

(inside)



Connect with TWB's 2009.2010 Season

Also:

The Washington School of Ballet

Final Exams Move to
International Stage

Spring Gala *FORWARD*

Minimalist Design and
Maximum Style

**TWB Company Members Elizabeth Gaither
and Luis R. Torres** in Septime Webre's
The Great Gatsby, premiering in February 2010.

Photo: Steve Vaccariello

The quarterly newsletter of

thewashingtonballet

Septime Webre, Artistic Director | Russell P. Allen, Executive Director | Mary Day, Founder



From Septime

Welcome to **(inside)**, TWB's new quarterly newsletter. The title says it all. We want to bring you inside four times each year as our way of both thanking you for your support while sharing behind-the-scenes stories of what makes this one of the most dynamic ballet organizations in the nation.

In this issue alone:

- We give you a sneak peek of next season and I share my thinking on my new ballet/adaptation of F. Scott Fitzgerald's classic novel *The Great Gatsby*;
- We honor those who helped create two of our most special events of the year: the Women's Committee Wine Tasting in March and our Spring Gala *FORWARD* just this past May. These pages are full of more than smiling faces; they give you a snapshot into the generous individuals that make our work possible;
- We're also proud to tell you more about a year of great education and community engagement programs, introduce you more personally to members of our professional company and spotlight one of our corporate sponsors who gives back to the community through their support of TWB.

We hope you enjoy this inaugural issue of **(inside)** and that each issue brings you closer inside The Washington Ballet. I look forward to seeing you in the theater.

Sincerely,

Septime Webre
Artistic Director
The Washington Ballet

About The Washington Ballet

Originally founded as The Washington School of Ballet in 1944 by legendary ballet pioneer Mary Day and incorporated as a professional company in 1976, The Washington Ballet (TWB) is one of the pre-eminent ballet organizations in the United States. TWB built an international reputation presenting bold works by choreographers from around the world, and its first artist-in-residence, Choo-San Goh, set the tone for the company's emergence as a powerhouse among national companies. Contemporary pieces by Christopher Wheeldon, Mark Morris, Twyla Tharp and Nacho Duato expanded the repertoire, as did Neoclassical masterworks and fresh stagings of 19th century classics.

Guided by a dynamic Board of Directors and under the leadership of Artistic Director Septime Webre and Executive Director Russell Allen, TWB has embraced a three-part mission: ensuring excellence in its professional performance company; growing the next generation of dancers through its Washington School of Ballet; and serving the community in which it resides through robust community engagement programs, including DanceDC and TWB@THEARC. For more information, visit www.washingtonballet.org.

The Washington Ballet

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(inside)

is the quarterly newsletter of
The Washington Ballet

Newsletter design: emSpace

Performance

The Great Gatsby

From Page to Stage

One 2009-2010 Season highlight will surely be Septime Webre's world-premiere of *The Great Gatsby*. Running February 24-28, 2010 at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' Eisenhower Theater, *Gatsby* not only features new choreography but also a commissioned score based on jazz music from the early 20th century. In this conversation, Mr. Webre reveals a few more details about bringing "The Great American Novel" to life.

(inside): Why Gatsby?

SW: *The Great Gatsby* has been one of my favorite books since I was a teenager. It so perfectly distills the energy of The Jazz Age. It operates on so many levels, as both social commentary and a moving love story. The soundtrack for the era is also incredibly danceable, and there is such physicality suggested in Fitzgerald's prose. Additionally, the "grand sweep" of the epic love story is perfect for the ballet idiom.

(inside): How do you begin the process of bringing this novel to life?

SW: Returning to the source was the most important step for me. Over the last few months, I've re-read *The Great Gatsby* several times, discovering new ideas each time. The second step is now distilling these ideas, not expanding on them, so that the story is told seamlessly and with clarity.

(inside): Tell us about the sets and costumes.

SW: We will be renting lavish sets and costumes from Pittsburgh Ballet. The sets are designed by renowned British stage designer Peter Farmer. Hence, the production will look like a million bucks.

(inside): How are you collaborating with the musicologist?

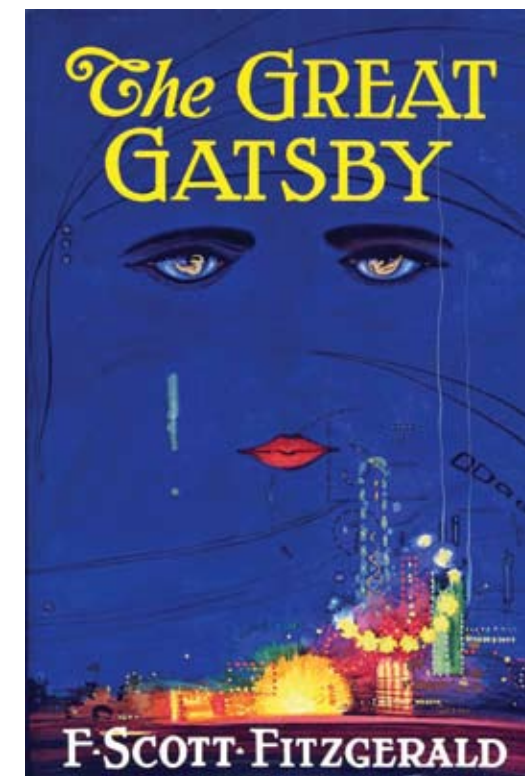
SW: The musicologist is Bill Novick, an early 20th century Jazz expert who is nationally recognized. He and I are compiling Jazz songs from the era and telling the story of Gatsby through that score. It includes the music of Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Willy "the Lion" Smith and many others.

(inside): How much are the dancers a part of the creative process?

SW: The dancers and I are equal partners in the creative process. I come to the studio with ideas and structure, but together we create the steps.

(inside): What do you hope your audiences will take away from *The Great Gatsby*?

SW: I hope audiences have a thrilling dance experience and are swept away by the story, the dance and the music. I hope they are inspired by this romantic tale and thought-provoking themes.



"The dancers and I are equal partners in the creative process. I come to the studio with ideas and structure, but together we create the steps."

—Septime Webre



Above: TWB Executive Director **Russell P. Allen** introduces the live auction.

Wine Tasting

On March 12, 2009, TWB's Women's Committee hosted the fifth annual wine tasting and auction event, Un Ballo in Maschera, at the Meridian International Center. Staci Capuano and Beth Kohlhoss served as co-chairs of this year's Venetian-themed event, which featured wines from many Italian regions, live and silent auctions and a candy bar. The event raised more than \$40,000 for TWB's community engagement programs.



Middle: (from left) **Charles Kohlhoss**, with event chairs **Beth Kohlhoss** and **Staci Capuano**
Bottom: **Yolanda Mamone** (with paddle) celebrates with other auction revelers.

Wine Tasting Photos by: Theo Kossenos



Top Right: Gala Chairs **Darryl Carter** and **Mary Haft**

Right: **Mary Haft** and a student from The Washington Ballet @ THEARC

Below: Board Chair **Sylvia de Leon**



Above: (left to right) **Roxanne Casscells**, **Maggie Sheedy**, **Mayra Addison** and **Linda Courie**

Left: (left to right) Advisory Board Member **Kay Kendall**, **Jack Davies** and TWB Artistic Director **Septime Webre**.



Above: **Aimee and Robert Lehrman**

Right: **Saki Kawakita** and students from The Washington Ballet @ THEARC.



Event photos: Stephen Baranovics

give



Top Left: Interior Designer and Gala Chair **Darryl Carter**'s make-over of the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium

Top Right: (left to right) **General John Altenburg**, **Jonathan Jordan** and **Diane Altenburg**

Above Right: (left to right) **Zachary Hackstock**, Women's Committee Member **Pat Skantze** and **Amanda Cobb**



Far Left: **Shigeko and Tim Bork**
Left: (left to right) **Jean-Marie Fernandez**, **Calvin Fong** and **Beth Kohlhoss**



Above: (left to right) **Donald Vieira**, **Deneen Howell** and **Charles Grazioli**

Right: **Sona Kharatian** and **Jared Nelson** performing Nacho Duato's *Cor Perdut*

Gala photos: Stephen Baranovics



Spring Gala 2009

Friends and supporters of TWB celebrated Septime Webre's 10th Anniversary Season as artistic director at this year's Spring Gala *FORWARD*, May 9, 2009 at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium. Co-chairs Darryl Carter and Mary Haft hosted the elegant evening, which featured Mr. Carter's minimalist designs—including a space lined with dancers in silhouette and a chic white-on-white color palette—and the premiere of Ms. Haft's institutional video, *Inside TWB*. Guests enjoyed the sounds of the band Free Spirit, delicious Bacardi cocktails and a performance of Nacho Duato's *Cor Perdut* by TWB company members Sona Kharatian and Jared Nelson.

Dancers and Donors Create Powerful Duet

Philanthropists Key Ingredient To Advances

For most students, studying for a test is a stressful rite of passage that teaches time management, mastery of a subject and proof that a teacher's knowledge has been successfully imparted as part of a broader education. But few students pay thousands of dollars to take an exam in front of hundreds of spectators where the grade can help launch a career. Thanks to the generosity of more than 20 donors, 13 students at The Washington School of Ballet (TWSB) had the chance to see their hard work and poise pay off in precisely that way.

TWSB students prepared for both the regional and national finals of the 2009 Youth America Grand Prix (YAGP), and their efforts reaped dividends in both competitions.

“We knew we couldn't let our young people miss this opportunity.”

—Kee Juan Han

YAGP is an international student ballet and contemporary dance competition held annually in New York City where talented dance students ages 9-19 compete for scholarships to leading dance schools around the world. Judges representing prestigious ballet companies and instructional institutions from around the globe select the best performers to award scholarships to further their dance education. TWSB Artistic Director Septime Webre and TWSB Director Kee Juan Han have frequently judged on this prestigious panel.

Exemplary students are also given the opportunity to secure contracts with international dance companies. To qualify for YAGP, a student must first perform at a regional competition where the top 10 are then selected to move on to the finals in New York. Students may compete as soloists or in group collaborations.

TWSB pre-professional students swept nearly every major award at the 2009 regional competition in Torrington, Connecticut the weekend of March 6, including the Outstanding School Award, the Outstanding



Choreographer Award for teacher Carlos Valcarcel, first place for a large ensemble piece and all-around Grand Prix for student Misako Mori. In addition, Robert Mulvey, Nayon Iovino and Dai Sakai swept first, second and third places for the Male Senior Age Division Classical Ballet category, and Amber Lewis won third place in the Female Classical category. Boysie Dikobe and Carolina Tavez placed in the top 12 for the event and were invited to compete at the annual international competition held in New York City.

While the results were exciting for the TWB family, it also presented a specific



Photos: Students of The Washington School of Ballet and School Director Kee Juan Han by Stephen Baranovics

challenge: it was going to cost more than \$10,000 to send the students to New York City for the finals, a mighty sum for the organization and its dancers, many of whom are already stretched financially to study at the School.

“We knew we couldn't let our young people miss this opportunity,” Han said, “but we had less than a month to find the money to make this possible.”

Enter the Washington, DC-based S&R Foundation, which has been a generous supporter of The Washington Ballet prior to the competition. S&R agreed to issue a \$5,000, \$1-\$1 challenge grant, which provided the much-needed momentum to raise the additional \$5,000. The S&R Foundation Challenge grant spurred another 20 donors to give gifts between \$50 and \$1,000.

“The S&R Foundation was pleased to help The Washington Ballet in such an important competition,” said Marianne Chaconas, the foundation's vice president. “The Washington Ballet YAGP competitors were a very talented, deserving group. They epitomize the young artists we are committed to supporting. We wanted to make sure that these skilled dancers had the opportunity to compete to help further their dance careers.”

engage

learn

» Page 11

DanceDC Pushes Beyond Literacy Work

Program Begins Tailored Approach in 10th Year

Since its inception in 1999, The Washington Ballet's DanceDC program has provided integrated dance and literacy training to more than 10,000 students enrolled in the District of Columbia Public Schools. As it surpasses two major “10” markers—10 years since it was founded by Artistic Director Septime Webre and more than 10,000 young people served—the program has received a facelift to better meet the needs of DCPS teachers while adding its first-ever program-wide performance at the Ballet's Anacostia campus.

DanceDC has always used The Washington Ballet's unique integrated dance/language arts curriculum, Dancing With Words, to help children write poems, read folk tales and keep journals to develop their verbal and written skills; study about dance leaders, particularly African-American and Latino artists; and engage in creative movement work.

However, this year the program expanded its curriculum to add in-depth learning created through collaboration of dance teachers and the classroom teachers. The lessons focused on themes that students were already working on and needed to master to meet the standards of learning for the academic year. Students at J.O. Wilson Elementary School worked with Native American themes, students at Malcolm X Elementary School worked with weather themes and students at Turner at Green Elementary School worked on the life cycle of a butterfly. DanceDC instructor Saki Kawakita's Bruce Monroe students, created movements using a book entitled *The Rollercoaster*.

“There has been so much discussion about the ways that DCPS is trying to re-energize the education of young people in the District,” said Katrina Toews, Director of TWB@THEARC. “We thought it was time to augment DanceDC to provide as much support as possible for the hard-working teachers in our city's schools.”

In addition to the expanded curriculum, a first-ever spring dance performance by participating DanceDC schools was held on Saturday, April 18 at THEARC Theatre. The program included Bruce-Monroe at Parkview, John Eaton, J.O. Wilson, Malcolm X and Turner at Green elementary schools, as well as students from the SE campus of The Washington School of Ballet. Additional performances by TWB's Studio Company members wowed the crowd with their technique.



Photos: DanceDC and TWB@THEARC students by Stephen Baranovics

“... we [know] how transformative an experience all people have when they come together in a celebration of the arts and learning.”

— Katrina Toews

Toews said the performance component not only allowed participants to demonstrate new-found skills but also did a great deal to foster community among participating schools. “We believe that there is a great deal of power in individual expression, but we also know how transformative an experience all people have when they come together in a celebration of the arts and learning.”

For additional information on DanceDC or any of The Washington Ballet's community engagement programs, please visit www.washingtonballet.org.

A Perfect Pas de Deux

Two of TWB's longstanding company members, Sona Kharatian and Jonathan Jordan, were featured in a variety of compelling pieces this past season. This happily married couple is now looking forward to a relaxing summer that includes traveling and visiting with family and friends.

(inside): What is your best memory of the 2008.2009 Season?

Sona and Jonathan: For us, the best memory of the season was the company tour to Georgia. It was such a great time, and it was a way for us all to bond! We had so much fun around the camp fire. We also enjoyed the day when Nacho Duato, Christopher Wheeldon and Mark Morris all came to work with us before *Genius2*. To have them all at the ballet at the same time was cool!

Jonathan: I also loved performing James in *La Sylphide*. It was something special for me.

Sona: I loved performing "Kick Girl" in *Rubies*, *Cor Perdut*, Eddie Liang's piece, *Wunderland* and Tiger Lily in *Peter Pan*.

(inside): What are you most looking forward to next season?

Jonathan: For me, it would have to be *Don Quixote* and revisiting *Cor Perdut* should also be fun.

Sona: I think both *Bolero(+)* and *Genius3* sound interesting.

(inside): What do you do in your spare time?

Sona: I like to hang with our kitties. I also like to read and watch movies. We both love to travel to Armenia to visit my family. We have great friends in the company and even when we are off we love to just chill together.

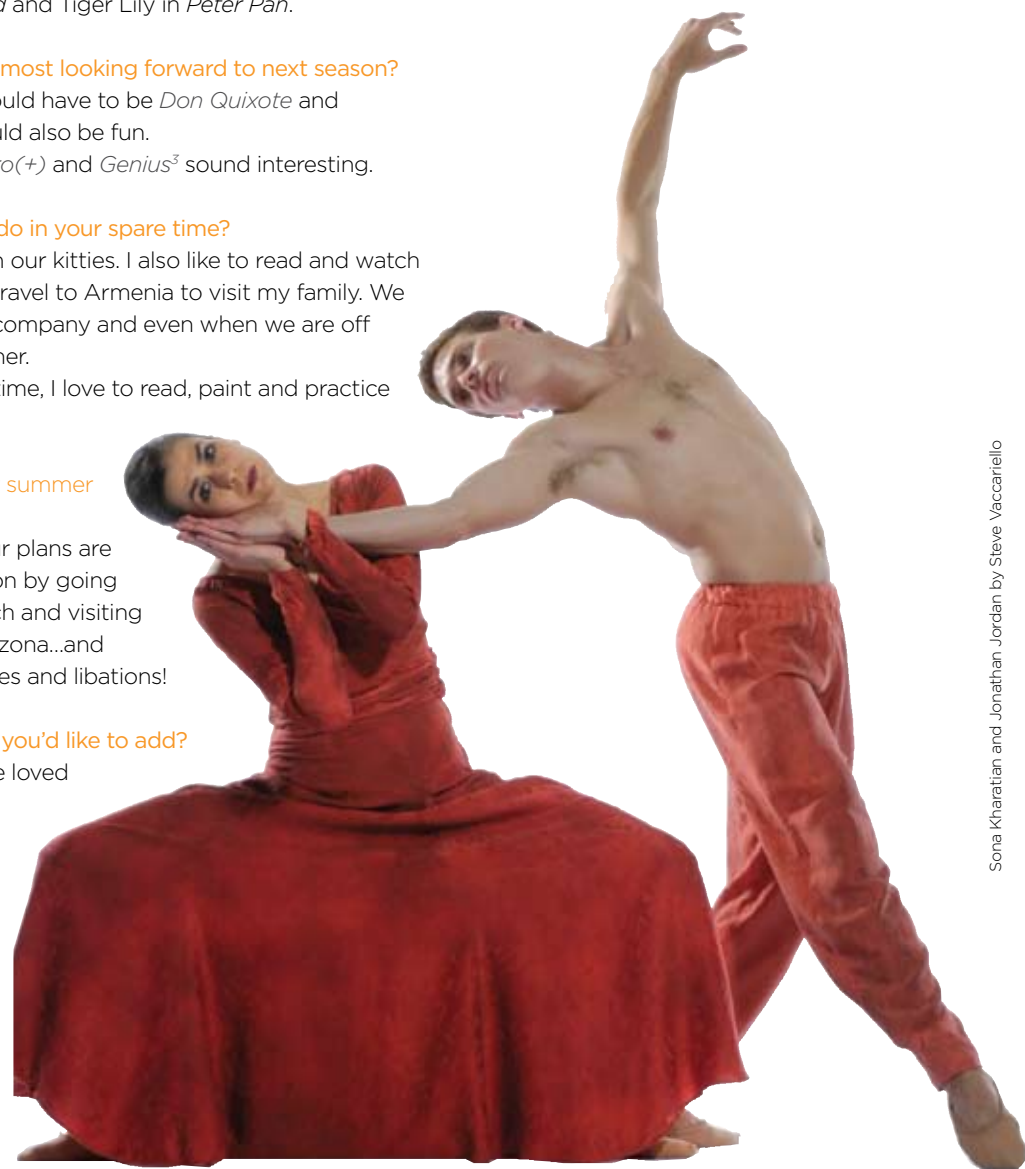
Jonathan: In my spare time, I love to read, paint and practice martial arts.

(inside): What are your summer plans?

Sona and Jonathan: Our plans are to recover from this season by going on some trips to the beach and visiting family in Armenia and Arizona...and plenty of movies, massages and libations!

(inside): Anything else you'd like to add?

Sona and Jonathan: We loved this last season. It was full of great challenges that enabled us to grow as artists...We are thankful to have a calling such as this. The repertoire this year was fantastic, and it looks as though next year is going to be even better!



Sona Kharatian and Jonathan Jordan by Steve Vecchiarillo

"To have [Nacho Duato, Christopher Wheeldon and Mark Morris] all at the ballet at the same time was cool!"

—Sona Kharatian and Jonathan Jordan

look

up close



Photo: Corey Landolt with Studio Company Members by Cade Martin/Design Army

Ten Years in Wonderland

"Ballet is more than a job. It is a passion. It is like breathing...you need it to survive!"

—Morgann Frederick

In Fall 2009, The Washington Ballet releases a commemorative book that celebrates Septime Webre's landmark 10 years as artistic director, entitled *Wonderland*. With creative and art design donated by Design Army, the book is a tribute to the decade of artistic leadership and creative daring exhibited by Mr. Webre since his appointment in 1999. The concept of the book is derived from a quotation from the classic Lewis Carroll tale, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*: "And what is the use of a book," thought Alice, "without pictures or conversations?"

The first half of the book's content is comprised of stunning photographs (read: pictures) by Cade Martin that re-create scenes from some of the most beloved ballets choreographed by Mr. Webre over the years including: *Peter Pan*, *Juanita y Alicia*, *Carmen* and *Romeo and Juliet*. The photographs feature TWB Company and Studio Company members, as well as The Washington School of Ballet students, in varying locations around the District: Mr. Webre's neighborhood featuring his own taxidermy, the U.S. National Arboretum and the Meridian International Center.

The other half of the content features photographs by TWB company member Brianne Bland that illustrate the creative process, the grueling rehearsal and glamorous performance aspects of a beautiful, polished ballet. This section also includes interviews conducted with the dancers of The Washington Ballet (read: conversations) that detail why they dance, how their lives have benefited from ballet and why they can't imagine life without their art form.

This combination of pictures and conversations makes for a very useful book, indeed.

Wonderland will be released in conjunction with TWB's 2009.2010 season: *Connect*, and will be available for purchase through The Washington Ballet.



Photo: Rui Huang and Lucas Segovia by Cade Martin/Design Army

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**From the
Executive Director**

Dear Friends,

As we close another incredible season here, we look back fondly on all our successes in 2008.2009: We achieved record sales with both *Highland Fling* and *Peter Pan*. We hosted internationally recognized artists including Mark Morris, Edwaard Liang, Patricia McBride and others. Our students were able to compete and place in the international Youth America Grand Prix, and we were able to serve hundreds of new students through an increase in our educational offerings. All of this was possible because of your support, and as we prepare for a new season, we ask you, our loyal audience, to re-connect with us and ensure our offerings reach even more people next year.

If you're not a subscriber, we encourage you to become one now and secure your seats for a stellar upcoming season. You'll enjoy a host of benefits including great savings and so much more. Please also consider making a contribution to help us have a strong beginning to the 2009.2010 Season. Ticket sales only cover 50% of our expenses. The remainder comes from contributions from people, such as you, who value and want to support The Washington Ballet's mission.

Without you, The Washington Ballet could not entertain, educate and enrich. Thank you again for your support. We look forward to seeing you in 2009.2010!

Sincerely,

Russell P. Allen
Executive Director
The Washington Ballet

people

partners

When The Fairfax opened in 1927, distinguished guests were drawn to its stately elegance and willing to part with the extravagant outrageous sum of \$4 per day for a double occupancy suite with a parlor, bedroom and full bath.

Now the recently renovated Fairfax at Embassy Row is the home for some of TWB's most important clients: the artists who travel from across the world to work on productions each year, making The Fairfax one of TWB's most important corporate partners.

"Our partnership with The Washington Ballet allows us to celebrate one of the most important arts institutions in the city while showcasing the one-of-a-kind hospitality guests discover at The Fairfax at Embassy Row and in our renowned Jockey Club Restaurant," said Bob Schofield, Managing Director and General Manager.

The partnership also affords TWB subscribers a special celebratory prix fixe dinner in the hotel's legendary Jockey Club restaurant (available for reservations between 5:30-6:30 p.m. on performance evenings).

"The Fairfax at Embassy Row is a model partnership," said TWB Executive Director Russell P. Allen. "We are grateful that this special Washington institution allows us to spend more of our resources on producing a vibrant season for our patrons."

**"Our partnership
with The Washington
Ballet allows us to
celebrate one of the
most important arts
institutions in the
city..."**
—Bob Schofield

» From Page 6

"This was an amazing sign of support for these talented young people," Han added. "To attend a competition like this is so important to their careers. To be sent to New York with the love and support of so many people in the TWB family provided an extra lift and made them feel valued."

The investment was worth the effort. Naylor Lovino received the bronze medal for the Senior Men's Division, Boiesie Dikobe placed 6th overall while Misako Mori captured the Mary Day Award for Artistry, a national YAGP Award given in honor of the TWB founder and ballet education icon. Other New York City YAGP finalists included Carolina Tavaréz, Ayano Kimura, Spencer Badesch and Robert Mulvey.

"This competition was a fantastic opportunity for our students to exhibit their talent and skill," Han said. "No matter the outcome, having the courage and discipline to step on the path of achieving a goal makes them all winners."

These ballet students are not only incredibly talented, they come from all over the world to study at TWSB. Almost every student who won a major award at the regional competition is from another country; Japan, Australia, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Spain and South Africa are among the nations represented by TWSB students.



Quintessential
Elegance



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Photo: Sona Kharatian by Steve Vaccariello

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2009.2010
SEASON

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Don Quixote

The Kennedy Center
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October 14-18, 2009



The Nutcracker

THEARC
December 3-5, 2009
Warner Theatre
December 10-27, 2009



The Great Gatsby

The Kennedy Center
Eisenhower Theater
February 24-28, 2010

Bolero (+)

The Harman Center
Sidney Harman Hall
April 14-18, 2010

**Shoogie, The Tail
of my Wiener Dog**

The Washington Ballet's
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Genius³

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