

# ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

newsnewsnewsnewsnewsnewsnews 2017 SUMMER SEASON

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May 1

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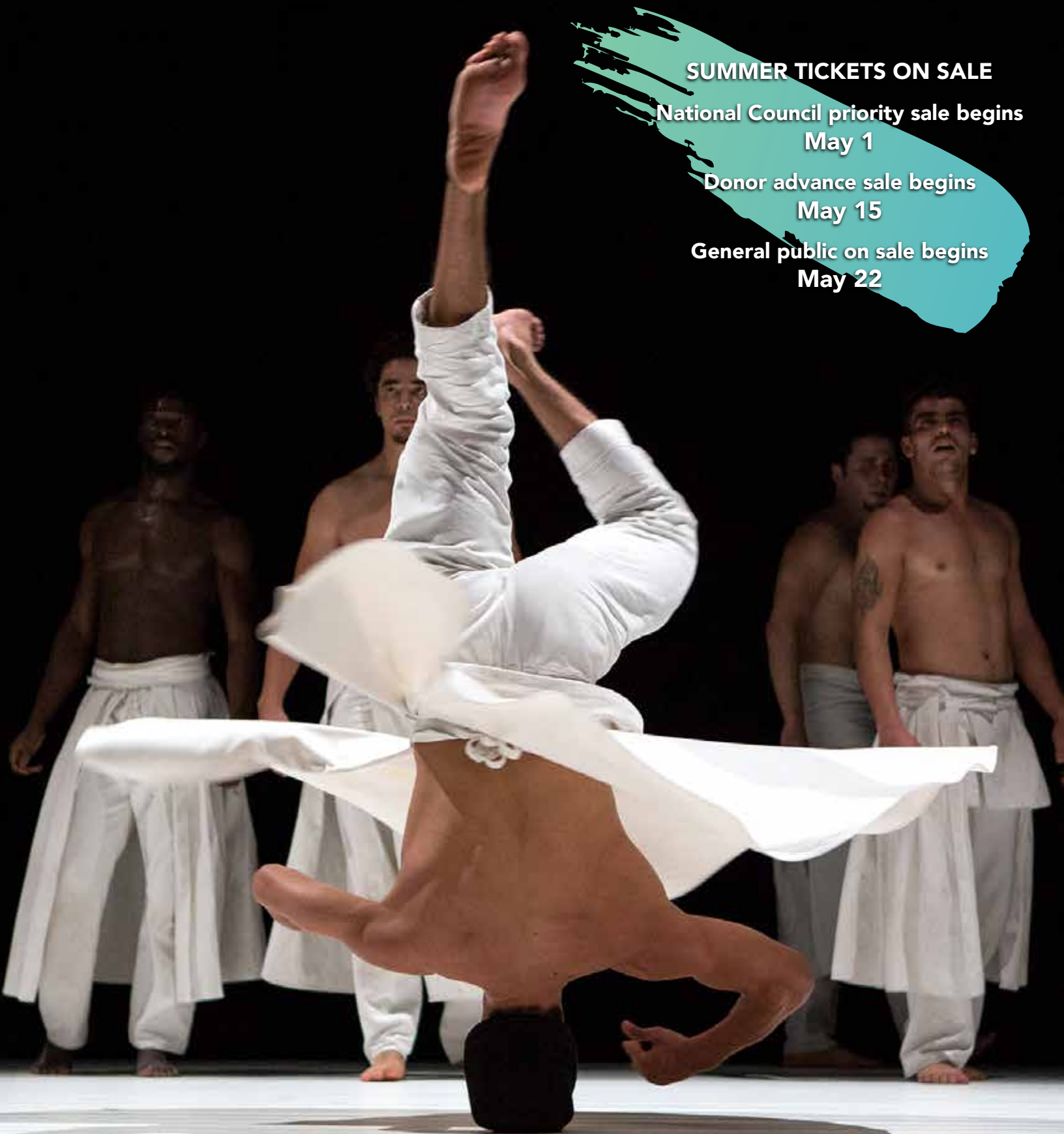


PHOTO: DIDIER PHILIPPART

# ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

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Dear Friends,

Aspen Santa Fe Ballet recently completed a U.S. tour covering major cities from coast to coast with performances in Los Angeles, Orange County, Scottsdale, Houston, Denver, Miami, New York, and Philadelphia. Now back and happy to be spending a summer in our beautiful home communities of Aspen and Santa Fe, we are preparing to roll out a summer season of powerful dance performances.

First up is our own Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, performing throughout the summer, with the premiere of a brand new multimedia dance work by Brazilian choreographer Fernando Melo (pg. 4), paired with Cherice Barton's newly-unveiled *Eudaemonia*, a ballet that draws inspiration from the eternal quest for happiness.

**Aspen Santa Fe Ballet Presents** continues its efforts to bring world-class dance to our home communities and this summer's guest companies certainly paint a thrilling picture of dance around the world! The avant-garde **Compagnie Marie Chouinard**, led by Canada's most noted dancemaker, makes its Aspen debut with Chouinard's iconic *Rite of Spring* danced to the glorious Stravinsky score. **Compagnie Hervé Koube**, the dynamic all-male dance troupe hailing from France and Algeria, debuts in both Aspen and Santa Fe with its signature fusion of urban street dance, hip hop, and athleticism (pg. 10). Finally, **Stars of American Ballet**, featuring noted dancers from New York City Ballet and American Ballet Theatre, returns to Aspen with a selection of neo-classical ballets capped by one of the most important works of our century, George Balanchine's *Apollo*.

Recently, our one-night-only shows have been selling fast and selling out! As a show of gratitude to our patrons, we have unveiled a new ticketing structure that gives our donors the opportunity to purchase seats prior to the general public. We urge you to take advantage of this offer, ensuring your favorite seats will be available for the summer season (pg 8).

As a loyal patron, you know your support is vital to our success. One way to show your support is by attending our annual galas; please mark your calendars for July 16 in Santa Fe and July 27 in Aspen. These events are not only incredibly fun, but also important, as they raise funds that support our entire season!

As always, we thank you for your enthusiasm and support. Get ready, we have an exciting summer of dance ahead!

*Tom Mossbrucker*

Tom Mossbrucker

*Jean-Philippe Malaty*

Jean-Philippe Malaty



PHOTO: ROSALIE OOGINOR

# Fernando Melo's Second Act

by Alexandra Villareal

Last year, when Emily Proctor and Anthony Tiedeman walked into the studio, they might have found assignments scrawled across the mirror. Charts made of patterns, numbers, and formulas signified complicated sequences that they had to construct and tear down with the precision of mad scientists stumbling across their own miracles of invention.

Despite their quantitative exactitude, Proctor and Tiedeman weren't mixing potions in test tubes or conceiving of the next Einstein-esque equation. Instead, they were translating barebones, mathematical etchings into something that resembled art.

"It is our job to remember dance phrases and sequences, but it took some time," Proctor said. In 10 years at Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, she had never experienced a choreographic process quite like the one Fernando Melo used to strategically unsnarl an image in *Re:play*.

After an acclaimed ASFB debut in February 2016, Melo will return to Aspen this July to create a brand new premiere that "tricks the eye of the audience and invites the observer to experience a constant shift of perception," Melo said. Aided by video projections, he will turn six company members into an illusion that challenges the bounds of reality.

Still in its early conception, the newly commissioned piece has yet to adopt a concrete, stable form. Melo's choreographic method requires bodies and brains as engines for his ideas so he can see them propelled into action. Until he visits Aspen in June, he will only have outlines of his final draft — mental bullet points that he will flesh out into articulated poetry with the aid of dancer-muses.

Melo said that the success of his endeavor hinges on the company members' "generosity of spirit, open-mindedness, and commitment to the work" — qualities endemic to the "young versatile group of dancers" he discovered at ASFB, who look forward to a next test.

"Any chance to push yourself and push your boundaries of what you think dance should be — it's a great opportunity," Proctor said.

She and her colleague, Tiedeman, who both filled leading roles in *Re:play*,





spoke to the concentration that Melo's methodical approach requires. Proctor remembered the tediousness of memorizing 38 sequences that were assigned letters and numbers, conjoined like puzzle pieces in an eloquent final tableau that ignored the toil of its manipulators.

"It was complex, and then the finishing product looks, to the audience's eye, so simple," Tiedeman said.

He recalled how, even during tech rehearsals just before the show's opening, he and Proctor would hide notes and glance at cheat sheets in the wings. Their memories worked overtime and there was still the task of performing, of enveloping an audience with the kind of mystique that makes them want to watch.

"If you're not a hundred percent focused and if you don't have intention behind what you're doing...then it just loses its magic," Tiedeman said.

When Melo exhumes a new ballet from his mind's archive, he hopes to "stimulate [the public's] imagination and countless interpretations." For *Re:play*, Melo's goal reached beyond the proscenium seats encased in darkness and onto the stage, where Proctor devised her own narrative about who she was and what her movements meant. Even the most discreet motion — a few steps that collapsed into a kneel — had to have purpose.

"In this pedestrian, mathematical ballet, I came up with an idea for the role of it in a way that I hadn't done before, or had the opportunity to do before," Proctor said. "It really sharpened my focus."

As the dancers transcended the formulaic base on which *Re:play*'s choreography had been founded to develop their characters, they excavated Melo's immediate, universal message.

"There's a weird pedestrian, human aspect that he wanted us to embody, and that's what the physical challenge was — to not make it look like dance," Tiedeman said. "He wanted it to be a person reaching for another person."

Melo's work is not always so grounded in the everyday. From operas, to contemporary ballets, to pieces set in tennis shoes, he can run with

nearly any idea and put his stamp on it. He said that he plans to challenge ASFB's dancers in a new way this time around, providing them with yet another frontier to explore.

"Every concept asks for a different kind of physical vocabulary," he said. "The range can be from extremely physical to completely static."

But though his oeuvre is diverse, it does have one unifying principle. A brain that employs equations to draw moving pictures like the ones that flashed in *Re:play* is one driven by structure. So that it looks like an art and not a science, this order can unravel, but it must exist in the first place.

"Choreography is, for me, about organization: organizing the bodies in space in an organized environment; organizing the stage elements — light, sound, energy, movement," Melo said.

"From my perspective, there is much more to dance as an art form than simply setting dance steps to a musical score," he added.

While Melo corresponds with Jerome Delbey to come up with costumes and collaborates with his assistants to hammer out his visions into physical realities, the dancers at ASFB must wait until June to learn what he has planned.

"Knowing that he always has these remarkable ideas brewing, I'm excited to see what the next challenge is going to be — because I know it's going to be a challenge," said Tiedeman.

Alexandra Villareal is a freelance writer and contributor to the Huffington Post

#### ASPEN

##### Aspen Santa Fe Ballet

July 8 | 8:00pm

July 20 | 8:00pm

August 18 | 8:00pm

Aspen District Theatre

#### SANTA FE

##### Aspen Santa Fe Ballet

July 15 | 8:00pm

September 2 | 8:00pm

The Lensic,  
Santa Fe's Performing Arts Center



# Today's Students, Tomorrow's Audiences

by Eve Tolpa

*Special thanks to the Morgridge Family Foundation for underwriting ASFB's February 27 performance for Denver area school children, and to the Melville Hankins Family Foundation for underwriting ASFB's April 10 performance for Santa Fe area youth.*

Chroniclers of Aspen Santa Fe Ballet's touring schedule will probably have noticed that there is not always a strict one-to-one ratio of performances to days in any given town. The reason can be summed up in a single word: outreach.

As a concept, it's not out of the ordinary—many dance companies offer school programming and master classes—but what ASFB brings to the table is context. At least that's how Kendra Ingram sees it. As Executive Director of the Robert and Judi Newman Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Denver, she hosts ASFB every two years for a dance concert and lecture-demonstration geared towards grades six through nine. "The performance begins with dancers onstage doing their warm-up," she says. "They really give the students a behind-the-curtain look [to see] what it was like to be a dancer. I wish more artists would do that, because it's really impactful." Denver has a very strong dance community, Ingram adds, and this past February students from the Denver School of Performing Arts attended a professional-level master class led by ASFB company members.

Eric Fliss, Managing Director at the South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center, recently collaborated with ASFB under the Dance Touring Initiative. Each year, he says, the center brings in a modern or contemporary ballet company, noting that "it must be a two to three day residency, not just a single performance." ASFB's South Florida stint required an advance site visit, which turned out to be a boon. "They understood more about who they were teaching," says Fliss. "They helped with the design of the engagement." This flexible, open-minded approach allowed Fliss to tailor Q & A discussions to his community's broader artistic concerns, like how to start and maintain a dance company. "Otherwise," he explains, "I would have just done exactly what was in the contract." ASFB's student presentations generated a lot of positive feedback from participants' parents, who especially appreciated that their kids got to "see themselves" reflected in the dancers on stage. "That's the other nice thing about the company," Fliss says. "It has diversity in it."





Though outreach and travel often go together, there are plenty of opportunities for ASFB to connect at home. For more than a decade, the company has been involved in a partnership between Santa Fe Public Schools and the Lensic Performing Arts Center, called PASS (Performing Arts for Student Success). Each year, all the district's second graders—about 1,200 on average—attend a dance performance by ASFB. According to Amy Summa, Arts Education Coordinator for Santa Fe Public Schools, “most of these kids would not have the opportunity

**“They really give the students a behind-the-curtain look [to see] what it was like to be a dancer. I wish more artists would do that, because it's really impactful.”**

to go to a ballet. They are just in awe.” Summa says her biggest challenge is scheduling, but “Aspen Santa Fe Ballet has been really adaptive and always bent over backwards” to accommodate things like spring break, testing, and parent-teacher conferences. That extra effort has been paying off. As a result of their exposure to dance, many Santa Fe children now “know how to behave in the theater. They know how to appreciate a performance. Even the most jaded, goofy middle schoolers are very polite. And,” Summa posits, considering that today's students become tomorrow's audiences, patrons, and artists, “who knows where it leads?”

*Eve Tolpa is a freelance writer and contributor to Local Flavor in Santa Fe.*



A student volunteer tries his hand at partnering.



**National Council  
priority sale begins**

**May 1**

**Donor  
advance sale begins**

**May 15**

**General public  
on sale begins**

**May 22**

## ASPEN



PHOTO: ROSALIE O'CONNOR

### ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

July 8 & 20 | 8:00pm

*Generously underwritten by Les Dames d'Aspen*

After making a splash in 2016 with his critically-acclaimed Aspen Santa Fe Ballet choreographic debut, Brazilian choreographer Fernando Melo returns this summer with a second world premiere ballet that blends video projection with stirring movement. Sharing the program is Los Angeles-based choreographer Cherice Barton's *Eudaemonia*, a recent ASFB premiere that explores the search for happiness. Let this diverse evening leave you mesmerized, uplifted, and entertained!

*"Aspen Santa Fe Ballet is ready for its Hollywood close-up."*

– Los Angeles Times

## SANTA FE



PHOTO: ROSALIE O'CONNOR

### ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

July 15 | 8:00pm

After making a splash in 2016 with his critically-acclaimed Aspen Santa Fe Ballet choreographic debut, Brazilian choreographer Fernando Melo returns this summer with a second world premiere ballet that blends video projection with stirring movement. Sharing the program is Los Angeles-based choreographer Cherice Barton's *Eudaemonia*, a recent ASFB premiere that explores the search for happiness. Let this diverse evening leave you mesmerized, uplifted, and entertained!

*"Aspen Santa Fe Ballet is ready for its Hollywood close-up."*

– Los Angeles Times



PHOTO: DIDIER PHILSPART

### COMPAGNIE HERVÉ KOUBI

July 26 | 8:00pm

*Generously underwritten by Bebe and David Schweppe*

Be swept away by this company of 12 outstanding men from Algeria and Burkina Faso, as they deliver a jaw-dropping performance packed with backflips, head spins, and a transcending emotional intensity. Created by French-Algerian choreographer Hervé Koubi, *What the Day Owes to the Night* (*Ce Que le Jour Doit à la Nuit*) is danced to an eclectic score including Johann Sebastian Bach, Hamza El Din & the Kronos Quartet, and traditional Sufi music.

*"A stunning fusion of acrobatics, gymnastics, b-boying, modern dance, and ballet."*

– The Washington Post



PHOTO: LOU DAMAS

### COMPAGNIE HERVÉ KOUBI

July 23 | 8:00pm

Be swept away by this company of 12 outstanding men from Algeria and Burkina Faso, as they deliver a jaw-dropping performance packed with backflips, head spins, and a transcending emotional intensity. Created by French-Algerian choreographer Hervé Koubi, *What the Day Owes to the Night* (*Ce Que le Jour Doit à la Nuit*) is danced to an eclectic score including Johann Sebastian Bach, Hamza El Din & the Kronos Quartet, and traditional Sufi music.

*"A stunning fusion of acrobatics, gymnastics, b-boying, modern dance, and ballet."*

– The Washington Post



PHOTO: MARIE CHOUINARD

### COMPAGNIE MARIE CHOUINARD

August 4 | 8:00pm

*Generously underwritten by Esther Pearlstone*

In a performance that's sure to leave audiences talking, this celebrated Montréal ensemble will present two significant ballets by company namesake, Marie Chouinard. Performed with live accompaniment, Chouinard's *24 Preludes* by Chopin plays with the very structure of Chopin's preludes to create a jubilant, yet solemn work that reveals new facets of this iconic music. Considered one of her most important creations, *The Rite of Spring* reexamines Stravinsky's unforgettable score in an avant-garde visual spectacle. (*This performance contains partial nudity*).

*"Chouinard's Rite of Spring is 55 minutes of choreographic brilliance performed with blazing energy by an extraordinary cast of seven dancers."*

– The Toronto Star



PHOTO: MARIE CHOUINARD

### ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

September 2 | 8:00pm

After making a splash in 2016 with his critically-acclaimed Aspen Santa Fe Ballet choreographic debut, Brazilian choreographer Fernando Melo returns this summer with a second world premiere ballet that blends video projection with stirring movement. Sharing the program is Los Angeles-based choreographer Cherice Barton's *Eudaemonia*, a recent ASFB premiere that explores the search for happiness. Let this diverse evening leave you mesmerized, uplifted, and entertained!

*"Aspen Santa Fe Ballet is ready for its Hollywood close-up."*

– Los Angeles Times



PHOTO: GABRIELLA MARKS

### STARS OF AMERICAN BALLET

August 12 | 8:00pm

*Generously underwritten by Carolyn Powers*

Hailed by *Dance Magazine* as "one of the best male ballet dancers," Stars of American Ballet Director Daniel Ulbricht joins an elite, all-star ensemble of artists he handpicked from New York City Ballet and American Ballet Theatre. Together, these phenomenal ballet technicians will wow Aspen audiences with a glamorous evening of selected works including *Red Angels* by Ulysses Dove, the iconic *Apollo* by George Balanchine, selections from Kenneth MacMillan's *Romeo & Juliet*, and more.

*"...an intoxicating evening even for the non-dancers in the audience, because the performers truly put their charisma at the service of art."*

– The Pittsburgh Tribune



PHOTO: ROSALIE O'CONNOR

### ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

August 18 | 8:00pm

*Generously underwritten by Les Dames d'Aspen*

After making a splash in 2016 with his critically-acclaimed Aspen Santa Fe Ballet choreographic debut, Brazilian choreographer Fernando Melo returns this summer with a second world premiere ballet that blends video projection with stirring movement. Sharing the program is Los Angeles-based choreographer Cherice Barton's *Eudaemonia*, a recent ASFB premiere that explores the search for happiness. Let this diverse evening leave you mesmerized, uplifted, and entertained!

*"Aspen Santa Fe Ballet is ready for its Hollywood close-up."*

– Los Angeles Times

## SANTA FE TICKET INFO

### ► 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

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www.aspensantafeballet.com

#### ► 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

## ASPEN TICKET INFO

### ► Performance Information

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

### Purchase Tickets

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# ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

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PHOTO: DIDIER PHILIPART

# Dancing Toward Home:

## Hervé Koubi's Global Journey

*An excerpt of a pre-performance  
talk by arts scholar Nancy Wozny for  
Compagnie Hervé Koubi's engagement at the  
Jacob's Pillow Dance festival, August 2016.*

If you talk to a choreographer long enough, you may arrive at the original spark for a dance. For French-Algerian choreographer Hervé Koubi, it was a simple question that he posed to his father after seeing a photo of his Algerian great-grandfather: "Who are my ancestors?" Koubi writes, "The day my father showed me a picture of an old man dressed in Arabic [clothing] and told me it was my great grandfather...it was a shock to me. I was not from France but from Algeria."

We are living at a particular time where belonging is under threat. So maybe this is an ideal time to consider Koubi's questions: Who are my ancestors? Where is home? Where am I from? Where do I belong?

Koubi is particularly equipped to be an arts ambassador, as he brings an unusual background to his choreographic table. He has a doctorate in pharmacology/clinical biology, which is certainly a rarity in the dance world. He studied at many prestigious institutions, including the International Center for Dance with the American choreographer Rosella Hightower in Cannes.

In looking over the body of his work, one finds an adventurous choreographer with an eye for savvy collaborators. His first work was an acrobatic and folk dance around the theme of Golem; then he re-imagined a version of *Coppelia*, where a mechanical puppet could contain more charm than the frame of the human body. In *Les Heures Florissantes*, a site-specific immersive work, the dancers doubled as statues at Versailles. In another outing, he created *Rendez-vous en Afrique*, a piece for seven dancers from the Ivory Coast. In *Moon Dog* he embarked on a project with street dancers and began experimenting with this idiosyncratic movement language.





Koubi's career spreads out horizontally across many places, disciplines, and styles, and has been characterized by extreme and often playful theatrics. He seems to revel in mixing and crossing cultural and aesthetic borders and boundaries.

*What the Day Owes to the Night* represents the largest challenge thus far in his career, in that he once again left his comfort zone of contemporary dance. This is definitely a threshold work for the choreographer.

Like many descendants of immigrant families, we can be somewhat of a stranger to our own origins. To authentically address the initial question that gave rise to *What the Day Owes to the Night*, Koubi needed to find his ancestral home and he could not fulfill that mission with dancers from his own world.

Instead, he traveled to Algeria to audition dancers. Koubi never set out to make an all-male dance. He held an audition and, as fate would have it, 249 male dancers and one woman showed up. They were mostly self-taught street dancers with a wide variety of skills, some culled from YouTube's global classroom.

Koubi says, "I went to Algeria to make light of my dark [unknown] history. I had to give life to my Orientalist dreams; I had to do it with dance. I had to do it with dancers from Algeria using their specific skills. The youth of Algeria is like that, full of power, full of dreams also."

The dance plays out on a white floor with the men dressed in white pants and long skirts. There is a suggestion of a sacred garment, but it is left open-ended. There's also feeling of a ritual or even a pilgrimage, perhaps an enactment of brotherhood, as the partnering is defined by many in-

tricate lifts that reveal an interconnected web between the dancers, and this idea includes some gasp-inducing 15-foot trust falls.

Koubi says, "Unlike my dancers, I had a very [traditional and classical] background, but the interest of the project lies in the mix between the technique of the dancers and my perception of dance and choreography."

The movement vocabulary, much of which comes from the dancers themselves, includes capoeira, martial arts, and hip-hop, yet is woven together with a contemporary dance sensibility that denotes Koubi's choreographic hand. It's here that we see a shift in the way these forms are usually presented, which often includes battling, bravado, unabashed virtuosity, and an interactive and rousing connection with the audience.

Koubi does indeed create a connection with us, but it's much subtler; we are drawn in by virtue of the intimacy he creates among the dancers. He enlists a contemplative landscape, mining a different aspect of street dance that may have gone unnoticed before. It's as if he looked at the larger brush strokes of these forms, allowing their more abstract contours to be experienced in a new way.

There are many familiar movements in this dance, but the context is shifted. Amazing acrobatic daredevil feats are deeply embedded into the fabric of the piece, rather than interrupting the proceedings with "wow" moments. Koubi insists, "I tried to stay away from creating the spectacular just for the spectacle."

Street forms utilize the floor in a particular way and Koubi has cleverly capitalized on that. The dance seems to grow from the ground, as the performers hover and locomote in earth hugging gallops. Koubi revels

*continued on pg.14*

National Council members gathered at LewAllen Galleries in Santa Fe's Railyard Arts District to mingle with Aspen Santa Fe Ballet directors and dancers on the weekend of the company's final winter season performance. Directors Jean-Philippe Malaty and Tom Mossbrucker updated patrons on recent and upcoming ASFB highlights, and children from the ASFB Folklórico program entertained guests, proudly putting their talents on display with a lively performance.

Special thanks to LewAllen Galleries for hosting this special National Council event at their magnificent space.



National Council member James Posch with dancers Anna Gerberich and Pete Leo Walker



National Council members Carl and Robin Hardin with dancer Emily Proctor



National Council member Larry Lazarus with dancer Katherine Bolaños



National Council member Bill Thornton, Kathy Schepps, and Trustee Charles Forte



Rye Lemons and National Council member Rod Boren



Trustee Leigh Moiola, dancers Sadie Brown and Seia Rassenti Watson, and National Council member Frances D'Alessio



National Council members Dan and Ashlyn Perry





Trustee Jay R. Lerner and his wife Bobette

Board Vice President Jay Lerner and his wife Bobette welcomed Aspen Santa Fe Ballet back to Los Angeles with a delightful dinner at their home. In this second year as dance company-in-residence at Valley Performing Arts Center (VPAC) in Northridge, CA, ASFB premiered a new ballet by Los Angeles-based choreographer Cherice Barton. Patrons celebrated the performance with a post-performance cocktail reception at the theater. Happily, VPAC announced an extension of the ASFB residency to a fourth year, bringing the company to LA each spring through 2019.



Geri Migielicz, Liza Culick, Executive Director Jean-Philippe Malaty, Trustee Leah Paalman, and dancer Katherine Bolaños



Choreographer Cherice Barton with Jodi Gates



Zander Higbie with Karen and Walter Loewenstern and guest.



Dancers Craig Black and Jenelle Figgins with Bonnie Homsey and Glorja Kaufman



Trustee Toni Kaplan, Jim Kaplan, Lukas Liebischer, M.E. Purnell, Board President Kelley Purnell, and dancer Anthony Tiedeman



Omri Escalante, dancer Joseph Watson, Olivia and Stephen Rassenti, and dancer Seia Rassenti Watson



Patrons Cathy and Troy Perry



Directors Tom Mossbrucker and Jean-Philippe with Georgia Foulard



Michael Hiatt, National Council member Lita Warner Heller, dancer Katherine Bolaños, Mike and Jill Erman, and Trustee Jay R. Lerner



PHOTO: LOU DAMARS

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in the mixing process. He says, "Dance is a very ephemeral form of art, however I am very attached to the notion of time, history, and common culture as the result of a mixing of the best of each culture. I think that we should be curious, and open to others."

More mixing happens in Koubi's musical choices, which include the late Nubian composer Hamza El Din's work for the Kronos quartet, his frequent collaborator, musician and sound artist Maxime Bodson, traditional sufi music and an eerie section of J.S. Bach's sacred oratorio *St. John Passion*, which comes and goes like a faint memory.

Koubi has created an opened ended experience. He says, "I want the audience to be free to feel what they want. I just would like the audience to be moved by what they see and also invite them to share my vision of a global culture, of a brotherhood beyond frontiers and beliefs."

*Nancy Wozny is editor in chief at Arts+Culture Texas and has served as a scholar in residence at Jacob's Pillow since 2010.*



PHOTO: STÉPHANE AUDRAN

#### SANTA FE

**Compagnie Hervé Koubi**

July 23 | 8:00pm

The Lensic,  
Santa Fe's Performing Arts Center

#### ASPEN

**Compagnie Hervé Koubi**

July 26 | 8:00pm

Aspen District Theatre



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September 2

ASFB in Cherice Barton's *Eudaemonia*

