



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 20, 2008

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FESTIVAL BALLET THEATRE presents
Premieres & Repertoire - Opening Concert of the 2008-2009 Season
Irvine Barclay Theatre | September 20 & 21, 2008

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif. - **Festival Ballet Theatre**, one of Southern California's most vibrant and accomplished ballet companies, will present the opening program of its 2008-2009 season at **Irvine Barclay Theatre on Saturday, Sept. 20 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Sept. 21 at 2 p.m.** Program highlights include a showcase of four company and world premieres featuring Molly Lynch's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as well as Twyla Tharp's *Shameless*, performed by guest principal dancers from the Broadway musical *Movin' Out*.

The company's 20th anniversary season begins with the world premiere of a newly commissioned work by Melissa Barak. Classical vocabulary and contemporary styling set apart this abstract, sculptural dance for seven to the moody strains of music by Arvo Pärt. The program continues with the world premiere of Lillian Barbeito's *Lemuria*. Inspired by writings about the lost society of Lemuria, a civilization pre-dating Atlantis, Barbeito's 11-minute work for an all-female cast of 13 is angular, athletic and visually arresting. A hyper-articulate and celebratory take on the evolving circles of life, the ballet is set to the music of John Williams, Johnny Greenwood and Ezio Bosso.

The first half of the program continues with a change of pace and Twyla Tharp's *Shameless*. Performed by special guest artists Karine Plantadit and Ian Carney, principal dancers from the Broadway hit musical *Movin' Out*, Tharp's "hyperkinetic style" meets "openly narrative choreography" is sure to be a showstopper.

The third world premiere of the evening is Brian Reeder's percussive neo-classical ode to the joy of movement, *Paisiello Variations*. The unfussy 13-minute ballet for 16 dancers, set to a compilation of operatic compositions by Giovanni Paisiello, showcases the company's technical prowess, clean lines and brisk, beautiful movement.

The program closes with the company premiere of Molly Lynch's bold and updated rendition of Shakespeare's enchanting *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Lively, amusing, and accompanied by the music of Felix Mendelssohn, *Dream* is complete with star-crossed lovers, mischievous fairies and Puck magically soaring high above the stage! Lynch originally choreographed *Dream* for Ballet Pacific while the company's artistic director. Festival Ballet Theatre is thrilled to welcome the acclaimed ballet into its repertoire, thereby giving a home to a part of Orange County dance history.

Saturday, Sept. 20 at 8 p.m. & Sunday, Sept. 21 at 2 p.m.

Tickets: \$38 for adults; \$33 for children & seniors; \$19 for students with valid ID

To order tickets:

Call Irvine Barclay Theatre box office: **949.854.4646**

Online purchases: visit thebarclay.org or ticketmaster.com

Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover accepted.

Download high-resolution images at: <http://press.thebarclay.org>

Irvine Barclay Theatre is located at **4242 Campus Drive** [Bridge and West Peltason Roads in Irvine]

To receive a free brochure or learn more about Festival Ballet Theatre, go to festivalballet.org



Company History

Under the direction of Salwa Rizkalla, since its founding in 1988, Festival Ballet Theatre has become one of Southern California's most vibrant and accomplished regional ballet companies. Celebrating its 20th anniversary of artistic service to Orange County, FBT is dedicated to presenting works that epitomize the artistry of professional ballet, offering cultural awareness of dance through educational programs, and nurturing a creative environment for some of our county's most talented dancers. Boasting a roster of impressive up-and-coming talent, the company's productions also feature internationally acclaimed guest artists from American Ballet Theatre, Boston Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, the Kirov Ballet, New York City Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, San Francisco Ballet and Scottish Ballet.

Festival Ballet Theatre strives to enrich the experience of Orange County's dance audience by highlighting the work of world-renowned guest and resident choreographers who have received critical acclaim for original ballets around the globe. With reverence for masterpieces of the past and a clear focus on developing future tour de forces, FBT presents a varied repertoire of full-length classical ballets including Coppélia, Don Quixote, Giselle, Sleeping Beauty and Swan Lake; as well as contemporary works by some of the nation's most sought-after choreographers.

Aspiring to the heights of artistic excellence, Festival Ballet Theatre simultaneously attracts the best in professional dance to its home-base while sending its own dancers out as artistic ambassadors to the nation. FBT's significant work has been recognized with a 2001 Arts Orange County Award for Outstanding Arts Organization of the Year.

Salwa Rizkalla, Artistic Director

Salwa Rizkalla's artistic vision and community involvement led to the creation of Festival Ballet Theatre, and its precursor Southland Ballet Academy. Her credentials as a classical ballet dancer include an impressive list of leading roles in well-known classical ballets, as well as appearances in original contemporary pieces. During her distinguished career as a professional dancer, Rizkalla had the privilege of working under the direction of world-renowned choreographers Leonid Lavrovsky and Serge Lifar. Trained in the Russian Vaganova method and having studied with ballet masters of the Bolshoi and the Kirov, Rizkalla holds a bachelor of arts degree in Ballet Pedagogy. In addition to her responsibilities as the artistic director of Festival Ballet Theatre and her busy teaching schedule at the Southland Ballet Academy, Rizkalla was a faculty member of several area institutions, including Goldenwest College and the Huntington Beach Academy for the Performing Arts. A fully credentialed California teacher, she has been a dedicated educator, a tireless promoter of the arts, and an active participant in the cultural life of her community for more than 25 years. Her contributions have been recognized by The Orange County Music and Arts Administrators and Orange County Performing Arts Center with an Orange County Arts Educator of the Year Award for Secondary Dance (2003). Youth America Grand Prix awarded Rizkalla Outstanding Teacher accolades in 2002, 2004 and 2005.

Ian Carney, Guest Artist

Born in Portsmouth, NH, Ian Carney was raised in New Orleans, LA, where he began his training with Harvey Hysell and Diane Carney. He continued his studies as a scholarship student with David Howard in New York and Devon Carney of the Boston Ballet. A graduate of Tulane University, Carney earned a bachelor of arts in English Literature while continuing to perform with Ballet Hysell in New Orleans.

In 1996, he joined Montgomery Ballet with his wife, Eleanor. He has danced principal roles in Coppélia, The Nutcracker, The Sleeping Beauty, Scheherazade, Petrouchka and Les Sylphides, to name a few. On Broadway, he danced the lead role in Billy Joel and Twyla Tharp's musical Movin' Out and was also production dance captain for three years. Currently, Carney is a guest artist with Youth America Grand Prix and performs across the United States as dancer, teacher and choreographer. Additionally, he is co-creator of Darwin, a children's show that recently received its premiered at the Detroit Music Hall.

Karine Plantadit, Guest Artist

Raised in Cameroon, Karine Plantadit received her ballet training in her native West Africa. As a teenager, she studied at the Rosella Hightower Dance Center in the south of France. At age 16, Plantadit saw the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater perform in Paris, France, and the experience set the course for her professional life. She followed the company to New York City, and received a scholarship to study at the Alvin Ailey American Center. Fulfilling her goal, she danced as a soloist with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre for several years.

"A gale force onstage," according to Dance Magazine, Plantadit is "a dancer with astounding technique matched by a frank sexiness." Her theatre credits include: Movin' Out (Brenda/Jessica); The Lion King (The Cheetah and lioness); Saturday Night Fever (Shirley Charles). Her commercial portfolio includes: EBay, American Express, Visa, Subway, LensCrafters and McDonalds. Television appearances include: Sex in the City and Starved. Finally, Plantadit's film credits include: Frida (Josephine Baker), Stay, Chicago and Across the Universe. Most recently, she performed in the one-woman show La Voix based on Jean Cocteau's "La Voix Humaine" (The Human Voice).