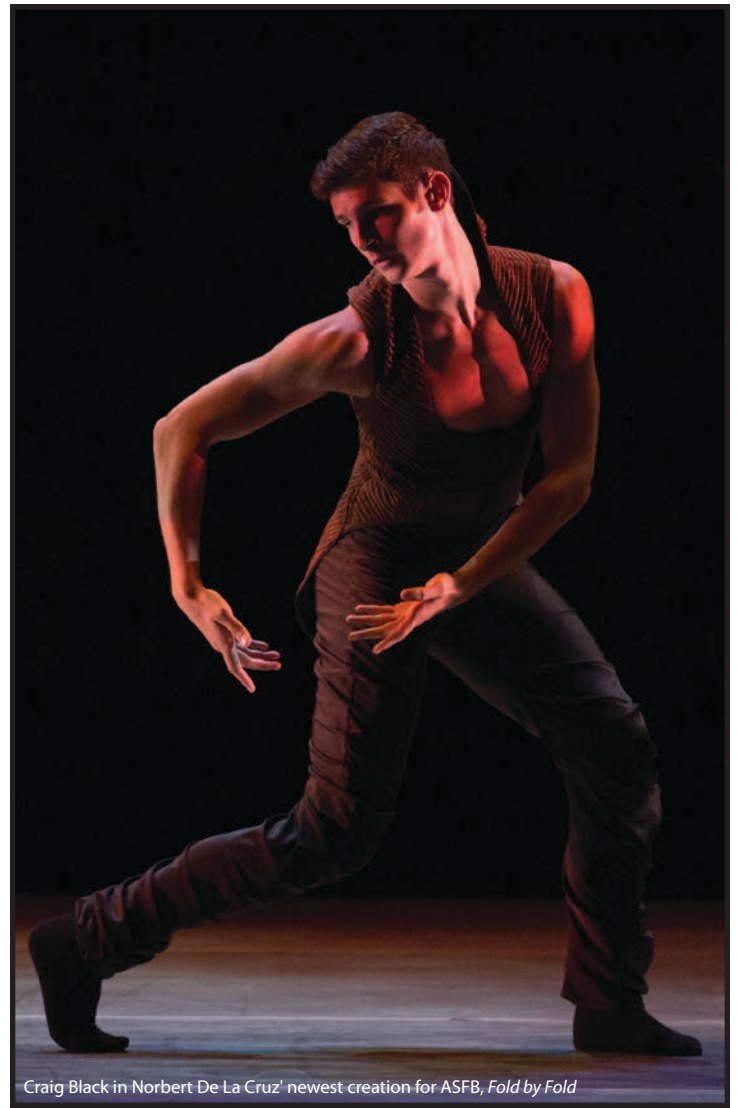




# ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

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Craig Black in Norbert De La Cruz' newest creation for ASFB, *Fold by Fold*

PHOTO: ROSALE O'CONNOR

cover photo: Katie Dehler in Jorma Elo's *First Flash*

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## Dear Friends,

We are writing to you from the beautiful Saratoga Springs Performing Arts Center. Tonight is the opening night of Aspen Santa Fe Ballet. It is with great pride and excitement that we bring our company to this world-renowned series, joining a roster that includes New York City Ballet and National Ballet of Canada. Next stop: Wolf Trap Performing Arts Center outside Washington, DC. This will be our third appearance at this historic site; the country's only national park dedicated to the performing arts.

As Aspen Santa Fe Ballet's summer season nears its end, so does the stellar career of one of our longtime dancers, Katie Dehler. Katie was a muse to many choreographers over the course of her 13 years with ASFB. It is fitting that her farewell performances will feature a program comprised of ballets that were created on her. Katie's partner in life and on stage, Sam Chittenden, who retired a few months ago, will make a special return to the stage to dance with Katie for one last time. Her farewell performances in Aspen and Santa Fe will be very special evenings, filled with love and admiration for all she has contributed to Aspen Santa Fe Ballet (page 4).

The summer season at home may be winding down, but we will continue to perform through the fall. Our upcoming tour will take us to Laguna Beach, California; Logan, Utah; Portland, Oregon; Escondido, California, and will conclude in Chicago with our third appearance at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance. Over the years, we have developed a great following in Chicago. It is a privilege for us to perform there for our many colleagues and supporters, and to be a part of this city's vibrant dance scene (page 8).

Summer is also the season for celebration with friends and patrons not only at the theater, but also at other ballet events. We enjoyed the opportunity to see our National Council members at the beautiful Aspen home of Maja and Nic Dubrul. We are thrilled by the generosity our friends in Santa Fe demonstrated at our Santa Fe gala, that was held at the Club at Las Campanas. This festive evening raised a record-breaking \$150,000 for ASFB (page 12).

As always, your enthusiasm inspires us and your support gives us wings to fly.

*Tom Mossbrucker*      *Jean-Philippe Malaty*  
Tom Mossbrucker      Jean-Philippe Malaty



The company at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center



# Katie Dehler:

## ASFB's Retiring Dancer Inspired Choreographers

by Debra Levine

Katie Dehler, Aspen Santa Fe Ballet's exquisite and treasured lead dancer for 13 seasons and 22 ballets, leaves an indelible impression not only on audiences. The soon-to-retire dancer, both muse and work horse, similarly sparked a trio of choreographers. Alejandro Cerrudo, Jorma Elo and Nicolo Fonte, all internationally in-demand dance makers with strong connections to ASFB, moved their creations to the finish line with Dehler in the room. The men rhapsodize about collaborating with the petite, brown-haired dancer.

Fonte professes a relationship that is particularly profound and that operates on a different plane: "The exchange isn't so much verbal," says Fonte. "She's not a talker."

Instead, "We goof around in the studio. She suggests things in a non-verbal way. We meet on an imaginative level."

Following these work sessions, says Fonte, "We don't talk about what we are doing; it's a physical thing. It comes to life – it births – in the studio."

The Brooklyn-based Fonte takes pride in having "discovered" Dehler in 2000. She was then a fresh graduate of the dance program at University of Utah. It's a real-life Cinderella story as Fonte puts it: "They commissioned me, the very first new work for the company. I arrived in Aspen and watched company class. I asked, 'Who's that girl?'"

"That's Sam [Chittenden]'s girlfriend. She kind of helps out in the office; they told me. 'Well, she's the best dancer in the company, so, yes, I want to use her.' After they saw her perform *Everyday Incarnation*, they realized what she could do.

"She is uber-talented, extremely musical and physically capable," says Fonte, assessing Dehler's qualities. "When I encountered her she was beginning to be an artist, to invest deeply in the work with integrity. But she knew it was very hard to be a great dancer, a lot of work. Watching that was very inspiring for me."

Dehler receives Fonte's special consideration: "If they take an existing work of mine, the first person I think of is her," he says, adding: "She brings out the best in me."

"What is she going to do in the piece? How am I going to work with her?" are Fonte's first thoughts. "I start imagining what I can do for her, but then it changes. When we are physically working together, it morphs in the studio; it becomes a collaborative thing."

How does that happen? Says Fonte: "In the studio it's quite magical. Everybody should work like she does. She has an extreme conscientiousness about trying to tap into what I am looking for. She'll stay 10-15 minutes extra; she won't take her breaks, just because she's trying to help me bring out ideas I'm looking for."

"She's pretty special. She found her right place. She grew and blossomed there. Every choreographer who passes through has accolades for her," he says.

One of them is Alejandro Cerrudo. The Spanish-born resident choreographer of Hubbard Street Dance Chicago created *Last* on the company in 2010. Says Cerrudo: "I was drawn to her personality and to her dancing right away. She is a beautiful woman, a beautiful person, a beautiful dancer."

"She is really nice to work with. She's very easy. She lets the choreographer mold or shape her, and she is not a dancer who does everything the same way. She listens to what the choreographer wants and adapts. Her attitude is very humble. She wants to take everything you have to give her."

Cerrudo reflects on his process and how a dancer like Dehler can make a difference: "Sometimes I give steps and they don't look as good as I thought," he admits. "It's a back and forth. What makes a dancer a greater dancer is to keep working and researching."

For Cerrudo it's also a quality thing: "I like to show the strength of the

woman. She can be very sensual; she has a quality of femininity, but she is not a fragile female. There is a long duet at the end of *Last*. The women are partnered and they partner as well; it's not just the man carrying the woman. She is a strong woman, and I think that is beautiful. I think it is very sexy too."

Jorma Elo noticed this as well. Speaking by cellphone from Logan Airport (he is Boston Ballet's resident choreographer) Elo admits with a laugh, "I am in love with Katie."

Elo, whose challenging choreography has advanced the technical skills of the female dancers, enthuses about a dancer on whom he has choreographed multiple times, in *1st Flash*, *Over Glow*, *Red Sweet*, and *Pointeoff*.

"The performance is always a creative moment for her," says Elo. "I'm like, wow, okay, that's what she did in this performance! It never ends for her, and that's a dream for a choreographer."

"And I understand her way of thinking."

Asked to describe what Dehler does best, Elo replies: "I think it is the play with different dynamics of the moment, her general physicality, how she throws herself into the movement. Sometimes you have to go, 'hey Katie, a little easier!' It's good when you don't have to push someone; instead you have to tone her down."

Also: "With dancers it is hard to change the dynamic, you go slow or medium and you cannot change the dynamic. That's another thing Katie is good at."

But taken in totality, "I love her tenderness and the female warmth she brings to her stage presence. That's tricky to illustrate, but one example is her very generous way of touching her partner. For a lot of dancers, modern or classical, sometimes it is difficult to touch each other without it being strange. Katie has a feminine way of touching on the shoulders, or the head. In a lot of my creations, she guides her partner. I think it is a genuinely lovely female quality she has."

"I can see her very clearly in all my ballets," says Elo. "I think of *Over Glow* -- the latest creation I made with her. There are so many moments that I feel like she really created those moments, and especially the dances with her partner Sam [Chittenden]."

Chittenden, who retired last season, is returning to the stage to partner Dehler in her final showcases in Aspen and Santa Fe. "Dancing with Katie has meant everything to me, one of the great joys of my career," he says. Asked whether the notoriously inventive Dehler ever surprised him with new interpretations on stage, Chittenden replies with a laugh, "Every performance!"

Fonte says succinctly: "She has been touched by the muse of dance for sure."

One of her two bosses, and a close friend, Tom Mossbrucker, puts it like this, "Katie is completely committed to the movement, she has a purity of movement and a clarity of movement. Her dancing is incredibly articulate and honest, uncluttered by pretension. To watch her dance is to look through something. It's clear, like water or glass."

*Los Angeles dance critic Debra Levine writes for the Los Angeles Times, The Huffington Post, and her arts blog, artsmeme.*

Aspen Santa Fe Ballet Program B takes place **August 24, 2013 in Aspen** and **August 31, 2013 in Santa Fe**. The program features *Over Glow* by Jorma Elo, *Where We Left Off* by Nicolo Fonte, and *Last* by Alejandro Cerrudo, all ballets that were created on Katie Dehler.

**Get Tickets:**

**Aspen: 970-920-5770**

**Santa Fe: 505-988-1234**

**[www.aspensantafeballet.com](http://www.aspensantafeballet.com)**



Katie Dehler in company class

PHOTO: ROSALE O'CONNOR



Katie Dehler and Joseph Watson in Alejandro Cerrudo's *Last*

PHOTO: SHAREN BRADFORD



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# Joint Assets

Aspen Santa Fe Ballet has two homes, but its affinity for mutual benefit doesn't end there

by Zachary Whittenburg

In October 2013, Aspen Santa Fe Ballet makes its third visit to Chicago's Harris Theater for Music and Dance. Add two impressive appearances at the Chicago Dancing Festival, in '09 and '11, and this fall's engagement makes five trips to the Windy City since '07. "It looks like Chicago likes them," observes choreographer and festival co-founder Lar Lubovitch, whose *Fandango* entered ASFB's repertoire in '04.

The company's success in building a fan base in the country's third-largest city is more than just evidence of its rising national profile. Despite being based elsewhere, ASFB plays an important role in the cultural life of the city. It's part of an ecosystem, says Jason Palmquist, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago's executive director, facilitating appreciation for and a deeper knowledge of contemporary choreography among residents.

"Take Jiří Kylián, for example," Palmquist explains. "Audiences here have seen *Sechs Tänze*, they've seen *Petite Mort*, they've seen *27'52"*, if they've been following what we're doing at Hubbard Street. But thanks to Aspen Santa Fe [Ballet], they've also seen his *Stamping Ground*, which really fills out a rich perspective on that choreographer's body of work. Or, take Twyla Tharp: The Joffrey's recently done her *Nine Sinatra Songs*. Hubbard Street premiered a commissioned work by her in 2011. And again Aspen Santa Fe brought us *Sweet Fields*, this rather rarely performed piece from a very interesting period in Twyla's career."

For a third example, one can consider vanguard dancemaker William Forsythe, born in the U.S. but based in Germany since the early '80s. For years, Chicago lagged behind other dance capitals in access to Forsythe's stringent, challenging



creations. Beginning in '05, it caught up: Hubbard Street acquired *Enemy in the Figure* and *Quintett*; the Joffrey Ballet in *the middle, somewhat elevated*; and ASFB's Katherine Bolaños and Sam Chittenden triumphed in a pas de deux from *Slingerland* at the Chicago Dancing Festival in '09.

This complementary relationship between the repertoires of resident and touring companies is essential to sustaining interest in dance in any city, affirms Hubbard Street's artistic director, Glenn Edgerton. "It allows the audience to go deeper," he says, "to be able to see, 'Okay, this is what Twyla Tharp was doing in the '90s, and here's where she is now.' The same can be said for any major choreographer. Living in a city where companies from all over come through is no different from that city having a good library. And it's no less important."

Far from being just an asset to audience development in Chicago, ASFB's regular visits also impact perspectives of, and decisions made by, the city's arts administrators. No single company has the resources to keep up singlehandedly with the activities of hundreds of dance organizations worldwide, not to mention thousands of individuals creating work and curating programming. Gail Kalver, executive director at River North Dance Chicago, notes ASFB's solid track record in introducing choreographers from abroad to the U.S. concert-dance ecology.

"Aspen Santa Fe Ballet has made a name for itself, in large part by having a knack for sniffing out rising stars and getting a lot of really great pieces for themselves," she says in admiration. A veteran dance advocate and key player in the Chicago community, Kalver credits ASFB's directors Tom Mossbrucker and Jean-Philippe Malaty, and their willingness to trust artists and cede space.

"Sometimes, choreographers go to a place and feel welcome and relaxed and so they can do their best work," she observes. "Sometimes, they go to a place and it's not a good scene, or the dancers are unhappy, or the artistic director is nervous. It's hard to make a good piece under those circumstances. I have a feeling [choreographers] like to go to Aspen, they see the mountains, it's gorgeous, even though it's hard to breathe" — she laughs — "everyone's wonderful to them, and they do their best work. That's their genius, Tom and Jean-Philippe: knowing how to set the scene for success. Knowing how to create a good atmosphere, whether for dancers, a guest choreographer, for a donor, for a visiting dance company or for a community. They're sensitive, considerate, open and accepting people, and it shows in the results that they get."

One such recent result is *Last*, made by Alejandro Cerrudo for ASFB in summer 2012. "It's a very fine piece," says Lubovitch, who saw the piece during ASFB's engagement at Manhattan's Joyce Theater, whose foundation commissioned *Last*. "It's one of the best things that Alejandro's done."

Despite the fact that Cerrudo is resident choreographer at Hubbard Street, October's Harris Theater visit will be Chicagoans' first look at the work — and the first time a company other than Hubbard Street presents Cerrudo's choreography locally. "That's a giant step for Alejandro," notes Kalver, "and a feather in Hubbard Street's cap. I don't know that people here realize how widely he's being produced elsewhere." (Cerrudo's creations are now in repertory across the U.S., as well as in Australia, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands.)

Just as Chicago benefits from multiple companies fleshing out the public's knowledge of major artists, Cerrudo benefits from choreographing in and out of the Windy City. "Working with other companies enriches me," he says by phone from Philadelphia International Airport. "It gives me another dimension. I'm lucky to have this laboratory and home in Chicago [at Hubbard Street], where I have all these amazing artists to work with. At the same time, getting away and meeting others is a special challenge. Having both is the ideal situation for me."

Cerrudo's choreography "is fresh and vital, and it's exciting to watch," says Jackie Tilton, who accompanied ASFB on its European debut, in the south of France in '04. She and her husband, Glenn Tilton, Chairman of the Midwest at JPMorgan Chase & Co., are members of ASFB's National

Council, and enjoy seeing the company regularly at the Harris Theater and at the Lensic Performing Arts Center in Santa Fe, their second home.

Chicago isn't the only place that benefits from ASFB's domestic travel, Mr. Tilton explains. "For Santa Fe, the quality of dance that they bring to the city and, for that matter, to New Mexico, is really a significant contribution.... The company always comes back with the benefit of its experiences touring, to Chicago, to Europe, to Latin America and across the U.S. Having a traveling company based in Santa Fe and in Aspen is a tremendous asset."

*Boulder, Colorado native Zachary Whittenburg has covered art, dance, film, music and more for the Chicago Reader, Dance Magazine, Dance Teacher, Dance Spirit, Flavorpill, Hoy, Pointe, Time Out Chicago, Total Theatre UK and the Windy City Times. He lives in Chicago.*

# ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

2013 SUMMER SEASON

## ASPEN



PHOTO: SHAREN BRADFORD

### ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

PROGRAM B | AUGUST 24

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## SANTA FE



PHOTO: ROSALE O'CONNOR

### ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

PROGRAM B | AUGUST 31

All shows take place at The Lensic, Santa Fe's Performing Arts Center  
Tickets Santa Fe at The Lensic: 505-988-1234

# ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

## TOURING SCHEDULE

### Laguna Beach, CA

Laguna Dance Festival

The Laguna Playhouse

September 7 | 7:30pm

September 8 | 2pm

tickets: [www.lagunaplayhouse.com](http://www.lagunaplayhouse.com)

### Logan, UT

Cache Valley Center for the Arts

Ellen Eccles Theatre

September 11 | 7:30pm

tickets: [www.centerforthearts.us](http://www.centerforthearts.us)

### Portland, OR

White Bird Dance

Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall

September 25 | 7:30pm

tickets: [www.pcpa.com/schnitzer](http://www.pcpa.com/schnitzer)

### Escondido, CA

California Center for the Arts, Escondido

September 28 | 7:30pm

tickets: [www.artcenter.org](http://www.artcenter.org)

### Chicago, IL

Harris Theater

October 5 | 7:30pm

tickets: [www.harristheaterchicago.org](http://www.harristheaterchicago.org)

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OFFICIAL AND EXCLUSIVE AIRLINE OF  
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Trustee Nic and Maja DuBrul graciously hosted Aspen Santa Fe Ballet's National Council summer meeting and reception at their home in early July. National Council Chair, Esther Pearlstone, spoke about many of our exciting new programs as well as milestones we have achieved this year. The evening was catered by Caribou Club with wine provided by Grape and Grain. A special thanks to the DuBruls for helping us kick off our summer season with our National Council!



The DuBrul home



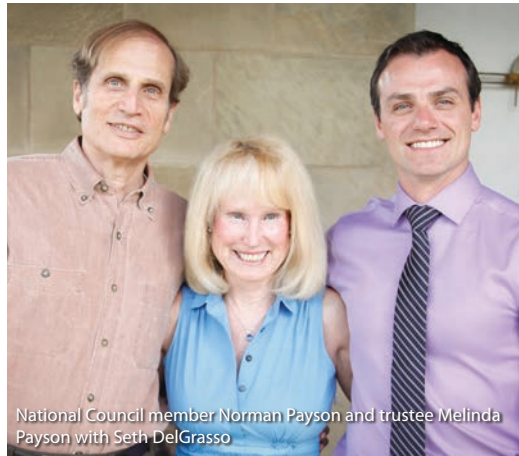
Artistic Director Tom Mossbrucker with trustee Nic DuBrul and Maja DuBrul



Trustee Tony DiLucia, Donna Dilanni, and National Council members Gene and Tita Zeffren



National Council member Carolyn Landis, trustee Rita Adler, and National Council member Kathryn Fleck



National Council member Norman Payson and trustee Melinda Payson with Seth DelGrasso



National Council member Deborah Sharpe and Zander Higbie



Bill and Ann Nitze with dancer Katie Dehler



Executive Director Jean-Philippe Malaty with National Council members Jim Horowitz and Paul Zimmerman



National Council member Bobette Lerner, trustee Esther Pearlstone, and dancer Peter Franc

Aspen Santa Fe Ballet's summer fundraising event in Santa Fe, *Raise the Barre*, took place at The Club at Las Campanas on July 15. The evening was a record-breaking success, raising funds to support our Santa Fe based programs. ASFB trustees, Leigh Moiola, Stephanie Wirt and Laurie Farber-Condon, co-chaired the event. The evening featured performances by ASFB Folklorico and ballet students; dinner, and a fabulous, entertaining live auction. Special thanks to our event sponsors, Las Campanas and Southern Wine & Spirits, and our many generous auction donors, including A-ROSA River Cruises, Charles Dale, Mark Kiffin, Crawford Malone, St. Regis Aspen, and Fiasco Fine Wine.

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David Wirt with trustee and gala co-chair Stephanie Wirt and Tom and Joan Dalbey



Trustee and gala co-chair Leigh Moiola with Charles Dale, Penelope Penland, and Rebecca Carrier



Dancers Joseph Watson and Seia Rassenti with National Council members Kevon Zehner and Ron Ritchhart



Blythe Bouza



Dancer Peter Franc with Marsha and Michael Bourque



Artistic Director Tom Mossbrucker and dancer Peter Franc with Rick and Beth Schnieders



National Council member Peter Harrison with John Geatreau and dancer Craig Black

ALL PHOTOS BY: CHARLES ENGBERT

# RAISING THE BARRE IN SANTA FE



Executive Director Jean-Philippe Malaty with National Council members, Carol Prins and John Hart



Dancers of ASFB Folklorico



Evie and Andy Smick with dancer Joseph Watson



Mike Abramson, dancer Katherine Bolaños, Gary Mihalik, and dancer Samantha Campanile



Auctioneer, David Goodman



Dancer Katie Dehler with Carol Trinca



Marty Markinson with Fred Klinghoffer and Arlena Markinson



Dancer Seia Rassenti with National Council members Chet and Joy Siuda



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September 7-8

**Logan, UT**  
September 11

**Portland, OR**  
September 25

**Escondido, CA**  
September 28

**Chicago, IL**  
October 5

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PHOTO: ROSALIE O'CONNOR