

BALLET *ballet like you've never seen it before.* FANTASTIQUE

**DONNA MARISA BONTRAGER
+ HANNAH BONTRAGER**
DIRECTORS + CHOREOGRAPHER-PRODUCERS
www.balletfantastique.org | 541-342-4611
960 oak | downtown eugene, or 97401
get social with us: facebook | twitter | youtube | pinterest | flickr

For Immediate Release: September 21, 2017

CONTACT

Hannah Bontrager, Ballet Fantastique Executive Director
Mobile phone/direct email (not for publication): 541-206-8977; hbontrager@balletfantastique.org

FALL 2017 ALL ORIGINAL BALLET FANTASTIQUE CONTEMPORARY BALLET WITH LIVE MUSIC

Contact Information:

Donna Marisa Bontrager + Hannah Bontrager, Choreographer-Producers: 541-206-8977; hbontrager@balletfantastique.org
For high-resolution images of the production, please email events@balletfantastique.org

QUICK FACTS:

- **WHAT:** Ballet Fantastique's original contemporary ballet, *Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, with LIVE music from Dréos and Eliot Grasso, and the Gerry Rempel Ensemble
- **CONCEPT + CHOREOGRAPHY:** All-original, by choreographer-producers Donna Marisa and Hannah Bontrager
- **EUGENE PERFORMANCES:** Friday Oct. 27 and Saturday Oct. 28 at 7:30 pm; Sunday, Oct. 29 at 2:30 pm
- All shows in the Soreng Theater, Hult Center. Tickets \$29-49 (students /youth \$18-24), with \$5off regularly priced tickets for groups of 6+. On sale now through the Hult Box Office: 541-682-5000 or www.balletfantastique.org

***Legend of Sleepy Hollow:* BFan's wickedly funny, sumptuous new take on a classic American legend, where romantic comedy meets superstition**

Ballet Fantastique presents its all-original premiere original *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*—as a quirky, sensuous, folksy adaptation of Washington Irving's classic tale of superstition and rivalry. Choreographers Donna and Hannah Bontrager bring Ballet Fantastique's signature wit and verve to this sumptuous and all-original romantic comedy spoof, fusing Colonial American whimsy with electric guitar and violin music as would-be hero Ichabod Crane confronts his desires, fears, and—of course—the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow, in pursuit of his love, Katrina.

"This project is perfect for Halloween weekend," says Donna Bontrager. "It's about superstition, imagination. The people in Sleepy Hollow are quirky and tangible—they're real people with superstitions, drama. They love to dance, they love a story. This project—one of the earliest pieces of American fiction—takes our audience back in time to a part of our heritage. Back then, if you wanted to talk to someone, you had to sit down, face to face." Donna feels that all the characters in this ballet are real, and tangible. "You could touch them, you can relate to them. They're human, and they are who they are—with all their quirks and superstitions. They also love to party and they love to tell stories—so we have a lot of parties in this show!

Musical collaborators Dréos (with internationally acclaimed musician Eliot Grasso and his hand-picked musical ensemble) and Gerry Rempel Ensemble provide decadent and playful new rock and world music, as well as new original compositions created especially for this inimitable new romantic comedy ballet.

“This is a collaboration with Ballet Fantastique's team and musical leaders Eliot Grasso and Gerry Rempel, and both of their styles are very apparent,” says Donna. “The music in this project is a key of making the story our own, unique Ballet Fantastique project. Other dance companies across the world have created versions of "Sleepy Hollow," but the music we've chosen with our team is incredibly ranging. Both Gerry and Eliot have their own styles as artists: Eliot can play ancient music that goes back in time--like what you would hear at a frolic in colonial days. Meanwhile, Gerry can play Paganini on electric guitar. There are also new pieces in our score that have been created just for this contemporary ballet premiere.”

Dréos combines the blazing piping of Eliot Grasso, virtuosic fiddling of Brandon Vance, and powerhouse accompaniment of Glen Waddell. They offer listeners exciting, handcrafted music in a living tradition, and bring audiences and students into a centuries-old cultural-artistic dialogue. Dréos has been engaging listeners in North America and in Europe since its inception.

Gerry Rempel is a resident composer, arranger, musician, and Music Director for Ballet Fantastique. Mr. Rempel's nine-piece group, Gerry Rempel Jazz Syndicate, arranged and performed, and composed two pieces for the music for the Ballet Fantastique roaring 20's Parisian *Pride and Prejudice* in 2013 and 2016. Mr. Rempel also composed for the Ballet Fantastique *String Theory* premiere in 2010, played guitars and composed “The Fall of Vashti” for the Ballet Fantastique premiere of *The Book of Esther: A Rock Gospel Ballet* in 2014, and spearheaded the collaboration with Eliot Grasso of Dréos for the Ballet Fantastique premiere of *Dragon & the Night Queen: Celtic Stories* in 2016. He also composed “The Dragon's Lair” for *Dragon & the Night Queen: Celtic Stories*.

“Performing with and composing for Ballet Fantastique's productions provides a rare opportunity to draw from many diverse musical styles and traditions, both modern and ancient, to help fulfill the vision the BF team has for each unique production,” says Gerry. “Whatever the stylistic combinations, emotional connection and authenticity is a bottom line with me when writing for a scene.”

Eliot notes, "Dréos is thrilled to be collaborating on such a stylistically diverse musical offering to complement BFan's new dramatization of this compelling American classic."

On the choreographic aesthetic, Donna explains, “We're drawing on folk and character dance, but giving these influences a contemporary, sensuous edge. There's a range of style from quaint-yet-sophisticated colonial-inspired movement for the party celebration scenes, to sensuous movement to hypnotic, rhythmic pieces of music. Some of the music has driving, compelling--almost tribal--rhythm, some of the music is haunting, some of the melody lines feel almost Native American in heritage. There's even sometimes an ancient whisper hint.”

The ballet features Ballet Fantastique soloist dancers Natanael Leal in the role of Ichabod Crane, Ashley Bontrager as Katrina Van Tassel, Jim Ballard as Baltus Van Tassel, Carolin Koeplin as Mrs. Van Tassel, and Gustavo Ramirez is Brom Bones and the Headless Horseman. The cast numbers 20 artists from Eugene and around the world, as well as 8 musicians.

Tickets are available in person at the Hult Center or online at balletfantastique.org.

###