

ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

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Paul Busch in Nicolo Fonte's *The Heart(s)pace*

PHOTO: SHARREN BRADFORD

ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

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Dear Friends,

With the promise of spring just around the corner, creativity and entrepreneurialism take center stage at Aspen Santa Fe Ballet. Fresh and exciting new projects have taken seed as we continue to evolve, renewing and deepening our connection to the art of dance.

Nicolo Fonte's newest creation *The Heart(s)pace* was a resounding success when it burst forth this Valentine's Day at the Aspen District Theatre. Its vibrant colors, exhilarating music and passionate dancing won our hearts. Don't miss its upcoming premiere in Santa Fe on March 21-22, and encore performances in Aspen on March 29, and in Santa Fe on April 19 (*page 10*).

Perhaps the biggest news this spring is the addition of the spectacular Juan Siddi Flamenco Santa Fe to our roster of programming. Now under the ASFB umbrella, this iconic Santa Fe-based troupe has renewed hope and opportunities for growth and maturity (*page 4*). We invite you to join us for an evening to benefit our new partnership, April 22, at Vanessie Santa Fe (*page 7*).

Last summer's collaboration between Aspen Santa Fe Ballet Folklórico and New York-based Batoto Yetu was a smashing success and we are looking forward to furthering the relationship this summer. To celebrate and help raise funds for this unique project, we invite you to join us at Harlem-hotspot Red Rooster on May 6 where celebrity chef Marcus Samuelsson will share his passion for Harlem's rich culinary culture (*page 7*).

Aspen Santa Fe Ballet will soon take its trademark brand of athleticism and accessibility on the road, embarking on an east coast tour that will include Princeton, NJ, Long Island, NY, and SUNY Purchase.

We proudly welcome new trustees: Sarah Broughton, Nicole Giantonio, and Deborah Sharpe from Aspen, and Natalie Fitz-Gerald and Keith Gorges from Santa Fe, to our board. And we are absolutely thrilled to announce that the Board of Trustees of Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, has named longtime friend and trustee, Betty Weiss, Trustee Emeritus. Her great enthusiasm and support over the years has helped transform Aspen Santa Fe Ballet from its early roots into the institution we all love. We are filled with gratitude. Thank you, Betty!

Tom Mossbrucker

Jean-Philippe Malaty



PHOTO: MORGAN SMITH

Juan Siddi Flamenco

Finds new footing with
Aspen Santa Fe Ballet

by Debra Levine

When opportunity knocks, Aspen Santa Fe Ballet stands ready. And when a worthy associate seeks support, ASFB widens its dance umbrella. A just-announced act of arts entrepreneurialism involves an expansion: the addition of Juan Siddi Flamenco Santa Fe to the ASFB family, spawning a vital new branch for the robust arts organization.

"It is serendipitous ... and inspiring," admits Executive Director Jean-Philippe Malaty. Forging an unprecedented partnership between a renowned contemporary ballet company and a fledgling flamenco troupe should not come as a total surprise, Malaty contends: "Responding well to opportunity has been intrinsic to Aspen Santa Fe Ballet's history and development. It's been one of our strengths," he says.

Siddi's intimate cluster of dancers and musicians has burned a furious brand of world-class flamenco for the past six years. Expanding beyond a core clientele that comprises Santa Fe locals, tourists, and cognoscenti, the troupe has attracted the attention of theaters around the country and begun to tour.

The Spanish-born Siddi got his New Mexico start when flamenco pioneer Maria Benitez anointed him as her Santa Fe successor. His local reputation escalated rapidly, so much so that in 2011, he was granted the Mayor's Award for Excellence in the Arts, Santa Fe. Deborah Lawlor, the acclaimed impresario of "Forever Flamenco" in Los Angeles, where he performed in the past, is a key supporter: "Juan is a wonderful dancer who draws on the resources of Santa Fe and Albuquerque, one of the nation's prime flamenco hubs," she says.

The addition of Juan Siddi Flamenco Santa Fe is a further expression of ASFB's core mission. Through its presentation series, ASFB has already introduced many dance companies in both home cities. Sharing and leveraging knowledge and riches is deep-seated in the company culture. A commitment to community and diversity has been a beacon throughout ASFB's history.

Further, beyond its core activity of incubating contemporary choreography from around the world, ASFB holds the value of preserving heritage and cultural dance. Evidence is found in the organization's longtime folkloric program reaching more than 300 children in Aspen

and Santa Fe combined. This award-winning approach to community outreach stems from a belief that the joy of dance, for non-dancers, is best accessed in a familiar and relevant cultural milieu. A professional flamenco troupe, representing truly the zenith of Spanish cultural dance heritage, provides the community with a model of excellence beyond that of classical ballet.

Good timing galvanized the partnership: “Over the past eighteen years, we’ve accrued deep knowledge, relationships and a reputation in the performing arts market,” says Malaty. “A few years ago, we were confronting a recession, coping with heavy touring, struggling for permanence. Having reached more stable ground, it becomes possible, and even attractive, to transfer our knowledge for the benefit of a devoted artist like Juan.”

There is more than a modicum of self-recognition in the act. “We remember all too well when ASFB was six years old. We were on the cusp of a breakthrough, broaching the next level.” Therefore, says Malaty, “It all feels so familiar. We understand intrinsically what needs to happen for Juan Siddi Flamenco Santa Fe.”

So it’s not pure altruism. Malaty sees tremendous benefit converging on ASFB: “We will gain the privilege to deepen our spirit of collaboration, preserve cultural heritage, expand diversity, serve as an incubator for new ventures, encompass more forms of dance, play a role in the future of an endangered art form.”

Siddi likes ASFB right back: “They are such an admirable company. The whole organization is very established, professional and respected. They are an international compass; they are out there and recognized for it.”

By incorporating his operation into that of ASFB, Siddi gains access to the ballet company’s largely hidden asset: its team of seasoned arts administrators. ASFB will provide critical support services: booking, marketing, audience development, communications, fund raising, fiscal management. This bank of knowledge, transferred in doses over time, should fast-track the Siddi troupe’s advancement.

Siddi gets that. “Their staff can take a lot of pressure off my shoulders,” he says. “Before, I have almost done everything, from choreographing to applying for artist’s work visas and arranging their housing. Then the financing part, managing and creating budgets. With the help of ASFB, I’ll have more freedom to focus on the production.”

But why flamenco? ASFB Artistic Director Tom Mossbrucker chimes in: “We see artistic excellence in what Juan does. Flamenco is so appealing; the women are charismatic and powerful; the musicians are exceptional

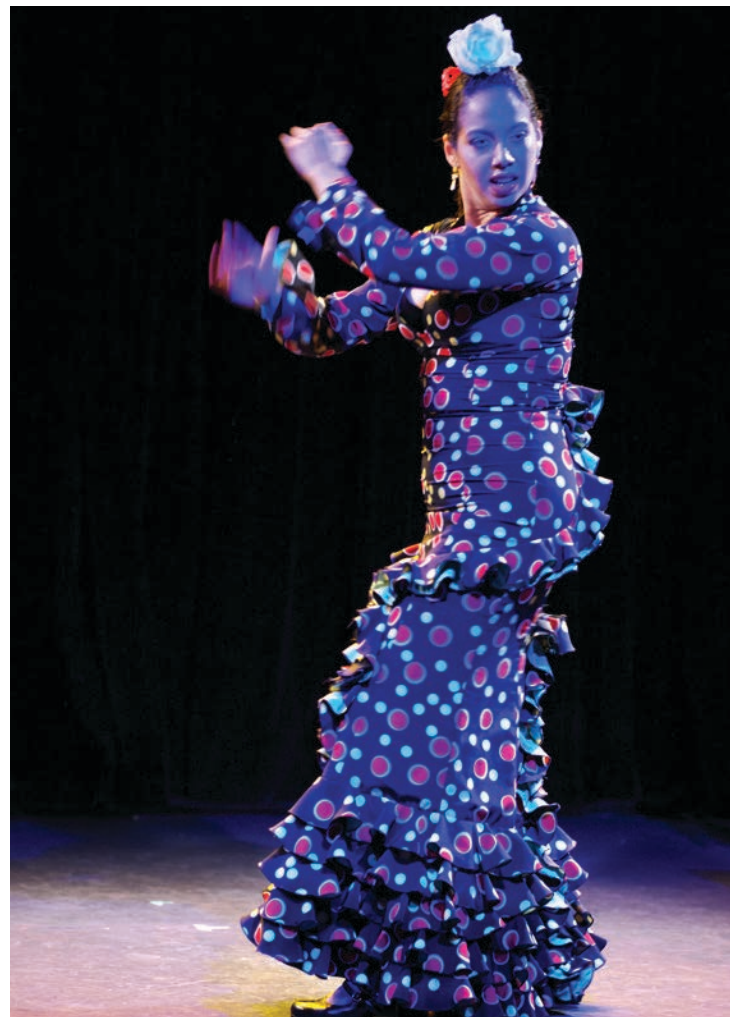


PHOTO: CH-FRS WALT

and accomplished – often virtuosi. Juan himself is a remarkable dancer. There’s an unusual complexity and refinement in his dancing that we appreciate.”

Beyond all the alluring artistic affinities, the venture has pragmatic footing in the business of the performing arts. Mossbrucker has a vision. “Together with Juan, we want to go beyond the company’s current tablao-style presentation (cabaret in a hotel) into a theatrical format with full production values. We believe that this offering, given Juan’s authenticity, will have appeal to presenters around the country.”

The historic Lencic, Santa Fe’s Performing Arts Center, with its Moorish-style architecture, provides a perfect fit for flamenco. Lencic Executive Director Bob Martin says, “For companies that are artistically driven, it is wonderful when they get strong management. It can be nothing but positive. From The Lencic’s perspective, more dance is good for dance. I think it’s going to be a mutually beneficial relationship.”

“It’s a privilege rather than a burden to help a fellow dance company reach its potential,” says Malaty. “Juan Siddi Flamenco Santa Fe has demonstrated true grit over the past six years, difficult days for any arts organization but for dance in particular. The bottom line is that Juan’s troupe merits our support.”


Los Angeles writer Debra Levine marks 30 years of dance criticism in 2014. She blogs about dance, film, music and more on artsmeme.com.



PHOTO: MORGAN SMITH

Join us for a benefit dinner in support of Juan Siddi Flamenco Santa Fe on **April 22** (see details on page 7)

Juan Siddi Flamenco Santa Fe will perform at The Lencic, Santa Fe’s Performing Arts Center on **July 18 and 27, August 3 and 9** and at the Aspen District Theatre on **July 22 and August 5**.



"Dance as though no one is watching."

From your friends at Alpine Bank, enjoy the show.



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Upcoming Special Events

Special
Event in
New York
City



Come and support the cultural exchange program between Aspen Santa Fe Ballet Folklórico and Harlem's Batoto Yetu. For the second year ASFB will bring 24 children from Harlem to experience dancing in the mountains of Colorado.

Tuesday, May 6, 2014 | 7:00pm
The Red Rooster / Ginny's Supper Club
310 Lenox Ave, New York City

Experience dinner by famed chef,
Marcus Samuelsson,
and a special performance by the children
of Batoto Yetu.

\$500 per person
(\$350 tax-deductible)

Individual tickets or tables for 8 -12
people may be purchased.

To reserve your seats or to make a donation,
contact Kaitlin Windle at
970-925-7175 or kaitlin@aspensantafeballet.com

PHOTO: CARLOS LETIAC

Join us in support of
our new partnership with
Juan Siddi Flamenco Santa Fe!

Tuesday, April 22, 2014 | 6:30pm
Vanessie Santa Fe
427 W. Water Street

cocktails, dinner,
and special performance by
Juan Siddi and guest artists.

\$140 per person
(\$100 tax-deductible)

Individual tickets or tables for 6 - 8
people may be purchased.

To reserve your seats or to make a donation,
contact Zander Higbie at
505-983-5591 or zander@aspensantafeballet.com

Special
Event in
Santa Fe



PHOTO: CHRIS WALT

2013/14 WINTER SEASON

ASPEN



LES BALLETS TROCKADERO DE MONTE CARLO

March 16 | 7:30pm

Generously underwritten by Melinda and Norman Payson

A playful, entertaining view of traditional, classical ballet in parody form, Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo dances the fine line between high art and high camp. The all male troupe, affectionately known as 'The Trocks', offers a flawless combination of slapstick humor, athleticism, and role reversal. Immerse yourself in the playfulness, grace, and humor of this unique and critically acclaimed company!

"Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo...remains one of the great comic creations of the American stage."

– San Francisco Chronicle



Encore! ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

March 29 | 7:30pm

Generously underwritten by Bebe and David Schweppe

In case you missed it, or maybe you just didn't get enough! Aspen Santa Fe Ballet brings back the trio of choreographic works performed in February. Don't miss this special encore performance and winter season finale!

"ASFB deftly showcased the 10 dancers' impressive technical facility, sleek uniformity and flair for eclectic works requiring ballet brilliance."

– Chicago Sun Times



THE SCHOOL OF ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

May 17 | 6:00pm

May 18 | 1:00pm

Enjoy an eye-catching performance by the 150-plus talented young ballet dancers of The School of Aspen Santa Fe Ballet! This anticipated recital is the culmination of a year of hard work and a valuable part of the students training; developing stage presence, musicality, discipline, and confidence.

SANTA FE



ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

March 21-22 | 7:30pm

Come see the world premiere commission by choreographer, Nicolo Fonte. Known for his daring and original approach to dance, this will be Mr. Fonte's eighth commissioned work. Joining the lineup is Cayetano Soto's wildly popular *Beautiful Mistake* and Norbert de la Cruz's striking *Fold by Fold*. ASFB's distinctive style, commitment to excellence, and creation of new works has earned glowing reviews around the globe. Discover what the critics are raving about!

"De La Cruz ... offers an arresting blend of movement and image. Fold by Fold, his second piece for ASFB, ... is mature, dynamic, and satisfying."

– Santa Fe New Mexican



Encore! ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

April 19 | 7:30pm

In case you missed it, or maybe you just didn't get enough! Aspen Santa Fe Ballet brings back the trio of choreographic works performed in March. Don't miss this special encore performance and winter season finale!

"ASFB deftly showcased the 10 dancers' impressive technical facility, sleek uniformity and flair for eclectic works requiring ballet brilliance."

– Chicago Sun Times



THE SCHOOL OF ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

June 1 | 1:00pm

Almost 230 dance students, ages 3-18, will take the stage in this year's combined annual recital. Ranging from ballet, jazz, and tap to traditional Mexican folkloric dances, the talented students from both programs will melt your heart and make you want to stomp your feet!



ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET FOLKLÓRICO

May 18 | 6:00pm

From Rifle to Aspen, over 140 students, ages 5 -18, come together to perform original choreography, inspired by the traditions of Mexico. This performance will showcase an entire year's work from the students of the acclaimed after-school program, designed to enrich the lives of children and inspire a new generation of creative thinkers and artists. Be carried away by the vibrant culture, color, and infectious energy of Folklórico with this annual recital!

► Performance Information

All shows take place at the
Aspen District Theatre
0199 High School Road, Aspen, CO

Purchase Tickets

► Online

www.aspensantafeballet.com
or
www.aspenshowtix.com

► By Phone

Aspen Show Tickets
970-920-5770 or toll free 866-449-0464

► In Person

Visit Aspen Show Tickets at the
Wheeler Opera House
320 E. Hyman Street, Aspen, CO

► Group Sales

Receive up to 40% off regular ticket prices with
groups of ten or more.

For more information, call 970-925-7175



► Performance Information

All shows take place at the
The Lensic, Santa Fe's Performing Arts Center
211 West San Francisco St., Santa Fe, NM

Purchase Tickets

► Online

www.aspensantafeballet.com
or
www.ticketssantafe.org

► By Phone

Tickets Santa Fe at The Lensic
505-988-1234

► In Person

Tickets Santa Fe at The Lensic
211 West San Francisco St., Santa Fe, NM

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Receive up to 40% off regular ticket prices with
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For more information, call 505-983-5591



PHOTO: SHAREN BRADFORD

Threading the Needle

Seeking a fresh perspective, choreographer Nicolo Fonte swims upstream — while being careful not to cut across the grain.

by Zachary Whittenburg

It's late January and Nicolo Fonte has just completed his eighth original work for Aspen Santa Fe Ballet: an octet choreographed to three movements from Italian composer Ezio Bosso's second symphony, called "Under the Trees'Voices."

By phone from Colorado, Fonte sounds at ease. "We finished yesterday," he clarifies. "Now it's just looking at it, tweaking it and working with the dancers, although it's in great shape and I don't want to overcorrect it. That can really kill the spontaneity and the joy, you know?"

As Fonte explains further what he means by the twin dangers "over-prepared" and "over-ready," it's apparent that, for him, "completed" and "finished" hold unique meanings in this particular context. A dictionary might define them as "consummate" or "lacking nothing" but, for this choreographer, such finality means a kind of death for a piece still three weeks away from its world premiere.

"I told Tom [Mossbrucker, ASFB's artistic director], 'Don't rehearse it every day when I'm gone next week,'" Fonte continues. "Go two, maybe three days without running it in the studio. I don't want the dancers discovering everything about it before they get onstage. I like it when they can take responsibility and are involved in the decision-making process."

The Heart(s)pace skips the first two movements of Bosso's 2012 composition and dives right into its driving, ecstatic middle, a scherzo for strings. Bosso's fourth section, the ballet's middle, lays long, plaintive phrases over first pizzicato, then a storm. Both the score and choreography conclude in a presto finale.

Company member Paul Busch, 25 and also a pianist, half-jokingly complains that he appears only in the first and third scenes of Fonte's new work. "My favorite music is the pas de deux, which I don't dance," he says, referencing *The Heart(s)pace's* centerpiece duet for Peter Franc and Seia Rassenti. "Which has been hard for me because I'm so madly in love with it." Busch finds more than enough inspiration for his role in the bookend movements, however, thanks specifically to their frequent shifts in tone. "There's a regality, there's sensitivity, quiet, sadness, joy, bursts of energy and parts that are very rhythmic," he explains. "The music brings out...it demands so many different qualities from our dancing."



What neither the music nor the choreography does is brood. By design, *The Heart(s)pace* bucks certain shadowy trends in contemporary dance. Audiences and performing-arts presenters alike wonder whether it's time to declare the apotheosis of a Northern European aesthetic — born in the early '90s and recognized for dimly lit, slightly hostile and clinical compositions — over and done.

Not that being among the first to propose a new paradigm is easy, say Fonte and Mossbrucker. Just because viewers are ready for something different doesn't mean they'll eagerly consume whatever's offered. What the hard-edged, cold world of choreography today handily avoids is sentimentality, and neither men see the answer in a pendulum swing. In late November, just more than halfway through the creation of *The Heart(s)pace*, Fonte expressed openly his concerns about how exactly to paint a more luminous picture.

"I want to keep the integrity of my work, of what I do. I also want to see how to incorporate more light, both in terms of the audience being able to see more clearly what's happening onstage, and generating more positive feeling, a celebratory feeling...without becoming cheesy." (Perhaps paradoxically, Fonte sought to accomplish this in part by spending his first week with ASFB's dancers in total privacy. "I almost got curtains for the windows," he says, "and made people knock on the door — I was that serious.")

Echoing Fonte's concerns about simply exchanging astringent gloom for cloying gloss, Busch confesses that, onstage, the depth of a feeling is more important for him than its type.

"If the choreography generates the mood within me, if it's inspiring and I'm moved by it to make it real then, yes, I can be joyful onstage. Otherwise I won't be, because it's fake. I don't smile in photos often. I'm a fairly serious guy, and very shy. So this common quality of contemporary dance right now, that seriousness that the public so often sees, is comfortable for me.

While the exuberant characteristics of *The Heart(s)pace* represent something of a departure for Fonte the choreographer, they're not unexpected by some familiar with Fonte the person. This project marks the second time dancer Peter Franc has originated a role for him, the first while a member of Houston Ballet. The 27-year-old dancer describes an artist whose manner in the studio is more day than night, more summer

than winter. "Nicolo's extremely positive in the studio, which allows everybody to move freely and their creative juices to flow... It's rare that you find someone so comfortable and fun, who's so easy to have a back-and-forth with during something as difficult as the creative process." ASFB dancer Sadie Brown, 22, agrees: "He never seems stressed. I guess he must have some pet peeves, but I haven't discovered any of them yet."

With the choreography "completed" and just some costuming and technical decisions left to resolve, knowing he doesn't want to micromanage *The Heart(s)pace* into a chore, I ask the choreographer what he does plan to focus on, during final meetings with the cast.

"Intention," he says plainly. "Helping them identify, at every moment, why each next step is what it is." He's silent for a second, then continues.

"You know, dance is a complicated thing. What we're doing in contemporary dance is, in general, abstract. We're not dealing in literal narratives anymore. I do, however, have trouble with empty gestures and we've been working on that from the get-go. Most younger dancers today are very good at being cold and edgy. Aloof. That's where we are right now, in this art form — that's still in vogue at the moment. Not that there isn't any fury in *The Heart(s)pace*, but it's more about the human heart. Every movement needs to be motivated by a sense of compassion. Without it becoming sentimental, without any overacting. It's hard to find that balance."

Boulder, Colorado native Zachary Whittenburg has written dance and culture stories for numerous publications including Dance International, Dance Magazine, Dance Teacher, Dance Spirit, Hoy, Pointe, Time Out Chicago, Total Theatre UK, Flavorpill and the Windy City Times. He is also Manager of Communication at Hubbard Street Dance Chicago.

Aspen Santa Fe Ballet will perform Nicolo Fonte's *The Heart(s)pace* in Aspen March 29 and in Santa Fe, March 21-22 and April 19

Get Tickets:

Aspen: 970-920-5770 | Santa Fe: 505-988-1234
aspensantafeballet.com

Special thanks to Kelli and Allen Questrom for underwriting *The Heart(s)pace*

ASFB Wins Santa Fe Community Foundation Piñon Award

Each year the Santa Fe Community Foundation gives its Piñon Award to nonprofit organizations that make extraordinary contributions to the local community. Aspen Santa Fe Ballet was proudly selected for the *Tried and True* award for the outstanding programming, services, and opportunities it provides.

Students of Aspen Santa Fe Ballet Folklorico entertained the audience of more than 250 at the October 8th awards banquet. ASFB patrons and trustees from Santa Fe and Aspen attended the event. We thank Anna Blyth from New Mexico Arts for nominating Aspen Santa Fe Ballet.



Santa Fe patrons Richard Hertz and Doris Meyer with Aspen trustee Barbara Gold



Tom Mossbrucker and Jean-Philippe Malaty receiving the Piñon Award



Santa Fe trustees Stephanie Wirt, Bill Thornton, and Charles Forte



Trustee Laurie Farber-Condon with National Council member Patricia Brewer



ASFB Folklorico entertains Santa Fe Community Foundation guests



ASFB Vice-President Leigh Moiola with National Council members Ashlyn and Dan Perry, and Charles Dale



Aspen trustee Barbara Gold and new Santa Fe trustee Natalie Fitz-Gerald



Children of ASFB Folklorico

ASFB Welcomes New Trustees

This fall, Aspen Santa Fe Ballet welcomed five new trustees. We are proud to have the following outstanding community leaders and arts patrons join our family: Sarah Broughton, Nicole Giantonio, and Deborah Sharpe from Aspen, and Natalie Fitz-Gerald and Keith Gorges from Santa Fe. This brings ASFB Board of Trustees to 33 members. We are grateful to all of our trustees for their unwavering support and careful stewardship of the organization.

In recognition of her 18 years of service on the Aspen Santa Fe Ballet Board of Trustees, and for her extraordinary generosity, Betty Weiss was named Trustee Emeritus, making her the second individual to receive this honor, after founder Bebe Schweppe. We celebrated Betty's longtime devotion at a luncheon at the Hotel Jerome following our first board meeting of the year. Thank you, Betty!



ASFB Dancers with Trustee Emeritus Betty Weiss

PHOTO: JANA CRUDER



Trustees Barbara Gold and Kelley Purnell with Betty Weiss

ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

2014 PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Aspen, CO | March 16 | 7:30pm

ASFB Presents

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo

Aspen District Theatre

Tickets: 970-920-5770

aspensantafeballet.com

Santa Fe, NM | March 21-22 | 7:30pm

The Lensic, Santa Fe's Performing Arts Center

Tickets: 505-988-1234

aspensantafeballet.com

Aspen, CO | March 29 | 7:30pm

Aspen District Theatre

Tickets: 970-920-5770

aspensantafeballet.com

Santa Fe, NM | April 19 | 7:30pm

The Lensic, Santa Fe's Performing Arts Center

Tickets: 505-988-1234

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Brookville, NY | May 2 | 8:00pm

Tilles Center for the Performing Arts, LIU

Tickets: 516-299-3100 or 800-745-3000

tillescenter.org

Purchase, NY | May 4 | 3:00pm

The Performing Arts Center, Purchase College

Tickets: 914-251-6200

artscenter.org

Princeton, NJ | May 7 | 7:30pm

McCarter Theatre Center

Tickets: 609-258-2787

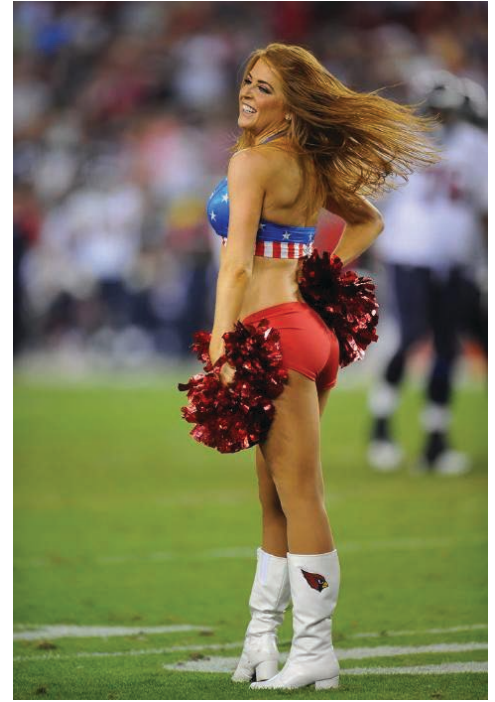
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PHOTO: SHAREN BRADFORD

Spotlight on Kristen Purnell

by Gretchen Hayduk-Wroblewski



From time to time, paths from Aspen Santa Fe Ballet continue to wind further along the dance road, but ASFB alum Kristen Purnell took a sharper turn than usual as she carried her childhood experiences at The School of Aspen Santa Fe Ballet (from 1989 to 2001) into her professional career. As an Arizona Cardinals Cheerleader, Kristen says the job is really more about dance than the gymnastic-based stunts that many people associate with cheerleading. Just home from an NFL goodwill tour in Japan, Kristen graciously took time to reflect on her transition from ASFB student dancer to Cardinals Cheerleader.

Q: How did you first become involved with dance?

KP: It's something my sisters and I did from a young age. My mom was a dancer—she minored in dance at Berkley—and so she enrolled us in The School of Aspen Santa Fe Ballet when I was four years old.

Q: What are your memories of growing up in the midst of ASFB?

KP: Every year the pinnacle was *The Nutcracker*, of course. I always loved preparing for it. I was a Party Girl for about four years, and a Soldier for another four years, but the best year was when I got to be the Marionette Doll. I think it was ASFB dancer Seth DelGrasso who picked me up and placed me down on stage.

It was pretty amazing viewing the company as it progressed over the years. A memory that really stands out is when I got to see them perform at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. My family flew there to see it. I think I was 10 or 11 at the time. It was an experience that really solidified my desire to dance.

Q: In retrospect, what do you think ASFB provided for you as you were growing up?

KP: ASFB provided me a sense of discipline and direction. While other kids were just running around after school, I had a place to go, a place to be, where something was expected of me. I was expected to be in the

studio, with my hair pulled back in a bun, with my leotard on. I had to be prepared, to be on point with my part. It gave me a sense of purpose. In a broader sense, I think my experience at ASFB contributed to my passion for the arts in general.

Q: Can you describe your segue from classical ballet to cheerleading?

KP: What's different is the style of dancing—it's very high energy. In case you're not familiar with what we do, we're actually dancing with a set of poms, not leading cheers. The primary purpose of our dancing is to get the crowd excited. It's a different style of dance than ballet, but I knew from a young age that I probably wouldn't be a professional ballerina, so I'm glad I was able to find another way to continue to dance. It's given me a tremendous number of opportunities.

Q: What do you consider the most beautiful sight in the world?

KP: I grew up in Aspen, but I guess I didn't always realize what a beautiful place it is. The first summer I came home from college, I remember flying in over the mountains, and it was at that moment, seeing the greens and yellows on the trees beneath me, that I realized how gorgeous my life was, how really beautiful my surroundings were.

Q: What artist has most influenced you?

KP: In very recent years—and with the idea of the performing arts in mind—I would have to say Beyonce. I had an opportunity to see her in concert, and she's amazing. She exudes confidence and her performance is sparkling. Yes, the girl sings, but she's an amazing dancer, too!

Q: How do you see yourself fifty years from now?

KP: I hope I would still be active, enjoying life, and still involved in the arts. Maybe a board member for a dance company or still involved with the NFL somehow. I'd like to be one of those people who everyone looks at and says, "Wow, how are you still doing that stuff? Running miles a day, still loving life?" Someone like that.

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