

# SBRI Presents Spring 'Tour De Ballet' at RIC

This Mother's Day weekend why not take mom on a trip around the world to see how various cultures celebrate their heritage through dance. To do so, you will not have to use any SkyMiles, just set your GPS for Roberts Hall at RI College where The State Ballet of RI will present Tour de Ballet.

As SBRI Artistic Director Herci Marsden reaches back into the company's repertoire, prepare for stops in Ireland for traditional Celtic dance, France for a saucy "Can-Can," Italy for the breathless "Tarantella," Spain for the fiery and romantic pas de deux from Don Quixote, Vienna for some waltzes and East Slavic for the powerful "Polovtsian Dances" from Borodin's Prince Igor.

But first the production will open with the world premiere of SAFARI choreographed by former SBRI principal dancer and resident choreographer Mia Godbout; emerging local composer Christy Isles was commissioned to create the musical score for this ballet, which will be performed by a live musical ensemble. According to SBRI Executive Director Ana Marsden Fox, this is the first time since the 1960's that music was "created just for State Ballet."

SAFARI certainly fits the program's travel motif especially, as Godbout explains, since each letter represents certain styles of dance: S for Spanish; A for American, F for French, R for Russian; and I for Irish. Godbout adds, "It is a nice introduction for the rest of Tour de Ballet as the countries referenced in my piece are represented throughout the show. It is also a great stand-alone piece if we ever decide to present it at other venues around RI."

And while Godbout has choreographed other ballets, the twenty-one minute SAFARI represents her most ambitious effort to date. "This is my biggest project to date," she affirms, "I worked on several shorter pieces for SBRI and choreographed many pieces for local area dance schools. In college, I won an informal competition for a piece I choreographed that SBRI ended up performing at studio performances and demonstrations. A few years ago, I collaborated with [SBRI dancers] Mark Marsden and Shana Fox in "Gracefully Gershwin" which was also a one-act ballet. Most recently, I collaborated with author David Ira Rottenberg and created a short ballet set to a live reading of his book Gwendolyn the Graceful Pig. But, this is my first one-act ballet on my own for a large-scale show!"

Godbout also explains how working directly with the composer has helped the creative process, "Generally, choreographers have to suit their steps to the music as it is. Yet, I have been able to ask Christy for sections to be lengthened or cut back if needed or the addition of instruments to enhance the steps." Godbout concludes, "I think I have definitely been spoiled as a choreographer during this process! Christy has attended almost all rehearsals, watched the choreography and took notes so we would all be working together when it is performed live. She herself is playing in each movement, either on the cello or piano."

As for future plans, Godbout observes, "This season has been incredible! I have had many exciting opportunities, with this show at the top of that list! But, I definitely need a bit of a break! My poor family has seen me trying out steps to Christy's music in every room of our house...even outside! I have put in long hours at the studio, so a bit of a rest is in order starting May 13!"

Tour de Ballet, featuring over 40 local dancers, runs May 11th and 12th at Roberts Hall at 8:00PM and 2:30PM. For tickets visit: [www.stateballet.com](http://www.stateballet.com).

