

ADVICE

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"My mother told me, 'There will be times when you feel wronged or wounded by



Knapp

what someone has said or done. It will be tempting to respond in kind, but remember this, I have never regretted being gracious.' It has helped me many times throughout my life to remember those words and not say something I later regretted. I have impressed that upon my children and they have quoted it when they've gone through difficult times."

—KENS anchorwoman Deborah Knapp, mother of grown children Alicia and Austin and grandmother of two

"My mother told me that

"Someone is always watching. No matter what you do, I'll always find out." Love and behold, I don't think I've ever gone anywhere when I didn't run into someone I knew or who knew my mother. ... While she may have considered that more of a threat, it was a pretty good piece of advice nonetheless."

—Melanie Cawthon, outreach & development vice president of Reaching Maximum Independence, a nonprofit that assists adults with disabilities.

"When I became a mother, my own mom gave me the single best piece of advice any first-time parent should hear: 'Save your sanity and put your kids to bed early.' It worked like a charm. For years, I would put my son to bed at 7:30 p.m., and those precious evening hours to myself would make me a better person, spouse and mother, not to mention give my kid the rest he needed. It's

the only advice I tell friends who are expecting their first child."

—Registered dietitian nutritionist and fitness blogger Claudia Zapata



Cuba

"(My mother) gave me a Time Life series of books on various religions, encouraging me to expand my appreciation of different beliefs."

—Author and educator Nan Cuba

"First thing that comes to mind is 'We don't discuss fights and finances outside the house.' ... It has guided me for years — personally and professionally."

—Lady Romano, senior vice president, agency relations, United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County

Compiled by Steve Bennett, Renee A. Guzman, Jeanne Jankie, Richard A. Martin and Deborah Martin

DANCE PREVIEW

Ballet boards 'Streetcar'

By Jasmina Wellinghoff
FOR THE EXPRESS-NEWS

The great choreographer George Balanchine famously declared that "there are no sisters-in-law in ballet," by which he meant to say that narrative complexity is difficult to translate into dance.

He was right, of course, but that has not stopped the Glasgow-based Scottish Ballet from trying and, according to reviews, brilliantly succeeding in turning one of the most iconic plays of the 20th century, Tennessee Williams' "A Streetcar Named Desire," into a vibrant full-length story ballet.

Thanks to Arts San Antonio, San Antonians will have a chance to see the award-winning production Tuesday at the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts. The Alamo City is one of only five U.S. cities on the tour.

"Every three to four years we do an entirely new, from-scratch production," said Christopher Hampson, the Scottish Ballet's artistic director, who is continuing the company's legacy of staging shows based on strong classical technique but "with a contemporary attitude." The latter includes expanding the repertoire with new themes and subject matter. In addition to "Streetcar," the company recently turned Arthur Miller's "The Crucible" into a short ballet.

For "Streetcar," Hampson's predecessor, Ashley Page, commissioned composer Peter Salem to write an original, jazz-flavored score and the Belgian-Colombian choreographer



Courtesy photo

The Scottish Ballet Company will perform "A Streetcar Named Desire" at the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts.

Annabelle Lopez Ochoa to create the choreography, which is a hybrid of ballet and jazz dancing. Ochoa then collaborated with theater director Nancy Meckler on the storytelling aspect.

"The key to the success of the ballet is the collaboration between Nancy and Annabelle," Hampson said. "They worked well together. The director brought real focus to the story and helped the dancers to invest themselves into their characters."

Though the essence of the tale has not been changed, the order of presentation has. In Williams' play, the audience learns about lead character Blanche DuBois' background slowly in various revelations and through bits and pieces that Stanley Kowalski discovers about her sordid past. But like sisters-in-law, such things are hard to convey without words. Thus, the creative team devoted the initial part of the show to Blanche's life before she arrives in New Orleans to live with the Kowalskis.

The ballet opens with Blanche *en pointe* dancing by herself in front of Belle

Reve, the family home she will eventually lose, and then proceeds to show her wedding, her rejection of her homosexual husband, his suicide, and her guilt over his death. Also shown is her sister's Stella departure from home, which leaves Blanche alone to deal with their parents' deaths and money problems.

"This change allows us to see Blanche from a different point of view," Hampson said. "She comes across as a more sympathetic character."

And since ballets are also expected to have large group scenes that audiences love, the staging includes crowd events — such as guys bowling or people dancing in a nightclub — that are only referred to verbally in the play. The conflicts and sexual violence in the Kowalskis' home are also presented "without a dash of sugar-coating," as the British newspaper *The Daily Telegraph* put it.

Knowledge of the play is not necessary to enjoy the ballet, Hampson said. In the U.K., where Williams' drama is not as well known as in the U.S., people always get the story.

"That's how we know we have been successful," he said.

"A Streetcar Named Desire" can be seen at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday in the H-E-B Performance Hall at the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts, 100 Auditorium Circles. Tickets range \$29 to \$100 at the box office; 210-223-8624; or at tobin.tobincenter.org.

Jasmina Wellinghoff writes about the arts

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