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Arts San Antonio announces 20th anniversary lineup

By Deborah Martin Updated 08:43 a.m., Monday, April 23, 2012



The Joffrey Ballet's re-creation of the original production of "The Rite of Spring" is a highlight of the upcoming Arts San Antonio season. Photo: Joffrey Ballet / SA

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Arts San Antonio is marking its 20th anniversary next season with a dance-heavy lineup that also includes some music and a little theatrical kung-fu.

That's all in keeping with the group's mission to present "globally significant" artists, said John Toohey, Arts San Antonio's president and executive director.

The group also strives to present art forms that aren't offered in abundance by other presenters in town.

"We believe the best way to increase the sophistication of performing arts audiences is to present exposure experiences," Toohey said.

Following are the season's offerings (unless otherwise indicated, performances will be at Lila Cockrell Theatre):

Ballet Folklórico de México de Amalia Hernández, Oct. 20-21: The dance troupe - which Toohey called "one of the world's great folklórico companies" - has paid frequent visits to San Antonio. Because of its significance and popularity, Arts San Antonio decided to present two

nights of performances.

Shaolin Warriors, Oct. 30, Laurie Auditorium: The company consists of monks who will perform stylized martial arts: "The entire evening is choreographed," Toohey said.

Chucho Valdés and the Afro-Cuban Messengers Quartet, Nov. 17: The New York Times called Valdés "one of the world's great virtuosic pianists," Toohey noted. The ensemble is based in Cuba.

The Romeros, Dec. 13, Charline McCombs Empire Theatre: The acclaimed classical guitarists will perform a holiday concert with the Concierto Málaga String Orchestra.

"The Nutcracker," Dec. 21-23: The holiday ballet is an Arts San Antonio staple. For the past few years, the organization has presented a company led by choreographer Paul Mejia, who once danced under George Balanchine at New York City Ballet; this year, he will be bringing his new company, Mejia Ballet International. The San Antonio Metropolitan Ballet will also contribute to the production.

"The Rite of Spring," March 8: This is the biggie of the 2012-13 season. The Joffrey Ballet is paying tribute to the 100th anniversary of the seminal piece with a production that recreates Vaslav Nijinsky's original choreography and Nicholas Roerich's original scenery and costumes.

In addition, there will be a string of events - dubbed "The Joffrey Experience" - around the performance, including a master class, a cast party and reception, a school visit and a dinner at the McNay Art Museum.

1Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, April 11: The renowned company is known for presentations in which male dancers play all the parts. The performances are funny, Toohey said, but they're also rooted in top-flight dance technique.

Bejart Ballet Lausanne, May 4, 2013: The famed Swiss dance company also will be touring a production of "The Rite of Spring" in honor of its centennial. Though Toohey thought it might be interesting to offer a different interpretation of the piece, he ultimately decided that audiences might want to see something different. And so, the company will be dancing "Bolero," inspired by and danced with Ravel's piece.

The company will be bringing 60 dancers; Arts San Antonio will be hunting regionally for an additional 20 male dancers.

Season packages, costing \$52 to \$116, go on sale this week. Call 210-226-2891 or visit artssa.org for more information.

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