

Small stage, big event

Dance company offers high culture, cheap beer at legion

BY GLEN SCHAEFER, THE PROVINCE JUNE 14, 2010



Dances For a Small Stage features works by eight choreographers.

Photograph by: Submitted, Michael Slobodian

Maybe she means diametrical. Then again, she might mean diabolical.

Producer Julie-anne Saroyan is talking about the latest edition of Dances for a Small Stage, works by eight choreographers from Canada and around the world, danced by Ballet BC on a 10-foot by 13-foot stage at a venue more often used for twangy cover bands and meat draws.

"That's what's so interesting about this show, is that Ballet BC is not at the Queen Elizabeth," says Saroyan. "It's sort of the diabolical opposite of the Queen E."

Yep, she definitely means diabolical.

"As Canadians, we know what the Legion is. There's a certain smell. It's a completely different experience for the ballet."

Dances For a Small Stage been doing shows at the Commercial Drive Legion for the past five years, and prior to that at a now-gone Granville Street club since 2002. Ballet BC artistic director Emily Molnar did a solo piece on the Small Stage several years ago, and other Ballet BC dancers have choreographed works for the show in the past, but this year the whole company is taking part.

"It's great for both of us," says Saroyan, who counts Molnar as a friend. "It's a cabaret, the lovely

legion ladies work it, they have their tables, their drink trays -- everything to do with the legion is in full swing. It's cheap beer and Ballet BC on stage."

For three nights, Ballet BC dances to contemporary works by American choreographers Cherice Barton and Lauri Stallings, and Germany's Farley Johansson, as well as Canadians Margie Gillis, Donald Sales, Cori Caulfield and Edmond Kilpatrick.

Gillis will be doing a solo dance, while Saroyan says she's particularly looking forward to a piece by Canada's Gioconda Barbuto that will put 13 dancers on that small stage.

"She had the guts to do a full-company piece," says Saroyan. "I'm excited and scared all at the same time. Obviously they're professionals, but they're used to the big stage."

On stage

Dances for a Small Stage

Where: The Royal Canadian Legion, 2205 Commercial Dr.

When: Wednesday to Friday, 8 p.m.

Tickets: \$20 at the door, no minors

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