



BY WAYNETTE GOODSON

Greensboro Ballet

This leading regional ballet company and successful school celebrates 30 years.

New York City Ballet principal dancer Daniel Ulbricht ignites the stage with a tango fusion of jazz, ballet, aerobatics, and gravity-defying leaps . . . no, this isn't a scene at Lincoln Center.



Greensboro Ballet performing the *Nutcracker*

It's just one of the professional pieces performed as part of the Greensboro Ballet's 30th Anniversary Gala.

And Ulbricht was in good company, pun intended. He was joined by dancers from the acclaimed Sarasota Ballet and Houston Ballet, as well as the professional dancers from the Greensboro Ballet. The local company's ability to attract such renowned guest talent for its milestone celebration attests to the level of artistry it has achieved.

"We have the expertise to create a viable professional company in Greensboro," says CEO Maryhelen Mayfield, the ballet's grande dame and driving force since 1980. "A diamond is a diamond, regardless of its carat size."

Indeed! And this emerging company and classical ballet school has many jewels in its tiara. First, the school itself is the only non-profit entity of its kind in the Greensboro area, and one of relatively few in the nation.

"We specialize in classical ballet and jazz," Mayfield says. "Our students do not learn



WANNA DANCE?

The Greensboro Ballet is housed in the Greensboro Cultural Center at 200 N. Davie St.

For more info, call 336.333.7480, email greensboroballet@yahoo.com, or log on to greensboroballet.com.



routines or do competitions, but rather learn classical ballet technique, as well as dance pieces from traditional repertoire or newly created works that they present on stage."

That's a far cry from how the organization started in 1964 as the Greensboro Civic Ballet. There was no official school and the focus was on annual recitals. In the 1970s, former dancers in the community began consistent, structured training and re-named it the Civic Ballet Theatre. The company soon gained membership in the Southeast Regional Ballet Association (SERBA). It was the first SERBA Honor Company, the highest level of membership, in North Carolina.

In 1995, the group evolved into the Greensboro Ballet (greensboroballet.com) and began adding professional dancers. Today's repertoire includes classics from the 19th and 20th centuries: *Sleeping Beauty*, *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, *Firebird*, *Coppelia*, *Les Sylphides*, and the ever popular *Nutcracker*.

The school even offers a special program

PHOTOS COURTESY OF GREENSBORO BALLET



Celebrate Greensboro

Art. Culture. Entertainment.



And a 5, 6, 7, 8!

CHECK OUT GREENSBORO BALLET BY THE NUMBERS.

6,753

Students who have studied a formal curriculum of dance education at the Ballet

1,445

Performances since the Ballet's founding in 1980

281,754

Audience members have attended a Greensboro Ballet performance

1997

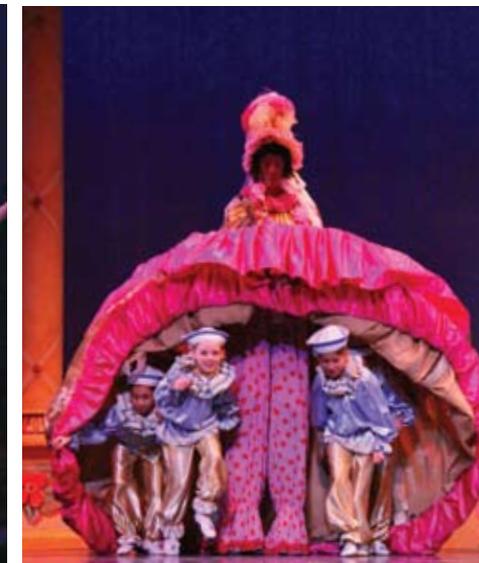
Year when professional dancers first joined the Company

1

Mission to inspire and invigorate audiences and artists through the ever-evolving art of classical ballet



Greensboro Ballet performing the Nutcracker



named Dancing Above the Barre, designed specifically for dancers with physical or mental challenges. Budding ballerinas, ages 4 to 12, take hourly classes for seven weeks to prepare to take the stage in a final presentation. The goals are to build confidence, gain physical strength, and create new friendships — while also fulfilling a dream to wear a tutu and be a dancer.

What's next for this exciting young company/classical ballet school? The 30th-Anniversary Gala was such a success that Mayfield has already named the date for next year: Mark your calendars for March 24, 2012. The evening will once again feature guest dancers from major U.S. ballet companies alongside its own professionals and top students. And it may even include a contemporary ballet piece or two.

The gala program sums it up best: "Today, Greensboro Ballet is not only a vibrant member of the local arts community, but stands among its peers in regional dance, including Atlanta Ballet, Tulsa Ballet, Kansas City Ballet, Ballet St. Louis, Birmingham



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“For more than 30 years, Greensboro Ballet has brought classical and contemporary ballet programming into our lives. This professional ballet company and the ballet school have enriched our community by providing not only a formal curriculum of dance, but also by offering many seasons of exceptional and enjoyable performances.”

—Aldona Wos, M.D., Ambassador (ret.), Gala Chairwoman

Ballet, and others.” And if Mayfield has her way — and all bets are on that she will — the company will enjoy many more decades of furthering the art of classical ballet.