



The State Ballet of Rhode Island

RI's First Established Classical Ballet Company

Artistic Director * Herci Marsden

P.O.Box 155, 52 Sherman Ave. Lincoln, RI 02865-0155

401.334.2560, fax 401.334.0412, www.stateballet.com, info@stateballet.com



January 22, 2010

Dear Superintendents, Principals and Teachers:

This year, The State Ballet of Rhode Island celebrates **50** seasons of:

Bringing arts education to New England

Allowing artists to aspire

Living our core values

Leveraging diverse talent

Entertaining audience

Teaching the art of ballet

There couldn't be a better time to expose your students to the importance of the arts. As one of the many events planned in 2010, the ballet Giselle will be performed in May, 2010 at Rhode Island College. Consistent with all of our performing seasons, we dedicate one performance exclusively to New England area schools.

We invite you to participate in our 50th anniversary through attending our exclusive **FREE** performance called "Project Ballet in Education" program for schools on **Friday, May 14, 2010 at 10 am at Roberts Auditorium, RI College in Providence**. It is made possible because of our generous sponsors the RI State Council on the Arts, AMICA Insurance, Layered Security and the Citizens Bank Foundation.

Education in the arts is an essential component of cultural development of our youth. Through our Project Ballet in Education initiative, students will obtain expert narration that highlights the underlying story of the ballet, staging, music and lighting. Discussions with the students also include the history of ballet and the physical training required of dancers.

The educational benefits to students extend far beyond learning about the mechanics of ballet. Through education in the arts, children cultivate creative ability, constructive challenge, and the capability to appreciate the importance of diligence, commitment, respect, challenge, and the freedom to extend our boundaries.

The State Ballet of Rhode Island, exemplifies the values that are essential in our businesses, communities, and leaders.

Enclosed you will find information about the ballet Giselle and The State Ballet of Rhode Island. We hope to see you there!

To the extent that you have any questions, I would be pleased to speak with you. You may reach me at 401.334.2560 or email at anamfox@stateballet.com.

Best regards,

Ana Marsden Fox
Executive Director, SBRI



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50th Anniversary Performance of Giselle

Giselle is a ballet in two acts by Théophile Gautier on a theme of Heinrich Heine with music by Adolphe Adam. Choreography was by Sir Anton Dolin after Jean Coralli. The ballet tells the story of a peasant girl named Giselle who protects her lover from the vengeance of a group of evil female spirits called the Wilis. *Giselle* was first presented by the Ballet du Théâtre de l'Académie Royale de Musique, Paris, France, on 28 June 1841. The role of Giselle is one of the most sought-after in ballet, as it demands both technical perfection and outstanding grace and lyricism, as well as great dramatic skill. In the first act Giselle has to convey the innocence and love of a country girl, the heartbreak of being betrayed. In the second act Giselle must seem otherworldly, yet loving.

The ballet is set in the Rhineland of the Middle Ages during the grape harvest. When the curtain rises on the first act, the cottage of Giselle and her mother Berthe is seen on one side, and opposite is seen the cottage of Duke Albrecht of Silesia, a nobleman who has disguised himself as a peasant. He is engaged to Bathilde, the daughter of the Prince of Courland. Against the advice of his squire Wilfrid, Albrecht flirts with a peasant girl named Giselle who falls completely in love with him. Hilarion, a gamekeeper, is also in love with Giselle and warns the girl against trusting the stranger, but Giselle refuses to listen. A love duet for Giselle and Albrecht is danced, with Giselle picking the petals from a daisy to divine her lover's sincerity. The couple are interrupted by Giselle's mother, who, worried about her daughter's fragile health, ushers the girl into the cottage.

Horns are heard in the distance and Albrecht retreats from the scene. A hunting party enters and refreshments are served. Among the hunters are Bathilde and her father. Giselle returns to the scene, dances for the party, and receives a necklace from Bathilde. When the party departs, Albrecht reappears with the grape harvesters. A celebration begins. Giselle and the harvesters dance but the merriment is brought to a halt by Hilarion who, having investigated the Duke's cottage now brandishes the nobleman's cloak and sword. The horn is sounded, and the hunting party returns. The truth about Albrecht is learned and Giselle loses touch with reality and falls dead.

The second act is set in a moonlit glade near Giselle's grave. Albrecht is grieving Giselle's death. He is frightened from the glade by the Wilis, female spirits who, jilted before their wedding day, rise from their graves at night and seek revenge upon men by dancing them to death. Giselle is summoned from her grave and welcomed by the supernatural creatures who then quickly disappear. Albrecht enters searching for Giselle's grave, and she appears before him. He begs forgiveness. Giselle, her love undiminished, readily forgives him and the two dance. The scene ends with Albrecht in pursuit of Giselle as she disappears into the forest.

Hilarion enters pursued by the Wilis who throw him to his death in a nearby lake. The Wilis then surround Albrecht and sentence him to death. He begs to be spared but Myrtha, the Queen of the Wilis refuses. Giselle protects him from the Wilis when they force him to dance. Day breaks and the Wilis retreat to their graves, but Giselle's love has saved Albrecht. By not succumbing to feelings of vengeance and hatred that define the Wilis, Giselle is freed from any association with them, and returns to her grave to rest in peace.

¹ Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giselle>



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American Values, Ballet, and The State Ballet of Rhode Island

Our American Heritage is anchored by solid core values. These core values have enabled one of the most successful countries to prosper and prevail through any adversity. While our founding fathers never documented a formal listing of “American Values”, they can be determined from our Nation’s Constitution and through the configuration of our government. Core values of Freedom, Integrity, Diligence, Commitment, Respect, and Community are all values embodied within the American Heritage. Preserving our American Values is one of the most important assets that we have as a nation – for it ensures the continuation of a legacy that will protect future generations.

One of the most powerful ways to continue our values as a nation is through supporting organizations and artists who exemplifies our American Values. One such organization is The State Ballet of Rhode Island. One such artist is the Artistic Director Herci Marsden.

The State Ballet of Rhode Island:

The spirit began in 1960 when Herci and Myles Marsden founded the State Ballet of Rhode Island as a non-profit, regional, civic, ballet company. For fifty years, The State Ballet of Rhode Island has been a showcase for the area’s dancers. Many use the valuable training and experience they gain to pursue professional careers in dance and theater. For those students who choose not to make dance their vocation, the State Ballet of Rhode Island provides them the opportunity to fulfill their artistic ambitions on the semi-professional level. For all, the State Ballet of Rhode Island offers a variety of meaningful experiences.

- The discipline and commitment of training.
- The freedom to aspire.
- The cultivation of integrity and respect to their team members.
- The thrill of performing.

The State Ballet of Rhode Island’s fifty year success has been based on honoring it’s commitment to maintaining core values. The State Ballet of Rhode Island has also been fortunate to have the influence and oversight of many legendary artists such as: Ana Roje, Oskar Harnos, and Sir Anton Dolan. In true American style, these international artists sought to impart their influence into the American Artist melting pot – through the vehicle of the State Ballet of Rhode Island.

As a not for profit organization and the first ballet company to offer arts education programs in local schools, the State Ballet of Rhode Island has four key ways of educating the community:

- **Company Productions:** The State Ballet of Rhode Island produces 6 full length ballets each performing season and affords the educational opportunity for ballet students to pursue their passion of dancing. While some of the State Ballet of Rhode Island’s dancers may not pursue a professional career in ballet, this creative outlet instills core values that are the foundation to any successful career. Many dancers have gone on to pursue many diverse, successful careers.
- **Project Ballet in Education:** During each performing season, two performances are allocated to the Project Ballet in Education initiative. Through sponsorship, local Rhode Island and nearby Massachusetts schools have the opportunity to attend the ballet at the theatre while obtaining expert narration. The Artistic Director discusses the underlying story of the ballet, staging, music, and lighting. Discussions with the students also include the history of ballet and the physical training required of dancers. The impact of this educational process is two fold: 1) Increasing education and awareness of the arts; 2) Exposing some to a profession or a career that will build solid core values.
- **Explore Ballet Workshop:** The Explore Ballet Workshop is designed to offer an onsite school ballet curriculum including demonstrations and short performances.



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Community Involvement: A believer in community involvement, The State Ballet of Rhode Island prioritizes the Community. Numerous performances are provided throughout the year to libraries and other not for profit organizations to enhance the education in the arts.

Many accomplishments have occurred during The State Ballet's long history. Some include: performing with the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra, Providence Opera, WaterFire and numerous state-wide civic celebrations, as well as representing Rhode Island throughout the United States and Europe.

The State Ballet of Rhode Island has also been an important community organization that provides pre-professional dancers, composers, musicians, writers and costume designers a creative outlet and stimulus to the Rhode Island economy. It is here that many talented and developing dancers have found a place to share their passion for the arts.

Former company dancers of The State Ballet of Rhode Island have gone on to work with many prestigious dance companies all over the world. Many dancers, female and male, have also established their own professional companies.

Herci Marsden:

A native Croatian, Herci began dancing at the age of five with the National Ballet School of Yugoslavia and was later a member of the Yugoslav National Ballet in Split. Through the years, her instructors have included such notables as Katic, Roje, Harnos, and Slavenska. In 1958, Herci emigrated to the United States to live in Lincoln, Rhode Island where she co-founded the Brae Crest School of Ballet. As Prima Ballerina, Herci Marsden made her American debut in 1960 with the State Ballet of Rhode Island – the repertory company she was instrumental in establishing. Through Herci's core values of freedom, integrity, diligence, respect and commitment, she has established a solid tone at the top for the State Ballet of Rhode Island that has supported a fifty year success. Herci exemplifies the definition of American Master Artist, a leader, and a dynamic woman in business.

While Herci is not a native American, she exemplifies the very core of what has built and established this great Country. Through her fearlessness, she emigrated from her native country to begin a new life in the land of opportunity – like many Americans who fought to fulfill their dreams in a land of freedom, justice, and liberty. Herci's goal is very simple – to share her passion and love for dancing while never sacrificing her values.

With her dedication and commitment to providing artistic opportunities for dancers, choreographers, and musicians alike, it has been possible for many Rhode Island artists to achieve their dreams. Under her direction, three generations of Rhode Island audiences have enjoyed many ballet classics, as well as have had exposure to new and unique dance performances.

American Master Artist:

Herci's notable artistic accomplishments certainly justify the status of an American Master Artist. Ms. Marsden was a leading dancer at the New York World's Fair and Eastern States Exposition and the St. Louis Municipal Opera. She performed the leading role in "Destiny" at the First Performing Arts Festival with the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra in 1967. Herci Marsden performed Faust, Aida, and Carmen with the Providence Opera Theater and the Rhode Island Civic Chorale and Orchestra in the production of "Carmina Burana". By invitation of the Yugoslavian government, she led the fifty-seven members of The State Ballet to tour Croatia in 1970.



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In 1966, Ms. Marsden introduced classical ballet at The University of Rhode Island, College of Human Science and Services, Department of Physical Education Health and Recreation. URI was the first university in Rhode Island to introduce classical ballet into its program as a credited course.

Leadership

Herci is a natural leader in fact, principle, and action. Her presence is known immediately when you meet her in that there is an aura around her – an aura that is powerful, authentic, and sincere. Her students aspire to her greatness. Herci leads by example – integrity is at the core of every decision and every interaction with her dancers; commitment is exemplified through her solid and unwavering passion for the ballet; respect is witnessed in her treatment of her students and business partners; diligence is exhibited through her tireless quest for perfection; and freedom embodied into the spirit of the State Ballet of Rhode Island. Freedom to aspire. Freedom to dream. Freedom to rise to any level of capability. Under Herci's leadership, roles in The State Ballet of Rhode Island are earned and are not gifted.

Through Ms. Marsden's leadership capability, she has positively impacted the lives of thousands of children around Rhode Island by implementing arts enrichment programs in their own schools, as well inviting them to attend numerous ballet performances and hands-on lectures. Through Herci's core operating practice, she sets a tone and structure that builds character in her dancers. These solid core values are equivalent to that of the true American Heritage values responsible for establishing this country.

Dynamic Woman in Business

Herci is a prolific example of a dynamic woman in business. While passionate about her work, Herci prioritizes her family and is a true and devoted mother. Herci sets a very powerful example for young women that it is possible to pursue your passions, be in business, yet also live a balanced healthy existence that prioritizes family. Herci's leadership example is important for woman to understand as they face difficult challenges in balancing their work and their families.