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EVERYTHING VANCOUVER

MARCH 6, 2017

## BALLET BC PREMIERES NEW WORK WITH 'PROGRAM 2'

Brittany Tiplady — Westender



'Solo Echo,' by Ballet BC alumna Crystal Pite, is part of the three-night dance showcase 'Program 2'. — Michael Slobodian photo

“We have a very vibrant dance community in this city,” says Ballet BC artistic director Emily Molnar. “It’s something that’s being looked at around the world and it’s a moment to celebrate. It’s a moment to applaud the talent that is staying here in this province.”

In celebration of Canada’s 150th anniversary, Ballet BC takes to the Queen Elizabeth stage with Program 2, featuring performances by four unique BC-inspired choreographers. Promising a dynamic and eclectic evening, Molnar has curated a program that promotes the province’s wide range of local, innovative talent.

Company 605 opens the night with the world premiere of *Anthem*, a large-scale piece and an entirely new venture for co-artistic directors Lisa Gelley and Josh Martin, as well as for the Ballet BC cast. “[Company 605] is such a dynamic voice right now, not only in BC but across Canada,” says Molnar. “They’re bringing such a fusion of approaches to dance together. They’ve never worked with a ballet company before, but I’ve been a fan of their work and watched them develop artistically.

“This is what Ballet BC is about,” she continues. “It’s about giving an opportunity to a really talented individual or company of individuals. It’s also such a wonderful learning [curve] for us at Ballet BC, because we’re bringing our understanding and background of contemporary ballet into Lisa and Josh’s voice, and that kind of sharing and platform being created is really delightful.”

Following *Anthem* is a piece set by Ballet BC alumnus Wen Wei Wang: a contemporary pointe adaptation of *Swan Lake* and *The Dying Swan*, set to the original *Swan Lake* score, bridged with a fresh musical composition. “[Wang] is such an important voice right now in our country and also in our province,” Molnar enthuses. “I think it’s going to be a very curious piece – intimate, but a little bit on the edge. It’s very compelling work.”

Partnered in the same area of the program is another world premiere. Choreographer Lesley Telford debuts *If I were 2*, a duet performed by Emily Chessa and Brandon Alley alongside Vancouver-based spoken-word poet Barbara Adler. Inspired by narcissism, the duet delves into our sensual relationships, exploring chasms both inanimate and human. “[Telford] has such a profound way of tapping into very deep recesses of our emotional and intellectual landscapes,” says Molnar. “Her physicality is very wonderful and very today. I think she’s a very exciting choreographer to watch as we go forward in this next generation of choreographers.”

Anchoring the evening is the return of the critically acclaimed *Solo Echo* by veteran artist and Ballet BC alumna Crystal Pite. While *Solo Echo* is well rehearsed by the company, Molnar felt including the popular work paired well with the BC-themed evening.

Asked if she has any pre-show jitters presenting such a world-premiere-heavy program, Molnar responds with a chuckle. “I think it’s really beautiful. I’m proud of the evening. Each of these [choreographers] is committed to the same things we believe in, which is collaboration, where the art is form going, and people who have curiosities and a range for what dance can be. We’re proud to be a creation-based company, and we feel strongly about building new work and giving that life.”

• Program 2 runs March 16-18 at Queen Elizabeth Theatre, 8pm nightly. Tickets \$70 and up from [balletbc.com](http://balletbc.com) (<http://balletbc.com/performance/program-2-2017/>).

*Note: An earlier version of this story contained an incorrect spelling of Wen Wei Wang as well as the name of the dance piece If I were 2. We regret the errors.*

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