

New Works Debut at Up Close on Hope



As Festival Ballet Providence continues to make unprecedented strides since its amazing season opening fundraising gala “Together We Dance,” where dancers from some of the top ballet companies around the world donated their talents, Artistic Director Mihailo Djuric has planned a very busy second act for their 2011-2012 Season.

During February, the dance troupe presents the second installment of the award winning Up Close On Hope, along with a world premiere of “Mother Goose Goes to Hollywood” for the popular chatterBOXtheatre, a dance series designed for children - young and old.

Billed as “dance so close you can touch it,” Up Close features a collection of unrelated dance vignettes ranging from contemporary to modern to classical in style. Set in the company’s intimate Black Box Theatre, audiences gush about these performances where “you can even hear the dancers breathing and see them sweat,” proving that despite how effortless they make dance look, they are working pretty darn hard.

The centerpiece for this installment will be resident choreographer Viktor Plotnikov’s “Short Stories for a Small Magazine.” Plotnikov first premiered this piece in 2004 for Boston Ballet’s highly regarded Raw Dance series. Since 2002, he has been staging world premiers for FBP often drawing international acclaim and awards for his efforts.

Inspired by the Jean Paul Belmondo film, *Le Magnifique*, “Short Stories” consists of six stories exploring family, hardship during war, addiction, labor strife, machines and childhood and love. With themes that are for more topical than some of Plotnikov’s current offerings, which tend to be far more metaphysical in nature, the dancing too seems a departure. The movements are bigger, raw and edgy versus the compact, rigid and eclectic style that has become his trademark.

The program also includes yet another world premiere by company dancer and popular Up Close choreographer Mark Harootian. Set to the music of Lady Gaga, rearranged by the Vitamin String Quartet, this piece utilizes six company dancers. As with most Harootian works, what he does with the music generally proves to be just as intriguing as his choreography.

Another company dancer, Leticia Guerrero, presents her second work for Up Close on Hope also a world premiere. The program features a total of four world premieres. Using three couples, this piece looks at relationships, “how they connect us and set us apart.”

Festival Ballet also proudly introduces George Birkadze, he will debut two world premieres: “RJ,” “a

duet about first steps, first experiences and something forbidden,” and “My Sorrow” with five dancers depicting experiences with frustration.

Rounding out the program will be two classics: Petipa’s exhilarating “Don Quixote” pas de deux and Vaganova’s version of Petipa’s “Diana and Acteon.” Both pieces will give company dancers an opportunity to showcase their superior skills and athleticism.

And while Up Close will be occupying the spotlight on evenings in February, Boston Ballet’s Boyko Dossev, a frequent Up Close contributor, will present his world premiere production of “Mother Goose Goes to Hollywood” for chatterBOXtheatre prior to the evening performances.

This charming and wholly original work promises to delight all – young and old. Watch as a father and his daughter create a series of heartfelt stories and then successfully sell them to Hollywood, culminating in a true Hollywood ending complete with a wedding.

Festival Ballet Providence, 825 Hope St, Providence presents Up Close on Hope Feb 17-18, 24-25; March 2-3 at

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