



## **BALLET AMBASSADORS**

*Sondra Forsyth, Founder and Artistic Director*

**and**

**New Day Academy**

*Ms. Ganeles, Principal*

present

### ***Dance, Dance, Dance!***

*A Sampling of Styles from Around the World*

**Thursday, August 12<sup>th</sup> 2010**

**1 p.m.**

**New Day Academy Auditorium**

**800 Home Street**

**Bronx, New York 10546**

**With generous support from**

**New York City Department of Cultural Affairs**



**New York City Department of Education**

## **Technique Demonstration and Highlights of Dance History**

Sondra Forsyth with Sophie Alpern and Lauren Jaeger

### **Peasant Pas de Trois.....Sophie Alpern, Andrei Kisselev, Sondra Forsyth**

*Choreography: Sondra Forsyth*

*Composer: Pyotr Illich Tchaikovsky*

Our celebration of dance in cultures around the globe starts in France where ballet originated at the court of Louis XIV in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Ballet terminology is still in French. Professional dancers everywhere are now trained in ballet technique even if they specialize in other disciplines such as modern, jazz, tap, or hip hop. A hallmark of ballet is that ballerinas dance on pointe in specially constructed shoes. This pas de trois, which means "dance for three," is from the Ballet Ambassadors adaptation of the well-loved classic, "Swan Lake."

### **Life in Technicolor.....Lauren Jaeger**

*Choreography: Lauren Jaeger*

*Music: Coldplay*

This is an example of modern or contemporary dance. An American-born dancer, Isadora Duncan, is credited with creating the form in the early 1900s when she broke away from ballet traditions and danced barefoot in flowing Grecian tunics. After that, innovative choreographers began to develop versions of contemporary technique that rival ballet in rigor, athleticism, and artistry. In the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, ballet and modern were separate camps in the dance world. Now, however, all of the major ballet companies have modern pieces in their repertoires. Also, professional modern dancers regularly take ballet classes and vice versa.

### **Tarantella.....Sophie Alpern and Sondra Forsyth**

*Choreography: Sondra Forsyth*

*Music: Ottorino Respighi arranged by Rossini*

The Tarantella began in Taranto, Italy in the 15th century. People believed that the bite of the tarantula spider could cause madness but that the cure was music and dancing, hence the lively folk dance during which the participants play tambourines. Our version combines folk dance steps with balletic pointe work.

**Russian Folk Dance.....Andrei Kisselev and Yana Volkova**

*Choreography: Andrei Kisselev and Yana Volkova*

*Music: Traditional*

This rousing dance is in the style of the renowned Russian choreographer Igor Moiseyev who founded his company in 1937 and led it to worldwide acclaim. His work has its roots in the dances of the Russian people, yet his dancers perform on a professional level because of their training in both ballet and character dance. The latter refers to classes that ballet dancers take in order to learn theatricalized versions of dances from cultures around the globe.

**Malagueña.....Sondra Forsyth**

*Choreography: Sondra Forsyth*

*Composer: Ernesto Lecuona*

This adaptation of Flamenco from Spain is complete with “zapateados,” or heel beats. The dancer wears shoes with nail heads on the soles in order to make the required staccato sounds. These shoes may have been precursors of the tap shoes that evolved in America. However, the metal plates on the soles of tap shoes create a very different sound from the nail heads on Flamenco shoes. The dancer also plays the “castañuelas” or castanets. The Spanish word for these musical instruments comes from "chestnut" because that is the best wood for a clear sound.

**Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy from "The Nutcracker".....Lauren Jaeger**

*Choreography: after Marius Petipa*

*Composer: Pyotr Illich Tchaikovsky*

For this selection from the holiday classic, the ballerina wears a short or "classical" tutu. Longer tutus are called "romantic." This dance is deceptively difficult because the ballerina projects an endearing sweetness while executing intricate pointe work. "The Nutcracker" was first performed at the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, Russia on December 5th, 1892. Since then, choreographers all over the world have adapted the ballet. That's a testimony to the international language and global appeal of dance.

**Hoedown.....Sophie Alpern, Andrei Kisselev, Sondra Forsyth**

*Choreography: Sondra Forsyth*

*Music: Traditional arranged by Arthur Fiedler*

A hoedown is an American folk dance harking back to the reels performed in England. Our version also incorporates elements borrowed from the Irish Jig, the Scottish Highland Fling, the Polish Mazurka and Polka, the Middle Eastern "grapevine," and the American "soft shoe." Get ready for some audience participation right in your seats at the end of this dance!

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Sondra Forsyth**, Founder and Artistic Director, began her in arts-in-education work in the 1980s when she was a Co-Director of the Huntington Ballet Theatre on Long Island. In 1992, after returning to Manhattan, she originated the Harkness Ballet Outreach program under the auspices of the 92<sup>nd</sup> St Y and served as principal Teaching Artist for six seasons before leaving to found Ballet Ambassadors. Sondra has served as a guest teacher for the American Ballet Theatre open classes and on the faculty of the School at Steps on Broadway, the SUNY Purchase Youth Ballet, the Harkness Dance Center of the 92nd Street Y, the Interlochen Center for the Arts, and Studio de Ballet Opera in Beirut, Lebanon. During her performing career, she danced principal and solo roles with Thalia Mara's Ballet Repertory, the Huntington Ballet Theatre, the New York Dance Theatre, and Dance Vectors, a multicultural company in NYC. In addition to studying ballet and modern with top teachers, she has studied Character Dance (folk dance from around the world) as well as Flamenco, including castanets, while in Spain, and Chinese Classical Dance. Sondra is a Featured Blogger on Dance.com. Her articles have appeared in *Dance Magazine*, *Dancer Magazine*, and many major publications. She is the author or co-author of eleven books and holds an M.A. from Harvard.

**Andrei Kisselev** trained in his native Russia and performed for several years with the legendary Moiseyev Dance Company. He went on to join the cast of "Riverdance on Broadway" and later toured with the show for five years. He received a rave review in the *New York Times* for a performance with Rebecca Kelly Ballet. Andrei holds a degree in education from the College of Art in Vladimir, Russia. He is a Professor of Ballet at Manhattanville College and he is the Director of the Bolshoi Ballet Summer Intensive held each year in Connecticut.

**Yana Volkova** dances principal roles with the Metropolitan Opera Ballet at Lincoln Center. Prior to that, she was a featured dancer with her husband, Andrei Kisselev, in "Riverdance on Broadway." Yana has appeared on television here and abroad and she has extensive teaching experience. She was trained in the Vaganova Ballet Method in her native Russia by Valentina Narozhnaya and she holds a B.A. in Choreography, Ballet, and Character Dance from the Russian Academy of Theatrical Arts in Moscow.

**Lauren Jaeger** is a member of the critically acclaimed Buglisi Dance Theater, a contemporary company that tours extensively here and abroad. She holds a BFA in Ballet Performance from Marymount Manhattan College which she attended on full scholarship. An alumna of the Ridgefield Conservatory of Dance in Connecticut, she is a past recipient of the Patricia Schuster Scholarship. Ms. Jaeger appeared in numerous principal roles as a member of the Ridgefield Civic Ballet, Bare Bones Dance Project, Contemporary Dance Ensemble, and for the Danbury Music Centre's "Nutcracker." She is an experienced teacher who has held faculty positions at Ballet Hispanico, Manhattan School of Ballet, and Peridance.

**Sophie Alpern** began her training in NYC at the School at Steps and was subsequently accepted by audition into the prestigious School of American Ballet. She danced children's roles with the New York City Ballet for several seasons before returning to Steps to study with Leslie Browne, the former American Ballet Theatre principal dancer who starred in the film "Turning Point." In the spring of 2010, Ms. Alpern received her B.A. from Vassar College where she was a member of the Vassar Repertory Dance Theatre. For the company's 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Gala, she danced in George Balanchine's "Valse Fantasie" under the direction of renowned ballerina Merrill Ashley. Sophie continues to study at Steps with her mother, Nancy Bielski, an internationally known master teacher.

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