

BALLET FANTASTIQUE

AN ALL-ORIGINAL
DANCE THEATER
PREMIERE

Of evermore

WORLD PREMIERE: OCTOBER 2019 //
HULT CENTER // EUGENE, OREGON

Welcome

Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849) • With his work, he influenced U.S. presidents (including Abraham Lincoln), international movements (including Dostoevsky, the school of psychological realism, the French Symbolists of the late 19th century—and in turn the entire direction of modern literature), and innumerable works of art (including...the entirely new work of dance theater you're about to see). Upon his death (which occurred under mysterious circumstances), he was effectively smeared as a drug-addicted depressive by his one-time friend and literary executor, R.W. Griswold, whose libelous obituary of Poe was published in the *New York Times* and picked up by newspapers across the country. It worked: Ask your friends what their first thought is when you say "Poe." We're now reclaiming Poe's stories in dance theater, because we think they're worth telling. Here are a few reasons why.

What we know: The orphan son of two actors, Edgar Poe was raised by John Allan, a prosperous Richmond exporter who never legally adopted him. He graduated from UVA and West Point, spent time in the Army (while his true life passion was to be a poet), and married his (awfully young) cousin, Virginia, in 1836...she died of tuberculosis in 1847. Poe's analytical method is practiced and evident both in his work as a creative author and as a critic of the works of his contemporaries. As Ballet Fantastique creatives, Poe's stories felt like a perfect match. Indeed, Poe's self-declared intent wasn't to create literature that was utilitarian: He believed fiercely in artistic idealism, using the chief requisites of pure aestheticism and literary formalism to write something real and new. Poe shows that through the (exquisitely) calculated use of language, one can express—though always imperfectly, he says—a subjective vision of truth and the essential condition of human existence.

There's another way to say this. As Ballet Fantastique dancer (and the Raven in tonight's ballet) Carolin Koepplin says so well: "Not all ballets should be *Swan Lake* and the *Nutcracker*...about princes and princesses, and the expectation that you'll live happily ever after...Poe writes about a more complex life experience. Sometimes you need someone to sit with you in the dark." ("Quoth the Raven," indeed.)

We've chosen five of our favorite Poe stories and poems to tell tonight through BFan's inimitable and #influencer signature mix of dance, theater, and a handpicked score of live music. We hope that you enjoy this new Ballet Fantastique world premiere (or five) as much as we've enjoyed bringing it to life—and death—for you.

— Donna & Hannah

THE Bfan CREATIVES
concept, choreography, production
DONNA MARISA + HANNAH BONTRAGER

music
composers **Peter Gundry (Australia), Lucas King (UK) + Rachmaninoff, Satie, Khachaturian**
original arrangements for Ballet Fantastique's live musician team by **Nathan Farrington (LA Opera)**

libretto
Donna Marisa + Hannah Bontrager
Deborah Speer

WITH GRATITUDE TO
ASSISTANT TO THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
JESSICA JAYE MACKINSON
+ THE DANCERS OF BALLET FANTASTIQUE
FOR THEIR INCREDIBLE ARTISTIC VOICES
+ INSPIRATION.

live music

Elizabeth Dorman piano
Sergei Teleshev accordion
Dale Bradley cello, tambourine
Garrett Davis live mix sound effects

featuring

Edgar Allan Poe Alastair Morley Jaques

research support

Dr. Barbara Mossberg (UO)
Eleanor Wakefield (UO)
Deborah Speer
Genevieve Speer

references/ inspiration

BFan's "Annabel Lee" death scene is inspired by Sir Frederick Ashton's 1963 "Marguerite & Armand," one of the greatest death scenes of all time // "Fall of the House of Usher" aesthetic drawn from Roger Corman's 1960 *Fall of the House of Usher* cult classic film (with Vincent Price) // Gustavo was inspired in his interpretation of Roderick Usher by Joaquin Phoenix's *The Joker* (2019) // "Masque of the Red Death" references the Stanford Viennese Ball Opening Committee waltzes by Joachim De Lombaert and Kseniya Charova // Inspiration for the aesthetic for "The Cask of Amontillado" from Mikhail Fokine's "Carnaval" pas de trois and twisted from *Romeo & Juliet*

Story Guide

a dance theater world premiere from
BALLET FANTASTIQUE

Act One

MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH (PUBLISHED 1842)

Our audience finds themselves in the midst of the Red Death, which has long devastated our country—with blood as its avatar and its seal. But Prince Prospero is happy and dauntless and sagacious. While his dominions are half depopulated, he summons to his presence his hale and light-hearted friends from among the nobles of his kingdom to his castellated abbeys, where they will lock themselves in and away from the peasants and the Red Death for a ball of unusual magnificence, proceeding through many entertainments and into many colored rooms, one after the next.

Join your fellow revelers in the Red Room.

. brief musical pause, as we compose the next chapter .

FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER (PUBLISHED 1839)

SCENE 1 // Our narrator has received a letter from his boyhood friend, Roderick Usher. As relayed in the letter, Roderick has been increasingly afflicted by a disease of the mind; he has written to his friend, our narrator, asking for help. It is known by all that year upon year, only one member of the House of Usher survives. Upon his arrival at the House, the narrator is greeted by the keepers, who lead him through the dark rooms of the fallen mansion.

SCENE 2 // The narrator meets his friend Roderick suffers from an acuteness of the senses. Roderick, who hasn't left the House in years, tells the narrator of his consumptive fear that he will die and attributes part of his illness to the fact that his sister, Madeline, suffers from catalepsy—she is consumed with frequent seizures where she appears temporarily immobilized. Roderick and Madeline are twins and share some sort of deep and supernatural, probably extrasensory, bond. Roderick is certain that Madeline will also soon die. The narrator tries to cheer them with the music and literature.

The House of Usher is powerfully sentient. Roderick sees things that the narrator cannot.

SCENE 3 // Madeline dances in the parlor and then—as Roderick predicted, and as he now declares, she dies. Roderick asks the narrator to help him entomb her body deep in the walls and catacombs of the mansion.

SCENE 4 // A week later, on a dark and stormy night, Edgar and Usher find themselves unable to sleep. They decide to pass away the scary night by reading a book. As the narrator reads the text aloud, all the sounds from the story they read can be heard resounding from below the mansion. Usher becomes increasingly possessed with even more fear—he is convinced that they have buried Madeline alive and that she is coming back.

. intermission . 20 minutes .

New for you this season: Hult Center concourse-level bar is open.

Decadent handmade confections for season subscribers by Euphoria Chocolate (upstairs)

Custom drink special: Raven's Blood (\$8) and William Rose Wines—Demon Bird

—drinks welcome in the theater.

Fevermore

Dancers/Characters Guide

Masque of the Red Death

Prince Prospero

Gabriel Ritzmann

Princesses

Ashley Bontrager

Madeline Gambino

Mimes

Jim Ballard

Carolyn Koeplin

Sophia MacMillan

Ladies

Brooke Bero

Isabella Fernandes

Taylor Harrison

Jenavieve Hernandez

Plague Peasants & Children

Phoebe Green, LilyAnn Haight,

London Pendleton, Marina Turner

Delancey Shultz, Louella Voegli

Lindsey Wingard, Louella Voegli

Red Death

Gustavo Ramirez

Angels of Death

Madeline Driver

Tracy Fuller

Fall of the House of Usher

Edgar (the Speaker)

Jim Ballard

Roderick Usher

Gustavo Ramirez

Madeline Usher

Carolyn Koeplin

Keepers

Jenavieve Hernandez

Sophia MacMillan

Act Two

ANNABEL LEE (PUBLISHED 1849)

“Annabel Lee” is the last complete poem composed by Poe. Like many of Poe’s poems, it explores the theme of the death of a beautiful woman. Debate continues over who, if anyone, was the inspiration for “Annabel Lee.” Though many women have been suggested, Poe’s wife Virginia Eliza Clemm Poe is one of the more credible candidates. Written in 1849, it was not published until shortly after Poe’s death that same year.

. brief musical pause, as we compose the next chapter .

THE RAVEN (PUBLISHED 1845)

Poe’s narrative “The Raven” is oft-noted for its musicality, stylized language, and supernatural atmosphere. With complex poetic meter, internal rhyme and alliteration, it tells of a talking Raven’s mysterious visit to a distraught lover, tracing the man’s slow fall into madness. The poem makes use of folk, mythological, religious, and classical references and was beloved by Abraham Lincoln, who carried a worn copy of it in his pocket on speech tours of the U.S. in the final years of the Civil War. Publication of “The Raven” made Poe popular in his lifetime, although it did not bring him much financial success. It remains one of the most famous poems ever written.

. brief musical pause, as we compose the next chapter .

THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO (PUBLISHED 1846)

SCENE 1 // We imagine the narrator, Montresor, on his deathbed. He confesses to the Contessa, his Lady, an untold story regarding his old friend, Fortunato.

SCENE 2 // Montresor takes us back in time, many years ago in the madness of a Venetian Carnival season—when Fortunato has mortally insulted him and Montresor has vowed vengeance in return. Montresor tells that he maintained an appearance of good will towards Fortunato...and that he decided to exploit Fortunato’s love of fine wines.

SCENE 3 // During the flashback, Montresor finds Fortunato in the streets and invites him to try a sample of sherry, which he has acquired and wishes to confirm as Amontillado. Fortunato is surprised and excited to be asked to help taste the special sherry, and insists on accompanying Montresor to the vaults to test it. Montresor offers a (token) protest, saying that the vaults are full of nitre, but the latter insists. They bid goodbye to the Lady, and Montresor leads Fortunato through the streets.

SCENE 4 // The passageway of the Montresor catacombs is dark and damp, causing Fortunato to cough. Montresor offers him a sip of Medoc wine. Montresor offers to call for someone else to taste the Amontillado. Fortunato insist that they keep going and toasts to the dead. Montresor toasts to Fortunato’s long life. Montresor leads Fortunato to a small, deep crypt, the end of which is lined with human remains. The light from the lantern is dim. Montresor claims the niche to be the location of the Amontillado. Fortunato walks drunkenly inside; then ties Fortunato up. Montresor begins to wall in the niche, with Fortunato inside.

Fortunato revives with a moan from his drunken state, laughing weakly and asking Montresor to end the joke, shouting, “For the love of God, Montresor!” but the latter mocks him, and Fortunato ceases to speak, despite Montresor’s calls. The only thing Montresor can hear as he lays the last brick is the jingling of the bells on Fortunato’s Carnival costume. Montresor’s heart grows sick, which he blames on the damp catacombs. He reconstructs the pile of bones and returns to the party on the street. He tells us that no mortal has disturbed the stones for the last fifty years. *In pace requiescat.*

Evermore

Dancers/Characters Guide

Annabel Lee

The Speaker

Gustavo Ramirez

Annabel Lee

Ashley Bontrager

Seraphs

Brooke Bero

Tracy Fuller

Madeline Gambino

Taylor Harrison

Jenavieve Hernandez

Carolyn Koeplin

The Raven

The Poet

Gabriel Ritzmann

Lenore

Madeline Gambino

The Raven

Carolyn Koeplin

Cask of Amontillado

Montresor

Jim Ballard

Contessa, his lady

Fortunato

Gustavo Ramirez

Girl in Red

Carolyn Koeplin

Revelers

Brooke Bero

Madeline Driver

Madeline Gambino

Phoebe Green

Jenavieve Hernandez

Sophia MacMillan

Arabella Tan

Marina Turner

BALLET FANTASTIQUE

Production/Design Team

featuring dozens of original commissions from local artists

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|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | Donna Marisa Bontrager |
| ARTISTIC OPERATIONS SUPPORT | Hannah Bontrager |
| <i>Research, libretto, and artistic support</i> | Deborah Speer |
| COSTUME DESIGN VISION | Donna Marisa Bontrager |
| COSTUME DESIGN TEAM | Allison Ditson/Allihalla, Noelle Guetti Jonna Hayden/J. Hayden Creative |
| BFAN WARDROBE MISTRESS | Andrea Taggart |
| HEADPIECES | Mitra DeMirza, Gabriel Ritzmann, Andrea Taggart |
| CUSTOM JEWELRY | Gabriel Ritzmann |
| BFAN SET/PROPERTIES MASTER | Mike Ricker |
| SETS/PROPS ARTIST | Kelle DeForrest |
| <i>Sets & Props Support</i> | <i>Davis Wingard, Chris Michael, Nico Noga, Dave Pendleton</i> |
| LIGHTING DESIGN | Donna Marisa Bontrager, Caroline Barnes |
| STAGE MANAGER | Greg Hopper-Moore |
| PRODUCTION MANAGER | Hannah Bontrager |
| BACKDROPS, SOFT GOODS | Theatreworld Backdrops, Backdrops Fantastic |
| HOSPITALITY SUPPORT | Sue McClelland, Andrea Taggart, Dianna Pounder Polly Ashworth and Rob Horner |
| PROMO PHOTOGRAPHY | Bob Williams, Stephanie Urso |
| 19–20 SEASON POINTE SHOE SPONSOR | Dianna Pounder, Bfan Angel |
| MARKETING | The Gilmore Agency, Hannah Bontrager, Gabriel Ritzmann |
| GRAPHIC DESIGN | Hannah Bontrager, Gabriel Ritzmann |
| FRONT of HOUSE | Ballet Fantastique Guild, Damon Garner (event planner), Euphoria Chocolate |
| VIP RECEPTION SPONSOR | Oregon Wine LAB + William Rose Wines Damon Garner (event planner), Sheild Catering |
| OPEN BARRE | Dr. Barbara Mossberg (UO), Sheild Catering, Oregon Wine LAB + William Rose Wines, Evenfall Cider, Celebrations Rentals |

LIZ DORMAN — PIANO: Praised by the *San Francisco Chronicle* for her “crisp, brightly finished” playing and her “elegance and verve,” Elizabeth received the Father Merlet Award from Pro Musicis and was a finalist in the Leipzig International Bach Competition. Recent appearances also include those with Leipzig Chamber Orchestra and Folsom Lake Symphony, solo recitals in WA, CA, and NY, chamber music performances with principal players from the LA and NY Philharmonics, as well as members of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Elizabeth is a member of New York’s Bridge Arts Ensemble. Elizabeth was an Artist in Residence at Banff and has also appeared at summer festivals including Tanglewood, Sarasota, Aspen, Toronto, Icicle Creek, and her live performances have been nationally broadcast on public radio. She has appeared as a soloist with orchestra in San Francisco’s Davies Symphony Hall, Stanford’s Bing Concert Hall, Leipzig’s Hochschule für Musik, Walnut Creek’s Leshner Center for the Arts, San Francisco’s Herbst Theater, and at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Elizabeth was also winner of the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra Concerto Competition, the Ross McKee competition, and the California Young Artist’s Beethoven Competition. She holds her PhD in music from Stony Brook University. A native of San Francisco, Elizabeth began her training at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

NATHAN FARRINGTON — ORIGINAL ARRANGEMENTS: Nate is a LA-based bassist, singer, and composer. He regularly appears in the bass sections of many of America’s top orchestras, including the LA Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony, the New York Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, the East Coast Chamber Orchestra, and the Seattle Symphony. Nate was recently named the Principal Bass of the LA Opera Orchestra, and has appeared at the Marlboro Music Festival, the Aspen Music Festival, the Olympic Music Festival, ChamberFest Cleveland, and at the Da Camera Society.

Special thanks

Donna and Hannah wish to thank the artists, designers, and dancers of Ballet Fantastique for their incredible artistic, creative, and theatrical contributions to the making of this original ballet.

Our angels

To the artists and everyone listed at left, for their profound investment in the creation of new art—and...

BFAN’S DEDICATED BOARD OF DIRECTORS; BFAN’S INCREDIBLE BUSINESS PARTNERS; BFAN’S AMAZING ACADEMY FAMILIES; THE GENEROUS, GRACIOUS, AND LONG-SUFFERING PARTNERS OF OUR ARTISTS; OUR ARTIST PARTNERS, WHO ALWAYS GO ABOVE AND BEYOND; ALPHA IT; ANCORA PUBLISHING; ATTIC MEDIA; BANNER BANK; BOB WILLIAMS PHOTOGRAPHY; CHRIS MICHAEL; CELEBRATIONS RENTALS; CRUMB TOGETHER; DAMON GARNER (EVENT PLANNER); DAVE PENDLETON; DEB SPEER; DIANNA POUNDER (BFAN ANGEL); THE DOWNTOWN ATHLETIC CLUB; ELIZABETH RICKER; EUPHORIA; EVENFALL CIDER; MANDY SHULTZ; MICHAEL & LAURA WILSON; OREGON WINE LAB; RACHEL HESS; RHYTHM & BLOOMS; ROARING RAPIDS PIZZA; SARA & STEW STEWART; SHEILD CATERING; STASZAK PT; STEPHANIE COATS—KELLER WILLIAMS REALTY; SUE MCCLELLAND; STEPHANIE URSO PHOTOGRAPHY; TRISH THOMAS; VERONICA HENNESSEY—COUNTRY FINANCIAL; WENDY REMPEL; AND BFAN’S MANY SUPPORTERS—YOU ARE WHY WE WORK HARD TO MAKE NEW ART!

Musicians

DALE BRADLEY — CELLO + ORIGINAL ARRANGEMENTS: Dales is a Springfield native and a graduate of the UO School of Music. He is a longtime member of Eugene Symphony, and a founding member of Oregon Mozart Players. Dale’s compositions and arrangements have been played in various venues on the West Coast including the LA Philharmonic. He teaches throughout the city, with multiple CDs as well as a recording studio.

SERGEI TELESHEV — ACCORDION + ORIGINAL ARRANGEMENTS: Classically trained at the Academy of Music in Voronezh, Russia, Sergei has won many regional and international accordion competitions. As a founding member and accordion player of Trio Voronezh, Classic Klezmer Trio, Valinor Quartet and East-West International Project, he collaborates with many internationally recognized artists, ensembles and orchestras. Sergei has performed with renowned orchestras and performers like the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Doc Severinsen, Halie Loren, Semmy Stahlhammer and many others. In addition to performing with them, Sergei also composes and arranges music and works on recording projects in multiple genres. Sergei has been a jury member at international accordion competitions in Russia, Canada and the USA. Recently, he won the National V-Accordion Competition. As the U.S. champion, Sergei represented the United States at the 7th Roland International V-Accordion Festival in Rome, Italy, where he received a special prize for “Most Online Votes” on the festival’s webcast. Sergei teaches online accordion lessons, master classes and educational school programs for all ages.