

# ITHACA BALLET NEWS

SPRING 2010

## Our Spring Offering: A Premiere of Giselle

I am so very pleased and proud to present the full-length *Giselle* this April 24 and 25, 2010. This is the most exciting and involved project that the Ithaca Ballet has engaged in since our four-act *Swan Lake* in 2008 and before that, *Romeo and Juliet* in 2005.

What makes *Giselle* so good?

*Giselle* was originally choreographed in 1841, but what has amazed me, time and time again as I have staged this ballet, is how timeless it is and what great entertainment it remains to this day. It is no surprise that ballet companies the world over keep this ballet in their repertoires.

At first look, the story is a bit far-fetched. Count Albrecht has disguised himself as a peasant and has fallen in love with a young peasant girl named Giselle, and she with he. Her mother, Berthe, is very suspicious of Albrecht and would prefer that Giselle marry Hilarion, a simple huntsman who is also in love with Giselle. Hilarion secretly sees Albrecht with his cape, sword and squire and realizes that Albrecht is fooling Giselle about being a peasant. When a royal hunting party enters the village with Albrecht's fiancée, Bathilde, Hilarion shows Giselle the mistake she has made. When Albrecht cannot honestly tell Giselle that he is not engaged to another woman, Giselle goes mad and dies of a broken heart.

Act II takes place in a clearing in the woods where Myrtha, the evil Queen of the Wilis, seeks revenge on every man who unwittingly enters the forest after midnight. Based on a German fairy tale, Wilis are young women who have been jilted and die before their wedding day. They will force any man they come upon to dance himself to death.

At the opening of Act II, Hilarion, grief-stricken, has fallen asleep at Giselle's grave. He wakes at midnight and is surrounded by countless Wilis. With Myrtha at the head, they actually form a phalanx and stalk him, in what must be one of the most striking images I have ever seen in a ballet, new or old. Once the Wilis have dispatched with Hilarion, Albrecht, looking for Giselle's grave, enters their midst.

*Giselle* tries to intervene on Albrecht's behalf, but Myrtha is determined to make him dance to death. However, Giselle is able to keep him alive until dawn, when the Wilis must return to their graves.

Based on themes of true love, betrayal and forgiveness, the story of *Giselle* is very compelling, and the choreography, based on the original by Jules Perrot and Jean Coralli, is just incredible and so timeless.

Our cast for *Giselle* is outstanding. Beth Mochizuki, one of our two Principal Women, is doing the role of Giselle. Beth has both beautiful classical lines and a rare dramatic capability necessary for this complex role. Giselle must be

(continued on page three)



Photo: Sherman Bamber

Beth Mochizuki as Giselle with Johann Studier.



The production of *Giselle* is made possible, in part, with support from the Cayuga Radio Group and with grant support from the Community Arts Partnership.

# Alumni News

by Alice Reid



**Christopher Fairbank** is one of my most memorable alumni. I will dedicate this spring "alumni news" section to him. To begin with, here is a note he submitted through the Ithaca Ballet website ([www.ithacaballet.org](http://www.ithacaballet.org)) in January:

"Hello, Happy New Year! I am one of the Ithaca Ballet alumni, and I thought I would give an update on myself. I am the executive artistic director and owner of a ballet school by the name of Performing Arts Conservatory of Texas. Please feel free to update me on the alumni page. I personally love looking at the page to see where all the other dancers that I grew up with or saw grow up have gone. WOW, everyone has done very well for themselves, and it's wonderful to see." Thank you, Christopher Fairbank.

When Christopher graduated from high school, Dryden High '96, Lavinia gave him a good-bye party at her house, Swan Cottage on Esty Street. When he said goodbye and I walked him to the door, tears were streaming down his cheek, and he gave me a bear hug.

He said, "Alice, if it weren't for you, I'd either be in jail or dead." He wasn't kidding: he really meant it. His story will tell you why. **Lena Rose**

**Magee**, a senior dancer in our Ithaca Ballet Company and his neighbor on Rte. 338 south of Dryden, brought 14-year-old Christopher to be a party boy in our 1991 *Nutcracker*. He was musical and learned his choreography easily, so we offered him a scholarship at the Ballet Center School.

It turned out that he had been adopted by Elmer Fairbank after being in seven different foster homes. He had learned that the way to get along in this world is to be friendly and outgoing. That was proof of a high intelligence that would carry him quickly into a dance career.

After high school, he did his Mormon service of two years in the Philippines. When he came back, he picked up dancing as if he'd never stopped. In the fall of '99, he went to the Columbia City Ballet in South Carolina where he soon became a principal dancer. He married Pamela Muir in March of 2002. Then they moved to Texas so she could pursue graduate studies at the University of Texas in Austin. In the fall of '02, Christopher became a principal dancer at the San Antonio Ballet.

Christopher and Pam live halfway between San Antonio and Austin. The



story of Christopher Fairbank, from being a foster child to a party boy in "Nutcracker '91" to directing his own regional ballet company, is inspiring. I think I would share it.

Come see Christopher in our upcoming *Giselle* as he dances the famous "Peasant Pas" in Act I with Company Soloist Julia Hellmich.

### *Looking for an old Ithaca Ballet friend?*

Send us your news in the envelope provided or through the Ballet website at [ithacaballet.org](http://ithacaballet.org). You can also find us on Facebook!

## *Thank you, members!*

The Board of Directors of the Ballet Guild of Ithaca would like to extend a heartfelt thank-you to everyone who responded to this winter's appeal with a gift to the Ithaca Ballet. Response this year exceeded our expectations and has been most gratifying. Your support will allow the Ballet to continue its tradition of showcasing the excellent talent and training of our dancers.

If you've not had the chance to send in your donation, now is the time! Please know that your membership gift really does make a difference in supporting this wonderful community treasure. Thank you again!



"Barcarola Veneciana," as performed at the Winterdance show at the State on February 27.

## Upcoming Ballet Events

**April 24-25:** Ithaca Ballet presents *Giselle* in two acts. The State Theatre. Saturday at 8:00 p.m. and Sunday at 3:00 p.m. Tickets on sale at State Theatre box office, online at [www.stateofithaca.com](http://www.stateofithaca.com) or by calling 607-27-STATE. Tickets also available at the door two hours before curtain.

**June 12:** Annual Ballet Center of Ithaca student recital. Lansing High School, 7:30 p.m. Tickets available at Body Gear Fitness & Dance on the Commons and at the Ballet Studio Saturday mornings two weeks prior. Also available at the door.

**June 28-August 6:** Ballet Guild of Ithaca's summer day camp in dance. Deposits due by May 15. Summer adult classes for beginners through advanced also offered. *New this year:* Pay your deposit and tuition online with a credit card. Visit the Ithaca Ballet website to download the registration form and for more information.

To buy 2010-'11 season tickets at this year's prices, visit [www.ithacaballet.org](http://www.ithacaballet.org), after May 1!



Waltz of the Flowers, Act II of *The Nutcracker*, at the State Theatre in December.

## Our Spring Offering: A Premiere of *Giselle*, cont.

(continued from page one)  
vulnerable and innocent, but she must also possess great strength of character and passionate love to save her beloved, even when she is already dead. Johann Studier, our resident guest artist, portrays Hilarion, the rough huntsman who loves Giselle. Nadia Drake, our other Principal, portrays the evil Myrtha, Queen of the Wilis. Guest Artist Brent Whitney will dance Albrecht, and Guest Alumnus Christopher Fairbank will partner Company Soloist Julia Hellmich in the Peasant Pas de Deux in Act I.

Extensive new costumes are being created for this production, including 16 gorgeous new Romantic-length

tutus for the Wilis, which are being constructed by Scott Dolphin with assistance by Hilary Sharp. Peasant garb is being sewn by long-time Ithaca Ballet wardrobe lady, Toby Hamilton, and royalty dress will be overseen by Alice Reid.

Sets are being constructed by Jim Sherpa, and lighting will be done by Ithaca Ballet Technical Director Craig Eagleson.

The dancers and I are eagerly anticipating our new ballet. Please don't miss this exciting Ithaca premiere of *Giselle*.

Cindy Reid  
Co-Artistic Director, Ithaca Ballet

## Did you know?

Donations to the United Way of America can be designated to the Ithaca Ballet, which is an official 501(c)3 entity! This is a simple and easy way to donate to the ballet, especially if you already give to the United Way through payroll deductions.

You can do this through your **employer:** Ask for a United Way pledge card, and in the space provided to designate your gift to a specific agency, write in "Ballet Guild of Ithaca, Inc."

You can designate your United Way donation to the Ithaca Ballet online: go to [www.uwtc.org](http://www.uwtc.org) and click on the donation link for the Tompkins County United Way. After selecting the amount of your gift on the donation form, specify that it go to the "Ballet Guild of Ithaca" in the field provided.

Thanks so much!



Rosie Grady Sayvetz dancing Coffee in the 2009 *Nutcracker*.

Ballet Guild of Ithaca, Inc.  
P.O. Box 4341  
Ithaca, NY 14852-4341

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## Summer Day Camp in Dance

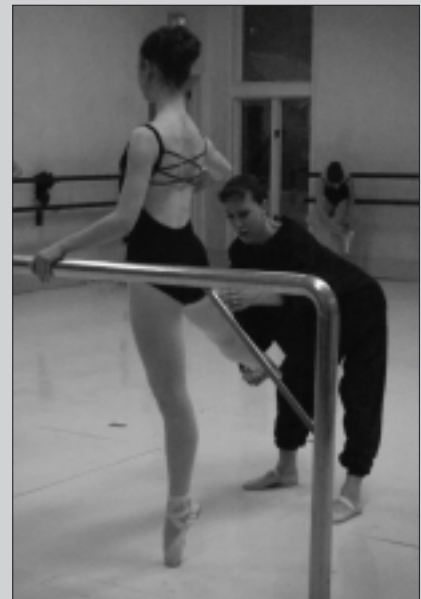
The Ballet Guild of Ithaca will offer its annual Summer Day Camp in dance this year from June 28-August 6, Monday through Friday. The first session is from June 26-July 16, and the second session is from July 19-August 6.

This intensive program is designed for kids 8-18 years old. Along with our talented and distinguished faculty, we include guest instructors for workshops.

### Daily activities include:

- dance technique classes including ballet, pointe, modern, jazz, stretch, and character
- workshop covering music, mime, stagecraft, anatomy, nutrition, and more
- daily recreational activities including swimming
- performance experience

The Ballet Guild summer day camp is offering an expanded curriculum this year to include an advanced level. All campers will take a placement class at the beginning of camp to place them in the proper level. Camp hours are 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at the Ballet Center of Ithaca, 504-506 N. Plain Street in downtown Ithaca. A deposit of \$100 is due by **May 15** to register your child. Registrations received after that date will be subject to a \$25 late fee. Call 257-6066 or visit our website at [www.ithacaballet.org](http://www.ithacaballet.org) for more information.



*Cindy Reid works with a student.*

**ITHACA BALLET**

Join us at The State Theatre for the premiere of *Giselle* in two acts on Saturday, April 24, at 8:00 p.m., and Sunday, April 25, at 3:00 p.m.