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**A**t the School of American Ballet, we often talk about the idea of “full circle.” As Mr. Balanchine had hoped, the majority of today’s faculty were once students at SAB; they went on to dance at New York City Ballet and returned to SAB to teach. The beauty of this circle is most evident in the advanced students’ variations classes. Not only are the students learning masterworks from the Balanchine and classical repertory, but they are, in many cases, learning the choreography from teachers who performed the ballets for Mr. B.

In this issue of the newsletter we highlight the Advanced Men’s variations class, which has undergone somewhat of a transformation this year. Several current and former New York City Ballet principal dancers have joined current faculty members Arch Higgins and Jonathan Stafford as rotating instructors, teaching variations that they know intimately as a result of their own performing experiences. As you’ll read, the new approach has created some wonderful learning opportunities for our young men.

As our Workshop season nears, we look forward to paying tribute to Sean Lavery, who retired from SAB’s faculty and from his position as the assistant to the Ballet Master in Chief at NYCB last fall. Sean was appointed to SAB’s permanent faculty in 2003, and he quickly became a beloved presence at the School, teaching several advanced and intermediate classes every week even as he oversaw a busy slate of rehearsals at the Company. For the past 10 years he has been an important link between the Company and the School, and he is sorely missed by his students and colleagues alike.

The 2012 Workshop program will feature Sean’s Twinklana—a charming but deceptively challenging ballet that showcases the talents of seven younger students dancing to Mozart. Our advanced students will also be performing George Balanchine’s Cortège Hongrois and Les Petits Riens, a ballet choreographed by Peter twenty-five years ago for eight of NYCB’s up-and-coming dancers (the fresh-out-of-SAB Wendy Whelan among them). We look forward to seeing you at the Workshop Performances on June 2 and 5, and as always thank our many friends and benefactors for their ongoing support.

**Peter Martins**  
Artistic Director

**Marjorie Van Dercook**  
Executive Director

### Save the Date for Workshop 2012

June 2 at 2pm & 8pm  
June 5 at 7pm

Visit [www.sab.org/workshop](http://www.sab.org/workshop) to purchase tickets

# A New Twist on Variations

While every day at SAB provides an opportunity for new challenges, growth and excitement, Advanced Men's variations class on Thursday afternoons have simply been, in the students' own words, "awesome."

Variations classes are one of the most important elements in the training of advanced students at SAB. Faculty members teach excerpts from notable ballets—most often principal solos, but sometimes passages for corps dancers or multiple soloists—to not only familiarize students with the classical repertoire but to nurture the development of their artistry. This helps to connect their daily SAB technique classes with the repertoire that students someday hope to perform on stage.

As the 2011-12 Winter Term got underway, Advanced Girls variations classes were taught alternately by Kay Mazzo, Susan Pilarre and Suki

Schorer—all former dancers at New York City Ballet who were coached in numerous roles by George Balanchine himself. The same distinguished performing background in association with Balanchine holds true for Sean Lavery, who had been charged with leading the weekly Advanced Men's variations class for the past decade.

When Mr. Lavery retired from SAB's faculty in late fall, Peter Martins introduced a new teaching model for the Advanced Men's variations class, inviting a select group of current and former New York City Ballet dancers to teach variations on a rotating schedule. While scheduling these busy dancers presented an ongoing challenge and introduced an element of surprise for the students—who typically learned the identity of their Thursday afternoon variations class teacher only hours in advance—the assignment was ably fulfilled by NYCB Principals Tyler Angle, Joaquin de Luz, Jonathan Stafford, and Daniel Ulbricht; former NYCB Principal Albert Evans, and former NYCB soloist Arch Higgins. Stafford and Higgins are already members of SAB's permanent faculty, while the others visited as guest faculty.

Students are usually left in suspense as to the actual choreography that will be taught in their variations classes until the teacher enters the studio and demonstrates the first step of the dance. The longstanding tradition in SAB's variations classes guides faculty to teach what they know—either through their own direct performing experience or firsthand observation of notable repertoire as it was created or rehearsed. There is no syllabus for varia-



Photo by Rosalie O'Connor

tions classes, and SAB's teachers adjust their selections from year to year to respond to the differing needs for growth among each group of students.

The rotating cast of teachers in this year's Advanced Men's variations class introduced students to a wide array of roles, including some that had not been taught in recent memory at SAB. Joaquin De Luz chose bravura solos from *La Bayadère* and *Swan Lake*, radiating nobility and showmanship while demonstrating passages full-out in hopes of driving home the equal importance of stage presence and technical mastery. Daniel Ulbricht provided a taste of Jerome Robbins with a variation from *Interplay* and also taught solos from Balanchine's *Cortège Hongrois* and *Donizetti Variations*. Tyler Angle taught three principal solos from *Mozartiana* in a single, 90-minute class session in order to challenge the students' stamina as well as their ability to learn roles extremely quickly—something he emphasized will be of utmost importance when they become professionals. Arch Higgins worked on a variation from Balanchine's sophisticated, French-flavored *La Source*.

Albert Evans, currently a ballet master at NYCB, visited multiple times and provided a modern twist, teaching an intensely aerobic solo from Peter Martins's *Fearful Symmetries* as well as the groundbreaking "Phlegmatic" variation from *The Four Temperaments* (pictured), a signature role from his accomplished NYCB career, which he first performed as a teenager at SAB's 1987 Workshop Performances. Mr. Evans's teaching of "Phlegmatic", which spanned two class sessions, was enriched by coaching he received from Todd Bolender, the acclaimed originator of the 1946 part under Balanchine's direction. In yet another example of the direct link SAB's students are regularly provided to ballet's illustrious past, Mr. Evans served as a filter for Bolender's advice, unlocking the mystery of the role by directing his teen charges to make the "Phlegmatic" soloist's few bold movements as quiet as possible.

The opportunity for learning extended beyond the classroom, with at least one teacher performing the role he had taught to SAB's students just days later at the David H. Koch Theater. SAB students eagerly attended the NYCB performance to check out Daniel Ulbricht's execution of his solo in *Interplay*, providing a visceral model for the part and inspiration for their next classroom attempts at the variation.

## IN MEMORIAM

SAB lost a dear friend and volunteer when **Jay Drucker** passed away on February 12, 2012. For many years, Jay was devoted to NYCB, SAB and—above all—his wife of 49 years, Mina. Not a Valentine's Day Open House passed at SAB without Mina wearing the special Valentine's pin made for her by Jay, with Jay at her side. We join Jay's many friends in sending Mina our heartfelt condolences.

# Beyond the Ballet Barre

## The *Beauty of Ballet* takes off throughout the city

On three consecutive weekends in March, SAB students presented lecture-demonstrations entitled *The Beauty of Ballet* at Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Harlem School of the Arts, and Queens Theatre.

Each lecture demonstration presented a 45-minute, family-friendly program illustrating the "101s" of classical ballet training alongside excerpts of popular ballets. Through brief segments focusing on barre, center, pointe work, and partnering, the program illuminated how dancers develop, starting as early as age six, into aspiring professionals by the time they are teenagers.



Katrina Killian leading the demonstration accompanied by Alla Reznik.



The audience delighted in seeing students perform variations from classical ballets such as *The Sleeping Beauty*, George Balanchine's *The Nutcracker™*, and *Swan Lake*—all in professional costumes and with live piano accompaniment by SAB's

Alla Reznik. Students were joined on stage by SAB faculty member and NYCB Education Department Ballet Mistress Katrina Killian.

Almost 1,000 attendees—many of whom were first time ballet audience members—poured in for these enlightening and delightful programs.

The *Beauty of Ballet* reminds us that classical dance is no longer only for King Louis XIV and his court, but for audiences near, far, and everywhere in-between. SAB will return to Brooklyn, Harlem and Queens, plus the Bronx and Chinatown, in early May to conduct free Community Auditions for children between the ages of six and ten, some of whom may have been inspired by *The Beauty of Ballet*, to try out for the upcoming 2012-13 Winter Term.

Photos by Rosalie O'Connor

## Class on Stage

On January 22, NYCB celebrated George Balanchine's birthday with *Sunday at the Ballet with George*, a day-long offering of educational events and an all-Balanchine matinee performance at the David H. Koch Theater. After the Company's rousing performance of *Union Jack* and *Who Cares?*, SAB students from the Advanced Girls "D" and Advanced Men's classes took the stage for a master class taught by Peter Martins. The students handled with aplomb the added pressure of 1,000 audience members observing their every move. By the end of the class, which featured barre work, center combinations and *pas de deux* exercises, the audience had gained a new appreciation of the effort and work involved in training for a career on the stage.



Photo by Paul Kolnik

## Fresh Talent Blooms at the NYCI Spring Session

On Friday, March 9, the NYCB ballet studios were completely packed with family members, staff and donors for the New York Choreographic Institute Spring Session performances. Among the highlights was a new work from SAB alumnus, New York City Ballet corps member, and burgeoning choreographer Justin Peck with new music by composer Conrad Winslow, a Juilliard doctoral student.

As always, the talent and promise were palpable. In total, 33 SAB students participated, providing the raw material for three upcoming dancemakers exploring the art of choreography.



Photo by Rosalie O'Connor

Sasha Janes working with Kathryn McDonald and Silas Farley on *Murmuration*.

"One of the great thrills of participating in the Institute was collaborating with stellar Juilliard musicians. They told us that seeing our movements opened up the music to them in new ways. In the same manner, hearing their beautiful playing lifted and inspired our dancing."

—Silas Farley, Advanced Men

# SAB HAPPENINGS

## Family Day

SAB students rarely have the chance to "show and tell," but the School's annual Family Day was a prime opportunity for kids to take their parents behind-the-scenes into their world on the 5th Floor.

On Sunday, April 22, 6 to 10 year-old students in the younger Children's Divisions and their parents excitedly milled through SAB's halls and studios enjoying an array of snacks, games, and activities led by SAB's Advanced students.



SAB studios were transformed into a magical spring carnival. At "Swan Lake Fish Pond" children "fished" for prizes. Face painting, crafting, and a *pas de deux* photo station ranked among the other hot spots. Many kids flocked to educational stations where they learned about tutus, pointe shoes, ballet history, and the SAB Workshop.

The final highlight of the afternoon was the chance to observe Katrina Killian leading a demonstration by intermediate and advanced students. SAB's youngest students watched with admiration as their accomplished role models practiced exercises and excerpts from classical ballets.

Soon enough, all of the studios were "back to normal," but for one afternoon, families enjoyed a whimsical, fun-filled party, SAB-style.

## Happy Birthday, Mr. B.

He may have been "turning" an august 108 years old, but that didn't keep a throng of SAB students from putting on their party shoes and attending his birthday celebration.

The feature presentation of the party for our 10 to 13 year-old students on January 22 was a dress rehearsal of New York City Ballet's Lecture-Demonstration program. SAB's Advanced students performed excerpts from *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™*, *Tschaikovsky Pas de Deux*, and *Stars and Stripes*. For those performing, it was a privilege to be selected for this leadership role, and for the younger students observing, it was a treat to see what they themselves might someday achieve.



Afterwards, students and their parents attended a fun-filled Adolescent Wellness Fair. SAB nutritionist Heidi Skolik and her staff revealed secrets of healthy snacking and wholesome meals.

With fun additions such as coloring, a quiz on George Balanchine, and mini-cupcakes, it was a celebration that would have made Mr. B. smile.

## Alumni Weekend

On February 3 and 4, more than 150 SAB alumni spanning seven decades attended the annual Alumni Weekend.



Suki Schorer with Tiler Peck.

Festivities began on Friday evening with old friends and classmates gathering for cocktails to toast Suki Schorer on her 40th anniversary as a member of SAB's faculty. Many of the guests continued the evening at a New York City Ballet performance of *Allegro Brillante*, *Russian Seasons*, *Zakouski* and *Stravinsky Violin Concerto*. On Saturday morning, alumni enjoyed an open

house highlighted by observation of intermediate and advanced classes and a behind-the-scenes tour of the Residence Hall.

By all accounts, the weekend was a big success, bringing good cheer and inspiring fond reminiscences of time spent at SAB. From professional dancers to proud parents to business leaders, our alumni boast a wide range of accomplishments and life pursuits, helping to make their return visits to SAB's halls and studios a very special time at the School.

If you are an SAB Alum please visit [net.sab.org/alumnicommunity](http://net.sab.org/alumnicommunity) to view photos from the weekend as well as a video of Suki's remarks at the cocktail reception. This Online Alumni Community also makes it easy to update your contact information, reconnect with other alumni and find out about upcoming events at SAB.

**Join us for the Alumni Workshop Cocktails on Saturday, June 2, from 6:00-7:30pm. RSVP at [net.sab.org/alumnievent](http://net.sab.org/alumnievent)**

## In Memoriam

### AMY MAZZOLA FLYNN

June 6, 1963–November 24, 2011

The entire School of American Ballet family mourns the sudden and tragic loss of SAB alumna Amy Mazzola Flynn this past Thanksgiving. Amy studied at SAB for eight years, beginning at the age of eight. As a young student, she performed countless times in *George Balanchine's The Nutcracker* and in other NYCB productions. Years later, she served as a chair of the Workshop Performance Benefit and generously supported SAB. Her daughter Christina followed in her footsteps and studied in the SAB Children's Division. Amy's lifelong devotion to ballet was an inspiration to everyone around her.



Photo by Patrick McMullan

To honor Amy's memory, SAB and the American Friends of the Paris Opera & Ballet (for which Amy served as a board member) will jointly sponsor two students from the Paris Opera Ballet School at the SAB Summer Course in July 2012.