



BALLET
FANTASTIQUE

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**World premieres, BFan originals, and live music comprise Ballet Fantastique's
2023–2024 season as tickets become available for purchase to the public
for all performances**

2023–2024 Season QUICK FACTS

Eugene's Emmy®-nominated Ballet Fantastique (BFan) announces its 2023–2024 Hult Center and touring performance season, with four unique dance theater concepts and immersive theatrical experiences for audiences of all ages.

Ballet Fantastique's mother-daughter Resident Choreographer-Producer team, Donna Marisa and Hannah Bontrager, celebrate twenty years of Hult Center productions in Fall 2023 and have chosen a season that runs the gamut of the company's most unique blockbusters: *Nevermore*, *Stories of Edgar Allan Poe*; *Babes in Toyland: A Holiday Story*; *Cinderella: The Rock Opera*; and *Alice in Wonderland: Remix*. Each is filled with the company's innovative signatures: Bold and playful concepts, vibrant all-original choreography, and evocative cross-disciplinary collaborations.

The year's scores are, as always, live music with accessible "listenability"—from Sergei Rachmaninoff to YouTube celebrity composers Peter Gundry and Lucas King (*Nevermore*), from 60s rock (*Cinderella*) to electro-swing (*Alice*), and live Big Band orchestra (*Babes*).

"I am thrilled for our upcoming 23-24 season, as it truly embodies everything that BFan excels at," says Ballet Fantastique Principal Dancer Ashley Bontrager, who will be dancing her 13th season this year with the company. On Ballet Fantastique's unique holiday performance, *Babes in Toyland: A Holiday Story*, Ashley continues, "I think what makes our production special is that it's a vintage holiday story, but one you've maybe never heard of! We've added our signature 'BFan spin' to it, and paired it with Duke Ellington's iconic *Nutcracker* score, played live by the Swing Shift Orchestra. The stage is set for a jazz-infused and comedic evening of fun for the whole family!" Ballet Fantastique's *Babes* world premiere in 2018 was featured nationally in *Pointe Magazine* and sold out with a waiting list for tickets. It's back by popular demand for 2023.

Recently promoted Company Artist Ana Brooks adds, "I'm excited to be a part of a wide variety of shows this season. There are so many types of characters to experience and bring to life! That's the challenge I look forward to most." These intricate character roles especially come to life in BFan's October performance of *Nevermore: Stories of Edgar Allan Poe*, which features five of Poe's most haunting, brilliant, and disturbing works.

The season concludes in May 2023 with an audience favorite, Ballet Fantastique's *Alice in Wonderland* which premiered back in 2018 and was huge success. The performance features a bold, splashy, and playful 70-minute ballet that crosses genres and defies expectations. *Alice in Wonderland: Remix* brings the vivid visions of Lewis Carroll to life, combining Ballet Fantastique's dance theater with an electro-swing soundtrack and a steampunk twist. For the project, Ballet Fantastique commissioned the Eugene-based band

High Step Society in their first-ever Hult Center collaboration; the band is now internationally renowned. Cirque du Soleil performer Raymond Silos, new BFan Resident Artist, stars as the White Rabbit.

“Our goal at Ballet Fantastique is to create these immersive experiences where people get lost and fall in love with the experience of live dance theater. We love what we do, and we’re ready to break ballet out of more boxes!” says Hannah. “The season is bold, fresh, charming, romantic, funny, and fun—and there’s something for everyone,” adds Hannah.

Ballet Fantastique’s Hult season runs Oct 2023 through Mother’s Day 2024 in the Hult Center’s beautiful Silva Concert Hall and intimate Soreng Theater. Season and single ticket packages are now on sale by calling the Hult Box Office at 541-682-5000 or online at hultcenter.org. Senior, youth, student and discounts for groups of 6+ are available. Student outreach tickets are also available—email info@balletfantastique.org. **Ballet Fantastique’s 23-24 Season is presented by Alpha IT.**

FALL 2023: Nevermore: Stories of Edgar Allan Poe

with live music: Peter Gundry and Lucas King + Dark Classics (Rachminoff, Satie)

- Thurs Oct. 19, Fri Oct. 20 and Sat Oct. 21 at 7:30 pm; Sun Oct. 22 at 2:30 pm (Soreng Theater, Hult Center)

BFAN ORIGINAL (2017): *Nevermore* is BFan’s macabre dance theater experience inspired by the tantalizing dark romances and poetry of Victorian literary genius Edgar Allan Poe. We reimagine Poe’s most haunting, brilliant, and disturbing works: The Raven, Annabel Lee, Fall of the House of Usher, Cask of Amontillado, and Masque of the Red Deth.

LIVE MUSIC: Surreal, Haunting new arrangements by YouTube sensations Peter Gundry and Lucas King + dark classics (Rachminoff, Satie)



THANKSGIVING WEEKEND 2023: Babes in Toyland: A Holiday Story

with live music: Gerry Rempel Jazz Syndicate + Star Guests

- Sat Nov. 25 at 7:30 pm, Sun Nov. 26 at 2:30 pm (Silva Concert Hall, Hult Center)

BFAN ORIGINAL (2018): *Babes in Toyland* reimagines a lost holiday classic with BFan’s trademark wit and whimsy. Victor Herbert’s original madcap fairytale mashup collides with hot jazz and genre-defying dance. Contagious, retro-glam new choreography and an entirely new holiday tradition.

LIVE MUSIC: Swing Shift Jazz Orchestra plays Duke Ellington’s epic jazz *Nutcracker*, Original Compositions & Arrangements from Duke Ellington + more, Original arrangements for BFan by Steve Sharp

SPRING 2024: Cinderella: A Rock Opera

With live music: Shelly James & the Agents of Unity

- Thurs Feb. 29, Fri Mar. 1, Sat Mar. 2 at 7:30 pm; Sun Mar. 3 at 2:30 pm (Soreng Theater, Hult Center)

BFAN ORIGINAL (: Experience the ultimate fusion of ballet and rock ‘n’ roll in BFan’s electrifying Cinderella: A Rock Opera. This 60’s bombshell jukebox ballet reimagining of the classic fairytale delivers a sassy, powerful twist.

LIVE MUSIC: Shelly James & the Agents of Unity

MOTHER'S DAY 2024: Alice in Wonderland: Remix

With live music: High Step Society

Thurs May 9, Fri May 10, Sat May 11 at 7:30 pm; Sun May 12 at 2:30 pm (Soreng Theater, Hult Center)

BFAN ORIGINAL (2018): BFan brings the vivid visions of Lewis Carroll's classics to life like you've never seen it before with signature dance theater storytelling with an electro-swing twist and a brave new heroine on an adventure of her own making.

LIVE MUSIC: High Step Society

Open Barre—Open rehearsal series

Also this season, Open Barre, Ballet Fantastique's unique Friday night open rehearsal series at the City Center for Dance (960 Oak, downtown Eugene). Join the Ballet Fantastique dancers, choreographers, and musicians on selected Fridays throughout the season for a behind-the-scenes open rehearsal preview of new performance premieres in progress, plus tastings of wine from local artisan winemakers, and delightful refreshments from various local eateries.

- **Nevermore Open Barre:** Friday, Oct. 6 from 6:30-8 pm
- **Cinderella: A Rock Opera Open Barre:** Friday, Feb. 9 from 6:30-8 pm
- **Alice and Wonderland: Remix Open Barre:** Friday, April. 19 from 6:30-8 pm

Company artists

Ballet Fantastique's season includes performances by the Company's international roster of resident artists, including Principal & Soloist dancers Ashley Bontrager (OR), Hannah Bontrager (OR), Nicole Brown (MN), Jenavieve Hernandez (WA), Isabelle Overstreet Bloodgood (CA), Preston Andrew Patterson (GA), and Gustavo Ramirez (Colombia); Company Artists & Apprentices Ana Brooks (UT), Phoebe Green (VT), Raymond Silos (FL), Tavari Groesbeck () and Brooke Geoffrey-Bowler (WA). **Ballet Fantastique proudly welcomes new artists: Joshua Webb (UK), Elizabeth Chapa (IL), and Lucy Pearce (UK).**

About Ballet Fantastique

Founded in 2000 in Eugene, OR (Pacific NW USA), Ballet Fantastique brings stories to life, writing new classics from diverse storytelling perspectives with all live music and bold, visionary new dance theater choreography and cross-disciplinary collaboration. Under the direction of mother-daughter Producer-Choreographer team Donna Marisa and Hannah Bontrager, Ballet Fantastique (BFan) creates and premieres genre-defying all original contemporary ballets. BFan's inimitable new works include *Cinderella* as a rock opera ballet set to 1960's billboard hits, a Wild West spin on Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, the first-ever authorized ballet version of *Zorro*® with the LA-based band Incendio and virtuoso violinist-composer Kim Angelis, the ancient epic of *The Odyssey* accompanied by the live looping electric violin of Cullen Vance (BFan marked Cullen's first-ever performance at the Hult; he now performs regularly with groups such as Oregon Bach Festival), *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon* with the DaXun Zhang and the Oregon Mozart Players, and *Aladdin: A Rock Opera Ballet* with Satin Love Orchestra playing the music of Queen. Ballet Fantastique forges innovative new collaborations with sculptors, choirs, opera and soloist vocalists, symphony and chamber orchestras, literary and visual artists, actors, break dancers, circus artists, and composers. Ballet Fantastique has been a proud Resident Company at the Hult Center for the Performing Arts since 2014. BFan tours across the PNW and internationally, and has been heralded "a bold, cross-disciplinary dance company" (*Eugene Weekly*) "imaginative geniuses" (*Portland Monthly Magazine*), "not your grandmother's Swan Lake" (*Register-Guard*), "a company to watch" (*Eugene Magazine*), and featured in the *Washington Post*.

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