

MINNESOTA BALLET

May 2011

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM TRULY A DREAM COME TRUE

The Minnesota Ballet capped its Season to Dream with Robert Gardner's world-premiering *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, March 18–20 at UMD's Marshall Performing Arts Center. Called by the Duluth News Tribune "luscious and utterly charming," the production delighted audiences from the moment Puck awakens in his tree to the moment he returns to fall asleep after playing his part in the magical doings.

It was telling a story as only dance can. **Director Gardner** realized a longtime dream of mounting this production, creating choreography and mime to tell the classic comedy and make its complications of plot comprehensible to audiences. **Company dancers** mastered their characters, the choreography, and the acting. **Ballet V–VII** students sparkled in their roles as Pixies, Sprites, Fairies, Bugs, and the Little Prince.



Photo by Jeff Frey and Associates.

Behind the scenes, many labored to create the set and costumes both to realize Robert's vision of a moonlit wood in Elizabethan England, and to do so on a "recession special" budget. **Scenic Designer Ann Gumpfer** created new legs (the drops to either side of the main drop) and a header (the drop across the top of the stage) to give the look of an enchanted wood to a full-stage drop borrowed from another of the Ballet's productions. To further save money on the set-build, Ann supervised Ballet Board members and Board committee members who volunteered to do all sorts of **unskilled work** from base-coat painting to gluing down raw edges, including the tip of every leaf along the bottom of the 70-foot wide garland header.

Ann also designed Puck's gnarled tree, engineered and built by Company **Production Manager Kenneth Pogin** and **Stage Manager Cheryl Vander Heyden**. The tree had to be sturdily constructed to support Puck's weight and include stairs in the front disguised as tree roots for Puck to climb. The top had to be engineered to be removable to fit through a doorway, and the underlying platform built on wheels, with brakes added to keep the tree steady. Cheryl also built the whimsical head that turns Bottom the Tailor into a **donkey**, another feat of artistic engineering that has to be donned in seconds and stay put during the celebrated pas de deux with a spell-bound Titania.



Photo by Jeff Frey and Associates.

The mortals' costumes are a wonder of visual art on a shoestring. **Company Costumer Sandra Ehle** adapted the lovers' costumes from the Ballet's decades-old costume collection and in going through the costume stock discovered a striking cape perfect for Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons. Sandra also built the layered and winged costumes for the Fairies and the exotic costume for the Little Prince.

The Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation and a private donor provided funding to bring in the Minneapolis design team of Lyle Jackson and Ellen Roeder, who created the imaginative costumes for Titania and Oberon—with crowns of leaves and twigs—and Puck—with the tiniest suggestions of horns—in addition to costumes for the Pixies, Sprites, and Bugs.

This production was made possible in part by a grant from the John T. and Elizabeth C. Adams Arts Fund of the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, and by Minnesota Power Foundation.

The performances were sponsored by the North Shore Bank of Commerce.



Reinhard von Rabenau dancing the role of Puck.

Photo by Jeff Frey and Associates.

WINE & CHEESE HAS NEW TWISTS

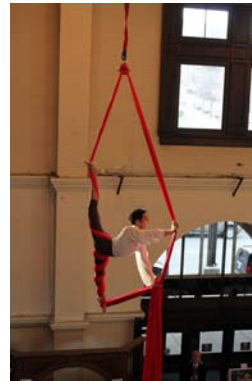
The Ballet’s Wine & Cheese offered three new features April 14 in the Depot’s Great Hall. All eyes went upward while Minnesota Ballet dancer Ernesto Lea Place floated above the crowd in his stunning aerialist performance to the strains of “Nessun Dorma” (“None Shall Sleep”) from Puccini’s “Turandot,” sung by tenor Marcus McConico. Marcus also served as emcee/auctioneer of the live auction, highlighted by two tickets to Elton John’s concert, which produced spirited bidding.

North Shore Scenic Railroad, Michael Bubl  tickets, a spot in the Ballet’s 6th annual Celebrity Dance Challenge.



Zeitgeist Arts Caf  table. Photo by Vicki Surges.

Guests sipped wines and micro-brewed beers, relished appealing finger foods, and bid on a range of items with something for everyone. Fun opportunities in a Cirrus plane ride, a party on the



Ernesto Lea Place during his aerial performance, and New Scenic Caf  table. Photos by Vicki Surges.

For physical fitness, an entry into Grandma’s Half Marathon, Pilates classes, fitness club memberships. For fashion, a sapphire ring and slinky designer dresses. And especially for ballet fans: “Traci—The Swan” limited-edition print of oil painting signed by the subject, ballerina Traci Gilchrest, of the North Carolina Dance Theatre, and by the artist, Charles Gilbert Kapsner, who was in attendance.

Wine & Cheese was sponsored by Keyport Liquor and CPL Imaging. Food for the event was provided by Bellisio’s Italian Restaurant, The Exchange, Lake Avenue Restaurant, New Scenic Caf , Northland Country Club, and Zeitgeist Arts Caf . Special thanks to all others who donated items, services or time.

DANCE DAY AT THE DEPOT ON MAY DAY



This year Dance Day at the Depot celebrated two events: National Dance Week and May Day. Outside, cold and damp dominated, but in the Great Hall, spring reigned, capped by a maypole dance choreographed by Principal Teacher LilaAnn Coates. Holding colored ribbons, Ballet VII students wove intricate patterns around first a living maypole and then a wooden one. The dancers’ springlike dresses were purchased with a grant from the Depot Foundation; their crowning flower circlets were constructed by Ballet Costumer Sandra Ehle.

To the capacity crowd, Ballet V and VI students demonstrated technique, Ballet IV–VII and Jazz students performed works choreographed by Lila, Linda Carrillo, Carrie Wanamaker, and Elyse Snider. But it wasn’t all watching. At the end of the afternoon, Elyse led dancers and guests in a mini dance party, young and old joining in lively social dances from “YMCA” to the limbo.



Dance Day at the Depot photos by Vicki Surges.

Dance Day at the Depot was made possible by a grant from the Depot Foundation.

DIRECTOR GARDNER RECEIVES COUNTY AWARD

March 1, 2011, Artistic Director Robert Gardner received the Excellence in the Arts & Sciences award from the St. Louis County Board of Commissioners in honor of his “dedication, innovation, and outstanding contributions: to the arts, which have contributed to the “exceptional quality of life in the region.” Seven members of the Minnesota Ballet Board of Directors attended the presentation in the county chamber.



From left to right: Commissioners Frank Jewel, Steve Raukar, Steve O'Neill; Director Gardner; Commissioners Peg Sweeney, Mike Forsman, Chris Dahlberg, Keith Nelson. Photo by Jeff Frey and Associates.

DULUTH 5TH GRADERS DISCOVER SHAKESPEARE

The Ballet's new outreach program “Discovering Shakespeare through Dance” treated Duluth's fifth-graders to Act I of the premiering *A Midsummer Night's Dream* March 17, at the Marshall Performing Arts Center. A guide sent to teachers before the presentation prepared students for the essentials of this delightful, magical comedy.



Duluth 5th graders applaud the performance of Act I Thursday, March 17, at MPAC. Photo by Vicki Surges.

Following the performance, Robert introduced the dancers, who then answered children's questions from “How long have you been dancing?” to “How hard is it to dance on your toes?”

This special presentation was made possible by a grant from:

Junior League of Duluth

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Thank you!

A special thank you to this season's sponsors:

Sleeping Beauty

Presenting support by U.S. Bank. The creation of this production was made possible in part by a grant from the Depot Foundation, with additional funding by Essentia Health, Minnesota Power, and Mead Witter Foundation.

The Nutcracker

ICO – Inter City Oil: Proud to underwrite the creation of Minnesota Ballet's new Manhattan *Nutcracker*. This new production also made possible by major funding from Essentia Health, and the Depot Foundation. This production also funded in part by the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, Minnesota Power Foundation, and especially generous contributors.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Presenting sponsor North Shore Bank of Commerce. The creation of this production was made possible in part by a grant from the John T. and Elizabeth C. Adams Arts Fund of the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, Minnesota Power Foundation, and especially generous contributors.

Black and White Ball

Sponsored by National Bank of Commerce, with contributions by The Pickwick, George's Liquor, Doug Odlevak, Arthur's Men's Formal Wear, Ken Sorvari, Arlette DeGrio, Vicki Surges, David Vipond, and all others who donated items to auction.

Celebrity Dance Challenge

Sponsored by American Transmission Company. Additional support by Advantage Emblem, George's Liquor, Mainstream Fashions for Men, and Peterson Anderson Flowers.

Wine & Cheese

Sponsored by Keyport Liquor and CPL Imaging. Catering thanks to Bellisio's Italian Restaurant, The Exchange, Lake Avenue Restaurant, New Scenic Café, Northland Country Club, and Zeitgeist Arts Café.

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PRODUCED BY LHB.

THE MINNESOTA BALLET
RECEIVES MAJOR OPERATING
SUPPORT GRANTS FROM THE
FOLLOWING FOUNDATIONS:
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE
ARTS, MINNESOTA STATE ARTS
BOARD INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT,
THOMAS AND KATHERINE GIBSON
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MINNESOTA BALLET ACTIVITIES
ARE MADE POSSIBLE IN PART BY A
GRANT PROVIDED BY THE
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THROUGH AN APPROPRIATION BY
THE MINNESOTA STATE
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THE MINNESOTA BALLET HAS
RECEIVED ARTS EMPLOYMENT
SUPPORT FROM MINNESOTA
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POSSIBLE BY THE NATIONAL
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THROUGH FUNDS ALLOCATED
FROM THE AMERICAN RECOVERY
AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009.

"A Season of Drama and Delight"

A sneak peak at the 2011-2012 performance season

From an atmospheric gothic thriller to a classic comedy of boy gets girl, boy flirts, loses girl and mayhem ensues, the Minnesota Ballet's 2011-2012 Season of Drama and Delight promises to be an exciting year of outstanding entertainment and special events. You won't want to miss the world premiere of *Dracula*, just in time for Halloween; the gorgeous holiday treat, the Manhattan *Nutcracker*, and the classic comedic ballet *Coppélia*, the story of the doll with enamel eyes.



Dracula, October 21-22



Special Event, *Celebrity Dance Challenge*, February 9

The Manhattan
Nutcracker,
December 9-11

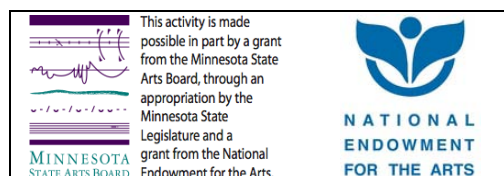


Old Turtle, in collaboration with the DSSO, March 31

Coppélia, March 16-18

Special events include our always crowd-pleasing *Celebrity Dance Challenge* plus a special collaboration with the Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra for the magical *Old Turtle* told through music and dance.

Become a member, get season tickets, and be a part of the state's finest professional classical dance company, proudly calling the Twin Ports home. Great art can make a great community even better!



SAVE THE DATE!

Black & White Ball ♦ September 30

Wine & Cheese ♦ April 19