



C E C C H E T T I
I N T E R N A T I O N A L
 c l a s s i c a l b a l l e t

Cecchetti International Classical Ballet

Annual Newsletter No. 14, 2008

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Photos by Anthony Hawkesworth Arrangement by Terra Mahood

These pictures capture some of the energy and enthusiasm that marked the 2008 CICB event. To purchase the CD with over a thousand colour photographs and the DVD of the stage classes, semi-finals and finals please see Resources on page 15, proceeds go to the next competition planned for 2011.

CONGRATULATIONS

to all the 28 young dancers who made the
2008 CECCHETTI INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION
such a very special event

Nicole Ellis, James Lyttle, Kirsten Marsh, Lachlan Phillips Dominique Yong (Australia)

Jennifer Bobo, Alexa Castle, Janna Fuller, Mary Steward (CCA)

Stephanie Carter, Marlie Couto, Claire Keeley, Mary Kate O'Sullivan,
Aileen Park, Madison Simons (CUSA)

Corynne Barron, Tanya Chumak, Garrett Groat, Alexandra Gibson,
Jennifer Gibson, Julian Lucila, Lucie McEvenue, (Canada)

Lara Brandi (Italy)

Candice Dennison, Kirsten Mansfield, Alexandra Potgieter (South Africa)

Lauren Claire Smith, Ruth Brill (UK)

Cover image, from left to right

Top layer: Alexa Castle-CCA, Lachlan Phillips-Aus., Nicole Ellis-Aus., James Lyttle-Aus.

2nd layer: Garrett Groat-Can., Alexandra Gibson-Can., Ruth Brill-UK, Marlie Couto-CUSA

3rd layer: Marlie Couto-CUSA, Alexandra Potgieter-SA, Kirsten Mansfield-SA, Madison Simons-CUSA

4th layer: Mary Kate O'Sullivan-CUSA, Corynne Barron-Can., Corynne Barron-Can., Candice Dennison-SA

5th layer: James Lyttle-Aus., Kirsten Marsh-Aus., Mary Kate O'Sullivan-CUSA, Mary Kate O'Sullivan

6th Layer: Jennifer Gibson-Can., Julian Lucila-Can., Garrett Groat-Can., Mary Steward-CCA

Up-coming Events 2007

AUSTRALIA	July 10	Lucie Saronova Memorial Award - Sydney
CCA	Jan. 25	CCA Ballet Day
	July 12 to 25	International Student Summer School, Hope College, Holland Michigan
	July 12 to 25	Teacher Training Intensive - The Art of Classical Ballet, location as above. Each of the 17 committees also hold 1 or 2 days of workshops several times a year. Watch www.cecchetti.org for details.
CANADA	Aug. 4 to 9	Cecchetti Society of Canada Summer Course, National Ballet School, Toronto. Watch www.cecchetti.ca for details
CUSA		Summer School, location and dates to be announced www.cecchettiusa.org
UK	Jul. 25 to	Junior Summer School (10 to 16 years) at The Arts Educational School, Tring,
	Aug. 1 incl.	Herts: Tel: +44 1245 293781 (24-hr voice mail) or email cjss@cecchetti.co.uk
	Aug. 2 to 7 incl.	Students' Summer School (15 up, holding a minimum of Intermediate)
		Chichester (alongside the Teachers' Course):
		Tel: +44 1245 293782 (24-hr voice mail) or email cssc@cecchetti.co.uk
	Aug. 1 to 7 incl.	Teachers' Summer School, Chichester: Tel: +44 1245 293783 (24-hr voice mail)
		or email ctss@cecchetti.co.uk
		Alternatively, anyone interested is very welcome to contact: +44 1245 267314
		or email: eswan@cecchetti.co.uk

CONTACTS

CICB Chairman: Betty Seibert CUSA bseibert@cheshiredancecentre.com
CICB Secretary/Treasurer: Sheila Kennedy hskn@telus.net
Australia: Carole Hall, chair: Wendy Cliff, sec: enrico@cecchettiballet.org
Canada: Joyce Shietze, chair: Catherine Hazin, office admin: cecchettioffice@shaw.ca
Italy: Stefania Sansavini, president info@ateneodanza.it
Susan Brooker & Raymond Lukens, delegates
Southern Africa: Gail Myburgh, artistic director. Eileen Phillips, sec: cecchetti@yebo.co.za
Yvonne Barker, delegate
CUSA: Marnell Himes, executive administrator mushijima@socal.rr.com
Betty Seibert, delegate
C.C.A. office ccainfo@aol.com
Lee Ann King & Ann Parsley, delegates
UK & Europe: Elisabeth Swan, chair: eswan@cecchetti.co.uk
Juliet Locks & Maureen Christie, delegates

www.cicb.org – CICB
www.cecchettiballet.org – Australia
www.cecchetti.ca – Canada
www.danzarececchetti.org – Italy
www.cecchetti.co.za – Southern Africa
www.cecchettiusa.org – CUSA
www.cecchetti.org
– Cecchetti Council of America
www.istd.org – UK & Europe
ALWAYS WELCOME: suggestions for further Cecchetti Pioneers, comments, articles, photographs, videos, web sites, book & music titles for the next newsletter.
Please mark CICB and send at any time to:
hskn@telus.net

OUTGOING CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

At our most recent CICB conference I stepped down as Chairman of the International Society. Having been originally designated “coordinator” for two years, and then elected as Chairman in Italy; I have been most privileged to be member of the Corporate Members board since the first meeting in Canada in 1997.

During the ensuing years we have been slowly moving towards an International organization which benefits all of its members, with the flexibility to continue to govern each of our own societies as we have done in the past, but, with the support and shared experiences of all of our member societies, to carry out the aims of the international society to promote and advance Cecchetti worldwide.

Sometimes, over the past 11 years I have worried that we had been standing still, even going backwards, but communication has not always been easy when everyone is far apart, and so busy with their own projects - thank goodness for technology - the internet, email and the

telephone - but I feel now that we are finally ‘together’. We once again have all seven founding member societies on the board, and are all traveling in the same direction. I know Cecchetti will remain in its place as one of the most extraordinary exemplary methods of teaching classical ballet in the 21st century.

I sense there is an opinion about that the Cecchetti is rather old fashioned. I can understand this in to-day’s hectic world where extensions are getting higher and pirouettes more numerous, but I am sure Cecchetti is not out of date - the training is extremely modern in its approach, and if we go back to basics and understand the genius of the Maestro we will be turning out beautifully trained, uninjured dancers who will be able to have a long life in their profession - be it classical ballet, contemporary dance, musical theatre or whatever form of dance will come in the future..

The major syllabi will continue to be modified, and CICB will be taking great pains to carefully modernize some of the

Robina Beard LCBA - MCA

content, but we are committed to retaining the history, the wonder of the Cecchetti magic. How to train for and perform the work beautifully in the future will be the constant quest for your International Society, and we have some formidable talent on our Corporate Members committee who will be collaborating in this.

So, you can see from this message that I leave ‘the chair’ reluctantly, but after 50 years of membership of one or other committee for The Cecchetti Society within Australia and in The International Society, I will enjoy the lack of responsibility (I think!)

I have received the most exquisite gift from all of you. I really like a glass of champagne, and I now have the most beautiful glasses out of which to drink the bubbles - two crystal Faberge champagne flutes, with Anna Pavlova’s image moulded into the stems. They are treasured by me, for their own intrinsic beauty, and also because they came from Cecchetti International - Classical Ballet. *Thank you.*

A WARM WELCOME TO THE NEW CHAIRMAN

Betty Seibert CUSA

Sincere thanks to Robina Beard and Carole Hall for her role as Secretary.



CICB's Web site

We welcome Mark Zetler who is the new manager for our website. He is presently updating it. **Please watch for more 2008 pictures and Cecchetti Pioneer Articles.** Suggestions and submissions for the web site should be sent to Betty Seibert, Chair. CICB, at **HYPERLINK** “mailto:bseibert@cheshiredancecentre.com” bseibert@cheshiredancecentre.com Please help us keep it up to date.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT on the CICB CONFERENCE

Aug. 3, 4, 5, 2008 Banff, Canada *by retiring Chairman, Robina Beard*

A report on the Conference and some resulting business.

Present: Robina Beard, Carole Hall (Australia), Joyce Shietze, Sheila Kennedy (Canada), Lee Ann King, Ann Parsley (CCA), Betty Seibert (CUSA), Juliet Locks, Maureen Christie (Cecchetti UK), Raymond Lukens (Italy), Gail Myburgh, Yvonne Barker (S. Africa), Diane van Schoor (Guest Founding Member).

Apologies: Susan Brooker Italy), Marnell Himes (CUSA), Stefania Sansavini (Italy).

We were very pleased to welcome Cecchetti UK back to the conference table to join the other societies from around the world. We also had a new delegate from CCA. After some initial reticence, our new delegates joined in the discussion with as much passion and enthusiasm as all our other corporate members.

One of the subjects for discussion was where and when the past CICB conferences have been held. The following information was presented:

- 1997 - Inaugural Meeting - Vancouver Island, Canada;
- 1999 - Civitanova Marche - Italy;
- 2001 - Melbourne - Australia;
- 2004 - Teleconference;
- 2005 - Los Angeles - USA;
- 2006 - Teleconference;
- 2008 - Banff - Canada

The finances of our organization were presented, and thanks to the generosity of Sheila Kennedy in donating all the proceeds from her invaluable resource "Notes

for a Dancer", and revenue from Richard Glasstone's "Thoughts" the society is in credit, and the auditor accepted the accounts. Many generous donations and travel points, including \$11,000.00 from CICB made the 2nd International competition possible. This was a great success resulting in \$8,000.00 being returned to CICB which is now invested in a GIC dedicated to the next Competition.

Some alterations were made to our By-Laws, and accepted by the board.

As required by the By-laws, nominations for office bearers were called for. The new chairman of CICB is Betty Seibert, CUSA, the vice chairman is Joyce Shietze, Canada, and Sheila Kennedy, Canada was re-elected as treasurer, with the added position of secretary.

The Future Direction for CICB - a proposal was submitted on behalf of Kate Simmons regarding an additional major examination. A letter is to be sent to thank her stating that while it had not been accepted at this time it led to some valuable discussion and outcomes. A most important decision, was made to proceed with revisions to the Adv. (2) and the creation of a "Professional Dancers' Teaching Course (PDTC). Diane van Schoor and Richard Glasstone will collaborate on this project. They are aiming to have the Adv. (2) completed by the end of this year.

The frequency of CICB meetings and Competitions was discussed and it was decided that at least one teleconference to be held in eighteen months and a meeting within 3 years. Research will be done on Skype, etc. but it was recognized that face-to-face meetings achieve far more than electronic ones. We will aim to hold our International Competition at three year intervals. All the delegates were charged with finding out about venues and accommodation etc. for the meetings and the competition.

Rules and regulations for the competition were discussed and those which were adopted will be recorded for use at the next competition. It is proposed to hold the 3rd CICB Competition in Britain in 2011. Further plans will be announced.

Under the expert guidance of Ross Alley with musicians Nina Pinzarrone, Lorel Plett and Susan Koybasi along with attending teachers additional music for the major material was selected during the Summer Course. The delegates thank Ross, Nina, Lorel, Susan and Diane for the time they gave to produce a CD which has been taken home by the delegates for trial and further input. Information will be circulated once this project is completed.

Fundraising for CICB - CUSA has produced posters of the Maestro and sold them at the Summer Course donating \$15.00 per poster to CICB. Please see Resources on page 15.

All countries were asked to promote these in their countries if possible. "Notes for a Dancer" continues to be a source of income to CICB. Canada was asked to organize further orders of the bags they had at the Summer Course, deleting the reference

AFFILIATED MEMBERS and FRIENDS of CICB

CICB Delegates would like to expand this membership category. Affiliated members are anyone holding a Cecchetti Teaching Qualification, but not belonging to a Corporate Member organization. Friends are all those interested in CICB, who by paying an annual membership fee receive the International Newsletter that comes out in November each year, and other information. Please visit www.cicb.org or email hsken@telus.net



photo courtesy of Alan Christie

Top row L-R Juliet Locks (UK), Gail Myburgh (SA), Raymond Lukens (It.), Diane van Schoor (guest), Betty Seibert (CUSA), Joyce Shietze (Can.), Yvonne barker (SA)
Lower row L-R Ann Parsley (CCA), Robina Beard (Aus.), Carole Hall (Aus.), Maureen Christie (UK), Lee Ann King (CCA), Sheila Kennedy (Can.)

to the Course and featuring CICB. Carole will ask her country for ideas.

Update on the Shiela Darby Legacy – Raymond and Betty are following up.

ABT Curriculum – Raymond presented an excellent video of the syllabus devised by Franco De Vita and himself, based on Cecchetti for the ABT Students.

There were two items not included in the agenda.

A Supplementary Theory book for Teachers was shown by CCA. The delegates who saw it gave it an enthusiastic review as a most useful publication.

Canada's new Related Subjects proposed for their Associate level requirements was shown.

The Conference Centre in Banff was most interesting, the scenery was magnificent and the rates were unbelievably low. Delegates enjoyed the three days of intense discussions, mealtimes were enlivened by the presence of five husbands. Some delegates stayed longer on their own. Plenty achieved - plenty to work on for all our members.

INDIVIDUAL FOUNDING MEMBERS

Following the CICB Conference this year, a motion to create this membership category was circulated to the delegates by email, moved by Joyce Shietze (8/10/08) and seconded by Raymond Lukens (8/11/08). All those attending the inaugural CICB Conference in 1997 will be invited to become Individual Founding Members. Yvonne Barker, Robina Beard, Franco De Vita, Mary-Jane Duckworth, Rose Marie Floyd, Richard Glasstone, Carole Hall, Sheila Kennedy, Lee Ann King, Raymond Lukens, Diane van Schoor, Betty Seibert, Joyce Shietze.

Individual Founding Members may hold office; would have no vote, but would have an active voice; are welcome at all meetings at their own expense; if specifically invited, fares and accommodation are paid by the shared pool of expenses for that meeting, with CM's agreement; if already teaching at the summer course, with fare paid, conference accommodation is paid by the shared pool of expenses for that meeting, with CM's agreement. Communication is currently taking place between all delegates to finalise this decision.

International Summer Course and Competition

Calgary, Alberta, July 2008

by Eva Romanowski-Annett and Juliet Locks

This summer I was thrilled to attend the Cecchetti International Classical Ballet summer course and competition in Calgary, Alberta. As a Canadian, I was truly proud to see our country host such a prestigious event and equally excited to renew friendships and meet new Cecchetti teachers and students from around the globe.

The organising committee should be proud of their work in coordinating such a major event because it was evident in the meticulous planning and scheduling. To fulfill the goal of meeting the needs of students, teachers and competitors in one summer school under one roof is no easy task. Yet, thanks to the generosity of the School of Alberta Ballet under the directorship of Nancy and Murray Kilgour and the hard work of a stellar committee, this summer school not only surpassed those goals but gave all participants a summer school to remember.

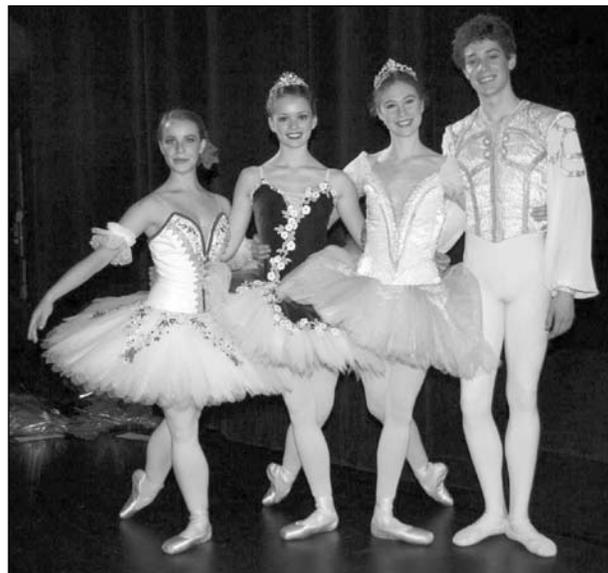
The School of Alberta Ballet was literally abuzz in dance. Five studios were awash with students and teachers yearning to get the most out of their bodies. Teachers had the privilege of working with an outstanding faculty which included Nancy Kilgour, Diane van Schoor, Sheila Kennedy. Their understanding, respect and love for the Cecchetti work are so tangible that it breathed life to every class. In the hands of those brilliant teachers, we were willing to push ourselves so we too could experience the technical challenges, the dynamics, the phrasing or the sheer beauty of putting all those elements together. As well as the majors, pedagogy and music were offered, the latter taught by Ross Alley whose knowledgeable and energetic manner was welcomed at the end of the day. The "Fitness table" was an inspired addition to the summer course. The introductory class taught by Patricia Maybury let us experience a new way of lengthening muscles, strengthening the spine and developing muscle tone.

Teachers were also free to watch and observe students

and competitors in their daily classes. From ballet to pointe, from variations to contemporary, from character to repertoire, students were fortunate to dance so many disciplines under the guidance of a truly international faculty. This included: Raymond Lukens, Murray and Nancy Kilgour, Diane van Schoor, Janet Tait, Jean Freebury, Joyce Shietze, Edmund Stripe, Aram Manukyan and Marijka Stanowych. The classes were a joy to watch due in part to the inspired playing of the musical faculty which included: Sharon Fox, Susan Koybasi, Lorel Plett and Nina Pinzarrone. As you will read, the competition concluded the summer course and celebrated not only the talent of the dancers but also brought attention to the Cecchetti method as a viable training method for future performers to the world stage. The success in Calgary has given us the inspiration and the energy on which to build. I hope to meet my fellow friends (in the not to distant future) at the 3rd CICB Summer Course and Competition.

– Eva Romanowski-Annett

An exciting and prestigious competition linked to the course was held at the Max Bell Theatre, in Calgary from July 31st – Aug. 2. Twenty eight dancers, ages 19 and under, from seven different parts of the world – Australia, Canada, Italy, Cec-



L-R Mary Kate O'Sullivan (CUSA), Kirsten Marsh (Aus.), Alexandra Potgieter (S. Africa), James Lyttle (Aus.)

chetti USA, Cecchetti Council of America, South Africa and United Kingdom, showed their talents in Classical and Contemporary Ballet, entertaining audiences on three consecutive evenings. From the twenty eight competitors nine were chosen to perform their solos at the Gala Performance on the Saturday night. The teachers of all the dancers are deserving of the highest praise for the standard achieved by their pupils. The nine finalists were James Lyttle, Kirsten Marsh, Dominique Yong (Australia), Mary Kate O'Sullivan (CUSA), Garrett Groat, Alexandra Gibson (Canada), Alexandra Potgieter (South Africa), Lauren Claire Smith, Ruth Brill (United Kingdom). Jean Grand-Maître, Artistic Director of Alberta Ballet, and Robina Beard, Chair of CICB, Masters of Ceremonies, introduced us to the judges: Desmond Kelly, formerly Assistant Director of Birmingham Royal Ballet, Anthony Randazzo, Ballet Master of Boston Ballet and Diane Van Schoor, Principal of White Lodge Royal Ballet School. Their task included watching the students in both the class situation taught by Jean Freebury and Edmund Stripe, accompanied by Nina Pinzarrone as well as their solos on stage.

The atmosphere was electric on the evening of the Gala and tension rose as the finalists performed their solos. Artists of the Alberta Ballet, Jung- Min Hong and Bernard Courtot de Boutellier then danced the "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux", during which time the Adjudicators retired to make their final decisions on Awards. The Competition was a wonderful Showcase for Cecchetti Classical Ballet world wide, and it is likely the prestige of this event will flourish with another competition planned for 2011.

It is encouraging that the Cecchetti Method of Ballet is alive and flourishing worldwide and with a successful Competition and Conference in Canada to bring its members together, we hope to see a continuing growth and development in the future.

– Juliet Locks

Comments received from participants:

Among the many comments received after the event this was a most treasured one from Kennet Oberly..

I felt that the competition as a whole was very well thought out and went surprisingly smoothly. I was a coach for one of the competitors and appreciated that the program was set up in a way to be more of an educational experience as opposed to just another hard core competition. I have coached both at Jackson and Helsinki and have vowed never again to be a part of something like that and went into this one with trepidation. However it turned out to be a positive experience. The teachers were all well chosen and the competitors taken into consideration that this was to be only a stepping stone as a learning experience and that many will still go on to professional careers despite that they didn't "win" something. Well done and you have my applause! Thank you and congratulations on a competition well done, and one that made sense!

– Kennet Oberly

The International Cecchetti Summer Course was a treasured experience for me. As a student training in the professional

fall at Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet School. Diane van Schoor, Nancy Kilgour and Raymond Lukens were inspirational. They each knew exactly how to bring out the best in me, and push me to new levels that I had yet not achieved.

Secondly, I enjoyed the variety of classes that were available to us. The modern and character were very different from what I was used to. This has opened my mind and was very interesting to see the different methods. I'm very thankful I went to the course, it rekindled a joy for the Cecchetti method which I have not studied for over 5 years.

– Nerissa McRury, Canada

yay! what a awesome time hey competitors! Well done.. what a wonderfully organised event!!!!

Thank you very much for asking me to submit my thoughts on Calgary and the Cecchetti International Classical Ballet Competition. I wish to thank the Cecchetti Society of Canada and the School of Alberta Ballet most sincerely for granting me this wonderful opportunity. We were welcomed to Calgary by the warm sunshine, pretty tree-lined streets and colourful hanging baskets and pots boasting the presence of Spring. What a beautiful city ! Classes given at the beautiful School of Alberta Ballet, with dancers, teachers and specialists sharing such a wealth of knowledge, it was a fantastic experience. So stimulating were these classes that I found myself dancing around my hotel room for a further hour or two!

Meeting fellow candidates from all over the world, each with their own magic to offer, showed that music and dance is one language understood by all! The dancers were all so friendly and much laughter, fun and camaraderie was shared. (for example, desperately sewing a pointe shoe ribbon on with dental

floss, just before a performance ! Thank you Australia !) As the week progressed the atmosphere became electric with excitement, anticipation, preparations and rehearsals. Dancing at the Max Bell Theatre with all its magnificence was an experience which I shall always treasure. Thank you Calgarians, for your warm, friendly hospitality ! Thank you for two wonderful weeks !

– Kirsty Mansfield, South Africa

Maestro Cecchetti Award \$5,000 Kirsten Marsh, V.C.A.S.S. Australia coached by Anne Butler & Ben Ho

Most promising Dancer \$2,000

James Lyttle, Australia coached by Carole Oliver & Ben Ho

Adjudicators' Choice \$2,000

Alexandra Potgieter, South Africa coached by Lynne Fouché

Musicality and Dynamics in Movement Award \$2,000

Mary Kate O'Sullivan, CUSA coached by Sylvia Palmer

Australian Ballet School, 1 week tuition

Dominique Yong, Australia, coached by Hilary Kaplan & Archibald McKenzie

National Ballet School of Canada, 2 weeks summer school

Kirsten Marsh, Australia, coached by Anne Butler & Ben Ho

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School, American Ballet Theatre, 1 year tuition.

Garrett Groat, Canada, coached by Margaret Dalwood

School of Alberta Ballet, 1 year tuition

Alexandra Potgieter, S.Africa, coached by Lynne Fouché

Royal Ballet School two weeks summer school

Alexandra Potgieter, S.Africa, coached by Lynne Fouché

field of dance, I will carry the many teachings received in all my further studies. What I really enjoyed from the course were the many different teachers I was fortunate to work with. The wealth of worldwide talent all comprised under one conference was an unforgettable experience. From the various teaching styles of the instructors, I will be bringing back with me a piece of knowledge from all of them as I pursue my studies this

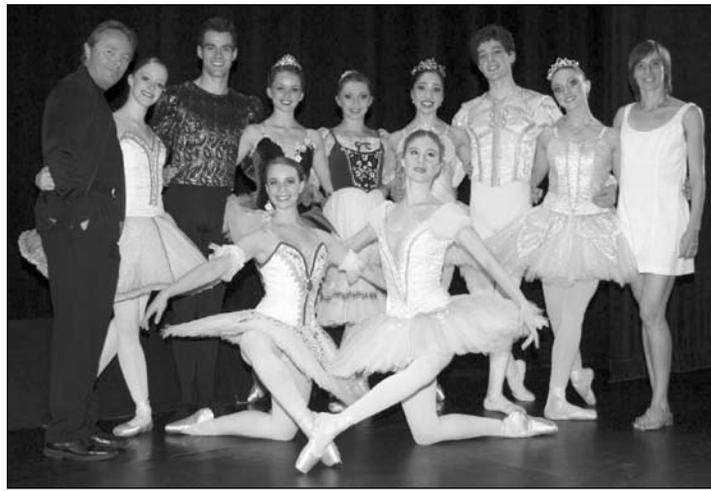
Thank you Cecchetti USA, Alberta Ballet, all of the competitors and organizers, it was an experience I will never forget!

– Mary Kate O’Sullivan, USA

I love Cecchetti ballet! C’mon and say it with me people!

– Lachlan Phillips, Australia

It was really wonderful being exposed to many new styles of dance, as well as having the opportunity to witness such a



L-R standing, Edmund Stripe, Alexandra Gibson (Canada), Kirsten Marsh (Aus.), Ruth Brill (Britain), Dominique Yong (Aus.), James Lyttle (Aus.), Lauren-Claire Smith (Britain), Jean Freebury. Kneeling, Mary Kate O’Sullivan (CUSA), Alexandra Potgieter (S. Africa)

wonderful International Cecchetti Competition.

– Mary Sinz, USA, age 16, working towards the Final Diploma.

Thank you so much for everything. The competition was such an enjoyable experience. Such great classes and such a friendly and encouraging atmosphere for us all. A real privilege to have been involved. Thank you for so many wonderful memories that I will take with me!

– Ruth Brill, Britain.

International Forum – Maxbell Theatre – Calgary, August 2, 2008

Robina Beard was Moderator with an International panel from Australia, Britain, Canada, Southern Africa, and the USA. - Yvonne Barker, Carole Hall, Desmond Kelly, Lee Ann King, Juliet Locks, Raymond Lukens, Beverley Miller, Anthony Randazzo, Diane van Schoor, Joyce Shietze.

Lynne Fouché, Marnell Himes, Betty Seibert and Murray Kilgour were unable to attend.

An excellent talk from Beverley Miller giving a fascinating record of her Cecchetti memories, stressing the theatre and values of the method set the stage for the two hour Forum. Questions flowed easily from the audience and the resulting opinions from the panel gave anyone teaching the method a lot to think about.

The wide range of topics raised by the audience included:

- The image of the Method in professional companies
- The ‘look’, what, if anything, in the method is out-dated?
- Marketing strategy
- CICB Competitions, is there a will to maintain the Calgary format on a regular basis?
- A proposal to create a more ‘up to date’ examination, to be taken in conjunction with the Maestro Cecchetti Diploma.
- Is the training of the Cecchetti Advanced II syllabus, a logical and progressive link to the requirements expected of

today’s professional dancer?

- What our training must accommodate
- The importance of ‘live’ performances
- How can Cecchetti Societies, CICB and the method meet the needs of regular studios?

Responses from the panel

Image of the Method in professional companies:

1. Artistic Directors have the say regarding training. We need to make them more interested in the Cecchetti training method, this relates to repertoire used in each company.
2. Each company has its own tradition, what is the culture of each company?
3. Companies need to be more encompassing.
4. The method is multi purpose with the 6 day programme of professional set work – it has a scientific base, safe, makes for less injuries, and a longer dancing life.
5. The method will not survive if not taught in professional schools.
6. We need to look at what is feeding into the Major work, and to look at Advanced 1 & 2 syllabi.
7. What is wanted for a dancer to be employed? See Conference Report for #'s 6 & 7

The “Look” of the Method

1. pelvic and spinal alignment - safe and

controlled. The method is not out-dated, but teaching these days often does not go beyond upright stance. When taken further there is so much more body movement, as there used to be. Fads and cycles come and go but Cecchetti basic principles always remain.

2. if used correctly the method produces performers not just technicians.
3. Versatility, simplicity, dancers must be able to impact their audiences.
4. It was asked what was outdated about the use of lines and circles? A suggestion was offered that the terminology and approach to teaching might be updated to give more current meaning to the training.
5. With larger theatres today ‘the look’ needs to be broader.
6. Amalgamate methods to produce a good dancer – but we need to clarify the essentials of the Cecchetti method so that the value and detailed work is not misunderstood. Keep it living, not static. Retain the Romantic way of moving while understanding the body coordination required for the Romantic style. At present the interpretation is not understood. It is perceived as restricted movement.
7. There is plenty of variation of style in the major Cecchetti material if well taught. Young dancers lack physicality, the Cecchetti method should be regarded as developing greater physicality as well as all the other attributes.

8. It is valuable to study what each company is looking for.
9. Musicality, a true feeling for dynamics, versatility. The value of daily balanced muscle use such as the simple port de bras that has so much depth of detail developing malleability for all kinds of choreography.
10. Knowing how Cecchetti evolved his method offers dancers the ability to 'grow' in the knowledge of tradition.
11. One experienced dancer expressed a wish that she had had an earlier exposure to the method.
12. The method was described as unsurpassed in the detailed coordination of the whole body.

Marketing strategy

It was agreed that marketing is necessary for individual Cecchetti Societies and CICB. It was suggested that there be a uniform image for Cecchetti, which could be designed and available for all the societies to use, in their publicity and advertising, so that this image would come to be recognized as "Cecchetti". This subject was taken to the CICB conference later in the week, and was discussed. Inquiries are being made by the various delegates, and we hope to have some progress on this soon.

CICB Competitions, is there a will to maintain the Calgary format on a regular basis?

CICB Competitions were discussed, and it was agreed that this is an excellent way to promote the method, please see Conference report, and reserve 2011 for the next such event.

A proposal to create a more 'up to date' examination, to be taken in conjunction with the Maestro Cecchetti Diploma was presented on behalf of a teacher who was unable to attend. This suggestion was also taken to the conference, and instigated a great deal of discussion.

Is the training of the Cecchetti Advanced II syllabus, a logical and progressive link to the requirements expected of today's professional dancer? Please see Conference report.

What our training must accommodate?

- 1) new generations with an awareness of the changes in attitude, mental development, education and practical conditions
- 2) more challenging to individual intelligence and imagination
- 3) more freedom to experiment with basic training being received

The importance of 'live' perfor-

mances, especially in this electronic age was emphasized

Further questions for you:

- How can Cecchetti Societies, CICB and the method meet the needs of regular studios?
- What role should the Cecchetti method play in movement training for all non-professional dancers, young children to all ages?

We would welcome views from all our dancers and teachers around the world – visit www.cicb.org and let us hear from you, give your email and we will try to reply.

The Forum concluded with an interesting question from one of the panel, who asked the audience to relate what they felt was so special about Cecchetti. It was clear that it means a lot of things to a lot of people, and all of them are positive and powerful. It was a most enlightening way in which to finish our first International Forum.

Now it is up to all of us who value the method to meet these challenges in our own teaching

DANCE BY DAY — LAUGH BY NIGHT – Chichester 2008

by Elaine Seidman, CCA East Coast Committee member

I have always told my new students, and their parents, that with their first Cecchetti class they become part of a family that is international and tightly knit. With their first Major Syllabus class they are learning traditional Cecchetti combinations that are the same throughout the world. The love of Cecchetti's work is something that goes beyond the exercises and the exams. There is something special in knowing that the work in the upper levels is a common, universal language. Having been awarded the Sylvia Hamer scholarship, I recently had the opportunity to live that statement at the Summer School in Chichester, a lovely town in the south of England with a charming town center, charming homes and a cathedral dating back to the 11th Century. In America we just don't have buildings that old!

The first few days were spent learning the Grades as they are in the UK Syllabus. This was very interesting since the work in the lower grades is not the same

as we teach in the States. Sandra Powell, Elisabeth Swan and Linda Pilkington were all wonderfully patient with my lack of knowledge of these syllabi and each was remarkably clear when teaching. These delightful instructors were able to help me understand not only the exercises but also the qualities and musicality of each. I left each class with a good understanding of the presented grade as well as where it was going within the Method. Additionally, these classes gave me some great ideas for enriching my approach to the lower grades in America.

Tuesday morning, I was fortunate enough to observe Richard Glasstone's class with the students and was so enriched by it. His ability to pull from the students the exact arms, head and timing with every exercise was amazing. The students were obviously in awe of him and I was as well. As we moved into the week and the Major Syllabus, with which I am very comfortable, it was inspiring to study with such

tremendous faculty, each with their own thoughts. Although the choreography of the exercises is shared throughout the world, every teacher had something special to bring to the work, making it feel fresh. I consider myself very lucky to have been trained by my teacher, Pamela Moore, to love the artistry and musicality of this difficult work, but delighted in each new approach to the method that these teachers had to offer.

Gillian Hurst's classes were dynamic with a tremendous sense of musicality and coordination of both arms and legs with the music. Her vigilance in teaching the "shape" and weight of the arms in port de bras injected a feeling of fullness in the arms that highlighted the artistry. I am a teacher who still dances and in Gillian's classes, I felt like a dancer, trying to do things the way she wanted them done and very sorry to disappoint at times. I thoroughly loved the "student" experience. Her flamenco class was also outstanding

and I enjoyed every second of it. Theresa Lungaro-Mifsud brought out such a joy and excitement with a discipline that can feel so impossible at times. Her passion for allegro is unsurpassed and she made everybody want to move without holding back. Her classes were exciting and bold and there was a great pirouette exercise in her unset class that I'll definitely be teaching to my students.

Penny Kay is a lovely, young teacher who demonstrates full out with command. She is extremely confident in her teaching style and very clear in her presentations. She had high expectations even from the older teachers in the class and wanted us all pulled up and placed properly. I especially enjoyed it when she told us that the leg was 90 degrees, not higher, not lower. We all tried very hard not to disappoint her. Jacqueline Davenport's classes surprised me. My first impression of her was that she was so quiet and shy. I didn't see how she'd manage to pull such advanced work out of her students. She is a quiet, elegant teacher whose voice was always calm, yet there was an excitement and theatricality present in her classes. In her teaching, the need to communicate with the audience was paramount. There was always singing, talking and facing partners. She was so good at reminding us that dancing must go beyond the mirrors and walls of the studios. My students will all be singing, talking and facing each other this year. I said this many times over the week but I will say it again, the pianists were amazing! Peter Jones, Derek Downes and Andrew West were inspiring. Sometimes, Diploma can seem so daunting and humbling, but with their music, I felt that I could do anything. I especially enjoyed the last class when Derek and Andrew played together. What a treat.

With such amazing faculty and pianists I felt very fortunate, but sharing the week with teachers of all ages from around the world was what I will never forget, South Africa, Spain, Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands, Malta, Germany, Scotland, England, Wales, how can I begin to express that magic? I never wanted to go to bed at night because I was having too much fun getting to know these delightful people from all over.

In Chichester I lived the reality of being part of an international family dancing all day and laughing all night.

Towards Musicality by Danie Fourie

In a talk presented to delegates of the 2007 National Cecchetti Summer School at Hilton College, Kwazulu-Natal, S. Africa, Mr. Fourie, senior lecturer in dance musicology at the UCT School of Dance, approached the subject of musicality in the ballet class from a somewhat different angle. He reports:

My brief suggested a discussion of the crucial role that music plays in the training of ballet dancers. Let's face it, we all want to instil the quality of *musicality* in our dancers effectively, and swiftly rectify any compromised component thereof wherever possible. Presuming that my audience had given ample thought to the subject in the course of their careers, I thought a seemingly quirky approach to the matter would stimulate new engagement. I therefore sought connections (the mark of all intelligent investigations?), i.e. commonalities and analogies, that would support my argument.

In this vein, it seemed wise to avoid fixating on the all too familiar aspects of what one might call *un-musicality*, e.g. off-the-beat dancing, bad timing, wooden phrasing, rigid or lacklustre interpretation, and awkward deportment. These failings are all too readily ascribed to inability, ignorance or insensitivity, and are considered irremediable. Therefore, I decided rather to stick to the well-tried *what, why and how* matrix, formulating an implicit manifesto as follows:

- Stop the tyranny of hierarchies ranking 'musically-challenged' teachers, students and dancers as culprits, victims or philistines, while bestowing some form of whiz-kid status on others.
- Demystify many dancers' innate musical expertise, which is all too often considered inexplicable, and simply assumed to be an incomprehensible gift from the gods.
- Consider common aesthetics that underpin all arts forms.
- Promote the equal, complementary and synergistic natures of ballet and music in the design of classical ballet.
- Contextualise the functions of ballet classes in terms of relevance to training and performance.

Admittedly, these notions would require conventional analysis, and I had hoped that my off-the-cuff talk - informed by experience and what I glean from others - would flow in a free, stream-of-consciousness delivery and, ideally, hold the attention of my participant audience

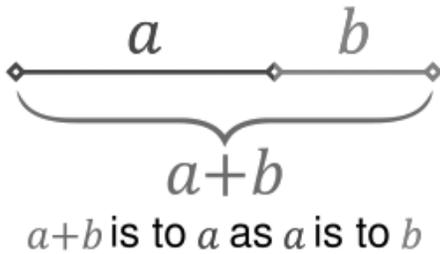
for about an hour! Well, this is how things evolved:

First, we visited one of the ancient Greek philosophical formulations developed by Pythagoras (c580-500BC) and his cronies a few millennia ago. This formulation connects physics and aesthetics in a mystical reduction of numbers to a simple ratio that proclaims mathematics as the ultimate reality of the universe.

The formulation of the laws of natural design and mankind's innate propensity for deriving pleasure from such agreeable qualities determined the ancient Greek concept of *aesthetics*. One definition of the term denotes aesthetics as 'the philosophy of taste' (and judgement) - the process by which the senses convey the perception of beauty to the mind in a formula of harmonious balance or symmetry (*sym*: with, together; *metry*: measure). Two ratios seemed to govern the formal design of natural, organic and physical shapes into attractive symmetries: the approximate numerical ratios of 1:2 (eg the mirror images of the two vertical halves of our faces) and 2:3 (eg the three vertical divisions of our faces).

Surfing the internet will provide further clarification of the geometric ratio known as the *golden ratio* or the *golden section*. This ratio, as illustrated below, apparently applies to a myriad of things - from the ideal (well-proportioned!) human form to the harmony of musical tones, both of which examples point significantly to the theme of our discussion. For instance, the relative proportions of the human body, demarcated by the joints (ankles, knees, hips, shoulders), are repeated in the visible divisions of the torso (clavicles, sternum, navel, pubis), the face (forehead, nose, chin), in the hands and feet and even in the digital division of toes and fingers. Such formal symmetry also corresponds to the structure of fruits (the surface patterns of pineapples and pine cones), flowers (the patterning of sunflower petals and seeds), shells (the proportional increase of conical spirals), and even musical instruments (if we measure the proportionate lengths of harmonising strings).

Wikipedia offers the following graphic illustration of the formula:



Thus, a little investigation reveals the ancient Greek measure for *classical* beauty that applies as much to the formal design of say, the ding-dong airport announcement (doh-mi-soh-doh), as to the shapely frames of the aeroplane fuselage, the air hostess and the layout of the glossy in-flight magazine cover!

But this rule also defines the principles of sound structural design and mechanics and, as such, links good physics with good physiques - here one might quote the concept of balance as a case in point. It comes as no surprise that the formal canon of classical ballet - as is the case in all the arts - adheres to the golden ratio in a refined presentation of measured positions and movements set in — well — *time and space*. And, it follows that the practice of ballet demands strict observance of the same laws of harmony when expressed both in movement *and* in music. As we know, when this ‘marriage’ is achieved, we consider a dancer *musical!*

This axiom supported the essence of my talk, and prompted the conclusion that dance education and training both require and should foster an understanding of the principles of aesthetics to achieve technical expertise *and* artistic excellence. (By the way, the ancient Greeks wisely employed the word *teknye* to define *both* qualities).

Since we see that the same law governs both artistic and technical excellence, cultivating an ideal what demands an understanding of *why*, for example, the arms look, feel and work better when positioned say two centimetres higher or lower, which in turn affects the *how* of correction and, musically, the when factor with regard to timing and dynamics. It seems feasible then to suggest that the transmission of old wisdom in the training traditions of past generations - that innate sense of ‘what looks good’ and ‘what works’ - should extend beyond the simple premise of

‘that’s the way it is and has always been’ and subscribe to classical enlightenment or exegesis, i.e. interrogation, explanation and revelation.

Let us therefore consider some elements shared by music and dance, and work these correspondences into the technical and artistic training programme of dancers. The following building blocks pertain to both dance and music composition:

- Vocabulary (a selection of understandable signals, i.e. a language).
- Form (sections, parts).
- Dynamics (all gradations of energy; velocity, attack, etc.).
- Rhythm (pulse regulation and duration patterns).
- Expression (communicated meaning).
- Style (sets of applied characteristics).
- Function.

Each of these elements contributes both to the movement tableau and to the *soundscape* in a particular manner. Each also incorporates a composite of sub-elements. In music, for instance, melody consists of a series of arranged notes (pitches of defined durations) grouped into phrases, rhythmic patterns, dynamic variations and a palette of expression enveloped in variable tone colours (vocal or instrumental). This is created with particular effects in mind and should be infinitely considered by a dancer moving to music (in fact, it is by far preferable to say moving *with* the music to avoid incorrectly applied hierarchical thinking).

The challenge is thus to identify how the dance harmonises or concertises with the melody: This is easily discernible in port de bras, where eye-line, épaulement, balance and transfer of weight all come into play. If necessary, each element should be analysed technically within the context of both the music and the dance and then practised in isolation and/or incremental combinations until a whole sequence falls into place.

Likewise, the music - with the assistance of an able pianist - can be deconstructed by isolating its components, pulse, rhythmic pattern, melody, dynamics (speed, accent and volume) and harmonic changes (e.g. a dissonance resolving into concord - usually signifying tension and release).

Of course, this kind of practice becomes essential where natural musicality seems lacking, but analysis need not be the rule for every class or rehearsal. Nonetheless, constant reference to these aspects reinforces awareness and leads to consummate artistry. In order to implement this working method, it is strongly advised that teacher, coach, dancer and student are all familiar with the jargon of music and dance, and can comprehend terminology such as *pitch*, *phrase*, *beat*, *accent*, etc. Here a glossary of definitions comes in really handy.

In the course of my talk, I engaged the assistance of volunteers to demonstrate some of these ideas. We looked at the proportional characteristics of the body and of dance positions, and discussed the geometric symmetries of some ballet positions and the stylised pathways of the dancer-body-in-motion. We noticed how ballet adhered to the principles of balance and beauty for practical (technical) *and* aesthetic reasons.

This led to a discussion of issues around familiar buzzwords such as *time and space* and how they relate to the control of speed and distance. Arguably, the function of music in ballet is to enhance the process of designed movement executed by the expressive body - ever-changing, suspended and transposed in space.

Music (designed sound) provides the elusive, nuanced and measured aural presence that matches - or teasingly resists - every calculated moment of movement. It can be described as the exquisite ticking of a complex sound clock pacing the dancer’s performance in a tapestry of vibration. To sum up: the musical dancer considers and expresses with infinite care the sensitive concord of the music and the dance, acknowledging both languages and making meaning visible in the translation and interpretation of artistic and aesthetic intention.

Remember the keywords: *awareness* and *understanding*. Also consider the fact that correct mechanics constitute the essence of beauty. The ballet class provides time and space for practising the immutable laws of the universe and presents a microcosm reflecting the macrocosm.

Let ballet then incarnate the music of the spheres and the dance of the heavenly bodies!

CECCHETTI PIONEERS

Valrene Tweedie O.A.M. (1925 – 2008)

by Athol Willoughby O.A.M., Fellow I.S.T.D.

All Cecchetti members and the many students who over the years have been examined by her will surely extend heart felt sympathy to the family of our beloved and most respected colleague Valrene Tweedie O.A.M. who lost her battle with cancer of the brain on the evening of August 4th at the age of 83.

The Cecchetti Organisation must count itself very fortunate to have had such an experienced member of the dance profession in this country as one of its staunchest supporters and examiners. After early training during the mid 1930s at the Byrlakov – Lightfoot Circular Quay studios in Sydney she went

onto study with Leon Kellaway, a former member of the Anna Pavlova Company before commencing to teach in Sydney. A gallery member at every performance of the visiting Colonel de Basil Ballet Russe in 1938-9 she was invited to take a Company class without realising that it was an audition; so shortly before her 15th

birthday she found herself being accepted into the Company even dancing in the 1940 world premiere of David Lichine's "Graduation Ball". At the age of 15 she sailed for the U.S.A. with the Company, first dancing in Los Angeles before heading on to the eastern states.

A tour of South America followed during which she married her first husband the Cuban dancer Luis Trapaga leaving the de BASIL Company she and Luis became foundation members of the Cuban "Ballet Alicia Alonso". When the latter dancers returned to Ballet Theatre in New York, Valrene became principal teacher in the newly formed school attached to the Company even guiding Alonso's daughter Laurita in her first dance classes.

During the mid 1940's she danced with the Serge Denham Ballet Russe in which Company she reached the rank of soloist. With this Company she danced in many of Balanchine's ballets – when he was to become her idol. Following the break down of her marriage she returned home to Australia in 1952.

Her links with Victoria go back to 1953 when Gertrude Johnson offered her the Directorship of the Australian National Theatre Ballet Company. At this time she revived Fokine's ballet "Carnaval" with herself dancing the role of Columbine and also made her choreographic debut with a

ballet danced to the Prokofiev "Classical Symphony" entitled "Caprice".

When the professional company folded soon after the 1954 Royal Command Performance she taught in the National Theatre Ballet School where she resumed her Cecchetti associations by being prepared for the Elementary examinations (i.e. Associate teaching qualification

current in those days) by Madam Lucie Saronova who had been her examiner way back in 1938 when she was prepared by Moya Beaver at the Lightfoot – Burlakov School in Sydney, for the original Grade 3 Syllabus examination, when she passed with Honours which was a rare event in those days. Apart from teaching in the School she joined Jean Alexander in instigating the Ballet Workshop concept; the aim being to encourage young choreographers and to give them the opportunity to have their early works staged. She also reproduced the 3 act "Coppelia" for the National; previously only the first 2 acts had been staged by the Australian Companies. Another reproduction was of the Fokine ballet "Le Coq d'Or". A short

period acting as choreographer and ballet mistress for a Tivoli revue was followed by an introduction to the lyric stage when she appeared in the Cole Porter musical "Can Can" for which her friend from Ballet Russe days Eleanore Treibor came to this country to appear in "The Garden Of Eden" Ballet. Valrene even spoke of her first on-stage words with the line "you can take off or leave on your pants, if you please", which was rather daring for the 1950's even though the role was that of an artist's model. With "Can Can" over she and Eleanore went onto stage ballets for the Elizabethan Opera Ballet Company for whom she choreographed "Wakooka" a work with an Australian theme to music by John Antill.

1956 saw her back in her home city of Sydney when she was asked to care take the studio of two former Ballet Russe colleagues: Phyllida Cooper (herself a Saronova pupil) and James Upshaw. When she eventually bought the Little Regent Street studio it became known as the Australian Academy Of Ballet. Choreographing for a weekly ABC TV variety show became part of a busy schedule.

With the beginning of the 1960's she founded Ballet Australia, which once again showcased the work of tyro choreographers who may never have otherwise found it possible to have their early attempts staged. The aim was to involve Australian dancers, choreographers, composers and artists. From this beginning a biennial Choreographic competition was launched with Nanette Hassal being one of the earliest winners, thus giving her the opportunity to continue her studies in New York. Ever an educator Valrene also introduced the first and only full-time Cecchetti dance course to this country.

When Laura Wilson came from England to examine in 1962 she joined Peggy van Praagh in setting up the initial Cecchetti National Council and a new panel of examiners of which latter Valrene became the new N.S.W. Representative. From then on she adroitly balanced her many N.S.W. activities with ever increasing commitments for the Cecchetti Society Branch of the I.S.T.D.



Many of her students were to dance in European Companies for example Katie Pianoff with the Royal Ballet, London whilst others were to become influential on the Australian Dance Scene; no better example being than our honoured patron Colin Peasley O.A.M. who was to become a foundation member of the Australian Ballet. Many, many others spring to mind but we should perhaps remember the choreographic success of Leigh Warren.

During the mid 1970s together we made 2 trips to London for further studies with Nora Roche at the Royal Ballet School. Because of her many years

dancing with the Ballets Russes dear Nora made sure that Valrene's fully professional approach to ballet teaching should be ac-



knowledged by the I.S.T.D. and so she was awarded the Maestro Cecchetti Diploma.

Even though giving up full-time teaching in 1985 she still kept up a tight schedule of guest teaching; no Victorian Summer School or Queensland Winter School would have been complete without her wonderfully inspiring classes which she was so well able to gear to the varying capabilities of the students before her. She scaled down on examining engagements but was always ready to accept short category 4 postings.

1991 saw her receive a most deserved recognition of her services to dance in this coun-

try, namely the fact that she was awarded the Medal of The Order of Australia.

1992 saw a special event occur in that

Graeme Murphy cast her as Clara the elder in his re-working of 'Nutcracker' for the Australian Ballet. At first tentative of the challenge after so many years since she had last performed on stage, her interpretation of the role was acclaimed by all the critics. For me personally it was an emotional time as we had last danced together on stage in her version of 'Francesca da Rimini' some 40 years earlier with the National Theatre. Her final stage appearances were made 9 years later in Stephan Baynes ballet 'Requiem'.

In retirement her significant concerns were the state of ballet in this country and the pleasure she derived from the children of her 2 nieces Ann and Fiona. Even though disagreeing with our new title CECCHETTI BALLETT she still gave much time to promoting 'The Method' which she so wanted to be seen as the epitomy of Classical Ballet.

To her Cecchetti meant beauty, simplicity and good, true, balletic basics. She truly was an Australian "National Treasure". We can do no better to respect her memory than to remember the basic tenets of the Classical dance, to teach them with correctness but also to be fully aware that we are involved in promoting a theatrical art form.

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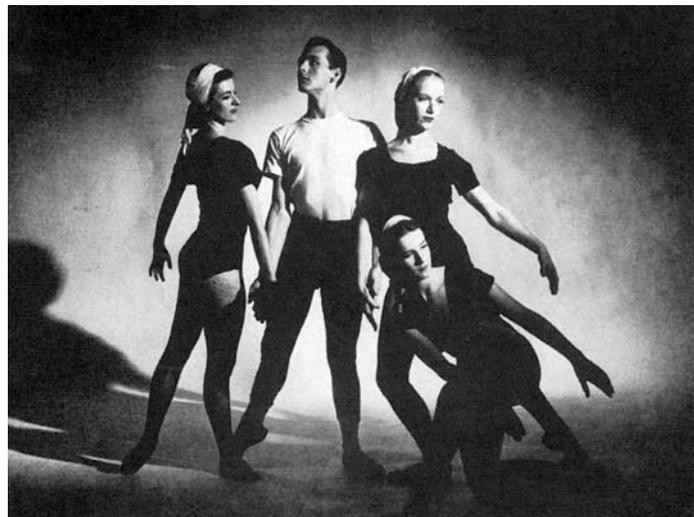
CECCHETTI PIONEERS

Kay Armstrong (1921-2008)

by Kaija Pepper

At the National Ballet of Canada's inaugural show in 1951, just one Canadian choreography was on the mixed bill – Kay Armstrong's dreamy quartet, *Étude*, set to Tchaikowsky. Artistic director Celia Franca had seen it the year before at the Canadian Ballet Festival in Montreal, when critic Anatole Chujoy, visiting from New York, called the five-minute ballet "a little jewel."

The festival allowed each group a single curtain call, and Kay never forgot the applause. It was a heady triumph for a shy, young woman who was then at the forefront of a



*Alice David, Ray Moller, Margaret Elmgren and Anita Barnett in Kay Armstrong's Étude, 1950.
Photo courtesy of Dance Collection Danse.*

burgeoning Vancouver cultural scene.

The youngest of four children, she spent her early years in Armstrong, B.C. a farming community in the Okanagan Valley. (The town was named after a London financier who raised the money for a railway project, it only coincidentally bears her family name.)

Her parents – Herbert Cecil Armstrong, of Scottish descent, and Lily Mae (May) Foreman, with English roots – were first generation Canadians who met in church. Herbert ran a dry-goods and grocery store, but he was not a natural businessman

and found it a challenge. A taciturn man, he became so infuriated with the local bank that he carried his money in his shoes. He later moved his family to Vancouver, where he opened an optometrist's office.

When it came time to start school, Kay was so worried about going that her mother kept her home an extra year. Her favourite pastime was to put a record on the gramophone and dance in a quiet corner of the dining room, all of which led her mother to send Kay to

Helen Crewe's Dancing Academy. The school's goal was "to cultivate a perfect physical and mental control of the body" through Greek exercises, ballet, tap, Spanish and interpretive dance.

By 1941, she had enrolled at the B.C. School of Dancing on Seymour Street, which had its entrance next to the Orpheum Theatre's stage door. It was here that she received classes from Princesse Arfa, who had studied with Enrico Cecchetti, and Kay eventually taught the Cecchetti Method in her school and became an examiner for the Cecchetti Society of Canada. She also studied with Joseph Pilates in Massachusetts, learning the now-popular exercises from the master himself.

During two years in New York, Kay took classes with Anatole Vitzak and Ludmilla Schollar, graduates of St. Petersburg's Imperial Ballet School. She remembered the thrill when such leading dancers from the Ballets Russes as Irina Baronova and Chris Volkoff dropped in for class. Kay - one of several Vancouverites dancing in New York at a time when there were few professional opportunities at home - landed a job with Radio City Music Hall's ballet troupe and then

appeared on Broadway in the musical *Show Boat*.



photo courtesy of Dance Collection Danse

With the offer of a partnership in the B.C. School of Dancing, Kay returned to Vancouver in 1947. As the school's principal teacher, she mounted many charity events with her students. In *A Night in Spain*, a floor show created for the Shriners, she appeared in a duet with Ray Moller, later a dancer with the National Ballet of Canada.

One of her greatest disappointments was not attending the first Canadian Ballet Festival in Winnipeg

in April, 1948. As it turned out, the Red River flooded and water filled the basement of the Playhouse Theatre. The only alternative venue was the more costly Odeon, and the festival directors withdrew their offer to cover travel expenses.

Perhaps by way of consoling herself, that year she choreographed her first major ballet, *Masquerade Ball*. It contained the basic ingredients of her best works - a clear storyline, stylish, well-made costumes and her top students as muses and dancers.

The B.C. School of Dancing was also where an unrequited love affair began with fellow teacher and dancer, Calvin von Reinhold. Together, they had performed the lead parts in *London Fantasia*, her ballet about young lovers killed in an air raid, and the chemistry between them was clearly evident. Globe and Mail art critic Herbert Whittaker noted the "romantic force" that fuelled their performance but, for various reasons, the relationship faltered.

In 1952, she opened the Kay Armstrong Vancouver Ballet School at 835 Granville street (above where Fluevog shoe store is today) and Mr. von Reinhold came to her with two proposals. He asked to become a partner in the school, but she refused. She also turned down his marriage proposal. In the end, he left Vancouver to work abroad and on Broadway and they exchanged letters and gifts over the years until his death in 1991.

In 1951, she followed up *Masquerade Ball* with *Le Réve Fantasque*, her first ballet set to a commissioned score. The music was written by Dolores Claman, who penned the Hockey Night in Canada theme heard until recently on CBC. The result, according to the Province newspaper, was "one

of the first all-Canadian ballets ever performed in British Columbia." Both works netted Kay the Vancouver Ballet Society Founder's Trophy for choreography, which she won five years in a row before it was discontinued.

Three years later, she founded the Kay Armstrong Dance Theatre, a brave venture that predated government funding for the arts.



photo courtesy of Dance Collection Danse

With choreography by Kay, the company of 10 dancers made two tours of B.C. and Alberta. Three of her dances were set to

music by composer Basil Hunter, and she herself performed a flamenco solo called *La Farruca* that would define her career as



Kay with Bob Cadwallader at her studio on W. Broadway, Vancouver

a dancer. Donning a Castilian costume of high-waisted pants, white frilled shirt and black, scarlet-lined cape, she performed a part usually danced by a man. With nostrils flaring, the normally calm and reserved Kay Armstrong was transformed into a fiery Spanish dancer. Murray Kilgour, who heads the School of Alberta Ballet, watched a later performance of *La Farruca*. “Kay had that dramatic profile, with her dark hair pulled back,” he said. “She was so sleek and strong.”

For her part, Ms. Armstrong could never say what drew her to Spanish dance. “I was painfully shy and got butterflies in my stomach before going out,” she said. “But as long as my legs didn’t shake, I didn’t mind. I liked the adrenalin.”

After that, Spanish dance would become her specialty as a performer.

Fittingly, her last stage appearance was a Spanish duet during a self-produced show at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre in 1965. By that time 43, she wore a long red dress, a flowered shawl and red shoes. Her partner, judging from photos of the event, was a young and untried student.

It was a sign of the times. The gap between amateur and professional dance had widened and her position in the Vancouver arts scene had shifted. The school productions that had once garnered serious press attention now seemed amateur and old-fashioned. After a time, her shows were no longer reviewed and she began presenting them at the smaller Metro Theatre on the edge of town.

By then, she had already moved her school out of the downtown core. There, on West Broadway, just east of Granville, her gentle, encouraging manner remained a fixture for 30 years. Over the years, she taught many hundreds of students. Among those who attended the school were Sylvia

Palmer and Rex Harrington, both of whom would go on to join the National Ballet of Canada. Sylvia Palmer said “Miss Kay” teased her students by saying: “I would like one perfect plié. Then I would be very happy. If you could do two, I would be ecstatic. If you do three, I’ll faint!”

Kay was not the only teacher at the school. Bob Cadwallader, who danced in New York in early television broadcasts and in musicals, also taught there, and they became close friends. In 1975, he moved into the spare room at Kay’s home in the Kerrisdale area of Vancouver and they lived together companionably for decades. The house was the same white-gabled family home she had shared with her parents until their deaths.

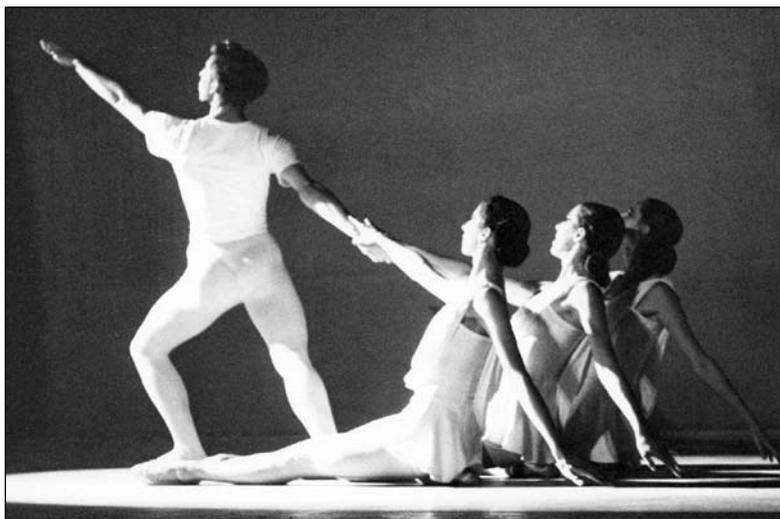
In 1989, she began giving weekly classes at Marpole-Oakridge Community Centre in South Vancouver and continued, uninterrupted, for almost 20 years. A year ago, she was hurt in a car accident. Unable to work, she asked her nephew Brian Armstrong, a teacher who had trained under her, to keep the class going until she recovered.

She never regained her strength, but did manage to watch one of his classes – and approved of what she saw, Brian said. “Auntie Kay said, ‘You know, Brian, you’re a good teacher.’ Then she turned to me with her sly smile and added, ‘But you know who taught you.’”

In April, 2008, *Étude* was remounted by Ballet Kelowna at the Norman Rothstein Theatre in Vancouver. Seated in the audience, and surrounded by family, friends and many former students, Kay watched the choreography she had created almost 60 years earlier. It was her last public appearance.

The first version of this article was published in the *Globe & Mail* and it is reprinted here with the permission of the author.

Further reading: *The Dance Teacher – A Biography of Kay Armstrong* by Kaija Pepper, 2001 ISBN 0-929003-43-8



Earl Kraul, Oldyna Dynowska, Katherine Stewart and Natalia Butko in a later National Ballet production of Étude. Photo courtesy of Dance Collection Danse and The National Ballet of Canada.

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Notes for a Dancer
compiled by Sheila Kennedy – to use in
conjunction with the Cecchetti Manuals,
\$50.00 Cdn. + postage



CECCHETTI
INTERNATIONAL
classical ballet

LIST OF MAESTRO CECCHETTI DIPLOMA HOLDERS up-dated

We ask that people notify the CICB Secretary, Sheila Kennedy hskn@telus.net of any spelling errors, names missed or new Diploma holders to allow her to complete our records. Dates will be added as received.

	date achieved		
Australia		Lisbeth Brown.....	2000
Sandra Allan.....	1978	Theresa Butkovich	2004
Mia Ballenden.....	2004	Linda Butler	1978
Natalie Blenheim	2004	Gail S. Choate-Pettit	2000
Kathleen Butler	1985	Kathy Cooke	2003
Jane Cameron.....	-	Aleta Davis.....	1978
William Carse [decd]	-	Rose Marie Floyd.....	1972
Sandra Clack	1985	Olga Fricker [decd]	-
Denise Coghill	1986	Suzanne Gray-Granger (A)...	-
Michela Dent-Causon	1996	Sylvia Hamer [decd]	-
Rita Eicens	1982	Marjorie Hassard [decd]	-
Meryle Elliott.....	1982	Marnell Himes-Ushijima ...	1981
Caroline Ettienne	1994	Cathy Jones-Wolf.....	2000
Jane Farrelly.....	-	Gertrude Jory [decd]	-
Peter Faux	1995	Lee Ann King.....	1997
Monique Feain	1995	Leona Lucas [decd].....	-
Denise Fisher	2000	Laura J. McCarthy	2000
Carole Hall	1992	Julie L. Merkle	1997
Janice Heale	1996	Jane Caryl Miller [decd]	-
Val Jenkins	1992	Pamela Moore	1977
Shirley Jones	1962	Laurie A. Papovich	1997
Rhyl Kennell	1977	Leslie R. Parreco.....	2006
Annette Langham.....	2000	Ann Parsley	1997
Jane Moran.....	2004	Tomi Sue Pollock.....	1991
Diane Pokorny	1987	Marjorie Randazzo.....	1989
Fiona Porteous	1985	Enid Ricardeau [decd].....	-
Andrew Pronger.....	1986	Pamela Rutledge	1997
Shelley Rae-Aris	1984	Elaine McHale Seidman ...	2000
Robyn Ross	1991	June Smith.....	1997
Cherill Rowston	1978	Theodore Smith [decd]	-
Edmond Stripe	1991	Patricia Suto	1991
Toivo Taves	-	Kathleen Tenniswood-Powell	
Valrene Tweedie [decd].....	-	PhD	2004
Athol Willoughby.....	-	Phyllis Thorne [decd].....	-
		Kimmary Williams Rice	1983
		Cecchetti USA	
		Greg Bomke	1999
		Susan Brooker	1989
		Shiela Darby [decd]	-
		Louanne Davies	1979
		Olga Fricker [decd]	-
		Marnell Himes-Ushijima ...	1981
		Raymond Lukens	1989
		Cara Schrack	2008
		Betty Seibert	1988
		Janice Smith	1995
		Raymond Smith	1996
		Deborah Vinton	1995
		Franco De Vita	1992
		Heidi Wright.....	1996
		Italy	
		Rita Gramigni.....	1993
		Brenda Hamlyn	1985
		Claudia Masini	1992
		Leonarda Raimondi.....	1981
		Evelina Ricci.....	1993
		Gillian Whittingham	-
		Malta	
		Tanya Bayona.....	-
		Theresa Lungaro-Mifsud ...	1992
		Pam Kerr	2004
		Southern Africa	
		Yvonne Barker	1974
		Jeanette Barlow	1970
		Diane Baumann.....	1985
		Gillian Behr.....	1984
		Shannon van den Berg	1978
		Rosemary Brandt	1975
		Beth Caballero	1999
		Joy Cooper	1975
		Pamela Crimes [decd]	-
		Patricia Durham	1973
		Diane Ebsworth.....	1979
		Mervynne Fernie [decd].....	-
		Lynne Fouché.....	1970
		Alison Hazel.....	1988
		Dulcie Howes [decd].....	-
		Eileen Keegan [decd].....	-
		Vivienne Keegan [decd].....	-
		Jennifer Klipfel	1994
		Karen Koen-Jooste.....	1999
		Daphne Kruger.....	1971
		Barbara Lewis	1971
		Suzette Van Der Linde	1976
		Timo Liston.....	2001
		Jennifer Louw	1998
		Nicolette Loxton	1990
		Dorothy McNair..... [decd] ..	-
		Gail Myburgh.....	1993
		Nadia Nerina [decd].....	-
		Noleen Nicol	1991
		Lana Paladin.....	1978
		Susan Perry	1983
		David Poole [decd]	-
		José Pretorius	1963
		Joyce Rabinowitz.....	1971
		Graham Rees	1988
		Wendy Reinhardt.....	1985
		Cecily Robinson [decd].....	-
		Diane Van Schoor.....	1979
		Denise Schultze.....	1956
		Pauline Shaw.....	1985
		Joy Shearer.....	1971
		Dudley Tomlinson.....	-
		Faith de Villiers [decd].....	-
		Diana Ward	1970
		Lynne Wesson	1986
		UK and Europe	
		Alison Allen	
		Christine Axon	
		Rosina Baker	
		Bleidynn Bellis.....	2004
		Brian Berscher	
		Jacobus Johannes Blokdijk	
		Greet Boterman	
		Susan Brooker	
		Nesta Brooking [decd]	
		Melanie Bull	
		Victoria Chappell	
		Lisa Christian	
		Maureen Christie	
		Diana Cremona	
		Jacqueline Davenport	
		Gillian Dawson McGregor	
		Alison Dos Santos	
		Cara Drower	
		Mary-Jane Duckworth	
		Ronald Emblem	
		Yukie Fujino	
		Raquel Gaviria	
		Richard Glasstone	
		Heather Goltman	
		Susan Handy	
		Pat Hardy [decd]	
		Rachel Heywood	
		Mavis Hoffman [decd]	
		Lynn Hollamby	
		Elaine Hubbard	
		Gillian Hurst	
		Akiyo Ishihashi	2007
		Deborah Jellis	
		Penny Kay	
		Janet Kinson	
		Molly Lake [decd]	
		Eileen Langman [decd]	
		Jacqueline Langman	
		Eve Leveaux	
		Patricia Linton	
		Margaret Marsh [decd]	
		Jocelyn Mather	
		Tracey Moss	
		Thérèse Oswald	
		Carolyn Parker	
		Daphne Peterson	
		Eve Pettinger	
		Linda Pilkington	
		Lucy Pohl	
		Peggy van Praagh [decd]	
		Gustavo Beserra Quintans	
		Gillian Robinson	
		Penelope Robinson-Debatin	
		Nora Roche [decd]	
		Janice Russell.....	1994
		Juan Sanchez	
		Sofia Santiago	
		Margaret Saul [decd]	
		Kate Simmons	
		Richard Slaughter.....	2004
		Mary Skeaping [decd]	-
		Mandev Sokhi	2007
		Mary Stassinopoulos	
		Elisabeth Swan	
		Lynn Wallis	
		Sarah Wells	
		Ann Whitley	
		Laura Wilson [decd]	
		Julie Wood	
		Helen Wolska [decd]	
		Terry Wright	
		Cecchetti Council of America	
		Betty Bandyk (A).....	-
		Jack Bickle [decd].....	-