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Miami City Ballet, celebrating Balanchine, presents great works old and new

By Andrea Henderson Special to The Post and Courier May 26, 2018



Members of Miami City Ballet in Justin Peck's "Heatscape," with set design by Shepard Fairey.

Gene Schiavone

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The world of dance was transformed by the works of 20th-century master choreographers George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins, and Miami City Ballet now is celebrating the evolution of classical dance with new works by Justin Peck and Alexei Ratmansky on Saturday and Sunday at the Gaillard Center.

Peck, the 30-year-old New York City Ballet resident choreographer, surely is the inheritor of the Balanchine-Robbins mantle. Balanchine started the company right after World War II, and then in 1948 hired a 30-year-old Robbins to be assistant artistic director. Ratmansky is artist-in-residence at another celebrated company based in New York, the American Ballet Theatre.

“Peck and Ratmansky are presently two of the great living choreographers working in classical ballet, and it’s important to have their works in our repertory for our dancers and audience,” Miami City Ballet’s Artistic Director Lourdes Lopez said.

The dancers will perform three works, one by Peck (“Heatscape”), one by Ratmansky (“Concerto DSCH”) and one by Balanchine (“Walpurgisnacht Ballet”). On Friday, the company, joined by New York City Ballet dancers, paid tribute to Robbins with a special performance of duets.

Presenting works by Balanchine, Ratmanksy and Peck is Lopez’s way of allowing her dancers to be part of an ever-evolving dance conversation, she said.

“Balanchine and Robbins, along with other past choreographers, transformed dance, and the company is a vehicle through which their works are now danced,” Lopez said. “It was the vision of our founding artistic director to follow the Balanchine aesthetic, and since I am also a product of that aesthetic, I have continued it.”

By performing these works, future generations of dancers such as Miami City Ballet's Julia Cinquemani, 26, can continue to dance to Balanchine’s distinguished choreography.

“ ‘Walpurgisnacht’ is an exciting and energetic piece to dance; it gives us a certain abandonment in the movement,” Cinquemani said. “Like all Balanchine ballets, the movement is choreographed with great musicality that allows us to be more expressive and, like he used to say, ‘see the music, hear the dance.’”

Cinquemani aims to demonstrate the talent of the company as a whole.

“I hope they get inspired by the dancers, and we bring to life the choreographer’s vision,” she said. “I think we do really represent what the choreographers would have wanted if they were still alive.”

Lindy Mandradjieff Fabyanic, director of Dance Conservatory Charleston, said Lopez has changed the city of Miami, and dance overall, with her creativity and style.

“She brought an extraordinary level of training and impressive repertoire with leading choreographers such as Justin Peck and Christopher Wheeldon, and supremely talented dancers,” Fabyanic said.

Andrea Henderson is a Goldring Arts Journalist at Syracuse University.

Miami City Ballet

If you go

WHAT: "Miami City Ballet"

WHEN: 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Sat., May 26; 2 p.m. Sun., May 27

WHERE: Charleston Gaillard Center, 95 Calhoun St.

COST: Tickets start at \$31.50

MORE INFO: www.spoletousa.org; 843-579-3100