

Rock opera version of *Cinderella* premieres by Oregon's innovative professional chamber ballet company

Eugene, OR—Imagine a version of *Cinderella* where the setting is 1964, the ball is prom, the dance moves are the Twist and the Mashed Potato (“It’s the latest/It’s the greatest”), and Cinderella goes by “Cindy.” Ballet Fantastique mother-daughter co-directors and choreographers Donna Marisa and Hannah Bontrager have. They’re calling their version of *Cinderella* a “Rock Opera Ballet,” premiering it on May 12–13 at the Hult Center as the closing concert of Ballet Fantastique’s 2011-2012 DARING season.

Donna and Hannah have invited musicians Shelley and Cal James of the Northwest-famed band Satin Love Orchestra to arrange fourteen hits from the early 60’s for this all-original production of *Cinderella*.

“We are thrilled and honored to be working with Shelley and Cal on this exciting, challenging artistic endeavor. They are world-class musicians and so much fun to collaborate with!” says Donna, Artistic Director of Ballet Fantastique.

Shelley adds, "As musicians and songwriters, we strive to put a uniquely 'Shelley & Cal' flavor on any cover songs that we arrange, and so we think it's a perfectly daring match to be working with Ballet Fantastique on the 60's decade of groovy music for their creative twist on the *Cinderella* classic!" Shelley and Cal and their band (complete with back-up singers) will perform live on stage with Ballet Fantastique's chamber company when *Cinderella: A Rock Opera Ballet* premieres at the Hult Center, OR in May 2012.

The dancers of Ballet Fantastique are equally excited about the innovative collaboration. Leanne Mizzoni, who dances the part of the Fairy Godmother, said, "Performing onstage with live music gives you a rush, a thrill. It helps me give me more energy and makes me want to do really well because the musicians are there giving one-hundred percent and trying to match what they do is always fun and challenging." Act I opens with "Big Girls Don't Cry." The Prince's mom tells him that "You Can't Hurry Love," and the stepsisters will be dreaming of the ball in their nighties to "Mr. Sandman." For each of the show's fourteen pieces, Shelley and Cal have created an original arrangement that pays tribute to the original 60's hit, and Donna and Hannah have created choreography that references movement from the period (including the Twist and the Mashed Potato), while still challenging the Ballet Fantastique company dancers' classical technique and virtuosity.

"The choreography is playful, dynamic, and really hard!" says Ashley Bontrager, dancing the part of one of the stepsisters. "It never stops!"

Frederick Davis of Dance Theater of Harlem, who will dance the role of Prince Charming, said, "I know it's going to be an amazing performance, putting this unique twist on Cinderella. It forces the artists to use their imaginations and find a way to create this new style." He is looking forward to the performance because it will not only challenge his dancing technique, it will also broaden his style. "I would love to connect with Ballet Fantastique on future productions, they have been great to work with."

Shelley and Cal's band will include: Joe Weber (lead electric guitars/co-producer), Rica Wright Weber (background vocals/percussion), Tom Teutsch (rhythm & backing guitars), Jim Reinking (drums), Shelley James (lead vocals & acoustic guitar), Cal James (bass guitar and background vocals), and Jennifer Scurlock (background vocals).

Ballet Fantastique, a chamber company comprised of under 10 professional dancers from across the US, has made a name for itself in these kinds of out-of-the-box contemporary story ballets: recent productions by Donna and Hannah Bontrager include Shakespeare's *As You Like It* as a wild west ballet, *Arabian Nights*, and a dramatization of Van Gogh's "Café Terrace at Night" painting, *Love at the Café Terrace*, with a live 25-part orchestra and original score by Northwest composer Jeremy DeKyle Schropp. Ballet Fantastique was founded in 2000. The 2011–2012 "Daring" season has included *Incendio* (with the LA-based band) and the sold-out *Arabian Nights*. *Incendio* toured to the Seattle area in March 2012, and the company's first international tour was announced this year (*As You Like It: A Wild West Ballet* will be performed in San Benedetto, Italy, in July 2013).

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