

Move It! 2008

Move It! is an annual dance exhibition based at London's Olympia, featuring classes, seminars, performances, and stalls. As an avid fan, this year's exhibition was bigger than ever, with 100 performances, 160 classes, and 150 stalls. My companion and I bravely booked 6 classes on the Saturday and, although exhausted, were exhilarated by the huge range of styles on offer. Learning Jive, Capoeira, Ballet-Yoga, Lindy Hop, Salsa, and Samba, was a lot of fun and gave me, as a dance teacher, some great ideas for warm-ups and fun lessons. It was fantastic to see so many people sharing their love of dance and making the most of a great day out, while supporting younger artists in their performances and learning about different dance issues at the seminars. Without a doubt, this event will keep going from strength to strength.

Imogen Walker

Visit to the Mansion House Thursday 27th March 2008

We arrived at the Mansion House on a warm sunny afternoon for our tour of the Lord Mayor's historical residence. The visit was enhanced by our very humorous and informative guide who, while reeling off costs, dates, facts and figures, was never boring or school-masterly. We learnt that the house dates from 1752, the site was one of three in contention and that the chosen designs were by one George Dance the Elder. The estimated cost was to be £35,000 but by the time the building was completed in 1752, the cost had risen to £59,000 (even in those days cost had a habit of escalating). The exterior of the building has not altered a great deal, but the interior is another story. If you thought remodelling alterations, knocking down walls and dividing rooms was a specialism of modern day TV, think again. Courtyards were roofed over, roofs raised, staircases relocated

and the first major alterations started as early as the end of the 18th century under George Dance the Younger – son of the original builder and continued until as recently as 1993.

The only downside of the visit was that we could not have access to the gold and silver vaults as many of the items were over at the Guildhall where the Lord Mayor and City of London Corporation were entertaining the President of France and Mme Sarkozy and were holding a banquet in connection with their state visit. But we did have a close-up view of the millions of pounds worth of pictures which included a very fine collection of Dutch old masters, part of the Samuels collection.

After the success of the visit, I thank all who called me to express their pleasure at the visit and we are arranging a visit to the Guildhall to see the art collection of the Corporation of the City of London. Watch this space.

Tim Rooke

Liam Scarlett Moves On

Royal Ballet Artist Liam Scarlett, who two years ago won the first award of the De Valois Prize for young choreographers, continues to make new work in parallel to dancing with the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden. He regularly contributes to the evenings of experimental choreography 'First Drafts' and 'Second Drafts' at the Opera House's Clore Studio Upstairs. Those who attended the celebration of the life of our late Vice-President, James Penstone, will remember that he choreographed a pas-de-deux danced by Natasha Oughtred and Johannes Stepanek at that event.

Liam is now receiving commissions from outside the immediate Royal Ballet circle. He devised the pas-de-deux *Margot and Rudy* for Carlos Acosta's first 'Carlos Acosta and Guests from the Royal Ballet' programme at Sadler's Wells. The work was seen again at the Coliseum last month when Carlos repeated

this programme to sell-out audiences. On that occasion, the work was danced by Mara Galeazzi and Valeri Hristov.

Ballet Black has also commissioned Scarlett to create works for them. Last year he made his first work for them: *Hinterland*, which was a success, and he was invited back to create two further works for this year's appearance by Ballet Black at the Opera House's Linbury

Theatre. The ballets were a pas-de-deux: *Somente*, and a more extended work for all six dancers of the company called *Indigo Children* and danced to music by Philip Glass.

Clearly, Liam Scarlett has now moved on from being a potential new talent to being an established and in-demand choreographer.

Richard Reavill

Shakespeare's Birthday Party 2008



35 Members and guests attended this year's party which was held in the second circle bar of the Old Vic from 4.00pm to 6.00pm on Saturday 26th April. One of our Members, Eileen Page, performed the ceremony of



proposing the toast to Shakespeare. Eileen was trained at RADA, and went to Stratford in 1946 working with Paul Schofield and Donald Sinden. After raising a family she joined the RSC appearing in many Shakespeare plays and later featured in several West End Musicals including Sondheim's

Follies and *Me and My Girl*. Modestly

describing herself as a working actress she delighted members with her reminiscences before proposing the toast as seen in the picture.

James Ranger



An attentive audience of members and guests

Party photographs © Nick Panagakis

An Unchoreographed World

**BBC Radio 4 - Afternoon Play
Thursday 22nd May 2008 at 2.15pm**

Dramatist: Frances Byrnes
Producer: Mark Smalley

The programme will available for the following seven days on the Radio 4 'Listen Again' page, under 'A' for 'An Unchoreographed World': <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/progs/listenagain.shtml>
Margot Fonteyn's name dominated British ballet for more than 40 years. One of the truly great dancers of our time, she was the most famous ballerina of the second half of the century. 'An Unchoreographed World' explores a dramatic formative event in the life of the young dancer. It's May 10th, 1940, and she is trapped in Holland during the German invasion. She and her older lover, the

composer Constant Lambert, and the fledgling Sadler's Wells Ballet, are in jeopardy. Her life threatened, the dancer discovers who she really is, and what her destiny might cost her.

In May 1940 the Sadler's Wells Ballet (which was to become the Royal Ballet after the war) was sent by the British Council on an ill-advised tour of the Netherlands. The arrival of German war planes shocks the dance company out of their rooms and onto the hotel roof to watch the invasion. The story of the subsequent escape of the dancers from Holland - which the Germans take only 5 days to overrun - is true and remarkable.

'An Unchoreographed World' dramatises the short tour's final two nights, focusing on Fonteyn and her close companions. Frances Byrnes draws upon vivid first hand accounts from former ballerina Julia Farron, and the detailed diary of Annabel Farjeon, which is

substantial and fantastically evocative of atmosphere, event, dialogue and danger. Through these we hear how Fonteyn (Sophie Jerrold), her lover Constant Lambert (Richard McCabe), her director, Ninette de Valois (Kate Littlewood), and the dancer-actor Robert Helpmann (Oliver Millingham), face the tedium and terror of their last day in The Hague, and their own mortality. They were lucky to escape with their lives.

There are many gorgeously unlikely details: for example, the company, led by Australian, Robert Helpmann, tune into the BBC Home Service in their hotel and do the exercise class that is being broadcast in England (still in the BBC archives): "Little bounce, little bounce, and UP!".

In urgent conversation, reflection – and conflict – with De Valois and Lambert, the 20 year old Fonteyn grapples with what her life means to her, now that it's in jeopardy. Back in England she knows that an eminently suitable gentleman farmer and artist her own age is waiting, hoping to divert her from dance to marriage and motherhood. Then here is Constant Lambert, drunk, clever, undependable, but nonetheless the man who gives her music to dance to. Because of her relationship with him – and her growing but still precarious position as potential prima ballerina – she's cut off from the other dancers, her young peers, the corps de ballet. In Frances Byrne's powerful evocation of this time, Fonteyn becomes more and more separate; anointed by de Valois as the future hope of British ballet.

To escape, the company's driven on a dangerous 50 mile ride that takes 9 hours - to a chateau where they spend an extraordinary night. Later Fonteyn will write rhapsodically about it in her autobiography. Yet her autobiography and all memoirs will erase any reference to Lambert whose presence was, in reality, part of the night's wonder. Why?

Lambert will go on to write only one more decent piece of music in the war. It's called *Aubade Heroique* and it's about that night in the chateau of refugees. Was it the end of something? Before the silent, petrifying voyage home across the Channel, the dancers are all silent because of U Boats, filthy and without food or water, having left almost everything behind.

Frances Byrnes is a dance expert, particularly about ballet, and writes for the Royal

Academy of Dancing's Dance Gazette and the dance press. Fonteyn holds a very long term fascination for her. She's written three Afternoon Plays and one Friday Play.

LATEST REVIEWS

by **Richard Reavill**

Spring Dance at the Coliseum: New York City Ballet

This spring, Sadler's Wells launched a major expansion of their activities by presenting (with Askonas Holt and Raymond Gubbay) a month-long season of dance at the London Coliseum. The major coup of the season was the first visit to London in 25 years of the New York City Ballet. The second international company to appear was the Stuttgart Ballet with Cranko's *Romeo and Juliet*. This was followed by Carlos Acosta, first with 'Guest Artists from the Royal Ballet', then in another programme accompanied by the Danza Contemporanea de Cuba. Lastly, Sylvie Guillem and Russell Maliphant appeared in *Push*.

The Acosta and the Guillem/Maliphant performances were sold-out despite the size of the theatre (London's largest) and a top price of £75, which shows the pulling power of star dancers. Surprisingly, the NYCB and Stuttgart seasons did not sell out, with rumours circulating that the tickets for the NYCB, top price £95, had been heavily discounted. Whether audiences were put-off by the high prices, or whether the New York company has been away far too long, is unclear. Perhaps the selection from their huge repertory was not very imaginative, but four different programmes were performed in ten days. I opted out of the first one, 'Essential Balanchine', to save my pennies and because the works presented: *Seranade*; *Agon*; and *Symphony in C*, have all been done recently by the Royal Ballet or the Birmingham Royal Ballet. However, those who attended this programme, (including our Chairman), were very impressed by the performances.

The second programme was of works by Jerome Robbins: *The Four Seasons*; *Moves*; and *The Concert*. *The Concert* has been presented in London recently by the Royal Ballet, but the other two works were unfamiliar, though I had seen *Moves* a couple of times in New York

some years ago. *Moves* is the only ballet performed without music that I find totally absorbing, and it is a marvel how the dancers time their movements. Many choreographers, even some of limited ability, introduce sections of dance in silence in their work, but it takes a choreographer of genius to produce a successful piece without the contribution of music. The dancers performed the work with great skill and precision. *The Four Seasons* was a delightful classical ballet, danced to Verdi music from *I Vespri Sicilliani*. Among a strong contingent of young dancers, Ashley Boudier, Benjamin Millepied and particularly Daniel Ulbright as a faun with a gazelle-like jump, impressed in 'Fall'. The programme finished with everyone having fun in *The Concert*.

Programme 3: 'Four Voices', introduced some of the newest choreography presented in New York. NYCB's recently departed Resident Choreographer, Christopher Wheeldon contributed *Carousel (A Dance)*, which was based on elements of the Richard Rodgers musical 'Carousel', and the 'dream sequences' popular in musicals of that era. Long serving NYCB stalwart Damian Woetzel, who is about to retire, demonstrated that he is going while still at the top of his game. 'Ballet Master in Chief' (Artistic Director in the parlance of other companies) Peter Martins provided a pas-de-deux: *Zakouski* (hors d'oeuvres) to bits and pieces by Russian composers, danced by Yvonne Borree and the stylish Andrew Veyette. Perhaps the most interesting work presented was *In Vento* by the Italian choreographer, Mauro Bigonzetti. Benjamin Millepied led a cast of ten young soloists in some original evolutions of movement. I did not find Alexander Ratmanský's *Russian Seasons* very absorbing, despite the presence of arresting dancers such as Rachel Rutherford, Wendy Whelen and Albert Evans.

The final programme was 'Ballet and Broadway', which started with *Thou Swell*, a work by Peter Martins to songs mainly from Rodgers and Hart musicals. The ballet was set in a glossy New York night club of the 1930s, and featured singers as well as dancers. Darcy Kistler and Nilas Martins were notable among the eight very stylish dancers. Balanchine's *Tarantella* followed, danced with great verve by Sterling Hyltin and newly recruited principal, Gonzalo Garcia. The next work, *Western Symphony*, was Balanchine's rather classical take on the American cowboy

scenario. This has recently been given some excellent performances by Birmingham Royal Ballet, but we can assume that the NYCB production is authentic Americana. I was particularly happy to see again the Robbins' superb dances from *West Side Story*. As a student, I earned a few bob pushing scenery around the stage of the Golder's Green Hippodrome where the touring production of that ground-breaking musical started its UK tour. In *West Side Story Suite*, the dancers, who also sing, looked exactly right, tough but touching, athletic but full of 'street cred'. It made an excellent final work for the season.

So, this was a season of great success with the audiences and the critics. I hope NYCB return again shortly, and manage to visit London every few years in future to consolidate their successes of this year. I know that it costs megabucks to import a company of 90 dancers to London, and no doubt the English National Opera is charging a fortune to hire out their large theatre. However, the wallets and purses of dance fans are limited, and top prices of £95 well exceed those of Covent Garden and visiting companies such as the Bolshoi and the Kirov, who come with rather more kit, in the form of costumes and scenery. Perhaps extra sponsorship from the USA is needed to help cement Anglo-American cultural relations, but congratulations to the Wells management for this initiative.

Spring Dance at the Coliseum: More Highlights

The Spring Dance season at the London Coliseum, presented by Sadler's Wells in association with Askonas Holt and Raymond Gubbay, continued in late March with the Stuttgart Ballet production of John Cranko's *Romeo and Juliet*. Despite the attractive production, the interest of seeing the Stuttgart company for the first time in a quarter of a century, and the relative novelty of the Cranko choreography, the season was by no means fully booked. Perhaps it was unwise to play safe with *Romeo and Juliet*, which has been over-exposed in London in recent years. The Royal Ballet gives a substantial number of performances of their production in the Kenneth MacMillan choreography during most seasons, indeed it is something of a cash-cow at the Royal Opera House. English National Ballet has both the Nureyev version, and the

one by Derek Deane performed 'in the round' at the Royal Albert Hall. Northern Ballet Theatre has a version by the late Christopher Gable, and may only be a matter of time before a revisionist modern version appears, courtesy of Matthew Bourne.

The Cranko choreography and the Stuttgart production have much to commend them. The setting, by Cranko's usual collaborator, Jurgen



Alicia Amatriain as Juliet
photograph by Leslie E. Spatt

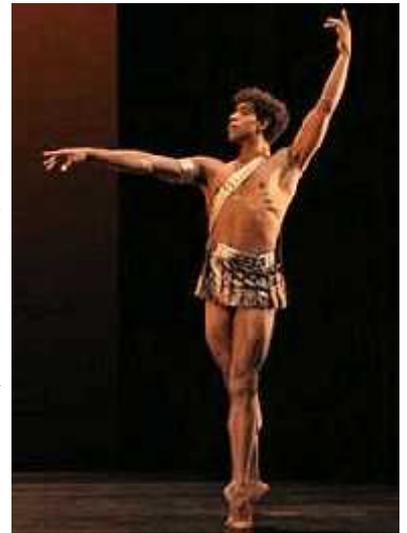
Rose, gives 'fair Verona' a sunny aspect. The production moves fast, and the fight scenes are more robustly staged than the more formalised duels of the MacMillan version. While the duets do not have the same passion and ecstasy of MacMillan, the characterisations are good. Romeo was Filip Barankiewicz at the performance I saw, and Sue Jin Kang danced Juliet. Both performed excellently and projected very believable characters. Stefan Stewart was a lively Mercutio, and Cranko's original Juliet, Marcia Haydee, was impressive as Lady Capulet. The Royal Ballet Symphonia, who have some practice playing the Prokofiev score with the Birmingham Royal Ballet (who also perform the MacMillan version), played very well under the baton of James Tuggle.

So, on to Carlos Acosta. His first session was *Carlos Acosta with Guest Artists from the Royal Ballet*. The Carlos bit was printed large, and the Guests component rather small, but this is a fair representation of the drawing power of an international star now at the top of his game. He appeared in four items, and did not hog the two part performance. The format was almost identical to the programme he gave at Sadler's Wells last year, using the stage opened at the back to show the dancers preparing to perform, and changing back after the performance. His collaborators were

Caroline Duprot; Mara Galeazzi; Martin Harvey; Valeri Hristov; Sarah Lamb; Jose Martin; Tamara Rojo and Lauren Cuthbertson. Missing was Zenaida Yanowsky, indisposed doubtless due to her recently announced pregnancy.

In the first session, Cuthbertson was the able substitute in the *Agon pas de deux* with Acosta, but could not quite match Yanowsky's power. In the Act 2 pas-de-deux from *La Sylphide*, Lamb was light and ethereal, but Hristov did not project too strongly. Galeazzi and Harvey worked up a storm of emotion in the farewell pas-de-deux from MacMillan's *Winter Dreams*, and received a great ovation. When will the Royal Ballet promote Harvey? Surely a dancer does not need to be imported from overseas to gain principal rank at Covent Garden? Sarah Lamb elected to substitute for Yanowsky in the *Dying Swan*. Though beautifully danced, this was a bad decision in my view, as the ghost of that *Trocks* dancer kept superimposing him/herself into my mental picture.

The Rojo/Costa version of the *Diana and Actaeon pas-de-deux* had to be the last item of the first half. To quote the late Eric Morecombe, "There's no answer to that". Roco scintillated, with stunning balances and a prodigious capability for fouettes. Acosta bounded to new heights, and performed, more than once, that butterfly jump where he uses his outstretched leg as the bar in a sort of pole vault without a pole. Great audience delight, and a big ovation!



Carlos Acosta
photograph by Bill Cooper

The second half involved more modern choreography. Harvey and Duprot performed strongly in Ben Stevenson's rather intense *End of Time pas-de-deux*. Rojo and Martin were very much with the spirit of the tango in Gustavo Mollajolli's sexy and slinky *A Buenos Aires*. I could not quite accept Lamb in the character of Edith Piaf in Ben Van

Cauwenbergh's *Je ne regrette rien*, but Acosta was entirely at home, inebriated but funny, in his *Les Bourgeois*. Liam Scarlett's *Margot and Rudy* was skilfully performed by Galeazzi and Hristov, without awaking any of my memories of the stellar couple. Cuthbertson again substituted for Yanowsky in Will Tuckett's *Nisi Dominus*, a strange piece, but one which was surprisingly well received. The other eight dancers danced in the final ensemble work, *Majismo* by the Cuban choreographer Georges Garcia. This gave opportunities to all the performers, but Sarah Lamb stood out among the ensemble for the clean effortless precision of her technique.

So a packed audience departed happily to their homes, and Carlos perhaps to the bank with another significant contribution to his pension. This I do not begrudge a man who gives so much, and has so much talent.

Nederlands Dans Theater 1

I usually look forward to the regular visits of Nederlands Dans Theater, be it NDT 1, NDT2 or NDT3, and frequently enjoy the modern dance they offer. As ever the production standards were high, the lighting good, and the dancers excellent. However, the music was variable and the choreography distinctly below par in this programme.

Three works were presented, all by in-house choreographers. They could be described at best as consistent in style, and at worst as lacking in variety. Two were by Jiri Kilian and one by the husband and wife team of Paul Lightfoot and Sol Leon. The Lightfoot/Leon piece, *Signing Off*, was the centre-piece of the programme, and had more to say to me than the other two pieces put together. It had an aura of melancholy and of saying good-bye, not just individual to individual, but good-bye to memories, and breaking with the past. For once, the few lines of indication in the

programme were replicated in the movement. The piece was danced to the 1987 Violin Concerto of Philip Glass. This is music apparently popular with modern choreographers, and the second piece for which it has been used in as many weeks.

The thread between text and content was much less apparent in Kilian's *Wings of Wax*, based on the legend of Icarus. The centre of the stage was occupied by a tree suspended upside down, and the dancers emerged from, and returned to, the darkness at the rear of the stage, an effect rather better realised in Twyla Tharp's *In the Upper Room*. The work was well constructed, the movement beautiful, and the dancers superb, but the relationship with Icarus was quite obscure, to me anyway.



Tar and Feathers

photograph by Sharon Yor Mosef

The final piece, *Tar and Feathers*, also by Kilian, was stronger on gimmicks than on content. A pianist improvised on Mozart from a grand piano perched high on stilts at the rear of the stage, but was interrupted from time to time by a sound-track of loud noises. The dancers did their best with the material, as usual. It reminded me of experimental dance at The Place by London Contemporary Dance Theatre thirty years ago. It seemed very passé, but perhaps was intended to be an example of the currently popular 'retro'.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions run from July 1st each year and are therefore due at the end of June.

The annual rate is £7.50 (reduced to £6.00 for OAP's)

Life membership is available for a single payment of £75.00.

Please send your payment to the Hon. Registrar:

Professor Liz Schafer, 372 Stroude Road, Virginia Water, Surrey GU25 4DB

Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope for your membership card (no SAE, no card!)

NEWS from Sadler's Wells

Community Outreach

Never before has dance raised such interest within the public sphere. Whether as entertainment on prime time television, a fun alternative to the gym or a creative outlet, the benefits of dance are widely recognized. Sadler's Wells is capitalising on this great appetite for watching and doing dance and has established itself as a leading force in dance education and community work.



Connect's community and outreach work complement's Sadler's Wells artistic programme by providing high quality participatory experiences for a range of users. Initiatives are carefully designed to suit specific needs and interests. We aim to encourage people to engage with the concept of 'going to the theatre' through a programme of behind the scenes activities and workshops designed to demystify dance and the theatre. In addition our projects highlight the importance of being active through practical dance experiences - often introducing people to dance for the first time or encouraging experienced dancers to try new dance styles. Connect's strategic priorities for 2007/8 - 2010:

- ◆ Older people - challenging assumptions of who can dance
- ◆ Young people - developing opportunities in formal education and youth dance
- ◆ Access - leading the way for access and accessibility in theatre and dance
- ◆ Professional development - sharing our knowledge and skills

Current community and outreach activity includes the weekly Lilian Baylis Arts Club for over 60s, Company of Elders, Over 60s outreach ballet classes in Islington, weekly movement play classes for toddlers, annual Deaf Dance Summer School, and an Associates Summer School. (from: www.sadlerswells.com)

NEWS from The Old Vic

Speed-the-Plow, with Jeff Goldblum, Laura Michelle Kelly and Kevin Spacey, having played to packed houses since it opened, took its final bow on Saturday 26 April. The play then transfers over to the Ruhrfestspiele festival in Recklinghausen, Germany.

Whilst the cast and company are abroad, the building will be far from quiet. As part of our Old Vic New Voices programme, which supports young and emerging talent, we have gathered together young performers from around London to create BRANDED an exhilarating theatrical event for the world famous Old Vic stage. BRANDED is part of wider project called Go for Green which has already worked with 30 schools and over 900 young people to encourage them to think about ecology, the environment and consumerism. BRANDED ran from 1 May to 3 May 2008.

This summer, we are looking forward to welcoming Tim Pigott-Smith and Michelle Dockery to The Old Vic for *Pygmalion*. Bernard Shaw's classic comedy, directed by Peter Hall. *Pygmalion* formed the basis of the much-loved musical *My Fair Lady* famously filmed with Audrey Hepburn and over the years has been filmed as both a play and a musical.

Pygmalion has also provided the inspiration for the London's Language Schools Challenge. Pupils will create a number of contemporary monologues based on themes taken from the production such as Social Roles, Manners, Class Distinction and Personal Identity. A selection of the resulting monologues will then be filmed by a professional cast and crew from The Old Vic.

To keep up-to-date with news and information for all productions at The Old Vic you can register with us at our website to receive regular e-newsletters.



TICKETS: 0870 060 6628

www.oldvictheatre.com

The Old Vic, The Cut, London SE1

REHEARSALS

I am pleased to announce several more rehearsals we may be able to attend at Sadler's Wells. Not all of these have been confirmed so please check for final details. **James Ranger**

Rambert Dance Company:
23rd May at 4.00pm (Confirmed)



Sutra with Buddhist Shaolin Monks:
26th May at 7.30pm (Confirmed)



The Peony Pavilion:
3rd June (To be confirmed)



Ballet Flamenco Sara Baras:
1st July (To be confirmed)



West Side Story:
22nd July (Time to be confirmed)



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WHAT'S ON at Sadler's Wells and the Old Vic

Sadler's Wells **0870 737 7737**
www.sadlerswells.com

20-24 May: Rambert Dance Company
27-31 May: Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui/
Antony Gormley/
Shaolin Monks
3-8 June: The Peony Pavilion
11-14 June: Akram Khan
Company/National Ballet
of China
20-22 June: Philharmonia Orchestra
1-12 July: Ballet Flamenco Sara Baras
15 July: Music and Dance Scheme
22 Jul-31 Aug: West Side Story

Lilian Baylis Theatre **0870 737 7737**

30 Mar-13 July: Lost Musicals 2008
22-24 May: Half Term Break
25 May: Arctic Circle
30 May: Dick Wong
6 June: Sang Jija
13-14 June: Dance Now
14 June: China Now Debate

Peacock Theatre **0870 737 0337**

15 April-10 May: Jump
15-18 May: London Children's Ballet
21 May-22 June: Havana Rakatan

Old Vic Theatre **0870 060 6628**
www.oldvictheatre.com

7 May - 2 Aug: Pygmalion

Attendance at Rehearsals

We attend rehearsals by kind permission of Sadler's Wells and the Management of visiting companies and dancers may not always be in full costume and may walk through part of their roles. For final details of timing and date, please check with the Secretary, Richard Reavill, tel: 01491 872574, or e-mail nunsacre@tiscali.co.uk. If you have registered your email address with Richard he will send you this information automatically. Please come to the foyer of Sadler's Wells 15 minutes before the start of the rehearsal and pay the £5 admission fee to the Committee member present.

The Vic-Wells *Broadsheet* is edited by
Miss Imogen Walker.
Please e-mail all enquiries, comments and
contributions to :
jen.walker@westherts.ac.uk