

DANCE

CULTURAL
PREVIEW
ARTS



On Valentine's Day, Garth Fagan Dance will open its studio and perform a duets concert paired with an intimate dinner. JAMIE GERMANO/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Staff reports

Maybe it's because of the strength of the dance programs at local colleges and inspiration from internationally acclaimed Garth Fagan Dance.

Maybe it's because dance traditionally does not draw as large an audience as theater and music programs.

Maybe it's because most dance pieces are set to music, which automatically involves working with a composer or musician.

Whatever the reason, dance groups in Rochester have been leaders in collaboration, both among different dance groups and with partners in music and other disciplines.

The "Fabo Collabo" concert has brought together several of the newer companies, first to leverage audiences and then last year to hold workshops. The dance groups have a number of creative programs in the First Niagara Rochester Fringe Festival, which continues through Saturday.

Several of the groups — including PUSH Physical Theatre and FuturPointe — traveled this summer for intensives and concerts, giving them exposure to new audiences and critics. Bill Evans Dance and the Rochester City Ballet both performed at the premier dance festival, Jacob's Pillow in the Berkshires.

Both Garth Fagan Dance and Rochester City Ballet have set their seasons. The smaller groups, which also include Biodance and Present Tense, will add concerts as the season goes.

And the Nazareth College Arts Center Dance Festival returns after a one-year hiatus, moving to May to be within the academic calendar. Headlining the festival will be Buffalo-based LehrerDance,

performing *Kaleidoscopika (The Art of Dance Unfolding)*, a collaboration with the acclaimed contemporary chamber group Cordis Quartet.

Because the Nazareth stage was built especially for dance, it becomes home base for the Garth Fagan and RCB home seasons.

Garth Fagan Dance will hold its fall concert from Dec. 3 to 8 after performing it in October in the Joyce Theatre in New York City. Included will be new pieces by Fagan and P.J. Pennewell, as well as *Easter Freeway Processional*. The company will have new dancers — two chosen from the company's summer training program.

On Valentine's Day, the company will again open its studio and perform a duets concert paired with an intimate dinner.

Fagan is also working to create more regional events. For example, the company is participating in an after-school anti-violence program at the YMCA and in June will give out its inaugural leadership award for promoting healthy communities to the University of Rochester Medical Center, along with UR President Joel Seligman and URMCE CEO Bradford Berk. Fagan is participating in a new Syracuse University program called the Jenkla Center that explores how the arts can lead to changes in communities.

"We have to figure out our relevant roles in communities," says Ruby Lockhart, executive director of Garth Fagan Dance, who says the company will work to find other ways to collaborate as well. Jamey Leverett, artistic director of Rochester City Ballet, says that reconnecting with Rochester is also a priority for her organization.

"I think our goal this season is to really get the word out there about Rochester City Ballet," she says.

The Rochester City Ballet concert on



Shanghai Ballet comes to Nazareth College Nov 15. PROVIDED PHOTO

Jan. 31 and Feb. 1, "RCB Style," is made up of dances of different styles to show audiences exactly what a contemporary ballet company can do. There's also a new piece: an experimental work, with music composed and played by James VanDemark, professor of double bass at the Eastman School of Music and bassist with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra.

In the spring, RCB will perform *Cinderella* on May 17 and 18 in a more traditional family show (and again will perform the *Nutcracker* on Thanksgiving weekend with the RPO).

Also on the schedule are touring shows of some noted dance groups, including Shanghai Ballet performing *The Butterfly Lovers* (Nov. 15) and *Phibolus* (March 8), a group whose moves verge on gymnastics — and whose members share the stage with jugglers and puppets. Both of those shows are at Naza-

areth. At the Auditorium Theatre will be the Moscow Ballet's *Great Russian Nutcracker* (Dec. 4). The National Dance Company of Ireland (March 29) will be at Roberts Wesleyan College's Cultural Life Center.

Some of the most creative dance work in Rochester is coming out of The College at Brockport, whose faculty includes Bill Evans and Mariah Maloney (who run dance organizations as well). Among concerts to mark on your calendar: Master's students' thesis work will be on display in a DANCE/Hartwell concert on Oct. 31 to Nov. 2; DANCSCORE will present the work of faculty members on Nov. 14 and 15; Sankofa African Dance and Drum Ensemble will perform May 1 to 4.

At the University of Rochester, Palo Seco Flamenco Company will perform on Oct. 11 and 12.



Buffalo-based LehrerDance headlines the Nazareth College Arts Center Dance Festival in May. PROVIDED PHOTO

GET MORE ON YOUR TABLET

Our free iPad and Android tablet versions of this story has this complete preview, plus added calendars, photo galleries and videos. It will be available starting Tuesday. To get it then, download the free Rochester Magazine app for iPad or for Android tablets through Google Play or Amazon. Tap the app to access the magazine storefront and find the icon for this year's free Cultural Arts Preview.