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BALLET BC CELEBRATES CAYETANO SOTO

Resident choreographer launches season with full evening of work

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Choreographer Cayetano Soto in rehearsal at Ballet BC. — Michael Slobodian photo

Vancouver audiences last encountered Spanish choreographer Cayetano Soto in 2015 aboard the undulating, sculptural voyage that is *Twenty Eight Thousand Waves*. With that piece, through moody lighting and endlessly shifting pas de deux, Soto evoked a ship being rocked by an ocean that both helped and hindered its passage.

Now Ballet BC's resident choreographer launches the 2016/17 season with [Program 1](http://balletbc.com/performance/program-1-2016/) (<http://balletbc.com/performance/program-1-2016/>), four works that take you on an entirely different journey – an exploration through passage of time and the evolution of his artistic vision, starting with the world premiere of a piece he calls *Beginning After*.

“The work is very simple in its structure,” the former dancer explains by phone, fresh off the plane from Barcelona. “My sense is the people can see that, here at Ballet BC, we have dancers that are soloists. So I wanted to use the company as a soloist. Every dancer. I didn't want to make any group sections.”

According to Soto, *Beginning After* questions the truth of memory. For example, in one vignette, dancer Andrew Bartee can be seen performing a beautiful, minimalist sequence of movements until the lighting fades. When the lights come up again, however, Bartee is still dancing the same movements, leaving the audience to wonder if what they just saw was real or a memory, and how the memory makes them feel.

“You’re questioning already what you saw,” Soto explains. “Was it the same thing?”

Not to be outdone, the evening then shifts to the Canadian debut of *Fugaz* – a piece Ballet BC artistic director Emily Molnar apparently knew she had to have within the first few minutes of seeing it.

All four works in Program 1 are very personal, Soto says, but *Fugaz* is especially so, as it was the last piece he created while still a dancer for Ballet Theatre Munich, and it came to pass just as his father was dying of cancer.

“It’s one of the ballets that’s been [staged] so many times and so many companies have interpreted it, but we decided we have to put it because it’s a birthing point for me,” Soto says. “*Fugaz* comes from the word for shooting star, [...] and it was a very personal work because it was the last work I created while I was still a dancer for the company. I was 29 years old. It was a commission from the company and I had decided already that I would start freelancing and I would stop dancing.”

The piece is about people who are diagnosed with cancer: those who survive and those who do not. Unfortunately, his father passed away before he could see the piece.

“There were many things that were important and shifting for me at that moment: stopping [dancing], losing somebody, and the piece reflects all this.”

Further along, we’ll also see the Canadian premiere of *Sortijas*, a dark, lush, music-forward duet tackling relationships and fate that Soto created for Ballet Hispanico in 2013, followed by the evening’s final new work, *Schachmatt (Checkmate)*, based on his acclaimed 2015 piece *Conrazoncorazon* (<https://www.jacobspillow.org/events/gauthier-dance/>) – a madcap ensemble piece that reportedly had audiences laughing out loud this past summer at the Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival.

“I just decided to make [*Conrazoncorazon*] bigger here. It will have more sections,” Soto says. “And for me it is like a game, because sometimes the head and the heart are not together. In the end, which one is the more dominant element in my body: the heart? Or the brain?” he laughs.

“In the end it’s my heart, but sometimes that drives us crazy.”

• *Ballet BC Program 1 runs Nov. 3-5 at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre (650 Hamilton). Tickets from \$30; BalletBC.com*
(<http://balletbc.com/performance/program-1-2016/>)