

Season's Greetings

2011 has been a year of contrasts - from the wonderful TOWER *Tutus on Tour* season (successfully presented by several Friends branches), to the terrible events in Christchurch. We all feel for Canterbury Branch committee and members in the wake of February's catastrophic earthquake.

As an organisation we have held our own during tough economic times. The future is looking bright for RNZB. Not only do they have an exciting new Artistic Director, but the UK National Dance Awards have named RNZB as one of only four nominees in the Outstanding Company category! And ex RNZB dancer Andrew Simmons' work *A Song in the Dark* has been nominated for Best Classical Choreography.

In order to keep in step we need to actively promote ourselves, to look for opportunities for growth, and to be more proactive in order to make the most of them. Strong, vital organisations are flexible and embrace positive change whilst remaining true to their guiding tenets and principles. With your continuing support, that is what we hope to do!

Merry Christmas to you and yours, and see you at the ballet in 2012!

Debbie Tangen, National President



Ethan with RNZB dancer Lucy Green Photo: Ross Brown

The Friends of the Ballet extend a very warm welcome to new RNZB Artistic Director, Ethan Stiefel

Ethan will be returning to the USA to spend Christmas with his family in Middleberg, Pennsylvania. He tells us that home is his favourite holiday destination and that he is looking forward to his Mom's Christmas Cookies. But he will be back in his new home in Wellington in January and is looking forward to the first season he has planned for 2012: **NYC**. Three short ballets from The Big Apple.

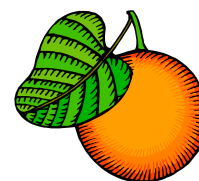
Please Note

The 2012 RNZB season brochure does not contain the usual booking form. Friends will be able to renew their memberships as usual through their branch and also when purchasing tickets at the Box Office, by phone or online. Unfortunately the Friends discount cannot be used when booking tickets online, something we hope to rectify.

Kumara baked in orange juice A favourite Christmas recipe From Abigail Boyle

1kg kumara, peeled
1 t fresh ginger
½ c orange juice plus zest of 1 orange
3T brown sugar

50gr butter,
½ t salt



Slice kumara into 1 cm slices and layer in a greased oven dish. Mix remaining ingredients, and pour over the kumara. Cover with foil or a lid and bake at 180c for 30-40 minutes. Use a fork to test for doneness, and when nearly cooked, remove the covering and continue cooking until kumara is soft and liquid has thickened.

After nine years with the RNZB Cassandra Wilson is leaving and we asked her a few questions before she hits the road:



Q: What has been your favourite role in your time at RNZB?

A: I really enjoyed performing the role of the ugly sister in Cinderella. The character was a delight to perform as she was mischievous, cheeky and incredibly uncoordinated.

Q: What will you miss most when you leave?

A: I feel privileged to have been a member of RNZB and know there will be many elements I will miss. As a dancer I have been given the opportunity to travel, perform, and dance every day with my closest friends. I will especially miss working in a team and watching my friends master new roles and possibilities in their dancing.



Q: Is there a teacher who has inspired you?

A: Tim Couchman our former Ballet Master. Tim was a constant inspiration in the studio through the passion he displayed for dance and his encouraging teaching style.

Q: What now?

A: Earlier this year I was fortunate to receive a grant from the Warren Douglas Scholarship Fund which will enable me to complete my Bachelor of Business Studies. I hope to stay actively involved in the arts environment by combining the knowledge I have gained as a dancer with the business skills I am learning.

Cassandra featured on the poster for *Tutus on Tour* 2003 & 2005
Photos: (left) Courtesy of New Zealand Post, (above) Ross Brown

Pina, a film in 3D by Wim Wenders

Reviewed by Jennifer Shennan

This beautiful film profiles the life and work of Pina Bausch, leading force in European dance-theatre. Choreographic excerpts are newly filmed in striking outdoor locations, or shown in archival footage, interspersed with interviews with her dancers.

Bausch dealt with human emotions, alternating the disturbing and uplifting aspects of behaviour and experience. Through powerful longing for contact and communication, dealing with courtship and desire, anger, fear and hope, Bausch made visionary, challenging and profound works of theatre.

Judith Mackrell, critic for *The Guardian*, wrote of *Kontakhoft* in a London season

“Why do fans of Marianela Nunez fight for tickets to see her Coppelia? Why would fans of Edward Watson kill to see his Mayerling? Because - in terms of body, temperament and imagination – the impact of a single dancer on a production can be enormous. In classical ballet, casting can be everything.

In modern dance, performances are no less individual, but we rarely get to compare different interpretations of a single role. I was thus fascinated to see what would happen when Kontakhoft, by Bausch, was performed by a senior cast aged over 65, and the following night by a junior cast aged under 19. (In the film, both senior and junior casts are combined, with telling effect.)

Wenders started work on this 3D film in 2009. Pina was diagnosed with cancer and, to everyone’s incredulity, died within five days. Wenders abandoned the project but, on the dancers’ subsequent urging, recommenced film-making. The result is a fine tribute to his skills, the dancers’ loyalty, and to the choreographic oeuvre of a truly remarkable dance-maker.

Margaret Brown was the lucky first prize winner in the Friends of the Ballet raffle – Margaret wrote to us about the wonderful prize weekend trip for two to Queenstown. “May was a perfect time to enjoy the stunning and ever changing scenery. We stayed at the first class Heritage Hotel, with their welcoming staff, a lovely room with balcony overlooking beautiful Lake Wakatipu and the surrounding snow-capped mountains and with breakfast included!! Truly a treat.....

Hiring a car enabled us to make the most of the weekend, visiting quaint Arrowtown with its stunning autumn colours, the Cardrona Pass to Lake Wanaka, Cromwell, Clyde and of course the irresistible Central Otago vineyards!!

Highlights and news from Friends of the Ballet Partnered Dancers



Qi Huan with Yang Liu dancing in the Chinese New Year with a Pas de Deux from *Don Quixote* in Palmerston North

Qi Huan will be going home to his family in China for the summer break – although it will be chilly wintertime there. He is especially looking forward to the delights of home cooked food – steamboat is his favourite!

As we go to print he is dancing in his favourite season of 2011, The Meridian Season of *The Sleeping Beauty*. He loves the costumes and sets and the sheer beauty of a big classical production. He says he has benefited greatly from coaching with guest teacher Fiona Tonkin and American Ballet Theatre Prima Ballerina Gillian Murphy during the rehearsals. Both gave invaluable help with technique and portrayal of emotion. New Artistic director Ethan Stiefel has also brought a different energy to the company in the short time since his arrival.

Over the past few years he has danced in all the big classical ballets. We asked which he has enjoyed most and he told us that he loved *La Sylphide* although sadly due to an injury he did not dance the role on stage. *Giselle* was also a favourite and he is really looking forward to working with UK choreographer Johan Kobborg in a new *Giselle* in 2012.

We caught up with Sir Jon Trimmer performing in The Meridian Season of *The Sleeping Beauty*. It is the fourth time he has danced in this ballet. This time he is the King but he remembers the 1976 production for the time he danced both the Prince and the wicked fairy Carabosse in the same performance.

One of the most unexpected things to happen to him this year was the chance to perform in cabaret – tap dancing and singing songs from the 1920s and 30s was wonderful fun.

Sir Jon also did some work with a genealogy group in 2011. They established that he has forebears who like him were painters and potters. And this is just what he will be doing over the summer holidays as well as swimming on Paekakariki Beach, keeping the garden tidy and tending the fruit trees.

On Christmas day he sees himself sitting on the gin terrace and enjoying the late afternoon sun with Jacqui.

Right Sir Jon Trimmer in his role of The King in The Meridian Season of *The Sleeping Beauty*

Photo: Ross Brown



Ballet Secrets – a new online magazine for girls and boys who love ballet – the first issue is based around The Meridian Season of *The Sleeping Beauty* and contains stories about the dancers, how to do dance steps, crafts, and food, a competition, and much much more! Find the link on the RNZB website: nzballet.org.nz

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Friends' partnered dancer Abigail Boyle is going to be spending the summer holiday relaxing by the beach and enjoying time with her family.

We asked her what 2011 has meant to her as a dancer and she told us that dancing the role of Aurora in The Meridian Season of *The Sleeping Beauty* was both an unexpected thrill and a huge technical challenge. Abi was partnered by Qi Huan in this role.

She also really loved the *Stravinsky Selection* because of the variety it offered and the opportunity to workshop with choreographer Cameron McMillan. She said *Milagros* was incredible to perform because it was such an emotional journey.

Abigail Boyle Photo: Ross Brown

The Meridian Season of **Angelina Ballerina's Big Audition**

Palmerston North 18 March

New Plymouth 21 March

Rotorua 23 March

Tauranga 25 March

Whangarei 28 March

Hamilton 31 March

Napier 4 April

Hastings 6 April

Auckland 11 – 13 April

Takapuna 15 April

Wellington 19 – 21 April

Blenheim 24 April

Ashburton 28 & 29 April

Invercargill 2 May

Dunedin 4 May

Timaru 6 May

www.nzballet.org.nz

THE MERIDIAN SEASON OF

ANGELINA BALLERINA'S BIG AUDITION

Royal New Zealand Ballet is delighted to be performing this enchanting production, originally created by English National Ballet.

18 MARCH – 6 MAY 2012

meridian

PALMERSTON NORTH, NEW PLYMOUTH, ROTORUA, TAURANGA, WHANGAREI, HAMILTON, NAPIER, HASTINGS, AUCKLAND, TAKAPUNA, WELLINGTON, BLenheim, ASHBURTON, INVERCARGILL, DUNEDIN, TIMARU

For booking information go to nzballet.org.nz

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