
Stars of the **American Ballet Theatre** show support for **Festival Ballet** November 8, 2009

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif. – American Ballet Theatre stars and world-renowned dancers, **Gillian Murphy** and **Gennadi Saveliev**, will assist with the fundraising efforts of the Festival Ballet Theatre (FBT). Murphy and Saveliev will join **Salwa Rizkalla**, Festival Ballet Theatre's artistic director, at FBT's **3rd Annual Sugar Plum Tea**. The fundraiser will take place at the **Hilton Waterfront Beach Resort** in Huntington Beach from **11am to 2pm** this **Sunday, November 8th**. The event is open to the public and tickets are currently on sale, \$75 for adults, \$50 for children, through FBT's website. All proceeds will benefit the Fountain Valley based non-profit dance company in preparation for their annual Nutcracker performance, which will take place in December at the Irvine Barclay Theatre.

Murphy, a principal dancer with American Ballet Theatre since 2002, has performed leading roles in many full-length works, been prominently featured in many of ABT's shorter works, and appeared in numerous world premieres. Murphy has been awarded both the Prix de Lausanne Espoir Award and the Princess Grace Foundation Award. Saveliev, a soloist with ABT since 2002, began dancing with the Bolshoi Ballet Academy at the age of 9. In addition to winning the Silver Medal at the New York International Ballet Competition (1996) and being a finalist at the Nagoya Ballet Competition (1999), he is the founder and artistic director of Youth America Grand Prix, America's first student ballet scholarship competition. Saveliev will be performing The Nutcracker with FBT on December 19th and 20th. Murphy will be performing the role of Kitri in Don Quixote on March 20th and 21st, 2010.

During the current economy, Rizkalla is especially grateful for the support of these celebrated dancers which will help FBT continue to bring high-quality dance to their Orange County audience. "Gillian and Gennadi have had a tremendous impact on FBT in the past few years by dancing with the company and now being an integral part of this important fundraiser. We are very grateful for their continued support of our company and our future", Rizkalla says. Attendees of the event, while enjoying a special high-tea menu, and raffle organized by FBT volunteers and supporters, will have the opportunity to meet and speak with the dancers.

Festival Ballet Theatre's Third Annual Sugar Plum Tea
Sunday, November 8, 2009 11am – 2pm

9527 Garfield Avenue
Fountain Valley, CA 92708

T: 714.962.5440
www.festivalballet.org

Waterfront Hilton Resort, Huntington Beach, CA

Tickets: \$75 for adults, \$50 for children

To order tickets visit: <http://www.festivalballet.org/fbt/functions.html>

To learn more about Festival Ballet Theatre, go to **festivalballet.org**.

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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 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*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake*; as well as contemporary works by some of the nation's most sought-after choreographers. FBT has also purchased the assets of Ballet Pacifica, preserving the company's rich dance legacy while enriching the future of FBT. 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 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 has awarded Rizkalla *Outstanding Teacher* accolades several years running, including 2009.