

# BALLET CONCERTO

INSPIRING DANCE

## Backgrounder

### Art of the Dance, Ballet Concerto SUMMER DANCE CONCERT

#### **Raymonda, choreography Marius Petipa, arrangement Webster Dean**

After an illustrious career in France, Marius Petipa became Premier Ballet Master of the Russian Imperial Theatre, producing more than 60 full-evening ballets and innumerable shorter works. His contributions are the cornerstones of the entire school of Russian ballet. Russian ballet vaulted to international fame and inspired the canon of 20<sup>th</sup> Century ballet.

His *Raymonda* is a ballet originally staged in three acts that debuted at the Imperial Mariinsky Theatre in 1898 in St. Petersburg. The ballet is famous for its *Grand Pas Classique* known as the *Grand Pas Classique Hongrois* or *Raymonda Pas de Dix* from the third Act, which is often extracted from the full-length work to be performed independently.

The SUMMER DANCE CONCERT performance of *Raymonda* will feature Shea Johnson & Melian Izotova.

Born in Marseilles, France, in the year 1818, Marius Petipa began his dance training at the age of seven with his father, Jean Petipa, the French dancer and teacher. Marius was educated at the Grand College in Brussels, studying music at the conservatory, as he disliked dancing in those early years. Nevertheless, his progress was so great that he made his debut in 1831 in his father's production of Gardel's *La Dansomanie*. In 1834, Jean Petipa became ballet master at the theatre in Bordeaux and moved there for Marius to complete his education. Marius became the premier danseur at the theatre in Nantes by age 16. In 1839, Marius left Nantes to tour North America with his father, returning to Paris where he soon made his debut at the Comedie Française, partnering Carlotta Grisi. He thereafter became a principal dancer in Bordeaux. After a time in Spain in 1845 to work at the King's Theatre, Madrid, he studied Spanish dance and choreographed *Carmen et Son Terero*, *La Perle de Seville*, and other works. Petipa's first great success was *The Daughter of Pharaoh* (staged in six weeks), resulting in his appointment as Choreographer-in-Chief in 1862, a position he held for nearly 50 years.

#### **Le Tricorne, choreography Luis Montero (world premiere)**

Inspired by a Spanish ballet originally choreographed by Léonide Massine for Ballets Russes with music composed by Manuel de Falla and designs by Pablo Picasso, Luis Montero's world premiere for the 2017 SUMMER DANCE CONCERT employs a Spanish setting, dance techniques and folk elements. Massine's *Le Tricorne* first premiered in the summer of 1919 in London's Alhambra Theater by Diaghilev's Ballet Russe. Taken from Pedro Antonio de Alarcón y Ariza's Andalusian story, *El sombrero de tres picos* (The three-cornered hat -1874), the piece reflects Massine's successful collaboration with Pablo Picasso, resulting in a production that was a critical and enduring success. Nearly 100 years later, Montero's ballet is a love story set in the eighteenth century in a small Spanish village, where a miller and his wife, although very much in love, flirt with passers-by to test each other's affection.

Born in Granada, Spain, and now a US citizen, Luis Montero studied Spanish Classical, Folkloric and Flamenco dance with many of Spain's masters. A professional dancer by the age of fifteen, Luis Montero has performed throughout the world as Principal Dancer, performing among other esteemed dancers, such as Jose Greco. He has danced with major ballet and opera companies in the U.S., Canada, Russia, Italy, France, Denmark, China and Japan. His resume also boasts choreographing the 2010 Winter Olympic gold-medal-winning ice-dancing routine for Canadians Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir. He choreographed Bolero for Ballet Concerto in 1990 and since then has staged the performance for companies throughout the U.S. and in Japan and Denmark. Among his highly acclaimed choreographic works are *El Amor Brujo*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *Ravel's Bolero*, *Rodrigo's Concerto Andaluz* and his balletic version of Bizet's opera *Carmen*. He has choreographed and performed in modern and postmodern dance, musical comedy, grand opera and classical ballet both on stage and on television. Luis has received many grants and awards for his work in the Spanish style, including grants from Northern Illinois University, Sam Houston State University, Mercyhurst College and Interlochen Arts Academy. He conducts master classes, seminars and workshops in Spanish dance, and he also choreographs in Mexico where he has a winter home in Puerto Vallarta.

*Le Tricorne* composer, Manuel de Falla, was born in Cadiz, Spain, where he studied piano from his mother and later went on to Madrid to study composition with Felipe Pedrell. He rescored *Le Tricorne* for Léonide Massine.

## ***Inscape*, choreography Bruce Marks, re-staged by Webster Dean**

Choreographer Bruce Marks' *Inscape* is an abstract duet to a movement from Bartok's Sixth String Quartet. Vacillating, like the music, between gnomic pathos and crisp angularity, it's an inventive and compact representation of Marks' background in both modern dance and classical ballet. Once described by well known ballet critic Olga Maynard as "lovers as enemies," the underlying theme is of two lovers trying to *escape into* each other, hence *inscape*.

Bruce Marks, a New York City native, received his training at the New York High School of Performing Arts, Brandeis University and The Juilliard School. At age 14, he began his performing career when he created the role of the young boy in Pearl Lang's *Rites*. He continued his ballet training with Margaret Craske, Antony Tudor and Mattlyn Gavers at the Metropolitan Opera School and joined the corps de ballet there in 1956, becoming premier danseur in 1958. He joined American Ballet Theatre (ABT) in 1961 where he soon became one of the most respected and versatile of ABT's male contingent, excelling in both modern and classical ballets. Shortly after his arrival, he was promoted to principal dancer. He created one of the two leading male roles in the American premiere of Harald Lander's *Etudes*, as well as the leading role of Prince Siegfried in ABT's first full-length production of *Swan Lake*. Marks was the first to be entrusted with the roles of Jose Limon when he danced *The Moor's Pavane* and *The Traitor* for ABT.

During his ten years with ABT, Marks appeared as guest artist with the Royal Swedish Ballet (1963-64) and London Festival Ballet. In 1971, he became the first American principal dancer of the Royal Danish Ballet and remained there for five years, mastering the 19<sup>th</sup> century works of August Bournonville.

Bruce Marks has partnered some of the world's great ballerinas, including Natalia Makarova, Cynthia Gregory, Eva Evdokimova, Maria Tallchief, Lupe Serrano, Violette Verdy, Melissa Hayden and Toni Lander, whom he married in 1966. He received the 1995 Capezio Dance Award for achievement in dance and contributions toward public awareness of dance in America. He also was honored with a 1997 Dance Magazine Award. Dance/USA recognized him in 1998. He holds honorary doctoral degrees from Northeastern University, Franklin Pierce College, the University of Massachusetts, Wheaton College, and the Juilliard School.

## **Elise Lavallee**

(information on her world premiere piece, to come)

Elise Lavallee is choreographing her Ballet Concerto commission this year for Art of the Dance, the 2017 SUMMER DANCE CONCERT. Among the numerous musicals, she has choreographed are *Merry Widow* (University of North Texas Opera), *In the Heights* (Artes De La Rosa), *Jubilation* (Jubilee Theatre) *Cabaret* (Texas Wesleyan University), *A Very Merry Unauthorized Scientology Pageant* (Circle Theatre), and *Frog and Toad* (Casa Manana). Lavallee was the assistant choreographer for *Figaro* (Dallas Opera) and the workshop of *Stagger Lee* (Dallas Theater Center). She also was the assistant director for Dallas Theatre Center's production of *Give It Up* (*Lysistrata Jones*), a play that went to Broadway. Film (DVD) credits include: choreographer for a *Barney and Friends* music video *I Hear Music Everywhere*, and assistant choreographer for *Let's Make Music* and *Let's Go to The Fire House*. As an instructor, she has worked with Kids Who Care and was their principal choreographer for eight years.

Lavallee teaches for Margo Dean School of Ballet, Ballet International Elite Academy, All Saints Episcopal School, Texas Wesleyan University, Dance Theatre of Arlington, and Grand Prairie Fine Arts Academy. As a dancer, Elise trained with Margo Dean School of Ballet. Professionally she was a member of The Bruce Wood Dance Company and Ballet Concerto and has performed in many musical theater productions for Casa Manana, Dallas Theater Center, and Lyric Stage, among others.