

Turnout

Donor Events for Your Calendar!

July 2020

Dear NBS Supporters,

I'm pleased to share your latest edition of Turnout, which has evolved over the past several months to be a valuable method of sharing how NBS is navigating our unprecedented and ever-changing circumstances—you will find updates on several key program areas in the enclosed document. However, this update is particularly important, as I want to go beyond our regular programmatic updates to engage you in a conversation about how Canada's National Ballet School is listening, learning, engaging and acting to heal the rifts caused by centuries of systemic racism.



At Canada's National Ballet School, we are committed to ensuring equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), and our work in developing EDI policy, programming and practices has been underway for many years. Access and inclusion are at the heart of all of our programs. Through our community dance programs, we work with and learn from choreographers who represent different backgrounds, dance styles and lived experiences—especially for the creation of our annual Sharing Dance Choreography. This is also true of the communities across Canada in which we build collaborative partnerships—from Toronto, ON, to Lac La Ronge, SK, to Fort Providence, NWT, to Vancouver, BC and hundreds more—that help people of all ages, abilities and aspirations pursue their fullest potential through dance. By increasing access to the joy of dance and working with a broad spectrum of Canadian communities like these ones, we also build pathways for passionate young dancers to take their talent as far as they can.

NBS is also developing a collaborative strategy, both with Canada's dance sector and with fellow national arts training organizations, to achieve a shared goal: create systemic change that removes barriers and increases access and inclusion in training at NBS and other arts organizations across the country. These are just a few examples of NBS' many initiatives.

In the past few weeks, we have seen a groundswell of support from within the NBS community—students, parents, alumni, donors—who have reached out to share their emotional responses to recent events, to seek context on the School's EDI work, and to understand what more the school can and should be doing.

Systemic change is a marathon; never a sprint. And while ballet and the world as a whole have a long way to go, we are confident that NBS' work, planning and actions now are leading us to a time when our students and staff will be reflective of the full diversity of Canada.

As a donor, you are an integral member of the NBS community and this conversation. The School welcomes your engagement, and I hope, as always, that this edition of Turnout will help you feel engaged with both our day-to-day activities and long-term strategic vision.

With sincere thanks for your ongoing support and participation in the NBS community,

Mavis Staines | Artistic Director and CEO

Fall in Love with Ballet

Whether you are a ballet connoisseur or watching a performance for the first time, NBS invites you to *Fall in Love with Ballet*. This newly launched online resource features performances and supporting materials curated and created to provide a glimpse, through the lens of young artists, into the beautiful world of ballet. Watch full-length performances by NBS Professional Ballet Students, explore behind-the-scenes content featuring choreographers and artists, and access educational materials that deepen your appreciation of each performance. From the spark of inspiration through to the final performance, *Fall in Love with Ballet* covers it all.

<http://www.nbs-enb.ca/loveballet>



Graduation Update

NBS graduation ceremonies may look much different this year, but their resounding sense of celebration, achievement and pride remains steadfast. We are pleased to share the following highlights:

Teacher Training Program

On June 18, twelve students graduated from NBS' Teacher Training Program: six from the program's three-year diploma program (from Ontario, Nova Scotia, Japan, and the USA); two from the Professional Dancers' Program for former professionals; and four from the one-year certificate program.

A theme of the graduation ceremony highlighted the importance of life-long learning and the impressive dedication, positivity and adaptability that this class demonstrated in recent months—all traits that will take them far in the world.

Alumni speaker, Dominique Turcotte, spoke to the graduates, sharing her thoughts about the arts being necessary to the human soul. She emphasized the important role that dance teachers play in the lives of their students, nurturing and inspiring both dancers and their families. She encouraged students to embrace learning over their entire lives, particularly as the art and science of dance evolves.

Professional Ballet Program

On June 26, 25 students graduated from NBS' Professional Ballet Program, representing a senior class that has risen to an extraordinary occasion and displayed remarkable bravery, adaptability, and grace in the face of adversity. Their next steps will take them many places: 18 students plan to pursue further dance training in post-secondary programs, 5 have undertaken contracts with professional companies as apprentices or company members, and 2 will join academic programs at post-secondary institutions.

Mavis Staines, Artistic Director and CEO, commented, "I am particularly struck by these students' passionate dedication to bringing positive change to the world, and their desire to ensure that all young people with a passion for dance have the same opportunity as they did to pursue and nurture their talent. The class of 2020 held these convictions at the start of the school year, and they have only grown more assured as the world has faced unprecedented change. It is with profound optimism and hope that I watch these young artists and citizens embark on the next stage of their journeys."

An update on programming at NBS' campus:

Our strategy for re-opening NBS' campus is constantly evolving to take into account the latest provincial and federal guidelines, and lessons learned from international ballet schools that have already returned to training students. Our priority is to re-open the School gradually and responsibly, moving in planned phases and progressing only as appropriate. The latest updates to this plan include:

- NBS' Residence facilities will remain closed in July but our hope is to welcome a small number of senior students into our Residence as of Aug. 3rd.
 - Toronto based students will return to NBS for on-site training, hopefully as of July 13th. The student and Artistic Staff will be divided into two groups, with junior students in the morning and senior students in the afternoon. All other students will continue to receive intensified daily on-line training through Zoom.
 - On-site training has been designed to keep students consistently in the same cohorts, allowing for a systematic approach to sanitization, tracking, and testing.
- *On-site and on-line training for current students will run until Friday, Aug. 28th to help the students get into the best possible condition.*
- NBS' audition processes will adopt new procedures, including limited weekend studio time and online assessments.
 - The start of the new school year is tentatively planned for September 14th.

While visitor access will likely remain restricted into the new school year, we hope to find opportunities to welcome you and our community of supporters back to the School as soon as it is safe to do so. Until then, we will continue to keep you at the heart of the School's life by sharing important news and updates.



World Ballet School Day – July 7

World Ballet School Day (WBSD) connects the next generation of young professional dance artists with young people from around the world. Created by students for students, this inaugural event is a platform for young artists in training to share a message of solidarity through the language of dance and ballet. Take a look behind the scenes at some of the world's leading schools and find out what it means to train at a professional level with talks, rehearsal and performance footage filmed both before and during lockdown. The event will also feature the world premiere of a new work by renowned choreographer Didy Veldman. Visit www.worldballetschoolday.com to learn more.



Baycrest NBS Sharing Dance Seniors – At Home

Dance your way through the summer – at home! Baycrest and Canada's National Ballet School (NBS) are pleased to offer a free six-week dance course as a pilot this summer, which can be accessed from your home or wherever you are. Through its artistry and physicality, dance supports overall physical, emotional and social wellbeing. Regular dancing also helps develop skills and confidence, while enriching your day-to-day life through creative expression. Classes are free during this pilot phase, and we will gather feedback from participants for future iterations. Register now at <https://nbcc.brightspace.com/> and begin weekly classes on July 20.

Thank You!

Your generous financial support will help talented young artists achieve their dreams of professional dance training, and inspire people of all ages and abilities to enrich their lives through dance.