

THE OUT

LIFESTYLE • ARTS • ENTERTAINMENT

JULY 5-11, 2019



3 MUSIC BEAT

The Raconteurs return

4 THE SCORE

On substance and beauty

7 HAPPENINGS

A bash for the buddies

8 WINE 'N' DINE

Growing pains

Beautiful DECAY

ASFB's first evening-length performance features 68- and 76-year-old dancers

SO

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Photos by Craig Turpin



Aspen Santa Fe Ballet presents "Beautiful Decay"

By Erica Robbie, Time Out Writer

Gregg Bielemeier can't help but tear up at certain moments during rehearsal for Aspen Santa Fe Ballet's upcoming production, *Beautiful Decay*. "I am aging, I am decaying, and that's what the piece is about. I can't ignore that," Bielemeier, who will turn 69 next month, said in an interview Tuesday. "When I'm on stage, it's a character, but it's also me. It's too real, but I love it."

Aspen Santa Fe Ballet opens its season Tuesday with a premiere of its first evening-length ballet, *Beautiful Decay*, choreographed by Nicolo Fonte. (See sidebar for details on the performance, which will run three times this summer).

"It seems to have a somber theme, which is about the cycle of life, but for me, this piece is really a life-affirming work that's full of joy and positivity and acceptance," Fonte said of the production. "We have to see our inherent beauty in every part of our lives and every moment moving forward. We're embracing the beauty of the process of aging, and ultimately, we have to accept that we won't be here forever. ... Well, I will. But not everyone else," he quipped.

Bielemeier and Hilary Cartwright, also an accomplished dancer at 76, star as the guest artists in *Beautiful Decay*.

In the almost 20 years since Fonte and ASFB began working together, it has commissioned and premiered eight of his ballets, according to ASFB marketing director Jessica Moore. "So, it's particularly special to now present what has become his signature work as our first evening-length ballet," she said.

Aspen Santa Fe Ballet's performances traditionally feature three different ballets by three different choreographers, rather than dedicating an entire evening to one piece. With the exception of its annual *Nutcracker* production, "the scale of work [with *Beautiful Decay*] is larger than anything we've tack-

led in the past," Moore said.

In the production notes, Fonte explains his draw to the piece: "The simple juxtaposition of pairing physically vigorous and experientially young dancers with the time-worn and hard-earned brilliance of elder dancers instantly created a compelling and irresistible dynamic for me to tap into."

At a rehearsal Tuesday afternoon, Cartwright smiled from ear to ear while moving her body among Bielemeier and a troupe of fresh-faced dancers.

Cartwright said she wanted to be part of the production because she believes in its message and Fonte's vision. "You ask what keeps me alive and up and fresh? It's that joy," she said. "You never lose the essence, that perfume, of what dance is about. It stays in you — it doesn't matter how old you are."

When Bielemeier and Cartwright talk about what keeps them dancing well into their 60s and 70s — in spite of hip replacements, injuries and aching joints — they exude a level of a passion that allows them to push through the pain and continually progress.

Put simply, they are happiest when they are dancing.

"Dance is the cure-all for me," said Bielemeier. "I'm never in pain when I'm dancing."

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IF YOU GO...

What: Aspen Santa Fe Ballet's "Beautiful Decay"

When: 8 p.m. on July 9, July 19 and Aug. 24

Where: Aspen District Theatre

Cost: Tickets range from \$36 to \$94 depending on seating.

Visit aspensantafeballet.com for tickets and more information.

Walk like a mummy at the Bash for the Buddies

BY CHAPMAN CROSKELL, TIME OUT WRITER



Mummies? In Aspen? This Friday, that's exactly what's happening. The 20th annual Bash for the Buddies is Friday evening. This year's theme is "Night at the Nile" and the goal of the bash to raise money for the Buddy Program.

The Buddy Program has been serving the Roaring Fork Community for over 40 years and it runs four programs, including one-on-one and group mentoring. The goal of the program is to support all members of the community through mentorship and other programs catered to helping out the valley's youth, or "Little Buddies."

This year's Bash will take place at the Merry-Go Ranch and is hosted by Lenny "Boogie" and Gail Weinglass. The bash will be honoring Mona Look-Mazza and Tony Mazza for "their many years of exemplary service and generosity to the Buddy Program," according to the event website. The event is annually attended by more than 500 patrons and

typically raises \$700,000 or more, in the one night, which is nearly two-thirds of the Buddy Program's annual operating budget.

The night kicks off with "Taste of Aspen," featuring many top local chefs and mixologists. Taste of Aspen also includes a silent auction and a seated dinner with a live auction.

Following the auctions and dinner, funk rock group Here Come the Mummies will be performing a live show for the crowd. The group is allegedly made up of 5,000-year-old Egyptian Mummies, but you'll have to go see them to verify.

Tickets are available online, and range from \$500 to \$2,500 for individuals and from \$10,000 to \$50,000 for tables. There is a \$175 ticket option for young professionals, but tickets may be limited. For more information about the event and the buddy program, head to buddyprogram.org/events/bash-buddies



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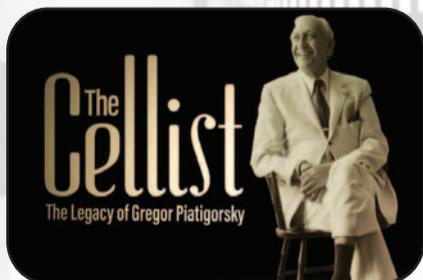
The series occurs on July 15, 22, and 28.



THE BIGGEST LITTLE FARM
Presented in association with Aspen Film
JULY 15 | 7:00 PM | \$20



MIKE WALLACE IS HERE
Presented in association with Aspen Film
JULY 22 | 7:00 PM | \$20



THE CELLIST: THE LEGACY OF GREGOR PIATIGORSKY
Presented in association with Aspen Film and Aspen Music Festival and School
JULY 28 | 7:00 PM | \$20

ALL EVENTS

PAEPCKE AUDITORIUM, 1000 N. THIRD STREET, ASPEN
ASPENSHOWTIX.COM | INFORMATION AT ASPENINSTITUTE.ORG

This program is made possible by generous donations from Leonard Lauder and Jane and Michael Eisner.



ASPEN SANTA FE BALLET

BEAUTIFUL DECAY

July 9 | 8:00pm

Aspen District Theatre

ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCES

July 19 & August 24

PHOTO: JAMES MCGREW

aspensantafeballet.com

