

blue ceiling dancer

interviews and features on artists/ reflections on creating and collaborating/ coincidences and confluences/ things dark and shimmering

Monday, November 7, 2016

Passion in performance: world premieres and inspiring dancers at ProArteDanza

In my quest to expand the coverage of these interviews and articles and to learn the methods and madness of new dance artists, I offer now an interview with the seemingly tireless Roberto Campanella, current artistic director and co-founder of ProArteDanza. They have a show coming up next week which includes a world premiere by Roberto and a ProArteDanza premiere of Robert Glumbek's work Diversion, originally made for Ballet BC.

Read on for Roberto's answers on change, passion, inspiration and the amazing dancers of the company.

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Roberto Campanella

LR: Probably you've been asked this question a thousand times, but from the vantage point of more than a decade of ProArteDanza, what spurred you to found the company and what drives you to continue?

RC: Well...sometimes I feel it was very naive of me and Joanna Ivey to found a dance company in this very challenging financial climate....

A lot of our inspiration stemmed from the need to create a venue for all those talented dancers, young and older, that were populating Toronto during those days, something that Joanna felt really strongly about, and to continue to foster the creative partnership between Robert Glumbek and me.

Passion in performance: world premieres and inspir...

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About Me



Lucy Rupert

Dancer, creator,
performer,
sometimes a writer

[View my complete profile](#)



ProArteDanza

LR: The company tag line is "passion in performance" -- how do you draw this out of your dancers and collaborators? And with your Summer Intensive Program, how do you instill this value in students and young professionals, especially in a time when hyper-technical dancing and tricks seem to be the trend?

RC: I personally feel that it is a combination of the whole team that surrounds ProArteDanza, a team of incredibly passionate artists. A group of people with a strong feeling of enthusiasm, excitement, intense drive and love towards what we do.

We also view the term passion as a great sense of sacrifice. And we all know how much dancers sacrifice their lives and their bodies to achieve that moment of magic on stage. Without this two-fold approach to dance we don't feel it's possible to create art, or artists. It's a non-negotiable ProArteDanza culture.



ProArteDanza

LR: Where do you personally draw inspiration to make new works?

RC: It's always different. It might start from the music, as is the case for my new creation *Fearful Symmetries*. It can also start from a more biographical reference; such is the case in Robert Glumbek's works.

In the studio with the dancers, I sometimes just patiently wait for the moment I say "ah!" and the light bulb goes on. It happens often working with the calibre of dancers and collaborators we work with.

*LR: And about *Fearful Symmetries* -- what is the source of this work?*

RC: My original idea was to delve into the world of the silent, black and white old movies: Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin....

Then I came across a video of a live concert that was playing John Adam's composition *Fearful Symmetries* while showing on a big screen behind the musicians all of Buster Keaton's amazing stunt work.

As I was being transported by the drive of the music and the fast tempo of such an intriguing piece of music, I realized that that is the tempo in which I -- and a lot of other people on this side of the world -- conduct their daily lives, at the speed of light. We move and operate at a very quick pace, but where we're all going is still a mystery to me...At times I feel we're all sucked in to a big

vacuum, a big black hole.



ProArteDanza

LR: How does it feel to be on the cusp of a world premiere?

RC: Nerve racking!

On the other end, we all know that a new creation is also an adaptive organism in which we have the opportunity to tweak, adapt, modify, develop. Especially going on tour in Ontario (St. Catharines, Oakville and Markham!) before we land back in Toronto. It will give me the ability to sit back and have a better perspective on the work, and therefore make adjustments.

However, a new creation is always an unknown, we will never know in advance how it will be received by an audience. And that perhaps is one of the reasons why choreographing is so exciting?



ProArteDanza

LR: What do you value or look for in your dancers? You have a wonderful mix of long time collaborators and fairly fresh faces on board right now...that must be a really interesting experience....

RC: ProArteDanza has been incredibly privileged with the current and past collaborators who made the company we are right now. We value the dance artist who collaborates, thinks independently, takes initiative and who is committed to not only the work, but also the overall vision of the company.

Our summer program -- which now has two levels, an apprentice program for 18-24 year olds and an aspirants program for young dancers 14-17 years old -- reflects that vision as well. We try to install all the above-mentioned values to our students on the cusp of becoming professionals.

We are the antithesis of hiring dancers who only do what they're told, as it was our training during the old days.

We have been drawing our new wave of company dancers from our summer program in August where the students spend a month working with us. At the end of our program we award an apprentice contract for the year, an ideal format for both the young dancer and for Robert Glumbek and I as creators.

This year Sonja Boretski is our apprentice.



Roberto Campanella

LR: Wondering if you could speak to both the current roster of dancers and the course of the company dancers over time....what have the changes meant to the vision or to you as artistic director?

RC: Our biggest challenge was to maintain the high standard which we never compromise. The challenge is to be able to continue to maintain a relationship with these high calibre dancers although we don't have the ability to offer more permanent contracts. We're slowly improving and developing into longer terms for contracts, but there is still a lot of work to do.

In the meantime, we plough ahead with the dancers who have been loyal to us, for which we are incredibly grateful and with the young dancers that we continue to cultivate....

See ProArteDanza in Performance

Fleck Dance Theatre, Harbourfront Centre

Wed, Nov 16, 2016 at 8pm

Thu, Nov 17, 2016 at 8pm

Fri, Nov 18, 2016 at 8pm

Sat, Nov 19, 2016 at 8pm

Tickets:

<https://my.harbourfrontcentre.com/single/PSDetail.aspx?psn=27306>