

BALLET SAN JOSE AWARDED GRANT FROM NEW YORK CHOREOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE

Ballet San Jose has been awarded a Fellowship Initiative grant from the New York Choreographic Institute, an affiliate of New York City Ballet, to support the development of new choreography in a studio setting. The choreographer will be **Dalia Rawson**, Ballet Mistress of Ballet San Jose School and for 15 years, a member of the professional ballet company. **Peter Martins**, Founder and Artistic Director of the Institute, states: "The Fellowship is meant to help ballet companies to create an environment in which a choreographer can develop ideas without the pressure of stage production. The Institute is committed to classical choreographers who will be creating works for the future."



Dalia Rawson, Photo by Scott Belding

Dalia Rawson performed with Ballet San Jose from 1991-2006, dancing principal roles in *The Nutcracker*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Rodeo*, *Coppélia*, *Graduation Ball*, and *Who Cares?* among others. Rawson is currently Ballet Mistress of the Ballet San Jose SCHOOL and Rehearsal Assistant for Ballet San Jose. Her choreography has been performed by both Ballet San Jose and the BSJ School. Rawson's ballet *Fém* debuted to critical and popular acclaim at the San Jose Center for the Performing Arts as part of BSJ's 2008/2009 season, and her ballet for sixty students from all levels of the Ballet San Jose SCHOOL, *Invitation to the Dance*, charmed audiences at the California Theater in 2011. In order to support the creation of new works that fuse classical ballet technique with a contemporary aesthetic, Rawson founded

[THE RAWSON PROJECT CONTEMPORARY BALLET](#) in 2010. For this company she has created a repertory of award-winning ballets that have been performed locally and nationally at choreographic festivals, competitions, showcases, community events and charity fundraisers.



Ballet San Jose dancers Keira Schwartz and Damir Emric performing with The Rawson Project Contemporary Ballet, Photo by Doug Speidel

“I am grateful to BSJ Artistic Director **Dennis Nahat** for recommending me for this prestigious Fellowship,” said Rawson, “and am personally thrilled to have received it; it is a great honor. The dancers and I are even more excited about the work that the Fellowship will facilitate! This Fellowship affords me a week and a half of full rehearsal days with nine Ballet San Jose dancers, all to workshop new movement without the pressure of a deadline or upcoming performance. The luxury of all this time to experiment and create is extremely valuable, and I plan to make the most of these hours in the studio. My goal is to incorporate improvisation into our creative process and to combine floor work and acrobatics with classical ballet in order to push the dancers and myself beyond our usual vocabulary. I plan to showcase the dancers’ virtuosity and

artistry, and to discover new ways of moving and new ways of expressing ideas and emotion through movement and line. I hope to eventually develop the movement we create in this Fellowship Workshop into a story ballet based on a fairy tale told to me as a child by my Lithuanian mother called *Egle, Queen of Serpents*. This fairy tale delves into human-to-reptile and human-to-tree shape-shifting, as well as themes of love, isolation, longing, betrayal, and violence stemming from fear or hatred of the unknown. My working title for the new ballet is *No Longer Human*.”

The Fellowship Initiative grant in the amount of \$13,545.35 will go toward dancer’s payroll, worker’s compensation insurance, dance shoes and a choreography fee. Workshop dates are from October 4th through 14th at the Ballet San Jose studios. Video samplings and interviews throughout the process will be posted on the Ballet San Jose Facebook page at www.facebook.com/BalletSJ and on the company’s YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/balletsj.

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