

# The ViewPointe

Volume VII Issue II Spring, 2006

ALEXANDRA ZAHARIAS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

## Of Mischief...

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The romantic revelry of **A Midsummer Night's Dream** and the regal majesty of **Paquita** combine to create a production for dance lovers of all ages, March 18, 7:30 pm, & March 19, 2:00 pm, at the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center on the campus of the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

Marek Cholewa's world-premiere choreography in **A Midsummer Night's Dream** exhibits a complete mastery of the complex storyline, despite the difficulty in condensing Shakespeare's lengthy work and Mendelssohn's extensive score into a one-act ballet. Cholewa, who lives in Indianapolis, traveled to St. Louis on three different occasions in order to set the new choreography on the Company dancers and refine it until he was satisfied.

The Company dancers responded to the roles with great enthusiasm. Pleased by what she saw at a recent rehearsal, artistic consultant Jeanne Engel had this to say, "Interaction of the characters is absolutely essential in any Shakespeare piece. It's the key to everything else." "The way these dancers are playing off each other," she continued, "is full of intelligence and wit. This ballet is a real gem."

With the tale having such an abundance of male roles, five male guest artists from Butler Ballet have joined another five from the Company and its official school, Alexandra School of Ballet, for this production. Stirling Matheson is commanding in the role of Oberon (ruler of the Fairy Kingdom), with Alexandra Ballet's Consuelo Williams portraying Titania, the Queen of the Fairies. Michael Green, whose powerful ballon is employed by Cholewa's choreography, dances the role of Oberon's faithful sprite, Puck.

(Continued on Page 2)

## ...and Majesty

The second offering of this dual bill is **Paquita**, restaged by Zhanna Dubrovskaya, with additional choreography by CiCi Houston of Alexandra Ballet. In a complete turnaround of mood and style, this piece illustrates the training and adaptability of this company. Ogulcan Borova, principal dancer of Tulsa Ballet and Gold Medal winner of the prestigious New York International Ballet Competition in 2003, joins AB in this majestically powerful ballet.

Dance Magazine has labeled Ogulcan a "feisty, brilliant dancer", and Pointe Magazine presented him as an "International star", yet for all his honors and awards, he is a humble and approachable young man. Having performed with Alexandra Ballet in 2004's production of **The Sleeping Beauty**, the Company was eager to welcome him back in January for rehearsal with Dubrovskaya and the AB dancers. He was quick to settle the nerves of his young but able new partner for Paquita, Aggie Schmank, and the rehearsal went very well under the watchful eye of Dubrovskaya and her husband, Sergey Kozadayev, artistic co-directors of Chicago's Salt Creek Ballet.



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Alexandra Ballet is Funded in Party By:



(Continued on Page 2)

**A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM  
& PAQUITA**

**Saturday, March 18, 2006, 7:30 pm  
Sunday, March 19, 2006, 2:00 pm**

**Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center**

**Tickets: \$25 \$30 \$40**

**Touhill Box Office—314-516-4949**

**WORLD PREMIERE!**

Alexandra Ballet begins with the world premiere of Marek Cholewa's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, set to the lush score by Felix Mendelssohn. Based on Shakespeare's tale of mortals caught up in the strife of the enchanted but unseen world of the fairy kingdom, this beautiful new production will leave you smiling. Then immerse yourself in the majesty of *Paquita*, featuring the sensational Ogulcan Borova, Gold Medal winner of the 2003 New York International Ballet Competition, and staged by Zhanna Dubrovskaya of Salt Creek Ballet. Don't miss this dual bill of extraordinary ballet!

**The Dace Dindonis  
Scholarship Performance**

**Saturday, April 8, 2006**

**5:00 pm & 7:00 pm**

**Alexandra School of Ballet**

**68E Four Seasons Center**

**\$15 Donation at the door**

Alexandra Ballet established the Scholarship Fund in 2001, named for AB's friend and prolific award-winning choreographer, Dace Dindonis, who created more than 85 works during her twenty-year career. This fund has provided valuable assistance to scores of talented and deserving dancers from the St. Louis region, enabling them to continue training with Alexandra Ballet.

Alexandra Ballet's scholarship performance is traditionally a repertory program, consisting of excerpts from classics, as well as contemporary ballet and modern dance pieces. This year the pieces include *Minkus' Divertissements*, the polonaise from *Paquita*, and *Ballare*, a modern work restaged by AB's Norma Gabriel.

Call 314-469-6222 for more information.

**Regional Dance America's  
2006 MidStates Festival**

**Dancing With Grace**

**May 17 - 19, 2006**

**Anderson Young Ballet**

**Anderson, Indiana**

Alexandra Ballet is an honor company in Regional Dance America's Mid-States Region. The pieces to be performed by Alexandra Ballet at this prestigious festival will be determined by an adjudication process set for the ballet company on March 5, 2006. For more information on the festival and RDA, please visit their website at [www.regional-dance-america.org](http://www.regional-dance-america.org), or go to [www.pointemagazine.com](http://www.pointemagazine.com) to view the article, "America's Training Ground" in the Dec/Jan issue of Pointe Magazine, which focuses on the festival hosted in 2005 by Alexandra Ballet, and features AB dancer Consuelo Williams.

Join Alexandra Ballet on Sunday, April 23, 2006, at Meadowbrook Country Club for—that's right...**Another Bloomin' Auction!** This special celebration of spring begins at 5:00 pm with cocktails and silent auction, followed by a gourmet dinner and festive oral auction full of unique gifts and packages. Tickets are \$50 per person or \$425 for a table of ten, and are available by calling 314-469-6222, or stopping by the AB studios at 68E Four Seasons Center in Chesterfield.

Some of the auction items already donated include Cardinal baseball tickets, passes to City Museum and Missouri Botanical Garden, tickets to St. Louis Black Repertory Theatre and Stages St. Louis' production of "*Cabaret*", an autographed Ram's football, several local restaurant gift certificates, a "Day of Golf" package for 4 at Old Hickory Country Club, and a special commemorative Midsummer Night's Dream quilt, and A Midsummer Night's "Dream Getaway", a romantic weekend package including lodging at the Renaissance St. Louis Hotel and Sunday brunch at Bristol's Grill.

It's important to remember that money raised from **Another Bloomin' Auction** supports AB's educational outreach efforts, which bring the magic of the dance world to St. Louis schools through our annual **Young People's Performances**, the largest and most comprehensive free fine arts initiative in the St. Louis region.

You can help make this magic come alive by participating in several ways:

- ♦ Make a tax-deductible donation of an item to be auctioned. Use your imagination—anything goes! Deliver it to the studio or call us and we'll pick it up.
- ♦ Make a phone call if you're willing to help with planning, setting up, decorating, or transporting auction items. 314-469-6222 is the number to call—we'll hook you up with the people in charge!
- ♦ Make a point of attending the auction—contact your friends, family, and coworkers and make it an evening of fun for a good cause!

If you've attended a benefit auction for Alexandra Ballet in the past, you already know what a great time it is for everyone. If you've not yet attended one, this is the time to start! We invite you and your friends to be a part of this gala evening in support of Alexandra Ballet, and look forward to seeing you in April at **Another Bloomin' Auction!** 

Of Mischief...

(continued from page 1)

The mortals are performed expressively by Aggie Schmank and Kevin Wiltz as Hermia and Lysander, with Sarah Stockman and Brandon Ragland as Helena and Demetrius. But possibly the most exciting is Sean Stryker's uninhibited portrayal of Bottom, the mortal whose head is changed into that of a donkey by one of Puck's mischievous spells. Reminiscent of an early Baryshnikov, this young man is a treat to watch.

From the quiet beauty in the ballet's early scenes (which may very well be stolen by little Ravi Shastri as the "changling boy"), to the rollicking mayhem of the two mortals besieged by invisible fairies, blindly dueling in the misty forest, this ballet is sheer delight, and is a wonderful addition to the talented company's extensive repertoire. 

...and Majesty

(continued from page 1)

Aside from the famous Grand Pas, **Paquita** serves up some of the most beautiful divertissements in ballet. In addition, CiCi Houston has restaged the Polonaise from **Paquita**, rarely seen in America today, and in doing so, makes one of the most beautiful statements of the entire piece. Performed by younger dancers of the Company, this piece shines with nobility and grace, and is a taste of what is to come from this talented group.

Costumed entirely by Jude Bonnot, (see "Spotlight on...Jude Bonnot," page 5), this ballet shines with the vibrant jewel tones of royalty, with shades of amethyst and magenta serving to amplify the majestic mood of the piece.

From the ethereal mood and style of **A Midsummer Night's Dream** to the stately beauty and power of **Paquita**, this exciting production is an examination of beauty and romance from two different perspectives—and a perfect example of how very different but equally satisfying two classical ballets can be. 

**Tickets are \$25, \$30, & \$40, and are on sale now at Alexandra School of Ballet, or through the Touhill Box Office at 314-516-4949.**

# Dance + Music + Children = Smiles



On Friday, March 17, 2006, Alexandra Ballet will entertain and educate more than 3,000 area school children with two free performances of ***A Midsummer Night's Dream*** at the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center on the campus of University of Missouri-St. Louis. Alexandra Ballet's annual **Young People's Performance** is unquestionably the finest example of the ballet company's commitment to educational outreach into the community, bringing the thrill of a completely professional ballet production to thousands of St. Louis school children each spring.

Coordinated by Theresa Rogers, this annual performance has become the one of the largest fine arts initiatives in St. Louis, and the only one to offer its program free of charge, due in large part to the generous contributions of Enterprise, WalMart, and Boeing Employees Community Fund. As always, both performances are filled to capacity, and AB maintains a long wait list for this popular event.

A critical component to this exciting performance is the preparatory educational booklet each class receives prior to its arrival. This comprehensive booklet, developed by Laura Stockman, PhD, contains grade level-appropriate information on ballet history and terminology, a synopsis of the ballet (libretto), the choreographer, composers, costuming, and more. These educational booklets serve a dual purpose; first to educate and prepare the students for the performance they are about to see, and secondly, to motivate them to learn more about this creative and challenging art form. In addition, all information offered in the Alexandra Ballet Educational Booklet applies to the National, Missouri, and Illinois Standards of Education in the



areas of Fine Arts, Social Sciences, Communication Arts, Language Arts, Music, Dance, and Theatre. This booklet, and others developed for past **Young People's Performances**, can be viewed by visiting the website at [www.alexandraballet.com](http://www.alexandraballet.com) and clicking the link on the home page.

Another fun and fascinating component was added last year, with **"What's Going on Back There?"** an interactive demonstration presented by production stage manager Tim Hubbard at intermission. During this break in the ballet, students are given a glimpse of just a few of the many activities occurring backstage during a fine arts performance, and the stage manager's role in pulling it all together. Hubbard is currently a national trainer in teacher workshops at The Grammy Foundation's Leonard Bernstein Center for Learning, and has developed many educational programs during his career. In addition, he recently helped to create the Indiana Academic Standards for Dance. His demonstration last year was met with great enthusiasm, and AB proudly welcomes his contribution to the Young People's Performance again this year.



Each component of this educational outreach initiative has been carefully planned with the intent to reach young people who might not otherwise have the opportunity to experience the thrill of a live performance. That these free performances touch children and change lives is evident to all who are a part of them, and Alexandra Ballet is proud to be a leader in this endeavor. If you or your organization is interested in helping to fund a future presentation of a **Young People's Performance**, contact our office at 314-469-6222. 

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Photography by Tynetta Chastain

## Where Are They Now?

### What We Hear From Our Alumni...

- ♦ **Jennifer Deckert** is now dancing with Roxey Ballet in New Jersey. She received an MFA in Ballet teaching and choreography from the University of Utah, and in May of last year, Deckert taught Kinesiology at the 2005 Regional Dance America MidStates Festival, hosted by Alexandra Ballet.
- ♦ **Stephen Duncan** has been named Vice President & Chief Marketing Officer for Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. Duncan, who left his post with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra last year, is not only an alumnus of Alexandra Ballet, but is the son of Herb and Sally Duncan, long-time friends and supporters of Alexandra Ballet. Duncan's mother, Sally, has served on the Board of Directors of Alexandra Ballet since its inception in 1984.
- ♦ **Louise Nadeau**, Principal Dancer for Pacific Northwest Ballet, is enjoying dancing under the direction of Peter Boal, long-time colleague and friend, who became Artistic Director of PNB on July 1, 2005, after the retirement of Founding Artistic Directors Francia Russell and Kent Stowell. Nadeau graces the cover of the new 2006 PNB calendar, and also appears in articles in the February issue of *Pointe and Dance Magazines*.
- ♦ **Lise Hoffman Reardon** dropped in to say hello to Miss A and observed classes and activities going on in late January. Reardon is the School Program Director for Eastern Connecticut Ballet in East Lyme, Connecticut. 

# Get the Training You Deserve This Summer!

## ALEXANDRA SCHOOL OF BALLET Official School of Alexandra Ballet

Program	Level	Dates	Faculty
<b>Summer Intensive</b>	This program is intended for the serious dance student with a focus on ballet.	June 5-9	Sergey Kozadaye Zhanna Dubrovskaya  Artistic Directors Salt Creek Ballet
	Required for all Company dancers.	June 12-16	Marek Cholewa Rosanna Ruffo  Professors of Dance Butler University
<b>Intermediate Workshop</b>	Intermediate Levels  Ballet – Pointe Modern - Character Dance	June 19-23	Alexandra Zaharias Artistic Director-Alexandra Ballet Norma Gabriel & CiCi Houston Ballet Mistresses-Alexandra Ballet
<b>Young Dancer's Workshop</b>	Beginner Levels  Ballet - Character Dance History of Dance~Music~Costumes <b>Exploring the tale of "Peter and the Wolf"</b>	June 26-30	Alexandra Zaharias Artistic Director-Alexandra Ballet  CiCi Houston Ballet Mistress-Alexandra Ballet
<b>Summer School</b>	All Levels  Ballet - Pointe	July 5-29	Alexandra Zaharias Artistic Director-Alexandra Ballet  CiCi Houston Ballet Mistress-Alexandra Ballet

CALL TODAY TO REGISTER FOR AN EXCITING SUMMER OF DANCE!  
314-469-6222

## Be An Angel...

Though you may not be able to make a sizable monetary donation to our non-profit organization, you may still make a substantial contribution to the Company in the way of durable goods or services.

### WE ARE IN NEED OF:

- ♦ Blank VHS tapes and Hi8/Digital 8 camcorder tapes (for rehearsal purposes)
- ♦ A skilled person able to remove the CD burner from the old computer and install it into our current computer
- ♦ Someone willing to coordinate refinishing the hardwood floors in both studios late this summer.

If you are able to provide an item on this list, please contact our office at 314-469-6222, or via email at alexandra@alexandraballet.com. We will direct your donation to the proper individual, and provide you with a receipt for your tax-deductible donation. Every little bit helps, so please . . . be an angel.

### A BIG "THANK YOU!" TO THE FOLLOWING ANGELS:

- ♦ The anonymous angel who donated the combination TV plus DVD & VCR. It is beautiful, and will be used for many years to come.
- ♦ Tynetta Chastain, CiCi Houston, and Jo Lucas, who have agreed to create a DVD of performance shorts for grant applications.

Alexandra Ballet thanks you for your generous gifts. 

Your tax-deductible donation will help us continue our mission to educate, elevate and enrich St. Louis communities for generations to come.

Yes, I want to support Alexandra Ballet with the following gift:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Contributor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 Corps Level      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Patron     | <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,500 Sustaining Level |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Sponsor    | <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000 Grand Tier Level |
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Please apply my donation to:

- Operating Fund     Scholarship Fund     Debt Reduction

- My company will match this contribution in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.  
A matching gift form from my company is enclosed.

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<input type="checkbox"/>	My employer has a matching gift program. The application is enclosed with my gift.
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Please return this form to: Alexandra Ballet • Attn: Fundraising Committee • 68E Four Seasons Center • Chesterfield, MO 63017  
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# SpotLight On...

## Jude Bonnot

When Jude Bonnot offered her expertise to Alexandra Ballet in 2001, it proved to be a match made in heaven. Her standards in the areas of costume design and construction have dovetailed perfectly with the artistic vision and production standards of Alexandra Ballet's artistic director Alexandra Zaharias. Five years and scores of costumes later, this British balletomane has achieved a milestone with the company this year with her first complete ballet build, **Paquita**.

Despite coping with a shoulder injury for which she has postponed much-needed surgery, Bonnot has completed nearly 30 tutus, dresses, and male costumes for the ballet. Working with a restricted palette of royal amethyst and shades of magenta, Bonnot custom dyed yards of silk for the build, and the result is breathtaking. The bejeweled costumes are befitting the majesty of the ballet, and will grace the entire company of dancers for this production, including AB's prestigious guest artist, Ogulcan Borova.

Unlike sewing a garment, explains Bonnot, one "builds" a costume, which requires elements of both engineering and art. Executing these elements is like the combined feat of building a bridge while creating a work of art, with one element entirely dependent on the other. The result is truly amazing—yards and yards of soft tulle, which, when layered together and sewn correctly, stiffen into the classical form of a tutu; the bodice of raw silk, which, with boning inserted into the seams of bodice panels numbering anywhere from 8 to 20, will constrain the ballerina's body while allowing her to move freely; or the whispering cascade of a contemporary ballet dress, cut and draped so that it moves with the dancer instead of pulling against her.

Bonnot, who received an award from the Embroiderer's Guild of America for her meticulous handwork, began producing dance costumes for a small local dance studio in 1994, and her experience with costuming grew from there. When her daughter, Suzi, came to AB's official school, Alexandra School of Ballet, in 2001, and was invited into the First Company soon after, Bonnot found her costuming niche. She has since produced costumes for skaters and ballroom dancers, the St. Louis Shakespeare Festival, the St. Louis Repertory Theatre, and Washington University, but it is obvious to all who know her that creating ballet costumes is where her heart lies.

Watching Bonnot work her magic is like witnessing any great artist at work. She begins with extensive research in order to achieve the histori-

cal or aesthetic accuracy she desires. Using everything from books to the internet to archival tapes of ballet productions, she analyzes every detail of the subject matter and forms her ideas. Beautiful sketches of her designs follow, which are, themselves, works of art, including descriptions of fabric, headpieces, and other specifics.

Using numerous measurements she has previously taken of each dancer, the work of pattern making, draping, and making muslin "mock-ups" soon follows, which can take weeks to accomplish. Although custom made to fit each dancer perfectly, the costumes will nonetheless be given extra room in discreet places in order to accommodate future dancers who may wear the costumes.

Bonnot arrives at the Company studios on a weekly basis to fit each component of the costume (including everything from hats to sleeve "poofs") on every dancer. She works with dancers of all ages, from squirming youngsters to more seasoned teens, and teaches each one to have respect for the costumes and the people who work on them. Known for her keen intellect and dry wit, she has been known to declare in her crisp British accent that any dancer who incurs her wrath during a fitting will subsequently "dance in her knickers," giving a wink and a nod as she makes the threat.

Alexandra Zaharias calls Bonnot "Our Karinska," referring to the legendary Barbara Karinska, who designed and made costumes for New York City Ballet for over three decades. "To have someone who does the work of researching, designing, and creating costumes is very unique," she says, "especially in this day and age." It is clear to Zaharias that Bonnot is far more than an ordinary seamstress. "Her costumes are one-of-a-kind," she explains, "and the dancers of Alexandra Ballet will rarely have the opportunity to wear such exquisite costumes, even as professional dancers. Each one is the work of a creative genius." 



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ALEXANDRA BALLET WELCOMES  
Jim Eichhorst and Classic 99's Circle Of Friends  
March 18 & 19, 2006 at the Touhill for  
*A Midsummer Night's Dream & Paquita*  
Stop by the KFUO-FM table and say hello!



*alexandra ballet*<sup>®</sup>  
ALEXANDRA ZAHARIAS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

68E Four Seasons Center  
Chesterfield, MO 63017

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## President's Corner

There is excitement in the air at Alexandra Ballet, as always, with the Company's annual full-length ballet just around the corner. This year, we unveil world premiere choreography with Marek Cholewa's ***A Midsummer Night's Dream***, and follow that with Zhanna Dubrovskaya's restaging of ***Paquita***, featuring the brilliant dancing of Ogulcan Borova, with additional staging by CiCi Houston. This production promises to be another great artistic success for AB, and we are fortunate to have such accomplished artists contributing their work to the repertoire of Alexandra Ballet!

In addition, plans are well underway for one of the most important fund raising events of the year for us. ***Another Bloomin' Auction!*** will take place on April 23 at the Meadowbrook Country Club, and many dedicated volunteers are hard at work making preparations for this important evening. Whether you like sports and theater tickets, restaurant and retail gift certificates, or luxury items like jewelry and vacation packages, this auction has it all. I encourage everyone to invite friends and family to attend this entertaining evening in support of Alexandra Ballet...the premier ballet company in the St. Louis region! 



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Greg Chastain, President  
Board of Directors