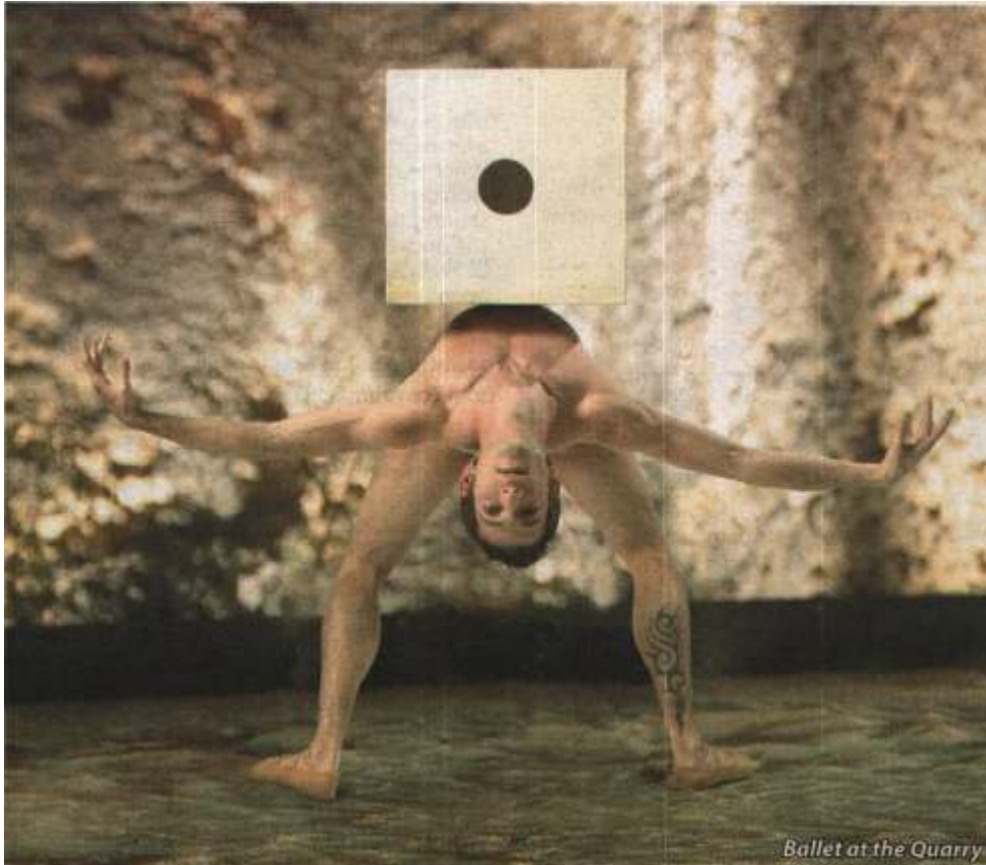




BALLET AT THE QUARRY



Ballet at the Quarry runs 'til Sunday March 1. Bookings can be made through BOCS.

West Australian Ballet presents its fifteenth year of Ballet at the Quarry this month, showcasing an array of exciting works from local and international choreographers at the Quarry Amphitheatre.

This year's international guest choreographers include artistic director of National Theatre Prague, Petr Zuska, and resident choreographers of Netherland's Dans Theater, husband and wife team Paul Lightfoot and Sol Leon.

West Australian Ballet's new director, Ivan Cavallari, is fervent that this is just the start of WA Ballet's climb to the international

level of its European counterparts.

"The company is at a very good level at the moment. We have increased the level of the program and the level of the dancers is good. But what we need now is to continue investing and working on different styles and different ballets. If we continue, we have the chance for the company to reach an international name. You need three years to develop a company to get it to an international level. We always have to continue in that direction and we need continued support from the government to maintain the standard of dance," Cavallari said.

The company has integrated seven different performances from local and international choreographers for their



first appearance of 2008, as part of the Perth International Arts Festival. These include Zuska's exhilarating one-act ballet, *Bolero*, and *Maria's Dream*, set in the 1800s and based on prima ballerina Maria Taglioni's dream of two famous ballets. Lightfoot and Leon also present their ballet *Step Lightly*, collaborated in 1991. The remaining performances are original, short works from the West Australian Ballet dancers 2007 Genesis project.

Cavallari said it was an honour for Perth's ballet dancers to be working with choreographers of such calibre and experience. "It means a lot to have these choreographers for the first time here in Australia. They are very well established choreographers and the work they are presenting is very challenging for our dancers, quite new for Perth. It's an honour for our dancers to have the opportunity to work with these fantastic people. They are very much enjoying their time here and are working very hard to get the quality out of our dancers. The company has progressed rapidly in the past five weeks, now we are just waiting for the public response," he said.

Born in Bolzano, Italy, Cavallari first trained as a dancer in Milan. He was then awarded a scholarship to study in Moscow where he completed his training. Since finishing his studies in 1983, he began working across Europe as a dancer, choreographer and director, developing a strong repertoire of performances, adaptations and original works. When he heard about the position at West Australian Ballet, he was definitely ready for the challenge.

"The ballet world is much smaller than the real world. I heard through friends and people I know that they were looking for a new director in Perth. I am always aiming for new ventures, improving

myself and learning new things," he explains.

"Last year was there was a lot of planning. Things have been in planning for so long and now, this year they are actually being put into place. Now I am baking my own bread."

When Cavallari first came to Perth in February last year he was taken straight to a show at the Quarry Amphitheatre after his flight landed. To be presenting his first showcase at this stunning venue is very exciting, he said.

"It is a fantastic venue, it's a great atmosphere for the dancers, for the audience and I hope it will be a very nice, enjoyable evening."

