

# Four works by choreographer Cayetano Soto open Ballet B.C.'s season



*KEVIN GRIFFIN*

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Ballet BC's season opener is Nov. 3 to 5 at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre. Photo by Michael Slobodian. [PNG Merlin Archive] *MICHAELSLOBODIAN / VANCOUVER SUN*

## Ballet B.C. (<http://balletbc.com/>), Program 1

Nov. 3 to 5, 8 p.m. | Queen Elizabeth Theatre

Tickets and info: [Ticketmaster.ca \(http://www.ticketmaster.ca/\)](http://www.ticketmaster.ca/) or 1-855-985-2787.

During rehearsal, choreographer Cayetano Soto (<http://balletbc.com/bio/cayetano-soto/>) gave lots of encouragement and direction to the dancers in Ballet B.C.

“Speak with your chest,” he said at one point to Alexis Fletcher.

Later, Soto advised Christoph von Ridemann not to “get romantic” as the young dancer moved through a phrase.

Sometimes, he exclaimed “Go! Pah! Pah!” when he wanted the dancers to go fast during a complicated section. He repeatedly said “very nice!” or “beautiful!” after seeing the dancers take his direction and make the movement their own.

Numerous times after explaining what he wanted he used phrases such as “make sense?” and “you know what I mean?”



When Soto asked questions, it sounded like he was checking in with the dancers to make sure they understood what he was saying. The slight uncertainty may also have stemmed from speaking in English, his third language after German and Spanish, his native tongue.

Soto was guiding the dancers through sections of *Beginning After*, one of two world premieres in the Ballet B.C.'s season opener. Program 1 features four works by Soto — the first time Ballet B.C. has feature an entire evening of work by their new resident choreographer.

A few years ago, a reviewer described one of Soto's works as a "state-of-the-art ballet moment." After spending about an hour watching the company rehearse and run through an early version of *Beginning After*, I can echo those comments. Soto's choreography looked very contemporary in its combination of physical expressiveness and bodily articulation. I got the impression that the dancers were moving into and expanding space.

Soto said in planning Program 1, he talked with artistic director [Emily Molnar](http://balletbc.com/bio/emily-molnar-2/) (<http://balletbc.com/bio/emily-molnar-2/>) about including works that show different aspects of the kind of ballets he can create for the company's 17 talented dancers.

"I want the people to see the different layers of what we're doing and of my work. That's why we decided to go with this mixed repertoire," he said.

"If people either love it or hate it, I will be very happy. If they say it was OK, that will kill me."

*Beginning After* is followed by *Fugaz*, a work inspired by the illness and death of Sotos' father, and *Sortijas*, a duet to music by singer-songwriter Lhasa de Sela. The evening ends with another new work called *Schachmatt* which is German for Checkmate.

*Schachmatt* is an expansion of a previous work by Soto called *Conrazoncorazon* that he created for Gauthier Dance in Stuttgart, Germany. In the original work, he was asked to create something funny and about 10 minutes long.

“I thought it had so much potential, “ Soto said. “I had this feeling that I could stretch my ideas and expand it.”

The game-like atmosphere of Schachmatt reflects Soto’s own battle between thinking and feeling when he’s creating new work.

“Sometimes you listen to your brain, sometimes to your heart,” said Soto. “For me, it’s like a game.”

Ballet B.C.’s season continues next March with a program that focuses on B.C. artists and designers. To mark the country’s 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the company will feature four works by Company 605, Lesley Telford, Wen Wei Wang and Crystal Pite on March 16, 17 and 18.

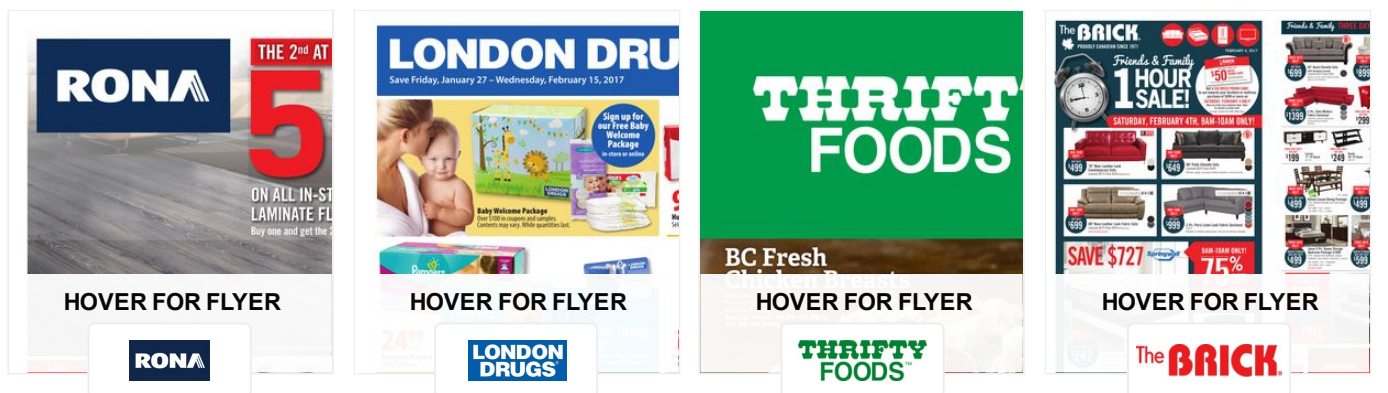
The season closes May 11, 12 and 13. Program 3 features a world premiere of a new work by Emanuel Gat, a new work by Molnar, and Minus 16 by Ohad Naharin.

From Dec. 8 to 11, Ballet B.C. brings back Royal Winnipeg Ballet’s Canadian retelling of the Nutcracker.

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