

# ENTERTAINMENT

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2014

## Group pushes the boundaries of dance

**BALLET:** Artistic director Molnar's fresh ideas were a big reason Kirsten Wicklund decided to return home

### On stage

#### Ballet B.C. No. 29

**Where:** Queen Elizabeth Theatre

**When:** Nov. 6-8, 8 p.m.

**Tickets/info:** \$98.50-\$58.50, audienceservices@balletbc.com, (604) 732-5003, ext. 208

DANA GEE  
THE PROVINCE

With her Ballet B.C. debut, dancer Kirsten Wicklund is stepping first into the contemporary ballet world.

"It's very interesting for me coming from the much more classical world and having transitioned with my career to doing more contemporary work," Wicklund said about Ballet B.C.'s approach under its artistic director Emily Molnar.

"It's perfect. I can utilize all my classical training and all that information and vocabulary and use it to discover new ways of moving. It's a very good opportunity for the progression of my career."

After well over a year off with injuries to her feet, Wicklund, who has danced for the American Ballet Theatre and the Washington Ballet among other top companies, returns to the stage with Ballet B.C.'s 2014-2015 season opener Nov. 6-8.

"I'm super excited to have one of the local dancers here," said Molnar, who is beginning her sixth successful season with Ballet B.C.

Fittingly titled 29, for the 29th season, the opener is made up of three performances: the world premiere of *White Act* by Spanish-born choreographer Fernando Hernandez Magadan; the Ballet B.C. premiere of *An Instant* from Vancouver-born choreographer Lesley Telford and a reinterpretation of Italy's Jacopo Godani's *A.U.R.A.*

A contemporary take on *La Sylphide*, one of the oldest surviving romantic ballets (1832), the *White Act* piece turns out to be a perfect fit for Wicklund at this point in her career.

"It is interesting to do a contemporary ode to a classical ballet," said



Kirsten Wicklund, right, with fellow dancer Gilbert Small, is moving headlong into the world of contemporary ballet for the 2015 season.

Wicklund, who will dance in all three presentations.

"It is very cool. I actually danced *La Sylphide* with the Washington Ballet so it is interesting to return to the idea of it and sort of recreate it in a new way."

Bringing two completely new works to Ballet B.C. stage is great, but it's not unheard of, as Molnar and company have mounted 40 new pieces since 2009.

"What that celebrates is we continue to be a really strong creation company in this country for contemporary ballet," Molnar said.

Aside from being a world premiere, *White Act* is also unique in the way

it was created.

"That was an interesting opportunity," said Wicklund, who also has on her resume a top-16 finish on *So You Think You Can Dance Canada* in 2010.

"Everything that was made was created with the dancers in the room, so we got to have a lot of input. There was a lot of collaborative work in that process. It was my first experience with the company, so it was really great to be a part of."

While this is Wicklund's first turn with the company, she has been thinking long and hard about joining. It was during her downtime to recover from the fractures in her feet that

she decided that coming home was indeed something she could do.

"I took time to reflect on my career and what I wanted to do. This was the only company I pursued because it was clear to me that I wanted to be member of Ballet B.C. just because of the direction Emily (Molnar) is going with the company, the choreographers it is working with, and just the chance to learn as a young choreographer, I really liked that," said Wicklund, who is already creating her own choreography.

The Molnar model of fresh ideas and fresh forms is in a way like a farm team for future choreographers like Wicklund.

"We need to keep them interested," Molnar said about current dancers.

"Keep them thinking and living and sometimes it has to come in different ways. Then you put it all together and they become the deeper artist."

That happens regularly through the company's choreographic lab project, a site-specific exercise that allows the dancers to create, produce and perform their own works.

"We want to push forward the comment of where is ballet going, where is contemporary ballet going," Molnar said.

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