

# Ballet BC new executive director Jay Rankin foresees bright future for company

BY KEVIN GRIFFIN, VANCOUVER SUN    SEPTEMBER 17, 2009



Ballet BC dancer in rehearsal.

**Photograph by:** Bill Keay, Vancouver Sun

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VANCOUVER — Ballet BC has the potential to become the country's top contemporary ballet company, according to its newly appointed executive director.

Ballet BC announced Thursday that Jay Rankin is the company's permanent executive director. He officially takes over Nov. 1.

Rankin said he's looking forward to coming out west from the Toronto Dance Theatre, where he has served as managing director since 2000. He will join interim artistic director Emily Molnar and all the Ballet BC dancers for the gala IGNITE on Sept. 30 at The Playhouse.

One of Rankin's goals as executive director, he said, will be to make sure everyone in the company — from the artists and support staff to the management and board — understands and fully buys into the company's artistic vision.

"I think that we have to really understand our scale and our size and our competitive advantage," he said.

"To my mind, Ballet BC can be Canada's pre-eminent contemporary ballet company. I really think that

Emily has the vision and the Rolodex to make it happen.”

During Rankin’s time at the TDT, he worked with artistic director Christopher House and built TDT’s working capital reserve, while reducing its \$80,000 deficit. He also instituted a multi-year professional development program, helped to redefine the public image of the organization, and successfully negotiated a variety of complex governance agreements.

TDT is so financially secure it is touring and commissioning new works. In fact, TDT is currently working with B.C. choreographers Simone Orlando and Josh Beamish.

Rankin has spent his 30-year career working with non-profit organizations in B.C. and Ontario. He’s worked with Anna Wyman Dance Theatre and Karen Jamieson Dance in Vancouver and has served on a number of funding panels, including the Canada Council Dance Section, the BC Arts Council, and the Ontario Arts Council.

In a phone interview from the TDT’s offices in Cabbagetown, Rankin said he felt confident about leaving after reaching his goals in Toronto and realizing things had changed with Ballet BC.

That, he said, included a level fiscal playing field, the beginning of a new positive spirit around Molnar and a commitment to relaunch the company.

“Relationships are super important — internal and external,” he said.

“You can’t do better than to make a lot of friends in as many places as you can. I am so looking forward to creating some good new stories around this organization.”

Ballet BC director Kevin B. Leslie said Rankin’s appointment is an extremely important milestone for the company.

He said Rankin “will be an excellent institutional ambassador who will bring clear and forceful leadership to the position with his strong fundraising and financial acumen, coupled with his creative, strategic and consistent management style.”

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